BA’AJ MULTI-SECTOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT (MSNA) REPORT

Study of the conflict-affected urban and rural communities within Ba’aj, with the aim of identifying the humanitarian needs faced and social conditions. This study undertaken by the Danish Refugee Council with the support of the International Organization for Migration.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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<th>Key findings</th>
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| DEMOGRAPHICS | ▪ Current estimated total of 1,960 households residing in Ba’aj Centre  
▪ 47% identified as host community, 40% returnees and the remaining are IDPs residing in Ba’aj  
▪ All displaced respondents stated their area of origin to be Ba’aj district and are currently displaced from the Ba’aj villages surrounding Ba’aj Centre  
▪ 92% of return and IDP families intend to remain for the next 12 months  
▪ 5% of the interviewed households intend to move elsewhere within Iraq during the 3 months following the assessment due to not having livelihoods opportunities in Ba’aj |
| WASH AND INFRASTRUCTURE | ▪ Water supply was flagged as one of the primary concerns, particularly water quality- including complaints of poor water clarity and a saline taste  
▪ 11% of households receive less than 30 litres per person per day  
▪ Piped water is available once per month to those with connections to it, and the population relies heavily on water trucking  
▪ The expense of water is cited as one of two main reasons to take up debts in Ba’aj  
▪ 1% of residents treat their drinking water  
▪ The poor state of the roads impairs access to food supplies and public services seasonally  
▪ Public electricity is reported available for only one hour per day |
| HEALTH | ▪ Lack of adequate health care facilities was cited as a primary reason why residents would not return to Ba’aj preferring to remain in displacement elsewhere in Iraq  
▪ The paramount barriers to access with health services in Ba’aj are cited by respondents as cost, lack of medicines and lack of services  
▪ There is a hospital in Ba’aj Centre however patients report needing to have to travel to Mosul to access X-ray, Sonar, surgical assistance, emergency health services and maternity care  
▪ 85% of health issues suffered by residents in Ba’aj are chronic health issues  
▪ 5% of respondents cite a physical disability within their families  
▪ At least 7% have at least one member of their household with psychological distress  
▪ In both locations more than 75% of children have not been vaccinated against polio and measles |
| FOOD SECURITY | ▪ 11% of the households of Ba’aj are deemed food secure, 77% marginally food secure and 12% moderately food secure  
▪ 18% of households reported relying on credit to purchase all food items  
▪ The level of food consumption is acceptable within 94% of households. Due to financial hardship families report relying on less preferred and lower cost foods to maintain acceptable levels of food consumption  
▪ 25% of the residents of rural, Karab Al- A’urna had insufficient access to food in 15 days prior to the assessment  
▪ Only 34% of households do not rely on negative coping strategies to meet their basic needs. The most used strategy is borrowing credit (47%) and selling assets (30%) |
| PROTECTION | ▪ Respondents cited a lack of safe spaces for women and children compared with what was experienced in camps which was attributed to a feeling of isolation for women and impact on mental health  
▪ Significant inter-communal tensions were described between the populations of Sinjar and Ba’aj  
▪ Marriage of children (both boys and girls) above the age of 12 was reported to be considered normal  
▪ Instances of children working from as early as 6 years old, and a total of 5% of children under 17 are engaging in forms of labour  
▪ The court in Ba’aj Centre is operating only 1 day per week, which limits resident’s access to legal services.  
▪ 22% reported a family member missing ID cards, since 42% of respondents report needing to show official documents at checkpoints, the lack of ID card is likely to cause challenges accessing areas outside of Ba’aj and therefore access to services unavailable locally. |
### Shelter/NFI
- 99.5% of households reported a need for NFIs, most often: blankets, cooking fuel, sleeping mats and cooking stoves
- 49% of families’ property or land was damaged during the conflict, and in Ba’aj Centre approximately 200 houses sustained damage. Due to a lack of financial capacity and high cost of construction materials, 118 remain destroyed, and 22 damaged
- In Karab Al- A’urna 50% of the houses are partially destroyed, mostly due to the houses being constructed with mud and more vulnerable to structural collapse
- 12% of residents not residing in their own homes feel at risk of eviction. Four fifths of those of these due to a lack of funds for rent
- 7% of respondents had been evicted in the last 12 months and 16% said that the property they are currently living in or own elsewhere is under dispute

