

Situation Overview

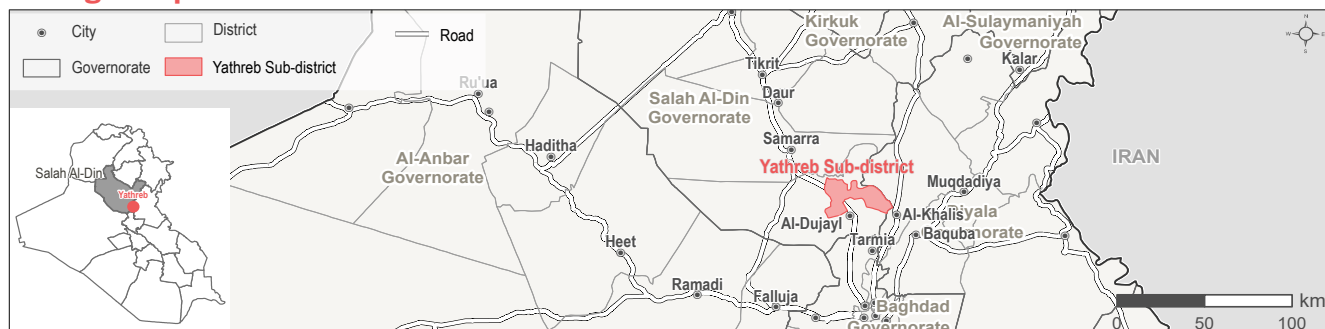
In 2020, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) returning to their area of origin (AoO) or being re-displaced increased, coupled with persisting challenges in relation to social cohesion, lack of services, infrastructure and - in some cases - security in AoO.¹ Increased returns were driven 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)'s Returnee Master List recorded that over 8,100 households returned to non-camp locations across the country between September and December 2020.³

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.

Yathreb Sub-district

Yathreb is a sub-district of Balad District in Salah Al-Din Governorate. It is located 45 kilometres north from Baghdad, on the Tigris river. It is close to other cities and towns such as Al-Duloeyah, Balad, Al-Esshaqi, Dojama, Al-Tarmiya and Al-Taji which facilitates commerce and access to markets.

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 Index¹ 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 or returns 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 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 Yathreb 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 August 2014, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) undertook military activities in Yathreb Sub-district resulting in widespread displacement.⁴ In December 2014, the government forces and their allies retook Yathreb Sub-district from ISIL, however, as of August 2020, some households in Yathreb were still concerned about possible ISIL operations in the area.⁵ According to the IOM DTM, the majority of households displaced from Yathreb returned to their AoO between April and June 2017.⁵ However, some households remain displaced, and returns to the area continue; Yathreb Sub-district accounted for 94.1% of the returns to Balad District between September and December 2020, and for 81.4% of the total returns to Salah Al-Din Governorate.³ The DTM Return Index reported that as of December 2020, 6,028 households had returned to Yathreb Sub-district.⁶

Reported Population Profile⁷











10,117-10,467	households were residing in Yathreb Sub-district before the events of 2014.
7,833-8,207	households in Yathreb were displaced since 2014.
6,597-6,920	households displaced since 2014 have returned to Yathreb at the time of data collection.
19-27	IDP households (AoO not specified) were displaced in Yathreb at the time of data collection.

Yathreb Sub-district was selected for the assessment as: social cohesion severity¹² classified as "medium", affected by the illegal occupation of private residences and reports of blocked returns;¹³ it was an AoO for IDPs in camps at risk of closure or recently closed;¹⁴ and dynamic population movements to/from this sub-district were reported through the Returns Working Group (RWG). The findings are based on 54 key informant (KI) interviews conducted between 15 and 19 January 2021, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods 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 Term of Reference \(ToR\)](#).

KI Profile

Yathreb Sub-district	
Community leaders ¹⁵	15 KIs
Remainees/non-displaced	5 KIs
IDPs (displaced from the area) ¹⁶	18 KIs
IDPs (displaced in the area) ¹⁷	6 KIs
Returnees (more than 3 months ago)	5 KIs
Returnees (less than 3 months ago)	5 KIs
54 KIs¹⁸	

