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Planning for Forced Displacement in Chronic Conflict Zones. A Settlement Approach for Temporary Humanitarian Camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

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Executive summary

In the shadows of armed conflict and forced migration, the urban landscape is subjected to constant change. Beyond destruction and homelessness, other urban realities are set on course. The lives of populations on the move emerge in parallel spatial dimensions (within and outside the existing ones), changing rapidly and dramatically the built environments in terms of physical settings and meaning. The humanitarian camp is one paradigm of these dimensions and often consolidates into today's urban reality.

Since 2011, with the Syrian conflict and emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), regions with full or relative stability acted as humanitarian hosts for the displaced. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) is definitely one of them. To manage chaos and confusion resulting from multi-folded displacement, the Local Humanitarian Regime (LHR) - consisting of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN agencies, and their Implementation partners (IPs) in coordination with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and its representative bodies - has been planning and setting camps to house the displacees. Through their active presence since the 1990s, UN and aid agencies seem to be drawing from their earlier experiences being in a region that is a recipient and a source of constant waves of mass displacement. The use of the Settlement Approach as a humanitarian device to cope with the massive influx's challenges has proven effective. However, with the prolonged and protracted displacement, the current situation of these camps in relation to their dwellers - as 'recipients of aid'- swings between urbanizing for refugees, temporary for IDPs, and closure for returnees.

Nevertheless, with the resurgence of conflicts - which historically proven is the norm in this specific geo-political context- the availability of existing infrastructure came to the rescue and presented other potentials. Closed existing camp-sites acted as receiving structures for unexpected displacement waves (Bardarash and Bahrka camps, for example). In such chronic conflict zones, the displacement situation's protraction is inevitable, and in many historical narratives, irreversible. The provisional infrastructure may suit the temporary; however, many of these humanitarian camps have already become a permanent part of the region's urban landscape and potential situational towns or – in Bram Jansen's terms (2010) - 'accidental cities.' The prolonged implications of such solutions - subjected to funding fluctuations, changing actors, and piecemeal interventions - on war exhausted infrastructure and economically fragile groups in the KR-I leave a small room -if any- for resilience, producing crippled forms of urbanity (Agier, 2002) and in continuous urgent need to be addressed.

There is a need to rethink displacement planned sites - especially in such chronic conflict zones - not only as a quick fix of reappearing phenomenon but also their long-term impact on natural resources, host communities, and hosted ones (Rooij L.L. & de Stuvier M., 2020). In chronic conflict zones where fatigue is deeply rooted in the societies' everydayness and their built environments, it is essential to rethink the newly installed site's role as an enabler system instead of a dependent one. In order to learn and develop spatial responses to the reoccurring phenomenon in chronic conflict zones, the paper discusses the effectiveness of the settlement approach used as a spatial apparatus to manage mass displacements.

Introduction:

Forced displacement has inescapable impacts on the urban reality and the lives of both the displacees and their hosts. The coercive move is deeply correlated with loss, rupture, and disruptions of the ordinary, all echoing in urban forms and associated with (partly or entirely) the disappearance of a place(s) and the emergence of another. In the past decade, the resurgence of humanitarian camps in hot spot zones -as humanitarian physical environments -dominated the media. Whether planned, self-settled, or reappropriated existing buildings - depending on the geographical context - these settings are part of our urban reality today.

Since 2011, with the Syrian conflict and war with the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), relatively (or fully) stable neighboring regions acted as 'safe-shores' for the displacement waves. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) has been definitely one of these regions. In 2020, the number of the registered refugees and Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) in the region was about a million (UNHCR Evaluation Service, 2020). To manage these multi-folded displacements, the Local Humanitarian Regime (LHR) - consisting of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN agencies, and their Implementation partners (IPs) in coordination with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and its representative bodies - has been planning, setting, and facilitating camps to accommodate the displacees. The use of the Settlement Approach as a humanitarian device has proven effective in the immediate response, serving a primary urban function: sheltering. In the following years, a cascade of crises reaffirmed the region -historical- character as a chronic conflict zone: starting from the 2014 fiscal crisis[1], renewed political unrests, armed conflicts (across and within the borders), and finally by the current Covid-19 ongoing pandemic accompanied with oil prices dropping (UNHCR, 2020a). As the displacement became protracted, the pressures on the already exhausted conflict-ridden infrastructure, degraded environment, and affected populations, are becoming unbearable. These crises are working in tandems and turning the situation in the region into a 'full-blown' humanitarian and environmental crisis, triggering and generating waves of forced displacement and reshaping the region's urban landscapes (World Bank, 2015). For this study's purpose, we will focus mainly on the planned humanitarian camps: the refugees and the IDP camps.

Humanitarian camps represent microworlds ruptured and patched up in bounded geography, "layered and ordered by diverse objects and programs" (Hailey, 2009). They are assumed to come into being and fade away when the 'problem is solved'. These settings' pre-supposed nature is temporary and seen as a last resort (IOM, NRC, & UNHCR, 2015). They are conceived and appropriated to control and manage an emergency, respond to immediate needs of 'make ends meet' and prolonged 'make-do' until 'a more suitable solution' presents itself elsewhere 'soon'. In addition to the camp's hardly predictable life-span, the periodic recurrence of the triggering phenomenon of forced migration and associated indispensable spatial impacts seem to be a norm, at least in the few previous decades in the GS. Consequently, the humanitarian problem also becomes a development issue. These facts have been fundamental in employing the Human Settlement Approach

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[1] The central government in Baghdad failed to pass a budget in 2014 and did not make the agreed fiscal transfers to KRG, contracting the region's fiscal space. (World Bank, 2015)

(HS-A) as an urban planning solution, seeded in isolation and/or plugged-in to more urbanized areas. Nevertheless, the way these seeds and plug-ins function is mainly related to the boundaries of their impact and the hosting context. In KR-I, the current situation for these camps and their dwellers - as 'recipients of aid'- swings between urbanizing for refugees, temporary for IDPs, and closure for returnees, consequently leading to impeccable waste of capital, land and irreversible environmental and socio-economic impacts. While many reoccurring approaches advocate for sustainability and durability, the paradoxical relation between the typical, namely temporary solution, and the future-development-oriented concepts attached to settlements (in terms of sustainability) result in reality in unfinished interventions in endless need of a 'boost'. Short or long life-span, the planned camp still imposes, just like any habitat, pressure on natural resources and livelihood opportunities, while its infrastructure still falls short in terms of operation.

This paper takes the planned humanitarian camps in KR-I as a case study to rethink the settlement approach's effectiveness as a spatial apparatus to manage mass displacements in chronic conflict zones. This workpaper focuses on using the settlement approach as a tool for planning camps in KR-I to contain a problem and provide humanitarian service and their consequent spatial progression. It aims to read these settings' current status, the advantages, disadvantages of the settlement approach between the apparatus or the machine, the everyday spaces, and the plausible future scenarios of these lived environments. This paper also aspires to bring attention to the unsustainable spatial practices that can be veiled in the name of temporariness, aid, development, and the potentials that these physical settings may present. This paper will first briefly introduce the historical development of the settlement approach's use in humanitarian contexts and the current logic behind it. It will then focus on the settlement planning and use in KR-I for forced displacement moves, revealing the region's nature as a chronic conflict zone. After that, the paper will come closer to humanitarian camps' current situation in the region, their spatial features, and their impacts. The paper will conclude by bringing to attention the relationship between sustainability and forced displacement, and the latent potentials that this approach in such contexts.

The Human Settlement Approach (HS-A) in Planning for Forced Displacement

Born out of chaos and in need of a 'fast deployable solution' to 'manage and provide', the settlement approach has been indeed one of the main tools to manage the forced displacement problem spatially in KR-I. The settlement approach in displacement situations commonly adopts the Human Settlement Approach (HS-A) as an alternative solution to camps (UNHCR, 2016a, 2018, 2021) for mass displacement in the GS. The International Humanitarian Regime (IHR) advocates this approach -when suitable- with longer-term vision, to defy the limitations that the 'camp' imposes on the occupants' freedoms of movement and access to services and economic opportunities (GSC, 2018), promising more durability and marching towards sustainability. The approach focuses on development priorities by adopting the human settlement in the spatial design for refugees to offer the best 'operative atmosphere' for humanitarian response and more 'dignified' lives for the displacees (UNHCR, 2021).

The focus of HS-A to "humanize and socialize the whole development process" is not new. This conceptual framework was built upon modernism's remnants and lays its roots in the late 1970s debates in addressing the 'uncontrolled urbanization problems', and mainly focuses its application in the 'developing world'- called today the Global South (GS) (D'Auria, de Meulder, & Shannon, 2010). This approach's early use in a humanitarian context in the GS can be traced back to the 1970s in Frederick C. Cuny's work - himself being a former marine- and his Intertact Group (Cuny, 1977). The logic of planning withdrew its roots from the military grid of 'operation,' the reductionist to 'make-do' and mashed it up with development logics of the sites and services concepts – generated in mostly in colonial contexts- by Turner in the late 60s housing provision programs (Turner & Fichter, 1972) and models of 'self-built' insertions by Habrakan and Alexander (for example), among many others (D'Auria et al., 2010).

The application of these approaches in emergency response demonstrated several problems: the poorly calculated impacts on the host community/country coupled with the inconsistent nature of aid have been generating large-scale problems of infrastructural fatigue, socio-economic hardship, and environmental degradation, especially in conflict-ridden contexts, becoming an overlapping of emergency and development issues. As a response, the global shelter cluster (GSC) has been developing 'the Settlement Approach' to solve these problems and support these settings' possibility of becoming more integrated with their hosts. The approach incorporates the humanitarian-development-peace nexus as "the transition or [the]overlap between the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the provision of long-term development assistance"(Strand, 2020). The approach focuses on three main fundamental issues: duration, (urban)integration with the host community , and sustainability (including self-reliance, durability, and socio-economic resilience).

The settlement approach adopts the 'human settlement' as a primary unit to deliver better human sharing assistance, paving the way towards a longer-term outcome and works with a clear socio-spatial framework for humanitarian agencies to deliver the best humanitarian response (GSC, 2020). The components of the settlement approach are:

The physical component is the material structure (including infrastructure and shelter) that the LHR provides on-site, the physical intervention from material/non-food items (NFI) provision to planning, conceiving, and upgrading the site.

The soft component is the non-material components that make the physical _tick:_ by programming the use and management of how physical components should operate and be operated. This component includes building collaborative efforts and supporting the existing (or founding in extreme cases) local bodies to deal with the displacement problem.

Users are the human - the personified - components that run this machine (by working or living). They do so through the physical component's use by implementing the soft component to provide the best service for occupational groups, and its actual end-use as an end product by the displacees themselves. These users can be seen in their relation to the use of the camp's site: as camp operators and camp dwellers[2].

