



MoMD RETURN GRANT UPDATE

March 2021

Update on the current status of the Return Grant¹ (See previous MoMD grant updates on the link [here](#)):

Since July 2019, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) has disbursed a grant of IQD 1.5 million to registered returnee households (with two family members or more; and IQD 0.75 million for single-member families), known as the return grant. Prior to the return grant, MoMD had distributed a similar amount known as the 'displacement grant' to displaced families as a 'one-off' safety net to help households (HHs) during displacement. The displacement grant was disbursed to IDPs in areas of displacement via the Q-card system.² Once victory over ISIL was declared in late 2017, MOMD stopped registering IDP families for the displacement grant by early 2018. Although the displacement grant has ceased, the return grants exist alongside other forms of in-kind assistance provided to IDP

and returnee families in the form of food rations and non-food items such as kerosene, clothes, hygiene kits and blankets. According to MOMD, the aim of the returnee grant, similar to the displacement grant, is to act as a one-time safety net for returnee families. However, the efficacy of the grant has been limited due to the infrequent, inconsistent and low rate of disbursement.

- **Total amount disbursed so far:** In 2019, MoMD disbursed IQD 44,599,500,000 to 29,736 households. In contrast, for 2020, MoMD distributed IQD 28,884,000, including a round that targeted recent camp closures. To date since 2019, MoMD has disbursed a total of IQD 77,379,750,000 to 51,660 returnee families. See full breakdown of figures in the table below.

Summary breakdown of the disbursement of the return grant per governorate for 2020 in comparison with 2019.

DATE OF DISBURSEMENT	NO. OF BENEFICIARIES (HH)	AMOUNT DISBURSED (IN IQD)
2019		
25 July 2019	12,000	18,000,000,000
24 September 2019	8,000	12,000,000,000
3 November 2019	9,736	14,599,500,000
Total 2019	29,736	44,599,500,000
2020		
21 January 2020	2,400	3,582,000,000
18 February 2020	2,600	3,869,250,000
18 March 2020	2,600	3,891,000,000
26 April 2020	2,600	3,894,000,000
29 September 2020	2,600	3,883,500,000
12 November 2020	2,600	3,894,750,000
24 December 2020	1,324	1,986,000,000
29 December 2020	2,600	3,883,500,000
Total 2020	19,324	28,884,000,000
2021		
4 January 2021	2,600	3,896,250,000
GRAND TOTAL	51,660	IQD 77,379,750,000

- **No. of targeted families reached:** In 2020, 19,324 returnee families received the grant, compared with 29,736 families in 2019. Since inception in 2019, 51,660

families have received the grant out of 573,465 families who have returned and applied for registration of their return with MOMD as of 31st December 2020.

¹ Information valid as of 18 April 2021.

² See Return Grand Update of October 2020 on challenges related to the Q-card system.

- Disbursement installments:** In 2020, the disbursements of the grant were made in the months of January, February, March, April, September, November and December. No disbursements were made during May-August and October due to the lack of budgetary allocation. For 2021, a disbursement was made in January and none have been made for February and March.
- Distribution per Governorate:** While Anbar has the highest number of registered HHs followed by Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Kirkuk and Baghdad, Ninewa has the highest number of returnees who have received the return grant (16,396 HH), followed by Anbar (9,224 HH) and Diyala (8,338 HH). Kirkuk remains the governorate with the lowest number of grant beneficiaries, with 4,435 families receiving the grant. Data shared by MoMD indicates that as

of March 2021, 575,714 HH have registered their return. However, 417,313 applications have been checked by the statistics department, with 158,401 applications yet to be checked. Diyala and Baghdad have the lowest number of pending verifications (and the highest proportion of returnees who have received the grant), while Anbar and Ninewa have the highest pending applications. Diyala and Baghdad have 75 and 135 pending verifications, while Ninewa and Anbar have 65,242 and 79,047 applications respectively. Baghdad and Diyala governorates have 99-100% registration processing complete while Ninewa and Anbar are at 67% and 62% of verified registrations, respectively. The backlog has been attributed to the registration process challenges and the lack of human resources to process the applications.

