

RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 31 May 2022
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-13:00 pm
- ❖ **Location:** IOM Conference Room, Erbil & Remote connection via Teams

In Attendance: Child Protection Sub-Cluster, REACH, National Protection Cluster, NL Embassy, Arbeiter-Samriter-Bund (ASB), War Child UK, DSTWG, PRM Office at the US Embassy Baghdad, Dorcas Aid International, PRM Office at the US Consulate General-Erbil, Consortia Coordinator - Solidarites International, TGH GRO, SNFI Cluster, SEDO, USAID/BHA, DRCPUI, INTERSOS, Dorcas Aid International, UNHCR Protection Cluster, UNAMI – OPAA, UNAMI- DSO, ACTED-MSL, Dorcas Aid International Program Manager, CADUS, Mercy Hands, TdH Italy, UNHP/FFIA, and IRCS.

Agenda:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of April minutes and follow up on action points.
- 2) **CCCM Cluster Context Update:** Camps and Informal Site Update
- 3) **REACH ReDS Presentation:** Markaz Hatra Sub-district Factsheet.
- 4) **DSTWG Update:** DSTF and DSTWG Update
- 5) **IOM Presentation: Lived Experiences of IDPs in Return and Protracted Displacement: The Case of Falluja Region**
- 6) **AOB**

Action	By who
Re-invite OCHA to present on HRP and Transition	RWG

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

- **Follow up on action Point from April's meeting:** DSTWG and OCHA to provide updates on the transition plan.
Update: OCHA was not available this month to present on the HRP and transition and may be available for the June RWG. DSTWG will provide update on progress so far during the DS update. (For further information, please see the DS updates below.)

- 2) **CCCM Cluster Context update:** Camps and Informal Site Update

Informal sites:

Balad and Samarra

- Renewed eviction threat on May 12 for Balad train station site and for Al Omar Unfinished school in Sammara - threat with 24 hours noticed shared. Government engagement from OCHA and IOM –

RWG subsequent notice that both evictions would be on hold. Reoccurring trend of eviction notice and then withdrawal.

- In Balad site access issues also regularly occurring; followed by local advocacy (IOM and OCHA) and then the granting of access permissions. At least 5 different blockage events affecting CCCM and WASH since March – typically only one day.
- Extended SAD ABC scheduled for Monday 23rd in Samarra but cancelled unfortunately – this meeting was seen as a necessary pathway to move forward on some of the reoccurring eviction and access and barriers to return.
- CCCM held coordination meeting May 16 to convene partners including the few DS actors that are working in the villages of return; sharing of information, action points related to updating collaboratively developed Response Profile and gathering more info on potential relocation locations. DS work in return villages limited + major security issues.
- AAF informal site; IOM's facilitated voluntary to support on Thursday 134 HH – potential high level visit from the MoMD Minister. May be second round of movement for some families after exams.

Ninewa:

Hokna informal site in Zummar was fully vacated following eviction threat and two phases of movement – all the households are originally from Sinjar and previously displaced to Dohuk before settling in Telafar – all left to Sumel and Zakho in Dohuk and are currently renting shared houses but have reported lost livelihoods opportunities following the eviction. ACTED coordinating support for these families who report poor living conditions. In Mosul, six informal sites hosting 68 families (413 individuals), mostly schools belonging to the Directorate of Education, vacated before Eid.

Camps:

- Duhok Governor approved shelter upgrades in the Duhok camps - positive step in camp transition planning and improving site conditions as well as reducing fire risk. Shelter Cluster working on the details roll-out of the self-upgrading process, including review of technical guidance and issues related to site planning and work with government engineers on monitoring and technical support.
- Food assistance in camps: Recent confirmation from WFP that from June distribution onwards, food assistance will be targeted in camps – the specific modality and methodology for the targeting has yet to be confirmed by WFP.

Discussion

- Question: According to the media, over 1000 individuals left their houses during the recent conflict in the Sinjar region. Is there any update on the family from the CCCM side? Have they returned? Have they remained in the IDP camp?
 - CCCM: According to our understanding, more than 1,700 families have arrived at IDP camps, with approximately 700 households having returned thus far. OCHA, on the other hand, provided extensive information at a recent meeting.
 - CCCM citing information from OCHA stated that: During the escalation of tensions in Sinjar over Eid, some 1,746 families, primarily Yazidis who had returned from Duhok to Sinjar over the previous 18 months, had moved from Sinjar back to Duhok. Of these 1,693 households arrived in camps. Since then, around 1,000 of these families had departed the camps. Families

either staying with relatives or in vacant tents in the camps - camp management waiting for situation to settle before formally admitting the IDPs to the camps. Camp management and IOM DTM are monitoring the movement situation.