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[2] Camp operators perceive the camp as a workspace representing institutional, governmental, and humanitarian bodies and their IPs. Their camp presence is 'mission-bound' (working hours, short-term missions), hence their use of its spatial structure. This group includes international/ national staff and displaced individuals who live in other displacement sites, and their presence in the camp is only work-related. In comparison, camp dwellers are the displaced group who arrived at the camp as a temporary occupational group waiting for a better solution somewhere else. Their presence in the camp is 'living' related, supposedly 'undefined' temporary, generally

The design guidelines and the physical planning for the current 'refugee settlement' in the UNHCR Emergency Handbook work with the Sphere Handbook Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere Association, 2018; UNHCR, 2020e). The devised schemes' typical physical component is a standardized iron grid of sectors of blocks consisting of communities (each of 16 plots/families). These physical elements can be shifted and sorted in accordance to natural and human-made features, relying on the existing connections to a host community infrastructure (water, sewage, electricity grid) and advocating proximity to an urban center to access economic opportunities and 'share' other services with the host (UNHCR, 2016a). Moreover, the newly released guidance note for settlement approach by the GSC in December (2020) acts as a manual for the best service provision, directed to the operators to 'maximize' the approach's 'benefit' that the affected groups (dwellers and operators) will receive and engage with (GSC, 2020). It expands these benefits to include the host communities and ensures the multi-sectoral level's engagement. The guidance note also focuses on the challenges that operators may face to 'technically' address the problems, whereas the dwellers become 'the source' to feed the information about the 'issues'. The participation is mainly related to 'identifying problems; and building/using these solutions as a form of livelihood provision (GSC, 2020).

The approach treats the site as a machine that targets an end-user with a good product while the operators 'run it smoothly'. In practice, the camp's HS paradigm falls into a proportional reduction of the 'city'/'town' entity and function, exacerbates its infrastructure and economic dependence on the host (urban) contexts. While considering the humanitarian response's tangible and intangible realities to keep the situation managed, in contrast, the application of minimum standards ensures that the camp's existence still hovers in the endurance mood, with the 'moving-ahead scenarios' almost eliminated from the equation. This spatial paradigm reflects the "biopolitical nature" seen in minimum standards just to keep the temporary "exception operative" (Genel, 2006).

Furthermore, most of the 'technical problems' are rooted in the gap of how the physical and soft components of these sites are used and perceived by operators and dwellers. This mechanical production focus that is 'sensitive to the social factors' has neglected to a large extent that camp as a lived space by not considering 'systematic failure' where the use of this 'machine' moves beyond operation and design needs. It overlooked largely how temporary displacement is lived and perceived by camp dwellers, and turns a blind eye on the camp as a living organism of the incremental everydayness reinserted in its spaces. This negligence results in repetition, unrequired interventions and generates additional dependencies and frustrations for both users. Hence, it fails largely to achieve its goals of integration, durability and sustainability.

In the following sections, we will go deeper in reading the uses and complications that occur with HS-A's employment in managing forced displacements in KR-I. Though using the same physical components; however, HS-A has been programmed, operated, perceived, and used differently.

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prolonged. The camp's use as a lived space includes practices of inhabitation and bonding (space -group), gradually moving towards a dwelling loci. This group may also work in their camp, whether short-term jobs, working with local or international organizations, or being entrepreneurs (opening their businesses, for example, in the camp).

A Brief History of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The Kurdistan region of Iraq (KR-I) represents an interesting case to understand how forced displacement and the use of HS-A, an apparatus to house the displacees, have been reshaping urban landscapes, the political and socio-economic realities, and the plausible futures of this particular geography.

Kurdistan, the land that the Kurds claim their historical entitlement, was divided through the nation states' project (1916) among Turkey, Iran, Syria, and Iraq. The fierce conflict over the borders to claim the right to a Kurdish identity geographically separated by nation-states' lines has created multiple displacement waves, which became attached to the Kurdish experience[3] (McDowall, 2004).

The Kurdistan region of Iraq (KR-I) is an autonomous region of the Federal Republic of Iraq. Though the Kurdish region's autonomy agreement was signed in 1970[4] (Harris, 1977), it only became fully effective after the 2005 constitution of Iraq[5]. The region has a state-like-status. The region is formed of 4 governorates: Duhok, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Halabja. The majority of its population are Kurds.

Figure 1- Left: Kurdistan Identified by population distribution. Source (Stansfield, 2003, p. 28).
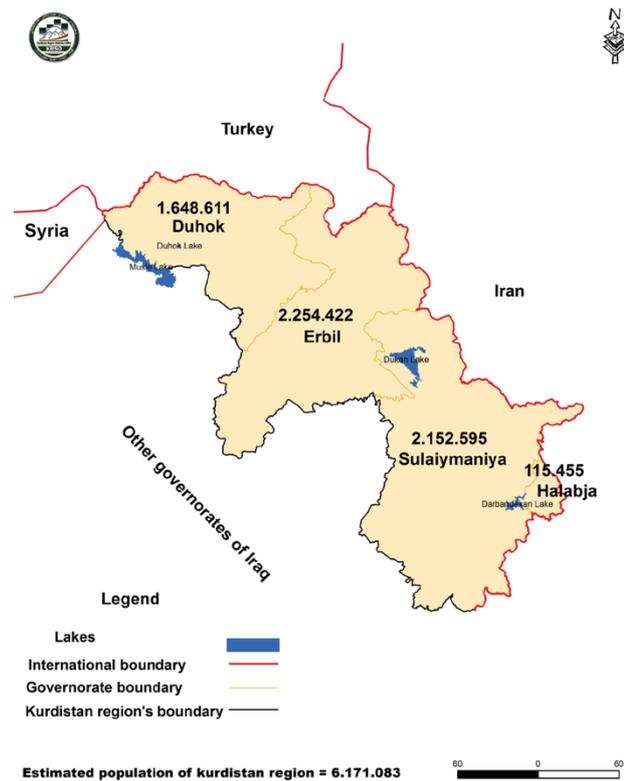
Figure 2 - Right: The map of estimated population of KR-I in 2020 . Source (KRSO, 2020)

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[3] In the absence of clear recognition of Kurdistan as a political entity, a Kurdish national dream of a united homeland surpasses the reality, it exists and survives through the collective belief generationally transmitted (O'Shea, 2004)

[4] This agreement is called the 1970 peace accord after years of armed struggle for self-determination between the Kurdish resistance and the Iraqi army. This agreement is the first of its kind for the Kurds to get an acknowledged legitimacy for their right to the land of KR-I with official boundaries on a map in their history as a nation.

[5] Article 117 of the Iraqi constitution 2005 specifically recognized the Kurdistan region as an integral component of federal Iraq, while Iraq's official languages are both Arabic and Kurdish in Article 4. The constitution also incorporated general principles of civic, cultural, political rights, and religious freedom into the region's governance structure. Political processes and institutions also became more representative to include diverse parties, ethnic and religious groups. Despite their ongoing political differences, the KDP and PUK decided to run one unified Kurdistan list for the Iraqi parliament and Kurdistan National Democratic list for the KNA for December 2005 legislative elections in Baghdad and Erbil, respectively. The parties also suppressed the 7% threshold to encourage small parties' participation in the elections.

Throughout the modern history of Iraq, the region's semi-emancipation came after a bloody series of conflicts and uprisings, which impacted the urban scene as well. The KR-I has been subjected to 'in and out' forced displacement moves, produced, and reproduced due to different resurgences of disputes, with 'stability' intervals. Unsurprisingly, these events have been accompanied by shifts and changes in the inhabitability of specific spatial settings that escalated dramatically to full annihilations of individuals and their habitats. In the regions' history, the settlement approach - as an urban planning tool - appeared in various models with different meanings for the operators and the dwellers of these settings. For this study, we will focus on forced displacements and their sites in the period of KR-I since the1970.

The Settlement Approach use for Forced Eviction in the KR-I (1958-1991):

Since the declaration of Iraq as a Republic in 1958, an 'urbanization' movement took place following the trends of modernity to develop the 'unserved rural parts'[6] of the country following the Iraq National Housing program (Doxiadis Associates & DBoGI, 1963; Genat, 2017; Stansfield, 2003), using the human settlement modern schemes and guidelines developed by Doxiads Associates[7] (Doxiadis, 1971; Steele, 1997). The first generation of these models was named in Arabic mojamma't assrya (modern collectives مجمعات عصريّة)[8], employing iron-grid layout as a tool, these settings had connections to improved services and infrastructures compared to the 'primitive situation in the unserved villages.' (Genat, 2017; Moldoch, 2017; Recchia, 2014).
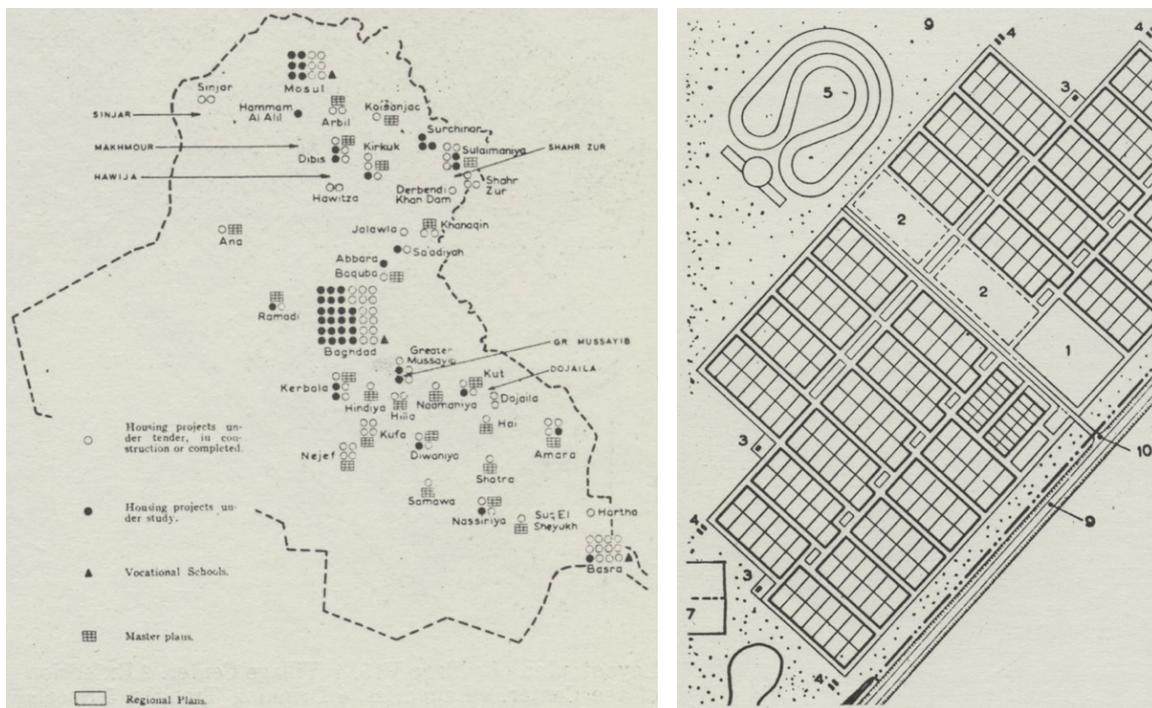

Figure 3: Housing activities in the national housing program of Iraq and generic layout for the town, developed by Doxiadis Associates (Doxiadis Associates & DBoGI, 1963)

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[6] A significant construction movement took place across Iraq, including the region, fueled by the Iraqi government's revenues selling the oil.

