

March 2024



BACKGROUND & RE-CAP: THE IRAQ DURABLE SOLUTIONS ARCHITECTURE

The Iraq Durable Solutions architecture is spearheaded by the Durable Solutions Task Force (DSTF), a senior steering committee consisting of UN agencies, donor representatives and NGOs, providing overall strategic direction of the mechanism and engaging in high-level discussions with the national government. To facilitate the varying levels of coordination required to achieve DS outcomes, the DSTF is supported by two national-level groups, the Returns Working Group (RWG) and the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group (DSTWG). The RWG, with open membership, offering a wide platform for information exchange and updates on DS interventions and plans. The DSTWG is a smaller operational & technical platform to design durable solutions tools, programmes and approaches, acting as the main vehicle

for steering the operationalization of DS plans in Iraq. The group has a fixed membership, with representatives from UN, LNGOs, INGOs, working groups, and other entities.

Until 2023, area-level DS planning and implementation was through 8 ABCs. Seven Joint Coordination Forums (JCFs) have now been established in Anbar, Diyala, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk, Basra, and KRI to take over governorate-level coordination and to further advance the leading role of authorities, including in areas that previously did not have ABCs. ABC Sinjar continues to operate covering Sinjar and Ba'aj districts due to the need for ongoing area-level coordination in these districts. More details on the establishment of the JCFs and the status of ABCs are provided in the next section of this newsletter.

LAUNCH OF JOINT COORDINATION FORUMS IN IRAQ

Following the establishment of the Iraq durable solutions architecture, the deactivation of the humanitarian cluster system in December 2022, and the launch of the 2023 Humanitarian Transition Overview (HTO) focus has shifted towards a government-led development phase. Furthermore, with the UN Special Adviser on Solutions identifying Iraq as one of the 16 focus countries with conditions for a push towards government-led and development-led solutions as part of the Action Agenda of the UN Secretary General, the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in coordination with the Iraqi government initiated the launch of the **Joint Coordination Forums (JCFs)** as the primary governorate-level coordination mechanism in Iraq. The primary objectives of the JCFs are to strengthen governorate-level coordination

between authorities and aid actors, as well as addressing operational and access challenges and sharing information on humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities, replacing all but one of the ABCs and the General Coordination Meetings which operated until 2022.

According to the JCF ToR, the JCFs are established in the governorates where area-based coordination (ABC) groups have been active, namely **Anbar, Diyala, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Kirkuk**, in addition to Basra and **KRI**. Upon the request of Ninewa authorities, the **Sinjar ABC continues to operate covering Sinjar and Ba'aj districts** due to the challenges and needs faced in these two districts.

JCF Chairmanship

1. Governor or appointed representative.
2. Aid Community member appointed by RC

JCF Membership

UN Agencies Local NGOs	INGOs Sub-sectors District Level fora	Line Sectors/ Directorates	MOMD Branch	Planning Dept
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JCF Secretariat

Development Support Office (DSO)

Structure of JCF mechanism

The JCFs are being co-chaired by the respective governors of each area or their designated representative, alongside a representative from the aid community appointed by the Resident Coordinator. Following a nomination process, the following aid actors have adopted their position as JCF co-chairs:

- Kurdistan Region JCF: **UNHCR**
- Basra JCF: **UNICEF**
- Ninewa JCF: **UNICEF**
- Kirkuk JCF: **IRC**
- Diyala JCF: **IOM**
- Anbar JCF: **IOM**
- Salah al-Din JCF: **RCO (interim)**

The Development Support Office (DSO) will provide secretariat support to the JCFs, and membership is open to representatives from relevant sectoral directorates, UN agencies, INGOs, LNGOs, and CSOs operating in the area.

To date inaugural ‘soft launch’ JCF meetings were held in February 2024 in Diyala, Anbar, Ninewa, Kirkuk, and Basra. During these meetings, the structure of the mechanism was explained to members of the respective JCFs along with the TOR, roles, and responsibilities of the members of the group. Each JCF will continue to meet monthly, while the inaugural meetings for KRI and Salah al-Din are yet to be confirmed.



