

# IRAQ DISPLACEMENT CRISIS

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2014–2017



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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and Response Team (RART) members for their work in collecting the data, often in very difficult circumstances; their tireless efforts are the groundwork of this report.

## WHAT IS THE DTM?

The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is IOM's information management system to track and monitor population displacement during crises. Composed of a variety of tools and processes, the DTM regularly captures and processes multilayered data and disseminates information products that facilitate a better understanding of the evolving needs of the displaced population, whether on site or en route. Through IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams

–composed of 123 field staff– present throughout the Iraqi territory, the DTM collects data on numbers and locations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees using an extended network of over 9,500 key informants. In addition to information collected from key informants, RARTs visit and assess identified locations hosting IDPs to collect more detailed and in-depth information on the displaced or returned population.



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## FOREWORD

Since January 2014, Iraq's war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has caused the displacement of nearly six million Iraqis – around 15% of the entire population of the country. Four years later, on 9 December 2017, the end to the country's war against ISIL was declared. The war against ISIL has precipitated the worst displacement crisis in the history of Iraq. To better understand the overall impact of the crisis, this publication sets out to examine and explain the critical population movements in the last four years.

First, the report provides a full overview of the population movements during the crisis using consolidated data gathered through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). The DTM has been tracking population movements since the start of the ISIL crisis by an extensive network of 9,500 key informants across Iraq. Subsequently, the study uses in-depth information on identified displacement hotspots to analyze specific geographical areas that have been affected by the crisis. These area overviews depict the evolution in the number of hosted IDPs, intra-governorate displacement, and highlight the burden of displacement in specific areas as well as the priority needs of the population.

It is my hope that this publication - Iraq Displacement Crisis 2014–2017 - will not only serve as a reminder of the impact of Iraq's war against ISIL on population movements throughout the country, but also as a base to facilitate assistance to conflict-affected communities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since January 2014, Iraq's war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has caused the displacement of nearly six millions Iraqis – around 15% of the entire population of the country. Nearly four years later, on 9 December 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi publicly declared the end to the country's war against ISIL. The announcement followed the end of the intensive clearing operations in west Anbar to push ISIL militants out of their last stronghold in the country.

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) has been tracking population movements caused by the conflict with ISIL since the start of the crisis and through all its different phases. Monitoring was carried out not only through the DTM Master List, but also through different instruments, such as emergency tracking mechanisms, which gathered precise information triggered by specific campaigns

and targeted household surveys. Thus, the body of data DTM has collected over the years is highly comprehensive.

This report aims at consolidating the current DTM data in order to contextualize and explain the population movements that occurred as a result of the ISIL crisis as a whole. As such, it will provide an overview of the full crisis throughout its phases – since the beginning of the Iraq Civil War (ISIL crisis), starting in Anbar in December 2013 with the battle for Fallujah, to the end with Prime Minister Abadi declaring victory over ISIL in December 2017 – and detailed information on localized emergencies. It will also assess main areas of displacement, analysing the evolution in number of hosted internally displaced persons (IDPs), the changes in their sectorial needs and shelter arrangements.

### THE REPORT IS ARTICULATED AS FOLLOWS :

1. ISIL crisis is contextualized: a brief overview of the displacement history preceding the start of the 2014 – ISIL crisis is presented together with the displacement situation at the time the crisis began;

2. Displacement – and return – movements are analysed over time and space. For each year – 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 – a brief chronology of key events is presented, followed by the review of main trends according to the area of origin/return, the socio–demographic characteristics of IDPs / returnees and the direction of their movements. Specific crises are discussed in depth.

3. Focus is shifted to areas of displacement, which have been affected differently by the crisis – receiving fewer or more IDPs – and had different responses to the influx. To facilitate the analysis, Iraq is divided in three regions: the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), which includes the governorates of Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah and Erbil; the South, which includes the Basrah, Missan, Najaf, Thi–Qar, Qadissiya and Muthanna governorates; and the North Central, which includes Anbar, Babylon, Baghdad, Diyala, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Wassit governorates. The evolution in the number of hosted IDPs, the relative burden of displacement and main priority needs of IDPs are reviewed according to the above–defined three regions.

Findings are illustrated in maps, info–graphics and charts. All the data are available on the DTM website, where the entire archive can be retrieved.

## 2. SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Information conveyed in this report has been gathered from an array of different products of IOM Iraq DTM:

- IDP Master List (ML) and Returnee Master List (RML), routinely assessed information on numbers and locations hosting IDP and/or returnee families through contacts with key informants;

- Location Assessments, detailed information on IDP and returnee families living in locations identified through the Master Lists collected through contacts with key informants;

- Emergency Tracking (ET), information on displacement or return movements triggered by specific crises and activated on an ad hoc basis.

- Governorate profiles, detailed information on specific governorates conducted from 2013–2015 and based on a combination of field surveys, key informants interviews and focus groups.

Needs assessments, surveys and other projects, informing on specific themes, are generally based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative information.

All information is collected through IOM's RARTs, composed of 123 staff members deployed across Iraq, and engaged in data collection and field emergency response activities. Data are gathered through interviews conducted with a well-established network of over 9,500 key informants, including community leaders, mukhtars, local authorities and security forces. Information is also collected from the government's registration data, camp management and partner agencies.

## 3. DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

### IDPS

According to the guiding principles on internal displacement, IDPs are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border." (United Nations, 1998). DTM considers IDPs all those who have fled from their original home and are living in a different settlement in a different location. The number of individuals is calculated by multiplying the number of families by six, the average size of an Iraqi family.

### RETURNEES

The DTM considers returnees all those individuals previously displaced who return to their sub-district of origin, irrespective of whether they have returned to their former residence or to another shelter type. The DTM's definition of returnees is unrelated to the criteria of returning in safety and dignity, nor with a defined strategy for a durable solution. The DTM records permanent return and does not capture "go-and-see" visits.

### LOCATION

A location is defined as a camp, a village in rural areas or a quarter (neighbourhood) in urban areas. Locations' boundaries are determined based on the key informants and RARTs' knowledge and evaluation.

### PRIVATE SETTINGS

Include rented houses, hotels/motels and host families.

### CRITICAL SHELTERS

Include informal settlements, religious buildings, schools, unfinished or abandoned buildings and other irregular settlements.

### INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Individuals displaced within their governorate of origin.

### INTERNAL RETURNEE

Returnees whose last governorate of displacement is the same of their governorate of origin.

**AQI** Al-Qaeda in Iraq

**DTM** Displacement Tracking Matrix

**GoI** Government of Iraq

**IDP** Internally Displaced Person

**IOM** International Organization for Migration

**ISF** Iraqi Security Forces

**IS** Islamic State

**ISIL** Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

**KRI** Kurdistan Region of Iraq

**MoMD** Ministry of Migration and Displacement

**PMFs** Popular Mobilization Forces

## 4. HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY FIGURES

Total number of displaced individuals (families) during the crisis 5,836,350 individuals (972,725 families)

### 2014

Number of IDPs as of December 2014 (cumulative):  
**2,123,340 IDPs** (353,890 families)

Internal displacement (% of IDPs as of December 2014): **37%**

IDPs in critical shelters : **43%**

### 2015

Number of IDPs as of December 2015 (cumulative):  
**3,289,740 IDPs** (548,290 families)

Number of returnees as of December 2015 (cumulative):  
**485,400 returnees** (80,900 families)

Internal displacement (% of IDPs as of December 2015): **32%**

Internal return (% of returnees as of December 2015):  
**47%**

IDPs in critical shelters : **29%**

Returnees in habitual residence : **86%**

### 2016

Number of IDPs as of December 2016 (cumulative):  
**3,064,146 IDPs** (510,691 families)

Number of returnees as of December 2016 (cumulative):  
**1,273,824 returnees** (212,304 families)

Internal displacement (% of IDPs as of December 2016): **40%**

Internal return (% of returnees as of December 2016):  
**60%**

IDPs in critical shelters : **37%**

Returnees in habitual residence : **92%**

### 2017

Number of IDPs as of December 2017 (cumulative):  
**2,615,988 IDPs** (435,998 families)

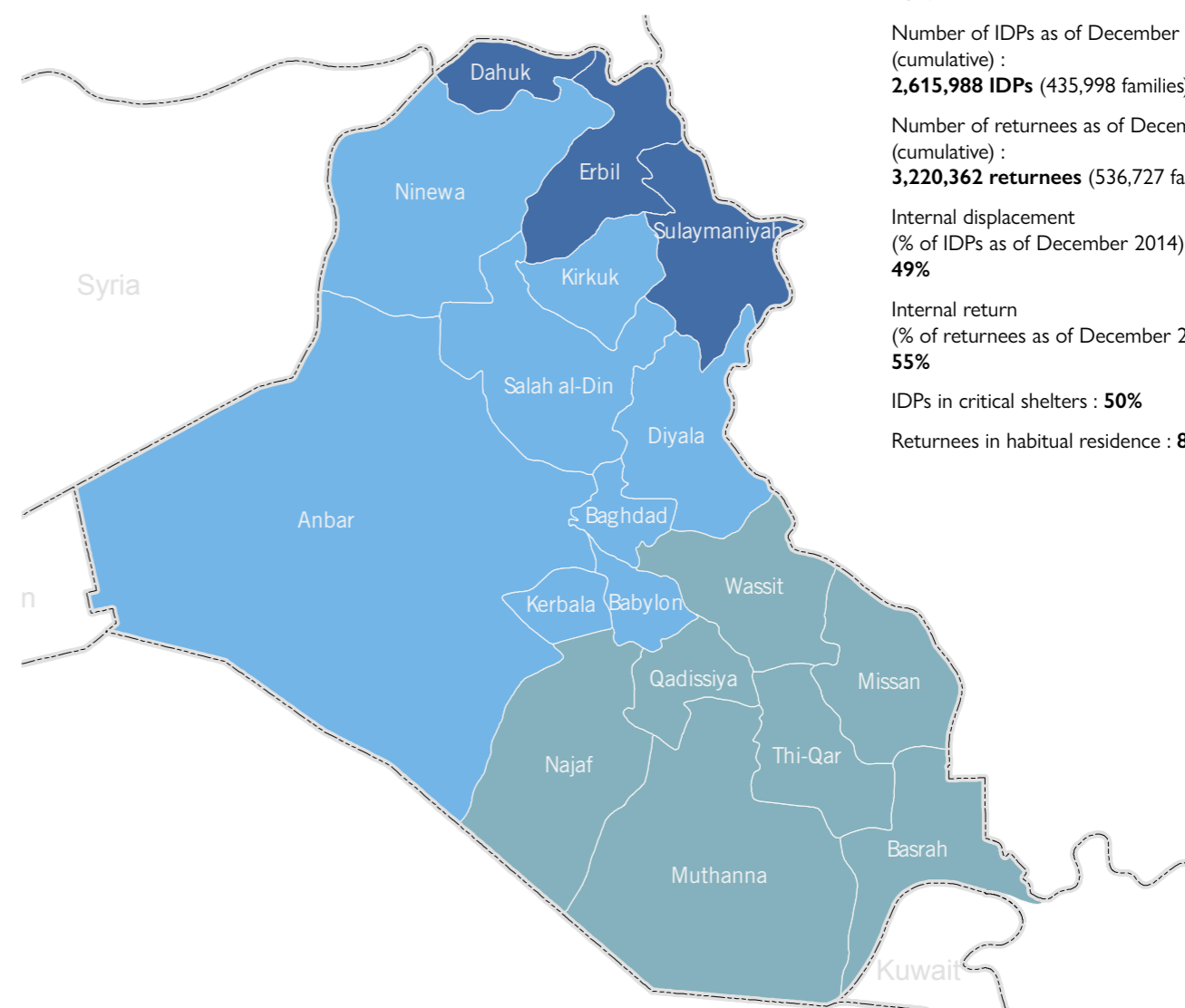
Number of returnees as of December 2017 (cumulative):  
**3,220,362 returnees** (536,727 families)

Internal displacement (% of IDPs as of December 2017): **49%**

Internal return (% of returnees as of December 2017):  
**55%**

IDPs in critical shelters : **50%**

Returnees in habitual residence : **89%**



MAP 1 GENERAL MAP OF IRAQ

## 5. SETTING THE SCENE

### DISPLACEMENT OVERVIEW BEFORE THE 2014–2017 CRISIS<sup>2</sup>

Historically, displacement in Iraq has been a continuous phenomenon that has occurred in waves, as deeply rooted sectarian and ethnic tensions are latent and foreign interventions have compounded the situation's complexity.

Before the last crisis, which started in late 2013, experts and scholars generally distinguish three major waves of displacement. The first surge began around the time when Saddam Hussein formally became the head of state in 1979. This wave lasted until 2003 and resulted in an estimated 1 million IDPs.<sup>3</sup> A primary cause for displacement was the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war, which also caused more than half a million deaths and another 1 million injured, mainly among Kurds. The Al-Anfal campaign also prompted many Kurds to flee the country, whereas the 1991 first Gulf War forced between two to three million Iraqis into neighbouring countries.

The second wave came in the wake of the intervention led by the United States of America in 2003, which toppled Hussein's regime and marked the beginning of a period of prolonged instability, sectarian violence and the displacement of an estimated million Iraqis in the first three years.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, at the same time, some 500,000 Iraqi refugees and IDPs - who had been displaced by the Saddam Hussein regime - returned to their places of origin.<sup>5</sup>

In February 2006, the bombing of the al-Askari mosque in Samarra, one of the holiest Shia shrines in Iraq, initiated a new wave of widespread sectarian violence, the persecution of minorities and their displacement. By the end of 2008, this violence brought the number of IDPs to a staggering 2.7 million and sent an estimated 1.8 million Iraqi refugees into Syria, Jordan and other neighbouring countries.<sup>6</sup>

The situation began stabilizing after 2008 and during the following period of relative calm (2008–2012) many IDPs returned to their areas of origin while others continued efforts to integrate in their area of displacement. As a result, displacement figures steadily dropped: as of September 2012, Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) reported that the number of IDPs had decreased to 1.3 million individuals.<sup>7</sup>

In the course of 2013, however, the security situation in the country started to deteriorate again. The total number of civilian and police casualties rose and reached the highest since 2008, with 7,818 killed (compared to 6,787 in 2008). The most violent month was May 2013, with a total of 3,154 civilian casualties, of which 963 were killed and 2,191 wounded. Baghdad was the worst-affected governorate, followed by Salah al-Din, Diyala, Ninewa, and Anbar.

Instability was widespread in Baghdad, where recurring security breaches were coupled by terrorist attacks on security forces and civilians alike. Continuous periods of armed attacks, assassinations and explosions also destabilized Diyala, Kirkuk, and Salah al-Din. The situation in Ninewa, which had greatly deteriorated following demonstrations in Mosul, was exacerbated by sectarianism. IOM key informants reported episodes of harassment, killings and evictions targeting minorities such as Christians, Yazidis and Shabaks, "in response to the attacks on Sunnis in Baghdad."

As a result, in August and September 2013, hundreds of Shabak and Turkmen families in Ninewa, the Toz-Kharmato district of Salah al-Din and in Diyala began moving, many citing direct threats as the cause of their departure. Most Shabaks stayed within Ninewa, fleeing from Mosul into nearby villages, whereas the Turkmen started moving towards Kerbala and Najaf. Generalized violence and spreading economic insecurity pushed additional families from Baghdad and Diyala on the move and, at the very end of 2013, around 10,000 individuals were displaced.

On 30 December 2013, clashes broke out in Ramadi, the capital of Anbar Governorate, after Iraqi government forces stormed a protest camp suspected of sheltering Sunni insurgents. This incident, which resulted in subsequent reprisals and clashes, initiated a crisis in Anbar. Just as the 2006 Samarra bombing, this episode is widely regarded as the trigger to the 2014–2017 crisis.

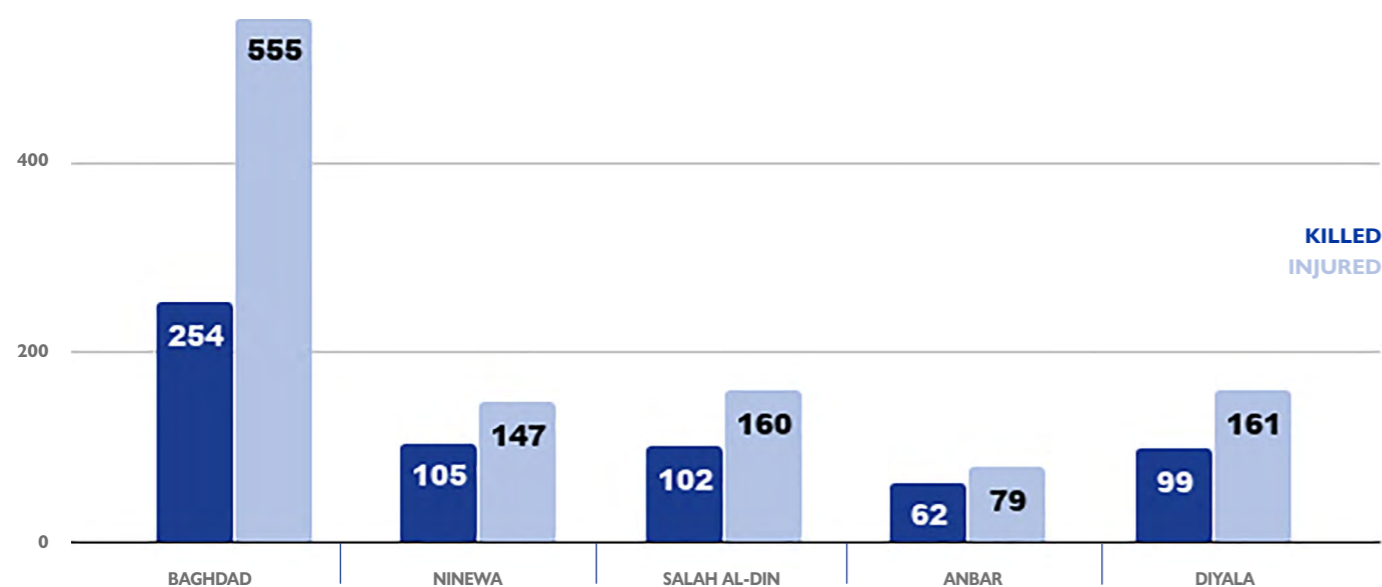


Figure 1 CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN THE FIVE MOST AFFECTED GOVERNORATES, DECEMBER 2013<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Information from this section is based on Ongoing Displacement: A profile of Iraq 2013 – 2014, IOM Iraq. See also <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2013/05/lessons-america-first-war-iran-riedel>; 2007 Iraq Index, Brookings Institute <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf> and Barriers to Integration, IOM, November 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Barriers to Integration, IOM Iraq, November 2013.

<sup>4</sup> 2007 Iraq Index, Brookings Institute <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Remembering Iraq's displaced, Elizabeth Ferris, The Middle East Channel, March 18, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Barriers to Integration, IOM, November 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Despite financial and other types of support provided by the government and international organizations, more than one million of Iraqis displaced in 2006–8 had yet to find a lasting solution. Ferris and Federici, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> UNAMI, 2013.

## 6. CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Displacement and return movements are largely independent from each other and dependent on the level of security – both physical and economic. The spread of ISIL across Iraq and the consequent campaigns for retaking areas under their control are therefore the main factors that can explain the evolution of these movements, either from or towards the location of origin. IOM has identified eight periods linked to key events of the Iraqi conflict. As shown in Figure 2 and summarized in the below boxes, between December 2013 and December 2017, around 5.8 million individuals have been forced

to leave their homes, 3.2 million of which had successfully returned at the end of 2017. Displacement occurred mainly during the first three periods of 2014; in particular, the Sinjar crisis, which marked the beginning of the third period and lasted only one month, caused the worst wave of displacement in terms of both the number of affected individuals and its geographic extension. Over 640,000 individuals fled during this period. 20% of IDPs still displaced in 2017 fled during the Sinjar crisis.

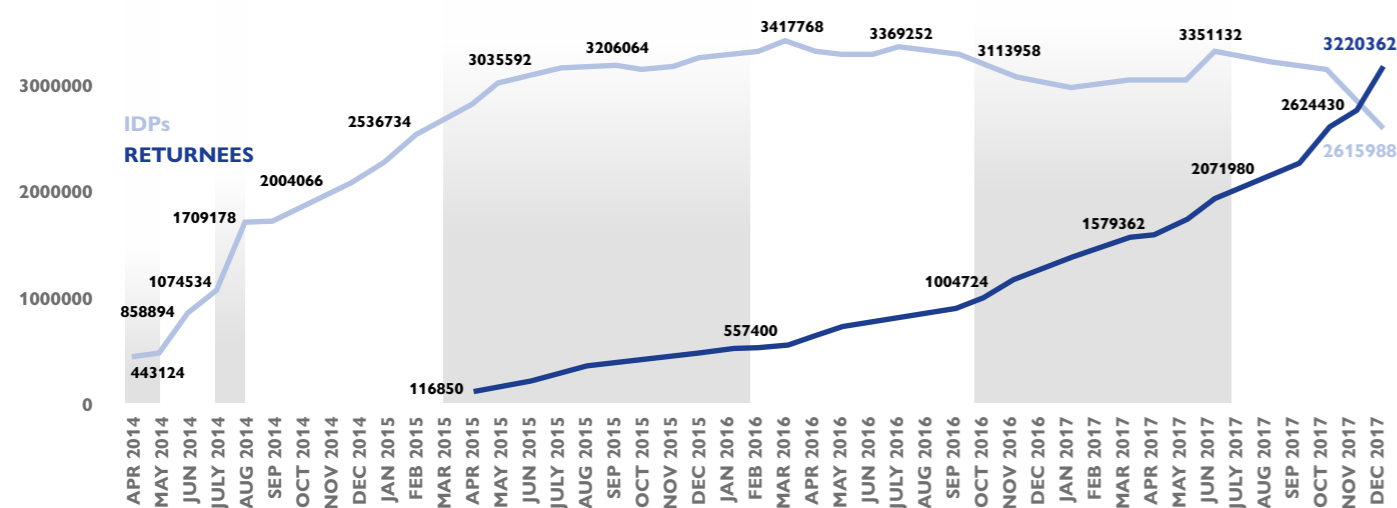
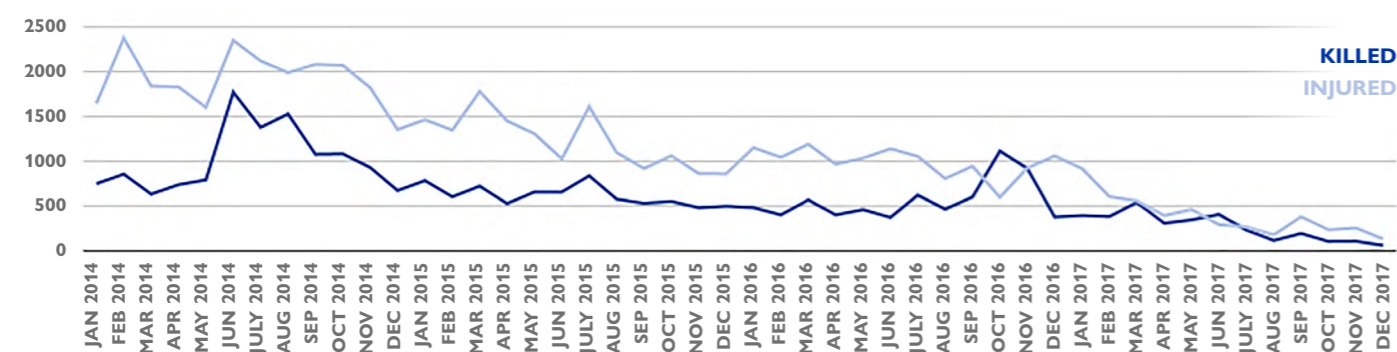


Figure 2 DISPLACEMENT AND RETURN TRENDS PER MAIN PERIOD, APRIL 2014–DECEMBER 2017



2014 was the worst year with an average of 97 civilian casualties per day

Figure 3 CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, JANUARY 2014–DECEMBER 2017\*

\* UNAMI, 2014–2017.

### FIRST PERIOD: JANUARY TO MAY 2014

Nearly 480,000 people fled their homes in the first five months of 2014, particularly in January and February. IDPs who escaped during this period came mostly from Anbar, fleeing the fighting between ISIL forces and the Iraqi government in the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah. The vast majority of IDPs stayed within Anbar, while smaller shares moved into Baghdad, Salah al-Din and the perceived safety of the KRI. In May, the massive flooding in the Abu Ghraib district of Baghdad, when dams fell while under ISIL control, caused the further displacement of approximately 40,000 individuals.

### SECOND PERIOD: JUNE 2014 TO JULY 2014

The spread of the fighting to Mosul led to additional displacement, prevalently from the governorates of Ninewa and Salah al-Din. Most of these families sought refuge in other areas of Salah al-Din, as well as Kirkuk and Baghdad. In some cases those originally displaced during the Anbar crisis suffered secondary displacement. This period also witnessed the peak outpour of Turkmen Shias to southern Shia-majority areas, and of Turkmen Sunnis towards Kirkuk and Salah al-Din. According to IOM's DTM, at the end of July, the total number of IDPs reached 1,709,178 individuals.

