

# Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertainty in the Context of Iraq



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# **Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertainty in the Context of Iraq**

**MERI Policy Report**

**Irene Costantini  
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# 1. Executive Summary

Following the Islamic State's (IS) occupation of Iraqi territories in June 2014 more than 3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) fled their homes in search for a secure place. Of these, around 1,3 million found refuge in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). In parallel to new waves of displacement, Iraqis were also choosing to migrate abroad. In 2015, Iraqis were among the top three nationalities reaching Europe through the Mediterranean routes, after Syrians and Afghans (UNHCR 2016b, 34). Besides displacement and emigration, a large number of IDPs have returned to their place of origin since 2017. As the process intensifies, the security, political and economic conditions of the liberated areas still remain unstable and unpredictable.

This report provides policy recommendations based on the results of the research study titled "Drivers for onward migration: the case of Iraqi IDPs in the Kurdistan Region leaving Iraq", which was conducted between May and November 2017. In it, we addressed the questions: what mechanisms are responsible for explaining why IDPs living in the KRI want to either stay, emigrate or return to their places of origin? and what are the relationships between displacement, emigration and return in the context of Iraq?

To address these questions, we employed both quantitative and qualitative analyses methods including: (a) evaluating 500 questionnaires distributed among IDPs in the KRI (Erbil, Duhok and Suleimaniyah governorates) between May and June 2017; (b) conducting 30 semi-structured interviews with IDPs in the KRI between June and July 2017, and (c) discussing preliminary results of the study during a workshop in Erbil on 23 July 2017 with local, national and international actors, including governmental and non-governmental organizations (see Section 2).

The data indicates that, although slightly more than half of the sample wish/plan to leave Iraq (55%), only a minority of the subjects (23%) actually developed a concrete plan to do so. Emigration was most appealing to those ages 26–35 and among those with no or low levels of education. Moreover, Yazidis and Christians were more represented among those who wished or planned to leave Iraq. In addition, the most important pull factors point to the presence of family/relatives and friends along with the confidence of receiving refugee status upon arrival. Ultimately, IDPs' perceptions of insecurity and lack of economic opportunities appear to be the most compelling reasons driving their wish/plan to emigrate (see Section 4.2).

The data also suggests that IDPs' perceptions towards the future political, economic and security situations in Iraq (expressed in the next five years) is the most relevant factor determining people's emigration decision: within an overall negative assessment of the future of Iraq, IDPs wishing or planning to emigrate held a more pessimistic view compared to those who wanted to return or stay in displacement. Conversely, the study finds that socio-political (i.e., relations between IDPs and hosting communities) and socio-economic (i.e., income level and employment status) factors are less significant in determining IDPs' wish/plan to leave the country. Where socio-political and socio-economic factors do not directly influence IDPs' intentions, they however, contribute to a distressing sense of uncertainty prevalent among IDPs (see Section 4.4).

Political, social and economic uncertainty overarchingly influences displacement, emigration and return in and from Iraq. Additionally, the Government of Iraq (GoI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have not been capable of (or willing to) address such uncertainty. Rather, they have contributed to a governance of uncertainty best illustrated by the absence of a comprehensive framework for managing displacement and return in both the KRI and greater federal Iraq. In response, this study calls for the

development of robust policies at the international, national and local levels which:

- a. Consider displacement in Iraq as a chronic condition versus a sudden crisis;
- b. Recognize how recurrent, protracted and unresolved displacement waves destabilize the region;
- c. Appreciate displacement as a diversified phenomenon.

These findings stress the destabilizing and traumatic effects of displacement and the urgency of addressing them, thus, we recommend the following prioritized policy areas through which international, regional, national and local actors can contribute to solve, or at least mitigate, the negative impact of displacement:

1. Elaborate and implement a national policy framework for displacement capable of addressing its multiple manifestations;
2. Adopt facilitation (without active encouragement) measures that can decrease the prevalent uncertainty among the population;
3. Include displacement in the broader physical and social reconstruction plan for Iraq.

The data for this report was collected in Spring/Summer 2017, and thus, describes a scenario that has changed following the events that took place in September and October 2017 (see Section 3). However, the findings and recommendations that the study identified appear as relevant today as they were pre-Referendum. Although the situation has changed, they support policy-recommendations that are urgently needed.

The research project “Drivers for onward migration: the case of Iraqi IDPs in the Kurdistan Region leaving Iraq” was funded by the NWO – Security and Rule of Law in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings programme. It was conducted by researchers from the Middle East Research Institute (MERI) in collaboration with Qandil and the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCCC).



## 2. Introduction

This study investigates the relationship between displacement, emigration and return in the context of Iraq. Following the Islamic State's (IS) occupation of Iraqi territories from June 2014, more than 3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) fled their homes in search of safety and security. Of these, approximately 1.3 million found refuge in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).<sup>1</sup> In parallel, Iraqis chose to emigrate in large numbers. In 2015, for example, they were among the top three nationalities to reach Europe through Mediterranean Sea routes, after the Syrians and Afghans (UNHCR 2016b, 34). Though large number of IDPs have returned to liberated places of origin, especially in 2017, security, political and economic conditions still remain unstable and unpredictable.

Displacement is a complex phenomenon which can originate from the violence of civil conflict;<sup>2</sup> be used as a strategic tool by opposing parties to gain political ground during hostilities; and serve as a determiner in the success or failure of a political settlement (Lischer 2007). Thus, evaluating and understanding displacement requires considering both its causes and effects. IS-generated violence cancelled differences among people fleeing their homes, but after displacement, they re-appeared. Ethno-religious group identity along with place of origin and other factors, such as socio-economic conditions discussed below, exerted tremendous influence on IDPs' migration decisions and the state's (and other political actors) response to displacement. While this study seeks to identify trends in the displacement wave following 2014, it also acknowledges such differences and the importance of considering them in potential policy solutions.

With reference to emigration,<sup>3</sup> the study seeks to understand when and under what circumstances displacement changes into emigration, that is when and under what circumstances Iraqi IDPs decide to leave the country. The focus of the study on IDPs residing in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) brings another complexity to the study: the movement of IDPs from the KRI towards foreign countries cannot technically be framed as onward migration—the movement of migrants to a third country other than the one of origin and the one of destination (Lindley and van Hear 2007). However, respondents from our study largely felt that living in the KRI was like “being in another country”. The specific status of the KRI as a quasi-state within Iraq (Natali 2010; Bengio 2012)<sup>4</sup> determined additional residency requirements for IDPs. For example, the KRG mandates that IDPs apply for residency just as any international would based on a thorough security screening and decision by Asaesh – the Kurdish security apparatus – and Ministry of Interior officials (Highel 2016).

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1 The precise number of IDPs is difficult to estimate due to registration issues and IDPs' continuous movements. According to the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre, as of April 2017, the KRI hosted 40% of all Iraqi IDPs corresponding to around 1,3 million Iraqi IDPs (JCCC 2017). The JCCC estimates that as of October 2016, the number of IDPs reached 1,411,313 (JCCC 2016). According to the IOM data the KRI hosted in March 2017 30% of the IDPs corresponding to around 1 million Iraqis (IOM 2017b). In both cases, the number of IDPs is large when considering the local population, estimated at around 6 million inhabitants.

2 Conflict-induced displacement describes a situation whereby people are forced to flee their home due to political violence. Conflict-induced displacement is only one of many categories as the term displacement includes also people fleeing due to other factors, including natural disasters. While internal displacement is similar in many ways to refugee flows, it differs from the latter in legal terms: as internally-displaced people do not cross an international border, their rights are not regulated by the 1951 Refugee Convention. Remaining a domestic competence, the protection of IDPs is framed by the non-binding Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1998. See: Lischer 2007; OCHA 2004.

3 We adopt the IOM's definition of “emigration” as “the act of departing or exiting from one State with a view to settling in another”. See: <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

4 A federal entity within Iraq, during the years the KRI has developed many state-like competences (from security to visa regulation and borders' control, among others) that have laid the foundation for being a quasi-state (Natali 2010; Bengio 2012).

Besides emigration, return occurred in parallel with new waves of displacement. Although it is problematic to determine precisely when a displacement crisis ends, the return of IDPs is often seen as the end of displacement and thus prioritized once conditions permit. Moreover, while return is ongoing, policymakers must continuously assess the security, political and economic conditions favoring or deterring return ultimately, determined by how the crisis is interpreted by returnees. As shown below, when Iraqis read IS advancement as the inevitable consequence of years of political mismanagement, Iraqi IDPs find it difficult to view the end of hostilities as the sole driver for return. Understanding Iraqi displacement, emigration and return include assessing both their spatial and a temporal dimension: the here and now of displacement, the elsewhere of emigration and the before of return, necessarily reinterpreted in light of the changes brought in the places of origin (Horst and Grabska 2015).

Finally, in approaching the issue of displacement and its relationship with emigration and return, this study privileges a political perspective within the broader political dynamics in Iraq. By this we mean that the international community often addresses displacement in fragile and conflict-affected countries in lieu of local governments often unwilling or unable to address it. As such, internal displacement has become a largely internationalized area of intervention with participation from many inter- and multi-national organizations like the UN and INGOs. While technical assistance and aid from these entities has provided local governments the ways and means to meet the challenges associated with large-scale displacement around the world, it has, at times, favored the 'humanitarian' vs political and security dimensions of the phenomenon. This study focuses on the latter two.

### 3. Methodology

From an analytical point of view, scholars generally approach migration studies from one of two perspectives: the individual, considering such decision factors as socio-economic status and support of families and friends or the perception of security; and the structural, considering the political, social and economic factors influencing individual decisions (Brettell and Hollifield 2015). This double perspective is often reflected in the dichotomy between macro—political economy—and micro dynamics —“the networks, practices and beliefs” of migrants themselves (Castles and Miller 2009, 28). This study combined both perspectives and considered identity dynamics a key socio-political element influencing individual decisions.<sup>5</sup>

In order to grasp the multifaceted nature of displacement and its relationship with emigration and return the study adopted a mixed methods approach. The quantitative analysis is based on data collected through a household survey, which was distributed among the IDP population in the KRI (Erbil, Duhok and Sulaymaniyah governorates) between May–June 2017. The survey’s sample was developed from data available through IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) from July–August 2016. Based on observations and interviews with key informants, we chose identity and shelter types as key sample variables, as explained below. Eliminating invalid entries (49), our analysis was built on a final sample of 500 questionnaires (see Table 1).

**Table1: Sample description**

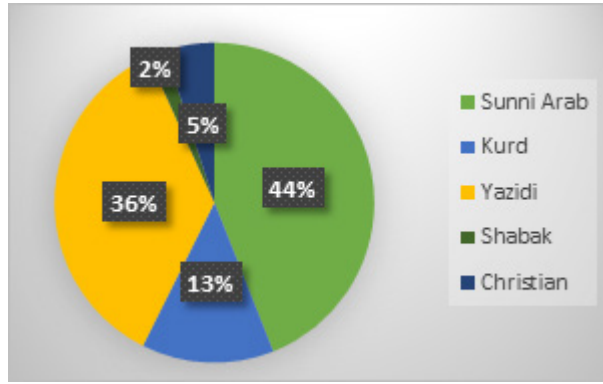
Identity/Shelter Type	Camp	Private	Critical	Total
Sunni Arab	25	151	44	220
Christian (different denomination)	3	20	2	25
Kurd Sunni/Shia	4	57	6	67
Yazidi	72	91	16	179
Shabak	6	1	2	9
Total	110	320	70	500

The five identity groups represented in the sample are those predominantly found in the KRI: Sunni Arabs, Christians (primarily comprised of Chaldeans, Assyrians and Armenians) Kurds, Yazidis and Shabaks (see Figure 1). Ethnic and religious minorities have been the primary target of the IS’s systematic strategy to remove or eliminate them (notable is the case of the Yazidi massacre). Ethno-religious considerations have influenced the movement of people, with communities clustering in specific parts of the country. For instance, Yazidis concentrated in the Duhok governorate where they represent 62% of IDPs (IOM 2017c, 18) or Shia-majority governorates such as Kerbela, Babylon and Najaf have attracted mostly Shia IDPs, belonging to different ethnicities (IOM 2017c, 29). Moreover, decisions regarding which IDPs would be assigned to live in which camps were largely based on ethno-religious identities.<sup>6</sup> In all, displacement has changed, at least temporarily, the demographics of some places of origin and resettlement.

<sup>5</sup> On identity dynamics in Iraq post-2014, see, among others: Van Zoonen and Wirya 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Wirya and Fawaz 2017; IILHR, MRG, NPWJ, UNPO 2016.

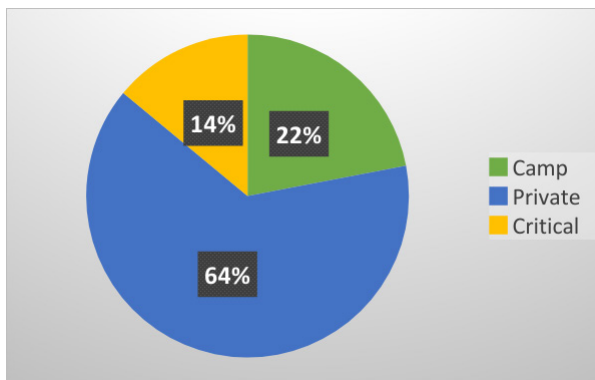
<sup>6</sup> Authors’ interview with different camp managers, Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, June–July 2017.

Figure 1: Distribution of sample by identity group



Together with identity, we treat shelter types as an indication of IDPs’ economic conditions. In the study, we include three shelter types: IDP camps, private settings (rented houses, motel/hotel, and hosted families) and critical settings (unfinished buildings, religious buildings and schools).<sup>7</sup> While we treat identity as the primary variable in the study of displacement and emigration from a structural point of view, we treat shelter as the primary variable where we adopt an individual perspective (See Figures 1 and 2.)

Figure 2: Distribution of sample by shelter type



As mentioned above, we elected to compliment quantitative analytical techniques with qualitative methodologies by conducting 30 semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth insights into the phenomenon and contextualizing some of the data collected through the survey. These interviews were conducted with IDPs residing in the governorates of Erbil, Duhok and Suleimanyah in June-July 2017. Interviews included IDPs residing in camps, critical settings and private settings with respondents belonging to the five identity groups identified above. We discussed the preliminary results of the study with key informants (local and national actors, international organizations and NGOs) during a workshop held 23 July 2017 in Erbil. Researchers engaged key stakeholders to provide on policy recommendations subject matter expertise germane to displacement, emigration and return.

<sup>7</sup> The categorisation follows IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) methodology. See: <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>

## 4. Context

*“Well, if possible I would go abroad, but I cannot. Abroad is better than Erbil, and Erbil is better than Mosul. It is better to stay in Erbil if you cannot go abroad.”*

[IDP, Harsham camp, Erbil].

The recent displacement wave of Iraqis resulting from IS conquests since June 2014 is not without precedent (UNHCR 2016). Since the 1970s, the Baath regime used displacement policies in the process of Arabisation to change the identity texture of Kurdish-majority territories across northern Iraq from Khanaqin to the east (along the Iranian border), to Shingal to the west (along the Syrian border) to Zakho in the north (along the Turkish border) and Tuz Khurmatu in the south (HRW 2004).<sup>8</sup> Kirkuk governorate was particularly affected by the Arabisation process, especially after the First Gulf War (1990–91) and the establishment of a no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel. Since then, the majority Kurdish governorates of Erbil, Duhok and Suleymaniyah gained autonomy while the governorate of Kirkuk, with its mixed population, remained under the control of the regime. In 2000, UN-Habitat estimated the number of IDPs at around 800,000 of the 3,5 million people inhabiting the three northern governorates of Erbil, Duhok and Suleymaniyah (UN-Habitat 2000).

Regime-change in 2003 did not stop internal displacement. Areas such as Khanaqin witnessed a reversed Arabisation process. But new waves of internal displacement resulted mostly from the violence that followed the fall of Saddam Hussein. In 2008, five years after regime-change, there were around 2,7 million IDPs, “more people displaced than ever before” (IOM 2008), as a result of the violence emanating from the 2006-08 civil conflict which paralysed Iraq. One of the primary consequences of this conflict exacerbating already extensive crises, was a deepening sense among Iraqis that safety and security were best provided by non-state or sub state ethno-religious militias rather than the state run security apparatus. Subsequent to massive displacement during this period, Baghdad, as the epicentre of violence, witnessed a radical demographic change in which previously mixed neighbourhoods homogenised along ethno-religious affiliations.

By November 2013, there were 759,000 registered Iraqi IDPs (Higel 2016, 8). This number soared to more than 3 million, following the brutal IS conquest of Iraqi territories since June 2014 and the dramatic uncertainty produced by its occupation. Subsequently, increased Iraqi displacement coincided with counter-IS military campaigns, specially, the operation to liberate Mosul in October 2016 producing more than 1 million IDPs between 17 October, 2016 to 29 June 2017 (IOM 2017a, 11). In 2014, IS and the displacement wave it caused severely affected Iraq’s already fragile political, economic and social context. The IS magnified old problems – a reconstruction process that failed to create conditions for a stable prosperous and democratic Iraq – and made salient GoI’s foremost challenge: how to re-establish Iraqi sovereignty with a state budget already insufficient to meet pre-IS needs let alone sustain a military campaign sufficient to topple it. In response to the displacement crisis, the international community rallied to supply operational assistance, the cost of which was estimated at USD 861 million for 2016, alone (OCHA 2015).

