

Rapid Overview of Areas of Return (ROAR)

Muqdadiya City and Villages to the North

Diyala Governorate, Iraq - October 2018

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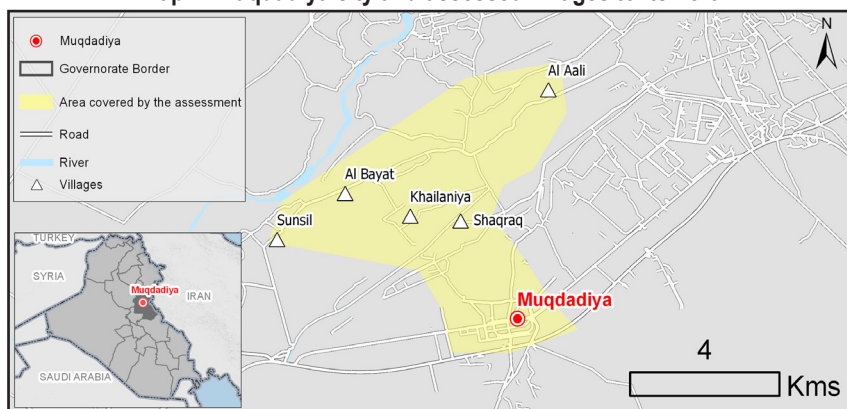
Overview

Muqdadiya is an important urban centre in Diyala governorate, situated about 85 kilometres northeast of Baghdad. It is the capital of the district of the same name and is surrounded by villages and fertile lands due to its proximity to the Sirwan river. There are no reliable estimates of the population of the city, but in 2007 the district's population was estimated at 248,139 individuals.¹ The north of the district is reportedly home to mainly Sunni Muslims, the middle (including Muqdadiya city) to a mix of Sunni and Shia Muslims, and the south to Shia Muslims.²

In June 2014, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) entered the district of Muqdadiya. The group never managed to establish control over Muqdadiya city, instead entering the roughly 40 villages north of the city. As such, people mainly displaced from these villages and from some neighbourhoods in the north of the city.³ Reportedly, the majority of The Government of Iraq (Gol) declared to have re-established control over the governorate in January 2015.⁴ Since the Gol re-established control over the area, about 6,500⁵ to 8,500⁶ families are estimated to have returned to Muqdadiya district. The majority returned to Muqdadiya district between May and October 2015 and between October 2016 and March 2017, while almost no returns have been recorded in 2018.⁷ Roughly 4,000 families, mostly originating from the villages north of the city, were estimated to remain in displacement.⁸ Around 90% of individuals originally displaced from Muqdadiya city was said to have returned to their area of origin at the time of data collection.

Given the limited information available regarding the current situation in Muqdadiya city and the villages to its north,⁹ REACH – in partnership with the Returns Working Group (RWG) – launched a Rapid Overview of Areas of Return (ROAR) assessment in October 2018, which seeks to inform the recovery process in order to support durable and safe returns. The ROAR assessment looks at the motivations behind return, along with the current context related to protection issues, livelihoods, and the provision of basic services in areas of Iraq that are experiencing returns.

Map 1: Muqdadiya city and assessed villages to its north



Key Findings

Priority Needs

Community leader KIs were asked which services needed to be restored most urgently and reported that:

- The top priority need in Muqdadiya city was **construction of a sewage system**;
- The top priority need in assessed villages was **reconstruction of houses and infrastructure, including rehabilitation of burned farmlands**.

Displacement and Return, Protection Concerns

- Key informants returning to the villages north of the city from displacement (returnee KIs) primarily reported coming back because their houses had been repaired by an INGO and because they lacked income in the area of displacement. Among KIs remaining in displacement (IDP KIs), **the main reasons given for not returning were damaged, destroyed or looted property, a lack of livelihood opportunities in the area of origin, and sectarian tensions**.
- The **continued presence of ISIL north of the city** was indicated to prevent some people from returning or from adequately working their lands due to fear of attacks.
- **Explosive hazards were reportedly still present in some of the agricultural lands around the villages north of Muqdadiya city**. The Gol was said to have undertaken efforts to clear the land of explosive hazards but reportedly did not have enough capacity to comprehensively clear the area.
- Families with perceived affiliations to extremist groups were reportedly not allowed to return to Muqdadiya city or surrounding villages.