### Education
- The reported challenges with education in Ba’aj include insufficient numbers of schools, lack of teachers, and the years of education missed by children during the conflict which caused some to discontinue education upon return
- Estimated 50% of the proportion of the school aged children in Karab Al- A’urna not attending school
- In villages around Ba’aj such as Soroj village, where education facilities are absent, pupils walk long distances along poor road conditions to reach Ba’aj Centre, and routes are often impassable during winter
- 21% of respondents have a child within the household who is out of school, with 12% citing the reason for this to be insufficient documentation
- The number of children not in school has increased every year since 2017 when it was only at 10%

### Livelihoods
- 76% of adults are unemployed and actively seeking work in Ba’aj.
- People have jobs as shepherds or farmers and that daily wage is the most common source of income (63%). Other jobs include shop owners, and government jobs within security forces
- 50% describe their employment as unstable due to it being seasonal, or casual arrangements
- Ba’aj is a highly culturally conservative area, with 97.5% of the female population of Ba’aj not employed
- 63.3% of retailers stated that the demand for credit increased since the crisis, implying issues with the purchase power

### Accountability
- The preferred channels for delivery of aid information are face-to-face (66%), telephone/mobile (16%) and TV/radio (16%)
- People generally rely on receiving information from Mukhtars, local authorities (65%) and friends in area of origin (60%)
BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

DRC Iraq expanded the Multi Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA) V7 tool developed by REACH Initiative and the Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) tool endorsed by the OCHA lead Assessment Working Group. Data collection took place between 3 February and 11 February 2020 with the support of IOM, in the locality of Ba’aj, approximately 45km south of Sinjar in Ninewa governorate, Northern Iraq. The purpose of this report is to provide information to orient humanitarian programming in the location.

In June 2016 until July 2017, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), Iraqi Sunni Militias (IM-Su) supported by Coalition Forces (CF) and the Kurdish Regional Government – Security Forces (KRG-SF) carried out a military campaign to retake areas in northern Ninewa Governorates held by the so called Islamic State (IS) since mid-2014. During the course of the operation, a large proportion of the residents of Ba’aj were displaced to IDP camps across a wide area- in Al Hol in Syria, as well as newly established camps in Duhok and Southern Ninewa. Many returns to Ba’aj occurred during the closure of the Southern Ninewa IDP Camps in October 2019, when across Ninewa the number of IDPs decreased by 22%\(^1\). One of the two districts hosting the highest number of a total of 10,045 households leaving camps was Ba’aj.

The district of Ba’aj is located in western Ninewa governorate, it borders the Syrian border to the west, the district of Sinjar to the north, Hatra to the east, and Anbar governorate to the south. The area comprises a majority Sunni-Arab population, and access is via Sinjar town, a predominantly Yazedi area. Control across the district is predominantly by local PMU and 20th Division from the Iraqi Army.

According to the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix from October 2019, there have been 2,050 households returns to the area to date, although figures are increasing daily with humanitarian initiatives such as ‘go and see visits’ where facilitated visits inform displaced households of the conditions at their area of origin to make informed choices about returning.

Despite the recent large volume of population movements, relatively little is known about the recent needs of the households residing in Ba’aj. The Iraq Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment round VII in August 2019\(^2\) had limited data collected in Ba’aj District due to barriers to humanitarian access, including assessment authorizations. Now that the area has become more accessible to humanitarian organisations, relatively little more than anecdotal evidence of needs is available. As such DRC, with the support of IOM, decided to conduct a multi-sector needs assessment in Ba’aj district.

METHODOLOGY

The MSNA is informed by a combination of a desk research and analysis of quantitative and qualitative results from households surveys, relevant technical observations, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions with community groups to collect multi-sector basic information and provide the best possible overview of humanitarian conditions in Ba’aj.

