

Rapid Overview of Areas of Return (ROAR)

Ana and Surrounding Areas

Anbar Governorate, Iraq - June 2018

Returns Working Group
RWG Iraq



REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

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Overview

Located 90 kilometres (km) east of the border with Syria and 250 km northwest of Baghdad, Ana is one of the main urban centres in the western part of Iraq's Anbar governorate. The town lies on the shores of the Euphrates river and is the capital of Ana district, which mainly consists of desert. Prior to 2014, the predominantly Sunni Arab population of Ana was approximately 40,000 people.¹

Ana district 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 Ana in September 2017, making it one of the last towns in Iraq to be retaken from ISIL.² Between June 2014 and September 2017 many residents from Ana displaced to east Anbar, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Baghdad. As West Anbar had been largely inaccessible to humanitarian actors during military operations in the city and its surrounding areas, in September 2017 REACH Initiative (REACH) launched a rapid assessment in order to inform preparations for a humanitarian response in the area. The assessment found a lack of clean drinking water, a lack of available healthcare and education services, limited livelihood opportunities and a lack of access to food.³

Since the GoI re-established control over the area an increasing number of displaced people have returned to Ana district, with a total of 9,672 returnees as of 15 June 2018.⁴ Given the limited information available regarding the situation in Ana and surrounding areas, REACH - in partnership with the Returns Working Group (RWG) - launched a follow-up Rapid Overview of Areas of Return (ROAR) assessment in June 2018. The aim of the assessment is 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.

Ana, Anbar Governorate



Key Findings

Displacement and Return, Protection Concerns

- The main reasons given by returnee key informants (KIs) for coming back to the area were a perceived improvement in security, the resumption of basic services in the area of origin (AoO), and a lack of adequate living conditions in the area of displacement. For KIs who remain in displacement, their **main reasons for not returning were damaged or destroyed property and a lack of healthcare services and jobs in the AoO.**
- Most returnee KIs reported feeling safe in their current areas, but concerns over the re-emergence of ISIL persist. **Explosive hazards were reportedly still present in villages and areas surrounding Ana town.**
- **Families with perceived affiliations to ISIL were reported to not be allowed to return to their areas of origin.** Moreover, there was said to be a nighttime curfew in the area.
- Ana was reported to have a functioning court and government offices for replacing official documentation. However, compensation for people with damaged, destroyed or stolen property was, according to KIs, not being provided at the time of data collection.

Livelihoods

- Livelihood opportunities were reportedly limited in the area, with the majority of employed people working in the public sector. **Agricultural and industrial work was said to be limited.** Those without an income were relying on the community, relatives or aid provided by governmental, development or humanitarian actors.

Access to Basic Services

- Most schools in Ana and surrounding villages were reportedly functioning. However, **there was a shortage of educational materials.** Some children from surrounding villages were not attending school due to associated costs for school clothes and books.
- **The public hospital was reportedly damaged, with only half of the building functional. Furthermore, there was a lack of doctors and medical equipment.** For specialized healthcare, residents were said to be relying on services from a field hospital run by an International Organisation (IO) or on healthcare facilities in Baghdad, Erbil, Haditha and Ramadi. Additionally, KIs indicated that there was limited availability of certain medicines.
- The piped water network in Ana was reportedly 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.
- Electricity from the public grid and solid waste collection were reportedly available in Ana town. Nonetheless, these services did not fully cover all surrounding villages.

¹ James A. Russell, "Innovation, Transformation and War; Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005-2007", 2011.

² Iraq Protection Cluster, "Anbar Returnees Profile", September 2017.

³ REACH, "West Anbar (Ana, Ru'ua and Qa'im), Iraq - Rapid Humanitarian Overview", September 2017.

⁴ IOM Iraq, [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), as of 15 June 2018.

Methodology

REACH enumerators collected data from 19 male and 6 female KIs⁵ from Ana town and Rayhana village, including 8 returnee residents, 4 non-displaced residents, 7 KIs from Ana who remained displaced outside of Ana district and 6 KIs with specialist knowledge in one of the sectors covered by the assessment (see Table 1). In some cases, the same KI was classed as an expert in more than one subject area. Respondents were identified through INGO partners and existing REACH KI networks. Data collection took place between 19 and 24 June 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	2	Community leaders
Livelihoods	2	Community leader, local government worker
Education	3	Community leader, teacher, local government worker
Healthcare	2	Community leader, healthcare worker
Water	2	Community leader, WASH expert
Electricity	2	Community leader, local government worker
Waste Disposal	1	Community leader

Movement Intentions

Current Trends

Many residents from Ana and surrounding areas displaced as a result of the recent crisis. The number of displaced individuals increased significantly in 2017 during the military operations by the GoI to re-establish control over western Anbar, with 75,000 people displacing from the region between January and September 2017.⁶ According to one community leader, around 25,000 people were living in Ana town at the time of data collection, of which approximately 80% were returnees.⁷ This KI also estimated that around 25% of the pre-conflict population was still living in displacement.

