



Situation and Needs Monitoring – Report #1

IRAQ INTER-CLUSTER COORDINATION GROUP

This analysis, produced by the Iraq Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), is the first situation and needs monitoring report and summarizes key trends and changes in the humanitarian situation and evolution of needs between January and May 2021 based on available data.

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INTER-CLUSTER OVERVIEW

The inter-cluster overview is prepared based on key inter-sectoral indicators discussed and agreed by the ICCG, for which trends and original data sources are presented in the online dashboard [here](#).

Overview

During the first five months of 2021, Iraq witnessed no major shocks which could have significantly impacted the scale or scope of humanitarian needs in the country. However, the effects of camp closures and COVID-19, which at the time of the development of the 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) were still ongoing and yet to be fully assessed, are now better understood, and have to some degree stabilized. In addition, the Iraqi currency devaluation and dry weather conditions are being monitored for potential humanitarian impact.

The government-led camp closures between October 2020 and January 2021 have had an impact on the scale and scope of humanitarian needs. Most notably, the need for camp services has been reduced significantly, with the closure or consolidation of all but two camps in federal Iraq. As people left camps and ended up in either out-of-camp displacement locations or in areas of return, many of which were not yet ready to sustain significant returns, their humanitarian needs have shifted and, in some cases, increased. This has manifested in increased exposure to protection risks of communities who left camps unexpectedly, some without core documentation; increased difficulty accessing some services, including health care, in out-of-camp locations, and limited livelihood opportunities in the new areas of displacement or return; as well as different shelter/NFI needs, with a slight increase in the number of people living in critical shelters in out-of-camp and return locations.

The economic impact of COVID-19, which led to large scale loss of livelihoods and income, was at its height during the time of data collection for the 2021 HNO. While the situation is ongoing and continued monitoring is paramount, indications are that the economic impact on some of the most vulnerable groups in Iraq, among them IDPs and returnees, has started to stabilize. Some of the temporary job-losses have been regained and food insecurity has started to improve and use of negative coping mechanisms to meet food needs has begun to decrease. Meanwhile, the devaluation of the local currency and the impact on local prices has the potential to impact humanitarian needs as well and is continuously being monitored by humanitarian partners, through the Cash Working Group (CWG). The initial increase in prices on basic commodities, included in the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) has since begun to stabilize, but remain higher than at the end of 2020. Should the price of the SMEB increase by more than 20 per cent of its current value, partners will consider adjusting the transfer value of multi-purpose cash interventions to avoid erosion of the purchasing power of those most vulnerable.

The dry weather conditions present another potential risk going forward, which could have destabilizing impact on already vulnerable communities, who rely on rainfed agriculture for their food and livelihood sources and who may not be able to absorb potential commodity price increases. If the situation continues, the dry weather and reduced water supplies could impact the food security, livelihoods, and access to water of already vulnerable populations, primarily of communities residing in Ninewa, Duhok, western Erbil, western Kirkuk and northern Salah Al-Din, which recorded up to 40 per cent below normal precipitation. According to FAO estimates, Ninewa could experience more than 70 per cent reduction in wheat production and almost complete loss in barley production, while areas in KRI could expect up to 50 per cent reduction in wheat production. In Diyala, Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din, the risk of severe water shortages is compounded by land disputes, competing claims on water and heavily damaged infrastructure from past conflicts.¹

In addition to food insecurity, the decrease in water supply could lead to increased cost of water, which in turn could lead to poorer hygiene practices with negative health outcomes. According to The Directorate of Health (DoH) in Sulaymaniyah, the number of diarrhea cases has tripled this year compared to the same period last year, largely due to poor sanitary conditions and limited access to clean water and sanitation. The DoH issued an alert check in early June 2021 about the increased risk of cholera particularly due to the water

¹ OCHA Iraq, Humanitarian Bulletin, May 2021, available online [here](#).

shortage.² Humanitarian partners are monitoring the situation, with a view to taking action should humanitarian needs manifest.

Overall, many of the contributing factors to humanitarian needs relate to progress on finding durable solutions to displaced communities, and therefore would require interventions in the medium- to long-term from other actors, including the government, as well as development and durable solutions actors. Other risks, which could increase the vulnerabilities of the IDP and returnee communities are to a large extent related to fragile livelihoods and income sources, which have a disproportionate impact on people who are already vulnerable and struggling to meet their basic needs and access basic evidence, as the impact of COVID-19 demonstrated in 2020.

Context and displacement situation

The overall number of IDPs (in-camp and out-of-camp) decreased between the end of December 2020 and the end of April 2021 by approximately 25,000 people. As of the end of April 2021, IOM-DTM estimated that some 1,198,940 IDPs lived in 2,864 locations across Iraq compared to 1,224,108 IDPs in 2,937 locations end of 2020.³ During the same time, the overall number of returnees increased by 35,000 people. As of 30 April 2021, DTM estimated that 4,867,050 returnees lived in 2,156 locations compared to 4,831,566 returnees who lived in 2,121 locations at the end of 2020.⁴

On a daily basis, displaced and returning families try to make decisions on whether to return to the locations of origin, stay in the location of displacement or move to a new location. These household-level or individual choices and subsequent actions are dynamic, and therefore all figures should be considered indicative, subject to variation.

Figure 1. Overall population movement over time



Source: IOM-DTM, [IDPs and Returnees Master List](#)

IDPs in camps

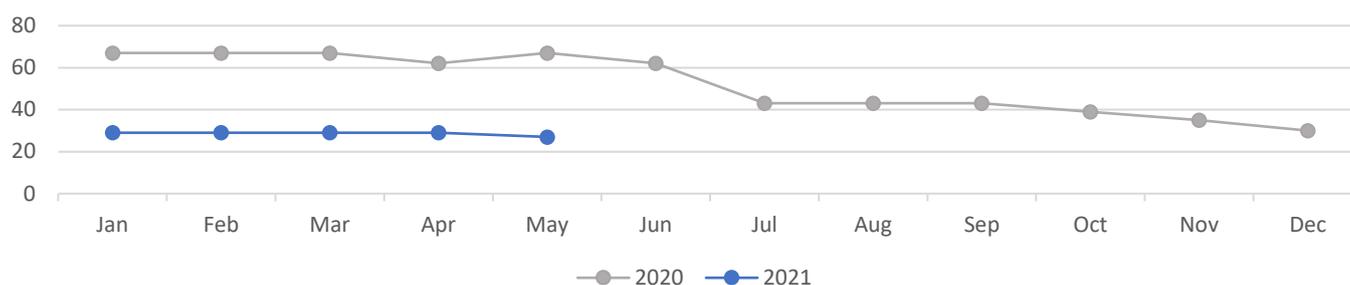
There are currently 27 formal camps for IDPs open compared to 67 IDP camps one year ago in May 2020. Most of the 40 IDP camps closed or consolidated in less than six months, with a third closing unexpectedly between October 2020 and mid-January 2021. The closure of Al-Salamiyah camp in Ninewa Governorate on 12 January 2021 was the most recent camp closure and the only camp to close during the reporting period. Two other formal camps in Baghdad hosting less than 200 people have been reclassified as informal sites during the reporting period.

² For more information, please consult the OCHA Iraq, Humanitarian Bulletin, May 2021, online [here](#).

³ IOM-DTM defines the location as an area that corresponds either to a village for rural areas or a neighbourhood for urban areas (i.e. fourth official administrative division). More on the methodology [here](#).

