

Situation Overview

In 2021, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) returning to their area of origin (AoO) or being re-displaced increased, coupled with persisting challenges in relation to social cohesion, lack of services, infrastructure and - in some cases - security in AoOs.¹ Increased returns and secondary displacement were driven primarily by the closure and consolidation of IDP camps.² As of November 2021, 16 formal camps and informal sites have been closed or reclassified as informal sites since camp closures started in mid-November 2020. For the camps that remain open across Iraq, there is an ongoing planning procedure to determine their future.³ The [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#)'s returnee master list recorded over 4.5 million individuals returned to their AoOs across the country, as of September 2021.⁴

There were no additional camp closures between January and November 2021, however IDPs continued returning or secondarily displacing. In light of these dynamics, the need to better understand the sustainability of returns, conditions for the (re) integration of IDPs and returnees, and the impact of their presence on access to services and social cohesion has been identified in the context of humanitarian and development planning.

Coverage Map



Background and Methodology

Several partners are currently tracking population movements and measuring progress towards durable solutions for displaced populations in Iraq.¹⁰ 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 Samarra Sub-district to provide an in-depth profiling of needs and understanding of social relationships between returnee¹¹ and/or IDP populations.¹²

Markaz Samarra Sub-district

Markaz Samarra is a sub-district of Samarra District, located on the banks of the Tigris River, 130 km north of Baghdad, and at one point was the capital of an Islamic empire.⁵ During the Iraqi Civil War, Markaz Samarra was in the "Sunni triangle" of violence,⁶ which led to waves of displacement. In November 2014, the sub-district fell under the control of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).⁷ In December 2014, Samarra Operations Command confirmed that the Army forces, alongside their allies, had completely liberated the district and its surroundings.⁶ However, ISIL operations continued to be reported in the area, which affected the feeling of safety for people in the district.^{7,8}

Reported Population Profile⁹

- 36,850-38,120 households** were residing in Markaz Samarra before the events of 2014.
- 27%-29% of households** in Markaz Samarra are displaced since 2014.
- 33%-37% households** displaced since 2014 had returned to Markaz Samarra at the time of data collection.
- 10-17 IDP households** (AoO not specified) were displaced in Markaz Samarra at the time of data collection.

Markaz Samarra Sub-district was selected for the assessment as: social cohesion and safety perceptions severity¹³ was classified as 'high' in three villages out of five;¹⁴ it was classified as an area of interest for the Area-Based Coordination group (ABC) under the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group (DSTWG) in Iraq;¹⁵ and it was an AoO for IDPs in formal camp(s) recently closed or at risk of closure.¹⁶ The findings are based on 45 key informant (KI) interviews conducted between 6 and 16 November 2021, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods adapted to the context. Data collection was conducted remotely due to movement restrictions and public health concerns linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

KI Profile

Markaz Samarra Sub-district

IDPs in the community ¹⁷	13 KIs	
Returnees (more than 3 months ago) ¹⁸	11 KIs	
Returnees (less than 3 months ago) ¹⁹	6 KIs	
IDPs (displaced from the area) ²⁰	5 KIs	
Community leaders ²¹	5 KIs	
Subject matter experts (SMEs) ²²	5 KIs	
		45 KIs²³

Key findings

-  The situation regarding returns to Markaz Samarra remained stable, with KIs reporting **a few ongoing returns and more projected in the six months following data collection**, driven primarily by the **nostalgia about their previous life in their AoOs**.
-  All KIs believed that **recent returns had positively impacted the community**, mainly by promoting the reconstruction of residential areas and infrastructure in Markaz Samarra. However, **further returns may** also reportedly **have negative impacts** in the community, mainly regarding the local authorities' lack of a preparedness plan to absorb a potential increase in the population.
-  The majority of KIs reported that **households faced challenges in accessing housing rehabilitation** in the sub-district, as well as difficulties in accessing government compensation for damaged properties. The level of damaged housing was the most reported reason leading to households renting or resorting to other types of housing agreements.
-  **Access to housing rehabilitation** was the **most commonly** reported **primary community need** and the **most needed activity to encourage further returns**.
-  KIs from different profiles prioritized community needs differently. Further efforts to develop the **healthcare and water infrastructure** were the most reported primary community needs **by community leader KIs**. **SME, returnee, and IDP KIs - from and in the community** - commonly reported access to **housing rehabilitation** as the **primary community need**.
-  All KIs reported that **the majority of households faced challenges in accessing basic public services**. The most affected sector was reportedly **healthcare**, mainly due to the damage or destruction to healthcare facilities in the sub-district and the lack of healthcare service providers in some villages.
-  KIs reported an **overall decrease in the availability of job opportunities compared to before 2014**. Reportedly, the type of jobs available had also shifted, with the oil industry, manufacturing, transportation, and trade jobs reportedly less available at the time of data collection than before 2014. Findings suggested that some sectors were **less affected**, such as **construction**, which was assumed to be a result of the reported reconstruction and rehabilitation of houses and infrastructure taking place in the sub-district.
-  **Agriculture** was the **most commonly** reported **livelihood sector of interest for older returnee and IDP households from the community**. It was also commonly reported by community leader and SME KIs as **the sector with the most growth potential** in the 12 months following data collection.
-  Generally, **formal security forces** were reportedly the **most influential bodies regarding governance**. The majority of returnee and IDP KIs reported that **the presence of formal security forces contributed positively to a feeling of safety** between community members. **Tribal leaders** were reportedly the **most effective body in resolving disputes within the sub-district**.
-  The majority of returnee and IDP KIs noted that **community members felt safe or very safe in Markaz Samarra**. Additionally, slightly over half of consulted KIs reported that **the majority of households in the community felt welcome or very welcome** to the sub-district. According to KIs, this was mainly driven by the prevalence and strength of different tribes in the area, causing households to feel protected since they belong to these tribes.
-  Over three quarters of returnee and IDP KIs reported that **the majority of households** from these displacement groups **mainly interacted with returnees**. This was reportedly associated to social and work inter-relations.
-  The majority of returnee and IDP KIs reported that **the majority of households** from these displacement groups **participated in decision-making processes**. One possible reason for this could be the connection that households had with existing tribal systems and their bonds with the community in Markaz Samarra.
-  Perceptions on durable solutions varied between KI profiles. The majority of returnee KIs reported that **returnee households felt reintegrated in the community** of Markaz Samarra, while all IDP KIs reported that **IDP households did not feel integrated in their areas of displacement (AoD)**.

Findings are based on the perceptions of KIs who were purposively sampled; all data should therefore be considered as indicative. The occasionally large variation between perceptions is potentially due to KIs varying profiles and personal interests. For further details on the methodology, please see the ReDS [Terms of Reference \(ToR\)](#).

Recent household return movements

Returnee, IDP from the community, SME and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (32 out of 45 KIs). Almost two thirds of KIs reported that no recent returns occurred to the sub-district (16 out of 32 KIs) or did not know about these movements (4 KIs). However, over a third of KIs (12 out of 32 KIs) reported that there were some returns.

Returns from non-camp areas

26-33 households returned to Markaz Samarra from non-camp areas in the six months prior to data collection, according to 11 KIs (out of 12 KIs). Returns were reported for Salah Al-Din Governorate, namely in Balad (7 KIs), Shirqat (2 KIs), Tikrit (1 KI), and Beygee (1 KI) districts; and in Yathreb (3 KIs) and Moutasim (1 KI) sub-districts.

Reported drivers for returns from non-camp areas (out of 11 KIs)²⁴

Nostalgia about their previous life	9 KIs	
Sense of increased safety and security	3 KIs	
Following the return of other extended family members	3 KIs	
Security clearance granted to return ²⁵	2 KIs	

Returns from camps

One older returnee KI (out of 12 KIs) reported that:

40-50 households returned to Markaz Samarra from Arbat IDP camp²⁶ in Suleimaniyah Governorate due to nostalgia about their previous life and the perception of increased access to services in their AoOs.

Reported impact of returns in the community

All KIs reporting the occurrence of recent returns (12 KIs) also believed that these movements had **positive impacts** on the Markaz Samarra community.

Impact on housing rehabilitation

The most reported impact of recent returns was noted in the rehabilitation of houses (10 out of 12 KIs). According to eight KIs, the high level of damaged housing was a concern for households considering returning. Reportedly, households with more resources were able to fully rehabilitate their houses upon return (7 KIs), while households with less resources partially rehabilitated their houses in order to reside there (2 KIs). Two KIs reported that humanitarian actors supported some households for the reconstruction of their shelter.

Impact on the public sector

According to four KIs, **"ongoing coordination between the government and humanitarian actors was in place in order to restore public services"** in Markaz Samarra. Three KIs reported that organisations rehabilitated some of the schools, equipped them and these were reopened with the return of the educational staff to their AoO. Two KIs reported that, with the return of households, the government has emphasized the rehabilitation of water treatment plants. Additionally, one SME KI reported that humanitarian actors supported the extension of the water network to areas which

lacked this service before 2014 in the sub-district. One recent returnee KI further reported that the government rehabilitated the public electrical network in most of the areas in the sub-district.

