



Iraq

Key Socio-economic Indicators

for Baghdad, Basrah, and Sulaymaniyah

Country of Origin
Information Report

November 2021





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PDF ISBN 978-92-9465-577-6 doi: 10.2847/7919 BZ- 01-21-427-EN-N

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Acknowledgements

EASO acknowledges as the drafter of this report:

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

The following departments and organisations have reviewed the report:

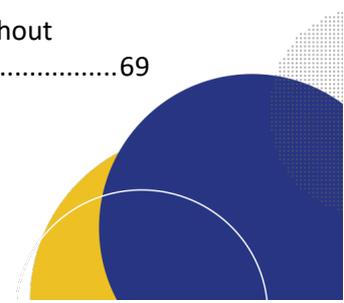
The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Country of Origin (COI) unit

It must be noted that the review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of EASO.

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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 31 October 2021. 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 2019 EASO COI Report Methodology can be downloaded from the EASO COI Portal https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019_EASO_COI_Report_Methodology.pdf

Glossary and Abbreviations

<i>Asayish</i>	Intelligence services of the KRG
CAD	Civil Affairs Directorate
CWTU	Compact water treatment unit
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
ID	Identification documentation
IDP	Internally displaced persons
IDH	Internally displaced household
IQD	Iraqi Dinar
ISIL	The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State, or Daesh
ISX	Iraq Stock Exchange
JCCC	Joint Crisis Coordination Cell
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
LSG	Living standards gap
MoDM	Ministry of Displacement and Migration
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoT	Ministry of Trade
MP	Multidimensional poverty
<i>mukhtar</i>	Local community leader
MSNI	Multi-Sectoral Needs Index
MVI	Multidimensional Vulnerability Index
PDS	Public Distribution System
PMU	Popular Mobilisation Units, also known as Hashd Al-Sha'bi
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

Introduction

This report is an update to the [EASO COI Report: Iraq Key Socio-economic Indicators](#), published in September 2020.

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 (IPA) within the EASO Country Guidance on Iraq 2021 update. This report provides information on key socio-economic indicators in Iraq, focusing on the cities of Baghdad, Basrah, and Sulaymaniyah and highlights aspects of the legal and administrative requirements for Iraqis to enter and settle in the respective city, ID documents and access to basic services, the situation of IDPs and returnees, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

This report is produced in line with the EASO COI report methodology (2019)² and the EASO COI Writing and Referencing Guide (2019)³.

The reference period for this report covers the time period between 1 August 2020 and 15 October 2021.

Some additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 31 October 2021. In this quality review process, a review was carried out by a COI specialist from the Netherlands as stated in the [Acknowledgments](#) section of this report, and internally by EASO. 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 September 2020, reference to that report was included for background information and where no new information was available. In those sections where no specific information was found on the respective city, information on the governorate was included. Where possible, the distinction is made in the report.

Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference of this report are based on the input received from policy experts from EU+ countries⁴ 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, Basrah, and Sulaymaniyah, within the relevant national context. Members of the EASO COI Specialist Network on Iraq and EASO Country Guidance Network were consulted and gave input on the ToR prior to its finalisation.

After consultation with stakeholders, it was determined that information on the situation in Sulaymaniyah would also be beneficial to decision makers. For this reason, it was covered in this report in lieu of Erbil as a representative city for northern Iraq for this update. This by no means

² The 2019 EASO COI Report Methodology can be downloaded from the EASO COI Portal https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019_EASO_COI_Report_Methodology.pdf

³ The 2019 EASO Writing and Referencing Guide can be downloaded from the EASO COI Portal https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019_EASO_COI_Writing_and_Referencing_Guide.pdf

⁴ EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland.

implies an IPA assessment of the two cities or indicates that Sulaymaniyah is safer than Erbil. The TOR for this report can be found in the Annex 2: [Terms of Reference](#).

Sources

In accordance with EASO COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: COI reports by governments; information from civil society, advocacy groups, humanitarian organisations, and NGOs; international and NGO human rights reports; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Iraqi and regionally-based media and social media; academic publications and think tank reports and specialised sources covering Iraq.

