



Overview

Rawa is one of the main urban centres in western Anbar governorate, situated about 260 kilometres north-west of Baghdad on the banks of the Euphrates river. Rawa is the capital of the district of the same name, which largely consists of open desert. In 2007, Rawa district had better connection to public utilities compared to the rest of Anbar governorate. 27% of the district population was not connected to the public water network (compared to 32% in Anbar governorate), while 8% of the population had more than 11 hour of power cuts daily or no connection to the public electricity grid at all (compared to 26% in Anbar governorate).¹ Furthermore, an estimated 10% to 12% of the working age population in Rawa was unemployed.²

Before 2014, the population of Rawa town was estimated to be 28,000 people.³ Rawa came under the control of the group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in June 2014. The Government of Iraq (GoI) re-established control over Rawa in November 2017, making it the last town to be retaken from ISIL in Iraq.⁴ The majority of Rawa residents displaced between 2014 and 2017. According to a community leader, around 19,000 people from Rawa were still living in displacement as of July 2018. Returns to Rawa started in January 2018,⁵ with 7,674 people having returned to the district as of 15 July 2018.⁶

Given the limited information available regarding the current situation in Rawa and surrounding areas, REACH Initiative (REACH) - in partnership with the Iraq Returns Working Group (RWG) - launched a follow-up⁷ Rapid Overview of Areas of Return (ROAR) assessment in July 2018, which seeks to inform the recovery process in order to support durable and safe returns. The ROAR assessment looks at the motivations behind return, along with the current context related to protection issues, livelihoods and the provision of basic services in areas of Iraq that are experiencing returns.

Rawa, Anbar Governorate



Key Findings

Displacement and Return, Protection Concerns

- The main reasons given by returnee key informants (KIs) for coming back to their areas of origin (AoO) were a perceived improvement in safety in Rawa and high living costs in their areas of displacement. Among KIs remaining in displacement, the **main reasons given for not returning were damaged and destroyed property and a lack of livelihood opportunities in their AoOs.**
- **Explosive hazards were reportedly present in some neighbourhoods of Rawa**, with reports that some houses had been booby-trapped during the recent crisis. At the time of data collection, no mine action actors were reportedly clearing these explosive hazards.
- Families with perceived affiliation to ISIL reportedly face difficulties in returning to Rawa, including reprisals from community members.

Livelihoods

- **Livelihood opportunities were reported to be limited in the area, with few people working in agriculture**, which was one of the main sources of income before the recent crisis. Those without incomes were relying on the community, relatives or aid provided by governmental, development or humanitarian actors.

Access to Basic Services

- **Electricity from the public grid was reportedly not available in surrounding villages⁸ and two neighbourhoods.⁹** The availability of electricity in those areas with access was said to fluctuate, resulting in many people being reliant on community generators.
- The public hospital in Rawa was damaged during the recent crisis, but a public healthcare centre was said to be operational in the town. **KIs reported a lack of doctors and specialized healthcare**, with no capacity for surgeries or healthcare for pregnant women.
- KIs indicated that **the number of schools, teachers and materials were insufficient to meet the needs of the student population.** Not all children from surrounding villages were reportedly attending formal education during the recent school year.
- The piped water network in Rawa was reported to be functional, however **the water from the network was said to be available for only a few hours per day and was not suitable for drinking.** KIs indicated that residents were getting sick from drinking the water, with reports of diarrhoea, urinary tract infections, and skin diseases.
- **Municipal waste disposal services were reportedly not available in six neighbourhoods.** Waste disposal services were said to only cover two neighbourhoods in Rawa.

¹ IAU, "Anbar Governorate Profile", March 2009.

² Ibid.

³ According to a community leader from Rawa.

⁴ The Washington Post, "Iraqi forces retake last town under Islamic State control", November 2017.

⁵ Global Protection Cluster, "Anbar Returnees Profile", January 2018.

⁶ IOM, "Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) 99", July 2018.

⁷ REACH conducted a [rapid assessment](#) in Qa'im, Ana and Rawa in September 2017.

