

# DSTF Ad-Hoc Meeting

17 March 2024



## Contextual updates

CoM's decision (24007 for 2024) to close all IDP camps in KRI has set off a chain of events. Baghdad introduced measures **intended to encourage returns in the decision, such as a 4M IQD return grant per family, 2% of job allocations are to be prioritised for returnees.** Etc However, it also imposed additional measures, notably the **Federal Ministry of Education's decision to shut all schools in KRI and reassign staff back to their original directorates in federal Iraq by end of July.** This mix of incentives and pressure decisions.

The potential repercussions of this decision to close federal schools in KRI are dire, with the KRG MOE forecasting "**a huge education failure**" among the IDP student population, should the closure proceed without a strategic and collaborative approach with Baghdad. There are approximately **160,000 children who currently use the Federal MoE schools in KRI.** The timing couldn't be more challenging, as KRG schools are already operating at full capacity, **having enrolled over 42,000 Syrian students in recent years.**

KRG's Interior Minister has requested in a letter to the prime minister **a review of key decisions,** including those affecting IDP children's education and to revise the stated date by Baghdad for camps closure in KRG. The letter did not withstand areas of disconnect between Baghdad and Erbil, such as urging for **the implementation of the Sinjar agreement** to safeguard minority rights, and **solutions for loan disputes for KRG camps.** Other notable points made in KRG proposal include the need to **establish high-level committee comprising federal government representatives, the KRG, and the UN to develop a joint humanitarian plan.**

There is a notable uptick in KRG's willingness to engage with the proposed roadmap than previously expressed. Despite existing tensions, the current situation presents an **emerging opportunity to position the roadmap as a mutual platform for Baghdad and Erbil** to collaboratively address the displacement file.



# Update on the Roadmap

Following the Federal Iraq Council of Ministers' (CoM) decision to close all camps in Kurdistan by the end of July 2024, **there emerged a need for the road map document to undergo revisions and adjustments in light of such contextual changes.** A notable advancement in this regard has taken place by forming a UN drafting team under the guidance of the RC's office, tasked with updating the road map.

1. Incorporating all new government commitments and provisions announced in the CoM's decision. These are aimed at both the in-camp population and returnees, ensuring all entitlements and measures are accurately reflected.
2. Detailing against each government commitment the specific measures for implementation, focusing solely on governmental actions to achieve those commitments.
3. Suggesting against each implementation measure key UN recommendations and good practices to promote consistency and coherence across different governorates.

**Key UN position:** Reiterated support for government to coordinate and consolidate efforts towards ending prolonged displacement in Iraq, emphasising adherence to principles of voluntary, informed, safe, and dignified returns and reintegration. The RC also highlighted that the UN's proposed framework for the roadmap spans 18 months, and that the UN has communicated to Baghdad the necessity of incorporating the Council of Ministers' decision into the roadmap without adhering to the July 31 deadline. The UN will continue advocating for a more harmonised approach between federal Iraq and the KRG, promoting a more realistic timeline.

# Update on the Roadmap

## Key concerns flagged during the exercise

- Whether the scope of the roadmap will be narrowed down to in camp IDPs only.
- A phased approach with IDP population targeted in phase I, sufficient grantees that out of camp population are to be targeted in phase II
- KRG Endorsement prospects of the road map
- Timeline of finalising the road map in light of the recent contextual developments

## Current priority:

The focus intensifies on acknowledging the recent decisions made by the Council of Ministers and engaging with the KRG in a constructive manner. This involves advocating in Baghdad regarding the implications of the Ministry of Education's decision but also actively seeking alternative solutions in collaboration with KRG authorities. The letter from the KRG provides reasonable propositions that could be proposed into the road map as operational mechanisms (which for the most part they are covered).

Additionally, there is a need for the UN to support **contingency planning** on camp-by-camp basis within KRG.



# Visits to IDP camps and Informal Sites

**Between 26th of February to March 13th the RC conducted field missions that spun visiting various sites in light of recent Council of Minister's decision**

- East Mosul Camp (Hassan Sham)
- Shirkan Village - East Mosul
- Ashqala Saghir Village - East Mosul
- Ashti Camp - Sulimani
- Bzebiz informal site - Anbar
- Focus group discussion with returnees to Ramadi and Al'Qaiem - Ramadi, Anbar
- Harsham IDP Camp - Dohuk
- Khanke IDP camp - Dohuk
- Qasr Ezedin Informal site
- Sinjar center , meeting with returnees



# Visits to IDP camps and Informal Sites

## **Ashti camp**

It was noted that residents enjoy a level of freedom of movement, including access to employment and public services like healthcare and education. However, the Sulaymaniyah governor reported receiving minimal support from both federal and regional governments, amid declining humanitarian aid from the UN and other international entities. Despite these challenges, the governor reiterated his preparedness to integrate those who cannot return to their origins but requires more support for this initiative.



