Moving Forward Together, Leaving No One Behind:
From Stigmatization to Social Cohesion in Post-Conflict Iraq

InterAction Protection Mission – Iraq
23 July-6 August, 2018

I.   Executive Summary

InterAction[1] conducted field research in Erbil, Mosul, Kirkuk, Baghdad, Anbar, and Karbala[2] from 23 July-9 August, 2018 to assess the most pressing protection issues and how they can be addressed by a whole-of-system response in line with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Protection Policy. InterAction spoke with a wide range of actors before, during, and after the mission.[3] This outcome report is based on the key elements of results-based protection, especially as it helps frame recommendations around the need for outcome-oriented methods, designing for contribution, and continuous, context-specific protection analysis. The recommendations outlined in this report were developed based on the understanding that a humanitarian protection response should analyze the current context *before* developing outcome-oriented approaches and gathering the various actors needed to achieve collective outcomes and reduce risks faced by affected populations. This was echoed by several humanitarian actors in-country who recommended that in-depth analysis be conducted before implementation of the recommendations made in this report, especially as it relates to durable solutions; that continuous monitoring and analysis take place in order to allow for the recommended actions to adapt to new developments; and that the humanitarian leadership take the lead on gathering necessary actors across the humanitarian-development divide to work together to achieve collective outcomes.

This report, including the recommendations, is intended to provide support to all humanitarian operational actors, advocacy experts in-country and globally, and the humanitarian leadership, notably the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). NGOs in Iraq have an important role to play in the implementation of the IASC Protection Policy by incorporating key elements into their organizational approaches to protection, and by contributing to interagency leadership and coordination on protection at country-level, and InterAction accordingly paid particular attention to the role of NGOs in the Iraq response.

"When ISIS came, they killed life. They even took color from us."

Female INGO worker from Mosul, who had lived under ISIS for over three years.

---

[1] Kathryn Striffolino, Program Manager – Humanitarian Practice and Ramon Broers, Program Manager – Protection

[2] This included east Mosul (observing a women's center and livelihoods activities), IDP camps in Kirkuk (Leyland 1 and Leyland 2), an IDP camp in Anbar (HTC), and informal settlements in Karbala.

[3] Prior to entering the country, InterAction conducted a desk review of relevant UN and NGO reports, as well as interviewed 30 key stakeholders working in Iraq for UN agencies, INGOs, NNGOs, human rights organizations, peacebuilding organizations, and donor governments. While in country, the visiting InterAction staff held a combination of focus group discussions and semi-structured qualitative interviews with 4 NNGOs in Erbil, and 11 NNGOs in Baghdad. Staff also met with the DSRSG/RCHC, observed the 6 August, 2018 HCT meeting, and conducted semi-structured interviews with a total of 59 representatives from INGOs, UN agencies, NPC coordinators, donor government representatives, and NCCI. In total, 73 actors were consulted (not including beneficiary interviews). Further discussions were held at the Iraq Working Group managed by InterAction in Washington DC, and debriefings were held with USAID, OFDA, and PRM.

Elements underpinning collective protection outcomes in the IASC Protection Policy

1. Data and information collection, sharing, and management must be purposeful
2. In-depth and integrated protection analysis considers not only threats and vulnerabilities, but also the capacities of affected populations to overcome risks they face
3. Humanitarian leadership should facilitate and ensure collective protection priorities and action
4. Humanitarian leadership should mobilize a diversity of actors necessary to achieve protection outcomes

Iraq is currently at a crossroads. The fight against ISIS, initially conducted by the Iraqi army and the international coalition led by the United States, has shifted from urban combat operations to low intensity hostilities in primarily rural areas. Elections are slow to yield a new government, resulting in high levels of uncertainty across NGO and UN stakeholder groups who rely on government support to operate effectively.

Donors have mobilized relatively generous financial support for the humanitarian response[4]; however, the difficult operational environment in Iraq, the increasingly strict counter-terrorism laws and other regulatory requirements imposed by donors, in addition to insufficient political support from the international community are oftentimes hampering NGOs' ability to deliver humanitarian services to some of the most vulnerable populations. In Iraq, this incudes individuals and families, widowed mothers and children, who lived in an area under ISIS control for several years and are now marked as having real or perceived affiliation with ISIS.

There is widespread stigmatization of people who lived under ISIS control. Various civilian authorities, military, intelligence, and security actors, and many victims of ISIS are assuming that because a family or an individual lived under ISIS they are affiliated with the group in one way or another. This stigmatization, compounded by the myriad of vulnerabilities forced upon people who survived under ISIS's brutal and repressive rule, is resulting in the deliberate deprivation of the human rights of entire communities. Human Rights Watch characterized a recent order banishing male relatives of ISIS members in the northern Iraqi district of al-Ba'aj as collective punishment and a war crime.[5] The threat of stigmatization against an immeasurable number[6] of people in Iraq constitutes one of the most pervasive and severe protection issues currently facing the country, and will require a whole-of-system approach, in line with the IASC Protection Policy, to properly address.

Of the nearly six million people estimated to have been displaced during the hostilities to combat ISIS, four million have returned home leaving nearly two million displaced. Many of those remaining displaced are individuals and families with real or perceived affiliation with extremist groups. While those able to return are slowly working to rebuild their lives with support from the UN, NGOs, and government actors, research indicates that those remaining displaced are unlikely to be able to return in the near future. IDP camp conditions vary greatly depending on the location and demography of residents; however, most camps house people who have lived under ISIS for years and/or are perceived to be affiliated with ISIS, and their living conditions are overwhelmingly appalling, with women and children experiencing significant repercussions as a result.

---

[4] Iraq's Humanitarian Response Plan is currently funded at 60%: https://fts.unocha.org/countries/106/summary/2018
[5] *Iraq: Local Forces Banish ISIS Suspects' Families,* Human Rights Watch, April 26, 2018: https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/26/iraq-local-forces-banish-isis-suspects-families.
[6] Per National Protection Cluster guidance, the humanitarian community will not attempt to quantify how many people are perceived or affiliated with ISIS in order to avoid stigmatization and unintentional discrimination.

Large scale humanitarian operations – peaking most recently during the 2016-2017 military operations to clear ISIS – are slowly starting to transition from emergency relief to early recovery and development. This transition is taking place in an environment where there are critically high levels of communal, ethnic, religious, and tribal tension coupled with widespread stigmatization against entire tribes or communities for having survived under ISIS rule. Underpinning the success of this transition will be to ensure comprehensive social cohesion programming backed by a government-led action plan for reconciliation, launched as a matter of urgency. Now is the time to bring people together and support communities in their journey to recover from years of brutality.

