

CONTEXT

The Return Index is a tool designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. Data collection for the Return Index Round 19 took place during May and August 2023 across 9 governorates, 39 districts and 2,170 locations in Iraq. During this round, an additional thirteen locations of return were assessed.

RETURNEE POPULATION IN SEVERE CONDITIONS

- Out of the 2,170 return locations assessed, 477 **present severe conditions hosting 12 per cent of the returnee population**, or 600,480 individuals.
- **An increase of 4,344 returnees living in severe or poor conditions** has been observed since the round collected in January – April 2023, when the share of returnees in severe conditions was also 12 per cent (596,136 individuals).

DETERIORATION OF CONDITIONS

- The **largest increases** were recorded in **Ninewa** (10,896 individuals) followed by **Diyala** (9,840) and **Baghdad** (558) governorates.
- In **Ninewa** Governorate, the most noticeable increase was observed in Sinjar, Telefar and Al-Ba'aj districts. In Sinjar District, the increase is driven by an insufficient electricity supply. This impact is related to intermittent transmission interruption to avoid overheating due to excessive use of electricity in the summer. The increase in **Telafar District** is driven by the presence of Popular Mobilization Forces (PMU) at checkpoints and concerns about harassment. In Al-Ba'aj District, more returns were observed to locations with severe conditions.
- In **Diyala** Governorate, the most noticeable increase was recorded in **Al Khalis District** due to an insufficient electricity and water supply.

Furthermore, the security situation has worsened due to the arrival of PMU in the area, which resulted in the presence of at least four different armed groups involved in security provision.

- The increase in **Baghdad** Governorate was notably observed in **Tarmia District** due to an insufficient electricity and water supply. Moreover, the slow recovery of agriculture and businesses also contributed to the severity of conditions in the district.

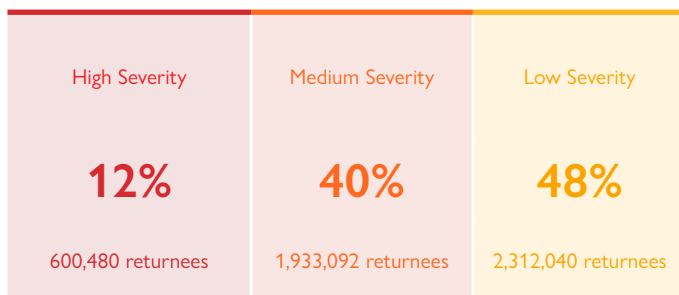
IMPROVEMENT OF CONDITIONS

- The largest decrease in the number of returnees living in severe conditions was recorded in **Salah Al-Din** (9,246 individuals) and **Anbar** (7,974 individuals) governorates.
- The decrease in Salah Al-Din was mainly observed in **Tuz Kurmatu District** driven by improvement across all domains, especially security. There was a noticeable decrease in concerns among the population about violence in the area, such as ISIL attacks, acts of revenge, clashes between security forces and ethno-religious or tribal tensions. The decrease in Anbar Governorate, mainly observed in **Heet District**, is attributed to reconstruction efforts to address damaged or destroyed houses. Nevertheless, the security situation remains poor with major concerns about different sources of violence and cases of block returns.

METHODOLOGY

The Return Index is based on 16 indicators across two domains: (1) livelihoods and basic services, and (2) social cohesion and safety perceptions. A regression model is used to assess the impact of each of the indicators in facilitating or preventing returns and to calculate scores. The scores of each domain and overall index are grouped into three categories: low, medium and high severity of living conditions. For more information on the methodology, please refer to the [Methodological Overview](#).

Figure 1. Proportion of returnees by category of severity



Data Collection Period: May – August 2023

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

Governorate	HIGH		MEDIUM		LOW		TOTAL	
	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations
Anbar	59,340	16	732,996	204	755,394	111	1,547,730	331
Babylon	1,860	2					1,860	2
Baghdad	1,674	6	19,482	23	73,140	93	94,296	122
Dahuk					744	1	744	1
Diyala	56,148	54	155,352	117	29,676	53	241,176	224
Erbil	4,566	15	12,132	29	45,360	23	62,058	67
Kirkuk	2,952	12	73,356	70	114,708	112	191,016	194
Ninewa	270,318	289	616,314	439	1,066,908	255	1,953,540	983
Salah al-Din	203,622	83	323,460	95	226,110	68	753,192	246
Total	600,480	477	1,933,092	977	2,312,040	716	4,845,612	2,170

GOVERNORATE HOTSPOTS OF SEVERITY

Subdistricts are classified as ‘hotspots’ if they score highly in terms of severity on at least one of the two scales (either livelihoods and basic services, or safety and social cohesion) or if they score medium in terms of severity but also host relatively large numbers of returnees (at least 60,000 returnees in a subdistrict).