[7] Hassan Fathy was a member of the Doxiades Associates in Athens between 1957 and 1962. Fathy entered wholeheartedly into both the intellectual and social activities of the Ekistics group, including the work on the Iraqi national housing program, lecturing on the relationship between climate and architecture at Athens Technical Institute, and joining the City of the Future' research project then underway at the Ekistics Centre itself. (Steele, 1997)

[8] which were introduced in 1958-1961in parallel with the land-reforms laws and the collective farms (قرى إسكان الفلاحين)

In the official media and several law decrees, the central government of Iraq (CGoI) made promises to address the region's displaced population needs resulting from the earlier disputes and armed operations[9]. These decrees included the 'reconstruction' and modernization of the region's damaged parts (Genat, 2017). By 1974, 250 'modern villages' popped up in rural Iraq, including the Kurdish region.

This temporary stability period ended in 1974 after the political disputes resumed between the Kurdish resistance and the Iraqi government; several promises in the autonomy agreement were either breached over and over or never saw the light[10], as "The Ba'th Party embarked on the Arabization of the oil-producing areas around Khanaqin, evicting Kurdish farmers and replacing them with Arab tribal families from southern Iraq" (HRW, 2004). Around 64 villages were Arabized, many others were bulldozed, and new Arab settlements were built nearby. These 'breaches' led to a Kurdish revolt quickly collapsed with the Algerian Accord's signage in 1975 between Iraq and Iran[11].

Between 1975-1980, around 400-700 thousand Kurds were (forcibly) evicted and relocated to collective towns with iron grid settings for displacees such as Bahrka, Harir, and Qushtapa [12](and more than a hundred others), while around 1400 villages were leveled with the ground (McDowall, 2004; Moldoch, 2017). The 'modern village' model started to be reduced to a mere iron-grid to be filled, simplified uniform concrete block structures with modern utility and commercial areas, placed close to farmlands, factories, and workshops for economic purposes. Service provision included a connection to the national electricity grid, water and sanitation networks, food rations distribution, health (though inadequate), and education facilities (Leezenberg, 2000)[13]. Though displacees were free to move, they were not allowed to go back to their villages in the buffer zone. This modular spatial planning style was utterly alien from the farmers' former habitat, with a drastic implication on culture and lifestyle in the national assimilation attempts[14]. Being plucked out of their ancestral land and the traditional ways of life had drastic economic and social implications on the whole region to this day (Mahzouni, 2013). That period's climate was full of mistrust, suspicion, and fear (Moldoch, 2017).

This mistrust mood intensified in the Iraq and Iran war period (1980 – 1988), which reached its climax in the genocidal Anfal campaign[15] (1988). In this heated political and violent

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[9] This plan was put on hold in the Kurdish region as the political disputes between the Kurdish parties lead by the Mullah Mostafa Barzani supported by the Shah of Iran, and the Iraqi army became bloody (Mahzouni, 2013). Consequently, voluntary and forced evacuations of Kurdish mountain villages rendered 'unsafe' have created waves of displaced Kurdish groups in urgent need of a temporary safe shelter. The 'modern' and 'development' aspects of this housing and settlement scheme were reactivated after the autonomy agreement was signed between the Kurds and the Baathist regime who took control.

[10] "The scale of the displacement of Kurds in the north during the mid-1970s was immense, displacing the entire Kurdish population from an area reaching from the town of Khanaqin, close to the Iranian border, to the Syrian and Turkish border areas around Sinjar" (HRW, 2004).

[11] The agreement included the withdrawal of the Iranian support of the 'Kurdish rebels in the mountains,' the Kurdish resistance fleeing from Iraq, and the demarcation and evacuation of a 'cordon sanitaire' for national security safety, covered villages of Kurdish leadership and supporters of the resistance. "By the late 1970s, the Iraqi government had forcibly evacuated at least a quarter of a million Kurdish men, women, and children from areas bordering Iran and Turkey. Their villages were destroyed to create a cordon sanitaire along these sensitive frontiers, and the inhabitants relocated to settlements built for that purpose located on the main highways in army-controlled areas of Iraq Kurdistan". (HRW, 2004).

[12] The three mentioned towns were all constructed in 1978, housing displacees from different villages and Kurdish tribes evicted from the mountains.(Stansfield, 2003)

[13] In the beginning, this provision was also on a household scale supported by modern applications such as TV's refrigerators and financial compensation for the loss that came with the relocation (Genat, 2017),

[14] On a social level, there have been social regroupings for the populations coming from the same ancestral village. Men were forced to enroll in the army while children and youth received military training, women had to attend evening education courses in the national campaign or lose their food ration cards following the compulsory literacy act (Moldoch, 2017).

[15] "Conducted between February and September 1988, Al-Anfal is the bloodiest campaign that Saddam Hussein lead against the Kurds. The military operation takes its name from the eighth Sura of the Quran; Al-Anfal literally means 'the spoil of war' and it refers to the successful 642 CE battle of Badr against the infidels. The religious reference was to justify (or reinforce) the motivations of this large scale genocide campaign. In the course of seven months, the Kurdistan Region was hit by several strikes with chemical weapons followed by heavy air bombardments on those who tried to escape. It is estimated that about 100,000 people died during Anfal" (Recchia, 2014)

climate, many groups of the Kurds who previously supported the resistance were seen as a potential threat, named traitors and saboteurs (Moldoch, 2017) that tend to support the enemies of the sovereign. The eviction, destruction, and depopulation of the Kurdish villages increased rapidly while the Arabization process intensified[16]. During the Anfal campaign, the Iraqi government destroyed around 4050 Kurdish villages and towns, displacing hundreds of thousands of Kurds (Moldoch, 2017) while "their livestock would be killed or confiscated, and their agricultural fields and orchards would be destroyed" (Leezenberg, 2004). Between flight and expulsion, the majority of the displaced Kurdish who remained in the country were resettled in the large-scale "complexes" or "collective villages" built by the Iraqi government (Genat, 2017; HRW, 2004; Mahzouni, 2013; McDowall, 2004; Recchia, 2012). This settlement model - named mojamma't qassryya (coercive collectivesمجمعات قسريّة) - has changed drastically from its development to incarceration to hold the enemies of the state[17], mainly gated, and the roads cutting the settlements were easily controllable by the military[18.] This generation of these towns population did not receive any compensation or money for housing, no running water, sewage network, no electricity, and without any signs of life [19](Leezenberg, 2004). It is estimated that 32 towns were set through the KR-I at this time , army-guarded (HRW, 2004), and acting de facto as open-air prisons. These typologies have changed forever the understanding of an urban setting as material culture in the Kurdistan region of Iraq (Recchia, 2012).

The Settlement Approach use for Relief and Development in the KR-I (1991-2012):

In the wake of the Iraqi army's defeat in Kuwait during the first Gulf war from 1990 – 1991[20], a large-scale uprising spread all over the country[21], which was easy for the Iraqi regime to crush. Around two million refugees crossed and filled the mountains' mountainous borders with Turkey and Iran in drastic conditions, adding to the pre-existing problem that resulted from the former period (Rudd, 2004; Yildiz, 2004). To solve the

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[16] In the Human Rights Watch Report (2004) highlighted this process: "The methods used by the Iraqi government to effect the forced displacements of the 1970s and 1980s involved first and foremost military force and intimidation: entire Kurdish villages were completely depopulated and bulldozed by Iraqi forces. But the Iraqi government followed up the brutality with legal decrees aimed at consolidating the displacement. First, the property deeds of the displaced Kurds were invalidated by legal decree, most frequently without compensation or with nominal compensation. The Iraqi government nationalized the agricultural lands, making them the property of the Iraqi state. The Iraqi government simultaneously embarked on a massive campaign to resettle the formerly Kurdish areas with Arab farmers and their families, thus completing the Arabization process. The Iraqi government did not have to look far for eager recruits for its Arabization campaign: located southwest of Mosul was the large al-Jazeera desert, home to hundreds of thousands of loyalist nomadic Sunni Arab tribesmen. Enticed with free, irrigated land, and encouraged by their tribal sheikhs, the Al-Jazeera tribesmen abandoned their hard lives in the desert and moved north en masse" (HRW, 2004).

[17] Symbolically confinement was reasserted by the erection of the military posts around the camp to control people's movement while decorated with the Baa'thist regime's symbols and portraits of Saddam Hussein (Moldoch, 2017).

[18] The displacees, still to some extent, received a piece of land and a budget for housing; they were also provided with food rations monthly distributed. These settlements were connected with electricity, water supply systems, schools, and health points as well.

[19] Leezenberg (2004) describes these settings: "After the amnesty, the surviving deportees were brought back to the north and simply dumped on relocation sites near the main roads to the region's major cities, surrounded by barbed-wire fences. Unlike the victims of most earlier deportations, they were not provided with any housing, construction materials, food, or medicine (let alone financial compensation), but just left to their own devices". Moreover, in her two-decade work with Anfal campaign survivors , One of Moldoch's interviewees depicts the situation "The soldiers marked a small plot with sticks. They said here, this is your place now. And then we went around and collected stones here and there. Some people gave us some bricks, so we build a room.". (Interview with Kurdish women of the Anfal survivors, Rabea, 2002 in (Moldoch, 2017).

[20] This event led to issuing the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 678 (UNSC, 1991) and the creation offer collision of 35 countries forces led by the US army. The military operation named 'Operation Desert Storm'.

[21] including the Kurds in the north and Shi'as in the south. . the individuals were brutally suppressed, detained, or killed.

'humanitarian problem'[22], the UN Security Council passed the 688 resolution declared northern Iraq as a 'no-fly zone'[23], a 'safe-haven' for humanitarian intervention and granting the *de facto* autonomy state to the Kurds in the area (HRW, 2004; Leezenberg, 2000).

To a large extent, this period was the root of the humanitarian-development approach marching towards sustainability in the KR-I and putting what seems to be the roots of the current body of the KRG. In this period, the HS-A differed in use and meaning in two phases. The first phase is the immediate relief phase: setting temporary -military/relief -planned resettlement camps rehabilitating the damaged urban areas. The second phase is the Oil-for-Food Program (OFFP) reconstruction and rehabilitation phase that concentrated on spatial−development interventions in the collective -coercive -settlements and displacement sites, transforming them into spaces of resilience and progress. Both phases included working on the soft/users components: setting up the institutional frame and governmental bodies (Yildiz, 2004) and empowerment programs.

   With the No-fly zone declaration in 1991, president G. Bush announced that 'Operation Provide Comfort' followed by 'Operation Encourage Hope' would establish in the 'hot spot' of Iraqi Kurdistan 'UN-protected enclaves' (Brown, 1995). The allied military forces started to set a series of relying on points within Iraqi Kurdistan; these sites were: food distribution points, way-stations, temporary camps, and resettlement camps (in the lowlands), converting the region into an intensified arena of military relief operations (Yildiz, 2004). More than ten resettlement camps were set in two months, while the Turkish camps across the borders were about to be closed (Brown, 1995; Rudd, 2004)[24].
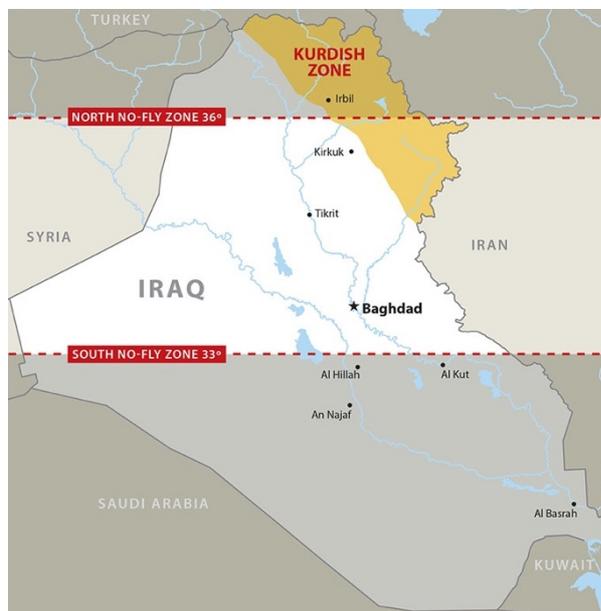

Figure 4: Map of Iraq showing Air restrictions and no fly zone areas (33°, 36° lines) covering the Kurdish Zone between 1991-2003 (Veritans. Jones, 2008)

Figure 5: The "protected enclave" set by the allied forces in 1991, and the powers in control in 1992. (Institute Kurde De Paris, 1992)

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[22] The UN Security Council passed the 688 resolution to remove the threat on International Security and peace and ensure safe passage for humanitarian aid (UNSC, 1991). US, Britain, and France unilaterally declared in 'no-fly zone' over northern Iraq.
[23] The no fly zone would remain in place until the fall over the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein in 2003.
[24] All the words in italic are in Kurdish which is the used dialect in that part of the KR-I. Zanon also translates into "pasture land, which was part of the seasonal migration for farms and semi-nomads" (van Bruinessen, 1992).

