

# RETURN DYNAMICS IN SALAH AL-DIN GOVERNORATE

JULY 2020

The Return Index Governorate Profiling provides singular analysis and insights at the governorate level, with a comparison of figures and severity of living conditions over the course of 2019 and early 2020.

This report focuses on return dynamics in Salah al-Din Governorate, the governorate with the third largest number of returnees. The report features an evaluation of severity conditions in areas of return across the governorate in early 2020, provides insights on new arrivals due to camp closures between September 2019 and February 2020, and analyses drivers of severity across geographical hotspots in the governorate.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Salah al-Din Governorate hosts 680,000 returnees out of 4.66 million across Iraq (15 per cent of the total), that is, the third largest in terms of returnee population after Ninewa and Anbar governorates. However, Salah al-Din has 200,000 individuals living in high severity conditions (30 per cent of the governorate's total returnee population), that is, the largest number of returnees living in such conditions within a single governorate across the country.
- More than 36,000 returnees are living in critical shelters (5 per cent of Salah al-Din's returnee population), spread across 133 locations. Baiji and Tikrit districts each host 10,000 returnees living in critical shelters.
- Between September 2019 and February 2020, DTM tracked almost 14,000 individuals (2,300 households) who left the camps for other non-camp settings in Salah al-Din Governorate due to camp closures. The subdistrict of Markaz Al-Shirqat includes the majority of new arrivals. Nearly all of them returned to their district of origin, although just over 40 per cent of new arrivals settled in locations classified as high severity while the rest settled in locations classified as medium severity.
- Five districts feature over 93 per cent of the returnees living in high severity: Balad, Baiji, Tikrit, Tuz Khurmatu, and Samarra.
- Finally, ten sub-districts in Salah al-Din Governorate are classified as hotspots of severity. From most to least severe, the list of hotspots are as follows: Suleiman Beg, Al-Siniya, Yathreb, Markaz Samarra, Markaz Tuz Khurmatu, Al-Amerli, Markaz Baiji, Markaz Al-Shirqat, Markaz Tikrit, and Markaz Al-Daur. The most common drivers of severity across hotspots correspond to indicators in Scale 2 (social cohesion and security concerns), including generalized concerns about renewed violence and attacks from Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as well as blocked returns.

## METHODOLOGY

The Return Index is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. The Return Index is built from a list of indicators developed in consultation with relevant partners and stakeholders to reflect the displacement context in Iraq (see Table 1). It is based on 16 indicators grouped into two scales: Scale 1, on livelihoods and basic services, and Scale 2, centred around social cohesion and safety perceptions. The overall 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. More details on the methodology are available on the portal of DTM Iraq at <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/> and in the report “Building Blocks of the Return Index in Iraq.”<sup>1</sup>

Multiple data sources are used for this report: (i) the Return Index Round 8 collected in January–February 2020 across eight governorates, 38 districts and 1,850 locations in Iraq, (ii) the Master List for Round 114 (January–February 2020), Round 113 (November–December 2019) and Round 112 (September–October 2019). Return Index Round 8 is used in this report for sections 2 and 3 to classify return locations by category of severity and in section 4 to analyse the underlying drivers of severity. The Master List data is used in section 2 to define total returnee and IDP population in each location and figures on arrivals from camps during the second half of 2019 and early 2020.

Table 1: Indicator list for each scale

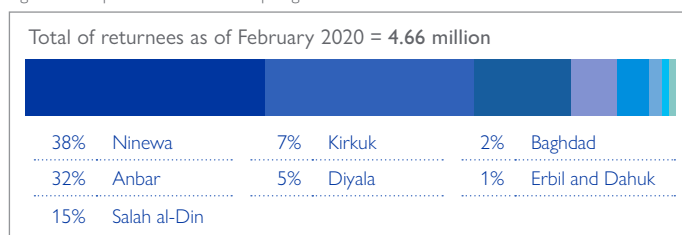
SCALE 1: LIVELIHOODS AND BASIC SERVICES	SCALE 2: SAFETY AND SOCIAL COHESION
Residential destruction	Community reconciliation
Employment access	Multiple security actors
Water sufficiency	Blocked returns
Recovery of agriculture	Checkpoints controlled by other security actors
Electricity sufficiency	Daily public life
Recovery of businesses	Illegal occupation of private residences
Access to basic services	Mines
Provision of government services	Sources of violence
SCALE 1 SCORE = 100	SCALE 2 SCORE = 100
OVERALL SEVERITY INDEX = AVERAGE OF SCALE 1 AND SCALE 2 SCORES	

