

ERBIL

GOVERNORATE PROFILE NOVEMBER 2010
IOM IDP AND RETURNEE ASSESSMENT



ERBIL: DISPLACEMENT AT A GLANCE

Total post-Feb 2006 IDPs ¹	9,275 families (est. 55,650 individuals)
Total pre-Feb 2006 IDPs ²	32,813 families (est. 196,878 individuals)
Number of post-Feb 2006 IDPs assessed by IOM ³	6,879 families (est. 41,274 individuals)
Returnees ⁴	138 families (est. 828 individuals)
Capital	Erbil
Districts	Choman, Erbil, Koisanjaq, Makhmur (officially in Kirkuk but administered by KRG), Mergasur, Shaqlawa, Soran
Population ⁵	1,542,421

IOM Displacement Assessments

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, 1.6 million people were internally displaced, chiefly in 2006 and 2007, according to government figures.¹

IOM field monitoring teams assess the varying needs and challenges of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnee communities across the eighteen Iraqi governorates. These comprehensive assessments of IDPs and returnees are conducted through Rapid Assessment questionnaires in conjunction with the assessments of Iraqi authorities and other national and international actors.

IOM seeks to ascertain and disseminate detailed information about IDP and returnee needs and conditions in each governorate. Our objective is to promote a greater understanding of displacement and return in Iraq by facilitating policy making, prioritizing areas of operation, planning emergency responses, and designing long-term programs.

To date, IOM has assessed 202,446 IDP families and identified 67,086 returnee families. Of these returnee families, 10,368 have participated in IOM in-depth needs assessment interviews. Unless otherwise stated, all data in the profile is based on IOM-assessed populations.

Erbil, like the other northern governorates under control of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), has been relatively stable since 2003. In comparison to elsewhere in the country, few families were displaced from Erbil. Consequently, returnee numbers in the governorate are also low.

Despite this, Erbil still merits closer attention since many families that were displaced from other governorates in Iraq since 2006 fled there in search of security and stability. Thus, Erbil still has a significant IDP population with urgent needs, namely access to work, legal help and shelter. While families returning to this governorate also cite these needs, they additionally list household non-food items as a priority need.

Though security conditions and the provision of services in Erbil are far better than elsewhere in Iraq, families displaced from or returning to the governorate must face the challenge of higher costs than elsewhere in the country and the resultant strain on household incomes.

Quick Facts on Erbil IDPs & Returnees



- IDP families in Erbil tell IOM monitors that they lack access to work, legal help and shelter.
- Displaced families in Erbil represent one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse groups in the country, as they are comprised of Sunni-Kurds (43%), Arabs (30%) and Christians (24%)
- Families continue to arrive in Erbil, both displaced and returnees, albeit at a slower rate than before.

Recent IOM Activity in Erbil

Rehabilitation and Extension of Kani Halan School



IOM monitors in Erbil identified the school in the Kani Halan area of Erbil as the only one providing education to local children, but as being undersized and in poor condition. Displaced and returnee families arriving to the village placed a further burden on the facility, meaning that dozens of children had to travel 5km to reach another school. An IOM project completed in August 2010 ensured that this was no longer the case and provided an additional 83 students with education.

For more information on IOM's past activities in Erbil, see *Activities in Erbil* at:
www.iomiraq.net

¹ As per the Iraq Ministry of Displacement and Migration and KRG Bureau of Displacement and Migration.

² As per IOM Phase II Monitoring, December 2005.

³ Please note that this is the number of post-February 2006 IDPs assessed by IOM, not the total number of IDPs in the governorate.

⁴ As per IOM Returnee Monitoring.

⁵ As per the Iraq Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology, 2007.

ERBIL DISPLACEMENT BACKGROUND

Like other governorates in Iraq, the majority of IOM-assessed displaced families arrived in Erbil during the height of sectarian violence in 2006 and the first half of 2007. Since then, displacement has slowed, but new families continue to arrive and sometimes in large numbers. In January 2010 for example, 41 families were displaced to the governorate. These families are not dispersed equally throughout the governorate, but rather they are overwhelmingly concentrated around the capital in the district of Erbil. In total, 92% of the 6,879 families IOM has assessed in this governorate are found near Erbil city centre.