### THIRD PERIOD: AUGUST 2014

August 2014 was the single worst month in terms of number of new IDPs: around 740,000 individuals. Displacement was triggered by threats of violence of ISIL in Sinjar city, Ninewa and surrounding areas. IDPs mostly fled into the mountainous Dahuk provinces and neighbouring Ninewa districts. It is also during this period that the mass migration of Yazidis towards Dahuk Governorate took place. Erbil and Kerbala also witnessed a large increase in their IDP population.

### FOURTH PERIOD: SEPTEMBER 2014 TO MARCH 2015

This period recorded the first net decrease in the displaced population, as the retaking of previously insecure areas allowed the first wave of significant returns (nearly 100,000 individuals) mostly towards Diyala, Salah al-Din and Ninewa, and, to a lesser extent, Anbar and Kirkuk. A notable decrease in the number of IDPs settled in critical shelters was registered concurrently to the intensification of returns. However, the situation remained very fluid and, in addition to intra-governorate movements (within Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din), extra-governorate movements were recorded towards Baghdad, Erbil, Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah.

### FIFTH PERIOD: APRIL 2015 TO FEBRUARY 2016

The fall of Ramadi brought the total number of IDPs from Anbar to nearly 1,200,000 in less than two months (between May and June 2015). Most IDPs remained within the governorate or fled towards Baghdad. Other notable intra-governorate displacement occurred in

Kirkuk, as Peshmerga forces advanced across the southern part of the governorate, reaching nearly 130,000 individuals at the end of February 2016. Salah al-Din and Diyala recorded the highest shares of returns with 47% and 21% of total returns, i.e. around 260,000 and 120,000 individuals respectively.

### SIXTH PERIOD: MARCH TO 17 OCTOBER 2016

Several governorates reported a significant decrease in the number of IDPs, particularly Anbar (–17%, corresponding to over 250,000 individuals), Baghdad (–34%) and Diyala (–25%). The decrease was linked to the intensification of return movements in the second half of 2016, which started after March 2016 in Anbar, the governorate with the highest percentage of returns. Nevertheless, displacement figures continued to rise in Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din.

### SEVENTH PERIOD: 17 OCTOBER 2016 TO 8 JULY 2017

The launch of military operations to retake the city of Mosul, in the governorate of Ninewa, caused a new large-scale displacement: over 80,000 individuals. An increase of IDPs along the Mosul corridor was also recorded in Salah al-Din and Kirkuk due to military operations in the two districts of Al Shirqat and Al Hawija. These displacements took place in parallel to the general decrease in the number of IDPs due to ongoing return movements. Overall, the returnee population increased by 4% (around 120,000 individuals), with Anbar experiencing the highest increase (around 745,000 individuals), mostly directed towards the retaken areas of Falluja, Al Rutba, Ramadi and Heet.

### EIGHTH PERIOD: 8 JULY TO DECEMBER 2017

For the first time since the beginning of the Iraq displacement crisis, the number of returnees tops that of IDPs – as of 31 December 2017, over 3.2 millions returnees compared to over 2.6 IDPs. The retaking of Mosul and Telafar, coupled with the policy of encouraging returns, led to a significant decrease in the number of IDPs settled mostly in Ninewa, Anbar, Erbil, Baghdad and Kirkuk, while the handover of the disputed areas from the Kurdish Peshmerga to the Iraqi Security Forces after 15 October caused both displacement and return movements from/to the area.

## CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN EVENTS

**31 DECEMBER 2013** Iraqi forces raid a camp in Anbar suspected of sheltering Sunni armed groups. Clashes between government forces and armed groups (AGs) start – it is the beginning of the Anbar crisis.

**JANUARY-FEBRUARY** Clashes continue in Anbar, primarily in Ramadi and Fallujah. Families start to flee the area, mostly seeking refuge within Anbar.

**MARCH** ISIL launches an urban assault and briefly takes control of central Buhriz, south of Baquba. This event marks the shift in ISIL operations in Diyala: from terrorist attacks to urban manoeuvres.

**27 APRIL** ISIL seizes control of the Fallujah dam on the border between northeastern Fallujah and Abu Ghraib. Flooding displaces thousands.

**30 APRIL** Iraqi parliamentary elections take place. In order to disrupt the elections, ISIL attacks polling stations in predominately Sunni areas in Anbar, Ninewa, Baghdad and Diyala.

**MAY** The total number of IDPs reaches 500,000 by end of May, an average of 532 families daily. Besides staying within Anbar, families start to reach Baghdad and the perceived safety of KRI.

**11 JUNE** ISIL seizes control of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, and then begin advancing south to Tikrit, capital of Salah al-Din governorate. It is the beginning of a new wave of displacement: the Mosul crisis.

**29 JUNE** ISIL changes its name to Islamic State (IS), announcing a new caliphate under Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi in all the territory running from northern Syria to the governorate of Diyala.

**15 JULY** ISIL issues a statement warning Christians they must “convert, pay taxes, or die” by 19 of July, sparking a significant Christian exodus from the “IS caliphate” towards the KRI.

**30 JULY** Another 500,000 are displaced from Ninewa between June and July – an average of 1,655 families daily. Ethnic and religious minorities are the main targets during the Mosul crisis.

**3 AUGUST** ISIL captures the Ninewa town of Sinjar, causing the worst displacement wave of 2014 – the so-called Sinjar crisis – during which the genocide and mass exodus of Yazidis take place.

**14 AUGUST** Thousands of Yazidis, trapped in the Sinjar mountains in

the attempt to escape, are evacuated through a humanitarian corridor through Syria, then cross back into Dahuk.

**AUGUST** At the end of the month, the balance of the Sinjar crisis is devastating: over 740,000 new IDPs (365,000 of which, Yazidis), an average of 3,412 families daily.

**SEPTEMBER** First return movements start to take place, initially targeting Ninewa, Diyala and Salah al-Din. Proximity with the location of origin and its restored safety are the strongest pull factors.

**SEPTEMBER** The town of Rabia, in Ninewa, is taken over by the military alliance of the Iraqi Shammar tribe and Kurdish Peshmerga, blocking ISIL's control of terrain between Iraq and Syria.

**OCTOBER** New displacement occurs due to a new ISIL offensive on the city of Heet, in Anbar. Residents remain within the governorate or flee towards the neighbouring Baghdad and Babylon.

**NOVEMBER** A series of smaller, distinct, concurrent crises recorded mainly in the central northern governorates of Anbar, Diyala and Kirkuk brings the total number of IDPs to over 2,000,000.

**DECEMBER** The Iraqi government and the leadership of the KRI sign a deal on sharing Iraq's oil wealth and military resources and unite in the face of the common threat of ISIL.

**DECEMBER** The cities of Ayadyah, Zummar, Sinjar are taken over by the Kurdish Peshmerga.

## DISPLACEMENT TREND IN 2014<sup>10</sup>

2014 was the worst year of the 2014–2017 Iraqi displacement crisis: from the beginning of January through 25 December, the DTM identified 2,123,340 internally displaced individuals<sup>11</sup> dispersed across 2,092 distinct locations in seventeen governorates of Iraq.<sup>12</sup>

Three major events shaped the trend of displacement in 2014: violence that originally erupted in the western Anbar Governorate; the lightning offensive of ISIL on Mosul city, in Ninewa, that also affected the central governorates of Salah al-Din and Diyala; and, lastly,

the offensive in the Sinjar district of Ninewa, which largely targeted minority, non-Sunni groups.

Additional displacement occurred from September to December. While this figure is comparatively smaller than other major waves, it is noteworthy to highlight that these movements were caused by a series of distinct but concurrent crises that broke out in several governorates, that is, Ninewa, Diyala, Kirkuk and Anbar – where a new ISIL offensive on the city of Heet took place.

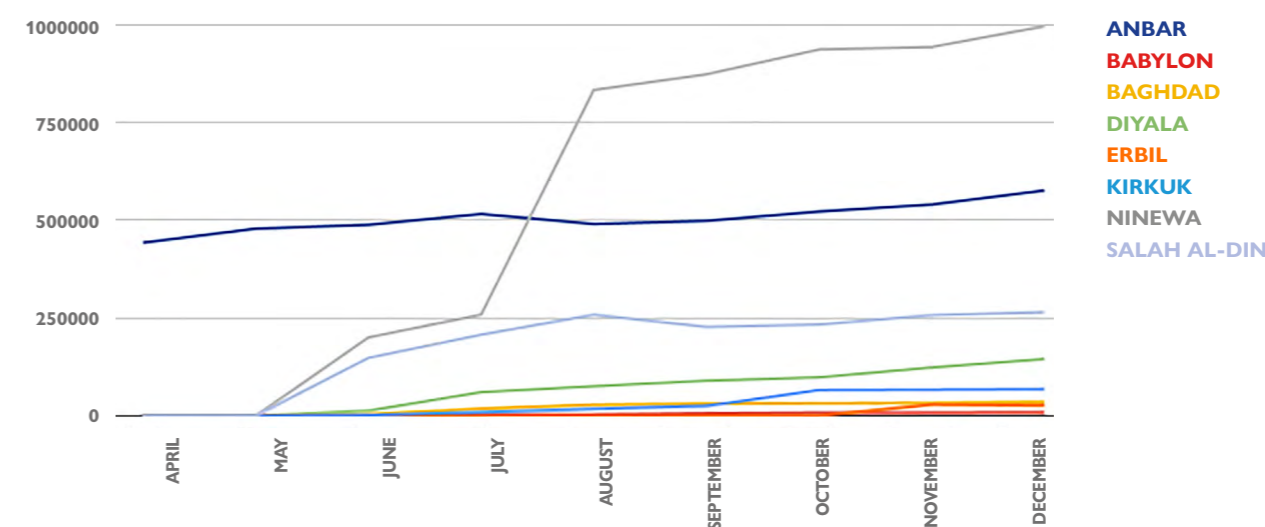


Figure 4 DISPLACEMENT TREND IN 2014 (CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF IDPS PER GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN)

<sup>10</sup> Text and figures for this section are based on IOM governorates' profiles, DTM Master List and Reports, Round 1 to Round 11, and Ongoing displacement: A profile of Iraq: 2013–2014, IOM 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Individual populations are based on an estimate that assumes each family unit consists of an average of six families.

<sup>12</sup> A location is defined as an area that corresponds to a sub-district (e.g. 4th official administrative division), or a village for rural areas or a neighborhood for urban areas (e.g. 5th official administrative division).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF IDPs : ORIGIN AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

By December 2014, the vast majority of IDPs originate from Ninewa (996,828 individuals, 47%), Anbar (576,774 individuals, 27%) and Salah al-Din (265,266 individuals, 12%) - the three governorates that make up the majority of ISIL's "caliphate" in Iraq. In addition, 7% left their habitual residence in Diyala (145,464 individuals); 3% in Kirkuk (68,298 individuals), 2% in Baghdad (35,580 individuals), 1% in Erbil (26,796 individuals) and 0.4% in Babylon (8,334 individuals).

DTM data collected on socio-demographic characteristics of IDPs show that there are slightly more female IDPs<sup>13</sup> (52% versus 48% of males) and younger individuals (16% are aged between 0 and 5 years; 22% between 6 to 14 years; 22% between 15 to 24 years; 31% between 25 to 59 years; and only 9% are aged 60 years and above).

In addition to regular civilians who flee due to war and violence, a significant portion of the 2014 IDPs belongs to

those groups that would have suffered enormously under ISIL rule, particularly minorities such as Yazidis, Shia Turkmens, Shabaks and Christians, who were all targeted during the Mosul and Sinjar crises. In fact, when asked to indicate the reasons for their displacement from their place of origin, nearly all IDPs who fled before June or after September 2014 cited "armed conflict and/or generalized violence", whereas around 10% of IDPs who fled in June-July mentioned "killing of family members" and 15% of those who fled in August cited "evictions" and "direct threats".



**NINEWA ANBAR SALAH AL-DIN  
DIYALA KIRKUK BAGHDAD ERBIL BABYLON**

Figure 5 IDPs BY GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN (DECEMBER 2014)

## LOCATION OF DISPLACEMENT<sup>14</sup>

From a regional perspective, at the end of 2014, 55% of IDPs are settled in the north-central region, 38% in KRI and 7% in southern governorates. The largest share of the displaced population is hosted in the governorate of Dahuk (23%, 478,890 IDPs) and particularly in the three districts of Sumel, Zakho and Dahuk. The governorate is the largest recipient of Ninewa IDPs escaping the Sinjar crisis, with Sumel and Zakho hosting the largest camp population of the whole country (70% of all IDPs settled in camps, around 130,000 individuals). Dahuk is also a preferred destination of IDPs wishing to leave the country, as its borders with Turkey make it the main entry door to the country.

The governorate of Anbar hosts the second largest population of IDPs (18%, or 381,054 individuals), mostly caught in between their habitual home and the location of displacement in the four districts of Falluja, Heet, Ramadi and Haditha. The three governorates of Kirkuk, Erbil and Ninewa each host around 10% of the total 2014 IDPs, respectively 238,776, 193,944 and 162,132 individuals. While IDPs in Kirkuk and Erbil are prevalently settled in the capital city district, the two Ninewa districts of Akre and Al Shikhan host three fourths of all IDPs. Among southern governorates, only Najaf hosts a relevant share of IDPs (4%, 81,534 individuals).

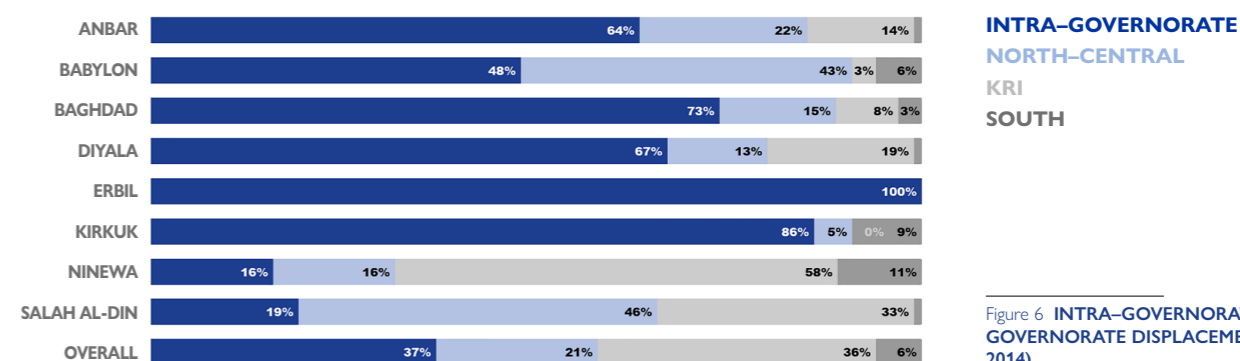
GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT	IDPs	%	GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	IDPs
ANBAR	381054	18%	ANBAR	Falluja	112176
BABYLON	34644	2%		Haditha	52722
BAGHDAD	134346	6%		Heet	93330
BASRAH	10200	0%		Ramadi	52326
DAHUK	478890	23%	BAGHDAD	Karkh	37236
DIYALA	98196	5%		Abu Ghraib	32214
ERBIL	193944	9%	DAHUK	Dahuk	91080
KARBALA	66750	3%		Sumel	203094
KIRKUK	238776	11%		Zakho	157476
MISSAN	7020	0%	DIYALA	Khanaqin	38568
NAJAF	81534	4%		Erbil	116742
NINEWA	162132	8%	ERBIL	Shaqlawah	49320
QADISSIYA	18306	1%		Kerbala	63042
SALAH AL-DIN	53610	3%	KIRKUK	Kirkuk	175722
SULAYMANIYAH	125658	6%		Najaf	71946
THI-QAR	9438	0%	NINEWA	Akre	63828
WASSIT	28842	1%		Al-Shikhan	57378
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2123340</b>	<b>100%</b>	SULAYMANIYAH	Sulaymaniyah	63744

Table 1 GOVERNORATES AND TOP DISTRICTS OF DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2014)

Figure 6 shows that most displacement occurred from one governorate to another: as many as 1,334,490 individuals, 63% of the overall IDPs, fled outside of their governorate of origin. However, different trends are observed among the conflict-affected governorates.

High rates of intra-governorate displacements are mainly reported as a consequence of restricted movements and tight border regulations between governorates, such as in Anbar and Kirkuk<sup>15</sup>, or following localized conflict that caused populations to displace to neighbouring districts, such as in

Erbil and Diyala. In Anbar, strong family and tribal connections also account for the large share of intra-governorate displacement. Broader ethnic and religious affiliations are determinant factors to predict whether IDPs seek protection outside their governorates of origin. IDPs originally from Ninewa and Salah al-Din show the lowest levels of intra-governorate displacement (16% and 19% respectively) due to ethnic and minority targeting. While families from Salah al-Din mostly seek refuge in Kirkuk and Baghdad, and to a lesser extent in Erbil and Najaf, at the end of 2014 nearly 60% of Ninewa IDPs can be found in the KRI.



**INTRA-GOVERNORATE  
NORTH-CENTRAL  
KRI  
SOUTH**

Figure 6 INTRA-GOVERNORATE AND EXTRA-GOVERNORATE DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2014)

<sup>13</sup> In December 2014, DTM revised the methodology and assessed 43 locations across five governorates, profiling 229,452 IDPs through the General Assessment Form. See IOM DTM Report, Round 11, December 2014.

<sup>14</sup> For conditions of IDPs in the location of displacement see the second part of the report, Areas of displacement.

<sup>15</sup> In May 2014, the DTM reported that 18 percent of all the 607 locations (109) it had assessed outside Anbar had groups of IDPs where no one was registered and it cited reports from Thi-Qar, in the south of the country, claiming that "security forces" were refusing to allow Anbar IDPs in unless they had a local sponsor in the governorate. In Kirkuk, evidence of restriction of movements that impacted the freedom to seek protection in third governorates was also reported. See IOM DTM Report, Round 9, 25 November 2014.



**CRISIS UNFOLDED : ANBAR JANUARY–MAY 2014**

On 30 December 2013, clashes broke out in Ramadi, the capital of the governorate, after Iraqi government forces stormed a protest camp suspected of sheltering Sunni insurgents. The campaign resulted in numerous deaths of the targeted insurgent ISIL, but it also forced thousands of families to flee their homes. Like the 2006 Samarra bombing, this incident is widely regarded as the beginning of the Anbar Crisis, which initiated the larger 2014–17 crisis.<sup>16</sup>

By 4 January 2014, media reports indicated that: “Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) is in complete control of Fallujah after the withdrawal of security forces.” Clashes continued in the governorate, primarily concentrating on specific areas in Ramadi and along the highway area between Ramadi and Fallujah. In the attempt to retake the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) sealed off the main entry and exit points to cut off supplies for the militants, creating a siege-like situation. The government also responded to ISIL’s presence in Anbar with aerial bombardments and shelling.

In February ISIL took control of a dam 5 km from Fallujah City, which regulates the flow of the Euphrates River. Throughout April, ISIL manipulated the dam, causing severe flooding across agricultural land in Anbar and into Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, and forcing farmers to abandon agricultural land and thousands of families to flee their homes.

Between January and May 2014, nearly 480,000 individuals left their homes in Anbar – an average of 533 families daily. While ISIL took control of much of the governorate, IDPs displaced from Anbar reported that clashes between armed groups and the Iraqi Government not only threatened their physical safety, but also destroyed their homes and property and disrupted public services such as food distribution, electricity and water supplies.<sup>17</sup>

Overwhelmingly, the trends within Anbar have been movement towards the north and west of the governorate, towards Heet and within Fallujah and Ramadi. At the end of 2014, Fallujah hosted over 110,000 IDPs, more than any other district of Anbar and the fifth largest figure among all Iraqi districts, followed by Heet (nearly 95,000 individuals) and Ramadi (over 50,000 individuals). Yet, the flooding of the Fallujah dam, the persisting instability and the severe shortages forced IDPs further away, towards Baghdad (12%), Salah al-Din (7%), Sulaymaniyah (5%) and Erbil (4%).

But, even when IDPs managed to escape the violence in their home governorate, the fear of being labeled as ‘terrorists’ because of their Anbari origin and Arab Sunni affiliation, left many too scared to register with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), cutting them off from aid and public services. In May, DTM reported that in 18% of all assessed locations outside of Anbar, there were groups of IDPs where no one was registered, and in 31% of the assessed sites in Baghdad, IDPs reported “restriction on movement”; additional restrictions were likewise observed in Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk and Ninewa.<sup>18</sup>

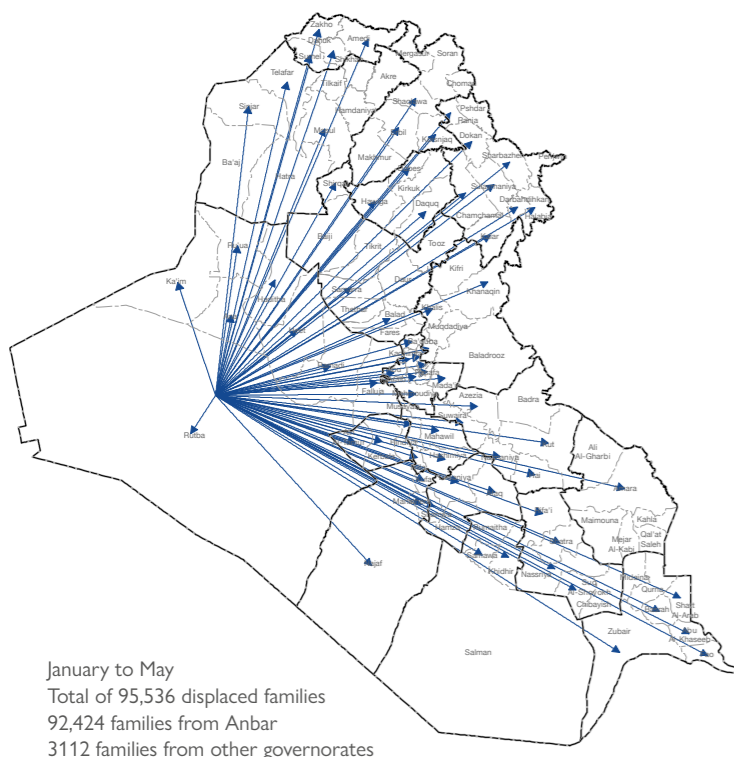


Figure 7 FAMILIES WHO FLED DURING THE ANBAR CRISIS AND DIRECTION OF MOVEMENTS<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The great deterioration of the security situation in Anbar can be linked to the specific socio-political fabric of the governorate. Anbar is an essential part of the “Sunni Triangle” and historically tribal leaders and Sunni clerics have always retained a high level of authority in local affairs. Since 2003, Anbar had also become a stronghold for al Qaeda and Sunni insurgents who took advantage of the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq as well as of the widespread Sunni anger at the sectarian policies of the country’s Shia-led government. Tensions between the government, tribal groups and armed groups had precipitated in 2011, after the transfer of security control to government forces. In October 2013, key informants and IOM field staff reported that: “the situation was liable to become dangerous at any time”. In fact, according to figures from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), over 900 people were killed in Anbar from June 2012 to June 2013, an average of 72 people each month.

<sup>17</sup> Surveys – IOM 2013–2014.

**CRISIS UNFOLDED : MOSUL JUNE–JULY 2014**

The ISF campaign to retake Fallujah led to reprisal attacks by ISIL, targeting predominantly Iraqi Shia areas, including Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city located along Iraq’s north-western Syrian border. On 11 June, ISIL seized control of the city, marking the beginning of the Mosul crisis. This event ignited a new mass exodus; temporary transit camps were set up by the checkpoints to provide shelter for those leaving the city.

Right after the capture of Mosul city, ISIL began advancing south to Tikrit, capital of Salah al-Din Governorate. Over the coming days, fighting intensified in Samarra and Tikrit cities, in Telafar in Ninewa Governorate, and across Diyala Governorate, with tens of thousands of people fleeing their homes, many heading north towards the KRI. As of 28 June, the cities of Mosul, Tikrit and Telafar were all under control of ISIL. The conquest was followed by the announcement of the establishment of a new caliphate in all territories running from northern Syria to the governorate of Diyala and the issue of a statement warning Christians that they must “convert, pay taxes, or die”.

The features of this second wave started to emerge, as ethnic and religious minorities became the main targets of the crisis. Because of direct threats and the instability caused by clashes between ISIL and ISF with Kurdish Peshmerga troops, between June and July, around 500,000 individuals (an average of 1,655 families daily, 23% of the total population displaced in 2014) flee their homes from the governorates of Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Diyala.

The impact of these displacement movements was widespread, affecting many of governorates, with the majority of the population fleeing to Erbil (16%), Kirkuk (16%), Najaf (14%), and Sulaymaniyah (11%). Displacements due to the Mosul crisis consist largely of ethnic and religious minorities, such as Christians, Yazidis and Turkmen Shia, with a clear pattern of Yazidis and Christians moving toward the KRI and Turkmen Shia moving toward the central and southern Shia-majority areas, namely Kerbala and Najaf, and of Turkmen Sunnis towards Kirkuk and Salah al-Din.

