



RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- ❖ **Meeting Date:** 8th May 2018
- ❖ **Meeting Time:** 10:00-12:00 hrs
- ❖ **Location:** Erbil (IOM Conference Room, Gulan Rd.) via bluejeans to Baghdad, SRSG Conference Room

In Attendance: MOMD, NRC, WFP, UNICEF, ICRC, German Red Cross, IMC, UIMS, IOM, INTERSOS, Food Security Cluster (FSC), Social Inquiry, CCR, ACTED, Shelter Cluster, HLP Sub- Cluster, WHH, MSF, CRC, FAO, Geneva Call, MAG, SIF, OCHA, COOPI, Oxfam, RIRP, REACH, World Vision, GIZ, Protection Cluster, UNHCR, Handicap International, DFID, Relief International, Samaritan's Purse, DRC

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) **Update on Governorate Return Committees:** Presentation on the national and field level GRC meetings
- 4) **Government Response to Returnees:** Presentation on MoMD's response and assistance to returnees
- 5) **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, on discussions regarding the Governorate level Intentions to Return. This focused on the national intention survey conducted by CCCM Cluster and REACH, and was broken down per governorate to cover the intentions of IDPs per governorate. The returns monitoring for Mosul camps conducted by CCCM Cluster, IDP Call Centre and Protection Cluster was also discussed, and more follow up required regarding the 5% of IDPs who went back to the camps and 22% who returned to other areas/ third areas of location.

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

Formatted: Centered

Formatted: Header distance from edge: 0.19"



Formatted: Centered

i) Update from DTM (Presentation attached for more details):

- As of April 2018, the total no. of returnees was at 3,635,598 and IDPs at 2,205,252
- During the reporting period, there was a 5% decrease in the no. of IDPs and 4% increase in the no. of returnees.
- Highest governorates of returns (as of April 2018): Ninewa, Anbar, Salah Al-Din
- Ninewa hosts 35% of returnees in Iraq, followed by Anbar at 34% and Salah al-Din at 14%. For the first time, the no. of returnees in Ninewa is higher than in Anbar.
- Not much return movement had happened to Duhok
- Mosul hosts the most returnees on district level (785,358)
- Emergency tracking: (more details in attached presentation)

ii) Field updates from main governorates of return (Presentation attached for more details)

➤ Discussion:

- To allow more time for presentation by MODM and on Governorate Return Committees, these were to be shared with partners after the meeting.
- A comment from UNHCR was raised regarding the dashboard presented in the recent meeting about governorates witnessing highest percentage of returnees. Erbil was among the governorates witnessing returns, while the description of returns in Erbil is about returnees **FROM** this governorate and not **TO** this governorate. Considering this, UNHCR recommends that that Erbil should be omitted from the presented dashboard/presentation.

➤ Action Point:

- Field updates to be shared with partners

3) Update on Governorate Return Committees (GRCs): Presentation on the national and field level GRC meetings

i) Presentation by Nasr Muflahi: Humanitarian Response Advisor (OCHA)

- Briefed on the Goal of the ToR, and clarified that much as the current TOR focuses on Camp Consolidation and closure, the GRCs are meant to also look at issues beyond camp consolidation. Returns is a major issue of focus, including protection challenges and barriers to a safe and dignified return.
- The TOR cannot be amended for now, as additional processes for the approval of the TOR will be required. However, the objectives of the TOR will be expanded, as well as the Principled



Formatted: Centered

Returns Framework, which will be expanded to include barriers to return- and added as an annex to the GRC TOR (see attached GRC ToR).

- There are 5 GRCs, i.e. Anbar, Salah al Din, Kirkuk and Ninewa, with a recent addition- Baghdad. Each GRC constitutes 2 NGO agencies and 2 UN agencies, as well as representatives from the Government. (see attached document on agencies represented in the GRCs).
 - A meeting was held on the 8th of April in Baghdad, and chaired by the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers Dr. Mahdi Al Alaq at the COMSEC offices. This meeting was attended by the Governor of Anbar, JCMC, MOMD, UN and NGO representatives of the Anbar GRC, OCHA and UNDP. It was confirmed that a letter was sent to the governorates, informing them to convene the GRCs. The government assured and stressed on the government policy on voluntary return, and the need to consolidate camps to provide high quality of services.
- National GRC Workshop:
- A national workshop on the GRCs was held on the 2nd May in Baghdad, and the purpose was to ensure that the NGO and UN members seat in the GRCs with a common understanding and voice, representing the whole humanitarian community, and also to relay a common understanding on the need to move from camp consolidation and closure to returns in general. This workshop was attended by NGOs and UN representatives of each of the GRC committees, along with OCHA, RWG and Clusters as well as other humanitarian agencies.
 - The GRCs that have so far convened are Anbar, Salah al Din, and UN and NGO partners for Ninewa GRC.
 - There is need to get clarity on the representatives of the GRC from the government side; MoMD would play a larger role in this subject, while JCMC will oversee the GRC process. NOC and HAT are responsible for troubleshooting.
 - It was also discussed that there is need to include development actors in the GRCs, or establish modalities of information sharing with development actors, given the work they do in development areas as well as creating the link between humanitarian and development actors.
 - Durable solutions should be also highlighted when discussions with the government takes place, in order to encourage a range of options for displaced Iraqis, including sustainable returns, local integration or settlement in another part of Iraq.
 - OCHA will share the main outcomes of this workshop and circulated widely.
- ii) Anbar GRC update: Mr. Ali Mahmood Ali- Executive Director UIMS
- The Anbar GRC was the first to be convened, with 3 meetings held so far between March and April in Baghdad.



