

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 The [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#)'s returnee master list recorded over 4.9 million individuals returning to their AoOs across the country, as of February 2022.

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

Map 1. 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.⁷ 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 Markaz Al-Kaim Sub-district to provide an in-depth profiling of needs and understanding of social relationships between remainee,⁸ returnee⁹ and/or IDP populations.¹⁰

Markaz Al-Kaim Sub-district

Markaz Al-Kaim is a sub-district of Al-Kaim District, located nearly 400 km (248 mi) northwest of Baghdad near the Syrian border and situated along the Euphrates River, in Al-Anbar Governorate. Markaz Al-Kaim was under the control of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since August 2014.⁴ During the 2017 Western Iraq campaign, the Iraqi forces and its allies liberated Al-Kaim District from ISIL control in November 2017.⁵ According to an IOM [Integrated Location Assessment \(ILA\)](#), as of July and August 2021, returnee households residing in the assessed villages in Markaz Al-Kaim (28 villages and neighbourhoods) were still somewhat concerned about possible ISIL operations in the area.

Reported Population Profile⁶

15,018-15,513	households were residing in Markaz Al-Kaim before the events of 2014.
72%-78%	of households in Markaz Al-Kaim have been displaced since 2014.
70%-75%	households displaced since 2014 had returned to Markaz Al-Kaim at the time of data collection.
130-161	IDP households were displaced in Markaz Al-Kaim at the time of data collection.

Markaz Al-Kaim Sub-district was selected for the assessment as: social cohesion and safety severity¹¹ was classified as 'high' or 'medium' in 28 villages and neighbourhoods out of 28,¹² and it was classified as a priority location for the West Anbar Area-Based Coordination (ABC) group under the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group (DSTWG) in Iraq.¹³ The findings are based on 99 key informant (KI) interviews conducted between 15 and 24 February 2022, 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

Markaz Al-Kaim Sub-district

Returnees (more than 3 months ago) ¹⁴	44 KIs	
IDPs (displaced from the area) ¹⁵	13 KIs	
IDPs (displaced in the community) ¹⁶	13 KIs	
Remainees ⁸	13 KIs	
Subject matter experts (SMEs) ¹⁷	8 KIs	
Community leaders ¹⁸	8 KIs	99 KIs¹⁹

Key findings

- ➡ The situation regarding returns to Markaz Al-Kaim remained stable, with KIs reporting **some ongoing returns** and **more projected in the six months following data collection**, driven primarily by **nostalgia about their previous life in their AoOs** and the **reclassification of Amiriya Al-Falluja camp**, in Anbar Governorate.
- ➡ The majority of KIs believed that **these return movements had positively impacted the community**. These did/may **reactivate the economic activity and the trade and commerce sector** by reopening shops and markets, and support to **fulfil the shortage or gaps in staff in the public sector**, namely education, healthcare, legal, and municipality services in Markaz Al-Kaim. However, **further returns may reportedly have negative impacts** in the community mainly regarding limited provision/ access to resources, services, and job opportunities, in addition to the expected deterioration of the security situation.
- ➡ Findings showed that the majority of **households in the community resided in owned houses**. Some **IDP KIs in the community** reported that some IDP households **resided under verbal rental agreement**, therefore in less secure tenures, and these were at risk of eviction in the six months prior to data collection mainly due to their inability to pay the rent fees.
- ➡ All KIs reported that **households faced challenges accessing housing rehabilitation** in the sub-district. **The main factor affecting access to housing rehabilitation** was related to the challenges faced by households to benefit from **government compensation mechanisms**.
- ➡ KIs from different population groups prioritized community needs differently. Further efforts to develop **education, water, and electricity** were the most reported primary community needs **for community leader KIs**. In contrast, **SME, returnee and IDP KIs from/in 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 accessing basic public services**. The most affected sector was reportedly **healthcare**. Access to healthcare services was reportedly affected by the lack of medical personnel, especially female staff, including specialist such as gynecologists. A few KIs reported that most of the medical personnel remained displaced at the time of data collection.
- ➡ All KIs reported that **the majority of the households faced challenges accessing livelihoods**. Reportedly, there was a lack of job opportunities in Markaz Al-Kaim, including those suitable for vulnerable women and graduated youth. Access to livelihoods was the most reported barrier to return and the most needed activity to encourage further returns.
- ➡ KIs reported an **overall decrease in the availability of job opportunities compared to before 2014**. Job opportunities in construction and public and private education were reportedly less available at the time of data collection compared to prior 2014.
- ➡ **Agriculture** was the most commonly reported **livelihood sector of interest for returnee and IDP households from/in the community**. It was also commonly reported by community leader and SME KIs as **the livelihoods sector with the most growth potential** in the 12 months following data collection. However, it was highly affected by the security measures imposed by security actors prior to the liberation of the sub-district in November 2017.
- ➡ **Local authorities** were reportedly the **most influential bodies regarding governance**. **Tribal leaders** were reportedly the **most effective at resolving disputes** within the sub-district and between the sub-district and other areas.
- ➡ Reportedly **the majority of returnee, remainee, and IDP households from/in the community felt safe or very safe** in Markaz Al-Kaim. Additionally, the majority of returnee and IDP KIs from/in the community reported that households in their respective displacement groups **felt welcome or very welcome** to the sub-district. According to KIs, this was mainly driven by strong kinship ties and social bonds between members of the community.
- ➡ The majority of returnee, remainee, and IDP KIs from/in the community reported that **the majority of households** in their respective displacement groups **interacted with all groups in the community**, this mainly through **financial and in-kind support to vulnerable households**. Additionally, **almost two thirds of these KIs** reported that households **participated in decision-making** processes in the sub-district.
- ➡ The majority of KIs reported that **the most influential actors** in terms of **social cohesion** were the **formal security actors**. The most commonly reported way to **improve social cohesion** in the sub-district was through **ensuring decent job opportunities without discrimination or favouritism**.
- ➡ Perceptions on durable solutions varied between KI profiles. **The majority of returnee KIs** reported that **returnee households felt reintegrated in the community** of Markaz Al-Kaim, while **all IDP KIs from/in the community** reported that **IDP households did not feel integrated in their areas of displacement (AoD) or the sub-district**.

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

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, community leaders, and SMEs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). **Slightly over the half of consulted KIs reported that they were not aware of recent returns** to the sub-district (44 out of 86 KIs). However, almost half of the KIs (42 KIs) reported being aware of returns to the sub-district.

Returns from non-camp areas

39-54 households returned to Markaz Al-Kaim in the six months prior to data collection (34 out of 42 KIs). Returns were reported from Erbil (23 KIs) and Baghdad (5 KIs) governorates, and from Falluja (5 KIs) and Ramadi (1 KI) sub-districts.

Reported drivers for returns from non-camp areas

According to the KIs reporting returns from non-camp areas, households' decisions to return were affected by pull factors in their AoO. These were reportedly:²⁰

Nostalgia about their previous life	17 KIs	<div></div>
Increased security	11 KIs	<div></div>
Following the return of other family members	11 KIs	<div></div>
Perceived increase in the provision of services	10 KIs	<div></div>

Returns from camps

43-63 households returned to Markaz Al-Kaim from Amiriya Al-Falluja camp in Al-Anbar Governorate mainly due to camp reclassification (4 KIs).²¹

Other reported reasons were the nostalgia about their previous life in the sub-district (3 KIs), the perceived increase in the provision of services (2 KIs), and the increased security in the AoO (1 KI).

Reported impact of returns

Almost three quarters of consulted KIs (63 out of 86 KIs) reported the occurrence of returns to the sub-district. Out of these KIs, 42 KIs reported return movements which occurred in the six months prior to data collection and the rest of KIs (21 KIs) mentioned the occurrence of returns seven months more, prior to data collection.

Positive impacts

The majority of these KIs (58 out of 63 KIs) reported that return movements had **positive impacts** in the community and different sectors.

Impact on livelihoods, trade, and commerce (40 out of 58 KIs)

Over half of these KIs (29 KIs) reported that the return of business owners ensured the reactivation of the economic activity, trade, and commerce by reopening shops and markets. KIs reported that the reconstruction of houses and infrastructure ensured job opportunities for community members (18 KIs). KIs also reported that reopened workshops for skilled workers, such carpenters, blacksmiths, plumbers, and barbers, improved the quality of these services (12 KIs). Regarding the agricultural sector, KIs reported expecting agricultural land to be recultivated with the return of farmers (10 KIs).

Impact on community inter-relations and social bonds (26 out of 58 KIs)

According to KIs, returns ensured the repopulation of the sub-district which increased the perception of stability and safety towards the different AoOs (15 KIs). This encouraged other households to return (11 KIs), and ensured family reunification, support, and collaboration within the households to retake the social and family bonds (3 KIs). Additionally, returns allowed households members to start recovering from the trauma suffered during displacement (3 KIs). According to three other KIs, durable solutions' actors increased their activities in the sub-district.

Impact on the public sector (25 out of 58 KIs)

According to 17 KIs, public employees and professionals, namely educational and medical staff, returned to the sub-district. KIs reported that returns increased the attention from the government to prioritize the sub-district and emphasize the restoration of basic public services (7 KIs). Additionally, four KIs reported that the local government focused its efforts to rebuild some of the schools in the sub-district to facilitate access to education for returnee children.

"It is releasing being able to return to our homes after suffering in displacement while paying rents and being residing in deplorable living conditions."

