



INTENTIONS ASSESSMENT OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN CAMPS

KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

REPORT

MARCH 2015

SUMMARY

As of 31 December 2014, according to the latest estimate from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 225,746 Syrians were seeking refuge in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) due to the Syrian conflict, which began in 2011.¹ At the time of writing 92,467 Syrian refugees were registered in nine camps or settlements located throughout the three governorates of the KRI, with 188,934 registered as living in host communities. The overwhelming majority of refugees arrived from Syria between August and November 2013 following the formal opening of the border with the KRI.² By May 2014 the protracted refugee crisis had stabilised somewhat, but another influx of nearly 22,000 newly registered refugees has occurred since September with families fleeing conflict in Kobane, Syria³

Since June 2014 the eruption of an internal displacement crisis in wider Iraq has further congested humanitarian space, stretching thin available funding and resources of humanitarian actors in the area. 798,492 displaced Iraqi individuals are now estimated to be residing across the KRI⁴, forced from their areas of origin following the escalation of violence that began in Anbar in December 2013 and spread to much of northern and central Iraq since June 2014. With the recent arrival of Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs), competition for accommodation and jobs both in camps and host communities has risen sharply. The combined number of Syrian refugees and Iraqi IDPs in the KRI now amounts to roughly 20% of the population of the region (five million).⁵

The REACH Initiative (REACH) has been actively supporting information management efforts undertaken by humanitarian actors in Iraq since November 2012. In consultation with the Protection Working Group (PWG) of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah Governorates of the KRI and the UNHCR Protection Unit, REACH was mobilised to assess any intended movements of Syrian refugee households between host communities and camps, between and within camps, and from camps outside the KRI. This assessment also aims to understand if the intentions of Syrian refugees in camps have altered since the arrival of IDPs, in order to gain a better understanding of refugee intentions overall, that will inform decision-making, planning and targeting of aid by humanitarian actors responding to the needs of Syrian Refugees across the KRI.

The assessment involved two rounds of primary data collection. The first round was based on mixed-methods data collection, including a household-level survey and focus group discussions (FGDs), in order to triangulate information and gather more qualitative data. In total, 729 households were assessed and 18 FGDs were held. Data collection took place between 2 and 9 June 2014 for camps in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah Governorates, and between 16 and 18 June 2014 for camps in Dahuk Governorate.⁶ The second round of household-level data collection took place between the 2 and 15 December, integrated into the Multi Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted by REACH at the request of UNHCR. A total sample of 1,981 households across all formal refugee camps were assessed to provide aid actors with information about the demographic profile, intentions and concerns of Syrian refugees staying in camps across the KRI.

¹ [UNHCR Syria Refugee Regional Response Information Portal](#), UNHCR Registration Trends for Syrian Persons of Concern, (15 September 2014), last accessed on 14 January 2015.

² According to this assessment, in June this year the majority (56%) of households in refugee camps or camp-like settings in the KRI had arrived to their camp directly from Syria between August and September 2013 due to the formal opening of the border. For the most part households reported that all members arrived together.

³ UNHCR, Information Kit Syrian Refugees Iraq, no.9, December 2014

⁴ 133,082 families, figures based on an average family size of six. International Organisation for Migration, [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), 25 December 2014.

⁵ UNHCR, Information Kit, Syrian Refugees Iraq, no.9, December 2014.

⁶ Data collection was temporarily interrupted by fighting in Mosul and Ninewa Governorate, which saw an estimated 300,000 people from elsewhere in Iraq enter the KRI between the 10 and 12 June 2014.

The assessment revealed the following key findings:

- The vast majority of households (93%) living in Syrian refugee camps across the KRI in December 2014 were not planning to leave their camp. They reported being unable to afford the cost of travel and rent, and perceived that cultural and social challenges, such as language barriers, would inhibit their integration into communities elsewhere.
- Some of those households planning to stay in their current camp of residence reported wishing to move but cannot – the assessment in June found that this amounted to 19%. The most commonly reported reason for not being able to leave the camp was a lack of resources.
- Of the small percentage of households who reported intending to leave, there was little difference between those reporting they intended to leave in June 2014 (5%) and in December 2014 (3%). Of those who intended to leave, the largest proportion of households intended to move within the same district or governorate within the KRI.
- Since June 2014, there has been a slight increase in urgency to leave the camp. The household-level survey in June showed that of the small percentage of refugees intending to leave camps in the KRI, 39% of these refugees intended to leave in less than one month. By December, this figure had risen, with 53% of respondents who intended to leave reporting they planned to leave the camp in less than one month.
- Respondents frequently cited access to better services as a key reason for intending to leave the camp. Between June and December, among those intending to leave, there was a shift in prioritisation from joining friends and relatives to a focus on gaining employment. For those households who reported intending to return to their area of origin in Syria, the most cited reason was to join friends and family.
- Many of the households intending to leave include vulnerable members; just over half of households across the KRI intending to leave had at least one child under 5 years old, meanwhile, a large minority included a pregnant or lactating woman. Moreover, a small minority of households now intending to leave had a member with a disability.⁷

This assessment illustrates a relatively static situation between June and December 2014, very different to the fluid situation less than a year before, when many refugee households were moving following the opening of the border with the KRI in August 2013. Most Syrian refugee households arrived in their current camp of residence during this period, with the majority of households travelling as one group.

Few household members have undergone further displacement either within or outside the camps. Over the past six months, camps have witnessed the arrival of 714 Syrian refugee families previously living in host communities; seven families in Dahuk governorate to Akre Camp, 182 families in Erbil governorate (129 of which moved to Gawilan Camp), and 525 families moved to Arbat Permanent Camp in Sulaymaniyah governorate.⁸ Taking into account that those who moved to Arbat Permanent Camp came due to its opening at the end of June 2014, this indicates that in fact a relatively small number of households have moved back to camps as a result of increasing pressure in relation to the arrival of IDPs.

In June only a limited number of households expected family members remaining in Syria to join them, and only then if there was a significant escalation of the ongoing conflict or a drop in livelihoods. Still in December respondents in

⁷ Figures of this subset were too small to be statistically relevant, but gave an indication of overall trends.

⁸ Figures according to camp management in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah governorates and according to the Refugee Administration of BORHA in Dahuk governorate.

all Syrian refugee camps across the KRI, with the exception of Gawilan, were not expecting new arrivals, which indicates that new arrivals from Kobane since September 2014 (still arriving in December) were either travelling as whole families with no previous family connections in the KRI, alternatively those with relations has already arrived. In addition, entry into the KRI for refugees from Syria has been increasingly limited since the last quarter of 2014 and the lack of space is likely to inhibit future movement of refugees from the host community to camps.

With regards to intentions to leave the camp, due to restricted livelihood opportunities and limited options for movement within the KRI due to delays in renewal of residency (in particular in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah governorates) and difficulties accessing documentation such as birth and marriage certificates,⁹ many families perceived life outside camps to be too difficult and do not wish to leave. Almost a fifth reported wishing to move, but lacked the resources do so. As a result, the overwhelming majority of Syrian refugee households living in camps in the KRI are unable to seriously consider leaving the camps. Since conflict in Syria continues and many refugees lack the resources and transport to move elsewhere, the current situation is likely to continue in a stable fashion into the foreseeable future.

⁹ REACH Initiative, Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Syrian Refugees Living in Camps, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2015 – pending publication at the time of writing.

