



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

Waterkeepers Iraq Organization

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WATERKEEPERS IRAQ
المحافظین علی المیاء العیراق

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	6
Projects and Activities Review - Year 2020:	7
"Reconnecting with Our Lifeblood" project:	7
Water sports and clean-up of Ashkawta Rukhaw Island:	7
Interview with Aryen TV:	7
Environmental Get Together at the Culture Factory:	8
Fines collected from polluters:	8
Volunteer-driven activities:	8
Organizational Structure	9
Founding Board Members:	9
Advisory Board Members:	9
2020-2021 by the numbers	10
• Beneficiaries Educated:	10
• Clean-up Projects (2 clean ups):	10
• Environmental Exhibitions:	10
• Advocacy and Awareness:	10

INTRODUCTION

Waterkeepers Iraq is pleased to present the Annual Report for the year 2020, showcasing our projects, activities, and achievements in protecting and preserving the water resources in Iraq, specifically focusing on the Tigris River and its tributaries. As a dedicated organization, we have strived to unite communities, raise awareness, and advocate for the sustainable management of our lifeblood - the rivers.

In 2020, we embarked on a significant project titled "Reconnecting with Our Lifeblood." Our team, in collaboration with Humat Dijlah, embarked on an extraordinary journey along the Tigris River, covering over 1000 kilometers from the mountains of Kurdistan to the Marshlands in Chibayish and Basra. Through interviews and personal experiences, we witnessed the profound impact the river has on the lives of diverse communities, which have endured years of unrest, war, and trauma. Inspired by these interactions, we aimed to challenge, inspire, and ignite the readers' imagination through poetry and photographs, highlighting the importance of protecting our rivers.

Furthermore, we organized various events and activities throughout the year to engage with local communities and raise awareness about the ecological significance of our waterways. One notable event was the water sports and clean-up day at Ashkawta Rukhaw Island in Dukan Reservoir. Partnering with the American University of Sulaymaniyah (AUIS), Humatdijlah, and Environmentkeepers, we provided AUIS students with an opportunity to experience the reservoir firsthand.

However, our efforts were not without challenges. In a recent interview with Aryen TV, Nabil Musa, our Waterkeeper, expressed concerns about the construction of the Ilisu Dam, part of the GAP project. This dam threatened the existence of a Kurdish village and posed risks to numerous communities. As Waterkeepers Iraq, we strongly advocated against such dam projects, emphasizing the unifying role of rivers in connecting communities and their irreplaceable value.

The annual report also sheds light on the issue of fines collected from polluters in the Kurdistan Region. Despite the intention of using these fines to fund environmental initiatives and expand inspections, the funds were routinely diverted for other purposes, hindering our ability to carry out necessary operations and enhance our activities.

In conclusion, the annual report of Waterkeepers Iraq for the year 2020 reflects our ongoing commitment to protect and preserve the rivers of Iraq.

MESSAGE FROM THE IRAQ UPPER TIGRIS

WATERKEEPER:

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of responsibility that I address you as the Iraq Upper Tigris Waterkeeper. As the guardian of the Upper Tigris River and its surrounding ecosystems, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that our waterways have on the lives of communities and the environment.

In the face of numerous challenges, we have persevered in our mission to protect and preserve the Upper Tigris River. Our dedicated team, in collaboration with partners and volunteers, has worked tirelessly to advocate for the sustainable management of this vital resource. Together, we have undertaken projects, organized events, and raised awareness to ensure the long-term well-being of our rivers and the communities they support.

Throughout the year, we have journeyed along the Tigris River, from its mountainous origins to its convergence with the Marshlands in Chibayish and Basra. Along the way, we have met incredible individuals whose lives are intertwined with the river. Their stories have fueled our determination to unite communities, challenge harmful practices, and inspire positive change.

One of our significant projects, "Reconnecting with Our Lifeblood," allowed us to capture the essence of our journey through poetry and photographs. This powerful exhibition showcased the interconnectedness of people, nature, and rivers, reminding us all of the urgency to protect our lifeblood.

We have also engaged with local communities through events such as water sports and clean-up days. These activities not only raised awareness about the importance of responsible water usage but also provided opportunities for individuals to actively contribute to the preservation of our waterways. Witnessing the enthusiasm and dedication of participants has filled us with hope for a sustainable future.

However, challenges persist. The construction of the Ilisu Dam and the diversion of fines collected from polluters have tested our resolve. Despite these obstacles, we remain steadfast in our commitment to safeguarding the Upper Tigris River and its ecosystems. We continue to advocate against destructive projects, demand accountability, and work towards effective environmental policies.

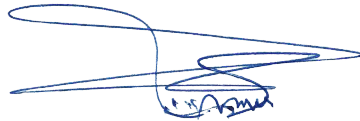
None of our accomplishments would have been possible without your unwavering support. Whether through donations, volunteering, or spreading awareness, your contributions have made a tangible difference in our efforts. Together, we have the power to protect our rivers and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

As we move forward, let us recommit ourselves to the cause of preserving our precious water resources. Let us work hand in hand to tackle the pressing environmental challenges that lie ahead. By embracing our shared responsibility, we can create a future where our rivers thrive, communities flourish, and the beauty of nature endures.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication. Together, we will make a lasting impact on the Upper Tigris River and the lives it sustains.

Sincerely,

Nabil Ibrahim Musa



Waterkeepers Iraq Organization

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In the year 2020, Waterkeepers Iraq operated primarily through the dedication and voluntary efforts of its team members. The organization's activities were driven by a strong commitment to protect and preserve Iraq's water resources, and it successfully carried out various projects and initiatives throughout the year.