In this scenario, the KRI faced pre-existing and evolving political, economic, defense and security and humanitarian challenges. At the peak of the crisis, it hosted around 1,3 million IDPs coming mostly from the provinces of Nineveh, Salahaddin, Dyala and al-Anbar in addition to 250,000 Syrian refugees.<sup>9</sup> The KRI showed a greater degree of stability compared to other areas of Iraq since the 2003 occupation serving as a pull factor for IDPs since the beginning of Iraq’s 2006-08 ethno-sectarian wars (Lischer 2008, 109).

<sup>8</sup> Some of these areas belong to the Disputed territories of Northern Iraq, areas defined by article 140 of the 2005 Constitution of Iraq, which include parts of the governorates of Nineveh, Kirkuk, Salahaddin and Diyala.

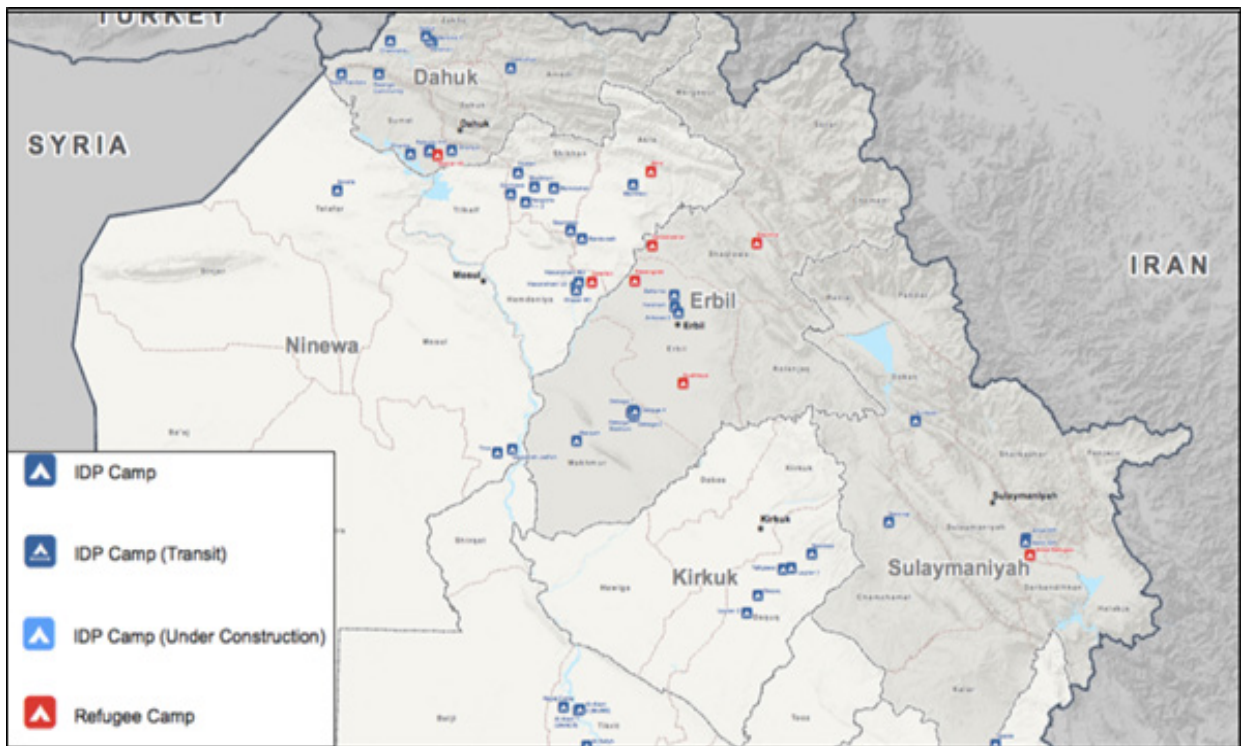
<sup>9</sup> See Note 1.



However, by 2014, the KRI was riddled with complex political, economic and social challenges. In addition to the political stalemate concerning regional presidential and parliamentary elections,<sup>10</sup> since 2014 the KRI experienced a drastic economic crisis (World Bank 2015; World Bank and Kurdistan Region 2016). IDP flows into the KRI further debilitated an already faltering economy by increasing pressure on a weak labour market, enhancing tensions at the political level and affecting social stability by increasing pressure on the demography and poor infrastructure of the region.

Though the UNHCR earmarked around 23 camps across the Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah<sup>11</sup> governorates most IDPs elected to find shelter in private settings (e.g., rented houses, hotel/motel and hosted families) with a smaller percentage forced to live in critical settings (e.g., unfinished buildings, schools and religious buildings), especially at the beginning of the displacement crisis (JCCC 2016).

Figure 3: Map of IDP camps in the KRI



(Source: Reach 2017)

10 The political crisis in the KRI began in 2015 with a protracted dispute over the terms and mandates of the KR presidential elections. Following a deadlock, the terms of the presidency had been illegally extended and parliament activities suspended (O'Driscoll 2016).

11 Outside the KRI, other IDP camps are situated in the governorates of Kirkuk, Nineveh, Salahaddin, Dyala, al-Anbar, Baghdad and central Iraq.

The governorate of Duhok, situated north of the KRI and bordering Turkey, received a large number of IDPs coming mostly from al-Anbar, Salahaddin, but above all, Nineveh. From Nineveh, it received a large number of Yazidis, an ethnic-religious minority concentrated mostly in Shingal, which made up around 62% of the governorate's total IDP population. IDPs mostly lived in camps situated in the district of Sumel and Zakho. Areas within the Duhok governorate witnessed an ethnic-religious compositional shift due to the large influx of IDPs from across Iraq, especially Yazidis, also reflected in demographic changes to IDPs' places of origin (IOM 2017c, 17–18). The Erbil governorate, similarly, hosted a large concentration of IDPs since the crisis in al-Anbar in December 2013. Given the central position of Erbil as the region's capital and administrative centre, the city and the governorate have attracted many IDPs, though the relatively higher cost of living in the city has functioned as a driver for secondary displacement inside the region (IOM 2017c, 25).<sup>12</sup> The majority of IDPs in Erbil are Sunni Arab, mostly from al-Anbar. Erbil continues to host a significant share of Christians from Nineveh concentrated in the Christian neighbourhood of Ainkawa. Suleymaniyah governorate hosts the lowest number of IDPs mostly from al-Anbar, Dyala and Salahaddin (IOM 2017c, 61).

Moreover, internal displacement constitutes but one migration response to instability in Iraq. Since the civil conflict worsened from 2006–08, over 2 million Iraqi refugees (IOM 2008) elected to emigrate, initially, to the neighboring countries, mostly, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon (Mokbel 2007) and then to Western nations when the war in Syria reversed this trend. After 2014, the number of Iraqis emigrating to Europe increased significantly and in 2015 Iraqis were among the top three nationalities reaching Europe through the Mediterranean routes, after Syrians and Afghans (UNHCR 2016b, 34). Some Iraqis fleeing to Europe were IDPs who, temporarily resided in the Kurdistan Region, and mainly transited across the Turkish border (UNHCR 2016a, 23).

As the military operation against IS liberated many IDPs' places of origin, the process of return accelerated. As of August 2017, the IOM estimated the number of returns at around 2 million.<sup>13</sup> While this number appears high, the process of return has remained trapped into the complex politics of the country. The process of return is highly conditioned upon local dynamics and, thus, is very diversified. IS occupied many of the disputed territories between Baghdad and Erbil, which constitute some of the most ethno-religiously heterogeneous territories of the country. What's more, the IS conquest and subsequent counter-IS military campaign to defeat it, coincided with a broader effort to redefine the political map of the country. For instance, since 2014, the KRG broadened the KRI's borders to include Peshmerga-liberated contested areas recently retaken by Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).<sup>14</sup> While the political map of Iraq is dynamic, events over the last three years indicate instability resulting from coupling territorial control with demographic composition. It is in this context that IDPs weigh the costs and benefits of return including regaining property, finding living wage employment and accessing services such as water, electricity, schools and health services, security and avoiding violent social tensions.

Additionally, though rates of return intensified during the summer of 2017, September's events generated a new wave of displacement. On 25 September, 2017 the KRG held a controversial referendum on independence which included some of the Kurdish-majority areas outside KRI, which are disputed between Baghdad and Erbil. Internally, the referendum was seen by some KRI political parties untimely and divisive whereas internationally, global actors refused to lend their support and called for Iraqi unity.

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<sup>12</sup> Secondary displacement refers to IDPs moving to a second location after initial displacement.

<sup>13</sup> IOM DTM data. See <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/default.aspx> (accessed 1 November 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Following the operation that started on 16 October 2017, Iraqi Security Forces together with the Hashd al-Shaabi re-established federal control over most of the disputed areas between Baghdad and Erbil.



The KRG's controversial decision to hold an independence referendum election only contributed to the IDPs' precarious conditions, especially for those originating from the disputed territories between Kurdish regional and federal Iraq territories. Prior to the referendum, IDPs expressed uncertainty about their future in a potentially independent Kurdistan and those IDPs who had already returned to the disputed areas feared an escalation of violence between Baghdad and Erbil. For instance, in Makhmur (a disputed area south of Erbil), many Sunni Arab IDPs hurriedly left Dibaga Camp before 25 September anticipating potential clashes among the population and military confrontations between federal Iraq and the KRI.

After the Referendum, negotiations between Baghdad and Erbil stalled and on 16 October the Iraqi Security Forces together with the Hashd al-Shaabi advanced and clashed with Peshmerga and civilians in the Kirkuk governorate then Tuz Khurmatu, the Mosul Plain, Makhmur and Shingal. Most areas affected by recent clashes overlapped with those that had suffered under IS occupation and counter-IS military operations. Most of those recently affected by violence are Kurds. According to the JCCC, 168,372 civilians, most Kurds, have been displaced from Kirkuk, Khanaqin, Tuz Khurmatu, Zummar and Rabea and found refuge in the Kurdistan Region: 84,000 resettled in Erbil, 78,372 in Suleimaniyya and 6,000 in Duhok and Zakho from Zummar and Rabea.<sup>15</sup>

In Tuz Khurmatu, the entire Kurdish population has been displaced. According to Amnesty International, "satellite images, videos, photos and dozens of testimonies collected by Amnesty International show that civilians were forced to flee their homes after fierce clashes erupted between Iraqi government forces, supported by the Popular Mobilization Units, and Kurdish Peshmerga forces in Iraq's multi-ethnic city of Tuz Khurmatu on 16 October 2017 (2017)." Other badly affected areas include Makhmur and those in the Nineveh governorate. As revenge and retaliation rhetoric increase, the current conflict creates further uncertainties among an already vulnerable population. Displacement is, once again, the effect of violence resulting in further instability in an already destabilized Iraq. While at the time of writing, discussions are ongoing between the KRG and the GoI to settle disputed territory differences, the events highlight, once again, the undermining effects of displacement and the urgency of addressing its many challenges.

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<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.jccckrg.org/ku/article/read/124> (accessed on 1 November 2017).

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Profiling the Respondents

As aforementioned, 500 questionnaires were administered in Sulaimaniyah, Erbil and Duhok for this study. Males constituted 68% while females formed 32% of the sample. The majority of the respondents were between 26-45 years old (58%). The sample showed a diversified spectrum of educational and professional backgrounds, as illustrated in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4: Educational background

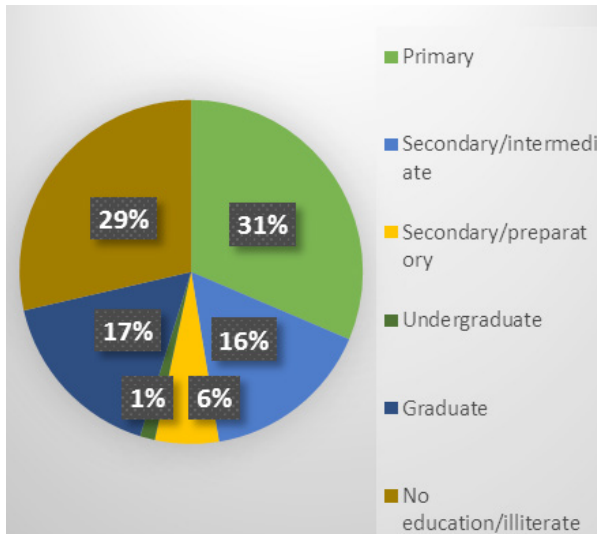
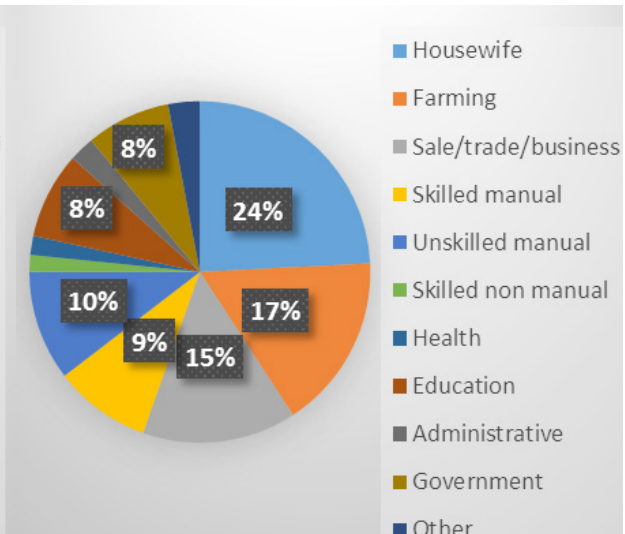


Figure 5: Professional background



The majority of the respondents were from the Nineveh governorate (72%), followed by those from al-Anbar governorates (19%) and Dyala (9%). Only 6% had been displaced prior to 2014 and the majority were Arab Sunni (5%). In a large majority of cases, 87% stated that they fled their homes with all family members (see Figures 6, 7 and 8).

Figure 6: Governorate origin of displacement

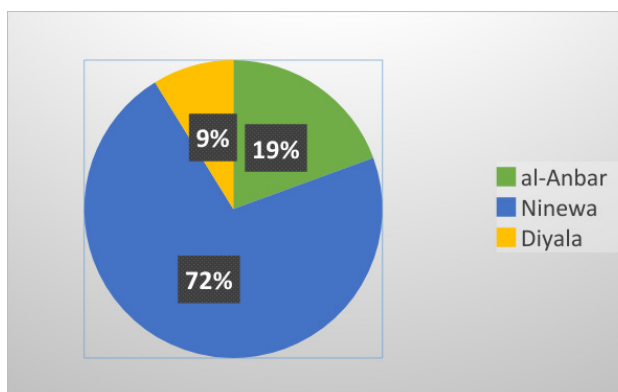


Figure 7: Previous displacement

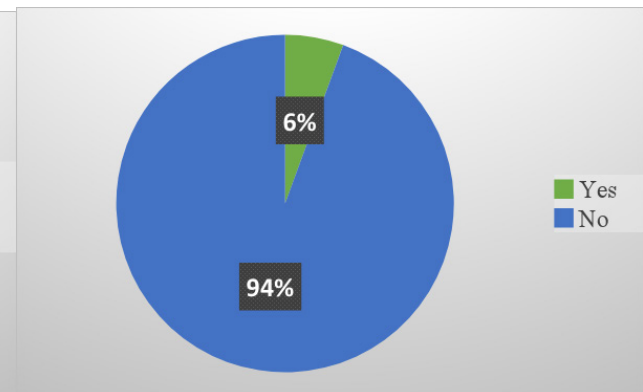
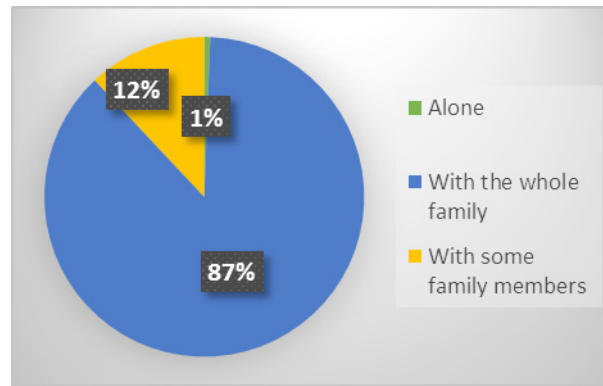


Figure 8: Family size during flight



## 5.2 To Stay or to Leave?

The first question we investigate is when displacement morphs into emigration, that is, when do IDPs decide to leave Iraq? To this end, we investigate IDPs' decision-making process in electing to stay in or leave Iraq. The crisis initiated by IS' advancement was followed by a new wave of Iraqis fleeing Iraq. When more than one million people emigrated to Europe in 2015 (IOM 2015), migration percolated to the forefront of political and public debate in most European countries and made it a highly securitised issue. In 2015, Iraqis represented around 7% of those to arrive in Europe, becoming the third largest group after Syrians and Afghans (UNHCR 2015). In 2016, the total number of arrivals to Europe plunged to 387,739, of which 25,975 were Iraqis <sup>16</sup>and following Syria (79,497), Afghanistan (41,369) and Nigeria (37,551), Iraq produced the fourth largest number of arrivals for the same year. Although the topic of migration has received extensive attention following the rise of IS in Iraq and Syria, the relationship between displacement and emigration lies largely unexplored. IOM's Migration flows from Iraq to Europe (2016b) provides some insight into this relationship, but it is confined to Iraqi migrants who left during 2015 and resided in Europe. According to this study's data, 18% of Iraqi emigrants were previously displaced.<sup>17</sup>

Respondents to our questionnaire were asked whether they or members of their family wished to or had plans to leave Iraq with more than half (55%) responding "yes" (see Figure 9). Researchers went on to inquire about when they first wished/planned to leave Iraq and found that the majority (61%) considered emigrating only after displacement vs a small percentage (7%) considering it, before (see Figure 10). Those wishing/planning to leave before displacement expressed that moving to the KRI was a strategic decision to finance their journey abroad. In particular, as interviews pointed out, emigration becomes an option when displacement persisted with no end in sight. Despite conducting surveys and interviews in tandem with counter-IS military operations, respondents continued to express uncertainty towards their future, disposing them to emigration.

