Iraq Protection Cluster: Ninewa Returnee Profile - March 2017

24 April 2017

**Protection Risk Matrix by District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Sinjar</th>
<th>Hamdaniya</th>
<th>Telafar</th>
<th>Mosul</th>
<th>Telkaif</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
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<td>Reported Violations of principles relating to return movements (including non-discrimination in the right of return, as well as voluntariness, safety and dignity of return movements)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security incidents resulting in death/injury in return area (including assault, murder, conflict-related casualties)</td>
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<td>Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)/ Improvised Explosive Device (IED) contamination in return area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reported Rights violations by state or non-state military/security actors (including abduction, arbitrary arrest/detention, disproportionate restrictions on freedom of movement)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Concerns relating to inter-communal relations and social cohesion</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
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</table>

**MODM Returnee Figures**

(Registered and non-registered)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinjar</td>
<td>7,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosul</td>
<td>4,740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ninewa Displacements and Returns**

- Total Families Still Displaced
- Total Families Returned

**IDP Information Center**

44% of the total number of calls received by the IIC during March were from locations in Ninewa. The main issues raised were:

- **27%** Governmental issues (grants, compensation on damaged properties, etc.)
- **23%** Cash assistance
- **20%** Protection and other issues
- **16%** Health issues
- **14%** Food security related issues

**Data Sources:**

- *IDM 07M as of 30 March 2017*
- *MoDM 18 April 2017*
- *IDP Information Center*

**Disclaimer:**

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. For inquiries please contact the Protection Information Management Officer; Email: alsalmam@unhcr.org.
Since the launch of the operations to retake Mosul in October 2016, massive displacements have been followed by high rates of returns including premature returns to newly retaken areas. The military offensive to retake west Mosul began on 19 February 2017 and by the end of March, the Ninewa Joint Operations Command released that only 7% of west Mosul remains under extremists’ control. Despite security, humanitarian concerns and severe challenges, large number of families continue to return to newly retaken areas of Ninewa and primarily retake parts of Eastern Mosul. The DTM estimates that at the end of March, over 36,491 families (218,946 individuals) had returned to various parts of Ninewa. UNHCR and protection partners continue to monitor returns, to assess voluntariness of these movements. Families have stated that the desire to reunite with family, recoup their homes, resume work, and leave the restrictive and difficult conditions in IDP camps, as the main reasons for their return.

At the same time, some families continue to be refused the right to return to their areas of origin. In the north/north-east, Dohuk authorities have barred returns to certain villages in the disputed areas of Zummar, Wanaa, Rabia’a, and Alquish for IDPs currently in Qaymawa and Nargizla camps. Again, protection actors have noticed a troubling development whereby certain IDPs are allowed to return to the areas of origin, while others are not. Arab IDPs have been pleading to be allowed to return to their villages of origin in the disputed areas but so far have not been allowed to, despite repeated UNHCR interventions. The authorities continue to contend that decisions on returns to disputed areas rest with senior government officials.

Denial of returns results in extreme and continued hardship for many IDP groups. During the reporting period, UNHCR had to intervene with the authorities on behalf of a group of Badush IDPs (500 families) in Hammam al Alii, who have left behind their livestock and wished to return to their area of origin. The demarches to the Government were successful. UNHCR continues to urge authorities at all levels to ensure that returns are voluntary, safe, dignified, and non-disruptive, highlighting that those wanting and able to return home should be allowed to do so.

The security situation in Ninewa continued to be a major challenge to voluntary, safe and dignified returns. During March, there were high civilian casualties as results of the military offensive. Credible reports indicated that at least 307 people were killed and another 273 wounded in air strikes in the Mosul al-Jadida, Rajin Harid, Rasala, Nabilis, Uruba and Sainaha al-Qadimah neighborhoods. While investigations by Coalition forces and the Iraqi forces are underway, the use of Coalition airpower is limited.

