



# Internal Displacement in Iraq: **BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION**

International Organization for Migration - Iraq



Internal Displacement in Iraq:  
**Barriers to Integration**

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

**Written, Designed and Photographed by:**  
The International Organization for Migration Iraq Mission

© IOM Iraq, December 2013

---

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

---

**D2 UNAMI Compound**  
**Green Zone, Baghdad, Iraq**

Tel: +962 65 659 660

Fax: +962 65 659 661

Email: rartinfo@iom.int

Web: www.iomiraq.net

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>5</b>	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>CHIEF OF MISSION'S FOREWORD</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY &amp; KEY FINDINGS</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>
11	Defining Internal Displacement
13	Defining Durable Solutions
14	How many IDPs are in Iraq?
15	History of Displacement
17	Settlement Options and Durable Solutions
<b>19</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
<b>21</b>	Understanding Displacement
21	What does being an 'Internally Displaced Person' mean to Iraqis?
23	How do the displaced feel about the term 'IDP'?
24	If not IDP, then how do the displaced prefer to be referred to?
<b>26</b>	Selecting the Area of Displacement
26	Pull Factors to an Area of Displacement
<b>28</b>	Perceived Consequences for Host Communities
29	Advantages for the Host Community
30	Disadvantages for Host Community
<b>32</b>	Defining Displacement in the Iraqi Context
<b>35</b>	Factors that Determine Intentions

35	Factors that Encourage Integration
36	Factors that Discourage Integration
37	Understanding Integration Intentions
<b>38</b>	<b>The Impact of Integration on Local Economies</b>
38	Advantages of Integration to Local Economies
39	Disadvantages of Integration to Local Economies
39	The Complexity of Economic Integration
40	What Makes the Displaced Integrated
<b>41</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In light of the necessity for continual assessment of the on-going IDP situation in Iraq, and acknowledging the importance of informed and targeted assistance to those most affected, IOM Iraq would like to thank the US State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) for their continued support. IOM Iraq also expresses its gratitude to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) for their invaluable support, and Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement for their assistance and review. And of course, many thanks goes to IOM Iraq's Rapid Assessment and Response Team members for their tireless work in collecting the data and information which constitutes the basis of this work. Their duties are often carried out in extremely difficult circumstances, and for this IOM Iraq is extremely grateful.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AoD</b>	Area of Displacement
<b>AoO</b>	Area of Origin
<b>BMD</b>	Bureau of Migration and Displacement (Kurdistan Regional Government)
<b>CRP</b>	Community Revitalization Programme
<b>GoI</b>	Government of Iraq
<b>HC</b>	Host Community
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>IDMC</b>	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IKG</b>	In-Kind Grant
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>KI</b>	Key Informants
<b>MoMD</b>	Ministry of Migration and Displacement (Iraqi Government)
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PRM</b>	U.S. State Department's Bureau of Populations, Refugees, and Migration
<b>RART</b>	Rapid Assessment and Response Team
<b>UNHCR</b>	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## CHIEF OF MISSION'S FOREWORD



“FREEDOM WOULD BE MEANINGLESS WITHOUT SECURITY IN THE HOME AND IN THE STREETS.”

~Nelson Mandela

communities to which they are displaced. Whether due to their government's inability or unwillingness to provide these basic needs, the result remains the same, a struggle for daily existence and a communal feeling of alienation experienced by Iraqis within their own country. A feeling of “statelessness” within a state, abandoned and left to seek refuge within communities often facing similar challenges. And so, a cycle of displacement, failure to integrate and onward displacement is frequently seen with Iraq's vulnerable communities.

Worsening conditions have been exacerbated in the wake of the Syria crisis for two primary reasons. Firstly, the IDP population in Iraq continues to grow as increasing numbers of Iraqis, originally displaced to Syria due to conflict and sectarian violence within Iraq, are displaced for a second time to their country of origin. Secondly, the eye of the international community has been diverted away from the plight of these affected populations, in addition to new waves of internal displacement triggered by continuing sectarian violence, by the extreme conditions confronting Syrian populations caught up in the country's ongoing civil war.

Whilst IOM Iraq supports, and will continue to support, ongoing efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Syrian nationals within their own country, and those registered as refugees in northern Iraq, the Mission remains conscious of the need to maintain and strengthen international support for those Iraqi nationals caught up in a cycle of evermore protracted displacement. The Mission is keenly aware of, and responsive to, evidence increasingly indicative of integration as the desired and most viable solution to displacement. IOM Iraq staff and management will continue to advocate on behalf of vulnerable IDPs. They will continue to support the Government of Iraq in dealing with the considerable challenges faced in this regard. They will not cease in their efforts to support local communities affected by this displacement, communities that often receive IDPs despite facing considerable hardships of their own.

Sincerely yours,

**Michael Pillinger**

*Chief of Mission, IOM Iraq*

Whilst those forcibly displaced across state borders receive refugee status, and are supported (to varying degrees) within an internationally recognized legal framework for refugee protection, the 759,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) officially registered within the borders of Iraq do not qualify for this support. Nor do the increasing number of IDPs believed to be unregistered in the country. Whilst the world's refugee protection regime was designed to offer international support to refugees who cannot rely on that provided by their own state (because they are no longer within the borders of that state), state support is very often unavailable to those nationals who, remaining within the country of their birth, are forced to abandon their homes at the hands of conflict, poverty, environmental crisis or targeted violence. On leaving their own governorate, Iraq's IDPs cannot guarantee access to that which should fall under the responsibility of their state. Security, health and education, economic opportunity, good governance, law and order, and fundamental infrastructure (transport and communications) are all to be expected, and yet are all too often beyond the reach of those who lack the documents appropriate for the

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

While Iraq continues making notable efforts towards economic and social recovery, the country still faces important challenges generated by the massive population movements over the past decades that remain unresolved. Many of Iraq's displaced populations and communities which they live in lack access to work, adequate accommodation and basic services.

The scale of the problem is, however, unclear. The actual number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq is unknown. Official records place the number of registered IDPs in Iraq at 759,000.<sup>1</sup> Many international actors, however, believe that the number is significantly higher and growing. The disparity not only reflects the challenges of accurately collecting data on populations that often live in the margins of an unstable Iraqi society, but also the difference between the criteria set by the Government of Iraq in defining the IDPs, and internationally recognized criteria.

These challenges have been further exacerbated since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria. According to IOM field staff, an increasing number of Iraqis returning from Syria, due to the scarcity of work and insecurity in Iraq, are unable to return to their place of origin and find themselves displaced within Iraq. Furthermore, since mid-2013, IOM field assessments confirm new waves of internal displacements allegedly triggered by the continuing sectarian violence and increasingly fragile security situation across the country. Over 5,000 Iraqis have been internally displaced in 2013.

This report aims to give a fresh look into the issues pertinent to the integration of IDPs in Iraq, including the evolving opinions and perceptions of IDPs, host communities (HC), and the relevant authorities dealing with IDP issues at national, provincial and local levels. Based on a series of interviews with the representatives of these groups, the report explores the causes and effects of displacement and integration, so that the perceived benefits can be exploited and the barriers to integration identified and mitigated. The analysis also sought to understand this information through the framework of durable solutions, as set out by the international standards, highlighting to what extent integration, as a durable solution, has been achieved and where further

programming needs to be focused.

Key findings confirmed that displacement in Iraq predominantly occurred due to a breakdown in security and the prevalence of sectarian violence. The displaced persons mainly selected their area of displacement based on the presence of security, which they perceived as intrinsically linked to ethno-sectarian homogeneity. While host community members felt that access to work was a primary consideration for the displaced when choosing their area of displacement, the displaced themselves reported other priorities. This represents a recurring attitude amongst host community members who are acutely aware of both positive and negative impacts that displaced populations have on their local economies. The increase in the size of the market in which goods and services can be sold and the arrival of new skills and workers are seen as potential positive impacts. However, when displaced persons arrive, they also establish businesses and seek out employment, competing with host community businesses and workers.

The social impact of displaced populations on host community members was seen as relatively

<sup>1</sup> Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), Nov 12, 2013.

minor and, in many cases, positive. This is likely because displaced individuals move to areas where they are part of a dominant ethno-sectarian group, often joining extended family, tribal or clan members with whom they share a common identity and associated practices. Whilst this bodes well for local integration on a social level, the implications for Iraq as a nation become more concerning as people become increasingly defined by a sectarian identity and interaction between different ethno-sectarian groups is reduced.

The vast majority (around 85%) of those who remain displaced now intend to integrate.<sup>2</sup> Once a displaced population arrives in a host community, the decision to stay and attempt to integrate is centered on the ability to secure work and accommodation. If these cannot be obtained, the negative effects of displacement will continue until these key preconditions are met. However, remaining in a particular area of displacement may not be decision at all, as there is often no other option available; in many cases IDPs can neither return home nor move elsewhere.

Access to employment and housing remain problematic, particularly for displaced individuals. Indeed, the rate of under and unemployment in Iraq is 28%<sup>3</sup> and there is a shortfall of 2 million housing units.<sup>4</sup> For those displaced individuals living in illegal settlements the situation is worse, as they live in precarious legal circumstances with no security of tenure, limited or no access to even basic amenities and services, and poor infrastructure. The Government of Iraq (GoI), at the local and national level, must strive to improve conditions for displaced populations, as many continue to remain negatively affected by their displacement and have yet to reach any form of durable solution.

In order to increase the socio-economic aspects of durable integration, strategies should be defined to

allow local economies to expand in order to satisfy the basic economic requirements of new arrivals, without detrimentally affecting existing actors within the host community.

The findings and conclusions discussed throughout this report are based on data and information gathered through a series of interviews carried out from June to August 2013 with the internally displaced persons, representatives of the host communities, and with selected officials of various governmental national, regional and local institutions and international agencies involved with IDP integration issues. The qualitative analysis was complemented by information and observations provided by the IOM Rapid Assessment and Response Teams (RARTs) deployed across Iraq.

The report was prepared by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq, in cooperation with the International Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) and with support of the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement. This was done within the framework of the “Community Revitalization Programme (CRP) – Phase II” funded by the US State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM).

<sup>2</sup> IOM Iraq Final Report 2012 – Displacement Monitoring and Needs Assessments. Available at: <http://www.iomiraq.net/Documents/Annual%20Report%20-%20ENGLISH.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Inter-Agency Information & Analysis Unit (IAU), United Nations OCHA, Iraq Labour Force Analysis 2003-2008 (2009), p.1. Available at: <http://www.unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/reports/OCHAIUAU%20LabourForceImpactsIraq%202009.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> UN HABITAT, Iraq Country Programme Document 2009-2011, p. 7. Available at: [http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/7476\\_49758\\_CPD%20Iraq-most%20updated9b.pdf](http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/7476_49758_CPD%20Iraq-most%20updated9b.pdf)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Iraq, with support of the international community and partners, has made concerted efforts to address the consequences of massive internal population displacements. However, the country continues to struggle with the severe effects of internal displacement on displaced populations and the communities in which they live, as well as with the changes wrought upon the ethno-sectarian make-up of the nation.