<sup>16</sup> The drastic drop in arrivals can be ascribed to many factors including the political. The agreement between the European Union and Turkey in March 2016 brought the Eastern Mediterranean and western Balkan routes to a standstill, closing an important transit point for Iraqi migrants (IOM 2016a).

<sup>17</sup> The findings of the report cannot be generalized. The report's methodology drew on referrals, not random samples, thus, the findings apply only to their sample not to the entire Iraqi migrant population.

Figure 9: Wish/plan to leave Iraq

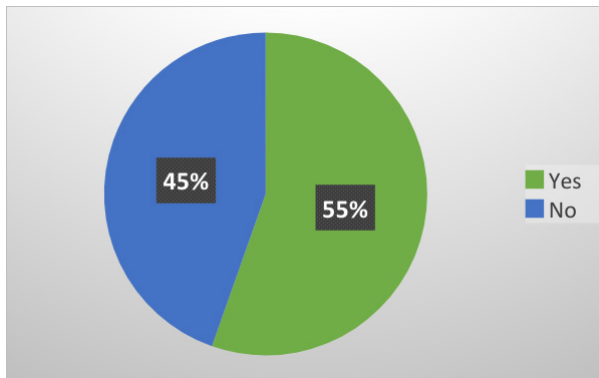
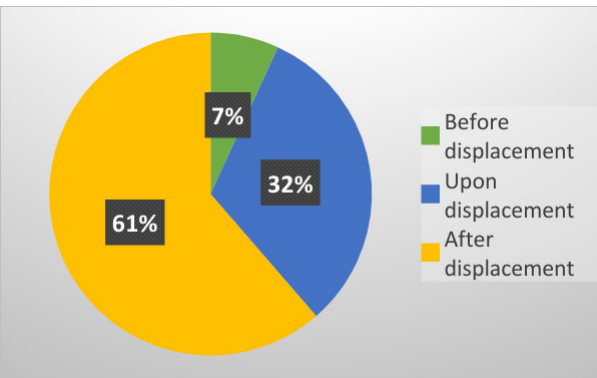


Figure 10: Decision to leave Iraq relative to displacement chronology



Although certain overall patterns can be deduced from the data, the wish/plan to leave Iraq cannot be easily attributed to individual categories of the sample. As regards shelter type, while there are no significant differences among people residing in private and critical settings, the majority of the respondents residing in camps voiced the wish or plan to leave the country (see Figure 11). As regards identity, the Yazidis show a higher proportion wishing/planning to leave the country. Christian respondents were almost split in half between those who wished/planned to leave and those who didn't, while the percentage of people wishing/planning to leave Iraq decreased among the Sunni Arab and Kurd groups (see Figure 12).

Figure 11: Wish/plan to leave Iraq - shelter type

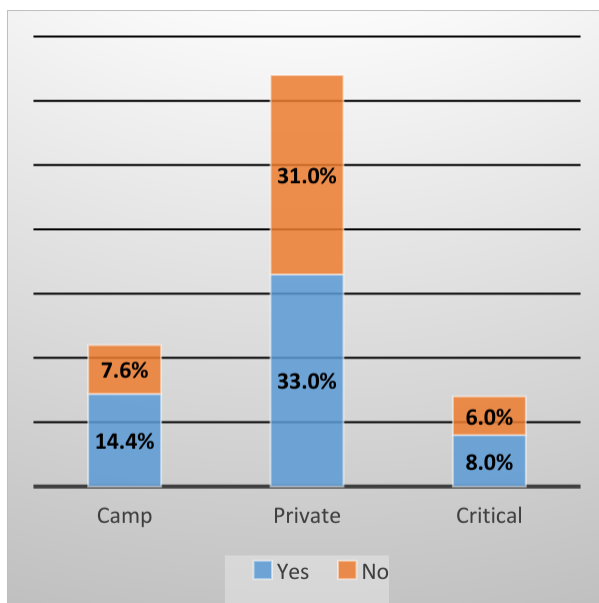
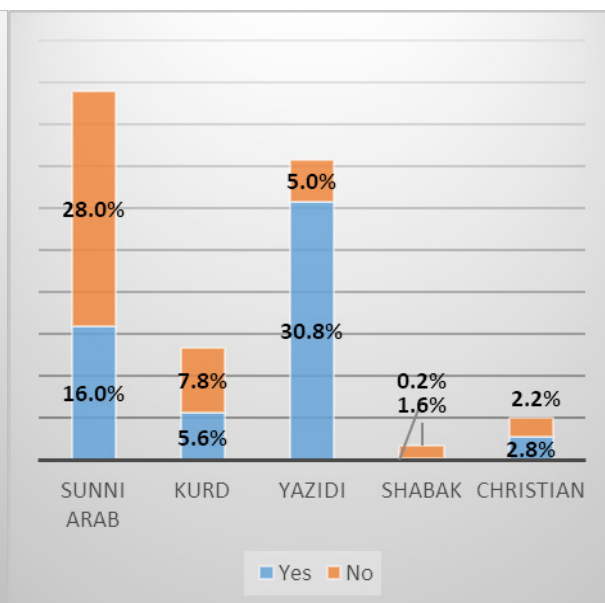


Figure 12: Wish/plan to leave Iraq - identity



As regards age groups, the largest discrepancy between respondents who wished/planned to leave Iraq vs those who didn't is found in age group distributions 26–35 with 18,2% of them wishing/planning to leave vs 9,4% who didn't (see Figure 13). As regards education, the largest discrepancy lay among those with no or low levels of education as, among the illiterate, 17% wished/planned to leave Iraq vs 11,6% who didn't and among those with primary education, 17,3% wished/planned to leave Iraq vs 13,6 who didn't (see Figure 14).

Figure 13: Wish/plan to leave Iraq - age group

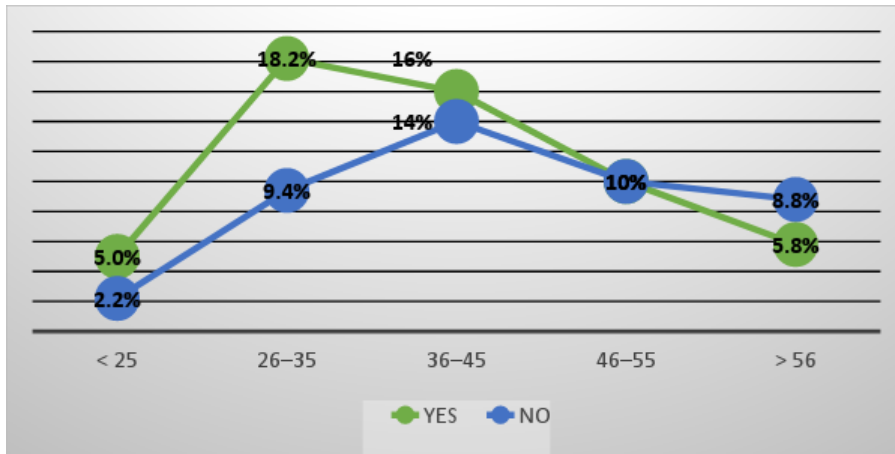
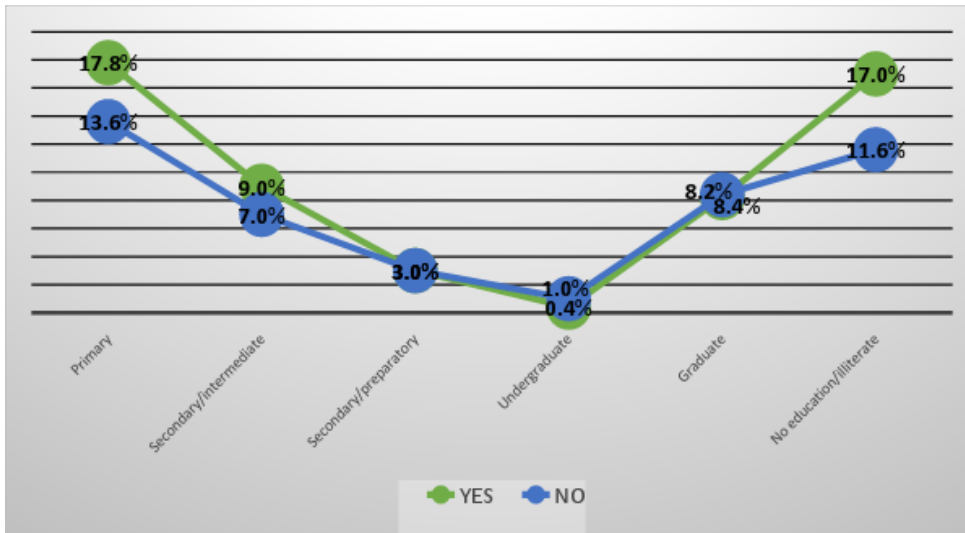


Figure 14: Wish/plan to leave Iraq - educational background



In one of the survey questions we deliberately examined wishing and planning, separately. Taken apart, respondents indicated that the option of emigrating remained, mostly, a wish as only 23% of respondents indicated that they were planning to emigrate within a year. The majority (80%) who wished to leave had not undertaken any concrete actions to do so vs 17% who were preparing emigration paperwork (see Figure 15 and 16).

Figure 15: Plan urgency to leave Iraq

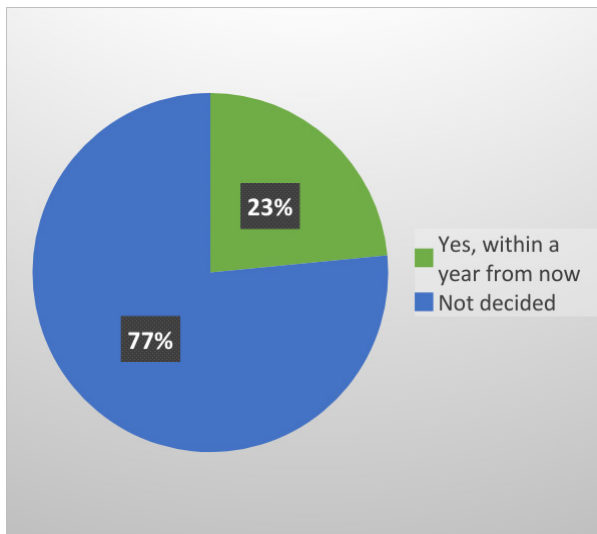
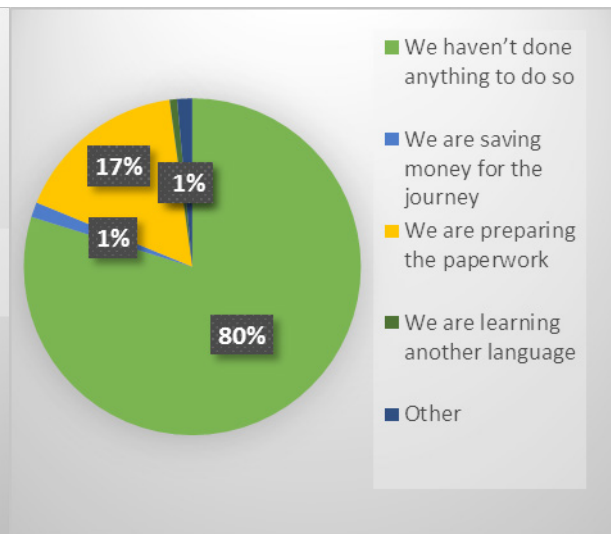


Figure 16: Preparations to emigrate



Respondents were also asked about which countries they would like to emigrate to (see Figure 17). Germany was overwhelmingly preferred (61%) followed by Australia (9%) then Canada (7%). Interestingly, the data shows that identity groups expressed highly homogeneous preferences. For instance, the majority of the Yazidi respondents preferred Germany, while the majority of Christians favoured Australia.

“A lot has left. I would say little less than half have left. The majority left to Germany because Yazidis were already there before 2014. Those who went before IS, they left because of dire humanitarian situation.”  
 [IDP, Khanke camp, Duhok]

As the above quote indicates, for most interviewees, their decision to choose one country of destination over another was based on community affiliations corroborating a previous IOM report stressing the importance of community in emigration planning. According to the IOM (2016b, 10) study, 40% of the emigrants surveyed relied on word of mouth as their primary source of information for decision-making followed by the internet and social media. In our study, the majority of respondents (71%) justified their country preference based on the presence of family/relatives or friends that could assist their journey and resettlement (see Figure 18).

Figure 17: Preferred country of destination

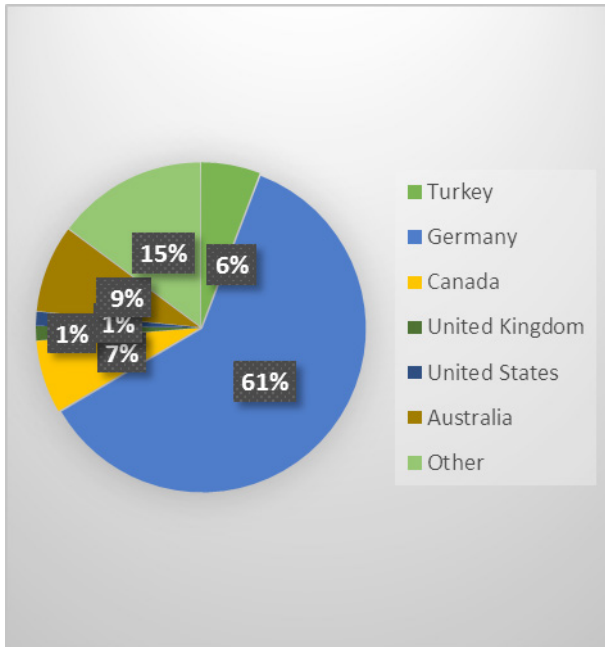
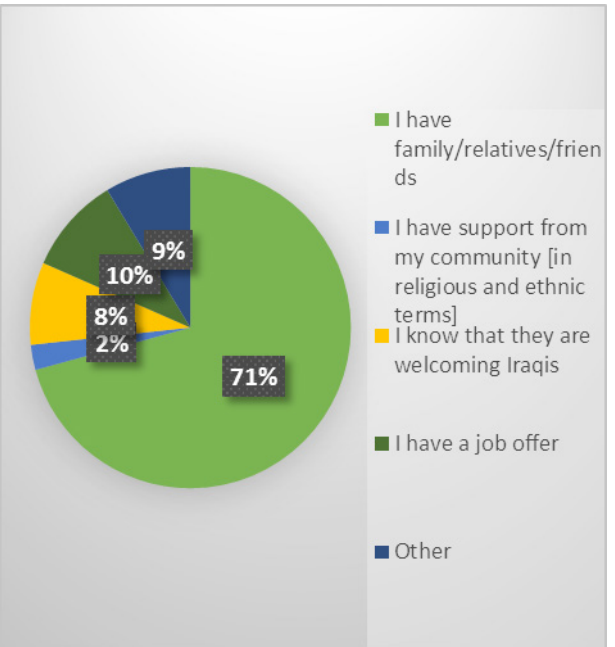
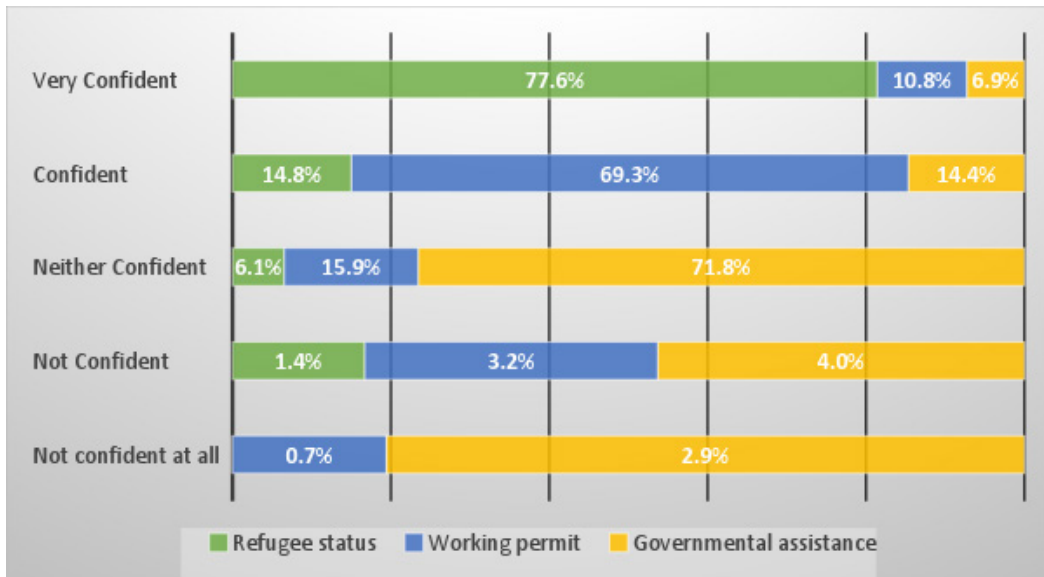


Figure 18: Main reason for choosing country of destination



In addition, we found other determinants shaping Iraqi IDP emigration. Among the respondents wishing/planning to leave, the majority (78%) were confident that they would obtain refugee status abroad and expressed a high degree of certainty that they would obtain a work permit (see Figure 19). Both of these assessments are, once again, mostly determined by the experiences of those who had already left Iraq.