⁸ KIs did not provide specific names or locations of these villages.

⁹ According to [OpenStreetMap](#) there are approximately 12 neighbourhoods in Rawa.

Methodology

REACH enumerators collected data from 22 male and 8 female KIs¹⁰ from Rawa, including 7 returnee residents, 1 non-displaced resident, 10 KIs from Rawa who remain in displacement, and 12 KIs with specialist knowledge in one of the sectors covered by the assessment (see Table 1). All displaced KIs indicated that they were living in cities, such as Ramadi, Fallujah and Baghdad. In some cases, the same KI was classed as an expert in more than one subject area. Respondents were identified through partners and existing REACH KI networks. Data collection took place between 24 and 29 July 2018 through remote telephone interviews.

Limitations

Findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically generalisable to the assessed area. Furthermore, KIs often provided estimates rather than exact figures, which should also be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings.

Table 1: Number and profession of KIs with specialist knowledge

Area	Number	Profession
Protection	3	International organisation (IO) worker, two community leaders
Livelihoods	2	Two non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers
Education	2	NGO worker, local government worker
Healthcare	2	Two healthcare workers
Water	2	Two local government workers
Electricity	1	Local government worker
Waste Disposal	1	Local government worker

Movement Intentions

Current Trends

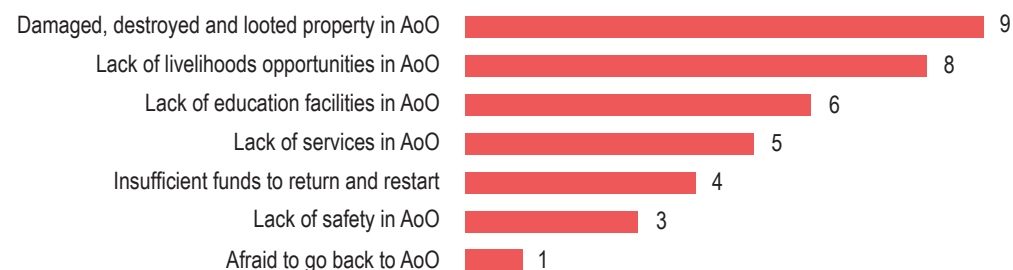
At the time of data collection, a community leader estimated the population of Rawa city to be 8,500 people. According to the same KI, 2,400 people¹¹ had returned to the city, while 19,000 people were still living in displacement.¹² Instances of secondary displacement were highlighted by six out of seven returnee KIs and two community leaders, where people were said to be re-displacing due to damage to their shelters and the lack of livelihood opportunities.

The KIs who had returned to Rawa reportedly hired cars and drivers to make the journey. Costs for car rental differed considerably, with KIs paying between 150,000 to 1,000,000 IQD (126 to 840 USD), depending on family size, the amount of luggage, and the distance to Rawa.¹³ All returnee KIs indicated that they had required security clearance from local authorities both in their areas of displacement and in Rawa before being allowed to return.

Why are IDPs not returning?

IDP KIs were asked what factors had caused them to remain in displacement. The most frequently reported were damaged, destroyed, and looted property (reported by 9 out of 10 KIs) and a lack of livelihood opportunities in the AoO (8 of 10 KIs). In addition, KIs highlighted a lack of education facilities (6 of 9 KIs) and basic services (5 of 10 KIs) in Rawa. IDP KIs indicated that schools were too far from their houses, that there was a lack of teachers, and that educational facilities in the area of displacement were better. With regard to basic services, KIs highlighted insufficient availability of water and electricity through the public networks. Furthermore, IDP KIs reported a lack of sufficient funds for returning and rebuilding houses (4 of 10 KIs), and a lack of safety (3 of 10 KIs) in their AoO, due to the perceived presence of explosive hazards in the town.