"Protection of all persons affected and at risk must inform humanitarian decision-making and response, including engagement with States and non-State parties to conflict. It must be central to our preparedness efforts, as part of immediate and life-saving activities, and throughout the duration of humanitarian response and beyond."

Statement by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals on the Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action (2013)

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen collective advocacy for individuals and families with real or perceived affiliation with extremist groups and ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered based on need, not political motivations. The Iraqi government, with the full support of the UN, NGO, private sector, and donor communities, should cultivate an enabling environment to allow realization of all human rights. Actors should pay special attention to individuals with real or perceived affiliation with ISIS. The humanitarian and human rights communities should work with the national, governorate, and municipal authorities to end discriminatory practices and promote reconciliation to reverse the effects of stigmatization that is taking place. NGO service providers should be granted full and unfettered access to populations in need backed by donor support that does not place unnecessary or counterproductive restrictions on their frontline staff.

Recommendation 2: The HCT should develop, endorse and secure government approval for a "Durable Solutions Framework" with an emphasis on local integration and relocation to another part of the country. The returns process, supported by Governorate Returns Committees (GRCs), Iraq's National Policy on Internal Displacement,[1] and backed by a Principled Returns Framework, should expand in scope to include substantial and well-planned local integration and relocation options for conflict-affected people. NGOs should conduct continuous, context-specific analysis to identify ways to facilitate local integration, and the HCT should support legislative initiatives to formalize relevant settlement arrangements. IDP camp management should ensure residents are able to fully enjoy their basic human rights while sustainable options for camp residents are realized. This is especially relevant now considering that the ongoing camp closure and consolidation process is still actively promoted by the government and supported by some donors.

Recommendation 3: Stand up an inclusive mechanism for coordination and strategic planning around social cohesion programming and support a government-led national action plan for reconciliation linked to local equivalents. A government-led, national action plan for reconciliation should be launched and the plan should link to local and context-specific reconciliation efforts. As a precursor to a national action plan, the HCT should ensure the creation of a mechanism that brings humanitarian, recovery, development, peacebuilding, and local actors together to effectively deliver area-based social cohesion programming at the local, governorate, and national levels. Enhanced dialogue and increased coordination across NGO, UN, donors, and government actors regarding social cohesion and reconciliation programming should happen immediately, led through NGO Early Recovery Forum (NERF), so finite donor resources can be used effectively and efficiently.

II.   Context

Iraq has been plagued by decades of internal armed conflict including ethnic, tribal, religious, and sectarian violence as well as unresolved issues in relation to disputed internal territories. Compounding the internal dynamics are numerous regional and international geopolitical interests in Iraq, ranging from Iraq's natural resources to countering violent extremism. These dynamics have contributed to a chronic breakdown of the rule of law, a significant internal displacement crisis, and a society that many Iraqis consider to be more divided than ever, with political and security actors often perpetuating this divide rather than seeking to repair it.

Homes, hospitals, roads, and other infrastructure in areas previously held by ISIS are now mostly either destroyed or contaminated by explosive hazards. Extremist elements[7] and pro-government militias[8] operate in various parts of the country, occupying a security vacuum left by the state, though with a different modus operandi than in 2014 when ISIS took control over numerous urban and rural territories. The joint military operations to clear ISIS were declared victorious in December 2017 by Haider al-Abadi, the Iraqi Prime Minster; however, the threat of a renewed resurgence of extremist violence remains, as evidenced by recent bombings in Al-Qa'im[9] and other violent ISIS attacks in Kirkuk.[10] These threats, coupled with the fractured Iraqi security sector, a breakdown in the rule of law, and the lack of a central government, presents ripe conditions for a backslide into conflict and violence.

The human toll of the conflict is profound and has required a large-scale humanitarian operation to provide lifesaving and sustaining services for conflict-

> **Dominant Risk Pattern: Stigmatization**
>
> Individuals and families with real or perceived affiliation with ISIS are experiencing deliberate denial of their human rights. These vulnerable communities live under the threat of government-affiliated armed security actors denying them freedom of movement and physical safety. Some individuals go through a ten-minute trial before facing the death penalty. Some are physically assaulted, verbally abused, and discriminated against for years. The capacity of affected populations to address threats has been weakened by comprehensive stigmatization, social exclusion, and de facto detention in camps. In a few instances, richer and better-connected people are able to negotiate their freedom and reintegration into their home communities with security actors and community leaders.
>
> To address this risk pattern and remove stigmatization, real or perceived affiliates need full realization of their human rights, access to justice and respect for rule of law. Progress towards social cohesion and reconciliation will further reduce their risks.

affected civilians. The humanitarian operation is evolving, from a life-sustaining emergency relief effort during active fighting, to longer-term projects supporting early recovery. The approaches are theoretically intended to fall under different frameworks, including the HRP and the Recovery and Resilience Programme (RRP), but as described in detail below, there is no functioning transition between the two. The overwhelming consensus across all stakeholder groups InterAction consulted is that action is required now to address the threats to and vulnerabilities of conflict-affected people, and if efforts are inadequate, there is a risk of renewed violence across the country. The IASC Protection Policy, which was partly developed due past failures to address pressing protection needs in an ongoing or abating crisis, provides a pivotal lens for how to identify main protection risks and a supporting framework for how to gather all relevant actors behind collective efforts to achieve protection outcomes, which is particularly relevant in Iraq to avoid renewed violence.

---

[7] One of these groups is called "The White Flags": https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/borzoudaragahi/isis-iraq-white-flags-syria-new-name

[8] Most of them are under the structure of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)

[9] See article about the suicide bombing here: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/08/iraq-killed-anbar-province-suicide-bombing-180829072538649.html

[10] See article from a local news station here: http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/d54acfa6-c499-4179-af19-9c568eed2ed4

III.   Specific Issues and Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen collective advocacy for individuals and families with real or perceived affiliation with extremist groups and ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered based on need, not political motivations.

"Guards are not guarding camps in order to protect the displaced people, but to keep them in because they believe they are affiliated with ISIS."

