



# COMMUNITY DIALOGUE, AREAS OF NO RETURN

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## AL-AYADIYA VILLAGE

December 2024

## METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVE

The Returns Working Group (RWG), in coordination with the Ninewa Governorate Office, facilitated a Durable Solutions Discussion to explore the challenges and opportunities for the return of displaced families to three villages in Ayadiyah: Harouna, Sajieah, and Qabak.

These villages have been severely affected by the conflict, experiencing high levels of destruction and ongoing challenges related to infrastructure, livelihoods, and safety. Discussions with community representatives revealed critical issues, including housing destruction, lack of economic opportunities, and the presence of explosive remnants of war (ERWs).

The objectives of the discussions were:

1. To identify key priorities for communities in each village.
2. To assess the local authorities' capacity to address challenges.

## PARTICIPANT LIST

Name	Position
Government	
Khalil Mohsen Hussain	Qaimmaqam of Tal afar
Nashaat Sadeq Mohamed	Mayor of Ayadiya
Shareef Gandy	Organization responsible in Talafar
Community Representatives	
Qanim Ali Ibrahim	Community member
Mahdi Saleh Mohamed	Community member
Yassin Ali Hasan	Community member
Emad Hussien Mohamed	Community member
Ali Younis Yousif	Community member
Farhan Mahmood Ibrahim	Community member
Shakir Mahmood Ibrahim	Community member
Ali Saleh Ibrahim	Community member
Mohamed Ali Ibrahim	Community member
Abass Ali Mohamed	Community member
Zaynal Abdullah Ali	Community member
Mohamed Ali Rida	Community member
Shareef Ali Hadi	Community member
Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim	Community member
Ahmed Qaseem Mohamed	Community member
Mahdi Abdullah Ibrahim	Community member
Asef Hassan Ali	Community member
Yousif Zaynal Yousif	Community member
Abdullah Mohamed Ismael	Community member
Faisal Ibrahim	Community member
Abdullah Mohamed Balo	Community member
Omran Rida Khan	Community member

Ali Saied Khan	Community member
Hamad Khalaf Ibrahim	Community member
Fahad Abdullah Mohamed	Community member
Abdulrahman Mohamed Ibrahim	Community member
Qassem Hassan Ali	Community member
Taha Ismaiel Ibrahim	Community member
Hazaa Mohamed Balo	Community member
Zuhair Sayed Khan	Community member
Ata Kadim Hamad	Community member
Saleh Mohamed Balo	Community member
Zuhair Sayed Khan	Community member
Aqeel Muslim Mohamed	Community member
Muslim Mohamed Khan	Community member
Zubeer Sayed Khan	Community member
Hussain Mohamed	Community member
Sajad Ali Akbar	Community member
UN/NGOs	
Ali Mohamed Saleh Ahmed	Voluntary team
Jelan Adnan Ali	Local organization
Karam Eskander	RWG
Hanan Ali	
Firas AlSalman	

## BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION

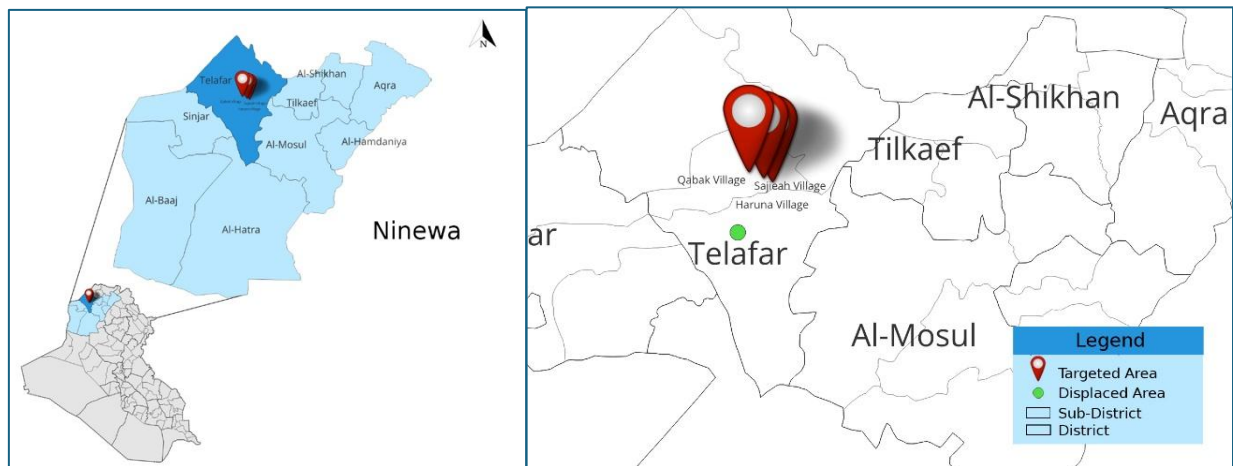
### Geographical and Demographic Context