Key findings

-  The situation regarding returns to Yathreb remained fluid, with KIs reporting ongoing returns and more projected in the six months following data collection, driven in part by decisions surrounding camp closures. According to a [REACH Intentions Survey from September 2020](#), IDP households interviewed across seven camps in Al-Suleimaniyah, Erbil, Diyala, Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din governorates indicated Yathreb Sub-district as their area of return.¹⁹ Three of these camps were closed between November and December, which could have affected the intentions of households to return.²⁰
-  Perceived improvements in the safety and security situation was the main reported pull factor for returns to Yathreb, followed by family reunification. In general, most KIs noted that community members felt safe in Yathreb. There were no reported movement restrictions, though women and girls were reportedly less able to move freely during the day and slightly less at night compared to men.
-  Despite this, safety and security reportedly continued to be barriers to the return of IDP KIs originally from Yathreb displaced elsewhere. Some IDPs from the same group reported the presence of armed groups in their AoO as a barrier for further returns. Additionally, while there were no groups reported to be unwelcome in Yathreb, IDP KIs originally from the area displaced elsewhere reported fear of persecution in their AoO due to outstanding disputes, fear of retaliation, or being perceived as affiliated with ISIL.
-  Other barriers to return reported by KIs were: damaged or destroyed housing; lack of basic public services and job opportunities; and concerns around housing, land and property (HLP) as some households did not have the necessary documents to claim their properties. In addition, some IDP KIs originally from Yathreb displaced elsewhere reported perceived restriction on further return movements, and security clearance as barriers for further returns.
-  KIs reported different levels of access to services across population groups. IDPs and returnees persistently reported having less access to housing, namely being more likely to live in inadequate shelters including tents or living in 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.
-  The most needed intervention to encourage further returns was reportedly increasing access to livelihoods. All KIs reported an overall decrease in the availability of job opportunities compared to 2014, exemplified by the more limited access to employment in the private sector due to the prolonged displacement of business owners. In addition, KIs perceived that further returns to Yathreb increased the competition for the limited available job opportunities which consequently could lead to tensions between population groups.
-  KIs from different population groups prioritized community needs differently. Livelihoods was the most commonly reported primary community need, except for remainee KIs who reported access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) as the primary community need. Returnee and IDP KIs reported the need to develop the health sector in Yathreb to meet the increased pressure resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
-  Improving access to basic public services namely education, healthcare, WASH and electricity were also reported as a community needs. The lack of public services was not only reported as an obstacle to future returns to Yathreb, but equally contributed to reported risks to the sustainability of returnees' re-integration and was identified as a push factor for expected departures of host community members.
-  Generally, in terms of social cohesion indicators, there were no reported obstacles to the interaction between groups and their participation in social events by the majority of KIs. IDP KIs reported a general perception that different population groups had different interests and thoughts (lack of shared goals) which negatively affected the interest to participate in social and public events, and sometimes the lack of harmony between different population groups in Yathreb reportedly reduced social interaction and participation in social events.
-  Friendship, kinship ties between community members, work relationships, integration and acceptance of IDPs in Yathreb, in addition to the intervention of local authorities, were reportedly factors to ensure the stability in the area regarding disputes.

Recent household returns, failed returns and family separation

Recent returns

36-58 households returned to Yathreb in the six months prior to data collection, as reported by 24 KIs (out of 54). Returns were reported from non-camp areas in Erbil (3 KIs) and Samarra (1 KI) districts; as well as Baghdad (1 KI), Kirkuk (1 KI) and Al-Suleimaniyah (1 KI) governorates. Other households returned from camps in Al-Suleimaniyah (11 KIs), Kirkuk (4 KIs)²¹ and Erbil (2 KIs) governorates. The rest of the KIs reported no returns (22 KIs), or they did not know about recent movements (8 KIs).

Reported drivers for returns (out of 24 KIs)²²

Sense of increased safety and security	15 KIs	
Following the return of other family members	7 KIs	
Camp closures in area of displacement (AoD)	4 KIs	
Nostalgia about previous life	4 KIs	
Availability of job opportunities	2 KIs	
Difficult living conditions in AoD	1 KI	
Refused to answer	3 KIs	

Recent returns reportedly lead to positive and negative impacts in terms of access to job opportunities and assistance, with negative consequences reported more frequently than positive. On one hand, while some KIs believed that recent returns contributed to **increased job opportunities** (3 KIs out of 24), the vast majority reported that these movements led to **higher competition in the labour market** (18 KIs). Similarly, while the majority reported a **decrease in the level of household assistance** due to increased demand (14 KIs), some KIs reported that access to assistance increased due to the response by different governmental and humanitarian actors to the recent returns (7 KIs).

While recent returns reportedly resulted in **family reunification** (7 KIs) which respondents perceived as positive, at the same time the reported **occurrence of disputes** between households (1 KI) affected the stability of the community in Yathreb (7 KIs).

Recent IDP arrivals

50-55 IDP households arrived in Yathreb in the six months prior to data collection from non-camp areas in Duhok Governorate (1 KI out of 54). Reportedly, this was due to **failed returns** to their AoO (AoO not reported) forcing them to secondarily displace to Yathreb chosen due to the **sense of increased safety and security**.

According to the KI, **access to assistance reportedly increased** due to the response from different governmental and humanitarian actors to the recent IDP arrivals, in addition to **family reunification** for some IDP households with family members displaced in Yathreb. The majority of KIs did not know about recent movements (27 KIs), or reported no IDP arrivals (25 KIs). One KI refused to answer.

Family separation

2 KIs (out of 54) reported that some households still **had members who remained displaced** at the time of data collection, all of whom were reported to be adult sons, mainly due to lack of jobs in AoO and availability of jobs in AoD.

In addition, it was reported that household members were reported to remain in displacement due to their houses being damaged or destroyed (2 KIs), and they lacked resources to return (2 KIs). Household members still in displacement were expected to return after their house were rehabilitated and expected they had better chance of securing employment in their AoO (1 KI).

