

Situation Overview

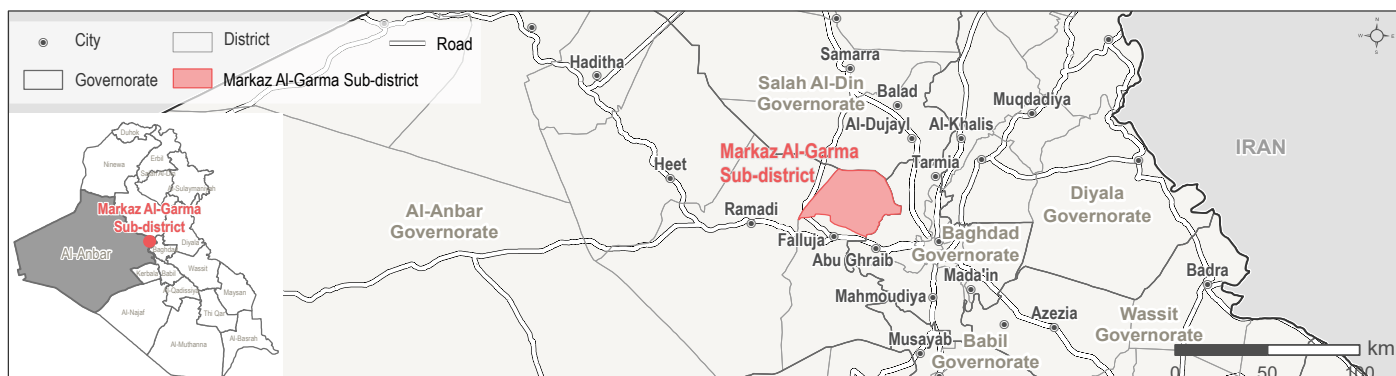
In 2020, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) returning to their area of origin (AoO) or being re-displaced increased, coupled with persisting challenges in relation to social cohesion, lack of services, infrastructure and - in some cases - security in AoO.¹ Increased returns were driven in part by the ongoing closure and consolidation of IDP camps; at the time of data collection, 14 camps and two informal sites had closed or been re-classified, with planning ongoing surrounding the future of the remaining camps across Iraq.² The [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#)'s³ Returnee Master List recorded that over 8,100 households returned to non-camp locations across the country between September and December 2020.⁴

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 humanitarian and development planning.

Markaz Al-Garma Sub-district

Markaz Al-Garma is a sub-district of Al-Falluja District, located in the eastern area of Al-Anbar Governorate close to Baghdad Governorate. Key informants (KIs) reported that Markaz Al-Garma Sub-district was housing an average of 48,752 households before 2014.

Coverage Map



Background and Methodology

A number of partners are currently tracking population movements and measuring progress towards durable solutions for displaced populations in Iraq.⁸ This includes the [IOM DTM Returns Index](#) which has collected data on a bi-monthly basis to provide indicative trends on the severity of conditions in areas of return (AoR) nationwide.

To build on this information, REACH Initiative (REACH) has been conducting multi-sectoral assessments in AoO/Rs across Iraq which 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 sub-district level, providing a localized 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 Markaz Al-Garma Sub-district to provide an in-depth profiling of needs and understanding of social relationships between remainee,⁹ returnee,¹⁰ and/or IDP populations.¹¹

In 2014, Markaz Al-Garma and the nearby cities came under the control of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), resulting in the displacement of over 47,000 households as reported by KIs. On 23 May 2016, ISIL was dislodged from Al-Falluja District by the Iraqi armed forces and their allies during Operation Breaking Terrorism.⁵ At the time of data collection, an estimated total of 624 households originally from Markaz Al-Garma remain displaced elsewhere as reported by KIs.

Reported Population Profile⁶










- 48,394-49,109** households were residing in Markaz Al-Garma Sub-district before the events in 2014.
- 47,709-48,451** households in Markaz Al-Garma were displaced since 2014.
- 47,106-47,807** households displaced since 2014 have returned to their AoO in Markaz Al-Garma at the time of data collection.⁷
- 66-70** IDP households (AoO not specified) were displaced in Markaz Al-Garma at the time of data collection.

Markaz Al-Garma Sub-district was selected for the assessment as: social cohesion severity¹² categorized as "medium", affected by reports of blocked returns; it was an AoO for IDPs in camps at risk of closure or recently closed;¹³ and dynamic population movements to/from this sub-district were reported through the RWG. The findings are based on 50 KI interviews conducted between 15 and 19 January 2021, combining remote qualitative and quantitative data collection adapted to the context. Data collection was conducted remotely due to movement restrictions and public health concerns linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings are based on the perceptions of KIs who were purposively sampled; all data should therefore be considered as indicative. For further details on the methodology, please see the [ReDS Terms of Reference \(ToR\)](#).

