

HPG Working Paper

The humanitarian response in Iraq

Support beyond international assistance in Mosul

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Acronyms

AWG	Iraq Assessment Working Group
FFES	Funding Facility for Expanded Stabilization
FFIS	Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	internally displaced person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JCMC	Joint Coordination and Monitoring Centre
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	[United Nations] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDS	Public Distribution System
PMU	Popular Mobilisation Unit
RRP	Recovery and Resilience Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

This report contributes to Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) research on alternative sources of humanitarian funding, the hypothesis of which proposes that international humanitarian assistance is only a small proportion of the total resources used in crisis response. Instead, help from other sources can often be a more significant and reliable means of support for those affected by crises.

This case study explores this hypothesis in the city of Mosul, northern Iraq, using the lens of displacement status to explore how the various sources of support have been impacted by conflict and occupation. The 300 respondents to this study's household survey were comprised of three equally sized groups: internally displaced people (IDPs); those who were displaced but have since returned to their area of origin; and those who have stayed in Mosul since the onset of the conflict with Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2013. This survey was complemented by in-depth interviews with affected people and humanitarian responders.

Following two years of rule by ISIL and widespread destruction caused by the city's recapture by government forces in 2017, Mosul has faced a humanitarian crisis. As well as suffering the consequences of conflict and displacement, the city's residents have also faced a lack of jobs and little support for reconstructing destroyed housing and services, despite a well-funded international humanitarian response. These issues have contributed to a slowing rate of former residents returning to Mosul, as well as hindering the city's recovery and being a factor in continuing insecurity.

The study shows that affected people drew upon a diverse range of sources of support during displacement and in the present reconstruction phase. Over half of respondents received government salaries in the past month, and over 60% received income from non-government jobs including in retail, construction, catering and other trades. Further sources of income included welfare payments, revenue from privately owned business and informal daily labour wages. Other resources, such as income from rent, support from networks of family and friends (including in the form of remittances) and aid from religious endowments and

government also provided support, albeit less frequently and in lower monetary value.

With this broader framing of support and income, international humanitarian assistance certainly appears less important, and recipients of this type of support are largely limited to those who have experienced displacement: whether currently IDPs (62% of respondents reported having access to international aid) or those who have returned to their area of origin recalling support they received while displaced (64% had received it). Post-displacement, aid fell sharply and was largely in-kind and perceived as temporary and infrequent, albeit a source of support that arrived rapidly and fulfilled basic needs.

Sources of support have been shaped by varying experiences of the crisis, and so it is unsurprising to find that those who stayed and those who had been displaced have different means of income and assistance. However, in Mosul these differences often intersect with the divides of recent communal violence and are further entrenched by the current political environment. This includes the perceived stricter security clearance practices for those who remained in Mosul under ISIL, reducing their access to more lucrative government salaries and welfare payments under Iraq's Public Distribution System (PDS). In addition, salaries from security forces and international aid are being disproportionately received by IDPs and returnees, deepening existing economic inequalities. Corruption in recruiting for jobs and accessing other support such as compensation for damaged housing is also a common source of frustration. Such findings highlight the risks these disparities present to a sustainable peacebuilding process, especially in the perceived absence of government-led reconstruction efforts, as well as the limits of using displacement status as the sole indicator of humanitarian need.

There was also a clear sense of value in the sources of help that went beyond simple monetary assistance. This was particularly apparent for support received from friends and relatives, which although largely in-kind in nature was seen as providing an important coping strategy. Of respondents who stayed in Mosul under ISIL, who had far less access to international humanitarian assistance, 43% reported receiving support

from relatives and friends in the city. However, these flows have altered over the duration of the crisis, and residents reported a general decline of help since the end of the conflict despite similar levels of need.

The findings of this study demonstrate that neither studying sources of support nor reconstruction are

technical exercises that can be understood through a purely financial lens. In Mosul they are instead products of the current political context and of the legacy of conflict and ISIL rule, necessitating a humanitarian and development response that is perceived as inclusive and works from a sophisticated understanding of need and vulnerability.

1 Introduction

The city of Mosul in northern Iraq has been subject to a series of humanitarian crises, most recently as a consequence of the conflict between the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the federal government of Iraq. From 2014 to 2017, ISIL ruled Mosul as a ‘shadow government’, before the city was recaptured by the government. Inhabitants of Mosul have faced displacement and sectarian violence, the impact of which is now reflected in the support and income available from humanitarian aid, jobs and assistance. The start of 2018 marked the first time since the end of the conflict that the number of people returning to their area of origin surpassed the number of displaced people in Iraq (IOM, 2018a). Yet in Mosul, returning residents are faced with a challenging and often hostile economic and social environment in which to attempt to rebuild their homes and livelihoods.

This case study contributes to a two-year research project carried out by the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) entitled ‘The tip of the iceberg: understanding non-traditional sources of financing’. It hypothesises that international humanitarian assistance, while the most prominent means of assistance from the perspective of international-level donors, responders and policy-makers, may not always be the most significant contribution for those affected by crises. Mosul is one of three areas studied in this research project, the others being the Terai region of Nepal following flooding in 2017 and the refugee camps of northern Uganda (Poole, 2019; Willitts-King, forthcoming). An urban, formerly upper-middle income context directly affected by conflict, northern Iraq provides a contrasting example that has received relatively high press coverage and a large humanitarian response. International assistance is just one small part of a broad range of resources and incomes that form the larger body of assistance accessed by affected people, who cite salaries through various jobs and aid from government and elsewhere, such as from family and host communities, as also supporting them. These alternative sources of help may be more valuable to recipients, either monetarily or in terms of relevance and impact on well-being.

This case study seeks to understand those sources, how important they are to recipients, and how they

have been affected by crisis. It will explore the effect of conflict on social support networks, and the role of such networks in mitigating the effects of conflict, as well as investigating the difference in abilities to cope economically given the different experiences of affected people. This will contribute to the overall research question of the wider study: ‘How might better knowledge about the assistance that reaches communities in crisis change/affect the international humanitarian response?’

Why does identifying the diversity of income sources matter for humanitarian responses in this context? As will be explored in this report, ISIL rule and the conflict have resulted in subsequent waves of displacement that are now reversing as many people return to their homes. However, rates of return are slowing; one of the cited reasons for this is a lack of livelihood opportunities in the still heavily-damaged city. Knowledge of the kind of jobs formerly and currently held and sought by respondents will contribute to a greater understanding of how best to pursue livelihood strategies that have a positive impact on incomes and other metrics. In addition, the experiences of people living in Mosul since the end of the conflict are diverse, and their sources of support are often a result of whether they are currently internally displaced, have returned to their place of origin, or stayed in their homes throughout ISIL rule and the conflict. Political, social and economic dynamics often vary between these three groups, and many dividing lines in income and sources of help mirror the divisions present since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003. These are also reflected in sources of support beyond money and extend into perceptions of how reconstruction is progressing. Rather than a purely technical exercise, knowing more about how this support interacts with political dimensions of post-conflict Mosul is important in ensuring peacebuilding efforts are inclusive and further conflict is avoided.

This report is structured as follows: the remainder of section 1 details the research methodology used for this project. Section 2 provides a contextual analysis of Mosul, the conflict and displacement, the actors present and a broad view of funding to the response. Section 3 presents key findings from the research, including detailing the sources of income and support

that affected people had access to and how they changed over time. Section 4 analyses three key issues arising from these findings:

- the division of income sources along socio-political lines;
- the lack of livelihood reconstruction, which has meant an effective contraction of assistance at the household level for most respondents; and
- how these resources, particularly non-monetary aid, are impacted and shaped by social networks and how they have changed over the course of the conflict.

Section 5 concludes the report, with further detail on the sampling methodology used in this study provided in the annex.

1.1 Methodology, tools and limitations

This report details the findings of analysis of field research in Mosul conducted between October 2018 and February 2019. HPG worked with Social Inquiry, a research organisation based in Erbil focusing on social, psychological and economic issues in conflict-affected societies, to develop and carry out this project. Data was collected in three layers: a quantitative component comprising 300 household surveys in neighbourhoods across Mosul City in October 2018; a qualitative component of a further 36 interviews with affected people, which provided the opportunity to explore social and economic networks in more detail; and a smaller number of interviews with those working in the international aid sector, providing insights into the humanitarian response.

For the household survey, the target population was segmented into three equally-sized groups¹ intended to represent the diverse picture of migration and displacement that Mosul has seen during and following the conflict.² These groups were:

1. ‘Stayees’ comprising respondents who did not leave Mosul for the duration of ISIL control and the city’s recapture.

2. Returnees displaced during 2014–2015 to areas outside of the city and returned after its recapture.
3. Current IDPs who were displaced during or after 2014, who are not originally from Mosul but are being hosted in the city.

The quantitative survey for this study was conducted in ten neighbourhoods across the city (see Table 1).

Both the quantitative and qualitative components aimed to elicit an understanding of how families experiencing different conflict and post-conflict situations have coped financially during these periods. To do this, questions focused on:

- Key sources of financial and other material support at the household level, with an emphasis on comparing situations before, during and after conflict and/or displacement.
- Differences among the population in terms of their social support networks and what role they play in accessing resources, in addition to how they are impacted by the conflict.
- Diversity in sources of income by population group, including cash assistance, livelihood earnings, savings and remittances.
- Differences in the ability to economically cope in a large conflict-affected setting such as Mosul, with varying degrees of reconstruction having recently started.

Mosul remains an insecure context in which to conduct research and the team faced multiple access constraints and security considerations. Access was further hindered following heavy rains and flooding in Mosul and surrounding areas in late 2018. Interviews with government officials were challenging due to high turnover of staff in relevant authorities. Since it is not known how the populations of ‘stayees’, returnees and IDPs are distributed across Mosul’s neighbourhoods, the sample size could not be weighted accordingly. As a result, the aggregation of findings to obtain representative results for the whole of the Mosul sample was not possible. Instead, the survey was intended to provide illustrative insights into the economic lives of Mosul residents and how they have been impacted by the conflict.

1 In rare cases some of these categories overlapped in some households, particularly when families were displaced in 2014 but left at least one member in Mosul, usually to protect property. In such cases, the classification in one or other category were based on the actions of the head of household.

2 See Section 3 for further context of these three groups, and Annex 1 for details of the sampling methodology used in this study.