INGO Head of Office in Erbil

Entire families can be accused of affiliation if one family member (e.g. a father or military age son) joined ISIS, even if it was involuntary or against the family's will. Indeed, entire communities are branded as ISIS affiliates if they lived in ISIS controlled areas and did not flee – which many could not because ISIS threatened to kill them if they did, effectively keeping them hostages; because they could not afford to pay smugglers to get them out; or because they had young children, elderly, or disabled family members who they could not risk to take on a dangerous journey. Communities are pitted against each other and inter-communal tensions have risen, and sometimes community leaders are at the center of this as they have considerable influence, often deciding who to forgive, allow back, effectively banish, or otherwise stigmatize.

To avoid stigmatization and discrimination, the humanitarian community does not collect data on the number of people considered to be affiliated with extremists; however, the numbers are believed by some conservative estimates to be around several hundred thousand. Others think the numbers are well over a million. To control and collectively punish this population, local governments, armed security actors, and tribal groups often deny them access to civil documentation or confiscate any documentation they come across. They infringe upon the right to freedom of movement by denying security clearances that are required for travel, and they ensure levels of segregation or confinement in camps. Perceived affiliates, inside and outside IDP camps, also suffer from physical violence, sexual and gender-based violence, verbal abuse, and expropriation and destruction of their properties. As they tend to lack housing documents, or are denied access to them, perceived affiliates cannot file compensation claims for destruction of property. This means *inter alia* that the affected population cannot move outside the camps in which they currently reside; they cannot access vital specialized health services outside of camps; they cannot send their children to better schools; they cannot purchase the natural resources or items they need; and they cannot access livelihood opportunities outside of camps.

"The water here is contaminated, and we don't have power during the hottest part of the day, we have asked for clean water and power, but have so far been denied by camp management. Why do you think they aren't helping us? Because they think we are ISIS supporters and they want us to be so miserable we leave and get killed trying to go home."

IDP camp volunteer from HTC camp in Anbar, living there with his wife and children, one of whom was born under ISIS and has never been registered

Evidently, individuals and families with real or perceived affiliation with ISIS are experiencing the deliberate deprivation of their human rights[11] by government authorities, including state security actors and paramilitary groups (e.g. various Popular Mobilization Forces), tribal authorities, and fellow community members. This is happening on such a coordinated and large scale[12] that several people InterAction consulted called it the biggest

---

[11] In particular the rights to non-discrimination, due process, liberty and security, freedom of movement, legal identity, and property rights.

[12] Examples of coordination are explained in more detail by HRW in the previously mentioned article: https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/26/iraq-local-forces-banish-isis-suspects-families as well as by OHCHR: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21818&LangID=E

protection issue currently facing Iraq. Moreover, perceived ISIS affiliation is a highly sensitive topic that some NGOs, UN agencies, diplomats, and donors are reluctant to publicly tackle, ultimately doing a disservice to the affected individuals and families.[13] Indeed, prior to the new Regional Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) taking up post, it was rarely discussed at the HCT.[14] Reluctance is mostly based on a perception or concern that assisting those with perceived ISIS affiliation would run afoul of counter-terrorism laws and regulations, on the need to "respect" the Government of Iraq's handling of post-conflict domestic affairs, or on outright fear of reprisals by local governments and security actors. However, the humanitarian community and its donors should be concerned that not fully engaging with this group of vulnerable people carries long-term risks and consequently could set a dangerous precedent for other country contexts[15] where people in need of humanitarian support have lived under non-state armed group control. One NGO staff member pointed out that "we should ask ourselves how willing we are to be complicit in human rights violations that could ultimately lead to renewed violence."

Not only is the humanitarian community so far collectively ambiguous about its approach to the issue of ISIS affiliation, and how they should support vulnerable individuals with real or perceived link with the extremist group, but humanitarian actors need to improve their engagement in the few areas where there is an opening to support them – for example, relating to juvenile justice, detention due to name similarity, and acquisition of civil documentation.[16] Local staff at international and local organizations are often intimidated, harassed, and accused of affiliation themselves when they try support perceived affiliates, resulting in extreme reluctance on their part to engage in such cases. With the full backing of the HCT, operational organizations with local staff should fully support these frontline workers without whom none of the actual service provision would happen. It is not enough to lightly touch on affiliation issues, and then pull back when staff are threatened. International and national NGOs should not be put in a position where they are forced to make the decision to stop or halt services. This underscores the crucial role of the RC/HC, HCT, and donor governments to lead collective advocacy toward local and national authorities to respect the impartiality of humanitarian action and to foster a safe operating environment for NGOs.

> *"If collective punishment isn't addressed, you will not break the cycle of violence. I hate ISIL and I don't want them to have more supporters."*
>
> NNGO program manager in Erbil

The legal framework and some protective mechanisms in Iraq conform to international human rights law; crime is individualized (collective punishment is prohibited), and citizens should nominally benefit from due process, liberty and security, and property protection. However, these laws are intentionally ignored according to the several local legal experts InterAction consulted, especially at the local levels where the federal government has less control. How local authorities address the issue of affiliation is *ad hoc* and varies greatly across governorates. According to one INGO Country Director, the Mayor of Ramadi is said to categorize ISIS families in three groups: 1) those who only had "very few" family members part of ISIS; 2) those where 1-2 family members were affiliated; and 3) those families where most members were affiliated. By doing so, affected families are subjected to different and unpredictable levels of discrimination.

---

[13] Some protection actors, including the National Protection Cluster, have openly discussed problems around perceived affiliation, even during periods of active conflict (e.g. in relation to security screening practices, detention, and movement restrictions). There has also been a positive recent change in discourse on this population and the NPC has written a paper titled "Recommendations for the Way Forward: Protection Concerns and Proposed Solutions for Iraqi Citizens with Perceived Affiliation" that is waiting for approval by the HCT sometime in October 2018, after which it will be considered endorsed and will be disseminated by all Clusters to their partners. Nevertheless, the humanitarian community and other relevant stakeholders are still not collectively addressing the issue of affiliation through action, or sufficiently supporting organizations and individuals when they are denied access to affiliated populations.

[14] Based on interviews with HCT members.

[15] For example, in Nigeria, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria.

[16] Protection actors have done this to a limited extent since 2015, so it is possible to share lessons learned across the sector. This is particularly encouraged by the Protection Cluster and Child Protection Sub Cluster, further described in the recommendation section.

