

## UNHCR Jordan

# Summary: Intention to Return to Iraq Inquiries of 2008 & 2009

Data Analysis Group - 21 May 2009 - Tracking Code OTH0002.1

Note: Please print in color.



### I. Highlights

1. **Only a small percentage of Iraqis in Jordan state an intention to return to Iraq.** The 2009 intentions inquiry shows that 92% of Iraqis in Jordan do not plan to return to Iraq, a small increase from last year. Only 2% have definite plans to return and 6% do not know if they will return. Out of the three other inquiries (of new arrivals, long-stayers and renewal cases) conducted in the past few months, 88-95% of Iraqis stated that they do not plan to return to Iraq.
2. **While the fear of direct threat and general insecurity in Iraq has decreased this year, employment and assistance in Iraq is severely limited according to returnees.** According to telephone conversations with a small sample (57 person) of returnees, a full 72% of returnees stated that they do not have sufficient income to meet their needs. Furthermore, none of the families that approached the Ministry of Displacement and Migration received assistance, and none of them received aid from NGOs.
3. **The level of dissatisfaction among current returnees may discourage further return.** The majority of persons who have returned with the assistance of UNHCR are not satisfied with their situation in Iraq. Unsurprisingly, this dissatisfaction is magnified in the perceptions of Iraqis remaining in Jordan. Although the primary reason for those who already returned or want to return is that they cannot afford to live in Jordan, the paucity of employment and assistance in Iraq may not only discourage return, but could encourage movement back to the country of asylum.
4. **Only 1% of Iraqis this year cited deportation as a reason for return,** a dramatic decrease from 19% in 2008.
5. **The desire to be resettled has increased in 2009 but is still surprisingly low.** More people this year do not want to return because of resettlement, an expected finding since the rate of departure for resettlement has increased. However, on average, only 13% of the reasons for not returning were resettlement. (Without averaging the responses, a full 20% of people in 2009 cited resettlement as one of the three reasons for not wishing to return to Iraq.) There do not appear to be reasons why Iraqis would strategically conceal this information, since generally they are eager to mention their interest in resettlement.
6. **Some Iraqis are likely to have incentives to strategically conceal their intentions from UNHCR** staff conducting these inquiries, since they may believe that indicating an intention to return would jeopardize their assistance or resettlement prospects. Given the lack of assistance accessible inside Iraq, their desire to continue to access assistance available in Jordan is understandable.

### II. Intention to Return to Iraq

1. In the 2009 intentions inquiry, 92% of Iraqis stated that they do not plan to return to Iraq, a small increase from 90% (395/438) in 2008 who stated that they had not intention to return. In 2009, only 2% (14/573) have definite plans to return to Iraq, compared to 5% (21/438) in 2008. About 6% (31/573) in 2009 state they do not know if they will return to Iraq, compared to 5% (22/438) in 2008.
2. In the 2008 intentions inquiry respondents were asked to give only one answer to the question of why they do not want to return to Iraq, whereas in 2009 respondents gave prioritized answers which were weighted accordingly in order to compare both inquiries. In 2009, persons were asked to give up to three reasons why they do not want to return to Iraq. On average, the reasons in 2009 were direct threat (34%) and fear of insecurity (24%), compared to 2008 when 45% cited direct threat and 38% cited fear of insecurity. In 2009, 13% of the answers were resettlement, compared to 2% in 2008. (Without averaging the responses, a full 20% of people in 2009 cited resettlement as one of the three reasons for not wishing to return to Iraq.) In addition, in 2009 11% noted they did not have a job in Iraq (0% in 2008), 10% had other reasons (11% in 2008), and 9% did not want to return because their houses were destroyed or are occupied (5% in 2008).

3. In the 2009 intentions inquiry, 25% (143/573) of respondents said that they knew people (a total of 389, of which 80% were said to be UNHCR-registered) who had returned to Iraq. In the 2008 intentions inquiry, 20% (88/438) of respondents are aware of 227 Iraqi returnees, of which 59% (133/227) were registered with UNHCR. UNHCR assisted only 392 persons to return in 2008-2009, suggesting that some UNHCR-registered persons return to Iraq without informing the office.
4. From focus group discussions, UNHCR staff has observed that discussion of return is highly sensitive among Iraqis, as some perceive that discussion of return suggests that international assistance and resettlement slots for the Iraqi population will be curtailed. This causes frustration and distress within the community.
5. According to the respondents in 2009, the main reason 47% of the Iraqis they knew returned to Iraq is that they could not afford to live in Jordan (158/338), an increase from 41% (91/224) in 2008. In 2009 and in 2008, respondents said about 10% of Iraqis returned because their families were not able to join them in Jordan. In 2009, 15% (51/338) returned because of improved security, a two percent increase (13% or 28/224) from 2008. Only 1% (4/338) returned to Iraq in 2009 because they were allegedly deported, a significant decrease from 19% (42/224) in 2008.

