

METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

PROGRESS TOWARD DURABLE SOLUTIONS
IN IRAQ: A PILOT PROJECT IN NINEWA
GOVERNORATE

DECEMBER 2023



DTM

IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX

CONTEXT

With the end of the conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in December 2017, protracted displacement has come to characterize the post-conflict environment in Iraq. Around 1.16 million people remain internally displaced, nearly all of whom fled their areas of origin more than five years ago. In many cases, displacement is not only prolonged but also unstable, in the sense that severe living conditions push households to resettle more than once. Returns are far from being complete. As of December 2022, almost 5 million returns have been recorded across the country, which corresponds to four fifths of the population displaced since January 2014. However, the rate of return across districts is extremely variable, with only two in five affected people having returned to Al-Ba'aj and Sinjar districts, and the pace of new returns has slowed considerably.¹

This pilot project aims at assessing progress towards durable solutions² to displacement for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees in Ninewa Governorate of Iraq in order to understand where they stand five years after the end of the 2014-2017 crisis and in which aspects they are still struggling compared to the population who never left their location of origin ('stayees'). In this respect, this project contributes to a broader discussion and Action Agenda around measuring progress towards solutions and determining the end of displacement, which aims at operationalizing the eight criteria of the Framework for Durable Solutions produced by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and informing targeted interventions in key areas of concern.³

The analysis of this project builds on the information and knowledge gained by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) regarding the 2014-2017 conflict. IOM Iraq has been tracking and monitoring IDP stock figures as early as December 2013 through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM).⁴ The collection of returnee stock figures began in April 2015, although returnee stock figures have been retroactively reported since October 2014. IOM Iraq also uses the Displacement Index⁵ and Return Index⁶ as tools to monitor the living conditions of the IDP and returnee populations at the location level across key sectors, such as livelihoods, housing, services, safety, social cohesion and inclusiveness. Since 2015, IOM Iraq and Georgetown University implemented a longitudinal study, *Access to Durable Solutions in Iraq*, to understand how IDPs take steps to build durable solutions. The study has regularly surveyed non-camp IDP families since their displacement in 2014-2015, including some families who managed to return to their area of origin since 2017.⁷

IOM Iraq has also monitored protracted⁸ and urban displacement⁹ in the main districts of origin and displacement to provide a contextualized categorization of the affected population and inform planning and development of durable solutions strategies.

The analytical framework for this pilot was developed according to the IASC Framework for Durable Solutions and the recommendations provided by the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS)/UN Statistics Division (UNSD) on IDP statistics and composite measures for progress towards durable solutions and overcoming key displacement-related vulnerabilities. All indicators selected for the composite measure were selected from the Interagency Indicator Library and, as such, they align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

SAMPLING DESIGN

Two sources of data were utilized as sampling frames to obtain the estimated base number of IDP, returnee and stayee households in each subdistrict in Ninewa Governorate. DTM Master List Round 127 data, collected between July and September 2022, was used as a sample frame for IDP and returnee households, while the source for stayee households was statistical population data 2021 from Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Planning for the Republic of Iraq.¹⁰

A two-stage sampling procedure was used. In the first stage, locations in each subdistrict were selected with a probability proportional to the population size¹¹ and then in the second stage, IDP and returnee households were selected proportionally to the total number of households in the location. All locations where IDPs and returnees were present according to DTM Master List Round 127 were included in the frame.¹² For stayees, the procedure was slightly different and based on 2021 Iraqi Central Statistical Office population estimates at the subdistrict level. Only locations selected for IDPs and returnees were included in the frame and the number of households was based on the total number of stayees in the subdistrict. In cases where no stayees or few stayees were present at the selected location, households were replaced within the subdistrict. Due to access issues, not all camps were included in the survey. Ninewa Governorate has eight IDP camps and interviews were conducted at four of them.

1 The rate of return is used to estimate the proportion of returns and is computed as the ratio of returnees to a geographical area (governorate, district or subdistrict) to the total number of returnees and IDPs originally from the same area. The rate of change is used to highlight the fluidity of returns between two different recording periods. If negative, it indicates that new displacement is occurring. For main trends, refer to: IOM, *DTM Overview of Return in Iraq: Integrated Location Assessment (ILA) VII* (Baghdad, 2023).

2 A durable solution is achieved when displaced people no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. It can be achieved through return, integration or resettlement. IASC, *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, The Brookings Institute & University of Bern (Washington D.C., 2010).

