

## CONTEXT

Tuz Khurmatu, situated in Salah al Din Governorate, lies along the route linking Baghdad and Kirkuk Governorates and falls within the disputed territories between the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government. Tuz Khurmatu has been under the administrative jurisdiction of Salah al Din Governorate since administrative changes were implemented in 1976, prior to which it was part of Kirkuk Governorate.

The population of Tuz Khurmatu includes diverse demographic groups, comprising Sunni Arabs, Shia Arabs, Sunni Kurds and Sunni and Shia Turkmen. Tuz Khurmatu has experienced heightened levels of violence compared to other disputed areas, which could be attributed to the area's history of interethnic and sectarian conflicts since 2003.<sup>1</sup>

### DISPLACEMENT DURING THE 2014-2017 CRISIS

In 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) launched an attack on Tuz Khurmatu but failed to seize complete control. However, they did take control of several areas, including Suleiman Beg and Al-Amerli subdistricts. This led to a significant displacement of families from these locations and surrounding areas to the center of Tuz Khurmatu, as well as to other districts within Salah al Din and to other governorates, primarily Kirkuk.

During ISIL's occupation of Tuz Khurmatu, communities mobilised to defend themselves and reclaim lost territories. Upon ISIL's expulsion in 2016, competition and clashes between rival security forces, notably the Shia Turkmen-led Popular Mobilisation Units (PMUs) and Kurdish Peshmerga, heightened tensions, particularly between Sunni Kurds and Shia Turkmen residents.<sup>2</sup>

The change in security and administration in October 2017 brought further violence, including indiscriminate attacks, looting, arson and displacement, predominantly affecting the Kurdish population.<sup>3</sup> Despite reported returns of many Kurds to Tuz Khurmatu, tensions persist among ethno-religious communities, with power dynamics shifting in favour of the Shia Turkmen population regarding security and administration compared to pre-2014 levels.<sup>4</sup> This impasse arises from both groups asserting historical claims to the town, which exacerbate local integration challenges.

In recent years, particularly following the emergence of ISIL, the region experienced an influx of IDPs primarily from nearby subdistricts such as Suleiman Beg and Al-Amerli.<sup>5</sup> These IDPs, predominantly Sunni Arab with smaller numbers of Sunni and Shia Turkmen, have been displaced for several years and for diverse

reasons. Sunni Arab IDPs fled during the ISIL conflict and subsequent military operations aimed at recapturing these regions. Their return has been largely prevented by multiple security forces controlling the areas, due in part to security concerns. Another group of IDPs, primarily Sunni Kurds, faced challenges returning following the security changes in October 2017. These IDPs fled as Kurdish and Shia Turkmen forces vied for control of the district and its centre during the conflict. After October 2017, a combination of Federal Forces and Shia Turkmen PMU took over security, displacing Peshmerga forces. Although these IDPs are not explicitly blocked from returning, they face obstacles related to social and security concerns. Tribal tensions still exist among various villages in Suleiman Beg and Al-Amerli, primarily stemming from sectarian differences. These are particularly notable in Albo-Hassan Kabeer village, Albo-Hassan Sagheer Village and A=-098765aj-Taba Village where return is prohibited.<sup>6</sup>

### CURRENT DISPLACEMENT TRENDS

As of December 2023, Tuz Khurmatu hosts the largest number of IDP population (17,646 individuals) and the fifth largest returnee population in Salah al Din Governorate (62,274 individuals).<sup>7</sup> The current rate of return<sup>8</sup> for Tuz Khurmatu stands at 65 per cent, meaning that 35 per cent of the IDPs originally displaced have not yet returned.

Almost one in five (17%) IDPs live in locations with high severity (2,640) and the remaining majority (83%) live in medium severity locations (12,726).<sup>9</sup> Those living in locations with high severity are in Markaz Tuz Khurmatu and Nawjul.

Around half of returnees in Tuz Khurmatu (53%) live in locations with medium severity (32,742) with only 15 per cent in locations with high severity (9,372).<sup>10</sup> The locations with highest severity index are Sayad village, Al-Salam Village and Basatmly Village. Two hotspot<sup>11</sup> areas can be found in Tuz Khurmatu: Al-Amerli (12,342 returnees) and Suleiman Beg (16,632 returnees). The most critical driver of severe living conditions in Al-Amerli is safety and security, stemming from concerns about sources of violence, the presence of multiple security actors and checkpoints controlled by other security actors. Similar concerns can be observed in Suleiman Beg, with difficulties related to insufficient essential services (electricity and water), safety and security (multiple security actors and checkpoints), as well as blocked returns due to tribal issues and the illegal occupation of private residences.

1 International Crisis Group, *Reviving UN Mediation on Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries* (Brussels, 2018).

2 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Cities as Home Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration* (Baghdad, 2020).

3 On 25 September, 2017, the Kurdistan Regional Government conducted an independence referendum in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and certain disputed areas, with about 93 per cent of voters supporting independence. The Iraqi government deemed the referendum unconstitutional and subsequently regained control of Kirkuk from the Peshmerga, as well as parts of Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Diyala. For more information, refer to: Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2017/18 - Iraq* (London, 2018).

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Thematic Durable Solutions Meeting Report - Tuz Khurmatu Return Challenges* (Baghdad, 2023).

7 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *DTM Iraq – Master List Dashboard 131 (September – December 2023)* (Baghdad, 2023).

8 The rate of return is computed as the ratio of returnees to a geographical area (governorate, district) 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: *DTM Iraq – Master List Dashboard 131 (September – December 2023)* (Baghdad, 2023).

