

RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 25 May 2021
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-1:00 pm
- ❖ **Location:** Microsoft Teams

In Attendance: ICRC, OCHA, War Child UK, UNMAS, ASB, GOAL, US Embassy, REACH, Malteser International, PPO, SDC, UNDP, GIZ, SEDO, iMMAP, USAID, UNAMI/ JAU, UNAMI/DSO, Mercy Corps, UNHCR, FCDO, Handicap International, IMC, NRC, SWEDO, Oxfam, ECHO, SSDF, Child Protection SC, Help, Social Inquiry, Heartland Alliance, Protection Cluster, Baghdad Organization, IOM

Agenda Items:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
- 2) **Context Update:** DTM Update, CCCM Updates, Key governorate updates
- 3) **DSTWG update:** DS Framework, UNSDCF and ABC Groups
- 4) **REACH presentation:** ReDS Markaz Mosul
- 5) **AOB**

Action Points to follow up by next meeting:

Action	By who
Announcement of online Arabic DS training	RWG

Key Discussion Points/ Action:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes, follow up on action points from previous meeting (RWG)

- The Chair gave an overview of the previous meeting after the introductions, as well as a review of the agenda items.

- 2) **Context update:** DTM Update, CCCM Updates, Key governorate updates

(Presentation attached for more details on DTM updates)

Key DTM updates:

- No. of IDPs (as of April 2021): 1,198,940 individuals
- No. of returnees (as of April 2021): 4,867,050 individuals
- Return Index: Out of the 2,128 return locations assessed, 448 present severe conditions hosting 11 per cent of the returnee population, or 512,034 individuals
- 39% of all returns in Iraq are to Ninewa, the governorate with the largest returnee population. As of December 2020, the total number of returnees in the governorate stands at 1.89 million individuals (out of 4.83 million nationwide).
- Displacement Index: Second pilot phase completed; Continuing to refine the model

CCCM updates:

- In Jeddah 5 camp, the next round of facilitated return is planned for later this week. AAF remains open thanks to advocacy at national level.

- REACH recently conducted a rapid intentions survey in 15 KRI camps. The presentation will be held on Thursday 27th May.

Key governorate updates:

- **Sinjar:**
 - Number of returns have notably decreased with 20 HH returning from Dohuk in April 2021. Local authorities attribute this to the unstable political and security situation, the presence of multiple armed actors and inadequate access to basic services.
 - A number of families continue to formally request return to Dohuk; more than 120 HH applied to DMCR to be readmitted.
 - 72HH returned from Sinuni to Qahtaniya (included 20HH who returned from Jabal Sinjar (Sinjar Mountain)).
- **Tel Afar:**
 - 12 HH returned to Markaz Tal afar from Baghdad and Kerbala
- **Salah al-Din:** a two-layered agreement between local tribes and Samarra operations command is expected to pave way for returns to Southern SAD enabling families who are displaced within SAD and in Sulaymaniyah to return to areas of origin.
- **Return grant:** In 2020, MOMD disbursed IQD 28,884,000,000 to 19,324 returnee HH - this is less than the IQD 44,599,500,000 which was disbursed in 2019 to 29,736 HH. In 2021, only one disbursement has taken place, in January 2021, to 2,600 HH. For camp returnees, with recent allocation to MoMD, it is anticipated the grants may resume in June or July.
- **DS Training:** There will be DS training in Arabic following the 2 DS training which were offered in Kurdish. Partners encouraged to look out for the emails in June.

Discussion:

- DTM mentioned that the largest decreases in IDP figures were seen in Anbar and Diyala, mainly in Heet and Qaim in Anbar and Muqdadia in Diyala due to reconstruction of houses and improvement in services and agricultural activities.
- PRM asked if news of 32 HHs returning to their AoOs from AAF could be confirmed.
 - IOM confirmed that 31 HHs have returned to parts of Fallujah and Husai, with 1 HH returning to the camp.
- RWG asked if returns from Jeddah camp resumed after Eid.
 - IOM confirmed that preparations have resumed. But numbers have been fluctuating and some activities had to be rescheduled due to movement restrictions but this may just shift things by a few days.
- Commenting on the facilitated returns from AAF, NPC noted that some challenges had been noted with regard to some of the departing families who had failed to transfer their children from AAF schools to schools in areas of origin. The authorities had initially undertaken to assist with engaging with the Ministry of Education to ensure that returning families would be able to register their children in schools in areas of return. The NPC was following up with the Education cluster to assist in resolving this challenge.

