



## INTRODUCTION

Since the end of 2007, return has been a significant issue in the Iraqi context due to its political and security implications. As the rate of displacement in Iraq slows and the rate of return accelerates, tracking Iraqi refugee and IDP returns continues to garner international attention.

The Government of Iraq (GoI) has initiated a financial incentive and subsidy program for returnee families, and they are working to develop their capacity to register and assist the increasing number of returnees. IOM has been working in close coordination with MoDM to track and assess returnee populations since December 2007. The information gathered is used to create a database designed to aid the Iraqi government in assessing and reporting on the issue. 'Returnee' is defined by IOM and MoDM as someone who has returned to their original home or neighbourhood. Returnees who cannot settle in their original home or neighbourhood are considered secondarily displaced. From these assessments, IOM has found that the humanitarian crisis of displacement continues after return. Returnees often find their homes and livelihoods destroyed. Access to food, fuel, and non-food items for returnees remains an urgent humanitarian priority.



*An elderly returnee, with no mattress or blankets.*

This report presents the data collected by IOM returnee assessments to date, along with analysis of return trends and reporting on specific locations. This document, along with a range of other IOM reports released on displacement in Iraq, can be found at <http://www.iom-iraq.net/library.html#IDP>. Comprehensive tabulated statistics are available in the MoDM report "Returnee Monitoring and Needs Assessments, Tabulation Report" March 2008.

## OVERVIEW OF RETURNEE POPULATION

Returnee information is gathered from the Returnee Support Center at MoDM, field visits conducted by IOM and MoDM monitors, UNHCR Rapid assessments (snapshot), and other sources. IOM has identified 325 locations comprising 16,848 returnee<sup>1</sup> families (101,088 persons) in Iraq.<sup>2</sup> The majority of these returnees (9,699 families, or 58%) have returned to Baghdad. A significant proportion (3,000 families) has also been identified in Anbar. 14,119 of returnees assessed (84%) have returned from internal displacement, while the remaining 2,729 families (16%) have returned from abroad.

<sup>1</sup> According to IOM and MoDM, a returnee is someone who has returned to his original neighborhood or home. If someone has returned to the same city or village but is not able to return to his/her original neighborhood or home, the person is considered secondarily displaced, not a returnee.

<sup>2</sup> The number of returnee families presented in this report is not the total number of returnees in Iraq, but the summary number of returnee families for locations (villages and neighborhoods) assessed as of the reporting date. With an increased number of sources and wider coverage of assessments, it is expected that this number will change in subsequent reports.

This figure is not comprehensive, since not all returnees are immediately identified by monitors. However, it is likely that this list represents the majority of returnees. Returns continue to represent only a fraction of the displaced population: this figure constitutes less than 1% of the estimated five million Iraqis displaced both internally and abroad<sup>3</sup>.

Identified returnee locations are as follows: 110 locations(34%) are in Baghdad, 83 (26%) are in Anbar, 27 (8%) are in Diyala, 17 (5%) are in Ninewa, 13 (4%) are in Basrah, 12 (4%) in Babylon, 11 (3%) in Thi-Qar, 10 (3%) in Missan. The remaining 42 locations (19%) are distributed in Wassit, Najaf, Muthanna, Salah al-Din, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Qadissiya and Dahuk.

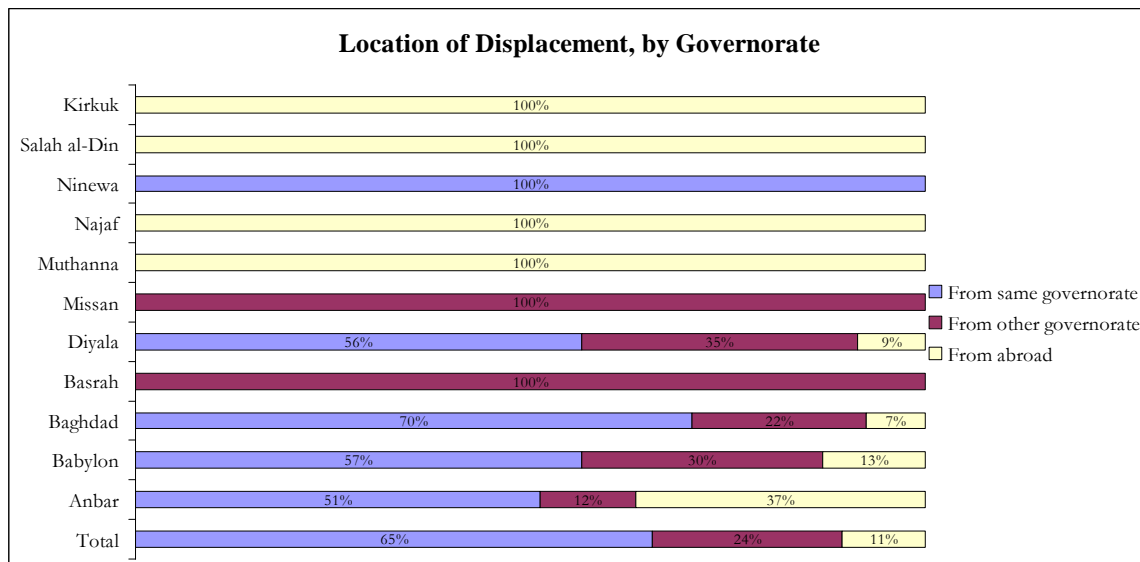
## PROFILE OF ASSESSED RETURNEE FAMILIES

