

Concept Note

MOVING TOWARDS A GOVERNMENT-LED, DEVELOPMENT-LED SOLUTIONS APPROACH IN IRAQ

5 March 2023

This concept note proposes a **shared vision** of durable solutions actors in Iraq for a new phase of solutions to internal displacement in Iraq that reflects the evolving context in Iraq. This note first provides an overview of the scale and nature of displacement, including conceptual and data-related challenges around displacement. It then provides a brief overview of the Iraq solutions architecture and summarizes key developments calling for a re-invigoration and re-orientation. It then outlines four key building blocks for a more government-led and development-led solutions approach in Iraq (strategy, government leadership, financing, and UN coordination) centered around the idea of a “Compact on Solutions” with Iraq and concludes by offering concrete next steps towards its development.

I. SCALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF DISPLACEMENT

There are currently around **1.17 million Iraqis displaced** as the result of the ISIL conflict. Around three quarters are in out-of-camp/urban settings, 15% remain in camps and around 9% reside in informal sites. 104,000 IDPs live in critical shelters (83,000 of which in Federal Iraq). Close to 60,000 IDPs live in areas with high severity (virtually all of which are in federal Iraq).

Of the 1.17 million IDPs, 618,040 are located in the **Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI)**: Around 180,000 in 25 camps, and around 430,000 in out-of-camp settings. Within the KRI, the displaced are spread across the three governorates as follows: Dohuk (248,596, virtually all originating from Ninewa), Erbil (231,000, almost half of which originating from Ninewa, around 30% from Anbar, and 10% from Salah-al-Din) and Sulaymaniyah (138,000, 24% of which originating from Salah-al-Din, 23% from Baghdad, 18% from Diyala, 15% from Anbar, and 7% from Babylon).

The remainder (around 550,000) are in out-of-camp settings within **Federal Iraq**, out of which 60,000 live in informal sites and another 30,000 in unfinished or abandoned buildings. Jeddah 5 camp holding around 3,700 IDPs is the only remaining formal camp in Federal Iraq. The highest number of displaced are located in Ninewah (248,039, 98% of which originate from that governorate), Kirkuk (92,610, around 60% of which originate from that governorate, 21% from Sahah-al-Din, and almost 10% from Ninewa), Salah-al-Din (51,642, 93% of which originate from that governorate), and Diyala (44,324, almost 90% of which originate from that governorate).

Five million IDPs have **returned** to their location of origin over the past 6 years, over 95% of which live in their original residences in habitable conditions. Close to 600,000 (12%) live in areas of high severity and 190,000 of which live in critical shelter, meaning they will require support to make solutions sustainable. Similarly, **host communities** that (re-)integrate IDPs and whose needs may be comparable, should not be neglected

Any renewed DS effort needs to account for and tailor responses to differences in displacement location, area of origin and preferred/viable solutions pathways.

II. A LAST MILE CHALLENGE

After five million IDPs have returned in the course of the past seven years, much of the current caseload represents a complex **“last mile” challenge**, in which material barriers to solutions (shelter, basic services, livelihoods) are compounded by political, social cohesion and security barriers, for instance where areas of return contested between federal Iraq and KRI (e.g. Yazidis/Sinjar, Hassansham villages); where returns are blocked by armed groups (e.g. return areas in Babylon, Diyala and Salah-al-Din) and IDPs with perceived affiliations and issues related to tribal cohesion (e.g. East Mosul camps and Jeddah 5 camp, informal sites in Mosul, Falluja, Kirkuk, other cities). In 2022, only 37,720 IDPs returned.

Any renewed solutions effort by the UN and partners needs to be accompanied by high-level and local level **political engagement strategies around specific groups** of displaced aimed at helping to overcome political and security barriers to solutions (see below “Political Accompaniment” and “Next Steps”).

III. CONCEPTUAL AND DATA CHALLENGES

The notions of who is an IDP and what the scope of a renewed durable solutions effort would take is marred by a number of conceptual and data-related challenges:

First, **the authorities’ and the international community’s definitions of who is an IDP, who is a returnee and when displacement ends differ**. According to the Federal Government’s definition and its operationalization, the IDP or returnee status in government records is primarily a function of IDPs registering as such with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement rather than a function of need and vulnerability. Also, authorities have been reluctant to call the urban displaced IDPs and often group them together with the urban poor.

