

Situation Overview

Whilst movement trends in Iraq have generally remained stable since early 2018, there has been a considerable shift since August 2019 with increasing numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) returning to their area of origin (AoO) or being displaced for a second time. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)'s Emergency Displacement Tracking¹ recorded over 9,600 households being displaced or returned to non-camp locations between 29 February and 15 June 2020, only 3% of which were recorded in Al Kaim district (representing 41% for Al Anbar governorate).²

There have been concerns in the humanitarian and development community over the principled character and durability of new returns and potential consequences for humanitarian needs and social cohesion in areas to which families have returned or been secondarily displaced.³

Al Rummaneh

Al Rummaneh is a sub-district of Al Kaim district, located on the north side of the Euphrates in western Al Anbar governorate, on the Iraq-Syria border.

Coverage Map



Background and Methodology

To date, IOM DTM's bi-monthly tracking⁵ of returnees and IDPs provides an overview of numbers and trends in movement and returns. Simultaneously, IOM DTM has run the Returns Index since 2018⁶, collecting data bi-monthly to provide indicative trends in the severity of conditions conducive to return in areas of return (AoR) nationwide. Similarly, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, IOM DTM, and the Returns Working Group (RWG) have conducted assessments with IDPs that have left camps following or in anticipation of closures, to better understand and map areas of return and secondary displacement.

REACH Initiative (REACH) has been conducting nationwide multi-sectoral assessments which include indicators concerning durable solutions. In addition, in light of recent movement trends, REACH conducted an assessment in Al Rummaneh sub-district to have an immediate understanding and in-depth profiling of needs and community interrelations between remainee, returnee⁷, and/or IDP populations⁸. This report outlines the overall conditions to examine how and to what extent durable solutions for returnees and IDPs have or can be achieved.

KIs reported that Al Rummaneh town was housing over 3,600 families before 2014, mostly Sunni Muslim Arab population. The sub-district fell under the control of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in June 2014 forcing over 2,500 families to flee their homes, as reported by key informants (KIs) during data collection. However, since Al Rummaneh was retaken in November 2017, most residents displaced in 2014 have reportedly returned. At the time of data collection, an estimated total of 718 families were reported to remain in displacement.

Population Profile

3,360-3,945 families were reported by KIs to be residing in Al Rummaneh before the events in 2014.

65-70% of the pre-2014 population in Al Rummaneh settlements displaced in 2014, as reported by KIs.

81-85% of the population displaced in 2014 have returned, as reported by KIs.

11-20 IDP families are reported by KIs to reside in Al Rummaneh settlements (not specified area of origin).

KI Profile

Al Rummaneh sub-district		
Community leaders	15 KIs	<div></div>
Returnees (more than 3 months ago)	5 KIs	<div></div>
IDPs (displaced from the area)	10 KIs	<div></div>
IDPs (displaced in the area)	5 KIs	<div></div>
Remainees	5 KIs	<div></div>

Recent population returns and displacement

Recent returns

20 of 40 KIs reported that additional families returned to Al Rummaneh in the six months prior to data collection.

46-70 families returned to Al Rummaneh. The main reasons for return, as reported by 18 KIs, were the **sense of increased security** and **following the return of other family members**. Two KIs also noted **camp closures** in the area of displacement (AoD) as a reason for recent returns.

Reported impact of recent returns in the community^{10, 11}

Family reunification	23 KIs	
Increased access to assistance	6 KIs	
Increased access to jobs	2 KIs	