- Question: Additional information from ACTED regarding the Hokna informal site eviction, including the needs of the evicted families?
 - ACTED: ACTED is following up on the evicted households' cases to register them for the MPCA, which is currently in the process. More details can be provided with the interested partners.
 - CCCM: ACTED has comprehensive data on needs derived from their remote assessments, which they shared with Partners operating in Tal Afar and Dohuk. It is advisable that ACTED will recirculate if you have not yet received it.

3) **DSTWG Updates:** DSTF and DSTWG Update

(Please refer to the full presentation link for further details)

DSTWG Updates: Humanitarian Transition Discussions

There are bilateral discussions being conducted between the DSTWG and the Clusters to determine to what extent clusters will hand over some coordination functions to the DS architecture and if so, what these functions would be and how they can be accommodated within the DS architecture. The discussions will contribute to an upcoming HCT retreat on the transition.

Expansion of the MCNA to survey more host communities

REACH will add 3 more DS-related questions to the 2022 MCNA and will expand the assessment to include more host community to give more comparative data between IDPs, Returnees and Host community.

- 1,300 members of the host community, approximately.
- 10 districts: Erbil, Sumail, Sinjar, Al-Fallujah, Baquba, Tooz Khurmato, Al Rutba, Al-Baaj, Al-Hawiga, Al-Hatra (pending security).
- Rolls out by June 1st, 2022.

Discussion

- Question: Regarding the MCNA, how were those 10 districts selected?
 - REACH: To cover areas with data-proven needs of particular interest to DS actors, REACH will expand 2022 MCNA data collection to include host community data from 10 districts in Iraq. Host community data allows for cross-group comparison, which will show, for example, whether an issue is most widely felt among displaced or previously displaced households, or whether an issue is experienced among all population groups within an area. Using the 2021 HNO, REACH identified districts containing more than 15,000 People in Need for at least one population group (IDPs or returnees) in the district, as well as having an average HNO

Severity level of 4 and 5 (out of 5). With these criteria, 10 districts were identified (five of which overlap with ABCs) as follows: Erbil, Sumail, Sinjar, Al-Fallujah, Baquba, Tooz Khurmato, Al-Rutba, Al-Baaj, Al-Hawiga, and Al-Hatra.

- RWG: In March/April the TORs of the ABC groups were amended to open the ABCs to more partners. Interested partners are encouraged to apply if they have programmatic activities that contribute to DS, operate in the ABC area of interest, and meet the other basic membership criteria.

4) Returns and Durable Solutions (ReDS) Assessment: Hatra District, Ninewa Governorate Preliminary Findings Presentation, Iraq

(Refer to the Presentation [link](#) and factsheet for more details)

Barriers to return:

Barriers to return: The two most reported barriers for further returns included:

- Access to livelihoods and basic public service
 - Limited availability of job opportunities,
 - Limited access to basic public services, and
 - Limited access to medical treatment.
 - Access to livelihoods and basic public service
- Access to housing and housing rehabilitation
 - Destroyed/damaged housing and
 - Former house was rented in AoO.

Access to Durable Solutions' Assistance

Activities/projects implementation: Reportedly there were activities and/or projects mainly implemented by humanitarian and development actors in the area. Reported implemented activities or projects:

- Water, sanitation, and hygiene,
- Protection,
- COVID-19 awareness, and
- Reconciliation and social cohesion.

Assistance as a factor to encourage returns: The three most reported needed humanitarian activities were:

- Livelihoods assistance,
- Housing rehabilitation, and
- Infrastructure rehabilitation,

Access to Housing and Type of Tenure

- The majority of returnee households reportedly resided in owned houses and had HLP documentation to prove ownership.

- The majority of IDP households in the community reportedly resided in houses under verbal rental agreement or hosted by other households in the sub-district.
- The majority of IDP households from the community had HLP documentation to prove ownership.

Reported Proportion of Damaged Housing 24%-33%

Access to Housing Rehabilitation: The three most reported barriers included the:

- Lack of government compensation for rehabilitation,
- Limited financial resources households had to rehabilitate their homes, and
- Lack of reconstruction campaigns or project implementation in the sub-district.