KI Profile

| Markaz Al-Garma Sub-district | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Community leaders ¹⁴ | 16 KIs |
| Remainees/non-displaced | 6 KIs |
| IDPs (displaced from the area) ¹⁵ | 18 KIs |
| Returnees (more than 3 months ago) | 5 KIs |
| Returnees (less than 3 months ago) | 5 KIs |
| | 50 KIs¹⁶ |

Key findings

-  Overall, Markaz Al-Garma was perceived to have a positive environment in terms of security, and community integration and acceptance. In addition, the perceived improvement in the safety and security situation had created a pull factor for returns to Markaz Al-Garma. In general, most KIs noted that community members felt safe in Markaz Al-Garma, there were no restrictions of movements and that there were no groups reported to be unwelcome in the area.
-  Housing rehabilitation and livelihoods were reportedly the most needed interventions in Markaz Al-Garma to encourage further returns. Damaged/destroyed housing was the most persistent challenge to sustainable (re)integration and returns. In addition, lack of basic services and job opportunities were not only obstacles to future returns to Markaz Al-Garma, but equally might contribute to risk the sustainability of durable solutions exemplified by expected departures of host community members as reported by KIs.
-  Recent and expected return movements into Markaz Al-Garma were perceived differently by some IDP and returnee KIs. A minority considered that less returns could ensure increased access to job opportunities for the community members in Markaz Al-Garma and less competition for limited available jobs. Other KIs believed that these movements could ensure family reunification and social stability.
-  KIs from different population groups prioritized community needs differently. Healthcare was the most commonly reported primary community need. In addition to healthcare, community leader and remainee KIs reported the need for further efforts to restore education services in Markaz Al-Garma. In comparison, access to livelihoods was commonly cited by returnee KIs as the primary community need closely linked to the need for further efforts to rehabilitate the roads and factories in Markaz Al-Garma to facilitate dignified access to employment, mainly for youth. IDPs KIs reported housing rehabilitation as their main need.
-  KIs reported different levels of access to services across population groups. IDPs and returnees were consistently reported to have less access to housing, were more likely to live in inadequate shelters including tents or living under informal - and therefore more insecure - housing agreements. In line with this, IDPs and returnees were also reportedly disadvantaged in access to compensation for housing and property rehabilitation and more at risk of eviction.
-  Some KIs reported that girls were slightly less involved in education than boys, mainly due to the limited number of available schools for girls in Markaz Al-Garma.¹⁷ Lack of transportation was reportedly one of the main reasons for both boys and girls to drop-out of school, potentially linked to the reported decrease in transportation service jobs in Markaz Al-Garma.
-  An overall decrease in the diversity and availability of employment opportunities was reported in Markaz Al-Garma compared to 2014. Reportedly, construction, oil industry and manufacturing jobs were more available in 2021 than other types of jobs such as public administration and defense, and transportation. KIs reported that access to livelihoods in Markaz Al-Garma was unequal for vulnerable groups, namely people with disabilities, elderly people, and female heads of household.
-  KIs reported that interaction between different population groups in Markaz Al-Garma was promoted by kinship ties, friendship, work relationships and common operation of businesses. However, a returnee KI reported that lack of communal harmony in Markaz Al-Garma was the main barrier for returnees to interact with other groups. In terms of participation in community and social affairs, KIs reported that the main barrier was the lack of interest to actively participate in social meetings, events or being involved in the work of a group/organisation. This suggests that further efforts are required to improve participation in social events and interaction between displaced, returnee and host community populations.
-  The majority of the KIs reported that no disputes occurred within neighbourhoods and/or between villages in Markaz Al-Garma, and almost half of KIs reported that this situation was expected to remain the same in the long-term due to the (re)integration and acceptance of IDPs and returnees in the community of Markaz Al-Garma, kinship ties between families, work relationships established between community members of different population groups and the intervention of the local authorities and formal security forces to resolve those disputes.

Recent household returns, failed returns and family separation

Recent returns

20-50 households returned to Markaz Al-Garma in the six months prior to data collection, as reported by 15 KIs (out of 50). The rest of the KIs reported no returns (25 KIs), or did not know about recent movements (10 KIs).

These households were reportedly returning from non-camp areas in Duhok Governorate (4 KIs out of 15), Erbil Governorate (2 KIs), Baghdad Governorate (1 KI), Kirkuk Governorate (1 KI), Al-Suleimaniyah District (3 KIs), Chamchamal District (1 KI), and Markaz Falluja Sub-district (1 KI). Returns were also reported from Habbaniya Tourist City camp (2 KIs) in Al-Anbar Governorate.

According to the CCCM Situation Report in January 2021, Habbaniya Tourist City camp (housing 503 households) was closed on November 2020 and was reclassified as an informal site.¹⁸

Reported drivers for returns (out of 15 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|--|--------|----------------------------------|
| Sense of increased safety and security | 15 KIs | <div style="width: 100%;"></div> |
| Availability of job opportunities | 2 KIs | <div style="width: 13%;"></div> |
| Access to services | 1 KI | <div style="width: 7%;"></div> |

Reportedly, recent returns had positive and negative impacts for all population groups. On one hand, recent returns reportedly contributed to **increased job opportunities** due to the return of business owners (6 KIs out of 15) and **ensured family reunification and social stability** with the return of some family members (4 KIs). On the other hand, these movements were also negatively perceived due to the presence of **higher competition in the labour market** (7 KIs) and a reported **decrease in the level of household assistance** due to increased demand (3 KIs).

Failed returns

12-20 households attempted to return to Markaz Al-Garma in the six months prior to data collection (7 KIs) from Duhok Governorate (2 out of 7 KIs) and Erbil Governorate (1 KI). Other households attempted to return from Habbaniya Tourist City camp (3 KIs) in Al-Anbar Governorate. One KI did not know from where the households attempted to return. The rest of the KIs reported no failed returns (24 KIs), or did not know about attempted returns (19 KIs).

