FURTHER DETAILS

ERBIL GENERAL RETURN PROCESS

CHALLENGES
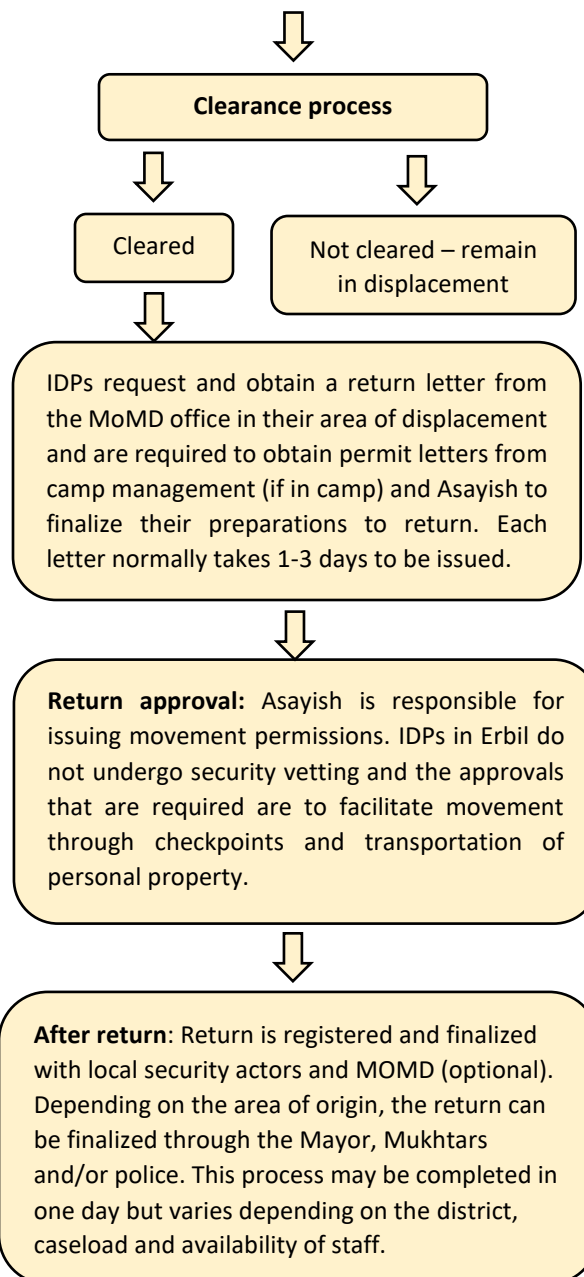
IDPs living in Erbil camps, who have already obtained clearance in their areas of origin: The process of return begins by verbally informing the Mukhtar of their section of the camp. The Mukhtar submits a list of names who have expressed their intention to return to the camp management. The camp management prepares a return letter in Arabic, listing each family member's name, to request the passage of the household through KRI and Iraqi federal checkpoints. It takes 1-3 days to receive the return letters from the Mukhtar and Asayish for moving household items and 1-3 days to receive a return letter from MOMD, depending on the availability of MOMD staff in their workstations. On the day of departure, camp management deactivates the departing IDP's file in the camps.

Out-of-camp IDPs, who have already obtained clearance in their areas of origin: The return process begins by informing the Mukhtar of their neighborhood of residence about their intention to return. The Mukhtar gives them a letter directed to Asayish requesting a permit letter for moving their household items. The IDPs are to then visit MOMD to obtain a return letter authorizing them to pass through KRI and federal Iraqi checkpoints, including those manned by PMF.

Both in-camp and out-of-camp IDPs are required to visit their areas of origin to obtain clearance from their local authorities (and tribal leaders in some cases) before starting the return process from the area of displacement. Clearance may take up to two months, depending on the area of origin. In most cases, only a one-time visit would be required to apply for clearance.

⇓

Clearance process

⇓   ⇓

Cleared   Not cleared – remain in displacement

⇓

IDPs request and obtain a return letter from the MoMD office in their area of displacement and are required to obtain permit letters from camp management (if in camp) and Asayish to finalize their preparations to return. Each letter normally takes 1-3 days to be issued.

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Return approval: Asayish is responsible for issuing movement permissions. IDPs in Erbil do not undergo security vetting and the approvals that are required are to facilitate movement through checkpoints and transportation of personal property.

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After return: Return is registered and finalized with local security actors and MOMD (optional). Depending on the area of origin, the return can be finalized through the Mayor, Mukhtars and/or police. This process may be completed in one day but varies depending on the district, caseload and availability of staff.

There have been cases where IDPs were reportedly forced to return to camps after being refused passage by PMF at the checkpoints (which may be due to perceived affiliation), despite obtaining return permit letters.

Since 10th June 2020, MOMD has not provided any transportation from the camps due to lack of resources, placing the onus on IDPs to use their own means to return. MOMD were previously providing transportation for IDPs returning in groups (i.e. several households at once) in Hasansham and Khazer camps (but not other camps), although IDPs were still expected to secure transport for their personal belongings separately.

Appeals: There is currently no official appeals process. Typically, households will attempt to re-apply if rejected.

IDPs who have served prison sentences in the KRI and are willing to return to areas of return are reluctant to return due to the non-recognition of their prison sentences in Ninewa and may fear being re-prosecuted in areas of origin.

Tribal conflict: Families facing tribal conflict are required to consult their tribal leaders prior to initiating return.

*This flowchart information is current as of August 2020 and is subject to change. Please refer to the narrative report for an in-depth and localized description.