

RETURN DYNAMICS IN ANBAR GOVERNORATE

JUNE 2021

The Return Index is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. The Return Index is based on 16 indicators divided into two scales: Scale 1, on livelihoods and basic services, and Scale 2, centered around social cohesion and safety perceptions. A regression model is used to assess the impact of each of the indicators in facilitating or preventing returns. The index ranges from 0 (all essential conditions for return are met) to 100 (no essential conditions for return are met). Higher scores denote more severe living conditions for returnees. The scores of the severity index are grouped into three categories: low, medium and high (which also includes very high). Refer to the report "[Methodological Overview](#)" for more details on the methodology.

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

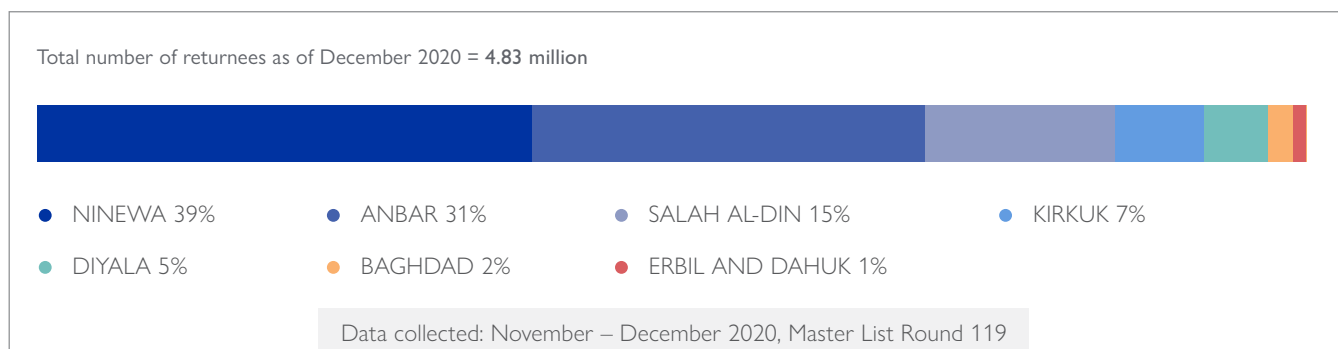
presents the overview of conditions across the governorate at the end of 2020 with a comparison of figures and the severity of living conditions over the course of 2020 (from 31 December 2019 to 31 December 2020). It also outlines the areas of no return recorded by IOM's Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs) as well as the newly assessed locations, the returnee population living in critical shelters and the displaced population hosted in the governorate. The second section is devoted to the mass arrivals from camps due to their closure, which began in mid-October, and highlights the living conditions of new arrivals either when they returned to their villages and neighbourhoods of origin or arrived in new locations of displacement. The third section provides an analysis of conditions at the district level and focuses on the main drivers of severity across subdistricts and changes that occurred between December 2019 and December 2020.

CATEGORIZING CONDITIONS IN AREAS OF RETURN

As of December 2020, the total number of returnees in Anbar Governorate stands at 1.5 million individuals out of 4.83 million nationwide, dispersed across eight districts and 326 locations.¹ This is the second largest returnee population compared to other governorates, with 31 per cent of all returns in Iraq (Figure 1). Between

December 2019 and December 2020, the returnee population in Anbar increased by 50,928 individuals, which is a lower number of returns than that of the previous year, during which 163,098 individuals returned (December 2018 to December 2019).

Figure 1. Proportion of returnees per governorate



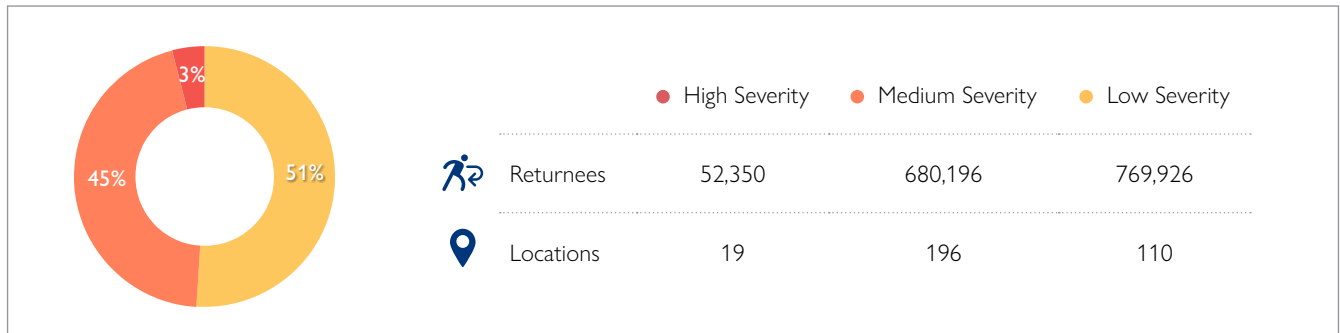
¹ Master List Round 119 (November–December 2020)

RETURNEE POPULATION IN SEVERE CONDITIONS

During the Return Index Round 11 collected in November and December 2020, a total of 325 locations of return were assessed. Out of these 325 locations assessed, 19 present severe conditions.² Anbar Governorate hosts the third largest number of returnees living in high severity conditions, with 52,350 individuals. In relative terms, this means that around 3 per cent of the returnee population in

Anbar has returned to locations classified as high severity, followed by 45 per cent to medium severity and 51 per cent to low severity. This distribution of returnees in the high severity category is significantly lower than the national average, which has 10 per cent living in high severity locations (Figure 2).

