

Iraq • Strengthening accountability to affected people



Executive summary

- **Despite the ongoing challenges and insecure environment in Iraq, people surveyed still feel safe in their day-to-day lives and when accessing aid or services (84% and 81%, respectively).** Safety is perceived differently at the governorate level, with 100% of respondents in Erbil feeling safe in their day-to-day lives, compared to just 56% in Sulaymaniyah.
- **Aid recipients continue to view their relationship with aid providers positively.** Ninety percent of the people surveyed feel that aid workers treat them with respect, and 70% trust the humanitarian community to act in their best interest.
- **People feel less able to participate in the response than in 2018. Only 16% of the people surveyed feel that their opinions are considered by aid providers, a decrease from 33% in 2018. 69% are unaware of how to make suggestions or complaints about the aid or services they receive.** With regard to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and sensitive complaints, **around half (48%) of respondents say that their communities feel able to report abuse or mistreatment by humanitarian staff**, down from 68% last year. There is a need – and an opportunity – to capitalise on people’s feelings of trust and strengthen both accountability to affected populations (AAP) and PSEA mechanisms.
- **The majority (71%) of people surveyed report that their most important needs remain unmet.** The primary unmet needs they identify are cash, food, and health services.
- **Around half (53%) of respondents feel informed about the aid and services available to them, but 39% do not feel that aid is targeted fairly.** Those who feel targeting could be improved say that the most impoverished in their communities, persons with disabilities, and people suffering from illness or disease are left out.
- **Only 12% of people say that aid empowers them to live without humanitarian assistance in the future.** They want job opportunities, cash assistance, and food and household items to help them reduce dependency.
- **Few respondents (28%) feel that people’s lives are improving in Iraq.** Nevertheless, this is an improvement over our 2018 survey, when only 19% felt conditions were getting better.
- While gender does not appear to significantly impact responses, **differences do exist at the levels of status*, accommodation, and governorate.** On issues of trust, access to information, aid targeting, and relevance of aid (among others), those outside of camp settings have a more negative response. Returnees and vulnerable host community members also tend to feel more negatively than other population groups. Proximity and access to aid programming continues to contribute to trust in and satisfaction with humanitarian action and must be taken into account as camps continue to close.

Since 2014, the humanitarian community in Iraq has been responding to waves of internal displacement, compounded by the ongoing arrival of refugees from Syria. Around 240,000 Syrian refugees and 1.4 million internally displaced people (IDPs) remain in Iraq, many in precarious living conditions. Among various challenges, the humanitarian response has had to adapt to changes in the political landscape, increasing rates of return, and camp closure and consolidation.

This bulletin presents an overview of the findings from Ground Truth Solutions’ recent survey of IDPs, refugees, returnees, and vulnerable host community members who have received aid from humanitarian organisations within the last 12 months.

With support from the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), the survey was carried out in August and September 2019 across six governorates: Erbil, Duhok, Ninewa, Anbar, Salah Al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah. Surveys were previously conducted in [2017](#) and [2018](#). In partnership with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and others, the findings are being used as a metric to monitor progress towards the strategic objectives of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and provide baselines for improvement against performance indicators.

People in Iraq trust aid providers, but do not feel their needs are being met or lives improving. For our global analysis on this trend, see our [Trust Brief](#).¹

¹ See the Humanitarian Voice Index website: <https://www.humanitarianvoiceindex.org>

* Status refers to the respondent’s classification as an aid recipient e.g. IDP, refugee, returnee, or vulnerable host community member.

Protection

Summary findings

Do you feel safe in your day-to-day life?



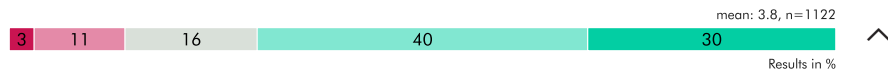
Do you feel safe when accessing aid or services?



Do aid providers treat you with respect?



Do you trust aid providers to act in your best interest?



Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid/services?



1 Not at all 2 Not really 3 Neutral 4 Mostly yes 5 Yes completely

Changes in responses since 2018

- ^ Increase in mean score of 0.5 or more **or** increase in "yes" responses by more than 10%
- ^ Increase in mean score of less than 0.5 **or** increase in "yes" responses by 5–10%
- = Change in mean score by less than 0.1 **or** change in "yes" responses by less than 5%
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- * This question was added since the previous round

Protection: key findings

Similarly to 2018, the majority (84%) of people surveyed feel safe in their day-to-day lives. One hundred percent of respondents in Erbil report feeling safe, compared to 56% of those in Sulaymaniyah. Of the population groups surveyed, returnees feel the least safe (76%). Those who do not feel safe say that uncertainty about the future and fear of armed actors, attacks, and violence are the main contributing factors to their feeling unsafe.

Of those surveyed, 81% feel safe when accessing aid. There are disparities, however, at the governorate level: 94% of respondents in Erbil feel safe, compared to 63% in Anbar. Vulnerable host community members report feeling less safe than refugees and IDPs. Overcrowded and hard-to-reach distribution points were cited as the main reasons for feeling unsafe.

