

## RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 1 December 2020
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-12:30 pm
- ❖ **Location:** Webex connection

**In Attendance:** WFP, IOM, UNICEF, Mine Action Sub-Cluster, Mercy Corps, NP, NFI & Shelter Cluster, SWEDO, GIZ, TGH, German Embassy, REACH, Mensen met ee M, IMC, Iraq Prospects, PWJ, Intersos, CCCM Cluster, PRM, Solidarites International, ECHO, ACTED, PLC, NPC, HLP Sub-Cluster, Save the Children, JICA, CPI, ASB, NPWG, UNHCR, World Vision, CRC, Danish Church Aid

### Agenda Items:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
- 2) **DTM Update and CCCM Camp Closures:** Update on latest Master list, Displacement and Return Index and Camp Closures
- 3) **DSTWG updates:** Context updates, return grants and DS planning
- 4) **REACH REDS Factsheets:** Qairawan and Tooz Khurmarto
- 5) **AOB**

### Action Points to follow up by next meeting:

Action	By who
NPC and NPWG to share Ba'aj/Sinjar Note	NPC

### Key Discussion Points/ Action:

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

- The co-chair gave an overview of the previous meeting after the introductions, as well as a review of the agenda items. Confirmed that RWG and DTM training dates and invites were shared and had since occurred. MOMD grant update had also been shared. Protection colleagues would share the Sinjar and Ba'aj report soon to be circulated with the minutes.

- 2) **DTM Displacement and Returns Update/CCCM Camp Closure Update:** Update on latest camp closures, emergency tracking and protection concerns

*(Presentation attached for more details)*

#### i) DTM updates

- New data covering September-October
- Total no. of IDPs as of October 2020: 1,278,864 individuals. (Change of 21,123 IDPs since August)
- Total no. of returnees as of October 2020: 4,782,414 individuals. (Change of 38,364 IDPs since August)
- 8% of IDPs and 3% of returnees live in critical shelter
- Main Districts of return are Mosul, Ramadi, Falluja and Telafar

#### Return Index:

- Data collected between September and October 2020.
- An additional 69,264 returnees were identified.
- An additional 42 locations of return were assessed

- Conditions of return are stabilizing a bit since June when 14% of returnees were in high severity conditions compared with 11% in October. Noted a decrease of 127,167 returnees living in poor or severe conditions.
- Largest decreases in returnees living in severe conditions was noted in Ninewa, Anbar and Diyala.
- A significant part of the decreases are related to the stabilized employment situation and daily public life after lockdown measures lifted.
- 35 Hotspots were identified across the six governorates which some 2 sub-districts added such as Al-Baghdady and Al Forat in Heet Districts while four sub-districts were excluded (Markaz Hatra, Al Muhalabiya, Markaz Mosul (Ninewa) and Markaz Tikrit (Salah al-Din)
- Al-Baghdady and Al Forat were added due to worsening safety conditions.
- Markaz Hatra was removed due to slight improvement in relation to residential destruction, employment, daily public life and water provision.
- Al-Muhalabiyah and Markaz Mosul were removed due to stabilization of daily public life and to a less extent employment.
- Markaz Tikrit was removed due to slight improvement of the situation with residential destruction, although there are still concerns about different sources of violence such as ISIL attacks, acts of revenge, clashes between security forces or ethno-religious tribal tensions and blocked returns.

#### **Camp arrivals tracking:**

- Between 23 and 29 November 959 households (5,265 individuals) have been recorded as arrival to non-camp settings following the camp closures currently underway.
  - Ninewa received the most arrivals primarily in the districts of Mosul, Al Ba'aj and Telafar, followed by Diyala governorate in the districts of Khanaqin and Al-Muqdadia and Salah Al-Din district of Baiji.
  - Since camp closures began in mid-October 3,565 households (18,929 individuals) have been recorded as arriving to non-camp settings.
  - Notably, after analysis of camp exit surveys, it was observed that actual arrivals do not always match reported intentions in the exit survey when leaving the camp, indicating that some households are not able to return to the area they reportedly intended to go to.
  - DTM will be providing a training for the Return Index dashboard
- ii) CCCM camp closure updates – *please see joint presentation with DTM*
- 31,934 individuals have since departed since the camp closures started in mid-October.
  - 11 camps and informal sites have closed.
  - 2 camps have been reclassified as informal site (HTC and Zayona)
  - 5 camps remain in Federal Iraq hosting 27,012 individuals.
  - KRI administers 25 camps hosting 186,417 individuals.
  - CCCM continues to track daily departures, protection partners continue to track departing households for referral, while IOM DTM continues to track household arrivals to areas of return or other secondary displacement locations. Camp departure surveys and IIC follow up calls for follow-up calls and referrals.
  - Sitreps are being produced to provide partners with information.
  - Notification that there will be a webinar on **Wednesday 2 December** on information resources on camp departure needs provided by DTM and CCCM (link and details shared in the chat box).