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/ReturnIndex>

## CATEGORIZING CONDITIONS IN AREAS OF RETURN

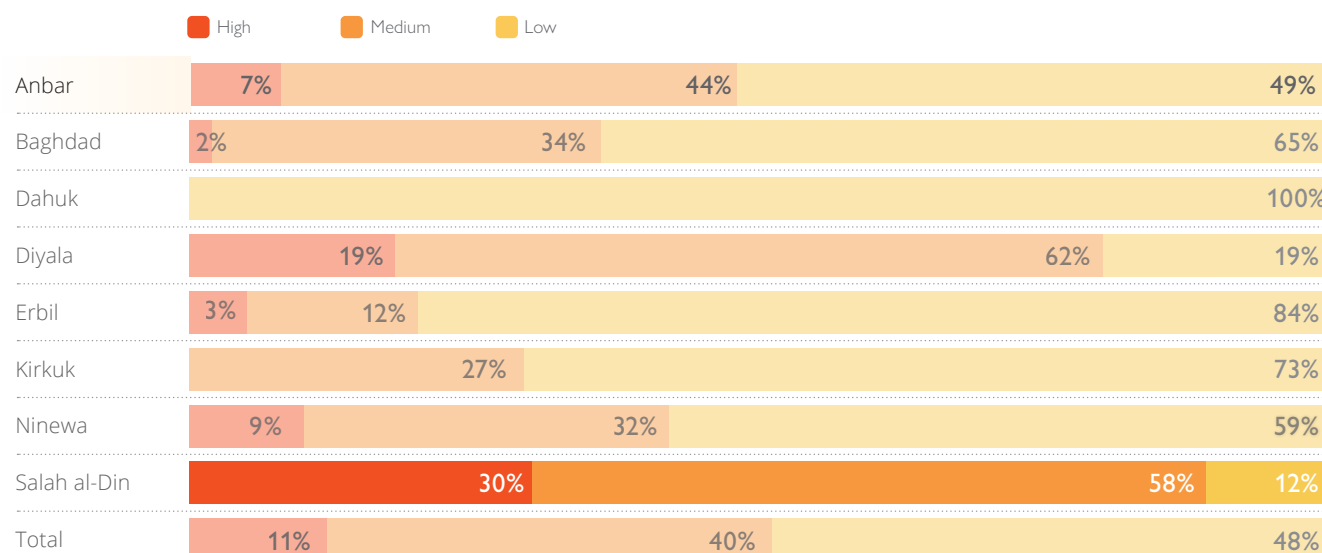
Fifteen per cent of returns in Iraq are in Salah al-Din Governorate, making it the third governorate with the largest returnee population after Ninewa and Anbar. As of February 2020, the total number of returnees in the governorate was 680,946 individuals out of 4.66 million in Iraq (Figure 1). Over the course of one year, the returnee population has increased from 601,866 in February 2019 to 680,946 in February 2020.

