

# PROGRESS TOWARD DURABLE SOLUTIONS IN IRAQ: SALAH AL DIN

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## ACRONYMS

**CCCA** Central Committee for Compensating the Affected

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**CSI** Coping Strategy Index

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**DS** Durable Solutions

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**DTM** Displacement Tracking Matrix

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**EGRIS** Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics

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**HH** Household

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**HLP** Housing Land and Property

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**HoHH** Head of Household

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**IASC** Inter Agency Standing Committee

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**IRIS** International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics

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**ISF** Iraqi Security Forces

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**ISIL** The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

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**ID** Identity Document

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**IDPs** Internally displaced persons

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**IOM** International Organization for Migration

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**MoMD** Ministry of Migration and Displacement

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**PMU** Popular Mobilization Units

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## DEFINITIONS

**Durable Solution** – A durable solution is achieved when displaced people no longer have any specific assistance or protection needs that are linked to their displacement and they can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. A durable solution can be achieved through three processes – return, local integration or relocation (Inter Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) framework)<sup>1</sup> with the end goal of all three being (re) integration.

**Internal displaced person (IDP)** – Person 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. The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix unit (DTM) in Iraq considers IDPs all Iraqi nationals who were forced to flee from 1 January 2014 onwards.

**Returnees** – IDPs who have returned to their place of habitual residence, that is, the place where they used to live at the time of the displacement causing event. IOM DTM Iraq considers as returnees all those displaced since January 2014 who have returned to their location of origin, irrespective of whether they have returned to their former residence or another shelter type. The definition of returnees is not related to the criteria of returning in safety and dignity, nor with a defined strategy for ensuring durable solutions.

**Stayee** – The population who was not forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence due to the 2014–2017 crisis. This group is used as a baseline for comparison with IDPs and returnees to assess displacement related vulnerabilities against a population group that has not been displaced. This comparison forms the basis for assessing progress along the solutions pathway, in line with the International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (IRIS).<sup>2</sup>

**Location** – An area that corresponds either to a village for rural areas or a neighborhood for urban areas.

**Critical shelters** – Tents/caravans/makeshift shelters/mud or brick houses,

unfinished/abandoned buildings, public buildings or collective shelters, religious buildings, school buildings and uninhabitable residences located, for IDPs, at the location of displacement and, for returnees, at the location of origin.

**Household** – Group of people who regularly share meals, income and expenditures together. Members must acknowledge the authority of one person as head of household and that person must live with the rest of the household members. In polygamous households, each wife is treated as a distinct household when the wives live in different houses, cook separately and take decisions independently.

**Female headed household** – Households that are headed by a female member. When female heads of households are described as residing 'alone', it means that they are single, widowed, separated, divorced or if married, not living with their husband.

**Economically inactive** – A person or members of the household who are pre-school children, students, retired persons, doing housework or not employed and not actively looking for a job.

**Dependency ratio** – The number of children (aged 0–17 years) and elderly persons (aged 60 years or over) in relation to the working age population or active citizens (aged 18–59 years).

**Stable income sources** – Regular income generated from salaried work (public or private sector), pensions, owned business or from rented property that is not fluctuating significantly on a month-to-month basis.

**Essential identity documents** – The documents considered to be essential are proof of nationality, national ID, residency card and birth certificate. All others are not considered to be essential for the purpose of this study.<sup>3</sup>

**Unified card** – A card that serves as proof of an individual's Iraqi identity and is a substitute for the Iraqi nationality certificate, civil status identity and residence card.

**Housing, land and property (HLP)** – An area of humanitarian practice that examines and seeks to address issues related to rights over immovable property, in the context of emergency response.

## CONTEXT AND DISPLACEMENT TRENDS

With the end of the conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in December 2017, protracted displacement has come to characterize the post-conflict environment in Iraq. As of August 2023, around 1.14 million people remain internally displaced, nearly all of whom fled their areas of origin more than five years ago.<sup>4</sup> In many cases, displacement is not only prolonged but also unstable, in the sense that livelihood, housing destruction, and living conditions push households to resettle more than once.

Significant shares of both IDPs and returnees are living in severe conditions. These complex dynamics – prolonged displacement, stagnating returns and severe living conditions – warrant focus on Salah al Din to understand whether IDPs and returnees have met their preferred solution and what displacement-related vulnerabilities remain.

1 The IASC is the longest standing and highest level humanitarian coordination forum of the United Nations system. It brings together the executive heads of 18 organizations and consortia to formulate policy, set strategic priorities and mobilize resources in response to humanitarian crises.

2 Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (EGRIS), *International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (IRIS)*, European Commission and United Nations (Luxemburg, 2020).

3 This definition of essential documentation used for this study includes all those considered critical in the Multi Sector Needs Assessment (as defined by the Protection Cluster) but also considers additional documentation that is considered necessary to be able to obtain a durable solution to displacement. Additionally, the questionnaire allowed space for the respondent to list another document if missing and considered essential. Protection Cluster Iraq, *Protection Analysis Report: Right to Identity and Civil Documentation* (2021).

4 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *DTM – Iraq Master List Report 130* (Baghdad, 2023).

## POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Salah al Din Governorate is located in the upper half of Iraq, directly north of Baghdad. It also borders the governorates of Diyala, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Anbar, Ninewa and the disputed Makhmur district. Due to its central location, Salah al Din has always been of strategic political importance. The triangle between Baiji in the west, Kirkuk in the north and Samarra in the south was particularly important for ISIL: it connects the hills and mountains in the east and offers a perfect hiding place, with the deserts in the west leading to the Syrian Arab Republic. It is assumed that ISIL aspires to reclaim this area.<sup>5</sup>

Map 1: Districts in Salah al Din Governorate



In 2021, the population was estimated at nearly 1.72 million individuals<sup>6</sup> settled within nine districts: Tikrit, Al-Shirqat, Baiji, Samarra, Al-Daur, Balad, Thethar, Al-Fares and Tuz Khurmatu, the latter falling within the so-called 'disputed territories' between Erbil and Baghdad.<sup>7</sup> Tikrit city, the governorate's capital, was the birthplace of Saddam Hussein, the former president of Iraq. Salah al Din also hosts Alas and Ajil oilfields and Baiji refinery, the biggest oil refinery in Iraq.

The governorate is predominantly inhabited by Sunni Arabs<sup>8</sup> but features a complex ethnoreligious composition as it is also home to Shia Arabs, Kurds and Shia Turkmen.<sup>9</sup> Tuz Khurmatu is particularly multi ethnic with Kurds, Turkmen

(both Shia and Sunni) and Sunni Arabs all living in the district,<sup>10</sup> whereas the towns of Al Fares and Balad have a Shia majority.

The population is also very diverse in terms of tribal affiliation and strongly 'characterized by its tribal nature.'<sup>11</sup> The Al Jabour tribe is the largest and most influential confederation of Sunni Arab tribes; they reside in northern and central cities, including Shirqat, Baiji and Tikrit. Baiji city is also home to the Al Qaisin, Al Jawariyeen and Al Janabiyeen tribes, and Balad and Al Fares of the Bani Tamim tribe. Tikrit is home to the Albu Nasir tribe, the tribe of former president Saddam Hussein.

Prior to the 2014–2017 crisis, Salah al Din witnessed multiple waves of displacement. The largest occurred in 2006 when the February bombing of Al Askari Shia mosque, one of the holiest Shia shrines in Iraq, triggered a wave of sectarian conflict that caused the displacement of 1.6 million people between 2006 and 2008.<sup>12</sup>

## DISPLACEMENT FROM SALAH AL DIN GOVERNORATE DURING THE 2014-2017 CRISIS

During the 2014–2017 crisis, displacement in Salah al Din Governorate primarily reflected the rapid expansion of ISIL across large swathes of Iraq and the efforts to defend and recapture these areas. A significant role in the fight against ISIL was played by the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs), which emerged as a parallel force to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and consisted of pre-existing Shia militias as well as new groups and forces.<sup>13</sup>

Salah al Din Governorate, together with Ninewa and Anbar, made up the majority of ISIL's 'caliphate' in Iraq, both in terms of land mass and population. In second half of the year 2014, ISIL seized control of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, and began advancing south into Salah al Din Governorate. ISIL captured Tikrit in June 2014, taking advantage of the resentment of marginalized Sunni tribes and militias who had been favoured during Saddam Hussein's rule. The district of Tuz Khurmatu and the towns of Baiji<sup>14</sup> and Shirqat also fell under ISIL control, while the towns of Samarra and Amerli were successfully defended.<sup>15</sup>

By the end of 2014, 265,266 individuals were displaced from Salah al Din Governorate (12% of the total caseload of IDPs). Less than 20 per cent of IDPs stayed within the governorate, with most seeking refuge in Kirkuk, Baghdad, and, to a lesser extent, Erbil and Najaf. This was mainly driven by variations in ethnoreligious demographics across these areas, as the majority of the displaced population were Sunni Arabs.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the key cities were recaptured from ISIL from mid 2015 onwards. After a one month joint campaign, the ISF, PMUs and Sunni tribal fighters recaptured

5 European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), *Iraq Security Situation* (2022).

6 Iraqi Central Statistical Office, *2021 estimates* (2021).

7 The issue should have been resolved as outlined in Article 140 of the 2005 Iraqi constitution, but has not been settled so far. For further details refer to Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., *Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries after ISIS: Heterogenous Actors Vying for Influence*, London School of Economics (LSE) (London, 2019); Meier, D., *Disputed territories' in northern Iraq: The frontiering of in between spaces*, *Mediterranean Politics*, 25:3, 351-371 (2019); Salih, D., *Disputed territories in Iraq: Security Dilemma and geopolitics*, Emirates Policy Centre (EPC) (2021); and International Crisis Group, *Reviving UN Mediation on Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries* (2018).

8 Saleem, Z. A., *The King of Salah al Din: The Power of Iraq's Sunni Elites*, LSE (London, 2021); Al-Khafaji, H., *The role of ethnicities, religions and sects in Iraq [Map]* (2021), *Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies* (2021).

9 Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., *Displacement and Iraq's Political Marketplace: Addressing Political Barriers to IDP Return*, Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS) (2021).

10 Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy, *Intelligence Briefing: A Thousand Hezbollahs – Iraq's Emerging Militia State*, Newlines Institute (2021).

11 Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., *Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries after ISIS: Heterogenous Actors Vying for Influence*, LSE (London, 2019).

12 IOM, *Iraq Displacement Crisis: 2014–2017* (Baghdad, 2018).

13 EUAA, *Iraq Security Situation* (Valletta, 2022).

14 The Baiji refinery was the scene of considerable levels of conflict and violence after ISIL took over control in June 2014. The oil field was used by ISIL as a major source of revenue between 2014 and 2017. In 2019, the oil field reportedly continued to be a target of ISIL attacks. In March 2021, it was reported that Iraqi security authorities dismantled a minefield in the Alas oilfield area, which still contains unexploited oil wells. EUAA, *Iraq Security Situation* (2022).

15 Ibid.

16 IOM, *Iraq Displacement Crisis: 2014–2017* (Baghdad, 2018).

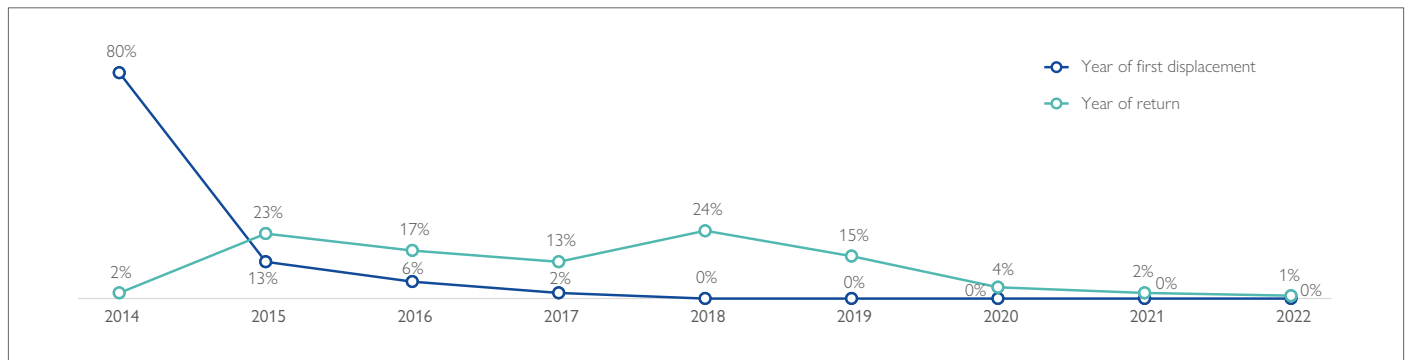
Tikrit in March 2015. The offensive was the biggest military operation since 2014. The reopening of the Tikrit Bridge in June prompted large waves of returns, which by the end of December totalled 167,430 individuals. Most of those returning were Sunni Arabs.<sup>17</sup> By December 2016, the number of returns reached 360,000.<sup>18</sup>

The dominant role played by the PMUs influenced return dynamics, in many cases further exacerbating political divisions in entire cities and rural zones. After ISIL's ousting, exceptionally high 'rates of abduction, killing, forced evictions, unlawful detentions, and property destruction' were reported, especially against families and tribes accused of affiliation with ISIL.<sup>19</sup> These families were banned from returning to Tikrit for five years and their homes were informally assigned to returnees whose home had been destroyed/damaged.<sup>20</sup> In Balad District, Shia

Arab tribes affiliated with PMUs allegedly blocked returns.<sup>21</sup> The Sunni population continued to be pressured by militias (and the ISF) in 2020 and 2021.<sup>22</sup>

The district of Tuz Khurmatu, located within Iraq's disputed territories, witnessed significantly higher levels of violence compared to other disputed territories.<sup>23</sup> This could be attributed to the area's history of interethnic and sectarian conflicts since 2003, which have involved Sunni Kurds, Sunni and Shiite Turkmen and Sunni Arabs. Violence peaked in 2017 during the military stand off between the Iraqi government forces, PMUs and Kurdish forces over the disputed territories. In 2019, the threat of inter-communal violence still loomed over the local population with reports of armed groups 'ready to take advantage of any development.'<sup>24</sup>

Figure 1: Year of first displacement and return



## CURRENT DISPLACEMENT AND RETURNS TRENDS

As of August 2023, Salah al Din Governorate hosted around 4 per cent of the total IDP population in Iraq (50,682 individuals),<sup>25</sup> nearly all of whom had been displaced for more than five years and most of whom had been displaced more than once (63%). Of the IDPs residing in Salah al Din, nearly 9 in 10 are hosted in three subdistricts: Markaz Tuz Khurmatu (34%), Markaz Samarra (31%) and Markaz Tikrit (23%).<sup>26</sup>

According to the Displacement Index Round 7 (May–August 2023),<sup>27</sup> Salah al Din Governorate hosted the highest number of IDPs living in severe conditions (20,328 individuals). Three hotspot areas,<sup>28</sup> based on the severity of living conditions and number of IDP residents, can be found in Salah al Din: Markaz Samarra, Markaz Tikrit and Al Alam, with the most critical domain being livelihoods.<sup>29</sup>

As of August 2023, Salah al Din Governorate hosted the third largest returnee population in Iraq (753,192 individuals, corresponding to 16% of the total caseload) with over half of them residing in the three subdistricts of Markaz Al Shirqat (22%), Markaz Tikrit (19%) and Markaz Baiji (14%).<sup>30</sup>

The current rate of return for Salah al Din stands at 85 per cent, which means that 15 per cent of the IDPs originally displaced from Salah al Din Governorate have not yet returned. However, the rate of return across districts is extremely variable, with lower rates observed in Tuz Khurmatu (65%) and Balad (73%) compared to Al Daur (98%) and Al Shirqat (96%). Additionally, the pace of new returns has slowed considerably.<sup>31</sup> These factors suggest that persistent and formidable challenges are preventing returns to select areas and for select groups.

17 Ibid.

18 Gaston, E. and Derzsi Horvath, A., *Iraq after ISIL: Sub State Actors, Local Forces, and the Micro Politics of Control*, Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) (Berlin, 2018).

19 EUAA, *Iraq Security Situation* (2022).

20 IOM, *Iraq Displacement Crisis: 2014-2017* (Baghdad, 2018).

21 European Asylum Support Office (EASO), *Iraq Security Situation Country of Origin Information Report* (Valletta, 2020).

22 Gaston, E. and Derzsi Horvath, A., *Iraq after ISIL: Sub State Actors, Local Forces, and the Micro Politics of Control*, GPPi (Berlin, 2018).

23 International Crisis Group, *Reviving UN Mediation on Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries* (Brussels, 2018).

24 Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., *Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries after ISIL: Heterogenous Actors Vying for Influence*, LSE (London, 2019);

25 IOM, *DTM Iraq – Master List Dashboard 130 (May–August 2023)* (Baghdad, 2023).

26 Ibid.

27 IOM, *DTM Iraq Displacement Index Dashboard: Round Seven* (Baghdad, 2023).

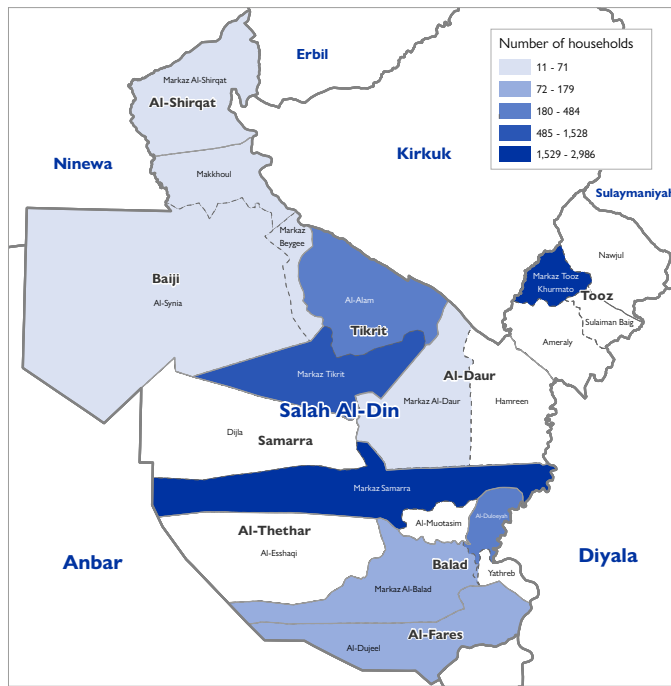
28 Ibid. Subdistricts are classified as 'hotspots' if they score medium or highly in terms of overall severity, have at least 1,000 IDPs residing in the subdistrict or score high on least on one of the five domains.