3 In 2015, an interagency process, composed by a group of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actors under the leadership of the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, was established. The group started work on developing and testing indicators and guidance for comprehensive durable solutions analysis in internal displacement situations, resulting in a library of standardized indicators and operational guidance. For more information, refer to: IASC, *Inter-Agency Durable Solutions Indicator Library*, Joint IDP Profiling Service (2020).

4 For more information, refer to: IOM, *DTM Iraq Master List*.

5 For more information, refer to: IOM, *DTM Iraq Displacement Index*.

6 For more information, refer to: IOM, *DTM Iraq Return Index*.

7 For more information on the study, its methodology and main findings, refer to: IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq. Part One* (2017). IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Three Years in Displacement* (Baghdad, 2019). IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Four Years in Displacement* (Baghdad, 2019). IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Five Years in Displacement* (Baghdad, 2020). IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Six Years in Displacement* (Baghdad, 2022).

8 For more information, refer to: IOM, *Progress Towards Solutions*.

9 IOM, *DTM – An Analysis of Urban Displacement in Iraq* (Baghdad, 2021).

10 Statistical population data for Ninewa Governorate were obtained from the Central Statistical Office through formal request and are not available in online sources.

11 Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) is a sampling technique where each element (in this case location) has some chance to be selected. The odds of being selected are determined by the population size (that is, locations with a larger population have a higher chance of being selected).

12 The IDP and Returnee Master List provides data on the number of IDPs and returnees at the governorate, district, subdistrict and location levels. In 2022, figures were reported every three months based on IOM's RARTs continuous data collection through interviews with key informants and cross checking with government registration data and partner agencies. IOM, *DTM Iraq Master List 127 Report (July – September 2022)* (Baghdad, 2022).

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection for this pilot took place in November 2022 across 9 districts and 36 subdistricts in the Ninewa Governorate. Data were collected through IOM’s Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs), composed of over 73 staff members (40% of enumerators are female). They collected data through structured face-to-face interviews with a sample size of 8,042 households equally split between three groups: **IDP, returnee** and **stayee** households. This sample size and design allow for comparison between the three groups as well as generalization of the findings per population group at the subdistrict level. Overall, surveyed households represent 41,697 IDP households, 322,410 returnee households and 284,917 stayee households. The margin of error ranged from 7.5–7.7 per cent for IDP estimates, 9 per cent for returnee estimates and 10.5–10.7 per cent for stayee estimates.

SELECTION OF INDICATORS

Indicators to assess the advancement toward durable solutions stemmed from the IASC Framework. The framework defines three ‘durable solutions’ — sustainable return, sustainable integration or sustainable resettlement — each of which depends on the fulfillment of eight criteria: (1) long-term safety and security; (2) adequate standard of living; (3) access to livelihood and employment; (4) access to effective and accessible mechanisms to restore housing, land and property; (5) access to personal and other documentation; (6) family reunification; (7) participation in public affairs and (8) access to effective remedies and justice (Figure 1).

