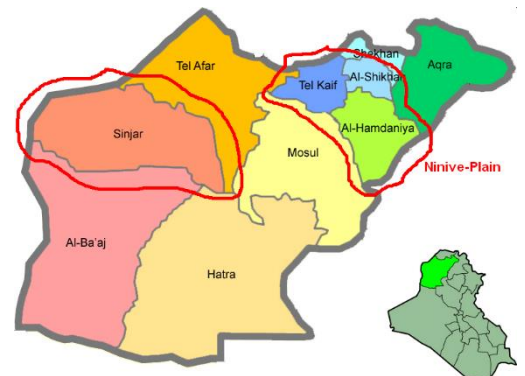


Fact Sheet: Iraq

Religious minorities are especially affected by the Corona pandemic

Corona has changed the whole world. Iraq is no exception. It is currently among the TOP 20 most affected countries in the world. The health care system was already bad and unemployment high before the current situation led to even more job losses.

The religious minorities are hit even harder because they live in areas that were liberated from the rule of the so-called "Islamic State" just three years ago and whose infrastructure was massively damaged or even completely destroyed. In the regions of Sinjar (mainly Yazidi) or the Nineveh Plain (mainly Christian) in northern Iraq there is still no well-functioning health system. Not even corona test stations are available everywhere. In some places the unemployment rate is 70%. Many Christians therefore move to Ankawa, a Christian suburb of Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan-Iraq region. If there is no improvement in the situation, a further migration movement can be assumed.



The young generation needs support

The country and society have suffered greatly from many internal conflicts: the collapse of the country, the rule of militias, corruption, etc. It is also a scene for (too) many external actors. The situation is complicated and a new model, a new future must be developed for Iraq. An investment in the young generation is imperative. They are fed up with the whole thing and want a perspective.

It would be helpful, for example, to support young people in the diverse society in the Nineveh plain, where different religious minorities live. There are good local initiatives there that take care of social cohesion and peacebuilding, as well as training people to actively participate in reconciliation and shaping their society. In addition, scholarships and support for local small businesses help young people to have a future in their country.

Israel is not an enemy for the majority of Iraqis

The United Arab Emirates' growing fear of Iran has now resulted in a peace agreement with Israel. This new development in the Arab world also affects Iraq, which is still under the influence of its neighboring country Iran.

The Iraqi Kurdistan region is in friendly relations with Israel for many years. The majority of the people in Iraq generally want normal relations with the countries in the region. Radical Shiite parties under the influence of Iran and fundamentalist Sunnis are in the minority. However, the current situation in the country will most likely not make any change possible.

The peace process between Israel and the Palestinians is seen as important, but seen as an intra-Palestinian issue.