Table 1: Neighbourhood by sampled households in each population group, quantitative survey

	IDPs	Returnees	Stayees	Total in neighbourhood
Al Arabe	10	10	10	30
Al Dawasa + Al Ghizlane + Al Jawsaq	8	9	8	25
Al Jazaer	9	10	10	29
Al Mansour	10	10	10	30
Mosul al-Jedida	10	10	9	29
Al Muthanna	10	10	10	30
Nabi Younis + Garaj Shimal	11	11	11	33
Al Noor	10	9	10	29
Al Sukar	10	10	10	30
Al Tayaran	12	11	12	35
Total	100	100	100	300

Table 2: Neighbourhood by sampled households in each population group, qualitative interviews

	IDPs	Returnees	Stayees	Total in neighbourhood
Al Dawasa	-	3	4	7
Al Ghizlane	1	2	2	5
Al Mansour	3	-	-	3
Mosul al-Jedida	3	-	-	3
Al Muthanna	-	-	4	4
Garaj Shimal	3	-	-	3
Al Noor	1	1	6	8
Al Tayaran	1	1	1	3
Total	12	7	17	36

2 The crisis context

This section introduces the humanitarian crisis and its impact on the inhabitants of Mosul, considering both the physical destruction of the city and the waves of displacement that occurred between 2014 and 2018. Of relevance when considering the political nature of the support received by affected people are the numerous actors present in the city, including multiple security forces. The macro-level funding picture is also considered to provide context for the humanitarian and reconstruction efforts cited by survey and interview respondents.

2.1 The conflict with ISIL

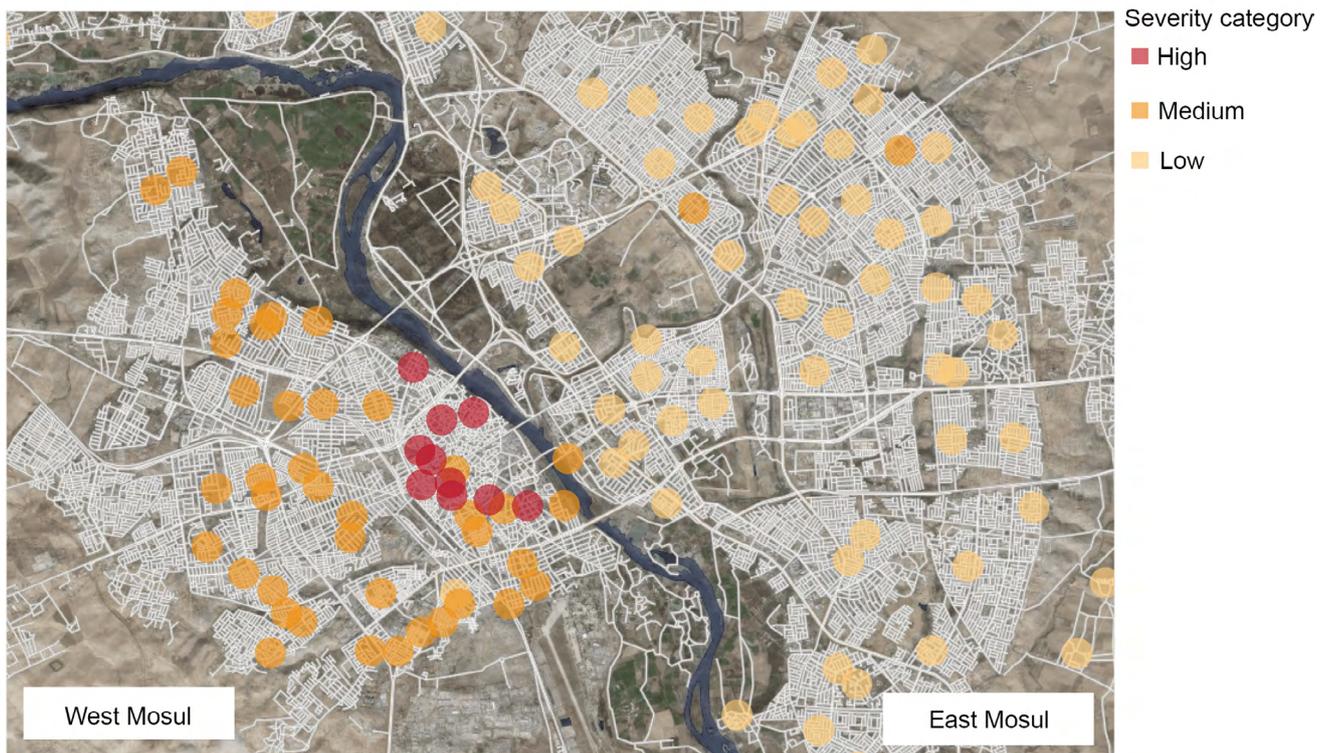
Mosul, the capital of Ninewa governorate, has been continuously inhabited for at least 3,000 years. Spanning the Tigris river, it flourished as a trade hub on the silk roads and attracted both commerce and a diverse group of migrants. Historically a destination for displaced people, by the 21st century Iraq's second city had a population of over a million people and comprised Sunni Arab, Assyrian, Kurds, Turkmen, Yazidi, Armenian and Shabak communities (IOM, 2018b: 3). Following the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies, and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, a sustainable political settlement for the wider state has proved elusive, and repeated cycles of sectarian violence have beset Mosul and the rest of the country.

Among opponents of US forces in Mosul and elsewhere were groups that would eventually develop into ISIL. A militant Sunni extremist organisation, ISIL made use of the porous border with neighbouring Syria to establish itself as a faction in the Syrian civil war that began in August 2011 (Svoboda and Redvers, 2014). ISIL made its first territorial claim in Iraq in 2014, and in June dramatically invaded and captured Mosul. Over the course of just six days, the group surrounded and routed US-trained and equipped Iraqi security forces and secured control over the entire city. By the end of 2015, ISIL controlled one-third of Iraq, leading to the displacement of over 3.2 million people and thousands of civilian deaths (Baudot, 2018: 7). Mosul became the de facto capital of this 'caliphate', with ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declaring its founding in front of the city's al-Nuri mosque (UNDP, 2019: 32).

ISIL would go on to occupy Mosul for the next two years, operating a municipal government that, although run and directed by ISIL fighters, retained many of the city's bureaucratic structures in order to collect taxes and run public services. What this meant for Mosul's inhabitants largely depended on their ethnic or religious affiliation as well as what role individuals had within the local authorities and security forces. Some reporting has also focused on ISIL's running of key services such as electricity and waste collection, which some residents reported as being an improvement upon those run by previous authorities (Culbertson and Robinson, 2017: 42; Revkin, 2019). However, members of minority groups and those who did not adhere to ISIL's laws faced brutal persecution, with the organisation adopting cruel and violent punishments and tactics to enforce their extremist interpretation of Sharia law. ISIL's appropriation of Mosul's governance apparatus also became a means of oppression, with bodies such as estate authorities being co-opted to find, expropriate and redistribute land, businesses and homes (Taub, 2018).

In October 2016, federal Iraqi, US-led coalition and Kurdish regional forces commenced the offensive to recapture Mosul. Although the city itself is divided into eight administrative sectors, it is largely perceived to consist of two parts separated by the Tigris. These two sides' experiences differed during the recapture by anti-ISIL forces, reflected today in markedly different degrees of damage and living conditions (see Figure 1). Military operations concentrated first on retaking East Mosul and, with its progress slowed by improvised explosives and the use of civilians as human shields, anti-ISIL forces paused for a month in early 2017. The operation to recapture West Mosul continued until July and was characterised by more intense house-to-house fighting and widespread bombing by coalition aircraft. Under pressure from Baghdad and internationally to conclude the conflict, allegations arose that anti-ISIL forces relaxed their rules of engagement in the final months, leading to especially high civilian casualties (Dennis, 2017). By summer 2017, the last ISIL fighters were surrounded in the narrow streets of the Old City area of West Mosul, along with over 118,000 civilians (ACAPS, 2017). ISIL was declared defeated in Mosul on 9 July

Figure 1: Map of Mosul's neighbourhoods classified by the severity of conditions



2017, following a nine-month battle to recapture the city that killed between 9,000 and 11,000 non-combatants, over ten times the figure cited by coalition forces (Amnesty International, 2017; George, 2017).

2.2 Displacement and return

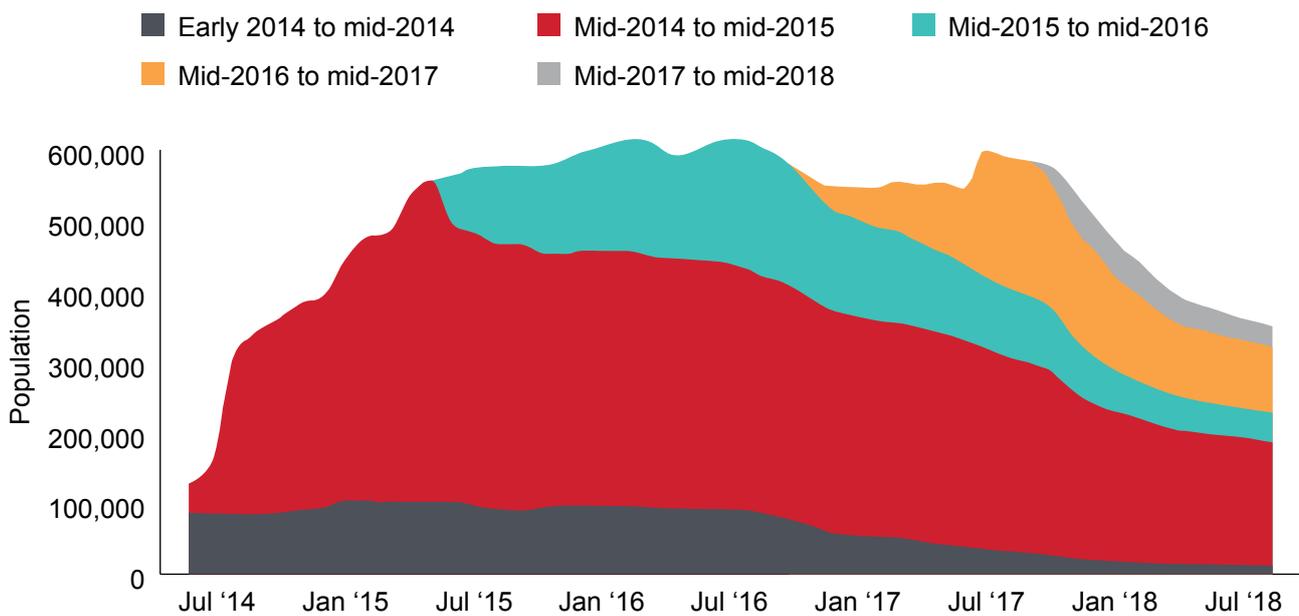
Since prior to the declared end of the conflict with ISIL, many displaced people began to return to their homes.³ Over 4.2 million returns have been recorded as of April 2019, 1.5 million more than the previous year, and the number of internally displaced Iraqis had fallen to 1.6 million (AWG, 2018a: 9). Yet such figures hide a more complex picture, where the formal end of the conflict has not necessarily meant an improvement in security for affected people. ISIL's advances and the military operations to counter it have caused successive waves of internal displacement and returns that are dependent on restrictions and perceptions of who can go home and who will be safe (see Table 2, Sanad et al., 2018: 9). In a larger-scale repeat of the sectarian conflicts that followed the 2003 invasion, many minority groups, among them Christian, Yazidi, Shabak and Kurdish communities, fled following ISIL's takeover of the city and have

yet to return in significant numbers. More generally, rates of return are slowing and have effectively levelled out (OCHA, 2018a: 4). Just 9% of camp-based IDPs in Iraq wish to return to their areas of origin in the next six months, and the number of people not intending to return home is growing (Saieh et al., 2018: 4; USAID, 2019: 1).

