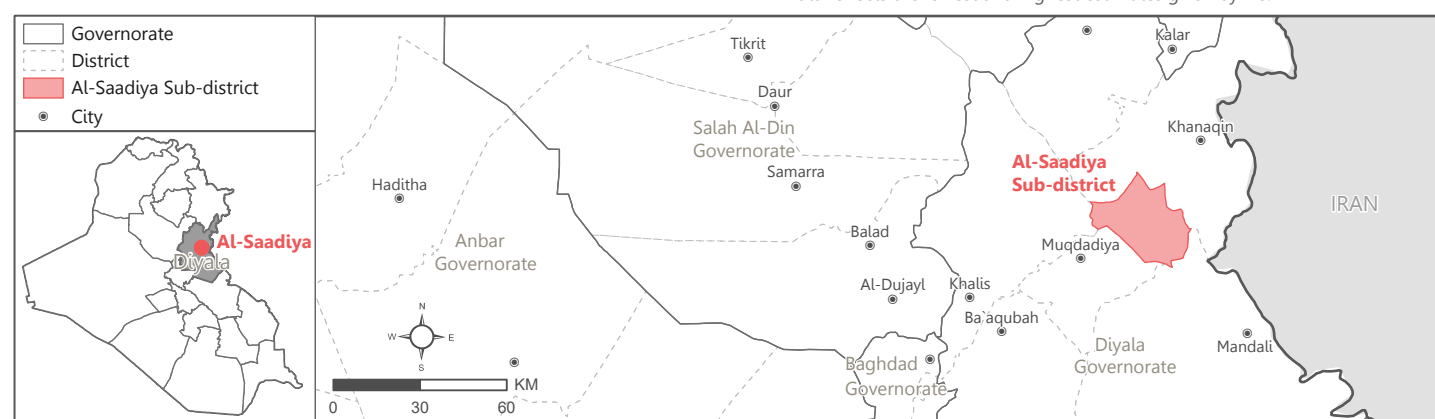


### Situation Overview

In 2022, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) returning to their areas of origin (AoOs) or being re-displaced continued, coupled with persisting challenges in relation to social cohesion, lack of services, infrastructure and security in AoOs, in some cases.<sup>1</sup> The [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#)'s returnee master list recorded over 4.9 million individuals returning to their AoOs across the country, as of June 2022.

Increased returns and secondary displacement were driven primarily by the closure, consolidation, and reclassification of IDP camps.<sup>2</sup> Between January and June 2022, no camps were closed, consolidated, or reclassified. However, for the camps that remain open across Iraq, there is an ongoing planning procedure to determine their future.<sup>3</sup> In light of these dynamics, the need to better understand the sustainability of returns, conditions for the (re)integration of IDPs and returnees, and the impact of their presence on access to services and social cohesion has been identified in the context of durable solutions planning.

### Map 1. Coverage map



### Assessment Background and Methodology

A number of partners are tracking population movements and measuring progress towards durable solutions for displaced populations in Iraq.<sup>6</sup> For example, IOM has collected data on a bi-monthly basis, found in the [IOM DTM Returns Index](#). This tool provides indicative trends on the severity of conditions in areas of return (AoRs) nationwide.

To build on this information, [REACH Initiative \(REACH\)](#) has conducted multi-sectoral assessments in AoOs or areas of return (AoRs) across Iraq, assessing the overall condition of affected areas to inform how and to what extent durable solutions have or can be achieved. REACH's Returns and Durable Solutions profiles (ReDS) focus on the study of conditions at the sub-district level, providing a localised overview of the perceptions of displaced and host communities on a variety of conditions linked to the (re)integration of IDPs and returnees.

In light of recent return and re-displacement movement dynamics, REACH conducted a ReDS assessment in Al-Saadiya Sub-district to provide an in-depth profiling of needs and understanding of social relationships between remainee,<sup>7</sup> returnee,<sup>8</sup> and IDP populations.<sup>9</sup>

### Al-Saadiya Sub-district

Al-Saadiya is a sub-district of Khanaqin District, in Diyala Governorate, Iraq. It is located near the Diyala River, 8 km south of Jalawla. Khanaqin District is one of the disputed territories between the Federal Government of Iraq (GoI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which might affect the district's fragmented reestablishment of services<sup>4</sup> and durable solutions. On June 2014, Al-Saadiya Sub-district came under the control of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The sub-district was liberated from ISIL in November 2014.<sup>4</sup> However, as of June 2022, the [VII IOM DTM Integrated Location Assessment \(ILA\)](#) suggested that households in all assessed villages in Al-Saadiya (19 villages) were somewhat concerned or very concerned about potential future ISIL operations in the sub-district.

### Reported Estimated Population Profile<sup>5</sup>

**3,225-3,500 households\*** were residing in Al-Saadiya before the events of 2014.

**95%-100%** of households\* in Al-Saadiya were displaced after 2014.

**70%-80%** households\* displaced after 2014 had returned to Al-Saadiya at the time of data collection.

\* Data reflects the lowest and highest estimates given by KIs.

Al-Saadiya Sub-district was selected for the assessment as social cohesion and safety severity<sup>10</sup> was classified as 'high' or 'medium' in 19 villages (assessed by IOM DTM),<sup>11</sup> and it was reportedly an underserved location of interest for local authorities, humanitarian, and durable solution partners operating in Diyala. The findings presented in this profile are based on 55 key informant (KI) interviews conducted between 13 and 20 June 2022. The assessment combined qualitative and quantitative data collection methods adapted to the context.<sup>12</sup> Findings are not generalisable with a known level of precision and should be considered indicative only. Data collection was conducted remotely, which facilitates rapid access to information to be shared with implementing partners.

### KI Profile

#### Al-Saadiya Sub-district

Returnees (returned more than 3 months ago) <sup>13</sup>	27 KIs	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Subject matter experts (SMEs) <sup>14</sup>	10 KIs	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Community leaders <sup>15</sup>	9 KIs	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
IDPs from the community <sup>16</sup>	8 KIs	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
Returnees (returned less than 3 months ago) <sup>17</sup>	1 KI	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>

### Key findings

- ➡ Returns to Al-Saadiya remained limited, with a few KIs reporting **some recent returns** (in the six months prior to data collection) driven primarily by **the nostalgia these households felt for their previous life in their AoOs**.
- ➡ All KIs (reporting the occurrence of recent returns) also reported believing that **these movements had positively impacted the community**. Reportedly, the **return of farmers helped to reactivate the agricultural sector**. KIs also reported that recent returns positively impacted the social life in the sub-district.
- ➡ A few KIs reported expected returns (in the six months following data collection) to the sub-district. Reportedly, these movements may positively impact the community in the sub-district. KIs reported that additional returns may affect trade and commerce and the private sector in general, reconstruction of the sub-district, social inter-relations in the community, access to services, and improve the sense of safety and security in Al-Saadiya. However, additional returns may have negative impacts since they may reportedly raise tensions between returnees and host community members due to existing intercommunal disputes, and further returns may also lead to an increased level of competition for the limited available job opportunities, according to some KIs.
- ➡ Most households **in the community reportedly resided in owned houses**. All IDP KIs and the vast majority of returnee KIs reported that households had housing, land, and property (HLP) documents to prove ownership. However, one returnee KI reported that some returnee households never had HLP documentations, which may negatively affect their ability to claim their properties and access government compensation funds.
- ➡ All KIs reported that **households faced challenges in accessing housing rehabilitation** in the sub-district. The most reported factors affecting access to housing rehabilitation were related to the limited access to financial resources for housing rehabilitation, and lack of government compensation for housing rehabilitation.
- ➡ **Facilitated access to livelihoods, housing rehabilitation, and healthcare were the most commonly reported community needs** among KIs from all tools. These were also the most reported barriers for returns and the most needed activities to be implemented in the sub-district to encourage further returns.
- ➡ All KIs reported that **most households faced challenges in accessing basic public services. Healthcare was the most reported public sector that had been negatively affected** by conditions at public healthcare clinics (PHCs) in Al-Saadiya, such as the shortage of medicines and shortage of medical staff, and the lack of functioning specialised hospitals, according to KIs.
- ➡ All KIs reported that **most households faced challenges in accessing livelihoods**. The lack of job opportunities in the sub-district was the most reported challenge to accessing employment and the main reason for family separation, especially for young male household members.
- ➡ KIs reported an **overall decrease in the availability of job opportunities compared to before 2014**. Employment in the service sector such as restaurants was reportedly not available at the time of data collection. In addition, findings showed that the agricultural sector, and private and public healthcare jobs were the most negatively affected at the time of data collection compared to prior to 2014.
- ➡ **Agriculture** was the most commonly reported **livelihood sector of interest for returnee and IDP households from/in the community**. Agriculture was commonly reported by community leader and SME KIs as **the livelihoods sector with the highest potential for growth** in the 12 months following data collection. However, the sector was reportedly negatively affected by the neglect and lack of support from the local government, inflated prices for agricultural materials, water scarcity, climate change, and land irrigation challenges.
- ➡ KIs commonly reported perceiving that **most returnee and IDP households in their communities felt safe or very safe** in Al-Saadiya. **Formal security forces** were **the most commonly reported actor effective at resolving disputes within the sub-district**.
- ➡ All IDP KIs from Al-Saadiya reported perceiving that **most IDP households from the community did not feel integrated in their areas of displacement (AoDs)**. Almost half of IDP KIs from the community reported that IDP households from Al-Saadiya **may feel welcome and accepted** if they return to their AoOs. A few IDP KIs from the community reported that IDP households from Al-Saadiya mainly interacted with returnees and participated in decision-making processes in their AoOs.
- ➡ The majority of returnee KIs reported perceiving that **returnee households interacted with all groups in the community and felt welcome or very welcome** in Al-Saadiya. This was mainly reported due to the existing strong relationships they had with other members of the community and the presence of kinship ties with other households in the sub-district. All returnee KIs reported that **returnee households felt reintegrated in the community** of Al-Saadiya.

### Recent household return movements

All KIs were consulted for this section (55 KIs). **The vast majority of the KIs** reported that **there were no recent returns** to the sub-district in the six months prior to data collection (50 out of 55 KIs). However, five KIs reported the occurrence of recent returns to the sub-district.

#### Estimated returns from non-camp areas

**19-24** households<sup>19</sup> returned to the sub-district from other districts in Diyala Governorate, namely Baquba (2 out of 5 KIs), Beladruz (2 KIs), and Muqdadiya (1 KI). In addition, households reportedly returned from Markaz Khanaqin Sub-district (1 KI).