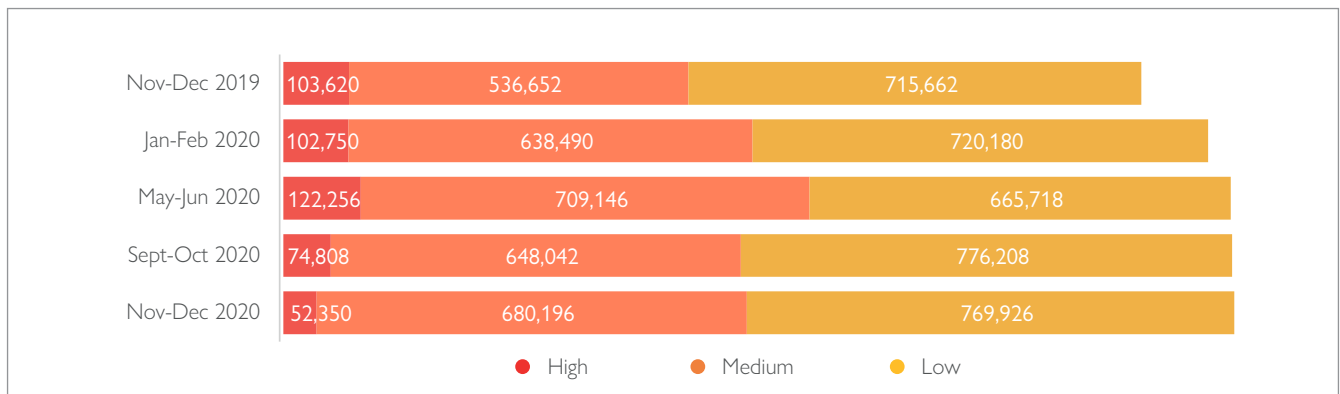
Figure 2. Proportion and numbers of returnees by category of severity in Anbar Governorate



Over the course of 2020, Anbar Governorate witnessed a significant decrease in the number of returnees living in locations classified as high severity (Figure 3). Between December 2019 and December 2020, a decrease of 51,270 individuals living in severe or poor conditions was recorded. There was a small increase in the number of returnees living in severe conditions in the round collected in May–June 2020 due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

outbreak and ensuing lockdown, when an increased concern about different sources of violence and restrictions on daily public life were recorded mainly in Al-Ka'im, Falluja and Heet. However, the number of returnees living in severe conditions decreased in the round collected in September–October 2020, when lockdown measures were lifted and the employment situation and daily public life stabilized.

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



LOCATIONS WITH NO RETURN AND NEWLY ASSESSED LOCATIONS

A location is recorded as having had no returns if none of the population displaced since 2014 has returned to date.³ As of December 2019, DTM identified one location with no returns in Anbar Governorate, located in Al-Rutba. This location did not witness any returns over the course of 2020; however, DTM identified two

additional locations of no return. These two locations are in Al-Rutba and Falluja and as of December 2020, returns were blocked by security forces. As a result, there are three locations of no return as of December 2020 in Anbar Governorate.

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

³ These locations, having no key informants and no population, are difficult to record and monitor and are generally identified through word-of-mouth.

RETURNEE POPULATION IN CRITICAL SHELTERS

As of December 2020, 44,496 returnees arrived to shelters in critical condition in Anbar, representing around 3 per cent of the total returnee population in the governorate.⁴ Specifically, most returnees in critical shelters arrived to destroyed or heavily damaged

pre-conflict residences, with the remainder in collective shelters. Around 34 per cent (13,194 individuals) of returnees in critical shelters are concentrated in Falluja district, followed by Ramadi (31%), and Al-Ka'im (23%).

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs) IN ANBAR

Between December 2019 and December 2020, Anbar Governorate witnessed a decrease in the number of IDPs from 35,790 individuals to 33,563. This small overall reduction of 2,227 IDPs included a reduction in the number of non-camp IDPs (1,902 individuals) and in the number of camp IDPs (325 individuals).

Anbar accounts for only a small share of IDPs in Iraq (3% of all IDPs), with the majority (29,268 individuals or 87% of IDPs in the

governorate) living in out-of-camp settings. Falluja and Ramadi districts host the largest population of IDPs in the governorate, respectively accounting for 61 per cent (20,351 individuals) and 21 per cent (6,984 individuals) of IDPs in Anbar. No locations of return in Anbar host more IDPs than returnees as of December 2020 (Table 1).