The increasing sectarian violence and the volatile security situation in Iraq, along with the regionalization of the Syrian crisis, have recently caused new displacements, threatening the hard won stability that followed the sectarian conflagration of 2006-2007. At the same time, Iraqi returnees continue arriving from Syria to Iraq, many of them becoming internally displaced and dependent on aid following the return. These new displacements are added to the already chronic issues faced by Iraq’s long term displaced, many of which have yet to achieve a durable solution.

These diverse challenges should be addressed strategically through a comprehensive set of complementary measures which will help enhance multiple facets of the integration process and ensure its durable character. These measures should address the immediate and longer term needs of the affected population, and collectively contribute to creating an environment which will offer equal access to essential services and livelihoods to IDPs and host communities to meet their basic socio-economic needs.

The following recommendations have been configured in this regard, based on the information, observations and findings generated during this assessment:

### Enhancing Livelihood: Employment Generation, Job Matching, and Support for Micro-Businesses.

As a primary condition for enhancing durable integration, the relevant strategies must promote expansion of local economies in order to satisfy the basic economic requirements of the displaced communities, without detrimentally affecting the host community. In the present Iraqi context, access to work and a regular income are central factors in an IDP’s decision as to whether to integrate in the current location or to consider a move elsewhere. It is, however, paramount that an IDP’s ability to earn a living does not come at the expense of the host community’s own ability to access employment. Livelihood support programs should therefore target both the IDPs and host communities through employment generation, job matching and support for the creation of small and micro-businesses, as well as through various types of vocational and on-the-job training. Such initiatives would thus have two-fold impact: setting the ground both for durable integration of IDPs and for long-term prosperity of the local community.

### Community Assistance Programs (CAPs): Infrastructural Support Within Receiving Host Communities.

Protracted IDP displacement and potentially increasing numbers of new arrivals further pressure local and national resources and infrastructure to adequately respond to the variety of needs and demands placed on them. In order to strengthen their capacity to facilitate the integration process, the recommended measures also include the Community Assistance

Programmes (CAPs), aimed at the reinforcement of local infrastructure, primarily of shelter and housing, health and education facilities, as well as the CAPs fostering socio-economic benefits for displacement affected communities.

**Promoting Dialogue and Interaction between IDP and Host Communities.** It is crucial to recognize and address the multi-faceted social and economic aspects of displacement and their far-reaching consequences. For IDPs, the frustration of displacement associated with isolation from families and social networks, often leads to further self-isolation, lack of income and high dependency on aid. The host communities on the other hand, often perceive the new comers as intruders into their community, who take advantage of a favorable socio-economic environment at their expense. Such views create divisions between communities and can severely inhibit peaceful co-existence. These situations can be prevented and addressed through initiatives promoting dialogue, enhancing mutual understanding between the communities and raising awareness of the economic and social benefits of successful integration of displaced communities. In particular, the individual and community-based micro-projects involving IDPs and members of host communities aimed at strengthening local service infrastructure should be prioritized and promoted.

**Increasing Integration Prospects: Enhancing Self-reliance and Access to Basic Services.** Forced migration and its consequences often lead to IDPs facing psychosocial problems and exhibiting related antisocial behavior. Provision of psychosocial support helps mitigate these problems through building and maintaining the social networks of, and relations between vulnerable groups. The integration process should also be supported by the provision of information, counseling and referral services to ensure timely access to accurate information about registration procedures, rights, obligations and entitlements, access to basic services and work opportunities, as well as many other issues that could impede successful integration process.

**Understanding Internal Displacement: Data and Information Management, Research.** Amid the present widening gap in official data and statistics on internal displacements, there is an obvious need for an alternative mechanism to capture, compile, compare and analyze data and information, in order to understand the scope of the internal displacements in Iraq, recent and future trends, as well as the diverse and evolving consequences on affected communities and the nation as a whole. Further research in the coming years will be critical to respond to many questions raised in relation to durable integration of IDPs, and key in any attempt to successfully close the 'integration file' in Iraq.

This research should also extend to current displacements trends and the needs of the newly displaced. It is of utmost importance to ensure the rapid provision of emergency and humanitarian relief assistance during the immediate post-displacement phase when the affected population is at their most vulnerable. Provision of adequate shelter and temporary accommodation; medical screening and referrals when necessary; provision of food and emergency non-food items (NFI) including hygiene and households items; and development of sufficient water, sanitation and other infrastructural facilities, are some of the basic services which are critical in responding to the immediate and basic post-displacement needs.

## BACKGROUND

Iraq has suffered multiple waves of displacement over the last four decades with a variety of causes. Millions of citizens have been forcibly uprooted from their homes, education and livelihoods. The events that caused each wave of displacement and the resultant impact of such large numbers of people migrating across and from the country have had hugely destabilizing effects on the country's complex tribal, sectarian, economic, social and political dynamics, notwithstanding the individual tragedies caused by displacement.

Despite the efforts of governmental and non-governmental actors to mitigate the effects of displacement on those affected, many people continue to be negatively affected by their displacement and are far from achieving a durable solution to their plight.

### DEFINING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Internally displaced persons are “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.”<sup>5</sup>

#### Components of the IDP definition

The definition provided by the internationally recognized Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement highlights two elements:

##### 1. The coercive or otherwise involuntary character of movement.

The definition mentions some of the most common causes of involuntary movements, such as armed conflict, violence, human rights violations and disasters. The common element of these causes is that people are left with no choice but to leave their homes and are deprived of the most essential protection mechanisms, such as community networks, access to services, and livelihoods. Displacement severely affects the physical, socio-economic and legal safety of people and should be systematically regarded as an indicator of potential vulnerability.

##### 2. The fact that such movement takes place within national borders.

Unlike refugees, who have been deprived of the protection of their state of origin, IDPs remain legally under the protection of national authorities of their country of habitual residence. IDPs should therefore enjoy the same rights as the rest of the population. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement remind national authorities and other relevant actors of their responsibility to ensure that IDPs' rights are respected and fulfilled, despite the vulnerability generated by their displacement.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. “The definition of an internally displaced person (IDP).” [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004D404D/\(httpPages\)/CC32D8C34EF93C88802570F800517610?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004D404D/(httpPages)/CC32D8C34EF93C88802570F800517610?OpenDocument).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Herein lies the core problem of internal displacement, particularly when the cause of displacement is conflict; the state, whose legal responsibility it is to protect all its citizens' rights, has been unable to do so either by commission or omission.<sup>7</sup>

### WHAT MAKES INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE MORE VULNERABLE

- “Internally displaced persons may be in transit from one place to another, may be in hiding, may be forced toward unhealthy or inhospitable environments, or face other circumstances that make them especially vulnerable.
- The social organization of displaced communities may have been destroyed or damaged by the act of physical displacement; family groups may be separated or disrupted; women may be forced to assume non-traditional roles or face particular vulnerabilities.
- Internally displaced populations, and especially groups like children, the elderly, or pregnant women, may experience profound psychosocial distress related to displacement.
- Removal from sources of income and livelihood may add to physical and psychosocial vulnerability for displaced people.
- Schooling for children and adolescents may be disrupted.
- Internal displacement to areas where local inhabitants are of different groups or inhospitable may increase risk to internally displaced communities; internally displaced persons may face language barriers during displacement.
- The condition of internal displacement may raise the suspicions of or lead to abuse by armed combatants, or other parties to conflict.
- Internally displaced persons may lack identity documents essential to receiving benefits or legal recognition; in some cases, fearing persecution, displaced persons have sometimes got rid of such documents.”<sup>8</sup>

7 “Violations of human rights: They include government transgressions of the rights guaranteed by national, regional and international human rights law, and acts and omissions directly attributable to the state involving the failure to implement legal obligations from human rights standards. One could argue that the concept of ‘persecution,’ usually used in the context of refugee movements, coincides at least partly with situations of human rights violations: threat to life or freedom on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. Other serious human rights violations, for the same reasons, would also constitute persecution (discrimination with consequences of a substantially prejudicial nature).” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, “Internally Displaced Persons: an optional module for the ReachOut training project: Who is an Internally Displaced Person?”. Available at: [http://www.nrc.ch/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/8FA27BA51F738586C125711500467CD2/\\$file/Definition%20module%20handout.pdf](http://www.nrc.ch/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/8FA27BA51F738586C125711500467CD2/$file/Definition%20module%20handout.pdf)

8 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, “The definition of an Internally Displaced Person (IDP)”. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/idp>

## DEFINING DURABLE SOLUTIONS

A durable solution for the displaced cannot be said to have been achieved until “internally displaced people no longer have specific protection needs that are linked to their displacement and such persons can enjoy their rights without discrimination resulting from their displacement.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, a durable solution requires that the rights to protection, socio-economic security, and freedom of movement that were lost by the displaced be regained.

Integration as a durable solution is a complex process, particularly when displacement is a result of conflict, as in many instances it can involve addressing the causes as well as the effects of displacement that are linked to peace, security, territorial control, equal treatment and equitable distribution of resources. This involves the coordination of multiple actors from the state, international community, and the people affected by displacement themselves. Therefore, finding a durable solution can be an incredibly lengthy and complicated process, particularly in a country as complex as Iraq.

A framework was developed to set out the rights of the displaced to durable solutions at the request of the former Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons. The framework involved the input of governments, donors, international agencies, non-governmental organizations

(NGOs), and civil society and IDP organizations; it is underpinned by international human and humanitarian law that reflects a human-rights-based approach in order to provide an objective set of criteria for concerned actors to assess whether a durable solution has been achieved.

The above definition is intended as an introduction so that the reader may recognize how the findings of the report should be understood; for a deeper understanding, refer to the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.

IASC has set out eight interlinked criteria as benchmarks to determine what extent a durable solution has been achieved:

- Safety and Security
- Adequate Standard of Living
- Access to Livelihoods
- Restoration of Housing, Land and Property
- Access to Documentation
- Family Reunification
- Participation in Public Affairs
- Access to Effective Remedies and Justice<sup>10</sup>

It is through these criteria that IOM sought to understand the responses from key informants, to evaluate what extent integration has been achieved, and to identify the barriers to integration which need to be overcome.

9 Ibid.

10 The Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, “Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.” (April 2010), available at: <https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/IASC%20Framework%20DS%20for%20IDPs.pdf>

## HOW MANY IDPS ARE IN IRAQ?

The actual number of IDPs in Iraq is unknown as estimates vary greatly. The Government of Iraq (GoI) reports the number of registered displaced in Iraq, as of November 2013, at 759,000<sup>11</sup> whilst many international observers estimate that the number is likely to be significantly higher. The disparity in the figures not only reflects the challenges of accurately collecting data on IDP populations that often live in the margins of an unstable Iraqi society, but also the difference between the criteria set by the GoI in defining the displaced and internationally recognized criteria set by the Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement discussed above.

The issue of quantifying the IDP population is made more difficult by the process of registering with the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD). While the official policy states that an individual displaced either before 2006 or after 2006 is eligible to register, there are numerous reports of problems with registration. IDPs have reported being unable to register with MoMD due to a lack of correct documentation, a fear of making their presence known to local authorities, or a simple rejection at the local government's registration office. Exact registration criteria differs from governorate to governorate as well, creating a situation in which not all those who have been displaced within the borders of Iraq are able to register and receive the governmental assistance to which they are entitled.

