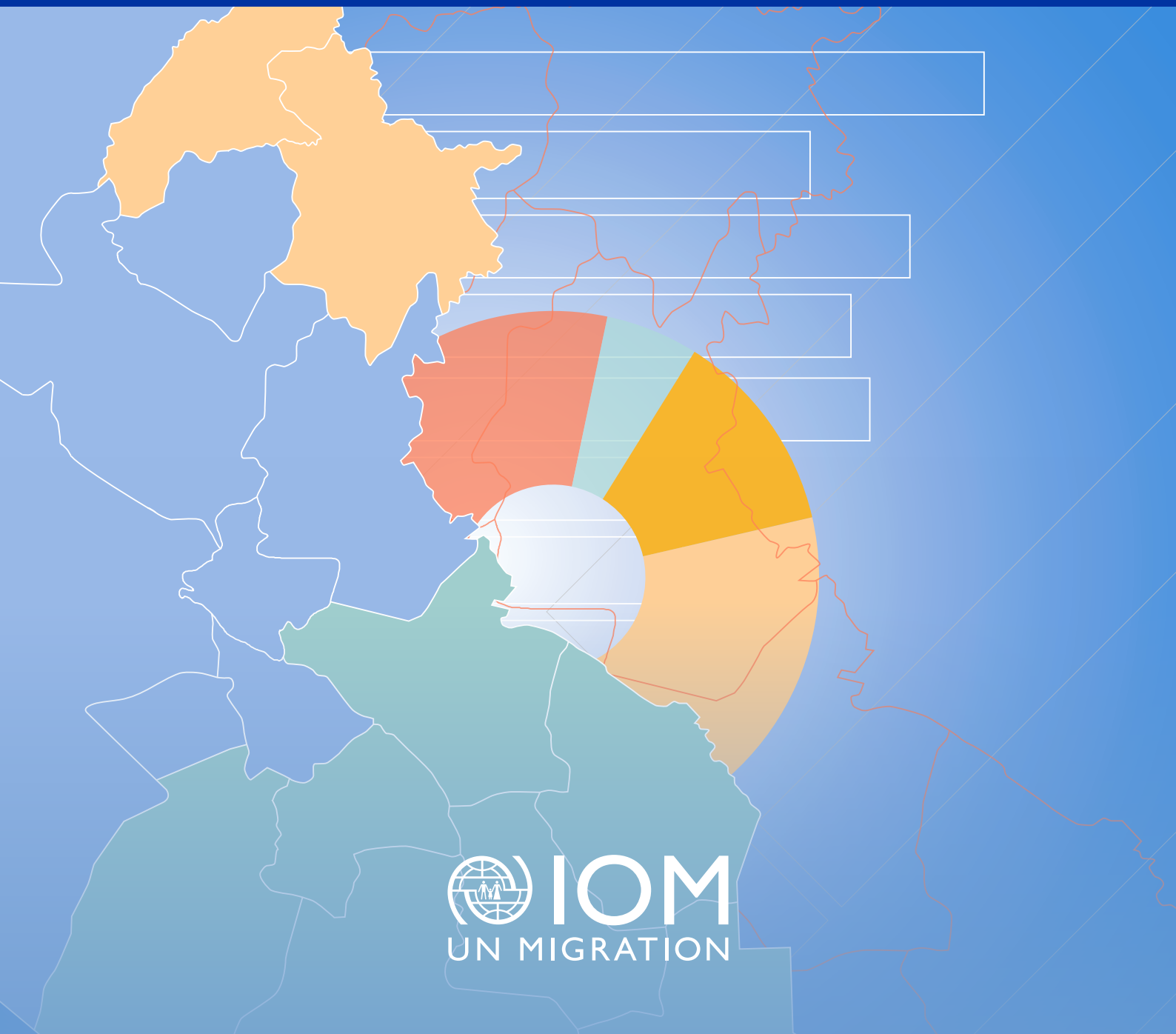


IOM IRAQ

# UNDERSTANDING ETHNO-RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN IRAQ: DISPLACEMENT AND RETURN

FEBRUARY 2019



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms and definitions	5
Executive summary	5
Introduction	7
Objectives	8
Methodology	9
1. Ethno-religious identity and socioeconomic characteristics	10
2. Factors driving decisions to return or remain	17
2.1 IDPs: What drives decisions to stay in displacement?	17
2.2 Returnees: What drives decisions to return?	20
3. Housing, land and property	24
4. Perception of own group, host community and other groups	26
4.1 Identity layers and perception of the own group	26
4.2 Perception of host community in displacement and other groups in origin	27
5. Future intentions	30
5.1 Returnee intentions	30
5.2 IDP intentions	33
5.3 Ethno-religious groups and intentions to return: Which factors affect intentions the most?	37
Conclusion	42
Annexes	43

# FOREWORD

Ninewa governorate, in the north western part of Iraq, is home to a multiplicity of ethno-religious groups illustrating the country's rich and diverse population. Ninewa was heavily impacted by the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levante (ISIL) that started in 2014 and concluded in 2017 with military forces retaking Ninewa's cities such as Mosul, Tel Afar and Sinjar.

Since then, rehabilitation efforts have been underway and many internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to their communities of origin. However, the levels of return among minority ethno-religious groups remain low and their intention to return in the short term is much lower than among other IDPs. Thus, the need to investigate the specific dynamics affecting the displacement and return of IDPs and returnees from different ethno-religious groups to facilitate durable solutions to their displacement.

This research identifies socioeconomic characteristics of returnee and IDP populations within four ethno-religious groups: Shabak Shia, Turkmen Shia, Christian and Yazidi. In addition, the study broadens our understanding of the main factors driving decisions to return or remain in displacement, including how housing, land and property issues impact decisions to return; explores whether IDPs and returnees have different perceptions of their own group and other groups in their areas of origin and maps short and long-term intentions of IDP and returnee households by ethno-religious group.

Obtaining answers to these topics contributes to a better understanding of the specific challenges faced by families from different ethno-religious groups both in displacement and after return and therefore represents an important step in formulating targeted approaches to find durable solutions to displacement and facilitate sustainable reintegration of returned IDPs.

We hope you will find the study useful and we look forward to receiving your feedback.

Gerard Waite  
Chief of Mission, Iraq

## ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

**DTM** Displacement Tracking Matrix

**IDP** Internally Displaced Person

**HC** Host Community

**ILA** Integrated Location Assessment

**ISIL** Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

**KRI** Kurdistan Region of Iraq

**WASH** Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

**IDPs:** According to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internally displaced persons (IDPs) are “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.”<sup>1</sup>

DTM considers as IDPs all Iraqis who were forced to flee from their location of origin from 1 January 2014 onwards and are still displaced within national borders at the moment of the assessment.

**Returnees:** All those previously displaced from their location of origin since January 2014 who return to their subdistrict of origin, irrespective of whether they have returned to their former residence or to another shelter type. The definition of returnees is neither related to the criteria of returning in safety and dignity, nor with a defined strategy of durable solution.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study focuses on four ethno-religious groups affected by displacement as a result of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) crisis: Turkmen Shias, Shabak Shias, Yazidis and Christians. The study explored the displaced groups’ decision to return to their location of origin or to stay in displacement by examining factors of: socioeconomic characteristics;

barriers to return and obstacles faced in displacement; and perception of own group, other groups in location of origin and host community in displacement. The study is based on a face-to-face survey with 1605 individuals, using a convenience sample in areas of displacement and return.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 22 July 1998.



### Key findings of the study are as follows:

**Levels of education** are similar across all groups except for Yazidis; 50 per cent of the respondents of this group had not received any formal education.

**Unemployment** is widespread among both IDP and returnee households: 31 per cent of IDPs and 23 per cent of returnees say they are unemployed and looking for work. Unemployment is roughly similar among the groups (24%), except for Yazidis where 50 per cent of IDPs are unemployed and looking for work. The finding that returnees have, on average, lower education levels than IDPs suggests that IDPs with higher education are returning at slower rates. Unemployment is roughly similar between Christians, Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia IDPs (24%). However, this level is significantly higher among Yazidi IDPs, with 49.6 per cent of the interviewed Yazidi IDPs indicating that they are unemployed. Among returnee communities, Shabak Shia have the highest level of unemployment (30%).

Differences between IDPs' and returnees' **living arrangements in displacement**: households staying in camps or with host families have returned at slower rates than those who rent accommodation. Turkmen Shia and Shabak Shia IDPs are more often hosted in religious buildings (25%). Yazidis are most often in camps (49%) or unfinished/abandoned buildings (20%).

The average Christian **household size** is smaller than the other groups (5 members) and that of Turkmen Shia the largest (9 members). Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia IDP families are more likely to have split up due to the return of family members: 7 per cent and 8.3 per cent respectively.

Both returnee and IDP households claim to have received various forms of **humanitarian assistance**, however aid was discontinued while in displacement for both IDPs and returnees. This suggests that cutting aid does not significantly affect the decision to either return or remain in displacement. The study also found that a move to return to the area of origin is not always associated with an improvement in living standards or income. A total of 25 per cent of respondents claimed their income worsened after return, and 16.4 per cent said their living standards deteriorated. Yazidis and Turkmen Shia were generally most positive about their household income and living standards after return. Interestingly however, nearly half of Christian returnees stated they perceived no significant difference between their lives in displacement and after return.

The main **driver for IDPs to stay displaced** is clearly better safety in the location of displacement (91%). Access to public services also plays an important role for over 73 per cent of respondents. More specifically, with regards to access to services, a majority of IDP households (70%) are

postponing or deciding against return because their children are enrolled in school. Many families appear unwilling to interrupt the education of their children for a chance to return home. A total of 40 per cent of IDP households said that better work opportunities in displacement are a strong or very strong reason to remain. Also, 37 per cent of IDPs express concerns about not being welcomed in their location of origin, with Christians being the group most concerned (112 out of 200 interviewed Christian IDPs).

**Returnees report four major pull factors**: missing home (95%), return of other people (76%) and family members (56%), improved safety situation in the location of origin (59%) and saving on living costs associated to returning to their habitual residence (51%). IDPs who own property return at faster rates.

Feelings of empowerment play a role in the decision to return. Returnees are more likely to say that they feel their group is more empowered than IDPs. Returns are more likely to occur, and at a faster rate, in locations where individuals feel their group is empowered or dominant in relation to other groups. IDPs are also more likely than returnees to report that they faced discrimination in their location of origin, again suggesting that those who have faced discrimination before are now less inclined to return.

**Regarding satisfaction with return**, a vast majority (87%) of returnees are not satisfied. The top three areas where returnees demand improvements are public service provision, security and economic opportunities (62%, 47.5% and 43% respectively).

**IDPs mostly demand improvements regarding economic opportunities and public service provision** in displacement. Additionally, some 13 per cent (mostly Turkmen Shia) would like to receive official permission to remain in displacement. While 80 per cent of Turkmen Shia plan to return, only 22 per cent among Christian and 43 per cent Yazidi IDPs plan to do so. Furthermore, 42.5 per cent of Christian and 25 per cent of Yazidi IDPs intend to move and settle abroad. On average, 27.4 per cent of IDPs wish to remain and integrate in their current location.

As to long-term intentions of **returnees**, nearly all Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia plan to remain in their location of return. Among **Christians and Yazidis**, 39 per cent and 25 per cent respectively, **plan to migrate abroad**. Yazidi returnees appear more driven to migrate abroad by factors related to security than their Christian counterparts, who more often cite economic opportunities, public services and administration as reasons for their intention to leave Iraq.

## INTRODUCTION

Iraq's population is made of a rich diversity of ethno-religious groups. In addition to the three major groups – Sunni Arabs, Shia Arabs and Sunni Kurds, themselves minorities in certain geographic areas – there are many other minority ethno-religious groups, all of whom were affected by displacement related to the ISIL crisis. This study focuses on four of these groups: Turkmen Shias, Shabak Shias, Yazidis and Christians.

The Ninewa Plains and west Ninewa areas, in Ninewa Governorate, are home to all respondents in this study. The conflict with ISIL particularly impacted these areas. After the city of Mosul fell under ISIL's control in June 2014, the group steadily took control of the Ninewa Plains and west Ninewa. By March 2015, 500,000 Yazidis, predominantly from Sinjar, 190,000 Turkmen Shia from Telafar, 60,000 Shabak Shias and an equal number of Christians, both from the Ninewa plains, had displaced.<sup>2</sup> Thus, among the over one million individuals<sup>3</sup> displaced from Ninewa Governorate at that time (March 2015) since January 2014, over 800,000 were Turkmen, Yazidis, Christians or Shabaks.

Since the operation to retake Mosul concluded in July 2017, areas of origin for these groups, such as Telafar, Sinjar and the Ninewa plains have been retaken from ISIL and rehabilitation efforts are underway. Notwithstanding these efforts, the number of returns among certain ethno-religious groups remains low. While Yazidis, Christians, Shabak Shias and Turkmen Shias make up around 22 per cent of Iraq's total IDP population, they only represent 2.7 per cent of returnees. The second IOM Integrated Location Assessment (ILA II) also found that their intention to return in the short term is much lower than among other groups.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore necessary to further investigate the specific dynamics affecting the displacement and return of IDPs and returnees from these ethno-religious groups.

This research study investigates the following questions: (i) the socioeconomic characteristics of each ethno-religious group, and how these affect the decision to return or remain in displacement, (ii) the main barriers to return and main obstacles faced in displacement, (iii) how housing, land and property issues affect IDPs and returnees within the four groups separately, (iv) perception of the own group, other groups in location of origin and the host community in displacement and how these perceptions affect decision-making, (v) using a different statistical model, the short- and long-term intentions of IDPs and their underlying motivations through different reasons and socioeconomic demographics.

Examining these issues will increase our understanding of the specific challenges faced by families from these ethno-religious minority backgrounds, both in displacement and after return. This study therefore represents an important step in formulating targeted approaches to displacement challenges, pursuing durable solutions for IDPs, and ultimately mitigating the adverse effects of conflict on the cultural and demographic diversity of Iraq.

2 DTM's Group Assessment I. December 2014 – March 2015.

3 DTM Monthly Report. March 2015.

4 DTM Integrated Location Assessment II.

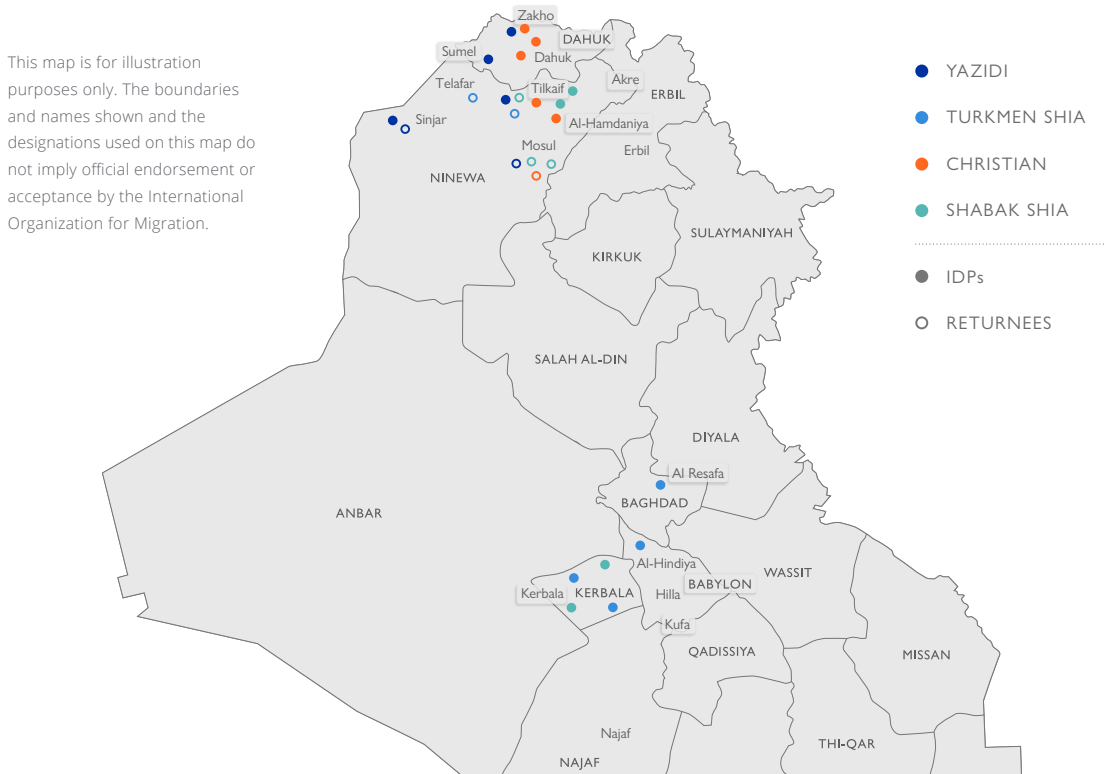
## OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this research is to analyse the migration trends affecting four displaced minority ethno-religious groups across Iraq: Christians, Shabak Shias, Yazidis and Turkmen Shias.<sup>5</sup>

**The specific objectives of the study are to:**

- Uncover consistent and relevant socioeconomic differences between returnees and IDPs from each ethno-religious group.
- Better understand the main factors driving decisions to return or remain in displacement.
- Better understand how issues related to housing, land and property impact decisions to return, as well as other challenges faced by returnees.
- Reveal whether IDPs and returnees from these groups have different perceptions of their own group and the others in their area of origin, and the degree to which this plays a role in their decisions to return or remain in displacement.
- Map the short- and long-term intentions of IDP and returnee households from each of the four ethno-religious groups and how satisfied they are with their current position – whether this be return or continued displacement.

Map 1: Assessed locations by ethno-religious groups and IDPs / returnees



5 The choice to limit the focus on the Shia component within the Shabak and Turkmen community was made because 93 per cent of displaced Turkmen are Shia, as are 72 per cent of displaced Shabak. Additionally, Turkmen Shia and Shabak Shia return at lower rates than their Sunni counterparts (IOM Iraq - DTM Integrated Location Assessment II).



## METHODOLOGY

The findings presented in this report are drawn from a face-to-face household survey with a sample size of 1,605 individuals, administered to a convenience sample of 703 returnees and 902 IDPs in nine different governorates across Iraq: Ninewa, Dahuk, Erbil, Baghdad, Babylon, Kerbala, Najaf, Qadissiya and Wassit. The two categories were stratified to include the four ethno-religious communities.

