



RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 30 September 2019
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 10:00-11:30 hrs
- ❖ **Location:** Erbil (IOM Conference Room, Gulan Rd.) via bluejeans to Baghdad, UNDP Meeting room

In Attendance: Food Security Cluster, US Consulate/ PRM, USAID/OFDA, SEDO, Sama Iraq, ACF, GIZ, CIVIC, PWJ, PAO, COOPI, Canadian Embassy, CRS, ACTED, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, EEAS, OCHA, UNOPS, National Protection Cluster, MSF Switzerland, MSF France, IOM, CCCM Cluster, DRC, HI, Social Inquiry, Nonviolent Peaceforce, WVI, SNFI Cluster, Mine Action Sub-cluster, Chemonics, Samaritan's Purse, HEKS-EPER, Embassy of the Netherlands, UIMS, IMC, PUI, Ajjal Association, Shareteah, ICRC

Agenda Items:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
- 2) **Returns Update:** Update on return figures from RWG/DTM dashboard and Return Index round 4 findings; Update on emergency tracking for Ninewa camp consolidation and closures; Presentation on measuring actor's coverage in areas of return, correlated with severity on conditions in areas of return
- 3) **Camp consolidation and closure- Ninewa IDP repatriation and GRC meeting:** Update from OCHA on recent events on IDP repatriations and camp consolidation and closures in Ninewa; Update from OCHA on Ninewa Governorate Return Committee (GRC) meeting
- 4) **'Movers' in displacement:** Presentation by IOM on study of IDP families who change their location of displacement
- 5) **AOB**

Key Discussion Points/ Action:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
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- The Chair gave an overview of the previous meeting after the introductions, as well as a review of the agenda items.

2) Returns Update: Update on return figures from RWG/DTM dashboard and Return Index round 4 findings; Update on emergency tracking for Ninewa camp consolidation and closures; Presentation on measuring actor's coverage in areas of return, correlated with severity on conditions in areas of return

(Presentation attached for more details)

Main points:

i) Return Update, July-August 2019

- Total no. of returnees = 4,350,150 individuals. This is an increase of 45,012 since the last round.
- Total no. of IDPs = 1,552,914 individuals
- Ninewa remains the governorate with the highest number of returnees (1,696,386 returnees), followed by Anbar (1,317,174) and Salah al-Din (646,860)
- The highest proportion of returnees living in critical shelters are found in Diyala and Baghdad, with 10% (21,612 returnees) and 7% (5,850 returnees) respectively.

ii) DTM Emergency Tracking: Camp Movements

- Between 15 Aug and 23 Sept 2019, DTM tracked 8,440 households who have left camps (mostly Jeddah 6, Airstrip and Haj Ali camps)
- The majority of households planned on returning or moving to Mosul, Baaj, Telafar, Sinjar and Baiji.
- In Ninewa, Jeddah 6, Haj Ali and Nimrud camps are now empty and officially closed; in Salah Al-Din, Al-Qadisya and Al-Aiam are also empty and officially closed.
- A total of 4,233 households having displaced/returned to non-camp locations have been recorded in the same reporting period.
- The majority of the households arrived in the districts of Baaj, Hatra, Mosul, Sinjar and Telafar.
- It is important to note that not all households who have been recorded in these non-camp settings have returned to their areas of origin, and many of the IDPs who left camps are now non-camp IDPs.
- Haji Ali departures; phone assessment
 - A quick follow-up representative survey of the list of 600 households having departed Haj Ali camp between the 4th and the 10th of September was conducted.
- Slightly over half of households (56%) returned to their location of origin while the other 44% displaced to another location.
- 69% of the households expressed fear of eviction
- Unavailability of basic services was reported main reason for not returning to location of origin by 81% of households, followed by housing condition and security situation (44%, 19%)



iii) Return Index

- The data for the 5th round of the Return Index was collected during the months of July and August.
- The data gathered from HRP 2019 Dashboard is organized into 2 different indicators for each district: 1) Total number of partners 2) Number of partners for each 10,000 returnees
- The top districts for total number of partners are Mosul, Telafar and Sinjar (all Ninewa)
- The top districts for partners per 10,000 returnees are Ana (Anbar), Daquq (Kirkuk) and Ba'aj (Ninewa)
- Based on their level of severity, these districts should have a presence of partners relatively higher than the average: Tooz, Sinjar, Balad, Ba'aj, Fallujah, Muqadiyah.
- In general, it shows that humanitarian assistance tends to be concentrated in those areas with a higher severity (only the districts of Telafar and Falluja fall short from what would be expected given their severity levels). Thus, there seems to be a correlation between severity and assistance and this is, in overall terms, a positive finding.