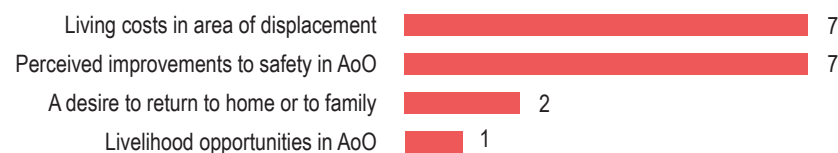
Figure 1: Reasons reported by IDP KIs (10 in total) for not returning to their AoOs¹⁴



Why are residents returning?

Returnee KIs were asked what factors had led them to return. The most common responses were perceived improvements to safety in their AoO and high living costs in the areas of displacement (both reported by 7 of 7 KIs). All returnee KIs reported renting houses in cities, such as Ramadi, Fallujah and Baghdad prior to their return, and reported that high rental costs were a reason for returning to Rawa. In addition, KIs noted a desire to return their homes or to family (2 of 7 KIs), and return to former employment (1 of 7 KIs).

Figure 2: Reasons reported by returnee KIs (7 in total) for returning to their AoO¹⁵



¹⁰The assessment aimed to have an equal number of male and female KIs. However, given the context in Rawa (and western Anbar generally), only seven female KIs could be identified by the assessment team. ¹¹The KI reported 400 returnee families. Number of individuals was calculated by multiplying the number of families by, the average size of an Iraq family, in line with the IOM DTM. ¹²Given the remote location of Rawa, accurate population figures were difficult to obtain. These figures are based on an estimation by the community leader. However, this estimate differs from figures reported by the IOM DTM.

¹³Price converted using www.xe.com 29 July 2018. ¹⁴KIs could provide more than one answer. ¹⁵KIs could provide more than one answer.



How are IDPs getting information?

In terms of what information influenced the decision to either remain in displacement or return to their AoO, the most commonly cited sources among both IDP and returnee KIs were telephone calls or social media contact with friends and family living in the AoO (11 of 17 KIs). Furthermore, KIs mentioned visiting their AoO (4 of 17 KIs) or receiving information through television (2 of 17 KIs) and social media groups (1 of 17 KIs).

Damage to infrastructure and housing

During the recent crisis, Rawa and its surrounding areas reportedly sustained significant damage. According to a community leader, around 150 houses were completely destroyed and 350 were damaged. Furthermore, KIs with specialist knowledge reported damage to government buildings, piped water infrastructure, the electricity network, healthcare facilities, and schools. Repairs have reportedly been made to some government buildings, and the public hospital was said to be under repair at the time of data collection.

Actors providing services

The GoI was said to distribute food and help with repairing damage to education facilities, as well as the water and electricity networks. In addition, KIs reported humanitarian and development actors to be active in Rawa. The humanitarian assistance provided in the town was said to include:

- Food and cash assistance
- Cleaning of rubble from damage to infrastructure
- Repairs of damage to the water network and public buildings
- Provision of education assistance, healthcare assistance, and legal assistance
- Psychosocial support services for children
- Emergency livelihood opportunities
- Provision of school supplies
- Polio vaccination campaigns for children¹⁶

Protection Concerns

Perceptions of Safety and Social Cohesion

- Most returnee KIs reported feeling safe in their current areas due to the presence of security actors, such as the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) and local police. However, two KIs indicated that fear of ISIL attacks persists.
- There were reported to still be explosive hazards in Rawa. According to two community leaders and an IO worker, there were thought to be 32 to 100 booby-trapped houses in several neighbourhoods of Rawa, including in al Qala'a and al Salam neighbourhoods. The GoI has reportedly previously attempted to clear explosive hazards and mine action actors were reported to have assessed the area. However, no actors were reportedly clearing the explosive hazards at the time of data collection. In addition, surrounding areas - including the solid waste dumping site - were perceived to not be fully cleared of explosive hazards.
- According to a protection KI, residents had their houses cleared at their own expense. A newspaper reported that residents needed to pay between 300-500 USD to have their houses cleared.¹⁷ This was reportedly done by local residents, despite not being professional mine clearance actors. Several residents had reportedly died as a result of the presence of explosive hazards within the town.¹⁸
- Families with perceived affiliation to ISIL reportedly face difficulties in returning to the area. According to five IDP KIs, families with this perceived affiliation were not allowed to return. In addition, KIs highlighted that families with perceived affiliation to ISIL that were living in Rawa had difficulty reintegrating into the community, and that retaliatory actions from local residents had taken place.

