

HLP Rapid Assessment – Housing & Utility Needs

I. Background

In the context of the spreading of COVID-19, a number of mitigating measures have been put in place across Iraq beginning early March 2020. Although the nature and scope of the measures vary across regions and Governorates, a common ground is that of imposing social distancing, limitation of trade and businesses and constraining movement. The purpose of this rapid HLP assessment is to measure the impact of the new movement and trade landscape on the housing situation of Mercy Hands pre-existing beneficiaries of legal assistance in Telafar. Specifically, the ultimate objective of this assessment is to understand whether People of Concern (PoC) are in danger of eviction and suspension of utilities.

II. Methodology and Limitations

Due to the rapid nature of this assessment, it was conducted via phone with existing beneficiaries of a Mercy Hands legal assistance program. Out of the full beneficiary pool, 141 beneficiaries are from unique households and were contacted for the survey. While this sample is not full representative of the surrounding area of Telafar, this number of households is partially representative of Telafar’s population with a confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of 7%. However, there is a strong bias in this sample, as it comes from an existing beneficiary pool who have already been shown to be vulnerable in terms of legal assistance.

III. Demographics

A total of 141 households were contacted. Of these, 28% of participants identify as female and 8% as persons with disabilities. 100% of participants are returnees. All participants are from Telafar, except one who lives in Mosul. Overall, the number and gender of individuals represented are as follows:

Household Members	# Individuals	% of Total
# female children aged 0-17	227	25%
# female adults aged 18-59	211	23%
# female adults aged 60+	14	1.5%
Total females	452	50%
# male children aged 0-17	241	26%
# female adults aged 18-59	205	22%
# female adults aged 60+	14	1.5%
Total males	460	50%
TOTAL	912	100%

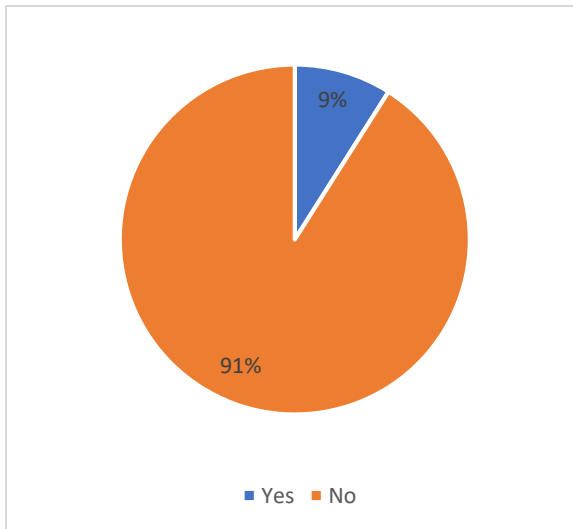
IV. Findings

Overall, this assessment found that measures in place to prevent COVID-19 from spreading have negatively impacted PoC in their ability to guarantee housing and utilities and indeed face danger of eviction. Moreover, this assessment found that participants who identify as female or people living with disabilities (PWD) have been affected to a larger extent when compared to those interviewees who identify as male and without disabilities.

What is your family's current living arrangement?

Type of arrangement	Number of Participants	% of Participants
Rent-free humanitarian shelter out of camp	1	1%
Rent-free living arrangement with family	18	13%
IDP camp	1	1%
Informal settlement	1	1%
Own house	85	60%
Rented house	33	23%
Other	1	1%
TOTAL	141	100%

Will you be able to keep paying rent for the next 3 months?



Out of the 33 participants who reported living in a rented house, **91%** reported expecting being unable to pay rent for the next 3 months.

When asked about what they are doing about the impossibility to pay rent for the next three months, 29 participants replied “I do not know what to do” and 1 participant expressed doing “nothing” about it.

All 33 participants with a rented house replied to have an “individual” landlord and no single written lease agreement. **In addition, 7 participants expect being evicted sometime in the next 3 months.**

Do you pay for utilities?

