

Durable Solutions Technical Working Group (DSTWG) – Summary of Meeting #51 on 11 June 2025

Meeting Chair: IOM

Co-chairs: BHMF, UNDP

Participants: IOM, OCHA, UN Habitat, IRC, UNMAS, UNHCR,, Mercy Corps, M&A Subgroup (IOM), HLP subgroup (IOM), CLRA (IRC) and RCO (Islam & Mohammed C)

Overview and Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Agenda and Action Points from April Meeting
3. DSTWG Update
 - Membership review
 - Subgroup updates
 - JCFs & ABC updates
 - Displacement advocacy messages
4. Iraq Double Burden – IRC Report recommendations
5. AOB

● April Meeting #49 Action Points:

1. ZFD Conflict Analysis survey request – DSTWG members interested (Completed)
2. Climate Resilient Livelihoods – To identify 1-2 ISSA to present on their climate change work during the June meetings, meeting feedback (Completed)
3. M&A Subgroup to finalize the online reporting tool for DSTWG members to test (Ongoing)

3.DS Update

a. Safety and Security Workshop – 3 June 2025:

- The workshop was jointly organized by IOM and MoMD and brought together MoMD, various security actors, multiple Governorates' officials, UN Agencies, ... and gave way to recommendations:
 - Workshop recommendations to be consolidated and submitted to the PMO through MoMD.
 - A follow-up session to be organized to address compensation and reconstruction with the Ministry of Finance, as well as addressing the *tabri'a* with MoI and SJC.
 - Establish a security committee mandated to address security-related barriers in *no-return areas* and develop plans per Governorate to facilitate safe, voluntary and dignified return
- IOM is preparing a workshop report that, once cleared by MoMD, will be shared with DSTWG members.

b. JCFs and ABC updates

- Salah ah Din JCF: meeting was held on 26 May 2025. As part of the planned handover strategy, JCMC has been nominated to assume the JCF secretariat role. A formal letter from the Deputy Governor's Office is awaited to confirm the designated focal point. The co-chair position remains vacant following the departure of DSO. However, the local NGO SEDO has expressed interest in assuming the co-chair role. Proposal under review and pending endorsement by the RC, as per the JCF Terms of Reference.

- Ninewa JCF: meeting held on 26 May 2025, co-chaired by the Deputy Governor of Ninewa and UNICEF. Meeting minutes were shared in both Arabic and English. Next meeting tentatively scheduled for the last week of June.
- Diyala JCF: convened on 29 April 2025. No meeting was held in May. Next session scheduled for 19 June 2025, with the Deputy Governor's Office currently assuming the secretariat role.
- Anbar JCF: held on 25 May 2025. The JCMC has officially been appointed as the new secretariat by the local government.
- Kirkuk JCF: reconvened on 4 June 2025. A new co-chair was appointed: Thara'a Al Wae'e, local NGO, following the withdrawal of IRC from the co-chair role. Secretariat function transferred to a representative from the Governor's Assistant Office, replacing DSO staff.
 - Sinjar ABC: latest meeting took place on 28 May 2025, co-chaired by Ali Omar and IOM. For the first time, local authorities from Sinjar and Ba'aj formally participated as members. Included a situation briefing by Ali Omar covering developmental, humanitarian and security updates in Sinjar and Ba'aj, as well as a presentation by IOM on the Facilitated Voluntary Movement programme and current status of returns.
- DSTWG members raised an issue with the continued suspension of new registration for return under the FVM programme: while movements are ongoing for previously registered families, the registration authority lies with the DMCR in Duhok. Suggested the need for renewed advocacy with MoMD to reopen registration for return, given growing interest from communities.

Action point: DSTWG co-chairs to raise this issue for follow-up with RCO and relevant authorities.

c. Displacement advocacy messages

- RCO briefed members on the ongoing process to update the collective advocacy position paper initially developed in 2024 in response to the GoI's announcement on the closure of camps. New round of updates seeks to reflect the evolving displacement landscape, challenges and emerging thematic priorities across Iraq.
- A template was shared with the DSTWG co-chairs and a select group of Agencies who contributed to last year's version (UNHCR, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, and new contributor UN-Habitat for compensation-related advocacy).
- The draft will now be circulated by the co-chairs to all DSTWG members.
- Original deadline for input was set for mid-June, but a revised deadline will be fixed shortly to allow adequate time for feedback.
- Once finalized, the updated advocacy paper will be presented at the upcoming DSTF meeting.

d. DSTWG membership review

- A number of organizations that were previously active in the DSTWG have become inactive or ceased operations in Iraq. Simultaneously, several new organizations have expressed formal interest in joining the Working Group and contributing to its strategic and technical discussions. The current ToR for the DSTWG require that the membership be balanced between UN Agencies and NGOs.
- Consensus was reached for the co-chairs to initiate the review process of the membership:
 - The Co-Chairs will contact organizations that have not participated in recent meetings to confirm whether they are still operational in Iraq and interested in maintaining DSTWG membership.
 - An open call for new members will be launched.