Livelihoods

- **Livelihood opportunities were limited in the area, especially in the assessed villages north of the city, according to KIs**. They emphasized a sharp decline in the number of people working in agriculture due to the burning of their lands and a lack of funds to restart activities.

Access to Basic Services

- **KIs noted that electricity from the public grid was available in the city and in the assessed villages north of the city**. The duration of access was said to be 12-20 hours per day in the city, but varied greatly between villages, from 3-4 hours to 24 hours per day.

¹ UN Interagency Information and Analysis Unit, "Diyala Governorate Profile", November 2010. ² Reported by a KI with expert knowledge on protection issues in the district. ³ An estimated 20-30% of the residents of Muqdadiya city displaced while almost all residents of the villages to the north of the city reportedly displaced, see: Reach, "Humanitarian Overview of Five Hard to Reach Areas", December 2016, p. 15; and see section 'Current Trends' below for more information. ⁴ Associated Foreign Press, "Iraq forces 'liberate' Diyala province from IS", 26 January 2015. ⁵ Reported by a KI with expert knowledge on protection issues in the district. ⁶ IOM, "Displacement Tracking Matrix (Round 105)", October 2018. ⁷ Ibid. ⁸ Ibid., and confirmed by a KI with expert knowledge on protection issues in the district. ⁹ REACH enumerators collected data from KIs with knowledge of the villages of Sunsil, Khallaniyah, Shaqraq, Al Bayat, and Al Aali the north of the city (see Map 1). It was not possible to determine the geographic location of all villages, so not all are included in the map.

- **Healthcare facilities in Muqdadiya city were said to be operating at the same level as before the arrival of ISIL.** Shaqraq, Sunsil, and Al Aali villages were reported to have a small public health clinic, which was no longer staffed by a doctor but only by medical assistants since the arrival of ISIL.
- Most children in Muqdadiya city and the surrounding villages were said to be able to access some formal education. However, KIs indicated that **the number of schools, teachers, and supplies were insufficient, especially in the villages.**
- KIs stated that the piped water network in Muqdadiya city and Shaqraq village was functional, but **the water from the network was not always suitable for drinking.** Residents in Al Bayat and Al Aali villages were reportedly not at all connected to the water network, while in Sunsil only some households had access. In those villages, residents reportedly use wells to access drinking water.
- Municipal **waste disposal services were indicated to only be available in the city** and not in the surrounding villages. There was reportedly no system to dispose of wastewater in the city.

Methodology

REACH enumerators collected data from 23 male and two female¹⁰ key informants (KIs) from Muqdadiya city and villages north of the city. These KIs include four returnees, five KIs who remain in displacement but originate from the area, seven community leaders, and nine KIs with specialist knowledge in one of the sectors covered by the assessment (see Table 1).¹¹ Respondents were identified through partners and REACH KI networks. Data collection took place between 10 and 15 October 2018 through remote telephone interviews.

Limitations

Findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically generalizable to the assessed area. Furthermore, KIs often provided estimates rather than exact figures, which should also be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings.

Table 1: Number and profession of KIs with specialist knowledge

Area	Number	Profession
Protection	3	Community leader and international organisation (IO) workers
Healthcare	2	Director of a public healthcare facility, health clinic employee
Education	2	School headmasters
Water	1	Local government worker
Electricity	1	Government worker
Livelihoods	1	International organisation (IO) worker

Developments

In December 2016, REACH conducted a rapid assessment of livelihoods, shelter damage, and basic services in Muqdadiya city and the villages to its north.¹² In comparing the current findings with that assessment, the following points stand out:

- Although security is still seen as an important challenge in the area north of the city, it is less explicitly reported than at the end of 2016. At that time, KIs reported insecurity as their main challenge while in the current assessment damage to houses and lands is said to be the main challenge.
- In October 2018, only two instances of secondary displacement were reported whereas at the end of 2016, 70% of returnees to the villages reportedly re-displaced.
- At the end of 2016, KIs reported significant overcrowding due to damaged houses while this has not been reported in the current assessment. In addition, some KIs in the current assessment stated that an INGO was working on repairing houses.
- Little progress was found to have been made on livelihoods, with KIs still reporting damaged farmlands, lack of equipment, and a lack of daily labour opportunities as crucial challenges
- KIs in the current assessment found education a bigger challenge than KIs at the end of 2016, with current KIs reporting damage to school buildings and a lack of teachers and supplies while in 2016 only a lack of supplies was reported.
- The quality of water in the city was reported to have decreased. In 2016, KIs said that the water was safe to drink whereas currently multiple KIs reported that the water was not safe to drink and was causing diseases.