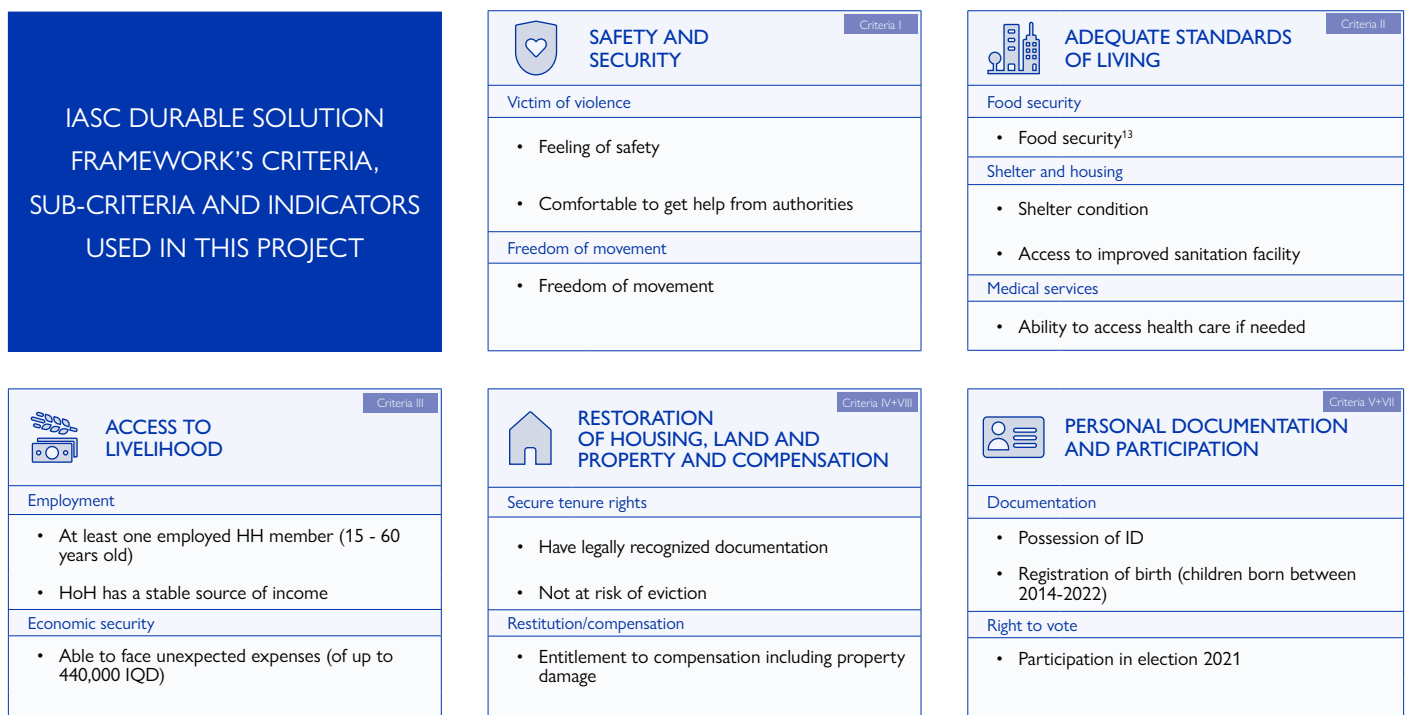
Figure 1: IASC Durable Solution Framework’s criteria to measure the progress toward achieving durable solutions




One of the methodological challenges of operationalizing the framework is that no set of statistical indicators has been agreed on to capture the priority criteria and sub-criteria with the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS) suggesting a context-dependent assessment of durable solutions rather than an absolute approach. For this pilot project, indicators were selected upon consultation with partners in Iraq and following the IRIS guidance to use already tested and standardized indicators such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators and the Durable Solutions Indicator Library (DS Library). All selected indicators across eight criteria were adjusted


to the context of Iraq and organized into a questionnaire, which was then administered to the sample of 2,679 IDP households, 2,675 returnee households and 2,688 stayee households across 36 subdistricts and 9 districts of Ninewa Governorate. Afterward, indicators were tested and analysed across the three population groups and those that differentiated groups better and were consistent across domains were selected for analysis. In the final stage, 16 indicators were selected for analysis and grouped into five domains to have at least three indicators per domain (Figure 2).

Figure 2: IASC Durable Solution Framework’s criteria, sub-criteria and indicators used in this project



13 Food security was assessed by the reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) from the World Food Programme, the de facto standard for measuring food security in humanitarian settings. It is based on five core questions that were administered to households and then weighted with universally standardized weights to allow comparability across contexts. In this analysis, the threshold for the absence of vulnerability was set at 18 and includes the first two classes (Minimal/None (0-3) and Stressed (4-18)) that correspond to a situation of less severe food insecurity. World Food Programme, *The Coping Strategy Index: Field Methods Manual (Second Edition)* (2008).

 SAFETY AND SECURITY Criteria I
Victim of violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of safety • Comfortable to get help from authorities
Freedom of movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of movement

 ADEQUATE STANDARDS OF LIVING Criteria II
Food security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security
Shelter and housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter condition • Access to improved sanitation facility
Medical services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to access health care if needed

Following the IRIS guidance, safety and security is one out of five priority criteria that need to be measured at the household or individual level in every displacement context. The safety and security domain in this pilot project considers whether households feel safe walking alone around the area they live during the day, are comfortable getting help from authorities and have freedom of movement in and out of their area of residence.

Feeling safe and **freedom of movement** have been monitored for several years through the Return and Displacement Indices, although at location level via key informant interviews.