Even once an IDP has registered with the government and is entitled to assistance, there is the broader issue of how to resolve the displacement situation, through return, relocation elsewhere in the country or local integration. Once an IDP has registered to have returned to their original location or to have integrated into their current location and receives the associated grant, they are de-registered as an IDP. As a result they are no longer entitled to any displacement-specific assistance, regardless of whether they actually found a durable

solution. Many families deregister as IDPs simply because they are desperately in need of the financial grant associated with that act. Once de-registered, however, the families' displacement-related hardships become even more difficult to address due to their lack of official status.

All these factors have helped lead to the confusion over the actual number of internally displaced people in Iraq, and where these people live. With no accurate, agreed picture of their numbers and locations, it is difficult for concerned actors and agencies to effectively formulate and implement policies to assist Iraq's displaced populations. An added complexity is that responses to displacement are dependent on when a person was displaced. Each displacement phase had very different causes and subsequent effects, and policy makers responded accordingly.

11 MoMD, Nov 12, 2013

## HISTORY OF DISPLACEMENT

There have been three relevant, distinct phases of displacement in the modern history of Iraq. The first phase encompasses all displacement that occurred prior to 2003, the second followed the American-led intervention and the third phase came as a result of the sectarian violence that engulfed the country in 2006.

Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist party was responsible for the creation of over a million IDPs by 2003.<sup>12</sup> Displacement resulted from Arabization policies which sought to shift the demographic make-up of predominantly Shia southern governorates, the Al-Anfal campaign directed predominantly against the Kurds in the north, the Iran-Iraq war and the first Gulf War, as well as failed agricultural policies which drained the marshlands in the south of the country. A common feature to all these displacements was the often brutal, systematic violence perpetuated by the state against its people.

The American-led intervention that toppled Saddam Hussein and the Ba'athist regime in 2003 marked the beginning of the second wave of displacement. The international community readied itself by setting up huge reception camps in bordering countries in anticipation of large numbers of refugees. This did not happen, and the camps were disbanded at the end of 2003 in a tragic episode of mistiming.<sup>13</sup> Following the intervention, an estimated 200,000 were displaced; many of these displacements occurred as an estimated 500,000 people displaced under Saddam returned to their places of origin in Iraq to reclaim their properties appropriated by the state. The current occupants were either forced out or fled fearing retribution from the returnees who were seeking to recover their properties and land.<sup>14</sup>

A little over two years later, the bombing of Al-Askari mosque in Samarra marked the start of a vicious sectarian conflict which spread across the country and saw millions of Iraqis displaced within and across the country's borders. Iraq and its neighbors were ill-prepared to deal with this third phase of displacement following the disbandment of the camps. The consequences continue to be felt today.

Between 2006 and September 2008, IOM estimated that a further 1.6 million Iraqis were displaced, bringing the total number of displaced up to 2.8 million in 2008.

Mass waves of returns were reported to have taken place in 2007 and 2008 once the security situation had improved, although returnees faced their own obstacles to re-integrate back into their communities, not least of which concerned land and property restitution.

12 Cohen, Roberta. "Rethinking the Future: The Next Five Years in Iraq: Iraq's Displaced: Where to Turn?." *Am. U. Int'l L. Rev.* 24 (2009): 301-943.

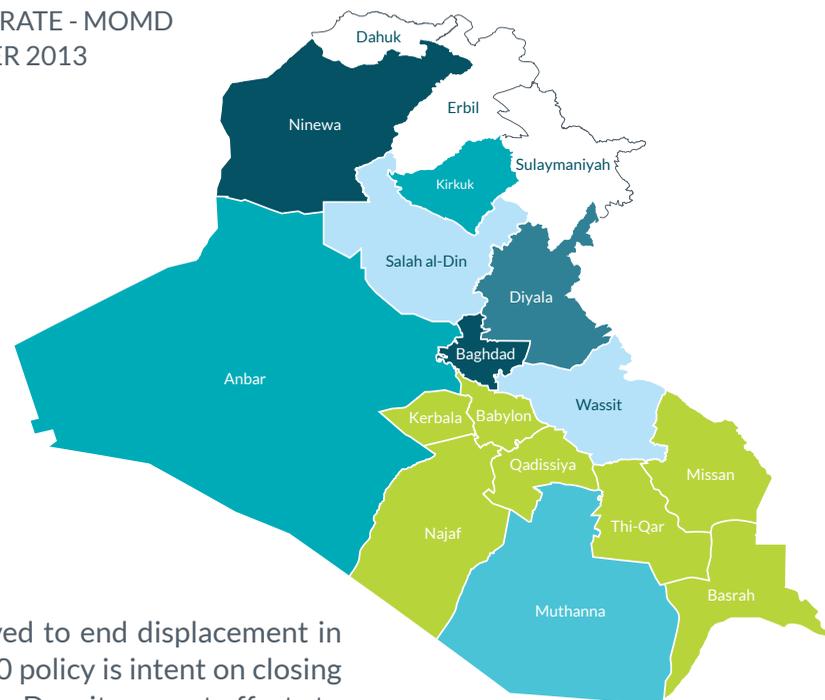
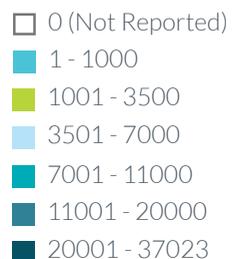
13 Dawn Chatty, "Iraq Refugees: Problems and Prospects," *Open Democracy*, November, 2010 available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/dawn-chatty/iraqi-refugees-problems-and-prospects>.

14 International Organization for Migration, *Iraq Displacement 2006 Year Review (Iraq, 2007)* available at: [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/media/docs/news/2006\\_iraq\\_idp.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/media/docs/news/2006_iraq_idp.pdf)

## LOCATION MAP BY GOVERNORATE - MOMD REGISTERED IDPS – NOVEMBER 2013

## IDP Families

## MoMD Numbers



Since 2008, the GoI has strived to end displacement in Iraq. The current MoMD 2010 policy is intent on closing the internal displacement files. Despite recent efforts to assist with local integration, there is clearly an emphasis on a policy of return over integration or relocation elsewhere in the country despite the overwhelming wishes of those families who remain displaced to integrate locally.<sup>15</sup> The first national policy regarding displacement was put in place as early as 2008 and is still described as a key document that guides the government on issues of protection and assistance for the displaced, and forms part of the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan to End Displacement. The plan was developed by MoMD in coordination with UNHCR, and sets out steps to ensure full coordination amongst ministries for the provision of services and durable solutions, either through return, local integration or resettlement to another part of the country.<sup>16</sup>

The plan focused heavily on the provision of financial grants with a 4 million Iraqi Dinar (approximately \$3,438)

grant for returnees and a 2.5 million Iraqi Dinar grant (approximately \$2,148) for IDPs wishing to integrate locally.<sup>17</sup> The amount offered for each grant provides a clear incentive in favor of return. Anecdotal evidence from IOM field staff suggests that IDPs have signed up for and received the larger return grant only to return back to the area of displacement. Given that sectarian violence was the main cause displacement between 2006 and 2007, and that according to a comparative study conducted by the Norwegian Refugee Council and UNHCR, 57 per cent of the displaced

15 Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (NRC/IDMC), Iraq: Response still centred on return despite increasing IDP demands for local integration, 23 September 2011, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e92b64d2.htm>

16 UN Iraq, "The plight of Internally Displaced Persons " Factsheet, August 2013, available at: <http://www.jauiraq.org/documents/1892/Factsheet-WHD-English.pdf>

17 Ibid.

families' neighbors of a different religious or ethnic group took an active part in enforcing their displacement,<sup>18</sup> it is perhaps unsurprising that displaced families take the return grant while continuing to reside in the area of displacement.

According to MoMD figures, as of November 2013, a total of 687,000 IDPs have registered as returned and are eligible to receive the grant.<sup>19</sup> Regardless of which grant a displaced family attempts to access, a condition of receiving the grant is that they are no longer registered as displaced. A displaced person remains displaced, however, as long as they continue to be disadvantaged by their displacement. Whilst the grants provided by MoMD are no doubt very useful to displaced families, it cannot

be concluded that once they receive the grants and are deregistered as displaced that they have reached a durable solution through return, resettlement or integration.

This discussion on the efficacy of grants has a renewed importance as Iraqi returnees from Syria and newly internally displaced families pushed by renewed sectarian violence further complicate Iraq's displacement file and the search for sustainable answers for displacement.

## SETTLEMENT OPTIONS AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Vast numbers of those who were displaced both before and after 2006 are still living in their places of displacement, and continue to have protection and assistance concerns linked to their displacement – meaning they have not achieved a durable solution to their displacement. These issues manifest themselves as a lack of access to security of tenure, poor access to work, poor accommodation, and poor or absent services.

As displacement has become more protracted, the settlement options that would best suit the Iraqi displaced and the communities in which they live have changed. There are, formally, three settlement options to displacement; return, resettlement elsewhere in the country, or local integration.<sup>20</sup> The most appropriate settlement option for those displaced must be determined by their views and wishes as to what

they see as the solution to their displacement, as is consistent with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. If the displaced are truly able to achieve a durable solution, then they must be empowered to make the choice themselves.<sup>21</sup>

18 Madarik Foundation (In partnership with NRC and UNHCR), "Conditions and rights of IDPs and Returnees in Four Governorates of Iraq." February, 2013. Available at: [http://www.nrc.no/arch/\\_img/9671988.pdf](http://www.nrc.no/arch/_img/9671988.pdf)

19 MoMD, Nov 12, 2013

20 Long, Katy. "Permanent crises?: unlocking the protracted displacement of refugees and internally displaced persons." Refugee Studies Centre Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford (2011).

21 UN Human Rights Council: Addendum to Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin, Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, 29 December 2009. A/HRC/13/21/Add.4, available at: [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/ido/docs/A.HRC.13.21.Add.4\\_framework.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/ido/docs/A.HRC.13.21.Add.4_framework.pdf)

In the immediate aftermath of the mass displacements in 2006, 2007, and 2008, IOM found that 45 per cent of IDPs intended to return to their original locations in Iraq. Four years later, only 6 per cent of vulnerable IDPs assessed by IOM wished to return to their places of origin, while 85 per cent of IDPs saw their

future integrating into their host communities.<sup>22</sup> This huge shift in intentions should have a profound impact on how all concerned actors address the evolving needs of displaced persons.

CHANGING IDP INTENTIONS OVER TIME



IOM IRAQ FINAL REPORT 2012 - DISPLACEMENT MONITORING AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Integration is a complex process, and whilst the processes and conditions which need to be applied for integration to be measured as a durable solution have been objectively set out as international standards,<sup>23</sup> people's perceptions of integration are more subjective. They need to be understood and addressed through a process of meaningful consultation in order to ensure sustainable integration. If policies are to be effectively implemented, then accountable parties need to understand what integration means to the displaced, and what barriers they feel prevent them from integrating. Currently this understanding remains academic, however; unless the government works with communities affected by displacement and with international partners on sustainable long term approaches to resolving the displacement situation, durable solutions will not be achieved. It is vital that the government, national and international

organizations responding to displacement take into account how people understand and experience integration in the Iraqi context, particularly in relation to ongoing violence and insecurity in the country. Once this is understood, effective programmes can be developed that will ensure sustainable solutions are found. Durable solutions can only be achieved once the displaced feel their rights have been reinstated and fully realized which can only happen with the support of a government engaging with and listening to the needs and concerns of the IDPs themselves and working with them as partners.

