

Activity Report Coordination Mechanisms Workshop Baghdad - Coral Palace Hotel 20-21 Aug 2024



حلول دائمة في العراق
Iraq Durable Solutions



Executive summary

While the Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MoMD) is responsible to provide certain services to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees such as registration, return grants, awareness, Non-Food Items (NFIs), etc, there are several services needed to be provided to IDPs and returnees under the responsibility of other ministries and departments such as Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), Ministry of Planning (MoP), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Education (MoE). Since there are no clear mechanisms developed by MoMD on this regard, and due to the many challenges on the coordination aspect that have been highlighted by MoMD, the RWG organized a workshop to provide MoMD staff and their partners in other ministries and local governments the opportunity to brainstorm and develop recommendations for processes and mechanisms which will ensure smoother information sharing and coordination between the ministry and the other authorities to ensure improved service provision to IDPs and returnee.



Coordination mechanisms workshop

Twenty-six government officials, including 16 from the MoMD Headquarter officials' and heads of branches of northern, central and Kurdish Regional governorates, five from ministries (Finance, Higher Education, MoLSA, Planning) and five from local governments (SAD, Anbar, Babil, and Ninawa) participated. The RWG facilitated the workshop along with DTM team who presented a session on the displacement and return index. The workshop was a response to a request by MoMD HQ to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group (DSTWG) with the aim of addressing the external coordination aspect of their work and develop it on headquarter and governorate levels.

Workshop agenda:

Day 1

- Introduction and workshop objectives (RWG)
- Introduction to coordination mechanisms (RWG)
- MoMD internal coordination on IDPs and returning programs (MoMD)
- MoMD coordination mechanisms with other institutions - brainstorming session (all participants)
- How to transform obstacles into opportunities – discussion session (all participants)

Day 2

- Review of day one and presenting day two agenda (RWG)
- Presentation on coordination planning (RWG)
- Exercise on coordination planning (4 groups)

- Discussion session on Coordination needs (all participants)
- Exercise on subject-based issues identified by community in previous RWG activities (4 groups)
- Outline final recommendations (all participants)

Objectives and expected outcomes:

- Identify inter-ministerial coordination challenges and weaknesses.
- Through group discussions and exercises, build pathways for coordination solutions.
- Learn keys fundamentals on coordination planning.
- Developing recommendations to be raised to MoMD HQ.

Other objectives:

- Non-MoMD institutions develop reports on the activity outcomes with the aim of preparing the colleagues in their institution for better coordination with MoMD.
- Non-MoMD institutions improve their internal coordination to support MOMD.
- Provide an opportunity for MOMD branches to discuss real issues with local governmental partners.

List of participants:

Government

	Names	Male/Female	Department
1	Hasan Moataz Hasan	Male	MoMD deputy head of SAD branch
2	Haider Moneer Shaik	Male	MoMD deputy head of Erbil branch
3	Rusal Ghanim Hadi	Female	MoMD Sulaymaniyah – staff member
4	Samer Mashkor Badri	Male	MoMD head of Sulaymaniyah branch
5	Iskander Mohammed Ameen	Male	MoMD head of Dahuk branch
6	Mustafa Hamed Farhan	Male	MoMD head of Anbar branch
7	Khalid Mahjoob Jasim	Male	MoMD Head of SAD branch
8	Kahlid Abed Al Kareem salim	Male	MoMD Head of Ninawa branch
9	Saif Omer Ibraheem	Male	MoMD head of Diyala branch
10	Basim Mohammed Mahmood	Male	MoMD Branches Affairs Department
11	Kathman Salman Sajet	Female	MoMD Legal Department
12	Bilal Hasan Abbas	Male	MoMD Administration and Finance Department
13	Tahreer Ibraheem Hanadi	Female	MoMD Planning Department
14	Fayadh Hasan Moshtel	Female	MoMD Planning Department
15	Muhanned Furat Adnan	Male	MoMD deputy head of Karkh branch
16	Ammar Maath	Male	MoMD – Anbar
17	Yasir Amer Hamed	Male	MoP – Human Resources Department
18	Lubna Khamis Mahdi	Female	MoHE – DG of Research Department
19	Muna Rasheed Shaker	Female	MoF – head of Budget Allocations Division
20	Aboul-Rahman Owayed	Male	MoLSA– DG of Social Protection
21	Daliya Tarik Abdul-Muhsin	Female	MoP – Human Resources Department
22	Ahmed Radi Kahdom	Male	Babil Government – head of IDPs Affairs Division

23	Ali Omer Kahder	Male	Ninawa Government – governor assistant for IDPs and Human Rights Affairs
24	Baker Jummah Awaad	Male	Anbar Government – NGOs Section
25	Marleen Talab Al Rahmli	Female	SAD Government – Head of Women Affairs Section
26	Salah Ali Mohammed	Male	Ninawa Government – Head of JCMC

