



KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PLAN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN KRI CONFERENCE REPORT

27 & 28 AUGUST 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) Regional Human Rights Plan provides a regional framework or action plan for the promotion and protection of human rights aligned with the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution, as well as international instruments such as the Arab Charter on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Plan aims to strengthen the Region's role in shaping both internal and external policy, enhance the protection and promotion of human rights, and build institutional and individual capacities.

The two-day conference, held on 27 & 28 August 2024 in Erbil, focused on promoting the human rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in KRI. The conference served as a platform to highlight KRI's commitments under the Regional Human Rights Plan, review progress on implementing these commitments, and propose recommendations for further enhancing the work of institutions dealing with displaced persons.

The conference was structured around several key themes contained in the Human Rights Plan, particularly focusing on the protection, economic, social, and cultural rights of IDPs:

1. Protection of IDPs:

The sessions discussed the legal rights, documentation, and residency protections for displaced populations, emphasizing the need for non-coercive, safe returns to liberated areas. The importance of preventing discrimination against IDPs and ensuring their safety and economic stability before their return was underscored.

2. Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights:

Panel discussions covered the rights of IDPs to basic services, healthcare, education, food, work, and social security. Participants shared experiences and best practices in delivering these essential services to displaced populations in KRI.

3. Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and minorities:

A significant focus was placed on strategies to prevent discrimination, stigmatization, and marginalization of displaced women and children, particularly those perceived to be affiliated with ISIS. The reintegration of returnees into society was highlighted as a critical challenge that requires coordinated efforts from all stakeholders.

The conference utilized a combination of presentations and panel discussions, led by stakeholders from government agencies, UN bodies and international organizations. Each session provided a question-and-answer section which allowed conference participants to engage with the panelists and raise recommendations or comments to further knowledge exchange and best practices in addressing the challenges faced by IDPs in KRI.

OUTCOMES:

- Increased awareness and understanding of the human rights situation of IDPs among key stakeholders.
- Strengthened partnerships and collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners.
- Concrete actions and recommendations for improving the protection, empowerment, and integration of IDPs, ensuring that their rights are upheld in alignment with the KRI Regional Human Rights Plan.

SESSION OVERVIEWS AND OUTCOMES

DAY 1

Welcome and Introduction

The KRG Coordinator for International Advocacy, Dr. Dindar Zebari expressed gratitude to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for its ongoing support of displaced families. He highlighted the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) efforts, noting that 48 decrees and laws have been enacted to protect and assist displaced individuals. The KRG, in collaboration with international institutions, has worked to improve the quality of life in camps, supporting over a million IDPs across 22 camps, with a particular focus on providing education through Arabic language schools. Dr. Zebari emphasized the KRG's commitment to continuing these services, especially for the Yazidi community, which remains the largest group still displaced. He also highlighted the government's ongoing efforts to implement the Sinjar Agreement to enhance security and stability in the Sinjar district, reaffirming the KRG's dedication to supporting affected families.



Opening Remarks and welcome to the OCIA Conference

The Head of Office, IOM KRI, Dr. Yoko Fujimura, welcomed participants to the conference highlighting the KRG's progress in addressing internal displacement since the adoption of the Human Rights Action Plan in 2021. She emphasized the KRG's commitment to various human rights issues, particularly the rights of IDPs, women, children, and marginalized groups. Ms. Yoko highlighted the importance of reviewing achievements and challenges, encouraging participants to engage critically in the discussions. She acknowledged IOM's collaboration with KRG and federal authorities to support IDPs, noting the critical role of donors such as the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in enabling these efforts.

CONTEXT OF IDP HOSTING IN KRI:

Erbil Governor- Mr. Omed Khoshnaw

The Governor opened by thanking the attendees and the IOM for their ongoing support to IDPs in the KRI. He emphasized that Erbil has become a refuge for many IDPs and Refugees since the 2014 armed conflict and reaffirmed the KRG policy of dignified and voluntary return. The governor highlighted the continuous efforts by the KRG, BCF, and JCCC in overcoming difficulties and supporting IDPs amidst the reduction of assistance from the aid community in the recent years.

