



MINISTRY OF MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP LOCAL INTEGRATION SOP WORKSHOP | REPORT | 28-29 MAY & 21-22 JUNE 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

59 participants, including Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) Headquarter officials (heads of units) and heads of branches in the southern, middle Euphrates, northern, central and Kurdish Regional governorates, DSTWG members IOM, NRC and REACH took part in the workshop. The workshop was a response to a specific request by MoMD HQ to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group (DSTWG). On the recommendation of MoMD, the workshop was split into two, two-day workshops. The first workshop was held in Baghdad focusing on the Southern and Middle Euphrates governorates due to the smaller caseload of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and these governorates being used as a pilot for the implementation of local integration. The second workshop held in Erbil focused on the Northern, Central and KRI governorates which host the bulk of IDPs in Iraq and have more complicated contexts. The workshops were co-facilitated by MoMD, IOM and NRC with MoMD taking the lead in facilitating most of the sessions as an internal brainstorming workshop.

Following years of advocacy conducted by the Returns Working Group with MoMD and following a decision of the Supreme Committee No. 888 on 4/11/2020 in October 2022, MoMD issued directives to all branches to implement local integration by closing the displacement files of those persons 'who wish to remain in the areas of displacement and integrate into society and who do not wish to return to their areas of origin'. Subsequently, both workshops focused on identifying existing or potential challenges and best practices in the implementation of the ministry directives to register IDPs for local integration to amend SOPs which were designed to unify practices in all MoMD branches for registration of IDPs and returnees. These internal sessions were interspersed with discussions on durable solutions frameworks, guiding principles, criteria for measuring progress towards durable solutions and DTM data on the displacement context of all the governorates represented at the workshop.

During the workshop MoMD reiterated their commitment to implementing local integration in all the governorates recognizing that some IDPs will elect to remain in areas of displacement or cannot return to their areas of origin for now (Households (HHs) who have settled, found better opportunities, livelihoods, access to basic services, etc. or those from blocked areas). However, the authorities recognized that local integration can be sensitive in some governorates and that based on their data, return remains the preferred solution for IDPs and government.

Several perspectives were shared by authorities regarding implementation of the registration of IDPs for local integration. For authorities in the South and Middle governorates, most local authorities (governors)





were supportive, and the process was well underway with a small proportion of IDPs already registered with the branches, except for two governorates (Najaf and Basra). In the Northern, Central and KRI governorates, only Baghdad, Karkh, Resafa, and Diyala branches have started registering IDPs for local integration while others have not yet started due to ongoing discussions with local authorities.

Overall, a recurrent theme was the perceived need for simpler procedures particularly with respect to the current requirement of submission of a residency card from the area of displacement/place of local integration. Participants reported that many IDPs are not in favour of changing their residency out of fear of losing benefits linked to their residency cards in areas of origin. The recommendation was for the legal department to make it clear that the letter of endorsement provided by the Mukthar was acceptable and that IDPs did not need to obtain the permanent residency card which is issued by the Information Office under Ministry of Interior.

Other challenges included the need for clarity on how to assist split families, with the legal department asked to provide uniform guidelines for these cases. Participants also enquired about whether IDPs who are not registered as IDPs at all in the MoMD database and are then classified as 'Returnee-IDPs' can also apply for local integration.

AGENDA

Day 1

- o Presentation of MoMD Policy for Local Integration and Current SOPs (MoMD Head of Branches);
- o Defining durable solutions, pathways and principles (IOM)
- o MoMD considerations for reviewing application for local integration (MoMD Legal Unit)
- Presentation of governorate displacement and return data, return index, displacement index, intentions (IOM DTM)
- o Group Breakout sessions---challenges, recommendations and lessons learned (all participants)
- o Day 1 Key takeaways (IOM).

Day 2

- o Recap of Day 1 and presentation of Day 2 Agenda (IOM)
- o Plenary session: Feedback from Day 1 Breakout sessions
- o Key considerations for local integration, access to property compensation, documentation (NRC)
- o Best practices and Lessons learned from branches and statistics department (MoMD)
- Outline of recommendations for the SOP and challenges (IOM and MoMD)
 Wrap Up (IOM and MoMD)

PARTICIPANTS





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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS				
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2.	Eman Naji Hendi-DDG of Migration	33. Ahmed Qasim MeftenHead of Statistics Department		
3.	Mohanad Salih Abdulrahim – Head of Central Department	34. Rahem Kamil ZghairHead of Return Department		
4.	Hanaa Rahim Rasheed – Head of Middle Gov Department	35. Mahmud Sabar Majli—Head of Central Gov Department		
5.	Ibrahim Noori– Legal Department Representative	36. Maher Maki Muslim—Rep Legal Department		
6.	Hussain Salih Qaiser – Head of Statistics Department	37. Anas Faik Salman—Deputy DG of Information		
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SESSION OVERVIEWS AND OUTCOMES

See accompanying Presentation in <u>Arabic</u> and <u>English</u> for full content.

