

Map 1. Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Diyala Governorates

Governorate Profiles

As part of the ReDS research cycle, REACH conducted a review of the data gathered through the ReDS assessments to summarise findings at the governorate level and elaborate three Governorate Profiles. The profiles aim to provide findings to support humanitarian and development actors to promote durable solutions for returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in situations of protracted displacement, including the development of localised interventions, dialogue, policy planning and resource mobilisation. Out of five governorates in which the ReDS took place, three were selected based on the following reasons:

Ninewa Governorate accommodates the largest number of Iraq's returnee population (1.9 million) and hosts most of the displaced populations (around 250,000 IDPs)¹ nationwide. Living conditions related to security, social cohesion and access to services remain challenging.²

Salah al-Din Governorate, in addition to Ninewa, remains one of the governorates hosting the highest number of returnees living in high severity conditions,³ around 200,000 individuals. It represents the assessed governorate with the highest severity score in terms of safety and security, livelihoods and services.⁴

Diyala Governorate accounts for the area with the least amount of governmental and non-governmental assistance. The challenging security situation in the governorate made access for non-governmental organisations to the different affected areas of return difficult.⁵ Returnees are facing many challenges related to their access to basic services, security, shelter and livelihoods.⁶

Background and Methodology

Since the formal defeat in late 2017 of the group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) that have returned to their Area of Origin (AoO) has increased steadily, reaching the number of almost 5 million returnees by October 2022.⁷ The ReDS assessment covered 25 sub-districts in five governorates in Iraq to profile priority sub-districts of return and/or secondary displacement where a risk to the sustainable (re)integration of populations, and therefore durable solutions, was identified.⁸ **The assessment is in the form of a secondary data review and existing qualitative and quantitative data from ReDS assessment constitute the main data source. The timeframe covered by the profiles is the period between January 2020 and September 2022, reflecting the overall ReDS assessments timeline. The assessment is based on an aggregation of sub-district level data for each governorate. The full methodology is available in the [Terms of Reference](#).**

Limitations: Besides being only indicative, findings have limitations regarding the geographical scope, timeframe and small number of KIs interviewed. Not all the governorates' territory will be covered in the assessment, but only the subdistricts assessed through the ReDS. Concerning the timeframe, data collection in different sub-districts occurred between January 2020 and September 2022, therefore some of the findings might be out of date, however, according to the IOM DTM Return Index, which suggests that most of the sub-districts are still considered hotspots and that the overall situation in the assessed governorates did not report particular alterations for the considered timespan.

Cross-Governorates Key findings

Reasons for returns: improved security conditions were the most mentioned driver for return in all the assessed governorates, followed by nostalgia for previous life in Ninewa and Diyala and family reunification in Salah al-Din. Camp closure was reported also, but predominantly during the assessments that occurred between 2020 and 2021.

Barriers to returns: common to all three governorates, House, Land and Property issues were the main barriers preventing returns, most notably housing damage; followed by a lack of livelihoods and a lack of public services in the AoOs.

Livelihood opportunities and barriers: agriculture was reportedly the most common sector of interest in the community and for available job opportunities, followed by construction and public education. Several barriers to accessing livelihoods were mentioned by KIs, especially related to the lack of reconstruction projects, water scarcity and a lack of financial assistance.

Access to public services: healthcare was the public service that communities reportedly had more difficulties accessing, followed by water and education. Infrastructural damage, lack of infrastructure rehabilitation projects and lack of staff reportedly hindered the access to public services in all the assessed governorates.

Social cohesion: similar situations were reported across the different governorates, most notably a perceived increase in safety and security stability within the assessed sub-districts and more interaction between the different population groups.

Ninewa Governorate - Overview

- ♦ **Returning population:** the main reported drivers for returns in Ninewa were improved security conditions, nostalgia for previous life, family reunification and, to a lesser extent, camp closure. The main barriers to returning were reportedly house, land and property (HLP) issues, lack of livelihoods and lack of public services in AoOs.
- ♦ **Community needs:** the most mentioned primary community needs across the sub-districts were livelihoods, healthcare, housing rehabilitation and compensation.
- ♦ **Livelihoods and public services:** agriculture and construction were reportedly the sectors with the most job availability and that were most likely to grow in the sub-districts. In some areas, health and education were also sectors expected to expand. However, infrastructures and a lack of reconstruction projects reportedly undermined access to both livelihoods and public services.
- ♦ **Social Cohesion:** findings showed stable social cohesion in most of the sub-districts. However, interaction among different groups was reportedly sometimes hindered by fear, discrimination and ethnic divisions.

