

Map 1. Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Diyala Governorates

### Governorate Profiles

As part of the ReDS research cycle, REACH conducted a review of the data gathered through the ReDS assessments to summarise findings at the governorate level and elaborate three Governorate Profiles. The profiles aim to provide findings to support humanitarian and development actors to promote durable solutions for returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in situations of protracted displacement, including the development of localised interventions, dialogue, policy planning and resource mobilisation. Out of five governorates in which the ReDS took place, three were selected based on the following reasons:

**Ninewa Governorate** accommodates the largest number of Iraq's returnee population (1.9 million) and hosts most of the displaced populations (around 250,000 IDPs)<sup>1</sup> nationwide. Living conditions related to security, social cohesion and access to services remain challenging.<sup>2</sup>

**Salah al-Din Governorate**, in addition to Ninewa, remains one of the governorates hosting the highest number of returnees living in high severity conditions,<sup>3</sup> around 200,000 individuals. It represents the assessed governorate with the highest severity score in terms of safety and security, livelihoods and services.<sup>4</sup>

**Diyala Governorate** accounts for the area with the least amount of governmental and non-governmental assistance. The challenging security situation in the governorate made access for non-governmental organisations to the different affected areas of return difficult.<sup>5</sup> Returnees are facing many challenges related to their access to basic services, security, shelter and livelihoods.<sup>6</sup>

### Background and Methodology

Since the formal defeat in late 2017 of the group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) that have returned to their Area of Origin (AoO) has increased steadily, reaching the number of almost 5 million returnees by October 2022.<sup>7</sup> The ReDS assessment covered 25 sub-districts in five governorates in Iraq to profile priority sub-districts of return and/or secondary displacement where a risk to the sustainable (re)integration of populations, and therefore durable solutions, was identified.<sup>8</sup> **The assessment is in the form of a secondary data review and existing qualitative and quantitative data from ReDS assessment constitute the main data source. The timeframe covered by the profiles is the period between January 2020 and September 2022, reflecting the overall ReDS assessments timeline. The assessment is based on an aggregation of sub-district level data for each governorate. The full methodology is available in the [Terms of Reference](#).**

**Limitations:** Besides being only indicative, findings have limitations regarding the geographical scope, timeframe and small number of KIs interviewed. Not all the governorates' territory will be covered in the assessment, but only the sub-districts assessed through the ReDS. Concerning the timeframe, data collection in different sub-districts occurred between January 2020 and September 2022, therefore some of the findings might be out of date, however, according to the IOM DTM Return Index, which suggests that most of the sub-districts are still considered hotspots and that the overall situation in the assessed governorates did not report particular alterations for the considered timespan.

### Cross-Governorates Key findings

**Reasons for returns:** improved security conditions were the most mentioned driver for return in all the assessed governorates, followed by nostalgia for previous life in Ninewa and Diyala and family reunification in Salah al-Din. Camp closure was reported also, but predominantly during the assessments that occurred between 2020 and 2021.

**Barriers to returns:** common to all three governorates, House, Land and Property issues were the main barriers preventing returns, most notably housing damage; followed by a lack of livelihoods and a lack of public services in the AoOs.

**Livelihood opportunities and barriers:** agriculture was reportedly the most common sector of interest in the community and for available job opportunities, followed by construction and public education. Several barriers to accessing livelihoods were mentioned by KIs, especially related to the lack of reconstruction projects, water scarcity and a lack of financial assistance.

**Access to public services:** healthcare was the public service that communities reportedly had more difficulties accessing, followed by water and education. Infrastructural damage, lack of infrastructure rehabilitation projects and lack of staff reportedly hindered the access to public services in all the assessed governorates.

**Social cohesion:** similar situations were reported across the different governorates, most notably a perceived increase in safety and security stability within the assessed sub-districts and more interaction between the different population groups.

### Salah al-Din Governorate - Overview

- ♦ **Returning population:** the main reported drivers for returns in Salah al-Din were improved security conditions, family reunification, camp closure and, to a lesser extent, nostalgia for previous life. The main barriers to returning were reportedly house, land and property (HLP) issues, lack of livelihoods and lack of public services in AoOs.
- ♦ **Community needs:** the most mentioned primary community needs across the sub-districts were housing rehabilitation, livelihoods and healthcare.
- ♦ **Livelihoods and public services:** construction and agriculture were reportedly the sectors with the most job availability and that were most likely to grow in the sub-districts. In some areas, public education and the oil industry were also sectors expected to expand. However, access to both livelihoods and public services was reportedly undermined by damaged infrastructures and a lack of reconstruction projects.
- ♦ **Social Cohesion:** findings showed stable social cohesion in most of the sub-districts. However, interaction among different groups was reportedly sometimes hindered by fear, discrimination and ethnic divisions.