### **III. Conditions for Returnees in Iraq**

1. Respondents to the intentions inquiry in 2009 said that 74% (138/186) of their friends/family members who had returned and with whom they were in contact regretted their decision to have returned to Iraq, down from 94% (136/144) in 2008.
2. The telephone conversations with 57 of the returnees assisted by UNHCR provide a somewhat different picture. 44% are satisfied with their decision to return, and 67% describe security conditions as good or average. However, 72% state that they do not have sufficient income to meet their needs.
3. These findings indicate a significant discrepancy between perceptions and actual experience.

### **IV. Intention to Return: New Registration and Renewal Cases**

1. Among new arrivals (who arrived from January to March 2009) and long-stayers (who arrived before 2009) who recently registered, as well as renewals (who renewed their registration with UNHCR, as required every six months), the vast majority has no intention to return. 88% (74/84) of new arrivals, 90% (54/60) of long-stayers, and 95% (326/344) of renewals have no intention to return.

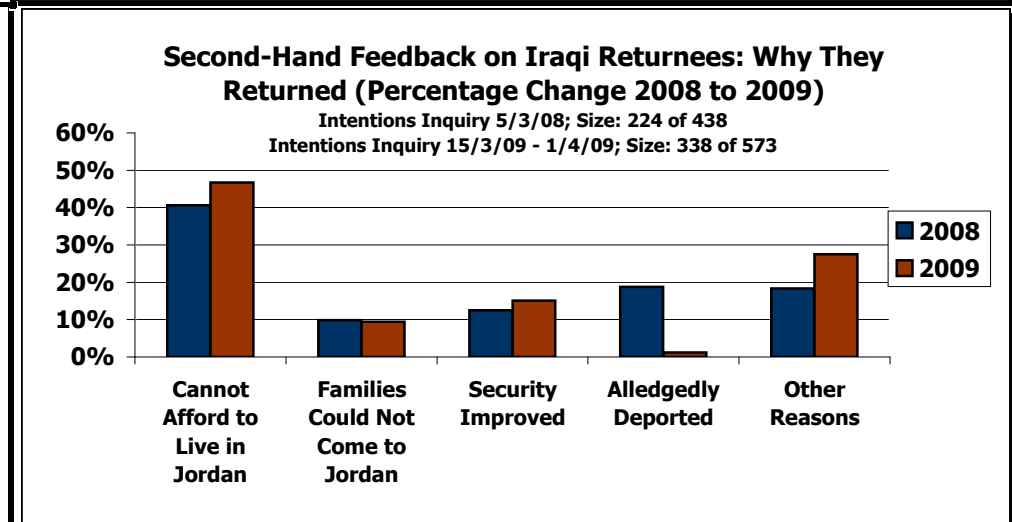
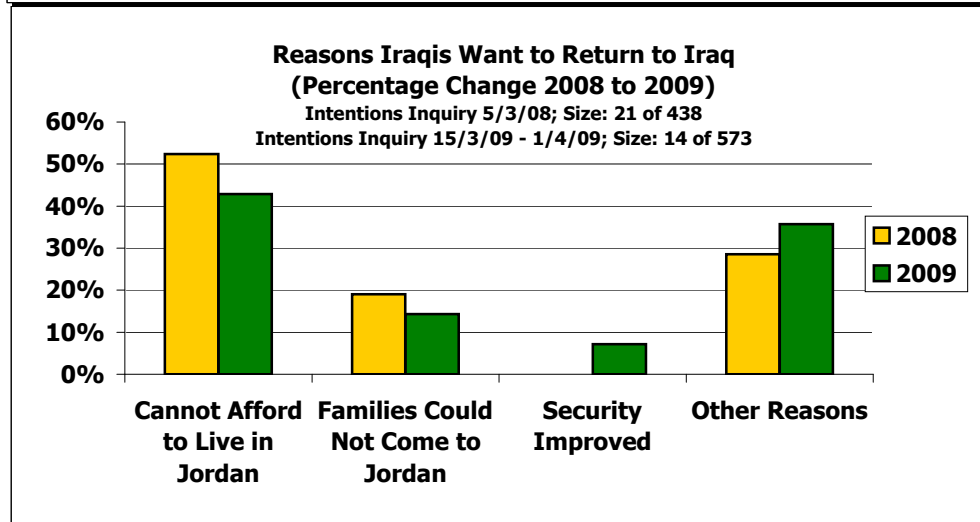
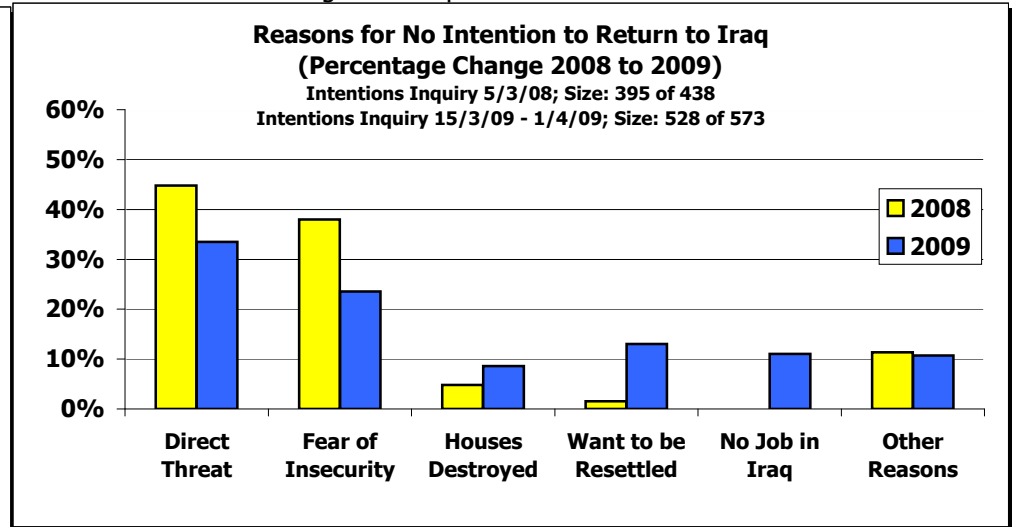
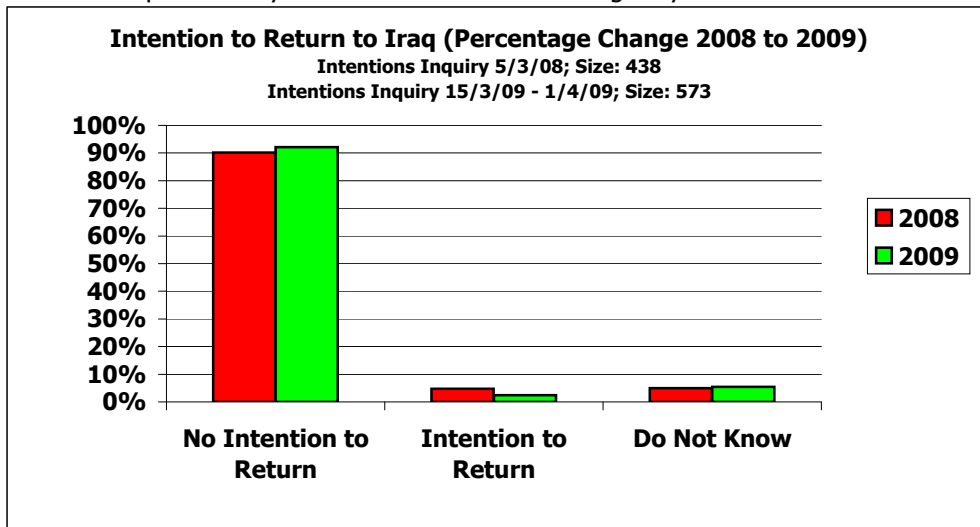
### **V. Sources**

