



# Factsheet - March to May 2017

## 1) RWG Objectives

In line with the 2016 Strategic Objective 3 of the Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan “to support voluntary, safe and dignified return” by monitoring and reporting on conditions in return areas and providing targeted assistance to highly vulnerable returnees, the Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator DSRSG/RC/HC established a Returns Working Group (RWG) to be Chaired by IOM.

### Priorities:

- Develop guidance, policies and operational recommendations for Iraqi governorates affected by returns;
- Support the response in providing principled short term intervention linked to Iraq’s coming return and reintegration challenge;
- Provide evidence base advocacy for the HC/HCT;
- Support the inclusion of returnee and reintegration specific indicators in monitoring and primary data collection mechanisms
- Provide a baseline on the achievement towards durable solutions and measure ongoing progress towards sustainable returns.

## 2) RWG’s incremental approach to promoting IDPs’ sustainable returns in Iraq

1. **Develop guidance, policies and operational recommendations** for Iraqi governorates affected by returns, based on the international frameworks and principles for humanitarian action);  
**GOAL 1:** Immediate emergency support as returns are happening, is provided in a principled manner and in line with the humanitarian imperative.
2. **Provide technical advice to government**, at national and local levels, as well as Iraqi civil society (NGOs, private sector, media, academia, etc.) to support the implementation of IDP returns according to applicable international standards;  
**GOAL 2:** An integrated approach to returns and reintegration is at the heart of each effort, thereby breaking away from silo interventions.
3. **Determine to what extent durable solutions have been achieved** for returnees, or progress made, based on the definition of durable solutions in the Iraqi context;  
**GOAL 3:** A national IDP returns and reintegration strategy is developed, coupled with a clear implementation plan to ensure that all IDPs in Iraq can find a durable solution to their displacement.

The RWG’s strategy aims for relevant stakeholders to identify and address specific, locality based, short-term needs, while at the same time planning for longer-term support and generating local and national ownership of activities undertaken.

## 3) RWG’s support in fostering an operational environment conducive to IDPs’ returns and reintegration

Iraq is a complex emergency where different contexts coexist in various transitional phases. Whilst the lingering humanitarian crises bring relief-focused needs that still demand short-term support, the patterns of assistance need to adapt according to the specificity of the local circumstances. It is critical to enhance the resilience of communities while creating a more seamless transition from relief-centered assistance towards more lasting self-sustaining national/community-owned process that reduces poverty, vulnerability, and instability. Frameworks developed by the RWG jointly with the cluster coordination look into new and better way for humanitarian-development cooperation, including scaling up and coordinating recovery efforts from actors from all sides of the aid spectrum. It is necessary and possible to support Iraq’s vulnerable population groups to become more resilient to future shocks and support conducive conditions for durable solutions such as voluntary return. The protracted crisis demands a multi-sector integrated early recovery approach, which begins early in humanitarian operations. Understanding vulnerability and subsequent humanitarian interventions through the lens of social fragility (safety nets) can minimize challenges to long-term peace, recovery and reconstruction. Both the Common Returns Framework (initial stages of return) and the Area Based Return and Reintegration Framework (post-return, conflict affected population approach) aim to laying the foundation for durable solutions as related to the Iraq context. As such, it aims to link with strategic objectives under various plans in areas of return, including the Iraq National Plan, the Humanitarian Response Plan and the United Nations Country Team’s Recovery and Resilience Framework.

## 4) RWG activities March-May 2017

### Common Returns Framework

The RWG has developed a Common Returns Framework, inclusive of a Returns Monitoring Framework, which supports partners in measuring the extent to which returns have been safe, voluntary and dignified, and assistance to be provided. This framework seeks to strengthen the response to returns, by capitalizing on existing data collection and existing coordination mechanism between displacement sites and areas of return. There is a need to understand the intention to return (or remain), assess the overall voluntariness of IDPs to return, and systematically measure these against conduciveness of return in areas of origin, to ensure returns are dignified and assistance is principled. The Common Returns Frameworks aims to sediment the logic behind the HRP’s objectives 1, 2 and 3. The RWG worked with the Assessment Working Group (AWG) and integrated return and reintegration indicators into OCHA’s Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA). The RWG is encouraging partners to systematically roll out the RNA as a first line assessment mechanism, verifying conduciveness (safety) in areas of return, as part of the common returns framework. **The RWG is working with the Protection Cluster and CCCM on rolling out the framework in a pilot.** The Operational guidelines for the provision of assistance to returns and [overall common returns framework](#) were reviewed at ICCG level and should be shared at the HCT. **Common Returns Framework Tools are available [here](#).**

### RWG Field Coordinator Field Mission Update

The RWG Field Coordinator has been presenting the RWG objectives and mandate at the sub-national level (after endorsement from the National ICCG). The aim of those missions was to present the RWG Common Returns Framework. **The Roving Coordinator proceeded to total number of 8 field missions across the country.** During the month of April - May, the RWG Field Coordinator presented in Dohuk, Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, Baghdad and Tikrit, the RWG commons returns framework which introduces the operational guidance to the provision of assistance to returns and the returns sustainability framework (SOP in responding in initial stages to return), to ensure that all short-term support to returns is principled and based on the longer-term goal of durable solutions.



