



## RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 29 September 2020
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-12:30 pm
- ❖ **Location:** Webex connection

**In Attendance:** PAO, AOO, MASC, Solidarites, HRW, SDC, ECHO, ACTED, GIZ, HLP Sub-cluster, SP, PWJ, Mercy Corps, US Embassy/ PRM, REACH, CCI, Nahri, SWEDO, Netherlands Embassy, CCCM Cluster, Handicap International, WFP, Social Inquiry, Save the Children, Sama al Iraq, GOAL, NRC, Child Protection sub-cluster, Shareteah, TGH, Shelter/NFI Cluster, PPO, IOM

### Agenda Items:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
- 2) **DTM Update:** Update on return figures from DTM dashboard and Sinjar and Ba'aj Emergency
- 3) **Situational Update on Key Returns – RWG and CCCM:** Returns overview and camp updates
- 4) **Durable Solutions Taskforce:** Updates on the Durable Solutions Taskforce
- 5) **Integration Main Findings – IOM/Social Inquiry/RWG:** Cities at home: Understanding Belonging and Acceptance Among IDPs and Host Communities in Iraq

### Action Points to follow up by next meeting:

Action	By who
Disseminate IOM/Social Inquiry/RWG Factsheet, "Understanding Belonging and Acceptance Among IDPs and Host Communities in Iraq	RWG to governorate level ICCGs, Working Groups etc
NPWG report on protection issues faced by returnees in Sinjar and Baaj	NPWG to share and RWG to circulate once received

### Key Discussion Points/ Action:

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

- The Co-chair gave an overview of the previous meeting after the introductions, as well as a review of the agenda items.

## 2) DTM Update: Update on return figures from DTM dashboard and returns to Sinjar and Baaj

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*(Presentation attached for more details)*

### i) DTM updates

- Total no. of IDPs as of August 2020: 1,299,987 individuals
- Total no. of returnees as of Aug 2020: 4,744,050 individuals
- 8% of IDPs and 3% of returnees live in critical shelter
- 10,200 newly displaced individuals were recorded in this round, mainly in secondary displacement situation, mainly from Sinjar.
- 60% of IDPs come from Ninewa, mainly Mosul and Sinjar districts which each account for 20% of all IDPs.
- Increasing trend of IDPs being displaced within their governorate
- DTM currently finalizing GPS coordinates of the informal settlements
- Update: household size in DTM figures now consistent with CCCM data, but individual figures are slightly different.

### ii) Sinjar and Baaj movements

- Between 2-17 September, the average number of daily individual arrivals was 198 to Sinjar and 21 to Al-Ba'aj, which is significantly higher than the daily averages recorded in the month of August.
- Since June 8, Sumel, Zakho and Shikhan have consistently been the main districts of departure
- 76% of individuals have come from camps.
- Biweekly updates being published on Baaj and Sinjar movements

### Discussion:

- RWG mentioned that secondary displacement in Sinjar used to be high – have those numbers gone down since DTM first started tracking these numbers?
  - DTM explained that the numbers have been fairly consistent, but more or less 30% of returns have resulted in secondary displacement. Of the individuals having returned between 3 and 17 September, 2,892 were recorded as returnees (88%), while the remaining 386 were recorded as out-of-camp IDPs (12%). This represents a deviation from the overall proportion of individuals having been identified as returnees (71%) and out-of-camp IDPs (29%) since 8 June.