29 Ibid. Severity is also driven by issues related to services, security and social inclusiveness. Issues include the poor provision of electricity, presence of other security actors, high concerns about ISIL attacks, movement restrictions and cases of discrimination or unfair treatment due to IDP status when it comes to access to rental houses and political representation.

30 IOM, *DTM Iraq – Master List Dashboard 130 (May–August 2023)* (Baghdad, 2023).

31 The rate of return is computed as the ratio of returnees to a geographical area (governorate, district or subdistrict) to the total number of returnees and IDPs originally from the same area. The rate of change is used to highlight the fluidity of returns between two different recording periods. If negative, it indicates that new displacement is occurring. For main trends, refer to: IOM, *DTM Iraq Master List Dataset 130 (May – August 2023)* (Baghdad, 2023).

Map 2: Subdistricts of displacement of current IDP population in Salah al Din



Map 3: Subdistricts of return of current returnee population in Salah al Din

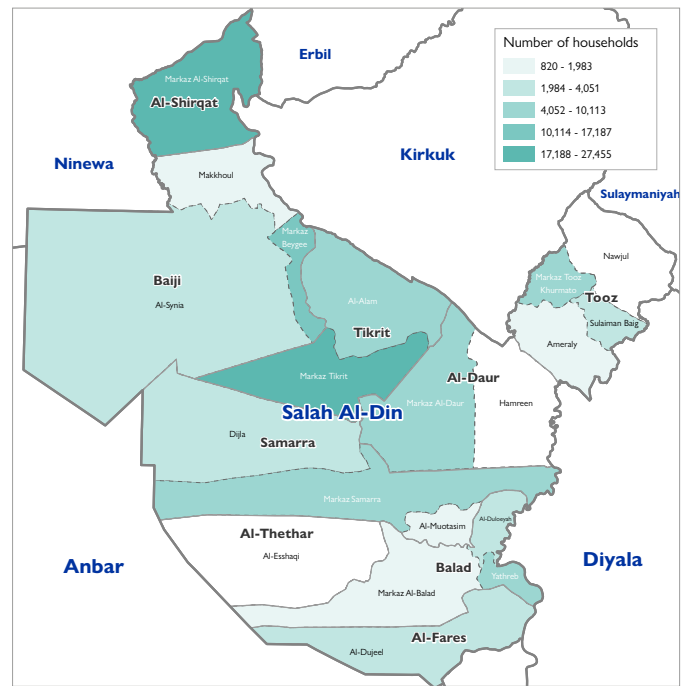
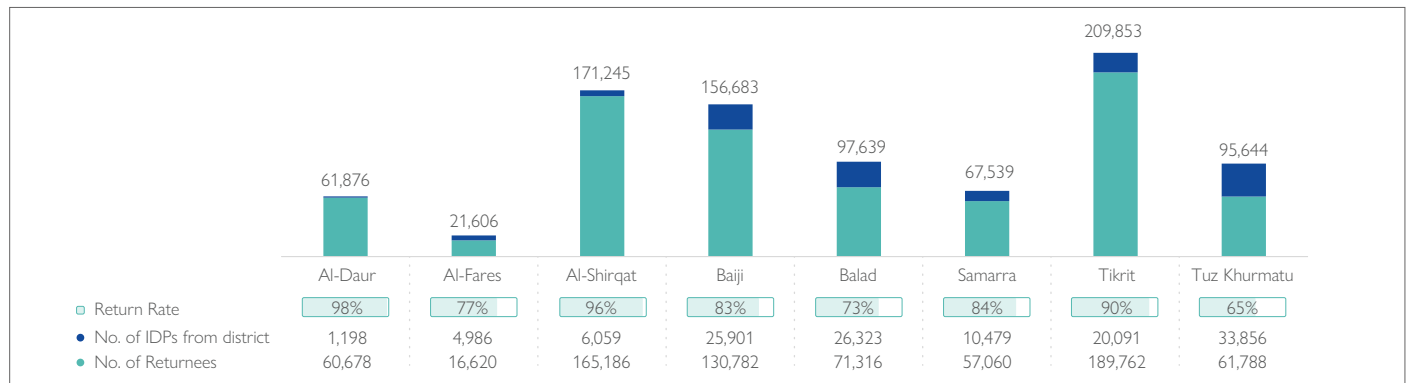


Figure 2: Rate of return in districts in Salah al Din Governorate<sup>32</sup>



According to Return Index Round 19 (May–August 2023),<sup>33</sup> Salah al Din is also the governorate hosting the second highest number of returnees living in severe conditions. Out of the 246 return locations assessed, 83 present severe conditions and 95 medium conditions, with over 627,354 individuals living in ‘hotspots.’<sup>34</sup> The greatest deterioration in conditions were observed in Al Dujeel Centre and Markaz Tikrit over difficulties accessing basic services such as electricity and water. Additionally, in Al Dujeel Centre, water scarcity reduced the agricultural output and decreased available livelihoods opportunities in the process. These aspects, in turn, hinder the ability of returnees to remain in their

area of origin and increase the chances of redispacement of these families, thus undermining the sustainability of returns.

In light of the above, it is essential to assess progress towards durable solutions to displacement in Iraq to inform targeted interventions in key areas of concerns. Identifying locations or groups that face similar challenges will support more efficient and effective programmatic responses. These activities, in turn, will enable IDPs to voluntarily take steps towards their preferred durable solutions and make returns more viable in the long run.

32 Ibid.

33 International Organization for Migration (IOM), DTM Iraq Return Index 19 Dashboard (May – August 2023) (Baghdad, 2023).

34 Ibid. A subdistrict is classified as a ‘hotspot’ if it scores highly in terms of severity on at least one of the two scales (either livelihoods and basic services or safety and social cohesion) or if it scores medium in terms of severity but also host relatively large numbers of returnees (at least 60,000 returnees). Al Amerli, Al Eshaqi, Al Moatassim, Al Siniya, Markaz Al Balad, Markaz Al Daur, Markaz Al Shirqat, Markaz Baiji, Markaz Samarra, Markaz Tuz Khurmatu, Suleiman Beg and Yathreb are all hotspots in Salah al Din Governorate.



## KEY FINDINGS

As of August 2023, Salah al Din hosts the third largest returnee population (753,192 individuals) and the fifth largest IDP population (50,682 individuals).<sup>35</sup> It is also the **second largest governorate of origin for IDPs in Iraq**, with 131,219 IDPs originating from Salah al Din.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, Salah al Din has the largest number of IDPs and the second largest number of returnees living in high severity conditions.<sup>37, 38</sup>

In Salah al Din, **people were mainly displaced in 2014**, with the exception of Al Shirqat where its residents were displaced over the course of three years. More than half of both IDP and returnee households experienced multiple displacements, with the proportion slightly higher among IDP households.

When asked about their preferred solution, **most IDP and returnee households prefer to stay in their current location. Only 1 in 10 IDP households (14%) prefer to return to their place of origin.** This is significantly lower than for IDP households surveyed in Ninewa, where one in three prefer to return. In line with the Ninewa report, IDPs in Salah al Din cited **housing destruction (72%) and a lack of livelihood opportunities (67%) as the primary reasons for not returning** to their place of origin. This suggests that housing reconstruction and livelihoods related programming would improve conditions and progress towards durable solutions.

### COMPARING LIVING CONDITIONS

This study compares living conditions for IDP, returnee and stayee households across five criteria: (1) safety and security, (2) adequate standard of living, (3) access to livelihood, (4) restoration of housing, land and property (HLP) and compensation and (5) documentation and participation.

In general, returnees tend to report slightly worse living conditions than stayees. However, **IDPs report significantly worse living conditions than both stayees and returnees.**

**Restoration of HLP and compensation is a crucial distinguishing factor for IDPs, returnees and stayees**, with the greatest divergence observed for the three groups across these criteria. Housing conditions are the primary driver behind the limited progress of IDPs and returnees. IDP households face additional challenges, especially concerning **the possession of legally recognized documentation and fear of eviction.** They also report **higher rates of HLP damage or destruction**, which further aggravate lower progress in this domain.

Access to livelihoods is difficult for all three groups. Even households who were not displaced due to the 2014–2017 conflict grapple with economic insecurity. Nevertheless, the displaced population faces a higher degree of vulnerability in this domain. **Most IDP households do not have a stable source of income** (74% of IDPs and 42% of returnees) and rely on precarious forms of work. Furthermore, less than a fifth of IDP households and a quarter of returnee households report having the financial capacity to handle unexpected expenses, with the majority lacking sufficient funds for savings.

IDPs face significant challenges in attaining an **adequate standard of living.** A smaller proportion of IDP households report living in housing in good condition. Additionally, **IDPs have more limited access to clean drinking water, sanitation facilities and health care services** in comparison to other households. They are also more likely to adopt coping strategies to address food insecurity. Samarra District is the area with the most challenging living conditions for IDPs.

35 IOM, DTM Iraq – Master List Dashboard 130 (May–August 2023) (Baghdad, 2023).

36 Ibid.

37 IOM, DTM Iraq – Displacement Index Round 7 Dashboard (May – August 2023) (Baghdad, 2023).

38 IOM, DTM Iraq – Return Index Round 19 (May–August 2023) (Baghdad, 2023).

39 IOM, Progress Toward Durable Solutions in Iraq – A Pilot Project in Ninewa Governorate (Baghdad, 2023).

### MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Households were rated according to the number of criteria met to measure the overall progress toward solutions. Those who met only one criterion or none are categorized as low progress, while those who met two or three criteria are classified as medium progress and those who met four or all five criteria as high progress.

Figure 3: Number of criteria met per progress group



Only 15 per cent of IDP households fall in the high-progress group. **Most IDP households are concentrated in the medium-progress group (46%), but a comparable proportion falls in the low-progress group (39%).** This indicates that IDP households are still facing challenges with overcoming displacement related vulnerabilities. Compared to the displaced population in Ninewa,<sup>39</sup> IDP households in Salah al Din have overall achieved lower levels of progress, with Salah al Din having a considerably higher share of low-progress IDP households (10% and 39%, respectively).

In contrast, the situation is slightly better for returnee households. More than half have attained a medium degree of progress (55%) and about one third (35%) have achieved high level of progress. **Only 1 in 10 returnee households are in the low-progress group.** Compared to in Ninewa, returnee households in Salah al Din have generally made less progress, with a significantly higher portion of low-progress returnee households (3% and 10%, respectively).

Figure 4: Percentage of IDP and returnee households by progress group

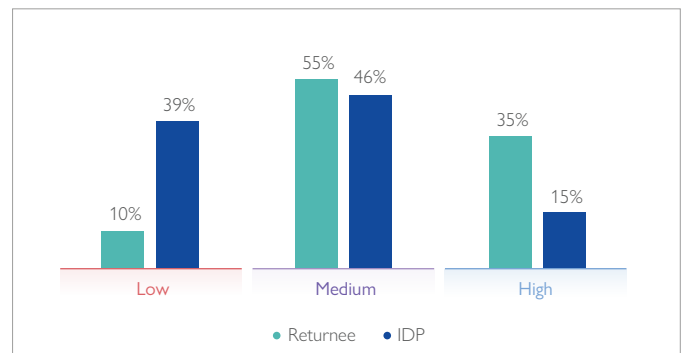
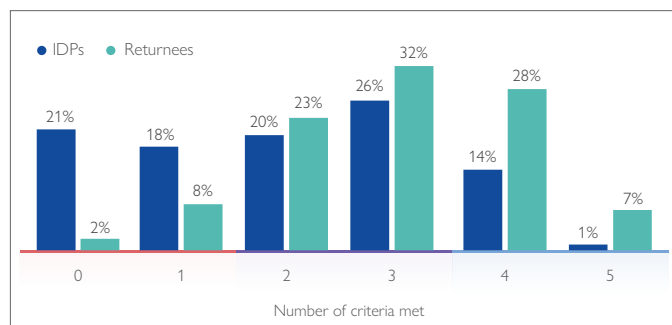


Figure 5: Percentage of IDP and returnee households by criteria met



## FACTORS ENABLING AND PREVENTING PROGRESS TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

This study offers evidence on the factors facilitating or hindering durable solutions, the distinct challenges faced by IDP and returnee households compared to those who never displaced and the distinguishing characteristics of low-progress households.

Certain factors related to displacement influence progress towards durable solutions, particularly amongst IDP households. **A greater proportion of households in the low-progress group experienced multiple displacements and reported a higher average number of failed returns.** This finding shows that the number of displacements and the success of return efforts are critical factors affecting the progress of IDP households.

**Housing conditions and the type of tenure agreement** have a profound effect on progress. Most low-progress IDP households live in **critical shelters** such as destroyed houses in bad condition, mud or block structures and tents. Living conditions in these shelters are often inadequate, owing to issues such as **overcrowding and limited access to drinking water and sanitation facilities.** Furthermore, housing precarity as measured by the type of tenure agreement appears to hinder progress. Low-progress households tend to rely on informal rental agreements or own a home without legal documentation. As such, low-progress households, especially those internally displaced, are more likely to **fear eviction.**

An **unstable livelihood situation** represents another barrier to progress. Although most households have at least one member working, low-progress households usually rely on **low wage work through daily labour or small scale subsistence agriculture.** As such, the vast majority of households are unable to

## INTRODUCTION

This report on Salah al Din Governorate is an extension of the original pilot project in Ninewa aimed at assessing progress towards durable solutions<sup>40</sup> to displacement for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees in the governorates with the largest shares of displaced populations in Iraq. The goal is to understand where IDPs and returnees stand five years after the end of the 2014–2017 crisis and in which aspects they are still struggling compared to the population who never left their location of origin (that is, stayees). In this respect, this project contributes to a broader

40 A durable solution is achieved when displaced people no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. It can be achieved through return, integration or resettlement. IASC, *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, The Brookings Institute & University of Bern (Washington D.C., 2010).

41 In 2015, an interagency process, composed by a group of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actors under the leadership of the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, was established. The group started work on developing and testing indicators and guidance for comprehensive durable solutions analysis in internal displacement situations, resulting in a library of standardized indicators and operational guidance. For more information, refer to: IASC, *Inter Agency Durable Solutions Indicator Library, Joint IDP Profiling Service* (Geneva, 2020).

face unexpected expenses. The relatively low share of households in the high-progress group able to afford unexpected expenses suggests that livelihood conditions for this group, while not ideal, are similar to those faced by stayees. However, even among the high-progress group, most households only have enough money for food and basic needs but not for savings.

With respect to **safety and security**, most household members feel safe walking alone in their area. However, households in the low-progress group were more likely to **face challenges getting help from local authorities.** Additionally, a higher proportion of households in this group reported barriers when moving in and out of their area of residence. Within the low-progress group, **constraints on freedom of movement were more pronounced amongst IDP households** in particular, likely linked to the higher share of those living in critical shelters.

Regarding **social cohesion**, a clear relationship exists between feelings of acceptance by the community and progress. **Only 20 per cent of low-progress IDPs and 55 per cent of low-progress returnees felt completely accepted by the community**, in contrast to 98 per cent and 99 per cent respectively in the high-progress group. The significant disparity in acceptance rates between low-progress IDP and returnee households highlights the specific challenges that IDPs face in achieving a sense of belonging and acceptance, which suggests that progress is also linked to integration within the community.

Finally, the **majority of households regardless of progress group prefer to stay in their current location**, generating a need to include locations of displacement and return in durable solutions programming, enabling IDP and returnee households to remain where they are.

In summary, only **a small percentage of IDP and returnee households have successfully addressed displacement related vulnerabilities**, with returnees demonstrating more progress than IDPs. However, the low scores for stayees indicate that even those who were not displaced struggle to meet all criteria for durable solutions. Livelihoods and housing are challenging for IDPs, returnees and stayees alike, and are closely tied to progress within each group. IDPs also face greater difficulties in attaining adequate standards of living. Geographically, **IDPs face significant challenges in Markaz Samarra and Markaz Tikrit, while returnees face the most difficulty in areas such as Markaz Al Shirqat, Al Moatassem and Yathreb.** These findings highlight the need for targeted programmatic interventions in preferred settlement locations to actively foster conditions for sustainable integration, return or resettlement.

discussion and Action Agenda around measuring progress towards solutions – and determining the end of displacement – which aims at operationalizing the eight criteria of the Framework for Durable Solutions produced by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and informing targeted interventions in key areas of concern.<sup>41</sup>

The analysis of this project builds on the information and knowledge gained by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) about the 2014–2017 crisis. IOM Iraq has been tracking and monitoring IDP stock figures as early as December 2014

through the DTM.<sup>42</sup> The collection of returnee stock figures began in April 2015, although returnee stock figures have been retroactively reported since October 2014. IOM Iraq also uses the Displacement Index<sup>43</sup> and Return Index<sup>44</sup> as tools to monitor the living conditions of the IDP and returnee populations at the location level across key sectors, such as livelihoods, housing, services, safety, social cohesion and inclusiveness. Since 2015, IOM Iraq and Georgetown University implemented a longitudinal study, *Access to Durable Solutions in Iraq*, to understand how IDPs take steps to build lasting durable solutions. The study has regularly surveyed non camp IDP families since their displacement in 2014–2015, including some families who managed to return to their area of origin since 2017.<sup>45</sup> Since 2019, IOM Iraq has been monitoring protracted<sup>46</sup> and urban displacement<sup>47</sup> in the main districts of origin

and displacement to provide a contextualized categorization and inform planning and development of durable solutions strategies.

The analytical framework for this pilot was developed according to the IASC Framework for Durable Solutions and the recommendations provided by the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS)/UN Statistics Division (UNSD) on IDP statistics and composite measures for progress towards durable solutions and overcoming key displacement related vulnerabilities. All indicators selected for the composite measure were selected from the Interagency Indicator Library and, as such, they align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## METHODOLOGY

### SAMPLING DESIGN

Two sources of data were utilized as sampling frames to obtain the estimated base number of IDP, returnee and stayee households in each subdistrict in Salah al Din Governorate. DTM Master List Round 129 data, collected between January and April 2023, was used as a sampling frame for IDP and returnee households, while the source for stayee households was statistical population data 2021 from the Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Planning of Iraq.