Additionally, at the request of the drafters, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided information regarding access to residency in Sulaymaniyah through written correspondence.

Structure and use of the report

The report is divided into three main parts: Part 1 deals with access and residency requirements for Baghdad, Basrah, and Sulaymaniyah, including legal and administrative requirements for Iraqis to enter and settle in those cities. Part 2 covers key socio-economic indicators in the three cities, including the economy, employment, poverty, food security, healthcare, education and housing and living conditions. Part 3 provides information on requirements to obtain ID documents, including for IDPs, ID documents and related access to services, and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic at a national level.

Map



Map 1: UN, Iraq - Map No. 3835 Rev.6, July 2014⁵

⁵ UN, Iraq - Map No. 3835 Rev.6, July 2014, [url](#)

1. Access and residency requirements for Baghdad, Basrah, and Sulaymaniyah

1.1 General information on access and residency requirements

In Article 44 (1), the Constitution of Iraq grants that ‘each Iraqi has freedom of movement, travel, and residence inside and outside Iraq’ while, in Article 44 (2), it stipulates that ‘no Iraqi may be exiled, displaced, or deprived from returning to the homeland.’⁶

Iraq also has a National Policy on Displacement, dating from July 2008, which provides for a broad range of IDP rights including non-discrimination and freedom of movement.⁷ Under the provisions on the Right to Freedom of Movement, Section 6.9 states that:

‘The competent authorities have the responsibility to ensure that the IDPs enjoy the right to move freely and choose their place of residence. It also includes the right to return and rehabilitate themselves in their places of origin or habitual residence, local integration or resettlement in other places in Iraq. [...] The Government ensures that a person’s freedom of movement and choice of place of residence will not be subject to any restrictions save those maintained by the law as they are deemed necessary for reasons pertaining to national security, public order or health, morals or other people’s rights and freedoms. The governorates and local authorities shall not prevent IDPs from residing in their areas, and they shall not create obstacles to that effect. The Government of Iraq realizes the consequences that resulted regionally from imposing internal obstacles on those who have been seeking safety.’⁸

According to information from October 2018, the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), created after 2003, was the federal body entrusted with addressing IDP and returnee issues under the National Policy on Displacement, and reportedly maintained offices in all governorates.⁹

When the 2014 ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) crisis began and with the 2008 National Policy on Displacement proving to be inadequate to tackle the challenges arising from new mass displacement, Iraq established an additional body¹⁰ called the Supreme Committee for the Relief and Shelter of Families Displaced by Terrorist Operations (renamed in 2019 into Higher Committee for the Relief and Support of the Displaced)¹¹ to coordinate the intersectoral response.¹²

⁶ Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, 15 October 2005, [url](#), Article 44 (1), (2)

⁷ Iraq, National Policy on Displacement, July 2008, [url](#), section 6

⁸ Iraq, National Policy on Displacement, July 2008, [url](#), section 6.9

⁹ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of EASO Report on Internal Mobility, 10 October 2018, cited from EASO, COI Report: Iraq – Internal Mobility, February 2019, [url](#), p. 15, footnote 28; see also Costantini, I. and Palani, K., Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertainty in the Context of Iraq, MERI, January 2018, [url](#), p. 37

¹⁰ Costantini, I. and Palani, K., Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertainty in the Context of Iraq, MERI, January 2018, [url](#), p. 38

¹¹ Iraq, Government of Iraq, Cabinet approves measures to strengthen support for people displaced by terrorist operations, 25 December 2019, [url](#)

¹² Costantini, I. and Palani, K., Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertainty in the Context of Iraq, MERI, January 2018, [url](#), p. 38

While the KRI, unlike Baghdad-administered Iraq, does not have a ministry dedicated to the issue of displacement,¹³ the Joint Crisis Coordination Cell (JCCC) was formed in 2015 as a body within the Kurdish Ministry of Interior to coordinate responses to the displacement crisis.¹⁴

Iraq's security forces are authorised to restrict movement within the country¹⁵ and, in recent years, local authorities in many areas have put in place requirements relating to access and residency.¹⁶ According to UNHCR, these 'access and residency requirements are not always officially announced and/or clearly defined, and/or implementation can vary or be subject to changes depending on political or security dynamics'.¹⁷ They have also been enforced selectively on ethno-sectarian grounds.¹⁸

