

Agenda Items: RWG Monthly Meeting 28 July 2020

1. **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes and follow up action from previous minutes
2. **Returns Update:** Update on return figures from DTM dashboard/Return Index, Salah Al-Din Return Index Governorate Profile, Sinjar-Ba'aj Emergency Tracking
3. **Situational update on returns:** Sinjar by OCHA, Ninewa, SAD, Erbil by RWG Field Team.
4. **Durable Solutions Network:** Update on Voluntary Returns Project Anbar
5. **AOB:** Camp closure and Consolidation (CCCM)



Situational Update on Returns

RWG Monthly Meeting 28 July 2020

Background to the new wave of return



- According to the updates received from the Joint Crisis Coordination Center July (JCCC) on 21 so far about 2,251 families (13,506 individuals) have returned to Sinjar district since the beginning of June 2020. The majority are Yazidis who were IDPs in Duhok camps and non-camp locations. With less than 10% of Muslims who returned to south of Sinjar (mainly to Rambousy and Qabosia village).
- The returnees are mainly returning to Sinjar, Sinune and Al-Qahtania center; whilst some have also returned to areas in Sinjar mountain, Qayrawan center, Tel Banat, Tel Qasab, Kanasor and Aljazera complex, Al-Wardia, Rambousy North, Rambousy west, Rambousy south, Solakh, Hatmia, Qabosia, Ajma Al Gharbi, Hardan, Hayali, Razka, Jafriya, Hamadan, Duhola, Tubal, Nuseria, Kurse and Gulat village). It is worth mentioning that very limited numbers of returnees are heading to other locations out of the 120 locations in Sinjar.
- The main reasons for this new wave of return are reportedly; first to re-join family members that are working with security/military forces and are not able to return to Duhok due to the lockdown and preventative measures. The second reason is to find better job opportunities in Sinjar since opportunities are very scarce these days in Duhok.

Secondary displacement or failed return



- The Mayor of Sinjar reported that between 16,000 to 20,000 houses were damaged in the area during the conflict, therefore only 65 percent of the returnees were able to return to their houses, while 35 percent of the returnees have reportedly ended up as IDPs in the other locations in secondary displacement.
- According to local authorities, the families that were not able to reach their homes have mainly settled in five locations (Sinjar center, Sinuni center, Qahtania center, Sinjar mountain and Al-Jazerah complex). At the same time, there are a few in other locations.
- These new returnees have mainly joined their relatives or are building temporary shelters on public land; i.e. mud houses or tents, and some have also reportedly occupied houses of other families.
- In an official letter the Mayor of Sinjar requested the Governor of Ninawa to increase the deployment of security forces in the area to prevent returnees from building new or temporary shelters on public and government land.

Government Response



- Sinjar MoMD committee has been established in Sinjar, under the jurisdiction of the Talefar MoMD department and the registration of the returnees for the return grants is ongoing.
- In a decree from the MoMD Minister to the Governor of Ninawa, Sinjar compensation office has been opened in Sinjar within the MoMD Ninewa department, the returnees and host communities are now able to register their losses and damages for a future compensation by the central government.
- The MoMD Minister has announced that they will give priority to Yazidi returnees in terms of providing return grants, so far, no grants have been distributed so far.
- The Sinjar MoMD branch office is regularly distributing food baskets and hygiene kits to the new returnees, so far almost 1,500 food baskets and 1,500 hygiene kits have been distributed and there are plans to cover the rest of the returnees.

Government Response continued...



- The MoMD Duhok branch office is in the process of making contracts with a transportation company to transport the returnees that are willing to return but cannot afford to pay transportation fees.
- The Mayor of Sinjar has announced that they are planning to start a range of infrastructure rehabilitation projects especially in the new return areas, including ;the construction of four schools in Yousfa, Hardan, Al-Awad and Al-Hilal village , rehabilitation of four boreholes, construction of an orphanage house for Yazidi children and construction of one PHC in Kuju village.
- The OCHA Ninewa sub office is working in collaboration with the OCHA Dohuk sub office on developing a response matrix to capture the response interventions. Once finalized will be shared with all relevant partners.

Needs and challenges



- Drinking water remains one of the priority needs for the returnees. Returnees are mainly relying on shallow wells and water trucking which costs around 10,000 IQD per HH.
- The Mayor of Sinjar in an official letter requested OCHA and Humanitarian partners to provide water trucking to (Al-Qahtaniyah district, Al Jazirah complex, Rambousi north, Ajma Al Gharbi village, south Rambousi village, west Rambousi village, Hayali village and Razka village, Tel Banat complex, Jafriya village, Tel Kasab complex, Hamadan village).
- Shelter assistance has also been identified as a priority need. Community leaders continue to report that the returnees are in dire need for shelter assistance, and that even houses that were not damaged during the crisis, are in need of partial maintenance.

Needs and challenges continued...



- HLP related concerns are also on the increase due to the occupation of other people's houses by some returnee families. MoMD has requested for shelter support for 200 families that are reportedly occupying other people's houses.
- Primary healthcare services are highly needed especially in the rural areas, a group of returnees are forced to travel around 30km to reach out the primary health services in nearby locations.

Barriers to return



The Mayor of Sinjar has reported that the number of returnees have recently substantially decreased due to below reasons:

- Lack of public services, mainly water and electricity.
- Damage of Shelter infrastructures at the area, as the Mayor mentioned between 16,000 to 20,000 of the houses are damaged.
- Presence of illegal security forces in the area, (especially in the mountain).
Social tensions among different groups and ethnics of the community especially Sunny Muslims and Yazidis.