The rest of the KIs did not know about family separation (43 KIs), reported no cases of family separation (8 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI).

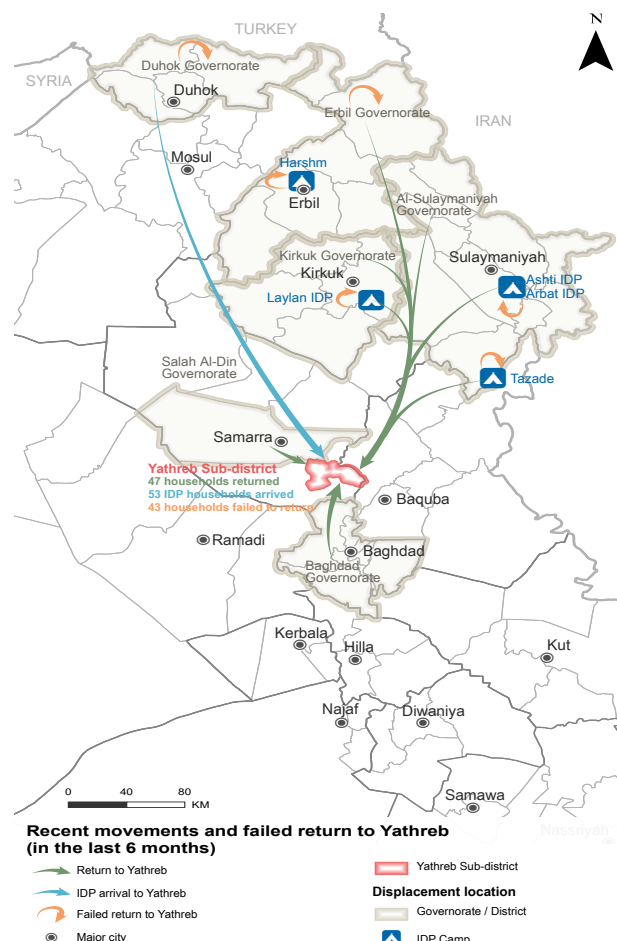
Failed returns

31-56 households attempted return to Yathreb in the six months prior to data collection but did not succeed (8 KIs out of 54). Attempted returns were reported from non-camp areas in Kirkuk (1 KI) and Erbil (1 KI) governorates. Other households attempted to return from camps in Al-Suleimaniyah (4 KIs), Kirkuk (1 KI)²¹ and Erbil (1 KI) governorates. The rest of the KIs reported no attempted returns (28 KIs), or did not know (8 KIs).

Reported reasons for failed returns (out of 8 KIs)²²

Lack of services in AoO	8 KIs	
Lack of job opportunities in AoO	6 KIs	

Reportedly, failed returns negatively impacted on access to livelihoods and assistance: the prolonged displacement of business owners reportedly resulted in **more limited access to livelihoods** (7 KIs). In addition, **less access to assistance** was reported due to the perceived lack of interest of governmental and humanitarian actors in the area (7 KIs).



Expected household returns and displacement

Expected returns

39-47 households are expected to return to Yathreb in the six months following data collection, as reported by 11 KIs (out of 54). Returns are expected from camp (2 KIs) and non-camp areas (6 KIs) in Al-Suleimaniyah and Kirkuk²¹ governorates. The rest of the KIs reported no expected returns (7 KIs), did not know about expected movements (32 KIs), or refused to answer (4 KIs).

Reported drivers for expected returns (out of 54 KIs)²²

Sense of increased safety and security	34 KIs	
Following the return of other family members	17 KIs	
Camp closures in AoD	11 KIs	
Availability of job opportunities	8 KIs	
Nostalgia about previous life	3 KIs	
Difficult living conditions in AoD	1 KI	
Families received the security clearance to return	1 KI	
Did not know	3 KIs	
Refused to answer	8 KIs	

Reported barriers to return (out of 54 KIs)²²

Destroyed/damaged housing	36 KIs	
Lack of job opportunities	24 KIs	
Lack of services	22 KIs	
Lack of documents needed to claim properties	8 KIs	
Prefer life in AoD	8 KIs	
Lack of specialised medical treatment	2 KIs	
Fear due to COVID-19 pandemic	1 KI	

In addition to the above, IDP KIs originally from Yathreb displaced elsewhere reported that there were barriers to return related to the security situation in their AoO such as **fear of persecution** due to outstanding disputes (1 KI out of 2); **fear of being perceived as ISIL-affiliated** (1 KI); and **presence of specific armed groups** (1 KI). Other barriers reported included **perceived limitations on further return movements** (2 KIs), and **lack of security clearance** for some households (1 KI).²³

Further returns were more reported to have negative impacts than positive on access to job opportunities and assistance. While the vast majority reported that expected returns could **increase the competition for the limited available job opportunities** (34 KIs out of 54), a smaller number reported that these movements could contribute to increased job opportunities with the return of business owners (9 KIs). Similarly, while further returns could **decrease the household levels of assistance** (24 KIs) and the limited capacity of humanitarian and governmental actors to absorb the demand for assistance (3 KIs), some KIs reported an expected increase in assistance due the potential attention of humanitarian and governmental actors (16 KIs).