The number of interviews allocated to each category depended on how concentrated or dispersed these identity groups are in their locations of displacement and return. Measures were taken to ensure that a represent-

ative number of female-headed households was included,<sup>6</sup> as well as in-camp and out-of-camp IDPs.

Data was collected by IOM's field teams during January 2018, following a two-day training held on 17 and 18 December 2017.

Table 1: Sample distribution by location

IDPs – RETURNÉES

GOVERNORATE	DISTRICT	SAMPLE			
		TURKMEN SHIA	SHABAK SHIA	YAZIDI	CHRISTIAN
Babylon	Hilla	30			
Baghdad	Al Resafa	25			25
Dahuk	Sumel			125	25
	Zakho			50	25
	Dahuk				25
Erbil	Erbil				100
Kerbala	Al-Hindiya	35	20		
	Kerbala	35	25		
Najaf	Najaf	50	45		
	Kufa	25			
Ninewa	Sinjar			25 – 100	
	Tel Afar	100			
	Mosul		90	50	↘ 25
	Tilkaif	50	20	25	↘ 50
	Al-Hamdaniya		90		↘ 125
	Akre		25		
	Al-Shikhan		40	25	
Qadissiya	Diwaniya	25	20		
Wassit	Kut	25	25		
<i>Total</i>		<i>250 – 150</i>	<i>200 – 200</i>	<i>250 – 150</i>	<i>200 – 200</i>

<sup>6</sup> DTM Longitudinal Study on Durable Solutions in Iraq (2015–2017) estimated that the number of Female-Headed Households was between 15–20 per cent IOM field teams were therefore instructed to reach a corresponding proportion in their sample.

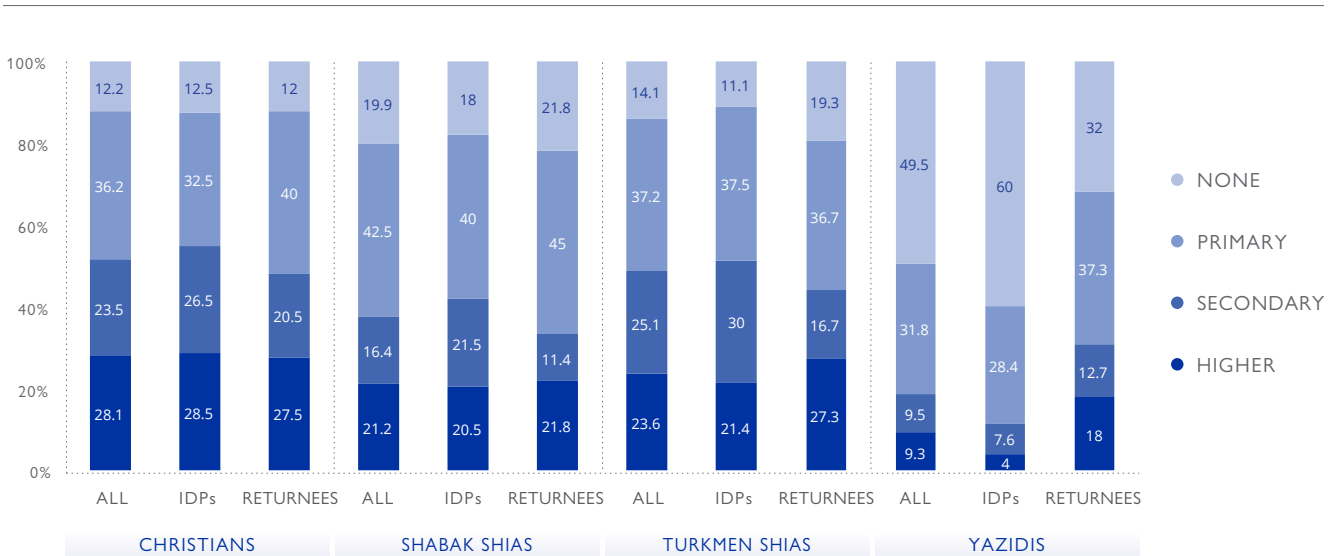
# 1. ETHNO-RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section presents data on the socioeconomic characteristics of the four surveyed ethno-religious groups and, when relevant, according to their situation as IDPs or returnees. The data include indicators on education and occupation levels, household size and number of children, household income and living standards, among others.

## EDUCATION

The study found that levels of education are similar across all groups except the Yazidi. This group had significantly lower levels of education: almost 50 per cent of the respondents had not received any formal education. Returnees have slightly lower levels of formal education than IDPs in all groups. Again, the exception was the Yazidi. In this group, the proportion of respondents who attained secondary education or higher was higher among returnees than IDPs.

Figure 1: Education levels by ethno-religious group and displacement category



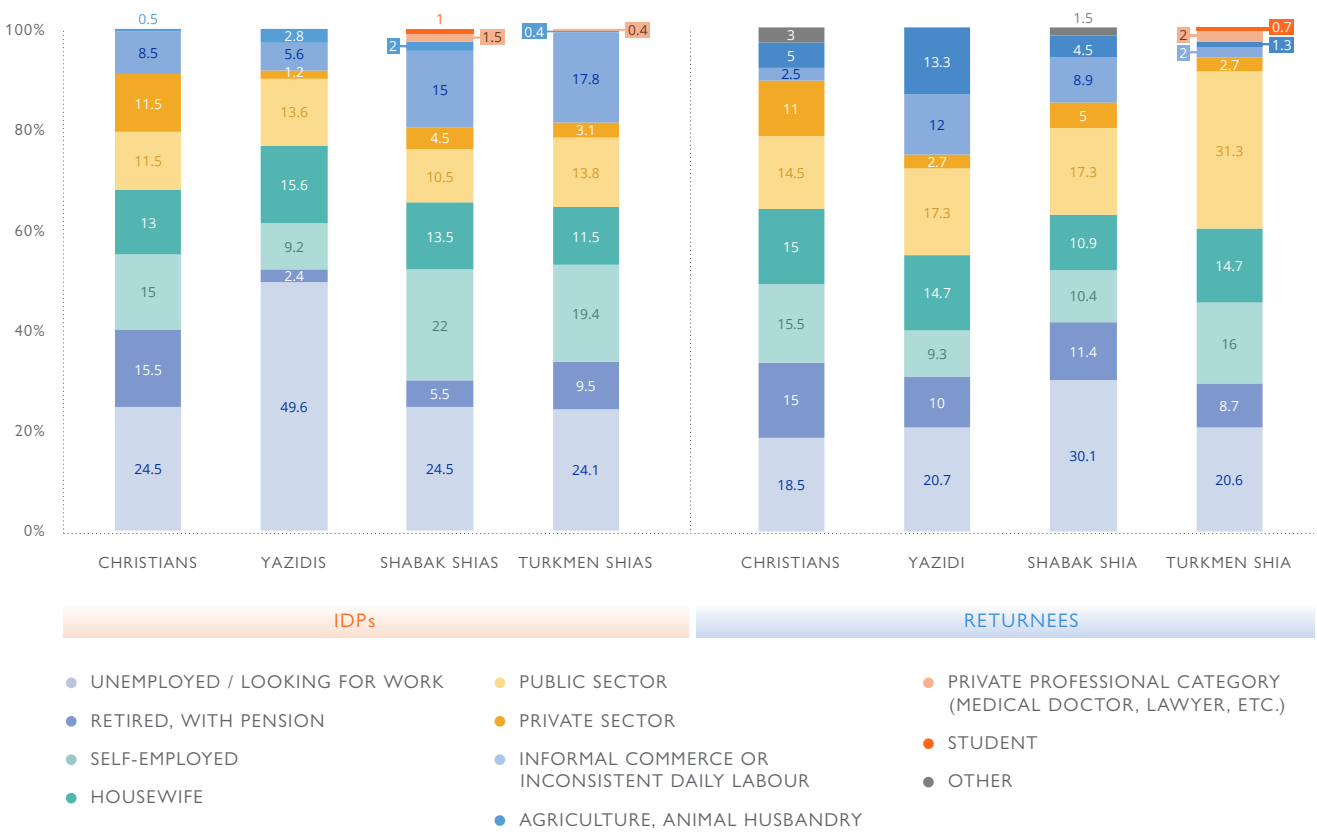
## EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment was found to be widespread among IDP and returnee households. Nearly one in three interviewed IDPs said they are unemployed and looking for work. Christians, Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia IDPs reported similar levels of unemployment (24% of IDPs in each group). However, levels of unemployment were significantly higher among Yazidi IDPs: half of the interviewed Yazidi IDPs were unemployed (49.6%). Among returnees, the group with the highest level of unemployment was Shabak Shia (30%).

The groups differed in terms of the type of employment they were engaged in. The group with the highest percentage of

employment in the public sector was Turkmen Shia (31%). The study found that these ethno-religious groups were rarely employed in the private sector; Christians were the only group where at least one in ten was employed in the private sector (11%). Employment in informal commerce or inconsistent daily labour as well as agriculture and animal husbandry are more prevalent among Yazidis than the other groups. Overall, agricultural activities and public sector employment are more common among returnees than among IDPs, whereas informal commerce or inconsistent daily labour is lower.

Figure 2: Employment per ethno-religious group and displacement category

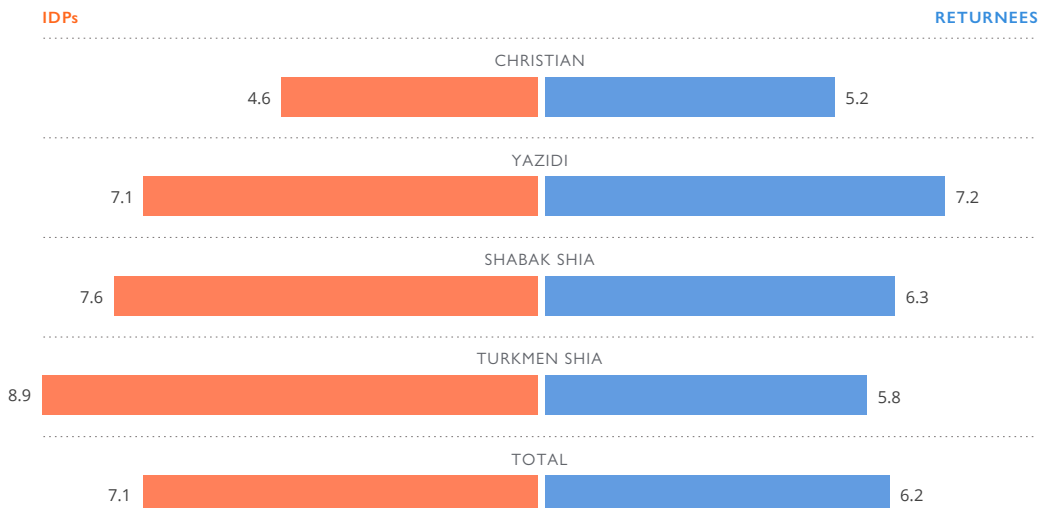


HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND SITUATION

IDP households (average of 7 individuals per household) tend to be larger than returnee households (6). Similarly, the number of children tends to be slightly higher among IDP households: three children per IDP household and two per returnee.

The study found that Christian households were smaller than others, with an average of five family members. Turkmen Shia IDP households were the largest with an average of nine people.

Figure 3: Average household size per ethno-religious group and displacement category



In most ethno-religious groups, household members have largely stayed together, regardless of whether they are returnee or IDP households. Nevertheless, Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia IDP families are more likely to have split up due to the return of family members: 7 per cent and 8.3 per cent respectively; and 4 per cent of Christian IDPs have at least one family member abroad. In terms of returnee households, Turkmen Shias and Yazidis have a significantly larger proportion of divided households. Yazidi households reported that they either have family members who went abroad (19%) or members who remain displaced (8.7%). For Turkmen Shia, 9.3 per cent of interviewed households have one or more members who remain in displacement. Turkmen Shia returnees are also the group with the highest number of members killed or missing (1.3% of households compared to the 0.6% average). Among IDPs, the Yazidi are the group with the highest percentage of members killed or missing (2% of households compared to the 1.2% average).

Table 2: Percentage of split households per ethno-religious group and displacement category

	CHRISTIANS	YAZIDIS	SHABAK SHIAS	TURKMEN SHIAS	IDP TOTAL
<b>IDPs</b>					
We are all together	94	93.2	90	87.7	91.1
One or more members abroad	4	2.8	0	0.4	1.8
One or more members detained by authorities	0	0.8	0	0.8	0.2
One or more members displaced in another governorate	2	1.2	2	2	1.8
One or more members missing or killed	0	2	1	1.6	1.2
One or more members returned	0	0	7	8.3	3.9
<b>RETURNEES</b>					
We are all together	95.5	71.3	99.5	88.7	90
One or more members abroad	3	19.3	0.5	0.7	5.3
One or more members remain in displacement	1	8.7	0	9.3	4.1
One or more members missing or killed	0.5	0.7	0	1.3	0.6

## SHELTER DURING DISPLACEMENT

Rented accommodation was found to be the most common shelter arrangement for Christians, Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia IDP and returnee households while in displacement. This was particularly the case among Christian households: eight out of ten Christian IDPs and six out of ten Christian returnees reported that they were living in rented accommodation during displacement. More than half of Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia also reported that they reside (if still in displacement) or resided while in displacement (for those who returned) in rented accommodation.

In contrast, Yazidis are (if still in displacement) or were (for those who returned) mainly hosted in camps, with five out of ten Yazidi IDPs and four out of ten Yazidi returnees staying in camps while in displacement.

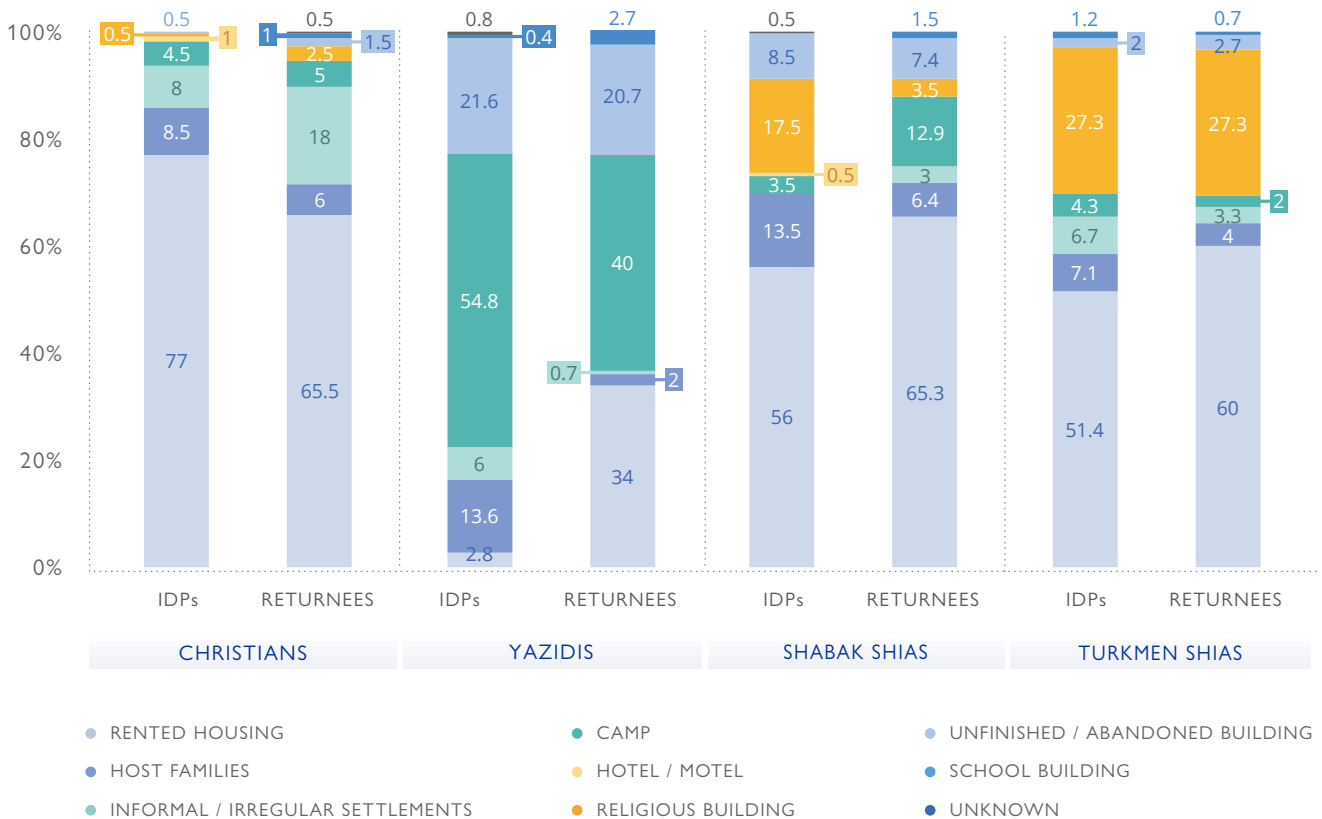
Almost three out of ten Turkmen Shia IDP families and two out of ten Shabak Shia IDP families reported that they are hosted in religious buildings.

The percentage of Yazidis living (if still in displacement) or who lived (for those who returned) in unfinished or abandoned buildings is higher than the average of these ethno-religious groups. Two out of ten Yazidi families live or were living in such buildings while in displacement. The percentage of Christian returnees who were living in informal or irregular settlements while in displacement is also higher than the

average, with almost two out of ten Christian returnee families living in such arrangements while in displacement.

Households staying with host families tend to return at a slower rate than those staying in other shelter arrangements. This trend can be observed across the four groups. Most returnees (83%) go back to their habitual residence, a trend shared across all four groups.

