

MoMD RETURN GRANT UPDATE, October 2022

Summary

Since July 2019, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) has disbursed a grant of IQD 1.5 million to registered returnee households (with two family members or more) and IQD 0.75 million (single-member families), known as the return grant. The aim of the returnee grant is to act as a one-time safety net for returnee families. As mentioned in the previous update, the efficacy of the grant has been limited due to the infrequent and low rate of disbursement. In 2021, the disbursements have been distributed in January, September, October, and December.

Meanwhile, in 2022, the disbursements have been distributed in June (6,000 HHs), July (2,400 HHs), September (3,600 HHs) and in October (6,600 HHs) according to the exchange mechanism 1/12 as the budget for 2022 has not yet been approved.

Update on the status of the Return Grant¹ (See previous MoMD grant updates on the link [here](#)):

- **Total amount disbursed so far:** For the fourth batch (June, July, Sep and Oct) in 2022, MoMD distributed 27,947,250,000 IQD to 18,660 HHs, and in 2021 distributed IQD 28,014,750,000 to 18,700 HH. In 2020, MoMD distributed IQD 28,884,000, to 19,324 households. Since 2019, MoMD has disbursed a total of IQD 129,445,500,000 to 86,423 returnee families. See full breakdown of figures in the table below.

Summary breakdown of the disbursement of the return grant per governorate for 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Date of disbursement	No. of Beneficiaries (HH)	Amount disbursed (in IQD)
2019		
25 July 2019	12,000	18,000,000,000
24 September 2019	8,000	12,000,000,000
3 November 2019	9,736	14,599,500,000
Total 2019	29,736	44,599,500,000
2020		
21 January 2020	2,400	3,582,000,000
18 February 2020	2,600	3,869,250,000
18 March 2020	2,600	3,891,000,000
26 April 2020	2,600	3,894,000,000
29 September 2020	2,600	3,883,500,000
12 November 2020	2,600	3,894,750,000
24 December 2020	1,324	1,986,000,000

¹ Information valid as of 6 October 2022. Data Source: MoMD Statistics Unit.

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29 December 2020	2,600	3,883,500,000
Total 2020	19,324	28,884,000,000
2021		
4 January 2021	2,600	3,896,250,000
15 September 2021	6,500	9,741,000,000
7 October 2021	7,000	10,488,750,000
16 December 2021	2,600	3,888,750,000
Total 2021	18,700	28,014,750,000
2022		
14 June 2022	6,000	8,987,250,000
7 July 2022	2,400	3,597,750,000
22 Sep 2022	3,600	5,383,500,000
06 Oct 2022	6,660	9,978,750,000
Total 2022	18,660	27,947,250,000
GRAND TOTAL	86,423	IQD 129,445,500,000

After the four batches launched in 2022, MoMD could match what was spent in 2021 if another batch of grants is distributed by the end of the year.

- No. of targeted families reached:** Since its inception in 2019, 86,423 families have received the grant out of 580,007 families who have returned and registered their return with MoMD as of 14th October 2022. The number of beneficiaries has progressively lessened since the inception of the scheme as shown by the table above, ie 29,736 families in 2019, 19,324 families in 2020, 18,700 families in 2021 and 18,660 families in 2022. According to the MoMD minister, the allocated financial resources to the ministry for the return grant are insufficient to cover the registered returnee families and undermines the efforts to support returnee families to meet initial basic needs in areas of return.
- Disbursement installments:** In 2022, the disbursement was in June, July, September and October based on 1/12 because it is related to forming the government and releasing the budget for 2022.
- Distribution per Governorate:** While Anbar has the highest number of registered HHs followed by Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Baghdad and Kirkuk, Ninewa has the highest number of returnees who have received the return grant (27,041 HH), followed by Anbar (19,088 HH), Salah al-din (12,565 HH), Diyala (12,442 HH) and Baghdad (8,743 HHs). Kirkuk remains the governorate with the lowest number of grant beneficiaries, with 6,544 families receiving the grant so far. Data shared by MoMD indicates that as of 06th Oct 2022, 580,007 HH have registered their return. However, 492,591 applications have been checked by the statistics department, with 87,416 applications yet to be checked. Diyala and Baghdad have the lowest number of pending verifications (and the

