

Impact of drought on human mobility: a case study from Iraq

Session 1 - SDG 1 - End Poverty Through Climate Resilience, Sustainable Livelihoods
and Nature

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1. Introduction to IOM's Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC)

Broad based partnerships

Evidence-based policy making and action

Targeted approaches and focus on the most vulnerable

We develop solutions for people TO move

Managing migration in the context of climate change to enable safe and regular mobility.

We develop solutions for people ON the move

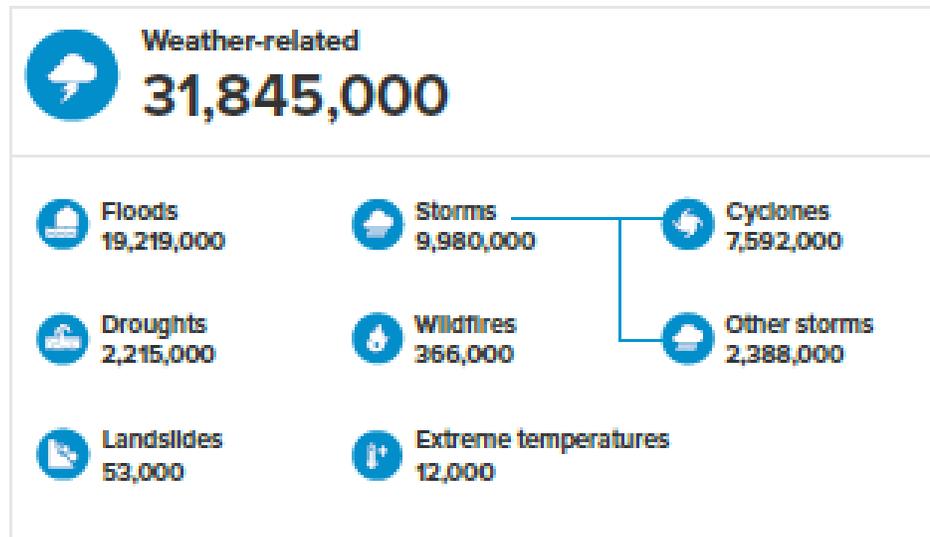
From anticipatory action to enabling solutions to minimize and better address loss and damage, including displacement

We develop solutions for people to stay

Making migration a choice by building resilience and addressing the adverse drivers – through disaster risk reduction and adaptation action