The villages of Harouna, Qabak, and Sajieah are located in the Al-Ayadiyah subdistrict of Tal Afar, historically home to diverse communities, primarily Shia Turkmen and Sunni Arabs.

Before 2014, these villages thrived on agriculture and pastoral livelihoods. However, during the conflict, families fled to areas such as Najaf, Zakho, and Tal Afar city, leaving behind homes and infrastructure that were then destroyed during the liberation efforts. Post-liberation, limited returns have occurred, but rebuilding has been slow due to lack of the support of aid actors.

## Key Historical Context

Before ISIS's takeover, these villages were targeted by armed groups due to their Shia Turkmen majority,



with residents working with security forces. In one tragic incident, a car bomb detonated at the primary school in Qabak, killing 25 students and injuring 75 others. This intensified fear among residents, compelling families to flee when ISIS entered the area.

## HAROUNA VILLAGE

Harouna village, was home to 35 families primarily from the Arab Juhayish and Turkmen Sayyid Moussawi tribes, faced significant displacement during the 2014 conflict, with residents fleeing to Najaf and Zakho. While all families returned in 2018, the majority settled in rented homes in Tal Afar city, leaving only five families to return to the village itself. Before the conflict, the village boasted 24 concrete houses and large olive farms with over 3,000 trees, reflecting a once-thriving community now struggling to rebuild.

Infrastructure and Services:

- **Water:** The internal water network requires rehabilitation due to broken water pipes, which cannot meet the community's needs.
- **Electricity:** During ISIS control, electrical transformers were stolen or destroyed. While new transformers have been installed post-liberation, Currently, the available electricity capacity is sufficient to meet the needs of the five families that have already returned. However, if all the families were to return, the current capacity would be insufficient to accommodate the increased demand.
- **Health Services:** There is no local health facility. Residents primarily rely on a health center in Tal Afar, located 11 kilometers away, with an additional center 7 kilometers away in Al-Ayadiyah.
- **Education:** The nearest primary school is 2.5 kilometers away in a neighboring village. Before ISIS control, children attended school in Sajieah village but now they go to Tal Afar center. And the

distance to talafar is approximately 11 kilometers. for secondary education, children typically travel to schools in Tal Afar.

- Housing and Property Compensation

Before the displacement, the village consisted of 24 houses, 20 of which were completely destroyed, while the remaining 4 suffered partial damage, both due to ISIS-related actions. Currently, the majority of displaced families are living in rented accommodations in central Tal Afar, with rental costs ranging from 100,000 to 250,000 Iraqi Dinars per month. Only five families have returned to the village itself. However, most families, when returning from displacement, choose to settle directly in the center of Tal Afar rather than rebuilding their homes in the village.

About, 70% of families have received compensation including those who have returned and those still displaced, mostly for claims under 30 million IQD. Larger claims face delays in Baghdad.,

The families have not received compensation for the livestock they owned because agricultural projects require a specific permit called a "Fields Permit," which is issued by the Directorate of Agriculture. However, these families do not possess such permits because their community is rural, and these permits are typically granted for large-scale projects outside the village's boundaries. The families' projects, on the other hand, are small-scale and located within the village, and thus, they lack the necessary documentation to support their compensation claims.

