

# Affected Population

**Number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): 1,802,832**

**Number of Returnees: 4,165,320**  
 (as of 15 December 2018)



## Protection Monitoring\*\*

**55,489** families reached\*



\*The disaggregated figures indicate the number of households containing individuals from each age and gender group – including enrolment.

**71%** of families do not have access to a regular source of income\*\*\*

**24%** of families are missing civil documentation

\*\* The data reflects the number of households assessed from 1 January to 31 December, 2018

\*\*\* Regular source of income includes pension, employment in private and public sectors, and self-employment.

## LINKS

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# Highlights

- Around 1,400 families departed from camps and more than 2,300 families arrived in camps across Iraq in December. Many IDPs report they are unable to return due to security concerns and lack of shelter and livelihood opportunities.
- The closure of formal and informal camps across the country resulted in secondary displacement and premature returns.
- As part of the '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence' activities, UNHCR and partners organized awareness raising campaigns and workshops for IDPs, refugees, government officials, camp management and humanitarian workers.
- Capacity building initiatives were conducted with federal and local government officials to promote and enhance refugee and IDP protection.

# Displacement

Based on data provided by the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, 1,402 families departed camps across Iraq during December, while 2,325 families arrived in camps. Of these, 1,032 families were in secondary displacement.

According to assessments carried out by UNHCR and partners, IDP families continued to be displaced for various reasons. In Erbil, 23 families, including 15 female-headed households, sought shelter in camps due to lack of livelihood and high rents in their previous areas of displacement. Twelve families originally displaced in Baghdad and in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) moved to Habaniyah Tourist City (HTC) and Amriyat Al Fallujah (AAF) camps in Anbar Governorate due to the limited services and livelihood opportunities, and as a result of authorities' camp consolidation and closure plans. In Salah al-Din Governorate, three families originally from Shirqat District were displaced from east Shirqat to Basateen and Karama camps due to their inability to rehabilitate their houses and the lack of services and employment opportunities.

For many IDPs experiencing multiple and protracted displacement, the prospect of return remains tenuous. A report on intention surveys carried out across 14 governorates between July and August 2018 was released by REACH and the CCCM Cluster. Only 12 per cent of the households reported intending to return to their areas of origin within 12 months, with seven per cent intending to return within three months. The main reasons for not returning included damaged or destroyed houses, fear and trauma, lack of security forces in areas of return, and lack of livelihood/income generating opportunities.<sup>i</sup> Similar results were reported by partners conducting protection monitoring visits in Kirkuk Governorate where many families indicated that they do not plan to return in the near future. The families cited continued attacks by extremist groups, destruction of houses due to military operations,

construction of barracks inside villages by government-affiliated armed groups, and lack of livelihood opportunities and basic services. According to assessments carried out by partners in Mosul District, Ninewa, around 3,350 families displaced in Al Abour Village stated that they were unable to return due to the lack of basic services, destroyed houses, inter-communal concerns surrounding their return, and their difficult socio-economic situation.

## Collective Punishment

UNHCR continues to receive reports of collective punishment of IDP families who are perceived to be affiliated with extremists. In Ninewa, between 28 October and 6 December, UNHCR and partners identified 110 families (over 525 individuals) who were denied their right to return by local authorities due to allegations that their family members were affiliated with extremists. Moreover, in late December, it was reported that camp management in Jeddah camp confiscated civil status documents from families whose members allegedly were affiliated with extremists. Due to the lack of documents, the families' freedom of movement was restricted and they were unable to return to their areas of origin. In Erbil Governorate, three women originally from Mosul District reportedly left their areas of origin for the camps due to continued harassment by government-affiliated armed groups who did not allow them to remain due to allegations that their husband or son was affiliated with extremists.

## Camp Closure and Forced Eviction/Returns

On 3 December, government authorities closed Kilo 18 camp (Anbar Governorate) and started to relocate 161 IDP families to HTC camp. Many IDPs chose to prematurely return to their areas of origins as they did not want to relocate to another camp. As a result, 101 families returned to their areas of origin in Al-Qa'im, Ana, Heet, Ramadi, Rutba and Saqlawiyah in Anbar.