Several actors that InterAction consulted asked for donors, UN agencies, and the RC/HC to work with the federal government in Baghdad to enforce their own laws and appropriately disseminate the message to all governorates. The National Protection Cluster (NPC) recently produced a list of recommendations for how to engage with the topic of perceived ISIS affiliation which is the most comprehensive document available to field level practitioners and advocacy experts. The document was created in consultation with its members, should be considered the guiding document on the topic, and provides a good starting point to initiate dialogue with the federal government.

In addition to their existing work on juvenile justice and name similarity, and with more comprehensive and concerted effort initiated at a national level, NGOs should collectively pursue local and governorate level action. This may entail, for example, public sensitization and awareness-raising – as well as private dialogue with *mukhtars*, tribal leaders, and local government – which promotes values of inclusion and non-discrimination. Such an initiative would most impactfully entail a coordinated strategy involving the capacities and contributions of a range of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors. These efforts will, of course, need to be informed by a rigorous security assessment and management measures, and should be incrementally developed in an iterative manner as societal and political barriers to dialogue on this issue are alleviated. The humanitarian community should look at this practically, and potentially engage in a political landscape mapping to support advocacy related to perceived ISIS affiliation. The UN has more leverage at the governorate and federal level than NGOs and are more immune to threats and intimidation. Moreover, donors should be significantly more supportive of operational organizations willing to engage with perceived affiliates.

Recommended Actions:

- Donors, UN country leadership, and the HCT should collectively be consistent and explicit about the importance of access to humanitarian services based on need, including to individuals and families with real or perceived affiliation to ISIS. The HCT should view support for perceived or real affiliates with ISIS as a protection priority and conduct a stakeholder and influence mapping exercise to inform a collective strategy and appropriate targeted messaging.

- NGOs should learn from each other and work collectively on rule of law issues such as juvenile justice, detention due to name similarity, and acquisition of civil documentation, for example, through legal partner meetings at the governorate-level Protection Working Groups in Ninewa, Baghdad, Anbar, Salah al Dinh, and forthcoming in Diyala. Regarding juvenile justice, NGOs should increase communication and engagement with the Child Protection Sub-Cluster as they encourage collective work on this and can support through technical advice and by providing global resources.

- All humanitarian actors should ensure that security management plans account for the risks associated with addressing issues of ISIS affiliation, including to better support and train local staff who are threatened and intimidated by local officials. Addressing threats and intimidation of staff in response should form part of the overall strategy at national, sub-national and local levels to address the pattern of discrimination associated with perceived ISIS affiliation.

- UN, NGOs, and the donor community should put pressure on governorate level authorities to subsume armed security under civilian control and ensure that they are following Iraqi laws against discrimination and collective punishment. The NPC or NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq (NCCI) should identify an active working group that can pursue dialogue and develop a practical and phased plan with governorate authorities to address this. If there are no relevant working groups that could take on this work, other mechanisms or organizations should be considered and consulted, e.g. OHCHR and UNDP.

- Donors should support NGO strategies to ensure individuals of perceived ISIS affiliation, including child soldiers, have access to basic services and assistance, including humanitarian aid.

Recommendation 2: The HCT should develop, endorse and secure government approval for a "Durable Solutions Framework" with an emphasis on local integration and relocation to another part of the country.

The issue of internal displacement is the biggest planning issue facing the humanitarian community in Iraq. Out of nearly six million IDPs, over four million have returned since the first return movements started in April 2015,[17] leaving nearly two million internally displaced Iraqis spread across the country in formal camps or informal settlements.[18] Currently, the humanitarian community is emphasizing the importance of facilitating principled returns and creating favorable conditions for this to happen. This includes ensuring the sustainability of the four million returnees so they are not displaced again. Returning people home is also important to the Government of Iraq (GOI) which, prior to the May election, hoped that 80% of the IDP population would return by the end of the year. Indeed, most IDPs want to return, *provided the conditions are conducive to do so.* Iraq is a middle-income country and Iraqis are accustomed to better services and conditions than they face when they are displaced. This indicates that their intention to stay where they are is based on external factors outside their control.

> *"I feel like I am in a prison, I can't leave, and everyone has guns."*
>
> 12-year-old girl living in an IDP camp in Kirkuk

There are existing frameworks and guidelines to support returns planning, but they only briefly cover alternatives to returning home. The Principled Returns Framework (PRF), endorsed in July and developed by the NPC in consultation with its NGO and UN members, is the guiding document on returns for the humanitarian community. It was adopted by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Center (JCMC) in late September 2018 and is intended to detail the consensus between the humanitarian leadership and the GOI, and to function as a framework for the Governorate Returns Committees.[19] However, only one out of 12 points cover "other durable solutions" such as local integration and relocation to another party of the country.

Nearly all the actors InterAction consulted highlighted the need for a collective effort to ensure that options for other durable solutions are cultivated, with a special focus on local integration and relocation. There is currently an over-emphasis on returns, and no current framework exists to facilitate alternative durable solutions. The need to recognize and support relocation and local integration options is pivotal in light of the obstacles to return and the fact that many IDPs are facing years of, or even permanent, displacement. This was a clear and unequivocal recommendation of all stakeholder groups InterAction interviewed.

The longer people are displaced, the more likely it is that they will continue to be displaced and face increasing stigmatization. As such, several consulted actors strongly recommended that the RC/HC continue to put pressure on the GOI to promote the PRF and, more importantly, ensure that it is understood, accepted, and followed by local authorities and security actors. This in addition to working with the GOI to develop local integration or relocation options. Local military and security actors continue to bypass the GRCs and forcefully evict and return IDPs, confiscate their civil documentation, induce premature returns, and obstruct returns (especially individuals with real or perceived affiliation with ISIS, addressed in Recommendation 1). None of the actors InterAction spoke with – including donor government representatives – had a clear understanding of how these pro-government armed actors operate, under which command and control, or the parameters of their jurisdiction. They appear to operate with impunity, and while some instances of forced returns were stopped before they were fully enacted through concerted advocacy by the HCT and protection actors, IDPs are understandably extremely concerned about their safety and ability to plan daily life activities. Insofar as these security actors

---

[17] Several consulted humanitarian actors pointed out that these numbers are unreliable due to large but unquantifiable numbers of secondary displacement and additional cycles of displacement.