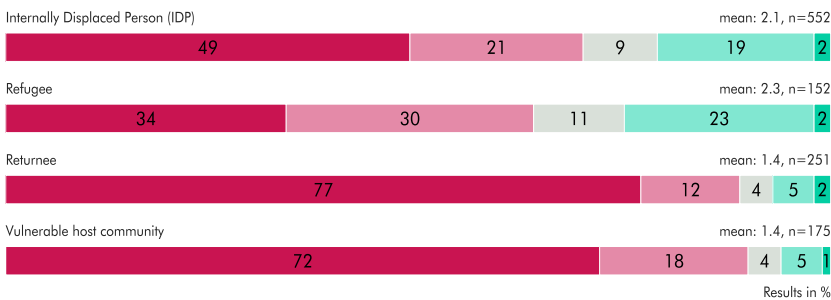
The majority (90%) of respondents feel respected by aid providers, a trend that has remained positive over the last three years. Seventy percent of respondents feel that aid workers have their best interests at heart.

Despite positive trends in respect and trust, only 16% of those surveyed believe that their opinions are being included in aid and service provision, down from 33% last year. Status impacts this finding: just 6% of vulnerable host community members feel that their opinions are considered, compared to 25% of camp-based refugees. At the governorate level, 35% of those in Duhok feel that they are listened to, while only 2% in Anbar say the same. Efforts by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), the Protection Cluster, and others are already underway to address this, aiming for a demonstrable improvement next year.

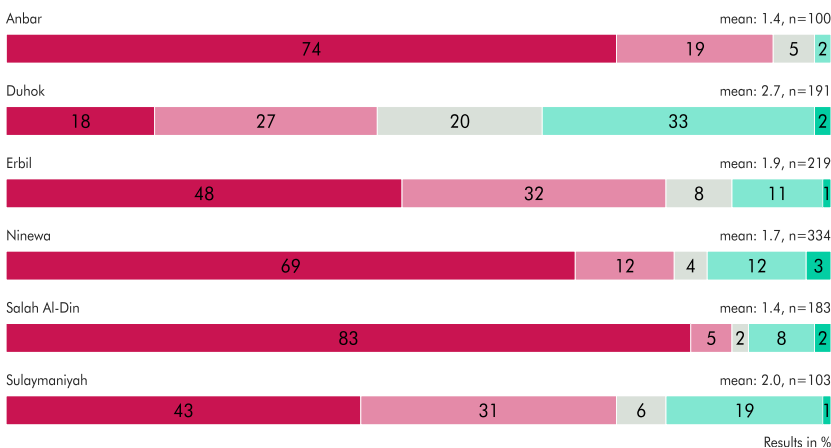
Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid/services?

(n=1130)

Status



Location



1 Not at all 2 Not really 3 Neutral 4 Mostly yes 5 Yes completely

IDP (internally displaced person): refers to someone who was displaced from their sub-district between 2014 and 2017, and who continues to reside in Iraq.

Refugee: refers to someone who fled their home and crossed an international border in order to seek protection in Iraq. All refugee respondents in this survey are Syrian nationals.

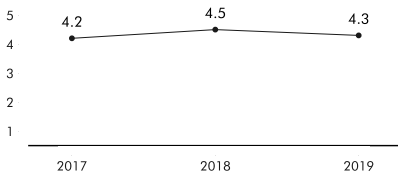
Returnee: refers to a person who was displaced between 2014 and 2017 but has since returned to their sub-district in Iraq.

Vulnerable host community member: refers to a person who remained in their sub-district in Iraq between 2014 and 2017, and whose community is currently hosting displaced persons.

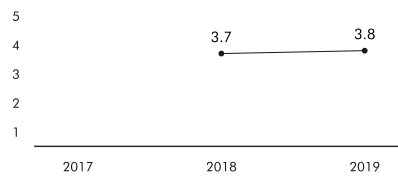
Note: in the following analysis, responses which were answered on the Likert scale as 1 or 2 (i.e. “not at all” or “not very much”) are treated as negative, 3 as neutral, and 4 or 5 (i.e. “mostly yes” or “yes completely”) as positive.

Protection: overview of responses since 2017

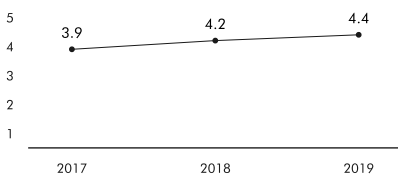
Do you feel safe in your day-to-day life?



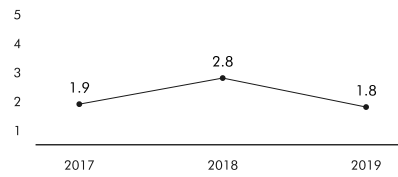
Do you trust aid providers to act in your best interest?



Do aid providers treat you with respect?



Do aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid/services?