highest proportion of returnees who have received the grant), while Anbar and Ninewa have the highest pending applications. Diyala and Baghdad have (0) pending verifications, while Ninewa and Anbar have 31,398 and 47,777 applications respectively. Baghdad and Diyala governorates have 100% registration processing complete while Ninewa and Anbar are at 82% and 80% of verified registrations, respectively. The backlog has been attributed to the registration process challenges and the lack of human resources to process the applications.

- **Rate of disbursement per Governorate:** Baghdad and Diyala have more HHs who have received the grant compared with other governorates who have higher numbers of registered families (see table below). Despite having the highest raw numbers of beneficiaries proportionally, only 16% of the registered returnees in Ninewa and 8% in Anbar have received the grant. In total, for all the six governorates, only 15% of returnee HHs who have registered their return with MoMD have received the grant. While MoMD offices in Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din and Kirkuk registered new returnees since April 2022, the offices in Baghdad and Ninewa have not registered any new households.

The table below shows the number of returnees in each governorate who applied to register their return with MoMD vis-a-vis those who have received the return grant.

Governorate	No. of returnee families registered with MoMD	No. of returnees who have received the return grant	Percentage of those who received the grant
Anbar	239,597	19,088	8%
Ninewa	171,567	27,041	15%
Salah al-Din	88,031	12,565	14%
Diyala	39,377	12,442	32%
Kirkuk	24,877	6,544	26%
Baghdad	16,563	8,743	53%
TOTAL	580,007	86,423	15%

- **Eligibility criteria:** The eligibility criteria remain unchanged from the previous rounds. Returnees who have closed their displacement files and registered their return with MoMD receive a returnee code and are eligible to receive the grant through the Q-card.
- **Methodology of disbursement:** The methodology of disbursement remains the same. The money is distributed through the Q-card. Following advocacy efforts by the RWG/DSTWG with MoMD, the ministry has reached out to the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI) and requested the authorities to provide alternative companies for those IDPs who did not receive the Q-card following the halting of distribution of the cards in 2017 (out of 721,000 registered IDPs about 130,546 IDPs did not receive the Q-card.). In early 2022, the CBI recommended four pre-qualified companies to MoMD. However, due to the current fragile political situation and taking into consideration that

the current government lacks the authority to make strategic decisions, the announcement about the successful company is expected to take place after a new government is formed.

- **Percentage of total returnees reached:** According to MoMD data, 580,007 HH have registered their return with MoMD branch offices in areas of origin. Of these registrations, 492,591 applications have been checked by the statistic department while 87,416 are pending checks. Most applications in Kirkuk and Diyala have been checked, while Ninewa and Anbar have the highest number of applications that have not yet been checked. For Anbar, out of 239,597 applications, 191,820 have been checked (80%), while for Ninewa 171,567 HH have applied and 140,169 (82%) have been checked. Since December 2020, no new registrations have been noted for these two locations despite DTM data indicating some returns to these governorates throughout 2021. Some efforts have been made to inform IDPs and returnees about the grant process to encourage them to apply for this assistance. (see the CwC materials by accessing this [link](#), then 'Guidelines' >> 'CwC Materials') However, the slow rate of disbursement of the grant to those who have registered may also affect the reliance on the grant.

