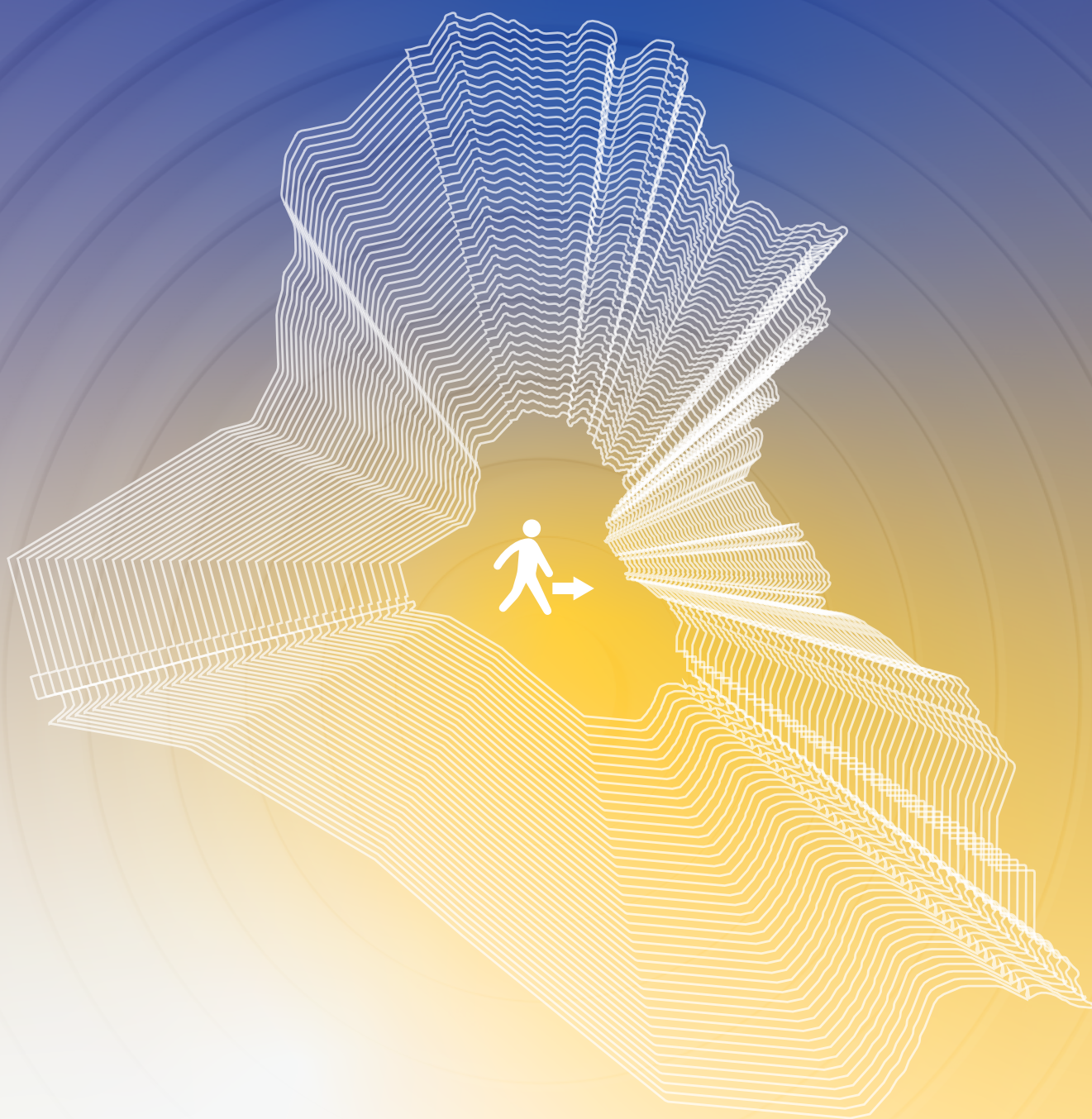


PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT IN IRAQ: REVISITING CATEGORIES OF RETURN BARRIERS



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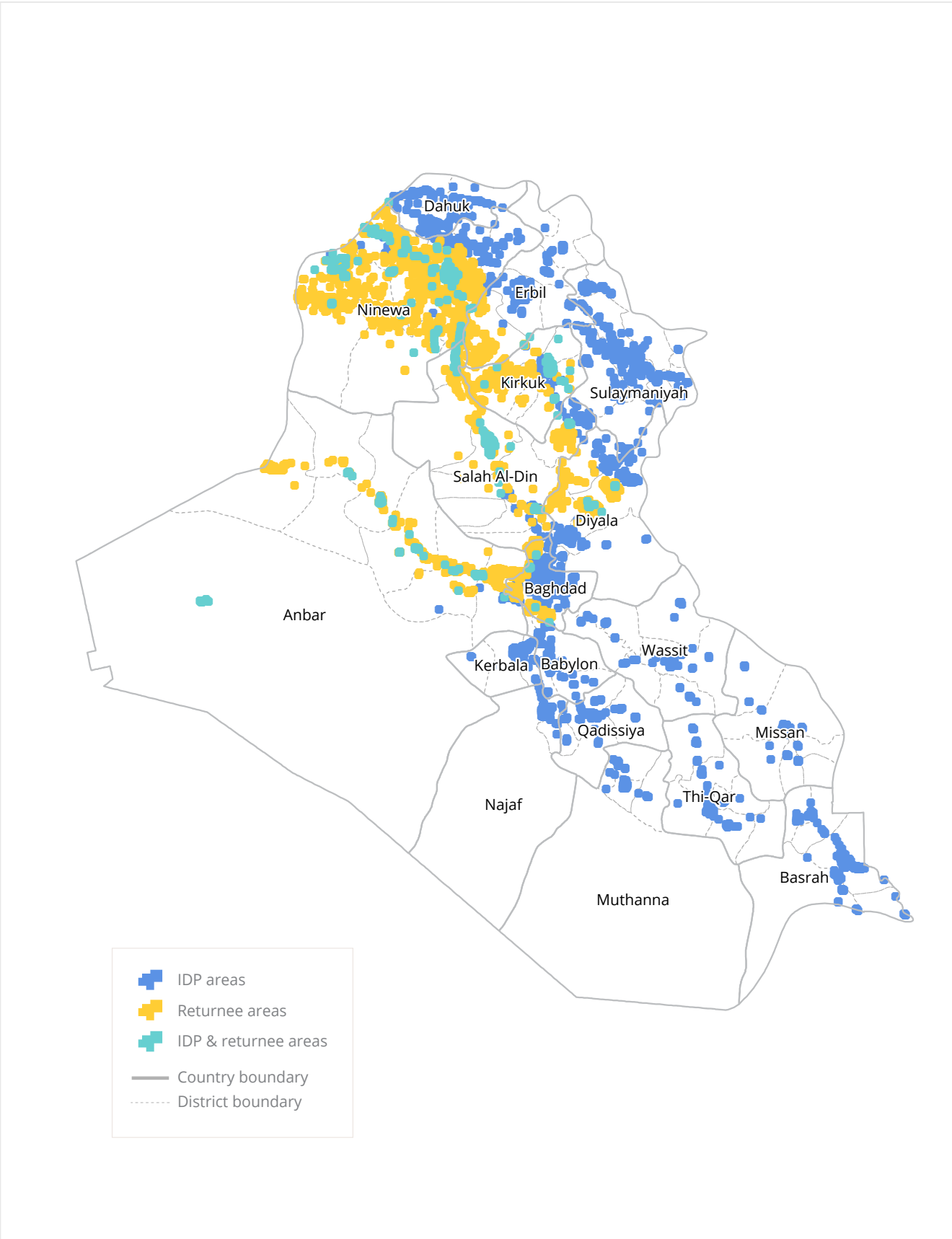
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Methodology	7
Limitations	8
Context: IDPs and Returnees in Iraq	9
Framework: Categories of Return Barriers	23
1. Housing	23
2. Livelihoods	28
3. Basic Services	29
4. Social Cohesion	31
5. Safety and Security	37
Exacerbating Factors	41
Conclusion	43
Gaining the Full Picture: Recommendations for Filling Information Gaps	44

Map 1: Presence of IDPs and Returnees by Area (as at August 2020)



INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, significant waves of displacement have taken place across Iraq in response to security threats linked to internal conflict, external intervention, as well as ethnic and religious persecution—including most recently the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).¹ Between January 2014 and December 2017, ISIL's attempts to control central and northern areas of the country, and the efforts of the Iraqi Government's military to re-gain control, led to the displacement of 5,836,350 individuals—representing 16 per cent of the entire population of the country.²³

Throughout the period of ISIL-related conflict, the displacement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has been attributable to distinct security threats and incidents.⁴ Likewise, the returns of millions of IDPs to their places of origin are often linked to the easing of security threats as well as increased opportunities for livelihoods and access to services in their places of origin.

Since the end of the conflict in December 2017, the rates of return of individuals to their places of origin has slowed significantly, leaving a total of 225,443 households (1,299,987 individuals) displaced across the country as at August 2020.⁵ This amounts to the continued displacement of 22 per cent of all individuals displaced during the period of ISIL conflict between 2014 and 2017. These individuals have not returned home for a range of reasons and are in, or are at risk of, protracted displacement.

The resolution of protracted displacement in Iraq necessitates the realization of durable solutions—a process that is led by IDPs and supported by governments as well as local and international actors. Durable solutions can be achieved through several pathways, including the return and reintegration of IDPs to their area of origin; their integration in locations of displacement; or their integration in other parts of the country.⁶ Since the period of ISIL conflict, IOM along with other local and international actors specializing in

stabilization and development have directed efforts towards understanding the requisite settings to advance towards durable solutions pathways for those living in displacement. Ultimately, these types of interventions aim to prevent or address incidences of protracted displacement by realizing settlement arrangements that align with the preferences of IDPs.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO RETURNING HOME: A DIMENSION OF DURABLE SOLUTIONS STRATEGY

This report specifically focuses on barriers that IDPs face in returning and reintegrating to their place of origin. Given the various forms that a durable solution can take, the findings in this report should be observed alongside the other factors central to the settlement of IDPs—namely, the role of positive conditions in locations of displacement and in other re-settlement locations in influencing their preferred type of settlement option. As such, in drawing on recent secondary data, it aims to highlight the barriers faced by IDPs in achieving safe and sustainable returns to their places of origin—and inform interventions to address them.

In November 2018, IOM Iraq in collaboration with the Returns Working Group and Social Inquiry, along with input from Federal Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD),

1 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Iraq Country Information*, 2019.

2 IOM Iraq, *Iraq Displacement Crisis: 2014-2017*, 2018.

3 World Bank Group, *Population Iraq*, 2019.

4 Refer to Table 1 below which includes an overview of key security incidents and related displacements since 2014.

5 IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

6 The guiding resource for durable solutions globally is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions For Internally Displaced People. The framework outlines three ways that a durable solution can be achieved: 1) sustainable reintegration at the place of origin (returns); sustainable local integration in areas where IDPs take refuge (local integration); and sustainable integration in another part of the country (settlement elsewhere in the country). Refer to: Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Brookings Institute & University of Bern, *Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010.

produced a report—*Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq*.⁷ The report drew on existing data sources, as well as inputs from strategic and operational experts, to illustrate the displacement context and develop a framework⁸ to categorize the different reasons why IDPs remained displaced by late 2018. The framework has since been used as a resource for strategy development and monitoring, as well as programmatic design, in relation to the resolution of protracted displacement faced by Iraqi IDPs displaced due to ISIL-related conflict in the 2014-17 period.

This report, *Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers*, is the second in this series and draws upon new literature and data that has been collected since *Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq* was published. The aim of this report is to provide an updated evidence base to inform continued strategy development and monitoring relating to the resolution of IDPs in protracted displacement, through:

- Providing an updated overview of the current IDP context in Iraq
- Providing an updated categorization framework highlighting the different types of barriers faced by IDPs in returning to their areas of origin

REPORT STRUCTURE

The remainder of this report is structured as follows.

- First, a summary of the methodology employed in producing this report is presented, outlining key data sources used, as well as its limitations.

- Second, an overview of IDP and returnee waves between 1979 and 2020 is provided, including a detailed summary of periods of conflict and associated waves of displacement, with a particular focus on the period of ISIL-related conflict between 2014 and 2017. This section draws on secondary data collected by IOM Iraq's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) since 2014, and highlights changes in the country's displacement context since the *Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq* report was published in November 2018 (noting that data presented in that report was collected in September 2018). It also includes a summary of IDPs across a range of indicators, including place of origin; location, type and duration of displacement; and intentions in relation to short- and long-term movements from locations of displacement.

Third, the updated framework is presented, Categories of Return Barriers. Updates to the framework have been made according to the advice of durable solutions experts within Iraq's humanitarian response, as well as the availability of new data and literature produced since the *Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq* report was published in November 2018.

- Fourth, and finally, the conclusion synthesizes key issues and makes a range of suggestions for further data collection initiatives to fill information gaps, to inform evidence-based decision making in support of realizing durable solutions for the remaining IDPs across Iraq.

⁷ Notably, the framework features in the Iraq Durable Solutions Network's Durable Solutions Strategy. The Durable Solutions Network is initiated by IOM and involves the participation of other UN agencies and NGOs in the development of approaches to facilitate the voluntary returns from IDPs in Iraq to their places of origin.

⁸ IOM Iraq, *Reasons to Remain: Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq*, 2018, p.12.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in producing this report involved a comprehensive review of data and literature relating to displacement in Iraq, with a special focus on new information that has become available since the *Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq* report was published in November 2018. Datasets and literature that have been reviewed relate to IDPs who have not returned to their areas of origin following the Iraqi Government's declaration of the defeat of ISIL in December 2017.⁹

KEY DATA SOURCES

The main data sources used in this report include:

- IOM DTM's Master Lists (ML) Round 1 (April 2014) to Round 117 (July-August 2020).
 - These datasets include the number of IDPs and returnees at the governorate, district, subdistrict and location levels, as well as their period of displacement, IDPs' area of origin, and returnees' area of last displacement.
 - This information is collected by IOM's Key Informants (KIs) at location level, which is defined as an area that corresponds either to a subdistrict, a village for rural areas or a neighbourhood for urban areas.
 - In these datasets, DTM considers IDPs as Iraqis who were forced to flee since January 2014 who have been displaced at the time of each round of data collection. Additionally, DTM considers returnees as those displaced since January 2014 who have returned to their location of origin, irrespective of whether they have returned to their former residence or to another shelter type.
 - Due to a change in calculation methodology to determine the number of in-camp IDPs in the ML 117 dataset, data included in part two of this report from all sources refers to the number of IDP and returnee families rather than individuals.¹⁰
- IOM DTM's Integrated Location Assessments (ILAs) 4 (June 2019) and 5 (August 2020).
 - These datasets provide an in-depth insight into the situation of displaced and returning populations in Iraq, putting special focus on profiling the locations in which these groups live. These include demographic composition of locations, the state of infrastructure, services, security, social cohesion, and movement intentions of IDPs.
 - This information is collected by IOM's KIs at the location level, which is defined as an area that corresponds either to a sub-district, a village for rural areas or a neighbourhood for urban areas.
- IOM DTM's Return Index (RI) 9 (May-June 2020).
 - This dataset provides insights into the severity of conditions in locations of return. A total of 16 indicators are aggregated to two severity scales: 1) Livelihoods and Basic Services and 2) Safety and Social Cohesion.
 - This information is collected by IOM's KIs at location level, which is defined as an area to which IDPs have returned, that corresponds either to a subdistrict, a village for rural areas or a neighbourhood for urban areas.

In the section, Framework: Categories of Return Barriers, triangulation of these key data sources are conducted to understand the extent that different barriers are faced by IDPs displaced across the country. One particular technique the report uses is the triangulation of data from the RI 9 with data from the ML 117, which involves identifying districts that score relatively highly on the RI severity scale (meaning that

⁹ International Crisis Group, *Averting an ISIS resurgence in Iraq and Syria*, 2019.

¹⁰ Prior to the publication of Round 117 (July-August 2020), the number of all IDP individuals was estimated by multiplying the number of households by six, the average size of an Iraq household as per government statistics. For the first time, in the 117 dataset, the number of individuals for in-camp IDPs is calculated by multiplying the number of households by five, which is consistent with data from the Iraq Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) since 2018. This has had a minor impact on the population variation relating to the number of IDPs in the 117 dataset and all previous 117 datasets.

they have high levels of residential destruction, insecurity, or other significant issues such as poor social cohesion), and then identifying locations within the ML that host a high number of IDPs who originate from these high severity districts. This process enables the identification of IDPs who originate from areas that have severe conditions, and in identifying where IDPs are displaced, it allows for an understanding of IDPs that are most likely to face certain types of barriers to sustainable return and re-integration in their places of origin.

Additionally, it should be noted that the key data listed above are collected via surveys with KIs at the location level. This means that population numbers, which are referred to extensively throughout this report, should be considered as best estimates rather than actual figures. Finally, findings relating to IDPs' return barriers from REACH Initiative's Multi-Sector Needs Assessments (MCNA) 7 (2019) and 8 (2020), which were jointly implemented with the Iraq Assessment Working Group (AWG), are included throughout the categories section below. It should be noted that questions relating to return barriers differ between the MCNAs and the ILAs. In the MCNAs, IDP households were asked what their movement intentions are for the next 12 months, with those

reporting not planning to return home then asked why not. By contrast, in the ILAs, KIs were asked about the short-term (<6 months) and long-term (≥6 months) movement intentions of the majority of IDPs in their locations. In locations where KIs reported that the majority of IDPs intend to return in the short or long term, they are then asked what the main return obstacles are. In the categories section below, the number and proportion of families reported as facing certain return barriers is calculated by bringing together data collected in the ILA with population numbers collected as part of the ML. All ILA data is collected at location level, and in the categories section it is aggregated and reported on at the governorate of displacement level, while all MCNA data is collected at the household level and aggregated to governorate of displacement level. Therefore, findings from these two assessments included below should be observed bearing in mind the different ways in which the data has been collected. Additionally, MCNA data presented throughout this section may differ from data presented in products published by REACH; any differences may be due to different sub-setting used in the analysis of data that is presented in this report compared with what has been used in REACH's analysis.

LIMITATIONS

As with the first version, a limitation of this report relates to the multiple data sources referred to, resulting in findings across multiple indicators appearing at times contradictory. The differences relate to variations in survey methodologies, including the phrasing of indicators and associated questions, as well as the types of data produced based on the design of tools and sampling strategies used: location and household level, quantitative indicative, quantitative representative, and qualitative.

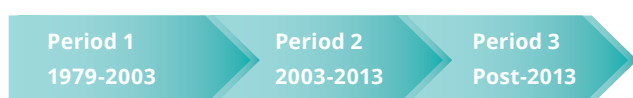
Another key limitation relates to the absence of targeted representative data relating to barriers faced by IDPs stratified by each of the three IDP population groups at governorate level: in camps, informal settlements, and outside of camps.¹¹ As such, findings featured in the categorization framework are not generalizable to each of these three groups and therefore do not represent the required nuance to adequately understand the differences in the types of barriers that these three population groups face in returning to their place of origin.

¹¹ Data relating to barriers faced by IDPs disaggregated by two types of displacement – camps and informal settlements – are available at governorate level. However, data relating to IDPs living in out-of-camp settings (i.e. urban or peri-urban locations) are not available at governorate level. Intentions data from DTM's Integrated Location Assessment 5 are included below for methodological consistency with the main data sources referred to throughout the categories section

CONTEXT: IDPs AND RETURNEES IN IRAQ

PERIODS OF CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT: 1979 TO 2020

As often happens during migration crises, the different periods in which significant numbers of Iraqi IDPs have been displaced owing to distinctive societal problems—conflict, external intervention, and political, ethnic and religious persecution—have been classified and monitored as distinct periods of conflict.¹² There are three recognizable periods of conflict that date back to the 1970s: 1) between 1979 and 2003, 2) between 2003 and 2014, and 3) post-2013. A brief overview of these periods are detailed below, followed by an in-depth summary of the third period that relates to the ISIL conflict, which caused a significant displacement of Iraqi citizens—of whom the remaining group are the central focus of this report.



Period 1

The first period of conflict and displacement is recognised to have commenced when Saddam Hussein became head of state of Iraq in 1979.¹³ Under his rule, the Ba'ath regime employed displacement policies in the framework of its “Arabization” policy to change the “identity texture” of Kurdish majority contexts, causing the displacement of around one million people across the country over the following three decades until the fall of Hussein’s government in 2003.^{14,15}

Period 2

The second period followed the intervention led by the United States of America and its allies in 2003, with significant waves of internal displacement taking place throughout a prolonged period of instability across the country—including around three million people within the intervention’s initial three years.¹⁶ The settings for internal migration grew in complexity during this period, characterized by returns of

around half a million IDPs to their places of origin alongside the displacement of further individuals. These displacements were prompted by several notable security incidents, especially the 2006 bombing of the al-Askari mosque in Samarra which took the number of IDPs to approximately 2.6 million across the country by 2008, followed by other violent incidents driven by civil unrest and sectarian violence until 2013.

Period 3

The third period is considered to have commenced in December 2013 when the violent ISIL insurgency took place, which saw the group eventually capture around 40 per cent of Iraqi territory.¹⁷ This prompted at least three million IDPs to flee their homes in search of safety, with an estimated 1.3 million fleeing to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).¹⁸ The spread of ISIL across the country and the Iraqi Government-led campaign to regain control catalyzed continued internal displacement throughout this period.¹⁹

This third period covers the the period of ISIL conflict between December 2013 and December 2017 (when the Iraqi Government declared the defeat of ISIL), as well as the period since then and the time of publication of this report (January 2021).

12 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Iraq Country Information*, 2019

13 Human Rights Watch, *Background: Forced Displacement and Arabization of Northern Iraq: The Mass Displacement of the Mid-1970s*, 2004

14 Constantini, I. & Palani, K., *Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertainty in the Context of Iraq*. Middle East Research Institute, 2018.

15 Human Rights Watch, *Claims in Conflict: Reversing Ethnic Cleansing in Northern Iraq*, 2004.

16 Brookings Institute, *Iraq 2007 Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*, 2007.

17 IOM, *Iraq Displacement Crisis: 2014-2017*, 2018.

18 Constantini, R. & Palani, K., Constantini, I. & Palani, K., *Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertainty in the Context of Iraq*. Middle East Research Institute, 2018.

19 IOM, *Iraq Displacement Crisis: 2014-2017*, 2018.

IDPs DISPLACED IN THE THIRD PERIOD OF CONFLICT: 10 WAVES

Since December 2013, throughout the third period of conflict and displacement, the lengths of IDPs' displacement—the duration for which Iraqi people have been displaced from

their area of origin due to ISIL-related conflict and related security threats—has been viewed by IOM in terms of 10 different migration waves. These waves vary in length and have affected different parts of Iraq at different times. IOM categorizes these periods as follows:

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF DISPLACEMENT WAVES DURING THE THIRD PERIOD OF CONFLICT: POST DECEMBER 2013²⁰

WAVE	TIME PERIOD	CHARACTERISTICS OF DISPLACEMENT WAVE	NUMBER OF IDPs REMAINING IN DISPLACEMENT (AUGUST 2020), ORIGINALLY DISPLACED DURING EACH WAVE
1	December 2013 to May 2014 (note that DTM started monitoring displacement in April 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost 480,000 people fled their homes from conflict between ISIL and the Iraqi Government in Anbar Governorate's Ramadi and Fallujah Districts Most individuals displaced within Anbar, with the rest moving to Baghdad, Salah al-Din, and KRI In May, ISIL's control of Abu Ghraib District following large floods prompted a further 40,000 individuals to flee 	50,748
2	June to July 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fighting in Mosul leads to large-scale displacement, especially from Ninewa and Salah al-Din, with the majority seeking safety in the same governorates 	267,187
3	August 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISIL security threats in Ninewa Governorate, especially Sinjar District, prompted around 740,000 individuals to flee into KRI's Dahuk and Erbil Governorates, as well as Kerbala Governorate in Federal Iraq^{21,22} 	409,714
4	September 2014 to March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to continued ISIL security threats, significant movements of IDPs took place, including intra-governorate displacement within Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, and Salah al-Din as well as inter-governorate displacement into Erbil, Baghdad, Dahuk, and Sulaymaniyah The net number of displaced individuals was offset when around 100,000 individuals returned to their places of origin after being re-taken by the Iraqi Government, across the governorates of Diyala, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Anbar, and Kirkuk 	116,503
5	April 2015 to February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In May 2015, the "Fall of Ramadi" to ISIL led to the displacement of tens of thousands of people, mostly within Anbar and towards Baghdad 	103,325
6	March 2016 to October 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This period was characterized by a significant drop in the net number of IDPs, due to lowered security threats and therefore high return rates in certain governorates, especially Anbar, Baghdad, and Diyala Meanwhile, IDPs continued to be displaced in to other governorates such as Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din 	43,416

20 In this table information within the 'Characteristics of displacement wave' column has been derived from IOM's *Displacement Crisis: 2014-2017*, which has been triangulated with data in the 'Number of current caseload of IDPs (June 2020) displaced during each period' column, which is derived from IOM's DTM *Master List Datasets (1-117)*.

