

## RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 29 June 2021
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-1:00 pm
- ❖ **Location:** Microsoft Teams

**In Attendance:** IOM DTM, NCCI, REACH Initiative, PRM Erbil, TdH Foundation-Lausanne, Mercy Corps, NPC, DSTWG, CRS, PUI, Samaritan's Purse, Handicap International, UNICEF, ECHO, USAID, World Vision Iraq, UNDP, Malteser International, WFP, Swedo, OCHA, Preemptive Love Coalition, IOM Protection, GIZ, People in Need, COOPI, SSDF, ICRC, Peacewinds Japan,

### 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 and Key governorate updates
- 3) **DSTWG update:** ABC Groups updates and , UNSDCF
- 4) **REACH presentation:** Intentions Surveys: formal camps KRI and informal sites
- 5) **Iraq Information Centre presentation:** Work of the IIC
- 6) **AOB**

### Action Points to follow up by next meeting:

Action	By who
No pending Action Points	

### 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:

- Key information still as previously shared during May meeting (Master list data as of April).
- No. of IDPs (as of April 2021): 1,198,940 individuals
- No. of returnees (as of April 2021): 4,867,050 individuals
- **Shelter:** 76% of IDPs are in private settings while 15% are in camps and 9% in critical shelter.
- Majority of returnees are residing in habitual residence and 4% are in critical shelter.
- **Return Index:** Data from March-April, out of the 2,128 return locations assessed, 448 present severe conditions hosting 11 per cent of the returnee population, or 512,034 individuals
- SAD and Ninewa witnessed the largest increases of returnees living in severe conditions.
- In SAD the largest increase of IDPs in severe conditions was in Baiji and Tikrit districts due to deterioration of government services, concerns about explosive devices and illegal

occupation of housing. For Tikrit the main issues were explosive devices and changes to public life (covid restrictions and curfews).

- In Ninewa, Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj witnessed returns in locations that suffer from the slow recovery of business and agriculture, poor provision of government services and access to water, pervasive concerns about sources of violence and non-state actors present at checkpoints, together with the absence of reconciliation processes. In addition, extensive residential destruction was also reported in newly assessed locations.

#### Reports now published

- **Governorate profiling reports (all available on the DTM website now):** reports for all governorates provide a comparison between living conditions in locations of return as of December 2020 and December 2019. Number of returnees, locations of no return, newly assessed locations drivers of severity across all the sub districts, etc.
- **Return Dynamics Annual Report (to be published on DTM website next week):** report examines the relationship between rate of return and the severity of conditions, areas of no return and newly assessed locations, mass arrivals of camps during the camp closures of mid-October 2020.

#### Update on ILA data collection

- Data collection is ongoing, as of 27 June 2,199 out of 3,823 have been visited so far.
- Scheduled for completion 19 July 2021.
- Dashboard anticipated for mid-August 2021.
- Informal sites with 5HH or more will be mapped and settlements with 15HH will be surveyed.

#### Master List

- Data collection is being done now, dashboard update anticipated for early August 2021

#### Displacement Index

- Pilot 1, January and February 2021 with 32 questions for the five selected domains.
- Pilot 2, March and April 2021.
- Data collection done and cleaned, final model being refined and tested. Currently model includes services, security, livelihoods and social inclusion.

#### Discussion:

- In the Annual report that is being produced will it be possible to compare between 2019 and 2020 the different factors that have caused situations to either deteriorate or improve in return locations?
  - DTM, confirmed that this will be possible in the annual report as it will indicate with factors and indicators why situations have deteriorated or improved.
- Question asked when the next DTM data be available as the data presented reflected the last quarter of 2020.
  - DTM stated that the next round will be May, June July and will be available early August.

#### Key governorate updates (RWG):

- **Ninewa (Jed'ah 5 Departures: Return and Relocation):**
  - 90 families departed the camp in June through the IOM facilitated Return Project.
  - Of these 90 families, 70 expressed an interest to relocate and were approved by local authorities and 19 families returned to areas of origin.
  - 84 families relocated and returned to Mosul, Ba'aj, Qaeyrawan, 3 families returned to Makhmour and 3 to Shirqat.

- Collaboration with many organization who provided health screening, documentation support and other protection assistance including post departure monitoring.
- New round of registration is scheduled for first week of July following interest by families in the camp.

### 3) REACH presentation: Camp Intentions Surveys VII and Informal Site (2020)

(See links [REACH Iraq Camp Intentions VII](#) and [REACH Iraq Informal Sites - 2020](#) for more details)

#### Camp Surveys

##### Key points:

- Main research questions were:
  - (a) What are the movement intentions of IDP households (HH) in the next three and twelve months? What are the movement intentions of the IDP HH if the camps were to close?
  - (b) What factors affect IDP households to return to their areas of origin (AoO)?
  - (c) How do IDP HH perceive the conditions in their AoO?
- 15 camps (12 Dohuk, 2 in Erbil and 1 Sulaymaniyah) were selected as considered high priority by the cluster and mixed methodology used. Finding are indicative.