A key reason for the declining rate of IDP returns is the reconstruction process, which is widely perceived to be slow to effectively non-existent for ordinary residents. Much of the city, particularly West Mosul and the Old City, remains destroyed, with millions of tons of rubble hiding thousands of bodies yet to be cleared. Unexploded ordnance and improvised devices continue to kill people indiscriminately, with civilians estimated to constitute 92% of the casualties from these explosives across Iraq (Fox et al., 2018: 17). Mosul's pre-war housing shortage has been exacerbated by homes being partially or completely destroyed through looting, fire or shelling (Culbertson and Robinson, 2017). During its rule ISIL seized and sold property, leading to disputes over ownership, and the compensation process recently established by the government for those whose houses were destroyed in the fighting is complicated and tarnished by nepotism and corruption (Baudot, 2018).

³ From March 2016 various areas across neighbouring Al Anbar governorate, including cities such as Ramadi and Fallujah, were recaptured by the central government, leading to some limited returns from Ninewa. East Mosul saw some returns earlier than that conflict was declared over.

Figure 2: IDP population of Iraq divided by time of displacement, demonstrating successive waves of displacement following the ISIL invasion of 2014



Source: IOM et al. (2018a: 9)

Reconstruction of services in Mosul has been limited to the state's security apparatus and key pieces of infrastructure that support the housing and movement of military forces. A lack of livelihood opportunities and jobs is also cited by displaced people as a key reason for not yet returning (AWG, 2018b: 2).

A second key factor slowing the pace of IDP returns is insecurity. Following the ousting of ISIL from Mosul, the city returned to the formal control of the central government. However, the multiple actors involved in military operations has resulted in a chaotic and unclear security situation. In retaliation for what it perceives as widespread support for ISIL from the city's Sunni majority population, government forces have launched investigations into alleged involvement with extremists that have been criticised as indiscriminate and severe (Abdul-Ahad, 2018; Taub, 2018; UNHCR, 2018). Families accused of being affiliated with extremists have reportedly been evicted and refused return (UNHCR, 2018). Reprisal killings are common, and trials investigating former ISIL affiliation are carried out by the Iraqi judicial system at speed and often without due process (Taub, 2018). The torture of detained children to confess involvement with ISIL has also been reported (HRW, 2019). Intimidation and threats are rife, with so-called 'night letters' being delivered to the houses of perceived collaborators warning them that they will be forcibly evicted if they do not leave, and authorities instructing residents to inform them of suspected ISIL

members (Colville, 2017, cited in Kao and Revkin, 2018: 20; Sanad et al., 2018: 20). Personal grudges can also lead to inclusion on these lists, which can impact everything from compensation for damaged housing to the likelihood of gaining employment. Such accusations and counter-accusations have had such a detrimental impact upon relations between those who stayed during ISIL control and those who left that some residents have described it as a 'different kind of civil war' (Abdul-Ahad, 2018).

Today, inhabitants of Mosul who stayed or have since returned are struggling to rebuild their homes and communities. A lack of jobs and livelihood opportunities, destroyed or occupied housing, rising poverty and a fear of violence and corruption are commonly cited as concerns among people living in, or originally from, Mosul (AWG, 2018b: 2). Many of those yet to return are sheltered in IDP camps in the surrounding areas of Ninewa and beyond. The governorate remains the epicentre of the humanitarian crisis and hosts four million, or almost half, of Iraqi IDPs who need humanitarian assistance (ACAPS, 2019). The needs of those who have returned are often just as critical, with over 1.5 million people registered as 'returnees' in need of some form of humanitarian assistance in Ninewa alone (OCHA, 2018a: 16). It is this complex picture – of the still-displaced, insecure returnees, the fear of reprisals and counter-reprisals and atmosphere of distrust – that aid actors must navigate.

2.3 Local, national and international actors

The support given to affected people in Mosul often correlates with and is determined by identity (socio-political, ethno-religious, displacement status or a combination of these factors), income and geographic location. In turn, these differences are often exacerbated because of the many authorities and factions now present in the region. The plethora of security actors also impacts where and how key humanitarian and reconstruction actors function, including the Iraqi government, UN system and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Since the end of the conflict in Mosul, multiple security actors have been present there, including the parties constituting the Iraqi security forces. Of particular importance are the Hashd al-Shaabi, or 'Popular Mobilisation Units' (PMUs): armed groups often consisting of Shia Arab soldiers from across Iraq who assisted in the recapture of territory from ISIL. Beginning as informal armed groups linked to political parties prior to the conflict, they formally became integrated into the Iraqi security apparatus and continue to hold territory in and around the city. These various forces control access to IDP camps, operate checkpoints, screen residents and conduct arrests. Although previously united in their fight against ISIL, these groups are now far from coordinated and have begun to fight each other for control of sources of income, contributing to the sense that, for many residents, insecurity is far from over (Mansour, 2019).

Government-led reconstruction efforts are divided between a central government that provides overall coordination efforts (with the Prime Minister's office leading on 'stabilisation') and governorate-level authorities leading specific programmes. Exactly what programmes constitute stabilisation has been difficult to ascertain, although security enforcement is clearly a large component of the government strategy. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) leads on stabilisation programmes within the UN system, in a response that is managed separately to the government effort and follows a largely

traditional coordination structure comprised of clusters focusing on food security, health, shelter and other sectors. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Unicef, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and World Food Programme (WFP) are among the largest of the 18 agencies involved in the Mosul response, along with 79 international NGOs and 54 national NGOs represented in coordination mechanisms (Culbertson and Robinson, 2017: 9). In 2018, humanitarian organisations reported reaching over 500,000 people in Mosul alone (OCHA, 2019: 27).

Although most international aid organisations were run from Erbil and elsewhere in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), some aid actors operated in Ninewa and other areas held by ISIL, employing mainly local Iraqi staff. Iraqi-registered NGOs were most prominent, though WFP provided food parcels and the Iraqi Red Crescent made distributions and ran a branch inside Mosul during ISIL rule (Svoboda and Redvers, 2014: 3). With labels removed and repackaged, some residents believed ISIL to be distributing aid (WFP, 2015). During the conflict and operations to recapture the city, anti-ISIL military forces in northern Iraq had an active role in providing aid, with respondents of one survey citing them most frequently as a provider of medical care (Fox et al., 2018: 37). A close relationship with military forces was credited for health workers, under World Health Organization (WHO) supervision, being able to run a rapid and sophisticated trauma operation (Dickinson, 2017). However, this degree of cooperation has been accused of compromising humanitarian principles, with reported incidents including soldiers pressuring doctors to prioritise care of combatants over civilians, the screening out of ISIL-affiliated patients and some cases of fleeing civilians having to pass through screening points controlled by the government prior to seeing humanitarians (Fox et al., 2018: 14; Stoddard, 2018). Since the end of the conflict, however, signs of humanitarians working closely with these authorities have faded. Aid responders must instead navigate the complex mix of security and civil government actors who often require stringent and differing requirements for documentation to allow access to affected people (OCHA, 2018a).⁴

4 These issues have been exacerbated by the continuing tension between the central Iraqi government and Kurdish authorities. In late 2018 the appearance of new internal customs checkpoints between KRI and Ninewa (as well as other centrally-held territory) led to complex new requirements for the movement of humanitarian assistance.

2.4 The macro-level funding picture

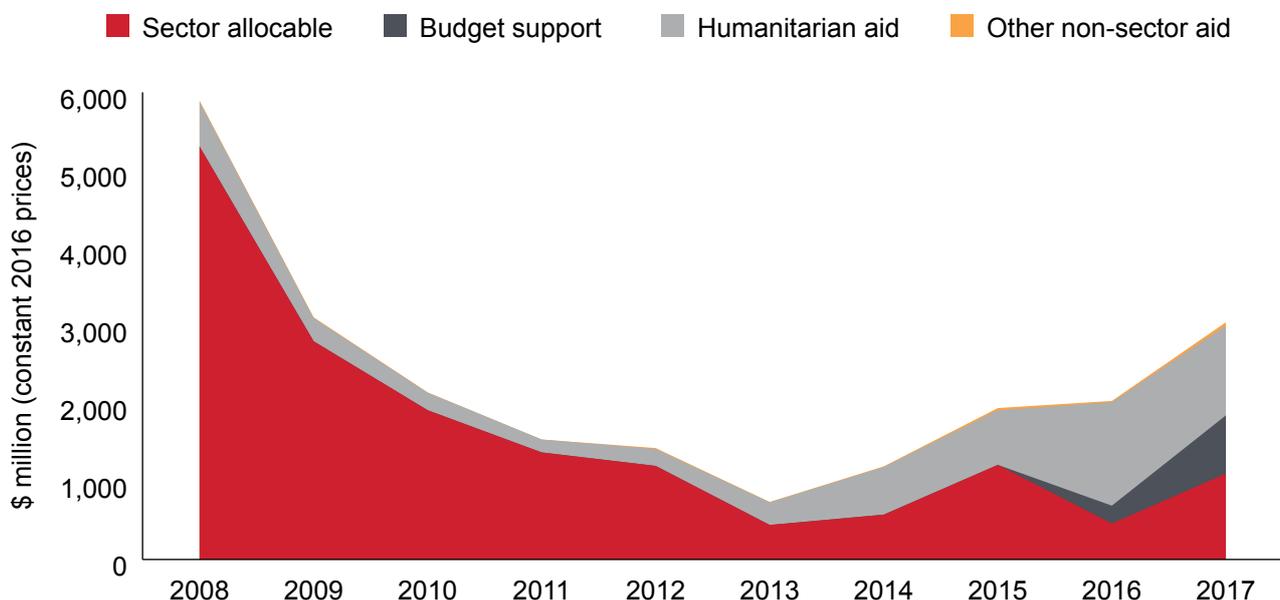
The scale of destruction in Mosul and across northern Iraq and its prominence for many key aid donors has meant a large-scale humanitarian response. In 2016, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Mosul flash appeal totalled almost \$284 million, of which 98% were met in one of the most well-funded responses of that year (Knox Clarke et al., 2018: 120; OCHA FTS, 2019). Indeed, for Iraq as a whole, the proportion of response plan funding that has been met has remained consistently high despite the emergence of other high-profile crises, with 96% of the \$984 million appeal met in 2017 and 93% of the \$568 million appeal met in 2018 (OCHA, 2019). The largest donors have been the US, Germany and the UK.