21 Amongst those displaced in August 2014 included a mass exodus of Yazidis, Christians and other religious communities from the districts of Ninewa. By March 2015, IOM estimates that around 500,000 Yazidis, mainly from Sinjar District, had fled to the KRI, especially Dahuk Governorate. For more information, refer to: UNHCR, *COI Note on the Situation of Yazidi IDPs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq*, 2019

22 IOM Iraq, *Understanding Ethno-Religious Groups in Iraq: Displacement and Return*, 2019, p.7.

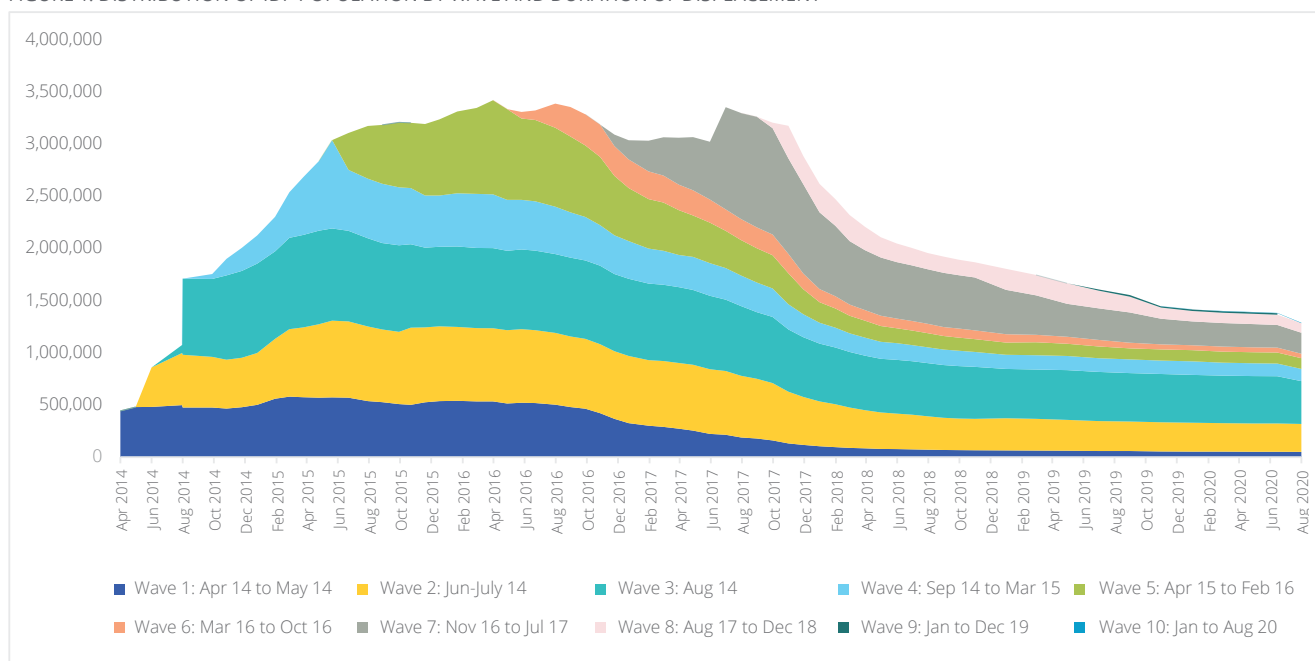
WAVE	TIME PERIOD	CHARACTERISTICS OF DISPLACEMENT WAVE	NUMBER OF IDPs REMAINING IN DISPLACEMENT (AUGUST 2020), ORIGINALLY DISPLACED DURING EACH WAVE
7	November 2016 to July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A military intervention to re-take parts of Ninewa Governorate led to the displacement of around 100,000 individuals, especially in Al Shirqat and Al Hawjia Concurrently, the returnee population continued to increase—especially in Anbar 	200,493
8	August 2017 to December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Iraqi Government's re-taking of Ninewa Governorate prompted a significant number of returnees to Mosul and Telafar. Many of these returnees had been seeking safety in the governorates of Erbil, Anbar, Baghdad, and Kirkuk 	91,037
9	January to December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DTM considers the full year of 2019 as a stand-alone wave, on the basis that no displacements took place at the scale of previous periods. The number of returns outnumbered the number of displacements during this period 	13,409
10	January to August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DTM considers the full year of 2020 as a stand-alone wave, on the basis that no displacements took place at the scale of previous periods. The number of returns outnumbered the number of displacements during this period 	4,155

CURRENT IDP POPULATION BY WAVE OF DISPLACEMENT²³

Figure 1 below displays the cumulative number of IDPs at any given time since April 2014 (when DTM started monitoring displacement), disaggregated by each of the 10 waves in which they were displaced. At the highest point of the displacement in March 2016, of the 3,417,768 IDPs across the country, a

plurality were recorded as having been displaced between April 2015 and February 2016 (901,560; 26%) when the fall of Ramadi took place, with the next highest share having been displaced in August 2014 (766,662; 22%), which was associated primarily with ISIL's violent occupation of Ninewa Governorate's Sinjar District.

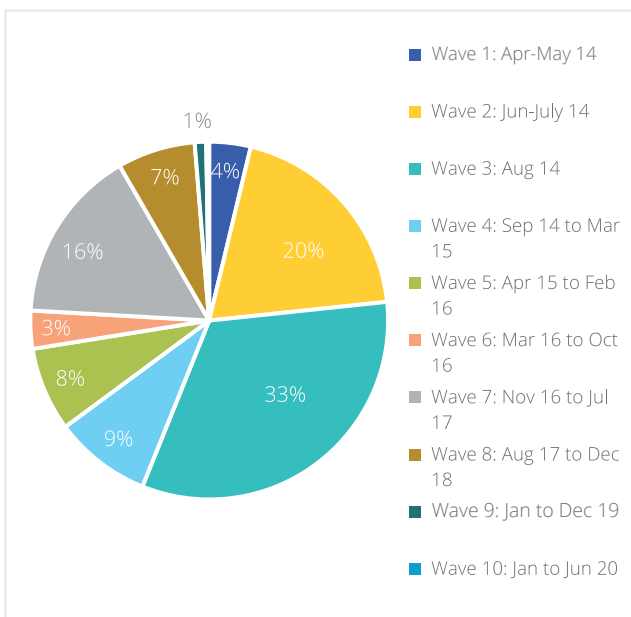
FIGURE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF IDP POPULATION BY WAVE AND DURATION OF DISPLACEMENT



23 All data included in this section are derived from IOM DTM's Master List, unless specified otherwise. Refer to: IOM (2020). *Master List Datasets (1-117)*, 2014-2020.

As shown in Figure 2, of the total caseload of IDPs as at August 2020 (1,299,987), 409,714 (33%) IDPs are recorded as having been displaced in August 2014—the shortest but most intense wave, prompted by ISIL domination in Ninewa Governorate’s Sinjar District, while 267,187 IDPs are recorded as having been displaced in the June-July 2014 period (20%), which was primarily associated with ISIL’s occupation of Mosul city in Ninewa Governorate. Otherwise, 309,094 IDPs of the current caseload are recorded to have been displaced during the post-October 2016 period (24%).

FIGURE 2: PROPORTION OF IDP CASELOAD, DISAGGREGATED BY PERIOD OF DISPLACEMENT (AS AT AUGUST 2020)

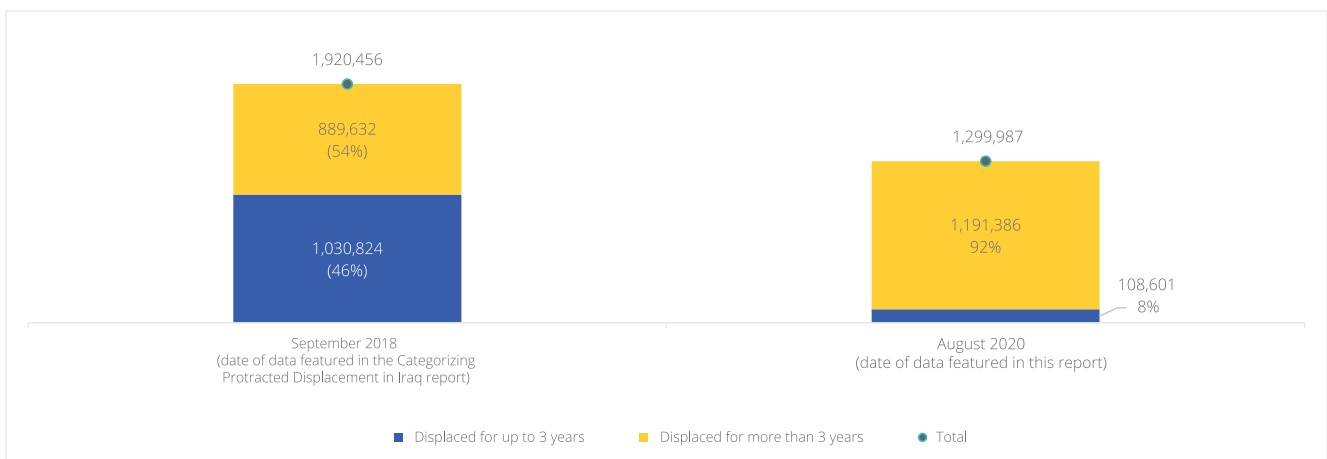


IDPs IN PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT²⁴

The definition of protracted displacement varies across crises, taking into account their unique and multi-layered complexities.²⁵ IOM Iraq recognizes protracted displacement as the situations in which IDPs have been unable to overcome the vulnerabilities that led to their displacement in the first instance, and advance towards a recognized pathway of durable solutions after three or more years in displacement.²⁶

A significant change between September 2018 and August 2020 relates to the duration for which IDPs have been displaced. These changes can be observed in Figure 3 below. In September 2018, 54 per cent of all IDPs across the country had been displaced for three or more years, while the remaining 46 per cent had been displaced for less than three years. However, as at August 2020, IDPs are far more likely to have been displaced for three or more years (92%) compared with those displaced for less than three years (8%). This change in composition of IDPs versus returnees can be explained by the fact that data reported on in the *Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq* report was collected less than 12 months following the declaration of ISIL’s defeat, as well as the range of barriers that the remaining caseload face in realizing durable solutions—including those limiting their ability to return to places of origin.

FIGURE 3: PROPORTION OF IDPs BY DURATION OF DISPLACEMENT, SEPTEMBER 2018 VS. AUGUST 2020



24 All data included in this section are derived from IOM DTM’s Master List, unless specified otherwise. Refer to: IOM (2020). *Master List Datasets (1-117)*, 2014-2020.

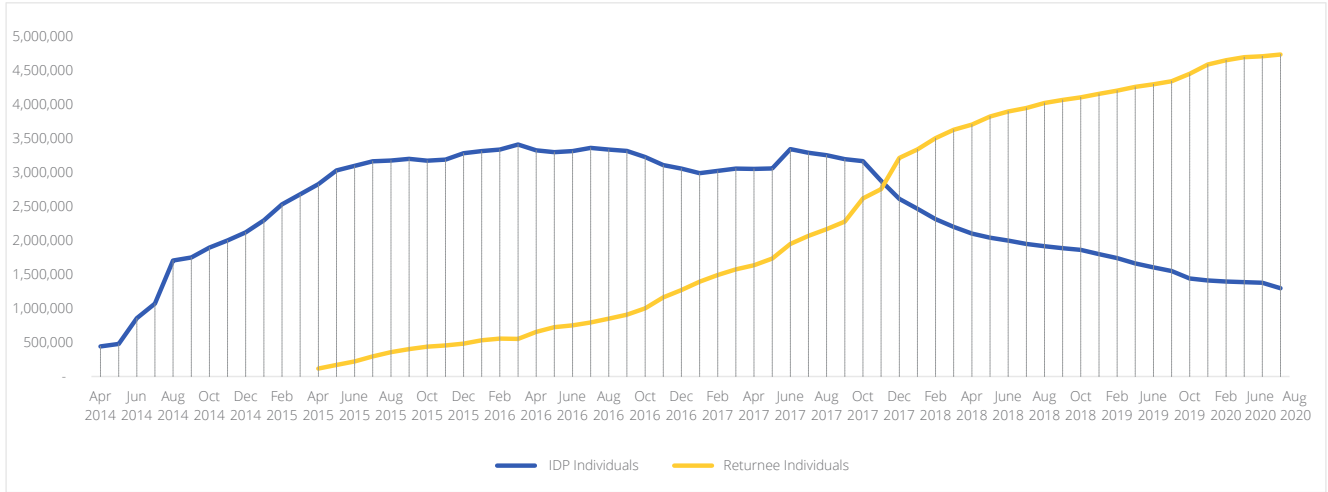
25 Humanitarian Policy Group, *Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile*, p.2.

26 IOM Iraq, *Reasons to Remain: Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq*, 2018, p.1.

Figure 4 below illustrates the change in the composition of IDPs and returnees since the first period of displacement in early 2014. While the overall number of returns has

outnumbered the displacement of individuals since the defeat of ISIL in November 2017, the rates of returns for a significant number of IDPs has steadily slowed down.

FIGURE 4: NUMBER OF IDPs AND RETURNEES OVER TIME

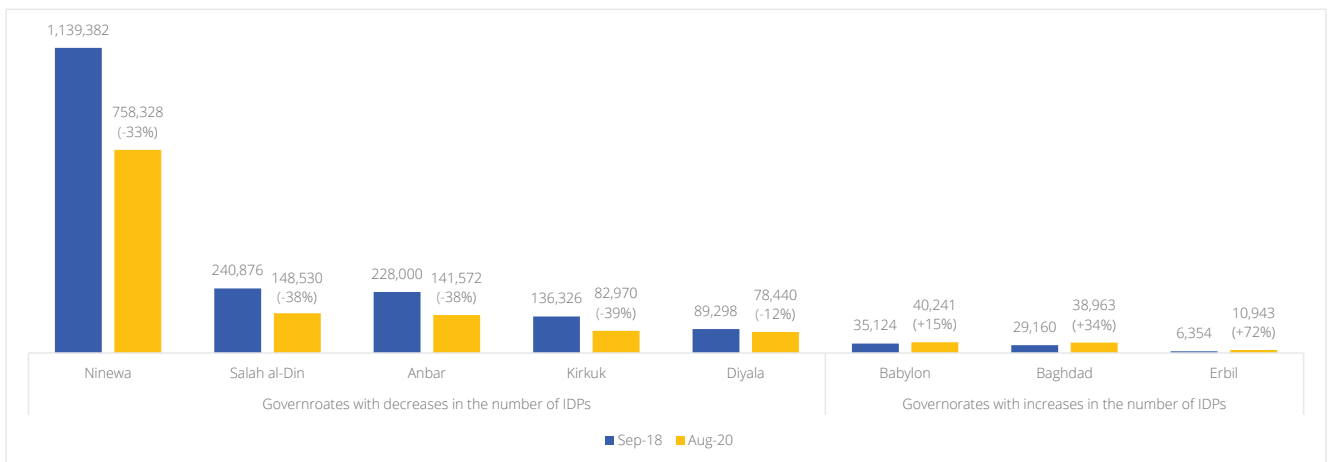


IDPs BY AREA OF ORIGIN²⁷

While the number of IDPs has dropped significantly between September 2018 and August 2020, the proportions of the total IDP caseload originating from different governorates remains relatively consistent between the two datasets. In August 2020, of the 1,299,987 IDPs across the country, 758,328 (58%) originally come from Ninewa governorate—especially from the districts of Mosul (269,077 individuals), Sinjar (227,035 individuals), and Al-Ba’aj (103,295 individuals). The next highest proportions of IDPs are from the governorates of Salah al-Din and Anbar, which contain respectively 148,530 (11%) and 141,572 (11%) IDPs.

Most IDPs originate from the Governorates of Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Anbar, Kirkuk, and Diyala. Since September 2018, decreases have taken place in the number of IDPs originating from these governorates. Conversely, the opposite applies to the three governorates from which the fewest number of IDPs originate (Babylon, Baghdad, and Erbil). This can be explained by the returns of 630,426 individuals to their governorates of origin that have taken place since September 2018,²⁸ along with security incidents that have led to the further displacement of some individuals from Babylon, Baghdad, and Erbil. Refer to Figure 5 below.

FIGURE 5: CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF IDPs ORIGINATING FROM DIFFERENT GOVERNORATES, SEPTEMBER 2018 VS. AUGUST 2020



²⁷ All data included in this section are derived from IOM DTM’s Master List, unless specified otherwise. Refer to: IOM (2020). *Master List Datasets (1-117)*, 2014-2020.

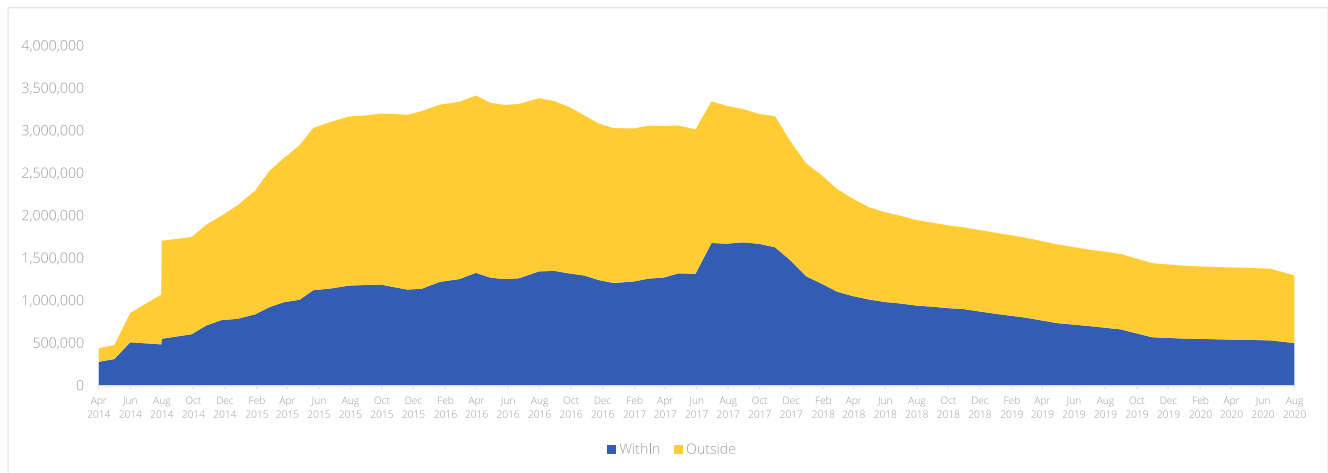
²⁸ IOM Iraq (2018), *Master List 112 Dataset*, 2020. & IOM Iraq, *Master List 117*, 2020.

IDPs BY PLACE OF DISPLACEMENT²⁹

Additionally, the overall rates of IDPs' statuses since 2014 reveals that they mostly have been displaced externally in governorates other than those from which they originate (see Figure 6). Since September 2018, changes have taken place to the rates of IDPs being displaced internally within governorates of origin versus those displaced externally in other governorates. The rates of IDPs' displacement locations were relatively even in September 2018, with 48 per cent displaced internally within origin governorates and 52 per

cent displaced externally in other governorates. However, by August 2020, the rates of IDPs being displaced internally dropped to 39 per cent while the remaining 61 per cent are displaced externally. This change suggests that IDPs displaced outside their governorates of origin are more likely to face barriers in returning home compared with those who are displaced within their governorates of origin. Amongst the group of IDPs displaced outside of their governorates of origin, the broad majority are displaced in out-of-camp settings (81%) versus camp settings (19%).

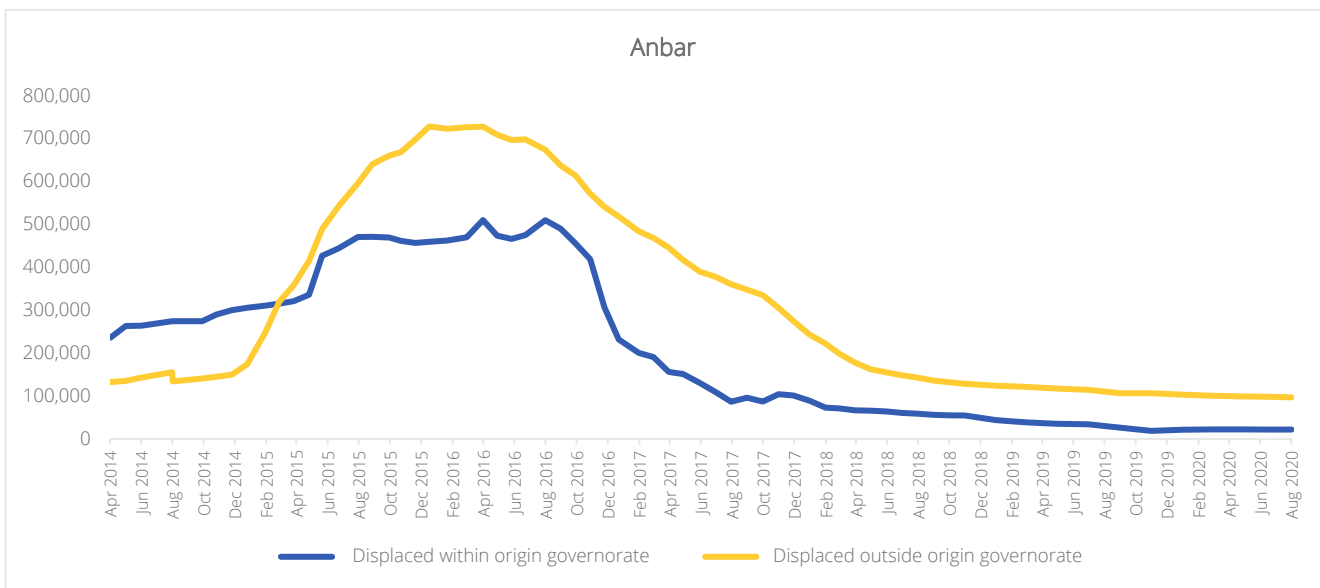
FIGURE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF IDP POPULATION BY PLACE OF DISPLACEMENT, WITHIN (INTRA-GOVERNORATE) VS OUTSIDE (INTER-GOVERNORATE)



As displayed in Figure 7, differences can also be observed in the number of IDPs displaced in different settings, at governorate level. IDPs from Diyala are the only group with a majority that have been displaced internally within their governorate of origin consistently since September 2018, however, this has applied for the majority of the period amongst those IDPs originating

from Kirkuk. By contrast, with a few minor exceptions over time, the numbers of IDPs displaced internally were outnumbered by those displaced externally amongst those originating from the governorates of Anbar, Babylon, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din between April 2014 and August 2020 (refer to the series of charts at Figure 7 below).