- Intentions Inquiry 15 March-1 April 2009, Conducted by UNHCR Field Unit, BO Amman; Sample Size: 573
- Intentions Inquiry 5-13 March 2008, Conducted by UNHCR Field Unit, BO Amman; Sample Size: 438
- Repatriation Inquiry (Telephone Conversations with Returnees) 15 February-15 March 2009, Conducted by UNHCR Refugee Status Determination Unit, BO Amman; Sample Size: 57
- New Arrivals Registration Inquiry 1-21 April 2009, Conducted by UNHCR Registration Unit, BO Amman; Sample Size: 84
- Long-Stayers Registration Inquiry 1-21 April 2009, Conducted by UNHCR Registration Unit, BO Amman; Sample Size: 60
- Renewals Inquiry 1-21 April 2009, Conducted by UNHCR Registration Unit, BO Amman; Sample Size: 344
- Various focus group discussions conducted with refugees.

# UNHCR Jordan - Intention to Return to Iraq Inquiries

## Inquiries Conducted March 2008 & March & April 2009

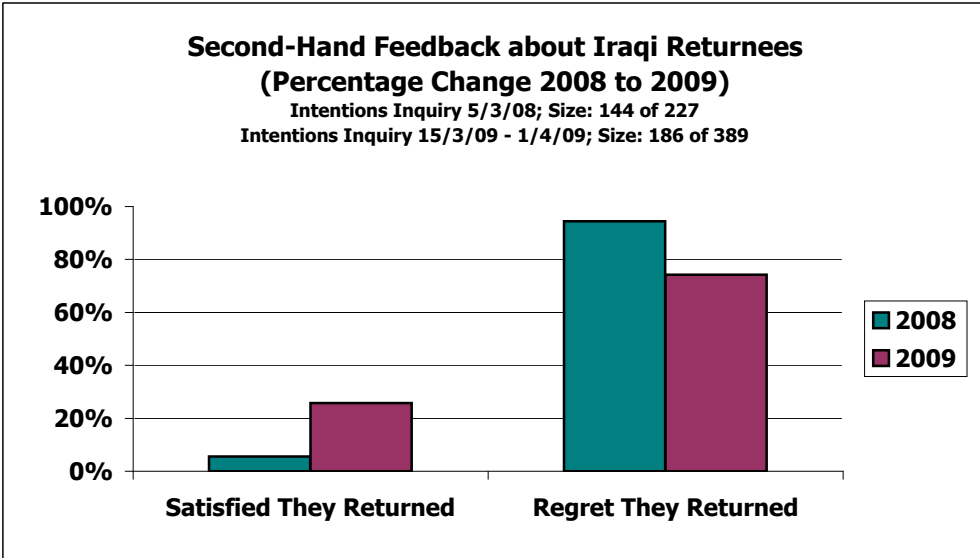
- Only a small percentage of Iraqis in Jordan state an intention to return to Iraq, a small increase from 2008.
- While the fear of direct threat and general insecurity in Iraq has decreased, the ability to meet basic needs in Iraq is severely limited according to returnees.
- The level of dissatisfaction among current returnees may discourage further return.
- Only 1% of Iraqis this year cited deportation as a reason for return, a dramatic decrease from 19% in 2008.
- The desire to be resettled has increased in 2009 but is still surprisingly low.
- Some Iraqis are likely to have incentives to strategically conceal their intentions from UNHCR staff conducting these inquiries.



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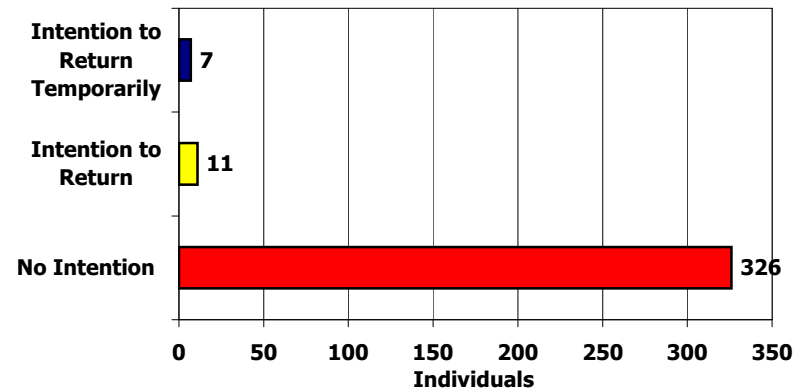
## Inquiries Conducted March 2008 & February, March & April 2009

- Iraqis in Jordan said this year that 74% of their friends/family members who had returned and with whom they were in contact regretted their decision to have returned to Iraq. This is a decrease from 94% last year.
- 88% of new arrival cases who registered with UNHCR between January and March 2009 have no intention to return to Iraq.
- 90% of long-stayer cases who arrived before 2009 and registered with UNHCR between January and March 2009 have no intention to return to Iraq.
- 95% of cases who renewed their registration with UNHCR have no intention to return to Iraq.



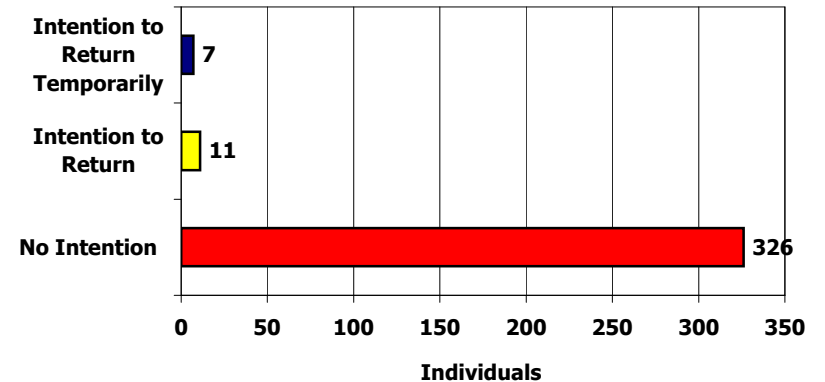
**Renewals: Renewed Apr 2009** Size: 344

No Intention	326
Intention to Return	11
Intention to Return Temporarily	7



**Renewals: Renewed Apr 2009** Size: 344

No Intention	326
Intention to Return	11
Intention to Return Temporarily	7



**Long-Stayers: Arrived before 2009** Size: 60

No Intention	54
Intention to Return	3
Intention to Return Temporarily	3