Anbar JCF Inaugural Meeting

MOMD PLAN FOR THE CLOSURE OF CAMPS IN KRI

On January 2 2024, the Council of Ministers announced the decision to close all camps in KRI by June 30 (which was later postponed to July 31), while MoMDO announced a plan to facilitate the closure of the camps. The plan indicates that all 23 camps in KRI are to be closed, with IDPs having the option to return to their areas of origin, locally integrate within KRI, or relocate to a third location. The plan includes various governmental incentives for IDPs, including return/integration grants of IQD 4 million for families who depart from camps to return, locally integrate, or relocate. Furthermore, MoMD indicated in the plan that the Ministry will coordinate with the Reconstruction Fund of the Liberated Areas (REFAATO) on the possibility of special grants to be provided for the renovation and rebuilding of homes, as well as coordination with banks to provide interest-free loans to IDPs returning from camps to rebuild or renovate their homes. Other key aspects of the plan include prioritizing solutions for families experiencing tribal, social, or security issues linked to their displacement, as well as the key role the Ministry

of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) will have in creating job opportunities through employment centers as well as including unemployed individuals in low-interest loans and social protection allowances. The plan also notes that MoMD will be conducting surveys with the in-camp IDPs in KRI to obtain their intentions regarding these three solutions, and to propose solutions to the obstacles that the IDPs may encounter.

On January 23, **the Council of Ministers endorsed this plan and confirmed the closure of camps in KRI by July 31.** The implications of this plan include the encouragement of departures from camps, incentivized with a IQD 4 million return grant per family as well as 2% of job allocations to be prioritized for returnees. On February 13th, the Federal Ministry of Education published decision 1/2/c/4920, in which it decided to close its representations in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Duhok by July 30. This decision comes within the framework of implementing the Council of Ministers decision to close IDP camps in KRG.



CoM Endorsement Meeting of MoMD Plan (January 23)

In response to the decision by the Council of Ministers, **the DSTF developed key messages** on the announcement of the camp closure. These key messages include:

- The importance of ensuring that all returns, local integration, and relocation are informed, safe, voluntary, dignified, and inclusive, and pursued in coordination with the KRG.
- The importance of upholding humanitarian principles, in line with the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs, throughout the process
- The inclusion of displaced people outside of camps and vulnerable returnees in the plan, as outlined in the DS Roadmap.

- The dire effects the suspension of assistance by July 31 would have on camp residents, as essential public services such as education and health are delivered by civil servants on the federal payroll.
- The need to revise the timeline, as the full implementation of the plan by July deadline appears unrealistic.

Along with this continuous advocacy, the RWG invited **Mr. Hamoudi Mahjoub Hamoudi**, the Deputy Director General of MoMD, to an **ad-hoc RWG meeting** where Mr. Hamoudi outlined details of the plan and answered questions posed by participants. The minutes of this meeting can be found [here](#).

DURABLE SOLUTIONS ROADMAP UPDATE

The initial drafting of the Durable Solutions Roadmap has been completed. The drafting of the Durable Solutions Roadmap, formerly referred to as the DS Compact, remains in progress. Upon the request of government authorities, it has been retitled as the “*Roadmap to Accelerating the Implementation of the National Plan to Resolve Displacement in Iraq*” to increase linkages with the National Plan developed by the government and emphasize the importance of its operationalization. The roadmap seeks to identify priorities and actions that require converging efforts from the government and its partners to create pathways for solutions to displacement, while providing a framework to sustain and monitor progress on solutions to displacement. The implementation of the roadmap will be led by the government and supported by aid actors, aiming to be completed within an 18-month timeframe.

Throughout the process of developing the DS Roadmap, the DSTF and the RC have continued advocacy with relevant line

ministries of the GOI and KRG. Feedback and endorsement has been provided by the GOI, while consultations are ongoing with the KRG to obtain their feedback.

In light of the MoMD plan for the closure of camps in KRI, **a drafting team under the guidance of the RC’s office is updating the roadmap** in light of the contextual changes. These updates include:

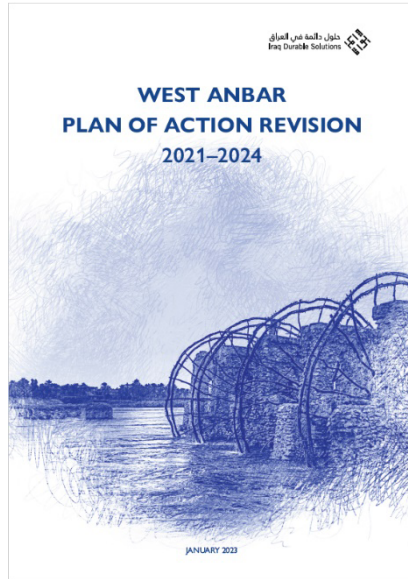
- Incorporating all new government commitments and provisions announced in the CoM decision, aimed at in-camp population and returnees.
- Detailing against each government commitment the specific measures for implementation, focusing solely on governmental actions to achieve those commitments.
- Suggesting against each implementation measure key UN recommendations and good practices to provide consistency and coherence across different governorates.