22 International Organization for Migration, Iraq Mission, Displacement Monitoring and Needs Assessments, (Iraq, 2012). Available at: <http://www.iomiraq.net/Documents/Annual%20Report%20-%20ENGLISH.pdf>

23 The Brookings Institution, "Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons."

## METHODOLOGY

This report set out to gain a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding displacement and integration in Iraq as understood by different affected demographics. To that end IOM carried out a series of interviews with representatives from IDP and host community key informants (KIs), as well as with local government workers who deal with the displaced and displacement-affected communities. The purpose of grouping the demographics in this way was to see where the individual groups' views and meanings converged and where they differed on key issues related to displacement and integration.

Interviews were conducted across varied displacement-affected communities in Iraq by IOM field teams. The interviews consisted of 43 open questions that focused on meanings of displacement and integration, what areas key informants felt determined the integration intentions, and what the advantages and disadvantages are to host communities by the arrival and integration of IDPs. Focus group discussions were also conducted; questions centered around the above areas, although respondents were allowed to fully explore each area. Once the data was collected, it was compiled into a database and coded where appropriate for analysis. This coding of qualitative data allowed IOM to quantify responses to more clearly understand variants in the data set and express them mathematically.

IOM conducted the assessments throughout June and August 2013. The assessment was based on qualitative methods that allowed IOM to explore which indicators of integration as a durable solution are deemed most relevant and go on to explore their meaning. The number of KIs in each category is as follows:



The results of the data should be taken as a starting point from which larger scale quantitative studies should be directed according to the indicators this study has identified. The qualitative method therefore allows IOM to assess how integration and displacement is perceived by KIs.

Finally, it is recognized that people are not equally good at observing, understanding and interpreting their own and other people's behavior. Targeted qualitative research recognizes that some informants are richer resources of information than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for

the researcher because of their experience of the issues this report set out to research. A purposeful sampling approach was therefore used in the selection of interviewees that focused on different cohorts (see below).

Key informants were selected from IOM's comprehensive database of community networks built up over the ten years IOM has been operating in Iraq, utilizing IOM's historical

presence and working relationships with communities and government officials across each governorate. The sample selection methodology used was predominantly the maximum variant technique to ensure that the widest possible range of experiences was analyzed to provide a more accurate approximation through statistical regression to the mean.

Location assessments took place to determine a community's vulnerability levels, in-line with established IOM criteria, with the aim of providing the study with the widest possible range of environments in which the displaced were present. This included areas where the displaced were in the majority or minority and either residing in rented accommodation, home-owners, living with extended family, or in illegal settlements. The socio-economic conditions of the locations were also assessed and included - areas where residents, including the displaced, were either employed by the state, self-employed, day laborers or unemployed.

A predefined list of key informants was developed at a country, governorate and district level and were defined by, but not limited to the following:

#### Community Leaders (HC)

#### IDP Representatives

#### Religious Leaders

#### Tribal Leaders

#### MoMD & Bureau of Migration and Displacement (BMD) Representatives

#### Local Government Workers (school, healthcare professionals)

#### Women's Representatives

However, the list was subject to expansion as further contacts were referred to IOM by predefined KIs

(Snowball Technique) leading to a total interview caseload of 137 individual informant interviews nationwide.

It is important to note that the assessment is largely based on the testimonies of a relatively small number of interviewees and, therefore, the assessment aimed to make each response as comprehensive as possible. Another point that must be made clear is that whilst the data was collected across all 18 governorates in Iraq, the sample sizes and qualitative method used mean that although the data can speak confidently at a national level on the results, there will inevitably be major regional and local variations that this study is not in a position to develop on.

For the purpose of this study, a focus group discussion for displaced populations and another for HC populations was constructed in each community to collect information related to the displacement impact and levels of integration in that community. The assessment covered two communities per governorate, totaling 72 focus group discussions nationwide. The participants were drawn from local communities on the same principles as the KI selection, in order to provide the maximum range of experiences of displacement-related issues.

## FINDINGS

### UNDERSTANDING DISPLACEMENT

#### WHAT DOES BEING AN 'INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON' MEAN TO IRAQIS?

**IOM found that displacement in Iraq has often been correlated with fleeing violence because the state was no longer able to protect its citizens. More than 70 per cent of respondents from all KI groups said that being displaced meant being forced to leave one's area of origin as a result of violence, sectarian violence or a threat of violence.**

This rationale for flight is in line with the internationally accepted definition of internal displacement, exemplifying the Iraqi experience of internal displacement, and, importantly, highlighting its causes - namely, that displacement is the result of people being forcibly displaced from their area of origin due to poor security and sectarian-driven violence. Regardless of people's personal experiences of displacement, its meaning was generally understood by all respondents.

This consensus, however, is not entirely shared by the Iraqi government, which has multiple working definitions of displacement (for the purposes of assistance from

the Iraqi government) that are contingent on when the displacement took place. This in turn is reflected in the varying levels and forms of support available.

"The Iraqi state's approach to displacement and return related to land and property issues is a good example of how these differences [concerning particular displacement waves] have translated into different types of measures in respect of what from a technical viewpoint are similar problems. Those who are victims of land and property takings by the former regime can request either restitution or compensation from the Property Claims Commission (PCC), established in 2004 to deal with land and property violations that occurred in the period between 1968 and 2003.<sup>24</sup> Displaced families who lost their land or property after 2003, however, need to rely on the civil courts if they were displaced between 2003 and 2006 or the return centers established in the frame of Decree 262 and Order 101<sup>25</sup> if they were displaced between 2006 and 2008."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes (CRPPD) replaced the Iraqi Property Claims Commission (IPCC) in March 2006. The CRPPD competencies include (1) confiscation for political, religious or ethnic reasons, e.g. Arabisation policies', (2) unlawful appropriation of property and (3) state property allocated to the members of the previous regime. But the CRPPD was not mandated to cover the bulk of land disputes. It was limited temporarily to events from the 17 July 1968 to 9 April 2003 and was not mandated to address the Anfal Campaign in the North or the drainage of the marshes in the South on the grounds that property Restitution in these areas would generate renewed ethnic tension in those areas (Van der Auweraert, "Property Restitution in Iraq" [paper presented at the Symposium on Post-Conflict Property Restitution, Arlington, Virginia, September 6-7, 2007]).<sup>23</sup> The Brookings Institution, "Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons."

<sup>25</sup> Decree 262 and Order 101 concern returnee support to those displaced in 2006-2007.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Van Der Auweraert, "Displacement and National Institutions: Reflections on the Iraqi Experience," Middle East Institute. Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique, 2011.

This institutional differentiation related to land and property restitution extends across the Iraqi government's response to the displacement file, another example being the registration of the displaced. The registration of the displaced allows them to access numerous rights and benefits, such as renting or purchasing property, voting, and accessing certain services and grants.<sup>27</sup> The criteria and eligibility for registration as a displaced person is problematic. Those displaced between 2006 and 2008 are eligible to register and, in theory, are entitled to the full range of support from the state. Those displaced outside that period may be able to administratively register, but many are refused even this (excluding displacements that have occurred in 2012-2013, where the state is registering and providing assistance). Regardless, they are not entitled to any displacement-related assistance, and this effectively refuses to recognize displaced people should their displacement have occurred before 2006 or between 2008 and 2012, regardless of whether their displacement meets the criteria as agreed by MoMD's own definition.<sup>28</sup>

**This gap between the internationally accepted definition of displacement and MoMD's working definitions that are contingent on when displacement occurred results in the potential marginalization of certain displaced populations, as they are unable to access support specifically designed to assist the displaced.** These distinctions need to be addressed to ensure that all of Iraq's displaced received the assistance they need so they are not unduly disadvantaged by their displacement.

<sup>28</sup> "Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border"-- Iraq Ministry of Migration and Displacement, National Policy on Displacement (July 2008) Technical Definitions, p.5. Available at: [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/projects/idp/iraq\\_2008\\_national\\_policy.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/projects/idp/iraq_2008_national_policy.pdf)

## HOW DO THE DISPLACED FEEL ABOUT THE TERM 'IDP'?

**The term IDP has negative connotations for the majority of HC members and displaced people, but, somewhat perversely, the term is commonly used amongst all groups;** approximately 80 per cent of all KIs said the term is used by other groups to describe the displaced, as well as the displaced using the term to refer to themselves.

In nearly every governorate, when HC and displaced community members were asked in IOM-chaired focus group discussions how the displaced felt about the term 'IDP', the majority of both groups said it had negative connotations that at best marked the displaced out as different and inferior to the HC, and at worst was used to discriminate against displaced people.

In a minority of communities, HC members and the displaced had different understandings of the term IDP. In Najaf, members of the host community felt that the displaced in their community did not mind the term as it was only used as a way for HC members to differentiate between the displaced and themselves, saying that:

**"There is no embarrassment when we call them IDPs because we don't mean it abusively, but only to distinguish them from host community families; when somebody asks about Abu Muhammad's house for example, there are many houses with such a name, so if we say the IDP or migrant (Muhajjareen) we can identify them."**

*(HC FGD participant - Najaf).*

However, displaced FGD participants from the same community felt the term was alienating them from the community they had relocated to and marked them out as different from HC members:

**"We as IDPs are embarrassed to be called IDPs because we refuse to be distinguished from host community families as we have previous relatives and relations."**

*(Displaced FGD Participant - Najaf).*

This understanding of the term IDP by the displaced is typical, with many displaced FGD participants feeling that the label undermines them or separates them as different, lesser or weaker than members of the community to which they find themselves displaced. However, for actors wishing to support the displaced, who almost invariably arrive at an area of displacement (AoD) in need of assistance, there must be a way to differentiate between the displaced and the non-displaced.

This distinction must be made sensitively, however, and its meaning and usefulness to displaced populations and the actors that seek to assist them will change as the period of displacement becomes protracted. This is perhaps best summed up by a quote from a displaced FGD participant in Kerbala:

**“It makes it easy to get help sometimes and also to get attention from the organizations, but when the people of the host community use this term it makes us feel that we are less than them and don’t have the right to live and work in the city like them.”**

As displacement becomes more protracted, and those who have the inclination and ability to return to their area of origin (AoO) do so, the majority of those who remain displaced now consider integration as the most attractive durable solution. So, if people are trying to integrate, then it is perhaps unhelpful to continue to marginalize them by marking them out as different to HC members with the IDP label. Nevertheless, it may be the case in many instances that the displaced are different to HC members, in that they continue to live in marginalized circumstances with substandard accommodation, disproportionately limited access to employment, and without enjoying the same rights as members of their host communities. If so, the term IDP has moved beyond its initial definition of forced movement and now encompasses all the things that the displaced lack.

When this analysis is understood through the durable solutions framework, it is clear that the displaced feel they remain disadvantaged.

### IIF NOT IDP, THEN HOW DO THE DISPLACED PREFER TO BE REFERRED TO?

The displaced and HC members were asked whether there were any preferred terms to IDP. The most common answer was migrants or muhajjareen, although many displaced people still felt this held the same negative connotations attached to the term IDP. Some displaced KIs seemed to reject the term, and indeed the idea of displacement altogether, saying that it was impossible to be displaced within one’s own country. Whilst this was one of the more extreme responses, the label itself is clearly problematic and not just for the displaced, but by extension for anyone wishing to assist them.