A two stage sampling procedure was used. In the first stage, locations in each subdistrict were selected with a probability proportional to the population size. In the second stage, IDP and returnee households were selected proportionally to the total number of households in the location. All locations where IDPs and returnees were present according to DTM Master List Round 129 were included in the frame. For stayees, the procedure was slightly different and based on 2021 Iraqi Central Statistical Office population estimates at the subdistrict level, which are available upon request. Only locations with IDPs and returnees were included in the frame and the number of households was based on the total number of stayees in the subdistrict. In cases where no stayees or few stayees were present at the selected location, households were replaced within the subdistrict.

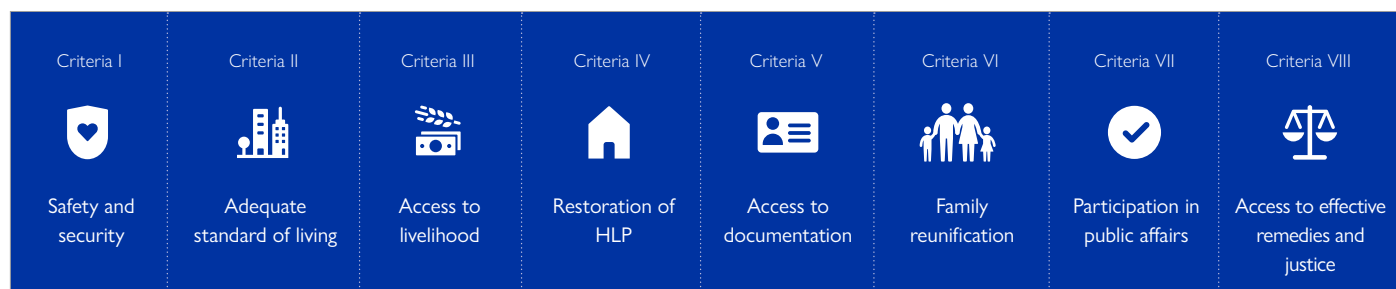
Data collection for this report took place between May and July 2023 across eight districts and 17 subdistricts in Salah al Din Governorate of Iraq. Data was collected through IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs), composed of over 24 staff members (33% of enumerators are female). They

collected data through structured face to face interviews with a sample size of **4,973 households, almost equally split between three groups: IDP (1,648), returnee (1,649) and stayee (1,676) households.** This sample size and design allow for comparison between the three groups as well as generalization of the findings per population group at the district level. Data for IDPs and returnees are also representative at subdistrict level. Overall, surveyed households represent 8,414 IDP households, 125,263 returnee households and 133,070 stayee households. The margin of error is 2.4 per cent at the governorate level for all groups — IDPs, returnees and stayees — and at subdistrict level ranges from 4.4 to 5.8 per cent for IDP estimates, from 8.7 to 9.9 per cent for returnee estimates and from 7.2 to 7.5 per cent for stayee estimates (although in their case, only district estimates can be produced).

### SELECTION OF INDICATORS

Indicators to assess the advancement toward durable solutions were drawn from the IASC Framework.<sup>48</sup> The framework defines three durable solutions— sustainable return, sustainable integration or sustainable resettlement – each of which depends on the fulfilment of eight criteria: (1) long term safety and security; (2) adequate standard of living; (3) access to livelihood and employment; (4) access to effective and accessible mechanisms to restore housing, land and property; (5) access to personal and other documentation; (6) family reunification; (7) participation in public affairs and (8) access to effective remedies and justice.

Figure 6: IASC Durable Solution Framework's criteria to measure the progress toward achieving durable solutions



42 For more information, refer to: IOM, *DTM Iraq Master List* (2023), Erbil.

43 For more information, refer to: IOM, *DTM Iraq Displacement Index* (2023), Erbil.

44 For more information, refer to: IOM, *DTM Iraq Return Index* (2023), Erbil.

45 For more information on the study, its methodology and main findings, refer to: IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq. Part One* (2017). IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Three Years in Displacement* (Baghdad, 2019). IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Four Years in Displacement* (Baghdad, 2019). IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Five Years in Displacement* (Baghdad, 2020). IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Six Years in Displacement* (Baghdad, 2022).

46 For more information, refer to: IOM, *Progress Towards Solutions* (2023).

47 IOM, *DTM – An Analysis of Urban Displacement in Iraq* (Baghdad, 2021).

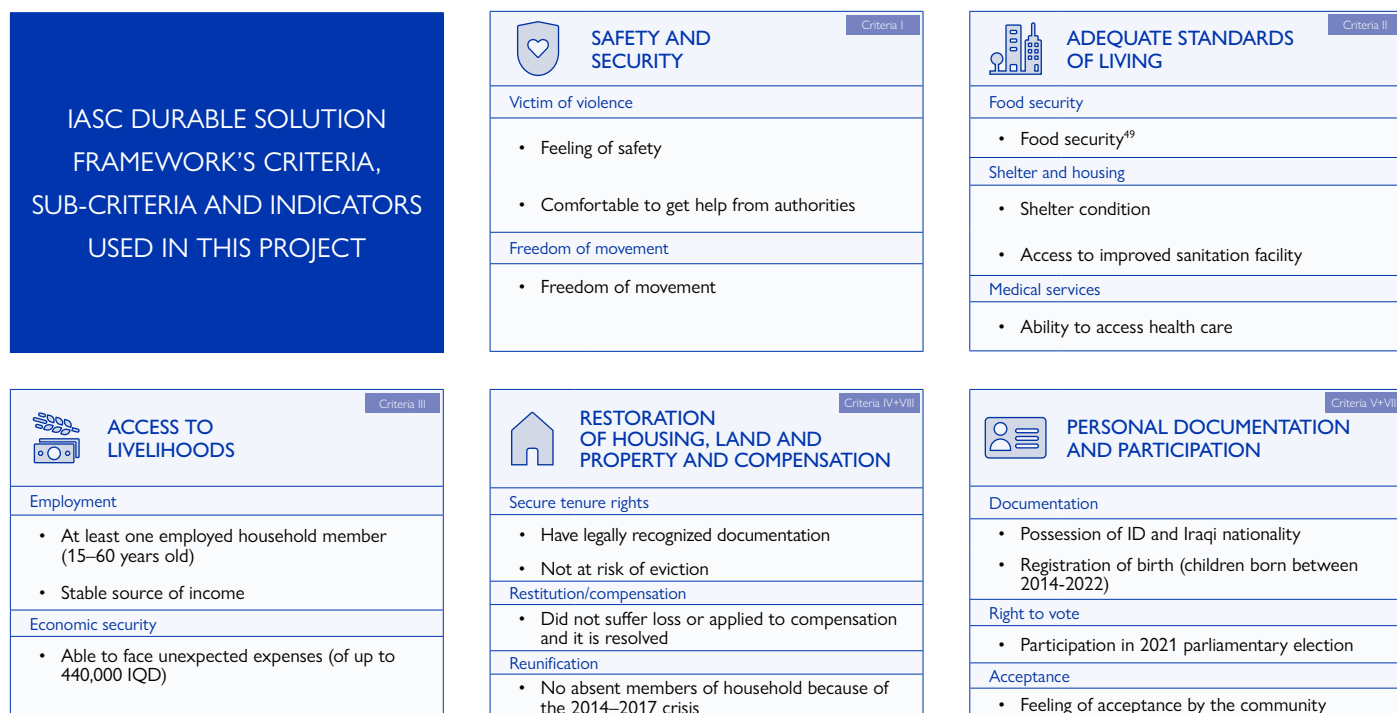
48 IASC, *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, The Brookings Institute & University of Bern (Washington D.C., 2010).

In consultation with partners and following the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS), indicators across those criteria were developed and organized into a questionnaire. The questionnaire and indicators were further refined following the pilot testing in Ninewa. Two additional indicators were included since the pilot round: (1) 'reunification' in the restoration of HLP and compensation criteria and (2) 'acceptance' in the personal documentation and participation domain. The 'reunification' indicator considers whether any household members are deceased, imprisoned or missing because of the 2014–2017 crisis. 'Acceptance' measures feelings of acceptance by the community. Additionally, three indicators were adjusted: the head of household's source of income was adjusted to the household's source of income (livelihoods); HLP loss

and compensation include all three groups and the status of the compensation claim; and essential documentation includes Iraqi nationality together with ID (documentation and participation).

The questionnaire was then administered to the sample of 1,648 IDP households, 1,649 returnee households and 1,676 stayee households across eight districts and 17 subdistricts of Salah al Din Governorate. Afterwards, indicators were tested and analysed across the three population groups and those that differentiated groups better and were consistent across domains were selected for analysis. Overall, 18 indicators were selected and grouped into five domains to have at least three indicators per domain (Figure 7).

Figure 7: IASC Durable Solution Framework's criteria, sub criteria and indicators used in this project



All indicators were coded as binary variables, with 1 representing when a displacement related or return related vulnerability was overcome and 0 when the vulnerability remained for a specific household. For example, 'feeling safe' or 'not reporting movement restrictions' is coded as a 1 as this is positive progress towards solutions. Recording of missing data was performed in the following way. Missing data by design, due to skipping patterns and non applicability, were interpreted as the absence of vulnerability. For instance, families who did not need health care were coded as 'not vulnerable' in the health sub-criterion. Missing data due to non-response were interpreted as the presence of vulnerability. For example, families answering 'Do not know' or 'Prefer not to answer' on whether they feel safe were coded as vulnerable, that is, 'not feeling safe'. Employment indicators were assessed at the household level and coded as the absence of vulnerability if at least one individual passed that indicator, that is, at least one

member aged 15–60 years is employed in the household and the household has a stable source of income (public or private employment, self employment or retired). The absence of vulnerability related to personal documentation was applied where all household members owned essential documents.

### COMPOSITE MEASURE

The composite measure to assess progress towards solutions was built in several steps. First, the **average number of indicators** met per domain was calculated. For instance, the safety and security domain include three indicators; thus, the maximum possible value is three when all indicators are met and the minimum possible value is zero, when none of the indicators are met. This allows for comparison between groups and identification of the most problematic domain.

49 Food security was assessed by the reduced Coping Strategy Index (CSI) from the World Food Programme, the de facto standard for measuring food security in humanitarian settings. It is based on five core questions that were administered to households and then weighted with universally standardized weights to allow comparability across contexts. In this analysis, the threshold for the absence of vulnerability was set at 18 and includes the first two classes (Minimal/None (0-3) and Stressed (4-18)) that correspond to a situation of less severe food insecurity. World Food Programme, *The Coping Strategy Index: Field Methods Manual (Second Edition)* (2008).

Table 1: The average number of indicators met per domain and population group

DOMAIN	IDPs	RETURNEES	STAYEES	MAX
Safety and Security	2.57	2.71	2.64	3
Adequate Standard of Living	2.73	3.35	3.75	4
Access to Livelihoods	1.37	1.75	1.91	3
Restoration of HLP and Compensation	1.81	2.88	3.29	4
Personal Documentation and Participation	3.43	3.79	3.84	4

Second, the **average number of criteria** met was calculated. To do so, domain scores were also coded as binary variables, with 1 representing when the IDP or returnee household met on average the same or a higher number of indicators

per domain as the stayee household and 0 when the IDP or returnee household met on average a lower number of indicators.

Table 2: The score coding per domain based on the average number of indicators met

DOMAIN	0	1	THRESHOLD (Average number of indicators met by stayee households)
Safety and security	<2.64	= or >2.64	2.64
Adequate standards of living	<3.75	= or >3.75	3.75
Access to livelihoods	<1.91	= or >1.91	1.91
HLP rights and access to remedies	<3.29	= or >3.29	3.29
Personal documentation and participation	<3.84	= or >3.84	3.84

Thus, the maximum possible value is five when all criteria are met and the minimum possible value is 0, when none of the criteria are met. This allows us to conduct an overall comparison between groups.

Table 3: The average number of criteria met by population group

	IDPs	RETURNEES	STAYEES	Max
All five domains	1.97	2.73	3.61	5

In addition, to assess the progress towards solutions, **households were then rated according to the number of criteria met**. Those who met only one criterion or none are categorized as achieving low progress, those who met two or three criteria as medium progress and those who met four or all five criteria as high progress.

Figure 8: Number of criteria met per progress group



### LIMITATIONS

As previously noted, some subdistricts had no or few stayees. As a result, the sample was met using other locations in the district. This means that for the stayee population, findings can be generalized at the district, not subdistrict level.

# I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISPLACED POPULATION

This section presents an overview of the main sociodemographic characteristics of the displaced population in Salah al Din Governorate. This population is composed of two main groups: households who are still at the location of displacement (IDPs) and households who have returned to the place where they used to reside before the 2014–2017 crisis forced them to move elsewhere (returnees).

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The sex distribution of the displaced population is balanced. Half of IDPs and returnees are female and half are male. The average household size is roughly seven members for both IDPs and returnees.

Around one in five IDP and returnee households are headed by a woman (20% IDP households vs 23% returnee households), versus only 15 per cent of stayee households. Furthermore, in 14 per cent of IDP and returnee households, the head

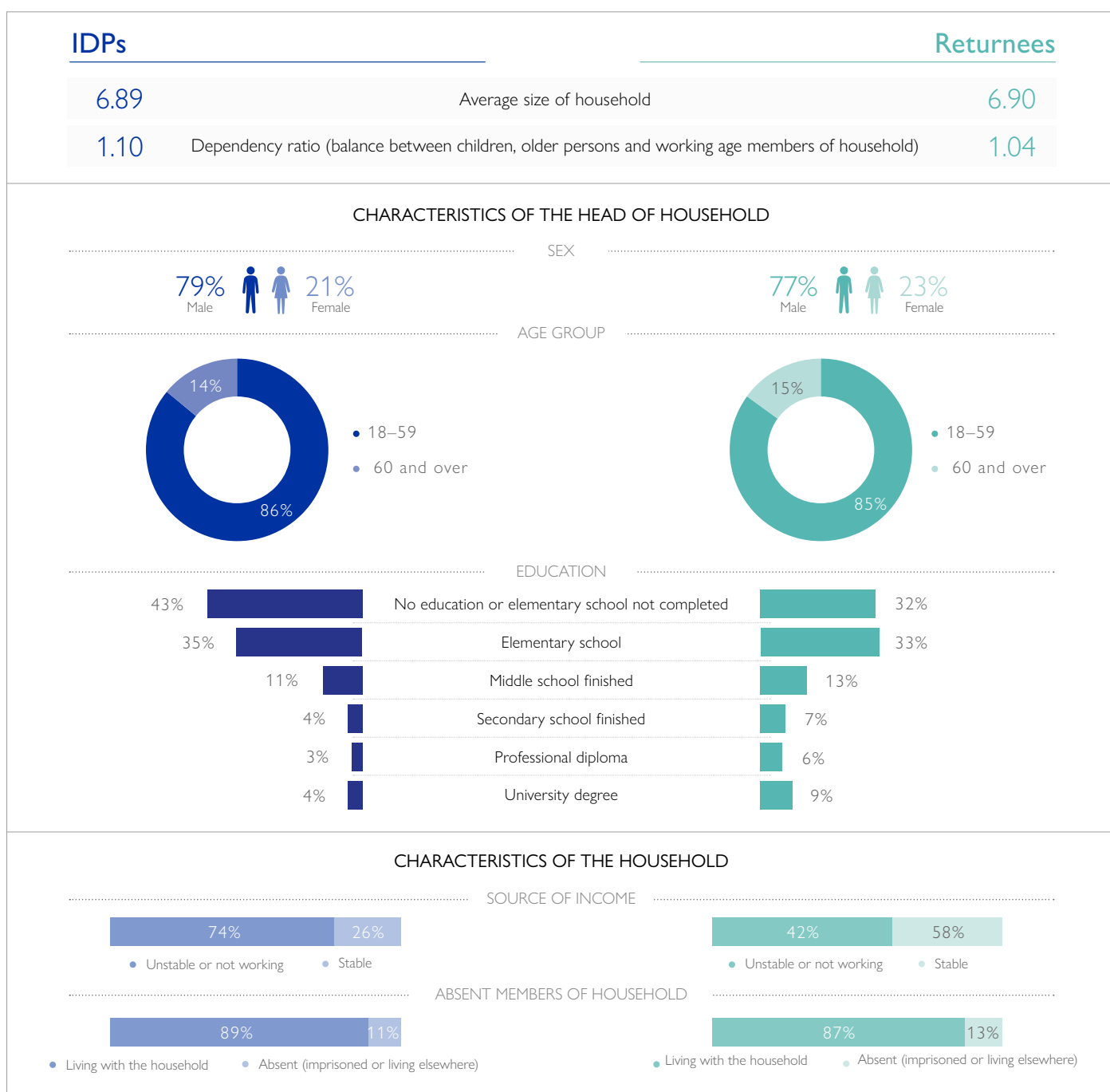
of the household is an elderly person. While most heads of households (HoHHs) are married, about 1 in 10 are widowed.

In more than three quarters of IDP households, the HoHH received no form of education (43% of IDPs versus 32% returnees) or has elementary school education (35% IDPs versus 33% returnees). This share is slightly higher for IDP households than for returnee households (+14 percentage points).

Seven in ten IDP households do not have a stable<sup>50</sup> source of income (74% IDPs versus 42% returnees). Almost a third of IDP households (31%) rely on external income sources (i.e. remittances, money from family, loans, grants or government assistance) compared to around one in ten returnee households (13%).

About 1 in 10 households have an absent family member (either missing, dead or imprisoned) (11% IDPs versus 13% returnees).

