

OBSTACLES TO RETURNEE REINTEGRATION IN IRAQ: LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY



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INTRODUCTION

Between 2014 and 2017, the conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) resulted in the internal displacement of 1,029,102 Iraqi families (6,138,788 individuals).^{1,2} These families fled from their homes in eight of Iraq's north and central governorates, seeking safety across each of the country's 18 governorates. As of December 2021, 825,372 families – 80 per cent of all those who became displaced during the ISIL crisis – have returned to their area of origin.^{3,4} The remaining 203,730 families remain displaced, with the majority spread across the governorates of Ninewa (21%), Dahuk (22%) and Erbil (19%).⁵

In 2022, the Iraq response is shifting to a development approach, with a strong focus on durable solutions and supporting returnee families to reintegrate into their area of origin.⁶ Challenges with accessing livelihoods and economic security represent some of the most significant barriers to the sustainable reintegration of returnees nationwide.

BARRIERS TO RETURNEE REINTEGRATION

In February 2021, IOM Iraq, the Returns Working Group and Social Inquiry produced a [report](#), *Home Again?*⁷ The report analyzed the sustainability of reintegration of Iraqi families who had returned to their area of origin after being displaced due to the ISIL conflict.⁸ In line with the durable solutions framework developed by the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS), the report examined the extent to which sustainable reintegration had taken place across five areas.⁹ The study found that the main challenges to reintegration relate to housing, land and property (HLP); safety, security and social relations; and access to livelihoods and economic security.

In 2021, IOM published a [report](#) and set of [district profiles](#) related to HLP, as well as a report focused on [safety, security and social relations](#). Taken together, this series of reintegration reports – including this report focused on livelihoods and economic security – provides a comprehensive evidence-base in support of the advancement towards sustainable reintegration for the 825,372 returnee families across the country.

CONFLICT, LIVELIHOODS AND REINTEGRATION

Conflict in Iraq has had a significant impact on returnees' access to livelihoods and income generation and poses challenges to their sustainable

reintegration in their area of origin. The country has experienced decades of economic challenges throughout consecutive periods of conflict, including the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988), the Gulf War (1990-1991), and the Iraq War (2003-2011).¹⁰ Following this, the ISIL crisis (2014-2017) continued to severely impact local economies in conflict-affected areas, with the militant group targeting the destruction or occupation of commercial activity centers such as markets and agricultural areas. This combined with the fleeing of families away from their homes to disrupt supply chains, while businesses who remained in ISIL-occupied areas were commonly forced to pay fees to finance the operations of ISIL.¹¹ These impacts on the economy weigh heavily on the financial independence and purchasing power of returnees, which thereby affects their quality of life, as they work towards reintegration in their area of origin.

COMPLEMENTARY ANALYSIS

ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY AMONGST IDPs AND RETURNEES

The analysis presented in this report can be viewed alongside the findings presented in a separate thematic IOM-Georgetown University [research brief](#), *Access to Durable Solutions in Iraq: Livelihoods and Economic Security and Displacement*, which was published in 2020.¹² The findings in that report emanated from a panel study focused on durable solutions, which surveyed approximately 2,000 of the same out-of-camp IDPs who became displaced during the ISIL conflict, aimed at understanding their level of access to durable solutions whilst in displacement over the course of six years.¹³

The report analyzed the IDPs' level of access to livelihoods and economic security whilst in the displacement, in line in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions.¹⁴ As such, together, these two reports provide a rounded understanding of the livelihood and economic challenges that families face – both while in displacement, and while reintegrating into their area of origin.

- 1 Since April 2015, Iraqi families have been returning to their area of origin, with the majority of returns taking place following the declaration of the defeat of ISIL by the Government of Iraq in December 2017.
- 2 IOM (2021). DTM Master List Dataset: Round 124. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/MasterList#Datasets>
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 This is commonly referred to as the national return rate.
- 5 IOM (2021). DTM Master List Dataset: Round 124. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/MasterList#Datasets>
- 6 OCHA (2022). Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan 2022. See: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/iraq_humanitarian_response_plan_2022_-_issued_27_march.pdf
- 7 IOM (2021). *Home Again? Categorizing Obstacles to Returnee Reintegration in Iraq*. See: https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/202216553131_iom_Iraq_Home_Again_Categorising_Obstacles_to_Returnee_Reintegration_in_Iraq.pdf
- 8 The *Home Again?* report recognized that sustainable reintegration is conceptually measured by the progress that returnees make, and the provisions put in place by authorities, in overcoming barriers following their arrival back to their area of origin.
- 9 The additional five criteria examined in the *Home Again?* report include: 1) safety and security and social relations; 2) adequate standards of living; 3) access to livelihoods; 4) property restitution; and 5) access to documentation.
- 10 A full overview of the displacement crisis that took place following each period of conflict can be viewed here: IOM (2018). *Iraq Displacement Crisis: 2014-2017*. https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/20203224827300_IOM-Iraq_Displacement_Crisis_2014-2017.pdf
- 11 UN Habitat (2016). *City Profile of Mosul, Iraq: Multi-Sector Assessment of a City Under Siege*. See: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UN-Habitat_MosulCityProfile_V5.pdf
- 12 IOM and Georgetown University (2020). *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Livelihoods and Economic Security in Displacement*. See: https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/2020121389453_IOM_Iraq_Access_to_Durable_Solutions_Livelihoods_and_Economic_Security_in_Displacement.pdf
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Inter-Agency Standing Committee & The Brookings Institution (2010). *Framework on Durable Solutions For Internally Displaced Persons*. See: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons>

REPORT OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE

The objective of this report is to strengthen the evidence-base related to the types of reintegration challenges related to livelihoods and economic security that returnees face across the country. The analysis is structured around the two relevant sub-criteria from the EGRIS framework, as follows:

Livelihoods and employment

Economic Security

The livelihoods and employment criteria refers to the state of local economic activities in areas of return, while the economic security criteria refers to the revenue sources that households rely on.

Under each of these sub-criteria, several quantitative indicators are presented, covering the different types of reintegration challenges that returnees face. For each indicator, national level findings are presented, with key differences in the rates at which returnees face each type of challenge also highlighted. For key indicators, comparative analysis is included, highlighting how conditions have changed between 2020 and 2021 (if any).

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH APPROACH

LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY AS MEASURABLE REINTEGRATION OUTCOMES

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework for Internally Displaced Persons (the IASC Framework) highlights three different ways in which displaced communities may achieve a durable solution.¹⁵ These include integration in areas where IDPs are displaced; integration in a location other than where IDPs are displaced or their place of origin; or reintegration in IDPs' place of origin.

As returnees advance towards the sustainable reintegration in their area of origin, the reintegration framework devised by EGRIS can assist in monitoring the extent to which this type of durable solution is sustainable in the long-term.¹⁶ With 80 per cent of all Iraqi families who became displaced having returned, ensuring an updated evidence-base related to the types of reintegration barriers that returnees face – including those related to livelihoods and economic security – is central in informing durable solutions strategy and planning.

This report provides a snapshot of the current situation related to livelihoods and economic security, as part of the Iraq humanitarian response's wider objective of supporting families to sustainably reintegrate into their area of origin. It does this by drawing on a range of secondary data collected in return locations as part of the data collection activities of IOM

The report is comprised of the following sections:

- First, an overview of the methodology employed in producing this report is included. This includes a summary of the research approach taken, a table listing the indicators and their data sources, and the limitations of the report.
- Second, a brief overview of the current situation relating to returnees across the country is provided. This includes a summary of the number of returnees across governorates and districts. Data visualizations, including graphs and maps, highlight key findings under each of the sub-criteria.
- Third, the report provides a comprehensive analysis of issues related to livelihoods and economic security as they relate to sustainable reintegration of returned households. This analysis is structured around the two relevant EGRIS sub-criteria of 1) livelihoods and employment, and 2) economic security. Key findings are visualized in graphs, with key geographical differences highlighted in maps.
- Fourth, and finally, the report concludes with a summary of key findings and recommendations for filling information gaps.

Iraq's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), namely the Master List, the Return Index and the Integrated Location Assessment, which respectively are implemented on a bi-monthly and annual basis.¹⁷ The report presents updated data that is drawn from each of these assessments.

INDICATOR SELECTION

In the analysis section of this report, under each EGRIS criteria, a range of aggregable quantitative indicators are presented. As with the other products published in this reintegration series, the EGRIS framework is interpreted in the context of the Iraq displacement crisis, with indicators selected based on their relevance.

All indicators presented in the analysis section are adopted from datasets produced by DTM. The majority of indicators are adopted from DTM's Return Index Round 14 (October–December 2021), with comparisons made with Round 11 (November–December 2020).¹⁸ The remaining indicators are adopted from DTM's Integrated Location Assessment (ILA) Round 6 (May–July 2021), which are compared with indicators from the ILA Round 5 (July–August 2020).¹⁹ All population figures are derived from DTM's Master List Round 124 (October–December 2021).²⁰ All additional information is referenced throughout the report. The indicators used in the analysis under each of the EGRIS criteria and sub-criteria are included in the table below.

