

RETURN DYNAMICS IN NINEWA GOVERNORATE

APRIL 2020

The Return Index Governorate Profiling provides singular analysis and insights on returns at the governorate level, with a comparison of figures and severity of living conditions over the course of 2019.

This report focuses on return dynamics in Ninewa Governorate, the governorate with the highest number of returnees. The report features an evaluation of conditions of return across the governorate at the end of 2019, provides insights on the mass arrivals which took place in September 2019 due to camp closures, and analyses the drivers of severe conditions across geographical hotspots that received an influx of new arrivals during that period.

KEY FINDINGS

- Ninewa Governorate hosts 1.77 million returnees out of the 4.60 million returnees in Iraq (38% of the total), making it the governorate with the highest number of returnees. Ten per cent of these returnees are currently living in locations ranked as having high severity conditions, while 32 per cent are living in medium severity locations and 58 per cent in low severity locations.
- While the absolute number of returnees living in high severity locations decreased between January and August 2019, in the last four months of 2019 the trend reversed and the number began increasing again. By December 2019, the number stood at about 174,000 individuals.
- The districts of Sinjar and Telafar host the largest number of individuals who have returned to high severity conditions. In Sinjar in particular, nearly all locations with returns are categorized as high severity – no returnee was found to be living in low severity conditions.
- A little over 52,000 returnees are living in critical shelters (3% of Ninewa's returnee population), spread across 255 locations. The majority of these returnees are concentrated in villages around the urban centre of Mosul district.
- Given the large presence of non-camp IDPs, one out of every four locations in Ninewa Governorate hosts both IDPs and returnees, increasing the pressure on the provision of basic needs and recovery resources. Multiple locations in Mosul and Sinjar, for instance, are currently hosting more IDPs than returnees.
- Between September and December 2019, DTM tracked almost 49,000 individuals who left camps for non-camp settings in Ninewa Governorate due to camp closures. Most of them (85%) returned to their districts of origin, while the remaining 15 per cent moved to new locations of displacement, thus becoming non-camp IDPs. The districts of Al-Ba'aj and Hatra host two thirds of these new arrivals.
- A little more than 40 per cent of the camp departures to non-camp locations in Ninewa Governorate have currently settled in locations classified as high severity. This influx points to a likely critical situation for these newly arrived households, from displacement camps to relatively deprived areas.

METHODOLOGY

The Return Index is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. The Return Index is built from a list of indicators developed in consultation with relevant partners and stakeholders to reflect the displacement context in Iraq (Table 1). The index is based on 16 indicators grouped into two scales: Scale 1, on livelihoods and basic services, and Scale 2, centred around social cohesion and safety perceptions. The overall index ranges from 0 (all essential conditions for return are met) to 100 (no essential conditions for return are met). Higher scores denote more severe living conditions for returnees (more methodology details can be found in the Return Index Round 1 and Round 3 reports).¹

Multiple data sources are used for this report, namely the Return Index Round 7 collected in November–December 2019 across eight governorates, 38 districts and 1,754 locations in Iraq, the Master List Round 113 (collected in November–December 2019) and Round 112 (collected in September–October 2019). Return Index Round 7 is used in this report for sections 2 and 3 to classify return locations by category of severity and in section 4 to analyse the underlying drivers of severity. Master List Round 113 and Round 112 are used in section 2 to define the total populations of returnees and IDPs in each location and figures on arrivals from camps during the second half of 2019.

Table 1: Indicator list for each scale

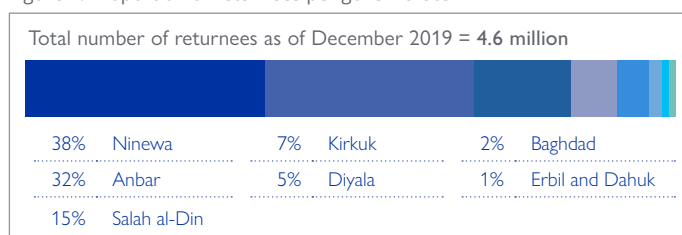
SCALE 1: LIVELIHOODS AND BASIC SERVICES	SCALE 2: SAFETY AND SOCIAL COHESION
Residential destruction	Community reconciliation
Employment access	Multiple security actors
Water sufficiency	Blocked returns
Recovery of agriculture	Checkpoints controlled by other security actors
Electricity sufficiency	Daily public life
Recovery of businesses	Illegal occupation of private residences
Access to basic services	Mines
Provision of government services	Sources of violence
SCALE 1 SCORE = 100	SCALE 2 SCORE = 100
OVERALL SEVERITY INDEX = AVERAGE OF SCALE 1 AND SCALE 2 SCORES	

