



## Return Process in Salah Al Din

### General Considerations

All IDPs are allowed to approach the Return Bureaus where a Security Committee exists. There is a return bureau in each return area.

The security committee in the Return Bureau (Markaz al Zawda) is composed of different authorities. This differs from checkpoint to checkpoint; however, the general actors involved include: ISF Intelligence, Anti-terrorism forces, Anti crimes bureau, National security bureau, PMF Intelligence (either Tribal PMF or Southern PMF), and Iraqi Police (IP) Intelligence.

In order to register their return, IDPs need to have all the requested documentation. This includes the civil ID of the householder and all family members, Nationality ID of the householder, Residence card OR Mukhtar support letter, and PDS (if available)). In case the returnee has missing documents, he /she should attach any other relevant document that approves that he/she was displaced (e.g: the security badge, the camp badge, Mukhtar support letter, rent contract). In cases where families might have lost their documentations prior to registering, they can try and obtain replacement documents; however, this is a complicated process and may involve travel to Baghdad.

The security committee in the Return Bureau of the concerned return area checks the names and their possible affiliation with ISIL, and if the families are cleared, the head of the household will be given a Return Card/Badge (betakat al Zawda). If they are not cleared, then they are not approved to return.

To submit an official return request, only the head of the household needs to be present with all the requested documents (no need for the whole family to be present. The procedures take around 3 to 5 days. If the family is granted permission to return, then they will be granted a return card/badge. Return process may then be organized/escorted by PMF, IPs and Iraqi Army (3 vehicles), and if families have their own mean of transportation (such as car), then they can follow the convoy. Other families make their own way back, independently.

The Return Card details are: full name, date of birth, ID number, # of individual of the household, number of the PSD card and date of return, address of the return area, type of car(s) and plates number(s) (if any). This card is stamped by the security committee of the Return Bureau from the area.

In case of family affiliated to ISIL, they are prevented to return, and are sent to Shahama Camp, where they are not permitted to get out of the camp and their official documents are confiscated. If a family tries to pass the checkpoint, and after the screening shows affiliation, they are also sent to the Shahama Camp. There are reports that the cases of those in Shahama have been reviewed and those without direct links to ISIL have been allowed to leave, mainly to Shirqat.

Prior to register their return at the Return Bureau (Security Committee), families are not granted a 'go and see visit' of their housing condition. They are only allowed to 'return' and see their housing condition or security situation only once they receive the Return Card/Badge. In cases where families have found that they cannot live in their homes (and although they are registered under the Return Bureau), families return to their area of displacement.

Families are informed of the return process through media (Salah Al Din TV channel), security forces, relatives, word of mouth.



## Details for Specific Areas of Return

### 1. Yathrib

The area is controlled by ISF, and Asaeb Ahel Al Haik IPs (عصائب اهل الحق)

There are reports that Asaeb Ahel Al Haik imposes a (illegal) tax on families that have returned who have small shops, ranging between 250,000 and 700,000 Iraqi dinars. Around 37 families decided to leave Yathrib and return to their area of displacement as they couldn't afford these amounts. There are also numerous reports of kidnapping of family members who can't afford to pay the fee.

Families affiliated to ISIL are not allowed to return. There are different degrees, such as degree 1 and 2 which are direct family members affiliated to ISIL (such as brother, husband, wife ect.) are not allowed to return at all. If it is a third degree family member (such as cousin, uncle ect.) they are allowed to return as long as they have the return card/badge and pay a fee to PMF, reported to be between \$1000 and \$3000. There are also reports that family members of those associated with ISIL have been arrested.

### 2. Al Bo Hashma (البو حشمة)

To date, Asaeb Ahel Al Haik and ISF have not allowed anyone to return to Al Bo Hashma.

Al Bo Hashma is comprised of mainly Sunni Arabs, with a Shia Arab minority (known as the Al Bou Hassan tribe.) Tension between the Sunni community (some of whom are suspected of supporting IS) and the Shia community (who are pro-PMF) there have been a number of deaths of Shia residents by Sunni residents. The government of SAD has intervened in the issue, but this issue has stalled returns, and so far nobody has been granted permission to return to this area.

Shia Al Bo Hassan residents have demanded that Sunni Al Bo Hashma residents pay 'blood compensation' to families that have lost a family member, to the amount of 25,000,000 Iraqi dinars per individual killed. In response to this demand, an amount of 9,000,000 Iraqi dinars was paid to these families by the government of Salah Al Din, in an effort to support IDPs to return. However, even though this amount has been paid, the Al Bou Hassan families are not allowing Al Bo Hashma families to return.

### 3. Aziz Balad/Jwezrat

This area was retaken in November 2016, but so far displaced families have not been granted permission to return. The area is currently controlled by PMF. There are high levels of destruction to housing and infrastructure. The vast majority of families are Sunni Arabs, and the land is mainly agricultural area. There are reports that Sunni families from Aziz Balad killed Shia families from the same area. There are no reports of compensation being paid to families.