Challenges

- I. The Ministry of Finance's budgetary allocation for the return grant continues to decrease year after year and is a fraction of what is needed to cover all the returnees who have registered their return with the MoMD.
- II. Eligibility criteria: The eligibility criteria remain the same. However, the use of the 'first come first serve' has been criticized for not being transparent and not ensuring that the funds go to the most in need.
- III. The MoMD minister has raised concern that the in-kind support provided to in camp IDPs will significantly reduce in 2022.² The lack of support to the most vulnerable families who remain in camps may result in premature return, secondary displacement, or in families engaging in negative coping strategies.
- IV. MoMD expected the parliament to allocate sufficient money to enable the ministry to provide the return grants to all the registered returnee HHs, provide in-kind assistance to in-camp and out-of-camp IDPs and also support the access to livelihoods through asset replacements. However, the allocation was very much lower than expected, as only 50B IQD were allocated to MoMD to support the IDPs with in-kind assistance. Until now, the Emergency Food Bill's criteria of use has not been finalized yet and the sectoral ministries have not received anything.

² Statement from Minister during a joint visit to Sulaymaniyah in November 2021.

Local integration:

MoMD is planning to launch the registration for local integration for families who wish to integrate, based on the decision of the Higher Committee for the Repatriation of Displaced Families. The registration of families wishing to integrate into the southern governorates will be the first stage in Basra, Muthanna, and Dhi Qar, and then other governorates will follow. The MoMD obtained the approval of local governments for most of the governorates to integrate families in those governorates. The locally integrated families will be eligible for certain benefits such as integration grants and relief aid, which will be announced as soon as possible.

Updates from the “Supreme committee for the implementation of National Plan”

In 2020, the Prime Minister directed to address the displacement file and achieve the voluntary return of the displaced, as the MoMD in cooperation and joint coordination with the Ministry of Planning, worked in preparing the national plan to return the displaced to their original liberated areas.

The main objective: The general objective of this plan is to set an executive general framework to address the problems of the displaced and facilitate their voluntary return to their areas of origin in a manner that preserves their dignity, or to find alternative solutions for those who cannot return within a specified period of time, contribute to their development and integration into society, rehabilitate and empower them, and ensure that their aspirations are linked to the goals of durable solutions.

Sub-goals:

1. Develop an inventory showing the number of displaced persons in the camps and their geographical distribution.
2. Determine the needs of the displaced outside the displacement camps and any support that may be required.
3. Identify the obstacles that prevent the displaced from resolving the problem of their prolonged displacement.
4. Determine programs and activities to solve the displacement problem, which includes facilitating the return of the displaced or any other solutions.
5. Develop a framework for estimating the financial costs required for those programs and activities.
6. Distribute responsibilities and roles between the executive bodies and the supporting bodies, each according to his competence.

3 main pillars:

1. Community reconciliation
2. Infrastructure rehabilitation
3. The participatory method

After that, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers issued Diwani Order No. 50, which included the formation of a committee to implement the national plan for the displaced to be headed by the Minister of MoMD and the membership of each of the:

- 1- Head of the Reconstruction Fund for Areas Affected by Terrorist Operations (REFAATO)
- 2- Adviser to the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers
- 3- The Deputy Ministers of Finance, Planning, Interior, Oil, Construction, Housing, Municipalities and Public Works, Trade, Education, Health and Environment, Transportation, Agriculture, MoLSA, Youth and Sports, Electricity, representative from MoD, DG NOC (Prime Minister's Office), a representative of the KRI, a representative of the JOC
- 4- The committee responsible for undertaking the tasks of implementing Cabinet Resolution No. 100 regarding approving the national plan for the displaced and issuing recommendations, orders, and instructions to facilitate the implementation of the national plan to assist the displaced, facilitate their return to their areas of origin and support their reintegration
- 5- The committee to hold its meetings monthly and issue the decisions following the endorsement of most of its members
- 6- The head of the committee and its members have the authority to add members of ministries and their representatives or cancel their membership
- 7- The committee has so far held four meetings, with each one including a set of decisions

The next paragraphs will consider the main outputs of four meetings that the supreme committee held so far. It's worth noting that the members failed to convene monthly meetings due to different political and administrative barriers.

