



RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 30 June 2020
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 10:00-11:30 hrs
- ❖ **Location:** Webex connection

In Attendance: Durable Solutions Advisor, Mercy Corps, ICRC, PRM, GOAL, ASB, COOPI, Peace Winds Japan, Handicap International, TGH, UNOPS IIC, UNHCR, OCHA, IQCM, INTERSOS, WFP, SWEDO, German Embassy, Netherlands Embassy, US Embassy, DFID, UNMAS, UNDP, UN-Habitat, DRC, HRW, UNICEF, NP, ACTED, GIZ, ECHO, NCCI, FEI, UNAMI (Human Rights office, DCO, JAU), World Vision, CCCM Cluster, Protection Cluster, Child Protection Sub-cluster, PAO, PPO, CIVIC, Mercy Hands, IOM

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 return index; Update on Emergency Tracking for Sinjar returns
- 3) **Situational Update on Returns:** Update on returns to Sinjar from Dohuk and Ninewa and Return and Security Clearance Process for Sinjar
- 4) **Camp Closure and Consolidation:** Update by CCCM cluster on returns from Jeddah, Al Hol, Sa'ad camp (Diyala), Al Shams camp (Baghdad) and Anbar
- 5) **MOMD Return Grants:** Update from RWG on MOMD Return Grants disbursement in 2020
- 6) **AOB**

Action Points to follow up by next meeting:

Action	By who
Circulation of an update of the MOMD grants note	RWG

Key Discussion Points/ Action:

1) Introduction and adoption of minutes: Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting

- 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 return index; Update on Emergency Tracking for Sinjar returns

(Presentation attached for more details)

Main points:

i) Return Update

- As of June 2020, there are 4,718,130 returnees (individuals), while 1,381,332 individuals remain in displacement.
- 68% of IDPs live in private settings, 24% in camps, and 8% in critical shelter.
- 94% of returnees live in their habitual residence, while 4% of returnees live in critical shelter.

ii) Return Index

- The number of returnees has continued to increase and as of 30 June 2020, an additional 115,806 returnees were identified, reaching a total of 4,706,928 returnees (784,488 households).
- Out of the 2,013 return locations assessed, 487 present severe conditions hosting 14% of the returnee population (659,082 individuals).
- 55 locations in Iraq, hosting 53,268 returnees (1% of the total returnee population), have the most severe conditions ('very high') when all indicators are combined.
- The top of these locations remain in Tuz Khurmatu District in Salah al-Din Governorate (535 returnees) and in Telefar District in Ninewa (4,572 returnees).

iii) Return Index Governorate Profile: Anbar Governorate

- Anbar Governorate hosts 1.48 million returnees out of 4.66 million across Iraq (32%), that is, the second largest returnee population after Ninewa Governorate.
- Seven per cent of these returnees are currently living in locations ranked as having high severity conditions, while 44 per cent are living in medium severity locations, and 49 per cent in low severity conditions.



- In terms of the shelter situation upon return, 30,810 returnees live in critical shelters, spread across 121 locations – 2 per cent of the total returnee population in the governorate.
- Ninety per cent of the new arrivals to Anbar Governorate from camps returned to medium severity locations, while 5 per cent returned to high severity locations and 4 per cent to low severity locations. One location is not categorized in terms of severity, due to the lack of information on conditions.
- Al-Saqlawiyah is the subdistrict with the most severe conditions in Anbar. Safety and security are the main drivers of severity in the subdistrict, especially regarding concerns of the returnee population about unexploded ordnances as well as further violence in the area. The presence of non-state armed groups was also a security-related concern.
- In Al-Garma subdistrict, house destruction is the main driver of severity. In four locations, half of the residences are reportedly destroyed, while in the remaining locations there is a lower level of destruction – less than half of the houses are destroyed.

iv) Emergency Tracking for Sinjar returns

- DTM has activated an Emergency Tracking on the recent displacement movements to Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj districts in Ninewa governorate. The 3rd report was just published, covering the period of 21-26 June 2020.
- The most common sub-district of arrival is Markaz Sinjar, which received 982 individuals (43%) in the last reporting period (June 21 to 26)—almost triple the number that arrived there in the previous period. Additionally, 928 individuals arrived to Al-Shamal sub-district (41%)—more than double the previous period. Together, these two sub-districts comprise 80% of all individuals that arrived to Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj since data collection commenced on 8 June.
- In the sub-districts having received the most individuals, the number of people coming from camp settings rose significantly in the 21-26 June.

Discussion:

- OCHA inquired if there is a way of finding out through the questionnaires what the perceptions of key informants (KIs) are regarding the effect of COVID-19 on the worsening of conditions in areas of return.
 - DTM mentioned that the questionnaire does not reflect this issue, but the same KIs that have helped with collecting return index data have also helped in contributing information to the COVID survey, so there are plans to triangulate those two sources of data in future rounds.
- The Protection Cluster and RWG are currently monitoring the needs of returnees, where the lack of basic services and livelihood opportunities appear to be the prevalent challenges that



contribute to the worsening of conditions. The information will be shared with colleagues once more data has been collected.