➤ Discussion:

- The Chair mentioned that more problems are being created by moving people out of camps, as it simply leads to displacement in other areas, i.e. there will be more IDPs in non-camp settings. Furthermore, IDPs have struggled to return to Ba'aj as it is the worst district in terms of severity, according to the Return Index. Half of the IDPs from Ba'aj have thus been displaced to urban centres, bringing up the need to identify the IDPs' areas of origin to scale up projects in those areas.

3) **Camp consolidation and closure- Ninewa IDP repatriation and GRC meeting:** Update from OCHA on recent events on IDP repatriations and camp consolidation and closures in Ninewa; Update from OCHA on Ninewa Governorate Return Committee (GRC) meeting

i) Update from OCHA on recent events on IDP repatriations and camp consolidation and closures

- Ninewa
 - **Closures and consolidation:** Haji Ali, Jeddah 6 and Nimrud camps have all been consolidated and closed, while the consolidation of Hamam Al-Aleel 1 & 2 is ongoing. Ninewa authorities have announced that they will implement the 2nd phase of consolidations and closures from 10 October. The camps planned for consolidation are: Salamiyah 1 and 2 into one camp; Jada'ah 1,2, and 3 into one camp; and Qayara Airstrip and Jada'ah 4, and 5 into one camp.

- Earlier in the day (30 September), MOMD appeared at Qayyarah Airstrip camp with buses, ordering IDPs to either move to other camps (Jeddah 4 or 5) or return to their homes. OCHA and humanitarian intervention put a stop to these proceedings, and it was agreed that only 50 families would be transferred to one of the other camps to see how the IDPs would react and to help them make informed decisions on where they want to go. More follow up expected.
- The Ninewa governor has given the Salah al-Din (SAD) authorities one week to prepare for receiving Salah al-Din IDPs who have been staying in Ninewa.
- **Movement restrictions:** Last week, MOMD and Ninewa Operations Command (NOC) informed camp management and the humanitarian community that movement restrictions on voluntary departure from all camps into southern Mosul have been lifted. It is expected that these restrictions will be also be lifted in Salamiya camp. Movement restrictions on departures in other governorates are still in place. Ninewa authorities and NOC have agreed to issue only one letter for each returning family to use at all checkpoints.
- **Durable solutions:** A zero draft of the Ninewa durable solutions operational response plan has been developed and is now under review and discussion at the Ninewa ICCG. The next step would be to share it with the national ICCG and other humanitarian actors for feedback.

ii) Update from OCHA on Ninewa Governorate Return Committee (GRC) meeting

- Ninewa
 - The Ninewa GRC held its first meeting in almost a year on 18 September 2019.
 - The main issue in the GRC meeting is that MOMD feel they should be involved but are not being actively engaged. MOMD is considered the party responsible for closing camps, and hence the discontent. Therefore, there should be more cooperation with actors on the ground.
 - There are ongoing discussions between MOMD and DRC regarding plans for the Airstrip camp.
 - The Ninewa governor understands that not all camps can be closed, but there is need to advocate for the best camps to remain open.
- Salah al-Din
 - **Transfer of IDPs to Salah al-Din:** There are around 3,200 families to be transferred to Salah al-Din. Until 2 weeks ago, the Governor of Salah al-Din was not aware of the scale of IDPs coming back to Salah al-Din. Basateen camp will remain open, but it is reluctant to take on new arrivals that may be affiliated or have security “indicators”, prompting them to be moved on to Karama. The idea is to keep the IDPs in Karama for 3 days before moving them on to their areas of origin, some of which are uninhabitable. The main obstacles,



however, are tribal issues and PMF presence in the areas of origin. Humanitarian assistance will continue in Karama camp if it remains a humanitarian camp and not turn into a detention camp. So far there are no signs that Karama is a detention camp, despite certain restrictions.

- The next Salah al-Din GRC meeting will be held on 1st October.
- Anbar
 - Anbar authorities intend to close all camps by the end of the year. These efforts seem to be succeeding as more IDPs are leaving AAF and HTC camps.
 - A payment of 500,000 IQD was recently given to each family leaving the camps, but there is a push to make other families leave camps without receiving such a payment.
 - The Anbar governor Advisor chairs the GRC meetings, and is ultimately responsible for the closure of camps.
- Diyala
 - There are no updates – status quo remains.