9 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *DTM Iraq Displacement Index Dashboard: Round Eight* (Baghdad, 2023).

10 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *DTM Iraq Return Index Dashboard: Round 20* (Baghdad, 2023).

11 Subdistricts are classified as 'hotspots' if they score highly in terms of severity on at least one of the two scales (either livelihoods and basic services or safety and social cohesion) or if they score medium in terms of severity but also host relatively large numbers of returnees (at least 60,000 in a subdistrict).

## INTRODUCTION

This factsheet on Tuz Khurmatu District is an extension of the project in Salah al Din<sup>12</sup> aimed at assessing progress toward durable solutions<sup>13</sup> to displacement for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees in the governorates with the largest shares of displaced populations in Iraq. The goal is to understand where IDPs and returnees stand seven 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.<sup>14</sup>

Data collection for this factsheet took place in between May and July 2023 across 3 subdistricts and 16 locations in the district of Tuz Khurmatu as part of the

overall data collection for Salah al Din Governorate of Iraq. Data were collected through IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs), composed of over 24 staff members (33% of enumerators are female). They collected data through structured face-to-face interviews with a sample size of 1,030 households, split between 255 IDP, 276 returnee, and 499 stayee households in Tuz Khurmatu district.

DTM Master List Round 129 data, collected between January and April 2023, was used as a sampling frame for IDP and returnee households. The composite measure to assess the progress towards durable solutions was built in several steps to conduct a comparison between groups and define the most problematic domains. For more information on the survey methodology, sampling design, selection of indicators and composite measure please refer to the Methodology overview of the Salah al Din report.<sup>15</sup>

## KEY FINDINGS

**Overall progress:** The IDP and returnee households in Tuz Khurmatu are making moderate progress towards finding durable solutions, with 68 per cent of IDPs and 55 per cent of returnee households falling in the medium progress category.

In Tuz Khurmatu, a lower proportion of IDPs (3%) and returnees (1%) are categorized in the low progress group. This contrasts sharply with the broader Salah al Din Governorate where 39 per cent of IDPs and 10 per cent of returnees fall in the same category, highlighting the better conditions faced by those in Tuz Khurmatu.

**Factors influencing progress:** Key factors affecting progress include demographic characteristics, housing and shelter conditions, livelihoods, health care, and safety considerations. IDP households in low progress groups face significant challenges, particularly regarding housing and livelihoods. Low progress returnee households report similar challenges, with housing conditions and livelihoods significantly impacting progress.

Demographic characteristics, such as marital status, affect progress for both IDPs and returnees. Female or widowed heads of household tend to be more common in low progress groups compared to higher progress categories.

**Housing and shelter conditions:** Housing quality and tenure status, such as residing in critical shelters or lacking formal rental agreements, are crucial factors influencing progress. Low progress IDP and returnee households are more likely to live in critical shelters, fear eviction and have limited access to sanitation. Low progress IDP households live in informal rental agreements or do not have documentation for their housing ownership.

**Livelihood and employment:** A significant proportion of low progress households lack a stable source of income. IDP and returnee low progress households tend to rely on irregular earnings or daily labour, hindering their ability to cover unexpected expenses.

**Health care access:** Low progress households are more likely to face difficulties in accessing health care. This highlights the correlation between unmet medical needs and vulnerability, emphasizing the critical importance of addressing health care access to enable progress.

**Safety and security:** A substantial proportion of low progress households do not feel comfortable reporting their safety and security issues to relevant authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms.

12 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Progress Toward Durable Solutions In Iraq: Salah Al Din* (Baghdad, 2023).

13 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).

14 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)

15 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Progress Toward Durable Solutions In Iraq: Salah Al Din*, (Baghdad, 2023).

# CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISPLACED POPULATION

## SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The sex distribution of the displaced population is balanced. Half of IDPs and returnees are female and half are male.

The average household size is roughly seven members, and IDP households are slightly larger than returnee households.