#### Discussion:

- IMC asked DTM about the frequency of the DTM rounds and how partners can obtain this information regularly.
  - DTM responded that the Emergency tracking data is shared twice a week (Monday and Thursday), while the master list and the next return index are done every two months (next will be sometime in January). Partners can subscribe using the email [iraqdtm@iom.int](mailto:iraqdtm@iom.int)
- IMC also asked CCCM if there was any plan with regard to the KRI or KRI administered camps.
  - CCCM responded that MoMD had planned to close Khazer in eastern Ninewa and consolidate Qoratu in Diyala this year but it is understood that there is a discussion that national MoMD plan to close the camps in 2021.
- WPF asked if there was any information about the 200 returnees who have come back to Dohuk from Sinjar as reported in the last RWG sitrep as they would like to track food assistance needs and if what the return packages that are being provided to returnees.
  - DTM noted that they are not tracking returns from Sinjar to Dohuk in the Emergency tracking rather arrivals to Sinjar.
  - RWG mentioned JCC provide the information that since June to date, 200 families have returned to Dohuk due to challenges they faced in areas of origin and they are spread in the different Dohuk camps. CCCM also added that camp management register the families and they will be automatically included in receiving assistance.
  - NPC mentioned that given the vulnerability of newly arrived population guidance on the packages comes from the clusters. In light of the camp consolidation and closures, the decision of the HCT is to provide assistance within the framework of the HRP. Would steer away from reference to 'return package' as there is on-going response. Would suggest providing immediate response which is linked to the HRP and longer term assistance which is linked with the durable solutions framework.
  - CCCM chimed in a request to partners to highlight geographic spread noting that while there a significant needs in Ninewa and Sinjar that other governorates such as Diyala, Anbar and Salah Al-Din have some needs as well.

### 3) DSTWG updates: Update on the creation of the Group and next steps

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*(Presentation attached for more details)*

#### i) DSTF and DSTWG updates

- Gol plan on protracted displacement nearly finalized- was shared with DSTF for feedback.
- Over all the plan is comprehensive and a good entry/reference point for engagement but it is quite focused on camps and returns. Feedback channelled was importance of considering other solutions and needs of IDs out of camps.
- In terms of coordination structures of the DSTF, the DSTWG has been created as a twin structure with the RWG with the DSTWG acting as a nexus group but smaller and more action driven while the RWG will become more of the information sharing forum.
- The DSTWG has 24 members which include UN agencies, NGOs, cluster representatives and working groups. Co-chaired by UNDP, IOM and an NGO (still being finalized). The first meeting happened on

the 25<sup>th</sup> of November with smaller meetings planned for this week noting the need to facilitate DS work at the local level.

- Operational framework has been drafted and is being refined.
- The three over-arching objectives are
  - (i) Improved conditions in return areas;
  - (ii) Support for local integration or resettlement; and
  - (iii) Facilitated movement (eg Salamiyah and AAF)
- Approaches and guiding principles
  - (i) Government ownership;
  - (ii) Avoidance of reliance on top-down, national planning alone;
  - (iii) Area-level planning.
- DSTWG will provide updates regularly through the RWG meeting and discussions can be fed back into the DSTWG.

#### Discussion:

- Question from WFP on the area-based coordination for Sinjar.
  - DSTWG noted that broadly, there might be different focal points depending on who is active in a particular location and there might be a need to take a more committee approach based on engagement with authorities in Ninewa and KRI. So the idea for Sinjar for example might link Dohuk and Ninewa as a steering committee. Still initial brainstorming.
  - PLC mentioned that they have livelihood projects in Sinjar (Qataniya and surrounding villages) and would like to coordinate with other partners so that they don't duplicate. Email address was shared in chat for partners to link up.
  - UNHCR commented that in Sinjar, there is a community support center in Sinuni that provides protection support and they can share additional information.
  - Shelter and NFI cluster noted that we must not confuse pure humanitarian work and the longer-term needs that the DS actors are engaged in. DSTWG added that humanitarian and ds must be looked at as a continuum and not as either/or.

#### 4) REACH: REDS Factsheet on Qairawan and Markaz Tooz Khurmato

*(Presentation and Factsheets attached for more details)*

\*Limitations

Data collection includes qualitative and quantitative data based on key informant level data and therefore indicative.

Sample size was small 36 KIs for Qairawan and 46 KIs for Tooz.

Just indicative of needs and issues.

Few female KIs. Remote format (phone limiting possibility of discussing sensitive topics).