Reportedly, expected returns could also result in **family reunification** (13 KIs out of 54) which was perceived positively by KIs.

Expected host community departures

27 KIs (out of 54) 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 host community departure movements (23 KIs), or refused to answer (4 KIs).

However, while no expected departures were reported, 24 KIs (out of 54) reported drivers that might result in host community movements. The rest of the KIs did not know about drivers to these movements (25 KIs), or refused to answer (5 KIs).

Reported drivers for host community departures (out of 24 KIs)²²

Lack of services	21 KIs	
Lack of job opportunities	14 KIs	
Lack of specialised medical treatment	2 KIs	
Lack of security	1 KI	

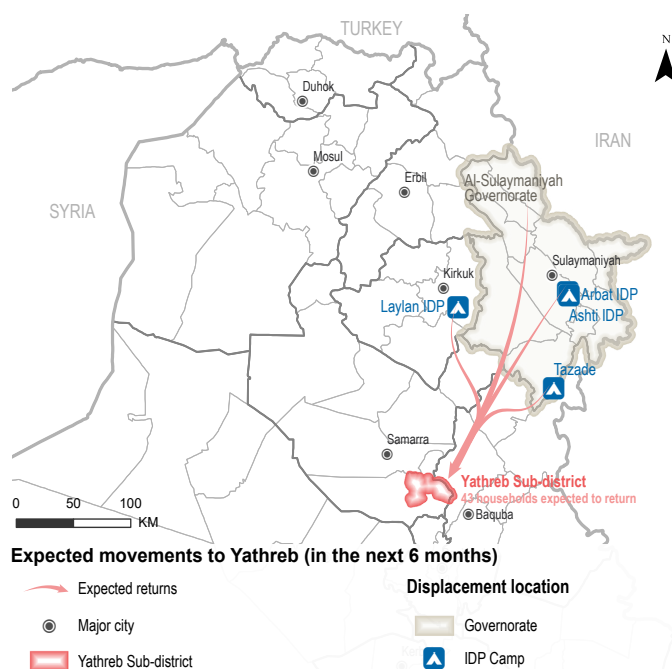
Expected IDP arrivals

26 KIs (out of 54) reported **no expected arrival of IDP households** to Yathreb in the six months following data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know about expected IDP arrivals (26 KIs), or refused to answer (2 KIs).

However, while no expected arrivals were reported, 33 KIs (out of 54) reported drivers that might result in further IDP household arrivals. The rest of the KIs did not know about drivers to these movements (13 KIs), or refused to answer (8 KIs).

Reported drivers for IDP arrivals (out of 33 KIs)²²

Sense of increased safety and security	30 KIs	
Arrival of other family members	10 KIs	
Availability of services and job opportunities	7 KIs	
Camp closures	5 KIs	
Difficult living conditions in AoD	2 KIs	



Primary community needs

Primary community needs in Yathreb (out of 54 KIs)²²

	First Need	Second Need	Third Need
Livelihoods	18 KIs	12 KIs	7 KIs
Housing rehabilitation	11 KIs	7 KIs	5 KIs
WASH	7 KIs	11 KIs	9 KIs
Healthcare	6 KIs	11 KIs	14 KIs
Electricity	5 KIs	6 KIs	9 KIs
Education	4 KIs	3 KIs	6 KIs
Documentation	1 KI	0 KIs	0 KIs
Food	0 KIs	1 KI	1 KI

The most commonly reported primary need for the community was **access to livelihoods** due to the perceived lack of governmental and private sector job opportunities (34 KIs out of 54), destroyed agricultural machinery (4 KIs), and the lack of investment in the private sector (1 KI). **Housing rehabilitation** was also reported as a primary need, due to housing destruction and heavy damage after the events in 2014 (22 KIs) and the lack of resources households have to rehabilitate their shelters (17 KIs).

The second most commonly reported main community need was **access to WASH** due to the limited access to public water services in Yathreb (12 KIs). As a result, households reportedly resorted to buying bottled water (12 KIs) and a KI reported that some households relied on wells as the main potable water source. **Healthcare** was also considered a second community need mainly due to the risks represented by the COVID-19 pandemic (12 KIs).

The third most commonly reported community need was **access to electricity** affected by the limited public service hours in Yathreb (14 KIs) and the limited number of private generators (3 KIs), which reportedly prevented small businesses from fully operating (3 KIs).

“Developing livelihood opportunities is important taking into consideration the high number of newly graduated, unemployed youth and the lack of job opportunities for them in the public and private sectors.”

