

MoMD RETURN GRANT UPDATE, June 2023

Summary

Since July 2019, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) has disbursed a grant of IQD 1.5 million to registered returnee households (with two family members or more) and IQD 0.75 million (single-member families), known as the return grant. The aim of the returnee grant is to act as a one-time safety net for returnee families. As mentioned in the [previous update](#), the efficacy of the grant has been limited due to the infrequent and low rate of disbursement. In 2021, MoMD distributed the grant only four times and in 2022 five times according to the exchange mechanism 1/12 as Iraq did not pass the 2022 Budget Law.

For 2023, MoMD distributed five rounds in March, April, and June. The first round was for returnees to Sinjar (2,006 HHs), the second round for female headed households (1,000 HHs), third round for the returnees (6,677 HHs), fourth round for the local integration (1,128 HHs) and the fifth round for the returnees (6,008 HHs).

The **National Budget** was announced in June 2023 and the allocation for MoMD is IQD356 billion, including IQD150 billion for special programs (including return and local integration grants) and IQD201 billion for operational allocations.¹

Update on the status of the Return Grant² (See previous MoMD grant updates [here](#))

Total amount disbursed so far: For the four return grant batches in March, April, and June 2023, MoMD distributed 23,499,000,000 IQD to 15,619 HHs. Since 2019, MoMD has disbursed a total of IQD 167,768,250,000 to 110,877 returnee families and 563,750,000 IQD to 1,128 for locally integrated families. See full breakdown of figures in the table below.

Summary breakdown of the disbursement of the return grant per governorate for 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Date of disbursement	No. of Beneficiaries (HH)	Amount disbursed (in IQD)
2019		
25 July 2019	12,000	18,000,000,000
24 September 2019	8,000	12,000,000,000
3 November 2019	9,736	14,599,500,000
Total 2019	29,736	44,599,500,000
2020		
21 January 2020	2,400	3,582,000,000
18 February 2020	2,600	3,869,250,000

¹ Iraq Budget Law 2023.

² Information valid as of 16 March 2023. Data Source: MOMD Statistics Unit.

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18 March 2020	2,600	3,891,000,000
26 April 2020	2,600	3,894,000,000
29 September 2020	2,600	3,883,500,000
12 November 2020	2,600	3,894,750,000
24 December 2020	1,324	1,986,000,000
29 December 2020	2,600	3,883,500,000
Total 2020	19,324	28,884,000,000
2021		
4 January 2021	2,600	3,896,250,000
15 September 2021	6,500	9,741,000,000
7 October 2021	7,000	10,488,750,000
16 December 2021	2,600	3,888,750,000
Total 2021	18,700	28,014,750,000
2022		
14 June 2022	6,000	8,987,250,000
7 July 2022	2,400	3,597,750,000
22 Sep 2022	3,603	5,383,500,000
06 Oct 2022	6,660	9,978,750,000
21 Nov 2022	3,337	4,999,500,000
18 Dec 2022	6,554	9,824,250,000
Total 2022	28,554	42,771,000,000
2023		
08 March 2023	2,006	2,999,250,000
16 March 2023	1,000	1,500,000,000
28 April 2023	6,677	9,999,750,000
16 June 2023	6,008	9,000,000,000
Total 2023	15,691	23,499,000,000
GRAND TOTAL	110,877	IQD 167,768,250,000

- **No. of targeted families reached:** Since its inception in 2019, only 110,877 families have received the grant out of 580,007 families who have returned and registered their return with MoMD as of 20 June 2023. The 2023 disbursements targeted 2,006 families from Sinjar, 1,000 female headed HH, 6,677 HH for returnees and 6,008 HH for returnees. According to the MoMD minister, the allocated financial resources to the ministry for the return grant are insufficient to cover the registered returnee families and undermines the efforts to support returnee families to meet initial basic needs in areas of return.
- **Registration of returnees:** MoMD reports that as of June 2023, 580,007 HHs have registered their return. Out of these, 492,708 applications have been checked by the MoMD Statistics Department

and 95,966 are pending verification. Diyala and Baghdad have the lowest number of pending verifications (zero pending verifications) and the highest proportion of returnees who have received the grant, while Babylon (8,550), Anbar (47,777) and Ninewa (31,398) have the highest pending applications. The backlog has been attributed to the registration process challenges and the lack of human resources to process the applications.

- **Disbursement installments:** Since the budget law was not approved in 2022, the disbursement was based on exchange mechanism 1/12. The exchange mechanism regulations provided for the spending purposes in the absence of the budget law for the period of 2022 and first half of 2023 by reflecting the regulations of 2021. The five rounds of grants that were distributed in March, April, and June are part of the 150 billion allocated in the 2023 budget law since the law was entered into force retroactively as of January 2023.
- **Distribution per Governorate:** Anbar continues to be the governorate with the highest number of registered HHs followed by Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Babylon. While Ninewa has the highest number of returnees who have received the return grant (34,475 HHs), followed by Anbar (25,781 HHs), Salah al-din (16,005 HHs), Diyala (15,5494 HHs), Baghdad (11,056 HHs), Kirkuk (9,088 HHs) while Babylon has the lowest number of grant beneficiaries (105 HH).
- **Rate of disbursement per Governorate:** Proportionally, Baghdad and Diyala have more HHs who have received the grant compared with other governorates (see table below). Despite having the highest raw numbers of beneficiaries proportionally, only 20% of the registered returnees in Ninewa and 11% in Anbar have received the grant. In total, for all the six governorates, only 19% of returnee HHs who have registered their return with MoMD have received the grant. MoMD offices in Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din, Ninawa, Kirkuk, and Babylon registered new returnees in 2023, while the offices in Baghdad have not registered any new returning households.