**6** Sub-districts assessed between 2020 and 2022<sup>9</sup>

**2020:** Markaz TooZ

**2021:** Yathrib, al-Siniya, Suleiman Beg, Markaz Samarra

**2022:** al-Amerli

**261** KIs interviewed in total<sup>10</sup>

**68** Community leaders

**30** IDPs in the community

**75** Returnees

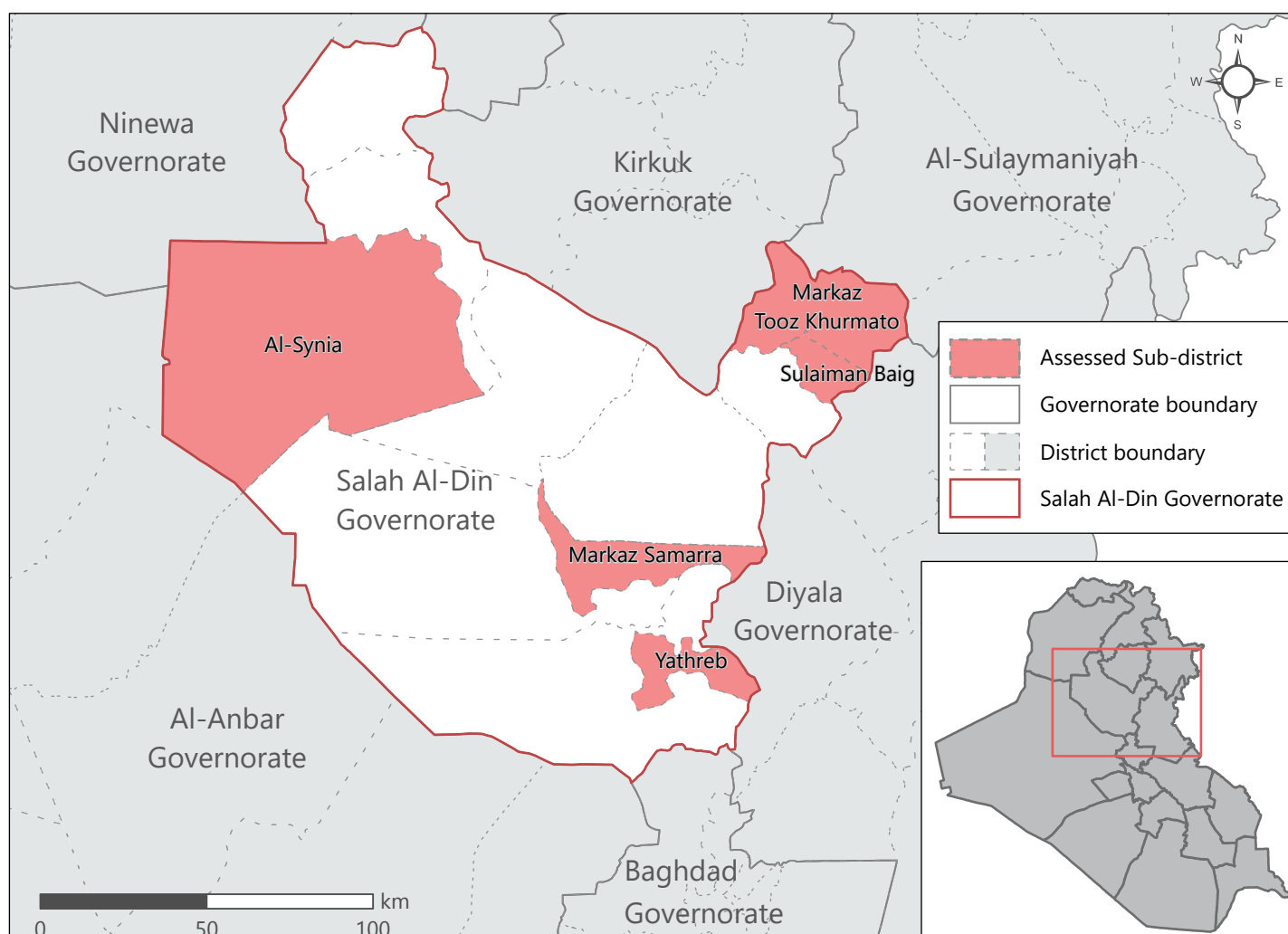
**26** Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

**51** IDPs from the community

**11** Remainees

**218** Male KIs

**43** Female KIs



Map 2. Sub-districts assessed in Salah al-Din Governorate

## Return movements

### Drivers for returns

According to the the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Return Index, between 2020 and 2022 there were around 41,700 individuals who returned to their AoOs in Salah al-Din.<sup>11</sup> Through the ReDS assessments, it was possible to identify common drivers and impacts of returns across the assessed sub-districts. The most commonly reported driver for returns was the perception of increased security in the AoOs, followed by family reunification and camp closure. In al-Amerli no returns were reported at the time of data collection. As shown in Table 1, it is observable how the perception of increased security was commonly stated by most of the interviewed KIs, except in al-Siniya and Markaz Samarra, where only a few KIs considered it as a main driver for returns. In these two areas, the most common reason was reportedly camp closure in al-Siniya and nostalgia for previous life in Markaz Samarra. Nostalgia for previous life was also reported as a relevant driver, especially in Suleiman Beg.

Also, family reunification was reported to be a relevant pull factor, especially in Markaz TooZ, where it was considered the second driver for return. Common also to other sub-districts, this practice shows the gradual return of households, as some of its members start returning to prepare the ground for the rest of the family's arrival from their area of displacement (AoDs).

