

IOM IRAQ

# ACCESS TO DURABLE SOLUTIONS AMONG IDPs IN IRAQ

FIVE YEARS IN DISPLACEMENT





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## INTRODUCTION

IOM's World Migration Report 2020 reveals that as of the end 2018, some 2 million Iraqis—almost 5 per cent of the country's population—remain internally displaced, making Iraq the number 10 country in the world with the largest number of IDPs.<sup>1</sup>

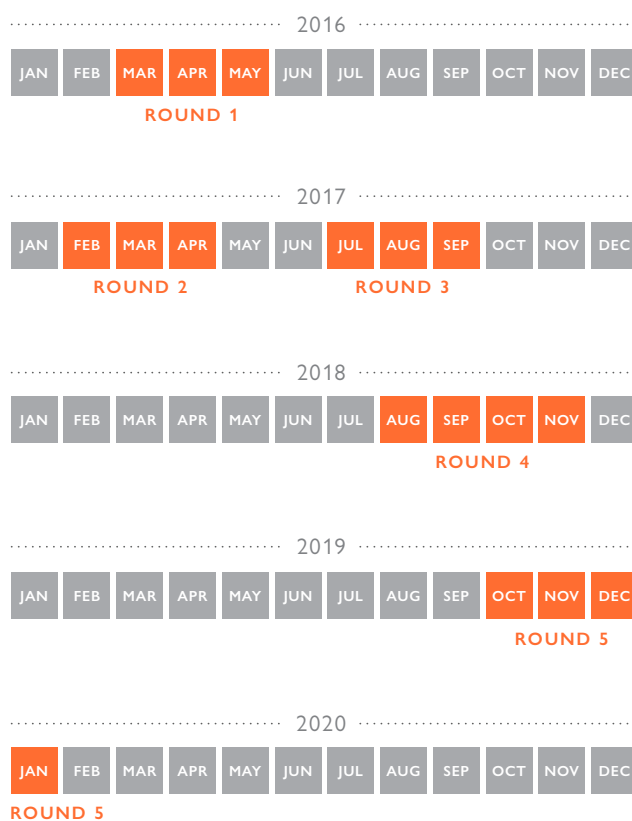
As the COVID-19 pandemic has tested the breaking points of global economies and healthcare, educational, and judicial systems, the most vulnerable populations, including IDPs, are often those to be first and most deeply impacted. But to understand how and to what extent the pandemic disproportionately affects vulnerable populations and exacerbates pre-existing cleavages in one country, it is important to have a baseline of what these pre-pandemic cleavages were. What challenges did IDPs face in accessing healthcare, education, and justice even before the arrival of COVID-19, and how did they overcome these challenges?

This report, which attempts to speak to these questions, is the fifth in the series tracking “years in displacement” that uses both survey data and qualitative interview data from the study Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq to analyze the changes in IDPs' lives over time and their solutions to the issues they face in displacement. This ongoing panel study<sup>2</sup> conducted by IOM Iraq and Georgetown University collects data from quantitative surveys and interviews to understand how non-camp Iraqi IDP households displaced between January 2014 and December 2015 by ISIL develop and adjust strategies over time to access a “durable solution” to their displacement.

The Inter-Agency Stand Committee's Framework for Durable Solutions for IDPs identifies three such durable solutions: sustainable return to the place of origin; sustainable local integration in areas where internally displaced persons take refuge; and sustainable integration in another part of the country. IDPs are considered to have reached a durable solution not based on geography but on the recuperation of rights. That is, when they no longer face discrimination or disadvantage on the basis of their displaced status across eight identified criteria: safety and security; standard of living; livelihood and employment; housing, land and property; personal and other documentation; family reunification; access to justice; and participation in public affairs.

The households in the study are part of the non-camp population displaced from the governorates of Anbar, Babylon, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din to one of four governorates where the study was fielded: Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah.

To date, five rounds of data have been collected:



1 IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, pg. 44. The number has been dropping and the latest Displacement Tracking Matrix for May-June 2020 puts IDPs at 1,381,332. See [http://iraqdtm.iom.int/images/MasterList/2020721134581\\_DTM\\_116\\_Report\\_May\\_June\\_2020.pdf](http://iraqdtm.iom.int/images/MasterList/2020721134581_DTM_116_Report_May_June_2020.pdf).

2 A panel study is one that tracks the same households over time.



*Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq* tracks both IDP households who have remained in the same location throughout their displacement (IDPs) and the households who were displaced and returned to their places of origin (Returnees). In Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020), 61 per cent of IDPs to whom the study generalizes resided in Baghdad; approximately 2 per cent were in Basra; 28 per cent in Kirkuk, and approximately 9 per cent in Sulaymaniyah. Of the 1,015 returnee households in the study sample, the largest number returned to Anbar (46%) followed by Ninewa (18%) (See Map 1).

Like previous “years in displacement” reports from the IOM Iraq project, *Access to Durable Solutions for IDPs in Iraq*,<sup>3</sup> this report first discusses generalizable findings about IDPs in Part I and findings about sampled returnees in Part II.<sup>4</sup> The IDP section and the Returnee section each begin with snapshot findings of the progress the IDP and Returnee households have made towards accessing a durable solution across each of the eight criteria that define it. But while previous reports have featured the longitudinal component of the study—that is, showing changes over time—this report instead focuses on three critical topics that fall within the scope of the eight criteria: education, healthcare, and justice. The key findings of the report are as follows:

## IDPs IN DISPLACEMENT

- **Progress Towards Reaching a Durable Solution:** IDP households report feeling safe in their host communities. They have found housing and jobs. Most can provide for their basic needs. And yet 84 per cent say they still consider themselves displaced: 47 per cent say their communities and their friends are what they miss most about their places of origin, followed by approximately 33 per cent who say their houses are what they miss most. It is clear that IDPs still feel displaced even if by other measures they have accessed a durable solution.
- **Economic and Infrastructural Barriers to Accessing Healthcare:** Only a minority of IDPs report facing discrimination in accessing healthcare, but the challenges they do face are not entirely divorced from their status as displaced persons. Financially, healthcare costs present a triple-pronged burden by simultaneously increasing IDP households’ expenses; preventing caretaker family members from working; and, consequently, mandating that IDP households borrow money, which exacerbates the burden of debt that displacement already causes.
- **Education of Children Faces Financial and Attitudinal Obstacles:** Access to schooling is not the key obstacle among this group of non-camp IDP households: only seven per cent report that none of their school-aged children is in school, and 8 in 10 households who currently have children in school report that their children have not missed three or more months of school. However, families with large numbers of children are more likely to have children missing three or more months of school or not be in school at all to save on expenses or increase familial income. These trends are compounded if parents do not have the ability to help their children study (because the parents themselves did not finish their education) or by perceptions that an education is of limited utility where the economy already cannot absorb those who graduate with degrees.
- **Justice Means an End to Displacement:** Throughout their time in displacement, IDPs have reiterated that the most important aspect of achieving justice is the prosecution of criminals, by which they mostly mean members of ISIL. At the most extreme, 25 per cent of the households reported that a member of the household was killed or disappeared as a result of the events. Compensation for the affected, part of a 2009 government law, is available and the shares applying to compensation have slowly increased over time, and many say that compensation is the key intervention point for the government to remedy injustices they have suffered. That said, “compensation” to IDPs means more than simply money for housing: rather, IDPs want investment in the greater public good and public services including education and healthcare and loans to become self-sufficient.

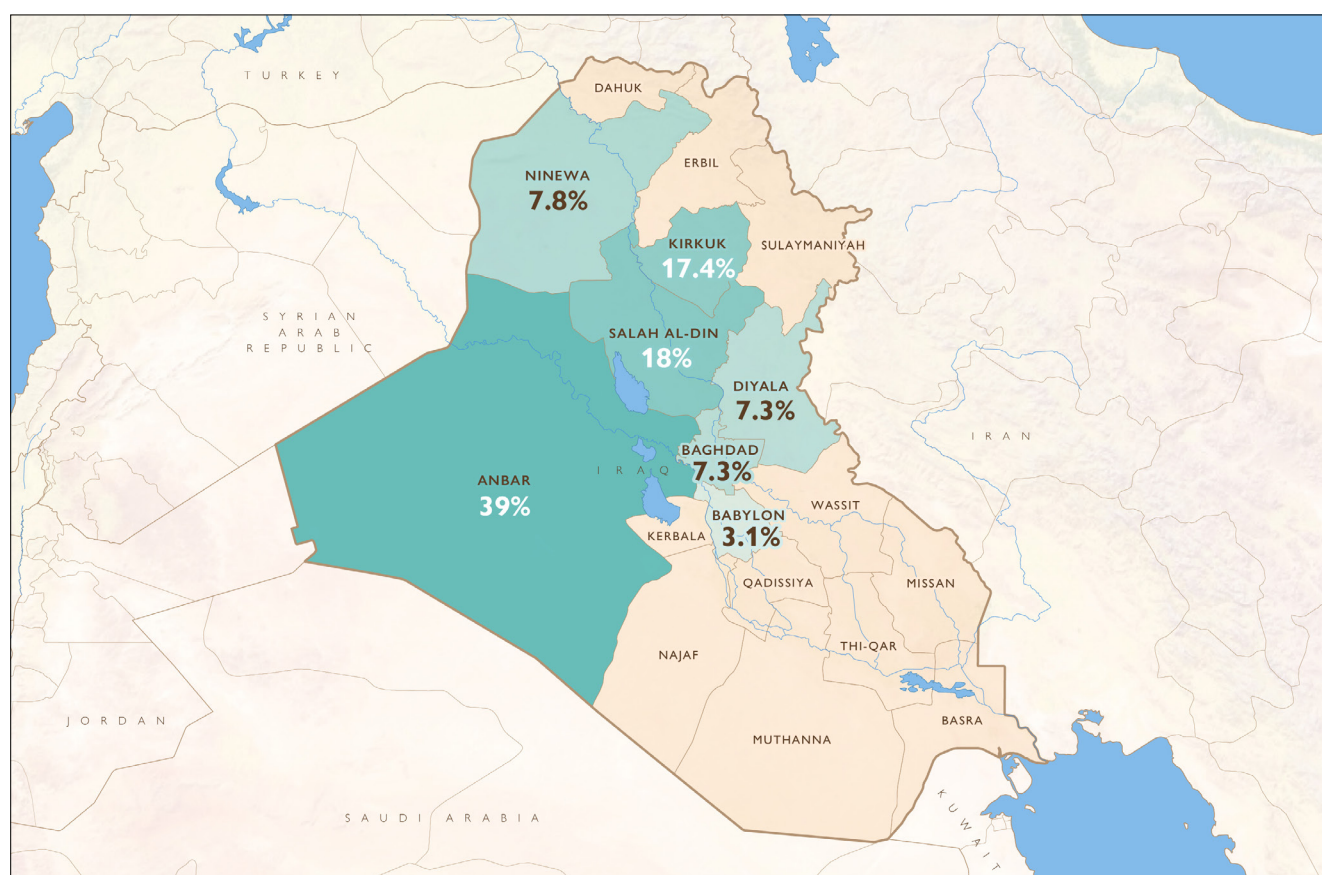
3 For previous reports in the series, please see: IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Four Years in Displacement*, November 2019; IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Three Years in Displacement*, February 2019; IOM and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq*, April 2017. For Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020) trends in longitudinal perspective, please see IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Unpacking the Policy Implications*, September 2020.

4 Findings reported in the section on IDPs generalize to a population of approximately 70,000 households displaced between January 2014 and December 2015 from Anbar, Babylon, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din to one of the four governorates where they still reside: Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk, or Sulaymaniyah. Findings on returnees apply only to the households in the study sample and who were returnees in both Rounds 4 and 5 (August-November 2018 and October 2019-January 2020).

