



DURABLE SOLUTION DISCUSSION ON PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT

AKASHAT

Tuesday June 11, 2024

BACKGROUND

Following two focus group discussions and five key informant interviews focusing on IDPs from Akashat who are displaced in Qaim, a similar exercise was conducted with IDPs from the same area who are displaced in Rutba, and a dialogue session with 17 IDP community representatives and government representatives in Rutba. The RWG, in coordination with Anbar local government then conducted a DS Discussion in Ramadi to find opportunities to open the location for IDPs to return.



Table of Attendees		
Name	Position	
Government Representatives		
1	Khalid Thwainy Ahmed	Deputy Governor (Anbar)
2	Saad Gahzi Abed	Member of Anbar Provincial Council
3	Suad Saoud Al Obaydi	Member of Anbar Provincial Council
4	Mazen Abu Risha	Governor Advisor
5	Turky Mohammed Kahlif	Qaim mayor
6	Layth Thary Abed Al Hadi	Director of Al-waleed District
7	Sabry Abdullah Al Omer	Director of Tribal Affairs Unit
8	Sameer Abed Salah	MoMD
9	Abrar Ahmed Kafia	JCMC
10	Ezzedine Ali Hussain	JCMC
11	Laheeb Sufain Ismail	Department of Organizations Affairs
12	Manaf Salah Farhan	Department of Organizations Affairs
13	Mohammed Hamood Hasan	Department of Organizations Affairs
14	Ali Jasim Awaad	Deputy Commander of Anbar Operations
15	Abed Al-kahder Hameed Salah	Deputy Commander of Anbar Police
16	Mahmood Kahdom Hamad	Assistant of PMUs leader for Anbar Operations
17	Abbas Musa	PMU-Anbar Operations
18	Basim Motar	Media Department of Anbar Governorate
19	Anmar Mokahlif	Department of Organizations Affairs
20	Mostafa Mohaned	Citizens Affairs Section
21	Ali Husain	Citizens Affairs Section
22	Waleed Kahlid	JCMC
23	Omer Fadel	JCMC
UN/NGO		
24	RWG	Facilitator
25	UNHCR	
26	IOM	
27	NPA	

Current Situation

- According to the mayor of Al-Waleed Sub-district, Akashat is an industrial area with 600 houses in the center, surrounded by more than 7 villages. An estimated 3,000 individuals lived in the city prior to their displacement. According to local authority, the total number of individuals was 5000 for the city and the surrounding villages. The mayor stated that Akashat is a blocked area under the control of the PMF (military area now) and all its people are displaced in Qaim, Rutba, and other cities. According to him, all the city infrastructure has been destroyed as well as most of the houses. The most urgent needs for IDPs to return are a police station, a civil defense detachment, houses rehabilitation, electricity network, WASH services, school rehabilitation, and livelihoods.
- The PMF representative, Mr. Abbas, said that currently, the PMF 13th Brigade controls the security and administrative situation in Akashat, adding that the PMF are using some houses and government institutions that need them to find an alternative, pointing out that they have preserved the property and citizens homes, however, the presence of ISIL in the past and the recent (February 2024) American strike which affected some houses.

Note: for more information about the history and the current situation of IDPs from Akasha please refer to the [Akashat Community Dialogue](#) notes from March 2024.

