RAPID ASSESSMENT ON RETURNS AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS   October 2021
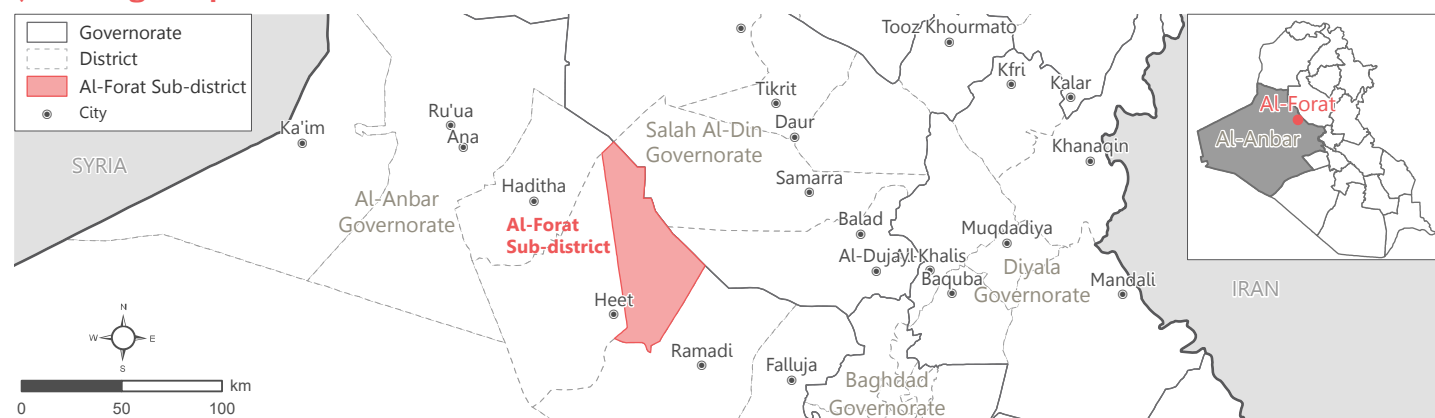## Al-Forat Sub-district - Heet District - Al-Anbar Governorate, Iraq

Situation Overview

In 2021, 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 AoOs.[1] Increased returns and secondary displacement were driven primarily by the closure and consolidation of IDP camps.[2] As of October 2021, 16 formal camps and informal sites have been closed or reclassified as informal sites since camp closures started in mid-October 2020. For the camps that remain open across Iraq, there is an ongoing planning procedure to determine their future.[3] The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)'s returnee master list recorded over 4.5 million individuals returning to their AoOs across the country, as of September 2021.[4]

There were no additional camp closures between January and October 2021, however IDPs continued returning or secondarily displacing. 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.

Al-Forat Sub-district

Al-Forat is a sub-district of Heet District, located in the west of Al-Anbar Governorate.[5] Al-Forat Sub-district is composed of a Sunni Bedouin population with a homogeneous culture, religion, and ethnicity.[6] On August 31 2014, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) announced the establishment of the Euphrates State (Wilaya Al-Forat from Arabic) to include the Western Anbar areas.[7] In November 2017, the Iraqi security forces and their allies retook the sub-district from ISIL.[6] According to an IOM Integrated Location Assessment (ILA) Round VI, as of July and August 2021, households residing in the assessed villages in Al-Forat (6 villages) were still somewhat concerned about possible ISIL operations in the area.

Reported Population Profile[8]

4,128-4,431   **households** were residing in Al-Forat before the events of 2014.

93%-96%   **of households** in Al-Forat are displaced since 2014.

87%-91%   **households** displaced since 2014 had returned to Al-Forat at the time of data collection.

5-9   **IDP households** (AoO not specified) were displaced in Al-Forat at the time of data collection.

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.[9] 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 (AoR) nationwide.

To build on this information, REACH Initiative (REACH) has conducted multi-sectoral assessments in AoOs or areas of return (AoR) 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 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 Al-Forat Sub-district to provide an in-depth profiling of needs and understanding of social relationships between returnee[10] and/or IDP populations.[11]

Al-Forat Sub-district was selected for the assessment as: social cohesion severity[12] was classified as 'high' in five villages out of six;[13] it was classified as a priority location for West Anbar Area-Based Coordination group (ABC) under the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group (DSTWG) in Iraq;[14] and dynamic population movements to/from this sub-district were reported through the Returns Working Group (RWG). The findings are based on 40 key informant (KI) interviews conducted between 6 and 17 October 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.

KI Profile   Al-Forat Sub-district

Returnees (more than 3 months ago)[15]   **23 KIs**

Community leaders[16]   **7 KIs**

Subject matter experts (SMEs)[17]   **6 KIs**

IDPs (displaced from the area)[18]   **4 KIs**   **40 KIs**[19]

RWG Iraq
Returns Working Group

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

Key findings

- The situation regarding returns to Al-Forat remained stable, with KIs reporting a **few ongoing returns** and **some projected in the six months following data collection**, driven primarily by the **sense of increased safety and security**.

- All KIs believed that **recent returns had positively impacted the community** mainly by promoting the reconstruction of residential areas and infrastructure in Al-Forat. However, **further returns may** also reportedly **have negative impacts** in the community mainly regarding limited access to resources, services, and jobs, in addition to the expected deterioration of the security situation.

- The majority of KIs reported that **households faced challenges in accessing housing rehabilitation** in the sub-district, as well as difficulties in accessing the government compensation for damaged properties. Issues related to access to housing rehabilitation, and access to livelihoods, were reported as the main barriers for households to return to Al-Forat.

- All returnee and IDP KIs from the community reported that **the availability of durable solutions' assistance for livelihoods would be a factor encouraging further returns** to the sub-district. Access to livelihoods was the most reported primary community need.

- The majority of KIs believed that **most of the households** in Al-Forat **resided in owned houses** and **had access to housing, land and property (HLP) documentation proving ownership**.

- KIs from different population groups prioritized community needs differently. Further efforts to develop the **healthcare and water infrastructure** and **housing rehabilitation** were the most reported primary community needs **for community leader KIs**. In contrast, **SME**, **returnee** and **IDP KIs from the community** commonly reported the need to ensure access to livelihoods as the primary community need.

- All KIs reported that **the majority of the households faced challenges in accessing basic public services**. The most affected sector was reportedly **healthcare** due to the lack of specialised staff who preferred staying in the city or developed urban areas, the lack of equipment, and the lack of medication.

- KIs reported an **overall decrease in the availability of job opportunities compared to before 2014**. Reportedly, the type of jobs available had also shifted, with manufacturing, transportation, and oil industry being reportedly unavailable at the time of data collection. Findings suggested that there were also sectors **less affected** such as **construction**, which was assumed to be a result of the reported reconstruction and rehabilitation of houses and infrastructure taking place in the sub-district.

- Overall, jobs in the agricultural sector were the second-most-often reported as available in the sub-district. **Agriculture** was the most commonly reported **livelihood sector of interest for older returnee** and **IDP households from the community**. It was also commonly reported by community leader and SME KIs as **the livelihood sector with the most growth potential** in the 12 months following data collection.

- Generally, **local authorities were reportedly the most influential bodies regarding governance**. The majority of returnee and IDP KIs from the community reported that the **presence of formal security forces** contributed **positively to a feeling of safety** between community members. **Tribal leaders** were reportedly the **most effective body in solving disputes** within the sub-district and between the sub-district and other areas.

- All returnee and IDP KIs from the community noted that **community members felt safe or very safe in Al-Forat**. Additionally, a few returnee KIs and half of IDP KIs from the community reported that households in the respective displacement groups **felt welcome or very welcome** to the sub-district. According to KIs, this was mainly driven by kinship ties between members of the community and strong social ties.

- Over half of returnee KIs reported that the majority of **returnee households did not interact with other groups**. **A few returnee KIs** and **over half of IDP KIs from the community reported that households mostly interacted with returnees**. This was reportedly due to the kinship ties between these groups.

- **Over half of returnee KIs** and **all IDP KIs from the community** reported that **returnee and IDP households participated in decision-making processes**. One possible reason for this could be the connection that household had with existing tribal systems and their bonds with the community in Al-Forat.