Feelings of safety measure 'perception' rather than ascertained 'facts', which could be, for instance, the number of security incidents in a given area, and yet it has proved more effective in measuring the impact and consequences of safety and security issues on the daily life of the displaced population. The 'perception' of safety has stronger correlation with other safety indicators such as presence of multiple security actors in the area, concerns about different sources of violence and existing tensions among residents than the number of reported security incidents. In addition, it can be administered to all survey participants and not only those who experienced violence.

Freedom of movement is an 'objective' indicator and is related to the state of law and restrictions in the country. In Iraq, freedom of movement is generally associated with perceived affiliation with ISIL and impacts households' ability to return to the location of origin.

Being comfortable getting help from authorities is another measure of 'perception' that has been adopted from the DS Library and stems from the IASC Framework statement that displaced people who have achieved a durable solution enjoy physical safety and security because of effective protection by national and local authorities.

In general, all three indicators tend to be associated with pockets of marginalization, i.e. IDPs clustered in secluded areas, ethno-religious minorities or households settling in areas experiencing unresolved post-conflict dynamics or in areas still vulnerable to the resurgence of ISIL.


The adequate standards of living criteria measures whether households have access to health care if needed and improved sanitation facilities. Additionally, this criteria considers whether IDPs' and returnees' housing is in good condition. Finally, it examines levels of food security based on households' scores on the Coping Strategy Index (CSI).

Among all the indicators available in the DS Library, the **reduced CSI** was selected due to its ease and practicality in measuring food security versus, for instance, collecting data on income and/or expenditure. In the case of Iraq, the resort to coping strategies is still very common. This is especially the case among IDPs as the portion of households adopting at least one coping strategy varies between 47 and 74 per cent, with the most common strategy being the resort to less expensive foods.

Housing conditions were assessed via the portion of households living in critical shelters, i.e. uninhabitable residences, tents/caravans/makeshift shelters/mud or brick houses, unfinished/abandoned buildings, public buildings or collective shelters, religious buildings, school buildings and, for IDPs, unowned and uninhabitable apartments/houses and camps in line with the Master List data collected since 2014. Around 10 per cent of IDPs still reside in critical shelters and 15 per cent in camps. Coupled with **access to improved sanitation facilities**, this indicator provides a reduced and lighter version of the SDG indicator 11.1.1: Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing.¹⁴

Access to health care aligns with the DS Library indicator 2.1.7: Target population who accessed essential health care services when needed in the past 12 months. This indicator easily captures access to health services for IDPs and returnees. It allows for straightforward comparison to the stayee average and provides a measure of the resilience of households, considering that healthcare expenditures are often the first to be 'cut' when struggling to make ends meet. Around 17 per cent of IDP households and 14 per cent of returnee households who needed healthcare in the past 12 months were unable to access it.

¹⁴ The efficacy of this indicator was also tested via the indicator on overcrowding.


Criteria III
 ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD
Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one employed HH member (15 - 60 years old) HoH has a stable source of income
Economic security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to face unexpected expenses (of up to 440,000 IQD)

The access to livelihoods criteria assesses whether at least one member of the household (ages 15 - 60 years old) is employed, whether the head of household has a stable source of income and whether households are able to face unexpected expenses of up to 440,000 IQD.

Collecting data on employment and income is challenging in any context due to its sensitivity and even more so in the Iraq context in view of large sizes of households. In this view, the recommended IASC indicators for measuring economic security, such as SDG 8.5.2: Unemployment rate and SDG 1.2.1: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, were replaced with lighter alternatives.

The **presence of at least one working member in the household** is a proxy for the unemployment rate and information on the main occupation of the Head of Household is a proxy of the relative **stability of income sources**.¹⁵ Figures range from 23 per cent of IDP households and 38 per cent of returnee households to 43 per cent of stayee households.

The **ability to afford unexpected expenses** was chosen as an alternative to the DS 3.2.4 indicator, Target population who in the last 12 months was not able to pay for basic expenses, to provide a measure of the resilience of households. Overall, 85 per cent of IDP households and 76 per cent of returnee households were unable to handle unexpected expenses – the threshold was set at 440,000 IQD which roughly corresponds to 336 USD.

Criteria IV+VIII
 RESTORATION OF HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY AND COMPENSATION
Secure tenure rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have legally recognized documentation Not at risk of eviction
Restitution/compensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entitlement to compensation including property damage

With respect to property restoration and compensation, the assessment considers whether households have legally recognized documentation for their housing and are not at risk of eviction. Additionally, households were asked whether their property was damaged and if they are entitled to compensation.