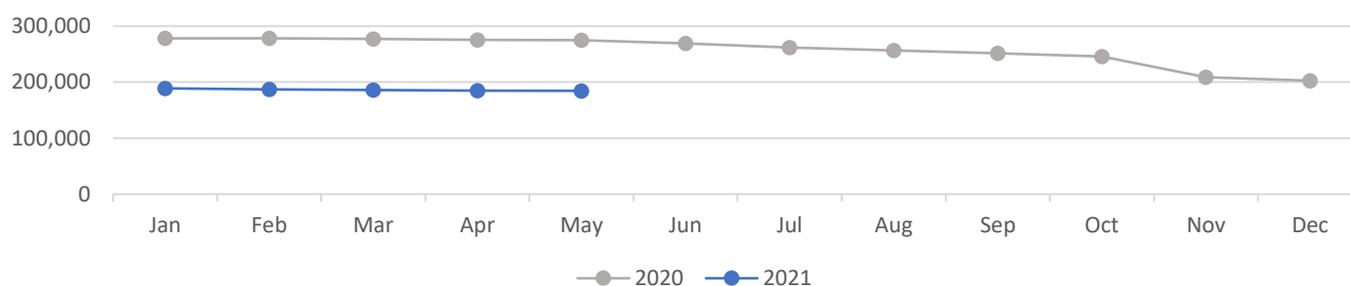
⁴ IOM-DTM IDPs and Returnees Master List, Round 119, December 2020; Round 120, February 2021; and Round 121, May 2021, available [here](#).

Figure 2. Number of IDP camps

Source: CCCM Cluster, [Master List](#)

As of May 2021, around 184,000 people lived in the 27 IDP camps in Iraq. Among them, 175,000 IDPs in 25 camps in areas administered by KRI (a decrease of around 5,000 people from January 2021) and 9,000 IDPs in two camps in Federal Iraq (a decrease of around 3,000 people from January 2021).⁵

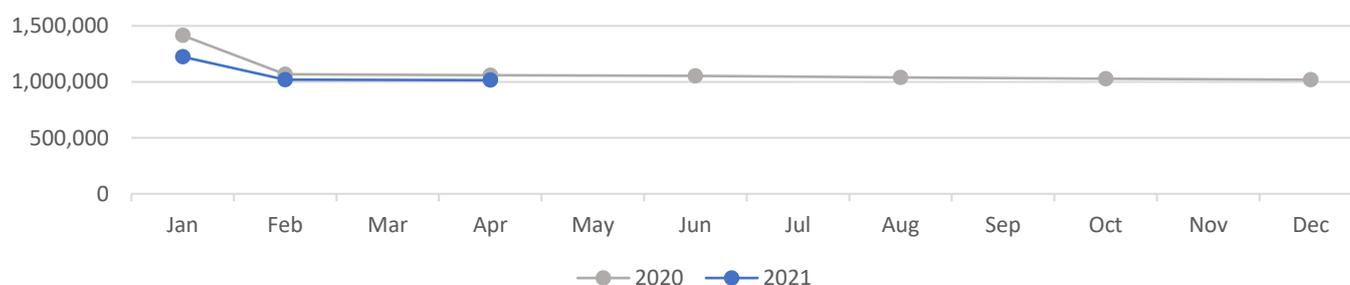
Figure 3. Number of in-camp IDPs (individuals)

Source: CCCM Cluster, [Master List](#)

Out-of-camp IDPs

As of May 2021, around one million people continued to be displaced and live outside of camps. Over the years, there has been a gradual and slow decline in the size of the population remaining in displacement in out-of-camp locations. While the trend continued in the first half of 2021, the extent of the decrease was notably smaller in the first half of the year. Since the beginning of the year, less than 3,500 people returned to their areas of origin, integrated with host communities in a new location or in their original displacement location. For perspective, the average in 2020 was approximately 5,500 people per month. This drop is likely to be partly attributable to COVID-19 Government-imposed movement restrictions at the beginning of 2021, a situation that was visible also in 2020 after the start of the pandemic.

Figure 4. Number of IDPs outside of camps (individuals)

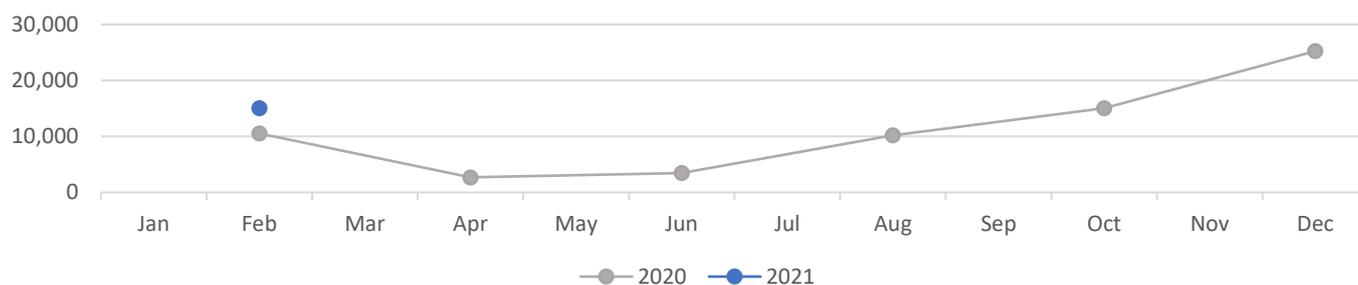
Source: IOM-DTM, [IDPs and Returnees Master List](#)

⁵ CCCM Cluster, Camp Population Flow as of May 2020, January 2021, April 2021, and May 2021.

One of the consequences of the sudden camp closures was the increase in the number of people displaced in some out-of-camp locations, including an increase in the number of informal sites. The number of newly and secondarily displaced people also increased in the second half of 2020, possibly also linked to the camp closures.

While some of these trends continued in 2021, some have changed course. The number of newly and secondarily displaced people decreased from a high of 25,000 people in December 2020 to 15,000 in February 2021 and 8,000 in April 2021, a return to levels pre-camp closures. Moreover, there have been increased reports of people returning to camps to seek re-admission because of return endeavors that were not successful.

Figure 5. Number of new and secondary displacements (individuals)

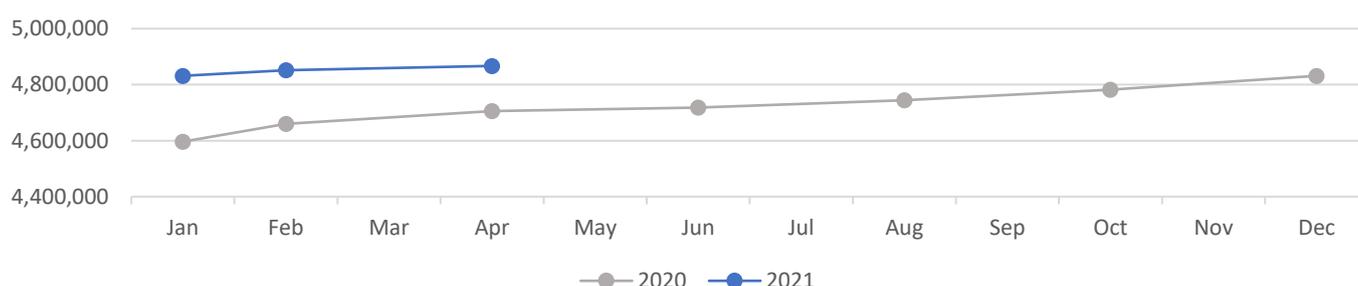


Source: IOM-DTM, [IDPs and Returnees Master List](#)