The data was conducted using a variety of tools. Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant interviews utilised the Rapid Needs Assessment endorsed by the Assessment Working group, and household surveys were based on the Multi Cluster Needs Assessment V7 tool developed by REACH Initiative. The study included a rapid Market Assessment. This utilized the Rapid Assessment of Markets (RAM) tool developed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and tailored to the unique Iraqi context through extensive collaboration with the Cash Working Group (CWG) and CWG partners and often utilized through joint data collection exercises.

The tools consist of pre-defined and well-tested structured questionnaires designed to collect basic information on humanitarian conditions on contexts related to conflict and displacement, including questions on Education, Emergency Livelihoods and Markets, Food Security, Health, Protection, Shelter/NFI, WASH needs.

\(^1\) DTM_112_Report_September_October2019

\(^2\) Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020
HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

The household survey is designed with a 95% confidence level and 6% margin of error, with an estimated total of 1,960 households in Ba’aj Centre. 286 households were interviewed, 274 in Ba’aj Centre, and 12 in a village 9km north of Ba’aj Centre called Karab Al- A’urna. Sampling was conducted through a street household count randomization method in order to achieve geographical coverage. Responses were mostly provided by the head of household, which allows for more reliable data on the intentions and consumption variables. 15 enumerators were trained in the digital collection method (phones Survey CTO collector). The team of enumerators was led by a DRC staff member who ensured data quality in terms of household selection and data collection. The image below offers the GPS location (20mts precision) of the surveyed households:

The data collected included the family gender and age composition which was modelled after completion to confirm that respondents were not skewed towards any one demographic. Since the model well matches the Iraqi demographic distribution, the sampling can be considered representative in terms of age and gender. The below graph shows that Ba’aj is primarily composed of single family households, of an average size of 6 in line with the Iraq average.

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3 IOM DTM Dataset Return Index Round 6 November 2019.
LIMITATIONS OF THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

- Households who faced significant barriers to return due to health, or threat to personal safety will be under-represented in the sample as data was gathered in the location of return
- Respondents were asked to self-report expenditure on items which cannot be verified and is open to bias
- The data presented only reports information on sectors, DRC did not verify answers such as the services available at hospitals, and the number and types of schools

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Focus group discussions were undertaken separately in Ba’aj Center and Karab Al- A’urna to give a comparison between rural and urban community needs in the area. In each location, FGDs were separated according to age and gender and asked about community needs as well as social dynamics. The groups were the following:

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<tr>
<th>Ba’aj Centre (Urban)</th>
<th>Karab Al- A’urna (Rural)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male Mukhtars (40 years and above): 11 participants</td>
<td>Male residents of Karab Al- A’urna (mixed ages): 14 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male residents of Ba’aj (18 to 30 years old): 15 participants</td>
<td>Female residents of Karab Al- A’urna (30 years and above): 9 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female residents of Ba’aj (18 to 30 years old): 9 participants</td>
<td>Female residents of Karab Al- A’urna (30 years and above): 9 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female residents of Ba’aj (31 years and above): 9 participants</td>
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A Key Informant Interview was undertaken with the Directorate of Municipality in Ba’aj to give a technical overview on the community needs in terms of gaps in municipal service delivery and triangulate findings from the FGDs and HH survey.

LIMITATIONS OF THE FGDs AND KIIS

- Mukhtars presented favourable image of community
- Selection/recommendation of participants to FGDs by the Mukhtars
- Lack of sensitivity by participants to the specific needs of women, children, and people with disabilities
- Potential reluctance to share sensitive concerns openly with the presence of others
- Limited availability of other governmental departments for KIls

RAPID ASSESSMENT OF MARKETS

A market assessment was conducted in Ba’aj to determine accessibility of marketplaces and availability of essential commodities at reasonable prices in the area of assessment. It also determined the feasibility of cash-based interventions in Ba’aj and determine the potential for livelihoods regeneration and job creation programming.

