

RETURN DYNAMICS IN BAGHDAD GOVERNORATE

JUNE 2021

The Return Index is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. The Return Index is based on 16 indicators divided into two scales: Scale 1, on livelihoods and basic services, and Scale 2, centered around social cohesion and safety perceptions. A regression model is used to assess the impact of each of the indicators in facilitating or preventing returns. The 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 are grouped into three categories: low, medium and high (which also includes very high). Refer to the report "[Methodological Overview](#)" for more details on the methodology.

The Return Index Governorate Profiling provides an analysis of returns in a specific governorate. This report focuses on the return

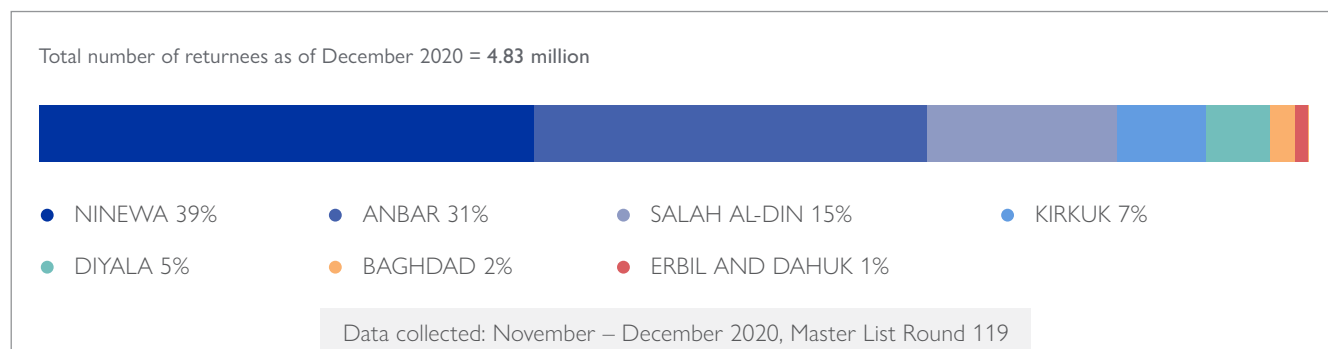
dynamics in Baghdad Governorate. The first section of this report presents the overview of conditions across the governorate at the end of 2020 with a comparison of figures and the severity of living conditions over the course of 2020 (from 31 December 2019 to 31 December 2020). It also outlines the areas of no return recorded by IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs) as well as the newly assessed locations, the returnee population living in critical shelters and the displaced population hosted in the governorate. The second section provides an analysis of conditions at the district level and focuses on the main drivers of severity across subdistricts and changes that occurred between December 2019 and December 2020.

CATEGORIZING CONDITIONS IN AREAS OF RETURN

As of December 2020, the total number of returnees in Baghdad Governorate stands at 91,008 individuals out of 4.83 million nationwide, dispersed across four districts and 122 locations.¹ This is the third smallest returnee population compared to other governorates, with 2 per cent of all returns in Iraq (Figure 1). Between

December 2019 and December 2020, the returnee population in Baghdad increased by 1,422 individuals, which is a lower number of returns than that of the previous year, during which 4,902 individuals returned (December 2018 to December 2019).

Figure 1. Proportion of returnees per governorate



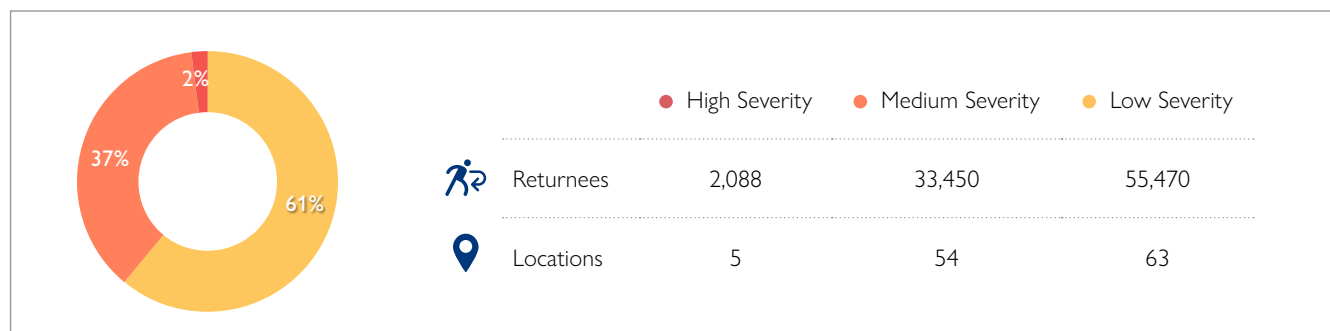
¹ Master List Round 119 (November–December 2020)

