

FINDINGS ROUND TWENTY-ONE – IRAQ

DATA COLLECTION PERIOD: JANUARY–APRIL 2024

JULY 2024

CONTEXT

The Return Index is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. Data collection for the Return Index Round 21 took place during January and April 2024 across nine governorates, 39 districts and 2,192 locations in Iraq. During this round, an additional five locations of return were assessed.

RETURNEE POPULATION IN SEVERE CONDITIONS

- Out of the 2,192 return locations assessed, **481 present severe conditions** and **host 13 per cent of the returnee population**, or 625,236 individuals.
- **An increase of 20,580 returnees living in severe or poor conditions** has been observed since the round collected in September–December 2023, when the share of returnees in severe conditions was 12 per cent (604,656 individuals).

DETERIORATION OF CONDITIONS

- The largest increases were recorded in **Ninewa Governorate** (18,036 individuals) followed by **Anbar Governorate** (5,328).
- In **Ninewa Governorate**, the most noticeable increase was observed in **Telafar District**, with an additional 15,894 individuals living in severe or poor conditions. This increase is mostly due to some locations in Zummar subdistrict having reported the presence of Popular Mobilization Forces (PMU) at checkpoints. As well, returns to locations in Markaz Telafar, Ayadiya and Zummar subdistricts, which are already experiencing severe conditions, have contributed to this increase.
 - Markaz Telafar and Ayadiya subdistricts still report safety and security concerns as residents remained concerned about possible ISIL attacks. Furthermore, the presence of PMU and concerns about the harassment residents endure at checkpoints continue to pose a challenge in Ayadiya and Rubiya subdistricts.
 - In Ayadia subdistrict there are still tensions that need to be resolved to prevent future violence, but no efforts are being made in this direction, alongside lack of government service provision. Rubiya subdistrict still experiences slow recovery of businesses and agriculture, as well as poor provision of government services, water and electricity.
 - DTM recorded the return of 90 individuals to Sheikhan village in Zummar subdistrict, which was a no-return area, after families received security clearance from Asayish forces. Zummar subdistrict witnesses tensions that need to be resolved to prevent future violence, but no efforts are being made in this direction. In addition, this area suffers from poor provision of government services and concerns about possible ISIL attacks.
- Most families that returned to **Telafar District** did so because they could not afford paying rent in other locations. Other families returned either after their destroyed house was rehabilitated or have returned from Hassansham U2 camp after being supported with financial grants by the

IOM-Durable Solution team and Ministry of Migration and Displaced through the voluntary return programme, in preparation for closing displacement camps by the end of July 2024.

- The increase in **Anbar Governorate** was notably observed in **Heet District**, with an additional **5,328 individuals** living in severe or poor conditions, because one of the locations with the highest number of returnees in **Heet District** has not seen any reconstruction efforts for damaged houses during this round mainly due to the families' financial difficulties, which worsens the severity of the situation in this area.
 - Despite the slight improvements in Al-Baghdady subdistrict as the area has been cleared of mines and explosives by specialized security forces and some destroyed houses have been rehabilitated, the area still faces high concerns about possible ISIL attacks. Additionally, the presence of PMU and concerns about the harassment residents endure at checkpoints continue to pose challenges in Al-Baghdady, Al-Forat and Kubaisa subdistricts.

IMPROVEMENT OF CONDITIONS

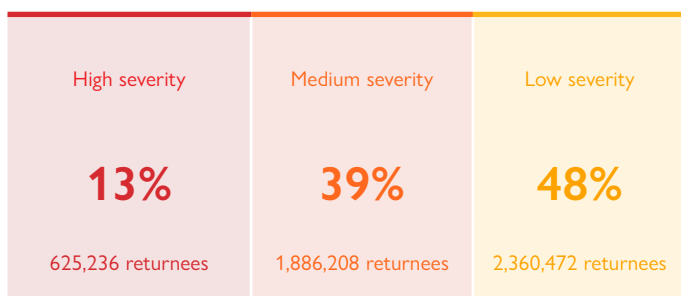
The largest decrease in the number of returnees living in severe conditions was recorded in **Salah al-Din Governorate** (2,142 individuals) followed by **Diyala Governorate** (750 individuals).

- The decrease in **Salah al-Din Governorate** was mainly observed in **Bajji District** due to an improvement in services and water supply in Al-Siniya subdistrict and more accessibility to employment and livelihoods in Markaz Bajji subdistrict. Daily life has also improved in both subdistricts, as most residents feel safe carrying out daily activities. However, Bajji District still experiences slow recovery of businesses, concerns about possible ISIL attacks and the presence of PMU at check points in Markaz Bajji, Al-Siniya and MakkHol subdistricts, alongside limited access to employment in Al-Siniya and MakkHool subdistricts. Poor electricity supply, concerns about mines, violence, illegal occupation of private residences and residents blocked from returning to Al-Siniya subdistrict are other reported concerns.
- In **Diyala Governorate**, the decrease is mainly observed in **Khanaqin District**, mainly due to the reduced presence of armed groups other than the Iraqi army at checkpoints in Jalula subdistrict, yet concerns about possible ISIL attacks, persist. Additionally, there is insufficient provision of water and electricity in As-Saadia subdistrict, and poor water supply in Markaz Khanaqin subdistrict.