The method used was the Rapid Assessment for Markets (RAM) to provide a quick and basic first understanding of key markets. The tools included market mapping, to reveal possibilities for market-support interventions and identify entry points to support market recovery⁴. The population groups of interest were actors related to the market for basic food and non-food items in the selected area, including those who rely on the market as a source of livelihoods (traders) and those who rely on the market to supply them with essential items for household consumption (consumers).

166 (2 Female, 164 Male) Key Informant Interviews were conducted with respondents between 18 to 65 years old.

⁴ICRC, Rapid Assessment for Markets: Guidelines for an Initial Emergency Market Assessment, p. 5
LIMITATIONS OF MARKET ASSESSMENT

- Only 2 of 99 consumer surveys were conducted with female respondents. This is as a result of limited presence of female customers at the marketplaces assessed. This limits integration of gender perspectives into the market survey.
- Perceptions of safety were asked at the marketplace, which will have biased results, as perceptions of those feeling unsafe enough to not come to the marketplace would not be recorded.
- The data was collected during a very cold period which limited data collection in market, especially with consumers.

OBSERVATION

DRC led a rapid, observation check list to assess infrastructure damage, in addition to the direct observation undertaken as part of the market’s assessment described above. This was too used to triangulate findings from other data sources. The focus was primarily on public infrastructure such as roads and municipal service, as well as private shelters.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the 286 interviewed, 47% identified as host community, 40% were returnees and the remaining are IDPs residing in Ba’aj. However in this study ‘returnee’ refers to only those returned in the last 3 months, and ‘host community’ could include a return occurrence more than 3 months prior, a person within their district of origin outside their own home, as well as a person that was never displaced. The data found many respondents identifying as ‘host community’ while being displaced from the Ba’aj villages surrounding Ba’aj Centre. This is in line with anecdotal reports that around 40% of the original population of Ba’aj did not return, and around the same number displaced within Ba’aj Centre from surrounding villages.

Those returning had an average of 22 months in displacement. While there has been a significant number of returns during 2018 and 2019, the number of returns in 2020 took place within one month only, representing a substantial increase in rate of return as a result of camp closure efforts in Southern Ninewa. 9.8% of those interviewed returned in 2020. Some of the displaced community did not return to Ba’aj and chose to displace elsewhere as a result.

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<th>Tool</th>
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<td>Market Observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAM – Retailers Survey</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAM Consumers Survey</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAM – Wholesalers Survey</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>60</td>
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5 Definitions given to enumerators. ‘IDP’: Displaced outside the district of origin; ‘Returnee’: Returned to Ba’aj, their district of origin within the last 3 months; ‘Host community’: From Ba’aj district.
of damage to private property, lack of job opportunities, and poor health facilities in the area of origin. Following the return to Ba’aj there has been no reported family separation or missing persons.

The marital status by age data below shows that the number of widows between 20 and 59 years old exceeds 6%. This percentage is higher than the number of widows under 60 years old typically found in the general population. This contributes to the high incidence of female-headed households, which stands at 20%, double the national Iraq average of 10% (UN).

When asked on the household movement intentions, 92% of return and IDP families intend to remain for the next 12 months. However, 5% of the interviewed households intend to move elsewhere within Iraq during the 3 months following the assessment due to not having livelihoods opportunities in Ba’aj.

WASH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Water supply was flagged as one of the primary concerns from respondents, particularly water quality- including complaints of poor water clarity and a saline taste. This correlates with the REACH Country Assessment\(^6\) that found that Ba’aj has some of the lowest rates of satisfaction with water nationwide, at only 22% of households reporting satisfaction.

While the average water quantity available daily is estimated to be 81.1 litres per capita, 11% of households fall below WASH Cluster Minimum Standards with less than 30 litres per person per day.\(^7\)

\(^6\) REACH Iraq, Out of Camp Fact Sheet, December 2019

\(^7\) Calculation is a division of the amount of people using the same household tank, the tank capacity and the number of times the tank is refilled per week. This calculation has limitations, as the household is asked to estimate the tank capacity.
The formal water supply infrastructure has sustained some damage, with one of two supply projects serving the town (Hai Thura Water Project) entirely dysfunctional due to contamination with oil. The other remaining largescale water supply source (Karab Bajar Borehole project) is shared across a wide rural area in Ba’aj and is not operating at full capacity due to inadequate power supply, and pipeline damages. As such, piped water is available as little as once per month to those with connections to it, and the population relies heavily on water trucking. The finding that only 1% of the residents treat water before drinking can imply high trust in the water quantity or limited knowledge or resources to treat water.