Sulaymaniyah Governor- Dr. Dr. Haval Abubaker. The Governor focused on the experience of Sulaymaniyah and noted that all the camps in the governorate had closed following the Council of Minister decision and that a significant number of IDPs integrated into the Sulaymaniyah host community. He lamented the lack of services in some areas of return. The governor raised the issue of the displacement caused by recent Turkish bombings in border areas and called on international agencies to intervene and assist the affected families. He also mentioned the needs of Iranian refugees who face significant hardships due to a lack of basic rights. The governor reiterated that Sulaymaniyah remains committed to supporting displaced persons and continues to offer aid.

Director General of Yazidi Affairs in the KRG Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs-Mr. Saud Masto

The Director General of Yazidi Affairs pointed out that the issue of displacement is a global issue and not only related to the Kurdistan Region, and that the welcome of the Kurdistan Region to the IDPs is appreciated so that as guests in the Kurdistan Region despite all the challenges faced by the Kurdistan Regional Government He praised the activities of the Ministry of Endowments to eliminate hate speech against refugees and stressed that they are supporting the implementation of the KRG's plan for human rights.

First Deputy Governor of Nineveh- Mr. Sirwan Rojbayani

The Deputy Governor thanked the KRG and international organizations for their support in providing essential services to IDPs displaced to the Kurdistan Region due to the ISIS conflict. He pointed out that Ninewa governorate is a microcosm of Iraq with diverse ethno-religious communities who had coexisted and who had suffered the most damage as a result of the conflict with ISIS. The Deputy Governor highlighted the strong coordination between Ninewa and the governorates of Erbil and Dahuk and the ongoing efforts to facilitate the return of displaced families, especially in areas like Khazir, Hasansham, Sheikhan in Zummar and Sofaya in Rabia. He pointed out the challenges posed by the lack of security in Ninewa, which are major obstacles to the return of Yazidi families and emphasized the importance of implementing the Sinjar Agreement, highlighting that the IQD4 million return grant alone will not guarantee the dignified and sustainable return of families. He also reiterated the challenges caused by the Turkish airstrikes.

PANEL 1: REVIEW OF KEY PROVISIONS OF THE KRG HUMAN RIGHTS PLAN ON IDPs

Panel Outline and Intended Outcomes:

Provided a review of the key provisions of the KRG Human Rights Plan concerning Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) looking at existing legislation and policies. Presenters discussed the achievements, highlighted implementation challenges, and explored potential legislative recommendations. The panel included representatives from the OCIA, Investigative Judge of Asayish, UNAMI Human Rights Office, KRI Human Rights Commission, Kurdistan Human Rights Watch, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA).

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

Moderator: Medya Hoshyar from OCIA opened the session by raising a question to the first panelist about the rights of displaced persons in the Kurdistan Region, particularly those convicted of terrorism-related crimes, stressing the importance of respecting their rights under international and local law.



Audience Engagement During the Conference



Panel 1 - Key Provisions of the KRG Human Rights Plan

Investigative Judge of Asayish

The Investigative Judge explained that, according to the 1959 International Convention and KRG law, many individuals convicted by the KRG have surrendered voluntarily showing trust in the regional judicial system. However, there have been instances where these individuals were rearrested by the federal government upon returning to their areas, which undermines the safe return of families to their areas of origin (AoO). To address this, a higher committee has been formed in coordination with Federal Baghdad to review the legal status of these individuals and prevent rights violations.

KRI Human Rights Commission

Addressed the legal challenges affecting citizens within the Kurdistan Region, highlighting Article 140 of the Constitution which deals with disputed territories. He pointed out that the Sinjar district remains highly insecure due to the presence of armed militias, which prolongs displacement. The panelist also highlighted the issue of new internal displacement caused by Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) activities and Turkish shelling in border areas and called for international support to address these issues. Regarding the displaced and the closure of camps, there are three international legal solutions. The first is voluntary return, the second is integration, and the third is relocation. According to the Iraqi Constitution, an Iraqi citizen has the right to live and reside anywhere they feel comfortable. However, there should be significant encouragement for the return of displaced persons. The current pressure is not for voluntary return; it involves reducing services and assistance, which contradicts voluntary return.

UNAMI Human Rights Office

The UNAMI Human Rights Office emphasized the importance of evaluating the implementation of the Iraqi Constitution, which guarantees the rights of all Iraqis, including displaced persons. The panelist acknowledged the KRG efforts in hosting and supporting displaced persons and underscored the need for continued dialogue among relevant bodies to improve the human rights situation in Iraq.

