

30 June 2015

IRAQ

IDPs caught between a rock and a hard place as displacement crisis deepens

As of June 2015, at least 3.1 million people had been displaced by conflict in Iraq since January 2014 and 8.2 million were in need of humanitarian assistance. As in previous conflicts, civilians have been directly targeted by all warring parties and continue to constitute the majority of casualties.

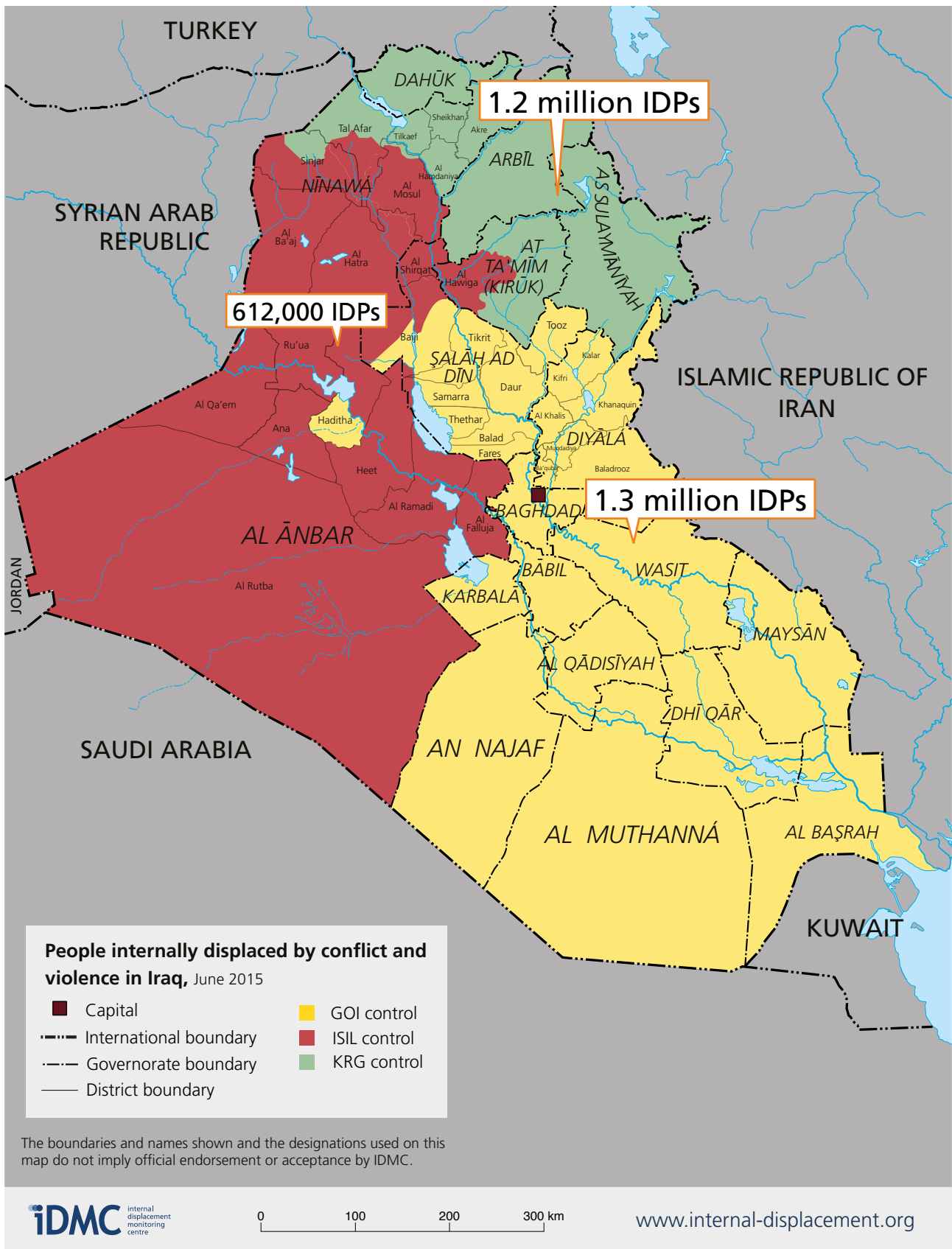
Violence against civilians has driven three million people into internal displacement in just eighteen months. In 2014 alone, Iraq suffered the highest new internal displacement worldwide, with at least 2.2 million displaced. This has exacerbated the destructive legacy of some 35 years of conflict and international sanctions which have left infrastructure in disarray and about one million living in protracted displacement, mostly in Baghdad.

