RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

❖ **Meeting Date: 9**th July 2018
❖ **Meeting Time:** 14:00-15:30 hrs
❖ **Location:** Erbil (IOM Conference Room, Gulan Rd.) via bluejeans to Baghdad, SRSG Conference Room

In Attendance: GiZ- Stabilization, IOM, GiZ- BIN, Geneva Call, Relief International, RIRP, Dar Human, Social Inquiry, UNDP, TDH Italy, CRS, COOPI, NRC, INTERSOS, Samaritan's Purse, WFP, PIN, Mercy Corps, RWACH, Canada Embassy, UNHCR, Centre for Civilians in conflicts, USAID/ OTI/ Chemonics, ACTED, Protection Cluster, DFID, MAG, Food Security Cluster, OFDA, INSO, US Embassy, UNICEF, MSF Holland,

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 DTM, Field updates from main governorates of return
3) **UXO/ ERW/ Mine Hazards in locations of return:** An overview from DTM on key findings from the ILA III
4) **Return Index:** Presentation on the DTM/ RWG/ Social Inquiry on new tool to track quality of returns, and prioritization on intervention in areas of return
5) **Stabilization projects in Anbar and Salah al Din:** Presentation by UNDP on current stabilization projects
6) **Situation in Siniya and Balad:** An overview of the obstacles to return in Siniya and Balad, and Presentation by Protection Cluster on the Rapid Protection Assessment conducted in the same locations
7) **AOB:**

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. Main action points from the previous meeting included providing a more in- depth overview of the prioritization of interventions in areas of return, which was to be expounded more on the return index presentation.

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2) Returns Updates: Updates from DTM, Field updates from main governorates of return

i)   <u>Update from DTM (Presentation attached for more details):</u>
▪ As of June 2018, the total no. of returnees was at 3,904,350.
▪ In the month of June alone, there were 74,592 returnees, which represent a 2% increase in returnees compared to the previous month in May.
▪ Ninewa still remains the highest Governorate witnessing returns in June, with 38% of the total returnees in Ninewa, followed by Anbar at 32% of total returnees and Salah al-Din hosting 14% of the total returnees in Iraq.
▪ The governorates with the highest increase in returns in June include Ninewa (+3%), Kirkuk (+2%), Salah al-Din (+2%)

ii)   <u>Field updates from main governorates of return (Presentation attached for more details)</u>

- The chair gave an overview of the field updates and provided both a general and governorate-specific update on returns, including information from JCC and JCMC.
- Main points:
▪ There is access to new locations in West Mosul, i.e. Baaj
▪ ISIL attacks have slowed down in Tooz and Shirqat in Salah al Din.
▪ 60% of the returns are intra- governorate
▪ **Salah al Din:** Security threats (mainly from ISIL) have disrupted the returns in Salah al-Din, especially in Tooz and Shirqat districts. 78 families returned to Sulayman Beg in the month of June, but most are government employees and thus need to be close to the work place. Few others returned to Tooz center after they had rehabilitated their burned houses (during the October 16 events). On June 26, the security forces allowed 230 families to enter Aziz Balad area, which has suffered from a lack of basic services of (water & electricity), and most houses have been destroyed by military operations.
▪ **Anbar**: Most families in Al-Khalidiya camps returned to their areas of origin following liberation from ISIL. The remaining 363 families received the approval to be relocated to the HTC camps to ensure that they are provided with better services and to complete the closure of Al-Khalidiya camps. In June 25, 61 families (311 individuals) were transported from Khalidiya camps to their areas of origin in Fallujah and Gherma districts and Saqlawiya sub-district. The return was voluntary. However, 12 of those families who returned to Gherma were not allowed to return to their exact area of origin. They were transferred to another public building in the center of Gherma, escorted by the military and the mayor of Gherma.

3) **UXO/ ERW/ Mine Hazards in locations of return:** An overview from DTM on key findings from the ILA III

- DTM provided an overview of the key findings from the Integrated Location Assessment (ILA III), that was recently concluded in May 2018. The ILA is an in-depth profile of displacement and return movements in Iraq. There are areas of special focus such as locations, ethno-religious composition of the people affected and the social dynamics of that arise from rapidly shifting populations and effects on host communities.

- DTM organized a visual display of responses (through the dashboard presented) specific to explosive hazards as a significant concern either in the location of return or in the intentions of IDPs that was extracted from the ILA III, which was conducted between **March and May 2018.**

- **IED/UVIED:** According to the data collected, there were reported incidents at the beginning of 2018 involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including road-side IEDs and Under-Vehicle-IEDs (UVIEDs) were reported to occur in 33 locations of these, **45% of incidents occurred in Al Muqdadiya district in Diyala governorate.**

- **ERW/UXO:** Incidents involving explosive remnants of war (ERW), landmines or unexploded ordinance were reported in 123 locations, with the highest number occurring in the following districts: 27% in **Al Khalis** (Diyala governorate), 12% in **Mosul** (Ninewa governorate) and 12% in **Baiji** (Salah al-Din governorate).

- **Casualties involving minors:** In 108 locations, incidents of casualties (deaths or injuries) among minors from UXOs/landmines were reported with significant numbers occurring in the following **districts**: 39% in **Mosul** (Ninewa) and 16% in **Al Shirqat** (Salah al-Din).