Figure 19: Confidence in receiving entitlements abroad





The questionnaire also addressed whether Iraqi IDPs planned permanent or temporary resettlement, should they emigrate. The data shows that the majority (49%) who wished/planned to leave wanted to move abroad for a temporary period (3-5 years) then return when conditions permitted. A similar percentage of respondents (46%) expressed the desire to permanently settle abroad (see Figure 20). The majority of respondents (74%) identified safety as their primary concern followed by finding employment (see Figure 21).

Figure 20: Permanence abroad

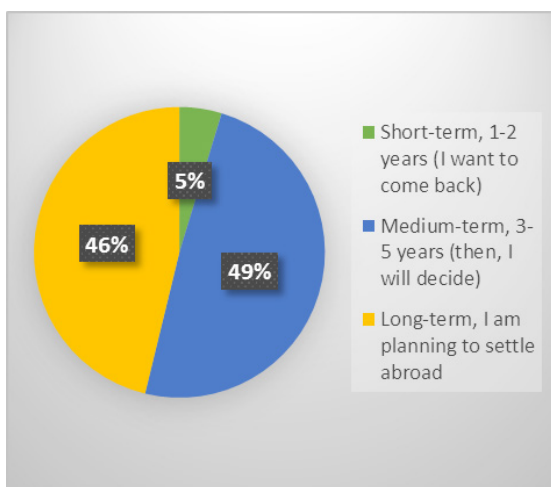
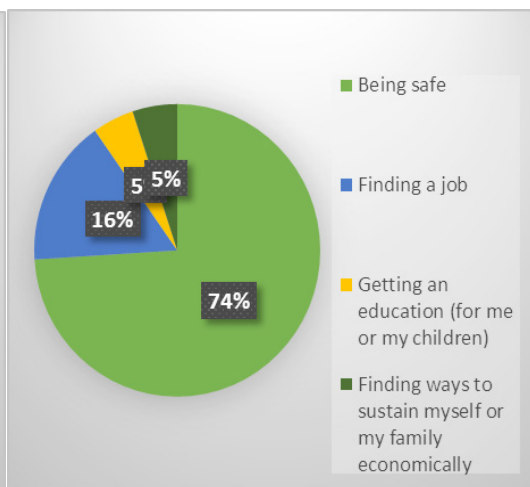


Figure 21: Priorities abroad



Lastly, respondents were asked to rank the factors influencing their wish/plan emigrate. Not surprisingly, the majority (89%) cited safety as the most influential socio-political factor impacting their decision to emigrate (see Figure 22). Moreover, the majority cited lack of employment opportunities as the most influential socio-economic factor impacting their decision to emigrate (see Figure 23).

Figure 22: Socio-political drivers for emigration

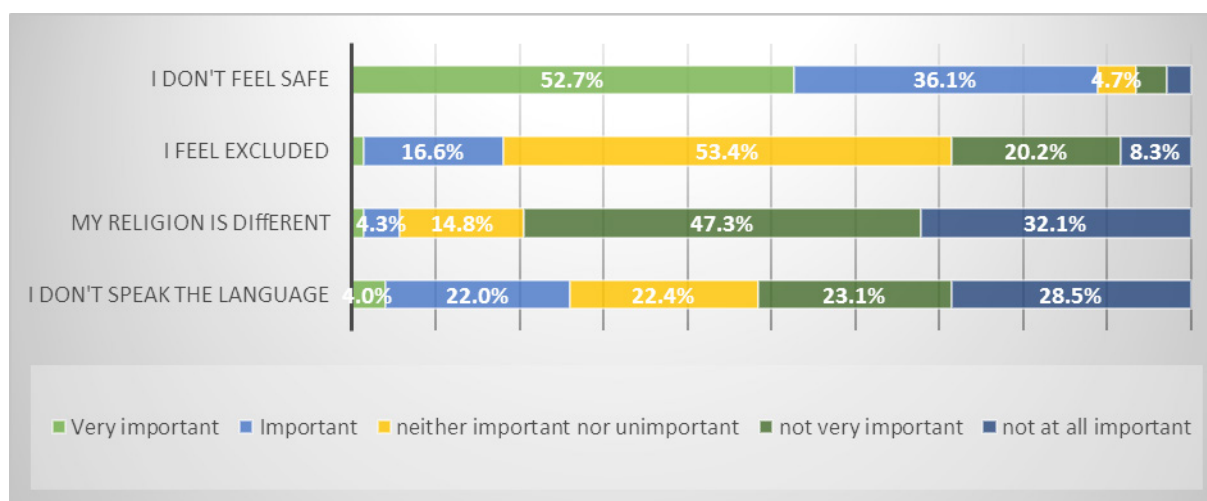
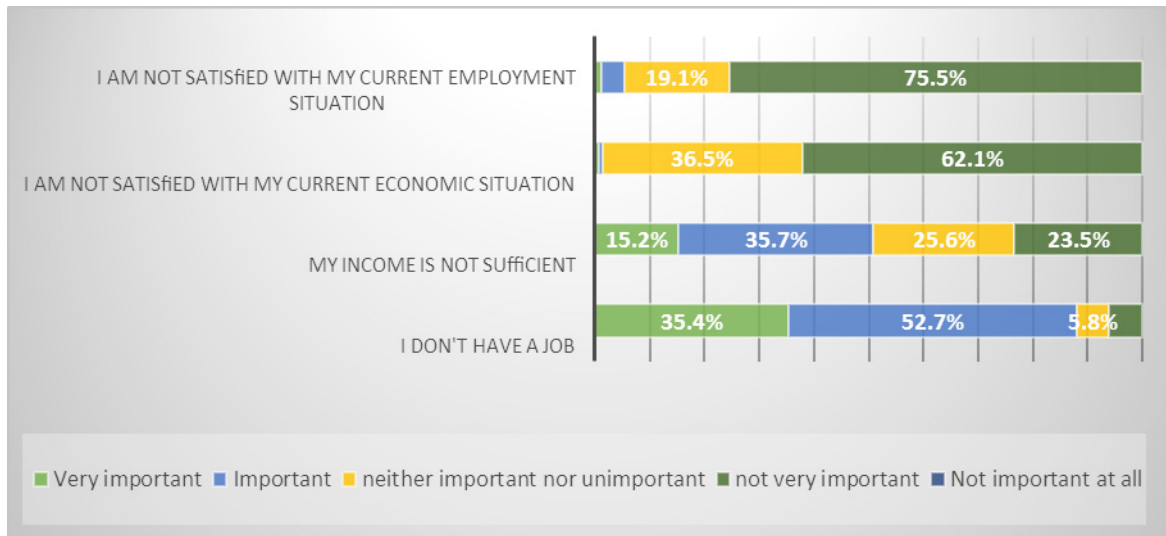


Figure 23: Socio-economic drivers for emigration



In sum, the data indicates that, although slightly more than half of the sample wish/plan to leave Iraq (55%), only a minority of the subjects (23%) actually developed a concrete plan to do so. What’s more, emigration was most appealing to those ages 26–35 and among those with no or low levels of education. Moreover, Yazidis and Christians represented the majority of ethno-religious groups who wished/planned to leave Iraq. In addition, the most important pull factors point to the presence of family/relatives and friends along with the confidence of receiving refugee status upon arrival. Ultimately, IDPs’ perceptions of insecurity and lack of economic opportunities appear to be the most compelling reasons driving their wish/plan to emigrate.

### 5.3 Expectations: the Future of Iraq

The second stage of the research was dedicated to investigating the circumstances under which displacement becomes emigration. To this end, we compared the answers provided by respondents who wished/planned to leave Iraq to those who didn’t in order to find relevant discrepancies. The questionnaire was designed to examine factors grouped into socio-political and socio-economic conditions as well as expectations about the future. Qualitative interviews were used to further explore and contextualise drivers for emigration. As previously mentioned, understanding IDPs’ intentions require a relational approach that sees displacement (here and now), emigration (elsewhere) and return (before) as migration alternatives weighed in both rational or emotional terms.

The data suggests that IDPs’ perceptions towards the future political, economic and security situation in Iraq (expressed in the next five years) is the most relevant factor determining people’s migration decision. In addition, within an overall negative assessment of the future of Iraq, IDPs wishing or planning to emigrate held a more pessimistic view compared to those who wanted to return or stay in displacement movements. Only around 30% of the respondents thought that the political, economic and security situation in Iraq would improve in the next 5 years, expressing the least confidence in an improved security situation during this timeframe (see figures 24, 25 and 26). That respondents hold such a negative attitude is worrisome considering that the distribution of the questionnaire coincided with the final stage of anti-IS military operations.

Figure 24: Perceptions of the security situation in Iraq in the next 5 years

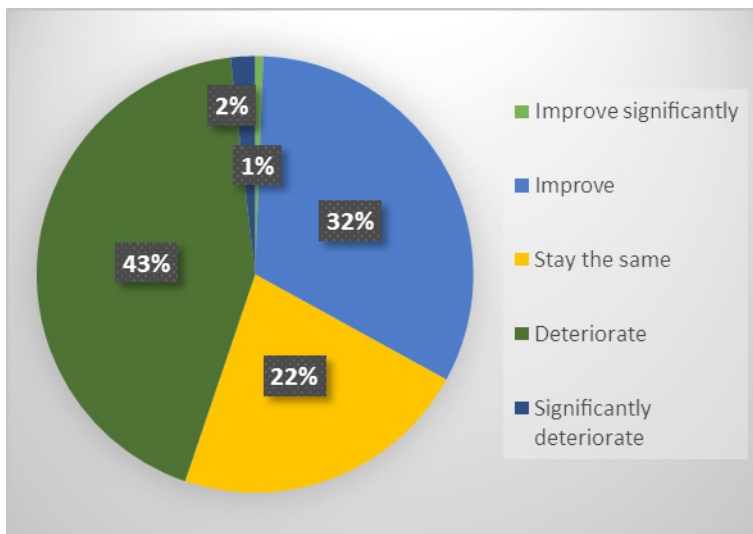


Figure 25: Perceptions of the political situation in Iraq in the next 5 years

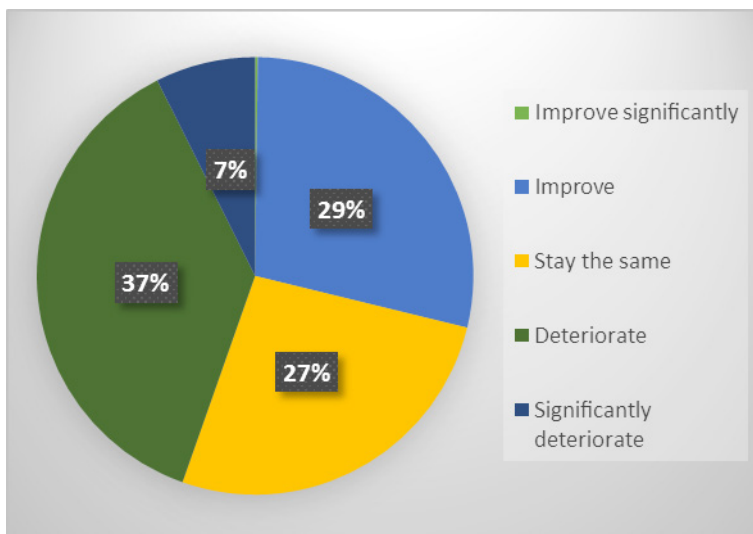
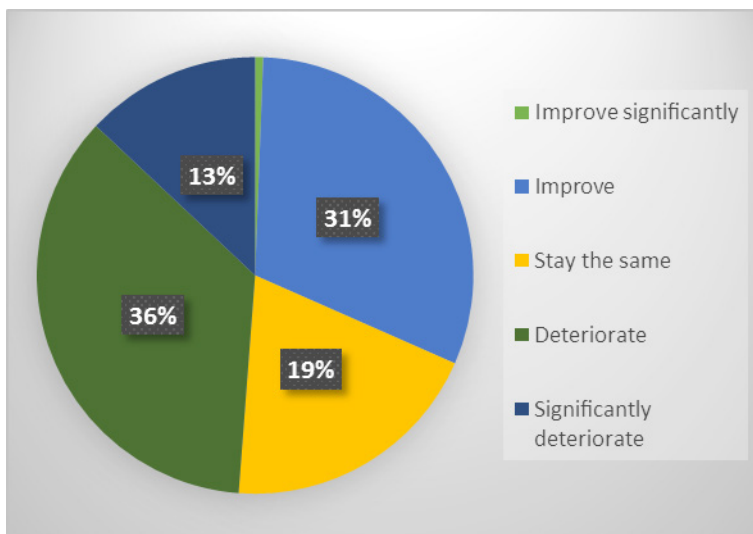


Figure 26: Perceptions of the economic situation in Iraq in the next 5 years



We found respondent’s expectations about the future of Iraq to be the most statistically significant factor for determining IDPs’ wish/plan to leave Iraq. Respondents who expressed their wish/plan to leave the country showed an adverse expectation about the future of Iraq in terms of its political, economic and security situations (see Figure 27, 28 and 29).

Figure 27: Perceptions towards the future of Iraq (security)



Figure 28: Perceptions towards the future of Iraq (politics)

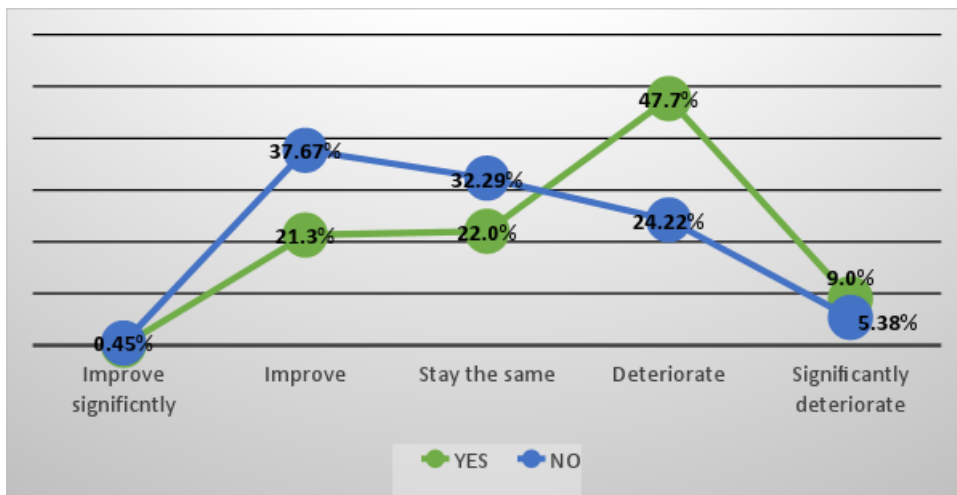
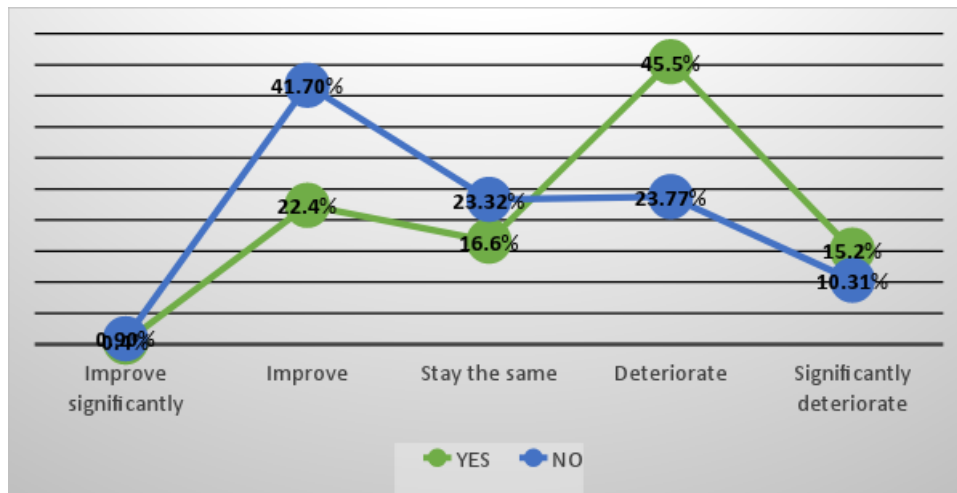


Figure 29: Perceptions towards the future of Iraq (economy)



It's important to note that these gloomy forecasts were not restricted to the IS occupation, which, according to most interviewees, would be completely defeated. Instead, respondents feared that new, perhaps more brutal extremist groups, would emerge to perpetuate a never-ending cycle of terror. This fear was particularly strong among minorities:

“Some people went back, but if you look at it, it is not safe. We can't go through the same fear; we don't know how people go back after what happened. Qaraqosh was surrounded by the Iraqi army and Peshmerga and ISIS could go in. Now, there is nothing and it is deserted, and people go back. It is strange. We hear people saying: other groups will come after ISIS and will take your women. We live in horror.”