Kurdistan Human Rights Watch

The panelist's intervention focused on the responsibility of human rights organizations to engage with the government on issues related to internal displacement and camp closures. He argued that the strength of local and international organizations lay in complementing government efforts and providing fast responses to crises. The panelist also emphasized that as Iraqi citizens return should be voluntary, not coerced by reducing services, which contradicts the principle of voluntary return and reminded the audience that there are three pathways to ending displacement which are return, relocation and local integration. The KHORW concluded his remarks calling for an investigative process to address the situation in Sinjar and prevent future genocides.

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA)

Provided an overview of the ministry's efforts to support between 270,000 and 280,000 displaced persons through collaboration with international organizations. Focusing on Sinjar, the panelist noted the challenges in implementing the Sinjar Agreement and the role of illegal armed groups in the region, which complicated the process of securing a safe return for IDPs. The discussion also touched on the lack of administrative authority in Sinjar, which remains a significant barrier to ensuring stability and the safe return of displaced persons.

Question and Answer Session

A question was raised about the Sinjar Agreement. The panellists explained the features of the agreement and highlighted the challenges in implementing the agreement, noting the presence of armed groups in the region as a key obstacle. They emphasized the importance of international collaboration to ensure the safe return of displaced persons in Sinjar, where a lack of administrative authority and ongoing insecurity continue to hinder progress.

The session concluded with a call for stronger legal frameworks and international collaboration to address these complex challenges and protect the rights of IDPs in the Kurdistan Region.

PANEL 2: SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF IDPs

Panel Outline and intended outcome:

The panel focused on the socio-economic rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and aimed to provide an overview of IDPs' access to essential services such as healthcare, education, food security, social security, and livelihoods. The discussion also included a Q&A session where panellists provided insights and recommendations for improving the delivery of these services. The panel featured representatives from UNAMI Human Rights Office, the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI), the Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF), and the World Food Programme (WFP).



Panel 2 - Socio-economic Rights of IDPs



Participants Focused and Engaged during the Conference

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS:

Ministry of Education (MoE):

The Ministry noted the significant challenges in providing education to IDP children, particularly regarding the lack of infrastructure which then forces schools to operate in shifts and in situations of overcrowding. The MoE also highlighted its efforts to integrate over 1,000 Syrian children into KRI schools, ensuring they receive the same rights as local students. The ministry also raised concern about the decision to close IDP camps and IDP schools, without consulting the Ministry or international organizations posed a risk to the educational continuity and the rights of displaced children. The MoE emphasized the importance of coordinating with the federal government to address educational needs, including the provision of buildings, teachers, and other teaching and learning resources.

Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI):

The Ministry described its role as critical yet often overlooked, likening the ministry to “hidden soldiers” in supporting IDPs and refugees. The ministry’s efforts have also included agricultural support, such as distributing 2,000 tons of wheat, and establishing a factory to create jobs for IDPs. These efforts are part of the broader KRG 2030 vision, which aims to ensure food security and economic stability for all residents, including IDPs. The MoTI highlighted its coordination with the federal government to distribute food, particularly to those displaced from Ninewa and Anbar.

Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF):

The BCF outlined their extensive support for IDPs, including providing food, clothing, and shelter since the onset of the crisis. Despite these efforts, the representative stressed the dire conditions in which many IDPs still live, particularly regarding health and education services. The BCF emphasized that the return of IDPs should be voluntary and raised concern about the IDPs moving to third countries, particularly vulnerable minorities like the Yazidis and Christians if the challenges they face are not adequately addressed.

World Food Programme (WFP):

The WFP acknowledged the challenges of sustaining food support for IDPs due to financial constraints which led to a reduction in activities starting in 2023. Food distribution in the camps was fully taken on by the government. The panelist reported that food security is precarious in some of the camps, with 90% of IDPs living below the poverty line. In conclusion WFP called for continued international support to provide adequate food and registration of all eligible IDPs to the social security network.

Ministry of Health (MoH):

The Ministry provided an overview of its efforts to deliver healthcare services to IDPs since 2003, with a significant increase in demand following the 2014 crisis. The MoH has established health centers, provided necessary equipment, and managed disease outbreaks despite limited resources, exacerbated by the federal government's decision to cut KRI's share of medicine. The MoH appealed to donors, UN agencies, and NGOs to maintain their support to ensure the continued provision of vital health services to IDPs.