There was one term that was favored by many displaced individuals, a term they felt if not replaced, superseded the IDP label: citizen or *muwatan*.

**“We see this term [IDP] as a symbol of weakness, and wish that the term is no longer used; there is no preferred term for it, we would love to be described as regular citizens.”**

*Displaced FGD participant - Dahuk*

Citizenship centers on the relationship between the state and the individual, and the rights and responsibilities that bind them together. In the Iraqi case, the state has been unable to meet its responsibilities to the citizen, as evidenced by the mere presence of the displaced and further confirmed by the inequitable standing of the displaced compared to citizens who have not been forcibly displaced. So when the displaced seek to be understood as citizens, it is because they did not and do not enjoy the rights citizenship normatively confers, and it should therefore be understood as a statement of aspiration to realize those rights post displacement with all that it entails.

**The following sections set out to understand how the displaced decide where to relocate, what the perceived advantages and disadvantages are to host communities once they arrive, what factors need to be present for the displaced to consider integrating, what factors determine whether the displaced are actually integrated, and the advantages and disadvantages to a host community of actually integrating the displaced, as seen by KI interviewees.**

**There are clear relationships between definitions of integration, pull factors to an Area of Displacement (AoD), and what factors determine whether the displaced integrate. There are also clear distinctions between KI groups regarding what they each view as the determining factors.**

## SELECTING THE AREA OF DISPLACEMENT

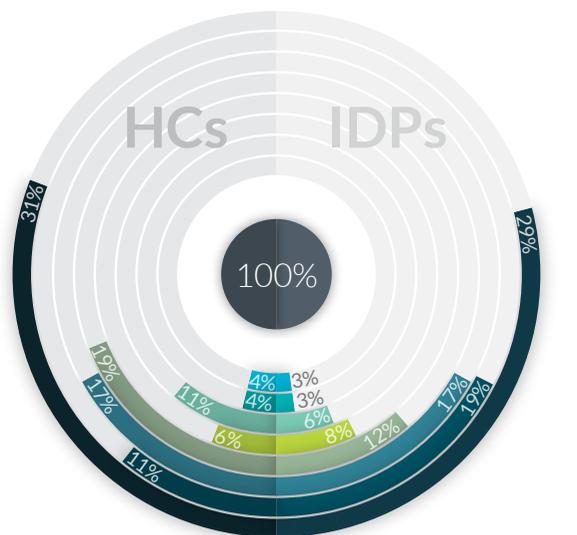
### PULL FACTORS TO AODs

Just as poor security and sectarian violence were seen by the majority of respondents as the main push factors for displacement, they were also the main pull factors that determined where displaced individuals chose to settle.

- Security & Stability
- Friends and Relatives
- Ethno-Sectarian Homogeneity
- Freedom to Practice Religion
- Access to Employment

- Stable Security
- Relatives and Friends
- Same Ethnicity and/or Religion
- Economy and Work
- Free to Practice Cultural & Religious Traditions
- Available Accommodation
- Available Services (Health/Education, etc.)
- Able to Build Illegally

PULL FACTORS FOR THE DISPLACED TO AREA OF DISPLACEMENT



There was, however, a noticeable disparity when defining pull factors between KI groups. Security and stability were cited as the dominant pull factors by all types of KIs, but the second most commonly cited pull factor for displaced individuals varied. While displaced KIs cited secondly the presence of friends and relatives in the AoD, HC KIs named the ability for the displaced to access the employment market. IDP KIs, however, ranked access to employment as the 5th most important factor in deciding where to relocate.

This is a major discrepancy in perceived pull factors affecting the decision making of the displaced when deciding where to settle. Further research is required to

fully explain why there is such a difference in the weight each group has ascribed to access to employment as a pull factor. What can be concluded with certainty is that host communities see their local economies as a highly desirable pull factor for the displaced, and that HC members are keenly aware of the impact that the displaced have on HC dominance of the local economies. The displaced, however, most probably consider the social networks as a more important aspect defining choice of location because through these networks, IDPs are potentially able to access not only work, but accommodation and other forms of support.

However, despite the disparity, all KI groups perceived the dominant pull factor for the displaced as the presence of security and stability. Since the absence of security that led to greater levels of sectarian violence was seen to be the main factor forcing people to move, it follows then that stability, security and an absence of sectarian violence were the main factors that determined to where the displaced relocated.

### DURABLE SOLUTIONS – LONG TERM SAFETY AND SECURITY

**“IDPs who have achieved a durable solution enjoy physical safety and security on the basis of effective protection by national and local authorities. This includes protection from those threats which caused the initial displacement or may cause renewed displacement. The protection of IDPs must not be less effective than protection provided to populations or areas of the country not affected by displacement.”<sup>29</sup>**

Physical security from harm of one’s self or property is the paramount pull factor to an AoD for displaced persons and is also the key factor that determines whether a displaced population chooses to integrate into an AoD, as identified further on in this report. However, long term safety and security encompasses more than physical security, it also includes freedom of movement. This encompasses full and non-discriminatory access to protection mechanisms, i.e. courts, police, etc., to ensure their rights are protected; if these rights are infringed, a means of seeking redress must be available.

This report is not in a position to establish whether the displaced have achieved full, non-discriminatory access to such protection mechanisms and, whilst many displaced people have moved to less insecure areas, long term safety and security has yet to be achieved in Iraq. It is important to note here that security across central and southern Iraq has deteriorated in 2013 and has led to over 5,000 people being displaced as sectarian tensions have once again boiled over into violence.<sup>30</sup> Anecdotal evidence from IOM field staff states that some of these newly displaced families had been previously displaced in earlier Iraq’s phases of violence and insecurity.

Given that the main factor behind instability in 2006-2007 was sectarian violence, it is unsurprising that the other top factors cited by IDPs for pulling them to their AoD are all linked to socio-cultural issues: the presence of friends and relatives in the AoD, people of the same ethno-sectarian demographic present in the AoD, and the freedom to practice their religious and cultural customs in the AoD.

These three factors explain the motivations for movement from certain areas towards others. Sectarian violence resulted in specific groups of people being targeted, so they moved to areas where friends and family members were present who were extremely likely to be of the same ethno-sectarian demographic as the displaced themselves.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The Brookings Institution, “Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.”

<sup>30</sup> Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/5241644c9.html>

<sup>31</sup> There were as many as 2 million mixed marriages between people of different sects and ethnicities pre 2006. During the sectarian conflict, mixed marriages were targeted. Australian Migration Review Tribunal, Refugee Review Tribunal, IRQ38175 (February 2011) Available: [http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/country/australian\\_refugee\\_review\\_tribunal/iraq/baghdad-sunnis-shia.pdf#page=8](http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/country/australian_refugee_review_tribunal/iraq/baghdad-sunnis-shia.pdf#page=8)

**“IDPs have overwhelmingly fled to areas where their own sectarian or ethnic group was dominant, leading to a demographic homogenization of the country’s governorates and greater segregation of communities. Over 95 per cent of the people fleeing to the nine predominantly Shi’a governorates of the south were themselves Shi’as, while those that left them were overwhelmingly Sunnis. In the Sunni governorates of Anbar and Salah-al-Din, over 95 per cent of IDPs are Sunnis.”<sup>32</sup>**

However, whilst there is undoubtedly a sectarian aspect to the causes of displacement and the determining factors that influence where the displaced choose to settle, it belies equally complex social and political factors at work in Iraq. To reduce the understanding down to purely sectarian divisions ignores deep, underlying issues that cut across sectarian cleavages into class, tribe, ethnicity, income brackets, and regional and local identities.<sup>33</sup>

were part of the predominant ethno-sectarian group, they greatly reduced the likelihood of being targeted on sectarian grounds, leaving them free to practice their religion and customs. In summary, instability and fear of sectarian violence have been the main push factors of displacement, and also the main pull factors for displaced people to where they relocate.

Once the displaced arrived into an area where they

## PERCEIVED CONSEQUENCES FOR HOST COMMUNITIES

The most commonly cited perceived impacts of the arrival of displaced persons on communities are economic. **The top five advantages and disadvantages listed by all KI groups showed that respondents felt that IDPs had the biggest impact on host community infrastructures and economies.**<sup>34</sup>

**If the displaced are to remain welcome by host community members, then a community’s economy, services and infrastructure must be able to incorporate them without detriment to existing community members.**<sup>35</sup>

32 (NRC/IDMC), Iraq: Response still centred on return despite increasing IDP demands for local integration

33 Eric Davis (2008). Pensée 3: A Sectarian Middle East?. International Journal of Middle East Studies, 40, pp 555-558.

34 It should be noted that KIs of all types were balanced in their assessment, with no group citing more advantages or disadvantages when asked to list each regarding the impact of the arrival of the displaced into a HC.

35 To comprehensively understand the impact of displacement, the effect of the displacement on the area of origin needs to be taken into account i.e. the closure of businesses, the loss of workers, the separation of families, severing of social bonds, etc. Assessing the economic activities the displaced groups had been engaged in their AoO and the economic gaps the host community has due to displacement away from the area would be an area worthy of more study. New arrivals to the HC could then be encouraged into those economic areas identified. This could be done through training, in-kind grants, etc., with the aim of resuming the same economic activities as a means of facilitating displaced arrivals into a community that had also experienced displacement itself.

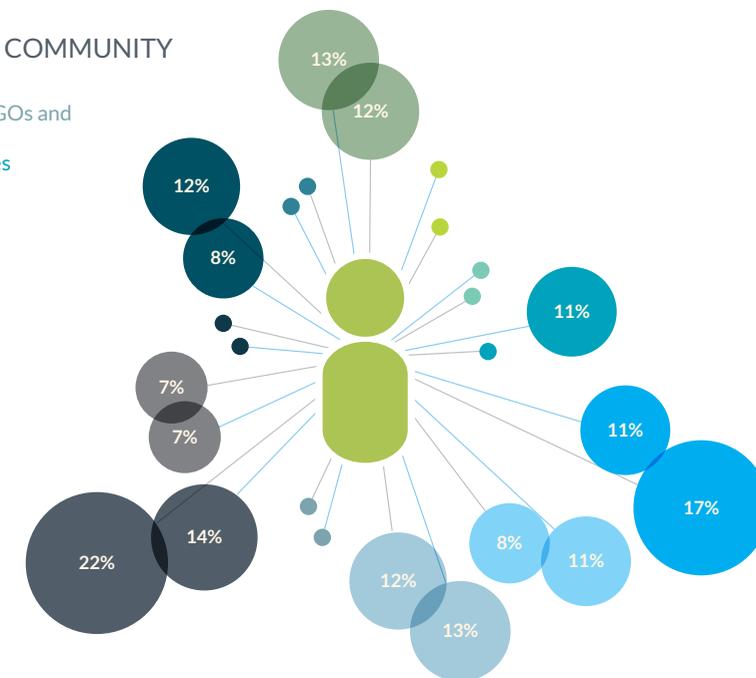
## ADVANTAGES FOR THE HOST COMMUNITY

All respondents felt that the benefits displaced communities brought to host communities were predominantly economic.

