



**COMMUNITY DIALOGUE
AREAS OF NO-RETURN
AL-MARJ VILLAGE**

FEBRUARY 2025

The Returns Working Group (RWG), in coordination with the Ninewa Governorate Office, facilitated a community dialogue to assess the possibilities for the return of displaced families to Al-Marj Village. Al-Marj is a “no return” village located in Hammam Al-Alil subdistrict.

The community dialogue aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the key issues preventing the return of displaced families from Al-Marj. The discussion focused solely on the perspectives of the affected community members, exploring challenges. Additionally, the dialogue identified the types of support the community believes would be necessary for a potential return. The insights gathered will be presented in the upcoming DS discussion or thematic meeting, where they can be shared with relevant stakeholders to advocate for appropriate solutions.



Figure 1 Community members engaged in Al-Marj dialogue session

BASIC INFORMATION:

Al-Marj village, located in Hammam Al-Alil subdistrict, approximately 35 km southwest of Mosul, is classified as a no-return area. Historically home to 30 Sunni Arab families (190 individuals) from the Al-Badran tribe, the village consisted entirely of mud houses. Following the ISIS occupation, all families were displaced to camps in Qayyarah, and while some have resettled in nearby areas (Jarn village and Mosul center). While no families have officially returned to Al-Marj, some have resettled in nearby areas—mainly in Al-Jarn village (2 km away) or in Mosul city. At present, approximately 50 families (376 individuals) from Al-Marj are living in displacement, primarily in Al-Jarn and Mosul. Families renting in Mosul typically pay between 100,000 to 250,000 IQD per month. Although the majority remain displaced, around five families have started minimal reconstruction efforts back in Al-Marj, building simple structures using mud or constructing one or two rooms due to limited financial resources. These homes remain unfinished. Some residents occasionally return to the village to cultivate their land or rehabilitate small poultry farms, though full return remains unfeasible due to the extensive damage and lack of basic services.

PARTICIPANT LIST

Name	Position
Community Representatives	
Hamed Mohammed Faraj	Mukhtar
Awaid Raheel Muhammad	Community member
Awaid Abdullah	Community member
Ali Mufarrej	Community member
Ahmed Nazzal Muhammad	Community member
Hajj Hamid	Community member
Ahmed Zahir	Community member
Aqeel Zahir	Community member
Obaid Nazzal Muhammad	Community member
UN/NGOs	
Karam Eskander	RWG
Firas AlSalman	

CHALLENGES AND NEEDS:

1. Housing:

Before the displacement, all houses were built from mud. Following the military operations in 2017, all homes in the village were completely destroyed. Only a few families have attempted to rehabilitate their homes in a very basic manner. Some families rebuilt their houses using mud due to limited financial means, while others managed to construct just one or two small rooms using available materials—often without proper roofing or finishing—simply to have a place to settle. These structures are not adequate for long-term habitation, and the lack of sufficient funds has prevented families from undertaking full reconstruction.



Figure 2: Mud houses in Al-Marj village

2. Livelihoods:

Previously, the residents depended on agriculture, livestock, and poultry farming. Currently, some families have resumed farming using irrigation systems, and one family has rehabilitated a poultry farm. The rest are engaged in daily labor, construction work, or hold minor government positions.

- **Compensation:** Most families have not applied for compensation due to financial and logistical barriers. To submit claims, families must travel to Mosul and pay IQD150,000 per site inspection. Additionally, compensation for destroyed homes, furniture, agricultural losses, and livestock requires extensive documentation and high costs, which many families cannot afford. Furthermore, the compensation allocated for mud houses is significantly lower than that for concrete or brick structures, making it insufficient to support meaningful reconstruction. According to community members, compensation for mud houses typically ranges from 1 million to a maximum of 5 million IQD, whereas homes built with other materials receive between 10 million and over 70 million IQD. This disparity highlights the challenge faced by families trying to rebuild, especially when considering additional expenses such as site inspections and other related costs.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND BASIC SERVICES

- **Access to Water:** Previously, water was sourced from several wells used for domestic use and livestock. Drinking water was purchased from tankers. Currently, a water network reaches the outskirts of the village, but there is no internal water distribution system. The existing wells are damaged.
- **Access to Electricity:** Before displacement, the village had a well-functioning electricity network. Currently, while the village remains connected to the grid, the power supply is unstable due to a single malfunctioning transformer in need of rehabilitation. As a result, electricity is only available for one to two hours every six hours, highlighting the urgent need for maintenance.
- **Access to Healthcare Services:** Al-Marj village has never had a healthcare facility. In the past, residents traveled approximately 2 km to Al-Jarn village to access basic medical services, while more serious cases were referred to hospitals in Mosul, located about 50 km away. Currently, there are still no healthcare services available in Al-Marj.
- **Access to Education:** Before displacement, children from Al-Marj used to attend school in Al-Jarn, as there was no school in their own village. At that time, around 30 to 50 children from Al-Marj were enrolled in primary and secondary education in Al-Jarn. The situation remains unchanged—Al-Marj still lacks any educational facilities. Currently, most displaced families from Al-Marj are residing in Al-Jarn, where approximately 30 children continue to attend the local school.
- **Municipal services/Roads:** Previously, the roads leading to the village were unpaved but still accessible. The main road connecting Jaran to Maraj is mostly paved, except for the final 800 meters leading into the village, which remains unpaved. This is the only access road to the village, and there is no alternative route. The unpaved section is at the village entrance, but it's unclear why this portion has not yet been completed. Families recalled a past incident in 2012 where, due to poor road conditions, an emergency patient needed hospital transport, but the vehicle was unable to pass during winter, resulting in the patient's death.

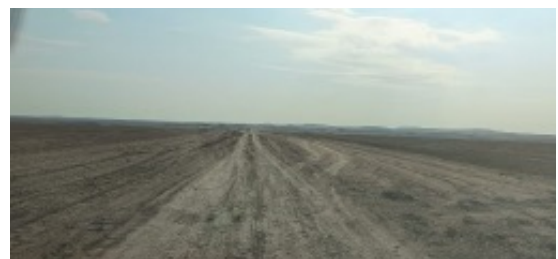


Figure 3: The image depicts the village's unpaved road.

- **Return Grant from MoMD:** All 30 families have registered with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) for the return grant, but none have received any financial assistance so far.
- **Intentions to Return:** Several families express a willingness to return, particularly those who have resumed farming or rehabilitated poultry farms. Additionally, four families are currently rebuilding their homes. Four families are already in the process of rebuilding their homes. Many women previously worked on farms and deeply miss their former way of life in the village. However, financial constraints and the lack of legal support to submit compensation claims continue to pose major obstacles. Many families require legal assistance specifically to prepare and file their compensation requests—whether related to housing, agricultural assets. Providing both financial and legal support is crucial to enabling a durable return. However, financial difficulties and the need for legal support to file compensation claims remain significant barriers. Providing financial and legal assistance is essential to ensuring a sustainable return.

MEETING OUTCOME AND NEXT STEP:

NEXT STEPS:

- **Coordination with the Compensation Department:** Engage with the department to explore potential support mechanisms for families seeking compensation.
- **Engagement with Municipalities and Rural Development:** Assess which entity holds responsibility and has the capacity to complete the remaining 800 meters of road paving to facilitate movement and improve access.

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AREAS OF NO-RETURN AL-MARJ VILLAGE

FEBRUARY 2025



حلول دائمة في العراق
Iraq Durable Solutions