In the face of mass displacement prompted by the expansion of ISIL and the ensuing military conflict between 2014 and 2017, authorities have imposed restrictions on entry and residency in numerous localities, including sponsorship requirements. In some places, they have imposed near-total entry bans for people originating from conflict areas, especially Sunni Arabs. While access bans and entry restrictions had been lifted in most places by early 2020, sponsorship and other clearance requirements still existed in several governorates as of January 2021 with regard to residency for persons from areas formerly held by ISIL or affected by conflict.¹⁹

Two of the main obstacles to freedom of movement and residency for IDPs and returnees are proving one's identity and obtaining security clearance.²⁰

Missing civil documents (as a result of documents being lost or left behind while fleeing, confiscation of documents or destruction of civil registries during conflict²¹) have been reported as a major concern for 43 % of IDP households living outside camps, 55 % of camp-based IDP households and 57 % of returnee households across the country.²² For more information regarding lost civil documentation, as well as the requirements for obtaining ID documents, please see section [3.1 Requirements to obtain ID documents](#).

Security clearance for persons with alleged affiliation with ISIL involves a review by security services. Moreover, the process 'relies centrally on the *mukhtar*, the local headman in the displaced person's hometown or city neighbourhood', who acts in coordination with the security forces²³ and can provide a signed letter attesting that a person suspected of ISIL affiliation has not actually committed any crime.²⁴ For more information relating to security clearance requirements for

¹³ Khedir, H. H., IDPs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Intractable Return and Absence of Social Integration Policy, 2021, [url](#), p. 154

¹⁴ Costantini, I. and Palani, K., Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertainty in the Context of Iraq, MERI, January 2018, [url](#), p. 38

¹⁵ USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁶ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁷ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 1

¹⁸ USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁹ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

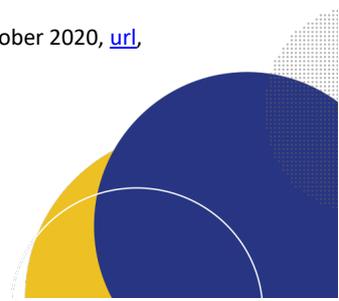
²⁰ GPC, Protection Monitoring System, Report 1, February 2021, [url](#), p. 6; see also UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs - Civil & Identity Documentation (May 2021), 27 June 2021, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 37, 39

²¹ NRC, Broken Home: Women's housing, land and property rights in post-conflict Iraq, 11 May 2020, [url](#), p. 10

²² UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 39

²³ International Crisis Group, Exiles in Their Own Country: Dealing with Displacement in Post-ISIS Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 5

²⁴ IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), p. 32



persons with alleged ISIL affiliation, please see section [3.3.3 Security clearance requirement for returnees](#).

Individuals alleged to be affiliated with ISIL appear to have limited prospects for settling outside of IDP camps²⁵ as they are subjected to denial of security clearance by security forces²⁶ or are compelled to undergo procedures that involve reporting relatives with alleged ISIL ties to the authorities or disavowing these relatives²⁷ in order to obtain civil documents.²⁸ What is meant by ISIL affiliation, however, varies by location. In some places ISIL affiliation is attributed to persons who lived in ISIL-held areas or those who did not flee until the military offensive was underway. In other places, it may only refer to those who have close family members directly involved in crimes committed by the group.²⁹

1.2 Legal and administrative requirements to enter the respective city

1.2.1 Baghdad

Baghdad City has a mixed resident population that includes ‘Sunni and Shia Arabs with smaller pockets of Christians, Sunni and Shia Kurds, and Sunni and Shia Turkmen’. The city’s displaced population is composed mainly by Sunni Arab.³⁰

A person is required to hold a valid identity document (e.g., Civil Status ID card, Iraqi Nationality Certificate, or passport)³¹ in order to be allowed to pass checkpoints and be admitted into Baghdad.³²

As of January 2021, individuals originating from areas formerly held by ISIL or affected by conflict (including returnees from a third country) do not need a sponsor to enter Baghdad governorate.³³

