STRATEGY TO SUPPORT REINTEGRATION AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS OF DISPLACED POPULATIONS
IOM MANDATE

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM acts with its partners in the international community to assist meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

IOM Iraq operates within the IOM Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (RO MENA). IOM Iraq’s Strategy for Returns aligns with the IOM RO MENA overall vision to enhance good governance of migration throughout the MENA region, ultimately aspiring towards migration and human mobility that is humane and orderly and that benefits migrants and societies.
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The complex conflict in Iraq has had a dramatic impact on the country’s population and caused the forced displacement of nearly 6 million Iraqis since 2014. There have been successive waves of displacement, responding to the dynamics of conflict. As areas occupied by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) were retaken by Iraq’s security forces, IDPs gradually returned to their areas of origin. As retaken areas are increasingly becoming safer and services are re-established, many displaced people will continue to return to their homes and areas of origin.

However, conditions in areas of origin often lack the preconditions to achieve durable solutions. While most IDPs intend to return in the long term, conditions in areas of return are often characterized by residual insecurity, damage to properties and public infrastructure, limited access to services, and livelihood opportunities, and fractured social relations. The sustainability of IDP returns and stability of these areas continue to be compromised.

While the long-term intention of IDPs is to return home, over 55% of them would rather stay in their current location of displacement in the short-term. The reason for such decisions often correlates with perceptions of safety and security, housing conditions and the lack of basic services and livelihood or employment opportunities in areas of origin.

Although residual humanitarian needs will persist, both in displacement and upon return, emphasis must be placed on the promotion of self-reliance and the creation of environments conducive to the achievement of durable solutions. Addressing challenges facing IDPs and returnees and obstacles to return is critical to achieving durable solutions and contributing to sustainable peace, national reconciliation, justice, rule of law and ultimately development in conflict-affected areas of Iraq.

The Strategy to Support Reintegration and Durable Solutions of Displaced Populations provides a framework to address return dynamics in Iraq and guide IOM’s support to national authorities in pursuing durable solutions for IDPs. The strategy builds on the extensive work of IOM Iraq in the areas of humanitarian assistance as well as transition and recovery.

The Strategy proposes a comprehensive approach to support the sustainable reintegration of IDPs and in support of government initiatives. Programming uses complementary, mutually reinforcing actions at individual, household, community and administrative level. Such approach addresses displacement-specific needs, and broader development, reconstruction and peace-building challenges in communities of return. IOM will integrate humanitarian and development approaches as part of the progressive resolution of displacement and the need for a sequenced approach to reduce risk and vulnerability. This strategy supports tangible measures towards bridging the humanitarian-development nexus including the Community Resource Centres (CRCs) and support for the Government to co-ordinate and disseminate information.

The strategy focuses on the reintegration aspect of durable solutions. Programme synergies have been actively sought within internal IOM programming and that of partners, including for local integration and resettlement opportunities. IOM supports continuity of care from the area of displacement to the area of arrival/origin to ensure safe, voluntary and dignified returns. Objectives and approaches towards reintegration and durable solutions are based on research and analysis to support practical, effective programming. To support coordination and integration, there will be continuous consultations with the Government of Iraq (GoI) and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), as well as UN and NGO partners and donors.

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1 IOM DTM Iraq, Integrated Location Assessment, Round II, March 2017
2 Ibid; Reach, Multi Cluster Needs Assessment 2017; CCCM Cluster Iraq, Intention Survey, September 2017

At the height of the crisis in April 2016 there were 3,417,765 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Iraq. As of March 2018, there are 2,205,252 IDPs and 3,635,598 returnees.
• Support to Government: Since national authorities have the main responsibility to address displacement challenges and provide durable solutions, IOM programmes will work to enable national, regional and local authorities to take the lead in recovery and development processes.

IOM will work closely with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Centre (JCMC) of GoI and the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) of KRG; and other relevant government authorities at national and sub-national level.

• Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP): IOM will continue to strengthen mechanisms on AAP, including for leadership/governance, transparency, feedback and complaints, participation and design and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Communicating with Communities (CwC) activities will continue to support existing community systems to meet the information and communication needs of affected populations. There will be two-way dialogue to understand dynamics and needs and work with beneficiaries to create space for feedback that will inform and influence programming. Communities will be consulted and will participate in the planning and management of processes supporting a durable solution. Beneficiaries are the most important partner in all IOM programming. Their views will be sought and factored into project design.