#### **Key findings for Markaz Tooz:**

- Recent returns were reportedly driven by the perceived improved access to services and humanitarian assistance and safety and security situation in Markaz Tooz Khurmato.
- Around 200 families have arrived to Markaz Tooz and 500 families expected to return

- Returns resulted in a perceived reduced access to services and assistance and less available job opportunities. However, family reunification resulted in an increase of services and availability of job opportunities.
- IDPs families expected to depart Markaz Tooz Khurmato sub-district in the six months due to the lack of assistance and job opportunity
- Safety and security concerns will need to be addressed in Markaz Tooz to enable sustainable returns due to existing perceptions and concerns related to the 2014 conflict and occupation.
- NGOs were reportedly implementing activities in Markaz Tooz Khurmato at the time of data collection. The availability of Humanitarian assistance was perceived as a factor to encourage returns across respondent groups.
- **Priority Needs:**  
 Health care and education cited as common priority for all KI groups  
 Community leaders: Water and sanitation, electricity and housing rehabilitation  
 Returnees: livelihoods, housing rehabilitation  
 IDPs: livelihoods, housing rehabilitation, water and sanitation  
 Remainees: Electricity and waste disposal
- IDPs reported to have less access to housing and housing rehabilitation, livelihoods and basic public services.

#### Impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the related local restrictions and measures

- COVID-19 movement restrictions were reported as an expected barrier for further return of families to Markaz Tooz during the six months.
- Access to housing rehabilitation, basic public services and livelihoods were affected due to COVID-19 related movement restrictions the closure of the relevant offices or departments
- Hospitals, public health center and medical staff were reportedly not prepared or trained to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Key findings on movements in Al-Qairawan Sub-district**

- Report from KIs: Al-Qairawan has a positive environment in terms of security and cohesion between the groups
- Between 12-21 families returned due to the increase of safety and security to their AoO in Al-Qairawan compared to previous areas of displacement
- many IDPs use Al-Qairawan as a transit location before they return to their AoO, as they are secondary displaced
- Differences reported in the access to services between different groups
- Further efforts needed to restore the infrastructure in Al-Qairawan
- The majority of the pre-2014 population has returned to Al-Qairawan. Between 91% to 97% have returned to their AoO.
- Movement into and out of the area were affecting the perception of access to jobs and having varying effects on population groups.

- The departure of IDPs is viewed as contributing to less assistance and reducing available labourers according to returnee KIs.
  - The departure of host community members especially business owners was perceived as a factor for negatively affecting the job opportunities
  - Challenges of damaged homes, lack of basic services and job opportunities are reported obstacles to return
  - IDPs reported to have less access and housing rehabilitation, livelihoods and basic public services. Returnees indicated lack of access to services such as housing and being at risk of eviction
  - Healthcare cited as a priority and the priority needs reported by community leaders were water and sanitation, electricity and education. Returnees also highlighted housing rehabilitation, livelihoods and education.
  - IDPs reported feeling less engaged in humanitarian projects
- All population feel safe in the Community in Al-Qairawan and this has been a pull factor for returns

#### Impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the related local restrictions and measures

- COVID-19 movement restrictions were reported as a barrier for the return of families to Al-Qairawan during the six months previous to data collection.
- Access to housing rehabilitation, basic public services, justice, education and livelihoods were affected due to the restrictions of movement.
- Hospitals, public health centers and medical staff were reported as not being prepared to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Access to jobs in particular daily wage labour was affected by the pandemic.

#### Discussion:

- Question about given the transit point nature of Qairawan whether IDPs whose areas of origin are in Markaz Sinjar are currently settled in Qairawan as they are unable to return at the moment?
- REACH mentioned that the IDPs are arriving from Al-Salamiyah and Ninewa non-camp area from Ba'aj and Mosul but we do not have data on their areas of origin but their last displacement points. Through the Reds we can only know the areas of origin of the key informants and not the families.
- IOM asked that between close to 91/97% of the population had returned and what impact that might have had on the host community.
- REACH responded that it is a question for community leaders without a time frame.
- DTM added clarity that the data is not representative and qualitative information, if you want to look at composition of IDPs rather look at the master list. The findings are indicative. REACH agreed.

#### 5) AOB

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- NPC asked confirmation MOMD had indicated that they do not have enough money so they will most likely split the IQD1, 5 million return grant into two and distribute the other half later.



- RWG noted that they had received the same information and we are following up to confirm whether this is the case.
- IMC asked a general question about the definition of returnees (voluntary/forced) noting that currently donors are not interested in supporting returnees rather focusing on camp and out of camp IDPs, despite the current large movements from camps, added that humanitarian donors are not willing to aid returnees alone. Is there any effort from the UN to advocate with the donors to provide support to returnees?
- DTM noted that returnees is based on a purely geographical perspective, we cannot assess the intentions/desires of IDPs. There is some information from CCCM about whether departures are voluntary or not. It is a fluid concept. We differentiate returnees from IDPs in secondary displacement is have they returned to their original neighborhood or village of origin, so if a IDP has returned to his/her district/sub-district of origin and not to their original village we would not classify them as a returnee. The more difficult one is when an IDP does not return to their original residence which is more quantifiable than voluntary/involuntary but is still difficult because sometimes someone might rent accommodation, so at the moment we limit returnee to neighborhood/village. Prior, it used to be district and now we report at location of return, so for Sinjar for example, those who return to the district and not to the village of origin are classified as secondary displaced.
- END of Meeting