Camp closure was reported as a driver in 2020 and part of 2021, a period in which several IDP camps were either closed or consolidated by the authorities. As shown in maps 3 and 4, movements occurred mostly from non-camp areas to the assessed sub-districts. Areas of displacement were both inside Salah al-Din governorate and outside its boundary, mostly in neighbouring governorates, with the exception of Dohuk Governorate, where some returns to Yathrib were reported.

### Impact of returns

KIs reports on the impact of returning populations were more or less similar across sub-districts. Overall, findings revolve around the pressure that returns would put on the existing community, in terms of stability and of access to livelihoods and services.

However, in al-Siniya and Suleiman Beg, KIs mostly reported a positive impact of returns, mainly considering family reunification as a driver for increased stability in the area. This point of view was also shared in other sub-districts; in Markaz Samarra it was also mentioned as a deterrence for further ISIL expansions:

*"The return of families positively affected the community from a security perspective, the repopulation of abandoned villages will ensure that ISIL does not occupy these areas and organise operations from there."*

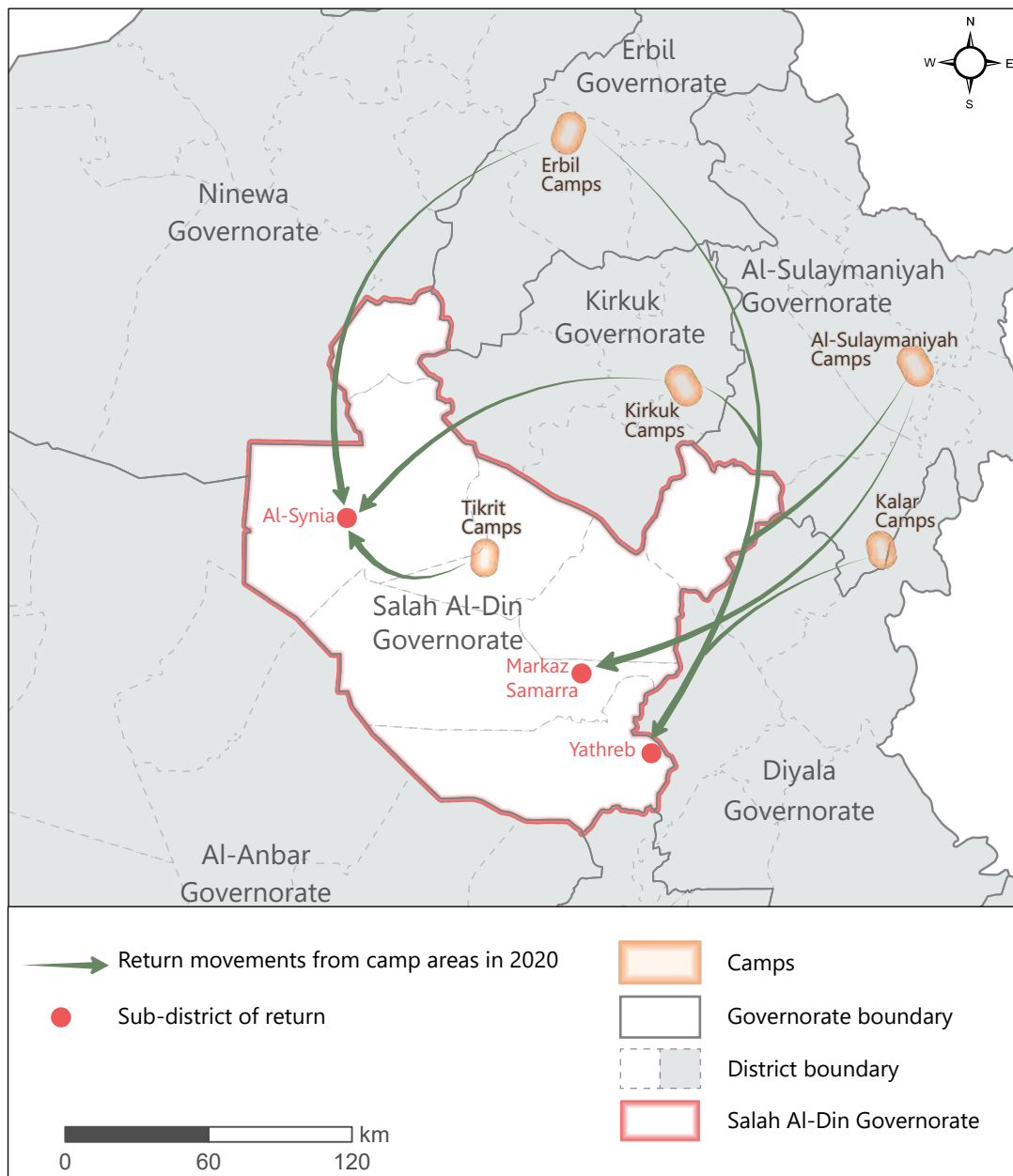
- Male Returnee KI from Markaz Samarra -

Increasing job opportunities were also mostly mentioned in al-Siniya and Suleiman Beg when KIs were asked about the effects of returns. It was usually mentioned that it brought a revitalization of the labour market, especially through the return of skilled workers and specialised professionals (in detail on pages 6-8).