The ability of displaced people to access safe areas of refuge has been dramatically restricted by the fragmentation of society along sectarian lines and security threats linked to terrorism and counter-insurgency. The Kurdish-controlled north including Kirkuk city, hosts more than a third of Iraq's internally displaced persons (IDPs) – some 1.2 million as of June 2015, including minority groups. Some 611,700 Sunni Arabs displaced from areas under the control of the Islamic State (ISIL) now find themselves with few safe locations to flee to. Sunnis from areas controlled by ISIL have increasingly been denied the possibility of fleeing to areas controlled by the Government of Iraq (GoI) or by the peshmerga (the militia forces in Iraqi Kurdistan), thus having no choice except to return to areas controlled by ISIL. This has further cemented the division of Iraq into, Kurdish, Sunni and Shia entities.

Humanitarian access to areas beyond government or Kurdish control remains limited with IDPs in these areas being extremely hard-to-reach. In areas accessible to humanitarian organisations, assistance has been complicated by lack of documentation, and administrative challenges. Funding shortages resulting from lower oil revenues have seriously limited the capacity of the national authorities to respond. Other Middle Eastern crises (notably in Syria and Yemen) and donor fatigue have diminished prospects of sufficient international assistance to meet IDPs' humanitarian needs.



Internally displaced Iraqis after their arrival from Mosul at Khazair checkpoint, where they seek permission to travel on to Erbil. UNHCR is carrying out needs assessments. UNHCR / R. Nuri



Map by: IDMC

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org/search?Type=Map

Background to displacement

National and international agencies working with IDPs in Iraq, such as the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoDm), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), divide internal displacement into three periods: the current displacement crisis which started in 2014, the protracted displacement situation which arose as a result of the sectarian conflict from 2006 to 2008 and previous protracted conflict-induced displacement mainly related to the policies of the government of Saddam Hussein.

The fragmentation of the Iraqi state can be traced back to Saddam Hussein's rule, which purged any significant non-Ba'athist groups and leaders. This has led to the fragmentation of the state that was further exacerbated by the de-Ba'athification process and decentralisation implemented by the US government following its invasion of Iraq in 2003 ([Harling](#), 2007). The absence of a central government weakened national state institutions, including the army, helping spawn a proliferation of militias.

The most recent wave of displacement began in early 2014 with the rise of ISIL alongside other Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs). They expanded their control over Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Diyala, in the aftermath of the Sunni insurgency in 2013 ([PBS](#), 28 October 2014). The swift successes of ISIL came against a backdrop of years of political marginalisation of Sunnis ([Benraad](#), 2012).

Sunni grievances had been simmering since the March 2010 elections when Ayad Allawi, who was perceived as the conciliatory candidate, was sidelined in favour of Nouri al-Maliki ([New York Times](#), March 2010). Following the elections, Maliki's government issued several arrest warrants for the most prominent Sunni political leaders, most notably the former Vice President Tareq Hashimi ([BBC](#), December 2011). The government also failed to implement plans to integrate Sunni men into the national Iraqi armed forces ([ICG](#), August 2013). When the body-

