



RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 25 November 2019
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 10:00-11:30 hrs
- ❖ **Location:** Erbil (IOM Conference Room, Gulan Rd.) via bluejeans to Baghdad, UNDP Meeting room

In Attendance: ACTED, DRC, UNDP, INTERSOS, GIZ, PAO, TGH, PUI, NCCI, Social Inquiry, RNVDO, Iraq Information Centre, UNHCR, UNAMI HRO, Chemonics, Qandil, Nonviolent Peaceforce, WVI, Samaritan's Purse, Handicap International, ICRC, REACH, US Embassy, HLP Sub-cluster, UNFPA, UNICEF, 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; Presentation on return index thematic series: Focus on reconciliation
- 3) **MCNA analysis on Durable Solutions:** Overview Presentation by REACH on the analysis of durable solutions conducted in the 2019 Multi- Cluster Needs Assessment
- 4) **Pilot projects to address protracted displacement:** Presentation by IOM on efforts to facilitate voluntary returns for IDPs in protracted displacement.
- 5) **Complaints and feedback mechanism:** Update by Iraq Information Centre (IIC) on calls from returnees and further referrals.

Key Discussion Points/ Action:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
 - 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
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(Presentation attached for more details)

Main points:



i) Return Update

- Total no. of returnees (as of August 2019): 4,460,808 individuals. Total no. of IDPs: 1,444,500 individuals
- 67% of IDPs live in private settings, 25% in camps, and 8% in critical shelter.
- 95% of returnees live in their habitual residence, while 3% of returnees live in critical shelter
- In terms of IDP movement, tracking where families move to has proven to be a challenge for multiple reasons, including the difficulty in finding key informants. Furthermore, a confusion of data can take place in registration, e.g. a single family in camp can sometimes separate into several families (to get more assistance) and then exit as one family.

ii) Return Index round 6

- Data collected during September and October 2019
- Out of the 1,674 return locations assessed, 272 present severe conditions hosting 11% of the returnee population (492,258 individuals).
- Ninewa and Salah al-Din remain the governorates hosting the highest number of returnees living in severe conditions, with 167,676 and 189,780 individuals respectively.
- Salah al-Din also presents the highest intra-governorate proportion of returnees living in severe conditions (29%), along with Diyala (17%).

iv) Return Index thematic series: Reconciliation

Key points:

- Using data of the Return Index Round 4 (March–April 2019) this second thematic report focuses on the role of reconciliation in return movements.
- The majority of locations where a need for reconciliation was reported are located in Ninewa, followed by Diyala, Baghdad and Salah al-Din governorates.
- 608,688 returnees, or 15 per cent of the total returnee population, currently reside in 279 locations where reconciliation is reported as needed. Of these, 241,914 returnees (6% of the total) are in locations where key informants reported that no reconciliation processes were initiated.
- All subdistricts in Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates presented in the analysis, except Markaz Tal Afar and Yathreb, have key informants who reported reconciliation is not taking place. In Diyala, Anbar, and Baghdad governorates, reconciliation is mostly taking place in the subdistricts that reported the need for it.



- It was found that reconciliation is correlated with five of the Return Index indicators: residential destruction, illegal occupation of private residences, concerns over revenge, the multiplicity of security actors, and the reincorporation of civil servants.
- Some locations with reported reconciliation need and ongoing reconciliation efforts, as well as locations where reconciliation need is not reported but efforts in this regard are ongoing, fall within the disputed territories of the country.