- Perceptions on durable solutions varied between KI profiles. Almost **two thirds of returnee KIs** reported that **returnee households felt reintegrated in the community** of Al-Forat, while **the majority of IDP KIs from the community** reported that **IDP households did not feel integrated in their areas of displacement (AoD)**.

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).

🏃 Recent household return movements

The majority of KIs reported that **there were no recent returns** to the sub-district (32 out of 40 KIs). However, eight KIs reported that:

15-18 **households returned** to Al-Forat in the six months prior to data collection.

Returns were reported from non-camp areas in Baghdad Governorate (1 KI), Haditha District (1 KI), and from two sub-districts in Heet District namely Baghdady and Markaz Heet (2 KIs). Half of the KIs reporting recent returns (4 KIs) did not know from where households arrived.

The most commonly reported pull factor influencing these movements was the sense of increased safety and security in Al-Forat (5 KIs).

Reported drivers for returns (out of 8 KIs)

Sense of increased safety and security	**5 KIs**
Nostalgia about their previous life	**2 KIs**
Following the return of other extended family members	**1 KI**

Reported impact of returns in the community

All KIs reporting the occurrence of recent returns (8 KIs) also believed that these movements had **positive impacts** in the Al-Forat community. KIs reported an increased stability in the area, influenced by the reopening of shops (3 KIs), the repopulation of villages in the sub-district and the partial rehabilitation of houses (2 KIs).

Impact on the public sector

One community leader KI highlighted that with the arrival of new households, the local government had prioritized restoring basic public services in the sub-district. Reportedly, humanitarian actors supported the rehabilitation of some water treatment plants and water networks in different villages (3 KIs) and they also rehabilitated some public health centers (PHCs) and schools (4 KIs).

Impact on access to job opportunities

Three KIs reported a slight increase in available job opportunities. Reportedly, the ongoing rehabilitation works and the improvements noted in trade and commerce slightly impacted access to livelihoods, particularly for youth. Additionally, one SME KI reported that humanitarian actors implemented vocational courses, skills training, and cash-for-work programmes in the sub-district involving vulnerable households.

"Returns made it possible to take the area back again as it was before the displacement. With the return of households, kinship ties were restored and reunification took place, and every person returned to his/her previous work, profession or business and this helped the community to rise again."

- Male older returnee KI -

🏃 IDP household displacements

This section refers to IDP households in the community of Al-Forat. Returnee, SME and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (36 out of 40 KIs) **The majority of KIs** consulted for this section reported that **there were no IDP movements** from the sub-district (30 out of 36 KIs) or did not know (5 KIs).

However, one community leader KI reported that:

7-10 **IDP households returned** in the six months prior to data collection from Al-Forat to their to non-camp areas in their AoOs in Heet District due to the sense of increased safety and security there.

👪 Family separation and reunification plans

The majority of KIs reported that **there were no family separation cases** in the sub-district (22 out of 40 KIs) or did not know (16 KIs). However, two KIs reported that some households had family members who remained in displacement at the time of data collection.
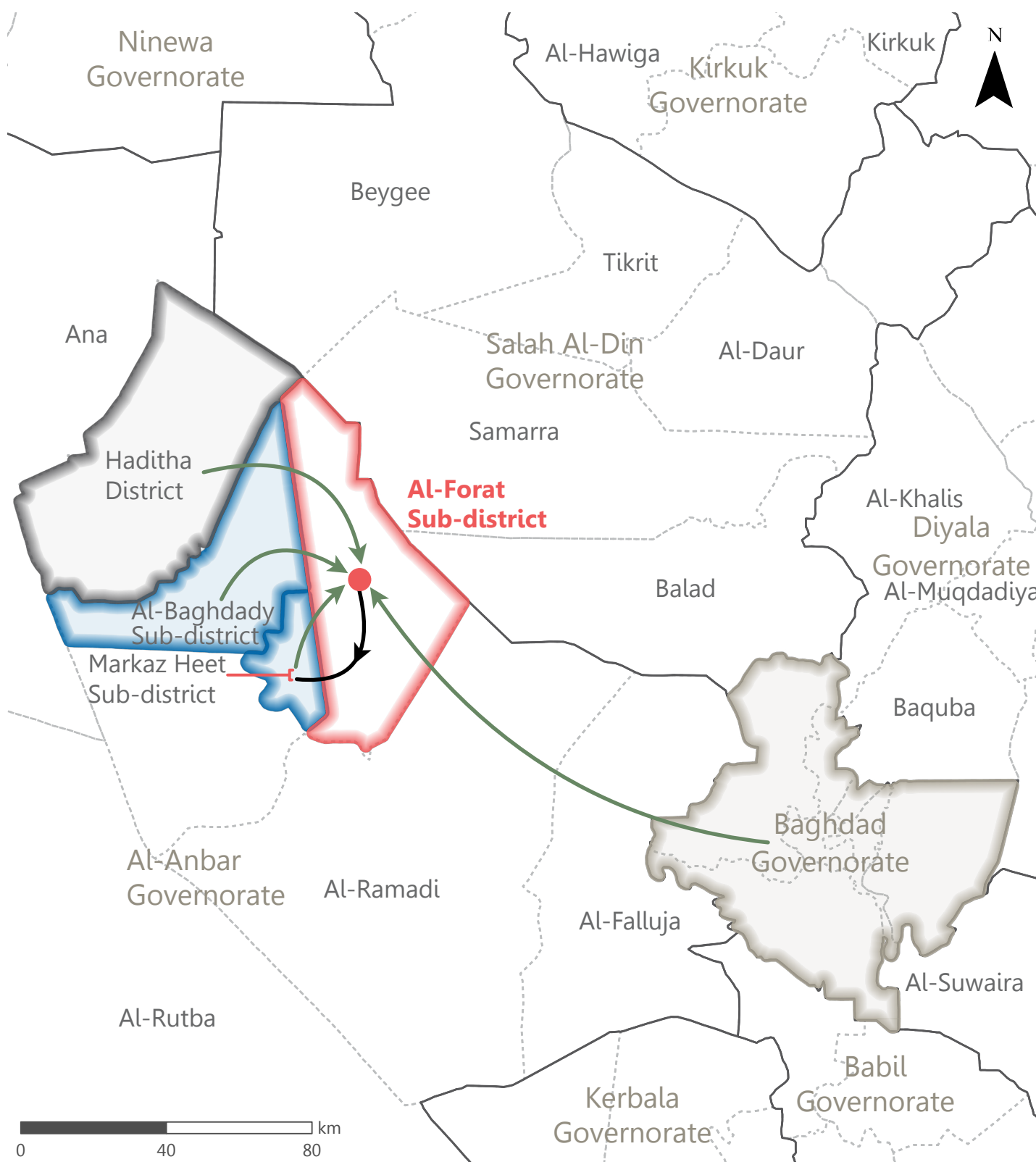
Adult males

Reportedly, some households had at least one adult male member who remained in displacement due to available jobs in AoD being unavailable in AoO and due to damaged/destroyed housing in AoO.

"There are some households who did not return to the area and live outside the governorate as a result of their commitment to work."

- Male IDP KI from the community -

Family reunification plans

As reported by the KIs: "When the houses are rehabilitated and job opportunities are provided for displaced community members, they will return to their original areas."

N

Ninewa Governorate

Al-Hawiga

Kirkuk Governorate

Kirkuk

Beygee

Tikrit

Salah Al-Din Governorate

Al-Daur

Ana

Samarra

Haditha District

Al-Forat Sub-district

Al-Khalis

Diyala Governorate

Balad

Al-Muqdadiya

Al-Baghdady Sub-district

Markaz Heet Sub-district

Baquba

Baghdad Governorate

Al-Anbar Governorate

Al-Ramadi

Al-Falluja

Al-Suwaira

Al-Rutba

Kerbala Governorate

Babil Governorate

km
0   40   80

Reported recent return movements and IDP displacement to/from Al-Forat (in the last six months)

→ Return movement to Al-Forat

← IDP return movement from Al-Forat

◼ Al-Forat Sub-district

☐ Governorate

⋯ District

Displacement location

☐ Governorate

☐ District

☐ Sub-district

🏃⮌ Expected household returns

The majority of KIs reported no expected returns in the six months following data collection (29 out of 40 KIs) or did not know about these movements (10 KIs). However, one community leader KI reported that:

7-8 **households** were expected to return in the six months following data collection to Al-Forat (potentially to Zwya Al-Gharbiya village).

