

Jada'a1 Center

WFP Rapid Assessment

Assessing Current Conditions and Recommending Strategies for Effective Intervention

JUNE 2024



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Introduction

The plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in Jada'a 1 center demands urgent attention and continuous support. The food security and livelihood challenges faced by residents of Jada'a 1 center are particularly alarming, highlighting the critical need for sustained food assistance and advocacy efforts to address their needs and ensure their well-being. Moreover, with the potential for an increase in returnees from Al-Hol camp, northeast Syria, it becomes even more imperative to bolster existing support mechanisms and infrastructure to accommodate the growing needs of the center residents.

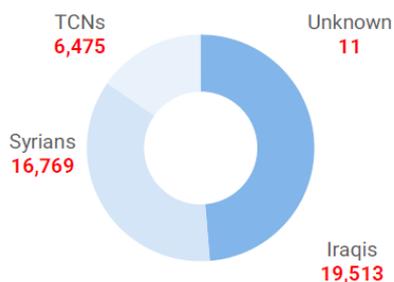


Background

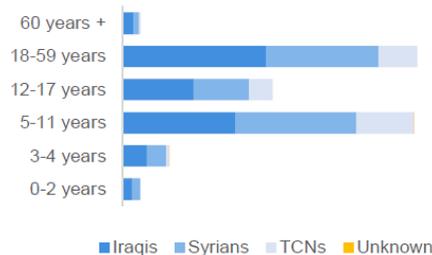
The repatriation of individuals from Al Hol camp in Syria to Iraq represents a pivotal moment in addressing the aftermath of the Islamic State's presence in the region. Initially established as a temporary refuge for civilians displaced by conflict, Al Hol camp experienced a shift in its demographics with the arrival of individuals from ISIL-affected areas, leading to heightened security apprehensions and deteriorating living conditions. Concerns raised by the UN underscored the pressing need for repatriation initiatives, particularly to mitigate the risk of statelessness among vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

As per the OCHA North-East Syria report of February 2024¹, the current population of Al Hol camp is 43,473 individuals, of which 46.2 percent (approximately 20,000) are Iraqi nationals (5,100 households). The overall demographic breakdown shows that 61.5 percent of the population of Al Hol camp are children and 31.6 percent are women.

Breakdown of the nationalities of residents of Al Hol camp



Al Hol camp population-age groups



OCHA - Syrian Arab Republic

An estimated 49 percent of Iraqi nationals displaced into Al Hol camp are originally from Anbar Governorate, and primarily from al-Qaim district (30% of the overall caseload). Smaller numbers

¹ Syrian Arab Republic: North East Syria: Al Hol camp, 4 February 2024 - <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-north-east-syria-al-hol-camp-4-february-2024>

come from Salaheddin Governorates and Ninewa Governorates (more than 4,300, of which over 50% come from Mosul). Many in Al Hol camp are perceived to have a degree of affiliation to ISIL, but the level of affiliation remains unclear.

Iraq has taken steps to facilitate the return of the approximately 20,000 citizens from Al Hol camp, subject to security clearance. Upon repatriation, returnees are resettled in Jada'a 1 center in Ninewa Governorate, where they are provided with essential services as part of the humanitarian response and undergo further preparations before reintegrating into their communities.

Within Jada'a 1 center, humanitarian assistance is provided by various organizations; food security needs of the residents are addressed by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD). WFP assistance consists of an e-voucher with a monthly transfer value (TV) of Iraqi Dinar (IQD) 24,000 for each individual center resident. The residents redeem the e-vouchers at the retailer shop, managed by a WFP partner. The TV is calculated based on a holistic understanding of market prices, government and donor context, ensuring residents meet their essential food security needs. It is aligned with the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) as defined by the Iraq Cash Forum, covering 80 percent of daily kilocaloric (kcal) requirements per person per day. The shop, monitored monthly by WFP, offers a variety of food items, including fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, dairy, canned goods, and dry food, with WFP e-voucher being the sole source of fresh food, dairy, and meat in Jada'a 1 center.

The remaining 20 percent of the daily kcal requirements are covered by MoMD, through in-kind assistance. MoMD assistance is distributed every four to seven weeks at the household level, with each household receiving one or two food boxes depending on its size². The assistance includes items such as rice, sugar, vegetable oil, beans, lentils, wheat flour, milk, salt, noodles, tea, and tomato paste. Despite the irregularity of distribution and the limited diversity of items included in the food basket, MoMD assistance provides essential food items to complement WFP's support, addressing the food security needs of Jada'a 1 center residents.