Many areas in the KRG governorates have been safe havens for religious minorities fleeing violence elsewhere in Iraq, and Erbil is no exception. At the time of publication, a wave of Christians were being displaced to Erbil following threats, targeted bombings, and the massacre in the Saidat al-Najat (Our Lady of Salvation) church in Baghdad. On 24th November 2010, IOM monitors reported that 125 families had been displaced to the governorate, mostly to the Ainkawa subdistrict. Most of these families were displaced from Baghdad, but some were also moving from Ninewa and Kirkuk. Fearing for their lives, many of these families left behind their possessions in their hurry to leave and are therefore in need of non-food items such as furniture and clothes. Initial assessments by IOM staff in Iraq suggest that more Christian families will be arriving to Erbil as soon as they are able to leave their homes and jobs.

Together, Baghdad and Ninewa account for almost 95% of Erbil's IDPs places of origin. While the level of violence in Baghdad may explain the number of families travelling to this relatively safe governorate, many families come from Ninewa partly due to its geographical proximity as well as the ethnic and political tensions which occur there. As such, 77% of families displaced to Erbil tell IOM monitors that they left their homes out of fear, a far more common reason for displacement than other governorates in Iraq.

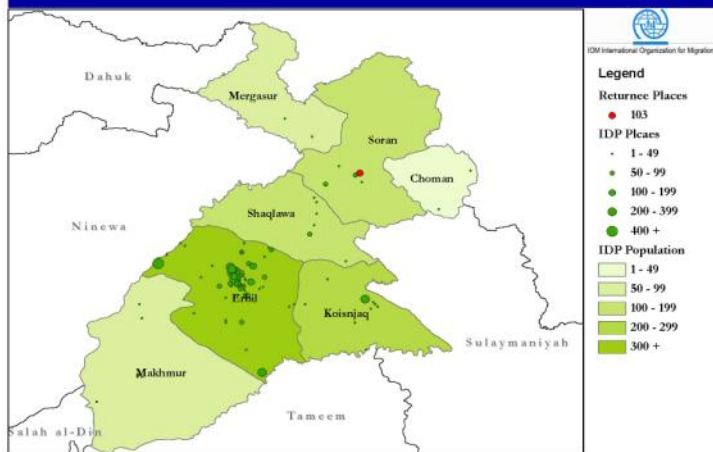
Despite being a broadly safe governorate, IOM monitors do report security concerns in some areas of Erbil, partly because of its unique position as the only governorate in Iraq that borders both Iran and Turkey. These border areas sometimes experience military incursions and air bombardments which have led to incidents of displacement in recent months.

Despite this, many of the security problems found elsewhere in Iraq are rare in Erbil. Displaced and returnee families report having excellent relations with the host community in most cases. Some have told monitors about the help they have received from these communities in the form of food, fuel and household items. Host communities have even been known to provide assistance in Kurdish language training, a valuable skill that can help displaced and returnee families find work in Erbil. Moreover, relations with local authorities are often more positive here than elsewhere in the country. This has facilitated the process of registration for displaced and returnee families as well as their ability to procure residency cards for the governorate. Nevertheless, some families tell IOM monitors that they still do not register because the process is lengthy and they see few tangible benefits in doing so.

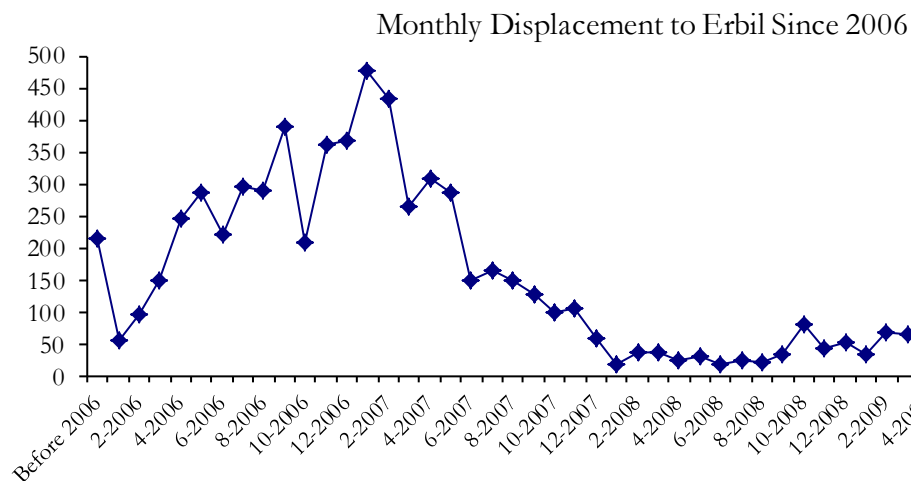
Number of IDPs in Erbil by District		
District	Families	%
Total Erbil	6879	100.0%
Choman	48	0.7%
Erbil	6300	91.6%
Koisnjaq	84	1.2%
Makhmur	102	1.5%
Mergasur	56	0.8%
Shaqlawaw	127	1.8%
Soran	162	2.4%