RETURNEE POPULATION IN SEVERE CONDITIONS

During the Return Index Round 11 collected in November and December 2020, a total of 122 locations of return were assessed in Baghdad. Out of these 122 locations assessed, only five present severe conditions.² Baghdad Governorate hosts 2,088 returnees

living in severe conditions. In relative terms, this means that 2 per cent of the returnee population in Baghdad has returned to locations classified as high severity, followed by 37 per cent to medium severity, and 61 per cent to low severity.

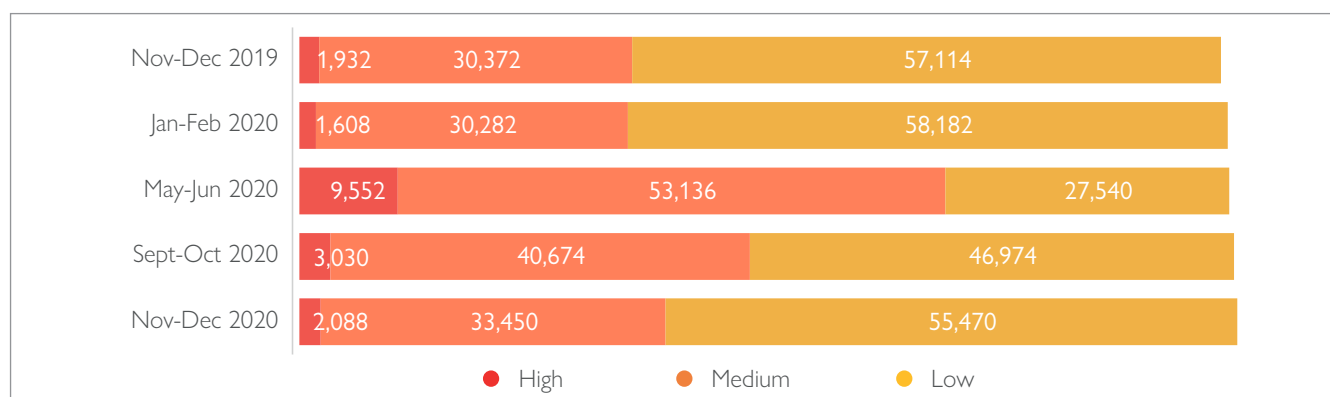
Figure 2. Proportion and numbers of returnees by category of severity in Baghdad Governorate



Over the course of 2020, Baghdad Governorate witnessed a very slight increase in the numbers of returnees living in locations classified as high severity (Figure 3). Between December 2019 and December 2020, an increase of 156 individuals living in severe or poor conditions was recorded. There was a spike in the number of returnees living in severe conditions in the round collected in May–June 2020 due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak and

ensuing lockdown, which worsened the employment situation and changed daily public life. However, the number of individuals living in severe conditions dropped in the round collected in September–October 2020 and again in November–December 2020, as the lockdown measures were lifted and the employment situation and daily public life stabilized.

Figure 3. Yearly trend of returnees by category of severity in Baghdad Governorate



LOCATIONS WITH NO RETURN AND NEWLY ASSESSED LOCATIONS

A location is recorded as having had no returns if none of the population displaced since 2014 has returned to date.³ As of December 2019, DTM recorded that the last two locations with no returns in Baghdad Governorate witnessed returns. There were

no additional locations with no returns identified in 2020; therefore, as of December 2020, there are no known locations of no return recorded in Baghdad Governorate.

