

Transition Brief

Findings from the Cross-Cutting Needs Assessment (CCNA)

July 2024 | IRAQ

Context & Rationale

Iraq has undergone significant shift over the past decade, transitioning from an acute emergency to a complex context where sustainable development and stabilisation goals intertwine with ongoing humanitarian needs. The country continues to grapple with protracted internal displacement, strained social cohesion, and incomplete rehabilitation of housing and essential services. Political instability remains a pervasive challenge in Iraq, affecting governance, security, and service delivery. This instability complicates efforts to address humanitarian needs effectively, as insecurity hampers humanitarian access and impedes sustainable development initiatives. Despite improvements in some areas, Iraq still faces daunting humanitarian challenges. Despite the cessation of large-scale conflict in Iraq in 2017, as of December 2023, there remains 1.1 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across 18 governorates and 104 districts. The highest proportion of IDPs are located in Ninewa, Dohuk, and Erbil. Efforts to support returns to Area of Origin (AoO) have been successful with 4.8 million IDPs returning, according to IOM DTM¹. The remaining 1.1 million IDPs are situated in in-camp and out-of-camp settings, including informal Sites.²

The displaced populations are considered the most vulnerable with limited prospects for durable solutions due to inadequate infrastructure, essential services, and livelihood opportunities in AoO. Social tensions further complicate efforts to facilitate safe and sustainable returns. The deactivation of the humanitarian cluster system in Iraq in 2022 has posed challenges by reducing the structured coordination mechanisms among humanitarian actors. This has increased the necessity for improved cooperation and coordination between government entities, international organisations, and NGOs to effectively address ongoing humanitarian needs. The significant decrease in funding from major institutional donors, led to gaps in addressing critical humanitarian needs. This funding shortfall has necessitated prioritisation of interventions, leaving some vulnerable populations underserved and exacerbating existing challenges such as insufficient provision of basic services, infrastructure rehabilitation hindering durable solutions, and limited livelihood opportunities.

Cross-Cutting Needs Assessment (CCNA) Overview

The Cross-Cutting Needs Assessment (CCNA) is a continuation of the Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment X (MCNA), conducted to inform the humanitarian community on the living conditions, multisectoral needs, access to services, and movement intentions of displaced (In-Camp and Out-of-Camp) and returnee HHs. The assessment was conducted in close coordination with REACH's partners in the Protection Consortium of Iraq³ (PCI), DRC, NRC, and IRC, as well as strategic actors such as WFP, IOM, and other UN agencies. As the context in Iraq continues to change, the CCNA intends to ascertain how the transition and the evolving context have affected the multi-sectoral needs of displacement-affected HHs compared to MCNA X (conducted in 2022). Concerns of deterioration of resilience without the presence and programming of humanitarian actors were central in the creation of the survey tools. Limitations of the assessment include:

- Reliance on IDP and returnee HHs ability to self report on key indicators, and therefore certain biases may exist within the findings. Some indicators may be under- or over-reported due to the subjective perceptions of the respondents.
- Since data collection was conducted between July and November, the timing of the HH survey may lead to seasonality differences impacting the comparability of the collected data, especially regarding NFI and WASH needs.

¹IOM DTM, January 2024

²ibid

³The Protection Consortium of Iraq is an ECHO funded consortium led by NRC focusing on the lingering protection needs.

KEY MESSAGES

98.5%

of HHs reported an Acceptable Food Consumption Score (FCS)

Out-of-camp and returnee HHs from Al-Rutba reported the lowest rates of 'acceptable' FCS at 60% and 42%, respectively.

95%

of HHs stated no specific location where women and girls felt unsafe

'Markets' were reported as unsafe locations by 24% of returnee HHs in Al-Rutba and 21% of out-of-camp HHs in Daquq.

95%

of in-camp and out-of-camp HHs reported intending to remain in their location for the next 12 months

Al-Kadhmiyah out-of-camp and Hasansham U2 HHs reported the lowest proportion of intentions to remain at 78% and 80%, respectively

Methodology

Between July 15th and November 1st, REACH collected 9,977 representative HH surveys from in-camp IDPs, out-of-camp IDPs, and returnee communities across 55 districts in 13 governorates. Data was collected at HH level through face-to-face interviews conducted by enumerators. A confidence level of 90% and margin of error of 10% for out-of-camp and returnee HHs for districts hosting a minimum of 200 HHs of the target population. For in-camp, the confidence level was 95% with a 10% margin of error. Sampling was completed using population figures from IOM DTM Master List and adjusted to align with OCHA-defined administrative boundaries. For further details, please see the [CCNA](#) and [Camp Profiling](#) ToRs.