Failed return movements¹²

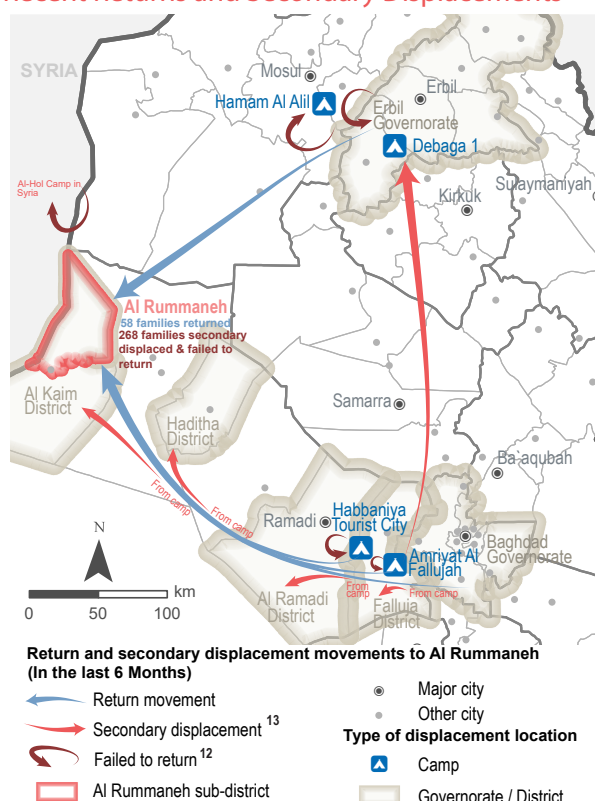
210-325 families reportedly attempted to return to Al Rummaneh in the six months prior to data collection but did not succeed.

Reported reasons for failed returns^{10, 11}

Destroyed/damaged housing in AoD	18 KIs	
Lack of jobs	17 KIs	
Resistance from community and/or local actors	14 KIs	
Lack of services	5 KIs	
Unstable security	4 KIs	

Three KIs (remainees in Al Rummaneh) reported that failed returns resulted to **less people present to compete** for the reduced number of available jobs in the area, and **less competition between business owners** to sell their products. They also noted this negatively affected **some employees who still have pending salaries** since their employers did not yet return to Al Rummaneh.

Recent Returns and Secondary Displacements



Recent host community displacement

10-20 host community families reportedly displaced to Erbil governorate in the six months prior to data collection due to **lack of services and jobs** in Al Rummaneh. KIs reported that this displacement did not impact the remaining community.

Recent IDP arrivals

6 of 40 KIs reported that additional IDP families have arrived to Al Rummaneh in the six months prior to data collection.

125-175 IDP families arrived in the six months prior to data collection as reported by two KIs.

Reported impact in the community were **increased available assistance**, **family reunification** and **increased workers**.

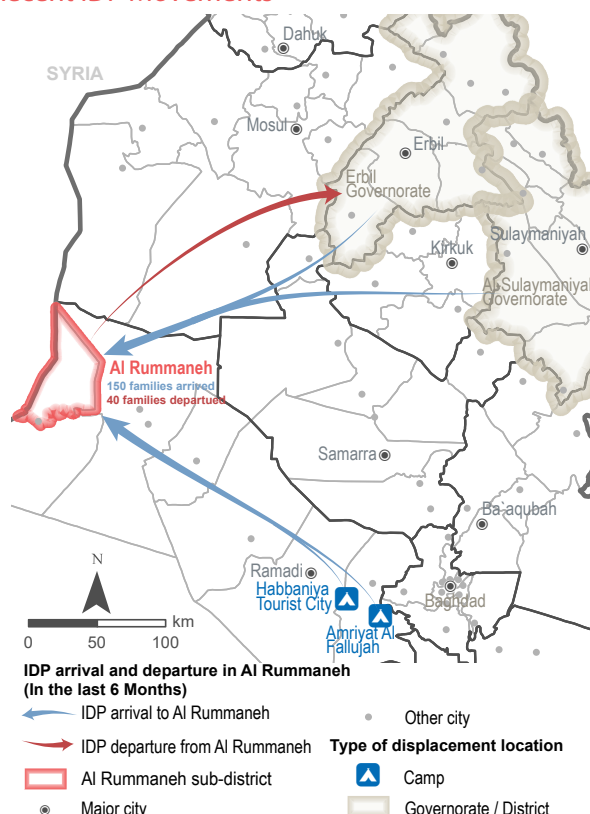
Reported drivers for recent IDP arrivals^{10, 11}

