



Unprepared for (re)integration

Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria
on Refugee Returns to Urban Areas

Annexes

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Front cover photo: A man prepares to load his luggage to leave the reception center in Berbera, Somaliland 2015
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Key concepts and definitions

Displaced persons are persons or groups of persons, including asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons, who are outside their homes or places of residence for reasons related to fear of persecution, conflict, generalised violence or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order.

Durable solution is achieved when displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. It can be achieved through sustainable (re)integration at the place of origin (voluntary return), local integration in areas where displaced persons take refuge or in another part of their country based on their choice. For refugees, it can also be achieved through resettlement in a third country. (ReDSS)

Host community refers to the community within which displaced persons reside. (GCER)¹

Internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular, as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border.²

Non-refoulement is the cornerstone of refugee protection. Set out in Article 33(1) of the 1951 Refugee Convention, it requires that *"no contracting state shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his (or her) life or freedom would be threatened"*.³

Preparedness refers to a proactive and planned response to emergency, disasters or, in the context of this study, to situations of return. The IASC speaks of preparedness as an inter-agency, common and planned approach. Preparedness is multidimensional and multilevelled, at individual/household, community, organisational or state levels. (IASC)⁴

Refugee is a person who, *"...owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his (or her) nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself (or herself) of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his (or her) former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it"*. (Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Convention) **1951 Convention** refers to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (also known as the 1951 Refugee Convention).

Sustainable (re)integration – There is no universal definition of the term "(re)integration". The IASC Framework highlights eight criteria to be used when considering whether durable solutions have been achieved, namely: safety and security; adequate standard of living; access to livelihoods; restoration of housing, land and property; access to documentation; family reunification; participation in public affairs, and access to effective remedies and justice.⁵ Meanwhile, UNHCR sees (re)integration as *"equated with the achievement of a sustainable return – in other words the ability of returning refugees to secure the political, economic, (legal) and social conditions needed to maintain*

1 Global Cluster for Early Recovery (2017). Durable Solutions in Practice.

2 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. UN Doc. E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2.

3 1951 Convention, Article 33(1). A similar formulation is also found in Article 3(i) of the UN Declaration on Territorial Asylum adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1967.

4 See IASC (2015) Early Response Preparedness. See also Cassarino (2014) A Case for Return Preparedness.

5 Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement (2010). IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.

UNPREPARED FOR (RE)INTEGRATION

life, livelihood and dignity, (and) a process that should result in the disappearance of differences in legal rights and duties and the equal access of returnees to services, assets and opportunities".⁶

Voluntary repatriation is the return to country of origin "on refugees' free and informed decision".⁷ The essential requirement for repatriation to be voluntary is the counterpart of the principle of non-refoulement. The facilitation of voluntary repatriation is one of the basic functions of UNHCR.⁸

Youth is defined by the UN as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24.

⁶ UNHCR (2004). Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities.

⁷ Adapted from IOM (2019) Glossary on Migration.

⁸ UNHCR (1980). Note on Voluntary Repatriation. EC/SCP/13.



Annexes

Annex 1: Methodology, scope and limitations

Samuel Hall has designed a series of tools to fully answer the main research questions.

Research questions and tools

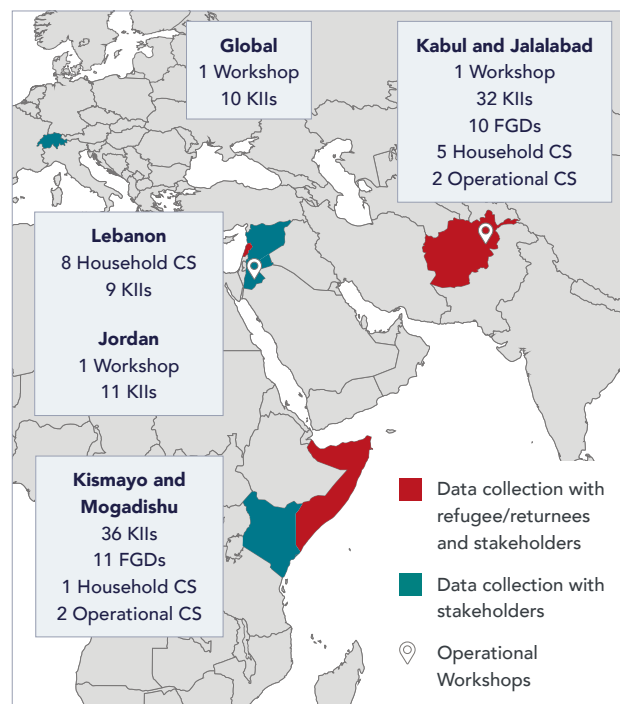
	Research question	Secondary literature and data	Operational workshops	Key informant interviews (KIIs)	FGDs* and household case studies	Operational case studies
Q1	What factors influence return patterns and sustainable (re)integration?	X	X	X	X	X
Q2	How can preparedness be more effectively addressed? What lessons can be drawn?	X	X	X	X	X

* FGDs – Focus group discussions

These tools were deployed to three separate returns contexts: Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria. This selection was largely determined by the work of the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) in Somalia, the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform (ADSP) in Afghanistan, and the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) in Jordan working on the Syrian refugee response.