[IDP, Ainkawa 2 camp, Erbil]

“What is Iraq? There will be another problem and displacement. Everyone has his/her own opinion. We feel that the situation will get worse. Jaish al Sufiani is coming, they will slaughter people. They are disbelievers (kafirs).”<sup>18</sup>

[IDP, critical setting, Chamchamal]

Negative expectations about the future of Iraq are, for most of the respondents, rooted in past developments, which created a flawed and divisive political system in Iraq. In particular, the political class is seen as corrupt and indifferent to the needs of the population.

“Yes. ISIS will end. The problem is with our government. The government is like the head of the family, he chooses whether he takes care of his family or himself only.”

[IDP, Ainkawa 2 camp, Erbil]

“Politics serves its interests, not the people. [...] We are the richest country in the world, but in reality it is the poorest one.”

[IDP, Ainkawa 2 camp, Erbil].

“The politicians say Saddam was bad, but they are worse than him. They don't care about the people; they should improve the services and help the IDPs go back. Extremists mindsets and organization have penetrated the state.”

[IDP, critical setting, Suleymaniyya]

“There should be only one government which provides security, not by different groups and bodies. For example, Ministry of the Interior should be the only body that is in charge of the security, and not Ministry

18 The term Jaish al-Sufiani refers to an armed group mentioned in some Islamic books. It is associated with tyranny, corruption and mischief.

of Defense or Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Mosul now, all ministries rule the city and work without a clear mechanism. There is no justice. In brief, and basically, the whole government is a ‘thief’. None of them is honorable. It is hard to get better.”

[IDP, Harsham camp, Erbil]

## 5.4 Drivers for Emigration: Unpacking Uncertainty

With the exception of IDPs’ expectations about the future of Iraq, we did not find any significant variance in the socio-political and socio-economic conditions of IDPs who expressed the wish/plan of leaving Iraq and those who didn’t. While socio-political and socio-economic factors, alone, cannot explain IDPs’ intention to leave Iraq, they, nonetheless, contribute to a general sense of prevailing uncertainty, which does influence their decisions and feeds into negative expectations about the future of Iraq, as many interviews have pointed out.

‘Uncertainty,’ by its very nature, is a vague concept, which deserves unpacking. Developed mostly in the ethnographic literature on emigration, uncertainty is more than insecurity and differs from risk (Horst and Grabska 2015). At the time of displacement, uncertainty informs how IDPs assess and respond to an often volatile, dangerous and rapidly changing environment. As displacement continues and the direct exposure to violence and other threats subsides, acute uncertainty transforms into protracted uncertainty as it permeates everyday life and decisions about the future.

Where uncertainty is different from ‘insecurity,’ insecurity fuels uncertainty. It warrants pause to discuss the differences between hard and human security. The former derives from traditional ways of interpreting security in terms of military, state-centric security. Applied to IDPs, hard security means the absence of actual physical and threat of violence. Instead, human security is based on the recognition of the interrelation of security threats—from violence to poverty, terrorism and health. Human security leads to a more comprehensive understanding of security, which is people-centred and broad enough to include “human freedom and human fulfilling” (CHS 2003, 4).<sup>19</sup> Applied to IDPs, human security means safety from actual or threat of physical violence plus “creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity” (CHS 2003, 4).

Uncertainty is also different from ‘risk’ as the latter assesses circumstances based on full access to information. Uncertainty, by comparison, is based on imperfect information and the unpredictability of the future (Williams and Baláž 2012, 168). In large part, sampled IDPs in the KRI did not possess full information about their status (e.g., their rights as IDPs or the ‘duration’ of the assistance), their places of origin (e.g., some respondents stated receiving news on their places of origin from TV or people returning from ‘exploratory’ visits) or emigration process (e.g., legal and administrative procedures, working possibilities and conditions). Unpredictability acquires a different meaning in the context of Iraq due to its extreme political, security and economic volatility. As we shall see, IDPs wishing/planning to emigrate, cite Iraq’s unpredictable future as a key determinant in their decision-making process. More than insecurity and different from risk, uncertainty in IDPs’ experience has both socio-political and socio-economic dimensions that play out differently in relation to displacement, migration and return.

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<sup>19</sup> In its 2003 Report, the Commission on Human Security defines human security as protecting “the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity” (CHS 2003, 4).



## 5.4.1 The Socio-political Dimensions of Uncertainty

### 5.4.1.1 Uncertainty and Displacement

One data point linking uncertainty to displacement reveals an apparent contradiction worth unpacking, as well. While the majority of those wishing/planning to leave Iraq highlighted safety as the primary driver for emigration, when asked to evaluate their current situation, virtually all respondents stated that they felt safe (see Figure 30). All respondents, for instance, cited that they had experienced no episodes of violence in the form of threats, harassment, or attacks. In addition, the data shows no significant difference between IDPs who wished/planned to leave the country and those who didn't because of fear of exclusion by host country communities (see Figure 31): most respondents did not view ethnicity, religion and language as important barriers to successful integration in the hosting community.

Figure 30: I feel safe

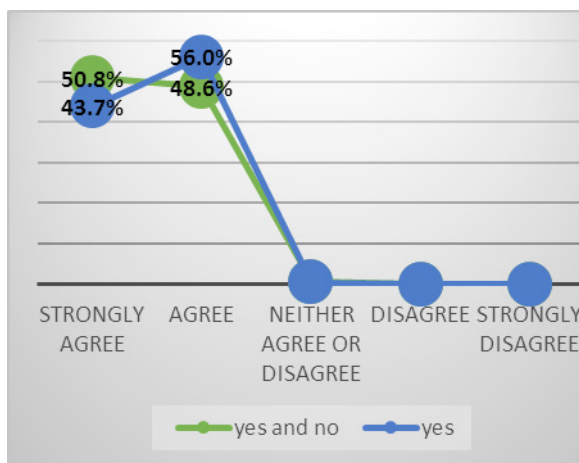
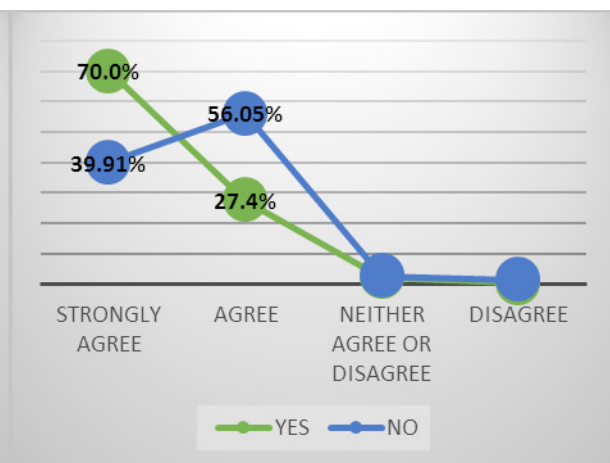


Figure 31: I feel accepted



We found that insecurity (in its “hard” version) and differences in ethnicity, religion or language is neither a determinant driver of emigration nor a definition, alone, for displacement. What does, however, define displacement, is a widespread sense of uncertainty conditioned upon the experience of being displaced and the political implications of such categories as ethnicity, religion and language. Our research revealed that the majority of IDPs did not accept the status quo and had rarely resigned in making displacement their new reality. This is not due to one isolated factor, but, rather, a combination of factors contributing to their overall dissatisfaction with displacement. For example, many IDPs likened the disempowerment associated with displacement to ‘being in prison’:

“We don’t have any problem here in the camp. We are all from Nineveh. You can say we are prisoners here but without a policeman.”

[IDP, Ainkawa 2 camp, Erbil]

“We want to return, we have homes there, it is our land, here is just like a prison. It is true that families and relatives are here, but it is like a prison.”

[IDP, critical setting, Chamchamal]

In addition, and not surprisingly, the ‘prison’ metaphor is a recurrent theme among people residing in camps. However, it is common among IDPs, who also referred to displacement as conditioning their sense of belonging to/exclusion from the hosting community. At times, this overlapped with notions of identity:



“When they ask me who am I, I will proudly say ‘I am a Shabak’. I am not an arrogant. When I say I am a Shabak, people here will say to me, do not say ‘I am a Shabak’; say ‘I am a Kurdish Shabak’. When I say I am displaced, they say, do not say ‘I am displaced’; say ‘I am at home’. Not all of them are like that; there are people who disrespect IDPs.”

[IDP, critical setting, Chamchamal]

“People have found their life here; there are good work opportunities here. There is no work there, for example, workers there may get 10000 or 15000ID a day, and this is very little. However, they will not let us stay here. It will be good if they specify an area here for the Arabs only; at that time the majority will stay, especially our people [...] because we had problems even before 2014.”

[IDP, Harsham camp, Erbil]

As the above quotes illustrate, IDPs view here/there or displacement/home as distinct and opposing categories. These distinctions are aided by a complex system of KRI administrative procedures which do not ease IDPs’ sense of exclusion. For instance, to obtain/retrieve legal documents like personal identification cards often lost or left behind in displacement, IDPs must usually travel to their governorate of origin or Baghdad, regardless of the financial burden or security risks to obtain/retrieve them (Higel 2016, 18).<sup>20</sup> IDPs also find transferring Public Distribution System ration cards,<sup>21</sup> obtaining civil registration records and birth certificates and registering land and property for non-Kurdish people residing in the KRI very problematic (Higel 2016, 19-20). Therefore, bureaucratic/administrative mechanisms feed, purposefully or not, a general sense of uncertainty, based on confused citizenship rights for IDPs in the KRI. The status quo (displacement) is neither accepted by most IDPs nor is it favoured by authorities as displacement calls into question many critical questions regarding what citizenship means in Iraq.

All this has occurred in an environment where communities remain mostly separated having little exchange amongst them. If ethnicity, religion and language are not seen as determinant drivers for emigration nor factors that, alone, define displacement, they are, nonetheless, the basis upon which some IDPs interpreted discrimination. This notion is best illustrated in the following quotes:<sup>22</sup>

“When we have some procedures in an office, they complicate it for us because we speak Arabic. They say we are Arabs. We are Christians. [...] As with Kurds in general, we don’t mix up with them.”

[IDP, private setting, Erbil]

“We don’t say Kurds are bad, but there is racism. Kurds don’t like Arabs. They say Arabs are troublemakers and terrorists. This is not good. Not all Arabs are terrorists.”

[IDP, Ainkawa 2 camp, Erbil]

“People here accept us but if you say you are Kurd then shop owners decrease the prices.”

[IDP, Khanke camp, Duhok]

20 This applied particularly to IDPs coming from al-Anbar and Salahaddin. An office in Kalak was established to help IDPs from Ninevah address legal issues. See Higel 2016.

21 All Iraqis have access to the Public Distribution System that distributes food rations. The PDS distributes items such as sugar, flour, cooking oil, rice and milk for babies.

22 It may be possible that respondents were not comfortable in expressing these evaluations in the questionnaire, but were more open to discuss them during interviews.

### 5.4.1.2 Uncertainty and Migration

As uncertainty undergirds displacement, it similarly informs intentions to leave Iraq due to imperfect information and unpredictability. What's more, IDPs gather information about potential countries of resettlement and a migration plan from family members, relatives or friends living in diaspora. While IDPs expressed a high degree of trust towards community ties, this is mitigated by not knowing what migration will ultimately entail:

“They say it [Germany] is paradise, and there is work. I don't know. Unfortunately, no place is better than Iraq, but we have suffered a lot and got old. We have seen several wars. We lost a lot, jewelry and money. We are tired; enough. We want to live in peace.”

[IDP, private setting, Erbil]

“Either [staying or leaving] is not easy. Life abroad is not easy, despite inducements. There are positive and negative elements. There is safety and health, but you don't know the future. You don't know the language. Things remain unknown. It is better if you leave it to Allah. He only knows.”

[IDP, private setting, Erbil]

In addition, IDPs wishing/planning to emigrate cite integration into foreign cultures as a pre-eminent source of uncertainty. When the concern arises, IDPs express it both in terms of language and culture:

“If we go to Australia or any other place, how many years it will require managing the language, and if you don't speak the language then you will be nobody.”

[IDP, Ainkawa 2 camp, Erbil]

“If I go abroad, the culture is different, and it would be difficult for me to monitor my children. My daughter wears hijab, and you know. I am not strict, but this is our life and culture and I am happy with it. [...] It is true that there will be probably security and education abroad, but the future will be unknown. When my children come back to the country, it will be hard to get integrated into the society.”

[IDP, private setting, Duhok]

While respondents associated emigration with higher degrees of safety, better education and health, they also counterposed these with concerns about losing highly valued social cohesion in their places of origin feeding uncertainty towards emigration. Communities and social ties were seen as highly relevant reference points for navigating uncertainty with. Displacement, emigration and return negatively affecting them. Many interviewees also related emigration to distressingly high levels of deterioration of community ties and social support:

“Well, most of our relatives went abroad. When we used to have a wedding or a party, it used to be crowded. Now if we have a party, then very few of them will be there.”

[IDP, private setting, Erbil]

“Young people who are kind of affected by the European culture would like to go and live abroad. They may think that it is better there, but I don't think so. I have a friend who went to Canada; he may have a house, a car and a job, but I think he is not happy because he is away from his family.”

[IDP, Dibaga camp, Makhmur]

“Even if services are brought back, we won't [go back], because all our relatives have gone abroad. Paradise without people is not desired.”

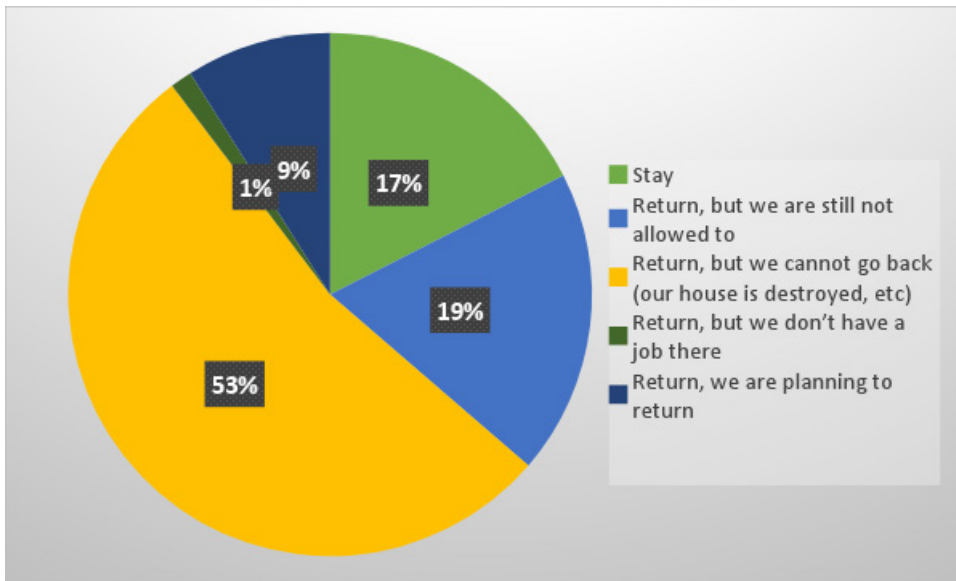
[IDP, private setting, Erbil].

**5.4.1.3 Uncertainty and Return**

‘Hard insecurity’—the presence of physical violence and threats thereof— was a primary driver of uncertainty related to the return process. The return process, occurring at times in parallel with displacement, is rather diversified unique to specific local conditions. In some areas it occurred voluntarily, in others it was facilitated for some and impeded for others, and in, yet, other areas it did not occur, at all. In addition, in most liberated areas, the extent of destruction is coupled with an unclear political management of the reconstruction process. Authorities and institutions in IS-affected areas were forced to leave and operate from a distance. Upon liberation, disagreements between incumbent and new authorities often associated with armed groups have further inhibited the return process (Higel 2016, 6).

Among the respondents who did not wish/plan to leave Iraq, 82% expressed their intention to return home, compared to only 18% who wanted to stay in displacement (reintegration). However, for 73%, return was constrained by political (not being allowed to return) or contextual obstacles, such as housing damage, insecurity or lack of services (see Figure 32).

Figure 32: Alternatives to emigration



Uncertainty, especially with respect to the right of return, has a clear socio-political dimension linked to the political status of the liberated areas of Iraq, especially among minorities. The comparison between IDPs and returnees based on ethno-religious identities indicates that the return process has been more attractive to Arab Sunni, Arab Shia, Kurds and Turkmen than to their minority counterparts (Shabaks, Yazidis and Christians) who mostly chose to remain in displacement (IOM 2017c, 12). Minorities, in particular, cited feeling caught in the tensions between Baghdad and Erbil:

“KRG wants to take Qaraqosh because it defended it and liberated it, but the central government doesn’t allow that. We are in the middle; we don’t know what to do. This is the same problem with Yazidis; but they suffered more than us.”