- **Greatest Need:** According to key informant interviews, the removal of UXOs and IEDs was expressed as the greatest basic need in 37 locations. The highest concentration of this sentiment (32%) occurring in **Mosul** (Ninewa).

- **Feelings of insecurity** among IDP families due to ongoing conflict or the presence of UXOs, landmines, and militias have been reported in 147 locations. The districts that stood out the most were:
  - Tikrit 29% (Salah al-Din)
  - Al Shirqat 16% (Salah al-Din)
  - Kirkuk City 13% (Kirkuk)
  - Sinjar 11% (Ninewa)

- Further information can be found in the DTM portal as well as on Humanitarian Response, where the full questionnaire and dataset can be accessed, as well as learn more about the methodology and discover additional dashboards.

4) Return Index: Presentation on the DTM/ RWG/ Social Inquiry on new tool to track quality of returns, and prioritization on intervention in areas of return

▪ A presentation was made on the Return Index, which is a joint product between the DTM, RWG and Social Inquiry, and a tool to measure the quality of returns, as well as inform priority areas of intervention across 1,400 locations in Iraq. (Presentation attached for more details).

▪ At present, there is less visibility on interventions in the return areas, and with increasing rate of return there is need to determine the quality of returns- in order to ensure that returns are sustainable as well as the conditions in the areas of origin are conducive to return.

▪ The Return Index consists of two new sets of questions generating two scales and a joint score on quality of returns, which will be updated on a monthly basis at the location level. One scale will assess livelihoods, basic needs and access to services; and the second scale will assess social cohesion, community tension and perception of safety.

▪ The return index will be able to compare changes in i) basic services and livelihoods and safety and ii) social cohesion and security over time, and data will be aggregated district and sub- district, and compared within sub- district.

▪ The output will include a **ranking system**, based on a combined score of the two scales, that will: allow partners to **prioritize vulnerable areas** or **mitigate risks of push/pull factors** for a more specific set of interventions on the part of humanitarian, recovery, and stabilization actors.

▪ The result will be presented through dashboards and snapshots in form of a "Traffic Light" system, where Red= bad, Yellow= middle and Green= Good/ almost good across governorates in Iraq.

▪ It was further mentioned that the results presented stemmed from the first round of data collection, and the tool will be improved through subsequent rounds as the data collection is progressive and on a monthly basis.

(Discussion:

- An inquiry was made on whether the return index will be able to capture secondary displacement, and it was mentioned that since the tool could be used as an early warning system, the tool could flag areas of concern as well as key issues or developments arising from certain locations.

- Protection cluster raised a concern on the prioritization of locations due to protection issues, for instance why some people are not returning to certain areas. Response was made that the return index could on the contrary help to raise matters arising in return areas, for more advocacy on principled returns.

- A query was raised on "source of income" not being available under the scale 1, i.e. access to livelihoods, basic need and services, as well as "presence of UXOs and IEDs". The audience was

informed that since this is still the 'beta' round of the return index, more consultation will be made with different stakeholders, also at the field level, to further improve the tool.

- An additional query was made on the methodology, and frequency of the data collection. There will be a separate session conducted in the coming month on the methodology on data collection for the return index. Regarding the frequency of data collection, initial plans are to collect data on a monthly basis, but this is subject to review. The weighting will also change every month, and will be tested and updated based on feedback received.

➢ Action Points:
- To review whether to add indicators on "source of income" and "presence of UXOs and IEDs".

5) **Stabilization projects in Anbar and Salah al Din:** Presentation by UNDP on current stabilization projects

(See presentation attached for more details)

▪ UNDP provided an overview of the current stabilization and reconstruction projects they are conducting across Iraq, through the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS).

▪ There are currently 31 locations cleared for FFS, with USD 806 million committed for 2,391 projects. At the moment, 1,040 projects have been completed, with 317 projects currently under implementation.

▪ The five key areas that require intensive stabilization support include: Western Ninewa (Sinuni and Sinjar), Baiji- Hatra corridor, Western Anbar, Mosul and broader Hawija.

▪ Housing was initially not one of the sectors. In addition, where there is large scale destruction, UNDP does not cover- these are left to REFATO and other government agencies.

➢ Discussion:
- A query was made on whether rule of law (ROL) was a component of the FFS. The response was that ROL is not one of the pillars of FFS, but works closely with SSR.
- It was also mentioned that reconciliation is another area of work, and the primary indicator is where people are operating.

6) **Situation in Siniya and Balad:** An overview of the obstacles to return in Siniya and Balad, and Presentation by Protection Cluster on the Rapid Protection Assessment conducted in the same location

(See presentation attached for more details)

- The Protection Cluster gave a detailed presentation on the Rapid Protection Assessment (RPA) conducted in Jwaizrat area, Balad district in Salah al Din.
- The RPA is a community-level tool designed to gather *macro-level information* on diverse protection situations, such as sudden large scale population movements or sudden changes in protection environment faced by a target population.
- The RPA was triggered by reports on **restrictions movement for IDPs** who have returned to their villages of origin, **HL issues** and **lack of basic services**.

7) AOB:

- DFID requested for more information or if there was an update on the technical committee for returns, which was requested by MOMD. It was mentioned that there is a need to clarify the TOR for this committee against the GRC. Jelena from UNOCHA is following up on this.