Figure 9: Characteristics of households

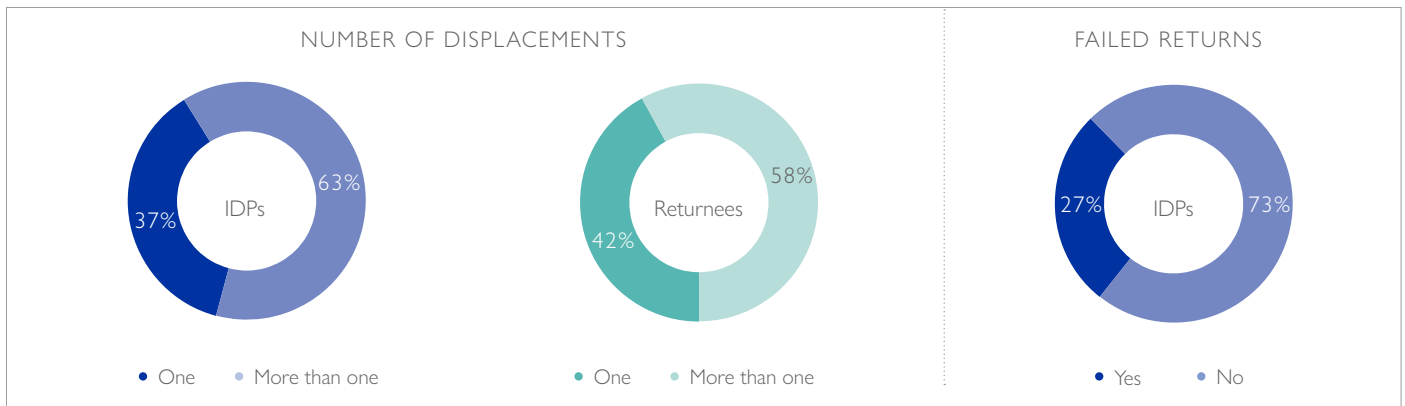


50 A stable income means that household members are regularly employed in the public or private sector, self employed or retired.

All IDPs have been displaced for five years or more (100%) and more than half have been displaced twice or more (63% IDPs versus 58% returnees). Failed returns were most commonly reported from Markaz Al Daur (30%), Markaz Tuz Khurmatu (27%) and Markaz Samarra (25%). Findings suggest that a lack

of livelihood opportunities in Markaz Al Daur (91%) and destroyed housing in Markaz Tuz Khurmatu (84%) and in Markaz Samarra (83%) are the main reasons preventing returns in those districts.

Figure 10: Number of displacements and failed returns

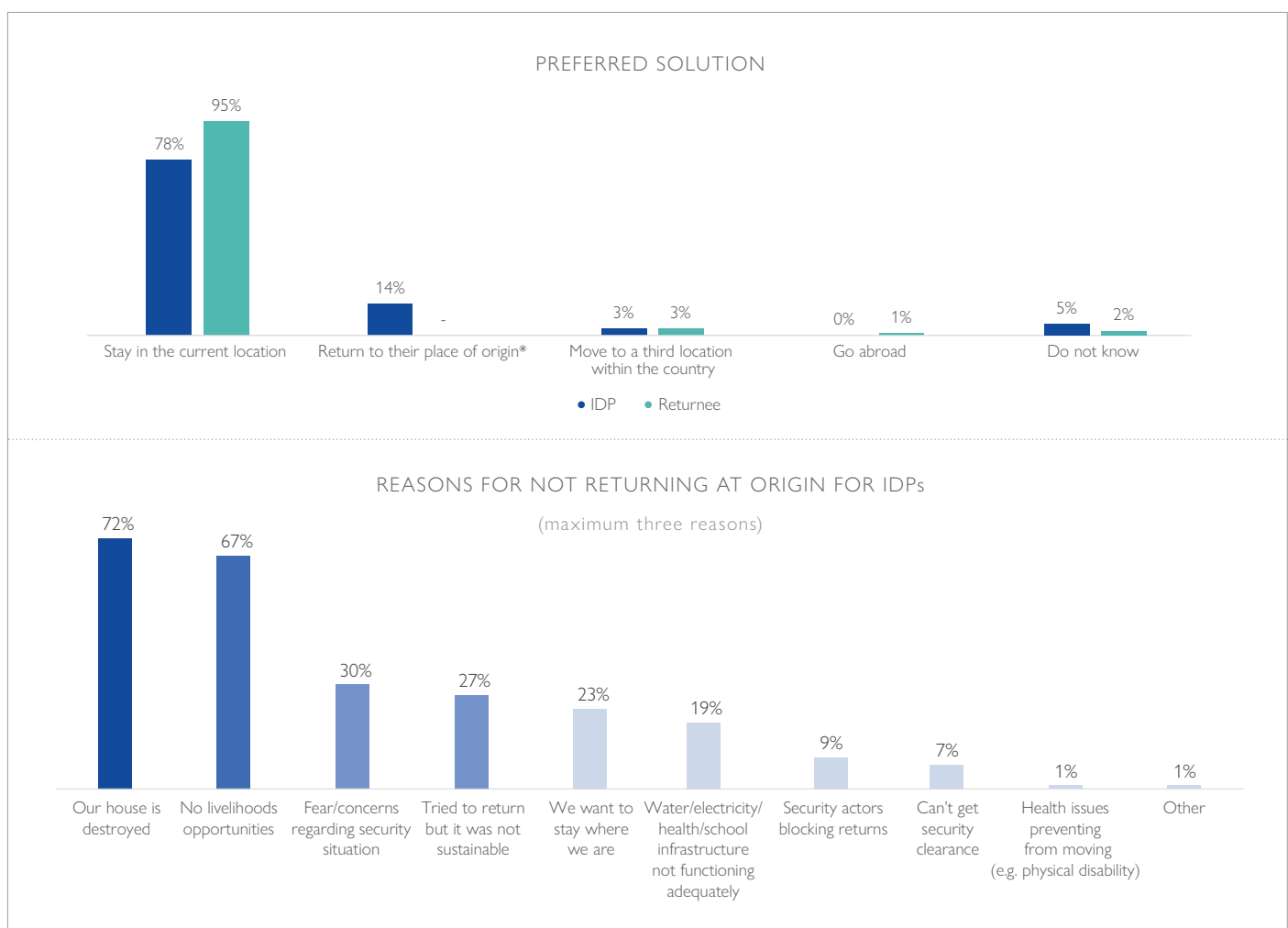


### PREFERRED DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND OBSTACLES

Most IDP and returnee households prefer to stay in their current location (78% IDPs versus 95% returnees), while 14 per cent of IDP households prefer to return to their place of origin. The main reasons for not returning to the area of origin are destroyed housing (72%) and a lack of livelihood opportunities (67%).

Around one third of IDP households (30%) reported fear/concerns regarding the security situation and almost one third (27%) tried to return but it was not sustainable. Additionally, around one fifth of IDP households (19%) are not able to return because of lack of adequate infrastructure (such as water, electricity, health and schools).

Figure 11: Preferred solutions and main barriers to return



\* Not a choice for returnees

## II. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS PER CRITERIA

This section compares progress for IDP, returnee and stayee households across five criteria: (1) safety and security, (2) adequate standard of living, (3) access to livelihood, (4) restoration of HLP and compensation and (5) documentation and participation.

**Livelihoods and HLP restoration and compensation** are the most challenging domains. With respect to livelihoods, all three groups performed poorly overall. Only a limited share of IDP, returnee and stayee households are able to face unexpected expenses. Compared to returnee and stayee households, IDP households are less likely to have stable sources of income and are more likely to engage in precarious types of work (for instance daily wage jobs or irregular earnings). Additionally, the largest gap between IDP, returnee and stayee households was observed in the HLP domain. Higher shares of IDPs reported not having legally recognized documentation. Relatedly, IDPs reported higher fears of eviction compared to the other groups. Moreover, more than twice as many IDP households have experienced property loss or have not successfully resolved a compensation claim compared to returnees. Furthermore, IDP households achieved lower progress in the **standards of living** domain. In particular, they reported lower scores for housing conditions as well as access to improved sanitation facilities and health care.

In contrast, all three groups scored relatively higher in the **safety and security** and **personal documentation and participation** domains. Nevertheless, IDP households tend to underperform relative to returnee and stayee households, especially regarding freedom of movement, participation in the 2021 elections and acceptance by the community.

### SAFETY AND SECURITY


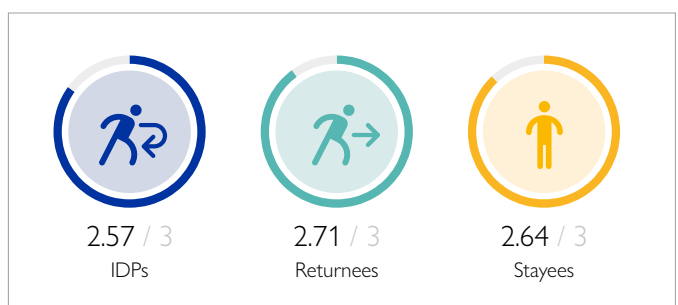
 The safety and security domain considers whether households feel safe, are comfortable getting help from local authorities and are able to move in and out of their location of residence.

Figure 12: The average number of indicators met per safety and security domain



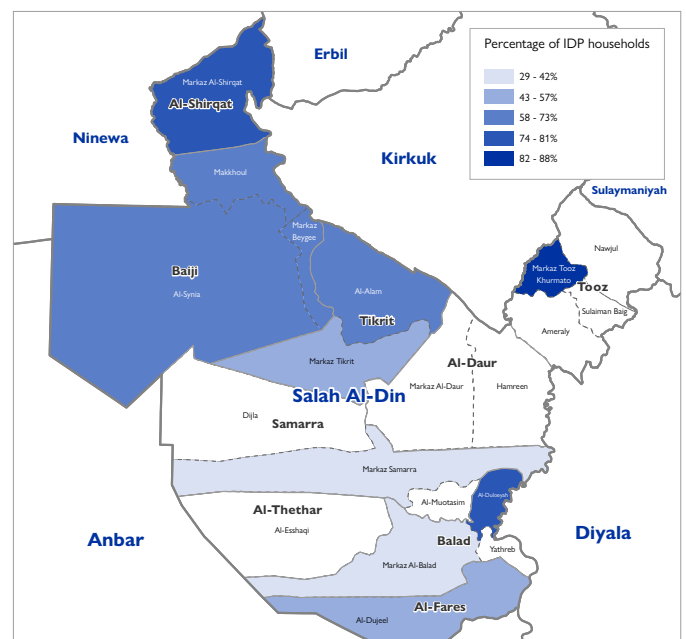
Safety and security is one of the least problematic domains, with IDP and returnee households receiving similar scores to stayee households. Over six in ten households pass all three indicators for this criterion (62% IDPs versus 73% returnees and 65% stayees), which include feeling safe in their current location, enjoying freedom of movement at all times and being comfortable reporting their safety and security issues to local authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms.

Disaggregating by indicator, nearly all IDPs and returnees feel safe walking alone in their area of residence (99% IDP households versus 98% returnee households and 99% stayee households).<sup>51</sup> However, while most IDPs and returnees feel free to move in and out of the area they live in whenever they choose (79% IDPs versus 91%

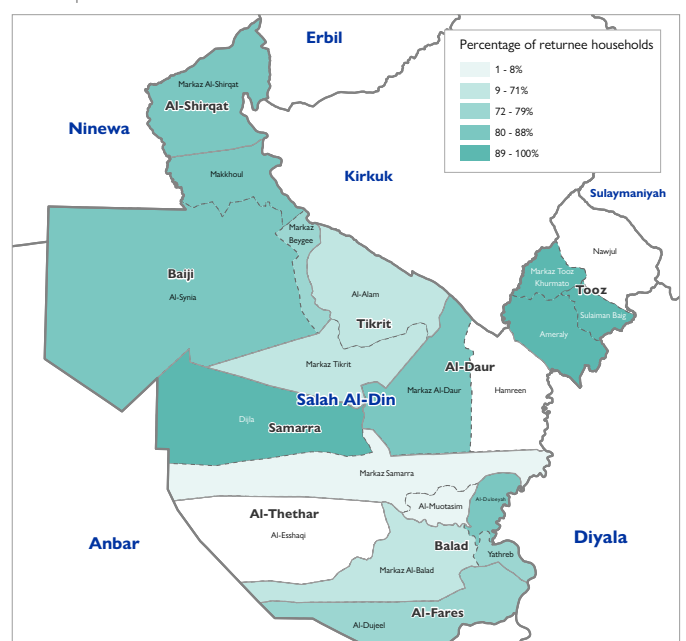
returnees and 76% stayees), one in five IDP households do not. The main mentioned reasons for not feeling free to move are harassment at checkpoints and lack of documentation (residency papers or permit). Furthermore, around one in five IDP and returnee households (20% IDPs versus 19% returnees) do not feel comfortable seeking help from authorities, compared to around one in ten stayees (12%).

In select subdistricts, IDP and returnee households face greater challenges surrounding safety and security. In particular, Markaz Al Daur (0%), Markaz Samarra (29%) and Markaz Al Balad (42%) have noticeably lower portions of IDP households meeting these indicators. Among returnees, Markaz Samarra (1%) and Al Moatassim (8%) have the lowest portion of households meeting this criterion.

Map 4: Percentage of IDP households meeting all safety and security criteria per subdistrict



Map 5: Percentage of all returnee households meeting all safety and security criteria per subdistrict



51 Respondents could report whether they felt unsafe themselves, whether their family felt unsafe, whether women felt unsafe or whether everyone felt unsafe.



## ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING


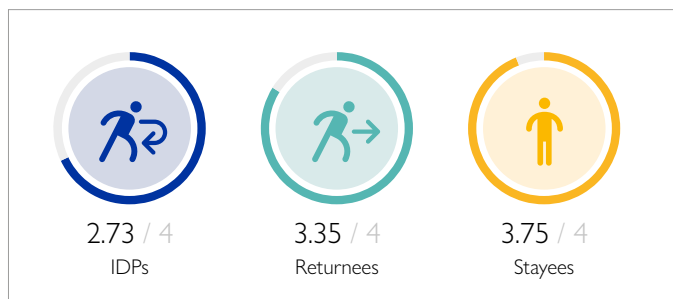
 The assessment measured adequate standards of living based on whether households have access to health care if needed or improved sanitation facilities. Additionally, this domain considered whether IDP and returnees' housing is in good condition. Finally, it examined levels of food security based on households' scores on the Coping Strategy Index.

Figure 13: The average number of indicators met per adequate standard of living domain



IDP households face more challenges related to standards of living than returnee and stayee households. Only 40 per cent of IDP households were able to pass all four criteria, compared to 52 per cent of returnee households. However, the relatively low proportion of returnee households meeting all four criteria indicates that this domain is challenging for both groups.

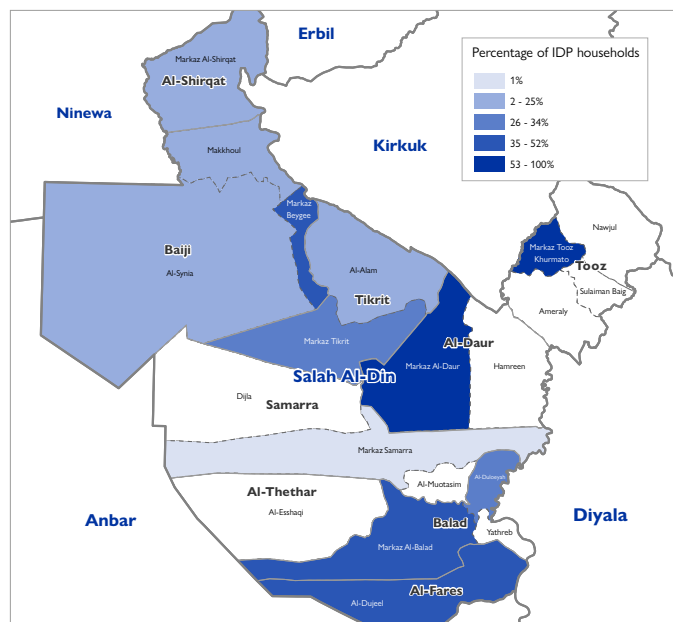
Specifically, around half of IDP households live in an apartment/house in good condition (54% IDPs versus 72% returnees and 89% stayees). Furthermore, only 62 per cent of IDP households have access to drinking water compared to 81 per cent of returnee and 93 per cent of stayee households.

Similarly, IDP households report reduced access to improved sanitation facilities (55% IDPs versus 77% returnees and 91% stayees) and greater difficulties accessing health services and facilities when needed (66% IDPs versus 87% returnees and 95% stayees).

However, there is almost no difference between groups in terms of food security (98% IDPs versus 99% returnees).

Across subdistricts, IDP households report lower standards of living in Markaz Samarra (1%) and Al Siniya (14%).

Map 6: Percentage of IDP households meeting all standard of living indicators per subdistrict



## ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS


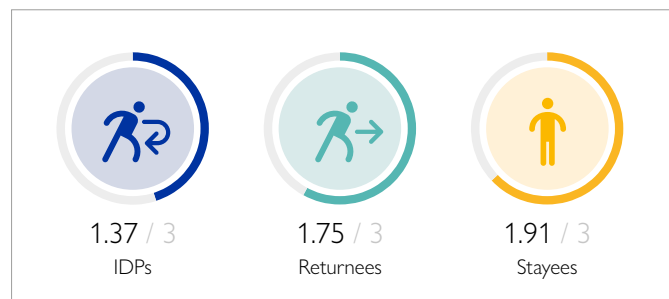
 The livelihoods domain assessed whether at least one member of the household (aged 15–60 years) is employed, whether the household has a stable source of income and whether households are able to face unexpected expenses of up to 440,000 Iraqi dinars.

Figure 14: The average number of indicators met per access to livelihoods domain



Employment and economic security appear to be a critical problem for all three groups. Overall, only 8 per cent of IDP households, 17 per cent of returnee households and 24 per cent of stayee households met all three indicators.

Almost all households have at least one member (aged 15–60 years) employed, with minimal differences between groups (93% of IDPs versus 94% returnees and 97% stayees).

Among IDPs, nearly three quarters of households have no stable source of income (74% IDPs versus 42% returnees). Conversely, only a third (33%) of stayee households face this issue, highlighting income stability as the primary gap between IDPs and stayees and, to a lesser extent, between returnees and stayees.

However, dealing with unexpected expenses is a challenge for all three groups (18% IDPs versus 23% returnees and 27% stayees). Therefore, having a stable income does not necessarily provide sufficient financial resources for sustainability and addressing unforeseen costs.

