

Basic Services & Reconstruction in Sinjar – Working Together for Sustainable Return 25 September 2025, Duhok

IOM, through the Returns Working Group (RWG) and in coordination with the Ninewa Governorate and relevant directorates, organized a workshop in Duhok on 25 September 2025 titled **“Basic Services & Reconstruction in Sinjar – Working Together for Sustainable Return.”**

The event convened senior representatives from government institutions, technical departments, local authorities, to discuss key challenges hindering return to Sinjar and to explore opportunities for joint action in service delivery, reconstruction, and durable solutions.

Participating government entities included the directorates of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), Trade, Well Drilling, Petroleum, Health, Education, and Municipalities, as well as the Sinjar Mayor’s Office and the Directorate of Water. Discussions centered on return dynamics, service gaps, and priority interventions to enable safe, dignified, and voluntary returns for internally displaced persons.



Figure 1: Ninewa Governorate Technical Workshop, Dohuk, Sep 25

Participant List

Name	Position
Government	
Khalid Abdul Karim	Department of Immigration and Displacement
Ali Omar	Assistant governor for organizations and displaced persons affairs
Nayef Sido Qasim	Sinjar mayor
Saleh Ali Mohammed	JCMC
Moaed Sadiq	Department of Water
Idris Hani Khalil	Ninewa Municipalities
Kamal Sharo Hassan	Sinjar Municipalities
Dalshad Ali Abdullah	Department of Health
Sultan Yousif Saleh	Director of Nineveh Trade Department
Alla Khaleel	Department of Health
Maha Abdulrazzaq Mohammed	Department of Health
Abdulrahman Abdulhadi Saber	Director of the Nineveh Wells Department
Ali Hassan	Wells Department
Uday Hussein Mohsen	Director of Petroleum Products in Nineveh
Mohammed Ibrahim Aboudi	Director General of Nineveh Education
Blawi Yassin Blawi	Governor's Advisor for Legal Affairs
Ahmed Younis Thannon	Deputy Governor for Planning Affairs
UN/NGOs	
Firas Alsalman	RWG
Karam Alhadeethi	
Abdullah Bakar	IOM

Opening Remarks

The workshop opened with remarks from Mr. Ali Omar, Deputy Governor for Organizations and IDPs, and Mr. Ahmed Younis, Deputy Governor for Planning. Mr. Omar highlighted the importance of unified efforts and coordination among institutions to ensure safe, dignified, and voluntary returns, stressing that closing the displacement file requires shared responsibility. Mr. Younis emphasized that sustainable return depends on restoring basic infrastructure—water, electricity, health, and education—and noted the Planning Office’s key role in guiding and coordinating reconstruction efforts in Sinjar through unified priorities and partnerships.



Figure 2: Discussion Sessions

Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD)

Mr. Khaled Abdul Kareem, Director of MoMD – Ninewa Branch

Mr. Khaled from the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) provided an in-depth overview of the current situation of returns to Sinjar. He noted that departures from camps have stalled due to the lack of authorization for families to obtain departure letters, as many camps are managed by the KRI rather than MoMD. He highlighted that the return grant (4 million IQD) has not been disbursed for over a year due to delayed allocations from the Ministry of Finance—only 60% of returnees have received it so far. Return rates vary, with Sinjar averaging 50% and Sinuni reaching 75%.

Mr. Khaled stressed that MoMD has not received any official directives on camp closures or integration of IDPs into host communities and that any such steps must be coordinated with KRG authorities.

He outlined major challenges including lack of basic services (water, electricity, health, education), climate impacts on agriculture and livestock, and unbalanced return patterns—mainly Yazidi families returning while few Arab and Shia families have, leading to a loss of Sinjar’s pre-2014 multi-communal economy.

According to MoMD data, 29,294 families have officially returned (27,316 Yazidi and 1,978 Muslim), mainly to Sinjar Center and Sinuni. Between 2023 and 2025, MoMD delivered over



Figure 3: Presentation of the Head of MoMD

60,000 food baskets, 74,000 hygiene kits, and other humanitarian support including 306 livelihood projects.

Key Recommendations included:

- Immediate resumption of the return grant payments.
- Increased financial allocations from the Ministry of Finance.
- Expanding administrative and financial services in Sinjar.
- Strengthened inter-directorate coordination.
- Strategies to restore Sinjar’s multi-communal coexistence and economic diversity.