IDP LOCATIONS: GOVERNORATES OF ORIGIN & DISPLACEMENT*					
Where they are from (Governorate of Origin)	Where they were displaced to (Governorate of Displacement All Rounds)				Total From Each Governorate of Origin
	Baghdad %	Basra %	Kirkuk %	Sulaymaniyah %	
Anbar	94.7	0.7	2	2.5	39
Babylon	71.1	0.7	0.9	27.4	3.1
Baghdad	84.1	0.7	2.4	12.8	7.3
Diyala	42.7	0.6	12.4	44.2	7.3
Kirkuk	4.2	0.9	94.9	0	17.4
Ninewa	50	6	24.4	19.6	7.8
Salah al-Din	44.6	2.5	47.5	5.4	18
<b>Total in Each Governorate of Displacement</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>100</b>

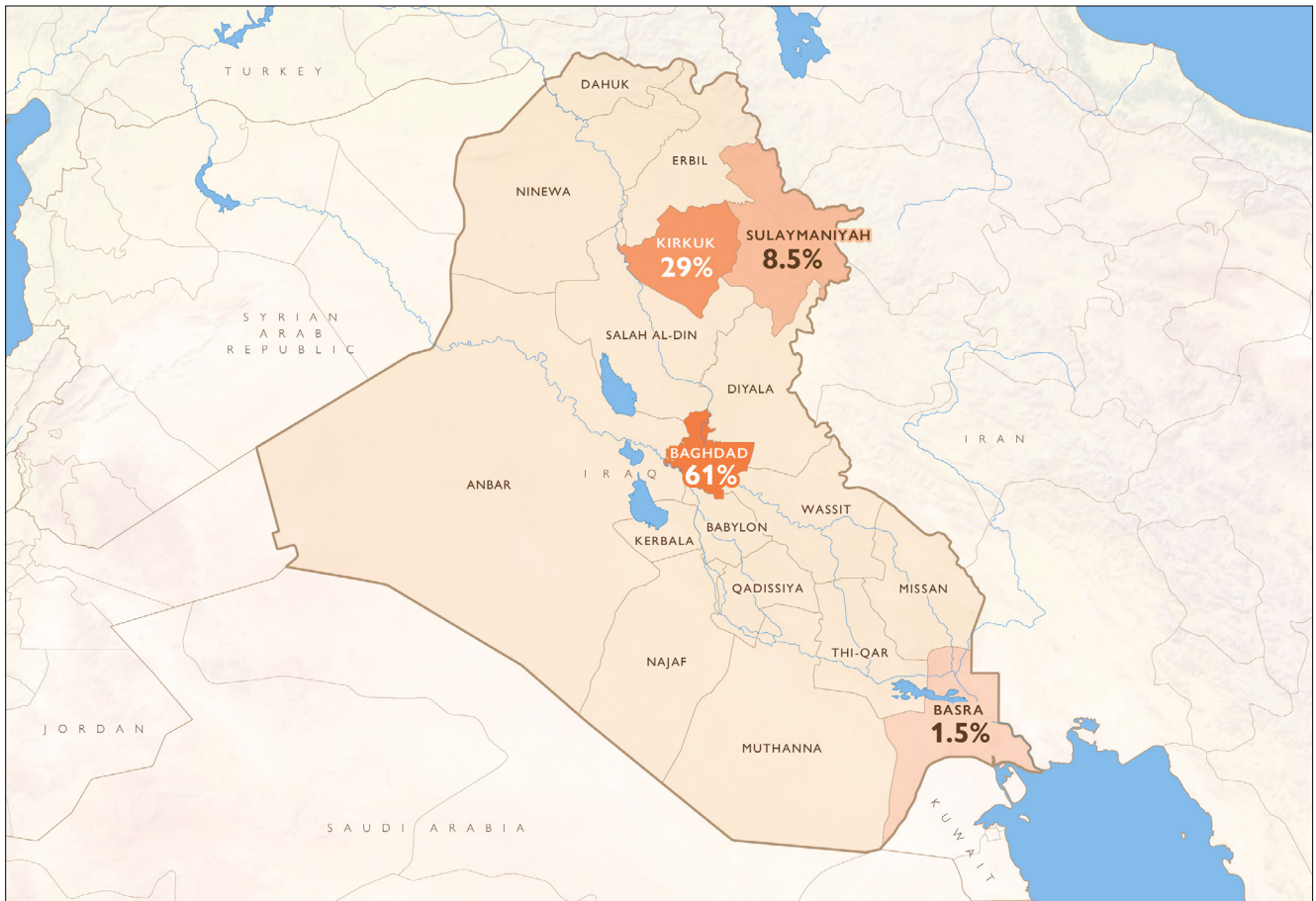
\* The population to whom the study generalizes is those non-camp IDP households displaced from one of the seven origin governorates to one of the four displacement governorates as reported in IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in December 2015 when the study sample was taken. The IDP households discussed in this report are those who have remained in the same governorate and district since they were initially displaced.

Map 1: IDPs by Governorate of Origin





Map 2: IDPs by Governorate of Displacement



## SAMPLED RETURNEES

- **In areas of return, when healthcare became available, it was no longer affordable.** ISIL targeted the public health care infrastructure, resulting in extensive damage. The longitudinal data from this survey show that the healthcare infrastructure is being rebuilt and that returnees now can access health care and they report that the services that they need are available; however, this seems likely because private healthcare is more readily available. So, while healthcare services are now present, almost 8 in 10 returnee report that they cannot afford the healthcare that they need.
- **In areas of return, children are returning to school in high numbers, but the facilities are still unsafe or incomplete and the educational quality suffers.** Among returnees, 85 per cent say that none of their children have missed three months of school or more. But for those children who aren't in school, it is largely due to financial reasons: paying for school supplies, transportation to/from school, the need for children to

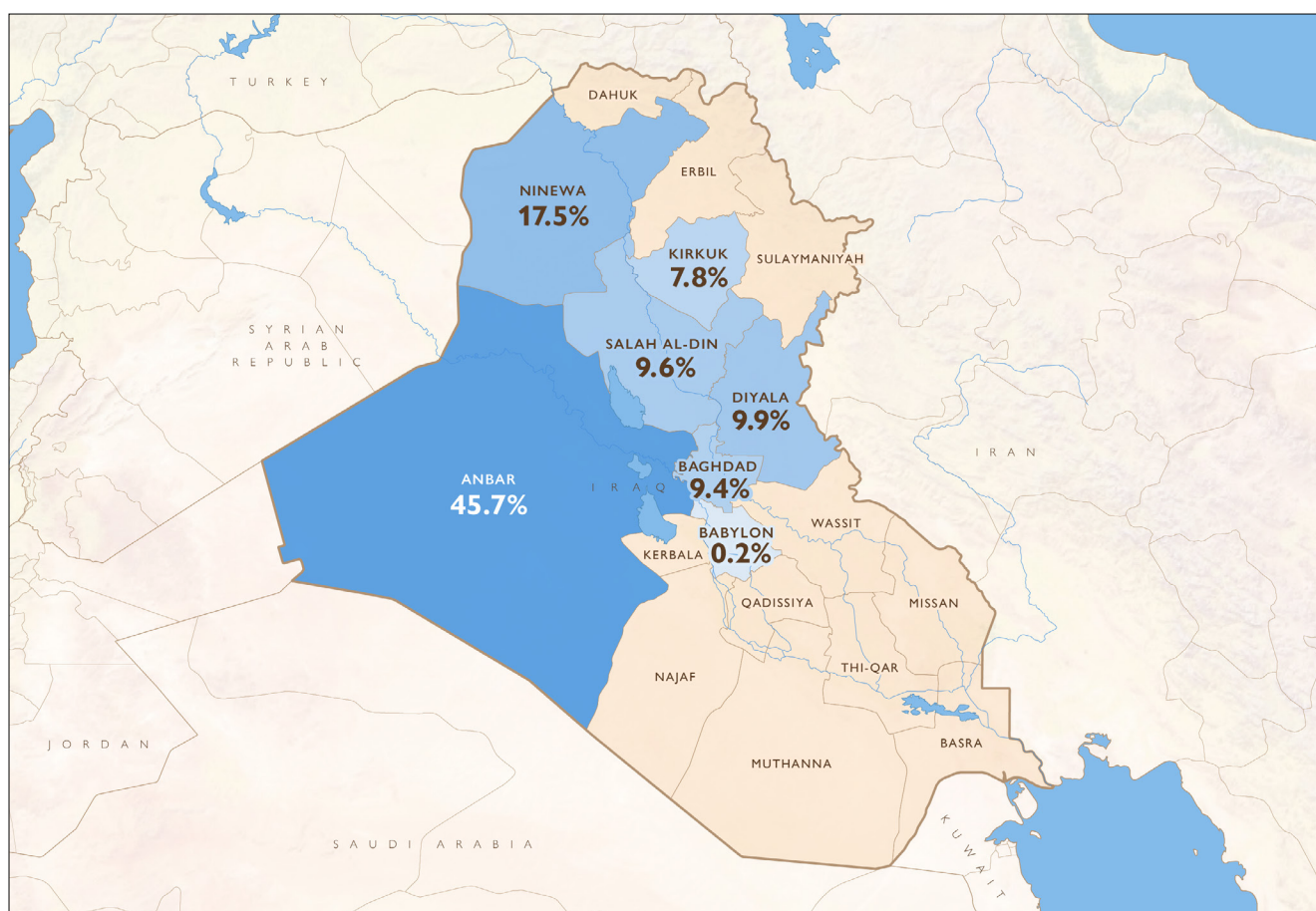
work to help the family. And while parents feel schools are an important part of their children undoing a sense of displacement and creating a sense of well-being, they also describe schools as lacking regular teaching staff, as well as proper school facilities, such as potable water, bathroom facilities, etc.

- **Sampled returnees continue to emphasize that justice for them means the prosecution of the criminals responsible for their displacement and compensation for what they lost.** Neither of these things is happening and among the 64 per cent who applied for compensation to the appropriate Iraqi governmental committees, just six per cent had received compensation, while three per cent had been rejected. The Compensation mechanism must move more quickly to provide needed resources to Iraqis, who in rebuilding their homes and business will in turn help rebuild Iraq.

SAMPLED RETURNEES: LOCATION IN ROUNDS 4 & 5*						
Anbar % (464)	Babylon % (2)	Baghdad % (95)	Diyala % (100)	Kirkuk % (79)	Ninewa % (178)	Salah al-Din % (97)
<b>45.7</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>9.6</b>


\* While households in the study began returning as early as Round 2 (February-April 2017), those who did so were overwhelmingly from one area: Anbar. In Round 4 (August-November 2018), returnees surpassed 30 per cent of the sample and had returned in more significant numbers to the rest of the governorates of origin. Findings on the sampled returnee households do not generalize beyond the households included in the study.

Map 3: Sampled Returnees Locations



“ Iraq is my homeland and Anbar is my city, and I’m proud of being Iraqi despite all the pain we have been through. No matter how difficult our circumstances are, it is still better to be here than any other place. Being an Iraqi means that I will not die from hunger, thirst, or lack of shelter. At least, there will be someone who will help you anywhere in Iraq.



A photograph of a man sitting in a makeshift shelter made of white plastic sheeting and wooden poles. The man is wearing a dark jacket and a red headscarf. He is sitting on a concrete block. In the foreground, several pigeons are on the ground. The background shows a clear blue sky. The entire image has a light blue tint.

SECTION 1:  
IDPs

# IDPs IN DISPLACEMENT: SNAPSHOT

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Five years into their displacement, feelings of safety and security remain high among IDPs:

**96%**

say they **feel completely** or **moderately safe**

**90%**

say their household members **feel accepted** as members of their host communities

**<3%** report that security procedures served as an impediment to each getting an identification document, renting an apartment, or selling property or real estate



## HOUSING, LAND & PROPERTY

**85%** of

IDP households rent



**97%**

pay the rent themselves

**58%** still own homes in their places of origin



**61%**

Can access their property

**53%**

Say their property is destroyed or heavily damaged

**42%**

Say it is partially damaged

## STANDARD OF LIVING

**77%**

report being **able to meet basic needs**



**30%**

need to **borrow money** to be able to do so

**748K IQD (657 USD)**

spent on average in monthly expenses by IDP households which include housing, utilities, food, transportation, and medical and educational expenses. Of this amount:



Cost of food accounts for **37%**



Housing accounts for **23%**

## DOCUMENTATION

**<7%**

report having **lost any of their documentation**



**95%**

of those who lost documents have **replaced** all or some of them

## FAMILY REUNIFICATION

**<5%**

say they had family members **separated for three months or more**



**53%**

of them have **no plans to reunite**

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Participation in public affairs remains low:

**<4%**

said they have **participated** in any activity organized by any civic group, cultural club, or social or professional association

**<4%**

have **attended a meeting** of such groups

## EMPLOYMENT & LIVELIHOOD

**98%** of IDP households report that they **have a source of income**

**19%**

Public sector jobs

**24%**

Business

**39%**

Informal labor



The share of IDPs in displacement working in the **agricultural sector** **remains less than 1%** and has never rebounded to pre-displacement levels of nearly 29% among the group of IDPs who have remained in displacement

**ONLY 9%** report receiving any **humanitarian aid**



## JUSTICE & REMEDIES

**WHILE 59%**

IDP households have **applied for compensation** from the government for their losses

**ONLY 19%**

say that reparations or compensation is the most important aspect of achieving justice

**RATHER 53%**

–a majority– say that **the prosecution of criminals** is most important for achieving justice



## SPOLIGHT ON TWO CRITERIA FOR IDPs: STANDARD OF LIVING & JUSTICE

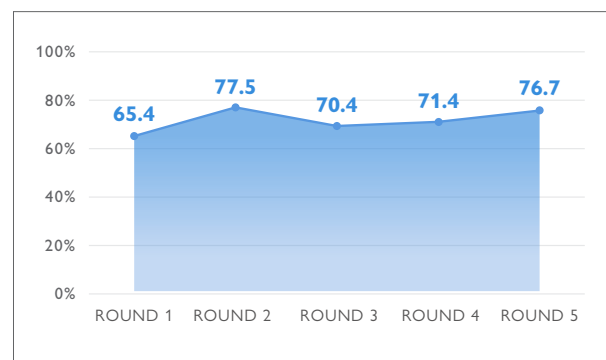
The snapshot findings from the Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020) household survey of *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq* suggest a continuity of trends that the study has observed and discussed in previous installment of the “years in displacement” series.

Of the eight criteria, three have never posed a central challenge to the non-camp population the study tracks. Since Round 1 (March-May 2016), a very small minority of IDP families have lost documentation (less than 7%), been separated from family (less than 5%), or participated in public affairs (less than 8%). Nearly all households in this IDP population satisfied a fourth criterium—safety and security—upon their initial displacement. As with Round 5, well over 95 per cent report feeling completely or moderately safe since their first year in displacement.

