

Iraq



International Medical Corps was among the first international NGOs to establish lifesaving humanitarian programs in Iraq in the wake of the 2003 war and we have been there ever since – building our teams across all 18 governorates.

Since 2014, our efforts have focused on the Kurdistan and Southern Central Iraq regions as we respond to ongoing armed conflict, incorporating our core expertise into our relief interventions; primary health care; gender-based violence support; and mental health and psychosocial services.



International Medical Corps first established operations in Iraq in 2003. Since then, our presence in Iraq has been uninterrupted. Our operational experience of all 18 governorates has generated valuable and productive relationships with Iraqi and Kurdish local authorities, as well as UN agencies, and local and international nongovernmental organizations.

Our integrated approach to service provision allows our primary health care service providers to work hand in hand with our mental health and gender-based violence (GBV) interventions while our direct services are offered through mobile medical units and static clinics to deliver primary health care, mental health and psychosocial services, and GBV community support and prevention wherever it is needed most.

Capacity building is an important component of all our programming as is focusing on delivering assistance to vulnerable communities. We make every effort to identify sub-groups within refugee, internally displaced, host and returnee populations that are potentially vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, women, children and adolescents, and older persons.



Where we work:

- Baghdad
- Erbil
- Salahadin
- Diyala
- Anbar
- Dohuk
- Ninewa



International Medical Corps is making health care and other vital services available to more than 650,000 people across seven governorates in Iraq.

HEALTH

Our teams provide direct assistance to those who need it most while bolstering local health systems and boosting capacity in camp and non-camp settings - all within the framework of the 2016 Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan.

In the Kurdish Region of Iraq we provide primary health care and basic reproductive health services in refugee camps and camps for internally displaced Iraqis in the Erbil, Dohuk, and Ninewa governorates. We also look to support those in out of camp settlements in hard-to-reach or underserved areas through our mobile medical units (MMUs).

In South Central Iraq, we operate MMUs in and around Baghdad and Anbar governorates while retaining the flexibility to expand services to surrounding areas as new crises arise and the needs among conflict-affected populations become acute.

Our extensive networks of staff and partners allow for the rapid assessment, implementation and scale-up of our health interventions as required.

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

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Our Community Health Workers (CHWs) work to provide the essential link between patients and primary healthcare service providers – accomplishing the outreach to and referral of those who otherwise might be unable to access to the health, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) or GBV services we support. Our staff also conduct disease surveillance and promote health awareness and health-seeking behaviors among at-risk communities.

These team members undergo comprehensive training courses to boost understanding around common disease education messages and simple case definitions – with this knowledge our trained CHWs go tent-to-tent in camps, and door-to-door in urban areas and hard to reach villages in Baghdad, Erbil, Dohuk, Anbar and Ninewa governorates as part of our integrated primary healthcare program.

We focus on hiring the best people – at least half of our CHWs are women while local recruits allow us to ensure acceptance among key populations – enabling the recognition of education messages and consideration of cultural sensitivities.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

International Medical Corps places a particular priority in the provision of integrated MHPSS to internally displaced Iraqis located in camp and non-camp locations. This emphasis is due to the limited nature of many of these services within Iraq and the gap in availability of basic and community-centred mental health care and non-specialised support services, such as case management and clear referral pathways to specialised services.

To fill this critical 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 alongside direct linkages with primary health care service points. In addition - we provide training in mhGAP as well as a technique used in crisis settings known as Psychological First Aid to our staff and other service-providers, including Department of Health personnel.

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

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

International Medical Corps is a principal implementer of gender-based violence interventions in Iraq. Our experience has proven that community-led processes are vital to ensuring relevant and meaningful messaging to the local population and is key to engaging government and community leaders leading to lasting impact. Our mentorship systems support GBV prevention and response actors, while other interventions support community-based structures, and raising awareness of available services and the consequences of GBV. In partnership with local organisations, we provide psychosocial activities in safe spaces and GBV case management support. Our GBV referral system is linked to our primary health care network ensuring integrated service provision. In hard-to-reach areas, our GBV services are incorporated into our MMUs and the GBV teams work closely with the community health teams. GBV Outreach Workers run community-based prevention and response campaigns, identify vulnerable women and girls and inform them of available services while making referrals if needed.

As a primary health care agency, our core role allows us to integrate comprehensive GBV response services into our work, offering survivors timely, discreet and effective treatment and support.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

International Medical Corps is widely recognized as a pre-eminent first responder with a global reach, delivering humanitarian relief to individuals and communities in need for more than three decades. Iraq is experiencing a large-scale humanitarian crisis spread over a vast and complex geographical area. The ongoing conflict and its anticipated expansion to new areas of the country mean that humanitarian emergencies can arise and affect populations with little warning. International Medical Corps in Iraq will ensure we have the capacity to respond quickly and efficiently to emergency events countrywide with pre-positioned stocks of essential supplies and an active roster of international and national technical staff that can be rapidly mobilized.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Since 1984, International Medical Corps has demonstrated the ability to deliver major relief and development programs to improve lives and strengthen national capacity through health, education, and social programming. International Medical Corps has responded to complex emergencies and implemented transitional development programs in more than 70 countries worldwide.



When humanitarian access to those populations displaced from Fallujah finally became possible, International Medical Corps responded immediately, deploying mobile medical units to provide life-saving care to thousands of displaced. We remain positioned and prepared to deliver humanitarian assistance wherever, whenever needed across Iraq.



www.InternationalMedicalCorps.org

Since its inception over 30 years ago, International Medical Corps' mission has been consistent: relieve the suffering of those impacted by war, natural disaster and disease, by delivering vital health care services that focus on training. This approach of helping people help themselves is critical to returning devastated populations to self-reliance.

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