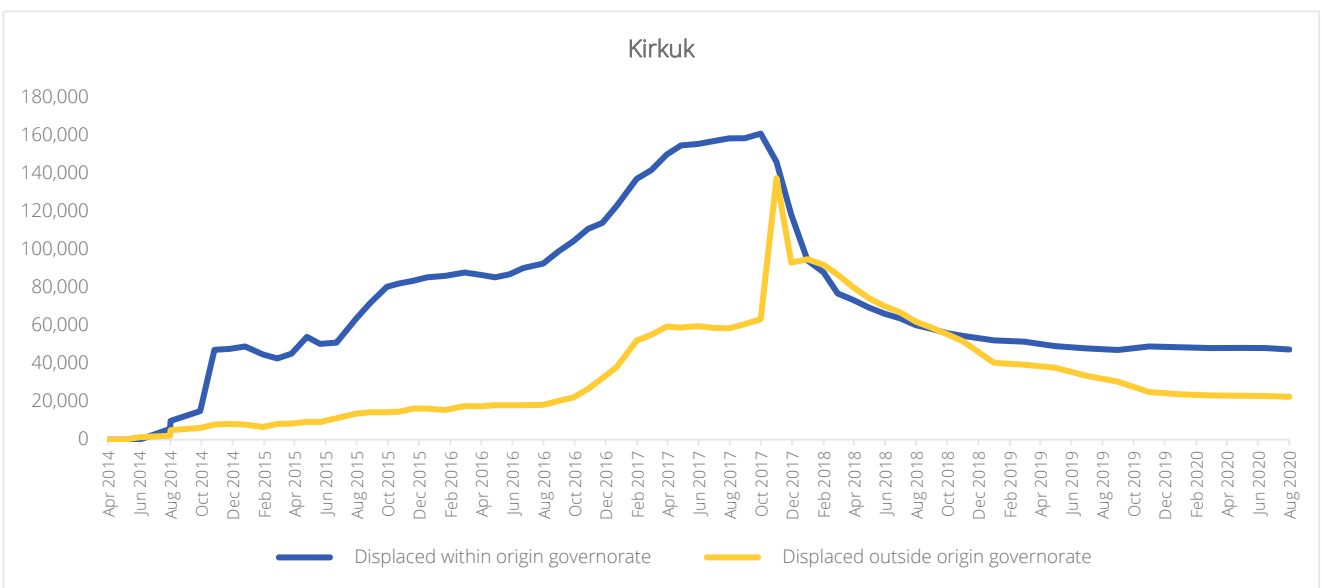
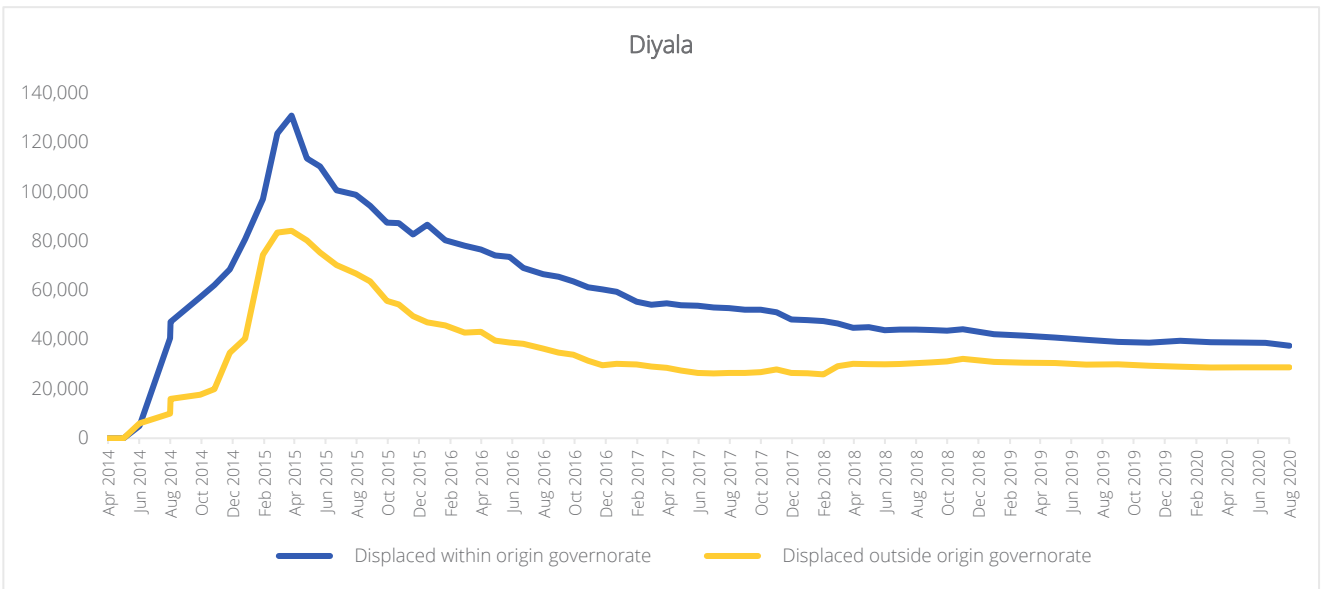
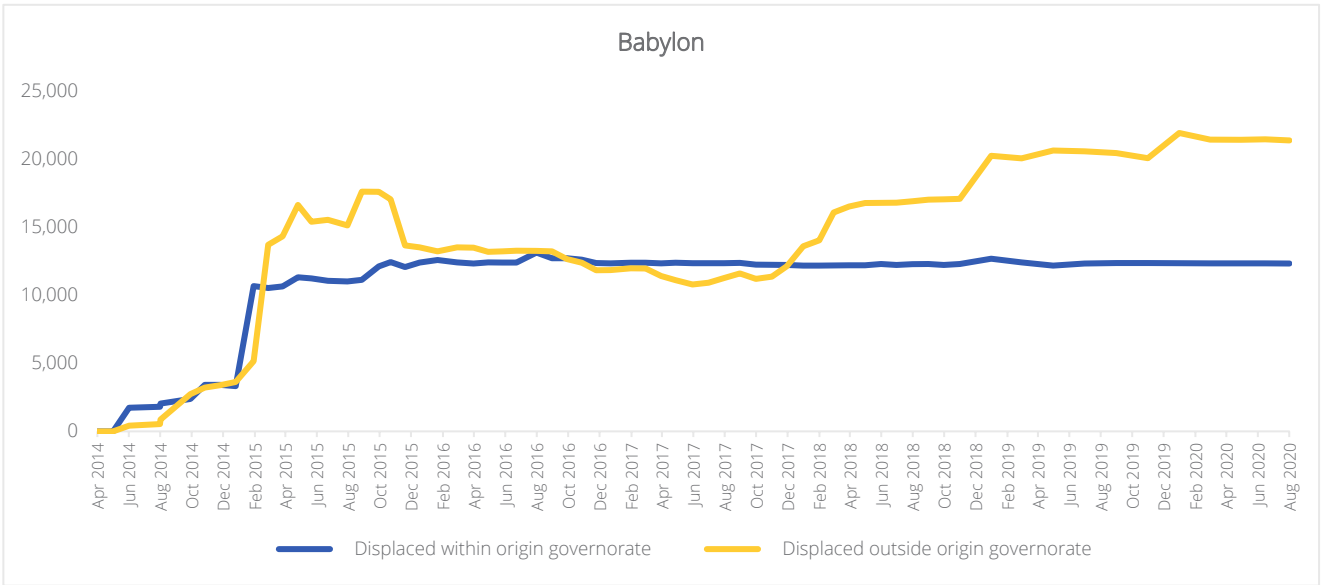
FIGURE 7: TIME SERIES ON THE NUMBER OF IDPs BY GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN^{30,31}

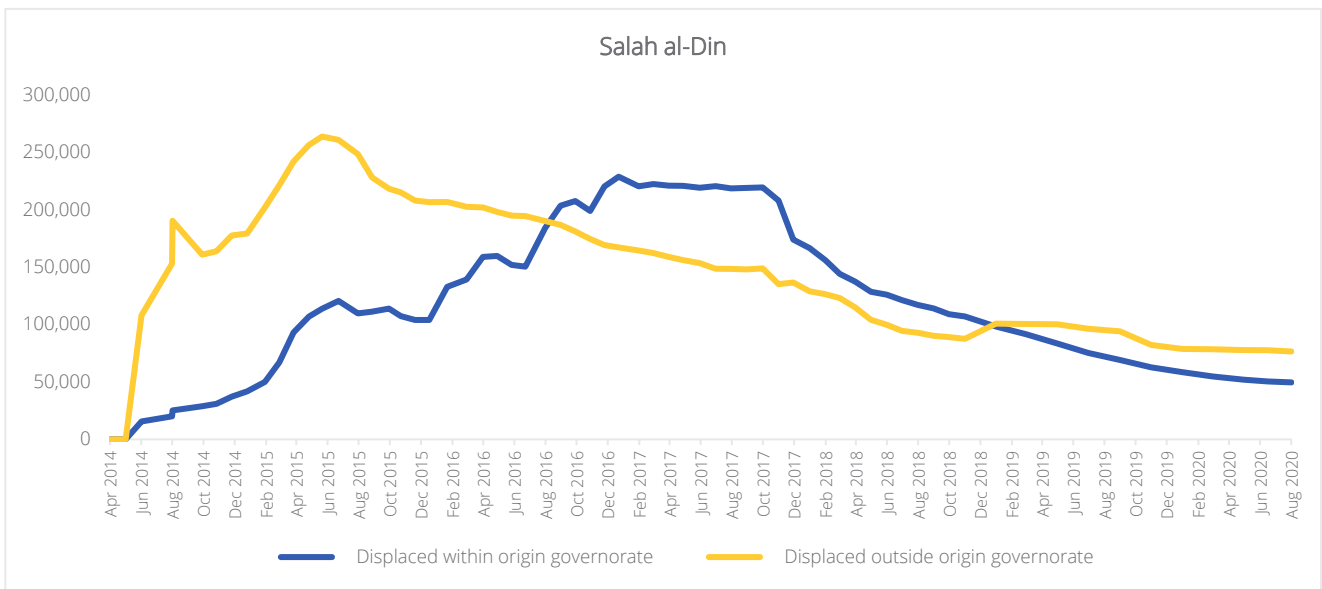
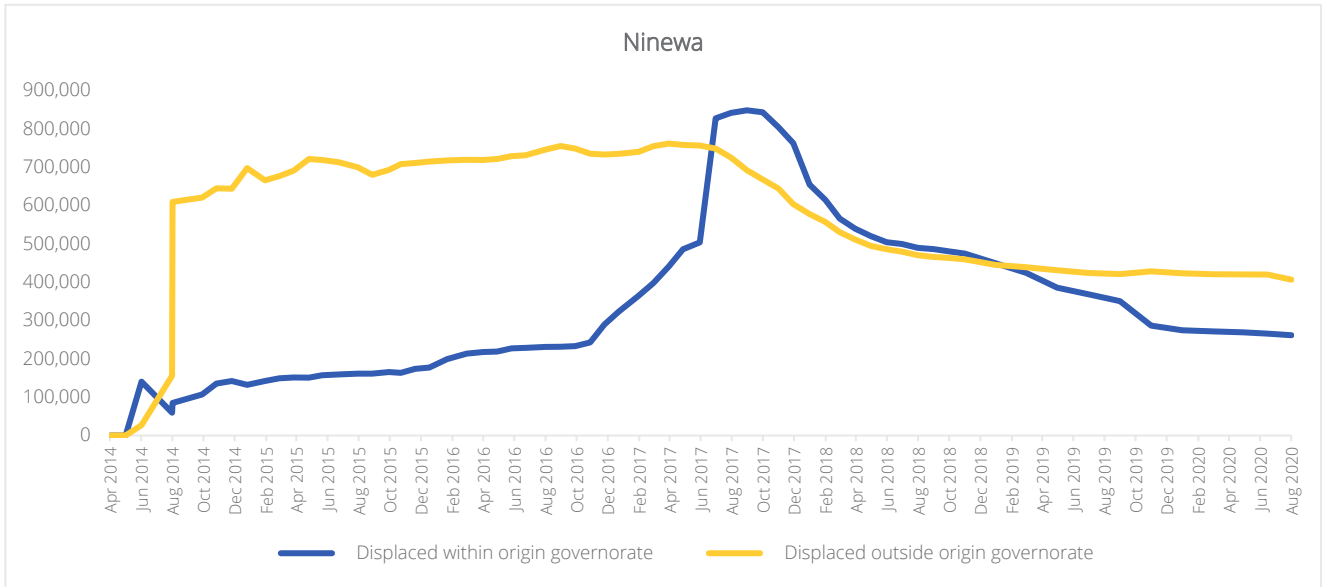


29 All data included in this section are derived from IOM DTM's Master List, unless specified otherwise. Refer to: IOM (2020). *Master List Datasets (1-117)*, 2014-2020.

30 All data included in this section are derived from IOM DTM's Master List, unless specified otherwise. Refer to: IOM (2020). *Master List Datasets (1-117)*, 2014-2020.

31 Charts showing the eight governorates with the highest number of IDPs are displayed. Other governorates only host minimal numbers of IDPs.



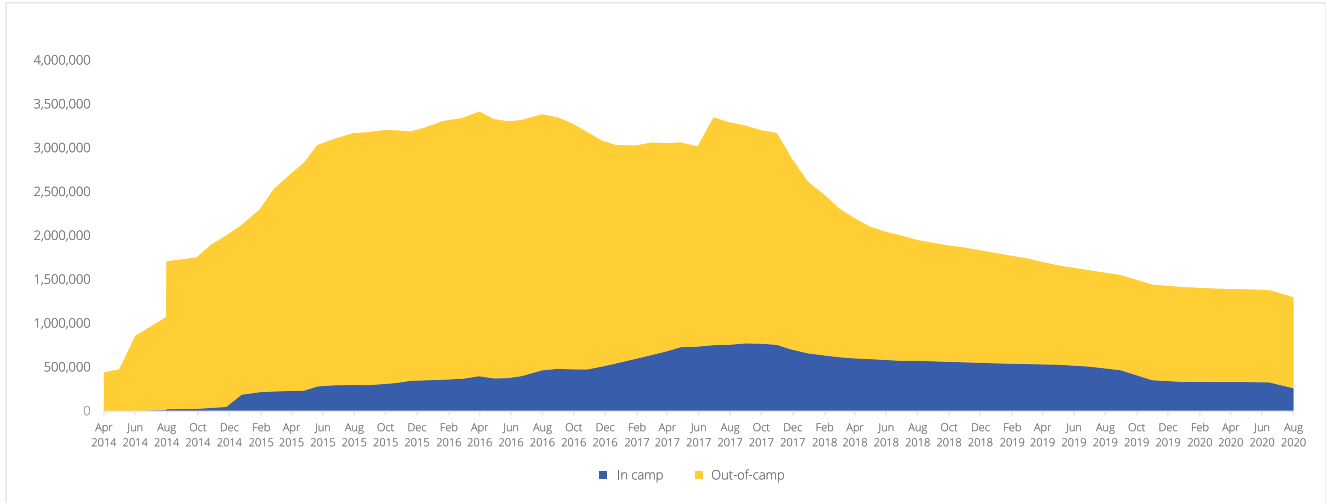


IDPs BY TYPE OF DISPLACEMENT³²

Since 2014, the “type” of IDPs’ displacement has been viewed in the context of whether they live in camp or out-of-camp settings. Observing the overwhelming majority of IDPs as having lived in out-of-camp settings demonstrates that the IDP crisis has largely taken place in urban and peri-urban settings since 2014.

At the height of the displacement crisis in March 2016, as measured by the highest total number of IDPs (3,417,768 individuals) across the country, 61 per cent were found to be displaced in out-of-camp settings, while the remaining 39 per cent were in camp settings. Since this high point, the rates of individuals residing in out-of-camp settings fell to 52 per cent (with 48% in camp settings) in October 2018, before rising to 61 per cent (with 39% in camp settings) by August 2020.

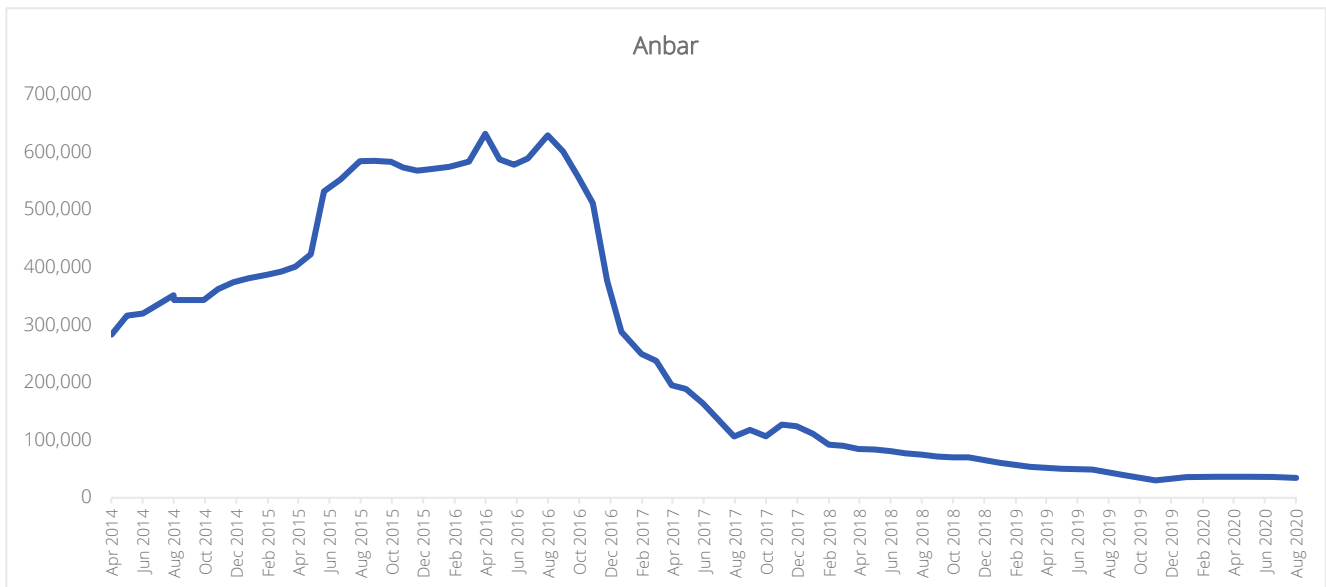
FIGURE 8: DISTRIBUTION OF IDP POPULATION, BY TYPE OF DISPLACEMENT



IDPs BY GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT

The following time series charts display trends to the number of IDPs since the first period of displacement. In most governorates, sharp decreases in the number in IDPs can be observed in late 2017 when the Iraqi Government declared the end of the military campaign against ISIL.

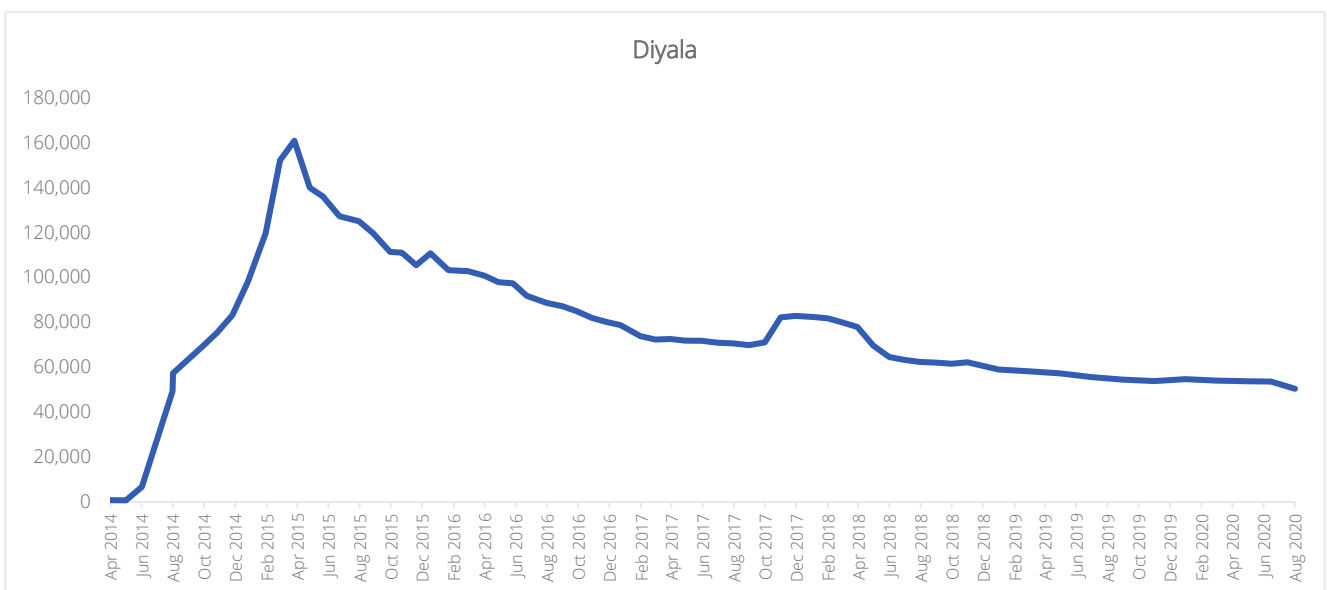
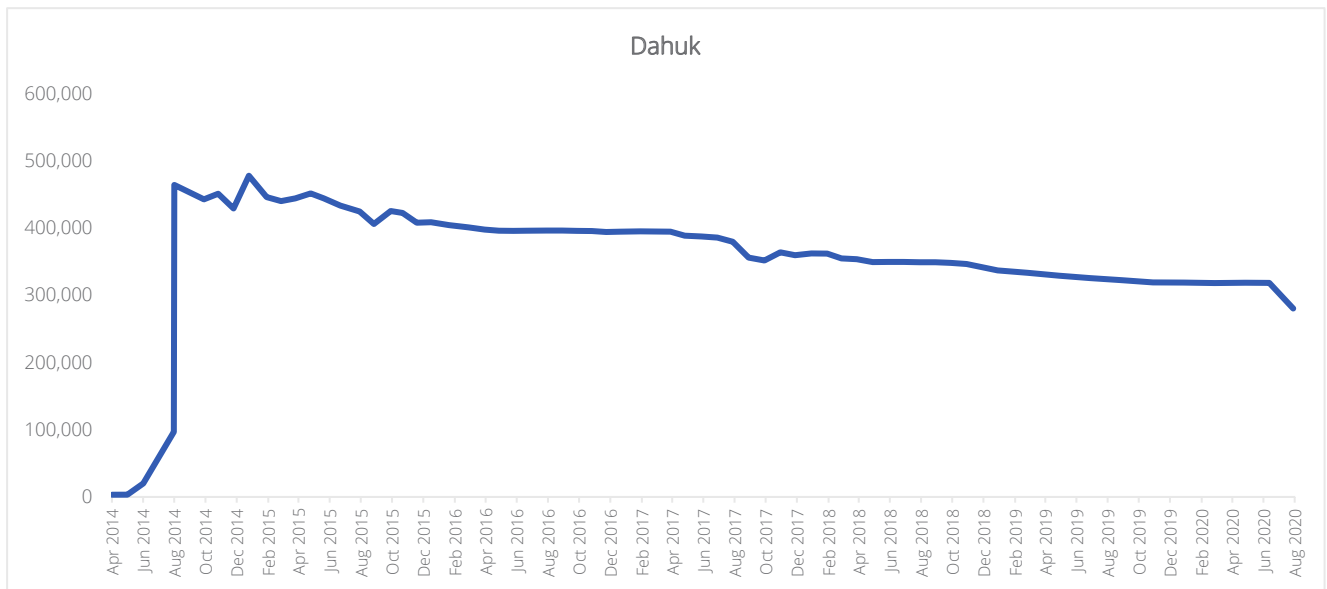
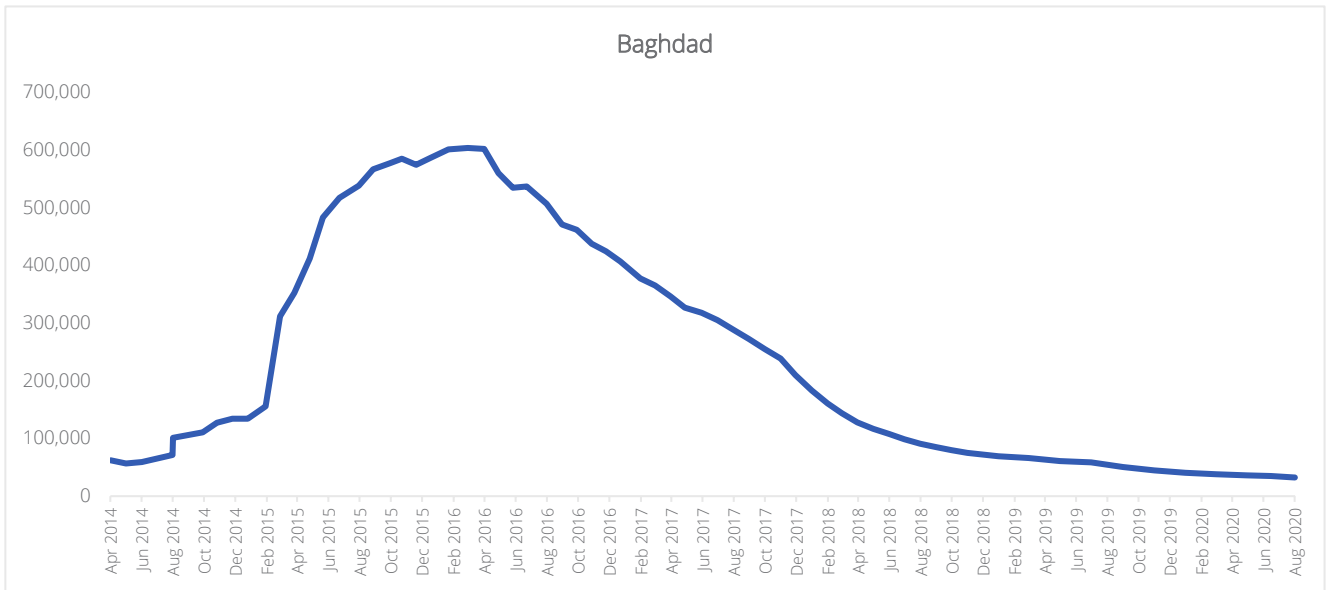
FIGURE 9: TIME SERIES OF THE NUMBER OF IDPs, BY GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT^{33,34}