Durable Solutions

The most commonly reported daytime movement restriction, reported by HHs in the 30 days prior to data collection, was the requirement to show ID documentations to civilian authorities or security actors. This was reported at 7%, reduction of 6% from last year, with higher levels seen amongst in-camp HHs. All types of movement restrictions (documents, physical barriers, clearance requirements, time restrictions) reduced compared to 2022 with the largest reduction displayed for document and physical barrier (reducing 6%).

41% of HHs reported not having valid documentation indicating land tenure or rental agreement in their AoO or Area of Displacement (AoD). The highest proportion was seen amongst the in-camp population at 70%, followed by out-of-camp HHs at 50%, and finally, returnee HHs at 35%. Amongst the returnee populations, the districts that expressed the highest proportion of not having valid documentation indicating land tenure or rental agreement were Al-Rutba (86%), Al-Hatra (74%), and Al-Shikhan (71%).

In terms of HHs reporting that the property that they currently live in, or own elsewhere, is under any kind of dispute (contested ownership), out-of-camp had the highest proportion at 17%, compared to 7% of in-camp and 6% of returnee HHs. Out-of-camp districts revealed the highest prevalence were Halabcha and Kalar at 71%.

Reasons to remain in current Location:

	In-camp	OoC
House in AoO is damaged/destroyed	52%	28%
Lack of livelihoods in AoO	33%	29%
Fear associated with returning to AoO	26%	25%

Compared to last year, the findings showed an increase amongst in-camp populations in the proportion of HHs reporting 'house in AoO is damaged/destroyed' (+12%) and 'lack of livelihoods in AoO' (+11%) as a reason for not intending to return home. The proportion of those reporting 'fear associated with returning to AoO' saw a slight decrease (3%) amongst in-camp HHs as a reason to not return.

Amongst the in-camp HHs, Bersive 1 (71%), Kabarto 1 (70%), and Sheikhhan (67%) displayed the highest proportion of reporting 'damaged/destroyed housing in AoO' as a reason for not intending to return.

Compared to the 2022 MCNA X, there was a decrease in the proportion of HHs reporting 'house in AoO is damaged/destroyed' (-1%), 'lack of livelihoods in AoO' (-7%), and 'fear associated with returning to AoO' (-7%). Findings revealed that 'damaged/destroyed housing in AoO' was most commonly selected reason for not intending to return for the out-of-camp districts of Dibis (55%), Tooz Khurmato (53%), and Telafar (50%).

Reasons to return to Areas of Origin:

	In-camp	OoC
Stable security situation AoO	33%	56%
Livelihoods available AoO	29%	32%
Emotional desire to return	58%	18%

1% of in-camp (72 HHs) and out-of-camp (121 HHs) HHs reporting that their movement intention for the 12 months after data collection was to return to their AoO.

In-camp HHs reported an increase in the proportion of HHs stating 'emotional desire' (+26%) to become the most reported reason for intending to return. The second response that reported a large increase was 'other family/community members have returned' (+18%) which is tied as the fourth most prevalent response with 'limited livelihoods available in AoD' (+10%) at 26%.

Out-of-camp HHs mostly saw improvements with almost all responses reporting lower proportions than the previous year. The only responses showing an increase were 'do not feel safe in AoD' (+7% to 10%), 'necessary to secure HLP' (+5% to 8%), and 'family member released from detention' (+2% to 2%).

4% of in-camp and 9% of out-of-camp HHs reported their HHs had attempted to return to their AoO, but were displaced again in the 12 months prior to data collection.

In-camp HHs were asked a follow-up question to determine the barriers to going back/remaining in their Area of Origin.