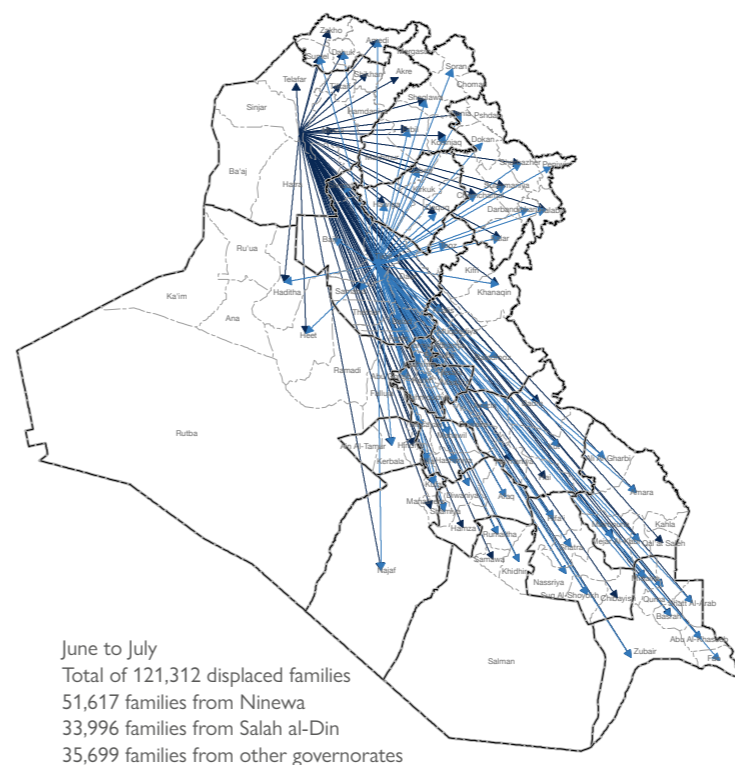


Figure 8 FAMILIES WHO FLED DURING THE MOSUL CRISIS AND DIRECTION OF MOVEMENTS<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Response to the Anbar crisis in Iraq, DTM, Round 3, Report, May 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Distribution of families at May 2015. See DTM Round 20, May 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Ninewa, a predominantly Sunni Governorate, has also historically been home to the vast majority of Iraq’s minority groups, such as Yazidis, Shia Turkmens, Shabaks and Christians.

<sup>21</sup> Distribution of families at May 2015. See DTM Round 20, May 2015.

## 8. POPULATION MOVEMENTS IN 2015

### CRISIS UNFOLDED : SINJAR AUGUST 2014

August witnesses further persecution of Ninewa's minority groups. At the beginning of the month, ISIL capture the Ninewa town of Sinjar, forcing tens of thousands of Yazidis to flee their homes.

While an initial wave of Yazidis fled along the Syrian border, many sought refuge in the nearby Sinjar mountain range where they were surrounded by ISIL, facing death and starvation. On 4 August, a humanitarian corridor to the Syrian border was opened under the protection of the Kurdish Peshmerga forces. By 13 August, the vast majority of Yazidis had been evacuated via the corridor and crossed back into Dahuk Governorate via the Peshkhabour border crossing.

Violence continued and at the end of the month, the balance was devastating: over 630,000 new IDPs (365,000 of which Yazidis), an average of 3,412 families daily. August was the single worst month in terms of number of IDPs of the whole 2014–2017 crisis.

Most IDPs (nearly 60%) went to Dahuk. Erbil and Kerbala also witnessed a large increase in their IDP population. Intra-governorate displacement also sharply increased in Ninewa, reporting over 130,000 newly displaced individuals.

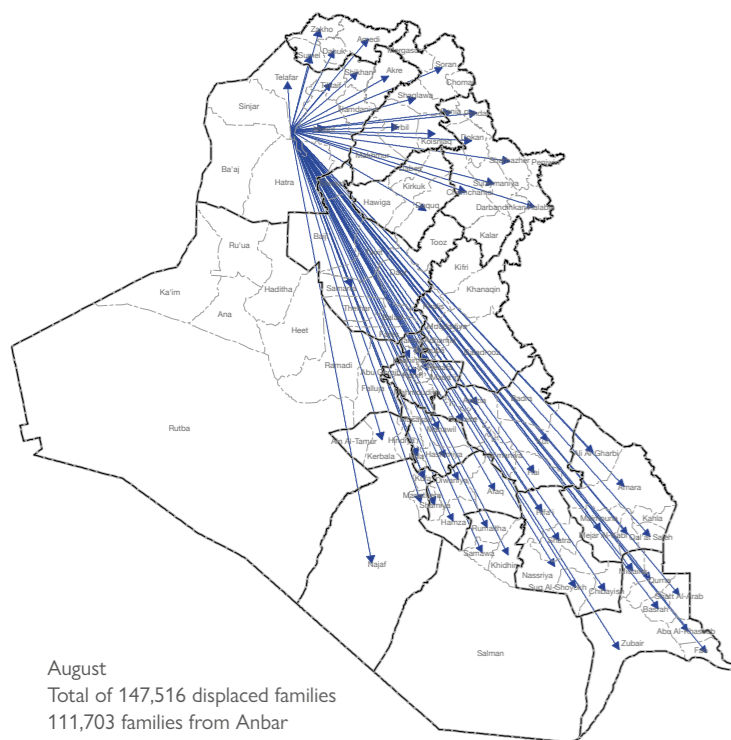


Figure 9 FAMILIES FLED DURING THE SINJAR CRISIS AND DIRECTION OF MOVEMENTS<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Distribution of families at May 2015. See DTM Round 20, May 2015.

<sup>23</sup> IOM field reports indicated that as October 31, 2014, ISIL controlled about 85% of Anbar governorate and battles were taking place in many locations.

### CRISIS UNFOLDED : HEET OCTOBER 2014

At the beginning of October, ISIL led an offensive in Anbar targeting Heet City and the city of Al-Furat in Heet district. The attack, aimed at gaining control of new positions in the governorate, came after a marked deterioration in the security situation, with continuous clashes between government forces and ISIL and airstrikes carried out by the International Coalition.<sup>23</sup>

This last wave of displacement in 2014 – which, from September to October, doubled the number of IDPs in the two districts of Haditha and Heet from 131,000 to 269,000 – was not an isolated incident in Anbar, but rather a new development in the displacement trends that began earlier in 2014. The deterioration of the security situation and the strict limitations on movements forced families to escape, not necessarily to safe locations but merely to 'safer' locations. This finding is reflected in the high number of individuals remaining within their district of origin when the crisis erupted. Limited mobility and road obstruction to and from Anbar hampered IDP access to food and health care. Tragically, this occurred in the governorate where emergency humanitarian response was needed most.

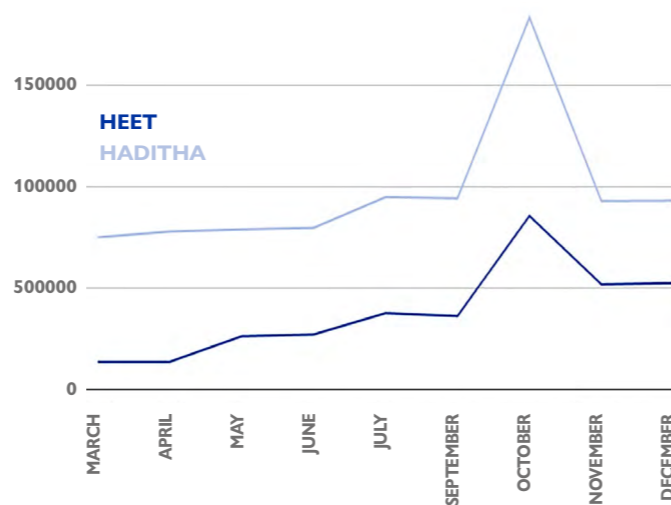


Figure 10 NUMBER OF IDPS IN THE TWO DISTRICTS OF HEET AND HADITHA (MARCH–DECEMBER 2014)

### CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN EVENTS

**JANUARY** Fighting between the Iraqi Army and PMFs against ISIL continues in Diyala, Mosul and Tikrit, with tens of thousands of civilians caught in the crossfire.

**FEBRUARY** The total number of IDPs exceeds 2,500,000 individuals, of which over 1,300,000 in North–Central, around 1,000,000 in the KRI (39%) and nearly 175,000 in the South (7%).

**31 MARCH** Following a month-long siege, the ISF announces the “liberation” of Tikrit, in Salah al-Din, which has been controlled by ISIL for nearly 10 months.

**APRIL** Some previously insecure areas become safe and around 100,000 returns are recorded – mostly in Diyala, Salah al-Din and Ninewa. The majority of departures are families leaving critical shelters.

**MAY** ISIL captures Ramadi, the capital of the western province of Anbar. Clashes in the governorate cause a 13% increase in the number of Anbar IDPs.

**MAY** The total number of IDPs exceeds 3,000,000 individuals.

**JULY** Tikrit Bridge reopens, which allows mass returns.

**JULY** The Iraqi army launches an offensive to retake Anbar governorate. ISIL attacks on the largest military base, in the Habbaniya area between Ramadi and Fallujah, triggers additional displacement.

**AUGUST** Authorities manage significant returns in Diyala.

**SEPTEMBER** Violence and military operations in Anbar force more than 500,000 people to flee. Most remain within the governorate or move to Baghdad.

**DECEMBER** At the end of 2015, the total number of IDPs exceeds 3,200,000 individuals. Fallujah (8% of total IDPs), Kirkuk (8%), Erbil (8%), Sumel (7%), and Karkh (6%) are top districts of displacement.<sup>24</sup>

### DISPLACEMENT TREND IN 2015<sup>25</sup>

The number of IDPs continues to rise throughout 2015 and by 17 December DTM identifies 3,235,476 internally displaced individuals<sup>26</sup> dispersed across 3,599 distinct locations in 18 governorates of Iraq.<sup>27</sup>

Movements in 2015 are shaped by the fighting between ISF and PMFs against ISIL in Diyala, Mosul and Tikrit and primarily by the outbreak of the Ramadi crisis, which erupts at the beginning of April, and causes the displacement of over half a million individuals from the governorate of Anbar. Other notable displacement occurs in Kirkuk, as Peshmerga forces advance across the south of the governorate,

causing the displacement of approximately 60,000 individuals.

2015 is also the year of first significant return movements (around 470,000 individuals), following the recapture of Tikrit in Salah al-Din Governorate in the month of March and other previously insecure areas in Diyala and Ninewa (mostly to the northern districts of Telafar and Tilkaif). The decrease in the cumulative number of IDPs from Salah al-Din (–19% since the month of June 2015) and Diyala (–28% since the month of March 2015) is linked to the high number of returns.<sup>28</sup>

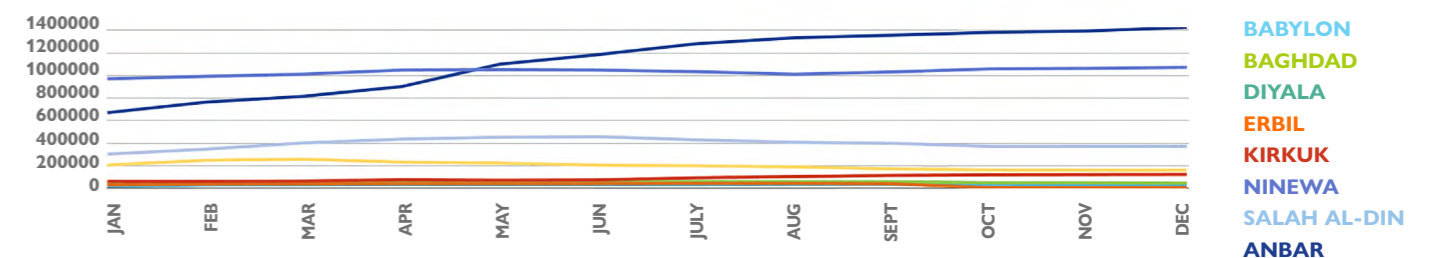


Figure 11 DISPLACEMENT TREND IN 2015 (CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF IDPS PER GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN)

<sup>24</sup> Figures from Master List Round 35, 17th December 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Text and figures for this section are based on DTM Master List and Reports, Round 12 to Round 35.

<sup>26</sup> Individual populations are based on an estimate that assumes each family unit consists of an average of six families.

<sup>27</sup> A location is defined as an area that corresponds to a sub-district (e.g. 4th official administrative division), or a village for rural areas or a neighbourhood for urban areas (e.g. 5th official administrative division).

<sup>28</sup> For more information on trends and characteristics of returns in the course of the year see section below, Returns in 2015.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF IDPs : ORIGIN AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

By December 2015, over three fourths of IDPs originate from Anbar (43%, 1,417,134 individuals) and Ninewa (33%, 1,096,800). The remaining share has left their habitual residence in Salah al-Din (12%, 402,888); Diyala (5%, 154,896), Kirkuk (4%, 120,432), Baghdad (2%, 62,304), Babylon (1%, 30,756) and Erbil (0.1%, 4,530).

The percentage distribution of IDPs per period of displacement shows how nearly one fourth of displacement movements occurred after the fall of Ramadi in April 2015. Displacement in summer 2014 (because of both the Mosul and the Sinjar crisis) accounts for around 45% of displacements, whereas 17% of IDPs left their location of origin during the Anbar crisis and 15% between September 2014 and April 2015.

DTM data collected on socio-demographic characteristics of IDPs<sup>29</sup> show that females account for half of the IDP population in all regions

of Iraq – and females of reproductive age (i.e. between 15 and 45 years old) represent 35% of the assessed female population. Furthermore, 45% of IDPs are under 15 years old (of which 13.5% under the age of 5 years); 40% are between 15 and 50 years and 15% are aged 50 years or above.



ANBAR NINEWA SALAH AL-DIN  
DIYALA KIRKUK BAGHDAD BABYLON

Figure 12 IDPs BY GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN (DECEMBER 2015)

## LOCATION OF DISPLACEMENT<sup>30</sup>

From a regional perspective, at the end of 2015, 66% of IDPs are settled in the north-central region, 29% in KRI and 5% in southern governorates. The largest share of the displaced population is hosted in the governorates of Baghdad (18%, 586,950 individuals) and Anbar (18%, 570,768), mostly due to the effects of the Ramadi crisis. In the governorate of Baghdad, IDPs are mostly found in the two districts of Karkh (199,434) and Abu Ghraib (161,562).<sup>31</sup>

Dahuk continues to host a large share of IDPs (13%, 410,040 individuals), mostly in Sumel and Zakho. The governorate continues to be the largest host of Ninewa IDPs (98% of all IDPs in the governorate, the vast majority of who fled during the Sinjar crisis). The three governorates of Kirkuk, Erbil and Ninewa host respectively 12%, 11% and 7% of the total 2015 IDPs, with the district of Al-Hawija recording the greatest increase (73,686 individuals). Among southern governorates, only Najaf continues to host a relevant share of IDPs in the capital district (2%, 67,326 individuals)

GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT	IDPs	%
ANBAR	570768	18%
BABYLON	60168	2%
BAGHDAD	586950	18%
BASRAH	11214	0%
DAHUK	410040	13%
DIYALA	110922	3%
ERBIL	353478	11%
KARBALA	66570	2%
KIRKUK	382314	12%
MISSAN	6642	0%
NAJAF	5622	0%
NINEWA	78756	2%
QADISSIYA	222888	7%
SALAH AL-DIN	24798	1%
SULAYMANIYAH	146970	5%
THI-QAR	163260	5%
WASSIT	8982	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3235476</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 GOVERNORATES AND TOP DISTRICTS OF DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2015)

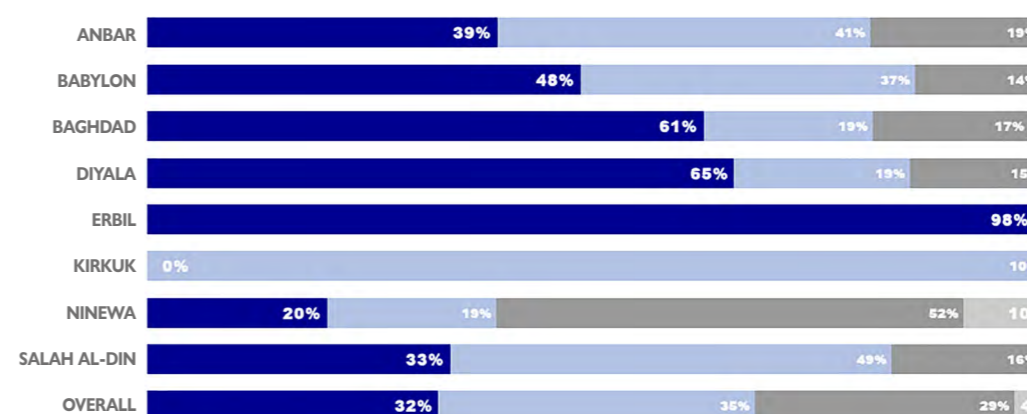
Just as in 2014, the majority of individuals displaced at the end of 2015 are found outside their governorate of origin: 2,091,888 individuals, corresponding to 68% of the overall IDPs.

High rates of intra-governorate displacements are recorded only in Erbil (98%), Diyala (65%) and Baghdad (61%), whereas compared to 2014, Anbar IDPs have mostly left the governorate for other north-central governorates (41%, mostly Baghdad and Kirkuk) and the perceived safety of the KRI (19%). Half of IDPs originally from Babylon are also settled within the governorate – in fact displacement in Babylon is closely linked to the events in Jurf Al-Sakhar and

GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	IDPs
ANBAR	Falluja	269478
	Haditha	49866
	Heet	89634
	Ramadi	85140
BAGHDAD	Karkh	161562
	Abu Ghraib	57498
DAHUK	Dahuk	46128
	Sumel	199434
	Zakho	51582
DIYALA	Khanaqin	213426
ERBIL	Erbil	120036
	Shaqalawa	52038
KARBALA	Karbala	273936
KIRKUK	Kirkuk	73686
NAJAF	Najaf	255456
NINEWA	Akre	67326
	Al-Shikhan	71664
SULAYMANIYAH	Sulaymaniyah	92130

surroundings. After being lost to ISIL, the city was retaken by PMFs in late October, hence Sunni families – the majority of those who fled – remain displaced for fear of persecutions in the district of Al-Musayab south of Jurf Al-Sakhr (or in the southern parts of Baghdad governorate).

Compared to 2014, higher shares of intra-governorate displacement were assessed both in Ninewa and Salah al-Din (20% and 33%). These can be linked to localized movements that took place in 2015 and associated with the retaking of previously insecure areas in both governorates.



INTRA-GOVERNORATE  
NORTH-CENTRAL  
KRI  
SOUTH

Figure 13 INTRA-GOVERNORATE AND EXTRA-GOVERNORATE DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2015)

<sup>29</sup> See, Group Assessment: Cycle I and II, DTM, January–March 2015 and May–September 2015. Coverage was respectively 80% and 84% of the total locations identified by the DTM during the reporting period. Most of the not assessed locations were in areas with limited or no access due to the security situation, such as Ninewa, Kirkuk, and Salah al-Din.

<sup>30</sup> For conditions of IDPs in the location of displacement see the second part of the report, Areas of displacement.

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that the increase of IDPs in Baghdad is also due to the registration of many IDPs who were not initially registered by the local authorities, either because of loss of documents or of fear to disclose their Anbari origin.

## RETURN TRENDS IN 2015<sup>33</sup>

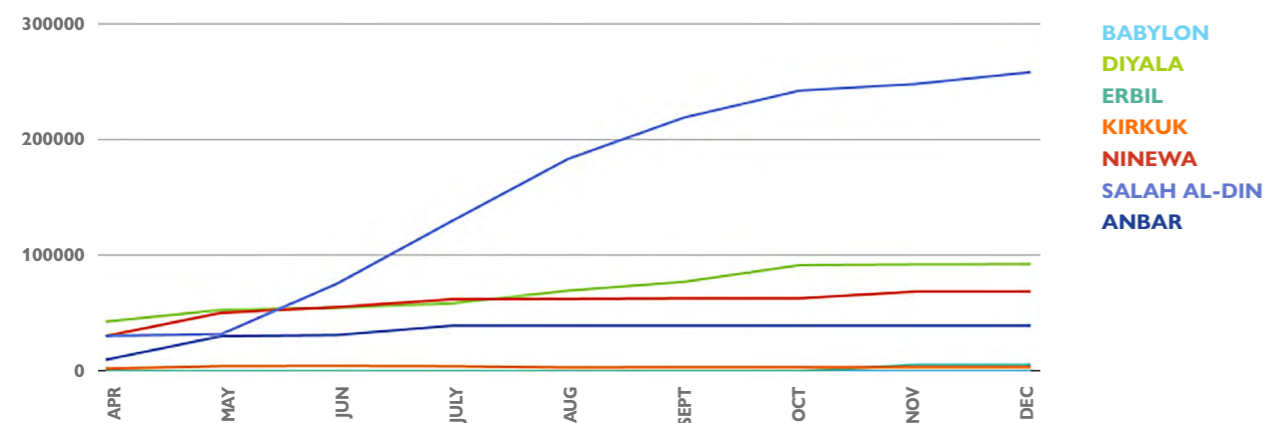


Figure 14 RETURN TREND IN 2015 (CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF RETURNEES PER GOVERNORATE OF RETURN)

2015 is the year of first significant return movements: as of December 2015, a total of 468,780 individuals are reported to have returned to their location of origin.

Return movements started in early spring, towards retaken areas of Ninewa, Diyala and Salah al-Din. While movements in Ninewa and Diyala continue at a slower pace, reaching around 160,000 individuals at the end of the year, returns to Salah al-Din increase dramatically after the retaking of Tikrit, which has been controlled by ISIL for nearly 10 months, and especially after the reopening of the Tikrit Bridge. Returns towards Anbar are also recorded in the first part of the year, although the outburst of the Ramadi crisis eventually brings to a halt movements towards the governorate.

By 17 December 2015, 55% of returnees (247,932 individuals) have returned to Salah al-Din governorate and 36% of total returns (167,430 individuals) to Tikrit district alone. Of the remaining returnees, 20% (92,352 individuals) returned to Diyala, mostly to Al-Khalis and Al-Muqdadia, and 15% (68,958 individuals) to Ninewa, primarily to the northern districts of Telafar and Tilkaif, thanks to improved security conditions. Kirkuk and Erbil are the last governorates of displacement with 1% each of the currently identified returnees to respectively the districts of Kirkuk and Makhmur.

GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT	DISTRICT	RETURNEES	% OF TOTAL RETURNS
ANBAR	Falluja	10794	2%
	Heet	2250	0%
	Ramadi	26514	6%
	Total	39558	8%
DIYALA	Al-Khalis	48090	10%
	Al-Muqdadia	38178	8%
	Khanaqin	5094	1%
	Kifri	1200	0%
	Total	92562	20%
ERBIL	Makhmur	5838	1%
	Total	5838	1%
KIRKUK	Kirkuk	3720	1%
	Total	3720	1%
NINEWA	Mosul	438	0%
	Sinjar	5640	1%
	Telafar	51060	11%
	Tilkaif	11820	3%
	Total	68958	15%
SALAH AL-DIN	Al-Daur	48714	10%
	Baiji	9420	2%
	Balad	11190	2%
	Samarra	15654	3%
	Tikrit	167430	36%
	Tooz	5736	1%
	Total	258144	55%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>468780</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 GOVERNORATES AND DISTRICTS OF RETURN (DECEMBER 2015)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RETURNS

Nearly three fourths of returnees assessed in 2015 fled during summer of 2014 – 44% in June and July and 28% in August. The remaining share of families left their location of origin between September and April 2015 (21%) or after April 2015 (7%). Nearly half of all returns are intra-governorate (47%) and in most cases individuals were able to regain their habitual residence (86%).

All IDPs who returned to Ninewa, from Dahuk or from within the governorate, fled during the Sinjar crisis and were able to resettle in their previous home. Most of those who regained their location

of origin in Diyala and Salah al-Din fled either in June–July 2014 or between September 2014 and April 2015. Intra-governorate movements were prevalent in Diyala; however, only 41% of returnees resettled in their habitual residence, with 46% seeking refuge in unfinished/abandoned buildings. Conversely, in Salah al-Din, only one fourth of returns were from within the governorate, with nearly all returnees resettling at their habitual residence. Returns to Anbar are mostly linked to newly fled families – 85% after April 2015. All families, who mostly returned from Baghdad and within Anbar itself, were able to regain their habitual residence.