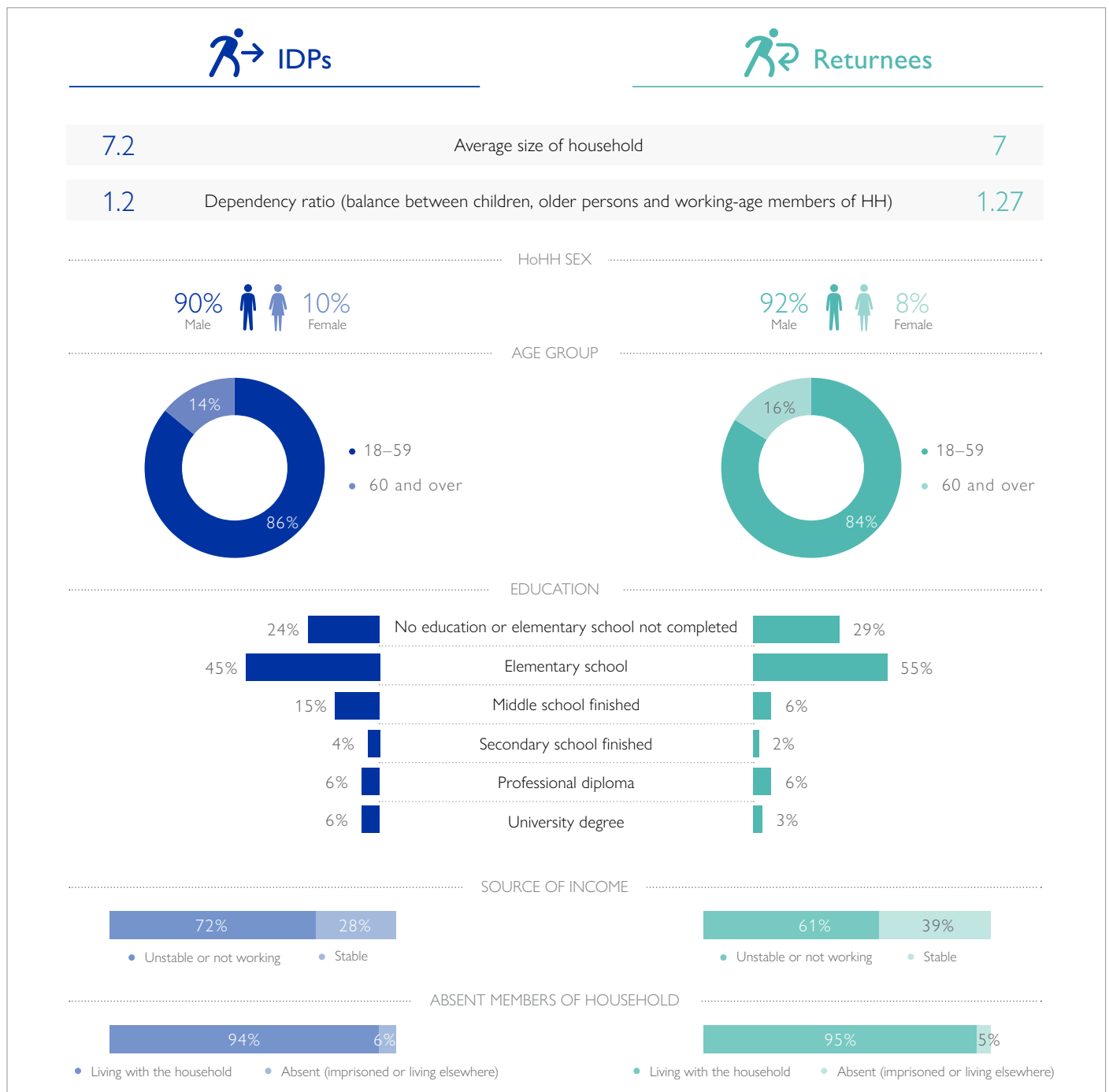
Around one in ten IDP and returnee households are headed by a woman (10% IDP households versus 8% returnee households). Furthermore, in 14 per cent of IDP households, the head of the household is an elderly person, compared to 16% of returnee households. Most heads of households (HoH) are married and less than one in ten are widowed (7% IDPs versus 5% returnees).

Over half of IDP and returnee households have received some form of education. In only a minority of IDP households, the HoH is illiterate<sup>16</sup> (24% of IDPs versus 29% returnees), while the majority has elementary school education. This share is significantly higher for returnee households than for IDPs households (45% IDPs versus 55% returnees).

Income source stability varies between IDPs and returnee households. About 72 per cent IDP households do not have a stable source of income<sup>17</sup> compared to 61 per cent of returnee household. The majority of both IDP and returnee households (respectively 75% and 64%) rely on irregular earnings and daily labour as the primary income source.

About one in twenty households has an absent family member (either missing, dead or imprisoned) (6% IDPs versus 5% returnees).

Figure 1: Characteristics of households



<sup>16</sup> 'Illiterate' here refers to an individual who did not receive any education or did not complete primary school.

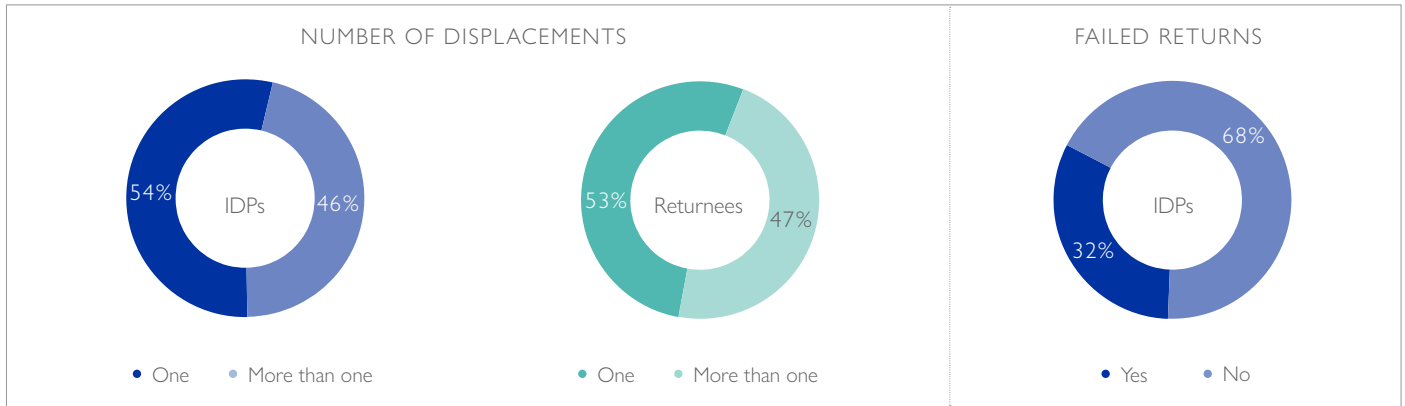
<sup>17</sup> A stable occupation means that the HH is regularly employed in the public or private sector, self-employed, owns land, has passive income (from rent of property or land) or benefits from a pension.