Lack of livelihoods in AoO	45%	
Fear associated with returning to AoO	29%	
House in AoO is damaged/Destroyed	25%	

In-camp HHs that reported that their movement intention to remain in their current location or undecided were asked if they, one day, wish to return to their AoO. 62% of HHs reported 'yes', this was most reported in Qoratu, Ashti, and Tazade at 82%. Notably, these camps have closed in the months following data collection.

In-camps HHs were asked about the assistance provided to returnees in their AoO:

None	42%	
Cash assistance	19%	
Shelter reconstruction	18%	
Food assistance	12%	
Livelihoods/IGA	7%	
NFI distribution	7%	

Of the HHs that reported assistance was being provided in their AoO, 95% stated that assistance was being provided by humanitarian actors and 13% reported local authorities were providing assistance.

Durable Solutions (continued)

To determine long term intentions of in-camp HHs, the CCNA included a series of questions on the AoO.

Availability of services:



Relevant and accessible livelihoods opportunities available:



Amongst in-camp and out-of-camp HHs, 75% reported intention to integrate into their AoD 12 months beyond data collection. Findings indicate that intention to integrate were higher amongst in-camp HHs, particularly in Tazade (100% - camp now closed), Ashti (86% - camp now closed), and Arbat (86%).⁵ Out-of-camp district which reported this in higher proportions were Al-Hatra (100%), Chamchamal (99%), and Kalar (99%).

All surveyed population groups (in-camp, out-of-camp, and Returnees) were asked about their perceived ability to play a role in local decision-making, returnee HHs reported at the highest proportion at 65%, followed by out-of-camp at 57%, and in-camp at 41%. Furthermore, HHs were asked about HH members' (18+) eligibility and ability to vote in local or national political elections, across the three population groups, 93% reported they were able to vote.

Livelihoods

Across all 3 population groups, livelihoods indicators convey that there is, to a certain extent, stabilization in relation to livelihoods and economic resilience of displacement affected HHs.

Main food source in the 7 days prior to data collection, by % of HHs

Population group	Own cash		PDS card		Credit	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
In-camp	50%	54%	8%	6%	38%	27%
Out-of-camp	50%	63%	25%	6%	23%	26%
Returnee	55%	64%	22%	12%	21%	22%

Each population group reported decreases in use of 'own cash' for sourcing food, along with increases in PDS. The in-camp population was the only group to report increased reliance in sourcing food on credit, from 11% to 38%. This is an indication of reduced economic resilience compared to the other populations surveyed.

Primary sources of income, by % of HHs⁴

Population group	Irregular employment		Regular employment		Loans/debt	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
In-camp	52%	58%	24%	23%	56%	45%
Out-of-camp	60%	68%	21%	17%	22%	31%
Returnee	53%	58%	26%	23%	11%	10%

'Irregular employment', 'loans/debt' and 'regular employment' remained the most prevalent responses for livelihood types. A slight increase was seen in out-of-camp and returnee HHs for 'regular employment' and a decrease in 'irregular employment'. The in-camp HHs also reported a decrease in 'irregular employment' with an 11% increase in reliance on 'loans/debts' as their primary income source.

Employment barriers reported by HHs with at least one adult member unemployed - Increased competition/not enough jobs:



'Increased competition/not enough jobs' was the most reported barrier to employment, reported by 82% of assessed HHs. Although, returnee HHs findings reveal 'lack of personal connections' (41%), 'lack of jobs for women' (34%), and 'only low-skilled or paid jobs available' in higher proportion compared to out-of-camp and in-camp HHs. Additionally, the option 'underqualified for available jobs' was more prevalent amongst out-of-camp (20%) and in-camp (17%) compared to returnee HHs (10%).

All population groups reported reduced use of livelihood coping strategies, indicating improved economic resilience. However, the lowest improvement were seen amongst in-camp populations which remain the most vulnerable to economic shocks. The most prevalent response was 'borrowed money from relatives or friends' at 45%. The most reported coping strategy that HHs reported as exhausted was 'sold HH assets' at 12%. In-camp HHs reported this in a higher proportion at 26%.

In-camp HHs experienced the largest decrease in monthly income, decreasing from 374,967 IQD to 300,219 IQD. This reduction could potentially be attributed to delay in KRG government and public sector workers' salaries.⁶ Out-of-camp and returnee HHs saw minimal income variation, with out-of-camp HHs reporting 13,000 IQD reduction, and returnees a 16,351 IQD increase compared to last year.