• Informed and voluntary choices: As a fundamental principle, IOM will continue to advocate for the voluntary return of IDPs, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or for their voluntary resettlement in another part of the country. Return should always be based on a free, fully informed and voluntary decision and be devoid of any form of coercion or influence. IDPs should not be forced to return by threats to confiscate documentation, closing IDP camps and sites, expulsion/eviction from temporary accommodation or arbitrary arrest/detention. IOM and the humanitarian community will advocate for principled returns.

• Mainstreaming Protection: As the responsibility of all IOM staff involved in the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of responses before, during and after migration crises. Assistance and services are provided according to needs of the community.

• Employing conflict-sensitive interventions: Based on ‘do-no-harm’ principles to avoid or minimize unintended negative consequences and consciously create positive impacts. In Iraq, the impact of the conflict on community diversity (ethnic and religious) has generated the need for tailoring sensitive approaches. Programmes for returning IDPs will be carefully designed and implemented to minimize impact on inter-community tensions.
Frameworks
This strategy is developed in line with international and national frameworks and IOM’s global strategies and policies to support the resolution of displacement situations. It aligns with the GoI’s priorities, and responds to calls for assistance. The strategy is outcome-focused, allowing IOM to re-align activities according to new developments and evolving government priorities, particularly after the elections that will take place in May, 2018. It aims to align to the Government’s National Framework for Reconstruction and Development (NFRD) 2017.

The strategy is based on the IASC Framework for Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons and contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), mainly SDG Target 10.7, to ‘facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies’. The SDGs are driving policy planning and implementation across borders and across sectors, recognizing the interlinkages between migration and development.

The strategy is also based on 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants marked a renewed commitment from the international community to protect the safety, dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status. As outlined in the Declaration, IOM is supporting consultations with governments and stakeholders to formulate the Global Compact on Migration in 2018.

The strategy was informed by the 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) for Iraq and establishes clear linkages with key current strategic objectives outlined by the humanitarian and development communities, under the following plans and strategies to address post-conflict challenges in Iraq:

- 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Iraq
- United Nations Country Team’s Recovery and Resilience Programme (RRP)

The strategy is flexible to incorporate subsequent iterations of country strategies and frameworks.
Even though all ISIL-occupied areas are now under Federal Government control, groups of IDPs remain reluctant to return.

### OBSTACLES TO RETURN IN AREAS OF RETURN (BY SECTOR)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Area Unsafe</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Services</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buildings Destroyed</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings Inhabited</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Money</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security Forces Prevented</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change In Ethno-Religious Composition</td>
<td>11%</td>
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The area is unsafe due to on-going conflict, unexploded ordnances, landmines, militias etc.

Absence of basic services back home.

House in place of origin destroyed.

Unable to return because property is inhabited.

Unable to return due to lack of money.

Unable to return because the security forces in the origin area do not allow a return.

Fear due to the changed ethno-religious composition of the place of origin.
**Safety and Security**

Awareness or perceptions of insecurity are the main obstacles to return. The complex and dynamic challenges that have emerged from past and ongoing armed conflicts in Iraq have led to a substantial weakening of state institutions, specifically when it comes to ensuring community safety and security. In certain areas, there is low trust in the security forces, who are perceived as hostile towards certain groups, and lacking accountability. In some areas, the security forces have limited capacity, which has allowed other armed groups to gain importance. Beyond the link between returns and “direct security”, indirect security factors also constitute an obstacle to return.

**Infrastructure**

Conflict-affected governorates have experienced wide-scale destruction of public and private property, infrastructure and public facilities. The overall damage or destruction of community infrastructures poses a major challenge in return areas. The governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Ninewa and Salah al-Din stand out with particularly high scores on the Infrastructure Damage Index (IDI).

**Housing, Land and Property (HLP)**

The issue of housing remains particularly pressing for returnees; some find their houses in poor conditions, others have to settle in unfinished or overcrowded buildings, while some find that their house, land or property has been sold or is occupied. There are a myriad of complex housing, land and property regulatory issues, complicated by multiple waves of displacement and conflict. Lack of legal documentation is among the top three HLP challenges reported by returnees.

**Sustainable Livelihoods**

As the job market is limited in areas hosting returnees, access to income appears to be one of the main causes for concern. IOM Community Assessment Reports found that those unemployed or unable to work are reported as the most vulnerable groups in a community. Such difficulties to access basic means of livelihoods are reflected in the high percentage of families unable to afford food or health services.

