

**1. Cross Border Movement:**

**Al-Waleed Crossing Point**

- Border crossing point of entry for Iraqis coming from Damascus, Aleppo, Hums and Hama.
- Syrian side of Al-Waleed is under the full control of the Syrian Army.
- Final destinations of Iraqis who crossed Al-Waleed are: Baghdad, Anbar, Najaf, Wasit, Basra, Salahdin and Nasiriya.

- Border crossing point of entry for Iraqis coming from Damascus and Aleppo
- Open 24 hours and Iraqis can cross at any time. Crossing of Syrian refugees was restricted to Syrians with urgent medical needs and family reunification.
- Crises Cell recommended to close this point effective March 29, 2013
- Syrian side of Al-Qaim is under the full control of the Syrian Free Army.
- Final destinations of Iraqis who crossed Al-Qaim are: Anbar, Baghdad and Diyala.

**Al Qaim Crossing Point**

**Rabiaa Crossing Point**

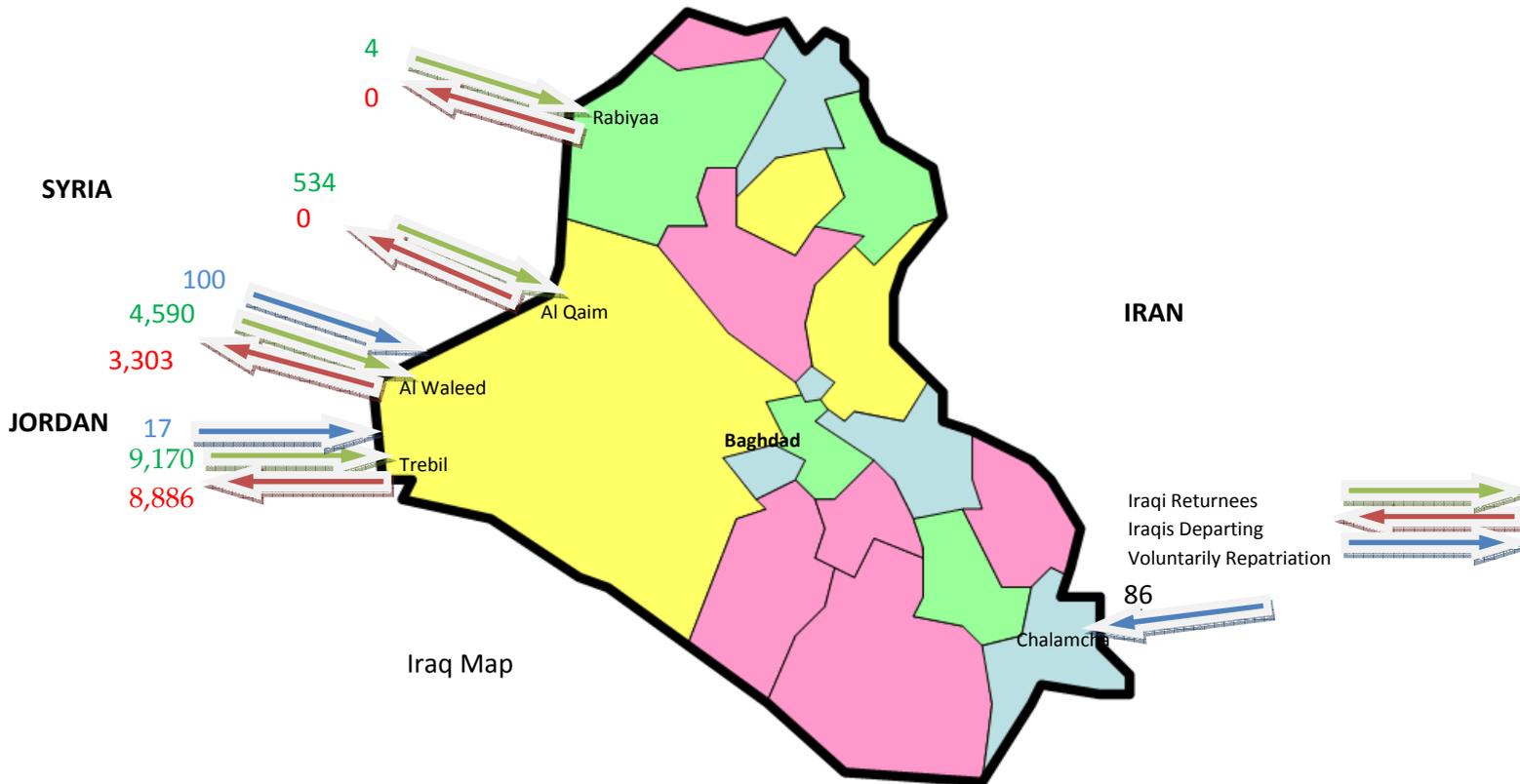
- Border crossing point of entry for Iraqis coming from Al-Hasaka, Damascus and Aleppo.
- Closed since March 2nd, 2013 for Iraqis, Syrians, and Trucks
- The Syrian Army controls the border while the Free Army controls Al-Ya'rubia City at the Syrian side of the border
- Syrian Army controls the Syrian side of Rabiaa crossing point.

- Only point of entry at the Iraqi-Jordanian border which witnessed normal traffic during the reporting period.
- Interviewed Iraqis indicated that they are temporarily visiting Iraq to see family and friends.

**Trebel Crossing Point:**

**Shalamcha Crossing Point:**

- One of the points of entry at the Iraqi-Iranian border through which UNHCR-organized repatriation of 86 individuals during March 2013.
- UNHCR Iraq is facilitating the Repatriation Grant payment for Iraqi Returnees from Iran after they cross the border into Iraq.