- Male returnee KI -

Negative impacts

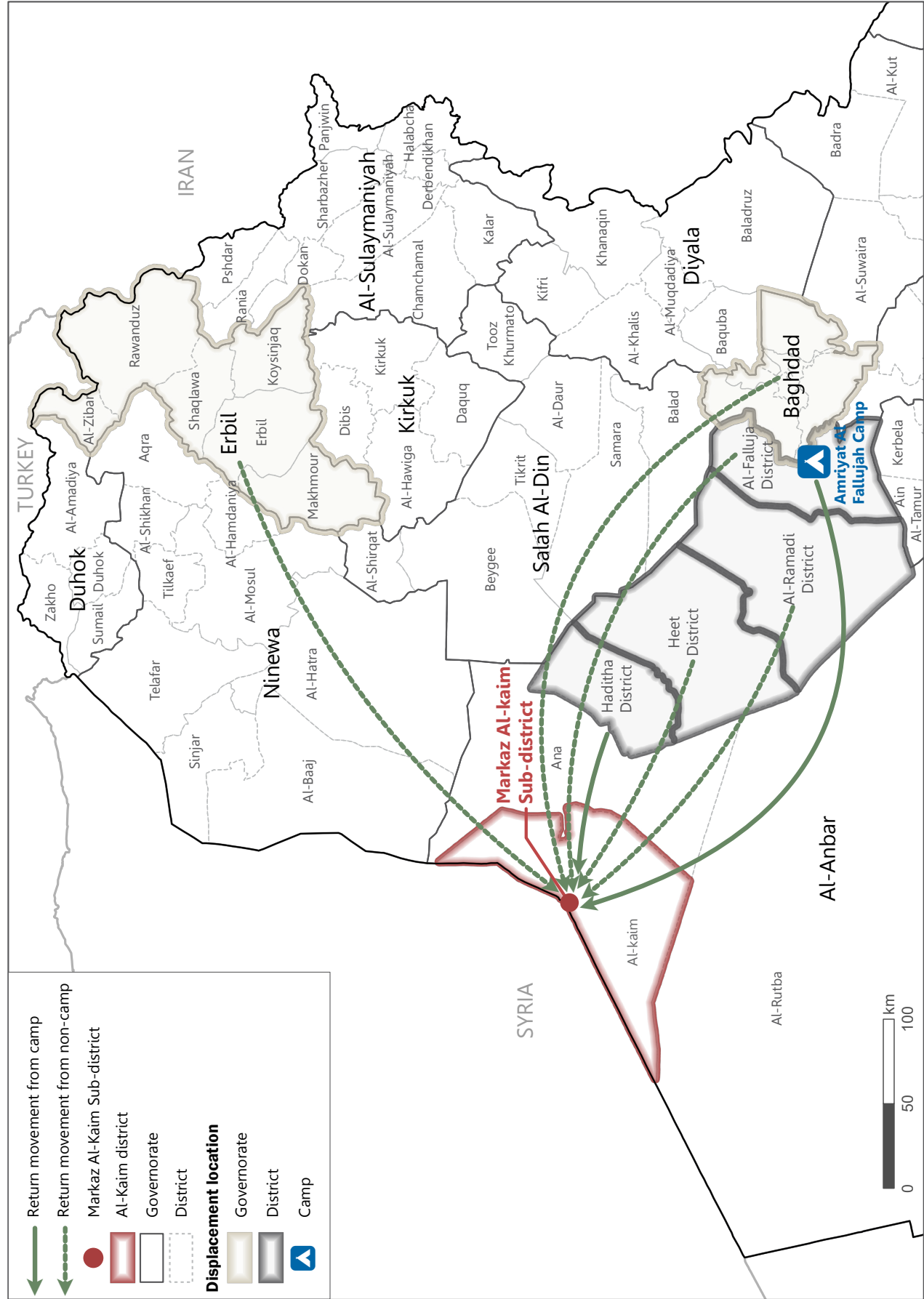
According to seven KIs (out of 63 KIs) returns had **negative impacts** in the community of Markaz Al-Kaim. Reportedly, these movements led to an increased competition for the limited available job opportunities (3 KIs). Additionally, there were limited services available in the sub-district and the local authorities lacked a preparedness plan to absorb the population increase after returns (2 KIs). From a security perspective, three KIs reported the presence of tensions between households in the community due to security concerns. One community leader KI reported the occurrence of disputes between families with members with alleged links to ISIL and those who had lost members during the conflict with ISIL.

Moreover, four KIs reported that:

- » Returnee households were forced to reside in shelter in deplorable conditions and low standards due to the lack of financial means to rehabilitate their houses (2 KIs),
- » Households returned involuntarily to the sub-district (1 KI), and
- » Absence of governmental compensation for households who had lost their breadwinner during the events of 2014 (1 KI).

Two KIs reported believing that recent returns had both positive and negative impacts.

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



➔ Host community departure movements

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, community leaders, and SMEs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). **The vast majority of consulted KIs reported that they were not aware of host community departures** from the sub-district (83 out of 86 KIs). However, three KIs reported being aware of the occurrence of host community departures from the sub-district.

9-22 **host community households departed** from Markaz Al-Kaim in the six months prior to data collection. These households reportedly moved to Erbil Governorate (2 KIs) and to Falluja (1 KI), Heet (1 KI), and Ramadi (1 KI) districts.

The reported reasons for households' movement from the sub-district were mainly related to push factors from their AoO, namely the lack of services (2 KIs) and job opportunities (1 KI).

➔ IDP arrival movements

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, community leaders, and SMEs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). **The vast majority of consulted KIs reported that they were not aware of IDP arrivals** to the sub-district (85 out of 86 KIs). However, one community leader KI reported being aware of the occurrence of IDP arrivals to the sub-district.

8-11 **IDP households arrived** to Markaz Al-Kaim in the six months prior to data collection from Amiriya Al-Falluja camp due to its reclassification as an informal site and being denied security clearance to return²² to their AoOs.

➔ IDP departure movements

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, community leaders, and SMEs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). **The vast majority of consulted KIs reported that they were not aware of IDP departures** from the sub-district (83 out of 86 KIs). However, three KIs reported being aware of the occurrence of IDP departures from the sub-district.

5-7 **IDP households departed** from Markaz Al-Kaim in the six months prior to data collection towards their AoO in Al-Kaim District.

The reported reasons for these households to return to their AoO included the perceived increased access to services and availability of job opportunities in their AoO, being unavailable in Markaz Al-Kaim.

👤 Family separation and reunification plans

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, community leaders, and SMEs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). **The majority of KIs did not know about family separation cases** (44 out of 86 KIs), reported that there were no family separation cases in the sub-district (19 KIs), or refused to answer (1 KI). However, over a quarter of KIs (22 out of 86 KIs) reported that some households had family members who remained in displacement at the time of data collection.

Adult household members (out of 20 KIs)

Reportedly, some households had at least one adult member (male or female) who remained in displacement. The most reported reasons included:²⁰

Available jobs in AoD being unavailable in AoO	19 KIs	<div></div>
Available medical treatment in AoD	11 KIs	<div></div>
Registration in education programmes in AoD	9 KIs	<div></div>

"When there are job opportunities available in their AoO to enhance the quality of life, they will return."

- Female SME KI -

Main breadwinner (out of 6 KIs)

Reportedly, some households had the main breadwinner, namely the husband, who remained in displacement. The most reported reasons included available medical attention in AoDs (6 KIs) and available jobs in AoD being unavailable in AoO (6 KIs).

"Reunification depends on the provision of job opportunities. In addition, there are families who have ill members. If specialised medical staff and services are present in Markaz Al-Kaim, they will return."

- Male returnee KI -

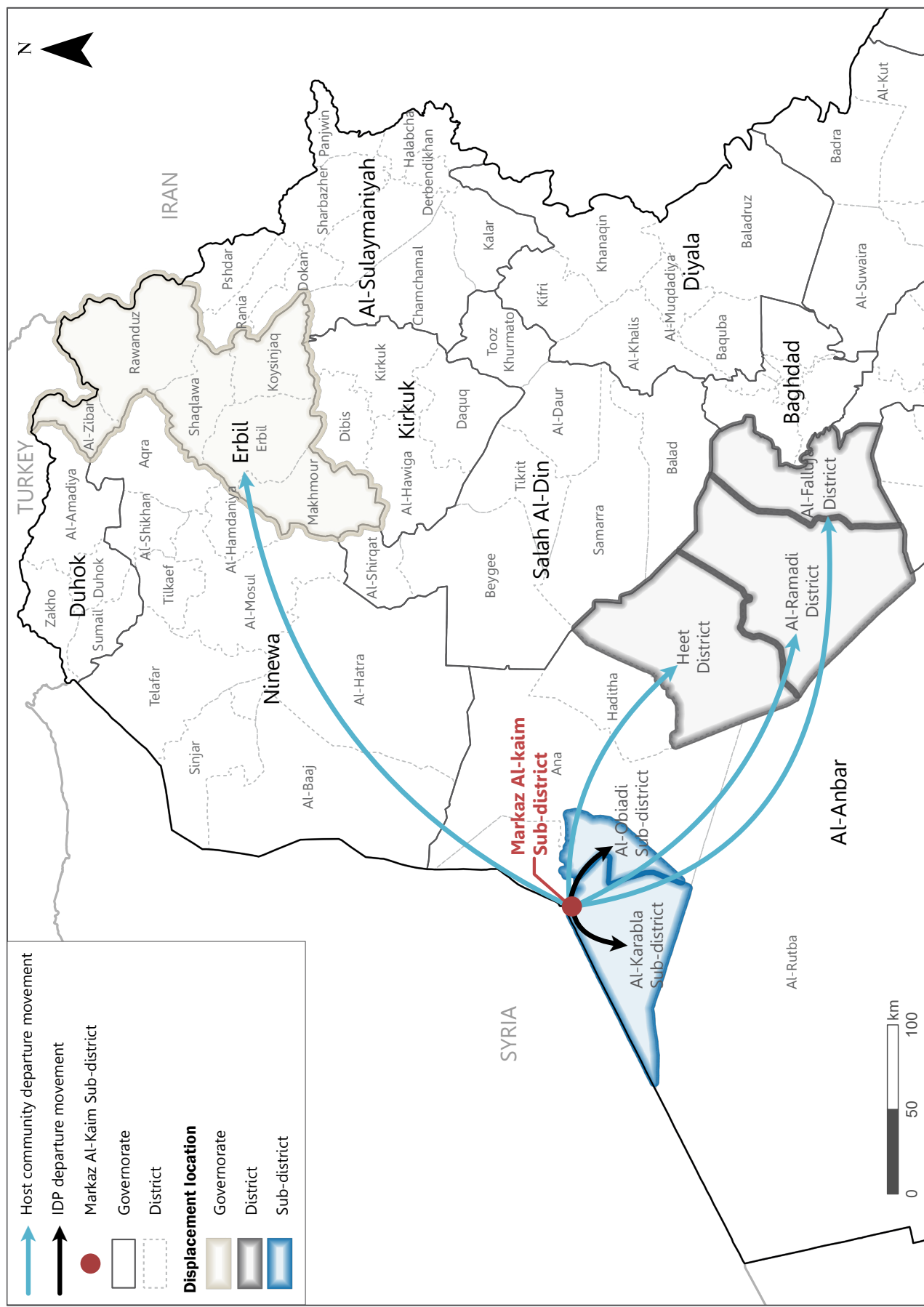
Minor household members (out of 3 KIs)

Reportedly, some households had at least one minor member (boys or girls) who remained in displacement. The most reported reasons included the registration of children and adolescents in education programmes in AoDs (3 KIs) and available medical attention (2 KIs).

"Those who remained in the AoDs were university students. They will return at the end of the school year. Others remained there to access jobs since there is no work for them in their AoO. When job opportunities are available, they will return."

- Male returnee KI -

Map 3. Recent IDP and host community household movements from Markaz Al-Kaim Sub-district (in the six months prior to data collection)



Expected household return movements

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, community leaders, and SMEs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). **The majority of KIs reported not being aware about expected returns** in the six months following data collection (81 out of 86 KIs). However, five KIs reported being aware of the potential occurrence of further returns to the sub-district as below.

Expected returns from non-camp areas

31-46 households were expected to return in the six months following data collection to Markaz Al-Kaim from non-camp areas in Erbil Governorate (3 KIs), and Falluja (1 KI) and Ramadi (1 KI) districts.