The activation of the government's plan to close parts of Bzebiz formal camp and informal settlements, also in Anbar, has led to secondary displacements and premature returns. In early December, government authorities relocated 178 families from Bzebiz formal camp to AAF camp despite the families' intentions to return to their areas of origin. In late December, government authorities relocated 210 families, the majority of whom were from western districts of Anbar, from informal settlements to formal camps in AAF and Bzebiz. Such action resulted in the premature return of approximately 240 families who preferred to return to their areas of origin rather than to be relocated to formal camps.

Authorities announced they will begin closing Nazrawa camp in Kirkuk District in January 2019. As such, on 24 December, UNHCR and partners assessed the relocation preferences of residents in the camp. A significant segment of the population indicated their preference to stay in the camp or return to their areas of origin rather than move to another camp. UNHCR and partners will continue to closely monitor the situation.

On 19 December, in Salah al-Din Governorate, Balad Police demanded IDP families residing in Balad train station return to Refeaat village despite the families' unwillingness to return due to lack of livelihood opportunities and basic services.

In Sulaymaniyah, families reported that mandatory return of government employees, economic hardship in the area of displacement, and the possible confiscation of land and property had influenced their decision to return recently. In addition, many families reported school closures and shortage of teachers and premises in areas of displacement were also a factor that influenced their decision to return.

## Returns from Syria and Turkey

UNHCR received several reports of Iraqi refugee returns from Syria over the course of December. On 14 December, 459 individuals arrived at Hammam Al Alil Transit Site (HAATS) after returning to Iraq

from Al-Hol camp in Syria. The Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) organized the returns, and camp management registered and provided the families with non-food items, hot meals and medical support upon arrival. According to camp management, the returnees were originally from Anbar, Baghdad, Ninewa, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din governorates. On 15 December, 210 individuals arrived at Ibrahim Khalil Border Crossing Point (IK-BCP) in Duhok upon return from Azaz, Syria. On 18 December, 114 individuals arrived at the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing point (IK-BCP) upon return from Azaz, Syria. Both returns from Azaz were also organized by MoMD.

UNHCR also received reports of Iraqi refugee returns from Turkey, notably 90 individuals returned on 15 December and eight individuals returned on 18 December through IK-BCP through a self-organized return.

## Response by UNHCR and Partners

- As part of the ‘16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence’ activities, UNHCR and protection partners launched awareness campaigns in and out of camps across the country. The main objective of the campaign was to engage the community in galvanizing actions to end violence against women and girls. Activities included seminars, art exhibitions, cultural dances, songs and dramas which called for the prevention and elimination of sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, UNHCR and partners organized workshops for government officials, camp management and humanitarian aid workers on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- UNHCR and partners engaged in capacity building workshops for government officials in various areas across the country. On 3 and 4 December, UNHCR conducted a workshop for Peshmerga officers in Duhok on the rights and obligations of persons of concern in accordance with international human rights standards. On 12 December, UNHCR hosted a capacity building session on humanitarian and protection principles in Kirkuk for local government staff and key interlocutors who work with IDPs. On 27 December, UNHCR and partners conducted a workshop for judges in Duhok and Ninewa to enhance the cooperation between UNHCR and the judiciary to promote the protection of refugees and IDPs.
- UNHCR and partners are working to improve access to quality education for refugee and IDP children and youth. In Erbil, UNHCR and partners monitored the enrolment and performance of refugee students in 28 refugee and Arabic schools. There are 1,254 Syrian students attending secondary schools, 11,962 children attending primary schools, and no reports of drop-outs. In Sulaymaniyah, UNHCR and partners completed rehabilitation of laboratories and libraries for four refugee schools, and provided capacity building training on leadership and management skills for headmasters of refugee schools and Directorate of Education staffs. UNHCR and partners also provided trainings on tailoring, maintenance and barbering for IDPs as well as language courses and life skill trainings for refugees. In Baghdad, UNHCR and partners provided scholarships to 14 Palestinian students in primary and secondary schools and transportation grants to 12 refugee students.
- As part of the winterization programme, UNHCR, through local telecommunication companies, conducted cash for winter registration events in Erbil, Duhok, and Sulaymaniyah governorates covering refugees and IDPs in camps and non-camp areas. Each family received a SIM card during the event and created a digital wallet for future money transfer.

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<sup>i</sup> REACH Initiatives and CCCM Cluster, National Level Movement Intentions of IDP Households, November 2018, available at: <http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/iraq/irqfactsheetintentionsnationalaugust2018>