### Voluntary Repatriation:

257 Iraqis voluntarily repatriated during the reporting period. The table below shows locations and date of repatriation:

Month	Syria	Iran	Jordan
January 2013	114	24	0
February 2013	123	61	0
March 2013	100	86	71
<b>Total Since January 2013</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>71</b>

Voluntary Repatriation from Syria indicated a decrease during the reporting period. Iraqis reported that access to UNHCR in some Syrian cities is quite difficult and they can't benefit from the Vol. Rep. Package. On the other hand, more Iraqis are repatriating from Iran and a high percentage of them are heading toward the southern part of Iraq.

### 1- Iraq Cross Border Movement: (a) Iraqi/Syrian Border:

A total of 80,290 Iraqis are reported to have crossed the border from Syria into Iraq since July 2012, up to the end of March 2013. These numbers include returnees who are registered with UNHCR Syria and those who are not. It also includes individuals who cross the border for private reasons on a daily basis.

This period recorded an increase in the number of Iraqis who return to Iraq, and a decrease in the number of Iraqis departing to Syria, compared to previous months (Chart 1.0 Page 4). The decrease in the number of Iraqis departing to Syria is because of the security situation in Syria and the fact that only Al-Waleed crossing point is open for departure.

Month	Cross Border Movement Into Iraq	Cross Border Movement Out of Iraq
<b>January 2013</b>	5,282	3,179
<b>February 2013</b>	5,269	4,205
<b>March 2013</b>	5,128	3,033
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,679</b>	<b>10,417</b>

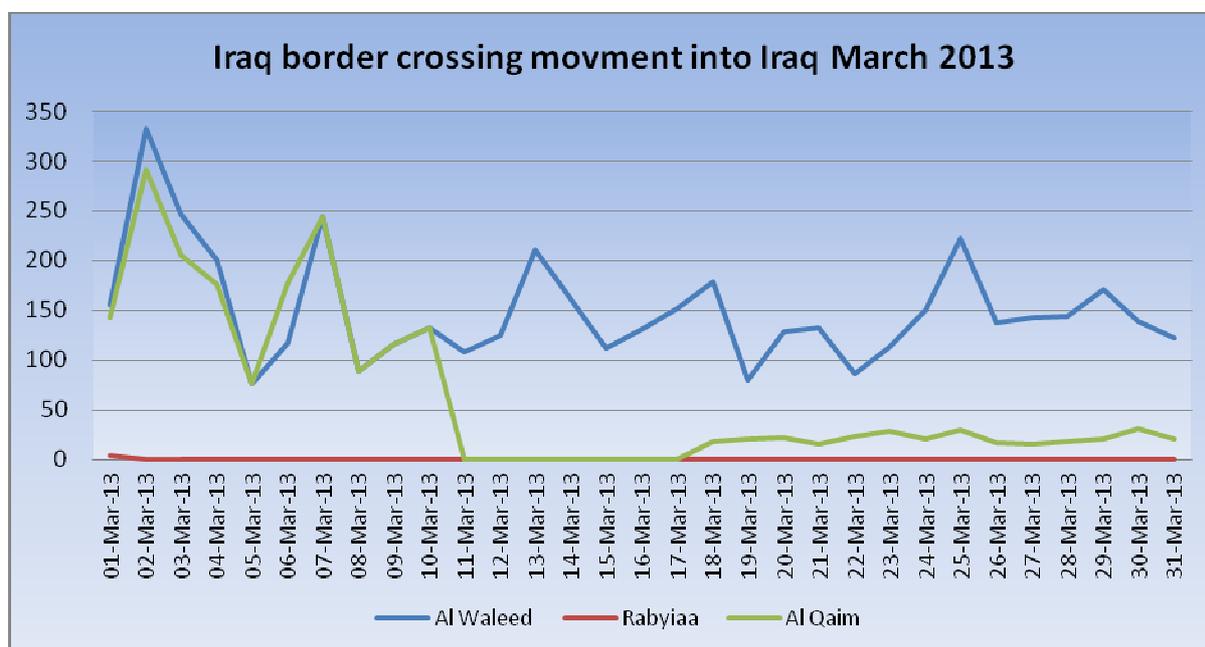
The table below includes the cross border figures Since January 2013:

The table below reflects the border status during March 2013:

Border Point	Iraqis In	Iraqis Out	Syrians In	Syrians Out	Remarks
<b>Al-Waleed</b>	Continues to receive the largest number of Iraqis	Normal Movement	Local authorities are facilitating the crossing of Syrians with valid visa and Syrian asylum seekers.  Syrian Asylum Seekers are being moved to Al-Qaim Camp.	Normal Movement	Due to recent incidents, instructions received to close the border daily from 11:00pm-7:00am
<b>Al-Qaim</b>	Normal Movement	Iraqis are not allowed to cross Al-Qaim toward Syria	Syrians with valid visa are allowed to cross to Iraq.  Syrians with urgent medical and family reunification cases are permitted to enter Al-Qaim camp.	Normal Movement	Closed effective March 29, 2013 with no definite date for reopening. The closure is based on the crises cell recommendation.
<b>Rabiaa</b>	Closed	Closed	Local authorities are facilitating the crossing of Syrians with valid visa and Syrian asylum seekers.  Syrian Asylum Seekers are being hosted in Rabiaa School.	Closed	Closed since March 2nd, 2013 as a result of the fight between the Syrian Army and Free Army. The Syrian side of the border is under full control of the Free Army .  Reports indicated that the Iraqi Army is considering additional security measures to secure Rabiaa .