Housing continues to pose a significant challenge to those in displacement. Rent constitutes a significant and ongoing new expense to households, the majority of whom owned a home prior to displacement and who pay rent themselves while in displacement.<sup>5</sup> Livelihoods also were impacted significantly, with a consistently high share (hovering around 40%) saying that the household’s main source of income in displacement came from the informal labor sector, known for its low wages and even lower job security.<sup>6</sup>

The two remaining criteria—standard of living and justice—constitute the focus of this report, particularly because they are multifaceted. After their first year in displacement, roughly 7 in 10 IDP households consistently have reported that they have been able to provide for their basic needs, defined as housing, food and water, healthcare, and education.

Figure 1. IDPs: Ability to Provide for Basic Needs



Housing constitutes its own criteria in the IASC Framework, and food and water often are subsumed under discussions of livelihood and cost of living. Healthcare and education, which are critical and have received heightened consideration in the context of a global pandemic, are included but not afforded their own criteria in the Framework. They are, nonetheless, definitional to standard of living, thus prompting this report’s use of data from *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq* to highlight IDP experiences with both.

Like standard of living, justice is a criterium that deserves further investigation because of its complexity. Justice is simultaneously at the core of IASC’s “durable solution” framework being premised on access to services and rights “without discrimination” but at the periphery of discussions of the remaining criteria because what it means and how it is achieved varies not only across time, but also across contexts.

5 For more information on challenges posed by housing, please see: IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Experiences Applying to Compensation*, January 2020.

6 IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Livelihoods and Economic Security in Displacement*, Forthcoming November 2020.

## IDPs: HEALTHCARE IN DISPLACEMENT

Only 19 per cent of IDP households in Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah suggest they were excluded or limited from accessing healthcare in Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020). That these households are in the minority is encouraging in light of the significant need for medical attention: in the same round, 57 per cent reported requiring healthcare in the past calendar year. More encouraging still is that the share needing this attention decreased by 12 points, down from 69 per cent in Round 4 (August-November 2018). The share reporting that they faced discrimination in accessing healthcare also decreased substantially in this same time period, down 11 points from 31 per cent in Round 4.

However, access to healthcare is not without challenges for IDPs, which is particularly problematic given that in fact just under two thirds (63%) of those needing to access healthcare say they needed it for a chronic condition. Not facing *discrimination* in accessing health services on account of IDP status is not synonymous with not facing additional *challenges* because of having been displaced. As previously published findings from *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq* have revealed, displacement itself creates additional financial burdens—from the cost of rent to the need to borrow money—that households might not have otherwise faced were they not displaced.<sup>7</sup> This displacement-induced economic distress makes the need to access healthcare while in displacement more challenging than it otherwise would be because the costs of healthcare only exacerbate financial burden.

For example, a mother living with her husband and five children in Kirkuk illustrates the long-term calculations of having to borrow money from relatives for her husband's surgery. "The surgery was in a private hospital, so we asked for a lot of money. Some of our acquaintances and relatives donated money to us and we borrowed the rest. [...] If it wasn't for this disease, I wouldn't have allowed my husband to borrow one dinar, and I would run the house as much as possible without being burdened with debt by purchasing unnecessary things."

Healthcare costs thus increase the burden of debt that displacement initially causes, and households are both wary and weary of the long-lasting effects this debt will have on their standards of living and their relationships with family, friends, and neighbors.

Figure 2. IDPs: Frequency of Facing Discrimination in Accessing Health Service

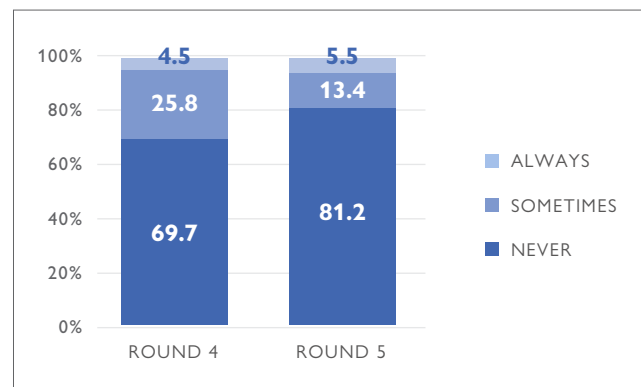
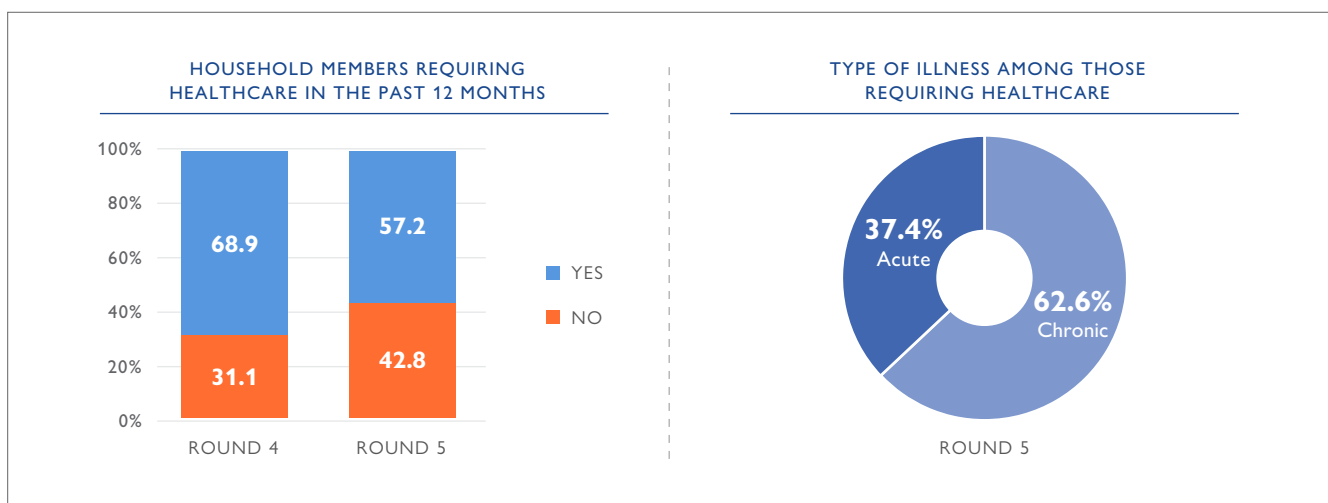


Figure 3. IDPs: Households Requiring Healthcare



7 IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Three Years in Displacement*, February 2019.

This one story is illustrative of a much more prevalent trend in the data. Financial hardship and the need to borrow money for medical treatment frequently constitutes a key challenge that households face in accessing needed care. While the share of households requiring healthcare decreased between Rounds 4 and 5 (August-November 2018 and October 2019-January 2020), the share saying they encountered problems while trying to access healthcare increased by 9 points from 32 per cent to 41 per cent. Approximately 86 per cent in Round 4 and 72 per cent in Round 5 said that insufficient funds to get treatment or medicine was the main impediment to accessing the medical attention they needed.

Figure 4. IDPs: Had problems in accessing needed healthcare in the past 12 months?

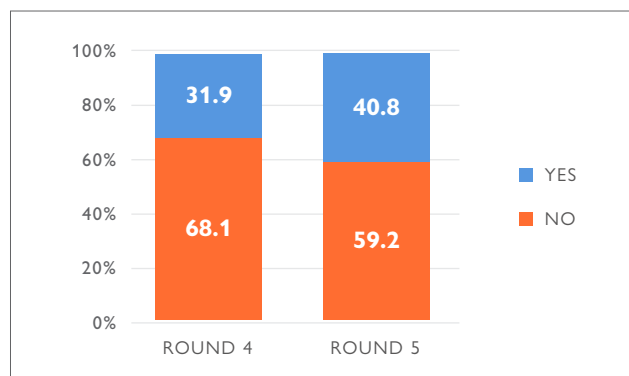
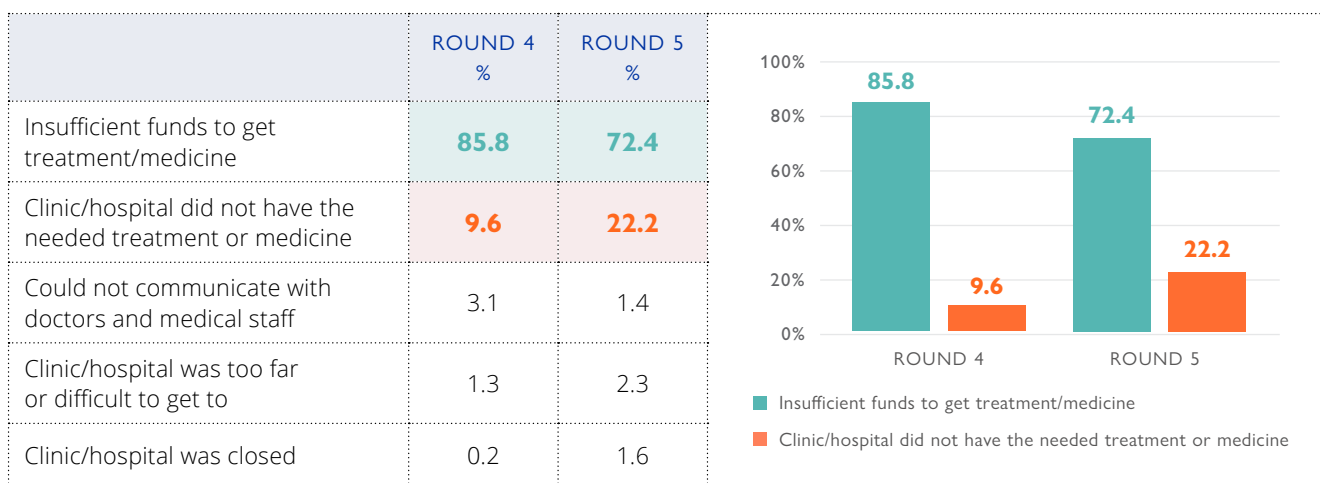


Figure 5. IDPs: Main Problem Encountered in Accessing Needed Healthcare



Furthermore, the data from *Access to Durable Solutions* suggest that the costs of healthcare not only compound financial stress on the already precarious economic situation of displaced persons, but also, these medical crises mandate that caretakers prioritize the needs of the sick family member over all else. As an IDP father displaced with his family within the governorate of Kirkuk explains, “I cannot leave the house due to my difficult family circumstances. I cannot leave my handicapped son at home, and therefore I am unable to attend any vocational training courses [...] Another one of my children does not like going out of the house. I think that he’s suffering from a psychological condition.” Not only do health problems create costs for services, but also they affect families’ abilities to earn a living, particularly as displaced populations now live far away from family members that may have assisted them with care in the past. As 63 per cent of those requiring healthcare need it for a chronic condition, the disruption to household income is far from temporary.

Infrastructural problems were the second most common reason IDP households cited in accessing healthcare, and are also tied to financial stressors. Those suggesting that the clinic or hospital lacked needed medicines or treatment more than doubled from 10 per cent in Round 4 (August-November 2018) to 22 per cent in Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020). This means that if and when treatment or medicine are not available in the public healthcare system, people have to turn to private healthcare system, which is costlier. Thus, only about half of all IDPs report going to public hospitals.

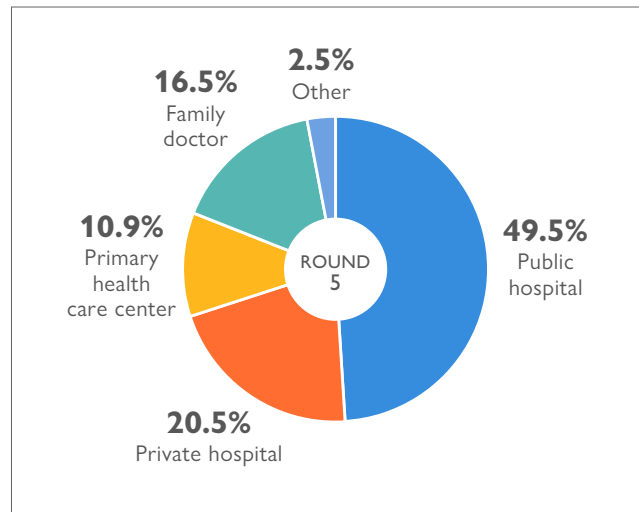
One story recounted by an IDP father of three displaced from Ninewa and living in Basra provides insight on a possible explanation: “My wife had an accident in the kitchen. She broke her hand because she fell from a chair. [...] Unfortunately, when we arrived at the hospital, nothing had been done for my wife. She was crying because she was in so much pain. [...] When I arrived at Hamdaniyah General Hospital, they told me that they needed to take an



x-ray, but that their machine wasn't working. So, they just took a picture on their phone and showed it to the doctor. That's when my friend said that we had to take her to a private hospital for treatment." The IDP father recounts that his friend insisted on paying for all the of the expenses, including the doctor's visit, the x-rays, and the stitches for his wife's hand.

In accessing healthcare, the population of non-camp IDPs to which *Access to Durable Solutions* generalizes mostly have avoided discrimination, but they have not altogether avoided disadvantages on account of their displacement. Healthcare costs increase IDP households' monthly expenses and simultaneously may prevent them from working to make up the cost. Absent an alternative, IDPs take on more debt or are forced to rely on relatives and host community members to help with logistical and financial burdens imposed by health problems.