Reported reasons for failed returns (out of 7 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|---|-------|---------------------------------|
| Destroyed/damaged housing | 4 KIs | <div style="width: 57%;"></div> |
| Lack of services | 2 KIs | <div style="width: 29%;"></div> |
| COVID-19 pandemic movement restrictions | 1 KI | <div style="width: 14%;"></div> |
| Did not know | 1 KI | <div style="width: 14%;"></div> |

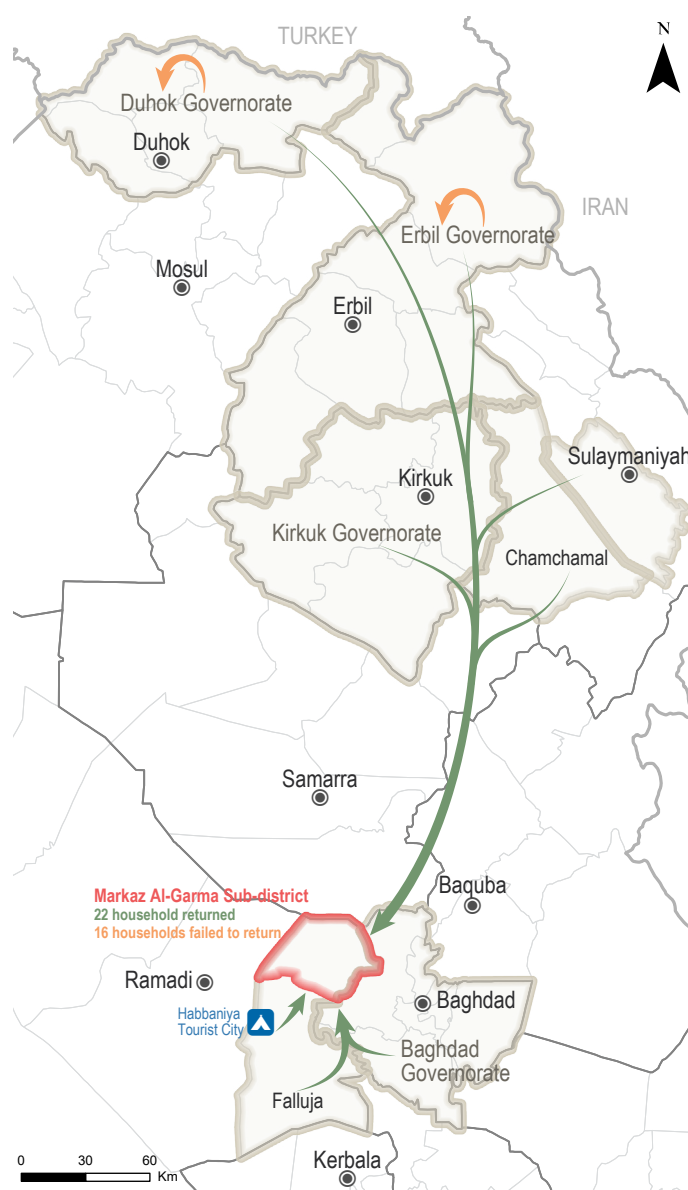
"Rehabilitation of damaged and destroyed homes will support families who cannot return to their areas of origin due to shelter destruction."

- Male returnee KI -

These failed movements reportedly negatively affected the **availability of job opportunities** due to some business owners remaining displaced (3 KIs) and contributed to a **decrease in the availability of assistance** due to the assumed lack of attention from governmental and humanitarian actors due to more limited return movements (3 KIs). On other hand, they were perceived as a factor which **positively affected access to jobs** due to less competition for limited available jobs (3 KIs).

Family separation

24 KIs (out of 50) reported that there were **no households with members who remained displaced** at the time of data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (24 KIs), or refused to answer (2 KIs).



Expected household returns and displacement

Expected returns

10-15 households were expected to return from Dohuk Governorate in the six months following data collection (1 KI out of 50). The rest of the KIs did not know about expected return movements (36 KIs), reported no expected returns (11 KIs), or refused to answer (2 KIs).

However, 47 KIs (out of 50) reported drivers that might contribute to returns in the future. The rest of the KIs did not know (3 KIs).

Reported drivers for expected returns (out of 47 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|--|--------|--|
| Sense of increased safety and security | 45 KIs | |
| Increased access to job opportunities | 11 KIs | |
| Following the return of other family members | 7 KIs | |
| Nostalgia about previous life | 1 KI | |
| Camp closures | 1 KI | |

Reported barriers to return (out of 50 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|---|--------|--|
| Destroyed/damaged housing | 44 KIs | |
| Lack of services | 11 KIs | |
| Lack of job opportunities | 11 KIs | |
| Lack of documentation to claim properties | 3 KIs | |
| Lack of specialised medical treatment | 1 KI | |

Further returns reportedly could lead to positive and negative impacts on the community. Expected returns reportedly could contribute to **increased job opportunities** with the return of business owners (26 KIs out of 50) as well as an expected **increase in assistance** due the expected attention of humanitarian and governmental actors (3 KIs). At the same time, it was reported that there could be a **higher competition for the limited available job opportunities** (17 KIs) in addition to an expected **decrease in the level of household assistance** due to the presence of a higher number of households in the area (6 KIs).

Expected host community departures

31 KIs (out of 50) reported **no expected departures of host community households** in the six months following data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know about expected departure movements (19 KIs).

