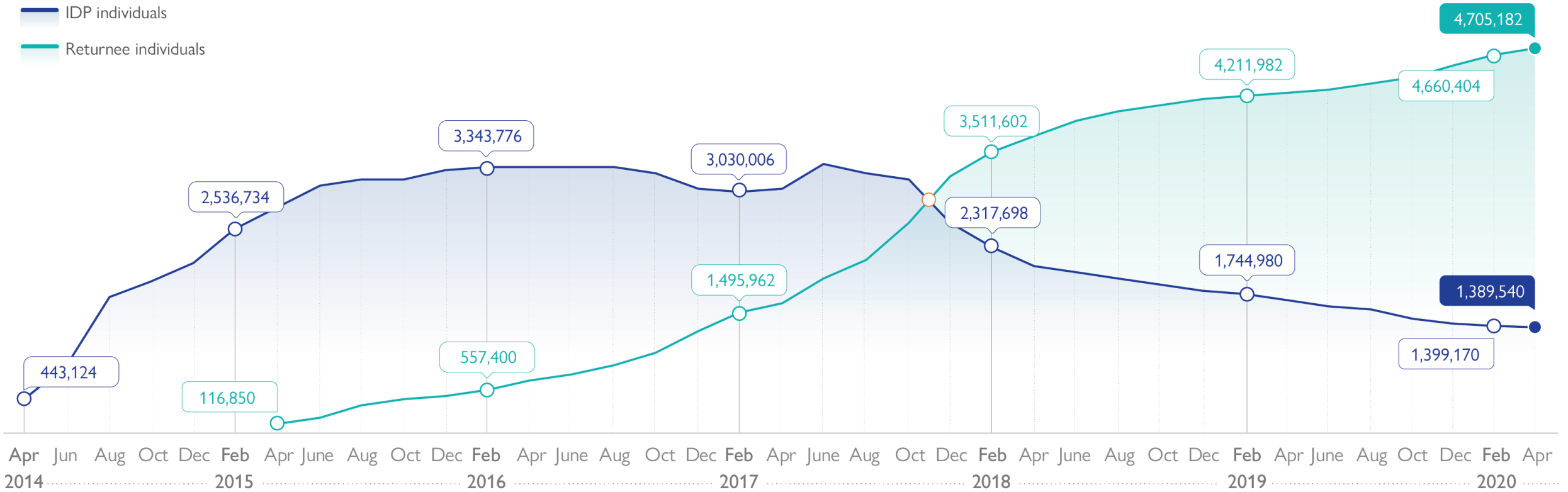# Displacement and Returns Update
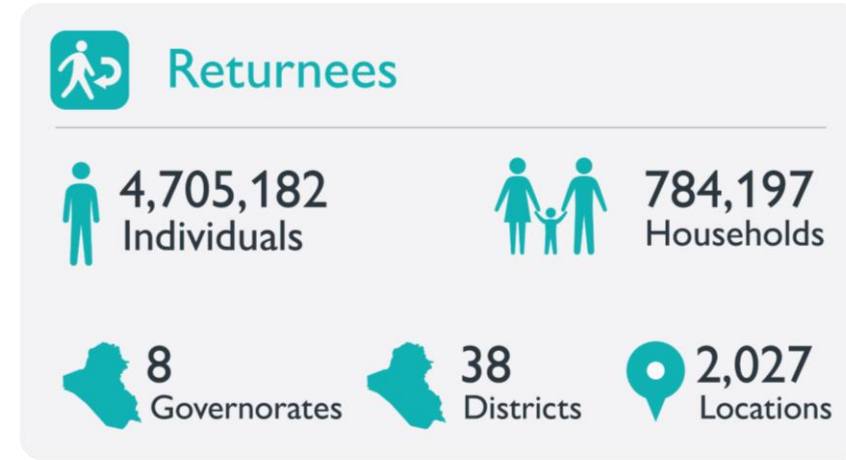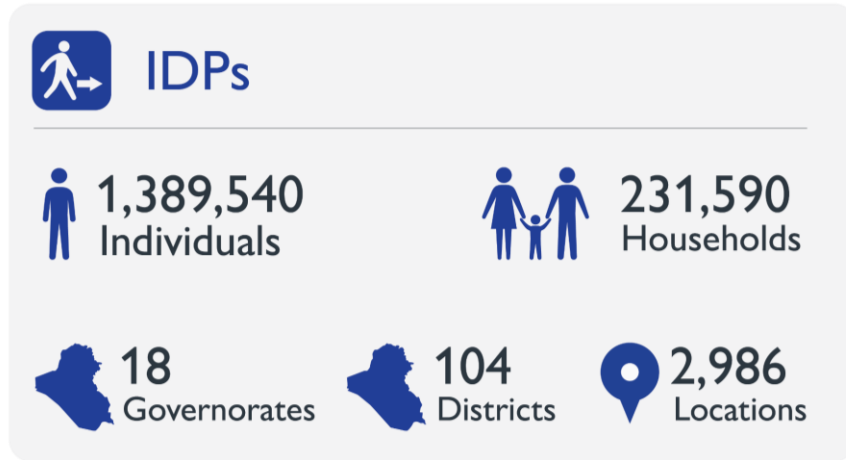
Returns Working Group, 27 May 2020