**Inter-community Relations**

Limited job opportunities, perceived favouritism for assistance, or perceptions of affiliation with ISIL (among IDPs, returnees or host communities) are reported as additional causes of tension. Fear of reprisal, harassment, stigmatization and/or discrimination dramatically undermine the sustainability of IDP returns and compel some IDPs to remain in their area of displacement.

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7 IOM DTM Iraq, November 2017
8 IOM DTM Iraq, Integrated Location Assessment, Round II, March 2017
9 Ibid
10 IOM DTM Iraq, Obstacles to Return in Retaken Areas of Iraq, July 2017
11 Ibid
12 IOM, Rapid Recovery Programme Community Assessment Report, September 2017
IOM Iraq recognizes that individuals and communities are vulnerable when they are exposed to risks of neglect, discrimination, abuse and exploitation – whether through physical, social, economic or environmental factors. The following populations are particularly vulnerable:

**IDPs Faced with Non-voluntary/Early Return**

While many returns are voluntary, cases of involuntary and forced returns have been reported in several retaken areas. In addition, anxiety is reportedly very high among IDP minorities who come from areas of disputed internal borders (DIB) who are unwilling to return. Barred returns have been reported, and anxiety is also reportedly very high amongst minorities in areas of DIB. Some IDPs are returning to their homes without knowing the conditions in their areas of origin. This poses major risks as some of these areas are not cleared for return, and still contaminated with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). The main reported causes of premature return from camps are:

- Extreme weather conditions
- Lack of job opportunities in areas of displacement
- Desire to reunite with family members
- Willingness to resume school and/or duties as a civil servant
- Limited provision of primary health care
- Restriction on freedom of movement
- Presence of scorpions and snakes in camps

**“Stayees” Including Persons Perceived as Affiliated with ISIL:**

The violence perpetuated by ISIL has created deep social fissures, which often translate in stereotypes against certain groups of people. Some Arab Sunnis, in particular, have expressed concern about their place in Iraqi society, and feelings of alienation and marginalization. The fight against ISIL exacerbated historical sectarian fears and reinforced internal divides between and within Sunni and Shia communities. The trauma of recent years and the hatred felt by both groups towards ISIL has on occasion manifested itself against the families of those believed to be affiliated to the group. Many Arab Sunnis feel there is a lack of recognition that many Arab Sunnis were also victims of violence perpetrated by ISIL.

**Female-headed Households & Women:**

Women face risks and vulnerabilities, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including due to conflict-related sexual violence. In Iraq, the law stipulates that women whose husbands have gone missing or are believed to be dead must wait for two years before they can claim for governmental assistance as female heads of household. During this period, they would have to work, or rely on extended family community for support. Elderly women or women with small children (and no childcare) often face extreme difficulties in accessing support and providing for their families.

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13 National Protection Cluster, September 2017

14 Post-ISIS Mosul Context Analysis, July 2017, Rise Foundation, p.2
The Objectives are tailored according to the identified priority issues and needs to return. There are key differences between the most pressing issues for IDPs and that for returnees, and these differences have been factored in to work towards mitigating further displacement.

The main concern of IDPs in general is access to means of living. Returnees, on the other hand, are more concerned about water and health. Returnee families were also more likely to express concern about education because schools are few and often overcrowded. The ranking of concerns is reflected in the share of IDPs and returnees who need information on specific issues.

![Figure 2: Most pressing issues for returnees and IDPs](image-url)
OBJECTIVES OF IOM IRAQ STRATEGY

Recognizing that return conditions differ significantly between retaken areas, IOM’s strategy is tailored to the specific needs and priorities of vulnerable populations in different areas of return. Community-based, participatory assessments and research are guiding programmatic decisions. More specifically, IOM supports mechanisms to assist at-risk groups such as minorities and other vulnerable populations faced with obstacles to return.

Based on the criteria to achieve durable solutions for internal displacement identified in the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs, IOM’s strategy in Iraq is built on the following four objectives.
IOM programming supports inclusive participation in decisions and processes of public affairs.

IOM will support the ministries of the national government as well as regional and local authorities, and actively promote coordination between the MoMD, MoLSA, other GoI and KRG line ministries, relevant IOs and NGOs, as well as CSOs. The Government participation and ownership of the return and reintegration process will be encouraged; the capacities of Government and communities will be enhanced to balance the need to protect the wider community, safeguard the interests of marginalized and vulnerable groups, and limit risk of abuse by those regulating return movements. The outcome intends to facilitate a wider, more inclusive discussion on matters related to migration and focused on returns and reintegration, to ensure a conducive environment for sustainable returns, such as addressing long-term drivers of displacement.