Impact on the agricultural sector

According to two KIs, recent return movements caused the replanting of agricultural lands, **"which led to the availability of agricultural crops in the entire district"**. In addition, one older returnee KI reported that, **"the government installed irrigation channels to revitalize and support the agricultural sector"**.

Impact on safety and security

According to one older returnee KI, **"the return of families positively affected the community from a security perspective, the repopulation of abandoned villages will ensure that ISIL does not occupy these areas and organise operations from there"**.

Failed return movements

Returnee, IDP from the community, SME and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (32 out of 45 KIs). The majority of KIs consulted for this section reported that there were no failed return movements (16 out of 32 KIs) or did not know (14 KIs).

However, a couple of KIs reported that:

10-14 households failed to return to Markaz Samarra from non-camp areas in Balad and Beygee districts in the six months prior to data collection. After failing to return, these households reportedly redisplaced to the areas of their previous displacement.

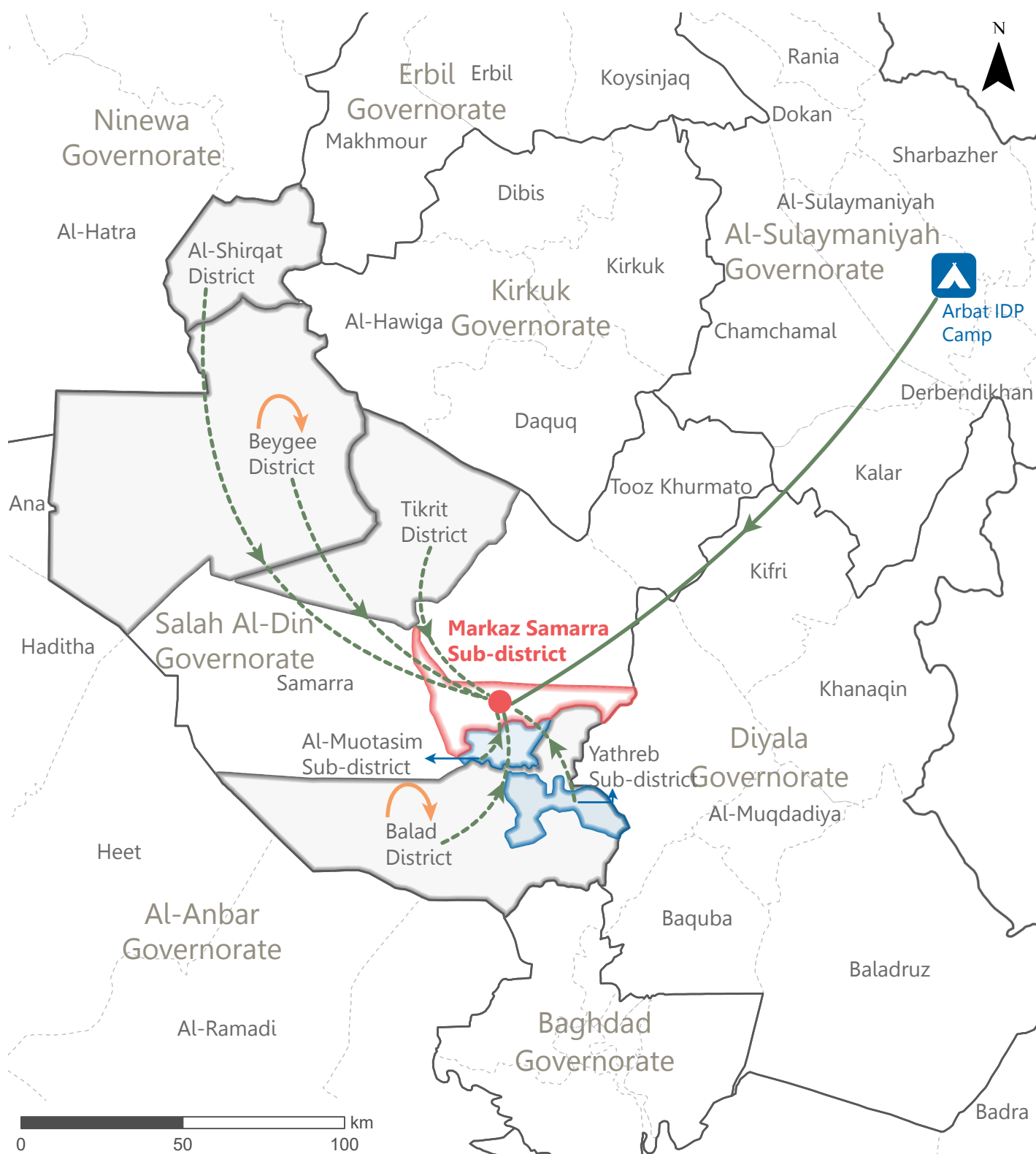
KIs reported that the lack of job opportunities in their AoO being available in AoD (2 KIs), lack of public services in their AoO (2 KIs), and the level of damaged housing (1 KI) were the reasons for these households failing to return.

Reported impact of failed returns in the community

One recent returnee KI reported that these movements had negatively impacted the community. Reportedly, failed returns led to villages being less populated with a high level of housing destruction. Additionally, the KI reported that while business owners remained in displacement, there were less job opportunities for daily workers, which negatively affected trade and commerce in the sub-district.

In contrast, one older returnee believed that failed returns had a positive impact on the community, since there was less pressure on public services and basic products due to the reduced demand.

According to an IOM report on [Protracted displacement in Iraq: District of origin profiles](#) conducted in August 2021, Samarra [District] has a total of 10 locations to which returns occurred, that is significantly lower than the overall average number of locations per district (80). Additionally, there are two locations of no return in this district, which are both located in the sub-district of Markaz Samarra. A total of five households failed to return in the six months between 31 October 2020 and 30 April 2021.



Reported recent return movements and failed movement to Markaz Samarra (6 months prior to data collection)

- Return movement from camp
- Return movement from non-camp
- Failed return movement
- Markaz Samarra Sub-district
- Governorate

- Displacement location**
- District
 - District
 - Sub-district
 - Camp

Expected household returns

Returnee, IDP from the community, SME and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (32 out of 45 KIs). The majority of KIs did not know about these movements (15 out of 32 KIs) or reported no expected return movements in the six months following data collection (10 KIs). However, seven KIs reported that:

77-103 households were expected to return in the six months following data collection to Markaz Samarra.

Reportedly, these households would be arriving from non-camp areas in Salah Al-Din Governorate, namely in Balad (2 KIs), Tikrit (2 KIs), Shirqat (1 KI), and Al-Daour (1 KI) districts; and from Suleimaniyah Governorate (1 KI).

Reported drivers for expected returns (out of 7 KIs)²⁴

Nostalgia about their previous life	6 KIs	<div></div>
Sense of increased safety and security	3 KIs	<div></div>
Following the return of other extended family members	1 KI	<div></div>

Reported impact of expected returns in the community

Regardless of individual KI reports about the occurrence of expected returns, all KIs were consulted regarding the impact of these movements. The majority of consulted KIs (27 out of 32 KIs) reported that further returns may have **positive impacts** in the community of the sub-district. KIs expected increased attention from the government and humanitarian actors to restore public services and support the rehabilitation of damaged/destroyed houses (8 KIs). Additionally, one older returnee KI anticipated a potential increase in the number of solidarity initiatives from community members to rehabilitate damaged schools. KIs believed that the reopening of schools would encourage the return of education personnel and consequently would enhance access to education (4 KIs). Reportedly, returnee households with better financial situations would rehabilitate their houses by themselves (10 KIs).

Impact on the economy

According to eight KIs, future returns may lead to an improvement in economic activity and the reactivation of trade and commerce links through the:

- » Return of skilled workers, professionals, and public employees (5 KIs),
- » Resumption of agricultural activity (5 KIs), and
- » Potential reopening of shops and markets (4 KIs).

Impact on security

KIs believed that further returns will show that the sub-district is safe (4 KIs) and will encourage other households to return to their AoO (6 KIs). Additionally, the repopulation of villages inside the sub-district's boundaries was perceived by three older returnee KIs **"as a wall or a protection shield so that ISIL groups do not hide or conduct potential attacks from there."**

On other hand, several KIs reported that further returns may negatively affect the community in the sub-district (7 out of 32 KIs).

Impact on access to resources and services

Reportedly, there was a lack of services in the sub-district, and local authorities lacked a preparedness plan to absorb a potential increase in the population (5 KIs), which could lead to overburdened public services and goods, namely water, food and non-food products, fuel, etc. (4 KIs).