Using the developed layout for community camp, Cuny and his team present in the field reappropriated the US marine camps' designs to "adjust to the needs of the Kurds," especially in terms of cultural sensitivities and the degree of group economy that does not align with military logics (Rudd, 2004)[25]. Camps had iron-grid layouts of 60 person *zanon* (communities), grouped into *gunds* (villages) of 1000 people. The capacity of the *bajeer* (town/ settlement) was 21,000-45,000 individuals. In the meantime, there have been different attempts to rehabilitate the damaged infrastructures and services in the Zakho area. These provision efforts lasted for two months with expectations of stabilization as the "survival needs were being met," The mission was accomplished with the return of the refugees back home from Turkey. Ironically, some of these sites were set earlier as collective towns in the late 70s and 80s (ex: Kani Masi, Begova) transformed into resettlement camps, subverted their notion from confinement to relief.

Figure 6: Arial view of one of the camps near Zakho in 1991, the image shows the iron grid layout divided by roads into *bajeer* (settlement), *zanon* (communities) and *gunds* (villages) (Brown, 1995). It is clear the use of the community unit model by Cuny & Intertect.
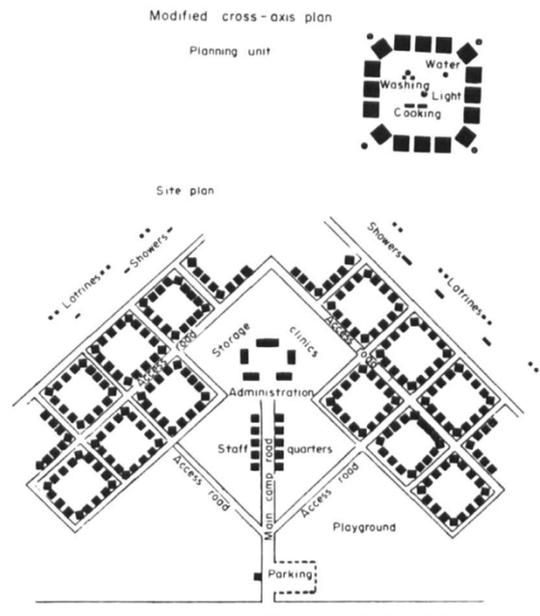
Figure 7: Cross Axis Plan model of refugee camps proposed by Fred Cuny and Intertect in the late 1970s. The community unit is the primary planning component. (Cuny, 1977)

The situation remained critical though that the military 'life-saving' mission was 'accomplished'. Hence, the humanitarian relief responsibility was handed over to UNHCR in the same year. Meanwhile, the KRG had an ambivalent international recognition, while CGoI considered the KRG illegal (Leezenberg, 2000; McDowall, 2004; Natali, 2010; Yildiz, 2004). Coupled with political instability and economic freeze[26], the situation in the region became critical.

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[25] "Cuny helped these units adjust to the needs of the Kurds. For example, when the MEU engineers began putting up the tents, they wanted to align them in an efficient checkerboard pattern similar to that of a military encampment. But Cuny recommended that they be arranged in clusters that allowed families and extended groups some autonomy. In another case, while trying to conserve building material for the maximum benefit, the engineers favoured latrines known as three-holers, which could accommodate several people at the same time. Again Cuny explained that the Kurds would not share latrines, making the single enclosed models more useful" (Rudd, 2004)

[26] The external international economic sanctions on the CGoI, and CGoI economic siege on the region.

In 1995, the OFFP was established to elevate civilians' extended suffering under the sanctions imposed on Iraq[27]; the KR-I was targeted to receive 13% of Iraqi oil sales proceeds to elevate hardship, provide humanitarian goods, and conduct reconstruction projects for civilians' needs. The UN agencies presence and the humanitarian-development nature of their activities became stipulated under the OFFP (UN Habitat, 2003), giving them the legitimacy - in this power vacuum between KRG and CGoI - to substituting the institutional quasi-state bodies and act as a "surrogate state" (Crisp & Slaughter, 2009; Kagan, 2011; Miller, 2018)[28].

The UN-Habitat under the OFFP has Implemented the 'Settlements Rehabilitation Program'. The program targeted the IDPs and the vulnerable groups (VGs) [29], linking spatial rehabilitation, self-built models, and improvements of services and (urban) infrastructures to stability. The Settlements Rehabilitation Program also focused on the 'society' as part of the rehabilitation program; this included: empowerment, capacity enhancement, local and community participation in the 'planning design and implementation' of the program. Hence, the Settlements Rehabilitation Program shifted the focus to development on the physical, soft, and users components of its HS-A.

In the early stages of the Settlements Rehabilitation Program, the intent was to dismantle the collective towns and resettle the coercively displaced back to their villages after being reconstructed (Moldoch, 2017). However, with the scarcity of opportunities for economic resilience and access to education at the time, IDPs became more vulnerable with the prolonged displacement, which hindered their desire to return to their original towns (UN Habitat, 2001). Consequently, collective towns' improvement became one of the main components of the Settlements Rehabilitation Program [30].
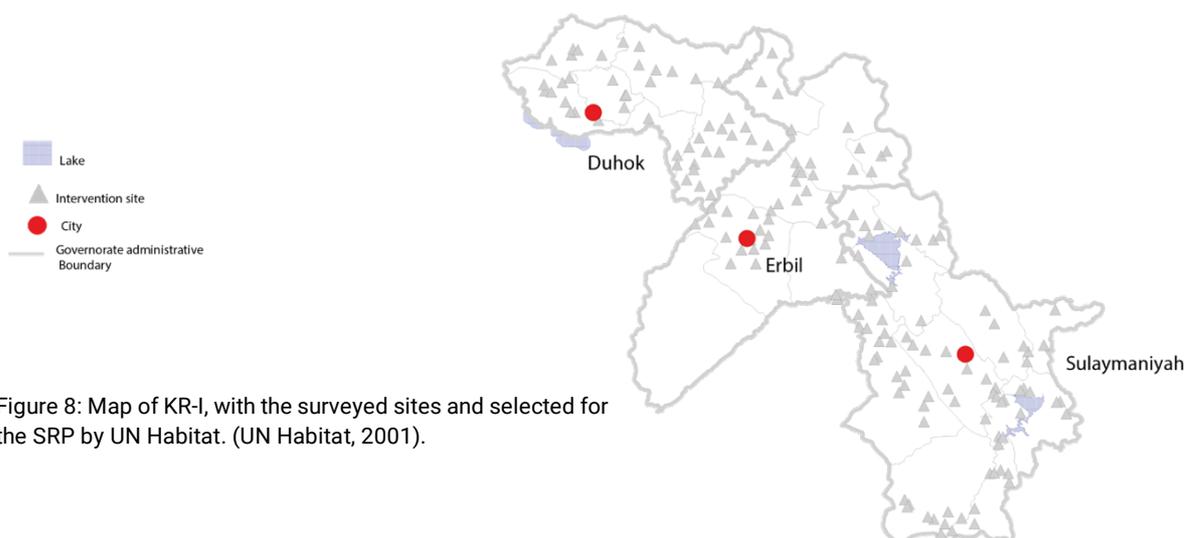

Figure 8: Map of KR-I, with the surveyed sites and selected for the SRP by UN Habitat. (UN Habitat, 2001).

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[27] under Bill Clinton's administration after the first Gulf war (UNSC, 1995) under the UN Security Council resolution 986, to allow Iraq to sell oil for the world market in exchange for food, medicine, and other humanitarian needs for ordinary Iraqi citizens without allowing Iraq to boost its military capabilities.

[28] The Un And CGoI and not the CRG note the resolution 986 and the Mo U signed between the UN and the central government in 1996 gave the United Nations Inter agency humanitarian program the role of acting on behalf of the CGI to prosecutor , transport, and distribute humanitarian aid for I NGOs and you and agencies to KR-I. This role was delegated to UNOHCI (Volcker, Goldstone, & Pieth, 2005a).

[29] It is not clear in the report whether the refugees were included in the IDPs category or not, as they are now in their own country of citizenship.

[30] In 2002 operational activities report by UN-Habitat referred explicitly to that the work that covered the collective towns, namely the "[r]renovation of approximately 10,450 houses, upgrading the water and sanitation infrastructure in towns, improving internal roads, construction of 388 classrooms and construction of 12 new health centers".

The importance of the HS-A use and its components became evident in the UN-Habitat reports' recommendations (2002, 2003): the Settlements Rehabilitation Program will continue as a long-term project named 'Under the Common Roof Approach.' This project focus used the planning tool on multi-scale geographies covering regional, city, and rural areas. The report also emphasized working towards developing a transport interlinkages scheme and stressed the use of the master planning method – appearing for the first time since the national housing program in KR-I- in their work. Focusing on the three major cities and accentuated the institutional upgrade as a component of the approach and building upon the "collaborative arrangement existing between UN-Habitat and local authorities" (UN Habitat, 2002).

Despite the scandal that uncovered the OFFP corruption and led to its termination by 2004 (Volcker, Goldstone, & Pieth, 2005b), for the KR-I, it was a period that provided continuity in the external aid, paving the path to sorts of economic recovery and rehabilitation (Natali, 2010). Nonetheless, it failed to shake the continuous 'sustaining lives' mentality. Moreover, the spatial interventions, especially in the rural areas and collective towns, were merely erecting physical elements lacking activation factors: "Schools were rebuilt without books, clinics were established without medicines or qualified physicians, and village houses were constructed without vital services such as electricity, access roads, and potable water" (Natali, 2010) while the dire economic situations and migration into urban cores prevented any other forms of self-investment and crippled the periphery.

Until 2003, the KR-I was suffering from constrained and crippled development interventions on short intervals. After the Iraq war and the recognition of the legitimacy of the KRG in the 2005 constitution of Iraq[31], the situation changed for the region dramatically. Given the relative stability in the KRI and being the direct recipient of aid agencies' funding, without the previous need of mediators[32], and regardless of the aid budget decrease, KR-I's situation improved[33]. UN projects were to be resumed[34], and development projects became the focus for the UN agencies in the field. The aid program became vital, with longer-term plan intervals covering the physical components of urban structures (schools, hospitals, clinics…) and infrastructural improvement (electricity, water, sewage, roads, …) all over the region. These projects also covered the soft/users components through intensive capacity-building programs, human rights and awareness campaigns, civic education, and providing opportunities for income-generating activities.