Figure 4: Shelter arrangement during displacement per ethno-religious group

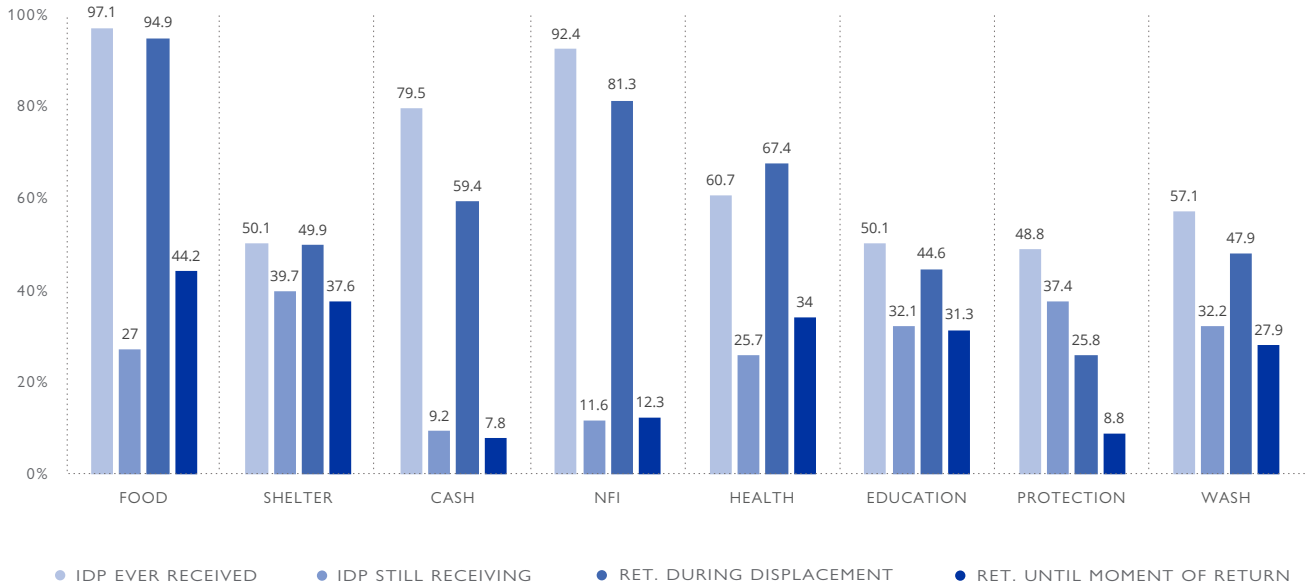


ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The percentage of households who received humanitarian assistance at some point is slightly lower among returnees than IDPs but there are no significant differences among IDPs who still receive assistance and returnees who were receiving assistance until they returned.

At the time of data collection, humanitarian assistance had been discontinued for a large segment of IDP households – and returnee households just before they returned – most notably food, shelter, cash and non-food items (NFI). Cash and NFI were the types of assistance discontinued for a larger number of IDPs.

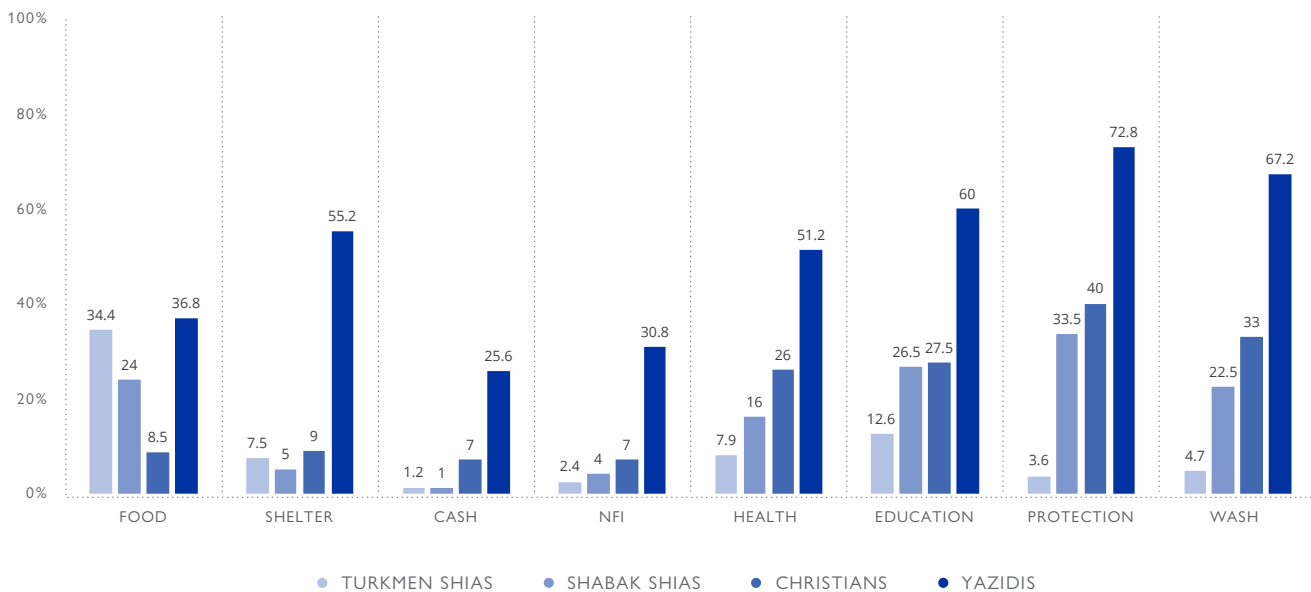
Figure 5: Access to humanitarian assistance per displacement category



Yazidis are the group that currently receives the most assistance. This holds true for all forms of assistance but especially shelter, health, education, protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, which are being provided to over 50 per cent of Yazidi IDPs. This is partially explained by the fact that the proportion of Yazidi IDPs

who reside in camp settings is much higher than for other groups. Turkmen Shia IDPs are the group receiving the least amount of assistance, although 27.6 per cent of interviewed Turkmen Shia IDPs are living in religious buildings, a particularly vulnerable type of critical shelter.

Figure 6: IDPs currently receiving assistance per ethno-religious group





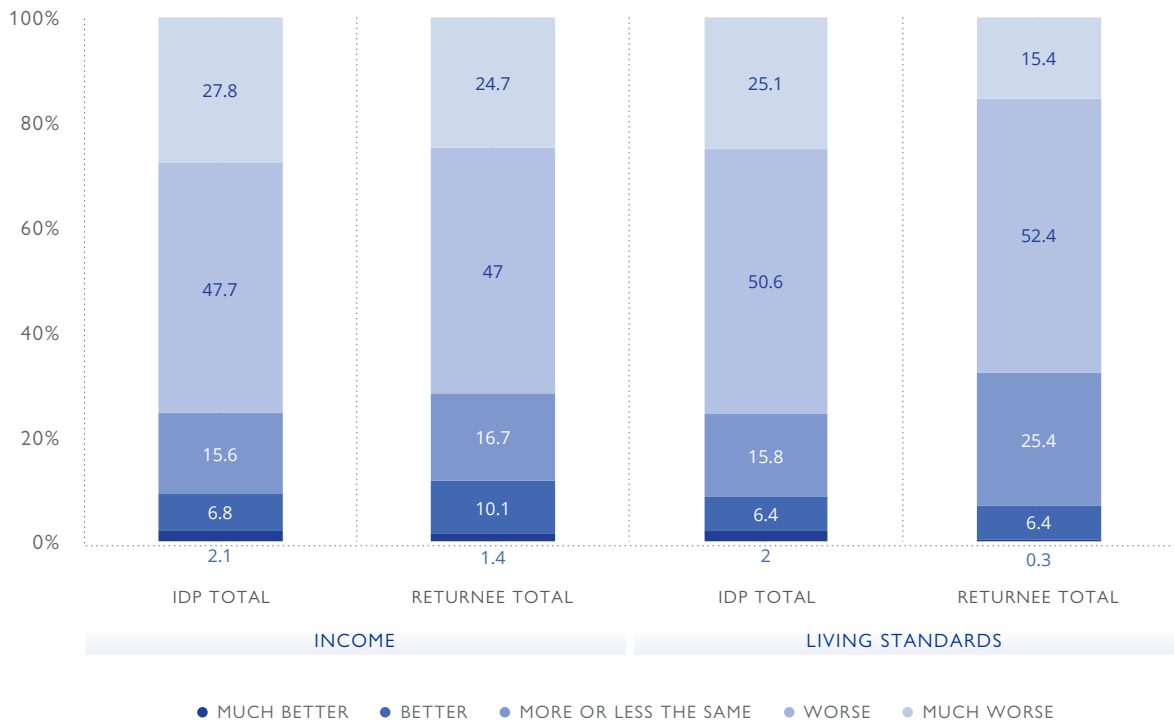
### HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND LIVING STANDARDS

A total of 75 per cent of IDP respondents and 72 per cent of returnee respondents stated that their household's income levels during displacement is or was worse or much worse compared to before displacement. There were no major differences among ethno-religious groups.

Regarding living standards, 76 per cent of IDP and 68 per cent of returnee households considered that they had worse or much worse current living standards than

before they were displaced. However, 8.4 per cent of IDPs and 6.7 per cent of returnees reported that their living standards were better than before they were displaced, and a quarter of returnees stated that there was no real difference. This opinion was more prevalent among Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia (IDPs and returnees combined), with two out of ten interviewed households stating that they had similar living standards before and during displacement.

Figure 7: Household income and living standards during displacement compared to before displacement per displacement category



However, a return to the area of origin is not always associated with an improvement in income or living standards. On average, one in four returnee respondents reported that their income levels were lower and 16.4 per cent said their living standards deteriorated after they had returned. Roughly one in three respondents says there was no significant improvement in their income or living standards with their return. This perception is stronger among Christians: nearly half of Christian returnee households stated that they perceive no significant difference between their lives in displacement and after return.

Yazidi and Turkmen Shia respondents were the most positive about their household's income and living standards improving after return. More than half of returnee households from these two ethno-religious groups considered that their income was better and more than 60 per cent said their living standards improved after return.

Figure 8: Household income after return – compared to during displacement – per ethno-religious group

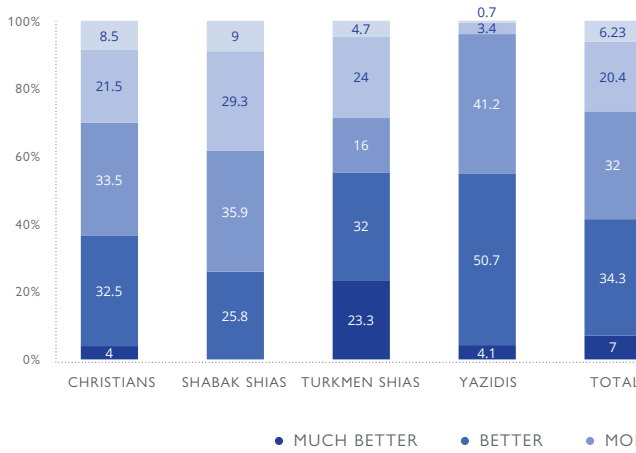
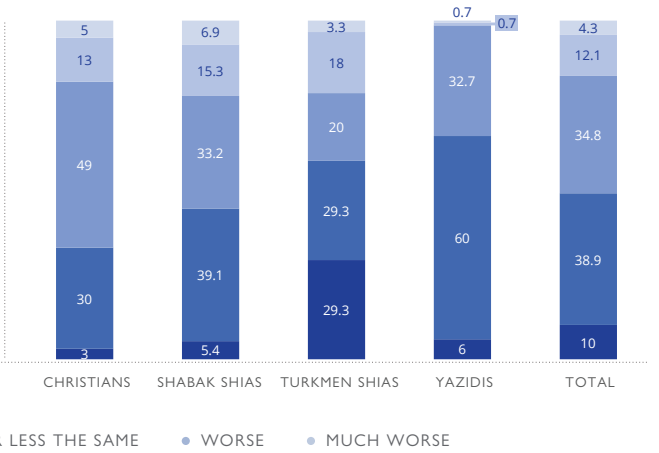


Figure 9: Living standards after return compared to displacement per ethno-religious group



## 2. FACTORS DRIVING DECISIONS TO RETURN OR STAY IN DISPLACEMENT

This section examines the factors driving the respondents' decision to return or remain in displacement.<sup>7</sup> The study found that these decisions are driven by factors related to the situation in displacement and affected by changes in the location of origin.

### 2.1 IDPs: WHAT DRIVES DECISIONS TO STAY IN DISPLACEMENT?

#### Factors in area of displacement

The study found that the main reason why IDPs from these four ethno-religious groups are not returning is that there is better safety in the location of displacement: 91 per cent of IDPs stated that safety played a "strong" or "very strong" role in their decision not to return to their home location. In terms of the ethno-religious breakdown, over 90 per cent of the Christian, Yazidi and Shabak Shia respondents reported that this is the main reason why they are still displaced. For Turkmen Shia, it was the second most important factor and the percentage was still very high (81%).

Access to public services was also important for 74 per cent of respondents. Of the four groups, Christian and Yazidi IDPs were more likely to cite better public services as a reason to remain displaced (88% for both groups). However, these differences may be driven by location of displacement rather than identity. Most interviewed Christians and all Yazidi IDPs are displaced in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), which has better public services than the rest of Iraq, while Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia are displaced mainly in the central governorates.

A large majority of IDP households (70%) reported that they decided to remain displaced because their children are enrolled in school. This is the main factor driving the decision to stay in displacement for Turkmen Shia (83%). The proportion of households remaining in displacement because they have children enrolled in school is lower among Christian households, potentially because they have relatively smaller households and fewer children (52%).

IDP households are less driven by economic considerations. Only 40 per cent of IDP households say that better work opportunities in the location of displacement is a strong or very strong reason for them to remain.

Less than half of IDPs interviewed overall reported that having a common language with the host community was a reason to remain in their location of displacement. In terms of group breakdown, however, it was important for Yazidi respondents: eight out of ten reported that it was a strong factor for staying in these locations.

Decisions to remain displaced are also influenced by the actions of other IDPs, particularly family members and relatives: 47 per cent of IDP households stated that the fact that other people are not yet returning plays an important role in their decision to remain, a percentage that grows to 53 per cent when these are family members or relatives. However, when community or religious leaders discourage returns, this only has a marginal effect on IDP households. Nearly 16 per cent of IDPs say this is not applicable to their situation, and where this does happen only 11 per cent of IDPs say it plays a strong role in their decision-making.

<sup>7</sup> Respondents were asked to select from a list of factors which ones played a very strong, strong, moderate, weak or very weak role in their decision. If a factor did not match their circumstance, they could also indicate not applicable. Some of the questions related to the respondents' current location, while others applied to the situation in displacement (for returnees) or in their area of origin (IDPs).

Figure 10: Factors that play a role in decision to stay in displacement (very strong and strong answers combined), related to location of displacement by ethno-religious background.



Factors in location of origin

A lack of services in their location of origin was a very strong or strong factor influencing the decision to remain displaced for 75 per cent of interviewed IDPs. The group most likely to report this were Christian IDPs (85%).

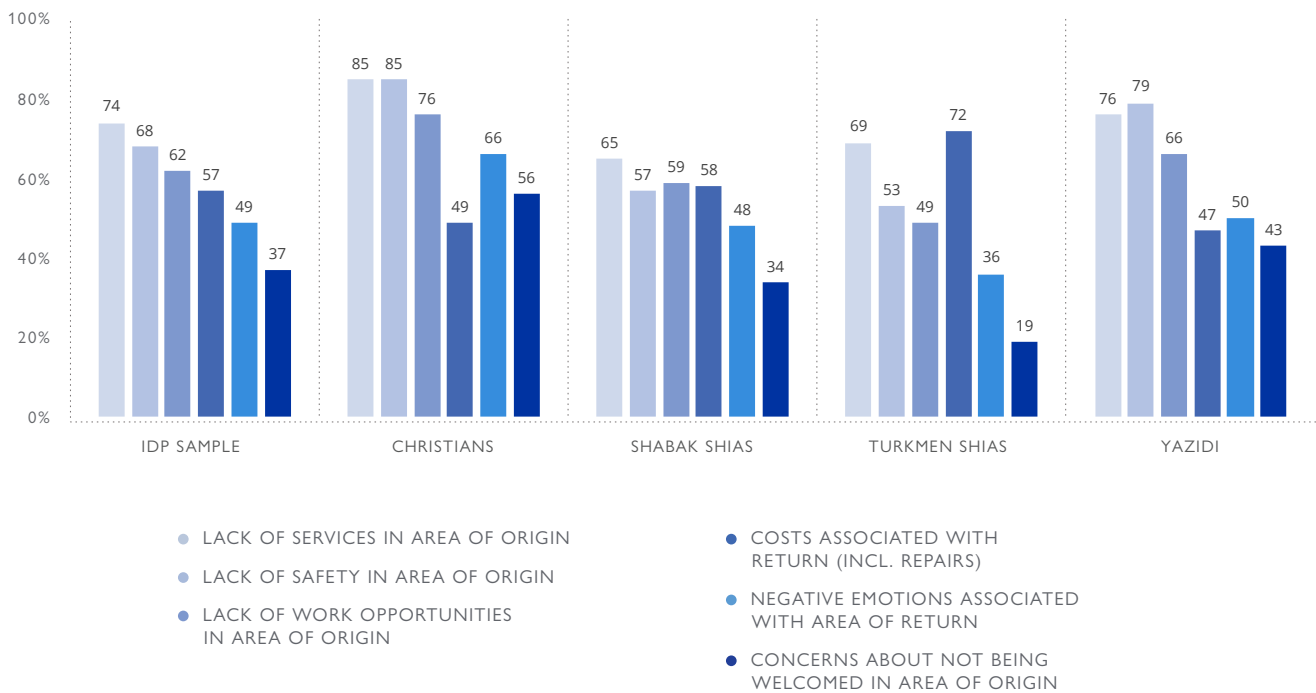
Lack of safety is the second most likely factor, mentioned by 68 per cent of IDP households, with higher averages among Christian (85%) and Yazidi (79%) IDPs. Lack of work opportunities was mentioned as a significant factor by 62 per cent of IDPs, particularly Christian IDPs (76%).

Seven out of ten Turkmen Shia interviewed considered the cost associated with the return, such as repairing their home or property, as a very strong or strong factor to remain displaced. This is a much higher percentage than across the rest of the groups, where less than half reported this as a major issue.

Emotions related to their location of origin were also a factor in the interviewed IDP households' intentions to return. Negative emotions associated with the location of origin were mentioned by almost half of the interviewed IDPs. The group least likely to mention this was that of Turkmen Shia (36%) and the most likely was that of Christian IDPs (66%).

Overall 37 per cent of IDPs interviewed had concerns about not being welcome in their area of origin. However, the weight of this factor varied widely across groups. Six out of ten Christians and four out of ten Yazidis reported that this concern has a strong impact on their decision to remain displaced but it played a strong role for only fewer than two out of ten.