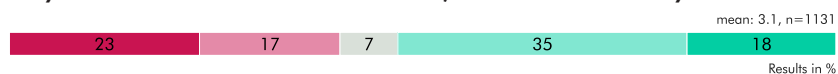
Aid recipients' perceptions on safety and respect have remained positive. The issue of trust, while in need of improvement, also elicits mainly positive responses.

However, recipients of humanitarian aid continue to feel that their voices are not being heard, as illustrated by the steep decline against this indicator between 2018 and 2019.

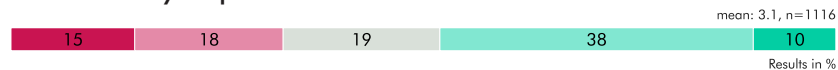
Information and feedback

Summary findings

Do you feel informed about the kind of aid/ services available to you?



Do people in your community feel able to report instances of abuse or mistreatment by aid providers?



1 Not at all 2 Not really 3 Neutral 4 Mostly yes 5 Yes completely

Do you know how to make suggestions or complaints about the aid/ services you receive?



Accommodation



Status



Have you filed a suggestion or complaint?



1 No 2 Yes

How easy did you find making the suggestion or complaint?



1 Not at all 2 Not really 3 Neutral 4 Mostly yes 5 Yes completely

Did you receive a response to your suggestion or complaint?



1 No 2 Yes

Changes in responses since 2018

- ^ Increase in mean score of 0.5 or more **or** increase in "yes" responses by more than 10%
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Information and feedback: key findings

Around half of those surveyed (53%) feel informed about the aid and services available to them, a marked improvement over 2018 (17%). However, there are discrepancies: only 13% of respondents in Anbar feel informed, compared to 76% in Erbil ², and those in camp locations (79%) feel more informed than people living in unfinished or abandoned buildings (22%). People have requested more information on available aid and services, on their rights and obligations, and on how to lodge a complaint.

Similarly to 2018, people overwhelmingly prefer face-to-face communication, followed by a helpline or hotline. Those surveyed mostly trust international organisations and agencies to provide them with information, followed by government, local aid providers, and community leaders. The most recent multi-cluster needs assessment (MCNA) found that returnees and out-of-camp IDPs prefer telephone over face-to-face communication, whereas in-camp IDPs prefer face-to-face contact.³

The MCNA also cited information needs regarding livelihoods, safety and security, and a tendency to trust information from friends and family in areas of origin. Returnees are much more likely to trust local authorities to provide information, compared to IDPs both in and outside of camps.⁴

Just under half (48%) of all survey respondents say that people in their communities feel able to report abuse or misconduct on the part of humanitarian staff, down from 68% last year. This finding, which indicates awareness of PSEA-type reporting mechanisms, contrasts with the awareness of complaints mechanisms more generally. Research conducted by Oxfam on aid worker misconduct in Iraq suggests that barriers to reporting are multifaceted, and involve personal, interactional, and structural factors. More effective collaboration and learning between humanitarian actors and local communities on issues such as gender, power and trust are essential in addressing these barriers.⁵




Only 31% of the people surveyed know how to make suggestions or complaints about the aid they receive, a decrease from 58% in 2018. There is a strong correlation between awareness of these mechanisms and type of accommodation, with those living in camp locations unsurprisingly reporting more awareness (67%) than those in unfinished or abandoned buildings (6%). There is also significant variation according to status: only 9% and 12% of vulnerable host communities and returnees, respectively, report awareness of complaints mechanisms, compared to 71% of refugees.

Of those who know about feedback mechanisms, **48% say they have lodged a suggestion or complaint**, an increase from 32% in 2018. **While the majority (80%) of respondents say they found it mostly or very easy to use feedback channels, only 36% say they received a response to their complaint or suggestion.** In 2018, 42% said they received a response, indicating that closing the feedback loop is an ongoing challenge. Just over half (57%) of the respondents are satisfied with how their complaint was managed.

What information do you need?* (n=447)

- 32% Available aid/services
- 11% Rights and obligations
- 8% How to file a complaint about aid and services




How would you prefer to receive information?* (n=1143)

-  75% Face-to-face
-  51% Helpline/hotline
-  8% Leaflet/posters

Who would you prefer to receive information from?* (n=1143)

- 62% International aid providers
- 37% Government
- 36% Local aid providers
- 20% Community leaders

How would you prefer to make any complaints you have?* (n=1143)

-  56% Face-to-face
-  28% Helpline/hotline
-  9% Suggestion box

Who would you trust the most to make a suggestion or complaint to?* (n=1143)

- 62% International aid providers
- 29% Government agency
- 28% Local aid providers
- 26% Independent organisation

² This aligns with Erbil Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (EJCC) and aid actor efforts to step up accountability across Erbil camp locations in 2019.

³ REACH, Iraq Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment VII (December 2019), https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/bf8af15e/REACH_IRQ_MCNA-VII_Report_December2019-1.pdf

⁴ Ibid.