- Male returnee KI -

Most commonly reported primary community needs per KI profile^{22, 24}

Community leaders (out of 15 KIs)		Remainees (out of 5 KIs)		Returnees (out of 10 KIs)		IDPs (displaced from and in the area) ^{16, 17} (out of 24 KIs)	
Livelihoods	12 KIs	WASH	5 KIs	Livelihoods	8 KIs	Livelihoods	18 KIs
WASH	9 KIs	Education	4 KIs	Housing rehabilitation	7 KIs	Healthcare	14 KIs
Housing rehabilitation	7 KIs	Healthcare	3 KIs	Healthcare	6 KIs	WASH	10 KIs

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

43 KIs (out of 54) reported that there were **no NGOs implementing activities and projects** in Yathreb at the time of data collection. However, a minority (10 KIs) reported that **there were NGOs implementing activities**. One KI did not know.

Reported activities implemented by NGOs (out of 10 KIs)²²

Food security programmes	7 KIs
Non-food items (NFIs) distributions	2 KIs
Housing rehabilitation	1 KI
WASH	1 KI

A returnee KI reported that **returnees** were less involved in humanitarian activities and projects, in addition to **child-headed households**, **unaccompanied/separated children (UASC)** and **people with disabilities**.

The most needed activities or projects in Yathreb as reported by 42 KIs (out of 54) were:

Livelihoods	33 KIs
Housing rehabilitation	9 KIs
Infrastructure rehabilitation	7 KIs
Social cohesion	3 KIs
Food and NFIs	2 KIs

Infrastructure rehabilitation reportedly included the restoration of water and electrical networks and enhancing the waste management disposal system in Yathreb Sub-district.

18 KIs (out of 54) reported that the **availability of humanitarian aid would be a factor encouraging returns** to Yathreb. The rest of the KIs reported that it was not a factor that would encourage returns (7 KIs), did not know (21 KIs), or refused to answer (8 KIs).

“It is important to ensure access to livelihood opportunities, especially for female heads-of-household who have lost their main breadwinner.”

- Female IDP KI originally from Yathreb displaced elsewhere -

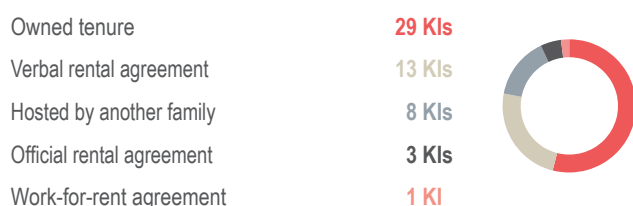
Perceptions on access to housing, basic public services and public judicial mechanisms

Access to housing

Most of the KIs (46 KIs out of 54) reported that the majority of households in Yathreb resided in houses. IDP KIs reported that the majority of the households in their community resided in tents (6 KIs), or resided in non-residential shelters such as garages (2 KIs).

In addition, 29 KIs (out of 54) reported that **IDPs and returnees** were more likely to **reside in tents**, as were **people with disabilities** (24 KIs), **child-headed households** (21 KIs), **UASC** (21 KIs), **large households**²⁵ (21 KIs) and **elderly-headed households** (1 KI).

Reported types of housing agreement for the majority of households (out of 54 KIs)²⁶



IDP KIs (24 KIs) reported that **the majority of IDP households were hosted by families in the community**, resided under official and verbal rental agreements or work-for-rent agreements.²⁷ One IDP KI reported that some IDP households owned houses in Yathreb. Returnee KIs (9 KIs) reported that **the majority of returnee households owned houses in Yathreb** and a returnee KI reported that some returnee households resided under verbal rental agreement. Community leader and remainee KIs (20 KIs) reported that the majority of the households in the community resided in owned houses.

Damage to housing

30%-60% of houses in Yathreb were damaged during military operations in 2014, as reported by all KIs (54 KIs).²⁸

IDPs and returnees were reportedly more likely to **reside in damaged or unfinished buildings/houses** (34 KIs out of 54), as were **large households** (26 KIs), **child-headed households** (20 KIs), **UASC** (19 KIs) and **people with disabilities** (19 KIs).

Access to housing rehabilitation

33 KIs (out of 54) reported that access to housing rehabilitation was **equal**. The rest of the KIs reported that access to rehabilitation is unequal (18 KIs), or did not know (3 KIs).

As reported by 15 KIs (out of 18 KIs who reported unequal access), **IDPs and returnees** had **less access to housing rehabilitation**, as did **child-headed households** (15 KIs), **UASC** (15 KIs), **people with disabilities** (13 KIs) and **people with less connections** (2 KIs). Reported reasons for this included due to the selection criteria being perceived as too specific (15 KIs), and the assistance reportedly targeting specific neighbourhoods (15 KIs).

Risk of eviction

47 KIs (out of 54) reported that there were **no families at immediate risk of eviction** in Yathreb. The rest of the KIs did not know (7 KIs).

However, **IDPs and returnees** might be most at **risk of eviction in the long-term**, as reported by 26 KIs (out of 54), in addition to **UASC** (25 KIs), **people with disabilities** (23 KIs), **child-headed households** (23 KIs) and **large households** (20 KIs).

