

# IOM EMERGENCY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS FOUR YEARS OF POST-SAMARRA DISPLACEMENT IN IRAQ



## I. POPULATION DISPLACEMENT AND RETURN IN IRAQ

**Four years after a severe wave of sectarian violence began, displaced families are returning and new displacements are rare. There is need for continued humanitarian support for the vulnerable displaced and sustainable solutions for those who wish to return, resettle, or integrate into their current locations.**

The February 22, 2006 bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra is widely considered the spark of escalating sectarian violence that drastically changed the cause and scale of displacement in Iraq, both to locations inside Iraq and to locations abroad.

Since February 2006, more than 1,600,000<sup>1</sup> Iraqis (270,000 families) have been displaced - approximately 5.5% of the total population. Of these 270,000 families, IOM monitoring teams assessed 221,983 (an estimated 1,331,898 individuals).<sup>2</sup> In addition, 62,361<sup>3</sup> returnee families (an estimated 374,166 individuals) have been identified across the country by IOM returnee field monitors and followed up with sample interviews.

These assessments, illustrated in this report, reveal the demographic composition and geographic journeys of the IDP populations remaining in displacement and returnee families who have come home. They also detail overwhelming basic needs such as adequate shelter, sufficient food, clean water, and access to employment.

### INSIDE:

- Displacement/Return Summary
- Post February 2006 Profile with Numbers, Identities, Locations, Origins
- Return potentials
- Humanitarian Needs & Response



A returnee woman in Fallujah receives job skills training

IOM assessments show that 49% of all post-Samarra IDPs would like to return to their places of origin, 29% would like to remain and integrate into their current places of displacement, and 19% would like to resettle in a third location.

Whether it is a matter of vulnerable IDP families living in squatter settlements who need permanent housing solutions, or families who wish to return yet face destroyed homes and property, there is a need for continued assistance and comprehensive plans for the future of these families.

IOM, together with other humanitarian organizations, is working with the Government of Iraq (GoI) to assist IDP and returnee families, but the response remains inadequately funded in proportion to the many and diverse needs across Iraq.

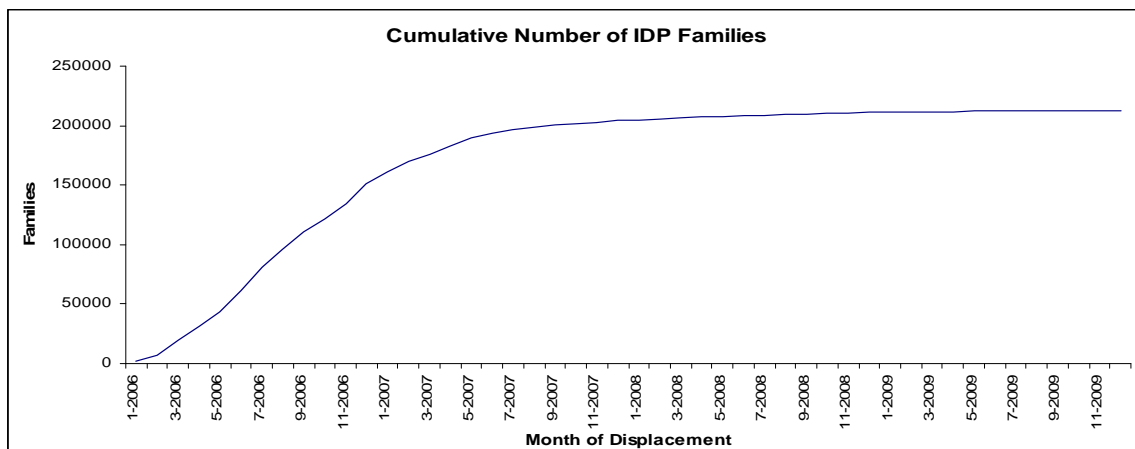
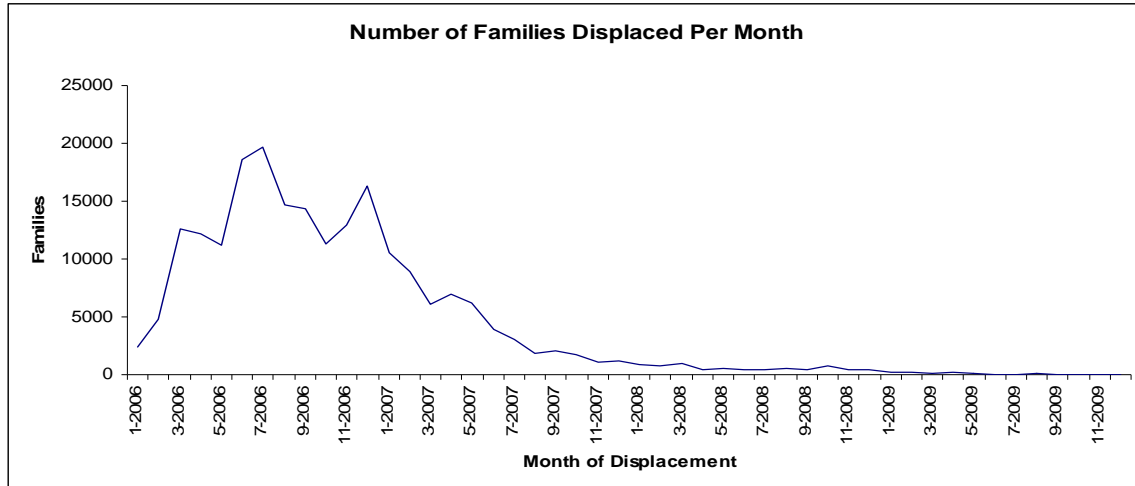
<sup>1</sup> As per figures from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) for the 3 northern governorates and the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) for the 15 central and southern governorates. See the IDP Working Group Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq Update (September 2008) for figures per governorate.

<sup>2</sup> For information on IOM's monitoring methodology, see "IOM Monitoring Needs Assessments Methodology" available at [www.iomiraq.net/library.html#IDP](http://www.iomiraq.net/library.html#IDP)

<sup>3</sup> The number of returnee families presented in this report is not the total number of returnees in Iraq, but the summary number of returnee families for locations (villages and neighborhoods) for which the returnee monitoring teams managed to collect data through particular sources as of the reporting date. These figures do not include displacement in Dahuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah.

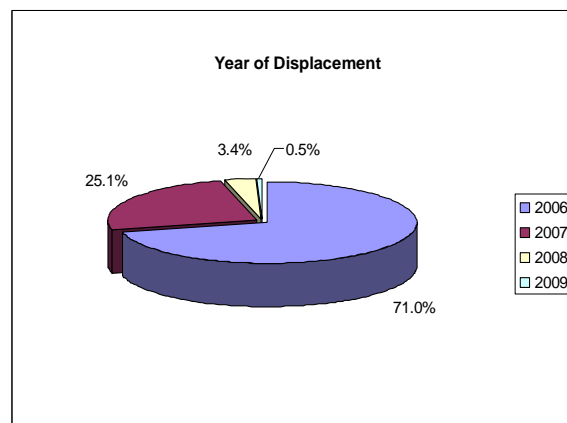
**DISPLACEMENT:** New displacements have all but stopped, though small flows continue along the disputed internal boundaries in the north and due to drought and desertification. The total number of families living in displacement remains high.

According to IOM assessments, the number of families being displaced every month was highest in 2006, decreasing steadily until the average dropped to 86 families per month in 2009:



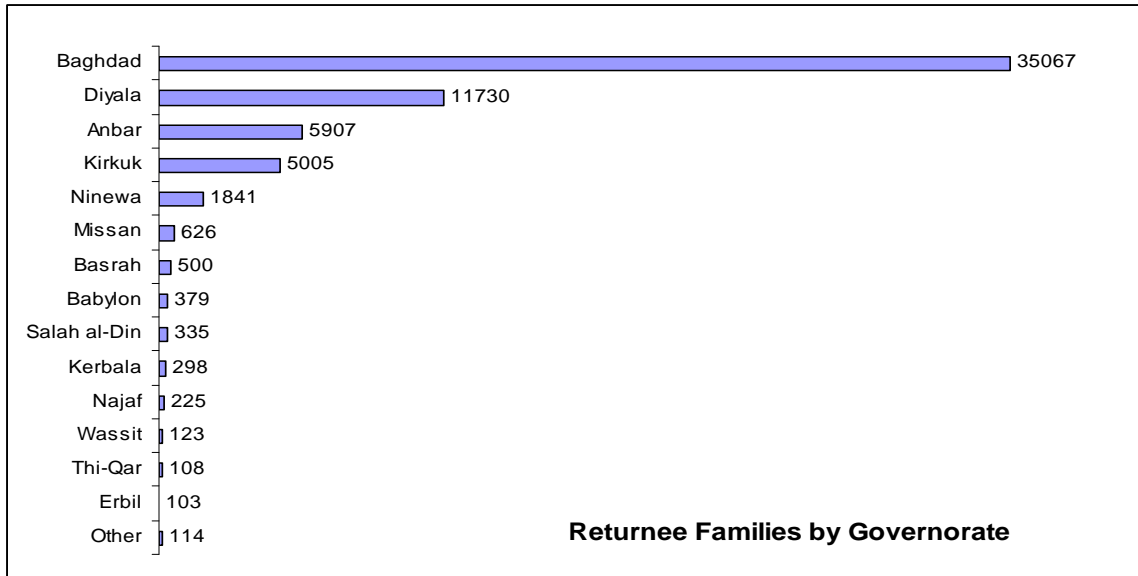
Most post-Samarra displacement took place in 2006 (70%) and the first half of 2007, and new displacements are rare in Iraq today. Yet the number of registered IDPs in the country remains large (270,000 families), a serious concern for the future of Iraq.