The same KI reported that these households would be arriving from non-camp areas in Ramadi District due to the sense of increased safety and security in Al-Forat.

Reported impact of expected returns in the community

Regardless of KI reports about the occurrence of expected returns, all KIs were consulted for this section regarding the impact of these movements. Therefore, the vast majority of KIs (34 out of 40 KIs) reported that further returns may have **positive impacts** in the community of the sub-district.

Impact on reconstruction and rehabilitation

KIs reported that further returns may promote the reconstruction of the sub-district (24 KIs). This was allegedly due to the expected housing rehabilitation (12 KIs), the reconstruction of health facilities mainly by NGOs (10 KIs) and school buildings (4 KIs), the reparation of the remaining damaged water treatment plants (6 KIs), and the maintenance of the electrical network and transformers (3 KIs).

Impact on agriculture, trade, and commerce

With additional returns, KIs expected the revitalization of the agricultural sector including livestock and animal husbandry (17 KIs) and the increased production of local agricultural products (3 KIs). Consequently, these may promote trade, commerce, and marketing of products (14 KIs) and may create new job opportunities (5 KIs). Reportedly, shops and industrial workshops will reopen with the return of their owners and skilled workers (13 KIs).

Impact on the public sector

According to KIs, the public sector may be positively affected by the return of professionals and public employees, which will allow the reopening of public departments and schools (11 KIs).

Impact on security

From a security point of view, KIs reported that the "population increase in the area might prove that the area is safe" (1 KI), since only households with a granted security clearance can return (3 KIs).

Impact on social inter-relations

Reportedly, these movements may encourage other households to return (5 KIs), ensuring family reunification (4 KIs) and re-established bonds between community members (1 KI). According to three KIs, only households with approved security clearance could return to Al-Forat, consequently these KIs suggested that the local government continue to negotiate security clearances to facilitate the return of the displaced households.

A few KIs reported that further returns may **negatively affect** the community in the sub-district (6 out of 40 KIs).

Impact on access to resources, services, and jobs

KIs reported that there is a lack of preparedness in the sub-district to absorb an increase in population and to share the limited available services and resources (3 KIs). In addition, two KIs believed that these movements may decrease the opportunities to access jobs.

Impact on security

From a security perspective, two KIs reported an anticipated deterioration in the security situation. Their statement was based on the possibility of security forces imposing additional security measures, such as a higher number of checkpoints in the area and the increased deployment of armed groups. One community leader KI believed that the increased number of armed groups in the area could lead to the sabotage of shops and homes by armed group members. One returnee KI reported that increasing the number of checkpoints will negatively affect the movement of individuals from/to the sub-district and the transportation of products.

According to KIs, some displaced households had members with alleged links to ISIL (3 KIs), and other households had members with pending legal processes due to previous crimes (1 KI). Taking these into consideration, one community leader KI was reportedly concerned about the potential occurrence of disputes with the return of additional households.

"The return of households to their AoOs contributed to the stability of the sub-district. After their return, the rest of the households are encouraged to return as well. However, further returns must be preceded by the provision of basic living requirements, because the displaced have suffered difficult conditions during the previous years. Al least, they must be provided with a suitable environment for a sustainable return, with support to rebuild their homes and public infrastructure."

- Female older returnee KI -

Reported barriers for further returns (out of 40 KIs)[20]

Access to housing

Destroyed/damaged housing	**29 KIs**

Access to livelihoods and basic public services

Lack of job opportunities	**23 KIs**
Lack of basic public services	**21 KIs**
Absence of specialised medical treatment in AoO	**1 KI**

Safety and security

Fear of being perceived as affiliated with ISIL	**7 KIs**
Concerns about security in AoO	**2 KIs**

Other barriers

Fear of contracting COVID-19	**2 KIs**
Preferred life in AoD	**1 KI**
Did not know	**9 KIs**

N

Tikrit

Salah Al-Din
Governorate

Al-Daur

Samarra

**Al-Forat
Sub-district**

Al-Khalis

Ana

Haditha

Balad

Baquba

Baghdad
Governorate

Al-Ramadi
District

Al-Anbar
Governorate

Al-Falluja

Babil
Governorate

Al-Rutba

Kerbala
Governorate

Al-Kufa

km

0   40   80
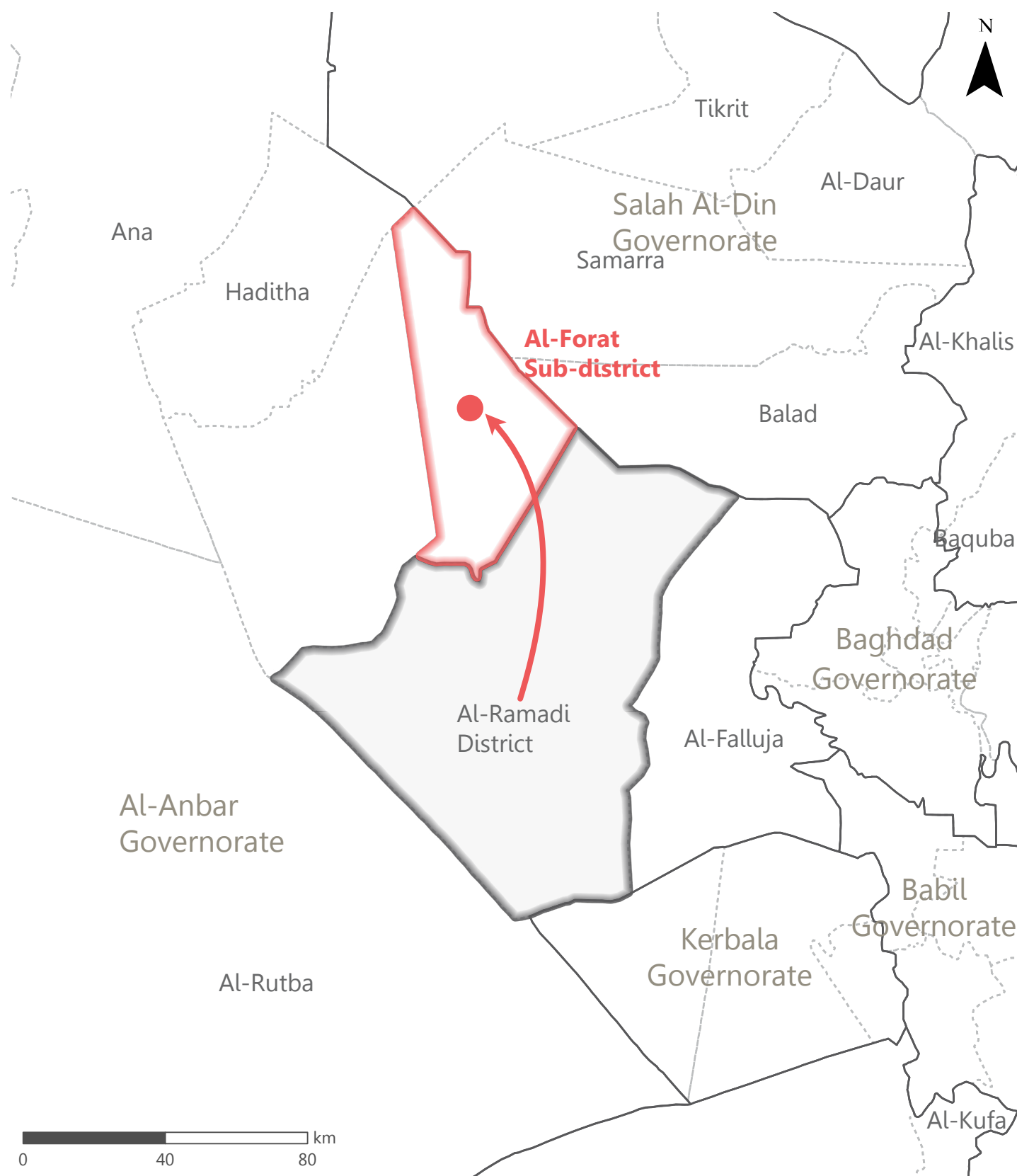
Reported expected return movements to Al-Forat (in the next six months)

⟵ Expected return movement from non-camp areas

● Al-Forat Sub-district

Displacement location

District

Governorate

District

RWG
Iraq
Returns Working Group

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🌾 Primary community needs

Primary community needs in Al-Forat
(out of 40 KIs)[21]

	First Need	Second Need	Third Need
Livelihoods	12 KIs	13 KIs	2 KIs
Healthcare	10 KIs	11 KIs	5 KIs
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	3 KIs	7 KI	10 KIs
Housing rehabilitation	8 KIs	4 KIs	2 KIs
Electricity	2 KIs	1 KI	5 KIs
Education	1 KI	3 KIs	3 KIs
Infrastructure rehabilitation	0 KIs	0 KIs	5 KIs

The most commonly reported primary community need was **access to livelihoods** (27 out of 40 KIs). KIs reported that there was a notable lack of job opportunities in the sub-district, which negatively impacted the employment rate and mainly affected young people (25 KIs). According to four KIs, access to livelihoods was highly affected by the lack of governmental job assignments or appointments, especially for recent graduates, and the need for connections ('"wasta"' in Arabic) to get employed.