Returnees

Sudden camp closures have also generated some spikes in the number of returns throughout the second half of 2020, although not all of these returns were sustainable as shown by the increase in the numbers of newly and secondarily displaced people during the same period. Moreover, while people continued to return to their areas of origin, the pace of the return was slowing down. There were fewer returns recorded between March and April (15,234 people) compared to the January to February period (20,250 people), and even fewer when compared to the November to December 2020 period (49,152 people). These are some of the lowest monthly return rates since 2015. Some of this is potentially attributable to the spikes in returns at the end of 2020 due to camp closures, but also COVID-19 movement restrictions during the first months of 2021.⁶

Figure 6. Number of returnees (individuals)



Source: IOM-DTM, [IDPs and Returnees Master List](#)

Protection environment and evolution of basic needs

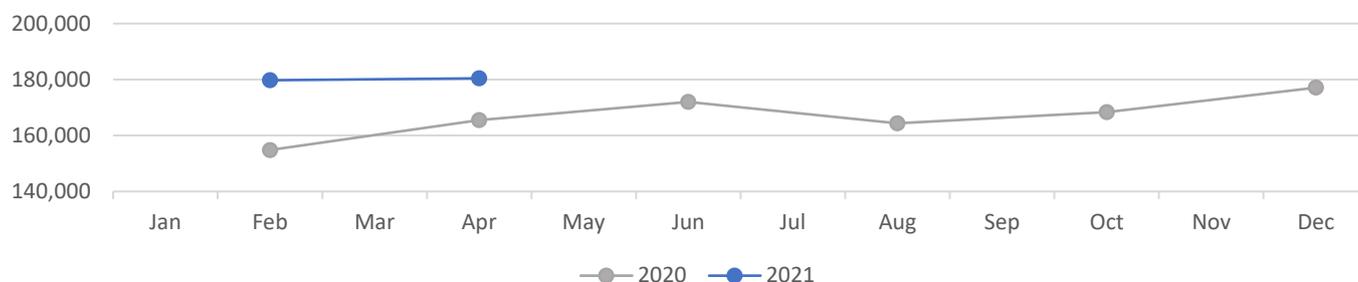
Critical shelter

Since August 2020, there has been a steady increase in the number of IDPs and returnees living in critical shelter, possibly linked with the sudden departures from closing camps and inability of many to find immediate shelter solutions.

⁶ IOM-DTM IDPs and Returnees Master List, Round 119, December 2020; Round 120, February 2021; and Round 121, April 2021, available [here](#)

Overall, the number of returnees living in critical shelter increased from 164,000 people in August 2020 to 180,000 people in April.⁷ While more returnees ended up in critical shelter in this period, the rate of increase has visibly reduced over the last six months with 8,800 additional returnees found in critical shelter as of end of December 2020, 2,600 people as of end of February and 700 people as of end of April. This could be an indication that the impact of the camp closures has started to diminish, but it can also reflect the fact that lower levels of returns were recorded during the months of January to May.

Figure 7. Number of returnees in critical shelter

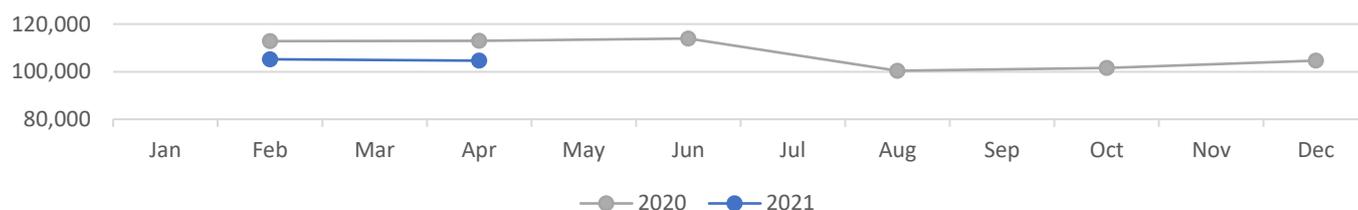


Source: IOM-DTM, [IDPs and Returnees Master List](#)

Among the internally displaced people outside of camp, minimal increases in number of people living in critical shelter were noted until the end of February 2021. However, over the period March-April 2021, the number of people ending up in critical shelter decreased by some 600 people. It is too early to evaluate if the decrease will be maintained over the next two-month period. As of the end of April 2021, some 104,622 IDPs were estimated to be living in critical shelters outside of camps, similar to findings in the 2021 HNO.

At the same time, data made available by the CCCM indicated that over 107,000 people were living in informal sites as of end of May. Informal sites are defined as places not built to accommodate people and where more than five households live together. While many of these informal sites present critical shelters, some of the sites are made up of mud brick houses which are not considered critical shelter.⁸ Examples of critical shelter most commonly found in Iraq are tents, unfinished and abandoned structures, make-shift shelter, and non-residential, public and religious buildings.

Figure 8. Number of IDPs in critical shelter



Source: IOM-DTM, [IDPs and Returnees Master List](#)

Protection risks and conditions in areas of return

Many of the people who remain in critical shelter do so because of the extensive shelter damage and protection-related risks and concerns (i.e. HLP issues and missing documentation, fear and trauma) related to their areas of origin. The protection monitoring done from December 2020 to January 2021 found that nearly half of the key informants interviewed perceived that some or most people in their communities faced issues obtaining civil documentation, with concerns being highest in Anbar (71 per cent), Ninewa (56 per

⁷ IOM-DTM IDPs and Returnees Master List, Round 117, August 2020; Round 118, October 2020; Round 119, December 2020; Round 120, February 2021; and Round 121, April 2021, available [here](#)

⁸ CCCM Cluster, Informal Sites Mapping, June 2021, available online [here](#).

cent) and Salah Al-Din (48 per cent), similar to findings in the period March to May 2021.⁹ Additionally, an estimated 15 per cent of households who departed camps at the end of 2020 reported at the time that they were missing civil documentation.¹⁰

Additionally, the percentage of people living in locations presenting severe conditions (related to livelihoods, basic services, safety perceptions and social cohesion) increased from 10 per cent in November-December 2020 to 11 per cent in March-April 2021 (512,034 returnees, 27,486 more than at the end of December), reflecting perhaps the unexpected increase in returns due to camp closures.¹¹

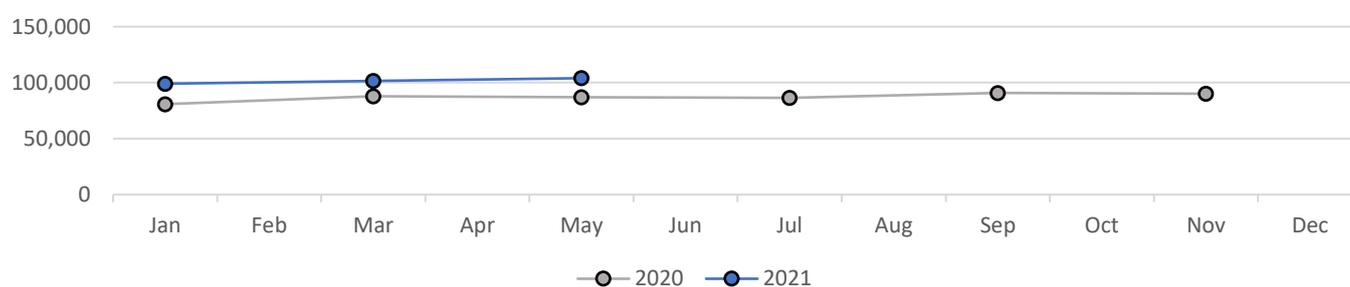
Food security, markets, and access to livelihoods

During the reporting period, some positive trends were also observed. These are primarily related to improved food consumption and less reliance on negative coping strategies to meet food needs among the general population of Iraq. The number of people across Iraq with insufficient food consumption more than halved, as estimates decreased from 3.3 million people in January to 1.6 million people with insufficient food consumption by the end of May 2021. The use of harmful coping strategies also decreased from 4.4 million in January 2021 to 2.9 million people in May 2021, potentially linked to the improved food security and stabilization of the acute impact of COVID-19 on loss of livelihoods and income. While national trends point to improvements in the overall food consumption patterns, there are significant variations at governorate levels, specifically Ninewa and Kirkuk governorates are presenting insufficient food consumption that is twice the national average according to FAO data.¹²

Food security remains a concern in 2021 for already vulnerable groups. The devaluation of the local currency, continued lack of employment, and most recently the dry weather conditions threatening agriculture-based livelihoods are compounding factors likely to put additional pressure on people who are internally displaced and vulnerable returnees.