8 Sub-districts assessed between 2020 and 2022⁹

2020: Markaz al-Baaj, al-Qairawan, Markaz Sinjar

2021: Markaz Mosul, al-Qahtanya, al-Ayadiya

2022: Markaz Hatra, Zummar

318 KIs interviewed in total¹⁰

80 Community leaders

40 IDPs in the community


78 Returnees

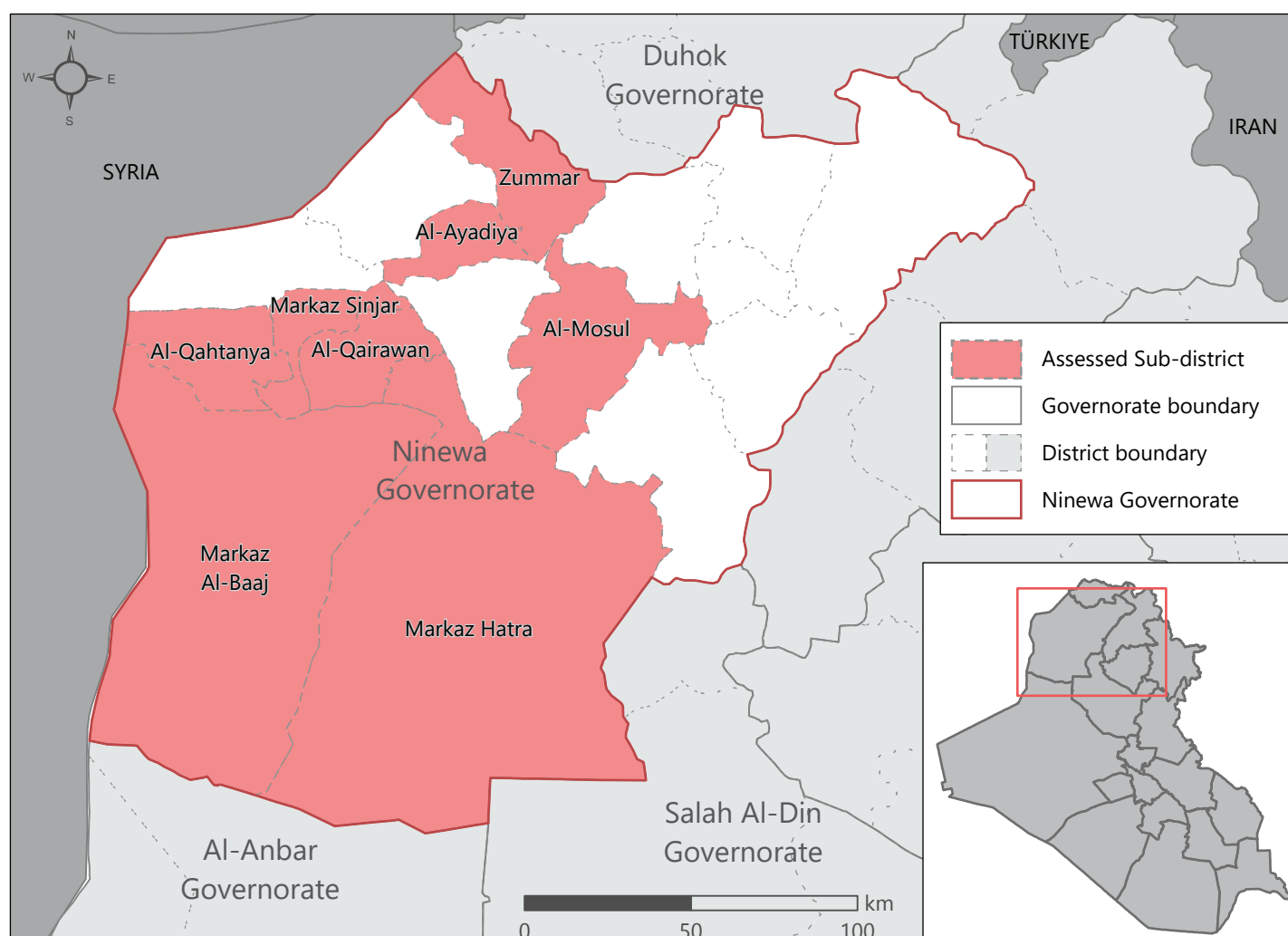
27 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

69 IDPs from the community

24 Remainees

 **274** Male KIs

 **44** Female KIs



 Map 2. Sub-districts assessed in Ninewa Governorate

Return movements

Drivers for returns

According to the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Return Index, between 2020 and 2022 around 82,500 displaced individuals returned to their AoOs in Ninewa.¹¹ Through the ReDS assessments, it was possible to identify common drivers and impacts of returns across the assessed sub-districts. The most commonly reported pull factor was the perception of increased security in the AoOs, followed by nostalgia for previous life. As shown in Table 1, the perception of increased security was commonly stated by most of the interviewed KIs, except in Hatra and Zummar, where less than half of the KIs considered it as a main driver for returns. In these two areas, the most common reason was reportedly nostalgia for previous life. Family reunification has also been reported as a relevant driver.

Family reunification was considered a relevant pull factor, especially in Markaz al-Baaj, where it was considered the primary driver for return. Common also to other sub-districts, this practice shows the gradual return of households, as some of its members start returning to prepare the ground for the rest of the family's arrival from their area of displacement (AoDs).

Camp closure was reported as a driver primarily in 2020 and part of 2021, a period in which several IDP camps were either closed or consolidated by the authorities. As visible in maps 3 and 4, returns to areas of origin in Ninewa were more common from camp areas during 2020. In the following two years (map 4), it is observable how the number of camps reduced and that returns were also from non-camp areas, including farther governorates, such as Baghdad and Kirkuk.

Impact of returns

KIs reports on the impact of returning populations were sometimes different and contradictory even within the same location, potentially due to the different positions and points of view of interviewed KIs. Overall, findings revolve around the pressure that returns would put on the existing community, in terms of stability, and access to livelihoods and services.

KIs were mostly in agreement in several sub-districts that the reunification of families would bring more stability to the community, seeing the returning population as new life coming to the abandoned areas. This was mostly reported in Markaz al-Baaj, where almost 80% of the population was displaced since 2014.