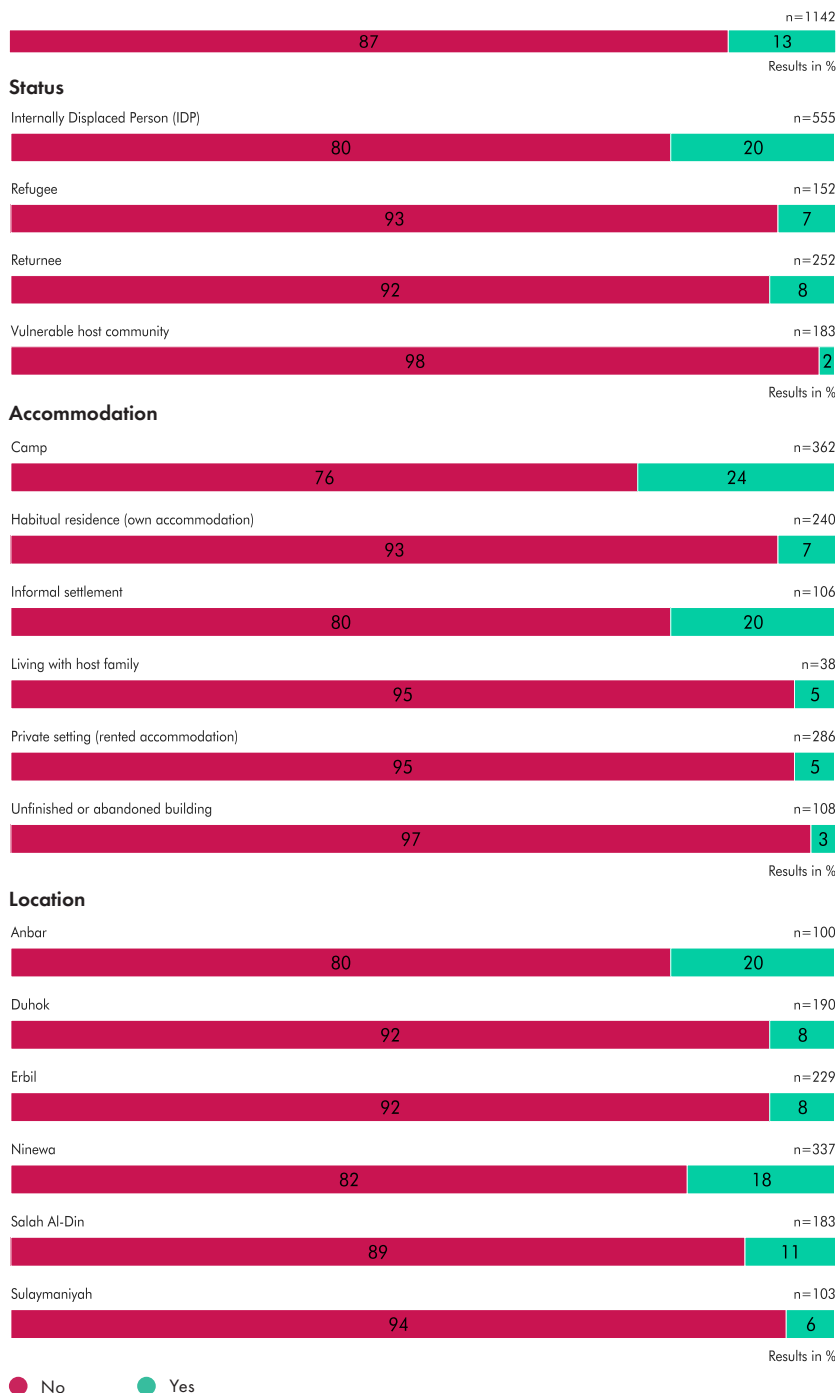
⁵ Oxfam, "Factors Influencing Misconduct Reporting in Saladin and Nineveh, Iraq" (January 2020), <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620929/cs-factors-influencing-misconduct-reporting-iraq-060120-en.pdf?sequence=1>.

* Only the top responses are shown. Percentages do not total 100 because respondents could choose multiple options.

Iraq Information Centre: key findings

In collaboration with the Iraq Information Centre (IIC), formerly the IDP Call Centre, a survey question was included on awareness of the hotline. **Thirteen percent of the people surveyed are aware of the centre.** Of the different population groups, IDPs were the most aware. Those in camps and informal settlements were more informed about the IIC, compared to people in other types of accommodation. In response to this, there has been an increase in awareness activities by OCHA, the ICCG, and the IIC. This question will be asked again next year to track progress.