Figure 11: Factors that play a role in the decision to remain (very strong and strong answers combined), related to location of origin by ethno-religious background.



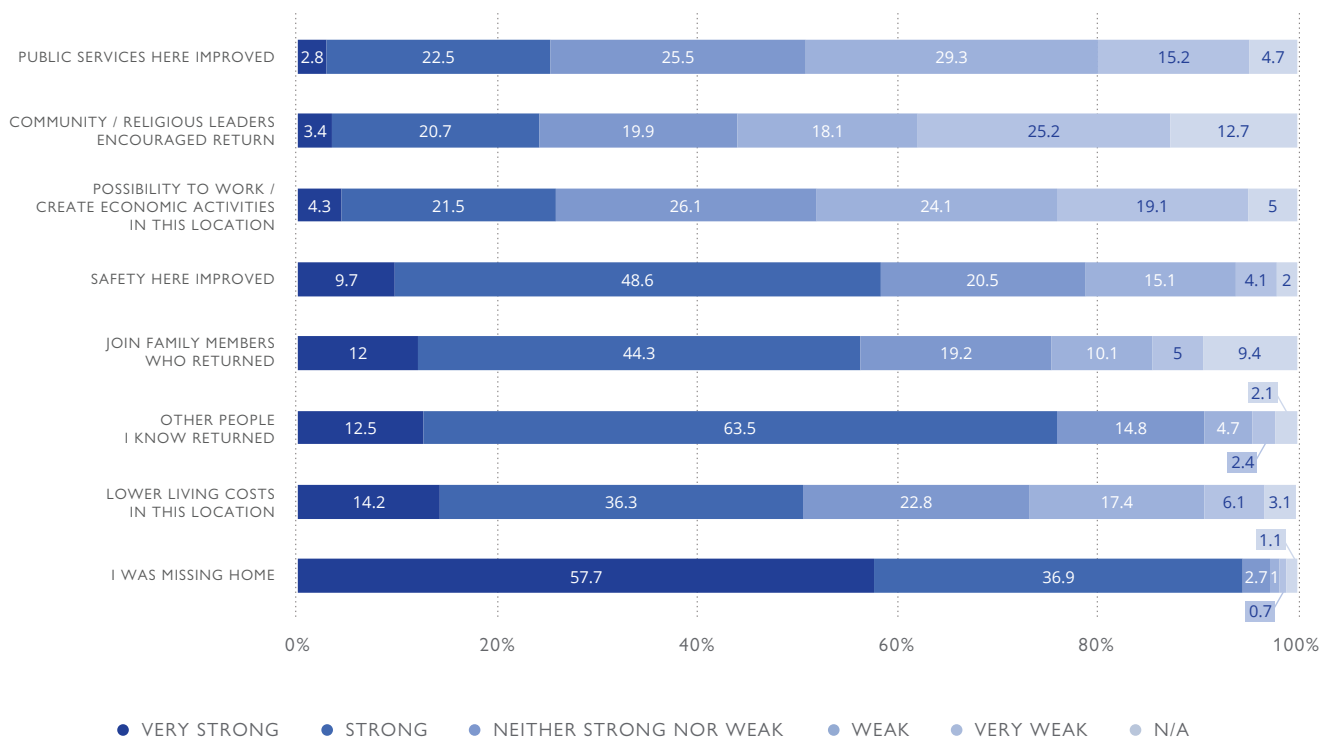
## 2.2 RETURNEES: WHAT DRIVES DECISIONS TO RETURN?

### Factors in origin / return area

There are four leading pull factors related to the location of origin or return that over 50 per cent of returnees said played a strong or very strong role in their decision to return. First, the feeling of missing home stands out, with 95 per cent of returnees reporting that this was a strong or very strong reason for their return. Second was the return of

acquaintances (76%) and family members (56%). Third, the improving security situation in their location of origin was important for 59 per cent of returnees. Finally, the saving on living costs, associated with returning to the habitual residence, was also an important factor (51%).

Figure 12: Factors that play a role in decision to return (very strong and strong answers combined), related to location of origin.

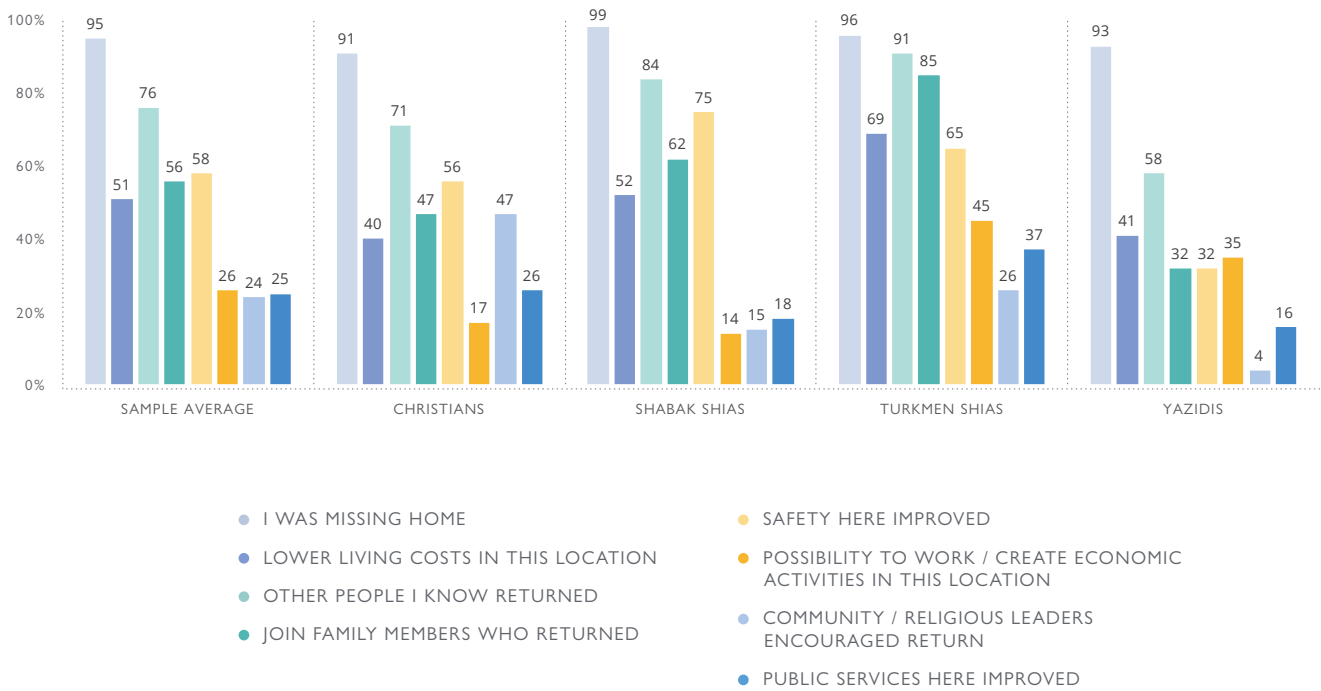




Missing home was the first and most important factor reported by respondents of all four groups. The second factor, other people returning, is a more important pull factor for Turkmen Shias (91%) and Shabak Shias than it is for Christians (71%) and Yazidis (58%). Joining returned family members or relatives is also more commonly expressed by

the former two groups. A total of 85 per cent of Turkmen Shia returnees and 62 per cent of Shabak Shia returnees say that family returning played an important role in their decision to return. In contrast, only 32 per cent of Yazidis reported that this is an important factor in their decision.

Figure 13: Factors that play a role in decision to return (very strong and strong answers combined), related to location of origin by ethno-religious background.

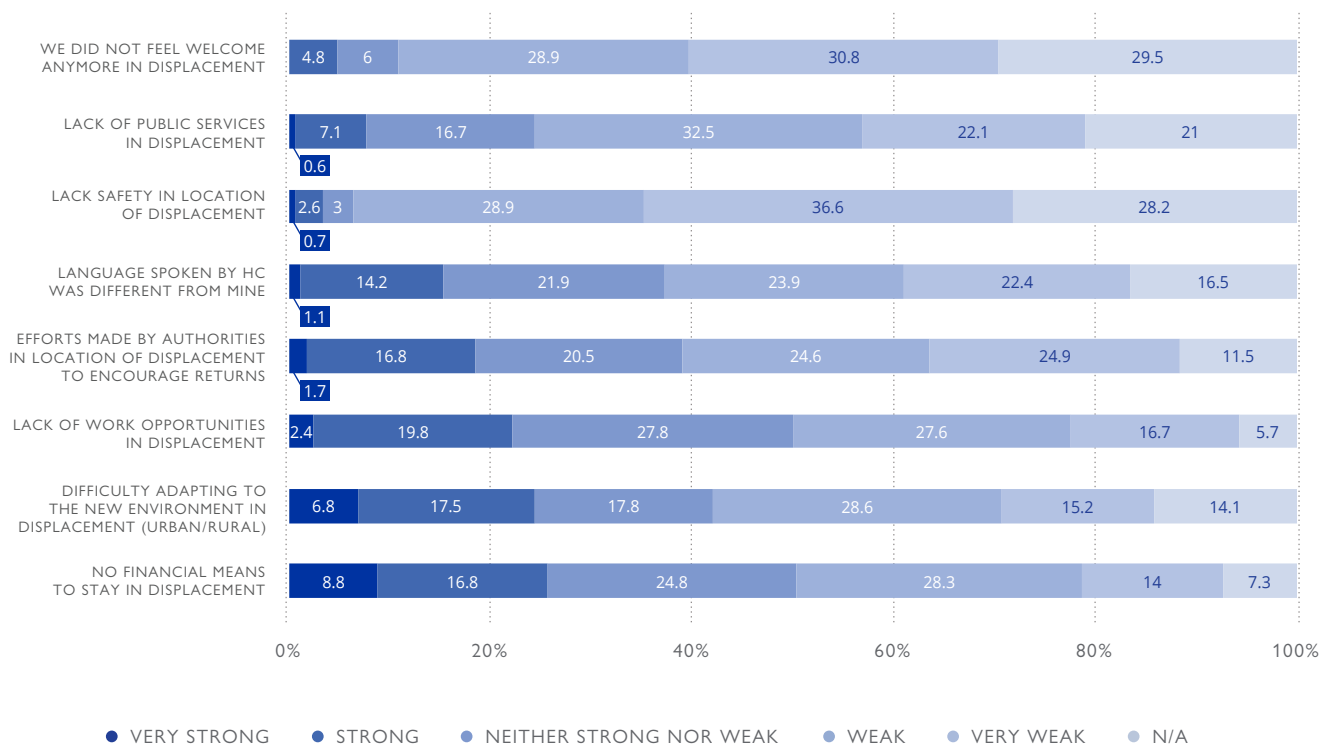


Three out of four Shabak Shia and over 50 per cent of Christian and Turkmen Shia returnees said an improvement in the safety situation in the area of origin played an important role in their decision to return. This percentage was significantly lower among Yazidis, 32 per cent of whom reported that safety played a weak or very weak role.

The study found that religious leaders encouraging IDPs to return was only a significant factor for the Christian

community: 47 per cent of interviewed Christian IDPs said that this played an important role in their decision to return. Among other communities, this factor carried less weight and occurred less frequently. Only 5 per cent of Christians responded that encouragement was not applicable, whereas 17 per cent of Shabak Shias and Turkmen Shias and 61 per cent Yazidis said so. In fact, 15 per cent of Yazidi IDPs reported that their community/religious leaders were discouraging return – the highest proportion among the four groups.

Figure 14: Factors related to location of displacement that play a role in decision to return



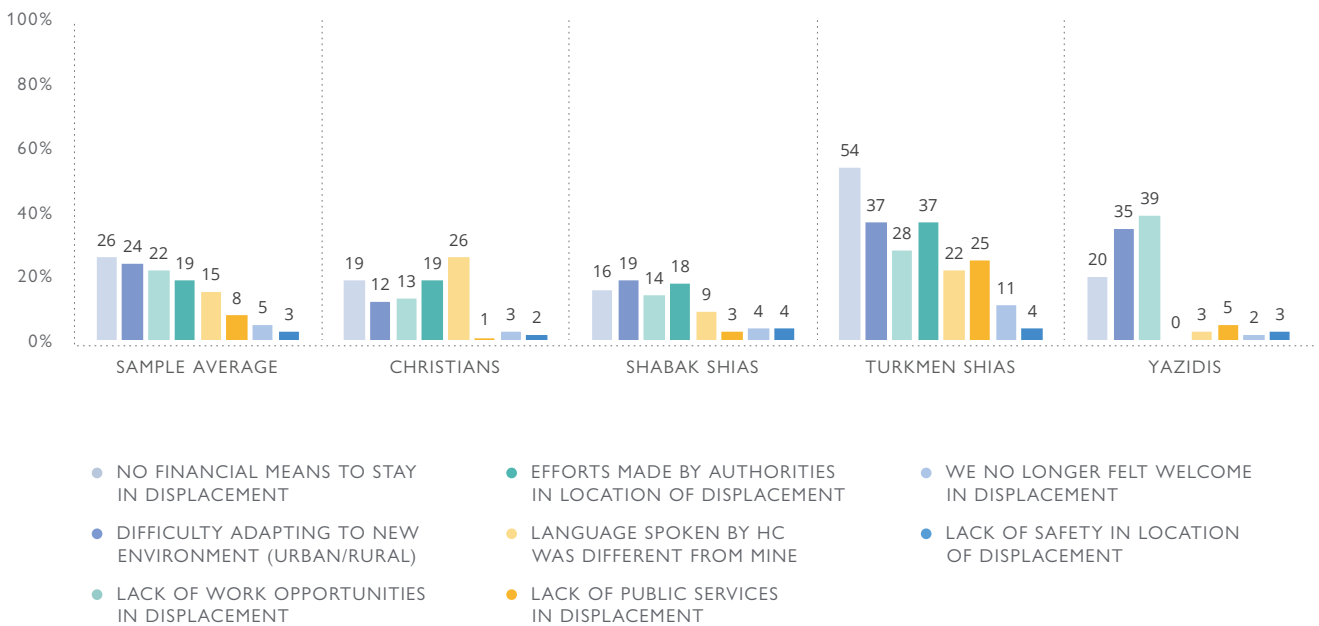
Lack of financial means to remain in displacement played an important role in the decision to return of one in four returnee respondents.

Over 54 per cent of Turkmen Shias said that lack of financial means to remain in displacement played an important role in their decision to return and mentioned lower living costs in the areas of return as a strong or very strong factor to return (69%).

Turkmen Shia were the group most pulled by this factor. Lack of work opportunities while in displacement was a push factor mainly for Yazidi returnees (39%) and Turkmen Shia returnees (28%).

Another factor reported by IDPs in their decision to return was the difficulty in adapting to a new environment (24%). Turkmen Shias (37%) and Yazidis (35%) were the groups most affected by this factor. Interviewed Turkmen Shia returnees were mostly originally from a rural location but lived in an urban setting while they were displaced. Nearly all Yazidi returnees who reported this factor had lived in camps or critical shelters such as unfinished buildings during displacement. Fifty-three per cent of Yazidi returnees who lived in camps reported difficulties to adapt as a reason to return, as did 61 per cent of Yazidi returnees in critical shelters. In comparison, only 4 per cent of Yazidi returnees who lived in rented housing cited this factor as a reason for return.

Figure 15: Returnees per ethno-religious group who state a given factor played a strong or very strong role in decision to return



### 3. HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY

#### House ownership

Across the sample and all four ethno-religious groups, the vast majority of IDPs and returnees (92.3%) own property in their location of origin, with relatively more returnees owning property. The study found that it was rare for households to lose ownership of property during displacement; only 13 respondents from a total of 1,264 interviewed IDPs and returnees said they had lost ownership of their property.

Most often, in these cases (7 cases), families had decided to sell the property. Of the four groups, Yazidis were the most likely to own property, almost nine out of ten families. It was the lowest among Christian respondents: almost four out of ten Christian IDP families and two out of ten Christian returnee families did not own property.

#### House damage

However, ownership does not necessarily mean a household faces less housing-related challenges in returning home. In some cases, owners are unable to access their property (23% of IDPs), mainly due to heavy property damage (17%). This problem was most widespread among Yazidi IDPs, with one in three reporting that they were unable to access their property. One in five Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia IDPs also said that they were unable to access their property due to heavy damage. Among Christian IDPs, this proportion is lower, affecting 12 per cent of interviewed Christian IDPs.

Property damage was also a commonly reported issue for returnees: 68 per cent of them were able to access their house but it was previously or still damaged and an additional 6 per cent were unable to access their property due to heavy damage or complete destruction. However, over half of returnees who own property have been able to repair damage to their house.

