



AREA OF NO RETURN, DURABLE SOLUTIONS DISCUSSION

ISLOBY VILLAGE, HATRA

September 2024

METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVE

The Returns Working Group (RWG), in coordination with the Ninewa Governorate Office, facilitated a Durable Solutions Discussion to explore opportunities for the return of displaced families to Isloby Village in Hatra. Isloby village is 1 of the 54 areas of no return in Hatra district. Prior to this discussion, on 1 July 2024 consultations with the Mukhtar and community members displaced in Qayyarah and Mosul revealed a strong desire to return, and the main obstacles faced by the community which related to safety and security (fears of attacks and occupation of the village by PMF) and the extensive housing destruction. The RWG proposed setting up a meeting between the community members and their local authorities to find a solution to the protracted displacement. Ninewa local authorities were agreeable to meet with the community representatives to hear their concerns and expectations of the local authorities. The DS discussion was semi-structured with a few guiding questions but focused on allowing the community representatives and local authorities full scope to dialogue.

The discussion sought to raise the key priorities of the community, the capacity of the local authorities to meet these priorities and the challenges which may need to be overcome.



Figure 1Community representative speaking during the DS Discussion

PARTICIPANT LIST

Name	Position
Government	
Salih Ali	GCMC
Adres Hani	Municipality
Mohammed Nashwan	MOMD
Basman Ahmed	Mayor of Hatra
Mohammed Aqueel	DOH
Abdulrazaq Mohammed	Department of wells
Saad Akram	Compensation
Fanar Ali	Municipality assistant
Ibrahim Nameq	Municipality assistant
Taher Mari	Municipality assistant
Haussain Hassan	Municipality assistant
Swood Hussain	Municipality assistant
Ali Ahmed	Mayor assistant
Mustafa Aysser	Mayor office

Name	Position
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES	
Khalaf Wadi	Mukthar of Isloby Village
Ayada Wassmi	Community member
Hazem Hawas	Community member
Hussine Wadi	Community member
Myassir Ayed	Community member
Salman Amash	Community member
Muzahim Ali	Community member
Mahmood Hazim	Community member
Ibrahim Rakad	Community member
Sabah Hawas	Community member
Haider Majed	Community member
Ibrahim Hussine	Community member
Ali Ateya	Community member
Abdulrahman Ali	Community member
Nawaf Ibrahim	Community member
Ali Abdullah	Community member
Adnan Gaber	Community member
UN/NGOs	
Omar Abbas	IRC
Duaa Yousif	Intersos
Raad Ali	
Abdulla Bakar	IOM
Dr. Saref Ahmed	IOM
Hanan Ali	RWG
Karam Eskander	
Sufyan Mandoo	
Martijn Dalhuijsen	UNAMI DSO

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION

Isloby Village is located 60km north of Hatra District. Before displacement in 2016, the village was home to 105 families. There are currently 154 families (1,100 individuals) and are primarily Sunni Arabs from the Al-Luhaib clan. Initially the families displaced to Jeddah Camps, Mosul and Al Shirqat. The families were largely dependent on agriculture and sheep breeding. Some families attempted to return after the liberation, but they faced renewed ISIS attacks due to the isolated location of the village. The 2018 incident resulted in some fatalities. This has significantly affected the community's willingness to return, as the security situation remained unstable.

Some of the displaced families currently live in rented houses in Qayyarah, Shirqat and Mosul while other families purchased houses and settled in Qayyarah. The challenges in areas of displacement include limited access to stable livelihoods, poor living conditions and insecure tenure for those living in informal sites.

According to the discussion participants the village's infrastructure has been severely damaged, with no functioning basic services. It is uninhabited and occupied by the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).¹

CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

Security Concerns: The ISIS attack on returning families in 2018 deeply affected the community's confidence in the safety of returning to the village. The community members also expressed concern about the presence of PMF in their village and requested their withdrawal from the village.

Livelihoods: Many families are in urgent need of financial assistance due to the harsh economic conditions. The families in Isloby primarily worked in agriculture and sheep breeding before displacement. The economic situation is challenging, preventing families from rebuilding their livelihoods and resilience.