These movements were expected as the result of the nostalgia about their previous life in AoOs (2 KIs), the increased security in AoOs (1 KI), and following the return of other members from the extended family (1 KI).

Reported impact of expected returns

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs).

Positive impacts

Over three quarters of consulted KIs (67 out of 86 KIs) reported that further returns to the sub-district may have **positive impacts** in the community and different sectors.

Impact on the public sector (48 out of 67 KIs)

The majority of these KIs (42 KIs) reported that public employees and professionals may return. Reportedly, this may support to fulfil the shortage or gaps in staff in the public sector, namely education, healthcare, legal, and municipality services. KIs reported that further returns may increase the attention from the government to prioritize the sub-district and emphasize in the restoration of basic public services (8 KIs). Other five KIs reported believing that the government may focus its attention to rebuild the damaged schools. Three KIs also reported that the potential restoration of the health sector may ensure that households do not travel to other areas seeking for medical attention.

Impact on livelihoods, trade, and commerce (44 out of 67 KIs)

Almost three quarters of KIs (32 KIs) reported that the potential return of business owners may ensure the development of the area and increase the job opportunities. Further returns may reportedly support the gradual **"normalization"** of life in the sub-district²³ and ensure the reactivation of **economic activity, trade, and commerce** by reopening shops and markets (26 KIs). KIs also reported the potential reopening of workshops for skilled workers such as carpenters, blacksmiths, plumbers, and barbers, which may improve the level of work and the quality of these services (18 KIs). All the above conditions may reportedly support to restore the local production of goods and food, which may influence positively the households' capacity to increase their incomes (9 KIs).

Regarding the **agricultural sector**, KIs expected agricultural land to be recultivated with the return of farmers (6 KIs). The **industrial sector** was also expected to be positively impacted by the reconstruction of the existing fabrics (4 KIs).

Impact on the reconstruction of the sub-district (24 out of 67 KIs)

KIs reported that with further returns the government may emphasize the reconstruction of public infrastructure and damaged or destroyed houses (22 KIs). This may be supported by the return of construction contractors to the area and their interest to develop projects in the sub-district (4 KIs), in addition to the support from development and durable solutions' actors (1 KI).

Impact on community inter-relations and social bonds (20 out of 67 KIs)

According to KIs, further returns may ensure the repopulation of empty villages which were abandoned during the events of 2014 (8 KIs). This may reportedly encourage other households to return (6 KIs) and may ensure family reunification, support, and collaboration within the and between households to retake the social and family bonds (6 KIs).

Negative impacts

According to 16 KIs (out of 86 KIs) further returns may have **negative impacts** in the community of Markaz Al-Kaim.

Reportedly, the sub-district **lacked basic public services**, namely education and healthcare, and the local authorities lacked a preparedness plan to absorb any potential increase in the number of households (5 KIs).

Additionally, these movements may increase the level of competition for the **limited available job opportunities** and raise tensions between returnees and host community members (9 KIs). A couple of KIs reported that the lack of reconstruction in the sub-district negatively influenced access to jobs and forced returnee household members to resort to daily low-wage jobs.

From a **security** perspective, four KIs reported that there was a general fear that returnee households may have members with alleged links to ISIL and feared this may led to serious security incidents. On the other hand, one older returnee KI reported that households with members with alleged links to ISIL may face movement restrictions which will block their access to basic needs items. Additionally, one community leader KI reported that returnees with alleged links to ISIL may face discrimination and exploitation at work based on their security status.

Most reported barriers for further returns (out of 86 KIs)²⁰

Access to housing

Destroyed/damaged housing **62 KIs** 

Access to livelihoods and basic public services

Lack of job opportunities **72 KIs** 

Lack of basic public services **60 KIs** 

Lack of needed medical treatment **7 KIs** 

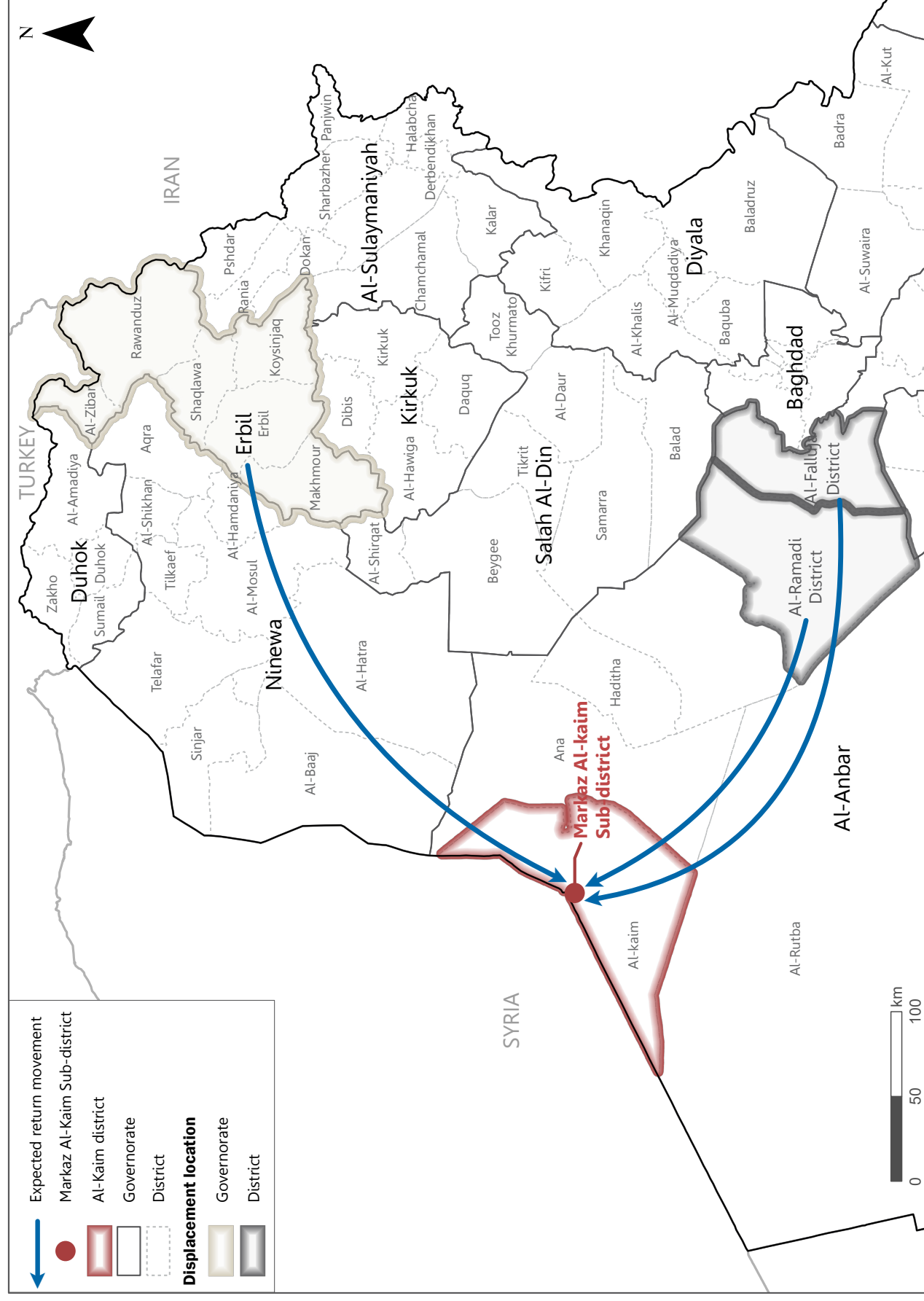
Safety and security

Fear of being perceived as ISIL affiliated **12 KIs** 

General security concerns in AoO **5 KIs** 

Denied security clearance to return²² **1 KI** 

Map 4. Expected return movements to Markaz Al-Kaim Sub-district (in the six months following data collection)



Primary community needs

Most reported primary community needs in Markaz Al-Kaim at the time of data collection (out of 99 KIs)^{20, 24}

	First Need	Second Need	Third Need
Livelihoods	21 KIs	33 KIs	15 KIs
Electricity	32 KIs	20 KIs	5 KIs
Healthcare	13 KIs	12 KI	19 KIs
Housing rehabilitation	14 KIs	11 KIs	1 KI
Education	6 KIs	13 KIs	6 KI
Infrastructure rehabilitation	2 KIs	4 KIs	13 KI
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	6 KIs	5 KIs	7 KIs

The most commonly reported primary community need was **access to livelihoods** (69 out of 99 KIs). KIs reported the lack of job opportunities in the sub-district (27 KIs) and the neglect from the local government and organisations to implement job creation projects (12 KIs). See section on access to livelihoods on page 13.

The second most commonly reported primary community need was **access to electricity** (57 out of 99 KIs). KIs reported the limited supply hours of electricity affected by the level of damage to the majority of the electrical network, transformers, and towers in the sub-district (37 KIs). See section on access to basic public services on page 13.

The third most commonly reported primary community need was **access to healthcare** (44 out of 99 KIs). KIs reported factors that affected the quality of healthcare in the sub-district, including the lack of medical personnel, especially female staff, including specialists such as gynaecologists (29 KIs). Three KIs reported that most of the medical personnel remained displaced. See section on access to basic public services on page 11.

Most commonly reported primary community needs per KI profile at the time of data collection^{20, 25}

Community leaders (out of 8 KIs)	SMEs (out of 8 KIs)	IDPs (out of 26 KIs) ^{15, 16}	Returnees (out of 44 KIs)	Remainees (out of 13 KIs)
Education 5 KIs	Electricity 8 KIs	Livelihoods 10 KIs	Livelihoods 31 KIs	Livelihoods 7 KIs
Water 4 KIs	Livelihoods 7 KIs	Electricity 6 KIs	Electricity 28 KIs	Housing rehab 6 KIs
Electricity 3 KIs	Healthcare 5 KIs	Housing rehab 5 KIs	Healthcare 24 KIs	Electricity 5 KIs

Access to durable solutions' assistance²⁶ and impact on returns

Returnee, remainee, IDP in community, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). The vast majority of consulted KIs (82 KIs) reported that **there were humanitarian and development activities or projects implemented** in Markaz Al-Kaim. Four KIs reported that there were no activities implemented in the six months prior to data collection.

Reported activities implemented in Markaz Al-Kaim in the six months prior to data collection (out of 82 KIs)^{20, 27}

WASH	24 KIs
Infrastructure rehabilitation ²⁸	24 KIs
COVID-19 awareness sessions	19 KIs
Livelihoods programmes	11 KIs
Food and non-food item (NFI) distributions	11 KIs

Activity implementers

Slightly over half of the KIs reporting implemented activities in the sub-district (42 out of 82 KIs) also reported that these **activities or projects were implemented by humanitarian and durable solutions actors**, followed by local authorities (35 KIs). According to KIs, local authorities were mainly involved in infrastructure rehabilitation, including roads paving (19 KIs) and WASH programmes (14 KIs). KIs reported that the local community (14 KIs) and security actors (6 KIs) were actively involved in the implementation of COVID-19 awareness campaigns.