"The return of the displaced households led to the return of life to the villages with the re-cultivation of lands"

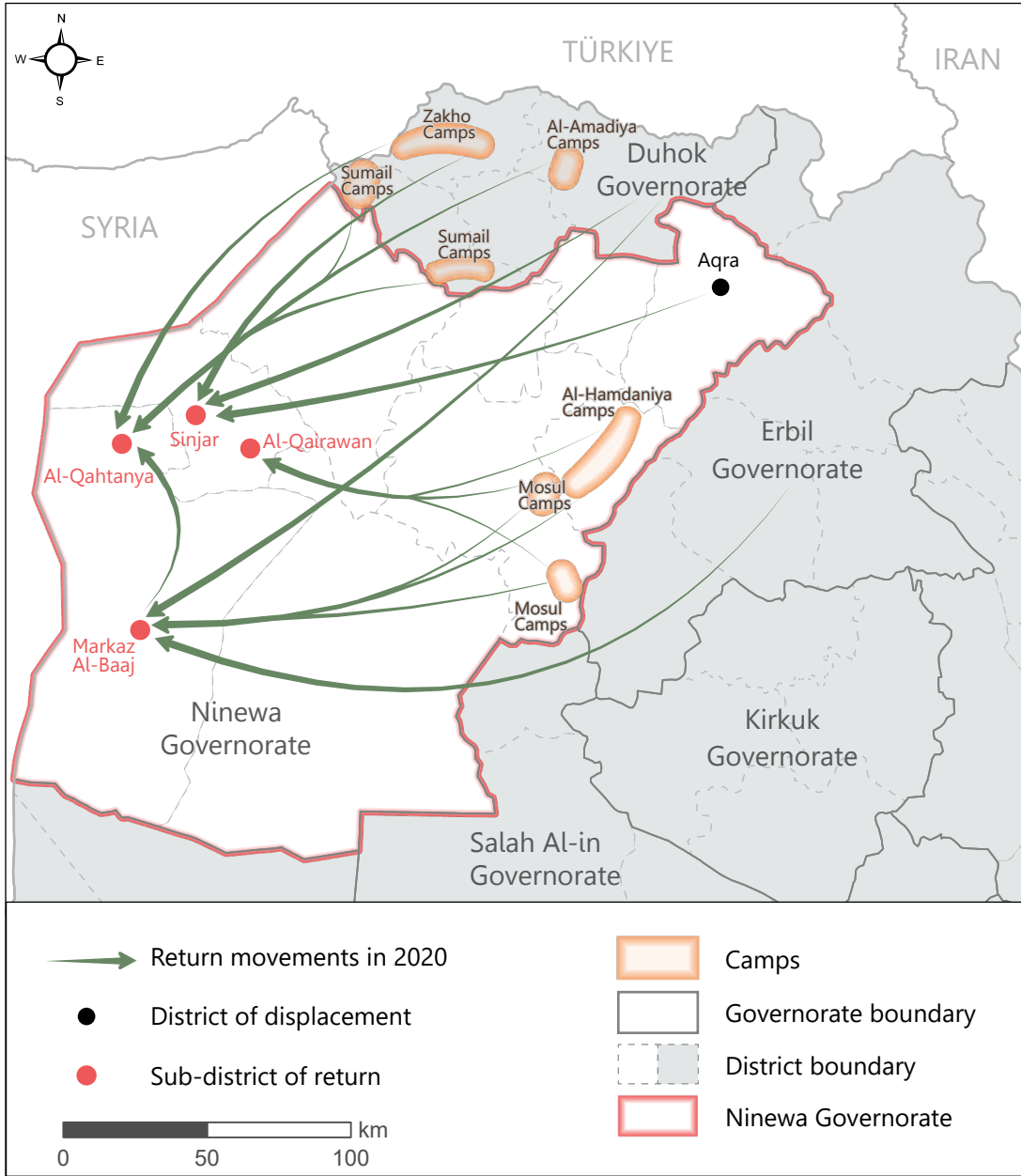
- Female Returnee KI from Markaz al-Baaj -

Job opportunities were usually perceived as increasing with the returning population. It was usually mentioned that lands in the sub-districts were left abandoned and needed people to cultivate them, as well as other livelihood sectors and public services needing reactivation. However, several barriers to accessing livelihoods and services were reported across all sub-districts (in detail on pages 6-8).