Increased sense of safety and security	2 KIs	
Expected increase in job opportunities	2 KIs	
Expected increase in available services	2 KIs	
Rummaneh is considered a transition area	1 KI	
Kinship ties	1 KI	

Recent IDP departures

Two KIs reported IDP families displaced to Erbil district or returned to their AoD due to **lack of jobs and services**, and **resistance from local actors in Al Rummaneh**. One KI reported between **30 and 50** IDP families recently displaced from Al Rummaneh, resulting in **family separation** but **decreasing the number of disputes in the area**.

Recent IDP Movements



Expected population returns and displacement

Expected returns

27 of 35 KIs reported that additional families from Al Rummaneh might return in the six months following data collection.

85-150 families are expected to return to the area in the six months following data collection, according to KIs' estimates.

Reported drivers for returns ^{10, 11}

Return of other family members	26 KIs	
Increased sense of safety and security	23 KIs	
Perceived increase in access to services	8 KIs	
Perceived increase in access to jobs	5 KIs	

Reported barriers to return ^{10, 11}

Destroyed/damaged housing in AoO	25 KIs	
Lack of jobs	19 KIs	
Lack of services	8 KIs	
Unstable security	6 KIs	
Fear of being perceived as ISIL affiliated	5 KIs	
Family has settled in AoD and prefers to stay	5 KIs	
Medical treatment is not available in AoO	1 KI	

All KIs reported that further returns will impact **family reunification**, and 52% reported that it will result in **increased job opportunities and assistance**. However, one KI considered that additional returns might lead to **increased disputes and less assistance** for the current population.

Expected host community displacement

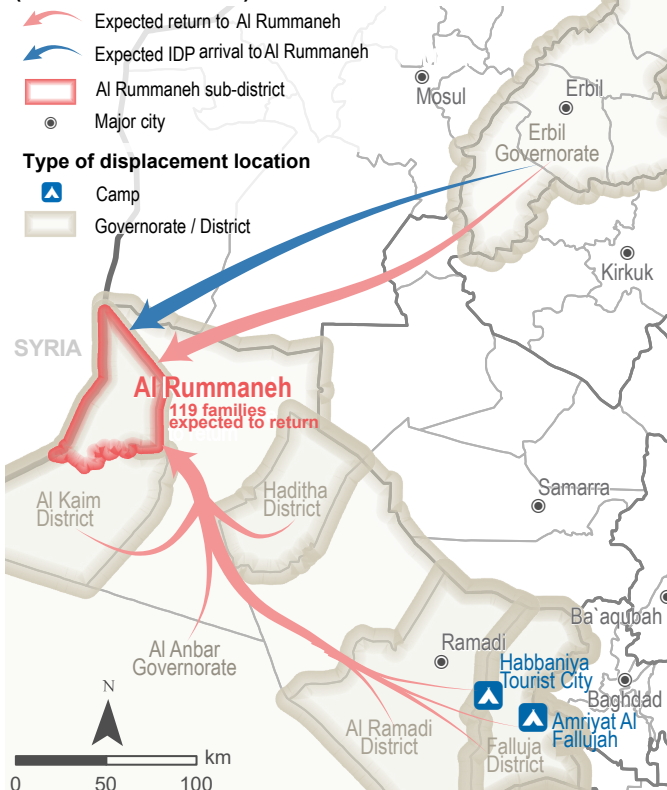
50-100 families are expected to be displaced to Al Falluja and Ramadi sub-districts looking for **job opportunities**.

Expected IDP movements

One KI reported that some IDP families might be arriving in the six months following data collection, due to the **sense of increased security** in Al Rummaneh, **following the arrival of other family members, and looking for jobs**. No expected IDP displacement from Al Rummaneh in the six months following data collection was reported.