- WFP asked how the 10,200 IDPs in secondary displacement were distributed (and what percentage was within Sinjar) as well as the reasons, also inquiring on when informal settlement data will be available.
  - DTM mentioned that around 4,500 of the IDPs were from Sinjar. This displacement was mostly due to lack of services and housing destruction, especially in the rural areas. This has resulted in IDPs moving to urban areas within the district such as Markaz Sinjar. An additional 1,500 IDPs were re-displaced across Ninewa, mainly in Telafar and Baaj. The remaining 4,000 IDPs are distributed between Sulaymaniya, Kirkuk, Dohuk and Baghdad. ILA data (including informal settlement data) is finalized and clean but needs to be transposed to the proportion of individuals (IDPs and returnees) rather than locations. Preliminary findings will most likely be shared next week.
- WFP added that they are implementing resilience projects in Sinjar and therefore wanted to know which government authorities in the area are responsible for the returnee agenda.
  - DTM explained that they are working with MOMD to register returnees and are assisting in the setup of their new office in Sinjar. The MOMD sub-office in Sinjar is the main entity registering and following up on the returnee caseload, but RWG should have more information. RWG added that MOMD is the main focal point for IDPs and returnees, but local authorities in Sinjar may also be useful contacts.
- WFP requested the following figures: population of Baaj, the number of households there, and the number of recent returnees.
  - DTM mentioned: 42,495 returnees are in Baaj, and 4,227 returned in the last 2 months. There are also 6,240 IDPs in Baaj. There has been no secondary displacement in the last 2 months.
- The NL Embassy mentioned that their partners in Duhok are considering shifting part of their services to Sinjar but will need information on the demographics of the returnees (e.g. women, children), if such data is available with DTM.
  - DTM mentioned that they have been working with authorities to collect these figures and have this level of detail available on the returnees but have not shared this information publicly as it includes sensitive identifiers. However, interested partners may reach out to DTM should they need this information.
- Save the Children asked what the drivers behind 76% of the returns being from Sumel and Zakho are.
  - DTM mentioned that they have partial information, but a large portion of the returns were due to COVID restrictions and the capacity of IDP households to cross between governorates, either for livelihood purposes or family reunification. IDPs in Duhok were not able to commute freely to their work in Sinjar, as was previously the case. There are likely



other reasons for these returns but the initial movement restrictions were what drove the initial returns to Sinjar.

- The Protection Cluster mentioned that the last Ninewa ICCG minutes confirmed that the proportion of Sinjar IDPs going into secondary displacement decreased from 30% to 20%. Furthermore, Ninewa PWG have produced a report on protection issues faced by returnees in Sinjar and Baaj. The revised version is being finalized, can be shared for dissemination once done.

### **3) Situational update on returns – RWG and CCCM: Returns overview and camp updates**

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#### **i) RWG updates**

##### a) Returns to Ninewa

- Several partners have responded to returnees' needs in Sinjar. For example, direct support to returnees, rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, water boreholes, government offices etc.
- Notably for Jabal Sinjar, MOMD has engaged with IDPs residing in the informal settlement and committed to supporting them with MOMD assistance (NFI and food basket) for a year, noting that many of the IDPs moved between the camp and their areas of origin for this assistance.

##### b) Returns to Kirkuk

- Return of 16 families to Markaz Al-Multaqa. Improved security conditions have enabled families to start rehabilitating their shelter. Sub-district faced high level of destruction and the lack of basic services has been the main obstacle to return even though the sub-district has been accessible for some time.
- Debris removal, shelter and school rehabilitation, repair of a damaged water plant, livelihoods. Electricity network is reportedly functioning but in need of additional transformers and cables.

##### c) Returns to Salah al-Din

- September: 132 families from Ashti and Arbat camps received return badges to return to Yathrib. This week, 22 HH (87 individuals) departed for Dujail and Yathrib with support from MOMD SAD. It is anticipated that more families will return. It is estimated that in addition to these 132, 100 more families have received clearance as well.
- August: 10 families returned from Tuz to Hafriya Kaber village in Suleiman Beg. This is the first return movement to this village since 2014.
- Improved security conditions in Nawafil village in Amerli.

##### d) Returns to Anbar



- Since the announcement of the IQD 500,000 offered by the Anbar Local government 81 families in HTC camp and 85 HHs in AAF camp have registered for return.
- Authorities stipulated that everyone from the two central camps who wanted to return would be eligible for the grant.

#### e) Returns to Diyala

- August: Following easing of return procedures and reconciliation efforts, 45 families returned to Maqdadiya.
- Diyala local authorities including MOMD branch announced clearance for about 1,400 families to Muqdadiya, Saadiyah, Jalawlaa, Jbara, Ka'nan and Buhruz. To date, about 440 families of those cleared have returned from both camp and out of camp locations.
- Diyala GRC meeting was convened on 23rd Sep 2020, the participants discussed the progress of Saad return plan and the government efforts in terms of facilitating the return or the integration.
- Limited support from partners to support the return or integration of the 106 families in the camp. Majority prefer to integrate in Baquba with financial support.