Formatted: Centered

- The governorate also issued administrative orders in early May, announcing membership of the Anbar GRC, from both the government and humanitarian side. The GRC will be led by Mr. Mazen Khalid Kamel- Advisor to the Governor for Relief and Displacement Affairs.
 - The governorate has advised that 3 steps will be taken for camp consolidation:
 - i) Internal/ district- district consolidation (consolidation of the camps within the same district)
 - ii) Voluntary families who intend to return
 - iii) Merging all camps to AAF and Kilo 18.
 - UIMS informed that the local authorities in Anbar have already made decision on which are the camps to close and to consolidate.
 - As for the situation in the camps, it was reported that some families are willing to return after end of school term, and there are rumors among IDPs that camps will be closed after elections (not confirmed).
 - No closure or consolidation has been applied to Bzeebz camp, as well as in AAF and HTC except lifting old and unused tents. Consolidation seen in some Khaldiya camps.
 - IDP families from some camps took their tents with them when they returned to their areas of origin. It is also reported that in the past month, HTC has received 12 families from Rutba and Ra'ua.
- iii) Salah Al Din GRC update: Pippa Bown- CCCM DRC
- 2 GRC meetings have been held so far, with members of the UN agencies and NGOs represented in the SAD GRC.
 - Complexes: A number of families are facing eviction in 3 complexes (no confirmed date), including Shafawa and Jama'at Tikrit. To move to Al-Alam camp. The Deputy governor said that the government will support with the transportation but this is not confirmed.
 - Camps: Hardaniyah and Tikrit stadium camps have been closed, given that there was barely any population in the camps. Sector 3 of Alam camp is being considered for closure. DRC is advocating to push back on the closure.
- Discussions:
- An inquiry was made on the sharing of Anbar and SAD meeting minutes, and OCHA was requested to share this information widely with partners.
 - A query was made on participation of MOMD and JCMC in the GRC, and OCHA clarified that some MoMD personnel sometimes double-hat as JCMC in the GRC meetings.
 - A question was raised on who makes decisions on camp merging and consolidation. UIMS responded that the local government and committee is involved, and this will also be discussed



Formatted: Centered

and clarified at the next GRC meetings. It was further mentioned that the plan of the Government was not shared neither discussed within the GRC.

- Inquiry made on Basateen camp in Salah al Din, if it was discussed in the GRC whether the decision on closing the camp was made or not. DRC answered that it was not mentioned yet but will follow up on that.
- Additional query was made on to what extent are the priorities of services in the return areas/ areas of origin are discussed, and how this loops with camp consolidation and closure and returns. The Chair mentioned that there is need to collect information in areas of return, and shared with the wider community in order to prioritize returns. Protection Cluster further mentioned that the service mapping of actors in areas of displacement and areas of return, which RWG is working on together with the CRCs, could serve to give an idea on the priorities and be discussed in GRC level meetings.
- IOM mentioned that there does not seem to be a systematic way of identifying those priorities. The Chair suggested that some of the priority areas could include areas where there have been large numbers of secondary displacement, such as Ninewa and Anbar. DRC mentioned that they have started a pilot on mapping of services in Baiji.
- Protection Cluster inquired on the methodology for prioritization of certain locations and what the implications would be for areas not prioritized, as DTM had assessed 1200 locations in the Integrated Location Assessment (ILA) III.
- An inquiry by Shelter cluster was made regarding the situation of the K18 extension camp, specifically the reasons behind people staying in the substandard "old" site for months now rather than move to the extension camp, which is of a higher standard.