The prospect of a far larger bill for reconstruction has been met with a more muted response from donors. The World Bank estimates the cost of post-ISIL reconstruction across Iraq at over \$88 billion, and much of the \$30 billion of loans and guarantees committed by donors at the International Conference for the Reconstruction in Kuwait in February 2018 has yet to materialise (OCHA, 2018a: 13; Westcott, 2018). This pattern of well-met humanitarian funding and less support for development funding continues a decade-long trend that has seen a decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) from a high of almost \$6 billion in 2008 to less than \$1 billion in 2017 (see Figure 3). Most of this was sector allocable aid:

bilateral or multilateral grants and loans earmarked for specific projects in social and economic sectors. Following renewed hostilities and conflict in 2014, total ODA rose to around \$3 billion by 2017. Crucially, in 2017 38% of this was humanitarian aid. While budget support also grew over this period, it is notable that humanitarian aid has shifted from a small minority of funding to the largest single component of ODA.

Iraq's economy is dependent upon oil production and exports, the bulk of which were unaffected by the conflict with ISIL. Recent increases in global oil prices have meant greater revenues and have since driven GDP growth, predicted at 6.2% for 2019 (OCHA, 2018a: 13). However, non-oil GDP in 2017 constituted just 72% of 2013 levels and the degree to which oil revenue will be invested into reconstruction programmes is unclear (World Bank, 2018a: 20). Instead, with most international donor assistance channelled through UN agencies and international NGOs, the government has partnered with institutions such as UNDP for stabilisation projects. Following the formation of the UNDP-led Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization (FFIS) in June 2015 and the Funding Facility for Expanded Stabilization (FFES) in April 2016, \$900 million has been raised for projects including the re-electricification of East Mosul and rebuilding schools in West Mosul (UNDP, 2019). These mechanisms fund 950 projects across the city, though a further \$313 million has been requested for Mosul alone (UNDP, 2019: 31). The UN-wide Recovery and Resilience Programme (RRP), intended to focus on the 'social elements of

Figure 3: Total ODA excluding debt relief to Iraq, 2008–2017



Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System

reconstruction’, including youth engagement and counter-extremism initiatives, also asked for \$482 million nationally, a figure described by one interview respondent as unlikely to be met considering the limited engagement from international donors (UN Iraq, 2018). As the FFIS and FFES have since become the key means of reconstruction funding in Iraq, so-called ‘local notables’ appointed by regional

governors, with the power to decide where such funding is spent, have become powerful stakeholders (Culbertson and Robinson, 2017: 46). Yet whether they possess legitimacy among the wider population is questionable, with just 10% of surveyed Mosul residents considering local governorate officials to be in the best position to provide assistance (European Parliament, 2018: 8).

3 How people in Mosul make ends meet

In contrast to international-level funding commitments, which have focused on large infrastructure and investment projects, a more local bottom-up reconstruction process led by Mosul residents is underway (Westcott, 2018). As an upper middle-income country, Iraq has an established welfare system and a large private sector, though the state remains the primary source of jobs and accounts for over half of total employment. Yet reconstruction presents a challenge for affected people, and a lack of jobs and livelihoods is a key barrier to more IDPs returning home (Grisgraber, 2017: 8).

Survey and interview results suggest this national picture is consistent with Mosul, although, as the epicentre of ISIL rule and the conflict, the city has additional challenges for residents trying to make ends meet and reconstruct their homes and property. Widespread infrastructure damage and a lack of functioning services due to the conflict mean key sources of income have been reduced, and the human cost, including a loss of family members and breadwinners, is substantial. Over 60% of households have reported incurring debt (on average \$1,800) since the conflict formally concluded, often for mere survival (OCHA, 2018a).

3.1 Surveyed households and displacement status

The households surveyed as part of this study comprised three equally sized groups with different experiences of the conflict and reconstruction. As a result, the sources of income and support accessible to these households varied. The ethno-religious identity of those in the three groups was broadly similar, though a higher proportion of respondents identifying as Sunni Arab stayed throughout the conflict. The three groups of respondents comprised IDPs, returnees and those who stayed in Mosul.

3.1.1 Internally displaced people

People classified as IDPs came to Mosul during the conflict with ISIL and are not originally from the city.

Some have been displaced multiple times. As of April 2019, there were 305,376 recognised IDPs residing in Mosul (IOM, 2019: 3). An ethnically diverse group, many IDPs came to Mosul from predominantly rural areas as they fell to ISIL. In this study's household survey, IDPs are marginally more diverse than the other groups, including a higher proportion of Sunni Shabak, Kurds and Turkmen, in addition to Sunni Arabs who form the clear majority of respondents, as they do in all three groups. Living in and around the city in rented houses, displacement camps and empty buildings, many have not yet returned to their places of origin because of destroyed housing, restrictions on return and fear of violence. IDPs who stayed through the military operations in Mosul witnessed severe violence and conflict, while those in West Mosul also faced deprivation of basic services and food towards the end of the conflict as movement became more restricted.

3.1.2 Returnees

This study has classified returnees as households or heads of households that lived in Mosul in 2014 but were displaced during 2014 or 2015 and returned to the city after its recapture. As of April 2019, 984,588 individuals are recognised as returnees in Mosul (IOM, 2019: 2). Rates of return are higher in Mosul than anywhere else in Iraq, with over 10,000 new returnees arriving in the last two months of 2018 (IOM, 2018a: 5). Most returnees in Mosul, much like nationally, have only returned provided their property escaped damage or looting, or they have the means to reconstruct their homes. As such, most returnees tend to be economically more secure than those in the other categories, although there are notable exceptions: over 5,000 returnees live in districts, particularly in West Mosul, classified as areas with 'critical' shelter needs (IOM, 2018a: 5).

Among this group are prominent members of Mosul society who were key targets of ISIL. Soldiers, civil servants and political candidates feature disproportionately among returnees. Like current IDPs, returnees may have been displaced multiple times, yet their lack of perceived links to ISIL has meant they are free from many of the current security pressures faced by many affected people.

3.1.3 'Stayees'

Almost all (98%) of this survey group are composed of households that never left Mosul for the duration of ISIL control and the city's recapture. The remaining 2% never left Mosul when it was under ISIL control, but fled at some point during the city's recapture, and returned within a year. The reasons for staying in Mosul are complex: this group reported receiving far more by way of business revenues than others, suggesting their key reason for remaining may have been the protection of property and other assets. Many families also split up during the conflict, with some members migrating elsewhere in Iraq to support those who stayed. Some of these stayees were also displaced within Mosul itself as military operations began, moving to safer neighbourhoods and leaving homes unoccupied.

Under ISIL rule, stayees reported persecution and restrictions, including on communications, dress and items that could be sold in shops. A general contraction in incomes reported in this survey supports larger studies that suggest areas under ISIL control saw a rise of more than 16% in poverty from 2012 to 2014 – an increase of four times the national average (World Bank, 2018b: x). Those that stayed also witnessed significant levels of violence before and during military operations and deprivation of basic services and food towards the end of conflict as movement became more restricted. As a result of staying in Mosul under ISIL rule, stayees now also have a higher risk of being seen as ISIL sympathisers.

3.2 Sources of income

The household study and qualitative interviews confirm the diversity of income sources present within Mosul. These sources surpass the monetary value of any cash or in-kind assistance provided by international humanitarian assistance, which nonetheless remains an important source of income for more vulnerable recipients who are current IDPs or lack access to other means of support. In this section, these sources are briefly analysed as well as differences noted in relation to the three groups described above.

While there is a diversity of sources of support cited by respondents, income comes from three main

sources: government salaries, private salaries and business revenues. Aid in the form of cash from NGOs and UN agencies is also a source of support for many, although most received non-cash aid. Support from third parties, including from family and other networks, in forms such as remittances, was very limited before the conflict and has remained so subsequently. While there is a clear humanitarian need to help many residents in Mosul, some families were able to sustain themselves using non-aid sources provided they were able to find work.

3.2.1 Government salaries

The state is the main provider of employment in Mosul and, on average, 50% of the people employed across the country work for the government (Culbertson and Robinson, 2017: 50). This was also the case among those surveyed, with 153 respondents of the 300 reporting that their households had access to some form of government salary in October 2018. The average monetary value of government salaries is the highest across all respondents, regardless of status, and the range in salaries themselves varies considerably, with the highest reaching over 4 million IQD (over \$3,000 a month). As of 2018 the average government salary totalled around 1.1 million IQD (around \$920 a month). Of the three groups, returnees and to a lesser extent IDPs have access to government salaries, with only around one-third of stayees receiving them. These salaries have decreased for those in receipt of them: for example, returnees have seen average monthly incomes fall from just over 1 million IQD to 840,000 during displacement and 841,000 in 2018. Almost all of the 19 women reported as generating income were in this group (seven worked as teachers, four as medical professionals and four for NGOs).⁵

As well as being the largest source of income listed, government salaries were also among the least susceptible to disruption over the course of the conflict. The government established administrative offices in areas of large-scale displacement, allowing IDPs to continue receiving their salaries. This crucial lifeline had important limits, however: generally, public employees could only receive such a salary provided they had been displaced within their home governorate. Only those who fled ISIL-occupied territories were still able to collect salaries through banks in Kirkuk, Baghdad and across KRI (UN-HABITAT, 2016: 33). As a means of incentivising returns, aid responders have reported that the government is attempting to cut salaries to public

5 50% of respondents were female in the household survey, with four of the 150 saying they were the primary income earner of the household. An additional 15 women were reported earning an income as part of their household. Nationally, an estimated 13% of all IDP and returnee households are headed by women (OCHA, 2019: 9).