##### Districts of Origin:

- Sinjar (62%), Al-Ba'aj (25%), Balad (6%), Makhmour (3%), Al-Mosul (2%) and Other. Findings for Balad and Makhmour have lower confidence level due to the small numbers.

##### Main Findings:

###### Security concerns:

- Sinjar: fear of armed actors, sporadic violent clashes (ongoing clashes between security forces and the PKK and YBS) and fear of extremist groups.
- Ba'aj: Fear of armed actors, poor infrastructure, fear of extremist groups. Findings more applicable to HH that are from Al-Qahtaniya sub district between Markaz Sinjar and al-Shamal. In the vicinity of this area are PKK activity, security operations and ISIL movement through the Syrian border (compared to those from Markaz-Baaj).

###### Service availability

- Reported to be completely absent in Al-Ba'aj as well as in Sinjar. Respondent noted that for Ba'aj, for example, there is a lack of health care services, water and waste management.

###### Livelihood opportunities

- Families from Balad reported significant lack of livelihoods followed by Mosul and Ba'aj, while those in Makhmour and Sinjar reported some opportunities.

###### Push and Pull Factors

- Safety was reported as the highest need in all the sub districts. For Balad and Sinjar, this was the highest need to enable return with 93% and 90% respondents indicating this while 84% for Mosul.
- Basic services was the second highest need. It was the highest need recorded for Makhmour and Balad with 83% and 73% of respondents indicating this respectively.
- Shelter was noted as a need but not as highly as the other concerns.

###### Movement Intentions

- 85% of the HH intended to remain in the camps in the next 12 months, 14 % were undecided or did not know and 1% intended to return.
- For those intending to return, the emotional desire to return was the main reason.

- Main reason for not returning was linked to shelter damage, livelihood opportunities and lack of basic services in AoO, and notably fear and trauma associated with AoO.
- For Balad, the main or top reason for not returning was discrimination, movement restrictions imposed by armed groups and lack of security forces in AoO.

#### Plans in the case of camp closure

- More than half planned to return in the case of camp closure but for many this would be against their will.
- The most reported reasons not to return are security, fear, trauma and discrimination, and social cohesion needs. Improved security is the most reported need to allow returns in all districts of origin.
- Comparison with KI information from the ReDS, KIs often mention the perceived lack of livelihood opportunities and damage to shelter as possible barriers to allow returns. However, IDP HHs surveys in the assessment reported more often on the lack of security forces than the lack of livelihoods.

### Informal Site Surveys (data collected end of 2020)

#### Key points:

- Movement Intentions: Of the 12% of the families reported that a camp was their last location of displacement, 5% mentioned eviction without camp closure, 64% chose to leave and 31% said it was due to the camp closure
- 3 month movement intentions, 93% intended to remain in area. Kirkuk had the highest response with 8% intending to return.
- 12 months, slightly more intending to return with about 12%.

#### Top 5 reported reason for not planning to return:

- Damaged or destroyed housing
- Lack of livelihoods
- Lack of security forces
- No financial means to return and restart
- Fear and trauma associated with area of origin.

#### Most commonly reported needs to enable safe and dignified return:

- Rehabilitation of homes (Majority of HH were from Dohuk)
- Increased safety and security in area of origin
- Basic services
- Livelihood opportunities
- Furniture/NFI

\*Each district had significant number of families who raised safety concerns as affecting decisions not to return to AoO, especially in Sumel, Kirkuk and Al-Fallujah districts. However, 0% of those in Tikrit reported safety concerns.

#### Discussion:

- Regarding the camp surveys, it was noted that one of the top reasons for not returning for IDPs in Balad is discrimination, the question was is there a power structure issue and what type of discrimination is being referred to by the IDPs?
  - REACH noted that the families from Balad who were asked were in the Sulay camps and it appears that the main challenge is that these families have ties with the previous regime prior to 2003 which make them a target of the armed groups. It does not appear to be perceived affiliation with ISIS.
- Follow-up question on whether these families are coming from Yatrib area.

- REACH confirmed that most families were indeed from Yatrib.

#### 4) **DSTWG update:** Framework, UNSDCF and ABC Groups

*(Presentation attached for more details)*

##### **Key points:**

##### ▪ **DSTWG Introductions**

- IOM co-chair Yoko introduced herself (IOM), UNDP co-chair Dennis, and NRC co-chair Maanasa.

##### ▪ **DSTWG Operational and Strategic Framework**

- English version shared via the RWG mailing list.
- Arabic version has been translated, currently under layout and will be shared with government counterparts.

##### ▪ **Sub group updates:**

- Facilitated Movements: Toolkit finalized, shared and under final layout.
- Shelter/HLP: TOR finalized and looking for expressions of interests from partners who may be interested in participating. Partners invited to reach out to UN-Habitat, UNDP or NRC.
- Monitoring and Assessment: Analysis framework developed and shared with members to develop common set of indicators. Timeline for completion is 31 August 2021.
- Social cohesion: TCC guidance note received and discussed.

