

RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 26 July 2022
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-13:00 pm
- ❖ **Location:** IOM Conference Room, Erbil & Remote connection via Teams

In Attendance: Malteser International, Radio Al-Salam, REACH, INTERSOS, Heartland Alliance International, UNHCR Protection Cluster, CCCM Cluster, Solidarites International, DG ECHO, PRM Office - U.S. Consulate General-Erbil, Dorcas Aid International, USAID/BHA, GIZ, Mercy Hands, IOM, TdHIT, UNDP/FFS, Cordaid.

Agenda:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of June minutes and follow up on action points.
- 2) **Context Update:** CCCM Cluster Updates, DTM IDP and Returnee Master List (Round 126)
- 3) **Mercy Hands Presentation:** Displacement is not ending with re-entering. Shelter baseline study, Balad---Salah al-Din
- 4) **DS Updates:** DSTWG updates, ABC updates
- 5) **IOM Research Presentation:** Obstacles to Returnee Reintegration in Iraq: Livelihoods and Economic Security
- 6) **REACH ReDS Assessment Presentation:** Al-Atheem Sub-district, Khalis District, Diyala Governorate, Iraq
- 7) AOB

Action Points	By who
N/A	

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

- No pending action points.
- The endorsement of the previous meeting minutes.

2) **Context update: CCCM Cluster, DTM Updates**

DTM IDP and Returnee Master List (Round 126)

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

Latest Displacement Data (April- June 2022)

As of 30 June 2022, DTM identified 4,969,788 returnees (828,298 families) across 8 governorates, 38 districts and 2,191 locations. A total of 10,074 new returnees were recorded during this round, which is slightly higher than the number of new returnees recorded in the January-March 2022 period but remains among the lowest number of returns recorded since they commenced in April 2015. Additionally, 1,177,234 IDPs (202,206 families) were recorded across 18 governorates, 105 districts and 2,792 locations.

Integrated Location Assessment VII: Coverage

- Number of Assessed Locations: 3,717
 - 1,935 locations with IDP families (vs 2,792 in ML 126)
 - 2,154 locations with returnee families (vs 2,191 in ML 126)
- # of IDPs reached: 195,793 families, 97% of the total (Camps are included)
- # of returnees reached: 827,201 families, 99% of total

Informal Sites Assessment: Coverage

- Residential destruction: Identified in 130
 - 376 sites with IDPs
 - 27 sites with returnees
- Extended informal sites assessment was conducted in 192 sites where 15 or more families resided
 - 185 sites with IDPs
 - 9 sites with returnees

Discussion

- Question: Is it feasible to track trends in movement from certain locations, such as north Sinjar and Sinuni (Shimal sub-district)?
 - DTM: The data segregation is accessible online at the governorate, district, sub-district, and location levels on the DTM website: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>. Please refer to the online master list's "IDPs and Returnee dataset" (Excel files) for the needed data. Please get in touch with us at iraqdtm@iom.int if you require any further information.

- Question: Could you please elaborate on the informal sites' map?
 - DTM: The map that is being displayed is from the previous round and has not yet been updated. Similarly, the purpose of it is to illustrate the location and population density. On the map, locations with a larger population are darker.
- Question: For the locations where there had previously been returns, after which the residents were re-displaced. How does DTM capture the re-displacement? Is there a mechanism to indicate the distinctions between the re-displacements from the location that formerly had returns and the ones that did not?
 - DTM: DTM tracks the location that had no returns, and produces a dataset, the team tracks the reasons for no return. In the master list, DTM tracks the information if it is displacement for the first time. For instance, the recent IDP movements overall in this round significantly decreased (700 new displacements), while the master list reveals that there are 6,500 arrivals from other locations of displacement and 1,400 re-displaced individuals, or returned to the area of origin, and now back to the locations.
- Question: Have new displacements been triggered as a result of security concerns or climate change?
 - DTM: DTM team began to separate the data. Given the economic situation and the limitation of employment in Baghdad, the DTM team spotted numerous new arrivals from there. However, DTM does not necessarily include them in our IDP caseload, unless they are displaced as a result of the conflict.
Furthermore, DTM indicates whether new arrivals from Baghdad arrived from their previous location as places of origin or are as of displacement.