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While at the national level, the RWG and Protection Cluster (PC) established a mechanism to jointly flag potential concerns over push/pull factors created in areas of return, the Sub-National Platforms worked with the Roving Coordinator on the implementation of this mechanism, based on local context. Therefore, follow-up meetings occurred with OCHA and Protection Cluster in both Baghdad and Kirkuk to start tracking returns and operationalizing the concept of safe, voluntary and dignified returns, and potentially see if there is capacity to systematize this tracking / flagging mechanism. Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah and Salah Al Din authorities all endorsed the concept and are willing to collaborate with the humanitarian community to ensure safe, voluntary and dignified returns. The RWG field coordinator will keep on going to the field to start the process of rolling out the common returns framework, in collaboration with sub-national mechanisms. Meetings in Salh Din have also touched upon the need to roll out coordinated Integrated Area Based interventions. The RWG is developing a system, based on Durable Solution Benchmarks, with the entirety of the Cluster System.

### Multi-Sectorial Return and Reintegration Response Framework

The protracted nature of Iraq's displacement has demonstrated that it is not sufficient nor efficient to implement humanitarian and development activities in isolation, but that a sustainable response in support of return and reintegration requires closer cooperation between all stakeholders involved. The RWG is building on the first line mechanism (initial stages of return) that is the Common Returns Framework to consolidate a Multi-Sectorial Return and Reintegration Response Framework (post-return). This exercise is co-facilitated with the Emergency Livelihoods Cluster to ensure social cohesion principles are mainstreamed throughout the returns policies and responses feeding into the inter-cluster coordination group. On Sunday, May 7th, cluster leaders, NGOs, and UN Agencies met to discuss the development of this Multi-Sectorial Humanitarian Returns and Reintegration Response Framework (herein referred to as Area Based Return and Reintegration Framework). It was presented at the ICCG and agreed that each Cluster will define what partners consider are the minimum standards to ensure Durable Solutions in future programmatic interventions. The Multi-Sectorial Response Framework aims at: (1) Promoting sustainable return by ensuring tracking return and ensure it is voluntary, safe and dignified; (2) Streamlining programming to facilitate returns, and improve conditions in areas targeted on the basis of recognized minimum standards; (3) Serving as a model for area-based approaches. Besides this return-related framework, the UNCT has developed a Durable Solutions Strategy that promotes self-reliance for IDPs through medium-term assistance and contributes to laying the foundation for durable solutions. Both this framework and the UNCT Framework complement one another by addressing people's needs and underlying vulnerabilities in their places of displacement and origin respectively. Ensuring proper sequencing between both frameworks will allow relevant programs to identify and address specific, locality based, short-term needs, while at the same time planning for longer-term reconstruction and development support and generating local and national ownership of activities undertaken.

Overall, the RWG facilitates information sharing and provides recommendation to ensure that all short-term support/assistance to returns is principled and based on the longer-term goal of durable solutions. Piloting the framework will take place in June 2017.

### RWG – CwC Linkages

RWG worked with the CwC taskforce, the IDP Call Centre and NGO focal points on better informing partners and IDPs on conditions in areas of return without creating through this information sharing an additional push/pull factor by raising expectations. The RWG is worked with CwC WG to provide a framework for messaging on returns specifically (divided along the phases of 1/displacement site, 2/ movement, 3/ arrival to area of return). RWG shared messages and a suggest methodology with the CwC taskforce.

### IDP Call Center

RWG incorporates information from the IDP Call Center in its various analysis. The RWG is not involved in responding to callers' needs but rather captures the information to better inform on return movement trends, status in displacement site (intention to return) and conditions in areas of origin. The RWG advocated on behalf of the Call Center in forums such as the HOC, ICCG and bilateral engagement with key stakeholders.

### RWG Data Collection Tools

Obstacles to Return and Reintegration Tracker, available [here](#) with its explanatory note (both in English and Arabic versions). Integrated 4Ws, explanatory note available [here](#); KOBO Link available [here](#)

The RWG worked with OCHA to include returnee specific indicators in their Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA).

- The RNA key objective is to provide a framework for multi-sectorial assessments in mixed population areas.
- Has a dedicated return section
- Is a rapid tool for short term tool emergency planning by providing baseline information on first-line needs
- Is a partner-based tool
- AWG has been training partners on this tool, with a current focus on Mosul due to the emergency (pilot)
- Tool can be rolled out at the national level: the RWG encourages partners to systematically use the RNA when assessing areas of origin's conditions to return, under the [common returns framework](#)
- The RNA tool links up through KOBO to one server maintained by OCHA, with a 24Hrs dissemination; data is immediately available online (map, dashboard) to clusters and RWG. All sensitive data is hidden, but available upon request via OCHA. Following discussions with the Assessment Working Group (AWG), RWG is to potentially train NGO networks on the assessment, as part of its overall training on durable solutions a common return framework.