Given the specific characteristics of the center (no mobility and no cash-based assistance policy) the residents of this center face various persistent challenges including food insecurity and very limited access to livelihoods opportunities. Moreover, it is assumed by UN agencies that the remaining 20,000 Iraqis individuals in Al Hol camp include more complex profiles both in terms of security as well as needs.

Therefore, addressing potential challenges in the context of increased returns and the resulting increase of needs at Jada'a 1 center requires careful planning and collaboration with the Government of Iraq (GoI) and organisations providing services and assistance.

Key challenges include:

Funding Constraints Impacting Food Assistance: Jada'a 1 center grapples uncertainty surrounding future funding for food assistance programs. The lack of clear visibility on funding poses a significant risk to the food security of the center population. Without assurance of sustained financial support, there is a looming danger of insufficient food assistance, exacerbating the vulnerability of already marginalized groups, such as female-headed households, to heightened food insecurity.

² Each household of seven individuals and below, received one food ration box. Households with eight individuals and above receive two food ration boxes.

Lack of Access to Social Protection Schemes: The extremely limited access to comprehensive social protection schemes such as Post Distribution System (PDS) and Social Safety Net poses significant challenges to the well-being of returnees in Jada'a 1 center. Upon arrival in Iraq, returnees, especially vulnerable groups, often lack access to essential social safety nets, exacerbating their socio-economic vulnerabilities. This gap in accessing social protection further compounds the challenges faced by center residents in rebuilding their lives and reintegrating into society.

Civil Documentation Barriers: Access to civil documentation remains a significant obstacle for returning Iraqis in Jada'a 1 center. Delays in documentation issuance, coupled with movement restrictions out of the center, impede returnees' ability to access critical services and resources. The lack of timely and efficient civil documentation processes further exacerbates the challenges of reintegration and access to essential rights and services.

As the number and complexity of cases are likely to increase, it is also anticipated to result in an increase in the number of cases that will require prolonged stays in Jada'a 1 center. Households who have remained in Jada'a 1 center for more than a year have done so due to several reasons, including separation from family members still in Al Hol, pending civil documentation, inadequate housing and livelihoods opportunities in areas of origin, unresolved social cohesion issues in areas of origin, and pending governmental approval to depart.

Methodology

WFP conducted beneficiary surveys among Jada'a 1 center residents using face-to-face data collection to gain insights into their food security situations and overall well-being. Trained enumerators utilized a structured questionnaire to gather key information on living conditions, food consumption patterns, income sources, and migration aspirations. Sampling 10% of the households (70 observations) in the center during the first week of April 2024 ensured a 90% confidence level with a 10% margin of error, balancing statistical rigor with practical considerations. Surveys were systematically and randomly conducted to ensure the findings reflected the broader Jada'a 1 center community. Data collected through face-to-face interviews were meticulously recorded and analysed to discern trends, patterns, and areas necessitating immediate attention or intervention.



Limitations

Despite the careful design and implementation of the surveys, several limitations must be acknowledged. Face-to-face data collection relies on respondents' cooperation, potentially leading to response bias or underreporting of sensitive issues. Surveys conducted within a camp setting may not fully capture the perspectives of all residents, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, lacking a sampling frame for the center population during the assessment meant household selection was not entirely based on probability-based random sampling, possibly

introducing biases. Time constraints during the assessment may have impacted its scale and thoroughness, affecting the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the findings.

Assessment Findings

In April 2024, WFP conducted a comprehensive food security assessment within the Jada'a 1 center, aiming to gauge the current food security situation and understand the prevailing challenges faced by residents. Through face-to-face household surveys, a selected sample of residents provided crucial insights into their food consumption patterns, livelihood opportunities, and coping mechanisms amid the center's challenging environment.



The findings revealed a concerning reality: access to sufficient and nutritious food remains a significant challenge for a considerable portion of the population. Many households, especially those headed by women, are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity with a notable percentage currently experiencing food insecurity or classified as vulnerable. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the limited (if any) livelihoods and income opportunities available within the center, forcing residents to adopt coping strategies that may compromise their long-term well-being and potential for development.