Latest Displacement Data (March-April 2020)

DTM IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX
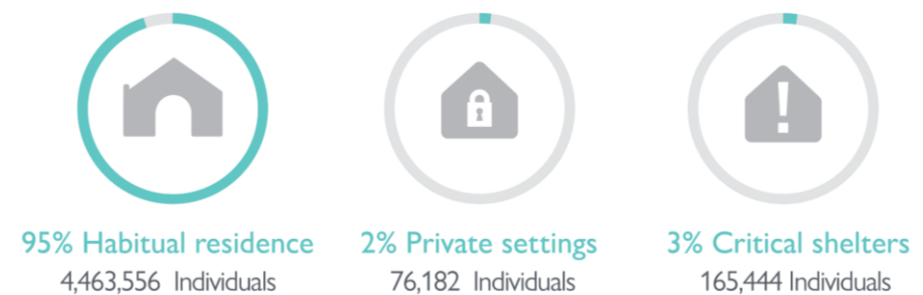
Legend:
- IDP individuals
- Returnee individuals

Data points (IDP individuals):
- 443,124 — Apr 2014
- 2,536,734 — Feb 2015
- 3,343,776 — Feb 2016
- 3,030,006 — Feb 2017
- 2,317,698 — Feb 2018
- 1,744,980 — Feb 2019
- 1,399,170
- 1,389,540 — Apr 2020

Data points (Returnee individuals):
- 116,850
- 557,400
- 1,495,962
- 3,511,602
- 4,211,982
- 4,660,404
- 4,705,182

X-axis:
- Apr Jun Aug Oct Dec **Feb** — 2014 / 2015
- Apr June Aug Oct Dec **Feb** — 2016
- Apr June Aug Oct Dec **Feb** — 2017
- Apr June Aug Oct Dec **Feb** — 2018
- Apr June Aug Oct Dec **Feb** — 2019
- Apr June Aug Oct Dec **Feb** Apr — 2020

Latest Displacement Data (March-April 2020)

DTM — IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX

IDPs

1,389,540 Individuals   231,590 Households

18 Governorates   104 Districts   2,986 Locations

-9,630
IDPs since last round

68% Private settings
942,684 Individuals

24% Camps
333,192 Individuals

8% Critical shelters
112,902 Individuals

Returnees

4,705,182 Individuals   784,197 Households

8 Governorates   38 Districts   2,027 Locations

+44,778
returnees since last round

95% Habitual residence
4,463,556 Individuals

2% Private settings
76,182 Individuals

3% Critical shelters
165,444 Individuals

Returns per Governorate

Governorates Ranked by Number of Returnees

Governorate	Returnees
Ninewa	1,696,386
Anbar	1,317,174
Salah al-Din	646,860
Kirkuk	333,120
Diyala	225,828
Baghdad	88,782
Erbil	41,220
Dahuk	780