Reported groups less involved in activities

IDPs in the community were reportedly less involved in activities or projects in the sub-district (24 out of 82 KIs), followed by IDPs from the community (17 KIs).

Regarding vulnerable groups,²⁹ almost half of the KIs (39 KIs) reported that all vulnerable groups had the same level of access to participation. However, other KIs reported believing that **older persons** (33 KIs) and persons with disabilities (19 KIs) were less involved in activities or projects than other vulnerable groups. Additionally, a couple of KIs reported that households with members with alleged links to ISIL were also less involved in activities and projects.

Durable solutions' assistance as a factor to encourage returns

All returnee and IDP KIs from the community consulted for this section (57 out of 99 KIs) reported that the **availability of durable solutions' assistance would be a factor encouraging returns** to Markaz Al-Kaim.

Reportedly, **livelihoods** were identified by KIs as the activities **most needed to encourage further returns** (26 KIs), followed by restoration of electricity services (16 KIs) and housing rehabilitation (6 KIs).

Perceptions on access to housing, housing rehabilitation, and compensation

Returnee, remainee, IDP in community, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs reported that the majority of households in Markaz Al-Kaim resided in **owned houses** (83 KIs).

Types of tenure and housing agreement

Findings showed that the majority of returnee households resided in owned houses (44 KIs). According to remainee KIs, the majority of host community households also resided in owned houses (13 KIs).

Regarding IDPs in the community, findings showed that some of the IDP households were residing in houses under verbal rental agreement (3 KIs) because they did not own houses in the sub-district. According to 10 KIs, IDP households in the community were at risk of eviction in the six months prior to data collection due to:²⁰

Could not pay the rent	8 KIs	■
Property needed rehabilitation	3 KIs	■
Had members with confirmed COVID-19	3 KIs	■

Access to HLP documentation

All KIs reporting that the majority of the households in sub-district owned houses (83 out of 86 KIs) also reported that they **had HLP documents** to prove ownership.

Regarding IDPs from the community, all IDP KIs (13 KIs) reported that the majority of IDP households from the community **had HLP documents** to prove ownership in their AoO.

Access to housing rehabilitation

Returnee, remainee, IDP in community, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs).

43%-52% of houses in Markaz Al-Kaim reportedly remained destroyed or heavily damaged at the time of data collection, according to 81 consulted KIs.

Challenges to access housing rehabilitation

All KIs (99 KIs) were consulted for this section. All KIs reported that **households faced challenges accessing housing rehabilitation**. KIs reported that access to housing rehabilitation was affected by the lack of financial resources households had to rehabilitate their homes (59 KIs). This taking into consideration the lack of implementation of reconstruction campaigns or projects in the sub-district (27 KIs). Other factors affecting housing rehabilitation included:

- » Lack of loans or financial support to affected households (20 KIs),
- » Shortage of building materials which were reportedly very expensive at the time of data collection and the lack of in-kind support from the relevant authorities and organisations to provide construction materials (5 KIs), and
- » No lands allocation by local authorities for housing construction (2 KIs).

Additionally, while one returnee KI believed that housing rehabilitation was also affected by relevant authorities denying access to organisations that can support housing rehabilitation, one community leader reported that organisations' registration processes for shelter programmes did not fulfil the needs of affected households.

Reportedly, there were strategies adopted by some households to cope with the lack of housing rehabilitation support, these included:

- » Affected households may remain displaced (5 KIs) and
- » Increase their debts to ensure housing rehabilitation (1 KI).

Reported groups with less access to housing rehabilitation

Returnees and IDPs in the community reportedly **faced more challenges to access housing rehabilitation** compared to other displacement groups (91 out of 99 KIs), followed by IDPs from the community (89 KIs) and remainees (84 KIs).

Regarding vulnerable groups,²⁹ **older persons** (77 KIs) and **persons with disabilities** (70 KIs) faced more challenges accessing housing rehabilitation than other vulnerable groups, followed by female headed households (46 KIs). Additionally, 10 KIs reported that households with members with alleged links to ISIL also faced challenges accessing housing rehabilitation and especially governmental compensation mechanisms.

Access to compensation mechanisms

Over half of the KIs (54 out of 99 KIs) reported that the main factor affecting access to housing rehabilitation was related to challenges faced by households to benefit from government compensation mechanisms. The main reported challenges accessing compensation included:

- » Lack of compensation for housing rehabilitation as result of government neglect and lack of budget allocation for compensation (50 KIs),
- » Households in the sub-district lacked awareness about the process (31 KIs),
- » Complex and long compensation processes, households need to travel to the governorate centre while households lack financial means to pay transportations fees (27 KIs),
- » Lack of legal assistance for households to present their claims, especially for households with members with alleged links to ISIL (27 KIs),
- » Households perceiving they will never receive their compensation transaction even if they had finalized the process. This was attributed to the lack of financial allocation to the sub-district (15 KIs), and
- » Affected households were forced to pay bribes or resorted to intermediaries to facilitate access to compensation transactions and to process their claims (5 KIs).

According to one remainee KI, the above situation led to households mistrusted the local government capacity to provide compensation and to rebuild the destroyed houses in the sub-district.

Perceptions on access to basic public services

All KIs reported that **households faced challenges accessing basic public services** in the sub-district (99 KIs). All KIs reported that **healthcare** was the most affected sector by the events of 2014.

Reported affected basic public services (out of 99 KIs)²⁰

Healthcare	93 KIs	<div style="width: 93%;"></div>
WASH	69 KIs	<div style="width: 69%;"></div>
Electricity	69 KIs	<div style="width: 69%;"></div>
Education	38 KIs	<div style="width: 38%;"></div>

Challenges to access basic public services

All KIs (99 KIs) reported that households faced challenges in accessing basic public services. According to KIs, this was a result of the neglect from the local government towards the public sector and services (11 KIs), and the lack of financial allocation from the central government to the recovery of the sub-district (7 KIs).

Other less reported reasons affecting access to basic public services included:

- » Lack of reconstruction of the public infrastructure and the local government neglect to reactivate the public sector (4 KIs) and
- » Relevant public employees were residing in other areas (outside the sub-district) which challenged their access due to the lack of public transportation (1 KI).

To alleviate the above-mentioned situation, three KIs recommended as following:

- » Development and durable solutions' actors to intervene in the sub-district to support reactivating the public services (3 KIs) and
- » The local government to promote or advocate with the central government for the financial allocation to reactivate the public sector in the sub-district (1 KI).

Access to public healthcare

The majority of KIs (93 out of 99 KIs) reported that households faced challenges accessing healthcare services. The majority of these KIs reported factors that affected the quality of healthcare in the sub-district, including the lack of:

- » Medical personnel, especially female staff, including specialist such as gynaecologists (64 KIs). Three KIs reported that most of the medical personnel remained displaced,
- » Medications in the available operating facilities (42 KIs), and
- » Materials, supplies, equipment, medical machines (13 KIs).

KIs also reported that the public health clinics (PHCs) were not enough to cover the needs of the community and the local government neglected the construction of new ones (4 KIs). Four other KIs reported the lack of night shifts for emergency cases and neglect from the central government to allocate medical staff in the sub-district.

Additionally, KIs reported the presence of different coping strategies adopted by households to access medical treatment (41 KIs). These included:

- » Households being forced to travel to Ramadi, Baghdad, or Erbil for specialized medical treatment (20 KIs),
- » Households being forced to purchase medications from local private pharmacies, which were perceived as expensive (12 KIs),
- » Some households resorted to utilizing private clinics for their medical needs, which were perceived as expensive (9 KIs), and
- » Some households remained in displacement to access the necessary medical attention and treatments (2 KIs).

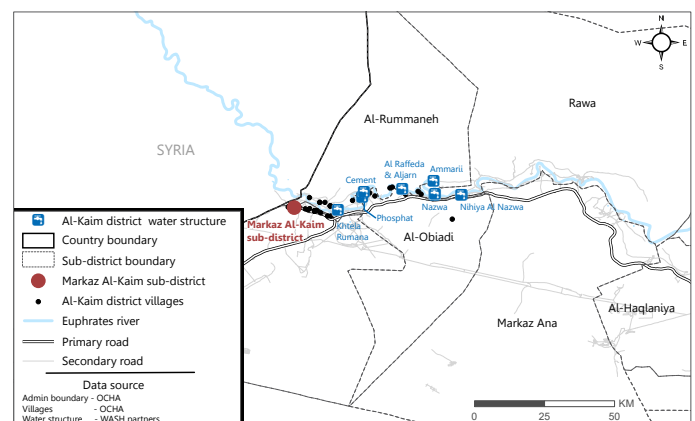
In order to overcome the challenges to access health services, 17 KIs provided recommendations to the local government. These included to reactivate the public health sector to encourage other households to return (9 KIs) and to build new healthcare facilities and rehabilitate the damaged existing ones (9 KIs).

Access to public water, sanitation, and waste management

Almost half of the KIs (43 out of 99 KIs) reported that households faced challenges accessing **water services** in the sub-district. The vast majority of these KIs (42 KIs) reported that access to water was highly affected by the lack of electricity, which **"reduced the water provision hours in such a way that was not enough to cover the demand of the households"** (7 KIs).