IDP & Returnee Locations in Erbil. See final page for detail.

Erbil - IDP and Returnee Locations



Reason for Displacement	Erbil	All Iraq
Left out of fear	76.5%	13.2%
Direct threats to life	10.7%	27.5%
Generalized violence	4.5%	10.9%
Other	1.4%	0.4%
Armed conflict	0.9%	6.9%
Forced displacement	0.2%	9.4%
No Answer	5.3%	27.3%



IDP Governorate of Origin	
Within Erbil	0.0%
Anbar	0.2%
Babylon	0.1%
Baghdad	48.9%
Basrah	0.1%
Diyala	1.3%
Muthanna	0.1%
Ninewa	45.6%
Qadissiya	0.0%
Salah al-Din	0.5%
Kirkuk	2.9%

ERBIL: IDP DEMOGRAPHICS

Like other governorates under KRG control, Erbil is both religiously and ethnically diverse. However, whereas the IDP populations in Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah are broadly divided between Arabs and Kurds who are both Sunni and Shia, Christians make up almost a quarter of IDPs in Erbil.

This demographic diversity is rooted in events that pre-date the 2003 invasion. Much of Erbil's large community of displaced Kurds fled from the disputed internal boundaries areas (DIBs), which have long been a source of tension in Iraq. Many displaced families from these areas who now live in Erbil were forcibly removed from their homes as part of the previous regime's campaign of 'Arabization'. For the Arab-Sunnis now living in the governorate, many left homes in Baghdad where sectarian violence forced them to flee to more secure environments in Erbil. Most of these families have little or no knowledge of Kurdish, which often makes it difficult for them to find employment or fully integrate with their host communities.

In contrast to other areas of Iraq, the demographic composition of displaced families in Erbil is generally older. There are more displaced adults of working age (18-60) than dependents (below 18 or over 60) which means there is a greater chance for those adults who can find work to be able to provide for their families. IOM teams in Erbil report that where rent can reach as much as \$500 per month, displaced families require at least two members to be fully employed to make ends meet.

This burden on adults is slightly alleviated by the fact that female employment is higher in Erbil than elsewhere in Iraq, with women making up around 29% of the labour force.¹ Though employment can in some cases offer women greater independence and opportunities to push for equal rights, women in the KRG, whether from displaced, returnee or host families, often face other challenges. For example, female genital mutilation is practised across Kurdistan and Erbil is no exception where many of the girls who undergo the procedure are less than 14 years old.²

IOM monitors have also spoken to families that were displaced from Erbil and are now located elsewhere in Iraq. Most families fled to Salah al-Din and Kirkuk, governorates which share boundaries with Erbil and where relatives or tribal connections may already be established. Moreover, these governorates also represent secure and stable parts of Iraq in comparison to places such as Diyala and Baghdad. Many of these families, particularly those who have moved to Kirkuk, express the intention to stay and integrate in their current location.