Day 1

Welcome and Introduction

In both workshops MoMD opened with grounding the workshop in the departments role in administering return and local integration of IDPs. MoMD reiterated that the MoMD policy on local integration follows a human rights-based approach which upholds the rights and dignity of the displaced and thanked IOM for its continued partnership in enhancing policy goals and the MoMD mandate of protecting and assisting displaced populations. MoMD noted that the purpose of the workshop was to provide guidance and technical support to field teams involved in the integration process and anticipated that the HQ and branch heads would share their experiences and challenges to improve the process and make recommendations which would be shared with the minister.

IOM reaffirmed its commitment to supporting IDPs and MoMD to implement local integration in a manner that protects IDP rights and IDP participation in decision making. IOM emphasized that the implementation of the policy should go beyond perfunctory removal of IDPs from MoMD records but must ensure that the department maintains a role in ensuring that local integration is sustainable and vulnerabilities IDPs face due to their displacement are addressed. IOM concurred with MoMD and hoped that the workshop would be productive and would result in clear recommendations which would advance IDP solutions pathways and would assist the work of the branches.

Session 1: MoMD Policy for Local Integration and Current SOPs

Session Outline and Intended Outcomes:

MoMD highlighted the objectives and principles of the local integration policy and confirmed the ministry's commitment to promoting successful integration. The department presented the SOPs and the planning related to local integration and covered various aspects, including the registration processes, data collection, analysis and information security. The presentation highlighted the significance of accurate data management, secure information storage, and the importance of regular reporting was confirmed.

Summary of Discussion:

 There was a mutual understanding and agreement on the data given on IDPs and returnees, while further discussions delved deeper into the obstacles that many IDPs in Sulaymaniyah face, particularly those from Salah al-Din and Babylon. Obstacles in Salah al-Din appeared to be widely known among the participants, while obstacles in Babylon appeared to be more politically sensitive with the area being blocked from return.





Participants indicated that stronger institutional capacity is needed to achieve durable solutions in Iraq.
 For instance, there are areas such as Jurf al Sakhr (Babylon) where even top officials cannot visit, which may be perceived as a case of weak governance. Sulaymaniyah hosts a significant number of IDPs from Babylon and it remains uncertain whether they will be able to return.

Session 2: Defining durable solutions, pathways and principles

Session Outline and intended outcome:

This session opened with an open discussion on frequently used terms such as IDP, citizen, refugee, migrant and durable solutions to gauge participants understanding as a review of key principles and criteria. The presentation drew from sources such as the Constitution of Iraq, MoMD's IDP Policy of 2008, the National Plan for the Return of IDPs to Liberated Areas (2020), IDP Guiding Principles and the IASC Durable Solutions Framework. The session also sought to get a better understanding on what MoMD understands by implementing the policy on local integration vis-a-vis the legal, economic and social process. The session included a scenario looking at local integration and blocked areas.

Summary of Discussion:

Discussion on durable solutions pathways of return, local integration and relocation/resettlement

- Participants confirmed that the Iraq Constitution and law recognised that all Iraqis have rights to reside anywhere in the country and there was general agreement that there are three solutions to displacement: return, local integration, and resettlement/relocation to a third location in Iraq.
- Authorities clarified that when they refer to local integration in the MoMD directives, they refer to both the 2nd and 3rd pathways and that within MoMD the terms resettlement/relocation are not used in reference to internally displaced persons but with Iraqi's who travel abroad.
- Participants agreed with and understood the IASC Framework's definition of when an IDP can no longer be considered an IDP – when they no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement.
- Scenario on blocked areas and advocacy for IDPs wishing to locally integrate.
 - Participants had mixed views about how to tackle the issues of the interference of the member of parliament with the right of IDPs from Babylon who wanted to locally integrate.
 - o Some proposed that the rights of the IDPs were paramount and should be respected and that a branch manager faced with such a challenge could either escalate the matter to the minister/prime minister/speaker of parliament since the MP was also accountable for his actions while others were of the view that IDPs should be informed of the challenge and they should be in a position to advocate for themselves with the MP and with the governor's office for their rights to be respected with full support of the branch manager. There were views that the branch head could engage with the MP to inform him that





10% was a small proportion of the whole and that local integration did not mean that if in 5/10/15 years families decide to return to their areas of origin that they cannot or that the MP could impose his personal will or views on IDPs.

