

Displacement of Shabak & Turkmen Shi'a Minorities from Tal Afar & Ninewa Plains

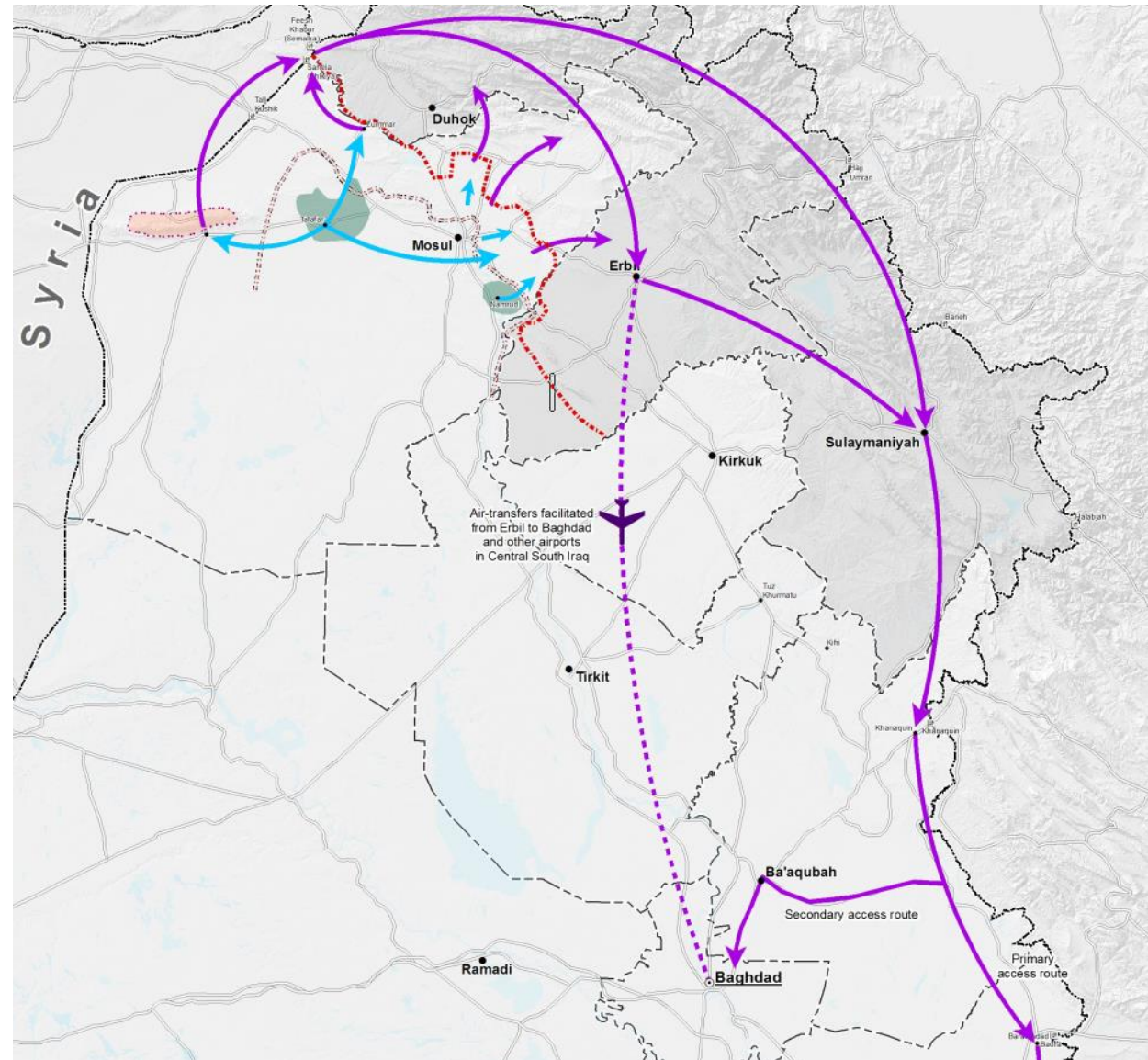
June - 18 August 2014

OVERVIEW

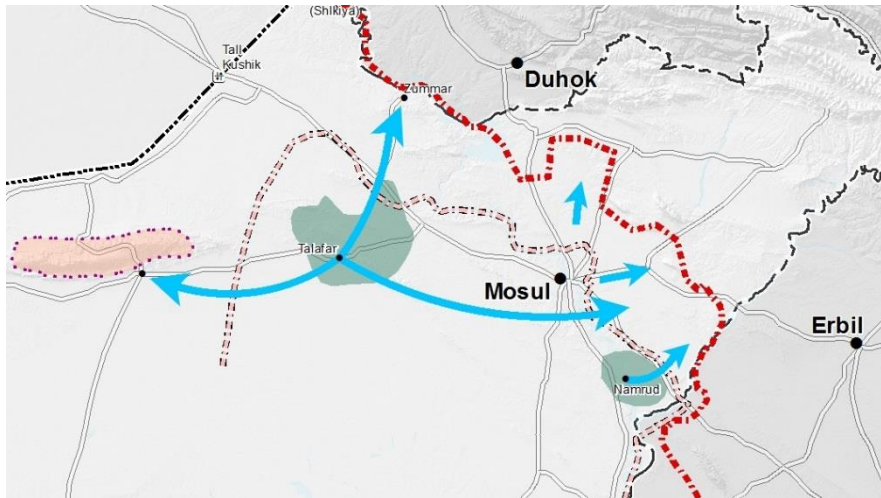
The takeover of the city of Mosul on 6 June by Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs), and intense fighting in Tal Afar on 16 June displaced an estimated total of more than 500,000 people. Tal Afar and the Ninewa Plains, an area located east of Mosul and proximate to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), are home to a variety of religious and ethnic minorities, including Shabak and Turkmen populations, who had to escape the conflict. Both Iraqi Turkmen, who are Iraq's third minority group, and Shabak people, include a significant proportion of Shia Muslims, whose displacement patterns were found to be distinct from that of other minority groups.

Initially sheltered by other minorities located throughout Ninewa Governorate during the early stages of the conflict in June, the majority of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) then