Ethno-Religious Identity of IDPs in Erbil (by District)								
District	Kurd-Sunni Muslim	Arab-Sunni Muslim	Assyrian-Christian	Chaldean-Christian	Armenian Christian	Arab-Shia Muslim	Turkmen Sunni Muslim	Other
Choman	22.9%	50.0%	2.1%	4.2%	0.0%	2.1%	12.5%	6.3%
Erbil	42.4%	26.9%	5.3%	19.1%	1.1%	2.2%	0.6%	2.5%
Koisnajaq	32.1%	42.9%	17.9%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%
Makhmur	48.0%	51.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Mergasur	67.9%	32.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Shaqlawana	66.9%	28.3%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	1.6%
Soran	53.7%	22.8%	9.9%	6.2%	0.0%	6.8%	0.0%	0.6%

IDPs Originally from Erbil are located in:

Governorate	# Families	Percentage
Basrah	4	0.9%
Dahuk	1	0.2%
Diyala	1	0.2%
Erbil	1	0.2%
Muthanna	12	2.7%
Ninewa	2	0.5%
Salah al-Din	134	30.2%
Kirkuk	288	65.0%
Total Assessed	443	100%

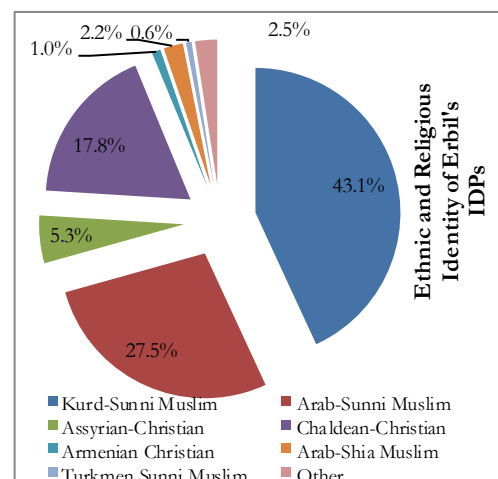


SANITATION

In the Girda Rasha Gawra Village of Erbil, a lack of municipal services means that children must walk through garbage to get to and from school.

IDPs by Age and Gender

Age	Female	Male	Total
Under 1 year old	529	471	1000
1 to 4 years old	1608	1588	3196
5-17 years old	6783	6511	13294
18-60 years old	9762	9703	19465
Over 60 years old	843	849	1692



¹ See 'Erbil Strategic Plan for Development and Improvement 2008-2012 at <http://www.iauiraq.org/reports/Erbil%20PDS%202008-2012%20English.pdf>

² See Human Rights Watch, 'Female Genital Mutilation in Iraqi Kurdistan, June 2010 at <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/06/16/they-took-me-and-told-me-nothing-0>

ERBIL'S DISPLACED: LIVING CONDITIONS AND PRIORITY NEEDS

As stated previously, displaced families living in Erbil face fewer security concerns than those located elsewhere in the country. Nevertheless, heads of displaced households told IOM monitors that they lack a number of basic necessities which affects their ability to fully establish themselves in their new communities. First among these is access to work, which is cited as a priority need for 83% of families. Though monitors report that employment is also a problem facing host communities, displaced families are often challenged by a lack of sufficient language skills or qualifications. This is a problem which is exacerbated by the lack of jobs available in the public sector, making it all the more difficult for displaced families to compete with host communities in the private sector where their lack of Kurdish can become an even greater obstacle. Efforts to deal with this are underway as the Erbil development plan emphasises the need to establish training centres for the unemployed, displaced families and those who have left school early.³

Many IDPs in Erbil also cite legal help as a priority need, a trend which is normally more common among returnee families than those who remain in displacement. This can be explained in part by a trend found across the KRG relating to property disputes after the policies of the former regime. For more information on this topic, please see the IOM Special Focus Report on Disputed Internal Boundaries.

Despite the fact that more than 6,000 of Erbil's IDP families live in rented accommodation, shelter is considered a pressing concern for 46% of displaced families in the area. This is partly because 'rented house' can be a misleading category which suggests comfort and financial security. In fact, rising rent prices together with poor quality accommodation mean that even those living in rented accommodation can feel insecure about long-term shelter for their families. Other forms of accommodation can offer even less stability for families, a concern which is particularly noticeable in the Erbil district, where 360 families are living in the houses of hosts, 31 in public buildings, and 290 in 'other' types of shelter which are usually improvised dwellings made from mud and scrap materials. This means that these families lack a stable housing situation, since a souring of the relationship between them and the families which host them or the authorities on whose land their homes are built could result in homelessness.