Moreover, the prevalence of crisis coping strategies, such as selling assets and reducing expenses on essential services like healthcare and education, underscores the urgent need for sustained and timely assistance. These coping mechanisms on one hand address immediate needs but at the same time pose a threat to the future prospects of the affected population, hindering their resilience and limiting their potential for socio-economic advancement.

In light of these findings, there is an urgent call for comprehensive support mechanisms to address the multifaceted challenges faced by Jada'a 1 center residents. Timely and sustained assistance is crucial not only to alleviate the immediate food security concerns but also to safeguard the future development and well-being of the center population.

FOOD SECURITY

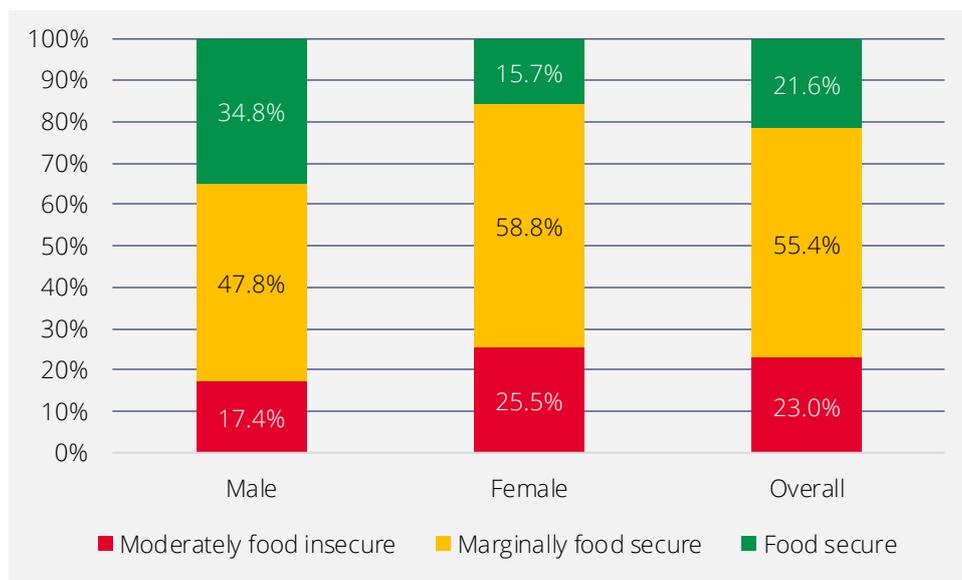
The food security situation in Jada'a 1 center presents a significant cause for concern, with a notable proportion of the population facing challenges in accessing sufficient and nutritious food. Approximately one-quarter (23%) of the population currently experiences moderate food insecurity, while an additional 55% are classified as marginally food insecure, according to the WFP's CARI methodology.

Female-headed households are particularly vulnerable, with 25 percent currently experiencing food insecurity and an additional 59 percent classified as vulnerable. These figures, though indicative, underscore the heightened vulnerability of this demographic group within the center.

Moreover, the pillars of food security - availability, access, utilization, and stability - remain precarious for Jada'a 1 center residents, despite the presence of WFP assistance. Limited economic opportunities and inadequate access to income-generating activities restrict residents' ability to procure food.

Of significant concern is the reliance of households on external aid, particularly WFP assistance, to meet their food security needs. Should this assistance be interrupted without alternative forms of support, only 1 percent of households would be able to maintain food security. This highlights the critical importance of sustained and timely assistance to ensure access to adequate and nutritious food for all residents, especially vulnerable groups such as female-headed households.