[IDP, Ainkawa 2 camp, Erbil]

“In Iraq, after 2003 Kurds have the Kurdistan Region and want to include other areas to the region, but the central government doesn’t allow that because these areas include Arabs. So it is a political problem. We hope

the problems will end and they reach a political agreement. We are victims of the political conflict. My house is in Baqirta, and Baqirta has been liberated three years ago, but I can't go back. It is forbidden. My house stuff is all taken."

[IDP, Dibaga camp, Makhmur]

"We do not know our future yet, we are not sure. We do not know if the town is going to be in the hand of the Iraqi government, the KRG or the militias. At the moment, there are no clashes between them. I am personally thinking of leaving the country, with my family, whenever there is an opportunity."

[IDP, critical setting, Chamchamal]

Although Baghdad had reclaimed control over these areas in October 2017, conflict and disputes have not yet been solved. By regaining control over most disputed territories, Baghdad, once again, shifted the KRI-GoI power balance and demography within them. Subsequently, IDPs who had already or were contemplating return, experienced another cycle of insecurity and uncertainty. For some minorities, disputes over the political status of their places of origin have fragmented their communities. To many respondents, these internal divisions only added uncertainty to an already uncertain return process:

"When we go to the government and complain, the government says you are Kurds and KRG should be responsible, when we go the KRG, the KRG ignores the Shabaks. Half of the Shabaks were with the Iraqi government and half with the KRG, because they ignored and marginalized Shabaks, and Shabaks divided into two parts. Now we have also the Hashd al-Shaabi. The future will be even worse. Our children have become political analysts. We have experienced a lot, we know when politicians talk, if they are lying or not."

[IDP, critical setting, Chamchamal]

"There are people who have now sided with the Hashd al-Shaabi and others with the KDP and each of them has his own agenda. This will bring instability which is bad for the future."

[IDP, Khanke camp, Duhok]

In other cases, it was demographic engineering and discrimination that fueled uncertainty among IDPs in disputed territories such as Makhmour and Kirkuk and strategic areas, though not disputed, such as Jurf al-Sakhar. In Makhmour, which the KRG controlled after Peshmerga forces ousted IS fighters, Sunni Arabs lamented that they were prohibited from returning, as confirmed by some Kurds residing in the area. However, after the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) retook this and other disputed towns and villages and political hands changed, many Kurds ended up fleeing to Erbil and other Kurdish areas seeking refuge. Territorial control is, thus, increasingly tied to demography; a trend that further divides communities, contributing to an overall sense of uncertainty towards the future:

"There is racial discrimination. For example, I cannot go to Kirkuk to get medical treatment because I am Arab. Before, during Saddam regime, Kurd citizens were recognized as saboteurs (muharribun). Now Arabs are terrorists and ISIS. These generalizations are wrong"

[IDP, Dibaga camp, Makhmur]

Jurf al-Sakhar is a Sunni Arab majority area strategically located in the Babil governorate 60 Km south of Baghdad and en route to Kerbela. This area was briefly occupied for 4 months by the IS in 2014 and liberated by government and factions within PMU forces during what became known as Operation Ashura. Since then, the town has been renamed Jurf al-Nasr (The Victory Bank) and is controlled by sub-state actors making the possibility of return extremely difficult as IDPs regard them as a destabilizing force causing additional insecurity and uncertainty:

“We hope someone hears our voice. Many areas had their people back, except Jurf Al-sakhar. No one went back. Only militias are there, no single civilian lives there. They took everything. They don’t allow people back; they refuse to give it back to government.”

[IDP, critical setting, Suleimaniyya]

“Many families went back to Anbar, but people of Jufr Al-sakhar no. They even want to remove us from the map according to what we recently heard.”

[IDP, critical setting, Suleimaniyya]

While the case of Jurf al-Sakhar highlights the primacy of political forces in driving uncertainty among IDPs with a low probability of return in the near-term future,<sup>23</sup> discrimination is driven both by political and societal forces. The widespread generalization that associates Arab Sunnis with violent extremism, especially that of the IS, has fed suspicion, revanchism among IS victims and communal punishments in the form of expulsions or property damage/destruction:

“Now there are tribal conflicts in the villages. For example, if your son is an IS member, his family will not stay in the village and should go somewhere else. Unfortunately, in every village they found 3-4 people who joined IS. All Makhmur villages made the same decision, the family who got an IS member should leave and their houses would be destroyed. In a village near ours, 10-20 houses were destroyed because they had IS members.”

[IDP, Dibaga camp, Makhmur].

“We had Christian neighbors in Bartila. ISIS has strengthened our relations. ISIS has strengthened the relationship between minorities Shabaks, Christians and Kakayees in Shaikhan, Bartila, Qaraqosh and Baashiqa, but not with Arabs. Arabs are out of this circle. I am telling the truth, this is my opinion. Arabs betrayed us; all of them are the same.”

[IDP, critical setting, Chamchamal]

Lastly, some respondents also noted an overarching militarization of Iraqi society, particularly affecting the youth. Joining armed groups can be economically attractive, as it provides a source of income for a large portion of unemployed or underemployed IDPs. As in other contexts and times, Iraqi IDPs offer an easy pool of recruits for armed groups for their inherent vulnerability (Lischer 2008, 96; Ferris 2008, 16). In light of the above discussion, the question remains as to whether Iraqis are returning because they feel safe enough or because displacement is unbearable<sup>24</sup> enough to risk it, regardless. Similarly, doubts remain as to whether the Iraqi government and the KRI are capable of and willing to provide the necessary conditions for return to all the liberated areas.

<sup>23</sup> Researchers also discussed the case of Jurf al-Sakhar with key informants who confirmed interviewee statements.

<sup>24</sup> On the return process, see also: IOM 2017d.

## 5.4.2 The Socio-economic Dimensions of Uncertainty

### 5.4.2.1 Uncertainty and Displacement

The data shows no significant differences between people wishing/planning to leave and those who didn't in terms of socio-economic conditions. The following graphs demonstrate similar trends among the two respondent groups in terms of employment status, income level, and economic coping mechanism. Figure 33 acknowledges that the majority of respondents were employed either as day laborers or unemployed. Figure 34 identifies that both groups had similar income levels with the majority reporting that these were insufficient to cover their expenses. Figure 35 reveals the most significant socio-economic variations between these groups related to using savings and loans as an economic coping mechanism. More people wishing/planning to leave relied on their own savings and took less loans than those who wished/planned to stay or return, which may suggest that IDPs wishing/planning to emigrate have more economic means at their disposal than those who don't.

Figure 33: Employment status

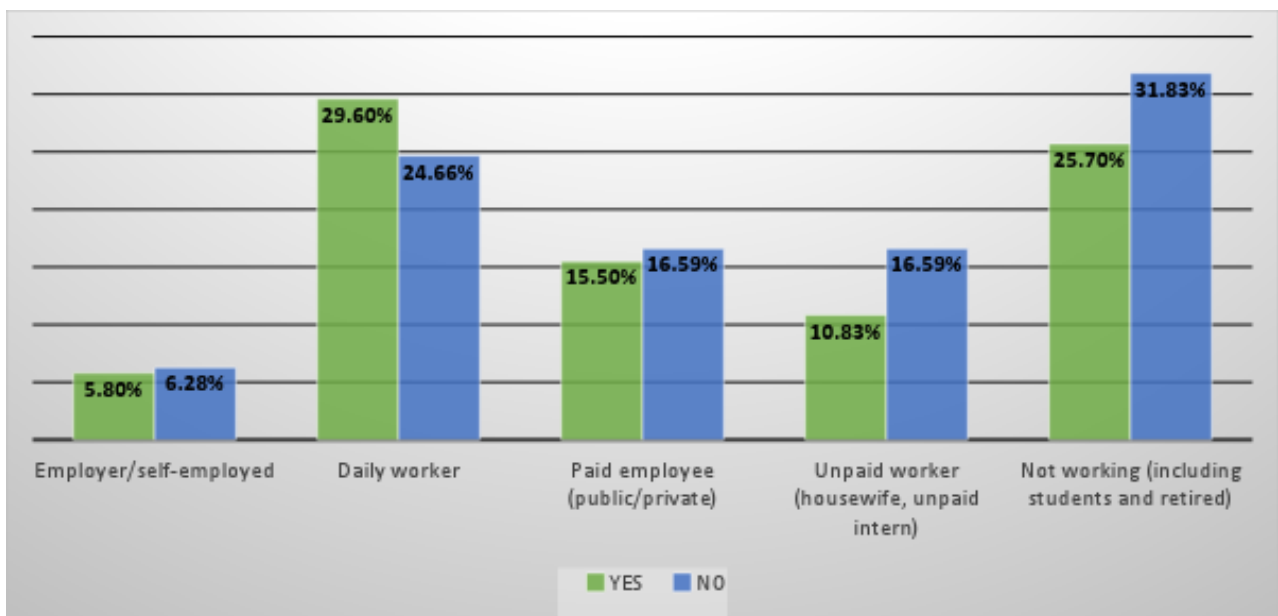


Figure 34: Income levels

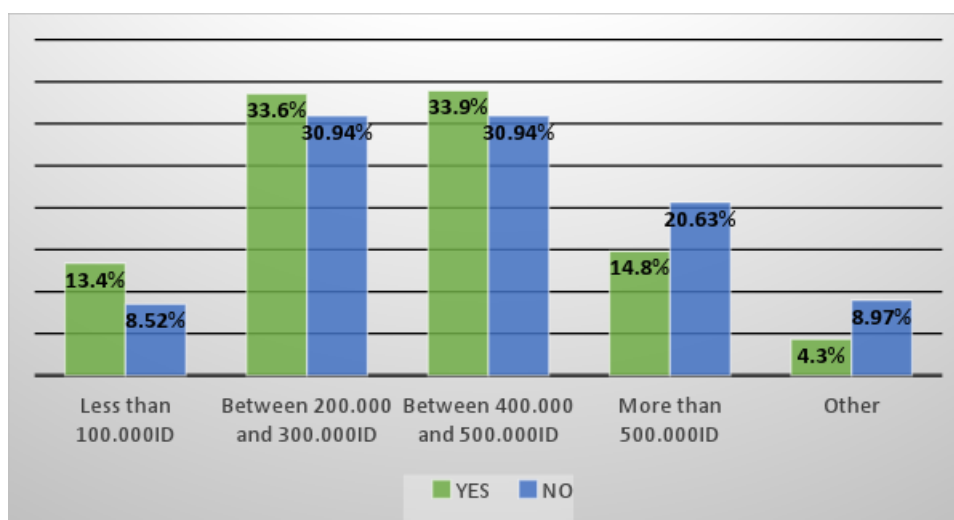
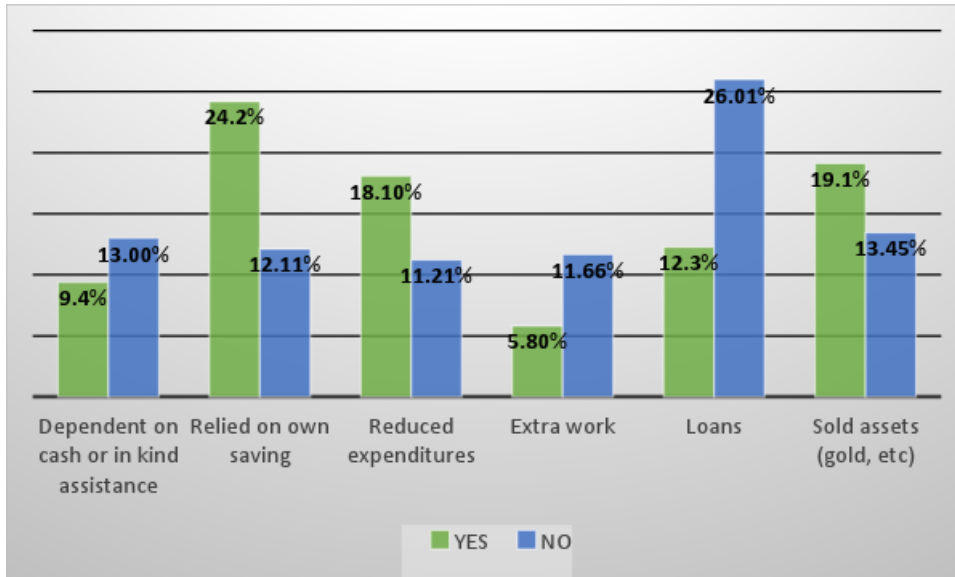




Figure 35: Economic coping mechanisms



While there is no indication that the socio-economic conditions of IDPs are a determinant factor leading to emigration, the displacement experience is associated with socio-economic difficulties that feed uncertainty. The qualitative interviews point to three main elements that contribute to the socio-economic dimension of uncertainty. First, there are low level of investment in the displacement phase, which can be related to the temporality of displacement and IDPs’ rejection of the status quo as discussed above:

“No, people do not have the appetite to invest, they are not certain about the future. Most of the young people are joining the armed groups because of financial reasons”

[IDP, Khanke camp, Duhok].

Many interviewees also cited the issue of militarization among displaced youth as a last-resort strategy for gaining employment. Adding to this, is an overall sense of discouragement prevalent among IDPs living in camps and critical settings:

“It is quite difficult [to work outside the camp]. I used to gain around 50.000 to 60.000 a day in the past but I cannot even make 10.000 IQD nowadays. I don’t even try now.”

[IDP, Khanke camp, Duhok].

On the other side of the spectrum, among people with better socio-economic means, their main preoccupation was related to a loss of income due to consumption levels:

“The house rents are so expensive [here], and there is no work. My friends and relatives recommend me to go back.”

[IDP, private setting, Duhok]



### 5.4.2.2 Uncertainty and Migration

Emigration raised other socio-economic uncertainties along with unemployment for those wishing/planning to leave Iraq. For most of the interviewees, emigration remained a wish rather than a plan due to lack of economic means. If the protraction of displacement reduced the economic possibility of leaving Iraq for many of the displaced, there was also a widespread recognition of the changed political economy of emigration, with an increase in both the cost and the risk of the journey to leave Iraq.<sup>25</sup>

“If you go in a legal way, you will need money and there is no money. If you go illegally by boat, you will drown. What to do?”

[IDP, Ainkawa 2 camp, Erbil]

“Two of my nephews left. They are in Germany. It was cheap for some time. They went through Turkey and then to Germany.”

[IDP, Khanke camp, Duhok]

Even for those with greater means, the costs to legally migrate proved prohibitive often preventing any plans to leave the country. For instance, under the UNHCR-led resettlement programme, Iraqis in search of protection abroad are required to reside outside their country (thus, legally becoming refugees) to be considered as part of this resettlement programme:<sup>26</sup>

“We did go to Jordan and Lebanon, and we had two interviews in Jordan, but we ran out of money so we came back. We left to Lebanon on 12 August 2014, and stayed for 18 days then we came back. It was very expensive there. Then we went to Jordan and stayed there for 6 months, we had two interviews, but we returned because we ran out of money and we couldn't afford to stay longer. Now we think about going out again. We have a house in Bartella and we can sell it. We don't have anything else [...] When we went to Jordan we spent \$10000 within six months. If we go there again, we might need to stay 2-3 years. We don't know. If we get the residence through UN, they will pay for us the tickets to Australia.”

[IDP, private setting, Erbil]

Those with greater economic means also perceived that emigration would result in a socio-economic loss compared to their position and status in Iraq. This evaluation was also influenced by a number of Iraqis returning to Iraq who experienced serious difficulties in foreign countries:

“To be honest, yes I thought but based on my job, family and social life here, I think it will be difficult to find something similar abroad. I have relatives in Germany and France. The one in France is a physician and she returned, and my relatives in Germany stayed but they don't recommend me to leave Iraq. They say it is better if you stay there since you have your job there. Life abroad is good but tedious and you have to work a lot. Some of my relatives are physicians but had to take up other jobs for a living.”

[IDP, private setting, Duhok]

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<sup>25</sup> In 2015, the average total cost of the journey was around 6,000 USD (IOM 2016, 18).

<sup>26</sup> Resettlement is the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another state that has agreed to admit them and grant them permanent settlement. In 2016, the UNHCR-facilitated resettlement programme included 12,800 Iraqi refugees. See: <http://www.unhcr.org/resettlement.html> (accessed on 1 November 2017).

### 5.4.2.3 Uncertainty and Return

Among those who expressed an intent to return (82%), 53% cited contextual factors as impeding the return, including the destruction of their houses, lack of economic opportunities, and insecurity (see Figure 32). Here stands a key dilemma pitting the return process against the reconstruction of liberated areas. International programmes have set IDPs return as the overall performance indicator of stabilisation (UNDP 2016). However, in some areas, non-return is due to political dynamics that the implementation of stabilisation programmes alone cannot resolve. In addition, among IDPs there was a widespread uncertainty about the reconstruction process of their places of origin, further complicating plans for return:

“They say a Germany organization will come to Qaraqosh to do reconstruction, and a French organization will come to our village, but all that is not true. We heard that those whose houses were destroyed in Qaraqosh will be given caravans to live in. Caravans are horrible. We don’t know what our destiny is; we don’t know if we will die if we return, we are tired psychologically. It is better if they murder us, it is better for us and for the foreigners.”

[IDP, private setting, Erbil]

Although socio-economic considerations influence the process of return, an exclusively economic approach to return is not sufficient. The lack of economic opportunities was identified by most interviewees as a key problem, but one that is part of a broader evaluation, as the below quote shows. For some of the interviewees, it was indeed the restoration of security (all security facets as discussed above) that can lead to resuming economic activities:

“If you want to go back, you need to submit a petition to the judge. The government will reconstruct the house provided that you go back and live in Bartilla. We don’t want to do that and go back. We are afraid that ISIS or other similar groups will come. We have escaped this time, [...] but we have children and we are afraid for them.”

