

## RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- **Meeting Date:** 29 April 2025
- **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-13:00 pm
- **Location:** IOM Conference Room, Erbil & Remote connection via Teams

Attendance: UNHCR, OCHA, IOM, GIZ, UNDP, Peace Winds Japan (PWJ), ICRS, IID Iraq, WRO, UN-Habitat, IVY-Japan, RWG Team, DRC, NRC, Mercy Paths, BHMF, UNAMI DSO, IRC, PRM- U.S. Consulate General in Erbil, Swiss. Embassy (Baghdad), U.S. Embassy (Baghdad), USAID-BHA, ECHO Erbil, Justice Centre, Dorcas Aid International, MSF Switzerland, MSF Belgium

### Agenda:

1. **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of March Meeting Minutes
2. **Context Update:** DTM – Climate Induced Displacement in central and southern Iraq (March 2025 data)
3. **IOM presentation:** Reintegration Monitoring Baseline and Endline Data (2025)
4. **DS Update**
5. **AOB**

### 1. Introduction and adoption of minutes: Review of previous minutes; Follow up action points from the previous meeting.

- Endorsement of the previous meeting minutes.
- No pending action points.

### 2. DTM – Climate induced displacement tracking (March 2025)

*(Please refer to the full presentation link for further details)*

### Overview

- The DTM cover 12 governorates in Central and Southern Iraq, assessing 475 locations for locations affected by drought and water scarcity.
- To date 28,701 families have been displaced by drought as of March 2025.
- Most families displaced from Thi-Qar (49%), Missan (19%) and Al Diwaniya (10%), with many displacements being localized within the governorates

### Government Response to Climate Displacement

- MoMD registered families affected by Drought and Desertification. According to this data based MoMD has registered 17,365 families, the majority being from Thi-Qar, Diwaniyah, Muthanna and Missan.
- The Ministries of Water Resources and Agriculture are engaged in efforts to help families cope with water scarcity and the effects of climate change. The Ministry of Planning is also increasingly involved in addressing climate-induced displacement.

### Key Challenges and Assistance for Displaced families

- The key challenges reported by families relate to housing, livelihoods and access to services
- More efforts may be needed by local municipalities to implement measures to integrate displaced families within their communities.
- Families often move from rural to urban contexts and may need assistance with diversifying their skills to better access livelihood opportunities.

### Discussion

- **Question 1:** Which government departments are involved in supporting interventions related to climate change other than MoMD and what kind of interventions do they do?
- **Response from DTM:** It is mostly the Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture. Some of the work they do is to reduce the demand for water through restricting extensive crops, improving water management and local municipalities may also be involved in assisting local communities. The ministry of planning has also recently reached out to DTM for support on conducting a climate survey, so they could also increasingly play a role.
- **Question 2 (UN Habitat):** The figures on the slides are those for families or individuals and does it include the 1,3million?
- **Response from DTM:** DTM counts the conflict IDPs separately from the climate IDPs as the causes for displacement are different. For the Climate figures DTM has both figures in the slides, families are 28,000 estimates of about 172,000 individuals. For the MoMD figures (17,365HH), there are some backlogs in collecting data in some of the governorates so there might be some information which will be updated in the coming months, also noting that MOMD is currently assessing 7 governorates which are a fewer than those assessed by DTM.
- **Question (Swiss Embassy):** Clarification that the displacement is mainly taking place in the South, and if there is any displacement occurring from the south to the north?
- **Response from DTM:** The largest flows are coming from the southern governorates, mostly Missan, Al Diwaniya and Thi-qar and less from Basra and Muthana, the trend is spreading to central Iraq but to a lesser extent and with people moving within their governorates and from rural locations to urban. DTM has not observed this in the north but it could emerge in the future.
- **Question 3(RWG):** What is the trend of the movements, are they temporary or long-term?

- **Response from DTM:** The general trend is more long-term or permanent although there are a few cases of people returning to areas of origin or relocations to a third location; however we have not found a decrease in displacement which suggests that numbers are increasing over time. DTM also did an assessment to ask families if they return to do agriculture but the figures of those who do were quite low. The cost of moving can be high if you are reliant on daily labour.
- **Question 4 (DRC):** What kind of assistance is available to families who register with MoMD?
- **Response from DTM:** MoMD provides registered IDPs with food and non-food assistance. However, MoMD has stated that greater support is needed as some of the needs of the families are outside of the mandate of MoMD including integrating children into schools.
- **Question 5 (OCHA):** Enquired if the registration is currently open, as the Ministry is known to close registration in governorates based on instructions from the Minister?
- **Response from DTM:** There are some variations **across** the governorates, in some cases there is a one-year window for families to register in other cases it is kept open. There have been reports of suspension of registration due to fraud. The Ministry of Water Resources has a criterion where it designates areas which are affected by drought and those families from those areas are eligible to register.