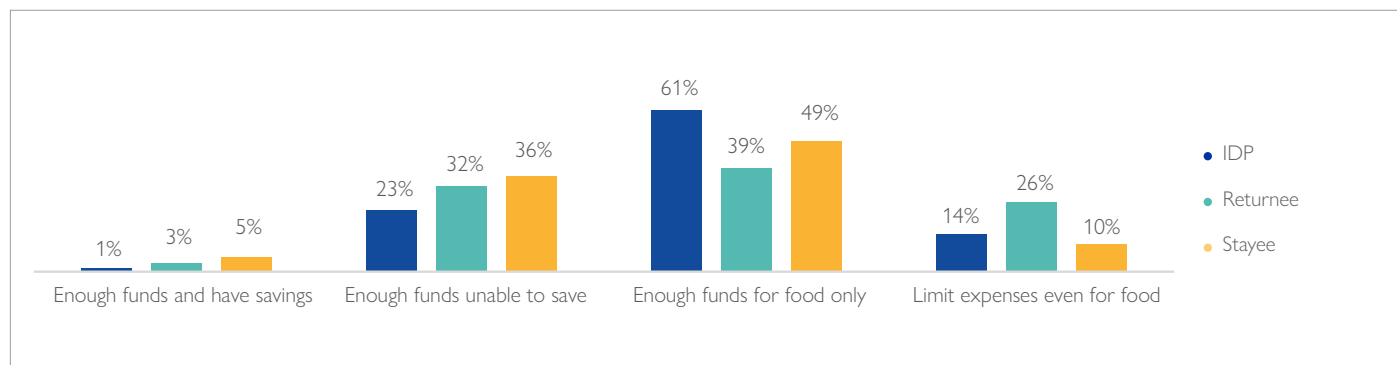
Households' financial status is determined by their ability to save by and their food expenses, which can fall into four categories: limiting expenses for food, having just enough for food, having funds but unable to save or having the capacity to save.

Among stayees, 1 in 10 households must limit expenses even for food and almost half have just enough funds for food only (49%). Moreover, around a third (36%) of stayee households have enough funds for basic needs but are unable to save, and only 5 per cent are able to save (versus 1% IDPs and 3% returnees).

Despite the considerable economic challenges faced by all groups, only a minority received assistance (34% IDPs, 13% returnees and 5% of stayees).

In terms of geographic variation, the subdistricts of Markaz Samarra (13%) and Al Siniya (23%) have lower portions of IDP households meeting these criteria.

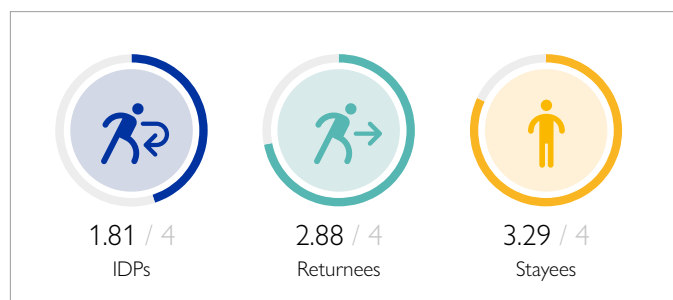
Figure 15: Financial status of household



## RESTORATION OF HLP AND COMPENSATION

With respect to property restoration and compensation, the assessment considered whether households have legally recognized documentation for their housing, whether they are at risk of eviction, whether their property was damaged and whether they have applied for compensation and the claim has been resolved. Additionally, the presence of deceased, imprisoned or missing members was added as a measure of vulnerability.

Figure 16: The average number of indicators met per restoration of HLP and compensation domain



HLP restoration and compensation is the domain with the biggest gap between IDP, returnee and stayee households. IDP households performed notably worse than returnee households, with only 4 per cent meeting all four criteria (versus 29% of returnees and 47% of stayees) and 19 per cent meeting three criteria (versus 38% of returnees and 36% of stayees). The main driver of this gap in progress is the large share of IDPs who do not have legally recognized documentation (83% IDPs versus 34% returnees and 37% stayees). Additionally, fears of eviction were notably higher among IDP households (50%) compared to returnee (32%) and stayee (23%) households.

Another factor driving the disparities between groups is the proportion of households with property loss or whose compensation claim has not been resolved. A significantly higher number of IDP households suffered property loss or did not have a resolved compensation claim (75% IDPs versus 33% returnees and 3% stayees).

All three groups reported similar shares of absent household members (11% of IDPs versus 13% of returnees and 9% of stayees).

Across Salah al Din, for IDP households, the worst performing areas for HLP criteria are Markaz Al Daur, Markaz Samarra and Markaz Tuz Khurmatu. For returnee households, the worst performing areas are Al Amerli, Markaz Tuz Khurmatu and Al Moatassem.

## DOCUMENTATION AND PARTICIPATION

With respect to personal documentation, households were asked whether all members of their household have essential personal documentation, that is, a national or unified ID, Iraqi nationality and a birth certificate. Additionally, regarding participation in public affairs, the assessment considered whether all eligible members of the household voted in the 2021 parliamentary elections. Households were also asked to evaluate the extent to which they felt accepted by the community.

Figure 17: The average number of indicators met per personal documentation and participation domain



In contrast to HLP and livelihoods, personal documentation and participation in public affairs was one of the strongest performing domains for all three groups. Most IDP households were able to meet three or four of the indicators (89% of IDPs versus 99% of returnees and 99% of stayees).

Most households across all three groups possess both a national or unified ID and Iraqi nationality. However, a slightly larger percentage of IDPs lack one of these documents (6% of IDPs versus 1% of returnees and 1% of stayees). Nonetheless, all three groups had a birth certificate for children born between 2014–2022 (100% of IDPs, returnees and stayees).

IDP households reported slightly lower levels of participation in the 2021 elections compared to returnee households (87% of IDPs versus 94% of returnees and 94% of stayees).

The main difference between IDPs and returnees is in the level of acceptance in the community. Only 62 per cent of IDP households feel 'very' accepted in the community, compared to 86 per cent of returnees and 91 per cent stayees.

With respect to social cohesion, Markaz Samarra subdistrict (3%) is a hotspot of vulnerability for IDP households, while Al Moatassem (1%) and Dija (7%) were the lowest rated subdistricts for returnee households.

### III. PROGRESS TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS

#### OVERALL PROGRESS TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS

To measure the overall progress toward solutions, all five criteria discussed in the previous section were summed to obtain a composite measure. Stayee households meet on average 3.61 out of 5 criteria, while IDP and returnee households meet 1.97 and 2.73, respectively.

Households were then rated according to the number of criteria met. Those who met only one criterion or none are categorized as low progress, while those

who met two or three criteria are classified as medium progress and those who met four or all five criteria as high progress.

Figure 18: The average number of criteria met per population group

	IDPs	RETURNEES	STAYEES
Average	1.97	2.73	3.61

Figure 19: Number and percentage of households by number of criteria met and progress group

		Number of criteria met						Total
		Low progress		Medium progress		High progress		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	
IDPs	# of households	1,778	1,537	1,705	2,177	1,134	83	8,414
	% of households	21%	18%	20%	26%	14%	1%	100%
Returnees	# of households	2,686	10,307	28,570	40,344	34,416	8,940	125,263
	% of households	2%	8%	23%	32%	28%	7%	100%

Around half of IDP households (46%) fall in the medium progress category, two fifths are classified as low progress (39%) and the remaining 15 per cent can be found in the high-progress group. Districts with the highest percentage of IDPs in the low-progress group include Samarra (70%), Tikrit (17%) and Balad (8%) districts.

Returnee households have achieved greater progress than IDP households. Over half (55%) are found in the medium-progress category, with a further 35 per cent falling in the high-progress group. Around one in ten returnee households are in the low-progress group (10%), primarily concentrated in Tikrit (28%), Al Shirqat (25%) and Samarra (21%) districts.

#### KEY FACTORS LINKED TO PROGRESS

This section presents an overview of the main characteristics of IDP and returnee households by their level of progress towards solutions. It highlights the main factors enabling or preventing households from achieving durable solutions. These include the subdistrict in which IDPs or returnees reside, their demographic characteristics, displacement history, housing conditions, livelihood opportunities, safety and security, participation, documentation, movement intentions and, in the case of IDPs, barriers to return. As discussed further in this section, **livelihoods** and **housing** appear to have the strongest connection with progress towards durable solutions.

Amongst IDP households, **housing** is an important distinguishing factor between the three progress groups, especially regarding adequacy of shelter, shelter conditions and fear of eviction. Low-progress IDP households are more likely to live in critical shelters for free or through informal agreements. By contrast, high progress households typically own good condition housing or are more likely to rent through formal means. As such, low-progress IDP households report higher fears of eviction, compared to higher progress groups. Additionally, most IDP households have lost their rights over their property or have unresolved compensation claims, especially in the low-progress group.

Access to **livelihoods** also had a strong link with progress, mostly in relation to job stability and sector of employment. Low-progress IDP households are more likely to work for daily wages compared to high-progress households, who typically

work in more stable forms of employment (that is, public or private employment or self-employment). Relatedly, low-progress IDP households tend to be unable to cover unexpected expenses, making them more vulnerable to economic shocks.

Furthermore, access to drinking water and sanitation facilities were the indicators with the largest gaps between low- and high-progress households.

Certain criteria related to displacement history had an impact on progress. Low-progress IDP households tend to have undergone multiple displacements and failed returns, compared to the rate at the governorate level. Acceptance in the community is also positively associated with progress. Low-progress IDP households tend to report lower feelings of acceptance in the community, which has implications for their ability to remain in their current location in the long term.

Households in different progress groups reported similar figures for most safety and security indicators, but those in the low-progress category had more difficulties with freedom of movement. The shares for other criteria, such as possession of essential personal documentation and voting in the 2021 parliamentary elections, were consistent across population groups but tended to increase with the level of progress.

IDPs' preferred solution is to remain in their current location, with this preference increasing by progress group. Low-progress IDPs are less likely to stay in their current location compared to all IDPs across the governorate. This finding suggests that IDP households who have made more progress toward achieving durable solutions are more inclined to stay in their current location. The main obstacles to their return, identified across all progress groups, are home destruction and lack of livelihood opportunities, with a higher proportion of the low-progress groups mentioning these challenges. More low-progress households were also more likely to have attempted to return, only to find it unsustainable.

Among returnee households, **housing** and **livelihoods** similarly play a critical role in determining progress, although returnee households outperformed IDP households. In particular, housing conditions, adequacy of shelter and tenure security have a strong relationship with progress. As with IDPs, low-progress returnee households were less likely to own housing with legal documents and subsequently had greater fears of eviction. However, the overall proportion of

those owning housing was higher for returnees. Not experiencing property loss and having a successful compensation claim were similarly correlated with progress, although an overall higher proportion of returnee households met this indicator compared to IDP households.

Additionally, livelihood opportunities influenced progress for returnees, with a smaller share of low-progress returnees having stable livelihoods and the means to face unexpected expenses.

Other factors such as safety and security ( freedom of movement) and, to a lesser extent, participation in the community ( level of acceptance, participation in the 2021 elections) and possession of essential personal documentation (national or unified ID) distinguished low-progress households from those in the medium and high groups.

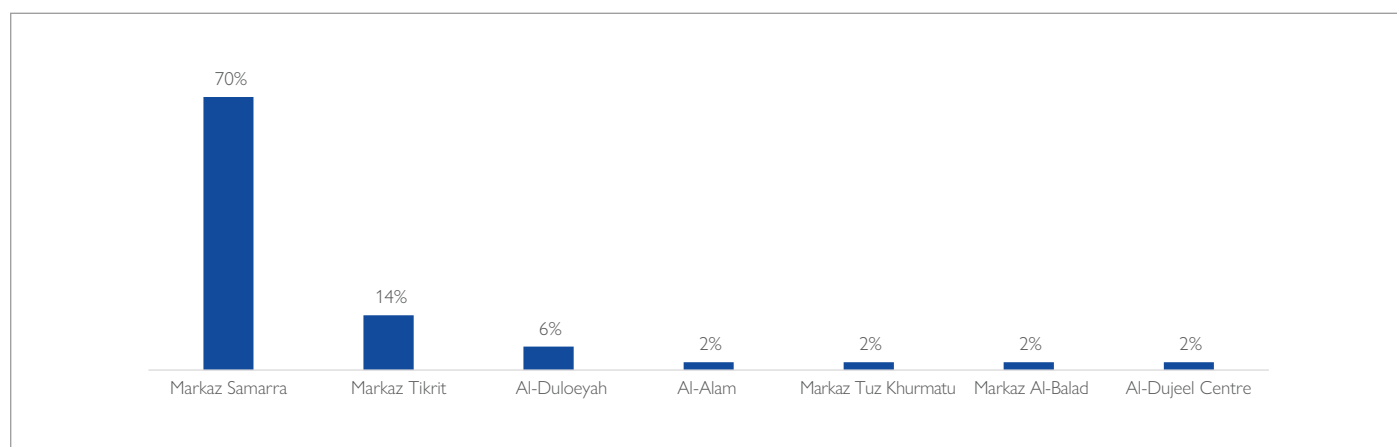
## LOW PROGRESS – IDP HOUSEHOLDS

**3,315** Households

**39%** of all IDP caseload

The low-progress group includes IDPs who have made progress on only one criterion or fewer. Overall, 4 in 10 IDP households fall in this category, including 21 per cent who have met no criteria and 18 per cent who have met one criterion. IDPs in the low-progress group are mainly concentrated in one subdistrict: **Markaz Samarra** (70%) in Samarra District.

Figure 20: Percentage of households in the low-progress group per subdistrict

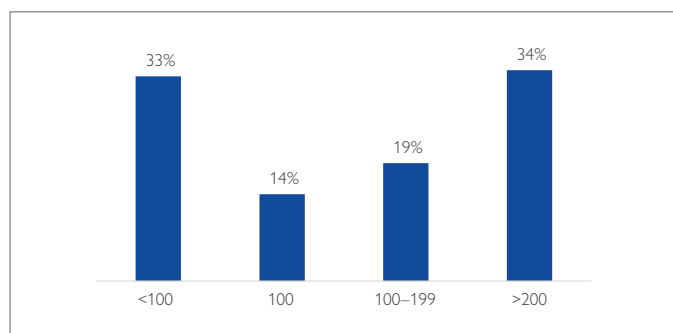


## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

With respect to demographics characteristics, the share of female headed households in the low-progress group (29%) is almost double that observed in the medium- and high-progress groups (respectively 16% and 15%). Additionally, a higher share of low-progress IDP households are headed by a widow (18%) compared to the medium- and high-progress groups (9% for each).

IDP in the low-progress group tend to have slightly higher dependency ratios (34%) than those in the medium- and high-progress groups (30% and 26%, respectively).<sup>52</sup> Most households do not have any children younger than 15 years who are currently working (2% compared to 2% and 0% in the medium and high-progress group).

Figure 21: Dependency ratio of households in the low-progress group



Nearly three in five low-progress IDP households (58%) have limited or no formal education, in contrast to 38 per cent in the medium-progress group and 20 per cent in the high-progress group.

The ethnoreligious composition of low-progress IDP households is very homogeneous – nearly all are Sunni Arabs (98% compared to 93% in the medium and 86% in the high-progress group).

The demographic disparities in education, sex and marital status within the low-progress group suggest that these factors may significantly impede their progress toward durable solutions. This implies that HoHHs with these characteristics have more limited access to opportunities and pathways for achieving durable solutions. Addressing the specific needs and barriers faced by these subgroups could be essential to improving progress rates and ensuring more equitable outcomes.

## DISPLACEMENT HISTORY

An IDP household’s history of displacement also appears to influence their progress towards solutions.

Across progress groups, the majority of IDP households have been displaced more than once. Low-progress IDP households are more likely to have been displaced twice or more, compared to medium- and high-progress groups.

Similarly, multiple failed returns are significantly more common in the low-progress group than the medium- or high-progress groups. Failed returns imply that IDP

<sup>52</sup> This refers to a dependency ratio of >200, meaning that there are over 2 dependents for every 1 working age individuals in the population.

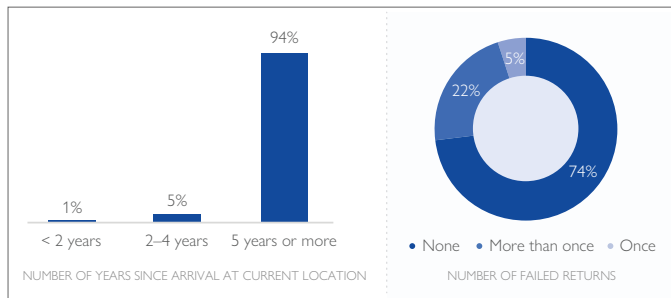
families wanted to return at one point but did not find satisfactory living conditions in the area of return. As a result, living in the location of displacement may not be the first preference of IDP families, with negative implications for progress. On the other hand, poor living conditions in the location of displacement may push families to return prematurely. This would suggest low progress is driving failed returns.

Based on these findings, stability during displacement – as reflected in the number of displacements and history of failed returns – may influence the progress of IDP households.

Across progress groups, most IDP households were displaced in 2014.

However, IDP households in the low-progress group tend to have arrived in their current location earlier in their displacement and have remained for longer periods.

Figure 22: Percentage of HHs by number of years since arrival at current location and failed returns

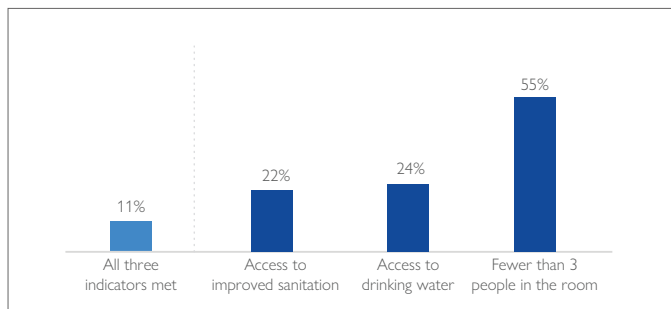


## HOUSING

Nearly four in five IDP households in the low-progress group live in critical shelters, most commonly in a mud or block structure (64%). The proportion of households living in good conditions (13%) is substantially smaller than for medium- and high-progress groups (respectively 75% and 100%).