¹ Available at <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex>

CATEGORIZING CONDITIONS IN AREAS OF RETURN

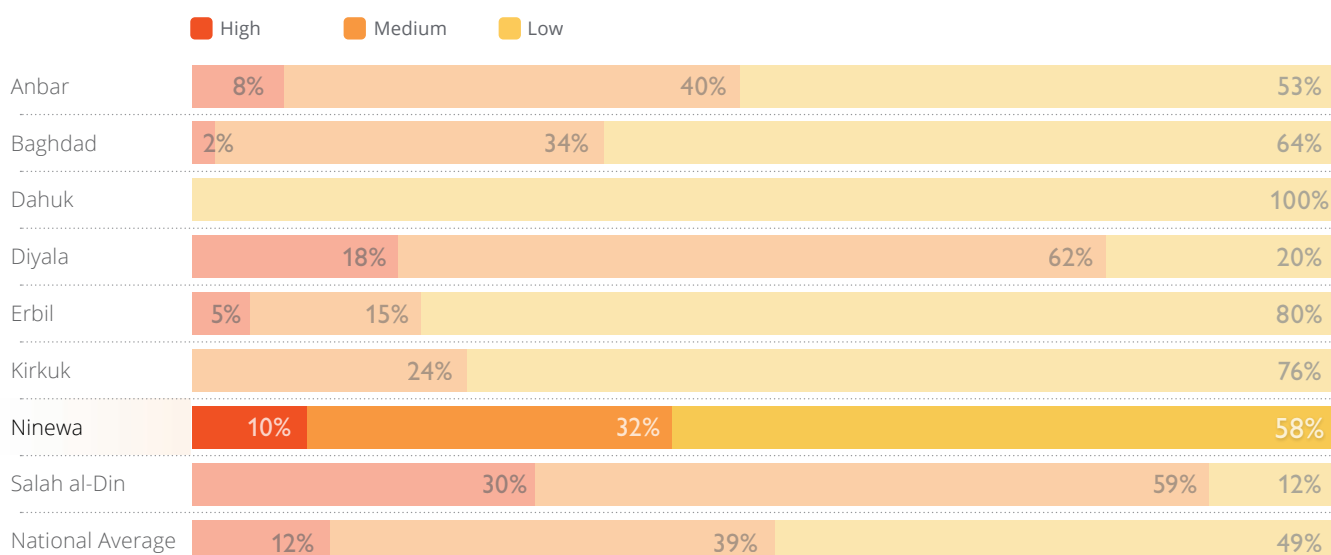
Thirty-eight per cent of returns in Iraq are to Ninewa Governorate, the governorate with the largest returnee population. As of December 2019, the total number of returnees in the governorate stands at 1.77 million individuals (out of 4.60 million nationwide, see Figure 1). Over the course of 2019, the returnee population in Ninewa increased by 125,000 individuals.

Figure 1. Proportion of returnees per governorate



Ninewa Governorate hosts the second largest number of returnees living in high severity conditions with 173,724 individuals, only surpassed by Salah al-Din Governorate. In relative terms, this means that around 10 per cent of the returnee population in Ninewa has returned to locations classified as high severity, followed by 32 per cent to medium severity, and 58 per cent to low severity. This distribution of returnees per severity category is similar to the national average, with 12 per cent living in high severity locations (Figure 2).

