



The Localised Plan for 1325 Women, Peace, and Security

Duhok Governorate



1- Introduction

Duhok Governorate, located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, has faced significant challenges due to its history of conflict and displacement. In this complex landscape, women and girls have often borne the brunt of these hardships, facing unique risks and vulnerabilities. Recognizing the critical role that women play in fostering peace and security, the localised Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda for Duhok seeks to address these challenges by empowering women as key agents of change in building a more peaceful and inclusive society.

This agenda is grounded in the four pillars of the global WPS framework—Participation, Protection, Prevention, and Relief and Recovery—and is tailored to the specific needs and context of Duhok. By focusing on local solutions and community-driven initiatives, the WPS agenda aims to enhance the participation of women in peacebuilding, ensure their protection from violence, prevent future conflicts, and support their recovery and empowerment. Through collaboration with local stakeholders, government entities, civil society organisations, and international partners, this agenda strives to create a sustainable and equitable future for all women and girls in Duhok, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are upheld.

This localised WPS agenda for Duhok Governorate is a call to action for all those committed to peace, security, and gender equality, providing a roadmap for transformative change that uplifts women, strengthens communities, and promotes lasting peace.

Duhok Governorate:



History of Duhok

Throughout the history to the present time Duhok has acquired a strategic position historically and geographically. The city was a trouble zone between disputed forces; Assyrian state in Nineveh and Urartu, Kutians and Meetanians Kingdoms. Nevertheless, Duhok has gained and maintained its identity as a commerce passage from its important location as a junction between Iraq, Turkey, and Syria and as a gateway for Iraqi Kurdistan. This is evident from reliable historic records and the existing remains in the city.

Moreover, based upon the most acceptable theory, which further backs up its identity, the name of Duhok is thought to be composed of two words; (Du) means (two) and (Hok) means (lump) in Kurdish language. Two lumps were a notice of tax payment during the era of Prince Ak-Shindow in the reign of Nouzi Kingdom who ordered to take two lumps as a tax from the basket of each passing caravan that often carried wheat and barley. Duhok joined the Badinan Emirate during the 14th-18th Century under the reign of Sultan Hassan Beck Bin AL- Amir Saifadeen, and it remained under the Emirate control until its collapse in 1842 AC.

Afterwards, Duhok city joined the Mosul Brigade during which Duhok territory was formed in 1873 AC when the Mosul Brigade was overrun by the British army after the First World War. On 27th May 1969 Duhok Governorate was formed and the city became the centre of Duhok governorate. There are numerous heritage sites across Duhok city that witness various periods of the city.

The rural-urban migration and refugee returning over the last two decades caused the population records to grow significantly. For instance, the Anfal campaigns which were carried out against Kurds between 1978 and 1989 in different places of Iraqi Kurdistan deported thousands, killed more than 182,000 people and destroyed more than 2,000 villages. This population shifting has led to unplanned city expansion from its southern, western, and eastern parts. The immigrants have settled mainly inside the city.

People still retain and recall painful stories about the city's eventful history and incidents they went through during Saddam's era for more than three decades. After the 1991 uprising and the declaration of No Fly Zone in northern Iraq by the coalition forces the Iraqi Kurdistan region has functioned as a de facto state. Under the democratically elected KRG ruling, people are eagerly looking forward to optimum standards of living. In turn this explains why Iraqi Kurdistan, Duhok in particular, continues to be the most peaceful place all over Iraq.

Societal Background

Tellingly, Duhok is a multicultural and multi-religion city with a population of approximately 350,000 inhabitants, which is 1/3 of the entire governorate population. Ethnically, Kurds form the majority, while groups of Assyrians, Chaldeans, Arabs, and Armenians represent the minority. The dominant religion in Duhok is Islam with Sunni Moslem, but minorities of Lyzdi and Christian religions are also practised.

Duhok is characterised by many socio economic potentials, primarily due to its strategic location for trade and tourism, natural and cultural heritage, wide agricultural landscapes, and farming background of its inhabitants. Despite all these vital resources they have not been used sufficiently and ample attention has been focused on highways, bridges, residential projects, and basic infrastructures. In recognition of KRG



efforts in the fields of reconstruction, investment and maintaining security, the commercial sector has flourished and Duhok is now considered as an important commercial centre for the Kurdistan region.

