

## RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 10:00-11:30 hrs
- ❖ **Location:** Erbil (IOM Conference Room, Gulan Rd.) via bluejeans to Baghdad, UNDP Meeting room

**In Attendance:** IOM, MOMD, REACH, OCHA, UNHCR, Food Security Cluster, NCCI, DFID, Social Inquiry, NRC, WFP, UNDP, HLP SC, CwC, Cash Working Group, GIZ, Samaritan's Purse, HEKS, Oxfam, WVI, CRC, WHH, USAID/OFDA, US Embassy/PRM, FAO, IRI, UNICEF, NPC

### 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) **HNO/ HRP 2019:** Presentation by OCHA on the Humanitarian Needs Overview/ Humanitarian Response Plan for 2019 for returnees
- 4) **Government update on returns:** Presentation by MOMD on 2018 plans and achievements against plans
- 5) **Remaining IDP caseload – Protracted displacement:** Presentation on the findings from the first protracted displacement report
- 6) **Rapid Overview of Return Areas (ROAR):** Presentation by REACH on the findings of the ROAR in Muqadadiya- Diyala Governorate

### 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
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- 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 from RWG/DTM dashboard
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*(Presentation attached for more details)*

**Main findings:**

- As of 31 October 2018, the total no. of returnees was at 4,113,660, spread across 1568 locations of return. A total of 1,866,594 IDPs remain in displacement.
  - The total return rate is currently at 69%, and there are 38 districts of return in total. However, the return rate from the previous month has dropped to 0.9%.
  - There were two new locations of return in Makhmur, Erbil. Many families have also returned to Sinuni sub-district in Sinjar after receiving security clearance.
  - In the month of October alone, there were 38,310 returnees, which represent a 0.9% increase in returnees compared to the previous month in September.
  - Ninewa still remains the highest governorate witnessing returns in October, followed by Anbar and Salah al-Din.
  - The governorates with the highest increase in return in October are Baghdad (+3.7%), Erbil (+3.4%), Ninewa (+1.5%).
  - Babylon remains the only governorate that has still witnessed no return. The chair mentioned that 15 families had reportedly returned to Babylon as mentioned by the local authorities, but this information is yet to be verified.
  - A total of 9 districts have witnessed no return.
  - DTM identified 180 locations of no return, 94 of which have been confirmed and verified. The majority of confirmed locations were found in Ninewa (23) and Salah al-Din (39, mostly Tooz). Main reasons listed for non-return were blocked areas and security issues.
  - Return Index update: indicators have been revised and improved, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of data collection has started. There will also be thematic and detailed analysis by indicators and governorate.
  - For more details, the following link can be used to access the return dashboard:  
<http://iraqdtm.iom.int/DTMReturnDashboards.aspx>
- Discussion:
- UNHCR asked what the criteria were that defined a critical shelter and whether secondary displacement figures by location of origin is available.
    - The DTM Coordinator explained that critical shelter was defined in collaboration with the Shelter cluster and based on the usual shelter categories (Category 1-4). The data collection method remains the same, i.e. through key informants. Category 1 falls under habitual residences that are in fair conditions, whereas Categories 2, 3 and 4 falls under critical shelter. Other critical shelters are unfinished, abandoned, public, religious and non-residential buildings, tents, containers and makeshift shelters.

- Regarding secondary displacement, the DTM coordinator explained that obtaining figures is more complex and requires close collaboration with CCCM partners, and that the work is under progress. More accurate figures are expected for the next round, particularly for those IDPs who were displaced once after returning to their area of origin. Families who have gone through multiple displacements are difficult to track but that will hopefully be addressed as well.

3) **HNO/ HRP 2019:** Presentation by OCHA on the Humanitarian Needs Overview/ Humanitarian Response Plan for 2019 for returnees

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*(Presentations attached for more details)*

**Some key points:**

- HRP is 93% funded, with well over 100% expected to be funded by the new year.
- There is too much focus on Mosul; there should be a balanced response to all areas of need, hence need to prioritize adequately.
- Discussion:
  - An inquiry was made on whether the the stance of the new government has changed, i.e. difference in approach.
    - OCHA explained that they have not yet entered discussions and consultations with the new federal government, though these discussions have been made with the KRG and the same is expected to happen with the new federal government. However, there has been no indication that there will be a change to an approach that the government has been using for the last two years. OCHA and humanitarian partners' role is to be as concise as possible on what needs to be done and why as the new government gets up to speed.
  - It was inquired whether minimum standards have been defined by OCHA, as there does not seem to be a standard threshold for clusters such as education and health.
    - OCHA explained that in terms of minimum standards, two clusters that usually come up in discussions are camp management and WASH. The expectation is that clusters would define these minimum standards while formulating their cluster response strategies.
  - The RRU Coordinator asked how partners can be encouraged to work in some of the hotspots identified by the Return Index.
    - OCHA mentioned that an important point needed to be made is that Mosul needs should not be addressed at the expense of other critical areas. Furthermore, we need to ensure that the plans are specific enough in terms of areas that need to be covered, i.e.

geographic specificity. The IHF will also be working in support of the priorities that are emerging from the HRP to ensure clusters are covering the identified people in need.