#### Reported drivers for returns

All KIs who reported recent returns (5 KIs) perceived that **nostalgia for their previous life in the AoOs** (prior to 2014) was among the main pull factors for displaced households to return to their AoOs.

#### Reported impact of returns

According to the five KIs reporting the occurrence of recent returns, these movements had **positive impacts** on the agricultural sector (3 KIs) and social life in the sub-district (3 KIs).

##### Impact on the agricultural sector

Three KIs reported perceiving that recent returns had positive impacts on agriculture. The KIs reported that the majority of returnee households were farmers and that this encouraged the recultivation of agricultural lands, which may reduce the desertification of the area in the near future. According to one KI, markets in the sub-district were supported by the availability of local products. However, potential environmental damage could be represented by farmers reportedly building illegal water wells at random to ensure proper land irrigation due to the pre-existing water scarcity in the sub-district (1 KI).

##### Impact on social life

Three KIs reported perceiving that recent returns had a positive impact on social life in the community. This was reportedly due to the fact that households who had returned had reconnected with their neighbours, friends, and relatives (3 KIs).

##### Other impacts of recent returns

In terms of impact on the private sector, according to one returnee KI, returns have resulted in the reopening of workshops and small factories, which provided jobs (for example for craftsmen) and increased trading and commercial activity in the sub-district. Moreover, recent returns have also resulted in the reconstruction of houses, reported by one KI. In addition, in terms of security, many areas in the subdistrict were reportedly deserted and having households returning added further potential benefits as they may reportedly support activities and initiatives related to security (1 KI).

### Expected household return movements

All KIs were consulted for this section (55 KIs). **The vast majority of the KIs** (53 out of 55 KIs) reported **no expected returns** in the six months following data collection. However, a few KIs reported that returns may occur in the six months following data collection (2 KIs).

#### Estimated expected returns from non-camp areas<sup>19</sup>

**225-325** households were expected to return to the sub-district in the six months following data collection. These movement may occur from non-camp areas in Diyala Governorate, namely Markaz Khanaqin (1 KI) and Jalawla (1 KI) sub-districts, and Baquba District (1 KI).

#### Reported drivers for expected returns

According to the two KIs, these households may be returning due to the nostalgia IDP households had for their previous life in the sub-district, in addition to these households following the return of other extended family members (1 KI).

#### Reported impact of expected returns

All KIs were consulted for this section (55 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs (44 out of 55 KIs) reported that further returns may impact the community in Al-Saadiya. The rest of the KIs reported believing there may not be further returns to the sub-district (10 KIs) or did not answer this question (1 KI).

#### Expected positive impacts

The majority of the KIs reporting expected returns (38 out of 44 KIs) also mentioned that these movements may positively impact the community in the sub-district. This was attributed to the general effect on trade and commerce and the private sector (24 KIs), the reconstruction of the sub-district (11 KIs), the social impact of returns (11 KIs), as well as the impact on access to services (9 KIs), safety and security (8 KIs), and the agricultural sector (7 KIs).

##### Impact on the trade and commerce sector

KIs reported that additional returns may contribute to a growth in the population size of the sub-district which may lead to increased commercial activity (23 KIs). Some also believed that there was the potential to increase trade exchange with further returns (7 KIs).

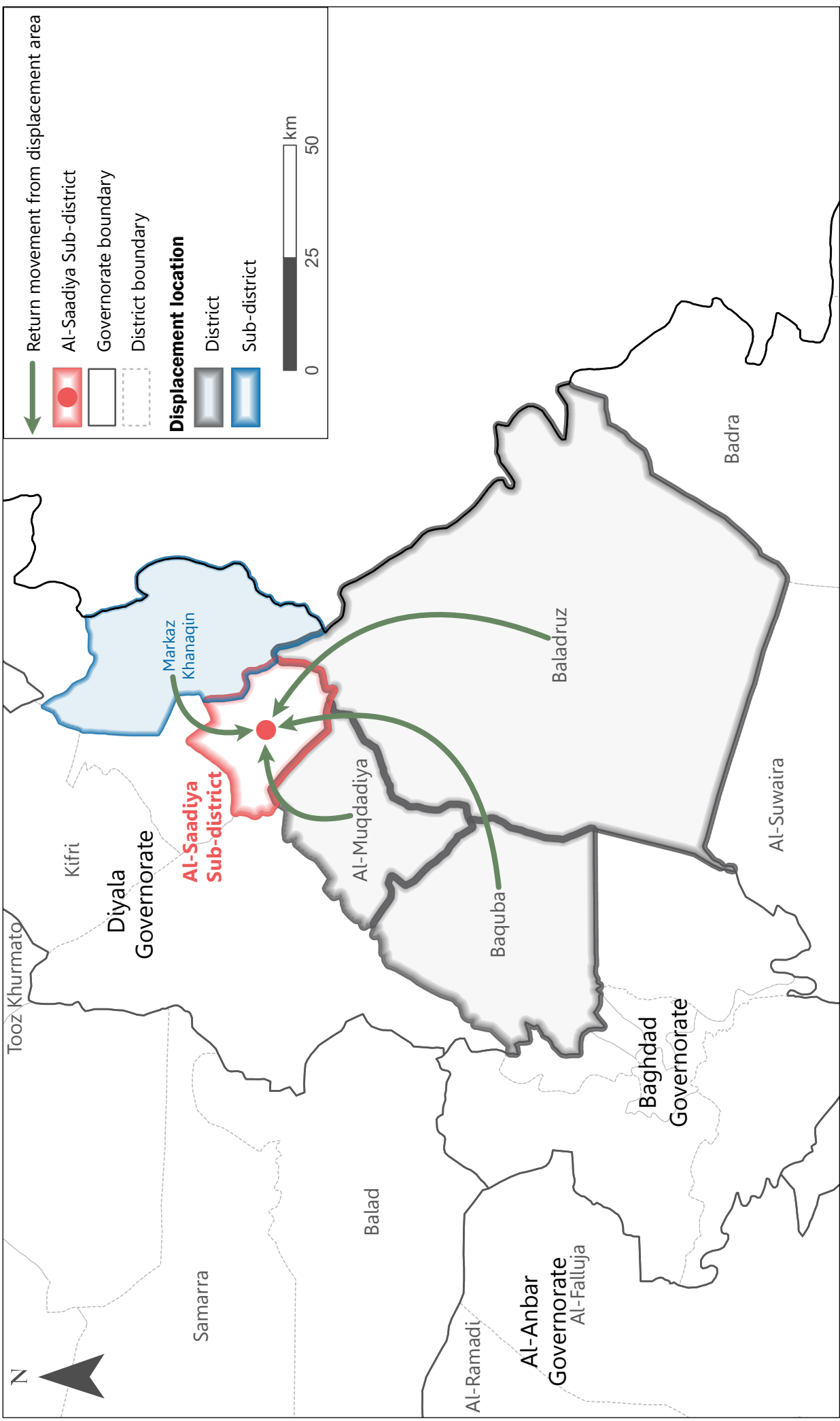
##### Impact on the reconstruction of the sub-district

According to 11 KIs, expected returns to the sub-district may lead to increased job opportunities within the construction sector, especially for housing reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. Furthermore, KIs reported that future returns may result in households potentially returning to their homes, thereby ending the payment of rent in their AoDs (5 KIs).

##### Impact on social life

According to five KIs, further returns to the sub-district may support the normalisation of life in the area, returning to a similar state to that of pre-2014. Lastly, these movements may reportedly ensure family reunification and re-establish bonds between neighbours, friends, and relatives (3 KIs).

Map 2. Recent returns to Al-Saadiya Sub-district from non-camp areas (in the six months prior to data collection)



### Impact on the private sector

Reportedly, the return of professionals and skilled workers such as craftsmen may enhance the quality of services provided by the private sector (7 KIs). In addition, the return of business owners may reportedly increase the availability of jobs for various types of skilled labour, specifically carpenters and blacksmiths (6 KIs). Furthermore, according to two recent returnee KIs, there was potential for future returnees to invest on the private sector reopening shops, reactivating the market, and developing their businesses.

### Impact on access to services

Reportedly, the return of healthcare and education professionals would compensate for shortages in personnel in these sectors and consequently improve the quality of these services for the community (6 KIs). In addition, three KIs expected that with further returns the local government may focus attention on the sub-district and the availability of basic public services. Moreover, two KIs reported believing that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) would be likely to implement projects that would facilitate access to services, following the return of additional households to Al-Saadiya.

### Safety and security perceptions

According to eight KIs, having an increased population may increase the perceptions of safety and security in the sub-district, encouraging other displaced households to return.

### Impact on the agricultural sector

According to seven KIs, the potential return of farmers may ensure the recultivation of land, which may lead to a reduction in the desertification in the area. Additionally, two KIs reported that lands reclamation may occur enabling the revitalization of the agricultural sector with the return of farmers to Al-Saadiya.

### Expected negative impacts

According to six KIs, future returns may have negative effects on the area due to issues regarding safety and security (3 KIs), access to employment (4 KIs), and basic services (4 KIs).

### Impact on safety and security

According to three returnee KIs, the possible return of households may lead to potential inter-communal disputes as well as reigniting any outstanding disputes.

### Impact on access to employment

Reportedly, these movements may lead to increased competition for the limited available job opportunities in the sub-district (4 KIs).

### Impact on access to basic public services

According to three KIs, the increase in population as a result of additional returns may require additional attention from the local government, especially to enhance access to public electricity and water services. In addition, one community leader KI reported believing that additional returns could be a risk for durable solutions if access to public services were to deteriorate as a result of population increases, as this would reportedly negatively impact households' reintegration.

### Family separation

All KIs were consulted for this section (55 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs did not know about family separation cases (35 out of 55 KIs), reported no cases of family separation in the sub-district (15 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI). However, six KIs (mainly SME and community leader KIs) reported that **adult male family members remained in displacement** at the time of data collection, particularly adult sons.

Reportedly, the main reason influencing the decisions of these household members to remain in displacement was **associated with the lack of job opportunities in the sub-district**, and their availability in AoDs (6 KIs). Additionally, one SME KI reported that some of these households' members were displaced at the time of data collection due to being obliged to work to cover the housing rehabilitation costs.

### Most commonly reported reunification plans

Reflecting the barriers to return and the reported main reason for family separation, all six KIs who reported being aware of family separation cases in their communities perceived that an increased availability of job opportunities in the AoO would enable reunification plans.