Reported barriers for further returns (out of 32 KIs)²⁴

Access to livelihoods and basic public services

Lack of job opportunities	28 KIs	<div></div>
Lack of basic public services	23 KIs	<div></div>
Absence of specialised medical treatment in AoO	3 KIs	<div></div>

Access to housing

Destroyed/damaged housing	24 KIs	<div></div>
Housing was rented in AoO	1 KI	<div></div>

Safety and security

Fear of being perceived as affiliated with ISIL	11 KIs	<div></div>
Fear of discrimination or persecution in AoO	4 KIs	<div></div>
Denied security clearance to return ^{25, 27}	3 KIs	<div></div>
Concerns about security in AoO	2 KIs	<div></div>

Other barriers

Fear of contracting COVID-19	7 KIs	<div></div>
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Expected IDP household displacements

This section refers to IDP households in the community of Markaz Samarra. Returnee, IDP in the community, SME and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (40 out of 45 KIs). The majority of KIs consulted for this section reported that no IDP movements from the sub-district will occur in the six months following data collection (23 out of 40 KIs) or did not know (16 KIs). However, one older returnee KI reported that:

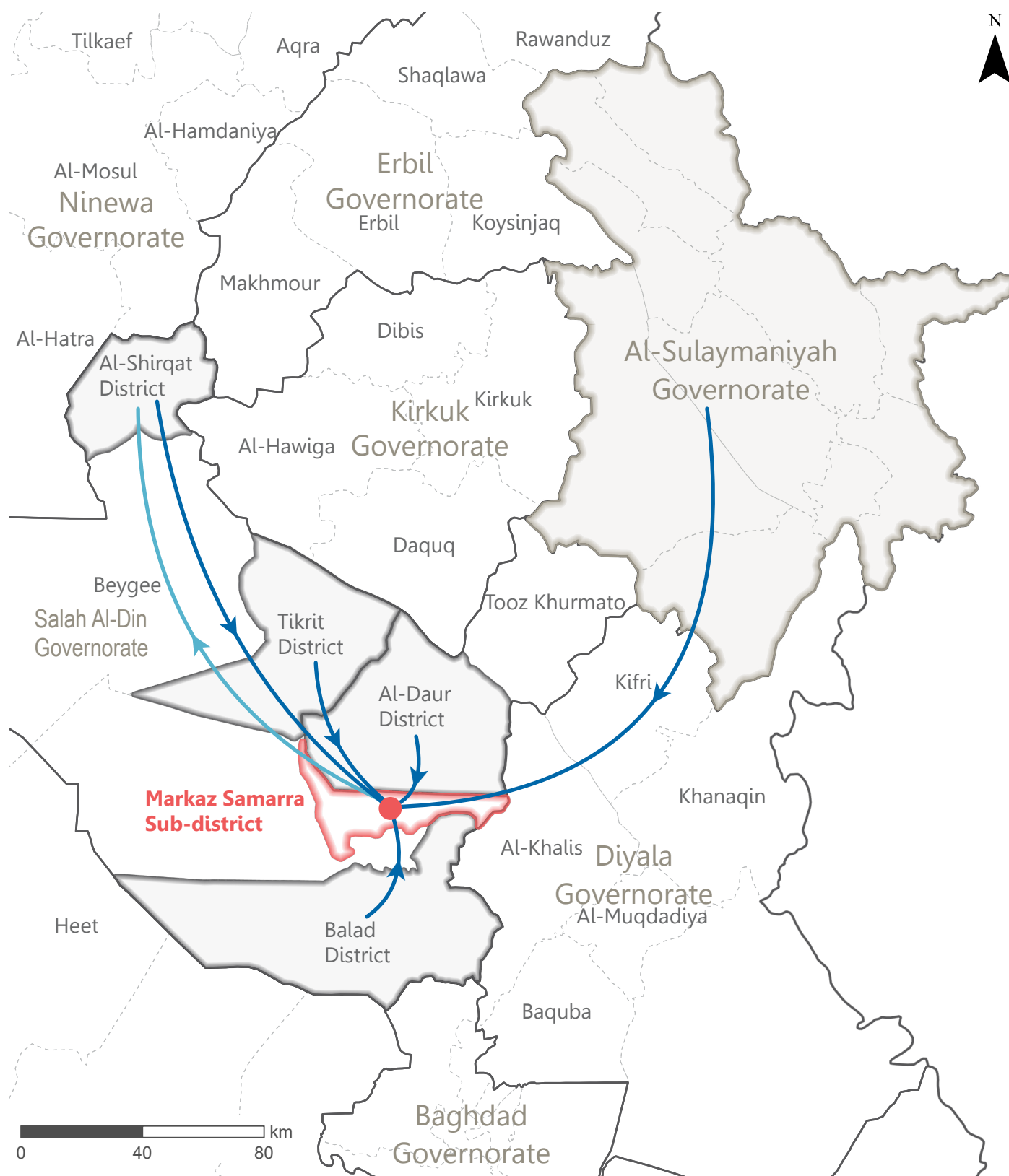
5-10 IDP households may return in the six months following data collection from Markaz Samarra to their AoOs in Shirqat District due to the sense of increased safety and security there.

Family separation and reunification plans





Returnee, IDP from the community, SME, and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (32 out of 45 KIs). The majority of KIs did not know about family separation cases (19 out of 32 KIs) or reported that there were no family separation cases in the sub-district (10 KIs). However, three KIs reported that some households had at least one adult male and other members of the extended family who remained in displacement due to available jobs in their AoD being unavailable in their AoO (2 KIs), having damaged/destroyed housing in AoO (2 KIs), and the perceived lack of services in the sub-district (1 KI).




Family reunification plans

As reported by the KIs, displaced members will return when there are **"implemented projects and reopened workshops and factories that will ensure job opportunities"**.



Reported expected return movements and IDP displacement to/from Markaz Samarra (6 months following data collection)

-  Expected return movement
-  Expected IDP return movement
-  Markaz Samarra Sub-district
-  Governorate

-  District
- Displacement location**
-  Governorate
-  District

Primary community needs

Primary community needs in Markaz Samarra (out of 45 KIs)^{24, 28}

	First Need	Second Need	Third Need
Housing rehabilitation	21 KIs	5 KIs	3 KIs
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	6 KIs	15 KIs	7 KIs
Education	6 KIs	5 KIs	5 KIs
Healthcare	3 KIs	9 KIs	2 KIs
Livelihoods	5 KIs	8 KIs	0 KIs
Infrastructure rehabilitation	1 KI	1 KI	8 KIs
Electricity	1 KI	1 KI	7 KIs
Food security	1 KI	0 KIs	5 KIs

The most commonly reported primary community need was access to **housing rehabilitation** (29 out of 45 KIs). KIs reported a high level of housing damage or destruction in the sub-district (25 KIs). According to KIs, access to housing rehabilitation was affected by the lack of compensation to impacted households (19 KIs) and the long process to access compensation (2 KIs).

The second most reported primary community need was access to **WASH**, mainly regarding access to water (28 out of 45 KIs). KIs reported that some water treatment plants and water networks in the sub-district were damaged and needed rehabilitation (19 KIs). One KI perceived that this may be a result of the neglect from the relevant authorities to restore the water public service. See section on access to basic public services on page 9.

The third most reported primary community need was access to **education** (16 out of 45 KIs). Conditions affecting access to education included the lack of educational personnel assigned by the government to the sub-district (3 KIs) and the presence of IDP households living inside school facilities, prohibiting their reopening (2 KIs).²⁹

Most commonly reported primary community needs per KI profile^{24, 30}

Community leader KIs (out of 5 KIs)	SME KIs (out of 5 KIs)	IDP KIs (out of 18 KIs) ^{17, 20}	Returnee KIs (out of 17 KIs) ^{18, 19}
WASH 4 KIs	Housing rehabilitation 3 KIs	Housing rehabilitation 15 KIs	WASH 14 KIs
Healthcare 3 KIs	Education 3 KIs	Livelihoods 12 KIs	Housing rehabilitation 9 KIs
Education 2 KIs	Livelihoods 3 KIs	Healthcare 7 KIs	Education 6 KIs

Access to humanitarian aid and impact on returns

Returnee, IDP in the community, SME, and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (40 out of 45 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that there were humanitarian activities or projects implemented in Markaz Samarra in the six month prior to data collection.

The **most reported humanitarian activities** implemented in the sub-district were **food security programmes** (23 KIs).

Reported activities implemented in Markaz Samarra (out of 40 KIs)^{24, 31}

Food security programmes	23 KIs
COVID-19 awareness sessions	9 KIs
Psycho-social support	6 KIs
Non-food item (NFI) distributions	6 KIs
WASH	3 KIs
Cash assistance	3 KIs

Activity implementers

Almost three quarters of consulted KIs (28 out of 40 KIs) also reported that these activities or projects were implemented by humanitarian actors. According to KIs, local authorities were mainly involved in food and NFI distributions (15 out of 17 KIs) and local community members supported in food distribution (5 out of 6 KIs).²⁴

Reported groups less involved in activities

Over a third of consulted KIs reporting implemented activities in the sub-district (14 out of 40 KIs) also reported that none of the displacement groups faced challenges in accessing humanitarian aid. The rest of the KIs believed that **IDPs from the community were less involved** in activities or projects (17 KIs), followed by IDPs in the community (12 KIs), returnees (8 KIs), and remainees (5 KIs). Regarding vulnerable groups,³² KIs reported that older persons (24 KIs) and persons with disabilities (19 KIs) were less involved in these activities or projects than other vulnerable groups. According to 15 KIs, households with alleged links to ISIL were excluded from humanitarian activities. Over a third of KIs believed that all vulnerable groups had the same level of access to participation (14 KIs).