The second most commonly reported primary community need was **access to healthcare** (26 out of 40 KIs). KIs reported the neglect from the relevant authorities to restore the health sector in the sub-district (4 KIs). According to five KIs, some PHCs were rehabilitated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). However, there was reportedly a lack of medication, supplies, and equipment in the PHCs (17 KIs). Additionally, the lack of specialized medical staff (16 KIs) led to limited PHC hours of operation (5 KIs).

The third most commonly reported primary community need was **access to WASH**, mainly affecting access to water (20 out of 40 KIs). See section on access to basic public services on page 9.

📊 Most commonly reported primary community needs per KI profile[20, 22]

Community leaders (out of 7 KIs)		SMEs (out of 6 KIs)		IDPs from the community (out of 4 KIs)[18]		Older returnees (out of 23 KIs)[15]	
WASH	7 KIs	Healthcare	6 KIs	Livelihoods	4 KIs	Livelihoods	17 KIs
Healthcare	3 KIs	Livelihoods	6 KIs	Housing rehabilitation	3 KIs	Healthcare	15 KIs
Housing rehabilitation	3 KIs	Housing rehabilitation	2 KIs	Healthcare	2 KIs	WASH	10 KIs

🚚 Access to durable solutions' assistance and impact on returns

Returnee, SME, and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (36 out of 40 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs (30 out of 36 KIs) reported that **there were humanitarian activities or projects implemented** in Al-Forat. According to six KIs, there were no humanitarian activities implemented in the sub-district.

Reported activities implemented in Al-Forat (out of 15 KIs)[20]

WASH	11 KIs
Food security programmes	10 KIs
Livelihoods programmes	7 KIs
Non-food item (NFI) distributions	3 KIs
COVID-19 awareness sessions	3 KIs

Other less reported humanitarian activities were social cohesion programmes (2 KIs), psycho-social support (PSS) (2 KIs), and cash assistance (1 KI).

Activity implementers

Over three quarters of KIs reporting implemented activities in the sub-district (23 out of 30 KIs) also reported that these **activities or projects were implemented by humanitarian actors**. According to KIs, local authorities were mainly involved in food distribution (8 KIs), and local community members supported in social cohesion activities (5 KIs).

Reported groups less involved in activities

Half of KIs reporting implemented activities in the sub-district (15 out of 30 KIs) also reported that none of the displacement groups faced challenges in accessing durable solutions' assistance. The other half believed that **IDPs from the community were less involved** in activities or projects (8 KIs), followed by IDPs in the community (7 KIs) and returnees (5 KIs). Regarding vulnerable groups,[23] KIs reported that **older persons** (9 KIs) and persons with disabilities or special needs (6 KIs) were less involved in these activities or projects than other vulnerable groups. According to seven KIs, households with alleged links to ISIL were excluded from humanitarian activities. Almost half of the KIs believed that all vulnerable groups had the same level of access to participation (14 KIs).

Durable solutions' assistance as a factor to encourage returns

The majority of returnee and IDP KIs from the community consulted for this section (22 out of 27 KIs) reported that the **availability of durable solutions' assistance would be a factor encouraging returns** to Al-Forat. The rest of KIs disagreed with this statement (5 KIs).

Reportedly, **livelihoods** was identified by KIs as the activity **most needed to encourage further returns** (19 out of 22 KIs), followed by housing rehabilitation (2 KIs) and healthcare (1 KI).

Perceptions on access to housing, housing rehabilitation, and compensation

Returnee, SME, and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (36 out of 40 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that the majority of households in Al-Forat resided in **owned houses**.

Access to HLP documentation

The vast majority of KIs (39 out of 40 KIs) reported that **the majority of households** in Al-Forat **had ownership documents** to prove housing ownership. However, one returnee KI reported that some returnee households had missing heirs deed certificates.

Access to housing rehabilitation

Returnee, SME, and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (36 out of 40 KIs).

40%-70% **of houses** in Al-Forat reportedly remained destroyed or heavily damaged at the time of data collection, according to all consulted KIs.

Challenges to access housing rehabilitation

All KIs (40 KIs) reported that **households faced challenges in accessing housing rehabilitation** in the sub-district, and over a third of KIs (14 KIs) reported access to housing rehabilitation as a primary community need. This was reportedly due to the high level of housing destruction in the sub-district (12 KIs).

All KIs reported challenges to access housing rehabilitation in the sub-district. Over half of KIs (22 KIs) reported that most of the affected households did not have the financial means to rehabilitate their houses. According to 14 KIs, there was a noted lack of financial support and loan provision from humanitarian actors and the relevant authorities. In addition, eight KIs reported the lack of rehabilitation projects or campaigns in the sub-district. One community leader KI reported that there was a lack of in-kind assistance distribution for affected households to replace their missed domestic items, such as furniture.

This situation led to households reportedly adopting coping strategies. According to seven KIs, households preferred to remain in displacement due to houses in their AoOs being damaged or destroyed. One community leader KI reported that households were forced to reside in one rehabilitated room of their houses or to stay in shelters under deplorable living conditions below minimum standards.

Additionally, KIs reported that the most difficult supports to obtain in terms of access to housing rehabilitation were (out of 40 KIs):[20]

Financial support	**36 KIs**	▬▬▬
Housing rehabilitation and reconstruction projects	**25 KIs**	▬▬
Legal support to present compensation claims	**6 KIs**	▪

"There are a number of displaced households whose homes are destroyed and they do not have the funds to rehabilitate them, instead they preferred to remain in the area of displacement and did not return."

- Male IDP KI from the community -

Reported groups with less access to housing rehabilitation

Over half of the KIs (27 out of 40 KIs) reported that households in all groups equally faced challenges in accessing housing rehabilitation. According to 13 KIs IDPs, in the community and/or returnees faced more challenges when attempting to access housing rehabilitation, followed by IDPs from the community (10 KIs).

While analysing vulnerabilities,[23] the majority of KIs reported that all groups were equally affected (23 KIs). The rest of the KIs believed that older persons (8 KIs) and persons with disabilities (7 KIs) encountered more difficulties to access housing rehabilitation compared to other groups.

Access to compensation mechanisms

The majority of KIs reported that the majority of households in Al-Forat **faced difficulties in accessing government compensation for damaged properties** (34 out of 40 KIs). According to six community leader KIs, there were no reported challenges to access compensation claims.

Reportedly, out of 34 KIs, perceptions toward the compensation process included:[20]

Long and complicated process	**14 KIs**	▬▬▬
Households will not be compensated at the end	**9 KIs**	▬▬
Lack of legal assistance for compensation	**6 KIs**	▬
Lack of awareness sessions about compensation	**3 KIs**	▪

Challenges to access compensation mechanisms

The lack of compensation was one of the main challenges for households in accessing housing rehabilitation, according to 19 KIs (out of 34 KIs).

Regarding eligibility

One community leader KI reported that some households originally from the sub-district were excluded from the compensation process without justification given. Additionally, eight KIs reported that families with alleged links to ISIL were excluded from processes for housing rehabilitation, including compensation.

Regarding physical access

One returnee KI reported that compensation claims were to be presented in the relevant public department located in the district center (Heet city). Therefore, households needed to travel long distances to present their claims while some of them lacked transportation means or financial resources to cover the travel cost.