Answer	Number of interviewees	%	% PWD	% Female
Yes	74	54%	45%	60%
No	64	46%	55%	40%

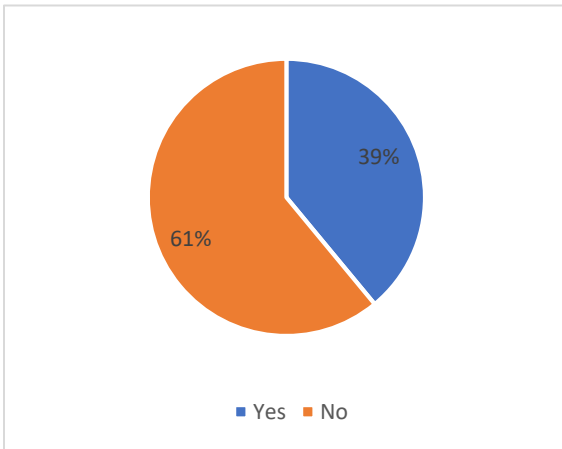
TOTAL	138*	100%	100%	100%
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*3 participants did not answer

Out of the participants that pay for utilities, 69 pay for water and electricity, 1 pays only water and 4 pays only electricity.

Only 4 interviewees raised having their utilities cut as these were “suspended to the entire neighborhood/area.”

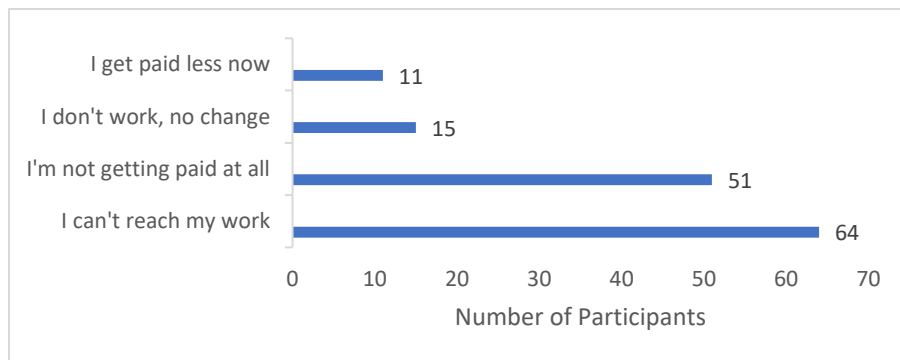
Do you expect to be able to pay for utilities during the next three months?



Among the 70 participants who reported paying for utilities (which have to date not been suspended), **61%** (43) reported expecting being unable to pay utilities for the next 3 months compared to **39%** (27) who can.

100% of PWDs and 78% of females who pay utilities reported expecting being unable to pay utilities for the next 3 months.

How have the recent restrictions affected the ability of adults in your household to work?



Impact of Curfew on Employment Status

- **29%** (41) of participants reported having a job at the time of curfew implementation, of which **41%** (17) reported no longer working.
- The other **61%** (100) reported not having or losing their job around the time of curfew implementation. Of these, **68%** (68) lost their job temporarily but expect to get it back later, and **32%** (32) lost their job permanently.

- Overall, only 17% (24) of participants are currently working.

V. Recommendations

As 91% of those who rent a house reported expecting being unable to pay rent for the next 3 months, and 61% of those who pay utilities reported expecting being unable to pay utilities for the next 3 months, Mercy Hands advocates to include HLP issues, specifically that of danger of eviction and suspension of utilities, as a core component of the COVID-19 response plan. Accordingly, Mercy Hands recommends partners to support PoC with assistance to cover rent and utilities.

In terms of how much assistance to provide, Mercy Hands reviewed SEVAT needs assessment data from 787 households in Telafar to determine the following average costs:

Expense	Amount
Rent	76,300 IQD
Shelter maintenance ¹	912,870 IQD
Electricity	48,900 IQD
Water	15,000 IQD

Therefore, Mercy Hands suggests the average of the monthly assistance should be of approximately 216,272 IQD per household for a period of at least three months.

¹ This amount is divided into 12 months to measure the monthly amount of assistance