NGOs

	Name	Organization
1	Precillar Moyo	RWG
2	Nigar Gardi	RWG
3	Karam Iskander Kahlil	RWG
4	Alan Al Jaff	RWG
5	Haider Al-Saadi	RWG
6	Marcus Tudehope	UN Habitat
7	Mohammed Jalo	IOM - DTM

Day 1:

Welcome and introductions:

Mr. Amir Abbas, director general of MoMD Planning Department, opened the workshop welcoming the attendees and expressing gratitude for their participation in the workshop that aims at identifying challenges and needs for improving and developing MoMD's coordination mechanisms with other governmental institutions in this fast-paced time and progress in addressing key issues by MoMD, including returns from KRG camps, returns from Al-Hol, supporting the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the informal sites such as Bzibiz camp, and close the file of camps and informal sites in general. Further suggested that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other organizations focus on closing KRG camps and facilitating the return of families to their areas of origin. He expressed hope that the workshop would yield proposals and recommendations for better coordination work by MoMD with other ministries and local authorities with the aim of enhancing the support and assistance provided to.

Ms. Precillar Moyo from RWG-DSTWG welcomed the participants and acknowledged the importance of government institutions which are responsible for providing services to IDPs, returnees and host communities such as compensations for rebuilding homes through the Ministry of Finance, the compensation committees, MoLSA and the Ministry of Trade, who ensure social security and the work of other ministries and local government. She reiterated what was mentioned by the Director General of Planning Department that Iraq is in a strong position to support its citizens and noted the reduced budgets of international organizations and the government leadership in enabling sustainable solutions to displacement. She noted that coordination is important to ensure that line ministries are working towards the same goals on enhancing life for all citizens recognizing that the obstacles faced by communities often intersect such that the lack of access to water or electricity can mean reduced opportunities for livelihoods and inadequate access to education can limit livelihoods. She encouraged

the participants to actively engage and come up with proposals on how ministries can better work together.

Session one - DTM Presentation:

IOM-DTM presented displacement and return data, IDP intentions, and challenges facing returns movements and returnees. The presentation sought to share with the participants the factors affecting IDP decisions, and to hear from MoMD on their perceptions of the data.

MoMD representative commented that DTM data often indicates either displacement or return and did not recognise stabilization (local integration or relocation). DTM responded that the current methodology which relies on key informants makes it difficult to properly gauge when a family relocates or locally integrates as this data would need to be collected at the household level. It was noted that efforts to note the other pathways are currently under discussions within IOM.



DTM session

Session two - Introduction to coordination mechanisms:

The RWG facilitator introduced the concept of coordination mechanisms to give the participants an overview on how coordinating works and how this contributes to achieving a common goal in an organized approach of work. Consequently, effective coordination leads to integration, unification and harmonization of the efforts of different departments.

This applies to the work of the MoMD. The support that MoMD provides to IDPs, and returnees is dependent on the services provided by other ministries and local governments, without water, electricity, schools, healthcare centers, without stable security and decent livelihoods, there will be no sustainable return. Therefore, the ability of MoMD to coordinate its action plans with other line ministries is important.

Session three - MoMD internal coordination on IDPs and returning programs:

In this session participants described the internal coordination among the different structures of MoMD both on headquarters and branches levels as well organized and smooth. The participants moved the conversation to talking about the challenges facing their external communications and coordination that are basically related to financial resources.

Session four - MoMD coordination mechanisms with other institutions (brainstorming session)

Participants focused more on what was working well and occasionally identified some challenges, especially those related to financial challenges facing the implementation of their plans, rather than highlighting coordination challenges.

Coordination in practice

A participant from Anbar said that coordination between Anbar and Ninewa MoMD branches for the return of families from Al-Hol camp to their areas of origin is smooth, but there are challenges mainly

related to official documents and enrolling children in schools. The lack of Iraqi nationality and the more complex issue of proof of lineage for orphaned children, which is currently being addressed in Jada'a camp. To address some of these challenges the Anbar MoMD office coordinates with IOM and WFP to support the issuance of documents and provide necessary support.

The Babil local government reported good coordination between relevant departments and organizations following the cabinet decision to close the camps, particularly IDPs who are originally from Iskandaria and Jurf al-Sakhar sub-districts. He however noted the limited number of aid organisations working in Babylon and the need for support in issuing documents for returnees and improving infrastructure in the Iskandaria return area.

The Ministry of Finance representative stated that the ministry supports direct funding for infrastructure and services projects in areas of return, but sometimes challenges arise due to financial deficit at one side and delay in releasing the budget allocations at another side as was the case in 2024 when the budget allocations were not released until August while it is supposed to be released at the beginning of the year. She pointed that IQD 94 billion have been allocated to support the displacement file, with IQD 47 billion has been already spent so far.

