

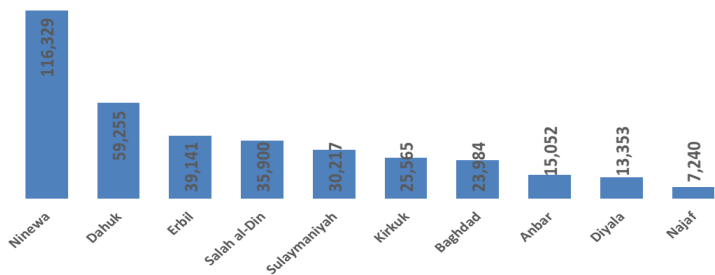
HIGHLIGHTS:

- Cases of collective punishment of families, particularly denial of returns by armed actors were reported by families from several locations in Ninewa, Kirkuk and Anbar governorates.
- At least 1,111 families from Salah al-Din and Anbar governorates returned to their areas of origin as part of spontaneous and organized returns from camps and non-camp settings in Anbar, Baghdad, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din governorates and parts of the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KR-I).
- 42 IDP families were evicted from an abandoned, government owned building in Tikrit (Salah al-Din Governorate) by local police. All families originate from Baiji district (Salah al-Din Governorate). Some families remain in the building, but are being pressured to leave.

Affected Population

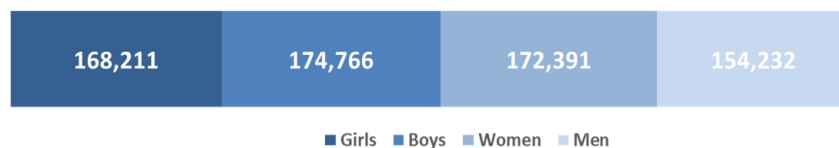
3.2 million IDPs have returned to their places of origin while **2.6 million** are still displaced in Center-South areas.