Humanitarian aid as a factor to encourage returns

Returnee and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (22 out of 45 KIs). Over two thirds of the consulted KIs (15 out of 22 KIs) reported that the **availability of humanitarian aid would be a factor encouraging returns** to Markaz Samarra. The rest of the KIs disagreed with this statement (7 KIs).

Reportedly, **housing rehabilitation** was the **most needed activity to encourage further returns** (11 out of 15 KIs), followed by livelihoods (3 KIs) and healthcare (1 KI).

Perceptions on access to housing, housing rehabilitation, and compensation

Returnee, IDP in the community, SME and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (40 out of 45 KIs). The majority of these KIs (37 out of 40 KIs) reported that **the majority of households** in Markaz Samarra **resided in houses**.

Reported type of housing vs tenure agreement

All community leader and SME KIs (10 KIs) reported that the majority of households in the sub-district resided in owned houses. Findings showed that **the majority of IDP households in the community** reportedly **resided in houses under verbal rental agreement** (8 KIs). Three KIs reported that few IDP households in the community owned houses in Markaz Samarra. One KI reported that some IDP households in the community resorted to less secure arrangements, such as work-for-rent agreements. A second KI reported that other households were hosted in religious buildings. **The majority of returnee households** reportedly **resided in owned houses or apartments** (17 KIs).

KIs who reported that households resorted to renting and other types of housing agreements (10 KIs) also reported this was due to damaged housing (10 KIs) or because many households did not own houses in the sub-district even before 2014 (4 KIs).

Access to housing, land, and property (HLP) documentation for owned housing

The vast majority of KIs reporting that households owned housing in the sub-district (28 out of 30 KIs) reported that **the majority of households** in Markaz Samarra **had ownership documents** to prove housing ownership. However, one returnee KI reported that some returnee households were missing their heirs deed certificates. One community leader KI reported that some households never had ownership documents.

All IDP KIs from the community reported that **the majority of IDP households from the community had ownership documents** to prove housing ownership, namely IDPs in Taq-taq Sub-district (Erbil Governorate) and in Abu Dalf, Al-Duloeyah, and Yathreb Sub-districts (Salah Al-Din Governorate).

Access to housing rehabilitation

Returnee, IDP in the community, SME, and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (40 out of 45 KIs).

40%-90% of houses in Markaz Samarra reportedly remained destroyed or heavily damaged at the time of data collection, according to all consulted KIs.

Challenges to access housing rehabilitation

All KIs reported that households faced challenges in accessing housing rehabilitation, and it was the most reported primary community need. KIs reported a high level of housing damage or destruction in the sub-district (30 out of 45 KIs). According to KIs, affected households lacked financial resources to rehabilitate their homes (30 KIs)³³, and some returnee households spent their savings on basic items (2 KIs). Rehabilitation was also affected by the lack of skilled workers in the construction sector due to their prolonged displacement (5 KIs). This situation reportedly led to households partially rehabilitating their homes (at least

one room) and/or having to reside in unfinished buildings (2 KIs).

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned challenges, KIs recommended that the government and humanitarian actors implementing housing rehabilitation projects in the sub-district provide financial support for housing rehabilitation directly to affected households (24 KIs). One IDP KI in the community believed that promoting and implementing housing rehabilitation projects would consequently increase the number of job opportunities in the sub-district. One IDP KI from the community recommended that the government and humanitarian actors intervene to allow households with denied security clearance to return so they can claim housing rehabilitation and ensure the reconstruction of the sub-district.³⁴

Reported groups with less access to housing rehabilitation

One third of KIs (15 out of 45 KIs) reported that households in all groups equally faced challenges in accessing housing rehabilitation. According to 28 KIs, returnee households faced more challenges when attempting to access housing rehabilitation, followed by IDPs from the community (25 KIs) and IDPs in the community (25 KIs). While analysing vulnerabilities,³² one third of KIs reported that all groups were equally affected (15 KIs). The rest of the KIs believed that persons with disabilities (19 KIs), older persons (12 KIs), and female-headed households (7 KIs) encountered more difficulties to access housing rehabilitation compared to other groups. Additionally, 14 KIs reported that households with alleged links to ISIL faced greater challenges to access housing rehabilitation mechanisms.

Access to compensation mechanisms

The majority of KIs reported that households in Markaz Samarra **faced difficulties in accessing government compensation for damaged properties** (39 out of 45 KIs). According to six KIs, there were no reported challenges to access compensation claims.

Reportedly, out of 39 KIs, perceptions toward the compensation process included:²⁴

Households will not be compensated at the end	23 KIs	<div></div>
Lack of awareness sessions about compensation	15 KIs	<div></div>
Long and complicated process	13 KIs	<div></div>
Lack of legal assistance for compensation	9 KIs	<div></div>

Challenges to access compensation mechanisms

According to KIs, access to housing rehabilitation was affected by the lack of compensation (34 out of 45 KIs) and the long process to access compensation (13 KIs).

Reportedly, there were practices in place which negatively affected access to compensation. These were related to affected households being forced to pay bribes to governmental officials or intermediaries to present and process their claims (4 KIs). Additionally, KIs reported the exclusion of households with members with alleged affiliation to ISIL from the compensation process (14 KIs).

Perceptions on access to basic public services

All KIs reported that **households faced challenges in accessing basic public services** in the sub-district (45 KIs). The majority of KIs reported that **healthcare** was the most affected sector.

Reported affected basic public services (out of 45 KIs)²⁴

Healthcare	38 KIs	<div style="width: 84%;"></div>
Education	36 KIs	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>
WASH	35 KIs	<div style="width: 78%;"></div>
Electricity	15 KIs	<div style="width: 33%;"></div>

Challenges to access basic public services

Allegedly, the limited availability of basic public services was due to the lack of attention from the government in the sub-district, as authorities considered it a rural area and not a well-developed urban area or main city (10 KIs). In addition, two KIs reported the lack of public employees assigned to the sub-district public departments by the government.

Access to public healthcare

The most reported challenges were related to conditions affecting households' access to healthcare and the operational hours of the health facilities. These included the:

- » Damage or destruction to healthcare facilities in the sub-district and the lack of healthcare service providers in some villages (28 KIs),
- » Lack of medications in the operational facilities, especially medicine for chronic diseases (19 KIs),
- » Lack of equipment, such as MRI machines, X-ray machines, etc. (11 KIs), and
- » Lack of medical personnel due to their prolonged displacement and the lack of positions assigned by the government (10 KIs).

Additionally, 18 KIs reported that households adopted coping strategies to access medical treatment. Reportedly, households were forced to travel to the district center for medical treatment (8 KIs) and to transfer emergency cases to Baghdad (3 KIs). Some households were reportedly resorting to private clinics for medical attention, which were perceived as expensive (4 KIs).

Reportedly, households who could not afford the cost of the private services resorted to pharmacists for prescription and medical treatment (5 KIs). The lack of medications in available health facilities forced households to purchase them from private pharmacies (4 KIs).

To alleviate the situation regarding access to healthcare, two IDP KIs in the community recommended that the government build specialized hospitals that could cover the needs of the community in the sub-district and could employ a high number of professionals.

Access to public water, sanitation and waste management

KIs reported that some water treatment plants and water networks in the sub-district were damaged and in need of rehabilitation (25 KIs). One KI perceived that this may be a result of the neglect from the relevant authorities to restore the water public service.

A second KI believed that access to this resource was seriously affected due to the population growth with the recent returns. Two community leader KIs reported that the most affected villages trying to access water were those in the outskirts of the sub-district.

Additionally, water scarcity reportedly affected households' daily water usage (11 KIs), the agricultural sector and farming with irrigation and animal raising (3 KIs), and workshops and factories which depended on water to operate (2 KIs). This situation reportedly worsened during the summer (10 KIs).

KIs reported that households adopted coping strategies to overcome the lack of water (16 KIs). The most commonly reported strategies were:

- » Resorting to illegally drilling water wells for private use (8 KIs),
- » Resorting to purchasing bottled water or water filters to be used at the household level (6 KIs),
- Being forced to travel to nearby villages with rehabilitated water plants to access water (5 KIs), and
- » Resorting to water trucking (3 KIs).

In addition, two KIs reported that some households used the water from agricultural channels and that other households used the water directly from the river for domestic and personal use, even though these sources were not safe.

A few KIs (6 out of 45 KIs) reported that households faced challenges in using public sewage networks. KIs reported a lack of public sewage networks (4 KIs) and a lack of infrastructure construction projects from the government in the sub-district (2 KIs).

KIs reported that households faced challenges in accessing public waste collection, disposal, and management services (10 out of 45 KIs). Of these KIs, eight believed that it was seriously affected by the lack or limited financial resources the municipality had assigned for sanitation works. Reportedly, there were limited operational vehicles for waste collection (7 KIs), a limited number of sanitation workers in the municipal department (2 KI), and a lack of garbage collection containers (1 KI). According to five KIs, this situation led to environmental concerns, as households disposed their garbage in the central area in the sub-district without proper management, or it accumulated in residential areas.

Access to public education

Conditions affecting access to education included the lack of educational personnel assigned by the government to the sub-district (3 KIs), the presence of IDP households in public school facilities in the sub-district, which affected their reopening (2 KIs),²⁹ and the perceived neglect from the government toward school rehabilitations (1 KI).