Second, and related, **we lack the data to determine which IDPs and returnees should be considered to have reached a solution**. According to the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions and the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS), displacement ends when an IDP is located at his/her preferred location of solution (through return, resettlement or local integration) and no longer faces displacement-related assistance and protection needs or discrimination that is higher than that of the general population or host community.

However, datasets in the Iraq response identify Iraqi families who fled during the ISIL crisis as returnees if they have returned to their area of origin, or IDPs if they have not yet returned to their area of origin. As such, families who may have locally integrated or settled in a third location may still be considered as IDPs in the current datasets, whether or not they have achieved a durable solution. Conversely, families who have returned to areas of origin are considered as no longer displaced even though they may continue to face displacement-related needs and vulnerabilities.

As the UNCT conducts a reorientation of its DS approach around the evolving context, it must seek to adapt the evidence base in order to allow us to determine progress towards solutions not only based on location but based on relative needs, vulnerability and access to rights in comparison with the general population (see below under “Next Steps”).

Third, the current caseload only represents the latest wave of displacement in Iraq and does not include more than **4 million IDPs who were displaced prior to the 2014 conflict against ISIL** and many

of whom remain in informal settlements and might not have achieved a durable solution. This raises the question whether and how any solutions strategy might want to address this “legacy caseload”.

IV. THE IRAQ SOLUTIONS ARCHITECTURE

Of the 16 focus countries of the SG’s Special Adviser on Solutions, Iraq is among those with the most advanced DS architecture in place. In November 2020, the government adopted a **National Plan** that is underpinned by a whole-of-government mechanism (“**Supreme Committee**”). The 2020-2024 Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework includes among its five pillars one on Durable Solutions (Pillar V).

In 2020/21, an **interagency durable solutions architecture** was developed, which includes a head-of-agency DS Task Force, co-chaired by IOM and UNDP, a working-level DS Working Group, and the establishment of Area-Based Coordination (ABC) Groups in eight ISIS-affected “hotspot” areas in Federal Iraq, all of which developed area-specific Plans of Action meant to advance coordinated and solutions-oriented programming around commonly identified priorities. The DS architecture is underpinned by a conceptually sound Interagency Strategic Framework of June 2021.

This architecture, and the programming of involved entities, has significantly helped advance progress for solutions in Iraq, benefitting hundreds of thousands of IDPs in recent years. The programs for IDP response and solutions implemented by the international community especially IOM, UNDP, UNHABITAT, UNHCR, ILO, WFP and NGOs are commendable many of which should be documented and serve as good practice in other crises.

V. A CHANGING CONTEXT

Its achievements notwithstanding, there is both a need and an opportunity to re-orient and reinvigorate the solutions effort in Iraq in light of the following developments:

First, in June of 2022, the UNSG issued his **Action Agenda** on internal displacement, which calls in particular for stepped-up collective action on durable solutions. The new appointed Special Adviser on Solutions, working with the Steering Group on Solutions¹ has identified Iraq as one of his 16 focus countries where conditions are ripe for a concerted push for solutions, led at country-level by the RC, under a paradigm of “government-led and development-led solutions.”

Second, after a period of transition, a **new government** has been established in Iraq that signals readiness to take greater ownership of the solutions effort – and a keen and likely premature desire to close the displacement file.

Third, in December 2022, the **humanitarian clusters were deactivated**, with arrangements made for progressive handover of cluster responsibilities to governmental authorities – and an expectation by some that the DS architecture takes over some of the clusters’ coordination functions for at least a transitional period.

Fourth, the **funding landscape** is rapidly changing with humanitarian funding largely winding down in the course of 2023 and stabilization and development funding also on the decline. Looking ahead, the government, benefiting from significant oil export revenues, is expected to shoulder the lion’s share of solutions financing.

