

ANBAR RETURN PROCESS MAPPING

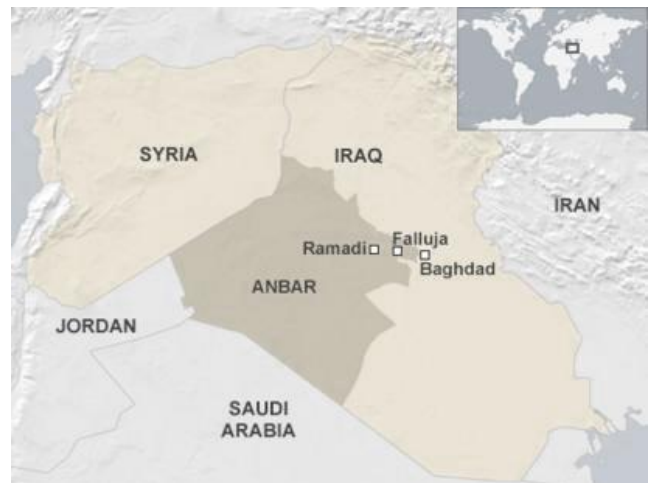
INTRODUCTION

The RWG conducts return process mapping (RPM) to outline the general procedures IDPs are expected to follow to return to areas of origin. The mapping involves engagement with IDPs, authority and government counterparts and, where relevant, camp management entities. The mapping intends to increase the awareness of actors involved in returns procedures as well as to engage in a dialogue with authority counterparts to share feedback from those involved in the process, particularly if there are opportunities to ease the procedures for IDPs. In contrast to other RPMS, this is an extended overview of Anbar, including the security context and relevant stakeholders involved in returns processes, detailed returns procedures as well as an annex providing district level return situation overviews for Anbar. The processes outlined below include those relevant to in and out of camp IDPs in KRI, in other governorates of Federal Iraq as well as IDPs within Anbar governorate. All information is relevant at time of writing and may be subject to change. Return process mapping for other areas in Iraq can be found on the following [link](#).

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Anbar Governorate is the largest governorate in Iraq by area. Encompassing much of the country's western territory, it shares borders with Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Out of the estimated 1.7 million people who were displaced due to the conflict with ISIL, 91% (or 1.5 million) people have returned to their areas of origin within Anbar.¹ About 146,000 IDPs are still displaced within the governorate and in other Iraqi governorates, with the majority displaced in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Baghdad.²

It is estimated that around 90% of Anbar's inhabitants are adherents of the Sunni branch of Islam and most belong to the Dulaim tribe. The remaining ten percent are either Christians or other minorities. The socio-political fabric of Anbar governorate has traditionally revolved around tribes and local hierarchies. Tribal leaders and Sunni clerics generally still retain a high level of authority in local affairs. Tribal dynamics are particularly notable in Haditha, Qaim, Ramadi and Amiriyat Al-Falluja districts. The most well-known tribes such as Jughayfe, Dulaimi, Albo Namir, Albo Mahal, Karbuli and Essawi have a long heritage and history.



SECURITY CONTEXT

¹ IOM DTM, June 2020.

² IOM DTM, Masterlist, displacement trends, June 2020.

The security dynamics in Anbar are influenced by a variety of complex and overlapping factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, residual ISIL presence and enduring counter-ISIL operations, competition for influence between different armed actors, tribal dynamics and political disputes. All these numerous factors have had a negative impact on the overall return of the remaining IDPs to their areas of origins (AoOs) in Anbar, especially those with perceived ISIL affiliation whom, on many occasions, were pushed into secondary displacement after attempts to return. Below is an overview of security actors and stakeholders that are involved in returns processes.