Activities include support to:

1. Encourage civic engagement and government ownership, including by strengthening local good governance and re-building trust between communities, national government and local authorities;
2. Strengthen coordination to facilitate discussion on displacement and migration, by creating inclusive platforms aimed at identifying priorities and addressing root causes of forced displacement;
3. Strengthen coordination and information sharing between and across ministries invested in community development and returns, including by creating referral patterns between Community Resource Centres and established Community Policing Offices, aimed at supporting safe spaces for discussing and solving problems, implementing crime-prevention policies and facilitating security related procedures for returnees;
4. Local government rehabilitation planning efforts including supporting ‘building back better’ initiatives; and
5. Strengthen and develop the MoMD technical capacity to register returnees and deliver essential reintegration services.

The eight criteria are: 1) safety and security; 2) adequate standard of living; 3) access to livelihoods; 4) restoration of housing, land and property; 5) access to documentation; 6) family reunification; 7) participation in public affairs; and 8) access to effective remedies and justice.
OBJECTIVES OF IOM IRAQ STRATEGY

OBJECTIVE 2: PROTECTION, SAFETY AND SECURITY

OUTCOME 2
Enhanced individual and community safety and security for vulnerable IDPs, returnees and communities.

Considering the difficult conditions returnees face upon arrival in their areas of origin and to achieve the objective of protection, safety and security, IOM will support the following areas of operation:

1. Establish or support the Community Resource Centres (CRCs), as multi-actor and multi-sectoral immediate assistance mechanisms. The CRCs, in partnership with the JCMC on behalf of the Government, will establish and reinforce the coordination of service delivery mechanisms. This will facilitate safe, voluntary, non-discriminatory and sustainable returns and socio-economic reintegration of vulnerable communities in the most affected regions of Iraq. CRCs enhance coordination between actors, some of who will be able to use CRCs as a platform for service delivery through information provision, referral to service providers, and community engagement. Services provided by partners in the CRC will be conducted through an area-based multi-sectoral approach, and will consist of:

   a. Direct: Basic Activity Set (BAS)
      • Support communities to identify and access services delivered at the CRCs or in communities, and support community engagement to access information and service provision;
      • Provide two-way information access and dissemination, including through a CwC strategy, with the CwC Taskforce, community structures and IDP Call Centre; facilitate delivery of information/outreach campaigns and awareness raising of humanitarian assistance, government services and basic needs, and implement complaint and feedback mechanisms;
      • Support multi-sectoral coordination among humanitarian and recovery/stabilization actors and liaison with government, including through community forums; and
      • Promote an area-based approach to displacement management, and map and monitor assistance and services provided by humanitarian, government, resilience, recovery and stabilization actors in catchment areas of the CRCs.

   b. Indirect: All other services identified by the CRC implementing partner based on needs and gaps, in coordination with existing Cluster coordination forums at the governorate level.

The CRCs are overseen by JCMC on behalf of the Government of Iraq with the support of, and in partnership with, a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee includes UN and non-governmental partners, who are managing the CRCs and are involved in implementation, to facilitate a common approach capitalizing on efforts and streamlining and supporting coordination with JCMC. The Steering Committee is chaired by IOM, with a rotating 6-month Co-chair. Observing members of the Steering Committee are OCHA, the Returns Working Group (RWG), the National Protection Cluster (NPC) and Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM).

2. Community-based activities to address local tensions and restore trust among community members in return areas. Such activities will be carried out through psychosocial support, peacebuilding and non-violent conflict resolution activities as well as training for youth and empowerment training courses for women.

3. Community Policing initiatives aimed at strengthening security at the community level by building trust between communities and law enforcement authorities will also be carried out, including the rehabilitation/construction of gende-sensitive and community-friendly Police Offices, to facilitate access to justice.
OBJECTIVE 3: ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

OUTCOME 3
Strengthened capacity of local stakeholders to provide effective services.

IOM will support the rehabilitation of key infrastructure that provides essential social services, including by improving Government capacity to provide these or directly implementing when there is an identified gap and at the request of authorities.