Freedom of Movement

- Current residents reported avoiding areas in the town which are believed to be contaminated with explosive hazards. In addition, KIs indicated that there was a curfew from sundown to sunrise, which was implemented by security actors in the area.

Legal Concerns

- KIs reported that the court in Rawa had reopened in July 2018 after repairs to the building had been made. Lawyers and judges were said to be available. Before July, residents reportedly needed to travel to Ana for any legal services. One returnee KI highlighted that the court was

¹⁶ World Health Organization, "[Iraq Humanitarian Emergency Situation Report No. 5](#)", 30 June 2018.

¹⁷ Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper, "[Anbar cities ... gradual improvement in services is subject to citizen complaint](#)", July 2018

¹⁸ Global Protection Cluster, "[Anbar Returnees Profile](#)", March 2018.



overwhelmed with requests from residents, leading to long waiting times.

- According to KIs, many people from Rawa and the surrounding areas lost civil and property documentation, though they noted that these documents could be replaced at civil registration offices in Rawa. A returnee KI highlighted that passports could only be replaced or renewed in Ramadi or Baghdad.
- KIs reported damaged, destroyed, and looted property in the area. According to a community leader, a Gol committee had come to Rawa to register cases of damaged, destroyed and looted property. However, no compensation for property had reportedly been received by residents at the time of data collection. An IO was said to be providing legal assistance to vulnerable people in Rawa.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

A community leader highlighted that specialized mine action actors were needed for clearing explosive hazards within Rawa and the surrounding areas.

Livelihoods

- According to returnee KIs, livelihood opportunities were limited in Rawa. Two KIs with specialist knowledge of livelihoods (livelihood KIs) indicated that only around half of the households in Rawa had at least one member with an income. Those working were said to be primarily employed in the public sector. Furthermore, residents were reported to be working in agriculture, fishing, shops, and as daily workers.
- The number of people working in agriculture had reportedly decreased drastically compared to the pre-ISIL period. According to a community leader, around 80% of the population of Rawa used to rely on agriculture, while he indicated that this was only 5% at the time of data collection. Livelihood KIs highlighted that residents did not have enough money to purchase fuel to operate generators, which were needed for pumping water to irrigate agricultural lands. In addition, they reported a lack of funds for buying farming equipment, such as water pumps and seeds. Returnee KIs indicated that the government used to provide support, such as distribution of seeds, to the agricultural sector before the recent crisis, but was not doing so at the time of the assessment.
- Households without sufficient income were reportedly relying on support from relatives, the community, the Gol, and humanitarian organisations. The Gol and humanitarian organisations were said to provide food distributions, while humanitarian organisations were also said to provide cash assistance to vulnerable families. In addition, one livelihood KI indicated that many people were selling possessions as a means of coping with lack of income.

- Lack of livelihood opportunities was one of the main reasons given by IDP KIs for not returning to Rawa.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

Returnee KIs highlighted that the agricultural sector needs support, especially with regards to electricity provision for generators. In addition, a community leader highlighted that more food assistance was needed.

Basic Services

Main service gaps and needs

Community leaders were asked which services needed to be restored or rehabilitated most urgently. Both community leaders highlighted that **restoring the public electricity network was the highest priority**, because many sectors, especially the agricultural sector, rely on consistent electricity provision to function properly. In addition, one community leader indicated that **improvements to healthcare facilities needed to be prioritized**.

