

## RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- **Meeting Date:** 25 February 2025
- **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-13:00 pm
- **Location:** IOM Conference Room, Erbil & Remote connection via Teams

**Attendance:** UNHCR, Mercy Hands, CRS, IMC, Peace Winds Japan (PWJ), UN-Habitat, IVY-Japan, DS Coordination, PRM- U.S. Consulate General in Erbil, DRC, MSF Geneva, LWF, Mercy Hands, PRM, Baghdad US Embassy, NPA, WRO, UNAMI DSO, IRC, Dorcas Aid International, USAID-BHA, ECHO Erbil and OCHA

### Agenda:

1. **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of Meeting Minutes and Action Points
2. **Context Update:** DTM – Displacement and Returns Update, and Al-Amal Center for Psychological and Community Rehabilitation Dashboards
3. **DRC presentation:** The Double Burden: The Lived Experiences of Displaced and Returnee Women in Iraq
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 – Displacement and Returns Update, and Al-Amal Center for Psychological and Community Rehabilitation Dashboards**

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

#### Return Index Round 23 (September – December 2024)

- Out of the 2,230 return locations assessed, 455 present severe conditions and host 12 per cent of the returnee population, or 609,954 individuals.
- An increase of 5,289 returnees living in severe or poor conditions has been observed since the round collected in September – December 2023, when the share of returnees in severe conditions was also 12 per cent (604,656 individuals).

#### Displacement Index

- Out of the 2,486 displacement locations assessed in Round 11, 82 present severe conditions. These locations host 5 per cent of the IDP population or 48,504 individuals.
- A decrease of 7,746 IDPs living in severe conditions has been observed since September – December 2023 (Round 8), when 6 per cent of the IDP population (56,250 individuals) were living in severe conditions.

#### Al-Amal Center for Psychological and Community Rehabilitation Dashboards

- DTM Iraq shared Al-Amal Center for Psychological and Community Rehabilitation Dashboards that DTM developed using data collected through our CCCM team (Camp Coordination and Camp Management) and Protection division team to develop two comprehensive dashboards focused on Jeddah One Camp.
- These dashboards provide detailed statistics about internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have arrived at Al-Amal center, those currently residing there, and their demographic breakdowns. Additionally, the dashboards shed light on the situations of IDPs who have departed the center, offering insights into the challenges they are facing as they transition to life outside.

#### Discussion

- **Question:** How many camps have officially closed as of now?
- **DTM:** As of the most recent update, two camps in Sulaymaniyah have officially closed. No camps in Duhok have been closed as of now. You can find more details on the DTM website under the Emergency Tracking section, which includes a tracker showing the percentage of closure for each camp.  
The DTM tracking of camp closures has stopped due to the cessation of MoMD grants that were previously used for camp closure activities. You can find more details on the DTM website under the camp closure section.
- **Comment from UNAMI DSO:** It seems that despite ongoing discussions and plans, such as the relocation of the two remaining families in Hasham and the East Mosul camp consolidation, there has been little progress. The lack of action since July or August, particularly with the unresolved situation in Baraka Camp, highlights a significant bottleneck.

- **Comment from RWG:** The decrease in the number of returns, especially from families in Sinjar and Qahtaniyah, highlights the ongoing challenges faced by IDPs. A key factor contributing to this is the MoMD's delay in resuming registration and disbursing the 4 million Iraqi dinar grant, which many families rely on to restart their lives in areas of origin. Without this support, and with the continued uncertainty about when the grants will resume, families remain hesitant to return. Additionally, the lack of basic infrastructure, safety, housing, and livelihood opportunities in areas of return further discourages displacement. Addressing these issues should be a priority to encourage safe and sustainable returns.
- **Question:** How often is the demographic tracker updated for CCCM and protection monitoring?
- **DTM:** For CCCM, the tracker is updated whenever a new round of data is received. While there is no fixed timeline, updates typically occur approximately every month, depending on changes such as new registrations or departures. If no significant changes happen within a month, the data remains unchanged until the next update. For protection monitoring, updates occur after a post-departure survey is conducted, which takes place about a month after individuals leave the camp. Once the data is finalized, it is shared for dashboard updates. The frequency of updates can vary depending on when the relevant divisions have data ready for submission.
- **Question:** Given that civil documentation is a high priority for returnees from Amal Centre, do families in the camp have access to these services, or must they wait until they return to their areas of origin? Are there any mechanisms in place to facilitate access while in displacement?
- **IOM Protection:** Families in the camp can submit requests for civil documentation, but the process varies case by case. It depends on the type of document and whether they have the necessary original documents to support their application. Recently, around 50 to 60 families successfully obtained the Unified Nationality Card while still in the camp. For those who leave before their case is completed, the request is transferred to a legal actor in their area of return. If no legal actor is available, families may need to follow up on their documentation independently after returning.
- **Comment from DTM:** With 70% of households headed by females, compared to just 20% in other returnee households, this group faces significant vulnerabilities, including limited access to employment and education. Additionally, they experience higher rates of multiple displacements, making it even harder for them to achieve durable solutions. Despite these challenges, the majority of this group prefers to remain in their current locations once they leave the camp, emphasizing the need for targeted support to improve their stability, access to services, and for economic independence.