## Challenges

- Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs) in agricultural areas remain a significant safety concern in all three villages. The presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO) in farmland hinders residents' agricultural activities, which are a critical livelihood source. Organizations like MAG and Charity are actively working in Tal Afar to clear landmines, but in these villages, the responsibility falls on the military forces to survey and clear the affected areas. According to residents, the military lacks the capacity to fully address this issue. They hope for better coordination with the Directorate of Mine Action and relevant organizations to find a long-term solution to this critical problem.
- Financial barriers to rebuilding homes and restarting livelihoods.

## QABAK VILLAGE

Before 2014, Qabak village was home to 115 families, comprising 75% Shia Turkmen and 25% Sunni Arabs. Following the liberation of Tal Afar in 2018, all families initially relocated to the district center and Currently, the number of families become approximately 130 families; however, 50 families, unable to afford the rent, so they returned to the village itself. Currently, Qabak hosts 50 families—40 Sunni Arab and 10 Turkmen—while the remaining families remain in Tal Afar city. The families who did not require security clearance as they did not displace to camps, have repaired their homes and resumed farming. The Mukhtar reports that 80 families have expressed interest in returning.

- Infrastructure and Services:

### Electricity

The electricity supply in the village is currently available for approximately 12 hours per day. This improvement in supply is attributed to the maintenance efforts carried out by the Electricity Department. The maintenance included repairing and upgrading transformers, replacing damaged wires, and ensuring the network's overall functionality. These efforts were undertaken in response to the presence of families in the village, emphasizing the importance of providing essential services to support their needs.

### Water

The water network in the village is fully operational and functions efficiently, providing a stable water supply to the residents. The network does not require further rehabilitation, as the Water Department has already undertaken the necessary repairs and upgrades. Their efforts have ensured the network's reliability, reflecting a proactive approach to maintaining essential services for the community.

### Access to Health Services

The health infrastructure in the village has been severely impacted due to the destruction of the local health center during themilitary operations. As a result, residents must travel approximately 2 kilometers to the health center in Al-Ayadiyah to access basic medical services.

While there are caravans designated to serve as a temporary health center within the village, these facilities remain non-operational due to the lack of medical personnel, including doctors and nurses. The absence of qualified healthcare providers has rendered the caravans ineffective, leaving the community without nearby access to primary healthcare services.

### Education

The village has a functioning primary school that serves as the main educational facility for local children. This school accommodates approximately 80 students and is staffed by 7 teachers.

However, the village lacks a secondary school, which forces students pursuing further education to travel 2 kilometers to Al-Ayadiyah. This presents logistical challenges for many families, particularly for students who do not have reliable transportation.

## Housing and Compensation for Damages

The majority of houses in the village were completely destroyed during the conflict, leaving many families displaced. Despite the extensive damage, most families have worked to rebuild their homes and settle back in the village. However, the state of housing remains a significant challenge, as the compensation provided to these families has not been sufficient to fully restore their homes. While the majority of families have received compensation, some have yet to receive their payments, and others have not applied for compensation due to the complex and bureaucratic nature of the application process. Furthermore, the compensation amounts, often limited and inadequate, fail to cover the full costs of rebuilding, leaving many families in a vulnerable position. This financial shortfall prevents them from restoring their homes to habitable conditions, perpetuating their struggle to recover and rebuild their lives.

## Livelihoods

Men in the village primarily work in agriculture and livestock herding. These activities provide a modest source of income but are not sufficient to fully meet the needs of the community. Employment opportunities outside these sectors are virtually nonexistent, further limiting the economic prospects of the villagers.

Women in the village do not engage in any form of work outside their homes. Women are confined to household responsibilities, which include maintaining the household, raising children, and managing domestic tasks.



## SAJIEAH VILLAGE

### Demographics and Displacement

The residents of the village are from the Musawi Sayyid tribe, belonging to the Shia Turkmen community. They were forced to flee their homes in 2014 due to the ISIS invasion. During their displacement, many families relocated to Najaf, and starting in 2018, some returned to central Tal Afar. These returnees either rented homes or built new ones in neighborhoods such as Al Qalaa, Al Qadisiyah, and Al Rabee.