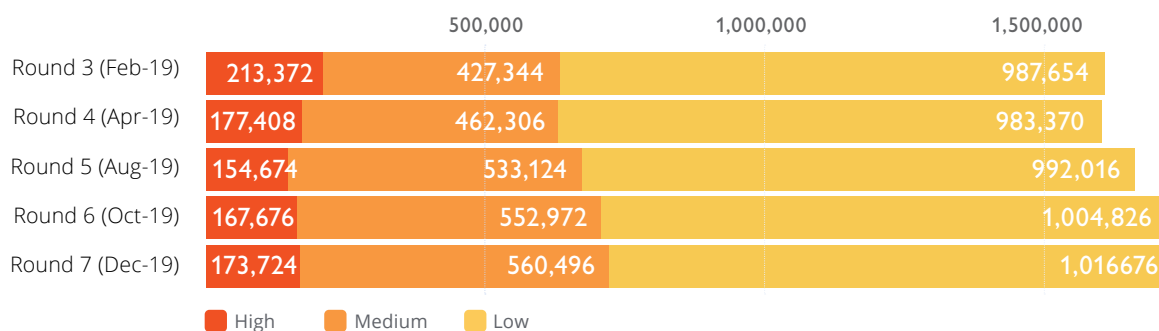
Figure 2. Proportion of returnees by category of severity per governorate



Note: percentages may not add to 100% due to the rounding applied.

The total number of returnees living in high severity locations in Ninewa Governorate significantly decreased over the course of 2019, from an initial figure of more than 213,372 individuals in February 2019 to 173,724 by December 2019 (i.e. a decrease of 20 per cent in one year). However, the last two rounds of data represent a turning point in this positive trend. Since August 2019, the returnee population in high severity locations has steadily increased. In line with the overall increase in returns to Ninewa Governorate, the locations in medium and low severity categories also recorded increases in the number of returnees each round.

Figure 3. Yearly trend of returnees by category of severity in Ninewa Governorate



When disaggregating by district, Sinjar and Telfar are the two most severe districts, featuring the largest concentrations of returnees living in poor conditions (Table 2). The total number of people in severe conditions in these districts stands at 65,952 individuals and 48,024 individuals, respectively, which altogether represent two thirds of the 173,724 returnees living in high severity conditions in Ninewa. Although Mosul district has the highest number of returnees in the governorate by far, it ranks third in terms of the total number of returnees in high severity areas. Lastly, in Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj districts, the proportion of returnees in high severity areas points to severe dynamics overall, as nearly all the locations with returns are categorized as high severity – almost no returnee is living in low severity conditions.

Table 2: Number of returnees per district and category of severity in Ninewa Governorate

DISTRICT	HIGH SEVERITY LOCATIONS		MEDIUM SEVERITY LOCATIONS		LOW SEVERITY LOCATIONS		TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEE INDIVIDUALS	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Sinjar	65,952	96%	2,922	4%	0	0%	68,874	100%
Telfar	48,024	14%	27,6774	81%	16,974	5%	341,772	100%
Mosul	26,874	3%	228,996	22%	762,108	75%	1,017,978	100%
Al-Ba'aj	19,836	97%	672	3%	0	0%	20,508	100%
Hatra	9,612	26%	22,662	61%	4,800	13%	37,074	100%
Tilkaif	3,240	3%	23,646	24%	71,568	73%	98,454	100%
Al-Hamdaniya	186	0%	4,824	3%	159,084	97%	164,094	100%
Al-Shikhan	0	0%	0	0%	2,142	100%	2,142	100%
Ninewa Total	173,724	10%	560,496	32%	1,016,676	58%	1,750,896 ²	100%

In terms of the shelter situation upon return, 51,792 returnees living in critical shelters are spread across 255 locations – 3 per cent of the total returnee population in the governorate. Only a quarter of these returnees are located in high severity locations, with around 60 per cent in critical shelters currently concentrated in Mosul district (in particular, in villages around the urban centre). Up to 98 per cent of these cases correspond to families living in their original, pre-conflict residence (most of them now nearly uninhabitable); the other 2 per cent mostly corresponds to returnees living in unfinished or abandoned buildings.

Districts such as Mosul and Al-Hamdaniya also host relatively large populations of IDPs in addition to large populations of returnees. Ninewa Governorate hosts the largest number of IDPs in Iraq, with 215,556 non-camp IDPs and 119,232 camp IDPs (24% of the total number of IDPs in Iraq). Given the large presence of non-camp IDPs, one out of every fourth location in Ninewa hosts both IDPs and returnees, increasing the pressure on the provision of basic needs and recovery resources. Multiple locations in Mosul and Sinjar, for instance, are currently hosting more IDPs than returnees (Table 3). Overall, however, IDPs tend to concentrate in areas classified as low severity, with about one fifth (19%) hosted in locations classified as having high severity conditions.