[18] According to IOM DTM figures from January 2014 – 15 September 2018: http://iraqdtm.iom.int/default.aspx

[19] Following the endorsement by the JCMC, it was circulated to Governors to be used as the basis for discussions in the GRCs. UN and NGO members of the GRCs have been advised to table the PRF as an agenda item in the next GRC meetings in Anbar and Salah al-Din. Ninewa and Diyala GRCs have not formally convened yet, but when they do, the PRF should be central there as well. The Governor of Baghdad endorsed the creation of a GRC for Baghdad in September.

can be controlled or influenced, they need to be brought under civilian control, and they should receive proper training and support, so they can learn to adhere to national and international human rights and humanitarian legal frameworks, or else be held accountable for instances of rights abuses (see above recommendation regarding the role of local armed actors).

Despite humanitarian planning and the government's push for returns, it is likely that the majority of the displaced population will remain displaced in the foreseeable future. Several factors indicate that we can expect a large caseload of effectively permanently displaced persons who will not return to their areas of origin and continue to rely on assistance:

1. Based on Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) numbers from January through July 2018,[20] it is clear that the number of returns is dwindling, signaling voluntary returns have now been exhausted.

2018 return numbers by month:
January: 126,000 (DTM Round 88)
March: 124,000 (DTM Round 92)
May: 119,000 (DTM Round 96)
June: 74,000 (DTM Round 98)
July: 52,000 (DTM Round 100)

2. According to a REACH Intentions Survey,[21] 84% of in-camp IDPs in Northeast Iraq (Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Diyala governorates) were *not intending to return* at the time of data collection; as well as 33% in Northwest Iraq (Ninewa and Kirkuk) and 39% in Southern and Central Iraq (Anbar, Baghdad, Kerbala, Najaf, and Salah al-Din).

3. The IOM Integrated Location Assessment (March–May 2018) identified that the main obstacles to return are: 1) damage and destruction of property (26%); 2) lack of livelihood opportunities (25%); and 3) safety concerns in areas of origin (18%). Preliminary findings from a Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment on 13 September, 2018 (sent out by the National Protection Cluster, 15 September), support these numbers and show that nationally 23% of in-camp IDPs do not intend to return due to concerns about explosive hazards, and 35% of in-camp IDPs do not intend to return due to Housing Land and Property issues. Without substantial progress towards reconstruction, livelihood opportunities, reduction of explosive hazards, and social cohesion (discussed in Recommendation 3), it is unlikely that these numbers will change.

IDPs are caught between a rock and a hard place; while there are serious obstacles to return, there are also push factors in their current locations, for example:

- Many camps do not meet SPHERE standards,[22] and through two camp visits in Kirkuk and Anbar, as well as NGO service centers in Ninewa and Kerbala, InterAction observed that residents suffered from contaminated water and related illnesses, the presence of armed security actors that physically and verbally abuse them, inadequate education, lack of adequate healthcare, and generally poor living conditions. In two IDP camps in Kirkuk, InterAction staff observed ripped fencing around the camp perimeter, latrines without gender partitions, and collected reports from female beneficiaries that many of their facilities did not lock from the inside.

"We go to the bathroom in groups, we wait for the men to leave, and then we guard the area for each other to use the bathrooms. Many of the bathrooms don't lock from the inside."

Female IDP camp resident, Leyland 1 camp, Kirkuk

- InterAction did not directly observe the UN using armed escorts inside the camps; however, NGO workers and IDP camp residents reported that this regularly occurs.[23] This is highly problematic because not only is

---

[20] The IOM DTM numbers can be found here: http://iraqdtm.iom.int/DtmReports.aspx
[21] REACH Intentions Survey; Round II – National IDP Camps (December 2017 – January 2018): https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-intentions-survey-round-ii-national-idp-camps-december-2017-january-2018
[22] Sphere Handbook on Shelter and Settlement: http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/1-shelter-and-settlement/
[23] Particularly in Central and Southern Iraq, not the Kurdish Region of Iraq.

it unnecessary, but it perpetuates the perception that IDP camp residents are seen as threats. Two different young girls articulated to InterAction staff the feeling of living in a prison.

- Young girls and their mothers in two adjacent camps reported to InterAction that teachers acted inappropriately towards the young girls through inappropriate touching, verbal abuse, and online bullying/exploitation, leading their families to take them out of school. Anecdotally, there is a widespread issue of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), but the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network established under the HC had only been alerted to a handful of cases at the time InterAction spoke with the PSEA Coordinator in April 2018. While the PSEA Network builds awareness with the UN, key government officials, and with most INGOs, awareness has not reached the field in most places. UNOPS has a highly effective IDP call center staffed by mixed gender, multi-lingual employees with direct linkage to the NPC and relevant sub-clusters like the GBV and Child Protection Sub-Clusters. PSEA capacity is low among NGOs, especially NNGOs, and some smaller NGOs have no SEA awareness, formal reporting mechanism, or policy.[24] There is political will among donors, UN agencies, and many NGOs to improve on PSEA gaps, but effective networking and linkages between PSEA actors are slow in coming together.

- Rapid Protection Assessments (RPAs) conducted by DRC for the NPC identified cases of sexual harassment, and other reports[25] have identified substantial GBV risk patterns, such as sexual exploitation, physical and verbal abuse, and rape across the country and in camp settings; however, humanitarian and government responses have not been proportional, and one of the actors InterAction consulted stated that failure to address and prevent gender-based violence would be seen as the biggest failure of the humanitarian community in Iraq over the past two years. Clinical management of rape services in Iraq are wholly lacking and an identified gap by NGO workers providing protection services for women. In Iraq, if a person attempts to access medical care for rape, the medical provider is legally required to report the case to government authorities. When government or pro-government security forces are allegedly responsible for the rape, this is notably problematic because it puts the survivor and her/his family at risk of retaliatory attacks.

"The teachers take pictures of us and then put them online. We know the teachers are paid for by the government. This scares us. We told our fathers and they told us we are not allowed to go to school anymore because it's not safe. I haven't been to school in over a year."

Young girl from IDP camp in Kirkuk

In addition, the GOI is taking steps to close and consolidate camps with little to no consultation with the affected population or the humanitarian community, squarely against their obligation to ensure that population movements are voluntary and based on free and informed decisions. During the closure and consolidation processes, the government will occasionally provide buses to those who want to attempt to return to their areas of origin, and the rest of the IDPs are moved into other camps with little planning to ensure a safe and dignified relocation process. Camp consolidation and closure should be a consultative process involving guidance by the GRC in line with Camp Coordination, Camp Management (CCCM) minimum standards for camp consolidation.[26] In camps with mixed populations of perceived ISIS affiliates and people not considered to be affiliated, community tensions escalate.