Only 11 per cent have adequate shelter, measured by the number of people per room and access to drinking water and improved sanitation. This percentage is considerably lower than in the medium- and high-progress groups (50% and 80%, respectively). Access to drinking water and improved sanitation facilities appears particularly challenging for low-progress IDP households compared to other progress groups. Specifically, only a quarter (24%) of low-progress IDP households had access to drinking water, against 83 per cent in the medium-progress group and 98 per cent in the high-progress group. Additionally, just 22 per cent of low-progress IDP households had access to improved sanitation facilities, versus 68 per cent in the medium-progress group and 99 per cent in the high-progress group. Most of these households tend to be in Samarra.

Figure 23: Adequacy of shelter of households in the low-progress group

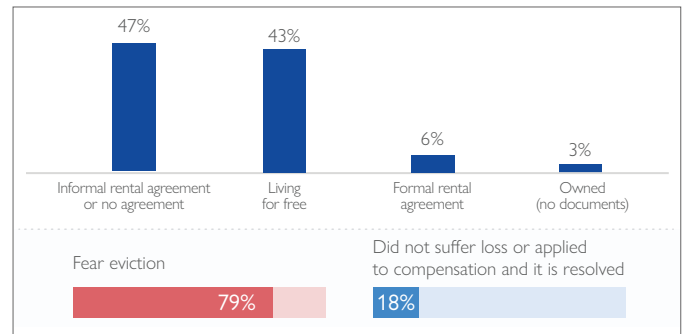


Most IDPs in the low-progress group lack secure tenure arrangements (97%). Almost three in four households (79%) are afraid of being evicted, which is significantly higher than those reported in medium- or high-progress households (34% and 20%, respectively). This is likely due to the fact that almost no IDP households in the low-progress category have formal rental agreements (3%) or own the property

with documents (<1%). Instead, most households live in informal rental agreements (47%) or live in their current location for free (43%). A rent-free housing arrangement is significantly more common among low-progress households than medium- and high-progress households (10% and 1%, respectively).

Damage or destruction to housing is the key issue reported amongst HLP rights. Only around one in five low-progress IDP households did not lose any property rights or have successfully resolved a compensation claim (18%). This portion is lower compared to medium- and high-progress groups (27% and 34%, respectively).

Figure 24: Security of tenure and compensation of households in the low-progress group



## LIVELIHOODS

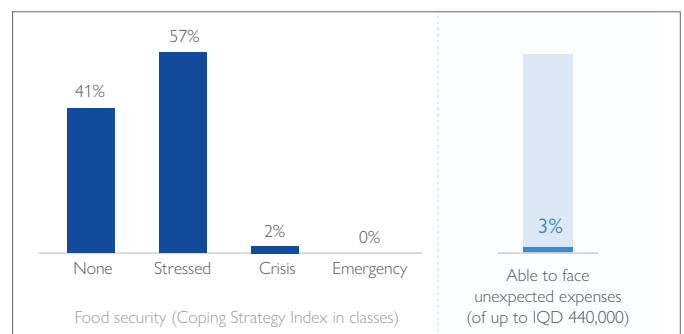
The livelihoods situation of low-progress IDP households tends to be precarious. While the majority of IDP households has at least one member working (93%), most do not have a stable source of income (91% compared to 74% and 30% in the medium- and high-progress group). Most of these households are engaged in irregular or daily labour or rely on loans from family or friends.

In nearly all households (97%), the HoHH either works for daily wages, relies on subsistence agriculture or is unemployed or inactive. Most low-progress HoHs tend to work for daily wages (68% low, 62% medium and 24% high progress) or engage in unpaid housework (18% low, 8% medium and 6% high progress). These figures are in strong contrast to medium- and especially high-progress households, where the proportion of heads of households in formal employment rises to 15 and 62 per cent, respectively (compared to 3% of low-progress households). High-progress groups are more likely to work in public employment (39%) compared to other progress groups (2% low vs 10% medium progress). As a result, nearly three in five low-progress households (59%) employ coping strategies, with over half classified as 'stressed' (57% in low, 24% in medium and 7% in high-progress households).

Low-progress IDP households tend to rely on one working member of the household (66%). Only 27 per cent of low-progress households have more than one member working, compared to 32 per cent and 34 per cent of medium- and high-progress households, respectively.

Almost no low-progress IDP households (3%) can face unexpected expenses, compared to almost half of high-progress IDP households (48%).

Figure 25: Food and financial security of households in the low-progress group



## SAFETY, SECURITY AND PARTICIPATION

Most low-progress IDPs feel safe walking alone around the area they live in (97%). Furthermore, most low-progress households also feel comfortable seeking help from authorities, albeit to a lesser degree (70%) than medium- and high-progress groups (81% and 100%, respectively).

On the other hand, low-progress IDP households are almost evenly split on freedom of movement, with slightly more than half feeling some restrictions (52%), compared to only 1 per cent and none in the medium- and high-progress groups. The main reasons cited appear to be harassment at checkpoints and a lack of residency papers or permit. Most of these households are in Samarra and Al Fares.

While many low-progress IDP households participated in the 2021 elections (77%), the overall proportion is lower than in medium- and high-progress groups (92% and 99%, respectively).

Feelings of acceptance in the community remain more challenging for this group. Only one in five (20%) low-progress IDP households feel completely or mostly accepted by the community, in contrast to 87 per cent and 98 per cent of the medium- and high-progress groups. Additionally, 7 per cent of households have faced discrimination or unfair treatment, compared to 2 per cent and 1 per cent in the medium- and high-progress groups, respectively.

Figure 26: Percentage of households in the low-progress group meeting safety and security indicators

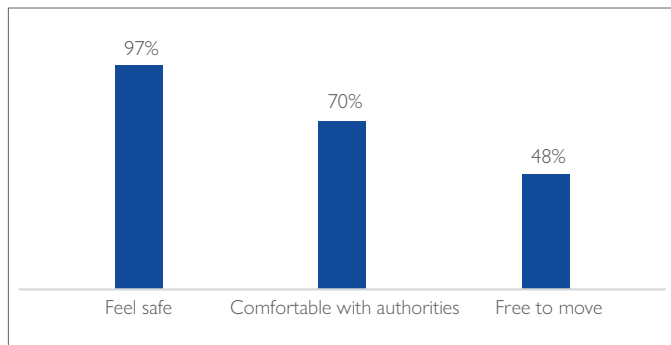
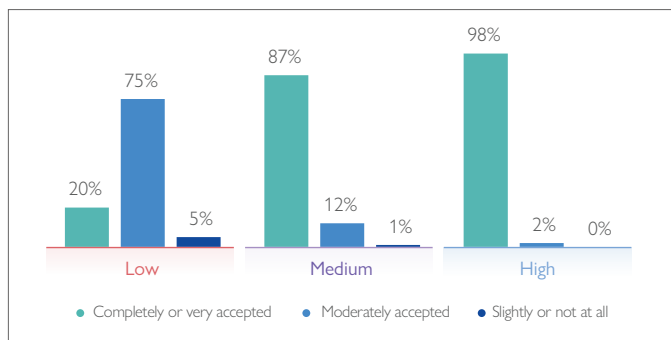


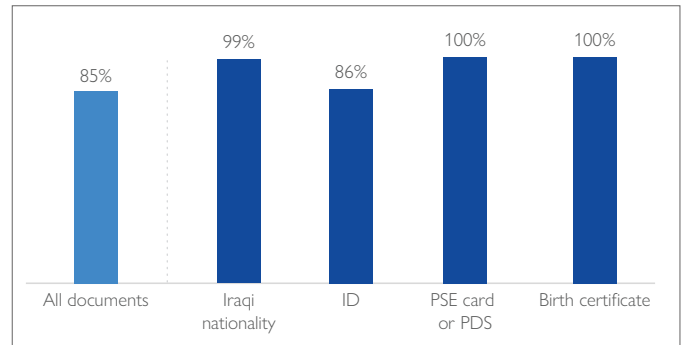
Figure 27: Level of acceptance by progress group



## DOCUMENTATION

Most low-progress IDP households have all essential documents (85%), including a national or unified ID, Iraqi nationality and birth certificate. Overall, this proportion tends to be lower compared to medium- and high-progress groups (99% and 100%, respectively). National or unified ID is the most commonly reported document missing amongst this progress group. The main challenges to obtaining the missing documents are cost and lack of support.

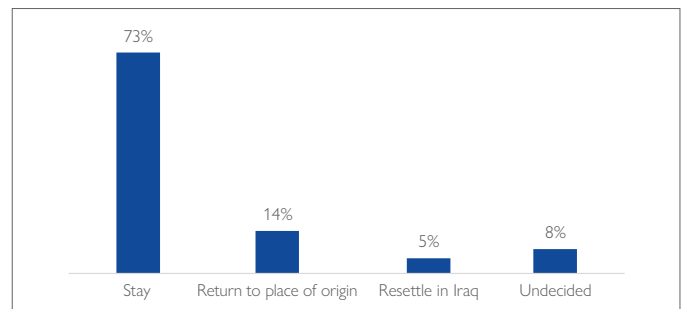
Figure 28: Possession of documents in the low-progress IDP group



## PREFERRED SOLUTION

Most IDP households across progress groups prefer to stay in their current location. However, compared to the overall proportion observed in the governorate (78%), a relatively smaller share of low-progress IDP household prefer to remain where they are (73%), while in medium- and high-progress groups, a relatively larger share prefer to remain compared to the governorate level (81% and 85%, respectively). IDPs in the low-progress group are more likely to remain undecided about their preferred solution or want to relocate to a third location within the country.

Figure 29: Preferred solution



Among those who prefer to return, the main obstacle cited is housing destruction (87%), followed by lack of livelihood opportunities (58%), which were also the main reasons cited by medium- and high-progress categories (72% and 47% for medium-progress and 74% and 68% for high-progress).

This finding highlights the importance of sectoral assistance in housing reconstruction and livelihoods to help IDPs progress towards durable solutions.

Many IDPs tried to return but it was unsustainable (37%) or have concerns regarding the security situation (17%).

## LOW PROGRESS – RETURNEE HOUSEHOLDS

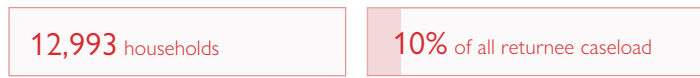
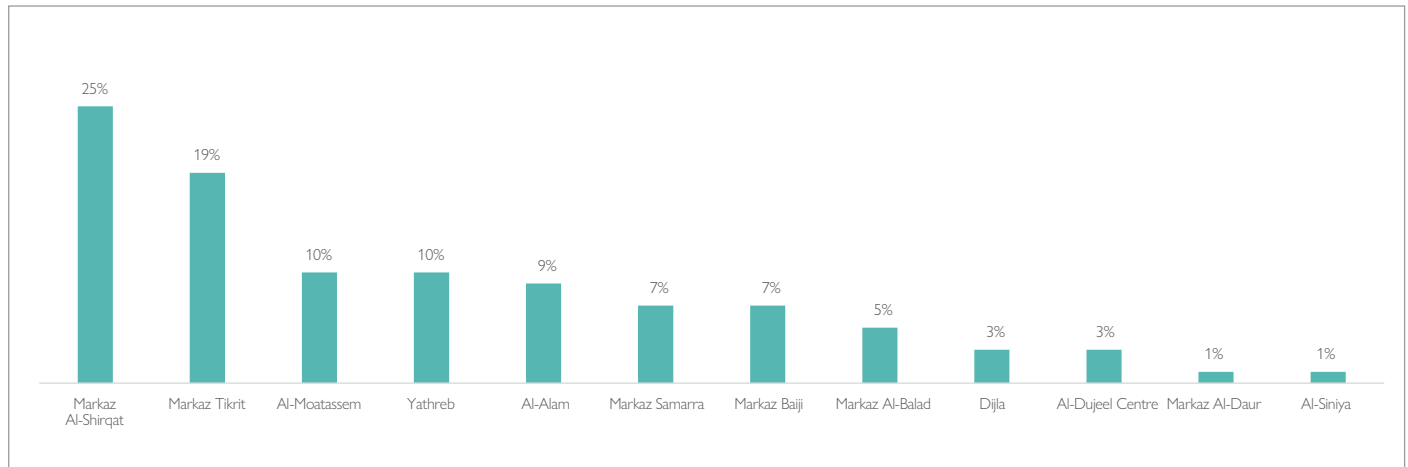


Figure 30: Percentage of households in the low-progress group per subdistrict



A smaller share of returnee households falls in the low-progress group (10% of returnee caseload, 12,993 households) compared to IDP households. Returnees in the low-progress group are mainly concentrated in two subdistricts: Markaz Al-Shirqat (25%) in Al-Shirqat District and Markaz Tikrit (19%) in Tikrit District.

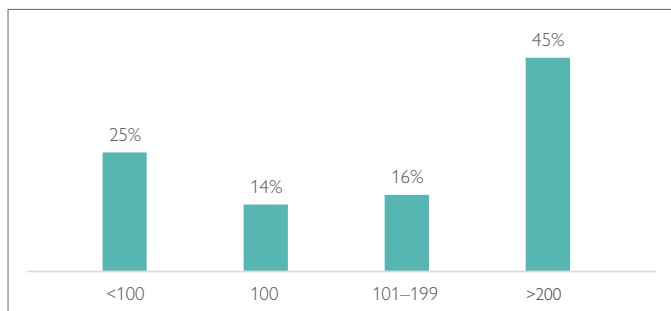
### DEMOGRAPHICS

Similar to IDPs in the low-progress group, this progress category has a higher percentage of female headed households (31%) compared to other progress groups (22% medium and 21% high). Returnee households in the low-progress group also tend to have a higher dependency ratio (45%, compared to 30% for the medium- and 22% for the high-progress groups).

Half of returnee heads of households in the low-progress group have no education or have not finished elementary school (compared to 35% in the medium and 22% in the high-progress groups).

As with low-progress IDP households, the sex and educational levels of the HoHH among low-progress returnees appear to be linked to progress, highlighting the importance of addressing the distinct needs and challenges encountered by these demographic sub-groups to improve their prospects for durable solutions.

Figure 31: Dependency ratio of households in the low-progress group



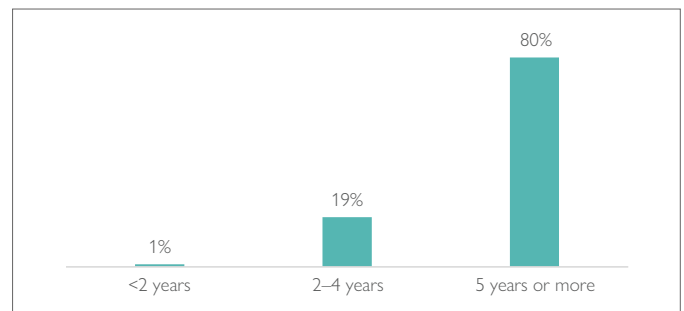
Households in this progress group tend to have a higher dependency ratio, with over half of households (61%) having inactive members outweighing active members (48% in the medium- and 41% in the high-progress groups).

Almost all households were Sunni Arabs (99%), with slightly lower shares reported among the medium- and high-progress groups (94% and 90%, respectively).

### DISPLACEMENT HISTORY

Regardless of progress level, most returnee households were displaced between 2014–2015 and returned over five years ago. Most low-progress returnees came back between 2015 and 2018 and almost no returnees moved abroad during displacement.

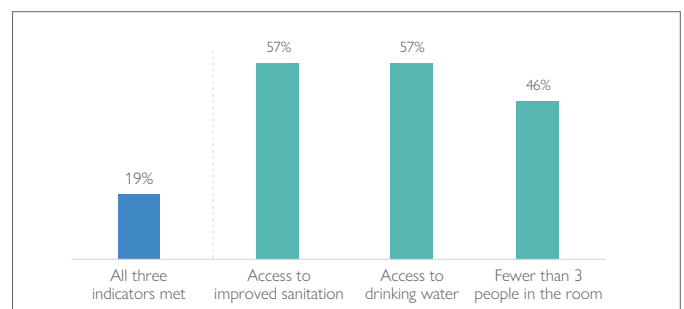
Figure 32: Number of years since arrival at current location



### HOUSING

Among returnees, a strong relationship exists between housing conditions and progress. Just under three quarters (71%) of low-progress returnee households live in critical shelters. Only 29 per cent live in housing in good condition, which is significantly lower than in the medium- and high-progress groups (65% and 97%, respectively). Only 19 per cent of households live in adequate shelters, measured by the number of people per room and access to drinking water and improved sanitation, against 41 per cent in the medium- and 68 per cent in the high-progress groups.

Figure 33: Adequacy of shelter of households in the low-progress group

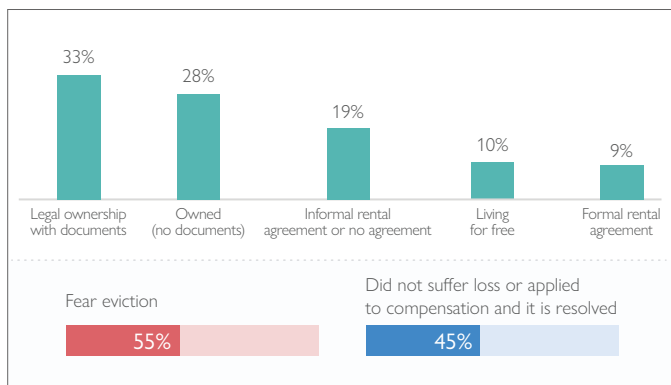


One third of low-progress returnee households own their housing with documentation (33%) and a similar number own property without documentation (28%). The main difference between returnee progress groups is legal ownership with documentation (33% in low, 54% in medium and 77% in high-progress households), suggesting that this is a strong factor affecting progress.

In contrast to IDPs in the same progress group, just over half (55%) of low-progress returnee households are afraid of being evicted, likely due to the higher proportion of returnees with ownership agreements.

Just under half of low-progress households (45%) did not suffer any property loss or have a resolved compensation claim, compared to 61 per cent of the medium-progress group and 82 per cent of the high-progress group.

