

RETURNS WORKING GROUP- IRAQ

- **Meeting Date:** 15 September 2026
- **Meeting Time:** 10:00 am-11:30 am
- **Location:** Remote connection via Teams

Attendance: IOM, UNDP, ECHO, UPP, Norwegian People's Aid, DRC, British Embassy Baghdad, International Committee of the Red Cross, WFP, Embassy of Switzerland, Erbil DMCR, UNHCR, Justice Center

Agenda:

1. **Opening & Minutes:** Welcome, introductions, and adoption of previous minutes
2. **RWG Presentation:** RWG Field Updates
3. **EDMCR Updates:** Update on the Erbil and East Mosul camp situation
4. **WFP Presentation:** Key findings from the Bzeibiz Assessment
5. **IOM FVM Presentation:** Facilitated Voluntary Movement programme updates
6. **IOM Presentation:** Reintegration monitoring findings: Sinjar
7. **AOB & Closing:** Activity Info reminder, and closing remarks

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

- Endorsement of the previous meeting minutes.

2. RWG Presentation: RWG Field Updates

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

Addressing Barriers to Return and Reopening Villages Behind the Security Line in Hatra

On 12–13 August 2026, the RWG, led by IOM and in coordination with MoMD, Ninewa Governorate, and relevant authorities in Ninewa and at the national level, held a high-level technical workshop in Baghdad that aimed to address challenges hindering return in the Hatra District, specifically regarding the 54 villages located near the Al-Sadd security line. Building on community dialogues and field missions conducted in July 2026, the workshop resulted in the development of a government-led roadmap to facilitate the gradual reopening of villages and ensure safe, voluntary, and sustainable returns for displaced families.

3. Erbil DMCR: Update on the Erbil and East Mosul camp situation

An update was provided by Naz Jalal, Director of the Erbil Directorate of Migration and Crisis Response (EDMCR) regarding the deteriorating situation within the IDP camps in East Mosul. A pattern of secondary displacement back to camps was noted, in which families are increasingly returning to camps due to the absence of basic services and livelihood opportunities in their places of origin. Key obstacles to successful returns were identified, including the lack of job opportunities and the inconsistent delivery of essential humanitarian aid. Furthermore, a significant decline in trust regarding government financial assistance was observed, following reported difficulties in cashing previously issued grants. To address these challenges, it was recommended that increased federal support be provided to families in the Mosul camps and that mobile court teams be deployed to assist with the resolution of legal documentation issues.

Discussion

- **Question:** What were the objectives and the background of the MoMD intention survey conducted in Baherka camp, and could any outcomes of interest be shared with the participants?
- **EDMCR:** It was confirmed that the survey had been conducted by MoMD to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation in Baherka camp. Through this survey, the primary obstacles to return, the number of families intending to return, and the drivers behind decisions to remain in camp or seek relocation are being identified. It was further stated that the survey results will be shared with the working group.
- **Question:** Regarding the 13 villages surrounding the East Mosul camps, how many families have been successfully returned to their areas of origin via the IOM FVM program, and how many remain within the camps?

- **EDMCR:** It was reported that permission for the return of families from these 13 villages was granted by the KRG Ministry of Interior two years ago. It was noted that the majority of these families have been successfully returned and the villages are now considered habitable; however, exact figures are to be shared later. It was highlighted that a significant challenge remains regarding the lack of essential services in the areas of origin, such as schools, which has resulted in children still being sent to schools located within the camps.

4. WFP Presentation: Key findings from the Bzeibiz Assessment

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

- **Bzeibiz Operation:** Following a vulnerability assessment by WFP and DRC, 1,305 households were registered. Assistance (approx. 280,000 per household) is slated for next week, following ongoing modality negotiations with the financial service provider. Coordination with DRC is being maintained to prevent duplication.
- **Al-Amal Operations:** WFP will launch a targeted intervention for individuals exiting Al-Amal who lack supporting legal documentation. This is being coordinated with IOM for referral purposes.

Discussion

- **Question:** Is the lack of unified identification commonly observed among those exiting Al-Amal?
- **WFP:** Since April 2026, a threefold increase in undocumented exits from Al-Amal has been observed, driven by expedited processes intended to facilitate center closure. While temporary residence certificates are issued by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), substantial risks are posed to vulnerable populations. Because access to essential social assistance is often precluded by a lack of formal ID, precarious situations are being created upon departure. While exact figures are maintained by IOM and other partners, this upward trend is considered critical.
- **RWG:** Ongoing efforts regarding civil documentation are being managed by a dedicated legal working group led by UNHCR. To further this work, a workshop involving government and international partners is planned for late September in Mosul. Efforts are being made to resolve complex documentation cases before individuals depart Al-Amal to avoid follow-up difficulties. Furthermore, partners continue to work alongside the government in areas of return to address ongoing documentation challenges.
- **UNHCR:** It was stated that significant pressure is being exerted to process the existing caseload, as the center is intended to be returned to its original purpose as a transit site. The lack of access to legal assistance for complex cases was identified as a primary blockage in the unified ID process. Furthermore, it was mentioned that a workshop is being held next week, during which the support of government capacity for case processing will be addressed.
- For further inquiries regarding the Al-Amal caseload and civil documentation issues, Luke (UNHCR) is to be contacted via hamilton@unhcr.org. The TWG co-chairs pbarns@unicef.org and rsarieddine@iom.int should be included in cc.

5. IOM FVM Presentation: Facilitated Voluntary Movement programme updates

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

- **2026 Statistics (812 households total):**
 - Dohuk: Major movements were recorded in Rwanga (214), Bajed Kandala (213), and Essian (125).
 - East Mosul: Movements were recorded in Khazir MI (33), HasanSham U2 (19), and HasanSham U3 (10).
- **Programme Progress:**
 - Three rounds of departures from Duhok to Sinjar and Baaj were facilitated.
 - 173 households have been returned or relocated through the FVM programme.
- **Planned Activities:**
 - Sensitization and registration in Dohuk will be commenced by IOM.
 - Departure of 11 households from EMCs is anticipated for September.

6. IOM FVM Presentation: Reintegration monitoring findings: Sinjar

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

IOM gathers data from FVM beneficiaries within one to three months and nine months after their arrival. Called Baseline and Endline follow-ups.

Adequate Standard of Living Updates

- **Housing:** Rudimentary housing (49%) and hosting (62%) were reported, with 89% of pre-displacement homes noted as damaged.
- **Essential Services:** Water trucking (68%) and alternative electricity (25%) were utilized, alongside a 13% lack of healthcare access.
- **Education & Documentation:** 96% school attendance was recorded, though a 3% lack of civil documentation (ID/PDS) was identified.
- **Livelihoods:** A lack of regular income (55%) and a reliance on daily labor (59%) were highlighted.

AOB

- Iraq Durable Solutions ActivityInfo Platform Reminder: Partners were reminded that while Q2 2026 reporting is now due, the window for Q1 2026 remains open for any outstanding submissions, which must be filed separately [via this link](#).
- The invitation for the next RWG meeting will be sent out in due course; meanwhile, partners are encouraged to reach out if they have any presentations or updates to share.

Action Points:

- Follow-up with EDMCR to receive a copy of the intention survey conducted in Baherka camp
- Follow-up and share the number of families who have successfully returned to the 13 villages surrounding the East Mosul camps.