### 3. IOM presentation: Facilitated Voluntary Movements ---Reintegration Baseline and Endline Survey Results Dashboard

*(Please refer to the full presentation link for further details)*

#### Overview:

- The Dashboard provides information on families who have participated in the IOM FVM program.
- Surveyed families either returned, relocated or locally integrated.
- The dashboard covers five criteria, safety & security, adequate standard of living, access to livelihoods, HLP and access to documentation

#### Key Findings:

- *Access to documentation:* There was a notable increase in the households reporting missing civil documentation between the baseline and endline follow-ups. This increase was attributed to the need for renewing documents and the introduction of unified ID.
- *Safety and Security:* Most families feel safe in their neighbourhoods with little change between baseline and endline results, however perceptions of safety and security vary across different districts.
- *Adequate Standard of Living:* The data indicated improvements in housing conditions, access to health services and access to water. However, challenges persist in the areas of school access and electricity supply (most families rely on generators).
- *Housing, Land and Property:* The survey results show some improvements in housing conditions and ownership status for the families; however, some challenges remain related to property ownership documents and fear of eviction.
- *Outstanding needs:* In general, the main outstanding need relate to shelter, healthcare and livelihoods depending on the location of arrival.

#### Discussion

- **Question 6 (ECHO):** Enquired about the civil documentation needs increasing concerned that it could be misleading to say that those returnees who need to renew civil documentation are 'missing' documentation? The expectation was that the number would be lower since in locations like Sinjar, more families should now have access to civil documents.
- **IOM:** Explained that the documents they consider 'core' civil documents are Civil ID, National Unified ID, PDS, Nationality Certificate and Birth certificate. Many families report that they are unable to use their PDS if it is expired. Some households simply do not have these documents or have children who don't have the documents. On Sinjar, indeed the needs for documents vary depending on the location. We could look more into the data and see if the families want to renew.
- **Comment (UNHCR):** Concurred that as the slides showed, there has been a significant shift in Iraq to the use of the Unified ID and it is an ID from Baghdad, and it has only been recently that there has been some flexibility in accessing this document in other areas. It is a huge task for any country to move everyone to a unified document. If life circumstances change you marry, divorce or become widowed it adds layers of complexity, so while we may expect it to be easier, there are resourcing constraints we need to consider.
- **Question 7 (UN Habitat):** Enquired about what kinds of daily labour livelihoods families generally rely on once they return?
- **IOM:** Responded that they would need to look closer into the data on livelihoods, since some families report having livestock and daily labour, but we don't have more information although in some instances it is construction.
- If partners need information on specific communities please reach out to Alaa, the dashboard is internal and does not include data from self - returning IDPs or host communities but can provide some helpful insights.

#### 4. DSTWG Update

(Please refer to the full presentation link for further details)

##### Subgroup Updates:

- M&A Subgroup:
  - The last meeting was conducted on 28 April.
  - The subgroup has completed working on the reporting M & A guidelines and are preparing the reporting tool which will be on Kobo.
  - With the wind down of REACH, an opening for co-chair of the subgroup is available. RWG members are invited to contact Alaa if interested in co-chairing or membership.
- ABC and JCF Updates:
  - Sinjar ABC: Next meeting is scheduled for today 29 May.
- JCF Update
  - UNAMI wrap up has resulted in the ending of contract for the Diyala, Anbar and Kirkuk secretariat support.
  - Temporary arrangements are in place for coverage in those governorates to ensure continuity and handover to government authorities:
    - Kirkuk---Osama
    - Diyala & Anbar---Saif
    - Ninewa---Osama until Najat's return
- Update on DSTF Meetings:
  - Meeting paused by the Resident Coordinator pending some proposed amendments to the ToR. Key changes focus on:
    - The centrality of the implementation of the Durable Solutions Road Map
    - Direct Engagement with the government for advocacy and decision making
    - Linkage with the Geneva based interagency solutions Hub.
- Update on Government Committees:
  - A committee mandated with the development of a plan for IDP return and reconstruction efforts and is chaired by the Deputy National Security Advisor has requested an extension to implement its work.
  - The committee currently has representatives from both Federal and KRG authorities.
  - It is anticipated that the plan will be completed with input from the UN.
- Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement:
  - A guidance document has been shared and will operate as the UNs foundational reference for solutions to internal displacement.
  - The key emphasis of the guidance is government leadership and ownership. Leadership of the Resident Coordinator and the UNCT supported by UNDP, UNHCR and IOM as global and local solutions champions with rotating roles as chairs.
  - Principles include quiet diplomacy, evidence-based planning, inclusive prioritise the rights and agency of IDPs.

##### Discussion

- **Question 7 (DRC):** Enquired about the DSTF meetings since they have no meetings in 2025.
- **RWG:** Confirmed that there have been no meetings this year. The Resident coordinator wanted to review some of the coordination meetings considering the draw down of the HCT and the change in context. There will be a meeting soon.
- **OCHA:** Added that for the HCT, there is a TOR being prepared for the new forum, more information will be shared once that is settled. finalised.

##### Summary of Action Points

- Members interested in joining the M&A subgroup or co-chairing it to reaching to Alaa.
- Partners interested in the reintegration data to also reach out to Alaa.
- RWG chair to invite EDMCR on the EMC update for next meeting.

##### AOB

- IVY Japan announced the launch of a food assistance activities in the East Mosul Camps providing 1,200 food baskets to families to address food insecurity and malnutrition.
- As per schedule, the RWG Meeting will be on 27 May 2025, partners are invited to reach out if you have any presentations to share.