The average household spending on water trucking is 25,000 IQD/month, although some households report spending more than three times this amount, as shown by the graph below. Households report relying on negative coping strategies in order to meet this expense including selling assets, using credit, and borrowing money and the expense of water and food is cited as the main reason to take up debts in Ba’aj.

![Graph showing frequency of HH expenditure on water](image)

The town and village assessed appear relatively free of solid waste, as the Municipality that collects and removes garbage, that it is dumped at an informal site just outside the town limits.

While the whole population has a private toilet, often the toilets when full, needs to be replaced, as residents lack the finances to desludge the facility. Some residents raised concerns about the local sewage network, reporting that the network is not functional in all neighbourhoods, and that effluent runs into a valley which becomes blocked when it rains causing a risk to public health.

Other infrastructure challenges included the poor state of the roads in and around Ba’aj. They stated that rain causes the surrounding villages to become cut off from the town centre, which results in difficulties for those with medical conditions to obtain treatment. Culverts under roads have collapsed causing some areas to be completely isolated and out of reach during rainy seasons.

Inconsistent access to electricity was also noted as a significant challenge within Ba’aj. Reportedly, public electricity is only available for one hour a day. Families are reliant on community generators, but those who live far away receive no power, as do those with limited economic resources to pay generator fees/fuel for generators.

87% of households in Ba’aj report having access to enough soap and practicing regular handwashing. 10% of the respondents reported not prioritizing soap use to wash hands, whereas the remaining 13% report not having enough soap to do so regularly. In general, schools in Ba’aj suffer from insufficient latrines and most have no water supply.

**HEALTH**

Lack of adequate health care facilities, that was reportedly available prior to the conflict, is cited as a primary reason why residents would not return to Ba’aj preferring to remain in displacement elsewhere in Iraq. As such, the household survey may show an
under reporting of health issues or of households facing health challenges. The data shows that 88% of the respondents currently have no health issues.

The paramount problems with health services in Ba’aj are cited by respondents as cost, lack of medicines and lack of services as detailed in the figure below.

There is a hospital in Ba’aj Centre that also serves the surrounding villages. However, this offers limited services with patients reporting to have to travel to Mosul to access X-ray, Sonar, and other similar services. Respondents also reported having to travel elsewhere beyond Ba’aj for medical supplies. Other cited missing services include surgical assistance (reported by 91.6% of the respondents), emergency health services (33.7% of the respondents) and maternity care (reported by 72% of respondents). A lack of doctors was flagged as an issue, as well as a poor supply of medicines. In addition to the hospital a local NGO, DARI, operate two mobile clinics.

Major safety concerns were cited using the roads through Sinjar due to tensions between residents of Ba’aj and Sinjar and some would only make this journey in case of emergency, and only using an ambulance.

The overwhelming majority (85%) of health issues suffered by residents in Ba’aj are chronic health issues, most notably: listing diabetes, asthma and high blood pressure as well as kidney disease: associated by residents to the poor quality of water. Conflict related health issues and communicable disease are prevalent at 6% and 9% respectively. There is a low rate of respondents citing a physical disability

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\(^a\) DRC used the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning questions, to assess disability. Here, disability is determined as anyone having answered ‘a lot of difficulty’ on at least one of the six questions.
within their families, at 5% when compared to the National average at around 8%\(^9\). Of these, there is an approximately even number of cases reporting mobility disabilities, hearing, sight and communication challenges, with none more prevalent than another. Of those respondents with a member of the family with a disability, 64% cannot access one or more health services due to that disability. This is in most cases because of high costs and inaccessible facilities; however, distance and social stigma are also mentioned as barriers to access to the service.