CCCM Cluster Updates: Camps Update

- Permissions for shelter upgrades have been granted in Duhok, and residents of the camps have been informed that if they ask for permission, whether for concrete blocks or mud bricks, they will obtain it. The process's adoption is slower than anticipated. Nonetheless, the CCCM cluster will keep partners informed of the requests for self-upgrade permissions requested by the families.
- EDMCR instituted an intentions survey in Harsham and Baherka Camps in Erbil, causing uncertainty and raising concerns among the families about whether the camps will be closed. This week, the EMCs will be targeted to reach all IDP camps. The authorities claim that it is only a simple survey to understand more about the intentions of the households. This has been amplified by the statements made by the head of the JCCC in a media interview on July 25. In the interview, he illustrated the KRG's commitment to not closing any IDP camps and the concept that returns should be voluntary. Moreover, statements of low intention to return amongst IDPs in the camp, an appeal reflection on the acknowledgment that the UN funding is reducing and that services are being handed over, and an appeal to federal authorities to support that.

Discussion

- Question: Do you have any idea if some of the partners plan to contribute to the shelter upgrades in Duhok camps? or the government is only allowing self-upgrade by IDPs themselves?
 - CCCM: The permission to enable the families for the self-shelter update was what was negotiated with the authorities. There are currently no actors contributing to the shelter upgrades.

3) Mercy Hands Presentation: Displacement is not ending with re-entering. Shelter baseline study, Balad--Salah al-Din

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

Objectives of the study

- To improve the understanding of constraints and challenges faced by returnees, and their current state of needs
- To identify the main needs of the returnees in the Balad District
- To explore grant opportunities - returnee needs vs. donor, government priority

Conclusions

- Some of Social Cohesion's main elements such: Social services; Housing; Employment; Social protection, are lacking to meet the rights related to these elements
- The lack of a mechanism or a proper one that supports the needs of returnees it is vital to prevent the re-displacement of returnees
- The above-mentioned elements of social cohesion are being violated
- The re-entering is meeting just a goal, of making possible the return, but opens up whole other new problems and challenges caused by forced re-entering

- The returnees are facing obstacles that impede their ability to find durable solutions in return areas, including restoration of their housing, employability

The Iraqi government is increasingly pushing for displaced persons to return to their area of origin but prematurely, often before conditions for a safe and dignified return are met.

Discussion

- Question: Have discussions with authorities been addressed throughout the assessment phase to obtain their perspective on the restoration of public services including access to water and schools, that are currently in a semi-destroyed state? What does the government contribute to a sustainable return that allows families to settle and communities to be rebuilt?
 - Mercy Hands: In the study, the Mercy Hand mainly considered the viewpoint of the community leaders. Interviews with local authorities, however, reveal the scarcity of allotted funds for renovation and the acknowledgment of the needs. As stated in the study, fostering functional accountability is essential to enabling the government to gradually take ownership of issues including compensation and budget allocation. However, for the time being, if there are no funds available.
- Question: How was the situation in the Sayed Gharib area, north of Salahuddin, taken into account in the research given the concerns about local problems and people's safety there?
 - Mercy hands focused on the issues raised by returnees that hinder durable solutions, such as the inability to renovate houses, a lack of employment and protection, and government support.

4) DS Updates: DSTWG, and ABC Updates

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

General DSTWG Updates

DSTWG sub-groups

- Monitoring and Assessment: Monitoring Framework was Endorsed and currently developing reporting guidelines.
- Housing and HLP: Guidelines on HLP Rights and Mediation Endorsed and shared with ABCs.
- Initiation of a livelihoods sub-group.

DSTF updates

- Endorsed new focal points
- Endorsed the inclusion of cluster/sector focal points into ABC membership
- Discussion around the funding of DS activities for NGOs, partners encouraged to use PoAs and engagement in ABCs for bilateral fundraising with donors.

