



PRESS RELEASE

Milestone Covenant signing facilitates voluntary returns to Muhalabiya, Mosul

Baghdad, 14 October 2020 – A Covenant of Honour to encourage more than 1100 families perceived to be affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to return to their places of origin in the Muhalabiya sub-district was signed at today’s Local Peace Conference.

The conference, organized by the West Mosul Local Peace Committee, was sponsored by the Governor of Ninewa and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Iraq. Attendees included Muhalabiya community members, government figures, sheikhs, community leaders, and family members of returnees.

For many families, the Covenant signing will mark their return home for the first time in three years, when liberation operations in the area began. During the conflict with ISIL more than 6 million Iraqis were displaced from their areas of origin. An estimated 1.4 million individuals remain displaced today which includes close to 330, 000 persons in Ninewa Governorate alone. For individuals perceived as affiliated with ISIL hardships often include threat of exploitation and violence during displacement.

Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq Zena Ali Ahmad, emphasizes, “The dedication of the Local Peace Committees to reintegrate people who have been displaced from their communities is vital to ensure a strong and cohesive future for the people of Iraq. This conference and the resulting covenant are a milestone for Muhalabiya and a promising indication of community peace and stability moving forward.”

UNDP Iraq, in partnership with the Danish government, supports the work of 24 Local Peace Committees in Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Anbar governorates, with planning underway for establishment of additional committees in Diyala and Kirkuk. These committees play a major role in conflict resolution, advocate for peace and coexistence, and work to empower locals to promote social cohesion and reconciliation within their communities.

UNDP Iraq has recently launched a project on community readiness and reintegration of perceived ISIL-affiliated families with a target to reach 4,000 families in four locations of Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Anbar governorates in the first year, to be followed by more households in 2021 and 2022. Local Peace Committees play a vital role in the project to enhance community readiness and reintegration through designing and implementing activities that facilitate dialogue, mediation, reintegration and trust-building between different community groups. The project is built on the UN Iraq joint approach for community-based reconciliation and reintegration of persons perceived to be affiliated with ISIL/Da’esh in Iraq.

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