

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 12 took place during the months of March and April 2021 across eight governorates, 38 districts and 2,128 locations in Iraq. During Round 12, an additional 52 locations of return were assessed.

RETURNEE POPULATION IN SEVERE CONDITIONS

- Out of the 2,128 return locations assessed, 448 present severe conditions hosting 11 per cent of the returnee population, or 512,034 individuals.
- An increase of 27,486 returnees living in severe or poor conditions has been observed since the round collected in November – December 2020, when 10 per cent of the returnee population (484,548 individuals) were in severe conditions.
- The largest increases were recorded in Salah al-Din (28,386) and Ninewa (12,132), while the largest decreases were observed in Anbar (10,254) and Diyala (3,126). In Salah al-Din, the largest increases were observed in Baiji and Tikrit districts. The increase in high severity in Baiji, that also witnessed an increase of 16,200 returnees this round, was related to a deterioration in the provision of government services, rising concerns about explosive devices and reports of the illegal occupation of private residences. In addition, extensive residential destruction was also reported in newly assessed locations. The increase in Tikrit was due to rising concerns about explosive devices and changes in daily public life. In Ninewa, the largest increases were recorded in Sinjar an Al-Ba'aj, with returns in locations that suffer from the slow recovery of business and agriculture, poor provision of government services and access to water, pervasive concerns about sources of violence and non-state actors present at checkpoints, together with the absence of reconciliation processes. In addition, extensive residential destruction was also reported in newly assessed locations. In Anbar, the largest decreases were recorded in Heet and Al-Ka'im due to the reconstruction of some houses. In Diyala, the largest decrease was in Al-Muqadadiya, where residents observed a drastic improvement in access to essential services such as water and electricity, as well as more moderate improvements

in the recovery of agricultural activities and reduced concerns about sources of violence.

- Ninewa and Salah al-Din remain the governorates hosting the highest number of returnees living in severe conditions, with 247,434 and 172,068 individuals respectively.
- Salah al-Din and Diyala host the highest proportions of returnees living in severe conditions (24% and 20% respectively).

MOST SEVERE LOCATIONS OF RETURN

- Seventy-one locations hosting 71,286 returnees were identified as having the most severe return conditions in this round. The top five of these locations remain in Tuz Khurmatu District in Salah al-Din Governorate (480 returnees).
- An additional four locations were observed with the most severe return conditions since the round collected in November – December 2020, when 59,964 individuals were living across 67 locations with the most severe return conditions.

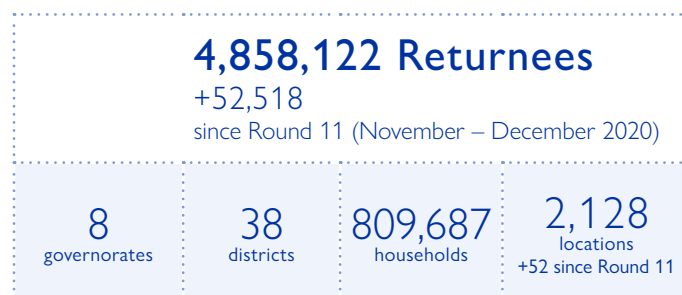
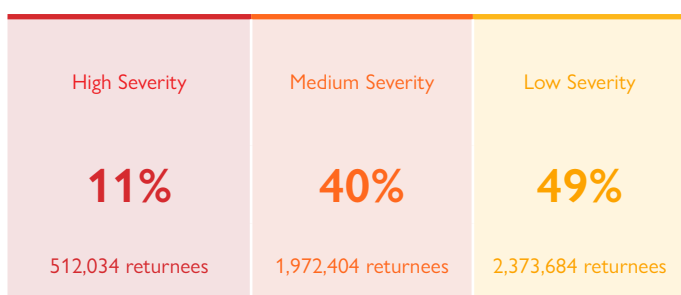
METHODOLOGY

The Return Index is based on 16 indicators divided into two scales: Scale 1, on livelihoods and basic services, and Scale 2, centered around social cohesion and safety perceptions. A regression model is used to assess the impact of each of the indicators in facilitating or preventing returns and to calculate scores for two scales. For example, the model tests how much less likely a location where no agricultural activities have recovered is to have returns compared to a location where they have recovered. To compute an overall severity index, the scores of the two scales are combined.

The index ranges from 0 (all essential conditions for return are met) to 100 (no essential conditions for return are met). Higher scores denote more severe living conditions for returnees. The scores of the severity index are grouped into three categories: low, medium and high (which also includes very high).

Refer to the report "[Methodological Overview](#)" for more details on the methodology.

Figure 1. Proportion of returnees by category of severity



Data collected March–April 2021

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

Governorate	HIGH		MEDIUM		LOW		TOTAL	
	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations	No. of returnees	No. of locations
Anbar	42,096	18	681,492	191	782,844	117	1,506,432	326
Baghdad	1,644	4	32,556	53	57,288	65	91,488	122
Dahuk	0	0	0	0	768	1	768	1
Diyala	46,626	45	158,196	133	32,442	46	237,264	224
Erbil	1,464	13	5,196	22	48,282	32	54,942	67
Kirkuk	702	4	80,778	69	265,974	146	347,454	219
Ninewa	247,434	294	613,506	392	1,049,256	252	1,910,196	938
Salah al-Din	172,068	70	400,680	116	136,830	45	709,578	231
Total	512,034	448	1,972,404	976	2,373,684	704	4,858,122	2,128

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-four hotspots were identified across five governorates in this round. Compared to the round collected in November – December 2020, one subdistrict was added to the list, Markaz Tikrit (Tikrit District) in Salah al-Din Governorate. The subdistrict was classified as a ‘hotspot’ due to an increase in concerns related to sources of violence, as well as a few locations reporting that residents leave their homes only when they have to and others noting increased concerns related to unexploded ordnance.

SALAH AL-DIN: 604,692 returnees in hotspots

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

NINEWA: 528,234 returnees in hotspots

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

ANBAR: 383,868 returnees in hotspots

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

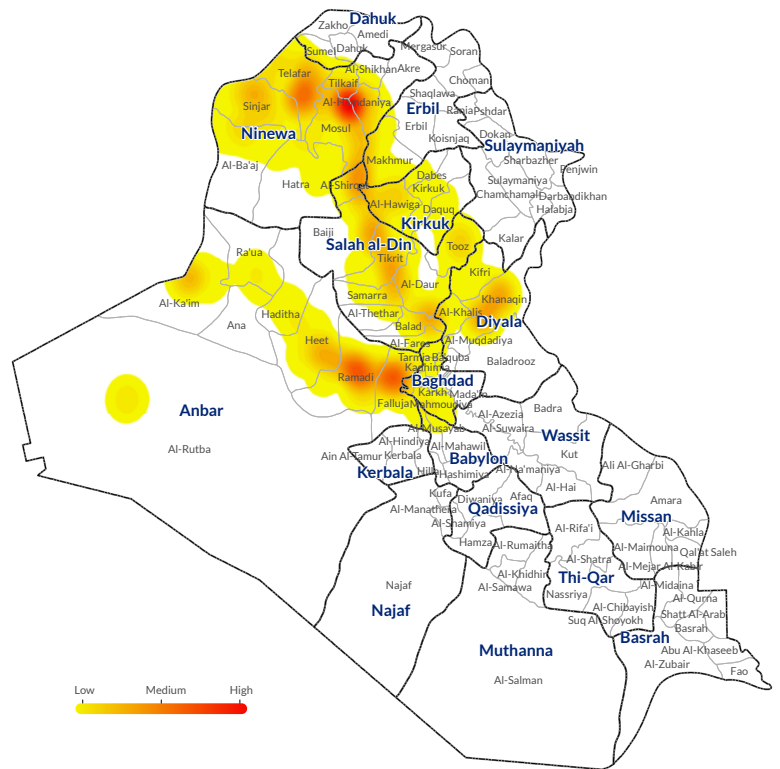
DIYALA: 139,746 returnees in hotspots

- Abo Sayda
- Jalula
- Markaz Al-Muqdadia
- Qara Tabe

BAGHDAD: 6,300 returnees in hotspots

- Al-Nasir Walsalam

Map 1. Returnee population density by overall severity score



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

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in the report 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 Iraq thanks the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) for its continued support.