### ADVANTAGES OF DISPLACED TO HOST COMMUNITY

- Increased Investment in the Community from NGOs and Government
- New Employment Opportunities/New Businesses
- Cooperation between HC & IDP Community
- Increase in Market Size/People to sell to
- Brain Gain (New Skills/Trades)
- Defence of Community
- Cultural Exchange
- Family Reunited
- Good Relations
- More Workers
- Don't Know
- Marriage
- None

— IDPs  
— HCs



The above chart shows that respondent groups had different opinions on what benefits the displaced brought to local communities. Two divergences in opinion between HC and the displaced should be noted. The displaced felt that the new businesses and employment opportunities they brought were a key benefit, though host community members surveyed felt new businesses established by displaced individuals competed with existing host community-run businesses, a factor that was looked upon negatively.

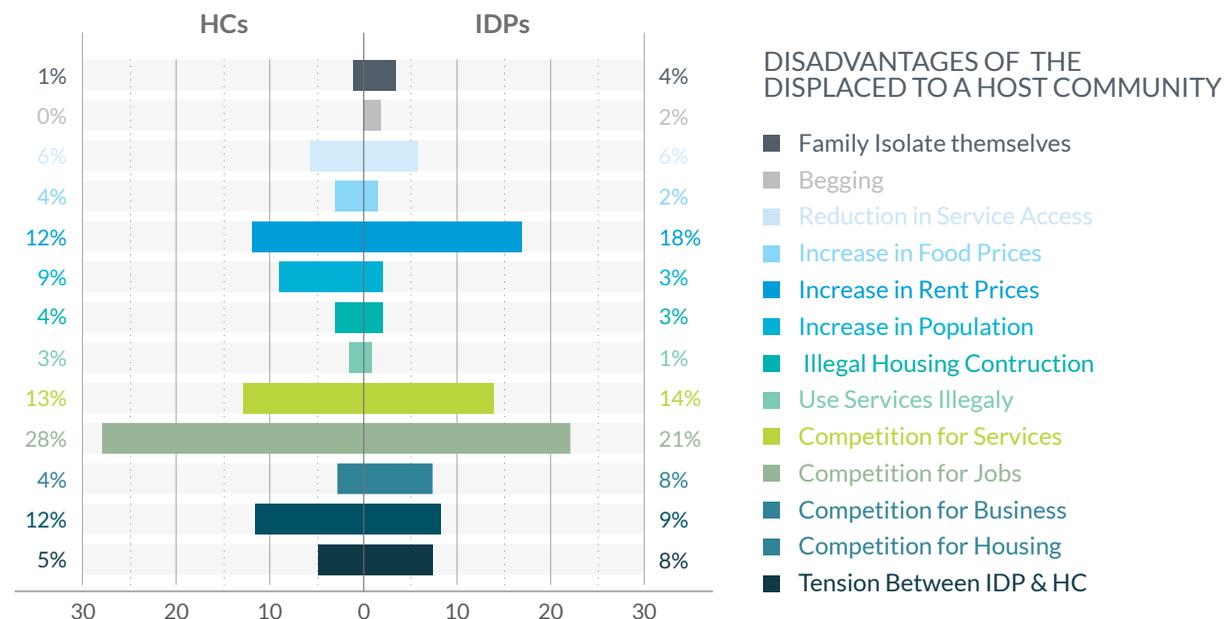
The second divergence in opinion

between host communities and the displaced related to the benefit of the sheer extra number of consumers in HC economies, potentially meaning more customers for businesses. The displaced also recognized the benefit, but not the extent that the host community did; presumably because the latter had a means of comparing business before the influx of IDPs.

Social benefits were also cited, as families reunited, friendships were formed, and in many cases marriages between the new arrivals and host community members occurred. The fact that IDP and HC did not identify social impacts of the inflow of people as an area of concern suggests that there were no major disruptions to social life as a result of the arrival of IDPs in the majority of cases. This again can be explained by the fact that the displaced moved to areas where they share the same ethno-sectarian identities and cultural norms.<sup>36</sup>

36 No significant negative social impacts for either the displaced or HC members.

## DISADVANTAGES FOR HOST COMMUNITY



Interestingly, the major disadvantages associated with the arrival of IDPs to host communities across Iraq were also all economic. Increased competition for businesses and for employment was universally felt to be the primary disadvantage. This was closely followed by a perceived increase in competition for accommodation and related increases in rent levels. The third major disadvantage, agreed on by all key informant groups, was the increase in competition for public services that were already struggling to meet the existing demand prior to the arrival of the displaced populations. The issue has only been exacerbated by the increase in community population size.

It is important to note the above perceptions against the national backdrop: underemployment and unemployment affect 10 per cent and 18 per cent of the Iraqi work force respectively;<sup>37</sup> there is a housing shortage of at least 2 million housing units, and with regards to public services,

only half the Iraqi population have regular access to safe water, a further 19,000 primary schools alone are needed, and almost a third of Iraq's 1,809 public health centers have been compromised due to lack of maintenance, lack of supplies, a lack of skilled health workers and inadequate support services.<sup>38</sup>

The perceived negative impacts of the displaced population on host communities cannot be disputed, but one can question whether the displaced are truly exacerbating causes of these issues, or are in fact only symptoms of wider national-scale problems that need to be addressed at the governmental

37 Inter-Agency Information & Analysis Unit (IAU), United Nations OCHA, Iraq Labour Force Analysis 2003-2008 (2009)

38 UN HABITAT, Iraq Country Programme Document 2009-2011

level. What is clear is that the problems identified by KIs need to be further understood in order to be addressed.

Perceptions aside, the scale of displacement and concomitant sectarian violence that occurred during 2006-2007 was on a vast scale in a state whose institutions were entirely ill-equipped to deal with its impact.

Importantly though, as previously stated, there were felt to be only social benefits to host communities by the arrival of IDPs.<sup>39</sup> This reinforces the observations that the displaced predominantly migrate out of mixed communities to communities that share the same ethno-sectarian identities and practices of host communities. Therefore HC members and IDPs may more readily identify and empathize with each other.

Whilst this may bode well for the prospects of local integration, it poses a serious issue for Iraq as

people become more defined by and subsequently begin to identify themselves along sectarian lines, perhaps at the expense of their national identity. "... while the vast majority of Arab Iraqis, whatever their political and religious persuasion, maintain a belief in the nation-state, there is little agreement on what that belief entails. ... The threat to the future of Iraqi nationalism...is the continuing failure of Iraqi nation-building, as exemplified by the incessantly feuding political elites, exacerbating already deep social division, that may render Arab Iraqis' belief in Iraq a concept too hollow to withstand the stresses of successive internal and external crises and pressures."<sup>40</sup> It seems displacement at the community level has also shifted the problem of sectarian tension from the local to the regional and national level, creating the possibility for more entrenched positions that will make future reconciliation more difficult to achieve.

It is therefore crucial that the large constituencies of the displaced and host community members alike receive all the support necessary from local and national government to realize durable solutions, reinforcing the reciprocal links that bond citizens and a state together, and that the government work on broader sectarian reconciliation. The alternative is that the bonds between the state and the displaced, already weakened by the inability of the state to prevent their displacement, are weakened further still.<sup>41</sup>

39 IOM does not conclude from this that there are no negative social impacts in every instance. For example, there were a minority of reported cases of friction between HC and displaced community members in certain districts and governorates.

40 Fanar Haddad et al., Iraq 10 Years On (London: Chatham House, May 2013).

41 Dodge, Toby, "State and society in Iraq ten years after regime change: the rise of a new authoritarianism, International Affairs 89(2), 2013

## DEFINING DISPLACEMENT IN THE IRAQI CONTEXT

Displacement due to conflict is a result of people being forcibly displaced from their area of origin, because the state has been unable to provide protection of a people's rights. **A durable solution cannot have been achieved until the displaced have re-established their rights and no longer require specific assistance and protection needs as a result of their displacement.**<sup>42</sup>

Protracted displacement is where the process for finding a durable solution for the displaced has stalled, and/or where the displaced are marginalized as a consequence of violations or a lack of protection of their human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights.<sup>43</sup>

Local integration, as a durable solution to protracted displacement, involves the displaced realizing their rights in their current location and no longer have protection or assistance needs linked to their displacement. If a family is to consider local integration as their favored durable solution option, it stands that conditions in the AoD be conducive to integration.

Therefore, the decision to settle in the area of displacement, adapt to their current situation and co-exist with their new community was cited as the most common understanding of integration by every key informant type. However, caution must be exercised in analyzing this information. Whilst this 'choice' is seen as central to people's understanding of settlement and integration, it should not be concluded that every displaced person has the luxury of such a choice, but

rather they see no other alternative settlement option.<sup>44</sup> It may simply be that the security situation in their area of origin precludes their ability to return or they do not have the means to relocate to a third location.

Government KIs and displaced KIs felt that the second most important feature defining integration was access to work and housing. Without access to employment or accommodation, the displaced cannot settle, as they have no income to support themselves and no accommodation in which to live.

<sup>42</sup> The Brookings Institution, "Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons."

<sup>43</sup> The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Report from the Second Expert Seminar on Protracted Internal Displacement, 19-20 January 2011, Geneva, "IDPs in protracted displacement: Is local integration a solution?", May, 2011. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/is-local-integration-a-solution#en>

<sup>44</sup> However, those displaced persons who did possess the means to move to a third location may well be locally integrated and would not necessarily come to the attention of actors seeking to understand and assist the displaced as they are no longer regarded as displaced. It is only to those with outstanding durable solutions challenges that have not been able to relocate to where more favorable conditions prevail that this lack of choice alludes.

## ACCOMMODATION AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Along with access to income and work, the issue of housing, land and property rights is central to resolving displacement in Iraq. As noted, the country already faces an acute housing shortage, and large scale displacements have severely exacerbated this issue.

Many displaced families live in one of the estimated 382 informal settlements across the country because they do not have the means to access legal tenure of land.<sup>45</sup> These informal settlements are usually on government-owned land and they lack access to even the most basic of amenities including proper shelter, potable water, electricity, sanitation, and health services. The GoI views the occupants of informal settlements as illegal squatters and are keen to regain the land; as the occupants have no security of tenure, they are subject to threats of eviction.

So far, the GoI has not been unable to offer up any viable alternative for those people living illegally on government land and have been unwilling to grant the legal right of occupancy to residents of informal settlements. Until a political solution can be achieved, those living in such settlements remain in a state of limbo with no solution in sight.

If a host community cannot provide these two essential factors, then the displaced will not choose to settle and integrate there if a more attractive alternative is available. Those displaced who are unable to support themselves in their current AoD will seek to move to an area where employment and accommodation can be obtained. If there is no alternative the displaced will be compelled to remain living in inadequate housing with no access to work or services, and with no prospect of achieving any form of a durable solution.

**"POVERTY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON THAT PREVENTS THE DISPLACED FROM HAVING STABILITY IN ONE PLACE, SUCH THAT IF HE DOES NOT HAVE A FIXED RESIDENCE OR STABLE JOB HE WILL ALWAYS MOVE FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER TO GET A STABLE LIFE."**

HC FGD PARTICIPANT - KERBALA

Like government and displaced KIs, HC members cited the decision to settle in the AoD as central to their understanding of integration, but went on to give a more rights-based understanding of integration. HC KIs felt integration was the process of the displaced moving from an insecure and unstable form of existence to a secure one, living without the need of assistance and achieving the same rights as members of the community in which the displaced are living.