Figure 16: Proportion of ethno-religious group able to access property

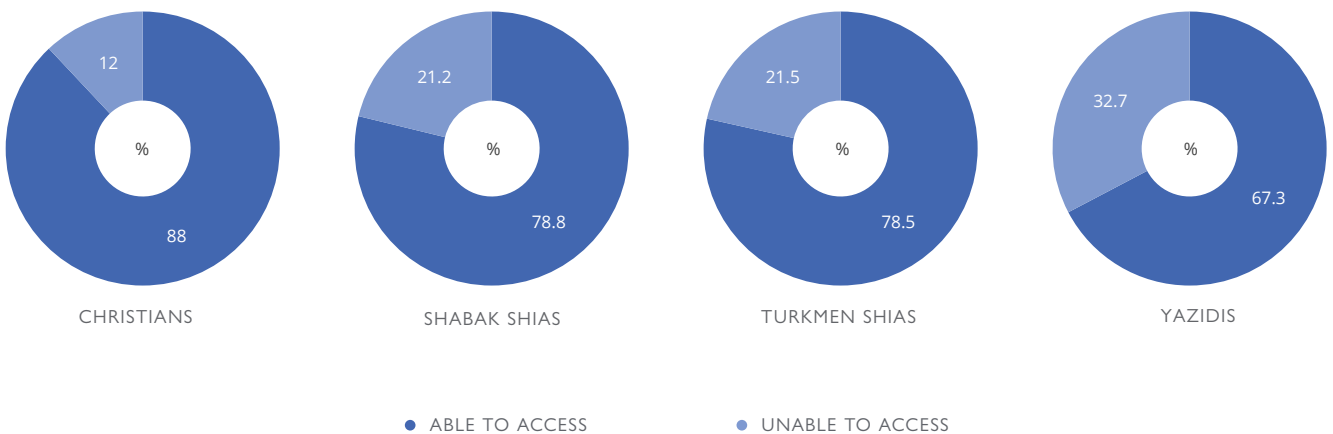
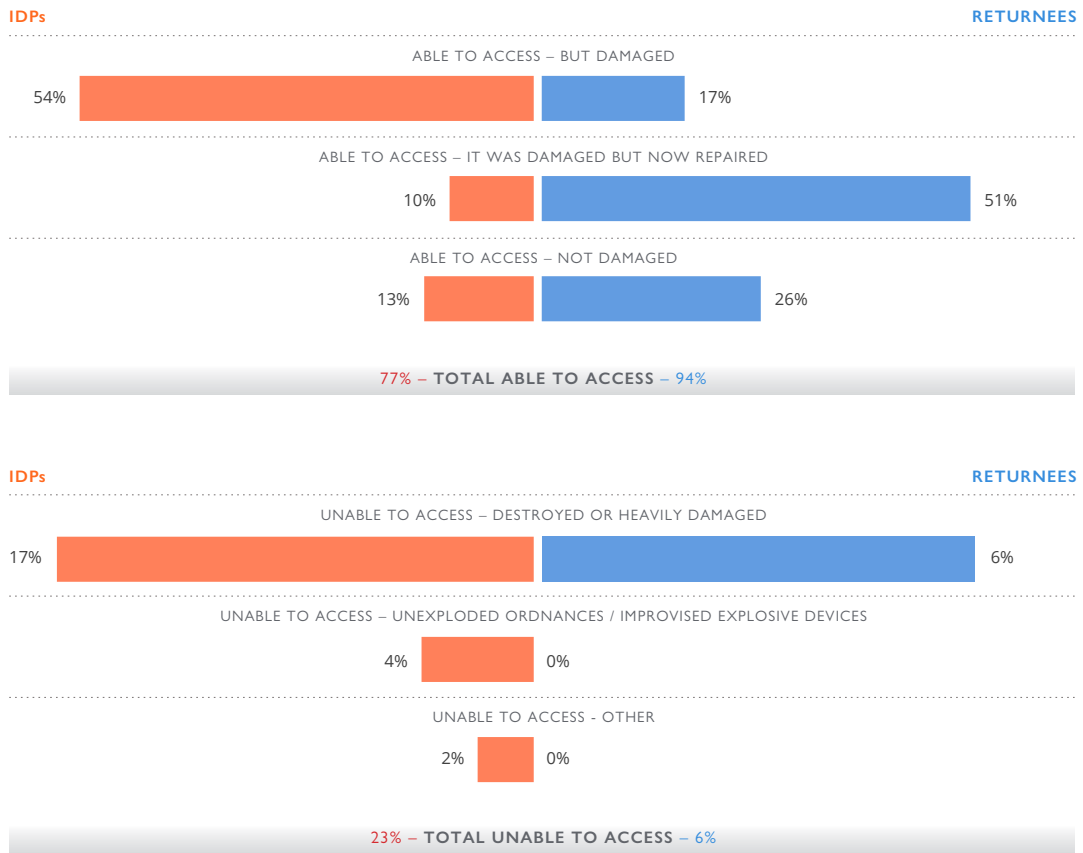


Figure 17: Able / Unable to access house among IDP / returnee property owners



**House status related to intentions to return**

While the study found that facing property issues was a key factor in IDP decision-making among all four ethno-religious groups, it was not the deciding factor for all.

A total of 23 per cent of IDP respondents who own a property had decided to remain displaced despite the fact that their property had been repaired or was never damaged.

Most of them (83%) planned to stay in displacement in the short term. Of the IDPs who have repaired their property but remain in displacement, nearly half are Turkmen Shias (48%). Of the IDP respondents whose house was not damaged, 47 per cent are Yazidis, but only one household intended to return in the short term.

## 4. PERCEPTION OF OWN GROUP, HOST COMMUNITY AND OTHER GROUPS

The study also analysed the way that individuals perceive their own group, how much they identify with it, as well as how they perceive the host community in displacement and other groups in the location of origin. This analysis aimed to explore whether this perception plays a role in an individual’s decisions to return or stay in displacement, because it influences the extent to which an individual follows their group’s dynamics and shapes shared perceptions of security, vulnerability or past events related to the crisis.

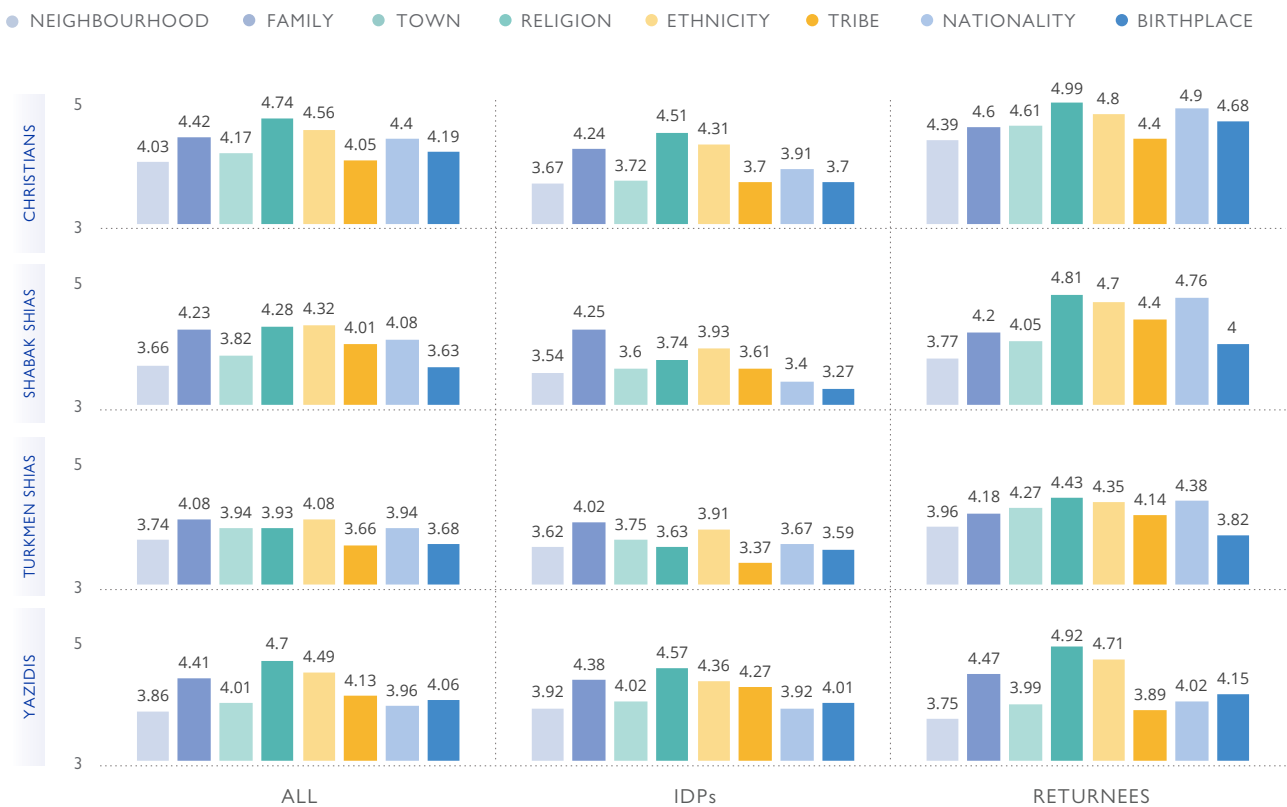
### 4.1 IDENTITY LAYERS AND PERCEPTION OF THEIR OWN GROUP

There were differences between the ethno-religious groups in terms of what layers are most important to their identity. Respondents were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 5, the importance of each element. Christian and Yazidi respondents identified first with their religion, followed by ethnicity. Also, Christian respondents, particularly returnees, ranked each element higher than any other group, which might indicate a strong bonding identity. For Shabak Shias

and Turkmen Shias, ethnicity carries more weight. However, these two groups differ in their ranking of religion: whereas religion is the second strongest identity component for Shabak Shias, for Turkmen Shias religion comes in fifth place.

These two groups present remarkable differences on how IDPs and returnees identify with several identity components. Religion, nationality, ethnicity and town of origin are stronger identifiers for returnees than for IDPs.

Figure 18: Average level of identification with each component per ethno-religious group





Through two series of five questions each, participants were asked about their experiences of agency and vulnerability as members of their group. After agreeing or disagreeing with a number of statements, an average score subsequently provides a measure for agency and vulnerability. When it comes to perceptions of agency as part of a group, Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia IDPs clearly experience higher levels of agency – that is, they feel they have greater control of their groups’ actions – while this figure drops significantly for Turkmen Shia returnees. It is possible that Turkmen Shia who are displaced in Shia-majority areas in central and south Iraq perceive a larger degree of control than those returning to mixed areas that were affected by direct confrontation.

Yazidis and Christians present significantly lower levels of group agency, which might also be linked to their perception of vulnerability. For both communities, however, returnees experience slightly more agency than IDPs. For many Yazidis, return often means they are moving from a camp back to their habitual residence in their hometown, which contributes to a feeling of being able to exercise control on group behavior and group outcomes.

When it comes to perception of vulnerability, Christians and Yazidis perceive their group to be more vulnerable than Shabak Shias and Turkmen Shias, both for IDPs and returnees. Turkmen Shia IDPs feel their group is the least vulnerable.

Figure 19: Perception of agency per ethno-religious group

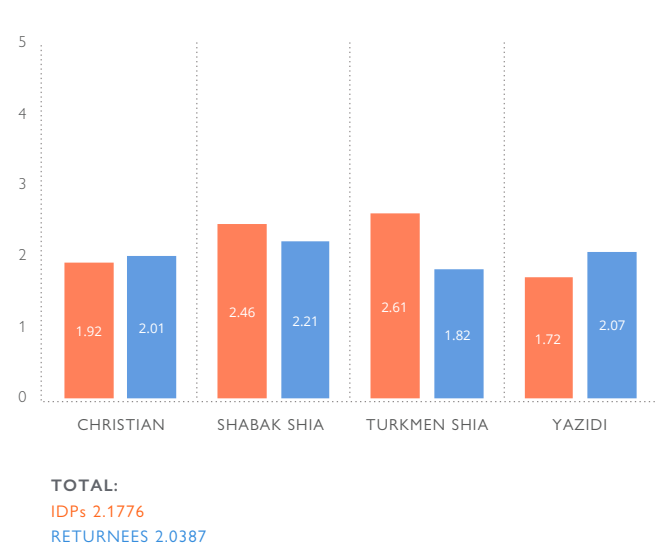
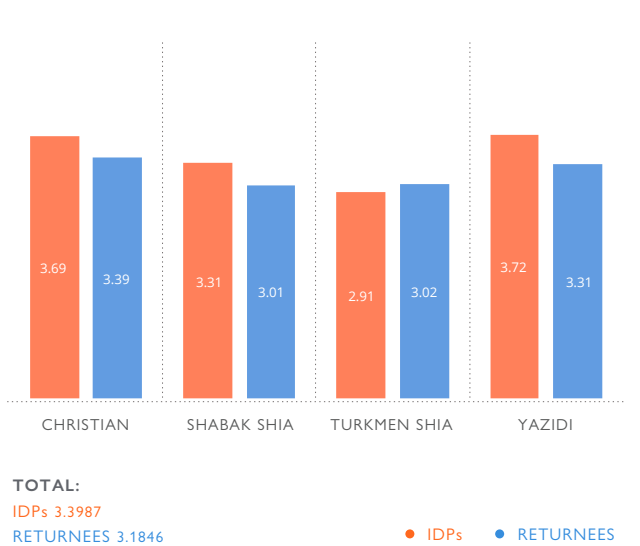


Figure 20: Vulnerability average score



#### 4.2 PERCEPTION OF HOST COMMUNITY IN DISPLACEMENT AND OTHER GROUPS IN LOCATION OF ORIGIN

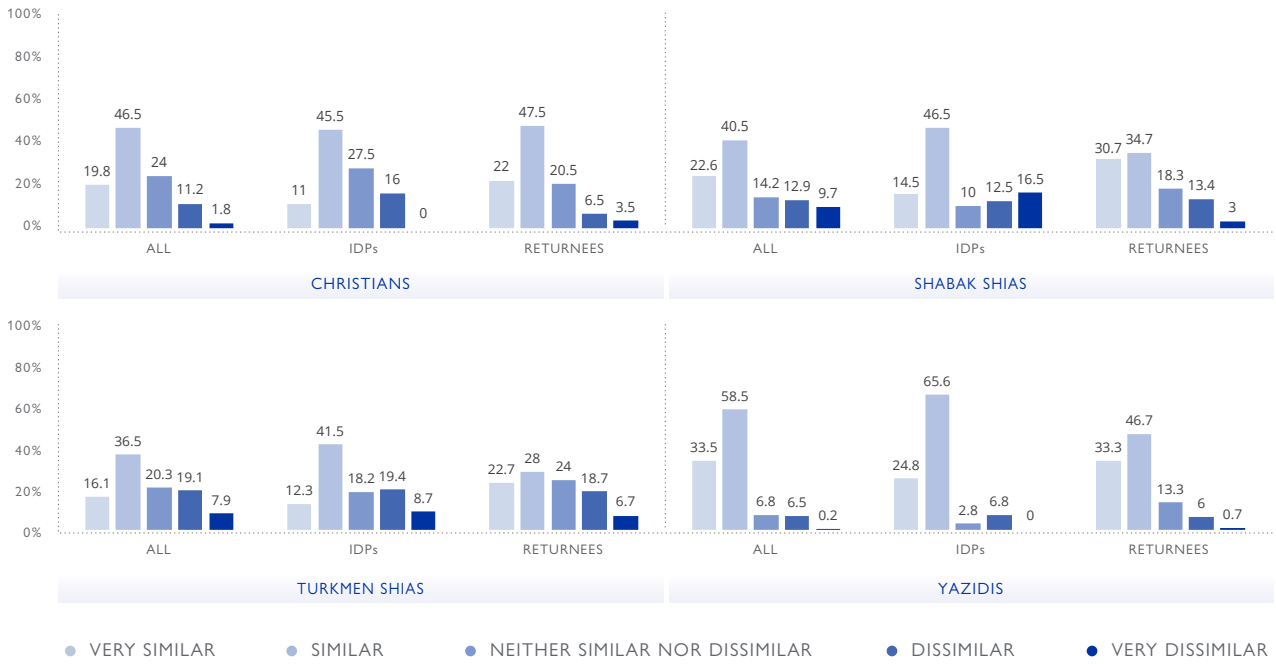
Returnees and IDPs were also asked about their perceptions of the other groups and of the host community.

##### Perception of host community in areas of displacement

Respondents were asked about how similar they feel to the host community. The majority (66%) of respondents felt similar or very similar, 16 per cent gave a neutral response, and 18 per cent felt different or very different from members of the host community. Across all groups, Shabak Shia

(29%) and Turkmen Shia (28%) IDPs were the groups that were more likely to feel different from the host community, whereas nine out of ten Yazidi IDP respondents stated that they felt very similar or similar to the host community.

Figure 21: Feeling of similarity to host community during displacement

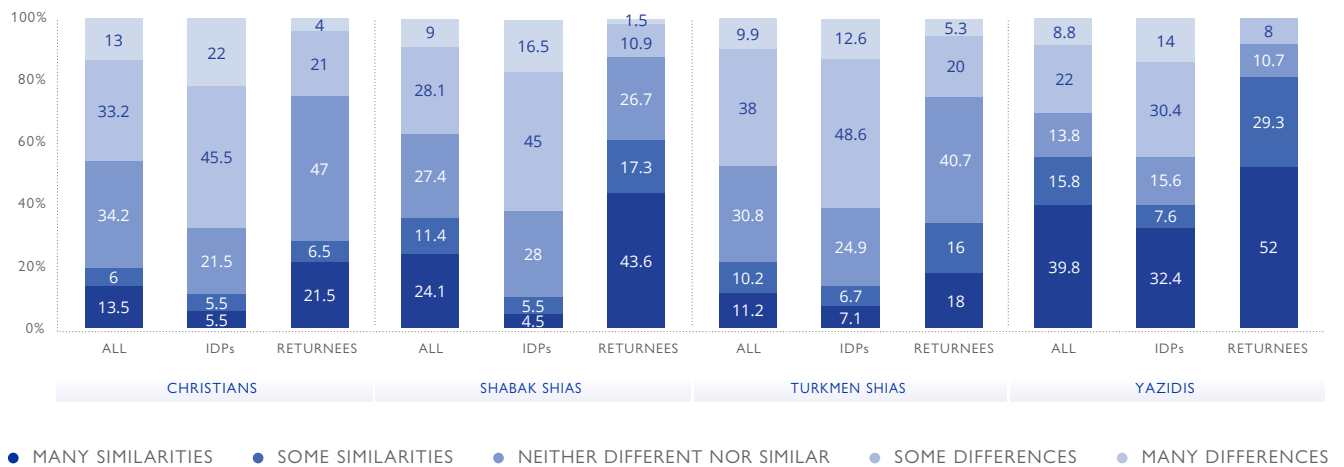


Perception of other groups in areas of origin

Overall, Christian (46%) and Turkmen Shia (48%) respondents were most likely to report differences between groups in their areas of origin. There are clear differences in the perceptions of returnees and IDPs when asked about their location of origin. More than half of IDPs (58%) perceive differences between the various groups living in their locations of origin, but far fewer returnees (18%) felt this way.

In particular, among Yazidis and Shabak Shias, IDPs and returnees from the same group expressed opposing views. Of the Yazidi respondents, 44 per cent of IDPs felt that there were differences between groups, in contrast to only 8 per cent of returnees. Among Shabak Shias, the difference is wider: 61.5 per cent of IDPs but only 12 per cent of returnees reported that such differences existed.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 22: Perceptions about other groups in location of origin



8 Although this might be due to returnees having a better knowledge of the situation in the area of origin / return, IOM's teams in the field observed that IDPs were more comfortable in answering these questions, whereas returnees might not have felt comfortable enough to openly express their views. This also applies to the questions on acceptance of other groups.