² This total only includes returnees in locations assessed for the Return Index and does not constitute the total number of returnees in Ninewa, as some locations have not been assessed.

Table 3: Number of returnees and IDPs per district in Ninewa

DISTRICT	AVERAGE SEVERITY	TOTAL RETURNEES (INDIVIDUALS)	TOTAL NON-CAMP IDPs (INDIVIDUALS)	TOTAL CAMP IDPs (INDIVIDUALS)	LOCATIONS WITH MORE IDPs THAN RETURNEES
Akre	n/a	0	0	1,188	n/a
Al-Ba'aj	High	21,510	21,510	0	0
Al-Hamdaniya	Low	164,094	164,094	39,240	0
Al-Shikhan	Low	2,142	2,142	32,040	0
Hatra	Medium	45,420	45,420	0	0
Mosul	Low	1,020,336	1,020,336	46,584	12
Sinjar	High	71,406	71,406	0	14
Telafar	Medium	342,972	342,972	0	0
Tilkaif	Low	98,454	98,454	0	1
Ninewa Total		1,766,334	1,766,334	119,232	27

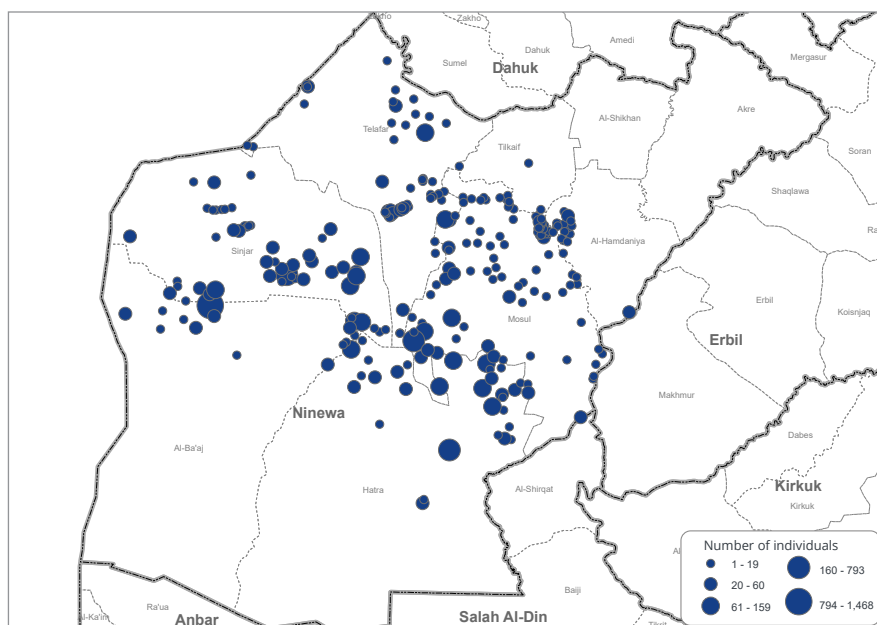
ARRIVALS FROM CAMPS AND CORRELATION WITH SEVERITY

Arrival of IDPs from camps to non-camp settings in Ninewa Governorate

Between September and December 2019, DTM tracked 48,552 individuals (8,092 households) that left IDP camps for non-camp settings in Ninewa. Among these, 41,082 individuals (85%) returned to their districts of origin, while the remaining 7,470 (15%) moved to new locations of displacement, thus becoming non-camp IDPs.

The districts of Hatra and Al-Ba'aj host two thirds of the new arrivals from camps, leading to a substantial increase in the number of returnees and IDPs since September 2019. In the case of Hatra, the vast majority of arrivals have returned to their areas of origin, and only a few have arrived to new locations of displacement. In Al-Ba'aj, around half of new arrivals from camps have returned to their areas of origin, while another half were recorded as new non-camp IDPs seeking shelter in Markaz Ba'aj. When comparing the number of returnees and IDPs between September and December 2019, the total population in Hatra and Al-Ba'aj more than doubled in four months, given the sudden influx of new returnees and IDPs combined. In addition to these two districts, Sinjar, Mosul and to a lesser extent Telafar hosted the remaining third of new arrivals in Ninewa (Map 1). The increase in caseload in these three districts is, however, significantly lower compared to previous rounds.