## UNHCR Iraq: Iraqi-Syrian Border Monitoring:

Daily return to Iraq since March 2013, through the three crossing points at the Iraqi-Syrian borders is shown in the graph below:



### Observations:

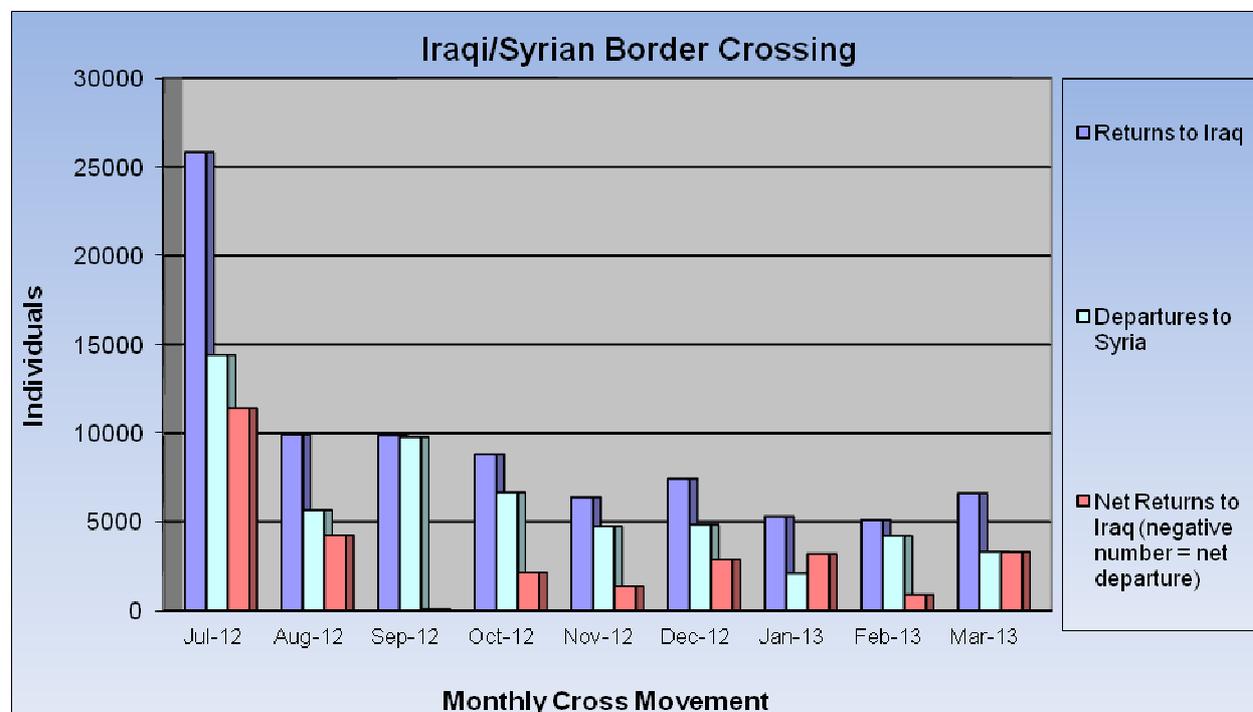
- On 04th March 2013, 48 Syrian soldiers were killed when moving from Rabi'aa to Al-Waleed crossing point. These soldiers were escorted by the Iraqi Army when they were attacked by an armed group in the main road between Al-Qaim and Al-Waleed. Reports indicated that 7 Iraqi soldiers were killed in that attack.
- Following the March 4<sup>th</sup> Rabi'aa border incident, instructions have been given to close Al-Waleed border point from 11:00 pm-7:00 am daily. Reports received from the border monitor indicates that Iraqi troops are heading for Al-Waleed border to secure the area against any attack by the Free Syrian Army.
- Despite the request from UNHCR to the Minister of Displacement and Migration and the Governor of Ninewa, Rabi'aa border crossing point remains closed for civilians to enter into Iraq following the heavy clashes at the that Syrian side of the border between the Free Syrian Army and the National Syrian Army.
- Closing Rabi'aa affected the movement of individuals and trucks. No Iraqis are waiting at the Iraqi side waiting to cross to Syria. Some Iraqis at the Syrian side are waiting for permission to cross in to Iraq.
- Individuals and trucks that used to cross the Iraqi Syrian border through Rabi'aa are now using Al-Waleed point.
- Percentage of Returnees who indicated that they are permanently returning to Iraq increased in March 2013 compared to the previous months.
- In response to an attack on a convoy transporting Syrian army soldiers, ISF have moved an additional 2 Brigades to Al-Qa'im and launched an offensive against suspected Al-Qa'ida strongholds within Anbar province. The events have not affected UNHCR operations for the moment.

- Iraqi Army is still considering additional security measures to secure Al Waleed and Al-Qaim crossing points.
- Some interviewed Iraqi returnees crossing the border indicated that the security situation in Syria is very critical, especially in Damascus. Military operations are taking place everywhere in Syria with no exceptions. Basic services such as electricity, water, medical care and food are not available in many cities in Syria, and all these factors make the Iraqis to decide to return to Iraq during this period.
- The statistics collected indicate that Baghdad governorate is still the main governorate that receives the largest number of Iraqi Returnees, followed by Nainawa, Diyala, Anbar and Basra. Please, see chart 1.2 below. This is in line with UNHCR Syria and Jordan statistics that indicated 70.5% of registered Iraqi refugees are originally from Baghdad, 7.2% from Ninawa, 4.8% are originally from Basra, 3.6% are originally from Anbar and 2.3% from Diyala.