Access to civil documentation: Some children lack official documentation, preventing them from enrolling in school, and legal assistance is needed. According to families, approximately 15 to 20 children in the village require legal assistance, mainly for obtaining official documentation, which prevents them from enrolling in school.

Compensation for damaged homes: Families are facing challenges navigating the compensation process, especially those with relatives previously associated with ISIS.

Freedom of Movement: Families with perceived affiliation with ISIS are unable to move freely within the villages. When checkpoints stop them and check their names, they are often denied entry. As a result, they need to contact the mayor for permission to enter Isloby village.



Figure2 Isloby village housing destruction

¹ PMF 21 Brigade (Nineveh Operations Command of the Popular Mobilization Forces).

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS:

Water: currently there is no functioning water network in the village. The only water sources available are two old wells, which are abandoned and not functional.

School: The primary school requires extensive repairs. There is one **mixed primary school** in the village with a total capacity of 250 students with 5 staff members (teachers), which requires major repairs. The school's capacity was not specified, but it is the only educational facility serving the community.

Health Center: The community donated land for a health center, and while the foundations were laid, construction was halted due to ISIS occupation.

Road Access: The village lacks paved roads, making transportation difficult, especially in the rainy season.

MEETING OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS

Security Assurance: During the meeting, the mayor of Hatra, Mr. Basman, assured families that the security situation in Isloby is now stable. He emphasized that they no longer need to fear further attacks, and returning to the village is safe. The absence of further ISIS attacks and the presence of multiple security checkpoints managed by local or national security forces suggests that the area is currently stable. These checkpoints are part of the efforts to maintain peace and monitor movements.

Municipality Services: The municipality representative pledged full cooperation and support for the village.

Health Services: A Health Department representative confirmed that if at least 10 families return, they can establish a temporary health facility. Mobile clinics are also available to provide immediate support.

Water: Previously, the residents of Isloby relied on wells for their water supply. However, if they return, the Department of Water (DOW) will ensure they are connected to the new water network. If they do not return, the village will not be included in the project, as the local authorities have stated that no infrastructure projects are permitted in empty villages.

Housing Destruction: According to community members and confirmed by the Mukhtar, nearly 100% of the traditional mud houses have been destroyed. Additionally, almost all of the concrete houses were demolished during the liberation operations, with only three remaining intact.

Compensation Procedures: The compensation office representative encouraged families to submit their compensation requests. Although the process has been challenging, especially for those with perceived ISIS affiliation. The mayor, Mr. Basman, assured us that any issues with the PMF at checkpoints would be handled by directly contacting Commander Khudair al-Matrohi. Also, the legal team from INTERSOS confirmed that they are ready to assist families with their compensation claims and complete their documents,

In General, and according to the families and their representatives, the most important factor for return is the reconstruction of housing. The mayor confirmed that all other services, such as water and health care. The Department of Electricity did not attend the meeting, but the mayor assured us that he would coordinate with the department to resolve the electricity issue once the families return.

Next steps include:

Coordinating Return: The local government and service departments, including health, water, migration, and compensation, will work together to encourage families to return. Once a significant number of families return, services and reconstruction efforts will begin. Discussions with relevant authorities regarding the removal of PMF from the village are also planned. There was no representative from the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) at the meeting. The mayor will be responsible for any communication with the PMF regarding relevant issues and coordination efforts.

Discussions on Return: The community is now deliberating internally to assess the feasibility of returning to the village. They plan to inform the village Mukhtar and Mayor about their decision, which will allow the government and service departments to proceed with the necessary preparations for their return. During the session, the community focused primarily on raising challenges and concerns regarding the services that local authorities could provide. The community was previously not aware of the local authority's position that services cannot be extended to the village unless families return. When this was raised by the local authority, the families responded by saying, 'we did not understand that before, so now we will discuss it and decide.'

Addressing the Issue in the JCF

During the meeting, it was decided that the challenges facing Isloby will be presented at the next JCF meeting. This will ensure that other relevant service departments and international organizations that were unable to attend will also be informed, allowing for further coordinated support for the village.

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