Period	Average # of displaced families per month	% of total IDP population displaced in that period
Jan-Jun 2006	10271	29.0%
Jul-Dec 2006	14865	42.0%
Jan-Jun 2007	7075	20.0%
Jul-Dec 2007	2454	5.1%
Jan-Jun 2008	666	1.9%
Jul-Dec 2008	520	1.5%
Jan-Jun 2009	138	0.4%
Jul-Dec 2009	35	0.1%



**RETURN: As returns continue, returnees need assistance to reintegrate and rebuild, while those who do not wish to return need alternative solutions.**

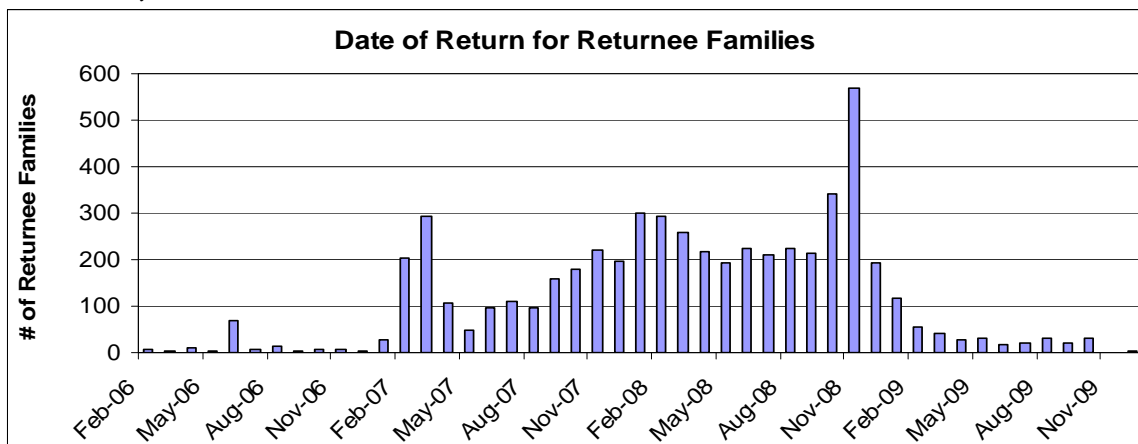
Displaced Iraqi families continue to return home, citing a combination of reasons including improved security, difficult conditions in displacement, and assistance from the government and other sources. Currently 62,361 returnee families (an estimated 374,166 individuals) have been identified across the country by IOM field monitors, distributed according to the chart below.<sup>4</sup> Some displaced families say they are waiting to feel safe enough to return, while others do not believe they will do so and need community integration or resettlement options to ensure their futures and those of their communities.



The majority of returns (58%) occur from within the same governorate. A smaller but significant percentage (23%) have returned from other governorates, and 19% of returnees have come back from outside the country. These families are mainly returning to Baghdad.

IOM returnee field monitors have conducted in-depth interviews with over 5,700 returnee families, of which 30% returned in 2007 and 57% in 2008.

When asked about reasons for return, 48% cited improved security in the place of origin, 12% returned because of difficult conditions in their place of displacement, and 26% said they were influenced by a combination of these two factors.



<sup>4</sup> See also the detailed map in Annex 2.

## II. POST FEBRUARY 2006 IDP AND RETURNEE POPULATIONS

### Summary Points

- The vast majority of post-Samarra IDP families are from Baghdad, Diyala, and Ninewa governorates, which saw some of the worst post-Samarra sectarian violence.
- Most of these families are displaced within their home governorates.
- The majority of post-Samarra IDP families wish to return to their places of origin, while IDPs in the south mainly intend to integrate into the place of displacement.
- The post-Samarra IDP population shows some specific trends with regard to ethnic and religious identity on the governorate level.

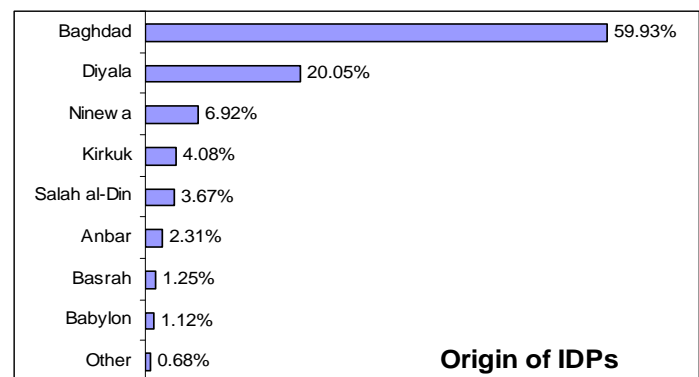
### IDP and Returnee Locations in Iraq

While IDPs have fled to every governorate in Iraq, the largest group of IDP families (36%) currently lives in Baghdad. Diyala, Ninewa, and Dahuk also host significant IDP populations, according to the MoDM IDP registration figures below. The IOM identified returnee population is located primarily in Baghdad, followed by Diyala, Anbar and Kirkuk.

Governorate	IDP Families <sup>5</sup>	%	Returnee Families <sup>6</sup>	%
All Iraq	282251	100.0%	62361	100%
Baghdad	100337	35.5%	35067	56.2%
Diyala	21064	7.5%	11730	18.8%
Ninewa	19040	6.7%	1841	3.0%
Dahuk	18406	6.5%	6	0.0%
Babylon	13430	4.8%	379	0.6%
Wassit	12883	4.6%	123	0.2%
Najaf	11698	4.1%	225	0.4%
Kerbala	10337	3.7%	298	0.5%
Anbar	10258	3.6%	5907	9.5%
Salah al-Din	9836	3.5%	335	0.5%
Erbil	9275	3.3%	103	0.2%
Kirkuk	8798	3.1%	5005	8.0%
Sulymaniyah	8306	2.9%	0	0.0%
Thi-Qar	7719	2.7%	108	0.2%
Missan	7269	2.6%	626	1.0%
Basrah	6968	2.5%	500	0.8%
Qadissiya	3833	1.4%	44	0.1%
Muthanna	2794	1.0%	64	0.1%

### IDP Governorates of Origin

While post-2006 internally displaced families fled to every governorate across the country, IOM assessments show that most originated from Baghdad (60%), Diyala (20%), and Ninewa (7%).