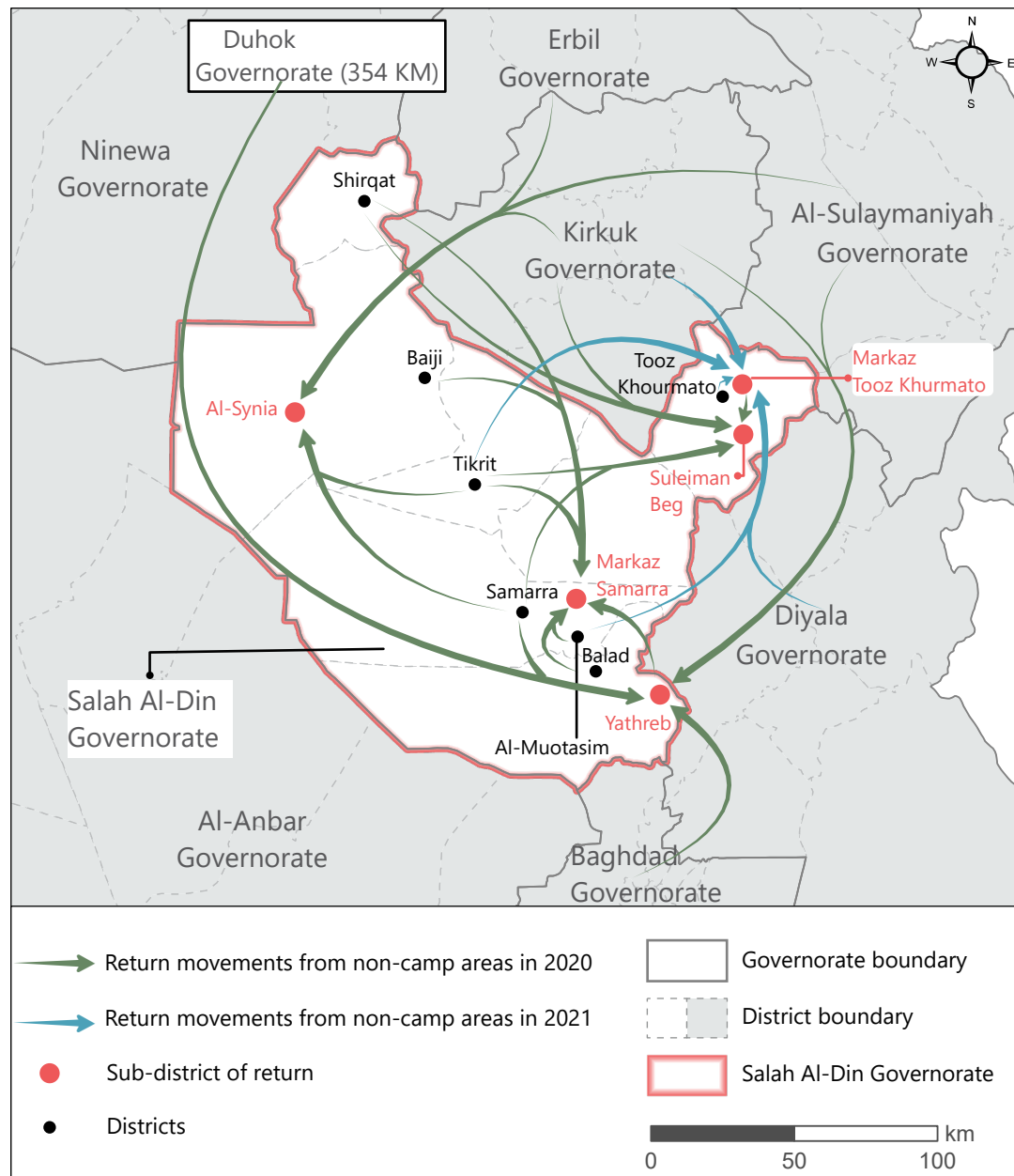
Negative impacts of returns were mentioned by only a few KIs in the various sub-districts, with the exception of Yathrib, where most KIs reported this. The main concern was reportedly the competition in the labour market, a condition reportedly worsened by the arrival of other IDP households in the sub-district at the time of data collection. As a negative effect, a decrease in humanitarian assistance was also reported, with more families having to compete for governmental or NGO assistance. The same points were mentioned in the other sub-districts, but only by maximum two KIs, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Drivers and impact of returns in sub-districts assessed in Salah al-Din Governorate, 2020-2022**

	2020	2021				2022
	Markaz TooZ (11 KIs)	Yathrib (25 KIs)	al-Siniya (26 KIs)	Suleiman Beg (26 KI)	Markaz Samarra (12 KIs)	al-Amerli No returns reported
<b>Drivers for returns</b>						
Increased security	11	16	2	16	3	-
Family reunification	6	7	6	12	3	-
Camp closure	1	4	19	-	-	-
Nostalgia	-	-	1	12	10	-
<b>Impact of returns</b>						
Stability/family reunification	4	8	22	20	4	-
Increased job opportunities	4	3	18	17	-	-
Decreased job opportunities	1	18	1	2	-	-
Increased number of families in need	1	15	1	1	-	-



Map 3. Return movements from camp areas to assessed sub-districts in Salah al-Din Governorate



Map 4. Return movements from non-camp areas to assessed sub-districts in Salah al-Din Governorate

## Barriers to returns

Beside the returnees, part of the population from Salah al-Din remained in displacement. Several barriers to return were reported in the assessed sub-districts at the time of data collection. The most common barriers were reportedly related to HLP matters, with almost all KIs reporting housing damage being too severe for a sustainable return. A few KIs also mentioned a lack of documents and that the house in the AoOs was rented.