Question and Answer Session

The Q&A session covered a wide range of topics, beginning with concerns over the national security, demographic change, humanitarian imperatives and equal citizenship rights. The Ministry of Education (MoE) addressed questions on the challenges of educating children without proper documentation, outlining efforts to ensure access to education and collaboration with the Ministry of Justice to resolve issues related to legal identification for students. The MoE also acknowledged the challenges posed by the differences in education systems between the KRI and the federal government, particularly for Arabic-speaking students.

Another audience member specializing in psychological studies raised concerns about the mental health of women IDPs, noting that forcing them to return to their areas without addressing their trauma could worsen their psychological well-being. The MoE responded by emphasizing the need for comprehensive solutions, particularly in camps where 65% of IDPs live outside of formal settlements and face unique challenges compared to those still residing in camps.

The discussion also highlighted the lack of legislation addressing the rights of IDPs and refugees, with participants calling for new laws to ensure proper recognition and protection for displaced individuals, including refugees from other countries. The session concluded with an emphasis on the need for coordination between security forces and government authorities to ensure IDP assistance and protection of both IDPs and host communities.

DAY 2

Welcome and Recap of Day 1

OCIA provided a recap of day 1 and noted the progress made under the KRG Human Rights Plan in protecting the rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). Panel 1 discussed the legislative frameworks, and the ongoing challenges faced by IDPs in displacement and also in areas of origin like Sinjar, emphasizing the need for stronger legal protections and coordination between the KRG and the federal government. Panel 2 focused on the socio-economic rights of IDPs, addressing access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and food security. The recap noted that despite ongoing efforts, the discussions underscored the persistent gaps in resources and infrastructure, calling for enhanced collaboration and continued support to ensure the dignity and well-being of IDPs.

PANEL 3: IDPs AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Session overview and intended outcomes:

Panel 3 focused on non-discrimination against Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The session provided an overview of the progress made in protecting displaced persons especially minorities and women, addressing their marginalization, and preventing discrimination. The panel included representatives from the Kurdistan Presidency, the Ministry of Planning (MOP), the Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, and the Emma Organization.



Panel 3 - IDPs and Non-Discrimination



Attendances sharing insights and ideas at the conference

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

Moderator's Introduction: The moderator, Kurdistan Presidency representative, opened the second day of the conference by thanking Dr. Dindar and IOM. He emphasized that this panel was a continuation of the discussions from the previous day, with a specific focus on IDPs and the discrimination they face. He underscored the psychological sensitivity of displaced persons, who may feel disrespected or marginalized due to their circumstances. The moderator noted that IDPs in KRI are treated with respect by both the host community and government institutions.

The Ministry of Planning (MoP)

The MoP reaffirmed the commitment to ensuring non-discrimination towards displaced persons. Key points included engagement in the 2030 Vision, adapting the previous plan to meet current needs, and collaboration with the Ministry of Health on healthcare awareness campaigns. The Ministry has developed a draft law aimed at preventing discrimination against displaced communities and is working to provide statistics and support for displaced persons. The representative noted challenges such as economic difficulties, political disputes between Baghdad and KRG, and a lack of coordination, which have complicated the provision of adequate support for the 1.5 million displaced persons and refugees in the region.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA)

MoLSA highlighted its dedication to transparency and fairness, focusing on labor and social affairs, care and development, and social protection. The Ministry focuses on labor market issues, unemployment, care for orphans and the elderly and gender-based violence. It has provided psychological and social services through its centers, in collaboration with UNICEF, targeting displaced women, children, and adolescents. The Ministry operates within and outside camps to offer psychosocial support, vocational training, shelter, and legal services to victims of violence. Reaching 100,000 beneficiaries through 16 camps and centers. MoLSA ensures that IDPs and refugees receive the same services as those in the host community, with vocational training available for both women and men.

The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs

The representative highlighted President Barzani's leadership and framed support for displaced persons as a religious duty. Initial coordination challenges during the displacement crisis were acknowledged, but effective operations have since been established, including issuing a fatwa to assist displaced persons. The Ministry has supported the safe return of displaced persons without discrimination, provided logistical support, and fostered an environment of respect and dignity. It has actively combated hate speech by working closely with religious leaders to promote peaceful coexistence and raise awareness against hate speech, particularly through social media. The Ministry has also taken substantial steps to prevent discriminatory rhetoric and promote peaceful coexistence, making the Kurdistan Region a model that has earned international recognition.

