



Guidance for Humanitarian Partners on How to Use Know Before You Go (KBYG) Messaging

September 2018

Why We Developed KBYG Messaging:

As of 30 June, 3.9 million of the 5.8 million people displaced from their homes since 2014 have returned to their areas of origin. Humanitarian actors expect additional IDP families to return to their areas of origin during the remainder of 2018. KBYG messages were developed by the Returns Working Group (RWG) and Communication with Communities Task Force (CwC TF) of the Protection Cluster in 2017, and updated in 2018. They are based on the principle that IDPs have and will continue to use their existing social networks to gather information on conditions in their areas of origin (i.e. on security related issues, availability of essential items and basic services, etc.). We also recognize that humanitarian partners do not always possess accurate and up-to-date information on conditions in areas of origin, because such information is constantly changing. Disseminating inaccurate and outdated information – that can influence IDPs' decision-making on when and whether to return – has the potential to do more harm than good.

How to Use the KBYG Messaging:

Partners are encouraged to use the KBYG messaging materials as points of engagement with IDP communities. Assessments and experiences from CwC partners in Iraq have clearly indicated that IDPs prefer face-to-face communication when it comes to awareness raising on important issues.

As a result, the CwC Task Force discourages partners from printing materials and disseminating them without a plan for face-to-face engagement. Successful implementation will allow for IDPs to interact, ask questions and provide feedback.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- KBYG messages can be delivered by protection, CCCM and other humanitarian actors working in and out of camps settings. Decisions on which actors implement the KBYG messaging should be made at the individual camp or informal settlement level, taking into account which actors have operational presence in specific camps or informal settlements and have been briefed on use of the KBYG messages. In urban areas, humanitarian actors may deliver KBYG messages either in static centres or on a mobile basis. Humanitarian actors working in each of these sites know their communities and structures best.

Issues for Consideration:

- **Relevant across Iraq:** KBYG messages have been designed to be used across Iraq. They are not governorate-specific.



- **Language:** The KBYG messages should be delivered in the language of preference of IDPs.
- **Accurate and Up-to-Date Information:** Where humanitarian actors do not have accurate and up-to-date information on conditions in areas of origin, they should be honest with IDPs about this, instead of providing inaccurate or outdated information.
- **Forced, Coerced or Barred Returns:** KBYG messages should not be used in contexts where IDPs are being forced or coerced to return to their areas of origin i.e. when they are unwilling or unable to return. Instead, humanitarian partners should advocate for immediate suspension of forced or coerced returns. Decisions by IDPs on whether and when to return should be voluntary and informed. IDPs should not be forced to return to areas where their safety would be at risk. Conversely, IDPs should not be obstructed from returning to their areas of origin if they wish to do so.
- **Vulnerable Populations:** During displacement, individuals and families are often under severe distress. This can affect their decision-making capacity. At the same time, family composition can change during displacement, including through births, deaths or family members going missing. Certain individuals may be compelled to assume decision-making roles that they may not have had to fulfill in the past. In their new roles, they may not be familiar with all the issues they should consider. Therefore, KBYG messaging can be helpful in prompting IDPs to gather more information on conditions in their areas of origin before making the decision on whether and when to return. Efforts should be made to reach individuals with mobility limitations – i.e. persons with disabilities, chronic illnesses or older persons – or individuals subject to movement restrictions, through household visits.
- **Referral to Specialized Protection Actors:** Any protection-oriented concerns raised by IDPs during interactive sessions should be referred to specialized protection actors.

Community Participation & Engagement:

- **Community Leaders.** It is recommended to engage Mukhtars, Anjumans, religious or community leaders (including women and youth leaders), teachers, or community or camp-based committees to organize group awareness-raising sessions for dissemination of the KBYG messages. These leaders can in turn utilize the KBYG materials in religious facilities, during community activities or household visits.
- **Community Outreach Volunteers (COVs).** It is recommended for male and female COVs to mobilize IDPs in camps or informal settlements to participate in group awareness-raising sessions. COVs are also well placed to refer any protection-oriented concerns raised by IDPs to protection actors.

Amendments to the KBYG Messages:

Where any concerns related to the content of the messaging are raised by IDPs during interactive sessions, protection or CCCM actors should share these with the Returns Working Group and CwC Task Force, so that messages can be amended, if necessary.