

RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ Meeting Date: 20 December 2022
- ❖ Meeting Time: 11:00 am-13:00 pm
- ❖ Location: IOM Conference Room, Erbil & Remote connection via Teams

In Attendance: CADUS e.V., Blumont, IOM, IMC, REACH, DRC, DG ECHO, IVY, REACH Initiative, PRM-U.S. Consulate General Erbil, GIZ,ECHO Erbil, NRC and CCCM

Agenda:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of November minutes and follow up on action points.
- 2) **Context Update:** DTM Update: Climate-induced displacement in central and southern Iraq, Monitoring of Yazidi Departures; RWG Field Update; and CCCM Update
- 3) Update
- 4) **REACH Iraq Presentation:** Ninth Movement Intentions Assessment Results
- 5) **DSTWG Update:** DS Updates
- 6) **REACH ReDS Assessment Presentation:** Al-Amerli Sub-district, Tooz Khurmato District, Salah Al-Din Governorate, Iraq
- 7) AOB

Action Points	By who
N/A	

1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from the previous meeting

- No pending action points.
- Endorsement of the previous meeting minutes.

2) **Context update:** DTM Update: Climate-induced displacement in central and southern Iraq, Monitoring of Yazidi Departures; RWG Field Update; and CCCM Updates

Displacement and Returns Update: Climate-induced displacement in central and southern Iraq

(Please refer to the full presentation link for further statistics)

- 11,445 families displaced by drought
- Key districts of origin
 - Al-Shatra, Thi-Qar
 - Qal'at Saleh, Missan
 - Afaq, Qadissiya
 - Nassriya, Thi-Qar
- Key districts of displacement
 - Najaf district, Najaf
 - Amara, Missan
 - Al-Shatra, Thi-Qar
- Intradistrict displacement – 38%
- Intragovernorate displacement – 68%

Monitoring of Yazidi Departures:

- 4,249 Yazidi individuals recorded crossing Ibrahim Al-Khalil from 24 August to 17 December 2022
- Departure point:
 - 75% leaving non-camp locations
 - 25% leaving from camps
- Destinations:
 - Greece (45%), Germany (32%), Türkiye (12%), Netherlands (11%)

Discussion

- Question: The 11,000 households displaced due to climate change, is this the total from 2018 when DTM began tracking the emergency, or is it just this year?
 - IOM DTM: The number is the cumulative total that DTM has observed thus far.

CCCM: Informal site and Jeddah 5 Updates

East Anbar Informal Sites:

- AAF updated population figures 186 HHs/ 980 individuals
- CCCM started necessary community engagement and messaging in preparation for planned site consolidation. In Parallel CCCM is also coordinating with AAF partners a site action plan to discuss service continuity in the context of changing in response modality.

Sinjar Mountain Informal Sites:

- Updated population figures 1,113 HHs
- 89 HHs left the site yesterday going back to their areas of origin through the IOM FVR program.

Salah Al Din Informal Sites:

- Balad Train Station updated population figures 68 HHs.
- On Sunday, members of the Iraqi army and police force informed 43 IDP HHs residing in the Train station sub-buildings to evacuate and leave the site within 7 days. They forced the IDPs to sign a notification letter. 5 HHs out of the 43 originally former J1 residents left the site to their areas of origin (Rawashed) after obtaining necessary approvals. The remaining 38 HHs are initially from Sayed Ghareeb and Al-Farhatea. The families are trying to push back through the support of some tribal leaders and government officials as they have no place to go, and their houses are destroyed which is the main barrier of returning. CCCM will be reaching out to OCHA and DS partners for their support with advocacy to stop the eviction. Meanwhile, CCCM is trying to understand in depth what are the barriers to return for these HHs, especially understanding that their areas are open for returns.

Jeddah 5 Formal IDP Camp:

- Updated site population figures 782 HHs/3,683 individuals
- On Dec 13, MoMD called for a meeting with J5 IDP representatives the meeting was also attended by the Ninawa Head of operations, Head of PMF in the south of Mosul, Head of national security, Parliament members, Head of Ninawa police, Qayyarah Mayor, and all Tribal Leaders force. During the meeting, the Head of MoMD Ninewa revealed the government's intention to close J5 soonest.
- Following the meeting MoMD shared the list of 370 HHs originally from Qayyarah who have to leave the site during the weekend the list also included the names of 45 HHs from Shorqat who also asked to leave the site soonest.
- Following advocacy at the Baghdad level the forced eviction was put on hold and MoMD called a meeting with J5 partners to discuss the new timeline for the camp closure. During the meeting, the Head of MoMD Ninewa announced that within the following days, MoMD will facilitate the departure of 15 HHs originally from Imam village following acceptance from the tribal leaders of their return. Also, MoMD will facilitate the departure of another 150 HHs who got their security clearance and are ready to go back to their AoO.