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

District	Average Severity (return locations)	Total Returnees (individuals)	Total Non-camp IDPs (individuals)	Total Camp IDPs (individuals)	Locations with more IDPs than Returnees
Al-Ka'im	Medium	100,326	96		0
Al-Rutba	Medium	27,588	3,096		0
Ana	Medium	15,192	552		0
Falluja	Low	541,194	16,056	4,295	0
Haditha	Low	27,462	1,152		0
Heet	Medium	176,400	1,332		0
Ra'ua	Medium	15,972	-		0
Ramadi	Low	600,498	6,984		0
Anbar Total		1,504,632	29,268	4,295	26

ARRIVAL FROM CAMPS AND CORRELATION WITH SEVERITY⁵

ARRIVAL OF IDPs FROM CAMPS TO NON-CAMP SETTINGS IN ANBAR GOVERNORATE

Between November and December 2020, DTM tracked a total of 1,536 individuals (256 households) who arrived in non-camp settings in Anbar after departing camps across the country.⁶ Most of those movements were a consequence of the camp closures and consolidation that began in mid-October 2020. A total of 1,122 individuals (73%) returned to their district of origin while the remaining 414 individuals (27%) moved to new locations of displacement, thus becoming out-of-camp IDPs. In addition to the camp closures and the desire of some IDPs to return home due to improved security in their area of origin, a notable push factor for departures from camps was related to movement restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. These restrictions, which limited the ability

of IDPs to work outside camp settings or to move freely between area of origin and area of displacement, pushed returns to their areas of origin.

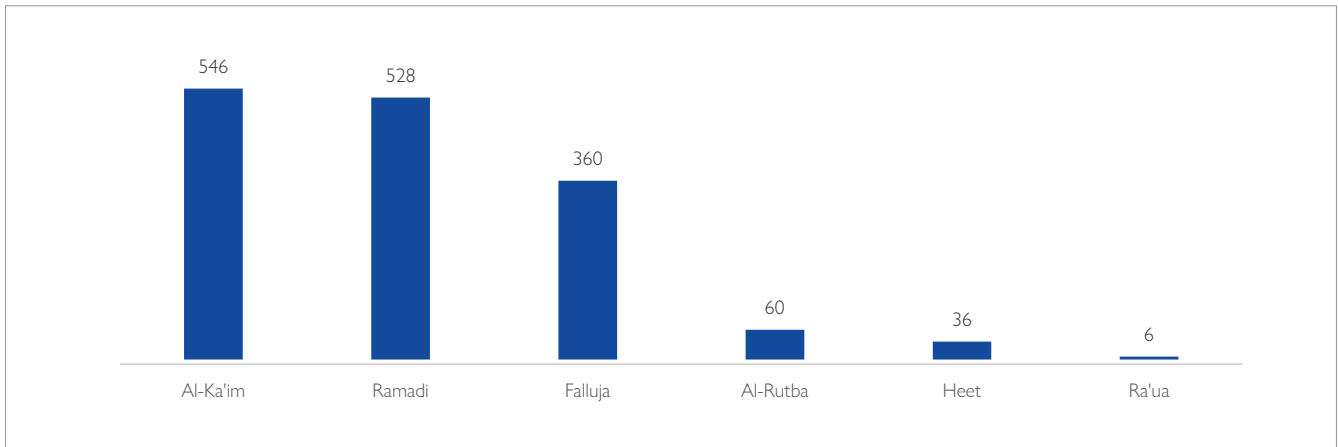
The districts with the highest number of arrivals from camps are Al-Ka'im and Ramadi, both accounting for 70 per cent of camp arrivals to Anbar (Figure 4). The majority of those arriving from camps in both Al-Ka'im and Falluja districts have returned to their areas of origin (82% and 80%, respectively). The rest of new arrivals in Al-Ka'im and Falluja arrived at new locations of displacement (18% and 20% respectively) and are therefore considered out-of-camp IDPs.