¹ The Steering Group comprises IOM, OCHA, UNDCO, UNDP, UNDPPA, UNDPO, UNHCR, UNICEF, and the World Bank.

Fifth, while many IDPs in Iraq still suffer from displacement-related vulnerabilities, very few, if any, suffer from acute humanitarian needs. With the partial exception of those who remain in camps and informal sites, **most IDPs have already embarked on a solutions pathway**, calling for longer-term development-oriented assistance, complemented by political engagement.

VI. ADJUSTING THE SOLUTIONS APPROACH

This larger context calls for a solutions approach in Iraq that is more anchored in government leadership, with the UN in a support role. In rethinking the solutions approach, it is useful to look separately at the **four “building blocks” to solutions**, which the Special Adviser is encouraging to establish across his 16 focus countries: (a) a “new generation” DS strategy, (b) government leadership arrangements, (c) a solutions financing framework, and (d) UN coordination arrangements.

a) A “New Generation” Durable Solutions Strategy

The new context in Iraq calls for a new Durable Solutions strategy that is co-owned by the Government of Iraq. This Durable Solutions Strategy could take the form of a **Compact with a 2-3 year time-frame, feature a costed plan with clear priorities and concrete deliverables** towards the larger goal of ending internal displacement in Iraq. The Compact would be jointly developed with the Government, also involve the Kurdish Regional Government, and feature specific commitments by the Government and the UN.

The Compact would pick up of where the 2023 Humanitarian Transition Overview left off. It would build on, concretize and operationalize (rather than replace) the National Plan, the Interagency Strategic Framework, and Pillar V of the SDCF. As such, it would offer a transitional solutions-specific strategy across the humanitarian-development and peace nexus at the end of which remaining displacement-related needs would be integrated and “mainstreamed” across a new SDCF Cooperation Framework (rather than constituting a specific pillar) as well as a national development plan.

The Compact would be **embedded in international norms and standards**. It would consider all possible solutions including voluntary return, local integration, and resettlement. It would ensure the centrality of protection, and be guided, first and foremost, by the needs and preferences of IDPs and returnees themselves and seek their participation. Below Box proposes key components for the Compact.

The Compact could be launched at a **conference in April or May** jointly with the government as co-signatory and could be underpinned by firm government political, financial, social and operational commitments. Key areas in which such commitments could be made are outlined in the following text box.

Proposed Commitments of the Components

1) Delivering on The National Plan for Returning the IDPs to Their Liberated Areas

The Compact proposes to identify clear system reforms that can accelerate delivery of the National Plan – focusing primarily on providing IDPs and returnees with the capacity to participate in the planning and management of their own durable solutions, through:

- Ensuring accelerated access of IDPs and returnees to the Iraq **Compensation Fund**
- Ensuring accelerated access of IDPs to the MoMD **Return and local-integration Grants**
- Continued provision of targeted infrastructure/**reconstruction investments (including housing)** in return/resettlement areas

2) Enjoyment of an Adequate standard of living and access to services without discrimination

The Compact aims to more fully integrate IDPs and returnees into the formal Iraqi legal and administrative systems. Support to reform the system functions of the government of Iraq will benefit the durable solution of IDPs and returnees, but also improve equitable access for all Iraqis through vertical system improvements. This will be promoted through:

- Including eligible IDPs in coverage of Iraq's national **social protection** scheme.
- Ensuring **access to civil documentation** to all IDPs
- Enhancing **tenure security of returnees** by strengthening management of land rights
- Improve **provision of essential staff** (teachers, doctors, nurses) to schools and facilities in areas of return, and ensure proper government-led operations and maintenance (O&M) for such facilities.