15 Inter-Agency Standing Committee & The Brookings Institution (2010). *Framework on Durable Solutions For Internally Displaced Persons*. See: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons>

16 Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (2020). *International Recommendations on IDP Statistics*. See: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/BG-item-3n-international-recommendations-on-IDP-statistics-E.pdf>

17 Primary data sources include the Return Index Round 14 (December 2021) and the Integrated Location Assessment 6 (July 2021)

18 IOM (2020-21). *DTM Return Index Datasets: Rounds 14 and 11*. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex#Datasets>

19 IOM (2021). *DTM Integrated Location Assessment Dataset: Round 6*. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ILA6#Datasets>

20 IOM (2021). *DTM Master List Round Dataset: Round 124*. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/MasterList#Datasets>

CRITERIA	SUB-CRITERIA	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE
1. Livelihoods and employment	1.1 Limited access to employment opportunities	% returnee households in locations where either none or less than half of the residents can find employment	Return Index Rounds 11 and 14
		% of returnee households in locations where access to employment or livelihoods opportunities is a main need	Integrated Location Assessment 5 and 6
	1.2 Inoperative businesses	% returnee households in locations where none or only some businesses are open	Return Index Rounds 11 and 14
	1.3 Inoperative agriculture	% of returnee households in locations where none or only some or the agricultural/livestock activities are taking place as prior to the ISIL crisis	Return Index Rounds 11 and 14
2. Economic security	2.1 Main sources of income	% of returnee households in locations by main sources of income	Integrated Location Assessment 5 and 6
	2.2 Economic activity	% of returnee households in locations where the majority are economically active	Integrated Location Assessment 5 and 6
	2.3 Insufficient funds to meet basic needs	% of returnee households where some families do not have sufficient funds for food, shelter or other basic needs	Integrated Location Assessment 6 (5 not available; indicator not included)

LIMITATIONS

There are two main limitations of this report, as follows:

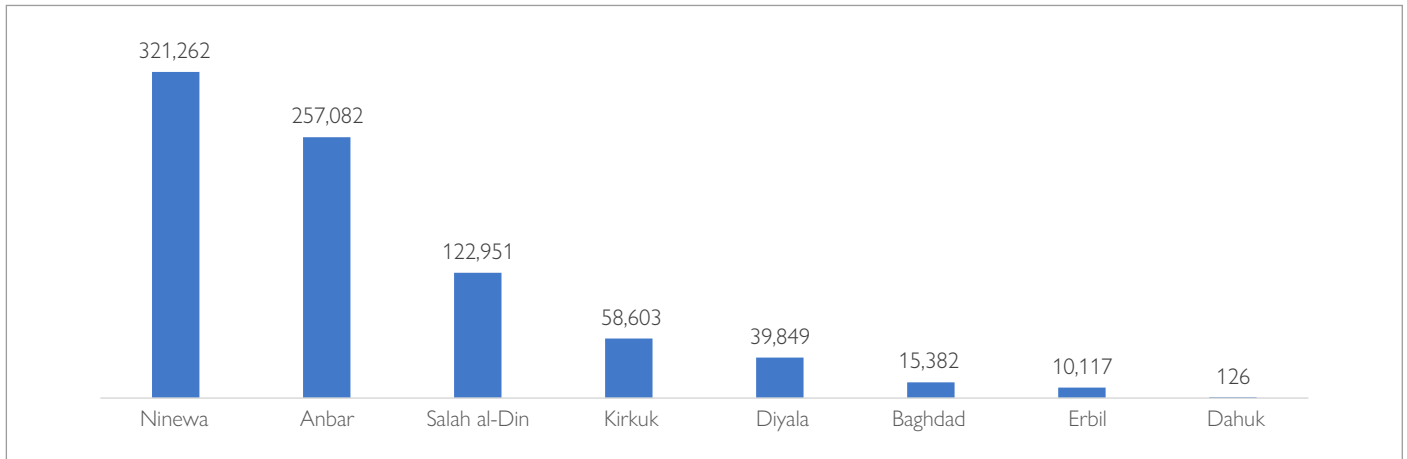
1. Secondary data: the information presented in the analysis section has been adopted from secondary sources – that is, datasets that were produced as part of separate assessment activities with their own clear objectives, that do not necessarily relate to the reintegration of returnees. Both assessments that produced the data featured in this report – the Return Index Rounds 11 and 14 and the Integrated Location Assessment Rounds 6 and 7 – had clear objectives of understanding the challenges faced by returnees across the country. However, the questions included in the assessment tools did not ask respondents specifically about the ways in which certain issues pose challenges to reintegration that returnees may face, and instead asked more broadly about the types of issues faced. The indicators have been selected based on their relevance to the reintegration criteria and sub-criteria that the analysis section is structured around. As such, the interpretation of findings should be made bearing in mind how the data has been aggregated as relevant under each of the sub-criteria.
2. Location level data: all data presented in this report was collected at location level. This means that Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) enumerators interviewed key informants about the conditions faced by returnees in a number of locations, which correspond to a village for rural areas or a neighbourhood for urban areas (i.e. a fourth administrative division). While this approach allows for extensive nationwide coverage over a short period of time, it relies often on one representative per location, mainly mukhtars and community or local council representatives, who report on the views of a potentially large and diverse population, which might lead to limited representation for smaller groups with distinct characteristics, or discrepancies caused by social desirability bias. Additionally, key household characteristics – including socio-demographic indicators such as the number of family members, and vulnerability factors (i.e. gender of the head of household, or number of members living with a disability) – are not accounted for in the datasets.

CONTEXT: RETURNS AND REINTEGRATION²¹

As of early 2022, a total of 825,372 families who became displaced during the ISIL conflict have returned to their area of origin. The highest number of returnees reside in Ninewa Governorate (321,262), followed

by Anbar (257,082) and Salah al-Din (122,951). Figure 1 below displays the total number of returnees who have arrived in the eight governorates across the country.

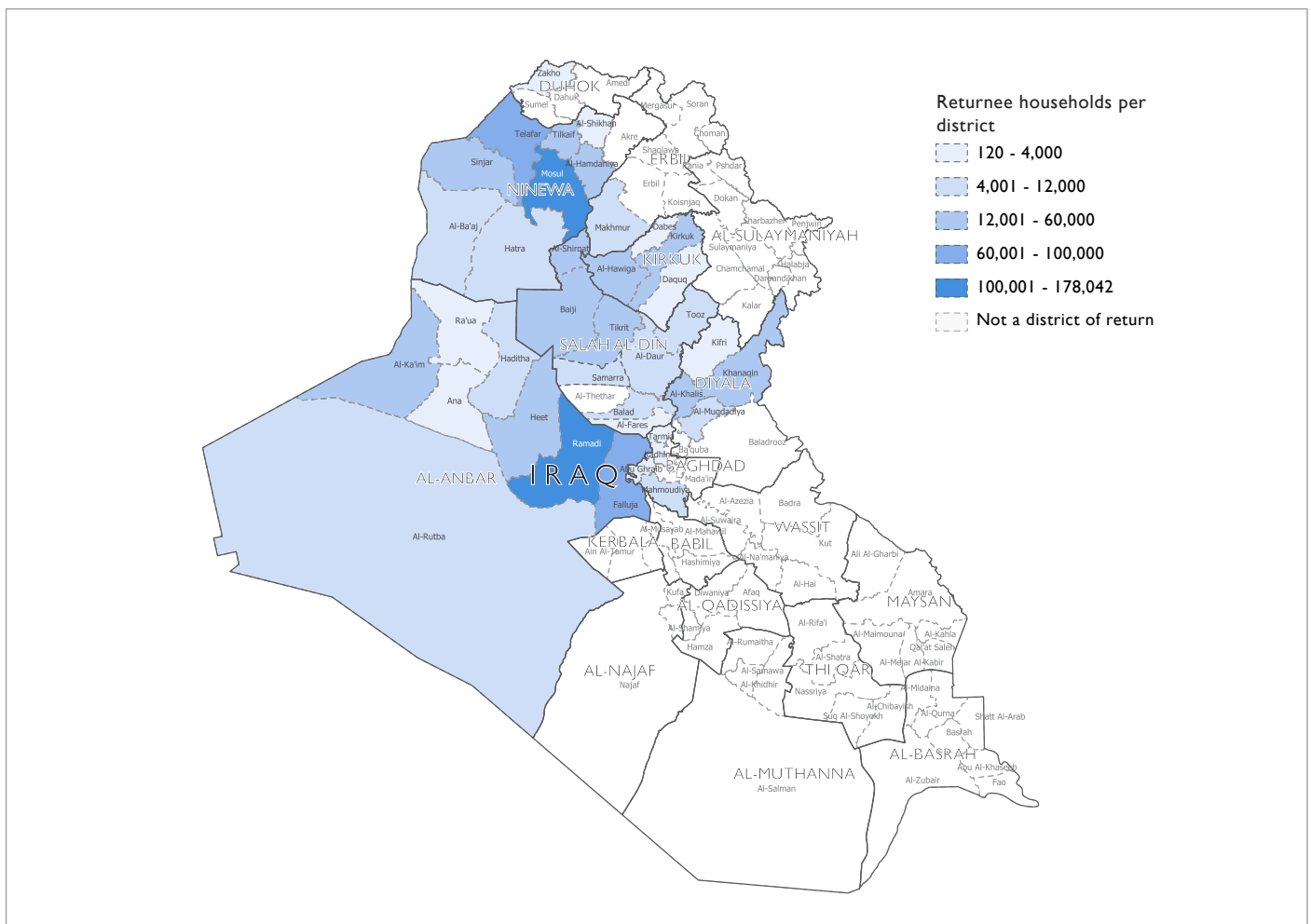
Figure 1: Number of returnee families, by governorate



At the district level, the highest number of returnee families are in Mosul district (178,042) in Ninewa Governorate, followed by Ramadi (100,264) and Falluja (95,135) in Anbar Governorate. The next largest returnee

populations are in Telafar (60,251) and Tikrit (31,627) in Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates, respectively. Map 1 below displays the distribution of returnee families across all districts of return across the country.