Additionally, KIs reported the urgent demand to rehabilitate existing damaged schools and to construct new ones in some sub-districts (14 KIs). According to nine KIs, operational schools were crowded and set into two shifts, mainly for girls in the morning and for boys in the afternoon. In some villages, parents and teachers collected financial donations to install classrooms in caravans, as reported by four KIs. One IDP KI in the community reported that available schools were distant from residential locations.

In previous years, students used to receive free learning materials, including books, notebooks, and transportation from the Ministry of Education (MoE).³⁴ These distributions stopped in the 1990s, and the situation remained the same at the time of data collection. According to 13 KIs, students' parents were forced to purchase materials from private libraries. KIs emphasized the need for the MoE to replicate the previous model and start free distributions of learning materials for students (13 KIs) and to provide transportation (1 KI) in the coming academic years.

Access to public electricity

Almost a third of KIs (15 out of 45 KIs) reported that households faced challenges to access public electricity services due to the lack of rehabilitation of the electrical networks and transformers. One older returnee KI believed that relevant authorities in the sub-district neglected this service. Additionally, KIs reported that the lack of electricity prevented farmers from activating irrigation systems for agriculture (3 KIs) and affected households' access to water (1 KI). One KI reported that this situation led to households resorting to private generators to access electricity.

Reported groups with less access to basic public services

Almost one third of KIs (13 out of 45 KIs) reported that none of the displacement groups faced challenges to access basic public services. The rest of KIs believed that returnees were reportedly the group who faced the largest challenges when attempting to access basic public services (33 KIs), followed by IDPs in the community (17 KIs), IDPs from the community (17 KIs), and remainees (15 KIs). Regarding vulnerabilities,³² less than one third of KIs reported that no groups faced challenges in accessing basic public services (12 KIs). The rest of KIs reported that persons with disabilities (33 KIs) and older persons (24 KIs) faced more challenges when attempting to access basic public services compared to other groups. According to one SME KI, households with alleged links to ISIL also faced challenges to access basic public services.

Perceptions on access to livelihoods

All KIs reported that **the majority of households faced challenges in accessing livelihoods** (45 KIs).

Challenges to access livelihoods

The majority of KIs (37 out of 45 KIs) reported that the lack of job opportunities in the sub-district affected access to employment. It was reportedly affected by the lack of governmental job appointments and the need to pay bribes to intermediaries or governmental employees to access employment (24 KIs).

Additionally, two KIs reported that there was a lack of employment with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and that household members were not receiving their salaries or assigned retirement from the government.

Regarding agriculture, KIs reported that there was a high level of destruction in the agricultural sector, mainly orchards, and that the government did not compensate farmers for their loss (9 KIs).

KIs also reported that community members, especially youth, resorted to low-daily-wage jobs in construction and agriculture to alleviate the difficult economic situation of their families (15 KIs).

Other household members were forced to travel to other areas to find job opportunities, mainly to Baghdad, which required high transportation fees (5 KIs). One older returnee KI reported that the slow revitalization of the agricultural sector in the sub-district forced traders and households to depend on imported products, which had a negative impact on the local economy.

To increase the availability of job opportunities in the sub-district, the majority of KIs (36 out of 45 KIs) recommended that the government and NGOs:

- » Support farmers with materials (namely seeds and fertilizers) to resume and reactivate the agricultural sector as an essential source of income in the sub-district (21 KIs),
- » Encourage investment in the private sector, which was perceived as inactive at the time of data collection (17 KIs),
- » Implement livelihood projects, including cash-for-work programmes (16 KIs),
- » Implement rehabilitation and construction projects in the sub-district, which consequently create a high number of job opportunities (16 KIs),
- » Rehabilitate or compensate owners of damaged workshops, factories, shops, and markets in the sub-district for them to reopen (14 KIs),
- » (The government) to ensure job appointments for youth and take measures to stop the presence of intermediaries and bribes for access to employment (4 KIs), and
- » Support for marketing agricultural and manufacturing products to promote trade and commerce in the sub-district (3 KIs).

Reported groups with less access to livelihoods

Less than one third of KIs reported that none of the groups faced challenges in accessing livelihoods (12 out of 45 KIs). The rest of the KIs reported that IDPs from the community were reportedly the group who faced the largest challenges when attempting to access livelihoods in the sub-district (23 KIs), followed by IDPs in the community (19 KIs), returnees (18 KIs), and remainees (14 KIs). Regarding vulnerabilities,³² less than one third of KIs reported that all groups faced the same challenges (11 KIs). The rest of the KIs believed that persons with disabilities (30 KIs), older persons (26 KIs), and female heads of household (17 KIs) faced more challenges when attempting to access livelihoods compared to other groups. Additionally, three KIs reported that households with alleged links to ISIL also faced challenges to access livelihoods.

Most reported livelihood sectors available in Markaz Samarra at the time of data collection (out of 35 KIs)²⁴

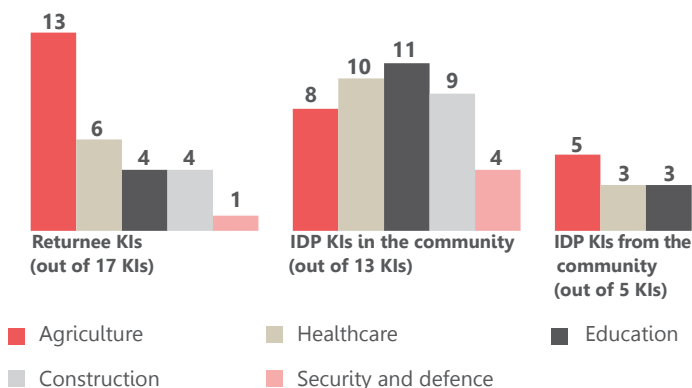
Construction	30 KIs	<div style="width: 86%;"></div>
Healthcare (public and private)	16 KIs	<div style="width: 46%;"></div>
Public education	13 KIs	<div style="width: 37%;"></div>
Agriculture	12 KIs	<div style="width: 34%;"></div>
Public administration and defence	6 KIs	<div style="width: 17%;"></div>

Findings indicated that the availability of some livelihood sectors was affected at the time of data collection.³⁵ The oil industry, manufacturing, transportation, and trade sectors were reportedly less available at the time of data collection.

Livelihood sectors of interest for returnees and IDPs from the community

Returnee, IDP in the community, and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (35 out of 45 KIs). The most commonly reported **livelihood sector of interest for returnee and IDP households** from the community was **agriculture** (26 KIs).

The top five most reported livelihood sectors interests included:²⁴



Additionally, other commonly reported livelihood sectors of interest were animal breeding (8 KIs), aquaculture (4 KIs), and trade and commerce (4 KIs).

Challenges to access livelihood sectors of interest

All consulted KIs reported that households in their respective displacement groups faced challenges accessing jobs in sectors of their interest. Reported challenges included:

Agricultural sector (including farming and aquaculture) (out of 22 KIs)

- » Lack of governmental support to revitalize the agricultural sector, farming (animal breeding and livestock), and aquaculture, and the need to purchase materials (such as seeds and fertilizers), taking into consideration that the area depended on the agricultural sector (20 KIs),
- » Lack of support to rehabilitate damaged irrigation systems (5 KIs),
- » Lack of financial and legal support to reclaim lands (3 KIs), and
- » Difficulties to transport fertilizers and agricultural materials through checkpoints (1 KI)

Government jobs (including public sector employment) (out 21 KIs)

- » Lack of governmental job appointments, the presence of intermediaries, and the need to pay bribes to public officials to access governmental jobs (20 KIs) and
- » Youth graduates volunteering as education personnel in the sub-district (1 KI).

Construction sector (out of 18 KIs)

- » Lack or limited rehabilitation and construction projects (16 KIs) and
- » Skilled workers in the construction sector remaining displaced, which affects rehabilitation in the sub-district (5 KIs).

Private sector (out of 15 KIs)

- » Lack of financial support and investment in the private sector (15 KIs) and
- » The devaluation of the Iraqi dinar negatively affecting trade and commerce in the sub-district (1 KI).

Livelihood sectors with reported growth potential

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (10 out of 45 KIs). **Agriculture** was commonly reported by all consulted KIs as **the livelihood sector with the most growth potential** in the 12 months following data collection.

KIs also reported that other sectors showed potential to grow, such as public healthcare (8 KIs), trade and commerce (7 KIs), public education (7 KIs), construction (6 KIs), and transportation (6 KIs). Less reported sectors with growth potential included manufacturing (4 KIs) and public administration and defence (4 KIs).

Livelihood activities support to economic growth

When consulting community leader and SME KIs (10 KIs) about the potential impact of livelihood activities and projects to support economic growth in the sub-district, all consulted KIs reported that livelihood activities may support the economic development of Markaz Samarra.

Impact on agriculture

To promote better support to the sub-district in terms of economic growth, all consulted KIs recommended the implementation of programmes that support the agricultural sector. Reportedly, these should support farmers with loans and materials such as fertilizers, seeds, and equipment to cultivate their land (10 KIs). As a result, local products, especially fruits and vegetables, would be transported to local markets, reducing the dependency on imported products (5 KIs). Additionally, three KIs reported the need to build new irrigation channels to revitalize the agricultural sector. One KI reported the need to revitalize aquaculture as well.