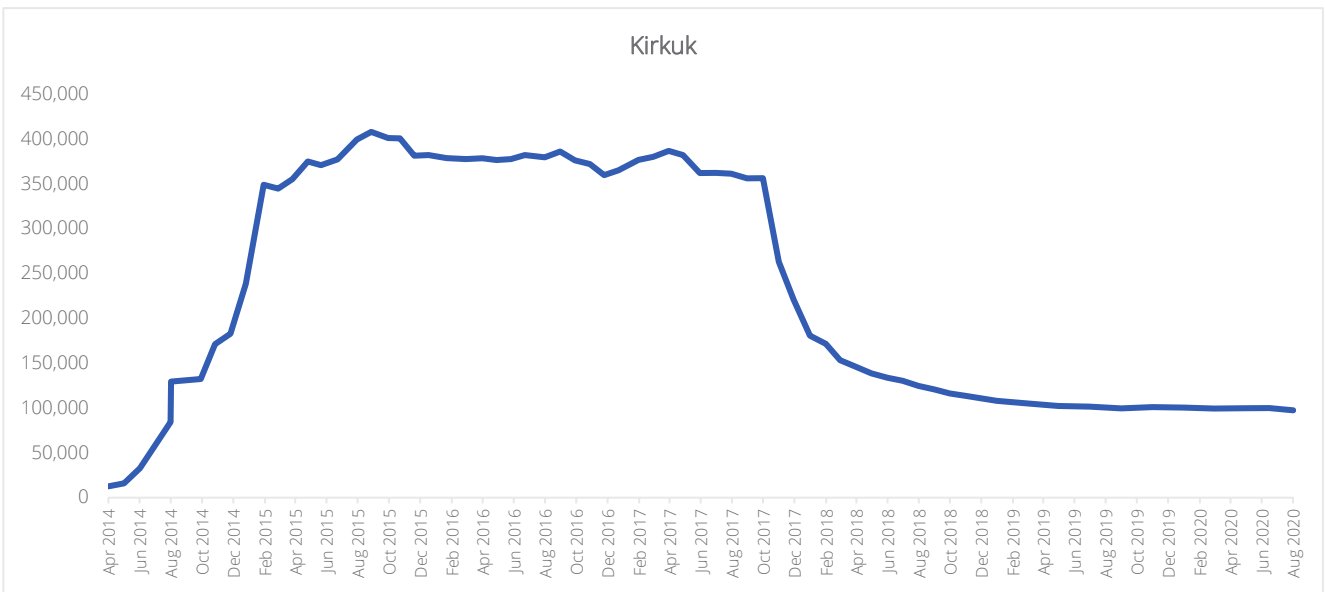
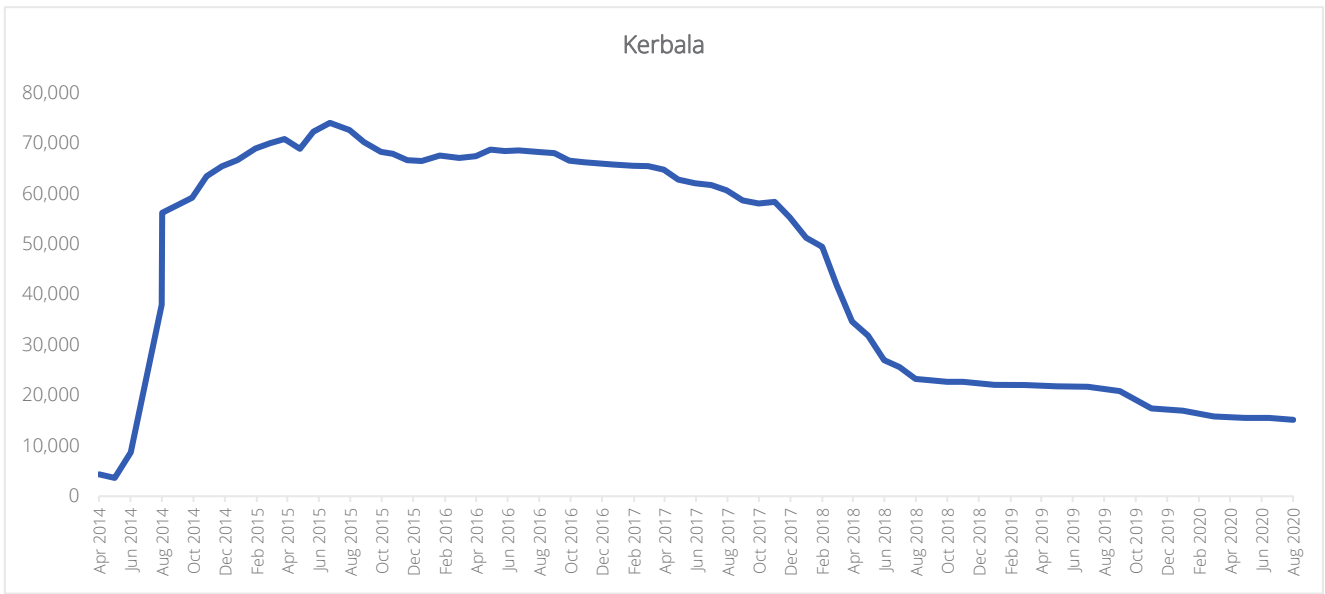
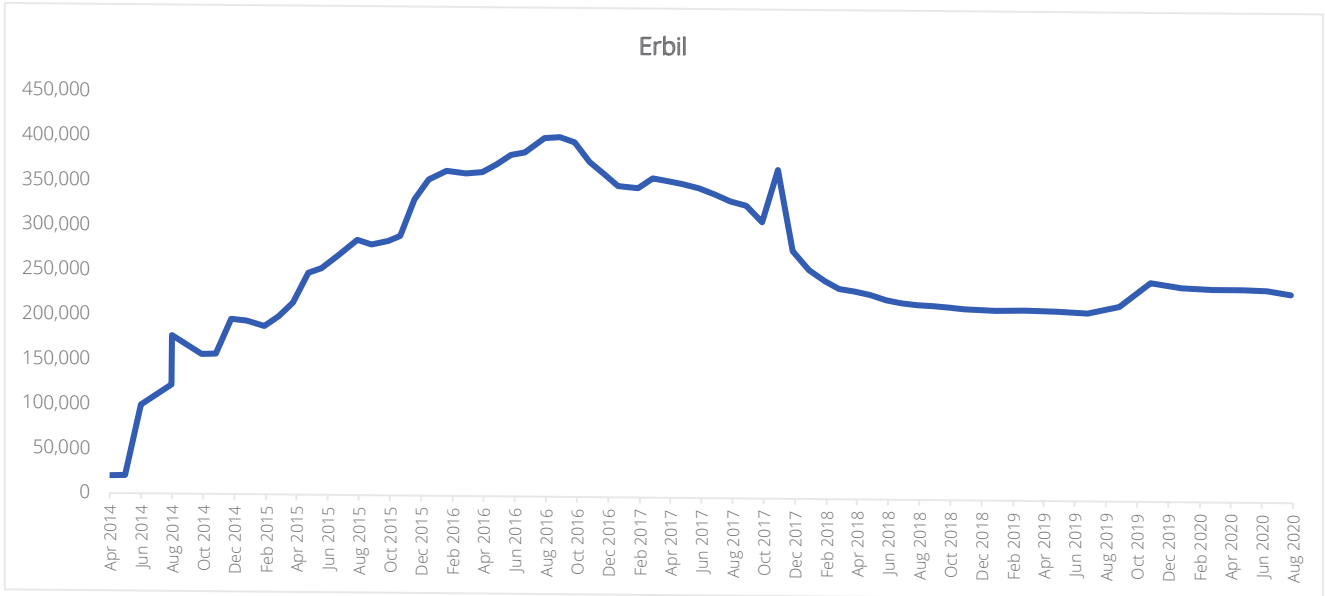


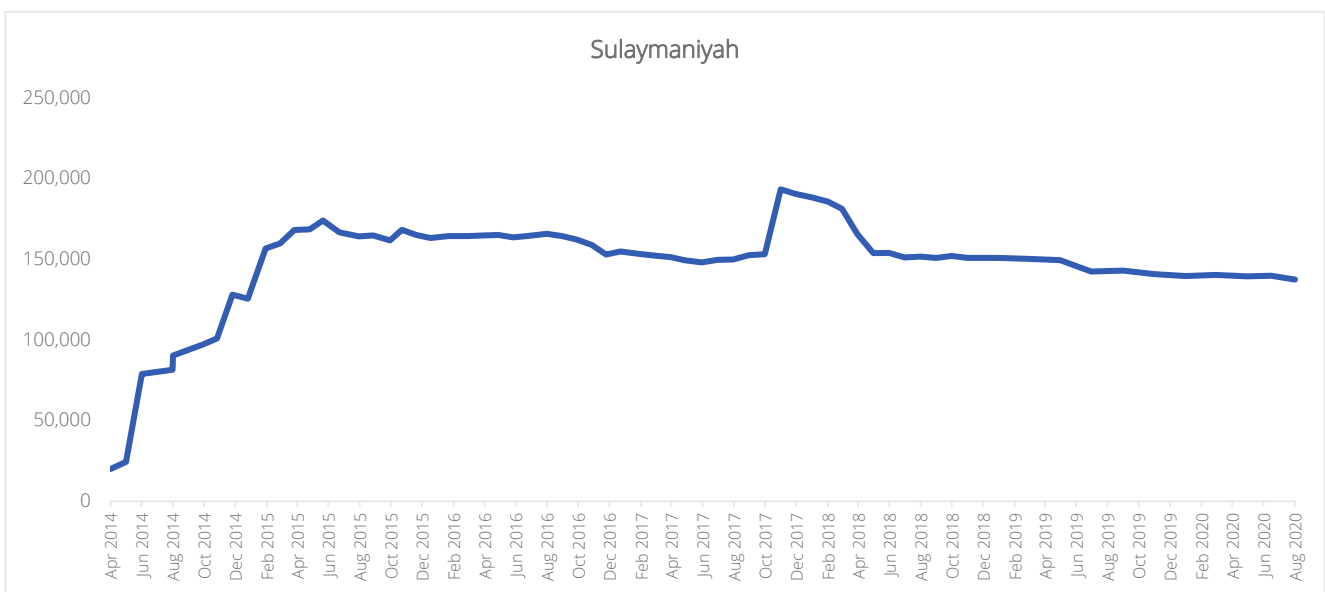
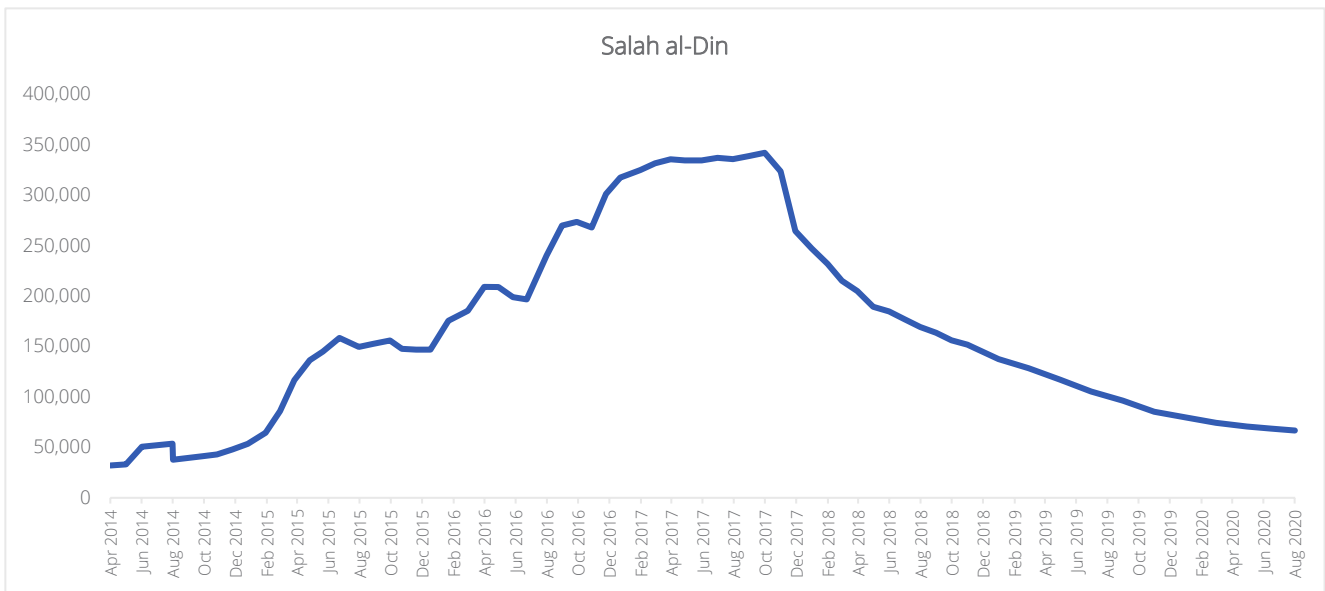
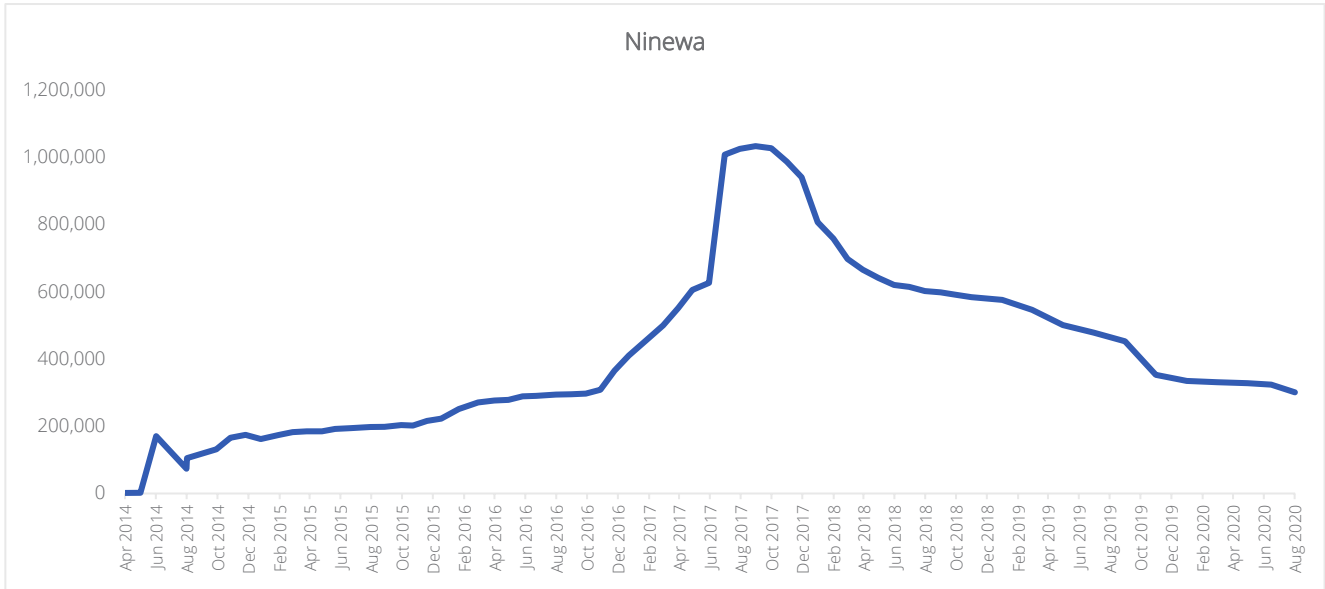
32 All data included in this section are derived from IOM DTM’s Master List, unless specified otherwise. Refer to: IOM (2020). *Master List Datasets (1-117)*, 2014-2020.

33 Ibid.

34 Charts showing the eight governorates with the highest number of IDPs are displayed. Other governorates only host minimal numbers of IDPs.





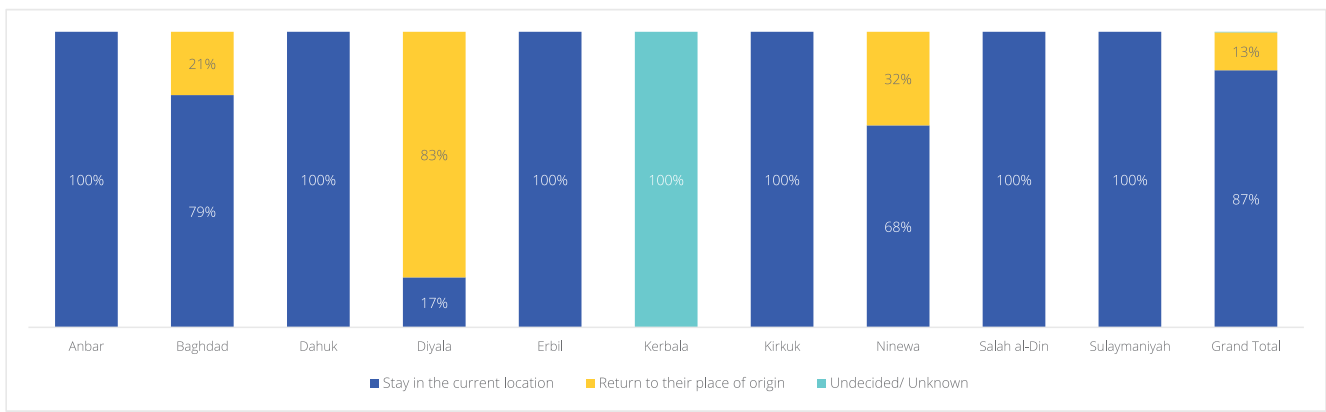


MOVEMENT INTENTIONS OF IDPs³⁵

Identifying IDPs’ intentions in relation to movements from their locations of displacement is complex, owing to a range of modalities that have been employed across the country to collect this information since 2014. To align with data included in the categorization framework in the next section, the intentions of IDPs captured in IOM’s ILA 5 assessment is included below. Short-term intentions relate to IDPs’ movements in the period up to six months following data collection (which took place in August 2020), while long-term intentions relate to their movements in six or more months following data collection.³⁶

As displayed in Figure 10 below, the rates that in-camp IDPs are reported as having different short-term movement intentions vary across the different governorates in which they are displaced.³⁷ As at August 2020, all in-camp IDPs in Anbar, Dahuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah were reported as intending to stay in their current location for the next six months, with a high proportion also reported as having this intention in Baghdad and Ninewa. Meanwhile, the majority of in-camp IDPs in Diyala (83%) were reported as intending to return to their place of origin, and all in-camp IDPs in Kerbala were living in locations where the majority of families were undecided as to their short-term movement intentions.

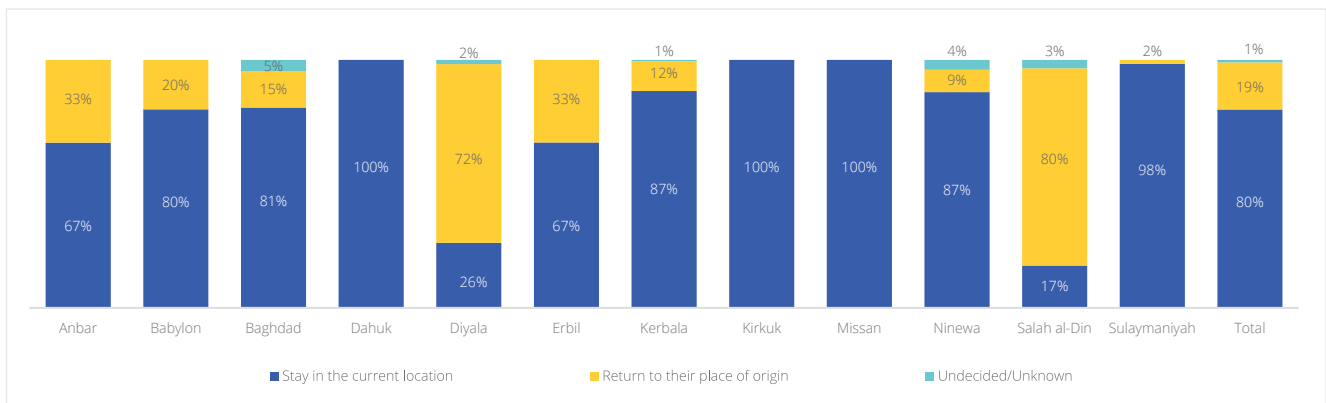
FIGURE 10: SHORT-TERM INTENTIONS (<6 MONTHS) OF IN-CAMP IDPs, BY GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT



The rates at which out-of-camp IDPs are reported as having different short-term movement intentions also vary across the governorates in which they are displaced.³⁸ While most out-of-camp IDPs in Dahuk and Kirkuk were reported as intending to stay in their current location for the next six months, the broad

majority of those in Anbar, Babylon, Baghdad, Erbil, Kerbala, Ninewa, Sulaymaniyah, and all in Kirkuk and Dahuk, were reported as having this intention. By contrast, the majority of out-of-camp IDPs in Diyala and Salah al-Din were reported as intending to return to their area of origin.

FIGURE 11: SHORT-TERM INTENTIONS (<6 MONTHS) OF OUT-OF-CAMP IDPs, BY GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT



35 All data included in this section are derived from IOM DTM’s ILA 5, unless specified otherwise. Refer to IOM Iraq, *Integrated Location Assessment 5*, 2020.

36 Note that during data collection for the ILA 5 assessment, DTM enumerators asked KIs (each representing a location) the following question: “What is the long-term (6 months or more) plan of most IDPs living in this location?”. Therefore, data presented in this section relates to the intentions of “most” IDPs in each location.

37 The following number of in-camp IDPs are displaced in each governorate: Anbar (1,473), Baghdad (294), Dahuk (24,465), Diyala (1,082), Erbil (2,636), Kerbala (99), Kirkuk (1,692), Ninewa (18,311), Salah al-Din (180), and Sulaymaniyah (2,439). Refer to: IOM Iraq. *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

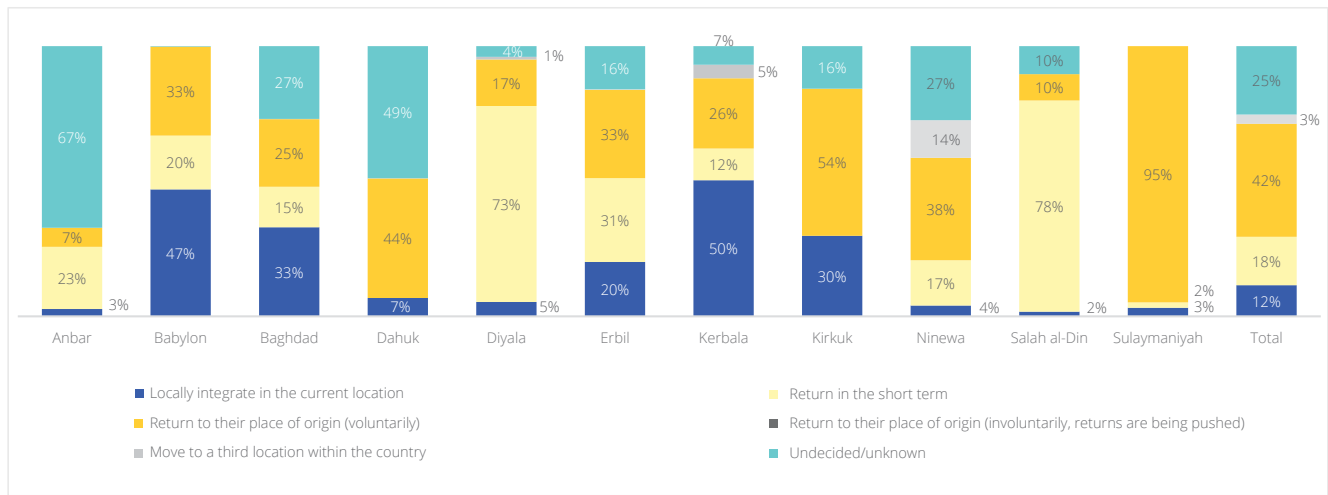
38 The following number of out-of-camp IDPs are displaced in each governorate: Anbar (3,226), Babylon (2,657), Baghdad (4,477), Dahuk (26,402), Diyala (7,437), Erbil (36,290), Kerbala (2,348), Kirkuk (14,830), Salah al-Din (10,442) and Sulaymaniyah (20,678). Refer to: IOM Iraq. *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

IDPs are significantly more likely to intend to return home in the long term (≥6 months) compared with the short term (<6 months).³⁹ While only two governorates (Diyala and Salah al-Din) feature a majority of IDPs that intend to return home within the next six months, the majority of IDPs in almost all governorates intend to return home after six months. In the ILA 5, IDPs in Sulaymaniyah Governorate are particularly likely to intend to voluntarily return to their place of origin voluntarily (95%), with high rates of IDPs also reported as having this intention in Kirkuk (54%) and Dahuk (45%). Otherwise, on

the question concerning long-term movement intentions, significant proportions of IDPs in Salah al-Din (78%) and Diyala (73%) were nevertheless reported as intending to return in the short-term. In addition, a notably high proportion of IDPs in Anbar and Dahuk were reported as being undecided as to their longer-term movement intentions, at 67 per cent and 49 per cent respectively.⁴⁰

Notably, 14% of IDPs in Ninewa were reported as intending to move to a third location within the country.

FIGURE 12: LONG-TERM INTENTIONS (≥6) OF IDPs, BY GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT



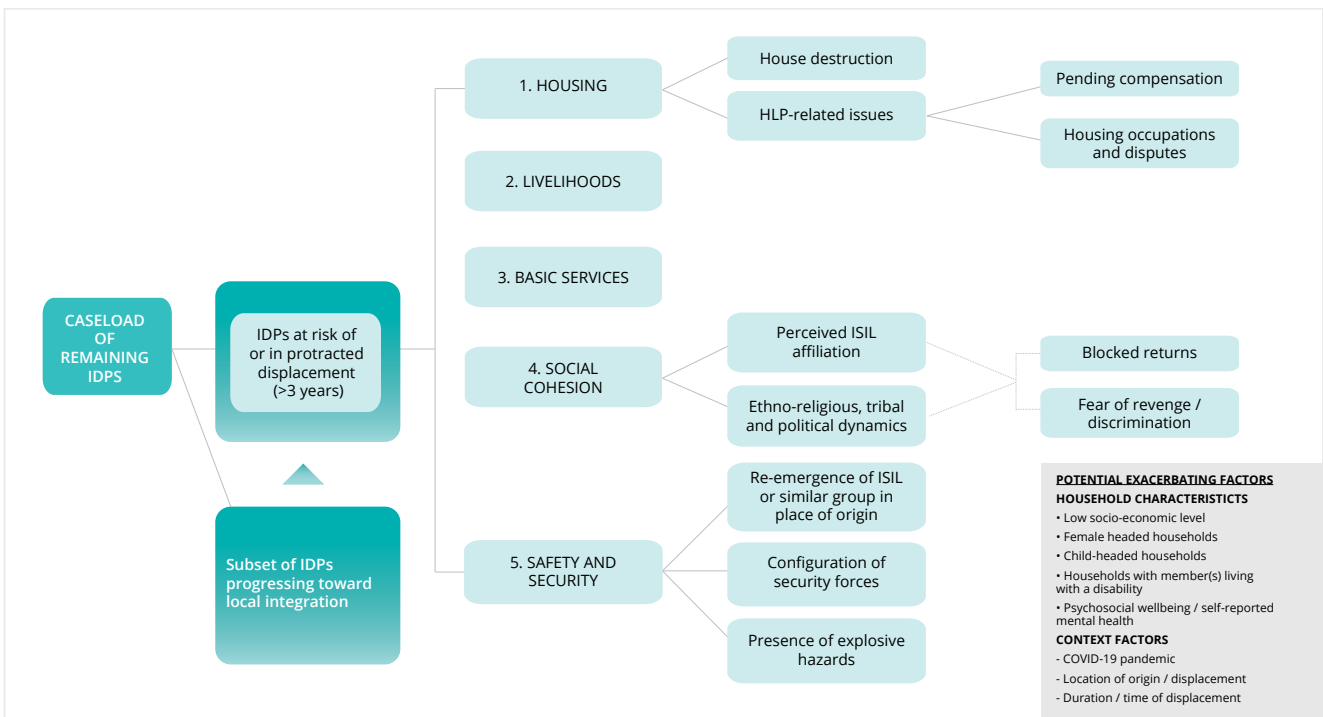
39 The following number of IDPs are displaced in each governorate: Anbar (6,007), Babylon (2,832), Baghdad (5,449), Dahuk (50,889), Diyala (8,596), Erbil (39,138), Kerbala (2,547), Kirkuk (16,522), Salah al-Din (11,154) and Sulaymaniyah (20,678). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

40 Note that in the graph, “Other” options are combination of the following options KIs could select in the ILA 5 questionnaire: “Move to a third location within the country” and “Go abroad”.