1.2.2 Basrah

The majority of Basrah City’s population is Shia,³⁴ while it also includes a minority of Sunnis,³⁵ a small Christian community³⁶ and other groups including Sabeen Mandeans.³⁷

²⁵ IOM, Cities as Home: Understanding Belonging and Acceptance Among IDPs and Host Communities in Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 29

²⁶ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 74

²⁷ IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), pp. 31-32

²⁸ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 74

²⁹ IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), p. 31

³⁰ IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 39

³¹ Since 2018/19, the Civil Status ID Card and Iraqi Nationality Certificate have been progressively replaced by the Unified ID Card, a biometric document that functions both as nationality and ID certificate. However, as UNHCR notes, the roll-out of the Unified ID Card has been ‘inconsistent due to administrative and logistical challenges and remains uneven across the country’. UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 1, footnote 1

³² UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2; Regarding the requirements for obtaining ID documents, please see 3.1 Requirements to obtain ID documents.

³³ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

³⁴ France 24, Iraqi protesters set fire to Iran consulate in southern city of Basra, 7 September 2018, [url](#)

³⁵ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Living Among the Hashd: Relations Between Citizens and Security Actors in Five Iraqi Provinces, IRIS, July 2021, [url](#), p. 18

³⁶ Al-Monitor, Basra church restored, but few Christians left to worship there, 7 August 2019, [url](#)

³⁷ Al-Menasa, Basra’s Sabeen-Mandeans Keeping Golden Traditions Alive, 16 October 2019, [url](#)

A person is required to hold a valid identity document (e.g., Civil Status ID card, Iraqi Nationality Certificate, or passport) in order to be able to pass checkpoints and be admitted into Basrah.³⁸

As of January 2021, individuals originating from areas formerly held by ISIL or affected by conflict (including returnees from a third country) do not need a sponsor to enter Basrah governorate.³⁹

1.2.3 Sulaymaniyah

Sulaymaniyah City has a predominantly Sunni Kurdish resident population, with smaller numbers of Shia Kurds, Sunni and Shia Arabs, Christians and other minorities. Since 2014, the city 'has hosted primarily Sunni Arab IDPs from across conflict-affected governorates'.⁴⁰

A person is required to hold a valid identity document (e.g., Civil Status ID card, Iraqi Nationality Certificate, or passport) in order to be able to pass checkpoints and be admitted into Sulaymaniyah governorate.⁴¹

IDPs, including ethnic Arabs and Turkmen not originating from the KRI, such as those stemming from areas formerly held by ISIL or affected by conflict, do not need a sponsor to enter Sulaymaniyah governorate.⁴² However, IDPs need to undergo a security screening and clearance process (for which holding ID documentation is a prerequisite) before they are allowed to enter Sulaymaniyah governorate.⁴³

Regarding Iraqi Arabs whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued in a governorate outside the KRI and who also do not have a residency permit from any KRI governorate, UNHCR states that 'upon entry to Sulaymaniyah governorate at an internal border checkpoint and following security screening, the *Asayish*⁴⁴ generally provides such persons with a temporary entry authorization (Tourist Visitor Card) valid for 30 days'. This authorisation is granted for short-term visits (for business, shopping, medical care, or similar purposes) and 'enables the holder to enter and remain in Sulaymaniyah governorate within the validity period of the authorization'. It does not authorise the holder to rent a house or obtain regular employment (they are however able to rent accommodation in a hotel). No fees are charged in Sulaymaniyah governorate for the issuance of temporary entry authorisation (Tourist Visitor Card). Persons who enter the governorate through Sulaymaniyah airport do not obtain this document⁴⁵ (see [3.1 Requirements to obtain ID documents](#)).

According to UNHCR, the below procedures apply for Iraqi Arabs 'from the KRI', i.e., 1) those whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued in one of the governorates that are part to the KRI (i.e., Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, Dohuk or Halabja governorates) and 2) Iraqi Arabs who hold a

³⁸ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2; Regarding the requirements for obtaining ID documents, please see 3.1 Requirements to obtain ID documents.

³⁹ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁰ IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 18

⁴¹ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2; Regarding the requirements for obtaining ID documents, please see [3.1 Requirements to obtain ID documents](#).