However, 23 KIs (out of 50) reported drivers that might result in host community departures. The rest of the KIs did not know (26 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI).

Reported drivers for host community departures (out of 23 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--|
| Lack of job opportunities | 12 KIs | |
| Lack of services | 11 KIs | |
| Lack of specialised medical treatment | 4 KIs | |

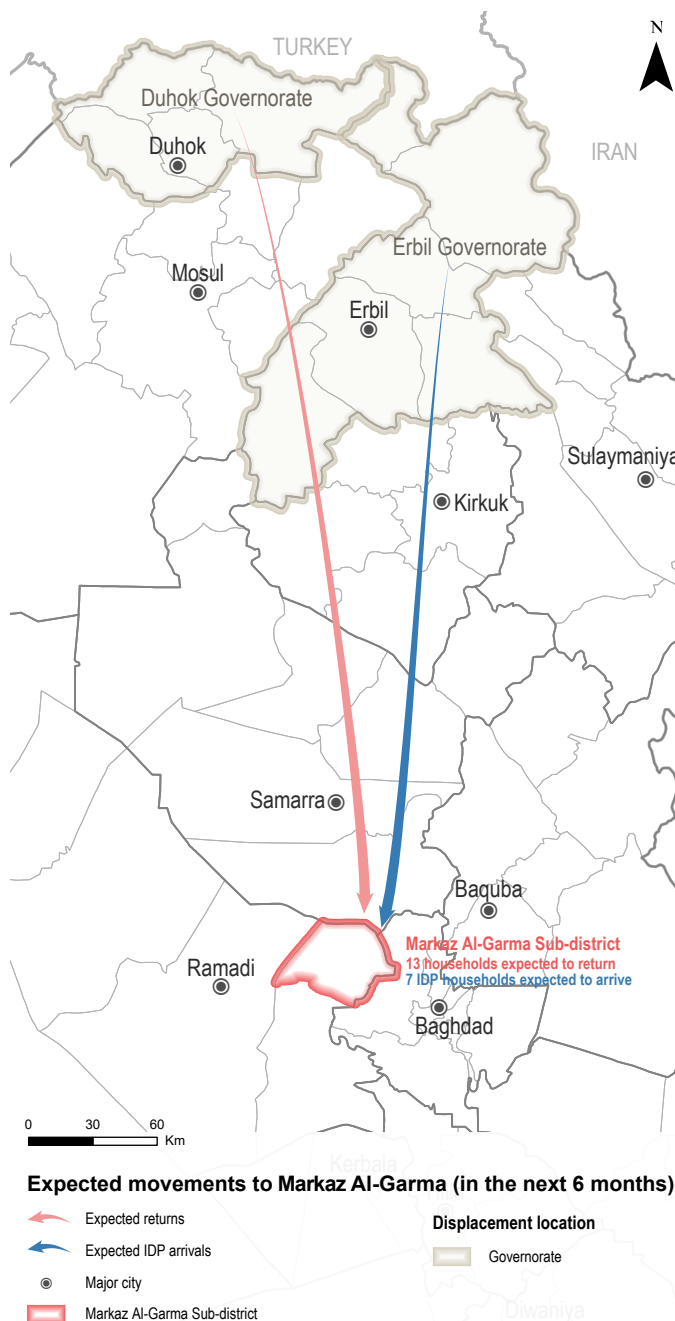
Expected IDP arrivals

5-10 IDP households were expected to arrive from Erbil Governorate to Markaz Al-Garma in the six months following data collection, as reported by a returnee KI. The rest of the KIs reported no IDP arrivals (29 KIs), or did not know about expected movements (20 KIs).

However, 49 KIs (out of 50) reported drivers that might result in IDP households arrivals. One KI did not know.

Reported drivers for IDP arrivals (out of 49 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|--|--------|--|
| Sense of increased safety and security | 47 KIs | |
| Availability of jobs and services | 12 KIs | |
| Arrival of other family members | 4 KIs | |



Primary community needs

Primary community needs in Markaz Al-Garma (out of 50 KIs)¹⁹

| | First Need | Second Need | Third Need |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| House rehabilitation | 15 KIs | 3 KIs | 2 KIs |
| Livelihoods | 8 KIs | 8 KIs | 2 KIs |
| Waste disposal | 8 KIs | 4 KIs | 8 KIs |
| Healthcare | 5 KIs | 7 KIs | 12 KIs |
| Electricity | 5 KIs | 6 KIs | 10 KIs |
| Education | 4 KIs | 12 KIs | 5 KIs |
| Water | 4 KIs | 8 KIs | 4 KIs |
| Infrastructure rehabilitation | 0 KIs | 2 KIs | 7 KIs |

KIs reported that the main primary need for the community was **housing rehabilitation** (15 KIs out of 50). Overall, 20 KIs reported housing rehabilitation as a community need due to the high level of destroyed/damaged housing after 2014 (6 KIs) and because households lacked resources for rehabilitation (20 KIs). One KI also reported that households in displacement cannot return if their houses are not rehabilitated.

The second most reported main community need was **access to education** (12 KIs out of 50). The majority of KIs who reported education as a primary community need (17 KIs out of 21) noted a decline in public education services in Markaz Al-Garma compared to pre-2014 (see access to basic services below).