[IDP, private setting, Erbil]

“If there is security, money will follow.”

[IDP, private setting, Duhok]

As the return process intensified in 2017 and stabilisation efforts began to surface in some areas, the question remains as to whether the Iraqi government and the international community will stand the challenge of providing the necessary economic development support needed to ensure adequate standards of living and socio-economic conditions to improve people’s expectation about the future. In other words, the question is whether the transition from stabilisation to reconstruction will be able to address such economic constraints that were widespread even before the advancement of the IS.

## 6. A Governance of Uncertainty

If IDPs live in a condition of uncertainty that influences their intention towards emigration and return, Iraqi authorities and the KRI have not been capable of (or willing to) managing such uncertainty. Rather, they have contributed to an ongoing governance of uncertainty as “maintaining a level of uncertainty among the displaced is a central element of governing them” (Horst and Grabska 2015, 10). The information distribution related to IDPs is also entangled in conflict as the GoI and KRG pursue different strategies. For instance, conflicting rumors ran rampant regarding financial handouts to returnees or the closing down of assistance facilities for IDPs. Key stakeholder interviewees confirmed that there was a general sense of confusion around displacement, return and resettlement, if not contradictory accounts of existing policies.

The absence of a comprehensive framework for managing displacement is partly due to Baghdad’s and Erbil’s prevailing treatment of the 2014 displacement wave as a symptomatic crisis rather than a protracted systemic issue. While the rapidity of the displacement was indeed unprecedented, the numbers were not. As we have seen, at the apex of the 2006–08 Iraqi civil war, the number of IDPs reached 2,7 million, not far from the 3 million IDPs generated by IS advancement. Population movements in Iraq are the legacy of persistent and widespread violence which grew to, itself, become a potential source of armed strife, creating further tensions among the population. The latest wave of displacement by Kurds leaving to the KRI from disputed areas after the 17th of October only confirms the insidious chronic nature of the unaddressed displacement issues in Iraq.

Given Iraq’s long displacement history, what policies currently exist to mitigate and manage displacement? Responses to displacement in Iraq have been largely reactive, developed around ad-hoc instituted mechanisms after discrete episodes of displacement. The first set of policies were introduced in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL)<sup>27</sup> and later in the 2005 Constitution of Iraq targeting displacement caused by the previous regime. The Ministry of Displacement and Migration, established by the Iraqi Governing Council in 2004, aimed to assist the return of Iraqi refugees abroad and develop durable solutions for displaced people. A key method in this early stage was the creation of a Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Issues (CRRPD), tasked with settling land and property disputes originated by the policies of the former regime (July 1968 -April 2003). However, the Commission was soon overwhelmed by the demands of victims displaced by Saddam’s regime lacking capacity to address them (The Brookings Institution and University of Bern 2009, 28).

Following the 2006–08 civil war, the government passed a National Policy for Displacement in 2008 designed to increase the capacity of providing durable solutions for IDPs (Ministry of Displacement and Migration 2008). The document included key provisions such as the right of IDPs to participate in decision-making and policy implementation; the right to protection of property; the right to protection against arbitrary displacement; the right to freedom of expression and access to information, etc. Though this Policy was comprehensive and aligned with the internationally-recognised Guiding Principles for Displacement, its endorsement of IDPs’ rights was not followed upon by an implementation plan capable of translating the document into actionable interventions. Again, displacement was addressed through ad-hoc policies outside a National framework. For instance, Decree 262 and Order 101 (2008) issued by the former government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, offered financial incentives for returnees and mechanisms to recover property, initially targeting Baghdad, before expanding the mechanisms to other governorates (The Brookings Institution and University of Bern 2009, 33).

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<sup>27</sup> The TAL was the provisional constitution introduced by the Iraqi Governing Council in 2004 regulating Iraq following the invasion and occupation of 2003.

When the 2014 crisis erupted, the 2008 National Policy for Displacement proved insufficient as a credible roadmap useful for addressing the new displacement tidal wave. As early as July 2014, the GoI established the Supreme Committee for Relief and Displaced Persons to coordinate responses to the crisis (UN HRC 2016, para. 20). Similarly, the movement of displaced people who reached the KRI led to the creation of the JCCC, within the Ministry of Interior of the KRI, tasked with coordinating emergency response efforts in May of 2015. Despite the valuable efforts of these institutions, their mandate was framed as managing a crisis rather than providing a long-term comprehensive national framework for displacement.

In the absence of such a framework, two documents serve as central references: the 2005 Iraqi Constitution, in particular Article 4.2, which establishes that “no Iraqi may be exiled, displaced or deprived from returning to the homeland” (Government of Iraq, 2005) and the non-binding Guiding Principles for Displacement. With reference to the latter, however, there are limits to the GoI’s (and KRG’s) adherence to the principles. This is evident in at least two realms. First, the voluntary nature of the return process (a key tenet in the document) has been mostly interpreted as “left to the people,” largely used by responsible actors to justify inaction. The return process needs, instead, a policy framework that guarantees adequate levels of assistance; a prerequisite for safe and successful return. At the time of conducting this research, such a framework did not exist. Second, while the non-binding Guiding Principles for Displacement acknowledges the importance of national security, policymakers have prioritized it over the rights of IDPs, as illustrated by long detention period for displaced people suspected of being sympathisers or members of the IS. IS’s traumatic imprint on Iraq further fueled an interpretation of national security which pitted austere security measures against protections of civil liberties for IDPs. Further aggravating matters, Baghdad and Erbil failed to reach consensus on what their interpretations of national security means in Iraq. Indeed, international denunciations of house demolition, evictions, or prohibition of return have often been justified invoking national security issues (Human Rights Watch 2016; Amnesty International 2016).

The absence of a comprehensive framework that regulates displacement; provides a degree of predictability and disseminates consistent information about the current and future status of IDPs, contributes to an overall state of uncertainty. Lacking such a national framework also curtails future critical international assistance for IDPs. As displacement in Iraq shifts from one of acute emergency to that of chronic impermanence, so, too, does international aid shift from crisis intervention to development. As assistance makes this transition, international actors are moving in a highly constrained space amid demographic changes, armed groups’ control and territorial ambitions. In some cases, these issues loggerhead attempts to both address the needs of the population while avoiding entanglements in local points of contention. During this interim period, many questions remain unanswered foremost of which are: what level of assistance is appropriate to manage the return process? and What mechanisms will be in place to guarantee people’s rights on a variety of issues, such as property and compensation disputes?

## 7. Policy Recommendations

In formulating policy recommendations, this study calls for developing solid policies at the international, national and local levels based on three key pillars:

1. Understanding displacement in Iraq as a chronic condition, rather than a sudden crisis;
2. Viewing the destabilizing potential of recurrent, protracted and unresolved displacement waves;
3. Considering displacement as a multifaceted phenomenon.

Based on these pillars, the study identified the following three priority areas necessary to mitigate the negative consequences of displacement, if not permanently resolve them:

**A national policy framework:** A national policy framework can be built leveraging the National Policy on Displacement passed by the Iraqi government in 2008. The document is widely considered as comprehensive and, as previously mentioned, aligned with international standards as identified in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement adopted by the 1998 UN General Assembly. Efforts should, therefore, aim to transform this or a similar framework into an implementable work-plan. Implementation necessitates strengthening the Ministry of Displacement and Migration as well as dedicating a budget to the realisation of the framework reflecting a commitment to solve displacement issues over the following years. In order to guarantee the success of such framework,

**National actors (GoI, KRG, and provincial authorities) should:**

4. Avoid politicizing displacement and IDPs' movements. While displacement requires a political solution, national policymakers should approach it as a nonpartisan issue requiring cooperation among all parties to solve. As minorities have been particularly affected by the politicization of displacement, positive messages should be sent stressing inclusion among all Iraqi constituents;
5. Separate territorial control from demographics. Likewise, ensure that the resolution of territorial disputes will not escalate tensions, thus, inducing further displacement of already vulnerable populations. Monitoring and sanctioning political discourses and behaviors that undermine this objective will serve to curb new waves of displacement. This can be done by establishing a joint GoI-KRG body and mechanism in the disputed territories to manage administrative and security affairs.
6. Address displacement within the country's broader strategic plan (e.g., in the formulation of the upcoming 2018-22 National Development Plan). Resolving displacement-related problems should be made a transversal issue alongside other top national priorities. This requires a solid collaboration between the Ministry of Displacement and Migration and other ministries at the regional and national levels.
7. Develop and adopt a disarmament, de-mobilisation, and community based reintegration framework in the liberated areas especially the disputed territories targeting al-Hashd al-Sha'abi constituents.
8. Craft a genuine national reconciliation road-map led by Baghdad in consultation with key stakeholders including the KRG, representatives of all ethno-religious communities, the UN, and donor countries, to ensure fair and transparent power-sharing and resource-distribution according to the Iraqi constitution.

**International actors (Western governments, the UN, international donors, NGOs) should:**

9. Recognize the central government of Iraq's (in coordination with the KRG) preeminent authority and responsibility in developing and implementing a nationwide displacement solution. International actors should advocate the need to frame their assistance (financial, technical and/or otherwise) within a national framework, without which, their efforts will be less productive;



10. Provide assistance to ensure that a comprehensive national policy framework on displacement is not only designed but implemented in full. This is especially important given that the previous 2008 National Policy for Displacement makes clear that implementation is the most demanding phase.

**Facilitation:** A durable solution for the displacement crisis can be reached by creating the proper conditions for a stable legal system that guarantees the rights of all Iraqi citizens, including the displaced. While developing such a system is a long-term goal policymaker can design/implement short term stop gap measures demonstrating the government's credible effort to work towards it. Reducing uncertainty among IDPs or previously displaced people is key to facilitating a progressive return to a more stable environment. To this end,

**National actors (GoI, KRG, and provincial authorities) should:**

11. Improve IDPs' access to official, consistent and accurate information regarding displacement, return and emigration that clearly communicates the objectives and measures of a national framework for displacement. Substituting "word of mouth" as the main source of information entails a certain degree of state–society trust, now virtually nonexistent. Local authorities at the governorate or district levels can facilitate this process, providing they operate within a national framework, without which the country runs the risk of creating further inconsistencies.
12. Revamp the procedures for obtaining legal documents to make acquiring them timely and convenient. Although the displacement crisis is subsiding, documentation remains a key obstacle to helping IDPs rebuild lives and livelihoods e.g., securing land property documentation, etc.

**International actors (western governments, the UN, international donors, NGOs) should:**

13. Assist national actors in streamlining the process of circulating official information regarding displacement, return and emigration to mitigate existing confusion. Civil society organizations can concentrate their efforts on helping those communities that show the least amounts of trust in government officials and systems;
14. Assist national actors in facilitating the bureaucratic/administrative procedures related to displacement. During crisis periods, some civil society organizations already demonstrated their capacity to work on legal/administrative procedures for IDPs. Their role can be further strengthened in this new phase.

**Physical and social infrastructure:** Iraq cannot fail in rebuilding newly liberated areas, as these largely comprise the hometowns of most IDPs, destinations for most returnees. Learning from previous mistakes, reconstruction resources must not fall to corruption and waste. In this regard, transparent mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating these should be introduced, covering both implementation and management. Iraqi authorities should consider the dire housing situation and limited infrastructure capacity, both predating the 2014 crisis (Isser and Van der Auweraert 2009). In some cases, restoration of services, a key tenet of stabilisation efforts currently underway, would not be sufficient as pre-IS conditions were already failing a large part of Iraqi society. Among the much-needed services, education remains a top priority. As some interviewees pointed out, IDPs regarded it as the top priority for their children and often drove IDPs' movements. In relation to Iraq's reconstruction:

**National actors (GoI, KRG, and provincial authorities) should:**

15. Include displacement in systematic long-term peace-building and development policies which reach beyond short term stabilization objectives. Success in addressing displacement largely hinges on addressing the timing and the sequencing of stabilization, reconstruction, peace-building and development efforts, which are not discrete objectives;
16. Make sure that reconstruction efforts targeting the newly liberated areas are strategic and framed within



a national country level plan. Such a plan should allow for bottom-up initiatives at the local level, where civil society organizations can inform and implement projects in accordance with national prerogatives.

Two of the most urgently needed sub-components of the country level plan include:

- a new national education framework (leveraging the in-process National Strategy for Education and Higher Education in Iraq for 2012-2022 and Chapter 6: Human and Social Development of the National Development Plan 2013-2017) to ensure that generations of IDP students don't fall prey to weak education standards in terms of quality, accessibility, and/or consistency. Iraq needs an integral overarching reconstruction strategy in areas most affected by conflicts, particularly among the currently and/or previously displaced who have academically slipped behind their peers. Additionally, those from the Nineveh, al-Anbar, Salahuddin and Kirkuk governorates, exposed to the Islamic State-sponsored educational system, are in need of a customized de-radicalization curricula.

- update the 2011 National Employment Policy to consider IDP's unique skills, education levels, barriers, etc. in accessing vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities within a larger integrated active labour market mechanism to support and accelerate development and promote inclusive growth and poverty reduction through economic transformation and job creation for this population.

**International actors (Western governments, the UN, international donors, NGOs) should:**

17. Transition from humanitarian to development assistance with an eye on maintaining a long-term engagement in Iraq. This should ensure the availability of appropriate resources to plan and execute reconstruction beyond stabilization efforts;
18. Promote the perspective that return is more than a mere consequence of stabilization projects. Similarly, promote an understanding of reconstruction as a balanced effort where economic incentive are proportionate to political and social initiatives;
19. Target stabilization and reconstruction efforts on those areas where conflict dynamics are not only of a social (the realm of social cohesion intervention) but also political nature (the realm of a country-wide political settlement). In cases where obstacles impeding return are of a political or security nature, the international community should pressure national authorities to stay focused on its humanitarian nature.

## **8. Conclusion**

Our main finding suggests that negative expectations about the political, economic and security future of Iraq is the main factor driving underlying IDPs' decision to emigrate. While this finding does not warrant changes to any specific set of policies, it does advise leaders to develop and implement a comprehensive national policy framework capable of addressing displacement in its many and varied manifestations. A robust policy framework needs to consider the multiple aforementioned factors contributing to Iraqi IDPs' sense of uncertainty, which, as we have shown, include both socio-political and socio-economic factors. It follows that achieving this objective is dependent upon reaching a political settlement in the country, while at the same time, addressing the many outstanding issues surrounding displacement can contribute to achieving national reconciliation in Iraq by easing many tensions at the societal and political levels.

While some priorities can be identified, it is important to note that they are not completely new. Rather, they are the exacerbation of previously unresolved issues. At the same time, international, national and local actors should be aware that the implementation of a comprehensive framework for managing displacement's consequences could enhance the legitimacy of the KRG and GoI, as a whole. Addressing the plight of the displaced is, in the end, a national obligation for which Iraqi and the KRG authorities need to take utmost responsibility. If national and local authorities demonstrate willingness and capacity to assist IDPs to stay (integration), return or resettle, they would provide hope to this unsettled population, thus, restoring a degree of state-society trust that is fundamental to avoiding further tensions and uncertainty.

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(أ) فهم حالة النزوح على إنها وضع مزمن وليس أزمة مفاجئة؛

(ب) الاعتراف بمدى قدرة حالات النزوح الطويلة والمتكررة في زعزعة إستقرار المنطقة؛

(ج) فهم حالة النزوح على إنها ظاهرة متنوعة.

تُشدد النتائج على الآثار المزعزعة للاستقرار والصدمة الناجمة عن النزوح وضرورة معالجتها، وبالتالي فإننا نوصي بهذه الأمور السياسية ذات الأولوية والتي يمكن للجهات الدولية والإقليمية والوطنية والمحلية الفاعلة من خلالها أن تساهم في إيجاد حلول للآثار السلبية للنزوح أو على الأقل التخفيف منها:

(١) وضع وتنفيذ إطار سياسي وطني للنزوح من شأنه مواجهة تجليات النزوح المتعددة؛

(٢) اعتماد التسهيلات (دون التشجيع) التي يمكن أن تقلل من حالة الريبة السائدة بين السكان؛

(٣) تضمين النزوح في خطة إعادة البناء المادي والاجتماعي للعراق.

وللاشارة فإن بيانات هذا التقرير كانت قد جُمعت في ربيع / صيف 2017، وبالتالي، فهي تصف سيناريوطرات عليه بعض التغييرات خاصة بعد الأحداث التي وقعت في أيلول / سبتمبر وتشرين الأول / أكتوبر 2017. ومع ذلك، تبدو النتائج والتوصيات التي حددتها الدراسة ذات صلة بأوضاع يومنا هذا. وعلى الرغم من أن الوضع قد تغير بعض الشيء، إلا أن النتائج تُشير إلى أهمية وضع سياسات وإقتراح توصيات تمس الحاجة.

تم تمويل هذا المشروع البحثي من قبل برنامج الأمن القومي وسيادة القانون في المناطق الضعيفة والمتأثرة بالصراعات التابع للمنظمة الهولندية للبحث العلمي (NWO). وقد قام باحثون من مؤسسة الشرق الأوسط للبحوث (ميري) بالتعاون مع منظمة قنديل والمركز المشترك لتنسيق الأزمات في كردستان العراق بإجراء هذا البحث.