Map 1: Number of returnee families, by district of return



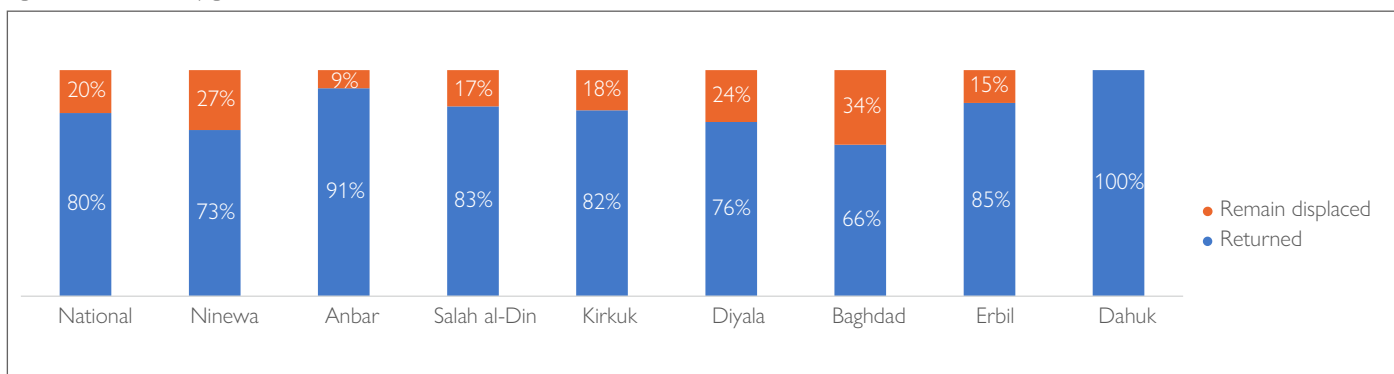
²¹ All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Master List 124 (December 2021) dataset, which includes a full overview of the number of returnees across the country, including the locations, sub-districts and districts to which they have returned. Refer to: IOM (2021). DTM Master List Dataset: Round 124. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/MasterList#Datasets>

RATES OF RETURN²²

One important metric for analysing the severity of conditions in return locations is the rate of return – that is, the proportion of families who became displaced during the ISIL conflict who have returned to their area of origin. Overall, 80 per cent of all families across the country who became displaced

during the conflict have returned home. The return rates at governorate level range from the lowest in Baghdad (66%), to Dahuk where all families (100%) have returned home. At district level, the lowest return rates are recorded in Sinjar (36%) and Al-Ba'aj (35%), followed by Tuz Khurmatu (62%), Al-Fares and Balad (both 70%).

Figure 2: Return rates, by governorate of return

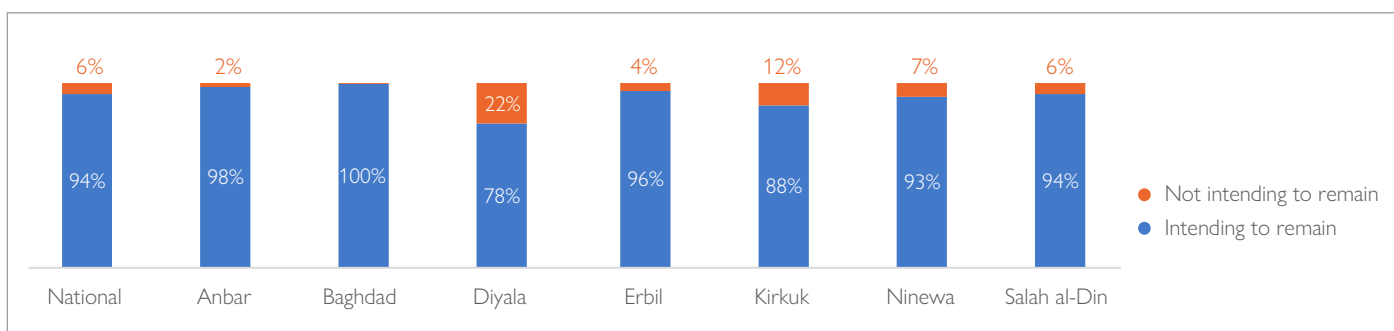


RETURNEE MOVEMENT INTENTIONS²³

Across the country, most families who have returned to their area of origin (94%) intend to remain there for the next 12 months (up to July 2022). The remaining families are either undecided as to their movement intentions (5%) or intend to relocate to another area within Iraq (1%). In most governorates,

almost all returnee families intend to remain in their current location in the next 12 months. Diyala is the only exception, where only 78 per cent of returnee households intend to remain. At district level, a notably low proportion of returnee households in Al-Khalis (45%) in Diyala report intending to remain in their current location. The next lowest rates of intentions to remain are recorded in the districts of Sinjar (78%) and Al-Hawiga (81%).

Figure 3: % of returnee households intending to remain in their location (in the period up to 2022), by governorate of return

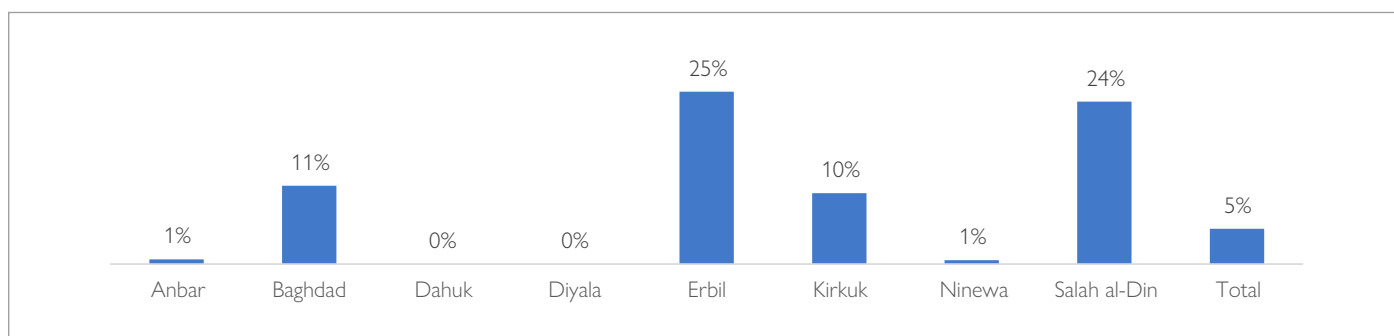


LIVELIHOODS AND RETURN MOVEMENTS²⁴

Only a small proportion of all returnees (5%) are in locations where the main reason for returning related to the availability of jobs in their area of origin. It represents a significantly lower factor compared with safety and security (91% of returnees), the availability of housing (82%), access to

services such as health and education (28%), and to join family members who have returned (8%). However, as displayed below, the proportion of returnee households in areas where access to jobs has influenced returns ranges from no households in Dahuk and Diyala, to as many as 25 and 24 per cent in Erbil and Salah al-Din.

Figure 4: Proportion of returnee households in locations where access to jobs has been a main reported reason to return home, by governorate of return.



22 All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Master List 124 dataset, which includes a full overview of the number of returnees across the country, including the locations, sub-districts and districts to which they have returned. IOM (2021). DTM Master List Dataset: Round 124. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/MasterList#Datasets>

23 All information presented in this section is derived from REACH Initiative's Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA) Dashboard: Round 9. The 12-month period that the intentions indicator refers to is from July to July 2021. REACH (2021). MCNA Round 9 Summary Tables. See: <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/reach-iraq-multi-cluster-needs-assessment-round-ix-2021>

24 All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Integration Location Assessment (Round 6). See: IOM Iraq (2021). Integrated Location Assessment 6. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex#Datasets>

ANALYSIS: CHALLENGES ACCESSING LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY AS BARRIERS TO REINTEGRATION

1. LIVELIHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT

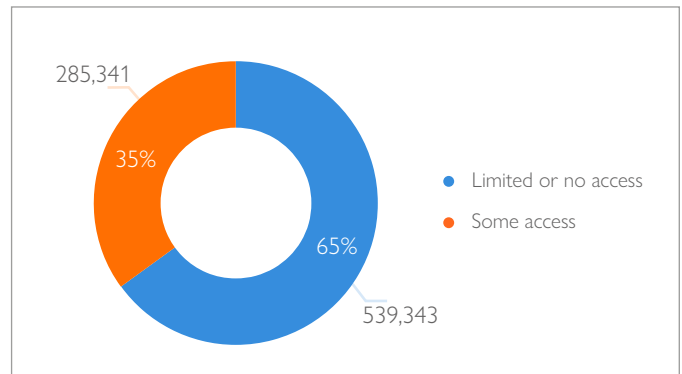
The ISIL crisis in Iraq (2014-2017) significantly impacted local economies. Along with destruction of housing and public infrastructure, ISIL insurgencies targeted the destruction or occupation of commercial activity centers such as markets, industries, as well as farmers of livestock and fresh produce. In addition, the fleeing of families away from conflict zones resulted in the disruption of supply chains. As a result, many of the 825,372 returnee families have limited financial independence and purchasing power, resulting in scarce opportunities for livelihoods and employment.²⁵

This section includes a summary of key indicators related to the different types of livelihoods and employment challenges as they relate to returnees' reintegration. The indicators cover the prevalence of areas with limited access to employment, and cases where access to employment or livelihoods opportunities represents a main need of returnee families. Additional data presented relates to industry-related challenges that returnees face, including low levels of business and agriculture activity in the areas where families have returned.