In November 2020 the Cash Working Group (CWG) evaluated that the survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB)¹³ – the costs for the minimum group of items required to support a six-person Iraqi household including food shelter/NFI, water baskets and transportation/communications costs - was IQD 90,029. By mid-January 2021 the value of the basket had increased by 10 per cent (to IQD 99,037) due to the sudden devaluation of the local currency in December 2020 and continued to increase by another 5 per cent (to IQD 104,523) by mid-February 2021. As the currency started stabilizing at the end of February, the value of the basket also gradually started to decrease, and by April it had decreased by 6 per cent (IQD 97,856). Overall, as of April 2021 the value remained 8.7 per cent higher than at the end of 2020. This fluctuation of the cost of the SMEB has a direct impact on the population because cash transfer values were set in line with the average prices. As the local prices of the SMEB items increase, the purchasing power decreases, with people being able to access fewer products with the same amount of money.

Figure 9. Overall Survival Minimum Expenditure [common basket] (IQD)



Source: REACH Initiative, CWG, Joint Price Monitoring Initiative

⁹ National Protection Cluster, Protection Monitoring System (PMS), first quarter report, February 2021; and second quarter dashboard, May 2021. Report available online [here](#) and the dashboard available [here](#).

¹⁰ Idem.

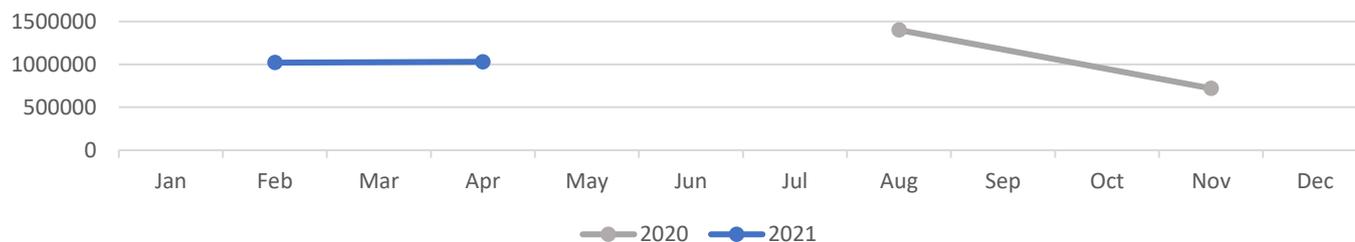
¹¹ IOM-DTM Return Index, Round 12, May 2021, available online [here](#).

¹² FSC, ELC and WASH analysis on seasonal perspectives, 10 June 2021.

¹³ The Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) represents the minimum culturally adjusted group of items required to support a six-person Iraqi household for one month, as defined by the Cash Working Group.

Furthermore, CWG market analysis found that there was an increase in households reporting challenges to accessing markets. The percentage of respondents reporting having challenges accessing markets increased from 11.7 in October 2020 to 14.1 in May 2021, attributable in part to the fear of going out because of COVID-19, especially in the first quarter of 2021, when cases were rising.

Figure 10. No. households reporting challenges accessing markets



Source: Source: World Food Programme, *Weekly Snapshot*

When analyzing the issues for which people call the Iraq Information Centre, a majority of IDPs and returnees call in relation to loss of employment and affected livelihoods, scarcity of food, lack of cash (including to pay rent), lack of medical supplies and ambulances, and COVID-19 related distress. These have consistently been the top five issues raised so far in 2021 and remain consistent with the issues flagged in 2020.¹⁴

Access

Positive trends in access continued during the reporting period, although some challenges remained. Access focus group discussions have indicated a general improvement in district-level access conditions, with the percentage of districts, covered by the HRP, which have moderate to high levels of access challenges, decreasing from 47 per cent in October 2020 to 24 per cent in April 2021. The districts with the highest access restrictions (15 of 60) mostly fall within the central and northern governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah Al-Din. While access improved overall, there have been increasing reports of interference from civil and security actors in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.¹⁵

¹⁴ Iraq Information Center, the monthly dashboard available online [here](#) and the COVID-19 dashboard available online [here](#).

¹⁵ OCHA, Humanitarian Access Severity Mapping, April 2021, available online [here](#).

CLUSTER OVERVIEW

Cluster overviews were prepared by clusters based on cluster-specific key indicators and data sources available. The content was edited by OCHA for language and length.



Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

The humanitarian situation in camps and informal sites remains largely as described in the 2021 HNO during the reporting period.

As of May 2021, two IDP camps remain open in Federal Iraq and 25 IDP camps in KRI, a total of 27 camps compared to 29 IDP camps open in January. Latifya 1 & Latifya 2 camp in Baghdad were reclassified as informal sites in May 2021. The humanitarian situation in camps remains largely as described in the 2021 HNO, with humanitarian services required to support the 184,470 people (4,438 people less than in January 2021).

Around 37,842 individuals departed the KRI camps between June and December 2020 (an average of 5,200 individuals per month). In contrast, only 7,696 individuals departed KRI camps in the first five months of 2021 (an average of 1,500 people per month). Furthermore, a survey of 15 camps conducted in April 2021 highlighted that only one per cent of families have the intention to return to their areas of origin in the next 12 months (fear and trauma, damaged shelter, lack of livelihoods, lack of services, lack of security forces in their area of origin were commonly-cited reasons to not return).¹⁶

Over the same period, 1,729 individuals were recorded as arriving to the camps¹⁷. There have been three broad types of 'new arrivals' in 2021: (a) people arriving from camps that closed in Ninewa Governorate, (b) IDPs within Duhok governorate moving from urban areas into the camps, and (c) families who had returned to Sinjar and Baaj in 2020 returning to IDP camps in Duhok Governorate.

For informal sites, CCCM and IOM DTM identified a higher number of individuals living in informal sites compared to what was recorded in the 2021 HNO: 108,000 people in May 2021 compared to 104,000 in October 2020. Overall, 547 informal sites were identified in May 2021. Poor living conditions, insecure tenure, and risk of eviction, especially in small urban informal sites, along with limited coping mechanisms and access to stable income continue to be the reality for families living in informal sites. Gaps in humanitarian assistance, and inconsistency of assistance between sites, are similarly reported.

Key messages and recommended actions(s):

- In the short- to medium-term 36,620 families continue to need support and services while in displacement in the IDP camps considering the low intention to return.
- In the long term, humanitarian and other international actors should develop a common strategy to work more closely with displaced population in KRI and Federal Iraq camps to understand intentions, preferences and self-identified solutions to end their protracted displacement, while maintaining emergency humanitarian response capacity in case of sudden closure of the sites.
- CCCM presence in informal sites has reduced in 2021 due to lack of funding for some priority governorates (Duhok and Kirkuk in particular). Lack of funding for HLP actors is also a concern for the CCCM Cluster, given the high risk of eviction especially in small urban informal sites

¹⁶ REACH Initiative, In-Camp Intentions Survey Preliminary Findings, April 2021.