Thirty-two hotspots were identified across five governorates in this round. Compared to the round collected in January – April 2023, **Markaz Tuz Khurmatu** in Tuz Khurmatu District, Salah al-Din Governorate was removed from the list of the hotspots due to an improvement in the security situation. At the same time, two subdistricts were added to the list: **Al-Dujeel Center** in Al Fares District and **Markaz Tikrit** in Tikrit District, both in Salah al-Din Governorate. In **Markaz Tikrit**, the worsening of conditions is driven by the poor provision of water and electricity. Other challenges include the slow recovery of agriculture, difficulties finding employment, poor provision of government services, water and electricity insufficiency, harassment at the checkpoints and tensions in public life.

SALAH AL-DIN: 627,354 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Amerli
- Al-Dujeel Center (New)
- Al-Eshaqi
- Al-Moatassem
- Al-Siniya
- Markaz Al-Balad
- Markaz Al-Daur
- Markaz Al-Shirqat
- Markaz Baiji
- Markaz Samarra
- Markaz Tikrit (New)
- Suleiman Beg
- Yathreb

NINEWA: 612,636 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Qahtaniya
- Al-Qayara
- Al-Shamal
- Ayadiya
- Hamam al Aleel
- Markaz Al-Ba’aj
- Markaz Sinjar
- Markaz Telfar
- Qaeyrrawan
- Zummar

ANBAR: 400,548 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Amirya
- Al-Forat
- Al-Garma
- Husaibah Al-Sharqiah
- Markaz Al-Ka’im
- Markaz Heet

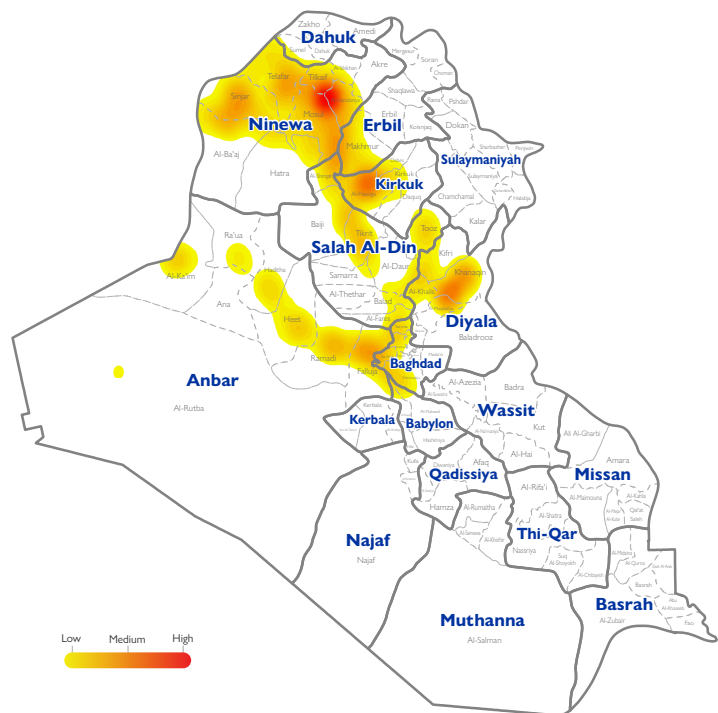
DIYALA: 83,784 returnees in hotspots

- Jalula
- Qara Tabe

BABYLON: 1,860 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Iskandaria

Map 1. Returnee population density by overall severity score



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM. The map shows conditions of severity based on population size and severity score of each assessed location. The darker colours indicate a larger concentration of families living in severe conditions of return, while the brighter colours indicate lower severity conditions or areas with low levels of returns.

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