Regarding the process

According to three KIs, households had to pay bribes to intermediaries to present their claims. Two of these KIs reported that households perceived paying bribes as an "effective strategy to have their claims presented, processed, and to receive their assigned transactions for compensation." In addition, five KIs reported that the relevant authorities did not support to make the process more accessible for affected households.

🏛 Perceptions on access to basic public services

All KIs reported that **households faced challenges in accessing basic public services** in the sub-district (40 KIs). All KIs reported that **healthcare** was the most affected sector by the events of 2014.

Reported affected basic public services (out of 40 KIs)[20]

Healthcare	**40 KIs**	▬▬▬▬
WASH	**29 KIs**	▬▬▬
Education	**23 KIs**	▬▬▬
Electricity	**13 KIs**	▬▬

Challenges to access basic public services

Reportedly, there was perceived neglect from the government and lack of interest from organisations toward public infrastructure rehabilitation (7 KIs). In addition, three KIs reported the lack of rehabilitation campaigns for the infrastructure in the sub-district and the lack of funds from the government to reactivate the public sector. One community leader KI explained that the lack of connections ("wasta" in Arabic) at the parliament level was negatively affecting the prioritization of the sub-district for funds allocation and reconstruction. One returnee KI reported that there were no complaints and feedback mechanisms in place for the population to report concerns regarding access to public services and prioritize sectors.

Access to public healthcare

All KIs reported that access to healthcare in the sub-district was affected after 2014, however 38 KIs (out of 40 KIs) specified the reasons. KIs reported that the governmental considered the sub-district as a rural area and neglected it (6 KIs), which allegedly resulted in limited rehabilitation works done to re-establish health facilities (5 KIs). According to eight KIs, the operational PHCs were crowded, and patients needed to wait long hours, coupled with limited hours of operation.

Other factors reportedly affecting access to healthcare in the sub-district facilities included the lack of specialised staff who preferred staying in the city or urban developed areas (26 KIs), the lack of equipment such as radiology machines (22 KIs), and the lack of medication (15 KIs). For specialised medical attention, KIs reported that there was no hospital in the sub-district (15 KIs), which forced households to travel to Markaz Heet to receive proper medical treatment in Heet General Hospital (6 KI). Some households reportedly resorted to private healthcare sector services, which was perceived as expensive (7 KIs). One older returnee reported that households with less financial resources used to visit local pharmacies to directly provide treatments instead of visiting a doctor.[24]

Access to public water, sanitation, and waste management

According to 29 KIs (out of 40 KIs), the public sectors covered under WASH were affected during the military operations in 2014. KIs reported that humanitarian actors rehabilitated some water plants and networks in the sub-district (12 KIs). According to 19 KIs, some water treatment plants and networks needed rehabilitation, mainly attributed to the government considering the sub-district as a rural area and neglecting the necessary repairs.[25] Reportedly, challenges to access water in the sub-district led to water scarcity, caused by limited supply hours and water pollution (8 KIs).[26] According to six KIs, households resorted to coping strategies to overcome the challenges in accessing water. KIs reported that households were forced to purchase bottled water mainly for drinking purposes by inflated prices (5 KIs). In addition, two community leader KIs reported that some households were digging illegal water wells and that others were using water from irrigation channels as their main source of water.

Regarding sanitation, a couple KIs (2 out of 40 KIs) reported that since before 2014 the sub-district lacked a sewage network. One returnee KI reported that for black water disposal, households used to prepare private pits without following sanitation and public health standards. Reportedly, households had to dislodge these pits on their own, and there was no monitoring for the disposal of the wastes in the sub-district. According to the KI, the situation in the sub-district was most affected in winter since there was a lack of rainwater management, harvesting, or drainage.

For waste management, reportedly the lack of funds allocated to the municipal sanitation services negatively affected waste collection (5 KIs). According to six KIs, the municipality in the sub-district lacked the capacity to purchase new waste collection vehicles or rehabilitate the existing ones. In addition, KIs reported the lack or limited availability of sanitation workers (4 KIs), and three KIs further reported delays in salary payments and the perception of low wages for sanitation workers. This situation would consequently lead to the accumulation of waste in the sub-district's residential areas, according to six KIs, until it was collected "once a week" and transported to a communal garbage dump.

Access to public education

Over half of KIs (23 out 40 KIs) reported that access to the public education sector was challenging, however 21 KIs (out of 23 KIs) specified the reasons. KIs reported that there was a governmental neglect toward the rehabilitation of schools (18 KIs), which led to a limited number of crowded operational schools running double shifts (morning and evening) (6 KIs). According to four KIs, these schools had mixed classrooms (boys and girls), which was not traditionally accepted by the community. In addition, one older returnee reported that some households prevented girls from attending the later academic shifts due to the fear of harassment while moving back home.

Five KIs reported that the quality of education was affected by the lack of governmental education staff assigned to the sub-district (4 KIs) and the lack of distribution of books and learning materials to students compared to previous years (1 KI).[27] Additionally, two community leader KIs reported that education platforms set online due to COVID-19 risks were perceived as negatively affecting the capacity of students to learn. One of these KIs reported that this situation mainly affected children in primary education and those who lacked access to Internet, consequently resulting in an unequal access to education between students. The same KI concluded that there was an urgent need to ensure efforts to return to in-person education.

Access to public electricity

Almost half of KIs (17 out of 40 KIs) reported that households faced challenges in accessing public electricity services. KIs reported the local government partially rehabilitated the electrical network in some villages, however there remain a considerable damage of the electrical network in the sub-district (15 KIs). Four KIs believed that the local government had neglected the electricity sector in the sub-district as other public services. KIs reported that the limited electricity service-hours affected the operation of water treatment plants (8 KIs), negatively affected irrigation (2 KIs) and workshops operation (1 KI).

According to two community leader KIs, this situation forced households to resort to purchasing private generators or to be connected to private general generators by increased prices.

Reported groups with less access to basic public services

Returnees was reportedly the group who faced the largest challenges when attempting to access basic public services (36 out of 40 KIs), followed by IDPs in the community (32 KIs) and IDPs from the community (26 KIs).

Regarding vulnerabilities,[23] over half of the KIs reported that all groups faced challenges equally (24 KIs). The rest of the KIs reported that older persons (10 KIs) and persons with disabilities (8 KIs) faced more challenges when attempting to access basic public services compared to other groups. According to two KIs, households with alleged links to ISIL also faced challenges to access basic public services.

Perceptions on access to livelihoods

All KIs reported that **the majority of households faced challenges in accessing livelihoods** (40 KIs).

Challenges to access livelihoods

Over two thirds of KIs (27 out of 40 KIs) reported that access to livelihoods was the primary community need in the sub-district. KIs also reported that there was a notable lack of job opportunities, which negatively impacted the employment rate in the sub-district and mainly affected young people (25 KIs). According to four KIs, access to livelihoods was highly affected by the lack of governmental jobs' appointments, mainly affecting recent graduates, and the need for connections ("wasta") to get employed.

This situation reportedly led to households/individuals adopting coping strategies (5 KIs). The most commonly reported coping mechanisms were:

» Male household member(s) travelling to other areas outside Anbar Governorate seeking jobs, namely in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and Baghdad (capital city) (3 KIs),

» Male son(s) remaining in displacement to work and provide for the extended family (3 KIs), and

» Households having to pay "huge amounts" or bribes to tribal leaders or governmental officers, mainly in Baghdad, to access job appointments or other employment opportunities (1 KI).

According to 13 KIs, to overcome the challenges to access livelihoods, some recommended actions to be implemented by the government and humanitarian actors were:

» Implement livelihood projects in the sub-district including cash-for-work programmes (10 KIs),

» Implement reconstruction and construction projects, which ensure significant numbers of job opportunities (4 KIs),

» Provide support to the agricultural sector, which ensure incomes to several households in the sub-district (3 KIs);

» Support farmers to restore livestock and animal husbandry businesses (1 KI), and

» Ensure access to compensation transactions for the rehabilitation of workplaces and businesses (1 KI).

One IDP KI from the community believed that supporting agriculture and farming may impact food security since local agricultural and farming products are perceived to be cheaper than imported ones.