- **Iraqi Security Forces**

The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are the main security actors in Anbar, namely the Iraqi Army, federal and local police (also called Emergency regiments) as well as other specialized agencies such as the Explosive Ordnance Division (EOD), which is responsible for IED clearance. ISF maintain a notable presence in the governorate, but two different operations commands, Anbar Operations Command (AOC) and Al-Jazeera Operations Command (JOC), share operational control in the governorate. The latter covers most of the territory in the west apart from Rutba. ISF typically spearhead counter-IS operations, manage key checkpoints, monitor governorate borders, and ensure protection of strategic infrastructure. The police mainly operate in population centers and in the countryside (federal police), maintaining law and order, including protection of government buildings and public areas, handling checkpoint duties and other similar tasks.

Each of the above-mentioned entities have a specific division called Intelligence, which is responsible for tracking people suspected of terrorism and other crimes. These divisions keep a database of suspected ISIL members and their collaborators, and perform security checks on IDPs who plan to return to their areas of origin, and are therefore responsible for approving security clearance for returning IDPs.

- **Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)**

Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) - also known as Al-Hashid Al-Shaabi - maintain security in some parts of the governorate especially in parts of Karma, Jazerat Al-Khaldiyah, Jazerat Al-Ramadi, Jazerat Heet and Al-Qaim. They also have significant presence in Rahaliyah and Al-Nukhaib to reinforce security positions of the forces responsible for maintaining the security of Kerbala governorate. The PMF are also engaged in the security clearance of returnees at governorate and district level. They have a representative in the Anbar Operations Command to undertake their part in the clearance process, using the PMF's own database to crosscheck data of returning IDPs.

- **Tribal PMF**

Sunni PMF - oftentimes referred to as tribal PMF - are a notable security actor in Anbar governorate alongside the regular ISF. Many of these groups were established within the framework of the so called "Sahwa" of the 2006 Sunni awakening, when tribal leaders were supported to form their own protection units in cooperation with multi-national forces against Al-Qaeda. As such, Sunni PMF are in fact the military components which every major tribe and most smaller tribes have. When PMF units were being formed in 2014, the Government of Iraq (GoI) directly imposed restrictions on tribes in Anbar forming their own units. This was a decision imposed to limit tribal power but was also widely accepted by tribal leaders in the governorate due to a reluctance to return to a plurality of armed tribal groups that could forcefully challenge each other and the government in particular. Accordingly, PMFs in Anbar, though often led by Sheikhs, were formed around broad geographical areas, often with a mix of tribal membership. PMFs in Anbar are therefore just given numbers and not names that might tie them to any specific tribe or movement. However, certain areas such as Qaim and Haditha are much more tribally homogenous, which accordingly affects the make-up of some forces. As intended, local forces have primarily been deployed in their local

areas only. However, in some cases, largely due to shortages of ISF in certain areas, tribal PMF have been deployed outside their local areas in support of ISF operations. Tribal PMF play no major role in the security clearance process for return; however, the leaders of these units often engage in facilitating the return of IDPs with community-related issues or those with perceived ISIL affiliation. These leaders are highly influential in their communities and can assist in finding solutions for tribal problems such those that may lead to retaliation against ISIL-affiliated families.

RETURN PROCEDURES

There are multiple categories of returns as outlined in the table below:

	In camp	Out of camp
Returns from KRI	IDPs have two options to apply for security clearance to return: 1) Through MoMD, who will forward their requests to NOC for further consideration 2) Initiate the process themselves by visiting the mayor's office in their AoOs This does not include the required security approvals relevant to KRG authorities	The IDP head of household is required to visit the mayor's office in the AoO to apply for the security clearance to return This does not include the required security approvals relevant to KRG authorities
Returns from another GOI area outside Anbar	IDPs have two options to apply for the security clearance to return 1) Through MoMD, who will forward their requests to NOC for further consideration 2) Initiate the process themselves by reaching out to the mayor's office in their AoOs	The IDP head of household is required to visit the mayor's office in the AoO to apply for the security clearance to return
Returns from within Anbar	IDPs can apply for security clearance to return directly through camp management. MoMD can also facilitate the process in coordination with relevant local authorities	The IDP head of household is required to visit the mayor's office in the AoO to apply for the security clearance to return

Registration for security clearance (before return):

The general procedure for return is uniform depending on whether an IDP is in a camp or out of camp setting, with a few variations for IDPs displaced in different areas (the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the federal governorates and within Anbar). There are also specific procedures for IDPs with perceived affiliation with ISIL. In general, IDPs intending to return must first obtain security clearance from their areas of origin *prior* to return. All IDPs are required to finalize their endorsement of residency upon return to confirm their place of residence. In some instances, MOMD will facilitate this process for large scale returns by liaising with the Anbar security authorities but in most cases IDPs are required to follow up individually.