#### f) Persisting challenges

- Conditions in AoO- lack of basic services, infrastructure damage, severe shelter needs
- Premature and unsustainable returns
- Secondary displacement
- Complex caseloads who can't simply return
- Impact of COVID-19 on individuals and economy
- Lack of available budget and support from government
- Expectations of international community
- Lack of clear, coherent policies and coordination between different entities

#### ii) CCCM updates

- From the end of August, MOMD was distributing instructions in all governorates hosting IDP camps to undertake surveys to collect information intentions, assistance needed to return and shelter damages in areas of origin. It is understood that this assessment is to form part of an MOMD return plan currently under drafting.
- Three governorates are waiting to hear instructions from the PM's office regarding camp consolidation and closure decisions.
- Sulaymaniyah: humanitarian agencies approached in early September by Sulaymaniyah authorities for the suggested consolidation of Arbat into Ashti camp as well as that of Tazade into Qoratu camp (which has been on the table since mid-2019, but was on pause due to a number of



reasons). Arbat and Qoratu have small populations. Sulaymaniyah CCCM and ICCG are working on a consolidation and closure plan, including advocacy messages. Intention surveys were done in all four camps, the results of which will inform the planning of CCCM and durable solutions actors. Around half of the families indicated that they wish to move to another camp while the rest highlighted obstacles to return and alternative solutions.

- Ninewa: changing indications from authorities throughout September. The MOMD minister announced they will potentially close two camps and consolidate 4 camps into two – Hamam Al-Aleel (HAA) to Salamiyah and Jeddah 1 to Jeddah 5, but awaiting further PM instructions. So far humanitarian engagement has been to try and understand what the authorities' intentions and will engage them more formally are. HAA consolidation completed in September and returns continue to be seen from Jeddah, HAA and Salamiya camps. Facilitated return projects implemented, go and see taking place in HAA. More updates to come on that.
- Jabal Sinjar marked for closure. Not a formal camp but hosts 600 HHs and large number of recent departures seen (awaiting confirmation on whether these departures are permanent). More engagement being done with authorities.
- Duhok and Erbil: no current indications on consolidations and closures. New arrivals continuously being received in Duhok camps
- Karbala: one camp with 85 HHs managed by MOMD, but the government intends to close the camp soon. 20 HHs expected to leave around mid-October while the remaining HHs are still being planned for. Most of the families originate from the Mosul area.
- Anbar: waiting on PM confirmation on AAF and HTC camps, which are expected to be closed by February 2021
- Baghdad: camps and informal sites under risk of closure: 1) Al Shams: expected to close by October or November. Discrepancy seen in the information received from authorities, but there are indications that IDPs who cannot return may be moved to AAF camp. Discussions on governorate level being undertaken to discuss potential options. Security clearance and transport requested for these families. 2) Al Ahel and Nabi Younis camps: informed to be closed early next year and may move IDPs to AAF 3) Latifiyah and Sayouna camps expected to remain as they are
- Diyala: The Inter-agency mission to Diyala took place yesterday, several operational NGOs in Diyala (mainly in the AoOs of Saad camp residents) were invited to discuss the obstacles to return and take referrals. More detailed information will be shared in the next sitrep. Currently awaiting PM's instructions regarding Al-Wand camps, but reports suggest that Al-Wand 2 will be consolidated into Al-Wand 1.
- Kirkuk and Salah al-Din: no fresh updates, camps expected to remain in place for now.

#### 4) Durable Solutions taskforce (DSTF) updates

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##### Key points:

- DSTF created in April 2020, with IOM and UNDP as the co-leads, other UN agencies and NGO members.
- The network has created a chapeau document that is intended to form a national strategy for durable solutions. The document is still in draft form but is substantially completed and will be shared widely soon. The document highlights the government's leading role in working toward durable solutions for its population groups with support from the international community, as well as gaps in coordination mechanisms and next steps.
- Governorate level plans of action (POA) were presented in one of the recent RWG meetings. The POAs are being developed by RWG from a technical level, constituting plans at governorate level feeding into the national strategy. Discussions in this regard have already taken place with UN agencies, NGOs, as well as ongoing consultations with donors and the government.
- As part of these discussions, there has been movement around coordination structures related to durable solutions.
- Reporting to HC/ RC directly
- Durable Solutions Network (DSN) will likely be formalized and expanded to include new members with the expansion of its scope. There will be list of thematic groups that will link with this structure
- Sub-national mechanisms to be linked to actors on the field level, e.g. governorate level ICCGs and GRCs.
- Several discussions held between HC and Ministry of Planning and MOMD to develop a joint strategy for durable solutions in Iraq.
- Overall, discussions ongoing within international partners as well as with the government to address durable solutions in Iraq.