15 Income coming from paid employment (in both the private and public sector), self-employment and pensions was considered as 'stable' as opposed to income coming from daily wages and informal small scale or subsistence agriculture.

16 As many as 70 per cent of IDP households who were asked about the main reasons for not returning to the place of origin reported the destruction of their property.

17 Iraq, Law No. 20 of 2009: Law on Compensation of Victims of War Operations, Military Mistakes and Terrorist Operations (28 December 2009).

18 Iraq, Law No. 8 of 2021 - Yazidi Female Survivors Law (2 March 2021).

19 European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), Ninewa: Common analysis. June 2022.

20 Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Compensation for ISIS Victims Too Little, Too Late'. 9 May 2023.

21 Nancy Ezzeddine and Alba Di Pietrantonio Pellise, *Trapped in a Vicious Cycle: Factors of Instability in Nineveh Plains*, Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations (The Hague, 2021).

22 United Nations Habitat, *Supporting Yazidis' land rights in Iraq*. Presentation by Muslim Qazimi to the Returns Working Group, January 2023.

This criterion is the most challenging to operationalize and measure. IRIS suggests for this purpose SDG 1.4.2: Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation and (b) who perceive their rights as secure. This indicator assesses the extent to which IDPs and returnees have been able to (re)acquire HLP rights at the current location. Part A was measured by **type of tenure agreement or ownership status of housing** where the household currently lives and Part B was covered by the percentage of **households who are not concerned about eviction** from their accommodation. Similarly to the safety and security domain, the latter indicator measures perception and not past experience. Data show that only 17 per cent of IDP household are missing documents for the shelter they own (12%) or do not have a formal or informal rental agreement (5%), yet more than double this share do not consider their HLP rights as 'secure' and are afraid of being evicted (39% of IDPs versus around 10% for both returnees and stayees).

Property restitution and compensation were assessed via the percentage of households who were aware of property restitution and compensation mechanisms and believed they were entitled to it, and those who reported property destruction at the place of origin, regardless of their awareness of the mechanisms.¹⁶ In Iraq, people who have suffered damage 'as a result of war operations, military mistakes, and terrorist operations' can apply for compensation under Law N. 20¹⁷ or under the Yazidi Survivors Law, if they are Yazidi or members of another ethnic minority, including Turkmen, Christians and Shabaks, who were 'summarily killed, kidnapped, enslaved, and raped by ISIS in 2014'.¹⁸ However, both procedures are complex, lengthy, expensive and, in some cases, entirely inaccessible. In many areas of Iraq, including Sinjar District in Ninewa Governorate, which is home to numerous religious and ethnic minorities including Christian, Yazidis, Shabak and Turkmen,¹⁹ the process under Law No. 20 has been plagued by procedural and processing inefficiencies and budgetary issues. Failure to provide compensation is a primary barrier to return.²⁰ Issues related to property restitution go beyond the displacement crisis of 2014-2017. Sinjar District was heavily impacted by the policy of 'Arabization,' which resulted in the forced displacement of Kurdish and Yazidis families and their replacement by Sunni Arab families.²¹ The impact of Arabization is still felt today, with many Kurdish and Yazidi families unable to claim the lands they owned during the Ba'ath regime. Their displacement during the 2014-2017 conflict further compounds these challenges.²²

Criteria V+VII	
PERSONAL DOCUMENTATION AND PARTICIPATION	
Documentation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possession of ID • Registration of birth (children born between 2014-2022) 	
Right to vote	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in election 2021 	

To measure this criterion, households were asked whether all members of their household have a national or unified ID and a birth certificate. Additionally, regarding participation in public affairs, the assessment considered whether all eligible members of the household voted in the 2021 parliamentary elections.

The selected indicators are standard IASC indicators for measuring progress towards durable solutions. These include **children born since 2014 currently in possession of valid birth certificates**, which partially aligns with SDG indicator 16.9.1 that covers children under five years old, and **the population currently in possession of national ID cards** or other personal identification documents relevant to the context (in Iraq, national or unified ID.) Lack of registration of births was reported in less than 1 per cent of IDP households and none of returnee or stayee households. With respect to national or unified IDs, roughly 10 per cent of IDP households, 4 per cent of returnee households and 3 per cent of stayee households indicated that at least one household member did not have this ID.