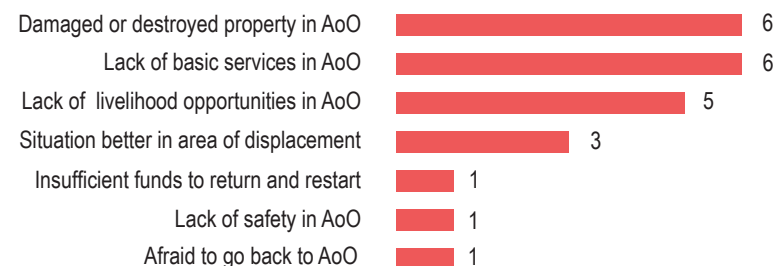
Four KIs indicated that some people re-displaced because they found livelihoods opportunities in other cities, such as Ramadi, Baghdad and Erbil. One IDP KI furthermore mentioned that he had returned for one week, after which he decided to re-displace because his house was damaged and because of the limited availability of basic services and livelihood opportunities.

Those returning to Ana, reportedly made use of rental cars or free buses provided by the authorities. Costs for car rental differed considerably, with KIs paying between 125,000 to 450,000 IQD (105 to 378 USD).⁸ Two returnee KIs indicated that they needed to register with local authorities before being allowed to return. Lastly, one returnee KI reported that his return was involuntary.

Why are IDPs not returning?

IDP KIs were asked what factors caused them to remain in displacement. The most frequently reported were damaged and destroyed property and a lack of services in the AoO (both reported by 6 out of 7 KIs). IDP KIs reported their shelters to be unfit for living because they were either completely destroyed or severely damaged. With regard to services, five KIs specifically mentioned that healthcare in Ana was insufficient, highlighting a limited availability of specialized healthcare and medication. Furthermore, KIs stressed that there was a lack of livelihood opportunities (5 of 7 KIs) and that the situation in the area of displacement was better (3 of 7 KIs). Notably, a KI indicated that some families were afraid to return due to perceived affiliation with ISIL.

Figure 1: Reasons reported by IDP KIs (7 in total) for not returning to their AoO⁹



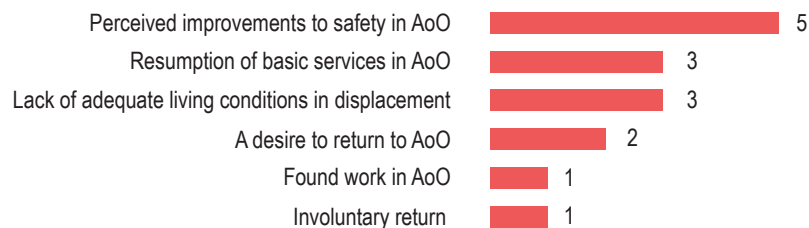
Why are residents returning?

Returnee KIs were asked what factors had led them to return (see Figure 2). The most common responses were perceived improvements to safety (5 of 7 KIs), resumption of basic services in the AoO (3 of 7 KIs) and lack of adequate living conditions in the area of displacement (3 of 7 KIs). Regarding the latter factor, KIs mentioned high living costs, lack of services and unfavourable weather conditions. Furthermore, KIs expressed a desire to return to their AoO (2 of 7 KIs) and finding a job (1 of 7 KIs) as reasons for returning.

⁵The assessment aimed to have an equal number of male and female KIs. However, given the context in Ana (and western Anbar generally), only six female KIs could be identified by the assessment team. ⁶Norwegian Refugee Council, "Thousands flee Anbar in advance of military operation on the last ISIS stronghold in Iraq", October 2017. ⁷Given the remote location of Ana town, 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. ⁸Price converted using www.xe.com 26 June 2018. ⁹KIs could provide more than one answer.



Figure 2: Reasons reported by returnee KIs (7 in total) for returning to their AoO¹⁰



How are residents getting information?