Figure 1. Proportion of returnees per governorate



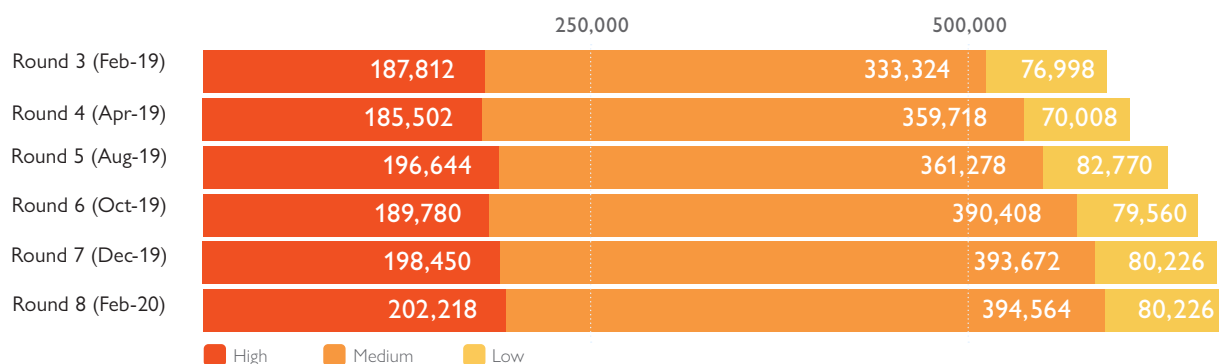
As to severity conditions, however, Salah al-Din Governorate ranks first in terms of the number of returnees living in high severity conditions, with 202,218 individuals. In relative terms, this means that 30 per cent of the returnee population in Salah al-Din has returned to locations classified as high severity, followed by 58 per cent to medium severity, and just 12 per cent to low severity (Figure 2). This distribution of returnees classified in the high severity category is almost three times the country average, where the proportion of individuals in high severity locations is 11 per cent.

Figure 2. Proportion of returnees by category of severity per governorate in February 2020



Note: percentages may not add to 100% due to the rounding applied.

Over the course of 2019, the total number of returnees living in high severity locations experienced a slow but continued increase (Figure 3). Between February 2019 and February 2020, the total increase of the number of people living in high severity conditions was around 14,000 individuals, with the numbers in the last round exceeding for the first time 200,000 individuals. The largest increase in the number of returnees in Salah al-Din Governorate is found in the medium severity category, with more than 60,000 new individuals in such locations, while the population in low severity conditions has only slightly varied across time.

Figure 3. Yearly trend of returnees by category of severity in Salah al-Din Governorate<sup>2</sup>


The bulk of returnees living in high severity conditions are evenly spread across five districts in the governorate: Balad, Baiji, Tikrit, Tuz Khurmatu, and Samarra. Together, these five districts host 93 per cent of the returnees living in high severity conditions and, overall, two-thirds of the total returnee population in Salah al-Din. The situation is especially critical in Tuz Khurmatu and Balad, with more than half of their respective returnee populations classified as living in high severity locations, at 72 per cent and 69 per cent respectively.

Table 2: Number of returnees per district and category of severity in Salah al-Din Governorate

DISTRICT	HIGH SEVERITY LOCATIONS		MEDIUM SEVERITY LOCATIONS		LOW SEVERITY LOCATIONS		LOCATIONS NOT CATEGORIZED		TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEE INDIVIDUALS	
Balad	45,228	69%	12,648	19%	7,836	12%	0	0%	65,712	100%
Baiji	44,502	40%	59,316	53%	7,656	7%	0	0%	111,474	100%
Tikrit	37,836	22%	79,524	46%	53,976	32%	0	0%	171,336	100%
Tuz Khurmatu	34,176	72%	11,502	24%	0	0%	1,938	4%	47,616	100%
Samarra	26,520	47%	26,430	47%	2,928	5%	0	0%	55,878	100%
Al-Shirqat	10,002	6%	148,074	94%	0	0%	0	0%	158,076	100%
Al-Fares	3,954	38%	0	0%	6,414	62%	0	0%	10,368	100%
Al-Daur	0	0%	59,070	98%	1,416	2%	0	0%	60,486	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>202,218</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>396,564</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>80,226</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>1,938</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>680,946</b>	<b>100%</b>

As to the shelter conditions upon return, 36,084 returnees are living in critical shelters spread across 133 locations – roughly 5 per cent of the total returnee population in the governorate. Three districts host most of these returnees: Baiji, Tikrit and Al-Shirqat. In 87 per cent of the cases, returnees are living in their pre-conflict residence which is currently in critical condition. The remaining cases correspond to returnees living in informal settlements and abandoned or unfinished buildings. Unsurprisingly, nearly all returnees in critical shelters are found in medium and high severity locations.