### Acceptance of other groups in areas of origin / return

When asked about whether they felt accepted by other groups living in their location of origin, returnees and IDPs also had different perceptions. Less than 1 per cent of returnee respondents felt rejected by other ethno-religious groups living in the same location of origin but almost 18 per cent of IDPs reported this issue. This proportion was highest among Yazidis (22.4%) and lowest among Shabak Shias (15.5%)

Figure 23: Feeling of acceptance among other groups living in location of origin/return

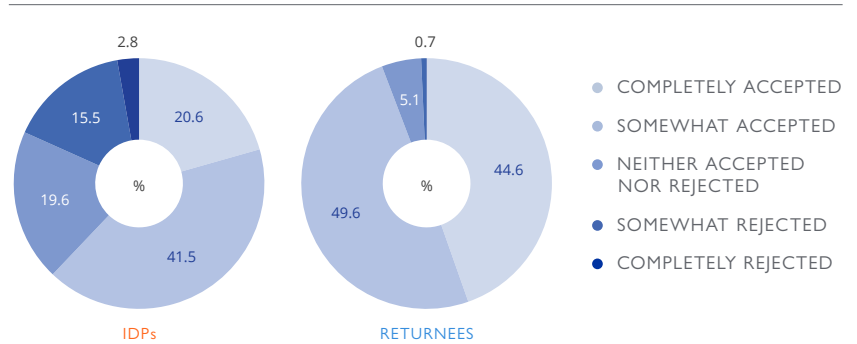
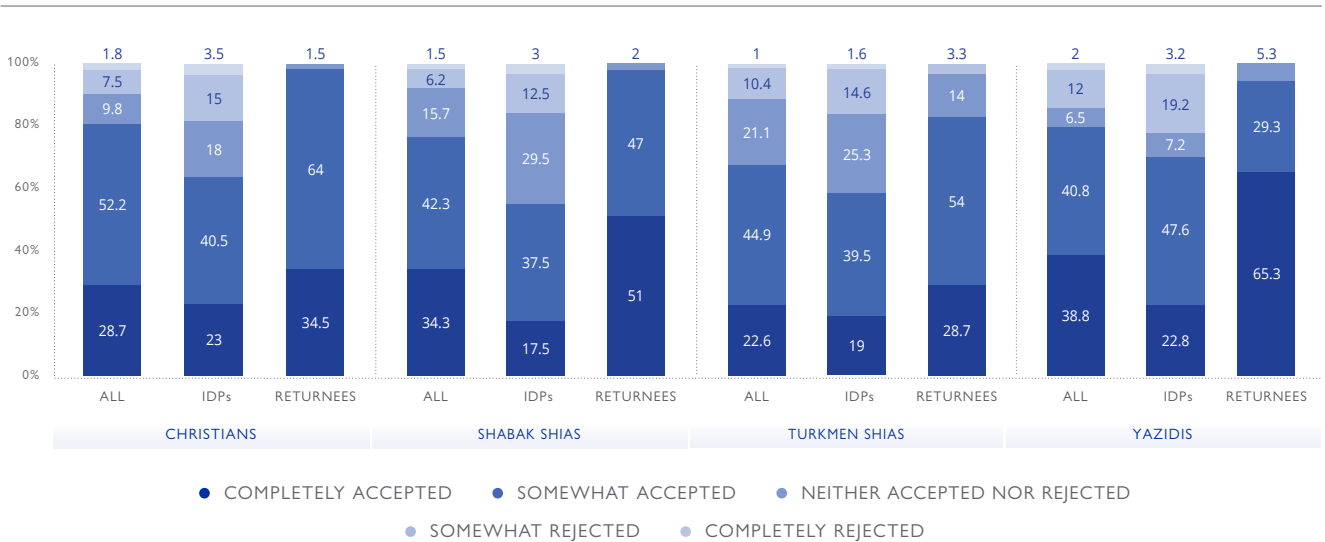


Figure 24: Feeling of acceptance by other ethno-religious groups living in location of origin/return

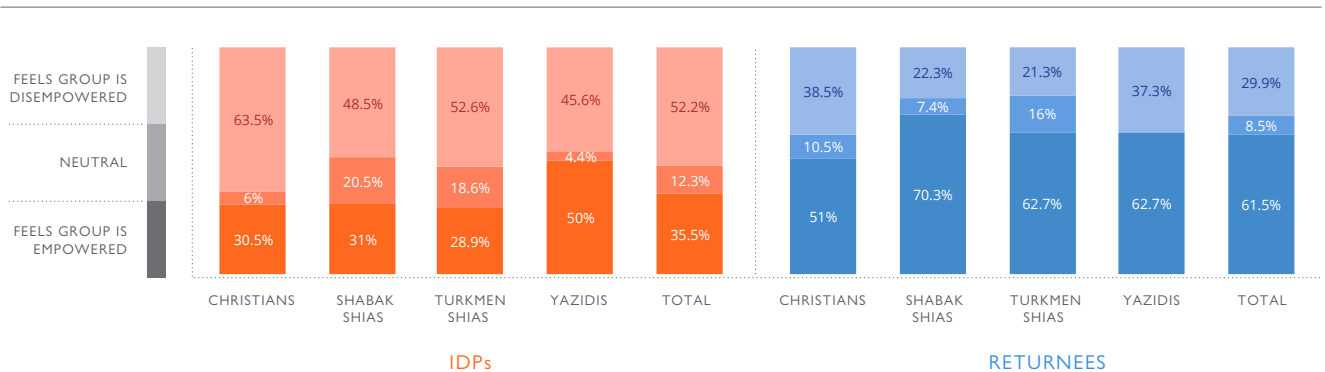


### Group empowerment in the location of origin

Over 50 per cent of IDP respondents reported that, compared to other groups, their group is disempowered in their location of origin. Among those who had returned, only about 30 per cent of respondents held the same view and 61.5 per cent felt that their ethno-religious group was empowered, with similar percentages across all four

ethno-religious groups. This might suggest that feelings of community empowerment play an important role in the decision to return, and that individuals are less likely to do so when they feel their group is disempowered in their area of origin.

Figure 25: Perceptions of group empowerment vis-à-vis other groups in location of origin



## 5. FUTURE INTENTIONS

This section reports on the future intentions of returnees and IDPs and has three parts: (i) levels of satisfaction among returnees and intentions to move in the future, (ii) short- and long-term intentions of IDPs and the different factors that drive their decisions to return, remain in displacement or migrate abroad, and (iii) regression models to explain future intentions to return within each ethno-religious group separately.

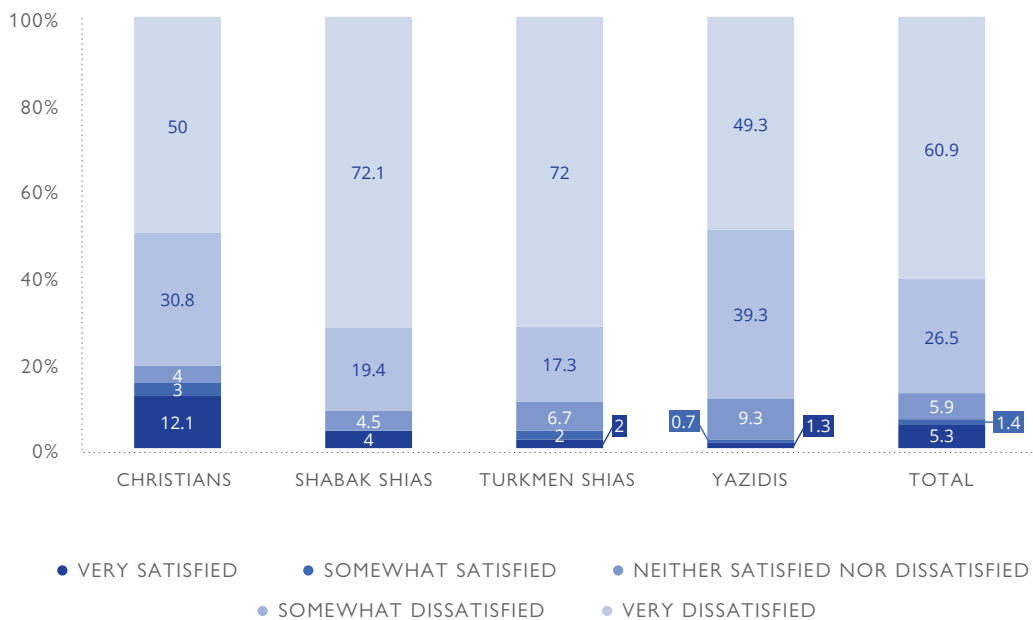
### 5.1 RETURNEE INTENTIONS

#### Satisfaction with return

Respondents were also asked whether they were satisfied with their current location (return or remain in displacement). A vast majority of returnees (87%) were not satisfied with having returned, reporting that they were somewhat

(26.5%) or very dissatisfied (60.9%). Levels of dissatisfaction are greatest among Shabak Shia and Turkmen Shia returnees (90% dissatisfied, 72% of whom reported that they were very dissatisfied).

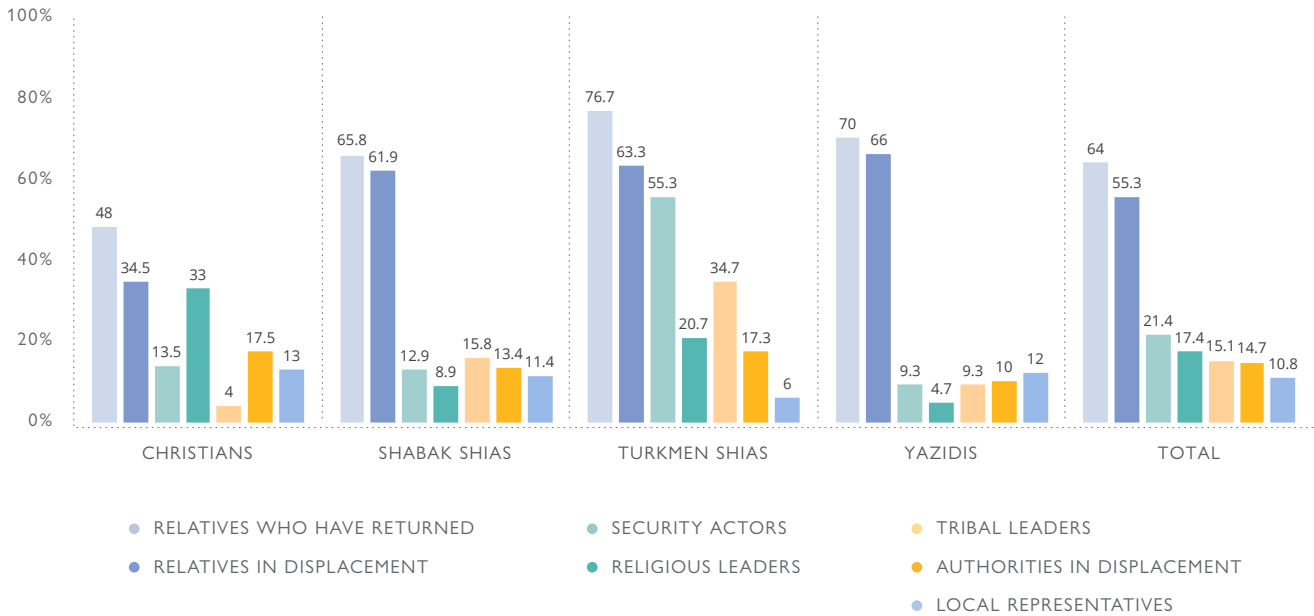
Figure 26: Satisfaction with return



### Consulting others about returning

The majority of returnees interviewed sought advice from other relatives who had already returned or who were in displacement, before returning. However, less than half of Christian respondents reported advice from others as a factor in their decision-making. In terms of other factors, Christians were more likely to seek advice from religious leaders than other groups, and Turkmen Shias reported that they consulted tribal leaders and armed forces prior to their return. For all groups in displacement, local community representatives were also consulted the least regarding the respondents' decision to return.

Figure 27: Proportion of respondents that sought advice regarding their decision to return

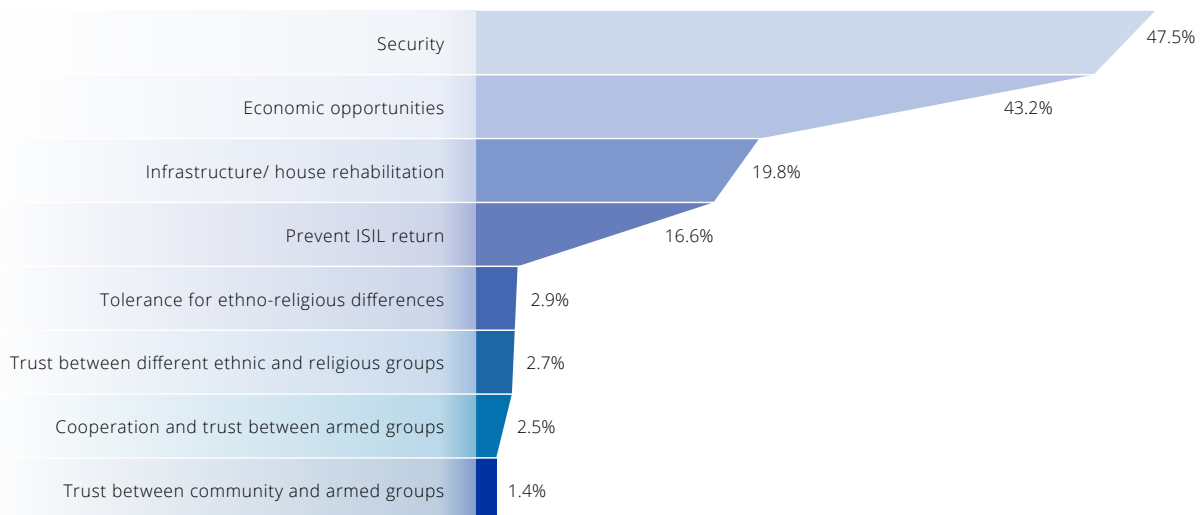


### Areas for improvement

The top three areas where returnees demanded improvements were public service provision (62%), security (47.5%) and economic opportunities (43%). Nearly 20 per cent of

returnees also prioritized infrastructure and house rehabilitation. The need for additional efforts to prevent the return of ISIL was reported by 17 per cent of respondents.

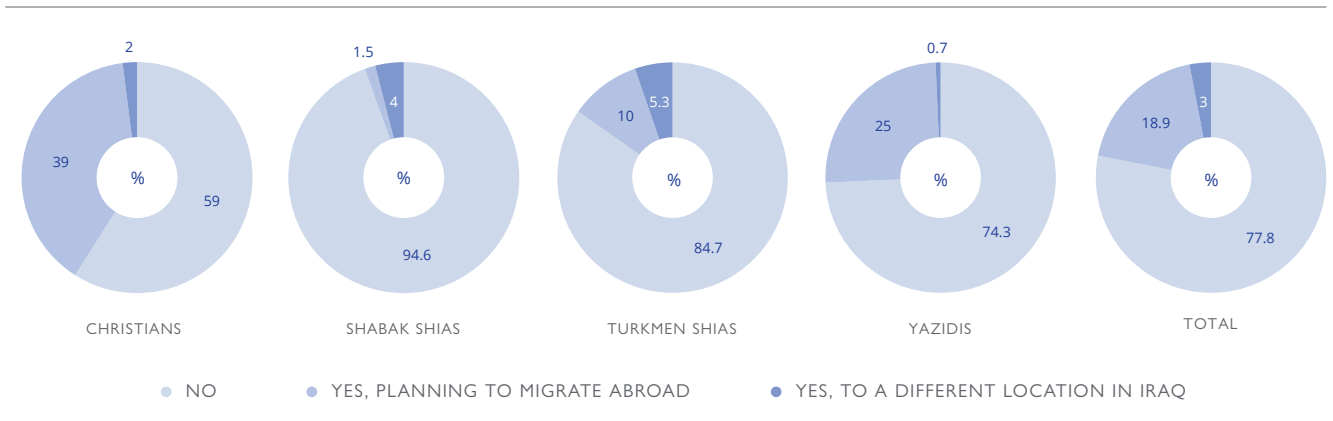
Figure 28: Areas for improvement



When it comes to future intentions, despite the high levels of dissatisfaction associated with returning, the majority of returnees (78%) were not planning to move again. This percentage is the highest among Shabak Shias (95%) and Turkmen Shias (85%).

For those who were planning on moving again, very few were planning to move to a different location in Iraq. However, a significant percentage of Christians and Yazidis (39% and 25% respectively) reported that they planned to migrate abroad.

Figure 29: Intention to displace again

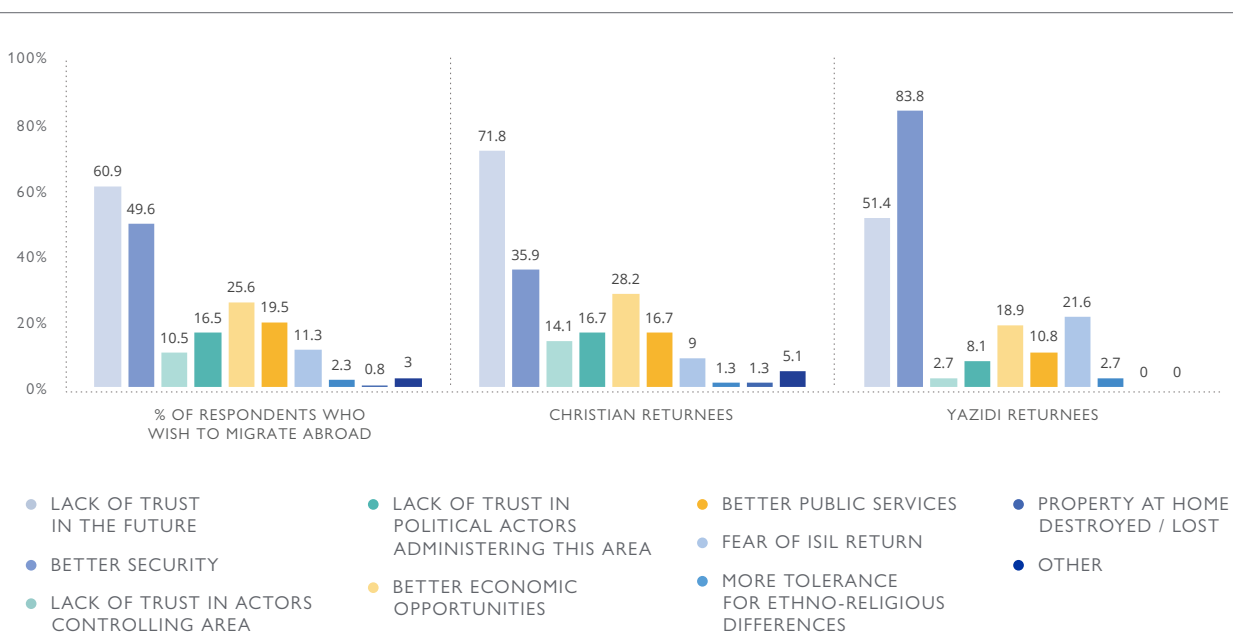


When asked about why they planned to migrate abroad, a lack of trust in the future and better security elsewhere were the two most commonly selected reasons. Other reasons included lack of trust in the leadership in their location, better economic opportunities, better public services such as education and healthcare, and fear of the return of ISIL. The location of family members was also a significant factor reported by households regarding their decision to move abroad. Of the 133 returnees planning to migrate abroad, nearly half (43.6%)

already had family members living abroad. In contrast, among returnees not planning to move again, only 14.7 per cent of households had one or more family members living abroad.