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About REACH Initiative

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH was created in 2010 to facilitate the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information about REACH and to access our information products, please visit: www.reach-initiative.org. You can also write to us at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us @REACH_info

List of Acronyms

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODK	Open Data Kit
PWG	Protection Working Group
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

Geographic Classifications

Governorate	Highest form of governance below the national level; comparable to a province with a governor
District	Sub-division of a governorate in which government institutions operate
Sub-district	Sub-division of a district composed of towns and villages

List of Maps, Figures and Tables

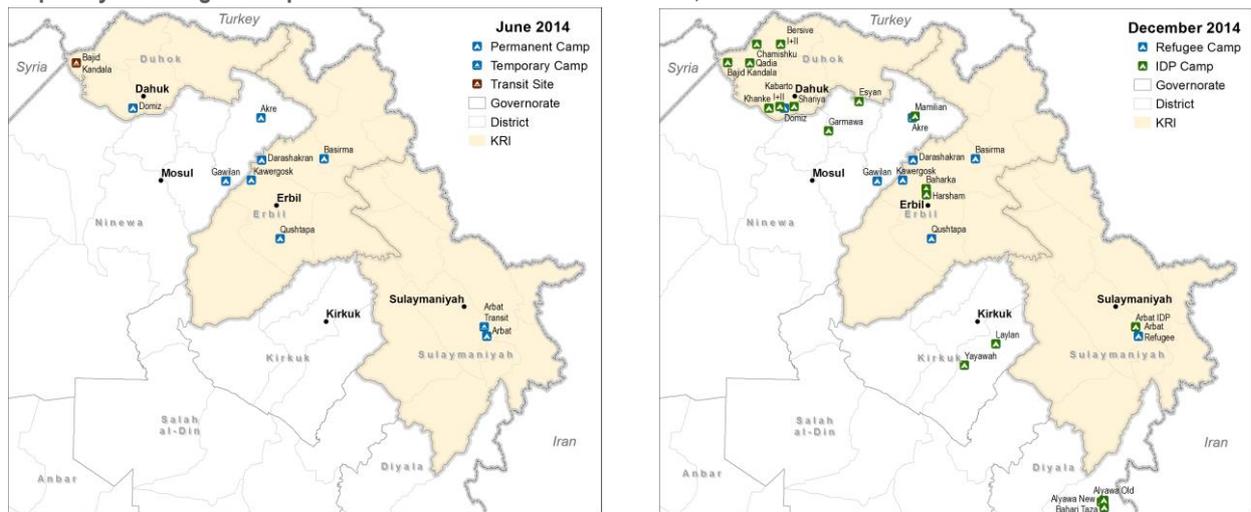
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Cover picture: Kawergosk Camp, KRI by Samantha Robinson / aptART – Awareness and Prevent Through Art: <http://www.apart.org/about/>

INTRODUCTION

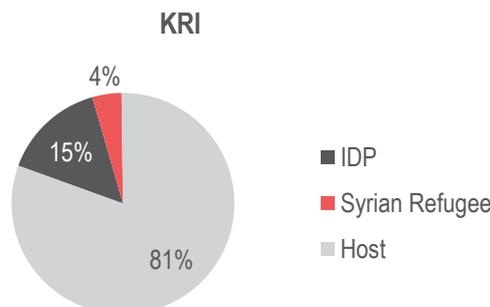
As of 31 December 2014, 225,700 Syrian refugees are estimated to be residing in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), with approximately 92,500 currently living in nine camps or settlements located throughout the three governorates of the KRI – Dahuk (Akre, Domiz, Domiz II and Gawilan), Erbil (Basirma, Darashakran, Kawergosk, Qushtapa) and Sulaymaniyah (the population of Arbat Transit site has now been relocated to Arbat, a permanent camp). Any intended movements by the refugees will determine the longevity of the camps and settlements across the KRI, and influence the absorption capacity of the host communities. An understanding of these intentions and motivations will improve the planning, targeting and decision-making for aid in Syrian refugee camps.

Map 1: Syrian refugee camp and IDP site locations across the KRI, June and December 2014



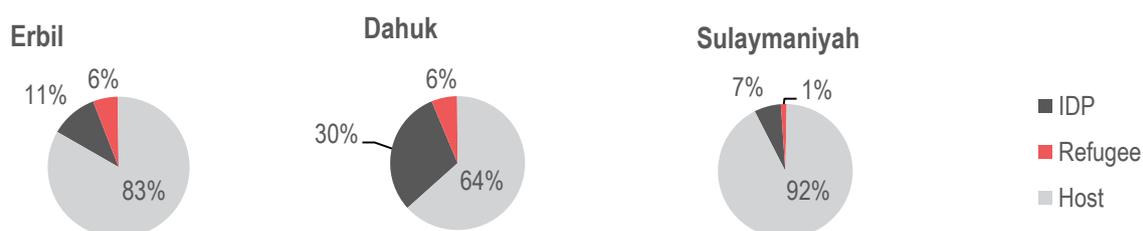
In addition to the large population of Syrian refugees in the KRI, the onset of a second wave of internal displacement in June 2014 resulted in the arrival of more than half a million displaced individuals in the KRI from elsewhere in the country. Internal displacement has continued to increase since June, with a spike in arrivals in the KRI in August following further expansion of violence in Sinjar and Ninewa plains. The large numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the KRI in need of humanitarian assistance, as seen in Figure 1, has also increased competition for accommodation in host communities and already limited jobs. It is important to consider whether this added pressure has impacted the intentions of Syrian refugees living in camps across the KRI, comparing current planned movement and motivations with those in June.

Figure 1: Proportions of IDPs, Syrian refugees, and host community members across the KRI¹⁰



¹⁰ UNHCR, Iraq Syrian Humanitarian Information Kit, no.9, December 2014

Figure 2: Proportions of IDPs and Syrian refugees, and host community members across the KRI¹¹



In June 2014 REACH was mobilised to assess the intended movements of Syrian refugee households in camp settings across the KRI, in consultation with the Protection Working Groups (PWG) in Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah Governorates of the KRI and the UNHCR Protection Unit. The involvement of all interested humanitarian actors in the design of the survey form was encouraged to ensure that the analysis will be able to inform future humanitarian assistance. The overall objective of this assessment was to better understand the future plans of Syrian refugees in camps in the KRI in order to enable effective prioritization of humanitarian assistance at the governorate level. With the rapid escalation of the Iraqi displacement crisis from June onwards it became clear that the changing humanitarian context would have an impact on Syrian refugees living in the KRI. At the request of UNHCR, and in consultation with the PWG, REACH incorporated comparable indicators on intentions into the December Multi Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) of Syrian refugees residing in camps.¹² Specifically, the report aims to understand household displacement profiles, any intended movements within and from the camp, especially to Syria, and the reasons behind their reported intentions.

The first part of the report introduces the methodology designed and applied by REACH for this assessment, followed by assessment findings, namely: arrival in camps, including displacement to current location and future arrivals in camps, and future intentions covering refugees intending to remain in camps, wishing to leave but unable to, and those intending to leave.

METHODOLOGY

This report is based on two assessments. One assessment was carried out in June 2014, specifically to determine the intentions of Syrian refugees living in camps and camp-like settlements across the KRI. Due to significant changes to the humanitarian context shortly after data collection, comparable indicators were added to the intentions section of the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in December 2014, to yield more relevant findings.