⁴ The remaining HHs chose "gift of food from family" and "with cash assistance"

⁵ Following the completion of data collection, which ended on November 1st, three of the surveyed camps in Sulaymaniyah were closed. Qoratu camp closed in November 2023, Arbat IDP camp closed in December 2023, and Tazade closed in March 2024

⁶ 'KRG council urges federal government to permanently resolve salary issues for Kurdistan's public sector workers' - Kurdistan Regional Government

Protection

Housing, Land and Property (HLP):

41% of HHs reported not having valid documentation indicating land tenure or rental agreement in their AoO or AoD. This was reported in highest proportion amongst the in-camp population at 70%, followed by out-of-camp HHs at 50%, and finally, returnee HHs at 35%. Amongst the returnee populations, the districts that reported the highest proportion of not having valid documentation indicating land tenure or rental agreement were Al-Rutba (86%), Al-Hatra (74%), and Al-Shikhan (71%).

Across the three population groups, 61% of HHs reported that their HLP was damaged/destroyed after 2014, of that 61%, 74% reported being aware of the government compensation scheme for damaged HLP. 62% of those that were aware of the compensation scheme applied for compensation, with 13% receiving cash from their application.

In terms of HHs reporting that the property that they currently live in, or own elsewhere, is under any kind of dispute (contested ownership), out-of-camp reported the highest proportion at 17%, compared to 7% of in-camp and 6% of returnee HHs. Out-of-camp districts reporting the highest prevalence were Halabcha and Kalar at 71%.

7% of out-of-camp and 3% of returnee HHs reported fearing eviction at the time of data collection. The most commonly stated reason was 'lack of funds to pay rental costs' at 37% and 'request to vacate from owner of building/land' at 27%.

Proportion of HHs reporting at least one member does not possess at least one of the following documents:

Civil documents	In-camp	OoC	Returnee
Valid PDS (ration) card	7%	3%	1%
National/unified ID card – Individual 18+	3%	3%	1%
National/unified ID card – Individuals 18-	3%	5%	1%
Nationality certificate – Individuals 18+	9%	6%	1%
Nationality certificate – Individuals 18-	21%	14%	6%
Birth certificate – Individuals 18-	6%	3%	1%

Nationality certificate for individuals under 18 years of age showed the lowest rates of proportion across all surveyed groups. Overall, returnee HHs reported the lowest rates of missing civil documentation.

In terms of civil documentation, possession of all forms of documentation are presenting figures above 90%. The CCNA did not incorporate questions to determine the scale or severity of complex cases in relation to missing civil documentation. The reasons reported for missing civil documentation included: 'have not tried to obtain/renew documentation' (44%), 'cost too high' (31%), and 'length/complexity of process' (15%).

In terms of specific locations where women and/or girls felt unsafe, as reported by HHs, 97% of HHs reported there were no locations where women and girls felt unsafe. The lowest proportion reported was out-of-camp HHs reported 94%, followed by returnees at 97%, and in-camp at 100%. Of the out-of-camp HHs that reported areas as unsafe, 3% reported 'markets', and 'social areas' and 'way to work' were both reported at 2%.

3% of school-aged children were reportedly engaged in work (556). The gender split of the children reportedly engaged in work:



Of the HHs that reported having a least one school-aged child engaged in labor, each population group reported a different work type as most prevalent. Out-of-camp reported 'non-structured' (selling in bazaar or traffic) at 57%, returnees reported 'structured' (serving in shop, restaurant) at 43%, and in-camp reported 'family work' (sewing, farming) at 64% as the most prevalent work type.

The most commonly reported daytime movement restriction, reported by HHs in the 30 days prior to data collection, was requirement to show ID documentations to civilian authorities or security actors. This was reported at 7%, reduction of 6% from last year, with higher levels reported amongst in-camp HHs. All types of movement restrictions (documents, physical barriers, clearance, time restrictions) reduced with the largest reduction seen for document and physical barrier (reducing 6%).