Access to Basic Public Services: The three most reported challenges were:

- Deteriorated conditions in healthcare facilities and shortage of medical staff in the sub-district,
- Lack of rehabilitation of the existing damaged water networks and treatment plants, and
- Lack of rehabilitation of electrical networks and transformers.

Access to Livelihoods: The four most reported challenges were related to:

- Trade and commerce, and private sector,
- Agricultural sector,
- Construction sector, and
- Governmental or public sector.

Support to economy: The main reported economic developments included the revitalization of the:

- Agricultural sector (including livestock),
- Private sector, and
- Construction sector
- Perceptions on Safety and Security.

Discussion

- Comment from NPC: In the upcoming IHF Allocation for General Protection, Hatra has been identified as a key area to cover. Hatra scored high based on the 2022 Intersectoral analysis and specifically:
 - (i) The highest numbers of acute people in need (PIN) reaching extreme and catastrophic levels,
 - (ii) Critical indicators underscoring vulnerability – missing documentation and critical shelter conditions,
 - (iii) Response gaps (current and underserved in 2021) and operational considerations such as access.
- Question: Has REACH considered sharing such assessment findings with the local authorities, especially at the national level - GOI? Are they going to be considered or integrated in the DS and ABCs?
 - REACH: Local governments are one of REACH's primary dissemination target groups. REACH has considered the possibility of translating ReDS data and extracting what may be

most informative to authorities and tested this on the governor of Balad, who remarked that it is the type of information required.

- RWG: There is no ABC in two locations in Ninewa with high needs (Hatra and Talafar) due to limited partner presence. In the initial stages of the Mosul PoA assessment showed that several IDPs from Hatra remain displaced in Mosul due to a lack of basic amenities, citing a shortage of water and lack of livelihoods as reasons for remaining in displacement. While only some priority areas have been identified for the establishment of ABC, outputs such as the ReDS help to inform partners on what humanitarian and development needs are in subdistricts that could still facilitate activities contributing to DS in non-ABC locations like Hatra.
- Question: what is the challenge of access to livelihoods in the construction sector?
 - REACH: The primary challenges included a lack of skilled/non-skilled personnel, as many skilled personnel remains in displacement, according to the KIs. Additionally, the high cost of building materials. The traders encounter obstacles to entering the building material into the sub-district due to security measures imposed at the checkpoints. Furthermore, a limited number of construction campaigns.
The KI recommendations included relevant authorities establish a control system on building material prices. Further details and extractions regarding livelihood can be shared bilaterally with interested partners.
- Question: DTM tracked 70 families that were re-displaced from Markaz Hatra because of drought conditions last year. Did this assessment uncover/ touch on the impact of drought on the decision to return/ sustainability of returns in the area?
 - REACH: The drought condition was noted as a hurdle to returns during the assessment, given that the families rely mostly on agriculture. The factsheet has further information.
- Question: In one slide “public services” is mentioned as a positive impact on returns and in another it is mentioned as a barrier. Can you please elaborate just a bit on that?
 - Access to Public Services was mentioned as a cause for returns in the most recent returns, which occurred six months prior to data collection (The first slide). In addition to the commitment of the government and non-governmental organizations to restore public services. However, the sector has not entirely recovered, and it has been noted that one of the major shortages is access to healthcare, particularly for households with medical concerns. As a result, several families were still unable to return.
 - Comment: In terms of the consequences of drought on agriculture, Mercy Hands undertook an assessment that revealed some returnees were re-displaced because of the drought in their hometown. SAD, Diyala, and Basra were amongst the targeted locations for the assessments.

5) IOM Presentation: Lived Experiences of IDPs in Return and Protracted Displacement: The Case of Falluja Region

Rationale and Methodology

The research study looked at informal settlements in the south of Fallujah to find out who are the people that are still in displacement and the reason they are not returning, or if they consider staying in their locations, or they are considering relocating. The research also sought to understand the dynamics between IDPs and their host communities. The aim was to examine how IOM could support either returns if relevant, or local integration or resettlement.

IDPs from areas under PMF control (Jurf al-Sakhar, Jumbalatiyya and 'Oweisat):

The majority of IDPs who were interviewed were originally from the areas that are currently under PMF control, such as Jurf Al-Sakhar, located between Hila and Fallujah the northwest of Oweisat town in Babil. In Fallujah, most of the IDPs are in Ameriyyat al-Fallujah which is at the south of Fallujah, because they are not permitted by the Mayor of the Fallujah district to settle inside the town of Fallujah.