Figure 34: Security of tenure and compensation of households in the low-progress group



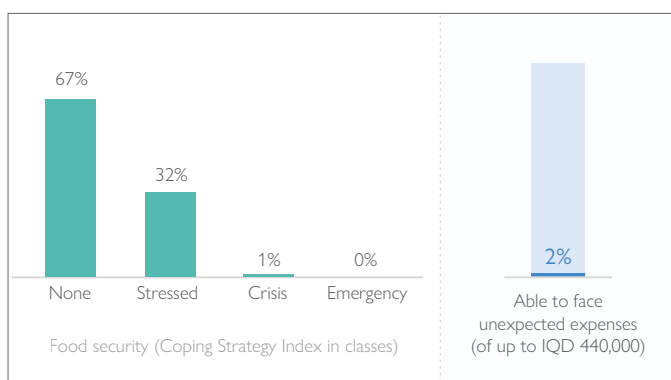
### LIVELIHOODS

Many low-progress returnee households are engaged in precarious forms of work. Although most households have at least one employed member (86%), less than one in five have a stable source of income (17%) and most rely on irregular earnings or daily labour.

Focusing on HoHHs, almost all low-progress returnee HoHHs (96%) rely on irregular earnings or subsistence agriculture or are unemployed or inactive. Specifically, low-progress households tend to rely on daily wages (58%), unpaid housework (18%) and small scale agriculture (14%). Only 1 per cent are employed by public or private organizations (in comparison to 50% of high-progress households).

However, in contrast to IDPs in the same progress group, only a third of low-progress returnee households have adopted coping strategies (33%), with most of these classified as ‘stressed’ (32% in low; 29% in medium and 14% in high progress households). On the other hand, almost no low-progress returnee households (2%) can face unexpected expenses.

Figure 35: Food and financial security of households in the low-progress group



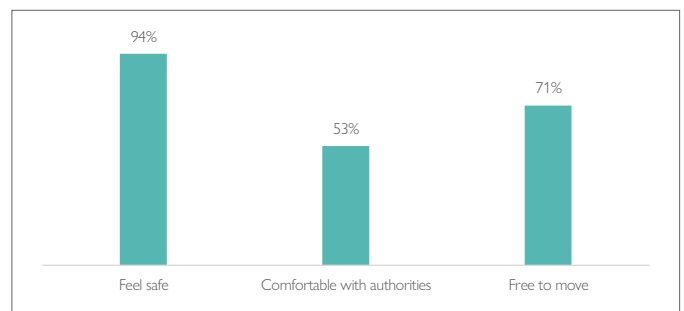
### SAFETY AND SECURITY AND PARTICIPATION

Similar to IDPs in the low-progress group, most returnee households did not report any issues with safety in their own area (94%).

However, only half (53%) of returnee households feel comfortable seeking help from public authorities, against 81 per cent and 90 per cent in the medium- and high-progress groups, respectively.

Furthermore, around three in ten low-progress returnee households face issues related to their freedom of movement (compared to 9% and 2% in the medium- and high-progress groups, respectively). The main factor impeding freedom of movement is lack of a permit. These households tend to be located in Samarra (59%) and Al Shirqat (21%).

Figure 36: Percentage of households in the low-progress group meeting safety and security indicators



As with IDPs in the same progress group, low-progress returnee households report lower levels of participation in the 2021 election (76%) compared to the medium- and high-progress groups (94% and 98%, respectively).

Low-progress returnees report higher levels of community acceptance compared to low-progress IDPs. Over half of low-progress returnee households (55%) report feeling completely or very accepted, with higher levels of acceptance based on progress group (84% in the medium- and 99% in the high-progress group). Only 1 per cent of low-progress households report feeling only slightly accepted or not accepted at all.

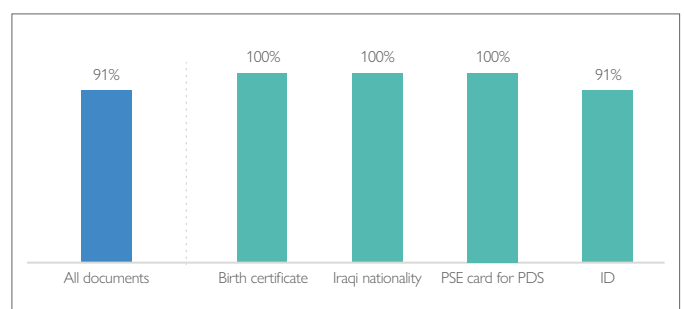
Table 4: Level of acceptance by progress group

	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Completely or very accepted	55%	84%	99%
Moderately accepted	44%	16%	1%
Slightly or not at all	1%	0%	0%

### DOCUMENTATION

Only one in ten low-progress returnee households need essential personal documentation. The main document that returnee households lack is a national or unified ID (9%).

Figure 37: Possession of documents in the low-progress group

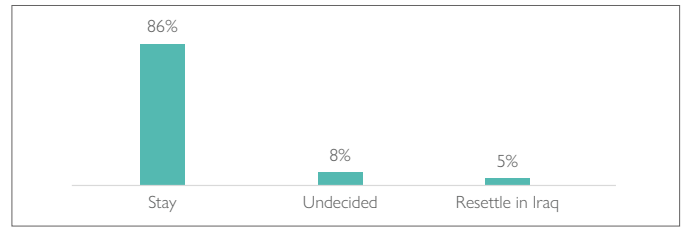




### PREFERRED SOLUTION

Compared to other progress groups, low-progress returnee households are less likely to want to remain in their current location. In contrast to overall rates at the governorate level, low-progress returnees more frequently report being undecided or wanting to move to a third location in Iraq.

Figure 38 Preferred solution of households in the low-progress returnee group



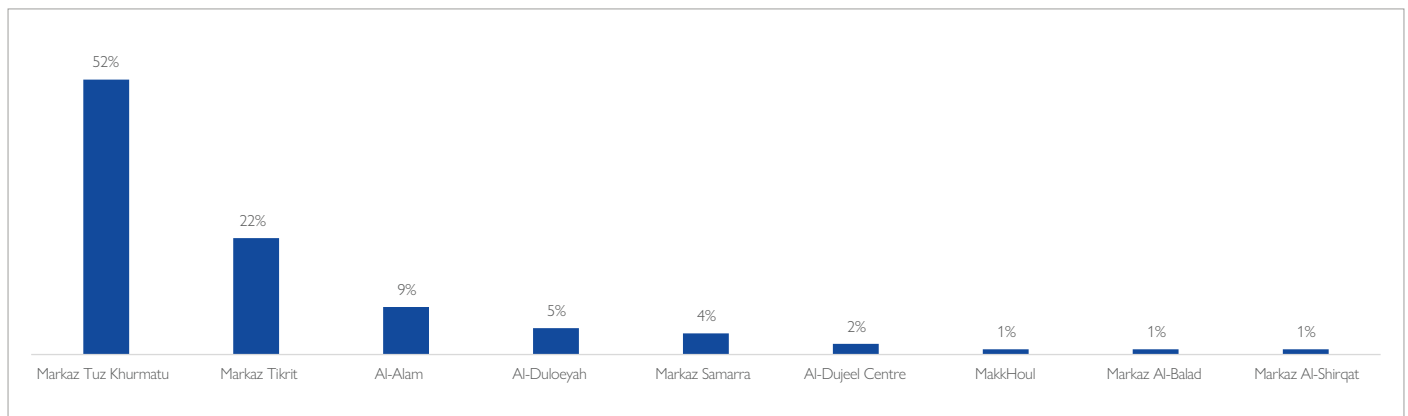
### MEDIUM PROGRESS – IDP HOUSEHOLDS

**3,882** households

**46%** of all returnee caseload

Almost half of IDP households (46% or 3,882 households) fall in the medium-progress group, meaning that households have met two (20%) or three (26%) progress criteria. Compared to households who have achieved low-progress, IDP households in this category are more likely to be found in the subdistricts of **Markaz Tuz Khurmatu** (52%) and **Markaz Tikrit** (22%).

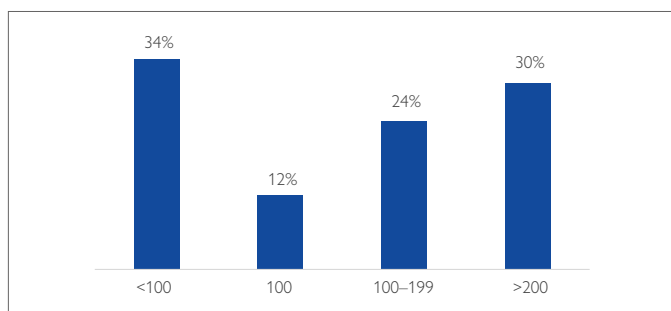
Figure 39: Percentage of households in the medium-progress group per subdistrict



### DEMOGRAPHICS

Most medium progress IDP households are headed by a man (84%). While the majority of households in this progress group are still Sunni Arabs (93%), 5 per cent are Sunni Turkmen.

Figure 40: Dependency ratio of households in the medium-progress group



Just under two thirds of medium-progress IDP HoHHs have completed some form of education (62%) compared to 42 per cent in the low-progress group.

### DISPLACEMENT HISTORY

Medium- and high-progress IDP households are more likely to have been displaced in 2014 compared to the overall IDP population in Salah al Din.

Compared to low-progress IDPs, medium-progress IDP households appear to have arrived in their current location more recently. In particular, one in five medium-progress households arrived between one and three years ago, versus 4

per cent for the low-progress group and 37 per cent for the high-progress group. This suggests that the year of arrival to their current location is linked to progress amongst IDP households, with more recent arrivals linked to higher progress.

Figure 41: Arrival year for medium-progress group

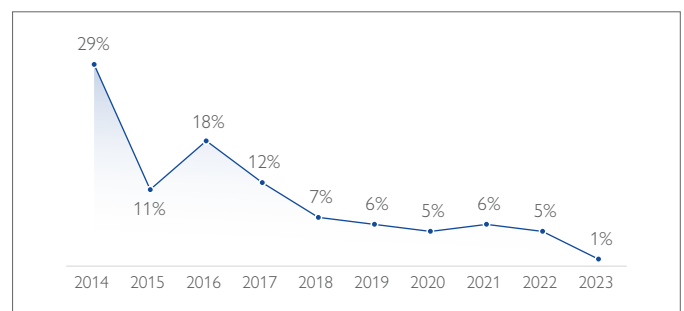
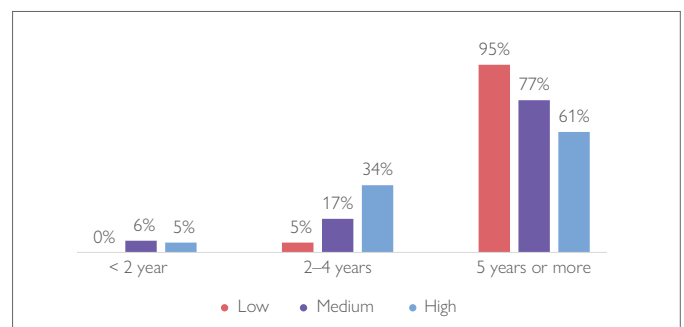
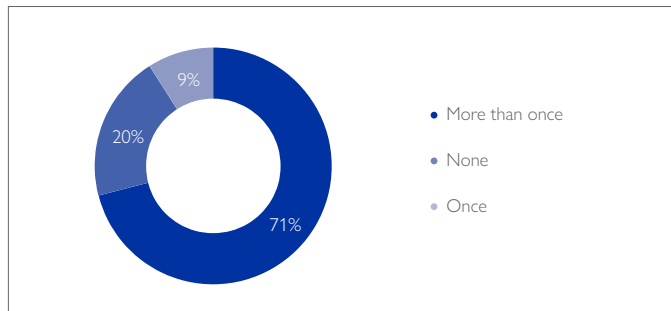


Figure 42: Number of years since arrival at current location by progress group



Compared to low-progress IDPs, medium-progress IDP households are less likely to have been displaced more than once. However, IDP households in the medium-progress group were more likely to have been displaced at least once and have one failed attempted return compared to all IDPs in Salah al Din.

Figure 43: Number of failed returns

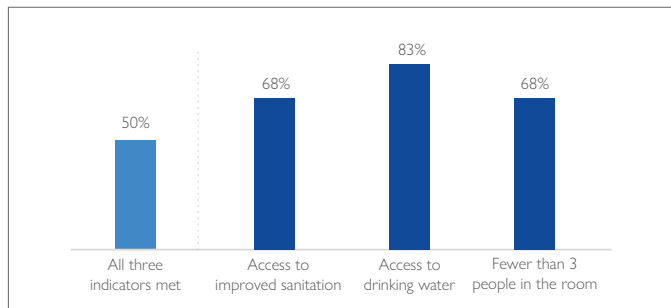


### HOUSING

Almost four in five medium-progress IDP households live in housing in good condition (75%), a percentage that is significantly higher than in low-progress group (13%). More than half of households (50%) live in adequate housing, in terms of the number of people per room and access to water and improved sanitation. Among these factors, the main issue is access to improved sanitation, as reported by almost one third of households (32%). Most of the households reporting this issue tend to be in Tikrit (52%) and Tuz Khurmatu (29%).

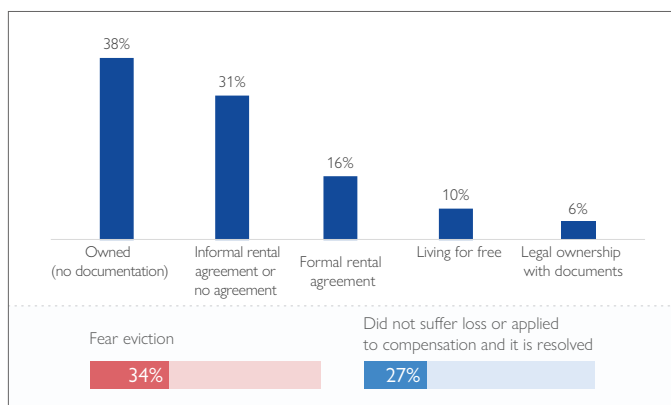
A minority of medium-progress IDP households reside in mud or block structures (12%), housing in bad condition (7%) or in unfinished or abandoned buildings (5%).

Figure 44: Adequacy of shelter of households in the medium-progress group



Almost a quarter of medium-progress IDP households are afraid of eviction (34%), although this portion is significantly smaller than in the low-progress group (79%). This may be related to the higher proportion of those who own their homes (44%) or rent with formal agreements (16%). However, about a third of households also rent based on an informal agreement or no agreement at all (31%), albeit to a lesser degree than those in the low-progress group (47%).

Figure 45: Security of tenure and compensation in the medium-progress group

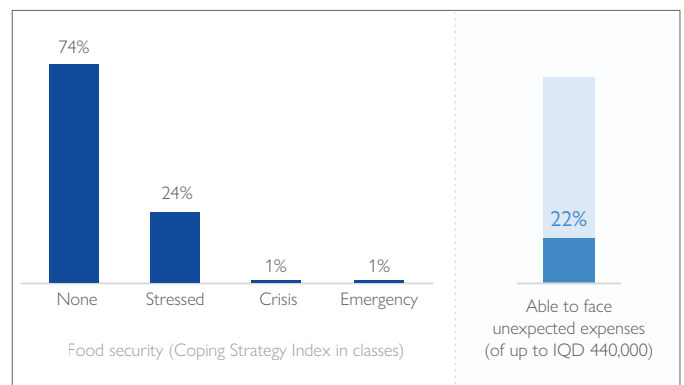


### LIVELIHOODS

Most medium-progress IDP households (93%) have at least one member working. In fact, almost one third (32%) of medium progress households have two or more members working, compared to 27 per cent in the low-progress group and 34 per cent in the high-progress group. Only about one fourth of households have a stable source of income (26% in medium- vs 70% in high-progress households).

However, regarding medium-progress IDP HoHHs, many are engaged in precarious forms of work (84%) rather than more stable forms of employment. Most households rely on daily wages (62%), unpaid housework (8%), small scale or subsistence agriculture (5%) or are unemployed or inactive (10%). On the other hand, only a quarter of IDP households in this progress group rely on coping strategies (26%), including 24 per cent classified as 'stressed'. This suggests that medium-progress IDP households are in a better financial position than those in the low-progress group.

Figure 46: Food and financial security of households in the medium-progress group



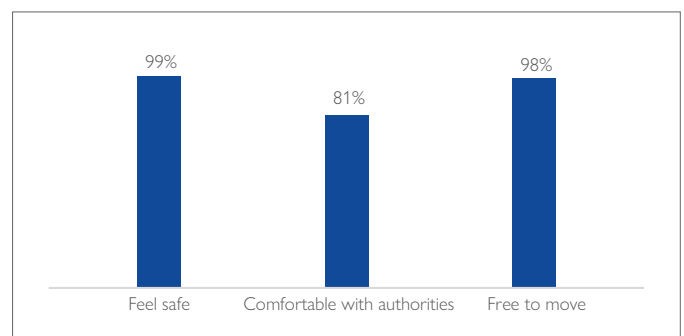
About one in five medium-progress households (22%) can face unexpected expenses, in comparison to 3 per cent in the low-progress group and 48 per cent in the high-progress groups. The relatively low proportion of high-progress households who can cope with unexpected expenses suggests that this indicator is challenging for all households, regardless of their progress level.

### SAFETY, SECURITY AND PARTICIPATION

Most medium-progress IDP households do not report major concerns related to safety, security and participation. Nearly all households report feeling safe (99%) and free to move in their area (98%).

However, similar to low-progress IDP households, medium-progress households report difficulties requesting help from local authorities. Almost one in five households (19%) do not feel comfortable turning to local authorities for support (in comparison to 30% of low- and 0% of high-progress households).

Figure 47: Percentage of households in the medium-progress group meeting safety and security indicators

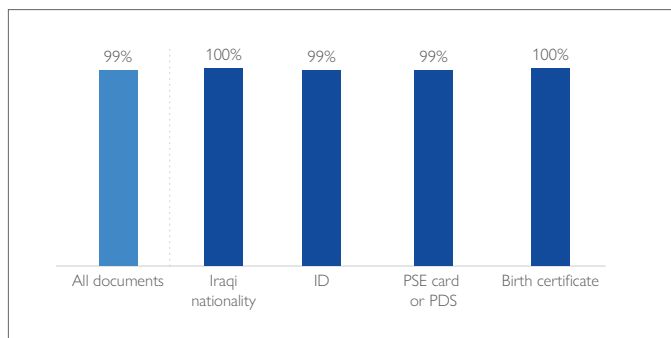


Most medium-progress IDP households (87%) feel completely or very accepted by the community, in contrast to only 20 per cent of low-progress households. Additionally, only 3 per cent of medium-progress households report facing discrimination. Regarding participation in public affairs, most households (92%) voted in the 2021 parliamentary elections, which suggests they are willing and able to engage in community life in their location of displacement.