1.1 LIMITED ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES²⁶

Challenges with accessing employment represent some of the main reintegration barriers faced by returnees across the country. Overall, a total of 539,343 returnee households (65%) reside in areas where under half of the residents can find employment. No changes took place in the proportion of returnees facing this challenge between 2020 and 2021. At governorate level, the highest number of returnee households in areas with low employment levels include Ninewa (216,865) and Anbar (198,088), representing respectively 68 per cent and 77 per cent of all who have returned there. A significant number of returnee households also live in low-employment areas in Salah al-Din (69,042; 56%) and Diyala (35,409; 89%).

Figure 5: Proportion of returnee households in locations where there are challenges accessing employment (limited or no access)



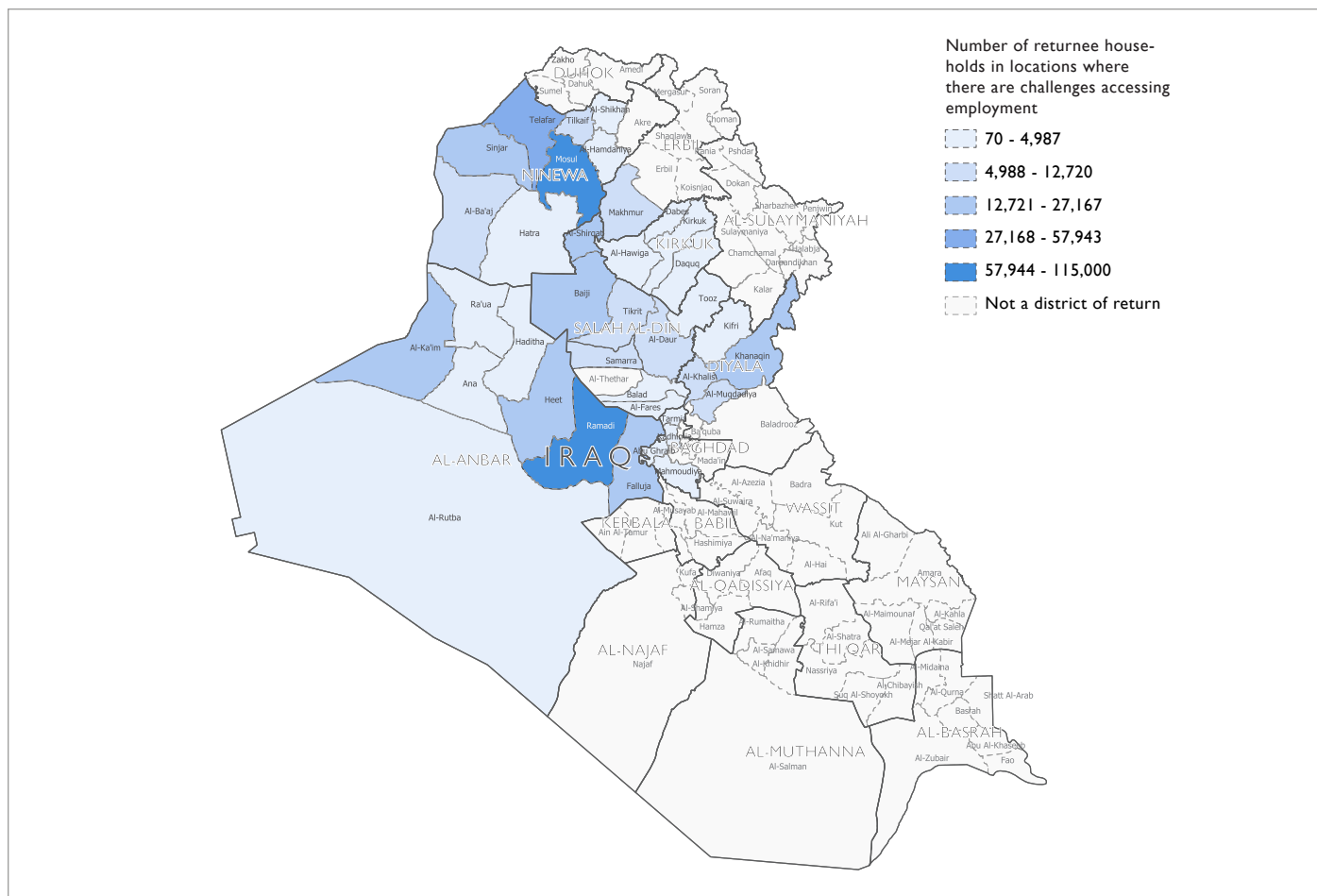
A significant variation in the number of returnee households in low-employment locations is also observed across districts of return. Mosul district in Ninewa governorate hosts the highest number of returnee families in low-employment levels (114,592), amounting to 64 per cent of all returnees there. Of additional concern, almost all returnee households are in low employment areas in Ninewa governorate's districts of Telafar (57,943; 96%), Sinjar (19,899; 99%) and Al-Ba'aj (8,921; 99%) - all of which sustained widespread destruction during the ISIL crisis.

Notably, all 17,238 returnee households (100%) in Khanaqin district in Diyala governorate are in low-employment areas, with significant numbers also facing this challenge in Anbar's districts of Ramadi (96,370; 96%), Falluja (43,236; 45%), and Heet (27,167; 91%). Refer to Map 2 below for an overview of the varying numbers of returnee households who are in low-employment areas across districts.

²⁵ UN Habitat (2016). *City Profile of Mosul: Multi-Sector Assessment of a City Under Siege*. See: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UN-Habitat_MosulCityProfile_V5.pdf

²⁶ All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Return Index datasets (Rounds 11 and 14). See: IOM Iraq (December 2020 and December 2021). *Return Index Datasets: Rounds 11 and 14*. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex#Datasets>

Map 2: Number of returnee households in locations where there are challenges accessing employment, by district of return

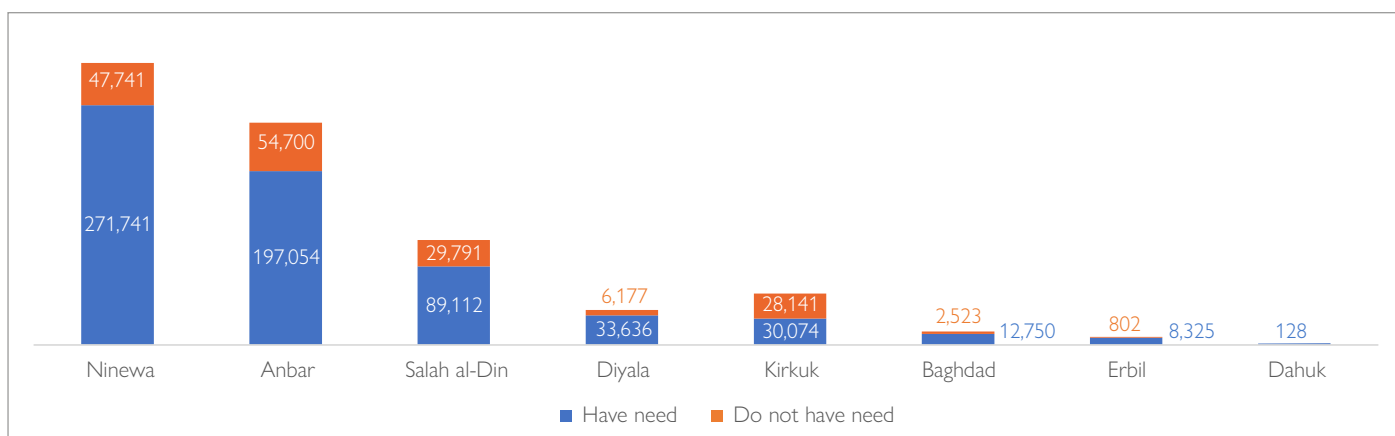


1.2 ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS AS A MAIN NEED²⁷

Challenges in accessing livelihoods and employment also represents one of the main needs of returnees. Nationally, a total of 642,820 returnee households – 79 per cent of all those who have arrived home — are in

areas where access to such opportunities represents a main need. These returnee households are mainly spread between Ninewa (271,741; 85% of all in the governorate) as well as Anbar (197,054; 78%), while a significant number are also in Salah al-Din (89,112; 75%). Figure 6 below displays the number of returnees reported as having this need in each governorate of return.

Figure 6: Number of returnee households in locations where access to employment/livelihoods is a main need, by governorate



Notably, access to employment and livelihoods opportunities is the main need of all returnees nationally (79% of families) – and is faced at significantly higher rates than the rehabilitation/construction of infrastructure and services (49%), as well as health and non-food items (both 39%). As displayed below, access to livelihoods and employment opportunities is also reported as the main need in most governorates of return. The type

of need was reported at especially high rates in the governorates of Dahuk (100% of families),²⁸ Erbil (91%), Ninewa (85%), and Baghdad (83%). Kirkuk is the only governorate with a more pressing need, with 62 per cent of returnee families in areas where access to drinking water is critically low, while 52 per cent need access to employment and livelihoods.