Other areas, also blocked by PMF, but they were further in the north but still within Anbar governorate, northwest of Jurf Al-Sakhar. These areas belong to **Jumbalatiyya tribes**. The IDPs are overall slightly less vulnerable because they fled their locations earlier than others before their areas were taken over by ISIS, so they have fewer missing persons or imprisoned individuals. They also don't have issues to renew or issue their civil documentation.

The Janabi tribe of Jurf Al-Sakhar who need to issue or renew documents in Musaib reported that their men are too afraid to go there due to fears of kidnappings and arrests that previously happened to Janabi men when they attempted to travel to Musaib. The Janabi are also more likely to have tribal disputes and are perceived to have ISIS affiliation.

Return Intentions

Most of the Jumbalatiyya and Oweisat tribesmen declare that they will immediately return home and rebuild their houses if PMF leave their areas, and some Janabi explained that they will also feel comfortable returning if their areas were re-opened especially those who had properties like land or houses in their areas of origin.

BzieBez

The main host community tribe in that area is Albu Issa. No one there reported any tensions while interviewing local community members. One of the town officials of Bziebez mentioned many IDPs were permitted to live in tents or build small block houses on land owned by Albu Issa tribesmen mostly in the desert side of it. This has increased competition for public services like water and electricity and livelihoods.

Despite this, the degree of social cohesion was surprising as some of the IDPs had made personal connections with Albu Issa (the host community tribe) prior to 2014 through business or marriage ties. The homeowners welcome the IDPs and state they can stay there as long as they want, and they can even build block houses in

their lands until their areas are open again and then they can take the building materials such as the blocks to rebuild houses in their areas of Jurf Al-Sakhar and Jumbalatiyyah.

Bedouins Intentions

There were also several Bedouins from Jazira al Shamiya desert in west Anbar or from some areas from Salahaddin who have lost their cattle during the war, and they had no interest or reason to return to their areas of origin, also another reason being the presence of PMF forces and military operations in their areas which constrains their movements. Many of Bedouins IDPs have previous connections to Ameriyyah al-Fallujah or they have families in this area that have settled there even before 2014. So, they decided to withhold their activities and settle down in houses there. There were also many of them in the town of Fallujah, but they have rented houses prior to 2014 and they have no reason to go back as the rents are expensive inside the city.

Discussion:

- Question: DRC is about to start an HLP assessment in Bziebez, therefore it would be great to hear more about some of your findings before we start data collection. Could you share your email so we can connect further?
 - The report will be finalized and disseminated as soon as possible. In the meantime, contact MÉLISANDE GENAT with any further questions. @megenat@iom.int
- Question: Do we have any data (Figures) on informal sites and impact on urban planning?
 - The numbers are included in the report (to be finalized). Local authorities of Al-Fallujah Ameriyyet, Qai"maqam, DTM data, and local mukhtars had provided the data, which included an estimate of the number of households in each sector. However, the figures shown are from September of last year (not up to date).
 - Comments from CCCM: Based on IOM DTM assessments, CCCM developed informal sites Master list. Interested partners to reach out to CCCM Colleagues.
- Question: The OCHA and the Anbar ABC groups are particularly interested in the Bziebe, where households experience conflict in the dynamics and are blocked from returning, and at the same time as a considerable third pathway to locally integrate in Al-Fallujah. Does IOM research focus on the social, political, and economic hurdles that these families face?
 - The PMF-controlled area of Jurf Al-Sakhar, is mostly divided between two tribal territories, namely (the Janabi tribe portion of the Babil) and (the Jumbalatiyyah tribe, in the north). Once the territories are accessible for the return of the households, the Jumbalatiyyah tribe will be able to return easily given they left their hometowns relatively early owing to relations with Albu Eisa (the host community tribe) and were not participating in ISIS operations. Meanwhile, the Janabi tribe has internal conflicts and has stated an unwillingness to return owing to ISIS

affiliation-related allegations. Furthermore, the majority of the households aim to settle in Al-Fallujah Ameriyyet.

5) AOB

- Yoko Fujimura change positions and will no longer be the IOM co-chair of the DSTWG as of June. Precillar will work with Rene as the IOM DSTWG co-coordinator.
- Next RWG meeting scheduled for June 28, 2022.