



Iraq

Key socio-economic indicators

For Baghdad, Basra and Erbil

Country of Origin Information Report



September 2020



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More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EASO COI Report Methodology (2019).¹ The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

'Refugee', 'risk' and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EASO nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 27 July 2020. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).

¹ The EASO methodology is largely based on the Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI), 2008, and can be downloaded from the EASO website: [url](#).

Glossary and Abbreviations

BTI	Bertelsmann Transformation Index
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
CSO	Central Statistical Organisation of Iraq
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EPIC	Education for Peace in Iraq Center
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview (UNOCHA)
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IQD	Iraqi Dinar
IRC	International Refugee Committee
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISIL (also known as ISIS, IS, Daesh)	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PMU (also PMF)	Popular Mobilisation Units; Popular Mobilisation Forces
PDS	Public Distribution System
PHC	Primary Health Care
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
USD	United States Dollar
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information for the assessment of international protection status determination, including refugee status and subsidiary protection. In particular, it is intended to inform the update of the chapter on Internal Protection Alternative within the EASO Country Guidance on Iraq 2020 update. This report aims to provide information on key socio-economic indicators in Iraq focusing on the cities of Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil, and highlighting aspects of the situation of women and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in those areas.

This report is an update to the EASO COI Report: Iraq Key Socio-economic Indicators, [url](#), published in February 2019.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of this report are based on the input received from policy experts from EU+ countries² within the context of an EASO country guidance development on Iraq.

It was determined that the report will concentrate information on the main urban areas of Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil, within the relevant national context. Members of the EASO COI Specialist Network and the EASO Country Guidance Network were consulted and gave input on the ToR prior to its finalisation. A section dedicated to the impact of COVID-19 on different sectors, e.g. economy, education, freedom of movement, was added despite the fact that it was not included in the Terms of Reference.

Methodology

This report is produced in line with the EASO COI Report Methodology (2019)³ and the EASO COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2019).⁴

Information in the report is the result of desk research of public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources until 30 June 2020. Some additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 31 July 2020. In this quality review process, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and organisations listed in the [Acknowledgments](#) section of this report. All comments made by reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report. Furthermore, and since this report is an update to the previous Iraq Key Socio-economic Indicators [report](#) published in February 2019, information from that report was included where no new information was available.

The general time frame set for the content of this report was to capture trends between January 2019 and July 2020. Sources did not always differentiate information between national, governorate and district, or city-level. Information was also sometimes only available for the national or governorate level. Where possible, the distinction is made in the report.

² EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland

³ The EASO methodology is largely based on the Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI), 2008, and can be downloaded from the EASO website: [url](#)

⁴ https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019_EASO_COI_Writing_and_Referencing_Guide.pdf

Structure and use of the report

The report is divided into two main parts: general overview and indicators pertinent to the cities of Baghdad, Basra and Erbil. The first part includes information on demographics, humanitarian context, IDPs/returnees, women, children, networks of support, documents, and impact of COVID-19. The second part comprises information on the socio-economic indicators specified in the ToRs. Each section is divided into four sub-sections: an overview of the indicator at a national level, and an update on the situation in each of the three cities (I.e. Baghdad, Basra and Erbil) with regard to the indicators, i.e. economy, employment, poverty, food security, health care, education, and housing and living conditions.

1. General overview

1.1 Demographics

According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the last full national census was held in 1987 (the census of 1997 did not include the KRI). Efforts to collect full census data have been hindered by insecurity, internal displacement and capacity problems.⁶ The Central Statistical Organisation of Iraq (CSO) estimated the population to be 40 150 200 in 2020 and to reach 51 311 700 in 2030.⁷ It is worth mentioning that a new demographic and habitation census is planned by the CSO and the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT) at the end of 2020.⁸

Iraq has a very high proportion of young people, with about 37 % of the population aged between 0 and 14 years old.⁹ More than 70 % of the population lives in an urban environment, with much of the population concentrated in the north, central and eastern parts of Iraq, mainly around the larger urban centres. The major cities are the capital Baghdad (7.144 million inhabitants), Mosul (1.630 million), Basra (1.352 million), Kirkuk (1.013 million), Najaf (0.874 million), and Erbil (0.847 million).¹⁰

The country is administratively divided into 18 governorates, with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI; Dohuk, Sulaimaniya, Erbil) governed as an autonomous region by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).¹¹

The three largest demographic groups in Iraq are Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds.¹² It is estimated that 75-80 % of the inhabitants are Arab and 15-20 % are Kurdish. Minority groups include those such as Turkmens, Yazidis, Shabaks, Kaka'is, Bedouins, Romanis, Assyrians, Circassians, Sabaeen-Mandaens and Persians. Islam is the country's official religion, with 95-98 % of the population being Muslim (roughly 64-69 % Shia and 29-34 % Sunni). Christians make up 1 % of the population and other religions between 1 and 4 %.¹³

The majority of the population of the KRI identifies ethnically as Kurdish and is of Sunni Muslim religion. Kurdish is the most widely spoken language in the KRI.¹⁴ The most widely spoken language in the rest of the country is Arabic. Few Iraqis speak both Arabic and Kurdish. This amounts to a language divide between north and south, though there has been some overlap,¹⁵ for example, Baghdad had a large Kurdish community that spoke both languages.¹⁶ Kurds in Baghdad numbered about 300 000, according to a report published by the Kurdish media source, Rudaw, in 2016.¹⁷

⁶ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 17 August 2020, [url](#), p. 10

⁷ Iraq, CSO, تقديرات سكان العراق للفترة (2015-2030) [Iraqi Population Estimates for the Period (2015-2030)], 30 June 2020, [url](#)

⁸ Iraq, CSO, العراق وبرنامج الأمم المتحدة للمستوطنات البشرية يوقعان عقداً مشتركاً لدعم تنفيذ التعداد العام للسكان نهاية العام الجاري [Iraq and UN-HABITAT Sign a Contract to Support Conducting the Demographic Census in the End of This Year], 23 January 2020, [url](#)

⁹ US, CIA, The World Factbook; Iraq; People and Society, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰ US, CIA, The World Factbook; Iraq; Economy, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

¹¹ US, CIA, The World Factbook; Iraq; Government, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

¹² MRG, Iraq, May 2018, [url](#)

¹³ US, CIA, The World Factbook; Iraq; People and Society 17 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Kurd, 21 September 2018, [url](#); IWPR, Arabic-Kurdish Language Divide, 21 July 2006, [url](#)

¹⁵ IWPR, Arabic-Kurdish Language Divide, 21 July 2006, [url](#)

¹⁶ IWPR, Arabic-Kurdish Language Divide, 21 July 2006, [url](#)

¹⁷ Rudaw, Baghdad's Kurdish population sees dramatic decline, official data shows, 9 April 2016, [url](#)

1.2 Humanitarian context

In its Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) of November 2019, UNOCHA stated that Iraq remained ‘unstable with widespread humanitarian concerns’. The HNO observed that social, sectarian, and ethnic tensions persisted in Iraq, together with intensifying ‘[p]olitical uncertainty and natural disasters’. The report added that the most vulnerable people were those who were displaced in the wake of the 2014-2017 conflict against ISIL, and those whose livelihoods were impacted.¹⁸ According to the UN Human Rights Council, insecurity in Iraq continued to ‘pose a challenge to host communities, internally displaced persons, returnees and humanitarian actors, as remnant ISIL cells continue to carry out attacks.’¹⁹ The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) identified reconstruction and development as major needs, and observed that the security situation in Iraq remained unstable and that ‘mass protests were a source of serious concern’.²⁰

In addition to security situation, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) observed that storms and flooding caused 37 000 new displacements in 2019 as the Tigris and the Euphrates flooded the adjacent plains and urban areas every year. Moreover, an additional 34 000 people from southern Iraq were estimated to have been displaced due to water scarcity in the governorates of Basra, Missan, Thi Qar and Muthanna. Reportedly, many of the displaced persons moved to urban areas.²¹

1 381 332 IDPs currently remain in Iraq,²² 78 % of which suffer from protracted displacement²³. The protracted displacement and/or returning goes with problems ‘related to resilience and recovery’, such as lack of livelihoods, lack of social cohesion, lack of shelter rehabilitation, and the inability of local government to ‘conduct basic civil administration and provide basic and specialized services’.²⁴

The UN Human Right Council observed that 4.1 million of the displaced population remained in need of humanitarian assistance.²⁵ According to UNOCHA, 2.8 million people (i.e. 68 % of the people in need) were ‘in acute need’.²⁶ Moreover, in its situation report covering the period 1 January 2020 – 31 March 2020, UNICEF stated that 1.89 million children in Iraq were in need of humanitarian assistance.²⁷

Finally, Iraq has seen an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases. According to UNHCR, the number of confirmed cases reached 77 506 as of 12 July 2020. More than 40 % of these cases have been registered in Baghdad, followed by Sulaimaniya and Basra. The number of deaths reached 3 150, and the authorities in the KRI and in the central and southern governorates imposed restrictive measures including curfew and travel bans. UNHCR observed that vulnerable displaced families faced risks which included the socio-economic consequences incurred by lack of livelihoods, rise of domestic violence, and suspension of education activities.²⁸ In the KRI, CARE surveyed more than 1 400 people and found that 74 % of the interviewees had to reduce their meals and 61 % had to make further debt in order to survive the economic situation incurred by the COVID-19 crisis.²⁹

¹⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2020, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, A/HRC/44/41/Add.1, 13 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²⁰ ECHO, Iraq, 20 May 2020, [url](#), p. 1

²¹ IDMC, Global Report on Internal Displacement: Grid 2020, 23 April 2020, [url](#), p. 33

²² IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 116, 30 June 2020, [url](#), p. 1

²³ IDMC, Global Report on Internal Displacement: Grid 2020, 23 April 2020, [url](#), p. 33

²⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan: Iraq, January 2020, [url](#), p. 14

²⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, A/HRC/44/41/Add.1, 13 May 2020, [url](#), p. 5

²⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan: Iraq, January 2020, [url](#), p. 14

²⁷ UNICEF, 2020 Internal Displacement Crisis Humanitarian Situation Report, 23 April 2020, available at: [url](#)

²⁸ UNHCR, Iraq: UNHCR COVID-19 Update XII, 12 July 2020, [url](#), p. 2

²⁹ CARE, CARE warns: Rapidly rising COVID-19 cases and massive lack of humanitarian funding put most vulnerable on the brink of survival in Iraq, 9 July 2020, [url](#)

1.3 IDPs/returnees

1.3.1 Number of IDPs and returnees

A UN Security Council report published on 6 May 2020 stated that the number of IDPs in Iraq was around 1.4 million people as of 27 January 2020, living in over 3 000 locations across the country, including 67 IDP camps.³⁰ The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons estimated the number of IDPs in Iraq to be 1.5 million people, of which 70 % suffered from ‘protracted displacement’.³¹ Finally, according to IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) dataset covering May and June 2020, the number of IDPs was 1 381 332, of which 35 034 were in Baghdad, 236 496 in Erbil, and 6 528 in Basra.³²

Regarding returnees, the DTM dataset of May and June 2020 indicated that the total number of returnees was 4 718 130 persons, most of whom were displaced between 2014 and 2017. According to the dataset, returns were to the following governorates: Anbar (1 503 468) – Baghdad (90 228) – Dohuk (768) – Diyala (230 244) – Erbil (53 004) – Kirkuk (341 106) – Ninawa (1 807 170) – Salah Al-Din (692 142).³³

The UN Human Rights Council stated that as of 31 December 2019, 4.6 million IDPs had returned to their areas of origin and that the policies of the Iraqi government ‘have been instrumental in promoting the returns; however, premature, coerced and forced returns, in addition to blocked returns, have also been reported’. The report added that around 1.4 million people remained in displacement as of 31 December 2019, many of them suffered from failed attempts to return.³⁴ In a report published in January 2020, UNOCHA stated that at the time of data collection and analysis, there were 370 000 IDPs living in camps and estimated that the number would drop to 288 000 by January 2020, and to 180 000 by the end of 2020.³⁵

1.3.2 Trends

Obstacles to return

The UN Security Council report of 6 May 2020 observed that the ‘rate of return of internally displaced persons had slowed significantly in 2019, leading to a substantial proportion of the internally displaced population in Iraq experiencing prolonged displacement’.³⁶ The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons indicated that 70 % of those who remained displaced ‘have been displaced for longer than three years’. She added that, according to recent surveys, 90 % of them ‘do not intend to return in the short term, and 70 per cent in the long term’.³⁷ She also raised the issue of

³⁰ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 11

³¹ OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

³² IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 116 May – June 2020, 30 June 2020, [url](#), pp. 2, 3

³³ IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 116 May – June 2020, 30 June 2020, [url](#), pp. 1, 5

³⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, A/HRC/44/41/Add.1, 13 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

³⁵ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan: Iraq, January 2020, [url](#), p. 14

³⁶ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 11

³⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, A/HRC/44/41/Add.1, 13 May 2020, [url](#), p. 12

secondary displacement and the risk it presented for IDPs who failed to return and who could ‘remain under the radar and further slide into economic impoverishment and social marginalisation’.³⁸

The Returns Working Group and IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix indicated that the number of locations that have not witnessed any returns, as of April 2020, was 269 locations: Erbil (45), Ninawa (115), Kirkuk (13), Salah Al-Din (38), Diyala (43), Babil (13) and Anbar (2)³⁹. Human Rights Watch, citing humanitarian workers, stated that 242 areas in Iraq have not seen any returns, either due to contamination with ISIL remnants of war or due to a ban on returns imposed by security forces because of perceived sympathy to ISIL.⁴⁰ UNOCHA also reported that ‘3,367 square kilometres of land contaminated with explosive ordinances bars returns and impacts the exercise of rights’.⁴¹ The report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons identified several obstacles to the return of IDPs in Iraq. These included destroyed or damaged housing, land property rights, long standing property disputes, land contamination by explosive remnants of war, lack of livelihood opportunities, restrictions on freedom of movement, lack of social cohesion, trauma or fear of retaliation in the areas of origin, fear of ISIL resurgence, and perceived ISIL affiliation.⁴² Furthermore, in September 2019, the New Arab, citing unspecified UN and Iraqi parliamentary reports, mentioned three reasons that have been impeding the return of IDPs to their areas of origin. These included the refusal of militias controlling 16 cities and town, such as Jurf Al-Sakhr, Al-Awesat, Yathreb, Baiji, Rabi’a, and Kharaghol, to allow families to return, the widespread destruction in areas recaptured from ISIL, as well as tribal considerations.⁴³ An official in the Iraqi Ministry of Interior estimated that 250 000 families were perceived to have ISIL affiliation and could not return to their areas of origin because of objections by Iraqi authorities or local communities.⁴⁴

Notwithstanding the obstacles to returns mentioned above, the UN Security Council report observed that in the five governorates previously held by ISIL (Salah Al-Din, Anbar, Ninawa, Kirkuk, and Diyala), 2 375 stabilisation projects in the areas of housing, livelihoods, education, etc. were completed as of 4 April 2020, and 215 others were still underway. Those projects enabled the return of 4.7 million Iraqis to their homes as of 29 February 2020 according to the source.⁴⁵

Voluntary returns

UNOCHA’s report of January 2020 stated that the number of IDPs in camps dropped from 449 858 to 293 402 from January to November 2019. This, according to the report was ‘a result of a combination of voluntary returns and spontaneous departures catalysed by sudden camp consolidations and closures initiated by the Government of Iraq’.⁴⁶

Regarding the procedure for voluntary return, Human Rights Watch stated that three families formerly residing in Kilo-18 IDP camp in Anbar were granted authorisation to return home after they had fulfilled all the requirements which constituted finding a community leader (to act as a sponsor) and providing ten testimonies that they have never been ISIL sympathisers. Furthermore, the report

³⁸ OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

³⁹ RWG and IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, Areas of origin having witnessed no return, April 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁰ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

⁴¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 52

⁴² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, A/HRC/44/41/Add.1, 13 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 12-13

⁴³ New Arab (The), العراق: جدل بشأن خطوات إعادة النازحين إلى مدنهم [Iraq: Debate about the Steps of Returning IDPs to Their Towns/Cities], 16 September 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁵ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 11

⁴⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan: Iraq, January 2020, [url](#), p. 45

observed a case where an elderly woman was asked to pay 40 000 USD to a majority tribe to be allowed to return to her home in Anbar.⁴⁷

Finally, Human Rights Watch referred to possible cases of revenge attacks against returnees who returned willingly to four villages in Sinjar. According to the source, 550 Arab families returned to their villages and were at risk of revenge attacks by their Yazidi neighbours. The returnees claimed that their homes were destroyed and looted by armed forces upon their flight. The source added that only a small Iraqi Army unit was present in the area to protect the returning families, who claimed being attacked by local Popular Mobilisation Units (PMUs).⁴⁸

Forced returns

UN agencies reported on cases of forced returns of IDPs, notably through the closure and merging of camps. UNOCHA warned about the severe effect of ‘involuntary and premature returns, and coerced departures in camps’ on the physical and mental well-being of IDPs. Such returns, according to the source, took place particularly in Ninawa, Salah Al-Din, Anbar and Kirkuk, and often resulted in secondary displacement.⁴⁹ UNHCR’s Protection Update of August 2019 observed that departures from IDP camps doubled in August compared to July 2019. The report referred to ‘forced evictions, forced relocations and coerced departures’ resulting from camp closures in Salah Al-Din, Anbar, Kirkuk and Ninawa.⁵⁰ The UN Human Rights Council stated that as of 31 December 2019, 4.6 million IDPs had returned to their areas of origin and that the policies of the Iraqi government ‘have been instrumental in promoting the returns; however, premature, coerced and forced returns, in addition to blocked returns, have also been reported’.⁵¹

The New Arab report also referred to recent attempts by the Iraqi government to return IDPs to their areas of origin, some of which were allegedly forceful.⁵² Similarly, HRW observed that around 60 IDP families were forced to return to their village of origin, Tal Abu Jarad, which was still in rubble. According to the report, armed groups in the area engaged in recruiting one male member of each family to join ‘a local neighbourhood watch’.⁵³

Damaged property compensation scheme

Regarding compensation schemes in place, the Global Protection Cluster stated that Law No. 20 of 2009 provided that the Iraqi government would ‘compensate all citizens, including IDPs, whose properties were affected by war-related incidents’. This Law was amended by Law No. 57 of 2015 which stipulated that ‘all Iraqis affected or harmed during military operations and terrorist actions are entitled to financial compensation’. Five categories were eligible for compensation, one of which was damaged property.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Law No. 2 of 2020 established compensation sub-committees in Baghdad and the KRI in addition to those already established in conflict-affected governorates and gave the sub-committees more competences and authority.⁵⁵

According to the report of the Global Protection Cluster, all property owners can submit compensation claims. A copy of a valid ID document should be provided alongside other documents including a proof

⁴⁷ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁸ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 52

⁵⁰ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, August 2019, available at: [url](#), p. 1

⁵¹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, A/HRC/44/41/Add.1, 13 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

⁵² New Arab (The), العراق: جدل بشأن خطوات إعادة النازحين إلى مدنهم [Iraq: Debate about the Steps of Returning IDPs to Their Towns/Cities], 16 September 2019, [url](#)

⁵³ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁴ Global Protection Cluster, PROPERTY COMPENSATION GUIDELINES: Based on Iraqi Law 20, 2009, Law 57, 2015 (First Amendment) and Law 2 of 2020 (Second Amendment), March 2020, [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁵ Global Protection Cluster, PROPERTY COMPENSATION GUIDELINES: Based on Iraqi Law 20, 2009, Law 57, 2015 (First Amendment) and Law 2 of 2020 (Second Amendment), March 2020, [url](#), p. 5

of ownership of ‘property title deed (tapoo)’. In case of loss of ownership documents, owners could request a replacement either from Regional Real Estate Registration Offices or from the Central Office in Baghdad. Alternatively, the owner could obtain an Ownership Proof Form, which ‘should be endorsed by the *Mukhtar*, community leaders, municipal council, local authorities, and two witnesses. All of them would have to validate that the property truly belongs to the said claimant’. High quality pictures of the damaged property and the exact address should be provided with the claim as well. For IDPs who are still in displacement, written claims by the *Mukhtar*, Mayor, and neighbours could replace the pictures for assessing the damage.⁵⁶

A report published by Minority Rights Group on 22 January 2020 stated that as of November 2019, 26 000 families from Ninawa governorate filed claims for property damage compensation. The report pointed out to problems in the mechanism, mainly the ‘cumbersome procedure required to file a claim, combined with the significant processing delays and alleged corruption’.⁵⁷ UNOCHA also observed that access to compensation schemes for damaged private property was ‘extremely challenging’.⁵⁸ The Global Protection Cluster stated that the procedures were ‘quite complex, complicated, somewhat contradictory or ambiguous’ with no clear instructions or mechanism in place.⁵⁹ The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons noted that ‘[d]estroyed or damaged housing and other issues related to housing, land and property, such as lack of documentation to prove tenure, remain a significant obstacle for IDPs to return to their place of origin’. The Special Rapporteur observed that despite the existence of mechanisms for compensation for damaged property, IDPs were either unaware of those mechanisms, or faced obstacles when applying due to lack of documents.⁶⁰ In a later report published on 13 May 2020, the Special Rapporteur stated that many compensation claims were left unprocessed, and added that ‘allegations of corruption, nepotism and discrimination in the processing of claims are also a matter of concern’.⁶¹