¹⁷ CCCM Cluster, Camp Population Flow, January 2021, April 2021, and May 2021.



Education

Access to education of IDP children leaving camps without adequate documentation has worsened, while lost or interrupted learning continued because of COVID-19 induced school closures.

Due to the closure of schools related to COVID-19, some 7,435,000 (3,208,617 girls and 4,227,079 boys) pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary children lost and/or interrupted usual learning in Iraq since the start of the pandemic. The lost learning needs must be recovered. As of May 2021, the cluster has reached 10,123 children which is 15 per cent of the 2021 target. Gaps remain in Rutba, Heet, Mahmoudiya, Kadhimia, Sumel, Zakho, Amedi, Erbil, Shaqlawa, Dabes, Daquq, Shikhan, Akre, Telafar, Hatra, Tikrit, Tooz, Balad, Kalar and Chamchamal districts. To access remote learning, teachers and students require capacity building and self-learning materials. Education cluster partners have been distributing tablets and the Government of Iraq requested the telecommunication companies to provide teachers and students with free of charge internet service. However, this service was unstable and could not be utilized by everyone. Cluster partners have been contracting Zain Iraq telecommunication company to provide free SIM cards, along with stable and free of charge internet service.

Another reason for not accessing schools refers to IDP and returnee children who continue to lack a legal identity and related civil documentation in 2021. Political and administrative hurdles actively impede children born under ISIL or having fled ISIL occupation to access documentation. More than 80,000 conflict-affected school-aged children are denied right to access formal education as a result. The camp closures have exacerbated this situation, as many of the children who were in schools in camps or following non-formal learning opportunities were unable to obtain necessary certificates before their sudden departure second-half of 2020, thus hampering school registration in their new area of displacement or areas of origin.

Key messages and recommended actions(s):

- Distance learning remains a plausible option to continue learning during closure of schools due to COVID-19. However, teachers and students need capacity building and devices to access online education.
- Lost learning due school closure caused by COVID-19 needs to be assessed and strategies to recover lost learning are to be formulated.
- Advocate with the MoE at federal and regional level to prioritize teachers in the ongoing vaccination, as this would facilitate opening of the schools and back to learning.
- Operationalize the strategy note drafted by the cluster regarding school-related certificates for the children whose parent lack civic documentation.



Emergency Livelihoods

During the reporting period, people's access to livelihoods and income has improved slightly, primarily due to easing of COVID-19 restrictions and improved access of emergency livelihoods partners to populations in need.

Although the overall access to income seems to have improved in 2021 compared to 2020 as COVID-19 restrictions eased, the level of income and access to livelihoods continued to remain very low for some vulnerable people in need, with significant variations noted at district level. Existing surveys indicate a correlation between unemployment, low levels of education and lack of adequate skills to access the labour market. For example, partner assessments in Fallujah district in Anbar Governorate found that 22 per cent of the 111 returnee families interviewed reported a monthly income of less than IQD 110,000 and that only 29 per cent of them had access to formal employment.¹⁸ Emergency livelihoods partners also found that in certain areas - Tooz Khurmato in Salah Al-Din and Al-Hawiga

¹⁸ COOPI, Risk Assessment Site Priority (RASP) in Fallujah, Anbar Governorate, May 2021.

in Kirkuk among them - people were selling property to cope with the lack of income resulting from lack of job opportunities and also sending children to work to meet the family's needs, linked also with children drop out of school. Additionally, almost four out of five households interviewed in Hawija reported borrowing money as one of the main strategies to meet basic needs, with a third reportedly buying food on credit from shop owners. Furthermore, IDP respondents in Khanaqin district in Diyala, estimated that their yearly income had dropped by 50-65 per cent in the first months of 2021 compared to the year before.¹⁹

Key messages and recommended actions(s):

- As COVID-19 restrictions eased, the livelihoods situation has improved slightly, though significant needs remain. ELC partners' access to populations in need also improved.
- Remaining challenges concern implementation of activities related to the promotion and creation of new economic activities and provision of income via a three-month cash for work scheme.



Food Security

While food consumption patterns have improved over the reporting period, along with a decrease in use of negative coping strategies among general populations, the IDP and returnee families continue to risk food insecurity due to increased prices, displacement status and lack of livelihoods.

With the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions countrywide, flow of salaries and Ramadan charities, the number of people using stress/crisis coping strategies and having poor or borderline food consumption scores has decreased by 26 and 36 per cent respectively.

The Iraqi currency devaluation at the end of 2020 resulted in an increase of prices for food commodities. The prices increased between the third week of December and the second week of January 2021, directly impacting the food security of vulnerable populations in Iraq, especially IDPs, returnees and refugees. Most IDPs are in the governorates of Ninewa, Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah while the returnees are concentrated in the governorates of Ninewa, Anbar, Salah al-Din and Diyala.²⁰ To help reduce the impact of the currency devaluation and assist households to meet their food needs, the cash-based transfer value for in-camp IDPs was increased from IQD 11,000 to 12,000 per individual in May.

Additionally, the 2020-21 rainfall season from November 2020 to January 2021 has been characterized by below-average rain in almost all of Iraq. While the situation improved in the central governorates between February and April 2021, the rainfall deficit persisted in the northern part of the country. It has been particularly pronounced in Ninewa and Duhok Governorates, where the 3-month cumulative rainfall is the second and third lowest on record in 40 years and most agriculture is rainfed. Due to the draught conditions and below average rain, potential wheat production loss in Ninewa is estimated at 70 per cent, while in areas of Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din the yield losses are estimated at 50 per cent. This could potentially deteriorate the food security status of vulnerable populations in the mentioned hotspots, especially farmer communities, out-of-camp IDPs and returnees. This effect is expected to become visible after the harvesting season, when the total production will be known and can be compared with previous years.

With the decrease of camp IDP populations and their movement to informal settlements and areas of return, the needs of returnees and secondarily displaced people in informal sites and settlements may increase due to a combination of no longer having access to food assistance, potential lack of access to land, and impact of the dry weather conditions.

Key messages and recommended actions(s):

¹⁹ HIO, Livelihood Assessment Survey in Tooz Khurmato (Salah Al-Din Governorate) and Al-Hawiga (Kirkuk Governorate), May 2021.

²⁰ IOM-DTM IDPs and Returnees Master List, reports available online [here](#).

- The cost of the food basket increased by 14 per cent from December 2020 to January 2021 month and although commodity prices have stabilized in April 2021, they are expected to remain at the new high level.
- Cluster partners continue to monitor trends and food consumption patterns, food based coping strategies and access to markets, as well as the dry weather situation in close coordination with the government. This monitoring will help shape the response modalities and packages in case of adjustment and adaptation to emerging needs. Cluster partners are also assessing the needs of populations living in informal sites and settlements.

Health

Access to primary and secondary health care has worsened for some population groups on the move, while the capacity of the public health system has slightly deteriorated due to increased caseloads seeking assistance.

Access to health care and capacity of the public health system has changed from the end of 2020 to May 2021 mainly because of camp closures that exposed people to a different scenario in out-of-camp locations, with some ending up in secondary displacement and some in areas of return. Around 40 per cent of those who departed camps between October 2020 to January 2021 reported having at least one member in need of medical assistance but unable to access health care.²¹ People in need who already had disrupted livelihoods and limited capacity to access basic services, including health, have become more vulnerable, while the public health system in the locations where former camp population arrived, has had to deal with an increased number of patients. IDPs who were previously accessing primary health care in camps have had to turn to public or private healthcare systems in areas of return or areas of new displacement. Even when health services were available, many have been facing financial or physical barriers to accessing them.

