

# IOM EMERGENCY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS—UPDATE

## DISPLACEMENT OF CHRISTIANS TO THE NORTH OF IRAQ

31 January 2012



Since the October 31, 2010 attack on the Saidat al-Najat church in Baghdad, IOM's monitoring teams have continued to assess the most recent Christian displacement in Iraq. This is an update to the January 2011 report and outlines the trends emerging among the displaced Christians. For additional analysis of the displacement of the Christians in Iraq, please refer to the earlier reports, which can be found on pages 2-5.

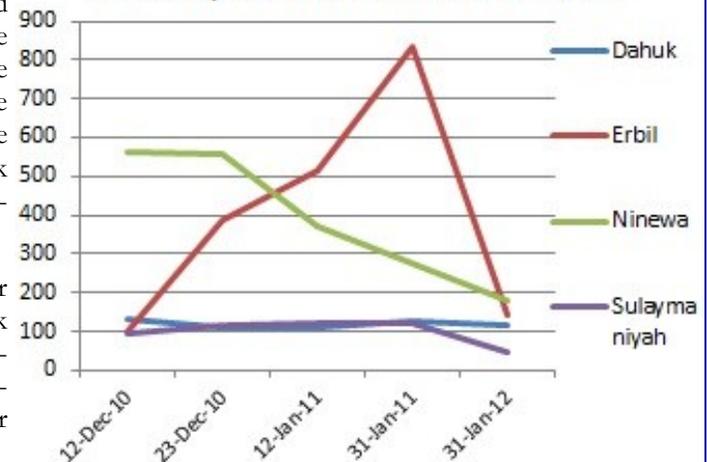
**Updated number of displaced:** IOM monitors have revised the numbers of Christian families displaced as a result of the attacks and targeting of Christians in late 2010 and 2011. The data show a noticeable decrease in IDP families across the northern governorates. Many Christian IDPs chose to emigrate or return in 2011 due to growing security fears, a lack of work opportunities, and difficulty with the transfer of education documents.

Many families registered at churches, coming to the region for a short period to seek refuge and assistance. Access to work quickly became a priority for those who remained in displacement, however promises of government support did not materialize and many found it difficult to gain employment on their own.

Movements both to and from the North of Iraq continued throughout 2011. For example, while almost 400 Christian families came to Dahuk in 2011, a larger number left the governorate to emigrate. Most of the movement out of Erbil occurred from Erbil city, specifically Ainkawa, while those displaced to less urban areas in Koysinjaq, Shaqlawa and Dyana generally already had family ties in these areas and were able to integrate more easily.

Monitors in Baghdad report that in the last few months of 2011, approximately 150 Christian families returned to Baghdad after experiencing difficulties integrating into communities in the North.

Number of post Oct. 31, 2010 Christian IDP families



Change in Number of Displaced Families by Governorate					
Governorate	Number of Families 12/15/2010	Number of Families 1/31/2011	Number of Families 1/31/2012	Change 2010-2012	Change 2011-2012
Dahuk	133	125	116	-17	-9
Erbil	102	831	142	+40	-689
Ninewa	563	276	182	-381	-94
Sulaymaniyah	96	122	49	-47	-73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>1354</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>-405</b>	<b>-865</b>

### DEVELOPING TRENDS AMONG DISPLACED CHRISTIANS

**Security:** Monitors report that the security of Christians in Northern Iraq is still of grave concern. Christians in Mosul have been repeatedly threatened and targeted for violence. In Dahuk, riots by Islamists and arson against Christian-owned properties in late 2011 spread fear in what was a largely safe area for religious minorities. Numerous kidnappings of Christians in Ainkawa also took place in 2011, most recently in mid-December. The latest incident ended with the man being freed and his kidnappers arrested, but the security incidents of 2011 have left the Christian community nervous and have prompted the emigration of many abroad.

**Intentions:** While 2011 saw an increase in return to Baghdad from Sulaymaniyah, nearly all remaining Christian families in Sulaymaniyah report the intention to integrate into their host community. In Ninewa however, the majority of families are still undecided about their intention to integrate or return. For now, many families in Ninewa originating from Mosul maintain employment in Mosul while commuting between the city and their new place of residence.

**Emigration:** Across the northern governorates, the rate of Christian emigration currently exceeds the number of new arrivals of displaced families. For example, monitors report that approximately 400 families emigrated from Dahuk to Turkey, Jordan, and, to a lesser extent, Syria. Rumors of the ease and speed of being resettled from Turkey as a refugee have led many displaced families to pursue this option. UNHCR Turkey confirms a large increase in Iraqi arrivals during 2011, about 50% of whom are Christian.