Figure 6. IDPs Round 5: Type of Healthcare Facility Used to Get Treatment








## IDPs: EDUCATION IN DISPLACEMENT

One of the most disruptive effects of displacement is felt by one of the largest age cohort of IDPs: children. Children account for almost 50 per cent—728,000 of 1.5 million—of Iraq's displaced population, 70 per cent of which has been displaced for more than three years.<sup>8</sup> And while access to education frequently has been cited as a key challenge for IDP children, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq* suggests displacement is only part of the problem. Instead, as with healthcare, the root problem of access to education is both an economic one and an infrastructural one among this group of non-camp IDPs.

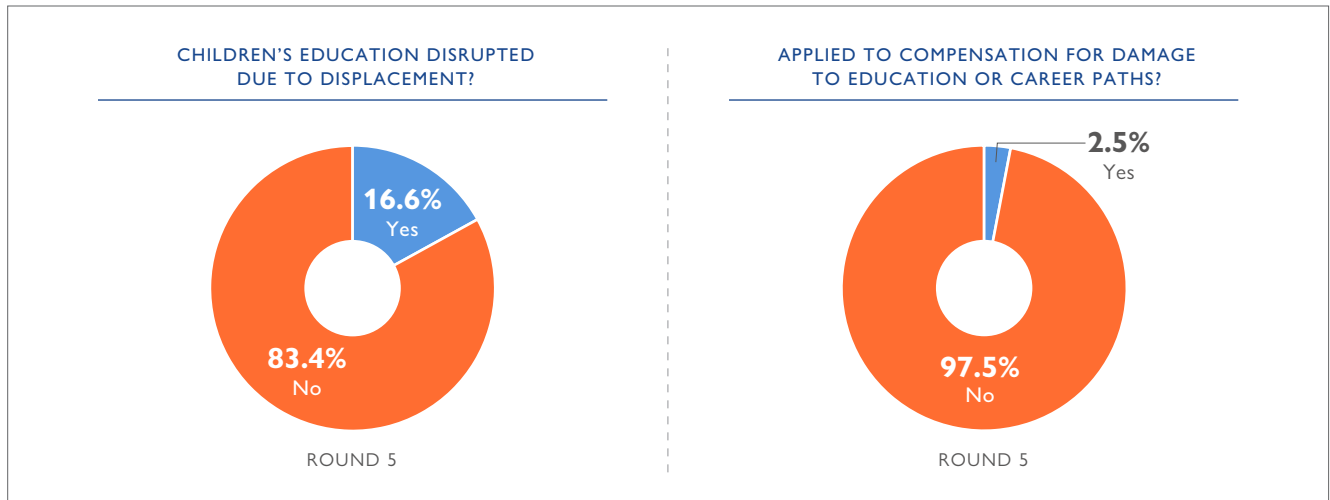
In Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020), 74 per cent of IDP households have at least one child between the ages of 6 and 20 living in the household. Of these IDP households with these school-aged children, 17 per cent report that the educational paths of children were disrupted due to their displacement, and 15 per cent say they have faced exclusion or limitation in accessing education always or sometimes. Less than three per cent applied for government compensation for damage to education or career paths.

Figure 7. IDPs: How many children between the ages of 6 and 20 live in the household?

	ROUND 5 %
None	26.0
	19.1
	15.1
	14.6
	14.4
	10.8

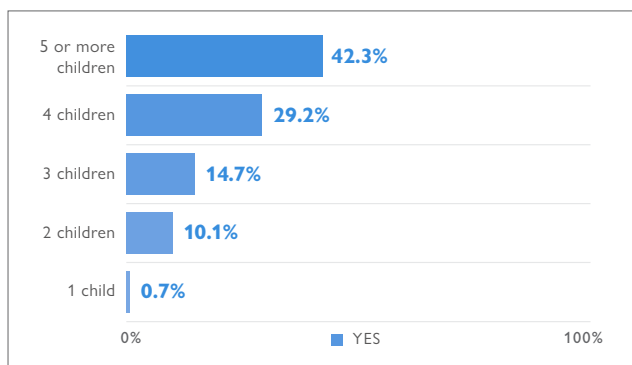
8 UNICEF USA, "How To Help Iraq and Its Children".

Figure 8. IDP Households with School-Aged Children (Ages 6-20)



Among IDP households who have school-aged children, only seven per cent report that none of their school-aged children are currently attending school. And for those who do have children in school, the overwhelming majority—83 per cent—report that their school-aged children have not missed three or more months of school in the previous year. Though the share of households that report their children have missed three or more months of school is relatively small (17%), *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq* suggests that there is an inverse relationship between family size and likelihood of at least one school-aged child in the household missing school. The more children in the family, the higher the share of households who say that at least one of their children missed three or more months of school. The share of households who report children missed three or more months of school is as high as 42 per cent among households with five or more school-aged children and as high as 29 per cent among households with four or more children.

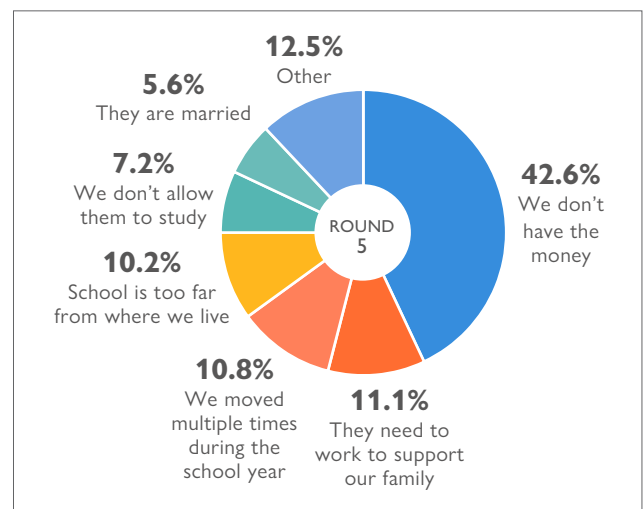
Figure 9. IDPs Round 5: Households with School-Aged Children (Ages 6-20): Did any children miss 3 or more months of school?



This correlation between number of children in a household and the number who miss school is linked to finances. IDP households with school-aged children report spending an average of 86,292 IQD (76 USD) per month on expenses, such as school supplies, uniforms, and transportation. As one father displaced with his family to Basra details, "I have three children. Two of them dropped out of school because we were displaced and we had no source of income to cover the school needs. My son dropped out of school in order to assist me with work, but my younger daughter is in her first year."

When families who currently send their children to school but whose children had missed three or more months of school were asked to explain why, the plurality of households—43 per cent—say the first most important reason is because they lacked the money. An additional 11 per cent report that the children needed to work to support the family.

Figure 10. IDPs: Main Reason for Children's Missing School\*



\*Among households who currently have children enrolled in school.



A similar—if not more pronounced—trend emerges among the seven per cent of households who send none of their school-aged children to school: 49 per cent say it is because they lack the money and 13 per cent who say they lack needed documents. Getting children into schools is a challenge in the Iraqi system because they can only register during the first 50 days of the school year. And according to UNESCO, “schools may refuse to register a child without required identity and school documents.”<sup>9</sup>

The finances of their families, however, are not the only obstacle standing in the way of IDP children’s education: the quality of education system and the home environment also present impediments. A father from Basra whose son and daughter are both in primary school explains, “They go to government schools, so there are many obstacles that interrupt their learning and harm their quality of education. The schools are overcrowded, and the teachers are neglectful, especially in populous communities where there is no serious monitoring or follow-up by the parents.”

Such assessments have been borne out in other studies of the structural or system-wide impediments faced by children who are able to attend school. In general, “school conditions are [...] poor, with damaged classrooms, large class sizes, limited teaching and learning materials and insufficient sanitary facilities and drinking water.”<sup>10</sup> In addition, the quality of education is weak, with UNESCO citing reports that “children’s reading and math skills are significantly below grade level.”<sup>11</sup>

These infrastructural problems become compounded in household environment. As the son of an IDP family displaced from one district to another within Kirkuk recounts, “Before displacement, the instruction in our areas was good. The teachers were very helpful and they used to help students a lot. My father and mother used to prepare a suitable study environment for us in our large house, and therefore our education level was better. But after displacement, my sister was obliged to drop out from school due to financial difficulties at the beginning of displacement. As I said before, our home is small and not suitable for studying.” While this young man goes on to suggest that through his dedication and perseverance, he

has continued to pursue work and education at the same time, others are bounded by legacies of the older generation’s lack of education. “My children’s education level is very low, since we can’t provide a good environment for them to learn in here,” says a father in Kirkuk. “My wife and I can’t help them study since we did not finish school. We do not put effort into their education, because I imagine that they will not be able to finish their studies also like us because our family is not educated.”

IDP households, particularly those who have four or more children, are at a greater risk of not sending children to school. Education also faces threats from parental evaluation on the state of the current education system, in addition to threats from judgements about the utility of education: if there are no jobs to absorb those who make it to advanced degrees, what is the purpose of an education? If these trends continue, increased financial pressure on households in light of the economic fallout of the current pandemic may increasingly force families with fewer children to withdraw children to save costs or to have children work to make up for lost income, particularly if their continued education represents an immediate cost with no long-term reward.

9 Alison Oswald, “Fixing the Past: Conflict, Displacement and Education in Iraq”, *UNESCO World Education Blog*, November 2019. “Students who have missed less than two years of school are placed according to age rather than last grade completed, effectively skipping up to two years of instruction without any remedial support and children who have missed more than two years of class cannot return to a regular school.”

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid. See also results from Save the Children’s *Annual Status of Education Report’s (ASER)* literacy and numeracy assessment, *Education Assessment: August 2017*, Save the Children Iraq, August 2017.

## IDPs: WHAT JUSTICE MEANS TO THEM

As stability and order has returned to their places of origin, IDP households' primary requirement for returning home has shifted: in Round 1 (March-May 2016), 65 per cent said a good safety situation was key for their return. In Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020), the most common response (48%) is money and a source of livelihood. This growing importance of money is reflected in a dramatic, 17-point increase in the share of households that say reparations and compensation are key for achieving justice (from 2% in Round 2 to 19% in Round 5).

The urgency of reparations notwithstanding, the majority of IDP households in both Rounds 2 (February-April 2017) and Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020) agree: the prosecution of criminals remains the most important aspect of achieving justice. It is worth noting that IDPs call members of

ISIL "criminals" and thus this response is about believing that the Iraqi government should find and punish ISIL members and collaborators.

Iraqis likely think that prosecuting ISIL as criminals now will help stabilize Iraq and prevent the rise of such groups in the future. As to who should be part of seeking justice for Iraqis, more than two-thirds of IDP households are very or somewhat comfortable with international organization playing a share in the process of transitional justice, though the share has slipped by 10 percentage points between Rounds 2 and 5 (February-April 2017 and October 2019-January 2020). These responses are likely due to the changing political environments, including the rise in global tensions as played out in Iraq.

Figure 11. IDPs: Most Important Aspect of Achieving Justice

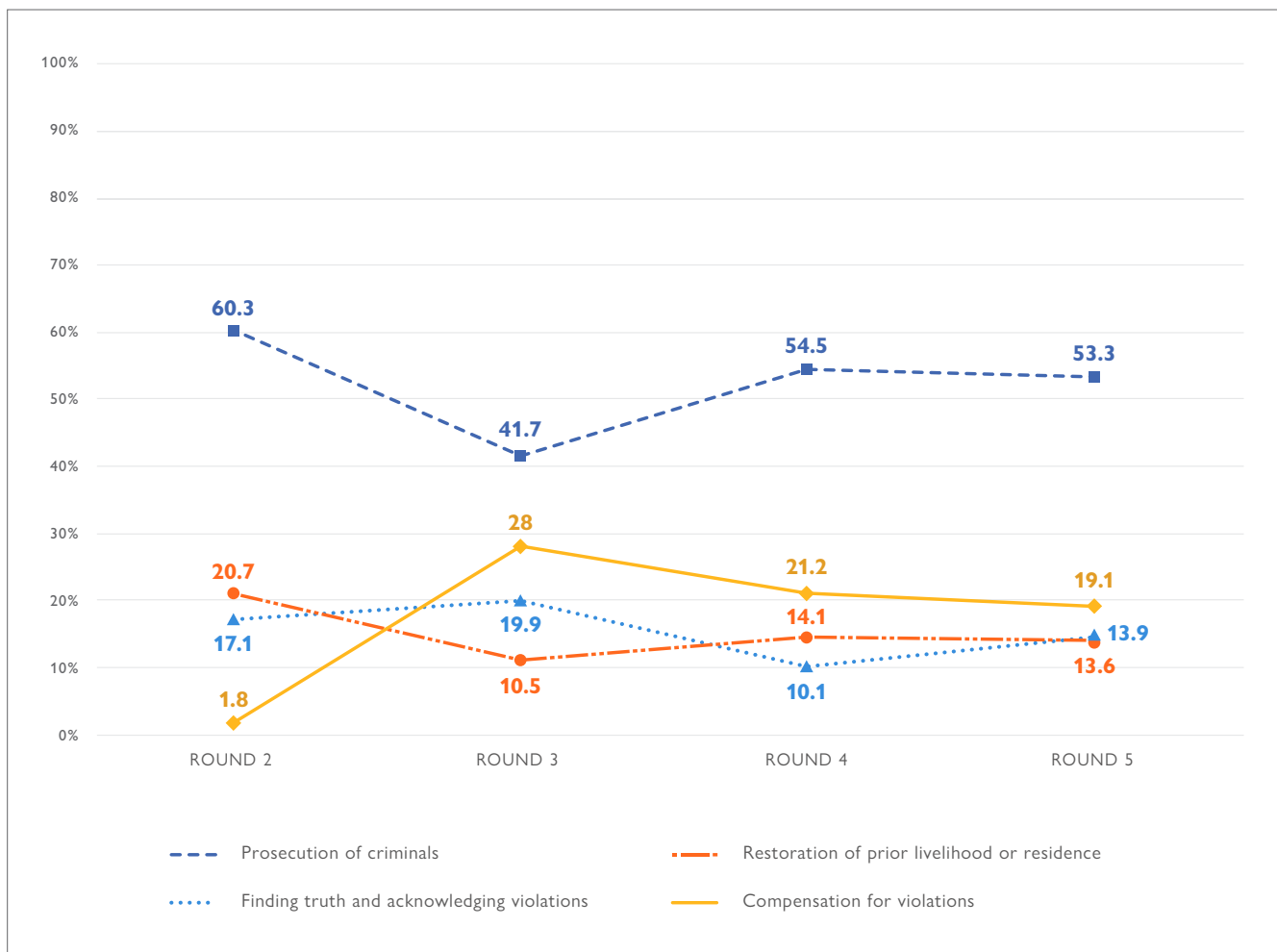
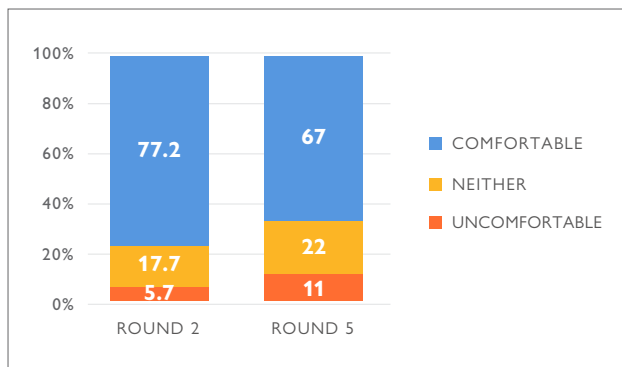