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[31] Article 117 specifically recognized the Kurdistan region as an integral component of federal Iraq with both Kurdish and Arabic as the official languages.

[32] The newly devised institutional framework and the constitutional legitimacy enabled the KRG to achieve a higher degree of autonomy to alter laws aside from the foreign politics and financial issues : it had its own police and security forces, control on the natural resources within its official boundaries including 'certain petroleum fields'.

[33] The no-fly zone and the safe-haven operations were all theoretically terminated, the green line was demilitarized and followed by the end of the double embargo.

[34] The operations under the OFFP were handed over to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). A special Advance Development Provincial Reconstruction (ADPR) budget was allocated to KR-I three governorates with a budget that grew three times larger than the previous ones, and KRG received 17% of the full federal budget. The embezzled amount OFFP added to the budget allocated for the rehabilitation grew at least three times larger than the previous. The revenues touched upon all aspects of life in the KRG, security, construction, including infrastructure buildings as water treatment plants and power transmission substations. These revenues help create industrial zones, hydropower stations , roads rehabilitation, private sector development, and the microwave links connecting the KR-I cities with the rest of Iraq. National capacity building projects supported by the US aid regional reconstruction team RRT and the World Bank focused on local governance , policy reform, service delivery, public participation, civil society, decision-making come up and re infrastructure building in the Kurdish North.

The Iraq-War also produced its displacement waves, where many landed on the region's shores. The stabilization and prosperity gloss made the region, contrary to earlier periods, 'the destination to go'. Ironically, the collective villages, once set for confinement m transformed into receiving sites for displacees; in towns like Rizgary[35,] the abandoned structures became safe shelters (Moldoch, 2017).

Furthermore, according to the UNHCR (2007) report, about 4000 Iranian Kurdish refugees from the 1980s were transferred from central Iraq to KR-I and housed in two refugee planned settlements: Barika and Kawa; about 12,000 Kurdish refugees from Turkey were transferred to Makhmour refugee settlement (UNHCR, 2007). All three settlements were either close by or annexed to a former collective town. It is worth mentioning here that around 700 Syrian Kurds were displaced in Iraq because of the 2004 violent events in Qamishli, Syria (Tejel, 2009), some rented houses in the Domiz area[36] in the Duhok. Today, Domiz hosts the largest Syrian refugee camp in KR-I.

The condition of the collective settlements themselves changed significantly: those approximate to major cities or industrial locations had a more noticeable share of the upgrade scheme, benefited from the overall stability, and started showing characters of urbanity and progress, turning into busy medium-sized towns[37]. The flexibility of the confining modular layout became an advantage, allowing expansion to absorb population growth[38]. Moreover, some of the collective towns, which were approximate to each other,
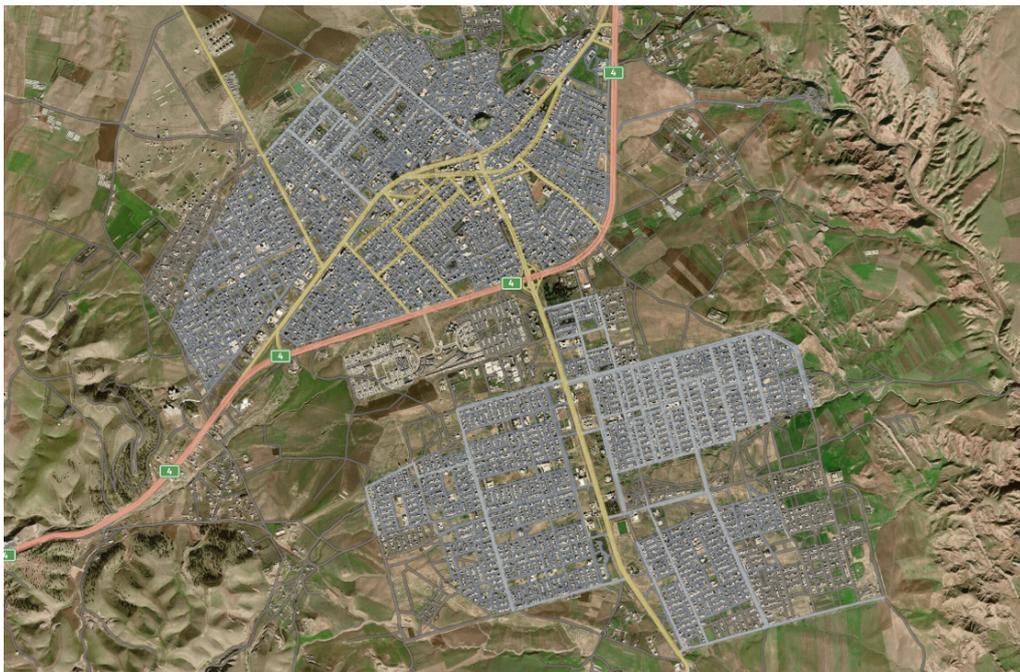
Figure 9: Chamchamal and Shoresh Collective towns today turning into urban cores. Notice the iron-grid layout still visible. Courtesy to wego.here maps (2020)

[35] It was one of the collective coercive settlements built in 1987 by the Baa'thist regime to confine families displaced from 5 different demolished villages from the buffer zone (Stansfield, 2003). The town is located in Sulaymaniyah governorate closer to the federal border with Iraq. The population of the town was almost 20,000 mostly women and children of the rebels' families, where most of the men were 'never seen again'. The name of the town was Sumud, which was changed after it was taken by the Kurds into Rizgary (Moldoch, 2017).

[36] Domiz housing complex was constructed to house Iraqi military officials in the 1980s, turned into a military base in 2003, and was partially abandoned by its citizens or rented cheaply (HRW, 2004)

[37] . The KRG also invested in these towns' infrastructures , whether the support of facilities such as health, education, public buildings, rehabilitation and modernization of the water and sewage networks, repatriation and asphalt coating the streets

[38] In addition to pensions for the Anfal survivors, families received budgets for houses or reconstructions. Few towns started to witness a rapid transformation and the construction of two stories houses painted with colors. Those who arrived as children had their own families, with additional privileges (scholarships, employment, …), and had their households in the town.

merged into one settlement (like Chamchamal and Shoresh) or got swallowed by the major cities' growth.

Nevertheless, this development and progression did not reach all the collective settlements that were not dismantled or abandoned. The majority of the upgrade and rehabilitation projects and interventions were poured into cities, while essential services were still missing in the region's poorest parts with unbalanced core-periphery urbanization (Mahzouni, 2013). This extremely uneven development created unprecedented inequality only experienced by the poorest of the poor; what appeared as prosperity acted as a continuity of a systematic internationalization of the remnant of the traditional society and an ineffective modernization of the former economic activities (mainly agriculture), which have been gradually disappearing from the scene; while the situation is in constant deterioration (Basirma town, for example). Simultaneously, other collective villages have been swollen by urbanization became slums of the cities they were annexed to.

This historical overview demonstrated the essential role of humanitarian-development interventions in the forced displacement receiving sites' spatial progression. Despite the efforts, the isolated settings still suffer from severe inequality and efficacy of essential services and structures coupled with socio-economic failures. The following section will focus on the contemporary forced displacement waves pouring into KR-I and their aftermath.

The Syrian conflict and the ISIL: The Settlement Approach use Planning Humanitarian Camps.

In the previous section, we have established that forced displacement waves constituted a norm in this region, with their sites are in constant (re)incarnations, reproduced in various purposes and meanings. Nevertheless, many shared similar components: iron-grid layouts, care /control mentality, and undetermined future scenarios.

Since 2011, the feature of the region being a chronic conflict zone has been reaffirmed by several events: The Syrian conflict, the war on the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), the fiscal crisis[39], the renewed political unrests, armed conflicts (across and within the borders), and finally by the current Covid-19 ongoing pandemic and the drop in oil prices (UNHCR, 2020a). These crises have been working in tandems, making or triggering new ones, turning the region's situation into a 'full-blown humanitarian crisis'.

Triggers of Massive Influxes of Forced Displacements since 2011:

The Syrian conflict resulted in the displacement of 11,6 million individuals, with 5,5 million of them registered refugees (UNHCR, 2020d). In *Rojava*[40], Kurds - a historically marginalized ethnicity in Syria- experienced the displacement slightly differently (Tejel, 2019). By mid-2012, non-state actors seized control over *Rojava*, the internally displaced flows from other rural and urban areas clogged the area. Combined with the ever-latent danger from the Turkish borders, the poor-living and insecurity conditions became unbearable. With the

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[39] The central government in Baghdad failed to pass a budget in 2014 and did not make the agreed fiscal transfers to KRG, contracting the region's fiscal space. (World Bank, 2015)

[40] *'Rojavayê Kurdistanê'* Kurdish word means 'Western Kurdistan', used to describe the parts of Syria within the boundaries of Great Kurdistan. Today, it is associated with a Kurdish identity, self-determination and administration.

generationally rooted fear of being persecuted by the ambiguous tides of power as 'enemies of the sovereign', waves of Syrian Kurds crossed the borders to KR-I to arrive at their fatherland's realized part 'KURDISTAN'. (Zibar, Abujidi, & de Meulder, 2021 (forthcoming)). Ethnic similarities, political aspirations, territorial belonging, and concentrations of opportunities of the region's economic revival (World Bank, 2015) paved the ground for a more particular situation for this particular group to arise. One can read that the move decision is less acute and more anticipatory for many (Kunz, 1973). The move seemed to be the right one at the time; after all, it moves from supposedly one home towards another (in Kurdistan). In no time, refugee camps were mushrooming their way up to became the material representation of this home-arrival and locality of the support.