Education is also a worry for almost 1 in 5 of the families assessed by IOM in Erbil. Given the dominance of Kurdish in the governorate, this is perhaps unsurprising, as many displaced families are arriving from Arabic speaking areas of Iraq. For IDPs with children of primary school age, this problem is less severe as it is often easier for the children to adopt a second language. However, where children are slightly older, displaced parents often tell IOM that they wish to return to their governorate of origin since it is extremely difficult for adolescents to catch up with their peers, continue their studies in the host community and eventually find employment.



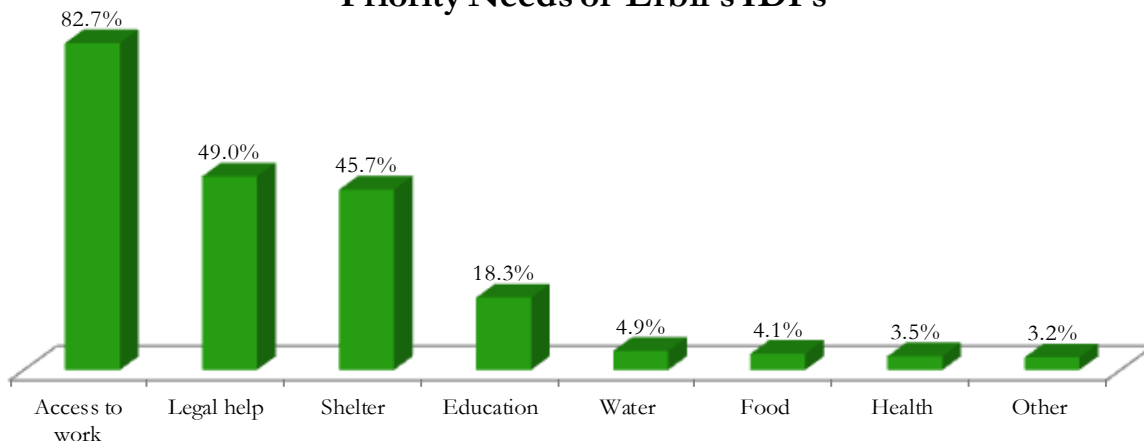
EDUCATION

In Erbil, children of displaced families who attend school often must do so in already overcrowded schools such as this one in Sarsang.

Living Structure (by district)

District	Rented house	Host House	Public building	Other
Total	88.9%	5.8%	0.5%	4.8%
Choman	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Erbil	89.1%	5.7%	0.5%	4.6%
Koisnjaq	97.6%	1.2%	0.0%	1.2%
Makhmur	95.1%	0.0%	0.0%	4.9%
Mergasur	69.6%	7.1%	0.0%	23.2%
Shaqlawana	88.2%	7.9%	2.4%	1.6%
Soran	74.7%	15.4%	0.0%	9.9%