QUARTERLY REVIEW: JANUARY – MARCH 2024

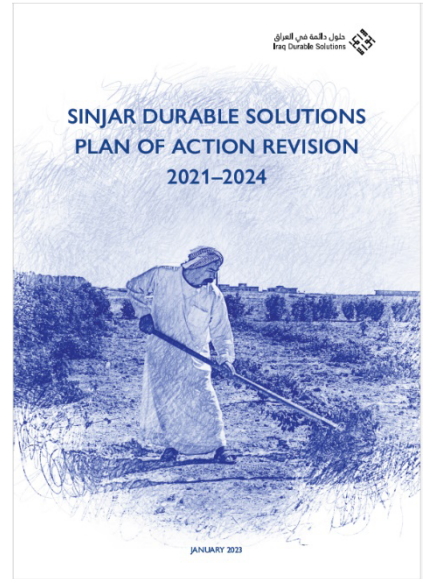
- **DSTWG organized a strategic planning retreat for 2024**, to outline and discuss the priorities of the group for the upcoming year. Discussions in the meeting, led by the DSTWG co-chairs, included brainstorming around DSTWG priorities to create a 2024 workplan, as well as updates on the DS Roadmap and the MoMD Camp Closure Plan. Co-chairs of the DSTWG sub-groups also presented their achievements so far and plans for the upcoming year. and attended by DSTWG members.
- **The Plan of Action revisions have been completed by the West Anbar, East Anbar, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, Sinjar, and Mosul ABC groups.** The POA revision of West Anbar, Mosul, and Sinjar can be accessed below while the others are pending finalization. Given the closure of the ABC groups (except for Sinjar ABC), these documents will be used by their corresponding JCFs as a starting point for their coordination as they provide an overview of the context, activities, and remaining gaps in priority locations in each of the governorates.



Mosul POA Revision (English)
Mosul POA Revision (Arabic)

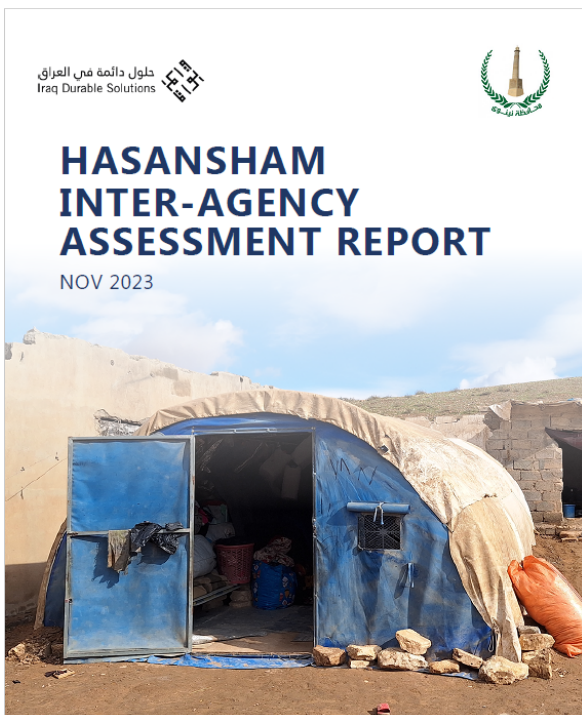


West Anbar POA Revision (English)
West Anbar POA Revision (Arabic)



Sinjar POA Revision (English)
Sinjar POA Revision (Arabic)

- DSTWG are in the process of finalizing the **Hasansham Inter-Agency Assessment Report**. This report details the findings of the inter-agency assessment coordinated by the DSTWG to assess the conditions of the 12 villages located in Hamdaniya following the announcement that households from these villages can return. The report will be circulated once finalized.