Access to basic public services

15 KIs (out of 54) reported **unequal** access to basic public services namely healthcare, water and sanitation. **IDPs and returnees** were perceived to have **less access to basic public services**, including **child-headed households**, **UASC** and **people with disabilities** due to having **less connections**. However, the majority of KIs reported that there was equal access to basic public services (39 KIs).

Related to access to **public education**, 53 KIs (out of 54) reported that boys and girls between 6-15 years old could access school and there were no children between those ages out of school in Yathreb. KIs reported a decline in the quality of public education in Yathreb (8 KIs) due to the number of damaged/destroyed schools and the lack of maintenance or rehabilitation. This situation resulted in imposed double shifts - one in the morning and one in the afternoon - in active schools and a lack of capacity to absorb the number of students (2 KIs). In addition, the lack of free distribution of books and/or educational stationery for students meant families had to purchase them, negatively affecting their monthly expenditure (8 KIs).

KIs reported a decline in the quality of the **healthcare** services after 2014 (14 KIs) and a lack of preparedness to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly due to the lack of medical staff (12 KIs) and limited availability of medications (24 KIs). This situation reportedly forced families to resort to private health services (8 KIs), move to other areas for treatment (5 KIs), and to keep sick family members at home even if they needed hospitalization (3 KIs).

Additionally, **public electricity** services reportedly had limited operating hours, not only affecting households but also preventing the operation of businesses²⁹ in Yathreb (14 KIs). In addition, KIs reported the lack of electrical network and transformers maintenance resulted in households using private generators (5 KIs).

Limited capacity in terms of **waste handling, transportation and disposal**, at the municipal level resulted in the accumulation of waste in urban areas raising health concerns (5 KIs).

In terms of access to **access to water**, the lack of maintenance of the water network and water filters in Yathreb (23 KIs) reportedly resulted in water pollution (12 KIs). This reportedly contributed to reliance on purchased bottled water (12 KIs) or local wells (3 KIs). This situation contributed to highly inflated prices for private water services (as reported by 4 KIs).

Access to public judicial mechanisms

53 KIs (out of 54) reported that access to public judicial mechanisms was **equal**.³⁰ A KI did not know about accessibility to public judicial mechanisms.

An IDP KI reported that **the department granting civil status documents was closed** during the period around data collection, affecting access to **identity documentation**.

Access to livelihoods

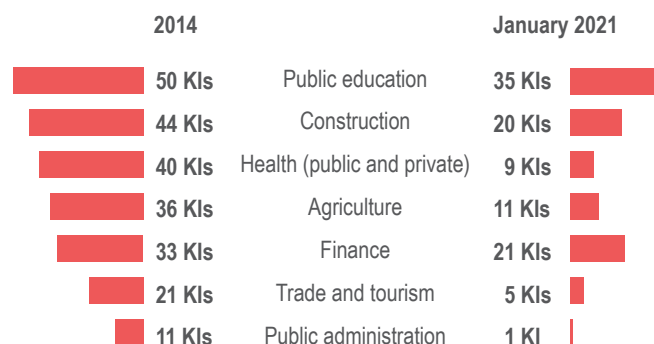
23 KIs (out of 54), representing IDPs originally from Yathreb displaced elsewhere and returnees, reported that access to livelihoods was **unequal** for their community groups.³¹ The majority of KIs reported that it was equal for all groups (28 KIs), and the rest of the KIs did not know.

IDPs and returnees, people with disabilities and elderly reportedly had less access to livelihoods opportunities (23 KIs). In addition, 23 KIs reported that **child-headed households** and **UASC** had less access to income. To cope with this situation, these groups were expected to rely on child labour to meet their needs (23 KIs). Six IDP KIs also reported that **internally displaced female heads of household** were the most restricted in terms of accessing income generating opportunities.

The main reported reasons for different groups to have less access to livelihoods were: **perceived limited physical capacity, skill or education level** that prevents these groups from performing the available jobs (22 KIs), and the **lack of connections** (1 KI).

The types and number of jobs available in Yathreb reportedly shifted compared to 2014. This includes due to the reported reduction of available jobs in the private sector due to the prolonged displacement of business owners (7 KIs).

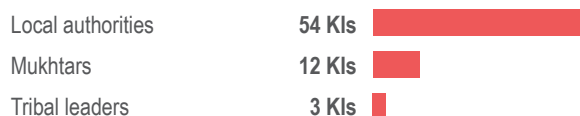
Types of jobs reportedly available in Yathreb in 2014 compared to January 2021 (out of 54 KIs)^{22, 32}



Perceptions on governance

Governance and influencing bodies

Reported influential local actors related to governance (out of 54 KIs)²²



48 KIs (out of 54) reported that there were **no expected changes in the most influential local actors related to governance** in the six months following data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (6 KIs).

48 KIs (out of 54) reported that there were **no appointments for new local authorities** in the six months prior to data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (6 KIs).