3) **MCNA analysis on Durable Solutions:** Overview Presentation by REACH on the analysis of durable solutions conducted in the 2019 Multi- Cluster Needs Assessment

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points and findings:

- Data collected between mid-June and mid-August 2019.
- The percentage of returnee households in need of property compensation but unable to access it ranged from 33% to 100% across districts.
- The percentage of returnee households experiencing daytime movement restrictions ranged between 0% in Al-Shikhan and 100% in Al-Baaj and Heet. Daytime movement restrictions can strongly be related to missing documentation.
- The proportion of returnee households without access to essential health services within 10 km ranged from 8% in Khanaqin to 100% in Sinjar and Al-Baaj.
- Adults being unable to vote can again be related to missing documentation.
- Proportionally to total expenditures, returnee households reported considerably higher expenditures on shelter, debt and food when compared to IDP households out of camp.
- IDP households' intentions to return were overall low both in the short and the long-term, suggesting that IDP caseloads are likely to remain constant through early to mid-2020.
- In line with previous assessments conducted with IDPs in and out of camps, findings indicate systemic issues that prevent IDPs from considering returning to their AoO: security, livelihoods, and shelter.
- Female-headed households remain a population of high concern and are found to be more exposed to other vulnerabilities related to livelihoods, protection and shelter and are also more prone to relying on negative coping strategies.
- The vast majority of households reported missing key civil documentation and being unable to access compensation. The high percentage of households reporting on missing documentation raises other durable solutions related concerns in relation to participation in public affairs and daytime movement restrictions.



- The debt value is highest among returnee households, with almost 50% of returnee households reporting a debt value of more than 505,000 IQD.

Discussion:

- HLP Sub-cluster mentioned that they will produce another advocacy note on HLP compensation, highlighting the challenges faced by compensation committees as well as the challenges faced by people in accessing compensation. The note can be found online in both English and Arabic.
- PAO inquired on whether the MCNA can be used in the development context, given the instability of the situation in Iraq and the thin line between humanitarian and development response.
 - REACH explained that the MCNA findings is indeed intended to be used as a response guide at the operational level by development actors.

4) Pilot projects to address protracted displacement: Presentation by IOM on efforts to facilitate voluntary returns for IDPs in protracted displacement.

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points:

- Current deadline for closure of all but one of the Ninewa camps is by end of 2019
- Using a methodology designed to support voluntary return, “help desks” were established in AAF and Salamiya camps. Help desks allowed IDPs to receive additional information and sign up for go-and-see visits. In AAF, 508 households signed up (40% of the camp population) while in Salamiya, 1,386 households signed up (41% of the camp population).
- The activities are divided into 3 stages: pre-departure, transitional and post-return and reintegration activities, all with a mainstreamed protection approach.

➤ Discussion:

- PAO asked how camp closures fit in with the presented information and activities.
 - IOM explained that these interventions have been able to support advocacy efforts in AAF and Salamiya camps. The information collected can be presented to local authorities and make them consider keeping the camps open for a longer time.
- UNICEF asked whether these survey results have been shared with local authorities, stressing the importance of engaging with the local government when conducting such activities, as that would ensure that the authorities are fully informed before GRC meetings.
 - IOM explained that they first do a “power mapping” of the relevant areas to know who the main stakeholders are, i.e. who to communicate with prior to any intervention. Therefore, local stakeholders are always consulted first.



- The Chair added that one of the lessons learned was regarding security clearance. There have been several instances of IDPs being cleared to return by ISF, PMF and other actors only to be rejected by the host community upon return due to perceived affiliation with ISIL. It is important that the return of IDPs be facilitated with local mukhtars and host community before issuing any sort of clearance.

5) Discussion on Durable solutions in Anbar Complaints and feedback mechanism: Update by Iraq Information Centre (IIC) on calls from returnees and further referrals.

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points:

- Top priority needs Cash (68.5% of calls), health (13.02%) and food security (11.58%)
- More than half of the calls were made by IDPs, while nearly three quarters of callers were living out of camps. Around 70% of callers were male.
- Current visibility materials: Business cards, posters, handouts, field visits, Facebook page (@IICINFO), radio spots
- Planned visibility materials/ activities: Outreach strategy, Materials: brochures and billboards, website, TV spots

Discussion:

- UNOPS-IIC mentioned that an SOP exercise will take place on Thursday (28th November). Feedback on the SOPs were received from clusters and were consolidated into the SOPs, which will be endorsed on 28 November.
- ICRC mentioned that they also have a feedback mechanism in place on the national level (and limited to activities conducted by ICRC) and would be happy to have a more in-depth discussion with IIC on the mechanism.