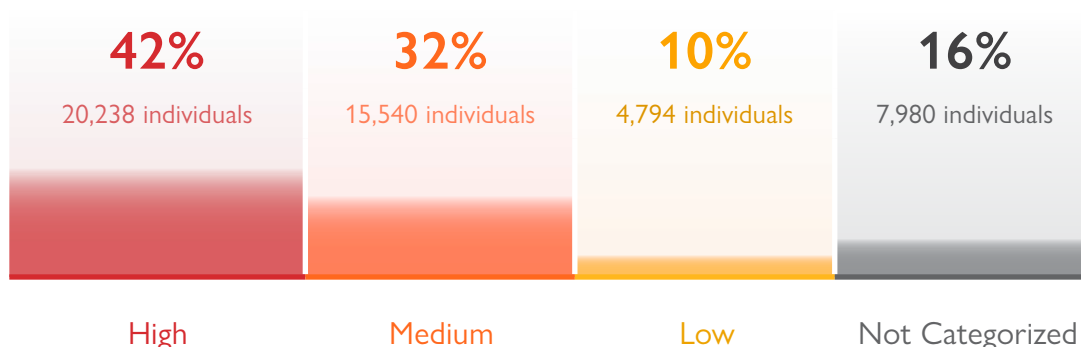
Map 1. Locations in Ninewa that recorded new arrivals from camps by number of individuals between September and December 2019



Matching new arrivals with severity conditions

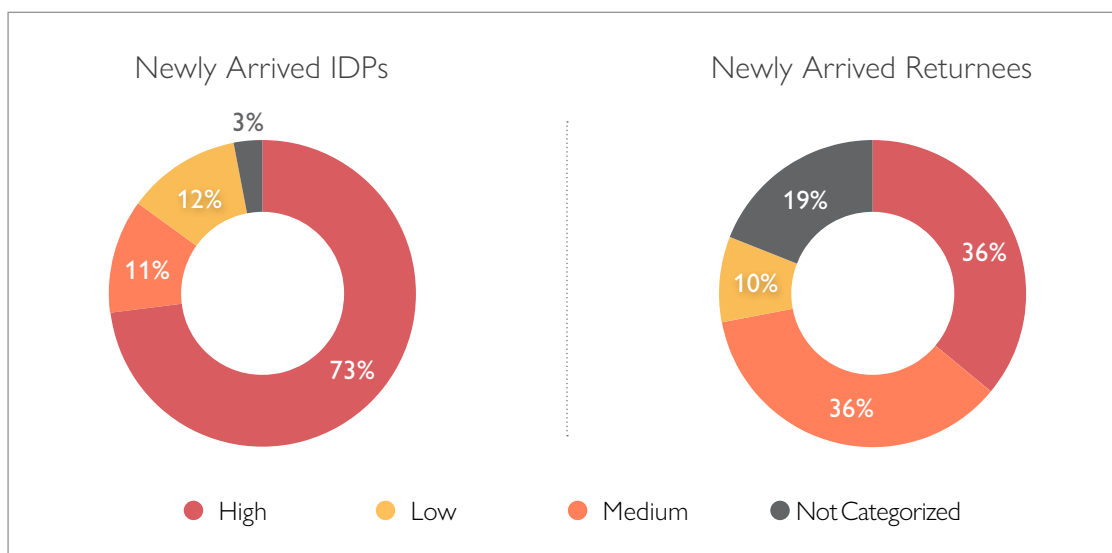
A little more than 40 per cent of the new arrivals to non-camp locations in Ninewa settled in locations classified as high severity. Out of the 48,552 individuals who left camps between September and December 2019, 20,238 are currently living in high severity conditions (that is, almost half of them), 15,540 in medium severity, and a minority of 4,794 in low severity conditions (Figure 4).³ This data points to a likely critical situation for these newly arrived households from displacement camps into relatively deprived areas. The fact that most of the new arrivals are to high or medium severity areas is also indicative of why they remained in protracted displacement in camps previously; in the absence of living conditions conducive to return in their areas of origin, remaining in displacement seemed to be the preferred option for IDPs until camp closures took place.