Legend:
- IDP & returnee areas
- Returnee areas
- IDP areas
- District boundaries
- Governorate boundaries
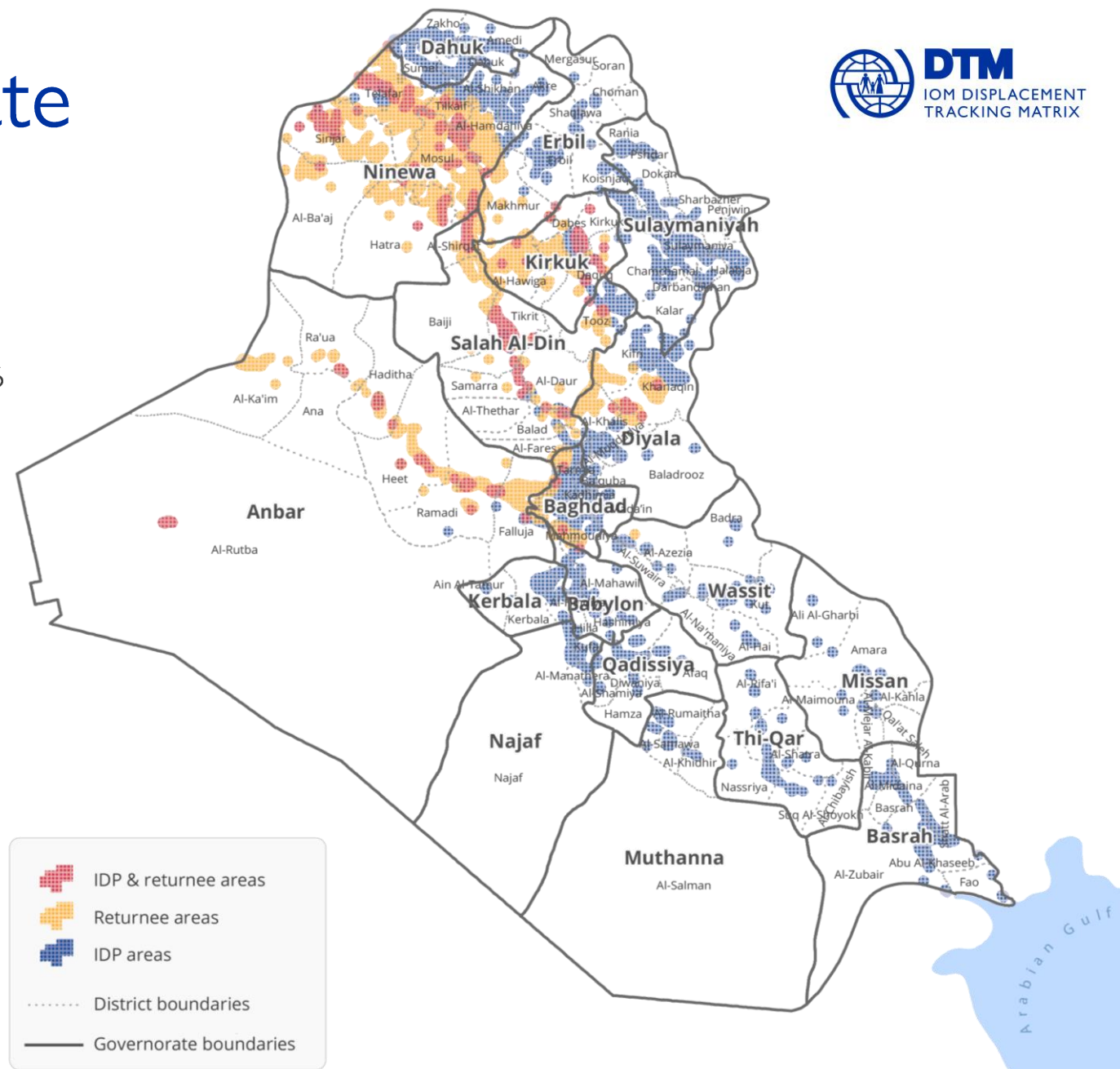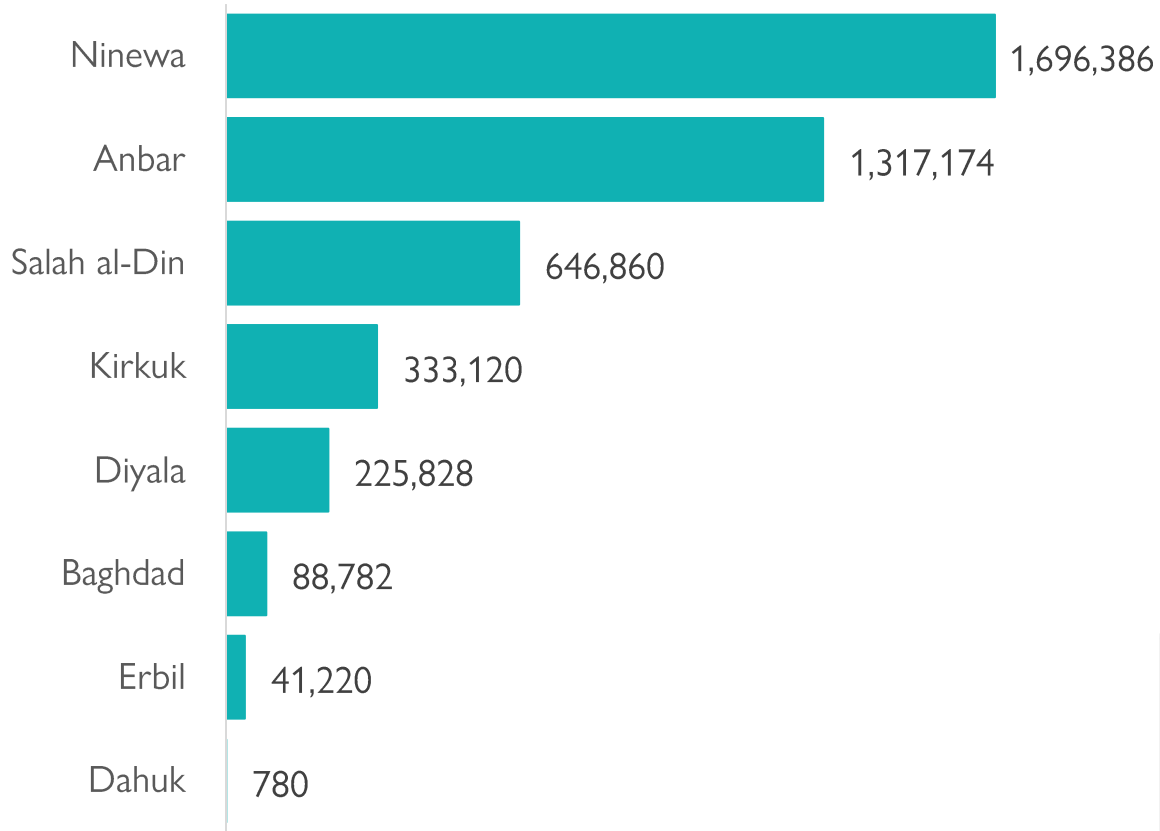
2 Methodological RI Reports