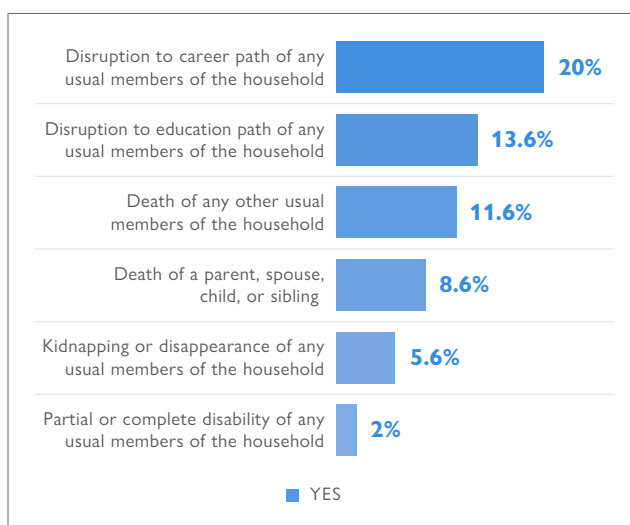


Figure 12. IDPs: Comfort with International Organizations Playing a Role in Transitional Justice



That the prosecution of criminals remains a key concern is unsurprising in light of the suffering IDPs have endured on account of ISIL’s onslaught: 20 per cent had an immediate relative or usual member of the family killed. Nearly six per cent report that a usual member of the household was kidnapped or disappeared. One in five households report a disruption in the career path of a usual household member, and 14 per cent report a disruption to the education path of a usual household member. Despite these injuries, five per cent or fewer in Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020) report applying for each death, kidnapping or disappearance of family members; partial and complete disability; or temporary injuries. There is likely either a sense that no compensation that could possibly do justice to such losses, or that they see these applications as unlikely to yield compensation.

Figure 13. IDPs: Injustices Suffered on Account of ISIL Incursion



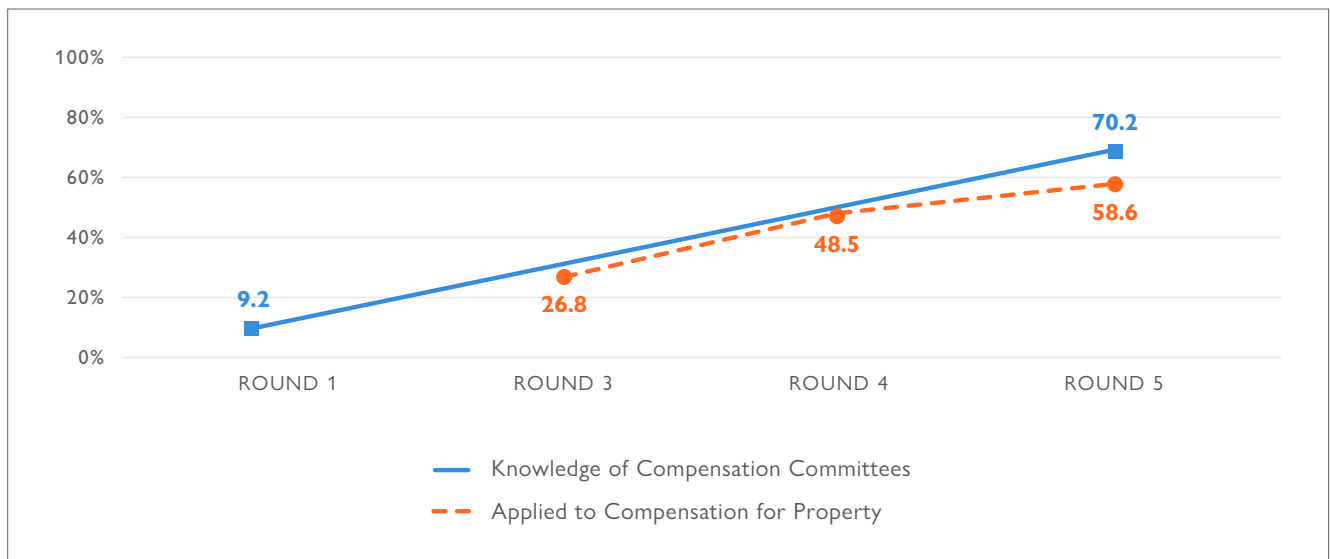
One father of a family from Balad in Salah al-Din recounted his family’s long and circuitous route to flee from an ISIL controlled area to safety. In trying to get out, his young son and daughter died. “Until now, I can’t get that out of my mind. We had to bury them along the road because of the difficulty of transporting them here.” But his family’s tragedy didn’t end there. “After our departure, a number of my siblings’ children refused to leave because they wanted to protect our lands and our homes. We eventually learned that ISIL killed them, cut their necks, and hung them up on our property. This is among the things that I will never forget. We know who did this and who helped ISIL and we will take what is rightfully ours when we return.”

These stories of horrific violence and loss that Iraqis experienced at the hands of ISIL extremists, most of whom were Iraqis themselves, will make achieving a sense of “justice” a challenge and a reckoning with the role of identity and the nation. Hence, as the IDP households contemplate this question about the most important aspect of achieving justice, these experiences make clear that the prosecution of individuals – criminals -- who enacted this violence plays a large role in their sense of justice about what ISIL did.

Compensation for ISIL-related damage began, according to the Iraqi Council of Ministry documentation, in January 2018. Because of issues with establishing the Compensation Commissions, it has been a slow process to extend bureaucracies into some of these areas. Thus, there has been a significant delay in getting ISIL-related compensation as well as compensation for war damages distributed.<sup>12</sup> But compensation for destruction is important to displaced Iraqis. In fact, in Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020), a much more significant share of IDP households have applied for compensation for their property than had applied earlier. With 53 per cent of reporting complete destruction or heavy damage to property and another 42 per cent reporting partial damage, the condition of their homes in their places of origin has precluded many IDP households from returning home. Over the years, IDPs’ knowledge of compensation has grown exponentially and reached 70 per cent in Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020) (though nearly 30% still say they have not heard of the compensation committees established by the government to compensate for the loss of property, death or absence of family members, and career and education disruptions). Still as knowledge has increased, so has the share of IDPs who have applied to compensation. In Round 5, the share has reached a peak, and nearly 60 per cent have applied to access restitution and compensation for property.

12 The HLP Sub-cluster chaired by UN-Habitat Iraq and NRC has produced detailed reports on the process related to filing a compensation claim. See *Property Compensation Guidelines Based on Iraqi Law 20, 2009 And Law 57, 2015 (First Amendment)*, December 2018. The challenges faced are detailed in *Advocacy Note on Property Compensation Scheme in Iraq: Challenges & Recommendations* (n/d).

Figure 14. IDPs: Compensation



Most IDP households report applying at the subcommittees of the Central Committee for Compensating the Affected (CCCA). Created by Law 20 of 2009 and headquartered in Baghdad, the CCCA is responsible for overseeing definitions of affected persons, the types of compensation available, and the processes by which affected persons apply for reparations.<sup>13</sup> The majority (84%) who applied are still waiting for a decision on their application. Almost 10 per cent of those who applied have had their claim accepted in Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020), a ten-fold increase from Round 4 (August-November 2018). The number of claims that were rejected also rose.

Figure 15. IDPs: Where did you apply for compensation?

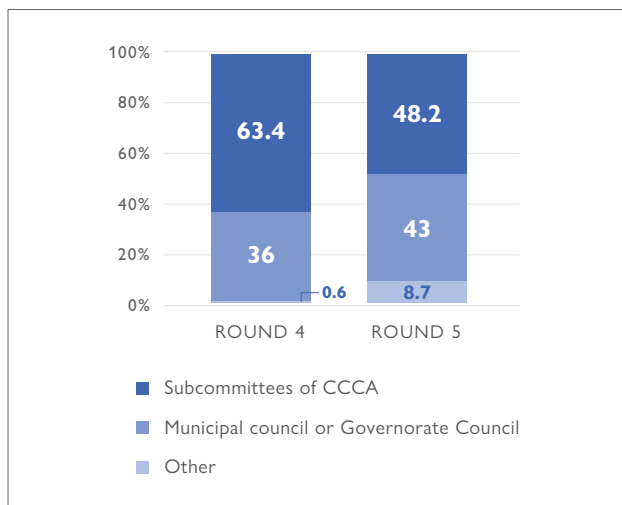
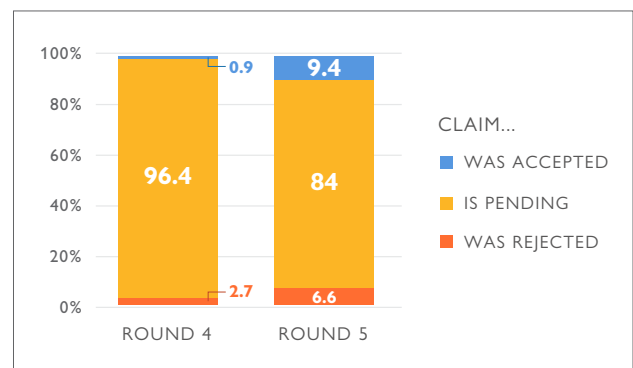


Figure 16. IDPs: What is the status of your application?



Though compensation was not necessarily the most important aspect of achieving justice, it was the most frequently cited solution provided by IDPs when they were asked to explain in a few words what they believed would be the most useful thing the government of Iraq could do to remedy injustices they experienced. This compensation, however, was not necessarily just for housing. Rather, some IDPs elaborated: “Compensate with a monthly stipend or financial grant to establish income-generating projects” or “help us integrate into the governorates of displacement by distributing loans.” Others added “increase food rations,” “guarantee education for my children,” and “provide health care” or “health services and build hospitals.” Such requests for compensation broadly understood complement demands to “prosecute ISIS criminals” and requests reconstruct or rebuild services in liberated areas. To summarize in the words of one IDP, justice means to, “Free the displaced from the name ‘the displaced.’”

13 IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq- Experiences Applying to Compensation*, January 2020.



SECTION 2:  
**RETURNEES**



# SAMPLED RETURNEES: SNAPSHOT (N=1,015)

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

With order and security slowly being restored to the areas from which they originally fled:

**93%** say they **feel completely or moderately safe**

**ONLY 2%** report that security procedures served as an impediment to each getting an identification document, renting an apartment, or selling property or real estate



## HOUSING, LAND & PROPERTY

Upon returning home:

**76%** of sampled returnee households are living in homes they own



Though this share is smaller than the **88%** who owned their homes prior to displacement



Almost **70%** say their property is partially damaged

## STANDARD OF LIVING

**85%** report being able to meet basic needs

**42%** need to **reduce household expenses** to be able to do so

**823K IQD (723 USD)**

spent on average in monthly expenses by IDP households which include housing, utilities, food, transportation, and medical and educational expenses. Of this amount:



Cost of food accounts for **43%**



Utility costs account for **16%**

Few sampled returnee households incur rental costs.