Shortly, in June 2014, the power vacuum developed in large parts of Syria and Iraq (Leezenberg, 2017); ISIL has risen to claim power and intensified its armed attacks and moves across borders. Most of these operations rendered civilians' life impossible: destructions, killings, bombarding, and continuous operations of strikes and strikes back with the enemies. As their previous habitat became inhabitable, Iraqis' displacement (Arabs and Yazidi groups in particular) was massive and acute, heading towards the closest safe-haven possible, which for many, the areas controlled by the KRG (World Bank, 2015).
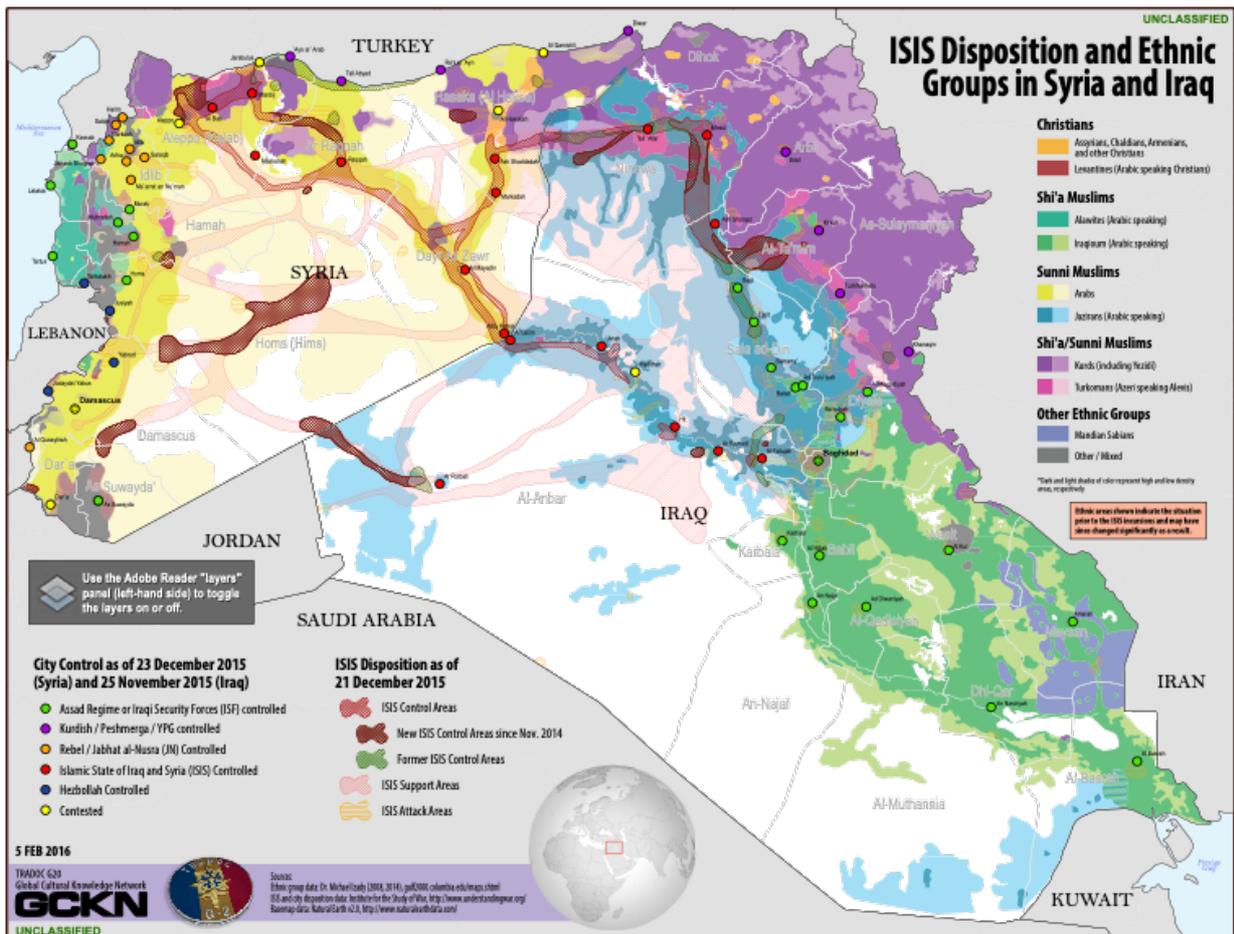

Figure 10 : Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Disposition Map in 2016. The map shows the expansion of ISIS control and the concentration of ethnic groups in both Syria and Iraq. Produced by U.S. Army Maps (2016)

Similar to the spatial solution to the Syrian waves, more than 26 planned camp-sites popped up to absorb the displacement waves and contain the problem[41]. With the basic aid and services provided, as the majority arrived with 'nothing but their clothes on', injured or traumatized by the atrocities they have seen and experienced [42] (World Bank, 2015), camps seemed the right place to go. . Within the KR-I, some of these camps as well are located near collective towns and/or refugee camps, forming a constellation of forced displacements sites.
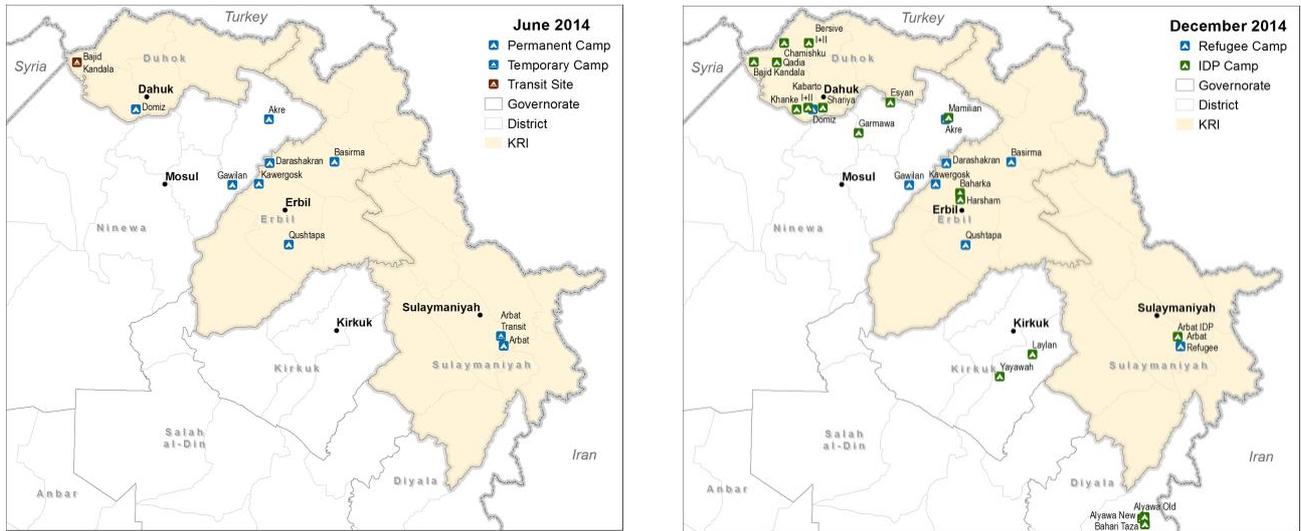
Figure 11: Maps showing the emergence of additional IDP camps between Juan and December of 2014, adding to refugee camps in the region (REACH, 2015).

Figure 12: Arbat constellation of forced displacements sites in Sulaymaniyah Governorate in KR-I. Arbat town was a former collective town built in 1987 . Arbat refugee camp was set in 2013 for the Syrian Refugees , followed in 2015 by setting Ashti IDP Camp. Notice again the buffer between the IDP camp and the town, While the refugee camp is fading into the town structure. Based on wego.here maps (Author, 2021).

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[41] For IDPs, the OCHA has the main coordination responsibility with its cluster system. While the UNHCR still works in coordination with the cluster system and the field. There is huge overlaps between the work of the two, leading to confusion.

[42] The World Bank (2015) report clearly stated "An immediate need is seen for housing and shelter in KRI. Adequate shelter needs to be provided immediately to more than 243,000 vulnerable IDPs. Providing adequate shelter for such a large population has proven an immense challenge for both KRG and the international humanitarian community. The government has built 26 IDP camps across the three KRI governorates with a total combined capacity for hosting 223,790 IDPs." (World Bank, 2015)

Conceiving the Planned Humanitarian Camps:

With the Syrian conflict and the rise and fall of ISIL since 2011, Iraqi Kurdistan has been acting as the substantial humanitarian operation arena to aid the massively displaced[43]. The LHR utilized the masterplan settlement approach to set camps as an emergency response for refugees and IDPs' immediate needs. During the (pre) emergency phase, setting up the camp includes clearing the land to plant the settlements: more than 35 standardized iron-grid settings covered the region. A break in the grid is subject either to site characteristics (topography, flashflood,..) or changes to host parallel urban structures dedicated to serving the recipients of aid exclusively (administration, schools, primary health centers, ...). The 'conceived space' (Lefebvre, 1991) of the fenced modular grid is sectors of a repeatable pattern of blocks with a fluid space between to host movement and future roads. A Block consists of several communities, where each of these communities consists of 16 plots of sheltering units. After being processed, each family (of 6) is assigned a single plot, with a tent and access to communal WASH facilities (latrines, showers, water taps…). As the situation got prolonged, with the harsh winter conditions, the idea was to use the improved shelter in all camps. For each plot, this typology consists of a concrete slab with three rows of standardized bricks to support the standard UNHCR tent, brick-walled facilities, including kitchen, bathroom, and toilet. These facilities have separate gray-black water systems in the majority of the camps and are all connected to one septic tank per community, while the previous communal ones got dismantled.
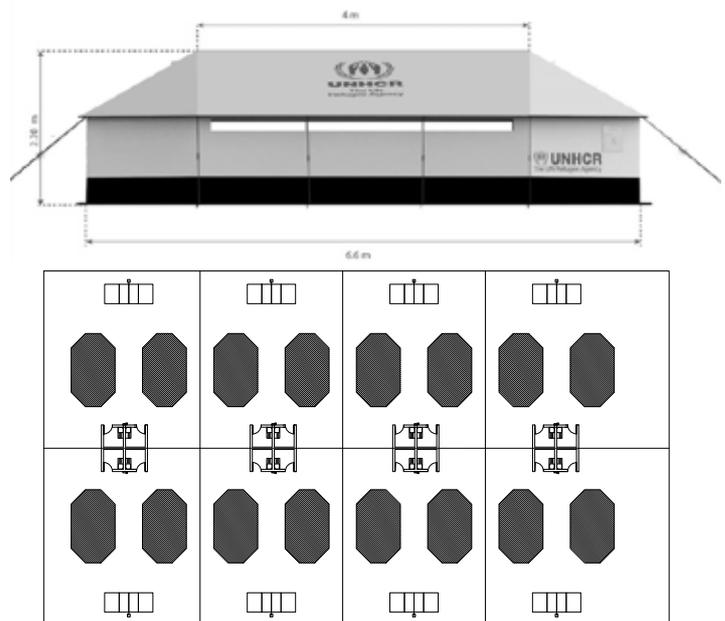
Figure 13 :Community Unit for planning the camp consists of 16 plots. This model is the improved shelter model used in refugee and IDP camps in KR-I in the early stages of planning. Image by the Author (2018) and schemes Courtesy to UNHCR Iraq , 2013.

The governmental institutions also contribute to the service provision, such as the Department of Sewage (DoS), Electricity Department (connection to the main electricity, water supply, sewage networks)[44]. To coordinate these open-ended tasks, on the one hand, the KRG has established an institutional body for coordination and management, named the

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[43] In November, 2020, the CGoI announced the closure of all IDP camps outside the KRG controlled territories. According to NRC, IOM and BBC news, this has eviction has started in August 2019, and was interrupted 'temporarily' by the recent COVID-19 pandemic (BBC, 2020).
[44] At the same time, other departments on a governorates' levels play a role in the provision of more intangible services in terms of security (Police and Asayish Office), health, education (Department of Education (DoE)), and Labor (Department of Labor and Social Affairs (DoLSA)) (UNHCR Iraq, 2019).

Joint Crisis Coordination Center (JCC) in 2014 (JCC, 2016), followed later in 2015, by the Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs (BRHA) with non-stop displacement waves of both refugees and IDPs pouring into Duhok governorate (BRHA, 2015). On the other hand, the UNHCR shelter sector works closely with clusters' strategies (such as shelter cluster, wash cluster, etc), developing contextual strategies (GSC, IFRC, & UNHCR, 2018). Moreover, humanitarian and development actors have been working closely to address the resurfacing needs, taking steps towards more 'durable' solutions.

