

CONTEXT

The Return Index is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. Data collection for the Return Index Round 7 took place during the months of November and December 2019 across eight governorates, 38 districts and 1,754 locations in Iraq. As this round is the last of 2019, some of the changes recorded throughout the year are presented. Since the Return Index Round 2 (collected in November – December 2018), an additional 281 locations of return were assessed.

Between January 1 and December 31 2019, an increase has been observed in the numbers of returnees in all categories of severity due to the overall increase in the total returnee caseload. The highest increase in the numbers of returnees was identified in locations with medium severity conditions. Proportions of returnees in each category have remained relatively stable as compared to the end of last year, with the proportion of returnees living in severe conditions being 12 per cent, or around 500 000 individuals.

In terms of conditions related to livelihoods and basic services (Scale 1 of the Return Index), a significant increase was observed in the numbers of returnees living in locations with low severity conditions, accompanied by a decrease in locations with medium severity since December 2018. An increase has also been observed in the numbers of returnees in all categories of severity related to social cohesion and safety perceptions (Scale 2 of the Return Index), with an increase of 48,696 returnees living in severe or poor conditions. These changes mainly reflect the fact that additional locations of return were assessed during 2019, most of them in rural areas.

RETURNEE POPULATION IN SEVERE CONDITIONS

- Out of the 1,754 return locations assessed, 293 present severe conditions, hosting 12 per cent of the returnee population, or 522,090 individuals.
- Salah al-Din and Ninewa are the governorates hosting the highest number of returnees living in severe conditions, with 198,450 and 173,724 individuals respectively.
- Salah al-Din and Diyala host the highest proportions of returnees living in severe conditions (30% and 18% respectively).
- A comparison of locations assessed in Round 2 (collected in November – December 2018) and Round 7 (collected in November – December 2019) reveals that the proportion of returnees living in severe conditions has remained relatively stable. This consistency suggests a lack of

improvement in conditions in the locations of return overall, despite variation across the governorates.

- Decreases in the proportion of returnees living in severe conditions were observed in Kirkuk, Anbar and Diyala, due to decreases in indicators related to livelihoods and basic services. By contrast, Baghdad witnessed an increase in the proportion of returnees in severe conditions since December 2018.
- In terms of indicators related to social cohesion and safety perceptions, decreases in the proportion of returnees living in severe conditions were identified in Salah al-Din, Baghdad and Diyala, and an increase was noted in Anbar.

MOST SEVERE LOCATIONS OF RETURN

- Forty-three locations hosting 46,164 returnees were identified as having the most severe return conditions in this round, a slight increase compared to Round 6. Of these, the top three locations are Al-Salam and Maftol Al Kaber villages with a combined population of 582 returnees (both located in Tuz Khurmatu District in Salah al-Din), and Al Sayer with a population of 690 returnees (located in Sinjar District in Ninewa).

METHODOLOGY

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 and to calculate scores for two scales. For example, the model tests how much less likely a location where no agricultural activities have recovered is to have returns compared to a location where these activities have recovered. To compute an overall severity index, the scores of the two scales are combined.

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).

Please refer to Round 1 and Round 3 reports for more details on the methodology.

Figure 1. Proportion of returnees by category of severity

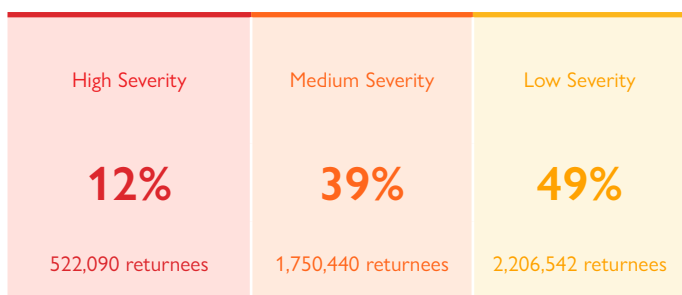


Table 1. Number of locations and returnees per governorate by category of severity