As of the time of reporting, IOM monitors conducted in-depth interviews with **1,567** of these returnee families (10,192 individuals). 11% of those interviewed are refugee returnees and 89% are IDP returnees.

These assessed families are located as follows: 62% in Baghdad, 13% in Ninewa, 12% in Diyala, 5% in Missan, 3% in Anbar, 2% in Najaf and the other 4% are assessed in Babylon, Muthanna, Kirkuk, Basrah and Salah al-Din.

### Place of Return and Place of Displacement

The majority (65%) of returnees have returned from within the same governorate, while 24% have returned from a different governorate, and 11% have returned from abroad, mostly from Jordan and Turkey. The breakdown of returnee place of displacement by governorate is as follows:



A closer look at returnee dynamics reveals certain trends across the governorates. 100% of returnees to Ninewa, 70% to Baghdad, 57% to Babylon, 56% to Diyala, and 51% to Anbar have all returned from elsewhere within the same governorate. In addition, many returnees are returning from displacement in Baghdad, including 94% of returnees to Missan, 30% of returnees to Babylon, 20% of returnees to Basrah, and 20% of returnees to Diyala. 80% of Basrah returnees have come home from Ninewa.

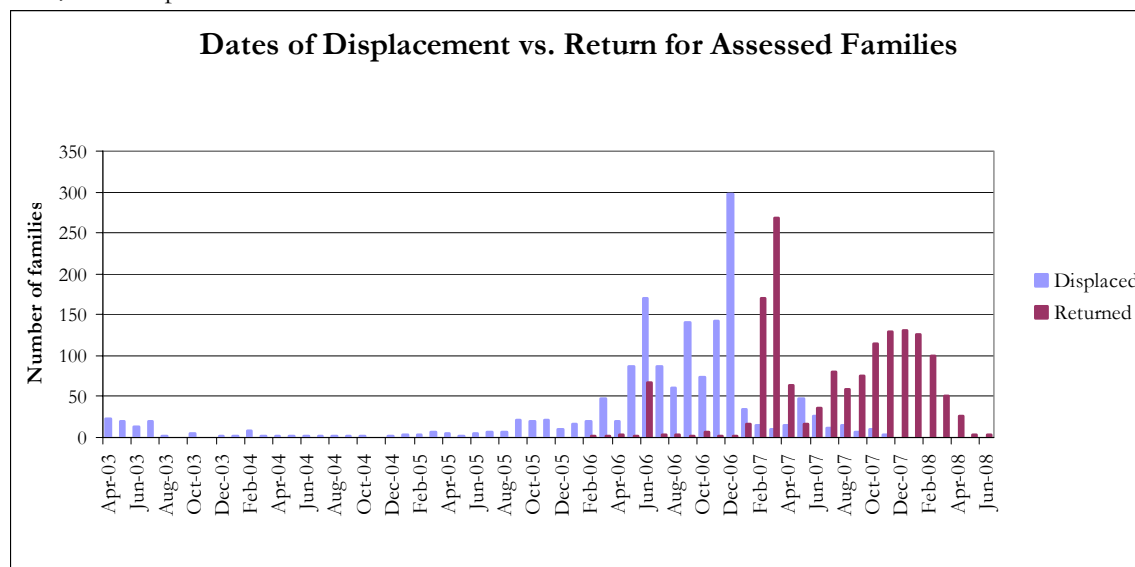
There have also been notable returnee movements from abroad. 67% of Muthanna returnees, 45% of Kirkuk returnees, and 32% of Anbar returnees have come back from Syria. 55% of Kirkuk

<sup>3</sup> According to the IDP Working Group's "Internally Displaced Persons – Update, June 2008," the estimated number of displaced since February 2006 is almost 1,596,448 individuals. This figure, combined with the estimated 1,212,108 individuals who were internally displaced before February 2006, results in a total of more than 2.8 million individuals displaced within Iraq to date.

returnees have returned from Turkey, while 28% of Muthanna returnees have come home from Jordan and 5% from Turkey.