Emma Organization

The Director of the organization shared its decade-long experience working with IDPs, particularly focusing on Yazidi women who were victims of sexual violence by Daesh. Challenges included financial difficulties due to economic disputes between the KRG and Gol. The panelist reminded the participants of the ongoing fear and trauma among Yazidi survivors, who cannot return to their homes due to the presence of armed groups and due to the reality of the service provision conditions in Sinjar. The panelist reiterated the need to overcome these obstacles, collaborating with various ministries, and importance of initiatives like the Lalish Conference to secure more support for Yazidi survivors.

Question and Answer Session

During the Q&A session, participants raised key concerns, including the need for accurate data on displaced persons and refugees, both inside and outside camps. A question about hate speech within the Yazidi community was also discussed. The Ministry of Labor emphasized its efforts to promote social harmony, while the Ministry of Planning highlighted initiatives to integrate displaced persons into the labor market and social welfare programs. Additionally, the lack of justice for ISIS perpetrators, particularly those responsible for crimes against Yazidi women and girls, remains a critical issue, leaving IDPs feeling insecure and unsupported.

The Ministry of Endowment addressed their role in fostering peaceful coexistence and combating hate speech, reaffirming their commitment to drafting legislation and inviting collaboration from various organizations. Emma Foundation shared concerns over threats the foundation faced after recent statements on sensitive topics but reiterated their dedication to supporting displaced persons and advocating for their rights.

The session concluded with an emphasis on the need for more accurate and comprehensive data on displaced persons and refugees, both within and outside camps, to ensure effective planning and service delivery. And to Strengthening Legislation against Hate Speech.

PANEL 4: SAFE RETURN AND SECURING IDP RIGHTS

Session overview and intended outcomes:

Panel 4 focused on the challenges and strategies for the safe return and securing of rights for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The session aimed to provide an overview of the efforts on voluntary return, access to housing, land, and property (HLP) rights, documentation, and residency. The discussion also addressed the key barriers to solutions and included recommendations for improving the return process. The panel moderated by IOM featured representatives from the Directorate of Migration and Crisis Response-Duhok, the Nineveh Governorate Council, UNAMI Human Rights, GIZ and IOM.



Panel 4 - Safe Return and Securing IDP Rights

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

Moderator's Introduction: The moderator opened panel discussion noting that all the previous panels had touched on the rights legislative, socio-economic and rights of IDPs to non-discrimination, there was a need to look to what needs to be done to ensure that IDP rights are upheld and respected and so that their return is safe and sustainable. The moderator noted that while return is often the preferred pathway by both IDPs and government, many IDPs elected to settle in areas of displacement and in such instances various initiatives and support related to residency and documentation would need to be implemented.

Directorate of Migration in Duhok (DMCR)

DMCR reported that there are 15 camps in Duhok which continue to operate due to the inability of displaced residents to return to their areas of origin, particularly Sinjar. DMCR identified obstacles such as instability, the presence of militias, destroyed infrastructure, and insufficient compensation. DMCR opined that the full implementation of the Sinjar Agreement, including the integration of over 2,000 local police from Sinjar into the security framework would address the challenges in the district. He also discussed the psychological and social impacts of the ISIL conflict on the Yazidi community, calling for the restoration of trust and ensuring the safe return of these communities. On integration of displaced in Duhok, DMCR noted that many IDPs had bought homes and established businesses in Dahuk and may prefer to locally integrate in Duhok, noting that Dahuk has always welcomed displaced persons for decades and local integration is not a new phenomenon in Duhok.

Ninewa Governorate Council (NGC)

The NGC focused on the difficulties faced by returning families, such as inadequate compensation for their destroyed home and the poor infrastructure. The representative criticized the current return grant system as discriminatory as it only focused on those in camps while those outside camps receive a smaller amount. On property compensation she noted that it remains insufficient and pointed out issues of bureaucracy and lack of transparency in distributing these funds. Similar to DMCR she noted that IDPs are citizens and have rights to live wherever they wish and settle where they prefer, however she stressed the importance of preserving the cultural identity of minorities like the Yazidis.