Salah al-Din Governorate also currently hosts 73,140 IDPs, 5 per cent of the total IDP population of Iraq. Districts such as Tuz Khurmatu, Tikrit and Samarra host relatively large populations of IDPs in addition to returnees. In Tuz Khurmatu, for example, there is more than one IDP for every two returnees, increasing the pressure on the provision of basic services and recovery resources. The majority of the IDP population in the governorate is located in non-camp areas.

<sup>2</sup> This total only includes returnees in locations assessed for the Return Index and does not constitute the total number of returnees in Salah al-Din, as some locations have not been assessed.

Table 3: Number of returnees and IDPs per district in Salah al-Din Governorate

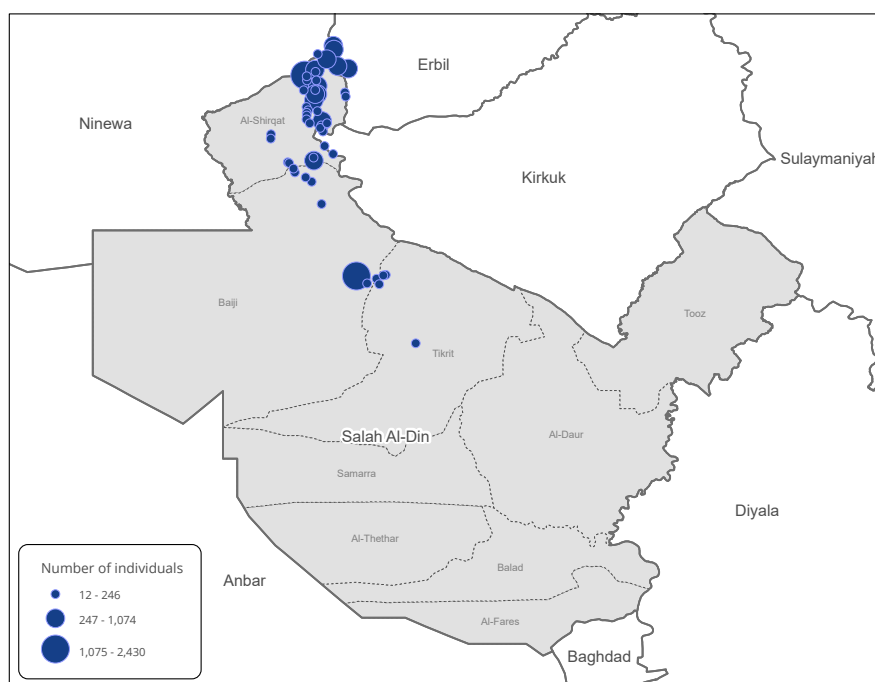
DISTRICT	AVERAGE DISTRICT SEVERITY	TOTAL RETURNEES (INDIVIDUALS)	TOTAL NON-CAMP IDPs (INDIVIDUALS)	TOTAL CAMP IDPs (INDIVIDUALS)
Al-Daur	Medium	60,486	114	0
Al-Fares	Medium	10,368	4,104	0
Al-Shirqat	Medium	158,076	1,044	0
Baiji	Medium	111,474	852	0
Balad	High	65,712	4,818	180
Samarra	High	55,878	18,372	0
Tikrit	Medium	171,336	19,110	1,164
Tuz Khurmatu	High	47,616	24,726	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>679,008</b>	<b>73,140</b>	<b>1,344</b>

## NEW ARRIVALS FROM CAMPS AND CORRELATION WITH CONDITIONS OF SEVERITY

Between September 2019 and February 2020, DTM tracked 13,842 individuals (2,307 households) who left the camps for other non-camp settings in Salah al-Din Governorate. Among these, 13,614 individuals (98 per cent) returned to their subdistricts of origin, while the remaining 228 (2 per cent) moved to new locations of displacement, thus becoming non-camp IDPs.

