

RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- **Meeting Date:** 27 May 2025
- **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am-13:00 pm
- **Location:** IOM Conference Room, Erbil & Remote connection via Teams

Attendance: JCI, UNHCR, Peace Winds, World Vision Iraq, Solidarites International, WRO, IVY Japan, IOM, USAID, NPA, ASB, Sunrise Organization, Dorcas Aid International, Mercy Hands, OCHA, DRC, IID, GIZ, IRC, UN-Habitat, MSF Swiss, UNAMI, EJCC, and PUI.

Agenda:

1. **Introduction and adoption of minutes:** Review of April Meeting Minutes
2. **Context Update:** RWG Field Update
3. **UN Habitat:** Update on Yazidi Land Ownership in Sinjar and implementation of Resolution No. 227
4. **EDMCR:** Situation in Erbil and East Mosul Camps
5. **IOM FVM:** Key Findings from Reintegration Monitoring and FVM Update
6. **DS Update**
7. **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.
- Inviting EJCC to the meeting to provide an update on Erbil camps--Completed

2. **RWG Field Update**

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

Ninewa Field Update:

Ninewa Compensation

Real Estate Applications: 69,666

- Completed: 68,366
- Paid: 60,366 | Pending: 8,000

Vehicle Compensation: 12,265 approved

Martyrs/Wounded: 18,492

- Under processing: 460 | Paid Martyrs Foundation: 17,197

Discussion

- **Question 1(UN-Habitat):** Has the government officially resumed camp closures or compensation-related actions?
- **RWG:** No, camp closures are currently suspended. According to the latest understanding, the July 2024 deadline for closures has passed, and the government is no longer enforcing any closure measures. A high-level committee was established to address displacement issues more proactively, without forcing returns. While there is no indication closures will resume, there is also no certainty about future decisions.
- **UNHCR:** While updates on the way forward in terms of reform or camp closure are being awaited, the ability to register an intent to depart the camp or to depart the camp has been suspended. Even those who would like to leave now, regardless of a more formal process, are not allowed to depart unless supported by IOM. Departures from the camps are almost exclusively facilitated by IOM, so only a small number have left.
- **Question 2(PUI):** Has the composition of the remaining camp population been identified? Are minorities still the majority among them?
- **UNHCR:** Yes, the majority of those remaining in the camps have been identified as Yazidis. The exception is in the East Mosul camps, where the population consists mainly of Sunni Arabs.

3. **EDMCR: Situation in Erbil and East Mosul Camps**

- As of 16 May 2025, the number of households remaining in the camps are: Baherka (180), Hassan sham U2 (104), Hassan sham U3 (610), Her (302), and Dibaga (881).
- Returns are occurring through three main channels: with MoMD, with IOM, and through self-facilitated departures. In Hasansham U3, 13 households returned independently in April 2025. An additional 15 households were confirmed as self-returnees after camp management conducted three verification visits at 15-day intervals to confirm their absence before classifying them as self-managed returns.

- Two MoMD returnee lists have been cleared for security and are pending final review and approval by EJCC. Once approved, they will be shared with Camp Management for further processing. The first list includes 28 households and the second includes 162 households.
- Separately, IOM has submitted returnee lists, but some key details such as ID numbers are still missing. These are required to complete the security clearance process. Once the missing information is provided and families are cleared, the lists will be forwarded to Camp Management for further processing.

Discussion

- **Comment from IOM:** Just to clarify, IOM does not share any information directly with JCC. Families are referred to BCF, which is the camp management. Only the names of the families are shared with JCC for coordination purposes. There is no direct data sharing or transmission of lists between IOM and JCC.
- **Question 3(RWG):** Is the consolidation of U2 and U3 camps still ongoing, or has it been cancelled?
- **EDMCR:** The consolidation is currently on hold. A technical assessment was conducted, and the findings were shared with MoMD. While MoMD was involved and informed of the results, they have confirmed that there is no budget available to proceed with the consolidation. JCC has checked with MoMD multiple times, and the response remains the same: there is no budget to move forward at this stage.
- **Question 4(UNHCR):** Has construction started on the new perimeter fence around U2, and is it connected to the camp consolidation plan?
- **EDMCR:** A committee from the Ministry of Interior (Mol) was established some time ago to investigate the security situation at U2. The fencing is not connected to the consolidation plan—it is solely for safety and security purposes due to repeated incidents of theft and unauthorized entry into the camp. There are currently no confirmed updates or timelines.

4. UN Habitat: Update on Yazidi Land Ownership in Sinjar and implementation of Resolution No. 227

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

Decision No. (227) of 2025

Council of Ministers – Twelfth Regular Session – March 25, 2025

- Approval to write off 100% of the purchase price of residential plots on which floors are built in the Yazidi complexes in Sinjar and al-Ba'aj, to prevent migration from these complexes. A non-disposal notice shall be placed on these properties for a period of three years from the date of ownership, in accordance with Cabinet Resolution No. (372 of 2019) regarding the Alqosh case in Nineveh Governorate.
- Providing the Nineveh Governorate with the Sinjar Real Estate Registration Office and the Municipality Directorate with staff according to the needs of these departments, and for the governorate's directorates to allocate their employees assigned to this file, with the matter to be completed within (60 days).

Discussion

- **Question (RWG):** What happens to families who are not currently in Dugrey or Tel Uzair? Do they have to wait for ownership titles, or is there an interim solution in place?
- **UN Habitat:** Families who are not in Dugrey or Tel Uzair are currently waiting for official title deeds. In the meantime, they have been issued Occupant Certificates by UN-Habitat. While these are not formal government-issued deeds, they are considered official because they were acknowledged through a Cabinet Resolution. This provides families with security of tenure until formal titles are available.