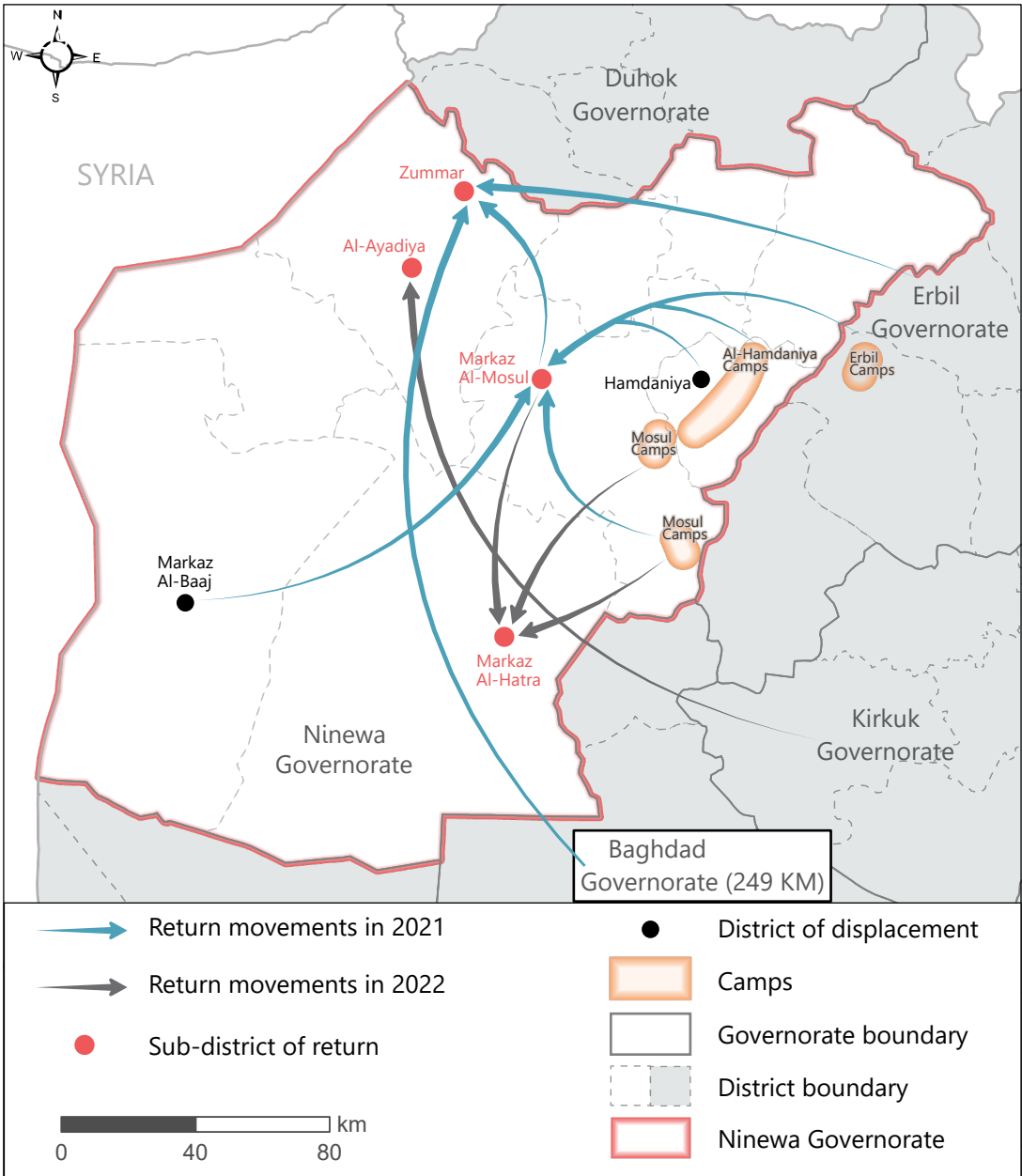
In Markaz Mosul and Markaz Sinjar, KIs also mentioned that job opportunities would decrease and competition among families in need of assistance would increase, as an effect of more people in the community. This can be understood by the presence of tensions within the communities and a higher number of people returning, most notably in Markaz Mosul.

Table 1. Drivers and impact of returns in sub-districts assessed in Ninewa Governorate, 2020-2022

| | 2020 | | | 2021 | | | 2022 | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | Markaz al-Baaj (16 KIs) | Qairawan (5 KIs) | Markaz Sinjar (11 KIs) | Markaz Mosul (14 KIs) | Qahtaniya (15 KIs) | Ayadiya (1 KI) | Markaz Hatra (14 KIs) | Zummar (11 KIs) |
| Drivers for returns | | | | | | | | |
| Increased security | 11 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 8 | - | 2 | 5 |
| Nostalgia | - | - | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 13 | 10 |
| Family reunification | 15 | 1 | - | - | 6 | - | 3 | 2 |
| Camp closure | 1 | 1 | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | - |
| Impact of returns | | | | | | | | |
| Stability/family reunification | 16 | 3 | 6 | - | 5 | - | 10 | 4 |
| Increased job opportunities | 5 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 12 | 3 |
| Decreased job opportunities | - | - | 5 | 8 | - | - | - | - |
| Increased number of HHs in need | - | - | 5 | 5 | - | - | - | - |



Map 3. Return movements to assessed sub-districts in Ninewa Governorate in 2020



Map 4. Return movements to assessed sub-districts in Ninewa Governorate in 2021-2022

Barriers to returns

Among the population who remained displaced from Ninewa, several barriers to return were reported in the assessed sub-districts at the time of data collection. The most common barriers were reportedly related to HLP matters, with almost all KIs reporting on housing damage being too severe for a sustainable return, together with household lacking property documents of the house previously inhabited in the AoOs.

Access to livelihoods and basic services in the AoOs reportedly posed a challenge to the population in displacement: lack of job opportunities and limited access to basic public services were reported through all the sub-districts as well. A few KIs also mentioned barriers related to safety and security; most notably fear of being perceived as ISIL-affiliated and perceptions of lack of security in the AoOs.

As shown in Table 2, KIs in different sub-districts were almost unanimously reporting on housing damage in AoOs being the most relevant barrier to return, and only in two sub-districts (Hatra and Zummar) did a higher proportion of KIs report that a lack of job opportunities rather than house damage as a barrier. Lack of property documents was mostly mentioned in Markaz Sinjar, while not owning a house in the AoO proved also to be a barrier in some sub-districts, most notably in Markaz al-Baaj.

It is also worth considering that in some cases conditions in AoDs were reportedly a more suitable option for IDPs, who either moved on from their past life and settled in the new area; or did not have enough appealing pull factors to return to their AoOs.

Across many sub-districts, the lack of job opportunities, both in the private and public sectors, was considered to be a relevant barrier to return. A similar pattern can be traced for limited access to public services, which was mentioned across most sub-districts, with the due exception of Markaz al-Baaj and Markaz Mosul, by at least half of the responding KIs. In al-Qairawan and Markaz Mosul sub-districts, it is noteworthy that limited access to public services was mentioned more frequently than the lack of job opportunities. This feature was often coupled with a reported lack of investments and projects of infrastructures and services rehabilitation. Also relevant, but not homogeneously mentioned, was limited access to medical treatment being considered a barrier by a few KIs.

"There are few [basic] services in the area; and households who return will put a strain on access to public water and electricity."