⁴² UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁴³ IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 20

⁴⁴ Intelligence services of the KRG

⁴⁵ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, pp. 1-2

residency permit issued by any of the four KRI governorates, but whose civil documentation has been issued in a governorate outside the KRI.

Iraqi Arabs whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued in one of the governorates that are part to the KRI are generally able to enter Sulaymaniyah governorate without restrictions by presenting such documents. Iraqi Arabs who hold a residency permit issued by any of the four KRI governorates, but whose civil documentation has been issued in a governorate outside the KRI, are able to enter Sulaymaniyah governorate by showing their 'residency permit'.⁴⁶ For further information on this permit, please see section [1.3.3 Sulaymaniyah](#) on legal and administrative requirements to settle in the respective city.

The same source indicates that the following requirements apply for Iraqi Kurds or Yazidis 'from outside the KRI', i.e., those whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued in a governorate falling under the administration of the Iraqi federal government: Iraqi Kurds can enter Sulaymaniyah governorate by 'presenting their Civil Status ID Cards or Unified ID Cards, regardless of the governorate in which their documents have been issued'. Iraqi Yazidis are, in practice, treated similarly to Iraqi Kurds and 'can enter Sulaymaniyah governorate by showing their Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card, regardless of where these have been issued'.⁴⁷

1.3 Legal and administrative requirements to settle in the respective city

1.3.1 Baghdad

IDPs seeking to stay in Baghdad are required to hold identity documentation in order to be able to obtain security clearance from the local security forces. This security clearance relating to the conflict with ISIL is the prerequisite for obtaining residency. Once clearance has been obtained, the individual can apply for residency documentation.⁴⁸

UNHCR reported that, as of January 2021, all individuals, including those originating from areas formerly held by ISIL or affected by conflict (as well as returnees from a third country), are requested to have a letter of support from the *mukhtar* of the neighbourhood where they intend to reside, in addition to two sponsors from the same neighbourhood.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, IOM noted that IDPs need either a support letter from the *mukhtar* or sponsorship from two residents of the relevant neighbourhood.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, former Baghdad residents who have a Housing Card ('Information Card') issued in Baghdad and intend to take up residency again in the same neighbourhood do not need sponsors or a support letter from the *mukhtar*. The housing card indicates the address at which the household head owns or rents a house or flat and is issued by the General Directorate for Nationality within the Ministry of the Interior.⁵¹

⁴⁶ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 1

⁴⁷ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 3

⁴⁸ IOM, Cities as Home: Understanding Belonging and Acceptance Among IDPs and Host Communities in Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 29; see also IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 41

⁴⁹ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁰ IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 41

⁵¹ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 3, footnote 8

It has also been noted that movement restrictions do not apply for IDPs who are in possession of required residency documentation and that ‘no extra security measures are reportedly taken in IDP populated areas’ in Baghdad.⁵²

Once an IDP has residency documentation, he or she is considered a ‘resident’ and can seek housing and move around within Baghdad.⁵³ However, IDPs are not allowed to purchase or own property in the city.⁵⁴

1.3.2 Basrah

Individuals from areas formerly held by ISIL or affected by conflict ‘require a local sponsor as well as a support letter from the local mukhtar’ in order to legally take up residence in Basrah governorate. Moreover, the relevant Operations Command at the Governorate level must grant additional security clearance to the security clearance given by local security actors.⁵⁵

1.3.3 Sulaymaniyah

According to IOM, IDPs displaced within the KRI originate either from outside the region or from the territories disputed between the KRI and the Federal Government of Iraq. As for IDPs from the KRI who have been displaced to other regions, authorities in the region’s major cities, including Sulaymaniyah, have ‘no instructions, regulations, or laws’ with regard to their returns. As a result, those IDPs who have returned have reportedly done so either spontaneously or under the Federal Government of Iraq regulations that have been applied to all IDPs in the country.⁵⁶

As of January 2021, ethnic Arabs and Turkmen originating from outside the KRI, including those from areas formerly held by ISIL or affected by conflict, are not required to have a sponsor but ‘must approach the local *Asayish* in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside in order to obtain a residency permit issued by *Asayish*’.⁵⁷ In order to obtain residency permission, they need security clearance.⁵⁸ While this permit, which is issued in the form of an ID card proving legal registration with the *Asayish*,⁵⁹ is commonly called ‘residency permit’, it is in fact a security clearance permit that is issued by the *Asayish*.⁶⁰