Impact on manufacturing, trade, and commerce

Two KIs recommended the need to reopen factories and workshops to promote manufacturing and ensure job opportunities for craftsmen and industrial professionals, such as carpenters.

Access to public judicial mechanisms

The majority of KIs (37 out of 45 KIs) reported that **households did not face challenges in accessing public judicial mechanisms**. However, the rest of KIs (returnee, IDP in the community, and IDP KIs from the community) reported that the main challenge households faced in accessing public judicial mechanisms was related to the lack of a court in the sub-district (8 KIs), forcing them to travel to the district center or to Tikrit to process their legal files.

Status of public offices or departments

Returnee, IDP in the community, SME, and community leader KIs were consulted about the groups less involved in activities (40 out of 45 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs (35 out of 40 KIs) believed that there were **no closed offices or departments** in Markaz Samarra at the time of data collection. However, five KIs reported that some police departments were closed due to

damaged buildings. Additionally, three KIs reported that the sub-district lacked a civil status department and offices representing the Ministry of Displacement and Migration since before 2014.

Missing or expired documentation

Returnee, IDP in the community, and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (35 out of 45 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs reported that **there were no households with missing, damaged, or out-of-date personal documentation** (34 out of 35 KIs). However, one older returnee KI reported that access to documentation, namely birth registration for children born from killed or disappeared parent(s), was a serious concern in the sub-district. The KI remarked that **"it was difficult to obtain any document that may be lost or missing, especially the birth certificate for those who have newborns with missing parents due to the 2014 events."**

Perceptions on governance³⁶

Community leader and SME KIs were consulted for this section (10 out of 45 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs (7 out of 10 KIs) believed that **formal security forces** were **the most influential bodies in terms of governance**.

Reported influential local actors regarding governance (out of 13 KIs)²⁴

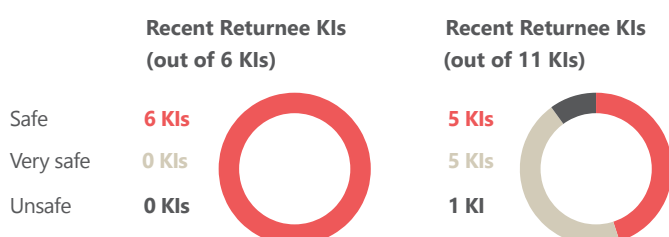
Formal security forces	7 KIs	<div></div>
Tribal leaders	4 KIs	<div></div>
Local authorities	3 KIs	<div></div>
Mukhtars ³⁷	3 KIs	<div></div>

Perceptions on safety and security³⁶

Returnee, IDP in the community, and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (35 out of 45 KIs). Two out of these KIs reported that reconciliation and security were essential primary community needs. One community leader KI reported that ensuring security for the community members in the sub-district was highly relevant due to continued ISIL attacks on some of the villages in Samarra District.³⁸

Returnee households

The majority of returnee KIs reported that most returnee households felt safe in the sub-district (11 out of 17 KIs). Findings showed that feelings of safety varied with the return period.



One older returnee KI reported that households felt unsafe due to the presence of outstanding intercommunal disputes in the sub-district.

IDP households in the community

All IDP KIs in the community reported that the majority of IDP households felt safe or very safe in the sub-district (13 KIs).

IDP households from the community

The majority of IDP KIs from the community reported that most IDP households felt safe or very safe in the sub-district (4 out of 5 KIs). One IDP KI reported that some households felt somewhat safe due to the presence of checkpoints and informal armed groups in the area.

Freedom of movement

Returnee, IDP in the community, SME, and community leader KIs were consulted for this section (40 out of 45 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that there were no restrictions of movement imposed in the sub-district.

Most of the returnee and IDP KIs in the community (25 out of 30 KIs) also reported that the majority of returnee households could freely move during the day and at night in Markaz Samarra if they desired. This situation was reportedly the same for women, girls, men, and boys,³⁹ according to 25 KIs. However, five KIs reported that households could not freely move during the day or at night due to the presence of informal armed groups and the deployment of the formal security forces at night. According to the KIs, this situation equally affected women, girls, men, and boys.³⁹

Explosive remnants of war (ERW) land contamination

The majority of KIs (42 out of 45 KIs) reported that **there were no fields contaminated with ERW** in Markaz Samarra at the time of data collection.

However, three KIs reported the presence of ERW contaminated sub-districts in the surroundings of the sub-district. KIs believed that there was a lack of clearance mechanisms and efforts for ERW removal from the local relevant authorities and specialized NGOs. This led to households' fear for incidents to occur.

Perceptions on community disputes³⁶

Returnee, IDP in the community, community leader, and SME KIs were consulted for this section (40 out of 45 KIs). All consulted KIs reported that **there were no disputes** between the sub-district and other areas (external disputes). In addition, the majority of consulted KIs (39 out of 40 KIs) reported that there were no disputes within neighbourhoods/villages (internal disputes) in Markaz Samarra in the six months prior to data collection.

However, one older returnee KI reported the occurrence of internal disputes between host community members and returnee households due to some of the returning members being infected with COVID-19.

Retaliation incidents

Additionally, the majority of KIs reported that there were no retaliation incidents in the sub-district in the six months prior to data collection (41 out of 45 KIs). The rest of the KIs did not know about the occurrence of retaliation incidents (4 KIs).

However, one IDP KI from the community reported the need for reconciliation and negotiation with tribal leaders in the sub-district to allow displaced households to return. According to the KI, returns were prevented due to outstanding intercommunal disputes.

Role of different bodies in solving disputes

Internal disputes (within the sub-district)

Returnee and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (30 out of 45 KIs). Reportedly, **tribal leaders** were the **most effective body in resolving disputes** within the sub-district (17 KIs), followed by formal security forces (4 KIs) and local authorities (3 KIs). The rest of KIs refused to answer (6 KIs).

Tribal leaders

KIs reported that households perceived tribal leaders as playing an essential role to ensure security and stability in the area and to resolve small internal disputes (14 KIs). Reportedly, this was because of the tribal nature of the sub-district because tribal leaders had a high influence on community members (13 KIs) and because the tribal system was accepted as a social institution by community members (2 KIs). Additionally, two KIs reported that tribal leaders were perceived as having recognized authority to maintain order and apply law in sub-district.

Formal security forces

KIs reported that the formal security forces were perceived as the highest authority to ensure security (4 KIs) and that they played an important role as official forces to impose the law (3 KIs). Additionally, one KI reported that tribal leaders cooperated with the formal security forces to maintain order in the area. In addition, all consulted KIs reported that the presence of formal security forces contributed positively to a feeling of safety between community members.

Local authorities

KIs believed that the local authorities were perceived responsible – by law – to resolve internal disputes (3 KIs) and that they were responsible to apply the law in the sub-district (2 KIs).

External disputes (between the sub-district and other areas)

Returnee and IDP KIs in the community were consulted for this section (30 out of 45 KIs). Reportedly, local authorities were the most effective body in resolving disputes between the sub-district and other areas (8 KIs), followed by formal security forces (7 KIs) and tribal leaders (2 KIs). The rest of the KIs refused to answer (8 KIs) or reportedly did not know about main actors to resolve external disputes (5 KIs).

Local authorities

KIs reported that community members resorted to involving the local authorities when disputes could not be resolved by tribal leaders (4 KIs). According to four KIs, local authorities were responsible for bringing people together, maintaining peace, and applying the law. Additionally, two KIs believed that local authorities were the main security body.

Formal security forces

KIs reported that formal security forces were perceived as the highest authority to ensure security and impose the law (7 KIs)

they were responsible for resolving external disputes between the sub-district and surrounding areas (3 KIs).

Tribal leaders

According to two KIs, tribal leaders only intervened in cases where external disputes were not complex.

Perceptions on community inter-relations

Feeling welcome to Markaz Samarra

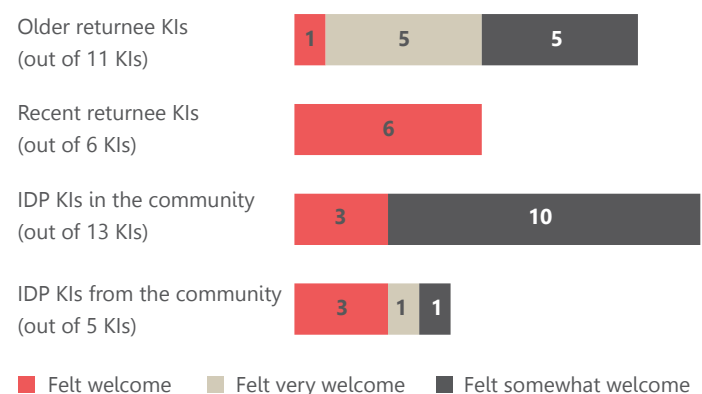
Returnee, IDP in the community, and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (35 out of 45 KIs). Slightly over half of consulted KIs reported that the majority of households in the community felt welcome or very welcome to the sub-district (19 KIs). The reported reasons included:

- » The prevalence and strength of different tribes in the area, causing households to feel protected since they belonged to these tribes (12 KIs),
- » Pre-existing strong cooperation relationships through trade and commerce, and work to reactivate the economy in the sub-district (9 KIs), and
- » Households were perceived to not be affiliated to ISIL (5 KIs).