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

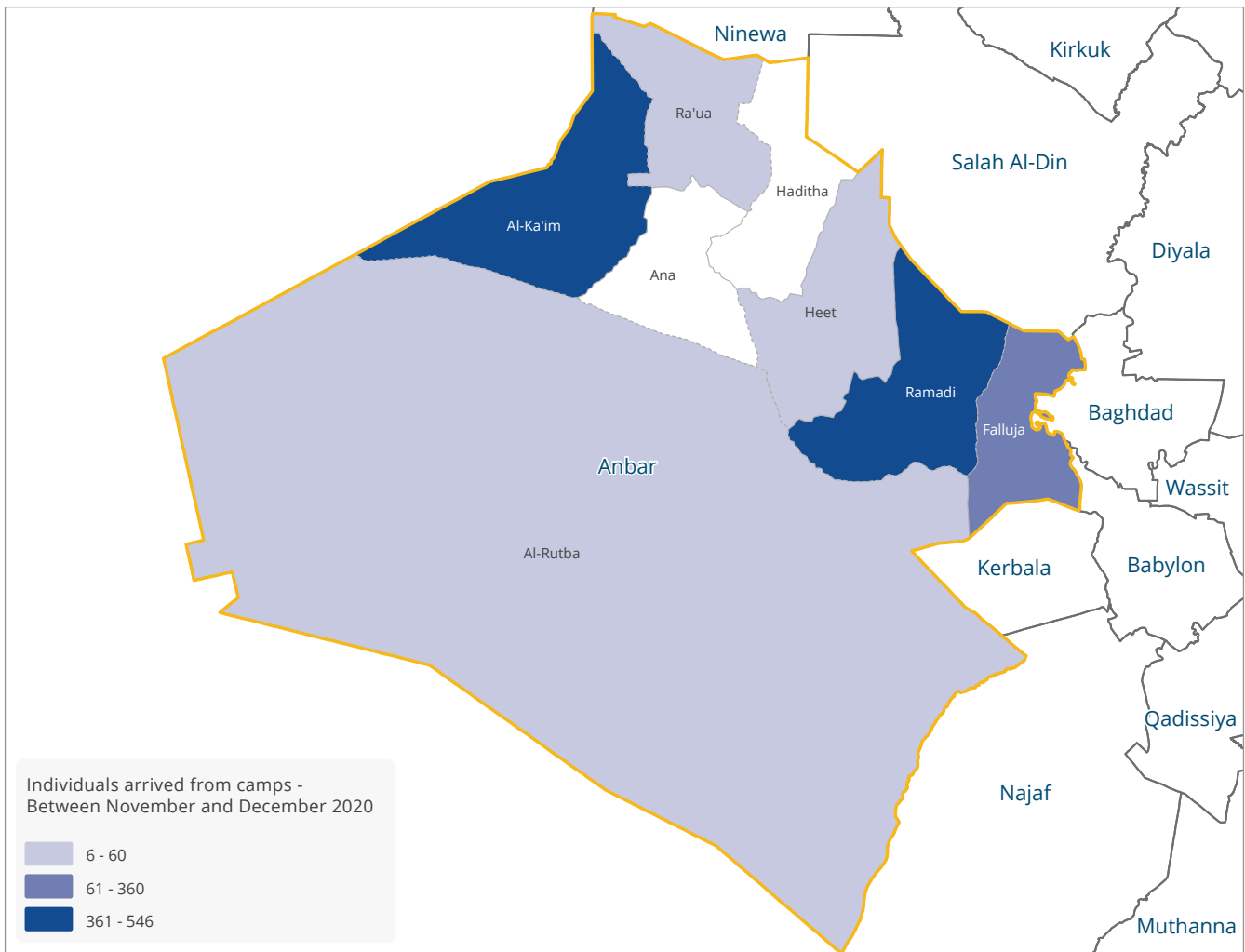
5 Refer to the Emergency Tracking report on "Movement of Camp IDPs" for more details on new arrivals since camp closures began in mid-October.

6 Master List Round 119 (November – December 2020)

Figure 4. Number of individuals arriving from camps to districts in Anbar (November to December 2020)



Map 1: Locations in Anbar that recorded new arrivals from camps by number of individuals between November and December 2020

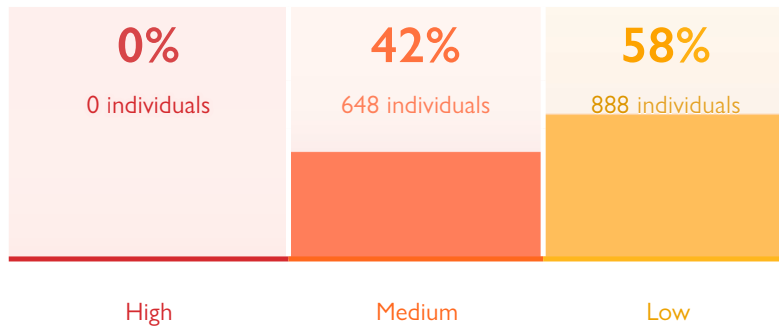


SEVERITY OF CONDITIONS IN LOCATIONS WITH ARRIVALS FROM CAMPS (NOVEMBER TO DECEMBER 2020)

At least 42 per cent (648 individuals) of the new arrivals from camps to non-camp locations in Anbar settled in districts classified as medium severity, while 58 per cent (888 individuals) settled in low severity districts (Figure 5). Around one third of the arrivals

to Al-Ka'im district from camps (546 individuals, 36%) settled in medium severity locations. The other districts with arrivals from camps into medium severity conditions are Al-Rutba district with 4 per cent of individuals, followed by Heet district (2%).

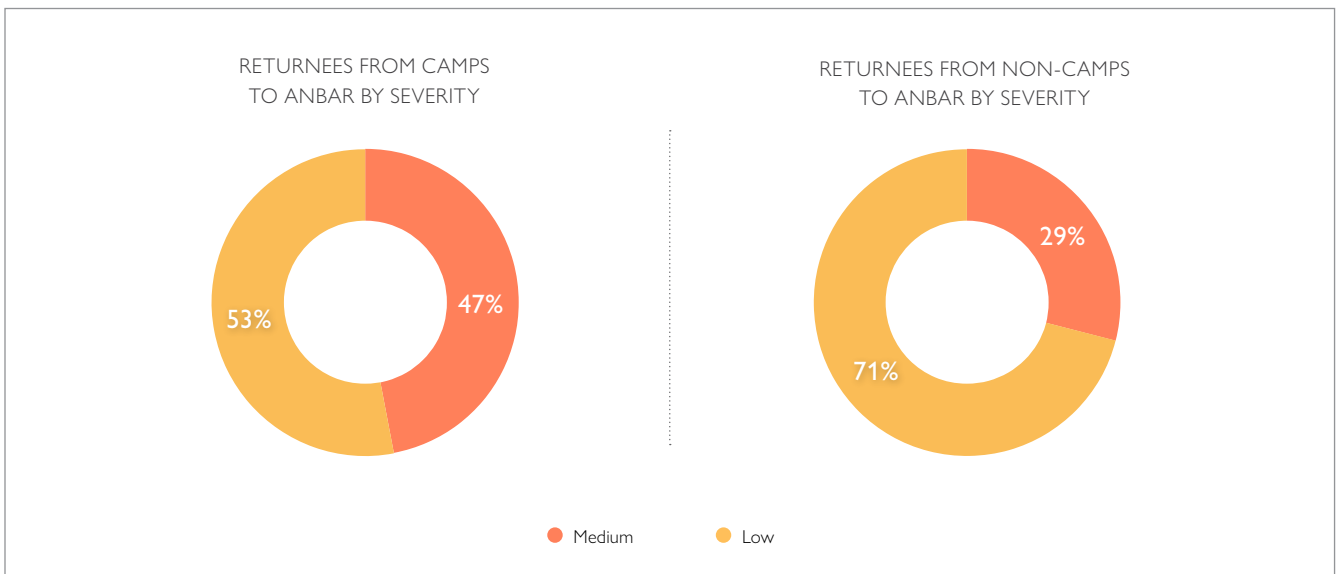
Figure 5. Distribution of new arrivals from camps to non-camp locations in Anbar by category of severity



