



RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 17 October 2019
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 14:00-15:30 hrs
- ❖ **Location:** Erbil (IOM Conference Room, Gulan Rd.) via bluejeans to Baghdad, UNDP Meeting room

In Attendance:, PUI, German Embassy, UNAMI Development Coordination Office (DCO), US Embassy/ PRM, US/ RIDPA, World Bank, WFP, ACTED, REACH, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Ground Truth Solutions, Handicap International, UN-Habitat, RNVDO, WVI, CRS, TGH, COOPI, QANDIL, PIN, Qatar Red Crescent, DRC, INTERSOS, Mercy Hands, GIZ, Ninewa Protection Working Group, Australian Embassy, UIMS, IRCS, UNICEF, UNHCR, Protection Cluster- Centre South, OCHA, IOM

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; Update on emergency tracking for Ninewa camp consolidation and closures
- 3) **Potential return of families perceived affiliated with extremist groups:** Overview by IOM on consultations with tribal leaders and local authorities to discuss return of families perceived affiliated with extremist groups in Shirqat, Salah al Din.
- 4) **Discussion on Durable solutions in Anbar:** Presentation by OCHA on Anbar ICCG and partners' discussions to explore the development of a durable solutions plan.
- 5) **Rapid overview on areas of return:** Presentation by REACH on the conditions in return areas, focus on Hatra district- Ninewa
- 6) **Strengthening accountability to affected populations in Iraq:** Presentation by Ground Truth Solutions on using feedback from affected people to inform the planning of the response in Iraq.

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; Update on emergency tracking for Ninewa camp consolidation and closures

(Presentation attached for more details)

Main points:

i) Return Update

- Total no. of returnees (as of August 2019): 4,350,150 individuals. Total no. of IDPs: 1,552,914 individuals
- 62% of IDPs live in private setting, 30% in camps, and 8% in critical shelter.
- 95% of returnees live in their habitual residence, while 3% of returnees live in critical shelter

ii) DTM Emergency Tracking: Camp movements

- In the last 2 months (23 Aug- 15 Oct), DTM tracked 16,584 households having left camps, mainly in Ninewa and Salah Al-Din with a few in Anbar. Most of these departures occurred in Ninewa camps.
- 8,557 of these HHs either displaced or returned to non-camp locations in the same period. Most of these families (over 7,000) arrived in the Ninewa districts of Hatra, Baaj, Mosul and Sinjar. Many of these returnees are living in critical shelter.

iii) DTM Emergency Tracking: Movements from Syria

- The total no. of Syrian refugees (individuals) that have arrived in Iraq so far is 1,628.
- All new arrivals were transported from the border. 819 people were transported to Bardarash camp in Dohuk.

iv) Return Index

- The latest round of the Return Index (July-Aug 2019) showed that 276 locations of return present severe conditions, hosting 11% of the returnee population (nearly 496,000 individuals).
- Ninewa and Salah al-Din remain the governorates hosting the highest no. of returnees living in severe conditions. Salah al-Din (31%) and Diyala (20%) also present the highest intra-governorate proportion of returnees living in severe conditions.
- 43 locations in Iraq, hosting 38,448 returnees (1% of the total returnee population), have the most severe conditions ('very high') when all indicators are combined. The top 4 of these locations remain in Tooz district (Salah Al Din).



➤ Discussion:

- The Chair mentioned as a point to note that 43 out of 50 locations in Salah al-Din where there are no returns are blocked by security actors, triggering a push to find out where IDPs are moving to after the closure of Basateen camp.
- Protection Cluster (NPC) mentioned that CAOFISR conducted a tent to tent intention survey in Basateen the previous week, which in addition to the new CCCM survey rolled out at the IDP Call Center to phone IDPs 2 weeks after their camp departure, will provide a better idea as to where these families will move. The intention survey shows that all these IDPs will be seeking shelter in informal sites in Shirqat. A GRC meeting is scheduled for 2nd November. The official reason for the closure of Basateen camp was an outstanding land ownership issue between the owners of the land and the camp management agency.
- RNDVO mentioned that there were 116 Iraqi families trying to cross from the Syrian border into Ninewa last week. Though they did not have the authorization to enter, the families are now residing in residences within the 28 villages in Sinuni sub-district (near Al-Fao area). Screening areas were also set up in the border area in Rabea. Additionally, the movement of Salah al-Din IDPs from Ninewa to Salah al-Din has stopped, and the IDPs from Salah al-Din who remain in camps are permitted to stay for the time being.

