

## RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 09:30-11:00 hrs
- ❖ **Location:** Erbil (IOM Conference Room, Gulan Rd.) via bluejeans to Baghdad, UNDP Meeting room

**In Attendance:** IOM, MOMD, USAID/OFDA, State/PRM, UNHCR, UIMS, EURLO, CRC, UNICEF, UN-Habitat, Social Inquiry, War Child Canada, REACH, NCCI/CCS, HEKS, GIZ, MAG, French Red Cross, ACTED, WVI, COOPI, CWG, CwC Task Force, WFP, DFID, GPPI, OXFAM

### Agenda Items:

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- 1) **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of previous minutes; Follow up on action points from previous meeting
- 2) **Returns Update:** Update from RWG/DTM dashboard
- 3) **Return Index findings and protracted displacement:** Presentation of findings of the first report of the return index; Analysis on the research for the remaining caseload of IDPs
- 4) **Community Resource Centres (CRCs) update:** Presentation by CRC chair on update of CRC activities
- 5) **Government update on returns:** Presentation by MOMD on assistance provided to returnees and other issues concerning returns
- 6) **AOB:** Iraq Innovation Lab, by Oxfam

### Key Discussion Points/ Action:

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- 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. The Chair recognized the presence of two MOMD colleagues, the Head of International Relations division and Head of Return division.

- 2) **Returns Update:** Update from RWG/DTM dashboard
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- i) Return Overview presentation:

*(Presentation attached for more details)*

### Main findings:

- As of 30 September 2018, the total no. of returnees was at 4,075,350, spread across 1539 locations of return. 1,890,696 IDPs remain.
- The return rate is currently at 68%, and there are 38 districts of return in total
- In the month of September alone, there were 46,386 returnees, which represent a 1.2% increase in returnees compared to the previous month in August.
- Ninewa still remains the highest governorate witnessing returns in September, followed by Anbar and Salah al-Din.
- The governorates with the highest increase in return in September include Baghdad (+3.6%), Kirkuk (+2.3%), Salah al-Din (+2.2%).
- Babylon remains the only governorate that has witnessed no return. The chair mentioned that 15 families had reportedly returned to Babylon, but this information is yet to be verified.
- A total of 9 districts have witnessed no return. Tarmia in Baghdad Governorate is the latest district to witness returns (in August 2018).
- For more details, the following link can be used to access the return dashboard:  
<http://iraqdtm.iom.int/DTMReturnDashboards.aspx>

3) **Return Index findings and protracted displacement:** Presentations of the first Return Index report findings; Analysis on the research for the remaining caseload of IDPs

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*(Presentations attached for more details)*

**i) Return Index findings**

Main points:

- Major hotspots identified and monitored:
  - Ninewa: Sinjar center, Telafar center, West Mosul, Ba'aj, Desert strip of Al-Tal, Hatra and Mahalabiya
  - Salah al-Din: Baiji, Tooz Khurmatu/ Suleiman Beg, Balad/Duloeiya
  - Kirkuk: Taza Khurmatu, Hawija center, Al-Abbasy
  - Diyala: Al-Adheim, Saadiya/ Jalawla
  - Anbar: Falluja-Ramadi strip, Ana center
- Next steps of the Return Index
  - Re-framing indicators to improve reliability of data collection (working with clusters and partners)
  - Producing thematic reports
  - Correlating data on hotspots with presence of actors and programs to evaluate coverage
  - Data visualization

➤ Discussion:

- DFID inquired on the source of information for the return index, and how the division of key informants is made based on gender and age (i.e. whether there is a gender balance).
  - Social Inquiry explained that the sources are key informants in the form of community leaders (mukhtars, sheikhs, mayors), as they represent the community. It was also mentioned that finding female informants is difficult in Iraq, but more efforts are being put into achieving a better balance.
- An inquiry was made on whether the presence of IDPs in hotspot areas were also included in the findings (i.e. whether they contribute to the issues and scoring in these areas).
  - Social Inquiry mentioned that IDPs are not included in terms of the scoring, but attention has been paid to it. For example, a noticeable pattern in West Mosul was that neighborhoods with the highest scores usually hosted less IDPs, as IDPs tended to cluster in areas with higher quality of returns. Note: IDPs are defined as people displaced from a different sub-district (IOM definition).
- The RWG Chair mentioned that data for the Return Index will be collected every two months, as opposed to monthly which was the case for the first rounds. This is also based on the feedback received from the consultations held in the field at governorate as well as national levels.