The June Intentions Assessment and December MSNA were originally separate projects, both implemented under the leadership of UNHCR with technical expertise and oversight provided jointly by REACH and with close involvement of other interested humanitarian actors. Preparations for both assessments followed the same process; drafting of indicators were conducted in consultation with the Protection Working Groups (PWG) of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, and the UNHCR Protection Unit. The purpose of consultation was to invite input from other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) responding to the Syrian refugee crisis in the KRI, by contributing feedback for indicators to be covered by the questionnaire.¹³ Comparability of intentions-related indicators between the two assessments was determined in close consultation between REACH and the UNHCR Protection Unit.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Complete findings from both the camp and non-camp MSNA will be published in April 2015.

¹³ Please refer to Annex I for the June assessment indicators in full, and Annex II for the December Intentions-related indicators.

Data Collection

Both rounds of data collection involved household-level surveys, using a questionnaire administered by REACH enumerators on Android-based smartphones with an ODK platform, enabling data entry directly during the interview.¹⁴ FGDs were also held in the June assessment in order to gather qualitative data that enabled triangulation and verification of other data sources. FGDs were not conducted in December due to the quantitative nature of the MSNA.

The first round of data collection took place from 1 to 18 June 2014 and covered eight camps and transit sites in all three governorates of Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk. A random sample of 729 households, between 78 and 101 in each camp, were interviewed across the KRI, to ensure findings can be generalised to the camp level with a 10% margin of error and a 95% level of confidence.¹⁵

The second round of data collection took place between 2 and 15 December and covered nine camps and transit sites in all three governorates of Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk.¹⁶ A random sample of 1,981 households, between 152 and 268 in each camp, were interviewed across the KRI, to ensure findings can be generalised to the camp level with a 5% margin of error and a 95% level of confidence (to remain comparable with the MSNA for non-camp communities where findings needed to be generalised to district level).¹⁷ Table 1 shows the size of random samples collected in each of the camps, in both June and December.¹⁸

Table 1: Samples sizes¹⁹

Location	Sample Size Round I	Sample Size Round II
Akre	78	152
Domiz	95	490
Domiz II	88	(Domiz & Domiz II sample combined)
Kawergosk	101	245
Darashakran	94	234
Qushtapa	98	224
Basirma	86	204
Gawilan	-	239
Arbat Transit ²⁰	89	193
TOTAL	729	1981

Two FGD discussions were held in each of the eight camps and settlements assessed in June with the exception of Domiz, where four FGDs were held due to larger population size. Each focus group comprised seven to ten participants and involved participants of varying age over 18 years old. The groups were separated by sex, in order to allow for more open and frank discussion among the participants, as well as identify specific challenges and

¹⁴ Please refer to Annex III for the questionnaire in full.

¹⁵ Data collection with a 10% margin of error determines the confidence interval, which is the range of values above and below the true answer. In turn 95% level of confidence implies that you would expect 5% of samples to be more than the margin of error away from the true answer. Using this sample calculation allows us to generalize data to the population of all the camps assessed.

¹⁶ In round 2, samples from Domiz I and Domiz II were combined (see table 1).

¹⁷ For further details on the sampling methodology, refer to <http://opa.uprrp.edu/InvinsDocs/KrejcieandMorgan.pdf>, which provides a short academic explanation of how the sample is determined.

¹⁸ A slightly larger sample than necessary was collected in order to be able to exclude any errors found. This explains, for example, why the sample collected in Arbat Transit exceeds that in Basirma despite having a smaller population.

¹⁹ Figures based on camp management data as of 19 May 2014

²⁰ Since data collection, IDPs from Arbat Transit camp have since been transferred to Arbat Permanent camp.

barriers to men and women. The FGDs were structured along a questionnaire designed by REACH, with the close involvement of UNHCR and other interested humanitarian actors.²¹

Challenges and Limitations

During the first round of data collection in June, the team was unable to conduct an assessment of Gawilan camp due to security limitations at the time; postponing data collection in this camp further would have rendered results non-comparable to the rest of the assessment. Bajed Kandala was also not included, since at the time of assessment the former was set up as a registration site without any long-term inhabitants (by the time of writing it had been converted to a camp for displaced Iraqis). At the time of data collection in June, Arbat Permanent camp was still under construction. By the time of writing, the population of Arbat Transit site has since been relocated to Arbat Permanent camp.

Due to the changes in population sizes between June and December and different sample size calculations used, it is not possible to directly compare statistical findings from the two rounds of data collection at the same confidence or margin of error. However, as both assessments individually provide findings that can be generalised to the camp level, broader trends and observations are comparable and will be discussed in the report.

FINDINGS

This section of the report outlines assessment findings on the intended movements of Syrian refugees in the KRI, namely; arrival in camps, including displacement to current location and future arrivals in camps, and future intentions covering refugees intending to remain in camps, wishing to leave but unable to, and those intending to leave.

Arrival in camps

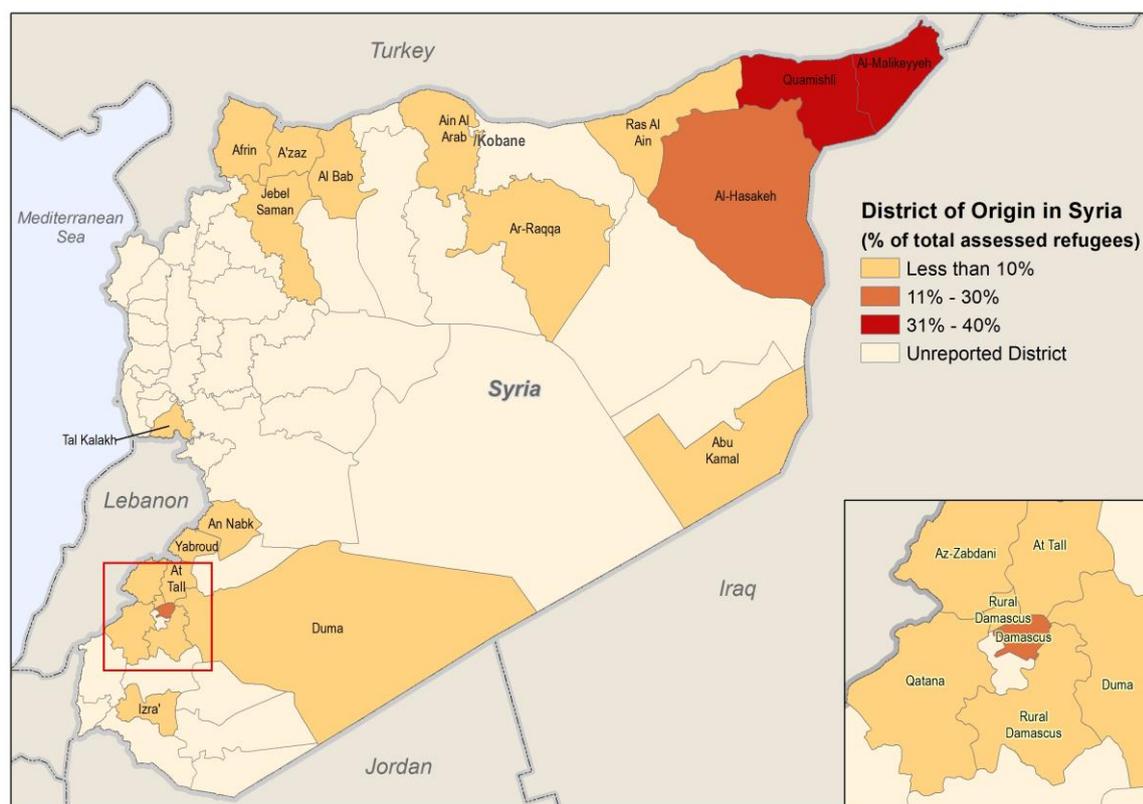
Displacement to current location

The majority (57%) of households in refugee camps or camp-like settings in the KRI had arrived in their camp between August and September 2013 due to the formal opening of the border, with only 9% of the camp population across the KRI arriving after January 2014.