Table 3: Percentages of households responding positively to ‘[Before the conflict in 2013/ while in displacement/under ISIL/currently] did your household have access to any of these sources of support to get by and carry out normal life?’

	Returnees			IDPs		Stayees		
	2013	While displaced	Now	2013	Now	2013	Under ISIL	Now
Government salary	47	41	61	53	56	36	21	36
Private salaries	23	11	17	22	21	4	3	2
Daily wage labour	33	32	26	29	31	36	58	35
Farming revenue	1	0	1	4	3	1	1	1
Business revenue	2	1	1	6	8	35	22	37
Income from renting	9	1	3	7	3	3	0	2
Relatives/friends in your town*	0	12	2	1	2	3	43	4
Relatives/friends in Iraq	0	1	1	0	0	0	11	2
Relatives/friends abroad	0	0	0	2	4	1	13	4
Aid from NGOs/ UN	1	64	32	0	62	0	2	35
Aid from government	1	30	9	0	12	0	0	3
Aid from religious endowments	0	4	0	3	10	0	1	3
Aid from your tribe	0	0	0	1	1	0	5	0
Aid from political parties	0	2	0	1	6	1	0	0

* ‘Your town’, for returnees while displaced and IDPs in both 2013 and now, referred to the town people were displaced to. For all other categories, this refers to Mosul.

employees who are not back in their original place of employment, but this is yet to be enforced.

Fewer stayees received government salaries, but the 21 respondents who did so while living under ISIL would have had their salaries ‘taxed’, meaning that the central Iraqi state indirectly paid ISIL members in control of government ministries in Mosul (Abdul-Ahad, 2018). This practice only ended in July 2015, when salaries were cut to deprive ISIL of this revenue source (UN-HABITAT, 2016: 33).

3.2.2 Private sector income

Income from non-government jobs in the survey can be divided into four categories: private salaries received by employees of businesses, business and farming revenues received by their owners and daily wage labour. Average income from these sources

was lower than from government salaries, but more respondents – around 60% – currently have access to at least one of these four sources. Unlike government salaries, these respondents are more likely to have more than one source of private salary within their household.

Respondents receiving ‘private salaries’ primarily have jobs in retail, catering, construction and other trades. While similar numbers of respondents report receiving this kind of income before and after the conflict, this masks some significant changes in the private sector over the course of the conflict and ISIL rule. For example, many larger companies and former large employers in Mosul have not returned following the end of the war. Many privately-owned factories have also shut down, around 70% of which did so as a result of ISIL dismantling them to sell equipment and

materials (UN-HABITAT, 2016: 29). Correspondingly, the informal economy has reportedly grown due to the collapse in Mosul's manufacturing sector and an influx of cheaper goods from Turkey and Iran. Some residents who previously worked at these factories and larger businesses now have new jobs (albeit on lower incomes), such as selling vegetables and taxi driving. This trend of previously relatively well-paid workers reduced to less well-paid and more insecure jobs appears to be common. Average private salaries have fallen from 794,000 IQD a month in 2013 to 646,000 IQD in 2018, and daily labour wages from 465,000 IQD a month in 2013 to 414,000 IQD in 2018. Private salaries also appeared to be more susceptible to interruption in displacement than government salaries, with around half of returnees who received private salaries in 2013 not receiving them during displacement, and 25% fewer returnees receiving this income in 2018 than before the war.

There are also clear discrepancies between the three surveyed groups on the income they received from private sector jobs. For instance, 46 respondents reported currently receiving an income from revenues from their own businesses, 21 of whom owned a shop or restaurant, with almost none receiving any money from private salaries. Most of these business owners stayed in Mosul throughout the conflict, likely motivated by the need to protect their business assets and their primary source of revenue. This is in clear contrast to IDPs and returnees, who largely do not report income from businesses, instead forming the majority of those who collect private salaries.

The wider private sector also suffered through ISIL control. The group carried out widespread extortion of businesses of all sizes, scaling up a practice that had been present in the city prior to ISIL rule, where many were forced to pay protection money to the city's informal armed groups (UN-HABITAT, 2016: 40). The few survey participants who owned farms reported similar practices of punitive and often arbitrary taxation. Other businesses were closed down as a result of ISIL's religious rulings: one interviewee had his barber shop closed, for example. Although 58% of stayees reported having access to some form of informal, daily labour wages under ISIL, the mean income per month was 136,000 IQD – far smaller than the mean 484,000 IQD a month received by the 32 returnees while they were in displacement.

The cumulative effect of these changes under ISIL's rule was the gradual collapse of the city's economy, and with it the purchasing power of its residents. Many businesses were destroyed during the

widespread destruction of Mosul during its recapture in 2017. As the city has begun to be rebuilt, there are jobs available in construction, although wages are low and some interviewees expressed dissatisfaction at the connections needed to secure them. Finally, although some report the appearance of new restaurants and cafes opened by returnees with the means to do so, many more cite a missing sense of vibrancy and dynamism that has not returned to Mosul's private sector or the wider city.

3.2.3 Rent

Income from rent is notable in that only a small, and decreased, number of respondents had access to this source in 2018. It was also a highly politicised issue during ISIL rule, with the group ordering all owners of rented properties to cut their rents by half, as well as levying a tax of 10% from tenants (UN-HABITAT, 2016: 38). Rather than an income source, rent is more likely to be discussed as an expenditure.

Although only 25% of surveyed households said they paid rent on the house they currently lived in, almost 30% of returnees and stayees who rented did so because the house where they lived in 2013 was destroyed or damaged. Renting was a common characteristic of displacement for many of those interviewed, with wealthier returnees having rented property in safer cities such as Baghdad or Erbil during the conflict. Renting in displacement continues in Mosul today, where almost 30% of surveyed IDPs said rent is the most important expenditure for their household. High rent is a concern for many qualitative interview participants, and was also cited as a key issue in terms of household vulnerabilities (OCHA, 2019: 8). This does not affect all households, however, with 46% of surveyed IDPs owning the residence in which they currently lived. With much of the displacement in Ninewa being from within the governorate, families in rural and peri-urban areas may own more than one house, influencing their displacement options, or they have bought houses in urban areas when they can afford it.

3.2.4 Support from friends and relatives

There were two standout findings relating to income received from friends and relatives. First, the number of recipients is generally low and appears restricted to two instances: those who stayed in Mosul under ISIL rule and, to a lesser extent, returnees who received support from host communities while they were displaced. Second, 'support' is not restricted to financial aid, with 20 stayees receiving money and 23 receiving in-kind support, including food, blankets and shelter. Similarly, just one returnee reported receiving money from

Box 1: Coping strategies

In attempting to seek alternative sources of support, affected people in Mosul are pursuing various adaptive strategies to maintain levels of income. Of particular prominence in the household survey were the number of stayees that reported adopting negative coping strategies immediately following Mosul's recapture, including begging (43%), selling family assets (40%) and sending younger members of the family to work (40%). These levels are significantly higher than adopted by returnees within the first month of returning to their original homes, of which just 3% report begging, 4% selling assets and 3% sending younger family members to work.

The trend of rising negative coping strategies in Mosul has been recognised by aid organisations (OCHA, 2018a: 51). Children being sent to work is a key concern, with 5% of children in the governorate, and 13% in neighbouring Erbil where many IDPs continue to reside, estimated to be engaged in labour (CSO/Unicef, 2018: 34). Survey and interview participants commonly used the strategy of selling assets to fund reconstruction and daily survival, primarily gold in the form of jewellery, as well as cars, appliances and furniture. Alongside these unambiguously negative coping strategies, other respondents also report a reliance on family members and the wider community for support, as discussed further in section 4.3.

friends and relatives while in displacement, with a further 12 receiving in-kind support.

Further afield, 11 and 13 stayees reported receiving financial support while under ISIL rule from elsewhere in Iraq and from abroad, respectively. The mean amount received from remittances was 366,000 IQD a month. While 11% of total respondents had immediate family members who had migrated out of Iraq in the past five years, this did not necessarily result in remittances being received, with less than half of these respondents reporting financial support from these relatives. Otherwise, financial assistance to other groups from friends and relatives living further away was limited, and this means of support had decreased by the end of 2018. Further discussion of these networks and how they have been changed by conflict is discussed in section 4.3.

3.2.5 International aid

All groups received some form of support during October 2018 from the aid sector: 43% of total respondents. However, this support is concentrated among IDPs, of whom twice as many have received international aid than returnees or stayees. This focus is mirrored in the experiences of returnees, 64 of whom recall receiving humanitarian aid during their displacement, decreasing to 32 now they have returned to their homes. This trend of the international system focusing on displacement status, potentially ahead of need, is a recognised issue of concern and its effects are discussed in greater detail in section 4.2.

While other groups received international aid, cash recipients were limited to those who were displaced –

either those currently so, or returnees, of whom 11% recalled receiving cash and 56% in-kind support during their time in displacement. Conversely, just two stayees reported receiving international aid during their time under ISIL rule, which as well as being a consequence of a lack of access for international responders may also be due to the alleged instances of ISIL repackaging international aid with its own labels. According to interviewees, humanitarian aid from international sources began to arrive in Mosul very shortly after the recapture of neighbourhoods, with multiple respondents citing aid received from WFP and the IOM.

International assistance tends to be focused on in-kind assistance rather than financial aid (see Figure 4). IDPs were most likely to report being the recipients of cash from international actors, with the mean amount received approximately 700,000 IQD. Although this figure was said to be 'received regularly', these are unlikely to be monthly payments and most are one-off.