⁵² IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 41

⁵³ IOM, Cities as Home: Understanding Belonging and Acceptance Among IDPs and Host Communities in Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 30

⁵⁴ IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 41

⁵⁵ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁶ IOM, Cities as Home: Understanding Belonging and Acceptance Among IDPs and Host Communities in Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 29

⁵⁷ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 4; see also MEI, The War at Home: The Need for Internal Security Sector Reform in Iraqi Kurdistan, July 2021, [url](#), p. 15; USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 28

⁵⁸ IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 20

⁵⁹ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 17 August 2020, [url](#), p. 65

⁶⁰ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 1, footnote 2



According to IOM, these protocols apply for any person from outside the KRI⁶¹ seeking to reside there, regardless of their displacement status'.⁶² The residency permits are normally valid for a year⁶³ and can generally be renewed⁶⁴ reportedly at any *Asayish* office.⁶⁵

However, it has been reported that single Arab and Turkmen men are generally only issued a one-month renewable residency permit by the *Asayish*. Although 'single Arab and Turkmen men who have proof of regular employment and a support letter from their employer can apply for a one-year *Asayish*-issued residency permit', only few of those who apply are granted one.⁶⁶

IDPs, including Arabs, who have residency in Sulaymaniyah are allowed to buy property in the city and have it registered under their own names. This new regulation applies to any person not originating from the KRI, whether or not they have been displaced.⁶⁷

According to UNHCR, the following requirements apply for Iraqi Arabs 'from the KRI', i.e., 1) those whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued in one of the KRI's other governorates and 2) those whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued outside the KRI but who hold a residency permit granted by one of the other governorates of the KRI.

Iraqi Arabs whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued in one of the KRI's other governorates are required to request a new *Asayish* code⁶⁸ as well as the transfer of their Housing Card ('Information Card')⁶⁹ to Sulaymaniyah in order to be able to settle in Sulaymaniyah governorate, according to UNHCR. The process of obtaining a new *Asayish* code involves that, initially, the local *Asayish* in the neighbourhood in which the person seeks to settle will refer him or her to the General *Asayish* Directorate of Sulaymaniyah. There, the person will be interviewed and given a new *Asayish* code that confirms that the person/family is known to the General *Asayish* Directorate of Sulaymaniyah. The person will subsequently have to approach the local *mukhtar* of the area where s/he seeks to settle and inform him about his/her arrival presenting him the *Asayish* code. In order to transfer the Housing Card, the person requires a support letter from the local *mukhtar* to be approved by the local *Asayish*. This letter then needs to be presented to the local police station for additional endorsement, followed by endorsement by the local mayor's office. Once these steps have been completed, the Sulaymaniyah Information Office can transfer the person's Housing Card to Sulaymaniyah. As the same source notes, an individual can already initiate the process of renting a house based on the *Asayish* code but will need to transfer the Housing Card before being allowed to sign the rental contract. Meanwhile, a Housing Card issued in Sulaymaniyah is necessary to obtain regular employment.⁷⁰

⁶¹ IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 20

⁶² IOM, Cities as Home: Understanding Belonging and Acceptance Among IDPs and Host Communities in Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 30

⁶³ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 4

⁶⁴ USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 28

⁶⁵ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 17 August 2020, [url](#), p. 65

⁶⁶ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 4

⁶⁷ IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 20

⁶⁸ 'The *Asayish* code is provided to every individual above 18 years old. Due to prevailing political, security and administrative divisions, the *Asayish* codes vary in each KR-I governorate. Therefore, individuals from Erbil, Dohuk or Halabja seeking to settle in Sulaymaniyah governorate will require a new *Asayish* code.' UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 2, footnote 3

⁶⁹ 'The Housing Card is a document showing the address where the head of household rents or owns a residence. The General Directorate for Nationality of the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the issuance of the Housing Card. It is used in both Federal Iraq and in the KR-I.' UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 2, footnote 4