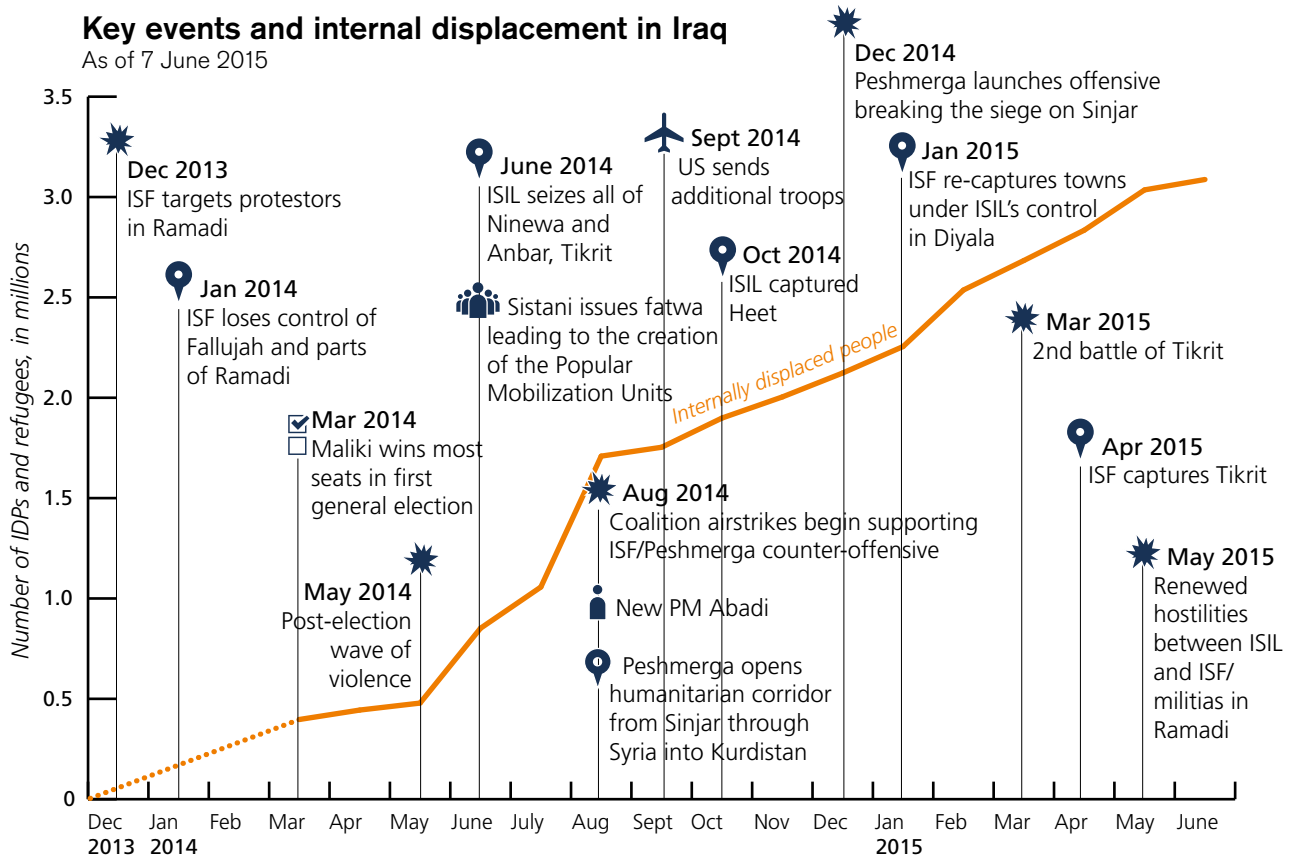
guards of the Sunni Minister Rafi Al Issayi were arrested in December 2012, demonstrations broke out in Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Kirkuk and Baghdad. The protests brought together a range of religious figures, tribal leaders and political organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, former Ba'athists and Salafists. Protests were met with violent assaults by government security forces, notably in Hawija in April 2013 and Ramadi in December 2013 when Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) opened fire on protestors ([ISW](#), October 2014).

The Sunni insurgency and the power vacuum left by ISF's collapse has enabled ISIL to expand rapidly ([ICG](#), March 2015). As of June 2015, ISIL controlled most Sunni Arab areas including Mosul, Shirqat, Hawija and all of Anbar province with the exception of Khalidiya, Habbaniya and Haditha ([ISW](#) 22 June 2015). As of mid-2015, the government exerts full control over the capital, Baghdad and the southern provinces in addition to several cities in the central governorates of Salah al-Din and Diyala. However, ISF's control relies heavily on several Shiite militia groups, which operate autonomously in certain areas. In 2014, the Kurdish authorities expanded their control outwards from the autonomous area of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) administered by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) to seize control of Kirkuk and Ninewa ([US Department of Defense](#), April 2015).

Displacement figures

IDMC estimates that at least 4 million Iraqis were internally displaced as of 15 June 2015, a tenth of all worldwide displacement reported by IDMC as of the end of 2014 ([IDMC](#), May 2015). In 2014 alone, Iraq suffered the highest new internal displacement worldwide with at least 2.2 million displaced. Additionally over 180,000 Iraqi refugees had sought refuge abroad as of 4 June 2015 ([UNHCR](#), 4 June 2015).

IDMC bases this figure on estimates published by IOM and the UN – including the UN Office for



the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNHCR, and the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) – as well as data published by national and local authorities.

IDMC's estimate combines IDP caseloads from two periods of displacement: three million IDPs displaced from January 2014 to May 2015 and 1.1 million IDPs still living in displacement following the 2006-2008 sectarian conflict.

Current monitoring mechanisms do not differentiate protracted displacement from new displacement and therefore the current figure might include double counting.

During the current displacement crisis which began in January 2014, three main waves of new displacement have affected all Iraqi governorates:

- January 2014 to May 2014 480,000 individuals were displaced following violent clashes between ISF and Sunni militant groups in Anbar.
- June 2014 to August 2014 total number of IDPs 1.2 million of which 833,800 individuals fled their homes in the north-eastern province of Ninewa.
- From September 2014 to June 2015, 1,378,200 IDPs were displaced. (IOM, June 2015)

According to [IOM Returnees Tracking Overview](#), as of June 2015, over 180,384 IDPs had returned to the governorates of Diyala, Ninewa, Salah Al-Din and Anbar. IDMC subtracts these returns from the overall total IDP figure, although it remains to be determined whether the returnees have achieved durable solutions.