fled to Shia-majority governorates in the south of Iraq when AOGs expanded their presence further into the Ninewa Plains. It is now estimated that 30,000 Shabak and Turkmen Shia displaced families, located in central and southern Iraq, are living in precarious conditions and in dire need of support.

Through key informant interviews conducted by REACH enumerators in northern and southern Iraq, this brief outlines the overall trends of displacement of Shabak and Turkmen Shia communities originating from the Ninewa Plains and Tal Afar area.



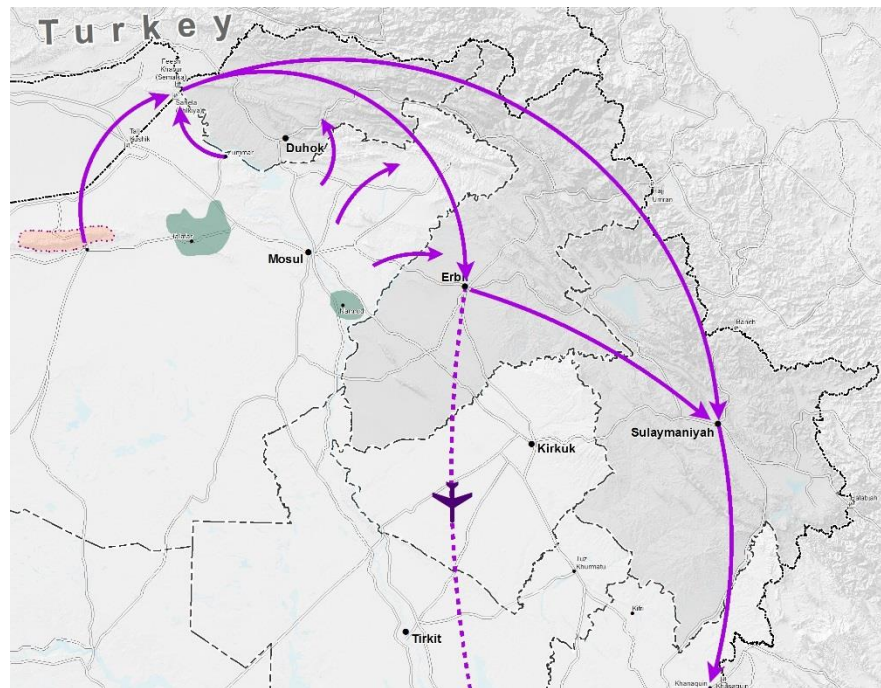
KEY PHASES OF DISPLACEMENT



Phase 1: Primary displacement 6 June – 2 August 2014

Throughout the month of June, AOGs expanded their geographical presence in North Eastern Iraq, threatening and marginalizing non-Sunni ethno-religious groups and leading to their rapid exodus to other parts of Iraq and neighbouring countries. The two main origins of displacement Turkmen and Shabak Shia were Mosul and surrounding towns as well as the Tal Afar District.