1.3.3 Housing, living conditions, and food security

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons noted that ‘IDPs in and out of camp settings lack (or have limited) access to food, housing, healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities.’ She pointed out that there were IDPs who were living in ‘sub-standard’ shelters, and that the level of poverty was so high that IDPs were seen selling food and non-food items they received.⁶² IOM dataset of 12 June 2020 indicated that out of 231 590 IDP households, 18 817 were living in critical shelters.⁶³ UNOCHA estimated the number of individuals who lived in critical shelters, e.g. unfinished or abandoned structures, makeshift shelters, and worn tents, to be around 700 000 and identified 1.5 million people who were in need of shelter and NFI (Non-Food Items) support.⁶⁴ According to UNOCHA, around 187 000 IDPs living outside of camps ‘fear eviction from their habitual residence’ due to failure to pay rent or family disputes over property, while property damage

⁵⁶ Global Protection Cluster, PROPERTY COMPENSATION GUIDELINES: Based on Iraqi Law 20, 2009, Law 57, 2015 (First Amendment) and Law 2 of 2020 (Second Amendment), March 2020, [url](#), pp. 5-6

⁵⁷ MRG, Mosul after the Battle: Reparations for civilian harm and the future of Ninewa, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 52

⁵⁹ Global Protection Cluster, PROPERTY COMPENSATION GUIDELINES: Based on Iraqi Law 20, 2009, Law 57, 2015 (First Amendment) and Law 2 of 2020 (Second Amendment), March 2020, [url](#), p. 7

⁶⁰ OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

⁶¹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, A/HRC/44/41/Add.1, 13 May 2020, [url](#), p. 12

⁶² OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

⁶³ IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPS Master List: Round 115, 12 June 2020, [url](#), TAB ‘Summary’

⁶⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 57

was reported by 60 % of returnees.⁶⁵ UNOCHA also maintained that around 370 000 IDPs residing in camps and 2 million ‘out-of-camp individuals’ are in need of shelter assistance. Moreover, around ‘half of female-headed households living in critical shelter have heightened needs related to safety and privacy’.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the New Humanitarian stated that UNDP was rehabilitating 15 000 buildings in west Mosul. According to the source, UNDP performed partial repairs only, while ‘[r]econstruction is in the hands of the government, and entire neighbourhoods still lie in ruins’.⁶⁷

As for returnees, IOM noted that a total of 27 574, or 3 % of all returnee households were living in shelters classified as critical, i.e. uninhabitable buildings, informal settlements, and abandoned, religious or school buildings, compared to 756 623 households living in non-critical shelters, mainly host families, rented houses and habitable buildings.⁶⁸ In Baghdad, 13 889 households returned to non-critical shelters compared to 1 044 who returned to critical shelters. In Erbil, almost all the returnee households returned to non-critical shelters.⁶⁹ In its Humanitarian Response Plan of January – May 2019, UNOCHA observed that ‘[n]early all families who have returned to their areas of origin (an estimated 95 per cent) have returned to a habitual residence that is in a good condition’. According to the report, returnees provided consistent reasons for return, which included ‘improvements in the security situation, provision of services and rehabilitation of houses in areas of origin’.⁷⁰

In its 2019 Iraq Factsheet, IOM stated that rental costs for two-bedroom houses ranged between 200-750 USD in 2019, and the price depended on the location and size of the property. Reportedly, it was easier for single men to rent apartments or studio apartments than to rent houses. Moreover, IOM observed that there were no governmental agencies to assist returnees in finding accommodation, and the available option was real-estate agencies. Finally, the government provided housing loans to citizens who possessed lands with areas of more than 100 square meters and who met certain eligibility criteria. However, according to IOM, the programme is on hold in the KRI.⁷¹

With regard to sanitation conditions, UNOCHA estimated that 1.85 million people across Iraq were in ‘critical need of sustained, equitable access to safe and appropriate WASH services’, of which 49 % were women and girls, 38 % children, and 4 % elderly.⁷² However, during the recent COVID-19 crisis, a Security Council report published on 6 May 2020 noted that ‘[h]ealth and water, hygiene and sanitization interventions for internally displaced persons were expanded in both camp and non-camp settings’.⁷³

Concerning food security, UNOCHA stated that a ‘total of 425,000 returnees and 125,000 out-of-camp IDPs are food insecure’, with the highest numbers being in Ninawa, Salah Al-Din, Anbar, and Diyala. The report added that female-headed households were among the most vulnerable and that girls aged between 6 and 17 were particularly affected and were ‘more likely to be denied food by caregivers and ... more prone to undertaking unsafe income generating activities’.⁷⁴ Concerning water, UNOCHA stated that ‘[a]s many as 46 per cent of households in camps, 36 per cent out of camps and 21 per cent of returnee households are unable to access enough water for domestic use’.⁷⁵

⁶⁵ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 54

⁶⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 57

⁶⁷ New Humanitarian (The), Nowhere to go: Mosul residents in limbo as camps close, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸ IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq: Returnees Master List – Round 115, 12 June 2020, [url](#), Tab ‘Summary’

⁶⁹ IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq: Returnees Master List – Round 115, 12 June 2020, [url](#), Tab ‘Shelter Type by Gov of Return’

⁷⁰ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan: Monitoring Report January – May 2019, 27 August 2019, [url](#), p. 8

⁷¹ IOM, Country Factsheet: Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p.6

⁷² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 59

⁷³ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 10

⁷⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 47

⁷⁵ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 20

With regard to livelihoods, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons stated that lack of livelihood opportunities affected female-headed households in particular and constituted an obstacle to returning to places of origin.⁷⁶ UNOCHA estimated that 370 000 IDPs in formal camps, 343 000 IDPs in out of camp settings, and 980 000 returnees could not 'attain a minimum level of living standards.'⁷⁷

Finally, the Health Cluster stated that in March 2020, the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement decided to suspend humanitarian assistance to IDPs residing in informal settlements in the Anbar province. Reportedly, only in-camp IDPs will continue to receive assistance from the Ministry.⁷⁸

1.3.4 Access to education

UNOCHA, in its Humanitarian Needs Overview of November 2019, estimated that in 2020, 1.22 million IDP children aged 6 – 17 would need government assistance in the education sector. Currently, around 345 000 IDP children, and 815 500 returnee children 'are particularly vulnerable and in-need of assistance to access education', notably in Ninawa, Al-Anbar, Salah Al-Din, Kirkuk, Al-Sulaimaniya, Erbil and Dohuk.⁷⁹

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons expressed her concern 'at the extent to which internally displaced children in and out of camp settings are deprived of education'. She added that internally displaced children in areas previously held by ISIL suffered from discrimination and reduced mobility due to lack of documents. Additionally, children 'born out of sexual violence' or who had lost their father but did not hold a death certificate were unable to obtain birth certificates or other types of civil documentation, which in turn, barred their access to education.⁸⁰ A report jointly published by UNAMI and OHCHR in February 2020 observed that children and young adults who lived in former ISIL-held areas 'accumulated a substantial gap in their academic knowledge due to years of missed education and also face challenges in obtaining the civil documentation required to enrol in formal schooling'.⁸¹ Finally, the Special Rapporteur observed that many IDP children worked in order to contribute to the family income.⁸²

The UNAMI/OHCHR report highlighted a gap in education provision for IDPs in areas previously held by ISIL. According to the report, despite the Iraqi government's directive 'advising teachers to adhere to standard "placement test" policies to enable children to re-enter the formal education system', 'students living in IDP settings were more commonly held back from joining age appropriate grades and were placed with younger children' which resulted in high dropout rates in intermediate and secondary education. Moreover, class over-crowdedness and time limitation, and 'untreated societal and individual trauma' exacerbated the problem.⁸³ In addition, and according to a mapping exercise conducted in May 2019 by United Nations led Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster,

⁷⁶ OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 20

⁷⁸ Health Cluster Iraq, Health Cluster Bulletin No. 3, March 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 43

⁸⁰ OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

⁸¹ UNAMI and OHCHR, The Right to Education in Iraq: Part One: the legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education, February 2020, [url](#), p. 4

⁸² OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

⁸³ UNAMI and OHCHR, The Right to Education in Iraq: Part One: the legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education, February 2020, [url](#), p. 9

ten IDP camps did not have education provisions at all, while the schools in Mosul operated in three shifts, which reduced schooling time to four hours per day.⁸⁴ UNICEF made reference to challenges in the education sector which included ‘limited availability of physical structures, teaching materials, and qualified personnel.’⁸⁵ In order to fill in this gap, the Iraqi Ministry of Education created the nationwide Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP), albeit for the primary curriculum only. Nevertheless, the majority of the residents of IDP camps and rural areas in governorates previously held by ISIL were not able to benefit from such initiatives due to lack of freedom of movement.⁸⁶

According to the UNAMI/OHCHR report, the current directives of the Ministry of Education require several types of civil documents for school registration. Reportedly, 45 000 children in IDPS camps do not have such documents, and most of the families who lived in former ISIL-held areas miss essential documents. This has an impact on access to education. This is particularly relevant for children of deceased fathers, as the directives of the Ministry of Education require the submission of identification documents for both the child and the parents.⁸⁷ A report of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and International Refugee Committee (IRC) pointed out that discrepancies existed among governorates with regard to the required documentation for school enrolment. The report found that in Salah Al-Din, only the student’s ID was required to attend, while in Anbar, those of the student and the parents were requested.⁸⁸ Finally, the Ministry of Education issued a directive ‘allowing school-age children to register in schools without documentation but requiring documents to be submitted by parents within one month of enrolment’. This directive, according to UNAMI was not effective due to under-dissemination and the lengthy process to obtain documents, which exceeded the one-month delay.⁸⁹

As for what concerns returnee children who went to school abroad, IOM observed that the following documents were required for school enrolment in Iraq: foreign school certificate certified by the Iraqi embassy in the host country and the Ministries of Education/Higher Education and Foreign Affairs in Iraq, ID of the student and parents, Food Ration Card, and personal photos. Additionally, high school certificates had to be equalised by the Ministry of Higher Education.⁹⁰

1.3.5 Access to health care

According to IOM’s 2019 Iraq Factsheet, the health system in Iraq is accessible to all citizens. For adults, only the ID card is required to register at a clinic or hospital. When receiving vaccination, infants are provided with leaflets and checklists, and parents are required to bring them along when they visit the hospital. The information contained in the leaflet is obtained from the infant’s birth certificate and the parents’ ID cards.⁹¹ As regards access to healthcare, Human Rights Watch observed that those who missed documents did not have access to healthcare and could not get birth certificates for their children.⁹²

⁸⁴ UNAMI and OHCHR, The Right to Education in Iraq: Part One: the legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education, February 2020, [url](#), p. 10

⁸⁵ UNICEF, 2020 Internal Displacement Crisis Humanitarian Situation Report, 23 April 2020, available at: [url](#)

⁸⁶ UNAMI and OHCHR, The Right to Education in Iraq: Part One: the legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education, February 2020, [url](#), pp. 10-11

⁸⁷ UNAMI and OHCHR, The Right to Education in Iraq: Part One: the legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education, February 2020, [url](#), p. 11

⁸⁸ NRC, et al., Paperless people of post-conflict Iraq: Denied rights, barred from basic services and excluded from reconstruction efforts, 16 September 2019, [url](#), p. 11

⁸⁹ UNAMI and OHCHR, The Right to Education in Iraq: Part One: the legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education, February 2020, [url](#), p. 12

⁹⁰ IOM, Country Factsheet: Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 9

⁹¹ IOM, Country Factsheet: Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 4

⁹² HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

UNOCHA observed that less people were in need of humanitarian health support due to the return movement that already took place, and ‘the gradual regeneration of basic government health services in areas of return’. The source added that the need for trauma care at frontlines and for ‘life-saving primary health care services’ has ceased to exist since the end of the conflict.⁹³ Nevertheless, UNOCHA observed that around 325 000 IDPs in camps and 500 000 in out-of-camp settings continued to be in need of basic health services, ‘including essential primary health care services delivered by humanitarian partners addressing gaps in Directorate of Health (DoH) capacity.’ Reportedly, around 2 million returnees risked having their basic health needs unmet in 2020 in areas of return if humanitarian actors were not able to provide services. The governorates of Al-Anbar, Babil, Baghdad, Dohuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, Al-Najaf, Ninawa, Salah Al-Din and Sulaimaniya remained the priority for UNOCHA.⁹⁴ Moreover, medicine cost was considered ‘the biggest barrier to accessing health services’, while specific medicines for chronic illnesses were not consistently available or supplied by the Directorate of Health.⁹⁵

In a report published on 11 March 2020, the Iraq Protection Cluster observed that in Baghdad, 4 189 people were in need of psychosocial support in 2020, of which 656 were IDPs and 3 472 returnees. In Erbil, the total number of people in need of psychosocial support was 10 598, of which 9 764 were IDPs and 829 returnees. The report stated that in 2019, 13 implementing partners/NGOs were present in Baghdad and 16 in Erbil, to cater for the psychosocial support needs.⁹⁶

For information about the impact of COVID-19 on the healthcare system in Iraq, see [Section 1.8](#) below.

1.3.6 Employment opportunities

UNOCHA remarked that the ‘main recovery need’ for IDPs was access to employment and work, the third most important reported need for IDPs and returnees after food and medical care.⁹⁷ IOM’s Integrated Location Assessment III, published in January 2019, stated that access to employment and livelihoods was a top concern for IDPs in nearly all of the over 4 000 locations it assessed in 2018.⁹⁸ The lack of livelihoods translated into difficulties accessing basic needs such as food, household/non-food items, and shelter.⁹⁹ Moreover, in its Humanitarian Needs Overview of November 2019, UNOCHA stated that ‘lack of livelihoods has been a primary barrier to sustainable returns, providing a disincentive for IDPs to return and a catalyst for secondary displacement for returnees’. According to the report, indebtedness existed among returnees and IDPs outside of camps, and unemployment among IDPs and returnees from Ninawa, Anbar, Salah Al-Din, Diyala, and Kirkuk was high. Furthermore, UNOCHA estimated the number of people in need of livelihoods assistance to be 2.39 million in 2020.¹⁰⁰ With regard to unemployment among IDPs, the World Bank stated in its report of January 2018 that in the seven governorates affected by conflict, i.e. Anbar, Babil, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa, Salah Al-Din and Baghdad, unemployment reached 17.7 % and underemployment 9.7 %. According to the report, the rate of unemployment in Anbar and Diyala was 33.6 % and 20.7 % respectively.¹⁰¹

In its Humanitarian Bulletin of April 2020, UNOCHA made reference to a government campaign in late 2019 to recruit security personnel. Reportedly, the campaign ‘saw a number of internally displaced

⁹³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 50

⁹⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 49

⁹⁵ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 20

⁹⁶ Protection Cluster Iraq, Psychosocial Support (PSS) Activities in Iraq: 2019 Achievements & 2020 Needs, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), pp. 51-52

⁹⁸ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 6

⁹⁹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), pp. 6, 34-35

¹⁰⁰ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 45

¹⁰¹ World Bank Group, Iraq: Reconstruction and Investment, January 2018, [url](#), p. 32

persons (IDPs) gaining employment with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and as police officers.’ According to the Bulletin, the recruited personnel worked in rotation within or across governorates and returned to their camp of residence for breaks.¹⁰²

According to IOM’s Iraq Factsheet of 2019, the Iraqi government provides vocational training programmes to address the issues of unemployment, lower skill levels and to respond to ‘the needs of an emerging private sector’. Returnees can request assistance from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and have to provide ID and Food Ration Cards, in addition to other varying documents to register at the Ministry.¹⁰³

1.3.7 Legal restrictions on travel or residence inside Iraq

Article 44 of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 stipulated that ‘[e]ach Iraqi has freedom of movement, travel, and residence inside and outside Iraq’.¹⁰⁴ On 11 February 2019, the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court reiterated that Iraqi citizens enjoy freedom of travel inside and outside Iraq, and that this freedom cannot be curtailed by any legislation.¹⁰⁵ Information about the types of documents required for internal mobility and about the (in)existence of legal restrictions on freedom of movement between regions in Iraq was scarce, and the focus of the sources consulted during the drafting of this report was on IDPs.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons noted that Iraqi IDPs faced ‘numerous barriers’ in the way to obtain civil documentation. She stressed the importance of those documents for ‘the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, in terms of IDPs accessing basic services, education, healthcare and social security benefits, housing, land and property rights, and freedom of movement’.¹⁰⁶ In addition, she expressed her concern for ‘the restrictions on freedom of movement imposed on IDPs’, notably through the requirement to obtain security clearance to be able to travel. She added that ‘security clearances are required and often denied to members of families perceived as affiliated to extremist groups’.¹⁰⁷ Human Rights Watch’s report of 14 June 2019 stated that members of the security forces in Iraq admitted that the ban on issuing security clearances to IDPs who had lived under ISIL aimed at limiting their movement in order to keep them under surveillance. The report added that movement without a valid ID card in Iraq could lead to arrest, and consequently to torture.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, The UN Special Rapporteur in the Human Rights of IDPs made reference to information according to which, IDPs were confined in their camps and needed escorts to go to medical or legal services.¹⁰⁹ UNOCHA observed that the need for legal assistance among IDPs and returnees regarding civil documentation and Housing and Land Property remained high, with more than 500 000 households missing essential documents. According to the report, persons missing documents were susceptible to deteriorating living standards and rights violations.¹¹⁰

¹⁰² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin, April 2020, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰³ IOM, Country Factsheet: Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁰⁴ Iraq, Constitution of Iraq, 2005, [url](#), Art. 44

¹⁰⁵ Al-Sumaria, المحكمة الاتحادية: لا يجوز تقييد حرية سفر العراقي داخل البلاد وخارجها [Federal Court: Iraqis’ Freedom of Travel inside and outside Iraq Should not be Curtailed], 11 February 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 52

A report published on 16 September 2019 by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and the International Refugee Committee (IRC) indicated that most of the surveyed people 'reported that a combination of the civil ID and security clearance was required to pass through checkpoints in areas formerly controlled by IS'. In Salah Al-Din, people mentioned difficulties in travelling within the governorate either because the security clearances they had were not recognised by checkpoints, or because they were asked to obtain additional 'security slips' or to have sponsorships.¹¹¹ Finally, Human Rights Watch observed that failure to possess civil documents and security clearance in Iraq resulted in a restriction on freedom of movement.¹¹²

In November 2019, UNHCR published 'Country of Origin Information on Access and Residency Requirements in Iraq (Update I)'. According to the document, persons originating from 'formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas, particularly Sunni Arabs (including persons who returned to Iraq from a third country)' needed a sponsor to access Missan, Muthanna, and Dohuk governorates. Entry to the governorates of Babel, Baghdad, Basra, Diyala, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Najef, Qadissiyah, Sulaymaniyah and Wassit did not require sponsorship. Moreover, 'Sponsorship requirements in order to enter Basrah, Erbil, Qadissiyah and Sulaymaniyah Governorates via air or at internal land borders were lifted in early 2019.'

With regard to residency, UNHCR observed the following requirements that concerned persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas, particularly Sunni Arabs:

- Baghdad governorate: two sponsors from the neighbourhood in which the person intends to reside and a support letter from the local *Mukhtar*.
- Dohuk governorate: approval of the local *Asayish* obtained by approaching them with the sponsor from Dohuk. This was pertinent to 'Arabs from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas and Turkmen from Tal Afar'.
- Diyala governorate: a sponsor from the neighbourhood in which the person intends to reside and a support letter from the local *Mukhtar*. In Khanaqin District, 'letters from three entities are required (mukhtar's office, National Security, and Intelligence)'.
- Kirkuk city: only a support letter from the local *Mukhtar* of the neighbourhood in which the person intends to reside was required. Previous sponsorship requirements were lifted following the re-establishment of central government control on 16 October 2017.
- Southern governorates: a local sponsor and a support letter from the local *Mukhtar*.
- Erbil and Sulaimaniya governorates: residency cards (or information cards) were obtained from the local *Asayish* in the neighbourhood in which the person intends to reside and no sponsor was required. Single Arab and Turkmen men needed to 'submit a support letter from their employer in order to obtain a one-year, renewable residency card'. UNHCR stated that persons who did not have regular employment obtained 'only a one-month renewable residency' which made it difficult for them to find regular employment.

UNHCR concluded that '[a]ccess and residency requirements are not always clearly defined and/or implementation can vary or be subject to changes depending mostly on the security situation' and that '[s]ponsorship requirements are generally not grounded in law nor are they officially announced'.¹¹³

¹¹¹ NRC et al., Paperless people of post-conflict Iraq: Denied rights, barred from basic services and excluded from reconstruction efforts, 16 September 2019, [url](#), p. 17

¹¹² HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

¹¹³ UNHCR, Iraq: Country of Origin Information on Access and Residency Requirements in Iraq: Ability of Persons Origination from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation (Update I), 6 November 2019, available at: [url](#), pp. 2, 3

For more information on obtaining lost documents for returnees and IDPs, see [Section 1.7](#) below.

