

RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 1st March 2018
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 10:00-12:00 hrs
- ❖ **Location:** Erbil (IOM Conference Room, Ghulan Rd.) via bluejeans to Baghdad, SRSG Conference Room

In Attendance: Handicap International, HEKS- Swiss Church Aid, CCCM Cluster, Non- Violent Peace Force, UNHCR, WFP/ PSEA Network, National Protection Cluster, DRC, Shelter Cluster, Relief International, War Child Canada, NRC, CRS, Samaritan Purse, IOM, UNMAS, UNHCR, IRCS/ GRC, German Redcross, REACH Initiative, USAID/ OFDA, Peace Winds Japan, Global Affairs Canada, UN Habitat, GiZ, UNOPS/ IDP Call Centre, Health Cluster, OCHA/ AWG, HLP Sub- Cluster, DFID, ICRC

Agenda Items:

- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
- 2) **Returns Updates:** Updates from IDP Call Centre, DTM, Field updates from main governorates of return
- 3) **Community Resource Centres (CRCs):** Presentation and Discussion on the establishment of the Community Resource Centres, CRC Steering Committee, Current status and Way Forward
- 4) **RWG Information Management Framework:** Brief on RWG IM Framework, Baseline information (DTM) and Area Based Approach- Presentation of the findings of the pilot phase ABA in Mosul Al-Jadida
- 5) **AOB:** Village Assessments (DRC)

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, with follow up from the Camp Consolidation and Camp Closure/ Sequenced Camp- Life Cycle presentation, as well as the results from the National Intention Survey and the expected impact on the returns process.
- 2) **Returns Updates:** Updates from IDP Call Centre, DTM, Field updates from main governorates of return
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i) Update from DTM (Presentation attached for more details):

- As of February 2018, the total no. of returnees was at 3,346,704 (557,784 families) and IDPs at 2,470,974 (411,829 families).
- During the reporting period, there was a 6% decrease in the no. of IDPs and 4% increase in the no. of returnees.
- Highest governorates of returns (as of February 2018): Anbar (38%), Ninewa (32%) and Salah al Din (15%)
- Highest district of returns as of February 2018 remains: Mosul (564,120), Fallujah (517,668), Ramadi (457,494)
- Emergency tracking: Anbar- 18,786 returnees since the first returns to Ana in 13th Dec. 2017.

➤ Discussion:

- UNHCR inquired if the DTM figures for returnees excluded secondary displacement. It was highlighted that this was an ongoing issue, and that it has been difficult to capture secondary displacement- as it is much easier to track returns inside camps than out of camps. In addition, the current figures for secondary displacement are low, and these questions have now been incorporated in the ILA III.
- An inquiry was made by ICRC on why the IDP figures are still high, given the current situation, i.e. declaration of full liberation, camp consolidation process etc. It was discussed that this was mainly attributed to the fact that some IDPs have still not been cleared to return- given the security screening process; presence of UXOs/ contamination in some areas; damaged shelters- as majority of the shelters are still damaged; as well as protection concerns such as barred returns and forced returns. In addition, the camp consolidation and closure process has not started yet, despite the local authorities are pushing for it, they haven't shared their plans neither called for the first meeting with the Voluntary Return Committees. The only list of camps to be closed shared by the local authorities were related to Baghdad camps, however, to verify if this plan has been followed.

ii) Updates from IDP Call Centre

- In 2018, the call centre has handled around 14,500 calls, of which **41% have been from returnees.**
- **Gender:** 31% of callers were female, 69% male.
- **Top 3 returnee call locations:** Mosul (78%), Telafar (8%) and Falluja (2%)

▪ **Top issues raised:**

- a) **49%** of all **cash requests** came from returnees who stated shelter/NFIs, health and food as their top needs
- b) **35%** of all **MMT**-related calls came from returnees.
- c) Reports of **debt** are high, as are questions surrounding next steps following assessments by cash partners.
- d) Requests for **emergency health assistance** are common as has been observed in the last few months.