- Female SME KI in Zummar -

Table 2. Reported barriers to returns in sub-districts assessed in Ninewa Governorate, 2020-2022

| | 2020 | | | 2021 | | | 2022 | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | Markaz al-Baaj (29 KIs) | Qairawan (36 KIs) | Markaz Sinjar (44 KIs) | Markaz Mosul (42 KIs) | Qahtaniya (23 KIs) | Ayadiya (33 KIs) | Markaz Hatra (34 KIs) | Zummar (57 KIs) |
| Access to housing and housing rehabilitation | | | | | | | | |
| Housing damage | 27 | 30 | 38 | 39 | 21 | 31 | 23 | 53 |
| Lack of property documents | 2 | - | 10 | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| House rented in AoOs | 7 | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - |
| Access to livelihoods and basic public services | | | | | | | | |
| Lack of job opportunities | 19 | 14 | 8 | 6 | 20 | 29 | 24 | 54 |
| Limited access to basic public services | 7 | 25 | 16 | 7 | 16 | 22 | 17 | 40 |
| Limited access to medical treatment | - | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | - | 2 | - |
| Access to safety and security | | | | | | | | |
| Fear of being perceived ISIL affiliated | 3 | - | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Security concerns in AoOs | 1 | - | 2 | 3 | 3 | - | . | - |

Primary community needs

The most commonly reported primary community need overall was **access to livelihoods (184/311 KIs)**. It was most notably reported in al-Ayadiya, especially due to the reported lack of job opportunities and high unemployment rates, which also reportedly caused the protracted displacement of households and individuals in their AoDs.

The second most commonly reported primary community need was **access to healthcare (154/311 KIs)**, denoting widespread difficulties in accessing basic services in all the assessed sub-districts. Reasons varied slightly in each sub-district, and in Markaz Sinjar, where it has been considered the first priority need, it was reportedly due to the lack of specialised medical staff.

Generally, reasons also included damaged infrastructures, lack of medicines and advanced medical machinery.

The third most commonly reported primary community need was **access to housing rehabilitation (147/311 KIs)**. Mostly reported in al-Qahtaniya and al-Ayadiya sub-districts, reflecting the issue already highlighted in the barriers to returns. In fact, together with house damage, KIs across sub-districts reported challenges in accessing compensation and rehabilitation, due mostly to the lack of government support and reconstruction projects.

Water also was reported as a crucial need, both about human consumption and irrigation.

Table 3. Reported primary community needs in sub-districts assessed in Ninewa Governorate, 2020-2022

| | 2020 | | | 2021 | | | 2022 | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | Markaz al-Baaj (38 KIs) | Qairawan (36 KIs) | Markaz Sinjar (44 KIs) | Markaz Mosul (42 KIs) | Qahtaniya (16 KIs) | Ayadiya (37 KIs) | Markaz Hatra (41 KIs) | Zummar (57 KIs) |
| Livelihoods | 28 | 20 | 11 | 18 | 9 | 28 | 28 | 42 |
| Healthcare | 14 | 22 | 37 | 16 | 6 | 24 | 11 | 24 |
| Housing rehabilitation | 18 | 17 | 18 | 9 | 12 | 27 | 15 | 31 |
| Water | 25 | 8 | 17 | 12 | 5 | 15 | 14 | 14 |
| Education | 5 | 8 | 18 | 13 | 1 | 5 | 17 | 14 |
| Electricity | 11 | 8 | 17 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Food | 2 | 7 | 1 | 19 | 1 | 1 | - | - |

Access to livelihoods

Access to livelihoods has reportedly been the second barrier for further returns after housing rehabilitation and the first community need, throughout almost all the assessed sub-districts. Interviewed KIs provided an overview of the different sectors in which livelihoods are available and potentially growing, and which are the most common livelihoods-related barriers and coping strategies.

Available livelihood sectors of interest¹²

The most common livelihood sector in the assessed sub-districts in Ninewa was reportedly agriculture, followed by the construction and health sectors. Considering that most of the sub-districts are also rural areas, agriculture usually represented the main form of employment and income. Complementarily, construction was needed to both restore the damaged houses and infrastructures and to expand the existing ones.

In Zummar, all the KIs reported agriculture as the most available and appealing sector for the returning population. Returned households were believed to bring a positive impact in revitalizing the sector. In al-Ayadiya and Markaz Mosul as well, there were reportedly more jobs available in the agriculture sector, which

was likely to grow and attract more returning population.

Construction was perceived to be the main livelihood sector in Markaz Hatra and al-Qahtaniya; since the sector reportedly had not been affected the decrease in job opportunities but rather was impacted positively by the returns and the resulting reconstruction efforts in the sub-districts.

The health sector, both public and private, appears to be one of the main available sectors, despite the lack of health facilities, staff and infrastructures reported in most of the sub-districts. Al-Qahtaniya and Zummar were the sub-districts where the largest number of KIs reported job availability in the health sector.

In contrast, findings in Markaz Sinjar suggest education as the most available livelihood sector, followed by finance. However, for this location, almost half of interviewed KIs were not aware of which sectors were available at the time of data collection.

"The return of the displaced households led to the return of life to the villages with the re-cultivation of lands"

- Female Returnee KI in Zummar -

Barriers to access livelihoods¹³

Although the mentioned sectors were perceived to be available, several barriers were still reported by the KIs when asked about access to the mentioned livelihood sectors. All the sectors reportedly share one common denominator: lack of projects and financial support to successfully develop them.