Yazidi returnees appear more driven in their intention to migrate abroad by factors related to security (better security and fear of ISIL return) than their Christian counterparts, who were more likely to cite economic opportunities, better public services and administration as the top reasons why they intended to leave Iraq.

Figure 30: Returnees' reasons to migrate abroad

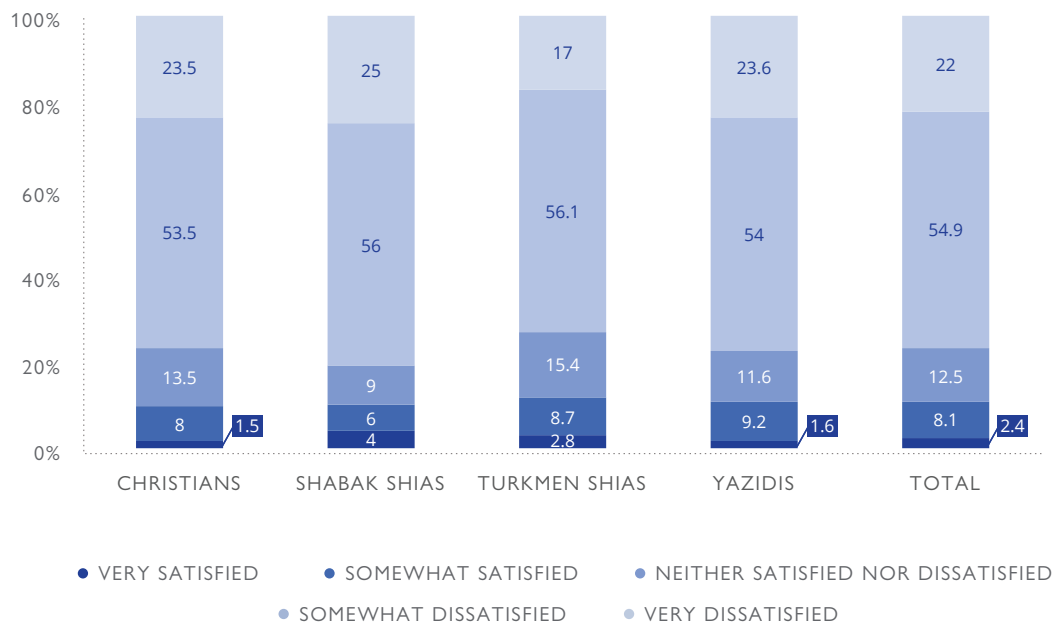


## 5.2 IDP INTENTIONS

### Satisfaction with decision not to return

Around 77 per cent of IDPs say they are dissatisfied with their decision to remain in displacement. Unlike returnees, however, most say they are somewhat dissatisfied (54.9%) rather than very dissatisfied (22%). There are no significant differences between ethno-religious groups or between IDPs displaced in the central/south of Iraq and those in the KRI.

Figure 31: Satisfaction with decision to remain in current location

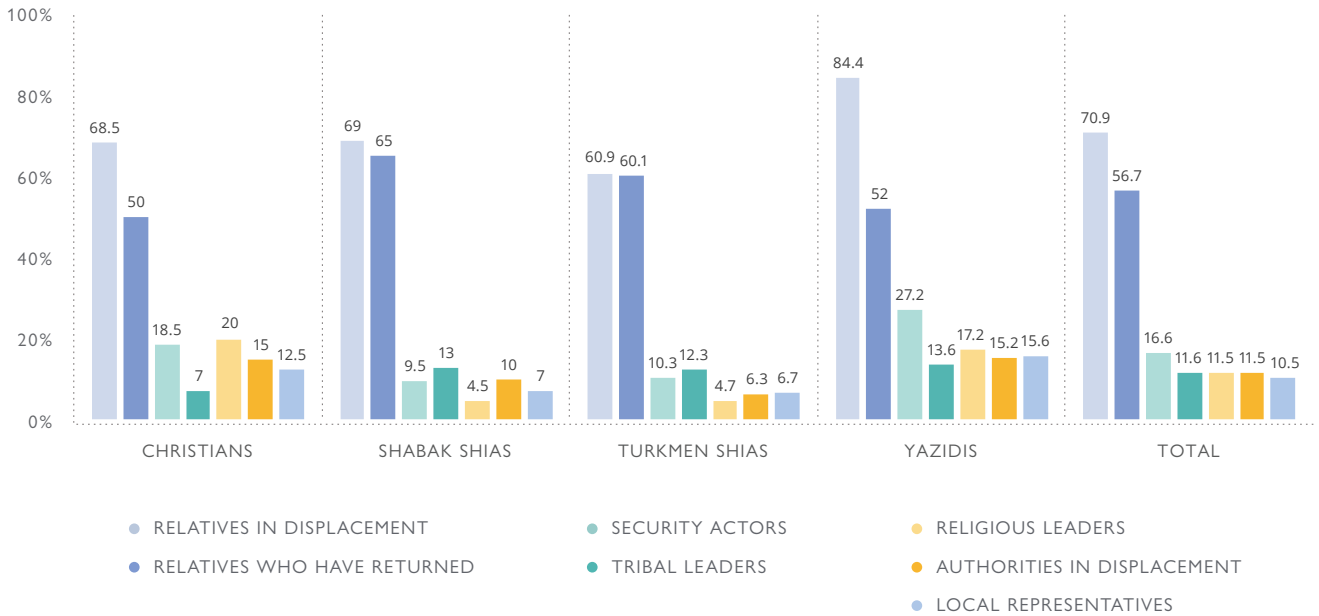


### Consulting others about returning

Similar to returnees, most IDPs seek advice from relatives who have returned and from those who have chosen to remain in displacement when deciding whether to return or not. Yazidis and Christians are more likely to seek advice from security actors and religious leaders than the other

two groups. Again, IDP respondents also reported that they barely consulted authorities in displacement and local community representatives during their decision-making process. Religious and tribal leaders were less likely to be consulted by IDPs than by returnees.

Figure 32: Proportion of respondents that sought advice regarding their decision to return

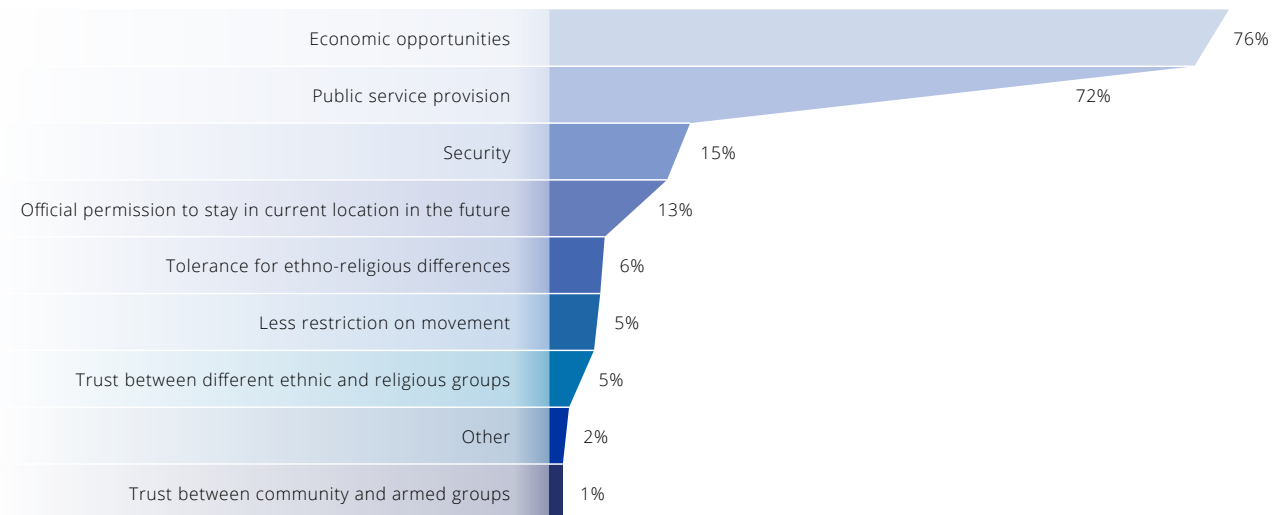


Areas for improvement

The main reasons why IDPs were dissatisfied with their current locations were the lack of economic opportunities (76%) and public service provision (72%). Nearly three out of four IDPs selected both of these as one of the two areas where they would like to see improvement. Security was much less of an issue for IDPs than for returnees; however, it

was still a concern for nearly one in every seven interviewed IDP households. Just over 13 per cent of IDPs reported that the process of receiving an official permission to remain in the location of displacement needed to be improved. These were predominantly Turkmen Shias displaced in Najaf and Wassit, as well as Shabak Shias in Najaf and Kerbala.

Figure 33: Areas for improvement



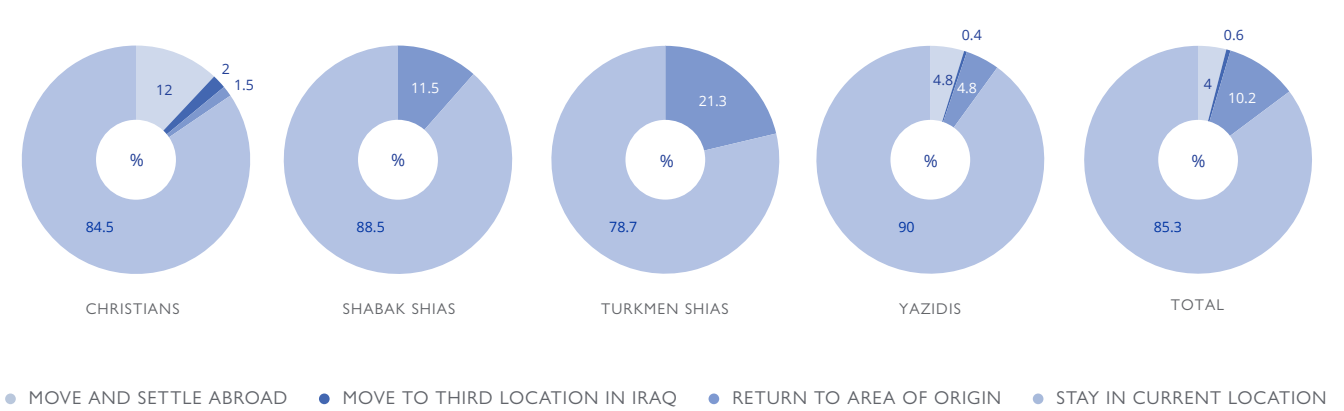


**IDPs' short-term intentions**

In the short term (<12 months) the vast majority of interviewed IDPs (85%) planned to stay in their current location. Turkmen Shias (21.3%) were most likely to report that they wanted to return and Christians (1.5%) were the least likely. Christian IDPs were the most likely to be planning to move and

settle abroad in the short term, followed by Yazidis. The main reasons cited by Christians and Yazidis for planning to move abroad were better security and better economic opportunities. More tolerance for ethno-religious differences was also cited as a reason by nearly 20 per cent wishing to migrate.

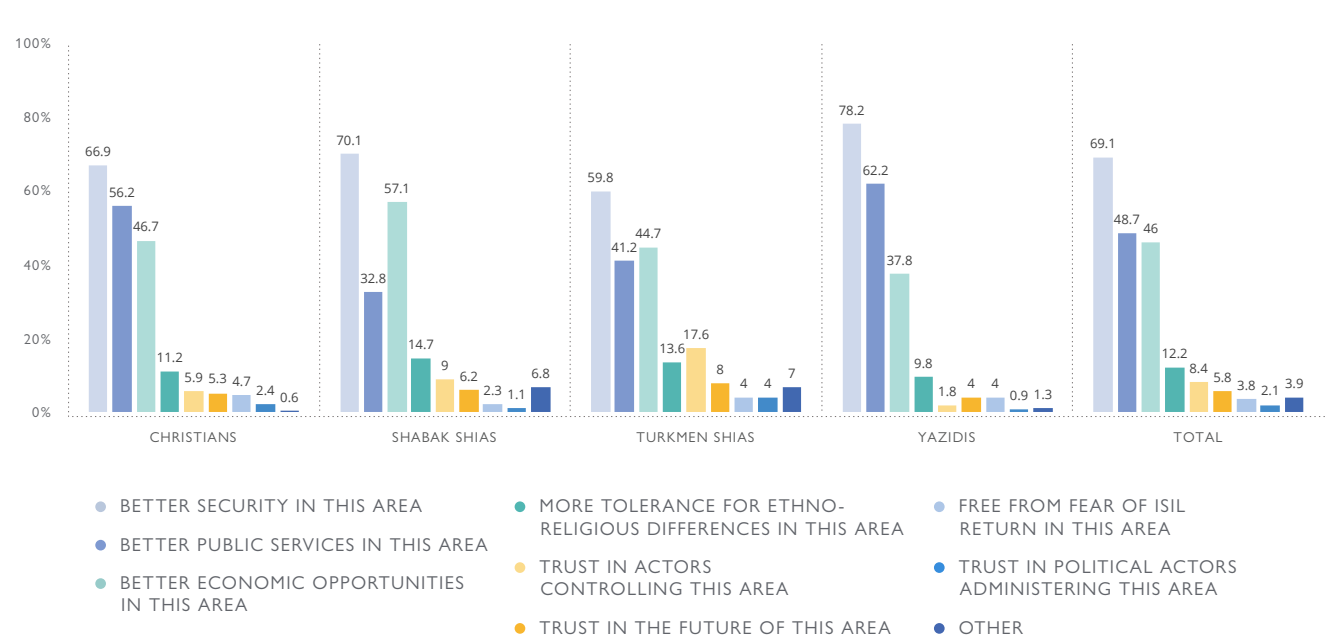
Figure 34: IDPs' short-term intentions



For the 85 per cent of IDPs who intend to stay in displacement in the short term, better security, public services and economic opportunities were the primary drivers. However, between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of IDPs across all four groups also cited a more tolerant climate for ethno-religious differences as a reason to remain in their location of

displacement. Turkmen Shias, were more likely to cite trust in local actors controlling their location of displacement than the other groups. Responses that fell in the "other" category were mainly issues related to housing, land and property, or a lack of education services in the location of origin.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 35: Reasons for IDPs wishing to remain in displacement in the short term



9 Coded from open-ended question filled when selecting "Other".

**IDPs' long-term intentions**

In the long term, most IDP respondents (55%) wished to return to their area of origin, but this differed between ethno-religious communities: 80 per cent of Turkmen Shias planned to return, in contrast to only 22 per cent of Christians and 43 per cent of Yazidis.

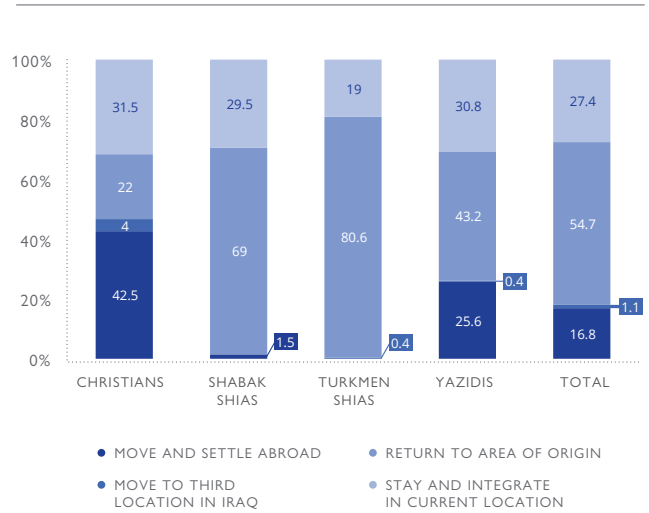
**Almost three out of ten IDPs wished to stay and integrate in their current location.**

This proportion is roughly similar among Christian, Yazidi and Shabak Shia IDPs (30%) but significantly lower among Turkmen Shia IDPs (20%), who were also more likely to report that they wished to return.

As with the returnees, the IDP respondents that were most likely to report that they intended to move and settle abroad were Christians (42.5%) and Yazidis (25.6%).