FRAMEWORK: CATEGORIES OF RETURN BARRIERS

In this section, the Framework: Categories of Return Barriers is presented. The framework has been developed in liaison with durable solutions experts in Iraq, and draws upon key data sources to demonstrate the extent that IDPs face each type of barrier—with the aim of building an understanding of how to address them.

FRAMEWORK: CATEGORIES OF RETURN BARRIERS (DIAGRAM)



1. HOUSING

IDPs’ access to housing, land, and property is central to achieving a durable solution, including in cases of IDPs returning to their area of origin.^{41,42} During the ISIL-related conflict in Iraq (2014-2017), the systematic and widespread destruction, looting, and confiscation of housing was a major push factor in the displacement of individuals in the north

and west of the country.⁴³ Likewise, IDPs’ ruined houses in the violence’s wake, their houses being occupied or disputed, and their limited ability to access compensation for damage sustained to houses during conflict, remain critical challenges for the sustainable return of IDPs to their places of origin.⁴⁴ An overview of data relating to these housing-related problems faced by IDPs in Iraq are detailed below.⁴⁵

41 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Brookings Institute & University of Bern, *Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010.

42 Guiding rights-based approaches to meeting this criterion in the pursuit of durable solutions are the UN Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for IDPs and Refugees (2004) - the “Pinheiro Principles.” Refer to: UN Commission on Human Rights; Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. *Principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons*, 2005. There are a total of nine principles, covering the different dimensions of human rights associated with IDPs accessing adequate housing through restoration, restitution or compensation.

43 Human Rights Watch, *Looting, Destruction by Forces Fighting ISIS*, 2017.

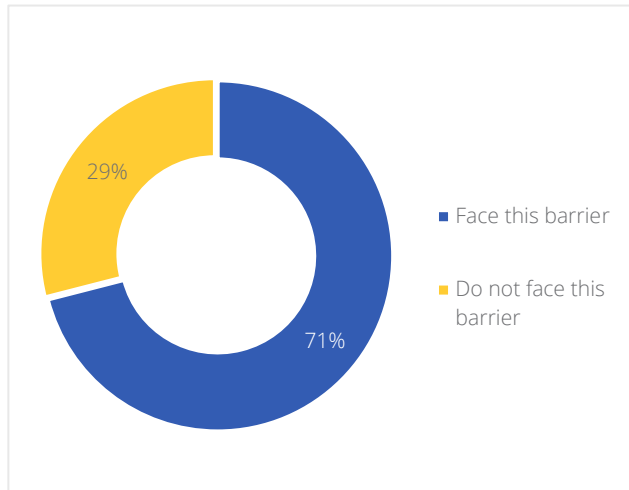
44 The Iraq Protection Cluster’s Housing, Livelihoods and Property (HLP) Sub-Cluster is responsible for the coordination and monitoring of programming across Iraq.

45 Note that housing-related return barriers may differ between those IDPs who owned a house and those who were renting prior to displacement. Additionally, there are reportedly cases of IDPs who had owned houses prior to displacement who opt to rent because of the extent of damage sustained to their own houses during the period of conflict. Available data does not capture this information in detail; this information gap could be addressed through implementing household level surveys including indicators relating to IDPs’ pre-displacement rental/owner status, and the extent of damage sustained to households during the period of conflict.

HOUSING DESTRUCTION

Housing destruction/damage is the most significant barrier faced by IDPs in returning to their place of origin. In IOM's ILLA 5, housing damage/destruction was reported as a barrier faced by 71 per cent of IDP families—representing a minor increase from that recorded twelve months earlier in the ILLA 4 (62%).⁴⁶

FIGURE 13: % OF IDP FAMILIES THAT CANNOT NOT RETURN HOME DUE TO HOUSING DAMAGE/DESTRUCTION IN THEIR ORIGIN AREA



An IOM study of the main districts from which IDPs originate suggests that the highest rates of this barrier being faced is amongst those from Kirkuk Governorate's District of Daquq (92%, all of whom were in out-of-camp displacement settings).⁴⁷ High rates of facing this barrier were also recorded amongst IDPs from Anbar Governorate's Districts of Ramadi (77% amongst those in out-of-camp settings, and 73% in camp settings) and Falluja (68% amongst those in out-of-camp

settings, and 64% amongst those in camp settings), as well as Ninewa Governorate's Al-Hamdaniya (59% amongst those in out-of-camp settings, and 80% amongst those in camp settings).⁴⁸

Across the country, almost all locations of return (1,626; 89%) are identified as having sustained medium or highly severe⁴⁹ levels of housing damage.⁵⁰ Ninewa Governorate, which sustained more damage than all other governorates during the ISIL conflict,⁵¹ features all of the country's 33 locations ranked as high severity in terms of residential destruction.^{52,53} These 33 locations are spread across the following districts: Mosul (2,716 families), Telafar (1,564), Tilkaif (835), Sinjar (801), and Al-Hamdaniya (31). As most of these locations are in Ninewa's Sinjar and Telafar, the remaining IDP families that originate from these two districts—who are predominantly displaced in the Governorates of Erbil and internally within Ninewa—are most likely to face this particular barrier in returning home.⁵⁴

Notably, perceptions concerning residential destruction levels appear to be greater among individuals in displacement compared with those that have returned. An IOM-Georgetown University panel study, which tracks IDP families displaced in 2015 over time, shows that those in displacement (60%) are significantly more likely than those who have returned home (25%) to report that their houses in origin areas have sustained "heavy" damage.⁵⁵ Since heavily damaged houses are unlikely to be habitable, these findings support the notion that housing damage or destruction is a significant factor affecting IDPs' inability to return home and thus remain in protracted displacement.⁵⁶ It also suggests that returnees may have been able to return due to their pre-displacement homes having sustained lesser damage during the period of ISIL conflict compared with those remaining in displacement.⁵⁷

46 In locations where the prevalent intention of IDP households is to return to their area of origin, KIs were asked to select the three main return barriers. Data are weighted with the number of IDPs living at each location.

47 IOM Iraq, *Protracted Displacement Study: An In-Depth Analysis Of The Main Districts Of Origin (May-December 2018)*, 2018.

48 Ibid.

49 In the Return Index 9, severity levels for residential destruction were categorized as follows: More than half the houses are destroyed (High), About half or less than half of the houses are destroyed (Medium), None of the houses are destroyed (Low)

50 Affecting a total of 638,867 returnee families living in areas characterized this way (amounting to 81% of all returnee families nationally). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *DTM Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

51 A World Bank damage assessment following the end of the ISIL conflict found that of all housing damage across the country, 43% of it took place in Ninewa Governorate, with urban centres in Ninewa along incurring 58% of the total damage to all urban centres across the seven governorates where the conflict occurred. Refer to: World Bank Group, *Iraq Reconstruction and Investment: Part 2 – Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates*, 2018.

52 IOM Iraq, *DTM Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

53 The majority of IDPs originating from Ninewa are currently located internally within the same governorate, as well as in KRI's governorates of Dahuk and Erbil. In Ninewa 98% of IDPs are from Ninewa; in Dahuk 99% are from Ninewa; and in Erbil 47% are from Ninewa.

54 The remaining 46,175 IDP families from Mosul are mostly in the following districts: Erbil (30%), Mosul (21%), Sumel (9%), Akre (9%) and Dahuk (6%). Additionally, the remaining 15,957 IDP families from Telafar are mostly in the following districts: Mosul (32%), Zakho (14%), Najaf (10%), Kerbala (9%), and Sumel (5%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

55 IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Experiences Applying for Compensation*, 2019.

56 An additional factor affecting IDPs' decision to not return home for reasons linked to housing damage is that IDPs may not have access to accurate information regarding the status of their homes in their area of origin, thus meaning they do not know whether it is safe to return.

57 It is also worth noting that a significant number of IDPs had been renting; however, data relating to renters/non-renters and the impact of housing status on returns is not available at national level.

In addition, REACH’s MCNA, a yearly household survey to understand the needs of crisis-affected populations across the country, suggests that IDPs face barriers related to housing damage or destruction at slightly higher rates in 2020 (41%) than 2019 (32%).^{58,59,60}

HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP)-RELATED ISSUES

PENDING COMPENSATION

Another dimension to housing-related barriers to returning home relates to IDPs’ access to compensation under the federal government’s scheme, which is available to citizens that were directly affected by acts of terrorism, military operations, or military mistakes since March 2003.⁶¹ The relevant Iraqi law outlines five case types under which affected populations can apply for compensation, including housing damage, which accounts for a significant number

of applications under the scheme.⁶² Since the inception of the scheme, a growing number of Iraqi citizens whose houses were damaged during the ISIL conflict⁶³ have lodged applications for compensation, with the national number of applications jumping from 8,406 in 2018 to 14,419 in 2019.⁶⁴

An important point to consider in understanding the role of the compensation scheme in supporting IDPs to return home relates to their awareness of the scheme in the first place. On this, the IOM-Georgetown University panel study reveals significant increases in IDPs’ awareness of the scheme between 2016 (11%) and 2018 (50%).^{65,66} This is a positive finding in the context of IDPs’ decision-making and ability to return home, especially when observing commensurate increases in the rates of IDPs applying for scheme, which jumped from under five per cent in 2017 to 48 per cent in 2018.^{67,68}

TABLE 2: % OF IDPs REPORTING OWNING PROPERTY AND APPLYING FOR COMPENSATION (AS AT 2018)⁶⁹

% OF IDP FAMILIES THAT OWNED A HOUSE PRIOR TO DISPLACEMENT	OF IDPS FAMILIES WHO OWNED A PROPERTY PRIOR TO DISPLACEMENT, % WHO APPLIED FOR COMPENSATION	OF IDP FAMILIES WHO APPLIED FOR COMPENSATION, % BY APPLICATION STATUS (BETWEEN 1-9 MONTHS AFTER LODGING)		
		Pending	Accepted	Rejected
70%	48% (34% of all IDP families)	97%	1%	2%

However, these positive findings should be observed bearing in mind that compensations are reportedly slow to be processed.⁷⁰ In the panel study, of the 70 per cent of IDPs

households that owned a house prior to being displaced, 48 per cent reported having applied for compensation. Amongst this group, almost all (97%) reported that they were

58 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 7 Dataset*, 2019.

59 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 8 Dataset*, 2020.

60 Based on MCNA data, significantly fewer households from Anbar reported this barrier in 2020 than 2019. This decline may be attributable to some of the nation’s largest shelter rehabilitation programs taking place there, especially in the sub-districts of Falluja and Ramadi—two of the hardest-hit locations during the conflict between 2014 and 2017. However, despite the decrease in this problem being reported amongst those from Anbar, this governorate features the highest number of return locations ranked as high or medium severity in terms of residential destruction (298 return locations, amounting to 92% of all locations within the governorate). Refer to IOM Iraq, *DTM Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020. For more information regarding levels of damaged sustained to shelters, refer to: Shelter Cluster Iraq, *Iraq War Damaged Shelter Rehabilitation Dashboard: Geographical Scope*, 2020, pgs. 9 & 14.

61 IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Experiences Applying for Compensation*, 2019, p.6.

62 For more details, refer to: HLP Sub-Cluster Iraq, *Property Compensation Guidelines Based on Iraqi Law 20, 2009 and Law 57, 2015 (First Amendment)*, 2018.

63 IOM’s longitudinal study into the experiences of IDPs found that 60 per cent of IDP households in displacement due to ISIL conflict owned a property prior to leaving their place of origin, with nearly all of this group reporting that these properties had sustained damage during the conflict, with most reporting that the damage was severe. Refer to: IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Experiences Applying for Compensation*, 2019, p.6.

64 HLP Sub-Cluster Iraq, *Property Compensation Guidelines Based on Iraqi Law 20, 2009 and Law 57, 2015 (First Amendment)*, 2018.

65 IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Experiences Applying for Compensation*, 2019, p.9.

66 Note that the panel study has tracked the experiences of the same 4,000 households displaced during the ISIL conflict in the two years between January 2014 and December 2015. Therefore, data from this study that is included in this section relates specifically to this group. Furthermore, data relating to rates of IDP households who owned a property prior to displacement, as well as those who applied for compensation, do not relate to the subset of IDPs that intend to return; all IDPs in the study were asked if they owned a house prior to displacement, and if so, if they have applied for compensation. Refer to: IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Four Years in Displacement*, 2019.

67 Ibid.

68 Additionally, qualitative data suggests that increased awareness levels of the scheme amongst IDPs are likely attributable to government-led awareness campaigns and word of mouth.

69 IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Experiences Applying for Compensation*, 2019, p.9.

70 The long processing times are due to the time taken to assess claimants’ claims, notify the claimants about their assessment outcome, as well as disburse the funds to the claimant.

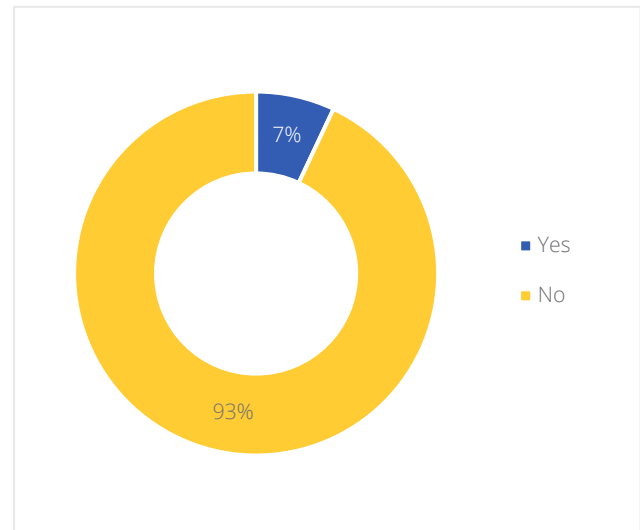
still awaiting an outcome of their compensation applications for between one and nine months.⁷¹ As such, while these data do not relate specifically to barriers to returning home, given the necessity of IDPs' access to housing in origin areas to ensure sustainable return and re-integration, the high proportion of IDP families reporting long wait times suggests that administrative blockages of the scheme may affect IDPs' decision to return home—or materially inhibit their ability to do so.⁷²

HOUSING OCCUPATIONS AND DISPUTES

In addition to damaged/destroyed housing, a small number of return locations (99; 5%) are ranked as medium or highly severe⁷³ in terms of IDPs' pre-displacement houses being illegally occupied.^{74,75} A total of 57,276 families (7%) have returned to these locations,⁷⁶ with all living in locations with high incidences of housing occupations in Ninewa Governorate's Districts of Telafar (3,436 families) and Sinjar⁷⁷ (538 families). Therefore, the remaining IDPs from Telafar and Sinjar, who are mostly displaced in certain districts internally within the Governorates of Ninewa and Dahuk, are most likely to face this barrier relating to housing occupations.^{78,79,80}

Refer to Map 1 below which displays hotspots for the rates of illegal occupations of private residences in Ninewa and Salah al-Din, drawn from the RI 9 dataset.

FIGURE 14: % OF RETURNEE FAMILIES LIVING IN RETURN LOCATIONS WITH INCIDENCES OF ILLEGAL HOUSING OCCUPATIONS



71 IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Experiences Applying for Compensation*, 2019, p.11.

72 Ibid.

73 In the Return Index 9, severity levels for illegal occupation of private residences were categorized as follows: Yes, many (High), Yes, few/I don't want to answer (Medium), and No (Low).

74 IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

75 It should be noted that this problem of illegal housing occupations may be under-reported, due to the sensitivity surrounding its occurrence.

76 IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

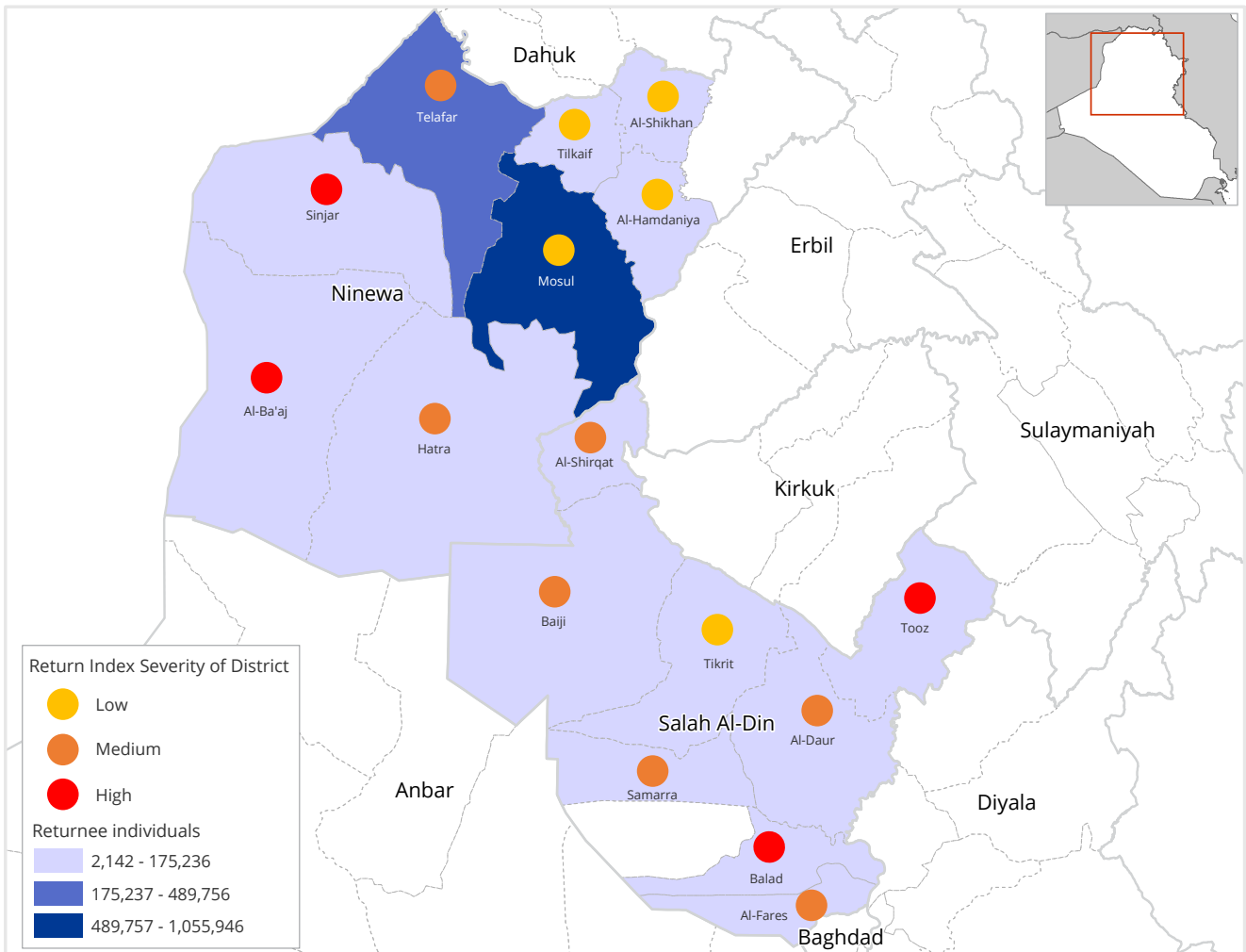
77 Determining the extent of secondary occupations of properties in Sinjar District is complex, owing to a significant portion of occupations there taking place when: 1) there is a negotiated agreement between the occupant and the original owner under which the occupant may cover the costs of running the property, or the occupant will ask the owner for reimbursement for these costs; or 2) the occupant and the original owner have a time-bound agreement whereby the occupant stays in the house until the return of the owner from their locations of displacement; or 3) the owner has knowledge of the occupant staying in their house but does not object to it; in this scenario the occupant is commonly a friend or relative. Given these different scenarios, it is likely that the number of families living in locations ranked as high severity is inflated.

78 It should be noted that housing occupations can be distinguished between those that are occupied by civilians and those that are occupied by military actors. However, the Return Index does not make this distinction.

79 The remaining 15,957 IDP families from Telafar are mostly in the following districts: Mosul (32%), Zakho (14%), Najaf (10%), Kerbala (9%), and Sumel (5%). Additionally, the remaining 44,253 IDP families from Sinjar are in the following districts: Sumel (43%), Zakho (23%), Al-Shikhan (11%), Mosul (8%), and Dahuk (4%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

80 Otherwise, notably, a significant number of returnees in Salah al-Din (138,180) are residing in locations where occupations take place occasionally, amounting to 20 per cent of all families that have returned to that governorate. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

MAP 1: ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF PRIVATE RESIDENCES IN NINEWA AND SALAH AL-DIN: NUMBER OF RETURNEES IN DISTRICTS, BY SEVERITY LEVEL



Other assessments similarly reflect the scale of occupied housing as a return barrier. In REACH’s MCNA 8, only three per cent of IDP households reported not returning home due to their house or land being occupied or disputed (consistent with 2% of households that reported it in the MCNA 7).^{81,82} By far, IDP households originating from Ninewa were most likely to report facing this barrier; this aligns with the previously

shown findings which highlighted this problem as most prominent in the same governorate.⁸³ Hence, while illegal housing occupations or disputes reportedly take place in a small number of locations, those originating from Ninewa are disproportionately affected and are thus more likely to remain in protracted displacement for this reason.^{84,85}

81 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 7 Dataset*, 2019.

82 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 8 Dataset*, 2020.

83 Ibid.

84 The majority of IDPs originating from Ninewa are currently located internally within the same governorate, as well as in KRI’s governorates of Dahuk and Erbil. In Ninewa 98% of IDPs are from Ninewa; in Dahuk 99% are from Ninewa; and in Erbil 47% are from Ninewa. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

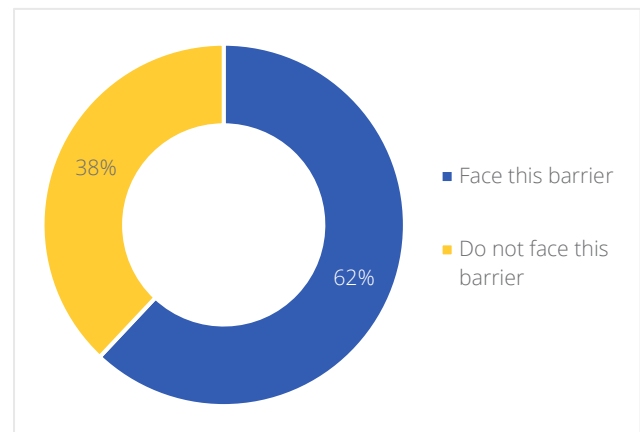
85 To a lesser extent, IDP households from Salah al-Din (12%) also faces this problem. The majority of IDPs originating from Salah al-Din are currently located internally within the same governorate, as well as in Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, and Diyala. In Salah al-Din 89% are from Salah al-Din; in Sulaymaniyah 26% are from Salah al-Din; in Kirkuk 22% are from Salah al-Din; and in Diyala 7% are from Salah al-Din. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

2. LIVELIHOODS

To achieve safe and sustainable returns to their areas of origin IDPs must be able to access livelihoods and basic services.^{86,87} The destruction of local economies and income generating opportunities during ISIL's occupation of Iraq's northern and western regions has had a significant impact on IDPs' decision to return home—especially for those working in the country's prominent sectors of agriculture, services, and industries.^{88,89,90} Additionally, the limited supply of basic services, due to damaged infrastructure or reduced workforces, represent another major deterrent to IDPs returning home.

Since the end of the ISIL conflict, limited job opportunities in IDPs' areas of origin represents a major barrier to returning home.⁹¹ The scale of this problem is reflected in IOM's ILA 5, with 62 per cent of IDP families deterred from returning by limited job opportunities in their pre-displacement location—making it the second most commonly reported barrier, having fallen from 73 per cent in the ILA 4 one year prior.⁹²

FIGURE 15: % OF IDP FAMILIES THAT CANNOT NOT RETURN HOME DUE TO A LACK OF LIVELIHOODS IN THEIR ORIGIN AREA



Otherwise, across the country, most return locations (1,557; 77%) are identified as having limited employment opportunities, having been ranked as medium or high severity on the metric of employment access in the RI9.^{93,94} This means that a total of 546,884 returnee families live in locations where fewer than half of the families can find employment (amounting to 68% of all returnees nationally).⁹⁵ Almost all returnees living in locations ranked as highly severe—that is, where there are no employment opportunities—are in Ninewa Governorate (19,911 families), especially in the Districts of Telafar (8,873 families) and Al-Ba'aj (2,975 families). As well, a significant number of returnee families in Salah al-Din's Baiji District (7,075) are living in locations ranked as highly severe due to having no opportunities for employment.^{96,97} As such, the remaining IDPs from Telafar and Al-Ba'aj,⁹⁸ who are mostly displaced internally within Ninewa as well as Dahuk, are most

86 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Brookings Institute & University of Bern, *Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010, p.7.