The June assessment found that across the KRI **79% of households living in camps or camp-like settings originated from Al-Hasakeh Governorate** in Syria, while another **13% originated from Damascus Governorate**. A higher average proportion of households in camps in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah came from Al-Hasakeh (on average 87%), compared to an average 66% of households residing in Dahuk camps. A larger proportion of households that came from Damascus and rural Damascus resided in Dahuk camps.

²¹ Please refer to Annex IV for the FGD questionnaire.

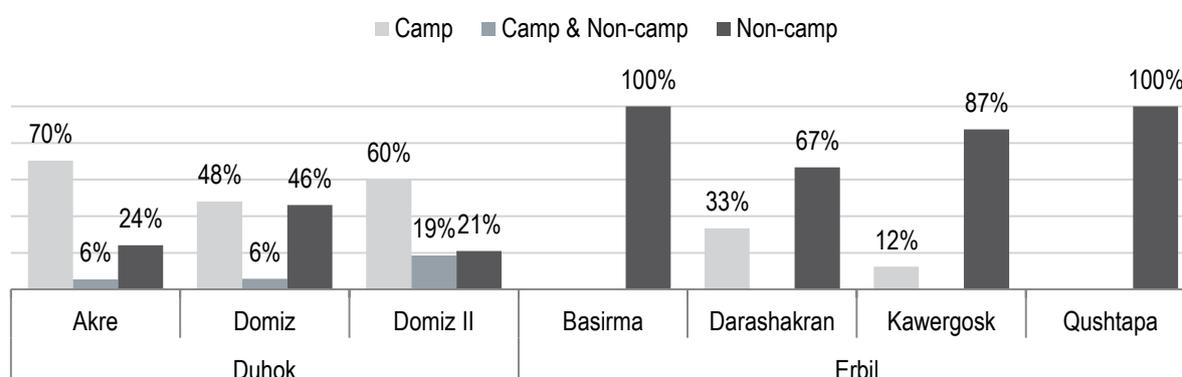
Map 2: District of Origin in Syria (% of total assessed refugees), June 2014



The majority of refugees interviewed in June 2014 arrived directly in camps, with the exception of Darashakran and Domiz II, where a majority of 81% and 68% respectively had lived elsewhere in the KRI first. Darashakran saw the highest proportion of households that came to their current camp from host communities, at 13%. Those who moved from host communities to a camp did so mostly within the same governorate. Many refugees in Erbil lived on the street and in schools when they first arrived in the KRI and so were moved by the government to camps nearby. Overall those who had previously lived elsewhere in the KRI predominantly had been in camps. Those in Domiz II mostly came from Domiz, with the former built as an extension of the latter.

According to the June assessment, most households (91%) also reported that all members currently living with them travelled from Syria in cohesive units. 93% of the remaining refugee households reported that the last member arrived within two months of the first. It was clear from the assessment that living with or near to family is a priority. The second most frequently cited reason to move to a camp from elsewhere in the KRI was to join friends and family. Indeed, only 23% of households across all three governorates reported a member living in either another camp or host community (see Figure 3), on average between one and three individuals. For the most part, these households resided in Dahuk. Of households in Dahuk that reported members living elsewhere in the KRI, many (70% in Akre, 60% in Domiz II and 48% in Domiz) clarified that these lived in other camps.

Figure 3: Accommodation setting for members of households who reported a member living elsewhere in the KRI outside the same camp, June 2014



Future arrivals in camps

Across the KRI in June only **10% of households with families elsewhere expected members living in another camp to join the household in their current camp, while 41% were not sure.** As less than a quarter of respondents across all three governorates reported a member living in either another camp or host community, the subsequent subset of expected arrivals from elsewhere in the KRI is therefore slim. Overall almost all of these were residing in host communities, not camps – most of which were expected to join their families’ camp in Erbil governorate. Despite expectations discussed earlier, since the arrival of IDPs into the KRI only a small minority of Syrian refugees in host communities have actually joined, seeing this as an option of last resort. According to camp management, in the past six months, seven families in host communities moved to a camp in Dahuk governorate (specifically only Akre), 182 families in Erbil governorate (129 of which moved to Gawilan with less variation between the other camps, and 525 families moved to Arbat Permanent Camp in Sulaymaniyah governorate (mostly due to the opening of the camp in the end of June).²²

The lack of movement until June 2014 can be explained in part because refugees were still heavily reliant on assistance and their freedom movement was limited by stringent rules on residency permits, which were particularly difficult to obtain, with renewals also hampered by delays in Erbil city and Sulaymaniyah governorate. Movement had been particularly inhibited or determined by a lack of livelihoods – the most decisive factor cited by households who expected members living elsewhere in the KRI to join their camp. Indeed, in another assessment conducted by REACH in May 2014, 12% of refugee households living in camps in the KRI reported having no income in the 30 days preceding the assessment, with the highest proportion found without an income in Gawilan (21%),²³ and 16% of refugee households living in host communities reported no source of income, with the highest proportion found in Sulaymaniyah (23%).²⁴

With regards to potential for further arrivals from Syria, **in June 90% of households across the KRI with members remaining in Syria (30%) either did not expect them to join them in the camp or were unsure of their intentions.** Respondents living in Erbil camps had significantly higher proportions of households expecting members in Syria to join them than the other governorates, with the least in Dahuk. One of the main cited factors that could trigger members in Syria to join their families in the KRI was an escalation of conflict, as well as a loss of income and a lack of access to basic services - both often degraded by conflict-related damage. In addition, the last quarter of

²² Camp management in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah camps and Refugee Administration of BORHA in Dahuk.

²³ REACH Initiative, Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Syrian Refugees Inside Camps, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Assessment Report, September 2014, p.2.

²⁴ REACH Initiative, Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Syrian Refugees Outside Camps, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Assessment Report, July 2014, p.2.