3.2.6 Other sources of aid: government and religious endowments

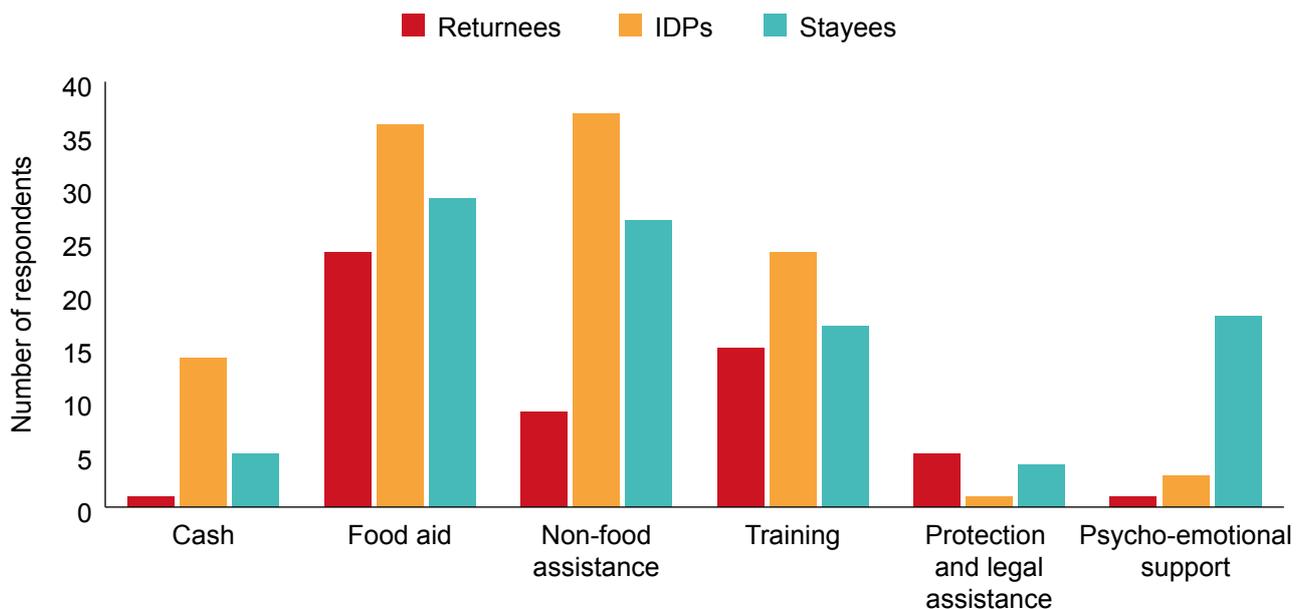
Respondents reported that instances of receiving aid from non-international sources was limited. The small exception was returnees during displacement, of whom 30 said they received support from government, all but one reporting in-kind. Of these returnees receiving government aid, 80% were displaced to the neighbouring Kurdish region, which hosted the majority of Iraqi IDPs in camps and in cities such as Erbil.

The only other group reporting substantial sources of aid not from the international system were IDPs currently in displacement, 12 of which reported

receiving aid from the government and 10 from religious endowments, of which the latter comprised a mix of small payments (around 50,000 IQD per month), in-kind aid and food assistance. Only a handful of other respondents cited aid from other sources or mentioned them in interviews. In contrast, international

interlocutors cited the importance of local NGOs and religious institutions in financing relief provision. This was said to be particularly important for minority religious groups such as Christian communities, who effectively channel faith-based giving into cash for work schemes and education programmes.

Figure 4: Respondents citing current sources of support from NGOs or UN they ‘regularly’ receive



Box 2: Welfare payments and Iraq’s Public Distribution System (PDS)

Although few respondents cited ‘aid from government’ as a key source of support, conceptions of ‘aid’ in Iraq do not tend to include pensions, disability allowance or state financial support for large families. Importantly, what people perceive to be government aid does not include the Public Distribution System (PDS), a food voucher scheme that all families have been entitled to since its introduction by the Saddam Hussein regime. Prior to the crisis, the PDS provided over one-third of Iraqis’ calorie consumption (CaLP, 2017) and in 2012, PDS transfers accounted for as much as 30% of the incomes of the poorest 10% of Iraqis (Krishnan et al., 2017). The PDS has been described by Unicef as ‘the only universal non-contributory social transfer system in the world’ (Krishnan et al., 2017: 1).

Despite the disruption caused by displacement, the PDS was not fully dismantled under ISIL rule, continues to function and is now used by UN agencies and international organisations as a means of delivery assistance. Respondents were largely aware of this, and interviewees discussed some of the issues with PDS and aid delivery. In the aftermath of the recapture of Mosul, interviewees with access to the PDS reported receiving payments for around two to six months, which was widely felt not to be long enough. Others cite problems around the distribution of PDS, arguing that it does not function as equitably as before the conflict and instead is only given to those with the right connections. This appears to be corroborated by reviews of the system highlighting complicated registration procedures and aid diversion as barriers to affected people receiving the right level of support (OCHA, 2018a: 54).

3.3 Summary

In summary, the sources of income and support that the surveyed and interviewed groups in Mosul had access to were diverse, but only a small number were of high monetary value. For example, government salaries were cited as being a source of income for over half of surveyed households, and average incomes from this source (1.1 million IQD) were far higher than private salaries (647,000 IQD) or daily wage labour (414,000 IQD), with other sources being far lower. However, all

sources have been impacted by political and economic changes, resulting in generally lower incomes and higher vulnerability, with many losing the support they had previously received since returning to their place of origin. With this more holistic perspective of incomes and support, aid from international organisations appears to be a relatively small feature of affected people's lives. Although playing an important role during displacement for many households, most of what was considered aid, provided either through international or government sources, was in-kind and often temporary.

4 Analysis of key issues

Identifying the scope of support networks and aid beyond international humanitarian assistance, who has access to them, and how they have been impacted by conflict and displacement highlights both the agency and dependencies of affected people in Mosul, and so provides a more complete economic and social picture of life in a crisis context. Additionally, such analysis can inform humanitarian responses. This is particularly pertinent in a context where humanitarian funding is likely to decline, while development and the many billions needed for reconstruction has yet to materialise. First, with a lack of livelihood opportunities cited as the key limiting factor preventing people from returning, the need to focus on livelihood generation has become especially critical. Second, the legacy of recent communal violence has impacted sources of support, risking entrenching divisions among the population. Finally, these dynamics have transformed social networks and the inter-communal relationships that also impact the support that affected people have access to.

4.1 A lack of effective reconstruction support hinders conflict recovery

Results from the household survey and interviews confirm the apparent disconnect between a heavily-financed but seemingly top-down reconstruction effort and its lack of beneficial impact upon Mosul residents, whether IDPs, stayees or returnees. This includes deficiencies in the government-led housing compensation process, under which many residents are entitled to payments, as well as other sources of aid. As discussed, the network of relief providers and security actors has led to a confused picture of aid provision and contributed to a lack of effective reconstruction efforts. The prevalence of negative coping strategies, perceptions of reconstruction and reported incomes suggest many people are not seeing a meaningful improvement in their circumstances, and even a decrease in support as humanitarian assistance declines.

As demonstrated by the survey results, salaries significantly outweigh support from international

aid sources in both frequency and monetary value, highlighting the importance of a livelihoods-centred reconstruction effort. Respondents also explicitly raised the issue of a lack of livelihood opportunities, with 63% reporting that better access to jobs would make the biggest difference in their families' ability to thrive. This was far ahead of 'receiving more cash aid' (36%), 'new skills development or educational opportunities' (3%) or 'feeling more protected' (1%), and these perceptions were noticeably similar among male and female respondents and between the three groups of IDPs, returnees and stayees. With former large employers such as factories not returning, the most lucrative roles are in government and NGOs, something commonly perceived by respondents as being dependent upon *wasta* (nepotism, or 'who you know'). The lack of accessible jobs that paid enough to cover essential purchases was a clear source of frustration for many.

Similarly, destroyed public services were commonly cited by interview respondents as being a key hindrance to reconstruction. This was particularly apparent in interviews with municipal authorities; one official illustrated this discrepancy by comparing the size of the total budget for Ninewa, around 660 billion IQD, or \$550 million, with the costs of reconstructing just one of the ten destroyed hospitals across the governorate, approximately 400 billion IQD. Few respondents appeared aware of any reconstruction projects, and faced with intermittent access to basic services, international responders have highlighted a growing sense of 'bitterness of what [residents] perceive as government neglect' (IOM, 2018b: 12). This long-standing anger over a lack of effective governance was apparent following a ferry disaster in March 2019 that killed 94 people. With street protests and political pressure driving out the sitting governor of Ninewa, the new municipal leadership emphasised the need for reconstruction to be accelerated to quell civil unrest (Rubin and Hassan, 2019).

Many of these dynamics are encapsulated in the issue of home reconstruction, particularly the government-run compensation process. Property damage has caused hardship for many and, among IDPs across Iraq, house destruction seems to be the most prevalent

self-reported reason for remaining displaced (IOM et al., 2018a: 19). Following the conflict, UN-HABITAT, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and other NGOs have assisted residents in submitting compensation claims to the Iraqi government in a complex procedure that has faced accusations of nepotism and corruption (Baudot, 2018; Westcott, 2018). As will be discussed in the next section, the compensation process is governed by the post-conflict political dynamics in Mosul, with civilians who are related to someone listed in the ISIL database summarily denied compensation. With over 800,000 individuals on the waiting list to be assessed, it is estimated that only 2% of homeowners who have experienced property damage have so far received compensation (OCHA, 2018a: 55; Al-Shami et al., 2019: 38). Aid respondents were critical of a system they saw as ‘not consultative, top-down and divisive’, and driving affected people to fund the reconstruction of their own homes, often incurring high amounts of debt to do so.

A lack of effective support for longer-term reconstruction can also be seen in many respondents assessments of the assistance they received from various sources. While most were positive about the aid they received, highlighting its importance and expressing gratitude that life-saving support arrived rapidly after the recapture of Mosul, many of the same respondents also criticised the aid as being short-term in nature. While the few who reported receiving monetary assistance said they received between 2–6 months of aid via the PDS, many more criticised aid for often stopping just when they needed it as they searched for work or began to reconstruct their homes. Similar to aid from other sources, including from family, assistance appeared limited to immediate, life-saving and often in-kind aid that was commonly not maintained despite similar levels of need being apparent later on.

In summary, there is a consensus among respondents that available sources of support are lacking. With the most important income sources destroyed during ISIL rule and the conflict, residents are faced with an employment environment dominated by nepotism and insecurity. With other sources of support such as aid reported as being temporary and limited to mostly in-kind assistance, emergency livelihood programming should now be a key priority for international responders. More generally, with government support in reconstructing public services, basic infrastructure and homes lacking, the majority of all respondents felt that reconstruction efforts and aid were insufficient, causing widespread perceptions of neglect and frustration.