"The lack of support for agriculture by the government, as well as the chances of employment in the country are weak due to nepotism. "Wasta", connections, and bribes are needed to be paid to government employees to get jobs in the security sector, including the police."

- Male IDP KI from the community -

Most reported livelihood sectors available in Al-Forat at the time of data collection (out of 36 KIs)[20]

Sector	KIs
Agriculture	24 KIs
Construction	24 KIs
Public education	13 KIs
Public administration and defence	12 KIs
Healthcare (public and private)	11 KIs
Finance	1 KI

Findings indicated that the availability of some livelihood sectors was affected at the time of data collection.[28] Job opportunities in manufacturing, transportation, and the oil industry were reportedly not available at the time of data collection. In addition, findings suggested that the least affected jobs in terms of availability were: construction, agriculture, and public administration and defence.

Reported groups with less access to livelihoods

IDPs from the community was reportedly the group who faced the largest challenges when attempting to access livelihoods in the sub-district (35 out of 40 KIs), followed by returnees (30 KIs) and IDPs in the community (13 KIs). Regarding vulnerabilities,[23] over half of KIs reported that all groups faced the same challenges (21 KIs). The rest of the KIs believed that older persons (13 KIs), persons with disabilities (9 KIs), and female heads of households (1 KI) faced more challenges when attempting to access livelihoods compared to other groups. Additionally four KIs reported that households with alleged links to ISIL also faced challenges to access livelihoods.

Livelihood sectors of interest for returnees and IDPs from the community

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (27 out of 40 KIs). The most commonly reported livelihood sector of interest for returnee and IDP households from the community was **agriculture** (22 KIs).

The most commonly reported livelihood sectors of interest:[20]

Returnees (out of 23 KIs)		IDPs from the community (out of 4 KIs)	
4 KIs	Agriculture	18 KIs	
2 KIs	Defense and security	7 KIs	
2 KIs	Defense and security	7 KIs	
3 KIs	Education	4 KIs	
4 KIs	Healthcare	3 KIs	

Additionally, returnee KIs reported that households from their displacement group were interested in jobs in construction (14 KIs), aquaculture (5 KIs), and industry and manufacturing (1 KI).

Challenges to access livelihood sectors of interest

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (27 out of 40 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that households in their respective displacement groups faced challenges in accessing jobs in sectors of their interest.

Governmental jobs (public sector employment) (out 24 KIs)

» Lack of governmental job appointments, the presence of intermediaries and the need to pay bribes to public officials to access governmental jobs (23 KIs),

» High level of competition to access job opportunities between community members (1 KI), and

» Community members, especially returnees, were forced to travel to other areas to seek employment (1 KI).

Agricultural sector (including aquaculture) (out of 21 KIs)

» Lack of governmental support to revitalize the agricultural sector, compensation and reclaiming land loss (21 KIs), and

» Lack of support to aquaculture (2 KIs).

Additionally, the construction sector was reportedly affected by the lack of construction projects (10 KIs), and the lack of financial support and investment in the private sector affected its development, including the number of job opportunities created (3 KIs).

Livelihood sectors with reported growth potential

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (13 out of 40 KIs). **Agriculture** was commonly reported by all consulted KIs as **the livelihood sector with the most growth potential** in the 12 months following data collection.

KIs also reported that other sectors showed potential to expand such as jobs in public and private healthcare (6 KIs), public education (4 KIs), and trade and commerce (3 KIs). Less reported sectors with growth potential included construction (2 KIs) and finance (2 KIs).

Livelihood activities support for economic growth

When consulting community leader and SME KIs (13 KIs) about the potential impact of livelihood activities and projects to support the economic growth in the sub-district, three community leader KIs believed that these activities will not have an impact, however the majority of consulted KIs reported that livelihood activities may support the economic development of Al-Forat (9 KIs).

To promote a better support to the sub-district in terms of economic growth, KIs recommended the implementation of programmes that support the agricultural sector (3 KIs) and the need to revitalize manufacturing production (1 KI). According to two KIs, there was a need for the revitalization of the trade, commerce, and support for the marketing of agricultural products. One SME KI reported that a successful agricultural sector provides job opportunities for women. In addition, three KIs recommended the need to develop skill training for youth, mainly for barbery (1 KI), blacksmithing (1 KI), and carpentry (1 KI), followed by loan provision for business start-ups (2 KIs). The above mentioned will reportedly support access to employment and increase households' income (4 KIs).

One community leader KI reported that *"there was no support from any governmental or international organizations. There is a complete failure in this regard."*

⚖️ Access to public judicial mechanisms

The majority of KIs (38 out of 40 KIs) reported that **there were no challenges in accessing public judicial mechanisms**. Two KIs reported that the main challenge to access justice was related to the long distances:

"The district does not have a court. The closest court is located in the center of the governorate. The challenge is the distance from the district to reach the court."

- Female older returnee KI -

and

"The difficulties are for households with lower incomes and those who do not have means of transportation from the sub-district to the governorate center where the judicial authorities are located."

- Male SME KI -

Reported groups with less access to judicial mechanisms

Over half of the KIs (29 out of 40 KIs) reported that none of the displacement groups faced challenges in accessing public judicial mechanims. The rest of the KIs reported that IDPs from the community faced more challenges when attempting to access justice (6 KIs), followed by IDPs in the community (4 KIs) and returnees (1 KI).

In terms of vulnerabilities,[23] three quarters of the KIs (30 KIs) believed that none of the vulnerable groups faced challenges to access justice. According to seven KIs, older persons and persons with disabilities faced more challenges when attempting to access justice compared to other groups. Additionally three KIs reported that households with alleged links to ISIL also faced challenges to legal services.

🏛 Perceptions on governance, safety and security, and community tensions[30]

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (13 out of 40 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs (10 out of 13 KIs) believed that **local authorities were the most influential bodies in terms of governance**.

Reported influential local actors regarding governance (out of 13 KIs)[20]

Local authorities	**10 KIs**
Mukhtars[16]	**7 KIs**
Tribal leaders	**3 KIs**
Formal security forces	**3 KIs**

🛡 Perceptions on safety and security

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (27 out of 40 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that **the majority of returnee and IDP households from the community felt safe or very safe** in Al-Forat. This situation was reportedly the same for women, girls, men, and boys,[31] according to all consulted KIs.

Freedom of movement

Returnee, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (36 out of 40 KIs). The vast majority of consulted KIs (35 out of 36 KIs) reported that **there were no restrictions of movement imposed** in the sub-district. One community leader KI did not know about restrictions.

All returnee KIs (23 KIs) also reported **that the majority of returnee households could freely move during the day and at night** in Al-Forat if they desired. This situation was reportedly the same for women, girls, men, and boys,[31] according to all returnee KIs.

⚠ Explosive remants of war (ERWs) land contamination

The vast majority of KIs (39 out of 40 KIs) reported that **there were no fields contaminated with ERW** in Al-Forat at the time of data collection.

However, one community leader KI (out of 40 KIs) reported the presence of ERW land contamination in Al-Forat sub-district. The KI also reported the occurrence of incidents with ERWs affecting children, causing fatalities. Consequently, there was a high need to proceed with ERW removal by a specialised team.[32]

👪 Community disputes and retaliation incidents

Returnee, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (36 out of 40 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that there were no disputes between the sub-district and other areas (external disputes). In addition, the majority of consulted KIs (26 out of 36 KIs) reported that **there were no disputes within neighbourhoods** in Al-Forat in the six months prior to data collection. However, ten KIs, mostly returnees, reported the occurrence of internal disputes, mainly related to small personal issues. These were reportedly caused by the the increased stress from trauma or the deteriorated economic situation of households in the sub-district.

Reasons for internal disputes within Al-Forat (out of 10 KIs)[20]

Small personal disputes	**10 KIs**
Work-related disputes	**3 KIs**
ISIL related crimes	**2 KIs**
Formal security forces	**1 KI**

All KIs reported that the occurrence of internal disputes may decrease in the 12 months following data collection due to the intervention of the local authorities (8 KIs) and tribal leaders (7 KIs). One older returnee KI also reported that disputes will decrease due to "the tribes which supported ISIL in the area were expelled and will never return."[33]

Additionally, there were no reported retaliation incidents in the sub-district according to all KIs (40 KIs). However, according to two KIs (out of 40 KIs), the need for reconciliation was considered as a primary community need. Both KIs believed that reconciliation efforts were still needed to ensure acceptance and re-integration of households with members with alleged links to ISIL.