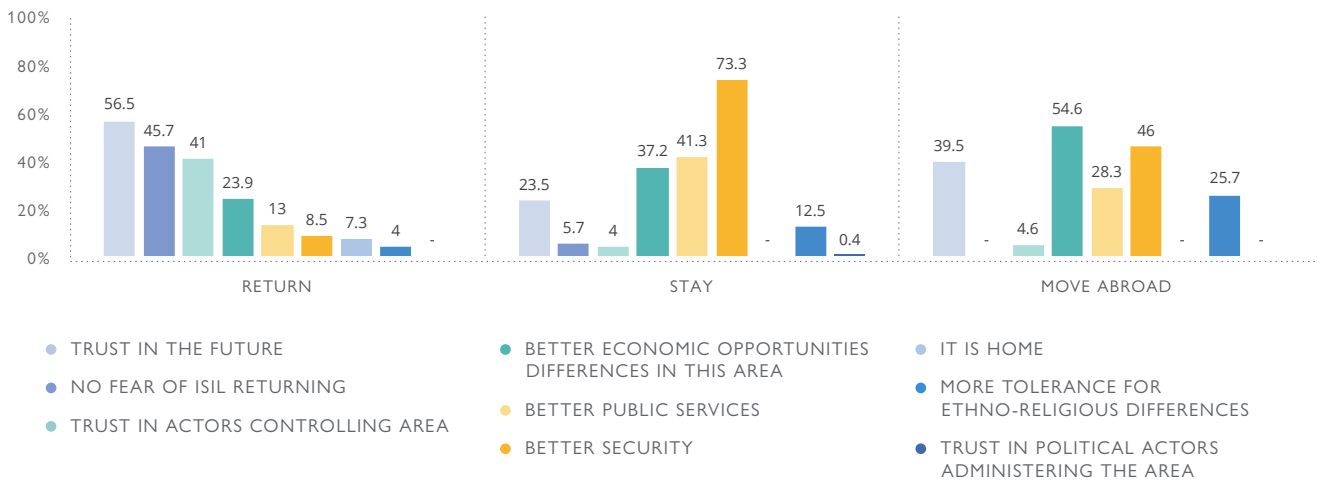
Individual motivations for wanting to leave Iraq, return, or stay and integrate differed depending on intentions. IDPs intending to return were mainly motivated by optimism regarding the future of their hometowns. They had trust in the future of the return area as well as in the civil and military

Figure 36: IDP long-term intentions



actors controlling it, and they believed that ISIL would not return there. Improvements in economic opportunities and public service provision appeared to carry less weight in their decision about whether or not to return.

Figure 37: Reasons for intending to return, stay displaced or move abroad



The roughly 27 per cent of IDP respondents who wished to stay in displacement are motivated by different factors: 73 per cent cited better security, followed by better public services (41%) and economic opportunities (37%). There were also 13 per cent of respondents who cited “a more tolerant climate for ethno-religious differences” as a reason to stay. This factor was also mentioned by a quarter of IDPs who intended to migrate abroad. Around half of those wishing to leave Iraq cited better economic opportunities and security elsewhere as main reasons to move abroad.

### 5.3 ETHNO-RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND INTENTIONS TO RETURN: WHICH FACTORS AFFECT INTENTIONS THE MOST?

Within each group, certain characteristics associated with intentions to return, stay in displacement or migrate abroad differ between groups; therefore it was necessary to analyse each ethno-religious group separately. The following are

findings of the logistic regression undertaken to analyse factors of intention to return in the long term for each ethnic group separately.<sup>10</sup>

#### Christian IDPs' long-term intentions to return

##### ▼ FACTORS REDUCING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS</b>	Female-headed households are four times less likely to intend to return than households headed by males.
<b>SAFETY</b>	Those who state safety is an important factor are less likely to intend to return.
<b>HOST COMMUNITY</b>	Those who feel similar to the host community (65%) are less likely to intend to return.

##### ▲ FACTORS INCREASING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>PROPERTY OWNERSHIP</b>	Those who own property in their location of origin are more than twice as likely to intend to return than those who do not – all other factors being equal.
<b>GROUP IDENTITY</b>	Those who identify more strongly with their ethno-religious group are more likely to intend to return.
<b>OTHER PEOPLE</b>	Those who indicate that their decision to return/remain is strongly influenced by the actions of others are more likely to intend to return.

The most important factor affecting intentions to return among Christian IDP respondents is property ownership in the location of origin. Those who own property in their location of origin are more than twice as likely to intend to return than those who do not – all other factors being equal. Another two related factors also increase the likelihood of Christian IDPs wanting to return: the extent to which they identify with their group and whether or not the respondents attribute importance to the actions and decisions of other IDPs. Respondents who do not find these two factors important are more likely to return.

Several factors reduce the likelihood of a respondent intending to return. First, the odds of female-headed households intending to return are four times lower compared to that for a male-headed household – all other factors being equal. Second, Christian IDPs who attributed a great importance to safety are less likely to return in the long term. Finally, Christian IDPs who report that they feel similar to their host community (almost six out of ten Christian IDPs) are 65 per cent less likely to return than Christian IDPs who do not feel similar to their host community.

10 In each model, a number of demographic controls were included to better explore the effects of particular perceptions and other socioeconomic factors on the odds for a particular outcome. These control variables are: gender of head of household, age of the head of household, education level, unemployment and ownership of property in location of origin.

Christian IDPs' and returnees' intentions to move abroad<sup>11</sup>

▼ FACTORS REDUCING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>OWNING PROPERTY</b>	Those who own property in origin are 0.50 times less likely to intend to migrate abroad.
<b>ELDERLY IN HOUSEHOLD</b>	Households with one or more older person are also 0.50 times less likely to intend to migrate.
<b>GROUP IDENTITY</b>	Households with one or more older person are also 0.50 times less likely to intend to migrate.
<b>POLITICAL CONFIDENCE</b>	Those who have a positive view of their group's leadership are 0.44 times less likely to intend to migrate.

▲ FACTORS INCREASING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>FRIENDS ABROAD</b>	Christians who have friends abroad are four times more likely to intend to migrate as well.
<b>NOT FEELING WELCOME</b>	Those who do not feel welcome in displacement and/or return are 1.5 times more likely to intend to migrate abroad.

As seen previously in the report, the intention to migrate abroad among Christian respondents is nearly 30 per cent. Six factors significantly impact the long-term intentions of Christian IDP and returnee respondents to migrate abroad. Two factors increase the likelihood of wishing to migrate abroad: having friends who have already migrated (four times more likely) and not feeling welcome in the current location (1.5 times more likely).

Four factors reduce the wish to emigrate: owning property in their location of origin, the presence of older people in their household – both factors halve this likelihood – the extent to which they identify with their own ethno-religious group and whether they have a positive perception of local political leaders.

11 The statistical model to assess factors affecting the intention to move abroad was not applied to Shabak Shias and Turkmen Shias as the percentage of respondents from the sample among these two groups intending to move abroad was too low to apply the regression.

## Yazidi IDPs' intentions to return

### ▼ FACTORS REDUCING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS</b>	Female-headed households are half as likely to intend to return than households headed by males.
<b>GROUP VULNERABILITY</b>	The more vulnerable Yazidis feel their group is, the less likely they are to intend to return.
<b>DISCRIMINATION</b>	Those who have faced discrimination in their location of origin prior to displacement are less inclined to return.

### ▲ FACTORS INCREASING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>PERCEPTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT</b>	Yazidis who feel their group is powerful in relation to other groups living in their location of origin are more likely to intend to return.
<b>ACTIONS OF FAMILY MEMBERS</b>	Yazidis who say the actions of family members are important to their decision are more likely to intend to return than those who say this is not important to them.

Among Yazidi IDPs, female-headed households are half as likely to return than male-headed households.<sup>12</sup> Other demographic variables, such as age or education level of the head of household, do not appear to have a significant effect on intentions to return.<sup>13</sup> Yazidi IDPs who have declared that keeping their family together in one place is important, are 3.6 times more likely to intend to return home. Another

factor that made Yazidis more likely to intend to return is the perception that their group is empowered in their location of origin (2.5 times more likely).

One factor that negatively impacts Yazidi IDPs intention to return is the perception of group vulnerability, which is negatively related to the intention to return (0.6 times).<sup>14</sup>

## Yazidi IDPs' and returnees' intentions to return<sup>15</sup>

### ▲ FACTORS INCREASING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>FAMILY ABROAD</b>	The 36 per cent of Yazidis who say they have family abroad are four times more likely to intend to leave Iraq than the 64 per cent that do not – all other factors being equal.
<b>DISCRIMINATION</b>	Those who have faced discrimination are 1.5 times more likely to intend to migrate abroad.
<b>AGE</b>	Households headed by younger persons (under 45 years of age) are twice as likely to intend to migrate abroad than those headed by older persons (over 45 years of age).

12 In situations where all else is equal. Note that the relation is only significant at the 10 per cent level.

13 Note that this absence of effect is partially explained by a lack of variance in the variables; among Yazidis, ownership of property is so high and education levels so low that these variables lose much of their distinguishing feature.

14 This variable is a scale of an average of five questions related to group vulnerability; every unit increase on this scale is paired with a decrease of a factor .611 in the odds of intention to return. However, this relation has a p. value of 0.052 and is therefore only significant at the 10 per cent level.

15 The statistical model to assess factors affecting the intention to move abroad was not applied to Shabak Shias and Turkmen Shias as the percentage of respondents from the sample among these two groups intending to move abroad was too low to apply the regression.

A quarter of Yazidi respondents (IDPs and returnees combined) intend to move abroad in the long term. Three factors significantly impact the likelihood of Yazidis to migrate abroad. First, having family members who have already done so (36% of the Yazidi sample). Having members who have migrated abroad increases the likelihood that the respondent intends to move abroad (four times more likely), followed by having

discrimination while in displacement. For every increase in the number of areas where discrimination occurred (e.g. access to public services, employment or housing based on ethno-religious identity), households are 1.5 times more likely to intend to migrate abroad. Finally, households headed by people younger than 45 are twice as likely to intend to migrate abroad than those headed by older individuals.

**Shabak Shia IDPs' intentions to return**

▼ FACTORS REDUCING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>HOST COMMUNITY</b>	Like Christians, Shabak Shia who feel similar to the host community are less likely to intend to return.
<b>GROUP VULNERABILITY</b>	Those who feel their group is more vulnerable in the location of origin are less inclined to return.
<b>PUBLIC SERVICES</b>	Those who say public services are important for their decision are less likely to intend to return than those who say public services are not important for their decision to return.

▲ FACTORS INCREASING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>EDUCATION LEVELS</b>	Shabak Shia with higher education are more than twice as likely to intend to return than others.
<b>OTHER PEOPLE</b>	Shabak Shia who say the actions of other people are important to their decision-making are 3.6 times more likely to intend to return than those who say this is not important to them. This suggests that there are Shabak Shia IDPs who intend to return but have not yet done so in part because other people have remained as well.
<b>LIVING STANDARDS IN DISPLACEMENT</b>	Those who say their living standards were worse than before displacement are more likely to intend to return.

Three factors increase the intention to return of Shabak Shia IDPs. The first is the level of education. Shabak Shias with higher education are more than twice as likely to intend to return than others. The second factor is the decision being taken by other members of the community. Shabak Shias who say the actions of other people are important to their decision-making are more likely to intend to return (3.6 times more likely). Finally, those who say their living standards are worse in displacement than before are more likely to intend to return (3 times more likely).

The likelihood of Shabak Shia IDPs intending to return significantly decreases when the respondents perceive few differences with the host community (61% of the sample). It also decreases when the respondent perceives his/her group as more vulnerable and disempowered than the other groups in the location of origin.

Among Shabak Shia IDPs, there is no link between male- or female-headed households and their intentions to return. Also, neither property ownership nor employment are significantly associated with the intention to return among Shabak Shias.

Turkmen Shia IDPs' intentions to return

▼ FACTORS REDUCING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>SHELTER IN DISPLACEMENT</b>
<b>EDUCATION LEVELS</b>

Turkmen Shia who rent accommodation in displacement are less inclined to return than those who stay in other shelter types (often religious buildings). Renting accommodation in this case should be seen as a measure of affluence and households who can afford it may be under less pressure to return than others.

Turkmen Shia households headed by a person with higher education are less likely to return.

▲ FACTORS INCREASING LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

<b>PROPERTY OWNERSHIP</b>
<b>GROUP IDENTITY</b>
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>
<b>OTHER PEOPLE</b>

Those who own property in the location of origin are more than twice as likely to intend to return than those who do not – all other factors being equal.

Like Christians, Turkmen Shia IDPs who identify stronger with their group are more likely to intend to return.

Turkmen Shia who say their household income deteriorated in displacement are more than 3 times as likely to intend to return than others. This concerns 61 per cent of Turkmen Shia IDPs.

Those who indicated that living costs are an important factor in their decision-making are four times more likely to want to return than those who said this played no or a weak role.

The housing situation and living costs seem to affect the intentions to return for Turkmen Shia IDP respondents more than those from other groups. First, Turkmen Shia IDPs who own property in their location of origin are nearly 5 times more likely to want to return than those who don't. Second, the Turkmen IDPs who live in rented accommodation in displacement (approximately 50% of the sample) are less likely to want to return than those IDPs staying in other shelter types including critical shelters, religious buildings, unfinished buildings or collective centers. Third, IDPs who indicate that living costs are a strong or very strong reason to return are 4 times more likely to want to return than those respondents who indicate that living costs

play no role or a weak role in their decision. Those who reported a deterioration in household income during displacement are 3 times more likely to want to return than those whose income is similar or better than before (nearly 61% of the Turkmen Shia IDP sample). Also, Turkmen Shia IDPs who identify more strongly with their ethno-religious group are more likely to intend to return (1.5 more likely). The education level of the head of household is relevant to a certain extent: higher educated heads of households are less likely to return.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Note that the relation is only significant at the 10 per cent level.

## CONCLUSION

Iraq is home to a rich and diverse population composed of many ethno-religious groups. This diversity is reflected in the heterogeneity of the country's IDP and returnee population: each ethno-religious group has different characteristics, displacement and return patterns, challenges and needs.

While the Shabak Shias, Turkmen Shias, Christians and Yazidis included in this study share many similarities with the overall Iraqi IDP and returnee population and between groups, group specificities need to be understood to better tailor programming efforts of humanitarian and development actors and to inform targeted assistance to returnees and IDPs from these four ethno-religious groups.

This research sheds light on the socioeconomic characteristics of these groups as well as on the reasons behind their displacement status and future intentions. For IDPs, better safety and access to services, as well as not feeling welcome in the area of origin, were found to be key drivers in the decision to remain in displacement. For returnees, missing home, the return of family members and friends and an improvement in the security situation were the main reasons for returning home. Despite these similarities, there were also disparities between the four groups. For instance, Turkmen Shia

and Shabak Shia IDPs are more likely to be hosted in religious buildings and Yazidis live predominantly in camps or unfinished/abandoned buildings; and while Turkmen Shias and Shabak Shias want to stay in Iraq, Christian and Yazidi IDPs and returnees are more likely to want to emigrate. Yazidis wish to go abroad because of security issues and their fear of a return of ISIL, whereas Christians are motivated by economic prospects and lack of trust in the future.

However, further research on intra-group dynamics and their effect on displacement and return is needed. Group vulnerability and identification to one's group were important factors affecting the likelihood to return, but a more in-depth understanding of how and why these two factors affect displacement dynamics is necessary. The study also showed disparities within all groups in terms of the effect of specific household characteristics and vulnerabilities on displacement patterns and future intentions; these findings call for further study.



## ANNEXES

Table 1: Christian IDPs intention to return

	Exp(B)
Female-headed household **	.249**
Head of household over 45 years old	.833
Secondary education or above	.783
Unemployed	.648
Own property in location of origin *	2.232*
Importance given to safety in displacement **	.126**
Importance given to safety levels in location of origin ***	.226***
Perception of similarity with host community **	.346**
Measure of identification with group (scale) **	1.494**
Actions of other people are important to my decision **	2.418
Concerns of not being welcomed in location of origin	.538
Constant	2.527
<b>R= .282, 82% correct case categorization.</b>	
*p. < .1, **p. < .05, ***p. < .01	

Table 2: Christian IDPs and returnees intention to move abroad

	Exp(B)
Female-headed household	1.370
Head of household over 45 years old	1.078
Presence of an older person (60+) in household **	.564**
Secondary education or above	.999
Unemployed	1.423
Own property in location of origin **	.595**
Having family who moved abroad	.765
Having friends who moved abroad ***	4.216***
Measure of identification with group (scale) **	.828**
Faced discrimination during displacement	1.236
Positive perception of political representatives of group **	.562**
Not feeling welcome in location of origin/displacement *	1.520*
Constant	.574
<b>R= .140, 65% correct case categorization.</b>	
*p. < .1, **p. < .05, ***p. < .01	

Table 3: Yazidi IDPs intention to return

	Exp(B)
Female-headed household*	0.478*
Head of household over 45 years old	1.520
Secondary education or above	.949
Unemployed	.950
Own property in location of origin	1.037
Perceptions of group vulnerability (scale)*	.611*
Faced discrimination in location of origin***	.061***
Perception that group is empowered***	2.537***
Keeping the family together in one place is important***	3.630***
Constant	.715
<b>R= .262, 70% correct case categorization.</b>	
*p. < .1, **p. < .05, ***p. < .01	

Table 4: Yazidi IDPs and returnees intentions to move abroad

	Exp(B)
Female-headed household	.815
Head of household over 45 years old***	.481***
Presence of older people (60+) in household	1.250
Secondary education or above	1.136
Unemployed	.691
Own property in location of origin	.974
Having family who moved abroad ***	4.059***
Having friends who moved abroad	1.471
Measure of identification with group (scale)	.871
Faced discrimination during displacement (scale) ***	1.521***
Positive perception of political representatives of group	.702
Not feeling welcome in location of origin/displacement	1.436
Constant	.295
<b>R= .232, 78% correct case categorization.</b>	
*p. < .1, **p. < .05, ***p. < .01	

Table 5: Shabak Shia IDPs intentions to return

	Exp(B)
Female-headed household	.976
Head of household over 45 years old	2.036*
Secondary education or above	2.362**
Unemployed	.971
Own property in location of origin	.994
Perception that group is disempowered	.364**
Living standards in displacement worse than before	3.064***
Perception of similarity with host community	.210***
Services in displacement are important to my decision	.295***
Perceptions of group vulnerability (scale)	.517**
Actions of other people are important to my decision	3.628***
Constant	39.023
<b>R = .373, 78% correct case categorization.</b>	
*p. < .1, **p. < .05, ***p. < .01	

Table 6: Turkmen Shia IDPs intentions to return

	Exp(B)
Female-headed household	.754
Head of household over 45 years old	.671
Secondary education or above	.470*
Unemployed	1.393
Own property in location of origin	4.978***
Stay in rented housing	.367**
Importance given to living costs in decisions on migration	4.143**
Household income during displacement worse than before	2.992***
Measure of identification with group (scale)	1.499**
Constant	.761
<b>R = .349 =, 85.4% correct case categorization.</b>	
*p. < .1, **p. < .05, ***p. < .01	

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