The rest of KIs (16 KIs) reported that some households felt somewhat welcome to Markaz Samarra, and this was allegedly due to:

- » The presence of discrimination based on their displacement status, ethnicity, religion, and tribal roots (7 KIs),
- » Some households having alleged links to ISIL (3 KIs),
- » The prevalence and strength of different tribes in the area preventing some households to return due to unresolved outstanding intercommunal disputes (3 KIs), and
- » The lack of trust in community members (2 KIs).

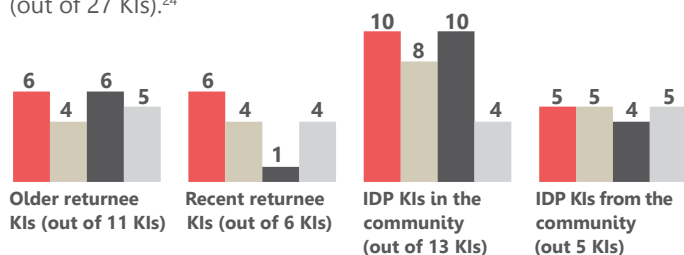
Additionally, over half of IDP KIs in the community (7 out of 13 KIs) reported that households displaced in the sub-district felt marginalised by the host community members and tribes (3 KIs), experienced mistreatment and challenging coexistence with community members (3 KIs), and faced exploitation at work from the local employers based on their ethnicity or displacement status (1 KI).



Interaction between displacement groups

Returnee, IDP in the community, and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (35 out of 45 KIs). Over three quarters of consulted KIs (27 out of 35 KIs) reported that the majority of households from all displacement groups mainly interacted with **returnees**.

Findings showed the variation of interaction between groups (out of 27 KIs).²⁴



- Interacted with returnee households
- Interacted with IDP households in the community
- Interacted with remainees
- Interacted with IDP households from the community

The rest of the KIs (8 KIs) reported that the majority of households in their respective displacement groups (representing IDPs in the community and older returnees) did not interact with other groups.

KIs who reported lack of interaction also reported that:

- » Felt somewhat welcome to the sub-district (7 KIs), and/or
- » Households felt somewhat belonging to the sub-district (6 KIs), and/or
- » Households did not feel (re)integrated (5 KIs).

Reported types of interaction between groups

Returnee, IDP in the community, and IDP KIs from the community who reported interaction with other community groups (27 out of 35 KIs) were consulted for this section. The most commonly reported way of interaction was the kinship ties households in the sub-district had between them (18 KIs). Other ways of interaction included:

Social related (out of 18 KIs)

- » Attending social events and supporting each other to organize weddings or funerals (8 KIs),
- » Providing support to returnee households to rehabilitate their houses or temporarily hosting them (5 KIs),
- » Actions of solidarity, such as financial support or voluntary work to rehabilitate schools (3 KIs), and
- » Providing financial support and in-kind donations to vulnerable households, especially recent returnees (2 KIs).

Work related (out of 12 KIs)

- » Strengthened work relationships (8 KIs),
- » Providing support to farmers to resume agricultural activities (4 KIs), and
- » Supporting lower-income households to reopen their small businesses, which helped reactivate commercial activity (3 KIs).

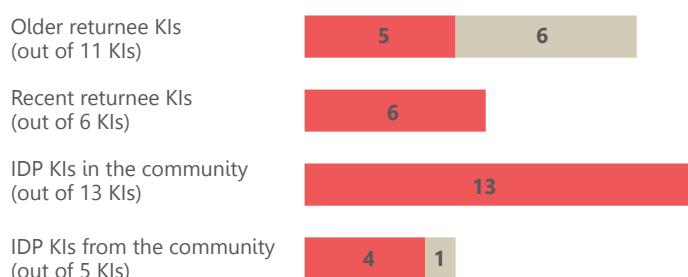
Challenges for interaction between groups

Over half of consulted KIs (20 out of 35 KIs) reported that there were no challenges for interaction between groups. However, 15 KIs reported that there were challenges for interaction including:²⁴

- » Presence or fear of discrimination, abuse, or exploitation from the community (6 KIs),
- » Some households had alleged links to ISIL (5 KIs),
- » Presence or existing inter-communal disputes (4 KIs),
- » Lack of interest to interact or lack of trust in other groups (4 KIs), and
- » Feeling marginalised by other groups (2 KIs).

Participation in decision-making processes

Returnee, IDP in the community, and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (35 out of 45 KIs). The majority of consulted KIs reported that **households participated in decision-making processes**.



- Yes, households participated
- No, households did not participate

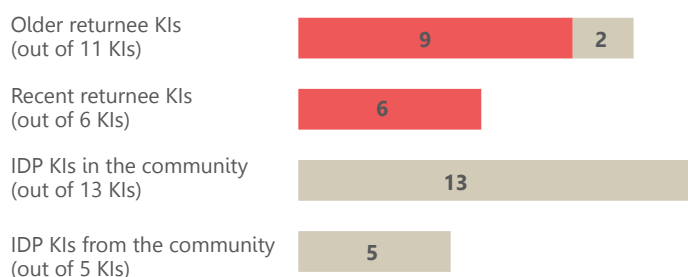
KIs who reported that households did not participate in decision-making processes also reported that households:

- » Faced challenges for interaction (7 KIs), and/or
- » Felt somewhat welcome to the sub-district (5 KIs), and/or
- » Felt somewhat belonging to the sub-district (3 KIs), and/or
- » Did not feel (re)integrated in the community (3 KIs).

Perceptions on durable solutions

Returnee, IDP in the community, and IDP KIs from the community were consulted for this section (35 out of 45 KIs). Over the half of KIs (20 out of 35 KIs) reported that the majority of households did not feel (re)integrated in the community of Markaz Samarra or in their AoDs.

Perceptions on durable solutions varied with KI profiles as the following:



- Felt (re)integrated
- Did not feel (re)integrated

Reported reasons for returnees' feeling of reintegration

This question was asked to returnee KIs (17 out of 45 KIs). The vast majority of returnee KIs (15 out of 17 KIs) reported that returnee households felt reintegrated in the community of the sub-district. The most reported reason was the fact that the households returned to their original areas and claimed to be **"the original population and the decisions-makers in the sub-district"** (13 KIs). KIs also reported that the households left the sub-district only under pressure due to the fear of ISIL presence after 2014 (2 KIs). Reportedly, some returnee households felt reintegrated due to some of their members being public employees and having a relevant role in public affairs (3 KIs).⁴⁰

Two KIs reported that some households did not feel reintegrated. One of these KIs believed this was related to returnee households being perceived as lacking financial resources and therefore to be of a different class (lower class compared to other households in the sub-district) (1 KI) and because other returnee households were alleged to have previous links with ISIL (1 KI).

Reported reasons for IDPs' feeling of integration

The majority of IDP KIs (17 out of 22 KIs) reported that lacking housing in the sub-district or in their AoDs was the main reason for households did not feel integrated in the community.

IDP KIs in the community (out of 13 KIs)

Did not own housing	12	Did not have a job	2	Did not have a network	2
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IDP KIs from the community (out of 5 KIs)

Did not own housing	5	Did not have a job	1	Did not have a network	0
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- Did not own housing
- Did not have a job
- Did not have a network

Perceptions on social cohesion

Social cohesion influencing actors

The majority of KIs (37 out of 45 KIs) reported that the **most influential actor in terms of social cohesion** was the **local community**.²⁴

Local community	37 KIs
Humanitarian actors	32 KIs
Formal security forces	32 KIs
Local authorities	31 KIs

Older returnee, community leader, and SME KIs reported that the formal security forces were the main actor to ensure social cohesion, while IDP in the community and recent returnee KIs believed that all actors had the same level of influence or responsibility towards social cohesion.

Improving social cohesion

KIs believed that the local authorities, tribal leaders, and humanitarian actors played an important role to improve social cohesion in the sub-district (11 out of 45 KIs). Additionally, there were reported strategies or initiatives to be considered to accelerate or enhance the process.

Initiatives promoting access to work for all

Over half of KIs (26 out of 45 KIs) reported that initiatives promoting access to work for all should be considered to improve social cohesion. These included:

- » Supporting job creation projects (21 KIs).
- » Promoting consciousness of employers to reject discrimination based on ethnicity or displacement status (10 KIs).
- » Implementing projects to rehabilitate damaged farms (2 KIs).
- » Promoting equal chances to access jobs and fair working conditions (1 KI).

"Increasing the number of available job opportunities and employing youth is important, so that they do not become busy creating problems and so that it does not create chaos among the members of the same community due to the high level of competition for employment."

- Male SME KI -

Initiatives promoting community inter-relationships

Almost half of KIs (22 out of 45 KIs) reported that initiatives strengthening community inter-relationships and interaction may improve social cohesion in the sub-district, such as:

- » Promoting participation in social events (9 KIs),
- » Implementing activities to promote trust between community members (7 KIs).
- » Providing assistance to ensure housing rehabilitation, focusing on priorities and vulnerabilities (5 KIs).
- » Promoting or reactivating voluntary work and encouraging women and youth to actively participate in these activities (4 KIs).
- » Supporting the return of displaced households (1 KI).