Returns Field Update

RWG MONTHLY MEETING – 28TH JULY 2020

RETURNS TO NINEWA

Ninewa Returns

MOMD Minister Visit

- On 25 and 26 July, MoMD Minister visited Khazer and Hasan Sham camps, Asian and Sheikhan camps in Sheikhan, Yazidi representatives in Sheikhan as well as Erbil authorities. During her visits the minister discussed supporting all returnees, encouraging IDPs to return voluntary and government support to rehabilitate and improve services in areas of origin.
- Discussions with Erbil authorities also included approaches on how to overcome the security obstacles that impede the return of the displaced families to areas of origin.

RETURN TO SOUTHERN SALAH AL-DIN

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Recent returns from Sulaymaniyah to SAD

- Late June MoMD facilitated the return of 35+2 IDP families (200) from Ashti camp to Yathrib sub-district and Al-Shihaby and Al-Ajeliyah villages in Dijeel district.
- Some families have settled in their own houses, while others stay with relatives and friends because their houses are totally destroyed.

Planned returns

- In July, 20 IDP families from Suly camps registered for return to Salah al-din. Returns are planned for after Eid.

Suly Task Team

- Comprising Suly Protection Cluster, CCCM, RWG and OCHA.
- Intentions survey currently underway in Suly camps.

Motivations for the Returns

- The Iraqi Federal Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) set a goal to accomplish returns by the end of 2020.
- Tribal reconciliation efforts lead directly by the governor, early signs of success in these processes in Balad district, Yathrib sub-district
- Albuishma tribe leaders visited Suly governor to request facilitation of freedom of movement for tribe members to go to SAD and finalise their security clearance.

Obstacles to return and return conditions

- Shelter damage
- Lack of basic services including drinking water
- Lack of security
- Social cohesion concerns (blocked returns, illegal occupation of private houses)

Yathrib return committee

In July 2020, the Yathrib mayor established a return follow-up committee, to be chaired by the mayor and includes representatives of:

1. Health
2. Education
3. Electricity
4. Municipality
5. Agriculture
6. Water
7. EOD (Mine clearance)
8. Department of national IDs

Functions of the Yathrib returns committee

- Identification of returnee immediate short-term and long-term needs
- Response through government ministries and directorates (JCMC involvement)
- New Mayor Mr. Enad Al-Azzawi has requested support to help meet the needs of returnees
- Additional needs communicated to SAD sub-national clusters' partners through OCHA
- WG monitoring the local authority efforts to finalize the “Endorsement of Residency” for the recent returnees, so that MoMD staff can start registering them as returnees

RETURN TO AL-AUJA

- In June SAD governor chaired a coordination meeting with aid partners to discuss the return to Al-Auja
- Governor emphasized that the village would need all kinds of support, esp shelter rehabilitation, mine clearance, MPCA and WASH.
- Initial steps will be taken by local government
- Estimated IDPs from Al-Auja range between 3,000-4,000 HHs
- Presence of PMF units and lack of services are the most priority obstacles to return
- No specific time on when the IDPs will start returning to their AoOs in Al-Auja



KRI UPDATE

Erbil

- Between March to 25 July 2020. 150 HH returned from Erbil camps to their AoO, the vast majority heading to Ninewa
- Some of the returnees have family members in to the Iraq federal security forces, who decided to return due to COVID-19 movement restrictions.
- The federal government did not send the salaries of the displaced schoolteachers to their areas of displacement, teacher had to receive their salaries in their AoO.
- More IDPs have registered their names and expressed their interest to return in the coming weeks.
- MoMD Erbil reports that there is ongoing return of on average 15-20 HH a week.

IHCHR RETURNS INITIATIVE

National Initiative for the Voluntary Return of IDPs - IHCHR



- The High Commission for Human Rights in Iraq (IHCHR) proposed a “National Initiative for the Voluntary Return of IDPs” to the Iraqi prime minister on 24th June 2020
- The initiative included 22 proposed activities, out of which the following are the most important ones:
 1. Identify a timeframe of (six months) in this year to return the IDPs to their AoOs voluntarily and allow them to take their tents and personal stuff/furnitures
 2. Allocate sufficient financial means for the return grant in 2020 or 2021 national budget
 3. Accelerate the process of security screening for those with intention to return to AoOs
 4. Facilitate the process of issuing the identification documents to IDPs in line with the right to have the ID (Article #18 – Iraqi constitution 2005)
 5. Rehabilitate the liberated areas completely and provide services through the “Reconstruction Fund for areas affected by terrorism operations”
 6. Look on the possibility of constructing housing complexes and low-cost shelters and distribute them to IDPs returned from camps
 7. Conduct concrete discussions between the federal government and KRG to facilitate the return of IDPs to their villages in Ninewa plain especially those from Rabe’a sub-district, Al-Khazir district and Talkaif district
 8. Call for an international donors' conference in Iraq this year (under the auspices of the United Nations) to provide assistance to Iraq, thus facilitating the return of the displaced.
 9. Launch a national programme to trace the missing and kidnapped IDPs and reunite them with their families
 10. Consider the AoOs of the current IDPs that have not yet been rehabilitated as Stricken areas that need all means of government support