1. Out-of-camp IDPs currently in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

- The head of household is required to visit the area of origin to start the application process; therefore, they will be responsible for their own movement, including passing through checkpoints. There are three checkpoints in western Anbar which the head of household will need to pass:
 - The first checkpoint is located at the entrance of Rawa district. The head of household is required to provide a sponsor before the ISF (Iraqi Army) to proceed with the visit to Rawa city. An ISF member will typically write the name of the head of household, their ID number, phone numbers, the name of his sponsor and full address on a sheet. The sponsor's ID will be kept by the checkpoint personnel until the head of household leaves the city.
 - The second checkpoint is located in Jbab (the first position of the 8th brigade). The head of household will be asked to identify a sponsor during their stay even if it is a short visit. The sponsor is required to physically come to the checkpoint, after which the head of household will register their name at the checkpoint and proceed.
 - The third checkpoint is located at entrance of Al-Qaim city (also called "Kesan" checkpoint), which is managed by PMF (Amn Al-Hashid). The same procedure as in the second checkpoint is applied here (the same sponsor can provide sponsorship in both second and third checkpoints).
- The head of household is required to visit the mayor's office in the area of origin to apply for clearance to return. The application is forwarded to the Anbar Operations Command, the entity responsible for issuing clearance. It normally takes 1-2 months to issue the clearance. The result of the application may be discovered through one of several channels (social media, calls from the mayor's office or follow up from family or friends at the area of origin), as there is no standard mechanism. If the result is still not known, the IDP head of household may need to follow up individually with the mayor's office in the area of origin.
- The head of household is also required to visit *Asayish in the area of displacement* to inform them of their intention to return and prepare for the departure. IDPs and returnees have suggested having the head of household fill a simple clearance form signed by themselves and the owner of the shelter they are renting in the area of displacement, to ensure that all financial and corresponding obligations are addressed as per the rental lease agreement. This form, which is a form of endorsement, would protect the household from future claims by the shelter's owner of potential damage to the shelter or of failure to fulfill the payment of the remaining financial dues. The form is also submitted to the *Asayish*.
- In case a family needs to transport a large amount of furniture from the area of displacement to the area of origin, a facilitation letter would be required from *Asayish* in the area of displacement to facilitate the movement of the furniture through KRI checkpoints. The endorsement of residency letter would be sufficient to facilitate movement through all checkpoints that are outside the KRI (such as those in Kirkuk, Salah al-din, Diyala, Baghdad and Anbar). Standard security checks may take place at these checkpoints before returning households can proceed any further.
- Upon return, the head of household is required to visit the local Mukhtar at the area of origin to obtain the "endorsement of residency" to confirm their place of residence. The process includes providing ID copies of each family member, a copy of a residency card and a copy of the PDS card. The Mukhtar will initiate the endorsement by signing the endorsement letter and ask the head of household to collect signatures (approvals) from local intelligence, local police and the mayor's office. The approval

from intelligence/ local police is reported to take between two to seven days. Once the intelligence/local police approval is given, the head of household can collect the letter and visit the mayor's office to collect his immediate signature. The cost of the endorsement is reported to be 2,000 to 5,000 IQD – this amount is normally collected by the Mukhtar only. Households are normally given 10-14 days from their date of arrival (return) to start this process.