The integration process ends when the displaced have achieved the same access to rights as the host population and no longer have protection and assistance needs linked to their displacement. It is a process, however, that cannot progress beyond the decision to integrate without the displaced gaining regular access to income and accommodation. In fact, without the ability to access income and accommodation in the AoD, the conditions under which integration

<sup>45</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (NRC/IDMC), Global Overview 2012: People internally displaced by conflict and violence - full report, 29 April 2013, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5188fa214.html>

can be considered as an option are not present, so their displacement will continue until their protection and assistance needs cease.

What KIs omitted from their definitions of integration should be viewed with equal significance to what they included. Security was rarely mentioned explicitly by any KI group when they defined integration, and yet security was cited as the most significant pull factor to an AoD and is the foundation on which a community's economy, infrastructure and services rely.

The displaced in Iraq can generally be said to have had access to accommodation, work, public services and rights in their area of origin. What they did not have, and what caused their displacement, was a lack of security as a result of sectarian conflict. As previously established, the displaced moved to areas where security was better, due primarily to the fact that they were part of the dominant ethno-sectarian group.<sup>46</sup> Thus, poor security has been exchanged for better security at the cost of their source of income, accommodation, access to public services, etc.

The definitions of integration, therefore, focus on conditions which are lacking in the AoD and also include conditions which have been achieved. Ethno-sectarian homogeneity has generally been a pre-condition of security for those fleeing sectarian-fueled violence in the Iraqi context, and security should therefore be viewed as a pre-condition of integration.

<sup>46</sup> Migration from Central and Southern Iraq to Iraqi Kurdistan does not necessarily follow this observation, particularly when looking at minority groups such as Christians. For further information, see <http://www.dw.de/iraqs-religious-minorities-flee-north/a-16707733>

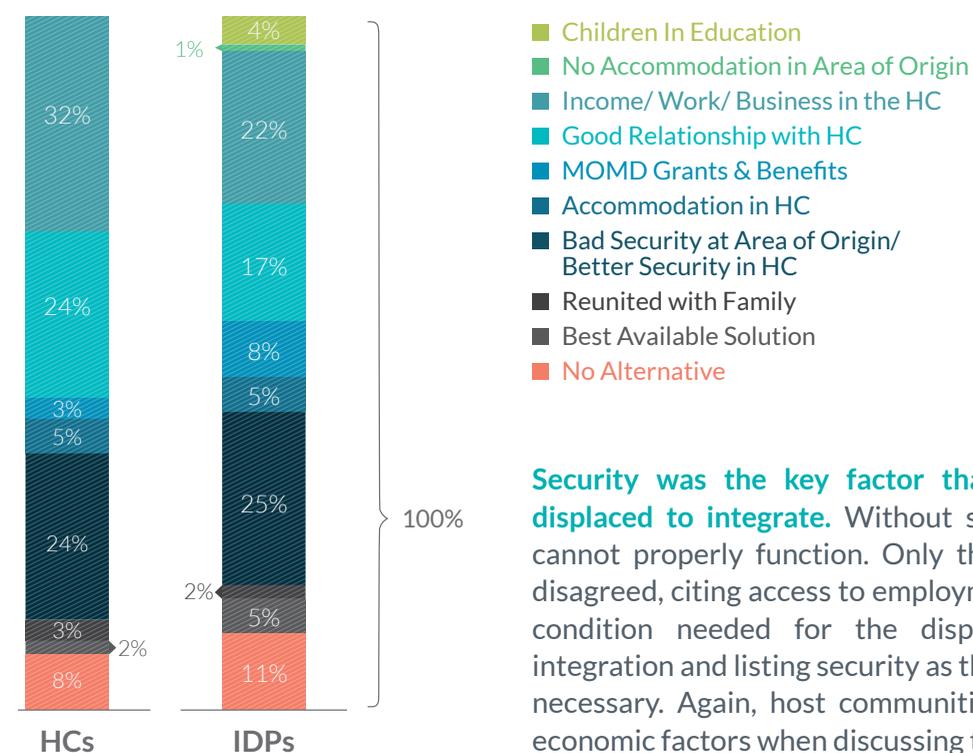
## FACTORS THAT DETERMINE INTENTIONS

People's definitions of integration as a concept, as outlined above, and the factors they feel determine the intentions of the displaced to integrate are linked, but do differ in a notable way.

Once the displaced have arrived in a host community, what factors encourage them to stay and consider integration, what factors force them into further displacement, and are there factors that are common push and pull factors related to integration intentions?

## FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE INTEGRATION

### REASONS IDPs INTEND TO INTEGRATE



**Security was the key factor that encouraged the displaced to integrate.** Without security, economies cannot properly function. Only the host community disagreed, citing access to employment as the primary condition needed for the displaced to consider integration and listing security as the second condition necessary. Again, host communities are focusing on economic factors when discussing the displaced.

One hypothesis is that host communities have not been as affected, directly or indirectly, by the violence that has resulted in the arrival of the displaced to their community, and so may not be as acutely aware of the effects of the absence of security. When taken in conjunction with the HC's preponderant focus on economic factors, this variation could be explained.<sup>47</sup>

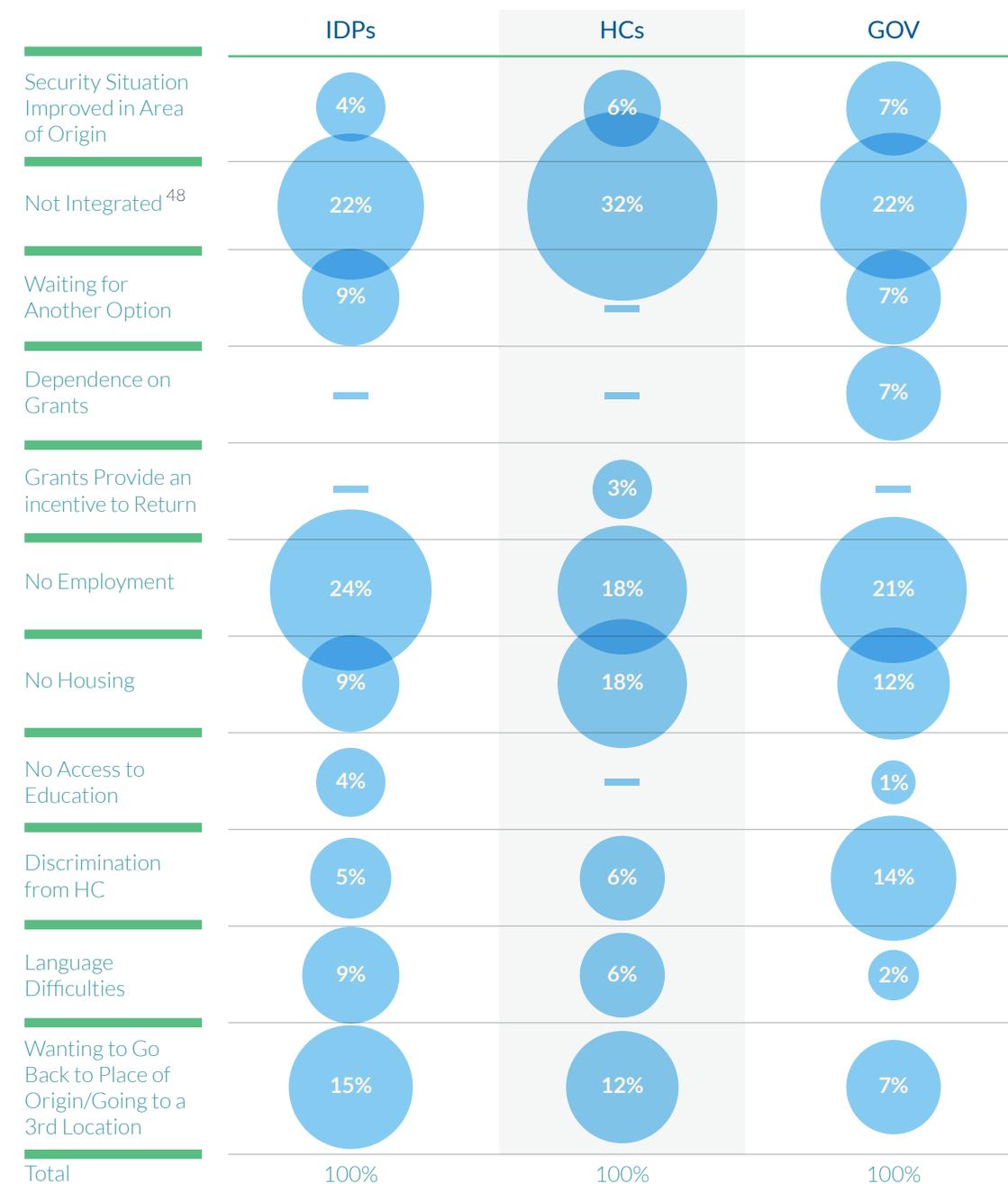
Good relations with the host community were seen as the third most significant factor that encourages the displaced to integrate by both host community and displaced KIs. How exactly good relations are defined by KIs is also worthy of further investigation.

<sup>47</sup> It is however difficult to generalize on this point with violence being so widespread.

## FACTORS THAT DISCOURAGE INTEGRATION

The survey indicates that if there is no work or accommodation available in an AoD, then the displaced will not consider integration as a durable solution. No access to income or employment is the major barrier that prevents people from integrating, according to all KI groups.

### REASONS IDPs DO NOT INTEND TO INTEGRATE



48 For the purposes of analysis, “not integrated” responses were not factored due to a lack of specificity on the part of KIs.

HC and displaced KIs then cited no or inadequate accommodation as the next reason why IDPs did not intend to integrate. Government KIs, however, listed discrimination by the HC as the second most common barrier to integration. This gap in perceptions between government, HC and IDP KIs needs to be examined in more detail if the barriers preventing integration are to be properly addressed.

### DURABLE SOLUTIONS – ENJOYMENT OF AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING & ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT

The IASC framework states that “displaced people who have achieved a durable solution enjoy, without discrimination, an adequate standard of living, including at minimum shelter, health care, food, water” and goes on to list sanitation and at least a primary school education.<sup>49</sup> Many of these cannot be obtained without access to employment, unless the state or other actors provide access in the form of humanitarian assistance.

This is clearly borne out by the KIs, who state that access to work is the key factor that prevents the displaced considering integration in an area of displacement.

## UNDERSTANDING INTEGRATION INTENTIONS

The defining fulcrum on which integration intentions pivot is access to employment. If the displaced have access to income then they are far more likely to intend to integrate, and inversely, if they do not have access to work then they are more likely to move on to another location.

There were interesting results concerning security and accommodation as push and pull factors relating to integration intentions. It could reasonably be expected that both would be prominent push and pull factors, but this was not the case. Insecurity was not mentioned as a primary push factor despite being the predominant pull factor for the displaced to integrate into an AoD. It is reasonable to assume that insecurity’s absence from the list of push factors is because it is no longer the push factor it was in 2006 and 2007. Whether this can be sustained in light of the upsurge in violence and the arrival of Syrian refugees over the past year remains to be seen.

