



3.3.2 Situation of returnees

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As of 31 December 2024, the returnees population in Iraq stood at 4 897 128,[1204](#) increasing to 5.1 million of returned IDPs as of 10 April 2025.[1205](#) Since 2021, the Iraqi government has accelerated repatriation efforts, particularly for individuals from Al-Hol and Rawj camps in northeast Syria.[1206](#) The pace of the return process further accelerated since January 2025, in light of the recent developments in Syria, notably the takeover of Damascus by a coalition of armed groups led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in December 2024.[1207](#) In 2024, around 34 % of IDPs left camps in the KRI. Between January and April 2025, 421 families (1 810 individuals) returned, mainly to Ninewa, Salah Al-Din, and Erbil governorates,[1208](#) with the majority of returnees being children and female-headed households.[1209](#)

Returnees faced limited access to services,[1210](#) scarce livelihood opportunities,[1211](#) and security issues, as some had to return in areas impacted by intra-group violence or areas controlled by multiple security actors.[1212](#) Returnees, particularly women, girls, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups often face stigma and harassment,[1213](#) exposing them to negative coping mechanisms,[1214](#) such as exploitation, gender-based violence, trafficking, economic hardship and renewed displacement due to lack of legal identity documents.[1215](#) (See [section 2.6 on Women and Girls](#); see [section 2.7 on Children](#)).

Reintegration is also hindered by damaged infrastructure,[1216](#) landmines and ERW continuing to endanger civilians and impede their movement and livelihoods,[1217](#) as well as insufficient social services.[1218](#) Lack of farming land[1219](#) due to climate change[1220](#) also influenced return decisions. Water scarcity caused tensions,[1221](#) reducing economic stability and hindering durable solutions.[1222](#)

The delayed return of Yazidi IDPs is largely due to lack of security,[1223](#) political and legal challenges, including the 'stalled' implementation of the Sinjar Agreement between the KRG and the federal Government. Consequently, around 100 000 Yazidis from Sinjar remained displaced and living in precarious conditions,[1224](#) many of them in the KRI.[1225](#) In Sinjar, armed groups such as the PKK and PMF compete for control over military, economic, and political power, turning the area into a 'transnational conflict hub' and impeding returns.[1226](#) Many returnees in Sinjar face harsh prospects due to destroyed homes, damaged infrastructure, and the presence of multiple armed groups.[1227](#)

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