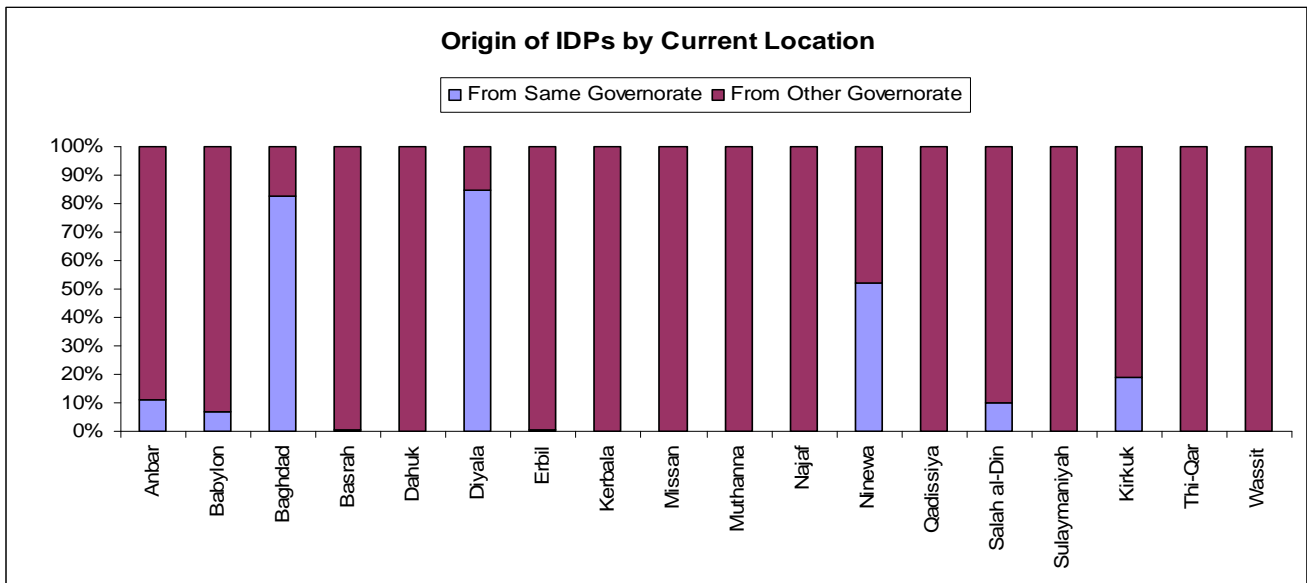


<sup>5</sup>Column shows distribution of 282,251 IDP families displaced since February 2006, according to MoDM and KRG/BDM registration.

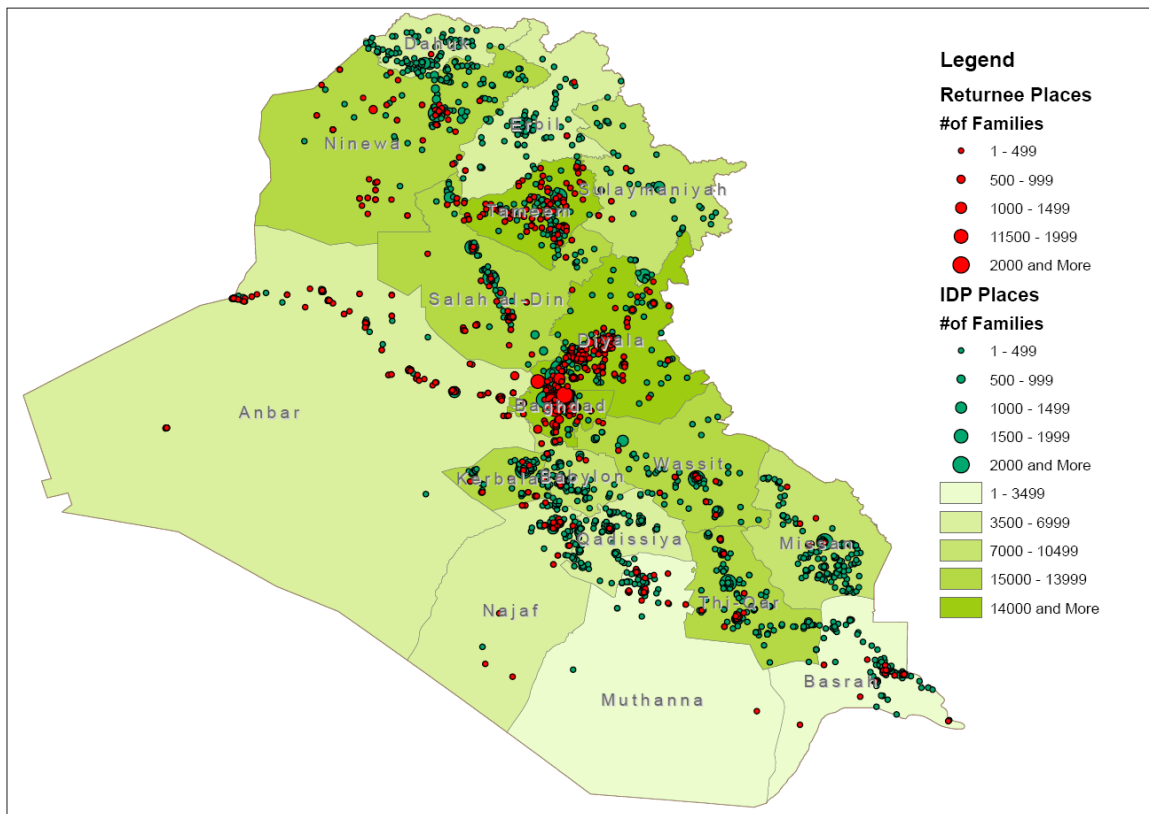
<sup>6</sup>Column shows distribution of 62,361 returnee families identified by IOM field monitors in ongoing assessments.

## Origin of IDPs and Returnees

According to IOM monitoring, 84% of all IDPs in Baghdad and Diyala have been displaced within their home governorates. This percentage is also significant in Ninewa (52%), Kirkuk (20%), and Anbar (11%). All other governorates are hosting IDPs originating from a different governorate.