Protection assessments with IDPs forced into secondary displacements back to Khazer, Hasansham and Chamaker IDP camps indicate that the majority of returns have been to areas such as Rashidiya, Adan, Karama, Quds, Intisar and some families have returned to Badoosh. There have also been significant departures of West Mosul IDPs from camps who have gone further to east Mosul and are currently renting accommodation while awaiting clearance to return to areas of origin.

MOSUL DISTRICT

Mosul district is comprised of six sub-distRICTs (Mosul, Qayyarah, Shura, Hammam Al Ilili, Mahalabiya and Bashiao). According to DTM 10,672 families (64,032 individuals) had returned to Mosul at the end of March. The majority of returns have been to liberated quarters of east Mosul despite the lack of essential services such as water, electricity, debris removal and the precarious security situation including the threats of arbitrary arrest and detention. In addition, armed extremists continue to launch mortar rounds into Siddiq, Ja’ar’ and al-Nabiy Yunis neighbourhoods resulting in civilian casualties. Displacement out of and returns to east Mosul are occurring simultaneously. Most of the returns in the east are in neighbourhoods of Intisar, Gogjali, Qarama, Qawsyati, Somer, Taherhan, Muthana, Nabi Younis and Zahraa. Families returning to east Mosul report that the security situation has improved, reuniting with families, perceived improved security conditions and push factors such as the restricted movements and difficult living conditions in IDP camps as the main reasons for returns. IDPs from eastern Mosul are also keen to return to areas of origin to secure their properties including from occupation by other IDPs.

Newly displaced persons, including families who had earlier returned to east Mosul report that insecurity, the lack of services and the lack of income generating opportunities are the main reasons for leaving east Mosul or coming back to the IDP camps. Media reports stated that one of the water plants servicing east Mosul had been repaired and has started operating to provide much-needed potable water to the city.

Returns to west Mosul from Hamman Al-Alii have been reported but are yet to be properly tracked as most records indicate that most families have been returning to their areas of origin due to the security situation. Al-Alii families have a mix of areas of origin to check on their belongings and have returned to displacement while awaiting the complete liberation of west Mosul. It has also been reported that ISF and PMF are currently clearing the recently recaptured Badoush area to the north of the western Mosul from IED/UXOs. MAMO announced that it has been providing food aid to Wadi Hajar and Al Mamoun areas to remainees, displaced and returnee families.

HAMDANIYA DISTRICT

Al-Hamdaniya, which was retaken by government forces in October 2016, was previously multi-ethnic and multi-religious with mixed communities of Arabs and non-Arabs and their relations to the predominantly Christian families. It lost its inhabitants prior to invasion by extremist groups and suffered widespread destruction. The DTM estimates that about 2651 families (15,906 individuals) had returned at the end of March and mainly to areas such as Wardak, Tal Al-Laban, Al-Adla, Kezkani, Majediyah, Kubaisa, Jlewkhan, Sayid Hamad and Ibrahim Alkhalil villages but no returns have been recorded for Al-Hamdaniya city itself. Reports indicate that a few Christians families are trickling back into Hamdaniya despite the widespread destruction and looting. Returnees have been encouraged by security checkpoints and patrols by a volunteer force but also expressed concern at sectarian slogans installed during street battles to reek the city. The Ninevah Plain Unit (NPU) is securing the town of Hamdaniya to ensure that the returnees are secure and that there is no evidence of illegal activities.

TILKAIF DISTRICT

Tilkaif district was retaken from extremists in January 2017 but returns have been slow with no recorded returns to the town. Prior to the crisis, the town of Tilkaif was predominantly populated by Christians while the surrounding towns and villages had a mixed population. The DTM reports that 3641 families (21,846 individuals) had returned to liberated areas of Tilkaif and mainly to Baowaiz, Mosul Dam, Tal Adas and Manara. However most Christians IDPs in Eribil continue to express concerns over their security as the main factor inhibiting their returns.