The Ninawa governor assistant for IDPs affairs mentioned a challenge related to data and information sharing with MoMD side noting that this challenge weakens the coordination and preparation by relevant departments and ministries for their interventions on IDPs files. A participant from MoMD Ninawa branch agreed that coordination was weak in the past due to the absence of provincial councils, but now onward these provincial councils will serve as coordination committees.

The head of MoMD branch in SAD focused on challenges in coordinating with security forces that require intensive efforts, given the presence of five security entities in the governorate, the Popular Mobilization Forces, the Iraqi army, the police, Saraya al-Salam, and the federal police.

Participants mentioned ongoing efforts to implement e-governance to reduce reliance on paper-based processes and that would positively affect the coordination efforts too. However, such a transition to these E-Systems requires substantial financial and human resources. A participant highlighted the importance of making use of the E-Systems in developing the coordination work techniques.

In Diyala, it was noted that coordination meetings take place every mid-month to facilitate collaboration among state entities. In addition, other MOMD branches have affirmed the same approach, or what is called "re-integration committee", however, the existence and the effectiveness of these committees varies from one governorate to another. According to MoMD headquarter staff, these committees should cover only IDPs related issues because this file requires special committees on a provincial level to be entrusted with the task of addressing the issues of IDPs and returnees.

In summary participants wanted to focus on the lack of financial resources to address the most pressing issues facing IDPs and returnees such as housing, infrastructures and services. They stressed that MoMD is not a service ministry responsible for extending roads and providing basic services such as water, power, health case, or building schools. A participant stated, "while there are substantial efforts in coordination with international organizations and state departments, the primary obstacle is the lack of budget allocations to support the enormous number of returnees in the program". However, the workshop facilitators reiterated the fact that the lack of financial resources heightens the need for. The participants suggested few initial recommendations such as activating the provincial committees,

increasing advocacy efforts, increasing budget allocations and disseminate financial allocations without delays so that services departments can make faster interventions. Participants did not focus very much on ways to develop and improve coordination mechanisms.

Day 2:

Review of day one:

RWG facilitator went through all parts and points discussed during day one such as financial challenges and huge intervention needed to provide basic services to encourage IDPs to return

On the second day of the workshop, participants engaged in practical discussions and exercises. The exercises were designed to simulate real-world scenarios, providing participants with hands-on experience in coordination and planning. However, during the discussions, participants expressed challenges in creating a workable action plan. The primary concern highlighted was the rapidly changing conditions in Iraq, which make it difficult to anticipate and plan. This uncertainty poses a constant obstacle to effective planning for government entities.



Wrap up of day one

Session five: Presentation on Coordination Planning (RWG)

The main elements of coordination were presented and explained to participants: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. Since this activity was designed to be a workshop rather than training only planning has been addressed. Below, key element of coordination planning presented and explained:

1. [Define your program goal and objectives](#)
2. [Identify your program activities and resources](#)
3. [Establish your program indicators and targets](#)
4. [Develop your program risk management plan](#)
5. [Communicate your program coordination plan](#)
6. [Review and revise your program coordination plan](#)



all key elements of coordination planning outlined above have been discussed with participants focusing what each elements means and how important each part should be taken to achieve professional coordination planning and action. Some participants have highlighted the challenge they could face due to the constant changes of dynamics and action workplans that might affect their issue identification for coordination planning. However, it has been reiterated that issue identification could be strategically planned, and the changing dynamics could be reviewed and revised as explained in point No (6).

The participant become more aware of the importance of setting indicators to measure progress and effectiveness of the coordination activities as well as the reporting aspect. One of the participants

highlighted the need to review not only workplans but also the previous coordination efforts taken to implement previous action plans so that they can assess and adjust based on professional approach.

Furthermore, the necessary to prepare risk plan has been elaborated with examples from the challenges faced the implementation of the CoM plan to close camps, specifically when it comes to the coordination aspect, pointing that developing coordination risk plan could help to overcome potential challenges and risks. In addition, pre-planning coordination has been reiterated as an essence to develop a practical plan that can be implemented on the ground.

It has been explained to participants that senior management at the HQ always highlight the need to develop the reporting aspect of the work. Illustrated to the participants that the weakness in reporting usually resulted from the lack of having written professional plan, because strong progress reports are developed based on actions planned to be done and agreed upon based on a plan with indicators to measure the effectiveness of these actions.