Over the course of 2020, a total of 1,122 returnees (187 households) arrived from camps to their respective districts of origin, while 56,154 returnees (9,359 households) arrived from non-camp locations to Anbar during the year. Of the returnees from camps,

47 per cent settled in medium severity districts while 29 per cent of the returnees from non-camp locations settled in medium severity districts (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Returnees to Anbar in 2020 from camp and non-camp locations by category of severity (December 2019 – December 2020)



SEVERITY OF CONDITIONS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

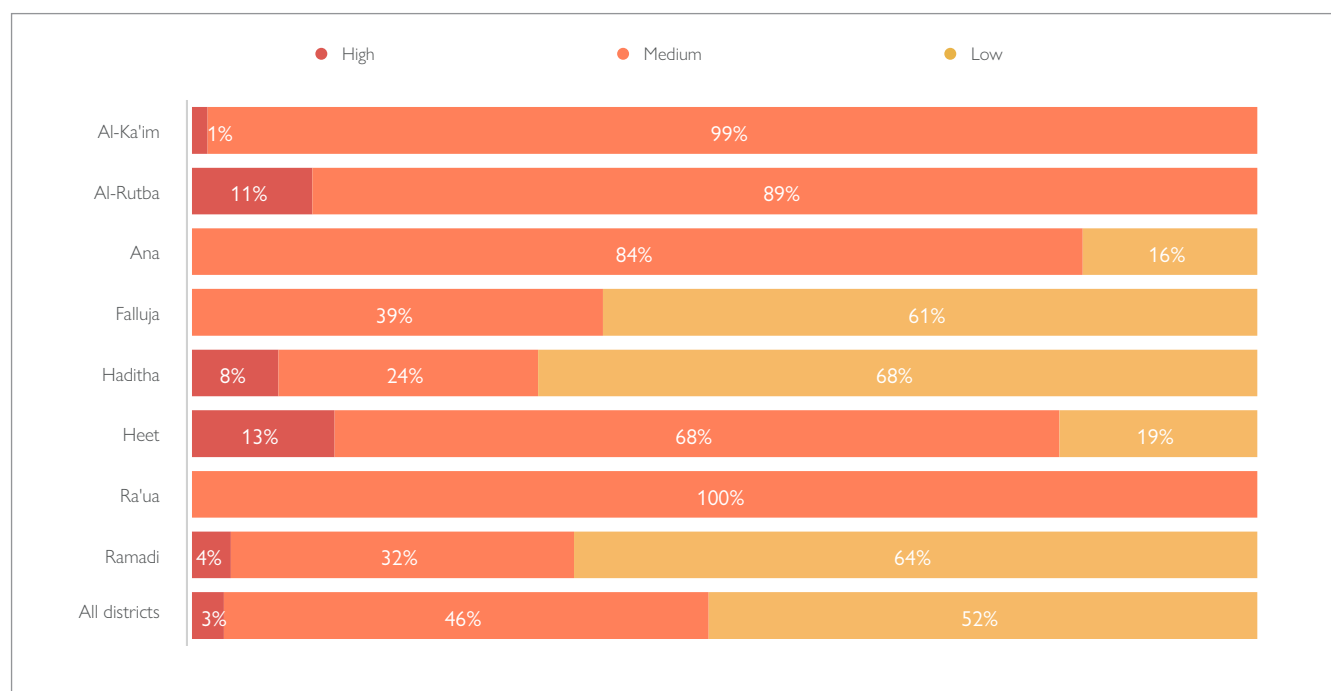
As of December 2020, Heet is the district in Anbar that hosts the largest number of returnees living in severe conditions (23,610 individuals), followed by Ramadi (21,900) and Al-Rutba (3,120) (Table 2). In relative terms, Heet and Al-Rutba districts also host the highest proportions of returnees living in severe conditions: 13 per cent of the district's returnee population in Heet and 11 per cent of the returnee population in Al-Rutba (Figure 7). These proportions of returnees in high severity conditions are higher than the

national average of 10 per cent as of December 2020. In contrast, Ramadi District, which has the largest returnee population in the governorate, has 21,900 individuals or 4 per cent of the district's returnee population living in high severity locations. The majority of the returnee population in Ramadi live in locations classified as low severity, which is also the case in Falluja, the district with the second highest returnee population (61% in low severity).