Directorate of Trade – Mr. Sultan Yousif

Mr. Sultan explained that the Directorate of Trade does not currently implement any specific livelihood support programs in Sinjar, focusing solely on food ration distribution. He outlined the procedure for returnees to reinstate their ration cards: families must first close their ration file in Duhok, then re-register in Sinjar at the Directorate’s office located in the local silo, where staff are available to process applications immediately.

He highlighted the activation of the electronic ration card system, which now allows returnees to submit transfer or reactivation requests online—simplifying access and reducing bureaucratic delays. In case of issues, beneficiaries can reach the Directorate through official complaint hotlines.

However, Mr. Sultan noted that lifting the suspension (“hijb”) on ration cards currently applies only to returnees in Sinjar and Jada’a, while those in other areas remain excluded from this service.

Directorate of Well Drilling – Mr. Abdulrahman Abdulhadi

Mr. Abdulrahman provided an in-depth briefing on the severe water scarcity crisis in Sinjar, noting that 95% of the district’s population depends on artesian wells. Of the 240 wells once active in Sinjar Center, 79 are now out of service, while 40 wells in Sinuni have completely dried up.

Key Challenges:

- Climate change and declining groundwater due to reduced rainfall.
- Unregulated and unauthorized well drilling, depleting water reserves.
- Illegal construction on Mount Sinjar slopes, damaging groundwater recharge zones.
- Severe funding shortages, with minimal allocations from Baghdad.
- Land ownership disputes obstructing public well projects.

Plans and Progress:

- Ongoing rehabilitation of wells by deepening them to 150 meters.
- Of 85 new wells planned for 2025, only 14 were completed due to lack of funds.
- The Directorate fast-tracks approvals for authorized well drilling on private land.

Assessment and Coordination:

Mr. Abdulrahman warned that the current water situation is unsustainable, calling for long-term strategic planning beyond short-term fixes. He also noted effective coordination with the Water Directorate, which connects rehabilitated wells to local networks or provides storage tanks to ensure community access to water.

Directorate of Oil Products – Mr. Uday Hussein

Mr. Uday highlighted key measures by the Directorate of Oil to facilitate returns and improve services in Sinjar:

- “My Fuel” Program: An online platform enabling returnees to activate fuel cards remotely, easing access to fuel quotas.
- Local Fuel Supply: Ambulances and government vehicles now refuel directly in Sinjar instead of traveling to Mosul.
- Expansion Plans: Four new fuel station licenses have been issued, with land requested for the district’s largest planned station.
- Achievements: Fuel provided to camps, private generators, and returnees; generators installed for returning families.

Challenges and Solutions:

Limited fuel stations have caused overcrowding and restricted access, discouraging some returns. The Directorate confirmed plans to establish additional stations to distribute quotas more efficiently and ensure easier access for ambulances and residents, improving overall service delivery in Sinjar.

Directorate of Health – Dr. Dilshad Ali & Ms. Maha Abdulrazaq

The Directorate of Health reported significant progress in rehabilitating Sinjar’s health services, with 90% of facilities restored since 2014. Sinjar now has a functioning hospital and at least one model health center per sub-district, along with smaller village clinics.

Key Challenges:

Acute shortage of female specialists (gynecology, radiology, and mental health), hindering reproductive and maternal healthcare.

Difficulty attracting doctors to Sinjar due to insecurity, distance, and lack of housing.

Ongoing Initiatives:

Full rehabilitation of Sinjar Hospital.

New psychological support services at the French Hospital.

A psychosocial support center for survivors under construction by the Survivor’s Directorate.

Planned obstetric and maternity operating theaters.

Additional Points:

Women face particular challenges accessing care and mental health support. Some survivors are referred abroad for specialized treatment through free referral cards. Coordination with the Oil Directorate ensures local fueling of ambulances and health vehicles. Health Service Challenges and Ongoing Efforts in Sinjar

One of the persistent obstacles in Sinjar has been the reluctance of doctors to accept transfers to the area, largely due to the absence of suitable accommodation. In response, the Directorate of Health (DoH) has begun constructing housing facilities for doctors, allowing them to stay in these residences while serving in Sinjar. This initiative has already encouraged more doctors to accept transfers, thereby improving the availability of medical staff.