87 There is an important difference between a barrier to returning home and issues preventing the achievement of safe and sustainable returns home. Note that ILA 5 data refers to IDPs in displacement locations, while RI 9 data refers to returnees in return locations.

88 World Bank Group, *Iraq Reconstruction and Investment: Part 2 – Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates*, 2018.

89 The scale of the conflict's impact is reflected in the rise in unemployment across (+314,000 individuals) across the seven affected governorates between 2014 and 2017. Refer to: World Bank Group, *Iraq Reconstruction and Investment: Part 2 – Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates*, 2018.

90 Additionally, impacts in locations of conflict are reflected in a sharp increase in the national unemployment rate between 2014 (12.6%) and 2017 (17.7%). Refer to: World Bank, *Arrested Development - Conflict Displacement and Welfare in Iraq*, 2019.

91 It should be noted that there is a distinction between IDPs' access to livelihoods and their socio-economic level. In the context of barriers to return, a lack of livelihoods in IDPs' area of origin may deter them from returning, but it does not necessarily mean that a lack of livelihoods will amount to a low socio-economic status, or that IDPs are currently at a low socio-economic status. Additionally, the socio-economic level of IDPs may also represent an exacerbating factor to their ability to return home (i.e. a low socio-economic family may not be able to afford the costs associated with returning home).

92 In locations where the prevalent intention of IDP households is to return to their area of origin, KIs were asked to select the three main return barriers. Data are weighted with the number of IDPs living at each location.

93 IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

94 In the Return Index 9, severity levels for employment access were as follows: No residents can find employment (High), Less than half the residents can find employment (Medium), Around half the residents can find the employment (Low), Most or all residents can find employment (Low). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

95 IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

96 Ibid.

97 An IOM study of the main districts from which IDPs originate suggests that the highest rates of no livelihoods being faced as a barrier to returning home is amongst those from Babylon Governorate's Al-Musayab District (35% amongst those in camp settings, and 48% amongst those in out-of-camp settings), followed by Ninewa Governorate's Tilkaif District (50% amongst those in camps, and 23% amongst those in out-of-camp settings), and Anbar Governorate's Al-Ka'im District (42% amongst those in camps, and 39% amongst those in out-of-camp settings). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Protracted Displacement Study: An In-Depth Analysis of the Main Districts of Origin*, 2020, pgs. 13-14.

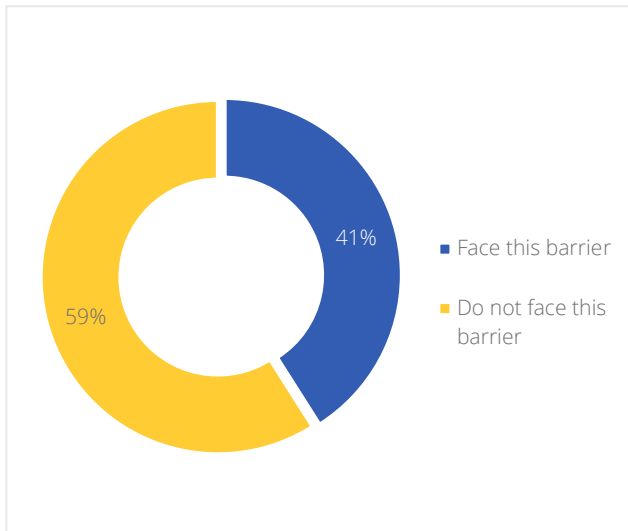
98 The remaining 15,957 IDP families from Telafar are mostly in the following districts: Mosul (32%), Zakho (14%), Najaf (10%), Kerbala (9%), and Sumel (5%). Additionally, the remaining 18,571 IDP families from Al-Ba'aj are mostly in the following districts: Sumel (27%), Sinjar (20%), Zakho (14%), Al-Shikhan (10%) and Al-Hamdaniya (8%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

likely to face this particular barrier. Additionally, the majority of IDPs from Baiji,⁹⁹ who are mostly displaced internally within Salah al-Din as well as Sulaymaniyah, are also likely to face limited employment opportunities as a barrier to returning home.

3. BASIC SERVICES

A lack of basic services represents another significant barrier, with 41 per cent of IDP families unable to return home due to facing this problem, making it the third most commonly reported barrier in the ILA 5.^{100,101} This represents a significant decrease from the rate at which this barrier was reported in the ILA 4 (68%).

FIGURE 16: % OF IDP FAMILIES THAT CANNOT NOT RETURN HOME DUE TO A LACK OF BASIC SERVICES IN THEIR AREA OF ORIGIN



IDPs in Anbar¹⁰² (96%) were most likely to face the barrier relating to a lack of basic services in their area of origin, followed by those in Dahuk (73%),¹⁰³ Erbil (47%), and Salah al-Din (45%).¹⁰⁴ At district level, an IOM study of the main districts from which IDPs originate suggests that the highest rates of a lack of services is being faced as a barrier to returning amongst those from Kirkuk Governorate’s Kirkuk District (32%, all of whom are in camp settings), and Ninewa Governorate’s Districts of Sinjar (21% amongst those in camp settings, and 20% amongst those in out-of-camp settings) and Al-Ba’aj (6% amongst those in camp settings, and 28% amongst those in out-of-camp settings).¹⁰⁵

Across three indicators related to basic services in the RI 9¹⁰⁶—provision of government services,¹⁰⁷ water sufficiency, and electricity sufficiency—one governorate significantly outweighs all others in having a higher number of returnees residing in locations ranked as highly severe: Ninewa (government services,¹⁰⁸ and water sufficiency) and Salah al-Din (electricity sufficiency).

A total of 711 locations are ranked as high or medium severity on the metric of provision of government services; these are areas where respectively no or only some services are provided. A total of 107,295 IDP families reside in these locations (14%), with the highest number recorded in Ninewa Governorate (88,552; 83%)—especially in the Districts of Mosul (where 34,893 families reside) and Telafar (24,358). IDPs originating from these two districts—who are mostly displaced internally within same districts—are therefore more likely to face problems of limited government services in their areas of displacement, and are also disproportionately likely to remain in displacement due to low rates of government service provision in their area of origin. Refer to Map 3 below for an overview of rates of service provision in Ninewa Governorate.

99 The remaining 4,634 IDP families from Baiji are mostly in the following the districts: Tikrit (28%), Erbil (18%), Sulaymaniyah (16%), Kirkuk (15%), and Chamchamal (3%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

100 IOM Iraq, *Integrated Location Assessment 5 Dataset*, 2020.

101 In locations where the prevalent intention of IDP households is to return to their area of origin, KIs were asked to select the three main return barriers. Data are weighted with the number of IDPs living at each location.

102 The majority of IDPs in Anbar originate from the same governorate (72%), and a significant amount also originate from Babylon (26%), with the remaining 2 per cent originating from Salah al-Din, Baghdad, Ninewa and Kirkuk. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

103 Almost all IDPs in Dahuk in originate from Ninewa (71%), with the remaining from Salah al-Din (11%), Anbar (10%), Baghdad (6%), Kirkuk (2%). IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020. The high number of IDPs from Ninewa reporting the barrier relating to a lack of basic services may be attributable to 70 per cent of infrastructure in two of its biggest cities—Mosul and Telafar—during the ISIL-related conflict between 2014 and 2017. Refer to: World Bank Group, *Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates: Part 2v*, 2009.

104 IOM Iraq, *Integrated Location Assessment 5 Dataset*, 2020.

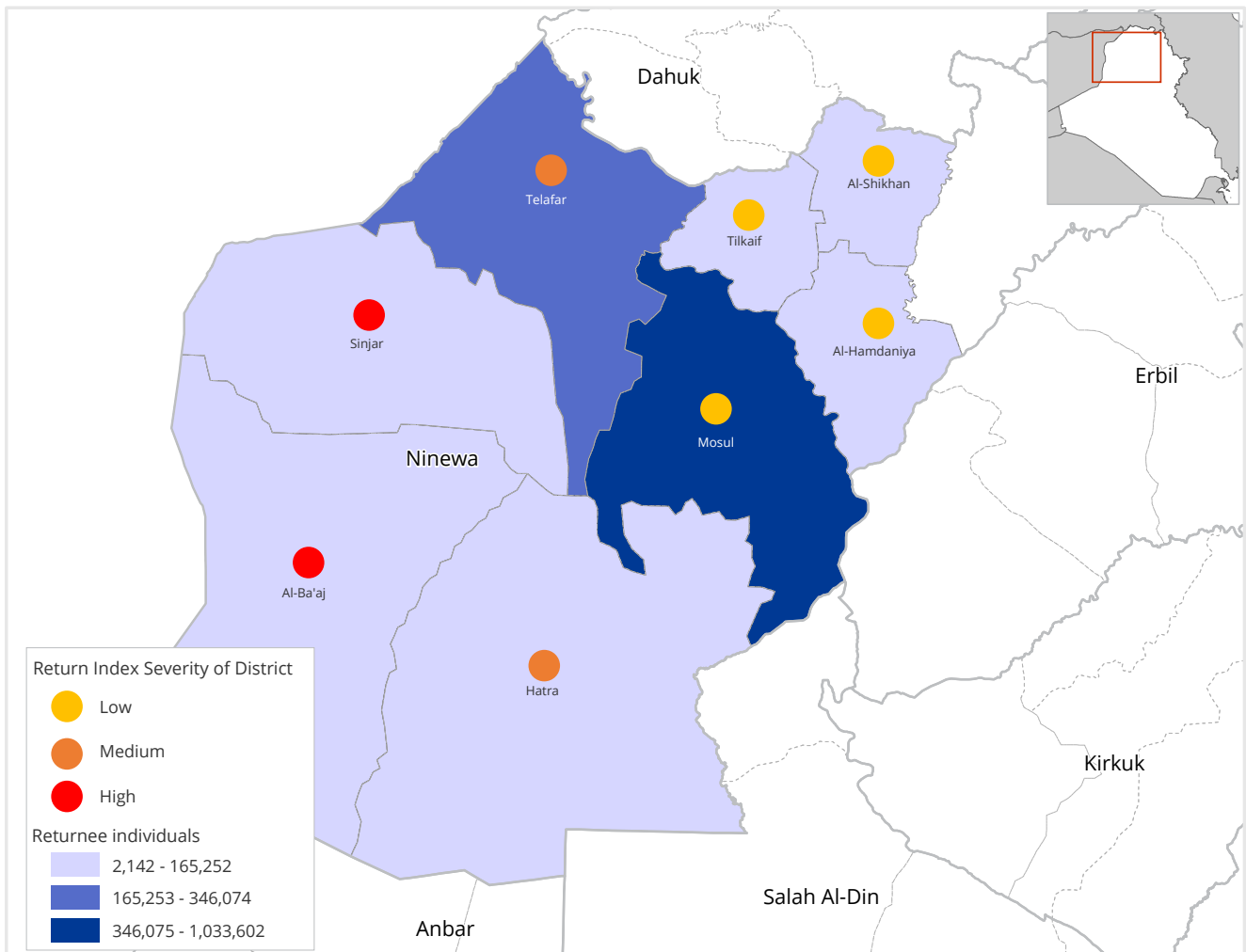
105 An IOM study of the main districts from which IDPs originate suggests that the highest rates of a lack of services is being faced as a barrier to returning amongst those from Kirkuk Governorate’s Kirkuk District (32%, all of whom are in camp settings), and Ninewa Governorate’s Districts of Sinjar (21% amongst those in camp settings, and 20% amongst those in out-of-camp settings) and Al-Ba’aj (6% amongst those in camp settings, and 28% amongst those in out-of-camp settings). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Protracted Displacement Study: An In-Depth Analysis of the Main Districts of Origin*, 2019, pgs. 13-14.

106 Data collection for the RI 9 took place in May-June 2020.

107 In terms of government service provision, around a third of all locations (711; 35%) are ranked as medium or highly severe; this means that 107,295 returnee families have either limited or no access to services.

108 Ninewa governorate features almost all locations (19 out of 21) where no government services are provided, with the number of returnee families residing there totaling 616—with most in the districts of Hatra (393 families; 64% of all families living in such locations) and Tilkaif (140 families; 23%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

MAP 3: GOVERNMENT SERVICE PROVISION IN NINEWA GOVERNORATE: NUMBER OF RETURNEES IN DISTRICTS, BY SEVERITY LEVEL



The scale of problems surrounding water sufficiency in return locations is comparable to that of limited basic service provision. A total of 719 locations (36%) are ranked as medium or high severity,^{109,110} Ninewa Governorate is most problematic on the measure of available water,¹¹¹ especially in Hatra (where 6,817 families reside), Sinjar (3,964 families), and Al-Ba'aj (3,319 families).¹¹² Otherwise, notably, a very high number of returnee families (4,588) in Anbar Governorate's Al-Rutba District do not have access to sufficient water.^{113,114}

As such, IDPs originating from these districts are mostly likely to face this barrier in returning home: the majority of those from Hatra, Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj are displaced internally within Ninewa or in Dahuk,¹¹⁵ while most of those from Al-Rutba are displaced internally within the same district.¹¹⁶

Electricity sufficiency is a lesser problem in return locations. Across the country, 379 return locations (19%) are identified as having medium or severe conditions in terms of the

109 This means a total of 121,105 returnee families either have limited or no access to water. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

110 In the RI 9, severity levels for water sufficiency were categorized as follows: No residents have enough water (High), Only some residents have access to water while others do not (Medium), Most or all residents have enough water (Low). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

111 22,855 returnee families (71% of all living in areas with such conditions) there do not have access to any water. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

114 This aligns with findings from a REACH study into the protracted water crisis in Iraq, which highlights Ninewa as most problematic in terms of access to potable water, followed by Anbar. Refer to: REACH, *Addressing the Protracted Water Crisis in Iraq with Nationwide WASH Assessments*, 2020.

115 The remaining 3,007 IDP families from Hatra are mostly in the following districts: Mosul (58%), Erbil (27%), Hatra (7%), Telafar (2%) and Al-Hamdaniyah (2%). Additionally, the remaining 44,253 IDP families from Sinjar are mostly in the following districts: Sumel (43%), Zakho (23%), Al-Shikhan (11%), Mosul (8%) and Dahuk (4%). Furthermore, the remaining 18,751 IDP families from Al-Ba'aj are mostly in the following districts: Sumel (27%), Sinjar (20%), Zakho (14%), Al-Shikhan (10%) and Al-Hamdaniya (8%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

116 The remaining 799 IDP families from Al-Rutba are mostly displaced in the same district (65%), with the others mostly in the following districts: Ramadi (19%), Abu Ghraib (5%), Erbil (3%) and Falluja (2%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

availability of electricity.^{117,118} A total of 6,710 returnees live in locations where there is no electricity available, with around three out of four of this group residing in Salah al-Din Governorate (5,294; 79% of all locations ranked this way) all of whom are in Tuz Khurmatu District,¹¹⁹ while 1,120 returnees living in such conditions are in Ninewa Governorate (mainly in the districts of Hatra and Sinjar, hosting respectively 524 and 389 returnees).¹²⁰

4. SOCIAL COHESION

Working towards social cohesion between IDPs and their pre-displacement communities is central to achieving a durable solution.¹²¹ In the context of Iraq, understanding the role of social cohesion in IDPs' decision-making or ability to return home requires observing the interconnected factors that lead to community tensions in areas of origin.¹²² Key challenges for social cohesion include the perception that some IDPs have a direct or indirect affiliation to ISIL, in addition to other complex ethno-religious, tribal or political dynamics whose origins often precede the recent period of conflict. As a result, completing the necessary security screening or other processes associated with demonstrating a lack of affiliation to ISIL represents a significant barrier for some IDPs in returning home, while other distinct challenges—namely fears of revenge or discrimination and blocked returns—also undermine prospects for returning.

PERCEIVED AFFILIATION WITH ISIL

Families with a perceived affiliation with ISIL often struggle to find a solution to their displacement.¹²³ The meaning of affiliation varies by location: in some settings, it refers only to those whose immediate relatives (such as the head of household) committed crimes during the ISIL insurgency and occupation, whereas in others, communities may perceive IDPs who lived in ISIL-controlled areas or those who only displaced when the military operation was underway as affiliated with the group.

IDPs' inability to be freed of perceived ISIL affiliation can prevent them from returning home. There are two different types of processes that IDPs commonly undertake to overcome such affiliation as a precursor to returning and re-integrating into their pre-displacement communities.

The first of these processes relates to security clearances that are issued by authorities in locations of return (ikhbar), whereby an individual with perceived affiliation reports their ISIS relative to an investigative judge, following a process under Iraqi anti-terrorism law.¹²⁴ Since the end of the ISIL conflict, security actors in many areas have requested IDPs to undertake the ikhbar process in order to receive permission to return to their area of origin, with IDPs in camps commonly required to follow it prior to taking the journey home.¹²⁵ Additionally, without an ikhbar letter, IDPs are likely to face challenges in accessing civil documentation, which are essential state-issued documents proving individuals' right to legal identity and nationality.¹²⁶

The second process relates to the tribal justice mechanisms, including the disavowal of an individual who has been incriminated on the basis of supporting ISIL, involving the

117 This means that a total of 81,003 returnee families (10%) have only some or no access to it. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

118 In the RI 9, severity levels for electricity insufficiency were categorized as follows: No residents have enough electricity (High), Only some residents have access to electricity while others do not (Medium), Most or all residents have enough electricity (Low)

119 For further details of electricity insufficiency in Salah al-Din Governorate, see: IOM Iraq, *Return Index in Salah al-Din*, 2020, p.9.

120 IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

121 Brookings Institute, *Iraq 2007 Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*, 2007, p.7.

122 Literature surrounding social cohesion in displacement settings emphasizes the importance of developing context-specific strategies that account for the unique challenges on either side of a displacement setting. This encompasses directing resources to preventing displacement in the first instance, fostering social ties in displacement settings, and—perhaps most challengingly—working towards strengthened cohesion as a factor to draw IDPs back to their areas origin and foster re-integration upon arrival. In available literature a widely used conceptual framework is the “Five Dimensions of Social Cohesion.” It highlights social cohesion as measurable across five spectrums: belonging to inclusion; inclusion to exclusion; participation to non-involvement; recognition to rejection; and legitimacy to illegitimacy. These spectrums—especially in relation to inclusion and exclusion—are conceptually relevant to the context of strengthening social cohesion in working towards durable solutions in Iraq. Refer to: De Berry, J. & Roberts, R., *Social Cohesion and Forced Displacement. A Desk Review to Inform Programming and Project Design*, 2018.

123 IOM Iraq, *Tribal Justice Mechanisms and Durable Solutions for Families with a Perceived Affiliation with ISIL*, 2020, p.5.

124 The process involves the filing of a complaint filed under article 4 of the anti-terrorism law of 2005.

125 IOM Iraq, *Tribal Justice Mechanisms and Durable Solutions for Families with a Perceived Affiliation with ISIL*, 2020, p.5.

126 Ibid. p.5.

banishment from a clan (bara'r), or disavowing of close relatives (tabriya).^{127,128,129} These mechanisms, which have roots in long-standing tribal and customary law, have the potential to absolve IDP individuals perceived of ISIL affiliation, and thereby enable their return based on their acceptance by the communities in their areas of origin. In addition, another means of gaining re-acceptance into areas of origin relates

to the mechanism of tribal sponsorship (kafala). This typically involves community leaders (i.e. sheikhs) sponsoring IDPs to return home by providing signed testimony to security forces involved in the returns of IDPs to their area of origin, attesting that the relevant person has not committed any offence, despite having possible family ties with an ISIL member.¹³⁰

SNAPSHOT: PERCEIVED ISIL AFFILIATION IN SALAH AL-DIN GOVERNORATE

An IOM assessment of community and conflict dynamics in Salah al-Din Governorate's Al-Shirqat District found that IDPs with perceived ISIL affiliation are required to obtain community sponsorship in order to return home, involving formalized agreements between community leaders, accused families, and local authorities such as councils and the police.¹³¹ However, in this district, sponsorship often does not materialize, due to individuals still being perceived as 'criminally liable' for events that took place during the ISIL conflict despite attempts to obtain clearance to return, as well as stigma associated with being a sponsor.

As such, IDPs may face barriers to returning home in relation to these practices, either because they cannot obtain security clearance through the ikhbar process, or because the processes of bara'r, tabriya, or kafala are unsuccessful in absolving them of perceived affiliation within their areas of origin.

BLOCKED RETURNS

In some cases, IDPs' inability to return to areas of origin is in some cases linked to the return journey itself being blocked by key power brokers including security actors, tribal leaders, or local authorities, either when trying to leave displacement locations or upon arrival to their areas of origin. The blocking of returns are generally imposed by security actors, with enforcement commonly on the grounds that IDPs do not

possess the necessary documentation in order to leave their displacement location, or re-enter their area of origin.¹³² Blocked returns also take place in scenarios where IDPs are suspected of ISIL affiliation by those in their areas origin (as detailed in the above section). To understand the prevalence of blocked returns, this section draws upon data collected in locations of displacement and returns, as well as in locations where no returns have taken place.

In locations of displacement, data suggests that this issue does not represent a significant barrier to returning home compared with other obstacles: seven per cent of IDPs were reported as having experienced blocked returns in the ILA 5, which is similar with the rate at which it was reported in the ILA 4 in the previous year (5%).^{133,134}

127 IOM Iraq, *Tribal Justice Mechanisms and Durable Solutions for Families with a Perceived Affiliation with ISIL*, 2020, p.18.

128 IOM has conducted a qualitative study regarding communities perceived as having ISIL affiliation in Anbar Governorate's Falluja District, from where nearly half a million people fled conflict in early 2014, and where many remained in ISIL-controlled areas. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Managing Return in Anbar: Community Responses to the Return of IDPs with Perceived Affiliation in Anbar*, 2020.

129 Moreover: "Communities have put in place mechanisms to manage and regulate the return of IDPs with perceived ISIL affiliation [...] Despite their controversial nature, these mechanisms need to be understood and acknowledged, as national and international actors put in place parallel structures to facilitate returns and explore how these mechanisms can be used. Since these mechanisms are not static, if tailored to comply with a rights-based approach and do-no-harm principles, they could be used as entry points for interventions looking at facilitating accepted returns." Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Managing Return in Anbar: Community Responses to the Return of IDPs with Perceived Affiliation in Anbar*, 2020, p.5.

130 IOM Iraq, *Tribal Justice Mechanisms and Durable Solutions for Families with a Perceived Affiliation with ISIL*, 2020, p.21.

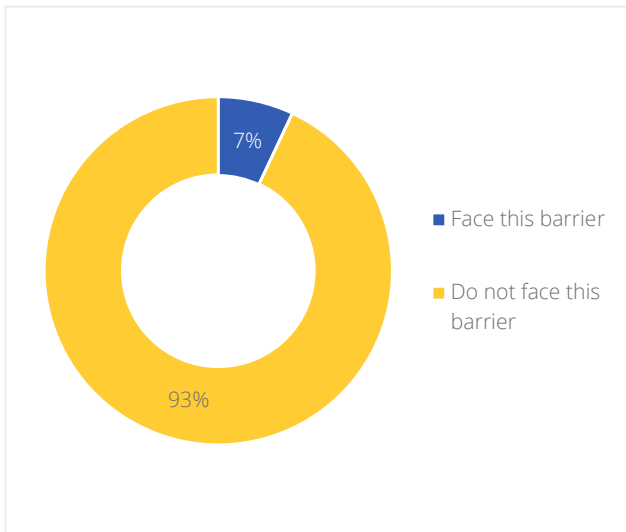
131 IOM Iraq, *Shirqat District, Salah al-Din Governorate: Preliminary Assessment of Community and Conflict Dynamics – March 2020*, p.3.

132 A recent list of locations that have had no returns of IDPs shows that 18 locations in Anbar Governorate's Tooz District did not receive any returnees due to the area being blocked by security forces as well as tribal and ethnic tensions. Other common reasons for blocked returns include the Peshmerga forces preventing families from returning, especially in Ninewa Governorate's Districts of Al-Hamdaniyah (7 locations) and Telafar (5 locations). Otherwise, a significant number of locations have received no returns due to Popular Mobilization Forces blocking them, especially in Babylon Governorate's Al-Musayab (12 locations), and Salah al-Din Governorate's Districts of Baiji (2 locations), Balad (2 locations) and Samarra (1 location), as well as Ninewa Governorate's Mosul District (1 location). Refer to: Iraq Returns Working Group, *Districts of Origin Having Witnessed No Returns*, August 2020.

133 While the rate at which this barrier was consistent between 2019 and 2020, it worth noting that it was reported as being faced by a significantly higher proportion of IDPs in 2018 (16%), and the rate was even higher in 2017 (26%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Integrated Location Assessment 3 Dataset*, 2018. & IOM Iraq, *Integrated Location Assessment 2 Dataset*, 2017.