Have you heard about the Iraq Information Centre? (n=1142)



Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Iraq

Data from DRC has found that around 38% of people in their programmatic areas are aware of complaints mechanisms.⁶

REACH MCNA VII (n=13,086 households)

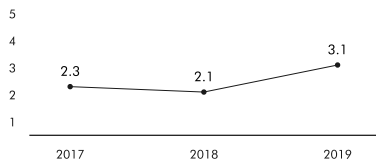
The latest multi-cluster needs assessment reveals that out-of-camp IDPs and returnees are far less aware of how to access complaints mechanisms than in-camp IDPs.⁷

⁶ DRC Iraq, Awareness of Complaints Mechanisms Dashboard (accessed December 2019), <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrjoiZWMONTAazY2MiZTlhNC00MThmLTk5MTAtM-jRkZDljN2FkMDg3IiwidCl6IjphMjE5YmQxLTg5OWMtNDc1Mi1iZDMzLTUxZWFiM2M1OD-JkNSlslmMiOj9.>

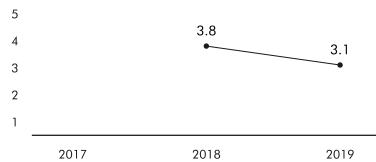
⁷ REACH MCNA VII.

Information and feedback: overview of responses since 2017

Do you feel informed about the kind of aid/services available to you?



Do people in your community feel able to report instances of abuse or mistreatment by aid providers?

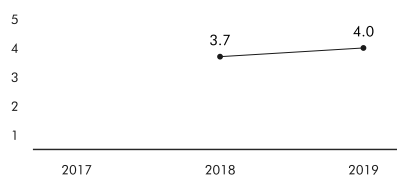


People in Iraq feel more informed about the aid and services available to them than they did last year, but feel less able to make suggestions or complaints or report misconduct by humanitarian staff.

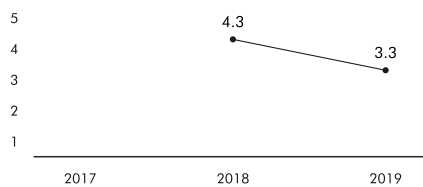
For the few who used a complaints or feedback mechanism, ease of use was rated higher than in the previous year. However, satisfaction with the handling of complaints has declined.

For those who lodged a complaint or suggestion:

How easy did you find making the suggestion or complaint?



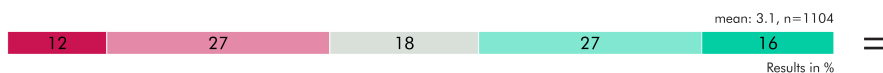
How satisfied were you with the response you received to your complaint/suggestion?



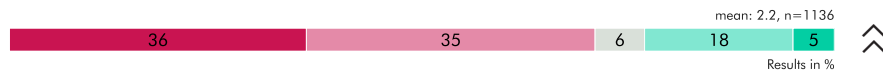
Aid effectiveness and durable solutions

Summary findings

Does aid to go those who need it most?



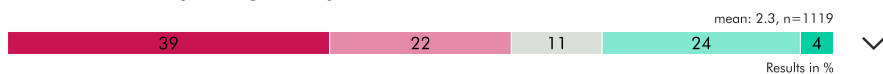
Do the aid/services you receive cover your most important needs?



Do you feel the humanitarian aid/services you receive will enable you to live without humanitarian aid/services in the future?



Overall, is life improving in Iraq?



1 Not at all 2 Not really 3 Neutral 4 Mostly yes 5 Yes completely

Changes in responses since 2018

- ^ Increase in mean score of 0.5 or more **or** increase in "yes" responses by more than 10%
- ^ Increase in mean score of less than 0.5 **or** increase in "yes" responses by 5-10%
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Aid effectiveness and durable solutions: key findings

Forty-three percent of survey respondents believe that aid is going to those who need it most. IDPs view targeting more positively than other groups. At the governorate level, almost 60% of respondents in Ninewa feel that aid is being distributed fairly, compared to those in Anbar (27%). Those living in acute poverty, persons with disabilities, and people living with illness or chronic disease are cited as the groups most often left out of aid provision.



Our situation outside the camps is very difficult, and aid rarely reaches us. We demand a focus on us and to be treated as they treat people inside the camps.

IDP in Duhok governorate, August 2019

While nearly a quarter of the people surveyed believe that the aid they receive meets their most important needs, this has improved since 2018 (10%). Cash, food, and health services are cited as the primary unmet needs. To compare, in 2019 the response targeted 26% of people in need with multi-purpose cash assistance, 45% with food assistance, and 31% with healthcare services.⁸ People spoke of greater food needs in 2019 than in 2018. This may be due to the various interruptions or delays in food distributions experienced in Iraq over the course of 2019.⁹

The majority (67%) of people prefer to receive cash. In the last year, 42% of respondents report having received some form of cash assistance, with most people calling for more.

What kind of cash and/or voucher support do you/did you receive?* (n=389)

20% Multi-purpose cash assistance

13% Vouchers

6% Cash for work

A study conducted by the CCI in late 2018 also found that vulnerable households in Iraq preferred cash assistance over other forms of aid. Cash was found to give recipients more autonomy and the ability to meet a diverse range of needs.¹⁰

The majority (85%) of people surveyed do not feel that their dependence on aid will decrease in the near future. In order to achieve self-reliance, people call for job and income-generating opportunities, cash assistance, and food and household items.

