Modern slavery in Iraq
Global Slavery Index 2023
Country Snapshot

Figure 1. Prevalence of modern slavery across the Arab States

KEY STATS

Population (2021) 40,222,503
GDP per capita, PPP (Current Intl $) $9,954

5.5
PREVALENCE OF MODERN SLAVERY per 1,000 people

221,000
NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN MODERN SLAVERY

82/100
VULNERABILITY TO MODERN SLAVERY

33/100
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO MODERN SLAVERY

The scale of modern slavery
According to the Global Slavery Index 2023, an estimated 5.5 in every thousand people were in modern slavery in Iraq at any point in 2021. In other words, 221,000 people experienced forced labour or forced marriage in Iraq in 2020. Iraq ranks 81st globally and 11th within the Arab States.

Figure 2. Estimated number of people in modern slavery across the Arab States
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Vulnerability to modern slavery
How vulnerable a country’s people are to modern slavery is dependent on a range of factors which reflect the strength of governance, access to basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups, and effects of conflict. On a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest vulnerability to modern slavery, Iraq is rated as 82 and has above average vulnerability for the region. Vulnerability is highest in terms of effects of conflict.

Figure 3.
Vulnerability of Iraq to modern slavery by dimension of vulnerability, compared to the regional average

Government response to modern slavery
The government of Iraq scored 33 out of 100 in their response to modern slavery. This places the government’s response below the average regional response. Of the five areas of response assessed (milestones), the government has taken most action on identification and support of survivors and the least action on addressing risk in government and business supply chains.

Figure 4.
Response of the government of Iraq to modern slavery by government response milestone, compared with the regional average

Priority Recommendations for the government of Iraq:

1. Criminalise the use of children in armed conflict and ensure that laws are enforced and offenders are given proportionate sentences.

2. Criminalise forced labour in line with international conventions.

3. Criminalise human trafficking in line with international conventions.

For more information on modern slavery, visit the Global Slavery Index 2023 website.