Access to livelihoods and basic services in the AoOs reportedly posed a challenge to the population in displacement: lack of job opportunities and limited access to basic public services were reported through all the sub-districts. Several KIs also mentioned barriers related to safety and security, most notably perceptions of lack of security in the AoOs and fear of being perceived as ISIL affiliated, especially in Markaz Samarra.

As shown in Table 2, KIs in different sub-districts were almost unanimously reporting on housing damage in AoOs being the most relevant barrier to return, and only in Markaz Samarra did a higher proportion of KIs report a lack of job opportunities rather than house damage as a barrier. Lack of property documents was mostly mentioned in Yathrib, while not owning a house in the AoO reportedly proved also to be a barrier in some sub-districts, most notably in al-Siniya.

It is also worth noting that in some cases conditions in AoDs may have been a better or more suitable option for IDPs, who either moved on from their past life and settled in the new area, or did not have enough appealing pull factors to return to their AoOs.

Across many sub-districts, the lack of job opportunities, both in the private and public sector was considered to be a relevant barrier to return. A similar pattern can be traced for limited access to public services, which was mentioned across most sub-districts, with the exception of Yathrib and Suleiman Beg, where it was mentioned by less than half of the responding KIs. In Markaz TooZ sub-district, it is noteworthy that limited access to public services was mentioned more frequently than the lack of job opportunities. This feature was often coupled with a reported lack of investment, infrastructure and service rehabilitation projects. Also relevant, but not homogeneously mentioned, was limited access to medical treatment being considered as a barrier to return by a few KIs.

*"There are few [basic] services in the area, and households who return will put a strain on access to public water and electricity."*

- Female SME KI in Zummar -

**Table 2. Reported barriers to returns in sub-districts assessed in Salah al-Din Governorate, 2020-2022**

	2020	2021				2022
	Markaz TooZ (46 KIs)	Yathrib (54 KIs)	al-Siniya (45 KIs)	Suleiman Beg (40 KI)	Markaz Samarra (33 KIs)	al-Amerli (30 KIs)
<b>Access to housing and housing rehabilitation</b>						
Housing damage	33	36	45	37	24	30
Lack of Property documents	3	8	7	2	-	-
House rented in AoOs	1	-	4	-	1	-
<b>Access to livelihoods and basic public services</b>						
Lack of job opportunities	20	24	34	24	28	25
Limited access to basic public services	26	22	28	19	23	24
Limited access to medical treatment	11	2	-	2	3	4
<b>Access to safety and security</b>						
Security concerns in AoOs	6	2	10	6	5	1
Fear of being perceived as ISIL affiliated	-	1	5	9	11	1



## Primary community needs

The most commonly reported primary community need overall was **housing rehabilitation (144/246 KIs)**. It was most notably reported in al-Siniya and al-Amerli, especially due to the lack of government support, lack of reconstruction projects and lack of households' financial resources.

The second most commonly reported primary community need was **access to livelihoods (132/246 KIs)**, denoting widespread difficulties in accessing job opportunities in all the assessed sub-districts. KIs reported lack of job opportunities and high unemployment rates, which also reportedly caused the protracted displacement of households and individuals in their AoDs.

Generally, reasons also included damaged infrastructures, and a lack of medicines and advanced medical machinery.

The third most commonly reported primary community need was **access to healthcare (114/246 KIs)**, mostly reported in Markaz TooZ and Yathrib sub-districts, reflecting the issue already highlighted in the barriers to returns. Reasons varied slightly in each sub-district, and in Markaz TooZ, where it was considered the first priority need, it was reportedly due to the lack of specialised medical staff. Water was also reported as a crucial need, both in relation to human consumption and irrigation, especially in al-Amerli sub-district.

**Table 3. Reported primary community needs in sub-districts assessed in Salah al-Din Governorate, 2020-2022**

	2020	2021				2022
	Markaz TooZ (46 KIs)	Yathrib (54 KIs)	al-Siniya (39 KIs)	Suleiman Beg (31 KI)	Markaz Samarra (46 KIs)	al-Amerli (30 KIs)
<b>Housing rehabilitation</b>	16	23	30	23	28	24
<b>Livelihoods</b>	24	37	20	19	22	10
<b>Healthcare</b>	29	31	19	10	18	7
<b>Water</b>	15	24	11	7	21	19
<b>Electricity</b>	14	18	7	5	9	9
<b>Education</b>	14	13	10	9	17	8
<b>Infrastructure rehabilitation</b>	6	-	7	7	5	1

## Access to housing rehabilitation and compensation

In Salah al-Din, housing rehabilitation and compensation is reportedly the first primary community need, which suggests at the same time the high level of destruction and the reported limited impact and reach of reconstruction projects.

### Access to housing rehabilitation

In all the assessed sub-districts, except Markaz TooZ, KIs reported that the level of damage and destruction of houses was very high. Rehabilitation efforts were reportedly hindered on one side by the lack of households' financial resources to undertake independent reconstruction and on the other because the government's rehabilitation campaigns were either absent, delayed or only limited to specific areas, in some cases targeting selectively some locations while neglecting others. In more than half of sub-districts, KIs specifically reported that the government was neglecting the area and there was a generalized lack of financial support. Lack of documentation to prove ownership and/or access rehabilitation was also reported in half of the assessed sub-districts. Households were reportedly resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as living in shared shelters or in damaged houses, with high safety risks.