UNAMI Human Rights Office

UNAMI intervention focused on the need for ensuring minority rights and providing equal protection under the law. He highlighted the state's failure to protect its citizens post-2014 is what led to mass displacement. The panelist advocated for preemptive actions and the implementation of special laws to protect minorities, stressing the risks of returning displaced persons to their areas of origin without adequate services and security.

German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)

GIZ highlighted the organization's support for the Kurdistan Regional Government's Human Rights Plan (2021-2025), focusing on a rights-based approach that emphasizes human beings as rights-holders. GIZ discussed the challenges for safe returns of

IDPs in Iraq, including housing destruction, lack of livelihood opportunities, and societal tensions. GIZ’s efforts to support local peace structures and peace agreements were also emphasized, showcasing initiatives aimed at enhancing social cohesion, enabling IDP returns, and fostering ethno-religious dialogue in conflict-affected areas.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

IOM highlighted the organization’s efforts to facilitate durable solutions since 2017, focusing on return to areas of origin, local integration, and relocation. She emphasized that returning to areas of origin is ideal but requires proper infrastructure and services. also discussed legal challenges, particularly related to land rights and civil documentation, and the need for legal support for returnees.

Question and Answer Session

During the Q&A session, participants raised critical issues related to the Sinjar Agreement, minority rights, and the role of international organizations in supporting the return of displaced persons. The discussion highlighted the importance of ongoing international supervision to protect the rights of all communities and ensure coordinated efforts between central and regional governments. Participants emphasized the need for effective implementation of the Sinjar Agreement and the crucial role of local leadership in supporting sustainable returns. The session concluded with an emphasis the continuous international oversight, which is necessary to ensure the fair implementation of return and compensation processes, particularly under the Sinjar Agreement. And enhancing local leadership and social services to promote sustainable returns and fostering community cohesion.



Audience Engagement During the Conference

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

Challenges	Recommendations
Inadequate resources and capacity within local government institutions to implement and monitor human rights initiatives.	Increase investment in capacity-building programs for local government institutions, providing the necessary resources, training, and support to effectively implement and monitor human rights initiatives.
Limited engagement and participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the development and implementation of human rights policies	Strengthen partnerships with CSOs by establishing formal mechanisms for their involvement in policy development, implementation, and monitoring processes, ensuring their contributions are valued and utilized.
Insufficient legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to protect and promote the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).	Advocate for the adoption and implementation of robust legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms that specifically address the protection and promotion of IDP rights, ensuring they are aligned with international human rights standards.
The disconnect between national and regional human rights initiatives, leading to inconsistencies and gaps in the protection of rights across different areas.	Enhance coordination between national and regional human rights bodies to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness in the protection of rights across all areas, with a particular focus on bridging gaps and addressing inconsistencies

Limited awareness and understanding of human rights issues among the public, contributing to a lack of support for human rights initiatives.	Launch public awareness campaigns and educational programs aimed at increasing understanding and support for human rights issues, with a focus on promoting the importance of human rights protections and encouraging active citizen participation in these initiatives.
Barriers to accessing justice for vulnerable populations, including IDPs, due to complex legal procedures, lack of legal representation, and discrimination.	Simplify legal procedures and increase access to legal representation for vulnerable populations, with a focus on eliminating discriminatory practices and ensuring equal access to justice for all.
The slow pace of legislative reforms needed to strengthen human rights protections in KRI.	Advocate for the acceleration of legislative reforms by engaging with key stakeholders, including lawmakers, to prioritize the enactment of laws that enhance human rights protections, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups such as IDPs.

CONFERENCE WRAP UP

The conference on promoting human rights for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) brought together key stakeholders, including government officials, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and human rights experts, to address pressing challenges and explore actionable solutions. Over two days, four panels discussed issues such as the lack of a unified strategy among government entities, insufficient resources and capacity within local institutions, and barriers to justice for vulnerable populations, including IDPs. Participants emphasized the need for a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach to human rights, stronger legal frameworks, and increased public awareness. The conference underscored the importance of collaboration between Federal Iraq and Kurdistan Regional authorities, aid actors locally and internationally, to ensure that IDPs, returnees and host communities have access to a dignified life and essential services. Recommendations included developing coordinated strategies, investing in capacity-building for local governments, and accelerating legislative reforms.



Audience attendance of the OCIA Conference

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