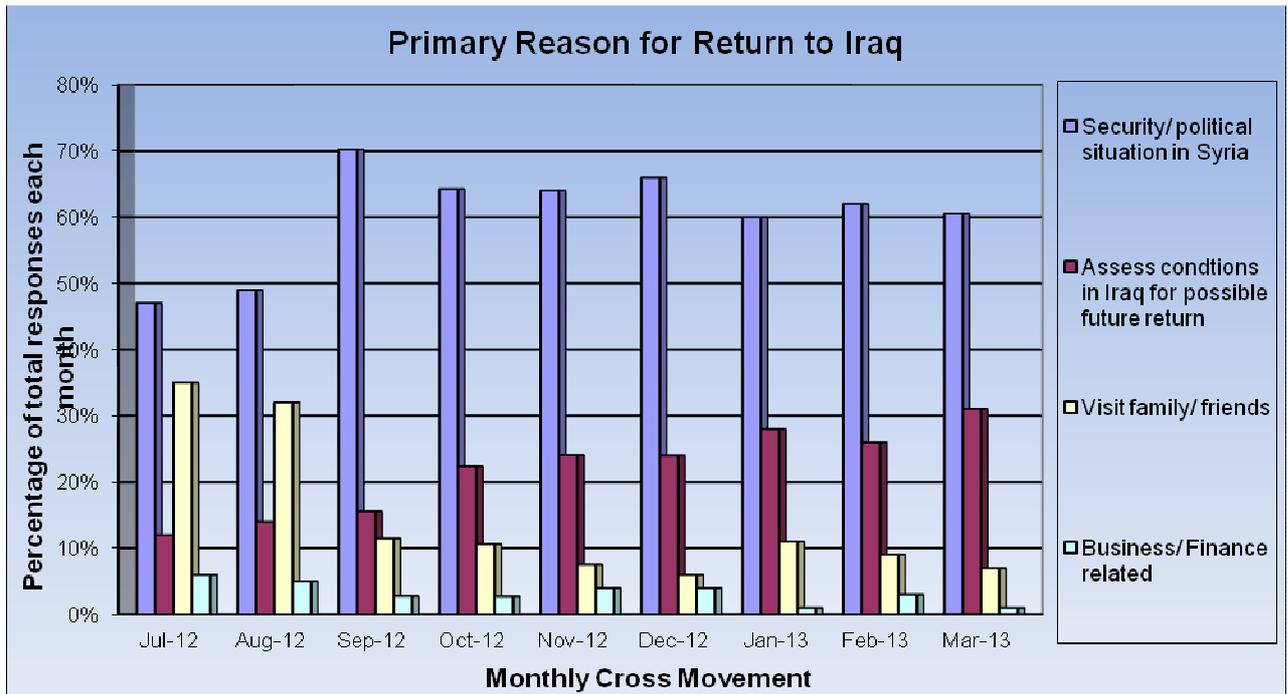
### Committees Coordination in Al-Qaim:

The Iraqi Committee in Al-Qaim did not conduct a distribution during the reporting period. The committee reported that with the decreased donations from authorities and individuals, there are no stocks left. Iraqi Committee handed all their storage food items to the Syrian side in January 2013. Iraqi people are donating some food items, but they are not enough to cover the increased need in Albokamal. Only medical items were handed to the Syrian committee in the reporting period.

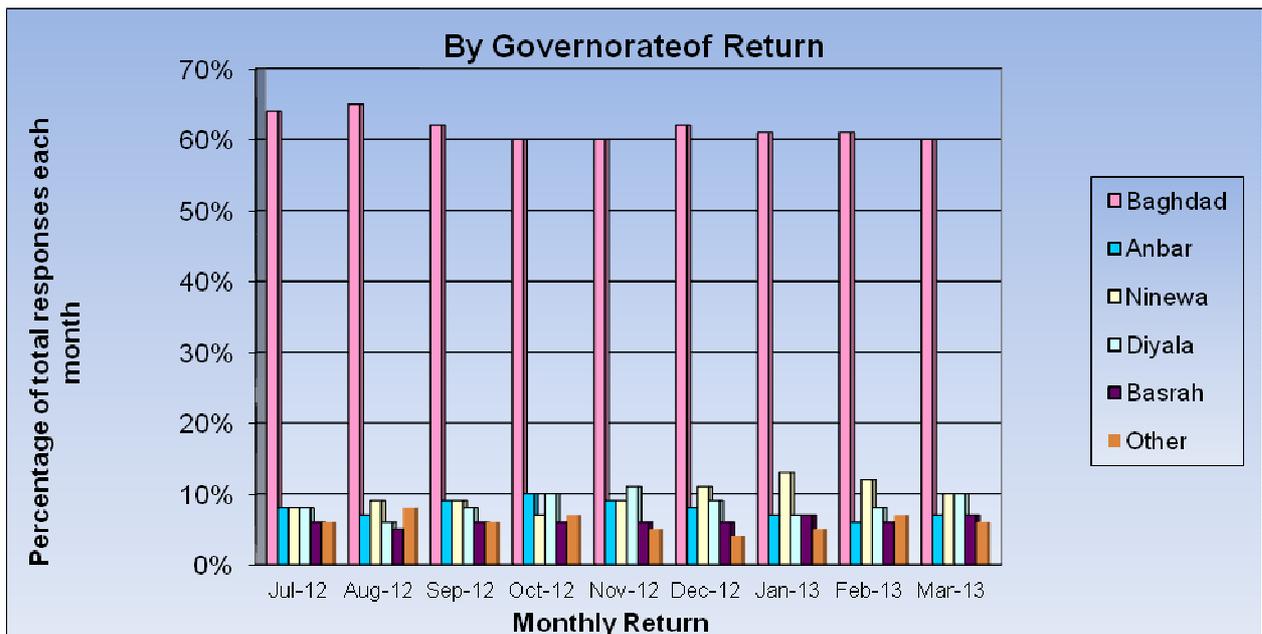
**Chart 1.0 Iraqi/Syrian Border Crossing-July 2012-March 2013**



