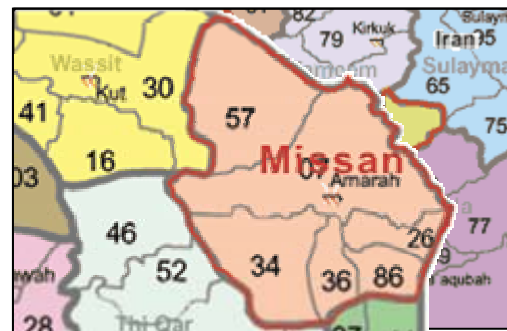




governorate number: 34
Capital: Amara
Districts: Al-Kahla, Al-Maimouna, Al-Mejar
Al-Kabi, Ali Al-Gharbi, Qal'at Saleh,
Amara
Population: 1,100,000



PHASE II MONITORING

IOM's Phase II monitoring compliments Phase I monitoring, which was implemented from April 2004 to September 2005 through a network of NGO partners in each governorate. The main objective of Phase I was to identify varying Internally Displaced People (IDP) caseloads in Iraq, their locations, reasons for displacement, numbers, protection concerns and humanitarian needs. Based on experience from the first phase, the second phase monitoring was expanded to a more in-depth needs assessment and to identify the return intentions of those populations interviewed.

As with the first phase, the second phase implemented a group-level IDP recording form. The data collection and processing was simplified and the coverage focused on IDP categories (pre- and post-2003 conflict and, in some governorates, IDP returnees). The interviewing focused on identifying immediate needs in the areas of water, sanitation, health, education, food, access to legal documents, and income generation. The data collected through the Phase II monitoring will be used for planning community assistance projects and to better understand and address the needs of IDPs.

GOVERNORATE OVERVIEW

Sharing the largest area of border with Iran, the Missan governorate is located in the lower south of Iraq, with Basrah to the south, Thi-Qar to the west, and Wassit to the north-west.

Missan has four major factories: sugar cane; vegetable oil, paper and plastic. Production in these factories has been completely stopped save for limited activity under the vegetable oil industry, where by-products such as soap, washing powder and food cooking oil is continuing albeit at constant monthly loss. The main reasons for this stoppage traces to a lack of work elements and needed resources to start-up the existing machines, a power supply strong and constant enough to maintain necessary heating and cooling systems, sufficient water supply, and upgraded maintenance.

There is a noted increase in building block production (mud-based) and using crude oil as the primary source of agriculture production post dam-lifting back in 2003.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS OVERVIEW

Post 2003	Pre 2003	IDP Returnee	Refugee Returnee	Others At Risk	Total
406	18,465	8,796	1,840*	1,067*	30,574

All figures are in families (on the basis of 6 persons per family)

*Based on Phase I monitoring figures

Missan experiences one of the highest number of pre-2003 conflict IDPs. During Phase II monitoring, 18,465 families were identified. An addition of 406 post-2003 conflict families brings the total IDP population to 18,871.

The reasons for displacement are primarily wars and political and religious discrimination. In the case of Missan, most of the displacement happened from rural areas or remote towns to urban/central areas. The IDP imported with them their own scale of values/traditions that are quite different from those of the host community, creating tension with host communities.

The majority of those under 30 years old expressed their wish to settle in their present place of residence rather than go back to the place of origin. This contradicts the wish of most of their parents/older generation who wish to return to their place of origin.

For the Marsh Arabs, the priority is the possibility to have agricultural lands so that they can go back to their usual activities (fishing, hunting, agriculture). Marsh Arab women usually deal with domestic tasks and transportation of water from the river. The estimated illiteracy rate among them is 80 to 90 percent.

The trend of Shia families escaping from other mixed Sunni-Shia hot spots in Iraq and settling in Missan is now confirmed. It is estimated that their number will increase as the hostilities against Shias are still carried out. They complain they lack basic "winterization" items.

Forty percent of IDPs are reported unemployed and 60% lack technical skills.

IDP DISPLACEMENT HISTORY

Missan has experienced the brunt of the Iraq/Iran war from August 1980 – August 1988, witnessing several waves of displacements, the majority of which are intra-governorate but to a lesser extent shared with Basrah. An important portion of Missan was covered by the marshland drained during the 1990s by the former regime. This explains why most of the IDPs located in Missan are along its southern constituencies with indigenous Marsh Arabs choosing to remain close to the edges of their former home.