Karab Al- A’urna village doesn’t have any Public Health Centre since the formerly functioning clinic is out service. As such, the nearest medical facility is 9km away in Ba’aj Centre. Here too, lack of financial capacity, and lack of available chronic disease medication were cited as the main reasons preventing rural populations to access to adequate healthcare.

Mental disabilities were mentioned in both rural and urban locations: a high proportion of respondents (at least 7%) have at least one member of their household with psychological distress. The data also indicates that there are often several cases within households where mental disabilities are prevalent.\(^10\)

In both locations more than 75% of children have not been vaccinated against polio and measles.

**FOOD SECURITY**

Using UNWFP-CARI analysis\(^11\) only 11% of the households of Ba’aj are deemed food secure, with 77% marginally food secure and 12% moderately food secure.

Food Security Groups

- 1. Food secure 100 (11%)
- 2. Marginally food secure 710 (77%)
- 3. Moderately food insecure 111 (12%)

The market is in the centre of Ba’aj hosts several vegetable vendors (56), mechanics/ car maintenance (47) and minimarts (44). Consumers generally rely on cash to purchase all their major food items; however, 18% of households reported relying on credit to purchase all food items.

The level of food consumption is acceptable within 94% of households. Families have reported relying on smaller portions, less preferred food options, and lower cost foods to maintain acceptable levels of food consumption despite the financial hardship.

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10 The MCNA VI questioner designed by REACH asks the direct question to household respondent “Do any members of your household suffer in the last 30 days and show signs of psychosocial distress or trauma such as nightmares, lasting sadness, extreme fatigue, being often tearful or extreme anxiety?” Direct questions on sensitive subjects as these might lead to underreporting.

11 This method uses the food consumption, level of emergency of the coping strategies, and the food expenditure ratio to the rest of the expenditure to categorize the household in four groups of food security.
In rural locations, it was recorded that 25% of the residents of Karab Al- A’urna had insufficient access to food in 15 days prior to the assessment. While usually families eat 3 meals a day, sometimes this is reduced to 2 due to a lack of economic resources to travel to Ba’aj and purchase food as there is no market in the village.

Only 34% of households do not rely on negative coping strategies to meet their basic means. The most used strategy is borrowing credit (47%) and selling assets (30%). The figure below shows the prevalence of the use of negative coping strategies in both locations covered by the assessment.

The participants stated that PDS is available to most of the community but does not function effectively.

**PROTECTION**

Due to the tribal system that exists within Ba’aj district, it was reported that people generally trust and support each other and feel safe when walking alone in streets. When a major problem occurs, it is usually the Sheikh or head of the tribe to solve it. Results from the household survey, however, showed that women typically avoid the marketplace and distribution areas. Nevertheless, this is likely more a result of the strict social norms that determine women’s engagement in the public space and not because of a feeling of personal safety.

Furthermore, very few women were observed in marketplaces, and socializing is culturally practiced inside houses only. Respondents cited there being a lack of safe spaces for women and children compared with what they experienced in camps. Respondents noted that this may contribute to a feeling of isolation for women, which can impact mental health.

**CHILD PROTECTION**

Marriage of children (both boys and girls) above the age of 12 was reported to be considered normal. While underreported in the data gathered from the HH surveys, this was cited as common in the community in the FGDs.

There is a high number of children working from as early as 6 years old, and a total of 5% of children under 17 are engaging in forms of labor. The prevalence of child labour was cited to be due to the inability of children to catch up with the years of education
missed during the conflict and lack of access to education. In addition, 31% of the households lack the documentation to enrol children in school (See Education section).

In both rural and urban settings there are no specific places for children to play.

**DOCUMENTATION**

Documentation is available from the court in Ba’aj Centre. However, this is functioning at a low capacity and operating for one 1 day per week, which limits the access of the population of to legal services. Those with the most limited access include women who were married to perceived IS affiliates who are now unable to change their civil documentation; and the residents of Q’ataniya village - which belongs administratively to Sinjar, who are reportedly unable to access civil documentation services in Sinjar Town.