In detail, concerning agriculture, the most reported barrier in the assessed sub-district was the lack of government support, which, coupled with the lack of financial resources to afford seeds, fertilizers and other materials, made cultivation of the available land impossible in some cases. Water scarcity and damaged irrigation systems were also mentioned in almost all the sub-districts, with KIs increasingly stressing the impact of climate change on the productive sectors in the later assessments. Additionally, in al-Ayadiya and Qahtaniya it was reported that lands were not accessible due to the high degree of contamination by explosive remnants of war (ERWs).

In construction, the main barrier reported in all sub-districts was the lack of rehabilitation and construction projects, negatively affecting the reconstruction in the sub-districts. This feature was considered part of the perceived lack of government support.

Lack of government jobs was the only reported barrier to accessing public employment, highlighted in al-Ayadiya, Markaz al-Hatra and Markaz Sinjar. The private sector also suffered from a lack of investments and compensation for damaged businesses. This issue was mostly highlighted in al-Ayadiya, Markaz Hatra and Zummar, where all small and medium activities were reportedly somewhat damaged during the conflict and were never able to access any compensation to restore their activities.

Also, the lack of factories was reportedly a barrier to enhancing the employment of the population and returning households. Additionally, road blockades and insecurity halted trade, negatively affecting commercial activities and goods provision, as most reported in Markaz Hatra and Zummar.

As coping mechanisms, only in Markaz Hatra, it was mentioned that individuals and households would move to another location to work. However, barriers to accessing livelihoods were considered a reason for households to remain in displacement.

Groups with less access to livelihoods

It was commonly perceived that all population groups faced challenges to accessing livelihoods in the different sub-districts. However, when asked if specific categories would be more vulnerable than others, KIs mostly mentioned older persons (except in Markaz al-Baaj) and persons with disabilities (except in Markaz al-Baaj and al-Qairawan). Female-headed households were mentioned only in half of the sub-districts (al-Qahtaniya, al-Qairawan, Markaz al-Baaj, Markaz Mosul).

IDPs in and from the community were reportedly the group most likely to face challenges in accessing livelihoods in almost all sub-districts, while returnees were reportedly challenged only in al-Qairawan, Markaz al-Baaj and Markaz Mosul.

"The lack of sufficient job opportunities, together with the return of the displaced households worsened the situation in al-Qahtaniya. Additional support projects are needed to serve the sub-district in the longer term."

- Male Returnee KI from Qahtaniya -

Access to healthcare

Healthcare was the second most reported primary community need and the public service which was most inaccessible in the assessed Ninewa sub-districts. The intensity of conflict in the governorate and the mass emigration from the various sub-districts reportedly caused an impoverishment of the quantity and quality of healthcare services provided.

Access barriers¹⁴

In all the assessed sub-districts, the main obstacles to accessing healthcare were reportedly a lack of staff and a lack of medications. In all the sub-districts, KIs have highlighted that even if the facilities were available in the subdistrict, they were not able to accommodate the needs of the community for the mentioned reasons. Together with those, lack of equipment was also reported to be crucial in all the sub-districts except in Markaz Mosul. By equipment, KIs mostly reported that machines and ambulances were missing, hindering the reach to the available health facilities. Additionally, destruction, lack of rehabilitation and lack of maintenance reportedly left the existing facilities and infrastructures in poor conditions.

In al-Ayadiya, al-Qahtaniya, Zummar and al-Qairawan, KIs reported on the complete lack of hospitals as well, mentioning that only smaller and unequipped public health facilities were available, together with private, more expensive clinics. Moreover, in al-Ayadiya and Zummar, the total absence of public health centres in smaller villages was reported, drastically reducing access for the population living in rural areas.

Only in al-Ayadiya was it mentioned that health facilities lacked maternity services. However, this could be underreported because almost all selected KIs were male, and may have lacked knowledge of the priorities and perception of the female population regarding healthcare needs.

Coping mechanisms

In all the assessed sub-districts, the most common coping mechanisms to access healthcare were to travel to larger centres to receive specialized medical treatment and/or resort to private and more expensive clinics. Most notably, in Markaz Mosul, KIs reported that households in rural areas had no choice but to travel to Mosul to find adequate treatment for their healthcare needs.

Additionally, in al-Ayadiya some KIs reported on households resorting to local pharmacies for treatment and medicine, despite them not being facilities equipped to deal with the different needs of the population. Also regarding al-Ayadiya, it was reported that to access healthcare services, some households preferred to remain in displacement. This appears to be generally in line with the barriers to return findings, where limited access to medical treatment was considered a reason not to return.

"There are no hospitals or clinics [...] dedicated to medical surgeries and care for pregnant women and children, and there are no services or medications for people with chronic diseases."

- Male community leader KI from al-Qairawan -

Access to housing rehabilitation and compensation

Reflecting house damage as the most mentioned barrier impeding returns, housing rehabilitation and compensation is reportedly crucial for ensuring a safe and dignified return for the displaced population. Being considered among the first primary community needs in Ninewa, it suggests at the same time the high level of destruction and the reported limited impact and reach of reconstruction projects.

Access to housing rehabilitation

In all the assessed sub-districts, except Zummar, KIs reported that reconstruction campaigns were either absent, delayed or only limited to specific areas, in some cases targeting selectively some locations while neglecting others. In half of the sub-districts, KIs specifically reported that the government was neglecting the area and there was a generalized lack of financial support.

In such cases, it was reported that when reconstruction projects were delayed or not available, some households did not have enough financial capacity to initiate reconstruction works on their own, resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as living in the damaged house, with high risk to their safety.