Safety Concerns in Area of Origin - In-Camp Survey only:

The top reported safety concerns regarding the AoO for in-camp HHs showed little change from last year with 'fear of armed or security actors' at 49% (2% reduction), 'fear of extremist groups' at 36% (10% reduction), and 'security incidents involved armed or security actors' at 28% (8% reduction). For all categories, HHs reporting their AoO as Sinjar reported higher proportion compared to the group average.

	Sinjar	Al-Baaj	Al Mosul
Fear Armed/Security	54%	43%	31%
Fear Extremist Group	42%	34%	13%
Security Incidents	32%	27%	9%

⁷ A concern that must be taken into consideration is 'Social Desirability Bias' - the tendency of respondents to give answers that are deemed socially acceptable - make it difficult to guarantee the reliability of the Unsafe Areas and Child Protection indicators.

Food Security

Comparative Food Consumption Score (FCS) across population groups:⁸

FCS	In-camp	Out-of-camp	Returnee	Total
2023	99%	99%	98%	98.5%
2022	95%	93%	98%	95%

Amongst in-camp and out-of-camp HHs, an increase in acceptable Food Consumption Score was seen. Although there was no improvement from the returnee HHs, the total population average is now 98.5%. Amongst the in-camp HHs, improvements were seen in all camps and in 2023, there were no in-camp HHs reporting poor FCS. While out-of-camp and returnee HHs also showed an improvement, Al-Rutba reported a degradation for both groups. Out-of-camp HHs reported acceptable FCS at 60% (31% reduction) and Returnee HHs reported 42% (51% reduction). Notably, no HHs in Al-Rubta reported a Poor FCS category in 2022, but it was reported for 12% of out-of-camp and 32% of returnees.

The most reported Reduced Coping Strategy reported in the 7 days prior to data collection was 'relied on less preferred and less expensive food' at 47%, followed by 'reduced portion size of meals' at 20%.

In terms of HHs reporting 'no or little hunger' in the 30 days prior to data collection, all population groups saw an increase.

HHs	In-camp	Out-of-camp	Returnee	Total
2023	99%	97%	98%	98%
2022	95%	93%	98%	97%

While the total average conveys positive findings, certain districts report the lowest rates of 'no or little hunger'. Notably, Sinjar and Al-Rutba reported the lowest proportions for out-of-camp and returnee HHs. Amongst in-camp HHs, the lowest rates were reported in Khazer M1 (91%), Hasansham U3 (92%), and Hasansham U2 (94%).

Food was the largest frequent expenditure for all population groups, accounting for 66% of in-camp HHs monthly income, 37% of out-of-camp, and 33% of returnees.

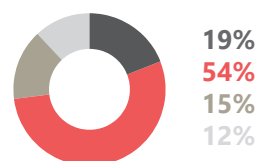
Shelter

Shelter was in the top 3 self-reported priority needs at 40%, below livelihoods at 62%. Shelter was reported in higher proportion amongst out-of-camp HHs at 62%, followed by in-camp and returnees HHs at 36% and 35%, respectively. Out-of-camp HHs in Kalar (100%), Dokan (98%), and Halalcha (91%) reported shelter as a priority need in the highest proportions.

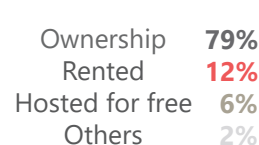
The shelter type most selected by out-of-camp and returnee HHs was 'apartment/house in good condition' at 68% and 84%, respectively. Tents was the most prevalent shelter type amongst In-Camp HHs at 58%.

Occupancy arrangement by % of HHs:

Out-of-camp



Returnee



Healthcare

In terms of difficulties when accessing health services, the most reported issue across all groups was 'high cost' at 51%, the same as the previous year which was at 59%. In-camp HHs reported 'high costs' as a barrier in higher proportions (81%) compared to out-of-camp (57%), and returnees (45%). Compared to the previous year, out-of-camp and returnee HHs saw a reduction in the proportion of HHs reporting 'high cost' as a barrier to access health services. Out-of-camp reduced 25% and returnees reduced 35%. In-camp HHs reduced 3%, but remains the population group with the highest healthcare needs.

Distance to hospitals (minutes):

While the average time required to a functional hospital was 26 minutes, there were certain locations that reported increased time needed to reach a hospital.