## EMPLOYMENT & LIVELIHOOD

**29%** of IDP households report that they have a source of income

**29%**

Public sector jobs

**28%**

Business

**25%**

Informal labor



Though **528** sampled returnee households indicated they came from rural areas, only **31 households** have returned to work in the **agriculture section**, compared to **193** who worked in agriculture before displacement

**ONLY 31 households** report receiving any humanitarian aid



## DOCUMENTATION

**<4%** report having lost any of their documentation

**98%**

of those who lost documents have replaced all or some of them

## FAMILY REUNIFICATION

**3%** say they had family members separated for three months or more



**50%** of them have no plans to reunite

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Participation in public affairs remains low:

**5%** said they have volunteered in any activity organized by any civic group, cultural club, or social or professional association

**7%**

have attended a meeting of such groups

## JUSTICE & REMEDIES

**WHILE 64%** of sampled returnees have applied for compensation from the government for their losses

**ONLY 18%** say that reparations or compensation is the most important aspect of achieving justice

**RATHER 65%** –a majority– say that **the prosecution of criminals** is most important for achieving justice

## SAMPLED RETURNEES: GRAPPLING WITH SCARS OF PROTRACTED CONFLICT IN AREAS OF RETURN

The IDP households participating in *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq* began returning to their districts of origin as early as Round 2 (February-April 2017). The study continued to track these returnees and monitor their progress towards a durable solution because the IASC Framework provides a rights-based rather than a geography-based definition of a durable solution. Return home is not necessarily analogous with the restoration of rights or freedom from the continued burden of having been displaced. Nowhere is this as apparent as in the sectors of healthcare, education, and justice.

The number of returnee households in the study continuously has increased over time, from 452 in Round 2 to 622 in Round 3; 1,100 in Round 4; and 1,292 in Round 5. Of the initial 452 households in Round 2 (February-April 2017), 404 households have remained returnees through Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020); 31 have dropped out of the study; and the remaining 17 have been either secondarily displaced or moved to a different district after returning home in one or more rounds.<sup>14</sup>

The chronological component of return is tied to geographic patterns in the liberation campaigns that the Iraqi army and coalition forces launched to reclaim land held by ISIL in northern Iraq: Anbar, Diyala, and Salah al-Din were among the first governorates to be liberated in 2016. Of the first group of 452 returnees, 73 per cent (330 households) had returned to Anbar followed by 14 per cent (64 households) to Diyala and 8 per cent (38 households) to Salah al-Din.

The Iraqi liberation campaign was declared successful by Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi in December 2017,<sup>15</sup> and accordingly, the greatest increase in returns among study household participants happened between Round 3 (July-September 2017) and Round 4 (August-November 2018). By Round 4, returnees accounted for 30 per cent (1,100 out of 3,635 households) of the study sample. Moreover,

they had returned to all seven of the governorates of origin. As such, this section of the report focuses on those 1,015 households who were returnees in both Rounds 4 and 5 (August-November 2018 and October 2019-January 2020) of the study and that remain returned across this regional distribution (see Figure 4).<sup>16</sup>

While 76 per cent of the 1,015 sampled returnee households in Rounds 4 and 5 (August-November 2018 and October 2019-January 2020) may have returned to the homes they owned before leaving, their home districts—and their homes themselves—are not identical to the ones they left as many as six years earlier. According to a World Bank needs' assessment of seven governorates affected by ISIS— identical to the governorates of origin in *Access to Durable Solutions*— education and health represent the two social sectors that suffered the most damage amounting to 2.8 trillion IQD (2.4 billion USD) and 2.7 trillion IQD (2.3 billion USD), respectively.<sup>17</sup> Against this backdrop, sampled returnees have returned to areas where services are slowly coming back, but not at a rate to satisfy needs. A family from Mosul who returned after taking refuge in Baghdad described their living situation as follows: “We live in a very small rented house and the streets are destroyed. The area is not following any regulations for living and there are no power lines. We get electricity from private generators. As for the water, we buy it as well because there is no potable water.”

14 *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq* measures return at the district level such that moving to a different district in the same governorate of origin would no longer make them returnees but rather place them in another study-defined category: movers, who are not discussed in this report. For more on mover households, please see: IOM Iraq and Georgetown University, *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq: Moving in Displacement*, September 2019.

15 “Iraq declares war with Islamic State is over,” BBC News, 9 December 2017.

16 The raw number of returnees increased by 192 households between Round 4 and Round 5 (August-November 2018 and October 2019-January 2020), but these represent newly returned households. Furthermore, the 1,015 households who were returnees in both Round 4 and Round 5 are fewer than 1,100 households in Round 4 because 85 households were either secondarily displaced; became movers as explained in the note just above; or dropped out of the study.

17 World Bank Group, *Iraq Reconstruction and Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates*, January 2018.

## SAMPLED RETURNEES: HEALTHCARE AT HOME

Sampled returnees' challenges in accessing healthcare brings to the fore the latent tensions endemic to reconstruction efforts: the quickest route to restoring healthcare services and making them physically *available* is not the same as making healthcare *affordable*. "Accessing" healthcare thus becomes a conundrum.

While the need for healthcare among sampled returnees decreased by 11 points between Rounds 4 and 5 (August-November 2018 and October 2019-January 2020), households reporting they needed to access medical care are still in the overwhelming majority. Of the 69 per cent of households reporting that at least one member of the family required medical care in Round 5, 48 per cent need it for a chronic condition.

Figure 17. SAMPLED RETURNEES: Household Members Requiring Healthcare

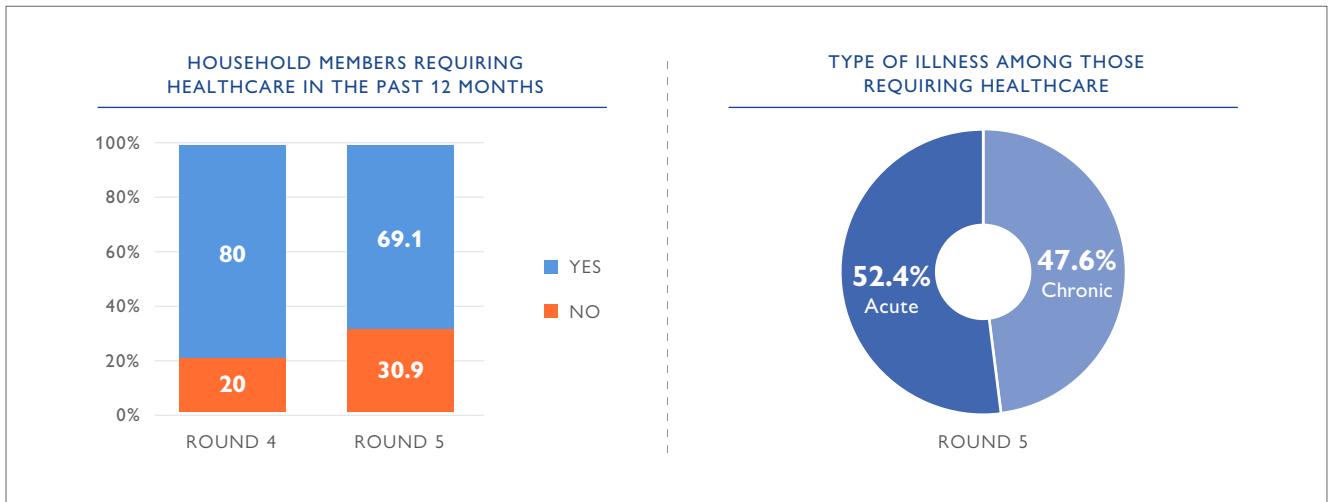
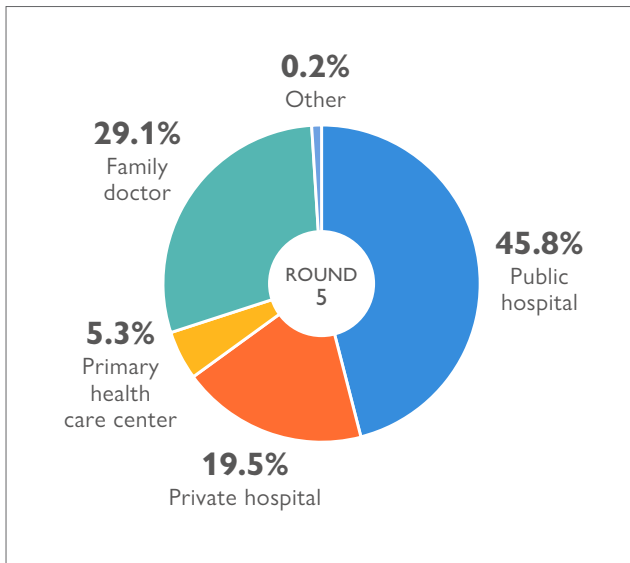


Figure 18. SAMPLED RETRUNEES: Type of Healthcare Facility Used to Get Treatment



A little more than half get treatment at the public hospital or primary health care center system. The World Bank's Iraq reconstruction assessment provides insight as to why this may be the case. Damages to the health sector in areas of return were as high as 1.2 trillion IQD (1 billion USD) and nearly or just over half a trillion IQD (420 million USD) in each Anbar and Kirkuk. Public institutions were particularly hard hit: of all damage to hospitals, 92 per cent was to *public* while only eight per cent was to private hospitals; furthermore, of the estimated 5.2 trillion IQD (4.4 billion USD) needed to rehabilitate health services across the seven governorates, 90 per cent (4.7 trillion IQD, 3.9 billion USD) would be needed for the public sector.<sup>18</sup> In Anbar alone, one estimate by the World Health Organization suggests that almost 50 per cent of healthcare was looted or destroyed by ISIL.<sup>19</sup> As such, the World Bank's short-term recommendation (1 year) suggested that the most vital areas were to rehabilitate were primary health care (PHC) centers, train healthcare

18 *Ibid.* pg. 20-22.

19 World Health Organization, *Restoring specialized medical care for returnee communities in west Anbar districts, Iraq*, October 2018.



workers, and ensure the availability of medical supplies before turning to the curative sector in the medium term (2-5 years) and focusing on “improving financial coverage for the poor through, for instance, defining and subsidizing a package of essential health care services to the poor, mainly women and children.”<sup>20</sup>

Figure 19. World Bank Group Damage Assessment to Health Sector by Governorate<sup>a</sup>

GOVERNORATE	DAMAGE COST (IN IQD BILLION)
Anbar	477.8
Babylon	13.8
Baghdad	91.9
Diyala	190.6
Kirkuk	523.3
Ninewa	1,236.8
Salah al-Din	175.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,709.8 (2.3 billion USD)</b>

<sup>a</sup> Table reproduced from World Bank Group, *Iraq Reconstruction and Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates*, January 2018, pg. 22.

Data from *Access to Durable Solutions Among IDPs in Iraq* suggests that while primary care services and treatments are slowly being rehabilitated, “financial coverage” suggested in the medium term of rehabilitation has been slow to come. The shares of sampled returnee households reporting they encountered problems in accessing health-care in their places of origin stays constant at around 40 per cent in both Rounds 4 and 5 (August–November 2018 and October 2019–January 2020), but the stated *reasons* for their difficulties change: The share of sampled returnees citing lack of treatment or medicine at their clinic or hospital dropped significantly from 40 per cent in Round 4 to just 14 per cent in Round 5. At the same time, nearly 80 per cent report not being able to afford the cost of medicine or treatment in Round 5, up from 54 per cent in Round 4.

Figure 20. SAMPLED RETURNEES: Had problems in accessing needed healthcare in the past 12 months?

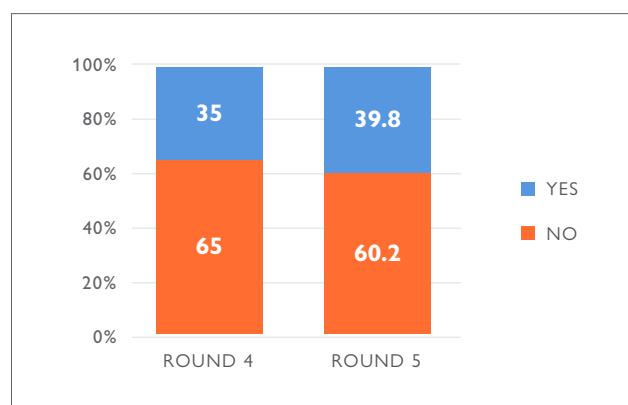
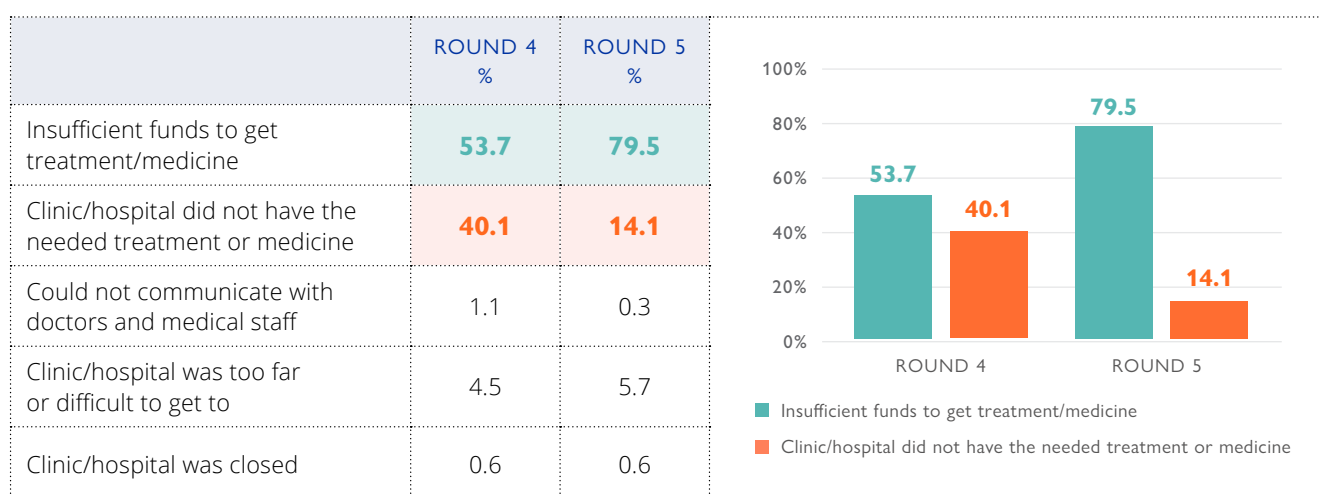


Figure 21. SAMPLED RETURNEES: Main Problem Encountered in Accessing Needed Healthcare



<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 23.