Expected Movements

Expected movement to Al Rummaneh (In the next 6 Months)



Primary Community Needs

Primary community needs in Al Rummaneh ^{10, 11}

	First Need	Second Need	Third Need
House rehabilitation	15 KIs	4 KIs	5 KIs
Security	14 KIs	0	1 KI
Livelihoods	6 KIs	23	4 KIs
Healthcare	4 KIs	5 KIs	4 KIs
Electricity and water	0	4 KIs	13 KIs
Waste disposal	0	0	8 KIs
Education	0	3 KIs	2 KIs
Unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance	1 KI	0	0
Food	0	1 KI	1 KI
Documentation	0	0	1 KI
Road rehabilitation	0	0	1 KI

KIs reported that the primary needs for the community are: **support to rehabilitate housing**, taking into consideration that most of the houses were destroyed or partially damaged during the military operations by ISIL and that there is limited compensation from the government for rehabilitation; and, **safety and security**.

"Security is a basic requirement to start a decent life" - male IDP from Rummaneh displaced in Erbil

The second main community needs most commonly reported were: **access to livelihoods** due to reported lack of jobs in the area, including the need of livelihoods projects for women heads of households as reported by 11 KIs; and, **healthcare** due to lack of specialities, the high cost of health services, and damaged facilities.

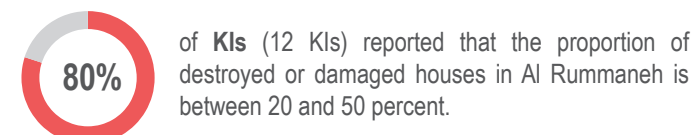
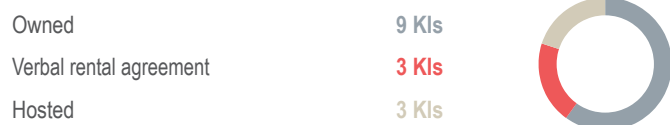
"Complex treatments are only available in Baghdad or Erbil" - remainee male

Electricity, water and waste management were considered as the third need considering the limitations to access those services, the operational hours, reduced capacity of Municipalities to respond and the high cost for private related services.

Perceptions on access to services and assistance

Access to housing and rehabilitation

All KIs (15 KIs) reported that the majority of families in the area reside in houses.

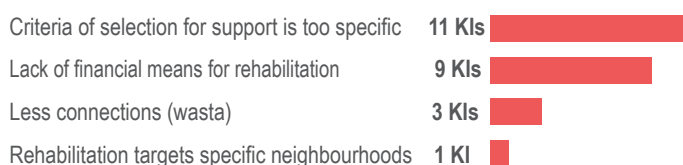


KIs reported that most of the population resides in damaged houses. Reportedly returnees, IDPs and some remainees are more likely to reside in damaged or unfinished buildings or houses. In all groups, female heads of household and families of members with alleged links to ISIL are the most affected.



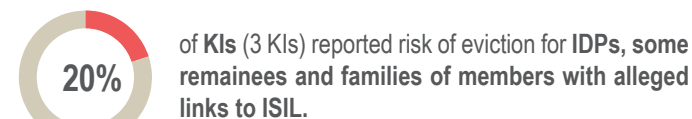
Reportedly, **returnees, female heads of household, people with disabilities and people with fewer connections (wasta¹⁴)** have less opportunities to receive housing support.

