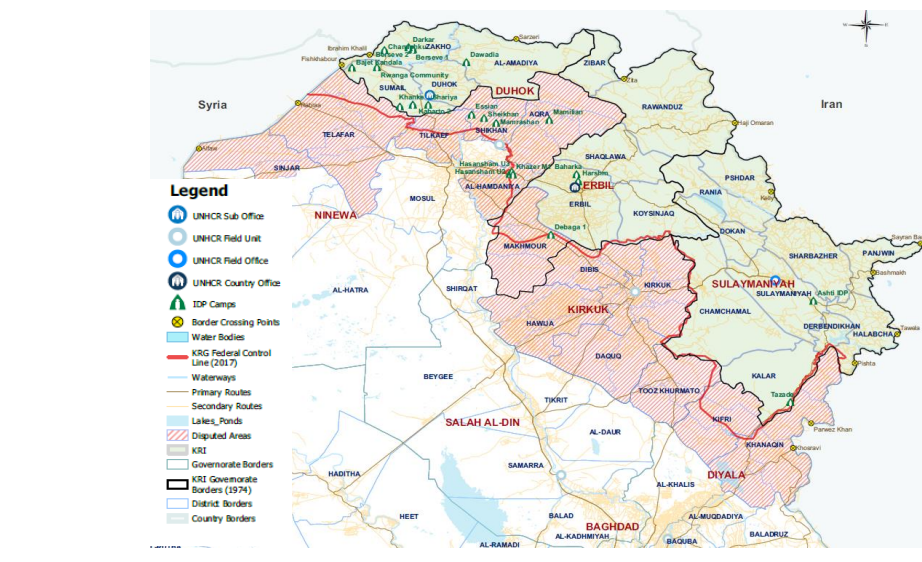


SOLUTIONS STRATEGY FOR CAMP-BASED INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN IRAQ

More than six years after the conclusion of large-scale military operations against Da'esh, almost 1.1 million Iraqis continue to live in protracted situations of internal displacement. While the overwhelming majority live in private accommodation in urban settings or in informal settlements, both in in Federal and Kurdish Governorates, almost 150,000 IDPs reside in 22 camps across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). Like other IDPs in protracted displacement, the IDPs in camps report that housing damage/destruction, lack of livelihoods in areas of origin, lack of adequate access to basic services, fear associated with and lack of security forces in areas of origin as some of the main reasons for remaining in displacement.

Latest findings from the end of 2023 indicate that one per cent of IDP households in camps intend to return to their AoO within the next 12 months, while the majority [express a preference for local integration](#) (authorities in the KR-I prefer to refer to this as 'inclusion').

Significant progress has been made in ensuring that IDPs in camps have access to core civil documentation. This will ensure that they can apply for the Unified ID, the sole valid form of documentation recognised by the Government of Iraq as of April 2024, either upon return to their areas of origin or, once the Ministry of Interior completes the roll-out of its new Unified ID system, anywhere else in the country. Furthermore, continuous advocacy led to the unblocking of the 13 Hassansham villages surrounding the camps in disputed territory (under de facto control of KRG);¹ recent support to camp closure and camp consolidation efforts in Sulaymaniyah Governorate/Garmian Administration at the end of 2023 which saw the closure of two out of the four camps in the governorate; and successful



¹ Disputed territories are areas in which Arabs, Kurds, Shabak, Yazidis and Christians live comingled or next-door to each other. A number of these communities are also internally divided. The Iraqi constitution (2004/5) reference these areas in article 140.

advocacy for the assessment of all IDPs residing in camps to review their eligibility to be included in the Social Safety Nets of the Iraq Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.² Those eligible now receive an average of IQD 125,000 per month per person to address their poverty levels.

Map of IDP camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as of January 2024

In line with human rights principles as reflected in the [IASC Framework for Durable Solutions for IDPs](#), the Roadmap Accelerating the Implementation of the National Plan to Resolve Displacement in Iraq recognises that solutions pathways to internal displacement are:

- Sustainable safe and voluntary [return](#) to Areas of Origin (AoO),
- [Sustainable local integration into the area of displacement](#), and
- [Sustainable relocation to a third location](#) within the country.

On sustainable integration, this strategy proposes that in some locations this pathway can be practically explored by facilitating IDPs integration into surrounding communities or through transforming the camps into formal settlements serviced by public institutions with upgraded shelter conditions.

Broadly, IDPs should be able to make an [informed and free decision](#) on what durable solution pathway is right for them, specific to their personal circumstances and conditions in return/displacement areas. Over the years, a multiplicity of actors have been working in camps and out of camps to support government efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in the camps, out of camps and to facilitate conditions in areas of displacement or return to assist IDPs pursue and ultimately achieve durable solutions.

Recognizing that camps are not a dignified way of hosting those forced to flee, emphasis remains on working with government authorities and with IDPs to help the pursue and achieve durable solutions through addressing the main obstacles faced by camp IDPs.