Movement Intentions

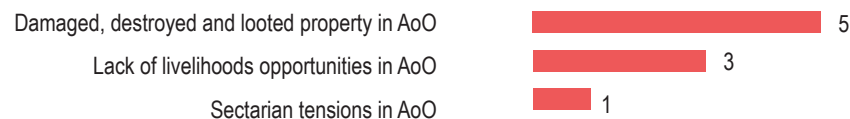
Current Trends

At the time of data collection, a KI with expert knowledge of protection issues (protection KI) estimated that about 6,500 families had returned to the Muqdadiya district, while 4,000 families, primarily originating from the villages north of Muqdadiya city, remained in displacement. KIs further estimated that more than 90% of people who were displaced from Muqdadiya city, had returned to their area of origin at the time of data collection.¹³ Two KIs reported instances of secondary displacement: significant numbers of people were reportedly re-displacing from Sunsil due to damage to their lands and the ensuing lack of livelihood opportunities, while another KI reported that people re-displaced from certain villages north of Muqdadiya due to sectarian tensions.

¹⁰The assessment aimed to have an equal number of male and female KIs. however, given the context in Muqdadiya, only two female KIs could be identified by the assessment team. ¹¹In some cases, the same KI was classed as an expert in more than one subject area. ¹²Reach, "Humanitarian Overview of Five Hard to Reach Areas", December 2016, p. 15. ¹³KIs estimated that around 75% of inhabitants displaced from the Al-Salama and Al-Baloor neighbourhoods, while no displacement was reported from Al-Jihad, Al-Glub, and Al-Mohsn neighbourhoods. No information was reported about the other neighbourhoods of the city.

All returnee KIs reported having been displaced within Diyala governorate, and all IDP KIs were still displaced within the governorate (Muqdadiya, Baquba, Khanaqin and Kalar).¹⁴ The KIs who had returned to Muqdadiya city and the surrounding areas reportedly made use of rental cars or taxis to make the journey. Car rental costs were reportedly between 150,000 and 240,000 IQD,¹⁵ depending on the size of families, the amount of luggage, and the travel distance. A taxi reportedly cost about 15,000 IQD.¹⁶ All returnee KIs indicated that they needed to obtain security clearance from authorities in Muqdadiya city before returning to their area of origin. Authorities reportedly denied this security clearance to family members of individuals with a perceived affiliation to extremist groups.

Figure 1: Reasons reported by IDP KIs (5 in total) for not returning to their AoOs



Why are IDPs not returning?

IDP KIs most frequently reported destroyed or damaged property (reported by all IDP KIs) and a lack of livelihood opportunities (three out of five IDP KIs) as reasons for not returning to their area of origin. They noted a lack of funds to repair and rebuild their homes, signalling the need for government or humanitarian support in order to return.

Two IDP KIs also reported security threats as a barrier to return, including perceived affiliation to extremist groups and long-standing tribal tensions. One KI reported that these threats are prohibiting return and causing secondary displacement, while adding that the parties involved in one such tribal tension had unsuccessfully attempted to resolve the dispute through bilateral negotiation. At the same time, two out of seven community leaders reported that the government was working on easing sectarian tensions and that, as a result, these tensions had decreased over the past twelve months.

A number of community leader KIs (five out of seven) from Muqdadiya city and surrounding villages reported that individuals were unable to return to certain villages north of the city due to the presence of ISIL.¹⁷ One KI stated that the government does not allow IDPs to return to certain villages north of the city, without being able to clarify which villages this concerned. Additionally, almost all KIs reported that families of individuals with perceived affiliations to extremist groups were not allowed to return. One KI added that this prevents a significant number of people from returning because it applies to the extended family of individuals perceived to be affiliated to extremist groups.

Damage to infrastructure and housing

During the period of ISIL presence, the villages to the north of Muqdadiya city and some neighbourhoods in the city sustained significant damage to housing and infrastructure. A KI with expert knowledge of protection issues estimated that about 50% of houses in the villages north of Muqdadiya were completely destroyed or severely damaged, which was corroborated by other KIs. For instance, all 1,200 houses in Shaqraq village were reported to have sustained damage and 300 of them to have been completely destroyed. In Al Aali village, 50% of houses were said to have been completely destroyed, and an additional 25% to have been looted. KIs indicated that humanitarian actors were restoring some damaged houses in Shaqraq and Al Aali villages, but would not work on fully destroyed houses. In Al-Baloor neighbourhood of Muqdadiya city, 100 houses had reportedly been destroyed while most had sustained some damage. In Al-Jihad neighbourhood, about 15 houses were said to have been completely destroyed while most had sustained some damage.