5. IOM FVM: Key Findings from Reintegration Monitoring and FVM Update

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

Reintegration Monitoring Sinjar and Baaj: IOM gathers data from beneficiaries within one to four months and nine months after their return. Called Baseline and Endline follow ups. Between March 2nd and 9th, 2025, 126 households departed camps and informal sites in Duhok, facilitated by IOM FVM program.

- Perceptions on safety and security: All (100%) of households reported they and their household members feel safe moving alone during the day in their community
- Education: 69% of households reportedly had children of school age.
- Documentation: 37% of households reportedly had at least one member of their household lack some of the civil documentation.

- Access to livelihoods: 41% did not have a regular monthly income in the last three months.

Discussion

- **Question (DTM):** Can you explain how displaced families are involved in agriculture, and how this affects their decisions about returning to areas of origin like Sinjar?
- **IOM FVM:** Many displaced families rent agricultural land in their area of displacement, particularly in Duhok, where they are highly skilled in farming. Although they are officially camp residents, some live seasonally on the rented farmland where basic shelter is available. The land is more familiar, has better access to water, and offers stable job opportunities. In contrast, areas like Sinjar are facing severe drought, and water is now much harder to access due to climate change, wells that used to reach water at 700 meters now cannot. Because of this, IDPs often prefer to continue farming in displacement areas. However, some families are planning to return to Sinjar by November, once the farming season ends, so they can prepare for the next agricultural cycle in their areas of origin.
- **Question (UNAMI):** What is the current status of the MoMD return registration process, and how is it affecting families?
- **IOM FVM:** The MoMD return registration process has been suspended since July 12. This suspension does not affect FVM (Facilitated Voluntary Movement) registration, which continues. The reason for the MoMD suspension is due to a high caseload, over 4,000 families were registered for return between 2023 and 2025. Currently, there are still nearly 2,000 families awaiting assistance. Due to this backlog, the priority is to serve those already registered, and it's unclear when or if new MoMD return registrations will resume.
- **Question (RWG):** When reintegration surveys identify community-level issues, such as water shortages or families living below the poverty line—are these findings shared with local authorities or referred to relevant government bodies like MoLSA?
- **IOM FVM:** Currently, the findings from reintegration monitoring are not directly shared with the government. They are mainly used internally for donor reporting and operational planning, such as prioritizing infrastructure projects. However, the suggestion to engage local authorities is valid. There is potential to design and share summarized findings with them.
- As for referrals to MoLSA, while there isn't a formal mechanism in place for this round, the idea is valuable, especially given current funding constraints. Community focal points also help raise post-return challenges, and there is some collaboration with local officials through ABCs, including the Ninewa Governor's Office, to address emerging issues.
- **Question (UN Habitat):** Can families receive both compensation from the government and assistance through the FVM programs, or are these mutually exclusive?
- **IOM FVM:** Yes, families can receive both. Receiving assistance through the FVM programs does not disqualify them from accessing compensation. Our support is not dependent on government aid. For example, IOM prioritized IDPs in informal sites who were not eligible for the government's 4 million IQD compensation, ensuring they still received assistance through IOM FVM programs.
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- **Question:** Did the survey explore legal needs beyond civil documentation, such as issues related to criminal records, similarity of names, or the need for supporting documents?
- **IOM FVM:** The survey primarily focused on civil documentation, but it included a general question that allowed respondents to mention other legal needs. While the majority of responses were related to civil documents, such as birth certificates or housing documents, some respondents did report additional legal challenges. These included issues like name similarities or the need for supporting documents to obtain the main civil documents they were seeking. In this particular round of data collection, only two families reported needing housing documents, which are considered part of civil documentation. Additionally, 37 percent of respondents indicated that they were missing one or more civil documents. A broader dashboard covering cases from 2023 to 2024 showed that 51 percent of respondents had reported missing civil documentation at some point.
- **Question:** Is there an existing referral system or financial support mechanism for individuals in Sinjar who require medical intervention for conditions such as amputations or congenital diseases, especially when these services are not available locally?

- **IOM:** As mentioned in the ABC group, there isn't much happening regarding referrals or financial support for specialized medical cases like amputations or congenital diseases in Sinjar. Some support exists for returnees through our health teams, but coverage is limited. Usually, patients go to local hospitals, and if services aren't available, it's unclear whether they get referred elsewhere. The best approach is to check with the local hospitals, coordinate, NGOs like MSF, and other health providers to find ways to connect people with the care they need.

6. DSTWG Update

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

DSTF Meeting 13 May 2025: Key Discussion Points

- UNHCR presented an update on the IDP camps (20 remain open, with ad hoc services remaining, no significant departures reported and EMCs exploring consolidation)
- Departures from Duhok camps were facilitated by IOM, and MHPSS needs reemphasized for returnees.
- The Gol High-level Committee met 6 times so far, with 2 subcommittees formed (one addressing the double jeopardy risks in EMCs, leading to judicial coordination between KRI and federal courts)
- The DSTF revised ToR was presented to align with post-HCT architecture and calls to improve DSTF's engagement with the Gol.
- Decisions
- DSTF members invited to submit feedback on the ToR by end of May.

Guideline on Climate Resilience

- The Sustainable Livelihoods subgroup has developed a guideline on climate and resilience.
- Hard copies of the guideline, printed by IRC, are available. Online copies available in Arabic and English on [DS Website](#)
- Those needing hard copies should please reach out to IRAQ RWG iraqrwg@iom.int ; distribution is possible in Erbil and Baghdad.

AOB

- As per schedule, the RWG Meeting will be on 24 June 2025, partners are invited to reach out if you have any presentations to share.