### 3. DRC presentation: The Double Burden: The Lived Experiences of Displaced and Returnee Women in Iraq

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

#### Recommendations: The government of Iraq should:

- Strengthen IDPs' and returnees' access to social safety nets
- Include the displaced and returnee women in the planning and execution of local and national policies
- Enhance security in the areas of origin through stabilization programs and conflict
- Ensure that policies, laws and their implementation are cognizant of the specific social pressure and violence that women and girls face

#### The international community should:

- Continue providing financial support to rebuild and repair damaged homes in areas of origin.
- Continue funding projects expanding livelihood opportunities for the displaced and returnee women.
- The International donor community should take a similar and consistent approach to both humanitarian and longer-term aid strategies and programmes for durable solutions.

#### Discussion

- **Question:** What basis were the five out of eight IASC criteria for durable solutions selected? How do the excluded criteria impact the overall understanding of achieving durable solutions for these women?
- **DRC:** The three excluded criteria are: effective remedies for displacement-related violations, voluntary reunification with family members, and access to personal documentation. These were not covered due to the nature of the focus group discussions, which made it difficult to address these topics in that setting. Despite their relevance, the focus was on criteria more suited to the group discussion format rather than individual interviews.
- **Question:** Why were these locations chosen for the data collection in the report, and what were the criteria behind the selection?
- **DRC:** These locations were chosen based on where we had existing programming and established relationships. We worked closely with our partners, JCI and Hawa, who were key collaborators in the data collection process. The primary criteria for selecting these locations were our ability to gather reliable information, facilitated by our ongoing work with program teams and those of our partners in these locations.
- **Question:** It was mentioned that some females were threatened by the Mukhtar about potential evacuation from their areas. Are these regular IDPs or ISIS-related families? What is the role of security actors in the locations where these threats occurred? Do they have any influence over the Mukhtar?
- **DRC:** It wasn't specifically clarified whether these were regular IDPs or ISIS-related families in the analysis. These distinctions will need to be reviewed with the team to gain a clearer understanding, particularly for these locations, as it might vary by area. But DRC will get back to you after further clarification is obtained.
- **Question:** In terms of employment opportunities, did the study uncover any particular needs, especially related to women?

- **DRC:** While the study did not go into great detail about specific job priorities, some key needs were identified. Many women highlighted a lack of tools despite having skills, such as sewing but lacking sewing machines. There was also a significant need for financial support for small projects, especially for women who prefer home-based businesses due to the challenges of working outside the home. Additionally, some business planning and skills support, particularly in rural areas, were identified as important for women seeking to start or grow their own small businesses.

#### 4. DSTWG Update

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

##### Discussion on the impact of the USG work-stop order : Collected information so far:

- Housing, Land and Property---Housing Rehabilitation, rental assistance
- Health services (in camps), MHPSS, WASH (in camps and in informal sites)
- Livelihoods
- Access to documentation and rights (Legal assistance, protection monitoring)

##### Ad hoc Meeting on Defining caseload and solutions pathways :

- Last meeting held in December 2024, minutes shared with agenda.
  - Next meeting scheduled for Feb/March 2025
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- **UNAMI DSO:** The JCF Workshop held on Sunday, the 23rd, was a well-attended event, despite some challenges. Due to budget limitations, some of the expected participants, especially from the Basra JCF, couldn't attend. However, the workshop saw strong representation from the government side and the UNAMI team, who helped manage and provide support to the JCF. The high-level attendance from both the government and the UN team, including the DSRSG, showcased the importance of the event. The government participants praised the role of the UN in running the JCF and emphasized the need to maintain this platform for continued discussions. Moving forward, discussions focused on the transition of responsibilities post-UNAMI, with a set of recommendations to guide the way forward. Overall, the workshop was positive, and a report will be shared with the outcomes and next steps.

#### AOB

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- The upcoming RWG meeting is scheduled for 25 March.