1- Rationale Behind this localised WPS 1325 National Action Plan – Duhok Governorate

The process was initiated by UNWomen in partnership with the High Council of Women and Development (HCWD) as a pilot intervention to address the region's specific context and unique challenges present in the governorate. Duhok's history of conflict, displacement, and its diverse demographic composition have created distinct vulnerabilities and needs for women and girls that differ from those in other parts of Iraq. A tailored WPS agenda allows for the development of strategies and interventions that are directly responsive to these local realities, ensuring that efforts to promote gender equality, peace, and security are relevant and effective. This localised approach enables a more precise focus on empowering women as key agents of change in peacebuilding processes, enhancing their protection from gender-based violence, preventing future conflicts through targeted prevention measures, and supporting their recovery and resilience in the aftermath of conflict. By aligning with local needs and leveraging community strengths, the Duhok localised plan aims to foster a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable environment, ultimately contributing to a stable and peaceful future for all women and girls in the governorate.

2- Methodology of Data Collection

Data collection for the Duhok localised plan involved a comprehensive and collaborative effort between local stakeholders, including the Lotus Flower and the HCWD in the Kurdistan Regional Government. This process employed a range of methodologies to gather nuanced insights into the local context. Workshops were organised with 20 representatives from civil society organisations and women's NGOs operating in Duhok, who have been instrumental in advancing the WPS agenda in the region. These workshops featured interactive sessions focused on the WPS context in Iraq and Kurdistan, addressing specific challenges faced by women and girls in Duhok, and identifying available opportunities. Participants engaged in group discussions to share their perspectives, experiences, and ideas on addressing existing gaps.

To deepen the understanding of local needs, the HCWD and Lotus Flower conducted key informant interviews with government stakeholders in Duhok. Interviews aimed to assess the specific needs and gaps related to the WPS agenda and the Kurdistan 1325 WPS National Action Plan, with particular attention to the context of Duhok. This comprehensive approach ensured a thorough examination of both the challenges and opportunities within the governorate, providing valuable data to inform targeted strategies and interventions for a more effective and localised plan.



3- Action Plan

To develop a localised WPS plan for Duhok Governorate, it is essential to consider the specific context, needs, and challenges unique to the region. The plan has been developed based on the outcomes of a comprehensive assessment of the current situation, including an evaluation of the socio-political landscape, security dynamics, and the status of women's rights and participation in peace and security processes. The assessment identified the specific barriers and opportunities for advancing the WPS agenda in Duhok, such as cultural norms, the impact of conflict and displacement, and the availability of local resources and infrastructure.

Based on this analysis, the plan prioritises creating a supportive and enabling environment that empowers women and girls by addressing their unique challenges and leveraging local strengths. This includes developing action plans that promote the participation of women in decision-making processes, enhance protection measures against violence and discrimination, and foster prevention strategies that mitigate the risks of conflict and insecurity.

Additionally, the plan emphasises the importance of effective coordination and oversight of WPS initiatives, ensuring that programs are strategically organised, efficiently executed, and yield impactful results. By fostering cooperation among various stakeholders at the national and local levels, and by maintaining a gender-balanced representation in decision-making bodies, the plan ensures accountability, transparency, and the optimization of resources. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework should be established to track progress and adapt strategies as needed, ensuring sustainable change and lasting impact in the Duhok Governorate. Through these efforts, the vision of a peaceful, secure, and equitable Duhok can become a reality.

First Pillar- Participation:

Objective 1: Promoting women participation in leadership and decision-making which enforces maintaining security and peace building.

Outcomes	Activities	Implementin g Entities	Timeline	Measurement Indicators	Budget
Women possess effective skills and abilities in negotiations	Building the capacities of women in government and political party sectors on leadership, negotiation skills,	CSOs DOLSA INGOs	2024- 2025	- The number of capacity building activities for women leaders, divided and distributed according to geographical regions.	30,000 USD

and peace building.	conflict resolution and crisis management. (5 trainings to target 100 women and girls aged between 16-55 yrs old).	Training centre in Duhok		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of women who participated in each session. - The % of good feedback reported by the participants. - Women's participation at a rate of no less than 30% in crucial decision-making bodies, including human and women's rights committees, Peshmerga, parliament, the executive authority, provincial councils, and all formed committees 	
A political and social environment that supports the participation of women in building and sustaining peace.	Building the capacities of local women from the grassroots level to become community leaders and have skills in negotiations and conflict resolutions. The target number of 150 girls aged between 16-55 yrs old.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of capacity building activities for women leaders, divided and distributed according to geographical regions. - The number of women who participated in each session. - The % of good feedback reported by the participants 	25,000 USD