Limits of data collection

The main means of tracking displacement is

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and registration figures provided by the Kurdish authorities and the MoDm. In coordination with the MoDm and a wide range of stakeholders, DTM supports the United Nations Country Team's (UNCT) efforts to track displacement. It provides up-to-date disaggregated data on population movements, as well as baseline information on displaced populations and conditions in the areas in which they have temporarily settled and returned.

Despite DTM's long-standing presence in Iraq, and a strong relationship with local communities, the actual number and location of IDPs is difficult to track. IDP figures are often revised due to the volatility of the security situation, fluidity of population movements and frequent access restrictions. ([IOM](#), June 2015).

Poor internet and telephony connections combined with movement restrictions often prevent rapid assessment response team members from verifying information with key informants. The frustration of local communities with the failure of humanitarian assistance to meet their needs has also hindered their willingness to participate in information collection ([IOM](#), DTM, 2015).

Causes of displacement

Displacement in Iraq has been driven historically by a combination of internal armed conflict, generalised violence, and persecution on the basis of political affiliation, ethnic or religious background.

Conflict and generalised violence

Since the start of the new wave of conflict in January 2014 clashes between NSAGs, the ISF and affiliated forces have resulted in the displacement of at least 1.2 million people in central and northern Iraq including 560,000 from Anbar alone. In April 2014, ISIL took control of a dam five kilometres from Fallujah city, diverting irrigation water and causing severe flooding which displaced over 7,000 families ([IOM](#), May 2014).

Military retaliation, movement restrictions and the targeting of civilians by ISF, Shiite militias and peshmerga combatants have also triggered displacement. Pro-government militias fighting alongside the Iraqi security forces engaged in the deliberate destruction of civilian property in Salah al-Din province around the northern town of Amerli. Forty-seven predominantly Sunni villages were totally demolished as peshmerga and Kurdish civilians destroyed dozens of Arab homes in the areas ([HRW](#), March 2015).

Ethnic, religious and political violence/persecution

The seizure of Mosul by ISIL at the beginning of June 2014 marked the start of the second major wave of displacement in Iraq. As ISIL expanded control over Ninewa and Diyala, at least 900,000 people fled their homes in search of safety in June, July and August 2014. Adherents of the various Christian denominations fled the city in panic and up to 500,000 people left Mosul in the days following its capture ([NYT](#), July 2014). ISIL then went on to occupy the towns of Tilkaif, Bashiqa, Bartella and Qaraqosh east of Mosul in the Ninewa Plains, displacing around 200,000 Christians and members of other minority groups ([REACH](#), August 2014).

In the first week of August 2014, hostilities between the peshmerga and ISIL in Sinjar, a district in Iraq's Ninewa Governorate near the Syrian border, displaced tens of thousands of people. Most of these IDPs are Yazidis, a syncretic ancient religious community whose members are widely dispersed across the region and the globe but only present in significant concentrations in Sinjar. Shiite Turkmen who had sought refuge in Sinjar when ISIL assumed control over Tal Afar were displaced a second time when ISIL took control of Sinjar. On 3 August 2014, the arrival of ISIL in Sinjar city and surrounding villages resulted in the displacement of 200,000 Yazidis.

ISIL has targeted non-Muslim Iraqi minorities, Shiites and fellow Sunnis who contest their doctrinal authority. Certain Sunni Arab tribes have also been targeted by ISIL because their leaders refused to

pledge allegiance ([The Guardian](#), October 2014). On 10 June 2014, 1,000 Turkmen – members of the third largest (predominantly Sunni) ethnic group in Iraq – fled Tal Afar to the southern governorate of Karbala. Shiite Turkmen were targeted in Tal Afar. Sunni Turkmen have also faced violent reprisals. By the end of June, 90 per cent of Tal Afar’s population had fled the city ([HRW](#), June 2014).

Displacement trends and patterns

Fighting in Iraq has effectively divided the territory into three distinct entities. As of June 2015, an estimated 1.3 million IDPs, or 42 per cent of the country’s internally displaced population since January 2014, lived in areas under ISF and affiliated forces’ control. The Kurdish region hosted an estimated 1.2 million displaced people – close to 38 per cent of Iraq’s displaced population. It is estimated that around 611,700 IDPs live in areas controlled by ISIL – close to 20 per cent of the total number of IDPs since January 2014.

Government of Iraq-controlled areas

As of June 2015, Baghdad hosted over 511,700 IDPs, the largest number of IDPs in areas under Gol control. The governorates of Najaf and Karbala had 84,900 and 73,500 respectively and Babylon had 58,300. In Baghdad 62 per cent of IDPs are displaced from Anbar ([IOM](#), June 2015).