Displaced Families per Governorate

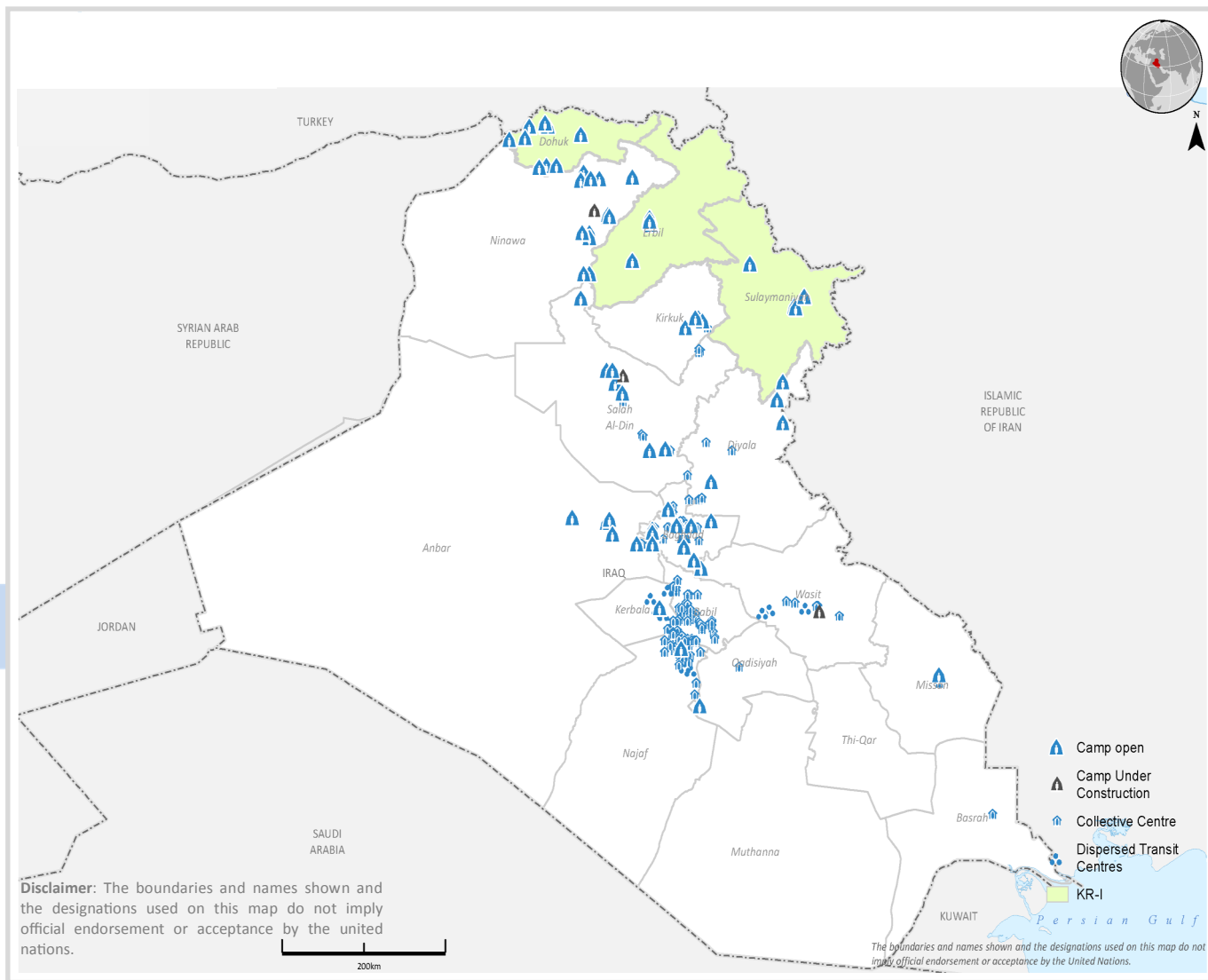


Protection Monitoring*

139,410 families reached **669,600** individuals reached



- 41%** of families with no income
- 2,762** unaccompanied or separated children
- 40%** of families missing civil documentation



Displacements

There has continued to be a mixed pattern of arrival and departure to and from Mosul camps. A lack of services and livelihood opportunities, destruction of homes in areas of return and insufficient funds to cover rental costs continue to be the key reasons for re-displacement. Meanwhile, joining relatives residing in out-of-camp settings, treatment of chronic disease, lack of livelihood opportunities in camps, and information that areas of origin are safe, were the main reasons for departure from camps.

There continues to be a high number of female-headed households arriving to IDP camps in Erbil Governorate. Of the 116 families (515 individuals) who had arrived to Khazar, Hassansham and Chamakor camps during the first half of March, 42 per cent were headed by females. Many left behind husbands or fathers in Mosul City and are moving to the camps due to the unaffordable living costs in the city. Some of household members also reportedly faced challenges at checkpoints while traveling to the camps, when questioned why they were traveling without an adult male relative. In some cases they had to plead with security officers to be allowed to proceed. Since the beginning of the year, 42 separated and unaccompanied children were also identified in these camps and referred to specialized services. In some cases, parents are sending their children to camps to receive assistance that they are unable to otherwise provide for them in Mosul.

The Camp Coordination Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster through close monitoring and interviews with 5,168 newly arrived families in Mosul camps between 12 January and 17 March revealed that 69 per cent moved to camps for financial reasons or due to their homes being damaged or destroyed. At least 23 per cent reported protection concerns including Housing, Land and Property issues (evictions by landlord, occupation of property), security concerns or collective punishment. The number of new arrivals in Qayyarah-Jada'a camp that reported displacement due to evictions by security actors was comparatively higher than other camps.

Security actors in two of the Jeda'a camps (Ninewa Governorate) have been continuing to confiscate identification documents of families suspected of having links with extremist groups. There have also been reports of security personnel searching through the belongings of some of these families. The confiscation of identification documents and arrest of some of IDPs from Shirqat (Salah al-Din) and Hawiga (Kirkuk) was first reported in late February. UNHCR and the National Protection Cluster have continued to highlight concerns over the presence of armed actors in the Jeda'a camps.

On 5 March, the Office of the Governor of Anbar issued a letter calling for the consolidation of Habaniya Tourist City (HTC) and Ameriyat al Falluja (AAF), as well as of Al-Khaldiyah and Bzebiz camps (hosting 2,900 families); the merging of all sectors of Kilo 18 camp; the removal and distribution of empty tents among returnee families; and restrictions of access by NGOs who do not have the approval of the Anbar Joint Coordination and Monitoring Centre (JCMC) and a registration certificate to work in the camps in Anbar Governorate. On 17 March, members from Al-Khaldiyah Local Council and Mayor requested the central camp management begin the process of consolidating Al-Khaldiyah camps. Some families refused to move and subsequently authorities threatened to cut off services, including food, water and electricity. However, after UNHCR and protection partners followed up with authorities, they committed to continuing assistance while they work with the IDPs towards a solution. In mid-January, JCMC and humanitarian actors had agreed to address camp closure and consolidation through Governorate Returns Committees (GRCs), in a consultative manner involving government, UN and NGO representatives. These have not yet been set up in Anbar though the process of camp consolidation has started. Camp consolidation and closures can be an opportunity for IDPs to be relocated to locations with better services and freedom of movement as well as will serving as a consultative process that engages IDPs and provides them with informed choices.