One notable project that received funding was "Reconnecting with Our Lifeblood," which involved capturing the essence of the journey along the Tigris River through poetry and photography. This project received a small grant from Goethe Institute which was utilized for exhibition costs, including venue rental, equipment, and promotional materials.

Apart from the funded project, all other activities were undertaken on a voluntary basis. The Board of Directors, Executive Coordinator, and other team members worked tirelessly to oversee operational activities, conduct field surveys, organize clean-up projects, and engage with local communities. These efforts were fueled by the passion and commitment of the individuals involved.

Overall, the financial report for 2020 reflects the dedication and resourcefulness of Waterkeepers Iraq. The organization made the most of limited resources, relying on the voluntary contributions of its team members to carry out its mission effectively. The successful execution of projects and initiatives demonstrates the organization's ability to create meaningful impact with the support of its dedicated volunteers.

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES REVIEW - YEAR 2020:



"Reconnecting with Our Lifeblood" project: Received a grant of \$10,000 to capture the journey along the Tigris River through poetry and photography. The project showcased the livelihood of people living along the river and highlighted the environmental challenges they face.

Water sports and clean-up of

Ashkawta Rukhaw Island: Organized in partnership with Humatdijlah and Environmentkeepers, the activity involved AUIS students participating in water sports such as paddleboarding, rafting, and swimming. The event raised awareness about the importance of Dukan Reservoir in providing clean drinking water and highlighted the impact of irresponsible garbage disposal on the ecosystem.



Interview with Aryen TV:

Waterkeeper Nabil Musa spoke against the construction of the Ilisu dam and advocated for the preservation of the Tigris River as a unifying force among communities.

Environmental Get Together at the Culture Factory: Organized by Waterkeepers Iraq, Humat Dijla, X-line, and OCSO, the conference aimed to bring together organizations and individuals working towards environmental improvement. The focus was on cooperation, negotiation, and collective efforts to protect and restore the environment.



Fines collected from polluters:

Officials highlighted the issue of fines levied on polluters in the Kurdistan Region being diverted for other uses, hampering environmental protection efforts. The funds were not allocated back to support initiatives and operations of the Environmental Board.

Volunteer-driven activities: All activities conducted by Waterkeepers Iraq in 2020 were carried out on a voluntary basis. The dedicated team members, including the Board of Directors and Executive Coordinator, played instrumental roles in overseeing operations, conducting field surveys, and engaging with communities.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organizational Structure:

Founding Board Members:

- Shirwan Ali Hamajan (Email: canshirwan@gmail.com)
- Renas Hasan (Email: renas.h@hotmail.com)
- Karzan Omer (Email: karzanomer@gmail.com)

Advisory Board Members:

- Anna Bachmann (Email: bachmanna@gmail.com)
- Virginia Tice (Email: virginia.tice@gmail.com)

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the dedicated volunteers who have generously contributed their time and efforts to support our cause. Your commitment and passion have been invaluable in driving our mission forward. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to protecting our water resources and promoting environmental sustainability.

Abdullah Salah, Agnes Kullos , Anna Bachmann, Azar Othman, Begard Sherwan, Charlotte Wells, Cris Guajardo, Danyar Abdulla, Dekan Sdiq, Hana Barzinji, Hastyar Mahmood, Hevy Hemn Hevy, Hoshyar Jamal, Karwan Shekhani, Karzan Fazil, Kawan Faraj, Lana Sherzad, Lona Nadhif, Nab Shexany, Nabil Musa, Naz Nishtiman, Nishtiman Arif, Noor Abdul Alstarr, Pommelien de Silva Cosme, Pzho Kamil, Rachel Weishaupt, Ranj Hussen, Rawezh Najmaddin, Raz Hassan, Renas Hassan, Rozhan Faraidun, Rozhgar Muhammad, Safe Muhammad, San Shaduman, Sara Tahir, Shalhar Mohammed, Shamir Salar, Shano Aram, Shirwan Khan, Shkar Awat, and Virginia Tice.

2020-2021 BY THE NUMBERS

In 2020, Waterkeepers Iraq made a significant impact on the lives of countless individuals and communities through its dedicated efforts to protect and preserve our precious water resources. Let's delve into the numbers that reflect the reach and influence of our activities.

- **Beneficiaries Educated:** Through our various educational programs and initiatives, we successfully educated and raised awareness among more than 1000 individuals about the importance of water resource protection, sustainability, and the interconnectedness of human and environmental well-being.
- **Clean-up Projects (2 clean ups):** Our dedicated +50 volunteers actively participated in multiple clean-up projects along rivers and reservoirs. Together, we removed 300 kilograms of waste from these vital water sources, improving the overall health and sustainability of the ecosystems they support.
- **Environmental Exhibitions:** Our captivating exhibition titled "Reconnecting with Our Lifeblood" attracted hundreds of visitors. Through stunning photography and thought-provoking poems, we highlighted the importance of rivers in our lives and inspired visitors to reconsider their relationship with these ecosystems.
- **Advocacy and Awareness:** Our relentless advocacy efforts included 3 media interviews, articles, and public engagements. By sharing our message with diverse audiences, we aimed to foster a sense of urgency and encourage collective action to safeguard our waterways.

These numbers represent the profound impact that Waterkeepers Iraq had in 2020. Each digit signifies the lives touched, the minds enlightened, and the steps taken towards a sustainable future. We remain committed to our mission, dedicated to protecting our life-sustaining water resources, and will continue to make a difference in the years to come.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our volunteers, sponsors, and supporters who played a vital role in achieving these numbers. Without their unwavering dedication and commitment, none of this would have been possible. Together, we are working towards a brighter, water-secure future for all.

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