### NEW DISPLACEMENTS

The year 2013 has seen the security situation in Iraq deteriorate significantly, as the government has cracked down on protests by Sunnis who have felt increasingly marginalized since the fall of Saddam Hussein, which has stoked sectarian tensions. This is further exacerbated by spill over into Iraq from the civil war in Syria.<sup>50</sup>

As of the end of November, Iraq Body Count has recorded 8,200 violent deaths<sup>51</sup> – a level of violence not seen since 2008. IOM and UNHCR reporting indicates that over 5,000 individuals have been internally displaced this year as of October 2013. If the perceived concerns over Sunni marginalization are not addressed then it is likely that the violence will continue, and so will the displacement.

49 The Brookings Institution, “Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.”

50 Patrick Cockburn, “As Syria disintegrates, so too does Iraq,” The Independent, October 28, 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/as-syria-disintegrates-so-too-does-iraq-8909348.html>

51 Recent Events, Iraq Body Count, November 30, 2013. Available at: <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/recent/1/>

## THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATION ON LOCAL ECONOMIES

Given the economy was central to people’s experiences and understandings of the impacts of IDPs on communities, it will be useful here to go into more detail on KIs’ views on economic impacts. Of HC KIs, 93 per cent said that integrating the displaced into a community had a detrimental effect on its local economy. Only 58 per cent of the displaced KIs felt they had a detrimental impact. This is a significant gap in opinion. As IDPs arrive they almost inevitably compete with HC members for services, facilities, housing and customers, so it is therefore unsurprising that so many HC KIs felt there were disadvantages to the local economy when integrating IDPs.

However, 80 per cent of HC KIs also said that integrating

the displaced brought advantages to the local economy as where only 69 per cent of displaced KIs felt they brought advantages. So whilst 93 per cent of HC KIs perceived a disadvantage, a significant majority also felt that IDPs brought distinct advantages to local economies. The economic areas KIs perceive as benefiting local economies are identified below, and these areas where KIs feel IDPs boost local economies should be capitalized on.

## ADVANTAGES OF INTEGRATION TO LOCAL ECONOMIES

HC and IDP KIs were in broad agreement about the perceived benefits brought to local economies through the integration of the displaced.

- Increased Investment and Economic Activity
- Increase of available workers
- Increased Skills in Labour Market
- Increase in Culture
- Increased Products
- No Advantage
- Don't Know



The arrival of the displaced was felt to increase economic activity, there was an increase in investment in the local economy, an increase in the number of available workers, and an increase in the number of skilled workers available.

## DISADVANTAGES OF INTEGRATION TO LOCAL ECONOMIES

IDPs cited an increase in rents and difficulty in obtaining property as the primary negative impacts their presence had on local economies. 48 per cent of HC KIs said that a decrease in job opportunities was the major negative impact of integrating the displaced into local economies, as where only 36 per cent of the displaced perceived a reduction in employment opportunities to be an issue.

The displaced and host community members both said that reduced access to public services was the third most noticeable negative impact, although it could be argued this is not particularly significant as public services across Iraq struggle to meet demand.

- Lower Wages and Less Job opportunities
- Increased Rents and increase prices
- Fewer Resources (houses, services and resources)



## THE COMPLEXITY OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

The perceptions among all participating groups, to varying degrees, are that the health of a community’s economy can be severely affected by the arrival of displaced people. Rents increase and the supply of labor outstrips demand, driving down wages. However, KIs also perceived positive effects; as a skilled or educated workforce arrives, access to new networks are established through which goods and services can flow, reinvigorating the local economy with new businesses and services and increasing the number of consumers spending in the local economy.

IOM has also found that the way in which the impact is viewed is affected by perceptions. The displaced generally view their impact as positive, whereas HC KIs were clearly more focused on the negative effects IDPs have on local economic conditions.

Displaced people who established businesses in their AoD noted that their enterprises are a sign of healthy competition in a functioning economy. HC members were more ambivalent, and in some instances view the presence of new businesses as a threat.

**“COMMERCIAL COMPETITION EXISTS BETWEEN THE HC AND IDPS WHERE THE HOST COMMUNITY MEMBERS RESENT THE PRESENCE OF IDP BUSINESSES AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL.”**

HC FGD PARTICIPANT - BASRA

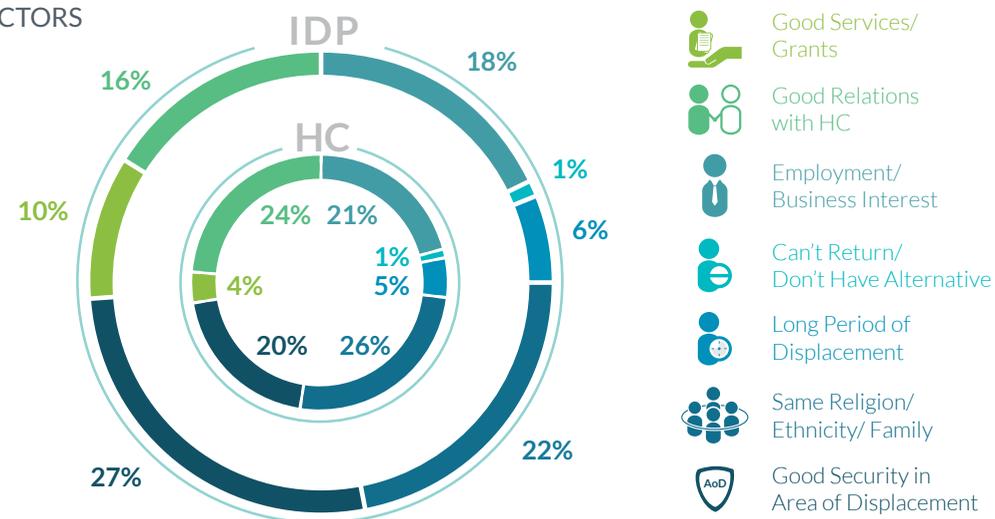
The impact that IDPs have on a local economy is complex, and many factors related to pre-existing local economic conditions must be considered, although how the impact is viewed is clearly determined by who is asked. The HC have a vested interest in maintaining their economic position. IDPs, whether investors or laborers, directly compete with existing businesses and workers for a share of the market. If the local economic market cannot expand to absorb the influx of additional labor and investment, then the economic impact of arriving IDPs will be significant for the HC.

The question that concerned policy makers must answer is how to make full use of the economic benefits the displaced bring to the host community, as perceived by KIs, to counter the perceived negative effects of integrating the displaced into a local economy.

**WHAT MAKES THE DISPLACED INTEGRATED**

The KIs perceived that security and ethno-sectarian homogeneity are the defining characteristics of an integrated community. This is then followed by access to employment and good relations with the host community.

**INTEGRATION FACTORS**



The IDPs view ethno-sectarian homogeneity to be equally as important as security, reflecting the IDPs’ experiences and causes of displacement. IDPs have also given equal importance to employment and good relations with the host community. The presence of these factors is an indicator that durable solutions in host communities can be achieved with government support, particularly in relation to security of tenure.

CONCLUSIONS

## CONCLUSIONS

Most displaced families in Iraq who have been able to return to their area of origin have already done so. Unfortunately, in many cases IDPs are not able to consider return as a safe option and a means of achieving a durable solution to their displacement because the security conditions do not allow this. Those that remain displaced are left with two remaining options. The intentions of the displaced are now, predominantly, to integrate. The shift from a state of impermanence to a desire to create permanence requires the presence of certain conditions.

When the displaced feel they are in a secure environment, access to employment and housing become the key features needed for integration to become a durable solution, as emphasized repeatedly by host communities and the displaced across every governorate in Iraq. If a displaced family has a regular income and decent accommodation, they can be considered relatively settled in an area and the label 'IDP' becomes a less relevant term as the displaced begin to regain what they lost.

This demonstrates how concerned actors seeking to assist the displaced must ensure that the help being offered moves from addressing immediate, humanitarian needs of the displaced to a developmental response. The capacity of the whole community needs to be developed, including both host and displaced community members, so that communities' systems and structures including social services can accommodate the population increase and so the gaps in access to facilities and services are closed.

Unequal access to housing, employment and basic services are major barriers to integration; if these barriers are not addressed, the displaced will continue to seek an environment where these barriers can be overcome. Until they find such an environment, displaced individuals will exist in a state of flux as they look to improve their situation; in this state of flux, the label IDP continues to be relevant. If the IDP situation in Iraq is to be properly addressed, employment opportunities must

be provided, which enables families to secure accommodation and access to services using their own finances.

The Iraqi government's efforts to close the Iraqi displacement file are welcome in many respects. However, they may be indirectly preventing the resolution of integration barriers by deregistering IDPs after receiving a return or integration grant, regardless of whether the money has allowed the beneficiary to achieve a durable solution. This potentially indicates that many displaced persons, despite no longer being registered as IDPs, remain vulnerable and in need of continued assistance because of their displacement. This could have serious repercussions for the country as large sections of the population begin to feel disenfranchised.

Host communities must also benefit from the development of housing, local economies, services and infrastructure, or the displaced may

find themselves the object of resentment and potential discrimination, as HC members are acutely aware of any perceived negative economic impacts.

It should be noted that whilst employment, accommodation and security were the key areas that KIs continually felt were central to integration, they are only three of the eight criteria by which a durable solution is measured.<sup>52</sup> These factors are perhaps the most visible or pressing, but they are intrinsically linked to the remaining criteria, not least the restoration of housing, land and property, and documentation access.

Once progress is made in securing employment and accommodation for the displaced, the Government of Iraq and the international community must then move their focus to the complex issues of land and housing restoration, family reunification, and access to justice for crimes that caused the displacement. These issues should be addressed so that some form of national reconciliation may take place.

Security, however, is the pre-condition on which all this rests; violence and the threat of violence destabilize the social and economic fabric of communities. As the security situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate, there is the distinct possibility of new, large-scale waves of

displacement, hints of which are already being witnessed, and of the fracturing of communities hosting existing displaced populations where integration has only a fragile foothold.

It is therefore of critical importance that the Government of Iraq and the international community redouble their efforts to help facilitate local integration by upholding the basic rights of IDPs to a secure and safe environment - an environment in which accommodation and essential services can be accessed and the displaced and host communities alike have equal access to livelihoods that can meet their basic socio-economic needs. The realization of these rights will be a key cornerstone to Iraqi stability and future prosperity; without it, the foundations of state and the country will remain on perilously unsteady ground.

<sup>52</sup> The Brookings Institution, "Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons."



IOM IRAQ

Internal Displacement in Iraq:  
**BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION**

DECEMBER 2013

Produced and Disseminated by  
**IOM Iraq**

Baghdad Regional Hub  
Office for Central Iraq  
UNAMI Compound DIWAN 2  
International Zone, Baghdad, Iraq

Tel: +39 0831 052 600 Ext. 2462/2438  
Email: [baghub1iz@iom.int](mailto:baghub1iz@iom.int)  
E-mail: [rartinfo@iom.int](mailto:rartinfo@iom.int)  
Web: [www.iomiraq.int](http://www.iomiraq.int)