There is an increasing number of people who cannot afford medical care as they have to turn to the private health care sector due to unavailability of necessary services at the public health care system (facilities destroyed during the conflict, specialized test or treatment not available, distance/costs required to travel to access these services).²² As of end of January 2021, IDPs, including secondarily displaced, and returnees in Al-Daur, Al-Hindiya, Al-Kut, Al-Najaf, Al-Rutba, Al-Samawa, Al-Suwaira, Duhok, Erbil, Kalar, Shaqlawa, Sharbazher, and Zakho; all previously conflict-affected districts, reportedly found it more difficult to access health services. As of end of April 2021, similarly people in Al-Adhamiya, Al-Daur, Al-Hindiya, Al-Kut, Al-Nasiriya, Al-Rifai, Al-Shatra, Aqra, Koysinjaq, Makhmour, Shaqlawa, Sumail, and Suq Al-Shoyokh districts are reported to have no or very limited access to healthcare services.²³

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on the already burdened health system. The fragile health system, already inadequate in conflict-affected governorates, has not been able to cope adequately with the pandemic. Additionally, Iraq was witnessing some delays in obtaining vaccines and the quantities available in-country were not sufficient to cover all the target population. This is compounded by the difficulty to maintain ultra-cold storage for some of the vaccines, vaccine hesitancy and reluctance among communities, including IDPs and returnees, to vaccinate. As of early June, less than 2,000 IDPs in camps were recorded to have received vaccination.²⁴ This means that less than 0,001 per cent of the total in-camp IDP caseload has been vaccinated as of now.

Finally, the most common illness affecting Iraqis - diarrheal diseases, including acute diarrhea, acute bloody diarrhea, and cholera - all are below outbreak-threshold level.²⁵ Cholera, one of the most feared outbreak-prone diseases, was not reported this year. It remains crucial to have strong monitoring and mitigation measures in place, as Iraq is endemic to this disease.

²¹ PMS report, February 2021. Information based on CCCM, NPC and IIC Camp Departure Follow-up Survey.

²² PMS report, February 2021.

²³ PMS Dashboard, May 2021.

²⁴ According to the data received from the Ministry of Health.

²⁵ EWARN, around 80 hospitals reported on average by month.

Key messages and recommended actions(s):

- The Health Cluster in collaboration with the Cash Working Group and the National Protection Cluster started discussion on cash for health as a modality to ensure most vulnerable conflict-affected people are supported to access health services while removing barriers related to high costs and distance to facilities.
- Cluster partners to continue to ensure access to basic primary healthcare services for locations with high number of returnees and secondarily displaced, in parallel with serving in-camp, while supporting longer-term stabilization activities to strengthen government capacity to takeover services.

**Protection**

The overall protection environment is perceived by communities to have deteriorated slightly during the reporting period. This is likely due to sudden camp closures exposing more people to additional protection risks.

Preexisting protection issues and risks noted in the HNO have been further aggravated by the closure of IDP camps in Federal Iraq, which resulted in both premature returns and widespread secondary displacement. Around 18 per cent of the households who were forced to depart from camps between October 2020 and January 2021 lacked some civil documentation²⁶, which increased exposure to arbitrary arrest and restrictions on freedom of movement, as well as difficulties to enroll children in school in areas of return or secondary displacement. Persons with perceived affiliation, including Female-Headed Households (FHHs), have often been forced to undergo the family disavowal process known as *tabre'a* either as a condition to return or upon return to be allowed to remain. The same groups have in some cases experienced threats to their lives and physical safety due to either perceived affiliation to extremist groups or unresolved tribal and social issues. This process, in addition to increased exposure to GBV-related risks, often causes serious psychological distress and has at times been associated with suicide cases, which reportedly increased at the beginning of the year, notably in Ninewa and Duhok. Psychosocial distress caused by premature returns and renewed displacement also contributed to increased neglect and corporal punishment against children at both the household and community level. Combined with other factors such as the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic and issues with access to education, this has contributed to a perceived deterioration of the situation of children between Q1 and Q2 (see indicator table at the end).

The situation of people in informal sites and other out-of-camp locations was already of particular concern but has been further aggravated by the arrival of new IDPs from closed camps. The risk of evictions from informal sites and subsequent secondary displacement is particularly high in Mosul, Ninewa, including due to urban planning regulations and the illegal occupation of public buildings. While the risk of eviction from informal sites was already identified in the HNO, it has further increased due to the trends of secondary displacement to Mosul -including to informal sites and critical shelter conditions - observed as a result of camp closures. More broadly, the lack of financial resources and the over-reliance on family and community support puts a large proportion of the population who departed from camps at higher risk of eviction. The lack of access to essential services combined with the dire material and financial situation of families in informal sites further contributes to making the situation for women and girls as well as children particularly concerning. Beyond informal sites, the protection environment for children is reportedly most problematic in out-of-camp and return locations in Sulaymaniyah, followed by Salah Al-Din, Anbar, Diyala, Ninewa and Kirkuk governorates. Some of the contributing factors to these issues include the limited funding available for Child Protection (CP) partners to operate in Sulaymaniyah, Diyala and the southern part of Salah Al-Din as well as the lack of non-CP service providers such as health and livelihood in the other governorates which leave child protection needs unmet.

The decision by the Government of Iraq in March 2021 to not allocate dedicated funding from its annual budget towards HLP compensation claims represents a critical development which jeopardize

²⁶ CCCM, NPC and IIC Camp Departure Follow-up Survey.

the capacity of IDPs and returnees to benefits from their legal entitlements and access durable solutions in the long-term. It may also prevent IDPs from returning to their areas of origin in the more immediate future.

Continued exposure of women and girls to GBV stems from limited access to livelihoods and basic services but also loss of income opportunities and safety and security concerns, prevalent in most return areas. Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that these issues have also resulted in an increase in domestic violence, survival sex and child-marriage besides other new forms of GBV online. There has been an increase of 7 per cent in the reporting of GBV incidents in quarter one of 2021 compared to quarter four of 2020 due to enhanced GBVIMS reporting mechanisms and continued exposure of women and girls to GBV risks. This can be further explained by the findings of the recent PMS²⁷ according to which 25 per cent assess the situation of women and girls as negative.

From January to May 2021, 50 explosive ordnance incidents recorded by the Human Rights Office in Iraq resulted in 40 people killed and 64 injured. UNICEF reported that during the first quarter of 2021, 34 children (26 boys, 5 girls and 3 unknown gender) were killed (16) or maimed (18) as a result of explosive remnants of war (ERW) or improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Casualties happened in Diyala (7), Ninewa, Anbar and Salah Al-Din (5), Basra, (4), Muthana (6) and Najaf (2). The number of child casualties from January to March 2021 is equivalent to that recorded throughout the year 2020.

The contamination in formerly ISIL-controlled areas is complex as it includes ERWs and IEDs in urban centres, residential areas as well as agricultural lands. Despite the achievements and continued operations by humanitarian partners in many locations, there are still significant contaminated areas where clearance operations are limited due to the lack of resources or the unstable security situation in some areas.