Table 2: Number of returnees per district and category of severity in Anbar Governorate⁷

DISTRICT	HIGH SEVERITY	MEDIUM SEVERITY	LOW SEVERITY	NUMBER OF RETURNEES
Al-Ka'im	1,488	98,838		100,326
Al-Rutba	3,120	24,468		27,588
Ana		12,702	2,490	15,192
Falluja		207,984	331,050	539,034
Haditha	2,232	6,690	18,540	27,462
Heet	23,610	120,042	32,748	176,400
Ra'ua		15,972		15,972
Ramadi	21,900	193,500	385,098	600,498
All districts	52,350	680,196	769,926	1,502,472

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



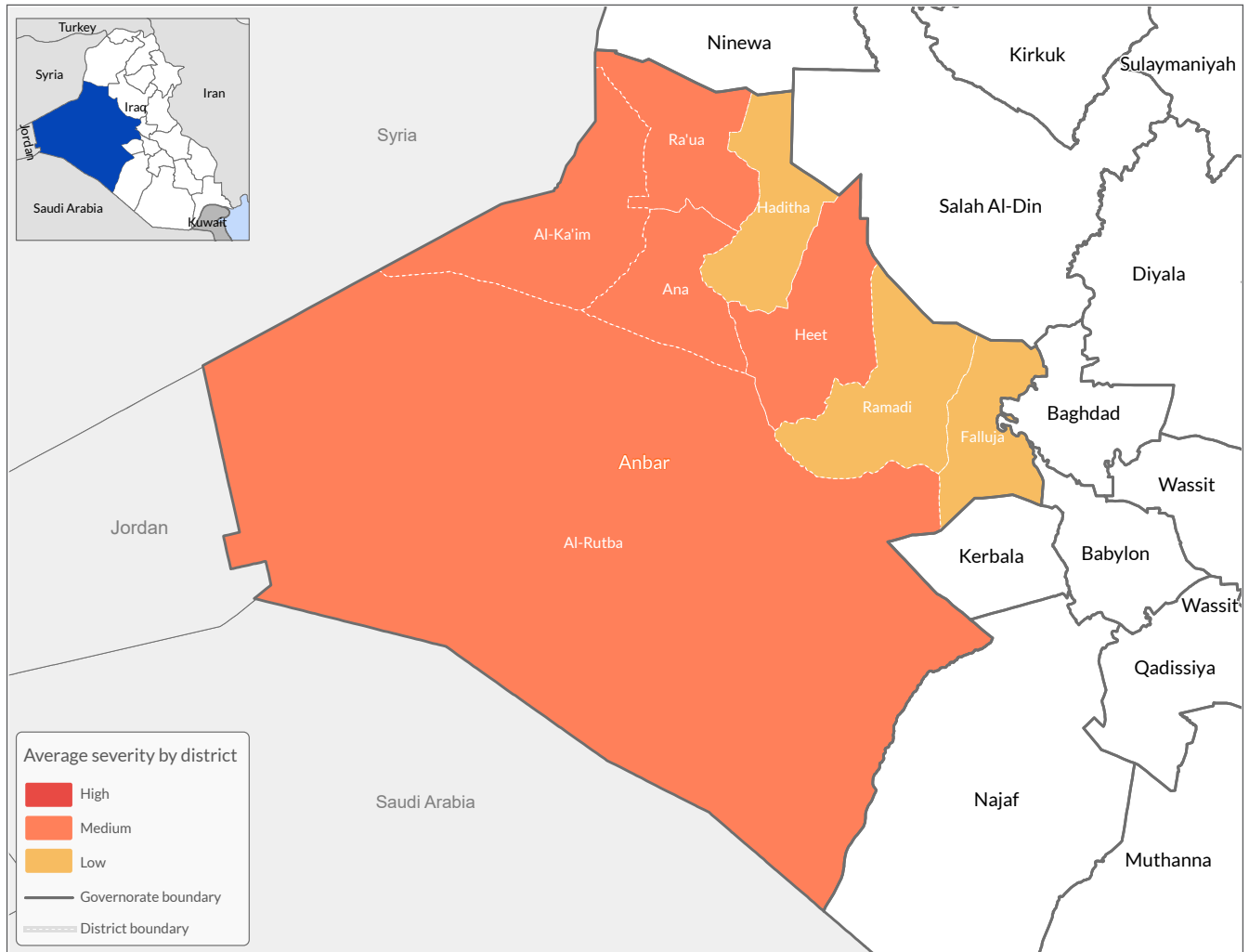
⁷ This total only includes returnees in locations assessed for the Return Index and does not constitute the total number of returnees in Anbar, as some locations have not been assessed.

