



# COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

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## Jazirat Al-Khalidiyah – Albo-Bali Village

October 2024

## METHODOLOGY:

The RWG organized a community dialogue bringing together community members, Mukhtars, and the community leaders of the area, with the presence of local authority to advance durable solutions for the families. The mayor of Habaniyah apologized at the last minute so a separate meeting with the mayor and the head of the unit was planned to deliver community voices and plan for future interventions.

## PARTICIPANTS

### Government:

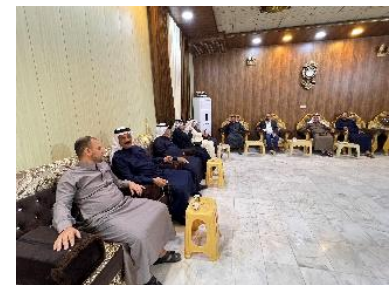
- Ismail Najem - Mukhtar of the Bzibiz informal site

### Community:

- Abed Al Wahab – Tribal leader
- Shiekh Ahmed Yousif – Community representative
- Ahmed Kareem - Community member
- Khalil Jasim - Community member
- Sabah Raheem - Community member
- Raad Jomaa - Community member

### NGOs:

- Aqeel Salim - RWG team (facilitator)



*Dialogue session in Albo-Bali Village*

## OVERVIEW AND DISPLACEMENT HISTORY

Jazirat Al-Khalidiyah is located northeast of Ramadi city in Anbar Governorate. Its strategic location on the Euphrates River makes it a vital crossing point between various regions of Iraq. Due to its strategic geographic position, the village has been a target for many forces seeking control, including ISIL and Al-Qaeda, and has witnessed fierce battles. The village is characterized by fertile land and water resources, making it an important agricultural area. All its residents, approximately 3,000 individuals, were displaced after 2014, most of them to the AAF camp. The displaced people began returning to the area towards the end of 2016. Over 60% of homes, property, and livestock were destroyed, including agricultural facilities and implements owned by families through governmental loans. According to local sources, most of the displaced people have returned, but there are still around 30 families who have been unable to return due to tribal issues and objections from the locals. The argument of the local community is that those families have members who were affiliated with ISIL who evolved in criminal acts against the community.

## Challenges and Needs:

- **Housing:** there are over 1800 houses in the village out of which over 60% were destroyed due to military operations. The families reconstructed their houses on their own, without any governmental support as their community leaders affirmed that no families received property compensation, which has burdened many families who accumulated debts to rehabilitate their homes.



*Figure 1 Destroyed houses due to military operations*

- **Livelihoods:** the area mostly depends on agriculture, but the area was affected by the war. Unemployment is high, with limited means of livelihood, and there is a lack of jobs, including government appointments. Residents rely on daily labor opportunities in Ramadi. Residents feel there is unfairness in obtaining government jobs, even though the Anbar government has launched many government job opportunities on a contractual basis in 2024 and 2023. Locals believe they are not getting such opportunities because they are not close to those in power of the local authority.
- **Agriculture:** Agriculture is the main source of income for these families, but due to the lack of government support in providing subsidized fertilizers and seeds, residents have become discouraged to farm. Since farming is limited, farming job opportunities are not available throughout the year which leads people to work as construction workers in the area and other parts of the governorate.
- **Access to Aid:** Limited humanitarian and no government aid has been provided since their return to their areas. The only humanitarian aid they received was a monetary amount of IQD480,000 from Oxfam for one month. Families report that they did not receive the MoMD return grant.
- **Health:** There is one health center in the area, which does not meet the required needs. It lacks equipment and medical staff, forcing returnees to travel to Ramadi or Al-Khalidiyah hospitals, which are located more than 45 minutes away.
- **Education:** There are 8 primary schools and 2 secondary schools, including one caravan school in Jazirat al-Khalidiyah. The returnees of Albo-Bali go to various schools in Jazirat al-Khalidiyah. Most schools are in a dilapidated condition and operate on a three-shift system. There is overcrowding with around 40-50 students per class. The schools lack teaching staff and depend on volunteers who are graduates from the College of Education.

- **Social Cohesion:** There are 30 families still displaced in other locations in Anbar and Erbil who have not returned to the area due to rejection by the community as those families had members who had joined ISIL and were involved in crimes against other families during the invasion of ISIL in 2014. According to the participants, community leaders and influential figures such as tribal leaders have been trying to increase awareness within the community of the importance of tolerance so that families of those elements who joined ISIL do not bear the burden of these crimes. However, the community is still rejecting these families.

#### Recommendations:

- Support the creation of job opportunities through coordination with the local government to increase the number of those included in government appointments from these areas.
- Call on the government to increase government support for services provided by the social protection network, especially for widowed women.
- Improve the conditions of the health center with equipment and staff.
- Coordinate with the local government to include schools in the government's program for the reconstruction and rebuilding of regions.
- Coordinate with the Agriculture Department to provide seeds and fertilizers.

#### Action Points:

| # | Action  | Who              | Timeline |
|---|---|------------------|----------|
| 1 | Raising issues and challenges with Department of Agriculture.   | RWG              | Dec-Jan  |
| 2 | Advocate with MoLSA to include qualifying families within social protection network   | RWG              | Dec-Jan  |
| 3 | Coordinating with MoMD future interventions to improve living conditions, including distributing return grants.   | RWG- MoMD        | Dec-Jan  |
| 4 | Creation of job opportunities through coordination with the local government and advocating to include more people from the area in government vacancies. | Mayor office     | Dec-Jan  |
| 5 | Follow-up with district health department to Improve the conditions of the health center with equipment and staff.  | RWG-Mayor office | Dec-Jan  |
| 6 | Discuss possibility and assess the need to organize a DS discussion   | RWG              | Dec-Jan  |

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