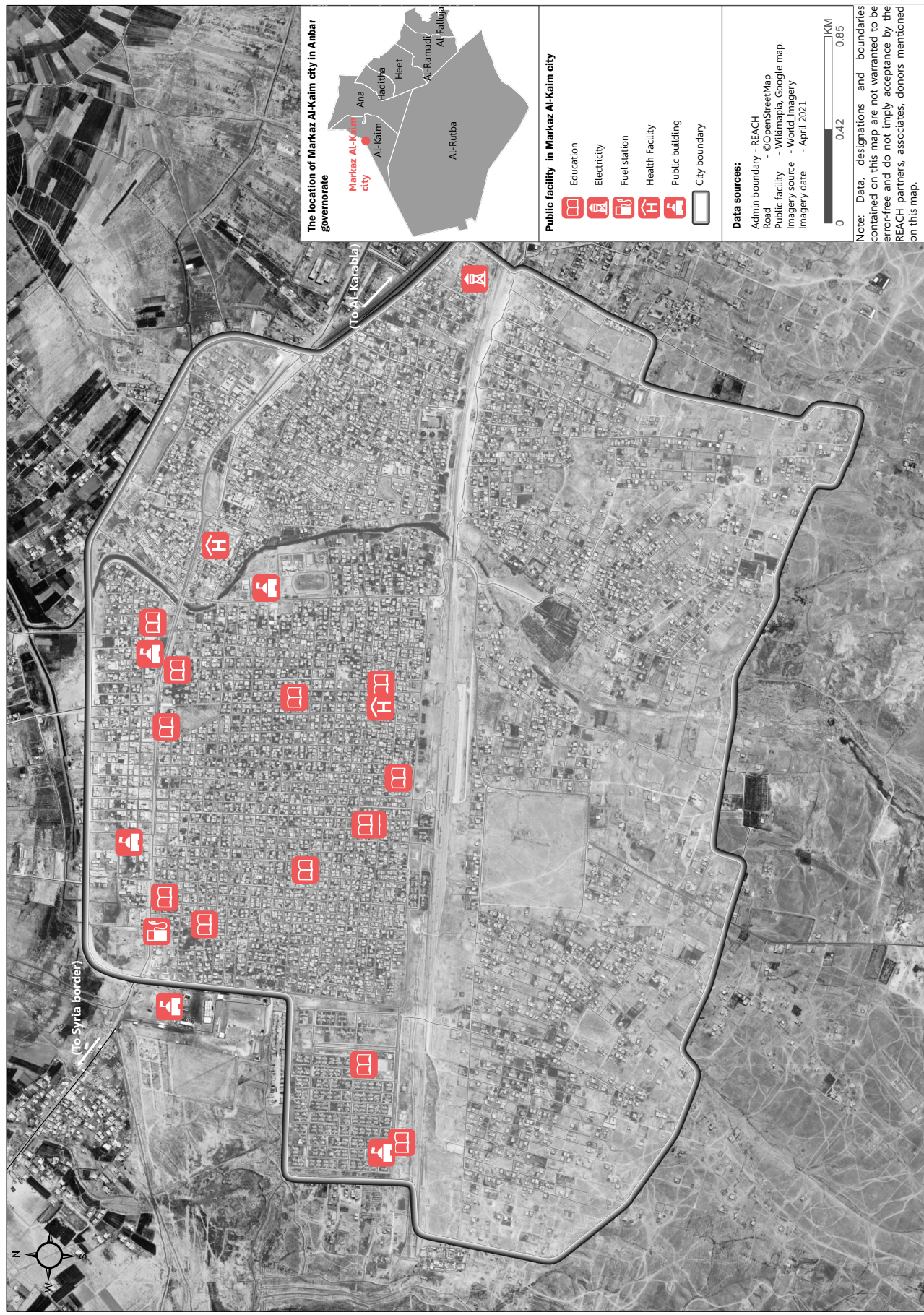
A couple of returnee KIs believed that water scarcity increased with the increased demand and population numbers after returns. Another returnee KI reported that the quality of water provided by the government did not meet the standards due to the water treatment plants being affected during the conflict in 2014, and after, and that these needed rehabilitation.

Map 5. Water facilities supplying Markaz Al-Kaim Sub-district



Several KIs (7 KIs) reported that households faced challenges accessing **waste collection, disposal, and management services** in the sub-district. Three of these KIs reported that the sanitation municipal department lacked employees due to the neglect from the local government to assign sanitation workers to the sub-district.

Map 6. Basic public services providers in Markaz Al-Kaim city, centre of Al-Kaim District



Additionally, three other KIs reported that there was neglect from the municipality to pay the wages for the available sanitation workers. One remainee KI reported that the municipality lacked equipment, cleaning materials, and waste containers. One community leader KI reported that there was a lack of waste removal management in most of the areas of the sub-district.

Access to public electricity

Over three quarters of KIs (76 out of 99 KIs) reported that households faced challenges accessing electricity services. The vast majority of these KIs (74 out of 76 KIs) reported the limited supply hours of electricity affected by the level of damage to the majority of the electrical network, transformers, and towers in the sub-district.

The lack of electricity reportedly affected the households' access to water (32 KIs), the operation of small businesses which depended on water such as food industry and others (13 KIs), and seriously affected the agricultural sector and livestock raising (10 KIs).

Additionally, 18 KIs believed that the provision of public electricity will encourage displaced households to return to their AoO in the sub-district.

Access to public education

Over one third of KIs (38 out of 99 KIs) reported that households faced challenges accessing education services. Conditions in the education facilities were reportedly the main element affecting access and quality of education in the sub-district. Over half of the KIs (22 KIs) reported that there was a lack of educational personnel mainly due to the majority of them remained displaced. To cover this gap, the education system reportedly relied on recent graduates with limited experience for teaching (2 KIs).

Almost half of the KIs (18 KIs) reported that operating schools needed rehabilitation and others need to be built. According to 14 KIs, there was a noted shortage of books and educational materials for students in public schools.³⁰ Additionally, eight KIs reported that operational schools were not equipped to absorb the demand and number of students, these operated in multiple shifts, morning covered primary level and secondary level in the afternoon.

Another reported challenge was related to the e-learning methodology (3 KIs). KIs reported that the e-learning system was the greatest challenge for education due to households lacked internet services (private service) or could not afford its cost. One remainee KI also reported there were students suffering from psychological disorders or trauma following the conflict in 2014.

The most reported impact on households with children on school age regarding the above mentioned challenges in accessing education included:

- » Parents forced to purchase educational materials, books, and stationary with their own resources in private libraries (4 KIs),
- » Parents forced to register their children in private reinforcement classes (2 KIs), and
- » Households to remain displaced to ensure their children attend affordable and quality education (2 KIs).

Reported groups with less access to basic public services

Returnees reportedly **faced more challenges to access basic public services** compared to other displacement groups (88 out of 99 KIs), followed by IDPs in the community (64 KIs), remainees (62 KIs), and IDP from the community (57 KIs).

Regarding vulnerable groups,²⁹ **older persons** (85 KIs) and **persons with disabilities** (76 KIs) faced more challenges accessing basic public services than other vulnerable groups, followed by female headed households (49 KIs). Additionally, one returnee KI reported that households with members with alleged links to ISIL also faced challenges accessing basic public services.



Perceptions on access to livelihoods

All KIs reported that **the majority of households faced challenges accessing livelihoods** (99 KIs).

Challenges to access livelihoods

All KIs (99 KIs) reported that households faced challenges accessing livelihoods. According to 78 KIs, there was a lack of job opportunities in Markaz Al-Kaim and a high level of competition for the limited available ones. Allegedly, access to job opportunities was affected by the general lack of livelihood programmes aimed to ensure job opportunities, namely cash for work for youth (28 KIs). One remainee KI reported that the main livelihood sectors for the community members prior to 2014 were agriculture, construction, and jobs in the sub-district's factories, for the production of phosphate, cement, and glass. One SME KI reported the lack of labour force in several sectors due to the extended displacement of households.

Agricultural sector (out of 99 KIs)

♦ Access to agricultural materials

Over half of the KIs (55 KIs) reported that the area suffered from the lack of financial and in-kind support to the agricultural sector including the lack of support from the local government to farmers to purchase agricultural materials (such as crops, fertilizers, etc.). Additionally, six KIs reported that agricultural materials, such as fertilizers, had highly increased prices at the time of data collection compared to prior 2014.

♦ Local production and marketing

According to 13 KIs, the local government neglected marketing local agricultural products. In addition, five KIs reported that the high number of imported products affected the local production and marketing.

♦ Security measures

Another 13 KIs reported the presence of strict security measures in the sub-district, which negatively affected access to agricultural lands and livestock herding.³¹ One remainee KI reported the lack of compensation to affected farmers or legal support provided to reclaim their lands.

Additionally, over one third of KIs (21 out of 55 KIs) reported the local government neglected the rehabilitation of existing damaged irrigation systems and the construction of new ones, and the provision of electricity for the irrigation operation.

Industry and mining sectors (48 out of 99 KIs)

According to 48 KIs, the lack of rehabilitation of the phosphate, cement, and glass plants negatively affected access to job opportunities, taking into consideration that these were one of the most reported sources of jobs and incomes for the majority of households in the sub-district.

Governmental or public sector (47 out of 99 KIs)

The three main factors reported by KIs affecting the access to governmental or public jobs were:

- » Lack of governmental job appointments (43 KIs),³²
- » High number of unemployed graduates (4 KIs),
- » Jobs in the land-port border crossing³³ needed the presence of intermediaries to get employed (2 KIs), and
- » Limited daily-workers quotas for municipal jobs such as these on sanitation (1 KI).

Private sector (39 out of 99 KIs)

Reportedly, the private sector was negatively affected by the lack of projects or investment in the sub-district (17 KIs). According to 12 KIs, some businesses had opened in the sub-district, however, these were not enough to cover the employment needs. These KIs also reported that employment in the private sector was affected by the fact that some business owners remained displaced, mainly in Baghdad and southern Iraq. The sector was reportedly affected by high prices for manufacturing materials, mainly affected by the devaluation of the Iraqi Dinar (IQD),³⁴ which led to challenging access to raw materials for small local workshops (11 KIs). Reportedly, it was also affected by the lack of electricity (3 KIs).

Additionally, KIs reported that businesses in the sub-district could not progress without paying bribes to specific parties (3 KIs). One returnee KI reported that the previously imposed COVID-19 measures negatively affected the availability of skilled workers to access their work areas and some of them had lost their jobs.³⁵

On the other hand, trade and commerce was reportedly affected by the damaged roads which made the transportation of products in and out of the area difficult (4 KIs).

Construction sector (33 out of 99 KIs)

Reportedly, there was a lack of construction and reconstruction projects in the sub-district which affected access to jobs (28 KIs). Additionally, the sector was affected by building materials not being allowed to cross the checkpoints (6 KIs). One remainee KI reported that obtaining security approvals from the Anbar Operation Office to bring in materials in the sub-district was a long process. Jointly, KIs reported the lack of raw materials, such as aluminium, to produce construction items in the reopened local workshops (6 KIs). A couple of IDP KIs from the community believed that owners of construction materials workshops in the sub-district remained displaced at the time of data collection.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned conditions affecting different livelihood sectors relevant for the sub-district, household members in Markaz Al-Kaim reportedly adopted different strategies to cope with the limited access to job opportunities, these included:

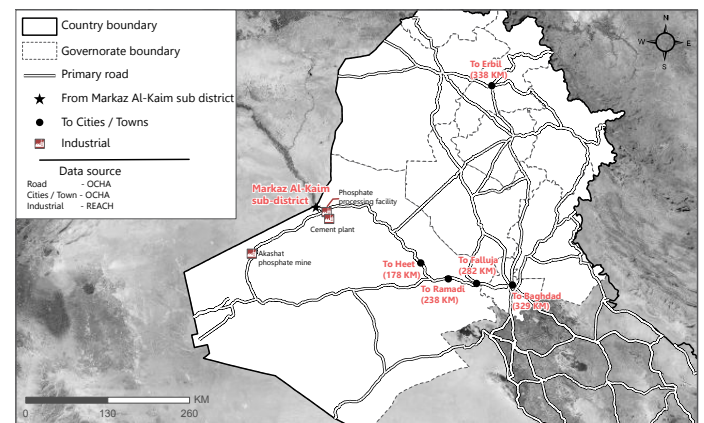
- » Travel to Baghdad, Erbil, Ramadi, Falluja, and other areas in Anbar seeking jobs (29 out of 46 KIs),
- » Remain in displacement due to the availability of jobs in AoDs (10 KIs),
- » Resort to the intervention of intermediaries and pay them bribes to access employment in the public and private sectors (10 KIs),
- » Re-displace after return to Ramadi, Falluja, and other areas in Anbar due to the lack of jobs in the sub-district (5 KIs), and
- » Accept daily low-wages jobs, with long working hours under exploitative working conditions (4 KIs).