##### Discussion:

- IOM/DSN explained that the DSN is not meant to duplicate existing mechanisms but rather to build on what already exists. The intention is to ensure effective coordination on durable solutions at field level regarding both IDPs and returnees.
- GIZ asked what the timeline is on the national strategy and the setup of subnational working groups.
  - IOM/DSN explained that part of it depends on discussions and negotiations with the government, but the next 1-3 months will most likely see substantial progress in the structuring of the subnational groups and the development of the strategies.
- Shelter Cluster asked whether the DSTF will have an operational strategy, with related budgetary requirements and if so, how it will be funded.



- IOM/DSN explained that the operational strategy will take the form of the POAs at governorate level and the operational part is to take place through governorates. Durable solutions will not be possible to work on without the participation of humanitarian agencies but there are elements of it that sit outside humanitarian work. There will be separate efforts fundraising and budgeting and will not overlap or compete with HRP and other existing funding pools.
- PWG asked if the DSTF is planning to set up a WG/TF on the situation of persons with perceived affiliation, as this was an action point under the action plan from last year's HCT Protection strategy. Yet this WG was never fully established. The HCT protection strategy needs to be reviewed/updated as asked by the HC. Therefore, the linkages between the NPC, the HCT Protection strategy and the DSTF on protection issues affecting people with perceived affiliation will need to be developed to ensure synergy.
  - The DSTF mentioned that intention is to maintain the centrality of protection, protection agencies are represented in the DSTF membership and this expertise and that of the Protection Cluster will be leveraged. Agreed on the need to ensure linkages with the NPC and protection strategy. On the issue of families with a perceived affiliation, there is already a group that has been established that is working on this issue.
  - Mercy Corps added that, there is a joint Advocacy Strategy being developed as part of the DSTF currently and all the questions/issues are being worked out (including protection)—to ensure that there are strong linkages between current strategies/mechanisms and no/limited duplication.

## 5) Main Findings – IOM/Social Inquiry/RWG: Cities at home, Understanding Belonging and Acceptance Among IDPs and Host Communities in Iraq

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*(Presentation attached for more details)*

Key points:

- The aim of the study is to identify: 1) Which factors help or hinder local integration and 2) Which locations are more (or less) conducive to this outcome.
- We focused on three elements that comprise the concept of local integration:
  - IDPs' feelings of belonging to the place of displacement.
  - Host community's acceptance of the IDPs hosted long term.
  - Local regulatory framework / landscape that may affect integration outcomes.





- Overall, integration is strongly driven by the characteristics of the surrounding environment for both IDPs and host community: the social environment, the physical environment, the institutional environment.
- Detailed findings can be found on the presentation slides. Report to be published next week.

Discussion:

- PRM asked how these social findings could help in achieving reconciliation and sustainable returns if applicable.
  - Social Inquiry explained that the findings are irrespective of whether IDPs want to return or locally integrate. Therefore, there is not many lessons learned in terms of reconciliation. Some of these findings may be different in areas of return if reconciliation processes are happening.
- PAO mentioned that it would be interesting to see how paradoxical it is the low feeling of belonging experienced by IDPs vs. high amount of integration wished by host communities.
  - Social Inquiry explained in that it is not so much that host communities wish for integration but rather that they generally accept people staying and integrating. The paradox is mostly related to the conditions that host communities live in and how it affects the level of acceptance. It would be interesting to see what factors can help both groups (IDPs and host communities) so that both groups feel a sense of belonging.
- Social Inquiry added that the factsheets will have specific data on each location, but it would be practical to receive feedback from actors working in those areas and receive suggestions on what interventions can be done for each location.

**No AOB**