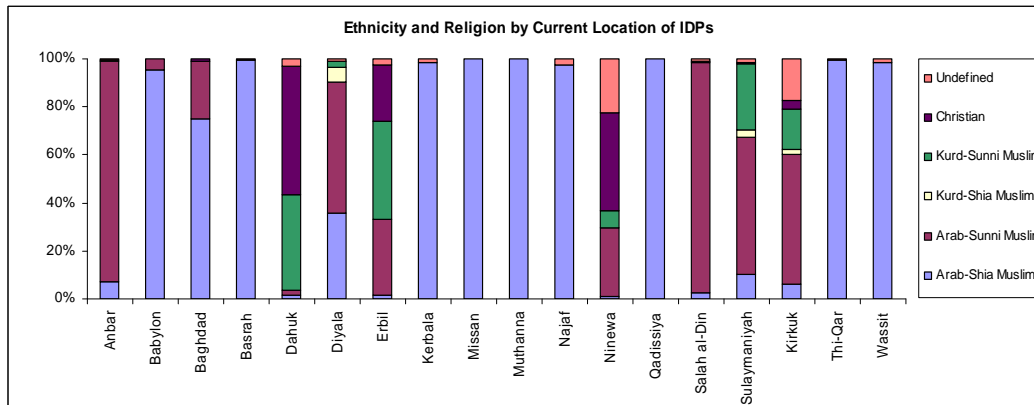


## IDP and Returnee Locations 2010

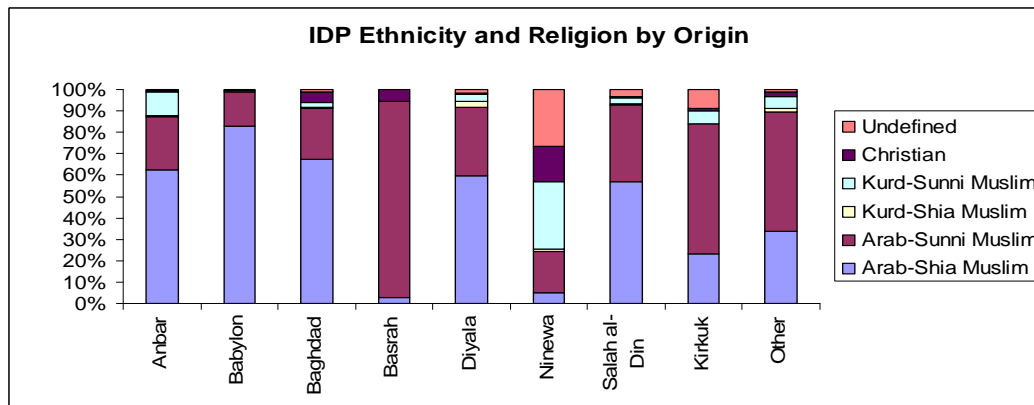


### Ethnicity and Religion of IDPs and Returnees

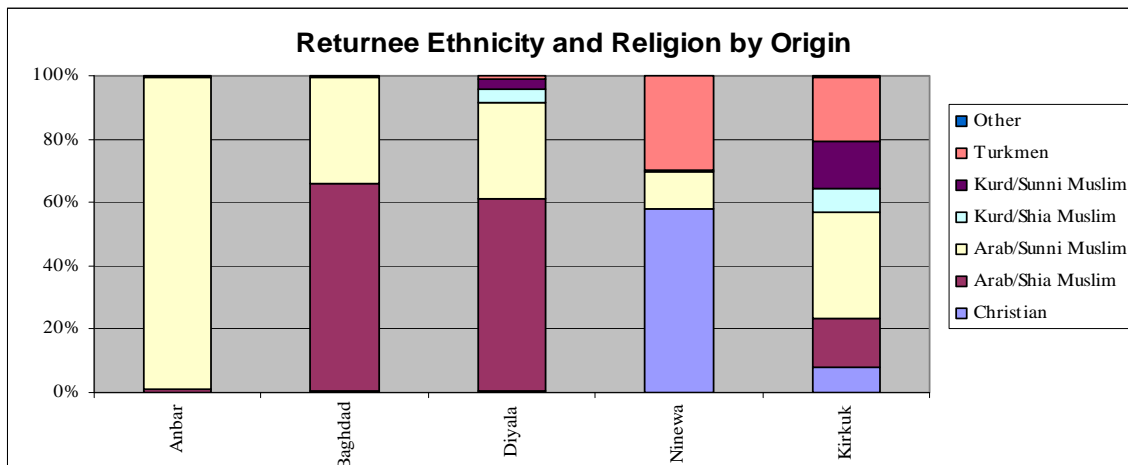
According to IOM figures, 58% of IDPs are Arab Shia Muslim, 28% are Arab Sunni Muslim, 5% are Kurdish Sunni Muslim, 5% are Christian, and 4% belong to other groups.



There are notable trends in the ethnic composition of IDPs on the governorate level. For example, all IDPs residing in Anbar are Sunni Muslims, yet 60% of those IDPs who fled from their homes in Anbar are Shia Muslims. Similarly, the majority of IDPs that fled their homes in Basrah are Sunni Muslims, yet IDPs currently residing in Basrah are Shia Muslims, predominantly from Baghdad.



The governorates with the most significant returnee populations are shown in the graph below. Returnee families in Anbar are almost entirely Sunni Arab, while returns in Baghdad and Diyala are split between Arab Sunni and Shia families. Some of these families, particularly in Diyala, are returning to mixed-ethnicity communities.

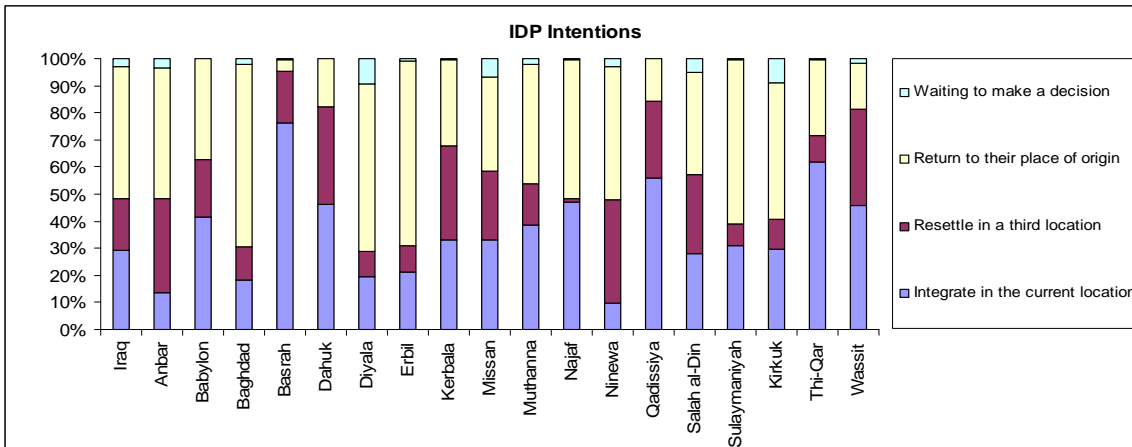
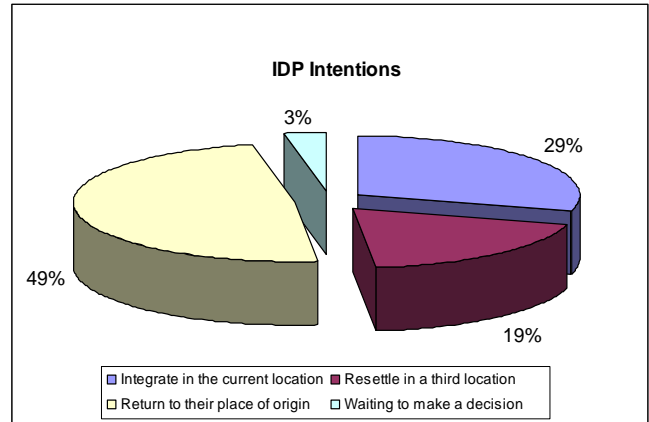


## IDP Intentions, Potential Return and Local Integration

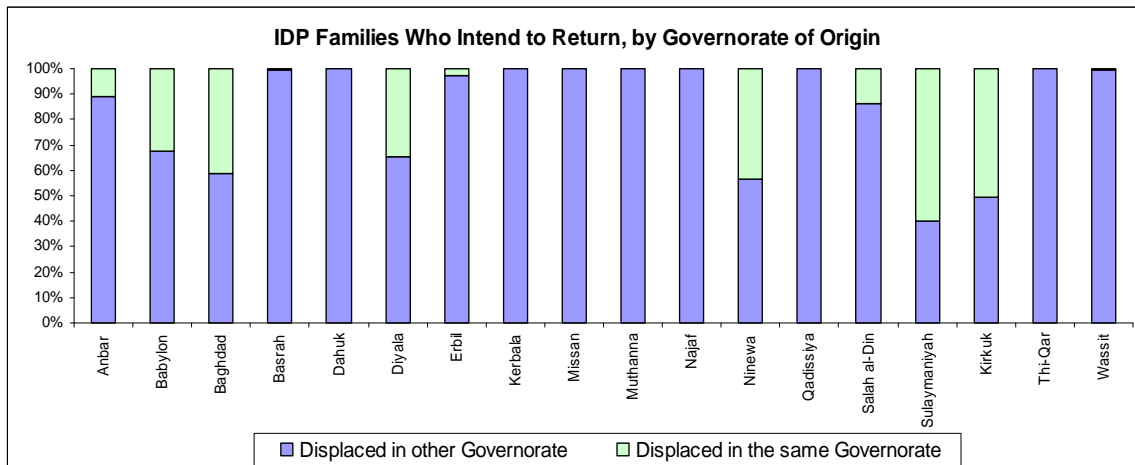
According to current IOM interviews, 49% of all post-Samarra IDPs would like to return to their places of origin, while 29% would like to remain and integrate into the current places of displacement, and 19% would like to resettle in a third location.

One year earlier, these statistics were reported at 61% intending to return and 22% intending to integrate, showing a significant change. While this may be in part because more families do not wish to return as displacement is prolonged, it is also because a sizeable percentage of those who intended to return have done so during the previous year.

These intentions vary significantly by region within Iraq. As seen in the chart below, there is a high level of intention to stay and integrate in the southern governorates of Basrah (84%), Wassit (69%), Thi Qar (60%) and Qadissiya (46%).



Intention to return to place of origin is very high in Baghdad (80%) and Diyala (83%). Since 80% of post-2006 IDPs in Iraq originate from these two governorates, they will likely continue to receive a substantial number of returnees. Barriers to return in these cases vary, and can be a combination of security, lack of access to property or destroyed property, lack of employment opportunities, or lack of basic services in the village or community.



### III. IDP AND RETURNEE HUMANITARIAN ASSESSMENT

#### Summary Points

- Security and basic needs continue to be serious concerns for both IDP and returnee families across Iraq.
- While security has improved significantly since the height of displacement in 2006, some IDPs still feel unsafe to return to their homes.
- Access to food, shelter, and employment remain priority needs for vulnerable IDP families across Iraq, and many cannot access the property they left behind.

More in-depth information and data are available at <http://www.iomiraq.net/idp.html>, including updated governorate profiles with detailed area-specific analysis and comparisons on displacement and return throughout Iraq.

#### Security/Protection

General security continues to stabilize in Iraq since the wave of sectarian violence in 2006, and the reason for return cited by the majority of families is improved security. Yet consultations by IOM monitors show that there are still IDPs who do not feel the situation as safe enough for themselves and their families to return.

The recent March elections also saw a slowing in return movements, as families reported that they were watching carefully and waiting for the outcome of the elections in order to make decisions about the future.

However, incidents do continue to occur, as with the recent displacement of approximately 1,100 Christian families from Mosul to other areas of Ninewa, Dahuk, Erbil, and Kirkuk. While over half of the families returned within a week, this is the second time within the last two years that such a displacement has happened (also in October 2008), and there is no sign that the root cause of these incidents has been addressed. There are also limited reports of targeting of returnees, mostly in urban areas where families return individually.