Perceptions in safety and security³³

Safety and security

51 KIs (out of 54) reported that their community members **felt safe** in Yathreb.³⁴ The rest of the KIs did not know (1 KI), or refused to answer (1 KI). A remainee KI reported not feeling safe but did not share the reasons.

According to the [REACH Intentions Survey conducted between August and September 2020](#), 113 interviewed IDP households originally from Yathreb residing in camps (out of 121 households) reported that they felt that their AoO were unsafe for them to return. The main reason was the perceived decrease in safety and security, reportedly related to the fear of recruitment to armed groups (75 households); proximity of AoO to an area of conflict (46 households), and fear of extremist groups recruitment or violence (40 households).²⁰ The perceptions in this assessment and the responses in the camp profiling and intention updates could differ due to the fact that the latter represents only the views of IDPs displaced in camps and could cover different areas and groups.

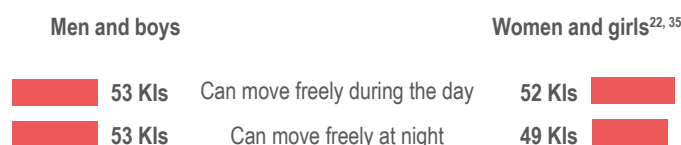
Perceptions on the presence of security forces

All KIs (54 KIs) reported that the presence of the security forces contributed **positively to a feeling of safety**.

Reportedly, security forces in Yathreb are **effective in resolving disputes** within neighbourhoods and between different villages (54 KIs).

Freedom of movement

The majority of KIs reported that women, girls, men and boys can freely move during the day and at night.



The rest of the KIs did not know about movement restrictions for women, girls, men and boys in Yathreb.

48 KIs (out of 54) reported that their community members **did not avoid specific areas** in Yathreb. The rest of the KIs did not know (5 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI).

Explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination

48 KIs (out of 54) reported that there were **no contaminated fields**. The rest of the KIs did not know (6 KIs).

All KIs (54 KIs) reported that **no incidents occurred due to ERW** in the six months prior to data collection.

Community disputes³³

Community disputes within neighbourhoods

42 KIs (out of 54) reported that there were **no disputes within neighbourhoods** in Yathreb in the six months prior to data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know about disputes (12 KIs).

11 KIs (out of 54) reported **expecting no changes in the current situation** due to the kinship ties between families (9 KIs), the integration and acceptance of IDPs in the community (9 KIs) and the existing work relationships (1 KI). The majority of KIs (43 KIs) did not know if there would be a change in the occurrence of disputes within neighbourhoods in the six months following to data collection.

According to the [REACH Intentions Survey, conducted between August and September 2020](#), social cohesion concerns such as fear of community or tribal groups violence, threats or harassment due to ongoing disputes were reported by 56 households as a reason to do not feel safe in their AoO.²⁰

Community disputes between villages

24 KIs (out of 54) reported that there were **no disputes between villages** in Yathreb Sub-district in the six months prior to data collection. The majority of KIs (30 KIs) did not know about disputes.

12 KIs (out of 54) reported **expecting no change in the current situation** due to the integration and acceptance of IDPs in the community (12 KIs), kinship ties between families (5 KIs), the existing work relationships (2 KIs) and the intervention of the local authorities (1 KI). The majority of KIs (42 out of 54 KIs) did not know if there would be a change in the occurrence of disputes between villages in the six months following data collection.

Retaliation incidents

24 KIs (out of 54) reported that there were **no retaliation incidents** in the six months prior to data collection. The rest of the KIs did not know (30 KIs).

Community inter-relations and co-existence³³

All KIs (54 KIs) reported that there were **no specific population groups which are not welcomed** by the majority of the community.

In addition, 13 KIs (out of 54) reported that community members **trust each other**. The rest of the KIs did not know (27 KIs), or refused to answer (14 KIs).

Interaction between population groups

23 KIs (out of 54) reported that community members **interact with each other**. The rest of the KIs did not know (11 KIs), or refused to answer (10 KIs).³⁶

Reported types of interaction (out of 23 KIs)²²

Kinship ties	23 KIs	<div></div>
Friendship	19 KIs	<div></div>
Work relationships (employment)	11 KIs	<div></div>
Attending to shops and public places	6 KIs	<div></div>
Common business operation ³⁷	1 KI	<div></div>

Reported barriers for interaction (out of 37 KIs)²²

No perceived obstacles for interaction	26 KIs	<div></div>
Different perceptions and thoughts	5 KIs	<div></div>
Lack of harmony between population groups	4 KIs	<div></div>
Lack of interest to interact	1 KI	<div></div>
Competition for livelihoods	1 KI	<div></div>
Did not know	17 KIs	<div></div>

Participation in social and public events

42 KIs (out of 54) did not know about community members **participation in social and public events**. The rest of the KIs (12 KIs) refused to answer.

However, two IDP KIs reported that the main barrier for participation was the **lack of interest** of some groups (not specified) to be involved in social and public events.