4.2 Sources of support reflect political violence

Affected people’s receipt, generation and use of aid is taking place in a context that is far from apolitical. Although the ethno-religious identity of the three groups identified in this study is broadly similar, their experiences during the conflict and displacement have changed their networks of income and support in different ways. Who has access to support, from whom and why are questions that intersect with the politics that led to and sustained the conflict. In the current context, which appears to lack an effective reconstruction effort, these differing sources have become entrenched and risk becoming another grievance that could lead to further conflict. This has clear implications for international assistance which, although constituting a small part of the total value of the support provided, has an important role that can alleviate or worsen such divisions.

As described in the previous section, the international aid system is oriented toward IDPs. They remain the primary target group in Mosul, to the extent that some returnees reported avoiding registering as such, for fear of being excluded from aid provision or receiving less support (RWG, 2018: 5). Yet while those in displacement certainly require humanitarian assistance, other groups in Mosul have also demonstrated similar levels of need. Indeed, when considering the adoption of so-called negative coping mechanisms, stayees have most frequently adopted such strategies (see Box 1). Conversely, displacement status did not necessarily mean a severance of income source, since many government employees reported being able to access salaries while displaced. Such sources present a more complicated picture of vulnerability than can be inferred from status alone.

Despite this diversity of experiences and needs, the legacy of conflict and government policy has meant many stayees face a hostile political environment that impacts their income generation. While continued insecurity affects inhabitants, those who stayed in the city are commonly accused of being affiliated with ISIL. This interacts with sources of income and support in several ways. First, direct discrimination bars access to some sources of aid. Multiple interview respondents mentioned that access to aid and PDS payments was dependent on personal connections with the authorities. While no respondents suggested it was a consequence of staying in Mosul or a suggested affiliation with ISIL, there have been reported instances of local

authorities instructing international aid organisations to stop providing cash assistance to neighbourhoods because the money was seen as being sent on to families of ISIL relatives (Sanad et al., 2018: 9; Wille, 2018b). Interviewees working for an international aid organisation cited a cash for work agency that worked with those who had lived under ISIL and had been expelled by Ninewa governorate authorities on similar grounds. International staff also reported the use of labels such as ‘ISIL women’, ‘ISIL families’ and ‘ISIL children’ by the Iraqi government to describe the inhabitants of particular camps and neighbourhoods.

The political situation also impacts access to income and support in less direct ways. Results from the household survey suggest that those who stayed already had less access to better-paid public and private sector jobs, instead either running a business or receiving daily labour wages (both of which had lower average incomes). To gain, or often regain, government salaries – including welfare payments through the PDS – stayees must now obtain security clearance, a process commonly seen as intimidating, arbitrary and corrupt. Some interviewees see extensive vetting as subject to bias and external interference that, rather than guaranteeing a job, further threatens their safety; having the right connections remains the only way to secure more lucrative roles in the public sector. While many interviewees share these concerns, stayees were most likely to cite this as a barrier to accessing such jobs. While an earlier survey of Mosul residents found many had a forgiving view of those who lived and worked under ISIL rule, the current policies of security screening and harsh punishments carried out by the Iraqi government have also discouraged many people from returning to their previous jobs or accessing these generally higher salaries (Kao and Revkin, 2018: 9).

Socio-political dividing lines are also present in other income sources, including often-lucrative jobs in security forces. Around equal numbers (approximately 5% each) of respondents from the three groups reported their heads of household were employed by security forces prior to the conflict. That has since changed, with 2% of stayees now reporting roles in security forces compared with 16% of returnees. The high levels of returnees in the security forces may be because they are easier to employ, with some having previously been soldiers and most having already been security cleared when they were displaced and returned. With the Iraqi army, police and PMUs offering generally steadier salaries and benefits, these roles are perceived as desirable. In addition, interviewees tended to recognise that having family members or connections with those in the security forces was a key determinant

of receiving aid: an unsurprising finding considering the clear presence of armed security actors in camps and at aid distribution points (OCHA, 2019: 20).

International aid providers are key actors that can positively or negatively affect the support that different groups receive. On the one hand, some international funding may risk entrenching socio-political divisions along the lines of ethno-religious identity. Several international responders cited the prominence of funding from some donors, including the US and UK, for particular minority groups that has led to significant differences in the conditions of IDP camps across former ISIL-held areas. One interviewee described some camps in nearby Duhok primarily populated by persecuted minority groups as ‘fairly luxurious in comparison’ to other camps that are hosting largely Sunni-Arab populations, where conditions are ‘severe’. Such funding earmarked for one group over another was described as compounding the ‘biggest risk’ in this post-conflict context: a lack of governance, transitional justice and peacebuilding apparatus.

On the other hand, concerns over differences in received support and living conditions are increasingly recognised by international actors working in Mosul and northern Iraq. Respondents reported frequent discussions in cluster meetings on the need to also focus on returnees, and in 2019 the provision of humanitarian cash transfers will be prioritised for vulnerable households based on socio-economic vulnerability, defined in terms of consumption rather than displacement status (OCHA, 2019: 61). This will go some way to alleviating the risk of unequal aid provision by status, although the international humanitarian sector still sees returns as a measure of a successful intervention, and a key plank of reconstruction. While camps are an unsustainable solution over the longer term, one international interlocutor argued that they are currently safer for IDPs and offer protection services, including addressing gender-based violence. This is now reaching a critical point: while those who have not returned two years on from ISIL’s defeat in Iraq will almost certainly be under suspicion as sympathisers, humanitarian funding will soon begin to decline and as such camps may no longer be tenable places of refuge.

Sources of income are shaped and altered by different experiences of displacement and crises, and so it is unsurprising to find that those who stayed in Mosul have divergent means of sustaining themselves. However, the particular context of the city means that these different sources of support intersect and often align with the divides of conflict. They are further

entrenched by the current political environment, including extensive security clearance practices that have effectively restricted many stayees from accessing higher-paying jobs or welfare payments. Salaries from security forces and support from international aid are disproportionately received by IDPs and returnees, presenting further disparities that replicate the divides of recent communal violence. The dangers of these economic divides cannot be overstated in such a context: a recent survey showed almost 70% of respondents in Mosul believed ‘material gain’ was a key reason for some joining ISIL, second only to ‘conviction and faith in the ideas’ themselves (Sanad et al., 2018: 17). As interviewees working in the humanitarian response emphasised, these divisions are not conducive to a sustainable peacebuilding process, especially in the perceived absence of government-led reconstruction efforts.

4.3 The changing character of social networks and non-monetary flows

In considering how sources of support for affected people in Mosul have changed, monetary flows are just one form of assistance available. While the monetary value of aid outside of international assistance is relatively small, qualitative interviews illustrated that help provided by family and neighbours is considered very important by respondents. Like sources of income, non-monetary flows have also been influenced by ISIL rule and the conflict, as well as by the sense of mistrust that many inhabitants now feel is present in the city.

For interviewees, support outside of monetary aid took many forms. For example, since returning to Mosul from displacement, some respondents had stayed with relatives and neighbours, while another helped collect building materials and blankets for those returning to destroyed homes. However, most of the support cited by respondents was limited to stayees recalling what they had received while under ISIL rule. Almost all (95%) of stayees reported receiving food assistance, 47% reported receiving material assistance and 44% received ‘psycho-emotional support’ from friends and relatives specifically from within Mosul. This network of support was clearly extensive and described as such in interviews, and operated at great risk under ISIL: one respondent recalled the case of a man in their neighbourhood who had a prominent role in distributing aid being killed by the group because of this. The general picture was one of people inside the city helping each other despite desperate circumstances

while under ISIL, which increased in severity following the destruction of the city during its recapture.

The social networks that governed much of this assistance within Mosul changed over the course of ISIL rule. Many interviewees cited the impact that ISIL’s ban on mobile phones had on the sources of support they had access to, and the negative impact this had on their well-being. Similarly, the use of radio, TV and social media was restricted, with harsh punishments for their use. The result of this, according to some interviewees, was a contracting of social networks outside of immediate family members. Yet the effect of this communications ban also spurred a network of support to protect people at risk. One interviewee reported that, following an incident where a member of ISIL saw her 20-year-old son using a mobile phone, she had successfully gathered money from friends in her neighbourhood to fund his passage to safety (eventually to Germany, where he currently resides).

While many stayees reported having access to these networks of support from their neighbours and family while living under ISIL, this has since changed. Many now claim that assistance from such networks and from non-international humanitarian aid sources has declined, while the need for support has remained high. There are apparent exceptions to this: several interviewees and an international responder mentioned the establishment of private schools and kindergartens run by communities themselves, in the absence of government-run facilities. Yet the previously cooperative relations between neighbours were reported as largely disappearing. Instead, support networks are limited to two sources: within families and wider networks of patronage. Those who reported losing jobs and income but who had large family networks were better able to borrow money to get by. For example, almost half of stayees reported sharing their housing with extended family members in October 2018, at similar levels as during ISIL rule. Those who experienced displacement were similarly grateful for family members elsewhere in Iraq for hosting them and assisting in travel and home reconstruction. The networks of patronage that some had access to as a result of friends or family in the public or private sector, security forces or NGOs were also considered highly influential. However, these networks were seen as exclusive, and often a source of resentment and frustration for many interviewees who did not have these means of support.

Overall, respondents generally report a support network among the wider community that has shrunk since the end of the conflict. A likely explanation is the effect of the legacy of communal violence and

displacement that has also changed more formal aid sources. Although it is important to emphasise that aid from such sources was always relatively low in monetary terms in this context, the impact felt by those living in Mosul is significant. Several respondents felt they were now treated differently by neighbours and where they lived was less welcoming than they remembered. Reasons for this included perceptions of differential treatment at the hands of the security forces and by the authorities in levels of compensation for housing damage, and fear and distrust of neighbours as a consequence of conflict. Many expressed sadness at the loss of diversity in Mosul, with a number of minority groups including Christians and Kurds not returning to the city. Some connected this directly with a loss of wider, neighbourly support networks, and expressed concerns for longer-term community cohesion and stability as a result.