Graph 1. Food Security by Sex of Head of Household



FOOD CONSUMPTION

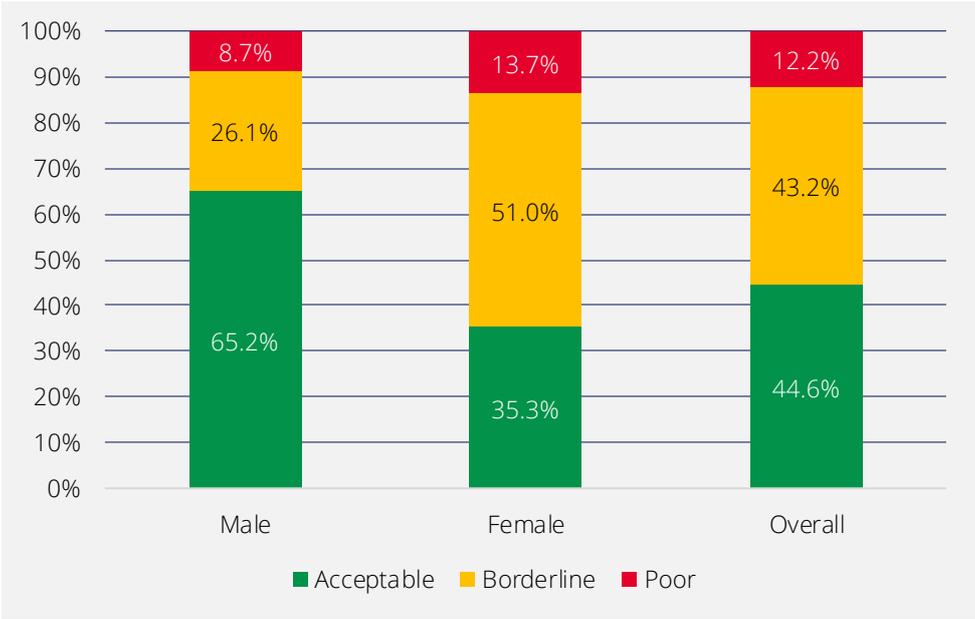
Food consumption in Jada'a 1 center reveals a concerning trend, with over half (55%) of surveyed households falling below the acceptable level of food consumption. This indicates a significant portion of the population are unable to meet the minimum kcal requirements of 2,100 kcal per person per day necessary for a healthy and productive life, despite receiving monthly assistance. Particularly alarming is the situation among female-headed households, where 65percent fail to meet the acceptable food consumption threshold. The inadequate access to animal-based proteins from dairies, meat, and fish, as well as fresh fruits, further exacerbates the challenge of achieving a balanced and varied diet.

Additionally, 70 percent of center residents report having to adapt their consumption behavior due to insufficient food or lack of financial resources. This adaptation often involves resorting to less preferred and less expensive food options, with 60 percent of residents adopting this coping mechanism. Such challenges not only affect the nutritional intake of individuals but also impede their ability to maintain a balanced diet essential for optimal health and well-being. In addition to the challenges highlighted regarding food security, female-headed households in Jada'a 1 center face

higher barriers to both rehabilitation and reintegration³. These households often spend longer periods in Jada'a 1 center due to the need to overcome more significant hurdles in securing a sponsor for their return. This extended stay exacerbates their already critical food security situation, as they struggle to meet their daily food security needs while awaiting the necessary arrangements for reintegration. The prolonged duration in Jada'a 1 center intensifies their vulnerability, amplifying concerns about their well-being and highlighting the urgent need for targeted assistance and support measures.

Furthermore, the impact of a lack of a balanced diet may have far-reaching consequences, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers. Insufficient intake of essential nutrients can hinder the full development of children, leading to growth stunting, cognitive impairments, and increased susceptibility to infections. Similarly, pregnant and breastfeeding women require adequate nutrition to support the healthy growth and development of their infants, and a lack of access to nutritious foods can adversely affect maternal and child health outcomes. Thus, addressing the challenges faced in food consumption is crucial for ensuring the overall well-being and development of individuals in Jada'a 1 center.

Graph 2. Food Consumption by Sex of Head of Household



INCOME AND LIVELIHOODS

The combination of movement restrictions and limited economic opportunities significantly hampers Jada'a 1 center residents in their efforts to generate income. A staggering 75 percent of surveyed households primarily rely on WFP assistance for their livelihoods. Despite an evident willingness to work with 80 percent expressing a desire for employment, only a negligible fraction of households