In terms of what information influenced the decision to either remain in displacement or return to their areas of origin, the most commonly cited source among both IDPs and returnees was telephone calls with friends or family living in the AoO. Furthermore, KIs mentioned visiting their AoO or getting information through people within the area of displacement.

Actors providing services

KIs reported humanitarian and development actors to be active in Ana. The humanitarian assistance being provided in the town was said to include food and cash assistance; cleaning and repairs of damage to infrastructure, housing and public buildings; healthcare assistance; and provision of equipment such as kitchen utensils, school supplies and generators. Furthermore, the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) had opened an office offering services related to lost documentation and registration of destroyed, damaged and looted property. Lastly, KIs reported that the Iraqi government was distributing food to residents in the area. Overall findings showed that humanitarian and development actors were primarily focusing their activities on Ana town, and to a lesser extent on the surrounding villages.

Damage to infrastructure and housing

During the recent crisis, Ana town and its surrounding areas sustained significant damage. Government buildings, such as the court house and local council were destroyed and equipment from the power station was stolen.¹¹ Furthermore, KIs with specialist knowledge and returnee KIs reported damage to industrial and healthcare infrastructure. One community leader indicated that around 100 houses were completely destroyed, while 200 were severely damaged.

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 ISF and local police. However, three KIs indicated fear of ISIL and other armed groups persists.
- There were still reported to be explosive hazards within the area. According to two community leaders the town and main roads were perceived to be cleared from explosive hazards. However, surrounding areas, including villages and farmlands, were said to remain contaminated. Lastly, one non-displaced KI said that there were still explosive hazards that had not been cleared within the village of Rayhana.
- Families with perceived affiliation to ISIL were reportedly not returning to the area. Three returnee KIs indicated that those families were either not allowed to go back by the authorities or were not returning due to fear of retaliation. A KI said that there were some families which did not return because family members had been arrested by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) when trying to return to Ana district, due to supposed affiliation with ISIL. KIs reported no other concerns related to social cohesion and perceptions of safety.

Freedom of Movement

- KIs reported that they could move freely within Ana town. However, one community leader indicated that residents avoided going to agricultural lands outside of the town. One non-displaced KI furthermore indicated that there were still explosive hazards within Rayhana village and that some residents avoid entering certain houses because of concerns for the continued presence of explosive hazards within these structures.
- KIs from Ana town and surrounding villages indicated that there was a curfew from sundown to sunrise, which was implemented by security actors in the area.

Legal Concerns

- KIs reported that there was a functioning court in Ana town, with lawyers and judges available. Furthermore, the MoDM had reportedly opened an office dealing with lost documentation and registration of destroyed, damaged and looted property. During the recent crisis, government buildings were destroyed and therefore offices of public services were moved into other buildings. One KI indicated that buildings of former kindergartens were used as government offices. Furthermore, one returnee KI indicated that some government buildings were repaired by a development actor.

¹⁰ KIs could provide more than one answer.

¹¹ Iraqi News, "ISIS detonates mayor's office and governmental buildings in Anah", November 2016.



- According to KIs, many people from Ana and the surrounding areas reportedly lost civil and property documentation. These documents could be replaced at civil registration offices in Ana town, but not in the surrounding villages. One returnee KI indicated that these services were not free of charge.
- Returnee KIs reported damaged, destroyed and looted property in the area as a result of the recent crisis. KIs reported stolen furniture, cars and household equipment in Ana and the surrounding villages. Five returnee KIs indicated that compensation for damaged, destroyed or stolen property has not been provided by the authorities.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

One community leader suggested that the areas surrounding Ana town need to be systematically cleared of explosive remnants by technical experts in mine action. Furthermore, another community leader indicated that government buildings need to be repaired.