VARIATION AT DISTRICT LEVEL BETWEEN DECEMBER 2019 AND DECEMBER 2020

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

contribute to particularly high severity conditions and changes that occurred between December 2019 and December 2020.⁸

Map 2: Districts in Anbar by category of severity

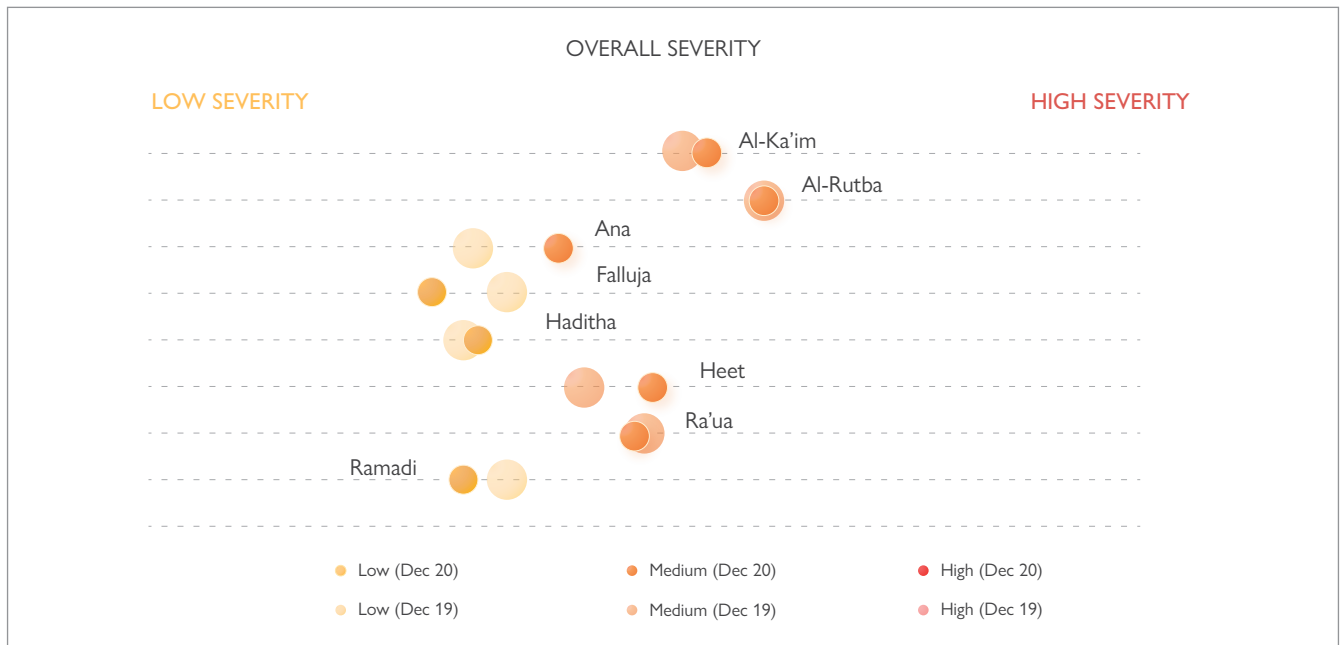


On average per district, a worsening of overall severity was recorded in Al-Ka'im, Ana, Haditha and Heet between December 2019 and December 2020, while an improvement was recorded in Falluja and

Ramadi (Figure 8). Al-Rutba was stable in severity during this period. Of these districts, only Ana changed in its category of severity, from medium to low, over the course of the year.

⁸ Drivers of severity are calculated at the subdistrict level and provide information on living conditions that contribute to severity to better inform interventions. Each driver is comprised of several Return Index indicators and considers the impact of each indicator in facilitating or preventing returns and the size of the returnee population in a subdistrict.

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



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

Al-Ka'im District

Over the course of 2020, the overall severity of conditions in **Al-Ka'im District** remained in the medium category, with minimal variation in drivers of severity observed across subdistricts. In **Al-Obiadi**, severity is driven by the limited recovery of agriculture and small businesses, concerns about various sources of violence, blocked returns and concerns regarding non-state military actors in control of checkpoints. Over the course of 2020, the sub-district saw a moderate improvement in the extent of housing destruction. **Al-Rummaneh**

recorded similarly severe conditions, with the recovery of agricultural activities slower on average than in Al-Obiadi. Compared with the other sub-districts, **Markaz Al-Ka'im** has comparatively lower severity with regard to the recovery of economic activity, although residents share the high levels of concerns around various sources of violence, blocked returns and concerns regarding non-state military actors in control of checkpoints.







Al-Ka'im	Overall Security	Residential Destruction	Livelihoods	Essential Services	Safety and Security	Social cohesion
Al-Obiadi	Medium	Low ▼	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Al-Rummaneh	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Markaz Al-Ka'im	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium

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

Al-Rutba District

There was no change in severity in **Al-Rutba District** over the course of 2020, which has just one sub-district with returnees. Severity in **Markaz Al-Rutba** is driven by insufficient access to running water, which affects most residents, as well as high levels of concerns about

various sources of violence, blocked returns and concerns regarding non-state military actors in control of checkpoints. Blocked returns were also recorded as a severe condition.







Al-Rutba	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Markaz Al-Rutba	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

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

Ana District

Generally, a worsening of the overall situation was recorded in **Ana District**. In the subdistrict of **Markaz Ana**, this worsening is attributable to a sharp increase in severity related to restrictions on daily public life in May–June which remained high throughout the rest

of the year. Beyond this shift, severity in Markaz Ana is driven by concerns about various sources of violence and a moderately high level of unemployment.