⁷⁰ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 2

On the other hand, Iraqi Arabs whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued outside the KRI but who hold a residency permit granted by one of the other governorates of the KRI, are required to request a new *Asayish* code as well as the transfer of their residency permit and their Housing Card to Sulaymaniyah in order to be able to settle in Sulaymaniyah governorate, according to UNHCR. The process of transferring the residency permit involves that initially, the local *Asayish* in the neighbourhood where the person seeks to settle will refer him or her to the Sulaymaniyah's General *Asayish* Directorate. There, the person will be interviewed and issued a new *Asayish* code to confirm that the person/family is known by the General *Asayish* in Sulaymaniyah. The General *Asayish* in Sulaymaniyah will then process the transfer of the residency permit. This involves reaching out to the *Asayish* in the governorate in which the residency permit was issued and informing them of the person's move to Sulaymaniyah. After a security screening, the individual will be given the new *Asayish* code in Sulaymaniyah. Once the person has obtained the new code, s/he can proceed to requesting the transfer of the Housing Card. This process is the same as for Iraqi Arabs whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued in one of the KRI's other governorates (an *Asayish*-approved letter from the local *mukhtar* that has been further endorsed by the local police and mayor's office). As the same source notes, an individual can already initiate the process of renting a house based on the *Asayish* code but will need to transfer both the residency permit and the Housing Card before being allowed to sign the rental contract. Meanwhile, a person has to hold both a residency permit and a Housing Card issued in Sulaymaniyah to obtain regular employment.⁷¹

The processes described above normally require no longer than one week, 'unless any complications affect the process, including for instance, an arrest warrant against the individual or any of the family members.' Also, single men may face additional scrutiny and thus their process may take longer. Having issued/transferred the residency permit to Sulaymaniyah requires payment of a fee of 10 000 Iraqi Dinars (EUR 5,88⁷²) (8 000 card fees and 2 000 administrative fees). Likewise, the issuance/transfer of the Housing Card to Sulaymaniyah entails fees totalling 10 000 Iraqi dinars (EUR 5,88⁷³) (8 000 card fees and 2 000 administrative fees).⁷⁴ The residency permit and the Housing Card are both issued per household.⁷⁵

The same source indicates that the below requirements apply for Iraqi Kurds or Yazidis 'from outside the KRI', i.e., those whose Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card has been issued in a governorate falling under the administration of the Iraqi federal government. Individuals of Kurdish or Yazidi background, regardless of where their ID documents have been issued, do not need a residency permit to settle in Sulaymaniyah governorate. Kurds and Yazidis who have obtained their Civil Status ID Card or Unified ID Card in any governorate outside the KRI need to request an *Asayish* code and the transfer of their Housing Card through the local *Asayish* office in the neighbourhood in which they want to settle in Sulaymaniyah. This process includes the following steps: the local *Asayish* in the neighbourhood in which the person intends to settle will refer him/her to the General *Asayish* Directorate of Sulaymaniyah. S/he will be issued an *Asayish* code confirming that the individual/family is known by the General *Asayish*. The person will then need to approach the local *mukhtar* of the area to inform him about his/her arrival by showing the *Asayish* code. To transfer the Housing Card, the person needs to get a support letter from the local *mukhtar* to be approved by the local *Asayish*. S/he then needs to present this letter to the local police station for additional endorsement, followed by endorsement by the local mayor's office. After this process has been completed, the Sulaymaniyah Information Office can proceed to transfer the person's Housing Card. A person can already initiate the process of renting a house once s/he has the *Asayish* code;

⁷¹ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, pp. 2-3

⁷² Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 29 October 2021

⁷³ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 29 October 2021

⁷⁴ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 3

⁷⁵ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 3, footnote 5



however, s/he will need to transfer the Housing Card before being allowed to sign the rental contract. Access to regular employment requires a Housing Card issued in Sulaymaniyah⁷⁶

The processes also take no longer than one week, ‘unless any complications affect the process, including, for instance, an arrest warrant against the individual or any of the family members.’ Also, single men may face additional scrutiny and thus their process may take longer. Same as above, issuance/transfer of the Housing Card to Sulaymaniyah entails fees totalling 10 000 Iraqi dinars (EUR 5,88⁷⁷) (8 000 card fees and 2,000 administrative fees).⁷⁸

