CONTEXT

The Return Index is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. Data collection for the Return Index Round 15 took place between the months of January and March 2022 across eight governorates, 38 districts and 2,165 locations in Iraq. During Round 15, three additional locations of return were assessed, but the overall number of locations remained the same due to families displacing from two locations previously assessed in Round 14 and the combination of two locations into one in Round 15.[1]

RETURNEE POPULATION IN SEVERE CONDITIONS

- Out of the 2,165 return locations assessed, 453 present severe conditions hosting 12 per cent of the returnee population, or 581,112 individuals.

- A decrease of 20,802 returnees living in severe or poor conditions has been observed since the round collected between October and December 2021, when 12 per cent of the returnee population (601,914 individuals) were in severe conditions.

- The largest decreases were recorded in Anbar (12,780) and Diyala (8,478), while the largest increase was observed in Kirkuk (498). In Anbar, the largest decreases were observed in Heet and Ramadi districts. The decrease in high severity in Heet and Ramadi was related to housing reconstruction. In Diyala, the largest decrease was recorded in Al-Muqdadiya - driven by housing reconstruction and the recovery of local businesses – and in Khanaqin, driven by improved access to water and electricity. In Kirkuk, the largest increase was in Al-Hawiga, where slow recovery of business, challenges accessing employment and blocked returns impacted locations of return.

- Ninewa and Salah al-Din remain the governorates hosting the highest number of returnees living in severe conditions, with 260,256 and 206,814 individuals respectively.

- Salah al-Din and Diyala host the highest proportions of returnees living in severe conditions (28% and 15% respectively).

MOST SEVERE LOCATIONS OF RETURN

- Sixty-eight locations hosting 77,418 returnees were identified as having the most severe return conditions in this round. The top five of these locations are in Telafar in Ninewa and Baiji district in Salah al-Din Governorate.

- One fewer location was observed with the most severe return conditions since the round collected between October and December 2021, when 75,540 individuals were living in 69 locations with the most severe conditions.
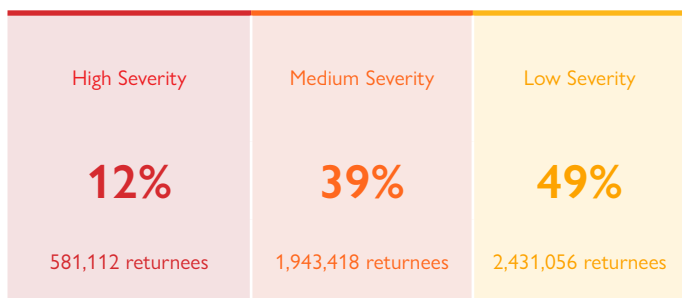
METHODOLOGY

The Return Index is based on 16 indicators divided into two scales: Scale 1, on livelihoods and basic services, and Scale 2, centered around social cohesion and safety perceptions. A regression model is used to assess the impact of each of the indicators in facilitating or preventing returns and to calculate scores for two scales. For example, the model tests how much less likely a location where no agricultural activities have recovered is to have returns compared to a location where they have recovered. To compute an overall severity index, the scores of the two scales are combined.

The index ranges from 0 (all essential conditions for return are met) to 100 (no essential conditions for return are met). Higher scores denote more severe living conditions for returnees. The scores of the severity index are grouped into three categories: low, medium and high (which also includes very high).

Refer to the report "Methodological Overview" for more details on the methodology.

Figure 1. Proportion of returnees by category of severity

High Severity	Medium Severity	Low Severity
12%	**39%**	**49%**
581,112 returnees	1,943,418 returnees	2,431,056 returnees

4,955,586 Returnees
+7,482
since Round 14 (October – December 2021)

8 governorates	38 districts	825,931 households	2,165 locations +0 since Round 14

Data collected **January - March 2022**

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1 The two locations from which all 10 families have displaced are in Makhmur district, Erbil governorate. Due to security concerns these families are leaving their area of origin at night and returning to engage in agriculture during the day.