1.4 Women

1.4.1 Employment

The Iraqi National Development Plan of 2018 – 2022 acknowledged that women’s participation in the labour market was weak (14.5 % in total, 12 % in rural areas and 14 % in urban areas).¹¹⁴ In a Blog post published on the website of the World Bank on 27 August 2019, the authors stated that the percentage of employed women in Iraq was 19 % of the total female population aged 15 and above. Those with lower education were usually self-employed or worked in the informal sector.¹¹⁵ The World Bank, based on ILO estimates, indicated that female unemployment in Iraq was 30.4 % of the female labour force in 2019.¹¹⁶ Moreover, and according to the IOM 2018 demographic survey on the KRI, at Erbil governorate-level, 10.7 % of women were ‘part of the labour force’, with a higher percentage in urban areas (11.1 %) compared to rural ones (8 %) at the KRI level.¹¹⁷

In its report of November 2019, REACH mentioned official plans and policies aimed to protect and promote women’s employment. Those included the National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325, the 2014-2018 National Strategy for the Advancement of the Status of Iraqi Women, and the Iraq Labour Law of 2015. Notwithstanding such efforts, REACH concluded that there was notable inconsistency in the application of those policies, especially in the private sector.¹¹⁸

The Iraqi National Development Plan of 2018 – 2022 outlined numerous challenges that hindered an effective participation of women in the labour market. Such challenges included the ‘weak activation of women empowerment laws’ due to social and cultural factors, the cancellation of the Ministries of Women Affairs and Human Rights, and the high rate of practices that infringed the Personal Status Law such as child marriage. Moreover, lack of sensitivity to gender issues in the state budget, discrimination against women with regard to social and economic roles, increase in the number of widows and orphans, and women’s insufficient education and skills also impacted women’s employment.¹¹⁹ The objectives set in the Plan to improve the economic situation of women included the improvement of women’s participation in the labour market through training and facilitation of borrowing, and in the private sector through increasing small loans to women and focusing on the activation of the chapter pertinent to women in the Iraqi Labour Law No. 37/2015.¹²⁰

UNAMI observed that factors such as violence, insecurity, societal views of women and weak performance of state functions impacted ‘the role of Iraqi women in rebuilding the country’.¹²¹ Moreover, Iraqi women tended to be highly affected by unreliable electric supply, which ‘impedes income and productivity of women’s small sized businesses, and ... discourages women from pursuing further education and or engaging in income-generating activities’.¹²²

¹¹⁴ Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018 – 2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 211

¹¹⁵ Canpolat, E. and Maier, E., Powering Women in Iraq, 27 August 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ World Bank (The), Unemployment, female (% of female labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) – Iraq, 1 July 2020, [url](#), TAB. Data

¹¹⁷ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 39

¹¹⁸ REACH, Iraq: Assessment on employment and working conditions of conflict affected women across key sectors, November 2019, [url](#), p. 3

¹¹⁹ Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018 – 2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 211

¹²⁰ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018 – 2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 212

¹²¹ UNAMI, Country Profile, n. d., [url](#)

¹²² Canpolat, E. and Maier, E., Powering Women in Iraq, 27 August 2019, [url](#)

In a survey conducted by the World Bank in the KRI, more than 70 % of the surveyed men and women considered that women's employment in the private sector was acceptable and more than 50 % of the surveyed unemployed women indicated their willingness to work.¹²³ Regarding the type of occupation for women in Erbil City, 82.3 % of the working women were employed in the public sector, 10.5 % in the private sector, 2.9 % were self-employed, and 1.9 % were daily waged workers.¹²⁴ The KRI 2020 Vision stated that around 80 % of the employed women in the KRI worked in the public sector.¹²⁵

The KRI Vision 2020 acknowledged that 'cultural considerations continue to restrict the equal access of women to resources and leadership positions in society.' The report stated that the majority of women in the KRI reported that they lacked in educational qualification required for employment. The goal of the KRG is 'to narrow the literacy and school enrolment gap between men and women' and to 'ensure that women have equal opportunities in all activities in society.'¹²⁶

1.4.2 Working conditions

The World Bank stated that, '[i]rrespective of sector, women earn significantly less than men with similar characteristics'.¹²⁷ In the same report, the World Bank reported that '[w]omen with low levels of education and skills are often self-employed and concentrated in private sector activities. These are usually informal, low-paying jobs with almost no access to benefits such as health insurance, maternity leave or pensions', and those employed in the informal economy were excluded from Labour Code protections. Of the women who participated in the labour force, 70 % were employed in the public sector and usually possessed secondary or higher education.¹²⁸

According to REACH, 167 out of 416 surveyed women in former conflict areas, i.e. Anbar, Baghdad, Dohuk, Erbil, Ninawa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaimaniya, reported not being aware of labour laws and policies in place. Moreover, having an employment agreement was higher among women employed in the health and education sectors compared to those employed in agriculture. With regard to transportation, numerous respondents indicated 'walking as their form of transportation to work'.¹²⁹ REACH also found that a 'small portion of women' reported on cases of verbal or sexual harassment at work, and this was due to the sensitivity of the topic. Of this small portion, almost 50 % indicated that the victim of harassment quit or changed her job.¹³⁰ USDOS noted that female IDPs, widows, and single women 'were particularly vulnerable to economic exploitation and discriminatory employment conditions', and that single women and widows faced difficulties registering their children.¹³¹

Moreover, the challenges that women in the KRI faced in relation to employment were the lack in childcare solutions, the requirement to return home before 5 p.m., and the 'weak legislative protection to women and families in the workplace'.¹³²

¹²³ World Bank (The), Helping Women in Kurdistan region of Iraq to Find Jobs, 21 March 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁴ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 100

¹²⁵ KRG, Ministry of Planning, Kurdistan Region of Iraq 2020: A Vision for the Future, n.d., [url](#), p. 16

¹²⁶ KRG, Ministry of Planning, Kurdistan Region of Iraq 2020: A Vision for the Future, n.d., [url](#), pp. 11-12

¹²⁷ World Bank (The), Iraq systematic country diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 50

¹²⁸ World Bank (The), Iraq systematic country diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 49

¹²⁹ REACH, Iraq: Assessment on employment and working conditions of conflict affected women across key sectors, November 2019, [url](#), pp. 4-5

¹³⁰ REACH, Iraq: Assessment on employment and working conditions of conflict affected women across key sectors, November 2019, [url](#), p. 5

¹³¹ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

¹³² World Bank (The), Helping Women in Kurdistan region of Iraq to Find Jobs, 21 March 2019, [url](#)

1.4.3 Access to health care

The National Development Plan 2018 – 2022 indicated that the health services provided to women suffered from shortage due to ‘the limited number of reproductive health and family planning centres’. Shortage in female medical staff especially in rural areas and the insufficient awareness of the significance of early detection of women diseases added up to the challenges faced by women in the process of integration in the labour market in Iraq.¹³³

In the wake of COVID-19 situation in Iraq, the GBV Sub-Cluster stated that ‘[w]omen and girls may not be able to access health care services if infected, as it is culturally unacceptable to put women and girls in mixed-gender spaces without their relatives’. Moreover, women and girls may be left without medical care if female health workers are not available as their families may not allow them to receive medical checks by male health workers.¹³⁴

1.4.4 Access to education/dropout rates

The National Development Plan 2018 – 2022 observed that the enrolment rates of male students in primary, intermediate and secondary levels were higher than those of their female counterparts. The report added that the dropout rate of females is ‘higher than males and increases with the development of education stages’, and that families were not ‘very keen on providing education to their female children’.¹³⁵ According to BTI 2020 Country Report, girls were less likely to go to school than boys. Citing the World Bank, the report stated that 49 % of young men were enrolled in school compared to 19 % of 17-year-old women. Consequently, illiteracy was higher among women (62 % compared to 47 % among men).¹³⁶ Finally, the Iraqi CSO indicated that illiteracy among women aged 15-49 in 2018 was 2.3 % in Baghdad¹³⁷ and 28.9 % in Basra¹³⁸.

1.4.5 Freedom of movement

On 11 May 2020, the NRC published a report, which stated that displaced Iraqi women ‘are 11 per cent more likely to face barriers impeding them from going back home after years of suffering in displacement camps since the end of the war against Islamic State group in their areas of origin.’¹³⁹ The UK Department for International Development observed that ‘[s]ocial and cultural barriers also often hinder women’s participation in Iraq, particularly the patriarchal cultural norm whereby women often need permission to engage in activities outside the home’.¹⁴⁰ According to USDOS Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019, ‘[l]aw and custom generally do not respect freedom of movement for women’. Reportedly, women could not apply for a passport or obtain Civil Status Identification (required to access several services) without the consent of a male guardian or relative.¹⁴¹ Freedom House observed the same practice and concluded that ‘[t]he movement of women is limited by legal restrictions’.¹⁴²

¹³³ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018 – 2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 211

¹³⁴ GBV Sub-Cluster Iraq: Guidance Note on GBV Service Provision during the Time of COVID-19, March 2020 [url](#), p. 2

¹³⁵ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018 – 2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 209

¹³⁶ BTI, 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 23

¹³⁷ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي بغداد [Baghdad Statistical Summary 2018, 21 June 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي البصرة [Basra Statistical Summary 2018], 21 June 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁹ NRC, Iraqi women denied their property by relatives, tribes and militias, 11 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ O’Driscoll, D., Women’s participation in peacebuilding and reconciliation in Iraq. K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, 24 November 2017, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁴¹ USDOS – US Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019 - Iraq, 11 March 2020 [url](#)

¹⁴² Freedom House: Freedom in the World 2020 - Iraq, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

OXFAM stated that according to women surveyed in Diyala, the exclusion of women from livelihoods in Iraq was not due to ‘deficiencies in the law’ but due to ‘the restricted freedom of movement that is imposed on them either by social norms or perceived lack of safety and security, or both’.¹⁴³ The report found that harassment played a role in the limitation of freedom of movement for IDP women. Reportedly, in Kirkuk male relatives would accompany women in all their movements outside the house, or women would avoid contact with the host communities altogether. Moreover, women in Hawija, Kirkuk governorate, tended to minimise their movement in town ‘in order to avoid the risk of coming into contact with armed groups’.¹⁴⁴

In a blog post published on the website of The World Bank in August 2019, the authors stated that Iraqi women faced ‘increased sense of insecurity and limited mobility’ due to unreliable electricity supply, as they were unable to leave the house at night.¹⁴⁵

1.4.6 Impact of COVID-19 on women

On 23 March 2020, UNFPA published a report which warned of the potential impact COVID-19 crisis could have on women in Iraq. According to the report, potential risks comprised limited access to services, risk of exploitation and sexual violence, added burdens on women and girls as caregivers, heightened risk of COVID-19 infection, increased number of female-headed households due to quarantine measures against male breadwinners, financial constraints for migrant women due to confinement, and limited access to healthcare.¹⁴⁶

The NRC report published on 11 May 2020 highlighted that COVID-19 related measures implemented in Iraq rendered women more vulnerable. According to an assessment conducted by the source in Dohuk, Ninawa, Anbar and Kirkuk governorates¹⁴⁷, ‘66 % of respondents indicated that they would not be able to pay their rent in the next three months.’¹⁴⁸ Moreover, the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) launched a campaign to combat the rise of GBV during the COVID-19 lockdown measures and cited a community police director who stated that ‘his department was focusing on addressing social problems, “foremost violence against women, which has increased in the wake of the corona pandemic crisis”’.¹⁴⁹

For more information on the impact of COVID-19 in Iraq, see [Section 1.8](#) below.

1.5 Children

According to USDOS, the Iraqi Constitution and law ‘prohibit the worst forms of child labor’, and the minimum age for employment is 15 in areas under the authority of Iraq’s central government. Nevertheless, the report stated that child labour existed throughout the country.¹⁵⁰ The Iraqi CSO

¹⁴³ OXFAM, Protection Landscapes in Diyala and Kirkuk, Iraq, March 2020, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁴⁴ OXFAM, Protection Landscapes in Diyala and Kirkuk, Iraq, March 2020, [url](#), pp. 24-25

¹⁴⁵ Canpolat, E. and Maier, E., Powering Women in Iraq, 27 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶ UNFPA, GBV Sub-Cluster Iraq, Guidance Note on GBV Service Provision during the Time of COVID-19, 23 March 2020, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴⁷ In the report, the NRC explained the methodology as follows: ‘The information and analysis in this report is based upon NRC’s programmatic experience in assisting women with housing, land and property issues in Iraq, in-depth interviews with women and other key stakeholders, focus group discussions, including separate focus group discussions for men and women, and a large scale quantitative survey in 2019.’

¹⁴⁸ NRC, Broken Home: Women’s housing, land and property rights in post-conflict Iraq, 11 May 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁴⁹ IWPR, Iraq: Activists Join Police to Combat Domestic Violence, 19 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iraq, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

indicated that child labour in Iraq was 7.3 % according to 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys.¹⁵¹ It added that in 2018, child labour was 4.8 % in Baghdad, 13.1 % in Erbil and 4.9 % in Basra.¹⁵²

UNOCHA observed that the deterioration in the economic situation and absence of income generating activities resulted in ‘negative coping mechanisms, including drug trade and abuse, child labour, prostitution and early marriage’¹⁵³. OXFAM stated that 70 % of the FGD respondents in Diyala province indicated that child labour was on the rise, notably among low-income and other vulnerable families. According to the report, children ‘most commonly work in urban areas such as Jalawla and Khanaqin, as street pedlars, beggars or rubbish collectors. They can also work part-time after school’.¹⁵⁴ In Kirkuk, the report observed that child labour was common, with children employed as ‘street pedlars, as handymen at markets or at construction sites, with a high risk of exploitation into forced labour and other forms of violence and abuse’.¹⁵⁵

OXFAM observed that there was sporadic information about recruitment of children by ISIL or state-affiliated forces in Diyala.¹⁵⁶ In Kirkuk, the report stated that recruitment of children was reported to have taken place by armed militias in Taza and Hawija.¹⁵⁷ For more information on the recruitment of children by the different actors in Iraq, refer to Chapter 3.8.1 of EASO’s 2019 Targeting of Individuals [Report](#).

Human Rights Watch stated that one of the practices used by the PMUs in Sinsil, Diyala governorate, to allow the return of IDP families was to recruit one male member of the family to join a local armed unit for neighbourhood patrols. The report cited a local source who claimed that ‘there were at least 10 members under 18, the youngest 16’ in those patrols. Human Rights Watch acknowledged that ‘Iraq used to have a large number of child soldiers but has made real strides over the past decade to reduce their ranks’ and warned that this practice ‘by local armed groups threatens that progress’.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, a UN General Assembly/Security Council report published on 9 June 2020 indicated that in 2016, three boys were recruited by the ISF and one by the PMU.¹⁵⁹ However, USDOS maintained that ‘[t]here were no reports that the central government’s Ministry of Defense conscripted or recruited children to serve in the security services’ and that ‘[t]he government and Shia religious leaders expressly prohibited children younger than 18 from serving in combat’. According to the report, the government had limited ability to control child recruitment and use by certain PMU groups such as Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq and Kata’ib Hezbollah.¹⁶⁰

1.6 Networks of support

In a comment on EASO’s Key Socio-economic Indicators [report](#) published in 2019, Dr Chatelard¹⁶¹ explained that patronage or clientelism is a structuring force in Iraqi society, and recourse to non-state support networks represents the most frequent coping mechanism adopted by all categories of the population to access social protection and economic resources. In the absence of rule of law and an equitable system for the allocation of public resources (including individual protection), accessing these resources requires the mediation of political strongmen, religious figures and other influential

¹⁵¹ Iraq, CSO, مؤشرات المسح العنقودي المتعدد المؤشرات [Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys], 21 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵² Iraq, CSO, 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) Briefing, n. d., [url](#), p. 34

¹⁵³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin, March 2020, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵⁴ OXFAM, Protection Landscapes in Diyala and Kirkuk, Iraq, March 2020, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁵⁵ OXFAM, Protection Landscapes in Diyala and Kirkuk, Iraq, March 2020, [url](#), p. 19

¹⁵⁶ OXFAM, Protection Landscapes in Diyala and Kirkuk, Iraq, March 2020, [url](#), p. 19

¹⁵⁷ OXFAM, Protection Landscapes in Diyala and Kirkuk, Iraq, March 2020, [url](#), p. 20

¹⁵⁸ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹ UN General Assembly and UN security General, Children and armed conflict, A/74/845-S/2020/525, 9 June 2020, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁶⁰ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iraq, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ An independent consultant and social scientist currently associated with the Iraq (Erbil) branch of the Institut français du Proche-Orient (French Institute in the Near East)

people who represent constituencies in exchange for allegiance. ‘Family ties (of which tribes are extensions), connections within the religious community, political parties, armed groups or militias, together with all other forms of relationships people can tap into with a certain degree of trust (such as neighbours, work colleagues, former classmates or members of the ethno-religious community) may be mobilised to find a job, facilitate administrative procedures, speed up an application for social assistance, gain access to better medical care, borrow money, etc.’¹⁶²

Wasta is a system which ‘includes a range of actors involved in governance beyond the formal political system, like businessmen, into the governance system’, enforcing loyalties and affiliations. Tribalism plays an intricate role in the *wasta* system across Iraq.¹⁶³ According to the think-tank ‘The Conversation’, *wasta*, ‘which involves serving those you favour and hold close, such as friends and family’ continued to serve Iraq’s elites who governed through this system at the expense of the majority of citizens who have been struggling.¹⁶⁴

In areas previously held by ISIL, REACH found that 407 out of 499 women who participated in surveys and FGDs ‘reported asking friends and family contacts and networks for help in finding a job’. According to the report, connections were indispensable to secure government contracts and IDPs tended to rely more on friends and relatives than on political connections.¹⁶⁵ In a report published on 23 October 2019, and based on more than 1 250 surveys conducted in Mosul and Tal Afar, DRC found that investment in support networks, which include family members, relatives, friends, cultural/religious groups, and local businesses was important ‘to meet basic needs, often through small cash loans or acquiring goods and services on credit’. Additionally, maintaining those networks required certain social decorum, e.g. attending social events, meeting social obligations, and reciprocating behaviour.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, socially investing in such networks was a prerequisite for accessing debt.¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, Humanitarian Policy Group observed that in Mosul ‘the networks supporting people in displacement or under ISIL rule have now dissipated and have been replaced by a reported atmosphere of mistrust’. The report added that nepotism and corruption were pertinent to securing jobs and receiving compensations, and that even working for NGOs was dependent on connections.¹⁶⁸

Welfare services

The IOM 2019 Iraq Factsheet stated that the Iraqi government provided basic services such as free education, healthcare, and food rations to all citizens without discrimination, including returnees. The welfare system varied between municipalities and provinces, and criteria existed, based on which cases of people with vulnerabilities, e.g. disabled individuals and families with widows, were assessed. The eligibility criteria were applicable to returnees who needed to register at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Offices and submit their ID and Food Ration Cards, as well as other documents the Ministry might request.¹⁶⁹ In addition to government assistance, UNOCHA stated in the 2020 Global Humanitarian Overview that ‘humanitarian organizations will provide support related to well-being and living standards for acutely vulnerable returnees’. According to the report, the focus in 2020 will

¹⁶² Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of EASO’s 2019 Key Socio-economic Indicators - Iraq, 19 October 2018

¹⁶³ Hesselink, E., On Coercion and Persuasion: How militia group Hashd al-Shaabi made strategic use of legitimacy sources in establishing civilian compliance in Ninewa governorate, Iraq, in 2017 and 2018, Utrecht University, 2 August 2019, [url](#), p. 27

¹⁶⁴ Conversation (The), Iraq’s discontent – its roots and how to begin fixing it, 23 October 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵ REACH, Iraq: Assessment on employment and working conditions of conflict affected women across key sectors, November 2019, [url](#), p. 26

¹⁶⁶ DRC and UKAID, Household Debt in Iraq: Borrowing in a time of Crisis, 23 October 2019, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁶⁷ DRC and UKAID, Household Debt in Iraq: Borrowing in a time of Crisis, 23 October 2019, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁶⁸ HPG, The humanitarian response in Iraq: Support beyond international assistance in Mosul, July 2019, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁶⁹ IOM, Country Factsheet: Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 7

be on 1.8 million persons who are the most vulnerable out of the 4.1 million persons in need of assistance in Iraq.¹⁷⁰

According to a UNOCHA report published in November 2019, IDP children residing outside of camps as well as vulnerable children in host communities ‘require stronger linkages with social protection safety nets to ensure access to education’.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, a report published in April 2019 by DRC observed that female-headed households were more susceptible to stigmatisation and exclusion due to lack of ‘strong community support networks to navigate potentially hostile environments’.¹⁷²

1.7 Obtaining lost documents for returnees and IDPs

1.7.1 Implications of missing documents

Aid groups estimated that ‘in early 2019 at least 156,000 displaced people are missing at least some of their essential civil documentation’.¹⁷³ A joint report published on 16 September 2019 by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and the International Refugee Committee (IRC) stated that 80 000 families across Iraq were estimated to have members who miss at least one civil document.¹⁷⁴ UNHCR reported that from June to August 2019, a Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment was conducted which revealed that ‘nearly 2.9 million individuals, including camp-based and out-of-camp IDPs as well as returnees, are missing at least one form of civil documentation’.¹⁷⁵

A policy research paper of the World Bank Group published in February 2020 stated that IDPs were registered by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement. Reportedly, registered IDP households were issued special ID cards, which enabled them to receive government and NGO assistance.¹⁷⁶

According to Landinfo, an ID card is essential, ‘since it is used in all contact with the public authorities, the health service, the social welfare services, schools, and when buying and selling houses and cars. In addition, the ID card must be presented when applying for other official documents, for example a passport’.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the difficulty in obtaining death or missing person certificate ‘impacts women’s ability to access services’ in cases where relevant documents were issued in the names of their husbands or fathers. This included claiming unpaid salaries of spouses.¹⁷⁸

1.7.2 Current arrangements and regulations in place

The UNAMI/OHCHR report of February 2020 stated that ‘according to the Civil Status Law, identification documents must be renewed in the applicant’s place of origin, requiring IDPs to return to their hometown for this purpose’. The report added that the return of IDPs to areas previously held by ISIL was problematic due to ‘local “decrees” and threats of violence’.¹⁷⁹ The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons also observed that the current practice was that