²⁷ All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Integration Location Assessments (Rounds 6 and 5). See: IOM Iraq (2021 and 2020). Integrated Location Assessments 5 and 6. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex#Datasets>

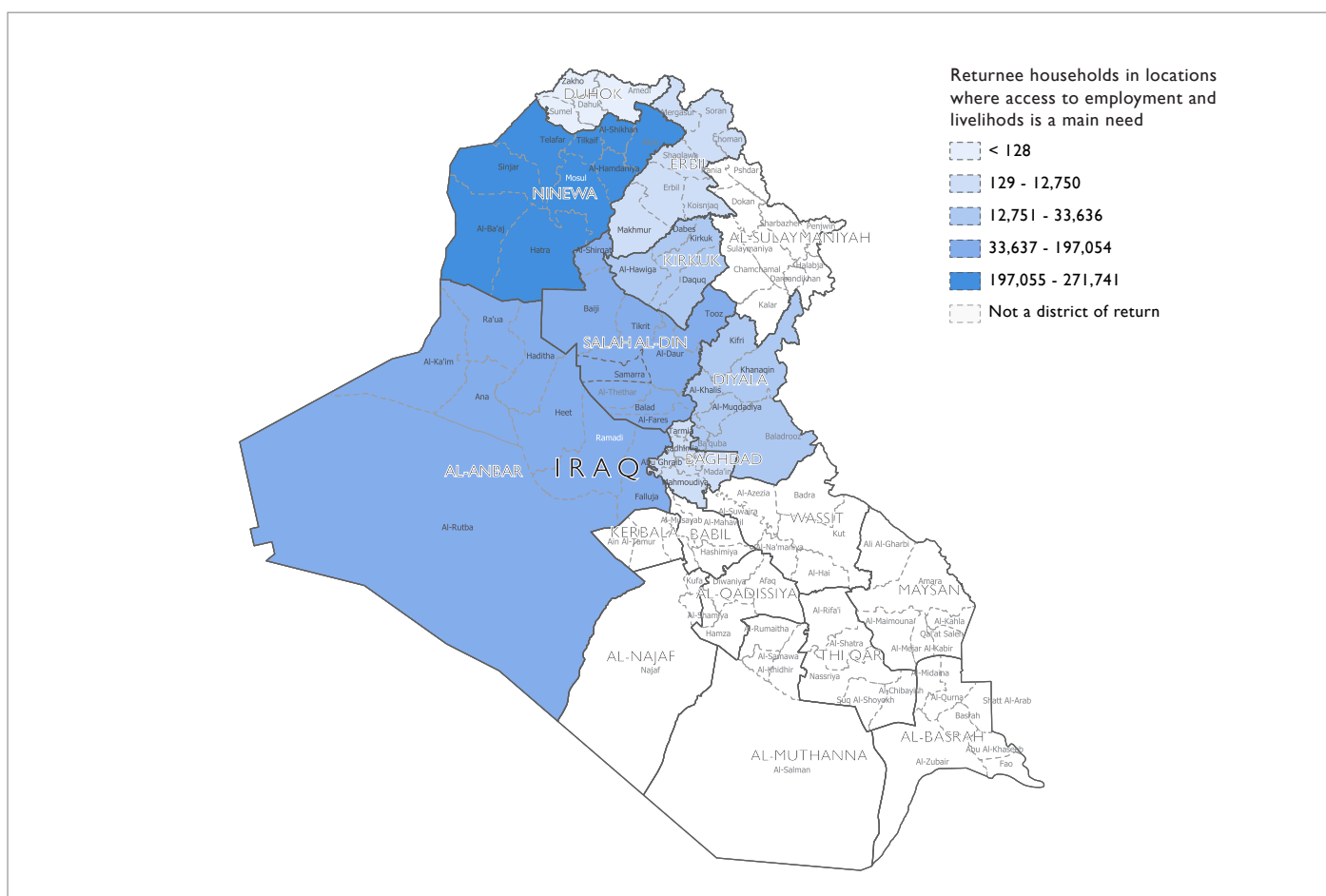
²⁸ Note that only a small number of returnee households (128) are in the governorate of Dahuk.

Figure 7: Number of returnee households in locations where access to employment/livelihoods is a main need, compared with other needs, by governorate²⁹

	ANBAR	BAGHDAD	DAHUK	DIYALA	ERBIL	KIRKUK	NINEWA	SALAH AL-DIN	NATIONAL
Employment/livelihood	78%	83%	100%	84%	91%	52%	85%	75%	79%
Rehabilitation/construction of infrastructure and services	45%	50%	0%	74%	15%	13%	54%	58%	49%
Health	50%	55%	100%	7%	26%	9%	39%	42%	39%
NFIs	57%	52%	0%	79%	71%	49%	22%	24%	39%
Drinking water	34%	12%	0%	36%	33%	62%	13%	18%	25%
Education	18%	14%	0%	6%	1%	12%	21%	17%	18%
Solutions for displacement-related rights violations	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	24%	37%	15%

The number of returnees in each governorate of return where access to employment and livelihoods is reported as a main need is also displayed in Map 3 below.

Map 3: Number of returnee households in locations where access to employment and livelihoods is a main reported need, by district of return



1.3 PRESENCE OF INOPERATIVE BUSINESSES³⁰

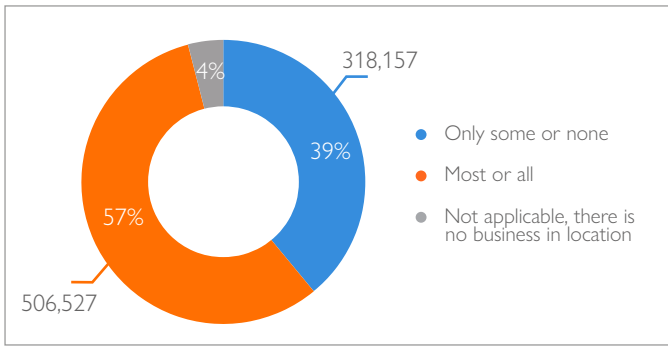
Another metric to understand reintegration challenges faced by returnees relates to the presence of inoperative businesses. Across all locations of return across the country, 318,157 households – 39 per cent of all who have returned – are in areas where only some or no businesses have re-opened following the defeat of ISIL. No significant changes have been recorded on this indicator between 2020 and 2021. The remaining

households are either in areas where most or all businesses are open (471,640; 57%), or where there are no businesses present (34,887; 4%). At governorate level, there is significant variation in the number of returnee families who are in locations where only some or none of the businesses are open. The highest number of returned families in such locations is in Anbar (110,648; 43% of all in the governorate), followed by Ninewa (88,739; 28%) and Salah al-Din (68,366; 56%).

²⁹ Respondents could select up to three different income sources. Therefore, answers do not equal 100%.

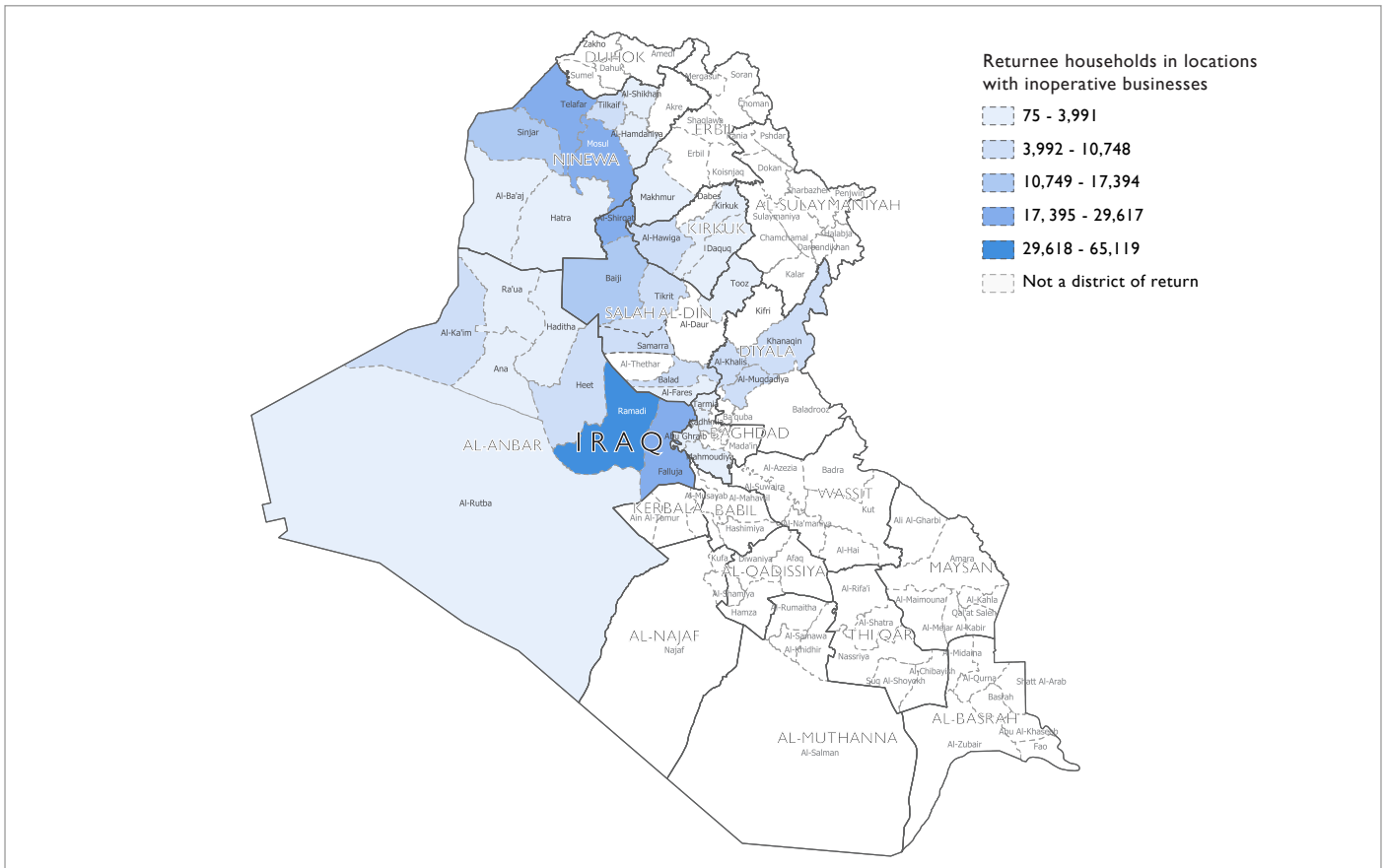
³⁰ All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Return Index datasets (Rounds 11 and 14). See: IOM Iraq (December 2020 and December 2021). Return Index Datasets: Rounds 11 and 14. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex#Datasets>