GOVERNORATE OF RETURN	PERIOD OF FORMER DISPLACEMENT					TOTAL	INTERNAL RETURNS	HABITUAL RESIDENCE
	PRE-JUNE 14	JUNE-JULY 14	AUGUST-14	POST SEPTEMBER 14	POST APRIL 15			
ANBAR	0%	0%	0%	15%	85%	100%	44%	100%
DIYALA	0%	47%	0%	53%	0%	100%	76%	41%
ERBIL	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	100%	100%	100%
KIRKUK	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%
NINEWA	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	28%	97%
SALAH AL-DIN	0%	64%	21%	14%	0%	100%	22%	99%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>86%</b>

Table 4 RETURNS PER PERIOD OF DISPLACEMENT, INTERNAL RETURNS AND RETURNS TO HABITUAL RESIDENCE (DECEMBER 2015)

### CRISIS UNFOLDED : RETAKING TIKRIT MARCH–APRIL 2015

The district of Tikrit in Salah al-Din Governorate had been taken over in June 2014 by ISIL, which took advantage of the resentment of marginalized Sunni tribes<sup>33</sup> and militias who had been favored during Saddam Hussein's rule. Most individuals who fled the district resettled in Kirkuk, Salah al-Din itself and Erbil.

Tikrit was retaken in March 2015, after a one-month joint campaign of the ISF, PMFs and Sunni tribal fighters. The offensive was the biggest military operation in the governorate since ISIL seized swaths of north Iraq in June 2014. The reopening of the Tikrit Bridge in June prompted returns to the area – which at the end of December totaled 167,430 individuals. Around 70% of returns occurred between June and August and the rest, at a slower pace, until the end of the year.

The most pressing issue upon returns regarded property use.<sup>34</sup> For instance in the sub-district of Markaz Tikrit, DTM reported that nearly half of interviewed returnees have had their properties destroyed

or damaged and a number of families occupied empty houses upon their return, which resulted in confrontations when the legal owners or tenants returned to Tikrit. To mitigate the problem, the local government gave houses that belonged to people affiliated with ISIL to those returnees who had their habitual residence damaged. This was done informally and not through any approved restitution and compensation mechanism.

Another critical issue was outlined by IDPs originally from Tikrit and who had not yet returned: according to them, the change of actors in charge of security was the most destabilizing factor in the community. Fear of security actors and fear of reprisal acts and violence were reportedly the two main obstacles to return. Furthermore, IDPs who have a relative affiliated with ISIL were banned from returning to Tikrit for a period of five years.

<sup>33</sup> Text and figures for this section are based on DTM Master List and Reports, Round 12 to Round 35.

<sup>33</sup> The most influential tribes in the area are the Al Jabouri, one of the oldest and largest tribes in Iraq, and the Abu Nasr, the tribe of former ruler Saddam Hussein.

<sup>34</sup> For more information see Obstacles to return in retaken areas of Iraq, IOM DTM, March 2017.

## 9. POPULATION MOVEMENTS IN 2016

### CRISIS UNFOLDED : RAMADI APRIL–JUNE 2015

Ramadi, the capital of Anbar Governorate, had been taken by ISIL at the beginning of 2014. Following a counterattack, the ISF had recaptured most of the city between March and May. However, by October ISIL presence was again reported in Ramadi.

Violence intensified in early 2015 and at the beginning of April 2015, ISIL launched a campaign to take over the city. The battle for Ramadi drew to a disastrous close when ISIL insurgents seized control of government buildings on 14 May. Three days later, the ISF left the city. At June 2015, a total of 257,142 individuals were reported to have fled the city and its outskirts: half between 8 April and 15 May and the other half after Ramadi city centre was entirely occupied by ISIL.

Families tried to leave the governorate and reach Baghdad, following a path that crossed Al-Khaldiya, in the east of Ramadi, and Al-Amirya (also known as Amriyat Al-Fallujah), with some continuing on to the Tourist City (Al Madina Al Siyahiya) in Al-Habbaniya. However, most families eventually returned to Anbar (especially to Markaz Ramadi

sub-district, in the centre of Ramadi district) citing the lack of a required sponsor to enter Baghdad as the reason for this.<sup>35</sup> Others reported that the alternative route that went through neighbouring Babylon Governorate had also been partially blocked.<sup>36</sup>

Reports of people being held back at checkpoints and refused passage into certain governorates across the country had become more common since ISIL first entered Anbar in 2014. Paperwork – or lack thereof – was a major hurdle for IDPs struggling to gain both safe passage and aid support. Due to the Ramadi crisis, at the end of 2015, the total number of Anbari IDPs reached 1,417,134, with 249,450 individuals displaced after April 2015 who were still in the governorate.

The fall of Ramadi, arguably the most significant city to fall to ISIL since Mosul, shifted the focus of the ISF away from retaking the north of the country and again towards the governorate of Anbar.

### CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN EVENTS

**9 FEBRUARY** The Sunni town of Ramadi, capital of Anbar Governorate, is recaptured from ISIL, who had overrun it in May 2015. ISIL forces withdraw to Fallujah.

**MARCH** ISF launches military operations to retake areas in Anbar Governorate still under ISIL control. Operations to retake the district of Makhmur in Erbil also start.

March: over 500,000 individuals return to their location of origin. Salah al-Din is the governorate experiencing most returns (260,000 individuals, 60% of which in Tikrit).

**APRIL** Ongoing military operations around Heet cause an increase of 8% in the total population in Anbar (around 50,000 individuals).

May: Ninewa, and particularly Telafar district, and Diyala report a high number of returns (18% or around 130,000 individuals each) thanks to improved security conditions. Local authorities also facilitate return to Ramadi and Heet, in Anbar, which are now declared as safe.

**MAY** The Iraqi Army and PMFs launch an offensive to retake Fallujah from ISIL.

**JUNE** Military operations to retake areas under ISIL control in Salah al-Din and southern Ninewa governorates begin, heavily affecting the districts of Al-Shirqat, Baiji, Al-Daur and Qayara.

**29 JUNE** Iraqi forces recapture Fallujah after two and a half years during which the city was outside government control. The city is destroyed and deserted, cluttered with burnt cars and debris.

**AUGUST** Military operations in Al-Hawija in Kirkuk intensify while clashes in Ninewa and Salah al-Din continue.

**SEPTEMBER** In addition to Heet and Ramadi, considerable return movements start towards Fallujah.

**OCTOBER** Overall returns exceed 1,000,000 individuals.

**17 OCTOBER** Iraqi forces backed by US-led air support launch an operation to retake Mosul. In the following 3 weeks, almost 60,000 individuals flee the city and surrounding areas.

**NOVEMBER** Camp population in Ninewa rises due to Mosul operations, while IDPs in critical shelters increase due to operations in Al Shirqat (Salah al-Din) and Hawija (Kirkuk).

**NOVEMBER** Anbar surpasses Salah al-Din as the governorate with the highest percentage of returns in the country, with 35% of all returns (406,746 individuals), 53% of which towards Ramadi.

### DISPLACEMENT TRENDS IN 2016<sup>37</sup>

The overall number of IDPs starts to decrease in the course of 2016 and at the end of December the DTM identifies 3,064,146 internally displaced individuals (–8% since the beginning of the year) dispersed across 3,711 distinct locations in 18 governorates of Iraq.

Displacement in 2016 is prompted by the fighting between ISF and ISIL in the governorate of Anbar. This, between February and July, leads to the progressive retaking of Ramadi, Heet and Fallujah and the subsequent decrease of figures in the areas.<sup>38</sup>

Military operations in Makhmur district of Erbil (started in March), Al-Shirqat and Baiji districts of Salah al-Din and Al-Qayara district of Ninewa (started in June), and Al-Hawija district in Kirkuk (started in August) are linked to the second key event of 2016: the retaking of Mosul. In fact, operations to retake Mosul had been underway since

the city was captured in the summer of 2014 and made ISIL's de facto capital in Iraq, yet the formal launch of the campaign on 17 October 2016 marks the beginning of the largest and most thorough offensive in the country. As a consequence, around 300,000 individuals are displaced along the Mosul corridor at the end of the year (15% of all IDPs in the country).

<sup>35</sup> In fact, IDPs were refused entry to Baghdad unless Baghdad residents vouched for the displaced, "to curb IS infiltration to Baghdad".

<sup>36</sup> The governorate had decided to prevent people between the ages of 18 and 50 from entering the city for security reasons.

<sup>37</sup> Text and figures for this section are based on DTM Master List and Reports, Round 36 to Round 61.

<sup>38</sup> For more information on trends and characteristics of returns in the course of the year see section below, Returns in 2016.

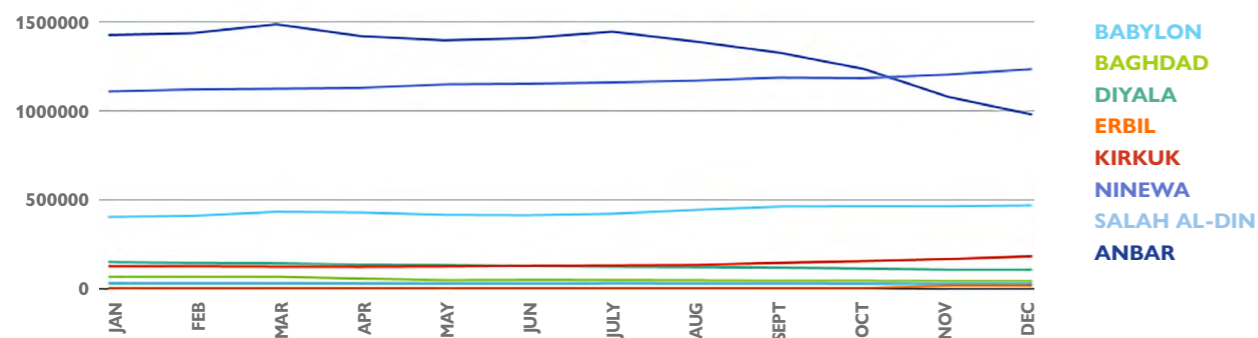


Figure 15 DISPLACEMENT TREND IN 2016 (CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF IPDS PER GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF IDPs : ORIGIN AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

By December 2016, the four governorates of Ninewa (42% of all IDPs, 1,270,152 individuals), Salah al-Din (16%, 475,038), Kirkuk (6%, 193,296), Babylon (1%, 29,004) and Erbil (0.4%, 13,194) record an increase in displacement figures, whereas figures in Anbar (30%, 901,689), Baghdad (1%, 44,670 individuals) and Diyala (4%, 107,562 individuals) progressively drop – by around 30% in each governorate since January 2016.

The percentage distribution of IDPs per period of displacement shows how 15% of movements occurred after March 2016. Displacement in the summer of 2014 (from both the Mosul and the Sinjar crisis) still accounts for around 45%. 39% of IDPs have left between September 2014 and April 2015 whereas only 11% of those who remain displaced left their location of origin during the Anbar crisis.

DTM data collected on socio-demographic characteristics of IDPs<sup>39</sup> show that one out of two IDPs is female. Also, one out of two IDPs is under 18 years old and the active population accounts for slightly

over 45%, while people aged 60 years and over constitute a very small share (4%). It should also be noted that the youngest age category (under 6 years of age) is barely half the size of the two subsequent children age groups, outlining the negative effect of the conflict on both fertility and infant mortality. In terms of religious affiliation, the overwhelming majority of IDPs is Sunni Muslim. In terms of ethnic affiliation, Arabs are the largest ethnic group, followed by Kurds and Turkmen. Overall, 66% of IDPs in Iraq are Arab Sunni Muslims. Yazidis, Turkmen Shia Muslims and Kurdish Sunni Muslims also account for one fourth of all IDPs.



Figure 16 IDPs BY GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN (DECEMBER 2016)

## LOCATION OF DISPLACEMENT<sup>40</sup>

At the end of 2016, IDPs are still displaced in all 18 governorates of Iraq, with the most significant concentration in the central and northern governorates (66%). In this area, the largest groups live in Baghdad (13%, with as much as 260,000 individuals in the two districts of Abu Ghraib and Karkh), Anbar, Kirkuk and Ninewa (12% each). In addition to affected districts, the impact of military operations along the Mosul corridor is reflected in the high number of displaced individuals found in Tikrit (146,364 individuals) and in general in Salah al-Din as well as in Kirkuk Governorate.

Nearly one out of three IDPs is hosted in the KRI (30%) with the governorates of Dahuk (13%) and Erbil (12%) hosting the largest concentrations. Except for Najaf (3%), southern governorates have been comparatively less affected by the waves of displacement (4% of all IDPs).

GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT	IDPs	%
ANBAR	288048	9%
BABYLON	47388	2%
BAGHDAD	407202	13%
BASRAH	10524	0%
DAHUK	395484	13%
DIYALA	78882	3%
ERBIL	347922	11%
KARBALA	65874	2%
KIRKUK	365370	12%
MISSAN	5322	0%
MUTHANNA	4590	0%
NAJAF	77268	3%
NINEWA	410436	14%
QADISSIYA	24024	1%
SALAH AL-DIN	317694	10%
SULAYMANIYAH	154896	5%
THI-QAR	8268	0%
WASSIT	25422	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3034614</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 GOVERNORATES AND TOP DISTRICTS OF DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2016)

GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	IDPs
ANBAR	Falluja	142602
BAGHDAD	Abu Ghraib	92898
	Karkh	158760
DAHUK	Dahuk	52704
	Sumel	199536
	Zakho	124254
ERBIL	Erbil	271728
KIRKUK	Al-Hawiga	73686
	Daquq	56166
	Kirkuk	227718
NAJAF	Najaf	65454
NINEWA	Akre	68496
	Al-Hamdaniya	71094
	Al-Shikhan	80364
	Mosul	110202
	Al-Shirqat	39690
SALAH AL-DIN	Samarra	43026
	Tikrit	146364
SULAYMANIYAH	Sulaymaniyah	95808

Compared to 2015, intra-governorate displacement has increased from 32% to 40% due to localized movements along the Mosul corridor from March onwards. Nevertheless, the majority of those who remain displaced at the end of the year are still found outside their governorate of origin: 1,822,776 individuals corresponding to 60% of

the overall IDPs. High rates of intra-governorate displacements are recorded in Erbil (100%), Kirkuk (76%), Diyala (66%) and Salah al-Din (58%); the majority of IDPs in Baghdad (53%) and Babylon (51%) is also found within their governorate of origin.

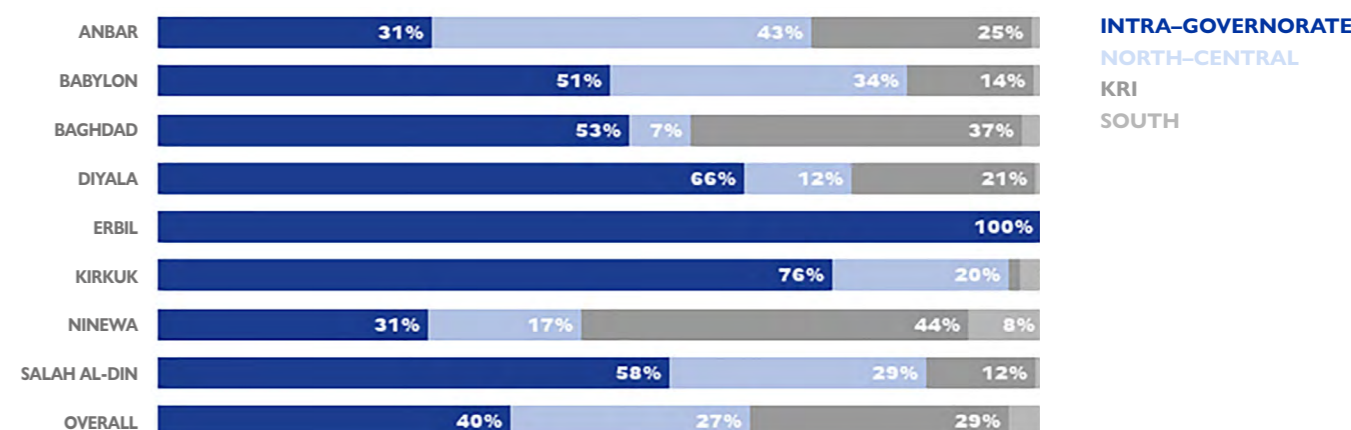


Figure 17 INTRA-GOVERNORATE AND EXTRA-GOVERNORATE DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2016)

<sup>39</sup> See Integrated Location Assessment I, DTM, March 2017.

<sup>40</sup> For conditions of IDPs in the location of displacement see the second part of the report, Areas of displacement.

## RETURN TRENDS IN 2016<sup>41</sup>

As of December 2016, a total of 1,370,862 individuals are reported to have returned to their location of origin (+139% since the month of January).

The significant decrease in the number of IDPs is linked to the intensification of return movements in the second half of 2016. Movements to Anbar are particularly significant and linked to the progressive retaking of the governorate.

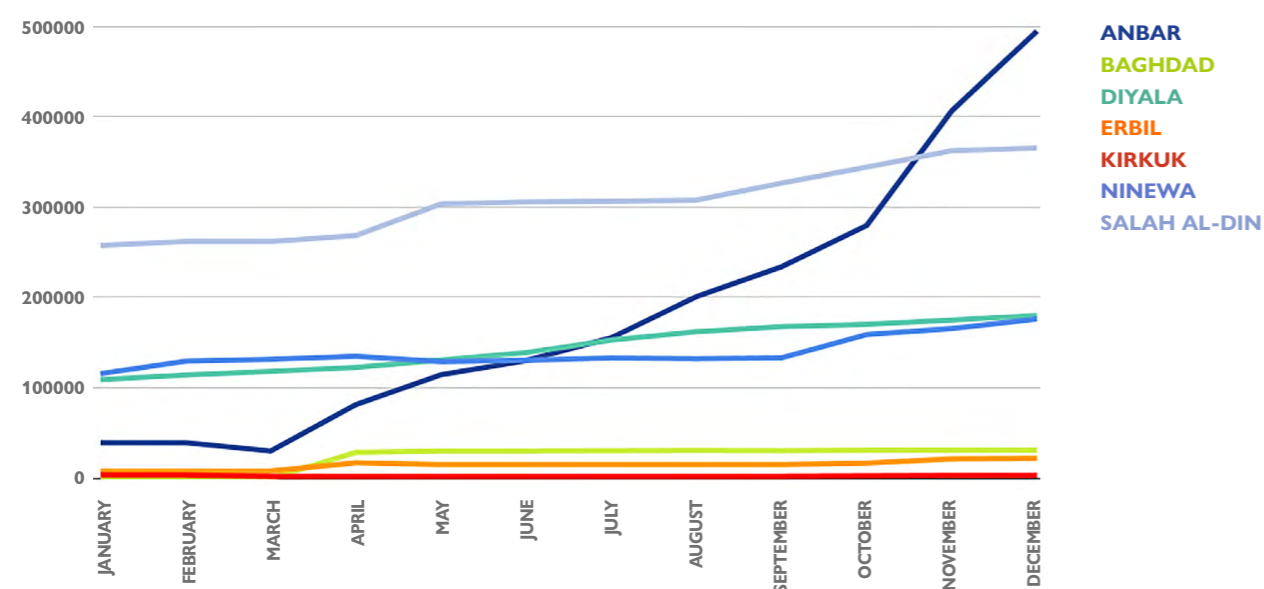


Figure 18 RETURN TREND IN 2016 (CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF RETURNEES PER GOVERNORATE OF RETURN)

Return trends follow the outcome of military operations, with Anbar recording both the highest number of returns in 2016 (534,054 individuals) and the highest percentage of returns registered so far in the county (42%). These have intensified after March 2016, following the retaking of Ramadi (256,464 returns), Heet (75,822 returns) and Fallujah (225,690 returns). Salah al-Din, the top governorate of return in 2015 due to the retaking of Tikrit (27% of overall returns so far),

also records an additional 108,330 returns in 2016, with a significant number of families regaining their location of origin in Al-Shirqat, Baiji, Balad and Samarra. Returns to Diyala and Ninewa Governorates have also increased and account respectively for 14% and 13% of all returns recorded so far – in particular, around 75,000 returns targeted the district of Khanaqin.

GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	RETURNS IN 2015	RETURNS IN 2016	OVERALL RETURNS	% OF TOTAL RETURNS
ANBAR	Al-Rutba	0	10200	10200	1%
	Falluja	10794	214896	225690	16%
	Haditha	0	5436	5436	0%
	Heet	2250	73572	75822	6%
	Ramadi	26514	229950	256464	19%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39558</b>	<b>534054</b>	<b>573612</b>	<b>42%</b>
BAGHDAD	Abu Ghraib	0	7668	7668	1%
	Kadhimia	0	8130	8130	1%
	Mahmoudiya	0	15636	15636	1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31434</b>	<b>31434</b>	<b>2%</b>
DIYALA	Al-Khalis	48090	20568	68658	5%
	Al-Muqdadaya	38178	4404	42582	3%
	Khanaqin	5094	75642	80736	6%
	Kifri	1200	0	1200	0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92562</b>	<b>100614</b>	<b>193176</b>	<b>14%</b>
ERBIL	Makhmur	5838	16320	22158	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5838</b>	<b>16320</b>	<b>22158</b>	<b>2%</b>	
KIRKUK	Daquq	0	966	966	0%
	Kirkuk	3720	-1242	2478	0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3720</b>	<b>-276</b>	<b>3444</b>	<b>0%</b>
NINEWA	Al-Hamdaniya	0	1002	1002	0%
	Mosul	438	41892	42330	3%
	Sinjar	5640	23298	28938	2%
	Telafar	51060	37368	88428	6%
	Tilkaif	11820	8046	19866	1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>68958</b>	<b>111606</b>	<b>180564</b>	<b>13%</b>
	SALAH AL-DIN	Al-Daur	48714	5748	54462
Al-Fares		0	6318	6318	0%
Al-Shirqat		0	31596	31596	2%
Baiji		9420	18366	27786	2%
Balad		11190	14388	25578	2%
Samarra		15654	26736	42390	3%
Tikrit		167430	3786	171216	12%
Tooz		5736	1392	7128	1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>258144</b>	<b>108330</b>	<b>366474</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>		<b>468780</b>	<b>920282</b>	<b>1370862</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6 RETURNS PER YEAR (DECEMBER 2016)

<sup>41</sup> Text and figures for this section are based on DTM Master List and Reports, Round 36 to Round 61.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RETURNS

Among all returnees recorded at December 2016, nearly 60% fled before September 2014 – 13% during the Anbar crisis, 26% during the Mosul crisis and 18% during the Sinjar crisis. Around 12% of returns were recorded among IDPs who fled due to military operations along the Mosul corridor, whereas the remaining 30% fled between September 2014 and March 2016. Intra-governorate returns increased in 2016 (60%, + 13% compared to 2015) and nearly all individuals were able to regain their habitual residence (93%).

Nearly 80% of IDPs who returned to Ninewa fled during the Sinjar crisis and 20% due to operations in the Mosul corridor; returns from KRI were prevalent with only one third of families coming back from within Ninewa – nearly all families were able to resettle in their previous home (97%). Intra-governorate movements were also rare in Salah al-Din (37%), with most families coming back from Kirkuk and Erbil and resettling in their previous residence (92%). Intra-governorate returns were prevalent in all other governorates, ranging from 72% in Anbar to 100% in Kirkuk and Erbil. The governorate of Diyala shows the lowest share of returnees in habitual residence (73%) with 21% of returnees settled in unfinished/abandoned buildings and 6% hosted by other families.

GOVERNORATE OF RETURN	PERIOD OF FORMER DISPLACEMENT							INTERNAL RETURNS	HABITUAL RESIDENCE
	PRE-JUNE14	JUNE-JULY 14	AUGUST 14	POST SEPTEMBER 14	POST APRIL 15	POST MARCH 16	POST OCTOBER 16		
ANBAR	25%	7%	0%	16%	33%	18%	0%	72%	99%
DIYALA	0%	0%	34%	66%	0%	0%	0%	87%	100%
ERBIL	0%	65%	4%	31%	0%	0%	0%	82%	73%
KIRKUK	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
NINEWA	0%	14%	0%	86%	0%	0%	0%	100%	86%
SALAH AL-DIN	0%	0%	77%	0%	0%	18%	6%	35%	97%
NINEWA	9%	50%	20%	13%	1%	6%	0%	37%	92%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>93%</b>

Table 7 GOVERNORATES AND TOP DISTRICTS OF DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2016)

## CRISIS UNFOLDED : THE ANBAR OFFENSIVE (RETAKE FALLUJAH)

Fallujah was the first district to be taken over by ISIL in January 2014.<sup>42</sup> Following its protracted besiegement, the humanitarian situation in the area had acutely deteriorated. Outward movements as well as supplies of food, medicine and other goods had completely stopped since December 2015. On 22 May 2016, the ISF and PMFs, supported by the coalition forces, engaged in an offensive against ISIL to retake the city and surrounding areas.

The campaign prompted immediate displacement, as residents moved towards northern neighbourhoods, where conflict was less intense, and/or to areas close to the river to access water. In June, there were nearly 300,000 individuals displaced within the governorate, an increase of 10% since the beginning of the year. Nearly all families stayed within the governorate (in Fallujah itself or in Ramadi and Al-Khadiya), with few managing to flee to districts located in the neighbouring governorate of Baghdad, including Abu Ghraib and Karkh.<sup>43</sup>

After a month of intense fighting, between 18 and 19 June, Iraqi and coalition forces entered the urban area of Fallujah and took the city. On 28 June, ISF was controlling both the city and western and northern neighbouring areas, where ISIL had withdrawn to organize its resistance.