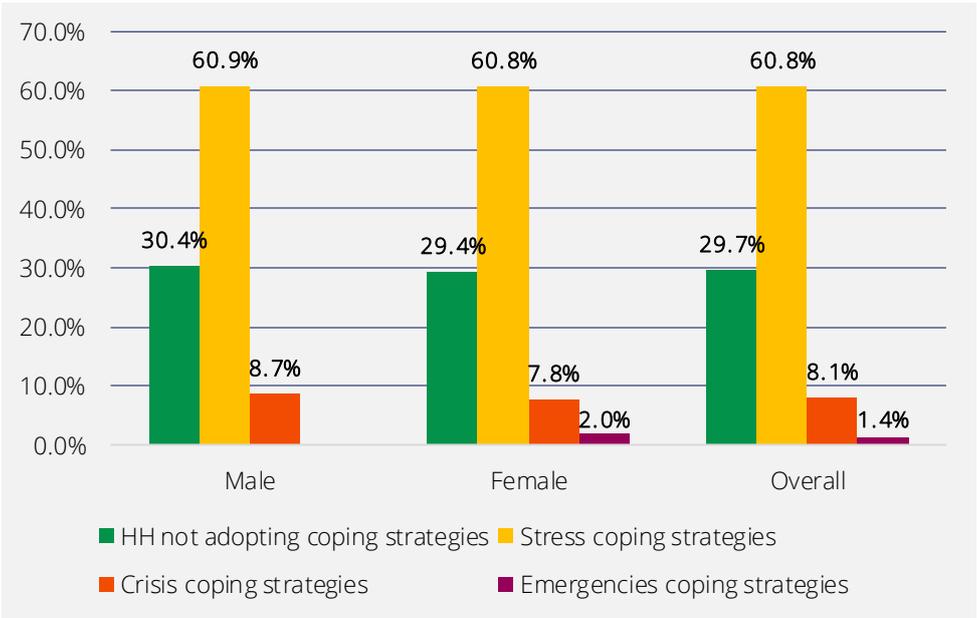
³ "The Road Home from Al Hol Center: Reflections on the Iraqi Experience" – United Nations University; UNIDIR, 2022 - https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:9040/RoadFromAlHol_FINAL.pdf

(3%) are engaged in paid labor. This stark reality underscores the urgent necessity for initiatives aimed at creating income-generating opportunities to empower marginalized populations and diminish their dependency on external aid.

Additionally, due to the pervasive lack of food and/or insufficient funds to purchase essential items, a concerning trend has emerged: 33 percent of male-headed households and a staggering 67 percent of female-headed households have resorted to selling their assets and cutting back on health-related expenses. These distress-driven measures not only exacerbate the households' immediate vulnerabilities but also undermine their long-term prospects. By depleting assets and compromising access to healthcare, these coping strategies erode the resilience and coping capacities of affected households, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and vulnerability. Moreover, reliance on credit to meet basic needs introduces further financial strain, heightening the risk of indebtedness and exacerbating protection risks.

These detrimental coping mechanisms not only jeopardize the current well-being of households but also pose significant challenges to their future potential. Considering the transitory nature of Jada'a 1 center, it is imperative to prioritize meeting the basic needs of its residents to ensure their immediate well-being and mitigate the necessity of engaging in risky behaviors, such as cutting expenses on health. The prevalence of households resorting to selling assets and reducing health-related expenses underscores the urgent need for comprehensive support during their stay in the center. However, looking beyond the confines of the center, there is a pressing advocacy need for a comprehensive package of livelihood support assistance, including integration into national social protection schemes, once residents are allowed to transition out of Jada'a 1 center. Addressing the root causes of income insecurity and promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities should be a central focus during this transition phase to break the cycle of poverty and vulnerability as well as ensure the long-term resilience of Jada'a 1 center residents.

Graph 3. Adoption of Livelihood Coping Strategies by Sex of Head of Household



OTHER ASSISTANCE

While households in Jada'a 1 center receive support from both WFP and MoMD, one out of 10 households expressed concerns regarding the consistency of MoMD assistance, which is occasionally subject to delays or missed distributions. Additionally, a significant portion of households (60%) relies on support from relatives, both within and outside of Iraq.

However, access to PDS for food rations, Iraq's prominent social assistance program managed by Ministry of Trade (MoT), targeting almost the entire population in Iraq and the SSN Programme, a cash-assistance programme managed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) targeting individuals with specific vulnerabilities, remains limited for displaced Iraqis, especially for residents of Jada'a 1 center. Only 1 out of 10 households reported accessing either of these vital social protection systems. The inadequate coverage of the PDS and SSN highlights a critical gap in the provision of essential support for Jada'a 1 residents. Without access to the PDS and SSN, many households face heightened challenges in securing an adequate and consistent food supply, further exacerbating their food security situation.

While assistance from MoMD and WFP offers some relief, the irregularity of MoMD assistance and the limited access to social protection schemes deepen the challenges faced by residents of Jada'a 1 center. It is imperative to address these gaps and ensure the provision of consistent and reliable support mechanisms to alleviate the hardships faced by Jada'a 1 center residents and promote their overall well-being.