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### DEVELOPING TRENDS AMONG DISPLACED CHRISTIANS, (JAN 2011)

**Property:** Christians in Baghdad are largely unable to sell their homes for a fair price to support themselves while displaced. Monitors report that some in Baghdad have exploited the situation by publishing rumors of impending violence against Christians in order to drive down prices of Christian homes and to force Christians to flee.

**Shelter:** Finding adequate, affordable housing continues to be a significant challenge to displaced Christians across Iraq. Many of the displaced live in rented apartments and houses, where monthly rental rates are high and rising. IOM monitors note that, in some areas with high numbers of displaced Christians such as Ainkawa, rental prices for very modest accommodation have risen 200-300% since November when Christians began fleeing to the northern governorates.

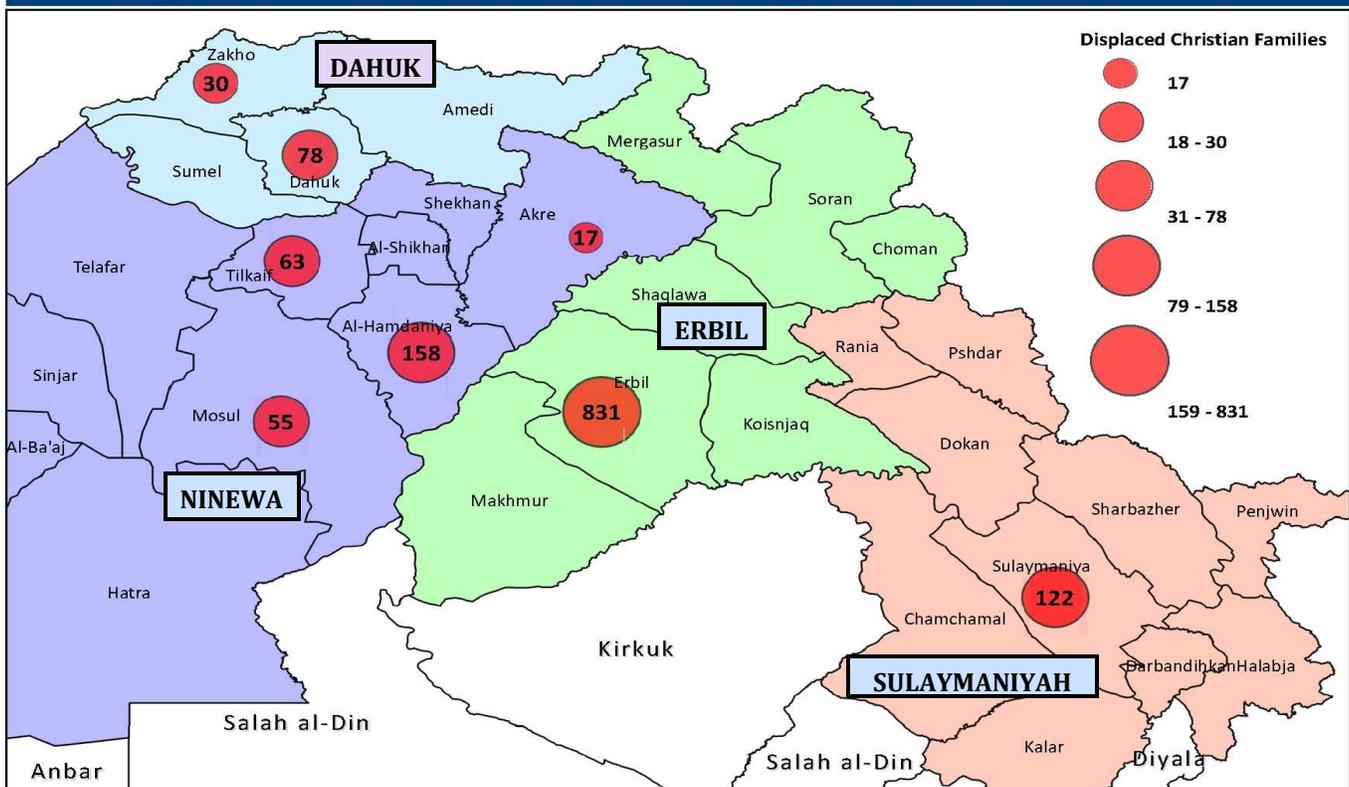
**Education:** Some of the displaced families have experienced difficulty in enrolling their children in new schools, often citing differences in curricula as the principal barrier to entry. However, perhaps of greater concern, those previously enrolled in universities in Baghdad and Mosul have found it nearly impossible to continue their studies in their location of displacement, thus many have returned to Mosul recently to complete their exams.