- Few participants were more cautious and argued that the branch manager was confined to the law and advocacy was not something a branch head should be involved in.
- Participants concluded broadly that in such instances the branch manager had to follow the directive of the minister and respect the wishes of the IDPs who wanted to locally integrate.
- Scenario on IDPs from safe areas electing to locally integrate and then change their minds after a few months or year.
 - Participants had similar views that in accordance with the Iraqi laws, IDPs are citizens and can make any choices regards where they live.
 - Participants added that once an IDP makes a choice that changes their status with MoMD, that IDP would no longer be eligible to receive a return grant once they had already received the grant for local integration.



MoMD Local Integration Workshop (Baghdad)

MoMD Local Integration Workshop (Erbil)







Session 3: MoMD considerations for reviewing application for local integration (MoMD Legal Unit)

Session overview and intended outcomes:

The legal unit (Mr. Ibrahim and Mr. Maher) discussed the legal guidelines for the standard operating procedures for local integration. The presentation highlighted the directives which had been issued by the department committee and also provided an opportunity for the branch head to ask questions and share the challenges they faced with implementing the directives.

Summary of Discussion:

Discussion on legal directives

- Participants in both workshops asked the legal unit to clarify the requirements for local integration specifically regarding proof of residency in the location of local integration. Participants sought clarity on whether what was required was a support letter from the Mukhtar, or the residency card which is issued by the information office.
 - On this issue, officials shared that IDPs are often reluctant to change their residency documents due to fears about benefits they might lose in the area of origin and not gain in the areas of local integration. IDPs believe that they might be unable to prove residency in the areas of origin when they apply for property compensation or opportunities for government jobs.
 - The legal department explained that the support letter should suffice but they will get a clear response from the minister's committee.
- Participants also took the opportunity to ask the legal department about difficult cases which often arise in the governorates such as:
 - Split families (Families which were registered under the head of HH but sons have since become adults, married and become heads of HH or where there has been a divorce)
 - Families with perceived affiliation or those with married contracts out of court.
 - Families who are registered under the head of HH who is currently serving time in prison. For this issuem perceptions varied between officials who understood previous regulations as implying that such HH are not entitled to any benefits at all particularly those where the head of HH is charged under terrorism laws, and those officials who were of the view that the families of those persons should not be penalised for the actions of the head HH and should be allowed to either register as returnees or locally integrated HH.







Session 4: Presentation of governorate displacement and return data, return index, displacement index, intentions.

Session overview and intended outcomes:

IOM DTM presented data, displacement and return figures and shared information related to IDP intentions, return and displacement index data for each of the branches represented in the workshops. The presentation sought to inform MoMD about conditions, factors influencing IDP decisions, and to hear from MoMD on their perceptions of the data.

Summary of Discussion:

Discussion on DTM Data

- At the Baghdad workshop, participants had some comments about the DTM data, particularly the displacement figures, with the branch heads reflecting on how DTM numbers were lower than their registration data. However, there was general agreement on the intentions data, the drivers of severity and obstacles to durable solutions.
 - The branch heads reflected that according to their information, a significant number of IDPs who have registered in their databases have since returned to their areas of origin without closing their files with MoMD. This could be one of the reasons why there is a variation between the DTM and MoMD figures.
 - DTM explained how their data is collected and the difference between tracking data which is based on key informants and registration data which is done by MoMD, and how DTM data could be used to assist MoMD in their work.
 - Authorities in the middle and southern governorates expressed concern that IOM had closed offices in their governorates.
- In both workshops, MoMD participants noted that from their experience in line with DTM data, only a small proportion of IDPs appeared to have the intention to return depending on the governorates. It was noted that in most cases, IDPs had settled in areas of displacement due to various factors such as livelihoods and better access to services.
- Participants in the Erbil workshop had no issues with the figures presented, and discussions particularly noted agreement that the data which was presented especially on the drivers of severity in the locations within the country contributed to IDP decisions to either return or to locally integrate in a particular location.
- Some participants noted that issues relating damage to property, lack of housing compensation, access to basic services and livelihoods are frequently cited as reasons for non-return or reasons for remaining in displacement in their branches.