Furthermore, KIs reported extensive damage to the farmlands and infrastructure around the villages, mostly because lands had been burned, fruit trees cut down, and equipment looted. KIs also indicated severe damage to educational facilities in at least one village. Lastly, the bridge connecting Shaqraq village to Muqdadiya city was said to have been destroyed.¹⁸

Why have people returned?

Returnee KIs were asked what factors had led them to return. The most common responses were the lack of livelihood opportunities in the area of displacement and improved livelihood opportunities in the area of origin (both reported by two out of four KIs).¹⁹ Other motivating factors for return were having their house rebuilt by an INGO, an improvement in the security situation, a desire to return home, and high living costs in the area of displacement (all reported by one out of four KIs). All KIs reported renting houses in cities in Diyala governorate (Kalar, Baquba, and Muqdadiya) while displaced, which contributed to a high cost of living. One KI reported an instance of forcible return, while another noted that he did not want to return but had to in order to retain his job. It is unclear whether these were isolated experiences or other members of the community experienced them as well.

How are IDPs getting information?

In terms of what information influenced the decision to either remain in displacement or return to their areas of origin, the most commonly cited source among both IDPs and returnees was through directly visiting their area of origin. Secondly, IDPs and returnees reported getting information through telephone calls with relatives or community leaders in the AoO. No KIs reported receiving information through official channels from international or government actors.

¹⁴ This is in line with IOM DTM findings that most displacement in Diyala takes place within the governorate: IOM, 'Displacement Tracking Matrix (Round 105)', October 2018. ¹⁵ Approximately 126 and 202 USD. Price converted using www.xe.com on 23 October 2018. ¹⁶ Approximately 13 USD. Price converted using www.xe.com on 23 October 2018. ¹⁷ In this instance, KIs referred also to a number of villages north of Muqdadiya not assessed in the current assessment, thus indicating that some of the problems are likely to extend beyond the current area of assessment. ¹⁸ See also: Reach, 'Humanitarian Overview of Five Hard to Reach Areas', December 2016, p. 15. ¹⁹ Out of these 2 KIs, 1 reported that he had to return in order to retain his job but would have preferred to remain displaced.

Actors providing services

The Gol was said to have distributed food and non-food items (NFIs) and to have improved the provision of water and electricity. In addition, KIs reported that humanitarian and development actors are active in Muqdadiya city and some villages to its north. However, it seems that this support does not reach all villages, as some were reportedly not receiving any assistance at the time of data collection. The assistance provided by humanitarian organizations in the city and surrounding areas was said to include:

- Renovation of damaged houses
- Repairs to the water treatment plant and network
- Repairs to the electricity network
- Food and NFI distributions
- Cash distributions, cash-for-work, and vocational training
- Social cohesion programs
- Provision of school supplies
- Legal services

Protection Concerns

Perceptions of Safety and Social Cohesion

- KIs reported feeling very safe inside the city and the villages due to the presence of sufficient security actors, but one returnee KI reported that residents of his village had felt the need to create a militia to protect themselves. Three out of the four returnee KIs also reported that people do not feel safe outside of the villages, especially when going to their farmlands, due to the continuing presence of ISIL and of explosive hazards. Three community leader KIs and an expert KI also indicated that ISIL was still present north of the city. One returnee KI reported that local armed groups create insecurity due to shifting power dynamics and their interactions with the location community.
- Multiple KIs reported the presence of explosive hazards north of the city, while four KIs reported that the government had undertaken some demining activities in this area. One of those KIs reported that the government did not have enough capacity to effectively demine the entire area. Multiple KIs reported that there were no explosive hazards present in Muqdadiya city and one KI indicated that the government had cleared explosive hazards in the city.

- Community leader and returnee KIs indicated that the security situation had improved over the last year, most likely due to the arrival of additional security forces and increased communication between forces.

Freedom of Movement

- Residents reportedly avoid areas north of Muqdadiya city due to fear of ISIL and explosive hazards. In addition, security forces reportedly do not allow people to travel in certain areas north of Muqdadiya city for undisclosed security reasons. The roads to Sunsil village were said to have recently reopened, and the prior road closure had reportedly adversely impacted access to livelihoods and basic services.

