



RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 19 February 2019
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 10:00-11:30 hrs
- ❖ **Location:** Erbil (IOM Conference Room, Gulan Rd.) via bluejeans to Baghdad, UNDP Meeting room

In Attendance: DFID, MOMD, NRC, World vision, Oxfam, Mercy corps, OCHA, IOM, SRC, CRC, NCCI, Mercy Hands, UNDP, UNMAS, Acted, REACH Initiative, IRC, WFP, Shelter cluster, UNHCR, Social Inquiry, HLP sub-cluster, DFID, CCCM Cluster, SIF, PUI, CRS, General Council of Hungary, ICRI- Iraq OTI, Geneva Call, Iraq Program, SEDO, Dary Human, Tear Fund, Sanad for Peacebuilding, War Child Canada, PAX.

Agenda Items:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
- 2) **Returns Update:** Update on return figures from RWG/DTM dashboard and geographical analysis of the Return Index
- 3) **Governorate Return Committees (GRC):** Update from IOM CCCM focal point for Central and South on the developments of the Governorate Return Committees (GRCs)
- 4) **Area of No Return:** Overview of current locations with no return, focus on Diyala.
- 5) **Government update on returns:** Presentation by MOMD on current IDP and returnee status.
- 6) **Peace and Reconciliation Working Group:** presentation by the Peace and Reconciliation Working Group on ongoing efforts in Ninewa
- 7) **AOB**

Key Discussion Points/ Action:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
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- The Chair gave an overview of the previous meeting after the introductions, as well as a review of the agenda items.

- 2) **Returns Update:** Update on return figures from RWG/DTM dashboard and geographical analysis of the Return Index
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(Presentation attached for more details)

Main points:

i) Return Update

- As of February 2019, the total no. of returnees was at 4,211,982.
- Round 108 (January-February) DTM recorded an extra 46,662 returnees, mostly to Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Anbar, which is slightly less than Round 107, when 51,696 new returnees were recorded (Total returnees 107: 4, 165, 320)
- 130,824 returnees are living in critical shelter, which makes up 3% of the total returnee population
- Also slightly less than Round 107, when 132,744 returnees were living in critical shelter

ii) Return Index Report no. 2

- DTM is now recalibrating the model, 6 months after the first data collection and after adding new previously inaccessible locations (Baaj, Ayadhiya, Tooz Khormatu...)
- The results, overall, did not change a lot—what was relevant before is still relevant now around the same magnitude.

Preliminary indicator analysis shows that

- Housing destruction remains the most impactful factor, in addition to access to primary schools (which is more important, than before).
- The indicator on need for reconciliation also shows a higher impact now than before.
- The indicator for agriculture was revised in the new questionnaire and has now shown some impact on returns in rural areas.
- Additional questions were added and revised on the indicators for access to employment and access to basic items (rather than presence of market), and has shown an impact on the latest round.
- Only a handful of locations reported not being able to access healthcare, even when there are no facilities in the location.

iii) Protracted Displacement

- The number of displaced households between March and December 2018 was compared and the rate of change between periods was computed.
- **Evidence from previous Integrated Location Assessments (ILAs) suggest that it is often the more vulnerable that are left behind, as permanence in displacement is linked to difficult conditions** - i.e. they have lost everything back home and/or have no means to return, hence the conditions of current IDPs may be worse off than those portrayed back when ILA III was collected.
- The 13 stationary districts host the majority of displaced households (66%, and 84% with fairly stationary). These include KRI (Akre, Dahuk, Sumel, Zakho in Dahuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah),



Ninewa (Mosul and Sinjar), Diyala (Ba'quba, Khanaqin), Falluja (Anbar), Al-Musayab (Babylon), and Tooz (Salah Al-Din).