Livelihoods

- According to a community leader and a local government worker, around 60% to 70% of households in the area had at least one member earning an income. However, percentages were reportedly lower in surrounding villages. Those working were primarily employed in the public sector. Furthermore, residents were reported to be working in the fishing industry, as daily workers, or in shops.
- The agricultural sector is reportedly in a bad state. KIs indicated that there was a lack of electricity seeds, water and electricity available on agricultural lands. Furthermore, some agricultural land reportedly remained contaminated with explosive hazards, and farming equipment was stolen or damaged during the recent crisis. As a result, agricultural lands were left fallow. The number of individuals able to earn a livelihood through the fishing industry had also reportedly decreased due to lower water levels in the Euphrates.
- Before the recent crisis there were reportedly several industrial factories and chicken farms within the vicinity, but they have reportedly been damaged or destroyed during the recent crisis and are no longer functional.
- Households without an income reportedly rely on support from relatives and the community for their livelihoods. Some KIs indicated that family members working in other cities were sending over money. The government, as well as humanitarian and development actors, was said to be distributing food and cash to those in need. A development actor furthermore reportedly deployed an emergency livelihoods project for several months. One female KI, whose husband was reportedly abducted by ISIL during the recent crisis, said that she could not receive her husband's pension as there was no proof of his death.

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

Improvements Suggested by KIs

A community leader and local government worker indicated that support is needed for the agricultural sector, such as clearing contaminated lands, providing funding for agricultural equipment and improvements to the water network. KIs furthermore suggested that factories and chicken farms need to be repaired or rebuilt.

Basic Services: Education and Healthcare

Education

- According to a KI with specialist knowledge on education, there were 33 primary and 13 secondary schools in the pre-ISIL period. At the time of data collection, 26 primary schools and 7 secondary schools were reportedly functional. Although not all schools have reopened, education experts stated that almost all children in Ana town had access to formal education. In order to cope with the number of students, schools were said to be working in shifts. A teacher indicated that there were four kindergartens in Ana town in the pre-ISIL period, but the buildings of these kindergartens were temporarily being used as government offices. Schools had reportedly been looted during the recent crisis, leading to a shortage of school materials. The GoI and a development actor were said to have provided new materials, such as books and desks. However, expert KIs stated that shortages of materials remained.
- The number of available teachers was said to be sufficient to meet the current educational needs, though one KI reported a lack of specialized secondary school teachers. Two KIs indicated that not all teachers were receiving their salaries.
- Several schools that suffered damage during the recent crisis were reported to have been repaired by humanitarian and development actors, though some schools reportedly remained closed due to damage or a lack of school materials.
- Two returnee KIs from surrounding villages reported that not all children were attending school because parents could not afford to buy school clothes and equipment. For those living far away from education facilities, travel costs might form an additional barrier, with transport reportedly costing between 25,000 to 50,000 IQD (21 to 42 USD) per month.¹²

Improvements Suggested by KIs

An education expert said that new materials for all schools is the most pressing need, while also noting that salaries of all teachers need to be paid.



