

## MoMD RETURN GRANT UPDATE, March 2024

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#### SUMMARY

Since July 2019, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) has disbursed a grant of IQD 1.5 million to registered returnee households (with two family members or more) and IQD 0.75 million (single-member families), known as the return grant. The aim of the return grant is to act as a one-time safety net for returnee families. As mentioned in the previous update, the efficacy of the grant has been limited due to the infrequent and low rate of disbursement. In 2021, MoMD distributed the grant only four times, and in 2022 five times according to the exchange mechanism 1/12 as Iraq did not pass the 2022 Budget Law.

For 2023, the MoMD distributed five rounds in March, April, and June. The first round was distributed to returnees to Sinjar (2,006 HHs), the second round to female headed households (1,000 HHs), the third round for returnees (6,677 HHs), the fourth round for the local integration (1,128 HHs) and the fifth round for returnees (6,008 HHs). Subsequently, after the passing of the 2023 Budget by the parliament in mid-2023, MoMD distributed six more rounds leading to a total of 11 rounds targeting more than 70,000 families.

The **National Budget** was announced in June 2023 and the allocation set to MoMD was IQD 356 billion, including IQD150 billion for special programs (including IQD 81 billion for return and local integration grants) and IQD 201 billion for operational allocations.<sup>1</sup> For 2024 and 2025, the same amounts have been allocated and approved since the parliament has endorsed the 2023, 2024, and 2025 budget laws all together.

#### Update on the status of the Return Grant<sup>2</sup> (See previous MoMD grant updates [here](#)):

**Total amount disbursed so far:** Since 2019, MoMD has disbursed a total of IQD 254,742,750,000 to 170,050 returnee families and IQD 563,750,000 to 1,128 locally integrated families. See full breakdown of figures in the table below.

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<sup>1</sup> Iraq Budget Law 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Information valid as of 16 March 2023. Data Source: MOMD Statistics Unit.

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Summary breakdown of the disbursement of the return grant per governorate for 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Date of disbursement	No. of Beneficiaries (HH)	Amount disbursed (in IQD)
<b>2019</b>		
25 July 2019	12,000	18,000,000,000
24 September 2019	8,000	12,000,000,000
3 November 2019	9,736	14,599,500,000
<b>Total 2019</b>	<b>29,736</b>	<b>44,599,500,000</b>
<b>2020</b>		
21 January 2020	2,400	3,582,000,000
18 February 2020	2,600	3,869,250,000
18 March 2020	2,600	3,891,000,000
26 April 2020	2,600	3,894,000,000
29 September 2020	2,600	3,883,500,000
12 November 2020	2,600	3,894,750,000
24 December 2020	1,324	1,986,000,000
29 December 2020	2,600	3,883,500,000
<b>Total 2020</b>	<b>19,324</b>	<b>28,884,000,000</b>
<b>2021</b>		
4 January 2021	2,600	3,896,250,000
15 September 2021	6,500	9,741,000,000
7 October 2021	7,000	10,488,750,000
16 December 2021	2,600	3,888,750,000
<b>Total 2021</b>	<b>18,700</b>	<b>28,014,750,000</b>
<b>2022</b>		
14 June 2022	6,000	8,987,250,000
7 July 2022	2,400	3,597,750,000
22 Sep 2022	3,603	5,383,500,000
06 Oct 2022	6,660	9,978,750,000
21 Nov 2022	3,337	4,999,500,000
18 Dec 2022	6,554	9,824,250,000
<b>Total 2022</b>	<b>28,554</b>	<b>42,771,000,000</b>
<b>2023</b>		
08 March 2023	2,006	2,999,250,000
16 March 2023	1,000	1,500,000,000
28 April 2023	6,677	9,999,750,000
16 June 2023	6,008	9,000,000,000
1-Aug-2023	3,942	5,913,000,000

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Date of disbursement	No. of Beneficiaries (HH)	Amount disbursed (in IQD)
3-Sep-2023	13,972	20,926,500,000
1-Oct-2023	14,062	21,031,500,000
30-Oct-2023	9,000	13,500,000,000
27-Nov-2023	8,533	12,799,500,000
21-Dec-2023	8,536	12,804,000,000
<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>73,736</b>	<b>110,4743,500,000</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>170,050</b>	<b>IQD 254,742,750,000</b>