- Membership expressions will be reviewed by the Co-Chairs and presented at a future DSTWG meeting for endorsement. Final validation to be submitted to the DSTF.

e. Iraq ‘Double burden’ – DRC Report recommendations

- Co-chairs presented a summary of key findings and recommendations from the “Double Burden” report by DRC and recently shared with the RWG, highlighting compounded vulnerabilities faced by displaced and returning women in Iraq.
- For the GoI:
 - Streamline application processes and timely disbursement of entitlements (social protection, pensions, PDS rations) to IDPs and returnees, particularly women-headed households.
 - Institutionalize the participation of displaced and returnee women in the design, implementation and monitoring of local and national policies that affect their lives and reintegration prospects.
 - Prioritize investments in stabilization and conflict resolution in areas of origin, such as Sinjar, where fragile governance and unresolved leadership disputes (around the mayoralty) continue to hinder safe return.
 - Ensure that policies and their implementation are informed by the specific risks and needs of female-headed households, survivors of GBV, and marginalized minority women.
- For humanitarian and development actors:
 - Sustain and scale up housing rehabilitation initiatives, especially for vulnerable returnee families, with a focus on ownership security and dignity.
 - Increase targeted programming that supports women's economic empowerment, including vocational training, microfinance access, small business development and climate-resilient livelihoods in areas of high return.

f. Subgroup updates

- M&A subgroup: ActivityInfo tool is finalized and testing is ongoing. The partners are invited to provide feedback on usability and relevance of indicators. The official launch will be soon with training sessions.
- Sustainable Livelihoods Task Force: an upcoming Community of Practice (24 June) will be held, focusing on anticipatory action/drought response in Iraq, with a presentation by IRC anticipatory action specialist.
- HLP Subgroup: the group shared their housing fact sheet and compensation advocacy points. Their ongoing work relates to updating the project coverage mapping, differentiating emergency vs. durable housing assistance and defining minimum standards and implementation modalities.

4. IRC presentation – Iraq Protection Needs Overview (Oct. 2024 – Mar. 2025)

- IRC presented the findings from its latest Protection Needs Overview covering the period October 2024 to March 2025.
- Data was collected through 178 HHs surveys, 76 KIIs, 39 FGDs with 351 participants.
- Findings:
 - Livelihoods were cited as the most urgent need by 92% of respondents.
 - Legal assistance needs were reported by 53% of respondents, particularly for documentation, family law issues and housing/land claims.
 - Access to healthcare was flagged by 49%, with challenges including costs, poor service quality and physical access limitations.



- 94% of respondents reported difficulty accessing basic services, an increase from 84% in the previous round.
- 28% of households reported missing at least one key civil document. This reflects an improvement from 40–49% in past years, but significant barriers remain to accessing services, particularly for returnees and female-headed households.
- Child labor was reported by 45% of respondents, with children engaged in construction, agriculture and domestic work.
- School dropouts and early marriage were identified as persistent protection concerns.
- Women and girls face systematic mobility restrictions, with 24% of households citing safety concerns as the main reason for limited access to healthcare and education.
- 57% of communities reported being directly affected by climate stressors, such as drought, poor water quality and agricultural loss.
- 16% of households reported displacement due to environmental degradation (crop failure, water scarcity).
- 19% of surveyed households had experienced climate-induced displacement, including cases in return areas such as Sinjar, where water scarcity undermines reintegration.
- 32% of respondents reported climate-induced psychosocial stress, anxiety, or trauma.
- Recommendations:
 - Support the activation of Iraq's state-led legal aid system, which remains non-operational despite legislation passed in 2024.
 - Ensure that livelihood programming and reintegration support reach returnees in areas impacted by drought and environmental degradation and provide interventions to address climate-linked displacement and mobility challenges.
 - Improve coordination between humanitarian actors and government institutions to ensure sustainability of services post-phase-out.
- RCO stressed the importance of integrating climate-related displacement into both DSTWG's programming frameworks and collective advocacy positions, noting that climate impact should be disaggregated and better defined in terms of affected caseloads and service gaps.
- IOM emphasized the value of the IRC's findings in shaping evidence-based policy and advocacy, particularly in under-examined areas such as the intersection of climate change and return dynamics.

Action points: Co-chairs to circulate the IRC report to all DSTWG members and highlight key findings in the upcoming RWG meeting.

5. AOB

Summary of Action points

- *Action points:*
 - *DSTWG co-chairs to raise this issue for follow-up with RCO and relevant authorities.*
 - *Co-chairs to circulate the IRC report to all DSTWG members and highlight key findings in upcoming RWG meeting.*