### Access to compensation<sup>12</sup>

Where further questions about compensation were asked (al-Siniya, Suleiman Beg, Markaz Samarra, al-Amerli), KIs reported similar situations across the sub-districts. The procedure that households had to go through was described as long, complex and expensive, requiring much time and effort without the guarantee of actually receiving a compensation. In almost all the sub-districts assessed, many households could reportedly not access compensation because they lacked awareness of the process and/or legal support. Finally, KIs reported that in many cases compensation was not paid, allegedly for lack of governmental financial resources and for their selective allocation.

### Coping mechanisms

Remaining in displacement was the most commonly mentioned coping mechanism (al-Siniya, Suleiman Beg, al-Amerli), in line with the main findings on barriers to return on page 5. In Suleiman Beg and Samarra, KIs reported that households resorted to paying bribes to obtain access to housing rehabilitation and/or compensation, while in al-Siniya KIs reported households travelling to other locations to file the compensation claim.

### Access to livelihoods

In Salah al-Din, access to livelihoods was the second most reported barrier for further returns after housing rehabilitation and the second most reported community need, throughout almost all the assessed sub-districts. Interviewed KIs provided an overview of the different sectors in which livelihoods are available and potentially increasing, and which are the most common livelihoods-related barriers and coping strategies.

#### Available livelihood sectors of interest<sup>13</sup>

The most common livelihood sector in the assessed sub-districts in Salah al-Din was reportedly construction, followed by the agriculture and public education sectors. Considering the high level of damage, construction was needed to both restore the damaged houses and infrastructures and to expand the existing ones. Complementarily, agriculture in the assessed sub-districts usually represents one of the main forms of employment and income. In al-Siniya, the second most available sector was perceived to be the oil industry.

#### Barriers to access livelihoods<sup>14</sup>

Although the mentioned sectors were perceived to be available, several barriers were still reported by the KIs when asked about accessing them.

In detail, concerning construction, the most reported barrier in the assessed sub-districts was lack of government rehabilitation and construction projects (al-Siniya, Markaz Samarra, al-Amerli).

For agriculture, the main barrier mentioned in all the assessed sub-districts was water scarcity, highlighting the growing need for water and irrigation. This, coupled with the lack of financial resources to afford seeds, fertilizers and other materials, reportedly made cultivation of the available land impossible in some cases, most notably in Markaz Samarra and al-Amerli.

*"The lack of cash for work projects and the weakness of local authorities to ensure job opportunities, in addition to the lack of financial support, affected IDPs' decision to return and forced us to work outside the sub-district."*

- Female Returnee KI in al-Siniya -

Lack of government jobs was the only reported barrier in accessing public employment, highlighted in Yathrib, Markaz Samarra and al-Amerli. The private sector also reportedly suffered from lack of investments and compensation for damaged businesses. This issue was highlighted in almost all the assessed sub-districts. Also, the lack of factories was reportedly a barrier to enhancing the employment of the existing population and returning households. Additionally, road blockades and insecurity halted trade, negatively affecting commercial activities and goods provision, as mostly reported in Markaz Samarra.

As coping mechanisms, only in Markaz Hatra was it mentioned that individuals and households would move to another location to work. However, barriers to accessing livelihoods were considered a reason for households to remain in displacement.

#### Groups with less access to livelihoods

When asked if specific categories would be more vulnerable than others, KIs mostly mentioned older persons (except in Markaz Samarra) and persons with disabilities (except in al-Siniya). Female-headed households were also often mentioned (Markaz Too, Yathrib, al-Siniya and Markaz Samarra).

IDPs in and from the community were reportedly most likely to face challenges in accessing livelihoods in almost all sub-districts, while returnees were reportedly challenged in more than half.

*"Most of the youth work there [outside the sub-district] and stay permanently to help their families in al-Amerli and visit the sub-district from time to time on their vacation leaves."*

- Male SME KI in al-Amerli -

### Access to healthcare

Healthcare was the third most reported primary community need and the public service which was reportedly most unaccessible in all the assessed Salah al-Din sub-districts. The intensity of conflict in the governorate and the mass emigration from the various sub-districts reportedly caused an impoverishment of the quantity and quality of healthcare services provided.

#### Access barriers

In all the assessed sub-districts, the main obstacles to accessing healthcare were reportedly lack of staff and lack of medications. In all the sub-districts, KIs have highlighted the lack of support for and rehabilitation of health facilities, coupled with the lack of hospitals in more than half of the assessed sub-districts. Regarding equipment, KIs specified that mostly machines and ambulances were missing, hindering the reach of the available health facilities. In Markaz Too, al-Siniya, Suleiman Beg and al-Amerli, KIs reported that available facilities did not have enough capacity to accommodate the community's needs and that patients were receiving a poor quality service. Moreover, in Markaz Samarra and al-Amerli, the total absence of public health centers in smaller villages was reported, drastically reducing access for the population living in rural areas. Lack of equipment was considered a barrier as well and mentioned in Markaz Too,

Suleiman Beg and Markaz Samarra, including the lack of machines, ambulances and tools, hindering the efficiency and quality of available health services.

