

Key Messages

March 2024

On 23 January 2024, the Council of Ministers announced its decision to close all remaining formal IDP camps located in the Kurdistan region of Iraq by 31 July 2024. The decision included a comprehensive package of incentives to encourage IDPs to voluntarily exit the camps, offering three pathways for IDPs: return to areas of origin, relocation, and local integration.

In response to this decision, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator sent a letter to the Minister of Migration and Displacement, commending the Government of Iraq's decision to address the displacement issue. The letter emphasized the importance of an informed and voluntary return process while encouraging dialogue and collaboration with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). However, it also expressed concern about the short timeframe for completing the camp closures.

During a meeting on 7 February 2024, the Durable Solution Taskforce convened and agreed upon the following key messages for advocacy and engagement purposes with both the Government of Iraq (GOI) and KRG authorities:

General Messages

- The aid community acknowledges the Council of Ministers' (CoM) decision to conclude the IDP file by 31 July 2024 and emphasizes the importance of complementing it with solutions to prevent secondary displacement.
- The GoI is to ensure that all returns, local integration, and relocations are informed, safe, voluntary, dignified, and inclusive as per the Inter-Agency Standing Committee DS Framework principles.
- In line with Council of Ministers Decision and National Durable Solution Plan, applicability of **all the three durable solutions pathways of return, local integration, and relocation** is highly recommended.
- We encourage the GoI to adopt an inclusive approach to displacement file in Iraq so it includes assistance for displaced individuals outside camps and vulnerable returnees.
- These efforts must be pursued in cooperation and coordination with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) as reflected in the work undertaken by the UN in close consultation and collaboration with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government in developing the '**Roadmap for Accelerating the Implementation of the National Plan to Resolve Displacement in Iraq**'. This roadmap integrates assistance to camp IDPs, out-of-camp IDPs, and returnees, reflecting a comprehensive approach to address displacement challenges in Iraq.
- **It is crucial to emphasize the collective responsibility to uphold humanitarian principles throughout this process.** The MoMD, along with other relevant ministries, has expressed dedication to proceed with the implementation of the CoM's directives, under the guidance of the Prime Minister. **This commitment is vital to ensuring that the displacement resolution efforts do not compromise the dignity and rights of those affected.**



Key Messages

March 2024

Specific Messages

➤ Inclusiveness and non-discrimination

- Urging MoMD and the Government to recognize that the in-camp IDPs are only a fraction of the displaced populations that are out of camps/informal sites– including outside of KRI -, and returnees who are in equally vulnerable situations to those in camps. It is highly important to encourage the government to include these populations in their plan and incentive mechanism to ensure no one is left behind. The Roadmap noted the agreement between the UN and the government to support **195,000 IDPs and 100,000** returnee families: we urge the Government to elaborate its response in line with the jointly recognized figures of targeted groups.
- In many cases, equity should be considered through the Social Safety Net and/or the Public Distribution System which should also cover out-of-camps population, which is currently limited.
- If implemented in a principled manner, the package offered by the government would be comprehensive, **but concerns remain on the non-inclusion of out-of-camps IDPs and its impact on their ability to reintegrate, in addition to the potential tensions** within communities arising from the unequal access of IDPs.

➤ Coordination with the Kurdistan Regional Government

- Encouraging federal authorities to closely cooperate and coordinate with the Kurdistan Regional Government, especially regarding the allocation of provisions and services within the respective jurisdictions of the camps.
- The capacity of the KRG to assume various responsibilities due to anticipated suspension of assistance in camps by humanitarian actors is at question. Consequently, further concerns arise in the event of a GoI withdrawal of assistance to IDPs in camps within KRI by 31 July deadline.
- Concerted efforts are required with KRI authorities particularly pertaining to the caseload in camps within KRI that are expected to locally integrate within the region.

➤ Realistic timeline for implementation

- The timeline for implementation appears unrealistic, and we urge the government to adopt a more pragmatic timeline to allow for adequate implementation of the plan. For instance:
- Many IDPs are unable to return to their areas of origin due to various challenges such as lack of shelter, livelihood opportunities, security, and political obstacles. Critical milestones are necessary before the 31st of July to ensure that the caseload receives the required support for reintegration. For example, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) survey would play a crucial role in mapping compensation entitlements, housing rehabilitation, and other provisions for returning families, yet it remains to be finalized. This highlights the significant tasks that the government must undertake prior to the stated closure date of the camps.
- IDP populations in many camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) continue to face unresolved conflicts with communities in their areas of origin. Facilitating their return without actively addressing these communal barriers through government-led reconciliation efforts would render their return unfeasible.

Key Messages

March 2024

- Clarification is needed on whether returnees will have guaranteed access to the low-income housing planned to be constructed or developed within the proposed timeframe.
 - **The provision of assistance to camps should not be suspended after July 31st, 2024 as it will have negative implications for IDPs.** In some camps, assistance through the federal government (food parcels, hygiene kits, fuel, kerosene) is the main source of assistance for many of the vulnerable families, particularly those with limited freedom of movement such as in the East Mosul Camps. Furthermore, essential public services such as education and health, are delivered by civil servants on the federal payroll. The withdrawal of assistance and access to basic services could have dire impact on camp residents and particularly for IDPs with specific vulnerabilities, as it is the case with IDP families in the East Mosul Camps and Yezidi survivors with multiple obstacles including trauma. Therefore, the government must consider alternative strategies, such as consolidation and ongoing support for families wishing to return but are hindered by conditions in their origin areas. This approach is essential to uphold the principle of voluntariness.
 - **To ensure comprehensive implementation,** providing a 4 mil IQD grant might help some IDPs in their decision to leave camps, but clarity and assurance regarding additional support measures for sustainable reintegration are essential. Advocacy efforts should concentrate on the complete implementation of the Council of Ministers' decision, guaranteeing it covers all aspects necessary for the effective and dignified return and reintegration of IDPs.
- **Continuation of Arabic Education IDPs**
- The international community calls upon the Federal Ministry of Education to urgently review its decision to close all its directorates in the Kurdistan region by 31 July 2024. It is imperative to ensure the continuity of Arabic-language education for displaced children, thereby preventing an increase in dropout rates among this vulnerable population. It is of utmost importance to urge the Ministry to adopt measures that ensure displaced children, irrespective of their current location, have uninterrupted access to quality education in a language of their instruction.
- **Revocation of the prohibition on UN agencies and NGOs after 31 July 2024**
- The prohibition on the aid community on working in camps post the 31 July deadline must be revoked. This will ensure the continuity of service delivery to those most in need.
- Continue to emphasize the applicability and relevance of the “Roadmap” for durable solution for all IDPs in formal and informal sites which the UN has been developing in consultation with both GoI and KRG over the past year. The roadmap envisions an 18 months’ timeline for ending displacement in Iraq in line with international principles and Iraq’s national strategy for IDPs developed with UN support in 2021. Highlight that Iraq is among the 16 pilot countries as part of UN Secretary General’s global strategy to reduce the number of IDPs in these countries substantially.