Legal Concerns

- KIs reported that Muqdadiya city has a functioning court with a sufficient number of judges, lawyers, and prosecutors available. KIs further indicated that it is possible to file criminal complaints at the police station or directly at the court. KIs generally reported that complaints and court cases were dealt with in a timely manner, but three KIs perceived elements of the legal system as unfair or partial. For instance, one KI indicated that the time to process a court case largely depended on how well-connected the applicant was, while another indicated that financial incentives could expedite the treatment of a case.
- Residents from the villages north of Muqdadiya city were said to have to travel to the city for all legal services except filing complaints, which they could do at the local police station.
- Many KIs reported that people had lost civil documentation but that it had been easy to replace these documents at the police station or the court. One KI indicated that people whose family members were wanted for alleged affiliation to extremist groups faced difficulties having documentation renewed, with officials only renewing documentation if the wanted family member was handed over to security forces.
- A number of KIs reported informal dispute resolution mechanisms being used before or instead of official procedures, especially in the villages. The mechanisms named were mediation between heads of families or dispute settlement by the Mukhtar.
- Two KIs indicated that the government had assessed damage to houses and infrastructure, but had not provided compensation thus far. Some KIs reported that this lack of government compensation prevented people from fixing their houses and was thus a barrier to return or caused returning families to move in with relatives.

Livelihoods

- The majority of returnee and community leader KIs indicated that there are very few livelihood opportunities in the area, albeit a bit more in the city than in the villages around. A KI with specialist knowledge of livelihoods (livelihoods KI) stated that the majority of households do not have sufficient income.
- Inside the city, the main reported sources of income were government or (I)NGO employment, daily labour, and agriculture. In addition, KIs reported that some people inside the city were self-employed, such as through owning a shop or driving a taxi. Residents of the villages north of Muqdadiya city reportedly relied almost exclusively on agriculture before the arrival of ISIL but were now engaging more in daily labour due to difficulties in resuming farming activities.
- Returnee and community leader KIs indicated that very few individuals are currently able to generate income from agricultural activities. The primary reasons for this decline are that the majority of farmlands were burned and a lack of funds to restart agricultural activity. Residents reportedly needed funds to buy seeds, to replace stolen equipment such as generators, and to buy the required chemicals. In addition, one KI reported that it takes long for the fruit trees²⁰ to grow back and start producing sufficient fruit. Lastly, as described above, residents of the villages reported being afraid to go to their fields due to the presence of ISIL and of explosive hazards.
- One returnee KI indicated that it is also hard for residents from the villages to do daily labour because the transportation to Muqdadiya city is expensive and it is difficult to arrive in the city early enough to do daily labour. Additionally, two KIs stated that female headed households were facing particular difficulties in finding work and sustaining themselves.
- One KI with expert knowledge of livelihoods indicated that there used to be a lot of quarries in the area but that they have not reopened since the arrival of ISIL.
- The main financial burdens reported were day-to-day living expenses, the reconstruction of houses, and health care costs. As primary coping mechanisms for a lack of income, individuals were reportedly resorting to community support, borrowing money, and relying on NGO aid. Two KIs reported that some children were working in order to sustain their family.
- The government has reportedly not supported farmers since the arrival of ISIL and there are reportedly no humanitarian actors working on agricultural activities.
- Four KIs reported that the livelihoods situation slightly improved over the twelve months prior to data collection whereas the other KIs did not indicate a change in the situation.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