2. In-camp IDPs currently in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI):

- The head of household approaches the camp management to inform them of their intention to return.
- The camp management consults with the MoMD representative in KRI to facilitate the security clearance for the family in coordination with the relevant security authorities in Anbar (i.e. Anbar Operations Command). The head of household then proceeds with the security clearance process for their household, following the same steps outlined in Section #1 (for out of camp IDPs in KRI).
- In cases where MoMD leads the process of obtaining the security clearance (which is extremely rare and can occur with collective returns only), the approval for return will be issued directly from Anbar Operations Command (AOC) to facilitate the return. The AOC's approval typically takes 1-2 months to be issued. However, the head of household will be required to proceed with obtaining the "Endorsement of Residency" once the family returns to the area of origin. The duration for obtaining the approval from the local intelligence actor in this case is around two to three days, due to the approval that had already been obtained from AOC.
- MoMD usually facilitates the transportation of IDPs and their personal belongings by providing buses and trucks.

3. Out of camp IDPs currently in Federal territories (including Anbar):

- Out of camp IDPs from other governorates, including Anbar, follow the same process as out of camp IDPs from KRI, except for the following:
 - o Should the family have a large amount of furniture to transport from the area of displacement to the area of origin, the endorsement letter would be sufficient to facilitate movement through all checkpoints controlled by the federal government of Iraq (such as those in Kirkuk, Salah al-din, Diyala, Baghdad and Anbar). Standard security checks may take place at these checkpoints before returning households can proceed any further.

4. In-camp IDPs who currently in Federal territories (excluding Anbar)

The process is similar to that followed by in-camp IDPs in KRI, except for the following:

- In case of collective return (more than one family returning at once), which is usually facilitated by MoMD with the relevant local authorities as well as Anbar authorities, the camp management (which is likely managed by the local government or MoMD) will:
 - If the camp is in Baghdad, the local government/MoMD will consult with Baghdad Operations Command and Anbar Operations Command to obtain two facilitation letters that will facilitate the movement of returnees through their respective checkpoints.
 - In case the camp is located in other governorates beside Baghdad, MoMD will liaise with the National Operations Command (NOC) to obtain one letter addressed to the relevant

Operations Command, which will facilitate the movement of returnees through their respective checkpoints.

- MoMD normally facilitates the transportation of IDPs and their personal belongings by providing buses and trucks.

5. For in-camp IDPs who are currently in Anbar, the process is similar to that outlined in the previous section, except for the following:

- In case of collective return (more than one family return at once) which is usually facilitated by MoMD in coordination with the Anbar local government, the camp management (which is likely managed by the local government or MoMD) will provide the governor's office with a list of families with intention to return. The list will contain the full name, area of origin and a functional mobile phone number. The governor's office will forward the list and MoMD request to Anbar Operations Command, who will initiate the security screening process. The security screening will take around one to two months, and the final feedback is shared with the Anbar governor office and MoMD.
- MoMD normally facilitates the transportation of IDPs and their stuff by providing buses and trucks.

6. IDP families with perceived ISIL affiliation (in-camp IDPs in GOI territories):

- The head of household is required to inform the camp management of their household's intention to return to the area of origin.
- The camp management will share the details of the family with Anbar Operations Command through the Anbar governor's office to obtain the required security clearance.
- At the same time, the head of household is required to:
 - Initiate a dialogue with the local community and tribal leaders for the purpose of obtaining their approval for return. This is reported by local authorities as an informal procedure that each family with perceived ISIL affiliation are required to undergo to ensure their acceptance at the areas of origin. The dialogue may be initiated by the head of household or by any of their relatives or friends in the area of origin. The dialogue should conclude with a document signed by 10 community and tribal leaders approving the return of this specific family to the area of origin. Recently, however, the commander of Anbar Operations Command requested that IDP families with perceived ISIL affiliation also collect signatures of ISIL victims in addition to community and tribal leaders. This new approach has complicated the process further but it reportedly aims to protect the returning household from individual acts of revenge once they return - which is a type of incident reported to have occurred in some areas in Anbar such as Qaim, Heet and Jazerat Al-Khaldiyah.

Note: Prior to initiating a broader dialogue with community and tribal leaders, families typically "check" through families, without directly visiting the area, whether there is indicative acceptance of their return. If not, they are unlikely to proceed without further efforts to seek assurances.