3) Voluntary and Informed Choice of a Location for a durable solution

This compact will move beyond the option of return only and address issues of integration and onward movement (without prejudice to IDPs' right to return in the future should they decide to seek intermediary solutions elsewhere). The Government and UN will jointly assess IDPs and returnees whose displacement can be considered to have ended. In addition, the Government of Iraq and UN will:

- Development of differentiated **solutions pathways for IDP population in camps**
- Address outstanding options for people displaced from so called **blocked areas/areas of no return**.
- Promotion of policies enabling sustainable local integration (e.g. facilitating the access to/transfer of PDS rations).
- Incremental **formalization of select informal sites** and connection to basic services (electricity, sewage and water systems), where IDPs have identified a preference to remain.
- Facilitating access of IDPs to solutions pathways through administrative and material support.
- Enhancing social cohesion and transitional justice processes

The Compact could be complemented by the establishment of a multi-partner trust fund that would require significant upfront investments from the government that could be announced at the conference (see below under “Financing Framework”). The Compact could designate the “Supreme Committee for Implementation of the National Plan” as main governance and implementation mechanism (See below under “Government Leadership Arrangements”).

On the UN side the Compact would be **overseen by the RC, supported by adjusted Durable Solutions coordination Arrangements** (See below under “Coordination Arrangements”), and would be accompanied by **stepped up political engagement** at federal, governorate and municipal level, leveraging, as appropriate, the role of the SRSG, UN agency staff (e.g. UNHCR in the KRI, DSTWG staff), as well as ABC focal points (See below “Next Steps”).

The Compact could incorporate a phased approach with priority locations/groups per phase.

Once a set of components is agreed upon, the UNCT in Iraq, in partnership with UNAMI, would **engage with the Federal Government of Iraq** – including the Prime Minister’s Office and COMSEC as well as key line ministries such as the Ministries of Migration and Displacement (MOMD), Planning (MOP), Finance (MoF), Interior (MoI) and the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA). Similar engagement would be required (with particular engagement by UNHCR) **with the Kurdish Regional Government** – in particular the Ministry of Interior and its Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) as well as Ministry of Municipalities. Ideally, the Compact would also include a **monitoring and accountability framework**.

In parallel, and to be reflected in the Compact, UN agencies will be developing an action plan that would detail concrete, prioritized, integrated and costed UN support for the implementation of the Compact, with concrete deliverables along with overall costing. The lead role of UN agencies on specific files (e.g. Habitat on tenure security, UNHCR on access to civil documentation) would be preserved.

Importantly, the exercise of developing a model Compact by the UN on the basis of which to engage the government will have value even if the government declines to officially sign up to such a document. Indeed, in such a scenario and as a **“Plan B”** it would provide the UN, and the international community at large with a “common song sheet” for prioritized programming and advocacy with the federal government and the KRG, which does currently not exist.

Political Accompaniment Around Specific Groups

UN support for the implementation of the Compact would need to be accompanied by targeted UN political engagement around specific groups/locations facing political and security barriers to return (tribal or ethno-religious tensions, perceived ISIS affiliation, presence of militia groups), with an eye to negotiating solutions, whether through return, local integration or resettlement elsewhere.

These groups may include but is not limited to:

- 1. Yezidis from Sinjar District displaced in Dohuk and elsewhere:** Around 130,000 Yezidis from Sinjar District are displaced across 15 camps in Dohuk (KRI), with further tens of thousands Yezidis displaced in out of camp settings in Dohuk, in other KRI governorates, as well as within Sinjar . Return of these families is complicated by rival territorial claims over Sinjar between KRG and GOI and competition between various militia forces. Progress in implementation of 2020 Sinjar Agreement, (which calls for the establishment of local governance structures with the nomination of an independent mayor and the responsibility of the district's security to a new local security force while removing non-state armed groups), is seen as prerequisite for significant IDP returns.
- 2. IDPs from Jurf Al-Nasr (Babylon Governorate):** IDP returns to Jurf al-Nasr (Musayab District) are blocked by PMF forces and all attempts to open the area and allow the return of displaced families have so far failed. Those families are dispersed across different locations places, including 59 families in Amiriya (Anbar), more than 1,000 families in informal settlement in Bzebiz, and about 300 families in Arbat and Ashti camps in Sulimaniya.
- 3. No Return Areas in Salah Al Din Governorate:** In a number of villages in Salah Al Din the return of Sunni Arab IDPs is prevented by local presence of fragmented and often competing PMF militias and/or fear of retaliation, including 3,000 households from **Al Oja Village (Tikrit District)** most of which are currently displaced in KRI; thousands of IDPs from **Yathrib Sub-District** currently displaced in Sulaymaniyah camps; Over 6,000 households from 15 villages in **Tuz Khurmatu** currently dispersed across Tuz, Amirli, Kirkuk, and other KRI districts; and over 5,000 households from **Balad District** (including hundreds of families from **Al Refeaat Village** who few of them currently displaced in nearby Balad Train Station informal site) the return of which is prevented on the pretext of ISIS affiliation but may have deeper roots in a local PMF faction's strategic goal is to control farmlands and tribal units across the area with the intent of carving out a subregion in close proximity to Baghdad. Addressing return blockages in these areas requires engagement of political blocs and key leaders who hold sway over the PMFs in the province.
- 4. No return areas in Diyala Governorate:** In close to 50 locations in Diyala largely Sunni IDPs are prevented from returning by a dominant local PMF faction (Badr), which threatens retaliation and uses IDP return as a point of leverage to demand payments and/or political loyalties from returnees. Concentration of no-return areas are particularly high in **Khanaqin District** (34 locations) affecting over 5,000 households and **Muqdadiya District** (6 locations) affecting over 3,500 households with most IDPs from these areas residing in Baquba and Khanaqin city. Significant short-term return unlikely in light of risk of re-displacement calling for high-level engagement with Badr leadership by Federal Government, KRG and international community with the Badr leadership to devise a strategic plan for managing protracted displacement and repeated re-displacements from Diyala.
- 5. East Mosul Camps:** Over 14,000 IDPs are currently displaced across three camps in Eastern Mosul in Ninewa Governorate (Hasansham U2, Hasansham U3 and Khazer camps), an area that is under de facto control of KRG security forces. They are prevented from returning to their nearby places of origin due to political disagreement between KRG and the Federal government as well as perceived ISIS affiliations. There are also some 200 former detainees in the camp, some of which since reunited with their families, who have been released by KRI authorities but who face re-arrest and prosecution once released to Federal Iraq. Similar engagement with PMF units in the area should be applied as they control the agriculture areas of the IDPs and used them illegally.
- 6. West Anbar:** The issue of blocked areas in Okashat and the occupied shelters by the PMF in Al-Qaim prevent more than 2,500 HHs from returning back to their AoOs.

b) Government Leadership Arrangements on Solutions

The SG's Action Agenda calls on Governments of displacement-affected countries to put in place an inter-ministerial mechanism that ensures Whole-of-Government approaches around solutions. The Federal Government has already established, under its National Plan on Internal Displacement, a Supreme Committee on the Implementation of the National Plan, that provides a ready-made platform that would allow for Whole-of-Government engagement within the framework of the new Solutions Strategy/Compact. The Supreme Committee is chaired by the Minister for Migration and Displacement and includes representatives of 17 line ministries at deputy ministers level as well as governors of five ISIL affected governorates.

The Supreme Committee would be the natural whole-of-government forum overseeing the implementation of the Compact on Solutions proposed above. Moreover, as part of the Compact, a proposal should be made to make the RC a standing member of the Supreme Committee. Other key government entities and line ministries, including the Prime Minister's office would need to be involved and engaged.

Importantly, a formula would need to be explored to bring the Kurdish Regional Government into the Compact Framework, as the KRI hosts a significant share of the remaining IDP population, including 25 or the 26 camps, residents of which hail almost entirely from Federal Iraq.

c) Financing Framework for Solutions

The financing framework for solutions in Iraq needs to take into account the changing ODA landscape, with humanitarian funding largely phasing out in 2023 and stabilization and development funding on the decline as well. No dedicated financing windows for durable solutions in place.

Meanwhile, the **Government of Iraq** is expected to shoulder the lion's share of financing its solutions commitments in the proposed Compact. This governmental solutions funding would come, on the one hand, through enhanced access to IDPs and returnees to a number of **standing government funds** that are critical in supporting IDPs' pathways to solutions (Compensation Fund, Integration Fund, Returnee Fund and the national social protection scheme). On the other hand, the government would also need to invest, through **budgets of relevant line ministries**, in infrastructure, reconstruction, and basic services that would support IDP return, resettlement or integration. The government's commitments under the Compact will ultimately need to be costed and reflected in the national budget.