The third main community need most reported was **access to healthcare** (12 KIs out of 50). The majority of KIs who reported healthcare as a community need (19 KIs out of 21) noted a decline in the quality and availability of healthcare services in Markaz Al-Garma mainly attributed to the lack of medical staff (5 KIs), neglect towards or under-financing of the health sector (4 KIs), lack of specialised medical services for elderly and children (2 KIs), and lack of preparedness to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic (2 KIs). This situation reportedly forced families to resort to private health services (18 KIs).

"Attention to education is important since the progress of cities starts with the development of new generations, and raising children begins with schools, teachers and education system in general. Children love schools and they love to attend classes!"

- Male returnee KI -

Most commonly reported primary community needs per KI profile^{19, 20}

| Community leaders (out of 16 KIs) | | Remainees (out of 6 KIs) | | Returnees (out of 10 KIs) | | IDPs (from the community) ¹⁵ (out of 18 KIs) | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|---|--------|
| Education | 11 KIs | Education | 6 KIs | Livelihoods | 6 KIs | Housing rehabilitation | 14 KIs |
| Healthcare | 11 KIs | Healthcare | 5 KIs | Healthcare | 5 KIs | Livelihoods | 9 KIs |
| Electricity | 9 KIs | Water | 3 KIs | Housing rehabilitation | 5 KIs | Waste disposal | 9 KIs |

"The region needs roads paving, improvement of the streets, and rehabilitation of factories to provide job opportunities for young people."

- Male returnee KI -

Access to humanitarian aid and presence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

41 KIs (out of 50) reported there were **no NGOs present in Markaz Al-Garma** at the time of data collection (41 KIs).

A minority (6 KIs) reported that there were NGOs implementing food security activities or projects in Markaz Al-Garma at the time of data collection, and there were no reported groups which were less involved in activities and projects. The rest of the KIs did not know (3 KIs).

The most needed projects or activities in Markaz Al-Garma as reported by all KIs (50 KIs) were:

| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Rehabilitation | 23 KIs |
| Livelihoods | 23 KIs |
| Basic services provision | 2 KIs |
| Food security | 1 KI |
| Social cohesion | 1 KI |

Rehabilitation reportedly referred to projects and activities to ensure recovery of services related to access to water, healthcare and electricity.

"Giving attention to the rehabilitation of public departments and institutions which should be currently active for the planning and development of the area - in addition to paving the streets and reconstructing the hospitals - will ensure that the community live comfortably."

- Male IDP KI displaced elsewhere -

30 KIs (out of 50) reported that the **availability of humanitarian aid was not a factor that would encourage returns** (30 KIs). A minority (7 KIs) reported that it would be a factor encouraging returns to Markaz Al-Garma. The rest of the KIs did not know (12 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI).

Perceptions on access to housing and basic public services

Access to housing

All KIs (50 KIs) reported that the majority of families in Markaz Al-Garma resided in houses or apartments.

In addition, 28 KIs (out of 50) reported that **IDPs and returnees** were **more likely to reside in tents** in Markaz Al-Garma, in addition to vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied/separated children (UASC) (19 KIs), people with disabilities (18 KIs), female-headed households (10 KIs), and minor-headed households (6 KIs).

Reported types of housing agreement for the majority of the households (out of 50 KIs)



Remainee KIs (5 KIs) and community leader KIs (16 KIs) reported that the majority of community members resided in owned houses. Returnee KIs reported that the majority of returnee households resided in owned houses (6 KIs) and other households rented through verbal agreements (4 KIs). IDP KIs originally from Markaz Al-Garma (18 KIs) reported that the majority of the IDP households resided in rented shelters under verbal agreement.

Damage to housing

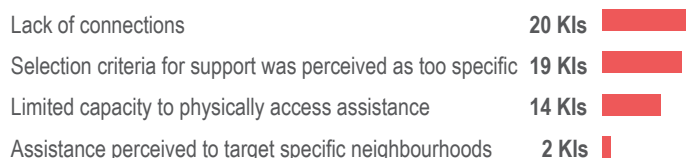
20%-60% of houses in Markaz Al-Garma were damaged during military operations in 2014, as reported by 46 KIs (out of 50). The rest of the KIs reported a smaller perception of damage (4 KIs).

While nearly half of KIs reported that **all population groups were equally likely to be residing in damaged houses/buildings** (21 KIs out of 50), **IDPs and returnees** (28 KIs) were reportedly the most affected, in addition to large households (19 KIs), people with disabilities (6 KIs), female-headed households (4 KIs), UASC (4 KIs), child-headed households (3 KIs), and elderly-headed households (3 KIs).

Access to housing rehabilitation

20 KIs (out of 50) reported that access to housing rehabilitation was **unequal**. Of those, the majority (18 KIs out of 20) reported that **IDPs and returnees** had **less access to housing rehabilitation**, in addition to UASC (15 KIs), people with disabilities (15 KIs), child-headed households (4 KIs), and female-headed households (4 KIs). The rest of the KIs reported that access to rehabilitation was equal in Markaz Al-Garma (27 KIs), or did not know (3 KIs).

Reported barriers to access rehabilitation assistance (out of 20 KIs)¹⁹



Risk of eviction

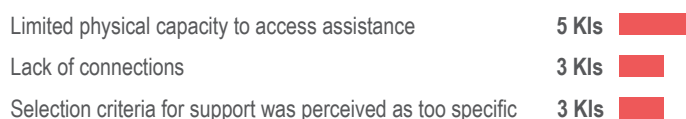
47 KIs (out of 50) reported that there were **no families at immediate risk of eviction** in Markaz Al-Garma at the time of data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (3 KIs).