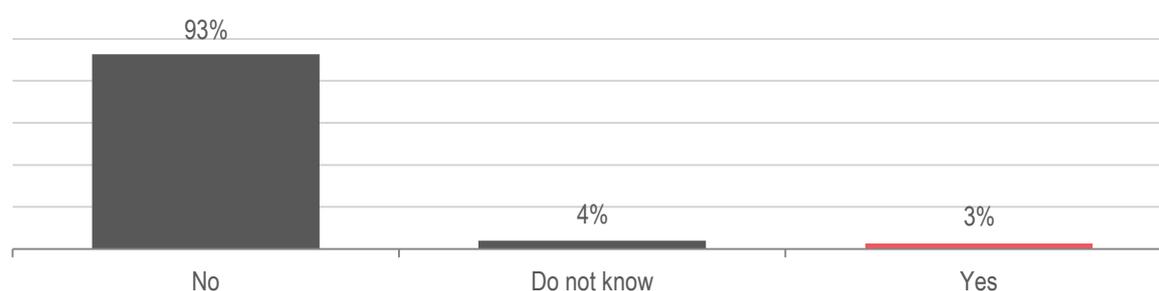
2014 saw a clear trend towards heightened border restrictions of countries neighbouring Syria including the KRI, with the exception for the large influx of refugees from Kobane.²⁵ Findings in June indicated that most households did not expect members in Syria to join them due to not wishing to live in a camp. Many also cited the cost of travel as an inhibitor – this is likely to be an even larger obstacle since access has now been limited to the KRI and the cost to arrange illegal passage across the border is even higher. Some noted that children and elderly are unable to travel, and a few also mentioned that they had lost contact with their family members and did not know where they are. In sum, **another major wave of movement into existing Syrian refugee camps should not to be expected unless new significant shocks break out in Syria.**

Future intentions

Refugees intending to remain in the camps

93% of households across the KRI in December did not intend to leave the camp, with no change between June and December and little variation across camps, apart from Qushtapa where 10% were planning to move.²⁶ All FGD participants stressed that residents would prefer to not have to live in a camp, but feel they have no favourable option in order to access services such as water and sanitation, assistance and education upon which they are still dependent. Moreover, **97% intended to remain in their current tent.** The predominant reason amongst those who did intend to move within their camp was for better shelter or accommodation, most often planning to move within one month.

Figure 4: Households intending to move from camps in the KRI in December 2014



Of those planning to stay, it was asked whether they wished to leave but could not – in June 19% of respondents confirmed this is the case. FGDs indicated that at the time of assessment only a small proportion of households wished to leave the camp because **life in host communities is considered to be even more difficult**, in part due to the lack of employment and the high cost of rent. Life outside the camps also presents more cultural and societal challenges, such as language barriers and separation from relatives within the camp. Some were also wary of difficulties accessing education and relocating children again, removing them from friends and a now-familiar community.

In contrast, those who wished to leave but could not, expected the quality of life to improve outside the camp, should they be able to afford rented accommodation. However, the June survey demonstrated that refugees were overwhelmingly **unable to leave the camp due to a lack of resources.** Some participants also clarified that should

²⁵ ACAPS, Regional Analysis for Syria, <http://acaps.org/img/reports/p-regional-analysis-for-syria--part-b-host-countries-oct-dec-2014.pdf>, 31 December 2014, accessed 28 January 2015.

²⁶ This data is from the December assessment.

they leave the camp they were aware this might be temporary unless they were able to find a sustainable job. Other reasons reported by a minority of these households were lack of residency and/or insurance, government or family constraints, safety and security concerns, and problems with transport. The lack of residency is likely a continued barrier as 86% of the population over 12 years old in Arbat and 22% in Gawlian reported no household residency in December. Possession of residency for Syrian refugees in the KRI is not necessary to access public services but is vital for their freedom of movement, legal rights and livelihoods. A lack of residency card inhibits refugees' movement through most controlled entry points, particularly into cities, and denies the right to legal solutions for civil disputes. With regards to employment, residency is often required for official contracts with larger organizations or NGOs.

Refugees intending to leave camps

Of the very small percentage of households intending to leave camps across the KRI, these households typically had between five and six members, which reflects the average household size of five members amongst Syrian refugee families in camps. In December 2014, many of the households intending to leave the camp included members with specific vulnerabilities which raise serious protection concerns. **10% of refugee households who were intending to leave the camp across the KRI were female-headed**, most of which were single or widowed. Most female headed households intending to leave reported wanting to be closer to friends and family, followed by concerns for cost of living and weather conditions. None reported safety concerns in the camp as a reason for wanting to leave. It was reported that **just over half of households intending to leave, across the KRI, had at least one child under 5 years old**, meanwhile, **a large minority included a pregnant or lactating woman**. Moreover, **a small minority of households now intending to leave had a member with a disability**, with a similar proportion known to be suffering from a medical condition; mostly from heart disease, followed by a number suffering from high blood pressure.

The characteristic livelihoods of households planning to leave had not shifted between June and December; **households intending to leave mostly reported unskilled agricultural labour as their primary source of income** in the camp, with the second most common source skilled waged labour. **Households intending to leave remain economically vulnerable**. FGDs highlighted that all households intending to leave their camp would subsequently continue to need support, such as food assistance, financial support and career support. 3% of those households that reported no livelihood at all intend to leave their camp, and a slight majority of households intending to leave the camp reported a daily salary arrangement. Overall almost half of households intending to leave in December were in debt, and the majority were facing problems gaining employment with little variation across the camps – particularly in Darashakran. All households reported spending savings in order to supplement their income. Although in December the average monthly income of households intending to leave was 457,947 IQD (389 USD), a small proportion even reported earning no money in the month leading up to the assessment. The average income was marginally larger than that of the general Syrian camp population across the KRI, found to amount to at 424,790 IQD (361 USD), in the MSNA in December.

Amongst the small percentage of households planning to leave in December, **access to better services was the most cited reason for leaving across the KRI**. Indeed, the June assessment found that households in every camp reported intending to leave due to poor water and sanitation services, and FGDs raised the need for better access to electricity (risks of fires were common), schools and health services. Between June and December 2014, there was a shift in prioritisation from joining friends and relatives, to a focus on gaining employment. In December particularly large proportions in Arbat Permanent and Domiz II cited the cost of living as reasons for leaving. It should also be noted that access to better shelter was cited by 23% of respondents

Figure 5: Reasons for leaving



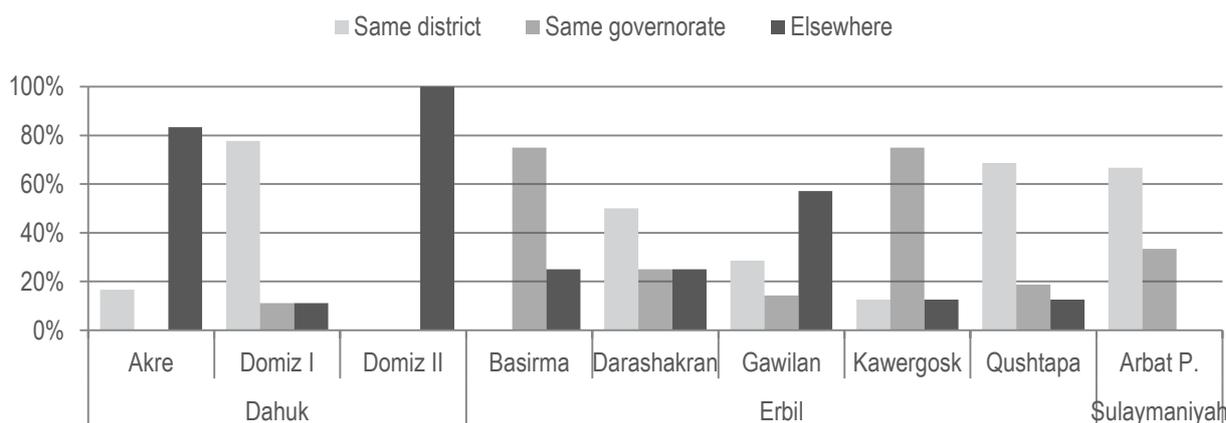
and transport by 8% in the earlier assessment – these variables were not included in the MSNA.