### Dates of Displacement and Return

The majority (74%) of assessed returnees were displaced in 2006 and returned in 2007. As the chart below demonstrates, the peak month for displacement of the assessed population was December 2006, and the peak month for return was March 2007.<sup>4</sup>



The majority of assessed returnees were displaced for less than a year, with almost 46% having been displaced for only 3 to 6 months:

Length of displacement	% of assessed families
Less than 3 months	0.9%
3-6 months	45.5%
7-12 months	17.7%
13-18 months	20.1%
19-24 months	5.6%
25-36 months	5.5%
37-48 months	4.8%

The table below shows the reasons for displacement reported by assessed returnees vs. those reported by assessed IDPs.<sup>5</sup> This statistic does not vary significantly between these populations, despite speculation that those who fled direct death threats or forcible displacement from property would be less likely to return.

Reason for displacement	% of returnees	% of IDPs
Direct threats to life	25.7%	30.8%
Generalized violence	38.4%	26.2%
Forced displacement from property	9.7%	14.6%
Left out of fear	21.4%	20.6%
Armed conflict	4.3%	7.7%
Ethnic/religious/political discrimination	0.6%	0.0%

<sup>4</sup> March 2007 as the peak month for returns is corroborated by registration information from the Government of Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM). See p. 17 of the 24 December 2007 MoDM report "Summary Results IDP Registration – February 2006 to December 2007."

<sup>5</sup> IOM has assessed 166,167 post-February 2006 IDP families throughout Iraq.

## **Reasons for Return**

Overall, 43% of assessed returnees cited 'improved security in area of origin' as their reason for returning. This is particularly notable in Anbar and Babylon governorates (73% each) as well as Diyala (85%). Another 37% of returnees in Iraq cited the combination of improved security and difficult conditions in displacement as primary reasons for return, particularly in Missan, which reported 86%. Only 14% cited the difficult conditions in displacement alone as their reason for return, although this figure was significantly higher in Ninewa.

## **Ethnicity/Religion**

<b>Ethno-religious identity</b>	<b>%</b>
Arab Shia Muslim	63.3%
Arab Sunni Muslim	28.2%
Turkmen Sunni Muslim	7.5%
Kurd Shia Muslim	0.3%
Kurd Sunni Muslim	0.2%
Turkmen Shia Muslim	0.3%
Arab Christian	0.06%
Armenian	0.06%

Nearly all assessed Shia Arab returnees are in the Abu Ghraib, Karkh, Mada'in, Mahmoudiya, Taji, and Adhamiya Istiqlal districts of Baghdad; the Al-Khalis, Al-Muqdadiya, and Ba'quba districts of Diyala; Amarah district, Missan; the Al-Samawa and Al-Rumaitha districts of Muthanna; Najaf district, Najaf; and Al-Mahawil district, Babylon. Most assessed Sunni Arab returnees are in the Fallujah, Al-Ka'im and Ramadi districts of Anbar; Al-Mahawil and Al-Musayab districts of Babylon; the Adhamiya Istiqlal, Al-Resafa, Karkh, and Mada'in districts of Baghdad; Al-Zubair and Basrah districts of Basrah; the Ba'quba district of Diyala; and the Telafar district of Ninewa; Tikrit district of Salah al-Din; and Kirkuk district of Kirkuk. Most of the assessed Turkmen Sunni returnees are in the Telafar district of Ninewa governorate. See maps of returnee locations in Baghdad and all of Iraq at the end of this report.

## **RETURNEE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION**

### **Security/Protection**

Of assessed returnees, 59% said that they consistently felt safe in their place of return, 40% said that they sometimes felt safe, and 1% said that they do not feel safe at all. Those who did not always feel safe cited general insecurity, continued insurgent activity in their area, and detention campaigns.

Military operations, general insecurity, and occupied houses are the primary reasons preventing Iraqis from returning home. Many of those who have returned remain cautious and even fearful of recurring violence. For example, about 60 returnee families in Al Wardiyah neighbourhood of Baghdad face ongoing security issues, including mortar attacks and unpredictable gunfire targeting their houses by armed groups operating out of the nearby neighbourhoods and surrounds.

In addition, sectarian violence is still a concern for some returnees. For example, monitors observed that returnees to the Dora/Hadar area were not necessarily moving back to their original homes and neighbourhood configurations, but rather into neighbourhoods divided along Sunni/Shia sectarian lines.

However, in some areas an increase in stability has encouraged return. For example, due to improved security and reconciliation efforts beginning in May, there was a wave of return in Aweej area of Rasheed sub-district in Baghdad. The total number of returnees in this area has now passed 1,000 families. Increased stability was also the main reason cited in Anbar (72%), Babylon (74%) and Diyala (85%). In addition, after the calming of the recent violence in Sadr City, Baghdad, the majority of families displaced during this episode have returned. According to MoDM's estimation, about 4,073

IDP families displaced by recent military operations have returned to Sadr City due to this improvement in security.