### Barriers for further returns

All KIs were consulted for this section (55 KIs). The majority of the KIs (47 out of 55 KIs) reported the presence of factors in AoOs which could block/delay further returns to the sub-district. The rest of KIs did not know about barriers for further returns (6 KIs) or refused to answer (2 KIs).

### Reported barriers for further returns (out of 47 KIs)<sup>20</sup>

#### Access to housing and housing rehabilitation

Destroyed/damaged housing	46 KIs	<div style="width: 98%;"></div>
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#### Access to livelihoods and basic public services

Limited availability of job opportunities	45 KIs	<div style="width: 96%;"></div>
Limited access to basic public services	22 KIs	<div style="width: 47%;"></div>

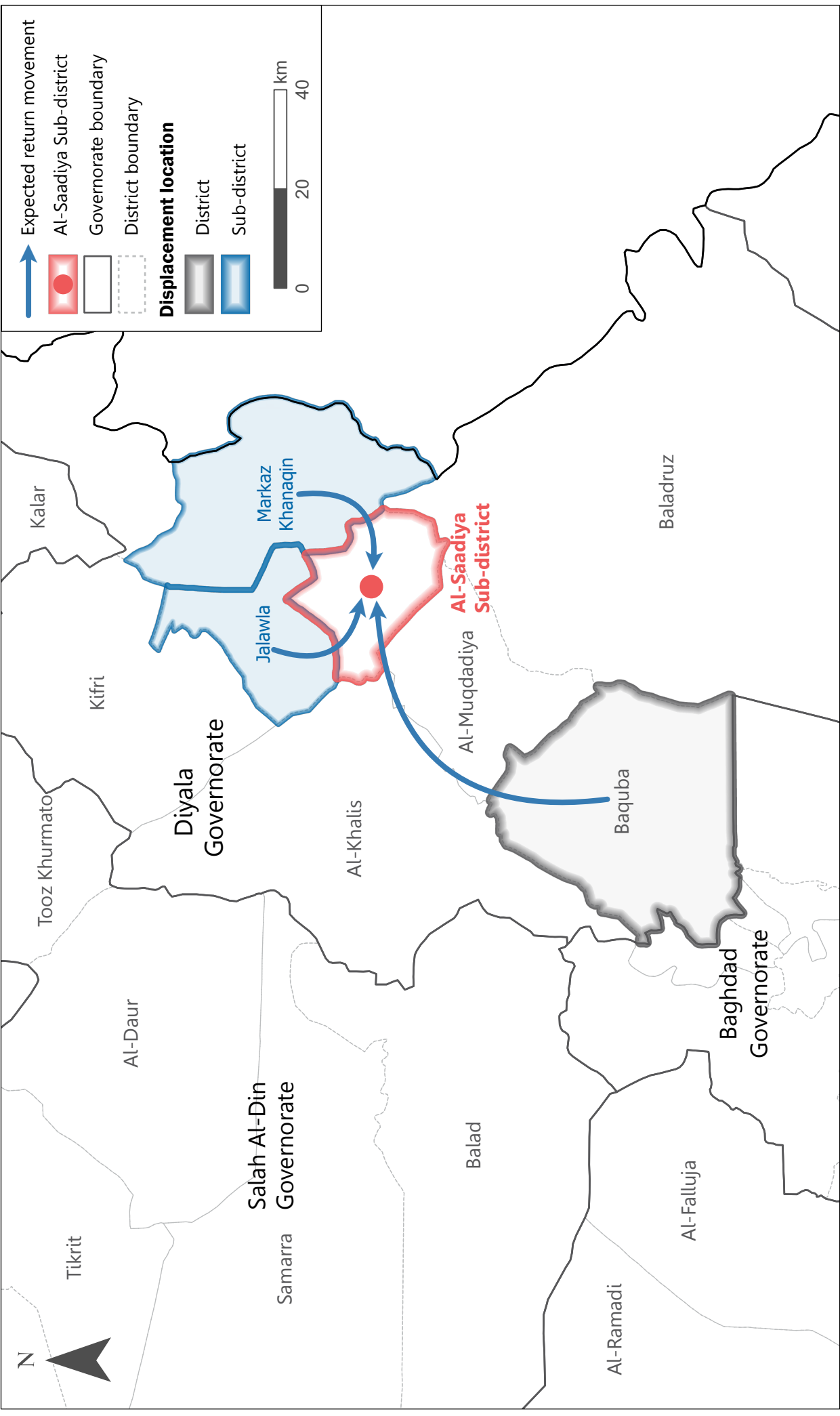
#### Access to safety and security

Security concerns in AoOs	1 KI	<div style="width: 2%;"></div>
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Taking into consideration the above-mentioned barriers, four KIs reported that some IDP households from the community preferred to remain in their AoDs.



Map 3. Expected return movements to Al-Saadiya Sub-district (in the six months following data collection)



### Primary community needs

#### Most reported primary community needs in Al-Saadiya at the time of data collection (out of 55 KIs)<sup>20, 21</sup>

	First Need	Second Need	Third Need
Livelihoods	29 KIs	11 KIs	2 KIs
Housing rehabilitation	12 KIs	20 KIs	4 KIs
Healthcare	10 KIs	7 KIs	10 KIs
Water	0 KIs	9 KIs	4 KIs
Education	2 KIs	2 KIs	1 KI
Electricity	1 KI	2 KIs	1 KI
Sanitation	1 KI	1 KIs	0 KIs

The most commonly reported primary community need was **access to livelihoods** (42 out of 55 KIs). Reportedly, the lack of job opportunities needed to meet households' basic needs and the high unemployment rate among graduated youth (35 out of 42 KIs) was negatively affecting access to livelihoods. See section on access to livelihoods on pages 11, 12, and 13.

The second most commonly reported primary community need was **access to housing rehabilitation** (36 out of 55 KIs). Three quarters of KIs (27 out of 36 KIs) reported that access to housing rehabilitation was mainly affected by the level of housing damage in the sub-district, especially in the rural areas, at the time of data collection. See section on access to housing and housing rehabilitation on page 8.

The third most commonly reported primary community need was **access to healthcare** (27 out of 55 KIs). KIs reported that access to healthcare was mainly affected by the shortage of medical personnel in the available facilities (22 out of 27 KIs). See section on access to basic public services on page 9.

#### Most commonly reported primary community needs per KI profile at the time of data collection<sup>20, 22</sup>

Community leader KIs (out of 9 KIs)		SME KIs (out of 10 KIs)		IDP KIs from the community (out of 8 KIs)		Returnee KIs (out of 28 KIs)	
Healthcare	3 KIs	Livelihoods	8 KIs	Livelihoods	7 KIs	Livelihoods	22 KIs
House rehab	3 KIs	Healthcare	5 KIs	House rehab	6 KIs	House rehab	19 KIs
Livelihoods	2 KIs	House rehab	5 KIs	Healthcare	4 KIs	Healthcare	12 KIs

### Access to durable solutions assistance<sup>23</sup> and impact on returns

Returnee, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (47 out of 55 KIs). The vast majority of consulted KIs (44 out of 47 KIs) reported that **humanitarian and development activities/projects had been implemented in Al-Saadiya in the six months prior to data collection**.

#### Most reported activities implemented in Al-Saadiya in the six months prior to data collection (out of 44 KIs)<sup>20, 24</sup>

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)	35 KIs
Livelihoods	35 KIs
Housing rehabilitation	4 KIs
Reconciliation and social cohesion	4 KIs

#### Activities' implementers

All KIs reporting implemented activities in the sub-district (44 KIs) also reported that these **activities or projects were implemented by humanitarian and durable solutions actors**, followed by local authorities (37 KIs). According to KIs, local authorities were mainly involved in WASH (35 KIs) and livelihood programmes (35 KIs).

#### Reported groups less involved in activities

Almost half of the KIs (20 out of 44 KIs) reported that **IDPs in the community were less involved in activities or projects** in the sub-district. According to seven KIs, IDPs from the community were less likely to be involved in these activities. This may be attributed to the fact that these households were still displaced at the time activities were implemented. However, nine KIs reported believing that there were no groups less involved in these activities. The rest of KIs did not know about groups less involved in activities (10 KIs) or refused to answer (1 KI).

Regarding vulnerable groups,<sup>25</sup> over half of KIs (25 KIs) reported that **older persons** (14 KIs) and **persons with disabilities** (11 KIs) were less involved in activities or projects compared to other vulnerable groups. According to nine KIs, all vulnerable groups had the same level of access to participate. The rest of KIs (13 KIs) did not know about vulnerable groups involvement in activities.

#### Durable solutions assistance as a factor to encourage returns

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (36 out of 55 KIs). The majority of these KIs (30 out of 36 KIs) reported that the **availability of durable solutions assistance would be a factor encouraging returns** to Al-Saadiya. Reportedly, **livelihood programmes** were identified by KIs as the **most needed to encourage further returns** (23 KIs), followed by housing rehabilitation (5 KIs) and healthcare (2 KIs).

### Perceptions on access to housing

Returnee, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (47 out of 55 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that most households in Al-Saadiya resided in houses.

#### Access to HLP documentation

The vast majority of consulted KIs (46 out of 47 KIs) reported that most of households in the sub-district who reportedly owned houses also **had HLP documents** to prove housing ownership. However, one returnee KI reported that some returnee households never had HLP documentation to prove the ownership of their houses.

#### Vulnerable groups at particular risk of eviction

According to 10 KIs, **households with alleged links to ISIL** were more at **risk of eviction** than other vulnerable groups.<sup>25</sup>

#### Access to housing rehabilitation

Returnee, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (47 out of 55 KIs).

**30%-45%** of houses<sup>19</sup> in Al-Saadiya reportedly remained destroyed or damaged at the time of data collection.

#### Challenges in accessing housing rehabilitation

All 55 KIs reported perceiving that most households faced challenges in accessing housing rehabilitation in the sub-district. KIs reported that access to housing rehabilitation was mainly affected by the limited access to financial resources affected households had for housing rehabilitation (34 KIs), the high level of housing damage in the sub-district, especially in the villages (27 KIs), and the lack of government compensation for housing rehabilitation (26 KIs).

#### Limited access to financial resources for housing rehabilitation

According to 34 KIs, affected households did not have financial resources for housing rehabilitation. KIs reported that households resorted to different strategies to cope with the damage to their homes and the lack of funds they had for housing rehabilitation (28 KIs). These reportedly included:

- » Households remaining displaced (25 KIs),
- » Households renting in AoOs, which was considered an unsustainable type of housing agreement (3 KIs), and
- » Some households only partially rehabilitating their homes due to lack of funds and residing in sub-standard houses (1 KI).