Access to compensation¹⁵

Where further questions about compensation were asked (al-Ayadiya, al-Qahtaniya, Markaz Hatra, Zummar), KIs reported similar situations across the sub-districts. The procedure that households had to undergo was described as long, complex and expensive, requiring much time and effort without the guarantee of actually receiving compensation. In almost all the sub-districts assessed, households could not access compensation because they lacked awareness of the process and/or legal support. Finally, KIs reported that in many cases compensation was not paid, allegedly for a lack of financial resources and their selective allocation.

Coping mechanisms

Remaining in displacement was the most commonly mentioned coping mechanism (al-Ayadiya, al-Qahtaniya, Zummar), in line with the main findings on barriers to return on page 5. In al-Ayadiya and Zummar, KIs reported that households resorted to paying bribes to obtain access to housing rehabilitation and/or compensation and to sharing a shelter with multiple households. While in Markaz Sinjar, illegal occupation was reported as a coping mechanism.

Access to public services

Reflecting primary community needs, healthcare was reportedly the most challenging public service to access in Ninewa's assessed sub-districts. As described on page 7, accessing healthcare and medical treatment was reportedly complicated or impossible according to KIs across the various sub-districts.

However, the destruction caused by war and the lengthy reconstruction process; caused dysfunctions and complicated the population's access to public services in general. In table 4 it is observable in more detail how water was reported as a crucial missing service. Water services were intended both for human consumption and agriculture and their limited availability is a consequence of both poor infrastructure and climate change (detailed on page 9).

Education also appeared to be a neglected service in some areas, especially in al-Qahtaniya and al-Ayadiya. As for healthcare facilities, KIs reported that schools were damaged during the

conflict and not repaired or maintained, prolonging the interruption of children's education and/or exposing them to safety hazards in buildings that are not suitable or equipped for their purpose. Moreover, lack of staff was also mentioned as a major barrier to accessing education services.

Electricity was only mentioned in Zummar as a key missing public service, although power cuts and lack of public electricity provision were generally widespread in the governorate. However, in this specific case, some KIs reported on the selective distribution of electricity.

"Infrastructure rehabilitation will provide the services and facilities necessary for the economy to function, thus contributing to the development of the region, supporting society and facilitating the production of basic social goods and services"

- Male IDP KI in al-Qairawan -

Table 4. Public services to which access was reportedly most challenging in sub-districts assessed in Ninewa, 2020-2022

| | 2020 | | | 2021 | | | 2022 | |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | Markaz al-Baaj (3 KIs) | Qairawan (15 KIs) | Markaz Sinjar (22 KIs) | Mosul (4 KIs) | Qahtaniya (12 KIs) | Ayadiya (37 KIs) | Markaz Hatra (41 KIs) | Zummar (57 KIs) |
| Healthcare | - | 15 | 22 | 4 | 9 | 36 | 34 | 49 |
| Water | 1 | 13 | 20 | 4 | 9 | 33 | 25 | 28 |
| Education | - | 1 | 1 | - | 9 | 32 | 19 | 28 |
| Electricity | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 16 |

Climate change

The effects of climate change in Ninewa reflect the general trend observable in Iraq overall. Drought and increasing temperatures caused widespread water scarcity that affected thousands of households' daily life and livelihoods. Water used for farming, industrial and domestic purposes became hard to access, with consequences, most notably crop failure and displacement.¹⁶

Water scarcity

In Ninewa, REACH findings in the assessed sub-districts align with the studies and reports on the matter by other agencies and organizations, as interviewed KIs considered water as the second most challenging public service to access and among the primary community needs. As highlighted by IOM, durable solutions are undermined by these phenomena, as in 2022 around "1,800 newly returned IDPs were forced into secondary displacement due to drought and associated crop failure."¹⁷

The agriculture sector was negatively affected as reported by KIs in half of the sub-districts assessed: water available for irrigation was not meeting the demand and was not sufficient for livestock farming. Also, considering domestic use, in all the sub-districts assessed, water was reported to be insufficient in quantity and of bad quality, often being unsuitable for human consumption.

In addition to water scarcity, the commonalities between the lack of access to water for irrigation and domestic use were reportedly the bad conditions of infrastructure and the lack of targeted renovation plans that could improve the public network, and minimize the amounts of non-revenue water.¹⁸

Coping mechanisms

KIs in all sub-districts except Markaz Al-Baaj, mentioned that households usually resorted to bottled water as an alternative to drinking tap water, either because it was not available or not safe to drink. This was reportedly having a bad effect on households' finances as, due to the high demand, prices of bottled water and private water services increased. In more than half of the assessed sub-districts, KIs stressed private trucked water was used to cope with the failing public network.

Another frequently reported strategy was digging illegal wells, mentioned in more than half of the sub-districts. This is a widespread practice, with known negative effects on groundwater reserves and the quality of water.¹⁹ In Markaz Hatra sub-district illegal connections to the public network were reported, also a common practice throughout the country.²⁰

Integration and social cohesion

Safety and security

In the sub-districts assessed, the perception of safety and security were homogenous, with KIs in all sub-districts mentioning that different population groups were feeling safe or very safe in the sub-districts. However, in Markaz Sinjar, some KIs pointed out that it depended on the population group and, due to the presence of armed groups at the time of data collection, not everyone felt safe in the location.

Feeling welcome and integrated

Findings in this section were mostly homogenous, with KIs in all sub-districts reporting that the different population groups felt either "somewhat welcome", "welcome" or "very welcome", depending on the location and population group.

KIs reported members of their group to feel welcome and integrated into their community of origin, while IDP KIs - both in the community and from the community - reported members of their group feeling less welcome and integrated, mostly due to mistrust, discrimination or lack of interest.