Displacement is protracted and multiple: almost all IDPs and returnee households have been displaced for nine years since 2014 (respectively 97% and 100%) with only a minority being displaced the following years. About a quarter of IDP and returnee households (25% and 24% respectively) have been displaced between two and four times, and 21 per cent of IDP households and 24 per cent of returnee households have been displaced five times and over. About one in three

IDP households (32%) report a failed return. Previous research in Salah Al Din shows that multiple displacements and higher average numbers of failed returns are key factors preventing progress towards durable solutions.<sup>18</sup>

Findings suggest that destroyed housing (84%) and lack of livelihood opportunities (75%) are the main reasons preventing returns.

Figure 2: Number of displacements and failed returns

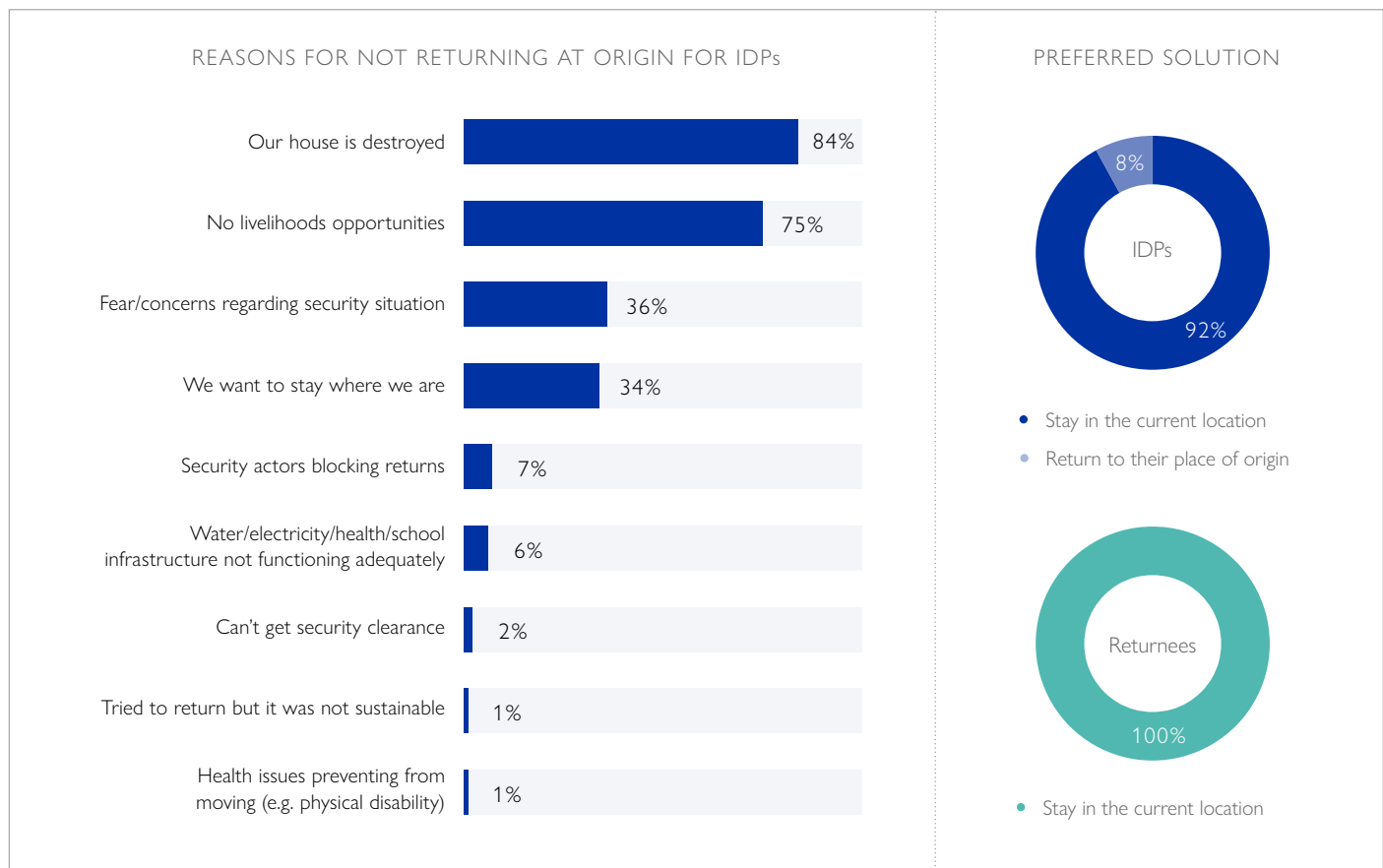


### PREFERRED DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND OBSTACLES

Most IDP households and all returnee households prefer to stay in their current location (92% IDPs versus 100% returnees), while only 8 per cent of IDP households prefer to return to their place of origin. The main reasons for

not returning to the area of origin are destroyed housing (84%) and a lack of livelihood opportunities (75%). Over a third of IDP households (36%) reported fear/concerns regarding the security situation. Only 6 per cent of IDP households are not able to return because of lack of adequate infrastructure (e.g. water, electricity, health and schools).

Figure 3: Preferred solutions and main barriers to return



18 International Organization for Migration (IOM), Progress Toward Durable Solutions In Iraq: Salah Al Din (Baghdad, 2023).