¹⁷⁰ UNOCHA, Global Humanitarian Overview 2020, 4 December 2019, [url](#), p. 45

¹⁷¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 43

¹⁷² NRC, Barriers from Birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁷³ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ NRC, et al., Paperless people of post-conflict Iraq: Denied rights, barred from basic services and excluded from reconstruction efforts, 16 September 2019, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁷⁵ UNHCR, Iraq: UNHCR Civil Documentations for IDPs, 20 November 2019, available at: [url](#), p. 1

¹⁷⁶ Phadera, L. et al, Iraq’s Universal Public Distribution System : Utilization and Impacts During Displacement, World Bank Group, February 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁷⁷ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015, [url](#), p. 17

¹⁷⁸ NRC et al., Paperless people of post-conflict Iraq: Denied rights, barred from basic services and excluded from reconstruction efforts, 16 September 2019, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁷⁹ UNAMI and OHCHR, The Right to Education in Iraq: Part One: the legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education, February 2020, [url](#), p. 12

IDPs needed to go to their places of origin to obtain civil documentation according to Iraqi law. However, she made reference to an initiative by the Iraqi government and humanitarian partners ‘to send mobile units to a number of IDP camps’.¹⁸⁰

In a report published in December 2019, UNHCR stated that it collaborated with the Ministry of Interior ‘to implement mobile missions to dispatch government officials to issue civil documentation to IDPs in camps and out-of-camp locations’. Reportedly, the Ministry launched missions to issue civil documents to IDPs in 15 camps in the governorates of Erbil, Dohuk, Ninawa, Sulaimaniya and Kirkuk. By the end of December 2019, the Ministry of Interior managed to issue 9 678 Civil Status IDs, 17 854 Nationality Certificates, 471 Unified National IDs across three governorates.¹⁸¹

On 1 November 2019, Kirkuk Now announced the opening of the first centre to issue the new National Card in Mosul, Ninawa governorate.¹⁸² The issue of the electronic biometric cards has started in September 2015¹⁸³, and according to Kirkuk Now, the National Card will replace four other documents including the ID card, and the procedures to obtain the new document are much simpler as applicants are able to book appointments online. The source cited the Governor of Ninawa who stated that the authorities plan to open other offices across the governorate.¹⁸⁴ In a press release issued on 31 October 2019, UNHCR announced the opening of this National Identification Document Centre in Ninawa governorate. However, according to UNHCR, the new National Card will replace only two civil documents, namely the civil ID status data and the citizenship certificate. Moreover, UNHCR stated that by the end of 2020, 600 000 people in Ninawa would benefit from the new centre.¹⁸⁵ On 10 February 2020, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior announced the closure of three old civil document offices in Missan governorate in preparation for adopting the new National Card system.¹⁸⁶ Finally, Iraq Network Press, a media platform, reported that there have been complaints about a mistake in the blood type field on the new National Card, with citizens blaming the authorities of filling the field with a default O+.¹⁸⁷

Regarding the issue of civil status cards for Iraqi citizens living abroad, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that ‘[t]he Consular Section organizes the papers to obtain the Civil Status Card and send them to the General Directorate of Travel and Nationality / Directorate of Civil Status’. According to the Ministry, the applicant has to submit an application form ‘used to obtain the Civil Status Card for the first time or to renew it or to get damaged or lost alternate form and stamp with the circular stamp of the consulate.’ The form can be filled by the head of the family, the ‘family housewife’, the owner of the record, the guardian, or the legal agent. It has to include the following information: ‘[t]he number of the page, the record, the name of the directory and the governorate, in which the registration happened according to the census of 1957 and full descriptions and the names of those the applicant wants to give them a personal card. The applicant must sign and write his full name and address in the cell provided and the form must be stamped by the consul.’ Moreover, an amount of 750 IQD (equivalent to 1 USD according to the source) has to be paid, and the applicant can authorise

¹⁸⁰ OHCHR, End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, upon conclusion of her official visit to Iraq – 15 to 23 February 2020, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸¹ UNHCR, IRAQ | UNHCR CIVIL DOCUMENTATION FOR IDPS, December 2019, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁸² Kirkuk Now, البطاقة الوطنية الموحدة تدخل حيز التنفيذ في نينوى للمرة الأولى [Unified National Card Enters into Force in Ninawa for the First Time], 1 November 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸³ EASO, Iraq: Internal Mobility, February 2019, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁸⁴ Kirkuk Now, البطاقة الوطنية الموحدة تدخل حيز التنفيذ في نينوى للمرة الأولى [Unified National Card Enters into Force in Ninawa for the First Time], 1 November 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ UNHCR, Press Release - With the support of UNHCR: Inauguration of the first National Identification Document Centre in Ninawa Governorate, 31 October 2019, available at: [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ Iraq, Ministry of Interior, محافظة ميسان تعلن إيقاف العمل بثلاثة دوائر لغرض العمل بالبطاقة الوطنية, [Missan governorate announces the closure of three departments in order to switch to the National Card], 10 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ INP Plus, خطأ فادح في إصدار البطاقة الوطنية العراقية الموحدة في عدة محافظات عراقية.. فما هو؟ [A Grave Error in the Issue of the Iraqi Unified National Card in Several Iraqi Governorates.. What Is It?], 25 June 2019, [url](#)

another Iraqi citizen residing in Iraq to follow up with the Civil Affairs Department. Once issued, the Department of Nationality and Civil Status sends the card to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which in turn sends it to the embassy or the mission concerned.¹⁸⁸ The same information is found on the websites of the Iraqi embassies in Brussels¹⁸⁹, Berlin¹⁹⁰, Vienna¹⁹¹, and Bern¹⁹² among others.

1.7.3 How to obtain lost documents

The UNAMI/OHCHR report outlined the current process for obtaining new civil registration documents in Iraq. The first step is to apply for security clearance by submitting one's name to the intelligence forces in the applicant's area. Names are checked against a database of ISIL affiliates, and the application is denied if a relative's name appears in the database. Moreover, the report stated that cases of denial of security clearance, destruction of application and/or the old documents, and arrest of applicants were reported to UNAMI.¹⁹³ A report published earlier by Human Rights Watch on 14 June 2019 described the same procedure.¹⁹⁴

With regard to IDPs obtaining security clearance, Human Rights Watch described different practices in different locations. First, it described a process called *tabriya* (acquittal), whereby IDP families who had a missing relative could lodge a complaint against that relative over ISIL affiliation before a judge. The judge would then issue a document enabling the family to obtain security clearance. The source cited a woman in Qaim who was allegedly forced to do *tabriya* after her return. Moreover, *tabriya* is rejected in certain areas where there is a 'blanket ban' on the return of IDP families with ISIL links. The second practice is the issuance of special pink ID cards in Karma, Anbar governorate, to more than 200 returning families who have relatives suspected with ISIL affiliation. According to the report, the authorities in the town stated that 'the families were allowed to return home and can use the documents to travel through checkpoints but will be permanently marked by the pink cards'. The third practice was to force one male member of the family to join a local armed unit of the PMU in Sinsil, Diyala, to conduct 'neighborhood patrols' without a pay.¹⁹⁵

Finally, the NRC/DRC/IRC report observed that persons with a missing or deceased relative could not obtain documents until the government locates the body of the relative. Due to the difficulty in proving death, the relatives are required to declare the person missing in a police station with the testimony of two men or four women. The Criminal Investigation Court will then open a case and the relatives are required to publish a public notice in the newspaper. When two years have passed without news from the missing persons, the relatives can request that the person be declared dead by the Personal Status Court, although this can take up to four years according to the source.¹⁹⁶ A Human Rights Council report dated 5 June 2018 made reference to what could be considered as 'certificate of absence' issued by a judge and valid for three years. According to the report, 'these certificates may be withheld from families of disappeared suspected ISIL members, including those that went missing after surrendering to ISF or affiliated forces.'¹⁹⁷

¹⁸⁸ Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, THE CIVIL STATUS ID, n. d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Brussels, The Civil Status ID, n. d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Berlin, The Civil Status ID, n. d., [url](#)

¹⁹¹ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Vienna, The Civil Status ID, n. d., [url](#)

¹⁹² Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Bern, The Civil Status ID, n. d., [url](#)

¹⁹³ UNAMI and OHCHR, The Right to Education in Iraq: Part One: the legacy of ISIL territorial control on access to education, February 2020, [url](#), p. 12

¹⁹⁴ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ HRW, Iraq: Not a Homecoming, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ NRC et al., Paperless people of post-conflict Iraq: Denied rights, barred from basic services and excluded from reconstruction efforts, 16 September 2019, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁹⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on her mission to Iraq, 5 June 2018, [url](#), pp. 15-16

As regards Iraqi living abroad, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that the procedure to obtain a lost document is similar to the regular procedure described in [1.7.2](#) above. The only difference is that the consul has to write down the statement of the applicant which must include information about the place, time, and the way in which the document was lost.¹⁹⁸

1.7.4 Obstacles and difficulties

The NRC/DRC/IRC report of 16 September 2019 indicated a number of challenges that people with lost documents had to face in order to obtain new ones. The first was high costs: persons interviewed for the study stated that they had to pay 200 000 IQD (equivalent to 148 EUR¹⁹⁹) to obtain a civil ID, and 50 000 IQD (equivalent to 37 EUR) for a blood test required to formalise marriages in Tikrit. In addition, respondents flagged widespread corruption, bribery, and *Wasta*, especially in Mosul.²⁰⁰ Moreover, over-crowdedness of the civil directorates (most serious in Salah Al-Din and Ninawa), scatteredness of courts and bureaucracy made it difficult for Iraqis to obtain documents. In Mosul, IDPs and returnees signalled significant delays in the process of document renewal, which hindered them from travelling for work.²⁰¹ Finally, as paperless persons are required to go to their areas of origin to replace documents, many cannot for financial or security reasons. Those who are blocked from returning to their areas of origin often cannot proceed further with the process to obtain documents.²⁰²

1.8 Impact of COVID-19

The World Health Organization (WHO) stated that as of 17 July 2020, there have been 83 867 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 3 432 deaths in Iraq.²⁰³ In an attempt to limit the spread of the pandemic, the Iraqi government announced a nation-wide curfew that entered into force on 17 March 2020; in the KRI, the curfew started on 14 March 2020.²⁰⁴ According to UNHCR COVID-19 update published on 12 July 2020, the KRG extended movement restrictions until further notice and banned movement between governorates. The Government of Iraq imposed partial curfew from 19:00 to 06:00 during weekdays and 24 hours during weekends in the central and southern governorates. Moreover, mass gatherings as well as the majority of public spaces were closed until further notice at a national level.²⁰⁵

UNOCHA reported on the impact of COVID-19 and the consequent movement restriction measures on IDPs. The impact included delayed cash distributions, limitation on physical mobility, and increased prices and scarcity of items. Additionally, UNOCHA observed that ‘some IDPs resorted to engaging unauthorized vendors to enable the cash-out process, who charged them a significant commission to access their money’ due to the closure of banks. Finally, UNOCHA also stated that due to the COVID-19 impact on the Iraqi economy, the WFP extended its list of ‘people identified as most at risk of food insecurity’ to include additional 10 000 IDPs and 35 000 refugees.²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁸ Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, THE CIVIL STATUS ID, n. d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ Exchange rates from [url](#) accessed on 9 June 2020

²⁰⁰ NRC et al., Paperless people of post-conflict Iraq: Denied rights, barred from basic services and excluded from reconstruction efforts, 16 September 2019, [url](#), p. 19

²⁰¹ NRC et al., Paperless people of post-conflict Iraq: Denied rights, barred from basic services and excluded from reconstruction efforts, 16 September 2019, [url](#), pp. 17, 20

²⁰² NRC et al., Paperless people of post-conflict Iraq: Denied rights, barred from basic services and excluded from reconstruction efforts, 16 September 2019, [url](#), pp. 20-21

²⁰³ WHO, WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard: Iraq, 21 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ Health Cluster Iraq, Health Cluster Bulletin No. 3, March 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²⁰⁵ UNHCR, IRAQ | UNHCR COVID-19 UPDATE XII, 12 July 2020, [url](#), p. 1

²⁰⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin, April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

A UN Security Council report published on 6 May 2020 made reference to COVID-19 crisis and all the subsequent preventive measures giving rise to ‘concerns regarding the population’s economic welfare and access to health resources’. According to the report, protests against the imposed measures and their impact on livelihoods were organised in Baghdad and other locations.²⁰⁷ In a briefing to the Security Council on 12 May 2020, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq stated that the imposed curfew ‘brought commercial activity to a near standstill, imperilling the already problematic livelihoods of many Iraqis who rely on daily earnings to feed themselves and their families’.²⁰⁸ According to DRC, the restrictive measures imposed by the Iraqi government ‘have already had drastic consequences on the country’s economy’. Reportedly, 83 % of respondents in the assessed areas, i.e. Dohuk, Erbil, Diyala, and Salah Al-Din, did not have any household member currently working, and 97.7 % reported that they had to incur debt to meet basic needs.²⁰⁹

Moreover, UNAMI stated that it received ‘credible reports of social stigmatization of infected persons in their communities, including verbal and physical attacks against them and their property’.²¹⁰ The report observed that the COVID-19 crisis, together with the drop in oil prices, had severely affected the economic situation in Iraq.²¹¹ The Security Council Report on the Implementation of Resolution 2470 (2019) stated that on 7 April 2020, the Iraqi government allocated a sum of 600 billion IQD (500 million USD) ‘to mitigate the economic impact of the curfew on approximately 10 million affected citizens over the next two months’.²¹²

Regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the healthcare system in Iraq, Education for Peace in Iraq Center (EPIC) observed that there has been an exponential increase in the number of COVID-19 cases since mid-May. The report added that the ‘situation at many of Iraq’s hospitals deteriorated rapidly, as waves of new cases exposed their capacity to cope with extraordinary pressure and overwhelmed their overworked and under-resourced staff.’²¹³ Moreover, WHO data showed that 6.2 % of the COVID-19 cases were Health Care Providers²¹⁴, which might have catastrophic repercussions on the healthcare system in Iraq, which is already suffering from a limited number of health care providers.²¹⁵ Finally, the EPIC report suggested that the actual numbers of COVID-19 deaths might be higher than the official ones due to the difficulty in registering death cases that occur outside hospitals.²¹⁶

Finally, regarding the impact of COVID-19 on education, UNICEF stated that schools in federal Iraq have been closed since 27 February 2020 in order to limit the spread of the virus. Closure of schools was extended each time the Ministry of Health extended curfews and movement restriction. This, according to UNICEF, ‘leaves all school-age children, who make up around 30 per cent of the estimated population of 37 million, without access to learning.’²¹⁷

²⁰⁷ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 13

²⁰⁸ UNAMI, Briefing to the Security Council by Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, 12 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁹ DRC, Labor Market and Livelihoods Competency Assessment : Iraq, April 2020, [url](#), p. 15

²¹⁰ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 9

²¹¹ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 13

²¹² UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²¹³ EPIC, IRAQ’S HEALTH SYSTEM AT RISK: THE STRUGGLE TO FIGHT COVID-19 AND SAVE LIVES, 25 June 2020, [url](#), pp. 1-2

²¹⁴ WHO, Iraq COVID-19 dashboard, n. d., [url](#)

²¹⁵ EPIC, IRAQ’S HEALTH SYSTEM AT RISK: THE STRUGGLE TO FIGHT COVID-19 AND SAVE LIVES, 25 June 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²¹⁶ EPIC, IRAQ’S HEALTH SYSTEM AT RISK: THE STRUGGLE TO FIGHT COVID-19 AND SAVE LIVES, 25 June 2020, [url](#), p. 5

²¹⁷ UNICEF, 2020 Internal Displacement Crisis Humanitarian Situation Report, 23 April 2020, available at: [url](#)

2. Socio-economic indicators in Iraq – with a focus on Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil

2.1 Economy

2.1.1 Country overview

In a report published in the second half of 2019, the World Bank reported on a ‘broad-based’ recovery of the Iraqi economy incurred by the increase in the oil production and improvements in the agriculture and electricity sectors. The expansion in the oil sector was estimated to be 4.4 % and the services sector was also reported to have improved.²¹⁸ Moreover, the report stated that consumption ‘picked up’ in 2019, while ‘overall investment’ made little progress because of ‘persistent public investment management constraints and unfavorable business environment’.²¹⁹ The public debt was reportedly on the rise in 2019 due to increased reliance on domestic financing.²²⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI) indicated that in Iraq, the private sector is weak, and that the ‘economy is largely public or semi-public’.²²¹

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned observations of the World Bank in the first half of 2019, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq predicted in May 2020 that the Iraqi economy would contract by 9.7 %.²²² BTI stated that, for the reporting period 1 February 2017 – 31 January 2019, Iraq’s economy ranked 168 out of 190 worldwide, making it ‘one of the weakest in the world’. The factors that contributed to this were corruption and political instability, as well as ‘visa requirements, shortages in electricity supply, customs regulations, “unreliable dispute resolution mechanisms” and a lack of access to finance’.²²³ The source noted that ‘private limited liability companies (LLCs) constitute the main organs of investment in Iraq, with branch offices of foreign corporations also contributing significantly to the private sector’, which remained weak.²²⁴ Moreover, the CSO indicated that the inflation rate increased by 0.7 % for the period July – September 2019 compared to the previous quarter.²²⁵

BTI observed that the Iraqi economy is dependent on global oil prices as 90 % of the government revenue comes from oil.²²⁶ This, according to UNOCHA, has resulted in high rates of unemployment, as the public sector became the main employer while the private sector was incapable of employing ‘the thousands of college graduates searching for jobs’.²²⁷ The CIA World Factbook also observed that

²¹⁸ World Bank Group, Iraq Economic Monitor – Turning the Corner: Sustaining Growth and Creating Opportunity for Iraq’s Youth, Fall 2019, [url](#), p. 3

²¹⁹ World Bank Group, Iraq Economic Monitor – Turning the Corner: Sustaining Growth and Creating Opportunity for Iraq’s Youth, Fall 2019, [url](#), p. 4

²²⁰ World Bank Group, Iraq Economic Monitor – Turning the Corner: Sustaining Growth and Creating Opportunity for Iraq’s Youth, Fall 2019, [url](#), p. 7

²²¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 19

²²² UNAMI, Briefing to the Security Council by Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, 12 May 2020, [url](#)

²²³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 20

²²⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 21

²²⁵ Iraq, CSO, مؤشرات الإنذار المبكر للربع الثالث لسنة 2019 [Early Warning Indicators for the Third Quarter of 2019], 2019, [url](#), p. 5

²²⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 19

²²⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 11

the oil sector dominated the economy, and provided around 85 % of government revenue and 80 % of foreign exchange earnings.²²⁸

Following a decision taken by OPEC to reduce the production of oil, the KRG and the Iraq government agreed to reduce the production of oil accordingly.²²⁹ The UN report stated that ‘Baghdad and Erbil continued to affirm that the disbursement of salaries to government employees would not be affected’ by the worldwide decrease in oil prices. Moreover, the report cited the KRG, which announced that civil servants in the KRI would continue to receive their salaries.²³⁰ However, the New Arab stated that in mid-April, Baghdad decided to stop paying the KRI its share of the federal budget and claimed outstanding payments from Erbil. According to the source, the budget allocated by the federal government to the KRG each month corresponds to 50% of the public salaries in the region.²³¹

Several sources referred to corruption and governance-related issues as the major challenges the Iraqi economy has been facing. The World Bank Group categorised weak governance and wide spread corruption as a main factor that hindered private sector development.²³² BTI observed that ‘corruption and the lack of institutional capacity remain endemic, undermining governmental performance in protecting socioeconomic and political outcomes, and civil liberties and the rights of citizens’.²³³ Moreover, the source reiterated that high levels of corruption and the weak rule of law have damaged the ‘already crippled economy’.²³⁴ In addition, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq stated that corruption ‘is perhaps the greatest source of dysfunction in Iraq’, affecting the everyday life of the Iraqi citizen and putting off investors.²³⁵ According to the 2020 Index of Economic Freedom published by the Heritage Foundation, ‘[b]ribery, money laundering, nepotism, and misappropriation of public funds are common’ and government officials engaged in corruption and enjoyed impunity.²³⁶

There have been rising concerns regarding the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the plummeting oil prices on the economic situation in Iraq. The report of the UN Security Council reiterated that ‘[t]he economic situation of Iraq has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and declining global oil prices’.²³⁷ The WFP Iraq Market Monitor Report of April 2020 echoed the same concern. The report observed that the COVID-19 crisis and the global drop in oil prices risk reversing ‘the economic gains of the previous year’ which saw a GDP growth of 4.4 %.²³⁸

The World Bank Group stated that ‘Iraqis have taken the streets in October 2019 to protest lack of jobs, ramping corruption, and poor quality of services. The demonstrators were mostly young, between the ages of 18 to 30, and were mobilized by social demands.’²³⁹ According to an article published by Al-Monitor on 21 May 2020, demonstrations in Iraq were resumed after around two months of quiet.²⁴⁰ A recent wave of protests was incited by government measures taken in the wake

²²⁸ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Iraq, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

²²⁹ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 4

²³⁰ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²³¹ New Arab (The), In Iraqi Kurdistan, plunging oil prices raise fears of economic collapse, 28 May 2020, [url](#)

²³² World Bank Group, Iraq Economic Monitor – Turning the Corner: Sustaining Growth and Creating Opportunity for Iraq’s Youth, Fall 2019, [url](#), p. 11

²³³ BTI, 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 4

²³⁴ BTI, 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 27

²³⁵ UNAMI, Briefing to the Security Council by Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, 12 May 2020, [url](#)

²³⁶ Heritage Foundation (The), 2020 Index of Economic Freedom: Iraq, 2020, [url](#), p. 265

²³⁷ UN Security Council, Implementation of resolution 2470 (2019): Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/363, 6 May 2020, [url](#), p. 13