The visual below shows the number of households with at least one person missing a personal documentation. The most reported missing documents are death certificates, inheritance and passports, amongst others. Of particular note, the assessment found a high prevalence of people reporting that at least one family member is missing birth certificates (31%). The lack of this document inhibits children’s access to education. In addition, 22% of respondents with a family member missing ID cards, since 42% of respondents report needing to show official documents at checkpoints, the lack of ID card is likely to cause challenges accessing areas outside of Ba’aj and therefore access to services unavailable locally.

Similar to the situation in the rest of the country, the most prevalent form of documentation per household is the public distribution system (PDS) card.

When comparing movement restrictions reported in Ba’aj to the national average it is much lower in terms of time, with only 4% reporting delays in checkpoints in Ba’aj compared to 37% across Iraq. Conversely the need to show official documents in Ba’aj is almost double the national average, at 42% compared with the average of 25% in the rest of Iraq. As described above, this emphasised the impact of the lack of documentation faced by households on their freedom of movement.

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12 Reach MSNA version 6, September 2019, page 36 figure 20
HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION

Ba’aj Centre and Karab Al- A’urna are cleared from mines by the Iraqi Government and the road between Sinjar and Ba’aj has visible markings from MAG to denote that the presence of explosive remnants of war (ERW) remaining in the agricultural land beside the road.

Despite interventions from mine actors, 74% of the residents of Ba’aj do not have awareness of mines and knowledge of unexploded ordinance. When asked, 87% of respondents did not witness fighting in the area, and 98% responded that they have no knowledge of any armed incidence taking place in the vicinity.

95% of respondents mentioned the personal risk to safety was the major barrier preventing returns.

SHELTER/NFI

During displacement, roughly 85% of the shops and houses were reportedly looted, with high value electrical items (such as televisions and fridges) being stolen and households lack economic resources to replace them. 99.5% of households reported a need for NFIs, with the most prevalent need being for blankets, cooking fuel, sleeping mats and cooking stoves. It was reported that most of the returnee residents in Ba’aj cannot afford to buy shelter materials and most of the NFI items are items brought from IDP camps. In rural locations, it was reported that blankets are repurposed to replace glass from broken windows.
49% of families’ property or land was damaged during the conflict, and in Ba’aj Centre approximately 200 houses sustained damage. Of these, 60 households have repaired their own houses. However, due to a lack of financial capacity and high cost of construction materials, 118 remain destroyed, and 22 damaged. This is much higher in rural locations such as Karab Al- A’urna in which 50% of the houses are partially destroyed. This is owing mostly due to the houses being constructed with mud, and this causing them to be more vulnerable to structural collapse. Of the respondents who reported needing improvements to their houses, the primary concern is protection from hazard, followed by improve tenancy.

The average household spent 192,000 IQD on shelter repairs in Ba’aj Centre and the estimated costs to repair a partially destroyed house in a rural location is cited to be around 2 million IQD.

In cases when the homeowner was perceived to be affiliated with IS, the house has been reportedly repossessed and used as a public office causing the residents to displace elsewhere or rent locally. This has occurred with 80 houses. However, if the owners have displaced elsewhere, the case will not be captured in the household data.

Of those not residing in their own homes, 12% of residents feel at risk of eviction. Four fifths of those at risk of eviction are due to a lack of funds for rent and the second most common reason is due to a lack of formal agreement with the homeowner. 7% of respondents had been evicted in the last 12 months and 16% said that the property they are currently living in or own elsewhere is under dispute.

EDUCATION

The major reported challenges with education in Ba’aj include insufficient numbers of schools, lack of teachers, and the years of education missed by children during the conflict which caused some to discontinue education upon return.

There are 7 primary schools and 3 secondary schools in Ba’aj. While some sustained damage during the conflict, these have been rehabilitated by NGOs and are now functional. The number of schools in Ba’aj district are not enough to accommodate the number of children in the area, classes are overcrowded with more than 70 children per class. Multiple schools are having to run double shifts in order to try to meet the needs of students in Ba’aj.