Baghdad attracts a large number of IDPs due to its proximity to conflict areas and a lower cost of living compared to the Kurdish region. Since the 2014 conflict, most IDPs fleeing to Baghdad have been Sunni Arabs escaping Anbar following heavy clashes between ISIL and ISF ([IOM](#), September 2014). Some IDPs have also used Baghdad as a transit point, going either northward to the KRI or southern Iraq.

Many IDPs have also sought refuge in the southern governorates. Ninety four per cent of IDPs in Najaf and 89 per cent in Karbala are originally from Ninewa ([IOM](#), June 2015). As ISIL expanded

its presence into the Ninewa Plains families who had earlier sought refuge among other minorities, suffered secondary displacement, this time fleeing to predominantly Shiite government strongholds ([Al Araaby](#), April 2015). The offensive on Ramadi in May 2015 was accompanied by a wave of insecurity in the capital, where some IDPs have been forced to flee Baghdad where they had initially taken refuge, after being threatened by militias ([IRIN](#), May 2015).

Kurdish Region of Iraq

KRI which already hosts over 225,000 Syrian refugees and IDPs from 2006-2008, held 38 per cent of the displaced population in Iraq since 2014. Dohuk hosted 441,300, the largest number of IDPs in KRI, with 99per cent originally from Ninewa. Additionally, Erbil hosted 266,300 IDPs mainly from Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Erbil. Finally, in the north-eastern governorate of Sulaymaniyah there were 29,200 IDPs, mostly from Anbar ([IOM](#), June 2015).

The KRI has historically been a safe haven for minorities. The KRG has been relatively welcoming of minorities, especially since most of them had historical links with the region and did not represent any security or demographic threats. Following the fall of Mosul in June 2014 and ISIL’s advance into Al Hamdaniya and Tilkaif districts in the Ninewa Plains in August 2014, members of various Christian minorities fled to shelters with co-religionists in Erbil and Dohuk ([Al Monitor](#), December 2014).

ISIL-controlled areas

Between October 2014 and January 2015 around 475,000 IDPs were reported to be living in ISIL-controlled areas. The number reached a peak of 611,700 in June 2015 ([IOM](#), June 2015). Despite on-going fighting, ISF military advances and the peshmerga retaking Tikrit, Balad, Baiji, Haditha and Diyala, the number of IDPs living in ISIL-controlled areas has remained largely stable. This is partly due to their inability to access safer areas because of restrictions on their movement imposed by both ISIL and ISF. Additionally, IDPs have returned to ISIL-controlled areas after being directly threatened by

Shiite militias in Gol-controlled areas ([Gulf News](#), 13 June 2015).

As the number of overall IDPs in Iraq has increased, the proportion of IDPs living in ISIL-controlled areas has decreased from 60 per cent in March 2014 to 20 per cent in June 2015. As of June 2015, 89 per cent of the 548,200 IDPs in Anbar governorate were living under ISILs rule. The two cities hosting the highest number of IDPs in Anbar were Fallujah with 235,000 IDPs and Heet with 94,100 IDPs ([IOM](#), June 2015).

The number of IDPs present in Mosul has slowly increased since June 2014, from at least 16,800 to 22,800 ([IOM](#), June 2015). This might be due to the fact that in order to leave the city, residents living in Mosul have been required by ISIL to provide a document issued by higher religious authorities in addition to a sponsor ([Todays Zamaan](#), March 2015). As of June 2015, there were 19,100 IDPs living in Baiji and Al Shirqat, the remaining ISIL strongholds' in Salah al-Din and Kirkuk, with 73,700 IDPs in Hawiga most of whom originally from Salah al-Din, Anbar, Kirkuk and Ninewa governorates ([IOM](#), June 2015).

Protection concerns

Continuing a tragic pattern which has endlessly repeated itself over recent decades, the vast majority of casualties of the current war are civilians. There were over 17,000 civilian deaths in 2014 ([Iraq Body Count](#), 1 January 2015).

In 2014, the UN Security Council passed resolutions 2169 and 2170, expressing grave concern for a steep escalation of attacks, heavy human casualties including children, and displacement of over a million civilians ([UNSCR2169](#), 30 July 2014). ISIL was condemned for "on-going and multiple criminal terrorist acts aimed at causing the deaths of civilians [...] and its continued gross, systematic and widespread abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law ([UNSCR2170](#), 15 August 2014).

It should be noted that none of the many belligerents in this latest conflict have spared civilians. This includes the Iraqi military and militias fighting on behalf of the government.