Figure 8: Number of returnee households in locations with inoperative businesses (only some or no operating businesses)



There is also a significant difference across districts of return. By far, the highest number of returnee households in locations with inoperative businesses is in Ramadi (65,119) in Anbar governorate, amounting to two thirds of all returned families in that district (65%). This is followed by Mosul district in Ninewa (29,617; 17%), Falluja (26,243 households; 28%) in Anbar, and Al-Shirqat in Salal-Din (24,900; 92%). Notably, almost all returned households in Al-Muqdadia in Diyala (9,631; 99%), and Al-Fares in Salah al-Din (2,165; 94%), have arrived in locations where only some or no businesses are operating. Map 4 below displays the varying number of returnee households who live in locations with this type of challenge.

Map 4: Number of returnee households in locations with inoperative businesses (only some or no operating businesses), by district of return



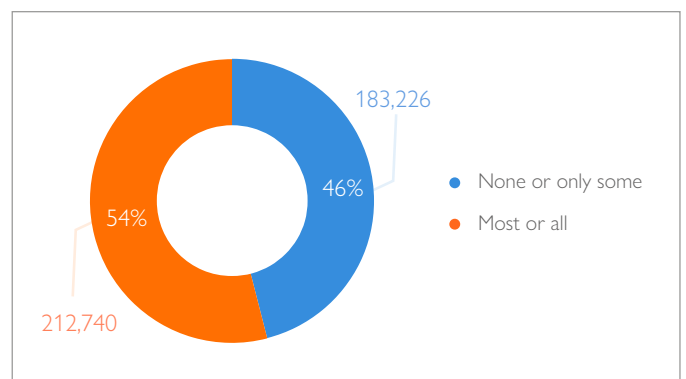
1.4 PRESENCE OF INOPERATIVE AGRICULTURE³¹

During the ISIL crisis, many communities who had relied on agricultural activities as a source of livelihoods fled from their homes. Agricultural areas operating in the livestock and produce industries were also targeted during insurgencies, with major destruction of farmland also taking place during the government-led military operations sought to re-take areas that had been held by ISIL.³² The impacts of the crisis on these vital industries continue to disadvantage communities in areas of return, with many who had previously worked in farms unable to find work, while also affecting supply chains and the wider community's access to fresh food in markets.

Amongst all returnee households nationally, just over half (427,997; 52%) live in areas where no agricultural practices take place. The remaining 396,687 households live in agricultural or livestock areas. In these areas, 183,226 households (46%) are in areas where only some or none of the activities are taking place at pre-ISIL crisis levels, while 212,740 households

(54%) are in areas where most or all activities are ongoing. No changes were recorded in the national rate of agricultural activities taking place between 2020 and 2021.

Figure 9: In agricultural areas, number returnee households in locations with inoperative agriculture (none or only some of the activities taking place)



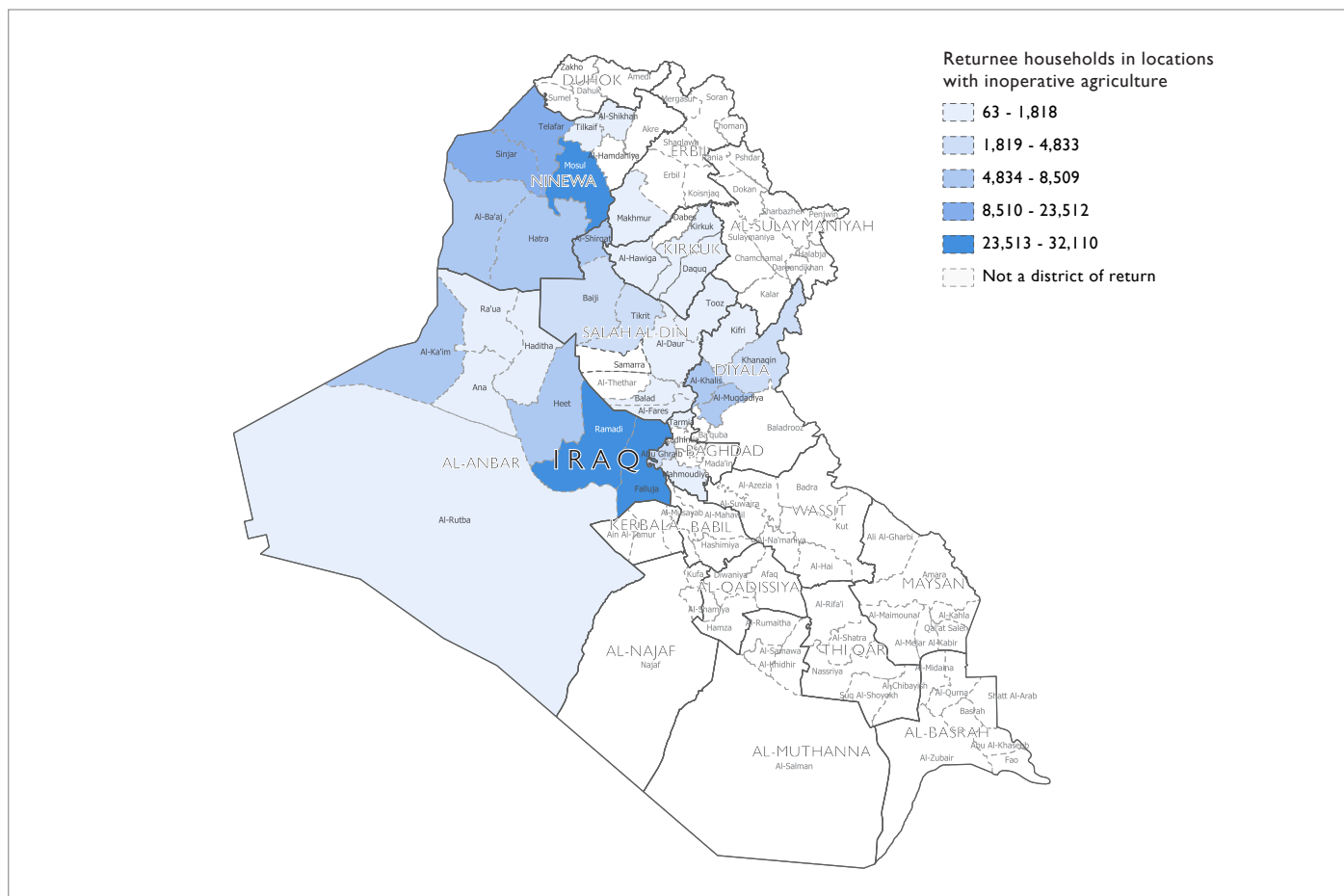
31 All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Return Index datasets (Rounds 11 and 14). See: IOM Iraq (December 2020 and December 2021). Return Index Datasets: Rounds 11 and 14. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex#Datasets>. In addition, in an IOM livelihoods assessment in ISIL-affected areas, 73% of Key Informants reported that their area is affected by climatic conditions such as the drought and high temperatures. See: IOM Iraq (2022). Labour Market Analysis Assessment in ISIL-affected areas.

32 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The Impact of ISIS on Iraq's Agricultural Sector. See: <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/impact-isis-iraq-s-agricultural-sector>

At governorate level, the highest number of returnee households with inoperative agricultural industries is in Ninewa (80,442), amounting to 48 per cent of all living in agricultural areas there. A significant number of these households are in Mosul district (32,110; 50% of all in agricultural areas). Notably, almost all returnee households in Sinjar district's agricultural areas (16,878; 99%) reside in locations where only some or no agricultural activities are taking place.

Additionally, in Anbar governorate, around two thirds of returnee households in agricultural areas live in locations with inoperative agricultural practices (59,129; 67%). These households are mainly in the districts of Ramadi (23,512; 80%) or Falluja (18,716; 48%). Map 3 below displays the varying number of returnee households in areas with inoperative agricultural practices.