Despite efforts to restore basic services, no families have returned to the village itself, as it remains destroyed and uninhabitable. Prior to the displacement, the village was home to 25 families, but approximately 33 families have since resettled in Tal Afar Center.

### Infrastructure and Services:

#### Water

The village has access to a functioning water network that has been fully restored to meet the needs of potential returnees. The water infrastructure, which had been damaged during the conflict, was rehabilitated by local authorities. This effort was undertaken to ensure a reliable water supply for drinking, cooking, and other household activities.

Despite the restoration, the water network requires regular maintenance to ensure its sustainability and capacity to support the community should families decide to return in the future. Additionally, while the infrastructure is operational, its long-term reliability depends on continuous support from the relevant water department. To enhance its effectiveness, there may be a need to expand the network or establish water storage facilities to meet the demands of a growing population.

#### Electricity

Electricity has been restored in the village, providing residents with access to power for approximately 12 hours per day. The rehabilitation of the electrical infrastructure included repairing damaged power lines, transformers, and other components of the grid. These efforts were essential in providing a stable source of energy to support daily life and essential services such as the newly reconstructed primary school.

However, the current electrical supply remains limited in both duration and capacity, potentially posing challenges for larger-scale resettlement. Upgrading the power network to provide a more reliable and consistent supply is crucial because the local authority is waiting for the families to return.



## Education

Education services in the village have seen significant developments, with efforts focused on rebuilding facilities to support the community's recovery and encourage the return of displaced families.

### Primary Education

A newly reconstructed primary school is the centerpiece of the village's educational infrastructure. Rebuilt in 2020 by the Tal Afar Directorate of Education, the school serves as a safe and functional environment for young learners.

The school is currently under the protection of local military forces, which ensures the safety of the premises and prevents vandalism because no one returns to the area.

### Secondary Education

The village lacks a secondary school and previously students traveled approximately 2 kilometers to Al-Ayadiyah to continue their education.

## General Overview of Displacement and Return Dynamics

The situation of displaced families varies significantly, with some choosing to integrate into new locations while others express a desire to return to their areas of origin. The challenges they face highlight the complexity of displacement and return efforts in the region.

### Families Who Chose Not to Return

Several families have successfully integrated into areas outside their original homes and have no intention of returning. These families have adapted to their new environments, often establishing stable livelihoods and homes. Factors influencing their decision include better access to services, economic opportunities, and a sense of security in their new locations.

### Families Willing to Return

Many families express a desire to return to their original homes but face financial constraints that make it impossible. Although they have received compensation payments, these amounts are described as insufficient to cover the costs of rebuilding homes or reestablishing livelihoods. Additionally, families did not receive compensation for lost livestock because they lacked official livestock field licenses, further exacerbating their financial struggles.

To adapt to these challenges, some families have used their compensation payments to start small businesses in their current locations. These initiatives help them sustain their livelihoods, but they often come at the cost of postponing or abandoning their plans to return.

## Specific Village Conditions

1. **Harouna and Sajjah:** These villages are home to a large number of families who have opted not to return. Many families have utilized their compensation funds to establish small projects, allowing them to remain in their current locations and provide for their families.
2. **Qabak:** A small number of families have returned to this village. They have managed to repair some of their homes, but significant challenges persist. The main obstacles include:
  - **Destroyed house:** The majority of houses in the village remain in ruins, requiring substantial resources for reconstruction.
  - **Limited job opportunities:** The lack of employment in the village hampers the economic recovery of returnees.
  - **Land mines:** The presence of land mines in agricultural areas prevents families from safely working their lands, further limiting their livelihood options.

## CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

### Security Concerns

- Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs) in agricultural lands pose a significant safety concern in Harouna, Qabak, and Sajjah, deterring families from returning. Incomplete demining operations hinder safety.

### Compensation

- Delays in processing claims exceeding IQD 30 million contribute to prolonged displacement.

### Livelihoods

- Limited economic opportunities push families to urban areas like Tal Afar.
1. **MEETING OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS**  
**Security and Demining:** A thematic meeting will be conducted to collaborate with relevant organizations and stakeholders on these demining efforts.  
**Advocacy with JCF:**

The challenges of these villages will be presented at the next JCF meeting to mobilize support.

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