Table 1. Number of locations and returnees per governorate by category of severity

Governorate	HIGH		MEDIUM		LOW		TOTAL	
	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations
Anbar	71,904	20	730,434	206	740,814	104	1,543,152	330
Baghdad	750	4	8,082	12	84,072	106	92,904	122
Dahuk					756	1	756	1
Diyala	34,602	39	171,078	131	32,772	50	238,452	220
Erbil	4,464	15	11,070	28	45,468	24	61,002	67
Kirkuk	2,322	8	77,580	70	271,014	148	350,916	226
Ninewa	260,256	284	614,412	426	1,054,794	253	1,929,462	963
Salah al-Din	206,814	83	330,762	98	201,366	55	738,942	236
Total	581,112	453	1,943,418	971	2,431,056	741	4,955,586	2,165

GOVERNORATE HOTSPOTS OF SEVERITY

Subdistricts are classified as 'hotspots' if they score highly in terms of severity on at least one of the two scales (either livelihoods and basic services, or safety and social cohesion) or if they score medium in terms of severity but also host relatively large numbers of returnees, at least 60,000 returnees in a subdistrict.

Twenty-nine hotspots were identified across four governorates in this round. Compared to the round collected in October - December 2021, one subdistrict was removed from the list, Markaz Al-Muqdadiya (Al-Muqdadiya District) in Diyala Governorate. The subdistrict was declassified as a 'hotspot' due to an improvement in the level of concerns among residents of violence from or between armed actors in the area.

SALAH AL-DIN: 488,472 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Amerli
- Al-Eshaqi
- Al-Moatassem
- Al-Siniya
- Markaz Al-Balad
- Markaz Al-Daur
- Markaz Al-Shirqat
- Markaz Baiji
- Markaz Samarra
- Markaz Tuz Khurmatu
- Suleiman Beg
- Yathreb

NINEWA: 537,018 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Qahtaniya
- Al-Shamal
- Ayadiya
- Hamam al Aleel
- Markaz Al-Ba'aj
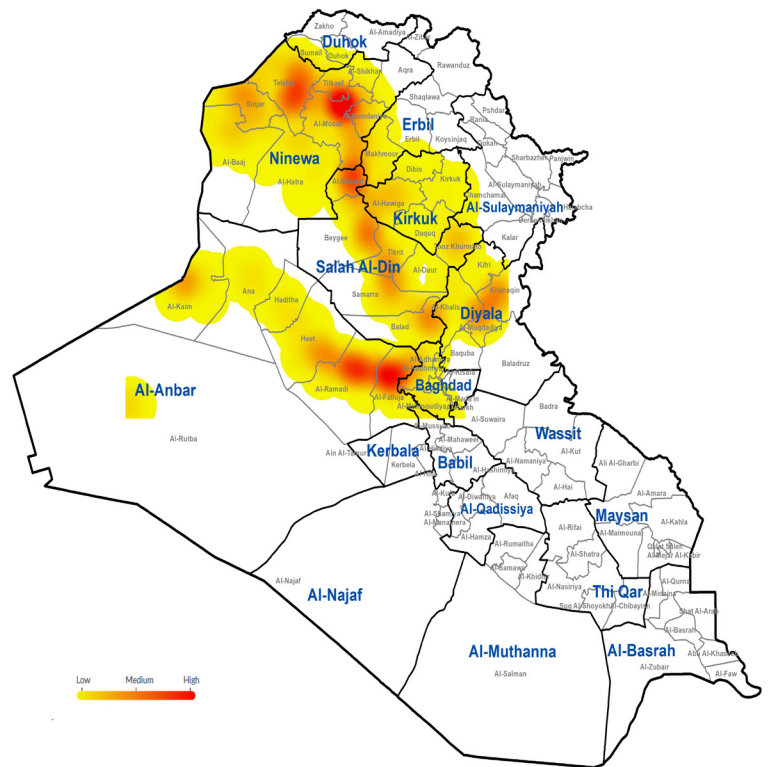- Markaz Sinjar
- Markaz Telafar
- Qaeyrrawan
- Zummar

ANBAR: 398,682 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Amirya
- Al-Forat
- Al-Garma
- Husaibah Al-Sharqiah
- Markaz Al-Ka'im
- Markaz Heet

DIYALA: 82,038 returnees in hotspots

- Jalula
- Qara Tabe

Map 1. Returnee population density by overall severity score

This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.
The map shows conditions of severity based on population size and severity score of each assessed location. The darker colours indicate a larger concentration of families living in severe conditions of return, while the brighter colours indicate lower severity conditions or areas with low levels of returns.