

## HIGHLIGHTS

Figure 1: Number of IDPs and returnees over time



Since 2014, the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) unit in Iraq has collected information on internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees using a network of key informants across the country.<sup>1</sup> Data for this round were collected from 1 September to 31 December 2024. As Round 134 is the last report of 2024, this report compares findings from the last trimester of 2024 to the same period in 2023 (corresponding to Round 131). This approach helps identify evolutions in displacement trends over the course of 2024.

### IDPs

## 1,031,475

▼ -92,188

- As of 31 December 2024, DTM identified **1,031,475** individual IDPs (175,674 households).
- Decrease of 92,188** individual IDPs (-8%) since September - December 2023 (Round 131).<sup>2</sup>
- The highest decreases were observed in the following governorates: Duhok (-24,223 individuals), Erbil (-20,575), Al Sulaymaniyah (-17,751) and Ninewa (-17,213).
- The decrease was primarily driven by **camps closure, grants from the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) and IOM Facilitated Voluntary Movement (FVM) programme**.
- There have been 8,797 individual IDP movements in this round. This includes IDPs arriving from another location of displacement – **relocation** (5,004) and secondary displacement (3,720) along with 73 individuals arriving from their area of origin following a failed return attempt.
- The number of IDPs living in **critical shelters fell by 12,312** individuals compared to last year.

**175,674**  
Households  
▼-16,991

**2,507**  
Locations  
▼-103

**18**  
Governorates

**102**  
Districts

▼▲ Change since the last year

### Returnees

## 4,927,890

▲ +64,818

- As of 31 December 2024, DTM identified, **4,927,890** individual returnees (821,315 households).
- Increase of 64,818** individual returnees (1%) since ince September - December 2023 (Round 131).
- The highest increase in number of returnees was observed in Ninewa and Salah Al-Din governorates (37,134 and 19,458 individuals, respectively).
- In **Ninewa, closure of camps and the financial support through MoMD and IOM FVM programme** helped encourage returns. In addition, many families returned to **reunite with their relatives** and benefit from **improved public services or better economic conditions** in their areas of origin. In **Salah Al-Din**, returns were driven by **improved security and services**, with some families returning after **renovating their houses and obtaining security clearance**.
- In this round, most returns from camps were to **Ninewa and Erbil** governorates (96% and 4%).
- The number of returnees residing in **critical shelters increased by 19,980 individuals** compared to last year.

**821,315**  
Households  
▲+10,803

**2,230**  
Locations  
▲ +41

**9**  
Governorates

**39**  
Districts

▼▲ Change since the last year

1. For more information on the Master List methodology, please refer to the [Methodology](#) at the end of this report.  
2. For more information on the rate of change in the IDP and returnee caseloads, please refer to the [Methodology](#).

# DISPLACEMENT OVERVIEW

Figure 2: IDP shelter types as of December 2024



## OVERALL TRENDS

As of December 2024, DTM identified 1,031,475 IDPs (175,674 households). This is a **decrease of 92,188 individuals** (-8%) since September – December 2023 (Round 131).

At the district level, the most significant decreases in IDPs were recorded in **Erbil (-18,752)** in Erbil Governorate, **Sumel (-14,097)** in Duhok Governorate, **Sulaymaniya (-12,379)** in Al Sulaymaniyah Governorate, **Mosul (-8,028)** in Ninewa Governorate, **Zakho (-7,124)** in Duhok Governorate, **Al-Hamdaniya (-6,555)** in Ninewa Governorate and **Al-Shikhan (-6,275)** in Ninewa Governorate.

The main reasons behind these reductions in **Erbil District** are concerns over **camp closures** and the opportunity to obtain the **MoMD grant**, despite the camp administration confirming that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) had not officially announced any closure decision.

These reasons were also resonant in **Sumel, Zakho and Sulaymaniya districts**. In these districts, returns were mainly prompted by **camp closures** which compelled families to **return to their areas of origin** or undergo **secondary displacement**.

In **Al-Hamdaniya and Al-Shikhan districts**, returns were mainly prompted by IOM support through **FVM programme, support from MoMD** and preparations for camp closures. Additionally, some families returned to their place of origin following **improvements to public services** and from an **emotional desire** to reunite with relatives and friends.

In contrast to the above decreases, **Sinjar District in Ninewa Governorate** witnessed an increase of 3,606 individual IDPs compared to last year, primarily **due to departures from the camps**. However, **the lack of services and the destruction of housing** in areas of origin resulted in many families resettling in nearby locations.

## RECENT IDP MOVEMENTS

In this round, a total of **8,797 new IDPs movements** were observed (1% of caseload). Most of these movements involve individuals who were **relocated (57%; 5004)**, followed by individuals who experienced **secondary displacement (42%; 3,720)**. Additionally, 73 individuals experienced failed returns (1%). The majority of these movements were recorded in **Ninewa, Erbil and Al Sulaymaniyah governorates**. Most of these individuals are from areas where conditions remain severe, such as Sinjar and Al-Ba'aj.<sup>4</sup>

**Erbil and Al Sulaymaniyah governorates** recorded the **highest volume of relocations (53% and 25%, respectively)** primarily driven by **better living conditions**, such as housing, access to services or livelihoods.

**Ninewa Governorate** recorded the most IDPs who experienced **secondary displacement (83%)**. The main reason behind these movements was the **announcement of camp closures**.

Additionally, **73 individuals experienced failed returns**, the majority of which were recorded in **Duhok Governorate**. Most of these individuals originated from Sinjar District in Ninewa Governorate, these individuals were forced to leave again after return due to a **lack of public services and job opportunities in their area of origin**.

Table 1: Top three districts recording recent movement

District, Governorate	Displaced for the first time	Relocation	Secondary displacement	Failed returns
Erbil, Erbil	0	2,358	420	0
Sinjar, Ninewa	0	6	1,980	0
Mosul, Ninewa	0	150	744	0

3. DTM collects data on the number of families per location. For camps, it estimates the number of individuals by multiplying the number of households by five (the average size of camp households in Iraq).

4. IOM DTM Iraq, Return Index, Round 23, September – December 2024, Baghdad, 2025.

### SHELTER TYPES

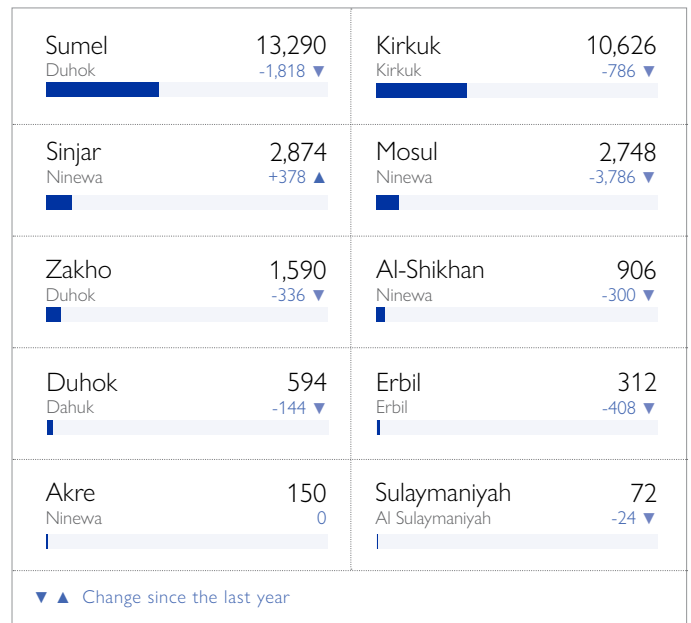
In Round 134, 81 per cent of the IDPs reside in private settings (834,078 individuals), followed by 11 per cent (112,845 individuals) in camps and eight per cent (84,492 individuals) in critical shelters. Since September – December 2023 (Round 131), IDPs living in camps decreased by (-30%; -48,790 individuals), followed by IDPs in critical shelters (-13%; -12,312) and IDPs in private settings (-4%; -30,384).

#### Critical Shelters<sup>5</sup>

IDPs living in critical shelters may face challenges such as limited access to livelihoods and basic services. Compared to Round 131, the number of IDPs residing in critical shelters has **decreased by 12,312 individuals**. The most significant reductions were in Mosul District in Ninewa Governorate (-3,786), followed by Sumel in Duhok Governorate (-1,818) and Tuz Khurmatu in Salah Al-Din Governorate (-1,446).

In some districts, IDPs live in critical shelter only, these were evident in districts of Falluja and Ramadi in Al Anbar Governorate (12,816 and 4,818, respectively), Mahmoudiya in Baghdad Governorate (4,128) and Sumel in Duhok Governorate (2,190).<sup>6</sup>

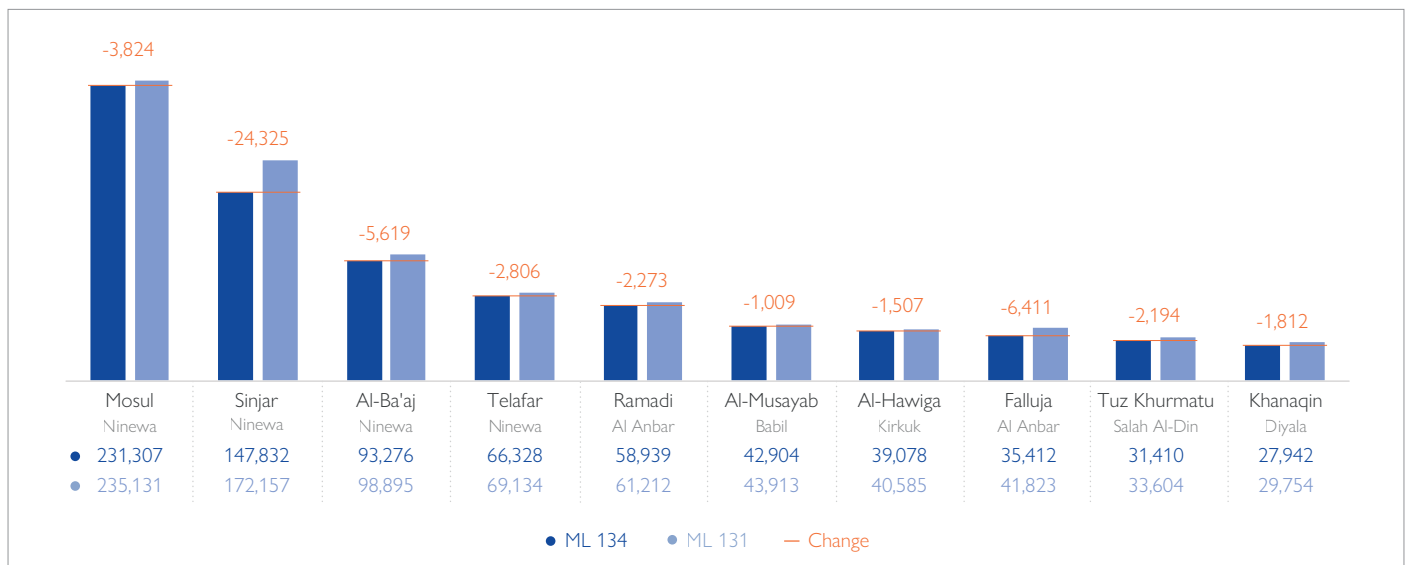
Figure 3: Number of IDPs in critical shelters by top 10 districts of displacement



### IDP AREAS OF ORIGIN

Slightly more than half (56%) of IDPs originate from Ninewa Governorate, in particular Mosul (40%), Sinjar (26%), Al-Ba'aj (16%) and Telafar (11%) districts. A further 22 per cent of IDPs originate from Al Anbar or Salah Al-Din governorates (11% each). Since September–December 2023 (Round 131) a significant decrease in the number of IDPs was recorded in the displacement locations, indicating their return to areas of origin. The most significant decreases were among IDPs from Sinjar District in Ninewa Governorate (-24,325), followed by Falluja in Al Anbar Governorate (-6,411) and Al-Ba'aj in Ninewa Governorate (-5,619). These figures reflect the most significant changes among the top 10 districts of origin.

Figure 4: Number of IDPs by top 10 districts of origin



5. For IDPs, critical shelters may include uninhabitable apartments or houses, tents, caravans, makeshift shelters, mud or brick houses; unfinished or abandoned buildings; public buildings or collective shelters; religious buildings or school buildings.

6. IOM DTM Iraq, *Displacement Index, Round 11, September - December 2024*, Baghdad, 2025.

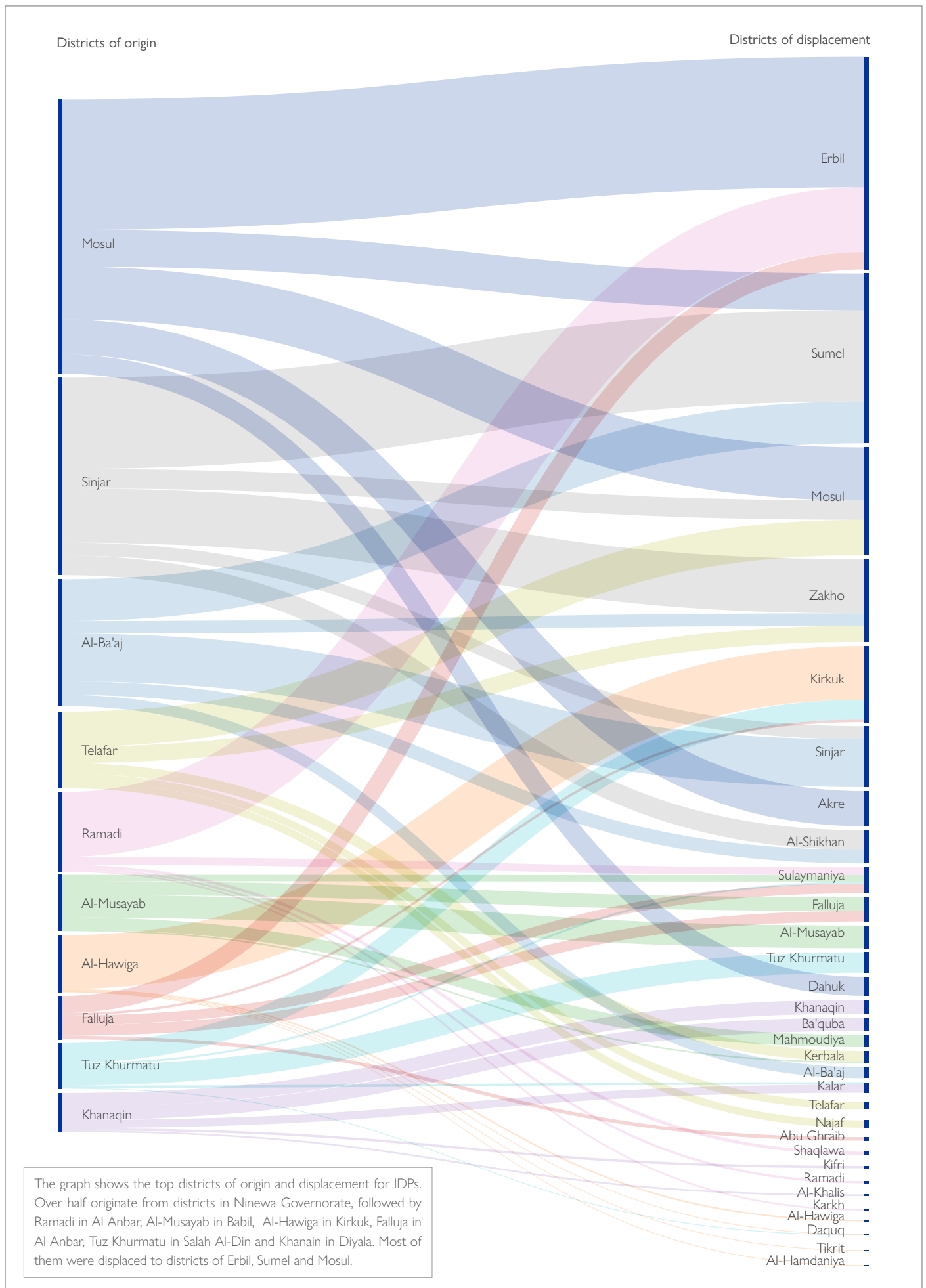
The graphs below show the eight governorates hosting the largest numbers of IDPs. They also indicate change in the number of IDPs since the last year, key districts where IDPs reside and top governorates of origin. For an overview of districts of displacement and returns across Iraq, please see the [IDP Background Map](#).

Figure 5: Top governorates of displacement, corresponding districts of displacement and governorates of origin as of December 2024



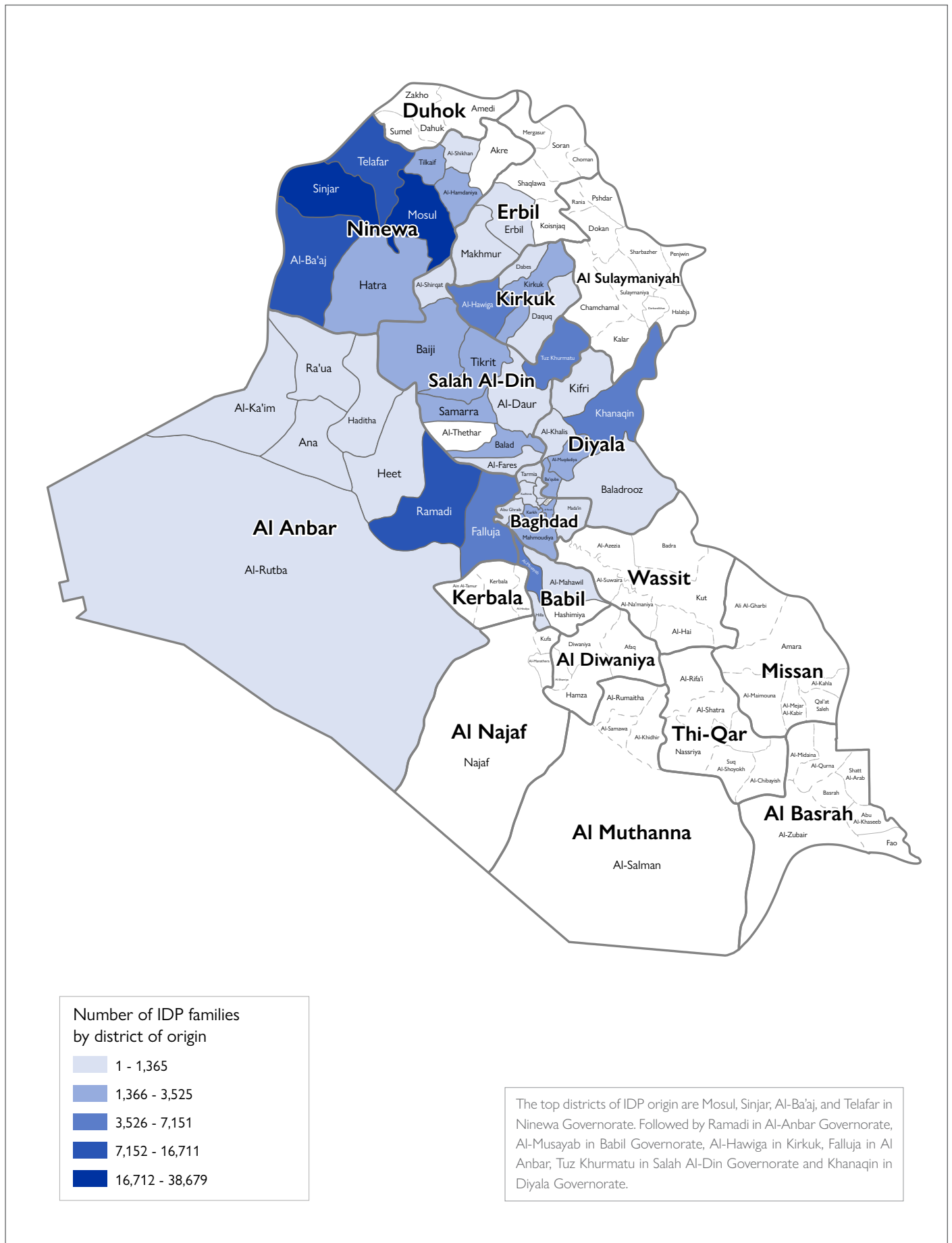
▼▲ Change since the last year

Figure 6: Top districts of origin and corresponding districts of displacement<sup>7</sup>

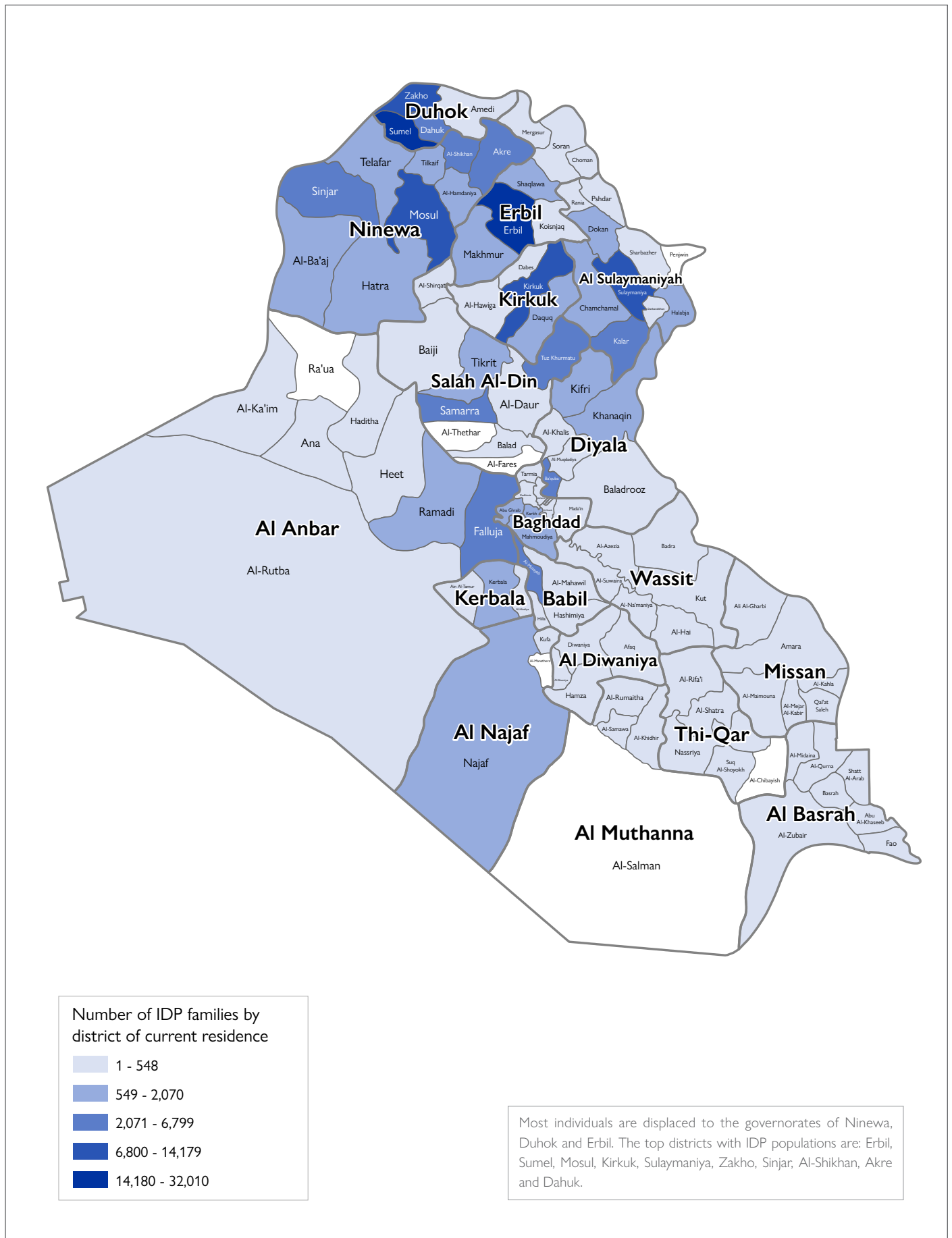


7. Only the top 5 districts of displacement per district of origin were reported.

Map 1: Districts of origin of the current IDP population as of December 2024



Map 2: Districts of displacement of the current IDP population as of December 2024



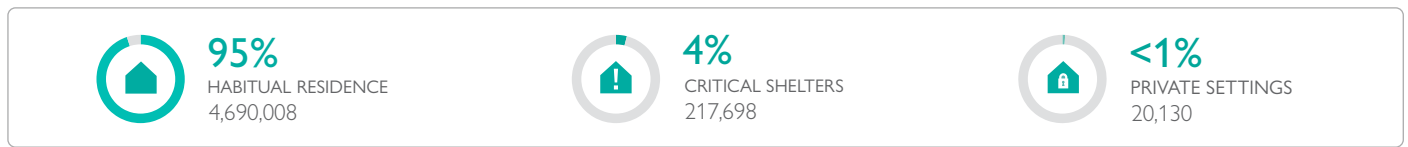
Number of IDP families by district of current residence

- 1 - 548
- 549 - 2,070
- 2,071 - 6,799
- 6,800 - 14,179
- 14,180 - 32,010

Most individuals are displaced to the governorates of Ninewa, Duhok and Erbil. The top districts with IDP populations are: Erbil, Sumel, Mosul, Kirkuk, Sulaymaniya, Zakho, Sinjar, Al-Shikhan, Akre and Dahuk.

# RETURN OVERVIEW

Figure 7: Returnee shelter types as of December 2024



## OVERALL TRENDS

As of December 2024, DTM identified 4,927,890 returnees (821,315 households). This marks the **increase of 64,818 individuals** since September – December 2023 period (Round 131). The country-wide return rate is 83 per cent, only a one per cent increase compared to last year. However, the rate of return across top districts of origin is extremely variable, with lower rates observed Al-Musayab in Babil (5%), and Al-Ba'aj (45%) and Sinjar (50%) in Ninewa. These rates have risen since the last year, reflecting a notable increase in the number of returnees. In contrast, the highest return rates remained steady in Falluja (94%) and Ramadi (91%) in Al Anbar.

## RECENT RETURN MOVEMENTS

Similarly to Round 131, **Ninewa** and **Salah Al-Din** governorates **have the highest increase in returnees**. In Ninewa, the largest increase was recorded in Sinjar (18,246 individuals) and Al-Ba'aj (13,722). In Salah Al-Din, Balad witnessed the highest increase (7,542), followed by Fares (5,346) and Baiji (5,040).

In **Ninewa Governorate**, most returns were driven by an **emotional desire** to reunite with relatives and friends and **preparations to leave the camp** ahead of its closure. In addition, the support some households received from the **IOM FVM** programme and **MoMD** serves as a pull factor. Sinjar, in particular, witnessed the largest wave of returns in years, driven not only by the camp closures but also by the increase in the return grant from 1.5 Million to 4 million IQD. Improving economic conditions further facilitated returns with increased market activity and job opportunities. While the security situation has relatively improved, with reduced tension between security forces and other armed groups, repeated Turkish airstrikes continue to cause fear and panic among civilians.

In **Salah Al-Din**, the increase in returnees reflects **departures from camps** in Sulaymaniyah Governorate, facilitated by **the support provided by MoMD**, as well as **improvements in services and security situation**. Additionally, some families were able to rebuild their houses.

## Arrivals from camps

**The number of returnees from camps has increased by more than six times compared to Round 131 (22,542 versus 3,702)**. The key districts of return this round were Sinjar (11,652 individuals) and Al-Ba'aj (8,508) in Ninewa Governorate. Most of the returnees in Ninewa are from Shariya Camp in Duhok Governorate.<sup>8</sup>

## Locations of no return

As of December 2024, there are 291 locations of no return, i.e. locations where displacement during or since the 2014-2017 conflict with Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) was recorded but have either not recorded any returns or have subsequently recorded that all returnees have re-displaced. Since September – December 2023 period (Round 131), 21 locations witnessed return and subsequently were removed from the list. In this round, locations that witnessed return were in districts of Mosul, Al-Hamdanya and Sinjar in Ninewa Governorate, Al-Hawiga and Kirkuk in Kirkuk Governorate, Baiji in Salah Al-Din Governorate and Al-Muqdadaya in Diyala Governorate.

**Security concerns** were reported as the primary barrier to return in most locations (112 locations), with the majority being in Ninewa, Erbil and Kirkuk governorates (42%, 28% and 23%, respectively). Additionally, **residential destruction** prevented returns in 71 locations, mostly in Diyala and Ninewa governorates (58% and 41%). Furthermore, in 44 locations, largely in Ninewa, Salah Al-Din and Babil governorates, **security forces blocked returns**. **Drought** was the main factor preventing returns in 20 locations, all of which were in Ninewa. Other reasons recorded, but in smaller numbers, included lack of services, tribal and ethno-religious tensions, lack of clearance to return, limited employment opportunities, concerns regarding ISIL reprisal due to perceived affiliation and presence of mines.

8. For more details check: IOM DTM Iraq, *Camp Movements, 1 April – 30 December, 2024*, Baghdad, 2024.



### Failed returns

The number of failed returns has significantly decreased this round compared to Round 131 (73 individuals vs. 406). **The majority of these failed returns were reported among individuals originally from Ninewa and Salah Al-Din governorates.**

In Ninewa, most failed returns were recorded in **Sinjar District** due to lack of public services and employment opportunities in the area of origin.

In Salah Al-Din, all the failed returns were recorded in **Balad District** due to **lack of employment opportunities and financial means** in the area of origin.

### SHELTER TYPES

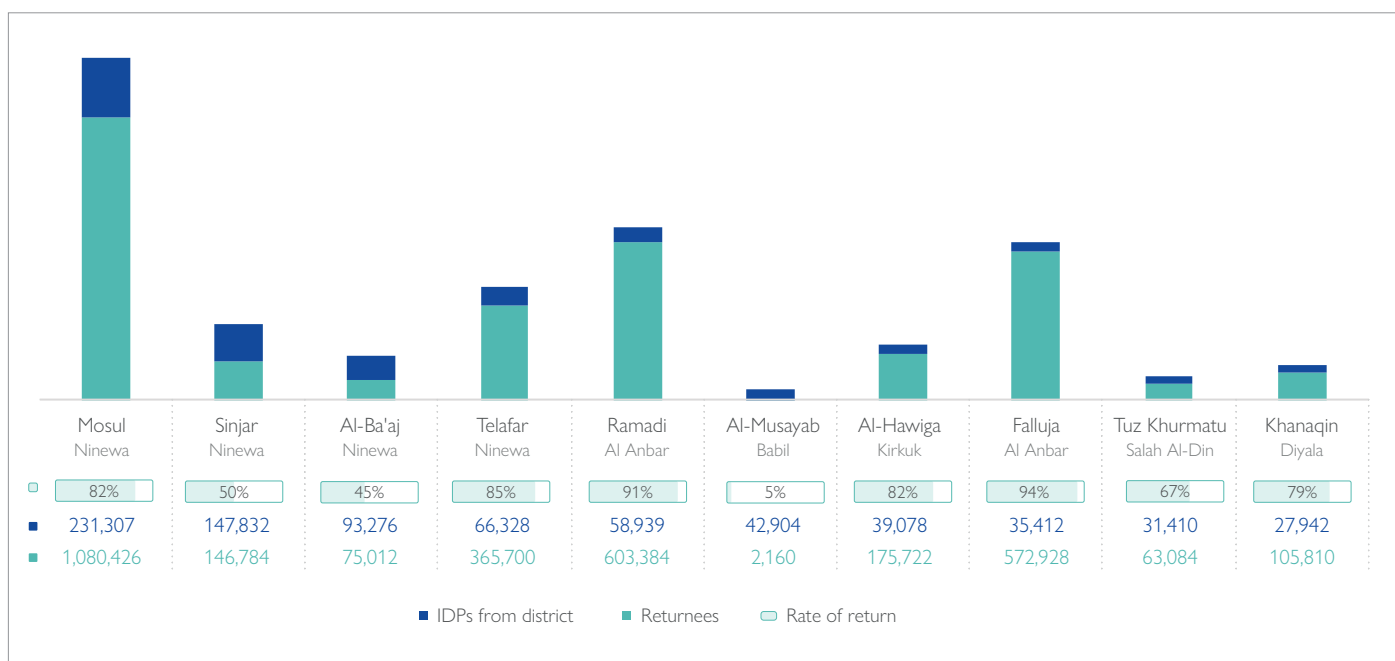
Most returnees (95%) reside in their residence of origin, while roughly 4 per cent live in critical shelters.

#### Critical shelters<sup>9</sup>

Across governorates, **Salah Al-Din continued to see an increase in the number of returnees residing in critical shelters since last year (12,150 individuals)**, largely within Balad, Al-Fares and Baiji districts. **Ninewa Governorate reported the second highest net increase in returnees** in critical shelters (9,348) mostly centered in Al-Ba'aj and Sinjar districts. These are also locations where conditions remain severe.<sup>10</sup>

In Balad and Al-Fares, the primary reason for the increase in returnees living in critical shelters is the rise in returns from camps, with families needing to return to their habitual residences, which are not yet habitable. Similar reasons apply in Al-Ba'aj and Sinjar, where families are returning to their uninhabitable homes but were encouraged by the presence of multiple organizations working to improve the area's infrastructure and basic services, including water, electricity, and schools.

Figure 8: Rate of return in top 10 districts of origin as of December 2024

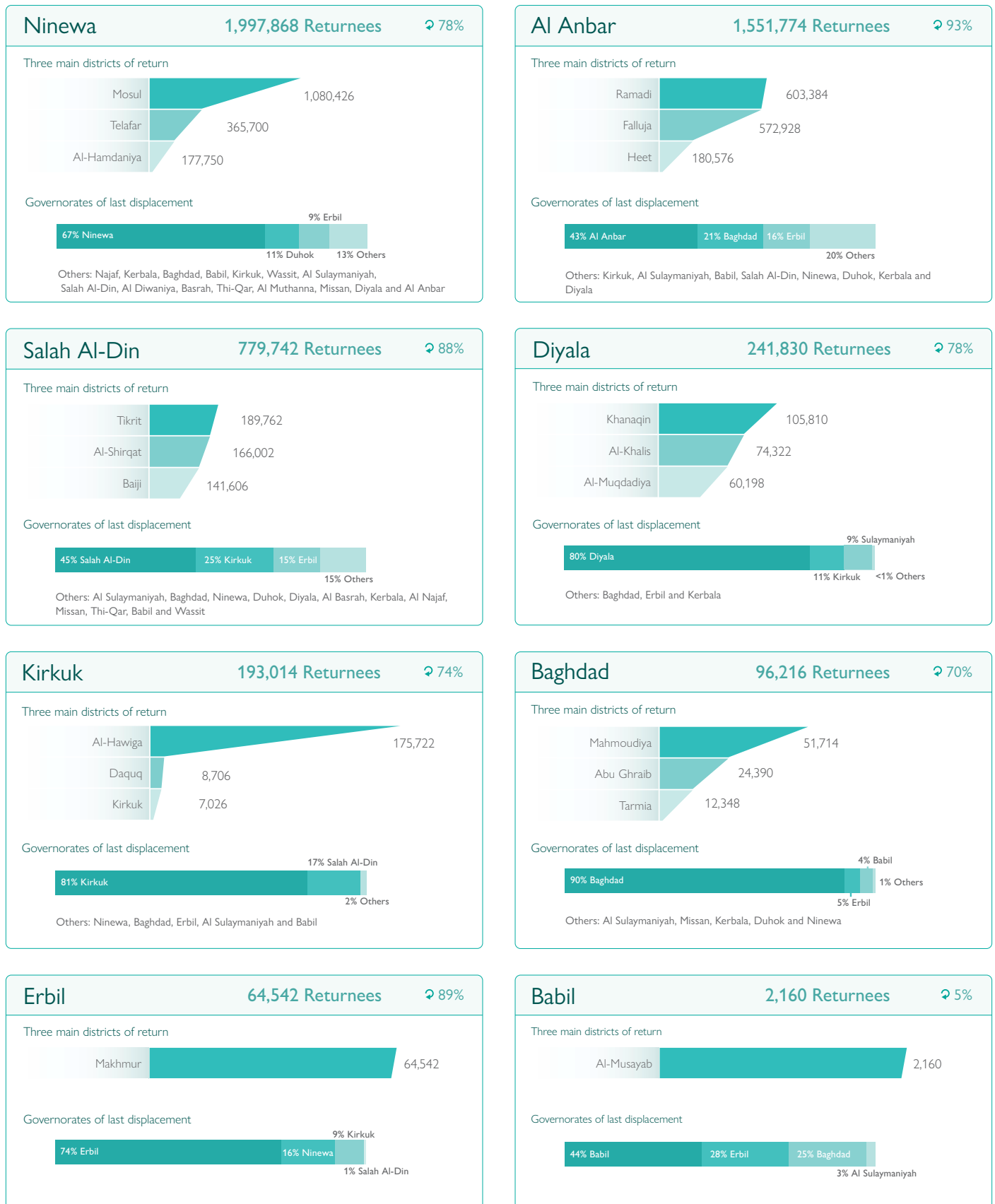


9. For returnees, critical shelters include uninhabitable residences of origin; tents, caravans, makeshift shelters, mud or brick houses; unfinished or abandoned buildings; public buildings or collective shelters; religious buildings or school buildings.

10. IOM DTM Iraq, Return Index, Round 23, September - December 2024, Baghdad, 2025.

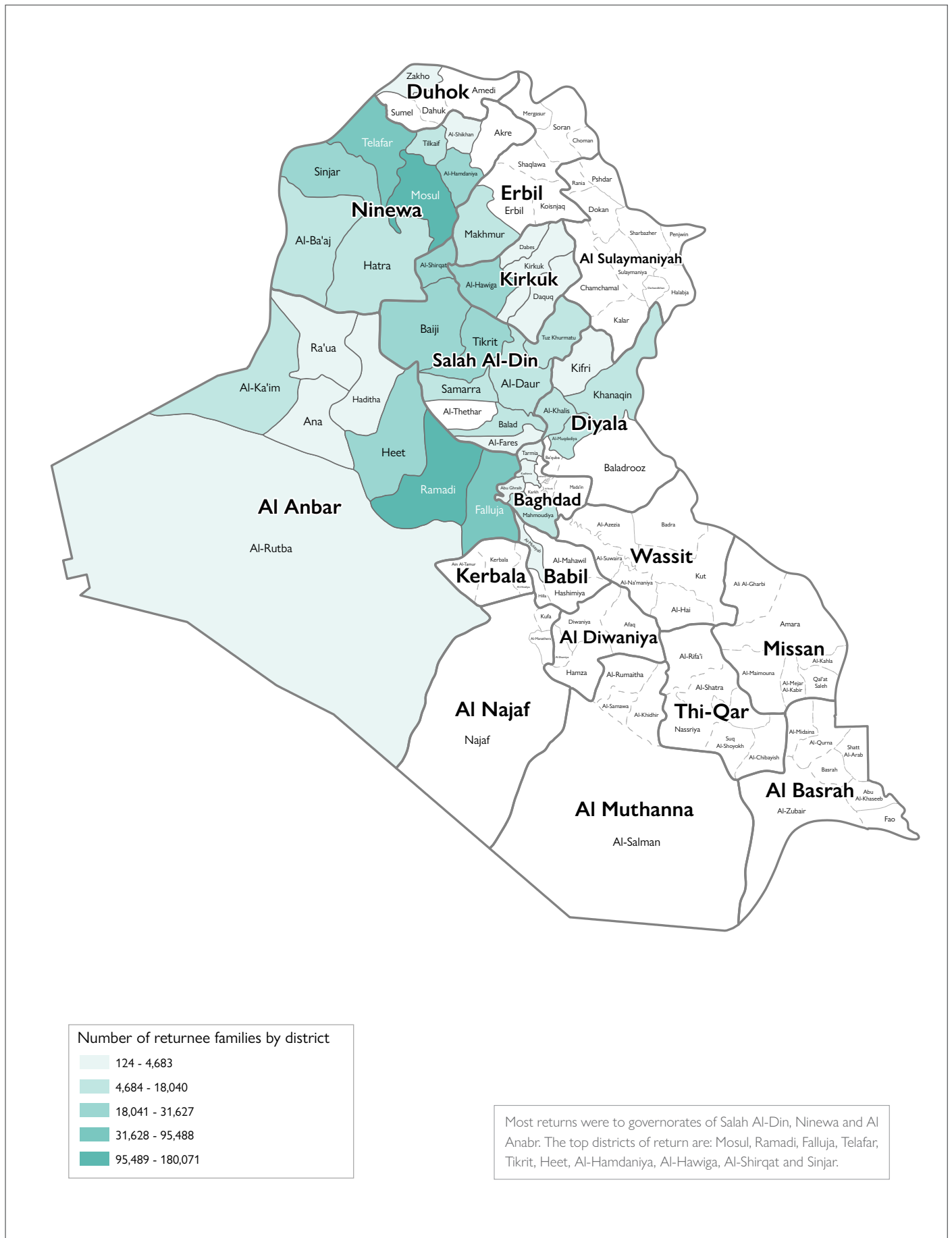
The graphs below show: 1) the number of returnees in all governorates, 2) the main districts where returnees reside, 3) the rate of return per governorate and 4) the governorates where returnees were last displaced. For an overview of districts of returns across Iraq, please see the [Returnee Background Map](#).

Figure 9: Top governorates of return, corresponding districts of return and governorates of last displacement as of December 2024

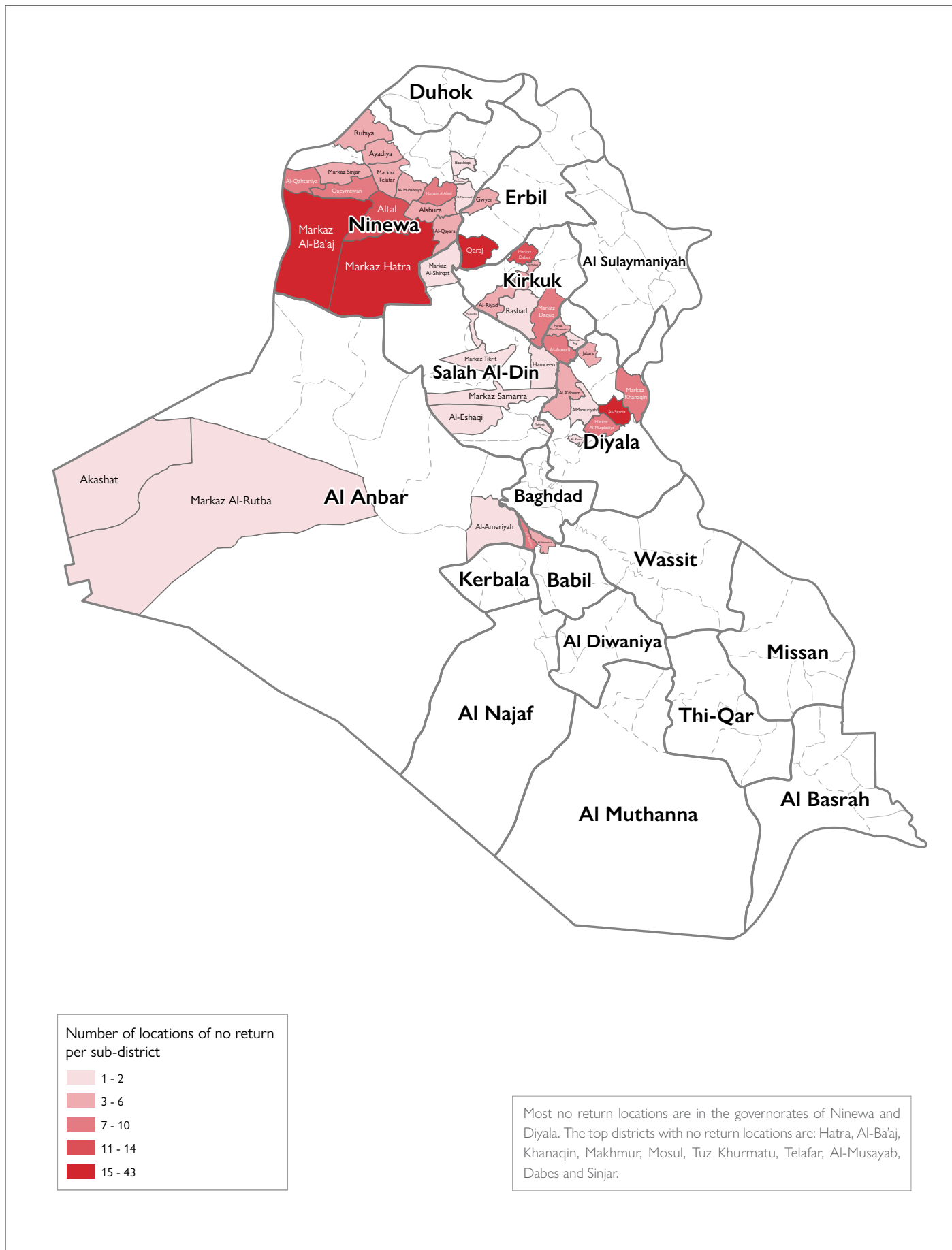


📍 Rate of return

Map 3: Districts of return as of December 2024



Map 4: Areas of no return as of December 2024



# METHODOLOGY

IOM's DTM monitors displacement and provides information on the IDP and returnee populations in Iraq. Data are collected through IOM's RARTs, composed of over 58 staff members deployed across Iraq (18% of enumerators are female). Data collection for Round 134 took place between September and December 2024 across 18 governorates.

Data from the IDP Master List and Returnee Master List are gathered through a well-established large network of over 2,000 key informants that includes community leaders, mukhtars, local authorities and security forces. Additional information is gathered from government registration data and partner agencies.

IOM RARTs collect Master List data continuously and report it every four months. However, limited access due to security issues and other operational constraints can affect information-gathering activities. The variation in displacement figures observed between different reporting periods, in addition to true variation of the population figures, may be influenced by other factors such as the continuous identification of previously displaced groups and the inclusion of data on secondary displacements within Iraq.

The displaced populations are identified through a process of collection, verification, triangulation and validation of data. IOM continues to closely coordinate with federal, regional and local authorities to maintain a shared and accurate understanding of displacement across Iraq.

## CALCULATIONS USED TO DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS

The number of individuals is calculated by multiplying the number of households by six, the average size of an Iraqi household as per governmental statistics, for all out-of-camp IDPs and returnees. Since the July-August 2020 period (Round 117), the number of individuals for in-camp IDPs has been calculated by multiplying

the number of households by five,<sup>11</sup> which is the average camp household size according to the Iraq CCCM Cluster since 2018.

## RATE OF CHANGE BETWEEN IDP AND RETURNEE CASELOADS

The rate of change of the IDP caseload and that of the returnee caseload may differ due to several factors. Firstly, DTM continues to record families who are displaced for the first time, families arriving from other locations of displacement (secondary displacement) and families who become displaced after returning (failed returns). Additionally, because DTM counts IDPs and returnees at the family level, marriage and other changes within the family can influence the size of the caseload. Furthermore, some families may be counted in both caseloads if: a) part of the family remains displaced while others have returned or b) families may move back and forth between their area of displacement and return. Finally, IDPs living in inaccessible areas may not be counted due to security concerns; upon their return, however, they may be included in the returnee caseload.

## DIFFERING LENGTHS OF REPORTING PERIODS

The Master List is produced on a tri-annual basis. Previous reports were published on a quarterly basis. Additionally, since January 2021, three reports (120, 121 and 123) covered a two-month period. The changing length of the reporting period may impact comparison between rounds.

## CHANGES TO SHELTER TERMINOLOGY

Since Round 122, DTM made changes to the shelter terminology to align with the Iraq CCCM Cluster's *Technical Note on Informal Sites Definition for Iraq* (September 2020). Please find shelter definitions in the glossary below.

11. Prior to Round 117, DTM calculated the number of in-camp IDPs by multiplying the number of families by six.

## GLOSSARY

Critical shelter	<p>For returnees, critical shelters includes the following shelter types: residences of origin (uninhabitable), tents/caravans/makeshift shelters/mud or brick houses, unfinished/abandoned buildings, public buildings or collective shelters, religious buildings or school buildings.</p> <p>For IDPs, critical shelters include those listed above for returnees except residences of origin, as well as apartments/houses that are not owned or are uninhabitable.</p>
Failed return	Individuals arriving from their area of origin after a failed attempt at return.
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)	For the purposes of the DTM assessments, all Iraqis who were forced to flee from 1 January 2014 onwards and are still displaced within national borders at the moment of the assessment.
Location	An area that corresponds either to a village for rural areas or a neighbourhood for urban areas (i.e. fourth official administrative division).
Location of no return	A location that recorded displacement during or since the 2014-2017 conflict with ISIL but has either not recorded any returns or have subsequently recorded that all returnees have redisplaced.
Private settings	For returnees and IDPs, includes hotels/motels, houses of host families or apartments/houses that are not owned. For IDPs, it also includes their own property.
Protracted displacement	Displacement that has lasted for longer than three years. As displacement data are collected in 'waves' of displacement that cover a period of several months, displacement that occurred before January 2021 is considered to be protracted.
Rate of return	Used to estimate the proportion of returns in a district of origin and computed as the ratio of returnees to a district to the total number of returnees and IDPs originally from the same district.
Relocation	Individuals who moved from one location of displacement to another location due to such factors as better conditions, safety, aid availability or family ties.
Residence of origin	For returnees only, refers to their residence prior to displacement.
Returnees	For the purposes of the DTM assessments, all those displaced since January 2014 who have returned to their location of origin, irrespective of whether they have returned to their former residence or to another shelter type. The definition of returnees is not related to the criteria of returning in safety and dignity, nor with a defined strategy for ensuring durable solutions.
Secondary displacement	Individuals who were forced to move from one location of displacement to another location due to such factors as camp closures, safety concerns, or environmental challenges.

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