In the marshlands extending throughout Ulzair (Qal'at Saleh district) and Mesarah (Al Kahla district) families have been forced out of their houses during the Iraq/Iran conflict or because targeted by the political persecution campaigns of the former regime. Houses and villages of origin have been completely destroyed, making the return of the IDP families impossible without assistance.

In the marshlands extending throughout Salam (Al-Maimouna district) and Adil/Khair (Al Mejar al-Kabi district), more than 2,500 families had been forced out during the period from 1991 to 1994 either as a result of the political persecution campaigns or of the drainage of the marshes ordered by the former regime. As for the IDP caseload in Qal'at Saleh and Al Kahla districts, the level of destruction suffered by these communities does not allow the return of the IDPs without external financial and operational support.

CASELOADS

Post-2003 Conflict IDPs: 406 families

- 23 Marsh Arab families

These families are living in Al-Maimouna district, either in collectives or in public buildings. They have moved into displacement as result of 2003 armed conflict. They come originally from Missan governorate.

- 383 Arab families

Almost 80% of the families belonging to this caseload come originally from Missan governorate itself. They have been forced to leave their residence due to insurgent and military conflict in July 2004. They are now living in Amara, mixed in host communities. Sixty-two families have been displaced from Basrah; they fled their houses in 2003 due to armed conflict. They are currently displaced in Al-Kahla, where they have found accommodation in public buildings.

Post-2003 conflict IDP intentions: Almost 80% of this category of IDPs plans to integrate in their current location. The remainder plan on returning to their place of origin.

Pre-2003 Conflict IDPs: 18,465 families

- 3,615 Marsh Arab families

This caseload includes the Marsh Arab families displaced as a result of the drainage of the marshes ordered by Saddam regime during the 1990s. The assessed families have all left their village of origin in the marshlands of Missan in 1991. Around 2,200 families are currently living in Al-Mejar Al-Kabi district; approximately 1,300 families are displaced in Al-Kaha; the remaining are located in Amara or Al-Maimouna. The families belonging to this caseload are living for the most part in collectives, with a few of them accommodated in host communities. The majority of the assessed families wish to go back to the place of origin.

- 14,850 Arabs families

These families were displaced in Missan after the 1991 Shia-uprising, many as a result of the Iraq/Iran war. The majority of them come originally from Missan governorate itself; only a few IDPs have arrived from Basrah and Baghdad. They are scattered throughout the districts of Amara, Al Maimouna, Al Mejar Al Kabi, and a few in Qalat Saleh and Ali Al-Gharbi. With regard of the type of settlement, they are living for the most part in host communities or in collectives. Around 60% of the caseload wishes to go back to the place of origin.

Pre-2003 conflict IDP intentions: About half of pre-conflict IDPs wish to integrate into their current location. Almost half wish to return to their place of origin, and a small percentage wish to return to their place of usual residence or resettle to a third location.

Returnee IDPs: 8,796 families

The majority of these families are displaced in Al Maimouna (50%) and in Qal'at Saleh (26%), the remaining scattered throughout the districts of Amara, Al-Khala and Ali Al Gharbi. They are living for the most part in collectives (69%) or in camp-like settlements (27%). The caseload includes families who are trying to move back to their place of origin after having been forced into displacement during the 1980s and the 1990s due to the Iraq/Iran war or the drainage of the marshes. The successful return of these families to the villages of origin is currently prevented by the lack of means to rebuild their houses or by the ecological damages inflicted by the drainage operations in the places of origin.

Priority needs: housing, employment, land and Access to health.

25 families originally from Missan, displaced in Thi-Qar since 1991 due to the political persecution, have been reported back to Missan in Ali Al Gharbi. They are now living in camp Kumait.

IDP Intentions: Almost all returnee IDPs wish to integrate in their current location.

Refugee Returnees: 1,840 families

The Refugee Returnee families are all Arabs who have returned from Iran after the fall of Saddam's regime. For the most part, these families have returned to the districts of Qal'at Saleh (30%), Al-Khala (33%) and Amara (24%); a few of them are living in Ali Al-Gharbi and Al Maimouna. They are currently mixed in host communities (53%), accommodated in collectives (36%) or occupying public buildings (11%).