#### Coping mechanisms<sup>15</sup>

In all the assessed sub-districts, the most common coping mechanisms to access healthcare was resorting to private and more expensive clinics. Except in Suleiman Beg, KIs also mentioned travelling to other locations for specialized medical treatment.

Additionally, in Markaz Samarra and al-Amerli, some KIs reported households resorting to local pharmacies for treatment and medicine, despite them not being equipped facilities to deal with the different needs of the population. Also regarding al-Amerli, it was reported that to access healthcare services, some households preferred to remain in displacement. This appears to be generally in line with the return barrier findings, where limited access to medical treatment was considered a reason not to return.

*"The hospital is destroyed, there are healthcare centers which lack capacity for treatments due to the limited presence of medical personnel and necessary equipment."*

- Male Returnee KI from al-Siniya -

## Access to public services

Reflecting primary community needs, healthcare was reportedly the most challenging public service to access in Salah al-Din's assessed sub-districts. As described in page 7, accessing healthcare and medical treatment was reportedly complicated or impossible according to KIs across the various sub-districts.

However, the destruction caused by war and the lengthy reconstruction process reportedly caused disfunctions and complicated the population's access to public services in general. In table 4 it is observable in more detail how, right after healthcare, water was reported as a crucial missing service. Water services were intended both for human consumption and for agriculture and their limited availability is reportedly a consequence of both poor infrastructure and climate change (in detail below).

Education also appeared to be a neglected service in some areas, especially in Suleiman Beg, where it was reported as being as challenging as healthcare to access. KIs reported that schools

were damaged during the conflict without being repaired or maintained at the time of data collection. This reportedly prolonged the interruption of children's education and/or exposed them to safety hazards in buildings that were not suitable or equipped for their purpose. Moreover, lack of furniture and equipment was also mentioned as a major barrier to accessing education services.

Difficulties in accessing legal courts were mentioned in three sub-districts, especially in al-Siniya, where KIs reported that most of the public offices and courts were closed, mostly due to damages and lack of specialised staff, who remained in displacement.

*"Among the services provided to citizens in the sub-district, water is available only from a few water stations, but these lack an emergency power line to be operated continuously. There is no sewage network."*

- Male Returnee KI in al-Siniya -

**Table 4. Public services to which access was reportedly most challenging in sub-districts assessed in Salah al-Din, 2020-2022**

	2020	2021				2022
	Markaz Tooz (13 KIs)	Yathrib (15 KIs)	al-Siniya (28 KIs)	Suleiman Beg (25 KI)	Markaz Samarra (46 KIs)	al-Amerli (30 KIs)
<b>Healthcare</b>	13	15	22	23	37	26
<b>Water</b>	9	15	14	9	32	25
<b>Education</b>	2	-	17	23	32	16
<b>Courts</b>	-	-	13	2	10	-
<b>Electricity</b>	-	-	-	-	-	17

## Climate change

Together with Ninewa Governorate, Salah al-Din is among the the worst-affected governorates by lack of rainfall.<sup>16</sup> Drought and increasing temperatures caused widespread water scarcity that affected thousands of households' daily life and livelihoods. Water used for farming, industrial and domestic purposes became hard to access, with consequences on different levels, most notably on food security<sup>17</sup> and social cohesion.

### Water scarcity

REACH findings in the assessed sub-districts align with the studies and reports of other agencies and organizations on the matter, as interviewed KIs considered water as the second most challenging public service to access and among the primary community needs.

The agriculture sector was negatively affected as reported by KIs in all the locations assessed: water available for irrigation was not meeting the demand and was insufficient for livestock farming. Findings align with the estimates about local crop production, which decreased with up to 75% in 2021 for wheat cultivation.<sup>18</sup> Also, considering domestic use, in all the sub-districts assessed, water was reported to be insufficient in quantity and quality.

In addition to water scarcity, the bad conditions of infrastructure and the lack of sewage and waste management reportedly posed a further challenge to proper access to water.

### Coping mechanisms

KIs in all locations mentioned that households usually resorted to bottled water instead of drinking tap water, either because it was not available or not safe to drink. This was reportedly having a bad effect on households' finances as, due to the high demand, prices of bottled water and private water services increased. In more than half of the assessed sub-districts, KIs highlighted that private trucked water was used to cope with the failing public network. Digging illegal wells was mentioned in half of the sub-districts, a widespread practice, with known negative effects on groundwater reserves and quality of water.<sup>19</sup> In Markaz Samarra it was reported that households would travel to other locations with accessible water plants and would use irrigation water for domestic use, despite it not being an improved source of water. While in al-Amerli it was mentioned that in some cases, difficult access to water services caused protracted displacement.



## Integration and social cohesion

### Safety and security

In the sub-districts assessed, the perceptions of safety and security were homogeneous, with KIs in all locations mentioning that the different population groups were feeling safe or very safe in the sub-districts.

### Feeling welcome and integrated

Findings on this section were mostly homogeneous, with KIs in all locations reporting that the different population groups felt between "somewhat welcome", "welcome" or "very welcome", depending on the location and population group. However, in Markaz Samarra, KI reported that some returnee and IDP households were not feeling welcome due to the presence of households with alleged links to ISIL, and discrimination based on displacement status, ethnicity, religion and tribal affiliation.