RETURNEE POPULATION IN CRITICAL SHELTERS

As of December 2020, 4,476 returnees reside in shelters in critical condition in Baghdad, representing around 5 per cent of the total returnee population in the governorate.⁴ Specifically, all of those who returned to critical shelters arrived at destroyed or heavily damaged

pre-conflict residence. Around 44 per cent (1,956 individuals) of returnees in critical shelters are concentrated in Mahmoudiya district, followed by Abu Ghraib (38%), Tarmia (16%) and Kadhimia (2%).

² The wording ‘severe or poor conditions’ in this report refers to conditions in the locations classified as high severity.

³ It should be noted that these locations, having no key Informants and no population, are difficult to record and monitor and are generally identified through word-of-mouth.

⁴ Critical shelters include collective shelters (such as religious buildings, schools, or other public buildings), unfinished or abandoned buildings, tents, caravans and other temporary, sub-standard or makeshift shelters; as well as severely damaged or destroyed habitual residences and long-term rental accommodations that are unfit for habitation (having the characteristics of unfinished or severely damaged buildings).

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs) IN BAGHDAD

Between December 2019 and December 2020, Baghdad Governorate witnessed a decrease in the numbers of IDPs, from 40,578 individuals to 26,173. Most of this decrease (14,405) in the displaced population was from non-camp settings (93%). Despite this decrease, Baghdad remains the governorate hosting the sixth largest number of IDPs in Iraq (around 2% of all IDPs), with a very small number of the governorate's IDPs living in camp settings in Mahmoudiya. Between December 2019 and December 2020, no individuals from camps arrived to Baghdad.

Karkh (22%), Abu Ghraib (20%) and Mahmoudiya (18%) districts host the largest population of IDPs in the governorate, respectively accounting for 54 per cent (49,434 individuals) and 25 per cent (23,232 individuals) of IDPs in Baghdad. No locations of return in Baghdad Governorate currently host more IDPs than returnees (Table 1).

Table 1: Number of returnees and IDPs per district in Baghdad

District	Average Severity (return locations)	Total Returnees (individuals)	Total Non-camp IDPs (individuals)	Total Camp IDPs (individuals)	Locations with more IDPs than Returnees
Abu Ghraib	Medium	23,232	5,268	0	0
Kadhimia	Low	7,764	1,428	0	0
Mahmoudiya	Low	49,434	4,620	205	0
Tarmia	Medium	10,578	2,748	0	0
Baghdad Total		91,008	14,064	0	0

SEVERITY OF CONDITIONS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

As of December 2020, Mahmoudiya is the district in Baghdad that hosts the largest number of returnees living in severe conditions (1,524 individuals), followed by Abu Ghraib (366 individuals) and Tarmia (198 individuals); (Table 2). In relative terms, Tarmia and Abu Ghraib districts host the highest proportions of returnees living in medium severity conditions: 85 per cent of the returnee population in Tarmia and 47 per cent of the returnee population in Abu Ghraib (Figure 7). As a result, much of the returnee population in districts across Baghdad returned to low severity conditions

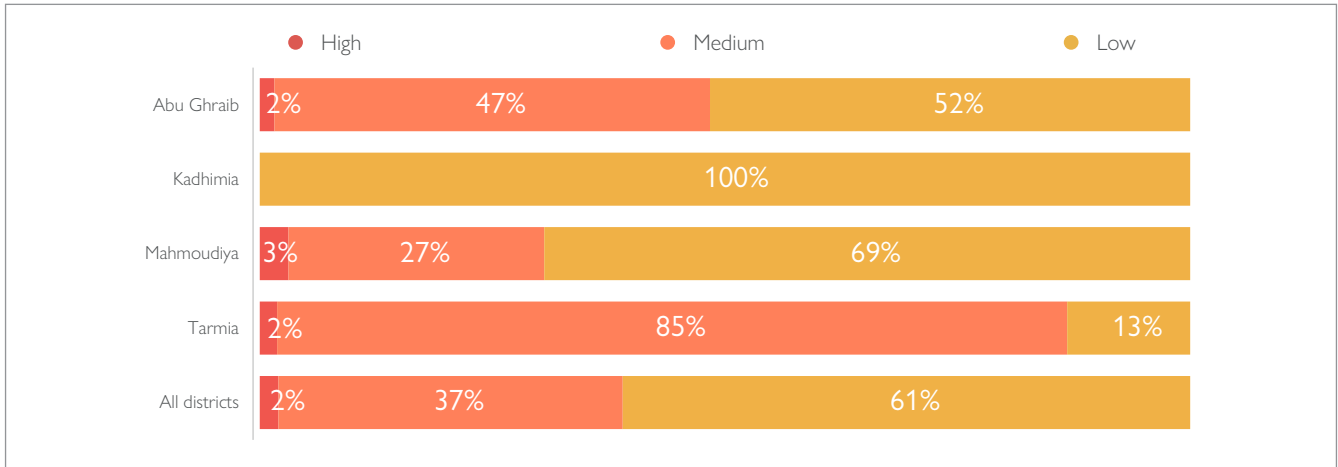
(61%) with 37 per cent having returned to locations classified as medium severity. In Kadhimia, which has the lowest returnee population (7,764 individuals), all returnees live in low severity condition. The proportion of returnees in severe conditions is lower in all of Baghdad Governorate's districts compared to the national average (10%), and Tarmia and Abu Ghraib are the only districts that exceed the national average of returnees living in medium severity conditions (41%).