**IOM Response:** To date, IOM has delivered non-food items (NFI) to nearly 600 Christian IDP families in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk, and Ninewa. By partnering with organizations such as UNICEF and UNHCR, IOM has been able to provide mattresses, blankets, stoves, hygiene kits, and a host of other items to displaced Christian families. IOM will continue to assess the needs of this vulnerable community and provide assistance when possible.



In addition to conducting in-depth monitoring assessments, IOM field teams have been assisting displaced Christian families within Iraq since the crisis began. Here, IOM distributes NFI packages to IDP families in the Bashiqa district of Ninewa.

### Displaced Christian Families by District Jan 31 2011



# IOM EMERGENCY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

## DISPLACEMENT OF CHRISTIANS TO THE NORTH OF IRAQ

15 December 2010



IOM monitoring and needs assessment field staff are continuously consulting multiple sources, including local councils, mayors, churches, mukhtars, community leaders and IDP families themselves in order to assess the scope of the displacement of Christian families to the northern governorates of Iraq and throughout the country. This trend has been accelerated by recent events, including declarations by insurgent groups that Christians in the country are “legitimate targets” and statements by Iraqi leaders suggesting that rather than leave the country, Christians should move to the more secure northern areas until the situation elsewhere has stabilised.

### BACKGROUND

Following a hostage taking by an insurgent group in the Saidat al-Najat (Our Lady of Salvation) church in Baghdad on October 31<sup>st</sup>, at least 58 people were killed, according to reports from the Associated Press. Threats and targeted bombings of Christians had occurred in Iraq before this attack, producing waves of displacement in October 2008 and March 2010. Nevertheless, last month’s murders marked the beginning of more a systematized campaign of violence against this religious minority. IOM monitors located throughout the country continue to assess the needs of vulnerable Iraqis and have reported a considerable change in the rate and scale of displacement of Christian families.

Many areas in the northern governorates of Iraq have been safe havens for religious minorities fleeing violence elsewhere in Iraq. In the past month, as violence against Christian Iraqis has increased, these areas have received a higher number of these families who have been displaced from areas where they fear for their lives. IOM monitors in four of Iraq’s governorates, namely Dahuk, Ninewa, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, have conducted in-depth assessments of 894 Christian families, focusing on their priority needs and intentions regarding return. This report presents a brief summary of the monitors’ findings, as well as IOM’s assistance to date.



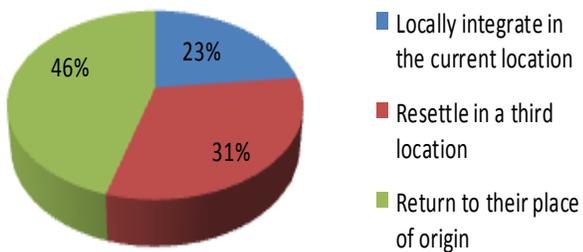
The most recent wave of Christian families began fleeing to northern Iraq in November 2010. While many have found a more secure environment, the displaced families are facing shortages of food, disrupted education for their children, and a lack of permanent shelter.



### ASSESSMENT OF DISPLACED FAMILIES

#### Intentions of Assessed IDPs

#### Intentions of Assessed IDP Families



The largest share of assessed IDPs expressed a desire to return to their place of origin. This is similar to the Christian displacement from Mosul that took place in February and March 2010. Following that displacement, many of the displaced returned to their place of origin within several months after they felt that the security situation had improved. This current wave of displacement is unique however, and while many IDPs wish to return to their place of origin, returns will depend largely upon improved security conditions in Baghdad and Mosul.

A teacher at the University of Mosul fled from Mosul with his family last month. He had previously fled from Mosul in 2008 and again in early 2010, returning as security improved. However, the displaced teacher now says, “Every time we return hoping that the security situation will improve and we can live in peace, but it seems that we have to spend our lives moving from place to place. I don’t think that we will return to Mosul again, maybe I’ll go to Erbil if I got a job there.”