Map 5: Number of returnee households in locations with inoperative agriculture (none or only some of the activities taking place), by district of return



2. ECONOMIC SECURITY

The sustainable reintegration of returnees in their area of origin is largely determined by type of income they receive, and the levels of economic activity across their community. As outlined in the EGRIS framework,³³ economic security is categorized separately from livelihoods and economic opportunity as it relates to the revenue sources that households rely on. Combined with limited opportunities for employment and livelihoods outlined in the previous section, understanding these issues provides a rounded understanding of economic conditions faced by families across areas of return in Iraq. This section presents information across key economic security indicators, including the main types of income sources, household levels of economic activity, as well as cases of households with insufficient funds for food, shelter and other basic needs.

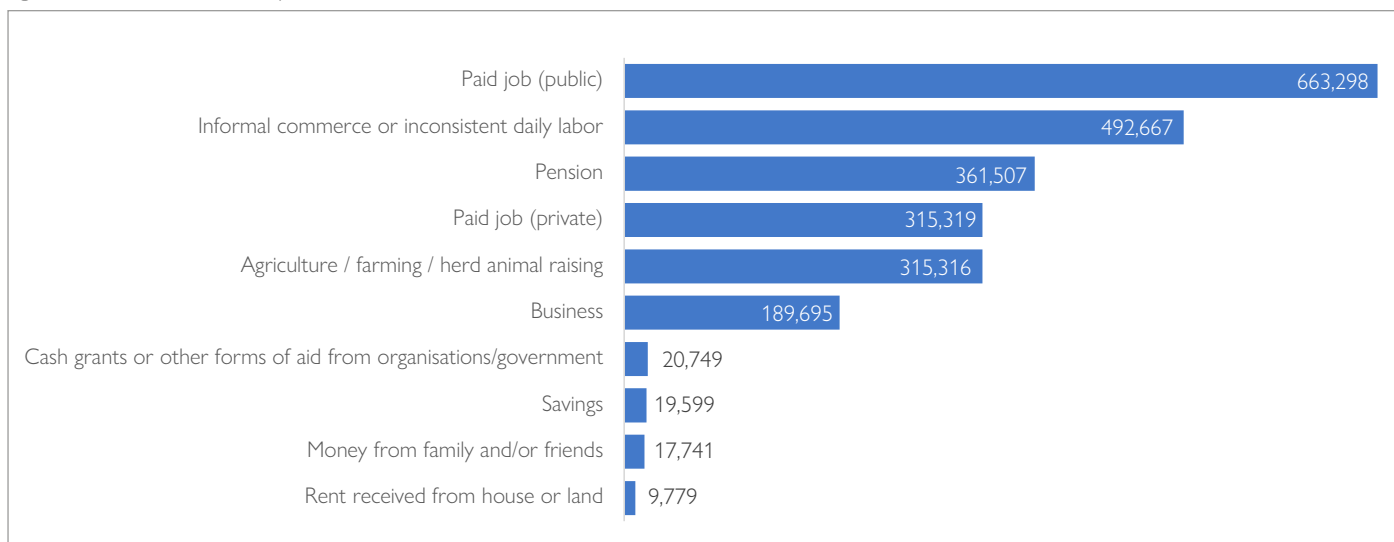
2.1 SOURCES OF INCOME³⁴

Across all locations of return, returnee households are in areas that have a high reliance on income from public sector employees (663,298 households; 82%). The next highest reported income source is through informal commerce or inconsistent daily labor (492,667; 61%), followed by the pension (361,507; 44%), while private sector employees (315,319; 39%) and agriculture (including farming and herding) is also a common source of income (315,316; 39%). No major differences were recorded between 2020 and 2021 on this indicator.

³³ Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (2020). *International Recommendations on IDP Statistics*. See: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/BG-item-3n-international-recommendations-on-IDP-statistics-E.pdf>

³⁴ All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Integration Location Assessments (Rounds 6 and 5). Note that for sources of income, Key informants could select more than one type, meaning results do not equal 100%. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex#Datasets>

Figure 10: Number of returnees by main sources of income in return locations³⁵



A notable variation can be observed in the types of income sources that returnees reportedly rely on across the eight governorates of return. For example, the proportion of returnee households in areas where public sector income is relied upon ranges from 51 per cent in Erbil governorate to 100 per cent in Dahuk governorate.³⁶ An even greater spread can be observed in terms of the proportion of returned households in areas where informal commerce or inconsistency daily labor is a common income source, ranging from no households in Dahuk to 86 and 89 per

cent in Kirkuk and Diyala, respectively. Otherwise, while no returnee households in Baghdad rely on the pension, around two in three (64%) in Erbil are in areas where it represents a common income source.

Notably, in the governorate of Ninewa – which sustained the most significant damage during the ISIL crisis – only 18 per cent of returnee households are in areas where the community is commonly employed in businesses, which is around half the national rate (39%).

Figure 11: Returnee households by main sources of income in return locations, by governorate³⁷

	ANBAR	BAGHDAD	DAHUK	DIYALA	ERBIL	KIRKUK	NINEWA	SALAH AL-DIN	NATIONAL
Paid job (public)	86%	52%	100%	64%	51%	70%	84%	84%	82%
Informal commerce or inconsistent daily labor	39%	44%	0%	89%	79%	86%	72%	53%	61%
Pension	41%	0%	0%	34%	64%	36%	50%	48%	44%
Paid job (private)	72%	31%	100%	21%	26%	42%	18%	31%	39%
Agriculture/farming/livestock	30%	83%	100%	47%	38%	38%	40%	46%	39%
Business	26%	31%	0%	19%	13%	24%	21%	24%	23%
Cash grants or other forms of aid from organisations/government	0%	7%	0%	12%	0%	0%	4%	1%	3%
Savings	1%	3%	0%	6%	2%	0%	2%	6%	2%
Money from family and/or friends	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	4%	2%	2%
Rent received from house or land	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%	1%

2.2 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY³⁸

Another indicator relates to return areas where most households are economically active. Nationally, one in two returnee households (404,363; 50%) are in economically active areas. None of the small number of returnee households in Dahuk are in such areas, while the 152,099 households in Anbar (60%) and 122,008 households in Ninewa (38%) are surrounded by economic activity. Between 2020 and 2021, a minor

percentage point increase was recorded of returnee households in economically active areas (46% to 50%). However, as displayed below, these increases are largely due to significant rises within two governorates of return: Baghdad (12% to 29%) and Diyala (16% to 27%). These proportional increases were partially offset by a decline in the proportion of returnees in Erbil (93% to 56%), bearing in mind only 10,117 households have returned back to that governorate.

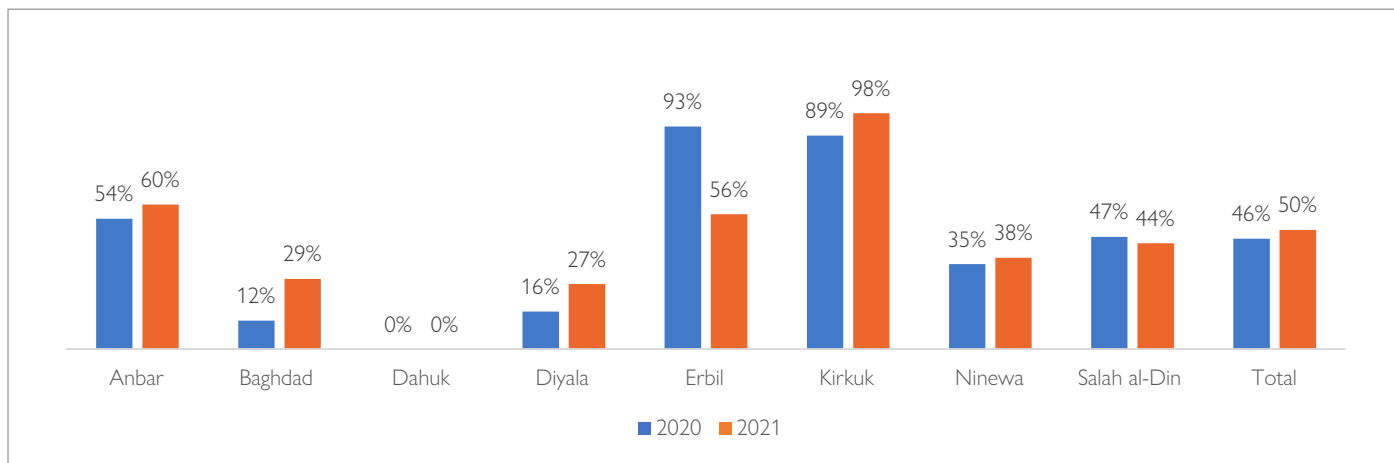
³⁵ Key Informants could select up to three different income sources. Therefore, answers do not equal 100%.

³⁶ Note that only a small number of returnee households (128) are in the governorate of Dahuk.

³⁷ Key Informants could select up to three different income sources. Therefore, answers do not equal 100%.

³⁸ All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Integration Location Assessments (Rounds 6 and 5). See: IOM Iraq (2021 and 2020). Integrated Location Assessments 5 and 6. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex#Datasets>

Figure 12: Proportion of returnee households in locations where the majority are economically active, by governorate



2.3 INSUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR FOOD, SHELTER OR OTHER BASIC NEEDS³⁹

The final indicator refers to cases where returnee households do not have sufficient funds to purchase food, shelter, or other basic needs, thereby representing a barrier to the advancement towards dignified and sustainable reintegration. Amongst all returnee households, six per cent of returnee households (42,895) are in communities where above 40 per cent of residents cannot afford to meet basic needs. A further 271,444 households (33%) are in areas where between 10 and 40 per cent of households cannot afford basic needs, while the remaining 498,356 (61%) are in locations where families rarely face this level of economic hardship.