One returnee KI also reported the perceived lack or limited skills of community members looking for jobs, therefore it was needed to cover the gap with skilled foreigners. This was mainly reported in the private health sector.

To overcome this situation, 57 KIs recommended to the local government and organisations to:

- » Launch reconstruction campaign for the damaged phosphate, cement, and glass plants in the sub-district (48 KIs) and
- » Support with job creation activities, especially for vulnerable women, and provide trainings and loans for new start-ups to encourage displaced households to return (34 KIs).

Map 7. Distance from Markaz Al-Kaim Sub-district to other areas where KIs reported that households could access basic public services and livelihoods (including main fabrics location)



Reported groups with less access to livelihoods

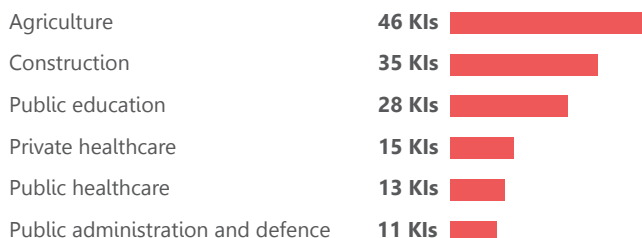
IDPs in the community reportedly **faced more challenges to access livelihoods** compared to other displacement groups (83 out of 99 KIs), followed by IDPs from the community (67 KIs) and returnees (62 KIs).

Regarding vulnerable groups,²⁹ **older persons** (89 KIs) and **persons with disabilities** (74 KIs) reportedly faced more challenges accessing basic public services than other vulnerable groups. Additionally, five returnee KIs reported that households with members with alleged links to ISIL also faced challenges accessing livelihoods.

Livelihood sectors with reported growth potential

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (16 out of 99 KIs). Reportedly, **agriculture** was **the livelihood sector with the most growth potential** in the 12 months following data collection (14 KIs). KIs also reported that other sectors showed potential to expand such as construction (6 KIs), trade and commerce (6 KIs), and public healthcare (6 KIs).

Most reported livelihood sectors available in Markaz Al-Kaim at the time of data collection (out of 99 KIs)^{20, 36}



Findings indicated that the availability of some livelihood sectors was affected at the time of data collection.³⁷ Job opportunities in construction and public and private education were reportedly less available at the time of data collection compared to prior to 2014.

Livelihood activities support for economic growth

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (16 out of 99 KIs). All KIs reported that livelihood programmes implementation in the sub-district may support economic development.

- » Revitalization of the agricultural sector (including livestock) (out of 10 KIs) depended on:
- » Providing financial or in-kind assistance for agricultural machinery and materials, such as fertilizers (5 KIs),
- » Establishing better managed border-crossing control for products imported from Syria (3 KIs),
- » Supporting the preparation of agricultural lands, cultivation of crops, and plowing (3 KIs),
- » Promoting the marketing of local products and supporting with their transportation outside the sub-district, this way there may be a reduced demand for imported products (2 KIs),
- » Rehabilitating the damaged roads may facilitate transportation of local products and increase trade (2 KIs), and
- » Building irrigation channels and networks and rehabilitating the existing ones (1 KI).

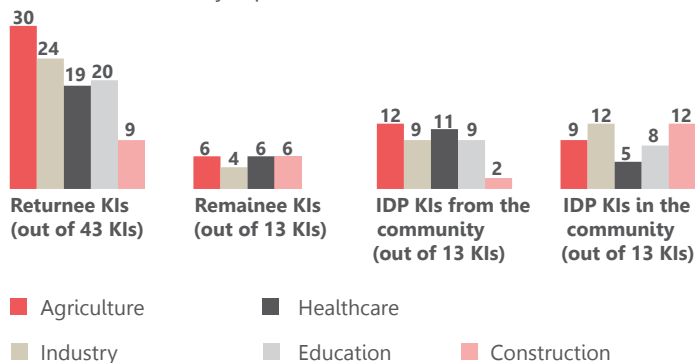
Additionally, five KIs reported that livelihood programmes implemented by durable solutions actors and partners will promote job creation for all, especially for youth and vulnerable women.

To activate the industrial sector, a couple of KIs recommended the establishment of large industries for glass production or poultry fields which may ensure jobs for the community members. Another couple of KIs reported the urgent need to rehabilitating the factories, namely the phosphate and cement plants, which may support to improve the economic activity of the sub-district.

Livelihood sectors of interest for returnees and IDPs from the community

IDP from the community, IDP in the community, remainee, and returnee KIs were consulted for this section (22 out of 99 KIs). The most commonly reported livelihood sector of interest for returnee and IDP households from/in the community was **agriculture** (57 KIs).

The most commonly reported livelihood sectors of interest:¹⁹



Access to public judicial mechanisms

Reported groups with less access to judicial mechanisms

Almost three quarters of KIs (71 out of 99 KIs) reported that none of the displacement groups faced challenges accessing public judicial mechanisms. The rest of the KIs reported that IDPs in the community (14 KIs) faced more challenges to access justice compared to other displacement groups, followed by returnees (10 KIs) and IDPs from the community (10 KIs).

Challenges to access public judicial mechanisms

Regarding vulnerable groups,²⁹ **persons with disabilities** (74 KIs) and **older persons** (73 KIs) faced more challenges accessing public judicial mechanisms than other vulnerable groups. **The majority of KIs** (82 out of 99 KIs) reported that **households did not face challenges accessing public judicial mechanisms**. However, 14 KIs reported that households with members with alleged links to ISIL faced several challenges to access legal services. These included households or individuals being forced to:

- » Provide security clearance to access courts or judicial mechanisms (8 KIs),
- » Go through longer legal processes (8 KIs), and
- » Pay bribes to complete their legal processes (6 KIs).

Additionally, six KIs reported the risk these households or individuals faced to be arrested or detained while approaching judicial facilities.

Other challenges reported were related to:

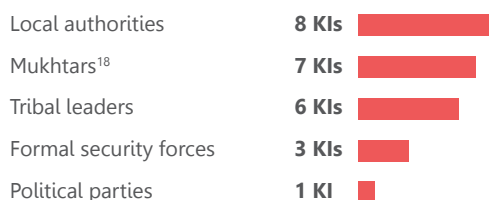
- » Limited number of staff to process claims and legal files, understaffed public judicial facilities (3 KIs),
- » Delays to process the legal files and transactions (2 KIs), and
- » Long distance to reach courts, households cannot cover transportation fees (2 KIs).

In addition, nine KIs reported that **households** (returnees in majority) **had missing, damaged, or out to date personal documentation**. These included the driving license (7 KIs), passport (6 KIs), and birth certificate (1 KIs).³⁹

Perceptions on governance, safety and security, and community tensions³⁸

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (16 out of 99 KIs). All consulted KIs believed that **formal security forces were the most influential bodies in terms of governance**.

Reported influential local actors regarding governance (out of 16 KIs)²⁰



Perceptions on safety and security

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (83 out of 99 KIs). The vast majority of consulted KIs (82 out of 83 KIs) reported that **the majority of returnee, remainee, and IDP households from/in the community felt safe or very safe** in Markaz Al-Kaim. This situation was reportedly the same for women, girls, men, and boys,⁴⁰ according to these KIs.

However, one IDP KI from the community reported that some IDP households felt somewhat safe in the sub-district due to the presence of informal armed groups.

Freedom of movement

Returnee, remainee, IDP in the community, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that **there were no restrictions of movement imposed** in the sub-district.

All returnee and IDP KIs in the community (15 KIs) also reported that **the majority of returnee households could freely move during the day and at night** in Markaz Al-Kaim if they desired. This situation was reportedly the same for women, girls, men, and boys,⁴⁰ according to all returnee and IDP KIs in the community.

Explosive remnants of war (ERWs) land contamination

The vast majority of KIs (95 out of 99 KIs) reported that **there were no fields contaminated with ERW** in Markaz Al-Kaim at the time of data collection. The rest of KIs (4 KIs) did not know about the ERWs presence in the sub-district.

Community disputes and retaliation incidents

Returnee, remainee, IDP in the community, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). The vast majority of consulted KIs (85 out of 86 KIs) reported that there were **no disputes between the sub-district and other areas** (external disputes) or **within neighbourhoods** in Markaz Al-Kaim in the six months prior to data collection.

However, six KIs reported that reconciliation was one of the primary community needs. According to four KIs, some households remained in displacement fearing the presence of informal armed groups in their AoO. A couple of KIs reported the existence of disputes between host community members and

households with members with alleged links to ISIL, and disputes between tribes which resulted in the occurrence of fatalities. Five KIs reported believing that there was a high influence of political parties in the community decisions. A couple of KIs recommended that tribal leaders must have a more significant role in resolving disputes and to support security forces in promoting safety and ensuring security in the sub-district.

Role of different bodies in resolving disputes

Returnee and IDP KIs from/in the community were consulted for this section (70 out of 99 KIs).

Disputes within the sub-district (internal disputes)

Over half of the KIs (40 out of 70 KIs) reported that tribal leaders were the most effective body in resolving disputes within the sub-district (internal disputes).

Tribal leaders

KIs believed that tribal leaders were responsible for resolving internal disputes (35 KIs). According to 28 KIs, the strong nature of the tribal system in Markaz Al-Kaim, the ancient tribal rules and traditions which had been in place, and the strong tribal relationships facilitated resolving tensions between community members.

Allegedly, tribal leaders had a high influence on community members (16 KIs). There were other conditions which led to KIs reporting the effectiveness of tribal leaders to resolve disputes. These included:

- » The perceived role of tribal leaders to ensure coexistence between tribe members (5 KIs) and
- » The preference of community members to involve tribal leaders when internal disputes occurred (2 KIs).

Formal security forces

According to 15 KIs, the formal security forces were the highest authority in the sub-district. They represent the government and the law, and therefore are respected by the community. One remainee KI reported that formal security forces were the unique body which was neutral and not influenced by political parties.

Local authorities

A couple of KIs (both older returnees) reported that local authorities were responsible for resolving disputes, implementing the law, and representing judicial mechanisms in the sub-district. One of the KIs believed that local authorities were the "formal representative of the government and the state."

Mukhtars¹⁸

One older returnee KI reported that some households also referred to the mukhtars in their villages to resolve any tensions that may occur since they know well the families and the community in general.

The rest of consulted KIs refused to answer about effective bodies to resolve internal disputes in the sub-district (9 KIs) or did not know about the topic (4 KIs).