Reported barriers to access assistance for rehabilitation^{10, 11}



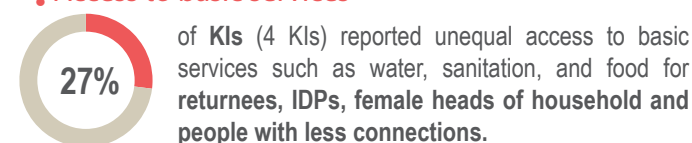
"Home rehabilitation preserves the sense of having a family and encourages displaced population to return" - returnee male

Risk of Eviction

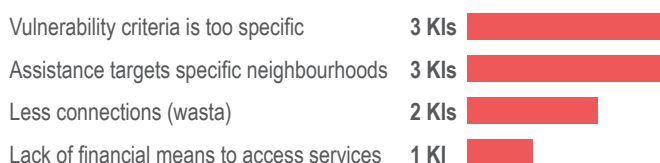


The main reasons for families to be at risk of eviction are reportedly related to: the landlord's decision to **use or rehabilitate the property** or **unwillingness to host the family** any longer; reports of **security incidents**; and, concerns about hosting **family of members with alleged links to ISIL**.

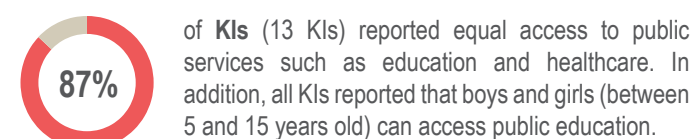
Access to basic services



Reported barriers to access basic services^{10, 11}

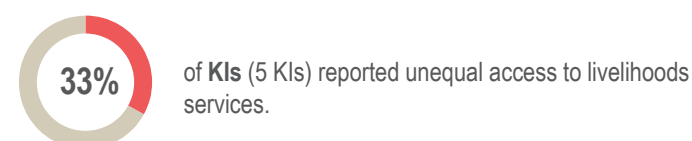


Access to public services

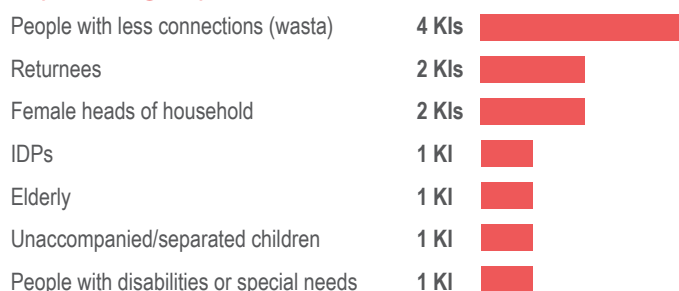


However, population groups residing in remote areas had reportedly less access to public services, namely schools and health. The main reasons were equally highlighted as **long distance from the residency** to the nearest public facility, the **lack of financial means** to cover the costs of services and the **specificity of the selection criteria** for the provision of some services.

Access to livelihoods



Population groups with less access to livelihoods^{10, 11}



Reported barriers to access livelihoods^{10, 11}



Access to justice

All KIs (15 KIs) reported that access to justice is equal for all population groups and there are no closed offices in Al Rummaneh. Only one KI reported that for IDPs in Al Rummaneh it is difficult to obtain a passport as they often cannot afford the cost for the process or the transportation due to limited access to resources.

Access to humanitarian aid

Most needed activities or projects according to KIs:



"If job opportunities are available, many families can meet their specific and basic needs, and many displaced families can return to the area" - remainee male

Family Reunification

All KIs (10 KIs) reported that some families in the community still have members in displacement.

Family members remaining displaced ^{10, 11}

Brothers and/or sisters	9 KIs	<div></div>
Sons and/or daughters	5 KIs	<div></div>
Parents	1 KI	<div></div>
Other relatives	3 KIs	<div></div>

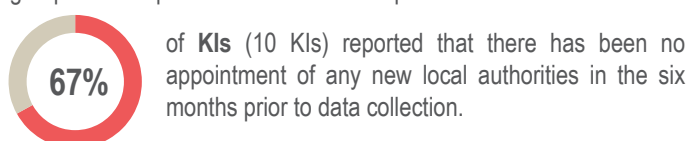
Main reasons for remaining displaced ^{10, 11}