Governorate	HIGH		MEDIUM		LOW		TOTAL	
	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations
Anbar	103,620	27	536,652	139	715,662	110	1,355,934	276
Baghdad	1,932	4	30,372	40	57,114	76	89,418	120
Dahuk	0	0	0	0	780	1	780	1
Diyala	41,634	41	141,798	111	44,754	65	228,186	217
Erbil	2,424	1	6,750	6	35,784	20	44,958	27
Kirkuk	306	4	80,700	75	255,546	123	336,552	202
Ninewa	173,724	166	560,496	293	1,016,676	247	1,750,896	706
Salah al-Din	198,450	50	393,672	126	80,226	29	672,348	205
Total	522,090	293	1,750,440	790	2,206,542	671	4,479,072	1,754

### GOVERNORATE HOTSPOTS OF SEVERITY

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. Thirty-one hotspots were identified across six governorates in this round.

#### NINEWA

- Al-Qahtaniya
- Al-Shamal
- Markaz Telafar
- Markaz Al-Ba'aj
- Markaz Sinjar
- Zummar
- Al-Shura
- Qaeyrrawan
- Hamam al Aleel
- Ayadiya

#### SALAH AL-DIN

- Markaz Al-Daur
- Markaz Baiji
- Al-Amerli
- Markaz Al-Shirqat
- Yathreb
- Markaz Tuz Khurmatu
- Markaz Samarra
- Al-Siniya
- Markaz Tikrit
- Suleiman Beg

#### ANBAR

- Markaz Al-Ka'im
- Al-Garma
- Kubaisa
- Markaz Al-Rutba
- Al-Saqlawiyah

#### DIYALA

- Al-Mansouriyah
- As-Saadia
- Markaz Al-Muqdadiya
- Jalula

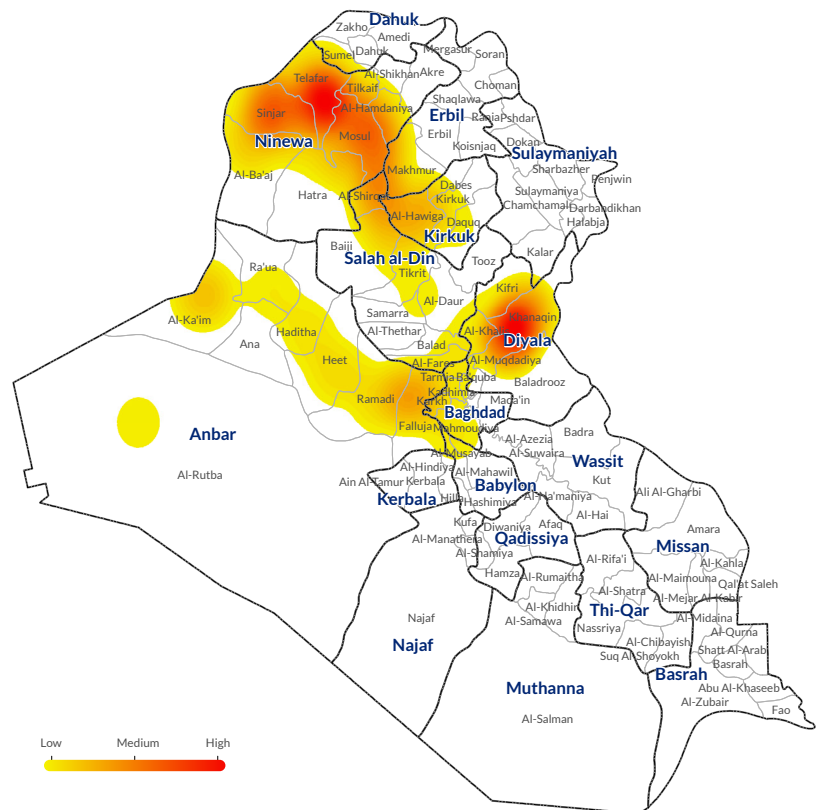
#### KIRKUK

- Al-Riyad

#### BAGHDAD

- Al-Nasir Walsalam

Map 1. Returnee population density by overall severity score



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

The map shows conditions of severity based on population size and severity score of each assessed location. The darker colours indicate a larger concentration of families living in severe conditions of return, while the brighter colours indicate lower severity conditions or areas with low levels of returns.

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