Discussion

- Question: What is the government's plan for the households currently residing at J5 Camp, given that it will be closed by the end of the month? Essentially, returning to their hometowns or moving elsewhere are the only options?
 - CCCM: The government has announced that the camp will be closed by the end of the month. However, it has been halted, following the advocacy at the ministry level in Baghdad. So as opposed to before, the camp is not closing at the end of the month. announced. Um. Nevertheless, there will be a follow-up to discuss and develop a plan with the partners, DSG, and other UN agencies. With the understanding that the majority of site residents have tribal engagement-related issues, we initially anticipate six months timeline. As a response, we are currently working with partners to develop a work plan to find durable solutions for the camp residents.

KRI Field Updates

Reverse returns from Sinjar:

- Since January 2021 and Up to 15 December 2022, DMCR has received 1193 Applications from families who want to re-admit to Dahuk. Out of 1185 families, 1042 were interviewed, 1034 families received approval to access Dahuk, and 660 families /3,049 individuals were re-admitted to Dahuk camps.

Ninewa Field Updates

MoMD Returns Grant:

- On Sunday 18 Dec 22, MoMD released round 21 of the return grants covering 6,500 returnee HHs across Iraq
- On Nov 22, MoMD released round 20 which covered 3,337 returnee HHs

3) REACH IRAQ: Movement Intentions Survey

(Please refer to the full presentation link for further details)

To support the imminent transition in Iraq, REACH conducted an Assessment of the movement intentions of in-camp IDPs, with three research questions:

- **Movement intentions:** What are IDP HHs' movement intentions for three and twelve months after data collection?
- **Barriers to return:** What factors reportedly prevent IDPs from returning to Areas of Origin?
- **Conditions in GoD & AoO:** How do IDPs perceive living conditions in Areas of Origin and Governorates of Displacement?

Conclusion: Return intentions are low, but IDPs remain connected to their Area of Origin.

Key barriers preventing returns:

- Safety and security
- Community
- Livelihoods
- Habitation

Discussion

- Support documentation is not one of the barriers among venation barriers for returns in the presentation. Do you think this is a kind of cross-cutting issue? What are your thoughts on this?
 - REACH: There are two possible dimensions to this. First, it's possible that IDPs did not mention civil documentation as a barrier to return. The second possibility is that it might not have been a response option. We need to double-check this and will get back to you if it's of interest. RECAH has a civil documentation assessment forthcoming, ECHO-funded for further information on this.
- On the rainbow slide, we spotted that Erbil's top reason for not returning was the (Others) option. Was there any conclusive information that you have seen dawn from that if any at all?
 - REACH: Since these are single-selection questions, it follows that the sum of the various options for each column is 100%. The other option is limited to groups. All the responses that 5% or less of the IDP families from Ninewa, and Salah AL-Din are beyond yellow selected and are grouped together because they are less significant in the grand scheme of all of our instructions.
The only conclusion I can draw from this is that Erbil's reasons for not returning are quite diffuse, as evidenced by the fact that 40% of respondents didn't choose any of the more significant ones. Once again, contextualization and area-based approaches are implicated.

4) DS Updates: DSTWG, and ABC Updates

(Please refer to the full presentation link for further details)

DSTWG Updates

- NPC/DS Workshops 4-12 December: Good participation and engagement from authorities and ABC members. In Anbar, more authorities than ABC members.
- ABC Mosul Membership Applications: 1 application received. Endorsement by DSTWG of the membership of the Non-Violent Peace force to replace OCHA.
- Draft Humanitarian Transition Strategy (Option 2) was shared with HCT and clusters by OCHA.

5) REACH ReDS Assessment Presentation: Al-Amerli Sub-district, Tooz Khurmato District, Salah Al-Din Governorate, Iraq

(Please refer to the full presentation link for further details)

Key Findings

- All IDP KIs from the community reported that IDP households may feel welcome or very welcome and accepted if they return to Al-Amerli. All IDP KIs from the community reported that these households did not feel integrated in their AoDs.
- All IDP KIs from Al-Amerli reported that the majority of IDP households from the community interacted with all population groups in the sub-district, mainly through family and social bonds and work relationships.
- All returnee KIs reported that the majority of returnee households felt welcome or very welcome in their AoOs in the sub-district. The majority of returnee KIs reported that most returnee households felt re-integrated in their AoOs in Al-Amerli.
- Perceptions about the interaction between returnee households and other groups reportedly varied between returnee KIs. Three-quarters of returnee KIs reported that the majority of returnee households did not interact with other groups in Al-Amerli.

Discussion

- In Al-Amerli Sub-District, are there any areas that are blocked off? Anything about this, considering that often we have heard about blockade areas and militias preventing residents from returning to this area? Do you possess any knowledge around that?
 - REACH: I believe that this falls under security. Barriers cited at the beginning include concerns about security in the areas of origin and destination. However, it's somewhat general given that the consultation did not go into considerable depth concerning this matter.

AOB

- IRAQ RWG 2022 Review survey was circulated to better identify strengths and weaknesses in our collective performance and to find ways in which we can improve our role as the information-sharing platform for the DS mechanism in Iraq. RWG Members' time and contributions to this [online survey](#) by **Monday, December 26, 2022**, will be extremely valuable.
- Next RWG meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2023.