---

[24] NCCI 2017 Report on Local NGO Learning Needs https://ncciraq.org/en/archive/ncci-studies/item/21114-ncci-report-on-local-ngo-learning-needs-assessment-iraq-and-the-kurdistan-region-of-iraq

[25] Refugees International: https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2017/10/iraq

[26] Relevant minimum standards for shelter and settlement: http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/shelter-and-settlement-standard-4-construction/

In a positive development, Iraq has a new returns framework. Prior to the PRF, there was no comprehensive returns guidance for humanitarian actors[27] and the GRCs were primarily set out to support camp consolidation and closure. The Returns Working Group (RWG) is an information-sharing forum under the Intercluster Coordination Group (ICCG), where humanitarian actors exchange information on return trends, and on return-oriented assessments and interventions – it is primarily concerned with the sustainability of the four million returnees so that they can mitigate secondary displacement. As such, it is a very positive development that Iraq now has a Principled Returns Framework that is endorsed and promoted by the RC/HC and HCT. In line with international law, it highlights the legal obligations of the duty bearers to ensure that returns are voluntary, safe, informed, and dignified, and it helps set parameters for humanitarian assistance, information messaging, and coordination with the government.

The first step in making local integration a sustainable reality would be to create a sound contextual analysis in the localities where IDPs could integrate that should *inter alia* explore ethnic, religious, and tribal dimensions; the capacity of local institutions and services to absorb a large group of people (schools, hospitals, public offices); the security situation; livelihood opportunities (including the positive impact an influx of residents would have); and available natural resources. This analysis would underpin a durable solutions framework and accompanying action plan. Affected populations and host communities should be extensively consulted as a matter of priority; the sustainability of any solution will be jeopardized without the full input and buy-in from the people who want to locally integrate in the medium or long term, or from the host community members who will welcome them. Clear information products should be produced based on the context analysis and community consultations, and widely disseminated so that the affected populations can make voluntary and informed decisions about whether they want to pursue local integration options. Their decision to move or remain where they are must be their theirs to make. There is a clear role for NGOs here; they have the experience and capacity to conduct in-depth, context specific analysis and the right networks and connections with the local communities to effectively share information.

The need for in-depth analysis to inform program planning on this scale is prominently featured in the IASC Protection Policy and considered necessary good practice for any humanitarian intervention. As the analysis will examine a range of different issues, requiring the attention of different sector experts, the solution will similarly require a whole-of-system approach. This goes far beyond the protection sector and even humanitarian sector and will likely include a significant involvement of recovery and peacebuilding actors, mediators, development organizations, and a diversity of community members (not only "leaders" as some of them are sources of social frictions).

Increasingly, humanitarian actors, in particular NGOs, seek a bigger push for local integration and/or relocation to alternative locations domestically, and the humanitarian leadership at the HCT level has indicated repeated support for this, so at this point it might not be an issue of willingness, but of action. Now that a returns framework exists, emphasis should be placed on cultivating viable options for integration and relocation, and on creating and disseminating information as widely as possible so that IDPs can make informed decisions. The HC an HCT should explicitly call for context-specific analysis in support of the development of viable options for not only return but relocation and local integration.

---

[27] Smaller guidance notes were created, but they were not widely endorsed and did not reflect current realities. This includes the Operational Guidance Note on Spontaneous Returns (NPC, endorsed by HCT in January 2015), the Aide Memoire on Principles of Voluntary Return in Safety and Dignity (NPC, 2015), the Guidance Note: Considerations on Return Parameters for Humanitarian Response (NPC, March 2016), the Operational Guidelines for the Provision of Assistance to Returns in Iraq (RWG, December 2016), and the Area Based Intervention Framework for Return and Reintegration (RWG, June 2017).

Recommended Actions:

- NGOs should conduct context-specific analysis in areas of displacement to support a durable solutions framework that emphasizes local integration and relocation. In order to harmonize the analysis, this could be tasked by the HCT and potentially conducted by one actor, e.g. the REACH Initiative. As this is a substantial task, additional actors might be called upon to support with analysis, based on a shared plan. Donors and UN agencies should fully support this effort and contribute expertise and resources where appropriate.

    - Meaningfully and extensively consult civil society, local NGOs, affected populations, and host communities during the crafting of this analysis. After the analysis is compiled, ensure that information about additional durable solutions is widely spread and understood by affected populations so they can make free and informed decisions about which option to pursue.

    - The key recommendations from the analysis should be followed by a measurable action-oriented implementation plan.

- The HC should continue to emphasize the importance of the PRF to the central government and consistently follow up on local uptake, especially as it relates to voluntary, informed, and dignified returns.

- The HCT should promote the passage of two legislative initiatives currently being promoted by UN-HABITAT to formalize informal settlements, i.e. on "Addressing Residential Encroachment" and the law on the Informal Settlements Development Fund.[28]

- A "durable solutions" framework should be drafted and endorsed by the HCT – similar to the PRF – which outlines an agreed policy and approach regarding relocation or integration as a first step, after which advocacy with the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government should ensue to solicit their endorsement. The HCT should ensure the involvement of peacebuilding, development actors, and the private sector in the development of durable solutions through return, relocation, and local integration.

- Voluntary decision-making about return, relocation, or local integration depends in part on avoiding push factors and ending coercive measures. CCCM and other relevant clusters should improve current living conditions in camps as the current residents likely will stay where they are until they are comfortable that viable options exist. Improvements include more effectively sharing information about SEA reporting mechanisms and providing PSEA training to camp managers; publicizing the IDP call center as a resource for IDP camp beneficiaries, and upgrading camp infrastructure to meet SPHERE standards, such as putting locks on the inside of latrines.

Recommendation 3: Stand up an inclusive mechanism for coordination and strategic planning around social cohesion programming and support a government-led national action plan for reconciliation linked to local equivalents.