This account from a father in his 40s shows how of a family deals with both chronic and emergency health care needs and the toll it takes on them financially. The family was displaced from Diyala to Kirkuk and returned to Diyala in Round 2 (February-April 2017). He reported in Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020) that “my mother is sick and has to see a doctor once a month, and I also have to get treatment for myself every month. There are many necessary things that we have to go without because we don’t have enough money. Since you last contacted us, our situation has deteriorated a lot. My brother lost his job because his leg is broken and he can’t work

anymore. He used to contribute by providing for his family and buying medication for my mother. At the present time, I alone am responsible for providing for the whole family.”

A father in his 30s who returned in Round 4 (August-November 2018) to Mosul describes suffering from chronic diseases (diabetes and arthritis). He says, “As for my visit to the doctor, I have not been to the doctor for five months now. Although I suffer from sickness, I need to work to earn money so that I can afford the necessary treatment the doctor specifies.”

## SAMPLED RETURNEES: EDUCATION

More than 80 per cent of sampled returnees have at least one child between the ages of 6 and 20 living with them, and approximately a quarter report that their education paths were interrupted on account of the ISIL incursion and their subsequent displacement. But the significant amount of damage sustained by the education sector—which in raw costs are even higher than those sustained by the healthcare sector—in each of the seven governorates of origin does not seem to have hampered sampled returnees’ ability to send their children to school. Instead, if the conundrum of “accessing” healthcare was between availability and affordability, the conundrum of “accessing” education is between availability and quality.

Figure 22. SAMPLED RETURNEES: How many children between the ages of 6 and 20 live in the household?






	ROUND 5 %
None	20.7
	14.4
	17.5
	20.9
	11.7
	14.8

Figure 23. SAMPLED RETURNEES: Education path of any usual members of the household disrupted because of ISIL/displacement?

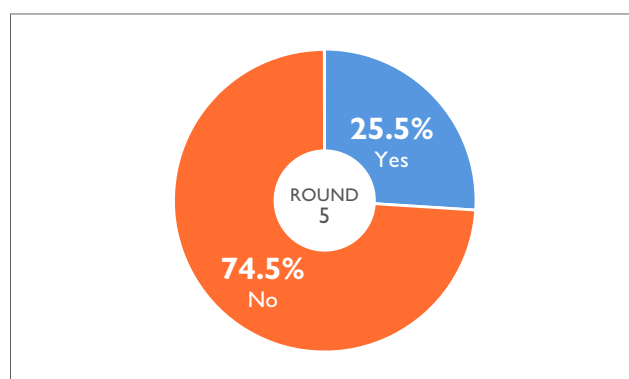


Figure 24. World Bank Group Damage Assessment to Education Sector by Governorate<sup>a</sup>

GOVERNORATE	DAMAGE COST (IN IQD BILLION)
Anbar	747.6
Babylon	100.1
Baghdad	393.7
Diyala	165.9
Kirkuk	474.3
Ninewa	741.5
Salah al-Din	139.4
TOTAL	2,762.6

a. Table reproduced from World Bank Group, *Iraq Reconstruction and Investment: Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates*, January 2018, pg. 27.

Among the sampled returnee households who have school-aged children, 97 per cent say all of those children are enrolled in school, and 85 per cent say that none of their children have missed three months of school or more. Of the 15 per cent (115 sampled returnee households) whose children have missed three months or more of school, almost half of them say it is due to financial reasons: 38 per cent of them say it is because they don't have the money to pay for the nominal costs associated with public education and another 11 per cent say it is because the children need to work to support the family. Of the 31 households who do not send their school aged children to school, 11 households say it is because of the financial situation followed by 3 households who say the kids work.

This father who returned with his family to Diyala from Kirkuk described the challenging transition of his children from displacement to returning to school: "With respect to my children and their educational level, my older children did not complete their secondary education -- they dropped out of school after middle school because they wanted to work instead. My daughters used to study before displacement in the village, but after displacement they didn't go to schools for a year. They continued studying when we were in Kirkuk for one year. After returning they'd grown up, and they were in classes with much younger children. The displacement was the reason for their delay in school."

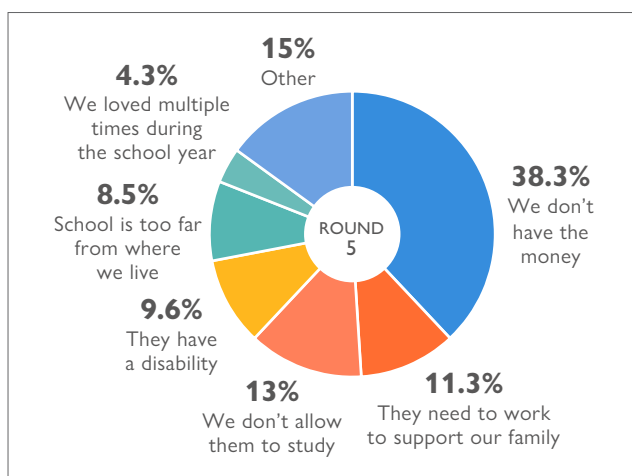
He, however, also was not intending to allow his daughters to continue on: "I have a rule, which is that I don't allow my daughters to continue going to school after completing primary school (after the sixth grade). The reason for this is that I see that the purpose of going to school is only to learn reading and writing."

It is critical to note that enrollment does not signify a full school day or quality of education. In fact, according to the Iraq Education Cluster Strategy report for 2019, "Over half of existing schools need some form of rehabilitation or provision of equipment to offer a safe, protective and conducive learning environment. Further, the shortage of adequate facilities means that schools host two or even three shifts of children, which reduces learning time and leaves few or no opportunities for any extra-curricular activities, including psychosocial support and social emotional learning. Students attending afternoon shifts may receive poorer education because both students and teachers are tired and less productive."<sup>21</sup>

This family that returned to Diyala after taking refuge in Kirkuk describes the overall challenges of the physical school environment: "The children go to school although the school is damaged; the ceiling is not well-constructed and rainwater leaks in, so the children do not go to school on rainy days because the classrooms are cold and children will be vulnerable to respiratory infections. Because of the long distances, the teachers from another village or subdistrict only come to school two days a week. The principal is from the village, so she teaches the students when the teachers are gone." However, for this family, the money needed to just get supplies for the children was a challenge: "The school doesn't provide the children with school supplies. Many of the children in the village can purchase school supplies, but my nephews are sad because my brother can't afford to buy them these supplies. So I bought books and notebooks for them."

Some accounts of returnees from the interviews shows the confluence of all these different factors that affect the quality of children's education and their ability to access it. This family returned to Anbar from Basra, and the father describes his daughter's school experiences that illustrate these factors. "My daughter is currently in the third grade of primary school. There are many things that should keep my daughter out of school, first of all our difficult living conditions. We cannot provide transportation for her which means she has to walk 1.5 km per day back and forth. And there is no way we can provide her school supplies. But we are trying as much as possible to encourage her and show her the bright side of taking such challenges to continue her education and attend school. The achievement is her continuous progress as she is now in the third grade of primary school, which is a very good thing given our circumstances. She has been going to school since our return and this enabled her to make friends with some children in the area and at school."

Figure 25. SAMPLED RETURNEES: Main Reason for Children's Missing School\* (n=115)



\*Among households who currently have children enrolled

21 Iraq Education Cluster, *Report: Education Cluster Strategy Iraq 2019*, pg. 8.



Parents' accounts of their challenges with education also focus their children's adjustments to new schooling environments as well as the psychological toll displacement has taken on the children. "At the beginning of our return, my children did not want to go to school because they were used to being on their own. This was because when we were displaced, they did not mix and interact much with other children. I used to live in Umm Qasr in Basra, which is quite remote and far from the center of Basra, and I was afraid to let them go out. That had perhaps a direct effect on their psychological well-being. They suffered from learning difficulties, had no desire to complete their homework, and could not concentrate on their studies. But after we returned, I was constantly trying with them, and thank God I got them back on the education track and thank God I made it. Now they

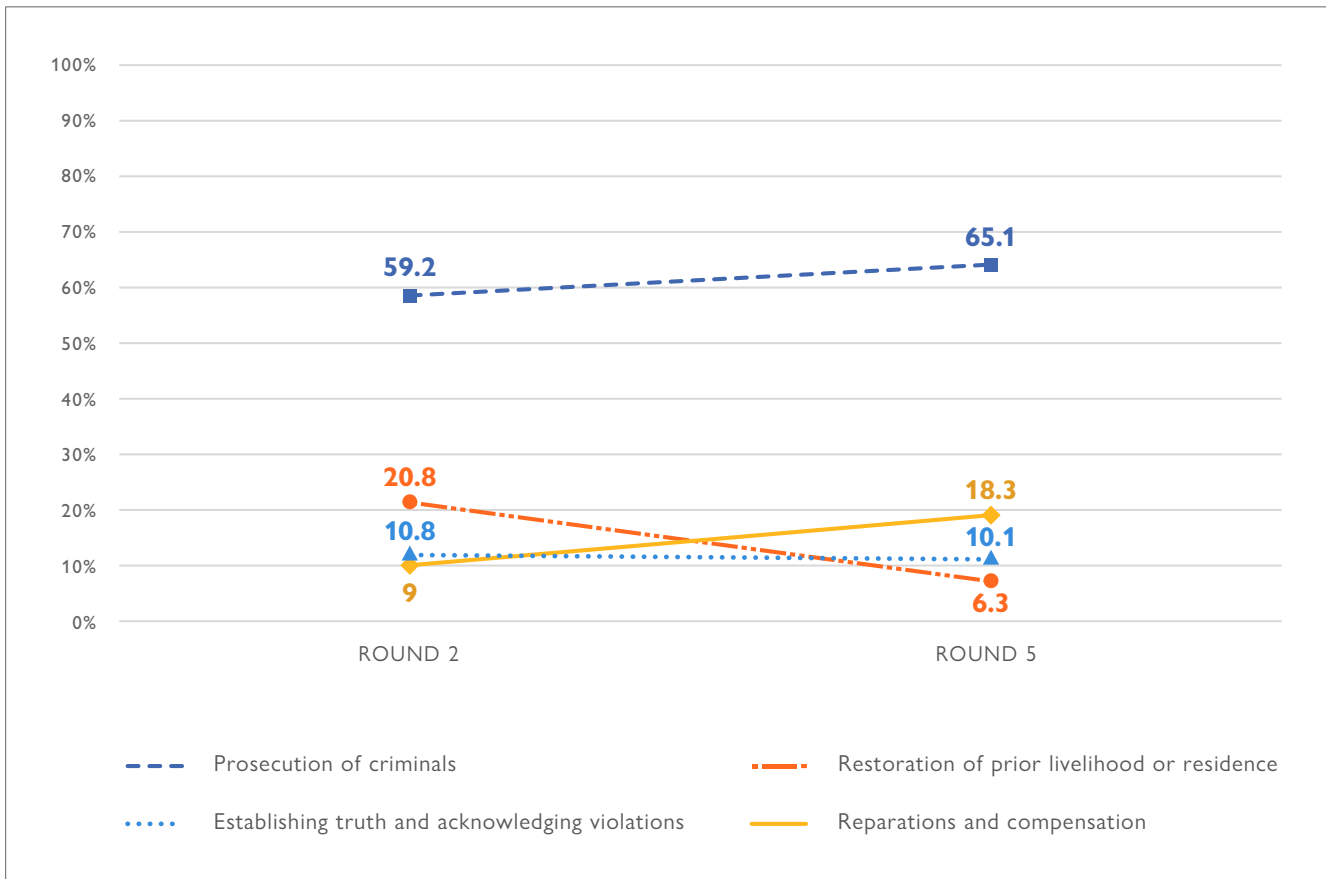
are doing well at school and following their studies. For me, success is not just about getting good grades; true success is continuing on with their studies."

Similarly, a family who returned to Mosul from Baghdad found that their children welcomed the return to the normalcy of a school they had known. "Some of my children left school because of displacement and some registered in schools after return. Some of the schools in Mosul have reopened, but they lack staff, school equipment, and some schools are destroyed and suffer from a great lack of water for use and others... Despite this, schooling became one of the good things, especially since the children are happy to return to schools in Mosul and thus got rid of their sense of displacement that left a psychological impact on them in general."