- Despite a prevalent intention to return at long term, IDPs in stationary districts are **the most likely to remain in the next 12 months**, confirming the presence of severe obstacles to their return.
- The 8 dynamic districts, i.e. Baghdad (Abu Ghraib, Adhamia and Karkh), Kifri (in Diyala), Najaf, Ramadi (Anbar), Telafar (Ninewa), and Tikrit (Salah-al-Din); host only 10% of displaced households (and 13% with fairly dynamic).
- IDPs' intentions at long term are largely similar to the average, with the majority planning to return. **The difference is more marked at medium term – with nearly half either leaning towards return or undecided and 55% – confirming the greater dynamism of these districts.**
- In general, outflows can be linked to the lower level of residential damage and the better security of IDPs' locations of origin. The most prevalent obstacle to return is **lack of job opportunities**
- 9 districts – accounting for about 30% of IDPs, the majority in Mosul- were found with high rates of intra-district displacement. These districts are Al-Musayab in Babylon; Mosul, Sinjar, Tilkaif and Telafar in Ninewa; Tooz and Balad in Salah-al-Din; Khanaqin in Diyala and Daquq in Kirkuk.

➤ Discussion:

- The Chair noted that some more returns happened in the last weeks- mainly in Anbar following the Bzebiz formal camps closure, and integration also happened in some location mostly for IDPs from Jurf al Sakhr and Owisat. With regards to reconciliation, Anbar and Diyala are some examples which show that reconciliation has helped some IDPs to return.
- A question was asked on w the correlation between stationary and dynamic districts.
- IOM DTM responded that:
 - They were assessing the intention of people who want to return or integrate.
 - Conditions of the districts in which IDPs have integrated seem to be improving.
 - The reason of no return for those IDPs who are in static districts is more difficult to capture in comparison to the dynamic districts.

3) Governorate Return Committees (GRC): Update from IOM CCCM on the developments of the Governorate Return Committees (GRCs)

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points:

1. ANBAR

1. Last GRC Meeting held 23 January 2019 with HC in attendance. Following agreements were reached with Anbar Governorate IDP Advisor:
 - Consolidation of BZBZ formal camps would proceed during the first two weeks of February.
 - The informal BZBZ sites would not be part of the BZBZ consolidation process.
2. Update on BZBZ closure process
 - Humanitarian partners completed intentions surveys on 5/6 February covering all BZBZ formal sites, registering 268 HH total. The majority of respondents expressed a preference to remain in the BZBZ area when the formal camps were closed.
 - Anbar Operations Command agreed on 5 February that BZBZ residents would have the option of integrating into existing BZBZ informal sites. This was confirmed with Anbar Governorate IDP Advisor. On partner request, AOC notified camp managers and partners officially that movement would proceed on 9 February.
 - Closure of BZBZ formal camps began on 9 February with the majority of HH relocating into informal areas in BZBZ.
3. Status of BZBZ camps
 - Formal camps Al Markazi A and B, Al Ihsan, Al Hijrah, and Abyadh were officially closed by Anbar Governorate representatives on 11 February.
 - Formal camps Al Khamseen and Camp 74 were closed and converted into informal sites by Anbar Governorate representatives on 11 February.
 - As of 14 February, of the 268 HH registered in the BZBZ intentions survey, 27 HH relocated to AAF, 113 HH remained in Al Khamseen and Camp 74 sites, and approximately 128 relocated from the formal camps into BZBZ informal site areas.

BZBZ partners are working to connect new arrivals to infrastructure in the pre-existing informal sites and respond to emergency needs, while encouraging integration into the pre-existing informal sites.

2. BAGHDAD

Update:

- Camp managers in Wahda and Al Amel camps, as well as Al Ahel camp, were notified on 31 January 2019 that Wahda camp was to be closed on 6 February and Al Amel camp on 12 February.
- Wahda camp
 - Partners completed intentions surveying at Wahda camp on 3 February. 21 of 23 HH reported their preference to remain in out of camp housing in Wahda area rather than relocate to Al Ahel.
 - Closure of Wahda went forward on 6 February with 9 HH relocating to Al Ahel camp and 14 HH remaining in the Wahda area renting houses out of camp.
- Al Amel camp



- Partners completed intentions surveying in Al Amel on 10 February. 79% of the 80 HH remaining in Al Amel camp stated a preference to remain in out-of-camp locations in Al Amel area rather than return or relocate to Al Ahel.

Closure of Al Amel camp has been postponed until 1 March in order to allow for completion of shelter replacement works in Al Ahel camp.

➤ Discussion:

The IOM CCCM focal point mentioned that the main information gathered are related to Anbar and Baghdad governorates.