### Disputes

As for the previous sections, in most of the sub-districts KIs reported the absence of disputes both within the community and with neighbouring communities. However, in Markaz Samarra and al-Siniya, some disputes were reported, mostly due to ethnic rivalries, perceived affiliation to ISIL and inherited older disputes between parts of the community. It is worth noting that for this question, a high rate of KIs refused to answer. Therefore, findings in this section might not adhere to the real situation on the ground.

### Interaction among population groups

Also concerning interaction between different groups in the community, KIs in all assessed sub-districts reported that it was happening smoothly, improving the social cohesion in the sub-district. However, most notably in Markaz Samarra and al-Amerli, KIs also reported that IDPs and returnees were more isolated in comparison to the host community.

Among the mentioned reasons for feeling of isolation, the most common ones were fear, discrimination, belonging to different ethnic groups and alleged affiliation with ISIL.

### Participation in decision making process<sup>20</sup>

As shown in Table 5, in the sub-districts where the question was posed, KIs, mostly in Suleiman Beg, Markaz Samarra and al-Amerli, reported that the different population groups were involved at some level in the decision making processes in the area. In Suleiman Beg and Markaz Samarra, a higher proportion of KIs reported this, due to the fact that both returnee KIs and IDP KIs in the community all reported that households of those groups were involved or participated in the decision making process. Specifically in al-Siniya, the KIs reported that IDPs in and from the community were not involved, without however specifying the reason. There was a similar situation for the few KIs who reported the exclusion of households from decision-making process in Yathrib and Markaz Samarra.

### Improving social cohesion

In each sub-district, KIs suggested strategies or initiatives to improve social cohesion in their location. Most of the suggestions revolved around improvements of livelihoods, public services and security sectors, suggesting that reconstruction projects would bring more stability and harmony within the community. In all sub-districts, seminars, awareness sessions and conferences about conflict resolution, tolerance, coexistence and acceptance of differences were highly encouraged as well as social events that could bring together the different groups living in the same community.

*"Because we are the original owners of the sub-district, so we returned to our area, rather than being strangers or outsiders in the area we live in."*

- Male Returnee KI in al-Amerli -

**Table 5. Participation in decision making process in sub-districts assessed in Salah al-Din Governorate, 2020-2022**

	2020	2021				2022
	Markaz Tooze (0 KIs)	Yathrib (54 KIs)	al-Siniya (20 KIs)	Suleiman Beg (25 KI)	Markaz Samarra (36 KIs)	al-Amerli (16 KIs)
Participation in decision making processes						
Yes	-	-	8	20	29	12
No	-	2	11	-	7	-

## ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

### Endnotes

- 1 [IOM DTM Masterlist](#), Ninewa Governorate, Round 5, December 2022.
- 2 [IOM DTM Masterlist](#), Ninewa Governorate, Round 5, December 2022
- 3 Severity is calculated in the IOM DTM Return Index with 16 indicators related to livelihoods and basic services and safety perceptions and social cohesion.
- 4 [IOM DTM Return Index](#), Salah al-Din Governorate, Round 17, December 2022
- 5 Information obtained from the RWG meetings and RWG focal point at governorate level.
- 6 [IOM DTM Return Index](#), Diyala Governorate, Round 17, December 2022
- 7 [IOM DTM Masterlist Report](#) 127, July-September 2022
- 8 Full methodology of the rapid assessment on Returns and Durable Solutions (ReDS) available in the [Terms of Reference](#), REACH Initiative, April 2021
- 9 All the ReDS publications are available at REACH Initiative Resource Centre, below the list of publication related to Salah al-Din Governorate:
  - [Markaz Tooze sub-district profile](#), October 2020
  - [Yathrib sub-district profile](#), January 2021
  - [al-Siniya sub-district profile](#), July 2021
  - [Suleiman Beg sub-district profile](#), August 2021
  - [Markaz Samarra sub-district profile](#), November 2021
  - [al-Amerli sub-district profile](#), September 2022
- 10 Findings are based on the perceptions of the KIs who were purposively sampled; all data should therefore be considered as indicative. The occasionally large variation between perceptions is potentially due to KIs' varying profiles and personal interests.
- 11 [IOM DTM Return Index](#), Salah al-Din Governorate, Round 10-16, September 2020, September 2022
- 12 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz Tooze and Yathrib.
- 13 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz Tooze.
- 14 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz Tooze.
- 15 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz Tooze.
- 16 FAO, IFAD, WFP, WB, Food Security in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19 with a special section on water shortages and adaptation, Nov 2020 - May 2021, p. 3. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/food-security-iraq-impact-covid-19-special-section-water-shortages-and-adaptation>
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Dizayee, R. (2018). Effects of Illegal Wells on Groundwater Level in the Central Sub-basin, Erbil Basin, Erbil, Kurdistan Region-Iraq. American Academic Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, and Sciences, 39(1), 244-249. Retrieved from [https://asrjetsjournal.org/index.php/American\\_Scientific\\_Journal/article/view/3865](https://asrjetsjournal.org/index.php/American_Scientific_Journal/article/view/3865)
- 20 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz Tooze.