Denied Returns

Cases of collective punishment of families with an alleged affiliation with extremist groups continue to be reported. During early March, there were reported incidents of denial of returns by government-affiliated armed groups controlling areas in Sinjar, Telafar and Mosul districts in Ninewa Governorate, Hawija in Kirkuk Governorate and Al Qa'im and Ramadi districts in Anbar Governorate. Families from at least four sub-districts of Sinjar reported forced displacement once they reached camp locations which had resulted in their secondary displacement. Several of them reported multiple displacements before reaching the camps and some families from Al Qayrawan in Sinjar noted that they had been living in displacement for more than three years. Families from Hawiga reported harassment by armed actors on several occasions, thus concerns over safety served as a reason for deciding to leave these locations. IDPs from Aiyadhiyah in Telafar also reported that those believed to have family or tribal links to extremist groups risk being arrested if they return. Some families were not able to return due to threats by the wider community. IDPs from parts of Zummar district located between the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and *Peshmerga* (Kurdish forces) lines of control reported returning to camps as they were not allowed by the ISF to return to their areas of origin

and did not feel it was safe.

Returns to Recently Retaken Areas

During the reporting period, at least 1,111 families from Salah al-Din and Anbar governorates returned to their areas of origin as part of spontaneous and organized returns from camps and non-camp settings in Anbar, Baghdad, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din governorates and parts of KR-I. All areas had been heavily affected by military operations. The Anbar Provincial Council confirmed that 75 per cent of the buildings and infrastructure are damaged in Al Qa'im district and that USD 10 billion would be required for reconstruction, noting that the infrastructure in some parts has been almost completely destroyed.

In addition to returns, 17 families in Al Shahama camp in Salah al-Din have been approved by the Governorate's Operations Commander for sponsorship by family members, which will allow them to leave the camp. Three additional families are in the process of having their files reviewed by the security actors. IDPs in the camp live in challenging conditions due to severe restrictions on movement, the significant presence of armed actors and limited access to services. The camp hosts 163 extremely vulnerable, predominantly female-headed households (634 individuals) who all have family members allegedly associated or accused of association with extremist groups. Most originate from east Shirqat district and were involuntarily brought from informal settlements in Tikrit and Al Alam camps to Al Shahama by armed actors because of alleged affiliation with extremist groups.

The CCCM Cluster with the support of the Protection Cluster partners between September 2017 and January 2018 conducted intention surveys with 5,731 households (37,922 individuals); first in camps in Mosul and later in camps across Iraq. Around 48 per cent of households reported intention to move back to their district of origin, and possibly their homes within three months, while 29 per cent said they planned to stay in the camps for the time being. Overall, however, participants of the survey felt that safety in areas of return had significantly improved. A fifth of those interviewed indicated that they do not know the condition of their shelter in their areas of origin, and 14 per cent reported that one or more members in their household is missing one or more legal documents.

In early March, a UNHCR protection partner conducted a separate intention survey in Salamiyah camp in Ninewa Governorate in which only five out of 150 families interviewed intended to return to their areas of origin. The obstacles to the return mentioned are insecurity, damaged shelters, and a lack of services and livelihood opportu-

nities. Some 90 per cent of the families reported that their houses had been partially damaged or completely destroyed.

Forced Evictions of IDPs

During the first two weeks of March, 42 IDP families were evicted by local police from an abandoned government-owned building in Tikrit, Salah al-Din. All families originate from Baiji district. Some families remain in the building, but a local *Mukhtar* (neighbourhood leader) and the Tikrit police continue to apply pressure on them to leave. Four IDP families also from Baiji district left an unfinished school after extensive pressure from a local *Mukhtar* and staff of the Tikrit police during the past month. This included at one point the confiscation of identification documents of families and the removal of water tanks and heaters.

UNHCR protection partners visited Al-Taji neighbourhood in Baghdad following reports about threats of forced evictions. The families are living in informal settlements, rented houses or with the host community. The security forces reportedly instructed them to leave the area within one week but did not evict them. A group of families, originally from Yathrib and Baiji in Salah al-Din expressed concerns about returning to their area of origin due to tribal tensions and collective punishment. If forced evictions take place, most families are likely to end up in secondary displacement. The Local Council of Al-Taji estimates that all together 500 non-camp IDP families from Anbar, Salah al-Din and Ninewa governorates live in the area, while the actual number might be lower due to recent returns. Reportedly, authorities suggested that if the families can provide pictures of their destroyed houses certified by the local Provincial Council in their area of origin, they would not be subjected to eviction.

According to the instructions of the Governor of Salah al-Din Governorate, the forced eviction of over 2,000 IDPs from informal settlements in Tikrit have been postponed at least until the end of March and possibly will be delayed till the end of the academic year. According to authorities, families will be able to choose between returning to their areas of origin or moving to camps. Further, plans to close Al Salam camp in Baghdad around 21 March have been announced by Ministry of Migration and Displacement. Families from Al Qa'im, Ramadi and Falluja in Anbar living in the camp will be provided with transportation to their area of return or be relocated to Al Ahal camp in Abu Gharaib district in Baghdad.