The UN Country Team would support the government in the implementation of the Compact through programming that is aligned with mutual commitments and prioritization agreed upon in the compact.

To mobilize funding for the implementation of the Compact the RC could propose the establishment of a **Multi-Partner Trust Fund on Solutions**. A *sine qua non* requirement for the MPTF to attract donor support would be significant upfront investment into the Fund by the Government of Iraq that could be announced at the launch of the Compact.

d) Solutions coordination arrangements

Iraq has well-developed solutions coordination arrangements in place that provide a mature architecture to support implementation of the Compact. In addition to the Supreme Committee outlined above, it includes a Durable Solutions Task Force will continue to be co-chaired by IOM and UNDP at head of agency level, which is supported by a technical-level Durable Solutions Technical

Working Group, chaired by the same entities in addition to NRC. Moreover, a “Priority Working Group 5” (PWG5), also co-chaired by IOM and UNDP, is to ensure coordination around the Durable Solution Pillar of the DSCF.

However, the proposed shift towards more government-led approaches to durable solutions will need to be reflected in the solutions architecture. Mirroring the proposal of including the RC in the Supreme Committee, and to address a lack of engagement between the DSTF co-chairs and relevant national authorities, the UN should adjust its own coordination architecture to allow for at least occasional participation of government authorities. As such, the **Durable Solutions Task Force** might arrange quarterly meetings to which the Minister for Migration and Displacement might be invited as co-chair, possibly alongside other relevant ministries. (The Durable Solutions Technical Working Group would remain unchanged.)

Similarly, the functions, coverage and focal point arrangements of the **ABC Groups** may warrant further review, as do the utility, purpose, and efficiency of **their Plans of Action**. While ABC Groups have proved to be useful mechanisms to allow for information-sharing of key stakeholder and engagement of authorities at subnational level, they seem to have fallen short in driving coordinated programming around common priorities and generate real local ownership at the governorate, district, and local level. In the absence of full-time focal points (and reluctance among donors to provide funding for such positions), coordination capacity remained weak.

At the same time, the recent proposal to transition the governorate-level General Coordination Meetings (GCM) established in 2014 by OCHA into Joint Coordination Forums (JCFs), to be co-chaired with governorate-level authorities, to facilitate information sharing, troubleshoot access and other challenges, identify gaps, ensure alignment with Governorate priorities, and seek opportunities for joint assessment, planning, and programming, raised questions about overlap and duplication with the function of ABC Groups.

Against the background of the above, the UNCT, HCT, and DSTF might want to explore the possibility of merging the JCF and ABC mechanisms, to serve as coordination forums that are co-owned and co-chaired by the governorate-level authorities and the UN, in which one UN or NGO counterpart – or UNAMI’s Development Support Officers - serves as one of the co-chairs and ensure some Secretariat support.

VII. RISKS

As the UNCT embarks on engaging the government around the idea of a Compact with specific political and financial commitments, it will need to take into account a number of risks and pitfalls, including:

First, the fact that the Shia-dominated government might see little political gain in making – or following up on - costly commitments around the reintegration of a predominantly Sunni population group many of which are widely perceived to have had affiliations or harbored sympathies for ISIS, all the more as that population group already benefited from disproportional international attention over the past five years and in light of overwhelming competing needs, widespread poverty, and high unemployment. Some donors, too, might question the value of such an initiative, arguing instead for a broader approach that integrates IDP needs into broader needs- and vulnerability-based development planning and that should aim at system-strengthening rather than IDP-centred approaches.

Second, the fact that the government has remarkably little fiscal space despite its significant oil revenue, as around 80% of its budget is already assigned through existing appropriations, in particular those related to exorbitant expenses on salaries and pensions for the overblown public sector.

Third, the fact that donors are generally skeptical vis-à-vis the idea of a Multi-partner Trust Fund, the likelihood (and even desirability) of the GoI making meaningful investments in such a fund and their own ability to provide contributions in light of competing door priorities.