In-camp	Out-of-camp	Returnee
32 minutes	24 minutes	26 minutes

Districts/camps longest average distance from hospital:

#	In-camp	Out-of-camp	Returnee
1	Hasansham U2 48 minutes	Telafar 94 minutes	Al Hatra 82 minutes
2	Dawoudia 47 minutes	Al Hatra 78 minutes	Al Mahmoudiya 48 minutes
3	Hasansham U3 46 minutes	Dibis 40 minutes	Al Kadhmiyah 45 minutes

23% of HHs reported that at least one member of their HHs had been pregnant and given birth in the 2 years prior to data collection. 92% of which gave birth in a hospital, 5% in a primary healthcare centre/clinic, and 3% at home.

⁸ A FCS score of 0-28 is considered as "poor", 29-41 as "borderline" and 42 or above as "acceptable"

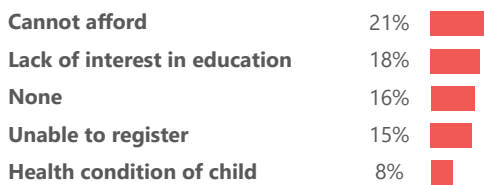
Education

Regarding the highest level of education, the largest proportion was in “elementary school” (36%), followed by “no degree, cannot read” (23%). This latter category was notably more common among households in camps (34%).

School enrolment rates by population group:



The top reasons for not attending:



Across the population groups, returnee HHs reported the highest proportion of ‘none’, out-of-camp HHs reported ‘cannot afford’ the most, and in-camp HHs reported ‘unable to register’ in higher proportions. To note, ‘unable to register’ could relate to the child being too old/young, child missed/failed too many years of education, lack of documentation, or previous poor performance/dismissal.

WASH

CCNA findings indicate that water scarcity presents more of a pressing issue for HHs than sanitation and hygiene. Under self-reported priority needs, 11% of HHs reported drinking water as a need, while only 2% reported hygiene NFIs and sanitation services.

Proportion of HHs with access to an improved water source:



79% of HHs reported never having less than their preferred amount of water for drinking in the 4 weeks prior to data collection. Furthermore, HHs reported having sufficient water for cooking (96%), hygiene (94%), and other domestic purposes (92%).

Across all population groups, the main source of drinking water was ‘piped into dwelling’ (61%), ‘bottled water’ (21%), and ‘piped into compound’ (7%). 46% of HHs reported not experiencing any water quality issues, with a higher proportion reporting this amongst the in-camp HHs at 56%. In terms of the most common water quality issues, 45% stated water was ‘not clear’, 23% reported ‘unpleasant taste’, and 9% ‘unpleasant smell’.