**ii) Protracted displacement: Analysis on the research of the remaining IDPs**

Main points:

- IDPs in protracted displacement are defined as those who have been displaced for more than 3 years. However, in the Iraq context, it should be noted that this is dependent on when areas were retaken, as IDPs could not have returned before their areas of origin had been liberated.
- Four main categories for protracted displacement: house damage, livelihoods and service, social cohesion, security and mental health.
- Exacerbating factors: female Head of Household (HoH), child HoH, low socio-economic income, mental health issues/ [psycho-social distress](#), household with disabled member, ethno-religious/tribal identity.
- The current stage of the protracted displacement study is the completion of secondary data review (ILA, Return Index, REACH, MCNA etc). The detailed report is expected to be published in November. Thereafter, regular data collection will be done to better define some of the categories.
- The RWG co-chair added that more qualitative data will be collected on areas of no return, and that the RWG had recently visited Babylon to receive feedback from the government, local actors and community leaders as to why people are not returning to certain areas. Babylon remains the only governorate to have witnessed no returns. The report of the findings in Babylon will be shared in the next RWG meeting.

- Other options that will be explored in the coming months are integration and relocation, as some IDPs may not be able to return to their areas of origin.
  
- Action points:
  - The protracted displacement report to be shared next week.
  - Findings on areas of origin in Babylon to be shared in next RWG meeting.

#### **4) Community Resource Centres update:** Presentation by CRC Chair on update of CRC activities

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*(Presentation attached for more details)*

Main points:

- CRC implementing partners can upscale activities by providing the space for different service providers, such as: mine risk education sessions, HLP services, livelihoods activities, social cohesion activities, PSS, vocational trainings, First Aid and health promotion sessions etc.
- 14 operational CRCs expected by the end of the year.
- The IOM information management team are currently working on the online platform, which includes the service mapping and the referral system. A Complaint and Feedback mechanism will also be developed.
- With regards to planning HNO figures for 2019, the CRC Steering Committee (SC) proposed having 30 CRCs, which would target 300,000 individuals.
  
- Discussion:
  - DFID asked whether the government has been approached to co-chair and co-fund the CRCs.
    - The CRC chair mentioned that is the aim to have JCMC be more involved in the Steering Committee meetings. All the progress and work done by CRCs have been shared with JCMC, with feedback also given from their side. So far, no suggestions have been made in terms of government funding, especially because of government uncertainty regarding its budget. However, this option will be explored once there is a clearer idea.
  - An inquiry was made as to who is equipping the CRCs.
    - The CRC chair mentioned that NGOs, each with their own donor sources, will be establishing the CRCs.
  - An inquiry was made on how coordination structures are maintained on the ground in terms of clusters, and if there are any best practice or SOP document available.
    - The CRC chair explained that National Protection Cluster (NPC), CCCM, RWG, and other CRC operational partners are part of the SC and attend the meetings. CRC are also in

touch with Mine action sub-cluster and Shelter cluster. CRC may eventually develop an SOP or similar document, but it is currently not available.

- CRC is also working with REACH in conducting area-based assessments (ABA), with an ABA for Telafar currently being finalized, the findings of which will be presented very soon. ABAs are also planned for Falluja and Hawija and expected to be finalized at the start of the new year.

#### **5) Government Update on Returns:** Presentation by MOMD on assistance provided to returnees and other issues concerning returns

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*(MOMD returnee data will be shared separately)*

The new returnee figures based on MOMD and Ministry of Interior (MoI) registration were presented.

➤ Discussion:

- The reason for data discrepancy between MOMD and MoI was requested.
  - MOMD mentioned that there are many actual returnees who have not registered with MOMD; they prefer to stay registered as IDPs as IDP benefits outweigh those of returnees (in terms of aid from MOMD and organizations). Further reasons for not registering are lack of livelihood opportunities, lack of services, security issues and tribal conflict. Furthermore, MoI does not register IDPs who re-displace after returning (i.e. secondary displacement), causing many IDPs to remain registered as returnees in the MoI database.
- It was inquired whether MOMD has paid any grants to returnees, and the amount allocated to each family.
  - MOMD stated that the allocated return grant is 1,500,000 IQD, but the grant has not yet been paid as it's currently not available.
- An inquiry was made on whether the return grants will be paid in 2019. For the time being, MOMD is waiting for the 2019 government budget to be decided and transferred from Ministry of Finance.

#### **6) AOB: Iraq Response Innovation Lab, by Oxfam**

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*(Fact sheet on the innovation lab attached for more details)*

Detailed presentation to be made at the next RWG meeting.