➤ Action Points

- RWG to work with DTM and development partners on the methodology for prioritization of return.
- RWG to provide update on mapping of actors and services in areas of return areas.
- To bring up to the Anbar GRC through OCHA on the plans to keep AAF and Kilo 18 open and to close all other camps.
- OCHA to advocate in subsequent GRCs for the government to share their plans on camp closure.
- DRC to follow up in the SAD GRC through OCHA on the decision to close Basateen camp.

iv) **Government Response to Returnees:** Presentation on MoMD's response and assistance to returnees



Formatted: Centered

- i) Presentation by Mr. Hamoodi Mahjob Hamoodi: Head of Returns Section (MoMD)
- In coordination with the Ministry of Transportation and security forces, MoMD have assisted with transportation of IDPs to the areas of origin 3-4 times every month, and provide NFIs assistance twice a month.
 - MoDM has assisted with income generation projects in areas of return, as well as legal assistance and supporting documents provided to IDPs so they can return.
 - So far 55% of IDPs have returned to area of origin.
 - There is a directive from COMSEC to handover all the camps to the local authorities.
 - **Challenges/obstacles of returns:** infrastructure, security issues, damage of properties, lack of employment and opportunities, tribal/social problems. MoMD requested for further assistance from the international agencies to assist with providing support to returnees.
 - **Future plans of MOMD:** Planning to conduct an intentions survey, to look at the protracted displacement and families who are not willing to return.
- Discussion:
- **Questions from UNHCR and UNICEF;** regarding the returnee figures and how the families are registered, (refer to the attached data by MOMD on returnee figures), given that there is a significant difference between the MOMD and Security forces figures. Furthermore, UNHCR asked for clarification as the figures of returnees registered by the security forces are higher than the figures of returnees registered with MoMD due to several challenges, including lack of staff to do the registration and accessibility issues, etc. The concern is that there are some districts reported in the MoMD figures where the number of returnees registered with the MoMD is higher than the number of returnees recorded by the security forces. Considering that the IDP family should obtain security clearance prior to return, this means that they should be registered by the security forces prior to the registration with MoMD.
 - **MOMD response:** this error may be within the records of the security forces or committees, and that there are also returnees who are still registered as returnees but have become displaced again (secondary displacement). There are also families who have returned but do not want to register, so they can continue to benefit from assistance. They also clarified that when families are displaced for 2-3 days and return, MOMD registers them as returnees, while the security forces do not. MOMD suggest to launch the return grant, to encourage returnees to register with them.
- **Question from UNHCR:** what does MOMD consider as returnees- whether the returnees are considered as going to their area of origin or just the governorate of origin.
 - **MOMD response:** If families are displaced out of their district of origin within the same original governorate or out of their original governorate, they are considered as returnees if they return to



Formatted: Centered

their original district (for those who displaced within their original governorate) or return to their original governorate (for those who were displaced out of their original governorate). Regardless of the fact that they do not return to their district or area of origin.

- **Question from DRC:** whether MoMD is working to facilitate compensation of land.
- **MOMD response:** there is a Committee in each governorate looking at compensation, but have not yet started the compensation process due to lack of finances.

- **Questions from OCHA:** 1) Whether the list of assistance provided in areas of return is available; 2) If the government has the financial means to run the camps, given the directive by COMSEC to handover the camps to the government, For example, in al-Alam camp, the local authorities would like to close sector 3 (handed over to Alam) due to funding issues. How will humanitarian partners handover the camps to the Government if they don't have enough funding to run them? 3) What is the estimated number of families/IDPs who cannot return to areas of origin?
- **MoMD responses:** 1) A grant will be provided to returning families pending budget allocation. Currently, legal assistance and NFIs are being provided. 2) The budget allocated for 2018 has been transferred from the High Committee to the local governments, and the only budget they have at the moment is for relief and emergency purposes. They also asked for assistance from organizations to fill in this gap. 3) A precise number of IDPs who cannot return is not available, hence the reason why MOMD intends to conduct an intention survey for the protracted caseload. Protection cluster raised concerns that making this list available poses serious protection implications, and would advise not to have this information publically shared.

- **Question on timeline for the returnees'** plan to be implemented, as well as an explanation on how the decision of camp closure is being made- when 52% of people do not intend to return according to REACH/ CCCM intention survey.
- Protection Cluster responded by saying that the intentions are relevant to the GRC meetings and that CCCM already has information on intentions, which they will give to GRCs.

- DRC has supported REACH to conduct intentions survey in out of camp situation in Salah al Din.

- **Action Points:**
 - REACH to provide intention survey for SAD out of camps at the next meeting.
 - To follow up on some queries from MOMD.

ii) **AOB:**



Formatted: Centered

- A query was made regarding the return package, and whether this is available. It was further mentioned that the Governorate of Anbar sent a formal request for assistance in this regard, citing that the budget for the returns grant has not been allocated.

Action Points

- To follow up with OCHA and update on the return package discussion.

DRAFT