Beyond Emergency: Spatial Progression of Refugees and IDP Camps

In KR-I, the majority of these sites find roots in the exhausted context, holding almost similar physical features (at least in their initial phases), while they differ in the soft component and the user. In the emergency phase, camps for both IDPs and Refugees were planned and conceived more or less as an operation arena for the humanitarian service and the safekeeping of the displacees "naked existence" (Arendt, 2007). The use of HS-A is supposedly to move towards 'longer-term' steps. Nevertheless, as the emergency became prolonged in this particular geopolitical context, it uncovered the plausible scenarios for these camps. In practice, the extent of this spatial progression depends on the interaction between HS-A components and the space-time perception from the camp operators and dwellers.

The first massive wave of refugees in urgent need of shelter arrived in 2012; with the previous engagement of the LHR, the logical solution was to set camps to absorb the non-stopping waves in need of immediate protection and shelter. Between 2012-2013, while the Domiz camp sheltered groups beyond its planned capacity at the first year of displacement, seven refugee camps were under construction simultaneously to absorb the succession of refugees influxes pouring into the region (Middle East Research Institute, 2015). Upon arrival, the LHR registered the displacees, qualifying them to protection and various moods of relief and support, with extended tolerance measures for 'Brothers and Guests'(RUDAW, 2019): including free access to health services, education, minimum labor restrictions, freedom of movement in KR-I, and permission to seek work (Etemadi) (Khan, Mansour-Ille, & Nicolai, 2020; UNHCR Evaluation Service, 2020; Yassen, 2019). Six of these refugee camps neighbor former collective town[45].

Refugee camps have been taking steps towards permanency in their early stages. With the KRG management's blessing, many NGOs (NRC, PWJ, ..) provided materials, and cash for refugees to upgrade their shelters[46]. By the end of 2014, most of the camps had improved shelters, while the camp's transit area was cleared out and replanned. On the other hand, refugees with access to sufficient capital self-upgraded their shelters, transforming them into more appropriate dwellings[47]. In addition, various 'self-building'[48] projects aspired to

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[45] These camps are Domiz 1, Domiz 2 and Gawilan, and Bardarsh in Duhok governorate, Kawergwesk, Dara Shakran, Queshtapa, and Basirma in Erbil governorate, and Arbat in Sulaymaniyah governorate. Bardarash was an IDP, closed in 2017 and later in 2019.
[46] On the condition to follow the guidelines developed by the camp management mainly building within the plot and having a temporary roof (either corrugated sheets or sandwich panels).
[47] According to many interviewees and, one can still 'sell' the shelter to camp dwellers looking for a shelter to get married or another refugee on the waiting list.
[48] In 2015, funded by the US Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM) and approved by the KRG, UNHCR initiated the "tent-free camp" campaign with Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) as a leading implementation partner (IP). The 'self-building

'upgrade'[49] the spatial conditions to "ensure that refugees live in more durable, semi-permanent shelters" (PWJ, 2019), while camps transformed into settlements integrated with the host community. Furthermore, these projects come with built-in technical guidance, livelihood, self-reliance, and participation components. This enablement policy plays a significant role in creating synergies between the camp operators and dwellers to anchor the camp in material manifestations recaptured to facilitate the everyday. Many of the camp dwellers are employed by NGOs or the KRG to facilitate the camp needs, while others have more entrepreneurial-oriented ideas for their dwelling units. Based on the unit location, opening a room towards the public space could be used as a shop to generate income, which leads to the emergence of a camp market that serves the camp. The existing parallel structures (health centers, schools, shops, administrative,..) in the camp seem – to a large extent- sufficient for the time being.

Figure 14: Kawergwesk Refugee Camp. Notice the fixed grid and the use of brick in upgrading the refugee dwelling units and the UNHCR logos spread in the scene. Beyond the camp lays the town of Kawergwesk, also a former collective town. (Author, 2018)

Contrary to refugee situations, IDPs are expected to repatriate (UNHCR, 2018). However, the situation is still in a 'no-return' mood: Humanitarian funding has declined, the built environment of the former habitat is severely damaged, obstructing IDPs' repatriation with expectations of a second displacement (UNHCR Evaluation Service, 2020), whereas the camps are not progressing beyond the improved shelter; with a decline of funding and prolonged protraction, the situation worsens. Despite the camp operators' efforts to cover the basic needs, the camp's spatial progression is stuck in the improvised spatial intervention attempts to 'make due', till the waiting is over. The 'hospitality' given to the

project' in Erbil camps unfolded in: providing orientation sessions to the process, standardized shelter layout, bills of quantity (BOQ), and laborer payments (phased on 8 stages). While the participation component includes informing sessions, focus group discussions with beneficiaries, it intersects with the livelihood one, by adding incoming generating opportunities for refugees. (PWJ, 2019)

[49] The 'upgrade' includes shelter, infrastructure (including road pavements, sewage networks, electricity networks, street lights, …), and generating livelihood opportunities to enable 'self-resilience' in its turn, and it goes hand in hand with (assisted) self-building and organizing.

Syrian refugees was not fully matched for the IDPs, especially for those lacking documentation[50]. "A condition of vulnerability is aided by perceptions of mistrust among communities in a context where inter-community interactions are limited" (Costantini & O'Driscoll, 2020). The environment is more constraining for IDPs, restraining their opportunities to any long-term integration and mirrored in the camps' spatial progression. Despite camps' closure and relocation of IDPs, some of these sites in KRG still functioned as a safe-haven (working as receiving structures) for in-camp migration. Many field workers in IDP camps[51] reported, through various interviews, that IDPs were returning after they repatriated.

Figure 15: Ashti IDP Camp in 2018. The image shows the improved shelter setting with the brick-built utilities, which – on the contrary of the refugee ones- stayed in its provisional state. We can also notice the patched up fabrics that indicate the improvised spatial practices of demarcation of thresholds . The iron-grid layout demarcated by the lamp posts. The roads are still in dirt. (Author. 2018)

After the end of the conflict with ISIS in 2017, the IHR aimed to move away from emergency and towards recovery and reconstruction (UNHCR Evaluation Service, 2020). The goal for 2021 in refugee camps is to " proceed to continuous integration of camp services into national and municipal service provision scheme with the aim to sustainable service provision." and ensuring "a safe return for the IDPs to their original towns and cities". However, the country is far from achieving these ambitions. Humanitarian funding has declined, recent reports by the UNHCR and the KRG indicate the intention to expand the camps, as refugees asked to be relocated as they barely 'make ends meet (UNHCR, 2020b, 2020c), meanwhile the built environment of former IDPs habitat is severely damaged, obstructing repatriation with expectations of a second displacement due to camps closure (BBC, 2020).

Cascade of Crises and Forced Displacement Impacts on the KR-I :

The war on ISIS, the influx of displaced populations, and the fiscal crisis have dramatically impacted KR-I's situation; the entire magnitude of the compiling crises is still unfolding. The 'KR-I: Assessing the Economic and Social Impact of the Syrian Conflict and ISIS', the World

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[50] the announced suspicion is that they are related to the ISIS members; hence the majority face severe movement constraints and access to facilities outside the camp boundaries (UNHCR Evaluation Service, 2020) The situation is for seeing another social split on the way, between ethnicities and the sub-ethnic groups themselves.
[51] Interviews with aid workers in Bahrka IDP camp and Qayyarah Jad'ah Camp 2018 and 2020 respectively.

Bank (2015) Report highlighted the impacts of the presence of more than 1.5 million displacees in the region: Basic needs[52] are hardly being covered; increase demand for food, poverty has more than doubled, the living standards are getting worse, concerns on hygiene and health for both the displacees and the host communities. These impacts also included the emanant stress on the infrastructure's fragile situation (if existed), including water, electricity, solid waste management, education, and health facilities[53]. While the capacity of the IHR and KRG "is being stretched to the limit". In 2015, the estimated funding gap for stabilizing the before-mentioned crises will require about $846 million as a baseline (World Bank, 2015). All these obstacles and pressures result in environmental degradation and pollution and "unsustainable strains causing long-term distortions".

Moreover, since the end of the war with ISIL in 2017, a succession of political instabilities have resurfaced across the country, starting from the independence referendum for the KR-I held in September 2017, added to the latent tension with the CGoI, resulting in sanctions[54] ended in 2018. Another wave of Syrian refugees crossed the border in need of assistance by the end of 2019, leading to opening Bardarash closed camp and adding an annex to Gawilan refugee camp. Conflict outbreak between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partîya Karkerên Kurdistanê) -PKK and the Turkish forces has escalated to attacks on the KR-I northern borders (Aljazeera, 2020), creating temporal displacements. IDP camps' closure in southern and central Iraq is sending signs of more significant problems in 2020 (BBC, 2020). Meanwhile, uprisings broke all over the country[55], leading to another economic crisis. To add insult to injury, the exceptional ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has triggered another economic crisis. The impacts extended to include oil price droppings, increased need for food rations (UNHCR, 2020b), and inconsistency in livelihood income generation activities (if existed) due to unavoidable multiple enforced lockdowns (Durable Solutions Platform, 2020; UNHCR, 2020a). All added phycological pressures unmasked additional vulnerabilities and exemplified inequalities.
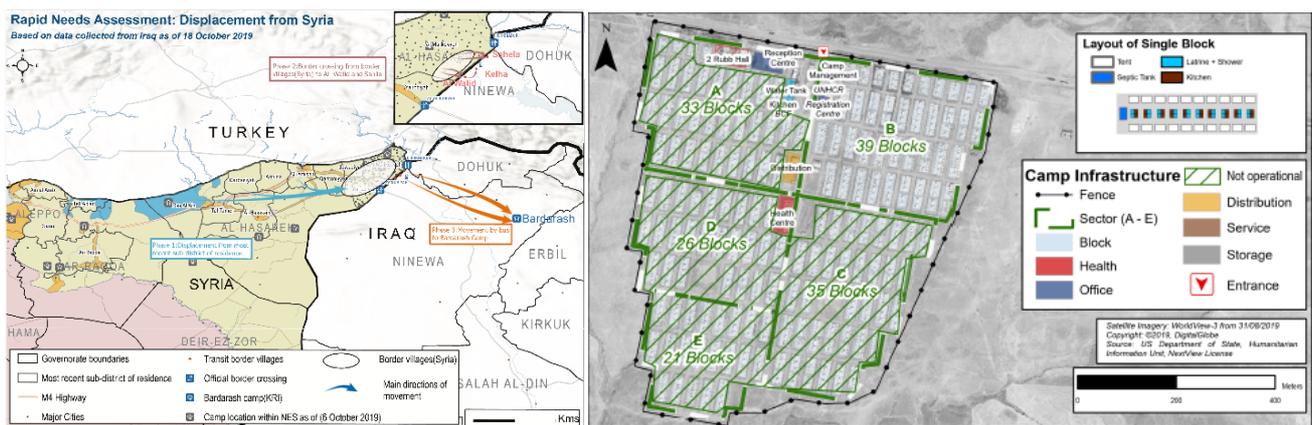

Figure 16: Displacement of Syrian-Kurds in October 2019 and the layout of the re-opened Bardarash Camp (Reach, 2019)

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[52] Basic needs in the same report include: food, water, fuel, transport, clothing, hygiene items, health care, education and rent.
[53] The general layout for parallel urban structures in camps is usually caravans ordered to match the need (administration, school, community centers, health center, …). Though, the situations for camp refugees and IDPs are better than the out-of-camp ones, with the camp's existing services reducing the pressure on the ones in the urban centers, especially in terms of heath (primary health clinics PHC) and education (schools). however, the gap between needs and provision is so far beyond bridging
[54] that reject its results as unconstitutional. The CGoI froze the budget, threatened with military operations, spread its military control over the disputed areas, and banned international flights to the region. These sanctions also came from across the borders from Iran and Turkey, which lasted till Mid-2018.
[55] The demands were mainly for political and governmental reforms related (UNHCR Evaluation Service, 2020),

These escalations and instabilities dramatically impact the planned sites' situations, as they are dependent entirely on the governmental and humanitarian capacities facing the decline in their enabling conditions. With the scarcity of solution at hand, and weakness of political framework that enables 'effective operations, UNHCR has announced its for 2020, the work will continue to 'maintain its focus on the continued scale of emergency' focusing on urgent programs, and partnering up with development actors in joint programs (UNHCR, 2020a; UNHCR Evaluation Service, 2020). This announcement, however, brings back the question of 'sustainability' and 'self-reliance'.