	A study to be conducted on the available leadership positions for women and girls within security sectors and justices, analysing it, highlighting the available gaps, and publishing it. 1 research that would collect data form 300 women and girls.	University of Duhok - department of gender CSOs INGOs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An increase in the number of female judges and public prosecutors - # of stakeholder with whom the report will be shared - # of international journalism where the report could be shared 	20,000 USD
Women are represented and influential in leadership positions within the security sectors and justice systems.	Conduct training on WPS1325, effective leadership for female judges and those leadership positions that women hold in the security sector. The training aims to target 100 women and girls.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of capacity building activities for women in the judiciary sector - Number of women who participate. - Number of women who report positive impact 	20,000 IQD

Objective 2: Integrating women in relief efforts and reconstruction stages in Duhok Governorate

Outcomes	Activities	Implementing Entities	Timeline	Measurement Indicators	Budget

Women are willing to work in the field of relief and reconstruction.	Organizing professional training courses for women to qualify them to join the relief and reconstruction projects (5 training to target 100 women and girls aged between 16-55 yrs old).	Governorate office CSOs HCWD DoLSA	2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of training courses completed to qualify women to work in reconstruction and relief projects. - Number of women trained to work in reconstruction and relief projects. 	25,000 USD
Women have specific projects in reconstruction programs.	<p>Providing training to women in leading businesses - 50 women.</p> <p>WPS advocacy team in Duhok to coordinate with the government, CSOs and NGOS who are working on reconstruction to ensure better involvement and women's participation.</p>	DoLSA Duhok Directorate of Migration Crisis Governor office HCWD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of implemented and facilitated partnerships for joining women in reconstruction. - Number of agencies working in humanitarian relief and reconstruction that have allocated job opportunities for women. 	15,000 USD

Second pillar- Protection:

In the challenging context of conflict and its aftermath in Duhok Governorate, the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda remains unwavering in its commitment to the second pillar: "Protection." This pillar serves as a strong foundation of hope and security for women and girls who often face extreme vulnerability in times of crisis. The essence of this pillar is to shield them from all forms of gender-based violence and ensure that those who commit these acts are held accountable. In Duhok, our focus within the realm of "Protection" is clear: to provide security, justice, and healing for those who have suffered the impacts of conflict, ensuring accountability measures for perpetrators of violence, ultimately paving the way for a safer and more equitable future for women and girls in the governorate.

Objective 1: Ensuring the protection of women and girls, especially in the camps, sites of displacement, and areas of return.

Outcomes	Activities	Implementing Entities	Timeline	Measurement Indicators	Estimated Budget
Clear and effective formal mechanisms and procedures for the protection of women and girls	Continuation of women's safe spaces inside IDP camps to help women and girls with many legal, psychosocial support (total of 100 women and girls for mental health, 50 for legal support and 100 for psychosocial support).	GDoH DoLSA UN Agencies INGOs CSOs	2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Indicators of the high level of health, psychological and social services provided to women.- Developing, rehabilitating, and establishing centres providing health, psychological and other services.- Number of centres available in each displacement setting	100,000 USD
	Comprehensive research on Gender Based Violence and its	DCVAW		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of qualitative and quantitative data collected.	10,000 USD

	consequence in Duhok governorate.	DOLSA Governor office UN Agencies INGOs CSOs		- Number of international journals in which the research can be published	
Improving the response to gender-based violence in different sectors.	Media involvement into the efforts of eliminating GBV - Creating three videos and publishing on TVs and social media accounts.	TVs in Duhok University of Duhok Governor office CSOs		- Number of videos created. - Number of TVs and social media channels - estimated reach of videos	10,000 USD
	Community awareness of hotlines to encourage women to use them. this activity to be done by WPS Network of women in the grassroots level (to target 3000 individuals within the different communities).	Media outlets Governor office DCVAW CSOs		- Report on the number of women benefiting from the hotline service at the civil society level and measuring the satisfaction of the beneficiaries of the service	100,000 USD