Re-opening Akashat

- Following the community dialogues and the request from the community members, the RWG advocated for the reopening of Akashat to enable the IDPs to resolve their displacement situation especially in light of the Council of Minister Decision to close camps which has been perceived as potentially leading to the neglect/leaving behind of the numerous IDPs who are in out of camp situations. Local government authorities have the responsibility to support all IDPs to find and achieve durable solutions.
- The RWG shared a summary of the previous activity when Akashat IDPs and community representatives expressed their desire to return to Akashat.
- During the discussion, Saad Ghazi, a member of Anbar Provincial Council, requested the PMF to allow these families to return IDPs as people cannot live in dignity unless they are in their AoOs, pointing out that the decision is now in PMFs hands, “we are ready to support the return efforts”.
- The deputy governor emphasized the need to re-open the area and bring the IDPs, who are willing, back to their homes. He said that the police can take the security responsibility inside the city, while the PMF can relocate outside protecting the city from external violations, in coordination with Al-Jazirah Operations Command.
- According to the PMF representative, Mr. Abbas, the PMF do not mind re-opening the city to IDPs to return, expressing the PMUs readiness to cooperate with all government agencies to return the displaced families. “Our first and last principle is citizen safety that should be very well considered”.
- The deputy police commander affirmed that the police command can re-open a police station in Akashat, providing security, in addition to a civil defense detachment and emergency regiments.
- As a next step the PMUs representative, Mr. Abbas, invited all attendees to hold the next meeting in Akashat to develop a detailed plan to evacuate houses and any other governmental buildings used by the PMF, assess basic needs, and act to re-open the city.
- Abdul Qadir Hameed, assistant of PMUs commander in Anbar Operations, who is a retired brigadier general, pointing out the importance of excluding families with perceived ISIL affiliation from returning to the city to preserve social cohesion and prevent any efforts to destabilize the situation after re-opening the area and returning the families. He also stressed that security should be always the priority to everyone, especially as ISIL danger still exists, mentioning an example of an offensive by ISIL militants few days prior the meeting.

Landmines and explosive remnants

According to the PMU representative, there are 6 houses that are contaminated with explosive materials. He also added that all visits or entry into Akashat must be with approval from PMF for security reasons. The deputy governor mentioned that there should be a coordination with the demining department and international organizations working in this field. The deputy governor asked the police commander to oversee coordinating with the Demining Affairs Department and RWG to coordinate with international organization for assistance on demining. NPA representative mentioned that his organization has worked closely with local authorities to support demining efforts in other areas and will discuss the possibility of interventions in Akashat to support the authority.

Challenges and needs

- The deputy governor affirmed that the local government will be responsible for providing basic services, and as a first step he instructed the set-up of technical committees from Rutba to assess the needs. He added that “with all challenges and delays with property compensations, the INGOs role to support on shelter rehabilitation would be very essential”.
- The PMU representative said that the return of IDPs requires effective and serious intervention from all governmental and non-governmental agencies because the availability of basic services in the city will influence the desire of the IDPs to return to not. He added that the PMUs will support the government and facilitate all its access needs to assess the needs inside the city.
- Ms. Suad AL-Obaidu, member of Anbar Provincial Council, raised several concerns, including rehabilitation of houses after they are checked for UXO clearance, the ministry of industry to reactivate the Phosphate mine in Akashat, provide all the basic services such as health, education, and emphasizing the importance of coordinating the returns with all stakeholders.
- RWG also stressed the importance of addressing all the issues facing the IDPs to prevent secondary displacement.
- MoMD representative said that MOMD can support these families after they return by including them in the ministry’s programs such as small business grants. He added that MoMD can coordinate with the local government and other ministries to include the returnees of Akashat in any available projects and programs.

MEETING OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS

1. Based on invitation by the PMU representative, the next meeting will be held inside Akashat city. The meeting will be coordinated among three focal points: Anbar Government, PMU, and RWG team. The date of the meeting to be decided after the Eid holiday. The purpose of the next meeting is to discuss return needs in detail.
2. PMU Anbar operations to assign a focal point to oversee coordination all IDPs return matters.
3. PMU to prepare a plan to evacuate governmental buildings such as schools.
4. RWG team to coordinate with UN agencies and international organizations to attend the meeting and to find out interests of UN agencies and international organizations to support projects in Akashat.
5. An ad hoc committee to be formed by Rutba mayor including all services departments and police department to prepare a study on the needs and this study should be done before the next meeting. An official letter shall be sent to Anbar governor's office to approve it. Then the letter to be sent to PMUs to facilitate access.
6. Anbar compensations committee to prepare a study on the needs for compensation for Akashat entitled HHs and find opportunities to priorities them.
7. A whatsApp group to be created to include all those who attended the meeting to add recommendations/action points/ next steps until the next meeting is organized.



Figure 1 and 2 Local Authorities and participants in the Akashat Durable Solutions Discussion

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