3) DSTWG update: Framework, UNSDCF and ABC Groups

(Presentation attached for more details)

Key points:

- **DSTWG Introductions**

- DSTWG co-chair informed partners that this is her last meeting and mentioned that her replacement Yoko Fujimura would be travelling to Iraq soon. She also introduced Maanasa Reddy the NRC co-chair who joined in early May.
- **ABC progress:**
 - Initial government meetings: All complete in early April
 - Local Authority Roundtables: Sinjar and Baaj this week, remainder of groups by mid-June
 - Extended Partner Outreach: Extensive bilateral, SAD wider outreach
 - Community outreach: Targeted and area-specific
 - Drafting of plans: Continuous compilation process
- **UNSDCF 2021 – Iraq**
 - In Iraq, the UNSDCF process began in June 2019 with the creation of 4 Strategic Priorities (SPs) and related technical implementation groups called Priority Working Groups (PWGs). As part of the UNSDCF architecture, the PWGs created activity level joint work plans (JWPs) to encapsulate all relevant activities within their PWG.
 - In 2020, with the shift in focus towards achieving durable solutions, the RC/HC, based on engagement with the government, requested that a 5th SP be created to focus entirely on Durable Solutions.
 - Five strategic priorities:
 - 1- Achieving Social Cohesion, Protection and Inclusion
 - 2- Growing the Economy for all
 - 3- Promoting effective, inclusive and Efficient institutions and Services
 - 4- Promoting Natural Resources and Disaster Risks Management and Climate Change Resilience
 - 5- Achieving Durable Solutions in Iraq
 - The outcomes, outputs and indicators stated for the UN Cooperation Framework will be more top line, inform development reporting for the UN (and partners) only, but is also built on the operational framework and guided by technical inputs of the DSTWG and M&A Subgroup.
 - Current status:
 - Alignment Table specifying linkages to Iraqi NDPs and to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (SDGs), will be included as an Annex to the UNSDCF (submitted Mid-May)
 - Narrative section of SP5 for the UNSDCF: Theory of Change, Partnerships Sections, Key Interventions, Risks and Risk Management (submitted Mid-May)
 - Joint Work Plan for PWG 5 (final review and submission this week)
 - M & E Plan (final review and submission this week)
 - UNSDCF Results Matrix (final review and submission this week)

4) REACH presentation: ReDS Markaz Mosul

(See links [Markaz Mosul Factsheet](#) and [Markaz Mosul Presentation](#) for more details)

Key points:

- Generally it was noted that community members feel safe in Markaz Mosul. No reported movement restrictions for women, girls, men and boys during the day or night and no areas are avoided. It was however noted that due to traditional naming practices some

families originally from Mosul could fear returning due to name similarity with suspected ISIL affiliated persons or those accused of a crime.

- Issues related to housing, land and property were also reported to hinder return, these include damaged or destroyed housing, inability to claim HLP due to missing or damaged documentation, illegal occupation of housing.
- KIs reported that there was a general decrease in availability of job opportunities compared with prior to 2014 and that access to livelihood could encourage returns (only exception was construction jobs which were perceived as similar to 2014).
- KIs noted that recent camp closures had contributed to more IDPs arriving in Markaz Mosul and that recent arrivals led to higher competition in the labour market.
- The main community needs appear to differ depending on the respondent group, eg community leaders and remainees ranked Education, Water and Health as the top needs while returnees ranked food, livelihoods and cash assistance as more needed, for IDPs livelihoods, food and NFI were the top needs.
- It was reported that all groups faced eviction risks although IDPs were most at risk, followed by returnees and least remainees.

Discussion:

- RWG noted that based on recent intentions surveys conducted in East Mosul camps (Hasansham U2, U3 and Khazer) there are significant number of families who remain in camps who have cited lack of housing and employment reported as their main obstacles, and asked what the key reasons for IDPs were for not returning to Mosul according to REACH results.
 - REACH noted that the ReDS confirm what has been found in the intentions surveys as the KIs reported that the top reasons were 1) damaged/ destroyed housing, as well as a lack of access to rehabilitation and compensation 2) feeling of insecurity; and 3) Lack of access to livelihoods.
- NPC enquired what the main reasons behind the risk of eviction.
 - Top reasons highlighted by REACH: related to security (alleged ISIL links) and lack of documentation of the head of HH to finalize the rent agreement. Another point to consider is that some returnees/ IDPs are illegally occupying houses, increasing chances of eviction. The other reasons are related to financial constraints in securing housing.

5) AOB