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS PER CRITERIA

This section compares progress for IDP and returnee households across five criteria: (1) safety and security, (2) adequate standard of living, (3) access to livelihood, (4) restoration of HLP and compensation and (5) documentation and participation.

**HLP restoration and compensation** and **access to livelihoods** are the most challenging domains. HLP restoration and compensation emerge as the most challenging domain for both IDP and returnee households, with a considerable gap compared to stayee households. Many IDP and returnee households lack legally recognized documentation for their housing and face unresolved compensation claims, indicating persistent barriers to property rights and restitution. Additionally, IDPs households report higher fears of eviction compared to the other groups. Regarding livelihoods, a significant proportion of IDP and returnee households lack a stable source of income and are able to cover unexpected expenses. This highlights the economic insecurity faced by both groups.

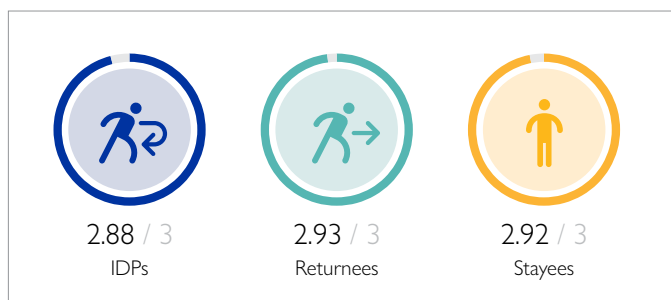
IDP households achieved lower progress in the adequate **standards of living** domain. In particular, they report lower scores for accessing improved sanitation facilities.

Conversely, all three groups scored relatively higher for the **safety and security** and **personal documentation and participation domains**. Households report no issues regarding feeling safe and freedom of movement, and similar scores for feeling comfortable getting help from authorities. Personal documentation and participation emerge as the least problematic domain for both IDP and returnee households, with high percentages possessing documentation, participating in the 2021 parliamentary election, and feeling accepted by the community.

### Safety and Security

The safety and security domain considers whether households feel safe, are comfortable getting help from local authorities and are able to move in and out of their location of residence.

Figure 4 The average number of indicators met per safety and security domain



Safety and security is the second least problematic domain with IDP and returnee households reporting similar scores to stayee households. About 9 in 10 households pass all three indicators for this criterion (88% IDPs versus 93% returnees and 92% stayees), which include feeling safe in their current location, enjoying freedom of movement at all times and being comfortable reporting their safety and security issues to local authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms.

Disaggregating by indicator, all IDPs and returnees report feeling safe walking alone in their area of residence as well as enjoying freedom of movement. Roughly one in ten IDPs and returnees (12% IDPs vs 7% returnees) do not feel comfortable in getting help from authorities, compared to 8% of stayees.

In select subdistricts, IDP and returnee households face greater challenges surrounding safety and security. All returnee households in Al-Amerli report feeling comfortable getting help from authorities, compared to 92 per cent in Suleiman Beg. In Marzak Khurmatu, around 12 per cent of IDP households do not feel comfortable getting help from authorities, compared to 9 per cent of returnee households in the same subdistrict.

### Adequate Standard of Living

The assessment measured adequate standards of living based on whether households have access to health care if needed or improved sanitation facilities. Additionally, this domain considered whether IDP and returnees' housing is in good condition. Finally, it examined levels of food security based on households' scores on the Coping Strategy Index.

Figure 5 The average number of indicators met per adequate standard of living domain



IDP households face relatively more challenges related to standards of living than returnee and stayees households. About 78 per cent of IDP households were able to pass all four criteria compared 85 per cent of returnee households. The most differentiating indicators were access to health and sanitation facilities and shelter conditions.

IDP households faced more difficulties with accessing improved sanitation facilities, with 12 per cent of households reporting no access compared to 2 per cent of returnees and 1 per cent of stayees. Additionally, IDP and returnee households reported similar scores for shelter conditions, with 11 per cent of IDPs and 10 per cent of returnees living in critical shelters.<sup>19</sup>

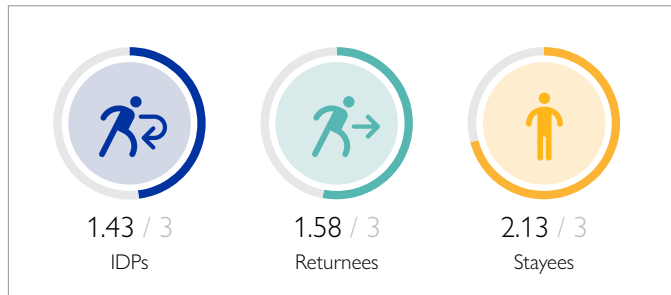
Across subdistricts, returnee households report lower standards of living in Suleiman Beg (76%), compared to Al-Amerli (85%) and Markaz Tuz Khurmatu (90%).

19 Critical shelters are severely damaged or unsafe dwellings, including damaged apartments or houses, temporary structures like containers or tents, mud or block constructions prone to collapse, and unfinished or abandoned buildings. These shelters pose significant risks to occupants and require urgent attention to ensure safety and provide adequate housing.

### Access to Livelihoods

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

Figure 6 The average number of indicators met per access to livelihoods domain



Employment and economic security appear to be a critical problem for both IDPs and returnees. Overall, only 38 per cent of IDP households and 48 per cent of returnee households met two or three indicators, compared to 75 per cent of stayee households.

Almost all households have at least one member (ages 15-60) employed with minimal differences between groups (93% of IDPs versus 94% returnees and 92% stayees).