Seminars, awareness sessions, and conferences

KIs believed that organising seminars, events, conferences, awareness sessions, and workshops was an effective way to promote social cohesion (12 KIs). The most recommended topics for these activities were:

- » Coexistence (6 KIs).
- » Security and conflict resolution (4 KIs).
- » Peace building and dialogue (3 KIs).

"Conducting conferences, whether from local authorities or tribal leaders, to increase relations and urge peaceful coexistence [is needed], and also for organizations to implement awareness sessions among the people of the district to promote social cohesion."

- Female IDP KI in the community -

Initiatives promoting community inter-relationships

Other perceived ways to improve social cohesion in the area were reportedly related to the responsibility and commitment from community members to report **"suspicious activities"** related to potential terrorist actions (10 KIs). One KI also believed that local authorities should proactively remove all unofficial armed groups from the sub-district and that only the official security forces should remain and take control over the area.

1. [IOM DTM Return Index](#)
2. Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster Iraq, [Iraq Informal Sites Overview](#), September 2021
3. A total of 16 IDP camps and informal sites have now been closed or reclassified since mid-November 2020 (12 formal camps closed, including Salamiyah, two informal sites closed, and two formal camps were reclassified to informal sites). However, as per July 2021, 2 camps in federal Iraq and additional 26 in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) (mostly in Dohuk) remained open. The Ministry of Migration and Displacement in Iraq (MoMD) announces from time to time their attempts to find solutions for the remaining in-camp IDPs in federal Iraq by closing the remaining two camps accordingly, while no plans have been set in place to support the IDPs who settled in the informal sites nationwide - RTONLINE, [Iraq discusses the situation of the displaced with the IOM](#), November 2021
4. IOM DTM Master List, [Returnees rounds 120 and 122](#), January-February 2021 and June-July 2021
5. UNESCO, [The ancient city of Samarra](#), 2007
6. "The area of central Iraq known as the Sunni Triangle, to the west and north of Baghdad, has been the focal point of violent resistance to the U.S.-led occupation. Long dominated by powerful Sunni Arab tribes and favoured by Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime, many Sunnis now fear retribution by Iraq's majority Shiites and marginalization under a new democratic government." - FRONTLINE, [Sunni Triangle: Tribes and Insurgents](#), 12 February 2004
7. "The forces of the 41st Brigade of Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi repelled an attack launched by ISIS remnants, south of Samarra in Saladin Governorate. A statement by al-Hashd Media Directorate said that a group of ISIS terrorists attacked the security forces in charge in Tal Al-Dahab area in Yathrib, south of Samarra, clashed with them and were forced to withdraw." - Shafaq Iraq News, [PMF repels an ISIS attack in Samarra](#), 7 March 2021
8. "The Popular Mobilization Forces announced today, Friday, that it had confronted an ISIS attack south of Samarra, Salah al-Din Governorate." - Iraqi News Agency, [PMF confronts ISIS attack south of Samarra](#), 19 November 2021
9. 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 Samarra, there were 5 community leader and 5 SME respondents. Population figures for returns and IDP populations in Markaz Samarra are based on their estimates at the time of data collection.
10. 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.
11. For the purpose of this research, returnees are categorized as an IDP returning to their AoO, where AoO is defined as the stated original sub-district of origin for the IDP as per the [IOM returnee index](#). Given the complexity of (re)integration, this could mean that returnees still face challenges to their sustainable return to their AoO.
12. As clarified by the Iraq Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) in 2018, secondary displacement covers multiple scenarios: 1) IDPs who are voluntarily or forcibly displaced to another displacement location; 2) IDPs who voluntarily or forcibly return to their AoO but are unable to achieve sustainable solutions and are consequently re-displaced to their first place of displacement or to a new location of displacement; and 3) IDPs who, voluntarily or forcibly, return to their AoO but are unable to occupy in their former habitual residence and cannot achieve sustainable solutions and are consequently re-displaced to a new location within their AoO.
13. "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](#)
14. The most severely affected areas in Markaz Samarra in terms of social cohesion and safety perceptions were reportedly Al-Jillam, Al-Jazera, and Al-Hewash villages - IOM DTM, [Return Index Round 13](#), August and September 2021
15. Durable Solutions Technical Working Group's (DSTWG), [Terms of Reference Durable Solutions Area-Level Coordination \(ABC\) Iraq](#)
16. Households originally from Markaz Samarra were reportedly displaced in Jeddah 5 camp. Closure plans for this camp remained unclear while its closure was posted in 2020. - CCCM Cluster Iraq, [Iraq: Camp Closure Status](#), 14 January 2021
17. "IDPs in the community" refers to households originally from sub-districts different than Markaz Samarra displaced in Markaz Samarra during the events of 2014. The majority of these KIs (10 out of 13 KIs) were originally from Al-Moutasim, Al-Tharthar, and Dila sub-districts (Samarra District in Salah Al-Din Governorate). The rest of the KIs were originally from Markaz Telafar (Telafar District in Ninewa Governorate) (2 KIs) and from Al-Atheem Sub-district (Al-Khalis District in Diyala Governorate) (1 KI).
18. "Older returnees" refers to households who returned to Markaz Samarra Sub-district more than three months prior to data collection.
19. "Recent returnees" refers to households who returned to Markaz Samarra Sub-district less than three months prior to data collection.
20. "IDPs (displaced from the area)" refers to households from Markaz Samarra displaced during the events of 2014 to areas different than their AoO specifically in Taq-taq Sub-district (Erbil District in Erbil Governorate), Al-Duloeyah and Yathreb sub-district (Balad District), and Abou Dalf Sub-district (Al-Daour District) in Salah Al-Din Governorate.
21. Community leaders are members of the host community. For this assessment they were represented by three education sector officials, one security official and one religious leader.
22. SMEs are members of the community with a high level of expertise in different sectors or topics. These were represented by: two senior officials both experts on migration and displacement, one senior official in the agricultural sector, one senior official expert in youth affairs, and one local NGO representative.
23. There were 45 individuals interviewed for the Markaz Samarra assessment aged between 28 and 71 years old. The majority were male (31 KIs, with a large majority of them from community leader profiles). Integration of vulnerable age groups was considered, two male KIs were over the age of 65 representing older persons.
24. KIs were able to select multiple responses to this question.
25. "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
26. Arbat IDP camp is located in Suleimaniyah Governorate. It accommodated 287 households (1,340 individuals) and remained open as per November 2021 - CCCM Cluster Iraq, [Iraq Camp Master List and Population Flow](#), November 2021
27. "The reasons for no returns taking place in these sub-districts relate to security forces blocking families from returning, as well as continued conflict between groups associated with ISIL and Iraqi government forces." - IOM Iraq, [Protracted displacement in Iraq: District of origin profiles](#), August 2021
28. Other less reported primary needs were access to documentation (1 out of 4 KIs), reconciliation and social cohesion programmes (1 KI), security (1 KI), and explosive remnants of war (ERW) removal (1 KI).
29. "On the other hand, 71 IDP households originally from and Saied Garib in Balad district; Yathrib in Aziz Balad sub-district; and Talafar in Mosul residing in schools in Samarra district expressed concerns from possible eviction. All above IDPs are unable to return to sub-districts of origin due to unstable security situation as well as shelter and infrastructure damage." - National Protection Cluster, [Minutes of Meeting](#), March 2021
30. Findings were indicative of each population group and not representative.
31. Other less reported humanitarian activities were livelihoods programmes (2 KIs), social cohesion programmes (2 KIs), and housing and infrastructure rehabilitation (1 KI).
32. 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.
33. All KIs reported that the most difficult assistance to obtain regarding housing rehabilitation was the financial support (45 KIs), followed by reconstruction and rehabilitation projects (37 KIs) and legal support for HLP (11 KIs).
34. "On the other hand, 71 IDP households originally from and Saied Garib in Balad district; Yathrib in Aziz Balad sub-district; and Talafar in Mosul residing in schools in Samarra district expressed concerns from possible eviction. All above IDPs are unable to return to sub-districts of origin due to unstable security situation as well as shelter and infrastructure damage." - National Protection Cluster, [Minutes of Meeting](#), March 2021
35. When 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 overall availability had reportedly decreased. The KIs were asked to recall the period before 2014 and the perceived difference was hence to be 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.
36. The findings of this section represent the perceptions of a relatively small group of respondents. Therefore, they 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.
37. 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.
38. Several ISIL operations and attacks took place in 2021. Some examples were recorded by [Shafaq Iraq News](#) (March 2021), [Reuters](#) (June 2021), [AA Middle East](#) (September 2021), and [Iraqi News Agency](#) (November 2021).
39. 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.
40. Four KIs believed that other factors influenced households' perceptions of reintegration, such as: the presence of kinship ties between households in the community (2 KIs), that some households were recommended by local authorities or tribes to return (1 KI), and that other households had previous trade and commerce experience in the area and therefore were well-known by the community (1 KI).