A consistent theme across interviews with all INGO, NNGO, UN and donor groups interviewed, was an interest in strategic, coordinated, and collective efforts to support social cohesion and reconciliation. Nearly all interviewees agree that social cohesion programming backed by a government-led policy initiative on reconciliation is necessary and a viable means of addressing some of the long-standing and more recent tensions across the country. As social cohesion and reconciliation cuts across the roles of humanitarian, recovery, development, and peacebuilding actors, there is significant confusion about who is doing what where, and

---

[28] The law titled "Addressing Residential Encroachment" covers two existing laws: law 154 on prevention of expansion of new informal settlements areas, and law 156 on regularization of the ownership and development of lands within urban areas. The law on Informal Settlements Development Fund is attached to the "Addressing Residential Encroachment" law to fund the activities under this law.

whether there is a collective strategy everyone can get behind. There is no common analysis nor strategy to address social cohesion. UN agencies and NGOs working on programs related to social cohesion demonstrated little knowledge of what each other is doing. This is highly problematic in terms of both efficiency and from a strategic, problem-solving standpoint.[29] This could, however, be remedied by identifying or creating a node where UN, NGO, and government stakeholders gather to collect area-based information, produce joint analysis, and coordinate programming and policy at the local, governorate, and national levels.

The RRP - intended to be the bridge plan between the HRP and the UNDAF in Iraq - nominally addresses issues regarding social cohesion. Problematically, though, no NGOs were consulted during the formulation of the RRP so therefore are not aware of its mechanics and program design nor when and how they may be asked to implement various programs.

"My dream is for restorative justice."

Female head of a NNGO based in Erbil

Key to the success of any social cohesion intervention, or the implementation of a reconciliation policy, will be enabling Iraqi civil society to lead the way. For decades, under Saddam Hussein, civil society was stifled; however, in recent years it has started to regain strength and NNGOs have taken up critical roles in humanitarian action, human rights, development, and peacebuilding. NNGOs interviewed in Baghdad and Erbil all articulated how they would like to continue to support reconciliation and peace efforts across the country. NNGO technical and contextual expertise should be cultivated and supported by INGOs, UN agencies, and donors to further social cohesion and reconciliation efforts across the country.

The exclusion of NGOs – both INGO and NNGOs – by UN actors from processes which could benefit from INGO and NNGO technical and context-specific knowledge and expertise, such as the RRP, is a missed opportunity and runs counter to commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 regarding collective outcomes.

Some NNGO, INGO, and UN stakeholder groups are managing social cohesion programming, and all stakeholder groups would benefit from a 3W mapping exercise so gaps can be identified, lessons and failures can be assessed for future program design, and all of the activities can be taken as evidence to support the formulation of a national action plan/policy on reconciliation.

Local Peace Committees have been established in parts of the country, with the support of UNDP, and their intention is to have community leaders run them rather than government, UN, or NGO stakeholders. This concept appears sound; however, it is a UN run activity, and when the program was presented to NGOs at a meeting of the NERF which InterAction observed, UNDP's delivery and NGO's reaction indicated that this was the first time many of them were made aware of such a program even though it geographically overlaps with NGO programming and activities.

In September, a "Ninewa Peace and Reconciliation Working Group" formed and at the time of writing the TOR was under development. The NGO stakeholders InterAction consulted expressed optimism that this could be the start of a local policy initiative backed by strategic programming that would address social cohesion and reconciliation. It is being led by an NNGO and includes space for a representative of the High Council of Reconciliation which is an initiative under the Iraqi Prime Minister's office. InterAction understands the intention of the Working Group will be to focus on reconciliation and social cohesion in Ninewa and include an inclusive set of participants ranging from government and UN to NGO actors. If successfully supported, this model could be replicated in other parts of the country and eventually linked to a national action plan on reconciliation.

---

[29] UNDP and the GOI have set up an Implementation and Follow-up Committee on National Reconciliation (IFCNR) which is not familiar to humanitarian NGO actors. The project is described here:
http://www.iq.undp.org/content/iraq/en/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/reconciliation.html

Donor support for social cohesion programming and related political support for a national reconciliation plan linked to governorate level equivalents – if done well – could effectively move Iraq toward a peaceful future. Concerns were raised by beneficiaries in Mosul, INGO, and NNGO staff, and UN officials – all stakeholder groups interviewed – about the US government directing funding to specific ethnic and religious groups. While all stakeholders agreed that there are ethnic and religious groups that have experienced significant repression and abuse, they also agreed that directing assistance to those groups versus taking an area-based approach and assessing vulnerabilities against resources to design programmatic interventions, would only further divide societies and foster the very same tension that contributes to violence and unrest.

Recommended Actions:

- Considering the lack of a collective push to address social friction and inter-communal violence, the HCT should lead on the creation of a mechanism for coordination around social cohesion programming that brings all stakeholders (UN, NGO, government, peacebuilding, humanitarian, recovery, development) together around a common analysis, and geographically sound and strategic programming. This could be co-led by UNDP and the NERF, pulling in elements of programming under a UNDP-led Emergency Employment and Social Cohesion cluster, some elements under the RRP's Community Reconciliation petal, and some elements in the UNDAF. Whatever structure is established and wherever it sits, for it to be successful it needs to be inclusive and transparent.

- Concurrently, UN actors, NCCI and its members, as well as humanitarian NGO working groups at capital level should, in consultation with the GOI and KRG, launch an advocacy campaign around a national plan for reconciliation, backed by local and context specific efforts. Government actors should be fully supported by the UN system and NGOs in making such a proposal a reality.

- UN actors, NGOs, and donors should consider Iraq as a pilot country for humanitarian-recovery-development-peacebuilding nexus coordination. In-country and external stakeholders should focus on standing up a mechanism for social cohesion programming which is sound and could be replicated to some degree, in other country contexts.

- The NERF should be viewed as the node for NGO coordination and communication regarding social cohesion and early recovery efforts and any "whole of system" mechanism that is stood up and focuses on this area should link to the NERF rather than create anything from scratch. In that vein, NGOs should designate focal points to the NERF and support NCCI in facilitating the group.

- Donors should provide multi-year, flexible funding through a funding facility focusing on social cohesion underpinned by area-based needs assessments and an information management system that draws upon area-based needs assessments and provides a common set of data and analysis to all stakeholders working on the "sub-sector".

IV.   Conclusion

Iraq is indeed at a crossroads, and the country context is so complex that any successful solution for protection issues – from addressing stigmatization and inability to realize human rights of entire communities, to creating sustainable living options for displaced people – must be context-specific and iterative in nature. Considering the current political, security, and economic situation in Iraq, and the reverberating effects of a large-scale military operation to combat ISIS, caring for the most vulnerable people in Iraq should be everyone's priority. Collectively, NGOs, the UN system, government actors, and the donor community have an opportunity to work together in support of the Iraqi people moving forward in a peaceful and sustainable manner. All stakeholders interviewed by InterAction agreed that if a collective problem-solving approach is taken toward addressing some of the most pressing protection issues outlined in this report, there will be significant gains made in support of conflict-affected people being able to move toward recovering and regaining their lives.