➤ Updates per sector:

- **Emergency Livelihoods** (2% of all calls)- 41% from returnees. Issues raised: seeking employment opportunities, materials/funding for community projects and vocational training.
 - Non-Standard Referrals: N/A
- **Health & Nutrition** (7% of all calls)- 47% from returnees. Issues raised: requesting health treatment/services in their area (facilities), specialized support for persons with disability, emergency health requests.
 - Non-Standard Referrals: Mainly for Mosul, issues raised surrounding access to clinics/health centres. Mental health also an area of potential concern/gap.
- **Food Security** (11% of all calls): 13% from returnees.
 - Non-Standard Referrals: Only 1 case from Telafar regarding registration barriers (delays) to receiving assistance.
- **Cash** (69% of all calls)- 48% from returnees. Issues raised are: requests for cash assistance, MMT and reports of being in debt due to a) shelter/rent, b) NFI needs and c) food.
 - Non-Standard Referrals: Mainly for Mosul, issues raised were requests for cash for emergency shelter repairs, information on cash programs and eligibility requirements. Reports of people forging return documents to receive cash, and overcrowded offices being a barrier to receiving entitlements.
- **WASH** (1% of all calls)- 28% from returnees. Issues raised: limited access to clean water.
 - Non-Standard Referrals: Mainly for Mosul and Telafar, issues raised surrounding the need for water projects (well construction, provision of generators and pumps, etc.) One report from Muqdadiya requesting reconstruction of a destroyed purification centre.
- **Education** (1% of all calls)- 40% from returnees. Issues raised- requests for education services in their area (Mosul mainly).
 - Non-Standard Referrals: 4 from Mosul regarding the need for educational facilities.
- **S/NFIs** (10% of all calls)- 33% from returnees. Issues raised include cash needs for NFIs and shelter repair.

- Non-Standard Referrals: Mainly from Mosul, multiple requests for housing (specifically, caravans).
 - **Protection** (8% of all calls)- 44% from returnees. Issues raised: access to legal assistance and report of missing persons were highly reported.
 - Non-Standard Referrals: From Mosul & Telafar, reports of ERW (Telafar) and requests for emergency health/PSS support (Mosul).
 - **Government** (2% of all calls)- 48% from returnees. Information about MoMD grants and compensation schemes.
 - Non-Standard Referrals: N/A
- Discussion:
- A query was made on whether there was an update from the Returns Monitoring exercise that the IDP Call Centre has been working on in conjunction with the CCCM and Protection Clusters, mainly on secondary returns. It was mentioned that this exercise is currently only for Mosul, and that the CCCM cluster would update on this at the next meeting.
- Action Point:
- CCCM Cluster to give an update at the next meeting.
 - OCHA to give an update on the Voluntary Return Committees
- iii) Field updates from main governorates of return (Presentation attached for more details)
- Discussion:
- Protection cluster that is scaling up advocacy efforts in relation to evictions and forced return, and advocating for principled and safe return.
 - About evictions, it was reported that 300 HHs have been facing evictions in Mosul. This is something to follow up as it was not mentioned previously.
 - In addition, it was mentioned that the Voluntary Return Committees (VRCs) has not been approved by the HAT, and there have been significant forced returns which is inconsistent with the framework. Advocacy efforts are ongoing within UNHCR, and also in relation to the upcoming elections in order to allow the IDPs to vote.
 - NRC inquired on the who is reporting on the informal sites/ out- of- camp IDP issues, as there seems to be lack of information on informal sites in general. It was reported that the VRCs will look at the informal sites as well, but have not yet been established. CCCM cluster mentioned that it was working on advocacy efforts with OCHA and local authorities, as well as working with

REACH and DTM on capturing information on the informal sites. This exercise is ongoing between 1st March 2018 and will conclude in May 2018, where initial results will be shared.

➤ Action Point:

- CCCM cluster to circulate strategy document by site.