IDPs squatting in government buildings or on publicly or privately owned land are also a significant concern that needs to be addressed with a long-term, sustainable solution. These groups are often among the most vulnerable and do not have housing alternatives.

#### IDP and Returnee Registration

MoDM continues to register returnee families and provide the 1,000,000 Iraqi Dinar (IQD) (\$850 USD) stipend for those who are eligible. Through its Return Assistance Centers (RACs), MoDM also provides referral to other ministries' services and some direct assistance.

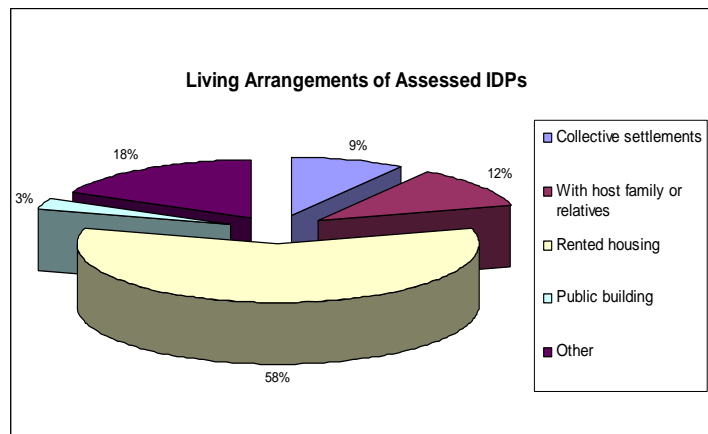
As of March 2010, MoDM RACs had reported registering 36,421 returnee families and provided the returnee assistance grant to the majority of these families.

IDP registration has currently stopped in the majority of governorates across Iraq. This is due to both lack of new displacements and the current focus on return, integration, and reintegration for IDP families.



## Shelter

IOM assessments reveal that shelter is consistently one of the highest-priority needs reported by IDPs, and it is also a major concern for returnees. Displaced families continue to struggle to find adequate income and housing in their places of displacement, even several years after leaving home. The most vulnerable of these – nearly one third – live in public buildings, old military encampments, or crude group squatter settlements with hand-built houses on publicly or privately owned land. These collections of houses have no electricity, water, or other basic services, nor are they included in new municipal construction projects. Additionally, as local authorities begin to rebuild, many will need to use these lands and buildings to provide services.



The majority (58%) of IOM-assessed IDP families live in rented accommodations, putting a constant strain on the household budget. In some cases, families make just enough money to pay the monthly rent, eat from their PDS, and have no leftover income. There is little room for error in these tight financial arrangements. Less than 1% lives in tent camps. IDPs view camps as an absolute last resort, due to cultural sensitivities and camps' lack of basic services and harsh living conditions.

Substandard shelter and a lack of basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and electricity are a major factor in the IDP humanitarian crisis. IDPs who are renting do not necessarily have access to these services. IDPs living in tents, public buildings, or makeshift shelters in collective settlements are particularly vulnerable and usually have additional urgent needs in other sectors such as food, health, water, and sanitation.

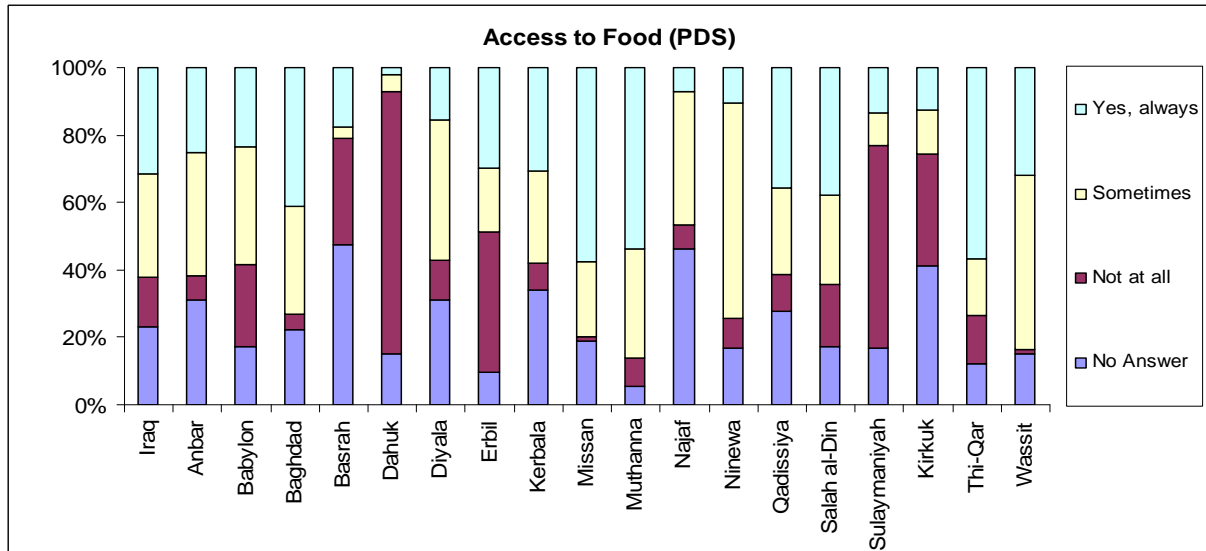
Shelter is also a major issue for returnee families, as some return to partially or completely destroyed property, while others need legal assistance to reclaim their properties. Shelter assistance is an important part of the reintegration process for families coming home from displacement within Iraq or abroad.



An IDP family tent shelter in al-Amel camp, Kerbala.

## Food/Public Distribution System (PDS)

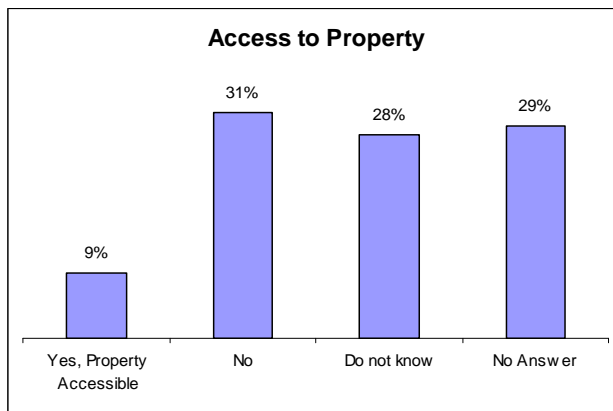
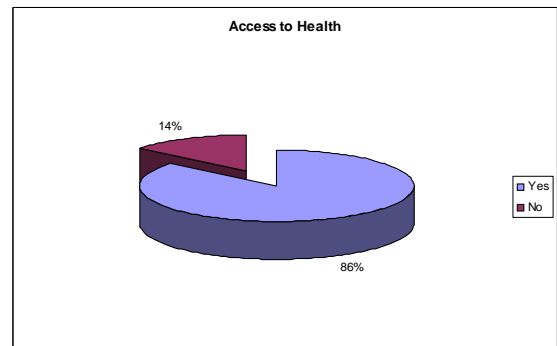
Much of the Iraqi population depends upon the government's PDS food rations, and vulnerable IDP families are particularly in need of this monthly support. However, across the country 46% of post-Samarra IDPs have periodic access to rations, at best.



While there is a governmental provision to allow IDP families to transfer the PDS ration to the place of displacement, this is nearly impossible for families living along the disputed internal boundaries in the north, as a change in official documentation of residency would affect the sensitive and highly politicized demographics of the area.

## Health Care

Access to health care remains a serious concern for IDPs and returnees across Iraq because of their frequently precarious living situations without access to potable water, protection from the elements, or sewage disposal. While 86% of IDPs nationwide report access to health care, this does not ensure that the health care is of good quality, or that the health care facilities have the necessary qualified staff, medicine, and equipment. Health care services in Iraq have deteriorated greatly due to the exodus of qualified professionals, a severe shortage of medication and equipment, and damage to medical facilities.