ANNEX

InterAction Mission to Iraq
24 July- 6 August 2018

Terms of Reference
11 July 2018

Background

Iraq continues to face a complex and substantial humanitarian crisis. Numerous protection issues are compounded by over 2 million internally displaced people, ongoing low-intensity military operations against ISIS, and a traumatized civilian population seeking to recover from over 15 years of violent conflict.

While Iraqis are uncertain how the May elections may impact reconstruction efforts across the country, there are significant questions about the safety of the displaced population, the communities that currently host them and those currently in transit seeking to return to their homes or an alternative settlement location. National authorities are strongly encouraging returns; however, there are credible reports of authorities forcibly returning people to their area of origin. Select IDP camps are undergoing closure or consolidation efforts, and to varying degrees displaced people face challenges realising their basic human rights in and out of camp settings. The returns process in its entirety will likely be the largest humanitarian planning issue for the remainder of 2018.

In this context, individuals and families who lived under ISIS control and/or are perceived to have been affiliated with ISIS are among the most vulnerable and there have been reports of active discrimination and abuse by various stakeholders. It appears that this community is facing several unique protection risks that are not being sufficiently addressed at a time when fostering social cohesion amongst all members of Iraqi society should be a priority, especially in the likelihood of a more sectarian government

Complicating IDP returns and reconstruction are the estimated one thousand km^2 of confirmed hazardous areas in Iraq. There are big reporting gaps, however, and while it is widely known that ISIS booby-trapped large areas and urban spaces, including people's homes, with IEDs, areas recaptured from ISIS have not been thoroughly surveyed. Iraq likely remains the most heavily mine contaminated country in the world, and the complexity of removing IEDs in places like Mosul requires significant investment of financial resources and technical expertise for a very long period. NGOs face many regulatory challenges when attempting to register and receive government accreditation to conduct clearance activities which is significantly hampering the decontamination operations. Families have often been forced to move several times, and every time they are displaced they face the risk of being injured or killed by ERWs and IEDs.

Purpose

InterAction will undertake a protection-focused humanitarian mission to Iraq. It will begin by researching the underlying causes and main protection risks facing the Iraqi population, including but not limited to the issues outlined above. Site visits to examine key protection issues will be prioritised in the mission agenda, along with bilateral and multi-stakeholder meetings. The mission will look at the role of collective and coordinated protection strategies to address these risks, how NGOs contribute to the development and implementation of such strategies and how a range of humanitarian and other actors are addressing protection issues through their activities. This includes working with the NCCI to better understand challenges associated with collective NGO action in Iraq and identify potential strategies to meet those challenges. InterAction will consult closely with the

protection sector including national and local NGO service providers. InterAction will also examine the role of humanitarian leadership and broader humanitarian coordination in pursuit of collective protection strategies as envisaged in the IASC Statement on the Centrality of Protection and the IASC Protection Policy.

In advance of the mission, through a series of bilateral consultations, InterAction has been, and will continue to discuss objectives and outputs with InterAction members and will identify NGO field staff to work closely with the mission team.

Some relevant observations already noted by IA staff, members and other individuals working inside Iraq include:
1) A new Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator has taken up post, providing an opportunity for collective NGO engagement in support of key protection issues through a whole of systems approach.
2) The L3 designation was deactivated by IASC principals in March of 2018, and donor governments have started to focus resources on reconstruction, and it is yet unclear whether and how this shift has impacted/will impact efforts to address key protection issues.
3) The National Protection Cluster is working on a protection strategy for 2018 and the HCT is reportedly considering hiring a specialist to work on an HCT protection strategy.
4) As the humanitarian response in Iraq shifts away from the emergency phase, various non-humanitarian actors are taking up service provision roles from humanitarian actors and/or in addition to humanitarian actors which provides both opportunities and challenges related to coordination and technical oversight of activities from a protection perspective.

Specific Tasks
- Gain a better understanding of field realities by undertaking context specific analysis of key protection issues and assessing how they are being addressed at the technical and strategic level including by non- protection actors;
- Identify major issues and joint advocacy points with the response, as well as the policy realm.
- Assess coordination around protection issues (such as returns and mine action), including coordination between protection and non-protection actors.
- Develop recommendations to assist both protection and non-protection actors best serve protection needs inside Iraq. Possible areas include replicable approaches, opportunities, use of resources, advocacy leveraging, duplications, representational arrangements and information management.

Outputs
The mission's expected outputs will include:
- A written report to include a summary of key observations of the mission and recommendations for steps that could be taken to address the identified protection concerns at both the country and global levels. These will be validated through stakeholder debriefs at various points during the visit and directly following the visit;
- A supplemental report to support national actors may be developed after consultations with national NGOs;
- Presentation of initial findings to the HCT and RC/HC (if timing allows) in country, or alternatively, a presentation remotely after the visit;
- Post-trip debriefings with InterAction members, NCCI, the Global Protection Clusters (GPC), donors, UN agencies (including select cluster leads), the IASC reference group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness, US government officials, World Bank staff, and individuals/groups that contributed to mission planning;
- Technical support to the InterAction Iraq Working Group on an advocacy strategy to support efforts to address protection concerns in Iraq.

Key Stakeholders

As of 10 July, the InterAction team will have conducted 29 pre-mission consultations with a variety of NGO, UN/IO and government actors. The team will meet with representatives of NGOs (national and international), the United Nations and international organizations while in country. Further, the team will meet with select Iraqi officials and donor government officials with the intention of gaining a holistic perspective on protection issues inside Iraq.

InterAction is maintaining a full list of consulted stakeholders; however, <u>will not be sharing the list</u> to protect the identities of the individuals and agencies who share information. InterAction may refer to actors as: NNGO/INGO, UN, Donor Government, etc in meetings and reports for the purposes of clarity and to foster a constructive dialogue.

Participants

The mission will be composed of two InterAction humanitarian team representatives who have worked extensively in conflict settings, and have substantial experience in protection and human rights research, advocacy and programming as well as in humanitarian response operations and NGO coordination.