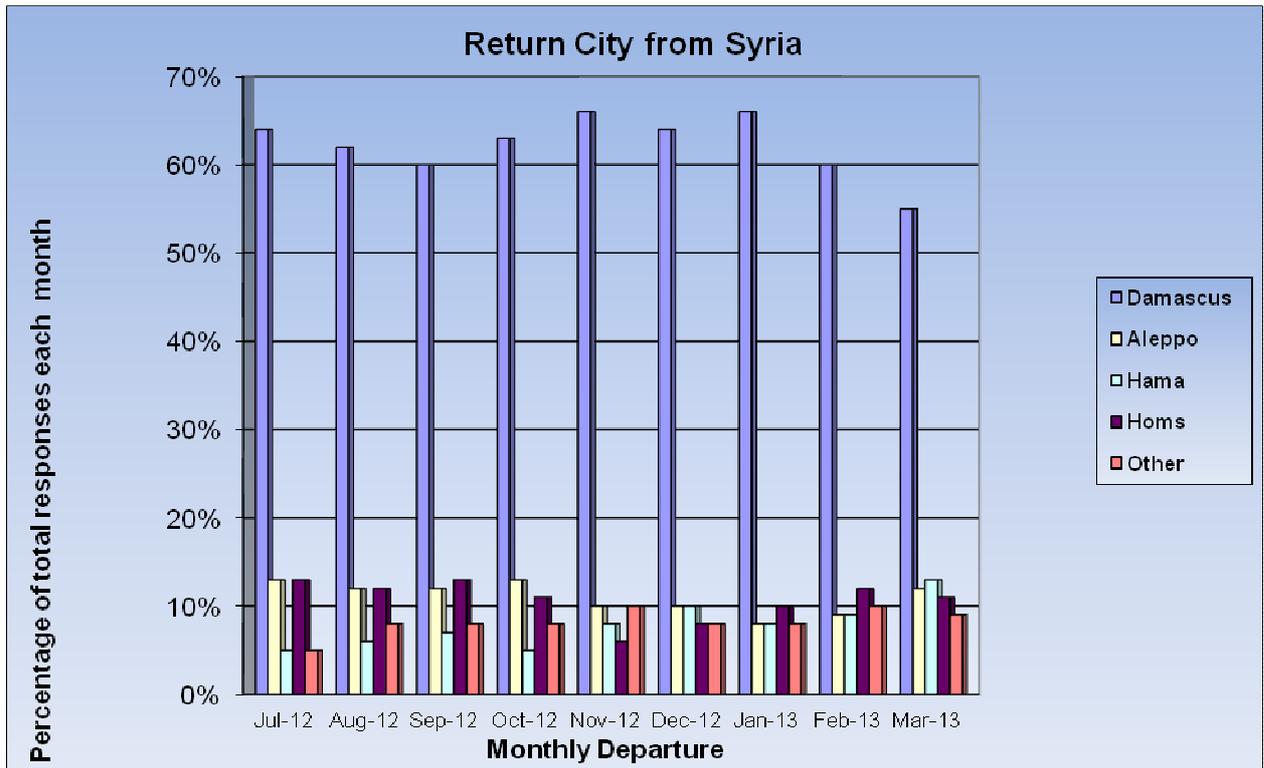
**Chart 1.1 Primary reasons for return to Iraq: Trend changes July 2012-March 2013**



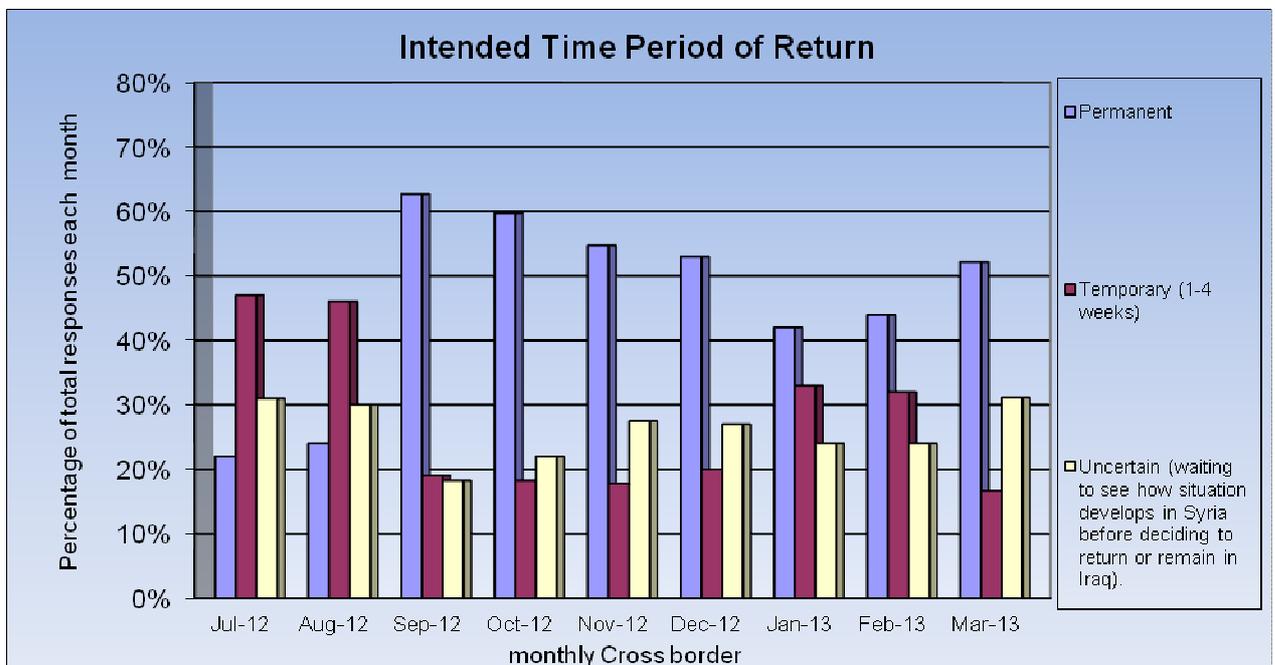
**Chart 1.2 Intended location of return to Iraq: Trend changes July 2012-March 2013**