²³⁸ WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 30, April 2020, [url](#), p. 2

²³⁹ World Bank Group, Iraq Economic Monitor – Turning the Corner: Sustaining Growth and Creating Opportunity for Iraq’s Youth, Fall 2019, [url](#), p. 13

²⁴⁰ Al-monitor, Iraqi protests resume as new government builds support for reform, 21 May 2020, [url](#)

of the economic crisis in Iraq. On 17 June 2020, Aljazeera reported that hundreds of people took to the streets in central and southern provinces in Iraq to protest the government's decision to stop the compensations/salaries it has been paying to Rafha refugees.²⁴¹ According to Iraq Business News, the Council of Ministers decided on 9 June 2020 to limit the payments to former political prisoners, so-called Rafha Detainees, to one person per family, i.e. the head of household, provided that he/she does not receive other government salaries.²⁴² Previously, the benefits were paid to each member of those families.²⁴³

2.1.2 Baghdad

Baghdad City is the capital of Iraq, home to the Iraqi federal government. A large part of Iraq's manufacturing is located in Baghdad, with the exception of heavy industry. The government is the city's principal employer.²⁴⁴ The governorate of Baghdad is the centre of the Iraqi economic, commercial, banking and financial sectors. It is also an important hub for the oil and gas industry, as well as for the production of tobacco, leather and cement. Baghdad International Airport is the main airport in Iraq and the capital is well connected by roads and rail to the rest of the country. Baghdad City is home to four universities and a number of educational and research institutions.²⁴⁵

New York Times outlined several simultaneous crises Iraq has been undergoing, including the plummeting oil prices, COVID-19 and the nation-wide curfew imposed to slow the spread of the virus, the anti-government protests, and the attacks launched by Iran-backed militias against US troops. According to the source, '[c]onstruction workers, street vendors, domestic workers and taxi drivers have been forced to stay at home' because of the curfew, and are 'on the edge of hunger'.²⁴⁶

2.1.3 Basra

According to Sajad Jiyad, Basra's oil exports constituted around 98 % of Iraq's federal revenues in 2019, 'with a monthly average of around \$6.5bn'. Despite this massive oil export, the source observed that poverty and lack of basic services were prevalent in the governorate and were the driver behind the protests that took place in 2018 and 2019. Moreover, the source referred to governance-related issues Basra has been facing since 2003, especially with regard to the responsibilities of the local and the federal governments. Finally, the source concluded that the population growth rate (current population stands at 4 million in Basra city and 1 million in the rural part of the governorate), the rural-to-urban migration driven by environmental change, the drop in global oil prices and the COVID-19 crisis may have an impact on the economy of Basra.²⁴⁷

On 3 January 2020, Al-Arabiya reported that the US embassy in Baghdad urged all US citizens to leave Iraq immediately, in the wake of the targeting of the commander of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and a commander of an Iraqi militia in a US airstrike. The Iraqi Oil Ministry

²⁴¹ Aljazeera, *الرفحايون في العراق.. من هم ولماذا يتظاهرون الآن؟* [Rafhawis in Iraq.. Who Are They and Why Are They Protesting Now?], 17 June 2020, [url](#)

According to the source, the Rafha refugees are considered by the Iraqi law as activists who participated in the 1991 revolution against the regime of Saddam Hussein and who were forced to flee Iraq to the neighbouring city of Rafha in Saudi Arabia.

²⁴² Iraq Business News, *Cabinet Ends Double Payments to fmr Detainees at Camp Rafha*, 24 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁴³ NRT, *Iraq cuts benefits to families who sheltered in Rafha camp during gulf war*, 22 June 2020. [url](#)

²⁴⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica, *Iraq*, 25 October 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁵ NCCI, *Baghdad Governorate Profile*, December 2015, [url](#), p. 2

²⁴⁶ New York Times (The), *Oil Prices Crash, Virus Hits, Commerce Stops: Iraq Is in Trouble.*, 29 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁴⁷ Jiyad, S., *Failure of Governance in Basra puts all of Iraq at Risk*, LSE, 2 April 2020, [url](#)

announced that some US citizens working in the oil industry in Basra were leaving in compliance with their embassy's call.²⁴⁸

2.1.4 Erbil

The KRI economy is dominated by government employment, construction, wholesale and retail trade, and agriculture. It also has a growing oil industry.²⁴⁹ In a 2016 report, the World Bank described the KRI economy as being dominated by government employment which amounted to more than 50 % in total employment, and by a high dependency on the oil sector.²⁵⁰ According to a Minority Rights Group International 2017 report '90 % of all Kurdish government revenues come from the oil and gas sector.'²⁵¹

The Erbil governorate is the commercial and administrative centre of the KRI. It is rich in natural resources, especially oil and gas, while the food supply is dependent on agriculture and food products imported from Iran and Turkey.²⁵² According to IOM, 'the city of Erbil is a trade center in Iraq and a transit point for most imported materials reaching Iraq from abroad, particularly from Turkey.'²⁵³ Its attractiveness to tourists makes Erbil the most visited region of the KRI, representing two thirds of tourist arrivals.²⁵⁴ According to a 2017 analysis by Mark A. DeWeaver, economist at the American University of Iraq Sulaimani, the KRI has entered into the third year of an economic recession that has started with the 2014 crash in world oil prices (which fell by over 50 % in the second half of that year).²⁵⁵ Following tensions in 2014 over oil revenue sharing between the regional and federal government²⁵⁶, the relations between Erbil and Baghdad worsened after the KRG held an independence referendum in September 2017 that saw 93 % of voters overwhelmingly endorsing the secession from Iraq.²⁵⁷ The vote, which was opposed by Baghdad and Iraq's neighbouring countries, Turkey, Iran and Western powers, was met with military and economic retaliation from Baghdad, which included forced closure of Erbil International Airport and re-gaining control of disputed territories such as the oil-rich area of Kirkuk.²⁵⁸

The World Bank noted in April 2018 that as a result of Iraq's punitive measures 'KRG has lost half of its oil revenue' and the 'federal budget proposes to reduce transfers to KRG from ID12 trillion [about EUR 8.86 billion] in 2017 to ID6.7 trillion [about EUR 4.95 billion] in 2018 and requires KRG to transfer the entirety of its remaining oil export receipts to the federal government.'²⁵⁹ The World Bank pointed out that lower level of transfers could be insufficient to pay salaries to KRG's civil servants and the military and 'could further increase vulnerability in KRG'.²⁶⁰ In a May 2018 report, the United States

²⁴⁸ Al-Arabiya, Iraq oil ministry confirms US oil workers leaving Basra, 3 January 2020, [url](#)

²⁴⁹ Georges, V., et. al, Initiatives to Improve Quality of Education in the Kurdistan Region — Iraq: Administration, School Monitoring, Private School Policies, and Teacher Training. Kurdistan Regional Government, 2016, [url](#), pp. 3-4

²⁵⁰ World Bank (The), The Kurdistan region of Iraq - Reforming the economy for shared prosperity and protecting the vulnerable, 2016, [url](#), pp. x-xi

²⁵¹ MRG, Crossroads: The future of Iraq's minorities after ISIS, 7 June 2017 [url](#), p. 21

²⁵² IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 138

²⁵³ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 138

²⁵⁴ World Bank (The), The Kurdistan region of Iraq - Reforming the economy for shared prosperity and protecting the vulnerable (Vol. 2): Main report, 2016 [url](#), p. 52

²⁵⁵ DeWeaver, M. A., Making Ends Meet: Economic Reforms in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in IRIS Iraq Report , American University of Iraq-Sulaimani, 2017, [url](#), p. 2

²⁵⁶ CRF, The Time of the Kurds, 29 July 2015, [url](#)

²⁵⁷ Reuters, Iraqi Kurds gear up for elections hoping to end turmoil, 11 September 2018, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ IPS, Homebound: Hardship Awaits Internally Displaced Iraqis, 18 April 2018, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018 [url](#), p. x

²⁶⁰ World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018 [url](#), p. 15

Institute of Peace estimated that ‘KRG’s debt is at least USD 17 billion [about EUR 15 billion], an unsustainable level that is probably in excess of 100 % of the region’s GDP.’²⁶¹

The recent plummeting of oil prices has exacerbated the economic crisis in the KRI according to the New Arab. The source quoted the KRG Prime Minister, who declared that ‘[t]he Kurdish economy was slashed by more than 90 percent since the recent oil price crash’. The crisis affected all economy sectors including the services sector and private businesses. Furthermore, there were plans in mid-May to diversify the economy and to invest in sectors other than oil, such as agriculture, industry and tourism.²⁶²

2.2 Employment

2.2.1 Country overview

As of 2017, the public sector was Iraq’s largest employer, representing an estimation of 42 %-50 %²⁶³ and as high as 60 % of all jobs.²⁶⁴ The sector employed people mainly in education, defence, and the Ministry of Interior. Public sector wages accounted for 40 % of the government’s budget in 2017.²⁶⁵ The same trend was noted in the KRI. It is estimated that in 2016 the public sector, excluding the one of the KRG, accounted for approximately 1.8 million employees. The Ministry of Education provided the most jobs, more than 650 000.²⁶⁶ It is estimated that the public sector in the KRI in 2018 provided for 682 021 jobs.²⁶⁷

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that in 2017 approximately 40 % of the total employment in Iraq was self-employment.²⁶⁸ In the private sector, construction constituted 15 % of all private sector employment. Private sector manufacturing companies existed, but 97 % were large companies owned by the government. Moreover, agriculture used to be the sixth largest economic sector, but the years of conflict, climate change, legislative challenges, and low investment in new technologies negatively impacted the sector.²⁶⁹

Unregistered or informal work accounted for about 20 % of Iraq’s employment.²⁷⁰ Iraqis faced competition on the job market by foreign workers, residing and working in Iraq either legally or illegally. The media reported that employers may prefer foreign workers either because of specific qualifications or because they would accept lower wages.²⁷¹

A report published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) on 26 May 2020 stated that there are no reliable figures regarding unemployment in Iraq, but indicators show that ‘Iraq may need to find some 300,000-450,000 additional new jobs for its young men and women per year during 2020-2030’.²⁷² A DRC report published in April 2020 stated that 2.5 million unemployed Iraqis were in urgent need for jobs.²⁷³ Based on 2017 data, the WFP stated that unemployment rates were at 10.8 %,

²⁶¹ USIP, Kurdistan Region’s Debt Crisis Threatens Iraq’s Economy, 9 May 2018, [url](#)

²⁶² New Arab (The), In Iraqi Kurdistan, plunging oil prices raise fears of economic collapse, 28 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁶³ IMF, Iraq – Selected Issues: IMF Country Report 17/252, August 2017, [url](#), pp. 5-6

²⁶⁴ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 30 ; Mirza, A. “The Rentier Trap in Iraq: Comments and Recommendations”, cited in: Atlantic council, Beyond Security: Stabilization, Governance, and Socioeconomic Challenges in Iraq, July 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁵ IMF, Iraq – Selected Issues: IMF Country Report 17/252, August 2017, [url](#), pp. 5-6

²⁶⁶ IMF, Middle East and Central Asia Department, Public Wage Bills in the Middle East and Central Asia, 2018, [url](#), p. 51

²⁶⁷ LSE Middle East Centre Blog, [url](#), 31 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁸ World Bank Data, Self-employed, total (% of total employment) (modelled ILO estimate), September 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁹ DRC, Labor Market and Livelihoods Competency Assessment : Iraq, April 2020, [url](#), pp. 9-10

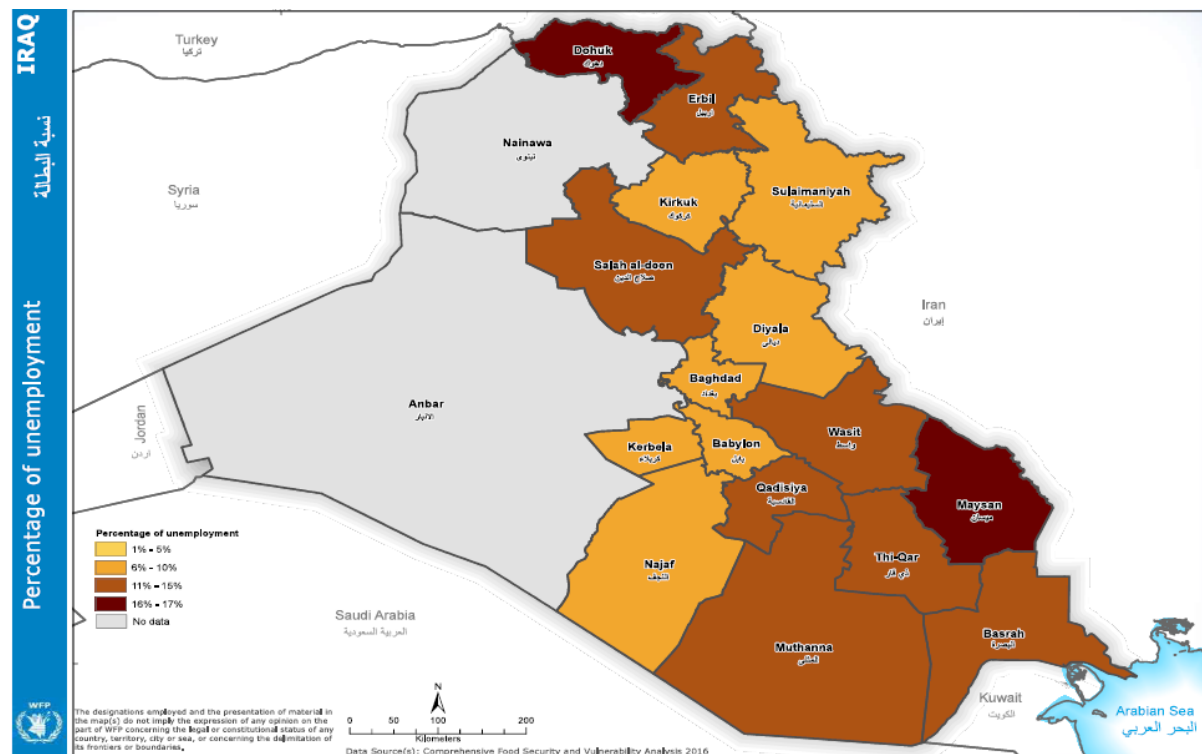
²⁷⁰ Gunter, F. R., The Political Economy of Iraq, Cheltenham, Elgar 2013, p. 195

²⁷¹ Arab Weekly (The), Foreign workers seeking jobs in Iraq despite perils, 18 February 2018, [url](#); Washington Post (The), Protests are mounting in Iraq? Why?, 21 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁷² CSIS, Strategic Dialogue: Shaping a U.S. Strategy for the “Ghosts” of Iraq, 26 May 2020, [url](#), p. 31

²⁷³ DRC, Labor Market and Livelihoods Competency Assessment : Iraq, April 2020, [url](#), p. 9

and rose to over 15 % in 11 provinces. Moreover, unemployment rates exceeded 25 % in some of the districts of Muthanna, Thi-Qar, Wasit, Missan and Salah Al-Din.²⁷⁴ The following map shows the unemployment percentages across Iraq:



Map 2: WFP Percentage of Unemployment 2019 based on 2016 data²⁷⁵

According to the CIA Factbook, and based on 2017 estimates, unemployment among young people aged 15-24 was 25.6 % in total, 22 % among males and 63.3 % among females.²⁷⁶ The World Bank, based on ILO estimates, indicated almost no change in unemployment rates in 2019 compared to 2018. According to the dataset, unemployment reached 12.86 % in 2018 and 12.82 in 2019²⁷⁷; for men the rates were 10.10 % in 2018 and 10.08 % in 2019²⁷⁸ and for women 30.85 % in 2018 and 30.40 % in 2019²⁷⁹.

IOM's Iraq Factsheet stated that improvement in the security situation resulted in an increase in private investment, notably in the liberated areas where jobs in the sectors of tourism and entertainment were created. The wages, according to the Factsheet ranged between 200 USD and 2 500 USD depending on the level of education and skills. Furthermore, employment centres were created in most cities, and the government approved a programme to 'assist workers with wages of less than one USD per day and unemployed people'. Finally, IOM observed that there was no unemployment cash assistance at a national level.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁴ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 40

²⁷⁵ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 42

²⁷⁶ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Iraq, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁷⁷ World Bank (The), Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modelled ILO estimate), 21 June 2020, [url](#), TAB: Data

²⁷⁸ World Bank (The), Unemployment, male (% of male labor force) (modelled ILO estimate), 21 June 2020, [url](#), TAB: Data

²⁷⁹ World Bank (The), Unemployment, female (% of female labor force) (modelled ILO estimate), 21 June 2020, [url](#), TAB: Data

²⁸⁰ IOM, Country Factsheet: Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 5

2.2.2 Baghdad

According to the WFP, Baghdad governorate had the lowest unemployment rates ranging from 6 to 10 % (2016 data)²⁸¹, while unemployment among persons aged 15 – 24 was 5-7 % (2017 data)²⁸². According to the CSO, unemployment among young people aged 15-24 was 18.6 % in 2016 in Baghdad²⁸³, while the total unemployment rate in 2017 was 9.3 %.²⁸⁴ No more recent data could be found in the course of preparing this report.

2.2.3 Basra

Employment opportunities in southern Iraq are described as ‘limited’ due to the dominance of the oil industry and DFAT reported in 2018 that people were moving to other areas of Iraq such as Baghdad, in search of employment.²⁸⁵

Oil dominated the economy, but provided only one percent of the labour force nationally.²⁸⁶ Oil companies in Basra frequently hire foreign workers instead of Iraqis, fuelling frustrations of the local population with higher unemployment rates in the south.²⁸⁷ In response, the government approved a regulation that requires that 50 % of oil workers employed by foreign companies are Iraqis.²⁸⁸ NRC conducted a market assessment in Basra and found that 80 % of the employers interviewed in the business survey considered the private sector in Basra to be the main sector providing employment. Of the respondents, 60 % reported that the main type of business was commerce/trading, while ‘7% each reported basic metal production, forestry wood, health, mechanical and electric engineering oil and gas production, and oil refining and services sectors as main business types in Basra’.²⁸⁹

Rural employment in the Basra governorate is mainly agriculturally based; the sector has been negatively impacted by water salinity and shortages in 2018.²⁹⁰

An NRC Fact Finding Mission from September 2018 found that residents of Basra stated that unemployment had worsened in recent years and armed groups were ‘often the only employer’, noting that it was extremely hard to find employment, even in day labour.²⁹¹ Some analysts stated that returning former Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) members who left to fight ISIL have put additional pressure on services and demand for employment.²⁹² With regard to challenges young people faced in making money, the NRC surveyed 40 young job seekers in Basra. Reportedly, the challenges to youth employment were ‘corruption (34%), lack of employment opportunities (20%), employers’ preference to hire foreign workers to nationals in the private sector (18%), lack of experience and skills among youth (9%), customs and traditions, (5%) and lack of national production (14%)’.²⁹³

²⁸¹ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 42

²⁸² WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 43

²⁸³ Iraq, CSO, مؤشرات التشغيل والبطالة [Employment and Unemployment Indicators], n. d., [url](#)

²⁸⁴ Iraq, CSO, الموجز الإحصائي بغداد 2018 [Statistical Summary Baghdad 2018], n. d., [url](#)

²⁸⁵ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 30

²⁸⁶ National (The), In Iraq’s oil-rich Basra, shanty towns flourish, 19 April 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁷ National (The), In Iraq’s oil-rich Basra, shanty towns flourish, 19 April 2018, [url](#); Al Monitor, Basra protests spark government scramble to create jobs, 22 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁸ Al Monitor, Basra protests spark government scramble to create jobs, 22 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁹ NRC, Market Assessment Report: Basra City, November 2019, [url](#), pp. 15-16

²⁹⁰ NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

²⁹¹ NRC, Basra Fact-Finding Mission Report #2, 22 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3; the FFM took place from 26 to 29 August 2018

²⁹² FP, Northern Iraq May Be Free, but the South is Seething, 9 November 2018, [url](#); NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 2, the FFM took place from 26 to 29 August 2018

²⁹³ NRC, Market Assessment Report: Basra City, November 2019, [url](#), p. 26

Finally, the WFP stated that Basra governorate had an unemployment rate of 11 – 15 % (2016 data)²⁹⁴ while unemployment among persons aged 15 – 24 was 8-10 % (2017 data).²⁹⁵ According to the CSO, unemployment among the youth aged 15-24 in Basra was 25.5 % in 2016²⁹⁶ and was 7.6 % in total in 2017.²⁹⁷ No more recent data could be found in the course of preparing this report.

2.2.4 Erbil

According to the IOM 2018 demographic survey, the labour force participation in Erbil City was registered at 65.9 % of men and 14.8 % of women.²⁹⁸ Regarding the type of occupation, IOM data showed that 43.7 % of Erbil's city labour force had been working in the public sector, 13 % in the private sector, 18.7 % were self-employed, and 19.2 % were daily waged workers.²⁹⁹

In Erbil governorate, the majority of the population is employed in the public sector, and 78 % of the employed population had a written employment contract whereas informal employment was more prone to take place in sectors such as construction and wholesale/retail sectors.³⁰⁰ In these sectors, UNHCR writes, 'only 30 % of workers are legally employed and receive wages instead of salaries.'³⁰¹

The WFP observed that unemployment rates in Erbil governorate ranged between 11 % and 15 % (2016 data).³⁰² Unemployment amongst persons aged 15 – 24 was 8-10 %, based on 2017 data.³⁰³ According to the CSO, unemployment among the youth aged 15-24 in Erbil was 13.6 % in 2016.³⁰⁴ No more recent data could be found in the course of preparing this report.