Disputes between the sub-district and other areas (external disputes)

Returnee, IDP from the community, and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (70 out of 99 KIs). The majority of KIs did not know about the bodies intervening to resolve these disputes (30 out of 70 KIs) or refused to answer (17 KIs).

Tribal leaders

From the rest of KIs, almost two thirds of them (15 out of 23 KIs) reported that the tribal leaders were the most effective in resolving disputes between the sub-district and other sub-districts (external disputes) due to the tribal nature of the area. Two returnee KIs believed that additional reasons may include the fact that tribal leaders played an essential role in the liberation process of sub-district from ISIL⁴¹ and the level of influence they had over community members.

Local authorities (14 out of 23 KIs)

Local authorities were reportedly believed to intervene to resolve external disputes once tribal leaders could not resolve them (10 KIs). According to seven KIs, they only intervened "in case of big external disputes which needed to be raised to public judicial mechanisms." Additionally, four KIs reported that local authorities represented the law and were responsible to apply it.

Formal security forces (6 out of 23 KIs)

KIs reported that the formal security forces were perceived to play an important role resolving external disputes, represent the law and were responsible to impose it (5 KIs). Reportedly, they were responsible to ensure security and impose control over conflicts, and they were perceived to be responsible to promote the feeling of safety in the sub-district (4 KIs).

Perceptions on community inter-relations³⁸

Community inter-relations

Returnee, IDP from the community, and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (70 out of 99 KIs). Almost half of consulted KIs (41 out of 70 KIs) reported that the majority of the households in their respective displacement groups **felt welcome or very welcome** in the community of Markaz Al-Kaim. However, perceptions varied with the KI profile.

Returnees feeling welcome

Returnee KIs were consulted for this section (44 out of 99 KIs). Almost two thirds of consulted KIs (28 out of 44 KIs) reported that returnee households felt welcome or very welcome to the sub-district. The reported reasons included:

- » Most of households having kinship and social ties with households in the sub-district (23 KIs),
- » The prevalence and strength of different tribes in the area, causing households to feel protected since they belong to the prevalent tribes (15 KIs),
- » Having strong work relationship in the sub-district (5 KIs),
- » Households having returned home to their areas of origin where they belong and considering themselves as the "original population of the sub-district" (4 KIs), and
- » Households perceived being welcomed by the host community members (1 KI).

One returnee KI reported that some households felt somewhat welcome due to the perception that "they may represent a security concern for the community due to having members with alleged links to ISIL."

The rest of returnee KIs reported that they did not know how welcome returnee households felt in the sub-district (12 KIs) or refused to answer (3 KIs).

IDPs in the community feeling welcome

IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (13 out of 99 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs reported that households felt welcome in the sub-district. The reported reasons included:

- » Most of households having kinship and social ties with other households in the sub-district (9 KIs),
- » The prevalence and strength of different tribes in the area, causing households to feel protected since they belong to the prevalent tribes (9 KIs), and
- » Households belong or had existing bonds with the existing tribes in the sub-district (6 KI).

A couple of KIs did not know about how welcome IDP households felt in the sub-district.

IDPs from the community feeling welcome

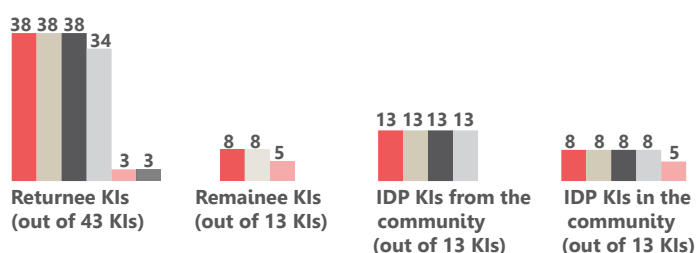
IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (13 out of 99 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs did not know about how welcome IDP households felt in the sub-district (11 KIs) or refused to answer (1 KI). One KI reported that some households felt welcome in the sub-district (noting that the KI was displaced in Markaz Karkh Sub-district, Baghdad Governorate). The reasons reported by the KI included:

- » Most of households having kinship and social ties with households in the sub-district and
- » The prevalence and strength of different tribes in the area, causing households to feel protected since they belong to the prevalent tribes.

Interaction between displacement groups

Returnee, remainees, IDP from the community, and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (83 out of 99 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs (73 out of 83 KIs) reported that households in their respective groups interacted with other households in the community.

Findings showed the variation of interaction between groups.²⁰



- Interacted with returnee households
- Interacted with IDP households in the community
- Interacted with IDP households from the community
- Interacted with remainee households (host community)
- None of the displacement groups
- Did not know

Reported types of interaction between groups

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (83 out of 99 KIs). Over three quarters of KIs (66 out of 83 KIs) reported ways of interaction between groups.

Findings showed that there were not notable differences on ways of interaction when disaggregated per KI profile. The most reported ways of interaction included:²⁰

Financial and in-kind support to vulnerable households (23 out of 66 KIs)

KIs reported that community members provided assistance to this specific household profile. The assistance consisted of financial or in-kind support to cover households daily needs including students expenses, children's basic needs, and covering the cost of a private generator to access electricity services. Additionally, five KIs reported that households in the community supported these households with ill members to reach medical attention by covering the cost of the treatment and providing transportation to healthcare facilities.

KIs reported that community members supported returnee households to rehabilitate their houses or hosted them (6 KIs). One IDP KI in the community also reported that host community members intervened with the landlord to reduce the rent for IDP households in the community.

Kinship and social ties between households in the community (19 out of 66 KIs)

KIs reported that households used to visit each other and attend social events.

Interaction at workplace (16 out of 66 KIs)

KIs reported that community members intervened to ensure access to employment for recent returnees by negotiating with "successful" employers in the sub-district (13 KIs). They also mentioned being able to discuss daily wages and working conditions. Reportedly, this type of interaction also included the support provided from community members to rehabilitate and reopen the shops of their owners in the sub-district (3 KIs). Additionally, KIs reported the interaction community members had in their workplaces and their interventions with the employer to promote a healthy environment in terms of inter-relations and without discrimination (5 KIs). One returnee KIs reported that interaction also consisted of "job opportunities provision and forming a partnership between the displaced, host community, and returnees."

One returnee KI reported that community members supported farmers to recultivate their lands.

Voluntary work to reactivate public education (4 out of 66 KIs)

KIs also reported that community members organised cleaning campaigns to remove the rubble from schools and facilitate the reconstruction of facilities.

Challenges for interaction between groups

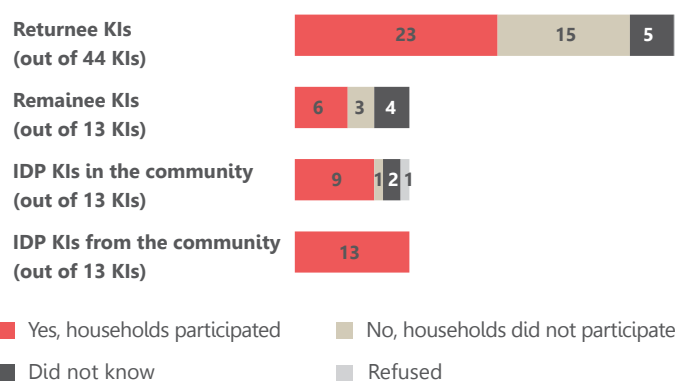
Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (86 out of 99 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs (69 out of 86 KIs) reported that there

were no challenges for interaction between groups. The rest of KIs (14 KIs) reported that **there were challenges for interaction between groups**, these included:

- » Presence or fear of discrimination upon displacement status or ethnicity (9 KIs),
- » Presence or existence of inter-communal disputes (8 KIs),
- » Some households having alleged links to ISIL (6 KIs), and
- » Presence of tensions or disputes due to increased competition for the limited available jobs (3 KIs).

Participation in decision-making processes

Returnee, remainee, IDP from the community, and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (83 out of 99 KIs). **Almost two thirds of consulted KIs** (51 out of 83 KIs) reported that households **participated in decision-making** processes in the sub-district.

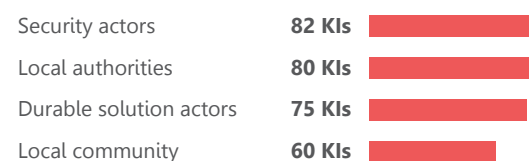


Perceptions on social cohesion³⁸

Actors influencing social cohesion

The majority of KIs (82 out of 99 KIs) reported that the most influential actors in terms of social cohesion were the security actors in the sub-district.

Perceptions on influential actors were as the following:²⁰



Improving social cohesion

All KIs reported strategies or initiatives to be considered to accelerate or enhance social cohesion processes, such as:

Initiatives promoting access to work for all

Over two thirds of KIs (67 out of 99 KIs) reported that initiatives promoting access to work for all should be considered to improve social cohesion. These included:

- » Supporting job creation projects and ensuring government job appointments for all without discrimination (41 KIs),
- » Supporting job creation projects for vulnerable women, namely widows and households which breadwinner is missing (11 KIs),

- » (to employers) promoting interaction at work places (9 KIs),
- » Implementing construction projects which ensure job opportunities (7 KIs),
- » (to employers) Ensuring respect and providing proper wages to workers and avoid exploitation (7 KIs),
- » Supporting households with lower incomes to open small projects (2 KIs), and
- » Encouraging establishment of joint businesses (partnership) (2 KIs).

One IDP KI in the community reported that one initiative would be ensuring that informal armed groups allow farmers to access their lands. One remainee KI also recommended supporting farmers to recultivate their lands.

According to 11 KIs, access job opportunities may “keep the community members away from problems and encourage youth to not join extremist groups.”

Seminars, awareness sessions, and conferences

KIs believed that organising seminars, sport programmes, conferences, awareness sessions, and workshops was an effective way to promote social cohesion (43 KIs). The most recommended topics for these activities were:

- » Inter-relation and coexistence (23 KIs),
- » Peace building, conflict resolution, and tolerance (18 KIs),
- » Acceptance of differences and promoting non-discrimination (15 KIs), and
- » Anti-terrorism, anti-extremism, and reintegration of households with members with alleged links to ISIL (8 KIs).

One community leader recommended that any topic encouraging reconciliation and dialogue between families in the sub-district may promote social cohesion.

KIs also recommended that these activities target the following groups (18 KIs):

- » Tribal and religious leaders (12 KIs),
- » Government officials (10 KIs),
- » Organisations representatives (5 KIs),
- » Returnee households' members (4 KIs),
- » Professionals and specialists in different sectors (2 KIs), and
- » Remainee household members (1 KI).

Initiatives promoting community inter-relationships and social bonds

Over one quarter of KIs (29 out of 99 KIs) reported that initiatives strengthening community inter-relationships and interaction may improve social cohesion in the sub-district, such as:

- » Encouraging visits between relatives and friends to strengthen bonds and promote forgiveness (12 KIs),
- » Promoting participation in social events (10 KIs),
- » Providing financial support to vulnerable households, namely widows (6 KIs),

- » Promoting volunteering work to reconstruct the sub-district and restore services (3 KIs), and
- » Providing assistance to ensure housing rehabilitation, focusing on priorities and vulnerabilities (2 KIs).