3) **Community Resource Centres (CRCs):** Presentation and Discussion on the establishment of the Community Resource Centres, CRC Steering Committee, Current status and Way Forward

(Refer to attached presentation)

- The CRCs will be established in coordination with JCMC, who will be the main Government lead of the centres.
- IOM is the Chair of the CRCs Steering Committee (SC), while there is a 6- month rotating co- chair. The current co- chair is NRC.
- The current SC members are: IOM, NRC, DRC, ACTED, PiN, UNHCR and TDH, while observers include the RWG, ICCG and Clusters at the National level.
- The common approach for the CRCs will be implemented through the Basic Activities Set (BAS), which are the direct activities and includes the network of activities to be provided. The indirect services will be compliment the BAS.
- The CRCs will be implemented at the sub- district level, and the BAS activities will eventually be handed over to JCMC.
- The CRCs will be implemented (at the moment) in Ninewa (all 7 agencies), Anbar (IOM, UNHCR, ACTED, NRC and DRC), Salah al Din (ACTED, DRC, UNHCR) and Kirkuk (NRC TDH). JCMC has requested to include CRCs in Diyala as well.
- The CRC chairs and JCMC to work on a roadmap, and capacity building of the government will be part of the roadmap.
- The steering committee is not in charge of funding the CRCs- each partner is expected to fund raise for their own respective CRCs to be established.

➤ Discussions:

- A question was raised on how the location of the CRCs were defined. This was based on discussion with and request from JCMC. 8 CRCs will be established in Mosul and at sub- district level.
- A question was made if IDPs will be registered in the CRCs. Since it is an Internal Displacement Response, no registration will be created instead basic information on the HHs will be collected as for protection guidelines.

- An inquiry was also made on whether the population will have access to the different CRCs or if the CRCs will move around, and also on how the information will be shared. It was mentioned that mobile services will be linked to the existing services, and that CwC messages will be developed as well as referral mechanisms on information sharing, which are already included in the Basic Activities Set (BAS).

4) RWG Information Management Framework: Brief on RWG IM Framework, Baseline information (DTM) and Area Based Approach- Presentation of the findings of the pilot phase ABA in Mosul Al-Jadida

i) RWG IM Framework:

- Presentation was made on the current RWG Framework, which includes the sources of information with regards to baseline information (DTM- first line), Area – Based Assessments (second line) and other ongoing/ existing assessments, i.e. RNA, RVA, Exit questionnaires, Village Assessments, Intention Surveys etc (third- line).
- These information sources are used to develop RWG products which are split into three categories; i.e. Strategic and Operational, Technical Guidance and Information and Coordination.
- The RWG is also in the process of developing a website, which will include all of the information mentioned above, as well as relevant links to ongoing baseline information and assessments.

ii) DTM Returns Dashboard

(Refer to attached presentation)

- DTM is currently working to expand scope to cover returnees and expand the current returns portal.
- Additional indicators will be included to better capture return data, such as reintegration indicators.
- DTM will continue to support all Clusters and the Humanitarian Community, but will mainly expand this dashboard support to the Returns Working Group (RWG) and Community Resource Centers (CRCs).

➤ Discussion:

- A question was asked on whether the dashboard will include forced returns. However, it was mentioned that given the sensitive nature and protection concerns of forced returns, this information will not be made available in the portal, but only upon request.
- An inquiry was also made on whether the data will include registered IDPs/ returnees, and it was mentioned that this will mainly include raw data captured at initial point of return, and suggestion was made to include different formulation to indicate the differences.

iii) Area- Based Approach: Findings from the pilot in Mosul Al- Jadida Municipality

(Refer to attached presentation)

- The Area- Based Approach (ABA) was conducted by REACH as an initial pilot, built on RWG's Framework- the Multi Sectoral Response Framework.
- The purpose was to aim to pilot services at location level from all relevant sectors based on existing gaps and identified needs.
- The main findings of the assessment are included in the attached presentation.
- REACH is currently working with Shelter Cluster to look into damaged housing.

5) AOB:

- DRC mentioned that they have just released a report- “The Long Road Home”, which was a joint effort between DRC, IRC and NRC on the current return situation. The report traces the challenges that families face as they attempt to return home- many of them prematurely and often unsustainably. It also highlights the violations that many IDPs face during the returns process including coerced, forced, and blocked returns and the lack of support for alternative solutions to displacement- such as integration or resettlement elsewhere in Iraq. Based on these findings, the report provides recommendations to prevent premature returns and promote safe, voluntary, dignified, and durable solutions to displacement across Iraq. A small presentation on the report will be given at the next RWG meeting.
- DRC informed that another report is about to be released which is related to the obstacles to safe and dignified return for families with specific protection risks and concerns in Anbar. The report will give an overview on the main challenges that vulnerable groups are facing, and will include some recommendations for humanitarian partners on how to deal with these cases.