🏃 Role of different bodies in resolving disputes

Returnee KIs were consulted for this section (23 out of 40 KIs). **Tribal leaders** were the **most effective reported body in resolving disputes within the sub-district and between the sub-district and other areas** (16 KIs).

Tribal leaders

Over half of consulted KIs reported that the area was of a tribal nature (16 KIs). These KIs also reported that tribal leaders were very effective in resolving internal and external disputes and that they had a strong influence on the community members. In addition, four KIs reported that old and deep relationships existed between tribes, which helped to ensure peace among communities.

KIs also perceived that the tribal nature of the area was a factor that may positively influence social cohesion (7 KIs). This was based on the perception of strong inter-tribal relationships and kinship ties (4 KIs) and the perceived role of tribal leaders strengthening relations between community members (1 KI).

Local authorities

According to three KIs, local authorities were the most powerful and supreme authority in terms of governance, they did not rush to make judgements, and they encourage mutual understanding. between community members.

Formal security forces

According to three KIs, security forces were the most powerful and supreme authority in terms of security.

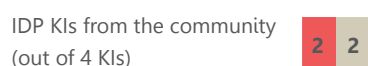### Perceptions on the presence of formal security forces

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (27 out of 40 KIs). The vast majority of consulted KIs (26 out of 27 KIs) reported that the **presence of formal security forces contributed positively** to a **feeling of safety** between community members. One KI did not know.

RWG Iraq
Returns Working Group

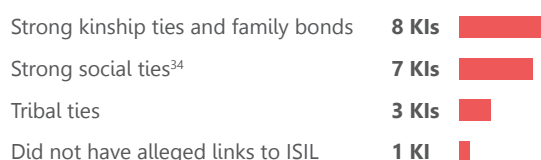REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

Perceptions on community inter-relations and coexistence

Community inter-relations

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (27 out of 40 KIs). Over half of consulted KIs did not know whether households in the community felt welcomed or not in the sub-district (11 KIs) or refused to answer (5 KIs). The rest of the KIs (11 KIs) reported that the majority of the households in their respective displacement groups felt welcome or very welcome in the community of Al-Forat.
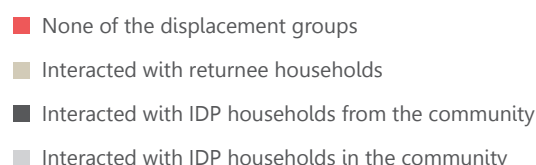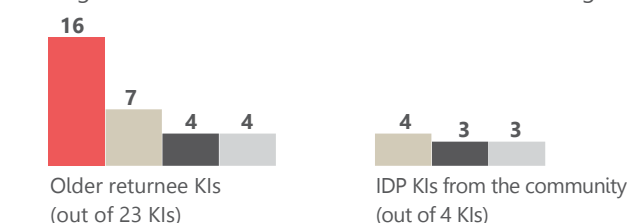
Returnee KIs
(out of 23 KIs)
| 5 | 2 | 11 | 5 |

IDP KIs from the community
(out of 4 KIs)
| 2 | 2 |

- ■ Felt welcome
- ■ Felt very welcome
- ■ Did not know
- ■ Refused to answer

Reasons for feeling welcome or very welcome (out of 11 KIs)[20]

Strong kinship ties and family bonds	**8 KIs**
Strong social ties[34]	**7 KIs**
Tribal ties	**3 KIs**
Did not have alleged links to ISIL	**1 KI**

Interaction between displacement groups

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (27 out of 40 KIs). Over half of consulted KIs (all older returnee KIs) reported that returnee households did not interact with other groups in Al-Forat (16 out of 27 KIs). The rest of the KIs (11 KIs) reported that the majority of the households in their respective displacement groups interacted with other groups.

Findings showed the variation of interaction between groups.[20]

Older returnee KIs
(out of 23 KIs): 16, 7, 4, 4

IDP KIs from the community
(out of 4 KIs): 4, 3, 3

- ■ None of the displacement groups
- ■ Interacted with returnee households
- ■ Interacted with IDP households from the community
- ■ Interacted with IDP households in the community

Reported types of interaction between groups

The most commonly reported ways of interaction were socially related (8 out of 11 KIs), including:

» Providing support to returnee households to rehabilitate their houses (5 KIs) or temporarily hosting them (1 KI). One KI reported that some skilled workers in the construction sector volunteered to rehabilitate houses in the sub-district.

» Providing financial support to vulnerable households to re-furnish their houses (3 KIs) and to access healthcare

(2 KIs). This type of assistance was mainly provided by relatives.

» Presence of kinship ties, which encouraged participation in social events and supporting each other to organize weddings or funerals (2 KIs).

From a security perspective, one older returnee KI reported that some returnee households were supported to solve outstanding disputes in the sub-district.
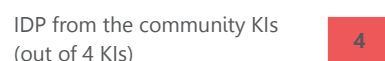
Challenges for interaction between groups

While 10 KIs (out of 27 KIs) reported that there were no challenges for interaction, over half of consulted KIs (17 KIs) reported that **there were challenges for interaction between groups**, these included:

» Lack of interest, "no need to interact", or lack of trust in other groups (6 KIs),

» Presence or existence of inter-communal disputes (5 KIs).

» Discrimination and competition at work (5 KIs), and

» Some households having alleged links to ISIL (3 KIs).

Participation in decision-making processes

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (27 out of 40 KIs). Slightly over half of returnee KIs and all IDP KIs from the community reported that households participated in decision-making processes.

Older returnee KIs
(out of 23 KIs)
| 12 | 6 | 5 |

IDP from the community KIs
(out of 4 KIs)
| 4 |

- ■ Yes, households participated
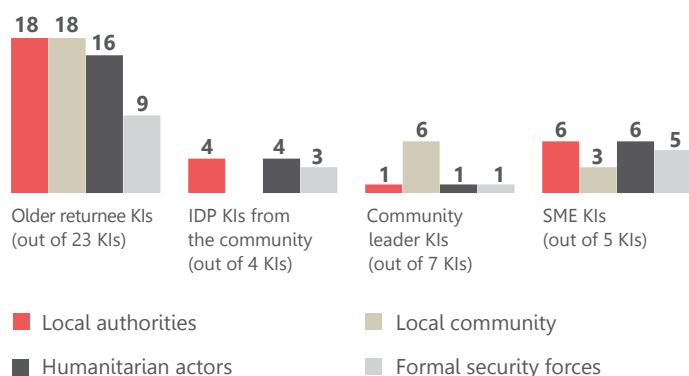- ■ No, households did not participate
- ■ Did not know

All IDP KIs from the community also reported that returnee households felt welcome or very welcome in the community, or mentioned that households had kinship ties with other families and tribes in Al-Forat. Findings showed that for returnee households who reportedly had participated in decision-making processes, returnee KIs also reported that these households:

» Felt reintegrated in the community (5 KIs),

» Felt welcome or very welcome to the sub-district or had kinship ties with other households in Al-Forat (4 KIs), or

» Felt somewhat belonging to the sub-district (3 KIs).

Perceptions on social cohesion and durable solutions

Social cohesion influencing actors

Almost three quarters of KIs (29 out of 40 KIs) reported that the most influential actors in terms of social cohesion were the local authorities. Perceptions on influence varied with KI profiles as shown:[20]

18 18 16 9	4 4 3	1 6 1 1	6 3 6 5
Older returnee KIs (out of 23 KIs)	IDP KIs from the community (out of 4 KIs)	Community leader KIs (out of 7 KIs)	SME KIs (out of 5 KIs)

■ Local authorities   ■ Local community
■ Humanitarian actors   ■ Formal security forces

Returnee, IDP from the community and SME KIs reported that the most influential actors in terms of social cohesion were the local authorities, while community leader KIs granted the major responsibility for social cohesion to the local community as a whole.

Improving social cohesion

KIs reported that **organising seminars, events, conferences, awareness sessions, and workshops** was an effective way to promote social cohesion (25 out of 40 KIs). The most reported topics to be covered were:

» Coexistence and peace building (22 KIs).