METHODOLOGY

The Return Index is based on 16 indicators across two domains: (1) livelihoods and basic services, and (2) social cohesion and safety perceptions. A regression model is used to assess the impact of each of the indicators in facilitating or preventing returns and to calculate scores. The scores of each domain and overall index are grouped into three categories: low, medium and high severity of living conditions. For more information on the methodology, please refer to the [Methodological Overview](#).

Figure 1. Proportion and number of returnees by category of severity



Data Collection Period: January–April 2024

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

Governorate	HIGH		MEDIUM		LOW		TOTAL	
	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations
Anbar	64,788	15	722,664	203	762,300	113	1,549,752	331
Babylon	1,860	2					1,860	2
Baghdad	1,128	4	9,048	14	84,726	104	94,902	122
Dahuk					744	1	744	1
Diyala	52,608	50	157,686	118	30,984	56	241,278	224
Erbil	4,746	15	12,186	29	46,080	24	63,012	68
Kirkuk	2,526	13	67,782	68	121,428	115	191,736	196
Ninewa	289,458	301	602,430	439	1,072,152	261	1,964,040	1,001
Salah al-Din	208,122	81	314,412	91	242,058	75	764,592	247
Total	625,236	481	1,886,208	962	2,360,472	749	4,871,916	2,192

GOVERNORATE HOTSPOTS OF SEVERITY

Subdistricts are classified as ‘hotspots’ if they score highly in terms of severity on at least one of the two scales (either livelihoods and basic services, or safety and social cohesion) or if they score medium in terms of severity but also host relatively large numbers of returnees, at least 60,000 returnees in a subdistrict.

Thirty-one hotspots were identified across five governorates in this round. The same hotspots were reported in the round collected in September–December 2023.

SALAH AL-DIN: 494,532 returnees in hotspots

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

NINEWA: 620,280 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Qahtaniya
- Al-Qayara
- Al-Shamal
- Ayadiya
- Hamam al Aleel
- Markaz Al-Ba’aj
- Markaz Sinjar
- Markaz Telfar
- Qaeyrrawan
- Zummar

ANBAR: 401,364 returnees in hotspots

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

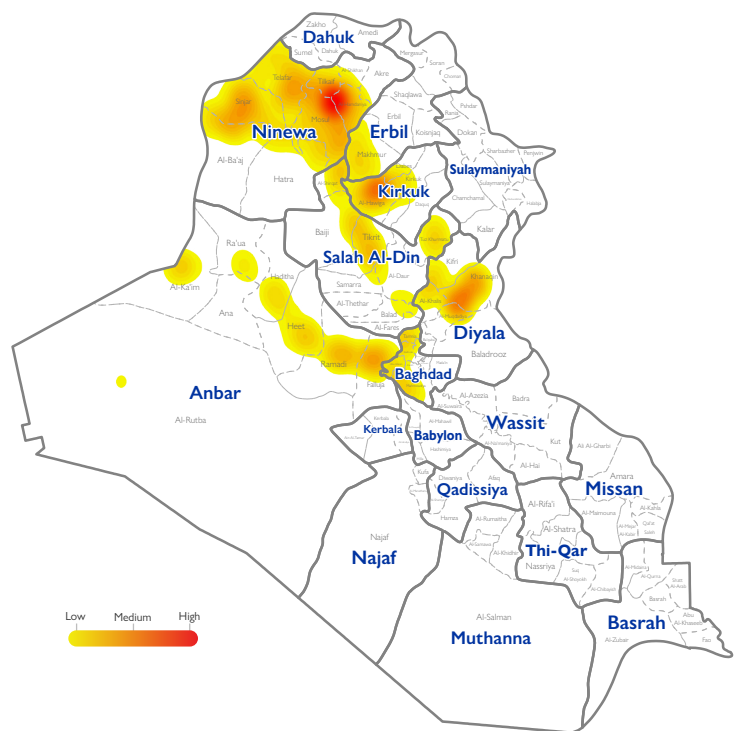
DIYALA: 83,934 returnees in hotspots

- Jalula
- Qara Tabe

BABYLON: 1,860 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Iskandaria

Map 1. Returnee population density by overall severity score



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM. The map shows conditions of severity based on population size and severity score of each assessed location. The darker colours indicate a larger concentration of families living in severe conditions of return, while the brighter colours indicate lower severity conditions or areas with low levels of returns.

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