End Notes

1. A joint initiative of DTM, Social Inquiry and the Returns Working Group (RWG): [IOM DTM Return Index](#)
2. A total of 16 IDP camps and informal sites have now been closed or reclassified since mid-October (12 formal camps closed including Salamiyah), 2 informal sites closed, 2 formal camps reclassified to informal sites). As a result, 43,097 individuals have departed from these sites - CCCM Cluster meeting, Camp Closures Status, 28 January 2021: (Not published)
3. [IOM DTM, Returnees, rounds 118 and 119, October 2020 and December 2020](#)
4. [Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Iraq in the light of abuses committed by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated groups, 13 March 2015](#)
5. [Integrated Location Assessment, IOM DTM, August 2020](#)
6. [Return Index round 11, IOM DTM, November and December 2020](#)
7. 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 Yathreb there were 15 community leader respondents. Population figures for returns and IDP populations in Yathreb are based on their estimates at the time of data collection.
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 Methodology](#)
13. [IOM DTM, Returns Index, Hotspots and Drivers, Drivers of Severity in Hotspots, Yathreb](#)
14. 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)
15. Community leaders are members of the host community represented by six mukhtars (from five different locations in Yathreb), seven governmental employees in three ministries, a retired community leader and a female community leader. Mukhtar can be defined as the head of a village or neighbourhood in some Arab countries.
16. IDPs (displaced from the area) refer to households from Yathreb displaced after 2014 events to other areas different than their AoO, specifically in Bazian, Markaz Rania and Markaz Pshdar sub-districts (Al-Suleimaniyah Governorate); and Markaz Erbil Sub-district (Erbil Governorate).
17. IDPs (displaced in the area) refer to households from AoO different than Yathreb Sub-district who were displaced after 2014 events and reside in Yathreb. Households were reportedly originally from different sub-districts in Balad District of Salah Al-Din Governorate.
18. There were 54 individuals aged between 20 and 58 years old interviewed for Yathreb assessment. The majority were male (44 KIs). Ensuring gender balance still a limitation to the assessment, mainly reported due to female KIs not answering to the phone calls.
19. During the assessment 121 IDP households originally from Yathreb, displaced in seven IDP camps were interviewed including AlWand 2, Arbat IDP, Ashti IDP, Debaga 1, Karama, Laylan IDP and Tazade camps. The findings should be considered as indicative - [Intentions Survey Round VII, REACH Iraq, August 2020](#)
20. Three of the seven camps reported AlWand 2, Karama and Laylan IDP camps were reported closed between November and December 2020 - CCCM Cluster meeting, Camp Closures Status, 28 January 2021: (Not published)
21. "Laylan IDP camp (1,323 households / 6,999 individuals) in Kirkuk Governorate was closed in 30 November 2020." - Camp Closures Situation Report 11, 10 December 2020: (Not published)
22. Sum of answers may exceed the 100% due to KIs being able to select multiple response options, including other topics.
23. The severity of blocked returns to Yathreb was classified as high, which in addition to other factors included the concern around the number of households which have applied for security clearance to return but which have had it denied by operations command due to outstanding tribal conflicts - [Return Index round 11, IOM DTM, November and December 2020](#)
24. Findings are indicative of each population group but not representative.
25. For the purpose of this research, large households refer to household who have over seven members including parents and children, which is the average size for a household in Iraq - [Household Size and Composition, 2019, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs](#)
26. Illegal tenure severity in Yathreb was classified as high, representing that there is a concern around the number of illegal occupations of private residencies affecting negatively the social cohesion severity score - [Return Index round 11, IOM DTM, November and December 2020](#)
27. For the purpose of this research, work-for-rent agreement is defined as a not-very-common type of housing agreement between a landlord and the workers to gratuitously stay in a shelter (usually a tent, unfinished building or low-cost shelter) or land, depending on the context, as long as they work, plant, or harvest.
28. The severity of housing destruction was classified as high in Yathreb - [Return Index round 11, IOM DTM, November and December 2020](#)
29. Recovery of businesses severity in Yathreb Sub-district was classified as high which refers to the existence of businesses that have not been restarted - [Return Index round 11, IOM DTM, November and December 2020](#)
30. All population have access to court, public distribution system office and the civil directorate but they are partially operational. There is no reported HLP programme office in Yathreb - [Integrated Location Assessment, IOM DTM, August 2020](#)
31. The second unmet need for returnees in Yathreb is access to livelihood opportunities - Integrated Location Assessment, IOM DTM, August 2020: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/ILA5#Datasets>
32. The main income source for the population in Yathreb is public service jobs, followed by agriculture, farming and herd animals raising, and private sector business - [Integrated Location Assessment, IOM DTM, August 2020](#)
33. 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.
34. The severity of the safety and security component in Yathreb was classified as medium affected by the concerns about sources of violence and the presence of checkpoints controlled by other security actors - [Return Index round 11, IOM DTM, November and December 2020](#)
35. This finding was probably affected by the gendered distribution of respondents with a majority being male KIs.
36. "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, March 2013](#)
37. For the purpose of this assessment, common business operation refers to the action of operating an income generating business in partnership involving members of different population groups.