- In general, the authorities involved in the GRC are not properly adhering to the GRC TOR.
- BZBZ population has different dynamics than HCT camps. IDPs are not really ready to go back to their AoO for different issues (for instance IDPs from Jurf al Sakhr and Owisat).
- Shelter Cluster mentioned that forced return is creating a risk of secondary displacement in precarious shelter conditions. Advocacy needs to continue at this regard.

4) Area of No return: Focus on Diyala

(Presentation attached for more details)

- As of February 2019, a total of **242 locations** have witnessed no returns as of February 2019, across **41 sub- districts** and in **23 districts**.
- Ninewa currently hosts the majority of the locations (**123 locations**) having witnessed no returns across **16 subdistricts** in **7 districts**.
- The main reasons for no returns are linked to lack of security, blocked areas, tribal issues, lack of services, presence of IEDs and mines, and damaged infrastructure.
- New returns were recorded across 11 locations in Ninewa (2 locations), Diyala (1 location) and Baghdad (8 locations) since the previous round.
- Out of all the governorates that witnessed displacement, Anbar did not register any locations that have not witnessed returns.

Focus in Diyala:

Key points:

- Since its liberation in early 2015, two villages in Muqdadiyah district have still not witnessed any returns:
 - **Al-Khaylaniya village**- located east of Muqdadiya city.
 - **Toakel village**- located 7 km from the center of Muqdadiya
- **Return of IDPs; Toakel village**
 - The condition of the government to allow returns in Toakel is related to **security clearance**.

- Some family members have been denied security clearance due to matching and duplication of names with suspected affiliates of extremist groups.
- **Intention to return:**
 - There is no intention to return as Toakel is located near terrorists hence security is still an issue.
 - There has been temporary return by some IDPs to check on their lands and property. However, they have been targeted by snipers or mines. It is perceived that these mines were planted by the people monitoring the village, who are supposedly reporting to ISIL.
 - IDPs interviewed expressed concern that since the people of Toakel have been displaced twice (in 2007 and 2014), there is no guarantee that if they return their houses will not be destroyed again.
- **Return of IDPs: Al-Khaylaniya village**
 - There has been no real attempt to return to Al-Khaylaniya village due to tribal conflict, which is linked to a clan dispute between the clan of Al-Khaylaniya and a section of the Bani Tamim clan who live in the village of Al-Bazool.
 - It is further perceived that all the people from Al-Khaylaniya were affiliated with extremist groups as they had all left, and no one has returned or attempted to return.
- **Intention to return:**
 - The IDPs expressed that they want to return but cannot due to threats and fear of reprisal acts by the people from Al Bazool village due to the tribal issues.
- Discussion:
 - A query was made with regards to blocked return related to militia in the area. The Co-chair replied saying that according to what it has been reported, security issues are not specifically related to militias.

5) **Government update on returns:** Presentation by MOMD on current returnee status and camp status

(Data on returnees and camp status attached)

- Discussion:
 - A question was made with regards to the GOI support for people who intend to return to Hatra, Sinjar and Sinuni in Ninewa.
 - MoDM is encouraging all IDPs to go back in the area of return, not just in Ninewa. The areas where no return is happening is related to security, tribes and ethnic situations. This is more so in Ninewa, where MOMD is working hard to facilitate this return. MoDM is also conducting awareness campaigns to facilitate this return.



6) Peace and reconciliation working group

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points:

- The Peace and Reconciliation Working Group (PRWG) is a coordination mechanism that brings together - on a monthly basis - relevant NGOs, CSOs, international agencies and government representatives with reconciliation programs in Nineveh, with the aim to better coordinate activities and interventions.
- The PRWG is chaired by Sanad for peacebuilding org. under the sponsorship of GIZ.
- The purpose of this coordination mechanism is to reduce duplication, address geographical and thematic gaps, coordinate interventions, exchange researches, assessments, and knowledge of the field as well as contextual dynamics in Nineveh.
- **Membership:** The PRWG in Nineveh is open to UN agencies, donors, INGOs, CSOs involved in reconciliation programming in Nineveh. New members must submit organization profiles to be considered for a PRWG membership.

➤ Discussion

- A query was made by one of the participants on activities/ projects in Hamdanya.
 - PRWG responded saying that there are few initiatives, however, there is a lack of activities in the sub-districts like Sinuni.
 - PRWG is trying to work on local peace force- involving tribal leaders.
 - Next PRWG meeting will be in Cristal Hotel on Thursday, 21st February 2019.