- No. of targeted families reached:** Since 2019, only **170,050** families have received the grant out of 588,674 families who have returned and registered their return with MoMD as of January 2024. The 2023 disbursements targeted more than 70,000 returned households. This was the highest number of disbursements since the grant system was initiated in 2019 but is still only a fraction of the of what is needed to address the waiting list. According to the MoMD minister, the allocated financial resources to the ministry for the return grant are insufficient to cover the registered returnee families and undermines the efforts to support returnee families to meet initial basic needs in areas of return.
- Registration of returnees:** MoMD reports that as of January 2024, 588,674 households have registered for the return grant. Out of these, 550,576 applications have been checked by the MoMD Statistics Department and 37,918 are pending verification. Diyala and Baghdad have the lowest number of pending verifications (zero pending verifications) and the highest proportion of returnees who have received the grant. Babylon (8,484), Anbar (36,930) have the highest pending applications, while Ninewa has made great progress in checking the applications, with the number of pending applications dropping from 31,398 in June 2023 to 720 in January 2024.
- Disbursement installments:** All rounds that were distributed in 2023 are based on the 2023 budget law that allocated IQD 81 billion for the return grants. For 2024, the same amount has been allocated and approved since the parliament has endorsed one budget law for 2023, 2024, and 2025.
- Distribution per governorate:** Anbar continues to be the governorate with the highest number of registered HHs followed by Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Babylon. Ninewa

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has the highest number of returnees who have received the return grant (56,745 HHs), followed by Anbar (33,359 HHs), Salah al-Din (22,816 HHs), Diyala (22,306 HHs), Kirkuk (16,031 HHs), Baghdad (14,637 HHs), and Babylon with only (156 HH). Babylon returnees started receiving the grant for the first time in June 2023 with 219 HH registered as returned. The governorate has the lowest rate of returnees according to MoMD registration figures.

- **Rate of disbursement per governorate:** Proportionally, Baghdad and Diyala have more HHs who have received the grant compared to other governorates (see table below). Despite having the highest numbers of beneficiaries proportionally, only 33% of the registered returnees in Ninewa and 14% in Anbar have received the grant. In total, for all the six governorates, only 29% of returnee HHs who have registered their return with MoMD have received the grant.

*The table below shows the number of returnees in each governorate who applied to register their return with MoMD vis-a vis those who have received the return grant.*

Governorate	No. of returnee families registered with MoMD	No. returnees who have received the return grant	Percentage of those received the grant
Anbar	239,597	33,359	14%
Ninewa	171,567	56,745	33%
Salah al-Din	88,031	22,816	26 %
Diyala	39,377	26,306	67%
Kirkuk	24,877	16,031	64 %
Baghdad	16,558	14,637	88%
Babylon	8,667	156	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>588,674</b>	<b>170,877</b>	<b>29%</b>

- **Eligibility criteria:** The eligibility criteria remain unchanged from the previous rounds. Returnees who have closed their displacement files and registered their return with MoMD receive a returnee code and are eligible to receive the grant through the Q-card. However, according to the regulations, the MoMD minister has the legal authority to make some exceptions to the priority criteria for 'special cases' such as the 2,006 grants that were distributed to Sinjar households on 8 March 2023, and the 1,000 grants distributed to HHs headed by females on 16

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March 2023. However, as mentioned above, MoMD has made a decision to give the priority to the returnees from KRI camps at the expense of other returnees who might have returned years ago.

- **Methodology of disbursement:** The usual mechanism of disbursement of the 1.5 million is through the Q-cards, however, after adopting the 2024 plan to close KRI camps by the end of July of 2024 (more details on this can be found on pages 6 and 7), MoMD decided to distribute the grant for those returning from KRI camps through cheques to accelerate the process and to incentivize departures from the camp. As of 19 March 2024, recently returned camp IDP families reported receiving the cheques from MoMD while other families reported some issues related to documentation required to receive the cheques.