# Visits to IDP camps and Informal Sites

## East Mosul Camps (Hassan Sham - U3)

The East Mosul camps, particularly HassanSham (U3), house families with severe movement restrictions and limited access to services or income generation, notably impacting female-headed households due to perceived affiliations with Da'esh. Notable portion of female-headed households (about 7,500), facing severe mobility restrictions and limited access to services or income opportunities. These households, many associated with Da'esh, encounter particular difficulties regarding civil documentation, harassment, and safety.

## East Mosul (13) Villages

Individuals displaced in East Mosul camps who are security cleared and have no indication of affiliation to ISIS and these individuals have largely returned to their areas of origin and those who are still in the camps are there due to the lack of financial means or shelter to return.

- Those who are residing in East Mosul camps but are not security cleared and have direct tie to a family member affiliated with ISIS
- Displaced population residing in Kurdistan region and are generally viewed to have no barrier to return to their villages,
- Displaced population in Mosul city and are currently viewed to be blocked/ not allowed to return by the Kurdish government for political and / or security considerations.



# Visits to IDP camps and Informal Sites

## Anbar

### Key Challenges highlighted by returnees in Ramadi

- 1. Delays in Return Grants:** Returnees report significant delays in receiving return grants, which are critical for facilitating critical resettlement and reintegration needs.
- 2. Lack of Access to Livelihood Grants or Housing Subsidies:** There is a notable absence of access to livelihood grants, which are essential for returnees to rebuild their lives and secure stable income. Additionally, subsidies for housing or shelter rentals are either insufficient or inaccessible, compounding the difficulties faced by returnees in securing safe and stable living conditions.
- 3. Registration Challenges in Social Protection Schemes:** Returnees encounter substantial hurdles when trying to register for social protection schemes. The registration process is often conditional upon the applicant undergoing a disavowal process, which is problematic and coercive in nature and exposes the returnee to further protection risks.
- 4. Uncertainty in Family Reunification:** Many returnees face uncertainty regarding the reunification with family members who remain in Al Hol, with no specified return date. This uncertainty exacerbates the emotional and psychological challenges of reintegration as well as reduces the informal safety nets for returning families as often relatives in Al Hol were the traditional bread winners of the household.
- 5. Experiences of Harassment and Extortion:** Reports of harassment and extortion by the security actors have been voiced, particularly concerning clearances for access to services. Such practices not only violate the rights of returnees but also further obstruct their access to essential services and support.



# Visits to IDP camps and Informal Sites

## Anbar

### **Bzebiz Informal Settlement**

Bzebiz stands as a complex and protracted case of displacement in Iraq. Home to approximately 1,200 households, its population represents some of the longest-standing camp residents since the country's liberation from ISIS. With majority originating primarily from the nearby Al Owaysat area, these families find themselves in a protracted state of political and a security impasse, unable to return due to the control of Hezbollah brigade over their area of origin.

#### **1. Challenges and Living Conditions**

The settlement can be characterised by a critical lack of basic services, which exacerbates the hardships faced by its inhabitants. Essential amenities such as electricity, generators, and air coolers are scarce. This is particularly challenging during the harsh summer and extreme heat. Electricity provision, when available, is sporadically supplied by a private landowner adjacent to the settlement.

#### **2- Stalled Government Initiatives**

Efforts by the government to relocate families to a nearby land plot equipped with better facilities, including caravans, have ceased as reported by residents of the settlements during the RC's visit.

#### **3- Key Demands of the Bzebiz Population:**

A. Short-term/ immediate Needs: The immediate provision of generators for air cooling purposes is critical to mitigating the severe impact of summer temperatures on the settlement's residents.

B. Long-term asks: The community urges government support for the construction of low-cost housing in Amreyat Al Fallujah. Situated in close proximity to their areas of origin, such housing would not only offer a temporary solution but also facilitate a smoother transition back to their homes, should the opportunity for return arise.



# Visits to IDP camps and Informal Sites

## Sinjar/ Dohuk

- Disparity in views between in camp population and in informal settlements, particularly on sense of security in Sinjar, conditions and services
- Returnee population express lack of confidence in their ability to access their entitlements, especially return grants from MOMD or compensation
- Returnees express key challenges as lack of shelter, livelihood opportunities and basic services as the most urgent need

# Q&A

Thank you