Coordination Planning (exercise)

The participants were divided into four groups for an exercise on coordination planning that reflects the main elements of planning. Each group was requested to identify:

- One issue,
- Coordination target
- Needed stakeholders
- Your resources and activities to achieve your target
- Your coordination tools and approach
- Challenges and obstacles
- How will you document and share the lessons learned and best practices

The participants' attention was directed towards general issues that hinder achieving durable solutions for IDPs and returnees. During the discussions that followed the presentation of the exercise results, the participants demonstrated a good degree of improvement in their ability to think about coordination aspects and the need to take into account staff, resources, tools, and approach. From these, it was clear that important elements like monitoring and evaluation, and reporting needed to be tackled to address the difficulties that the coordination work would face in order to carry out the institution workplan. One group, for instance, recommended relying on a range of coordinating techniques to address problems, including one-on-one consultations, stakeholder meetings in groups, and the use of surveys to gather information and produce results.

Session six: Identify urgent Coordination topics and agree on action needed – group exercise

Subject based topics based in certain locations that need to be tackled by MoMD and relevant institutions. The topics that have been selected are taken from real advocacy and assessment activities conducted by RWG in 2024 and 2023, as below:

- 1- Houses destruction in Yathrib villages
- 2- Destroyed Schools in Imam Wais Villages
- 3- Return to Iskandaria blocked villages
- 4- Low-cost housing in Sinjar- Ninawa

Below are key solutions identified by the four groups:



Group exercise on Housing destruction in Yathrib

Houses construction and Yathrib villages

- Conducting advocacy campaigns to activate the compensation.
- Meeting the members of the provincial councils to push them to exert pressure on the compensation committee and ministry of finance to speed up the processes and increase the number of settled cases.
- Addressing the issue to MoMD minister to follow-up through the council of ministers and the COMSEC.
- Coordinating with UN agencies and international NGOs.

Destroyed Schools in Imam Wais Villages

- Addressing the needs through official letters to Ministry of Education.
- Addressing the issue in the higher committee for IDPs Relief
- Meeting the local government and authorities to push for financial allocations and quick interventions.
- Coordinating with UN agencies and international NGOs.
- Holding collective meetings with all relevant parties.

Return to Iskandaria blocked villages

- Direct meeting with displaced families to understand their intentions
- Coordinate with local authorities, mayor office, local government, security.
- Convening periodical meetings
- Directly coordinating with security forces on the ground to understand possibilities of re-opening the blocked areas.

- Conducting field visits to make needed assessments
- Advocacy activities with decision-makers in Baghdad
- Activate social media communication with affected people

Low-cost housing projects in Sinjar- Ninawa

The group has pointed out that 50 acres are not enough to construct 2,500 housing units as intended by the council of ministers. Adding that those families in Sinjar are used to living in open areas, rather than small low-cost houses. However, the group suggested the following advocacy and coordination efforts to achieve the implementation of this decision.

- Constant follow-up with the local government of Ninawa to push for taking action to solve challenges and move forward.
- following up and advocate with the council of ministers to push relevant parties to take actions needed.
- Implement fundraising activities to collect the allocations needed for infrastructure and other facilities.



Group exercise on low-cost housing in Sinjar

Final recommendations for MoMD to approve/adjust and work with other line ministries and governorates:

1. Include decision makers to the provincial coordination committees ("re-integration committees). that are entrusted with the task of returnees and IDPs.
2. Reactivate Provincial coordination committees (re-integration committees) to provide DS solutions to IDPs and returnees. Note: This recommendation targets the governorates where the re-integration committees are inactive. After coordination and discussion with MoMD, the senior management emphasized the importance of adopting an approach to assess the effectiveness of

these committees in each governorate and activate the inactive ones. Further support on this regard from RWG to be discussed internally and with MoMD to be decided.

3. Develop SOPs that organize the work of the provincial (re-integration) committees e.g. hold intensive regular meetings every two weeks, not unregularly or just when needed since the need to the coordination of IDPs and returnees related matters is relentless.
4. Defining and understanding each goal of any action plan to develop applicable coordination driving to appropriate action whether this action is coordination activity, approach, resources, or tools, etc.
5. Provide financial allocations to implement work plan based on professional coordination plan. Financial restrictions have been always a reason behind the lack of diversifying activities of coordination, depending on one-to-one coordination approach or official letters.
6. Expand and decentralize powers and authorities since the more decision-making power you have, the better coordination you may offer.
7. Improve the staff capacity to gain more and better coordination skills to support MoMD branches managers and the senior management in the HQ in coordination work on the ground to avoid delays and slowness in issue-solving that mostly depending on senior management and head of branches in the present.
8. Establish follow-up teams to monitor and evaluate the progress achieved in coordinating plans, based on clear indicators, that can help with adjusting and improving the coordination.

Post-session assessment results

The post-session evaluation targeted only the 16 participants from MoMD staff, 14 of them took parts in the evaluation. 100 participants reported an improved understanding of coordination mechanisms (57% “strangely agree”, 43% “agree”), increased knowledge and development opportunities (57% “strangely agree”, 43% “agree”), and by the end of the discussion (36% “strangely agree”, 64% “agree”) they become more aware of the various factors that need to be taken into account when planning coordination.