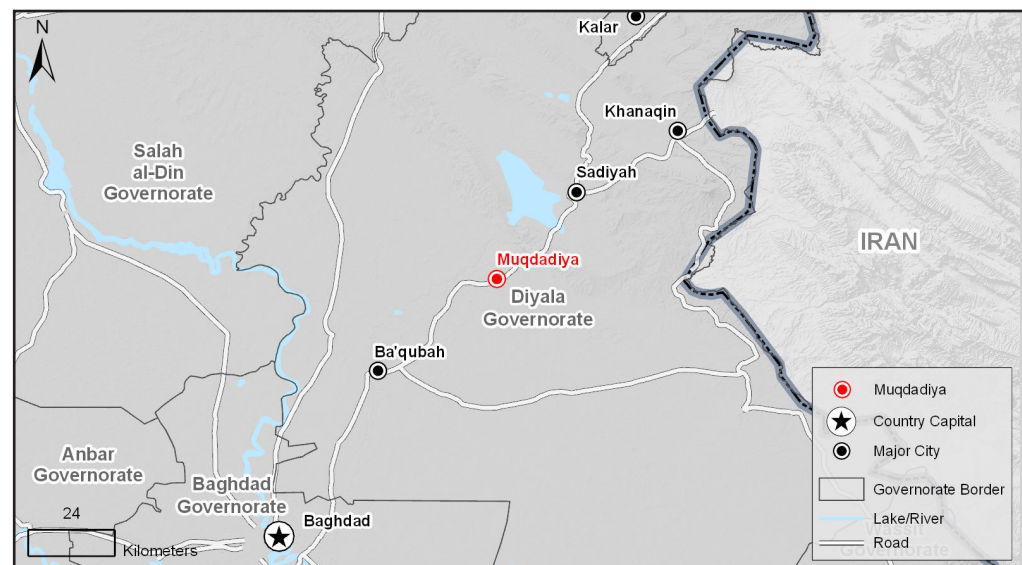
Multiple KIs reported the need for financial support for the agricultural sector to buy equipment, seeds, and restore farms.

Basic Services

Electricity

- Community leaders from Muqdadiya city and from the villages all reported that everyone in their community had some access to electricity. The same was reported by four returnee KIs to the villages north of Muqdadiya city and a KI with expert knowledge on electricity (electricity KI).
- The electricity KI reported that the Gol had repaired all damage that the electricity network had sustained during ISIL occupation, and that the supply was now better than before the arrival of ISIL. However, the network supplies 150V electricity (instead of the desired 220V) due to poor maintenance.
- Two KIs reported that the supply of electricity to their village had significantly improved over the last twelve months, while two others stated that it was still below pre-ISIL levels.
- Community leader KIs from Muqdadiya city reported having 12 to 20 hours of public grid

Map 2: Muqdadiya in relation to Khanaqin, Ba'qubah, and Baghdad



²⁰ Which was the main agricultural activity before the arrival of ISIL.

electricity per day, while residents in the villages were reported to have widely differing access times, ranging from 3 to 4 hours per day (Al Bayat village) to 24 hours per day (Shaqraq and Al Aali villages).

- All KIs reported having to pay for electricity, the average amount depending on family size and the season. Estimates ranged from 20,000 to 70,000 IQD per two months.²¹ One KI indicated that they were paying much more than before the arrival of ISIL.
- All KIs reported having access to community generators whenever the public grid was not available. The only reported barrier to accessing community generators was the cost, which the majority of KIs reported to be 10,000 IQD per ampere.²²

Improvements Suggested by KIs

The electricity KI reported a need for more technical experts and better means of transportation between different power stations in order to improve the maintenance of outdated infrastructure.

Healthcare

- All KIs reported having some access to public healthcare facilities.
- Muqdadiya city was reported to have one general hospital and one hospital for women and children. Additionally, Muqdadiya city reportedly has a number of public and private health clinics and pharmacies.
- Shaqraq, Sunsil, and Al Aali were said to have a small clinic in the village, which provided only the most basic services. Before ISIL these clinics were reportedly staffed by a doctor and assistants, whereas now they are only staffed by assistants. Additionally, some KIs indicated that their village had a small private pharmacy. Most KIs reported having to travel to Muqdadiya city for medical care or for buying medication; however, a KI with expert knowledge of healthcare (healthcare KI) reported that the cost of this travel is a barrier to accessing care for some people.
- KIs reported having to pay 2,000 to 3,000 IQD for a visit to the hospital.²³ Public pharmacies reportedly had only basic medication available for free, thus requiring people to pay for certain medications at private pharmacies. Multiple KIs indicated that the price of medication had gone up significantly compared to before ISIL. KIs reported paying 2,000 to 3,000 IQD for a visit to the small public clinic in their villages.²⁴
- A healthcare KI reported that the most common health needs were kidney diseases, skin problems, and chronic diseases. A number of community leader KIs also indicated that kidney diseases were a common health need.
- The same healthcare KI indicated that the general hospital lacked dialysis and x-ray machines, and did not have a large enough intensive care unit to meet needs.

- Two community leader KIs noted an improvement in the access to healthcare in Muqdadiya city over the last twelve months, due to the improvement in security and freedom of movement, especially at night.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

A healthcare KI reported the need for more mobile clinics to reach people in the city and surrounding villages who cannot afford to pay for transportation to healthcare facilities. The one mobile clinic that is currently in use does not cover all the needs.