Table 2: Number of returnees per district and category of severity in Baghdad Governorate⁵

DISTRICT	HIGH SEVERITY	MEDIUM SEVERITY	LOW SEVERITY	NUMBER OF RETURNEES
Abu Ghraib	366	10,878	11,988	23,232
Kadhimia			7,764	7,764
Mahmoudiya	1,524	13,590	34,320	49,434
Tarmia	198	8,982	1,398	10,578
All districts	2,088	33,450	55,470	91,008

⁵ This total only includes returnees in locations assessed for the Return Index and does not constitute the total number of returnees in Baghdad, as some locations have not been assessed.

Figure 7. Proportion of returnees per district and category of severity in Baghdad Governorate

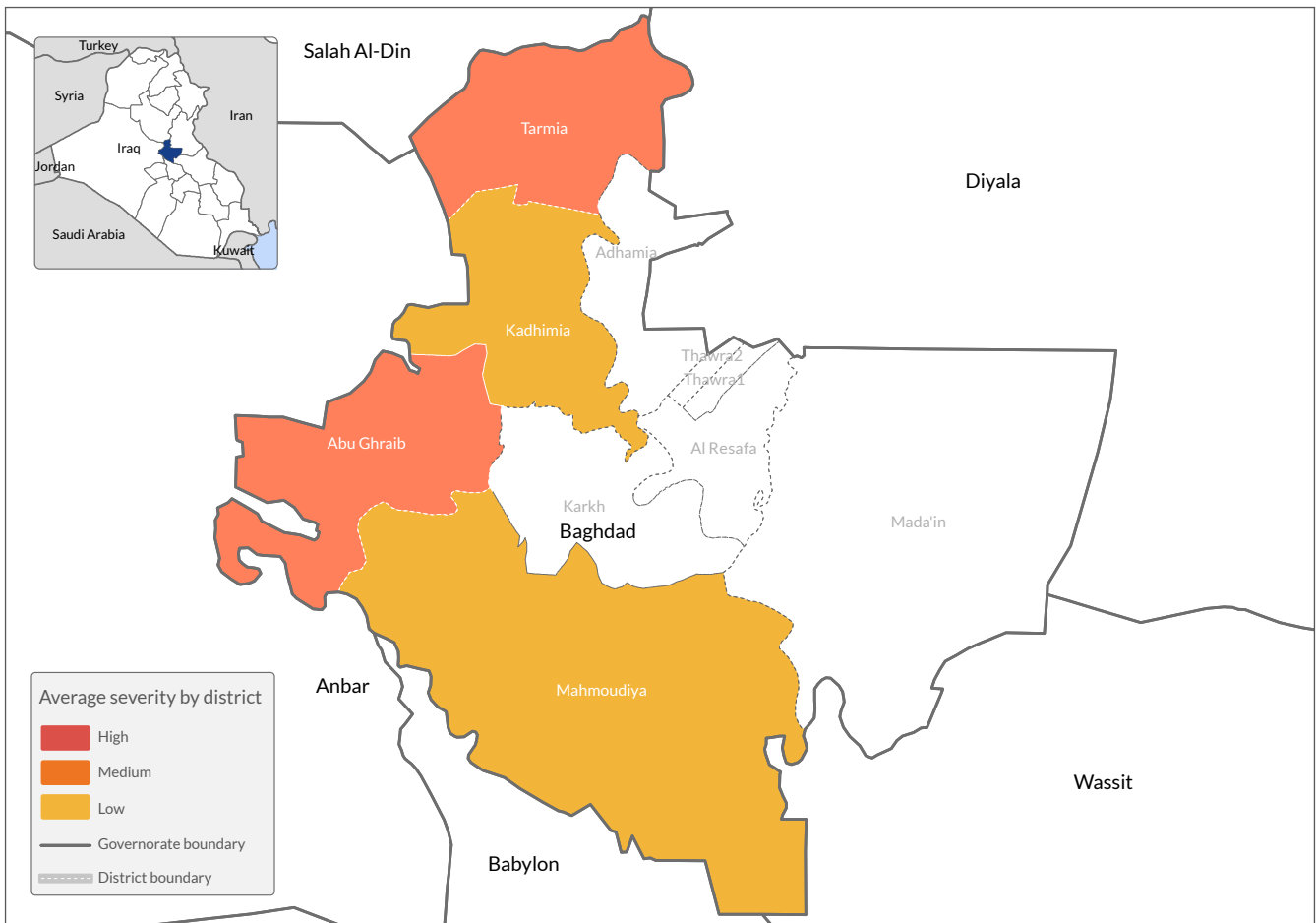


VARIATION AT DISTRICT LEVEL BETWEEN DECEMBER 2019 AND DECEMBER 2020