- NPC mentioned that there are many initiatives on social cohesion, e.g. RRP and NERF, but that there should be more coordination between stakeholders in this regard. NPC should be more involved in social cohesion interventions and that this issue should not only fall under RRP, and that such interventions under RRP have not yet materialized. The process has generally been slow, but peaceful coexistence activities should at least be organized to address tensions regarding people with perceived affiliation.

#### **4) Government update on returns:** Presentation by MOMD on 2018 plans and achievements against plans

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*(MOMD plans, achievements and assistance details attached for more details)*

➤ Discussion:

- An inquiry was made on whether there are any limitations to the draft government budget plan currently under discussion and if it's possible to continue working on the same budget.
  - The MOMD Head of Returns section explained that the government allocates the annual budget based on the same number from the previous year, which is unlikely to change/increase for 2019. This number is 127 billion Iraqi dinars for 2018, the same amount expected for 2019. The government had not referred to the MOMD branches to discuss the intensive needs of IDPs and returnees. Furthermore, the government's focus is on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure in the affected governorates, thus limiting the budget allocated to MOMD. It is also unclear whether MOMD's Higher Committee for Relief and Reconstruction will remain functional, which would be another factor affecting MOMD's work.

#### **5) Remaining IDP caseload – Protracted displacement:** Presentation on the findings from the first protracted displacement report

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*(Presentation attached for more details)*

➤ Discussion:

- A question was asked as to how the social cohesion scale is measured.
  - Social Inquiry explained that the indicator used for demographic change came from the Integrated Location Assessment (ILA III) by IOM, which was based on key informant responses regarding perceptions of ethno-religious change in the concerned areas.

- GIZ inquired on whether there is any information available that mention the area of origin (by district and sub-district) of in-camp and out of camp IDPs and whether they want to return, as they have not been able to find this information.
  - The DTM Coordinator mentioned that this information is already available (ILA, area assessments, REACH intentions surveys etc.) and that the only detail left to be collected is the areas of origin by individual, as this information had been captured based on the majority of IDPs rather than by individual. However, data will soon be collected on the district of origin for every sub-set of IDPs in the concerned location. The next steps of the secondary data review for the protracted displacement report will attempt to incorporate information regarding the exact areas of origin of the IDPs as well as the obstacles they're facing.
  - The RRU Coordinator mentioned as a point to note that the first phase of the protracted displacement study had focused on secondary data review and agreeing on a standard set of categories. The second phase will focus on filling the information gaps partially through household data collection and additional analysis of secondary data, providing information such as IDP caseload, location of displacement and areas of origin.
- An inquiry was made as to whether indicators that measure the level of integration would be used, and if these indicators can be discussed with the relevant clusters once they are included in the study.
  - DTM mentioned that integration has been looked at through household assessments and that this information will be included. There have already been examples of integration being successfully achieved in certain locations.
- The RWG Chair noted that the protracted displacement report will be released in the coming days.

## **6) Rapid Overview of Return Areas (ROAR):** Presentation by REACH on the findings of the ROAR in Muqdadiya- Diyala Governorate

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*(Presentation attached for more details)*

### **Key points:**

- Data was collected between 10 and 15 October 2018 from a total of 25 key informants.
- 6,500 to 8,500 families are estimated to have returned to district, while 4,000 remain displaced.
- Main reasons for not returning to AoO are damaged/destroyed houses, lack of livelihood opportunities and sectarian tensions.
- Government or humanitarian actors are present in most assessed villages and neighbourhoods of the city.
- Residents do not feel safe outside Muqdadiya city or villages due to ISIL presence, particularly at night or in the farmlands.
- Only lands around the villages were reportedly still contaminated.

- Extensive damage to houses (at least 50%) and farmlands in villages, as well as stolen equipment.
- Most people reportedly have insufficient income, especially in the villages.
- Sharp decline in income from agriculture, due to: lands being burned, lack of funds to restart activities and fear of ISIL presence.
- Schools in villages have been damaged, lack of supplies, and lack of teachers.
- The water in the city may not be clean to drink, most villages rely on wells.
- The city urgently needs a wastewater system, villages do not have any waste system.
- Data collection has also taken place in Baquba, which will be the focus of the next ROAR.

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