Table below shows the number of returnees in each governorate who applied to register their return with MOMD vis-a vis those who have received the return grant.

GOVERNORATE	NO. OF RETURNEE FAMILIES REGISTERED WITH MoMD	NO. RETURNEES WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE RETURN GRANT	PERCENTAGE OF THOSE RECEIVED THE GRANT
Anbar	239,597	9,224	4%
Ninewa	171,567	16,396	10%
Salah al-Din	86,694	6,849	8%
Diyala	37,317	8,338	23%
Kirkuk	24,164	4,435	19%
Baghdad	16,377	6,418	39%
TOTAL	575,714	51,660	9%

- Rate of disbursement per Governorate:** As reported in the previous update, Baghdad (39%) and Diyala (23%) continue to proportionally have more HHs who have received the grant compared with other governorates who have higher numbers of registered families. Despite having the highest raw numbers of beneficiaries proportionally, only 10% of the registered returnees in Ninewa and 4% in Anbar have received the grant. To date, only 9% of returnee HHs who have registered their return with MoMD have received the grant. Since October 2020, there have been more registered returns in Salah al-Din, Diyala, Kirkuk and Baghdad compared with Anbar and Ninewa, where fewer new registrations were recorded. This is despite the camp closures which took place in the federal governorates during this period.
- Methodology of disbursement:** The methodology of disbursement remains the same. MoMD uses the first come first serve basis, and the money is distributed through the Q-card. For the first time since inception in 2020, following sudden camp closures in Federal Iraq, MoMD disbursed return grants targeting IDPs who recently returned from camps, but eligibility was limited to those who possessed the Q-card.
- Percentage of total returnees reached:** Out of the estimated 575,714 HHs who have returned to their areas of origin and registered their return with MoMD, 51,660 HHs (9% of the registered HHs) have received the grant. This new figure (575,714 HHs) indicates an increase of only 2,249 HH who registered their return with MoMD between October 2020 and March 2020. Notably, no new returnees were registered in Ninewa between October 2020 and December 2020. DTM data shows that close to 805,261 HH have returned to areas of origin. Some efforts have been made to inform IDPs and returnees about the grant process to encourage them to apply for this assistance. (See the CwC materials in the link [here.](#)) However, the slow rate of disbursement of the grant to those who have registered may also affect the reliance on the grant.
- Eligibility criteria:** The eligibility criteria remain unchanged from the previous rounds. Returnees who have closed their displacement files and registered their return with MoMD receive a returnee code and are eligible to receive the grant through the Q-card.

CHALLENGES

- I. The Ministry of Finance's **budgetary allocation** for the return grant is a fraction of what is actually needed to cover all the returnees who have registered their return with the MoMD. Although the frequency of disbursement has increased, the number of targeted beneficiaries has reduced significantly from just under 30,000 HH to just over 19,000 HH. To distribute the grant to all the registered families in 2021, the Ministry of Finance will need more than IQD 7.82 billion.
- II. **Eligibility criteria:** Given the limited resources available, the use of the 'first come first serve' criterion does not ensure that the funds go to those most in need. In addition, the use of the Q-card means that 130,546 IDPs who did not receive the Q-card will not receive the grant until a new method of disbursement is found (contrasted with 721,200 IDP HH who received the Q-card). An initial plan touted in 2019 to identify 'vulnerable' families for prioritization saw very few households benefitting in 2019. However, in 2020, MoMD targeted IDPs who recently returned from camps. It is unclear how these HHs were selected, what factors were considered and whether this targeting of recent returnees from camps will continue. There remains a need for more transparent and fairer targeting and to identify those in dire need.