### DOCUMENTATION

Almost all IDPs in the medium-progress group (99%) have all essential documentation. All households reported having a birth certificate and Iraqi nationality, while most also have a national or unified ID and a PSE card.

Figure 48: Possession of documents in the medium-progress group

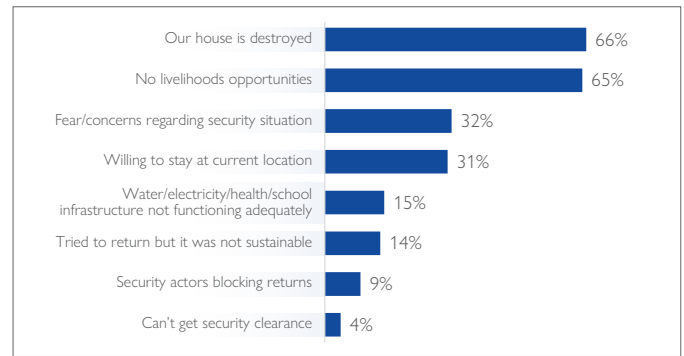


### PREFERRED SOLUTION

Medium-progress IDP households tend to prefer to stay in their current location for the next 12 months compared IDPs across Salah al Din. Those who prefer to return to their place of origin are more likely to originate from Balad, Tuz Khurmatu and Al Daur.

As with the other IDP progress groups, the main reasons for not returning among those who wish to do so are housing destruction (66%) and a lack of livelihood opportunities (65%). Around one third of households (32%) also cite security concerns, a slightly higher proportion than that reported by the low- and high-progress groups (28% and 29%, respectively).

Figure 49: Reasons for not returning to the location of origin for IDP households in the medium-progress group



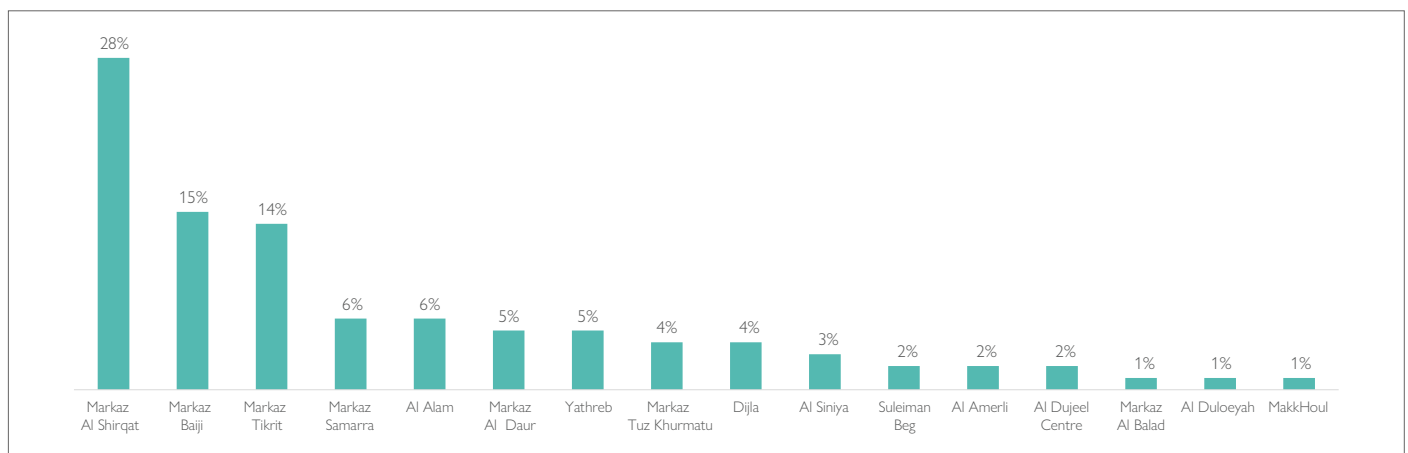
### MEDIUM PROGRESS – RETURNEE HOUSEHOLDS

**68,914** households

**55%** of all returnee caseload

Around half of returnees (55% or 68,914 households) fall in the medium-progress group, meaning households are able to meet two (23%) or three (32%) criteria. Compared to the low-progress group, these households are also likely to be found in **Markaz Al Shirqat** subdistrict (28%) in Al Shirqat, followed by **Markaz Baiji** (15%) in Baiji and **Markaz Tikrit** (14%) in Tikrit.

Figure 50: Percentage of households in the medium-progress group per subdistrict

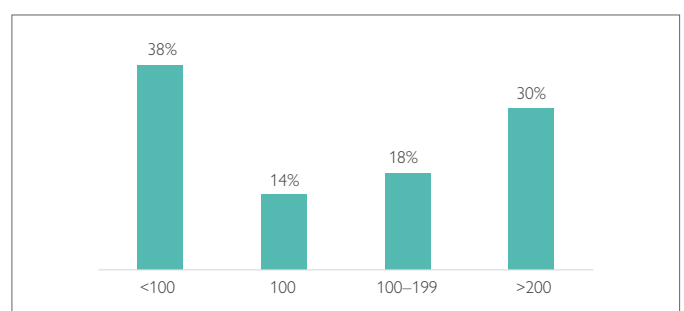


### DEMOGRAPHICS

Among medium-progress returnees, one in five households are headed by a woman (22%). Households tend to have between five and six members, with relatively fewer children and elderly people (38% have a low dependency ratio).

Households in this progress group tend to have a similar ethnoreligious composition to other progress groups, with Sunni Arabs (94%) representing the majority of households and a smaller share represented by Sunni Turkmen (3%), Sunni Kurds (1%) and Shiite Arabs (1%).

Figure 51: Dependency ratio of households in the medium-progress group



## DISPLACEMENT HISTORY

The majority of households were displaced in 2014 (78%) or the following year (12%), and most returned in 2018 (27%). Additionally, compared to the lower progress group, a larger share displaced more than once (36% in the low, 58% in the medium and 64% in the high-progress groups).

## HOUSING

Around two in three households (65%) live in housing in good condition, which is considerably higher than in the low-progress group (29%) although still significantly lower than in the high-progress one (97%). One in five households (20%) still live in housing in bad condition and 1 in 10 (9%) in mud or block structures. In addition, a similar proportion of households in the medium-progress group fear eviction as in the low-progress group (55% in the low, 41% in the medium and 11% in the high-progress group), despite over half of households having legal ownership with documents (54%). This figure is likely related to the percentage of households who have no documentation (22%).

Almost half of households (41%) live in adequate housing arrangements in terms of the number of people per room and access to water and improved sanitation (compared to 68% of the high-progress group).

Figure 52: Adequacy of shelter of households in the medium-progress group

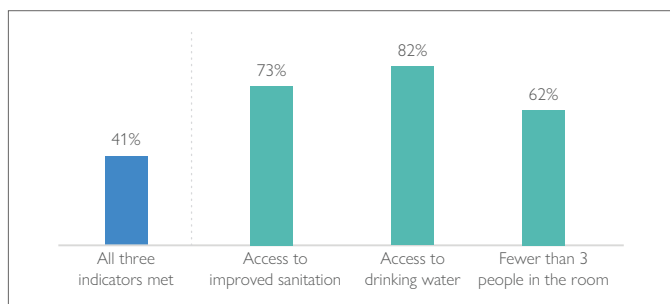
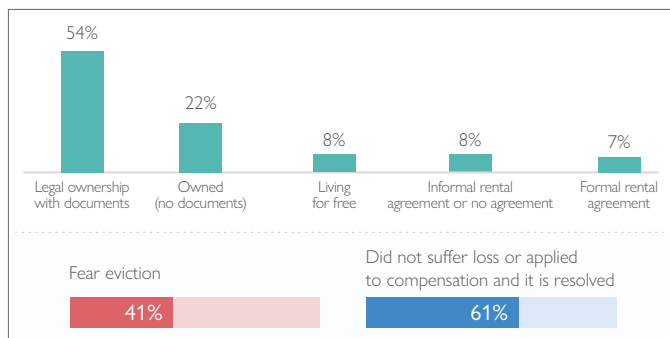


Figure 53: Security of tenure and compensation of households in the medium-progress group



## LIVELIHOODS

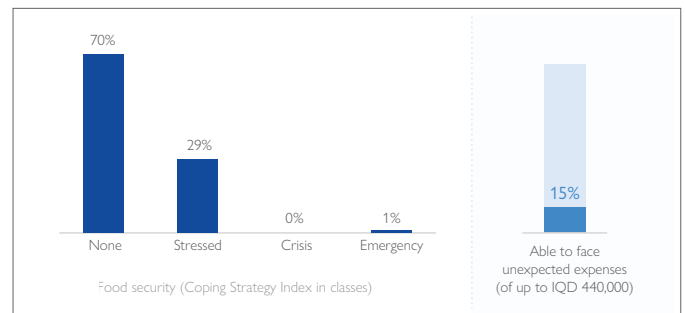
Similar to low-progress returnee households, although most households had at least one member working (94%), only half of households have a stable source of income (50% of medium- vs 83% in high-progress households). Most still rely on irregular earnings or daily wages, but a higher proportion of households also rely on public sector employment as a source of income, compared to low-progress groups.

Around two thirds of HoHHs (66%) rely on irregular earnings or subsistence agriculture or are unemployed or inactive. In comparison, only 34 per cent of high-progress households rely on irregular earnings.

Almost one third of households rely on coping strategies, with 29 per cent classified as 'stressed' and 1 per cent deemed to be at 'emergency' levels (compared to only 14% of households in the high-progress group who adopted coping strategies and were classified as 'stressed').

Relatedly, only a small portion of households (15%) can face unexpected expenses (compared to 41% in the high-progress group).

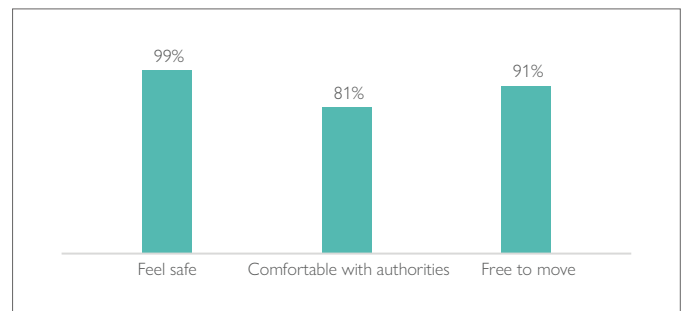
Figure 54: Food and financial security of households in the medium-progress group



## SAFETY, SECURITY AND PARTICIPATION

Medium-progress returnee households report high levels of safety and security. In particular, nearly all households (99%) feel safe and most are free to move in and out of their current location (91%) and seek help from authorities (81%).

Figure 55: Percentage of households in the medium-progress group who met safety and security indicators



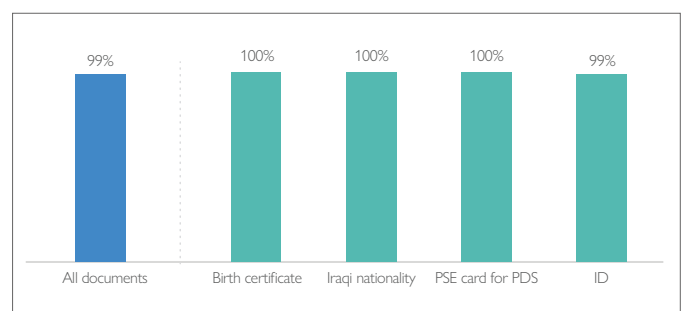
This group also show a high degree of participation in public affairs. Nearly all medium-progress returnee households (94%) indicate that all eligible members voted in the 2021 parliamentary elections (compared to 98% in the high-progress group).

Additionally, over four in five households (84%) feel completely or very accepted by their community, compared to 55 per cent in the low-progress group and 99 per cent in the high-progress group.

## DOCUMENTATION

Almost all medium-progress returnee households (99%) have all essential personal documentation. All households (100%) reported having a birth certificate, Iraqi nationality and a PSE card, while nearly all (99%) have access to a national or unified ID.

Figure 56: Possession of documents in the medium-progress group



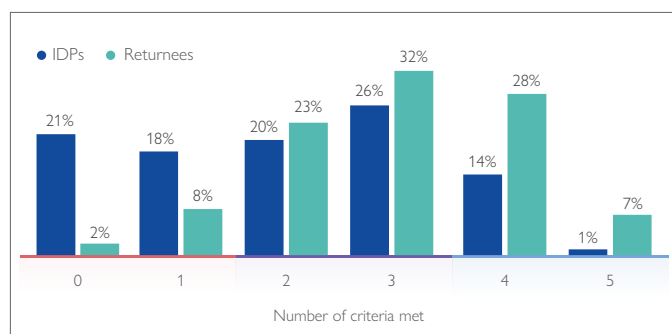
## PREFERRED SOLUTION

Consistent with the low- and high-progress returnee households, medium-progress households largely prefer to stay in their current location.

## CONCLUSION

This project in Salah al Din Governorate provides unique evidence to assess progress towards achievement of durable solutions for the Iraqi IDP and returnee population, eight years since the start of the 2014–2017 crisis. **Only 1 per cent of IDP households and 7 per cent of returnee households met all five criteria and can be considered as having overcome displacement or return related vulnerabilities.** However, treating stayee conditions as the baseline, 15 per cent of IDP households and 35 per cent of returnee households have achieved high progress towards durable solutions.

Figure 57: Percentage of households by number of criteria met



**The returnee population has made more progress towards durable solutions than the IDP population.** Around one third (35%) of returnee households met four or all five durable solutions criteria measured. However, only 15 per cent of IDP households have achieved that same level of progress. Although the bulk of IDP and returnee households are in the medium-progress group (46% and 55%, respectively), the proportion of IDP households in the low-progress group was significantly higher compared to returnees. In fact, nearly two in five IDP households were represented in the low-progress group compared to only one in ten returnee households. Furthermore, nearly no progress was made by one in five IDP households (21%), in contrast to only 2 per cent of returnee households. In other words, **IDP households are significantly more vulnerable than returnee households. Low-progress IDP households face distinct challenges related to their displacement, housing situation (adequacy of shelter, conditions and fear of eviction) and livelihoods (job stability and sector of employment). They also face greater difficulties related to acceptance by their communities.**

In this study, the living conditions of stayees were set as a relative benchmark rather than target to reach. The fact that stayee households met on average 3.61 out of 5 criteria highlights that even families who were not forced to flee due to the 2014–2017 crisis would not pass all the vulnerability criteria. This reflects **the impacts of the conflict beyond displacement, such as with issues related to livelihood conditions and opportunities, as well as older challenges that predate the 2014–2017 conflict.** Accordingly, both developed oriented programming and targeted assistance to vulnerable IDP groups are needed to support progress towards durable solutions.

### SECTORS FOR PROGRAMMING

This assessment reveals the specific domains and indicators driving the vulnerabilities faced by IDPs, returnees and stayees in Salah al Din. These insights can support the development of programmatic interventions to target critical thematic and geographic areas.

- **Access to livelihoods** was the most problematic domain for all three groups, especially IDPs. Although most households had at least one working member, most IDP households did not have a stable source of income. Furthermore,

all three groups had large proportions of people working in precarious forms of work (irregular earnings or daily labour). The majority of households only had enough funds for food but not for other necessities. Relatedly, only a few households could face unexpected expenses, making most households vulnerable to economic shocks.

- **Restoration of HLP and compensation** contributed to the biggest gap between IDP, returnee and stayee households. IDP households faced greater challenges related to possession of legally recognized housing documentation and fear of eviction. They also reported higher rates of HLP damage or destruction and inability to access their home, especially in Tuz Khurmatu, Samarra and Balad. Returnees also performed poorly, although comparatively less so than IDPs, and also had the largest gap with stayees in this domain, especially concerning property loss and successful compensation claims.
- IDPs faced significant challenges in achieving **adequate living standards**. Fewer IDP households lived in well maintained housing and they also had less access to clean drinking water, sanitation facilities and health care services compared to other households.
- In contrast, all three groups performed better in the **safety and security** and **personal documentation and participation** domains, although IDP households tend to underperform compared to the other groups. Specifically, IDP households reported lower levels of acceptance in the community compared to returnee and stayee households.

The majority of IDP households express a preference to stay where they currently reside, with 14 per cent preferring to return. **Housing and livelihood opportunities appear to be the main obstacles impeding IDPs' ability to return**, which is in line with the difficulties highlighted above. Additionally, around one third of IDP households mentioned that fear and security challenges are obstacles to their return, suggesting that safety concerns still affect return and displacement dynamics.

### AREA-BASED PROGRAMMING

In terms of geographic trends, IDP progress scores are significantly below average in **Markaz Samarra subdistrict**, Samarra District, followed by **Markaz Tikrit subdistrict** in Tikrit District. For returnees, the lowest scores are in **Markaz Al Shirqat**, Shirqat; **Al Moatassem**, Samarra and **Yathreb**, Balad at the subdistrict level.

Progress towards durable solutions not only means households are able to meet their basic needs, but are also able to pursue their preferred solution. This choice may involve remaining in their current location, returning to their place of origin or relocating to a third location. Regardless of the choice, **it is essential to implement targeted programmatic interventions in preferred settlement locations to create the conditions necessary for sustainable integration, return or resettlement.**

The high percentage of IDPs reporting **housing destruction** is particularly pronounced in districts such as **Tuz Khurmatu**, **Tikrit** and **Balad**, indicating the severity of this issue in these locations. Additionally, the significant number of IDPs reporting a **lack of livelihood opportunities** highlights the widespread economic challenges they face. The many challenges and context specific issues observed in **Samarra** add to the complexity of the displacement situation there, emphasizing the importance of tailoring solutions through area based programming to address the unique needs of each location.

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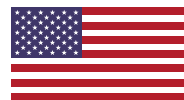
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