#### Lack of government compensation for rehabilitation

Access to government compensation for housing rehabilitation was reportedly limited due to:

- » Lack of compensation to affected households by the local relevant entities (24 out of 25 KIs),
- » Households needed to pay bribes to intermediaries to have their compensation transactions processed (2 KIs),
- » Lack of government budget allocation for housing rehabilitation in the sub-district (2 KIs), and

- » Complicated compensation processes which required households to be present in the governorate centre, resulting in additional costs for transportation (1 KI).

#### Other reported challenges to access housing rehabilitation

Other factors reportedly affecting access to housing rehabilitation included:

- » Lack of reconstruction projects led by the local government (18 KIs),
- » Limited support from NGOs for housing rehabilitation (9 KIs),
- » Lack of government loans for housing rehabilitation (5 KIs), and
- » Inflated prices for construction materials which were of limited availability in the sub-district (3 KIs).

According to one community leader KI, blocked returns to the sub-district negatively affected housing rehabilitation, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, residential land plots assigned by the government for housing purposes<sup>26</sup> were not distributed yet at the time of data collection (3 KIs).

#### KI recommendations to enhance access to housing rehabilitation

According to 24 KIs (out of 25 KIs), the local government and NGOs should launch reconstruction projects to support housing rehabilitation in the sub-district. Furthermore, it was also recommended that the local government promote the construction of housing complexes for the most affected returnee households whose houses were heavily damaged (2 KIs).

#### Type of support reportedly needed to access housing rehabilitation (out of 55 KIs)<sup>20</sup>

Financial support	54 KIs	<div></div>
Rehabilitation projects	24 KIs	<div></div>
Legal assistance/representation	1 KI	<div></div>

### Perceptions on access to basic public services

All 55 KIs reported perceiving that most households faced challenges in accessing basic public services. **Healthcare** was the **most reported type of public service that was difficult to access** in Al-Saadiya (51 out of 55 KIs). One KI clarified that this might be due to under-development:

**"The health sector is one of the neglected sectors in Al-Saadiya."**

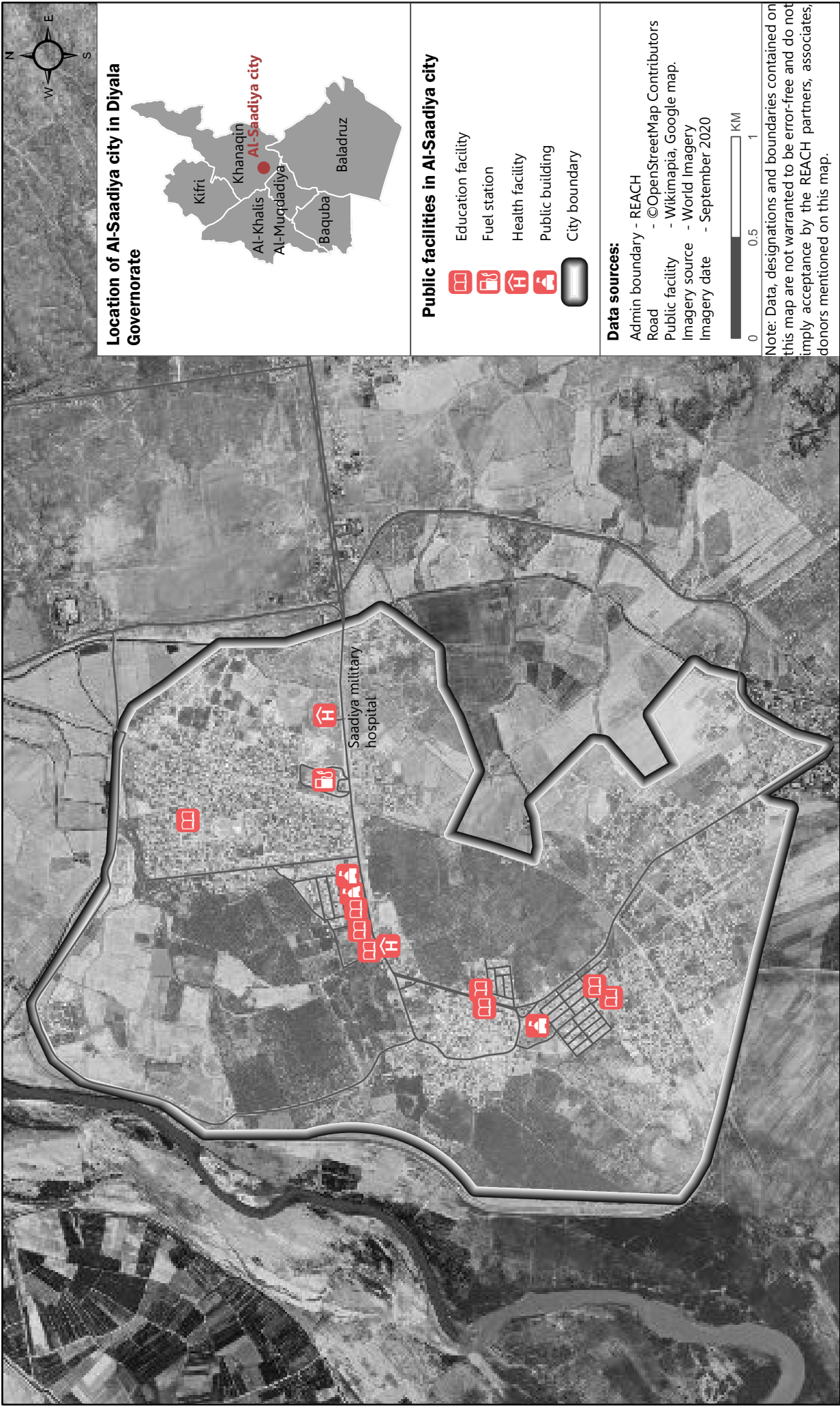
- Male returnee KI -

#### Reported basic public services challenging to access at the time of data collection (out of 55 KIs)<sup>20</sup>

Healthcare	51 KIs	<div></div>
Water	39 KIs	<div></div>
Electricity	20 KIs	<div></div>
Education	11 KIs	<div></div>
Waste disposal	5 KIs	<div></div>



Map 4. Basic public services providers in Al-Saadiya city



### Challenges in accessing basic public services

Several KIs reported that there was a need for public infrastructure to be rehabilitated (7 out of 55 KIs). This was attributed to a lack of budget allocated for public services (5 KIs), limited infrastructure rehabilitation projects (1 KI), the payment system for construction contractors not being facilitated (1 KI), and roads needing rehabilitation (1 KI). Other challenges negatively affecting households' access to basic public services were reportedly related to the small number of NGOs providing basic service assistance (2 KIs) and households experiencing delays to access services reportedly due to lack of public sector employees assigned to specific work in the sub-district (1 KI).

### Access to public healthcare

The vast majority of the KIs (51 out of 55 KIs) reported that households faced challenges in accessing public healthcare services. The most reported challenges were related to the conditions at the functional public health centre (PHC) in Al-Saadiya (40 KIs), shortage of medical personnel (40 KIs), and the lack of functional hospitals (29 KIs).

#### Conditions at the operational PHC

Conditions negatively affecting the operation of the PHC reportedly included:

- » Shortages of medicine (31 KIs),
- » Shortages of medical supplies and equipment such as ultrasounds and x-rays (19 KIs),
- » Lack of emergency doctors, particularly at night (5 KIs),
- » PHC's services not being enough to cover the demand of increased population (4 KIs), and
- » Lack of specialised services in operational PHC (3 KIs).

#### Shortage of medical personnel

Shortages of public medical staff was commonly reported as a factor negatively affecting access to healthcare (40 KIs). According to the KIs (40 KIs), shortages were mainly due to the specialised medical staff reportedly remained displaced, lack of experience of medical staff available at the PHC, and lack of specialised staff and doctors.

#### Lack of operational hospitals in the sub-district

In addition to challenges related to conditions in the PHC, according to 12 KIs (out of 29 KIs), the sub-district lacked operational hospitals that could provide delivery and surgery services. Reportedly, one of the two existing hospitals in the sub-district operates as a PHC (12 KIs) due to damages to the building and needed rehabilitation (5 KIs). Additionally, 10 KIs reported that the military hospital, which once serviced households located outside of the city centre, had stopped operating for healthcare purposes after it had been re-purposed to serve as military headquarters after the liberation of Al-Saadiya in 2014.

According to 15 KIs (out of 49), two main strategies have been adopted to cope with some of the noted challenges. As reported by 9 KIs, households travelled to Jalawla, Khanaqin, Baquba, and Baghdad to access hospitals even though it was expensive. Moreover, households were forced to purchase medicines in private pharmacies resulting in additional medical expenditures (6 KIs).

### KI recommendations to improve access to public healthcare services

Several recommendations were made by consulted KIs (40 KIs) which include addressing the:

- » Shortage of (specialised) medical staff and doctors by assigning new personnel to the healthcare sector (30 KIs),
- » Providing the needed medications and treatments to the operational PCH supported by the relevant local authorities (26 KIs), and
- » Rehabilitating the two hospitals in the sub-district (10 KIs).

### Access to public water

Over half of the KIs (39 out of 55 KIs) reported perceiving that most households faced challenges in accessing public water services in the sub-district. The most reported challenge pertained to water quality being low and not suitable for drinking (23 KIs) which reportedly resulted in households resorting to purchasing bottled water in local markets (3 KIs). Although, there were reports of damaged water networks being rehabilitated, several KIs stated that public water networks need to be extended to some villages in the sub-district (7 KIs).

Other reported factors affecting access to public water services included the increase in demand for water due to an increased population size after recent returns to the sub-district (1 KI) and allegations of upstream countries negatively affecting water flows entering Iraq's rivers in Diyala (1 KI).<sup>27</sup> Three KIs reported that neighbourhoods' water provisions had been rationed to cope with limited access to water. One KI reported that business operations had been negatively affected by limited water access, while another KI believed that households' return intentions might also be influenced by this.