Conclusion

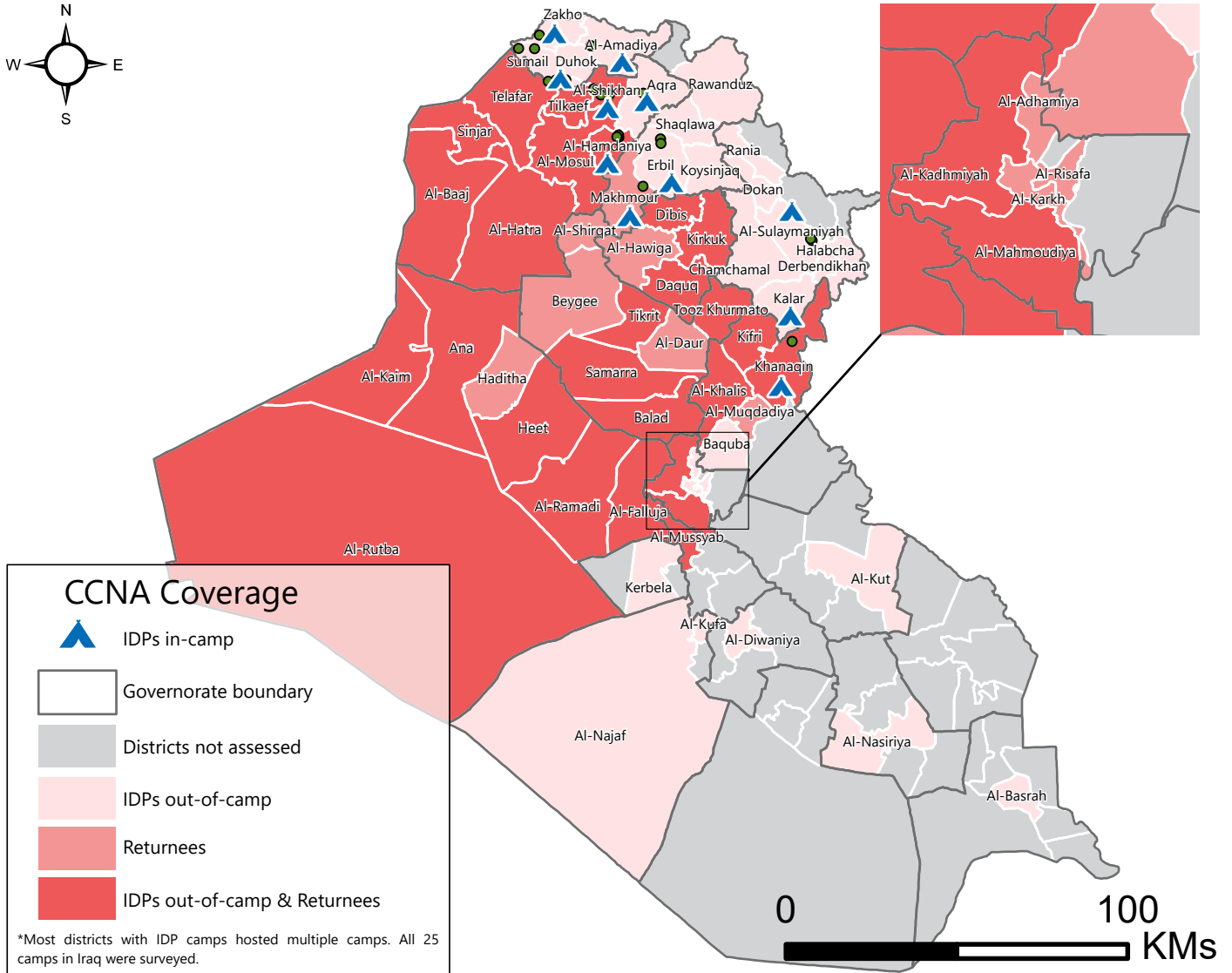
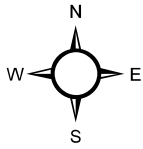
The context of Iraq continues to present poignant challenges and opportunities to learn for the international humanitarian community on how to successfully phase out of humanitarian assistance and facilitate a comprehensive handover of basic service delivery and social protection to governmental actors. The CCNA was conducted at a critical point as international and national actors reduce their programming with limited clusters/fora remaining to support information dissemination and coordination of actors and/or programming.

There has been significant progress since the end of large-scale military operations against ISIS, although there remains room for improvement to address the remaining humanitarian, durable solutions, and development needs. The already existing national social protection schemes does not currently benefit all eligible IDPs with additional obstacles to durable solution goals such as registration barriers in AoO for food rations and social safety net programmes. As a result, IDPs often depend on protection actors to receive the necessary information and support to register for these services.

Of particular concern is the remaining pockets of humanitarian needs which persist throughout the country. Across all indicators, there were certain districts that presented higher needs and/or lower resilience such as Kalar, Halabcha, Chamchamal, Al-Shikhan, Al-Rutba, Sinjar and Al-Kaim for out-of-camp and returnee HHs. Camps such as Tazade, Ashti, Arbat and Qoratu and the East Mosul camps (Hasansham U2, Hasansham U3, Khazer M1) presented the highest needs, particularly concerning as Arbat, Ashti and Qoratu were recently closed.

The escalating crises in the region are a cause of concern as the remaining humanitarian funding will become highly contested with the most vulnerable communities being affected. Due to Iraq’s ‘Upper Middle Income’ classification, it could be deprioritised for other contexts. With reducing humanitarian attention, lesser coordination fora, and insufficient government capacity to replace humanitarian actors, Iraq’s most vulnerable may be left behind. Lastly, the continued monitoring of vulnerable communities and populations remain a critical need if the transition from humanitarian assistance to development, and social and economic development of Iraq is to be successful for the most vulnerable populations.

Assessment Coverage



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PROTECTION
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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).