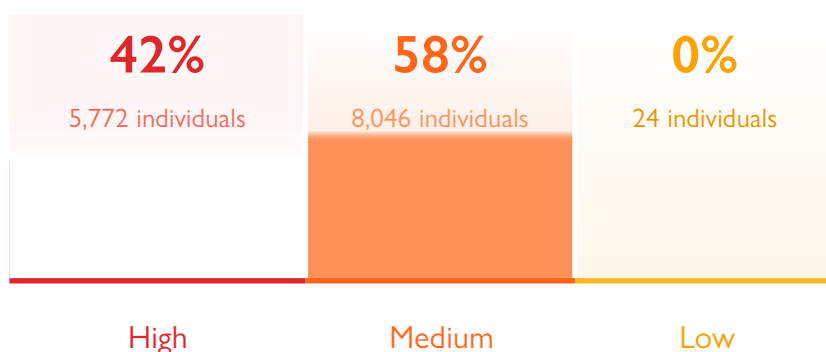
These new arrivals from camps took place in Al-Shirqat (10,632 new returnees and 204 new IDPs) and Baiji (2,982 new returnees). In the case of Al-Shirqat, most locations with new arrivals are found in Markaz Al-Shirqat subdistrict, while for Baiji most new arrivals are found in Al-Siniya subdistrict.

Map 1. Locations in Salah al-Din having recorded new arrivals from camps, by number of individuals, between September 2019 and February 2020



A substantial proportion of new arrivals has settled in high severity locations (Figure 3). Forty-two per cent of these are now living in high severity conditions (almost evenly split between Baiji and Al-Shirqat districts), while the remaining 58 per cent are mainly living in medium severity conditions. This data suggests a critical situation for many of these newly arrived households from displacement camps, as they have moved into relatively deprived areas.






Figure 4. Distribution of new arrivals from camps to Salah al-Din Governorate by location's category of severity













## DRIVERS OF SEVERITY IN GEOGRAPHICAL HOTSPOTS
















Ten subdistricts in Salah al-Din Governorate are classified as severity hotspots. These clusters of severity feature the majority of the 202,000 returnees within the governorate living in locations classified as high severity. Overall, they present the less optimal conditions in comparison with the remaining subdistricts in Salah al-Din.<sup>3</sup>
















The tables below highlight these severity hotspots, including the relevant drivers of severity, and can inform interventions on the ground.

	High	Medium	Low		
<p><b>MARKAZ AL-DAUR (Al-Daur District)</b></p> <p><b>Number of returnees:</b> 60,486 individuals in 11 locations</p> <p><b>Number of IDPs:</b> 114 individuals in 1 location</p> <p><b>New arrivals from camps:</b> none</p>	 Housing destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Social cohesion	 Safety and Security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Markaz Al-Daur district is classified as medium severity in two categories: livelihoods and safety and security. There are widespread concerns among returnees about further violence in the area linked to new ISIL attacks and the presence of blocked returns, in addition to several reported cases of harassment by security actors. On the other hand, severity in livelihoods is caused by a relative absence of employment in the subdistrict, as locations do not offer job opportunities for the majority of returnee population.</li> </ul>					

<sup>3</sup> 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. For more information, consult the corresponding Return Index report: [http://iraqdtm.iom.int/images/ReturnIndex/20203193148705\\_IOM%20dtm%20return%20index\\_round\\_8\\_March\\_2020.pdf](http://iraqdtm.iom.int/images/ReturnIndex/20203193148705_IOM%20dtm%20return%20index_round_8_March_2020.pdf)