Key messages and recommended actions(s)

- While most protection issues related to civil documentation, HLP and restrictions on freedom of movement are structural and remain in line with strategic priorities identified in the HRP 2021, the lasting impact of the camp closures and associated renewed displacement has resulted a number of pre-existing protection issues further deteriorating, including in terms of GBV and CP.
- The cluster's partners continue to organize mobile missions to issue civil documentation in areas of displacement, but such initiatives are currently insufficient to meet the scope of the issue and need to be scaled-up. Legal partners are also mapping out the operational capacities of Civil Affairs Directorates, as a mean to identify and address key operational barriers.
- The capacity of partners to provide specialized protection services – including case management and psycho-social support – at scale in areas of return and in out-of-camp locations remains a challenge due to limited partners' presence and access issues.
- The lack of non-protection support and services - especially for health and livelihoods - is a key challenge for child protection actors in terms of referrals. Without access to comprehensive responses and durable solutions, child protection risks such as child labour, child marriage and recruitment will continue and become more common. The nationalization of technical child protection programme positions across several INGOs has also affected the child protection intervention of partners. Therefore, the cluster will conduct technical training on child protection case management focusing on child labour and parenting programmes.
- The cluster will also organize workshops on community-based protection, an approach essential to developing community-led responses to protection risks which can complement the interventions of non-humanitarian actors working on social cohesion.
- The GBV Sub-Cluster will continue with the planned response as per the HRP focusing on a multi-level and multi sector response to meet the holistic needs of GBV survivors and mitigate GBV risks.

²⁷ PMS Dashboard, May 2021.

- Mine action partners continue to conduct mine action and clearance activities in the governorates of Ninewa, Anbar, Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din in line with the HRP.



Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI)

Even though the number of people in need of shelter support remained stable during the reporting period, with no significant changes in the severity of need, implementing shelter interventions has become more complex as target beneficiaries have increasingly moved from camp settings to secondary displacement or returned to areas which require significant investment and tailor-made shelter solutions.

The shelter situation in country continues to demand attention especially for out-of-camp population who find themselves unable to get adequate shelter due to shelter destruction, inability to pay rent, loss of livelihoods due to the pandemic and overall poverty. Additionally, 90 per cent of the remaining camps have shelter types (tents and RHUs) which are beyond their recommended lifespan of passing two winters. Continued advocacy vis-à-vis the government is needed to support shelter improvement in the remaining camps.

Camp closure that started last year and continued in early 2021 translated in an increase in the out-of-camp population, specifically secondary displacement to informal sites, where all people by definition live in critical shelter). Many who left camps are unable to return to their area of origin due to challenges related to perceived affiliation to extremist groups, difficulties re-establishing their destroyed shelter or facing issues with documentation for proof of ownership. Those who have returned to the properties prematurely find it difficult to access government or other schemes for war-damaged housing rehabilitation. With support and following the humanitarian guidelines of Shelter Cluster, Durable Solutions partners and coordination groups are looking to fill this gap. Information sharing and technical knowledge exchange is undertaken under a DSTWG sub-group on Housing and HLP, co-chaired by Shelter Cluster for the second half of 2021 and tasked with establishing technical standards, lessons learned and recommendations for development actors.

A major change in needs have not been identified at the moment apart from the close monitoring of a likely increase in informal sites that will need humanitarian support and a multi-sectoral response. The cluster continues to monitor needs of the identified groups and will highlight any significant changes in the next situation and needs monitoring report and the relevant coordination forum.

Key messages and recommended actions(s)

- While the shelter situation in country has not significantly changed from the previous comprehensive humanitarian needs overview, the major shift of populations from camp settings to informal sites and premature returns have made the response more complicated e.g. accessing and assessing dispersed locations, complex shelter interventions at places of origin and need for tailor-made construction approaches.
- The cluster is closely monitoring issues around informal settlements for adequate intervention.
- The Shelter Cluster and partners continue to effectively monitor and respond to shelter needs on the ground through engagement and support of various stakeholders.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

No significant changes in the water, sanitation and hygiene situation or WASH-related needs during the reporting period.

Over the first four months of 2021, there has not been a significant change in the needs of affected populations. IDPs in camps or in informal settlements and recent returnee households continued to need emergency support for water and hygiene interventions primarily due to the second wave of COVID-19. IDPs in camps and informal settlements continue to depend on WASH support, especially in camps where infrastructure has not been replaced since initial construction and requires continued

maintenance. WASH actors continue to work in all 27 camps to sustain current levels of water supply and sanitation services and ensure an enabling environment for good hygiene practices.

In areas hosting IDPs out-of-camp and returnees, implementation of interventions to provide basic sustainable water provision for affected populations has been slow, particularly for the returnees. Only 77,000 returnees reached out of the 709,000 returnees targeted under the HRP 2021. The delay in meeting the needs for these returnees is largely tied to humanitarian funding, where the cluster has only secured 9 per cent of the necessary funding under the 2021 HRP. Ensuring that basic WASH services are met is critical, considering that over one third of returnees live in areas without sustainable water supply sources and rely on water trucking. Additionally, 49 per cent of returnees live in locations where there are water source issues related to poor quality. Additionally, the 32 locations in 6 Governorates of Ninewa, Salah Al-Din, Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk and Baghdad identified as hotspots for returns in 2020, continue to face challenges in terms of WASH partner presence and coverage. Provision of water outside of water trucking and sanitation solutions remain essential in the areas hosting recent returnees, many of whom are living in critical shelters and have limited livelihoods opportunities to meet their needs.

Recent reports of indicators of drought may indicate a change in the humanitarian situation which would demand increased funding and support for WASH interventions. In Syria, engineers have determined that a major dam on the Euphrates river is only 20 to 30 days away from closing due to a lack of water. As a major source of water in Iraq, the potential humanitarian impact on households already struggling with COVID-19 could be severe, particularly during the warm summer season. Additionally, these could be associated to increases with waterborne diseases, such as cholera, which is endemic in Iraq. These indicators must be carefully monitored to ensure rapid response to any identified humanitarian needs.

Key messages and recommended actions(s)

- The WASH situation and needs related to water, sanitation and hygiene in Iraq has remained approximately the same during the reporting period.
- The WASH Cluster is only 9 per cent funded (\$6.7 million out of an appeal for \$74.2 million) and partners require humanitarian funding to ensure implementation of essential humanitarian interventions. The upcoming Standard Allocation under the Iraq Humanitarian Fund will provide much needed emergency support as longer term donor support is secured.
- The upcoming indications of potential drought associated with decreased rainfall and lowering levels of rivers and water tables could lead to a major humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian organizations must closely monitor the indicators of drought and secure additional humanitarian funds to meet the needs of the affected populations

ANNEX 1 – NEEDS INDICATORS TRENDS

CLUSTER	INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	SOURCE	BASELINE	RECENT FIGURE	MID-YEAR TREND	
CCCM	e.g. # In-Camp IDPs	Monitoring in-camp population	CCCM camp population Master List	202,580 (Dec 2020)	184,552 (Apr 2021)	Decreased population figures.	↓
CCCM	# camps	Monitoring in-camp population	CCCM camp population Master List	31 (Dec. 2020) 29 (mid-Jan 2021, HNO update)	27 (May 2021)	No camps closed during the reporting period. However, two camps have been reclassified and are no longer considered formal camps.	→
CCCM	# people departing formal camps	Monitoring in-camp population & monitoring returns / secondary displacement	CCCM camp population Master List	N/A	10,955 (Jan – April 2021)	Increased numbers. However, trends emerging with returns to camps.	↑
CCCM	# people living in informal sites	Monitoring out-of-camp displacement	CCCM informal sites masterlist (working ver., May 2021)	104,432 (Oct 2020)	107,837 (May 2021)	Increased numbers, also due to improved tracking and reporting of sites.	↑
CWG	# of HH reporting challenges accessing markets	Monitoring difficulties of accessing markets by people of concern	VAM	11.7% (Oct. 2020) * last available data for 2020	14.1% (May 14, 2021) * data available on weekly basis	Increased challenges. Potentially attributed to COVID-19 restrictions and fear of contracting the diseases if going out.	↑
CWG	% of variance of the cost of the SMEB	Monitoring the prices of the items included in the SMEB to identify variances in the cost of basic needs	JPMI	90,029 IQD (November 2020) * the last available data for 2020	+8.7% (April 2021) * data available on monthly	Increased gradually in the first quarter of the year and stabilized at 8.7% higher percentages now. an increase of 20% is required to adjust the SMEB transfer value.	↑
EDC	# of children receiving distance learning	Measuring how many girls and boys have access to learning during school closure.	Partners reporting on ActivityInfo	N/A	25,899 children ²⁸ (May 2021)	-	N/A
EDC	# of children lost learning due to COVID-19	Girls and boys affected by schools full/partial closure (the pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary)	UNESCO global monitoring of school closures:	N/A	7,435,000 children ²⁹ (May 2021)	-	N/A
ELC	Access to employment	Severity to find employment for returnee people	IOM Return Index 11 and IOM Return Index 12	N/A		22K Returnee individuals think finding employment is easier compared with 2020	N/A
ELC	Asset replacement/small grants for enterprises	Beneficiary received financial support to start-up or improve their small and micro businesses.	ActivityInfo	11K	5K Direct beneficiaries	-	N/A