There was a slight variation in reported motivations for leaving the camp between men and women. Across the KRI, female FGDs pointed towards hardships of life in the camp and the lack of welfare or education for their children, as well as the desire to be closer to family and friends. Women had also raised concerns about climates being difficult for children. In turn, men consistently spoke of the need to find job opportunities with better salaries. Importantly, FGDs did not raise a **conflict of interest between women and men**. According to the first round of data collection only 5% of households intending to leave across the KRI had female decision-makers (more than half of which were female-headed households).²⁷ Of the households currently living in camps across the KRI 6% are female headed, but 10% of those intending to leave are female headed. The remaining households were evenly split between joint and male decision-makers.

Of the small percentage of households intending to move, the majority intended to move as a family unit, indicating that movement is more difficult and costly, likely planned to be permanent. With few willing to leave their families for reasons other than marriage or livelihoods necessity, it is perhaps unsurprising that by June only **2% of households across the KRI reported that a member had already left the camp**.

Households intending to leave their camp largely plan to stay within the KRI. The December assessment found that a much larger proportion of households living in camps in Dahuk in comparison to the other governorates intended to move away from their current governorate of residence elsewhere, including from the KRI. Meanwhile the majority of households intending to leave Domiz I, Darashakran, Qushtapa and Arbat Permanent were intending to move within the same district, in part to retain their residency and registration status with the camp. Within these areas, generally the first round of data collection found that most of households intended to move to host communities, not other camps. Indeed, almost all of the members reported to have already left their households in June had moved to host communities. Comparatively, all households that intended to leave Arbat Transit, and the majority in Qushtapa, Basirma and Akre, intended to move to another camp. In the case of Arbat Transit movement was from the transit site to the new permanent site; since July, families have now been relocated from the former to the latter. However, only Gawilan camp was accepting new arrivals at the time of writing.

Figure 6: Intended destination upon leaving current camp, December 2014²⁸



With regards to households intending to leave the KRI, FGDs in June revealed that the relatively large proportions of households who intended to leave the KRI for another destination were often referring to European countries. Moving

²⁷The question on the sex of the decision-maker was not included in the December survey.

²⁸ The option to move to another governorate was a wider proxy, also accounting for locations outside the KRI or Iraq.

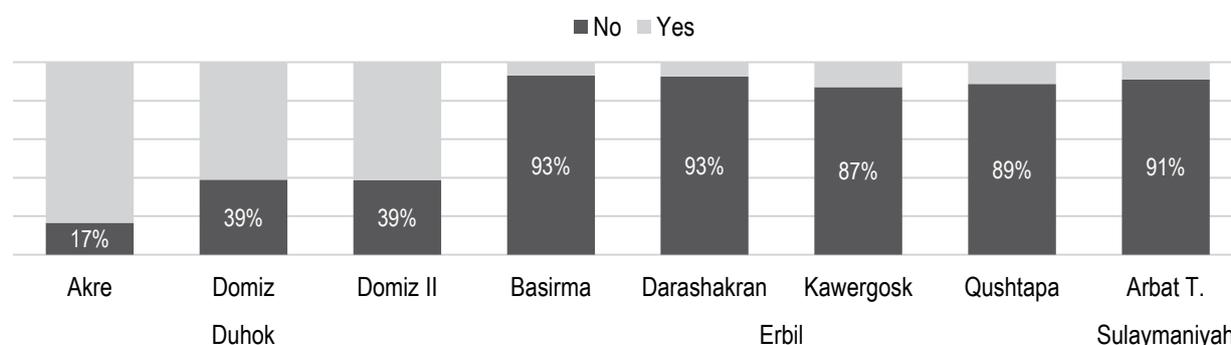
to Europe was often described as the ideal destination due to perceived freedom of human rights and higher standard of living, however travel is costly and difficult and illegal routes are often unsafe. In turn returning to their area of origin in Syria was considered dangerous or impossible. By June only a handful of households in June had already left the camp for Syria (from Akre and Domiz).

Figure 7: Households reporting intending to return to area of origin



In December, 8% of refugee households living in camps across the KRI intended to return to their area of origin in Syria. This question was not conditional on the earlier discussion on plans to leave the camp overall. The purpose of this was to avoid interviewees interpreting an encouragement to return to their area of origin, and also to encompass an understanding of broader willingness to return in the future. The results therefore differ from the 3% intending to move from camps which targeted more tangible plans. When disaggregated by plans to move from the camps, 26% of those who had responded that they intend to move from the camp also reported that they intend to return to their area of origin – this amounts to roughly only 1% of the entire refugee population living in camps.

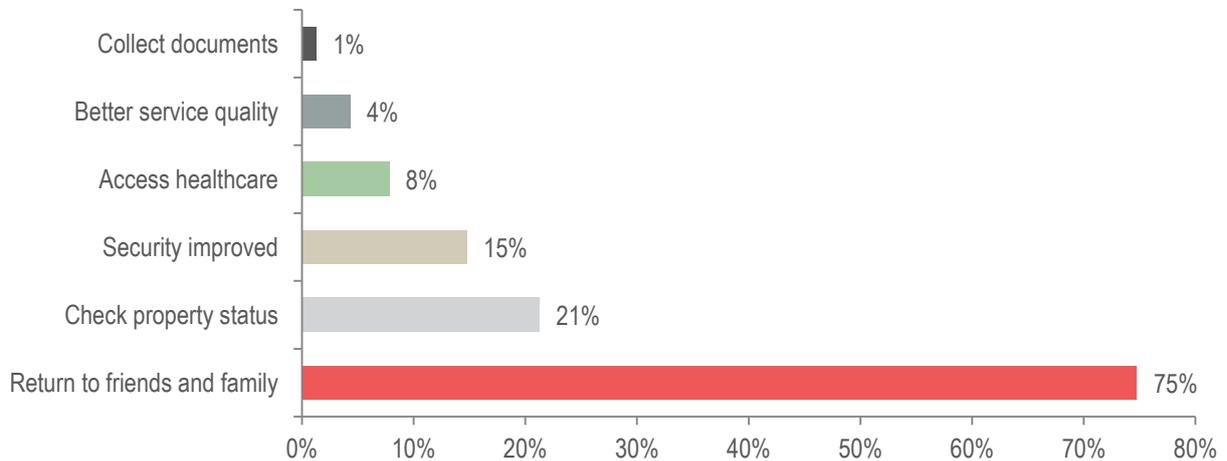
Figure 8: Families reporting to have immediate family left behind in Syria, June 2014



The predominant reason for wanting to return to Syria was to join friends and relatives. Indeed, the first round of data collection found that a fair proportion of households in Dahuk still had family members left behind in Syria, particularly in Dahuk. Other key reasons cited for moving back to Syria included checking property status, featuring some variation between camps with the largest proportion in Gawilan and least in Kawergosk, and access to healthcare. Households in Arbat Permanent especially cited employment opportunities as a primary reason. FGDs in June explained that Syria was not a common destination due to the persisting insecurity and level of destruction in many areas of origin. However, by December relatively few of the households planning to move back to their area of origin reported an improvement in security as encouraging them to return. This indicates that many of those leaving the KRI for Syria are doing so due to a perceived relative deterioration in the ability for Syrian refugees to meet their basic needs in the KRI rather than a normalisation in their area of origin. The fact that many households intending to leave included vulnerable members as discussed above,

indicates that intentions to move are often not a proactive reflection of improved circumstances in protection terms but a reactive response in search of better conditions.