The high and continuous demand for cash assistance may be linked to existing social protection structures – including financial assistance programmes – on which Iraqi citizens have relied for decades. A Brookings Institution study from 2017 found that people in Iraq thus view public assistance as an entitlement.¹¹

Sixty-one percent of survey respondents do not feel life in Iraq is improving. Lack of employment, corruption, and instability are among the main reasons given.

⁸ OCHA, Iraq 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (February 2019).

⁹ WFP, WFP Iraq Situation Report No. 60 (February 2019), https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000104145/download/?_ga=2.139478387.1567423433.1576492778-1778628434.1576230879.

¹⁰ Cash Consortium for Iraq, MPCA in Iraq: Perspectives of Beneficiaries (accessed December 2019), <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/cci-mpca-in-iraq---perspectives-of-beneficiaries-on-impact.pdf>.

¹¹ Talajeh Livani, "Income Inequality, Government Welfare Effort, and Subjective Well-Being: Three Essays" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2017), https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/19839/Livani_umd_0117E_18346.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

¹² CCI, PDM expenditure data (internal document, October 2019).

¹³ REACH MCNA VII.

What are your most important unmet needs?* (n=814)

 **54%** Cash

 **42%** Food

 **20%** Health services

Cash Consortium for Iraq (CCI)

(n=21,132 households)

Data collected by CCI partners between February 2017 and May 2019 show that food (27%), debt repayment (20%), healthcare (13%), and rent (8%) are the top expenditures of cash recipients.¹²

The main barriers to healthcare access across population groups, as reported by REACH, are high medical costs and limited availability of medicines across the country.¹³

What would you need to live without humanitarian aid in the future?* (n=961)

 **59%** Job/salary

 **51%** Cash assistance

 **37%** Food and household items

Why do you feel life is not improving in Iraq?* (n=683)

37% Lack of employment opportunities

32% Corruption

29% Instability/lack of security

28% Ineffective government

26% Lack of aid and services



We need jobs and food, because we haven't received any food items for one year.

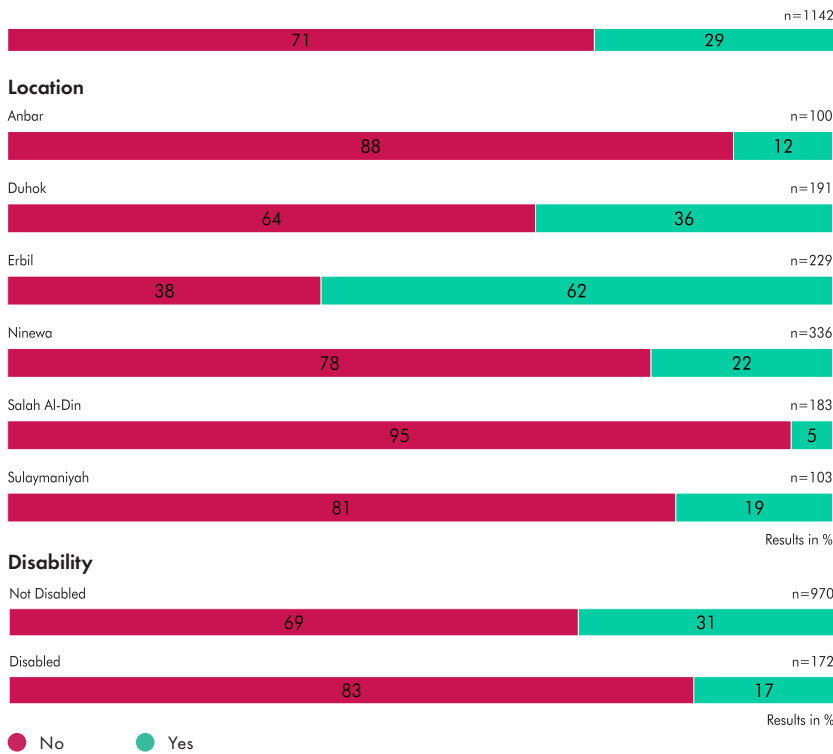
Refugee in Erbil governorate, August 2019

* Only the top responses are shown. Percentages do not total 100 because respondents could choose multiple options.

Aid effectiveness and durable solutions: key findings

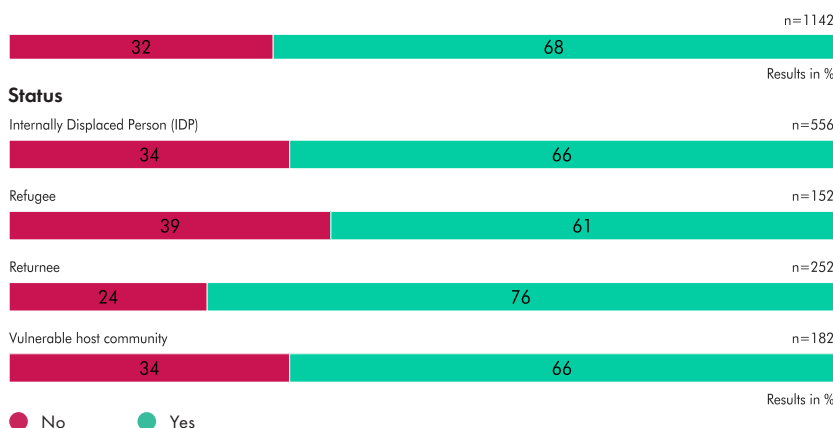
The majority (71%) of respondents do not have access to jobs, and those with disabilities are less able to access employment opportunities. At the governorate level, people in Erbil have more access than those in other locations. Unsurprisingly, those who do not have access to employment are more likely to sell the aid items they receive in order to meet their needs in cash.