One returnee KI believed that encouraging marriage between families in the sub-district and attending tribal meetings may ensure strong kinship ties and tribal bonds which may promote social cohesion.

Initiatives promoting safety and security

According to 11 KIs, local authorities and tribal leaders had the responsibility to promote and prevent retaliation incidents taking into consideration that they were highly respected by and had high influence on community members. Some KIs believed that a potential way to improve social cohesion in the area was related to the responsibility and commitment from community members to report “dangerous situations” related to potential terrorist actions (7 KIs). One community leader KI also reported the need for community members to respect the law and regulations in the area.

Other initiatives

Additionally, five KIs reported that ensuring involvement of all community members in decision-making processes may enhance social cohesion (5 KIs). One returnee KI reported the need to conduct recovery activities focusing on children's education and mental health, such as psycho-social support after trauma suffered by the events during and after 2014. The same KI also believed that there was a need to develop and implement a national peacebuilding and reconciliation plan to enhance social cohesion in Iraq. One community leader also believed that social cohesion will be improved when community members avoid interference in political matters.



Perceptions on durable solutions³⁸

Returnee, IDP from the community, and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (70 out of 99 KIs).

Returnees feeling reintegrated

Returnee KIs were consulted for this section (44 out of 99 KIs). Over three quarters of consulted KIs (33 out of 44 KIs) reported that the majority of returnee households felt re-integrated in the sub-district. The reasons included:

- » Being returned to their homes and lands in their AoOs (20 KIs),
- » Returned to the areas where they were born and grew up (16 KIs),
- » Families were reunified (6 KIs),
- » Households ended displacement and stopped paying rents in AoDs (4 KIs),
- » Existing strong inter-relationship with households in the sub-district (3 KIs),
- » Some households recently bought houses and lands in the sub-district after returning (1 KI),
- » Existing kinship ties between households in the sub-district (1 KI), and
- » Belonging to the community since they were attached by tribal bonds, customs, and traditions (1 KI).

A couple of returnee KIs reported that some returnee households did not feel re-integrated in the community of Markaz Al-Kaim. This was reportedly due to:

- » Feeling marginalised and judged by the rest of the community members (2 KIs),
- » Different population groups had different interests which led some returnee households feel that there is no sense of community (1 KI), and
- » Some returnee households' perceptions on community members belonging to political parties which negatively affected their feeling of belonging to the sub-district (1 KI).

The rest of the returnee KIs did not know about how re-integrated returnee households felt in the sub-district (6 KIs) or refused to answer (2 KIs).

IDPs in the community feeling integrated

IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (13 out of 99 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that **the majority of IDP households did not feel integrated in the sub-district**. The reasons included:

- » Households did not return to their homes (12 KIs),
- » Households did not return to their extended families and relatives in their AoOs (2 KIs), and
- » There was a perceived lack of basic services in the sub-district which negatively affected the feeling of integration of IDP households (1 KI).

IDPs from the community feeling integrated

IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (13 out of 99 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs reported that most of IDP households did not feel integrated in their AoD (11 out of 13 KIs). The reasons included:

- » Households did not return to their homes and lands, due to their houses remaining destroyed or there were not enough services in the sub-district (10 KIs),
- » Feeling that they were treated as strangers among host communities (3 KIs),
- » Not being considered as the original population in the area, and therefore feeling marginalised (3 KIs),
- » Broken bonds and networks with the community in the AoD (1 KI), and
- » Households remained separated from the extended family (1 KI).

One IDP KI reported that some households, namely in Barwana Sub-district (Haditha District in Anbar Governorate), felt integrated in the community since they had strong relations and network with the host community, and they resided with other relatives which let them feel protected.

One IDP KI from the community did not know how integrated IDP households from the community felt in their AoDs.

End Notes

1 [IOM DTM Return Index](#)

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

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

4 Niqash, [Baghdadi's new home: The Iraqi city of Al Qaem may be the new extremist capital](#), 28 July 2016

5 Reuters, [Iraqi forces recapture last Islamic State-held town](#), 17 November 2017

6 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 Markaz Al-Kaim, there were 8 community leader and 8 SME respondents. Population figures for returns and IDP populations in Markaz Al-Kaim are based on their estimates at the time of data collection.

7 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.

8 "Remainee" refers to members of the host community who did not displaced during the events of 2014 or after.

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

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

11 "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](#)

12 The most severely affected areas in Markaz Al-Kaim in terms of social cohesion and safety perceptions were reportedly Door Al-Sikak, Hay 12 Rabee Alawal, Hay Al Askary, Hay Al Rashid, Hay Al Sham, Hay Al Shuhadaa, Hay Al inay, Hay Al-Andalus, Hay Al-Athar, Hay Al-Farooq, Hay Al-Maamon, Hay Al-Makarim, Hay Al-Salam, Hay Al-Yarmook, Sadah, Wazeeriya, Al Nahda Al-Sharqiyah, Al-Amen, Al Nahda Al Gharbi, Hay Alzaytun, Hay Al Forat, Hay Ghaza, AL Qunaytara Village, Al Fayadhiya Village, Abu Mandeel Village, Jreejib Village, Swehil Village, and Al Angaa: IOM DTM, [Return Index Round 14](#), August

13 Durable Solutions Technical Working Group's (DSTWG), [Iraq Durable Solutions Platform](#)

- 14 For the purposes of this research, “older returnees” refers to households who returned to Markaz Al-Kaim Sub-district more than three months prior to data collection.
- 15 “IDPs (displaced from the area)” refers to households from Markaz Al-Kaim displaced during the events of 2014 to areas different than their AoO, specifically in the sub-district of Markaz Ramadi (5 KIs), Markaz Erbil (3 KIs), Markaz Karkh (2 KIs), Barwana (1 KI), Bazian (1 KI), Markaz Heet (1 KI), and Mansour (1 KI).
- 16 “IDPs (displaced in the community)” refers to households originally from areas different than Markaz Al-Kaim who displaced to Markaz Al-Kaim during the events of 2014 and after. Interviewed IDP KIs were originally from Markaz Rutba Sub-district (11 KIs), Nekhaeeb Sub-district (1 KI), and Obaidi Sub-district (1 KI).
- 17 “SMEs” are members of the community with a high level of expertise in different sectors or topics. These were represented by: seven public sector employees (education, electricity, agriculture, and municipality) and one civil society representative.
- 18 “Community leaders” are members of the host community represented by five mukhtars, and three tribal leaders. 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.
- 19 There were 99 individuals interviewed for the Markaz Al-Kaim assessment aged between 22 and 77 years old. The majority were male (95 KIs). The lack of gender balance among the KIs is a limitation to the assessment. Integration of vulnerable age groups was considered, three male KIs were considered in the youth group (between 18 and 24) and five male KIs represented older people (over 65 years old).
- 20 KIs were able to select multiple responses to this question.
- 21 “Across federal Iraq, 27 camps remained open at the time of data collection, until in November 2021, when Amriyat al Fallujah was re-classified as an informal site. As of November 2021, nearly 1.2 million IDPs remained in protracted displacement throughout the country. This included almost 180,000 individuals who resided in 26 formal IDP camps after the re-classification of Almrifat al-Fallujah.” - REACH Iraq, [IDP Camp Profiling Round XV Situation Overview](#), June-August 2021
- 22 KIs referred to “normalization” as the expected recovering of the area to conditions pre-2014.
- 23 “In order to leave IDP camps and return to their home communities, families with alleged ISIL association are required to obtain a security clearance from Iraqi government authorities.” - UNDP, [Pathways to Reintegration: Iraq](#), February 2021
- 24 Other less reported primary needs were access to reconciliation and social cohesion programmes (4 KIs), food assistance (2 KIs), security (2 KIs), and ERWs (1 KI).
- 25 Findings were indicative of each population group and not representative.
- 26 Durable solutions’ assistance includes the humanitarian, stabilization, development and peace-building assistance under its umbrella.
- 27 Other less reported types of programmes were social cohesion (4 KIs) and psycho-social support (3 KIs).
- 28 Infrastructure rehabilitation included roads (9 KIs), housing (6 KIs), and schools (1 KI) reconstruction.
- 29 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.
- 30 “In previous years, students used to receive free learning materials, including books, notebooks, and transportation from the Ministry of Education (MoE). These distributions were affected in the 1990s, and the situation remained the same at the time of data collection. “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
- 31 The Major of Al-Qaim reported that “PMF control on the Masharea area to the south of Markaz Al-Qaim affected the agricultural sector while it used to be an area of income for 7,000 HHs pre-ISIL conflict.” – Durable solutions round table discussion on 8 July 2021 (not published)
- 32 “The Iraqi state cannot afford to keep creating government jobs to appease its underemployed, ever-growing, and increasingly dissatisfied population [...]”: Institute for the Study of War (ISW), [IRAQ 2021–2022: A FORECAST](#), June 2021
- 33 “Qaim border-crossing with Syria [...] will be reopened for travellers and trade”: Reuters, [Iraq to open border-crossing with Syria on Monday](#), 28 September 2019
- 34 “Although the currency devaluation was an essential part of Iraqi policy reform, it had some negative impacts on the economy in the short run. The new exchange rate drove up import prices for essential commodities and raw materials which immediately boosted inflation across the country.” – WFP, [IRAQI DINAR DEVALUATION AND THE PRICE OF THE FOOD BASKET](#), March 2021
- 35 “In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Iraqi authorities have imposed mobility restrictions since March 2020, aimed at curbing the spread of the virus. These measures include restrictions on travel and limitations on freedom of movement, such as the closure of airports and points of entry (PoEs) along land borders and maritime boundaries, as well as domestic movement restrictions. [...] Between 28 July and 10 August, the Government of Iraq (GoI) extended the nationwide lockdown measures to curb the spread of COVID-19. These measures include restrictions on commercial activity as well as civilian movements across the country” - IOM IRAQ, [IRAQ MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS DUE TO COVID-19](#), 28 JULY – 10 AUGUST 2020
- 36 Returnee, returnees, IDP in the community, community leaders, and SMEs (86 out of 99 KIs) were consulted for this section. Other less reported livelihood sectors available in the sub-district at the time of data collection were manufacturing (8 KIs), transportation (7 KIs), trade and commerce (6 KIs), finance (6 KIs), and oil industry (1 KI).
- 37 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.
- 38 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.
- 39 Missing, damaged, or out of date documentation could be obtained in Ramadi, however KIs reported that the main challenge was the distance to the district and the cost of transportation which households could not afford.
- 40 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.
- 41 “Tribal leaders in the province have renewed their pledge to reject all forms of terrorism and keep supporting Iraqi security forces in their fight against the ‘Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant’.” – Diyaruna, [Anbar tribes disavow ISIL, pledge support to Iraqi forces](#), 09 January 2017