Among IDPs, nearly three quarters of households have no stable source of income (72% IDPs versus 61% returnees). Conversely, less than a third (29%) of stayee households face this issue, highlighting income stability as the primary gap between IDPs and stayees and, to a lesser extent, between returnees and stayees.

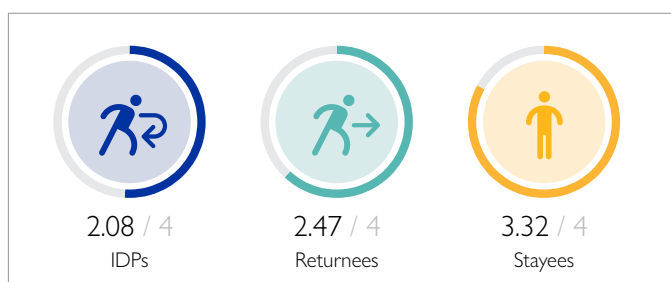
Dealing with unexpected expenses is also a notable challenge for all three groups. Only 22 per cent of IDPs, 25 per cent of returnees and 51 per cent of stayees are able to face unexpected expenses. The inability to afford such expenses is likely linked to the lack of stable income sources described above. However, even stayees, with their comparatively higher level of stable incomes, struggle with unexpected expenses, albeit to a lesser degree.

In terms of geographic variation, the subdistricts of Suleiman Beg (36%) and Al-Amerli (38%) have lower portions of returnee households meeting these criteria than Markaz Tuz Khurmatu (57%)

### Restoration of HLP and Compensation

With respect to property restoration and compensation, the assessment considered whether households have legally recognized documentation for their housing, whether they are at risk of eviction, whether their property was damaged and whether they have applied for compensation and the claim has been resolved. Additionally, the presence of deceased, imprisoned or missing members was added as a measure of vulnerability.

Figure 7 The average number of indicators met per restoration of HLP and compensation domain



HLP restoration and compensation is by far the domain with the biggest gap between IDP, returnee and stayee households. IDP and returnee households perform notably worse than stayee households, with respectively only 2 per cent and 4 per cent meeting all four criteria compared to 43 per cent of stayees. This gap is mainly driven by the large share of IDPs and returnees who do not have legally recognized documentation (78% IDPs and 80% returnees versus 50% of stayees).

Another factor driving the disparities between groups is the proportion of households with property loss or whose compensation claim has not been resolved. A significantly higher number of IDP households suffered property loss or did not have a resolved compensation claim (88% IDPs versus 61% returnees and 4% stayees).

Additionally, fear of eviction is fairly higher among IDP households (19%) compared to returnee (7%) and stayee (7%) households, while remaining overall low compared to other indicators in the same domain.

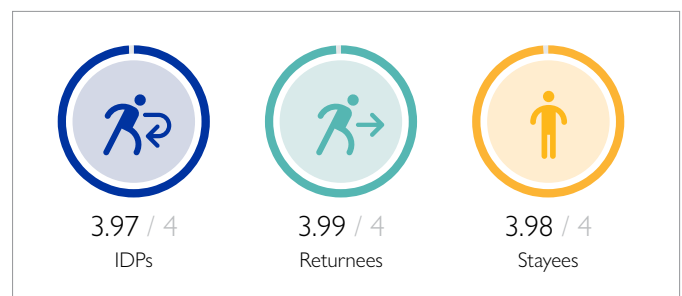
Finally, all three groups reported similar shares of absent household members (6% of IDPs versus 5% of returnees and 8% of stayees).

Across subdistricts, the worst performing areas for HLP criteria for returnee households is Al-Amerli where no returnee have legally recognised documentation compared with 3 per cent in Markaz Tuz Khurmatu and 70 per cent in Suleiman Beg.

### Documentation and Participation

With respect to personal documentation, households were asked whether all members of their household have essential personal documentation, i.e. a national or unified ID, Iraqi nationality 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. Households were also asked to evaluate the extent to which they felt accepted by the community.

Figure 8 The average number of indicators met per personal documentation and participation domain



Personal documentation and participation is the least problematic domain, with IDP and returnee households reporting very high scores with minimal or no difference with stayee households. Almost all IDP and returnee households were able to meet all four indicators (97% of IDPs versus 99% of returnees and 98% of stayees).

Almost all households across all three groups possess both a national or unified ID and Iraqi nationality (100% of IDPs, 99% of returnees and 100% of stayees). Similarly, all three groups had a birth certificate for children born between 2014-2022 (100% of IDPs, returnees and stayees).

IDP households report slightly lower levels of participation in the 2021 elections compared to returnee households (97% of IDPs versus 100% of returnees and 98% of stayees).

Almost all IDPs feel accepted by the community (99%), in line with returnee and stayee households (both 100%).

# PROGRESS TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Most IDP and returnee households have achieved medium to high progress towards durable solutions.

More than half of IDP households (68%) fall in the medium progress category. Only 3 per cent are classified as low progress, and the remaining 29 per cent can

be found in the high progress group. Returnees have achieved relatively similar progress to IDP households. More than half of returnee households are in the medium progress group (55%) with the remaining half (44%) in the high progress group. Only 1 per cent of returnee households fall in the low progress group.

Figure 9: Number and percentage of households by number of criteria met and progress group

		Number of criteria met						Total
		Low progress		Medium progress		High progress		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	
IDPs	# of households	0	81	597	1,441	867	0	2,986
	% of households	0%	3%	20%	48%	29%	0%	100%
Returnees	# of households	0	126	1,293	4,299	4,353	120	10,191
	% of households	0%	1%	13%	42%	43%	1%	100%

Overall, there are significant differences in progress between Tuz Khurmatu and Salah al Din. IDP and returnee households are comparatively doing better in Tuz Khurmatu compared to Salah al Din. IDP households in Tuz Khurmatu are facing less challenges compared to IDPs across Salah al Din, with only 3 per cent of households falling in the low progress group compared to 39 per cent at the governorate level. Most households are in the medium progress group (68% in Tuz Khurmatu versus 46% in Salah al Din) and almost double the proportion of households are in the high progress group in Tuz Khurmatu compared to Salah al Din (respectively 29% and 15%). This indicates that IDP households in Tuz Khurmatu are not facing as many challenges compared to IDPs at the governorate level.

Similarly, returnee households in Tuz Khurmatu have achieved greater progress than returnee households in Salah al Din, although with relatively similar proportions compared to IDPs. Over half of returnee households in both Tuz Khurmatu and Salah al Din are in the medium progress group. Around 44 per cent

of returnee households in Tuz Khurmatu are in the high progress group compared to 35 per cent at the governorate level, indicating that returnee households in this district have achieved greater progress overall. Only 1 per cent of returnee households in Tuz Khurmatu fall in the low progress group compared to 10 per cent of households in Salah al Din.

Figure 10: Percentage of households by progress group in Tuz Khurmatu and Salah al Din

		Low progress	Medium progress	High progress
IDPs	Tuz Khurmatu	3%	68%	29%
	Salah al Din	39%	46%	15%
Returnees	Tuz Khurmatu	1%	55%	44%
	Salah al Din	10%	55%	35%

## KEY FACTORS LINKED TO PROGRESS

This section presents an overview of the main characteristics of IDP and returnee households by their level of progress towards solutions. It shows that factors such as demographic characteristics, housing and shelter conditions, livelihood stability, documentation, and safety considerations affect progress towards durable solutions.

Demographic characteristics, such as marital status, affect progress for both IDPs and returnees. Specifically, low progress heads of household are more likely to be widowed and headed by a woman compared to higher progress groups.

IDP households in low progress groups face significant challenges, particularly regarding housing and livelihoods.

Housing and shelter conditions significantly affect progress amongst IDP progress groups. Low progress IDP households are more likely to live in critical shelter conditions and lack secure tenure arrangements, compared to high progress households. No IDP households in the low progress category have formal rental agreements or own the property with documents. As such, low progress IDP

households report higher fears of eviction, compared to other progress groups. Access to health care impacts progress, with low progress IDPs having more difficulty accessing medical treatment when needed.

Employment stability and the ability to cover unexpected costs also correlate with progress, with high progress households having more stable jobs. Low progress IDP households often lack stable income sources, relying on irregular earnings or aid, hindering their ability to cover unexpected expenses.

Despite feeling safe in their surroundings, low progress IDP households exhibit lower levels of participation in elections and are less inclined to seek help from authorities, indicating a disconnect between their needs and available support systems.

Low progress returnee households report similar challenges, with housing conditions and livelihoods significantly impacting progress. Most low progress returnee households reside in critical shelters and are more likely not to have access



to improved sanitation facilities. Access to healthcare remains a challenge for this group as well, with a significant gap between the need for medical assistance and actual access to services. Additionally, they are more likely to fear eviction compared to other progress groups.

Unstable livelihoods, with lower progress groups relying solely on irregular earnings, also affects progress. Low progress returnee households tend to report no stable

source of income compared to higher progress groups. Relatedly, low progress returnee households are therefore unable to face unexpected expenses compared to higher progress groups.

Finally, documentation issues such as possession of ID and Iraqi nationality, and safety considerations such as seeking help from authorities were crucial in distinguishing between low, medium, and high progress groups.

Figure 11: Key factors linked to progress for IDPs and returnees in Tuz Khurmatu





## LOW PROGRESS – IDP HOUSEHOLDS

81 Households

3% of all IDP caseload

The low progress group includes IDPs who have made progress on only one criterion or fewer. Overall, only 3 per cent of IDP households (81 households) fall in the low progress group, all of which have met one criterion.

### Demographic characteristics

With respect to demographic characteristics, approximately a quarter of IDP heads of household (24%) are widowed, compared to the medium and high progress group (respectively 5% and 9%). Around a quarter of households are headed by a female (24% in the low progress versus 7% medium and 16% high progress group). This suggests that marital status appears to influence progress towards durable solutions.

While over half of households are Arab Sunni Muslim (65%), almost a quarter are Turkmen Shia Muslim (24%), a proportion that is higher compared to medium and high progress groups (respectively 2% and 5%).

### Displacement history

Across progress groups, most IDP households were displaced in 2014. However, about a quarter were displaced the following year (24% in the low progress group compared to 1% in the medium progress group and 5% in the high progress group).

### Housing and shelter condition

A majority of IDP households in the low progress group live in critical shelters (55%), most commonly in an unfinished or abandoned building (45%) with the remainder living in a mud or block structure (10%). The portion of households living in good conditions (45%) is substantially smaller than medium and high progress groups (respectively 87% and 100%).