### KI recommendations to improve access to public water services

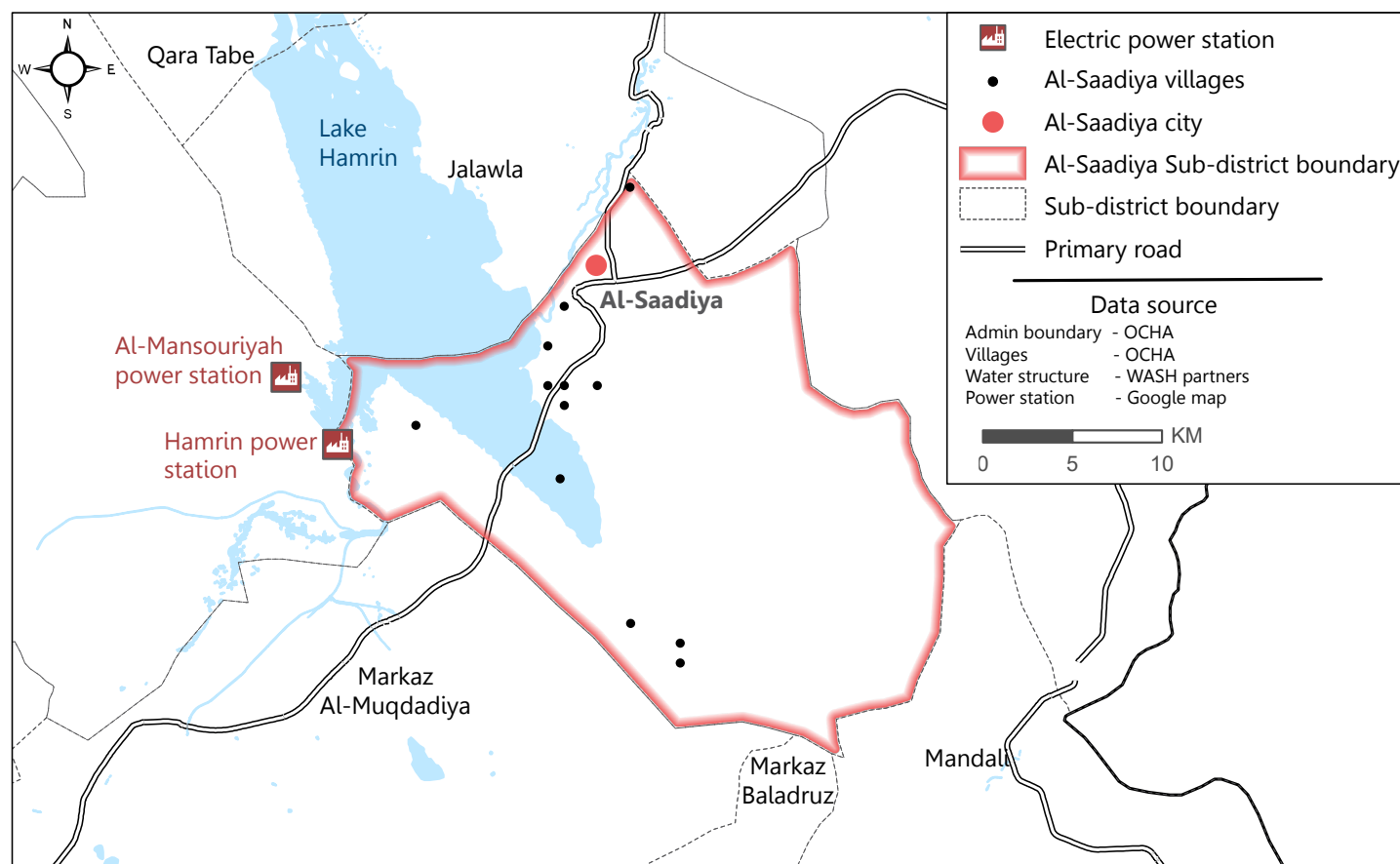
According to 28 KIs, there were activities that could facilitate improvement concerning access to public water, which included:

- » Building new and rehabilitating existing water treatment plants or central filtering systems (20 KIs),
- » Rehabilitating and expanding water complexes to cover the needs and demands of the community (14 KIs), and
- » Implementing projects led by the local government to ensure access to enough water for land irrigation (1 KI).

### Access to public electricity

Almost half of KIs (20 out of 55 KIs) reported perceiving that most households faced challenges in accessing public electricity services in the sub-district. The most reported challenges were related to the electrical source not being able to cover the demand resulting in limited electricity supply (19 KIs), and electrical networks needing rehabilitation or to be replaced, specifically transformers, poles, and electrical wires (5 KIs). Additionally, it was reported that there were electric lines that have been disconnected from Iran's network due to rehabilitation activities (1 KI).

**Map 5. Water facilities and electric power stations supplying Al-Saadiya Sub-district at the time of data collection**



### Access to public education services

According to 8 KIs (out of 55), there were challenges in accessing public education in the sub-district. These were related to several concerns regarding the conditions at operating schools (6 out of 8 KIs), shortage of education staff (2 KIs), and limited support to develop the education sector in Al-Saadiya (1 KI).

#### Conditions at operating schools

It was reported that functional schools in the sub-district needed rehabilitation (3 KIs), could not cover the demand of the community (3 KIs) and did not meet the minimum standards for students' safety (3 KIs).

#### Shortage in education personnel

Furthermore, it was reported that there were shortages in education staff (2 KIs) and that, consequently, schools had relied on lecturers who lacked experience and worked for daily wages (1 KI).

A few KIs (3 KIs) recommended the construction of new schools led by the local government as a way to reduce the challenges in accessing education for the children in the sub-district.

### Access to sanitation and sewage connection services

According to five KIs (out of 55), most households in the sub-district faced challenges in accessing services related to sanitation. This was reportedly due to projects for sewage rehabilitation recently starting and showing delays in implementation (3 KIs), the current sewage system being old and not fully operational (2 KIs), and delays by the municipality in paying wages for daily workers (1 KI).

### Access to waste collection, disposal, and management

One KI reported that there were challenges in accessing public waste collection, disposal, and management services. The reasons reportedly included:

- » Waste being collected once a week,
- » Lack of sanitation workers, and
- » Lack of vehicles for safe waste collection.

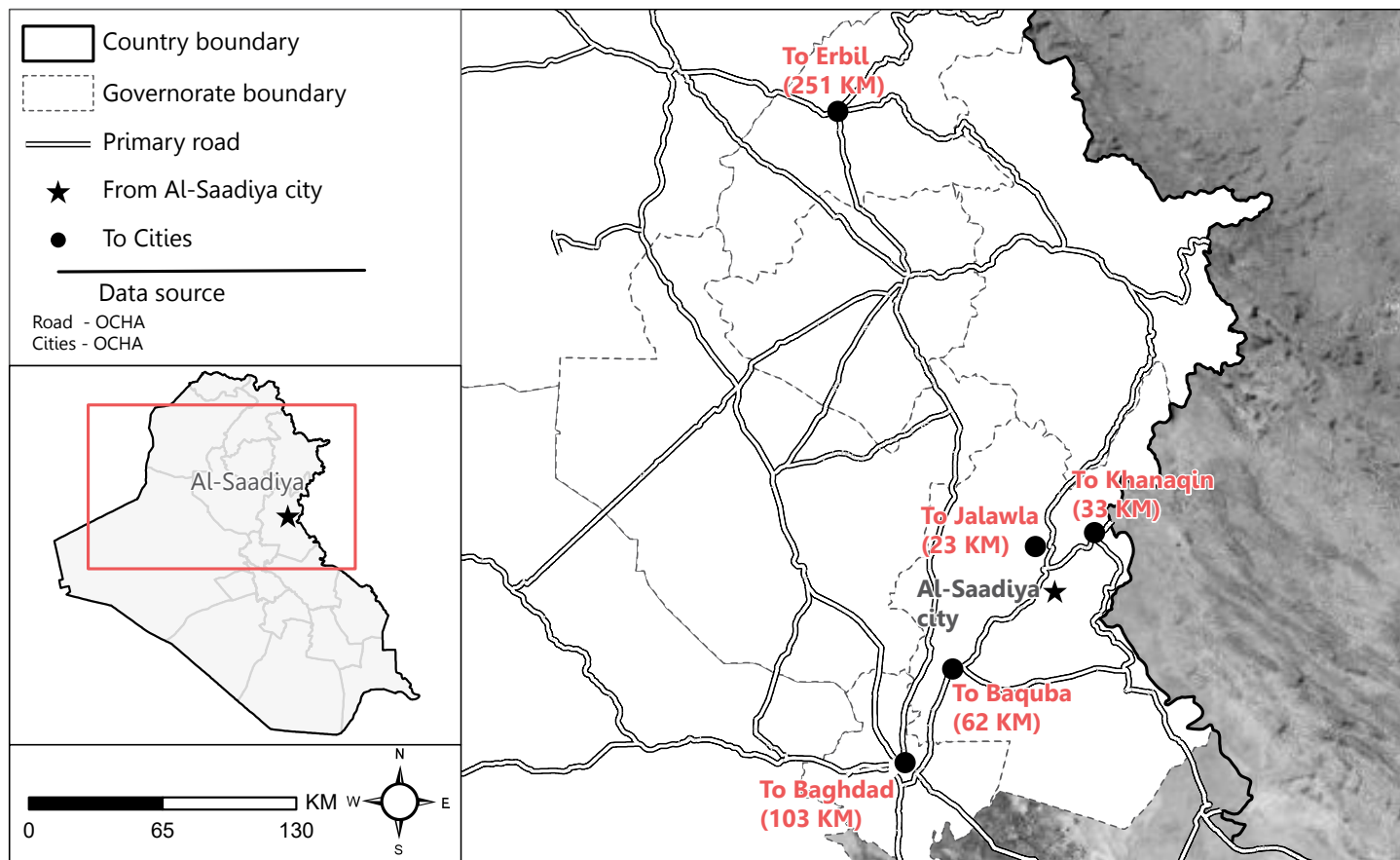
### Perceptions on access to livelihoods

Almost all KIs (54 out of 55 KIs) reported that most households faced challenges in accessing livelihoods, while one KI reported no challenges. Among these KIs, the most reported challenges to accessing employment were a general lack of opportunities and limited diversity in employment sectors (43 KIs). Additionally, 17 KIs reported that IDP households from the community remained displaced due to the lack of job opportunities in the sub-district.

#### General lack of job opportunities and reduced diversity of employment sectors

According to 13 KIs, family members travel to Khanaqin, Baquba and Bagdad in search of jobs, including youth who relocated<sup>28</sup> to these identified locations in addition to Erbil (7 KIs). Perhaps reflecting reports of a lack of work opportunities in the sub-district, four KIs reported considerable competition for existing jobs. According to two KIs, social connections were an important factor in obtaining a job, with relatives and friends reportedly often being favoured.