Session 5: Review of SOPs Challenges Group Sessions

Session overview and intended outcomes:

The group session divided the participants into four groups. Each group had a specific section of the current SOP to work on and all four groups had to answer the following questions:

- 1. What challenges exist when it comes to registering IDPs who want to locally integrate?
- 2. What are some of the proposed solutions to addressing the identified challenges?
- 3. What information is necessary for IDPs to understand the MoMD policy and process to register for local integration?

Group 1 worked on the form currently being used for registering IDPs (the same form is used for return and local integration)

Group 2 worked on archiving and paperwork.

Groups 3 and 4 focused on the main questions

The session was the last session of the day, and each group would reconvene on day two and present their observations and recommendations in plenary on day 2.



MoMD Local Integration Workshop (Baghdad)



MoMD Local Integration Workshop (Erbil)





Day 1 Wrap Up

MoMD highlighted the objectives and principles of the local integration policy and confirmed the ministry's commitment to promoting successful integration. Participants indicated that stronger institutional capacity is needed to achieve durable solutions in Iraq. IOM presented key definitions of durable solutions, pathways and principles based on the Constitution of Iraq, MoMD's IDP Policy of 2008, the National Plan for the Return of IDPs to Liberated Areas (2020), IDP Guiding Principles and the IASC Durable Solutions Framework. Furthermore, the legal department explained that the support letter should suffice, however the department will discuss and decide with the MoMD minister and senior management based on the recommendations coming from this workshop. Furthermore, IOM DTM presented displacement and return figures, stressing the high severity conditions many returnees are facing in various locations that require stronger interventions by the government and the international organizations. During the final session of the day, participants worked as groups to identify challenges, propose solutions, and determine information necessary for IDPs to understand the MoMD policy and process to register for local integration.







Day 2

Introduction and Recap of Day 1

The day commenced with a refresher of the previous day and participants recounted their main take aways from the first day. The agenda for the day was presented.

Session 1: Best practices from the branches and from the statistics department

Session outline and intended outcomes:

The MoMD research and information unit presented on their role in supporting the legal process of Local integration within the MoMD through the data collection and entry of records and maintaining the data base for the registration of IDPs. MoMD shared some of the challenges that they face ranging from the sheer volume of data and challenges which arise from verification of data, for example single families with multiple files in the MoMD data base and how to ensure that the data they have is accurate. The session included a plenary exercise which included a review of the registration form and considered whether the form was adequate to cover the data needs on both the side of the branch heads and for the data collection team in HQ.

Summary of discussions on best practices and statistics department:

The participants from MoMD different branches came up with the following suggestions:

- In the light of the problem of IDPs not willing to change their residency card to the return area, the suggestion was to obtain confirmation of residence by the mukhtar and support of the local administration without referring to the information office. Another suggestion was to send a letter to the Ministry of Interior to issue new Residency cards without referring to the governorate of origin.
- A discussion took place regarding the difference between grants, and it was recommended to increase the integration grant compared to align it with the return grant.
- Communication between authorities to facilitate the issuance of new documentation for families with missing documents.
- As many families don't have enough information and to save time and encourage families to apply for return and update records, the participants emphasized the importance to educate families wishing to integrate and distributing brochures related to integration.
- To encourage IDPs to return and to ensure their integration, it was suggested to increase the financial allocations for the merged and assure their inclusion in income improvement projects.
- The head of branches mentioned the importance of improving the capacity of their staff, particularly data entry staff in order to improve the efficiency of their work.
- To approach the governorate administration for the purpose of directing local administrations and mayors to facilitate integration procedures.





• Since split families have no information on MoMD databases, there were discussions about the government needing to support the registration of these families.

Session 2: Key considerations for Local Integrations—Access to documentation and HLP

Session outline and intended outcome:

NRC presented on some of the existing challenges which may affect the local integration process for IDPs. The session highlighted the delays which currently exist with the property compensation scheme, the lengthy procedure and challenges faced by female headed household who do not have access to ownership documents. NRC highlighted the importance of civil documentation including PDS and enquired if IDPs would be able to transfer their PDS cards. The session included a plenary discussion on what role MoMD could have in facilitating IDP claims to compensation.

Summary of Discussion:

- MoMD agreed that civil documentation is important in all processes related to the department and reported that the Minister's advisory committee included authorities from the ministry of interior and that in several locations, MoMD facilitated the issuance of civil documentation.
- On the issue of property compensation, the participants explained the mandate of MoMD versus the mandate of the compensation commission and noted that since the compensation for property damage was the responsibility of the commission and much of the work had been delegated to the governorates, this was an issue that fell outside of MoMD scope and mandate.