RETURN INDEX

METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW - IRAQ

MAY 2020

CONTEXT

As more people return to their places of origin than remain displaced in Iraq, it is necessary to know the severity of conditions in the locations to which they are returning, how the severity changes over time and which locations have limited returns and why in order to shape strategies for intervention and resource allocation. The Return Index is a tool developed to measure these factors in over 1,850 return locations across the country.

This document presents a short overview of the methodology and guiding principles of the Return Index. Further details on how the Return Index was constructed in Iraq by delving into its most important building blocks, as well as discussing lessons learned during the design and implementation process, are available in the report "Building Blocks of the Return Index in Iraq".

INTRODUCTION

The return of internally displaced persons is often seen as a significant and critical step toward durable solutions in the aftermath of conflict. However, it also signifies that the context may require a shift in programming from humanitarian to recovery-oriented policies, interventions and funding. While population and location figures highlight the significant number of people in Iraq who may be in need of assistance upon return, they do not shed light on what type of assistance is needed, who needs it, and where to prevent secondary displacement or prolonged residence in poor physical and/or social conditions. In other words, such data alone cannot answer two critical and inter-linked questions necessary for strategizing, advocating, and operationalising responses for returning populations in Iraq:

1. What are the conditions in areas of return and how do they evolve over time?

2. Which locations have limited returns and why?

Thus, a more precise tool is needed to understand the "quality of returns" in Iraq and to this end IOM DTM, the Returns Working Group, and Social Inquiry developed the Return Index. This tool serves as a means of measuring the severity of conditions in areas of return, and allows for partners to better strategize regarding resources and operations in vulnerable areas or to mitigate the risks of push/pull factors when it comes to return. The Return Index facilitates a more specific set of coherent interventions that bridge humanitarian, recovery and stabilisation needs.