## من النزوح إلى الهجرة: العوامل المؤثرة على العملية

### الملخص التنفيذي

بعد إحتلال تنظيم الدولة الإسلامية (داعش) للأراضي العراقية في يونيو/حزيران ٢٠١٤، اضطّر أكثر من ثلاثة ملايين مواطن إلى النزوح من ديارهم بحثاً عن الأمن. ومن بين هؤلاء، وجد ما يقارب ١.٣ مليون شخص ملاذاً آمناً في إقليم كردستان العراق. وفي الوقت الذي كانت فيه موجات النزوح الداخلي تُمثل خياراً لدى البعض، مثلت الهجرة إلى دول الخارج خياراً آخر للعديد من العراقيين. في الواقع، وبحلول عام ٢٠١٥، كان العراقيون من بين ثلاث أكثر جنسيات تُصل الأراضي الأوروبية عن طريق البحر الأبيض المتوسط، بعد كل من السوريين والأفغان. إلا إنه ومع حلول عام ٢٠١٧، أخذ العديد من النازحين في العودة إلى ديارهم بالرغم من إن الأوضاع الأمنية والسياسية والاقتصادية في المناطق المحررة لاتزال غير مستقرة ولا يمكن التنبؤ بها.

يهدف هذا التقرير إلى وضع توصيات سياساتية بناءً على نتائج الدراسة البحثية المُعنونة "من النزوح إلى الهجرة: العوامل المؤثرة على العملية" والتي أجريت في الفترة ما بين مايو/أيار ونوفمبر/تشرين الثاني ٢٠١٧. قامت الدراسة بتناول الأسئلة المهمة التالية: ماهي الآليات والأسباب المؤثرة على رغبة النازحين في إقليم كردستان في إما البقاء في الإقليم أو الهجرة إلى خارج العراق أو العودة إلى ديارهم؛ وماهي العلاقة بين النزوح الداخلي، الهجرة الخارجية والعودة؟

للإجابة على هذه التساؤلات، تم استخدام أساليب التحليل الكمي والنوعي بما في ذلك: (أ) تقييم ٥٠٠ إستمارة قمنا بتوزيعها على النازحين في إقليم كردستان العراق (محافظات أربيل ودهوك السليمانية) خلال الفترة ما بين مايو/أيار ويونيو/حزيران ٢٠١٧؛ (ب) إجراء ٣٠ مقابلة شبه منظمة مع النازحين في إقليم كردستان العراق خلال الفترة ما بين يونيو/حزيران ويوليو/تموز ٢٠١٧؛ (ج) مناقشة النتائج الأولية للدراسة خلال ورشة عمل أُقيمت في مدينة أربيل بتاريخ ٢٣ يوليو/تموز ٢٠١٧ التي حضرها العديد من الجهات المحلية والوطنية والدولية الفعالة، الحكومية منها والغير الحكومية.

تُشير بيانات الدراسة إلى أنه على الرغم من أن أكثر من نصف العينة (٥٥٪) يرغبون/يخططون إلى مغادرة العراق، إلى أن قلة منهم، (٢٣٪)، لديهم خطط فعلية للقيام بذلك. يُعتبر الأشخاص الذين تتراوح أعمارهم ما بين ٢٦-٣٥ سنة والأشخاص غير المتعلمين أو أولئك الذين لديهم مستويات تعليم منخفضة هم الأكثر إنجذاباً إلى فكرة الهجرة. بالإضافة، تجد الدراسة إلى أن الايزيديين والمسيحيين يعدان أكثر تمثيلاً بين أولئك الذين يرغبون/يخططون إلى مغادرة العراق. هذا وأن من بين أهم العوامل الدافعة إلى هجرة الأشخاص هو تواجد أفراد من العائلة أو الأقارب والأصدقاء في الخارج بالإضافة إلى الثقة في الحصول على صفة اللاجئ عند الوصول. في نهاية المطاف، يُعتبر إدراك أو تصور النازحين بإنعدام الأمن والفرص الاقتصادية من بين أكثر الأسباب إلحاحاً التي تدفع أولئك الذين يرغبون/يخططون إلى مغادرة العراق.

وتشير البيانات أيضاً إلى أن تصورات النازحين تجاه مستقبل الأوضاع السياسية والاقتصادية والأمنية في العراق (خلال الخمس سنوات القادمة) هي العامل الأكثر تأثيراً في قرار الأشخاص للهجرة خارج البلاد. وفي إطار تقييمهم السلبي العام للأوضاع في العراق، كان النازحون الذي يرغبون في الهجرة أو يخططون لها أكثر تشاؤماً مقارنة بأولئك الذي كانت لديهم الرغبة في العودة إلى ديارهم أو البقاء كنازحين في إقليم كردستان العراق.

من ناحية أخرى، تجد الدراسة أن العوامل الاجتماعية - السياسية (أي العلاقات بين النازحين والمجتمعات المضيفة) والاجتماعية-الاقتصادية (أي مستوى الدخل والوضع الوظيفي) أقل أهمية في تحديد رغبة/خطة النازحين في الداخل إلى مغادرة البلاد. حتى في الحالات التي لا تؤثر فيها هذه العوامل بصورة مباشرة على نوايا النازحين إلا أنها تساهم في بروز حالة مريّة من الريبة التي باتت سائدة لديهم.

وتؤثر حالة الريبة السائدة بالواقع السياسي والاجتماعي والاقتصادي تأثيراً كبيراً على قرارات النزوح الداخلي والهجرة أو عملية عودة النازحين. فضلاً عن ذلك، لم تكن حكومة العراق وحكومة إقليم كردستان قادرتين (أو مستعدتين) للتعامل مع حالة الشك هذه لدى النازحين. على العكس، ساهمت الحكومتين في نشرها وهذا ينعكس جلياً في عدم وجود إطار شامل لإدارة حالات النزوح والعودة. وكحل لذلك، تدعو الدراسة إلى تطوير سياسات قوية على الأصبدة الدولية والوطنية والمحلية بما في ذلك:



ئەم ئەنجامانە جەخت لە گاریگەرە نالەبار و زیانبەخشەکانی ئاوارەیی و زەرورەتی چارەسەرکردنیان دەکاتەو. بۆیە، ئەم راپۆرتە پێشینیازی ئەم خالانە دەکات کە لە پێیانەو دەکریت کارەکتەر نیوودەولەتی و ھەریەمی و عێراقی و لۆکالیەکان ھەوێ چارەسەری یان کەمکردنەووە زیانەکانی ئەم پرۆسە یە بکەن:

(۱) دارشتن و جێبەجێکردنی پۆلەسیەک لە سەرئاستی عێراقدا بە چەشنێک کە بتوانیت چارەسەری دەرئەنجامە ھەمەجۆرەکانی ئاوارەیی بکات.

(۲) گرتنەبەری چەند ھەنگاویک بۆ ئاسانکاریکردن بە مەبەستی کەمکردنەووی نادۆنیایی لە نیوان خەڵکدا.

(۳) دانانی بابەتی ئاوارەیی لە سەررووی پلانی عێراق بۆ بونیاتنانەووی کۆمەلایەتی و ماددی.

داتاکانی ئەم توێژینەوویە وەسفی دۆخیەک دەکات کە لە و ماویدی دواییدا گۆرانکاری بە سەرداھاتووە، بە تاپیەتی لە دوای پروداووەکانی ئەیلوول و تشرینی یەکەمی ۲۰۱۷. بەلام، دەرئەنجامەکان و پێشینیازەکانی ئەم توێژینەوویە ھەمیشە لەگەڵ دۆخی ئیستای ئاوارەکان دەگونجین و زەرورەتی دارشتنی پۆلەسی و نەخشەریگا دوویات دەکەنەو.

ئەم پرۆژە یە لە لایەن ریکخراوی ھۆلەندی بۆ توێژینەووی زانستی (NWO) لە ژێرپرۆگرامی (ئەمنیەت و سەرورەیی یاسا لە ناوچە لاواز و ناسەقامگیرەکان) تەمویل کراو. توێژەران ئینستیتیوتی رۆژھەلاتی ناوہراست بۆ توێژینەووی (مێری) بە ھەماھەنگی لەگەڵ ریکخراوی قەندیل و ناوہندی ھاوہەشی ھەماھەنگی قەیرانەکانی حکومەتی ھەرێم ئەم توێژینەوویان ئەنجام داو.

## له ئاوارەبىيە ۋە بەرەۋ پەناھەندەيى: ھۆكۈمەت كۆچكردىن

### پوختەي راپۇرت

پاش ئەۋەي رېڭخراۋى دەۋلەتى ئىسلامى (داعىش) لە مانگى حوزەيرانى ۲۰۱۴ چەند ناۋچە يەكى لە عىراق داڭىركرد ، زياتر لە ۳ مىليۇن كەس ئاۋارەبوون وزىدى خۇيان بەجىپىشت و كەوتنە گەران بۇدۇزىنەۋەي ناۋچەي ئارام. لە نىۋىباند، نىكەي ۱،۳ مىليۇن كەس پەنايان بۇ ھەرىي كوردستان ھىنا ۋەلەۋى نىشتە جىبوون. ھاوتەرىب لە گەل ھاتى شەپۇلى نوپى ئاۋارەكان، عىراقىيەكان رىچكەي كۆچكردىن بۇ دەرەۋەي ۋلات ھەلدەبىژارد. لە سالى ۲۰۱۵ دا، عىراقىيەكان لە نىۋەسە گەلەنەبوون، لە پاش سورىيەكان ۋ ئەفغانىيەكان، كە زۇرتىن كۆچيان بەرەۋ ئەۋروپا كىردە لە رىگەي دەرەي سى ناۋەراستەۋە (UNHCR 2016b, 34). ھەرچەندە، لە ۲۰۱۷ ۋە ۲۰۱۸ ھەرقەندە، كە زۇرى ئاۋارەكان گەراۋنەتەۋە بۇزىدى خۇيان، بەلام بارى ئەمنى و سىياسى و ئابوورى ناۋچە ئازادكاراۋەكان ھىشتا بە ناچىگىر و پىشېبىنى لىنەكراۋ ماۋنەتەۋە.

ئەم راپۇرتە بابەتتىكى توپىنەۋەيە بە ناۋىشانى " لە ئاۋارەبىيە ۋە بەرەۋ پەناھەندەيى: ھۆكۈمەت كۆچكردىن " بە واتاي كۆچكردن لە ناۋچە يەكەۋە بۇ ھەرىي كوردستان پاشان بۇ ۋلاتى سىپەم، كە لە نىۋان مانگى ئايار و تىشېرىن دوۋەمى سالى ۲۰۱۷ ئەنجامدرا. ئەم راپۇرتە جگەي لەۋەي كە كۆمەلپىك پىشنىيازى پۇلەسى لە خۇدەگىرت، ھاۋكات ھەۋلدەدات ۋەلامى ئەم پىرسىارانە بداتەۋە: ئەو فاكتەرانە چىن كە ۋادەكەن ئاۋارەكانى عىراق بىيانەۋى لە ھەرىي كوردستان بىمىنەۋە، يان كۆچ بىكەن ۋەيان بگەپنەۋە نىۋمال ۋ ھالى خۇيان؟ ھەرۋەھا چ جۇرە پەيۋەندىك ھەيە لە نىۋان ئاۋارەبوون و كۆچكردن و گەرانەۋە لە عىراقدا؟

بۇ ۋەلامدەنەۋەي ئەم پىرسىارانە، لەم توپىنەۋەيەدا ھەردوۋ مېتۇدى جۇرى و چەندى بەكارھىنراۋن بۇ كۆكردنەۋە و شىكىردنەۋەي داتاكان، ئەمەش ئەمانە دەگىرتەۋە: كۆكردنەۋەي و شىكىردنەۋەي پىنجسەد (۵۰۰) راپىسى كە لە نىۋە ۋ ئاۋارانەي لە پارىژگاكانى ھەۋلپىر و دھۆك و سىلمانى لە نىۋان مانگى ئايار و حوزەيرانى سالى ۲۰۱۷ جىگىر بوۋبوون؛ ئەنجامدانى سى (۳۰) دىمانە لە گەل ئاۋارەكان لە نىۋان مانگى حوزەيران و تەمموزى ھەمان سال، ۋە ھەرۋەھا تاتوئىكردنى ئەنجامە بەرايەكانى ئەم توپىنەۋەيە لە ۋوركشۇپىكدا كە لە بەروارى ۲۳ تەمموزى ھەمان سالدا لە ھەۋلپىر بە بەشدارى لايەنە پەيۋەندىدارە لۇكالى و نىۋەدەۋلەتى و رېڭخراۋە حكومى و ناھكومىيەكان ئەنجامدرا.

داتاكان ئامازە بەۋە دەكەن كە سەرەپاي ئەۋەي كە زياد لە نىۋەي بەشداربوون، (۵۵%)، ئارەزوۋمەندبوون ۋەيان پلانىيان بۇ كۆچكردن ھەيە، بەلام تەنيا ۲۳% سى بەشداربوون لە راستىدا پلانى كۆچكردىن داپىژتوبو بۇ ئەم مەبەستە. كۆچكردن جىگى سەرەنجى ئەۋانەن كە تەمەنىيان لە نىۋان ۲۶-۳۵ سالىدا بوون بە تايبەتى لە نىۋان ئەۋانەي كە ئاستى خويىندەۋارايان نزمە. زياد لەۋەش، ئىزىدىيەكان و كىرستىيانەكان زياتر دەرەدەكەون لە نىۋان ئەۋانەي كە ئارەزوۋمەندن ياخود پلانىيان بۇ بەجىپىشتى عىراق ھەيە. ھەرۋەھا، گىرنگىرتىن خالە پاكىشەرەكان بىرىتى بوون لە ھەبوونى ئەندامانى خىزبان و خىزم و برادەرلە دەرەۋە و متمانەي ۋە دەستەپىننى بارى پەنا بەرايەتى. جگە لە مەش پوانگەي ئاۋارەكان بۇ نەبوونى ئەمىنەت و دەرەفەتى كارلە عىراقدا ۋادەدەكەۋىت كە پالئەرو ھۆكۈمى سەرەكى بن بۇ دروستبوونى وىست و دروستكردنى پلان بۇ كۆچكردن.

داتاكان ئەۋەش نىشان دەدەن كە پوانگەي ئاۋارەكان بەرامبەر بە داھاتوى عىراق لە پرووى سىياسى و ئابوورى و ئەمىنەۋە (لەمەۋداي پىنج سالى داھاتوۋ) دىارتىن فاكتەرى كارىگەرە لە سەر بىرارى خەللك بۇ كۆچكردن: لەم دىدە نەرنىيەدا بۇ داھاتوى عىراق، ئەو ئاۋارانەي كە ئارەزوۋمەندن يان پلانىيان بۇ كۆچكردن داپىژتوۋ زىاتىن بۇچوونى نەرنىيان ھەيە بە بەراۋرد بەۋانەي كە دەيانەۋىت بگەرتىنەۋە بۇ شىۋىنەكانىيان ياخود ئەۋانەي كە دەيانەۋىت لە ئاۋارەبىدا بىمىنەۋە. بەپىچەۋانەۋە، ئەم توپىنەۋەيە دەرەدەخات كە بارى سىياسى كۆمەلپەتتى (پەيۋەندى نىۋان ئاۋارەكۆمەلگەي خانەخۇي) و بارى ئابوورى كۆمەلپەتتى (ئاستى داھات و بارى ۋەزىفى) كارىگەرى راستەۋخۇيان لە سەرنىيەتى ئاۋارەكان نىيە، بەلام ئەۋفاكتەرانە بەشدارن لە مەرئەۋبارە گوماناۋىيە كە لە نىۋان ئاۋارەكاندا بلاون. بەگىشتى، نادلىنپاي سىياسى و كۆمەلپەتتى و ئابوورى گارىگەرى لە سەر ئاۋارەبوون و كۆچكردن و گەرانەۋە لە عىراقدا دروستدەكات. جگە لەۋە، حكومەتى عىراق و ھەرىي كوردستان نەيانتوانىۋە (ياخود نەيانتوانىستوۋ) چارەسەرى ئەم نادلىنپايە بىكەن، بەلكورەنگە بەشداربوونە لە دروستبوونى، ئەمەش بە باشتىن شىۋە رەنگى لە نەبوونى پلانىيى گىشتىگىر بۇ ئىدارەدانى ئاۋارەي و گەرانەۋە لە ھەرىي كوردستان و عىراقدا داۋەتەۋە.

دەرئەنجام، ئەم توپىنەۋەيە پىشنىيازى داپىشتى پۇلەسى تۆكمە دەكات لە ئاستى نىۋەدەۋلەتى و عىراق و لۇكالىش بە جۇرپىك كە:

(أ) رەچاۋى ئاۋارەي لە عىراق بىكىت ۋەك ھالەتتىكى داپىژخايەن نەك قەيرانىكى كىتوپىر.

(ب) ئاگادار بوون لەۋەي كە دۇخى ئاۋارەي داپىژخايەن و چارەسەرنەكراۋ ناسەقامگىرى لە تىكراي ناۋچەكە دروستدەكات.

(ج) مامەلەكردن لە گەل ئاۋارەي ۋەكو دىاردەيەكى فرەپەھەند.

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