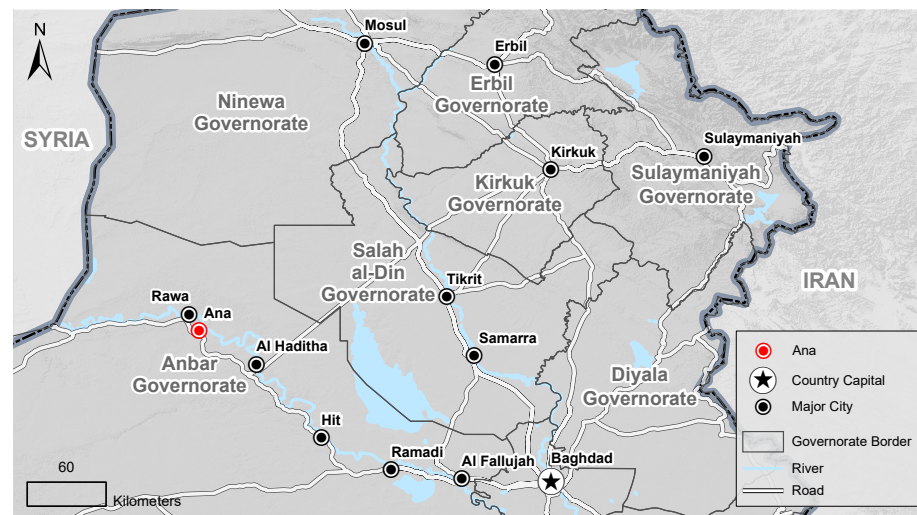
Healthcare

- The public hospital was reported to be functional, though half of the building was said to be destroyed. As a result, emergency and surgical facilities were reportedly non-functional. In addition, KIs reported that an international organisation had set up an emergency field hospital, and there were also said to be several private clinics.
- Residents from surrounding villages need to travel to Ana for healthcare or rely on visits from healthcare organisations.
- A consultation in the public hospital was reported to cost 2,000 IQD (1.68 USD), while private clinics were said to charge 10,000 IQD (8.40 USD).¹³
- One KI with specialist knowledge of healthcare provision reported a shortage of doctors in the area, with only five doctors (including 1 female doctor) working in the public hospital. As a result of this shortage, patients were said to have wait times of several hours before being able to consult a doctor.
- There was reported to be a lack of medical equipment in the public hospital, as equipment was either looted or damaged during the recent crisis. Two returnee KIs noted that the hospital was not being cleaned properly.
- Specialized healthcare was said to be mainly available in the field hospital, which was reported to have some capacity for basic surgery and emergency care. Mental healthcare and cardiology services were reportedly not available. A community leader stated that there was no proper healthcare available for pregnant women.
- For those healthcare services not available within Ana town, residents were said to be traveling to other places, such as Baghdad, Erbil, Haditha or Ramadi. However, a community leader said that not all residents had enough money to access healthcare in these places.
- There were reported to be pharmacies in the area, but they were said not to have sufficient supplies of medicines, and those medicines that were available were reportedly expensive.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

KIs with specialized knowledge of healthcare stressed that new equipment and personnel is needed. They also highlighted that the public hospital needs to be repaired.

Map 2: Ana in relation to Erbil, al Haditha, Ramadi and Baghdad



Basic Utility Services: Water, Electricity and Waste Disposal

Water

- According to a KI with specialized knowledge on water, the piped water network in Ana town was functional, although there was reported to still be damage to the system. There used to be seven water pump stations in Ana, but now only three are functional. The water from the public network was said to only be available for a few hours per day, as the generators powering the water pumping stations were not being properly serviced, and because the fuel to run the generators was too expensive.
- An estimated 100-150 families reportedly did not have access to the water system. According to a returnee KI, residents from a surrounding village did not have access to the system at all.
- One KI with specialist knowledge of water provision reported that the water from the public network was being sourced directly from the Euphrates, and was not safe to drink. Despite this, many residents were said to be drinking the water without treating it. Others were reportedly boiling the water, using filter systems or buying bottled water. One non-displaced KI indicated that the field hospital was providing chlorine tablets for purifying the water.



- KIs reported that some people suffered from diseases caused by drinking unclean water, such as skin and kidney illnesses.
- A development organisation reportedly replaced and fixed some water pumps and provided new generators.

Electricity

- In general, most people in Ana town reportedly had free access to the public grid. Electricity was said to be provided from the Hadiitha dam, which is approximately 40 km away.
- Damage to the network in Ana city was reportedly repaired by the GoI and generators that were looted during the recent crisis have been replaced. There was still reported to be damage, such as broken poles and cables, to the network in surrounding villages.
- One KI with specialist knowledge of electricity provision reported that power was available for approximately 15 hours per day. However, several KIs highlighted that electricity was available for up to 24 hours per day in the weeks preceding data collection. In addition, there were reported to be community generators available which cost between 5,000 and 10,000 IQD (4.21 to 8.42 USD)¹⁴ per ampere.¹⁵

Improvements Suggested by KIs

A local government worker stated that the local electricity services require new poles, cables, drills and other equipment in order to be able to fix the damaged network in surrounding areas.

Waste Disposal Services

- Waste disposal services were reportedly available in the whole of Ana town. According to an expert KI, waste is collected for free twice a week by the municipality from house to house. However, returnee KIs indicated that collection was less consistent, with answers ranging from once every ten days to three times a week.
- According to an expert KI, solid waste was being taken to a disposal site 8 km east of the town. He furthermore indicated that the waste disposal services had fewer employees and cars for collecting the waste compared to the pre-ISIL period.
- Two KIs from surrounding villages said that solid waste was not being collected from their houses, indicating that waste disposal services were not fully covering surrounding areas.

Main service gaps and needs

Community leaders were asked which services need to be restored or rehabilitated most urgently. Both interviewed community leaders highlighted that improvements to healthcare services should be prioritized, because of the damage to facilities and the lack of equipment. Other priorities highlighted by community leaders were the need for improvements to the piped water network, sufficient equipment for education facilities, food assistance to those without an income, and assistance to the agricultural sector.

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.

¹⁴ Price converted using www.xe.com 26 June 2018.

¹⁵ The number of amperes purchased determines how many appliances can be used at once. If that allotment is exceeded, a communal fusebox automatically cuts power to that house, requiring the switch to be thrown manually