Priority Needs of Erbil's IDPs

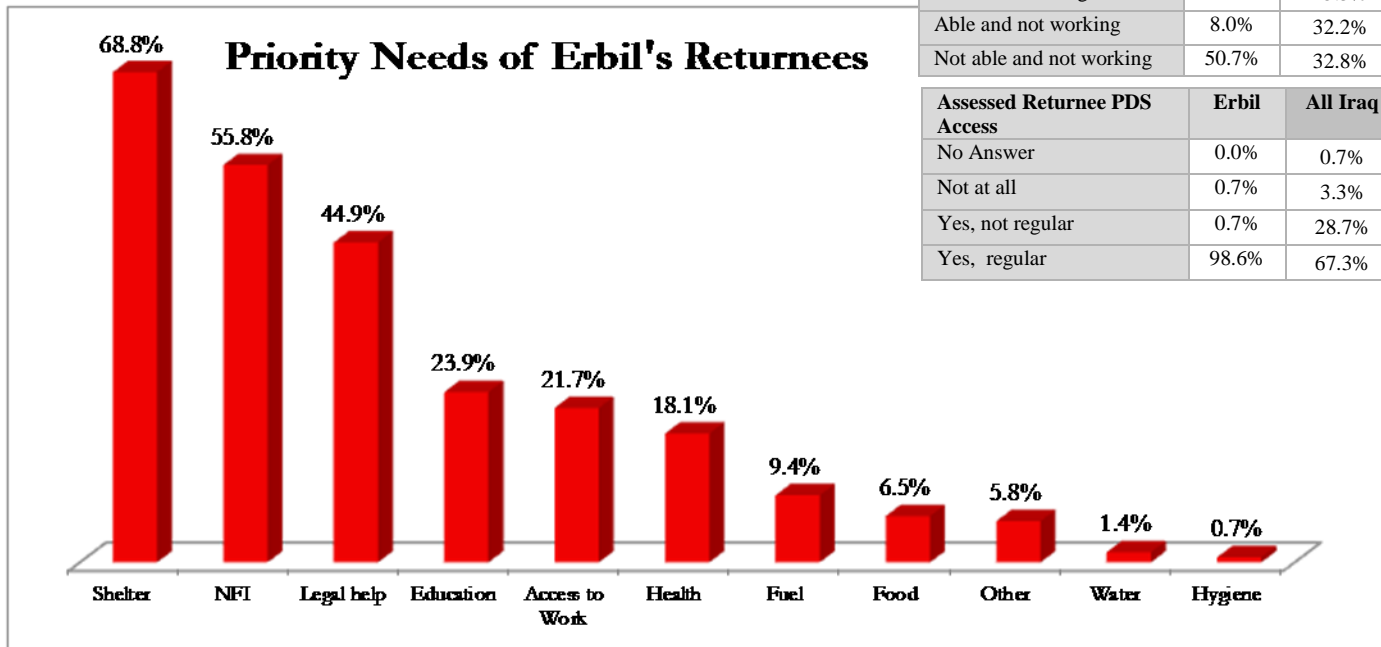


³ See 'Erbil Strategic Plan for Development and Improvement 2008-2012 at <http://www.iauiraq.org/reports/Erbil%20PDS%202008-2012%20English.pdf>

RETURNEES

Assessed Returnee Employment	Erbil	All Iraq
No Answer	1.4%	19.7%
Able and working	39.9%	15.3%
Able and not working	8.0%	32.2%
Not able and not working	50.7%	32.8%

Assessed Returnee PDS Access	Erbil	All Iraq
No Answer	0.0%	0.7%
Not at all	0.7%	3.3%
Yes, not regular	0.7%	28.7%
Yes, regular	98.6%	67.3%



The needs of returnees in Erbil differ significantly from those stated by families returning to their homes and neighbourhoods elsewhere in Iraq. In total, IOM has assessed 138 returnee families in this governorate and found that they state shelter, non-food items and legal help as their priority needs.

The fact that these families are less likely than average Iraqi returnees to cite food and access to work reflects the nature of the economy and food provision in Erbil. Whilst only 67% of returnee families across Iraq state that they have regular access to the rations provided by the public distribution system (PDS), 137 of the 138 families IOM spoke to stated that they had valid PDS cards and 138 said that they had regular PDS access. Moreover, returnees in Erbil have higher rates of employment than in other governorates, partly because of the faster economic recovery of governorates in the KRG. An IOM programme, executed in partnership with the directorates in the governorate as well as those in Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah, has provided financial assistance to returnees from Iran to set up small businesses. Programmes like these can facilitate returnee reintegration into their original communities. Good relations with their host communities also contributes to the fact that 98% of Erbil's returnees state that they always feel safe.

Although these represent significant sources of stability, returnees in Erbil, who are mostly located in the districts of Soran (75%) and Erbil (19.6%), still state that they have a number of priority needs. First among these is shelter, a concern also cited amongst IDPs in the governorate. Many returnees in the governorate live in rented accommodation and as such struggle to meet the rising costs of living. Like the communities that host them, returnees are often forced to reduce expenditure on other household items to meet these housing demands—a trend which has likely contributed to the fact that 56% of returnees in Erbil also cite non-food items as a priority need. Non-food items typically consist of fuel, household items such as bedding and kitchen equipment, and household cooling and heating systems - an essential item in Erbil where temperatures can drop as low as 2°C in winter and rise upwards of 50°C in summer.

Erbil was among the northern governorates targeted as part of the Al Anfal campaign, which took place between 1987 and 1989 under the previous regime. Their policy of 'Arabization' in the north involved the forced eviction of Kurdish farmers who were replaced with poor Arab tribesmen from the south.⁴ Although some areas of Erbil were spared from the worst of the violence, 9 of the IOM-assessed returnee families provide their date of displacement as being in 1988. Families who return to Erbil and attempt to reclaim their properties after many years are often without the appropriate documentation or find that it has since been inhabited by another family. As such, many of these families state that they are in need of legal assistance to secure their previous residencies and rebuild their lives.