The retaking of the city prompted the massive return of IDPs to Fallujah: between August and December, nearly 220,000 returns were recorded – making Fallujah the second district in Iraq recording the largest number of returns, after Ramadi. Just as in Ramadi, the sharp increase in return movements was also driven by local authorities, which facilitated returns to areas declared safe.

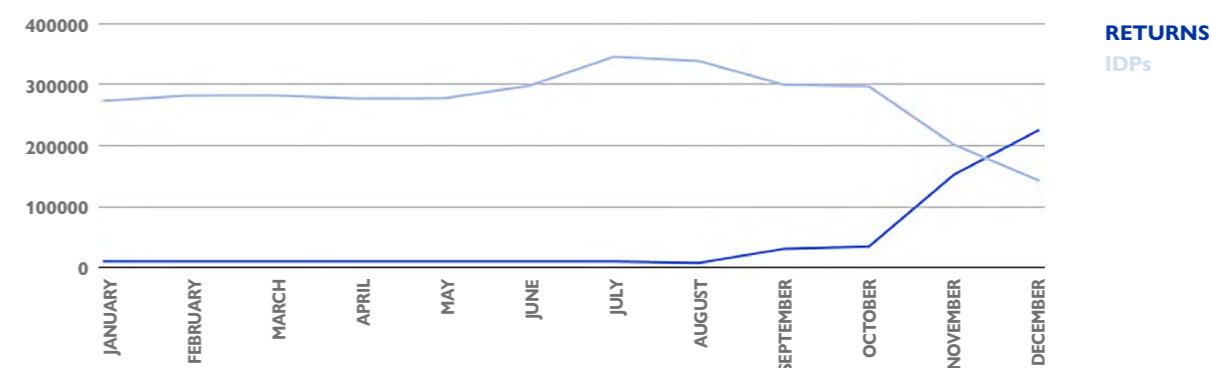


Figure 19 IDPs IN FALLUJAH AND RETURNS TO FALLUJAH (JANUARY-DECEMBER 2016)

<sup>42</sup> See also previous section of the report, Crisis unfolded: Anbar.

<sup>43</sup> At the time, the policy on migration and prevention of terrorism of the Government of Iraq (GoI) sanctioned complete control over population movements from Fallujah, with security screenings to identify potential ISIL affiliates within the IDP population. GoI strategy was to keep IDPs in camps as much as possible and to limit their movements within Anbar Governorate, with strict checkpoints, especially on Bezebiz Bridge preventing IDPs from crossing into Baghdad Governorate.



## CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN EVENTS

**JANUARY 2017** Over 330,000 individuals are displaced along the Mosul corridor as a consequence of the military operations that started in October 2016.

**JANUARY 2017** Eastern Mosul is back under Iraqi government control, which announces its full "liberation".

**19 FEBRUARY** Military operations to retake the west side of Mosul city start, prompting displacement movements mainly towards camps located in southern Ninewa.

**MARCH** Returns exceed 1,500,000 individuals. An increase of 18% is recorded in the number of returns to Mosul – over 12,000 individuals coming mainly from Hamdaniya district.

**29 JUNE** Iraq announces it has recaptured the iconic Al Nuri mosque in Mosul, with Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi saying it is a "sign of [ISIL's] impending defeat".

**10 JULY** Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi formally declares victory over ISIL in Mosul City.

**JULY 2017** Returns exceed 2,000,000 individuals.

## DISPLACEMENT TRENDS IN 2017<sup>44</sup>

The overall number of IDPs continues to decrease in the course of 2017 and at the end of December the DTM has identified 2,615,988 internally displaced individuals (-13% since the beginning of the year) dispersed across 3,711 distinct locations in 18 governorates of Iraq.

Extensive new displacement in the course of 2017 is recorded mostly in Ninewa and is prompted by military operations to retake West Mosul after the east side has surrendered in the month of February. Movements peak in the month of June and reach 1,892,964 individuals. Figures start to drop after the Prime Minister announces the complete recapture of the city in July: returns to Mosul bring the total number of IDPs to 1,480,278 at the end of the year.<sup>45</sup>

**20 AUGUST** Telafar and surrounding areas are successfully retaken by ISF.

**SEPTEMBER** ISF launches a full-scale offensive against ISIL in the west Anbar districts of Ana, Al Ka'im and Ru'a.

**OCTOBER** The handover of the disputed areas from the Kurdish Peshmerga to the ISF triggers localized displacement.

**OCTOBER** Military operations in Al-Hawija (Kirkuk) and Shirqat (Salah al-Din) come to an end, with 60,000 returns recorded in the area.

**NOVEMBER** The campaign in west Anbar ends with the areas being retaken.

**9 DECEMBER** Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi declares the end to the country's war against the ISIL.

**DECEMBER 2017** For the first time since the beginning of the crisis, the number of returnees (3.2 million) exceeds that of IDPs (2.6 million).

During the second half of October, a temporary rise of displacement figures is triggered by the handover of the disputed areas from the Kurdish Peshmerga to the ISF. Military operations in Al-Shirqat and Baiji (Salah al-Din), Al-Hawija (Kirkuk) and west Anbar also cause a localized increase in displacement figures towards the end of the year. Nevertheless, by December 2017, displacement from all governorates drops due to the large return movements.

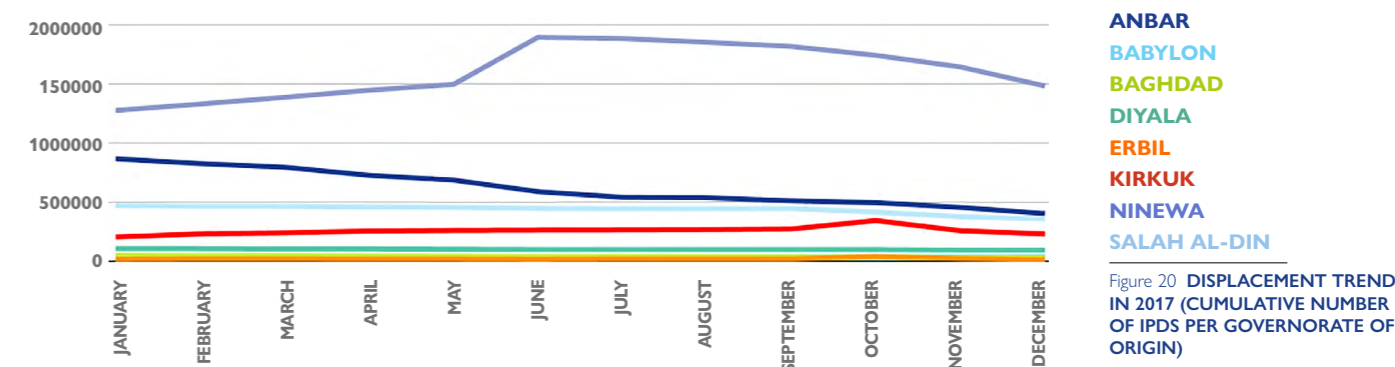


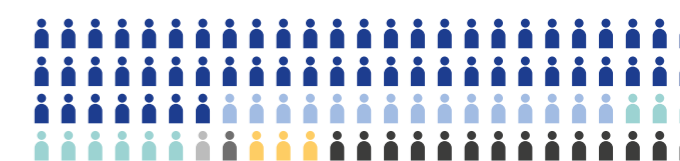
Figure 20 DISPLACEMENT TREND IN 2017 (CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF IDPs PER GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF IDPs : ORIGIN AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

As of 31 December 2017, nearly 60% of the total IDP population of 2.6 million comes from Ninewa (57% or 1,480,278 individuals). Anbar is the second most common governorate of origin for IDPs (15%, 399,210). Figures in both governorates have largely decreased due to ongoing return movements to Mosul district and to Fallujah and Ramadi (combined with the slowing down of displacement from west Anbar). Figures in Erbil (0.3%, 8478) and Kirkuk (9%, 226,956) have also reported a significant decrease – due to return movements following the handover of the disputed areas from the Kurdish Peshmerga to the ISF. Babylon, Baghdad, Diyala and Salah al-Din account respectively for 1%, 1%, 3% and 14% of the residual share of those who remained displaced.

The analysis per ethno-religious affiliation shows that 89% of returnees and 67% of IDPs in Iraq are Arab Sunni Muslims. Turkmen Shia Muslims, Yazidis and Kurdish Sunni Muslims account for a significant share of the displaced population (altogether almost 23%), but for a smaller percentage of returnees (8% overall, because

of low figures for Turkmen Shia Muslims and Yazidis). In fact, while Arab Sunni and Kurdish Sunni Muslims have mostly returned home, Turkmen Shia and Sunni Muslims, Yazidis, Christians and Shabak Shias remain displaced across Iraq. For over 20,000 IDP families belonging to these ethno-religious groups, "fear due to a change in ethno-religious composition of the place of origin" was cited among the top three obstacles to return.<sup>46</sup>



NINEWA ANBAR KIRKUK  
BABYLON BAGHDAD DIYALA SALAH AL-DIN

Figure 21 IDPs BY GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN (DECEMBER 2017)

## LOCATION OF DISPLACEMENT<sup>47</sup>

At the end of 2017, IDPs are still displaced in all 18 governorates of Iraq, with the most significant concentration in the central and northern governorates (66%). In this area, the largest groups live in Ninewa (31%, with as much as 550,842 individuals in Mosul), Salah al-Din 9% (247,362 individuals, 97,854 of which in Tikrit), Baghdad 7% (183,516 individuals, 75,078 of which in Karkh), Kirkuk 7% (180,858 individuals) and Anbar 4% (111,042 individuals, over half in Fallujah).

Nearly one out of three IDPs is hosted in the KRI (31%, 806,976 individuals), with the governorates of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah hosting respectively 14%, 10% and 7% of individuals still displaced. South Iraq hosts 4% of IDPs (95,280 individuals), most of who are settled in the capital district of Najaf (47,226 individuals).

<sup>44</sup> Text and figures for this section are based on DTM Master List and Reports, Round 62 to Round 86.

<sup>45</sup> For more information on trends and characteristics of returns in the course of the year see section below, the Mosul recapture.

<sup>46</sup> See Integrated Location Assessment II, IOM DTM, October 2017.

<sup>47</sup> For conditions of IDPs in the location of displacement see the second part of the report, Areas of displacement.

GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT	IDPs	% OF TOTAL IDPs	GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	IDPs
ANBAR	111042	4%	ANBAR	Falluja	66396
BABYLON	33468	1%	BAGHDAD	Abu Ghraib	31458
BAGHDAD	183516	7%		Karkh	75078
BASRAH	9288	0%		Dahuk	41052
DAHUK	362898	14%	DAHUK	Sumel	191388
DIYALA	82554	3%		Zakho	120498
ERBIL	255672	10%	ERBIL	Erbil	221898
KARBALA	51306	2%	KIRKUK	Daquq	46866
KIRKUK	180858	7%		Kirkuk	132792
MISSAN	3528	0%	NAJAF	Najaf	47226
MUTHANNA	3078	0%		Akre	36984
NAJAF	55086	2%	NINEWA	Al-Hamdaniya	82104
NINEWA	807324	31%		Al-Shikhan	62046
QADISSIYA	18480	1%		Mosul	550842
SALAH AL-DIN	247362	9%		Samarra	41484
SULAYMANIYAH	188406	7%	SALAH AL-DIN	Tikrit	97854
THI-QAR	5820	0%		Tooz	43632
WASSIT	16302	1%	SULAYMANIYAH	Kalar	35766
				Sulaymaniyah	105528
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2615988</b>	<b>100%</b>			

Table 8 GOVERNORATES AND TOP DISTRICTS OF DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2017)

Compared to 2016, intra-governorate displacement has increased from 40% to 49% due to localized movements along the Mosul corridor. Nevertheless, half of those who remain displaced at the end of the year are still found outside their governorate of origin

(1,287,462 individuals). More specifically, around 70% of IDPs originally from Anbar are in Baghdad or in the KRI, and between 40% and 50% of those originally from Babylon, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din are found in other north-central governorates or in the KRI.

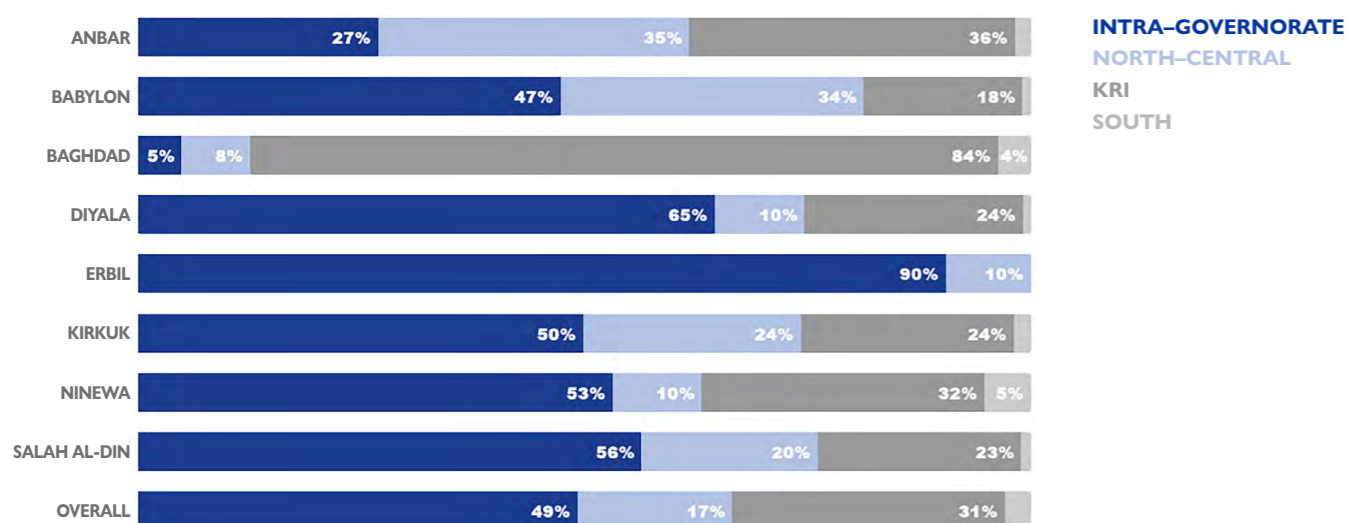


Figure 22 INTRA-GOVERNORATE AND EXTRA-GOVERNORATE DISPLACEMENT (DECEMBER 2017)

## RETURN TRENDS IN 2017

For the first time since the beginning of the Iraq displacement crisis, the number of returnees tops that of IDPs – as of 31 December 2017, 3,220,362 returnees are recorded – an increase of 1,849,500 individuals since December 2016.

The retaking of Mosul and the end of hostilities in other areas, such as Telafar, Tilkaif, Al-Shirqat and west Anbar, coupled with the policy of encouraging returns, are the main factors triggering return movement towards areas of origin.

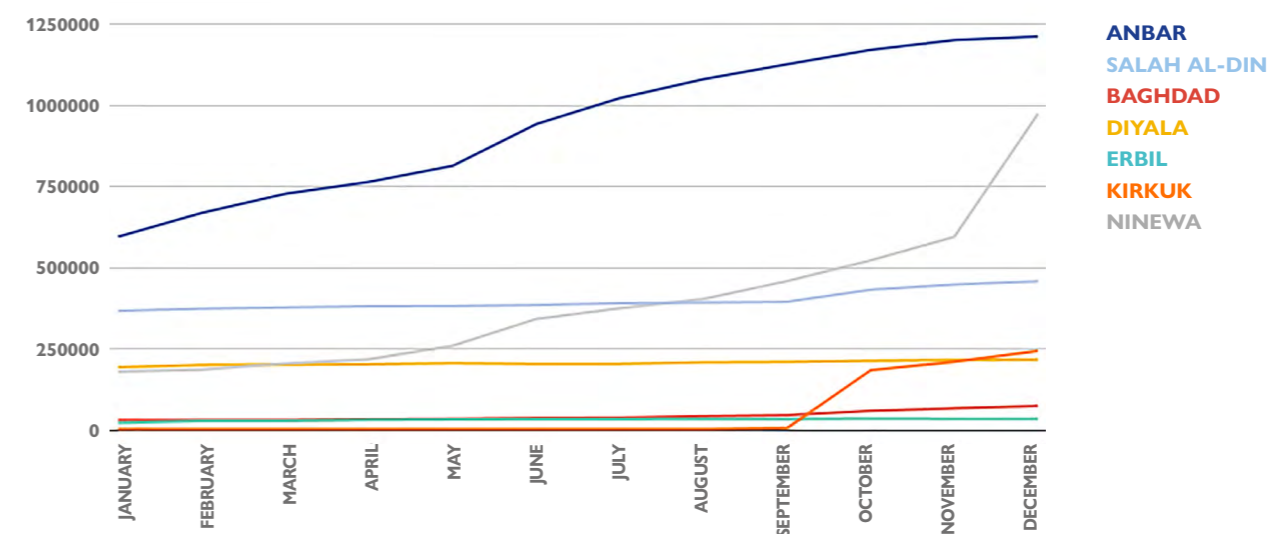


Figure 23 RETURN TRENDS IN 2017 (CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF IDPs PER GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN)

Ninewa Governorate recorded the greatest increase in the number of returnees during the course of 2017, reaching 974,862 returnees (30% of all returns recorded so far).<sup>48</sup> The Ninewa returnee population is mainly concentrated within the three districts of Mosul (564,120 individuals), Telafar (179,838) and Al Hamdaniya (103,596). Nevertheless, the governorate that continues to host the largest returnee population is Anbar, with a total of 38% (1,213,476 individuals) – almost all concentrated in the districts of Fallujah (16%, or 517,668 individuals), Ramadi (14%, or 457,494) and Heet (6%, or

179,466). The third largest governorate hosting returnee populations is Salah al-Din, with 14% (459,186 individuals), as many returnees continue to head back to Al-Shirqat district, which was retaken from ISIL in late September. IDPs originally from the Al-Hawija and the disputed-areas crisis are also increasingly returning to Kirkuk (8% of all returns, of which 244,764 in 2017). Over 30,000 returns were also recorded in the district of Mahmoudiya (Baghdad), where authorities are actively encouraging returns to retaken areas.

<sup>48</sup> These returnees were identified during the joint data collection exercise conducted by the DTM in cooperation with local authorities in Mosul, in addition to continuous returns to Mosul district, and the return movements to Telafar and Tilkaif districts from the disputed-areas crisis.

GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	YEAR 2015	YEAR 2016	YEAR 2017	OVERALL	% OF TOTAL RETURNS	
ANBAR	Al-Ka'im	0	0	1332	1332	0%	
	Al-Rutba	0	10200	16974	27174	1%	
	Ana	0	0	3012	3012	0%	
	Falluja	10794	214896	291978	517668	16%	
	Haditha	0	5436	21894	27330	1%	
	Heet	2250	73572	103644	179466	6%	
	Ramadi	26514	229950	201030	457494	14%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39558</b>	<b>534054</b>	<b>639864</b>	<b>1213476</b>	<b>38%</b>	
BAGHDAD	Abu Ghraib	0	7668	11628	19296	1%	
	Kadhimia	0	8130	-366	7764	0%	
	Mahmoudiya	0	15636	32172	47808	1%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31434</b>	<b>43434</b>	<b>74868</b>	<b>2%</b>		
DIYALA	Al-Khalis	48090	20568	3840	72498	2%	
	Al-Muqdadaiya	38178	4404	9690	52272	2%	
	Khanaqin	5094	75642	10710	91446	3%	
	Kifri	1200	0	0	1200	0%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92562</b>	<b>100614</b>	<b>24240</b>	<b>217416</b>	<b>7%</b>	
ERBIL	Makhmur	5838	16320	12852	35010	1%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5838</b>	<b>16320</b>	<b>12852</b>	<b>35010</b>	<b>1%</b>		
KIRKUK	Al-Hawiga	0	0	72750	72750	2%	
	Dabes	0	0	6084	6084	0%	
	Daquq	0	966	9390	10356	0%	
	Kirkuk	3720	-1242	153096	155574	5%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3720</b>	<b>-276</b>	<b>241320</b>	<b>244764</b>	<b>8%</b>	
NINEWA	Al-Hamdaniya	0	1002	102594	103596	3%	
	Al-Shikhan	0	0	1140	1140	0%	
	Hatra	0	0	8454	8454	0%	
	Mosul	438	41892	521790	564120	18%	
	Sinjar	5640	23298	19878	48816	2%	
	Telafar	51060	37368	91410	179838	6%	
	Tilkaif	11820	8046	49032	68898	2%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>68958</b>	<b>111606</b>	<b>794298</b>	<b>974862</b>	<b>30%</b>	
	SALAH AL-DIN	Al-Daur	48714	5748	2790	57252	2%
		Al-Fares	0	6318	12	6330	0%
Al-Shirqat		0	31596	54252	85848	3%	
Baiji		9420	18366	18042	45828	1%	
Balad		11190	14388	10080	35658	1%	
Samarra		15654	26736	3984	46374	1%	
Tikrit		167430	3786	42	171258	5%	
Tooz		5736	1392	3510	10638	0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>258144</b>	<b>108330</b>	<b>92712</b>	<b>459186</b>	<b>14%</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>468780</b>	<b>902082</b>	<b>1849500</b>	<b>3220362</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Table 9 GOVERNORATES AND DISTRICTS OF RETURN (DECEMBER 2017)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RETURNS

Among all returnees recorded at December 2017, over three fourths had fled before September 2014 – 7% during the Anbar crisis, 45% during the Mosul crisis and 20% during the Sinjar crisis. Around 10% of returns were recorded among IDPs who fled due to military operations along the Mosul corridor, whereas the remaining 20% fled between September 2014 and March 2016. Extra-governorate returns increased in 2017 (57%), reflecting how even IDPs who have resettled far from home (and who have been in displacement for several years) are consistently returning home. Nearly all individuals were able to regain their habitual residence (96%).

Nearly 80% of IDPs who returned to Ninewa fled due to military operations in Mosul corridor; accordingly returns from within the governorate were prevalent (68%), with all families able to resettle in their previous home. Intra-governorate movements were fewer in Kirkuk (29%), Salah al-Din (37%) and Anbar (47%), with most families coming back from other governorates. Just as in previous years, the governorate of Diyala shows the lowest share of returnees in their habitual residence (78%). However, families have moved out of unfinished/abandoned buildings to rented accommodation or to be hosted by other families.

GOVERNORATE OF RETURN	PERIOD OF FORMER DISPLACEMENT								INTERNAL RETURNS	HABITUAL RESIDENCE
	PRE-JUNE 14	JUNE-JULY 14	AUGUST-14	POST SEPTEMBER 14	POST APRIL 15	POST MARCH 2016	POST OCTOBER 2016	POST JULY 2017		
ANBAR	28%	11%	0%	21%	27%	12%	0%	0%	47%	97%
BAGHDAD	18%	1%	21%	61%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	98%
DIYALA	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	78%	86%
ERBIL	0%	54%	15%	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%	93%	100%
KIRKUK	0%	4%	35%	0%	0%	0%	0%	61%	29%	99%
NINEWA	0%	1%	3%	6%	5%	7%	6%	72%	68%	99%
SALAH AL-DIN	0%	2%	42%	1%	1%	3%	47%	4%	43%	89%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>96%</b>

Table 10 RETURNS PER PERIOD OF DISPLACEMENT, INTERNAL RETURNS AND RETURNS TO HABITUAL RESIDENCE (DECEMBER 2017)

## CRISIS UNFOLDED : RETAKING MOSUL AND OPERATIONS ALONG THE MOSUL CORRIDOR\*\*

East Mosul retaken (October 2016 – February 2017)

West Mosul offensive (February – July 2017)

The city of Mosul in northern Iraq had been held by ISIL since 2014. The offensive to re-establish Iraqi government control over the city began on 17 October 2016 after three years during which Mosul had been completely inaccessible to humanitarian actors and isolated from the rest of Iraq. Movements in and out of the city had become progressively more restrictive since August 2014, while living standards were hindered by severe shortages of goods, services and cash, especially after the Gol's decision in July 2015 to freeze all payments to employees in ISIL-held territories.

The DTM has identified three main phases of displacement flows to facilitate analysis. The first phase lasted for a couple of weeks, until the ISF reached the city's borders; hostilities mainly affected rural areas

and nearly 17,000 individuals displaced. The second phase is linked to the retaking of east Mosul in January and lasted until 25 February 2017. Displacement flows continued throughout this period, with over 200,000 individuals.

The third phase was marked by the launch of the operations for the retaking of west Mosul. Military operations progressed more slowly on this side of the city due to its narrow streets and dense population and caused more large-scale damage and displacement (nearly 800,000 individuals). Most movements occurred within Ninewa – with individuals moving from the western to the eastern side of the river in order to avoid conflict areas or along safe corridors into territory controlled by the ISF, settling in emergency camps and/or screening sites, or moving in with host families.