<p><b>MARKAZ AL-SHIRQAT (Al-Shirqat District)</b></p> <p><b>Number of returnees:</b> 158,076 individuals in 58 locations</p> <p><b>Number of IDPs:</b> 1,044 individuals in 20 locations</p> <p><b>New arrivals from camps:</b> 10,836 individuals in 44 locations since September 2019</p>	 <p>Housing destruction</p>	 <p>Livelihoods</p>	 <p>Essential Services</p>	 <p>Social cohesion</p>	 <p>Safety and Security</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markaz Al-Shirqat is the subdistrict with the largest population of returnees in Salah al-Din, including a substantial number of new arrivals coming from recently closed displacement camps. Severity in Markaz Al-Shirqat is caused by issues in livelihoods, social cohesion, and safety and security.</li> <li>• As to livelihoods, the main driver of severity is caused by high levels of disruption in the business environment, as many small businesses remain closed. Other locations are faced with moderate issues in terms of general job availability as well as damaged agriculture, but their overall impact on severity is smaller.</li> <li>• Security issues are mainly caused by fears across all locations of renewed violence and attacks, especially from ISIL, coupled by the presence of blocked returns for those IDPs originally from Al-Shirqat who are yet to return.</li> </ul>					
<p><b>AL-SINIYA (Baiji District)</b></p> <p><b>Number of returnees:</b> 12,408 individuals in 2 locations</p> <p><b>Number of IDPs:</b> none</p> <p><b>New arrivals from camps:</b> 2,430 individuals in 1 location since September 2019</p>	 <p>Housing destruction</p>	 <p>Livelihoods</p>	 <p>Essential Services</p>	 <p>Social cohesion</p>	 <p>Safety and Security</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Al-Siniya is one of the most critical hotspots in Salah al-Din, with severity caused by all drivers assessed, except for housing destruction. It should be noted that this subdistrict only recently recorded population returns and thus was first assessed in Round 8 of the Return Index (January–February 2020).</li> <li>• Livelihoods is the main driver of severity in the subdistrict. In all locations assessed, none of the returnees are reportedly able to find employment and the agricultural and business activities are partly disrupted. Essential service provision is also largely missing across the subdistrict, with locations reporting absence of both water and electricity supply.</li> <li>• Other drivers of severity in the subdistrict, related to security and social cohesion, also play a moderate role in creating severe conditions. By order of importance, issues are extended blocked returns in all locations, widespread risks of renewed violence, as well as concerns of harassment by the security actors at checkpoints.</li> </ul>					

<p><b>MARKAZ BALJI (Baiji District)</b></p> <p><b>Number of returnees:</b> 94,686 individuals in 33 locations</p> <p><b>Number of IDPs:</b> 852 individuals in 3 locations</p> <p><b>New arrivals from camps:</b> 372 individuals in 5 locations since September 2019</p>	 <p>Housing destruction</p>	 <p>Livelihoods</p>	 <p>Essential Services</p>	 <p>Social cohesion</p>	 <p>Safety and Security</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main drivers of severity in Markaz Baiji, although moderate, relate to livelihoods and safety and security. Consistent with most hotspots in Salah al-Din Governorate, there is a widespread disruption in the business environment, with most small businesses not operating yet.</li> <li>No or limited employment opportunities are reported in many locations.</li> <li>Return conditions are impacted negatively by the widespread concerns among the population of being subject to harassment in checkpoints as well as the risk of new ISIL attacks.</li> </ul>					
<p><b>YATHREB (Balad District)</b></p> <p><b>Number of returnees:</b> 34,854 individuals in 1 location</p> <p><b>Number of IDPs:</b> none</p> <p><b>New arrivals from camps:</b> none</p>	 <p>Housing destruction</p>	 <p>Livelihoods</p>	 <p>Essential Services</p>	 <p>Social cohesion</p>	 <p>Safety and Security</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Yathreb subdistrict, housing destruction is the most important driver of severity by far. Across the area, about half of the residences are reportedly destroyed, although reconstruction is ongoing.</li> <li>Aside from housing issues, there are other important drivers of severity, linked to safety and security, and social cohesion. Severity in social cohesion is almost classified as high severity due to the widespread presence of blocked returns coupled with cases of illegal occupations of private residences. Regarding safety and security, the negative impact on return conditions is caused by the returnee population's concerns about renewed violence.</li> </ul>					
<p><b>MARKAZ SAMARRA (Samarra District)</b></p> <p><b>Number of returnees:</b> 30,210 individuals in 5 locations</p> <p><b>Number of IDPs:</b> 18,186 individuals in 28 locations</p> <p><b>New arrivals from camps:</b> none</p>	 <p>Housing destruction</p>	 <p>Livelihoods</p>	 <p>Essential Services</p>	 <p>Social cohesion</p>	 <p>Safety and Security</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Markaz Samarra presents severity drivers across all categories except for housing destruction. The main drivers of severity include safety and security, with the returnee population widely concerned about the presence of mines in the locations, as well as about multiple sources of violence – especially risks of clashes between armed groups, and ISIL attacks. Most locations also reported concerns about being harassed at checkpoints by the armed groups manning them.</li> <li>Essential service coverage is also a driver of high severity, as only some residents report having enough water and electricity supply. In addition, some of the public offices for civil affairs are still closed.</li> <li>Finally, social cohesion is the third most significant driver of severity, mainly caused by lack of trust among the population to return to daily activities, as well as blocked returns for some IDPs.</li> </ul>					