Do you or your family have access to employment opportunities?



Sixty-eight percent of respondents say they send their school-age children to education classes. Higher proportions of returnees are attending school, compared to other population groups. Just over half (58%) of respondents are satisfied with the education provided. Those who are less satisfied point to low-quality instruction, lack of education materials, and lack of facilities and teaching staff as reasons for their dissatisfaction.

Do you have any school-age children (6-18 years old) who attend education classes? (n=1142)



The most important thing is any source of livelihood.
Returnee in Ninewa governorate, August 2019

What are the main barriers to employment?* (n=1142)

- 41% Too few jobs in the area
- 30% Lack of necessary connections
- 21% Lack of necessary skills

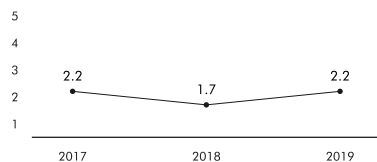
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Aid effectiveness and durable solutions: overview of responses since 2017

Does aid go to those who need it most?

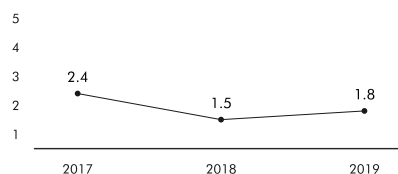


Do the aid/services you receive cover your most important needs?

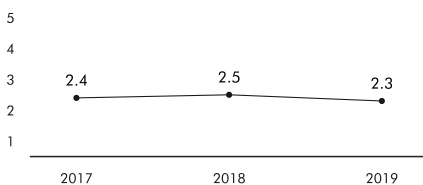


People are less optimistic about the future and prospects for recovery. Due to lack of access to livelihood opportunities, respondents do not feel that they can become self-reliant.

Do you feel the humanitarian aid/services you receive will enable you to live without humanitarian aid/services in the future?



Overall, is life improving for people in Iraq?



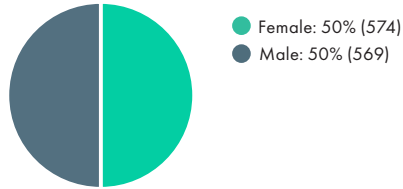
Next steps

These findings provided the basis for follow-up conversations Ground Truth Solutions conducted in Iraq in October 2019 with OCHA leadership, clusters, operational agencies, the IIC, donors, and government representatives. Collectively, we are in the process of agreeing on the final perception indicators and targets to be included in the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan, as measured against the Strategic Objectives. Across the board, there is a desire to increase access to participation, information, and feedback mechanisms, with many activities already underway at the cluster and agency levels to accomplish this. These activities focus on awareness of the call centre as well as other methods. Ground Truth Solutions is providing support for ongoing coordination and accountability efforts under the common services and AAP/communication with communities (CwC) sub-groups of the ICCG in order to encourage, and not merely track, progress.

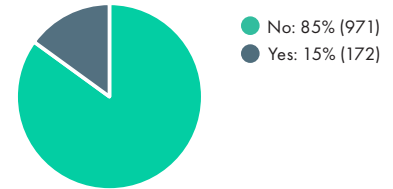
Demographics

1,143 internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, returnees, and vulnerable host community members

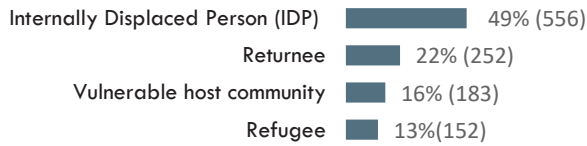
Gender



Respondents with a disability



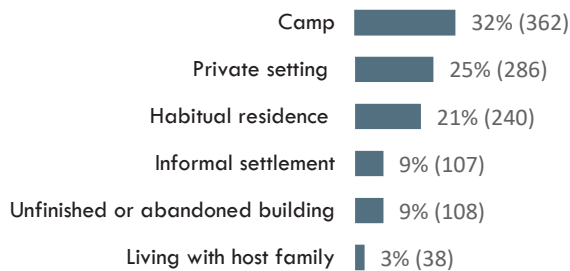
Status



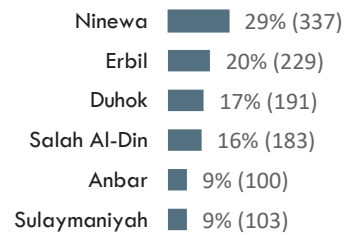
Age



Accommodation



Location



Methodology

Sampling methodology

This cross-sectional survey is the third round of questions to be asked of randomly selected individuals among the affected populations in Iraq. The sampling strategy was designed using the most recent figures (as of 8 August 2019) from the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) returnee and IDP master lists. At that time, the figures reported for Iraq were as follows: 1,607,148 IDPs, 4,305,138 returnees, and 228,851 Syrian refugees. Vulnerable host communities were sampled in areas with an IDP presence, so as to capture the perceptions of communities that have been targeted with assistance within the last 12 months.