**Map 6. Distance from Al-Saadiya Sub-district to other areas where KIs reported that households could access basic public services and livelihoods at the time of data collection**



Lack of job opportunities have also reportedly led to households with less financial resources depending on low daily wages (4 KIs). With these challenges, there have reportedly been elevated levels of poverty whereby households cannot meet their needs (12 KIs) and cases of households remaining displaced (6 KIs).

### Challenges in the agricultural sector

Agriculture is one of Diyala's main economic sectors, with farmers growing a variety of produce including dates, citrus fruits, wheat, barley, and rice.<sup>29</sup> Al-Saadiya Sub-district was famous for its agricultural lands and orchards (5 out of 30 KIs). In recent years several factors have been affecting the development of the agricultural sector, including the perceived impact of climate change, the lack of support to farmers, and challenges in accessing loans from agricultural banks due to complicated bureaucratic processes.<sup>29</sup>

According to 10 KIs, the local government was perceived as not providing enough support to the agricultural sector, which reportedly contributed to its deterioration. KIs reported that the lack of financial support to farmers to purchase and access seeds and fertilizers led to them abandoning the agriculture sector (23 KIs). Other reported challenges presented to farmers included the inflated prices of seeds and the lack of agricultural materials in the sub-district (8 KIs). Furthermore, three KIs reported that damage to agricultural lands and fields had high restoration costs (3 KIs). These KIs also reported that the above-mentioned influenced farmers' decisions not to continue cultivating. Moreover, according to a few KIs, farmers could not access their lands due to being located far from their residency and security measures being imposed preventing access to these lands, also due to the

reported presence of explosive remnants of war (ERWs) (2 KIs). Additionally, the agriculture sector continued to be affected by farmers remaining displaced (1 KI). The overall deterioration of agricultural productivity in the sub-district has reportedly resulted in local products increasingly being replaced by imported products (4 KIs).

### Challenges in the public sector

Almost half of the KIs (25 out of 54 KIs) reported challenges in accessing job opportunities in the governmental or public sector. The vast majority of the KIs (21 out of 25 KIs) reported that the main barrier to employment was the lack of appointments within the public sector, impacting particularly unemployment among recent graduates (4 KIs). On this note, four KIs reported perceiving that people sometimes need to pay bribes or leverage personal connections to secure employment. One returnee KI also reported that the number of jobs available in the public sector was negatively affected by the economic crisis in Iraq.<sup>30</sup>

### Challenges in the construction sector

Over one third of the KIs (21 out of 54 KIs) reported challenges in the construction sector in Saadiya Sub-district. The majority of the KIs (17 out of 21 KIs) reported that there was a lack of construction and reconstruction projects in Saadiya. According to one returnee KI, favouritism influenced approval processes and successful implementation of projects. Reportedly, the construction sector was impacted by the lack of construction materials, which were imported from Erbil and Suleymaniya (4 KIs), as well as bribes reportedly paid at checkpoints to facilitate entrance of these materials to the sub-district (2 KIs).



Reportedly, the sub-district faced a shortage of skilled and unskilled construction workers, further impacting construction works in Saadiya (2 KIs).

### Challenges in the private sector

Almost half of reporting KIs (20 out of 54 KIs) also reported challenges to accessing jobs in the private sector, including the manufacturing industry in Al-Saadiya. KIs perceived that the government should play an active role in establishing private sector initiatives, such as promoting the establishment of factories that could ensure high number of job opportunities in the sub-district (17 KIs). According to one IDP KI, despite the return of shop and business owners who reopened in the sub-district, it was not enough to cover the demand for jobs in Al-Saadiya.

Moreover, it should also be noted that the manufacturing industry in Saadiya sub-district was reportedly negatively affected by the lack of access to raw materials available in the area and the transportation of goods. More specifically, KIs reported that raw materials were not available in the sub-district and were imported from Erbil and Suleymaniya (2 KIs), and that these were sold at inflated prices (1 KI). To this end, one returnee KI reported incidents of bribes being paid at checkpoints to allow raw materials to enter the area.

### Challenges related to NGOs programming

Reportedly, access to livelihoods was negatively affected by the limited access to livelihood programmes led by NGOs in the sub-district (6 out of 54 KIs). According to four KIs, there was a lack of cash for work programmes led by NGOs in some villages in the sub-district and those available were not enough to cover the needs of participating households. Furthermore, these KIs also reported a lack of job creation projects which may support households' access to livelihoods. Additionally, one IDP KI from the community reported believing that implemented short-term livelihood programmes did not have sustained impacts on the community.

### KI recommendations to enhance access to livelihoods

To overcome the identified challenges in accessing livelihoods, KIs (35 out of 54 KIs) suggested to the local government and NGOs to focus on:

- » Implementing long-term livelihood projects (28 KIs),
- » Developing irrigation systems and enhancing access to water (15 KIs),
- » Establishing government factories and workshops, for example water filtering and bottling factories (3 KIs), and
- » Facilitating removal of ERWs in the sub-district for farmers to safely access their lands (1 KI).

### Livelihood activities support economic growth

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (19 out of 55 KIs). According to the majority of consulted KIs (17 out of 19 KIs), livelihood programmes implementation in the sub-district may support economic development with special focus on the revitalization of the agricultural sector (10 KIs).

### Supporting the revitalization of the agricultural sector (including livestock and fishing)

According to 10 KIs, the agricultural sector could be revitalised through a number of initiatives, including:

- » Facilitating the marketing of local products in local shops, which may reduce the dependency on imported items (4 KIs),
- » Facilitating access to government loans for farmers so they can buy seeds and fertilizers (4 KIs),
- » Supporting farmers to rehabilitate their orchard and providing loans for field recovery (3 KIs),
- » Improving water and irrigation systems (3 KIs), and
- » Providing machinery to farmers (1KI).

Furthermore, one community leader KI reported that further efforts were needed to facilitate and encourage the return of farmers from the sub-district who remained displaced. Another community leader KI reported that there should be advocacy for improved management of water flow from Hamrin Lake dam to facilitate improved fishing in the sub-district.

### NGOs implementing livelihood programmes

Almost half of consulted KIs (9 out of 19 KIs) reported that NGOs should support livelihood programmes in the sub-district. A few KIs also reported that there were some cash-for-work programmes implemented by organisations and these positively impacted on the community (2 KIs).

Activities recommended by KIs to be implemented included:

- » Cash-for-work programmes, which may increase households' incomes and, consequently, may increase the commercial activity (5 KIs),
- » Loans for small projects and job placements for barbers and craftsmen (3 KIs), and
- » Job creation programmes targeting women (1 KI).

Lastly, it was suggested by one community leader KI that within the private sector, factories be established to ensure a high level of jobs.

### Livelihood sectors with reported growth potential

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (19 out of 55 KIs). **Agriculture** was the **most commonly reported sector showing growth for potential** in the 12 months following data collection (14 KIs), followed by private and public healthcare (4 KIs) and private education (3 KIs).

### Most reported livelihood sectors available in Al-Saadiya at the time of data collection (out of 47 KIs)<sup>20, 31</sup>

Public education	36 KIs	<div></div>
Construction	22 KIs	<div></div>
Agriculture <sup>32</sup>	21 KIs	<div></div>
Private healthcare	14 KIs	<div></div>
Public healthcare	10 KIs	<div></div>
Public administration and defence <sup>33</sup>	6 KIs	<div></div>

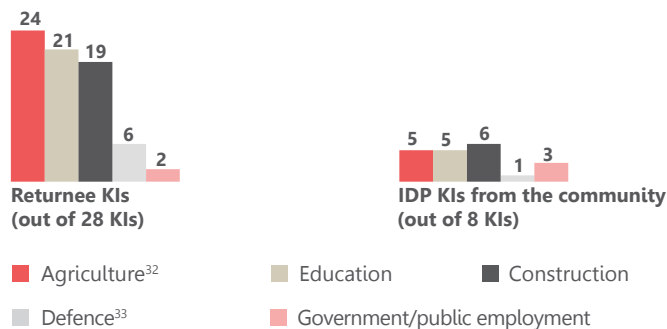


Findings indicated that the availability of jobs were less widely available in some sectors as compared to before 2014.<sup>34</sup> Employment in the service sector such as restaurants was reportedly not available at the time of data collection.

### Livelihood sectors of interest for returnees and IDPs

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (32 out of 55 KIs). The most commonly reported livelihood sector of interest for returnee and IDP households from the community was **agriculture** (including animal husbandry) (28 out of 32 KIs).

The most commonly reported livelihood sectors of interest:<sup>20</sup>



### Reported groups with less access to livelihoods

Over one third of KIs (21 out of 55 KIs) reported that **all displacement and vulnerable groups<sup>24</sup> faced challenges in accessing livelihoods**. Other KIs reported perceiving that IDPs in the community (19 KIs) and IDPs from the community (5 KIs) faced more challenges to access livelihoods compared to other displacement groups. According to 16 KIs, **older persons faced more challenges in accessing livelihoods** than other vulnerable groups, followed by people with disabilities (9 KIs) and female heads of households (2 KIs).

## Access to public judicial mechanisms

### Challenges to access public judicial mechanisms

All 55 KIs reported perceiving that most households generally did not face challenges in accessing public judicial systems.

### Presence of public judicial offices/departments and missing personal documentation

Returnee, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (47 out of 55 KIs). According to the vast majority of the KIs (43 out of 47 KIs), there were no public judicial offices closed in the sub-district at the time of data collection. However, one SME KI reported that the police station in Al-Saadiya was closed due to damage to the building (1 KI).

Additionally, a few KIs reported that there were no offices for the Directorate of Passports under the Iraq Ministry of Interior in Al-Saadiya (2 KIs). According to one returnee KI, passports were not difficult to obtain from other offices covering access to documentation for households in the sub-district.

## Perceptions on safety and security<sup>35</sup>

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (36 out of 55 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that the majority of returnee and IDP households from the community felt safe (10 KIs) or very safe (26 KIs) in Al-Saadiya. This situation was reportedly the same for women, girls, men, and boys.<sup>36</sup>

### Freedom of movement

Returnee, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (47 out of 55 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that there were no restrictions of movement imposed in the sub-district.

The vast majority of returnee KIs (26 out of 27 KIs) also reported that most of returnee households could freely move during the day and at night in Al-Saadiya if they desired. This situation was reportedly the same for women, girls, men, and boys.<sup>36</sup> One returnee KI reported perceiving that there were restrictions on movement at night but did not provide further details.