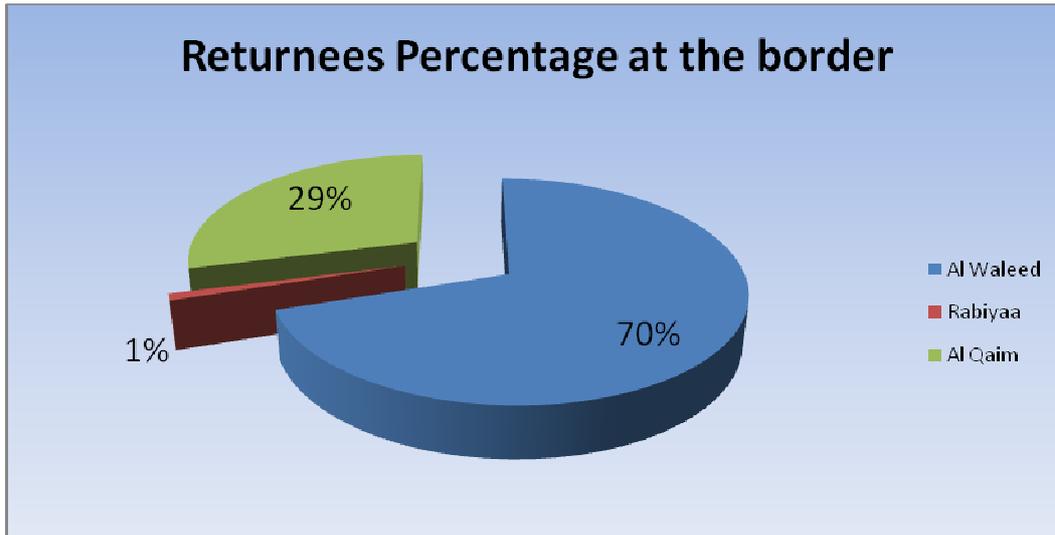
**Chart 1.3 Iraqi Returnees: Location in Syria. Trend analysis July 2012-March 2013**



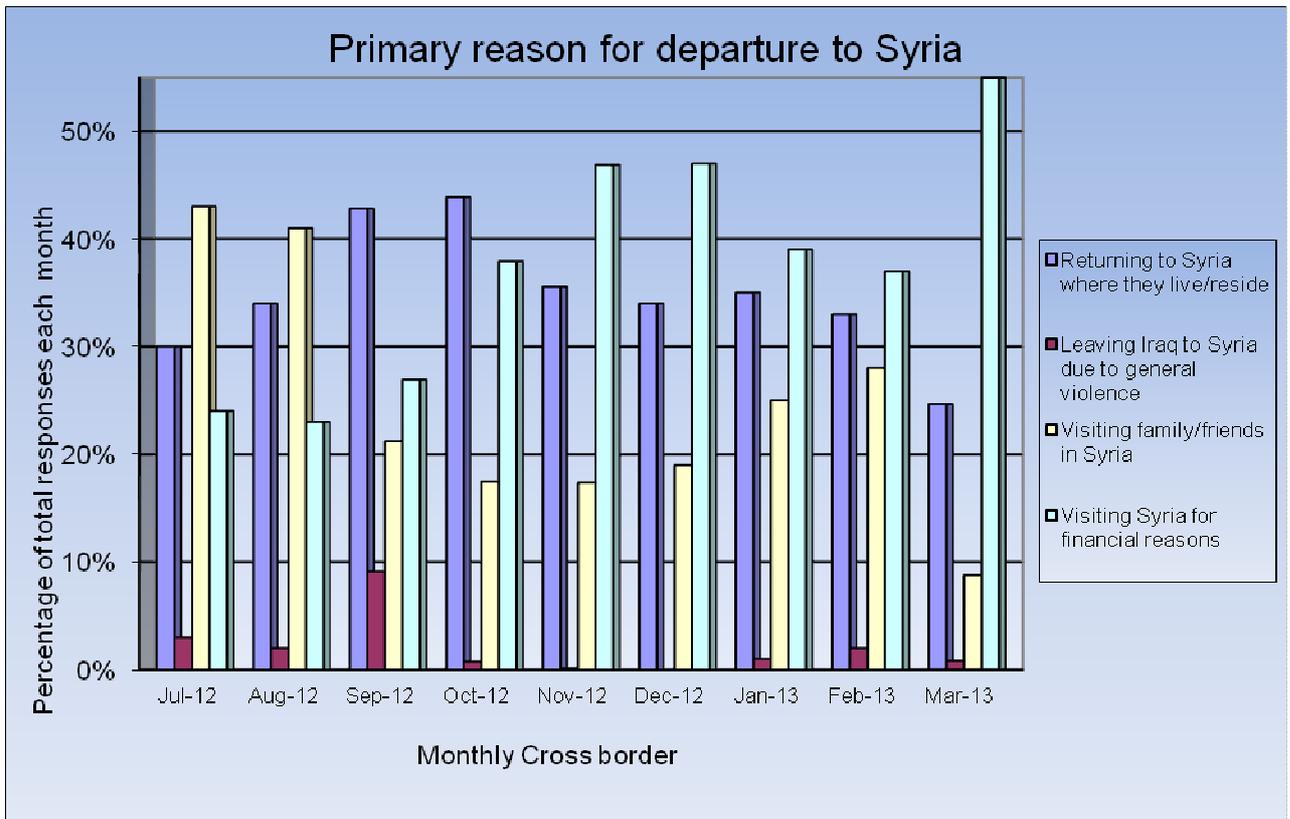
**Chart 1.4 Iraqi nationals intended time period of return to Iraq: Trend changes July 2012-March 2013**