### 4. Baiji

Baiji has different procedures from the rest as at the beginning, the only families allowed to return are those with PMF (in particular, the local tribal mobilization units affiliated within PMF), ISF and the martyrs' families only (except for a few that received the permission to return). These families have returned to Jdaida village, located north-east of Hay Al Asriy (which unlike the rest of the area has been cleared from mines and IEDs, and also the municipality removed all the remains from the roads) as well as al-Bue'je and al-Mazra' villages, south of Baiji.



However, in spite of an executive order from the Prime Minister's Office in November 10, 2016, addressed to Salah Al Din's Joint Operations Command, placing high priority for the return of IDPs into Baiji district, no organized process of returns has started. There are reports that the PMF forces were denying the return of IDPs to the area. As a result, only a third of the population that was displaced from the conflict has been able to return, mainly to the southern villages but not to the town centre, while the remaining displaced population remains scattered (35% of total IDPs originally from Baiji are in Baghdad, 18% in Tikrit, 14% in Kirkuk Centre, 11% in Erbil Centre).

Moreover, few families (around 4 families) have been secondarily displaced due to the suicide attacks from ISIL in the areas of Fatha and Hamrin Mountains. Indeed, ongoing military operations to purge al-Zawiya and al-Fat'ha villages are still taking place in the north of the district.

Unlike other areas, approximately 70% of housing and infrastructure has been destroyed. This is likely to make Baiji one of the slowest areas of IDP return. Families are expecting that the government will provide them with compensation and the Government Authorized (Baiji Mayor) requested the UN to reconstruct the area. However, at this stage, the compensation plan from the government only concerns the 2008 (Al Qaeda) cases, and does not include the destruction that happened by ISIL since 2014, although families have been registering for their compensation.

#### **5. Al Dour and Markaz Tikrit**

Al Dour and Markaz Tikrit have witnessed the return of many residents, excluding those with IS affiliation and those who fled to other countries. Al Dour has a border (near Diyala) is an open area where there has been operations from ISIL, and families had to flee to center of Al Dour. The population is mainly Bedouins from Shamar tribe. The sheikhs of Shamar tribe has been cooperating with ISF and since then have been fighting ISIL along ISF and the PMF.

#### **6. Tooz Khormatu**

Al Tooz centre is comprised of Turkmen, Kurds, Arab Sunnis and Arab Shias. Tooz City center is under the control of Peshmerga in the East and PMF in the West. The main market place is under the control of the PMF, and there are reports that Kurdish residents have been assaulted and told not to come there. The South part of Tooz District is under the control of PMF but most of their residents are Turkmen. Checkpoints on the highway are all manned by KRG-ISF.

There are reports that Sunni families have left the area following threats by security actors. In addition, there were clashes in the town in 2015 between PMF and Peshmerga and a tense situation remains with crossed accusations of attempting a demographic re-engineering of Tooz Centre.

There are nearly no IDPs originated from Tooz Centre, but the conflict with ISIL and subsequent changes in the security forces in charge triggered displacement mainly from the other two subdistricts of Tooz Khormatu (Suleiman Bek and Amerli). 75% of the 6,800 IDP families



originally from this district are currently hosted in Tooz Centre, while the rest of the remaining IDPs are located mostly in Kirkuk.

Returns were initiated in 2016 to Amerli Centre and some surrounding villages (all majority Shia Turkmen). The large majority of families still displaced and not able to return are Sunni Arabs and Sunni Turkmen originally from Suleiman Bek and other villages in Amerli subdistrict. The Sunni Endowment initiated a process of mediation with the Prime Minister's Office and the Badr Organization to allow the return of Suleiman Bek's IDPs –most of them from al-Bayati tribe. The mediation resulted in an executive order from the PM's Office addressing the legality of the returns, but it has not been yet put in practice at present.

## **7. Shirqat**

The Tigris River separates the east and west sides of Shirqat. The eastern bank is held by IS, while the western bank is held by the ISF. Therefore, individuals from the east have fled to the west, and are hosted in governmental buildings following security screening in the public events hall in the Jameela Village and other areas.

People living in west Shirqat, including returnees, have been attacked by mortars by ISIL. More than 70% of families have returned to Sahel Al Aiman from Shirqat (which is an area controlled by ISF and PMF). The total population is around 13,000 families, composed of stayees, returnees and IDPs. In addition, it is estimated that 18,000 families remain displaced out of the district, the vast majority of them within Tikrit Centre.

The environment in Shirqat is currently very volatile and no process of returns has been considered as of yet. Different tribes accuse each other of being affiliated with ISIL and the fact that half of the district is still controlled by ISIL has an obvious impact on returns and any reconciliation. About 100 families are reported to have been evicted into a detention camp near Tikrit due to alleged links of at least one of the family members to ISIL.