The table below shows the number of returnees in each governorate who applied to register their return with MOMD vis-a-vis those who have received the return grant.

Governorate	No. of returnee families registered with MoMD	No. returnees who have received the return grant	Percentage of those received the grant
Anbar	239,597	25,781	11%
Ninewa	171,567	34,475	20%
Salah al-Din	88,031	16,005	18 %
Diyala	39,377	15,495	39%

Kirkuk	24,877	9,088	37 %
Baghdad	16,563	11,056	67%
Babylon	8,667	105	1%
TOTAL	588,679	110,877	19%

- **Eligibility criteria:** The eligibility criteria remain unchanged from the previous rounds. Returnees who have closed their displacement files and registered their return with MoMD receive a returnee code and are eligible to receive the grant through the Q-card. However, according to the regulations, the MoMD minister has the legal authority to make some exceptions to the priority criteria (first come first serve) for ‘special cases’ such as the 2,006 grants that were distributed to Sinjar households on 8 March 2023, and the 1,000 grants distributed to HHs headed by females on 16 March 2023.
- **Methodology of disbursement:** The methodology of disbursement remains the same. The money is distributed through the Q-card. Following advocacy efforts by the RWG/DSTWG with the MoMD, the ministry has reached out to the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI) and requested the authorities to provide alternative companies for those IDPs who did not receive the Q-card following with stoppage of distribution of the cards in 2017 (out of 721,000 registered IDPs about 130,546 IDPs did not receive the Q-card.). In early 2022, the CBI recommended four pre-qualified companies to MoMD. In 2023, following the formation of the new government, the bids were opened for companies to submit, however the selection process has not yet been completed as of June 2023.

Challenges

- I. The government has allocated IQD 150 billion for the return and local integration grants in the 2023 budget law passed early June, including all grants distributed in 2023 prior to passing the budget law. This allocation remains inadequate to cover all the households who have registered for return and would need to be substantially increased in the next few years.
- II. Disparity between the return grant and the local integration grant: Initially MoMD had reported that the local integration grant would be IQD 1 million compared with the IQD1,5 million which is given to returnees. However, in late May, MoMD decided to reduce the local integration grant to IQD 500,000. The RWG has advocated with MoMD to align the grants as much as possible so that IDPs can make informed choices on which pathway to choose.
- III. Eligibility criteria remain the same, however the use of the ‘first come first serve’ has been criticized for not being transparent and not ensuring that the funds go to the most in need. It is recommended that the Minister continue to use discretionary powers to ensure that vulnerable households are somehow prioritized in the disbursement of the grants.

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- IV. Allocations to the in-kind support provided to in camp IDPs in 2023 remains unclear. The lack of support for the most vulnerable families who remain in camps may result in premature return, secondary displacement or in families engaging in negative coping strategies.
- V. Delay in issuing Q-cards to the remaining registered HHs and negotiations with the central bank.

Local Integration

MoMD has started a pilot process of registering families for local integration based on the decision of the Supreme Committee for the Relief and Support of Displaced Families. The registration of families wishing to integrate in the southern governorates will be the first stage and other governorates will follow. The MoMD obtained the approval of local governments in most governorates except a few where the decisions are still pending. According to the MoMD, locally integrated families would be eligible for certain benefits such as integration grants and relief aid. Below is a table with the numbers of families registered in the governorates, in addition to that MoMD recently launched the integration grant for registered families, targeting 1,128 families in June 2023.

Breakdown per governorate for local integration

Governorate	No. of IDP HH registered with MoMD	No of IDP HH who have registered for local integration	No. IDPs who have received the local integration grant	Percentage of those received the grant
Diyala	15,331	524	197	38%
Baghdad	45,935	24	19	79%
Babylon	5,473	31	25	81%
Karbala	3,283	1,558	807	52%
Wasit	996	101	31	31%
Qadsia	40,489	149	0	0%
Muthana	304	29	21	72%
Thi Qar	910	128	24	19%
Misan	417	109	4	4%
Basra	2,334	436	0	0%
TOTAL	115,472	3,089	1,128	37%

Summary breakdown of the disbursement of the local integration grant for 2023

<u>Date of disbursement</u>	<u>No. of Beneficiaries (HH)</u>	<u>Amount disbursed (in IQD)</u>
<u>2023</u>		
06 June	1,128	563,750,000

Updates from the “Higher Committee for the Relief and Support for IDPs”

The Higher Committee for Relief and Support for IDPs headed by MoMD minister decided in its last meeting on 29 March the formation of a committee to follow up and assess the needs of the displaced inside and outside the camps, as well as following up on the conditions of the returnees to their original areas.

Meeting Agenda

1. Discussed the issue of increasing the quantities of gas oil allocated for generators to the Jeddah 1 Rehabilitation Centre.
2. Discussed a request to increase the share of electricity power to IDP camps in Erbil and Dohuk
3. Discussed the amendment to a decision of the Supreme Committee, session 104 paragraph 2 to be (mandating the Ministry of Migration and Displacement to disburse financial grants of IQD1.5 million for each family returning from displacement due to terrorist acts by adopting the electronic payment, provided it is registered according to the Ministry regulations and instructions, granting authority to make exceptions to the minister to exchange in the return grants distribution priority based on assessing the need or situation).

Update on the ‘Supreme Committee for the Implementation of the National Plan’

The Supreme Committee for the Implementation of the National Plan has not yet convened a meeting in 2023.