### **Shelter/Property**

Many returnees have found their houses destroyed or damaged, placing them in need of shelter assistance. Furthermore, of IDPs assessed nationwide by IOM, 32% report that the property they left behind has been occupied by others. Even among *returnees* assessed, 6% still report that their property is occupied. Monitors report most disputes over property ownership are in Baghdad. Resettlement and property occupation is currently being handled on an ad hoc basis by various authorities in Baghdad. In the event of future large-scale returns, a comprehensive policy and mechanism will be essential to prevent renewed tensions.

The Iraqi government is now implementing a number of measures aimed at encouraging the return of IDPs and refugees to their homes, such as payments of 1.8 million Iraqi dinars (approx. US\$1,500) to families who are illegally occupying the houses of other displaced families and who want to return to their homes, so that they may rent their own homes lawfully. IDPs or refugees willing to return to their houses will be paid one million Iraqi dinars (about \$840). Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries are being offered free airline tickets, free shipment of their belongings, and compensation for damaged property.

Of returnees assessed, 85% had returned to their original house and the remaining 15% are living in their original neighbourhood but not their original house.<sup>6</sup> 89% of returnees in Ninewa are living in their own house, albeit in poor condition. In Missan conversely, more than 80% of returnees are living in rented houses. Muthanna and Najaf also have a significant proportion of returnees renting, with 44% and 38% respectively. A large percentage of returnees in Muthanna (39%) are also living with neighbours, friends or relatives.

Out of 78 returnee families interviewed in Missan, none of them had returned to their original household. They had, however, returned to their original neighbourhoods. It is reported that all of these families were expelled by the governor of Missan after they had committed atrocities during the time of the former regime. After their expulsion, their houses were either confiscated or taken by others.

Monitors noted that families in Latifiyah are returning to live in the skeletal remains of what once was the family home, despite the houses often being decrepit or dangerous. Where families return to find their homes uninhabitable, they often will post a family member at the house to guard it, before returning to their displacement location.

Others attempt to receive compensation and resettle in their places of origin. For example, 118 families returned to Diyala to find their homes and orchards destroyed. In this case the city council, awakening council, provincial council, and humanitarian organizations liaised with local police to develop a committee which could assess damages. Families were given 7,000 Iraqi dinars for the purposes of rebuilding, but this has been inadequate. Many are having to rent houses in nearby villages and having to commute daily to their properties.



*A returnee to Baghdad surveys the remains of his house.*

<sup>6</sup> IDPs or refugees who have moved from displacement to another location that is not their original house or neighborhood are still “internally displaced” and are therefore assessed as IDPs, not returnees.

<b>Housing status</b>	<b>%</b>
Own house in good condition	41.2%
Own house in bad condition	42.1%
Renting	9.8%
Live with neighbor / friend / relative house	4.4%
Other	1.1%
Improvised shelter on own land	0.9%
Improvised shelter on others' land	0.5%

<b>Status of non-moveable property (house, land)</b>	<b>%</b>
Accessible and in good condition	58.7%
Partially destroyed	26%
Occupied by others	6.4%
Completely destroyed	8.9%

<b>Status of moveable property (car, furniture)</b>	<b>%</b>
Lost / stolen (do not have it now)	41.4%
Have it still	36.9%
Used by family during displacement (do not have it now)	17.4%

### **Gender, Vulnerabilities and Employment**

Approximately one third (30%) of heads of household nationwide are able to work, but not working. This was highest in Diyala (46%), Ninewa (43%) and Baghdad (47.5%). 36% of returnees in Missan reported not being able to work, significantly higher than the Iraqi average (23%).

Families with unemployed female heads of household, pregnant women, chronically ill or disabled members, or young children are often especially vulnerable in a humanitarian crisis. Widowed heads of household in particular have great difficulty finding employment in the Iraqi context, due to religious and cultural practices.

Gender and age breakdown of the 1,567 assessed families (10,192 individuals):

<b>Gender and Age</b>	<b>% of total</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Children 0-17</b>	29%	27.6%
<b>Adults 18-59</b>	21.2%	19.8%
<b>Elderly 60+</b>	1.6%	1.1%

Of assessed households, 84% are headed by married men, 49% of whom are currently unemployed. Female-headed households number 12% and the number of unemployed in this group rises to 98%. The majority of these unemployed female widows live in the Karkh, Adhamiya Istiqlal and Mada'in districts of Baghdad, Ba'quba district of Diyala, Telafar district of Ninewa, and Amarah district of Missan. Another 4% of families are headed by widowed men, 72% of whom are unemployed. 16% of assessed returnee families reported that they had family members who were chronically ill or disabled.