ABC update: ABC Overview 2021/22

- 8 ABCs (Baaj, Diyala, East Anbar, Hawija, Mosul, Salah al Din, Sinjar, West Anbar)
- 1542 projects being implemented to an estimated value of US\$ 520 million currently implemented under the ABCs
- An estimated 33% of activities are livelihood activities and 7% are housing rehabilitation

Discussion

- Question: Is the monitoring framework a public portal, or is it individualized?
 - M&A Sub-Group: The monitoring framework is finalized, and the reporting at the output level will be presented at the different ABCs. And at the outcome level, it's been more difficult, as it's using existing data sources while IM capacity at the DSTWG level is currently limited.

5) IOM Research Presentation: Obstacles to Returnee Reintegration in Iraq: Livelihoods and Economic Security

(Refer to the Presentation link for more details)

Returnee overview

Returnee rates: Overall, 80 percent of all families across the country who became displaced during the conflict have returned home. The return rates at governorate level range from the lowest in Baghdad (66%), to Dahuk where all families (100%) have returned home. At district level, the lowest return rates are recorded in Sinjar (36%) and Al-Ba'aj (35%), followed by Tuz Khurmatu (62%), Al-Fares, and Balad (both 70%).

Reasons for return: 5% of returnees report having returned to their area of origin due to the availability of opportunities for livelihoods and employment.

Key findings: Challenges accessing livelihoods and economic security as barriers to reintegration

Criteria 1: Livelihoods and employment

- Limited access to employment opportunities
- Presence of inoperative businesses
- Presence of inoperative agriculture

Criteria 2: Economic security: This section presents information across key economic security indicators, including the main types of income sources, household levels of economic activity, as well as cases of households with insufficient funds for food, shelter, and other basic needs.

Discussion

- Question: Despite the difficulties that returnees in remote areas face than the urban centers, the graph comparing economic security, ranks Ramadi above Mosul. Yet, when it comes to agriculture inoperative, Mosul is at the top. Does the report go into detail to describe what sort of economic activities are needed to help partners, to invest in agriculture services or construction? and What kind of information would be accessible to guide the partner in this regard?
 - On the Agriculture indicator particularly, there is a caveat in the question that indicates comparison with pre-ISIL level, simply locations such as Mosul, the large city, is agriculture inoperative ranks high as people are displaced from the districts where agriculture practices take place.
In terms of data, the objective of this study is to highlight the geographical differences across districts at the national level. In addition to outlining the most severe districts, which face livelihood and economic security challenges. Nonetheless, all of the data sources are provided, particularly the DTM Dataset for further details.
- Comment from UNDP FFS: One agricultural barrier is farmer markets. Since farmers' products have little value to sell to develop their production, imports from neighboring countries are extremely competitive.

6) REACH ReDS Assessment Presentation: Al-Atheem Sub-district, Khalis District, Diyala Governorate, Iraq

(Refer to the Presentation link for more details)

Assessment Methodology:

- Multi-sectoral assessment tool, which combined qualitative and quantitative data.
- Data collection was done remotely by phone between 7 May and 7 June 2022, adapted to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Purposive sampling methods were employed to identify KIs. Findings should therefore be considered as indicative.
- Methodology based on key informant interviews (KIIs).

Access to Durable Solutions Assistance: The top four implemented activities/projects were:

- Water, sanitation, and hygiene,
- Housing rehabilitation,
- Reconciliation and social cohesion, and
- Food programmes.

Access to Housing and Type of Tenure: The majority of households from the community reportedly had housing, land, and property (HLP) documents proving ownership.

Reported Proportion of Damaged Housing 40%-70%

Access to Livelihoods: The three most reported challenges were:

- Lack of support and neglect from the local government towards the reactivation of agriculture,
- Water scarcity, climate change, and challenges for land irrigation, and
- Lack of construction and reconstruction campaigns.

AOB

- The introduction to durable solutions online training has been announced by the Iraq RWG. The training will be conducted in Arabic and include interactive exercises in August 2022. There are only 30 seats available. The IRAQ RWG would consider holding another session if the number of applicants exceeded the training's capacity. The RWG members will soon receive further information in due course.
- Next RWG meeting scheduled for August 30, 2022.