Access to basic public services

The majority of the KIs perceived there was equal access to basic public services (44 KIs).

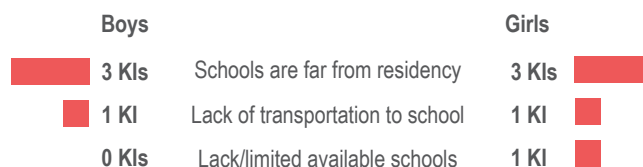
However, six KIs (6 out of 50) reported **unequal** access to basic public services namely healthcare, education, water and sanitation (WASH). These KIs reported that **IDPs and returnees** had **less access to basic public services**, in addition to UASC (6 KIs), people with disabilities (3 KIs), child-headed households (1 KI), female-headed households (1 KI), and elderly-headed households (1 KI).

Reported barriers to access basic public services (out of 6 KIs)¹⁹



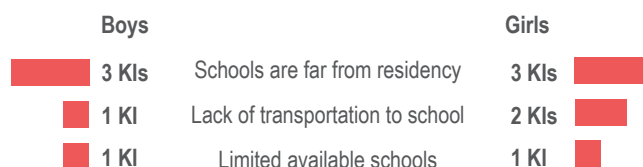
In terms of access to **public education**, 47 KIs (out of 50) reported that boys and girls between 6-15 years old can access school in Markaz Al-Garma. However, three KIs reported that both boys and girls cannot access school.

Reported barriers to access education (out of 3 KIs)¹⁹



In addition, 46 KIs (out of 50) reported that there were no boys and girls between 6-15 years old out of school in Markaz Al-Garma. However, 3 KIs reported some children out-of-school, with slightly more girls (up to around 30%) than boys (up to around 20%) not accessing education.

Reported reasons for school drop-out (out of 3 KIs)¹⁹



Several KIs also reported that access to education services were affected by the lack of free distribution of books and/or educational stationery for students (17 KIs out of 50).

Regarding basic public services, KIs reported frequent cuts of **public electricity services** due to limited public service hours (14 KIs) and lack of network maintenance (10 KIs). This resulted in households resorting to private generators (3 KIs) and reportedly prevented small businesses from fully operating (7 KIs).

The limited capacity of municipal **waste disposal infrastructure**, including lack of waste collection services (9 KIs), had reportedly resulted in waste accumulation in urban areas (9 KIs) and increased diseases in Markaz Al-Garma (1 KI).

Reportedly, the lack of maintenance of the **public water network** (5 KIs) contributed to water pollution and scarcity (7 KIs). This resulted in households reliance on purchased bottled water (3 KIs), contributed to highly inflated prices (3 KIs) and negatively affected the operation of small businesses and agricultural work (1 KI).

Access to livelihoods

18 KIs (out of 50) reported that access to livelihoods was **unequal**. The rest of the KIs reported that it was equal for all population groups (32 KIs).

IDPs and **returnees** reportedly had less access to livelihoods opportunities (15 out of 18 KIs), in addition to people with disabilities (17 KIs), female heads of household (7 KIs) and elderly (4 KIs). KIs also reported that UASC (15 KIs) and child-headed households (5 KIs) had less access to income, which may lead to child labour for these groups to meet their basic needs.

Reported barriers to access livelihoods (out of 18 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|---|--------|--|
| Limited physical capacity or lower skill/education level | 17 KIs | |
| Lack of connections | 15 KIs | |
| Criteria of selection for support was perceived as too specific | 12 KIs | |

Access to livelihoods was reportedly a primary community need in Markaz Al-Garma (18 KIs). KIs reported that the lack of governmental and private sector job opportunities (10 KIs), COVID-19 movement restrictions and closure of business due to the lockdown (1 KI) were additional barriers for households to access job opportunities.

The types and number of jobs available in Markaz Al-Garma have reportedly shifted compared to 2014. The vast majority of KIs reported that there were fewer job opportunities in 2021 (49 KIs out of 50).

Types of jobs reportedly available in Markaz Al-Garma in 2014 compared to January 2021 (out of 50 KIs)¹⁹

| 2014 | | January 2021 |
|--------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 40 KIs | Construction | 35 KIs |
| 33 KIs | Private and public health | 6 KIs |
| 24 KIs | Agriculture | 14 KIs |
| 23 KIs | Public education | 9 KIs |
| 18 KIs | Finance | 10 KIs |
| 18 KIs | Trade, hotels and restaurants | 7 KIs |
| 3 KIs | Oil industry | 1 KI |
| 1 KI | Manufacturing | 1 KI |

KIs reported that jobs available in 2021 were less diverse than those in 2014. Employment in the public administration and defense (10 KIs); and transportation (2 KIs) were not reported to be available at the time of data collection. Construction, oil industry and manufacturing jobs were reportedly reduced availability in 2021, compared to 2014, though not in the same severity as other types of jobs.

Perceptions on governance and access to public judicial mechanisms

Reported influential local actors related to governance (out of 50 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--|
| Local authorities | 49 KIs | |
| Mukhtars | 19 KIs | |
| Tribal leaders | 6 KIs | |
| Community-based governance structures | 1 KI | |

48 KIs (out of 50) reported **no expected changes in the most influential local actors related to governance** (23 KIs). The rest of the KIs did not know (4 KIs).