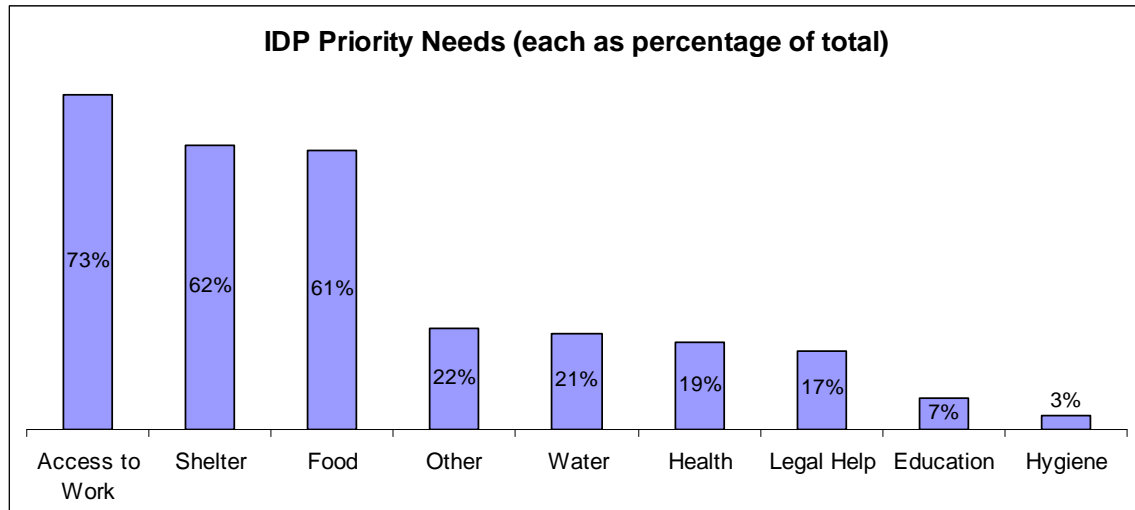


## Access to Property

According to current IOM displacement monitoring, only 9% of post-Samarra IDPs are certain that they have access to the property they left behind. Another 31% do not have any access, primarily because the property is occupied or destroyed. 28% of surveyed IDPs have not been able to find out the status of their property, often for security reasons.

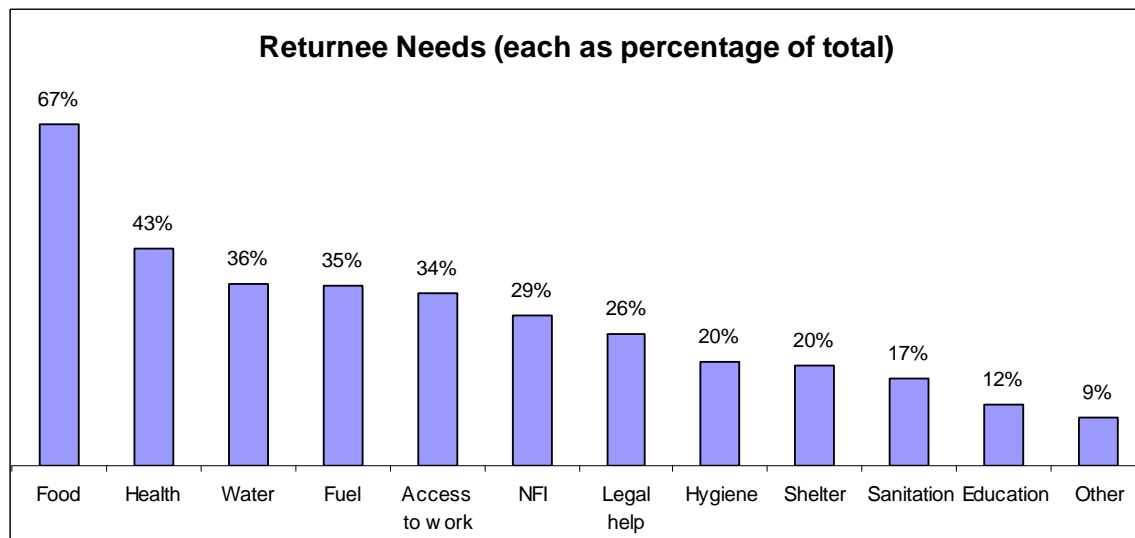
## Priority Needs

When asked about their most pressing needs, post-Samarra IDPs overwhelmingly name access to work (73%), shelter (62%), and food (61%). Water, health care, and legal help are also chief concerns.



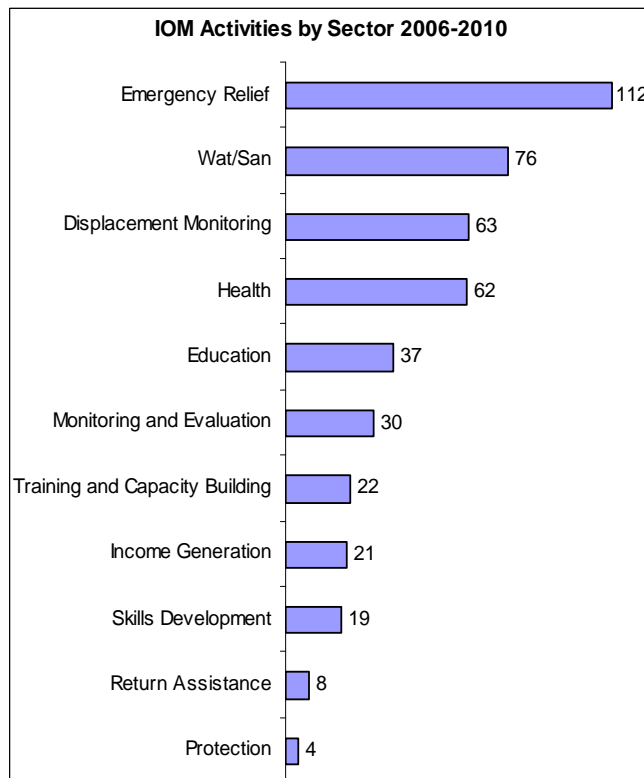
Returnee families most often list food as their priority need (67%), since many families do not receive adequate PDS rations and are forced to buy food at high local market prices. Returnee families also list health care (43%), water (36%), fuel (35%), and access to work (34%) as important concerns.

A comparison of returnee needs to those of IDPs reveals the different living situations for these communities. Monitors report that, on average, returnee families tend to be more economically stable than IDPs, often returning home after first knowing they would have access to employment and shelter. While these needs remain important for many returnee families, they are nevertheless a lower priority than with IDP families. Still, both returnees and IDPs living in the same areas must cope with the same deficiencies in infrastructure and services, so health care, water and other municipal services remain important concerns to IDP, returnee and host community families alike.

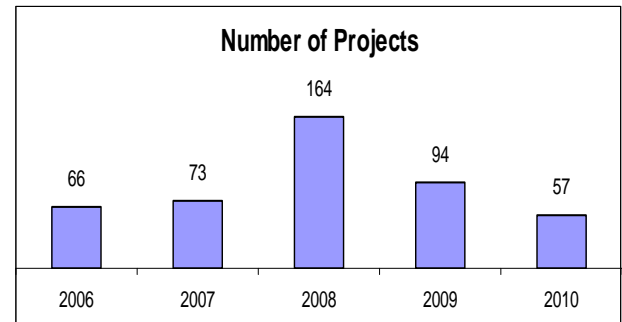


## IV. IOM HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

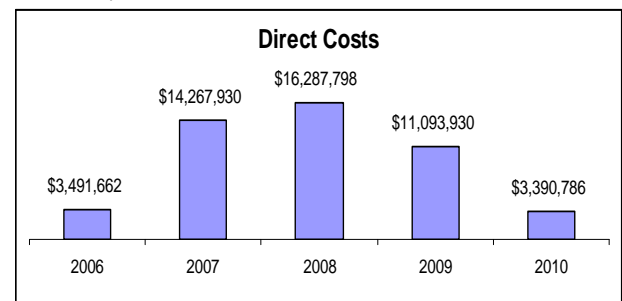
IOM has successfully assisted post-Samarra IDP, returnee, and host community families in every governorate of Iraq. Since 2006, IOM has implemented 454 projects totaling over 48 million USD, divided among the following sectors:



Projects were distributed across the years as follows:



Direct costs for projects are as follows for each year:



From psycho-social support and legal aid to female-headed households in Diyala, to distributions of wheelchairs and crutches to handicapped persons in Anbar, IOM strives to provide efficient and effective assistance to displaced populations and vulnerable host communities throughout Iraq (see the detailed map in Annex 1).

Recently, IOM has conducted Emergency Distributions to assist Christian families displaced from Mosul by sectarian violence in early 2010, and funded school rehabilitations in Baghdad and Salah al-Din. In addition to Emergency Programs and Community Assistance Projects, IOM is expanding its efforts in skills trainings and in-kind grants for the establishment of small businesses, providing IDP and returnee families with long-term, sustainable opportunities to improve their lives.