Conclusion Remarks: Sustainability in the Settlement Approach between Myth and Potentials.

This paper has demonstrated that KR-I represents a chronic conflict zone for in and out forced displacement. It has a long history in the (re)emergence of planned receiving structures for forced displacement waves, seeding their roots in the exhausted, war-ridden geopolitical context. Whether conceived for development, confinement, or humanitarian relief, the planned sites hold almost similar physical elements, while they differ in the soft component and meaning to the users. Despite the purpose of their 'production' and their 'termination date', these settlements tend to shake the temporariness characters. However, the interaction between the sites' components (the physical, the soft, and users), with the locational assets aggregation (services, infrastructure, proximity to urban centers) of this particular geopolitical context is the main determinant of their spatial progression. In all cases, the flexible and scalable iron-grid canvas acted as receiving structures for (succession) of displacement waves. What was once an apparatus for suppression became a site for pride, progression, hospitality, and prosperity (Moldoch, 2017; Recchia, 2012). Acknowledging this historical lesson, the current policies regarding the camps' built environment in KR-I seem to incorporate 'sustainability' and 'resilience': starting from using the Settlement Approach (as physical) in making the camp's infrastructure for both IDPs and refugees, developing more 'durable' dwelling typologies to face harsh winters, and following 'a more conscious approach' by integrating basic greywater systems and solar panels when possible—at the same time, working on programming the camp by the provision of capacity building and skills upgrade. The announced goal is for the displaced population to become more resilient and self-sufficient to phase out the humanitarian mission.

Marching towards sustainability in planning is not a new concept; it has been the center of urban planning academic and practice discourses for decades, and the promotion of self-sustaining displacement sites can be traced centuries back to the earliest utopian designs of cities of refuge (Lewis, 2016). The IHR has been advocating 'sustainable approaches and durable spatial solutions for these settings to follow the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promoted on an international scale (UNHCR, 2016a, 2016b). In 2018, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) had emphasized the need to ease pressure on the host countries and enhance refugees' self-reliance (United Nations, 2018). This future-oriented thinking has invited many initiatives to (re)apply, (re)develop, and (re)tailor 'sustainable

solutions' in camps, including more durable shelters (UNHCR, 2014, 2016b) and the Settlement Approach (GSC, 2020; UNHCR, 2016a). These experiments vary in scale and nature between trial and error depending on the host's political will, availability of the funds, and the camp phase (emergency level/time). Unfortunately, most of these 'solutions'[56] do not bypass the temporary camps' time-space boundaries, acting as a low-quality bandage on an inflammatory problem.

Moreover, 'development' and solutions' attached societal visions turn out to be vacant or paralyzed promises. They are mainly developed in isolation of these sites' realities and applicability in the geopolitical and economic contexts they are mushrooming within. Therefore, these ad-hoc interventions do not fulfill their ambitious purpose(s) of sustainability, mostly moving linearly towards a vacuum. The operating camps still fall short in terms of service provision with the gradual retractions of funding consequently services as well (Grafham & Lahn, 2018) redirected to work with other 'urgent' crises (Crisp, 2003) in the name of self-reliance (Betts, Bloom, Kaplan, & Omata, 2017; Omata, 2017). Simultaneously, the situation for the sites' components and host contexts is in continuous and incremental degradation. 'Sustainability' and 'resilience' become a gloss to continue the relief operations, attract donor funds, and be dismissed with the first siren whisper of another emergency.

Circularity: a correction move?

In the current academic and policy debates, a paradigm shift is occurring, promoting circularity as an overarching canopy that aims to achieve sustainability and keep the system operating in -if achieved - a healthy manner. Circularity has been portrayed as a correction move to the misuse of natural resources[57], a way to make amends by looking and acting into the present as a proactive rather than a preventative measure to decrease or eliminate the unsustainable practices to go to the future. It is an approach to "rethink from the ground" (OECD, 2020). Planned humanitarian camps are -after all- reduced forms of urbanity: as cuts and reductions of physical, operative, and consumption patterns to a minimum standard of 'right-now' solution, to keep the lifesaving machine operative (Boano, Matén, & Sierra, 2018; Genel, 2006). Even though thinking of camps as isolated geographies is problematic, the optimized design, scale, and (semi) isolation of the site can be seen as an opportunity to revisit concepts of self-sustaining settlements. It can also present a chance to close loops within the camps' boundaries or stretch the idea and allow them to be dependent upon. This approach may have the possibilities to keep the value of enormous expenditure in the camp's physical and soft component recirculated within its users' networks (operators-users) and maintain (or increase) the opportunities that the camps' presence provide in terms of employment (including hosts and displacees) and access to improved infrastructure, especially in chronically unstable geographies.

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[56] These interventions include wastewater separation in infrastructure (black-gray), use of solar panels (on shelter /camp levels), and small-medium scale decentralized wastewater treatment systems to reuse water for some green-houses and agricultural projects, which in their turn aim to support trivial forms of self-reliance between domestic production, limited cash-for-work opportunities and development of a set of 'skills' that lack feasible markets.

[57] The circular economy is where "the value of products, materials, and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible by returning them into the product cycle at the end of their use, thus minimizing the generation of waste" (EC, 2015).

While investment in the site structure and the impact on the ecology is irreversible, the ever-rising need for more dignified, durable, and less aid-depended effective solutions is still paramount. The idea is to incorporate circular economy to cause a 'systematic shift' to slow down, narrow, and close loops of consumption by providing enabling atmosphere: providing services, activities, and infrastructures to facilitate this process. Therefore, it is paramount to invite decentralized solutions, retrofitted in scale to be part of these machines, tailored to become part of the fast response, yet flexible for upgrades in terms of type can and connection to a broader urban scale. Several innovative solutions and ideas are emerging in research and practice with the reoccurring problem of forced displacement and on different scales and spheres. Fast temporary and deployable plug-ins for short-term camps to be upgraded later still emerge. For example, BORDA's *Septic Bags for Emergencies* for safe waste disposal, to be replaced with a more permanent system later or scaled up to reuse the wastewater treated for agricultural purposes (BORDA, 2018).
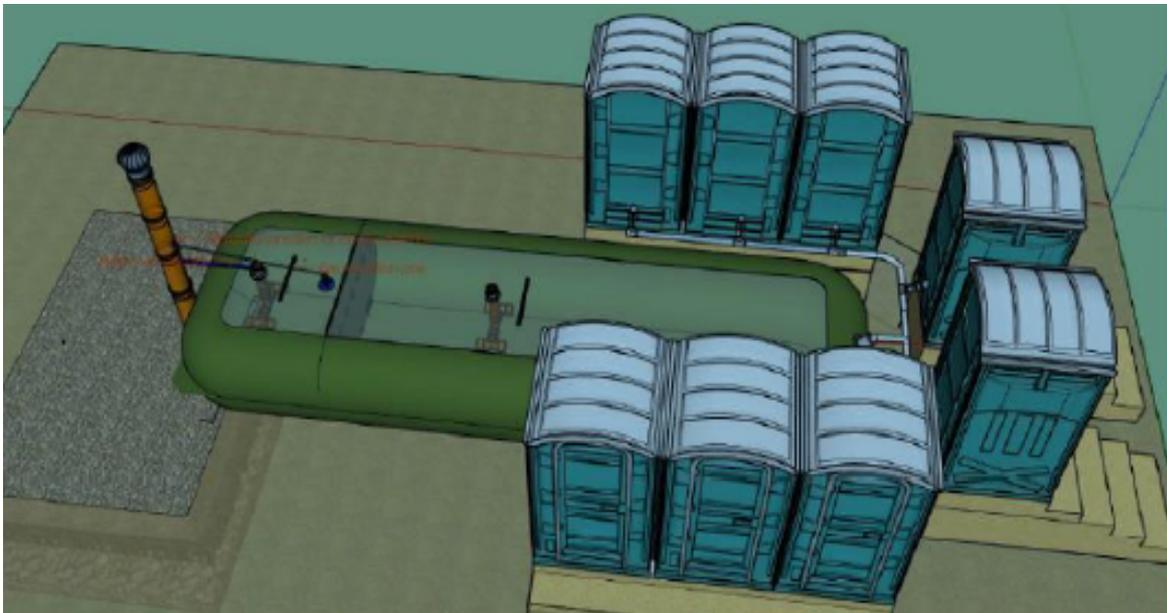
Figure 17: BORDA Septic Bag for Emergencies: In cooperation with Oxfam, BORDA has been developing a new type of septic tank adapted to the needs of emergency camps: made from a foldable membrane, can be set within a day and serves around 500 users. The bladder system or "Septic Bag" lays on the ground while the infiltration system is built as a substructure underground. (BORDA, 2018)

Similarly, reducing fuel use by incorporating solar energy to run camps: Zaatari Camp has a solar farm to supply the camp with power (UNHCR, 2019). Furthermore, scaling down the panels' use on a refugee dwelling level could also save large solar farms' maintenance costs and reduce consumption on a domestic level and electricity costs (The Guardian, 2015). Williams (2019) highlights that 'Infrastructure embodies resources which can be recirculated in the urban system.' Hence, it is essential to incorporate similar – deployable-solutions into the prototypes of emergency camps while thinking and investigating the host contexts' needs of complementary structures to ensure that designing out does not leave the residual waste untreated on a larger scale, that can be designed to encourage circular resources flows.

To conclude: the search for realistic, durable solutions is as urgent as the human vessel upkeep, if not the fundamental basis for it. In KR-I, the foil of 'relative stability' and economic prosperity hides nested obstacles to developing and a fragile reality on edge to fall apart. Hence, weaving new settlements as dependent systems, with all its components, is imposing additional problems in a fragile urban canvas, whereas self-sufficiency expectations are hardly realistic. In all future scenarios, contrary to what the UNHCR Hand-Book for Emergencies in its operational response considerations hopes to "ensure the site is returned to its previous condition" (UNHCR, 2020e) after the mission is over, the impact on the land, hosts, and the ecological system is irreversible. Despite the efforts of various ad-hoc projects to be plugged into the camp space in the name of sustainability and reliance, their ambition is far beyond reach. As long as humanitarian and development approaches of sustainability and resilience in the region are locked in a linear process of a preventive measure of decay, it is hard to move beyond 'sustainment'. The existing problems are expected to exacerbate not only for the vulnerable population, including the host, but also the ecological system at large.

The question remains, can the myth of sustainability be genuinely realized? Can planned sites of displacements move beyond dependency and become enablers themselves?

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