<p><b>MARKAZ TIKRIT (Tikrit District)</b></p> <p><b>MARKAZ TIKRIT (Tikrit District)</b></p> <p><b>Number of returnees:</b> 129,492 individuals in 38 locations</p> <p><b>Number of IDPs:</b> 12,480 individuals in 35 locations</p> <p><b>New arrivals from camps:</b> 24 individuals in 1 location since September 2019</p>	 <p>Housing destruction</p>	 <p>Livelihoods</p>	 <p>Essential Services</p>	 <p>Social cohesion</p>	 <p>Safety and Security</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main driver of severity in Markaz Tikrit is livelihoods, particularly availability of employment. Several locations report that none of the residents can find employment, while most of the remaining locations indicate that half of the population is affected by the absence of job opportunities.</li> <li>Issues with social cohesion are also reported to negatively impact living conditions. In particular, there are some instances of illegal occupation of private residences across the subdistrict and cases of blocked returns have occurred in nearly all locations.</li> </ul>					
<p><b>AL-AMERLI (Tuz Khurmatu District)</b></p> <p><b>Number of returnees:</b> 7,998 individuals in 15 locations</p> <p><b>Number of IDPs:</b> none</p> <p><b>New arrivals from camps:</b> none</p>	 <p>Housing destruction</p>	 <p>Livelihoods</p>	 <p>Essential Services</p>	 <p>Social cohesion</p>	 <p>Safety and Security</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most significant driver affecting Al-Amerli's returnee population is safety and security. Similar to the other subdistricts in Tuz Khurmatu, there are multiple security actors competing for the control of the subdistrict. In addition, there are widespread concerns about renewed violence in the area, especially in relation to fears of ethno-religious conflict, revenge cases among the population, and new ISIL attacks. There is also a small number of locations where the population is concerned about the presence of mines in residential areas.</li> <li>The main issue for social cohesion is the need for a process of reconciliation between the different ethno-religious groups in the district. This process is reportedly needed but not currently taking place.</li> <li>Finally, issues related to the provision of essential services is limited to some residents who do not have access to electricity supply across all locations.</li> </ul>					
<p><b>MARKAZ TUZ KHURMATU (Tuz Khurmatu District)</b></p> <p><b>Number of returnees:</b> 29,436 individuals in 12 locations</p> <p><b>Number of IDPs:</b> 23,880 individuals in 15 locations</p> <p><b>New arrivals from camps:</b> none</p>	 <p>Housing destruction</p>	 <p>Livelihoods</p>	 <p>Essential Services</p>	 <p>Social cohesion</p>	 <p>Safety and Security</p>

- The most important drivers of severity in Markaz Tuz Khurmatu consist of a combination of social cohesion issues and a lack of safety. The main issue related to social cohesion refers to the need for a process of reconciliation between the different ethno-religious groups in the district. This process is reportedly needed but not currently taking place. This issue is further compounded by the large number of blocked returns to the subdistrict, as well as cases of illegal occupations of houses in some locations.
- In terms of safety and security issues, and similar to the other subdistricts in Tuz Khurmatu, multiple security actors compete for the control of the subdistrict – in some locations up to six different actors. There are also widespread concerns about new ISIL attacks and, in particular, concerns that conflict between the different ethno-religious groups in the district may re-ignite.
- Finally, as in the previous assessed hotspot, issues regarding the provision of essential services is limited to some residents not having access to electricity supply across all locations.