Access to public judicial mechanisms

All KIs (50 KIs) reported that access to public judicial mechanisms was **equal** for all population groups.

48 KIs (out of 50) reported **no governmental offices were closed** in Markaz Al-Garma during the period around data collection and all population groups reportedly **had access to documentation** in the departments nearest to them. The rest of the KIs did not know (2 KIs).

According to the [IOM DTM Return Index](#), the offices for civil justice matters in Markaz Al-Garma were accessible up to December 2020.

Perceptions in safety and security²¹

Safety and security

48 KIs (out of 50) reported that their community members **felt safe** in Markaz Al-Garma. A remainee KI reported not feeling safe but did not report the reasons. One KI did not know if the community members felt safe in Markaz Al-Garma.

All KIs (50 KIs) reported that the community members **did not avoid any area or neighbourhood** in Markaz Al-Garma.

ERW contamination

All KIs (50 KIs) reported that there were **no contaminated fields** in Markaz Al-Garma.

49 KIs (out of 50) reported that **no ERW incidents occurred** in the 6 months prior to data collection. A KI did not know about incidents due to ERW in the area.

Perceptions on the presence of formal security forces

All KIs (50 KIs) reported that the presence of formal security forces contributed **positively to a feeling of safety**.

In addition, it was generally reported that security forces were **effective in resolving disputes** within the community and between different villages.

According to the [IOM DTM Return Index](#), the presence of checkpoints controlled by informal security actors or armed groups negatively impacted the safety and security in Markaz Al-Garma.^{22, 23} This situation can be a barrier for the return of some population groups and represents a concern for the stability of the returns.

Freedom of movement

All KIs (50 KIs) reported that **women, girls,²⁴ men and boys could freely move** in Markaz Al-Garma during the day and at night.

Community disputes²⁰

Community disputes within neighbourhoods

44 KIs (out of 50) reported that there were **no disputes within neighbourhoods in Markaz Al-Garma** in the six months prior to data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (5 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI).

23 KIs (out of 50) reported that there were **no expected changes** in the situation in the 6 months following data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (24 KIs), or refused to answer (3 KIs).

Reported reasons for no change in the number of disputes within neighbourhoods (out of 23 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|--|--------|-------------|
| Integration and acceptance | 16 KIs | <div></div> |
| Kinship ties | 11 KIs | <div></div> |
| Intervention of local authorities and formal security forces | 6 KIs | <div></div> |
| Work relationships (employment) | 3 KIs | <div></div> |

Retaliation incidents

41 KIs (out of 50) reported **no retaliation incidents** in the six months prior to data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (7 KIs), or refused to answer (2 KIs).

Community disputes between villages

35 KIs (out of 50) reported that there were **no disputes between villages in Markaz Al-Garma** in the six months prior to data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (14 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI).

20 KIs (out of 50) reported that there were **no expected changes** in the situation in the 6 months following data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (26 KIs), or refused to answer (4 KIs).

Reported reasons for no change in the number of disputes between villages (out of 20 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|--|--------|-------------|
| Integration and acceptance | 14 KIs | <div></div> |
| Kinship ties | 9 KIs | <div></div> |
| Intervention of local authorities and formal security forces | 5 KIs | <div></div> |
| Work relationships (employment) | 5 KIs | <div></div> |

According to the IOM DTM Return Index conducted between November and December 2020, in the majority of the assessed locations in Markaz Al-Garma (20 locations out of 22) the severity score for daily public life was ranked low which represents the lack tensions among residents.^{22, 25}

Community relations and co-existence²¹

47 KIs (out of 50) reported that there were **no specific population groups which were unwelcome** by the majority of the community in the area. The rest of the KIs did not know (3 KIs).

22 KIs (out of 50) reported that **their community members trust each other**. The rest of the KIs did not know (28 KIs).

Participation in social and public events

5 KIs (out of 50) reported that some community members **did not participate in social and public events**, but did not specify which groups. The rest of the KIs did not know (44 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI).

Reported barriers for participation (out of 50 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-------------|
| Lack of interest in participating | 19 KIs | <div></div> |
| No barriers | 2 KIs | <div></div> |
| Did not know | 26 KIs | <div></div> |
| Refused to answer | 4 KIs | <div></div> |

Interaction between population groups

22 KIs (out of 50) reported that community members from different population groups **interacted with each other**.

Reported types of interaction (out of 22 KIs)¹⁹

| | | |
|--|--------|-------------|
| Kinship ties | 21 KIs | <div></div> |
| Work relationships (employment) | 14 KIs | <div></div> |
| Friendship | 10 KIs | <div></div> |
| Common business operation | 6 KIs | <div></div> |
| Interaction in shops and public places | 1 KI | <div></div> |

However, ten KIs (10 KIs) reported no interaction between different population groups. The rest of the KIs did not know (17 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI).

While almost half of KIs believed that there were **no obstacles for interaction between different population groups** (22 KIs out of 50), a returnee KI reported that the **lack of harmony in the area was the main barrier for the interaction** between different groups.²⁶ Over half of the KIs (27 KIs) did not know about obstacles for interaction.