Needs: Housing, employment, land, access to health, and legal assistance.

Others at Risk: 1,067 families

These are families who have been assessed as vulnerable families mixed with IDPs in public buildings of Ali Al Gharbi, Amara and Al Memouna districts.

Needs: housing, water and sanitation and employment

ASSISTANCE NEEDS

Top Priority Needs:

The IDPs in Missan communicated that their top priority needs are:

1. Shelter
2. Employment opportunities

Priority Needs per Sector:

Water:

1. Extension/rehabilitation of water network
2. Desalination of water
3. Compact unit

Sanitation:

1. Garbage containers
2. Construction of latrines
3. Sewage network

Health:

1. Provision of drugs/medicine
2. Construct public clinic
3. Providing instruments and medical staff

Education:

1. School furniture (desks, chairs, etc.)
2. Construction of schools

Food:

1. Adding more items in PDS ration card
2. Distribution of food items

Legal Assistance:

1. Legal representation
2. Legal consultations

Income Generation:

1. Sewing
2. Metal works
3. Carpentry/ Construction

Type of information needs

1. Shelter
2. Employment opportunities
3. Public services

PROTECTION CONCERNS

The security profile in the isolated areas bordering the marshes is characterized by a high presence of criminal activities. Criminal gangs are constraining the free and secure movement of IDP families in and around their place of residence, preventing children from going to school or families from reaching the few health clinics functioning in the area. On the other hand, precarious security and criminal activities mean more difficulties for outreach activities set up by humanitarian organizations and local public administration offices to get in touch and address the problems of the most isolated communities.

As highlighted above, IDPs living in settlements around the districts of Al-Mejar Al Kabi, Qal'at Saleh, Al Kahla and Ali al-Garbi are, for the most part, cut off from the public service coverage of water and sanitation infrastructures, electricity and garbage collection services are not functioning in these areas. Such poor status of the service system entails extreme deterioration of IDP living conditions, thus representing a constant threat to life especially for the most vulnerable segments of the population, such as children and elderly.

Mine fields and unexploded ordnance have been acknowledged by displaced population and authorities in the governorate and witnessed by monitors when visiting the sites, especially in Teeb, Kahla, Uzair and Mushrah sub-districts where they border Iran. MINETECH has worked extensively on de-mining but was interrupted back in April with full pull-out.

Child labor has been reported as a common coping strategy in the region. Children of school age are engaged in small business activities such as selling cigarettes, chewing gums, shining shoes, etc. to support their families during school hours.

CONSTRAINTS

The main difficulties encountered during the IDP monitoring included unpaved roads which made transportation very difficult reaching insecure locations without police escorts, assessment fatigue of the displaced population,

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Durable solutions for IDP families in Missan governorate depend on the future of the marshes, which cover an important portion of the governorate's territory. As mentioned above, the majority of the displaced families currently residing in the governorate are Marsh Arabs forced out of their

village of origin by the drainage campaigns promoted by Saddam's Regime. A pre-condition for the design of a sustainable return strategy for these families is the revitalization of the marshes' eco-system.

Any kind of intervention to repair the damages inflicted to the marshes by the drainage operation will require medium to long term multi-sectoral strategies and massive financial investments. It follows that, at least in the short-term, the return of the displaced families to their place of origin is not possible.

In light of what was just stated, integration in the place of displacement or resettlement appears to be the only option that can be explored. On the basis of the field assessment conducted by our monitoring partners, it seems that especially the young generations are determined to integrate in their current place of residence. Many of the interviewed youngsters have expressed their wish to find an employment in the urban areas and to try to rebuild their life away from their village of origin. Lack of financial means and property issues, however, represent two major obstacles constraining the possibilities for these families to settle in the places of displacement in a sustainable way.

Finally, assessment activities should only be conducted if coupled with concrete assistance.

For further information on IDP displacement in Iraq, please contact the IOM Iraq IDP Program at +962 6 565 9660 or email Dana Graber, Monitoring and Reintegration Officer, at dgraber@iom-iraq.net.