\*\* IOM has been following displacement trends in Mosul since the offensive started on 17 October 2016 with the Emergency Tracking (ET) system, a crisis-based tool that aims to track sudden displacement or return movements triggered by specific crises.

Returns towards east Mosul started as early as November 2016, although at a very slow pace until January 2017. Returns greatly increased at the beginning of June 2017 (+32%), although the violence of the final offensive triggered new displacements. While the east Mosul population has mostly returned home, west Mosul families remain in displacement. Their return may be deterred by ongoing

violence, security risks in the area, lack of services and infrastructure and residential damage caused by the prolonged conflict – families originally from Mosul said that one of the main obstacles to their return was that their house is occupied or destroyed. By October 2017, one year after the start of Mosul operations, nearly 800,000 individuals remained displaced.

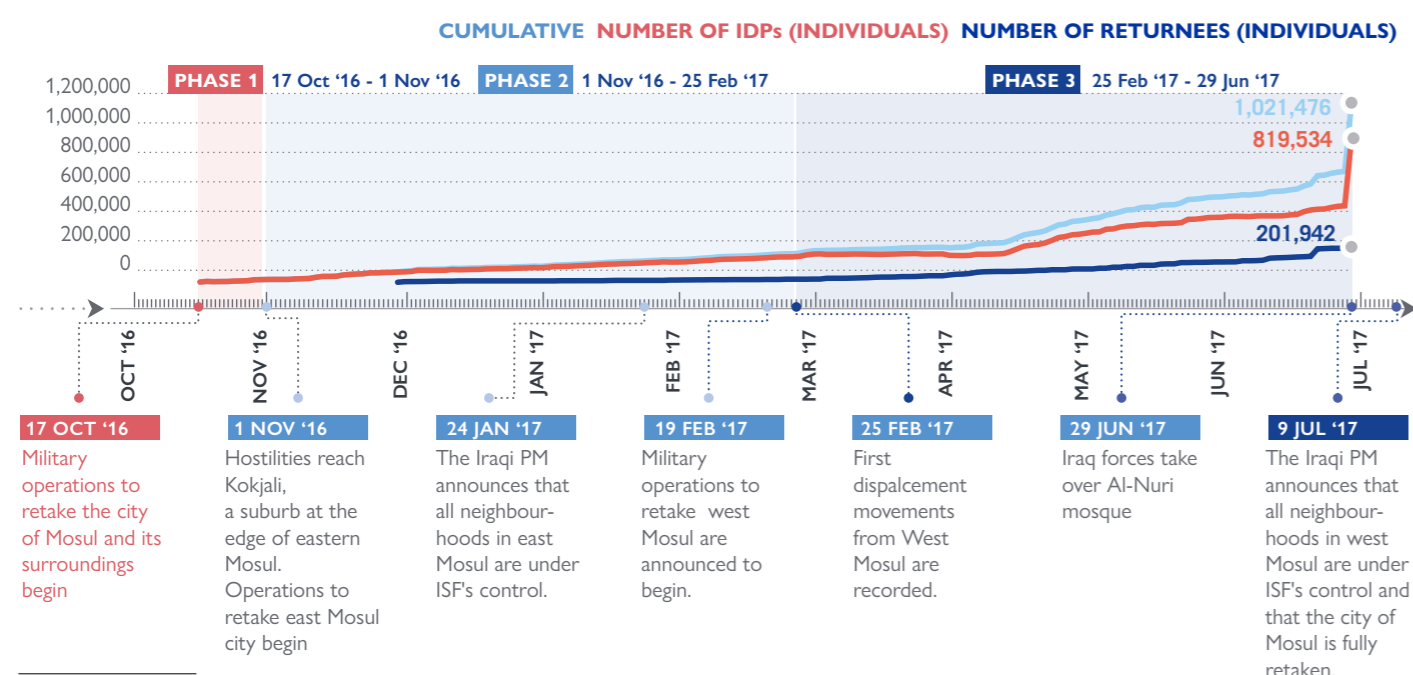


Figure 24 MOSUL CORRIDOR DISPLACEMENT TIMELINE (OCTOBER 2016–JULY 2017)

Ongoing hostilities in Kirkuk, Salah al-Din and Erbil caused additional displacement movements along the Mosul corridor, albeit more limited.

At the time the Mosul offensive was launched in October 2016, hostilities were ongoing in Kirkuk Governorate and in Salah al-Din, particularly in Baiji and Al Shirqat districts. At that time, the DTM had identified 84,000 IDPs along the Mosul corridor (i.e. those areas connecting the recaptured districts of Anbar to southern Ninewa). Another 30,000 individuals were displaced due to the hostilities in Al-Hawija and 13,000

individuals who had fled Makhmur in March 2016 were still displaced. The number of IDPs scattered along the Mosul corridor kept growing after the beginning of the Mosul offensive. On 21 September 2017, Iraqi forces resumed military operations against ISIL in Hawija district, Kirkuk Governorate, and launched an offensive in Shirqat district, Salah al-Din Governorate. As a result, the number of IDPs from these areas peaked in October, reaching around 110,000 individuals. At the end of December 2017, nearly 80,000 returns were assessed, with around 90,000 individuals from these areas still displaced.<sup>50</sup>

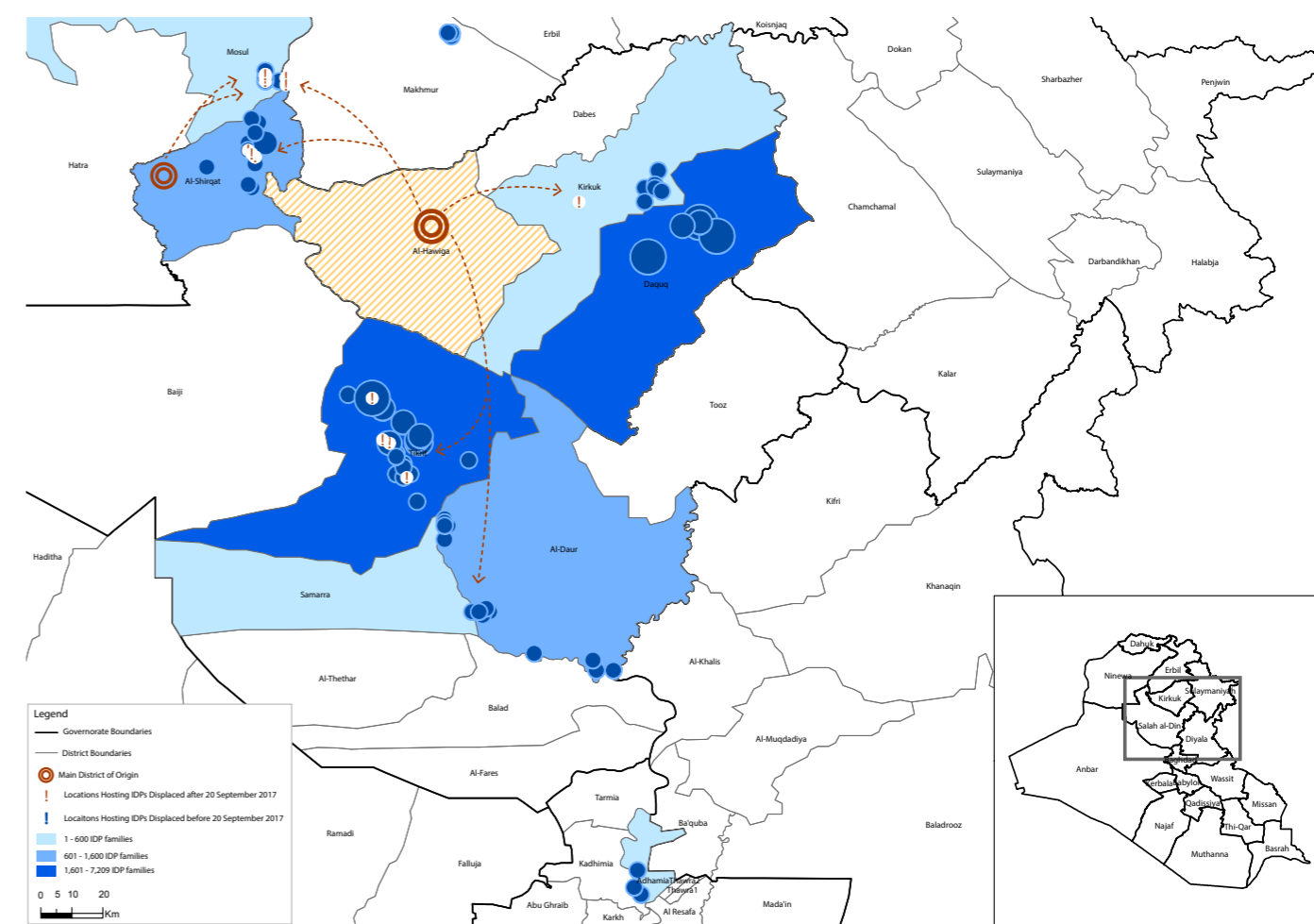


Figure 25 AL-HAWIJA AND AL-SHIHQAT DISPLACEMENT OVERVIEW

<sup>50</sup> DTM Emergency Tracking covers displacement movements from Hawija in Kirkuk governorate during Iraqi forces' offensives to retake the area between August 2016 and October 2017 and from Shirqat from September 2017 when the offensive was expanded to take in this Salah al-Din district. DTM has been tracking returnees from this crisis since September 2017.

**CRISIS UNFOLDED : RETAKING TELAFAR AUGUST 2017<sup>51</sup>**

The ISF regained control of Telafar in August 2017, after the city had been conquered by ISIL in June 2014 while the group was advancing towards the Mosul dam and the borders of Syria and Turkey.

The city and its surroundings, home to notable Kurdish, Christian and Sunni Arab communities as well as a large Shia Turkmen population, saw large displacement movements during summer 2014. In late 2016, following the beginning of the offensive to retake Mosul city, the ISF started to advance towards Telafar. In view of future operations, families started fleeing the city mostly to surrounding villages, as ISIL was actively preventing them to leave the area. In late April, families began to move further out, encouraged by easier access to Kurdish-controlled areas northeast of the city, as well as the weakening position of ISIL.

Displacement took place primarily along a few main axes, through Badosh, Al Masaid and Muhalabiyah areas, in Mosul district. Most IDPs, gathered at mustering points, eventually reached Hammam Al Aleel screening site, from where they proceeded to camps and out-of-camp locations. Between 9 July and 14 September, around 36,000 individuals transited through Hammam Al Aleel screening site, three fourths of which registered in camp-like settings.

Returns to the district of Telafar started to the villages surrounding the city. Few returns to the city itself were recorded initially due to the continued presence of explosive hazards and the lack of services. However, after the city was partially cleared and some services resumed, returns increased, with the district totaling 180,000 returns at the end of the year.

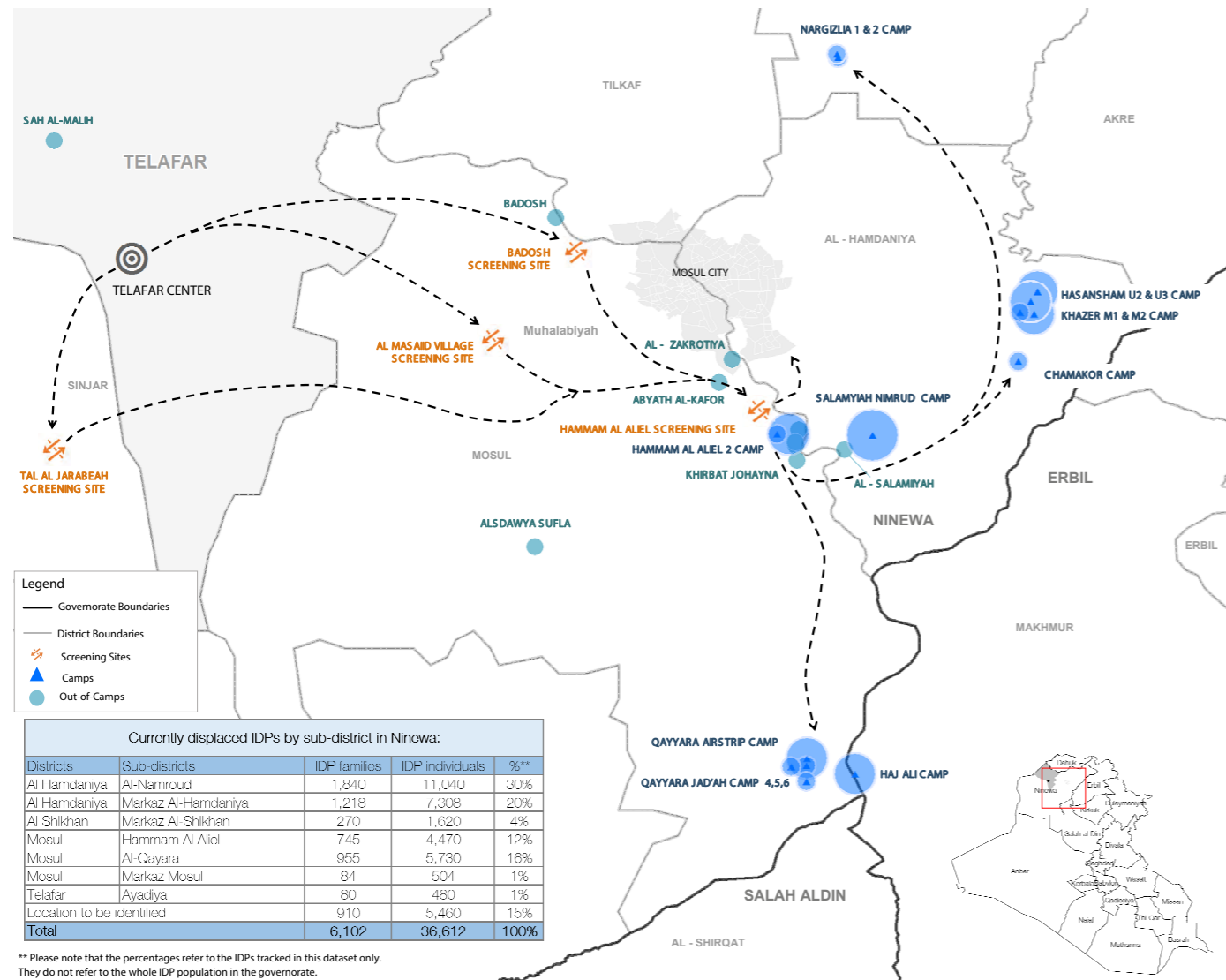


Figure 26 TELAFAR DISPLACEMENT OVERVIEW

<sup>51</sup> The DTM has been monitoring preemptive displacement movements from these areas since spring 2017, and with greater intensity since the second half of July 2017 after the conclusion of the military operations to retake the city of Mosul.

**CRISIS UNFOLDED : WEST ANBAR SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER 2017<sup>52</sup>**

On 19 September 2017, Iraqi forces launched a full-scale offensive against ISIL in the west Anbar districts of Ana, Al Ka'im and Ru'a – collectively referred to as west Anbar – which ended with the areas being retaken by mid-November. This territory, which was taken by ISIL in June 2014, was among the last areas of Iraq still held by ISIL.

Displacement movements in the area started as early as January 2017 due to both ongoing hostilities and anticipation of major military operations. In early September 2017, 38,000 individuals had already displaced from their location of origin in west Anbar. The pace of displacement increased rapidly as soon as the offensive started, with over 60,000 individuals arriving at Kilo 18 screening site, west of Ramadi, at the beginning of November.

According to the screened individuals, the vast majority of IDPs who left ISIL-controlled territory in west Anbar did so via southern routes through the desert to the city of Rutba, before continuing on to IDP camps near the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah. Most respondents reported hiring smugglers to drive them south across the desert, traveling at night and avoiding main roads in order not to be detected by ISIL.

As of December 2017, 27,174 individuals were reported to have returned to Al-Rutba, 3,012 to Ana and 1,332 to Al-Kai'm.

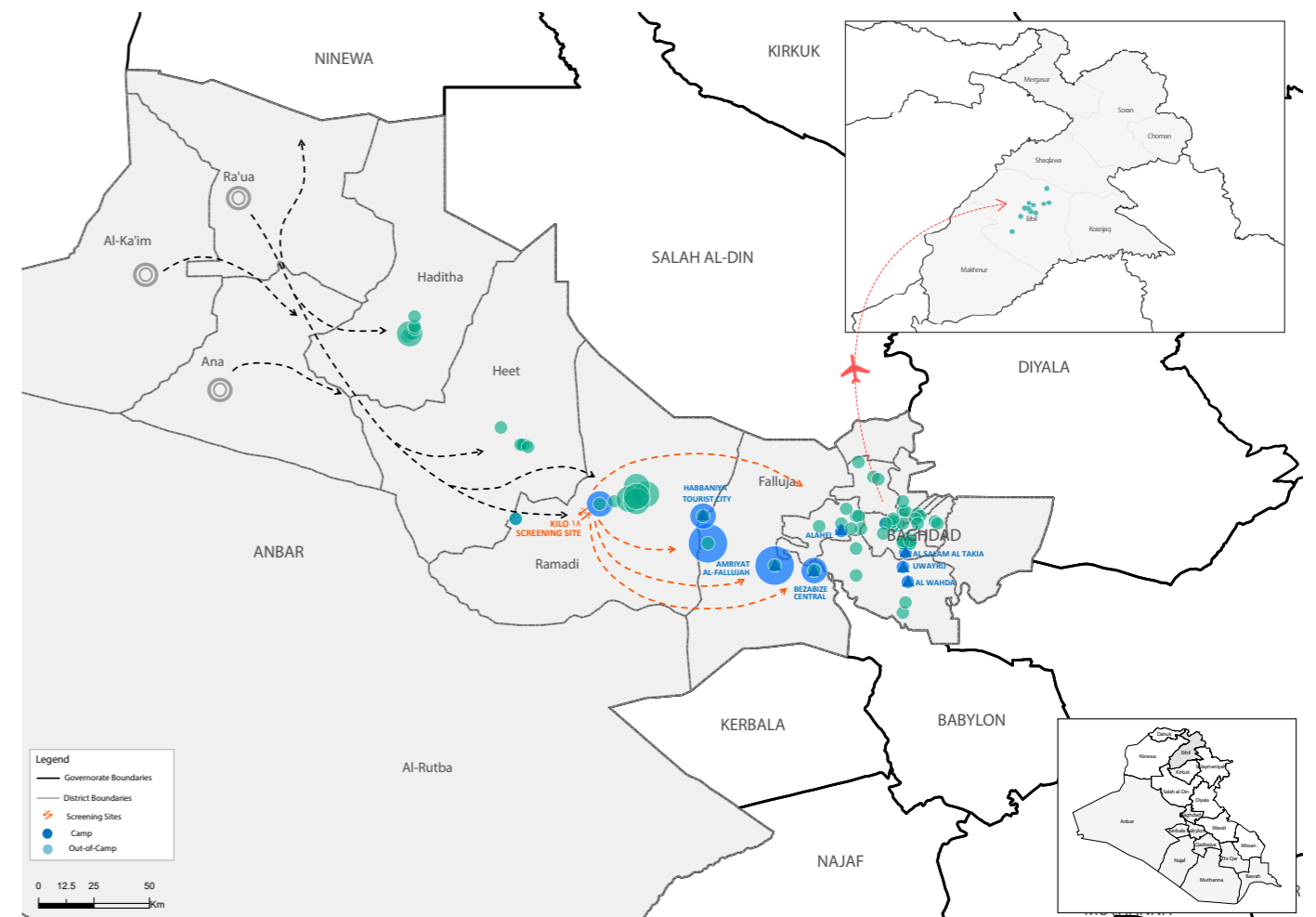


Figure 27 WEST ANBAR DISPLACEMENT OVERVIEW

<sup>52</sup> DTM has been monitoring the crisis since January 2017, when significant displacement movements were already occurring due to hostilities in the area and anticipation of major military operations.

## NORTH CENTRAL IRAQ

The region covers the nine governorates of Anbar, Babylon, Baghdad, Diyala, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Wassit. Before the crisis, the area had nearly equal Arab Sunni and Arab Shia populations, with some governorates containing mostly Sunni (Anbar and Salah al-Din) or Shia (Babylon, Wassit, Kerbala) populations, and others were more mixed and/or with various small religious and ethnic minority groups (Baghdad, Diyala, Ninewa and Kirkuk).

This was the main setting of the 2014–2017 crisis, as the conflict initiated in the governorate of Anbar and spread as far as Diyala Governorate. Some districts have seen the fiercest battles (such as Ramadi, Fallujah, and Mosul) and the whole region has, to varying degrees, witnessed security incidents, generalized violence and constant tension. Hence, nearly all Iraqi IDPs originate from central-north and as much as 55% (in 2014) to 65–66% (in subsequent years) were hosted in these regions.

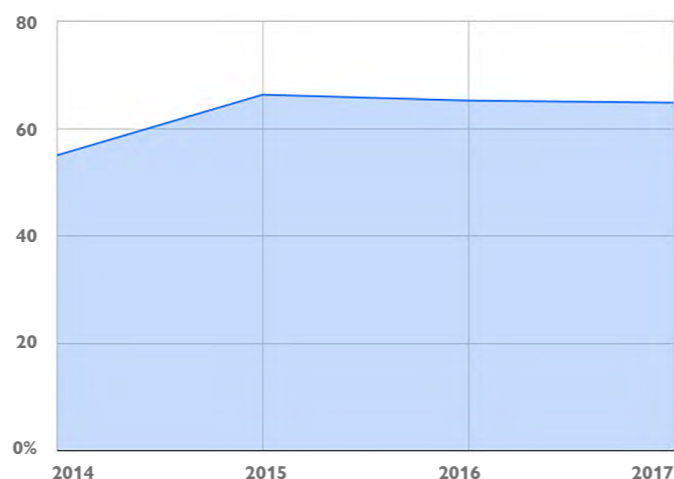


Figure 28 PERCENTAGE OF IDPs IN NORTH AND CENTRAL REGIONS (2014-17)

### EVOLUTION IN THE NUMBER OF HOSTED IDPs

Throughout all the crisis, the progression of hostilities was the main factor forcing individuals to displace, whereas the most common factor in the choice of the destination was security: IDPs moved to areas at least relatively more stable than those they had left. When possible, they remained close (within their governorate of origin or in neighbouring governorates) so they could monitor the situation in their former locations and return as soon as security allowed.

As a result, the evolution in the number of hosted IDPs in each governorate follows the conflict's main events, with Anbar and its

crises leading the trend until 2016 (when first returns allowed a sensible drop in IDP figures). Baghdad caught up in 2015 and 2016, accommodating, similar to Kirkuk, a consistent share of primary and secondary displacement from Anbar, and Ninewa taking the lead afterwards due to Mosul operations in late 2016 until the end of the conflict. The protraction of hostilities in Salah-al Din and Kirkuk in late 2016 and 2017 accounts for stable or increasing figures, whereas everywhere else returns to origin are overwhelmingly decreasing displacement figures.

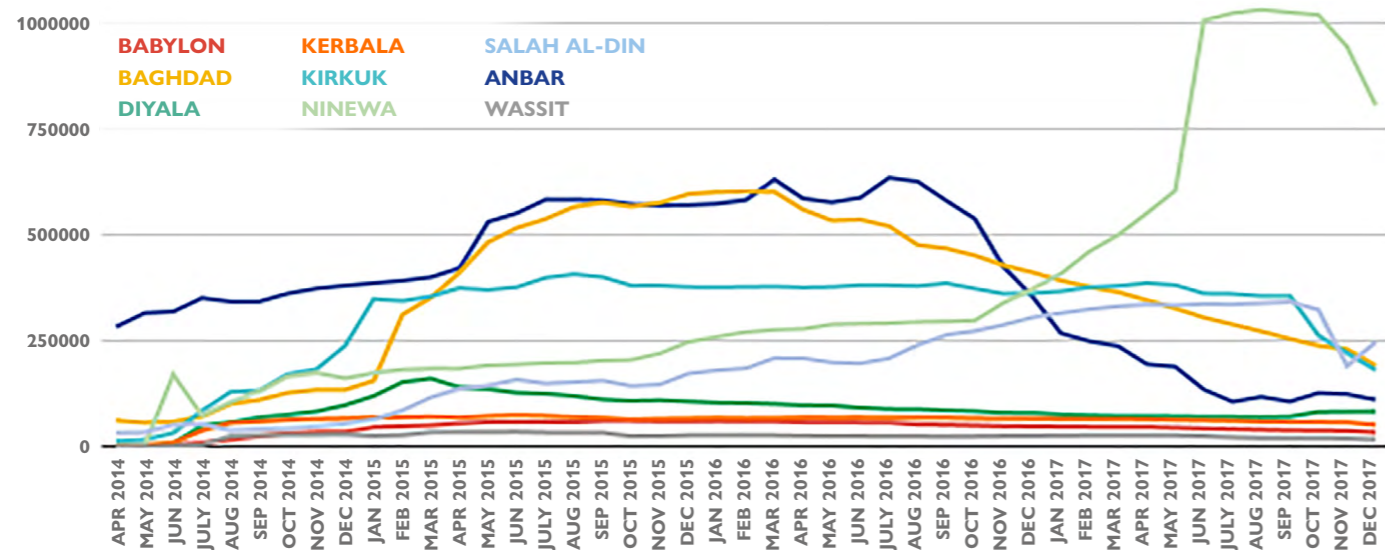


Figure 29 GOVERNORATES OF DISPLACEMENT (EVOLUTION IN THE NUMBER OF HOSTED IDPs)

### INTRA-GOVERNORATE DISPLACEMENT

The significance of the events that took place in summer 2014 in the governorates of Ninewa and Salah al-Din is largely lost in the above picture, since ethnic tensions and armed conflict pushed over 80% of IDPs outside the borders of the two governorates and as much as 775,000 individuals (36% of all IDPs at the end of 2014) out of the North–Central region. All other governorates have high shares of internal displacement, ranging from around 50% in Babylon to almost 90% in Kirkuk, confirming the preference of IDPs to resettle in close

vicinity to origin. The generalized drop in intra-governorate figures after December 2016 is linked to the progress of retaking of areas of origin and shows how, as soon as security allows, intra-governorate IDPs are the first to return, whereas early decreasing trends of internal displacement (such as in Anbar and Baghdad in 2015) are mostly linked with secondary movements out of the governorates due to the spreading of the conflict.