### ERW land contamination

One returnee KI reported the presence of ERWs contamination in agricultural lands belonging to Al-Saadiya Sub-district. The KI also recommended the intervention of relevant authorities and specialised actors to remove ERWs from the lands. Consequently, removing ERWs may ensure the safety of civilians since incidents involving casualties had reportedly occurred in the six months prior to data collection due to ERW explosions, according to the KI.



### Perceptions on governance<sup>35</sup>

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (19 out of 55 KIs). Over two thirds of KIs (13 out of 19 KIs) reported believing that none of the present bodies (such as community leaders, local authorities, and security actors) in the sub-district were influencing governance at the time of data collection.

However, five KIs reported that **local authorities** were influencing governance in the sub-district, followed by the formal security forces (4 KIs). According to one SME KI, the political groups in the sub-district were the most influential body in the sub-district in terms of governance.

#### Governing bodies concerned with returnees and IDPs' affairs

All KIs were consulted for this section (55 KIs). The vast majority of the KIs (49 out of 55 KIs) reported that there were no governing bodies concerned with returnees and IDPs' affairs at the time of data collection. However, one KI reported that the political groups in the sub-district were the body influencing returnee and IDP affairs in the sub-district at the time of data collection.



### Perceptions on community tensions<sup>35</sup>

Returnee, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (47 out of 55 KIs). The vast majority of consulted KIs (46 out of 47 KIs) reported not being aware of any disputes within the sub-district in the 6 months prior to data collection. One KI did not know about the occurrence of these disputes. In addition, none of the KIs reported being aware of any disputes between the sub-district and other areas, or any type of retaliation incidents, in the 6 months prior to data collection.

However, according to three returnee KIs, the potential return of households to the sub-district may lead to intercommunal disputes and reignite any outstanding disputes.

#### Role of different bodies in resolving disputes

Returnee KIs were consulted for this section (28 out of 55 KIs). The vast majority of consulted KIs (26 out of 28 KIs) reported the presence of different bodies that were effective in resolving disputes within the sub-district and between the sub-district and other areas. The rest of the KIs refused to answer (1 KI) or did not know about these bodies (1 KI).

#### Formal security forces<sup>37</sup>

Over three quarters of consulted KIs (20 KIs) reported that formal security forces were the most effective body in resolving disputes. According to the majority of the KIs (16 out of 20 KIs), the formal security forces represented the state, were responsible to impose the law, and to ensure the safety of the community. Moreover, KIs also reported formal security forces had a role in resolving disputes (14 KIs) and maintaining and promoting security (8 KIs). According to 5 KIs, the security forces receive trust from the community, which reportedly highlights their effectiveness.

#### Local authorities

According to six KIs, local authorities were effective in resolving disputes. These KIs reported that it was their responsibility to resolve disputes, and they represented the law in the sub-district (5 KIs).



### Resolving disputes between the sub-district and other areas

Returnee KIs were consulted for this section (28 out of 55 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs reported not knowing of any bodies that were effective in resolving disputes between the sub-district and other areas (18 out of 28 KIs) or refused to answer (6 KIs). The rest of KIs reported that tribal leaders (3 out of 4 KIs) and mukhtars (1 KI) were the most effective at resolving disputes between the sub-district and other areas.

#### Tribal leaders

According to a few KIs, the tribal leaders' role was to preserve social bonds, renounce violence between communities and community members (2 KIs), and implement customary laws<sup>38</sup> to resolve disputes between affected parties (1 KI). Reportedly, tribal leaders were highly respected by community members in the sub-district (1 KI).

#### Mukhtars<sup>39</sup>

Additionally, according to one KI, mukhtars were reportedly effective in resolving small disputes between community members. They reportedly usually intervened in the case of small disputes.



### Perceptions on community inter-relations<sup>35</sup>

To understand community inter-relations in Al-Saadiya it is important to highlight that Khanaqin District is strategically important for commercial, security, and political reasons.<sup>40</sup> The region is inhabited by large Kurdish, Arab (Shia and Sunni), and Turkmen population, who are perceived as significant voting blocs by both Kurdish and Baghdad-based parties. The district centre is majority Kurdish, while large populations of both Kurds and Sunni Arabs reside in Jalawla and Al-Saadiya sub-districts.<sup>40</sup>

#### Community inter-relations

Returnee and IDP from the community KIs were consulted for this section (36 out of 55 KIs). Slightly over half of consulted KIs (19 out of 36 KIs) did not know how households from their respective displacement groups felt in the sub-district (18 KIs) or refused to answer (1 KI). The rest of consulted KIs reported that most households in their respective displacement groups **felt welcome** (15 KIs) **or very welcome** (2 KIs) in the community of Al-Saadiya.

#### Returnee households feeling welcome

Returnee KIs were consulted for this section (28 out of 55 KIs). The majority of returnee KIs (15 out of 28 KIs) reported that returnee households felt welcome or very welcome in the sub-district. KIs based their statement on reported strong relationships and cooperation between community members (14 KIs), and existing kinship ties and friendship with other households in the community (14 KIs). Additionally, a few KIs reported that the sub-district community was multi-sectarian and tribal in nature which facilitated returnee households feeling welcome (2 KIs).

According to four returnee KIs, households felt only somewhat welcome. Reportedly, this was attributed to the discrimination and lack of trust some returnee households faced from host community members.

### IDPs from the community feeling welcome

IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (8 out of 55 KIs). The majority of IDP KIs (6 KIs) did not know how IDP households from the community may feel if they return to their AoOs.

Two KIs reported expecting that most IDP households would generally feel welcome if they were to return to the sub-district. Reportedly, this was attributed to IDP households from the community having strong relationships and cooperation with other community members and the presence of kinship ties and friendships with other households in the community.

### Interaction between displacement groups

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (36 out of 55 KIs). According to 21 KIs (out of 36 KIs), various groups in the community interacted with one another. Interaction reportedly happened through:

- » Participation in voluntary work such as cleaning and supporting to get schools ready for the academic year (5 KIs),
- » Financially supporting vulnerable households to cover their basic needs (5 KIs),
- » Attending religious and social events (5 KIs),
- » Financially supporting households with family members who have medical conditions so they can access medical treatment (3 KIs),
- » Supporting affected households with housing rehabilitation (2 KIs), and
- » Participating in projects which involved all members of the community (1 KI).

Additionally, one returnee KI reported that households in the community interacted through the kinship ties they had.

### Reported interaction between returnee households and other groups

Reportedly, **returnee households equally interacted with other returnee households and IDPs in the community** (17 out of 18 KIs reporting interaction between groups), followed by IDPs from the community (16 KIs). The rest of the KIs did not know about interaction between groups (10 KIs).

Participating in voluntary activities (5 out of 18 KIs) and attending religious and social events (5 KIs) were the most commonly reported ways of interacting for returnee households.

### Reported interaction between IDP households from the community and other groups

A few IDP KIs from the community (3 out of 8 KIs) reported that **most IDP households from Al-Saadiya mainly interacted with returnees** (3 KIs).

Financial support provided to other households in the sub-district was the most commonly reported way of interacting for IDP households from the community. Reportedly, this support was specifically dedicated to vulnerable households which were not able to meet their basic needs and these with members with difficult medical conditions.

### Barriers for interaction between groups

Returnee, IDP from the community, and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (32 out of 55 KIs). Among them, 25 reported perceiving there were **no challenges to interaction between groups** in the sub-district. However, five KIs reported the presence of factors negatively affecting interaction between groups. These reportedly included:<sup>20</sup>

- » Fear of being perceived as ISIL affiliated (4 KIs),
- » Presence or fear of discrimination, abuse, and exploitation (1 KI), and
- » Existence of inter-communal disputes (1 KI).

### Participation in decision-making processes

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (36 out of 55 KIs). **The majority of consulted KIs (22 out of 32 KIs) reported that households participated in decision-making processes** in the sub-district.



## Perceptions on social cohesion<sup>35</sup>

### Actors influencing social cohesion

Durable solutions actors **should be the most involved actors to improve social cohesion** in the sub-district, according to 46 KIs (out of 55).

Types of actors that were reportedly perceived as needed to be involved to improve social cohesion in Al-Saadiya, by number of KIs:<sup>20</sup>



### Improving social cohesion

The vast majority of the KIs (52 out of 55 KIs) reported strategies or initiatives to be considered to accelerate or enhance social cohesion processes.

### Initiatives ensuring access to employment for all

Access to jobs for all target groups was identified by KIs as an important factor to promote social cohesion (33 out of 52 KIs).

Reportedly, having individuals working together would increase interaction and improve relations between community members in Al-Saadiya (8 KIs).

### Implementing seminars, national and local conferences, and awareness sessions

Over half of the KIs (33 out of 52 KIs) reported that organising seminars, conferences, awareness sessions, and youth activities could effectively promote social cohesion. The most recommended topics for these activities were:

- » Cooperation and peacebuilding (5 KIs),
- » Accepting differences (4 KIs),
- » Trust and participation without discrimination (2 KIs), and
- » Security and prevention of terrorism (1 KI).

In terms of groups to target, the participation of returnees and IDPs from Al-Saadiya (3 KIs), and tribal and religious leaders (3 KIs) was recommended. Moreover, a few KIs reported that intellectual personalities should also be targeted for conferences and meetings (2 KIs). KI reported that civil society organisations should organise such activities, while another KI thought government and local authorities should be involved.

### Initiatives promoting community inter-relationships and social bonds

KIs recommended the following activities that would improve social bonds would also facilitate improvements in social cohesion (29 out of 55):

- » Advocating and promoting the return of displaced households (16 KIs),
- » Promoting voluntary work to bring different groups together (8 KIs),
- » Providing financial assistance to vulnerable households such as widows and families who have lost members due to the conflict (2 KIs), and
- » Promoting kinship ties, specifically encouraging marriages between different ethnic groups (1 KI).

However, six KIs reported believing that there were no initiatives that needed to be planned as there were no concerns for social cohesion in the sub-district. It was reported that the various sectarian and ethnic groups have a good relationship and understanding between them (2 KIs) and that, furthermore, kinship ties were already strong in the area.

### Perceptions on durable solutions<sup>35</sup>

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (36 out of 55 KIs).