This camp based IDPs solutions strategy, as part of the Roadmap, aims to present a population specific approach to address the challenges faced by IDPs in camps and to highlight some of the areas for consideration primarily by government and also interventions which partners can support government with. Accordingly, the IDPs are categorised into three groups according to the profile and geographical location of each camp:

- IDPs in the [East Mosul Camps](#) (EMCs),
- IDPs in camps in [Duhok](#) governorate and [Zakho](#) Administration, and
- IDPs in the camps in [Erbil](#) and [Sulaymaniyah](#).

EAST MOSUL CAMPS

In 2016, five camps were established in Eastern Mosul in the Ninewa governorate to accommodate IDP families from nearby areas, mainly Mosul city and the 13 Hassansham villages in disputed territories of Al-Hamdaniyah sub-district. As January 2024, only three camps remain operational: Hassansham U2, Hassansham U3, and Khazer M1. These are

² It is reported that 9,000HH are receiving SSN assistance across the camps.

known collectively as the East Mosul Camps (EMCs) – hosting some 9,808 IDPs. ³These camps are located in a disputed area in the Ninewa governorate and are de facto administrated by the KRG with public services provided by federal authorities. The majority of IDPs in these camps are from Mosul, Hamdaniya, Hamam Al-Alil, Bartella and Telafar.

IDPs in the EMCs live in dire conditions, compounded by severe restrictions on their freedom of movement. They have limited access to basic services in the camps (or outside given the geographical location of such camps, far away from any urban centre). Electricity, water, sanitation and hygiene services are inadequate, posing significant public health challenges and certain protection risks. Camp-based schools are under-staffed and overcrowded, while health services are inadequate, often necessitating outside referrals that most residents cannot access due to movement restrictions.

Residents of the EMCs consist of the following groups:

- i) Female-headed households (approx. 1,000 HH's), where the husband is deceased, missing or incarcerated. They face numerous challenges, including lack of core civil documentation, high risks of harassment and abuse and safety concerns in their areas of origin due to their perceived affiliation with Da'esh, coupled with lack of livelihood opportunities.
- ii) Approx. 480 families (approx. 1,900 individuals) originating from 13 Hassansham villages surrounding the EMCs in the disputed territories of Al-Hamdaniyah (see above decision from KRG Mol of July 2023 to allow return to these areas); and
- iii) Persons released from detention in KRI, who were arrested by KRG security and law enforcement authorities, including those convicted by Kurdish courts of (terrorist/serious) crimes as, or affiliation with, Da'esh (approx. 260 individuals, many of them now with their family, including children), and have in some instances completed their sentence. They are currently unable to return home in Ninewa not only because of risks of discrimination and abuse due to their status, but also because they run the risk of (re-) arrest by Federal Iraq, either for the same crimes or new charges being pressed against former detainees.

Priority is to assist the IDPs in the camp to find durable solutions and the eventual **closure of the camps** given the dire living conditions and their geographical location, preventing any local inclusion/integration option; however, in the intermediate period, **living conditions in the EMCs need to be improved immediately.**

Priorities include advocacy on:

- the enhancement of public services with a particular focus on WASH, electricity, education and health by Government of Iraq public service providers, replacement of tents by MoMD and authorization by camp management authorities for IDPs to upgrade their shelters.
- support to the Gol's Ministry of Interior to deploy mobile **civil documentation** missions to provide IDPs with (Unified) IDs, including for those with complex cases due to their suspected affiliations with extremist groups.
- Provision of security clearances by the KRG allowing for return and reintegration, including to the 13 villages surrounding the EMCs.
- provision of community-based protection activities particularly in the EMCs due to limited freedom of movement: Community Centers serve as safe spaces for the

³ May 2024, there are currently: 9,808 IDPs the latest data can be found at <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoizGMwNWwM2MDEtOTQyMy00YjNkLWlxNGQtM2NiMzEwMmE3NTVhIiwidCI6ImU1YzM3OTgxLTYNjQjNDEzNC04YTJTY1NDNkMmFmODBiZSI6ImMiOjI9>

community to meet for social events, life skill sessions, education, livelihood, and vocational training programmes and share their concerns.

Additionally, this strategy advocates for the respect of choices of pathways made by IDPs including continuation of returns and sustainable reintegration of families in the EMCs, as local integration is not possible, and particularly:

- For IDPs not facing specific barriers for reintegration in their local communities of origin mainly in Ninewa (not perceived as affiliated with Da'esh e.g.), [return to their areas of origin remains an option](#) and would require them to receive their IDs and security clearances to be able to opt for this solution.
- For IDPs originally from the [13 Hassansham villages in the Al-Hamdaniyeh sub-district](#), this strategy advocates for the [continuation of returns and sustainable reintegration](#) in their village of origin with access to adequate public services of quality that have to be resumed by Ninewa authorities as well as support for the rehabilitation of their shelters and access to livelihoods opportunities by relevant authorities and with the assistance of partners.
- For those not able to return to their areas of origin, in particular due to risks of discrimination or abuse linked to their perceived affiliation, [relocation to alternative locations in Iraq, including Ninewa governorate](#), is a solution that needs to be further explored.

