

BACKGROUND

Despite continuous efforts by a wide range of stakeholders supporting the government of Iraq, violent extremism remains a major threat to Iraq's national security and stability. Iraq adopted a national strategy for preventing and countering violent extremism and has put in place action plans at the level of the governorates through the countering violent extremism (CVE) sub-committees. Iraq also faces another major challenge posed by the camps in North-East Syria (NES). Beyond their threat to national, regional, and global stability, Iraq is committed to the return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of large numbers of Iraqi families coming from these camps.

Iraq became a GCERF partner country in 2023. To date, GCERF has invested USD 7 million with active grants supporting 13 civil society organisations. These grants are funded by GCERF's unrestricted resources and USAID-funded holistic case management programme.

GCERF pioneers a unique model of investment designed to promote a whole-of-society approach and ensure the sustainability of our programmes. Under this model, in each partner country, we support national governments in establishing a steering committee called the Country Support Mechanism (CSM).

In Iraq, the CSM is chaired by the President of the National Committee to Combat Violent Extremism (NCCVE) under the office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA). In addition to engaging NCCVE that brings together relevant government agencies and CSOs, GCERF also engages donor representatives. This mechanism provides strategic direction for the programmes, ensure results and progressively inherit ownership of funding community-level efforts to prevent violent extremism.

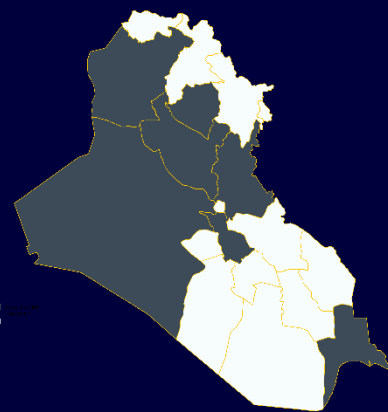
GCERF'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY IN IRAQ

GCERF's investment strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to address the drivers of violent extremism (VE) and guides civil society organisations in designing their programmes. According to GCERF's needs assessment and consultations with relevant stakeholders, there are two main drivers of violent extremism in Iraq:

- 1. Inter-ethnic and religious conflicts:** VE groups exploit existing and emerging conflicts to increase their grip on communities.
- 2. Returnees from liberated areas and Northeast Syria:** Returnees from the areas formerly held by VE groups and families associated with VE Groups face a challenge in reintegrating with the original communities.

The primary objective of GCERF's investment is to strengthen the coordination and capacity of CVE local sub-committees, enhance an enabling environment for rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, and improve community-security relationships.

*Partner countries are those in which GCERF funds civil society organisations to implement initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism.



WHERE

- Baghdad
- Basra
- Anbar
- Ninewa
- Salah Al-Din
- Kirkuk
- Diyala
- Babylon

WHO

- Returnees from Northeast Syria (children and women)
- Children, juveniles, and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 18 years, Women especially mothers and female-headed households,
- Frontline Workers: Social workers, members of the local authority, teachers, psychologists,
- Influential members of host communities, women (mothers, single woman-headed households), Local and Informal Authorities, Religious leaders, Vulnerable members among internally displaced people
- Civil Society Organisations

CURRENT GRANTS



IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Ashor Iraqi Foundation for Relief and Development (ARD) Sub-recipient: Hebaa Foundation for Sustainable Development (HFSD)		Fostering the VE and PVE knowledge production and sharing with PVE stakeholders in civil society, education, and government. Local CSO (Civil Society Organisation) technical skills are increased. Market-oriented skills and access to livelihood opportunities for at-risk youth and women are increased in VE affected areas. Community (including host and returnees) acceptance towards co-existence is strengthened.	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Ninewa, Babylon, Diyala		USD 999,981	January 2024 – June 2026

IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Aid Gate Organization (AGO) Sub-recipients: Dream Organization, Human Line Foundation (HLF)		Returnees have enhanced capacity to re-integrate into communities of return. Youth and community stakeholder action on PVE and reintegration is increased. Community resilience and acceptance of returnees are improved.	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Diyala, Anbar, Ninewa		USD 999,999	January 2024 – December 2026



Clinical psychologist delivering individual counselling sessions.