Education

- All KIs reported that children in the city and surrounding villages have access to some form of education.
- In Muqdadiya city, the state of the education system was reportedly similar to before the arrival of ISIL. The main problems remained a lack of teachers, insufficient supplies, and overcrowding. KIs did not report any conflict-related damage to education facilities in Muqdadiya city.
- Educational facilities in the villages were said to have sustained damage, with at least seven school buildings damaged in Sunsil, one in Shaqraq, and one in Tokel. Schools in Shaqraq and Sunsil villages were said to use prefabricated caravans as a temporary solution, which created problems in summer and winter when the schools become very hot or cold. At times this would reportedly prevent the school from opening.
- The Al Bayat and Al Aali villages reportedly suffered from a lack of government-supplied educational facilities,²⁵ and had to resort to renting a private house from which they operated a school. Both villages reportedly did not receive any supplies or furniture from the government,²⁵ who only provided teachers. Nonetheless, the schools in the villages were said to have a lack of teachers.
- Two community leader KIs from Muqdadiya city reported that some children are not going to school because they are working to provide for their family.
- Three KIs stated seeing an improvement in the state of the education system over the last twelve months, with one KI adding that the equipment in the school had significantly improved.

Improvements Suggested by KIs

Education KIs indicated a need for more teachers, to renovate old school buildings, and to build new school buildings.

Water

- According to a KI with specialist knowledge on water provision (water KI), the piped water network in Muqdadiya city was functional. This KI also reported that the water was available 24 hours per day and that it was clean enough to drink. However, three community leader KIs from Muqdadiya city reported that the water was not adequate for drinking, and that it caused kidney diseases and diarrhoea among the population. These KIs indicated that there was no damage to the water infrastructure but that there were not enough funds to adequately operate the water treatment plant (WTP). As a result, people were reportedly resorting to filtering water at home or using chlorine tablets.
- Water was reported to be available between two and five hours per day in the city, mostly at night. About 150 households in the Al-Jihad neighbourhood of Muqdadiya city were reportedly not connected to the network.
- KIs stated that the piped water network in Shaqraq village was functional, but the water from the network was not always suitable for drinking. Residents in Al Bayat and Al Aali villages were reportedly not at all connected to the water network, while in Sunsil only some households had access but the pressure was inadequate. In those villages, residents reportedly use wells to access drinking water. The municipality reportedly tried to reach these villages with water trucks but was not always successful due to a lack of trucks and insecurity north of the city. As such, many villages were said to rely on water from wells or the river.
- An international NGO was reported to be working on the water infrastructure in Shaqraq and Al Bayat villages and was expected to complete this soon, providing water to all inhabitants. The water KI also stated that humanitarian actors were working on extending the reach of the water network into the villages.
- Households with access to piped water all reported paying for access to water, with the cost depending on the amount used. Estimates ranged from 3,500 to 20,000 IQD per month.²⁷

Improvements Suggested by KIs

The water KI stated that the main WTP needs new filters and have some of its water tanks fixed in order to improve the quality of the water provided.

Waste Disposal Services

- All five community leader KIs from Muqdadiya city indicated the lack of a system to dispose of wastewater in the city. They reported that such a system had never been constructed in the city and was currently their most urgent need. On the other hand, solid waste was said to be collected one to two times per week and either from all streets in their neighbourhood or only from the main roads. However, two KIs reported that residents of their neighbourhoods still disposed of waste themselves by dumping or burning it because the municipal collection system was not sufficient.
- No municipal waste collection system reportedly existed in the assessed villages. Residents reportedly collected their trash themselves and either dumped it outside of the village or burned it.
- A humanitarian actor was reported to be setting up a waste collection system in Shaqraq village.

About REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms.

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About the Returns Working Group (RWG) Iraq

The Returns Working Group (RWG) is an operational and multi-stakeholder platform on returns, which was established in line with Strategic Objective 3 of the 2016 Iraq HRP “to support voluntary, safe and dignified return” of IDPs; to monitor and report on conditions in return areas, and determine to what extent durable solutions have been achieved- or progress made- for returnees.

The key objective of the group is to establish coherence of information, data and analysis, strengthen coordination and advocacy, give guidance on activities related to the key areas, and enhance complementary action among its partners with the overall goal of supporting and reinforcing the national response to Iraq’s coming reintegration challenge.