## SAMPLED RETURNEES: JUSTICE

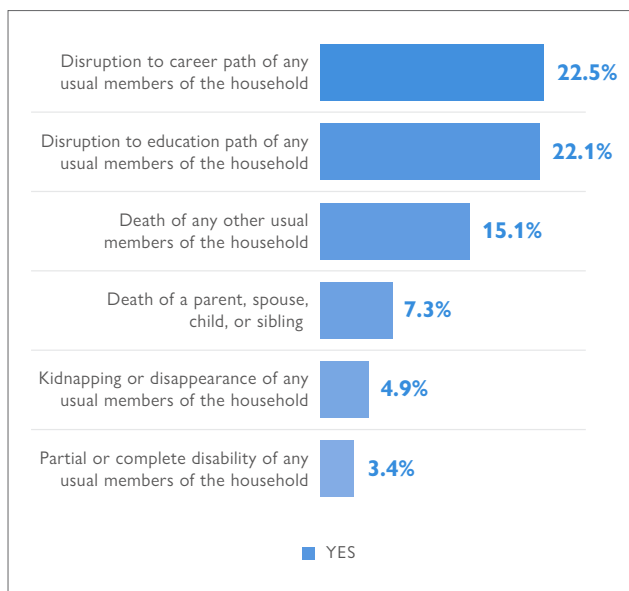
Iraqi sampled returnee households express that justice for them centers more than ever on the prosecution of criminals (65% in Round 5).

Figure 26. SAMPLED RETURNEES: Most Important Aspect of Achieving Justice



A father displaced to Basra elaborated on what suffering the injustices of ISIL occupation and subsequent displacement meant. “Most families have had the fabric of their families torn apart when family members were killed or went missing. Such a vulnerability threatened our ability to provide for our basic needs. This happened especially for women who became the heads of their households when they lost their husbands, exposing them to the worst abuses. Livelihoods, access to basic services and protection must be restored, taking into account our safety and dignity. We want accountability for all those who have violated our right to live in safety and peace. This is how we will feel that justice has been finally done.”

**Figure 27. SAMPLED RETURNEES: Injustices Suffered on Account of ISIL Incursion**



The lack of the rule of law is a major complaint of IDPs. A man from Diyala, who has since returned home recalled that “When I was in Basra, about three months after my displacement, one of the armed groups broke into my house and detained me in front of my family. They tied my hands and put the barrel of the pistol at the head of my 11-year-old son. They then transferred me to an unknown location. Through the interrogation which took about four hours, I was severely beaten and insulted. Once they realized I wasn’t the one they wanted, they released me. Although I knew who arrested me, I could not file a lawsuit against them, as the group has power and influence in the area. It would be fair enough if there was a law protecting victims of such violation, including providing for prosecution of the perpetrators and compensation, but unfortunately there is no such law.”

Other types of justice that ranked high included some type of financial remuneration for the damages to their lives: In Round 2 (February-April 2017), 21 per cent prioritized the restoration of their prior livelihoods and residences, whereas by Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020), this had dropped to just six per cent, with a commensurate rise of in seeking financial compensation or reparations (from 9% in Round 2 to 18% in Round 5). These changes suggest that with the passage of time, Iraqis see that the only ways to restore their previous homes and livelihoods is through the compensation system that has been established by the government.

Knowledge about the compensation committees grew among returnees (10% in Round 1 to 81% in Round 5). However, even if returnees know about the compensation committees, just 64 per cent are applying for compensation for property. By Round 5 (October 2019-January 2020), the system had been set up so that they could apply at Compensation Subcommittee offices (72%), rather than a local council offices or other governmental spaces (28%). Despite these huge changes in both the awareness of the committees and the numbers of households applying, more than 90 per cent in Rounds 4 and 5 (August-November 2018 and October 2019-January 2020) reported that their claims are “pending.” Just over 6 per cent had received compensation in Round 5, and another three per cent had been rejected.

A family from Ninewa who fled to Basra and has since returned reflected the frustration with the compensation process: “Compensation is a lie that has persisted for two years now, and there is no benefit to show for it. I applied almost two years ago, and my case was referred by the Damage Assessment Committee to the investigating judge, but I have yet to receive any compensation. There is no integrity in the compensation process, it is just lies and a waste of time. The administrative processes, from the application to the referral from the investigatory and assessment committees, all run smoothly. It is when the cases reach Baghdad that no one knows what happens with them. It’s like they disappear, and no one has any idea whether they were approved, rejected, burned, or simply ignored.”

It is imperative that the government committees move more quickly on these cases as getting compensation to families will not only help them rebuild their lives, but it will also help rebuild the economic infrastructure of the areas of return and as well as the rest of Iraq.

Figure 28. SAMPLED RETURNEES: Compensation

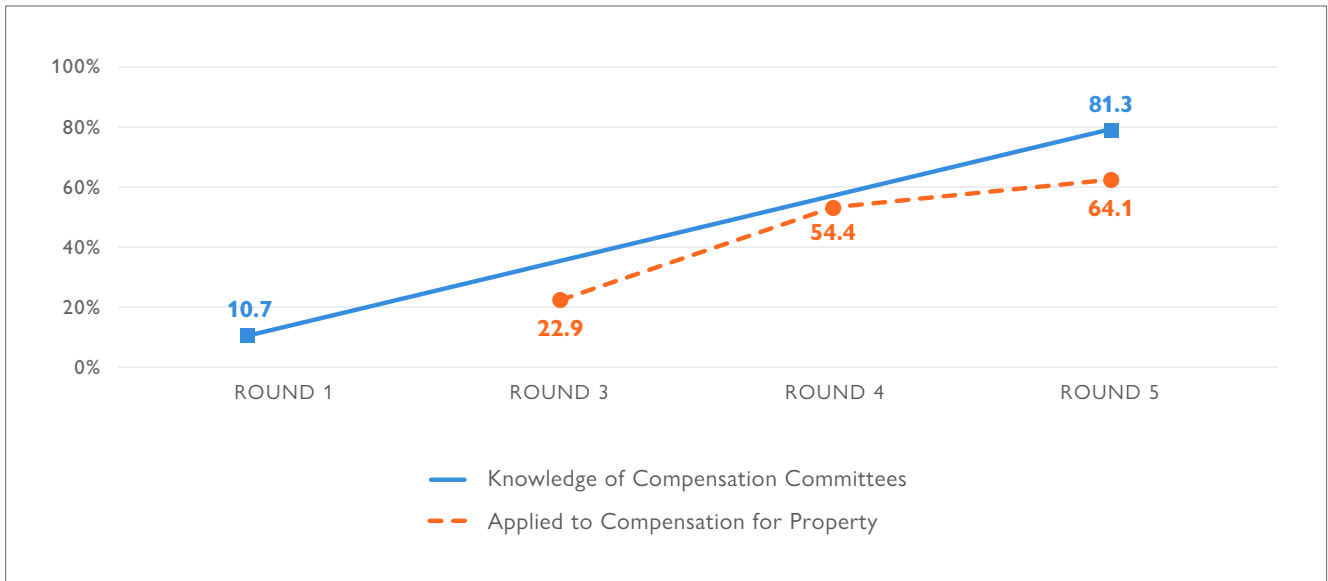


Figure 29. SAMPLED RETURNEES: Where did you apply for compensation?

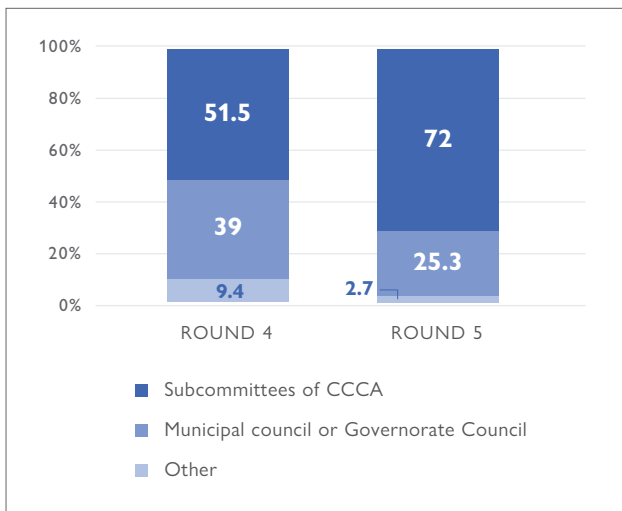
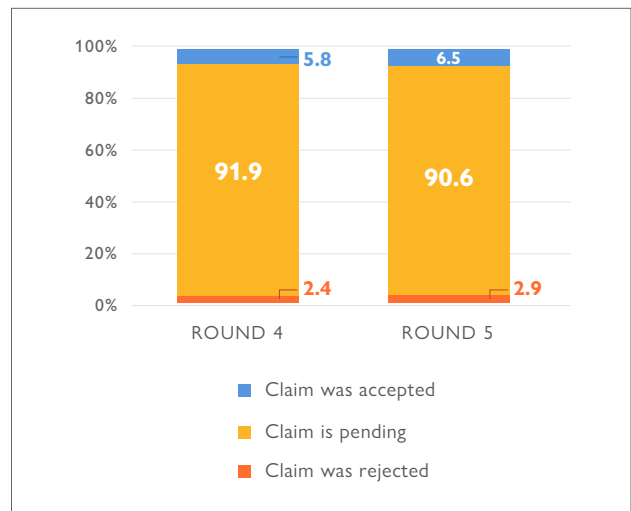


Figure 30. SAMPLED RETURNEES: What is the status of your application?



## CONCLUSION

The conclusions from this study are based on five rounds of data that have been collected with IDP households that are part of the non-camp population displaced from the governorates of Anbar, Babylon, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din to one of four governorates where the study was fielded: Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah.

This report covers both IDPs who have remained in displacement over the five rounds of data collection, and Returnees who returned to their home districts. Tracking

the households over time, no matter where they are, provides tangible data on a diverse population as it deals with the ups and downs of war, death, displacement, financial ruin, rebuilding, and return.

This fifth installment of the “years in displacement” series reveals many changes over time, both positive and negative. Safety continues to be both a priority as well as a reality for the vast majority of IDPs and Returnees. Their feelings of acceptance in their communities are high and



they have created or have rebuilt social networks in the areas of displacement or return. And most of their children are in school, which parents report as helping children have a sense of normalcy.

However, despite the seeming positive nature of the above findings, they mask the lack of stability and vulnerability in most parts of people's lives. Also, the sense of displacement remains: IDPs in particular, do not see achieving one of the three "durable solutions" as describing their situation. Rather, 84 percent still consider themselves displaced, even if other indicators of the eight Durable Solution criteria suggest that they have integrated.

The overall sense of instability is at both the personal as well as structural level. Only 1 in 10 IDPs reports receiving any kind of direct aid and the numbers are lower for Returnees. While the aid community has shifted to provide more developmental aid at the infrastructure level, and there are many improvements there, it means IDPs and Returnees have one less possible source of direct assistance on the personal level as they rebuild their lives. One way they continue to address their needs is through borrowing money: over 30 per cent of IDPs have taken out loans from family and friends. This is evidence of how they continue to suffer the financial burden of displacement. In addition, the main reason why parents do not send their children to school is because they do not have the money to pay for school supplies and transportation. While many more returnees now have access to medical facilities and medical care than in prior rounds, many more returnees cannot get that medical care because they cannot afford it. Financially, healthcare presents a triple-pronged burden: healthcare costs money, lack of healthcare means that some family members cannot work, and addressing urgent health care needs (as well as some chronic ones) means that households have to borrow money, exacerbating the debts that they take on.

On the structural level, the demonstrations throughout the country that started in October 2019 centered on issues that affect all Iraqis, including IDPs and returnees.<sup>22</sup> They focused particularly on rising costs, lack of work opportunities for youth, corruption, and lack of government services. According to the World Bank, "Non-oil sector investment execution stood at a mere 18%, raising concerns over public service delivery, a rising infrastructure gap, and a stalled reconstruction program."<sup>23</sup> The critiques of the government leveled by citizens, combined with the physical destruction of parts of Iraq by ISIL and the war that ousted them, point out the disconnect Iraqis feel from their political representatives

and those responsible for Iraq. Iraqi returnees are particularly aware of the physical devastation to infrastructure and health and education systems, as well as the slow pace of rebuilding and governmental compensation.

Among IDPs and Returnees, their sense of justice centers on prosecution of criminals, and compensation is second. Additionally, given the financial strains and precarity of the surveyed households, it is clear that providing timely compensation is a missed opportunity. Few have received compensation: Among returnees, it is only six per cent of those who applied. In the big picture, compensation is not only about a sense of justice and making Iraqis feel part of the nation; but it is also that compensation is also about accessing durable solutions, since it will allow returnees to rebuild their homes and businesses and IDPs to return to damaged or destroyed homes and shops and rebuild them. Compensation is also one way for the Iraqi government to support the return of the construction, agriculture, markets, and other business infrastructures by compensating with cash the very people who will rebuild and use those services.

In terms of education, it is positive that children are still in or have returned to attending schools. However, parents see declines in the quality of their children's education due to the destruction of physical spaces and lack of water or the overcrowding or second shift schools. Parents who themselves do not have high levels of education are unable to provide their children with the educational support they might need in order to succeed, and some do not see the value in their older children continuing their education if they can work now and make money for the family. In a very few cases, girls are kept home after finishing primary school because they are just seen as needing to know how to read and write, but will not need to gain knowledge or skills for working outside the home.

Finally, five rounds of surveying Iraqi IDPs and Returnees show that overall their lives remain tenuous. Without serious movement forward on infrastructure rebuilding to increase health care access for all, improving educational facilities, and rebuilding agricultural, manufacturing, and business infrastructures and climates, Iraqis lives will likely remain the same. Offering more possibilities of capital through microloans or small business loans—that doesn't require them to rely on family and friends—will offer entrepreneurial Iraqis to engage in opportunities around them.

22 Ranj Alaaldin, "The irresistible resiliency of Iraq's protesters", The Brookings Institution, 31 January 2020.

23 *The World Bank In Iraq*, Accessed 20 August 2020.

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