Many communities suffer from a high rate of unemployment and lack of job prospects in the area, due to violence and lack of infrastructure. Those families with a source of income still find it difficult to afford anything more than the most basic provisions. Wages are seldom high enough to cover requirements like medication or fuel for generators and cooking. The majority of returnees lost their original jobs and livelihoods during displacement, while others have been forced out of work by direct threats from insurgents and armed groups. Those from agricultural areas return to find their farms neglected and therefore cannot immediately support themselves. Communities in Al Entisar and Al Hardaniya note that the tillage cost and constant threat of having livestock stolen are stopping them from returning to farming. Returnees to urban areas such as Sadr City are frequently coming home to find their livelihoods (such as shops and offices) destroyed during military operations.

Female-headed households still continue to suffer, with many lacking financial support, or struggling to juggle work and childcare at the same time. They frequently face alienation from the community. Many children now lack a male role model, leaving them vulnerable to influence from various sources outside the family, such as local militias or armed groups. Monitors identified about 100 returnee households in Arab Jobur, located in Karkh district of Baghdad, where widows are living in especially difficult economic conditions. In Hoor Rijab of Awereej district in Baghdad, many women exhibited severe psychological effects from having witnessed the deaths of their husbands and other family members.

In Al Saheroon and Al ‘Aboss neighbourhoods, Baghdad, returnees expressed concern about the lack of government and NGO support for orphans and widows in the community, while in Badran village, monitors identified cases of elderly and disabled people in need of assistance.

### **Water and Sanitation**

Access to potable water is a major concern of IDPs, returnees, and host community members alike because of the wider implications for health and disease prevention associated with clean water. 84.4% of those assessed have access to municipal water networks, although this does not guarantee that the water is potable:

<b>Water Source</b>	<b>%</b>
Municipal water/pipe grid	84.4%
Rivers, streams or lakes	10.3%
Other	0.4%
Public wells	1.5%
Water tanks/trucks	1.5%
Open or broken pipe	1.8%

Places such as Alhardaniya in Al Mada’in district, Al Entisar in Istiqlal district, and Sadr City Sector 12 in Baghdad, as well as Adwaniya in Rasheed City, Baghdad all lack adequate sewage networks, with waste often flowing in the street, contaminating water supplies and posing an immediate health risk. Saheroon and Al ‘Aboss lack sewage systems completely and suffer shortages of drinking water, while Malhaniya’s sewage system was destroyed by insurgents. Drainage moreover is an issue in many neighbourhoods, with water accumulating in streets and alleys and restricting movement in many areas.

There is a lack of municipal water or drinking water in many neighbourhoods as well. For example, inhabitants of Adwaniya are dependent on wells as their only source of water and lack water resources for agricultural purposes, while villagers in Al Hamedat and Nahrawan, in Mada’in district, Baghdad, must travel several kilometres to access water provided by trucking. In Momniyah, Mahmoudiya district, Baghdad, returnees have to travel twenty kilometres to access water from a neighbouring village. The water system in Albo Aitha has deteriorated to the point where pipes have become contaminated by foreign bodies and water access is limited. Families in the area have now resorted to obtaining their water supplies directly from the river. In neighbourhood of Saidiya, in the Karkh/Rasheed district, families only have intermittent access to water supplies. They are compensating by using water pumps.

### **Access to Electricity**

<b>Daily electric supply</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Electricity source</b>	<b>%</b>
1-2 hours	28%	Public network	71.7%
3-6 hours	32.5%	Private generator	12.6%
7-10 hours	20.4%	Public and private sources	12.6%
11-18 hours	16%	No electricity at all	2.9%
More than 18 hours	2.4%		
No electricity	0.8%		

While 58% of the assessed mentioned fuel being accessible in their area, 62% of them said that it was too expensive for them to buy.

Families returning to their place of origin often are unable to fully access their ration of gas and oil, and are frequently forced to collect wood for cooking and heating. Badran village and Al Zahraa neighbourhood have no access to kerosene, nor would they be able to afford it were it available. Families in Saba al-Boor reported having no power for more than twenty days; prior to this, they had access to electricity for 3-5 hours per day at best. Public electricity in Adwaniya is limited to two hours per day; returnees have not been able to access private generators, nor fuel. Electrical infrastructure in Sadr City was severely damaged due to recent conflict in the area. Residents report access to electricity for one hour a day, and most are depending on personal generators for electricity. The electricity poles in Hamdeet village, Momniya and Al A'aboss neighbourhood were stolen by insurgents, and families in these areas have no access to electricity at all.

### **PDS Rations and Government Grant for Returnees**

97% of assessed returnees reported having a current PDS card. 38% of returnees reported regular access to PDS rations, 59% said they have intermittent access, and 3% said they have no access at all. Access to PDS rations is especially infrequent in Diyala, Ninewa and Anbar, with more than 90% of returnees in each governorate reporting irregular access to rations.