#### Returnee households feeling reintegrated

Returnee KIs were consulted for this section (28 out of 55 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs (22 out of 28 KIs) reported that **returnee households felt reintegrated** in the sub-district after returning to their homes. A few returnee KIs reported that households felt reintegrated since they were reunited with the members of their extended family (2 KIs). Another two consulted KIs reported that returnee households felt reintegrated since they were no longer facing the challenges they did when displaced, such as issues to pay housing rents. Additionally, one KI reported that, for some returnee households, having returned to their main sources of income and businesses and having good relations with community members helped them to feel reintegrated.

The rest of the KIs did not know how returnee households felt regarding durable solutions (4 KIs) or refused to answer this question (1 KI).

#### IDP households from the community feeling integrated

IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (8 out of 55 KIs). According to six IDP KIs from the community (out of 8 KIs), **IDP households did not feel integrated in their AoDs**. Two IDP KIs did not answer this question.

**"We do not feel integrated or belonging to the locations we are displaced in because these are not the areas where we were born in."**

- Male IDP KI from the community -

### About the Returns Working Group in Iraq

The [Returns Working Group \(RWG\)](#) is an operational and multi-stakeholder platform on returns, which was established in line with Strategic Objective 3 of the 2016 Iraq HRP "to support voluntary, safe and dignified return" of IDPs, so as to monitor and report on conditions in areas of return, and determine to what extent durable solutions have been achieved, or progress made, for returnees. The key objective of the group is to establish coherence of information, data and analysis, strengthen coordination and advocacy, give guidance on activities related to key areas, and enhance complementary action among its partners with the overall goal of supporting and reinforcing the national response to displacement and reintegration. Currently, IOM serves as the chair.

### About REACH

REACH 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). For more information, please visit our website: [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org). You can contact us directly at: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org) and follow us on Twitter @REACH\_info.



## End Notes

### 1 [IOM DTM Return Index](#)

2 Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster Iraq, [Iraq Informal Sites Overview](#), September 2021

3 Iraqi News Agency, [Minister of Migration announce the closure of all IDPs camps except for Kurdistan](#), 12 December 2021

4 International Crisis Group, [Reviving UN Mediation on Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries](#), December 2018

5 The ReDS questionnaire is tailored to direct questions related to demographics only to community leader and SME KIs based on their knowledge about the sub-district and population groups. In the case of Al-Saadiya, there were 4 community leader and 4 SME KIs. Population figures for returns and IDP populations in Al-Saadiya were based on their estimates at the time of data collection.

6 To date, [IOM DTM's bi-monthly tracking of returnees and IDPs](#) provides an overview of numbers and trends in movement and returns. Simultaneously, since 2018, the Returns Index was run as a joint initiative of DTM, Social Inquiry and the Returns Working Group (RWG), collecting data bi-monthly to provide indicative trends in the severity of conditions in areas of return (AoRs) nationwide. Similarly, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, IOM DTM, Protection Working Group (PWG), and RWG have conducted assessments with IDPs that have left camps following or in anticipation of closures to better understand and map AoR and secondary displacement.

7 For the purposes of this research, "remainee" refers to members of the host community who did not displaced during the events of 2014 or after.

8 For the purposes of this research, "returnees" are categorized as IDPs returning to their AoOs, where AoO is defined as the stated original sub-district of origin for the IDP as per the [IOM returnee index](#). Given the complexity of (re)integration, this could mean that returnees still face challenges to their sustainable return to their AoOs.

9 "The [DTM](#) considers as Internally displaced persons (IDPs) all Iraqis who were forced to flee from 1 January 2014 onwards and are still displaced within national borders at the moment of the assessment." - IOM DTM Iraq, [Location Assessment Methodology](#)

10 "To measure the severity of conditions in each location of return, the Return Index is based on 16 indicators grouped into two scales: (i) livelihoods and basic services, and (ii) social cohesion and safety perceptions. To compute an overall severity index, the scores of two scales are combined. The severity index ranges from 0 (all essential conditions for return are met) to 100 (no essential conditions for return are met). Higher scores denote more severe living conditions for returnees. The scores of the severity index can be grouped into three categories: 'low' severity conditions, 'medium', and 'high' (which also includes the identified 'very high' locations)." - [IOM DTM Methodology](#)

11 The most severely affected areas in Al-Saadiya in terms of social cohesion and safety perceptions were reportedly Al Israa Qtr, Al Rabe Al Olaa Qtr, Al Asree Qtr, Al Shaheed Qtr (Al Zohor), 17 Tamooz Qtr (Al Jaaf), Al Rabe Al Thaniya Qtr, Al Rabe Al Thaletha Qtr, Al Taakhi Qtr, Saad Qtr, Al Salaam Qtr, Ahmed Hani village, Rabiah village, Al-Asriyah village, Al-Khadraa Qtr, Bani weas village, Murjana village, Al Asakraa village, Diyala village, and Al Baydha village - IOM DTM, [Returns Index Round 15](#), March 2022

12 Findings are based on the perceptions of 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. For further details on the methodology, please see the ReDS [Terms of Reference \(ToR\)](#).

13 For the purposes of this research, "older returnees" refers to households who returned to Al-Saadiya Sub-district more than three months prior to data collection.

14 For the purposes of this research, "SMEs" are members of the community with a high level of expertise in different sectors or topics. These were represented by: six public employees (electricity, water and sanitation, agriculture, and youth and sports) and four NGOs representatives.

15 For the purposes of this research, "community leaders" are members of the host community represented by seven mukhtars and two local authority officials. A mukhtar can be defined as the head of a village or neighbourhood in some Arab countries, this position is officially recognised as local authority.

16 For the purposes of this research, "IDPs from the community" refers to households from Al-Saadiya displaced during the events of 2014 to areas different than their AoOs. Interviewed IDP KIs were displaced in Markaz Khanaqin Sub-district (Khanaqin District of Diyala Governorate) (7 KIs) and Markaz Al-Adhamiya Sub-district (Al-Adhamiya District of Baghdad Governorate).

17 For the purposes of this research, "recent returnees" refers to households who returned to Al-Saadiya Sub-district less than three months prior to data collection.

18 There were 55 individuals interviewed for the Al-Saadiya assessment aged between 22 and 69 years old. The majority were male (49 KIs). The lack of gender balance among the KIs was a limitation to the assessment. Integration of vulnerable age groups was considered, three KIs were considered in the youth group (between 18 and 24) and one KI represented older people (over 65 years old). Vulnerable age groups represented 7% of KIs.

19 Findings in this section were based on KIs estimated lower and highest average at the time of data collection.

20 KIs were able to select multiple responses to this question.

21 Other less reported primary needs were access to security and ERWs removal (2 KIs), food assistance (1 KI), infrastructure rehabilitation (1 KI), and waste collection, disposal, and management (1 KI).

22 The sample and the sub-samples are small and not representative with a known level of precision, hence findings are strictly indicative.

23 Durable solutions assistance includes the humanitarian, stabilization, development, and peace-building assistance under its umbrella.

24 Other less reported types of programmes implemented in Al-Saadiya in the six months prior to data collection included: COVID-19 awareness (3 KIs), non-food items distribution (1 KI), psycho-social support (1 KI), and food assistance (1 KI).

25 For this assessment, vulnerable groups included female heads of household, older persons, people with disabilities, unaccompanied/separated children (UASC) and minor heads of households. Other groups mentioned in the report were reported by KIs under 'other vulnerable groups' option.

26 "Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi has confirmed that more than half a million plots of land have been allocated for three million citizens under the "Dari" housing initiative. Applications for the scheme were made via an online process. [...] about 186,000 plots have already been distributed to citizens." - Iraq business news, [Half a Million Plots of Land allocated for Housing](#), January 2022

27 "Hamdani [The Ministry of Water Resources] had previously warned that Iran was "completely" blocking the outflow of water from border rivers into the country, causing a "catastrophe" in Diyala province. On July 11, 2021, he said that Iran had "completely" prevented the water of the Karkheh, Alvand, Karun and Sirvan rivers from entering Iraq. If the situation continued, he said, the crisis in Iraq's Diyala province would deepen." - Al Monitor, Iran, [Iraq exchange accusations over water flow](#), January 2022

28 Through the assessment findings it was not possible to define the specific type of movement referring to displacement, re-displacement, or migration. Further studies may be needed by durable solutions actors regarding this phenomenon.

29 IOM Iraq, [Agricultural Value Chain Analysis for Salah Al-Din and Diyala](#), 2021

30 "The Iraqi state cannot afford to keep creating government jobs to appease its underemployed, ever-growing, and increasingly dissatisfied population [...]" : Institute for the Study of War (ISW), [IRAQ 2021-2022: A FORECAST](#), June 2021

31 Returnee, community leaders, and SME KIs (47 out of 55 KIs) were consulted for this section. Other less reported livelihood sectors available in the sub-district at the time of data collection were public healthcare (4 KIs), transportation (3 KIs), and oil industry (1 KI).

32 Agriculture works also reportedly included livestock raising and animal breeding.

33 Referring to the official police and the Iraqi Security Forces under the Iraqi Ministry of Defence.

34 When the KIs were asked to compare which types of jobs were available in the sub-district before 2014 and at the time of the data collection, the availability had reportedly decreased. The KIs were asked to recall the period before 2014 and the perceived difference was understood keeping this in mind. In addition, the seasonality aspect of the situation at the time of data collection might have had an impact on the perceived availability.

35 The findings of this section represent the perceptions of a relatively small group of respondents and therefore are not representative and may differ from other reporting on these topics. Additionally, differences in reporting compared to other metrics could also be due to the methodology, with people being less open to sharing sensitive information over the phone.

36 It should be noted that gender indicators can be subject to potential under-reporting due to the limited number of female KIs interviewed. In addition, there might be a stigma around reporting on safety for men and boys.

37 "Formal security forces" refers to the Iraq security forces and all its components. "There are three principal components of the Iraqi Security Forces: the Iraqi Army (IA), the Iraqi Police (IP), and the National Police (NP). The Iraqi Army and the National Police are both national-level assets, with the IA under the command of the Ministry of Defense and the NP under the command of the Interior respectively." - Institute for the study of war, [Iraqi security forces](#)

38 "Customary law" refers to "Law consisting of customs that are accepted as legal requirements or obligatory rules of conduct; practices and beliefs that are so vital and intrinsic a part of a social and economic system that they are treated as if they were laws." - UN Environmental Programme, [Customary law definition](#), 2007

39 A mukhtar can be defined as the head of a village or neighbourhood in some Arab countries, this position is officially recognised as local authority.

40 LSE Middle East Centre, [Iraq's disputed internal boundaries after ISIL heterogeneous actors vying for influence](#), February 2019