2. Figures: drought impacts on human mobility

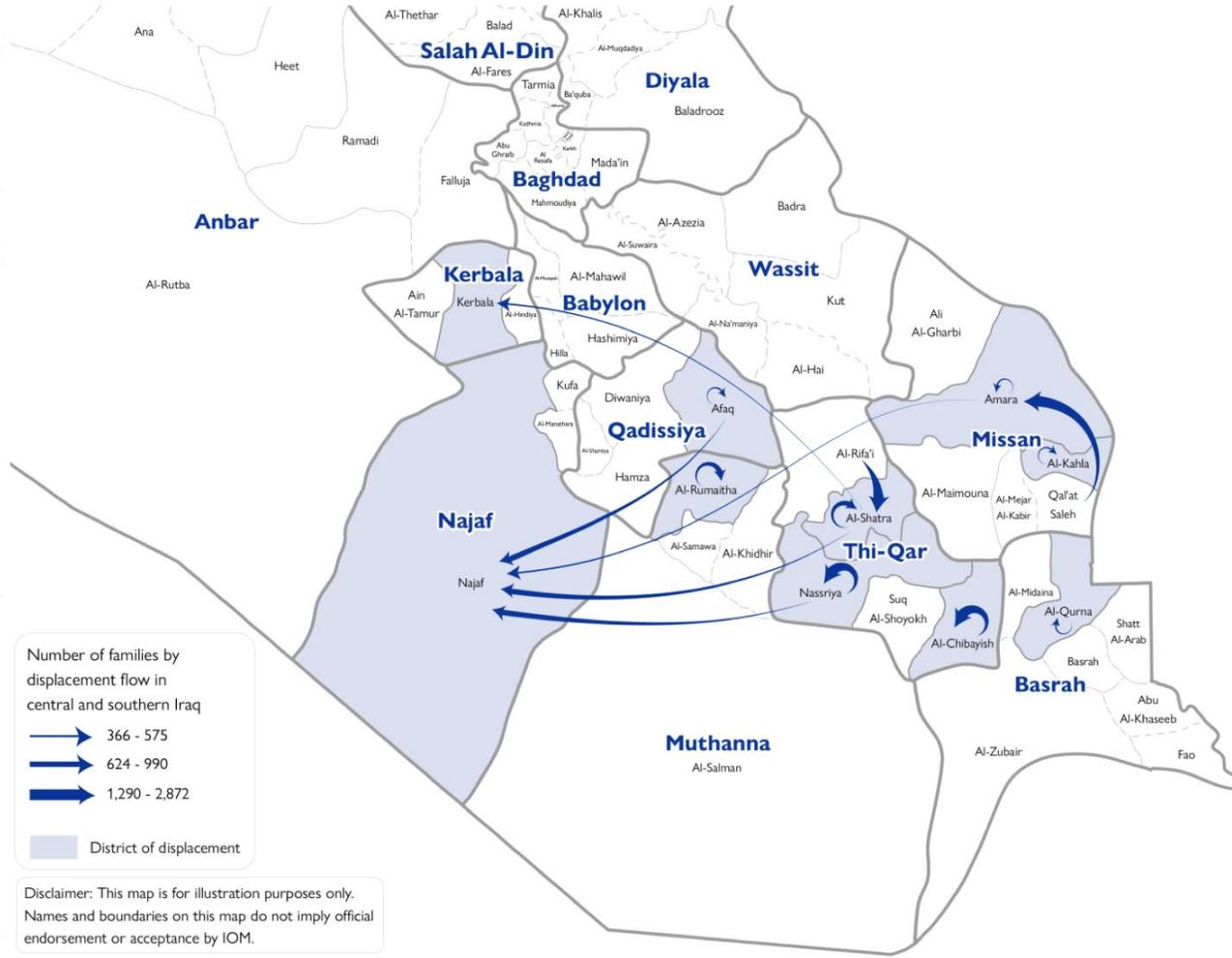
Breakdown by hazard



- In 2022, 31.8 million people were newly displaced globally by weather related hazards.
- **Drought was the third top hazard** that induced disaster displacement globally.
- The worst drought recorded in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, triggering **2.1 million movements**.
- In Somalia alone, **1.1 million people** were internally displaced, **six times higher** than the previous year.
 - Two thirds of those displaced have been children since the start of drought.

3. Case study from Iraq: Climate Emergency Tracking (Feb 2024)

Top 15 climate-induced displacement flows in central and southern Iraq



Coverage

- 12 governorates in Central and Southern Iraq
- 471 locations assessed
- 22,583 families (135,498 individuals) displaced by drought as of February 2024
- 54% of locations of displacement are urban.

Governorates of origin:

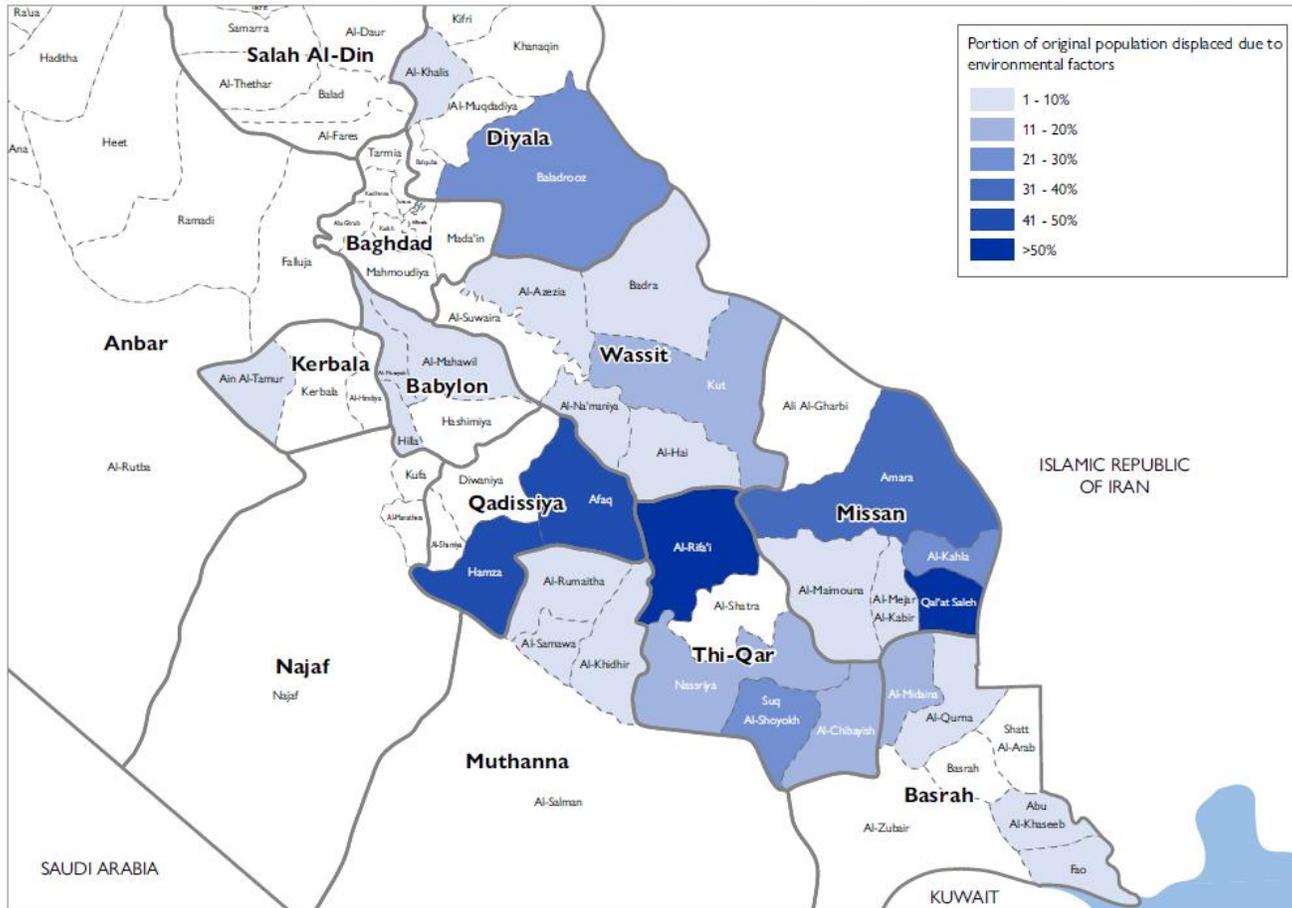
- Thi-Qar (46%), Missan (23%), Muthanna (8%), Qadissiya (8%)

Governorates of displacement:

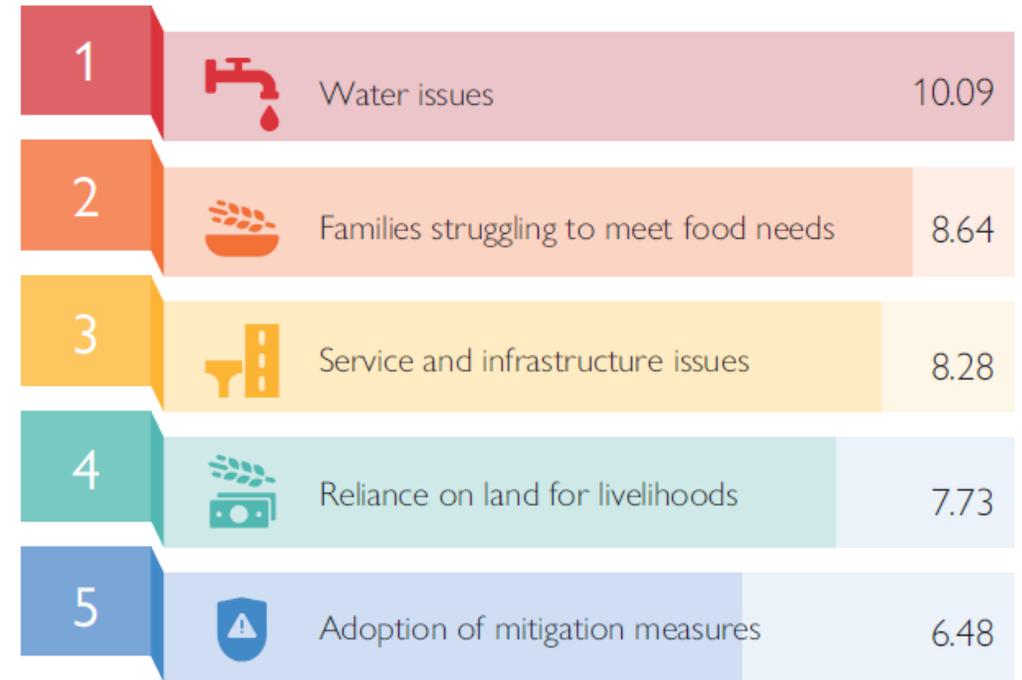
- Thi-Qar (36%), Missan (20%), Najaf (15%)

Climate Vulnerability Assessment

% of original population displaced due to environmental factors



Top 5 predictors of climate-induced depopulation*



* Based on the mean decrease in Gini coefficient from Random Forest analysis

Data and key findings are used for...

Promoting in-depth understanding of mobility drivers and their complexity

- **Pre-existing vulnerabilities** affect the degrees and ways that climate change impacts different groups. The most vulnerable groups include those who rely on land and water resources for income, struggle to access basic services and experience tensions over natural resources.
- **Mobility involves multiple steps:** sending household members to different locations in search of a job, while others reduce expenses or sell assets, land or livestock. If conditions persist, the whole families may displace to other locations.
- **Trapped population:** Families who remain behind may lack the economic and social means to relocate, therefore, the most vulnerable.
- **Tension and conflict over natural resources:** primarily revolving around water, grazing land, livestock and arable land, natural resources were a driver of tension or conflict in only seven districts.

Collaboration with the government and stakeholders to inform policies and programming to address the root causes while addressing the needs of displaced persons

- **DTM data enable to identify specific needs of IDPs in specific locations:**
 - lack official documents, residing in irregular shelters, no access to jobs and services; non-food items and small income generation.
- **Analyses of the DTM data and climate vulnerability assessment help identify medium and long-term actions to address root causes based on the evidence:**
 - Promote **greater cooperation with neighbouring countries** over water distribution
 - Equitable **water management policies** and develop **monitoring systems** related to water scarcity
 - Improve **existing water infrastructure** and acquire climate-smart infrastructure, create **platforms for dialogue and mediation**, and prioritize **most vulnerable districts** for programming
 - Support communities to **diversify livelihoods** and **expand provision of basic services**

Key takeaway messages:

- **Droughts displace tens of thousands of people** driven by the deprivation of nature-based livelihoods and diminishing incomes to meet basic needs. **Evidence-based action planning and programming are critical** to identify risks of displacement, reach the most vulnerable including “trapped populations”, meet their immediate needs while building resilience to droughts in origin and host communities. **Water scarcity is also a direct driver of displacement** when people cannot access water of sufficient quantity and quality for drinking/domestic use.
- In the context of Iraq, **people face risks of protracted and multiple displacements** due to the intersection between droughts, conflict and insecurity. In order to prevent such displacements and facilitate returns where desired, **promotion of durable solutions for the displaced populations** is critical based on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approach. Climate change can contribute to secondary displacement and failed returns but may also impede return from displacement. In other words, it contributes to mobility and immobility. In order to make it possible for people to return, however, interventions are required to make nature-based livelihoods more sustainable.



Thank you!
For more information:
www.environmentalmigration.iom.int