Strengthening the capacities of judicial and investigative bodies with specific skills and knowledge to address sexual violence	Providing health care services to all survivors of violence, including rape. (total of 750 survivors from different communities for transportation).	DoH CSOs INGOs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of health centres. - Measuring the extent of the beneficiaries' satisfaction of health care services with the survivors of violence, according to periodic reports issued by the Ministry of Health, showing the number of survivors of violence benefiting from health care services. 	50,000 USD
	Establishing and expanding safe spaces for women and their children in the local communities. Benefiting over 1000 women with services such as safety, MHPSS.	Nawa centre DOLSA CSOs INGOs	2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of safe spaces in the local community and number of women visiting. - Number of women and girls who benefit 	500,000 USD
Developing legal and institutional frameworks for accountability and justice.	The WPS advocacy team to coordinate closely with government and legal entities and have biannual meetings to ensure that accountability and justices are prevailed in GBV issues.	Governor office CSOs INGOs Court office		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of meetings conducted. - Number of participants - Number of decisions made for the benefit of women's rights and protection 	6,000 USD

Objective 2: Protection of women and girls affected by conflict from sexual violence as one of the tools of war and their reintegration into society.

Outcomes	Activities	Implementing Entities	Timeline	Measurement Indicators	Estimated Budget
The reintegration of survivors of sexual violence and children born as a result of it into their communities.	Supporting available centres that provide support services for victims and survivors in and out of IDP and refugee camps. These are centres that provide MHPSS, legal and social support.	DoLSA DCVAW CSOs	2024-2025	- Number of centres - Number of women who reported positive impact	100,000 USD

Third pillar- Prevention:

In Duhok Governorate, the third pillar of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, "Prevention," is dedicated to fostering a future where peace is a lasting reality, free from the shadows of conflict. This pillar reflects our commitment to proactively addressing the unique challenges faced by women and girls before, during, and after conflicts. Through targeted efforts to prevent violence and mitigate risks, we aim to break the cycle of violence and create a protective environment that nurtures safety, security, and gender equality in Duhok. By empowering communities, promoting education, and strengthening local capacities, we work towards a future where every woman and girl in Duhok can thrive in peace and security.

Objective 1: Create a safe environment for women and girls and a supportive society based on coexistence and the rejection of violence.

Outcomes	Activities	Implementing Entities	Timeline	Measurement Indicators	Estimated Budget
Establishing a religious and	Capacity development for religious leaders on WPS. 50 leaders in 2024	Media Outlets	2024-2025	- Number of courses and workshops targeting	30,000 USD

societal discourse that adopts the principles of tolerance, respect for women's rights, diversity, and coexistence.	Capacity development for media agencies in Duhok on WPS.	UN Agencies INGOs LNGOs DoLSA		teachers on peace and community coexistence. - Number of media campaigns run. - Attitude and Perception Pre-Post intervention Survey	
	An awareness campaign on GBV targeting schools and universities - 200 individuals.			- Number of sessions - Number of participants - Number of positive feedback reported	50,000 USD
Rehabilitation of fighters after end of battles in order to protect the society	An awareness campaign on GBV targeting Zirka Prison - 200 prisoners to be involved.	DCVAW DOLSA CSOs Governor office Assish		- Number of sessions - Number of participants - Number of positive feedback reported	20,000 USD
	Organizing awareness and educational campaigns to combat extremist ideology with community-based women leaders at the local level, with the participation of other relevant leaders.	CSOs INGOS Social Media DCVAW DoLSA		- The level of participation and active engagement of community-based women leaders and other relevant leaders in the awareness and	50,000 USD

				educational campaigns to combat extremist ideology.	
Inclusion of gender in early warning systems to prevent conflict-related violence in societies	Organizing training workshops to build the capacity of cadres working in the early warning sector on gender to prevent conflict-related violence. targeting 100 Prs.	DoLSa DCVAW CSOs INGOS	2024-2025	- Number of training workshops and the preparation of trainees on the integration of gender in early warning systems divided by gender and organization.	20,000 USD
	training WPS Network of women in available early warning systems - 50 women are targeted.	Governorate office Universities Duhok Court UN Agencies INGOs		- Increase the number of women graduates working in early warning systems.	7500 USD
	Capacity building and awareness of legal frameworks such as international humanitarian law) for law enforcement agencies to provide greater protection for women, especially in camps within Duhok	DCVAW DOLSA HCWD CSOs INGOs		- The number of women participating in capacity building and legal awareness activities	30,000 USD