In addition, the DoH highlighted a notable shortage of psychologists. To address this gap, discussions are ongoing with the Department of Labor and Social Affairs to leverage their experienced staff, particularly those trained in psychology, to support through training or temporary transfer arrangements. While the DoH has already provided Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) training to its staff, these personnel are not specialized

graduates from psychology faculties. Coordinating with specialized professionals from other departments is therefore seen as a critical step toward strengthening mental health services in the district.

Despite all challenges, the health sector in Sinjar is considered the second best in Ninewa after Mosul, thanks to progress in rehabilitation and coordination.

Directorate of Education – Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim

The Education Directorate reported that all 33 schools in Sinjar Center have reopened, with full textbook distribution for primary schools and partial delivery (30%) for secondary schools due to ministry shortages.

Key Points:

- **Staffing:** 1,121 contract teachers were appointed, working on a three-day rotation due to low salaries (300,000 IQD). Each teacher must commit to their assigned post.
- **Rehabilitation:** Of the 2 billion IQD needed for school repairs, only 1.7 billion was allocated, leading to prioritization of schools with the highest student numbers, in coordination with the Mayor's office.
- **Future Plans:** The governorate aims to build 200 new schools, including in Sinjar, through the Reconstruction Fund. A new Education Department will be opened in Sinuni to improve access for remote communities.
- **Language Access:** Arabic-language education will be introduced in Kurdish-only areas if sufficient student demand exists.

Directorate of Water– Mr. Moaed Sadiq

The Water Directorate confirmed that Sinjar faces severe water shortages, exacerbated by climate change, drought, and unregulated drilling. Of the 176 wells under its management, 69 are currently out of service due to groundwater depletion.

Key Initiatives:

- **Sinjar–Baaj Water Project:** Technical designs are ready for a \$1.017 billion, five-year project that would provide a sustainable solution to water scarcity. Feasibility studies and designs are available in Baghdad, pending approval and funding. Donor options, including a potential British loan, are being explored.
- **Coordination and Distribution:** The Directorate works closely with the Well Drilling Directorate; once a new well is drilled, water distribution networks or tanks are installed to deliver water directly to households.

Mayor of Sinjar District

The Mayor highlighted persistent challenges affecting returns and recovery in Sinjar, including:

- Limited implementation of the Federal Government–Kurdistan Regional Government agreement.
- Restricted access to basic services in some villages.
- Shortage of livelihood opportunities and insufficient government support.
- Climate change and water scarcity worsening the situation for returnees dependent on agriculture and livestock.

- Presence of non-state armed groups, such as PKK forces in Karzark, creating insecurity and discouraging returns.

Priorities of Local Directorates:

- Strengthen coordination among government departments, particularly between local authorities in Sinjar and directorates in Mosul.
- Reduce bureaucratic hurdles to improve service delivery and support sustainable reintegration of returnees.

Outcome and Next Steps

The workshop served as a platform for government institutions, local authorities, to assess the barriers to return in Sinjar. Key discussions highlighted critical service gaps in **water, health, education, fuel, and trade**, along with the need to restore administrative functions and strengthen inter-directorate coordination. Participants



Figure 5: Workshop Participants

emphasized that sustainable returns require addressing infrastructure and service deficits through inclusive and well-coordinated planning.

Next Steps

MoMD:

- Advocate for renewed allocation of return grants.
- Enhance coordination with the KRI on camp departures.

Water & Well Drilling Directorates:

- Accelerate rehabilitation of wells.
- Secure long-term funding for the Sinjar–Baaj Water Project.

Health Directorate:

- Prioritize recruitment of female specialists.
- Expand psychosocial and maternal health services.
- Coordinate with the Department of Labor and Social Affairs to utilize psychologists and trained staff for case transfers and training, addressing the shortage of specialized graduates.

Education Directorate:

- Continue teacher deployment and ensure textbook distribution.
- Advance plans for a new Education Department in Sinuni.

Petroleum Products Directorate:

- Operationalize new fuel stations and expand the “My Fuel” program.
- Coordinate with the Health Directorate to fuel ambulances and health vehicles locally.
- Collaborate with the Mayor and Municipality to allocate land for a large fuel station.
- Coordinate with Sinjar Municipality to allocate fuel quotas for municipal vehicles based on an official inventory.

Planning Office:

- Strengthen inter-sectoral coordination.
- Align directorate priorities with reconstruction plans.

RWGIOM:

- Continue convening technical dialogues.
- Provide a platform for follow-up and coordinated actions.