DISBURSEMENT OF GRANT TARGETING IDPS WHO ARE NEWLY RETURNED FROM CAMPS

Following the rapid camp closures between October and December 2020 and the recognition of the vulnerability faced by many new returnees, MoMD disbursed the grant to a few new returnees. The criteria used for targeting these HHs was similar to the general return grant except for the additional requirement of being formerly displaced in a camp. Similar to the return grant in general, there remains a lack of clarity in how beneficiaries are selected and if there is any scope to include vulnerability criteria to ensure that the most vulnerable receive the grant. With the exception of using the first come, first served criteria, the main criteria remain as below:

- Registration of return with the MoMD.
- Closure of the displacement file with no pending information requests between the area of displacement and the area of origin.
- The availability of an MoMD Q-card through which the grant is paid.

Table below shows the breakdown of round 1 allocation to recent returnees from camps, disbursed in December by MoMD.

GOVERNORATE	NO. OF BENEFICIARIES	AMOUNT DISBURSED (IN IQD)
Round 1 Camp Returnees		
Anbar	202	303,000,000
Baghdad	0	0
Diyala	130	195,000,000
Salah al Din	39	58,500,000
Kirkuk	0	0
Ninewa	953	1,429,500,000
TOTAL	1,324	IQD 1,986,000,000

In addition to the usual criteria, MoMD reached out to the IDPs before they left the camps and informed them to register to return with the MoMD branch in the governorate of origin (in case they were displaced in a different governorate). In some cases, MoMD initiated the registration of these families before they departed the camp (while they were waiting for the National Operations Command (NOC) approval to leave the camp). According to DTM, some 9,000 HH departed camps between October 2020 and March 2021.³ Of these, about 7,200 HH arrived in their areas of origin. Only 1,324 HH who returned between October and December received the grant. There was also an attempt to consider geographical location to include districts that had been neglected in previous regular rounds. The use of the first come first served criteria alone meant that IDPs from areas/districts that were liberated first and where IDPs were able to return earlier received the grant and districts such as Ba'aj, Sinjar or Hawiga lagged.

EFFECT OF THE 2021 BUDGET ON THE FUTURE OF THE RETURN GRANTS

- I. The endorsed National Plan for 2021 did not allocate sufficient financial resources to MoMD to enable it to proceed with return grant disbursement to registered returnees (including those who left the recently closed camps between October 2020 and now). The allocation for MoMD in the 2021 national plan was intended for their operational activities and provision of basic humanitarian responses (such as in-kind assistance).
- II. On 11th April 2021, the MoMD convened its first conference for facilitating the return of IDPs to their AoOs titled "Our IDPs, a challenge and achievement". The second recommendation (out of the final 9 recommendation raised during the conference) stated "Establishing a financial fund from the concerned ministries to accelerate

³ See DTM Camp Closure Emergency Tracking <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/ldpMovements> accessed on 28 March 2021.

the distribution of the return grants to returnees (1,500,000 IQD), given that the total number of returning families reached (577,124)”

It remains to be seen whether the disbursement of the return grant will continue given the existing challenges.

IN-KIND MOMD DISTRIBUTIONS

As mentioned earlier, in addition to the cash grant, MoMD distributes an assortment of in-kind assistance to newly returned families. In 2020, the following assistance was provided to returnees:

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	NO. OF BENEFICIARIES (HH)
2020	
Food Basket	139,617
Health Basket	126,051
Kitchen Basket	1,142
Carpets	13,671
Blanket	14,821
Clothes	31,942
Total	466,861

Overall, in 2020, the distribution of in-kind support for returnees was not evenly distributed across the different governorates. Anbar governorate returnees received the highest number of food baskets (45% or 62,636 HH), hygiene kits (50,043 HH) and carpets (13,671 HH), followed by Diyala (35,605 HH received the food baskets) and Ninewa (32,292 HH received the food baskets), while Salah Al-Din (5,321 HH), Baghdad (2,575 HH) and Kirkuk (1,188 HH) returnees received the lowest amounts of food baskets. It is notable that Kirkuk returnees lag in terms of both the return grant and in-kind assistance. It is unclear whether there is a vulnerability criteria that is applied for HHs to receive in-kind assistance but such assistance would be beneficial for returnees as they return to locations which may not have reliable markets or livelihood opportunities.