- Apply for denunciation through the Criminal Justice Court of the family member who had joined ISIL. Denouncement requires individuals to formally accuse family members of being members of ISIL and committing crimes in court. This mechanism initiates the process of formally expelling and incriminating a member from the community, which can have

repercussions in ongoing or future criminal cases. The judge will then request four to ten eyewitnesses to support the family's claim. Once the eyewitnesses confirm, the judge will release a letter to the local intelligence for their confirmation and submission to the judge, who will then issue the denunciation paper. The denunciation letter should remain with the concerned family for future verification by the ISF.

- Once the family obtains the clearance, the signed reconciliation paper and the legal denunciation paper, they may return to their areas of origin and proceed with the endorsement of residency as mentioned in above sections.

Appeal Process

- There is currently no official appeal process. Households will typically attempt to re-apply and there have been reported cases where they eventually obtained the clearance.

AFTER RETURN

▪ Registration of return with MoMD:

Registration for return with MoMD is done as follows:

1. A request from the IDP family should be submitted to the MoMD branch in the area of displacement to close their file.
2. Once the request is submitted, the branch will forward the request to the relevant MoMD branch in the governorate of origin. A copy will be sent to the ministry headquarters in Baghdad. This step would include the deactivation of the family displacement code.
3. The head of household receives a letter after submitting their request to the MoMD branch in the area of displacement, which they can take directly to the MoMD branch in the governorate of origin and submit with the following documents:
 - Housing endorsement prepared by the local Mukhtar and signed by the Mukhtar, intelligence and the mayor
 - One copy of the head of household ID, nationality certificate (or the national ID), residency card and PDS card
 - One copy of each family member's IDs
 - One copy of the previous Q-card
4. The head of household will receive an SMS or phone call from the MoMD branch in the governorate of return informing them to collect their new return code and wait for further assistance to be provided by MoMD (e.g. food packages, NFIs, return grant and livelihood grant). The time frame for this process can vary greatly, taking anywhere between a few days and 2-3 months.
5. The entire process is free of charge.

NOTES:

1. The entire family is required to return to the area of origin so that MoMD can proceed with finalizing the return file
2. The family must be initially registered as a displaced family; otherwise, they will not be able to register for the return. In case the family failed to register during displacement, the family registration will be made for the displacement and returnee

at the same time. The family must provide the required documents that prove their displacement (confirmation from the mayor office of the area of displacement, any additional docs will be worth)

▪ Follow-up after return

- Once a household returns, they will not be required to proceed with additional procedures as the endorsement of residency is enough to prove their presence and clearance approval. However, on some occasions, different security entities may approach the returnees as well as the host communities and ask them to fill in specific forms for routine population inventory.
- The returnee family is required to update their place of residency with the local authorities (mayor's office, local police and intelligence) if it has changed after obtaining the initial "Endorsement of Residency". This case would require a new endorsement of residency paper from the mukhtar of the area where the new accommodation is located.

▪ Additional Considerations:

- If the family has school-age children enrolled in KRI schools for various periods, they would need to bring a certificate from the relevant directorate of education in KRI or a representative of Anbar's Directorate of Education (DOE) in the KRI to the Anbar DOE to ensure enrollment in Anbar schools after return.
- The majority of IDPs could not manage to relocate their PDS agents from Anbar to KRI as the PDS is not functional in the region. However, upon return, they are required to visit the PDS office located at the mayor's office to re-activate the PDS by confirming their presence in the area of origin.
- While the Government of Iraq's compensation process is not linked to the return process, more compensation claims have been submitted by returnees than those who are still displaced, to date.