134 In locations where the prevalent intention of IDP households is to return to their area of origin, KIs were asked to select the three main return barriers. Data are weighted with the number of IDPs living at each location.

FIGURE 17: % OF IDP FAMILIES THAT CANNOT NOT RETURN HOME DUE TO THE RETURN JOURNEY ITSELF BEING BLOCKED



However, the rates of this barrier being faced by IDPs vary across the different governorates in which IDPs are displaced.¹³⁵ In the ILA 5, IDPs in Babylon are most likely to face this barrier than anywhere else. Almost all IDPs there—totaling 1,399 families, amounting to 99 per cent of that

governorate’s caseload—were reported as facing blocked returns as a barrier to returning home.^{136,137,138,139} However, Sulaymaniyah Governorate features the highest actual number of IDP families that face this barrier (3,383, amounting to 15% of all IDPs there), while a significant number of families also face this problem in Ninewa (2,010; 7%).¹⁴⁰ Therefore, IDPs in certain districts across these two governorates may be more likely to face blocked returns.¹⁴¹

In parallel with information collected at locations of displacement, the RI 9 offers insights into the occurrence of blocked returns in return locations. Across the country, a total of 778 return locations (39%) are ranked as high or medium severity.¹⁴² This means that a total of 333,783 returnee families have managed to return to these locations, despite high rates of blocked returns being imposed by authorities. Notably, the Governorate of Ninewa features almost all locations identified as high severity (15 out of 18) on this metric, meaning it has high incidences of blocked returns—especially in the District of Telafar (seven locations, to where 4,520 families have managed to return), Mosul (two locations; 713 families), and Al-Ba’aj (three locations; 51 families).¹⁴³

SNAPSHOT: LOCATIONS WITH NO RETURNS

In addition to the ILA 5 and RI 9, which capture information at location level regarding fears or incidences of blocked returns, IOM Iraq’s DTM also monitors locations where no returns have taken place. As at August 2020, a total of 291 locations had not received any returnees, a plurality of which are located within Ninewa Governorate (134; 46%)—mainly in the districts of Hatra (48) and Al-Ba’aj (42).¹⁴⁴ The most common reasons for returns not having taken place to these locations include limited basic services, a lack of security forces, as well as cases of Popular Mobilization Forces (PMFs)¹⁴⁵ reportedly having prevented IDPs from returning. The second highest share of locations where no returns have taken place is in Erbil (46; 16%), followed by Diyala (40; 14%) and Salah al-Din (40; 12%). The main reasons for returns not having taken place in these three governorates include poor security conditions, a lack of basic services and job opportunities, destroyed houses, and further cases of PMFs preventing returns.

135 Note that IDPs can be blocked from leaving their area of origin and/or entering their destination such as their area of origin.

136 IOM Iraq, *Integrated Location Assessment 5 Dataset*, 2020.

137 This barrier also significantly outweighs all other barriers faced by IDPs located there. The next most common barrier faced by IDPs in Babylon Governorate relates to trauma associated with their area of origin (reported by 537 families). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Integrated Location Assessment 5 Dataset*, 2020.

138 However, it should be noted that Babylon hosts a low number of IDPs (16,992) compared with other governorates—especially compared to those hosting the highest numbers of IDPs: Ninewa (300,865), Dahuk (280,869), Erbil (232,192), and Sulaymaniyah (137,487). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

139 Almost all IDPs in Babylon are displaced from other parts of the same governorate, and this is reflected in a recent Iraq Returns Working Group (WRG) assessment, highlighting 13 different Babylon locations from which IDPs originate that have received no returns. These locations were all within the District of Al-Musayab, spread across two Sub-districts: Al-Iskandaria and Jurf Al-Sakhar. Refer to: Iraq Returns Working Group, *Districts of Origin Having Witnessed No Returns Dataset*, August 2020.

140 IOM Iraq, *Integrated Location Assessment 5 Dataset*, 2020.

141 The majority of IDPs in Sulaymaniyah originate from Salah Al-Din (25%), followed by Diyala (18%), Baghdad (18%), Anbar (17%), Ninewa (10%), Babylon (7%), Kirkuk (6%), and Erbil (<1%). Additionally, the majority of IDPs in Ninewa originate from the same governorate (98%), with small numbers originating from Erbil (1%) as well as Salah Al-Din, Kirkuk, Baghdad, Babylon, and Anbar (all <1%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

142 In the RI 9, severity levels for blocked returns were categorized as follows: Yes, many (High), Yes, few (Medium), I don’t want to answer (Medium), None (Low).

143 Additionally, the Al-Hamdaniya features two locations to where 390 individuals have managed to return, and Sinjar has one location to where 84 individuals have managed to return. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

144 Iraq Returns Working Group, *Districts of Origin Having Witnessed No Returns Dataset*, August 2020.

145 PMFs is a state-sponsored umbrella military organisation composed of around 40 militia groups

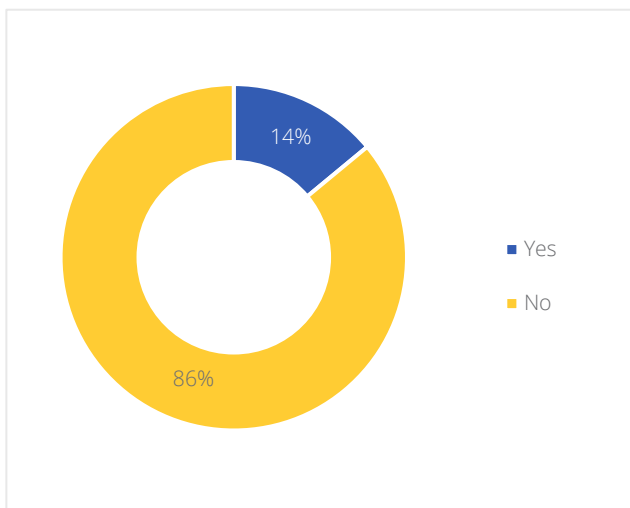
FEAR OF REVENGE AND DISCRIMINATION

Data collected from IDPs as well as in locations of return suggest that fears of revenge and discrimination in areas of origin are generally low—although there are some exceptions.

With regards to those living in displacement, overall 10 per cent of IDP households reported not intending to return to their areas of origin due to fear of discrimination in 2020 (MCNA 8), which is consistent with the rate reported in 2019 (MCNA 7) (16%).^{146,147,148} Otherwise, as displayed in Figure 18 below, in the RI 9, only 283 of the country's return locations (14%, where 57,271 returnee families live) are ranked as medium or highly severe with regards to fears that revenge acts will take place.^{149,150,151}

Returnees in Diyala are most likely to face fears of revenge, with eight out of 10 families (3,862) living in areas ranked as highly severe on this metric (refer to Map 4 below).¹⁵² This group is spread across 49 locations in the governorate with almost all in the Sub-district of Al-A'dheem (3,810) within Al-Khalis District (in Diyala); therefore, IDPs from this region, who are mainly displaced internally within Diyala as well as Kirkuk, are most likely to face this barrier.¹⁵³ The Governorates of Ninewa¹⁵⁴ and Salah al-Din¹⁵⁵ feature the next highest numbers of returnee families living locations ranked as highly severe (hosting 2,748 and 2,280, respectively).

FIGURE 18: % OF RETURNEE FAMILIES LIVING IN RETURN LOCATIONS IN WHICH THERE ARE CONCERNS OF REVENGE ACTS



146 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 7 Dataset*, 2019.

147 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 8 Dataset*, 2020.

148 Note that this is considered a proxy indicator relating to IDPs' fears of discrimination in areas of origin, due to a lack of in-depth representative data on this issue.

149 In the RI 9, severity levels for concerns of revenge acts were categorized as follows: Very concerned (High), Somewhat concerned (Medium), Not concerned (Low)

150 Concerning return locations, data collected in REACH's Rapid Assessment on Returns and Durable Solutions found that returnees and re-displaced IDPs in certain locations were likely to face tribal-related discrimination. In each of the two assessed areas—Anbar Governorate's Al Ka'im District, and Ninewa Governorate's Al-Ba'aj District—tribal-related discrimination against returnees and IDPs was highlighted as one of the most pressing issues preventing re-integration and access to livelihoods. Refer to: REACH, *Rapid Assessment on Returns and Durable Solutions. Al Rammaneh Sub-district, Al Kaim District, Al Anbar Governorate, Iraq, 2020.* & REACH, *Rapid Assessment on Returns and Durable Solutions. Markaz Al-Ba'aj Sub-district, Al-Ba'aj District, Ninewa Governorate, Iraq, 2020.*

151 With regards to IDPs' broader decision-making process regarding returning, findings from IOM's Durable Solutions study suggest that discrimination and associated security concerns are regular factors in IDPs' wider assessment of the "affordability" of returning. This IOM study suggests that the "affordability" of return does not relate only to financial and economic factors, and explores other challenges as part of the IDPs' decision or ability to return home. These other challenges include housing damage as well as social cohesion and security. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *When Affordability Matters: The Political Economy of Economic Decision Making of Iraqi IDPs*, 2019, p.4.

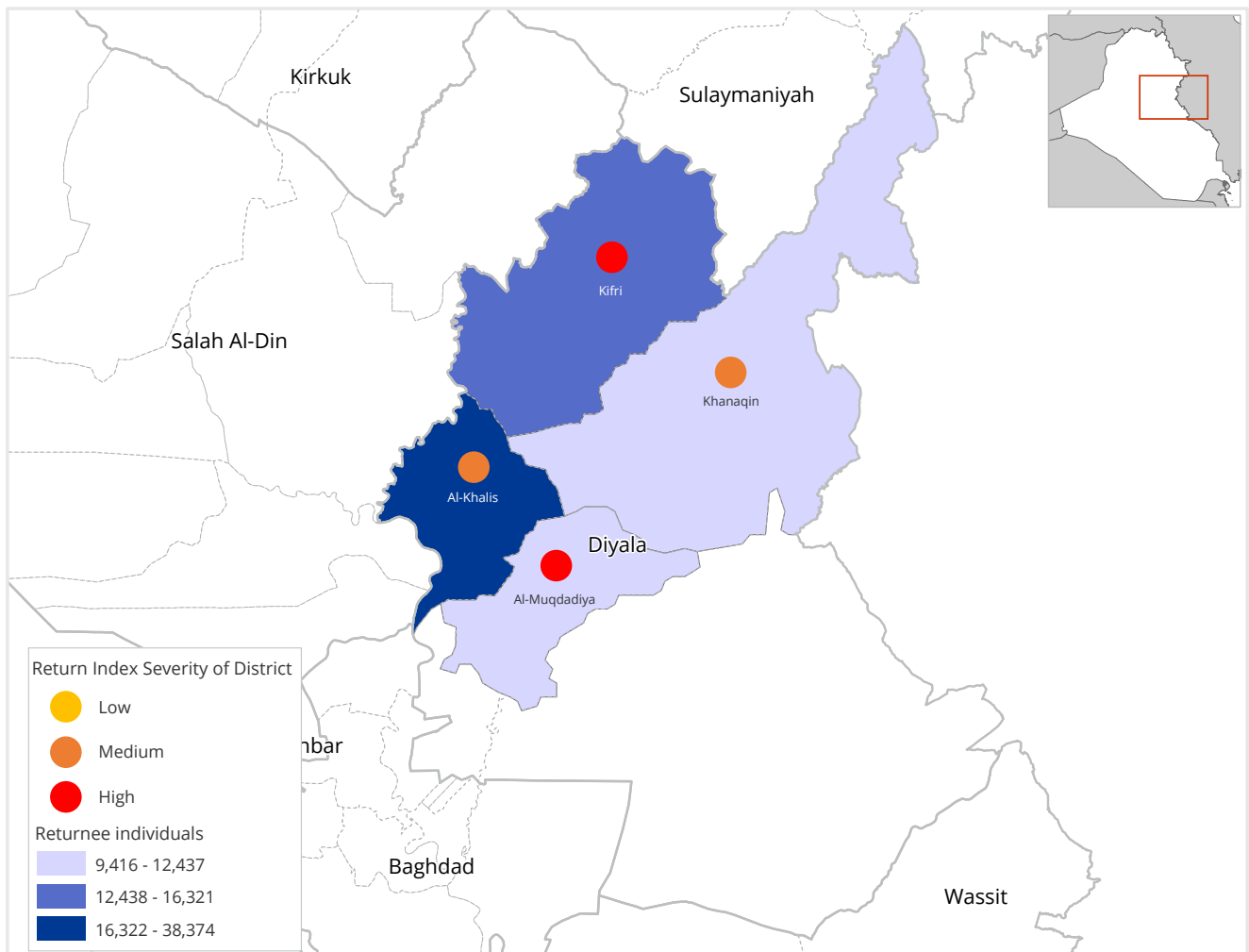
152 Some Sunni Arab IDPs from certain governorates, especially from Diyala, cannot go back home because militias explicitly bar them from returning under the pretext that they co-operated with ISIL during the period of conflict. Additionally, others fear revenge attacks by militias for non ISIL-related reasons. In some instances, Peshmerga forces have also destroyed the homes of IDPs, possibly as a means of preventing their return to their origin areas in the future. Refer to: Amnesty International, *Punished for Daesh's Crimes: Displaced Iraqis Abused by Militias and Government Forces*, 2016.

153 The remaining 1,505 IDP families from Al-Khalis are mostly in the following districts: Kirkuk (24%), Ba'quba (22%), Al-Khalis (19%), Kifri (8%) and Tuz Khurmatu (8%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

154 In Ninewa, of the 2,748 individuals in return locations ranked as highly severe, many are in the District of Hatra (990), followed by Mosul (726), Al-Ba'aj (576), and Sinjar (456). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

155 In Salah al-Din, of the 2,280 individuals in return locations ranked as highly severe, all are in the District of Samarra. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

MAP 4: CONCERNS OF REVENGE ACTS IN DIYALA GOVERNORATE: NUMBER OF RETURNEES IN DISTRICTS, BY SEVERITY LEVEL



Fear of discrimination (as distinct from revenge) is another barrier to IDP return. An IOM study conducted in 2019 found that fears of discrimination varied according to IDPs' districts of origin. The highest rates of this problem were recorded in the same governorates where there are high fears of revenge acts, especially in Diyala Governorate's Khanaqin District (40% of those in in-camp settings, and 32% of those in out-of-camp settings), Ninewa Governorate's Sinjar District (28% in-camp, and 24% out-of-camp), as well as those from Salah al-Din's Balad District (52% in camp, and 27% out-of-camp).¹⁵⁶

ETHNO-RELIGIOUS, TRIBAL AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS¹⁵⁷

Dynamics at the community level, such as tensions or divisions related to ethno-religious, tribal, or political dynamics, can represent barriers to returning home for IDPs. Often, these dynamics pre-date the period of ISIL conflict. The historical vulnerabilities of ethno-religious minority IDPs, along with the fact that many of them originate from disputed territories¹⁵⁸ that endured high levels of destruction during the ISIL conflict, makes them a particularly vulnerable subset of the remaining IDP caseload.¹⁵⁹

IOM's ILA 5 provides a snapshot of where ethno-religious minority groups are currently displaced. Of the 219,765 IDP families across the country, 72 per cent were recorded as belonging to one of the three main ethno-religious majority

¹⁵⁶ IOM Iraq, *Protracted Displacement Study: An In-Depth Analysis of the Main Districts of Origin*, 2019, Pgs. 13-14.

¹⁵⁷ For in-depth information regarding challenges faced by IDPs from ethno-religious minorities, refer to: IOM Iraq, *Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Exploring Durable Solutions and Challenges for Ethno-Religious Minorities in Displacement*, 2020.

¹⁵⁸ In December 2017, the number of IDPs originating from disputed areas reached its peak of 184,146, amounting to 7% of the total caseload of IDPs (2,615,988) at that time. The number of IDPs originating from disputed areas then declined, broadly in line with the overall decline in the number of IDPs across the country as they returned to their areas of origin. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Disputed Areas Emergency Tracking*, 2018.

¹⁵⁹ IOM Iraq, *Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Exploring Durable Solutions and Challenges for Ethno-Religious Minorities in Displacement*, 2020.

groups: Sunni Arab IDPs (129,248; 59%), Sunni Kurd IDPs (26,923; 12%), and Shia Arab IDPs (2,007; 1%).¹⁶⁰ The remaining 28 per cent were identified as IDPs from ethno-religious minority backgrounds, with most of this group Yazidi IDPs (43,925; 20%), and the remaining eight per cent of IDPs a combination of Sunni Turkmen, Shia Turkmen, Shia Shabak, Sunni Shabak, Shia Kurd, Kakais, and Christians (Chaldeans, Assyrians and Syrians).¹⁶¹

The highest number of ethno-religious minority IDP families was recorded in Dahuk (32,337; 64%); almost all of this

group were identified as Yazidis originating from Ninewa Governorate.^{162,163} A significant number of ethno-religious minority IDP families were also recorded in the Ninewa (18,957; 37%), who were mainly identified as Yazidis displaced internally within the same governorate.¹⁶⁴ While Kerbala does not comprise a significant number of IDPs compared with other governorates, a high proportion of its caseload were Turkmen Shia Muslims (66%), while around one in five were Shabak Shia Muslims (22%).^{165,166}

TABLE 3: ETHNO-RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF IDPs, BY GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT

	ETHNO-RELIGIOUS MAJORITY GROUPS				ETHNO-RELIGIOUS MINORITY GROUPS				
	SUNNI ARAB IDPs	SUNNI KURD IDPs	SHIA ARAB IDPs	SUB-TOTAL	YAZIDI	SUNNI TURKMEN IDPs	SHIA TURKMEN IDPs	OTHER*	SUB-TOTAL
Anbar	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Babylon	93%	0%	1%	94%	0%	0%	6%	0%	6%
Baghdad	92%	0%	1%	93%	0%	0%	5%	2%	7%
Dahuk	5%	31%	0%	36%	60%	0%	0%	3%	64%
Diyala	92%	3%	4%	99%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Erbil	90%	5%	0%	95%	1%	1%	0%	3%	5%
Kerbala	2%	0%	9%	12%	0%	0%	66%	22%	88%
Kirkuk	93%	0%	0%	93%	0%	6%	0%	0%	7%
Ninewa	53%	11%	0%	63%	23%	9%	0%	4%	37%
Salah al-Din	92%	1%	0%	93%	0%	7%	0%	0%	7%
Sulaymaniyah	83%	13%	0%	96%	3%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Grand total	59%	12%	1%	72%	20%	3%	2%	3%	28%

*Ethno-religious groups listed as "Other" include: Shia Shabak, Shia Kurd, and Kakai

At least 32 per cent of IDPs originate from territories designated as disputed between the Gol and the KRG, of whom 9 per cent displaced into other disputed areas.¹⁶⁷ The disputed territories (DTs) are spread across the governorates of Diyala, Salah al-Din, and Kirkuk. These areas are subject

to rivalries over political, economic and security control, commonly resulting in administrative gaps and, typically, more volatile security situations.¹⁶⁸ The ISIL crisis led to increased instability in the DTs, which exacerbated tensions between different groups on the basis of ethno-religious

160 IOM Iraq, *Integration Location Assessment 5 Dataset*, 2020.

161 Ibid.

162 Ibid.

163 Note that these figures have been extrapolated using data collected in the ILA 5 dataset. KIs were asked what percentage of IDPs in each location belong to each ethno-religious group. The percentage of individuals in each governorate belonging to each group was calculated by aggregating the number of individuals based on ethno-religious percentage compositions in each location to governorate level.

164 IOM Iraq, *Integration Location Assessment 5 Dataset*, 2020.

165 Ibid.

166 Additionally, a recent IOM study into protracted displacement in urban settings in KRI found that the following cities have the following ethnic compositions amongst IDPs: Dahuk City (53% Kurd Sunnis, 26% Arab Sunnis, 11% Kurd Shias, 5% Christians, 3% Yazidis and 2% other); Zakho Town (83% Kurd Sunni Muslim, 7 Yazidi, 5% Arab Sunni Muslim, 3% Kurd Shia Muslim, 1% Chaldean and 1% Turkmen Sunni Muslim); Erbil City (72% Arab Sunni, 7% Kurd Sunni Muslim, 6% Chaldean Christian, 5% other type of Christian, 2% Assyrian Christian, 2% Syriac Christian, and 1% each of Arab Shia Muslim, Yazidi, Shabak Sunni Muslim, Shabak Shia Muslim and Turkmen Sunni Muslim). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Urban Displacement in Iraq: Understanding Protracted Displacement*, 2020.

167 IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

168 Iraq Returns Working Group, *Overcoming Disputes and Demographic Changing: Integration Patterns of IDPs from Disputed Territories*, 2020.

tensions as well as micro-political issues.¹⁶⁹ These dynamics within DTs have resulted in heightened security risks, at times leading to the forced displacement of individuals, as well as the blocking of their returns back to their areas of origin. This means that IDPs who originate from DTs are often unable to return home and are therefore commonly at risk of protracted displacement, while those who do return home commonly face challenges with re-integration due to the politicization of their movements and associated demographic changes.¹⁷⁰

4. SAFETY AND SECURITY

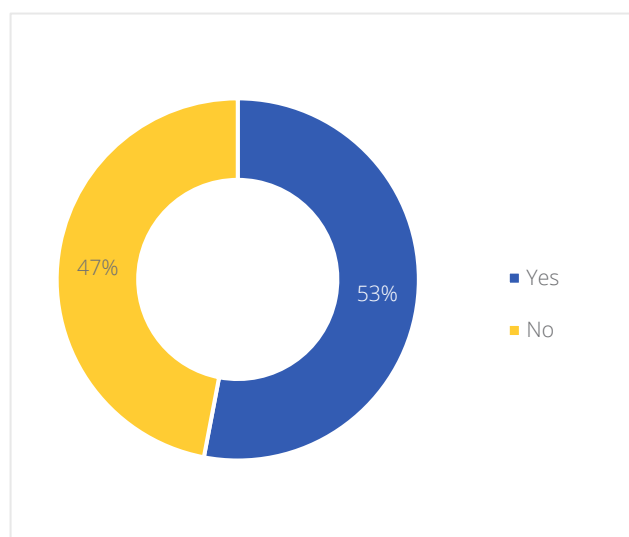
There is a strong link between safety and security and the broader issues that characterize internal displacement such as conflict, territorial integrity and sovereignty. As such, ensuring the safety and security of IDPs after they return is critical to achieving a durable solution.¹⁷¹ In the current context of Iraq, perceived insecurity in origin areas by IDPs relates to a number of factors, including concerns surrounding the re-emergence of ISIL or other groups, the configuration of security forces (that is, issues linked to either no presence of, or too many, security actors), along with the presence of explosive hazards in IDPs’ areas of origin.

REACH’s MCNAs include one key indicator related to IDPs’ fears of limited security in their areas of origin as a reason for not returning home. Overall, this concern was reported by 12 per cent of IDP households in round 8 (2020), down from 31 per cent in round 7 (2019).^{172,173,174} These concerns may relate to a range of factors in IDPs’ areas of origin, including fears of ISIL-related attacks, the presence (or lack thereof) of security actors, or the presence of explosive hazards. The next sections examine these fears in greater detail.

RE-EMERGENCE OF ISIL OR SIMILAR GROUP IN PLACE OF ORIGIN

IOM’s RI 9 captures information relating to concerns that ISIL attacks will take place in locations of return. Across the country, a significant number of return locations—1,068, amounting to 53 per cent, are ranked as high or medium severity in terms of fears that ISIL attacks will take place in the future.^{175,176} A total of 378,037 returnee families (48%) are residing in these locations, making fears of such attacks one of the greatest challenges experienced by returnees upon arrival to their areas of origin.¹⁷⁷

FIGURE 19: % OF RETURNEE FAMILIES LIVING IN LOCATIONS IN WHICH THERE ARE FEARS OF ISIL ATTACKS



Amongst this group, 23,652 returnee families are living in locations where there are high levels of concerns regarding ISIL attacks, which are mostly in the Governorate of Salah al-Din (15,947; 67%)—especially in the Districts of Baiji (6,175; 26%), Samarra (4,246; 18%), and Al-Shirqat (3,098; 13%).¹⁷⁸ Notably, a significant number of returnee families (3,880; 16%) in Diyala Governorate’s Al-Khalis District also live in locations where fears of attacks are serious. Of the remaining IDPs originating from the three listed districts in Salah al-Din, most

169 Iraq Returns Working Group, *Overcoming Disputes and Demographic Changing: Integration Patterns of IDPs from Disputed Territories*, 2020.

170 Ibid.

171 “Safety and security” is the first of eight criteria listed in the *Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. Refer to: Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Brookings Institute & University of Bern, Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010, p.27.

172 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 8 Dataset*, 2020.

173 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 7 Dataset*, 2019.