MoMD Local Integration Workshop (Baghdad)



MoMD Local Integration Workshop (Erbil)







Session 3: Presentation of Key Challenges and Recommendations for the MoMD

This final session was a collection of day 1 group work and provided an opportunity for each group to share some of the challenges they had identified and the recommendations they sought to put forward to MoMD HQ.

Summary of Discussion:

Challenges	Recommendations			
Residency Requirements				
Obtaining approval from the local authorities to commence local integration	Continued engagement from the Minister and Prime Minister's Office with Governor's and the KRI on allowing local integration			
Clarity needed for proof of residency	Either for the support letter from the mukthar to suffice or Not making proof of residency a requirement			
Fears from IDPs regarding implications of changing residency	Clear instructions from legal department following clarity from compensation committee to MoMD			
Procedural Challenges Complicated and long procedures for IDPs	Simplification of the procedures to correspond with the requirements for return process (Uniformity of approaches in all branches)			
Families with missing documents	Where possible for MoMD to liaise with relevant directorates for the issuance of documentation e.g CAD offices			
Resources Challenges				
Difference between the return grant amount and the local integration amount	MoMD to consider minimizing the disparity between the two grants			
Delay in disbursement of MoMD Grants (under 20% of all returnees have received grants)	Speeding up the disbursement of MoMD grants through adequate budget allocation and increasing number of disbursements per month			
Communicating with Communities				
Lack of public awareness about local integration and what it entails	CWC materials which could be shared at the branch offices or on social media, including information on what local integration implications could be on housing compensation, residency documents needed, and other benefits which IDPs have in their areas of origin			





Guidance required				
Confusing instructions on what is required and what the process is	Legal department to reinstate the registration guidelines which had been used previously which would be shared with all branches to ensure uniform approaches. Community/Town-Hall sessions led by branch offices			
Clarity needed on how to approach split families	Legal department to provide uniform guidelines on addressing the registration of split families			
Families who have the head of HH in custody	Suspending/freezing the file of the head of HH and allowing the rest of the family of register.			
Clarity needed for HH who want to locally integrate but had never been registered in the IDP database	Proposed to follow the same approach which the department applies for returnees who were not registered in the IDP database			
Logistical				
Lack of devices for registration at the field level	IOM, UNHCR and a Chinese grant had provided some devices at the HQ			
Miscellaneous				
Infrequent opportunities for all branches to get together to brainstorm	MoMD to invest in annual or bi-annual meetings for all branch heads			

Workshop Wrap Up

During the workshop, a set of discussions and recommendations were put forward in order to facilitate the government's dealings with the displaced population and how to facilitate the process of integration with the host community. Also, verbal support was obtained from the legal department of MoMD to work on issuing and amending laws according to the proposals of the heads of branches for the central and northern governorates.

The workshop concluded with the following key recommendations:

In the midst of the proposals by the heads of the branches of the governorates, a set of proposals were collected from 4 working groups, as listed below.

- 1. Approving and working with a housing endorsement letter instead of a housing card, given that the information office requires displaced people to only use a housing card in their new areas of residence. The legal department is to issue a letter requesting the cancellation of the endorsement of the housing card by the information office and work on the approval of the mukhtar and the district administration office.
- Issuing a third category housing card and withdrawing the old card for families wishing to integrate. Note: The old card for the areas of origin can be restored in the event that the families decide to return in the future.





- 3. For families who wish to integrate from outside the camp and cancel their old housing cards, the Ministry of Interior must issue a decision stating that the person can cancel the old housing card without the need to return to the area of origin to process the paperwork
- 4. In light of the fact that most of the displaced families are not aware of the laws and methods of integration, awareness brochures should be distributed to the families explaining the possibility of integration with the host communities and how it works.
- 5. Capacity-building for local governments about the laws and work of MoMD on integration and how to support families in those areas. Additionally, capacity-building for the mukhtars and departments on the documents required by the integrated families.
- 6. Accelerate procedures for the results of special grants for returning and integrated families.
- 7. Raising the ceiling of privileges for families wishing to integrate, in order to motivate them to integrate and not have their status remain between being a returnee and a displaced person.
- 8. Better coordination with humanitarian organizations in supporting families.

MoMD wrapped up the workshop thanking IOM for organizing the workshop and for their unwavering support. They hope to hold another workshop in the future with participation from all of the heads of branches in Iraq to discuss laws affecting IDPs, common problems that MoMD faces, and ways that coordination can be improved between the various governorate offices.