ANNEX

DISTRICT RETURN CONDITIONS:

A. Falluja district:

Falluja district has the second highest number of returnees in Anbar, with 552,138 individuals who have returned to date.³ Seven of the least severe locations in Anbar are in Markaz Falluja, ranked based on housing, livelihoods and basic services.⁴ The district accommodates a variety of security actors, whose agendas, SOPs, and training substantially vary. ISF are the major security actor in the area, mainly represented by the Iraqi Army reporting to the Anbar Operations Command. Local police operate under the Ministry of Interior. The Iraqi army is mainly concentrated on the outskirts of Falluja district center, providing safety and security at the eastern, northern, and western entrances to the city. Police forces predominantly operate in populated centers, their duties including manning internal checkpoints. There is also a notable presence of PMF, who mostly operate in Saqlawiyah and Al-Garma sub-districts and in parts of Falluja district center. Both these sub-districts have severe return conditions and are considered hotspots with safety and security as main drivers of severity, although Al-Garma is also known for its widespread housing destruction.⁵ Falluja has the highest number of locations (17) classified as high severity, hosting 95,040 returnees.

B. Ramadi district:

Ramadi district hosts the highest number of returnees in the governorate, with 593,250 individuals who have returned as of June 2020.⁶ The strategic location of the district makes it a hub for trade and traffic, from which the city had gained significant prosperity. The glass and ceramic factory in Ramadi city is the major industrial enterprise in the district and one of the largest employers in the governorate with up to 2,300 people working there. Furthermore, tracts of fertile soil are found along the Euphrates river, which make agriculture the major source of income in small villages in the area, especially in Jazerat Al-Ramadi, Albo Resha and Albo Farraj.

The presence of security actors makes the overall safety and security environment in the district permissive for safe return with the only exception being remote, sparsely populated desert areas in the southern and northern countryside. ISF (Iraqi Army and local police) are the major security actors in the district. Local police are mostly concentrated in population centers and support the Iraqi army at key checkpoints along the main routes connecting Ramadi city with neighboring district centers. The rural countryside is mostly under tribal PMF control, whereas the PMF only maintain limited presence in the Thirthar areas north of Ramadi city. When assessing the top 10 most severe locations in Anbar in terms of overall return conditions, Husaibah Al-Sharqiah sub-district accounts for four of the ten most severe locations in terms of housing destruction, livelihoods, basic services, and damage to agricultural land or fishponds. Lack of employment is also a concern.⁷ The district has the second highest number of returnees living in conditions of high severity (18,666 returnees) in five locations.

³ DTM Return Overview Anbar, June 2020.

⁴ IOM DTM, RWG and Social Inquiry, Return Index Snapshot, September 2020.

⁵ IOM DTM, RWG and Social Inquiry, Return Index Return Dynamics in Anbar Governorate June 2020.

⁶ DTM Return Overview Anbar, June 2020.

⁷ IOM DTM, Returns Working Group, Return Index Snapshot Anbar, September 2020.

C. Heet district:

Heet has the third highest number of returnees after Ramadi and Falluja, with 179,034 returnee individuals in the district. ISF are formally the main security actor in the district and maintain an extensive presence. Iraqi army and emergency police headquarters and their units are mostly stationed in Heet district center, Kubaisa and Baghdadi sub-district. Kubaisa is considered a hotspot sub-district, where the main driver of severity are safety and security concerns. However, two locations (Hay al Jury and Al Sikak) in Markaz Heet are in the top 10 least severe locations in Anbar in terms of livelihoods and basic services.⁸

D. Haditha district:

Haditha district hosts 27,360 returnees. Haditha hosts seven out of the top 10 least severe locations in Anbar based on safety perceptions and social cohesion.⁹ A variety of security actors maintain extensive presence in the district. The ISF, represented by the Iraqi Army reporting to Al-Jazeera Operations Command, mostly operate on the periphery, including providing security of strategic infrastructure (such as Haditha dam), counter-ISIL activities, and EOD operations. The local police reports to the Ministry of Interior and maintains law and order in major population centers. Tribal PMF are deeply entrenched into the Haditha district security landscape since the federal government decided to engage local citizens in maintaining security in their areas in 2014.

E. Ana district:

Ana district is one of the smallest districts in Anbar and has 15,162 returnees.¹⁰ A large fishery at the Haditha lake and several poultry farms in Ana district center are the main enterprises in the district. Due to limited industrial infrastructure, most of which was destroyed during ISIL's offensive in summer 2014, livestock and agriculture are now the main sources of livelihoods in the district.