Electricity

- According to a KI with specialist knowledge of electricity (electricity KI), not all residents had access to public electricity because of damage to the grid. Poles and power lines had been damaged during the recent crisis, while transformers and generators were said to have been looted. All surrounding villages, as well as two neighbourhoods and parts of al Yadida neighbourhood, reportedly did not have access to the public grid due to this damage. The local office of the electricity ministry was reportedly in the process of repairing the network at the time of data collection, but did not have sufficient material and equipment.
- For those residents with access to the public electricity grid, availability reportedly differed based on supply of electricity through the Haditha dam, with electricity being available from one to twelve hours per day. Public grid electricity was said to be free of charge.
- In addition to public electricity, residents were said to be making use of community generators. Electricity from these generators was reported to be available between noon and midnight and cost between 7,000 and 12,000 IQD (6 and 10 USD)¹⁹ per ampere.²⁰ Not all residents were said to be able to afford this.
- According to an electricity KI, the lack of available public grid electricity had a negative effect on livelihoods, with residents closing their shops and workplaces because they did not have electricity.

¹⁹ Price converted using www.xe.com 29 July 2018.

²⁰ The number of amperes purchased determines how many appliances can be used at once. If that allotment is exceeded, a communal fuse box automatically cuts power to that house, requiring the switch to be thrown manually. On average households use 3-5 amperes per month.



Improvements Suggested by KIs

Community leaders highlighted that electricity was a top priority need for Rawa. According to an electricity KI, the public grid needs to be repaired by replacing power lines, poles and power plants.

Healthcare

- According to KIs with specialist knowledge of healthcare (healthcare KIs), most residents in Rawa and surrounding village had access to healthcare facilities. KIs reported that there was one public healthcare centre and several private doctors. Furthermore, a number of humanitarian organisations were said to be providing basic healthcare services, including supporting the healthcare centre with staff, medicines, and equipment. The public hospital was reportedly closed at the time of data collection, because it was damaged during the recent conflict. KIs indicated that the hospital was being repaired by the GoI.
- Healthcare KIs reported a shortage of doctors in the area, leading to long wait times for healthcare services. These KIs also noted a lack of specialized healthcare, for which residents reportedly travel to healthcare facilities in Ana, Haditha, or Ramadi. The healthcare centre reportedly had general doctors and one paediatrician. However, a healthcare KI reported that on some days only one doctor was available.
- There was reportedly no capacity for surgeries or services for pregnant women at the healthcare centre. A humanitarian organisation was said to be providing prenatal care in Rawa, but for delivery, women needed to travel to Ana or Ramadi.
- A healthcare KI reported that there was a lack of equipment in the healthcare centre, with no X-ray machine available. Ambulances were said to be available to bring people to the healthcare centre or to healthcare facilities outside of Rawa in case of emergencies.
- A consultation at the public healthcare centre was said to cost 2,000 to 3,000 IQD (2-3 USD).²¹ A humanitarian organisation was said to be providing free consultations in the healthcare centre during the afternoon. Private doctors reportedly charge 10,000 to 15,000 IQD (8-13 USD)²² for a consultation.
- There were reported to be two private pharmacies in Rawa, but they did not have sufficient supplies of medicines. A healthcare KI indicated that medicines from private pharmacies were expensive and that not all people were able to afford them.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

Healthcare KIs indicated that more specialized doctors and medication were needed. In addition, they highlighted that there needs to be the capacity to perform surgeries and to provide maternity care. Lastly, they mentioned that the Rawa general hospital needs to reopen.

Education

- According to two KIs with specialist knowledge of education (education KIs), most children from Rawa had access to formal education. One education KI highlighted that not all children from surrounding villages had access to formal education, due to a lack of educational facilities in those villages. Returnee KIs furthermore highlighted that not all families were able to afford transportation costs if education facilities were far away. School transport reportedly cost between 15,000 to 35,000 IQD (13-29 USD) per month.²³
- An education KI reported that there were 27 schools in Rawa in the pre-ISIL period, nine of which were said to be functional at the time of data collection (eight primary schools and one secondary school). As a result, classes were said to be overcrowded. Those schools that were not operational had reportedly been destroyed, damaged or looted during the recent crisis. An education KI indicated that the GoI had repaired two schools.
- The number of teachers and school materials was reportedly not sufficient to meet the needs of students. Education KIs specifically highlighted that many teachers were still displaced.