2.3 Poverty

2.3.1 Country overview

BTI stated that 22.5 % of the Iraqi population is under poverty line, with poverty rates rising from 3.5 to 12.5 % in the KRI and reaching 41.2 % in areas held by ISIL and 30 % in southern provinces.³⁰⁵ Moreover, UNESCO observed that '[p]overty headcount ration at \$1.90 a day' was at 2.5 %.³⁰⁶ The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq predicted that poverty rates would double to reach 40 % in 2020.³⁰⁷ On 2 July 2020, Al-Sumariya stated that the Iraqi Minister of Labour and Social Affairs announced that due to the COVID-19 crisis and the plummeting of oil prices, poverty in Iraq increased from 22 % to 34 %.³⁰⁸

²⁹⁴ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 42

²⁹⁵ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 43

²⁹⁶ Iraq, CSO, مؤشرات التشغيل والبطالة [Employment and Unemployment Indicators], n. d., [url](#)

²⁹⁷ Iraq, CSO, الموجز الإحصائي البصرة 2018 [Statistical Summary Basra 2018], n. d., [url](#)

²⁹⁸ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 105

²⁹⁹ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 100

³⁰⁰ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 34

³⁰¹ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 30

³⁰² WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 42

³⁰³ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 43

³⁰⁴ Iraq, CSO, مؤشرات التشغيل والبطالة [Employment and Unemployment Indicators], 21 June 2020, [url](#)

³⁰⁵ BTI, 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 17

³⁰⁶ UNESCO, Iraq : General Information, n. d., [url](#)

³⁰⁷ UNAMI, Briefing to the Security Council by Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, 12 May 2020, [url](#)

³⁰⁸ Al-Sumariya, العمل تعلن زيادة نسبة الفقر من 22 الى 34 بالمئة في البلاد [Ministry of Labour announces that poverty rates increased from 22 % to 34 % in the country], 2 July 2020, [url](#)

In Iraq, the social safety net is ‘expansive’ as a high percentage of the population is employed in the public sector or receives pensions.³⁰⁹ IOM observed that public sector employees could retire at the age of 65 after having served for 25 years. In Baghdad, however, employees can retire at the age of 55 or after having worked for 25 years, or 15 years for employees with medical issues. Regarding the private sector, IOM stated that ‘[s]ome employees in the private sector may receive a pension stipend, which is managed by their employer.’³¹⁰

According to WFP, poverty alleviation mechanisms existed and were enacted by the government. These included the Public Distribution System (PDS), which distributed food rations to over 95 % of Iraqi families, Social Protection Network (which supported more than 1.2 million vulnerable Iraqi families by providing economic and social safety nets), education subsidies and public healthcare.³¹¹ The PDS continues to function, but has been impacted by the political instability in the country, and provisions have not been delivered regularly.³¹² USDOS observed that the PDS was implemented ‘sporadically and irregularly, with limited access in recently liberated areas’. Reportedly, not all commodities were distributed each month, and the system was not accessible to all IDPs since it is required that citizens ‘redeem PDS rations or other services only at their registered place of residence’.³¹³

The Iraqi government launched the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) for 2018-2022. The challenges the PRS aimed at addressing were related to security and stability, good governance, fair distribution and diversification of income, mitigating the negative impact of economic reforms on the poor, and the high costs of the war on terrorism and the IDP crisis in the aftermath of the war against ISIL.³¹⁴

Dr Chatelard commented that women without male relatives, including women-headed households, divorced women and widows are placed in a vulnerable position economically and in terms of exposure to harassment, and have difficulty finding employment, noting that the situation is not markedly better for widows, who also ‘lack the protection of a male relative and necessary connections to find employment and sustain dependent children’.³¹⁵ UNOCHA reported in 2017 that IDPs, particularly women in female-headed households, widows, disabled women and girls and teenage girls, were at risk of falling victim to abuse and experienced difficulties in getting humanitarian aid.³¹⁶ IDPs in Baghdad with female-headed households had a higher proportion of people reporting having no livelihood source and a high reliance on humanitarian aid and government assistance to cover their basic needs.³¹⁷

2.3.2 Baghdad

The WFP Socio-economic Atlas of Iraq provided the following wealth index quintile for Baghdad: poorest (17 %), lower-middle (24 %), middle (19 %), upper-middle (21 %), and richest (19 %). With regard to household assets, the Atlas indicated the following breakdown for Baghdad: owner (67 %), rented (19 %), free with owner agreement (11 %), and random house (3 %).³¹⁸ According to Oxford

³⁰⁹ BTI, 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), pp. 22-23

³¹⁰ IOM, Country Factsheet: Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 7

³¹¹ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 40

³¹² BTI, 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 22

³¹³ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁴ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty in Iraq 2018-2022, January 2018, [url](#), pp. 1-2

³¹⁵ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

³¹⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian needs overview, January 2017, p. 15, [url](#)

³¹⁷ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), p. 18

³¹⁸ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 101

Poverty and Human Development Initiative 2019 dataset, 1.14 % of the population of Baghdad governorate were in severe poverty, and 4 % were vulnerable to poverty in 2018.³¹⁹

Baghdad has a high proportion of female-headed IDP households who were living in camps (24 % of those surveyed by REACH as of April 2018).³²⁰ IOM also noted in October 2017 high numbers of vulnerable groups in the population: ‘Baghdad hosts 17 % of IDPs in need of protection – 30 % of mothers under 18, 18 % of female heads of household and 17 % of all physically and/or mentally challenged individuals. A total of 5 % of physically and/or mentally challenged returnees are also hosted in the governorate.’³²¹

Internally displaced people and returnees in Baghdad reported that access to employment was a top concern for those living in Baghdad.³²² IOM stated that it was estimated that 88 % of IDPs relied on earnings from informal labour, less than 20 % depended on pensions, 17 % were dependent on support from family and friends, and 26 % relied on cash aid.³²³ A joint IOM/Georgetown University study noted that, compared to other governorates, in Baghdad, the highest percentage of IDPs (73.7 %) reported to be able to have an adequate standard of living. Local charities and aid organisations based in Baghdad play an important role in providing assistance for IDPs living in the capital. In addition, a relevant portion of IDPs had already relatives residing in the city, who provided them with support.³²⁴

2.3.3 Basra

According to Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative 2019 dataset, 2.25 % of the population of Basra governorate were in severe poverty, and 8.79 % were vulnerable to poverty in 2018.³²⁵

Poverty varies significantly between districts in Basra governorate.³²⁶ The World Bank found in 2015 that Basra district itself had the highest poverty rate in the governorate, followed by Al Zubair, Al Khaseeb, Al Qurna, Al Hartha, Al Deer, and Shatt Al Arab.³²⁷

In Basra City, begging has become a growing problem, with beggars forming organised systems and gangs, and become associated with, or run by criminal networks.³²⁸ Some female beggars have been reported to drug their children whom they bring with them to beg.³²⁹ In impoverished areas of Basra, gangs form to make a living from sifting through the garbage of wealthier inhabitants of the city.³³⁰

³¹⁹ Alkire, S. et al., The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2019, [url](#), Tab 5.1 MPI Region

³²⁰ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), p. 15

³²¹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 5

³²² IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 32

³²³ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 25

³²⁴ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 23

³²⁵ Alkire, S. et al., The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2019, [url](#), Tab 5.1 MPI Region

³²⁶ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

³²⁷ World Bank The), Where are Iraq’s Poor: Mapping Poverty in Iraq, 2015, [url](#), p. 56

³²⁸ Niqash, Mister can you spare a dinar – life with the beggar mafia of Basra, 30 January 2014, [url](#)

³²⁹ Niqash, Mister can you spare a dinar – life with the beggar mafia of Basra, 30 January 2014, [url](#)

³³⁰ Niqash, Mister can you spare a dinar – life with the beggar mafia of Basra, 30 January 2014, [url](#)

2.3.4 Erbil

According to Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative 2019 dataset, zero % of the population of Erbil governorate were in severe poverty, and 5.32 % were vulnerable to poverty in 2018.³³¹

According to a 2015 World Bank assessment, the poverty rate in Erbil governorate was 4.1 %.³³² 2018 data from IOM showed that 29 % of households surveyed in Erbil governorate lived on a monthly income between IQD 500 000 and 750 000 (about EUR 368 – 550) whereas 25.9 % earned between IQD 250 000 and 500 000 (about EUR 184 – 368) and 21.1 % had a monthly income situated between IQD 750 000 and 1 000 000 (about EUR 550 – 735).³³³ 8.2 % of the Erbil governorate households surveyed lived on a monthly income lower than IQD 250 000 (about EUR 184). When compared to other KRI governorates higher income households were more prevalent in Erbil (16 %).³³⁴

The IOM 2018 KRI demographic survey findings noted that female-headed households are more prevalent in Erbil (10.7 %) and Sulaimaniya (11.2 %) and, in general, more in urban than in rural locations (11 % versus 8 %).³³⁵ Female-headed households have fewer job opportunities as a result of their responsibilities at home and because of the stigma around working as a divorcee or widow.³³⁶ Without having an income source, female-headed households are more likely to be supported by family, friends and institutions.³³⁷ IOM wrote that ‘nearly 50 % of female-headed households also rely on pensions as a source of income, an expected finding considering that female household headship is often associated with widowhood at older ages.’³³⁸

2.4 Food security

2.4.1 Country overview

The Iraqi National Development Plan 2018-2022 warned that 4 095 377 donums (approximately 4 095 square kilometres) of Iraq’s agricultural land were in danger of desertification.³³⁹

In its Iraq Socio-economic Atlas for 2019, the WFP estimated that in 2017, 11 % of Iraqi families depended on agriculture for livelihood, which was Iraq’s main source of food security. Agriculture contributed to 9 % of the total GDP, and only 27 % of Iraq’s surface was suitable for farming. Furthermore, the report stated that extreme weather changes, land degradation, and displacement and infrastructure damage incurred by war could pose a threat to agriculture in Iraq.³⁴⁰

Regarding the percentages of food insecure families across Iraq, the WFP stated that food insecurity among men in urban areas was 1.8 % and in rural areas 4.9 %, while among women the percentages were 1.5 % in urban areas and 7.6 % in rural areas.³⁴¹ The following maps show the distribution of food insecurity per gender and at a governorate level as well as the food security zones in Iraq:

³³¹ Alkire, S. et al., The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2019, [url](#), Tab 5.1 MPI Region

³³² World Bank (The), Where are Iraq’s Poor: Mapping Poverty in Iraq, 2015, [url](#), p 28

³³³ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 44

³³⁴ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 44

³³⁵ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 22

³³⁶ Kaya, Z. N. and Luchtenberg, K. N., Displacement and Women’s Economic Empowerment: Voices of Displaced Women in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 2018, [url](#), p. 23

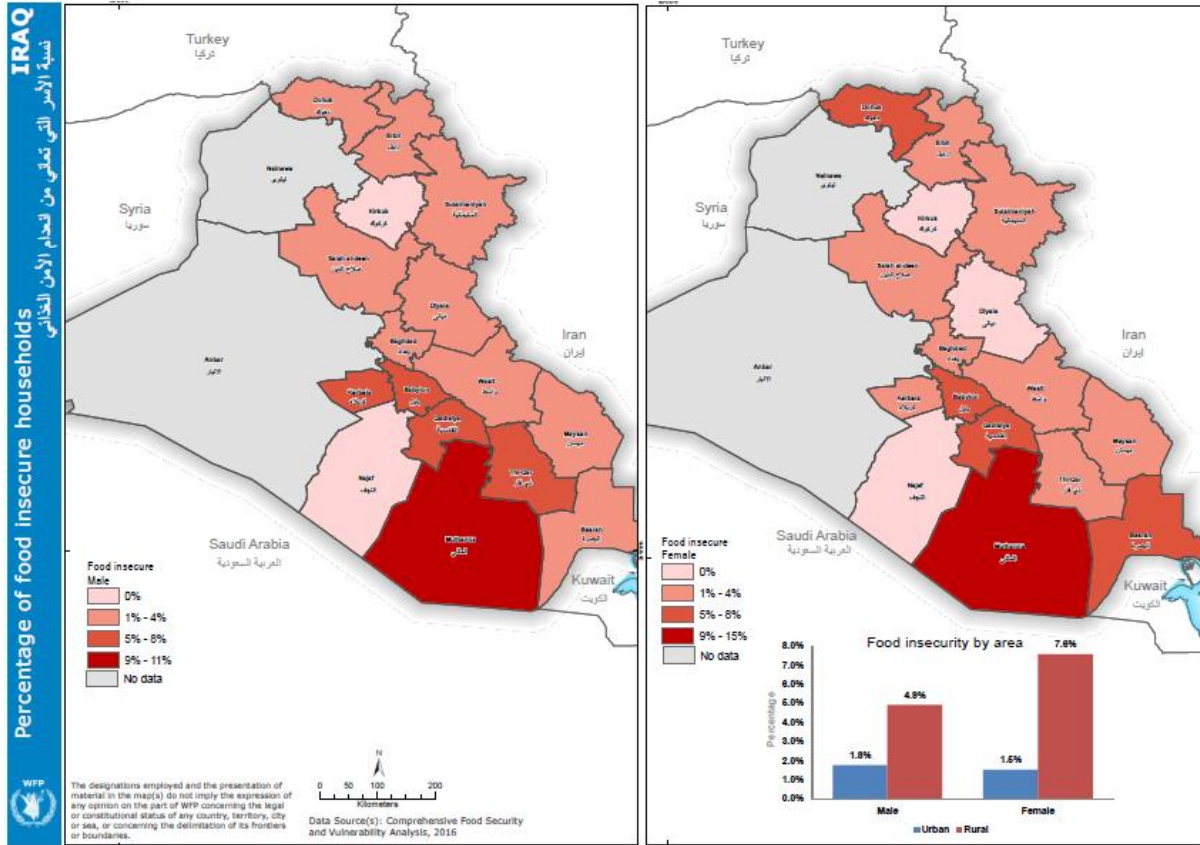
³³⁷ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 45

³³⁸ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 45

³³⁹ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 226

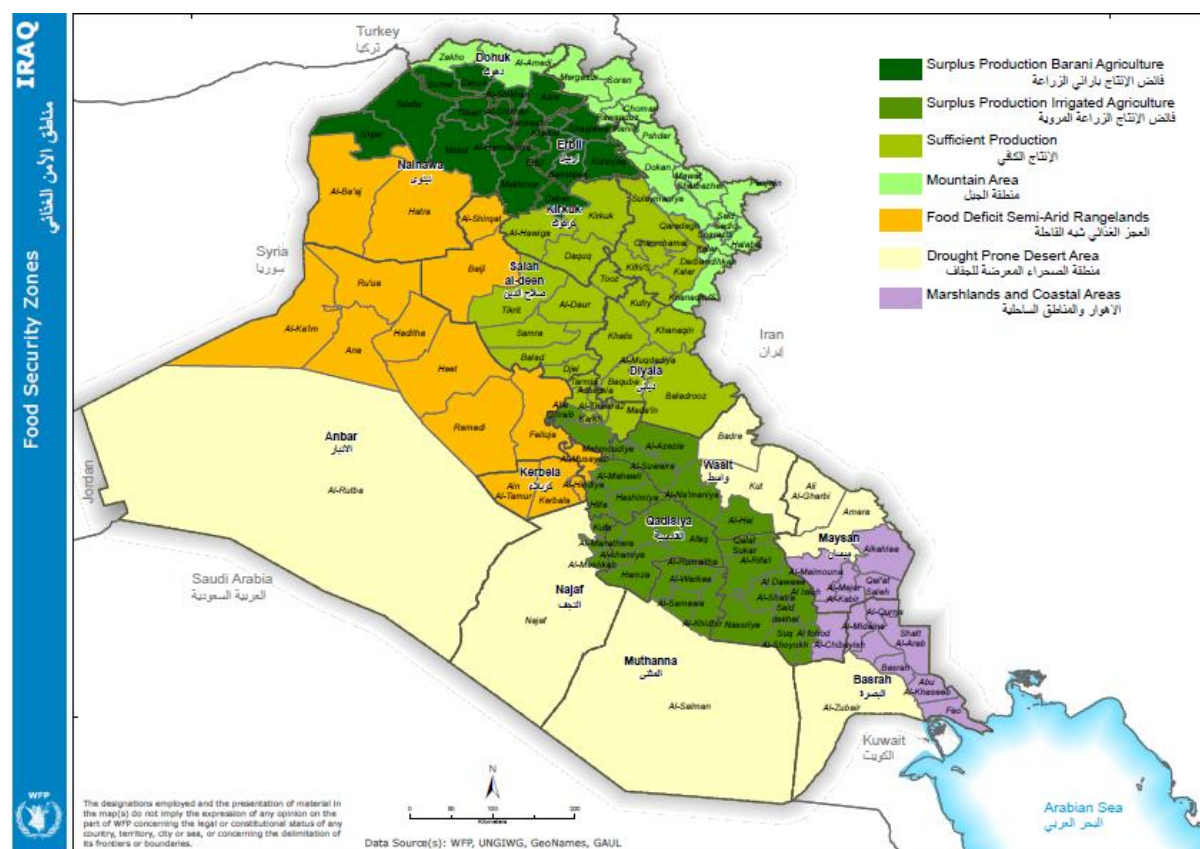
³⁴⁰ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 19

³⁴¹ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 34



Map 3: WFP Percentage of food insecure households 2019 based on 2016 data³⁴²

³⁴² WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 34



Map 4: WFP Food Security Zones 2019³⁴³

According to WFP, the percentages of people who are vulnerable to food insecurity were significantly higher, amounting to around 50 % in urban areas and 60 % in rural areas.³⁴⁴

With regard to water resources in Iraq, the Ministry of Planning noted the existence of a serious water resources problem stemming from external and internal factors such as the drop in the levels of water of the Euphrates and Tigris, climate change, and high contamination level.³⁴⁵ BTI stated that the main reason behind water scarcity in Iraq was the ‘increasing number of projects and dams that affect water flow along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers’ in Turkey.³⁴⁶ Iraq experienced prolonged drought and decades of aging water infrastructure, which has depleted its ability to provide water and sanitation to the population; rural populations have the greatest difficulty accessing water and sanitation.³⁴⁷ Water access has improved since 2010, however many Iraqis still rely on ‘informal wells, government and NGO water trucks and unreliable tap systems’ while Iraq’s freshwater continues to be depleted.³⁴⁸ Water shortages are reported.³⁴⁹

In a report dated 30 April 2020, the WFP observed a tendency to hoard food for the COVID-19 lockdown period, which led to a surge in food prices towards the end of March. However, the prices stabilised in April due to price control measures and the distribution of essential food items through the PDS. However, the WFP stated that ‘the fall in global oil prices resulted in a significant revenue shortfall for oil-based economies such as Iraq’s’ and warned that if this situation persisted, social

³⁴³ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 33

³⁴⁴ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 35

³⁴⁵ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), pp. 132-133

³⁴⁶ BTI, 2020 Country Report — Iraq, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 25

³⁴⁷ IRIN, Water shortage leads people to drink from rivers, 18 February 2007, [url](#)

³⁴⁸ EPIC, Drought in the land between two rivers, 18 July 2017, [url](#)

³⁴⁹ World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor, October 2018, [url](#), p. 6

safety nets such as the PDS could become difficult to sustain.³⁵⁰ The average of goods availability at a national level was 8.5 out of 10, and markets across the country showed very good resilience in terms of supply chain.³⁵¹ With regard to food prices, the WFP noted that the year-on-year (y/y) price of wheat flour in Iraq was 21 % higher in 2019. The highest y/y price increase was for eggs (28 %), while items such as tomatoes and beans underwent a month-on-month price increases of 24 % and 15 % consecutively.³⁵²

2.4.2 Baghdad

The WFP Socio-economic Atlas of Iraq stated that in Baghdad, 53 % of households were food secure, 46 % marginally food secure and 1 % food insecure.³⁵³ The WFP Iraq Market Monitor indicated non-significant changes in month-on-month prices in Baghdad markets for March-April, but low predictability of future changes.³⁵⁴

The production of wheat in Baghdad governorate dropped significantly, from 159 984 tons in 2017 to 91 141 tons in 2018. Similarly, the production of barley dropped from 10 378 tons in 2017 to 5 466 tons in 2018. However, the production of dates increased from 124 176 tons in 2017 to 130 593 tons in 2018.³⁵⁵

The World Bank stated that the residents of Baghdad deal with daily water service interruptions, especially in summer. Droughts³⁵⁶, inadequate infrastructure, along with rapid population growth and the inflow of IDPs have led to water shortages and the outbreak of waterborne diseases. Sewer pipes leakages contaminate drinking water networks. Families are thus forced 'to spend a significant fraction of their income on medical treatment and to purchase bottled water'.³⁵⁷

Drinking and agricultural water available in Baghdad City is of poor quality. It is estimated that the level of organic material pollution in water in the capital is three times higher than national and WHO's limits. In Sadr City, for example, the only source of clean water is bottled, which is inaccessible for the poorer population.³⁵⁸

2.4.3 Basra

The WFP Iraq Market Monitor indicated insignificant changes in month-on-month prices in Basra markets for March-April, but predictability of future changes was low.³⁵⁹

The production of wheat dropped by more than half in Basra governorate, from 38 643 tons in 2017 to 15 637 tons in 2018. Similarly, the production of barley dropped from 1 225 tons in 2017 to 584 tons in 2018. The production of dates, however, remained almost the same: 37 556 tons in 2017 to 37 816 tons in 2018.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁰ WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 30, April 2020, [url](#), p. 4

³⁵¹ WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 30, April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

³⁵² WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 30, April 2020, [url](#), p. 4