Ana district continually records one of the lowest security incidents rates in the governorate. The safety and security environment in the district notably changed after ISF and respective allies expelled ISIL from the area in autumn 2017. Since then conflict activity, which was previously confined to frontline areas and mostly comprised direct and indirect fire attacks, as well as aerial activity, began to gradually shift toward ISF arrests and EOD operations. ISF (mainly Iraqi Army and local police) maintain the security situation in the town and the surrounding areas. Presence of tribal PMF is not visible in the district due to the relatively stable security situation.

F. Rawa district:

Rawa district has 15,456 returnees.¹¹ Rawa has extensive tracts of fertile land along the Euphrates river, which makes agriculture the main source of income for its residents. Rawa is also known for fish and poultry production. When compared with other locations in Anbar, a number of locations in Rawa have concerns related to the presence of unexploded ordnances (UXO).¹² ISF (Iraqi Army and local police) and tribal PMF

⁸ IOM DTM, Returns Working Group, Return Index Snapshot Anbar, September 2020

⁹ IOM DTM, Returns Working Group, Return Index Snapshot Anbar, September 2020. These include Hay K 28, Al Khansaa, Al Mutanabi, Hay Al-Haqlaniah Qadim, Barwanah Hay al-Shurta, Hay Khalid Ibn Al Walid and Hay Al-Salam.

¹⁰ IOM DTM Returns Overview Anbar, June 2020.

¹¹ IOM DTM Returns Overview Anbar, June 2020.

¹² Return Index.

share responsibility for security in Rawa district, including manning the main Rawa entrance checkpoint on the southern outskirts of Rawa district center.

G. Qaim District:

Qaim district stretches along the Iraqi-Syrian border. Most of the district's terrain is open desert with large uninhabited areas, marked with hills, plateaus, and canyons. This topography renders these areas uninhabitable and difficult for ISF to fully control. Areas surrounding Qaim city and considerable swaths of Ubur sub-district, however, have rich fertile land, making agriculture the main source of income for the population in these areas. Qaim district also has important industrial infrastructure such as the Akkaz gas and oil field. The eastern part of Qaim district also hosts the Qaim cement factory, which is one of the major cement producers in Iraq. Markaz Al-Qaim sub-district is a hotspot where the main drivers of severity are safety and security with concerns surrounding further violence and the presence of non-state security groups. Despite the economic potential, the lack of livelihood opportunities has contributed to the severity of conditions in the area. Notably, Qaim also has the highest number of individuals living in critical shelter (40%).

ISF are the major security actor in Qaim district, consisting mainly of the Iraqi Army 8th division reporting to Al-Jazera Operations Command. In addition, there are local police that mostly maintain law and order in major population centers. Tufuf PMF is one of the main actors in Qaim district, notably influencing its security landscape. Kata'eb Hizbu Allah and Imam Ali PMF operate along the Iraqi-Syrian border and in the district's southern countryside adjacent to the Okashat area in Rutba district.

H. Rutba district:

Rutba is the largest district in Anbar and Iraq by area. To date, 27,528 returnees have returned to areas of origin in the district. The Okashat Phosphate Factory lies in Rutba close to the administrative border with Qaim district, a location that has not seen any returns due to the lack of security. The strategic importance of the area includes three border crossing points in the district connecting Iraq with Syria (Al-Walid), Jordan (Tribeel) and Saudi Arabia (Ar'ar), which are of economic and security importance. Ar'ar also serves as a dynamic port used by pilgrims travelling between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, while Tribeel is one of the main border checkpoints used for trading goods with neighboring countries.

ISF are the main security actor in Rutba district, including the 1st Emergency Response Division of the Iraqi Army, which reports to Anbar Operations command. The local police are the other major actor, and operate under the Ministry of Interior. Multiple tribal PMFs consisting of local tribesmen also operate in the district, supporting ISF in maintaining safety and security along the main roads, including the manning of checkpoints. Kata'eb Hizbu Allah PMF maintains notable presence in Okashat sub-district.