Disputes

As in the previous sections, in most of the sub-districts, KIs reported the absence of disputes both within the community and with neighbouring communities. However, in Zummar, Markaz Al-Baaj and Markaz Sinjar, some disputes were reported, mostly due to ethnic rivalries, perceived affiliation to ISIL and inherited older disputes between parts of the community. It is worth noting that for this question a high rate of KIs refused to answer, therefore, findings might not reflect the reality on the ground.

Table 5. Access to participation in decision making process in sub-districts assessed in Ninewa Governorate, 2020-2022

| | 2020 | | | 2021 | | | 2022 | |
|---|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | Markaz Al-Baaj (0 KIs) | Qairawan (0 KIs) | Markaz Sinjar (44 KIs) | Mosul (42 KIs) | Qahtaniya (15 KIs) | Ayadiya (22 KI) | Markaz Hatra (27 KIs) | Zummar (41 KIs) |
| Access to participation in decision making processes | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | - | - | 22 | - | 11 | 20 | 21 | 30 |
| No | - | - | - | 15 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| Barriers to participation | | | | | | | | |
| Lack of interest | - | - | - | 10 | - | - | - | - |
| Neglected | - | - | - | 7 | - | - | - | - |

Interaction among population groups

Also concerning the interaction between different groups in the community, KIs in all assessed sub-districts reported that it was happening smoothly, improving the social cohesion in the sub-district. However, most notably in Markaz Al-Baaj and Markaz Sinjar, KIs also reported that IDPs and returnees were more isolated in comparison to the host community. Among the mentioned reasons, the most common ones were fear, discrimination, belonging to different ethnic groups and alleged affiliation with ISIL.

Access to participation in the decision-making process²¹

As shown in Table 5, in the sub-district where the question was posed, there is a large consensus from KIs about the fact that different population groups were involved at some level in the decision-making processes in the area. In Markaz al-Hatra and al-Ayadiya, a higher proportion is observable, because both returnee KIs and IDP KIs in the community all reported that households of those groups were involved or participated in the decision-making process. KIs reporting households not being involved mostly mentioned that IDPs in and/or from the community were not involved, more rarely mentioning also returnees.

Only in Markaz Mosul did KIs report that the exclusion from the decision-making process in the area was mostly due to a lack of interest by the population and partially also due to neglect by the authorities.

Improving social cohesion

In each sub-district, KIs suggested strategies or initiatives to advocate for improved social cohesion in their location. Most of the suggestions revolved around improvements in livelihoods, public services and security sectors, suggesting that reconstruction projects would bring more stability and harmony within the community. In all sub-districts, seminars, awareness sessions and conferences about conflict resolution, tolerance, coexistence and acceptance of differences were highly encouraged as well as social events that could bring together the different groups living in the same community.

"The community is gentle and welcoming, and the most important priority for the households is to keep the stability in the sub-district."

- Male Community Leader KI in al-Qahtaniya -

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

Endnotes

1 [IOM DTM Masterlist](#), Ninewa Governorate, Round 5, December 2022

2 [IOM DTM Displacement Index Dashboard](#) and [IOM DTM Return Index Dashboard](#)

3 Severity is calculated in the IOM DTM Return Index with 16 indicators related to livelihoods and basic services and safety perceptions and social cohesion.

4 [IOM DTM Return Index](#), Salah al-Din Governorate, Round 17, December 2022

5 Information obtained from the RWG meetings and RWG focal point at governorate level.

6 [IOM DTM Return Index](#), Diyala Governorate, Round 17, December 2022

7 [IOM DTM Masterlist Report](#) 127, July-September 2022

8 Full methodology of the rapid assessment on Returns and Durable Solutions (ReDS) available in the [Terms of Reference](#), REACH Initiative, April 2021

9 All the ReDS publications are available at REACH Initiative Resource Centre, below the list of publications related to Ninewa Governorate:

- [Markaz Sinjar sub-district profile](#), November 2020
- [Markaz al-Baaj sub-district profile](#), June 2020
- [Al-Qairawan sub-district profile](#), August 2020
- [Markaz Mosul sub-district profile](#), March, 2021
- [Al-Qahtaniya sub-district profile](#), August 2021
- [Al-Ayadiya sub-district profile](#), November 2021
- [Markaz Hatra sub-district profile](#), February 2022
- [Zummar sub-district profile](#), August 2022

10 Findings are based on the perceptions of the 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.

11 [IOM DTM Return Index](#), Ninewa Governorate, Round 10-16, September 2020, September 2022

12 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz al-Baaj and al-Qairawan.

13 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz al-Baaj, al-Qairawan, Markaz Mosul and Markaz Sinjar.

14 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz al-Baaj and al-Qairawan.

15 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz al-Baaj, al-Qairawan, Markaz Mosul and Markaz Sinjar.

16 IOM Iraq, [Migration, Environment, and Climate Change in Iraq](#), 2022

17 IOM Iraq, [Migration, Environment, and Climate Change in Iraq](#), 2022, pag. 15

18 Non-revenue water is intended as water that has been produced and it does not reach its intended destination, in this case the consumers, either for physical losses (e.g. leaks) or apparent losses (e.g. theft, metering inaccuracy).

19 Dizayee, R. (2018). Effects of Illegal Wells on Groundwater Level in the Central Sub-basin, Erbil Basin, Erbil, Kurdistan Region-Iraq. *American Academic Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, and Sciences*, 39(1), 244-249. Retrieved from https://asrjetsjournal.org/index.php/American_Scientific_Journal/article/view/3865

20 Human Rights Watch, Basra is Thirsty, Iraq's Failure to Manage Water Crisis, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/iraq0719_web.pdf

21 For this section, the question was not asked in Markaz al-Baaj and al-Qairawan.