IOM is also engaged in programs to build the capacity of Iraqi government ministries, strengthening government institutions in order to better serve IDPs, returnees and their host communities.

## V. CONCLUSION

Iraq has a long history of displacement, the most recent significant event being the February 2006 bombing of the Samarra Al-Askari Mosque. Due primarily to sectarian violence, 1.5 million people were internally displaced, chiefly in 2006 and 2007, according to registration figures from the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM).

The vast majority of post-Samarra internal displacement in Iraq occurred as families fled three governorates: Baghdad, Diyala, and Ninewa. Many of these families are now displaced within their home governorates, yet displacement affects every province of Iraq. As families were threatened or felt unsafe during periods of heavy violence and sectarian targeting, they fled to more secure locations. They often chose an area due to family ties or shared ethnic and religious identity.

Today there are few new incidents of displacement in Iraq. Those that occur are along the northern disputed internal boundaries or due to drought and desertification. Most recently, targeted assassinations of Christian families in Mosul resulted in over 1,000 Christian families fleeing Mosul for nearby locations in Ninewa, Erbil, Dahuk, and Kirkuk.

Displaced families continue to struggle to find adequate income and housing in their places of displacement, even several years after leaving home. The most vulnerable of these – nearly one third – live in public buildings, old military encampments, or crude group squatter settlements with hand-built houses on public or privately owned land. These collections of houses have no electricity, water, or other basic services, nor are they included in new municipal construction projects. Additionally, as local authorities begin to rebuild, many will need to use these lands and buildings to provide services.

A steady source of income is a particular problem for IDP families, who struggle to pay pricey monthly rental costs. Even after being displaced for several years, some IDP families still do not have regular access to PDS rations, schools for their children, health services, and other key needs.

IDP intentions for the future vary considerably by region and according to the place of origin. Yet overall, assessments show that 50% of those remaining displaced wish to return, 39% wish to integrate permanently in the place of displacement, and 19% wish to settle in a third location.

Return from post-2006 displacement has been ongoing since the end of 2007, and nearly 400,000 people have returned to date, primarily to Baghdad, Diyala, Ninewa, and Anbar. In addition to this flow of families, returns to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) from Iran began after 2003, where Kurdish families are coming back after having lived in Iran for many years. In areas along the Iran-Iraq border in the rest of the country, Iraqis are also returning home from Iran.

While returnees often cite a combination of improved security, hardships of displacement, and the governmental returnee grant as reasons for return, more engagement in the return process is necessary to ensure sustainable reintegration. Whether it is a matter of assisting individual returnee families in an urban area or a group of rural villagers returning together, returnee communities need a multi-faceted approach to address a wide range of needs, including access to health services, water, legal assistance, and expanded economic opportunities. When conducted in a safe and dignified manner, return is also an opportunity to introduce or enhance reconciliation efforts in a community, making it a crucial element in the future of Iraq. To be successful, this process must be combined with durable solutions for those displaced Iraqis who wish to remain permanently in their places of displacement or will simply not be able to go home.

Despite limited funding and insecurity, IOM continues to assist displaced, returning, and host community Iraqis with emergency food, water and household item distributions, community

assistance projects, and advocacy. Since 2006, IOM has successfully completed 454 projects in with direct costs of over 48 million USD. Still, overall assistance to these vulnerable communities remains inadequate.

The interventions indicated above have also served to complement GoI efforts, local and otherwise, in search of sustainable, durable solutions. Spontaneous IDP returns continue, and in some cases, there is need for local integration at the sites of displacement or resettlement. However, until these solutions can be successfully implemented, displacement and the need for protection of those particularly vulnerable displaced persons will continue to be a chief concern for the future of Iraq.

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Please note that displacement and return are occurring on a continuous basis, and IOM strives to update this information as frequently as possible. Through its monitoring and needs assessments, IOM has also developed periodic displacement updates, yearly and mid-year reviews, returnee needs assessments, and other reports. For these and information on the IOM's needs assessment methodology, see <http://www.iomiraq.net/idp.html>

For further information on IDPs and returnees in Iraq, please contact Rex Alamban, Head of IOM Iraq Joint Operations Cell at [ralamban@iom.int](mailto:ralamban@iom.int) or Liana Paris, IOM Monitoring Officer, at [lparis@iom.int](mailto:lparis@iom.int) (+962 6 565 9660 extensions 1067 and 1022).

# IDP Programme Projects 2006 - 2010

Annex map 1

IOM DISPLACEMENT MONITORING AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS



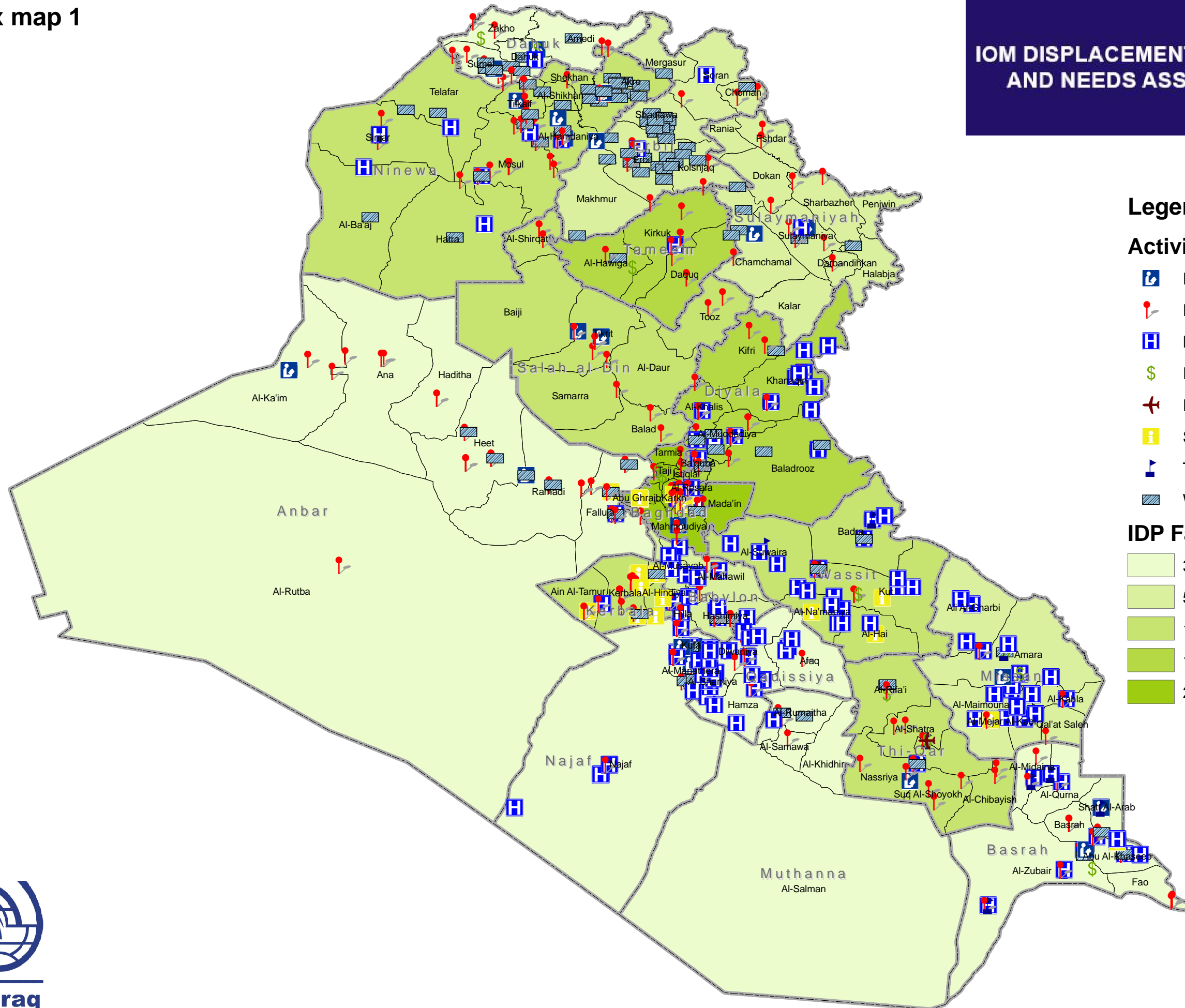
## Legend

### Activity Sector

- EDUCATION
- EMERGENCY RELIEF
- HEALTH
- INCOME GENERATION
- RETURN ASSISTANCE
- SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
- TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING
- WAT/SAN