Map 2: Rawa in relation to central and northern Iraq



²¹ Price converted using www.xe.com 29 July 2018.

²² Price converted using www.xe.com 29 July 2018.

²³ Price converted using www.xe.com 29 July 2018.



- An education KI highlighted that some children were behind in schooling, because they could not attend school during the recent crisis (approximately three academic years). As a result, there were said to be significant age differences within classes.
- Humanitarian organisations were reportedly providing summer schooling to children in Rawa, helping students to catch up with educational backlog.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

According to an education KI, more educational materials were needed, including books, pens, blackboards, and notebooks.

Water

- According to two KIs with specialist knowledge of water provision (water KIs), the piped water network in Rawa was functional. A water KI highlighted that 60-70% of the piped water network had been damaged during the recent crisis. Half of the damage was reported by KIs to have been repaired by the GoI and a development organisation. There was reportedly no functioning water treatment plant, with water being sourced directly from the Euphrates river. Repairs to the treatment plant were reportedly ongoing at the time of data collection.
- The water from the public network was said to only be available to residents for two to twelve hours per day, depending on electricity provision for the main government water pumps. According to a water KI, households pay 7,000 IQD (6 USD)²⁴ per month for water from the public network.
- Residents were reportedly either using filtration systems at home, drinking water directly from the tap, or were buying bottled water. A healthcare KI highlighted that there were many cases of diarrhoea and urinary tract infections as a result of drinking unfiltered water. In addition, returnee KIs mentioned that residents were suffering from skin diseases as a result of exposure to the untreated water.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

According to water KIs, new equipment and materials were needed, such as drills, water pumps and pipes.

Waste Disposal Services

- Municipal waste disposal services were reportedly available in certain parts of Rawa. According to a KI with specialist knowledge on waste disposal services (waste KI), solid waste was collected from house to house every two to three days in al Jadida and al Qadissiyah neighbourhoods, while six other neighbourhoods were not covered by the municipality due to a lack of staff and equipment.²⁵ Residents from those neighbourhoods reportedly dispose of waste themselves, by dumping it outside of the town or by burning it.
- All returnee KIs reported that waste was regularly collected from their houses. Notably, two returnee KIs from al Qala'a neighbourhood said that waste was collected from their houses.
- Waste was reportedly dumped by the municipality in the eastern part of Rawa, because the original landfill site to the northeast of Rawa was thought to be contaminated with explosive hazards.
- A development actor reportedly provided 1,000 solid waste containers to households. The same actor was said to be supporting the clearance of rubble from the city through an emergency livelihoods project.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

A waste KI indicated that that more employees, garbage trucks, and tractors were needed for waste collection. In addition, other equipment, such as protective clothes and gloves were needed for employees.

About REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms.

All our reports, maps and factsheets are available on the REACH resource centre. For more information, visit our website at www.reach-initiative.org, follow us on Twitter: @REACH_info and Facebook: www.facebook.com/IMPACT.init or write to geneva@reach-initiative.org

About the Returns Working Group (RWG) Iraq

The Returns Working Group (RWG) is an operational and multi-stakeholder platform on returns, which was established in line with Strategic Objective 3 of the 2016 Iraq HRP "to support voluntary, safe and dignified return" of IDPs; to monitor and report on conditions in return areas, and determine to what extent durable solutions have been achieved- or progress made- for returnees.

The key objective of the group is to establish coherence of information, data and analysis, strengthen coordination and advocacy, give guidance on activities related to the key areas, and enhance complementary action among its partners with the overall goal of supporting and reinforcing the national response to Iraq's coming reintegration challenge.

²⁴ Price converted using www.xe.com 29 July 2018.

²⁵ According to [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org) there are approximately 12 neighbourhoods in Rawa. The waste KI did not report on the remaining four neighbourhoods.