➤ Discussion:

- The Chair mentioned as a point to note that there are discussions to revise the Ninewa GRC terms of reference as it currently focuses solely on camp consolidation without considering the return factor/ areas of origin. Discussions are underway.
- CCCM mentioned that they have engagement with JCMC, as well as bilateral engagement with partners through MOMD, but have a hard time reaching the Ninewa governor. Meeting the governor, who is the decision maker, would help in reaching a compromise and understanding what the governor wants. However, the governor does not attend GRC meetings, making direct engagement with the decision makers impossible. Mixed messages and inconsistencies from MOMD add further challenges – MOMD had in fact been invited to the last GRC meeting but could not attend due to having other meetings. Furthermore, the international community is not being consulted in the GRC process. There should be an effort to involve key decision makers in GRC meetings before they are convened, or to move beyond the GRC and engage directly with the governor/ decision maker.
 - OCHA explained that the feeling from MOMD is that they are not happy with GRC meetings happening without them being part of it, as they like to be consulted since they are responsible for camp consolidation. Otherwise, MOMD will go their own way and make decisions independently. The key is to speak to the appropriate actors on the ground.
- UNICEF explained that the lack of technical expertise from the government at the GRC meetings is another concern. For example, it would be helpful to have the directorate of education (DoE) involved in the discussions to avoid cases of secondary displacement.

- OCHA mentioned that screening issues occur when IDPs move between governorates, which stems from the security actors' lack of knowledge regarding these IDPs. Communication between different security actors are not as streamlined as they should be, which would have otherwise prevented this screening problem.
- The Chair added a few points:
 - The Ninewa governor met with Ba'aj tribal leaders to seek their approval for the return of families perceived to be affiliated to ISIL, which was accepted by some tribal leaders and refused by others. The GRC Chair will share more details in this regard, but it is clear that more engagement would be needed with tribal leaders and not just government actors to facilitate the return of IDPs.
 - Issues have been raised regarding departure letters for Yazidi families from Sinjar. It is reported that IDPs who previously left camps without departure letters have been unable to claim the return grant after returning to their areas. MOMD have requested for more support to be able to register these families going forward.
 - JCMC have reiterated that the Ninewa Governor had requested to distribute camp assets in the areas of return to assist returnees, in a push to focus more on areas of origin rather than displacement, and encourages humanitarian partners to do the same.
 - The government has allocated 450 billion IQD (378 million USD) to improve conditions in the areas of origin in Anbar, Ninewa, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din.
 - A stabilization committee has been formed in Ninewa, which currently focuses on western Ninewa.
- OCHA mentioned that mayors of areas that are blocked (e.g. Balad) have requested assistance from the humanitarian community, however the only way humanitarians can assist is if the government unblocks these areas as humanitarians don't have key to remove these barriers. Though these mayors are very keen for their people to return, but it is plain to see that the local authorities are not in control of these areas. The Chair added that 43 out of 50 locations of no return in Salah al-Din are blocked.

4) **'Movers' in displacement:** Presentation by IOM on study of IDP families who change their location of displacement

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points:

- About the study
 - Joint study by IOM-Georgetown University
 - Longitudinal survey tracking the same people over time



- 3,854 Iraqi non-camp IDP families displaced by the ISIL crisis between January 2014 and December 2015
 - Displaced to four governorates: Baghdad, Kirkuk, Basra, and Sulaymaniyah
 - Based on the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons
 - Round 4: August – November 2018
 - 3,635 IDP, mover, and returnee families in 14 governorates
 - 1,100 returnees
 - 2,535 families still in displacement (Of which, 265 had moved to a different location and were identified as “movers”)
 - Movers were displaced to a particular district at the time of the first interview and who subsequently moved to another district, but did not return to their districts of origin
 - Report focuses on all 265 households, using all four rounds of data in a longitudinal nature
 - Of the 265 families covered, the top governorate of origin was Salah al-Din (103 households), followed by Ninewa (51 HHs) and Anbar (30 HHs).
 - Key finding 1: Movers move to find jobs and secure livelihoods, supported by their family networks.
 - Key finding 2: Movers may visit their original homes, but the vast majority have not tried to live in them again. Therefore, they are not “failed returns.”
 - Key finding 3: Some movers are “in process” returnees, meaning they have returned to areas very close to their original homes.
 - Key finding 4: Movers also witness higher levels of damage to their housing, land and property than returnees; households are moving to get closer to home but may not be able to move home because of the destruction of their property.
- Discussion:
- Shelter Cluster explained that 5,000 to 10,000 USD is needed to rehabilitate each destroyed house, but the large scale of destruction means that humanitarian capabilities are limited due to limited resources. Hence the importance of government efforts and compensation The Chair mentioned that there is a continuous push to redefine the scope of humanitarian engagement, and the transition to development is required to meet the huge and long-term interventions.
 - Ninewa PWG asked whether a qualitative and quantitative survey of the study was available, indicating how these populations have contributed to the development of the community.
 - IOM explained that not all questions were included in the report, but the latest report can be shared once published.