Hasansham Inter-Agency Assessment Report

- Tazade IDP camp in Sulaymaniyah was closed on March 19, 2024.** A total of 121 families departed from the camp, with 104 of these families returning to their areas of origin in Yathrib, Salah al-Din, and 17 families relocating to third locations (Rizgari town, Kolajo village, and Kalar town). Conditions in villages that the IDPs have returned to remain dire with limited access to services and destroyed housing.
- MoMD announced that the process to close Ashti camp in Sulaymaniyah will commence at the end of March.** According to MoMD, 95% of IDP families have indicated that they will return to their areas of origin in Salah al-Din.
- The return process in East Mosul camps, mainly in Hasansham U2 camp, is ongoing.** As of March 27th, 240 families have been approved through the IOM FVM program..
- Most IDPs who departed the camps confirmed receiving the IQD4 million** either after return to areas of origin or prior to departure in the case of the Sulaymaniyah camps.
- Some concerns have been raised that in the case of the Sulaymaniyah camp, IDPs were not given a choice** raising concerns about the voluntariness of the process.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED REPORTS/RESOURCES

- [Extreme Heat, Drought and Displacement in Iraq](#) – This NRC report is based on survey data, examining the impact of drought in Iraq across four brought themes: water security and governance, income and food insecurity, social tension, and drought and displacement.
- [Protection Needs Overview: Monitoring and Trends](#) – This IRC overview documents findings from protection monitoring efforts conducted between April and September 2023 in Anbar, Ninewa, and Kirkuk.
- [DTM Master List Displacement Findings: Round 131](#) - These DTM findings provide displacement information, with data for this round collected from September to December 2023.
- [DTM Master List Returns Findings: Round 131](#) – These DTM findings provide information on returns, with data for this round collected from September to December 2023.
- [DTM Displacement Index Findings: Round 8](#) – These DTM findings provide an overview regarding the living conditions of IDPs, between September and December 2023 across 18 governorates, 103 districts, and 2,581 locations in Iraq.
- [DTM Return Index Findings: Round 20](#) – These DTM findings measure the severity of conditions in locations of return between September and December 2023 across 9 governorates, 39 districts, and 2,187 locations.
- [Emergency Tracking: Evictions from Informal Settlement](#) – This DTM tool provides information on the number of affected people in informal settlements and their main characteristics. The data collection period for this round was 1 January – 15 January 2024.
- [Prospects for Resolving Displacement in Areas of Limited and No Return in Sinjar District and Qahtaniya Sub-District](#) – This IOM study seeks to uncover barriers to durably resolving the displacement of affected people in Sinjar and Qahtaniya and to examine potential ways forward in unlocking these barriers. This study was also conducted in Babylon governorate, and is available upon request (please email iraqdtm@iom.int).
- [Progress Towards Durable Solutions in Iraq: Salah al-Din](#) – This DTM report aims to assess progress towards durable solutions to displacement for IDPs and returnees in Salah al-Din, to understand their current situations and the aspects which they are still struggling with compared to the population who never left their location of origin. This study is an extension of the original pilot project in Ninewa, which can be accessed [here](#).
- [Bzibiz FGD Advocacy Report](#) – This RWG report presents the outcomes of FGDs conducted in Bzibiz to better understand the current situation, intentions, and needs of IDPs in Bzibiz including the challenges they face in returning to Jurf al-Sakhar.
- [Riyadh DS Discussion Advocacy Report](#) – This RWG report presents the outcomes of a discussion between aid actors, local authorities, and community representatives to better understand the challenges IDPs face in returning to Riyadh, and to plan for future initiatives and collaboration to address these challenges.
- [Saadiyah DS Discussion Advocacy Report](#) – This RWG report presents the outcomes of a discussion between aid actors, local authorities, and community representatives on the obstacles to durable solutions being faced in 23 no-return locations in Saadiyah sub-district.

Upcoming Meetings		
RWG	Monthly	Every last Tuesday of the month (open)
DSTF	Monthly	(DSTF members)
DSTWG	Monthly	Every second Wednesday of the month (DSTWG members)
JCF	Monthly	Varied depending on JCF (JCF members)

For further details, and if you would like to send relevant resources to be included in the next edition of the newsletter, please feel free to contact Mohamed Osman at mohameosman@iom.int.