Figure 9: Reported reasons for intending to return to Syria, December 2014²⁹



Since June there has been a slight increase in urgency to leave the camp. The household-level survey in **June** showed that of those Syrian refugee families intending to leave camps across the KRI, 39% intended to leave in less than one month, with variations between camps. **By December, 55% of respondents were planning to leave the camp in less than one month.**

²⁹ Refugees were allowed to give multiple answers to this question

CONCLUSION

Since the massive influx of Syrian refugees arriving into the KRI after August 2013 vital services have now been established across nine camps and settlements. Although basic assistance across the KRI still needed much improvement, by June 2014 the crisis had stabilised somewhat. In an effort to inform better planning of a more sustainable response, it is important to understand any intended movements by refugees across the region, as this, together with the absorption capacity of host communities across the KRI, will affect the longevity of the camps and settlements. However, since June 2014, and particularly during August, the KRI has also been host to a rapid wave of Iraqi IDPs escaping escalating violence in Northern and Central parts of the country. The growing number of households in need of humanitarian assistance has also been compounded by the arrival of many Syrian refugees fleeing fighting in Kobane. With the Iraq refugee and IDP responses underfunded by 64% and 66% respectively,³⁰ both these populations are competing for jobs, accommodation and humanitarian assistance. As the humanitarian landscape in December was very different from that in June, it is necessary to understand if the intentions of Syrian refugees in camps have altered.

Overall, **almost all households (93%) across the KRI do not intend to leave the camp for the foreseeable future.** Indeed, in June 2014 only 2% of households across the KRI reported that a family member had already left the camp – of those who did, most had moved to host communities. **Most households perceive life outside the camp to be even harsher than life in the camp**, and therefore prefer to stay in the camp with guaranteed access to basic services. **Lack of sufficient or stable livelihoods is a key factor inhibiting movement**, in particular for the 19% of households who are staying in the camp but wish to leave should they be able to. The average monthly household income across camps in the KRI in December was 424,790 IQD (361 USD), while the average monthly expenditure of households intending to leave was 386,776 IQD (328 USD) – indicating that they have been unable to save much for travel or future rent whilst in the camp. With 69% of households living in camps across the KRI reliant on a daily income salary arrangement, the main livelihoods of most families remain vulnerable. Indeed, the MSNA found that 58% of refugees in camps are already in debt, with 30% of reporting not having received any salary within the month previous to the assessment. 14% of households in the camps are still not able to meet their basic needs. For the most part there is no guarantee of a job in the congested host communities or outside the KRI, and additional costs outside the camp such as expensive rents and fuel for transport, coupled with lack of food assistance, ensure that most families cannot afford to live outside a camp.

Another major consideration for households not planning to leave is the importance of maintaining the family unit. Most households arrived with all members together, and should they leave they would want to do so as a unit. However, most cannot afford to move their entire family. Moreover, many households discussed reluctance to uproot their family again, face language barriers and search for limited availability of education for their children.

Refugees reported in focus group discussions that the majority of households would prefer to be able to live outside camps. In order for this to be a possibility, there is a need to address barriers to the labour market, such as lack of residency privileges and inability to complete education as a refugee. Other reported issues, such as cultural and language barriers, should be tackled, together with the promotion of integration with the host community. Legal advice to obtain civil documentation could also be extended. Economically vulnerable households – including those with no income, large number of members (especially with minors and elderly), and single heads of households or female heads of households – could receive livelihoods assistance such as vocational training, small and medium enterprise schemes, and assistance to pursue livelihoods outside camps. Support for the development of economic

³⁰ UNHCR Syria Refugee Regional Response Information Portal, Iraq, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=103>, last accessed on 21 January 2015; OCHA, Iraq Crisis Situation Report, no.26.

activity in and around camps will be vital to create sustainable livelihoods for refugees living in camps across the KRI, which would give them increased financial security and the means to move elsewhere or return to Syria.

Of the 3% of households that were intending to leave their camp, most were planning to move in less than a month to proximate areas, either within the same district or governorate within the KRI. **The overwhelming driver for movement to another destination in the KRI was to seek employment opportunities.** Notably **there was a slight increase in the percentage of households reporting an intention to move back to Syria**, with 8% in December. Only a minority of refugee households living in camps reported that they intended to move back to Syria due to an improvement of security in their area of origin. This indicates that many of those leaving are doing so due to a perceived relative deterioration in the situation for Syrian refugees in the KRI rather than a normalisation in their area of origin. They also cited looking for better employment opportunities as a reason to move, but overwhelmingly reported that they intended to join friends and family. The fact that many households intending to leave included vulnerable members, coupled with economic insecurity, indicates that intentions to move are often not a proactive reflection of improved circumstances but a reactive response in search of better conditions. Families moving elsewhere in the KRI need to be monitored in order to ensure that they continue to receive necessary assistance.

To conclude, the current situation of relatively static movement for Syrian refugees living in camps in the KRI is likely to continue into the foreseeable future, as the main drivers of displacement in Syria remain and inhibit return, but life outside camps in the KRI or elsewhere is perceived by refugees to be too challenging. Considering the relatively recent displacement of most arrivals to camps between August 2013 and June 2014, many refugees in camps remain heavily reliant on assistance, while stringent rules on residency permits continue to limit freedom of movement. In addition, at the time of assessment in June, few households were expecting family members either in Syria or elsewhere in the KRI to join their household in camp within the next six months. The possibility of such arrivals has been further diminished due to the increasing border restrictions into the KRI since the last quarter of 2014. Unless there are new shocks in Syria the rate of new arrivals into the KRI is likely to remain stable.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Indicators List, June 2014

REACH Initiative	
Indicators Intentions Survey - Camp Refugees KRI	
Type	
General	# of people in HH
	# of families in HH
	% of individuals by age group and gender
	% of individuals with a HH member with a disability - by type of disability
	% of respondents registered with UNHCR
	% of respondents <u>not</u> registered with UNHCR - by knowledge on how to register with UNHCR and willingness to register
	% of respondents by residency status in the KRI
	% of HH by time of arrival of first HH member in the camp by month
	% of HH by time of arrival of last HH member in the camp by month
	% of HH having moved from the host communities to the camp - by reason and Governorate/district
	% of HH having moved from another camp in the KRI to the camp - by reason and camp
	Skills Profile & Livelihoods
% of HH by top 3 type of income in place of origin	
% of HH by top 3 main source of income	
Area of Origin	% of HH by area of origin in Syria
	% of HH with immediate family left behind in Syria
	% of HH that are still in regular contact with family left behind in Syria
	Average number of HH members left behind in Syria - per HH
	% of HH with immediate family left behind in Syria that intend to join the HH in the camp in the next 1-6 months
	% of HH with immediate family left behind in Syria that do <u>not</u> intend to join the HH in the camp in the next 1-6 months - by reason preventing them from joining
	% of HH by main factor to have family join HH in the camp
	% of HH with family in the host communities of the KRI - by Governorate and number of HH members
	% of HH with family in the host communities of the KRI that intend to join the HH in the camp
	% of HH with family in the host communities of the KRI that do <u>not</u> intend to join the HH in the camp - by reason
	% of HH with immediate family left behind in Syria that intend to come to the KRI in the next 1-6 months (Iraq or other camp than HH)
	% of HH with family in other camps in the KRI - by camp and number
	% of HH with family in other camps in the KRI that intend to join the HH in the camp
	% of HH with family in other camps in the KRI that do <u>not</u> intend to join the HH in the camp - by reason preventing them from joining
	% of HH that had family residing with them in the camp that left - by reason and location
	% of HH that have immediate family residing in Iraq (non-KRI)
	Intentions
% of HH that intend to leave the camp - by location (district in Governorate / sector in camp), reason and time	
% of HH that do <u>not</u> intend to move to the host community - by reason	
% of HH that intend to move outside the KRI (in Iraq) - by district in Governorate, reason and time	