Outputs of the 1st meeting:

During the first meeting, a draft joint action plan was discussed for the purpose of ending the displacement file. The action plan was the reflection of activities considered in the national plan and several action points were made for members to undertake.

The chair (MoMD minister) highlighted the obstacles that prevent the return of displaced people to their AoOs and how to overcome them by providing all the necessary requirements to facilitate the return of the displaced families. The chair also considered the financial costs for implementing programs and projects, as well as distributing roles and responsibilities for the implementation as per

the members' mandate. The chair emphasized on the necessity of maintaining coordination and cooperation with international and local organizations including the donor countries.

Outputs of the 2nd meeting:

Despite the return of many of the displaced to their homes, there is unfortunately a reverse displacement of returnees to the camps due to the challenges caused by the lack of public services such as electricity, water, destroyed homes, in addition to tribal issues. These concerns represent a major obstacle to return for displaced people.

The attendees discussed several aspects, including the recommendations of the meeting of the stabilization team for the governorates of Diyala and Kirkuk, as well as studying the requirements for facilitating the return of the displaced to their original areas of residence with specific consideration for the role of Anbar's local government, as the governor attended that meeting. Several action points were made during the 2nd meeting:

- To host the governors of (Kirkuk, Diyala, Salah al-Din, Ninewa and Anbar) to discuss the proposals and recommendations of the stabilization committees³ for those governorates
- Calling the security entities to intensify their efforts to secure the return of displaced people to those governorates, presenting these efforts to the National Security Council and providing MoMD with the requirements for the return of the displaced.
- The committee also decided to address the Directorate of Military Engineering of the Ministry of Defense and the Mine Department of the Ministry of Interior to treat and remove mines in the Ramadi irrigation project in Anbar Governorate

Outputs of the 3rd meeting:

The third meeting was convened at the premises of the Ministry of Planning, and included the participation of Ninewa, Kirkuk, Anbar, Salah al-Din and Diyala governors, as well as the rest of the committee's members. The third meeting was dedicated to hearing from the governors about the progress of rehabilitating the damaged cities and resuming life in conflict-affected areas. The committee also raised the possibility of closing AAF camp in Anbar and J5 camp in Ninewa, but this was not taken further.

³ Stabilization committees: an initiative formed by the COMSEC in cooperation with local government of liberated governorates in early 2018 to ensure better coordination with stabilization partners, these committees are led by the governor and his deputy for technical affairs. They are also considered as the main government-led coordination body for REFAATO works at governorate level

Outputs of the 4th meeting:

The fourth meeting was chaired by the current acting MoMD minister (MoI minister) Mr. Othman Al-Ghanimi. The meeting concluded with the following key important decisions and action points:

- 1- Provide the Supreme committee with the projects implemented by the local government under the Reconstruction Fund of the Liberated governorates and the Ministry of Planning
- 2- Provide the Supreme committee with a financial report on what was disbursed under the Construction Fund and the Ministry of Planning regarding the implementation of projects and the remaining financial amounts
- 3- Provide MoMD with a detailed report which includes the number of projects implemented by the members and local governments of target governorates, and the projects that the ministries intend to implement as per the National Plan's Framework, noting that the National Plan was approved by Cabinet Resolution No. 100 in 2021, which means that the projects are supposed to be implemented for the same purpose and at the same timeframe
- 4- Invite the governors of Kirkuk, Diyala and Ninewa to consider their government's position for the implementation of the National Plan and the challenges that prevent the implementation process
- 5- Forming a higher committee from MoMD, as a chair with COMSEC, MoP, and local government representatives as members to visit the implemented projects and provide the Supreme Committee with detailed reports on those projects, their compatibility, and the number of families returning to their areas of residence following the implementation of those projects
- 6- Based on what was presented by the COMSEC representative about the possibility of enabling the families returning from displacement to access the CBI initiative, it was decided to invite the CBI Governor to the next meeting to examine the possibility of enabling the returnees from displacement to have access to CBI Loans for housing and restoration, and the corresponding procedures