Activities towards the Objective are:

a. Implementing Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) aimed at supporting local authorities to restore and improve community services (through reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure), access to services as well as support and capacity-building to service providers;

b. Creating and/or strengthening networks for reintegration assistance, infrastructure rehabilitation and service provision in areas of return;

c. Providing immediate post-return and reintegration assistance through the provision of basic items and shelter support to returnees;

d. Providing assistance to enable safe arrival to the destination, through the ‘Basic Return Packages’;

e. Where appropriate and possible, offering psychosocial and primary health services for vulnerable returnees.

Through the CRCs, information on services for returnees and vulnerable populations will be available.

OBJECTIVE 4: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS & EMPLOYMENT

OUTCOME 4
Improved access to sustainable livelihoods and employment.

Sustainable livelihoods and employment will be prioritized to mitigate tensions and improve community relationships. IOM will provide direct support to individuals and communities in areas of return to improve their livelihoods through:

a. Socio-economic inclusion of returnees and support to local economies through employment creation and support, including job placement, creation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), individual and community business support, vocational and specialized trainings etc.

b. Cash-for-work programmes focusing on small community infrastructure rehabilitation initiatives that facilitate recovery (e.g. rubble clearing, roads clearing, waste disposal etc.)

c. Provision of information on job opportunities to improve livelihoods and accessibility to employment and income, to mitigate tensions and improve community relationships.
As nearly 80% of return movements are taking place within the governorates in the north-central and central region, the priority geographical areas for intervention will include Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Anbar, Kirkuk, Baghdad and Diyala (see map below).16

These governorates have been selected based on criteria such as high numbers of returnees, high scores of infrastructure damage and residential damage, and high levels of vulnerabilities. Baghdad, Kerbala, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din stand out as the governorates with greater vulnerabilities: evictions and discrimination were reported, integration mechanisms are rarely in place and interaction between communities is negative or virtually non-existent.17 In Anbar, as much as 80% of locations are still contaminated with unexploded ordnances (UXOs). IOM will work with IDPs and authorities in areas of displacement, including in KRI.

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16 IASC, IASC Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, September 2011
17 IOM DTM Iraq, Integrated Location Assessment, Round II, March 2017
Co-ordination and Partnerships

Interventions are coordinated with partners including the UN and NGOs, the Government and local leaders. IOM collaborates with community-based groups and civil society organisations, where feasible. IOM sits on the UN Humanitarian Country Team and the UN Country Team and coordinates through the IASC Clusters and the Inter Cluster Co-ordination Group (ICCG). This strategy will be shared with government authorities, and there will be continuous consultations to jointly discuss and amend plans and priorities if needed.

IOM chairs the Returns Working Group (RWG) in Iraq, which was established in line with Strategic Objective 3 of the 2016 Iraq HRP namely “to support voluntary, safe and dignified return” by monitoring and reporting on conditions in return areas and providing targeted assistance to highly vulnerable returnees. The RWG will continue to act as a critical function for co-ordination and information for the benefit of partners, provide evidence-based advocacy, and develop guidance, policies and operational recommendations for Iraqi governorates affected by returns. This strategy builds on the RWG objectives, which among others supports the response in providing principled short-term intervention linked to Iraq’s return and reintegration challenges, and seeks to determine to what extent progress has been made and durable solutions achieved for returnees.

The RWG aims to:

• Promote sustainable return by tracking return and ensure it is voluntary, safe and dignified;

• Streamline programming to facilitate returns, and improve conditions in areas targeted based on recognized minimum standards;

• Support sustainable action for IDPs who will not be allowed to return, or allowed to return home; and

• Promote area-based approaches for social and economic reintegration of conflict-affected population in areas of return.

Communication and Information Sharing

IOM will share and receive information using a range of tools tailored to specific audiences and working closely with local leadership/authorities, civil society organisations and communities to ensure inclusivity. IOM will engage in the Inter-agency complaints and feedback hotline, and beneficiary feedback will be sent to IOM Focal Persons for rapid response. IOM shares information with communities to allow them to make informed decisions, and where appropriate with Government interlocutors to better inform service delivery. Information is shared according to data and protection principles.

Research and Evidence

Programming is underpinned by data and strong information management and sharing, including through a responsive DTM and targeted research. There will be continued investment in understanding the causes and impacts of displacement and returns with respect to humanitarian response and development services, human rights, and peace and security. Programming is based on global, regional and local best practices and approaches. The analysis and research support evidence-based programming, and better targeted responses and advocacy. Programming is flexible and based on contextual analysis to incorporate changes in context and population flows.