32% of assessed families reported that they had registered and received the Government of Iraq's financial grant for returnees. Of the total assessed, another 68% said that they had registered for the grant but had not yet received it. The remaining 46% had not registered for the grant. Nearly all families who actually received the grant are in Baghdad, Babylon and Anbar.

Families throughout Baghdad have suffered shortages and delayed deliveries of PDS rations and materials. This is especially detrimental to low-income families, who rely food items such as rice, flour, tomato paste, legumes and oil provided by the PDS packs. In addition, deliveries are frequently delayed for more than two months. Rations in Al Wardiya, Baghdad have been delayed some six months.

Many families have complained of receiving compromised PDS ration packs that are missing food items. Some report only having received tea, sugar and flour.

Al Saheroon and Al A'aboss neighbourhoods have not received rations since their return, as the area is too dangerous to effectively distribute food. Albo-Aitha has not received flour for several months, and now returnees are reporting that drivers are refusing to bring PDS rations into the area due to security concerns. Returnees must walk 9km in order to receive rations. During military operations in Sadr City in early summer, returnees reported not receiving PDS rations for more than three months, despite the GoI announcing that it would double rations throughout military operations. In Hameedat Village, returnee families have not received any form of support and are urgently in need of food assistance.

### **Health Care**

Of assessed returnee families, only 51% have access to health care. When asked why they could not access health care, returnees cited lack of health facilities and a shortage of medications. Access to health care is worst in the centre; 67% of returnees assessed in Baghdad said they have no access to health care. In Kirkuk, 91% of returnees assessed said that they have no access to health care, and in Basrah, 60% of returnees assessed have no access to health care. More than 90% of interviewees in governorates such as Anbar, Missan, Muthanna, Najaf, Ninewa and Salah al-Din report access to health care.

Access to medications is also worse in the centre. Of returnees assessed there, 52% said that they cannot access medications they need. A shortage of medication in Sadr City is forcing a large number

of returnees to resort to buying from private pharmacies, where the prices are much higher. In Basrah, 60% of returnees assessed have no access to medications and all the families assessed in Kirkuk cannot access medications.

Returnee families reported a complete absence of health care in Al-Latifayah, Al-Mada'in, Qariat Nabisheet, A'rab jboor, Al Forat and Al Akhtal, Baghdad, nor in Momniyah, Awereej, Mahmodiyah, and Al Entisar. Similarly, in Rikiyah village, Al-Ahnaf, northern Kadhimiyah, Baghdad, the closest health care is 8km distant. Infant deaths have been reported due to a lack of skilled midwives. Isolated and rural communities (such as Kargolayah and Madain) frequently lack health centres altogether because their population density does not meet Ministry of Health requirements. Returnees must often travel long distances (30km in the case of Al Entisar) in order to seek out basic health facilities (even pharmacies in some cases); often an expensive and dangerous journey. Health care centres are frequently either destroyed (such as in Al Hardanih), closed down due to violence (in Badran and Saidiya), understaffed (as in Al Saheroon and Al A'aboss) or do not provide adequate services in case of emergency such as Saba al-Boor.

### **Education**

Of families with school-age children in Iraq, 80% reported having access to schooling and that their children were attending. A further 9% report only some access, and 11% report having no access.

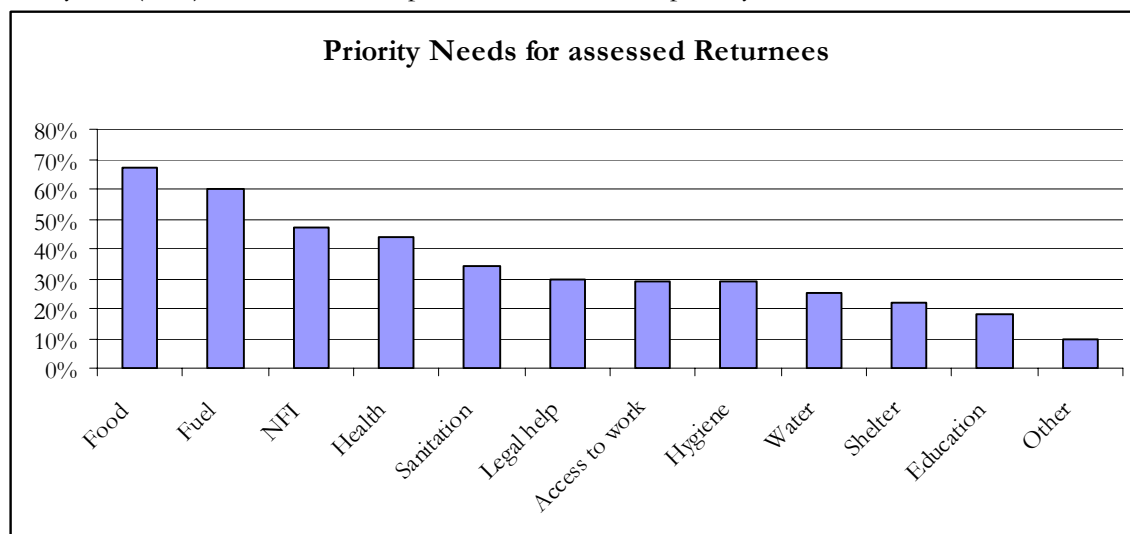
Many returnee children have had their education interrupted. Reasons include sectarian discrimination, displacement to a location too remote to attend school, or being forced to work to help support their family. In some locations, monitors have noted that returning families have left their children in an area of displacement to continue studying for the remainder of the year.