End Notes

1. [IOM DTM Return Index](#)

2. A total of 15 IDP camps and informal sites have been closed or reclassified since mid-October (11 formal camps closed, two informal sites closed, two formal camps reclassified to informal sites). As a result, 34,061 individuals have departed from these sites - CCCM Cluster, Camp Closures Status, 6 December 2020: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/camp_closure_status_mapping_cccm-ocha_06_dec_2020.pdf

3. [IOM DTM](#)

4. [IOM DTM, Returnees, rounds 118 and 119, October 2020 and December 2020](#)

5. [Iraqi military claims advances in Islamic State-held Fallujah, The Washington Post, 23 May 2016](#)

6. The ReDS questionnaire is tailored to ask questions related to demographics only to community leaders based on their knowledge about the location and population groups. In the case of Markaz Al-Garma there were 15 community leader respondents, and population figures for returns and IDP populations in Markaz Al-Garma are based on their estimates at the time of data collection.
7. According to the Returns Index dataset, 22 locations in Markaz Al-Garma have witnessed the return of the majority of the displaced population originally from the area - [Return Index Dataset 11 Dec 2020, IOM DTM, November 2020](#)
8. 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 (AoR) 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.
9. For the purpose of this research, remainees (non-displaced persons) will be categorized as individuals or households who were not displaced from their AoO during the events of 2014 or after. They represent the host community members in their AoO.
10. For the purpose of this research, returnees will be categorized as an IDP returning to their AoO, 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 AoO.
11. As clarified by the Iraq Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) in 2018, secondary displacement covers multiple scenarios: 1) IDPs who are voluntarily or forcibly displaced to another displacement location; 2) IDPs who voluntarily or forcibly, return to their AoO, but are unable to achieve sustainable solutions and are consequently re-displaced to their first place of displacement or to a new location of displacement; and 3) IDPs who voluntarily or forcibly, return to their AoO, but are unable to resume habitation in their former habitual residence and cannot achieve sustainable solutions and are consequently re-displaced to a new location within their AoO.
12. "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, refer to methodology](#)
13. The following camps were closed in 2020: Al-Ahel closed on 18 October; Al-Kawthar closed on 18 October; Al-Shams informal site closed on 19 October; Al-Nabi Younis closed on 21 October; Saad Camp closed on 27 October; Al Wand 2 closed on 11 November; Jeddah 1 closed on 12 November; Ishaqi informal site closed on 12 November; Yahyawa closed on 13 November; Hamam Al-Alil closed on 15 November; Al Wand 1 closed on 28 November; Laylan IDP closed on 30 November; and, Al-Karama camp closed on 6 December - CCCM Cluster, Camp profiling dataset, December 2020: (Not published)
14. Community leaders are members of the host community represented by eight public sector employees, five health sector employees and two educational sector employees.
15. IDPs (displaced from the area) refer to households from Markaz Al-Garma displaced after 2014 events to other areas different than their AoO, specifically in Khaifan and Bradost sub-districts (Rawanduz District of Erbil Governorate); and in Al-Suleimaniyah Governorate specifically in Markaz Chamchamal Sub-district (Chamchamal District), Sourdash and Gnareen Sub-districts (Dokan District), Markaz Kalar Sub-district (Kalar District) and Bazian Sub-district (Al-Suleimaniya District).
16. There were 50 individuals aged between 20 and 75 years old interviewed for the Markaz Al-Garma assessment. All KIs were male, and ensuring gender balance is a limitation to the assessment. This was primarily because female KIs had a limited response rate of female KIs. In addition, 4% of the KIs were elderly (over 65 years old), and 4% represented youth (aged between 20 and 23 years old) which ensured inclusion of vulnerable age groups.
17. "While there are technological solutions being offered to deal with school closures, such as delivering educational content to primary, secondary, and tertiary students through virtual classrooms, many of these remote learning methods are not feasible options for impoverished segments of the population, especially those residing in IDP camps. As a result there are around 7.4 million students who are affected by school closures that do not have the means to access remote schooling. Implementing an adequate online education system in camps across Iraq is challenging due to the limited capacity to provide students with internet and required electronic tools, especially in federal Iraq. KRG managed to negotiate with internet service providers in the region to provide access to the e-school portal for free to registered students. The federal government has not made such arrangement." - [Education in Iraq, Impact of COVID-19, protests, and pre-existing crises on needs, ACAPs, November 2020](#)
18. Camp Closures Situation Report 12, 28 January 2021: (Not published)
19. Sum of answers may exceed the per cent due to KIs being able to select multiple response options, including other topics.
20. Findings are indicative of each population group but not representative.
21. This represents the perceptions of a smaller group, and differences in responses could also be due to the methodology with people being less open to sharing sensitive information over the phone.
22. [Drivers of severity in hotspots, Return Index Dataset 11 Dec 2020, IOM DTM, November 2020](#)
23. Presence of armed groups in control of checkpoints apart from the Iraqi army, the local police and the federal police, combined with concerns about harassment: - [Methodological Overview, IOM, May 2020](#)
24. It should be noted that gender indicators can be subject to potential under-reporting due to the limited number of female KIs interviewed, which should be kept in mind when interpreting these results.
25. [Methodological Overview, IOM DTM, May 2020](#)
26. "Social sustainability allows for the consideration of the importance of social interaction and cohesion for the sustainability of communities [...] Socially sustainable communities are equitable, diverse, connected and democratic and provide a good quality of life." - [Measuring Social Interaction and Social Cohesion in a High Density Urban Renewal Area, UNSW Sydney and Macquarie University, January 2013](#)