



Consultation on potential return of associated families

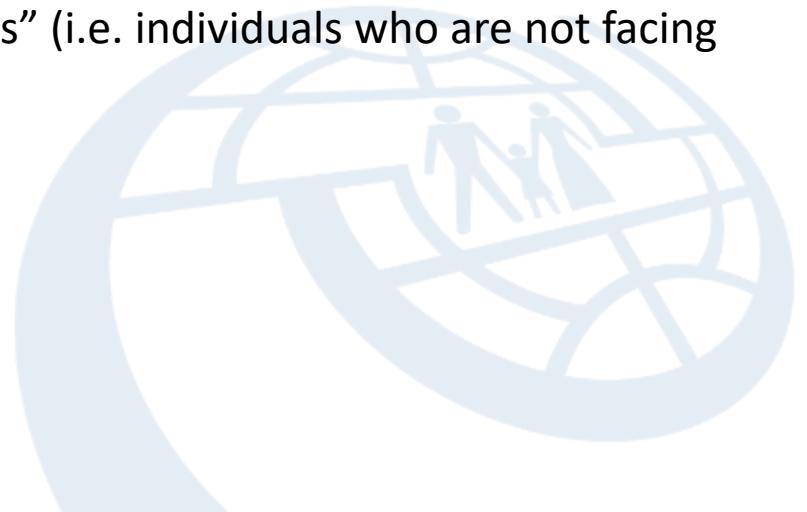
Returns Working Group
17 October, 2019

Introduction

“Any mistake in dealing with them will create massive future problems... To date, the government has not dealt with this problem in the right way... [the government] is dealing with this as a general IDP issue and moving forward with the effort to close the camps, but it is unclear what we will do with [“ISIS families”]”

Iraqi government official, 12 September 2019

- Process **aims** to discuss the complex issue of “ISIS families” to unpack potential risks and begin to develop a response strategy which will help to avert future cycles of conflict;
- Consultation sessions in Mosul (12 Sept) and Shirqat (19 Sept), + workshop with Ninewa governorate authorities on 13-14 Oct.
- Current **focus** is exclusively “ISIS families” (i.e. individuals who are not facing criminal charges) in Iraq.



Consultation in Shirqat: Background

- Return of approx. 127 HH from Ninewa to Basateen on 2 Sept provoked significant security incidents due to perceived affiliation of returnee families;
- Subsequent buses were diverted to other locations outside the camp, and 97 of the families who arrived in Basateen on 2 Sept were eventually relocated to Al-Karama;
- Prior to the arrival of IDPs from Ninewa, Basateen hosted 10 families with a perceived affiliation ($\approx 3\%$ of the camp pop.). The reaction to the new arrivals was attributed to:
 - The scale of the operation;
 - The origin of returnee families (many of the families were reportedly from Shirqat, and therefore very well known to the community);
- Security incidents compelled approx. 120 families from the existing Basateen camp population to flee to Shirqat centre. As of 19 Sept, 30 of these families had returned to the camp;
- Nine of the families who arrived from Ninewa to Basateen were able to return to areas of origin through the “sponsorship system”;

Consultation in Shirqat: Findings

- Some tribal reconciliation taking place, however:
 - Efforts are highly localized and unable to facilitate return and reconciliation at the scale needed (e.g. sponsorship system);
 - In some locations, it is “too early” to consider return and reconciliation. Linkages between reconciliation and compensation are highlighted frequently;
 - Agreements are not always robust;
- Some participants expressed concern about risks of [re]radicalization in camps, but the principle factor driving efforts to facilitate return is shame;
- It was recognized that there is a spectrum of collaboration with ISIS, and there is a common view that the government must develop a system of “categorizing” IS families;

“It is easier to accept the family of [someone who has killed as an act of personal vengeance or as a result of a tribal feud] but ISIS families are viewed as the enemy of their communities, making return very challenging”

Tribal leader in Shirqat, 19 September 2019

Consultation in Shirqat: Findings (cont.)

- Tribal leaders question who will support families (financially) if they do return;
- Significant concern expressed about children who were raised with ISIS members in their households.
- It was noted that, in quite a few cases, the PMF and other security actors have taken control of asset belonging to families with a perceived affiliation, and therefore have a vested interest in their non-return;
 - The PMF presence is reported to have weakened traditional tribal influence in Shirqat, with the PMF not only providing security, but also employment and status, to large numbers of young people;
 - It was suggested that the attack on Basateen was not a tribal incident, but perpetrated by youth acting outside of tribal structures;

“Assuming that there is tribal reconciliation and ISIS families are able to return, who will support them, because they will not find any source of income?”

Tribal leader in Shirqat, 19 September 2019

Next steps

- Workshop with Ninewa governorate authorities on 13-14 October to frame a response strategy around three main pillars:
 - Community acceptance, destigmatization, and social cohesion
 - Risk reduction
 - Protective factors (civil documentation, access to services, protection from SEA, etc.)
- Agreed to establish a committee, incl. the Mayor of Mosul, JCMC Focal Point/Assistant Governor, other governorate representatives, to prepare a proposal to address current gaps in response;
- **Findings and recommendations** will be set out in a report which will be shared with the Governor of Ninewa and discussed/endorsed during a governorate-level conference in October/November, before being submitted to the central government.

Discussion