Presence of jobs in AoD	10 KIs	<div></div>
Lack of jobs in AoO	3 KIs	<div></div>
Registration in school/university in AoD	3 KIs	<div></div>
Access to medical treatment in AoD	1 KI	<div></div>
House partially/completely damaged in AoO	1 KI	<div></div>

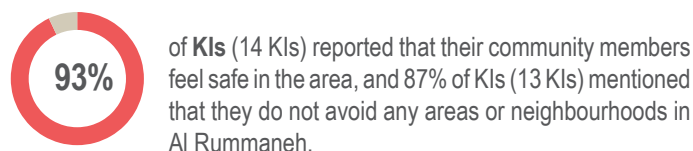
Perceptions on Governance, Safety and Security

Governance and influencing bodies

KIs (15 community leaders) reported that mukhtars¹⁵ and local authorities are the most influential bodies with regards to governance, followed by tribal leaders. No changes in the levels of influence of groups were reported in the six months prior to data collection.

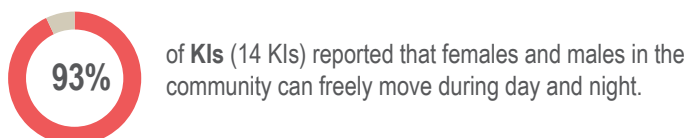


Safety and security



However, a remainee KI reported feeling unsafe due to the presence of specific armed groups in the area and the fear that ISIL could return to Al Rummaneh.

Freedom of movement



However, a returnee KI reported that some females and males do not freely move during the night or day due to the presence of checkpoints or control spots for specific political parties in the area.

Community disputes

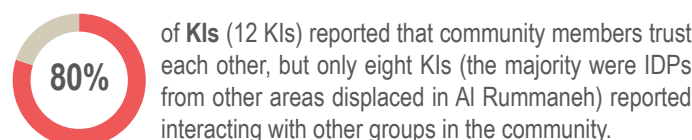
One KI reported that disputes took place in the area due to the **return of some families** in the six months prior to data collection. No disputes were reported between villages or towns in Al Rummaneh.

Retaliation incidents reported



All KIs (15 KIs) reported that the presence of security forces such as the police and the Iraqi armed forces contributed positively to a feeling of safety. In addition, it was generally recognized that security forces are effective in resolving disputes within the community and between different villages.

Community relations and co-existence



All KIs (15 KIs) reported that there are no specific population groups which are not welcome by the majority of the community in the area.¹⁶

Contamination of housing, land and property

No contaminated land was reported in the area, though one KI reported an incident with mines without casualties.

End Notes

1. IOM DTM: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/IdpMovements> - February 2020 and April 2020
2. IOM DTM: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/MasterList#Datasets> - February 2020 and April 2020
3. Based on the 2016 Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) Strategic Objective to ensure 'principled' returns, meaning voluntary, safe, dignified, and durable returns of IDPs to their AoO.
4. Al Rummaneh settlements may or may not be populated after the events in 2014.
5. IOM DTM: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/MasterList#Datasets> - February 2020 and April 2020
6. IOM DTM: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex> - February 2020 and April 2020
7. Returnees are commonly categorized as an IDP returning to their AoO, where AoO is defined as the stated original sub-district of origin for the IDP.
8. 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) and 3) 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 4) 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.
9. IOM DTM: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex> - refer to methodology, to compute the severity index different parameters are combined.
10. Sum of answers may exceed the 100% due to KIs being able to select multiple response options, including other topics.
11. Percentages are represented by the number of KIs who answered the questions.
12. Failed returns refer to the movement of those populations from Al Rummaneh who tried to return to Al Rummaneh but did not succeed and subsequently ended up back in their original location of displacement or were secondarily displaced to a new location.
13. Secondary displacements of original Al Rummaneh residents.
14. Wasta can be defined as the advantages a person might have due to using one's social connections and influence.
15. Mukhtar can be defined as the head of a village or neighbourhood in some Arab countries.
16. As per IOM DTM, in Al Rummaneh the severity of social cohesion is medium - <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex>