

SITREP 11: Saad Camp Closure (11<sup>th</sup> May 2020)SUMMARY

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- On 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the Diyala Governor ordered Diyala Operations Command to close Sa'ad camp within ten days.
- The Governor provided IDPs with two options, return to areas of origin or consolidate the remaining IDPs in Al-Wand IDP camps.
- On 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020, OCHA addressed a letter to Diyala Deputy Governor (GRC Chair) with initial recommendations on behalf of the GRC and ICCG partners.
- The Deputy Governor received OCHA's letter and after preliminary discussions with the Governor, they decided to halt the move and reconvene after Eid, to discuss in detail.
- On 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020, OCHA met with the deputy governor to consider the next steps. The action point was to have the humanitarian partners develop a camp consolidation plan and Return/Integration plan for those who have intention to return or locally integrate within Baquba District.
- Families in the camp had previously reported that for those from Jalawlaa, Saadiyah and Mugdadiyah, various obstacles to return exist including returns being blocked by ISF and PMF due to insecurity, and the destruction of a number of villages (both housing and infrastructure)

SITUATION OVERVIEW

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On 11 May 2020, the Diyala Governor ordered Diyala security forces (both Diyala Operations Command and Diyala Local Police) to close Saad camp in Ba'quba within ten days and consolidate the remaining IDPs in Al-Wand camp. This letter references a recommendation of the Diyala Governorate Returns Committee (GRC), which emerged from different understandings of the Diyala GRC discussion of 25 February 2020. On 14 May, OCHA sent a letter on behalf of the Diyala ICCG and GRC to the Deputy Governor, expressing concern about the decision of closing Saad camp before durable solutions are found and expressed concerns over movements during the COVID-19 pandemic. On 15 May, the Diyala Government decided to halt the move and reconvene after Eid, to discuss in detail.

The reason for closure according to Diyala governorate was the bad quality of basic infrastructure (not related to the services provided by humanitarian partners). MOMD reported, among others, that the sewage networks require extensive renovation and the lack of fencing, entry control led to several security and protection incidents and unpaved roads posed a risk of accident. Furthermore, the distance between caravans does not allow for social distancing in line with COVID-19 preventive measures. The funding allocated to solve these issues is also considered disproportional to the number of 118 households living there.

OCHA during an ad-hoc meeting with the Diyala GRC confirmed that the humanitarian community remains committed to support IDP and services in the camp, as well as returns in line with the Principled Returns Framework. Based on the intentions survey, 51% of households in Sa'ad camps are willing to return and humanitarian partners are working on a plan to support this return, but the initial deadline could not be upheld due to the curfew. OCHA added that most of those who cannot return would prefer to stay in the vicinity of

the camp, as many have income opportunities there – local integration would be the preferred option for them.

As per the results of the intention survey carried out by IOM/DRC in September 2019, the move to Al-Wand camps seems to be difficult as the IDPs do not want to move there, and resident IDPs and authorities in Al-Wand were against receiving them. This would lead to concerns of potential discrimination and conflict.

The Deputy Governor requested OCHA to come up with proper camp consolidation and corresponding return/integration plans with realistic timelines to discuss them with the Governor. The ICCG partners developed the following plans:

- A plan with potential measures to address obstacles to returns by the Government and humanitarian partners, based on the outcomes of the intentions survey (RWG)
- A CCCM plan for preparation in Al-Wand camp, including inputs from protection actors on the risks of local conflict due to the move and accompanied mitigative measures

As of now, OCHA and Diyala sub-national ICCG partners agreed to update the above-mentioned plans mostly with inputs from the S/NFI, education, health, food security and WASH clusters. Once the plans are finalized, OCHA will call for a GRC meeting to discuss those plans and agree on the timelines.

### PROFILE OF HOUSEHOLDS AND INTENTIONS

- **Area of origin of the IDPs:** The majority of households are from Diyala, with a few IDPs from Salah Al-Din and Ninewa as shown below.

#	AREA OF ORIGIN	OBSTACLES TO RETURN						TOTAL
		Destroyed <sup>1</sup> houses	Damaged houses <sup>2</sup>	Houses belong to MoD <sup>3</sup>	Insecurity at AoO	Security Clearance	Tribal issues	
1	Jalawlaa	49	20					69
2	Muqdadiyah			18	11			29
3	Saadiyah					13		13
4	Al-Abarah/Saghnia				1			1
5	Salah al-din/Yathrib						4	4
6	Salah al-din/Baiji					1		1
7	Ninewa/Mosul		1					1
								118

<sup>1</sup> Emergency Repairs to War Damaged Shelter Guidelines: According to the Shelter cluster war damage classification, destroyed housing refers to category 3 and 4, housing which is structurally compromised and that which is destroyed to the extent that rehabilitation is not feasible.

<sup>2</sup> Emergency Repairs to War Damaged Shelter Guidelines defines damaged housing as categories 1 or 2, those which have minor damage or major damage but are structurally sound.

<sup>3</sup> Some IDPs occupied shelters after the end of the US Invasion of 2003, they had occupied these shelter until June 2014 when they displaced to Khanaqeen. The shelters that had previously belonged to the Iraqi Army and when Iraqi forces liberated the area the Ministry of Defense retook the barracks for its forces.

- **Conditions in areas of origin:** according to the recent discussions with Jalawlaa and Saadiyah mayors in February 2020, both mayors confirmed that the governmental services have resumed while the security situation has improved over the last two years. However, it was also reported that the villages around both sub-districts have been completely destroyed (including the infrastructure). They added that some of these villages are blocked by either the ISF or PMF (for example, 19 out of 29 villages in Saadiyah are destroyed and no one has access to them for the time being).  
In terms of security, Jalawlaa, Saadiyah and Muqdadiyah have faced heavy ISIL attacks over the last six months, with these attacks targeting mainly ISF and PMF positions, farmers and orchards of wheat. The ISF and PMF deployed more forces to support their positions in these locations but the situation remains critical.
- **Demographics:** the camp hosts 118 household comprising 559 individuals, the average family size is around 5.4 members, 44% of families have 4 or more children.
- **Vulnerabilities:** around 42 of the 118 HHs are female headed. IDPs face chronic disease and have disabilities that require advanced health care not available in non-urban areas
- **Intentions and areas of origin:** IOM/DRC carried out an intention survey in September 2019. The results showed that nearly all households have been displaced for 5 years or more and are from Diyala. More specifically, 52% from Jalawlaa, 21% from Markaz Al-Muqdadiyah, 15% from Al-Saadiyah, 5% from Al-Mansouriyah, 4% from Yathrib, 2% from Al-Audhaim, 1% from Markaz Tikrit and the same from Abo Sayda.
- **Obstacles to return:** Return intentions are split between households intending to return and those who do not. For those planning to return, the majority (62%) does not know when, 16% will return when the camp closes, and the rest plan on leaving within the year (5% planning to return in the next month). The most reported obstacles to return cited were housing issues, followed by lack of employment and issues with access documents. A few households mentioned that conditions in location of displacement were better than in their area of origin, prompting them to remain. Of the HHs who mentioned they have security clearance issues, 80% said they had applied but had not received an answer yet. Additionally, only one HH mentioned needing tribal reconciliation, 1 mentioned trauma and one being blocked from returning; four cited security clearance issues - all these HHs said that they would return if this was resolved. Most HHs reported that they will not be able to meet some basic needs in the event of camp closure, most notably food and water.
- **Security clearance:** almost 58 families have obtained security clearance and are able to return once their obstacles are addressed. For the 18 HHs from Muqdadiyah that were living in the military housing compound, it was reported that they will not be able to return to their AoOs even if they get security clearance, as the ministry of defense- the owner of these shelters, allocated their former shelter to their staff who serve in that area.

## LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANS AND COORDINATION WITH THE GRC

The outputs of OCHA's meeting with the deputy governor stated the intentions of the local government toward the residents of Sa'ad camp, and the government proposed on of the following three solutions:

- 1) **Return** to their AoO (if security clearance is granted)
- 2) **Consolidation** into Al-Wand camp, and

### 3) **Local integration**, remain in the area and rent houses there

It remains unclear what the contribution of the local government will be in achieving the above-mentioned solutions financially, logistically and administratively. CCCM, education and health clusters are discussing with the relevant authorities on the potential needs of the IDPs in line with the proposed solutions and what specific services would be needed to be in place. RWG will discuss with MoMD as well as other relevant authorities the possibility of conducting sensitization campaigns to the residents of Sa'ad camp to enable them understand the potential services MoMD can offer to returnees, as well as consider the criteria and procedures for applying for Gol compensation.

## COVID-19 PREVENTIVE MEASURES

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Nothing specific to be considered at the time being as the health cluster is dealing with the relevant authorities regarding the precaution measures during the transportation of IDPs to their AoOs or even to Al-Wand IDP camps.

## RECOMMENDATIONS/ADVOCACY NEEDED

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- RWG will continue its coordination with OCHA to update the proposed plan with other clusters' inputs
- RWG will reach out to MoMD and local government of Diyala to prepare for the sensitization campaigns
- In case of return, RWG in coordination with the other sub-national ICCG partners should monitor the situation and report the immediate/short/long term needs.
- Engagement with development and stabilization actors that may be able to support those IDPs wishing to return or integrate in addressing obstacles to return, housing rehabilitation and sustainable livelihoods in AoO or in the location of displacement.