Military operations have destroyed the only schools in Al A'aboss, Al Hamdeet and Momniya. Studies have since been suspended. Similarly, Al Saheroon neighbourhood's only primary school was destroyed by insurgents. The community has tried to compensate by teaching students in a local house, but it is ill-suited to the educational needs of the community. While there is a school in Adwaniya, the number of pupils is high and the school in need of extension.

Sectarian violence has not only destroyed schools, but also displaced teaching staff. Returnees are not content with government efforts to rebuild schools or provide incentives for teaching staff to return to communities.

### **Priority Needs**

The most frequently reported priority needs are food (67%), fuel (60%), and non-food items (47%). Nearly half (44%) of the assessed reported health care as a priority need:



## **Assistance Received**

When asked if they had received other assistance *from the government* besides PDS rations and the returnee grant, only 4% of those assessed said that they had.

When asked about other sources of assistance *apart from the government*, almost 89% of those assessed said that they had not received any aid:

<b>Other sources of assistance</b>	<b>%</b>
Have not received any assistance	88.8%
Relatives	6.2%
Humanitarian organizations	4.0%
Neighbors	2.9%
Religious groups	0.3%
Military (MNF-I/IF)	0.8%
Militia/Insurgents	0.1%
Other	0.6%

However, with regard to aid distribution, there is a concern that in some cases IDPs are being shown some preference by host communities and local authorities over returnees coming home from neighbouring countries due to resentment of refugees who went abroad.

## **CONCLUSION**

During the first half of 2008, the rate of Iraqis returning home has continued to accelerate due primarily to a combination of improved security in the place of origin and harsh conditions in the place of displacement. The GoI and MoDM have made it a priority to encourage such returns using public awareness campaigns, financial aid grants and subsidies for returning families. However, the current returnee population remains very small compared to Iraq's IDP population.

An increase in security in place of return does not imply an improvement in terms of basic needs and services, and the humanitarian situation for returnees remains grim. Almost 89% of returnees report that they have received no assistance, and they note food, non-food items, and fuel as their top priority needs. While many have access to fuel, 62% cannot buy it because it is too expensive. Most returnees (68%) report only intermittent access to PDS rations, and almost half (48%) have no access to health care. Conditions for returnees can vary widely from governorate to governorate, depending on the security situation and available services and infrastructure.

In addition, many returnees come home to find their homes destroyed either partially (26%) or completely (9%), or their homes may be occupied by other families or IDPs (7%). There is currently no official mechanism in place to resolve these types of property issues.

Although the United Nations and IOM do not necessarily encourage return at this time because of security concerns, both are committed to providing assistance to those who do decide to return. For instance, IOM distributed food and non-food items to 2000 vulnerable returnee families in Baghdad between December 2007 and May 2008.

Currently, 59% of IDPs assessed by IOM state that they intend to return home. There remains potential for a large increase in the number of returns, contingent on factors such as security and conditions in place of displacement. The political nature of return statistics in Iraq means that this issue should be treated with delicacy and an eye to the larger context of the country, in which the current humanitarian crisis created by IDPs dwarfs the number of returnees, even as this trend continues to grow.

*Please note that displacements and returns are occurring on a continuous basis, and IOM strives to update this information as frequently as possible. Through its monitoring and needs assessments, IOM also disseminates biweekly displacement updates, Governorate Needs Assessment Profiles, the 2007 Iraq Displacement Year in Review, and IDP camp updates. For these and information on the IOM's needs assessment methodology, see <http://www.iom-iraq.net/idp.html>.*

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## APPENDIX – RETURNEE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

IOM has monitored internal displacement in Iraq since 2003. In 2007, IOM expanded its nationwide monitoring coverage to assess Iraqis who are returning from abroad and within Iraq to their place of origin, while continuing to assess recently displaced IDPs. In Baghdad, IOM and MoDM are jointly implementing returnee assessments.