	% of HH that intend to move multiple times - by number of movements
	% of HH that intend to move - by decision maker
	% of HH that wish to move yet cannot - by location and reason for not being able to move
	% of HH by means of supporting themselves if they were to leave the camp
	% of HH by desired improvement of their sector in the camp
	% of HH by rating of the quality of services of their sector of the camp
	% of HH by rating of the quality of services in the camp

Annex II: Intentions-related Indicators List, December 2015

REACH Initiative	
Indicators Intentions Survey - Camp Refugees KRI	
Type	
Intentions	% of HH intending to move - by reason(s) why
	% of HH intending to move by destination
	% of HH with intention to return to AoO
	% of HH intending to move by time of planned move

Annex III: Household-Level Questionnaire, June 2014

A GENERAL						
A.1	Location?	Camp Name				
	Respondent's Gender					
	Head of Household Gender					
A.2	Are any of your family members registered with UNHCR?	All	None	Some		
	If no, please specify why	I do not know what UNHCR is				
		I know what UNHCR is but I could not/did not register				
A.2.1	Does your family have information on how to register with UNHCR?					
A.2.2	If your family does not have this information, please specify why:					
	We do not know how to find this information	We requested the information but never received it				
	We received the information but it is not in a language we understand	We are not interested				
A.2.3	If requested, but not received, please specify who you requested it from:					
	Humanitarian Organization	Government Authority	UNHCR		Other	
A.3	How many people live in your household?					
A.4	Do you have a family member with disabilities?					
A.5	How many of the residents have the following disabilities?	Auditory	Physical			
		Visual	Mental			
B ARRIVAL						
B.1	When did the first member of your household come to this camp (month)?					
B.2	When did the last member of your household come to this camp (month)?					
B.3	Did you come to this camp from another camp / part of the KRI? (not Syria)					
		Yes:	Where?			
			Why?			
	Pressure from government authorities	Security concerns/Safety				
	Joining friends/relatives	Lack of access to health				
	Lack of livelihoods opportunities	Lack of access to education				
	Other (specify)					
B.4	Which camp did you come from?					
B.5	If non-camp, which Governorate did you come from?	Governorate	District			
B.6	What is the highest level of education in your household?	No Education			Primary School	
		Secondary School			High School	
		Institute			University	
C LIVELIHOODS PROFILE						
C.1	How did your family earn a living in your place of origin in Syria? (provide only top 3 sources)					
	Agricultural production (crop/livestock)	Informal trade				
	Agricultural waged labour	Sale of household assets				
	Formal trade	Shop owner				
	Unskilled non agricultural daily labour	Savings				
	Skilled daily labour	Cash from charities				
	Begging	Sale of non-food assistance				
	Gifts from family/relatives	Teacher/public servant				
	Remittances	Loans				

	Unemployed/inactive	Other (specify)	
C.2	What is your primary source of income in the camp? (provide only top 3 sources)		
	See C.1. options above.		
D	AREA OF ORIGIN		
D.1	In which Syrian Governorate did your household reside prior to displacement?		
D.1.2	In which Syrian district did your household reside prior to displacement?		
D.1.3	In which Syrian sub-district did your household reside prior to displacement?		
D.2	Do you have immediate family left behind in Syria?	Yes:	How many?
			Expected them to join 1-6 months?
			When?
		No:	What is preventing them from joining?
	Security concerns/Safety en route	Not enough resources for the trip	
	They don't want to live in a camp	They don't know where we are	
	Elderly (unable to make the trip)	Children under 18 unable to make the trip	
	Other (specify)		
		What factors would trigger them to join?	
	Escalation of Conflict (national)	Loss of Income	
	Escalation of Conflict (district)	Less access to basic services	
	Escalation of Conflict (governorate)	Improved internal mobility	
	Loss of assets	Other (specify)	
D.3	Do you have any immediate family members living in other parts of Iraq?		
		Yes:	Where?
	Non-camp/host community KRI	Another camp in KRI	Iraq, outside KRI
		If camp:	Which camp?
			How many?
			Expected them to join?
			What is preventing them?
			See D.2 . options above.
D.4	Do you have any family members who left the camp?	Yes:	How many?
			Where to?
			Why did they move?
	Pressure from government authorities	Security concerns/Safety	
	Joining friends/relatives	Lack of access to health	
	Lack of livelihoods opportunities	Lack of access to education	
	Other (specify)		
E	INTENTIONS		
E.1	Does your household intend to move within the camp?	If no, why?	
	Because I'm not allowed	Stay close to friends and relatives	
	Better access to WASH facilities	Better access to health	
	Better access to transport	Better access to drinking water	
	Economic activity/opportunity	Better access to schools	
	Better access to electricity	Better shelter/accommodation	
	Other (specify)		
		Yes:	Which sector?

Intentions Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Camps - Kurdistan Region of Iraq, March 2015

			When move?
			Why?
			See E.1 options above
E.2	Does your household intend to leave the camp?	Yes:	Where?
			Why?
			See E.1 options above
			When?
			How would you support yourself?
	Formal Trade		Agricultural waged labour
	Unskilled non-agricultural daily labour		Skilled daily labour
	Informal trade		Sale of household assets
	Remittances		Loans
	Cash from charities		Gifts from family/relatives
	Sale of non-food assistance		Sale of food assistance
	Savings		Other (specify)
			If no, do you wish to move but cannot?
			Why unable?
	Safety concerns/Safety		Not enough resources for the move
	Problems with transport		Not registered with UNHCR
	Government/authority constraints		Cannot bring a member of the family
	No residency		No insurance
	Other (specify)		
			Gender of decision-maker?
E.3	How would you rate the quality of services available in your area? (Out of 10: 1 for poor and 10 for excellent)		
E.3.2	How would you rate the quality of services available in the whole camp? (Out of 10: 1 for poor and 10 for excellent)		

Annex IV: Focus Group Discussion Questionnaire, June 2014

REACH Initiative FGDSS Questionnaire

1.
 - a. Have you ever thought about leaving the camp? If so, why? Please name 3 reasons
 - b. Would you leave the camp permanently or temporarily?
 - c. Where would you want to move to?

2.
 - a. Do you think men and women have different reasons to want to move? If so, how?
 - b. Do you think children if would have different reasons to want to move? If so, how?
 - c. Do you think many people in the camp want to move?
 - d. Do you think they mostly want to move to the camp, to the host community, another place in Iraq, somewhere else? Why? Please explain.

3.
 - a. How do you think you would support yourself if you were to leave the camp?
 - b. Would you need assistance to support yourself, if so please explain what kind of assistance would you need and from whom?