For each context, fieldwork was conducted in two locations: Kabul and Jalalabad in Afghanistan, Mogadishu and Kismayo in Somalia, and Amman and Lebanon for Syria. This sampling enabled the research team to grasp the urban dilemmas of return by choosing the return locations with high numbers of returns and allowed for coverage of one refugee host setting. Locations in Afghanistan and Somalia were specifically chosen to allow for perspectives from both national and municipal, and ‘headquarters’ and programme staff. Through the literature review and the accounts of the returnees interviewed, the research covered the situations of refugee returnees from Iran and Pakistan to Afghanistan, from Kenya and Yemen to Somalia, and from Lebanon and Jordan to Syria.

Overview of data collected and research locations



A phased approach

The research took a three-phased sequential approach to gathering data in order to ensure that each tool added specific value and was targeted towards particular areas of enquiry.

1. The research team drew on **existing secondary literature and data to identify practices and knowledge gaps**, to ensure that the research builds on current knowledge.
2. **Key informant interviews (KIIs)** engaged a wide pool of stakeholders globally and in each context (for example, government officials, community leaders and experts).

3. An **operational workshop** was conducted in Kabul to launch the research, engaging a wide set of operational actors; and in Amman with regional stakeholders, providing an overview of key findings from Afghanistan and Somalia to generate discussion and feedback.
4. **Focus group discussions and case studies** (household and operational/programme-level case studies) were conducted across the context, with returnees, refugees intending to return and host community members.

Research tool details

Secondary literature review

The findings of this research are framed by and built on current knowledge on preparedness and return. The research team reviewed, assessed and identified over 150 documents during the first phase of the research, and continued to add to these over the course of the project. These sources were assessed based on relevance of results, quality and methodology, and the key points from top-ranked documents were detailed in a literature review template. Based on this, key gaps in existing data were identified. Sources included policy and programme documentation, existing research studies on the topic, data around returns and (re)integration shared by a variety of UN and other stakeholders, and more.

Operational workshops

Two operational workshops were conducted: one in Afghanistan and one in Amman. The purpose of the workshop in Kabul was to provide a Chatham House Rule setting to bring together relevant stakeholders working on refugee return and (re)integration in Afghanistan to discuss the lessons from 15 years of programming, to highlight current debates and trade-offs in Afghanistan and to identify recommendations for the study's methodological framework and focus areas. The second workshop, in Amman, presented preliminary analysis around the findings from the examination of returns in Afghanistan and Somalia in order to discuss lessons learnt from these contexts in relation to current and potential returns to Syria. Both workshops included a plenary session around initial findings as well as an operational session in two working groups, which sought to provide clear recommendations to answer major questions emerging from the research.

Key informant interviews

Although the original target for this research was of 45 key informant interviews (KIIs), 102 key informants were interviewed, both at a global level and in the three contexts of primary research (Afghanistan, Somalia, and Lebanon/Jordan). These included local and national-level government officials, programme and policy staff at NGOs and INGOs, researchers, academics and more. These interviews complemented the operational workshops to triangulate data on lessons learnt and to ensure that humanitarian, development and national actors were engaged with throughout the research process. They provided a broad range of views around current programming centred on preparedness, as well as planned and past programming.

Focus group discussions

The 21 focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted were specifically designed to draw out the views and opinions

of host and community members on preparedness and returns. Conducted in urban contexts of return where returns have been ongoing for some time (to ensure a longer understanding of sustainability), the FGDs sought to examine the realities of returns and differentiators in returns experiences, broader social cohesion and participation, operational support and future aspirations. Analysis focused on key thematic gaps identified during the secondary literature review, as well as subgroups of interest (in particular, age- and gender-(re)integration-related factors). Purposeful sampling was conducted to ensure that within each FGD, a variety of respondent profiles would be included.

Programmatic case studies

Four operational case studies focus on a particular programme, either in Afghanistan or Somalia, to better understand existing programmes in place to support returnees from the perspective of programme implementers, government stakeholders and returnees.

Household case studies

The household case studies (14 in total) were designed to address the fact that, while much existing data on return considers households as units, decision-making, particularly around return, can prompt significant discussion and tension, and may have long-lasting impacts on reintegration. As such, these case studies sought to better understand the lived experiences of members of the same household with regards to preparedness and actual returns, interviewing, in each case, a minimum of two household members. As regards to the Syrian context, these were all conducted with Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Research limitations

Existing data on returns and (re)integration is both limited and fragmented. As such, while it has been considered and integrated where appropriate, the potential for direct comparisons between the situations in each of these contexts is limited.

A purely qualitative approach was used for data collection with refugees and returnees (KIIs, case studies). The main objective of both the case studies and the FGDs is, therefore, not to provide granular comparative analyses, but, rather, to serve as illustrations of some of the different tensions – in particular, around gender, age and return – that can exist in these contexts of return, directly focused on areas identified through the earlier phases of the research.

Key informant interviews collected depend on the willingness of potential interviewees to participate and respond. Samuel Hall reached out to a broad range of stakeholders so as to ensure that a variety of perspectives were included.

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