

AD-HOC RETURNS WORKING GROUP MEETING- IRAQ

- **Meeting Date:** 10 March 2024
- **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-12:00 pm
- **Location:** IOM C9 Meeting Room, Erbil & Remote connection via Teams

Attendance: Solidarites International, Peace Winds, USAID/OTI, Dan Church Aid, BICC, WFP, DRC, Dorcas Aid International ,Danish Refugee Council Samaritan's Purse (SP) , Blumont, Ta'afi, UNOCHA, DG ECHO, UNHCR, SEDO, Mercy Corps , IVY Japan, Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid, Netherlands Embassy Baghdad , INTERSOS, REACH Initiative ACTED, CESVI, Dak Organization for Eizidi women Development, GIZ, NRC, Development Support Office (DSO),UNAMI, IOM, MSF Switzerland, MSF Holland, TGH, Chemonics International, Médecins Sans Frontières - Iraq Mission, and DS Coordination.

MoMD Implementation of the Council of Ministers Decision to close camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

(Please refer to the full presentation links for further details)

Components of the MoMD camp closure plan

- The plan was drafted by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement and approved by the Council of Ministers.
- Setting July 30, 2024, as the deadline for closing the displacement file, and there is no information on the possibility of extending this date.
- The plan aims to focus on areas of return and intensify governmental and international efforts to provide an appropriate environment for the stability of returning families.
- The plan was prepared according to the National Plan for the Return of IDPs for 2020 approved by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement and the Ministry of Planning.

Core elements of government action include the following:

- Compensation or support for destroyed houses.
- Provision of a return/integration grant.
- Income-generating projects
- Addressing tribal and security obstacles
- Coordination among supporting government departments (Ministry of Labour, Education, Health, Judiciary, Transport, etc)
- Media campaigns to inform IDPs, coordination with the regional authorities and security authorities.

Discussion/Questions

- Can the DDG provide the figures from the MoMD conducted survey regarding the IDPs' movement intentions, including their plans to return, locally integrate, and move to a third place?
 - MoMD: The figures for IDPs' movement intentions, including plans to return, locally integrate, and move to a third place, are available. However, to obtain this information, an official request is necessary to ensure approval from MoMD management.
- With regards to the presentation highlighting public infrastructure issues in various Sinjar locations, does the department have confidence that the different departments will manage to restore public infrastructure in the areas of origin by June 30th?
 - MoMD: As mentioned earlier, coordination with the local government is already in progress, which is a crucial aspect. Additionally, concerning the Sinjar situation, it's worth noting that more than six thousand families have returned, and several services and projects in Sinjar are being led and coordinated by local governments. MoMD is actively working to coordinate, encourage, and support the local authorities, particularly the governor's office, to prioritize the reconstruction efforts in Sinjar.
- Amidst the delay in implementing the Sinjar Agreement and the impending anniversary of the Sinjar genocide, there is a pressing need to address the challenges faced by Yazidi women who have endured ISIS atrocities. Specifically, what concrete measures or initiatives are being undertaken to provide support and empowerment for these women, particularly in light of their security apprehensions? Additionally, is there consideration for adjusting the deadline to a less traumatic date for the Yazidi community as the closure date coincides with the commemoration of the Genocide?

- **MoMD:** The suffering of the Yazidi communities is indeed a significant concern. The efforts are focused on facilitating the return of families to Sinjar to prevent future violations. Also, the Iraqi Government's ongoing efforts to combat threats like ISIS are also pivotal in ensuring long-term security and stability. Regarding the deadline for closing the camps, considering the prolonged displacement of these families for over a decade, it is imperative to explore solutions that allow for their voluntary return or integration into alternative locations. Efforts must also focus on providing psychological support to Yazidi women and girls who have suffered trauma, with coordinated efforts from various authorities and organizations at local and international levels.

- Has the MoMD taken into consideration the plight of former detainees currently residing in Hassan Sham and Khaizr camps, particularly those who were sentenced in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and might face resentencing by the Government of Iraq (GOI)? Concerns have been raised that upon camp closure, some individuals may resort to drastic measures such as suicide.
MoMD: In response to inquiries regarding former detainees from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), it's imperative to note that while discussions have arisen, official documentation or sentences pertaining to these cases have not been received. As per Iraqi law and the Constitution, individuals cannot be subjected to double jeopardy—being sentenced twice for the same charge. However, if former detainees from the KRI face new charges upon their return, they may undergo resentencing accordingly. Nonetheless, the official list of former detainees sentenced by the Kurdistan Regional Government is still pending. Transparency and adherence to legal procedures are paramount in addressing such matters.

- Could MoMD provide insights into how security clearances will be expedited for all camp residents in the KRI within the upcoming four months? Notably, the IOM has been monitoring the issuance of security clearances for 200 households whose requests were submitted as early as August last year and which have only now just been granted.
 - MoMD: Regarding security clearances and the associated delays, the Prime Minister's decision has restricted security agencies to complete security checks within one month and promptly return approvals. Recently, approvals for names, including Hasansham and Khaizr, were received after a prior delay. The responses from the Joint Operations Command (JOC) have been shared with relevant authorities and organizations. Additional lists were shared with the JOC two weeks ago, and they are expected to respond within two weeks from now. This streamlined process aims to expedite security clearances and mitigate delays effectively.

- Could the DDG provide further details on the process for individuals to access integration grants? Additionally, what support mechanisms will be available for families opting to relocate to other areas within Iraq?
 - MoMD: Upon families leaving the camps, a list will be compiled and forwarded to specialized committees tasked with disbursing integration grants to returning families in their designated areas. This process involves evaluating various factors to ensure fair distribution. Furthermore, discussions are underway regarding procedures for families choosing either to reintegrate into their current displacement areas or to relocate to a third location. Efforts are ongoing to facilitate these transitions effectively.

AOB

- RWG invited MoMD representatives join RWG Members in Erbil for an in-person meeting given the short time that was provided and the connectivity issues and also to allow direct engagement with the partners on this important issue DDG Mr Hammoodi accepted the invitation and will confirm a date after Eid.

- The DDG, Mr. Hammoodi also invited addressing any questions or concerns from RWG Members in writing . Partners should take this opportunity to share any queries they may have by COB Sunday, March 10th.

Action Points: RWG team to confirm date for in person meeting with MoMD and RWG members and RWG Team to compile questions not answered in the slides and share with MoMD.

- Next RWG meeting is scheduled for **April 30, 2024**.