Access to safety and freedom of movement

The Special Rapporteur (SR) on the Human Rights of IDPs, during his latest visit to Iraq in May 2015, expressed concerns that IDPs were being denied access to safety on the basis of their identity or place of origin ([OHCHR](#), 15 May 2015). There is no clear and consistent policy at national or governorate level requiring authorities to guarantee access to safe locations for IDP fleeing violence. Decisions on whether or not to permit entry are made at the local, rather than the national level. The authorities have raised some legitimate security concerns but the reality is that unlawful access restrictions for IDPs based on their ethnic and religious identity or place of origin have been widespread in territories controlled by KRG, ISIL and the Gol ([UK Home Office](#), 24 December 2014).

Interviews with 1,768 IDP families in the governorates of Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah indicated a decrease in the number of IDPs crossing the Badrika check point on the Ninewa Dohuk border, many citing tighter restrictions of movement as a possible reason ([REACH](#), August 2014).

In April 2015, the Gol restricted entry into Baghdad for IDPs fleeing violence in Anbar, stopping them at the Bzaibiz Bridge, west of Baghdad ([Reuters](#), 20 April 2015). In addition to access restrictions at entry checkpoints, IDPs have also not been allowed to travel freely within their governorate of displacement. Around 150 families currently residing in disputed territory in Mawaa between Dohuk and Ninewa were not allowed to go into Dohuk city but only into Shaykhan ([UK Home Office](#), 24 December 2014). Sunni Arab IDPs in camps in Khanaqin, Diyala were not allowed to go into Khanaqin city or into Kurdish-controlled areas due to 'security concerns' ([Christian Science Monitor](#), August 2014).

Child protection

Restrictions on freedom of movement have led to family separation. For instance, the provincial authorities in Babylon have denied access to Sunni Arab males between the ages of 15 and 50, causing family separation as women and children were allowed access. ([OHCHR](#), 15 May 2015).



At least 50 per cent of IDPs in Iraq are children. IDMC/Sarah Kilani, May 2015

Violence has hit children the hardest, exposing them to abuse including suicide bombing, being sold in markets, killed or buried alive. Children who have fled the conflict are in dire need of help to cope with trauma, inadequate health care, and poor nutrition. However, only 45 per cent of children in camps are attending school and only 30 per cent outside them ([HRP](#), June 2015).

Loss of civil documentation

ISIL's rapid advance in mid-2014 across northern Iraq forced numerous IDPs to flee without any form of identification, including public distribution system cards used to obtain public distribution rations. In some instances, IDPs' identification papers have been confiscated at checkpoints and some displaced minorities have even abandoned them to avoid detection (in [Minority Rights](#), February 2015).

Without these documents IDPs face further restrictions on their movements and are unable to reg-

ister with the MoDm to receive assistance, to find employment or access a wide range of services ([OHCHR](#), 15 May 2015).

Issuance and replacement of civil documentation for IDPs has become a growing challenge. A survey found 44 per cent of all IDP families had one or more members lacking critically important national identity cards (USAID survey in [Minority Rights](#), February 2015). Most IDPs are unable to replace key identity documents without returning to their area of origin ([OCHA](#), 22 August 2014). In an effort to address the issue, the government has opened five governorate level offices tasked with issuing IDPs new identity cards as of February 2015 ([UNHCR](#), 15 February 2015). However, IDPs still faced physical access restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles. For example the Civil Status Directorate for Tal Afar IDPs in al- Najaf does not issue identity cards without a support letter from MoDm. ([UK Home Office](#), 24 December 2014). Lack of logistical support and specialised staff in these centres has been another hurdle complicating the process of replacing identity cards for IDPs.

Inadequate living conditions and shelter

During displacement, IDPs face various challenges accessing their rights to shelter, food and water. The limited number of IDP camps has forced IDPs to occupy unfinished or abandoned private dwellings, public buildings or move to informal settlements where access to basic services has been limited. As of June 2015, only eight per cent of IDPs live in camps ([IOM](#), June 2015). Over time, prolonged displacement has meant many IDPs are unable to afford rent payments. As of March 2015, around 1,300 IDP families in Karbala were under threat of eviction as MoDm stopped covering their rent ([CCCM](#), March 2015).

An additional factor contributing to the precarious situation of IDPs in urban settings is their weak security of tenure. This leaves them at continuous risk of forced eviction. IDPs lack the documentation required to enter into formal tenancy contracts.

A number of women and children have died due to intense heat and dehydration ([Minority Rights](#), February 2015). Water supplies were cut off in some ISIL-occupied areas and many IDPs have been forced to drink contaminated well water. Around 40 Yezidi children were reported to have died due to dehydration and overheating while fleeing ISIL in Sinjar ([UNICEF](#), 5 August 2014).

