RETURN INDEX
FINDINGS ROUND THIRTEEN – IRAQ
OCTOBER 2021

CONTEXT

The Return Index is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. Data collection for the Return Index Round 13 took place during the months of August and September 2021 across eight governorates, 38 districts and 2,157 locations in Iraq. During Round 13, an additional 29 locations of return were assessed.

RETURNEE POPULATION IN SEVERE CONDITIONS

• Out of the 2,157 return locations assessed, 453 present severe conditions hosting 12 per cent of the returnee population, or 592,932 individuals.

• An increase of 80,898 returnees living in severe or poor conditions has been observed since the round collected in March – April 2021, when 11 per cent of the returnee population (512,034 individuals) were in severe conditions.

• The largest increases were recorded in Anbar (40,032) and Salah al-Din (30,252), while the largest decreases were observed in Diyala (-1,668) and Baghdad (-900). In Anbar, the largest increases of those in severe conditions were in Falluja (28,986) and Heet districts (11,508). The increase in high severity in Falluja was related to one newly assessed location in Al-Garma subdistrict which was classified as high severity because of extensive residential destruction, concerns about harassment at checkpoints and restrictions on movement. In Salah al-Din, the largest increase was in Al-Shirqat district (34,698), with 27 locations recording severe conditions (20 more than in the previous round). This was driven by an increase in the number of security actors operating in this area, as well as blocked returns, illegal occupation of private residences and concerns about harassment at checkpoints.

• In Diyala, the largest decrease was in Al-Muqdadiya district, where residents continue to report fewer concerns related to various sources of violence and a moderate improvement in access to employment. In Baghdad, the largest decrease was in Mahmoudiya district. This decrease was driven by improved access to electricity, access to employment and improvement in the quality of daily public life in Al-Latifya subdistrict.

• Ninewa and Salah al-Din remain the governorates hosting the highest number of returnees living in severe conditions, with 256,800 and 202,320 individuals respectively.

• Salah al-Din and Diyala host the highest proportions of returnees living in severe conditions (28% and 19% respectively).

MOST SEVERE LOCATIONS OF RETURN

• Seventy-six locations hosting 78,390 returnees were identified as having the most severe return conditions in this round. The top five of these locations are in Tuz Khurmatu and Baiji districts in Salah al-Din Governorate, as well as one in Telafar district, Ninewa Governorate.

• An additional five locations were observed with the most severe return conditions since the round collected in March – April 2021, when 71,286 individuals were living across 71 locations with the most severe return conditions.
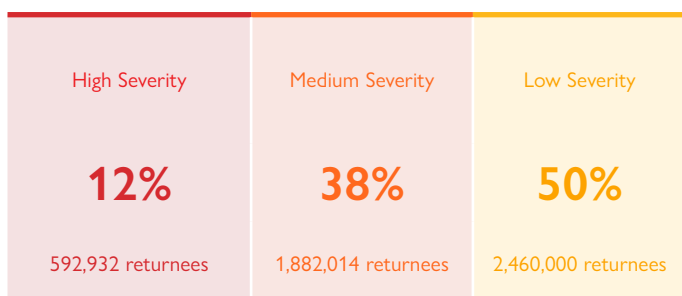
METHODOLOGY

The Return Index is based on 16 indicators divided into two scales: Scale 1, on livelihoods and basic services, and Scale 2, centered around social cohesion and safety perceptions. A regression model is used to assess the impact of each of the indicators in facilitating or preventing returns and to calculate scores for two scales. For example, the model tests how much less likely a location where no agricultural activities have recovered is to have returns compared to a location where they have recovered. To compute an overall severity index, the scores of the two scales are combined.

The 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. The scores of the severity index are grouped into three categories: low, medium and high (which also includes very high).

Refer to the report "Methodological Overview" for more details on the methodology.