**SULEIMAN BEG (Tuz Khurmatu District)**

**Number of returnees:** 10,182 individuals in 2 locations

**Number of IDPs:** none

**New arrivals from camps:** none



Housing destruction



Livelihoods



Essential Services



Social cohesion



Safety and Security

- The case of Suleiman Beg is unique in that, due to access and security issues, the assessment is not done for each location in the subdistrict with returns, but on the general conditions in the subdistrict. It is therefore not surprising that Suleiman Beg has the highest severity score among all subdistricts assessed in Iraq, with issues spread across almost all indicator categories.
- Safety and security issues are significant drivers of severity in the subdistrict. These issues include concerns about renewed violence, both due to ISIL attacks as well as ethno-religious tensions, harassment at security checkpoints, the presence of mines in residential areas, as well as the multiplicity of security actors.
- As in the other subdistricts in Tuz Khurmatu, the main issue regarding social cohesion is the need for a process of reconciliation between the different ethno-religious groups in the district. This process is reportedly needed but not currently taking place. This issue is further compounded by the large number of blocked returns to the subdistrict, as well as cases of illegal occupations of houses in some locations.
- Other drivers of severity include essential services and livelihoods. Only some residents are reportedly able to access enough electricity and water supply. In addition, most small businesses remain non-operational and there is widespread disruption to agricultural activities.

## ANNEX. DISAGGREGATED DATA ON POPULATION RETURNS, DISPLACEMENT, AND SEVERITY


District	Subdistrict	Number of returnees	Number of IDPs	Scale 1 Severity	Scale 2 Severity	Overall severity
Al-Daur	Markaz Al-Daur	60,486	114	Low	Medium	Medium
Al-Fares	Al-Dujeel Center	10,368	4,104	Medium	Medium	Medium
Al-Shirqat	Markaz Al-Shirqat	158,076	1,044	Low	Medium	Medium
Baiji	Al-Siniya	12,408	0	High	High	High
Baiji	MakkHoul	4,380	0	Medium	Medium	Medium
Baiji	Markaz Baiji	94,686	852	Medium	Medium	Medium
Balad	Al-Duloeyah	23,844	3,576	Low	Medium	Medium
Balad	Al-Eshaqi	3,132	432	High	High	High
Balad	Markaz Al-Balad	3,882	990	High	High	High
Balad	Yathreb	34,854	0	High	High	High
Samarra	Al-Moatassem	8,058	54	Low	High	Medium
Samarra	Dijla	17,610	132	Low	Medium	Medium
Samarra	Markaz Samarra	30,210	18,186	Medium	High	High
Tikrit	Al-Alam	41,844	7,794	Medium	Low	Medium
Tikrit	Markaz Tikrit	129,492	12,480	Medium	Medium	Medium
Tuz Khurmatu	Al-Amerli	7,998	0	Low	High	High
Tuz Khurmatu	Markaz Tuz Khurmatu	29,436	23,880	Low	High	High
Tuz Khurmatu	Nawjul	0	846	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tuz Khurmatu	Suleiman Beg	10,182	0	Medium	High	High

RETURN INDEX GOVERNORATE PROFILING

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IOM IRAQ

 International Organization for Migration  
The UN Migration Agency - Iraq Mission  
Main Office in Baghdad  
UNAMI Compound (Diwan 2)  
International Zone, Baghdad, Iraq

 + 3908 3105 2600

 iraqdtm.iom.int  
iraq.iom.int

 iraqdtm@iom.int  
iomiraq@iom.int

    @IOMIraq

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