The **share of eligible voters who voted in the 2021 national election** was selected to assess the extent of social participation in line with IRIS recommendations. Figures are extremely high and vary between 98 per cent of returnees and stayees to 95 per cent of IDPs, which were slightly less likely to receive the biometric card or travel to the voting location.

Table 1: The average number of indicators met per domain and population group

DOMAIN	IDPs	RETURNEES	STAYEES	MAX
Safety and Security	2.94	2.95	2.97	3
Adequate Standard of Living	3.16	3.50	3.52	4
Access to Livelihoods	1.25	1.53	1.54	3
Restoration of HLP and Compensation	0.95	1.93	2.16	3
Personal Documentation and Participation	2.85	2.93	2.94	3

Secondly, the average number of criteria met was calculated. To do so, domain scores also were coded as binary variables, with 1 when IDP or returnee household met on average the same or higher number of indicators per domain

RECODING OF INDICATORS

All indicators were coded as binary variables, with 1 representing when a displacement-related or return-related vulnerability was overcome and 0 when the vulnerability remained for a specific household. For example, 'feeling safe' or 'not reporting movement restrictions' is coded as 1 as this is positive progress towards solutions. Recording of missing data was conducted in the following way. Missing data by design, due to skipping patterns and non-applicability, were interpreted as the absence of vulnerability. For instance, families who did not need health care were coded as 'not vulnerable' in the health sub-criterion. Missing data due to non-response were interpreted as the presence of vulnerability. For instance, families answering 'Do not know' or 'Prefer not to answer' on whether they feel safe were coded as vulnerable, i.e., 'not feeling safe'. Employment indicators were assessed at the household level and coded as the absence of vulnerability if at least one individual passed the indicator; i.e., at least one member aged 15-60 years old is employed in the household and the head of household has a stable source of income (public or private employment, self-employment or retired). The absence of vulnerability related to personal documentation was applied where all household members owned essential documents.

COMPOSITE MEASURE

The composite measure to assess progress towards solutions was built in several steps. First, the average number of indicators met per domain was calculated. For instance, the safety and security domain includes three indicators; thus, the maximum possible value is three when all indicators are met and the minimum possible value is zero, when none of the indicators are met. This allows us to conduct a comparison between groups and define the most problematic domain.

as stayee households and 0 when the IDP or returnee household met on average a lower number of indicators.

Table 2: The score coding per domain based on the average number of indicators met

DOMAIN	0	1	THRESHOLD (Average number of indicators met by stayee households)
Safety and Security	< 2.97	= or >2.97	2.97
Adequate Standards of Living	< 3.52	= or >3.52	3.52
Access to Livelihoods	< 1.54	= or >1.54	1.54
Restoration of HLP and Compensation	< 2.16	= or >2.16	2.16
Personal Documentation and Participation	< 2.94	= or >2.94	2.94

Thus, the maximum possible value is five when all criteria are met and the minimum possible value is 0, when none of the criteria are met. This allows us to conduct an overall comparison between groups.

Table 3: The average number of criteria met by population group

	IDPs	RETURNEES	STAYEES	Max
All five domains	2.58	3.00	3.21	5

Thirdly, households were rated according to the number of criteria met. Those who met only one criterion or none are categorized as achieved low progress, those who met two or three criteria as medium progress and those who met four or all five criteria as high progress.

Figure 3: Number of criteria met per progress group



LIMITATIONS

The IASC Framework sets out eight criteria for assessing progress towards durable solutions. The seventh criteria ‘family reunification’ was excluded from this report due to an error during implementation of the survey. As previously noted, some subdistricts had no or few stayees. As a result, the sample was met using other locations in the district. This means that for the stayee population, findings can be generalized at the district, not subdistrict level. Additionally, access constraints for camps resulted in only four out of eight camps being assessed for the project.

IOM IRAQ

 iraq.iom.int

 iomiraq@iom.int

UNAMI Compound (Diwan 2),
International Zone,
Baghdad/Iraq



@IOMIraq



IOM Iraq thanks the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) for its continued support.

© 2023 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The following citation is required when using any data and information included in this report and information product: 'International Organization for Migration (IOM), December 2023. *Progress Toward Durable Solution in Iraq: A Pilot Project in Ninewa Governorate*. IOM, Iraq.' For more information on terms and conditions of DTM reports and information products, please refer to [this link](#).

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.