in conflict settings	governorate. 100 individuals are trained.				
	Preparing a gender-responsive budget that is presented annually to relevant stakeholder in Duhok this includes CSOs and government entities.	Governorate office HCWD UN Agencies INGOs CSOs		- Adoption of a gender responsive budget.	15,000USD
	Community awareness on Cyber abuse through social media and WPS Network of women from grassroots level - targeting 5000 individuals.	Duhok Governorate DCVAW DOLSA CSOs Media agencies	2024-2025	- Number of sessions in person - Number of online posts - Estimate of reach online	250,000 USD
	Advocacy with legal entities to put better protection measures for survivors and victims and accountability.	Duhok courts HCWD Duhok Governorate CSOs		- Number of meetings - Number of participants - Estimate of positive decisions	50,000 USD

Objective 2: Increasing the resilience of women affected by conflict through livelihood opportunities and access to services in their communities.

Outcomes	Activities	Implementing Entities	Timeline	Measurement Indicators	Estimated Budget
Facilitating the economic participation of women in areas that witnessed conflict and creating a suitable work environment for them.	Business management training and mentoring for 100 women. 50 micro grants for women and girls who are survivors of war and conflict	CSOs DoLSA DCVAW HCWD Governorate office	2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of women who were trained in managing small projects and measuring their performance in the projects they achieved. - Number of grants distributed 	100, 000 USD
	Providing vocational training and linking it to suitable job opportunities for women in conflict areas with the public and private sectors to secure jobs. 250 women and girls to be involved.	DOLSA DoF Un Agencies INGOs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of women who have been professionally qualified to work in appropriate occupations in the public and private sectors and measuring the economic performance of women affected by the conflict. 	180,000 USD
Expanding economic empowerment	Job placement for women and girls within available private sector companies -	Governorate Private companies	2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase in income and economic self-sufficiency of the targeted groups. 	100,000 USD

and livelihood program	targeting 50 girls and women.	DOLSA Un Agencies INGOs LNGOs Banks		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of new livelihood opportunities created. - The success rate of startup businesses - The level of financial inclusion achieved. - Establishing foundations for resistance to the risks resulting from climate change 	
	Develop training programs and workshops to build skills necessary for these livelihood opportunities. Targeting 100 women and girls.				50,000 USD
	Provide financial literacy training to women who already own business or are willing to establish. 10 rounds of trainings to target 250 women and girls.				50,000 USD
	Financial grants for women who already run businesses for expansion and improvement that can facilitate the process of employment. (25 grants)				50,000 USD
	Advocate with governorate office & banks to develop mechanisms for providing grants or low-interest loans to startup businesses.				5,000 USD

4- Conclusion

The localised plan for Duhok Governorate is a strategic and comprehensive plan tailored to address the unique challenges faced by women and girls in this region. Grounded in the 3 pillars of the global WPS framework—Participation, Protection, Prevention—this plan emphasises a collaborative and inclusive approach to fostering a peaceful, secure, and equitable environment for all. Through targeted actions and strategic partnerships with local stakeholders, government entities, civil society organisations, and international partners, the Duhok localised plan aims to empower women as key agents of change in peacebuilding, enhance their protection from violence, prevent future conflicts, and support their recovery and resilience.

By focusing on the specific needs and strengths of the Duhok community, this plan seeks to ensure that women and girls are not only safeguarded from the impacts of conflict but are also empowered to participate fully in peace and security processes. The commitment to gender equality and the proactive involvement of women in leadership positions within the security sectors and justice systems are crucial components of this agenda. Moreover, the emphasis on creating a supportive and enabling environment, alongside effective coordination, and oversight of WPS initiatives, ensures that efforts are strategically organised, efficiently executed, and yield impactful results.

As Duhok moves forward with this localised WPS plan, it is essential to maintain momentum and continuously adapt strategies based on feedback and emerging needs. By doing so, the governorate can build a more inclusive, resilient, and peaceful society where the rights and contributions of women and girls are recognized, valued, and celebrated. This agenda is not just a roadmap for transformative change; it is a call to action for all those committed to peace, security, and gender equality in Duhok. Together, by leveraging local resources, fostering community-driven initiatives, and ensuring the meaningful participation of women at all levels, Duhok can set a powerful example for the region and beyond, paving the way for a brighter and more peaceful future for all.