DOHUK AND ZAKHO CAMPS

Some 124,000 IDPs reside in 15 camps located in Duhok Governorate and the Zakho administration. Of these, the overwhelming majority are Ezidis who mostly settled next to pre-existing Ezidi communities in Duhok. The majority of these IDPs are from Sinjar and Ba'aj. There are no administrative barriers for IDPs to move out of camps into these communities, including with family members, and those that had the ability and socio-economic means to do so, have largely done so by now (as many are still on the payroll of the government as public servants for example).

While 63 per cent expressed a wish to return to their AoO one day,⁴ for the time being, almost all intend to remain in their current area of displacement and are not expected to return to Sinjar and Ba'aj in the immediate future. Therefore, for IDPs in the camps in Duhok and Zakho, this strategy advocates for, depending on the choices of the IDPs:

- i) support for camp residents to locally integrate in surrounding communities, including through strengthening of public services in local communities, and be provided appropriate support to do so, including through the MoMD settlement grants, or
- ii) the transformation of camps into longer-term settlements included in the development plans of nearby villages (especially when already de facto included in such villages).

For the latter, the strategy advocates for the implementation of targeted critical infrastructure projects to complement public services provided by municipalities and KRG departments as well as the continued implementation of shelter self-upgrades, as a temporary measure to ensure that IDPs are living in more decent conditions until the time they can opt for a sustainable and more suitable solution or camps – eventually decommissioned – become formal settlements.

⁴ As per September-October 2023 CCNA IDP camp profiling report.

IDPs have indicated that for them to be able to return in the longer term, access to public services and shelter of quality as well as to livelihood opportunities, security and law enforcement must be fully restored through institutions they trust. Ezidi survivors specifically should have access to compensation schemes, and transitional justice measures (reconciliation, guarantees of non-repetition, criminal accountability, etc.) should be implemented. The UN continues to advocate with authorities to implement the Sinjar agreement and ensure effective and simplified access to compensation schemes.

ERBIL AND SULAYMANIYAH CAMPS

Two urban camps in Erbil - Harsham and Baharka - and one non-urban camp in Debaga host some 11,900 IDPs, while 6,500 IDPs reside in one camp in Sulaymaniyah Governorate— Ashti. For the Erbil camps, the majority are from Mosul, Ba’aj, and Hamdaniya districts. IDPs in Debaga are mostly from Makhmour while those in Ashti camp are mostly from Balad, Yathrib and with some families from Sinjar district.

Residents in the urban Erbil and Sulaymaniyah camps mostly enjoy freedom of movement and have access to livelihood opportunities, and essential public services including access to healthcare and education, and many have opportunities as daily labourers, such as in construction, manual labour and in shops.

To ensure local inclusion outside camps for those who opt not to return to their areas of origin due to specific profiles or obstacles (such as IDPs in Suly originally from so-called blocked areas⁵ in Salah Al Din), the relevant security clearances are required and, in some cases, financial support to initially settle in surrounding communities, which could be provided through MoMD’s settlement grants.

Furthermore, IDPs should continue having equitable access to employment and livelihoods and access to quality public services outside or in the camps. For IDPs remaining in the camps, they should have improved shelter conditions through self-upgrade of shelters or are supported to move to urban locations, and camps should be fully included in the local administration’s plans/budgets.

For IDPs in the camps in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah to be able to eventually return to their AoO, IDPs should swiftly receive the required security clearances, and receive the required support to re-establish themselves in their AoO when they opt for such a solution. As seen during the closure of Arbat and Qorato camps at the end of the 2023, many IDPs chose to return to their Area of Origin, in Salah Al-Din and Diyala. However, some indicated they did not want or could not yet return and opted to relocate to Ashti and Tazade camps, despite UNHCR’s advocacy with the authorities to find alternative solutions through local inclusion/integration in the communities in order not to perpetuate camps. Many have expressed concerns about security (beyond the blocked areas) as well as destruction or confiscation of their homes and lack of livelihoods opportunities (especially as farmers given UXO/landmines or confiscation of their land). This will require continued coordination between Federal and the Kurdish authorities and programmes to ensure social cohesion and re-integration in areas of return.

Priorities include advocacy on:

⁵ Blocked locations are those where individuals or groups of individuals are prevented from returning by security actors. There are currently some 100 locations in Iraq which are classified as blocked mostly in Salah Al-Din, Babylon, Ninewa and in Diyala. Mostly commonly cited examples include locations in Al-Musayab such as Jurf Al Nassar.

- Government procedures to facilitate local integration for those IDPs (Iraqi citizens) choosing to locally integrate.
- The transformation of camps into longer-term settlements, including through strengthening of basic services in camps coupled with self-upgrade of shelters.
- Government led process for the unblocking of blocked areas in Salah Al-Din and Babylon.
- Prioritisation of property compensation and provision of basic services in areas of origin.