3) RNVDO Update on the Stabilization Committee in Ninewa

Key points:

- RNVDO are in the process of conducting a survey with government counterparts, particularly in areas in western Ninewa including Qayrawan, Baaj, Hatra and the 28 villages on the Syrian border in Sinuni sub-district. The focus on these areas is due to the recent return of families from camps to these areas.
- Lack of services such as water is the main issue. The source of water for the 28 villages is under the control of a Yazidi PMF, who have blocked the water supply to these villages. Access to schools is another problem, as 3 of the 4 available schools are not functioning and require rehabilitation. Furthermore, support in the agriculture sector is also needed.
- The Stabilization Committee report is currently being drafted for further review.

Discussion:

- GiZ asked what the next steps of the committee will be, and whether a meeting with stakeholders will be planned.

- A meeting presenting the draft of the report will be held soon, and the finalized version will be sent after the meeting.
- The Chair added that a durable solutions operational plan (planned by ICCG Ninewa) was submitted to the Ninewa Governor by the HC. The plan is still under discussion, and will feed into the discussions of the Stabilization Committee.

4) Potential return of families perceived affiliated with extremist groups: Overview by IOM on consultations with tribal leaders and local authorities to discuss return of families perceived affiliated with extremist groups in Shirqat, Salah al Din.

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points:

- Consultation sessions were held in Mosul (12 Sept) and Shirqat (19 Sept), as well as a workshop with Ninewa governorate authorities on 13-14 Oct.
- Shirqat consultation
 - Background: Return of approx. 127 HH from Ninewa to Basateen on 2 Sept provoked significant security incidents due to perceived affiliation of returnee families. Security incidents compelled around 120 families from the existing Basateen camp population to flee to Shirqat centre- 30 of whom eventually returned to the camp.
 - Findings:
 - Though tribal reconciliation is taking place, efforts are highly localized and not done at the scale needed.
 - Linkages between reconciliation and compensation are frequently highlighted. Agreements are not always robust
 - There is a common view that the government must develop a system of “categorizing” families perceived to be affiliated with ISIL, as they recognized that there is a spectrum of collaboration with extremist groups.
 - Tribal leaders question who will support families (financially) if they do return; though compensation should be the responsibility of the government.
 - It was noted that, in quite a few cases, the PMF and other security actors have taken control of asset belonging to families with perceived affiliation, and therefore have a vested interest in their non-return. The PMF have reportedly weakened tribal influence in Shirqat.
- Next steps
 - Workshop with Ninewa authorities was held to frame a response strategy around 3 main pillars: 1) Community acceptance, destigmatization, and social cohesion; 2) Risk reduction; 3) Protective factors (civil documentation, access to services, protection from SEA, etc.)



- It was agreed to establish a committee (including main government representatives) to address current response gaps.
- Findings & recommendations will be set out in a report which will be shared with the Governor of Ninewa and discussed/endorsed before it's submitted to the central government.

➤ Discussion:

- The Ninewa Protection Working Group expressed interest in providing protection feedback and recommendations to the response strategy and documentation.
- The Chair mentioned that the government is ultimately responsible for compensation, adding that the government's compensation law specifies the amount for each eligible category/ incident.

5) Discussion on Durable solutions in Anbar: Presentation by OCHA on Anbar ICCG and partners' discussions to explore the development of a durable solutions plan

Key points:

- A sub-national ICCG was established in Anbar in July and is currently highly active.
- A brainstorming workshop was conducted on 16 October with humanitarian, stabilization and development partners to decide on how to move forward with durable solutions in Anbar. The topics discussed were in regard to 1) What happens in areas of return, noting that 590,000 out of 1.3 million returnees live in substandard conditions; 2) Areas of displacement (i.e. what can be done until full camp closure is implemented); 3) Residual camp population that will not be able to return; 4) Vulnerable groups (including IDPs, returnees, host communities, stayees) . The objective of the workshop was to develop a roadmap for durable solutions and do it in advance of camp closure expected to happen next year.
- Anbar is already in the return and reintegration stage. Many problems are known but little action has taken place to move forward, while some problems are still not well known and need better understanding.
- Anbar camps have been marked for closure for the start of 2020, but this seems unrealistic. However, we must still plan ahead based on that plan and give IDPs options.
- 3 groups of camp populations who cannot return have been identified. They are around 2,000 families, 1,600 of whom reside in camps and settlements (Kilo and Bzebz) and are mostly from Babylon (Jurf al Sakhr area). These families have no prospect of returning, hence necessitating discussions with political actors to provide these families alternative solutions/ options.
- Generally known needs:
 - Shelter (main obstacle to return) – almost 90% of shelter is damaged/ destroyed