"Encouraging coexistence between the people within the neighbourhoods and residential areas, inspiring love between them, and promoting the dissemination of cultures within the region."

- Male older returnee KI -

» Stability and security (9 KIs).

"Tribal leaders must compel their followers to renounce hate, retaliation, or outstanding disputes between them and other groups or tribes in order to get rid of problems between communities in the region."

- Female older returnee KI -

» Anti-terrorism and rejection of extremism (4 KIs).

» Equality between community members (1 KI).

"[...] strengthening the sense of belonging to society, promoting equal opportunities for all, and creating a society characterized by love, coexistence, and acceptance of differences."

- Male older returnee KI -

The role of the government to **ensure access to job opportunities**, namely promoting jobs in the agricultural sector with special attention on youth was reportedly an effective way to improve social cohesion (14 KIs). One returnee KI reported that "[...] increasing opportunities for youth to access jobs will keep them away from joining extremist and armed groups", consequently this may enhance social cohesion and households' perceptions about safety and security in the area.

According to ten KIs, social cohesion may also be improved through the **implementation of humanitarian activities**. KIs reported the need for livelihood projects for women and men in Al-Forat, including cash for work (4 KIs). Three of these KIs focused on the need for skill training targeting women, such as sewing, followed by loans for business start-ups (3 KIs). In addition, one returnee KI recommended that organizations focus on supporting vulnerable households.

Other perceived ways to improve social cohesion in the area were reportedly related to the responsibility and commitment from community members to report "suspicious activities" related to potential terrorist actions (4 KIs) and the encouragement of equal participation of community members in political activities (1 KI).

Perceptions on durable solutions

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (27 out of 40 KIs). Almost two thirds of returnee KIs reported that returnee households felt reintegrated in the community of Al-Forat, while the majority of IDP KIs from the community reported that IDP households did not feel integrated in their AoDs. Perceptions on durable solutions varied with KI profiles as the following:[20]

Older returnee KIs (out of 23 KIs)	15	6	2
IDP KIs from the community (out of 4 KIs)	3	1	

■ Felt (re)integrated   ■ Did not feel (re)integrated
■ Did not know   ■ Refused to answer

Returnee KIs who reported that returnee households felt reintegrated (15 out of 27 KIs) also reported that this was due to the feeling of belonging households felt (8 KIs), that they only originally displaced because of the fear of ISIL operations (3 KIs), and the fact that there was a strong communication and kinship ties between them and other households in the sub-district (2 KIs). Returnee KIs who reported that households did not feel reintegrated based on the perception that the prolonged displacement negatively affected their feelings of belonging (6 KIs).

Regarding IDP households from the community, IDP KIs reported that households did not feel integrated in their AoDs due to the fact that they did not own a house there.

1. IOM DTM Return Index
2. Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster Iraq, Iraq Informal Sites Overview, September 2021
3. A total of 16 IDP camps and informal sites have now been closed or reclassified since mid-October 2020 (12 formal camps closed, including Salamiyah, two informal sites closed, and two formal camps were reclassified to informal sites). However, as of July 2021, 2 camps in federal Iraq and an additional 26 in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) (mostly in Dohuk) remained open. The Ministry of Migration and Displacement in Iraq (MoMD) announces from time to time their attempts to find solutions for the remaining in-camp IDPs in federal Iraq by closing the two remaining camps, accordingly, while no plans have been set in place to support the IDPs who settled in the informal sites nationwide - RTONLINE, Iraq discusses the situation of the displaced with the IOM, October 2021
4. IOM DTM Master List, Returnees rounds 120 and 122, January-February 2021 and June-July 2021
5. Shafaqna News Association, Interview with Al-Forat sub-district Major, September 2021
6. Army University Press, Western Anbar after the Awakening, March-April 2018
7. Small Wars Journal, Understanding the Wilaya Al-Forat: Heart of Daesh's Homeland, May 2016
8. The ReDS questionnaire is tailored to ask 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-Forat, there were 5 community leader and 3 SME respondents. Population figures for returns and IDP populations in Al-Forat are based on their estimates at the time of data collection.
9. 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.
10. For the purposes of this research, "returnees" are 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 occupy 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. The most severely affected areas in Al-Forat in terms of social cohesion were reportedly Kibae, Zawiat Al-Wustaa, Zoyah Al-Gharbiyah, Zoyah Al-Sharqiyah, and Tal Aswad villages: IOM DTM, Return Index Round 13, August and September 2021
14. Durable Solutions Technical Working Group's (DSTWG), Terms of Reference Durable Solutions Area-Level Coordination (ABC) Iraq
15. For the purposes of this assessment, "older returnees" refers to households who returned to Al-Forat Sub-district more than three months prior to data collection.
16. Community leaders are members of the host community represented by six mukhtars and one tribal leader or sheikh. 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. A sheikh can be defined as an elder male in a particular Arab tribe, family, or village who is respected and consulted.
17. SMEs are members of the community with a high level of expertise in different sectors or topics. These were represented by: three public sector employees (health and electricity), one public sector senior manager, one local authority representative and one local union representative.
18. "IDPs (displaced from the area)" refers to households from Al-Forat displaced during the events of 2014 to areas different than their AoO, specifically in Barwana Sub-district (Haditha District in Anbar Governorate).
19. There were 40 individuals interviewed for the Al-Forat assessment aged between 21 and 73 years old. The majority were male (30 KIs), a large majority of them community leaders. The lack of gender balance among the KIs is a limitation to the assessment. Integration of vulnerable age groups was considered, two KIs (one male and one female) were over the age of 65 representing older persons, and two male KIs were considered in the youth group (between 18 and 24).
20. KIs were able to select multiple responses to this question.
21. Other less reported primary needs were access to food assistance (2 KIs), reconciliation and social cohesion programmes (2 KIs), and explosive remnants of war (ERW) removal (1 KI).
22. Findings were indicative of each population group and not representative.
23. For this assessment, vulnerable groups included female heads of households, 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.
24. "We have three health centers in the district, but they lack medical staff, as two centers have not even reached any doctor, and the third does not have any doctor at the present time, and after two o'clock in the afternoon, the health service ends in the district. [...] the patient has to go to the district of Hit to receive treatment." - Shafaqna News Association, Interview with Al-Forat sub-district Major, September 2021
25. One community leader KI believed that it was also affected by the lack of a municipal department to address access to water issues.
26. "16 projects have been completed, and three other projects are in the process of referral, and if they are completed, water scarcity will be eliminated in some areas, especially in agricultural areas that consume water and cause water scarcity in other areas." - Shafaqna News Association, Interview with Al-Forat sub-district Major, September 2021
27. "During the 1970s and 1980s, primary and secondary schools developed to provide learning materials, free meals, public healthcare, and transportation for their students. [...] particularly for the country's isolated rural and semi-rural populations. [...] This system suffered under international sanctions in the 1990s, creating infrastructure shortages and competing exigencies for students and teachers that undermined education provision. [...] Widespread looting after the 2003 events gutted many schools of their supplies and equipment, including computers, desks, pens, and copper wiring. Entire libraries burned. [...] In November 2016, over 4,000 textbooks were stolen from the Ministry of Education and sold on the black market, following a nationwide shortage." - EPIC, Empty classrooms and black-market textbooks, December 2016:
28. 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.
29. "There are restrictions facing sheep traders in the Euphrates district, according to the district director, who pointed out that 'the joint control held by the Anbar Operations Command prevents the entry of more than five sheep in one car, and this exacerbates the problems facing the district.'" - Shafaqna News Association, Interview with Al-Forat sub-district Major, September 2021
30. 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.
31. 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.
32. IOM ReturnIndex of September 2021 tracked a high severity of security score in Al-Forat affected by the presence of mines - IOM DTM, Return Index, September 2021
33. "[...] all of the accused people from the district are still outside the area, and despite their attempts to return to their homes, by submitting a request (recommendation), the district administration refuses to return because of the residents' unwillingness to do so." - Shafaqna News Association, Interview with Al-Forat sub-district Major, September 2021
34. "Social ties are defined as connections among people that are used for sharing information, knowledge, feelings, and experiences. Social ties can be weak, strong, or latent based on the extent of exchanges and interactions between two nodes." - IGI Global, Dictionary