##### ▪ **ABC progress:**

- Anticipated that all 7 POAs should be completed by 31 August 2021. Sinjar and Ba'aj are ahead and may be in first draft stage by mid-July. DSTWG is taking the lead in drafting the plans, partners requested to approach the ABC focal points for their areas to ensure that activities are reflected in the plans of action.
- Monitoring Framework main task of the M & A subgroup currently. Some questions to be addressed include, who will be reporting, how often etc.
- NGO engagement, DSTWG to give briefing at the NCCI. Meeting is tentatively end of next week (first week of July).
- Co-chairs working on developing work plan for remainder of 2021.
- Most ABCs have had their outreach session and the next plan for most are the roundtables scheduled for July between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Sinjar and Ba'aj had their roundtable on 26 May 2021.
- Plans of Action structure explained and partners called upon to reach out to the National DSTWG and the ABC focal points for their areas to ensure that their activities are captured in the POA Implementation Plan.

##### ▪ **UNSDCF 2021 – Iraq**

- Reminder:
- 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
- Update, since April revision to define outcome and define activities. Now validated.

- UNSDCF can contribute up to \$1,7 billion towards development related DS programming for UN Agencies (2020-2024)
- Activities under the UNSDCF will be implemented in the same priority area, two additional locations (Baghdad and Babylon under the National Plan)
- Coordination mechanism at national level and at the ABC level, working with Supreme Committee for relief and support IDPs and Governorate Level.

#### Discussion:

- Question on whether the 1.7 billion is already committed/secured or whether it is like the HRP with countries still to fund it and if there will be funding to ensure local civil society engagement.
  - Not all funding secured but yes it is the project amount the UN has committed to and further funding to be mobilized.
  - On the issue of local civil society, the issue is one that has been raised including at the validation workshop and the conversation to ensure that local civil society is involved is ongoing.

### **5) Iraqi Information Centre**

*(Please see presentation)*

#### **Key points:**

- The Iraq information Centre (IIC) was established in 2015 as a project implemented by UNOPS on behalf of the Iraq Humanitarian Country Team as a link between affected people and humanitarian actors.
- Main aim is to empower communities through information, accountability and participation.
- The Call Centre is at the heart of this as serves as a confidential and free service.
- To date the Call Centre has reached 3 million affected people (IDPs, returnees, host communities and refugees), serviced by call operators who provide information about services and document feedback from beneficiaries.
- IIC works with the clusters, sub-clusters, working groups, 6 UN Agencies and several INGOs.
- The most common requests through the call centre are food, water, NFI, camp/shelter, healthcare, education, legal support, GBV support etc.
- Outside of the call centre the IIC also provides a monthly dashboard on humanitarian needs, a Covid-19 dashboard, conducts surveys on behalf of partners, bulk sms campaigns and such media campaigns.
- **Returnee information:** Most recent information shows that 15% of the calls are from returnees and this is anticipated to increase. The top needs for women callers are cash, livelihoods and shelter. 69% of the callers are male and 47% of the calls are looking for livelihood opportunities in areas such as Ninewa however, there is an increasing need for partners working in this sector.
- Partners working in the recovery, stabilisation, peacebuilding and development sectors urged to partner with the IIC to meet some of the needs which communities are calling for which may otherwise appear as gaps.

#### **Why partner with the IIC?**

- Avenue for effective accountability
- Direct line of communication with communities.
- Field staff can refer beneficiaries to the IIC for issues that are beyond their scope of work



- Service is free of charge for partners
- \*Contact details for the IIC team [Silvias@unops.org](mailto:Silvias@unops.org) and [Charlotteh@unops.org](mailto:Charlotteh@unops.org)

#### Discussion:

- Question on whether the call for engagement was to encourage more recovery and stabilization partners in DS efforts.
  - IIC noted that when the call centre was set up in 2015 it was operating in the emergency or humanitarian context however as the context is shifting the call centre hopes to move with the context to note the early recovery and stabilization needs.
- Question on whether the bulk sms service provide by the IIC is one way or multiple-way, ie can the call centre received responses from the recipients.
  - The response was that the bulk sms service relies on partnerships with the mobile service providers in Iraq, Asiacell, Korek and Zain and this service is one way. However it was noted that communities can call or sms the call centre and this is a free service. Communities can also reach out to the call centre via social media such as Facebook.
- Question on whether the IIC also covers Anbar governorate?
  - The call centre is national and can receive calls from anywhere in the country from communities who want to be linked with services that are provided by partners on the ground. However, it was noted that the service largely depends on partner presence to take these referrals once the call centre receives them.
- Does the IIC cover PVE related calls, example provides was for calls from family members who may be concerned about a family member who has been radicalized?
  - Clarity was sought on whether the question was asking if the call centre receives calls from persons with perceived ISIL affiliation, it was confirmed that the call centre received and provides referrals for such families who may call requesting humanitarian services or support.

#### 6) AOB

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**No AOB.**