The overwhelming majority of the Tal Afar residents fled towards Sinjar, Zummar and surrounding areas. Those from Mosul City, Namrud and surrounding villages fled northwards into the KRI and to other minority villages in Hamdaniya District; many found refuge in Khazer transit site. Most IDPs remained in their location until the end of July, although some were being flown to the south of Iraq, as explained in the Phase 2.



Phase 2: Secondary displacement 3 - 18 August 2014

The spread of violence into the Ninewa Plains, towards Sinjar, Zummar, and areas to the north and east of Mosul, resulted in a second wave of displacement of Turkmen and Shabak Shia IDPs and residents. A majority of them headed towards the KRI, and many found refuge in Khazer transit site. From there, a large number travelled onwards towards Shia-majority governorates in southern Iraq, namely Wassit, Thi Qar, Qadissyia, Muthanna, Missan and Al Najaf.

Two main routes were used to reach southern Iraq. From the end of July to the beginning of August, thousands of IDPs originating from Tal Afar were flown by chartered flight organised by the Iraqi government from Erbil to Baghdad or directly to Najaf, from where they were distributed among the different governorates. Furthermore, throughout this displacement phase, IDPs either drove down or were bussed through Khanaquin District and then further southwards towards Baghdad. Reports suggest that a recent deterioration of the security situation in Baghdad has forced IDPs to travel along the Iran-Iraq border.

CURRENT SITUATION

The majority of Turkmen and Shabak Shi'a IDPs are currently found in the south of Iraq, more specifically in the Wassit, Thi Qar, Qadissyia, Muthanna, Missan and Al Najaf Governorates. Some Shabak Shi'a have found refuge in the KRI, with pockets of Shabak Shi'a populations located throughout the Erbil Governorate, notably in Baharka Camp, Kalak and Chamchamal. Reports also point to some Turkmen remaining in Zummar, while others, previously displaced to Sinjar, are estimated to have fled to Turkey.

IDP situation in the north of Iraq

The situation of the Shabak Shi'a IDPs in the KRI varies considerably according to their location. They are either living in camp settings in Baharka, or in collective shelters—generally schools—or in unfinished buildings.

While some have reported having received some form of assistance, from the host community or local authorities in Chamchamal or through organisations in Baharka, the majority is still struggling to meet their basic needs, most specifically the population displaced from Khazir transit site and currently living in Kalar. MoDM has started distributing cash assistance of 1,000,000 IQD per family in Baharka.

Most of the IDPs are hoping to leave the KRI, either to head towards the south of the country, or to leave Iraq altogether. Many also report hoping to be able to return to their area of origin if the situation were to stabilise.



IDP situation in the south of Iraq

IDPs in the south of Iraq are predominantly living in temporary collective shelters, such as mosques, schools, public or unfinished buildings, with often little means to sustain themselves. The most vulnerable are the IDPs who are still travelling to their final destination. As the flow of displaced families increased dramatically, the authorities have restricted freedom of movement of IDPs both within and around governorates. This has resulted in IDPs having to travel to the governorates located further east in the hope to find local authorities willing to register them. It is only upon registration (through local mukhtars, local council, police, and finally MoDM), that they will receive a ration card and be allowed full freedom of movement as well as the opportunity to access employment. The registration process has so far been very slow, and in the meantime very limited assistance has been received.

The most pressing needs relate to core relief items, as most IDPs arrived with little to no possessions. Food is being provided by host communities, although they have a limited capacity to do so. People are reportedly receiving some assistance from authorities, notably water, cash upon registration (1,000,000 IQD/family) and organised transport. Government authorities are overstretched in responding to this influx, with numbers estimated at around 30,000 displaced Turkmen and Shabak Shi'a families, and have requested lifesaving support from humanitarian actors to urgently meet the needs of displaced populations.

About REACH Initiative

REACH was created in 2010 to facilitate the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information, you can write to our in-country office: iraq@reach-initiative.org or to our global office in Geneva geneva@reach-initiative.org. You can also visit our website www.reach-initiative.org or follow us @REACH_info.