TEL AFAR DISTRICT

During the reporting period, the town of Tel Afar was still under control of the ISIL. The town had remained effectively under siege by pro-government militias while the surrounding areas had been retaken by the said militias. As the Tel Afar’s population is predominantly Turkmen and Sunni Muslims with about a quarter of the population being of Shia Muslim faith, there are serious concerns about the possibility of revenge attacks on Sunni families by the militias for past atrocities committed by extremist groups against Shia Muslims in the town and elsewhere.

There are still hundreds of families from Zummar, Rabe’a and other areas in Tal Afar that remain in displacement camps despite the fact that these areas were retaken from extremists and are currently under Peshmerga control. Reported 15,084 families (90,504 individuals) had returned to Tel Afar as of 30 March with some of the main areas of return being to Ewanyat village, Bardiqay complex, Kiriver village, Tal Mus, Qasr Jarli, Kahreez, Hay al Askari, Qasabat Zummar and Hay Alasreya. Arab IDPs continue to plead to be allowed to return to their villages of origin in the disputed areas but so far have not been allowed to, despite repeated UNHCR and government demarches. In addition, while some reported returns appear linked to claims of affiliations to extremist armed groups, in other instances such as the situation in Zummar, Rabia’a and other ‘disputed areas’ they appear linked to demographic considerations and the issue of disputed internal border areas.

SINJAR DISTRICT

During the reporting period the district continued to face security challenges, which inhibits returns. In early March, armed clashes erupted after Roj Peshmerga were deployed to Khanaos in northwestern Sinjar, an area controlled by YBS resulting in casualties from both sides. A few days later, on 14 March, one person was killed and 15 others wounded when armed groups fired on a demonstration that was reportedly in opposition to the deployment of Roj Peshmerga in the area.

Due to security and other challenges, IDP returns to Sinjar which was retaken in November 2015, continues to be modest numbers to date. 4443 families (26,658 individuals) had returned at the end of March and mainly to Sinjar Center, Dokki, Dohola, Borat, Guhtal & Shorka, Karsa & Korka, Adika, Sharaf Aliddin, Ashit & Heriko, Zora & Birwa and Qandil. Other factors inhibiting returns are widespread destruction of properties and infrastructure, widespread contamination with explosive hazards, lack of basic services and critical infrastructure, presence of some elements in addition to punishment and expulsion of families suspected of having links with extremist armed groups. Humanitarian access also continues to be severely limited, other than for Sinuri sub-district which is largely accessible. The majority of former residents of Sinjar remain in displacement in Dohuk and other parts of the KRI.

Return to Ninewa can be classified as;

Voluntary return: Families returning to areas of origin after stabilization of the security situation and restoration of services, following screening procedures. Some of these returns can be classified as premature especially those who have returned to areas likely to be under renewed extremist pressure or to areas prone to armed conflicts, destruction of armé groups and severe shortages of basic necessities including food and water. The situation in retaken areas has forced some returnees to go back to IDP camps after returning to their areas of origin.

Spontaneous return: Families prematurely returning, after security screening procedures, due to push factors of economic pressure, de-facto encampment policy with severe restrictions on freedom of movement and fatigue from being displaced, following successful screening procedures.

Forced return: Instances of forced returns were not observed in March.

No or limited return: families/tribes/ethnic groups suspected to have links with ISIL, IS, or other groups are not granted to return by local communities, especially in disputed areas such as villages of Ashqala, Birbang, Chamaker, Hasansham, Jarr, Jazrooinyah, Khazir, Manguba, Mosha, Sewdian Sherkan, Sqtq Sufiya, Tal-Aswad, Telkeif, Zangal and Zummar. Sub-districts of Bashiao, Hamadanliya, Rabbia, Sinuni and Sinjar districts. Some Turkmen families have relayed fears about the return process being used to force them to leave. As noted earlier, some remote areas that are linked to prospects of affiliation to extremism armed groups, while others appear linked to demographic considerations and the issue of disputed internal border areas.