Figure 1. Proportion of returnees by category of severity

High Severity	Medium Severity	Low Severity
12%	**38%**	**50%**
592,932 returnees	1,882,014 returnees	2,460,000 returnees

4,934,946 Returnees
+76,824
since Round 12 (March – April 2021)

8 governorates	38 districts	822,491 households	2,157 locations +29 since Round 12

Data collected August - September 2021

Table 1. Number of locations and returnees per governorate by category of severity

Governorate	HIGH		MEDIUM		LOW		TOTAL	
	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations
Anbar	82,128	23	671,712	188	787,626	119	1,541,466	330
Baghdad	744	2	17,334	33	73,824	87	91,902	122
Dahuk					762	1	762	1
Diyala	44,958	43	165,792	137	27,630	42	238,380	222
Erbil	4,314	16	10,968	29	45,150	24	60,432	69
Kirkuk	1,668	6	80,418	71	267,714	148	349,800	225
Ninewa	256,800	277	605,454	422	1,060,068	255	1,922,322	954
Salah al-Din	202,320	86	330,336	96	197,226	52	729,882	234
Total	592,932	453	1,882,014	976	2,460,000	728	4,934,946	2,157

GOVERNORATE HOTSPOTS OF SEVERITY

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, at least 60,000 returnees in a subdistrict.

Thirty-one hotspots were identified across four governorates in this round. Compared to the round collected in March – April 2021, one subdistrict was added to the list, Al-Dujeel Center (Al-Fares District) in Salah al-Din Governorate. The subdistrict was classified as a 'hotspot' due to a deterioration in access to water and the need for community reconciliation. In two locations there is very poor access to employment, concerns about harassment at checkpoints, restrictions on move, blocked returns and a low quality of daily public life.

SALAH AL-DIN: 493,476 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Amerli
- Al-Dujeel Center
- Al-Eshaqi
- Al-Moatassem
- Al-Siniya
- Markaz Al-Balad
- Markaz Al-Daur
- Markaz Al-Shirqat
- Markaz Baiji
- Markaz Samarra
- Markaz Tuz Khurmatu
- Suleiman Beg
- Yathreb

NINEWA: 533,538 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Qahtaniya
- Al-Shamal
- Ayadiya
- Hamam al Aleel
- Markaz Al-Ba'aj
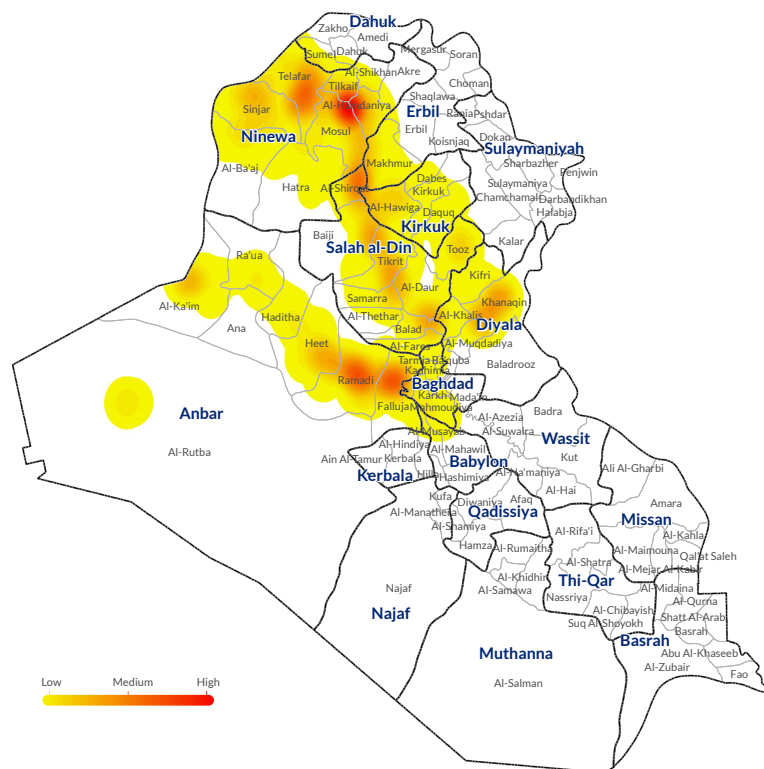- Markaz Sinjar
- Markaz Telafar
- Qaeyrrawan
- Zummar

ANBAR: 397,332 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Amirya
- Al-Forat
- Al-Garma
- Husaibah Al-Sharqiah
- Markaz Al-Ka'im
- Markaz Heet

DIYALA: 140,676 returnees in hotspots

- Jalula
- Markaz Al-Muqdadiya
- Qara Tabe

Map 1. Returnee population density by overall severity score

This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

The map shows conditions of severity based on population size and severity score of each assessed location. The darker colours indicate a larger concentration of families living in severe conditions of return, while the brighter colours indicate lower severity conditions or areas with low levels of returns.

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