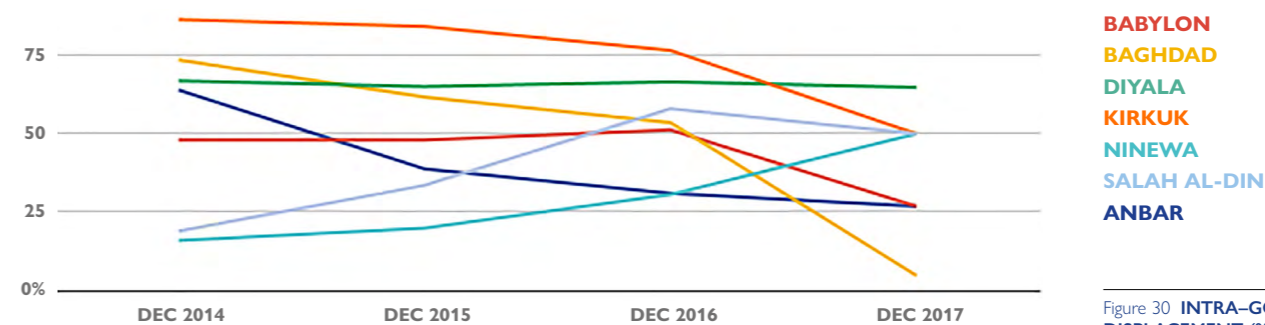


Figure 30 INTRA-GOVERNORATE DISPLACEMENT (% OF IDPS DISPLACED WITHIN THEIR GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN)

### BURDEN OF DISPLACEMENT

Figure 27 provides an indicator of the burden of displacement – computed by dividing IDP figures by the 2014 resident population estimates in each governorate.<sup>53</sup> Until the end of 2016, Anbar and Kirkuk are consistently the worst-affected governorates in the region. The indicator peaks for both at the end of 2015, where respectively 35 and 25 IDPs per 100 residents are reported. While in Anbar IDPs are nearly all from the governorate itself, at the end of 2015 the greatest burden in Kirkuk comes from the Anbar influxes (over one third of all

IDPs in the governorate) and Salah al-Din (28%). The share of IDPs to resident population increases notably in Ninewa after December 2016 due to Mosul operations, whereas in Salah al-Din the peak of 20 IDPs per 100 residents is reached at the end of 2016, after military operations in the two districts of Al-Shirqat and Baiji take place. In all other North–Central governorates, the burden is constantly lower, with fewer than 8 IDPs per 100 residents.

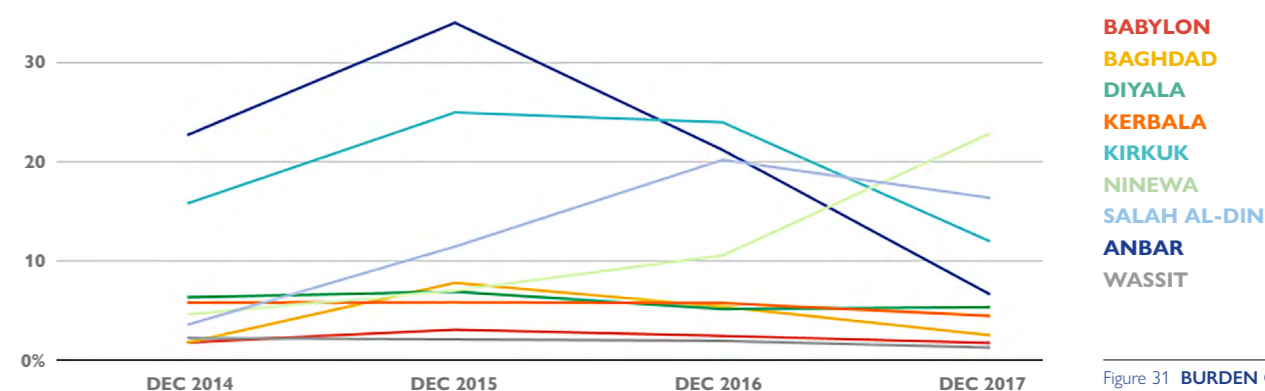


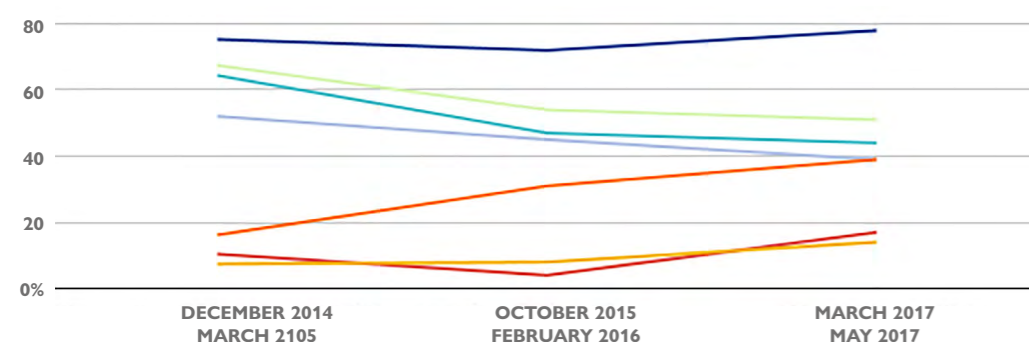
Figure 31 BURDEN OF DISPLACEMENT (% OF IDPS OVER THE RESIDENT POPULATION)

<sup>53</sup> Landsan data projected by the Iraq Central Statistical Office in 2014 have been used for district population estimates.

### PRIORITY NEEDS

The analysis of the first three priority needs in areas of displacement shows how, despite having already witnessed waves of displacement in the past, when the conflict erupted in 2014, no governorate had found sustainable solutions for the newly displaced. This is mirrored by the high share of IDPs in need of food (52%)<sup>54</sup>, NFIs (64%) and adequate shelter (67%) at the end of the first year of conflict. The new IDPs residing in Central-North governorates were generally staying in crowded conditions with relatives (for more details see below section on shelter) and had poor access to food and NFIs. The May 2014 DTM report indicated that in more than half of the assessed sites, mainly in Anbar, Baghdad and Salah al-Din, IDPs lacked cooking and eating utensils and had no bedding.

Despite the apparent difficulties in securing more immediate needs, employment was the number one concern at the end of 2014: unskilled labour and daily work were by far the most common form of employment for the newly displaced. Also, many IDPs reported that employment was intermittent. Access to employment remained the main concern throughout the conflict and, in the summer of 2016 the majority of IDPs was still unemployed in 60% of the locations, with peaks of 95% in locations across Ninewa and Anbar.<sup>55</sup> As the conditions of displacement became protracted, health and to a lesser extent education became increasingly pressing – with 39% and 14% of families respectively reporting health among the first three needs in spring 2017.

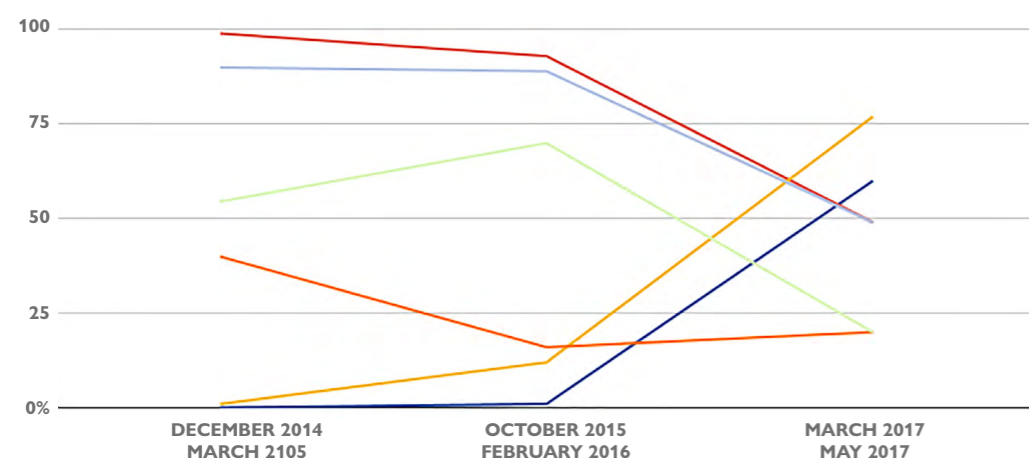


ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT  
DRINKING WATER  
EDUCATION  
HOUSEHOLD/NFIS  
HEALTH  
SHELTER OR HOUSING  
FOOD

Figure 32: SECTORIAL NEEDS (2014-2017)

The trade-off between short-term (emergency) priorities and long-term needs is clear in the governorate of Anbar. Until the spring of 2016, over 90% of families displaced in the governorate reported severe shortages of food and NFIs. The vicinity of clashes to areas of displacement disrupted transport and triggered climbing prices, a situation exacerbated by the severe burden endured by many communities. As the level of hostilities reduced, long-term needs

emerged, eventually surpassing basics – in the spring of 2017 nearly 80% and 60% of families in Anbar cited health and education among their first three concerns. Employment and shelter were important to IDPs in Anbar, but these issues were overshadowed both on the short and long term.



EDUCATION  
FOOD  
HEALTH  
HOUSEHOLD/NFIS  
SHELTER OR HOUSING  
EMPLOYMENT

Figure 33: SECTORIAL NEEDS IN ANBAR (2015 AND 2017)

<sup>54</sup> All Iraqis qualify for government food rations through the Public Distribution System (PDS). Recipients normally register in their own governorate hence, especially at the beginning, IDPs struggled to transfer their PDS entitlement to their area of displacement.

<sup>55</sup> Integrated Location Assessment I, IOM March 2017.

The evolution in the conditions of families can also be traced following their housing situation. At the end of 2014, over one third of IDPs are in critical shelters due to the rapid spreading of the crisis. Yet the most common option is staying with a host family (41%) – a share largely generated by the number of Anbar IDPs, who tend to move to areas where they can benefit from the support of relatives and friends. This figure drops drastically in the subsequent year (-30 percentage points)

and is replaced by rented housing, the prevalent option in 2015 and 2016. Camps were never a main alternative in North Central, except for 2017, when displacement caused by the retaking of Mosul was largely accommodated in camps (28%).<sup>56</sup> The urgency of Mosul-caused displacement is also reflected in the share of IDPs settled in improvised and critical shelters at the end of 2017 (29%).

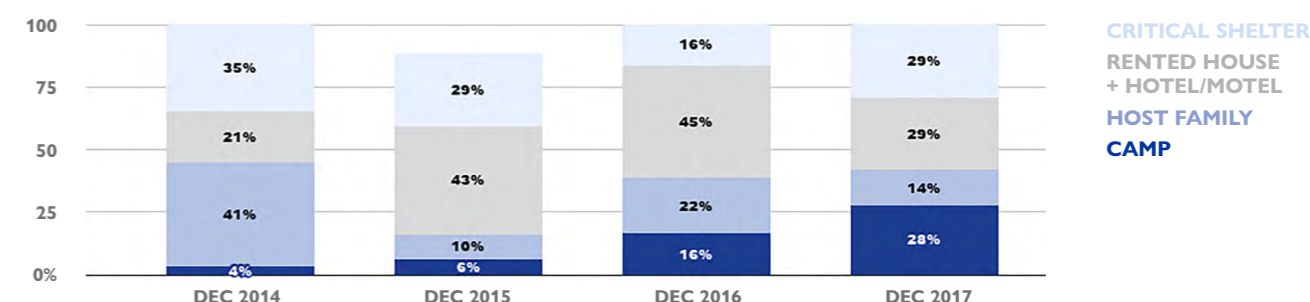


Figure 34: SHELTER TYPE, 2014-2017

### KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

This northern region consists of the three governorates of Erbil, Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah. It is a Kurdish and Sunni region with a semi-autonomous government. The perceived stable security of KRI was the most important pull factor attracting IDPs towards the region, which has experienced internal displacement only from the district of Makhmour (Erbil) due to the presence of ISIL on the western border of the governorate. Not only has the KRI enjoyed a more stable security situation, but it has also offered, comparatively, more job opportunities and better infrastructure to the displaced population.

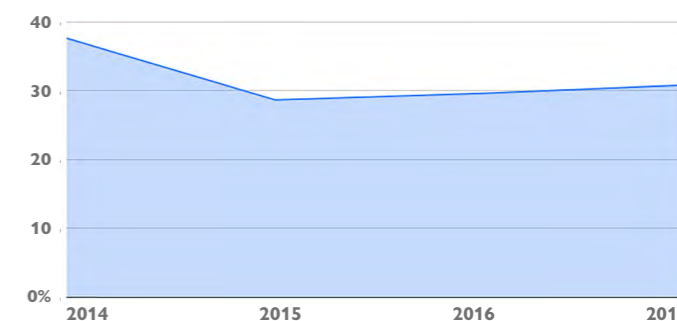


Figure 35: PERCENTAGE OF IDPS IN KRI (2014-17)

### EVOLUTION IN NUMBER OF HOSTED IDPS

After the escalation of hostilities in June 2014, most minorities such as Christians and Yazidis started moving from Ninewa to the KRI. Between June and September 2014, Dahuk received the single largest influx of IDPs of any governorate: 460,000 individuals. Besides being the main cluster of Yazidis fleeing Ninewa, Dahuk – especially Zakho district – became a key stop for Iraqis wishing to flee abroad through Turkey. Arrivals stopped in Dahuk in 2015, whereas Erbil and Sulaymaniyah continued to receive IDPs from Ninewa as well as Anbar and Salah-al-Din. At the end of 2015, the number of IDPs in Erbil totaled over 350,000 (+87% since the beginning of the year).<sup>57</sup> Arrivals, eventually,

slowed down due to the requirement of a sponsorship for residence and work permit – even though entrance was formally permitted.<sup>58</sup> Outflows from KRI were also recorded as the high cost of living pushed many IDPs out of the region in search of cheaper solutions.

From late 2016, the progressive retaking of areas (including Makhmour) caused a significant decrease in IDP figures. Families originally from Ninewa, Anbar and Salah al-Din gradually left the region. Nevertheless, at the end of 2017, over 800,000 individuals remain displaced in KRI.

<sup>56</sup> The increase of the camp figures in 2015 has also to be read within the harmonization exercise which took place between IOM DTM, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and local authorities and has allowed validating estimates and adjusting the figures of the population living in camps in the governorate of Anbar.

<sup>57</sup> Figures in Erbil also include internal displacement from Makhmour district.

<sup>58</sup> Hence only Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with some form of sponsorship or a certain ethnic or religious profile or some sort of connection to government officials or people employed with the security forces in the area actually managed to enter KRI. For instance Kurds, including Kurds from Kirkuk, were exempted from the sponsorship requirement, as well as IDPs in need to enter for medical reasons, or single women or female-headed households with children. In some cases, exemptions were also made in cases where local tribal or religious leaders succeeded in negotiating access for certain groups of IDPs. See The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, Danish Refugee Council, Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing, January 2016.

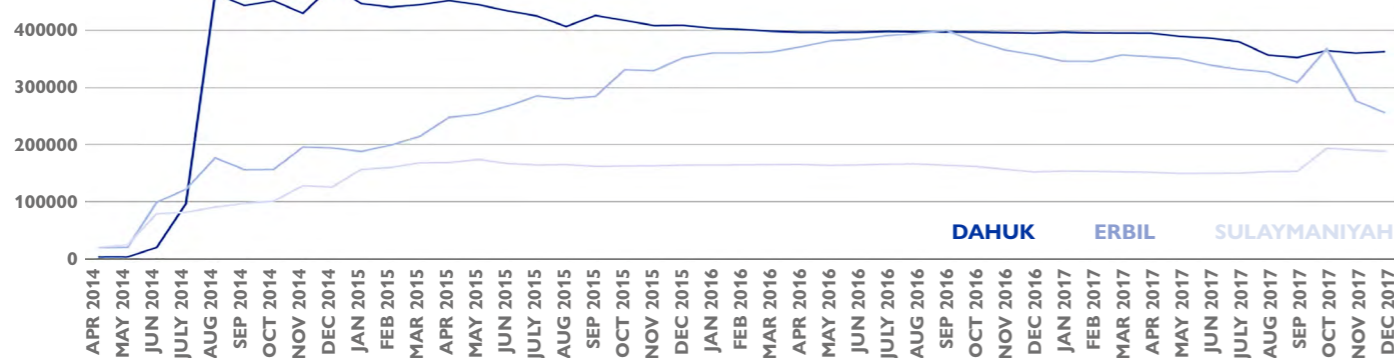


Figure 36 GOVERNORATES OF DISPLACEMENT (EVOLUTION IN THE NUMBER OF HOSTED IDPS)

The breakdown of IDPs according to the period of displacement shows that at the end of 2017, 60% of families still hosted in KRI fled during the events of August 2014, when ethnic tension was at its peak. Direct threats and ethnic or religious persecution were

the most important causes for their leaving. These IDPs have been generally more undecided than other groups about their intention to go back home. A total of 16% of current IDPs are newly displaced (post-July 2017).

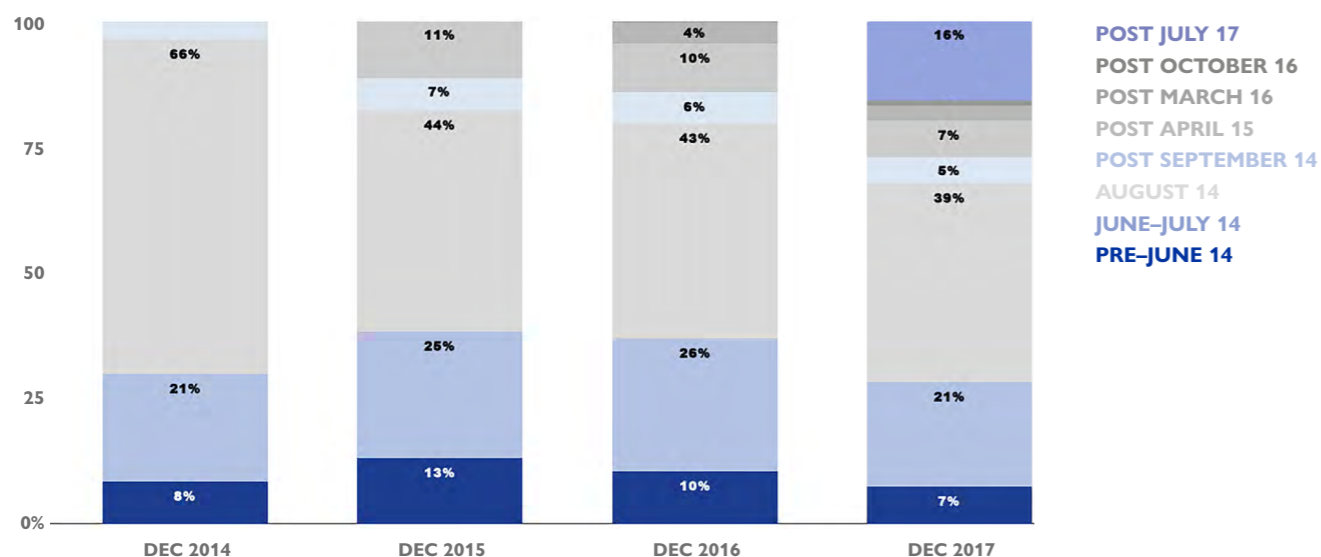


Figure 37 DISPLACEMENT PER PERIOD

**BURDEN OF DISPLACEMENT**

The burden of displacement in the region follows closely the trend of number of hosted IDPs. DahuK, with its sizeable camp population, is consistently the worst-affected governorate, with an indicator that peaks at the end of 2014: nearly 40 IDPs per 100 residents. The share of IDPs to resident population increases notably in Erbil after

December 2015, remaining stable in 2016: 20 IDPs per 100 residents. The district of Erbil bears the highest burden as it hosts numerous camps and registration offices. In Sulaymaniyah the burden is steadier and constantly lower, with less than 10 IDPs per 100 residents for the whole 2014-2017 period.

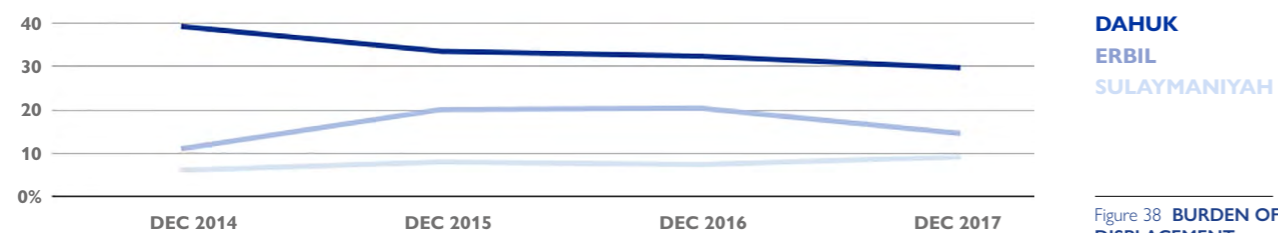


Figure 38 BURDEN OF DISPLACEMENT

**PRIORITY NEEDS**

The analysis of the first three priority needs of IDPs shows how, in KRI, the population increasingly regarded employment as its first priority. Concerns over employment can be linked both to the high costs of living (particularly rent expenses) and the difficulties in finding a Kurdish sponsor to legally access the job market. According to Integrated Location Assessment I, in the summer of 2016 the majority of IDPs is employed in less than 5% of surveyed locations in Erbil. Depletion of savings led to difficulties in affording food, which remains a serious concern for around half of families for the whole 2014-2017 period, making IDPs vulnerable to secondary displacement.

governorates, despite the volume of arrivals in 2014 and 2015. The need for education, on the other hand, is steadily higher, reaching a peak in late 2015, when over one out of four families reported education among their top three needs. Language obstacles (most IDPs in the region are Arabic speaking), coupled with the initial need to use schools as a shelter for IDPs, further limit children's access to education.

Long-term concerns over health also emerge among the displaced population hosted in the region as the conditions of displacement become protracted, with nearly half of families respectively reporting health among the first three needs in the spring of 2017.

Shelter and NFIs – though expensive – are less of a concern for IDPs in KRI than for those who remained displaced within Central-North

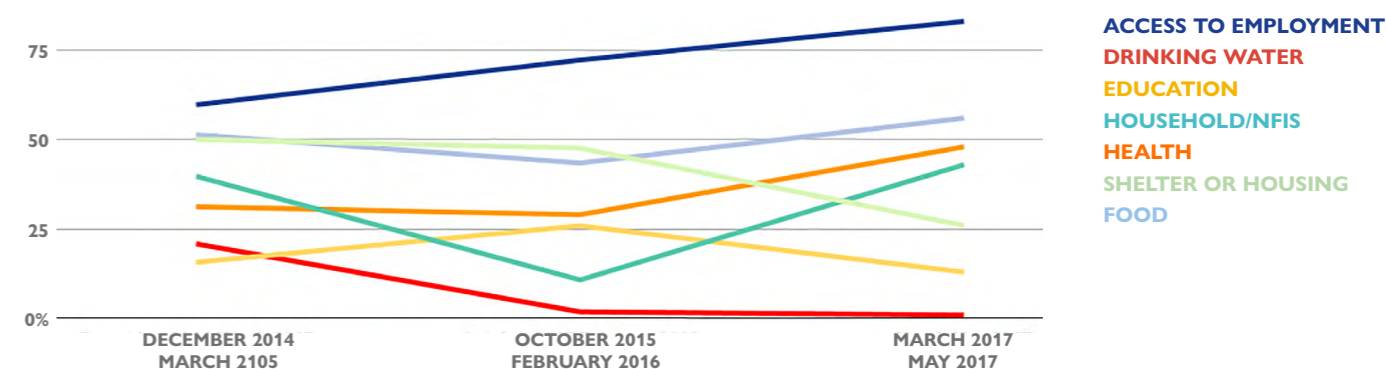


Figure 39 SECTORIAL NEEDS (2014-2017)

After security, access to accommodation is the primary pull factor to the KRI, reported by IDPs in the region far more frequently than by those displaced elsewhere of Iraq. The other distinctive feature of housing in KRI is that IDPs typically have no relatives in the location of displacement; therefore, they prefer to settle in rented accommodation (43% at the end of 2014 and around 65% in all subsequent years) and in camps – between one fifth and one

fourth of the displaced population from December 2015 onwards. The governorate of DahuK hosts the largest camp population of the country (around 150,000 individuals at the end of 2015), mostly in the districts of Sumel and Zakho. Nearly 30% of IDPs are hosted in critical shelters at the end of 2014, but their share drastically drops to 11% at the end of December 2015, keeping steady until the end of the conflict.