Figure 4. Distribution of new arrivals from camps to non-camp location in Ninewa by category of severity



IDPs who left camps to new displacement locations in Ninewa tended to cluster in locations with high severity, while those who returned to their areas of origin were distributed across locations of varying degrees of severity. Thus, the situation for new non-camp IDPs seems to be even more critical: 73 per cent are currently living in high severity conditions as compared to 36 per cent of new returnees (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Categorization of new arrivals from camps in Ninewa between September and December 2019



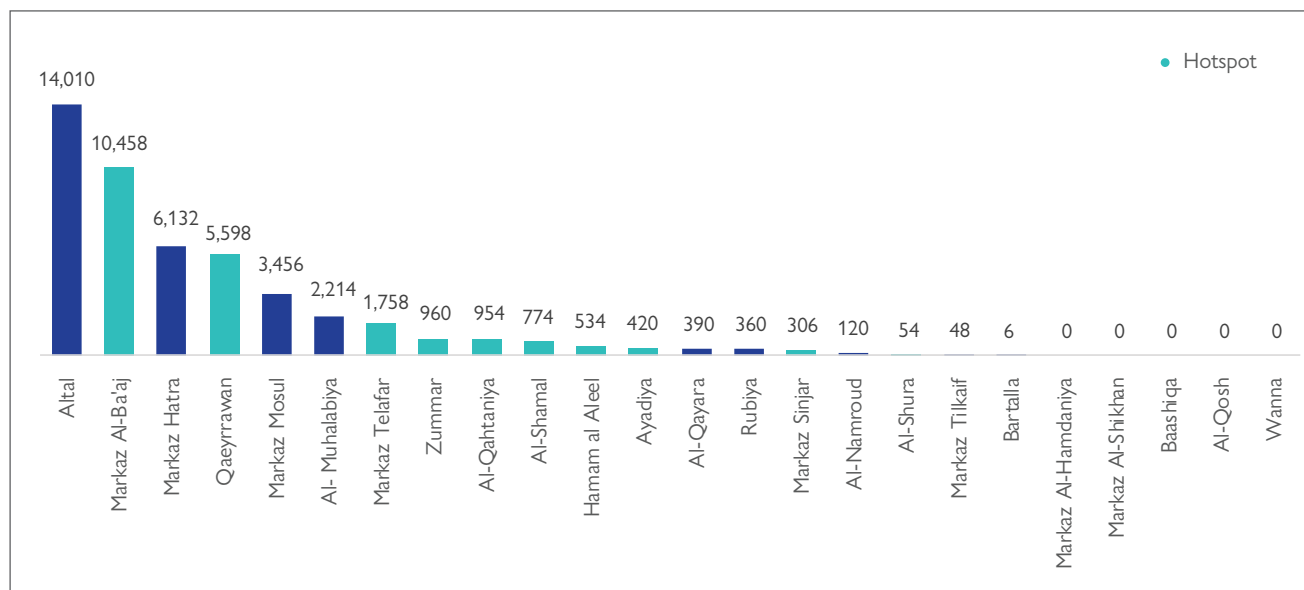
Note: percentages may not add to 100% due to the rounding applied.

³ 50 locations are not categorized in terms of severity, as they consist of newly inhabited places not assessed as part of the Return Index. These locations correspond to nearly 8,000 new arrivals (16%) for which there is no information on the severity of conditions.

DRIVERS OF SEVERITY IN HOTSPOTS WITH ARRIVALS FROM CAMPS
















Ten of the 24 subdistricts with returns in Ninewa are classified as severity “hotspots”.⁴ The vast majority of the 173,724 returnees living in high severity conditions as well as a large proportion of new arrivals from camps are living in these hotspots. The hotspots of Markaz Al-Ba’aj and Qaeyrawan are within the top five subdistricts in Ninewa that received arrivals from camps (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Number of new arrivals per subdistrict in Ninewa Governorate



The tables below highlight those high severity hotspots that received a large number of arrivals of both new returnees and IDPs from camps between September and December 2019. These subdistricts, as indicated in Figure 6, correspond to Markaz Al-Ba’aj, Qaeyrawan, Markaz Telafar, Zummar and Al-Qahtaniya. The analysis focuses on which drivers contribute to particularly high severity conditions to better inform interventions. Those indicators highlighted in blue are those with the greatest impact on high severity conditions, while those in grey range from moderate to no impact on severity conditions. Targeted interventions for these subdistricts are needed to address their specific needs.