As displayed below, the highest rate of returnees in areas where above 60 per cent cannot afford food, shelter or basic items is in Diyala governorate (10,880 households; 27%). Additionally, high rates of households in Kirkuk (27,007; 46%) and Erbil (3,920; 43%) are in return locations where some households cannot afford essential items. Notably, despite sustaining major destruction to private and public industries during the ISIL crisis, the majority of returnee households in Ninewa are in areas where a few (67,032; 21%), very few (133,404; 42%) or none (93,766; 29%) of the community are unable to afford basic items.

Figure 13: Returnee households in locations by proportion of the community who have sufficient funds to meet basic needs, by governorate

	ANBAR	BAGHDAD	DAHUK	DIYALA	ERBIL	KIRKUK	NINEWA	SALAH AL-DIN	NATIONAL
None (0%)	31%	9%	100%	17%	8%	15%	29%	12%	25%
Very few (1%-10%)	41%	43%	0%	20%	28%	36%	42%	16%	36%
A few (11%-25%)	17%	27%	0%	12%	21%	2%	21%	42%	21%
Some (26%-40%)	2%	17%	0%	6%	43%	46%	8%	28%	12%
Around half (41%-60%)	5%	3%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%
The majority (61-100%)	4%	0%	0%	27%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%

³⁹ All information presented in this section is derived from DTM's Integration Location Assessments (Round 6). Note that the question asked to Key informants referred to households' inability to afford basic items in the three months prior to data collection, which took place in July 2022. See: IOM Iraq (2021 and 2020). Integrated Location Assessments 5 and 6. See: <https://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex#Datasets>

CONCLUSION

During the ISIL crisis (2014-2017), around one million Iraq families became displaced across the country's north and central regions. Between April 2014 and December 2021, 80 per cent of all who became displaced – have returned home. As these families undergo the process of reintegrating into their area of origin, they face significant challenges in accessing opportunities for livelihoods and economic security.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As this report has highlighted, in line with the EGRIS framework for returnee reintegration, these challenges can be categorized as 1) livelihoods and employment, and 2) economic security. Annex 1 displays the figures for each of the indicators from 2020 and 2021. A summary of key findings under these two categories, and each of their sub-categories, is detailed below.

LIVELIHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT

- The aftermath of the widespread destruction of commercial activity centers such as markets, as well as industrial and agricultural areas, poses major challenges to returnee families in re-gaining opportunities for livelihoods and employment.
- Concerningly, 65 per cent of all returnee households are in areas where under half of the community can find employment.
 - Returnee households in Ninewa and Anbar are most likely to be in areas facing this challenge of low employment levels, making up 68 and 77 per cent of returnees in each governorate.
 - At district level, the highest rate of returnee households in areas with low employment levels can be found in Ninewa's Mosul district, at 64 per cent of all in the district. Notably, at least 96 per cent of all returned households face this challenge in the districts of Telfar, Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj in Ninewa, as well as Khanaqin in Diyala.
- Otherwise, amongst all returnees nationally, 79 per cent are in areas where access to opportunities for livelihoods and economic opportunities represents a main need. This challenge is reported at much higher levels than other persistent issues such as the rehabilitation of infrastructure and services (49%), as well as health and access to non-food items (both 39%).
 - As with the previous indicator, returnee households facing this issue are mainly in Ninewa and Anbar, with 85 and 78 per cent of households in these governorates confronted with this problem.
 - Notably, access to livelihoods and employment opportunities represents the most pressing need in most governorates of return. Kirkuk is the only exception, where drinking water is the most prevalent need.

- Additionally, the presence of inoperative businesses or agriculture activities also is a major concern, especially in some governorates.
 - Thirty-nine per cent of all returned households are in areas where only some or no businesses have opened following the government's declaration of defeat over ISIL in 2017.
 - Governorates of return that lack small businesses include Salah al-Din, Anbar and Ninewa - with respectively 56 per cent, 43 per cent and 28 per cent of all returned families living in locations that face this type of economic pressure.
 - In agricultural areas, just under half of all returnee households (46%) live in areas where none or only some agricultural activity is occurring at pre-2014 levels. A concerning high rate of households in agricultural areas in Ninewa Governorate (48%) face this issue, especially in the districts of Mosul (50%) and Sinjar (99%).

ECONOMIC SECURITY

- Notably, 82 per cent of all returnee households are in locations where income from the public sector is the primary source of income. The next highest source includes inconsistent daily labor (61%), followed by the pension (44%). A smaller proportion of returnee households are in areas with a strong reliance on private sector employment or agriculture including farming and herding (both 39%).
 - However, income sources vary geographically. Rates of returnee households in areas reliant on public sector income range from 51 per cent in Erbil to 86 per cent in Anbar,⁴⁰ while between 39 per cent in Anbar and 89 per cent in Diyala are in locations with levels of informal commercial activity or daily labor taking place.⁴¹
- In addition, one in two returnee households (50%) are living in neighborhoods or villages with high levels of economic activity – that is, where most of the community are economically active.
 - Unlike most other indicators, changes in the levels of economic activity were recorded in the year up to July 2021: the proportion of returned households in economically active areas jumped in Baghdad (12% to 29%) as well as Diyala (16% to 27%), although it fell in Erbil (93% to 56%).
- Finally, six per cent of returnee households are in areas where more than 40 per cent of the community do not have sufficient funds to meet basic needs such as food or shelter.
 - Additionally, high rates of households in Kirkuk (27,007; 46%) and Erbil (3,920; 43%) are in return locations where some households cannot afford essential items.

⁴⁰ Note that 100% of returnee households in Dahuk are in areas that are heavily reliant on public sector income. However, only 128 households have returned there, representing the smallest number of all returned households across the eight governorates of return across the country.

⁴¹ Similar to the above, 0% of returnee households in Dahuk are in areas that are heavily reliant on informal commerce or daily labor. However, only 128 households have returned there.

MINIMAL CHANGES TO LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY OVER TIME

As noted throughout each section of this report, very few changes can be observed across the presented indicators relating to opportunities for livelihoods and economic security between 2020 and 2021. In fact, the highest percentage point increase was recorded on the indicator related to the proportion of households who are living in communities with high levels of economic activity, which jumped from 46 per cent (2020) to 50 per cent (2021). Refer to Annex 1 for an overview of national level changes during this period.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FILLING INFORMATION GAPS

As demonstrated throughout this report, challenges in accessing opportunities for livelihoods and economic security represent some of the most significant barriers to the sustainable reintegration amongst returnee families across the country.

This report has provided a comprehensive overview of the types of challenges that Iraqi returnees face in accessing opportunities for livelihoods

and economic security, in line with the corresponding criteria in the EGRIS framework for returnee reintegration. This report complements previously-published reports on [reintegration in Iraq](#), as well as two other criteria – [housing, land and property](#), and [safety, security and social relations](#). To continue strengthening the evidence base for returnee reintegration in Iraq, further research is recommended to be conducted into the other barriers that are faced. This can be achieved by examining further reintegration issues in line with the remaining EGRIS criteria, especially:

- Property restitution and compensation; and
- Documentation.

Further research into these other EGRIS criteria would complement the growing body of research related to sustainable reintegration in Iraq. In addition, research that enables comparative analysis of vulnerabilities between returnees and those who remained during the ISIL conflict, as well as between IDPs and host communities in third locations, would assist informing durable solutions strategy in the fifth year since the Government of Iraq declared defeat over ISIL and beyond.

Summary Table: EGRIS Reintegration Framework Criteria 2 – Livelihoods and Economic Security, 2020 vs. 2021

Sub-Criteria	2020	2021	Source
1.1 Livelihoods and employment			
% returnee households in locations where either none or less than half of the residents can find employment	65%	65%	Return Index 11 and 14
% of returnee households in locations where access to employment or livelihoods opportunities is a main need	71%	79%	Integrated Location Assessment 5 and 6
% returnee households in locations where none or only some businesses are open	39%	39%	Return Index 11 and 14
% of returnee households in locations where none or only some of the agricultural/livestock activities are taking place as prior to the ISIL crisis (as a subset of households in agricultural areas)	46%	46%	Return Index 11 and 14
1.2 Economic security			
% of returnee households in locations by main sources of income	Paid job (public)		Integrated Location Assessment 5 and 6
	80%	80%	
	Informal commerce or inconsistent daily labor		
	54%	61%	
	Pension		
	46%	46%	
	Paid job (private)		
	42%	39%	
	Agriculture / farming / herd animal raising		
	40%	39%	
	Agriculture / farming / herd animal raising		
	20%	23%	
	Money from family and/or friends		
	4%	2%	
	Cash grants or other forms of aid from organisations/government		
	3%	3%	
Savings			
1%	2%		
Rent received from house or land			
1%	1%		
% of returnee households in locations where the majority are economically active	46%	50%	Integrated Location Assessment 5 and 6
% of returnee households where at least 40% of families do not have sufficient funds for food, shelter or other basic needs	N/A	6%	Integrated Location Assessment 6

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