A focus group estimated the proportion of the school aged children in Karab Al- A’urna not attending school to be 50% since there is only 1 primary school in the village without enough teachers. The distance to Ba’aj is 9km and there is no means of transport. Secondary school aged children wait on the road for transport to school. However, in some cases girls stay at home due to fear of harassment. In villages around Ba’aj such as Soroj village, where education facilities are absent, pupils walk long distances along poor road conditions to reach Ba’aj Centre, and routes are often impassable during winter.

In Karab Al- A’urna the community privately fund volunteer teachers to supplement government employed teachers.
21% of respondents have a child within the household who is out of school, with 12% citing the reason for this to be insufficient documentation. Many families described losing documentation during displacement, and within Ba’aj there are approximately 100 Syrian refugee families with stateless children due to lost IDs during displacement. Children from families with members perceived to be affiliated with IS also cannot attend schools. The number of children not in school has increased every year since 2017 when it was only at 10%.

In addition, it was mentioned that schools, in general, suffer from poor teaching materials and unequipped latrines and have no water.

**LIVELIHOODS**

The household survey showed that 76% of adults are unemployed and actively seeking work in Ba’aj. The main barriers to employment include not enough jobs, available jobs being far away and job seekers being underqualified for the available jobs. Of the 26% that are working, these are mostly doing casual labour, shop owners, and government jobs within security forces.

The market assessment also found that people have jobs as shepherds or farmers and that daily wage is the most common source of income (63%).

The household assessment found that only 39% of the people employed consider their employment stable. 50% describe their employment as unstable due to it being seasonal, or casual arrangements.

Ba’aj is a very culturally conservative area, with 97.5% of the female population of Ba’aj not employed. This contributes to the finding that a
A higher proportion (74%) of single, female headed households that earn less than the cost of the survival minimum expenditure basket, compared with married households (62%).

Only 34% of households do not rely on negative coping strategies to meet their basic needs. The most used negative coping strategy is borrowing credit (47%) and selling assets (30%). The prevalence of use of negative coping strategies is illustrated in the figure in the section on Food Security.

The largest proportion of a household’s monthly expenses on average include debt, shelter/NFI and food, each representing around one fifth of the total average household expenses as shown in the diagram to the right.

Debt in Ba’aj is, similarly to the national average, five times higher than average monthly income and the main reason for taking up debt in the community is either for food or healthcare.

**MARKET ANALYSIS**

In total, 488 retailers were identified in Ba’aj urban centre as shown on the map to the right. 448 smalls to medium-sized shops and 40 larger shops. and the main source of supplies showed to be Ninewa district, specifically Mosul. The market is well stocked with fresh vegetables, including 56 vendors (11%) selling this. There are only 7 shops selling construction items. However, more specialist vendors such as black smith (29) and paint shops (11) are available.

Conversely, there are no shops in Karab Al- A’urna, and rural residents travel to Ba’aj Centre to the nearest market. During winter rains the market becomes inaccessible to rural communities due to the poor conditions of the roads.

Half of the interviewed retailers indicated damage to their shop. Out of those, 40% identified disruptions in electricity as the major impact to the business, water (26%) and damaged roads (23%) were also expressed as negative impacts to trading. 47% who reported damages stated lack of funds as the main barrier to renovation.

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13 Income is defined as pension and employment

14 The survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB) as currently defined by the Cash Working Group of Iraq is 480,000 IQD
Almost half of the consumers (42%) reported issues accessing cash, and on average, 41.5% of customers purchase on credit. 63.3% of retailers stated that the demand for credit increased since the crisis, implying issues with the purchase power, as indicated from the other data sources too.

On the whole market prices are higher than the consumers can afford, and 63% of retailers said the demand for credit increased significantly since prior to the crisis.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

The preferred channels for delivery of aid information are face-to-face (66%), telephone/mobile (16%) and TV/radio (16%).

The most mentioned specific needs that limit access to information are single headed households (70%), and those with health conditions (23%).

People generally rely on receiving information from Mukhtars, which is by far the most used channels of information acquisition followed by local authorities (65%) and friends in area of origin (60%).

There is no significant change of preferred channel or special needs by gender or status of head of household.