The analysis presented in this section focuses on the overall severity in each of Baghdad’s districts, as well as the main drivers that

contribute to particularly high severity conditions, and changes that occurred between December 2019 and December 2020.⁶

Map 2: Districts in Baghdad by category of severity

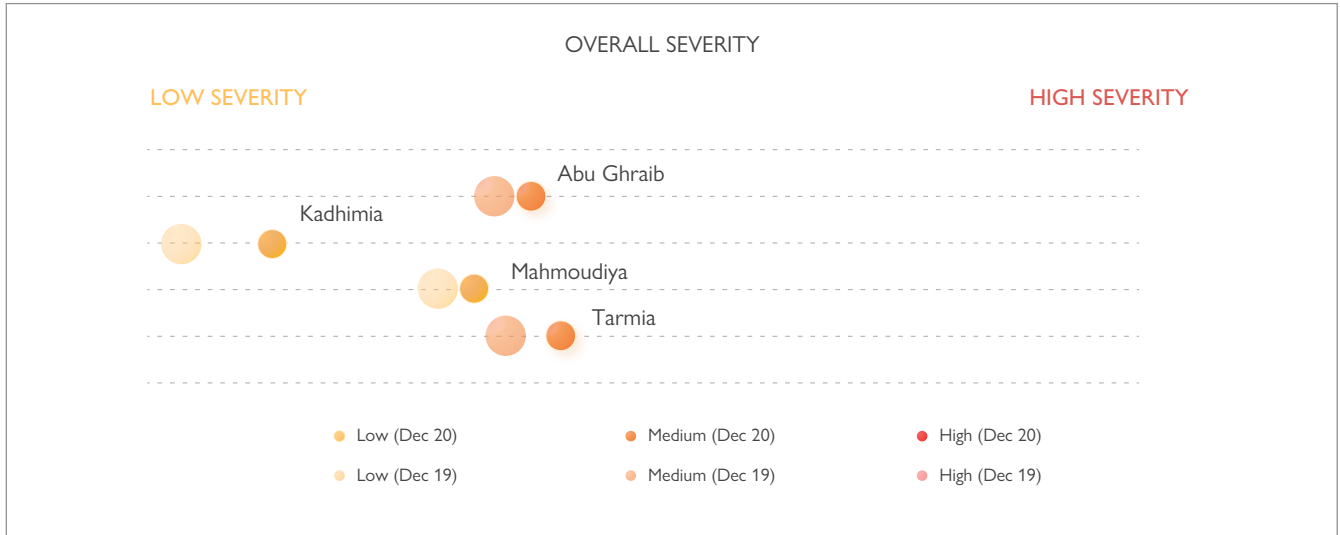


6 Drivers of severity are calculated at the subdistrict level and provide information on living conditions that contribute to severity to better inform interventions. Each driver is comprised of several Return Index indicators and considers the impact of each indicator in facilitating or preventing returns and the size of the returnee population in a subdistrict.