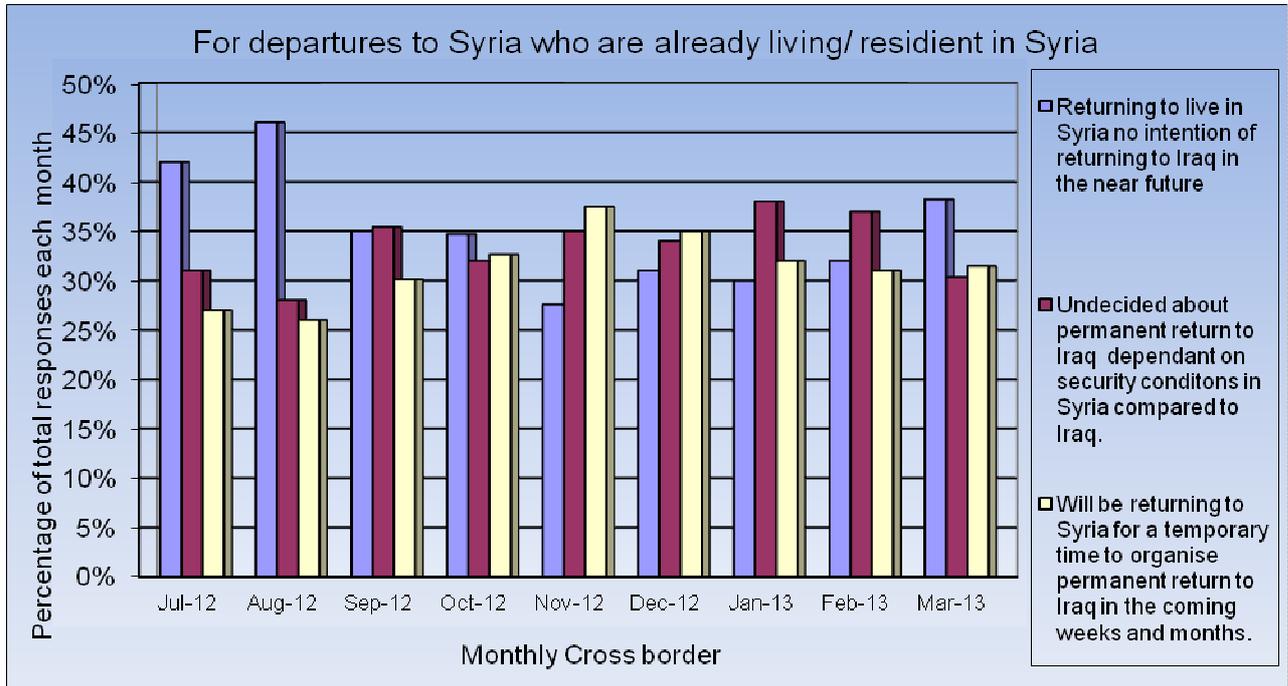
**Chart 1.5 Points of Entry in March 2013**