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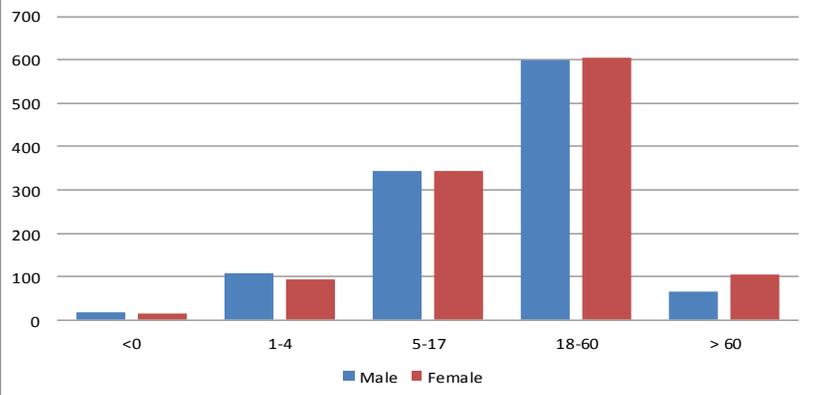
### ASSESSMENT OF DISPLACED FAMILIES, CONTINUED

#### Age and Gender of Assessed Christian IDPs as of 15 December 2010:

- 51% are female
- 40% are children
- 7% are older than 60

The large number of children among the displaced is cause for concern. They are often left particularly vulnerable after the trauma of displacement since they are often unable to continue their education due to language barriers or difficulties registering with new schools.

Age and Gender of IOM-Assessed IDPs



**Priority needs:** The top two needs among assessed families are food (68%) and education (68%). A further 41% of assessed families cited access to work as a priority need. While only 27% of all families listed shelter as a priority need, that number climbs to 97% in Dahuk (though monitors stress that this largely reflects the need for income to pay for the high cost of shelter). 55% of assessed IDPs cited “other” as a priority need. The need for fuel for both heating and cooking accounts for the largest share of this number, while financial assistance, furniture, and non-food items (NFI) make up the remainder.

**Food:** With the strain of high rent prices and lack of employment in the location of displacement, displaced families face difficulties purchasing food. Few of the displaced will have access to the Public Distribution System (PDS) rations, forcing them to purchase food in local markets and further stretching their limited budgets.

**Education:** IDP families are struggling to maintain the education of their children while coping with the other challenges of displacement. The sudden displacement forced many children to leave school in the middle of the academic year. Many families have not registered their children for school in the displacement location, waiting instead to see if they will return to their original schools or move to another location. Also, Arabic-speaking students fleeing to Kurdish areas are confronted by language barriers.

**Shelter:** 31% of displaced families are living with host families or relatives and 57% are living in rented accommodations. Those who share accommodation with relatives often live in over-crowded homes, while those who live in rented accommodations are especially vulnerable to secondary displacement due to high and increasing rent prices. A small minority (7%) of the Christian displaced are seeking refuge in the Church of Mar Yousif (Saint Joseph) in Sulaymaniyah. The church, although safe, does not offer a long-term solution for them while they sleep on simple mats. Christian IDP families elsewhere are also seeking refuge in churches and monasteries.

### IOM RESPONSE

On 22 November, IOM staff took part in a Governorate Emergency Cell (GEC) coordination meeting in Erbil with other international organizations and local authorities. It was agreed that IOM should be the leading organization in conducting an assessment of the families arriving to the governorate. The IOM assessment resulted in data on where Christian families had been displaced to and what they were in need of. This then provided the information needed for assistance. To date, IOM, working with UNHCR and UNICEF, has provided non-food item (NFI) assistance to 470 of the displaced families. IOM's NFI kits include bed frames, mattresses, pillows, blankets, gas stoves, heaters, plastic cabinets, carpets, and hygiene kits.

Soon after IOM monitors completed a comprehensive assessment of Christian displacement in northern Iraq, IOM staff began distributing non-food items to assist the displaced families. The distributions have been a collaborative effort with local authorities and UN agencies.