⁴ Subdistricts are classified as ‘hotspots’ if they score highly in terms of severity on at least one of the two scales (either livelihoods and basic services, or safety and social cohesion) or if they score medium in terms of severity but also host relatively large numbers of returnees. For more information, consult the corresponding Return Index report: http://iraqdtm.iom.int/images/ReturnIndex/2020312358786_IOM%20dtm%20return%20index_round_7_Feb_2020.pdf

<p>MARKAZ AL-BA'AJ (Ba'aj District)</p> <p>Number of returnees: 18,222 individuals in 14 locations.</p> <p>Number of IDPs: 7,008 individuals in 1 location.</p> <p>New arrivals from camps: 10,458 individuals in 11 locations since September 2019.</p>	 Housing destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Social cohesion	 Safety and Security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the course of 2019, Markaz Al-Ba'aj was consistently one of the subdistricts in Iraq with the highest severity score. Most of its population, including both returnees and IDPs (including new arrivals from camps during the last four months) is concentrated in the subdistrict capital. All locations in the subdistrict are categorized as having high severity conditions. The most important driver of severity in Markaz Al-Ba'aj is the lack of safety and security, with a combination of concerns about further violence evident across locations (especially renewed ISIL attacks and ethno-religious tensions) as well as concerns about the excessive number of security actors controlling the area. The other relevant drivers of severity are the lack of essential services as well as social cohesion concerns, both obtaining the same score. Regarding services, the main emphasis is on the insufficient water supply across locations and a generalized lack of any other type of services in the villages around the subdistrict capital. In terms of social cohesion, the two main indicators with high scores refer to the overall reports of blocked returns as well as cases of illegally occupied residential property. 					
<p>QAEYRAWAN (Sinjar District)</p> <p>Number of returnees: 12,030 individuals in 17 locations.</p> <p>Number of IDPs: none.</p> <p>New arrivals from camps: 5,598 individuals in 15 locations since September 2019.</p>	 Housing destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Social cohesion	 Safety and Security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qaeyrrawan is a subdistrict of Sinjar district; it witnessed a 30 per cent increase in the number of returnees between November and December 2019, a number that remained very small during all of 2019 given the high severity of return conditions. Fifteen out of 17 locations assessed in the subdistrict categorized as high severity have received new returns from camps. The lack of both safety and essential services are the two main drivers of severity in Qaeyrrawan. As in the case of neighbouring Markaz Al-Ba'aj, there are concerns about renewed armed violence and the presence of multiple security actors, both severely impacting return conditions. In terms of services, high severity is driven by the insufficient water supply as well as the absence of civil servants (who were not reincorporated into the administration after the conflict). Finally, the situation in terms of livelihoods is not as severe as it is for safety and essential services, but the limited availability of employment in particular also moderately impacts return conditions. 					
<p>MARKAZ TELAFAR (Telafar District)</p> <p>Number of returnees: 165,144 individuals in 41 locations.</p> <p>Number of IDPs: None.</p> <p>New arrivals from camps: 1,758 individuals in 20 locations since September 2019.</p>	 Housing destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Social cohesion	 Safety and Security

- Markaz Telafar hosts one of the largest populations of returnees in Ninewa Governorate. Safety and security are the major drivers of severity in this location, especially regarding the large number of various security actors present and the highly prevalent concerns among residents about further violence.
- To a lesser extent, social cohesion also contributes to the overall severity situation due to the widespread presence of blocked returns and the illegal occupation of private properties in several locations. Livelihoods, especially the absence of employment, is another moderate driver of high severity in Markaz Telafar.

ZUMMAR (Telafar District)

Number of returnees: 94,644 individuals in 55 locations.

Number of IDPs: 1,212 individuals in 8 locations.