Conclusion

The obstacles confronted by Jada'a 1 center residents requires prompt intervention and enduring assistance from governmental bodies, humanitarian organizations, and the international community. The concerning levels of food insecurity, coupled with limited livelihood prospects and the absence of main national social protection schemes highlight the criticality of sustained and timely interventions. Additionally, given the potential influx of returnees from Al-Hol camp, fortifying existing support structures is paramount. Efforts to advance sustainable livelihood initiatives, bolster food security measures, and address migration aspirations must be prioritized. Advocating for sustained assistance holds the potential to significantly impact the well-being of Jada'a 1 center residents and pave the way for a more promising future.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue with Timely and Sustained Food Assistance:

Given the acute food security needs of Jada'a 1 center residents, collaborative efforts between government bodies and humanitarian agencies should prioritize the continuation the timely and sustained delivery of assistance to mitigate the immediate impacts of food insecurity and prevent longer-term consequences. Additionally, maintain regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of interventions and address emerging needs.

Establish Contingency Mechanisms for Interruptions in WFP Food Assistance: Develop alternative plans to address potential interruptions in WFP food assistance due to funding constraints or other factors. In the event of WFP assistance being halted, MoMD should be prepared to expand its current assistance to cover the acute and severe needs of residents in the Jada'a 1 center. This may involve reallocating resources, mobilizing additional support from humanitarian partners, or implementing emergency measures to ensure that no households are left without access to essential food assistance. By proactively planning for potential disruptions, stakeholders can safeguard the well-being of residents and mitigate the adverse impacts of food insecurity in the center.

Improve Access to Social Protection Schemes: Increase access to national social protection systems such as the PDS and SSN to ensure that all eligible households, including displaced Iraqis in Jada'a 1 center, receive essential food security and cash assistance. This requires continued inter-agency advocacy efforts to address barriers to enrolment and assistance provision as well as increased efforts in the processing of civil documentation.

Enhance Support for Female-Headed Households: Recognize the heightened vulnerability of female-headed households and tailor assistance programs to address their specific needs. This may include targeted livelihoods support, access to education and healthcare, and protection measures to safeguard their rights and well-being.

Enhanced Livelihood Opportunities: While residents remain in Jada'a 1 center, efforts should be made to create income-generating opportunities that promote self-reliance and reduce dependency on external assistance. Initiatives such as vocational training, skills development programs, and micro-enterprise support can empower individuals to generate sustainable incomes within the constraints of the center environment. By equipping residents with the tools and resources to earn a living, these interventions lay the groundwork for economic stability and resilience beyond the confines of the center.

Transition Planning and Support: Recognizing that Jada'a 1 center serves as a temporary refuge for its residents, there is a critical need for comprehensive transition planning and support services. This includes facilitating the smooth reintegration of individuals and families into their communities of origin once they are permitted to leave the center. Transition assistance should encompass access to essential services, psychosocial support, and livelihood opportunities tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of returnees. By facilitating a seamless transition process, stakeholders can mitigate the challenges associated with resettlement and promote the sustainable reintegration of displaced populations.

Long-Term Resilience Building: While Jada'a 1 center residents await the opportunity to return to their communities, efforts to build long-term resilience should not be overlooked. Investments in education, skills development, and community infrastructure can empower individuals and communities to withstand future shocks and adversities. By fostering resilience at the individual and community levels, stakeholders can mitigate the risk of prolonged displacement and promote sustainable development pathways for displaced populations.

Advocacy for Policy Reform: Advocacy efforts should be intensified to address the systemic barriers that perpetuate food insecurity and livelihood challenges among displaced populations. This includes coordinated advocacy for policy reforms that facilitate access to essential services, promote inclusive economic growth, and safeguard the rights and well-being of displaced individuals.

Within this context, a technical working group has been established among various ministries, national bodies, and UN agencies as joint coordination mechanism to work on securing the safe return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of Iraqi families from Al-Hol camp. Additionally, the UN has conveyed its commitment to providing technical assistance to the Government to meet both short-term and long-term reintegration needs.

By engaging with policymakers and advocating for evidence-based interventions, stakeholders can drive positive change and create an enabling environment for the dignified and sustainable reintegration of displaced populations.

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