### Challenges

- I. The government has allocated IQD 81 billion for the return and local integration grants in the 2024 Budget Law passed in June 2023. This allocation remains inadequate to cover all the households who have registered for return and would need to be substantially increased in the next few years.
- II. **The suspension of distribution of the 1.5 million return grant until 30 July 2024 to save the money for families returning from KRI camps would delay receiving the grant by the families who have already returned and registered for the grant.**
- III. Eligibility criteria remain the same, however, the use of the 'first come first serve' has been criticized for not being transparent and not ensuring that the funds go to the most in need. It is recommended that the Minister continues to use discretionary powers to ensure that vulnerable households are somehow prioritized in the disbursement of the grants.
- IV. Delays in issuing Q-cards to the remaining registered HHs and negotiations with the central bank.

### Local Integration:

MoMD has started a pilot process of registering families for local integration based on the decision of the Supreme Committee for the Relief and Support of Displaced Families. The registration of families wishing to integrate in the southern governorates will be the first stage and other governorates will follow. MoMD obtained the approval of local governments in most governorates except a few where the decisions are still pending. According to MoMD, locally integrated families would be eligible for

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certain benefits such as integration grants and relief aid. Below is a table indicating the numbers of families registered in the governorates. Additionally, MoMD launched the integration grant for registered families, targeting 1,128 families in June 2023 and no further disbursement of this grant has taken place since then.

### Breakdown per governorate for local integration

Governorate	No. of IDP HH registered with MoMD	No of IDP HH who have registered for local integration	No. IDPs who have received the local integration grant	Percentage of those received the grant
Diyala	15,331	524	197	38%
Baghdad	45,935	24	19	79%
Babylon	5,473	31	25	81%
Karbala	3,283	1,558	807	52%
Wasit	996	101	31	31%
Qadsia	40,489	149	0	0%
Muthana	304	29	21	72%
Thi Qar	910	128	24	19%
Misan	417	109	4	4%
Basra	2,334	436	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115,472</b>	<b>3,089</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>37%</b>

### Summary breakdown of the disbursement of the local integration grant for 2023

<u>Date of disbursement</u>	<u>No. of Beneficiaries (HH)</u>	<u>Amount disbursed (in IQD)</u>
<u>2023</u>		
06 June	1,128	563,750,000

### Updates from the “Higher Committee for the Relief and Support of the Displaced”

The Higher Committee for Relief and Support IDPs, headed by the MoMD minister, decided in its last meeting on 26 February 2024 on the formation of committees from members of the Supreme Committee for the purpose of supervising and coordinating with the relevant authorities in the Kurdistan Regional Government, local authorities in the governorates, and camp management to

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facilitate the implementation of the Council of Ministers' decision to close the camps and remove the obstacles, impediments and challenges that hinder the return of the IDPs. The Higher Committee also assigned representatives of the ministries and members of the Supreme Committee to form teams within their ministries to follow up on the working mechanisms for implementing the plan to close the camps.

### MoMD Plan to Close KRI Camps by 30 July 2024

In January 2024, the Iraqi Council of Ministers, during its second regular meeting, issued a decision to close camps in the Kurdistan Region by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. According to this decision, MoMD prepared and submitted a plan to the CoM which it approved during the fourth regular meeting on 23 January and extended the deadline to 30 July 2024. According to this plan, the return grant will be increased to IQD 4 million for each family with the aim of encouraging families in KRI camps to return, re-integrate, or re-locate to a third location of their choice. The IQD 4 million will include only those families registered in the KRI camps. As a result of this, MoMD decided at the end of January to suspend the distribution of the IQD 1.5 million grants in order to save the money for those families returning from KRI camps. The key challenges surrounding the MoMD plan can be found in the table below.

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### Key challenges surrounding MoMD Plan:

Challenge	Assistance by Government	
Demolished houses	Coordinate with international organizations.	
	Send list to compensation committees.	
	Coordination with the Reconstruction Fund of the Liberated Areas to indicate the possibility of including them in a special grant.	
	Coordination with governmental banks to provide free-interest loans.	
	Construct low-cost houses in Sinjar and Mosul.	
Security/tribal/ blocked areas	Forming a high-level committee for the purpose of conducting visits to the liberated governorates to overcome and resolve tribal conflicts.	
	Intensifying coordination and communication with the security authorities.	
	Reintegration and relocation options.	
Livelihoods	Contracts by Ministry of Transportation.	
	Allocate 2% of governmental jobs opportunities.	
	Provide vocational training	
Return Grant Challenges	Increase the grant from IQD1.5million to IQD4million	
	Issue the grant via cheque instead of Q-cards	