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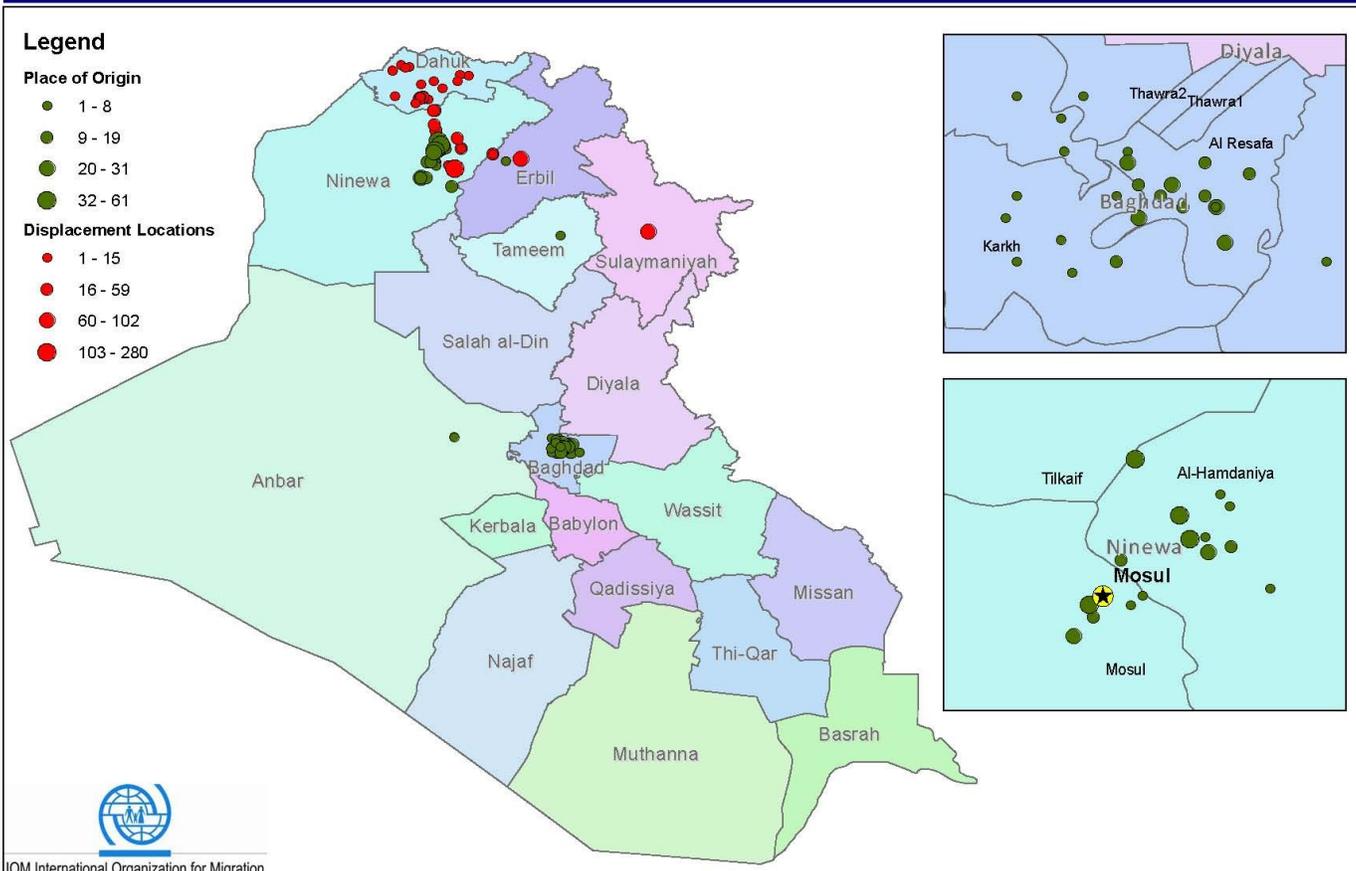


## ORIGINS AND LOCATIONS OF DISPLACED FAMILIES

Place of Origin		Number of Families
Governorate	District	
Anbar	Ramadi	1
Baghdad	Adhamia	7
Baghdad	Al Resafa	251
Baghdad	Karkh	31
Baghdad	Mada'in	2
Ninewa	Mosul	600
Tameem	Kirkuk	2

Displacement Location		Number of Families
Governorate	District	
Dahuk	Amedi	5
Dahuk	Dahuk	112
Dahuk	Sumel	4
Dahuk	Zakho	12
Erbil	Erbil	102
Ninewa	Al-Hamdaniya	361
Ninewa	Tilkaif	202
Sulaymaniyah	Sulaymaniyah	96

## Number of Christian Families Displaced in Iraq Nov-Dec 2010



Please note that displacement and return are occurring on a continuous basis, and IOM strives to update this information as frequently as possible. Through its monitoring and needs assessments, IOM has also developed periodic displacement updates, vulnerability assessments, yearly reviews and other reports. For these and information on the IOM's needs assessment methodology, see <http://www.iomiraq.net>.

For further information on IDPs, returnees and vulnerable communities in Iraq, please contact Keegan de Lancie, Displacement Monitoring and Needs Assessments Officer, at [kdelancie@iom.int](mailto:kdelancie@iom.int) (+962 6 565 9660) or IOM Iraq Information Requests at [iomiraqinfo@iom.int](mailto:iomiraqinfo@iom.int)