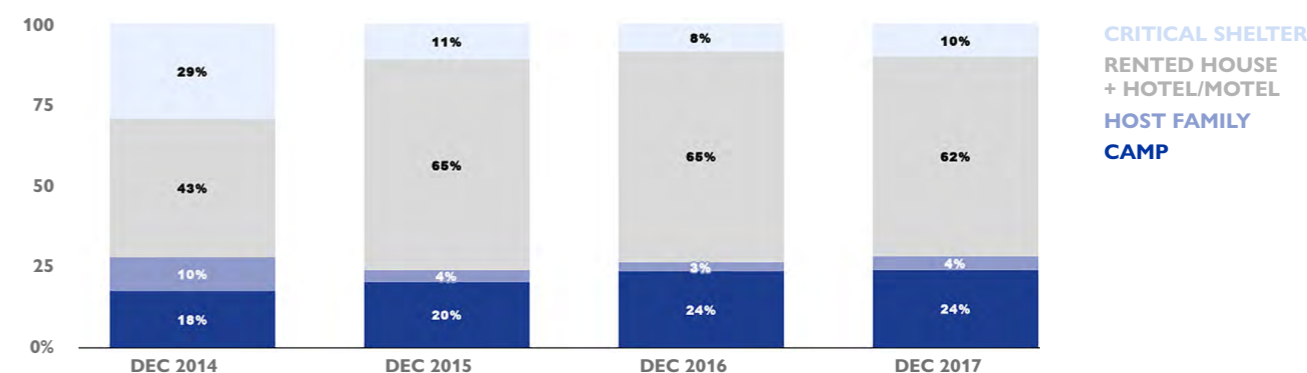


Figure 40 SHELTER TYPE, 2014-2017



## SOUTH IRAQ

The region covers the six governorates of Basrah, Missan, Muthanna, Najaf, Qadissiya and Thi-Qar. These governorates are more secure than the north-central region and enjoy relative ethnic and religious homogeneity, the majority being Arab Shia. Nevertheless, these governorates have experienced devastation and infrastructure damage in the course of the 2003–2011 conflict. Compared to KRI, southern governorates also offer fewer prospects of employment and basic services

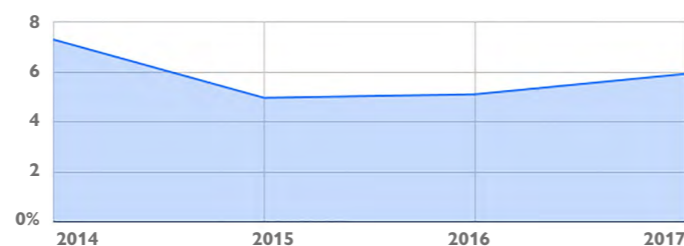


Figure 41 PERCENTAGE OF IDPs IN SOUTH (2014-17)

### EVOLUTION IN NUMBER OF HOSTED IDPs

The region witnessed relatively smaller inflows of displaced individuals – between 5% and 7% of all Iraqi IDPs – and only the governorate of Najaf received significant figures – around 80,000 individuals as early as October 2014, and still hosting around 55,000 individuals by December 2017.

The first movements towards the region were recorded before June 2014 as families began fleeing from the Fallujah district. With the capture of Mosul and Tikrit cities, new displacement took place in June, mostly from Ninewa Governorate to Najaf district. ISIL advancements in Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates brought additional IDPs, and

by the end of 2014 the south hosted 7% of all Iraqi IDPs. New inflows (mostly due to secondary displacement) were recorded in the spring of 2015, with the situation remaining largely stationary afterwards.

Families were attracted to the south by the presence of family/relatives and the religious make-up of the region – including the availability of religious buildings. Most Shia families, especially Turkmen Shias, formed several “comfort zones” in the region. The first outflows were recorded in Najaf after the summer of 2015, but returns started consistently decreasing only after May 2017. At the end of 2017, 5% of all Iraqi IDPs are still hosted in the region.

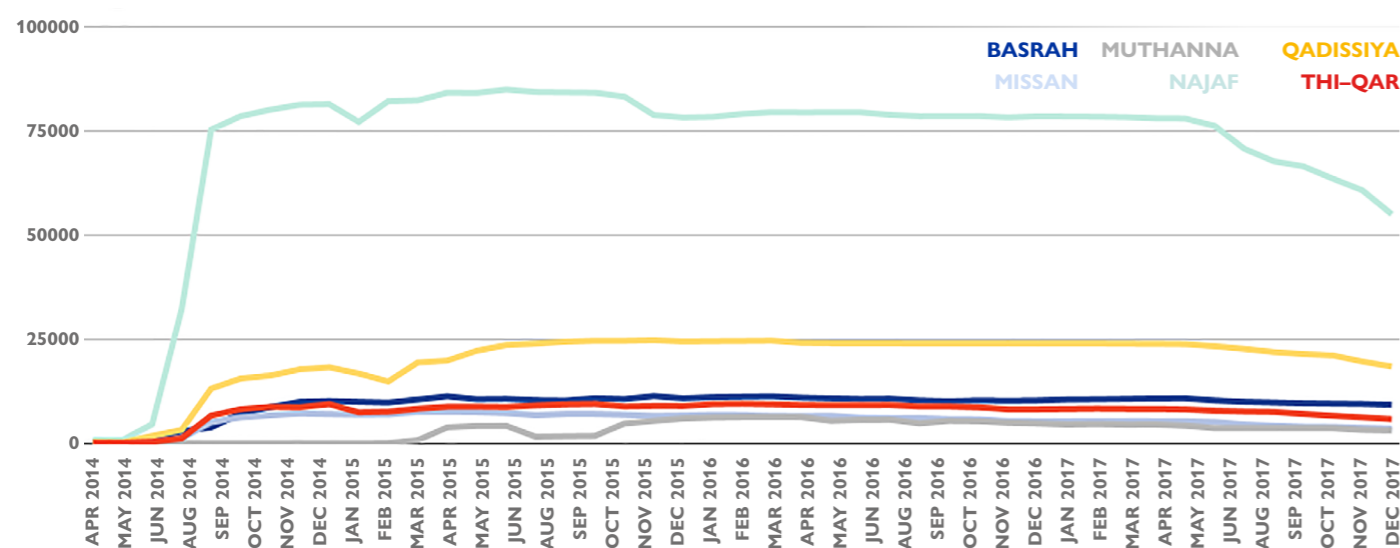


Figure 42 GOVERNORATES OF DISPLACEMENT (EVOLUTION IN THE NUMBER OF HOSTED IDPs)

The breakdown of IDPs according to the period of displacement shows that at the end of 2017, over 85% of families still hosted in the region are long-term IDPs – those who fled before September 2014. The prolonged displacement, which has drained the families’ resources, the distance from home and, especially, the homogeneous

ethno-religious composition of the location, are linked to a greater intention to integrate in the region. In the spring of 2017, nearly 90% of families settled in Najaf and 40% of those settled in Basrah stated their will to remain in the location of displacement.

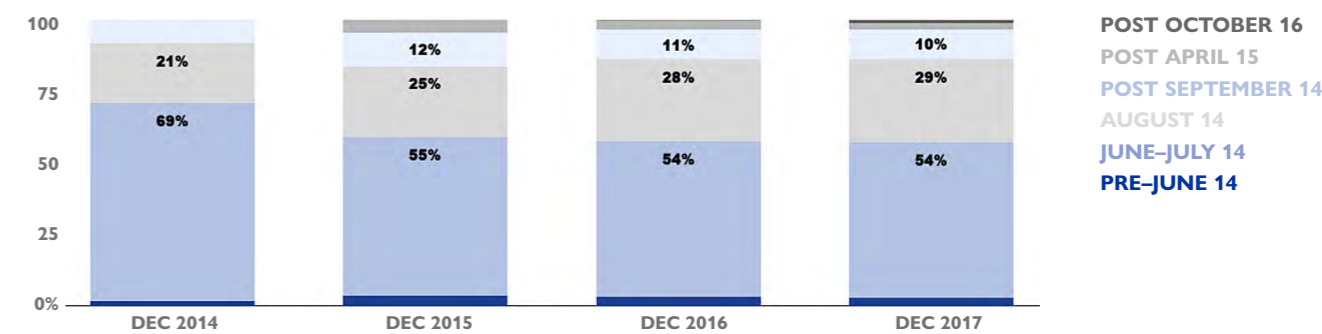


Figure 43 DISPLACEMENT PER PERIOD

### BURDEN OF DISPLACEMENT

The burden of displacement in the region is consistent with the relatively lower inflows of IDPs, and only in Najaf it has exceeded 5 IDPs per 100 residents. In all other governorates, no more than 2 IDPs per 100 residents were reported throughout the period of 2014–2017.

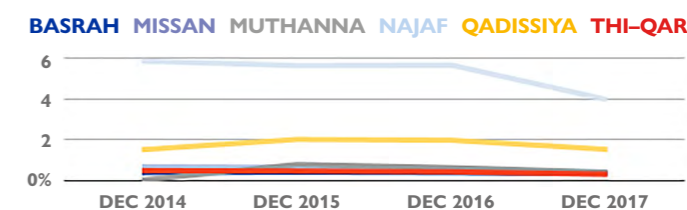


Figure 44 BURDEN OF DISPLACEMENT

### PRIORITY NEEDS

Shelter, employment and access to NFIs remained the main concerns of IDPs settled in the south throughout the crisis. Whereas shelter concerns were linked to the high shares of IDPs settled in critical shelters (see below, Shelter issues), concerns over income were mostly caused by the scarcity of employment, which made informal commerce and daily labour the only alternatives. As in Ninewa and Anbar, IDPs reported to have sold gold or other valuables; other families stated that they were relying on the host community for shelter, food and, in some cases, cash assistance.

As the conditions of displacement became protracted and more families exhausted their savings, work became increasingly important: nearly all families still in displacement in the spring of 2017 reported work as a top priority. The urgency of employment overshadowed other needs while creating severe obstacles to their satisfaction. At the end of 2014, IDPs in the south mentioned more frequently than those settled in the rest of Iraq avoiding buying medication and visiting medical institutions (especially for women). In the spring of 2015, one out of three families was in need of education, as the overwhelming lack of income also created severe obstacles to school attendance for IDP children.

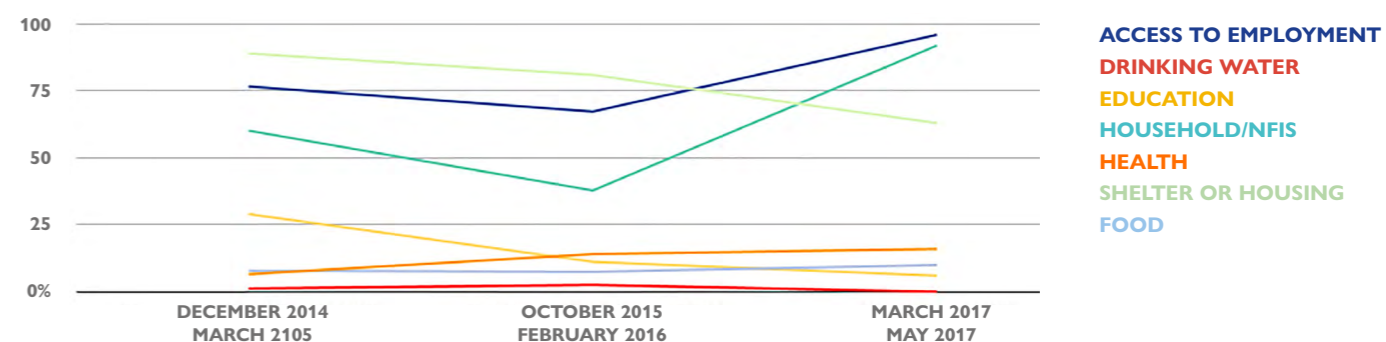


Figure 45 SECTORIAL NEEDS (2014-2017)

The distribution of shelter type shows that at the end of 2014, 64% of families in the region were hosted in critical shelters, particularly in religious buildings. These families were often at risk of being forcibly evicted, especially at times of pilgrimage when these buildings were needed to accommodate incoming visitors. Despite being free of charge, these accommodations also translated into deprived living conditions: poor quality of infrastructures, overcrowding and lack of sanitation facilities. Although an increasing number of families shifted to rented housing in the subsequent years – with the latter becoming

the prevalent shelter type at the end of 2017 (48%) – in the summer of 2016, 60% of families hosted in Najaf were still settled in mosques or hussayniyat, that is, informal Shia religious buildings commonly used as a prayer rooms for men.

The share of hosted IDPs has remained largely stationary during the whole period, with other families accommodating between 11% and 15% of IDPs.

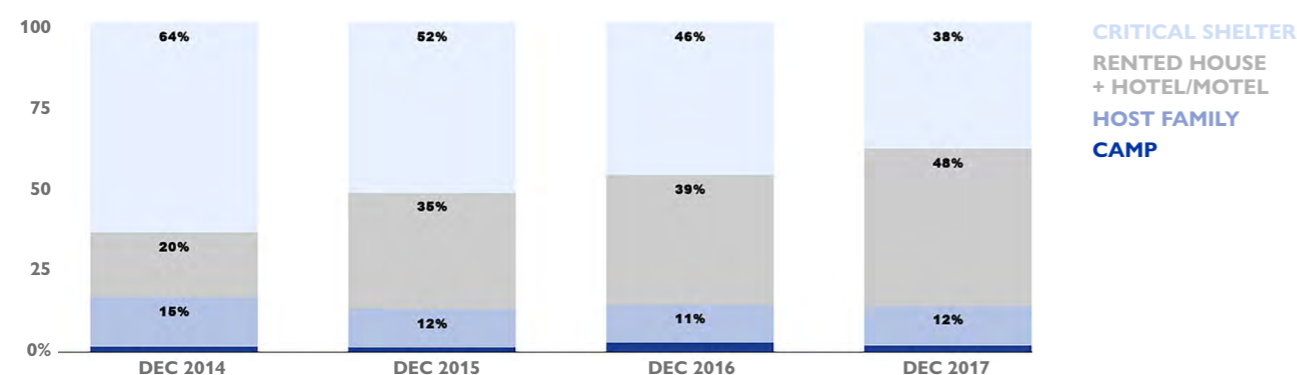


Figure 46 SHELTER TYPE (2015 AND 2017)

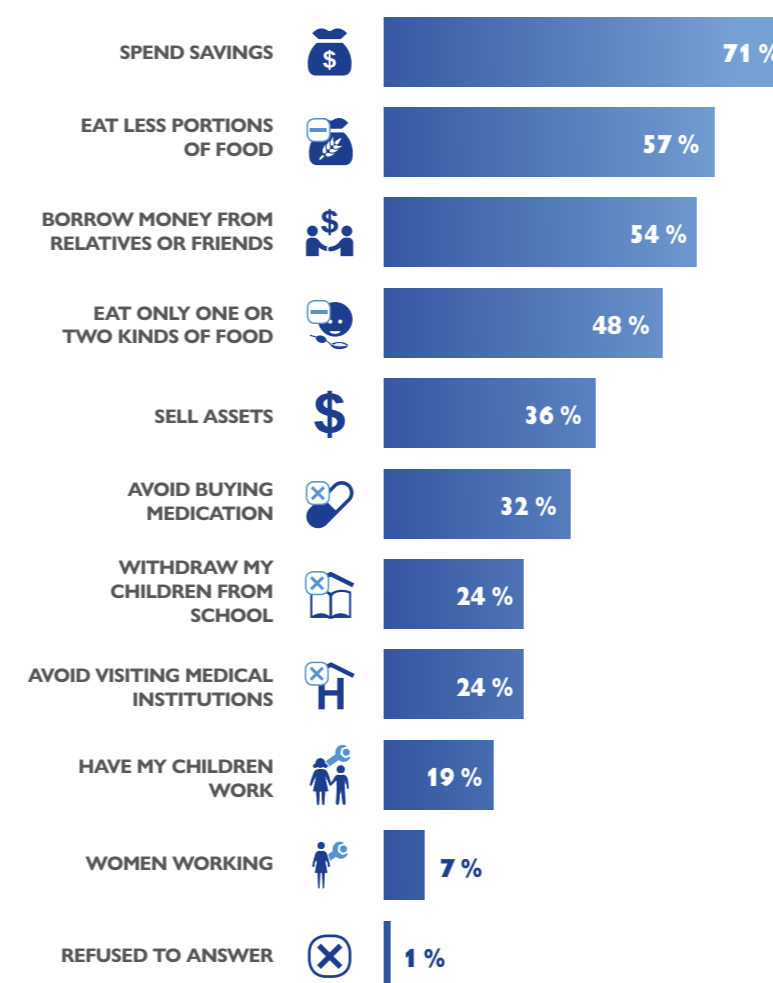


Figure 47 COPING MECHANISMS IN 2014

### HOW DID IDPs COPE WITH THE DISPLACEMENT CRISIS?<sup>39</sup>

When faced with the difficulties and the costs of displacement, families do not have much choice: they can either break into their savings, cut their expenditures or both. The high proportion of families adopting one or more strategy confirms the severity of the situation in 2014. Specifically, over 70% of households were spending their savings and/or 54%, having exhausted their reserves, were relying on money lent by relatives or friends. Families in Anbar, Ninewa and south Iraq were most likely to report that they had sold gold or other valuables to get money for their families. In addition, 57% of households had reduced food intake, 48% were eating only one or two types of food, while between one third and one fourth had cut health expenditure, such as medication (32%) or visits to health centres (24%). The highest proportion of households that reported food self-rationing was

in the KRI (72%), due to the fact that families were prioritizing expenses for rent whereas families displaced in the South were more likely to report not accessing health care due to high costs. In some parts of Anbar, such a strategy was not feasible because medication and treatment were unavailable even for those who could afford it, because of the siege. Hence, all families reported a higher incidence of untreated chronic illnesses. The last risk-coping instrument was to increase the number of working family members. Sending women to work (7%) was, on average, less preferred than dropping children out of school (24%) and sending them to work (19%), because this strategy allows to cut school costs while maintaining the role of women as the main family care-takers.

<sup>39</sup> Between February and September 2014, in addition to routine DTM monitoring, IOM Iraq RARTs carried out 2,009 IDP household surveys in 16 governorates to capture specific vulnerabilities and most urgent needs of displaced families. Focus group discussions were also arranged in selected locations and for different types of IDP settlements.

Since January 2014, Iraq's war against ISIL has caused the displacement of nearly 6 millions Iraqis – around 15% of the entire Iraqi population. This has been the worst displacement crisis recently recorded in the country, considering that the previous 2006–2008 crisis caused the displacement of 2.7 million individuals.

Patterns of displacement have followed the levels of violence in the country, with the North–Central being the main setting of the crisis, as the conflict initiated in the governorate of Anbar and spread as far as Diyala Governorate. Hence, nearly all IDPs originate from North–Central and as many as 55% (in 2014) to 65–66% (in subsequent years) were hosted in the region.

The year 2014 was the worst year of the crisis. From the beginning of January throughout the end of December, the DTM identified 2,123,340 IDPs dispersed across 17 governorates of Iraq. An average of 1,626 and 516 families were displaced daily during the Anbar crisis (January–May) and the Mosul (June–July) crisis respectively, but the peak was reached during the Sinjar crisis, when an average of 3,412 families were displaced daily in August alone.

In addition to civilians who flee conflict and violence, a significant portion of 2014 IDPs belonged to groups that would have suffered enormously under ISIL rule – minorities such as Yazidis, Shia Turkmens, Shabaks and Christians. When asked about the reasons for their displacement, around 10% of IDPs who fled in June and July mentioned the “killing of family members” and 15% of those who fled in August cited “evictions” and “direct threats”.

The significance of the events that took place in the summer of 2014 in the governorates of Ninewa and Salah al-Din can be better grasped by looking at the high shares of extra–governorate displacement: over 80% of IDPs fled outside the borders of these governorates and as many as 775,000 individuals out of the Central–North. Between June and September, Dahuk received the single largest influx of IDPs of any governorate: 460,000 individuals, mostly of who were Yazidis fleeing Ninewa.

The analysis of the first three priority needs conducted in areas of displacement shows that despite having already witnessed waves of displacement in the past, no governorate had put in place sustainable solutions for the newly displaced when the conflict erupted. This is mirrored by the high share of IDPs in need of food (52%), NFIs (64%) and proper shelter (67%) at the end of 2014.

In addition, most families confirmed having adopted one or more coping strategies: 70% were spending their savings, 57% of households had reduced food intake and 54% were relying on money lent by

relatives or friends. The highest proportion of households that reported food self–rationing was in the KRI (72%), due to the fact that families were prioritizing expenses for rent.

Displacement continued to rise throughout 2015 and on 17 December the number of IDPs reached 3,235,476 individuals. Movements were mostly shaped by the fighting between ISF and PMFs against ISIL in Diyala, Mosul and Tikrit and by the outbreak of the Ramadi crisis. Other movements occurred in Kirkuk, as Peshmerga forces advanced across the south of the governorate.

Just as in 2014, most IDPs were found outside their governorate of origin (68%). In Anbar and Baghdad, decreasing trends of internal displacement were linked to secondary movements out of the governorates due to conflict's spreading and difficulties in securing means of living. At the end of the year, around half of IDPs were still in need of food and proper shelter.

Nevertheless, 2015 was the year when the first significant waves of return were recorded. Movements initially targeted the retaken areas of Ninewa, Diyala and Salah al-Din. In particular, returns to Salah al-Din increased dramatically after the retaking of Tikrit, which had been controlled by ISIL for nearly 10 months, and the reopening of the Tikrit Bridge.

The main issue affecting early returns regarded property. For instance, in the sub–district of Markaz Tikrit, nearly half of the interviewed returnees reported to have had their properties destroyed or damaged. As a result, in Diyala only 41% of returnees resettled at their habitual residence, with 46% seeking refuge in unfinished/abandoned buildings or empty houses.

New displacement in 2016 was prompted by the fighting between ISF and ISIL in Anbar. Yet, the progressive retaking of the governorate between February and July led to massive returns to Ramadi, Heet and Fallujah and a subsequent decrease in IDP figures.

Military operations in the districts of Makhmur (Erbil), Al-Shirqat and Baiji (Salah al-Din), Al-Qayara (Ninewa), and Al-Hawija (Kirkuk) are linked to the second key event of 2016: the formal launch of the campaign to retake Mosul on 17 October. The impact of the largest and most thorough offensive in the country is reflected in the large number of IDPs along the Mosul corridor at the end of the year: around 300,000 individuals (15% of all IDPs).

Extensive new displacement in 2017 is related to the military operation to retake west Mosul after the east side surrendered in February. Movements peak in June (1,892,964 IDPs) and start decreasing soon

after the recapture of the city in July. Localized movements are also recorded in the second part of the year along Mosul corridor and in west Anbar, while the handover of the disputed areas from the Kurdish Peshmerga to the ISF causes temporary displacement.

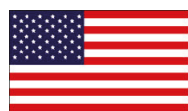
The retaking of Mosul and the end of hostilities in other areas, such as Telafar, Tilkaif, Al-Shirqat and west Anbar, coupled with the policy of encouraging returns, prompts considerable returns: at the end of December 2017 the number of returnees exceeds that of IDPs (3.2 million versus 2.6 million) for the first time since the beginning of the crisis.

Extra–governorate returns increase in 2017, adding to 57% of all returns and outlining how even IDPs who have resettled far from home, and who have been in displacement for several years, are consistently returning home. Conditions in the locations of origin also improve and nearly all individuals are able to regain their habitual residence (96%).

Nevertheless, pockets of insecurity and fear remain, even after the declared victory over ISIL. In particular, returns to areas where families would belong to a minority group are much slower than to areas where they would be living as part of a majority group. The analysis per ethno–religious affiliation shows that while Arab Sunni and Kurdish Sunni Muslims have mostly returned home at the end of 2017, Turkmen Shias and Turkmen Sunni Muslims, Yazidis, Christians and Shabak Shias remain displaced across Iraq. For over 20,000 families belonging to these ethnoreligious groups, “fear due to a change in ethno–religious composition of the place of origin” is among the top three obstacles to return.

**IRAQ**  
**DISPLACEMENT CRISIS 2014–17**

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October 2018