³⁵³ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 101

³⁵⁴ WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 30, April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

³⁵⁵ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي بغداد [Statistical Summary Baghdad 2018], n. d., [url](#)

³⁵⁶ Al Jazeera, Iraqi farmers, including in the areas near Baghdad Iraq's farmers hit hard by water shortages, 3 August 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ World Bank (The), Iraq: 5 Million Residents in Baghdad to Benefit from Improved Water Supply and Wastewater Services, 31 February 2018, [url](#), EPIC, Drought in the land between two rivers, 18 July 2017, [url](#)

³⁵⁸ EPIC, Drought in the land between two rivers, 18 July 2017, [url](#)

³⁵⁹ WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 30, April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

³⁶⁰ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي البصرة [Statistical Summary Basra 2018], n. d., [url](#)

In 2015, it was reported that Basra had above average high rates of access to the public water network and ‘improved water sources’, however, the quality of the water was poor.³⁶¹ Access to safe drinking water represented one of the main problems in Basra.³⁶² Southern Iraq’s freshwater, particularly in Basra, was largely from the Shatt Al-Arab waterway, which has become heavily salty due to upstream dams, drought, and pollution. In recent years, water shortages have caused reduced cultivation of crops, such as rice and wheat.³⁶³ Following a fact-finding mission to Basra City in September 2018, NRC found that the water crisis has negatively impacted livelihoods in agriculture in rural areas around Basra³⁶⁴, and forced 3 780 people from rural areas of southern Iraq to be displaced in August 2018.³⁶⁵ Due to water scarcity, a rise in rural to urban displacement was noted in Basra in September 2018.³⁶⁶ In November 2018, IOM reported that the number of families displaced by the water crisis and drought in southern governorates was 3 522 (most of whom were in Thi Qar).³⁶⁷

2.4.4 Erbil

The WFP Iraq Market Monitor observed ‘high price changes’ in month-on-month prices in Erbil markets for March-April, with a high predictability of future changes.³⁶⁸

Access to safe drinking water was nearly universal in Erbil governorate, with 89.7 % of households having the public network/tap as a source of freshwater supply, whereas 8.9 % relied on wells.³⁶⁹ Sources indicated that water shortages might occur in KRI as a result of rapid population increase and waste.³⁷⁰ The quality of Erbil’s drinking water was evaluated to be within acceptable limits.³⁷¹ Houses in Erbil governorate were equipped with sanitation facilities, such as connection to the public sewage network with covered canal (25.6 %) or septic tanks (71.8 %).³⁷²

2.5 Health care

2.5.1 Country overview

In a report published on 2 March 2020, Reuters stated that ‘Iraq’s healthcare system is in crisis’, and suffered from shortages of drugs and medical personnel. Reuters observed that the healthcare system in Iraq was centralised, whereby Baghdad received ‘the bulk of funding’ and Basra was underfunded. The report added that ‘[w]here the rest of Iraq has 1.1 hospital beds and 0.8 doctors per 1,000 people, Kurdistan has 1.5 beds and 1.4 doctors’. In order to improve the capacity of the healthcare system, the Ministry of Health enabled the investment of the private sector, which resulted in an increase of 4 % in the number of beds per 1 000 people in the first half of 2019 in Iraq.³⁷³ The Congressional Research Service (CRS) pointed out that Iraq’s health systems, public and private, suffered from limited capacity and significant shortcomings. The report, citing the World Bank, stated that ‘Iraq has

³⁶¹ NCCI Iraq, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

³⁶² UNIAU, Basrah Governorate Profile, November 2010, available at: [url](#), p. 1

³⁶³ Bloomberg, Basra’s Tap Water is Too Salty and Polluted Even for Washing, 2 August 2018, [url](#)

³⁶⁴ NRC, Basra Fact-Finding Mission Report #2, 22 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3; the FFM took place from 26 to 29 August 2018

³⁶⁵ NRC, Iraq: Basra’s children face disease outbreak in rundown schools, 23 October 2018, [url](#)

³⁶⁶ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9, September 2018, [url](#), p. 8; the FFM took place from 26 to 29 August 2018

³⁶⁷ IOM, Iraq Water Crisis (Central/South), November 2018, [url](#)

³⁶⁸ WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 30, April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

³⁶⁹ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018 [url](#), p. 50

³⁷⁰ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 59; Rudaw, Erbil water shortages to be solved by new pipeline: governor, 8 July 2018, [url](#)

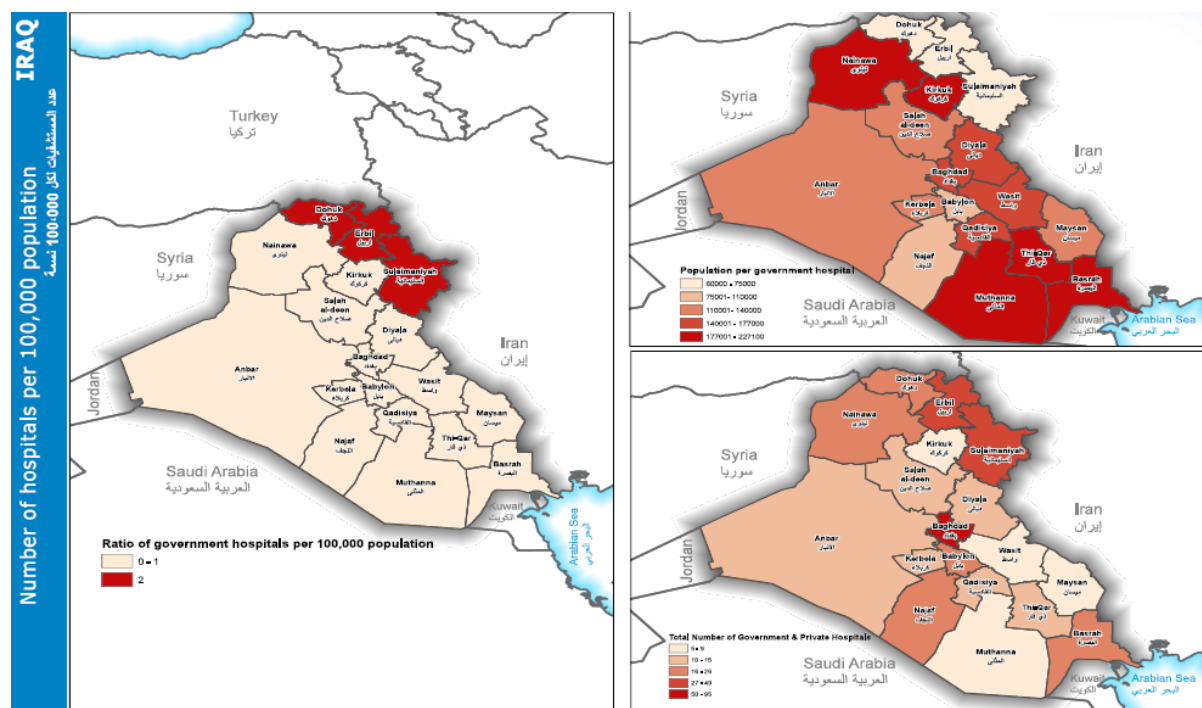
³⁷¹ Jadoon, S., et al., Evaluation of Drinking Water Quality in Erbil City Kurdistan, Region-Iraq, Journal of Environment and Earth Science, Vol.5, No.21, 2015, [url](#), p. 17

³⁷² IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 49

³⁷³ Reuters, The medical crisis that’s aggravating Iraq’s unrest, 2 March 2020, [url](#)

approximately 0.8 physicians and 1.3 hospital beds per 1,000 people (below the global averages of 1.5 and 2.7, respectively).³⁷⁴

The WFP observed that the Iraqi State provided ‘universal healthcare and medical supplies at a subsidised cost’ to all Iraqis. The source also reported on a low rate of less than one hospital per 100 000 persons. According to the report, even ‘[l]ower incidences of hospitals and physicians are observed in the governorates of Kirkuk, Thi-Qar, Nainawa, Maysan and Anbar’.³⁷⁵



Map 5: WFP Number of Hospitals per 100 000 Population 2019³⁷⁶

In its Iraq Country Factsheet 2019, IOM observed that public hospitals and clinics charged minimal fees, but might not provide all medical services. Moreover, most of the infrastructure was rehabilitated, save for the newly liberated areas. IOM stated that there might be waiting times for certain medical specialisations, particularly in big cities. Furthermore, patients should visit a clinic for diagnosis first before they were referred to the appropriate healthcare facility. The costs of medical services depended on numerous factors (e.g. age and gender) and costs of medications depended on diagnoses. Additionally, in public hospitals medications were provided at a lower cost but were subject to shortages.³⁷⁷ Reuters, citing Iraq’s former Minister of Health, stated that in 2018, ‘more than 85% of drugs on Iraq’s essential medicines list were either in short supply or completely unavailable’, with cancer drugs being ‘among the scarcest and most smuggled’. Moreover, Reuters observed that pharmacies were full with smuggled drugs that either could be unsafe or expired.³⁷⁸

Although reliable data is sparse for the post-2008 period, the deterioration of the security situation after the ISIL offensive in 2014 has intensified the need for mental care and specialised staff, according to EPIC.³⁷⁹ In 2018, it was estimated that between 15 and 20 % of the country’s population faced

³⁷⁴ CRS, Iraq and U.S. Policy, 16 June 2020, [url](#), p. 2

³⁷⁵ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 40

³⁷⁶ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 51

³⁷⁷ IOM, Country Factsheet: Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 4

³⁷⁸ Reuters, The medical crisis that’s aggravating Iraq’s unrest, 2 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁷⁹ EPIC, Iraq’s quiet mental health crisis, 05 May 2017, [url](#)

mental health issues.³⁸⁰ WHO representatives, interviewed by Landinfo and DIS, in 2018 noted that with regard to mental health ‘there are huge needs and the available services do not meet the demand.’³⁸¹ The growing mental health needs haven’t been met due to a shortage of specialised staff, as, according to IRIN news, there were only 80 clinical psychologists in the country, working alongside a limited number of psychiatrists.³⁸²

2.5.2 Baghdad

According to the WFP Socio-economic Atlas, and based on 2017 data, there was one government hospital for 140 001-177 000 persons in Baghdad governorate. Regarding the overall number of hospitals (public and private), the WFP estimated a range of 50-95 in Baghdad governorate, with a rate of 10.1-15 % of physicians for every 10 000 persons.³⁸³ Moreover, mortality rates for children under five in Baghdad were 20.1-30 percent.³⁸⁴ The CSO stated that in 2017, the numbers of governmental hospitals and Primary Healthcare centres were 95 and 257 consecutively.³⁸⁵ According to the National Development Plan 2018-2022, and based on 2016 data, there was a deficit of 110 governmental hospitals and 538 primary health care units in Baghdad between the standard and actual numbers.³⁸⁶

The WHO Iraq Health Cluster Response Monitoring Interactive Dashboard 2018 indicated that in the Baghdad governorate, six organisations were operating health facilities in 12 locations. This included one facility for mental health and eight for treatment of common diseases.³⁸⁷ According to the Country Cooperation strategy for WHO in Iraq, inadequate mental health services were provided as primary care across all Iraq. In 2016, two trauma centres were opened in Baghdad. A UNAMI/OHCHR report noted that in 2016 there were 45 NGOs in Baghdad who had registered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and were specifically providing medical support on disability. According to the NGOs surveyed by the UNAMI/OHCHR report, there was only one centre for plastic limbs and medical cushions in Baghdad and one specialised hospital for persons with disabilities with spinal cord injuries.³⁸⁸

2.5.3 Basra

In a report published on 2 March 2020, Reuters stated that the healthcare system in Basra was underfunded, despite the governorate’s massive oil production. According to the report, doctors and nurses in Basra were ‘overworked’. Additionally, Basra suffered from a shortage in vital medical equipment, and had only three CT scanners and one MRI unit per million residents, ‘a fraction of the average rate of 34 CT scanners and 24 MRI units for developed countries’.³⁸⁹

According to the WFP Socio-economic Atlas, and based on 2017 data, there was one government hospital for 177 001-227 100 people in Basra governorate.³⁹⁰ The WFP noted that Basra governorate had a range of 16-26 public and private hospitals, while the rate of physicians per 10 000 persons was

³⁸⁰ Rudaw, Seminar examines mental health challenges in post-conflict Iraq, 2 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁸¹ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 54

³⁸² IRIN News, Iraq’s growing mental health problem, 16 January 2017, [url](#)

³⁸³ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), pp. 51,52

³⁸⁴ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 61

³⁸⁵ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي بغداد [Statistical Summary Baghdad 2018], n. d., [url](#)

³⁸⁶ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 173

³⁸⁷ WHO, Iraq Health Cluster Response Monitoring Interactive Dashboard 2018, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ UNAMI, Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, December 2017, [url](#), p. 12-13

³⁸⁹ Reuters, The medical crisis that’s aggravating Iraq’s unrest, 2 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁹⁰ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 51

at 8.1-10 %.³⁹¹ Moreover, mortality rates for children under five in Basra were 30.1-40 %.³⁹² The CSO stated that in 2017, the number of healthcare facilities in Basra was 246, of which 19 were governmental hospitals and 139 were Primary Healthcare centres.³⁹³ According to the National Development Plan 2018-2022, and based on 2016 data, there was a deficit of 42 governmental hospitals and 154 primary health care units in Basra between the standard and actual numbers.³⁹⁴

2.5.4 Erbil

In the three governorates of the KRI, the ratio of government hospitals to residents was significantly higher, i.e. one hospital per 60 000-75 000.³⁹⁵ According to the WFP, Erbil governorate had a range of 27-49 public and private hospitals and a higher rate of 15.1-19 physicians per 10 000 persons.³⁹⁶ Moreover, mortality rates for children under five in Erbil were 10.1-20 %.³⁹⁷ Additionally, Reuters observed that in the KRI, there was 1.5 hospital beds per 1 000 people.³⁹⁸ According to the National Development Plan 2018-2022, and based on 2016 data, there was a deficit of 11 governmental hospitals and a surplus of 96 primary health care units in Erbil between the standard and actual numbers.³⁹⁹

Many of the basic primary care services were provided in the KRI, however not in a consistent way.⁴⁰⁰ The PHC [Primary Health Care] system covers all Iraqis, including non-KRI residents who are Iraqi citizens. However, non-KRI residents who do not have citizenship of Iraq cannot avail themselves of health facilities and medicines under the same terms as Kurdistan citizens.⁴⁰¹ The same source noted that 'all citizens are eligible for a broad package of health care, dental, and emergency services in public hospitals and PHCs. The services provided are limited by the budget, available equipment and medicines, and the education and training of the staff'.⁴⁰² Syrian refugees residing in the KRI had the right to access public healthcare.⁴⁰³ The distribution of PHC centres was not necessarily uniform across the Kurdistan Region, with most main PHCs serving too many people, and most sub-centres serving too few people. The centres providing services to a larger population were, however, equipped with more doctors and nurses than the sub-centres.⁴⁰⁴ In August 2018, Rudaw reported that medication was illegally imported into the KRI and that this included counterfeit medication.⁴⁰⁵

2.6 Education

2.6.1 Country overview

In its report for 2019, the civil society movement 'Global Campaign for Education' noted an increase in education funding for 2019, but this increase, according to the source, would not be enough to

³⁹¹ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), pp. 51-52

³⁹² WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 61

³⁹³ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي البصرة [Statistical Summary Basra 2018], n. d., [url](#)

³⁹⁴ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 173

³⁹⁵ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 51

³⁹⁶ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), pp. 51,52

³⁹⁷ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 61

³⁹⁸ Reuters, The medical crisis that's aggravating Iraq's unrest, 2 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁹⁹ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 173

⁴⁰⁰ Moore, M., Ross C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 70

⁴⁰¹ Moore, M., Ross C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 60

⁴⁰² Moore, M., Ross C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 60

⁴⁰³ Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, Asuda, Broken Lives: Violence against Syrian refugee women and girls in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, March 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁰⁴ Moore, M., Ross C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#)

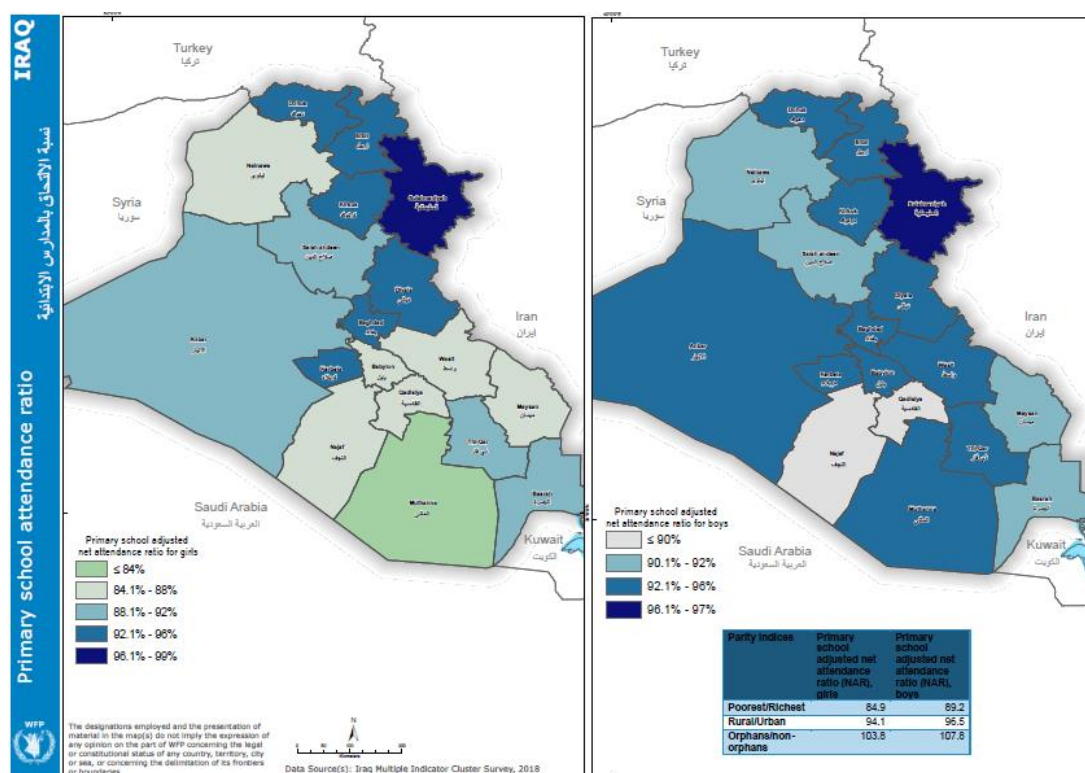
⁴⁰⁵ Rudaw, 27 August 2018, KRG cracks down on counterfeit medications worth millions, [url](#)

rehabilitate thousands of schools damaged during the conflict in areas previously held by ISIL.⁴⁰⁶ BTI stated that Iraq suffered from ‘weak educational infrastructure, especially in areas liberated from the IS group’. Reportedly, one out of five schools was destroyed during the conflict against ISIL.⁴⁰⁷

The National Development Plan 2018-2022 noted that male enrolment rates at primary, intermediate and high schools were higher than those of females based on 2016 data. Moreover, dropout rates of female students were higher than those of their male counterparts.⁴⁰⁸ BTI observed that decades of conflict in Iraq have led to a decline in school attendance, especially as some families and children feel there is no bright future ahead’.⁴⁰⁹ The CSO provided the following data for 2018/2019 at a national level:

- Primary education: Number of schools 17 235 – Enrolment 6 501 053 – Dropout 127 891 – Number of teachers 290 664.
- Secondary education: Number of schools 8 139 – Enrolment 3 140 110 – Dropout 72 658 – Number of teachers 168 330.
- Vocational education: Number of schools 314 – Enrolment 50 603 – Dropout 1 607 – Number of teachers 10 976.⁴¹⁰

The following maps show the primary, lower and upper secondary school attendance ratios per gender:



Map 6: WFP Primary School Attendance Ratio 2019⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁶ Global Campaign for Education, Iraq Spotlight Report 2019, 2019, [url](#), p. 7

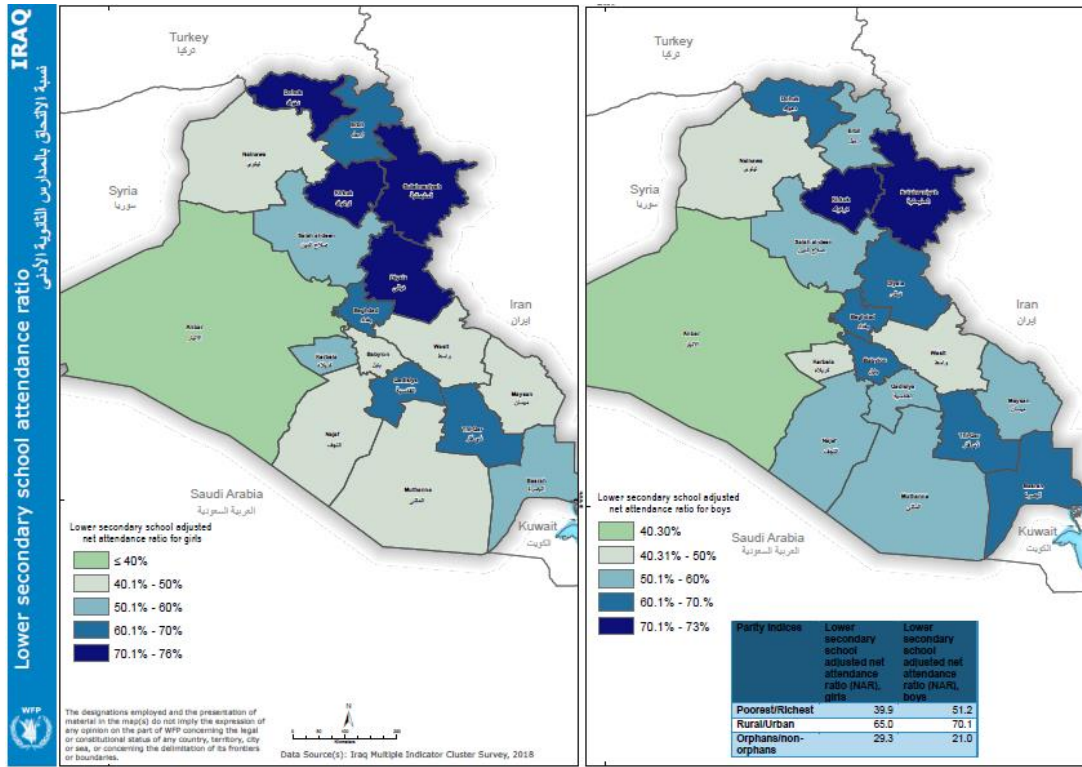
⁴⁰⁷ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018 [url](#), p. 25