²⁸ Girls: 12,292, Boys: 13,607

²⁹ Female: 3,208,617, Male: 4,227,079. Pre-Primary: 108,929; Primary: 4,864,350; Secondary: 2,037,509; Tertiary: 424,908

ELC	Temporary employment activities (Cash for Work)	Individuals benefited from temporary employment activities (Cash for Work)	ActivityInfo	11K	3K Direct beneficiaries	-	N/A
FSC	% households relying on stress / crisis / emergency strategies to cope with a lack of resources to meet basic needs	The number of households (HH) using crisis or above crisis-level food-based coping has decreased by 31.9K	WFP mVAM Dashboard	3.9M (Jan. 2021)	2.9M (May 2021)	Decreased. To consider potential effects of a potential drought on this indicator.	↓
FSC	% households that have poor/borderline/acceptable food consumption score	# of people with insufficient food consumption decreased by 0.84M in the last months	WFP mVAM Dashboard	2.5M (Jan. 2021)	1.6M (May 2021)	Decreased. To consider potential effects of a potential drought on this indicator.	↓
Health	# cholera cases reported	surveillance to ensure early identification and immediate response for any cholera outbreak	EWARN database	0 (Jan. 2021)	0	No cases observed based on reporting from hospitals.	→
Health	# Acute bloody diarrheal diseases	surveillance to ensure the trends remain below outbreak-threshold	EWARN database	22 (Jan 2021)	44 (May 2021)	Increase in cases based on reporting from xx hospitals, however trends are below an outbreak threshold and require only monitoring.	↑
Health	# Acute diarrheal diseases	surveillance to ensure the trends remain below outbreak-threshold	EWARN database	1190 (Jan 2021)	1573 (May 2021)	Increase in cases based on reporting from xx hospitals, however trends are below an outbreak threshold and require only monitoring.	↑
NPC	% of KIs who report that rights violations against civilians occur sometimes or frequently	Measurement of the perceived frequency of serious protection incidents through community-level and KI-based protection monitoring	Protection Monitoring System	12% (data collected Dec 2020 – Jan 2021)	13% (data collected in Mar-May 2021)	Slight increase as per information received from key informants. Due to small variation between Q1 and Q2, it is difficult to ascertain whether the violation of rights of civilians has indeed deteriorated.	↑
NPC	% of KIs who report restrictions on freedom of movements to other districts/governorates	Measurement of the perceived prevalence of restrictions on freedom of movement through community-level and KI-based protection monitoring	Protection Monitoring System	16% (data collected Dec 2020 – Jan 2021)	21% (data collected in Mar-May 2021)	Increase as per information received from key informants. As the statistic variation is more significant compared to other indicators, conclusions can be drawn about worsening situation related to freedom of movement.	↑
NPC	% of KIs who report that some or most people are missing civil documentation	Measurement of the perceived prevalence of lack of civil documentation through community-level and KI-based protection monitoring	Protection Monitoring System	49% (data collected Dec 2020 – Jan 2021)	50% (data collected in Mar-May 2021)	Slight increase as per information received from key informants. Due to small variation between Q1 and Q2, it is difficult to ascertain whether the situation has indeed worsened.	↑
NPC	% of KIs who report that some or most people are facing HLP issues	Measurement of the perceived prevalence of HLP issues through community-level and KI-based protection monitoring	Protection Monitoring System	51% (data collected Dec 2020 – Jan 2021)	55% (data collected in Mar-May 2021)	Slight increase as per information received from key informants. Due to small variation between Q1 and Q2, it is difficult to ascertain whether the situation has indeed worsened.	↑

NPC	% of KIs who assess the situation of children as negative	Measurement of the perceived severity protection issues children through community-level and KI-based protection monitoring	Protection Monitoring System	27% (data collected Dec 2020 – Jan 2021)	35% (data collected in Mar-May 2021)	Significant increase as per information received from key informants. As the statistic variation is more significant for this indicator, conclusions can be drawn about deteriorating protection environment for children.	↑
NPC	% of KIs who assess the situation of women and girls as negative	Measurement of the perceived severity of protection issues affecting women and girls through community-level and KI-based protection monitoring	Protection Monitoring System	23% (data collected Dec 2020 – Jan 2021)	26% (data collected in Mar-May 2021)	Slight increase of reports of negative situations for women and girls, as per information received from key informants. Due to small variation between Q1 and Q2, it is difficult to ascertain whether the environment for girls and women has indeed worsened.	↑
SNFI	HHs Living in Critical Shelter (Camp)	Monitoring in-camp population	CCCM Master List	202,580 (Dec 2020)	184,552 (Apr 2021)	Decrease in the number of people living in camps (critical shelter).	↓
SNFI	HHs Living in Critical Shelter (Out-of-camp IDPs and returnees)	Monitoring out-of-camp population	MCNA VII (baseline), DTM (tracking)	300,058 (Dec 2020)	285,048 (Apr 2021)	Decrease in the number of people living in critical shelter.	↓
SNFI	% People NOT intending to Return	Intention to return to areas of origin	Camp Profiling	95% (Sep 2020)	99% (April 2021)	Slight increase in number of people not intending to return.	↑
SNFI	% Callers Asking SNFI Support	Requesting support on SNFI needs	IIC	2.8% (Dec 2020)	2.5% (Apr 2021)	Slight decrease in number of calls related to shelter issues.	↓
WASH	# of people who have access to improved potable water	Activity delivered to: IDP in camp, IDP out camp, Returnee	Activity info reporting 2020, 2021	509,086 (Dec 2020)	112,744 (April 2021)	Situation and needs are estimated to have remained the same. Humanitarian reach was limited and there are response gaps.	→
WASH	# of people (including men, women, boys and girls) who have knowledge of good hygiene practices	Activity delivered to: IDP in camp, IDP out camp, Returnee	Activity info reporting 2020, 2021	476,663 (Dec 2020)	98,411 (April 2021)	Situation and needs are estimated to have remained the same. Humanitarian reach was limited and there are response gaps.	→
WASH	# of people (including men, women, boys and girls) who have access to functional and improved sanitation facilities	Activity delivered to: IDP in camp, IDP out camp, Returnee	Activity info reporting 2020, 2021	565,393 (Dec 2020)	98,411 (April 2021)	Situation and needs are estimated to have remained the same. Humanitarian reach was limited and there are response gaps.	→