⁴ See 'Genocide in Iraq: the Anfal campaign against the Kurds', written by George Black, Human Rights Watch and Middle East Watch (1993)

RETURN POTENTIAL

IDPs from Erbil

Analyzing the intentions of families who were displaced from Erbil can provide an indication of future shifts in the distribution of displaced families throughout Iraq. When IOM monitors in Iraq spoke to the 443 families that left their homes in Erbil, they found that 44% of them did not want to return, but rather wished to integrate into their current locations. This may seem surprising given the relative safety and security available in Erbil. However, a closer look reveals that most of the families who wanted to stay in their place of displacement were those who were displaced to Kirkuk—a neighbouring governorate of relative calm where many of these families sought out similar ethnic and religious groups. By contrast, 56% of the families that were displaced to Salah al-Din state that they would like to resettle in a third location and a further 34% say they would like to return to Erbil. A significant number of families (12%), all of whom are located in Kirkuk, state that they are ‘waiting to decide’ what their next movements will be. Elsewhere in Iraq, few families express this indecisiveness. The fact that so many families displaced from Erbil do so is a reflection of the unclear status of some parts of Iraq which come under the jurisdiction of both the KRG and the central government in Baghdad. While families wait to find out if they will be able to reclaim the properties they have left, they are also keen to know under which jurisdiction they will eventually live since this can affect everything from service provision to their ability to find work. It is likely that once these issues are clarified, more of the families displaced from Erbil will be able to express a concrete intention.

IDPs in Erbil

Around half of the 6,879 IOM-assessed displaced families in Erbil state the desire to return to their place of origin. This figure varies slightly by district. 80% of those living in Makhmur wish to return to their place of origin. It is probably no coincidence that 60% of the families in Makhmur cite food as a priority need compared to the 4% average across Erbil. Though around 1 in 3 families in Erbil wish to stay and integrate with their communities in the governorate, this rises to 96% in Mergasur where key issues such as food, water and health are not considered priority needs by families. Where possible, IOM seeks to help these displaced families fulfil their intentions, whether through community integration programmes or resettlement assistance.

Erbil IDP Settlement Intentions				
District	Locally integrate in current location	Resettle in a third location	Return to place of origin	Waiting to Decide
Total Erbil	33.2%	14.1%	50.1%	2.7%
Choman	31.3%	12.5%	56.3%	0.0%
Erbil	32.4%	14.5%	50.5%	2.6%
Koisanjaq	40.5%	0.0%	48.8%	10.7%
Makhmur	17.7%	2.1%	80.2%	0.0%
Mergasur	96.4%	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%
Shaqlawa	55.1%	0.0%	35.4%	9.4%
Soran	30.2%	27.2%	42.0%	0.6%

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 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 or Liana Paris, IOM Monitoring Officer, at lparis@iom.int (+962 6 565 9660).

What are the intentions of those displaced from Erbil?

Displaced in	Integrate into the current location	Resettle in a third location	Return to their place of origin	Waiting to Decide
All IDPs from Erbil	197	128	66	52
Basrah	3	0	1	0
Dahuk	1	0	0	0
Diyala	1	0	0	0
Erbil	1	0	0	0
Kerbala	0	0	0	0
Kirkuk	165	51	20	52
Muthanna	12	0	0	0
Ninewa	0	2	0	0
Salah al-Din	14	75	45	0



IOM MONITORING

IOM monitors talk to local Mukhtars and IDP family representatives.

Of those that intend to return, to which governorate would they return?

Baghdad	55.8%
Ninewa	37.9%
Kirkuk	3.4%
Diyala	1.8%
Other	1.1%

Erbil - IDP and Returnee Locations



IOM International Organization for Migration

Legend

Returnee Places

● 103

IDP Places

● 1 - 49

● 50 - 99

● 100 - 199

● 200 - 399

● 400 +

IDP Population

1 - 49

50 - 99

100 - 199

200 - 299

300 +