In order to strengthen the reliability of the sample and follow the trend of the humanitarian response, in-camp IDPs were undersampled in favour of out-of-camp IDPs. Locations were selected based on a convenience sample devised in consultation with humanitarian organisations and Ground Truth Solutions' data collection partner in country. Adjustments were made in cases where access and/or safety was an issue.

Sample size

1,143 respondents were selected from six governorates, and selection was proportional to the size of the targeted communities. A conservative estimate for response rates was fixed at 50%. Using a confidence level of 95%, this sample size affords an expected margin of error slightly above 3%.

Question formulation

The majority of the survey questions use a Likert scale (i.e. 1 – not at all, 2 – not really, 3 – somewhat, 4 – mostly yes, and 5 – completely yes) or binary (i.e. yes or no) questions. In addition, we asked multiple-choice and open-ended follow-up questions to probe the reasons behind certain responses. Respondents were also given the option of not answering.

Respondents

A respondent is any consenting adult aged 18 years or over who is willing to answer the Ground Truth Solutions questionnaire. Respondents are screened by asking whether they have received aid. No questions are asked of those who have not received aid within the 12 months prior to the time of data collection.

Data collection

Data was collected from 23 August to 14 September 2019, in partnership with the Statistical Office for Social Sciences (SOSS), an Erbil-based data collection firm. Enumerators had previously been trained on electronic data collection devices including KoBo, on which this questionnaire was programmed. Ground Truth Solutions staff trained enumerators on the survey tool, concepts of perception data, and the GTS Code of Conduct prior to the commencement of data collection.

Data disaggregation

Data was disaggregated according to the affected person's status, age, gender, region, type of accommodation, and disability (if any), as well as their status within their household. To identify groups of persons with disabilities within the sample, respondents were asked a condensed series of questions developed by the Washington Group.¹⁴

Data triangulation

Data was triangulated with other data sets, which are mentioned in the report where relevant.

Perception data

Ground Truth Solutions gathers perception data from affected people to assess humanitarian responses. Listening and responding to the voices of affected populations is a vital first step in closing the accountability gap, empowering affected populations to be part of the decisions that govern their lives, building relationships with communities, and localising knowledge. Nonetheless, it is evident that perceptual data alone is insufficient to evaluate the state of the humanitarian response. It should not be considered in isolation, but as a complement to other forms of monitoring and evaluation.

For more information about our work in Iraq, please contact: Meg Sattler (meg@groundtruthsolutions.org), Elias Sagmeister (elias@groundtruthsolutions.org), or Cholpon Ramizova (cholpon@groundtruthsolutions.org).

Author

Cholpon Ramizova – Senior Programme Analyst

Methodology

Statistical analysis

Summary statistics are reported as a percentage of responses in each of the Likert categories. Average values are obtained for each question. Sub-group comparisons are made according to objectives, and change over time is assessed by comparison with past round mean scores. Graphic representation of participant perceptions are produced using green for favourable opinions and red for unfavourable opinions. Neutral responses are shown in grey.

Language of the survey

This survey was conducted in Arabic.

Challenges and limitations

Safety: there were some areas at the sub-district and village levels where enumerators were advised not to collect data due to security and access concerns. In such cases, safer and more accessible locations containing similar caseloads of the target population within the same governorate were selected.

Idiosyncratic bias: during data collection, residents in Qayyarah Airstrip camp in Ninewa governorate and in Al Qadisiya complex in Salah Al-Din governorate were given notice to leave the premises within a given period of time as a part of camp closure and consolidation. As such, respondents in these locations may have been more wary of people collecting data and may have viewed enumerators with more suspicion. Moreover, it is possible that responses were affected by respondents' distress as a result of these circumstances. Enumerators liaised closely with camp and settlement authorities to ensure that they were aware of the objectives of the survey, and proper permissions were obtained. This bias was mitigated to the best of enumerators' abilities by obtaining informed consent from respondents, providing a thorough explanation of the survey and its objectives, and managing expectations by clarifying that participation would not result in immediate changes to the aid or services they receive.

Selection bias: considering the survey's content and the fact that respondents were asked to self-identify as aid recipients, it is likely that some respondents were hesitant to answer honestly when asked whether they had received any kind of assistance (and were therefore eliminated from the sample) in the hope of receiving (additional) services in the future. This bias was mitigated by informing respondents of the purpose of the survey and explaining that their participation would not result in any immediate changes to the aid they receive. The proportion of people who were approached and did not give consent was low, and as such, we have no reason to believe that their lack of participation impacted the results.