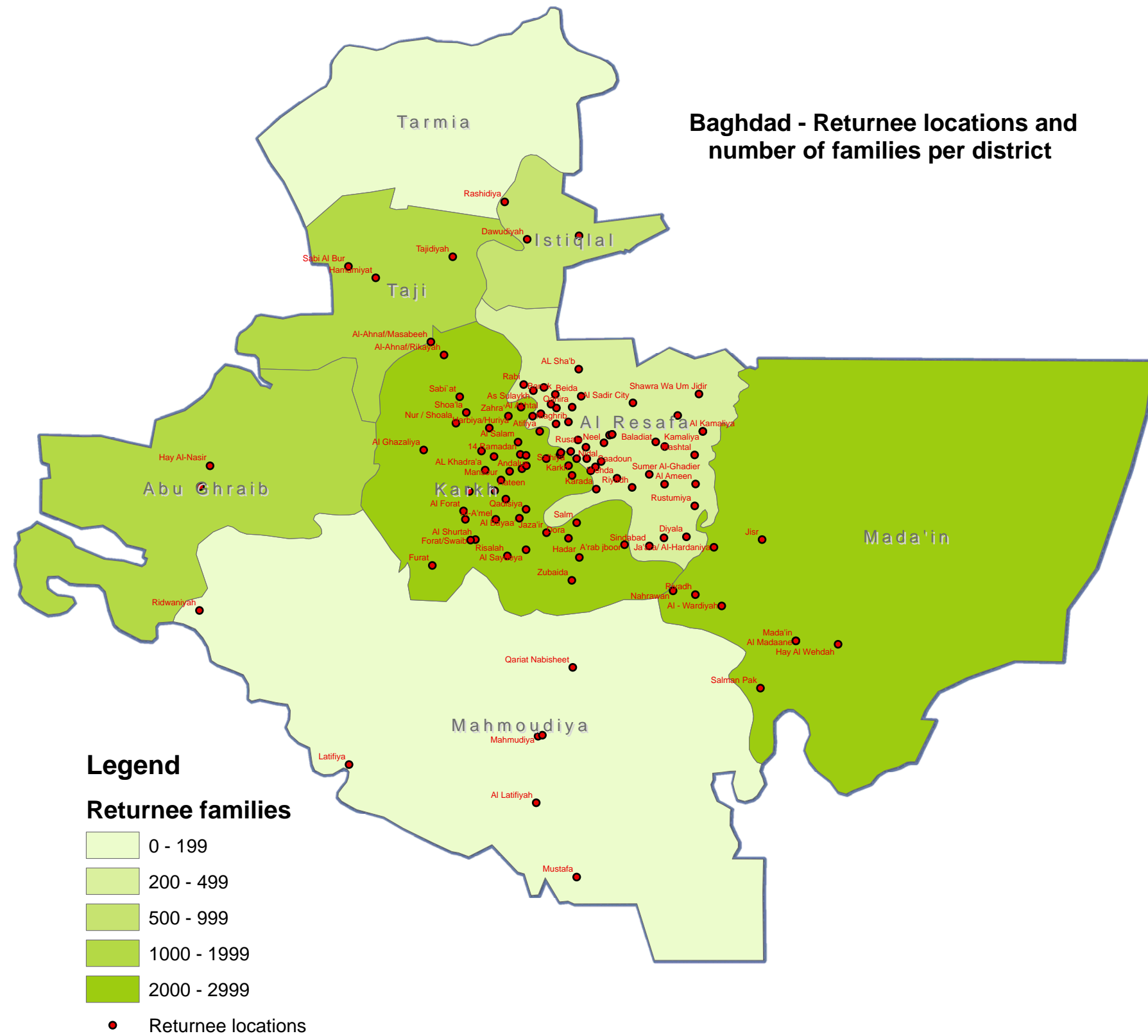
Monitors work with local authorities, MoDM branch offices, community leaders (tribal and religious), provincial councils, and local “awakening” groups to identify returnee locations. In coordination with MoDM, these locations are processed into a list that contains precise locations and family counts. Monitors then work through these location lists as they individually interview returnee families using an in-depth IOM questionnaire. The data from these questionnaires is entered into an IOM database, allowing statistical analysis of the return context.

In March, prior to the widespread deterioration of security due to events in Basrah, monitors observed an increase in returns that generally outstripped the capacity of MoDM and local authorities to identify all locations. The map of locations and returnee count at the beginning of this report is not comprehensive, although it is likely that it represents the majority of returnees to date. Furthermore, monitors to date have assessed only a fraction of the returnee locations identified. As capacity expands and assessments continue, new returnee locations will be identified and the in-depth assessments published by IOM will be based on an increasingly larger sample of the identified returnee population. However, for the time being, anecdotal reporting from IOM partners across the country does corroborate the humanitarian needs identified by IOM assessments thus far.



# IOM IRAQ – ATLAS RETURNEE LOCATIONS, JULY 2008

Baghdad - Returnee locations and  
number of families per district



Iraq - Returnee locations and  
number of families per governorate