3) Situational update on returns: Update on returns to Sinjar from Dohuk (OCHA Ninewa) and Ninewa and Return and Security Clearance Process for Sinjar (RWG)

Key updates:

- Reasons to return: Movement restrictions since the beginning of Covid-19 pandemic, to join their extended families, difficulties to find jobs in the areas of displacement.
- Concerns: checkpoint related access challenges
- Opening of new checkpoint: Shella checkpoint opened- Some transit difficulties experienced
- Conditions in areas of origin: some returns to habitual residence, and some to neighbor's houses or residing with relatives
- Immediate needs in Sinjar: pile up of debris, Access to portable water, Secondary occupation of houses, Electricity, health
- Establishment of feedback /complaint /response mechanism
- Establishment of a committee to receive and register newly returned families to Sinjar
- Issues in AoO: demonstration in Sinjar that called for preventing the return of displaced Sunni Muslim families to Sinjar
- Protection monitoring of returnees: initiated by Ninewa Protection Working Group
- MOMD initiative: announcement of IQD 2 billion for return
- Compensation: The amended compensation guidelines as per the new Iraqi Law 2 allows Yazidis to apply for compensation
- Social cohesion issues: in Sinjar between different ethnic groups
- Security clearance process flowchart developed for Sinjar by RWG.
- JCMC mentioned in a meeting earlier in the week that water and electricity are the top needs in Sinjar. Returns are happening mainly due to COVID-related restrictions.
- There is also a need for mobile PHCs to deal with the increased number of returns.
- Sinjar is mostly relying on international humanitarian assistance.
- Areas that have seen returns include Markaz Sinjar, Markaz Qayrawan, Qahtaniya, Sinuni sub-district, Rambosi village and other villages.

4) Camp consolidation and closure: Update by CCCM cluster on returns from Jeddah, Al Hol, Sa'ad camp (Diyala), Al Shams camp (Baghdad) and Anbar

(Position paper attached for more details)



Key points:

- Sa'ad camp (Diyala): camp consolidation and closure plans developed, return plans
- Rapid acceptance survey conducted in Al Wand- camp
- Al-Shams informal site (Baghdad): Go and see visit to Al Ahel camp
- AAF and HTC (Anbar): Consolidations are on standby in AAF. New MOMD Minister visited AAF
- 83 families have departed Jeddah camp.
- 35 families departed Ashti camp in Sulaimaniyah for their AoOs in Salah al-Din.
- Returns from Sulaimaniyah to southern Salah al-Din was facilitated by MOMD with the support of the local Salah al-Din government. 15 families returned to Yathrib, while nearly 20 families returned to Dujail. The majority of IDPs from Albo Hishma tribe have not been allowed to return so far, but dialogue to allow the return of these IDPs is currently underway. RWG have agreed with local authorities to set up a local committee consisting of representatives from various administrative units to monitor and address the short- and medium-term needs of the returnees.
- Clusters have been working on a note to update the operational plan on Al-Hol camp in Syria. The note outlines different scenarios and designs what the appropriate humanitarian response would be. The note was drafted and discussed at the HCT meeting.
- Two plans have been developed for Saad camp, one by CCCM for IDPs intending to relocate from Saad camp to Al-wand camp and another by RWG for durable solutions for IDPs depending on their intentions. A similar plan is being developed for Al-Shams camp in Baghdad.

Discussion:

- The Protection Cluster added that they have been aware of pending logistics between governorates regarding the return of Salah al-Din IDPs but were informed last minute that the returns would occur. Local authorities intend to facilitate more returns to Salah al-Din for the remaining 2,200 households who are mostly displaced across KRI and have asked partners on the ground to be on standby. It was also discovered from the DoH of Salah al-Din that there was no capacity to quarantine and isolate returning families and to provide them with PPEs. A lack of social distancing and mask wearing was also witnessed amongst returnees. From the Sulaimaniyah side, PPEs were recently distributed in Ashti camp, but they only cover short-term needs. In Anbar, around 150 HHs in Fallujah have been threatened with eviction back to AAF due to not formally denouncing their perceived ISIL affiliated family members. However, the courts are not offering the procedure because courts are currently operating at 0-25% capacity. No evictions have been reported so far. These issues are being followed up at ICCGs in Baghdad, Salah al-Din and Anbar. Regarding Al-Shams camp, it was found that most IDPs were not willing to relocate to Al-Ahel camp. A plan was circulated amongst Baghdad ICCG members advocating for local integration as the most rational solution. However, it remains to be seen whether authorities will grant that option, and whether it



would be temporary or long-term. The Baghdad GRC meeting was scheduled for 1st July with the Deputy Governor, but the meeting has been canceled. Finally, a threat of eviction was identified for returnee HHs in Kirkuk – the situation is being followed up.

5) MOMD Return Grants: Update from RWG on MOMD Return Grants disbursement in 2020

(Presentations attached for more details)

Key points:

- MoMD offers a 1.5 million IQD grant to encourage the voluntary return of IDPs to their AoOs
- The return grant for a single member family is only 0.75 million IQD
- So far, MoMD released grants to 39,936 HHs in six governorates through seven rounds of disbursement
- So far, the total amount allocated for the return grant is 59,835,750,000 IQD
- The allocation for each governorate is based on the 1) time of registration, 2) geographical location

Discussion:

- The Yazidi survivor grant of 2 million IQD is given to each identified individual, but the money has not been allocated yet.

6) AOB

- RWG Coordinator announced it was the end of her mission in Iraq and her last RWG meeting, and introduced the new RWG coordinator, Zulfiye Kazim.