METHODOLOGY

The Return Index is built on a list of indicators developed in consultation with relevant partners and stakeholders to reflect the displacement context in Iraq. To measure the severity of conditions in each loca-tion of return, the Return Index is based on 16 indicators grouped into two scales: (i) livelihoods and basic services, and (ii) social cohesion and safety perceptions. A regression model is used to assess the impact of each of the indicators in facilitating or preventing returns and to calculate scores for the two scales. For example, the model tests how much less likely a location where no agricultural activities are back to normal has returns compared to a location where

this is not the case. To compute an overall severity index, the scores of two scales are combined. The severity index ranges from 0 (all essential conditions for return are met) to 100 (no essential conditions for return are met). Higher scores denote more severe living conditions for returnees. The scores of the severity index can be grouped into three categories: 'low' severity conditions, 'medium', and 'high' (which also includes the identified 'very high' locations).

Table one shows the list of the indicators for both scales. Indicators at the top of the list increase the overall severity index.

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BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE RETURN INDEX IN IRAQ

APRIL 2020

SUMMARY

This report aims to provide general insights on how the Return Index was constructed in Iraq by delving into its most important building blocks, as well as discussing lessons learned during the design and implementation process. The report covers two aspects: (a) the indicator framework design with statistical modelling, and (b) the data analysis and dissemination. Both the building blocks and lessons learned can be used as blueprints to replicate the Return Index in other countries and displacement crises.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THE RETURN INDEX?

The Return Index is a tool developed to measure and monitor the severity of conditions in locations with returnee populations in Iraq. As more people return to their places of origin than remain displaced after the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) conflict in Iraq, determining the severity of conditions in the locations to which returnees are returning, how severity changes over time, and finally, which locations have limited returns and why are all necessary steps to shape strategies for intervention and resource allocation.

The data for the Return Index is collected continuously through key informant interviews and reported every two months. Data collection is carried out at the location level, that is, villages in rural areas and neighbourhoods in urban settings, in around 1,800 locations across 38 districts in 8 governorates in Iraq. Data is collected through IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs), composed of over 100 staff members deployed across Iraq (20% of enumerators are female). IOM's RARTs collect data through structured interviews with key informants using a large, well-established network of over 9,500 key informants that includes community leaders, mukhtars, local authorities and security forces.

The advantage of this approach is its ability to systematically cover all known return locations in a short period of time and to monitor changes over time. The limitation of this approach is that it relies on one representative per location, mainly mukhtars and community or local council representatives, who report on the views of a potentially large and diverse population. Responses may be subject

to individual key informant interpretation and may not consider all the nuances. In light of this limitation, questionnaires must aim as much as possible to capture observable indicators over individual perceptions.

The main assumption used to build the analytical model for the Return Index is that the severity of living conditions for returnees (i.e. the likelihood or sustainability of returns) can be evaluated according to whether all the pre-conflict population has returned or not. According to this assumption, locations where all residents have returned are likely to have good conditions for return. Locations where not all of the population have returned are likely to present issues with services, livelihoods, safety, or social cohesion. This measurement approach has limitations, given that the presence of full returns in a location may not be due to good conditions, but to forced or premature returns from places of displacement.

The Return Index is built using a list of indicators developed in consultation with relevant partners and stakeholders to reflect the displacement context in Iraq. To measure the severity of conditions in each location of return, the Return Index uses data on 16 indicators divided into two scales: Scale 1, on livelihoods and basic services, and Scale 2, centred around social cohesion and safety perceptions. A score is assigned to each indicator according to its impact in explaining the likelihood of return – the reason for giving a specific score instead of allocating the same value to all indicators is to reflect that not all indicators have the same impact on returns. A regression model is used to assess the impact of each of the indicators in facilitating or preventing returns, where the dependent variable is the return rate of the pre-conflict population and the independent variables are indicators that measure the severity of conditions. For example, the model tests how much more likely a location where agricultural activities are back to normal is to have returns, compared to a location where agriculture is still paralyzed.

Using the assigned scores for each indicator, the values of the two scales are calculated. To compute an overall severity index, the value of the two scales are combined as an average. The index ranges from 0 (all essential conditions for return are met) to 100 (no essential conditions for return are met). Higher scores denote more severe living conditions for returnees. The scores of the severity index are grouped into three categories: low, medium and high (which also includes very high).

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