⁴⁰⁸ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 209

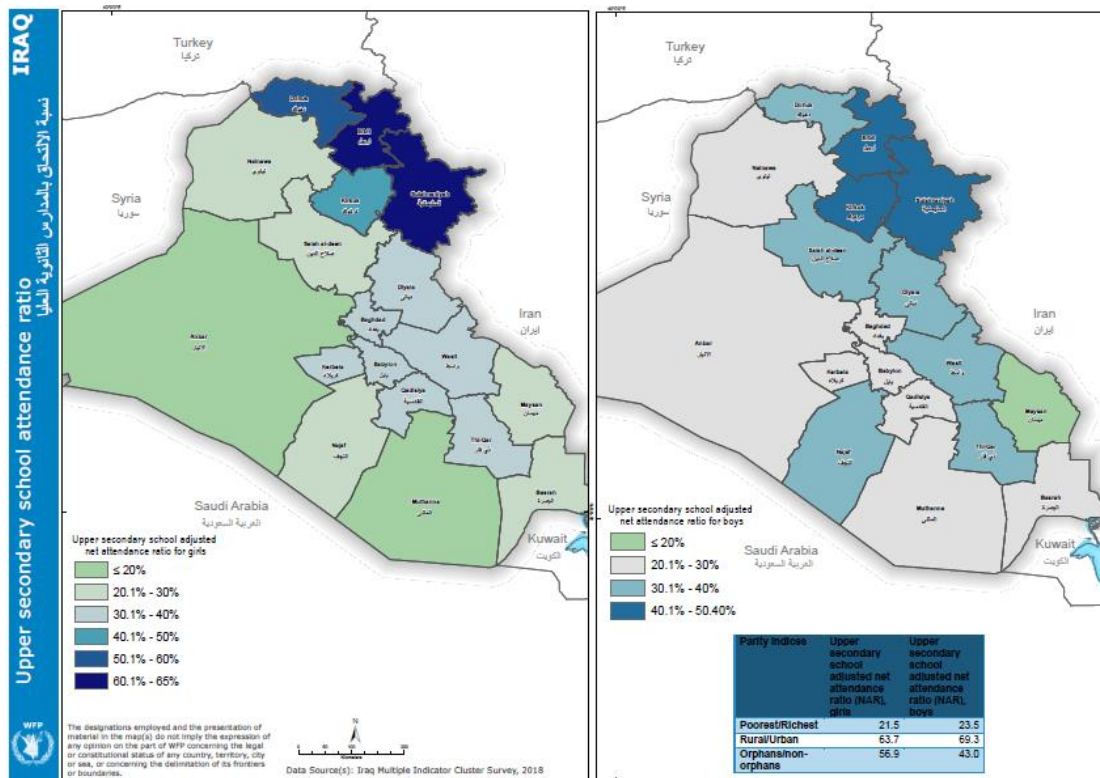
⁴⁰⁹ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 25

⁴¹⁰ Iraq, CSO, مؤشرات التعليم [Education Indicators], n. d., [url](#)

⁴¹¹ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 84



Map 7: WFP Lower Secondary School Attendance Ratio 2019⁴¹²



Map 8: WFP Upper Secondary School Attendance Ratio 2019⁴¹³

⁴¹² WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 85

⁴¹³ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 86

2.6.2 Baghdad

The 2016/2017 school enrolment rates in Baghdad were 97 % for elementary school, 67.7 % for secondary, 34.6 % preparatory, and 66.3 % high school.⁴¹⁴ The CSO stated that during the school year 2017/2018, 1 573 526 students were enrolled in primary schools and 788 082 in secondary schools in Bagdad.⁴¹⁵ Moreover, the WFP provided the following breakdown of the education level of household members who were +10 of age: illiterate (9 %), read only (2 %), read and write (14 %), primary (33 %), intermediate (15 %), secondary (12 %), diploma (5 %), and higher (9 %).⁴¹⁶

The National Development Plan observed that '2908 buildings are needed for kindergarten, 2849 elementary schools, 353 middle and high schools in Baghdad' to reach the standard number based on Baghdad residents' criteria.⁴¹⁷

Unlike the rest of the country, where private schools were still underdeveloped, Baghdad had an estimated 5 % of private schools.⁴¹⁸ Higher quality education in private and international schools in Baghdad was accessed by wealthy families. The average fee for private school was approximately USD 1 300 (EUR 1 145) per month.⁴¹⁹

2.6.3 Basra

The National Development Plan 2018-2022 stated that in 2016/2017, school enrolment rates in Basra province were 96.5 % for elementary school, 59.8 % secondary school, 28.2 % preparatory school, and 60.8 % high school.⁴²⁰ Moreover, there was a gap of 1 022 buildings for kindergarten and 734 for elementary schools, and a surplus of 47 buildings for middle and high school buildings in Basra province.⁴²¹ The CSO stated that for the school year 2017/2018, 602 512 were enrolled in primary schools and 291 393 in secondary schools.⁴²²

2.6.4 Erbil

Based on a 2018 survey, the WFP stated that the percentage of children attending primary school in Erbil province was 20.1-25 %.⁴²³ A joint report by the Erbil Refugee Council, IOM, the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre, UNHCR, UN-HABITAT, OCHA and UNFPA stated that '[b]asic and high school education are provided mainly through public schools, which are free to the residents of the Kurdistan Region.'⁴²⁴ The economic crisis in KRI has seriously affected education financing which has consistently decreased since 2012-2013, significantly impacting Erbil governorate, where the implementation rate of the education budget dropped from 45.9 % in 2021-2013 to 3.7 % in 2015-2016.⁴²⁵

Erbil governorate hosts three universities and a number of colleges and other education facilities.⁴²⁶ According to IOM's 2018 demographic survey Erbil governorate scored among the highest literacy

⁴¹⁴ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 170

⁴¹⁵ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي بغداد [Statistical Summary Baghdad 2018], n. d., [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 101

⁴¹⁷ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 170

⁴¹⁸ World Bank (The), Iraq: reconstruction and investment, part 2, January 2018, [url](#), p. 25

⁴¹⁹ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 9

⁴²⁰ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 170

⁴²¹ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 171

⁴²² Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي البصرة [Statistical Summary Basra 2018], 21 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴²³ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 83

⁴²⁴ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), pp. 23-24

⁴²⁵ UNICEF, The Cost and Benefits of Education in Iraq: An analysis of the education sector and strategies to maximize the benefits of education, 21 May 2017, available at: [url](#), p. 33

⁴²⁶ NCCI, Erbil Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 3

levels in KRI with around 80 % of respondents being able to read and write.⁴²⁷ School attendance level for Erbil governorate was recorded at 37 %, whereas 45.9 % were not currently attending and 17.1 % had never attended.⁴²⁸ An article on Opendemocracy.net states that ‘economic problems’ caused most of the drop outs from school in the city of Sulaimaniya. The article furthermore states that 25 % of the schools in the KRI are ‘completely unserviceable’ and 50 % of the schools need renovation.⁴²⁹ Corroborating information could not be found.

2.7 Housing and living conditions

2.7.1 Country overview

Housing

According to the National Development Plan 2018-2022, there was a housing deficit of 2.5 million units in Iraq by the end of 2016, 50 % of which in Baghdad and Ninawa governorates. Moreover, the plan referred to ‘[p]ersistent gaps in housing provision among provinces and between rural and urban areas’. Rapid population growth and constant growth in informal settlements inside and around cities (mainly Baghdad and Basra) were aspects of the current housing situation in Iraq.⁴³⁰

In its Humanitarian Needs Overview of November 2019, UNOCHA observed that around 700 000 people (out of 2.4 million estimated to be in need of shelter and NFI assistance) remained in critical shelter, such as makeshift shelters, unfinished or abandoned buildings, worn tents or public buildings.⁴³¹ Regarding IDPs, destruction of housing was a ‘primary issue’ keeping people in situations of displacement in conflict-affected areas, according to IOM, in 2018, noting that the worst house destruction was reported to be in Anbar, and IDPs were significantly more likely to cite this as a reason for lack of return.⁴³²

Electricity, hygiene, sewerage and sanitation

UNOCHA reported in February 2018 that 5.4 million persons in Iraq were in need of water, hygiene and sanitation assistance.⁴³³ They estimated this dropped to 2.3 million people in need of water and sanitation access as of December 2018.⁴³⁴ UNICEF noted that between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2020, 1.85 million people, of which 851 000 were children and 943 000 females) were in need of ‘at least one form of humanitarian WASH support.’⁴³⁵

The delivery of electricity was chronically deficient; already before the conflict, it was reported that supply was insufficient. Years of neglect have led to a dilapidated electricity infrastructure. Power outages were very common.⁴³⁶ IOM reported in its 2019 ILA III that overall, public electricity was available in most residences in locations where IDPs/returnees lived, but that the availability of daily hours of electricity was quite varied depending on the region. The southern governorates had 20 hours of electricity per day, while Ninawa and Salah al-Din had the lowest availability at 10 hours per day.⁴³⁷ On 4 June 2020, Reuters reported that Iraq has signed an agreement with Iran to import electricity for

⁴²⁷ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 34

⁴²⁸ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 35

⁴²⁹ Open Democracy, Corruption corrodes Kurdish education, 15 October 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁰ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 158

⁴³¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq, November 2019, [url](#), p. 57

⁴³² IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), p. 13

⁴³³ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#), p. 5

⁴³⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), pp. 6, 37

⁴³⁵ UNICEF, 2020 Internal Displacement Crisis Humanitarian Situation Report, 23 April 2020, available at: [url](#), p. 3

⁴³⁶ World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁴³⁷ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 30

two years (2020 and 2021).⁴³⁸ However, due to the US sanctions on Iran, the Iraqi government is envisaging to switch to the Gulf Countries for energy supply. According to Al-Mada, 80 % of the project to link Iraq's electricity grids to the Gulf Cooperation Council grid has been finalised.⁴³⁹ Kurdistan 24, citing AFP, stated that this agreement 'was hailed as a "landmark deal" and is planned to provide 500 megawatts of electricity to Iraq's "overstretched grid by 2020"'.⁴⁴⁰

IOM remarked that nationally, 'the most inefficient [infrastructure and services] sectors appeared to be sewerage and waste management/disposal, which existed but were only functioning in locations where around 10 % of returnees and 40 % of IDPs lived. While these services were mostly present in the KRI, the main problem in the north-central governorates seemed to be the absence of both services, whereas malfunctioning was reported in the south.'⁴⁴¹

Large parts of the Iraqi population were not connected to sewer systems.⁴⁴² The conflict with ISIL has impacted the state of critical infrastructure in Iraq, particularly in areas that were difficult to reach, and in recently retaken areas from ISIL, greater damage to water infrastructure was affecting non-displaced populations.⁴⁴³ UNOCHA reported that 1.4 million people, including IDPs from Ninawa, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, and Anbar, who lived in 33 camps, were in need of water and sanitation support and access due to inadequate facilities and sanitation coverage.⁴⁴⁴

2.7.2 Baghdad

A map published by WFP showed that Baghdad governorate had 334-1022 informal settlements.⁴⁴⁵ Based on estimates for 2017, the National Development Plan 2018-2022 indicated the existence of 1 022 informal settlements and 136 689 informal housing units in Baghdad province.⁴⁴⁶

Regarding water and sanitation, the WFP Socio-economic Atlas stated that 70 % of the households in Baghdad had continuous availability of drinking water while 30 % had irregular availability. Moreover, 91 % obtained drinking water from the general network while 9 % relied on bottled water.⁴⁴⁷ The CSO stated that 86.9 % of Baghdad inhabitants were served with drinking water networks in 2017.⁴⁴⁸ The National Development Plan 2018-2022 indicated a deficit of 35 % in drinking water demand coverage in Baghdad outskirts.⁴⁴⁹

The National Development Plan also stated that the sewer system in Baghdad was old and 'has exceeded its design life', and that it suffered from various problems especially in the rain season.⁴⁵⁰ The WFP Atlas observed that 52 % of toilets were with siphon and 48 % without.⁴⁵¹ The CSO indicated that in 2017, 75.9 % of Baghdad inhabitants were served with a sewer system.⁴⁵²

⁴³⁸ Reuters, Iran signs two-year contract with Iraq to export electricity: IRNA, 4 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴³⁹ Al-Mada, الكهرباء تعلن إكمال 80 % من خطوط النقل الخليجية [Electricity Department announces that 80 % of the GCC lines have been finalised], 26 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁰ Kurdistan 24, US hails Gulf Arab plan to supply electricity to Iraq, 17 July 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴¹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 28

⁴⁴² BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018 [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁴³ REACH, Iraq, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA), December 2017, [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁴⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 37

⁴⁴⁵ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 46

⁴⁴⁶ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 158

⁴⁴⁷ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 101

⁴⁴⁸ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي بغداد [Statistical Summary Baghdad 2018], n. d., [url](#)

⁴⁴⁹ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 161

⁴⁵⁰ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 163

⁴⁵¹ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 101

⁴⁵² Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي بغداد [Statistical Summary Baghdad 2018], n. d., [url](#)

IOM stated that overall, infrastructure in Baghdad appeared to be mostly functioning.⁴⁵³ Power outages were however commonplace.⁴⁵⁴ The damage to the housing stock in the governorate of Baghdad was estimated to amount to IQD 337.5 billion (EUR 251.2 million).⁴⁵⁵ Significant residential damage was mainly reported in Abu Ghraib (3 %) and Mahmoudiya (7 %) areas.⁴⁵⁶

The large inflow of IDPs and migrants to urban areas has put notable pressure on the housing market in Baghdad.⁴⁵⁷ According to a 2018 academic study, an estimated 187 000 housing units in Baghdad (around 31 % of the capital housing stock) were inappropriate. The housing shortage, along with lack of construction materials and scarce serviced urban lands, were the main reasons for an increase of housing costs.⁴⁵⁸ Housing prices in Baghdad varied depending on the area, with prices being lower outside the centre. IOM reported that an unfurnished house in suburban Baghdad of 200m² could rent for USD 100-300 [EUR 87-263], while inside Baghdad a house of that size would cost USD 750-1000 [EUR 658-877].⁴⁵⁹

In terms of living costs in Iraq, IOM stated that on average a family would spend monthly: USD 13 [EUR 11] on gas, USD 9-22 [EUR 8-19] on water, USD 22-30 [EUR 19-26] on public electricity, and the same on private or community generators.⁴⁶⁰

2.7.3 Basra

A WFP map showed that the governorate of Basra had the same rate of informal settlements as Baghdad, i.e. 334-1022.⁴⁶¹ The National Development Plan 2018-2022 indicated the existence of 677 informal settlements and 62 602 informal housing units in Basra province.⁴⁶²

In a report published on 22 July 2019, Human Rights Watch stated that Iraqi authorities ‘have failed to properly manage and regulate Iraq’s water sources, depriving the people in Iraq’s southern Basra governorate ... of their right to safe drinking water’. According to the report, Basra’s main water source was the Shatt Al-Arab River with its fresh water canals. Human Rights Watch also observed that over 300 000 residents in the Basra governorate were not connected to the water and sewage network, which led them to ‘contaminate groundwater with raw sewage and to illegally tap into the piping network to access water, exposing the systems to wastage and revenue loss, decreased water pressure, and potential contamination.’ Moreover, public water plants in Basra were not equipped with the technology required ‘to remove dissolved constituents from seawater intrusion from the Shatt Al-Arab, which render chlorine less effective in removing harmful substances’. Finally, salinity and other problems related to water quality have impacted agriculture, raising livestock and fisheries in the governorate.⁴⁶³ The CSO stated that 90 % of Basra inhabitants were served with drinking water networks in 2017.⁴⁶⁴ Concerning water coverage, the National Development Plan 2018-2022 indicated

⁴⁵³ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 10

⁴⁵⁴ Reuters, As Baghdad life improves, some still seek refuge in its past, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁵ World Bank, Iraq reconstruction & investment part 2 Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates, January 2018, [url](#), p. 16

⁴⁵⁶ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 6

⁴⁵⁷ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 44

⁴⁵⁸ Al-Hafith, Omar, B.K. Satish (et al.), A systematic assessment of architectural approaches for solving the housing problem in Iraq, in: *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, July 2018, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁵⁹ IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), pp. 7-8

⁴⁶⁰ IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁴⁶¹ WFP, Iraq Socio-economic Atlas, 2019, [url](#), p. 46

⁴⁶² Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 158

⁴⁶³ HRW, Basra is Thirsty: Iraq’s Failure to Manage the Water Crisis, 22 July 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁴ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي البصرة [Statistical Summary Basra 2018], n. d., [url](#)

a deficit of 26 % in drinking water demand coverage in Basra province.⁴⁶⁵ The CSO indicated that in 2017, only 34.1 % of Basra inhabitants were served with a sewer system⁴⁶⁶.

Regarding electricity, the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington (AGSIW) observed that high tension lines were damaged during the years of conflict, and that although the damage was concentrated in the north, 'it affected the whole country, including the southern oil province of Basra' as all governorates were interconnected by the national grid.⁴⁶⁷ According to an article published by Meed, a source for business intelligence and economic analysis, on 12 June 2020, Iraq imported 1 200 MW of electricity from Iran in average. Moreover, the source stated that an independent power project near Basra (i.e. Rumaila power plant) was underway, and that the second phase 'has come online'. Reportedly, the project will produce 3 000 MW.⁴⁶⁸

On 26 November 2019, Al-Monitor reported on 'deadly protests' in Basra, where several people were killed.⁴⁶⁹ On 3 October 2019, BBC reported that in Basra, people protested over power shortages, unsafe drinking water, corruption and unemployment for weeks.⁴⁷⁰ On 24 November 2019, Euronews reported that Basra 'has seen weeks of protests against poor quality of services, especially chronic shortages of clean water and acute power shortages, leaving residents with only a few hours of electricity per day.'⁴⁷¹

2.7.4 Erbil

IOM 2018 data showed that 'nearly all families in Erbil governorate live in proper housing, such as an entire house occupied by a single household (92.1 %); a house shared by more than one household (6.3 %); or an apartment/flat (1.4 %).'⁴⁷² Erbil governorate's rate of urbanisation was estimated to be over 80 % as result of the influx of economic migrants and IDPs.⁴⁷³ IOM assessed in 2017 that the infrastructure was mostly functioning in all districts.⁴⁷⁴

According to the demographic survey of the KRI conducted by IOM in 2018 'access to the electricity grid in the KRI is universal but supply is limited and households have an average supply of 17 hours per day.'⁴⁷⁵ In Erbil governorate the average number of hours per day of public electricity supply was 15.6.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁶⁵ Iraq, Ministry of Planning, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 161

⁴⁶⁶ Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي البصرة [Statistical Summary Basra 2018], n. d., [url](#)

⁴⁶⁷ AGSIW, Iraq's Electricity Challenges Mount as Oil Revenue Slows to a Trickle, 15 May 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁸ Meed, The 3,000MW Rumaila plant is being developed as an independent power project, Power Technology, 12 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁹ Al-Monitor, Protests spread in oil-rich Basra as death toll rises, 26 November 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁰ BBC, Iraq protests: Curfew imposed in Baghdad amid widespread unrest, 3 October 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁷¹ Euronews, Iraq protests: Basra streets fill with black smoke, burning tyres, 24 November 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁷² IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 48

⁴⁷³ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 14

⁴⁷⁴ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 14

⁴⁷⁵ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 50

⁴⁷⁶ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 50

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

Reference period: January 2019 to 6 July 2020.

1. General overview

This report will include two main sections: one providing a general overview, and one providing a description of the situation in each of the three cities Baghdad, Basra and Erbil by a set of indicators.

The general overview will include separate chapters on IDPs/returnees, women children, and single persons.

The chapter on IDPs/returnees will focus on housing and living conditions, access to education, health care and employment, and on obtaining lost ID documents (current arrangements and regulations in place, state of issuing offices in areas recaptured from ISIL).

The chapter on women will focus on employment, working conditions, access to health care, access to education/dropout rates, and freedom of movement for women.

The chapter on the situation for children will focus on child labour (legislation, statistics, underreporting, prevalence in IDP/returnee communities, underage recruitment and/or use by armed actors (such as the PMUs).

The chapter on networks of support for single persons will cover both men and women. It will focus on family and community networks, political and patronage networks, and wasta. The importance of networks for security will be covered, as well as the prevalence of organizations/arrangements providing support to persons without network.

2. Baghdad, Basra and Erbil, by indicator. Focus on the situation inside each city.

In this chapter, the following indicators will be applied: Economy, employment, poverty, food security, health care, education, and housing and living conditions.

There will be separate paragraphs for each of the three cities under each of the indicators, covering the reference period.



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