New arrivals from camps: 960 individuals in 13 locations since September 2019.



Housing destruction



Livelihoods



Essential Services



Social cohesion



Safety and Security

- In Zummar subdistrict, the need for and absence of reconciliation processes is particularly important. This issue, combined with blocked returns and strong concerns about violent incidents, indicates a degradation of social cohesion in the subdistrict and, to a certain extent, concerns about safety and security.
- Service provision overall does not rank as a severity factor in Zummar, but the very low reincorporation of civil servants and thus the lack of public services also seem to moderately impact living conditions in the subdistrict.

AL-QAHTANIYA (Al-Ba'aj District)

Number of returnees: 3,288 individuals in 9 locations.

Number of IDPs: None.

New arrivals from camps: 954 individuals in 8 locations since September 2019.



Housing destruction



Livelihoods



Essential Services



Social cohesion



Safety and Security

- The most important driver of severity in Al-Qahtaniya is, by far, livelihoods. As the area is primarily rural, returnees are significantly impacted by their inability to reinitiate farming activities. None of the agricultural or livestock activities are taking place, as reported by key informants. In the absence of these activities, the availability of alternative employment and open, functioning businesses are also critically limited in most locations in the subdistrict.
- The second driver is the lack of essential services. Similar to the remaining hotspots, the main issues regarding service restoration are related to insufficient water supply (affecting most locations) as well as the absence of the provision of governmental services (affecting all locations).
- Finally, safety and security concerns among residents are also exacerbating the severity of conditions in Al-Qahtaniya. In particular, concerns about renewed violence in the area affect all locations in the subdistrict. The multiplicity of armed groups is also an underlying issue in Al-Qahtaniya.

ANNEX. DISAGGREGATED DATA ON NEW ARRIVALS AND SEVERITY


District	Subdistrict	Number of returnees	Number of IDPs	Number of NEW returnees from camps	Number of NEW IDPs from camps	Scale 1 Severity	Scale 2 Severity	Overall Severity
Al-Ba'aj	Al-Qahtaniya	3,288	0	954	0	High	Medium	High
Al-Ba'aj	Markaz Al-Ba'aj	18,222	7,008	5,274	5,184	Medium	High	High
Al-Hamdaniya	Al-Namroud	24,666	18,738	120	0	Low	Low	Low
Al-Hamdaniya	Bartalla	86,616	0	6	0	Low	Low	Low
Al-Hamdaniya	Markaz Al-Hamdaniya	52,812	20,880	0	0	Low	Low	Low
Al-Shikhan	Markaz Al-Shikhan	2,142	25,518	0	0	Low	Low	Low
Hatra	Altal	33,030	960	13,932	78	Medium	Low	Medium
Hatra	Markaz Hatra	12,390	348	6,114	18	Medium	Low	Medium
Mosul	Al- Muhalabiya	26,430	66	2,214	0	Medium	Medium	Medium
Mosul	Al-Qayara	52,932	34,890	390	0	Medium	Medium	Medium
Mosul	Al-Shura	47,016	0	54	0	Medium	Medium	Medium
Mosul	Baashiqa	128,424	1620	0	0	Low	Low	Low
Mosul	Hamam al Aleel	50,862	14,178	534	0	Low	High	Medium
Mosul	Markaz Mosul	714,672	105,270	2,454	1,002	Low	Low	Low
Sinjar	Al-Shamal	48,468	16,566	486	288	Medium	High	High
Sinjar	Markaz Sinjar	10,908	8,868	36	270	High	High	High
Sinjar	Qaeyrrawan	12,030	0	5,598	0	Medium	High	High
Telafar	Ayadiya	25,704	486	420	0	Medium	High	High
Telafar	Markaz Telafar	165,144	0	1,758	0	Low	High	Medium
Telafar	Rubiya	57,480	7,614	30	330	Medium	Low	Medium
Telafar	Zummar	94,644	1,212	660	300	Low	High	Medium
Tilkaif	Al-Qosh	13,512	6,336	0	0	Medium	Low	Low
Tilkaif	Markaz Tilkaif	47,226	4,320	48	0	Low	Low	Low
Tilkaif	Wanna	37,716	732	0	0	Low	Low	Low

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