- HLP rights
- Access to basic services
- Income opportunities
- Vulnerable female-headed households
- Needs known but not well understood:
 - Legal documentation issues linked to property rights and residence rights, which are believed to have led to cases of evictions in western Anbar.
 - Secondary displacement: this includes “micro secondary displacement”, where people return to their locations but are displaced to other areas within the same sub-district. There is very little data available on secondary displacement. This issue is also linked to reports of threats and intimidation that have caused secondary displacement, which is information that has been classified by the government. Many people now refuse to answer their phone calls due to such threats.
 - Social cohesion, transitional justice, de-stigmatization of families on the community level
 - Local integration: more information and analysis needed on this topic. REACH has been working on this area, which will be followed up.
- There will be follow up discussions on the durable solutions roadmap with development actors.
- Feedback shows that better coordination is needed in terms of receiving proposals.
- A meeting with MOMD has been arranged next week to discuss and understand government plans.
- An ICCG working group meeting will be held on 21st October.
- A meeting with Access Working Group will also be held to discuss ways they identify information gaps (esp. on secondary displacement).
- Discussion:
 - The Chair pointed out the importance of understanding secondary displacement as some cases of return can be unsustainable. Furthermore, it was previously discussed that shelter is biggest issue related to return and that 5,000 – 10,000 US dollars are required to rehabilitate each house, hence the importance of involving development actors.

6) Rapid overview on areas of return: Presentation by REACH on the conditions in return areas, focus on Hatra district- Ninewa

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points:

- Data for Hatra was collected between 9 and 20 June.
- The majority of the population was reported to still be in displacement. Community leader KIs estimated that between 200 and 300 families had returned.



- The **most frequently reported reason for IDPs not returning was poor access to services**, especially to water services, and better access to services in their area of displacement (AoD).
- The most frequent reported reasons for re-displacement were insufficient or no access to basic services and lack of job opportunities.
- Neither IDPs nor re-displaced KIs expressed an intention to return to their area of origin (AoO) in the 12 months following the assessment.
- The court in Hatra was reportedly not functioning. To access legal services, residents had to travel to Al Qayyarah.
- Recommendations and needs:
 - Restore the court in Hatra to alleviate reliance on the court in Al Qayyarah
 - Giving compensation for returnees
 - Providing support for farmers
 - Providing cash and food support by the government such as PDS, or from NGOs
 - Providing income opportunities and business grants
 - Rehabilitation of public and private buildings
 - Health SME KIs suggested repair of the healthcare clinic, and additional doctors and equipment.
 - Education SME KIs reported a need for more teachers and school supplies.
 - Water SME KIs suggested to improve water services by providing more generators and equipment for the Hatra WTP and repairing pipes
 - Electricity SMEs suggested that to improve electricity services, which would be necessary if returns were to increase, they needed more transformers and community generators

7) Strengthening accountability to affected populations in Iraq: Presentation by Ground Truth Solutions on using feedback from affected people to inform the planning of the response in Iraq

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points:

- Surveyed demographics: 50-50 male-female representation. 49% IDPs, 22% returnees, 16% vulnerable host communities
- Key findings
 - 57% report that aid providers do not take their opinion into account when providing aid/services.
 - 69% do not know how make suggestions or complaints about the aid/services they receive.
 - Around 40% do not feel informed about the type of aid/ services available.

- 75% prefer receiving information face-to-face, and 51% also mentioned helpline/hotline as a preferred information channel. 62% preferred to receive information from international aid providers and 37% mentioned government.
- Priority needs remain largely unmet, consisting of 54% cash, 42% food, 19% health services
- Only 15% of affected people say that aid promotes self-reliance.
- 87% mentioned that they are not aware of the Iraq Information Center (IIC).