IDPs in the low progress group tend to lack secure housing arrangements. No IDP households in the low progress category have formal rental agreements or own the property with documents. Most IDPs in the low progress group own the place they currently live but never had documentation (65%). However, the remainder (35%), live in an informal rental agreement, a proportion that is higher compared to the medium and high progress IDP households (respectively 22% and 23%). Relatedly, around a third of low progress IDP households (35%) are afraid of being evicted compared to 17 per cent and 21 per cent in the medium

and high progress group. This suggests that secure housing arrangements are related to progress towards durable solutions.

About three quarters of IDP households in the low progress group (76%) have access to improved sanitation. This proportion is lower than in the medium and high progress groups (respectively 83% and 100%).

### Access to health care

Only about seven in ten low progress IDP households (69%) are able to access health care, a proportion that is significantly lower than the medium (95%) and high progress (100%) groups.

### Livelihoods and employment

The livelihoods situation of low progress IDP households tends to be precarious. Only a quarter of low progress households (24%) have a stable source of income compared to medium and high progress groups (12% and 67% respectively). Most low progress households (76%) tend to rely on irregular earnings or daily labour, cash/grants or other forms of aid from national institutions (24%). Only around a quarter of low progress IDP households are in formal employment (24%), compared to almost half of high progress IDP households (46%).

As a result, only about one in four IDP households (24%) can face unexpected expenses,<sup>20</sup> compared to almost half of high progress IDP households (45%).

### Safety, security and participation

All low progress IDP households, as all medium and high progress, feel safe walking alone around the area they live in and move in and out of the area whenever they choose. However, only one in ten low progress IDP households (10%) feel comfortable seeking help from authorities, compared to medium and high progress groups (respectively 87% and 100%).

While many low progress IDP households participated in the 2021 election (65%), the overall proportion is lower than in medium and high progress groups (respectively 97% and 100%).

### Preferred solution

Most IDP households across progress groups prefer to stay in their current location. However, compared to the overall proportion a relatively larger share of low progress IDP households prefer to remain where they are (100%), compared to medium and high progress groups (92% and 89% respectively).

<sup>20</sup> Unexpected expenses refer to the ability of households to face up to 440,000 IQD

## LOW PROGRESS – RETURNEE HOUSEHOLDS

126 Households

1% of all returnee caseload

Only 1 per cent of returnee households fall in the low progress category (126 households), similar to the IDP share.

### Demographic characteristics

Similar to low progress IDP households, around a quarter of low progress returnee households (26%) are widowed, compared to 8% and 2% in the medium and high progress groups. This progress group also has a higher proportion of female-headed households (26%) compared to the other progress groups (12% medium and 4% high).

Returnee households in the low progress group also tend to have a higher dependency ratio<sup>21</sup> (74% compared to 37% and 52% in the medium and high progress groups).

Most low progress households are Arab Sunni Muslim (74%), a proportion that is significantly higher than medium and high progress groups (38% and 30% respectively). The remaining proportion are Turkmen Sunni Muslim (26%).

While there are no Kurd Sunni Muslim in the low progress group, this proportion significantly increases in the medium and high progress groups (12% and 46% respectively).

### Housing and shelter condition

Among returnees, there is a strong relationship between housing conditions and progress. More than three quarters (78%) of low progress returnee households live in critical shelters, a proportion that is significantly higher than medium and high progress groups (16% and 0% respectively).

Almost half of low progress returnee households (47%) live in a mud or block structure (compared to 5% of medium and 0% of high progress groups). Additionally, around a third live in damaged or destroyed housing (31%) compared to only 5 per cent in the medium progress group and none in the high progress group. In comparison, only 22 per cent of low progress households live in an apartment in good condition housing compared to 84 per cent and 100 per cent of the medium and high progress groups.

Over half of low progress returnee households (56%) own their house but never had documentation and about one in five (22%) live in informal rental agreements. Only 22 per cent have legal ownership with documentation.

Almost half (47%) of low progress returnee households is afraid of being evicted compared to only 9 per cent and 4 per cent of medium and high progress groups.

Only 69 per cent of low progress returnee households have access to improved sanitation compared to 97 per cent in the medium and 100 per cent in the high progress groups.

### Access to health care

Only about five in ten low progress returnee households (53%) have access to health care, compared to 89 per cent of medium and 100 per cent of high progress households. Additionally, around eight in ten (78%) low progress households report needing medical assistance in the last 12 months.

### Livelihoods and employment

Low progress returnee households have an unstable livelihood situation. None of the households in the low progress group report having a stable source of income, in comparison to 14 per cent and 71 per cent of the medium and high progress groups. All low progress households (100%) rely on irregular earnings, in strong contrast to medium and high progress groups (respectively 83% and 39%). As such, none of the low progress returnee households are able to face unexpected expenses (compared to 5% and 51% in the medium and high progress groups). The relatively low proportion of households that are able to face unexpected expenses across all progress groups suggests this is challenging for returnees in general.

### Safety, security and participation

Similar to IDPs, all returnee households feel safe walking alone around the area they live in and move in and out of the area whenever they choose. However, only around a third (31%) of returnee households feel comfortable seeking help from public authorities, against 89 per cent and 100 per cent in the medium and high progress groups.

However, unlike IDPs in the same progress group, low progress returnee households report higher levels of participation in the 2021 election (100%) at the same level of medium and high progress groups.

### Documentation

Around seven in ten low progress returnee households possess ID and Iraqi nationality, compared to all households in the medium and high progress groups (100%).

<sup>21</sup> This refers to a dependency ratio of +200, meaning that there are over 2 dependents for every 1 working age individuals in the population.

# PROGRESS TOWARD DURABLE SOLUTIONS IN IRAQ:

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

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