### RWG Taskforce: “Mapping the Processes and Actors associated with IDP Return”

The RWG created a Mapping Taskforce to map processes and actors associated with return. Based on this information, the RWG created two profiles at the Governorate level (with break downs at community level) outline the processes and actors associated with IDP return in Salh Din and Anbar. The method of data collection is not intended to be a questionnaire asked to IDPs or authorities. The information is already available throughout partners' (field) teams. The aim is to share the profiles among the humanitarian community, along guidelines stated in the Taskforce information Sharing Protocol. The main audiences for these profiles are IDPs through CwC, CCCM and Protection Cluster so people can be informed (where to do, what documentation is needed etc.) about the return process within their respective areas.



## Returns Working Group March-May 2017

Operational Response	Policy development
Support the formulation and inclusion of return/reintegration specific indicators in ongoing or newly developed assessment and monitoring Mechanisms: Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA); Protection Cluster joint initiative: indicators developed to monitoring S,V,D returns	Sediments logic behind first three objectives of the HRP. Evidence Base Advocacy on extend to which humanitarian action is principled and joint protocol of engagement with authorities on assisting safe, voluntary and dignified returns kick started (Salh Din, Ninewa)
Guidelines issued to organizations (Operational guidelines for the provision of assistance to return)	Short-term policy development (e.g. Kirkuk, Diyala, Mosul, Baiji)
Development of Common Returns Framework	Evidence Base Advocacy through framework covering and articulating the three steps (safe, voluntary dignified) evidencing sustainable returns. Approach is effective as it considers the design of assistance to match the expectations and the concerns of IDPS enabling durable solutions to the resolution of displacement. It strengthens partners' evidence base advocacy and engagement with authorities.
Area Based Return and Reintegration Framework (Multi-Sectorial, Cluster Led) The Multi-Sectorial Response Framework aims at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting sustainable return by ensuring tracking return and ensure it is voluntary, safe and dignified;</li> <li>Streamlining programming to facilitate returns, and improve conditions in areas targeted on the basis of recognized minimum standards;</li> <li>Serving as a model for area-based approaches.</li> </ul>	Besides this return-related framework, the UNCT has developed a Durable Solutions Strategy that promotes self-reliance for IDPs through medium-term assistance and contributes to laying the foundation for durable solutions. Both this framework and the UNCT Framework complement one another by addressing people's needs and underlying vulnerabilities in their places of displacement and origin respectively. Returns and Reintegration coordinated under a single planning umbrella to ensure coherent assistance for affected population.
RWG Roving Coordinator supports Sub-National mechanisms in their Interventions and advocacy in areas of return	Discussion initiated with Salh Din Authorities, Duhok/ Ninewa and Sulaymaniah authorities. Close collaboration with Sub-Clusters and Protection Working Groups across the country.
NGO focal points in key return areas create networks which initiate coordination interventions, support information sharing, advocacy and continuous monitoring of return movements	Return Trends analysis produced on a monthly basis, through NGOs.
Systematic Mapping of IDP returns processes in key governorates (Mapping Taskforce established)	2 Governorate Profiles delivered (Salh Din and Anbar). The main audiences for these profiles are IDPs through CwC, CCCM and Protection Cluster so people can be informed about the return process within their respective areas.
<b>Product dissemination:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational Guidelines for the delivery of assistance to returns in Iraq</li> <li>Monthly Returns Trends Overview</li> <li>Guidance note on safe, voluntary and dignified returns</li> <li>Guidance note for the delivery of assistance in Mosul</li> <li>Integrated 4Ws (activities and service mapping in return areas)</li> <li>Obstacle to Return and Reintegration Tracking mechanism</li> <li>Common Return Framework</li> <li>Return and Reintegration Framework</li> <li>CwC methodology on returns messaging</li> </ul>	<b>Product dissemination:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy note – Kirkuk (forced returns)</li> <li>Advocacy note – Diyala (obstacles to return)</li> <li>3 Monthly Returns Trends Overview</li> <li>1 Overview (5 months) on Extend of Safe, Vountary, Dignified Return in Iraq (Private)</li> <li>RWG-Oxfam Event: Emergency - Early Recovery nexus and its value in tackling complex displacement and return setting in Iraq – using the case study of Jalawla</li> <li>2 Governorate Profiles on Returns Processes</li> </ul>
All documents and tools available here:	
<a href="https://www.dropbox.com/s/w3etllro4u5gnrz/A_RWG%20final%20draft%20ToR%2029%20MAR%202016.pdf?dl=0">https://www.dropbox.com/s/w3etllro4u5gnrz/A_RWG%20final%20draft%20ToR%2029%20MAR%202016.pdf?dl=0</a>	