VIII. PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

This concept note proposes that under the leadership of the RC, the following steps are undertaken towards the development of the proposed Compact:

1. Filling Data Gaps

The RC might request from IOM and REACH, as co-chairs of the DSTWG Monitoring and Analysis Subgroup and drawing on existing data sources and evidence, to produce a report by mid-April 2023, with prioritized overview of sectors, population groups, and geographic areas in need of support. This report should provide an indicative basis to internally inform the development of the Durable Solution Compact and allow clearly identified prioritization and costing.

Analytical components should include: (1) A district-level vulnerability analysis; highlighting which districts contain a relatively higher severity of outcomes for IDPs and/or returnees; (2) Individual/household-level analysis providing (where data exists) granular data on IDP, returnee, and host community's reported experiences and vulnerabilities; (3) Exceptional vulnerabilities not visible at district-level identifying communities/populations assessed to have specific vulnerabilities that may be either underreported or have a low prevalence across the broader population (for example, individuals lacking civil documentation) as well as geographic areas with localized barriers to solutions, such as areas of limited or blocked return; and (4) Data gaps highlighting locations, sectors, or populations whose vulnerabilities are not covered by this analytical exercise and proposing how such data gaps could be filled in the future.

2. Engaging the Federal Government of Iraq and The Kurdish Regional Government

Under the leadership of the RC, the UNCT might engage the GoI and the KRG to explore concrete interest in the idea of a compact and its potential scope. First steps of such an engagement might include for the RC to meet with relevant high-level officials of the Federal Government (including the Prime Minister) and the KRG, accompanied by other heads of agencies as relevant. These meetings might be followed up with a formal letter to the GoI and the KRG, inviting them to engage around such a Compact and designate focal points for its development. The letter might also float the possibility of the RC becoming a standing member of the Supreme Committee.

Key elements to highlight in the engagement of the government might include (1) Iraq's inclusion as one of the 16 pilot countries under SG's Action Agenda, (2) Iraq's potential role in serving as a model for ending displacement; (3) Commitments by past and current governments to end displacement in Iraq; (4) the UN's readiness to offer integrated support to the implementation of the plan and its ability to mobilize broader international support thereto.

3. *Creating Small Drafting Group for the Compact*

The RC might establish an inter-agency drafting team to develop the Compact based on the overall approach proposed in this concept note (draft templates for Compact structure as well as the template for spelling out individual commitments therein have been developed.)

The drafting team will be led Lisa Monaghan (IOM consultant seconded to the DSTF) and will be overseen by the RC and DSTF co-chairs, with dedicated day-to-day support from the RCO, IOM, UNDP, NRC. The drafting team will draw on consultations with and input from OCHA, HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, and FAO, ILO, WFP, NCCI, GIZ, and other relevant stakeholders.

4. *Developing Political Engagement Strategies Around Specific Groups*

The RC might initiate a small group under the joint oversight of the RC and D-SRSG (Political) that would develop a note outlining political engagement strategies aimed at overcoming political and security barriers to solutions with respect to specific groups or locations, building and expanding on the groups and locations identified in this Concept Note. Those strategies should seek to leverage, as appropriate, the role of the SRSG, UNAMI political affairs, UN agencies (e.g. UNHCR in the KRI), as well as ABC focal points.

The group might include the political affairs component of UNAMI, the RCO, UNHCR, and IOM. [The February 2021 IRIS Report on “Displacement and Iraq's Political Marketplace: Addressing Political Barriers to IDP Return” might provide a helpful starting point for this effort.]

5. *Review of the ABC Group Structure and Functions*

As outlined above under “Solutions Coordination Structures,” the RC, in consultation with DSTF co-chairs and OCHA, might also initiate a review of the ABC structure and specifically explore the possibility of merging the JCF and ABC mechanisms, to serve as coordination forums that are co-owned by the governorate-level authorities and the UN, in which one UN or NGO counterpart serves as co-chairs and in which UNAMI’s Development Support Officers provide Secretariat support.