In assessing the value of these alternative forms of assistance and how they operate, a purely monetary lens is clearly limited. Instead, a wider conceptualisation of value should be adopted that includes connections with social networks, well-being and solidarity. The support from friends and relatives received by those in Mosul appears to be generally low in monetary value, with much of it composed of in-kind aid and other forms of support. For example, remittances were just a small fraction of average incomes and were accessed only by a few people. However, although remittance values were generally low and received infrequently, interviewees who received them nonetheless saw this support as highly valuable, and an example of a support network they had access to in desperate circumstances. The diversity of the support cited by respondents suggests a wider understanding of what help is important in times of crisis and an awareness of the importance of social networks in dictating who receives aid. This connects with broader dynamics present in Mosul around community cohesion and stability.

4.4 Summary of key issues

This section highlights three key issues arising from this study. First, the lack of obvious reconstruction and livelihood creation damages the longer-term prospects for recovery, as well as slowing rates of return to Mosul. Existing sources of accessible support are a product of conflict, often caused by and exacerbating political tensions. These dynamics are also present in social networks at a community level; the networks supporting people in displacement or under ISIL rule have now dissipated and have

been replaced by a reported atmosphere of mistrust. Running through these findings is a clear sense of frustration over nepotism, in either securing jobs or receiving compensation. The prominence of reported corruption in the answers of respondents, when combined with these other trends, creates an unpromising picture of a post-conflict context, one where affected people face an uncertain political as well as economic future.

The overarching policy question of this study considers how better knowledge about the assistance that reaches communities in crisis may change the international humanitarian response. In such a context, humanitarian aid is not immune to political dynamics that govern how other sources of support and income are distributed. Respondents cite lucrative jobs in NGOs as being dependent upon connections, instances of aid being diverted or distributed through the current fractured security apparatus and aid being reduced despite needs remaining high. A key message from the case of Mosul is that a clearer understanding of how humanitarian aid interacts with and contributes to existing inequalities and socio-political divides is crucial in this context. While its monetary value may be relatively small, humanitarian aid offers an important source of support when jobs and other incomes disappeared in the midst of conflict and displacement. Ensuring it is distributed in a manner perceived as equitable is critical to avoid developing a further source of tension, something donor funding targeting specific minority groups appears not to comply with.

Humanitarian aid actors have limited capacities and do not have the ability to provide for reconstruction efforts on the scale needed in Mosul. Yet given the vicious cycle between lack of livelihood opportunities slowing returns and the absence of visible reconstruction that has a meaningful impact on residents' lives, the divide between humanitarian/development and response/recovery phases appears as arbitrary as ever. Ensuring that people with destroyed or damaged houses have the means and knowledge to access the compensation they are entitled to is important, as well as advocacy efforts to ensure nationally-owned systems like the PDS distribute support in an equitable and transparent manner. More broadly, a wider conceptualisation of value is also vital in this post-conflict context and is necessary to see the underlying networks and relationships that govern support. Though they have been damaged by conflict and displacement, potentially beyond repair, they are crucial to rebuilding communities as well as the city itself.

5 Conclusion

This study has explored how current inhabitants of post-conflict Mosul make ends meet, how the support they have access to has changed over the years of ISIL rule and displacement, and the interaction these sources have with the political and security context faced by residents. When looking simply in terms of income, the majority comprised government and private salaries and business revenues. Although aid in the form of cash and in-kind assistance was a source of support for many, this was limited to those in displacement. This also appeared to be the case for the diverse range of other sources of help, including from relatives, friends and elsewhere. These sources of help were infrequent and small in monetary value.

Using the lens of displacement status highlighted that the city's inhabitants share many common humanitarian needs and all groups' sources of income and aid had diverged over time. However, they had differing experiences, social networks and identities; for example, returnees were more likely to have access to higher salaries in the public and private sectors than those who stayed in Mosul. Instead, stayees were more reliant on less secure income from daily labour, or through their own business revenues. Support from friends and relatives, mainly in-kind aid, was restricted to those who stayed in the city under ISIL rule, while aid from international sources was directed more at IDPs.

Yet all groups surveyed reported being in need of humanitarian aid, as illustrated in the high adoption of negative coping strategies. While returning to one's place of origin may be a positive sign, it is insufficient evidence of recovery following conflict and, faced with a lack of evident reconstruction efforts, many in IDP camps are not planning on returning in the near future. There is a risk, while the international aid system and the Iraqi authorities continue to use the metric of returns as a proxy for measuring success, of assuming those inhabiting their original homes or what remains of them are seen as less in need, which is not necessarily the case. The development of new metrics by IOM and other responders that focus on need over status is therefore a welcome development. This is more reflective of the current reality in Mosul and across northern Iraq, where a complex mix of displacement, destroyed housing and discrimination

require a more sophisticated understanding of need and vulnerability.

Responses to questions around livelihoods and income reveal that current sources of support are underpinned by the political context and the legacy of ISIL rule, the conflict and its aftermath. With the government now aggressively pursuing a strategy of securitisation and seeking out and punishing people suspected of being affiliated with ISIL, a whole range of income sources, including housing compensation and government jobs, have become more difficult to secure and sometimes placed off-limits to primarily those who stayed during ISIL rule. Powerful actors that control this income, including security forces, the government and NGOs, are perceived as exclusive, yet crucial in securing sources of support. While this picture existed in Mosul prior to the ISIL conflict, it has been accentuated by it and presents a barrier to a more inclusive recovery process. In this context, framing reconstruction as a purely technical and politically neutral exercise is of limited use in understanding the myriad motivations behind staying, leaving and returning, and how this affects both current vulnerability and the prospects for recovery.

Adopting a wider lens on the sources of income received in a context like Mosul should not detract from the key role that international humanitarian assistance played in providing life-saving and timely support at key times of need for those experiencing displacement. Like all sources of income analysed in this study, however, humanitarian aid affects and shapes the political and economic environment it interacts with. Despite their limited capacities, humanitarian actors should ensure their assistance mitigates rather than deepens inequalities and vulnerabilities that contribute to conflict. This necessitates going beyond interpreting 'support' through a purely financial lens, and like recipients themselves regarding the instances of aid provided by the community and network as very important, regardless of their monetary value. The residents of Mosul are keenly aware of the loss of these kind of cooperative relationships, and although such perceptions cannot be measured in the same way as income assessing them is just as crucial in a context of recent sectarian conflict, and a reconstruction effort not yet seen as inclusive or fair.

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Annex 1: Sampling methodology

This research was completed through quantitative and qualitative components, and according to the following sampling methodology.

A1 Quantitative component

A total of 300 close-ended household interviews, disaggregated into 100 interviews per population group (stayee, returnee, IDP) to obtain a representative sample with a 10% margin of error for each.

The enumeration team in Mosul consisted of six local individuals (three men/three women) with experience in quantitative data collection with Social Inquiry. Surveys were administered in the local Arabic dialect using an open-source data collection software compatible with smartphones (Kobo).

The selection of survey areas in Mosul was stratified by neighbourhood characteristics to ensure that the sample was representative of the urban environment as a whole (fieldwork could not take place in all parts of the city given the small sample size). A proxy to determine these characteristics is the Return Index, developed by Social Inquiry and IOM Iraq's Displacement Tracking Matrix Unit, which provides a measurement of the living conditions of populations across locations of return in Iraq, based on indicators on livelihoods, services, reconstruction, safety and social cohesion.

Based on this, a small number of neighbourhoods were chosen and, within each, surveys were administered to randomly selected respondents – the number of neighbourhoods selected by high, medium and low severity of living conditions as well as the number of respondents surveyed in each was determined to ensure that this matched the proportions within the wider population as much as possible. More specifically, the sampling for population groups was based on neighbourhood characteristics as follows:⁶

- For returnee households, data was available on their total number and their geographical distribution across neighbourhoods in Mosul. 4% of these households are living in areas with very high/high severity of living conditions, 73% in medium severity areas and 23% in low severity areas. Roughly, this means that four interviews were conducted in high severity areas, 73 in medium severity areas and 23 in low severity areas.
- For IDP households, data on their total number and geographical distribution was also available. 60% were living in areas classified as medium severity and 40% in low severity areas; no IDP household was recorded in high severity areas.
- For stayee households, no data was available about their total number or where they are.⁷ A proxy distribution was established by aggregating the total number of returnees and IDPs as a representation of population density. Based on this, 3% of the population lived in very high/high severity areas, 70% in medium severity areas and 27% in low severity areas.

Bearing these considerations in mind, it is important to note that the sample gathered was only representative of the population living in Mosul in October 2018 – not the pre-conflict population. Some neighbourhoods of Mosul have very low to no rates of population return, which has also affected the ethnic heterogeneity of the population since minority groups have not returned to the city as of yet.

⁶ Some locations, disproportionately those assessed as very high severity, were considered unsafe for field teams and were removed from the sample.

⁷ No reliable data exists on 2014 or pre-2014 population figures for Mosul (or elsewhere in Iraq).

A2 Qualitative component

Thirty-six semi-structured household interviews (12 per population group) were conducted, to garner enough diversity of narratives from different conflict experiences, particularly in relation to access to livelihoods and financial resources.

This portion of data collection was conducted directly by Social Inquiry researchers consisting of two field teams of two researchers each – one composed of men and the other of women. Surveys were conducted in Arabic following a semi-structured interview guide, and transcribed into English.

The geographical stratification of the 12 interviews per group also took into account the type of neighbourhood based on the Return Index, as described above. One neighbourhood of each type was selected in which stayee, returnee and IDP households could be found at the same time, for a total of three neighbourhoods studied.⁸ Within each, four interviews were carried out for each group. The selection of households in each area also aimed to diversify participants based on factors such as the occupation of the heads of household (government employee/employer or business owner/security member/unemployed/retired), his/her education level (no schooling/primary education/secondary education/university) and his/her age (below/above 35 years old).

A3 Ethical considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Respondents were required to provide verbal informed consent ahead of participation and after the study, and these guarantees were explained. The interview process did not collect any identifiable information from respondents – with the exception of gathering GPS coordinates for the purpose of quality control, which were then removed from the final dataset. Expectations were managed by explaining that this assessment was not intended to directly provide in-kind assistance; it was made clear to respondents that specific questions relating to humanitarian needs could be answered by surveyors and interviewees could be told of available services. No individual younger than 18 was interviewed.

8 One exception was the neighbourhoods with high severity since IDPs do not live there; for this group, interviews took place in two neighbourhoods with medium severity and in one with low severity. For consistency, qualitative data collection took place in neighbourhoods where quantitative data was collected.

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Cover photo: Destruction in Mosul, one year after the Iraqi army reclaimed the city from ISIL in 2017.

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