### IDP Families per Governorate

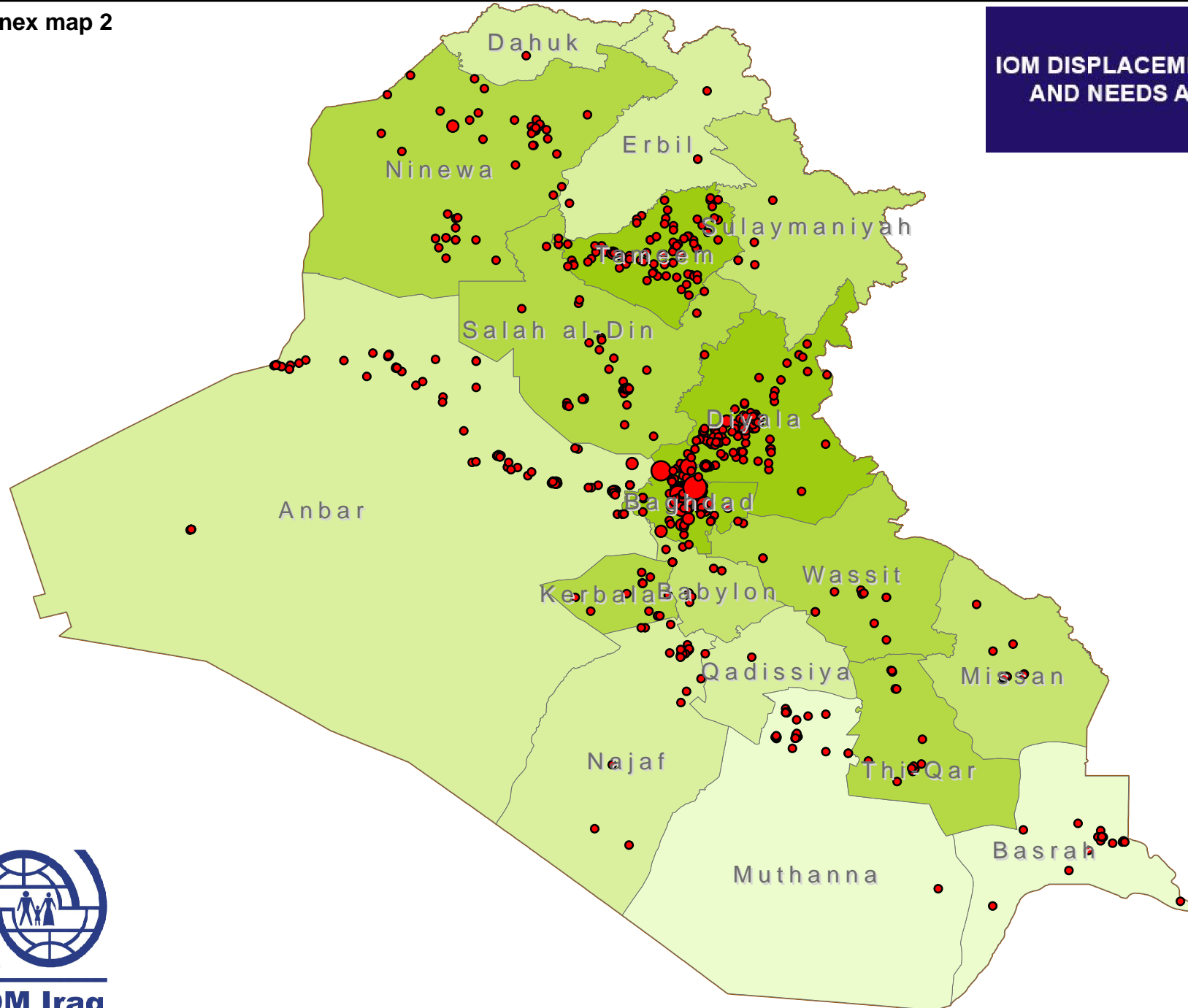
- 3000 - 4999
- 5000 - 9999
- 10000 - 14999
- 15000 - 19999
- 20000 and More



# Returnee Family Locations, February 2010

Annex map 2

IOM DISPLACEMENT MONITORING  
AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS



## Legend

### Returnee Places

#### #of Families

- 1 - 499
- 500 - 999
- 1000 - 1499
- 11500 - 1999
- 2000 and More

- 1 - 3499
- 3500 - 6999
- 7000 - 10499
- 15000 - 13999
- 14000 and More



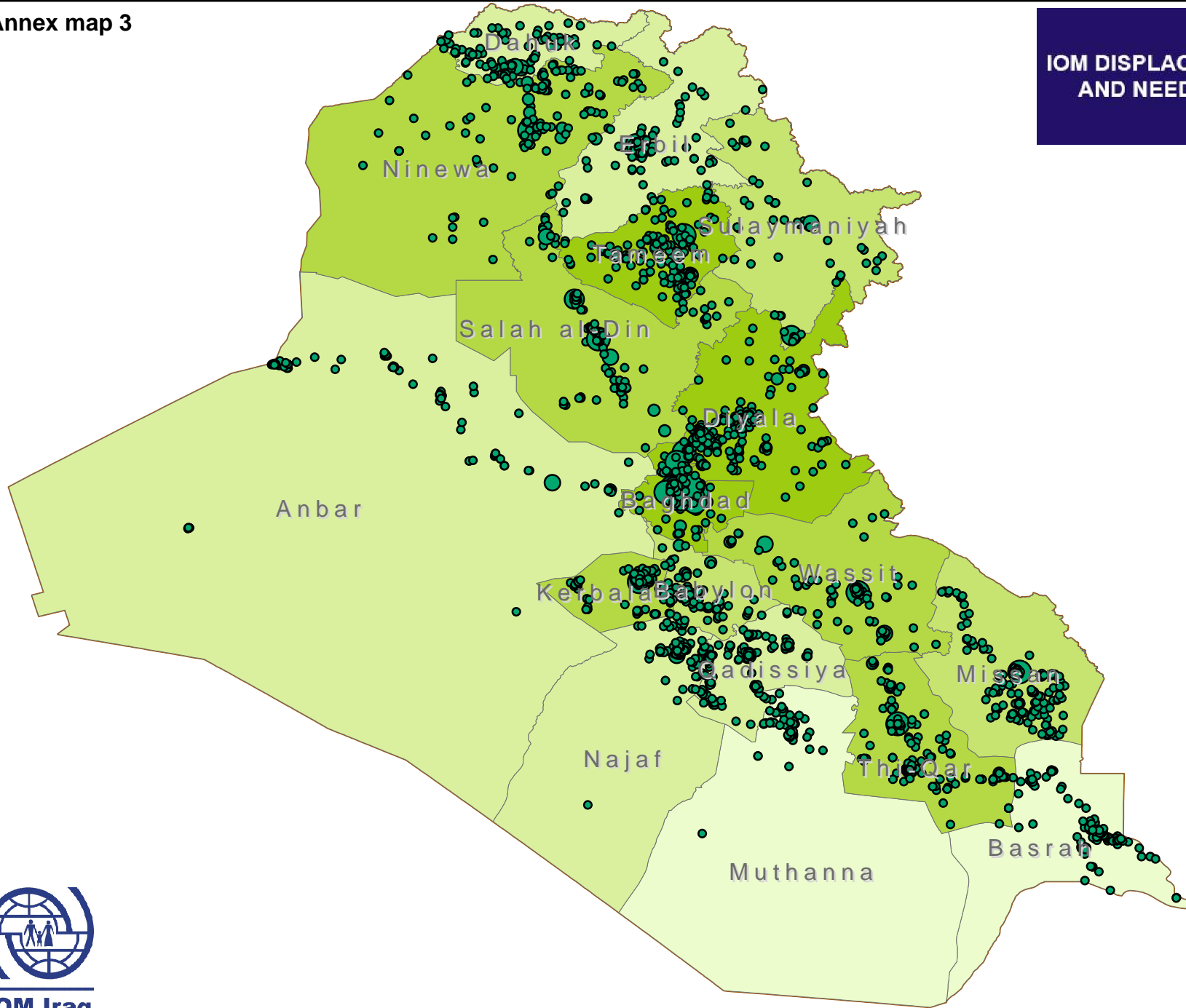
IOM Iraq



# IDP Family Locations, February 2010

Annex map 3

IOM DISPLACEMENT MONITORING  
AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS



## Legend

### IDP Places

#### #of Families

- 1 - 499
- 500 - 999
- 1000 - 1499
- 1500 - 1999
- 2000 and More

- 1 - 3499
- 3500 - 6999
- 7000 - 10499
- 15000 - 13999
- 14000 and More