Women and girls

According to the SR on the Human Rights of IDPs the situation is particularly alarming for internally displaced women and girls. Survivors of gender based violence, including forced marriage and rape by ISIL combatants, have sought temporary shelter in KRG governorates. Many are in desperate need of emergency medical treatment, psychosocial support and counselling. However, authorities have not been providing them with sufficient assistance. ([Minority Rights](#) February 2015)

According to the Yezidi Fraternity and Solidarity League, none of the 175 female IDPs interviewed had been registered with official agencies or offered any type of support from the government. Humanitarian and non-governmental organisations have been attempting to address this gap. Additionally, over three quarters of displaced widows have not received a pension and 33 per cent any form of humanitarian assistance ([Minority Rights](#), February 2015).

Durable solutions

The vast majority of IDPs wish to return to their place of origin but are unable to do so. ([IOM](#), April 2015). The sectarian nature of the conflict has prevented many IDPs from returning or making a voluntary and informed choice about their preferred settlement option. Sectarian divisions are further complicated by the lack of national reconciliation and the absence of effective state authorities.

Progress towards solutions for those displaced prior to 2014

The situation of individuals displaced by conflict and violence prior to December 2013 is not actively monitored. Reliable information on Iraq's protracted IDP population is therefore scarce. Current monitoring is complicated by the fact that many such IDPs are thought to have been displaced multiple times including since January 2014.

The government of Iraq has in the past initiated several mechanisms providing restitution, encouraging return and facilitating local integration. The GoI established the Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes (CRRPD) in 2006 to settle property disputes arising from displacement under the rule of Saddam Hussein. However, the CRRPD was not part of a wider transitional justice framework and its achievements were limited ([Peter Van Der Auwevert](#), 2007).

Property restitution only applied to those who were forcibly moved by the Iraqi regime excluding people displaced due to house demolitions, Arabization campaign and Marsh Arabs. In July 2009, the Iraqi Prime Minister's Office launched a Diyala Return and Integration Initiative which sought to establish conditions for the return of over 95,000 displaced Iraqis who had fled due to the violence in 2006-2007 ([Brookings-LSE](#), 24 February 2012). However, the government's efforts were met with scepticism.

The GoI established centres to assist and encourage IDPs to return but according survey in 2009 found 60 per cent had not sought assistance because they had lacked the required documents, could not afford the required fees or feared retribution. Only 30 per cent of those who had applied for a grant had received assistance ([IDMC](#), 2011).

Key obstacles to solutions for those displaced since 2014

Multiple factors limit the option of return for the recently displaced – ongoing conflict, house demoli-

tions, property dispossession, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and generalised fear.

ISIL has looted homes and robbed families as they were fleeing. There have been numerous reports of the sale of possessions of displaced people in markets in Mosul and in Syria, as well as the distribution of their homes to militants and their supporters. ISIL militants reportedly destroyed up to a 100 residential houses after looting the Turkmen town of Chardagli ([Minority Rights](#), October 2014). In ISIL-controlled areas, Christian and Yazidis have been subjected to unlawful seizure, secondary occupation or destruction of their properties ([Iraq Rescue Foundation](#), 29 July 2014).

Additionally, recent reports have documented widespread destruction in Sunni areas that have been retaken by Iraqi security forces and Shiite militias ([NYT](#), 18 March 2015 and [HRW](#), 18 March 2015). Hundreds of buildings were demolished or set on fire in villages near the town of Amerli after the area returned to Gol control. The village of Hufriyya was devastated, with over 95 of the buildings destroyed ([HRW](#), 18 March 2015). Another obstacle faced by returning IDPs is the loss of their proof of property ownership or tenancy agreements. A report in late 2014 the vast majority of IDPs surveyed no longer had housing, land and property documentation ([UNHCR](#), 15 October 2014).

ERW and improved explosive devices (IEDs) are impediments to return in many areas. The town of Taza Kharmatho, South of Kirkuk has been rendered

uninhabitable ([Al-Jazeera](#), 8 October 2014). In Tikrit, special army units as well as local forces are looking for bombs and booby traps planted across the city by retreating ISIL combatants. IEDs have been cleared on a daily basis but locals believe hundreds are still hidden ([The Daily Beast](#), 5 February 2015).

Most of the original population in Tikrit was Sunni. When ISF and Shia militias took over the city many Sunni IDPs refused to return out of fear of sectarian persecution and of retaliation acts from ISF's affiliated forces ([CNN](#), 2 April 2015, and [CNN](#), 7 April 2015).

Response

International response

There are many actors in the current on-going response, a total of 152 organisations including 18 UN agencies, 79 international non-governmental organisations and 54 national organisations as of February 2015 ([HNO](#), 2015 and [OCHA](#), 10 February 2015).