**Chart 1.6 Primary reasons for departing to Syria: Trend changes July 2012-March 2013**



**Chart 1.7 Iraqi's Intentions regarding settling in Syria or future return to Iraq: July 2012- March 20, 2013**

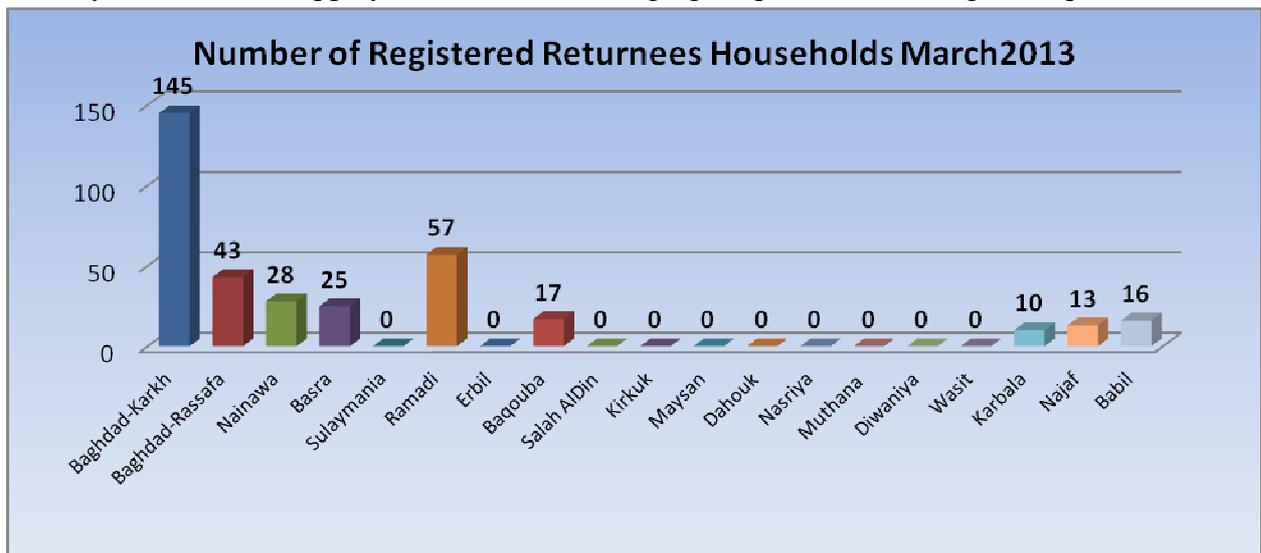


**Returnees Monitoring Report:**

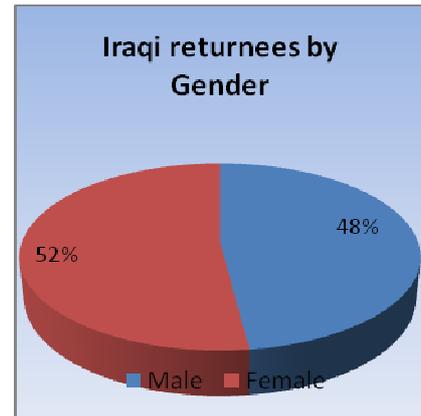
**a) Registration Process:**

Based on the Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MoMD) instructions of July 25, 2012, Iraqi Returnees who return on June 20, 2012 and after, should be immediately registered with MoMD. Expedited registration and grant distribution processes are supposed to be implemented in all MoMD's branches. 354 Iraqi households registered with the MoMD in March 2013, bringing the total number of registered returnees to 6,677 since June 2012.

The number of registered returnees witnessed a decrease during the reporting period. The recent security concerns in Iraq played a role in discouraging Iraqis from returning to Iraq.



It has been noted that Iraqi females represent 52% of Iraqi returnees, while males represent 48%.



b) MoMD Cash Assistance:

The MoMD is assisting Iraqi Returnees with 4,000,000 ID cash assistance; however, reports indicate that the distribution process is very slow, especially at the governorates level. Only 3,459 Iraqi Returnee households received the MoMD grant out of 6,766 registered households all over Iraq.

No grant distribution occurred in Muthana, Salah Aladin, Erbil, and Duhok governorates. UNHCR is following up with the MoMD regarding the distribution of cash assistance in the governorates.

Currently, MoMD is suspending the grant distribution due to internal complications. It was reported that 2013 grant distribution will be through the smart card instead of direct payment. Iraqi Returnees are complaining from the length of the payment process. UNHCR is in contact with MoMD to speed up the process. .

c) Resettlement Cases:

Many Iraqis who are under the resettlement programme in Syria coming to Iraq are considered as having to "forcibly return." They do not intend to permanently repatriate to Iraq, but rather are temporarily waiting for resettlement to a third country from Iraq instead of Syria. UNHCR RACs and RICCs offices are collecting information on returnees who want to keep their cases active and UNHCR is following up with these resettlement cases with the relevant stake holders. Cases pending Department of Homeland Security interviews will be prioritized and interviews will be arranged. 436 cases/1,041 individuals are verified and 77/198 is pending verification with UNHCR Syria.

d) NFI Distribution:

UNHCR agreed with MoMD that Non Food Items (NFI) will be distributed among all registered Iraqi Returnees. Starting in 2013, NFIs distribution is based on vulnerability. Upon refugee returnee monitoring vulnerable cases identified by Protection network in the field can be provided with a NFIs package and/or one- time cash assistance. A total 45 NFIs package were distributed during March based on vulnerability, bringing the total number of NFIs distributed to 5,396 since July 2012.

e) UNHCR Cash Assistance:

Reports indicated that Iraqi Returnees who fled Syria on and after June 20, 2012 are in urgent need for cash assistance. A total of 3,116 returnee households (18,815 individuals) received their cash assistance. These funds helped them pay rent, buy food, pay for heating fuel and essential items for their families. UNHCR is grateful for the strong financial support it has received so far and will continue to count on more support to offer urgently needed assistance to vulnerable families.

In light of allocated budget for Iraqi Returnees in 2013, the second phase of UNHCR One- time Cash assistance will cover only returnees who registered with the MoMD until the end of December 2012. According to the MoMD’s registration lists, there are still 1,158 households (3,929 individuals) registered in 2012 that were not enrolled in the UNHCR Cash Assistance. Total amount of \$400,000.00 is needed to cover the cash assistance. Extremely Vulnerable Individual (EVI) assessments to target vulnerable cases of returnees who returned on and after

June 20, 2012 based on vulnerability. The actual implementation of the proposed plan of action will embark soon.

### **3)) Protection Needs:**

The UNHCR Protection monitoring network comprising of 18 Protection Assistance and Reintegration Centers (PARCs) in each of Iraq’s governorates and six Returnee Integration Community Centers (RICCs), based in Bagdad, have provided protection assistance to Iraqi refugee returnees during the reporting period. According to UNHCR Database statistics, 139 cases of Iraqi returnees were assisted with obtaining various documents such as Civil IDs, residence, citizenship cards, death and birth certificates during the reporting period. All their needs and queries are referred to the RICCs and PARCs for assistance. Please see below the summary of RACs activities during the reporting period and the cumulative number of cases since January 2013:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>March 2013</b>	<b>Cumulative No. Since January 2013</b>
Cases referred to the related RICCs	62	179
Completed RSD application forms	12	49
Number of returnees in need of Legal advice	47	139
Cases in need of compensation for their damaged property	3	16
Number of cases interviewed and completed	163	403
Number of attestation letters requested	14	41

For more information, please contact Jessica Hyba, Senior Public Information/External Relations Officer at: (+964) 78 010 99 776.

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