Ana	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Markaz Ana	Medium ▼	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low ▼

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

Falluja District

The overall situation in **Falluja District** improved more than in any other district in Anbar over the course of 2020. In **Al-Amiryah**, a marked improvement in the recovery of small businesses and agricultural activities was recorded in November–December 2020. However, access to government services and concerns about various sources of violence rose sharply to high severity from May–June onwards. Blocked returns and concerns regarding non-state military actors in control of checkpoints remained consistently high throughout the year. **Al-Garma** witnessed a small improvement in the extent of residential destruction, while a mild deterioration in access to running water from May–June drove an overall worsening in severity related

to essential services. Blocked returns and concerns about non-state military actors in control of checkpoints remained consistently high. The improvement in severity in **Al-Saqlawiya** was driven by a significant improvement in November–December, which included the recovery of agricultural activities and small businesses, improvements in daily public life and reduced concerns regarding various sources of violence. Concerns about unexploded ordnances also fell significantly in September–October. **Markaz Falluja** recorded no significant variations in severity, although reporting of blocked returns rose in September–October and remained through to the year's end.







Falluja	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Al-Amiryah	Medium	Low	Low ▲	Low ▼	Medium ▼	Medium ▲
Al-Garma	Medium	Low ▲	Medium	Low ▼	Low	Low
Al-Saqlawiyah	Medium ▲	Low	Medium ▲	Low	Medium ▲	Medium ▲
Markaz Falluja	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

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

Haditha District

Generally, in **Haditha District**, a marginal worsening of overall severity was recorded compared to December 2019. The main drivers of severity in **Al-Haqlaniya** subdistrict are related to the slow recovery of agricultural activities, small businesses and employment. Concerns about unexploded ordnances and non-state military actors in control of checkpoints also drive severity. In **Barwana**, employment and

non-state military actors in control of checkpoints are the primary factors that increase severity for returnees. **Markaz Haditha** shared similar conditions as elsewhere in Haditha, but also had a notable, but moderate, difficulty in accessing primary essential services such as education and health care.







Haditha	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Al-Haqlaniya	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
Barwana	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low
Markaz Haditha	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low

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

Heet District

The overall situation in **Heet District** is classified as medium severity and worsened slightly over the course of the year. Between December 2019 and December 2020, the overall worsening of severity in **Al-Baghdady** was driven by a sharp rise in concerns regarding various sources of violence, with consistently high levels of blocked returns and non-state military actors in control of checkpoints. Similarly, in **Al-Forat**, a sharp increase in concerns about unexploded ordinance was recorded in September–October, and remained high for the rest of the year. The recovery of agricultural

activities and small businesses remain high severity in Al-Forat. **Kubaisa** recorded a sharp improvement in access to running water recorded in January–February 2020. The subdistrict also recorded an increase in the illegal occupation of private residences in November–December 2020. **Markaz Heet** saw a steady worsening of conditions in both livelihoods and safety and security. These changes were driven by worsening access to employment from May–June, which remained moderately high throughout the year. Concerns related to unexploded ordnance also rose in September–October.







Heet	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Al-Baghdady	Medium ▼	Low ▲	Medium	Low	Medium ▼	Medium
Al-Forat	Medium	Low	High	Low	High ▼	Medium
Kubaisa	Medium	Low	Medium	Low ▲	Medium	Medium ▼
Markaz Heet	Medium ▼	Low	Medium ▼	Low	Medium ▼	Medium

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

Ra'ua District

The overall situation in **Ra'ua District** improved slightly over the year but remained in the medium category of severity. As an urban district, **Markaz Ra'ua** has moderate severity, resulting from the slow recovery of small businesses and moderate levels of unemployment.

Concerns related to unexploded ordnance, various sources of violence and checkpoints controlled by other security actors remain critical.







Ra'ua	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Markaz Ra'ua	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	High	Low

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

Ramadi District

The overall situation in **Ramadi District** reflects the trends of other districts of return in Anbar, with moderately severe conditions related to livelihood and severe concerns related to safety and security. Nevertheless, Ramadi witnessed a small improvement over the course of 2020. In **Al-Habbaniya**, there were no profound changes during the year, but employment, blocked returns, concerns around various sources of violence and checkpoints controlled by other security actors remained the primary causes of severity. **Al-Khadiya** recorded an improvement in the level of blocked returns and checkpoints controlled by other security actors, which fell in January–February. Concerns about various sources of violence were extremely high throughout the year. **Al-Wafaa** was added to the

return index in May–June 2020 and witnessed little change in the intervening time. Severity in the sub-district is driven by concerns regarding unexploded ordnances, non-state security actors in charge of checkpoints and the slow recovery of small businesses. **Husaibah Al-Sharqiah** is unique among the sub-districts in Ramadi for having relatively high levels of residential destruction. The district did, however, record an improvement in the recovery of agricultural activities as of May–June and a slight reduction in concerns related to checkpoints. **Markaz Ramadi** has less severe conditions. Concerns related to non-state actors operating checkpoints fell significantly as of September–October, while the recovery of agricultural activities and small businesses worsened steadily over the course of the year.

Ramadi	 Overall Security	 Residential Destruction	 Livelihoods	 Essential Services	 Safety and Security	 Social cohesion
Al-Habbaniya	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
Al-Khadiya	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium ▲	Low ▲
Al-Wafaa	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
Husaibah Al-Sharqiah	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Markaz Ramadi	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low ▲	Low

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

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