All districts in Baghdad Governorate worsened slightly in severity between December 2019 and December 2020, but not sufficiently to change in category of severity (Figure 8). Kadhimia recorded the

most pronounced increase in severity but remained low severity overall.

Figure 8. Overall severity per district in Baghdad in December 2019 and December 2020



VARIATION IN THE DRIVERS OF SEVERITY AT SUBDISTRICT LEVEL BETWEEN DECEMBER 2019 AND DECEMBER 2020

Abu Ghraib District

Within **Abu Ghraib District**, there was limited variation in drivers of severity in two subdistricts. **Akar Koof**, where the only driver of severity is related to the availability of employment, saw no change in conditions over the course of the year. **Al-Nasir Walsalam**, which has the highest overall severity in Abu Ghraib, has high rates of residential destruction, poor recovery of agriculture and small businesses, and inadequate access to electricity. Over the course of 2020, the employment situation deteriorated in May–June and did not recover in the remainder of the year. In **Khan Dhari** subdistrict,

housing destruction is also a primary driver of severity, as well as the limited recovery of agricultural activities and small businesses. Access to electricity improved over the course of the year. Khan Dhari also suffered from a peak of severity related to daily public life in May–June 2020, most likely attributable to the restrictions introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19. Severity reduced significantly in September–October and then returned to the lowest possible level in November–December.







Abu Ghraib	Overall Security	Residential Destruction	Livelihoods	Essential Services	Safety and Security	Social cohesion
Akar Koof	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Al-Nasir Walsalam	Medium	High	Medium ▼	Low	Low	Low
Khan Dhari	Low	Medium	Medium ▼	Low	Low	Low

▲ – Improvement; ▼ – Worsening compared to the round collected in November – December 2019

Kadhimia District

The overall increase in severity in **Kadhimia District** was driven by variation in the one subdistrict of return, **Sab'a Al-Bour**. The area suffered from a steep rise in severity related to the recovery of small businesses in May–June 2020 which plateaued for the remainder of the year. This sharp rise also affected the level of employment, though

less severely, for the same period. There was a small improvement in the extent of residential destruction recorded from September–October. Sab'a Al-Bour experienced a peak of severity related to daily public life in May–June 2020, most likely attributable to the restrictions introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19.







Kadhimia	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Sab'a Al-Bour	Low	Low ▲	Medium ▼	Low	Low	Low

▲ – Improvement; ▼ – Worsening compared to the round collected in November – December 2019

Mahmoudiya District

The overall situation in **Mahmoudiya District** remained the most stable of all districts in Baghdad Governorate in 2020. In **Al-Latifya**, severity is driven by the poor recovery of agricultural activities and small businesses and blocked returns. Over the course of 2020, the availability of employment opportunities, the quality of daily public life and access to sufficient electricity all increased sharply in severity in May–June and remained high throughout the remainder

of the year. **Al-Yousifya** is comparatively less severe. The subdistrict recorded an improvement in the extent of housing destruction in November–December as well as an improvement in the recovery of agricultural activities in September–October. Access to employment opportunities worsened as of May–June 2020 and instances of blocked returns remained at very high severity throughout the year.







Mahmoudiya	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Al-Latifya	Medium ▼	Low	Medium ▼	Low ▼	Low ▼	Medium ▼
Al-Yousifya	Low	Low ▲	Low ▼	Low	Low	Low

▲ – Improvement; ▼ – Worsening compared to the round collected in November – December 2019

Tarmia District

The overall situation in **Tarmia District** remains the same as one year ago. In **Meshahda**, severity is driven by the very poor recovery of agricultural and small business activities, as well as blocked returns. Access to essential services such as electricity and running water worsened significantly in May–June and remained high over the

course of the year, with access to water improving and returning to low severity as of November–December. Daily public life worsened significantly as of May–June and remained consistently high throughout the remainder of the year.

Tarmia	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Meshahd	Medium	Low	Medium	Low ▼	Low ▲	Low ▼

▲ – Improvement; ▼ – Worsening compared to the round collected in November – December 2019

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