Returnee community members participating in cultural reintegration sessions in Al-Tadhamun center in Heet district of Anbar.



GCERF-led USAID Funded Programme

Returning with Hope

February 2024 – 2026



 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipients: - Ashor Iraqi Foundation for Relief and Development (ARD) - Aid Gate Organisation (AGO) - Iraqi Institute for Development - United Iraqi Medical Society - Tadhamun Iraqi League for youth Sub-recipient: Soqya		This programme is funded in partnership with US State Department, aiming to support a holistic case management to promote successful return from Northeast Syria to the areas of origin through the Jada'a transition centre. The programme is divided into 5 grants: - One (1) umbrella grant tackling comprehensive case management with Aid Gate organisation. - Three (3) Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and Educational Services provision in Ninewa, SalahEddin and Anbar with Iraqi Institute for Development, United Iraqi Medical Society and Tadhamun Iraqi League for youth - One (1) grant on media and communication campaigns to support the enabling environment for return with Ashour for Relief and Development	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF GRANTS
Ninewa, Anbar, Salaheddin		USD 3.9 million	July 2024 – December 2025

STORY OF CHANGE

Subhi comes back stronger

A Returnee from Al-Hol Camp Finds His Way Back to His Old Life.

Subhi Hamid returned from Al-Hol camp to Mosul where he worked and lived prior to his displacement. After his return, he faced significant difficulties finding a job, which posed a major obstacle to his social integration and regaining a normal life.

He said of that period: "I felt helpless and anxious. I hadn't found anything to help me rebuild my life, and the need to support my family was putting a lot of pressure on me."

Through his participation in the entrepreneurship training organized by our project, Subhi gained the skills and knowledge necessary to manage his own business more effectively. In addition, he benefited from a microfinance grant provided by the initiative, amounting to one and a half million Iraqi dinars, which enabled him to purchase several sheep and resume his livestock trading activity.

With the ongoing support and training, Subhi was able to gradually rebuild his business and generate a stable income to help him meet his and his family's needs.

Sobhi added, "**The initiative didn't just give me money, it also restored my hope and self-confidence. Now I feel like I have a place in society.**"

Today, Sobhi has become a role model in the neighborhood, sharing his experience with other returnees and encouraging them to take advantage of available opportunities and work to improve their economic and social conditions.

Sobhi has regained his self-confidence, and he expresses his deep gratitude for the initiative, which helped transform his challenges into real opportunities for success and integration.

KEY RESULTS

790

Returnees have benefited from different activities under GCERF programming

520

People benefited from counselling and psycho-social support

156

Awareness and sensitisation campaigns on PVE and Return

120

Returnees benefiting from training on vocational skills

GCERF'S VALUE PROPOSITION

GCERF'S UNIQUE MODEL OF INVESTMENT PRIORITISES:

Community-ownership and localisation: We invest in trusted grassroots civil society organisations that prioritise the needs and grievances of communities most affected by violent extremism. Many of these organisations have never received international funding before.

Sustainability: Our programmes involve all groups of society and strengthens trust between government, civil society and community members to build stronger, more resilient societies. This ensures that initiatives and structures continue to be relevant and effective.

Robust monitoring and evaluation processes: Our multi-layered monitoring and evaluation system, operating locally and globally, provides continuous feedback on programme effectiveness, identifies areas for improvement, and ensures objectives are consistently met.

Knowledge sharing: Our global network of civil society organisations working on PVE facilitates the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, fostering collaboration and enhancing the effectiveness of interventions. We also share our experiences through our participation in various conferences, publishing of articles and research papers in reputed journals to advance the understanding of PVE.

Capacity strengthening: We strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to manage large-scale grants and implement effective initiatives, while also enhancing government capacity to develop comprehensive, holistic strategies to prevent violent extremism.



GCERF
Preventing Violent Extremism
and Terrorism

Find out more about becoming an investor, our work, and the collective impact we make at:
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