According to the UN and IOM as of June 2015 8.2 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance ([ECHO, June 2015](#)). In August 2014, the UN declared Iraq emergency to be at crisis level 3 (L3), the highest designation on its internal scale. Since the announcement, multiple assessments have been initiated to evaluate and prioritise humanitarian needs. However, as of June 2015, only 26 per cent of the \$1.2 billion appeal covering operations from October 2014 to December 2015 had been funded ([OCHA FTS](#), 2015).



A view of an IDP camp in Erbil, Kurdistan. IDMC/S. Kilani, May 2015

In February 2015, a Fast-Track Priorities for Iraq appealing for \$150 million to support critical humanitarian activities to the end of June was launched. Ninety per cent of requested funds are targeted towards IDPs. On 6 June 2015, the newly appointed Humanitarian Coordinator launched another emergency response appeal ([HRP](#), June 2015). The SR on the Human Rights of IDPs has urged the international community and the Iraqi authorities to help facilitate the search for durable solutions, and support return, local integration and settlement in other parts of the country for those who are unable or unwilling to return ([OHCHR](#), 15 May 2015).

In addition to funding shortages, administrative hurdles further hinder effective response. Competing funding streams for refugees for IDPs, as well as counter-terrorism laws and access concerns, have limited NGOs scope of intervention. Yearly lengthy registration processes on the regional level especially in disputed territories for international non-governmental organisations, and travel bans on some staff of Arab have also limited the international community ability to respond. Consequently, efforts have been focused on Iraqi Kurdistan and more specifically camp populations whereas up to 92 per cent of IDPs live in urban settlements ([IOM](#), June 2015).

Continuing violence and insecurity have greatly impacted the humanitarian community's ability to respond to the needs of those trapped in many parts of northern and central Iraq ([ECHO](#), June 2015). UN agencies and partners have limited access to people in Anbar, Ninewa, Mosul, and Salah al-Din. At least 3.6 million reside in areas under ISIL control and almost half of Iraqis in need live in ISIL-controlled areas ([OCHA](#), October 2014).

UN agencies have started partnering with local organisations in order to circumvent the access problem ([Sorouh Foundation](#), 2015). UN agencies through implementing partners have been able to operate in the periphery of areas under ISIL control. OCHA has set up a Humanitarian Access Unit in or-

der to coordinate and address humanitarian access restrictions.

National response

a. *Gol-controlled*

In July 2014, the Iraqi government established the Supreme Committee for Displaced Persons ([Al Jazeera](#), 12 January 2015). The committee, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Saleh Al-Mutlaq, includes representatives from several Iraqi ministries. It was established to cut through bureaucratic red tape so as to provide quick assistance to IDPs. The ministry established operations centres in the Iraqi Kurdish Region, Kirkuk and other areas. Additionally, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Centre was created in September 2014 to strengthen response coordination within the Gol and between the government, the UN and its partners ([UNAMI](#), 17 December 2014).

After registering with the MoDm each Iraqi family displaced is entitled to a cash grant of one million Iraqi dinars (\$850). In September 2014, the Council of Ministers said that the Gol had distributed around \$36 million to 15 governorates, excluding the KRG, over a period of eight months.

The Iraq Strategic Response Plan launched by the Humanitarian country team in October 2014 accounts for 346 planned projects for 2014-2015 in government-controlled areas with most projects under the protection and health sectors ([SRP](#), 2015). National government interventions are reinforced by local organisations such as the Iraqi Red Crescent, which provides in-kind and protection assistance.

b. *KRI-controlled*

According to the Iraq SRP, the chief number of planned projects is in Dohuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah, accounting for 44 per cent of total number ([SRP](#), 2015). In addition to the SRP, the KRG Ministry of Planning, UN agencies and key stakeholders developed the Immediate Response Plan (IRP) outlining a two-month operational plan from 15 September to 15 November in Iraqi Kurdistan.

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The IRP laid out how to meet the most urgent shelter, food, health, water and sanitation needs of the most vulnerable. The report which covered the period from November 2014 to March 2015 estimated that \$152 million was required to cover IDP's essential food, shelter, education, water and sanitation needs ([KRG and UNAMI](#), December 2014).

The SR on the Human Rights IDP noted in May 2015 that the Iraqi authorities lack the resources and capacity to respond adequately. The GoI lacks the means to cover the massive cost of reconstruction and development. He called on the international community to remain committed to humanitarian assistance and development ([OHCHR](#), 15 May 2015).

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement. For the millions of people worldwide displaced within their own country, IDMC plays a unique role as a global monitor and evidence-based advocate to influence policy and action by governments, UN agencies, donors, international organisations and NGOs.

IDMC was established in 1998 at the request of the Interagency Standing Committee on humanitarian assistance. Since then, IDMC's unique global function has been recognised and reiterated in annual UN General Assembly resolutions.

IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an independent, non-governmental humanitarian organisation.

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