174 Additionally, in the MCNA 8, 5 per cent of IDP households reported that a lack of security specifically for women and girls was deterring them from returning home, down slightly from 6 per cent in the MCNA 7

175 IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

176 In the RI 9, severity levels for concerns of ISIL attacks were categorized as follows: Very concerned (High), Somewhat concerned (Medium), Not concerned (Low)

177 IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

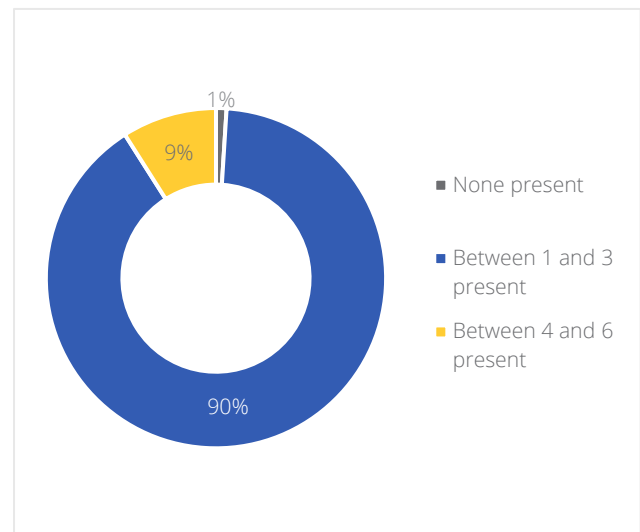
178 Ibid.

are displaced internally within the same governorate,¹⁷⁹ while the majority of IDPs from Al-Khalis¹⁸⁰ are spread between the Governorates of Diyala and Kirkuk. Therefore, the IDPs originating from these four districts—who are spread across certain districts in the Governorates of Salah al-Din, Diyala and Kirkuk—are particularly likely to consider the safety in the location when assessing to return home.

CONFIGURATION OF SECURITY FORCES

IOM's RI 9 features information surrounding return locations' presence, or lack thereof, of security forces, including military and police forces as well as various groups within the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs).^{181,182,183,184} Across the country, only 15 locations were recorded as having no security actors present (1%)—all of which are in Ninewa's Hatra District, where a total of 642 families have returned (<1%).^{185,186} Otherwise, a total of 1,677 locations has between one and three security actors present (83%), where a total of 705,680 families (90%) have returned. Otherwise, in the country's remaining 321 return locations (4%), between four and six security actors are present. The majority of these locations are in Ninewa Governorate (182; 57%), especially in the Districts of Al-Ba'aj (82 locations) and Telafar (67 locations). A significant number of locations were also recorded in Diyala (122; 38%), mainly in the Districts of Khanaqin (68) and Al-Muqdadiya (52). Notably, observing return rates suggests that families may be less likely to return to locations where there are high numbers of security actors present compared with locations where there are lower numbers.¹⁸⁷

FIGURE 20: % OF RETURNEE FAMILIES LIVING IN LOCATIONS WITH DIFFERENT NUMBERS OF SECURITY ACTORS PRESENT



PRESENCE OF EXPLOSIVE HAZARDS

There are three main types of data relating to the explosive hazards across the country. These include perceptions of their threats in locations IDPs' origin areas held both by returnees and those intending to return, as well as government-level incident numbers. These data are reported on below to understand the extent that the presence of explosive hazards affects IDPs' decision or ability to return home.

The RI 9 identifies 149 locations (7%) as having medium or high severity regarding concerns for the presence of unexploded ordnances (UXOs). This means that 42,760 returnee families (5%) live in locations where there are moderate or high levels of concerns held in relation to UXOs, making this one of the lesser challenges faced in return locations.

179 The remaining 4,634 IDP families from Baiji are mostly in the following districts: Tikrit (28%), Erbil (18%), Sulaymaniyah (16%), Kirkuk (15%), and Chamchamal (3%). Additionally, the remaining 1,872 IDP families from Samarra are mostly in the following districts: Samarra (82%), Sulaymaniyah (11%), Chamchamal (1%), Kalar (1%) and Darbandikhan (1%). Otherwise, the remaining 2,097 IDP families from Al-Shirqat are mostly in the following districts: Tikrit (42%), Erbil (19%), Kirkuk (10%), Daquq (4%) and Al-Shirqat (6%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117*, 2020.

180 The remaining 1,505 IDP families from Al-Khalis are mostly in the following districts: Kirkuk (24%), Ba'quba (22%), Al-Khalis (19%), Kifri (8%) and Tuz Khurmatu (8%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117*, 2020.

181 IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

182 Overall, a total of 336 locations (17%), hosting a total of 78,808 returnee families (17%), are ranked as high severity on this metric. Locations ranked as high were recorded as containing either none, or more than three, different security actors present at the time of data collection. Locations ranked as low were recorded as containing one or two actors. No locations were ranked as medium for this indicator in the Return Index 9. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

183 The RI 9 data has been analysed by categorizing the number of security actors present in locations into three groups: 1) those with no actors present, 2) those with between one and three actors present, and 3) those with between four and six actors present. The underlying principle for this analysis is that the first and third groups may adversely affect the community, due to having respectively a lack of or too many security actors, while the second group is considered ideal in terms of having an adequate number of actors present. However, this may vary according to various factors in locations (i.e. population density, and relationships between returnees and security actors).

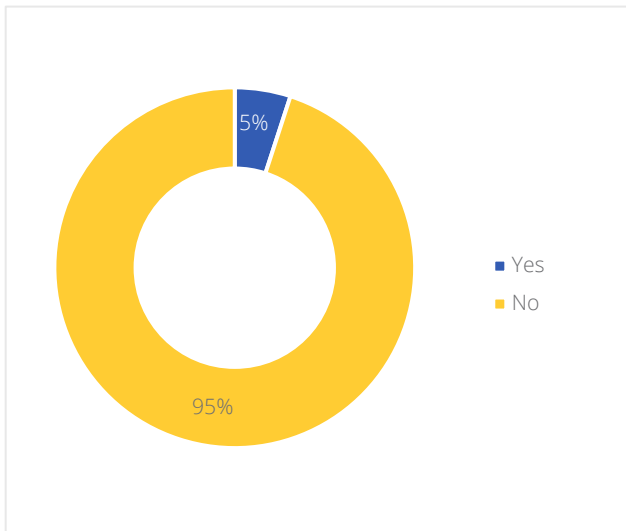
184 A high number of security actors present in a location is often due to the presence of multiple PMUs.

185 IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

186 These locations are spread across Hatra District's Sub-Districts of Altal and Markaz Hatra.

187 All 15 locations (100%) where there are no security actors present, which are all in Hatra District, have received most returnees. By contrast, of the 321 locations where four or more security actors are present, 12 have received all returnees (4%), 197 have received most (57%), 71 have received half (22%), and 55 have received less than half (55%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Return Index 9 Dataset*, 2020.

FIGURE 21: % OF RETURNEE FAMILIES LIVING IN LOCATIONS WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS REGARDING THE PRESENCE OF UXOS

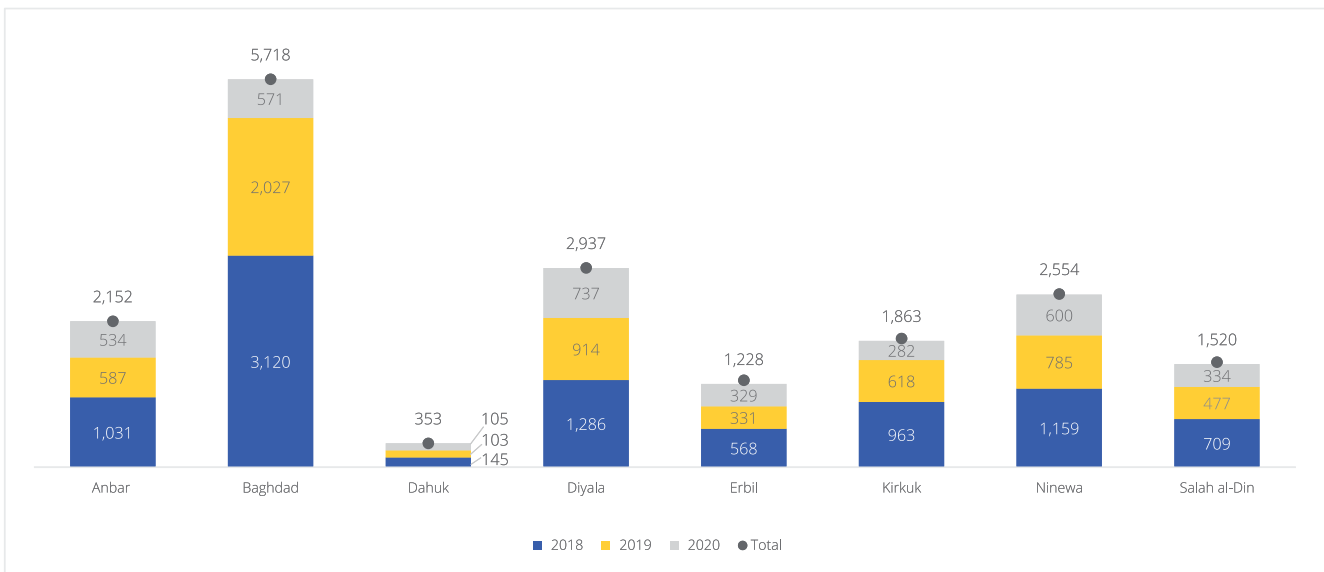


Amongst this group, 2,805 families (<1%) live in locations with high levels of concern, with most residing in Ninewa Governorate (1,451), especially in the Districts of Telfar (992) and Mosul (335). A significant number of returnees live in locations identified with high concern levels in Diyala Governorate’s Al-Khalis District (421).

Similarly, REACH’s MCNA 8 data suggests that the presence of explosive hazards is not a major barrier to IDPs returning home, with five per cent of IDP households reporting this was the case in 2020, down from 13 per cent in the MCNA 7 in the previous year.^{188,189}

Incident data made available by iMMAP offers another way to understand how this security risk varies across governorates.¹⁹⁰ Between 2018 and 2020,¹⁹¹ a total of 25,709 explosive hazards were identified across the country, of which 18,325 took place in the eight main governorates from which IDPs fled during the period of ISIL conflict between 2014 and 2017. By far, Baghdad has had the highest number of incidents (5,718),¹⁹² especially in 2018, followed by Diyala (2,937), Ninewa (2,554), and Anbar (2,152). As at August 2020, the highest number of incidents have been recorded in Diyala Governorate (737), followed by Ninewa (600), Baghdad (571), and Anbar (534). As such, IDPs originating from these governorates—especially those from Baghdad,¹⁹³ where the highest number of incidents have taken place since 2018—may be less likely to return home due to the security risks posed by explosive hazards.¹⁹⁴

FIGURE 22: EXPLOSIVE HAZARD INCIDENTS IN THE MAIN GOVERNORATES THAT IDPs ORIGINATE, FROM 1 JANUARY 2018 TO 31 AUGUST 2020



188 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 7 Dataset*, 2019.

189 REACH, *Iraq MCNA 8 Dataset*, 2020.

190 iMMAP, *Level of Explosive Hazard Incidents in Iraq – Map*, 2020.

191 iMMAP data was accessed on 6 October 2020, therefore the figures for 2020 displayed here only cover up to this date

192 While Baghdad has had the highest number of incidents, only a small number of the remaining IDP caseload originate from this governorate (6,501 families; 3%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117*, 2020.

193 The remaining 6,581 IDP families originating from Baghdad are mainly in the following districts: Sulaymaniyah (62%), Erbil (29%), Kirkuk (3%), Baghdad (1%) and Anbar (1%). Refer to: IOM Iraq, *Master List 117*, 2020.

194 Additionally, a recent list of locations that have had no returns of IDPs shows that 6 locations have received no returns due to the presence of UXOs. These locations were Salah al-Din’s Governorate’s Baiji District (4 locations), Ninewa Governorate’s Sinjar District (1 location), and Erbil Governorate’s Makhmur District (1 location). Refer to: Iraq Returns Working Group, *Districts of Origin Having Witnessed No Returns*, August 2020.

In addition to incidents, it is also worth observing the risks associated with explosive ordnance contamination levels across the main governorates from which IDPs originate, which is also presented by iMMAP. There are three types of explosive ordnance contamination for which data is available at governorate level: 1) explosive remnants of war (ERWs) are unexploded shells, grenades or bombs; 2) cluster munitions are weapons that are launched from the ground or air which scatter large numbers of submunitions that explode on impact; and 3) landmines, which are referred to above as UXOs.

As displayed in Table 4 below, ERWs pose the greatest safety risk, especially in Diyala where a total of 87,939,903 square meters (SQM) are contaminated, followed by Salah al-Din

(77,865,968).¹⁹⁵ Diyala also features the largest land mass contaminated by landmines (15,791,646).¹⁹⁶ In addition, Ninewa features the most significant area contaminated with cluster munition (4,157,090), with the next largest area identified in Kirkuk (587,687).¹⁹⁷ As such, IDPs originating from Diyala—who are mostly displaced internally within the same governorate (57%) and in Sulaymaniyah (32%)—are most likely to confront challenges in returning home related to the contamination of ERWs and landmines.¹⁹⁸ Otherwise, IDPs from Ninewa—who are displaced mostly internally (39%) and in Dahuk (38%) and Erbil (14%)—are significantly more likely to face safety problems in relation to cluster munition contamination.¹⁹⁹

TABLE 4: LEVELS OF EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION LEVELS IN THE MAIN GOVERNORATES THAT IDPS ORIGINATE FROM

GOVERNORATE	TYPES OF EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION		
	EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR (SQM)	LANDMINES (SQM)	CLUSTER MUNITION (SQM)
Anbar	218,499	1,580	15,726
Baghdad	3,511	0	0
Diyala	87,939,903	15,791,646	0
Kirkuk	3,357,280	5,584	587,687
Ninewa	3,757,857	523,578	4,157,090
Salah al-Din	77,865,968	44,888	0

¹⁹⁵ iMMAP, Recorded Explosive Ordnance Contamination in Iraq – Map, August 2020.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

EXACERBATING FACTORS

The first version of the report highlighted a range of exacerbating factors that may impede the ability of IDPs to return home. These factors are broken into two categories below—those related to households characteristics, as well as context factors related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19 pandemic), and how IDPs' location of origin and displacement as well as the duration and time of their displacement may impede return prospects.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

- Low socio-economic level
- Female-headed households
- Child-headed households
- Households with members who have a disability
- Psychosocial wellbeing/self-reported mental health

There is an information gap that limits the ability to understand the extent that these characteristics make these households more likely to face certain barriers in returning to their area of origin. To address this information gap and gain a stronger understanding of the different IDP groups that are more likely to remain in displacement, targeted quantitative and statistically representative research capturing information on IDP characteristics and movement intentions, as well as their areas of origin and displacement, are recommended to be implemented.

CONTEXT FACTORS

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Since the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Iraq has imposed a number of measures to curb the spread of the virus across the country.²⁰⁰ These include restrictions on citizens' movements between governorates, and were in place between March and August 2020, and may have had an impact on IDPs' decisions or ability to return to their area of origin. While movement restrictions may have prevented some IDPs from returning home in some instances, the restrictions at times reportedly also accelerated returns, including in the case of IDPs returning to Ninewa Governorate's Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj Districts between June and December 2020.²⁰¹

200 Since April 2020, DTM Iraq has published a number of reports focusing on the impact of COVID-19-related travel restrictions on Iraqi citizens and migrants across the country. They are available [here](#).

201 DTM Iraq's Emergency Tracking assessment covering IDP and returnee movements to Ninewa Governorate's Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj districts highlighted that one of the push factors prompting the movements related to COVID-19 movement restrictions. Reportedly, some families who had a member working in their area of origin and who were moving between there and the area of displacement (which were mainly in Dahuk) could no longer easily move due to movement restrictions, which pushed them to return home. Refer to: IOM Iraq, *DTM Emergency Tracking: Displacement and Returns to Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj Districts*, 2020.

202 IOM Iraq, *Master List 117 Dataset*, 2020.

To date, no assessments specifically aimed at understanding the impact of the pandemic on IDPs' ability to return to their area of origin have been implemented. However, observing the number of returns that have taken place in the period of March to August in 2020 and the previous two years suggests that the impact of COVID-19 movement restrictions may be significant on IDP movements. In the period of March-August 2018, a total of 517,092 returnees were recorded as arriving to their area of origin, before dropping significantly to 138,168 in the same period in 2019, and dropping again to 83,646 in 2020.

As such, this decrease in the number of returns that took place in the March-August period in 2019 and 2020 may be partially explained by the movement restrictions that were in place in the latter year. However, it should be noted that, as detailed throughout the report, the remaining IDPs may not return home for a range of different reasons, and it is therefore not possible to determine the extent that COVID-19 movement restrictions have impacted the returns of IDPs to their place of origin.

LOCATION OF ORIGIN/DISPLACEMENT

The locations where IDPs originate from, as well as where they are displaced, can be significant in determining how long they remain in displacement and exacerbate the risk of protracted displacement. An indication of how IDPs' location of origin can exacerbate the sometimes-overlapping factors that lead to protracted displacement at the individual level can be seen by observing return rates—that is, the proportion of IDPs originating from each governorate who have returned home. Amongst all governorates of origin, Dahuk has the highest return rate (100%), followed by Anbar (91%), Erbil (83%), Salah al-Din (82%), Kirkuk (80%), Diyala (75%), Ninewa (71%) and Baghdad (70%).²⁰²

Otherwise, IDPs' locations of displacement may also play a role in their duration of displacement. A key factor that can make IDPs more likely to remain in displacement relates to limited access to income in displacement, which may inhibit their ability to cover costs associated with returning to their areas of origin and restarting their life upon returning, including for the rehabilitation of housing (refer to the housing section in the categories framework above). In addition, IDPs' limited access to income in displacement may also decrease the likelihood of being able to cover the costs associated with local integration.

DURATION/TIME OF DISPLACEMENT

The duration for which IDPs are displaced can also be a factor affecting the risk of protracted displacement, especially with regards to IDPs' financial standing. As highlighted in an IOM Iraq and Georgetown University panel study, only a small proportion of IDPs (19%) had any savings when they were forced to leave their area of origin, and over time these minimal savings depleted whilst in displacement.²⁰³ As such, with IDPs facing significant difficulties in accessing opportunities for income generation in locations of displacement, the continued costs associated of remaining in displacement may continue to compound their financial position. The longer IDPs remain in displacement, the more likely they may be to deplete their savings and be unable to cover the costs of returning home, thereby increasing the risk of protracted displacement.

The time when IDPs became displaced, in the onset of the crisis fleeing the ISIL advance or due to the ensuing military campaign to retake the areas, may also be significant. IDPs who displaced in the later stages of the crisis might face greater risks of being perceived as affiliated with ISIL amongst their pre-displacement communities, particularly if they cohabitated with the group, thereby making them more likely to face return and reintegration barriers (refer to the social cohesion and safety and security sections of the categories framework above).

203 IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Livelihoods and Economic Security in Displacement*, 2020, p.12.

CONCLUSION

This second report in the *Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq* series has sought to update and explore the different reasons why the remaining post-2014 caseload of IDPs remain in displacement across Iraq.

SUMMARY: WHY DO IDPS REMAIN IN DISPLACEMENT?

This report has extensively covered the different types of barriers faced by IDPs in returning to their area of origin. Due to the different modalities used to collect the information presented throughout the categorization framework—including whether data was collected in locations of displacement, or in locations of return—it is not possible to accurately rank the extent that IDPs face barriers to returning home. However, it is possible to identify barriers that IDPs are more likely to face than others across each of the framework's categories.

- **Housing-related** issues represent significant barriers to IDPs returning home. Damage or destruction to IDPs' pre-displacement homes is a particularly significant barrier, with around seven in 10 households reporting facing this problem. This problem is most severe amongst those from Ninewa Governorate, which sustained widespread damage to infrastructure during the conflict period. Additionally, difficulties in accessing compensation for damaged housing assets prevent IDPs returning, and can be traced to a combination of IDPs' limited awareness of the scheme (with only one in two families reporting to have heard of it), as well as delays in receiving assistance following lodging an application (with one in 100 family applicants reporting to have received assistance in a timely manner, which can be attributed to the processing of claims, as well as the disbursement of funds). Incidences of IDPs' pre-displacement homes being occupied or disputed affects fewer IDPs, with around one in 15 families in return locations facing this problem; however, returnees in Ninewa Governorate's Telafar and Sinjar Districts, and IDPs originating from them, are disproportionately likely to face this issue.
- **A lack of livelihoods and basic services** are evidently central to IDPs' decision or ability to return home. Data collected in locations of displacement reveal that around six out of 10 IDP families cannot return home due to a lack of livelihoods in their area of origin, with returnees in Ninewa Governorate's Telafar and Al-Ba'aj Districts—and IDPs originating from them, who are mostly displaced in within Ninewa or Dahuk Governorates—are most likely to face this type of barrier. Additionally, a lack of basic services in pre-displacement areas pose challenges to around four in 10 IDP families. However, gaps in services vary according to their type and location: families in or originating from Ninewa are most likely to face problems with accessing government services and sufficient water, while those in or originating from Salah al-Din are most likely to face problems in accessing electricity.
- **Social cohesion**-related issues represent clear barriers to returning home. However, understanding the extent that certain social issues influence IDPs' ability to return home is complex, owing to significant variations in the country's ethno-religious, tribal and political dynamics that pre-date 2014, and limited quantitative data covering community processes that facilitate the returns of IDPs to their pre-displacement homes. Otherwise, around one in five IDP families reportedly do not intend to return home due to fears of discrimination in their area of origin, with data collected in return locations highlighting those from Diyala and Ninewa as most likely to face this problem. Moreover, IDPs' return journeys being blocked by security actors or their origin communities can also result in their continued displacement. In some settings, blocked returns can be explained by the presence of security actors in locations where no returns have taken place, or the delays in the implementation of return agreements.
- **Security and safety**-related barriers to return to areas of origin are consistently high across available datasets. Around one in three IDP households reportedly face fears of limited security in their area of origin, and return location data reveals the rates at which related problems are faced. Of particular concern, almost one in two returnee families in live in locations where there are fears that further ISIL attacks take place, with those in, or originating from, the Governorates of Salah al-Din and Diyala most likely to hold such fears. Additionally, variations in the configurations of security forces highlight locations that may be less likely to receive returnees, with available data suggesting that high numbers of security actors represent a greater barrier than lower numbers of actors. Under one per cent of returnee families are living in locations where no security actors are present (which are all in Ninewa Governorate's Hatra District), while around one in 20 returnee families live in locations where there is a potential over-presence of actors (four or more). Finally, available survey data suggests that explosive hazard incidents in IDPs' origin areas are not a major

factor overall in IDPs' decision to return home, with only one in 20 families reporting this as a barrier. IDPs originating from Ninewa Governorate's Districts of Telafar and Mosul, as well as Diyala's Al-Khalis, may be more likely than others to face this problem. However, governorates with high numbers of explosive hazard

incidents (especially in Baghdad, Diyala and Ninewa), as well as high levels of explosive ordnance contamination levels (especially in Diyala and Ninewa), may be less likely to receive returnees due to the associated risks of their presence.

GAINING THE FULL PICTURE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FILLING INFORMATION GAPS

This report has provided an in-depth understanding of why IDPs remain in displacement, with a focus on how conditions in their area of origin—based on perceptions of those in displacement, and insights from those in locations of return—represent barriers to returning to them. In doing so, it has emphasized the need for durable solutions actors to work towards the realization of durable solutions in line with the key principles laid out in the IASC Framework For Internally Displaced Persons.²⁰⁴

However, to understand the full range of reasons why IDPs remain in displacement, these barriers to returning home should be observed in the broader context of the different forms that a durable solution can take. For example, if an IDP family is considering potential options for settlement arrangements—including re-integration in their area of origin, or integration in locations of displacement or other locations—they are likely to weigh up the different types of barriers they may face under each scenario.²⁰⁵ As such, further information is required to better understand the extent to which certain factors prevent IDPs from achieving each of these types of durable solutions.

Quantitative research has been conducted on levels of IDPs' belonging and acceptance in host communities,²⁰⁶ as well as the needs and intentions of IDPs in urban displacement settings.²⁰⁷ However, available datasets do not allow for a macro-level delineation of two clear dimensions in IDPs' decision to return home: 1) negative conditions in areas of origin, and 2) positive conditions in areas of displacement or 'third' locations. To address this information gap, further quantitative research focused on distinguishing between these two factors, including how they vary according to

IDPs' locations of origin and displacement, may assist in determining appropriate approaches for assisting IDPs to return home or integrate locally. Additionally, collecting information related to households' characteristics in line with the exacerbating factors referred to above—socio-economic level, gender, and age of heads of household, the presence of members with a disability, the psychosocial wellbeing/mental health of members, as well IDPs' location of origin/displacement and time/duration of displacement—would enable an understanding of what characterizes households that are more likely to face certain barriers in returning home, and inform programming to address them.

Additionally, to further strengthen the evidence base surrounding durable solutions in Iraq, it is important to identify the different obstacles that IDPs face in re-integrating to their area of origin. This is central to assessing if returning is sustainable in the long run, and identifying cases where IDPs' return home represents the advancement towards a durable solution. To fill this information gap, research quantifying the number of returnee households affected by obstacles to reintegration, understood as conditions in locations of return that may jeopardize households' ability to sustainably remain there upon return, is needed to complement this report.

204 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Brookings Institute & University of Bern, *Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010.


205 It should be noted that positive conditions in locations of displacement does not mean integration will successfully take place; there is a risk that IDPs will remain in displacement if integration fails

206 IOM Iraq, *Cities as Home: Understanding Belonging and Acceptance Among IDPs and Host Communities in Iraq*, 2020.

207 Additionally, in 2021, IOM Iraq and Social Inquiry will publish a report focused on quantifying the number of returnee households that are affected by obstacles to reintegration, understood as those situations in return locations that may jeopardize households' ability to sustainably remain there upon return. This will aim to contribute to the overall understanding of durable solutions in Iraq, and will be able to be observed alongside IOM's significant body of durable solutions research products, including this report.

PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT IN IRAQ: REVISITING CATEGORIES OF RETURN BARRIERS

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