Kurds and Yazidis arriving from areas that are disputed between the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and the Federal Government of Iraq (i.e., ‘disputed areas’ in parts of Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah Al-Din Governorates) are also permitted to move their Housing Card to Sulaymaniyah as explained in this section. However, they cannot obtain civil documentation issued in Sulaymaniyah and are not allowed to request a transfer of their food ration card via the Public Distribution System (PDS).⁷⁹

2. Key Socio-economic indicators in Baghdad, Basrah, and Sulaymaniyah

2.1 Economy

For general information on the economy in Iraq, please see section 2.1.1 Country overview of EASO’s COI report [Iraq: Key socio-economic indicators - For Baghdad, Basra and Erbil](#) from September 2020.

2.1.1 Baghdad

Baghdad encompasses a population of seven million and is the fourth biggest city in the Middle East after Cairo, Tehran and Istanbul. As the capital city, ‘it represents one of the wealthiest and most economically diverse areas of the country.’ Baghdad’s development has been linked to the growth of the oil industry. Oil refining is the ‘principal economic activity’.⁸⁰ The city’s location is ‘crucial’ for the petroleum industry, since it is well connected to other parts of Iraq by both road and rail with the oil-rich areas of Southern Iraq.⁸¹

During the 1970s, Baghdad experienced a rapid economic growth, which reportedly stagnated as oil prices fell in 2020⁸². Other local economic sectors are the production of textiles, cement, tobacco products, leather and carpets. The city is therefore the manufacturing hub of Iraq.⁸³ Baghdad is also the ‘center for commerce, banking and the financial sector’.⁸⁴ Iraq’s three largest financial banks and

⁷⁶ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 4

⁷⁷ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 29 October 2021

⁷⁸ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 4

⁷⁹ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 4

⁸⁰ Jiyad, S. et al., Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p.26; see also, NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, updated December 2015, [url](#), p. 2

⁸¹ Jiyad, S. et al., Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p.26

⁸² World Bank (The), COVID-19 and Low Oil Prices Push Millions of Iraqis into Poverty, 11 November 2020, [url](#); NPR, In Iraq’s ‘Dire’ Economy, Poverty Is Rising — And So Are Fears Of Instability, 3 February 2021, [url](#)

⁸³ Jiyad, S. et al., Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p. 26; Rawabet Center for Research and Strategic Studies, Economy of the largest cities of Iraq “Baghdad”, 4 October 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁴ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, updated December 2015, [url](#), p. 2

three largest insurance companies are headquartered there.⁸⁵ Also, the Iraq Stock Exchange (ISX), which was formed in 2004, has its headquarters in Baghdad.⁸⁶ The ISX stresses that it is ‘financially and administratively independent from the Iraqi government including the Ministry of Finance.’⁸⁷

With its international airport, Baghdad serves as an important trading centre in the region. Furthermore, the city attracts more than one million tourists each year.⁸⁸ Also to be mentioned are the various military industries located there.⁸⁹

Construction work has increased since 2003 due to destructions in the course of military conflicts and terrorist operations. At the same time, the risk for companies and workers involved has increased, particularly at sites near military bases or territories where military operations are conducted.⁹⁰

In December 2020, the government devalued the Iraqi dinar against the dollar by about 20 %, causing food prices to increase, especially in Baghdad⁹¹. Shopkeepers near the Khadimiya shrine, a major religious site in Baghdad,⁹² moreover complained in early 2021 that ‘no one has been buying much’ since.⁹³

The Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) wield influence both at economic and political levels. As a resident told Chatham House in February 2021, ‘in most cases working closely with PMU parties, companies, economic committees or leaders meant that “loans can be obtained” and “projects will not be obstructed or rejected”’.⁹⁴

A female shopkeeper, who owns a shop on public land in Baghdad, reported that bureaucrats contracted out rent collection to the parastatal armed group Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq and that the municipal authorities sent members of them to collect the rent from her.⁹⁵

From October 2019, protests demanding more job opportunities and an end to corruption as well as against pro-Iranian militias’ influence have shaken Iraq. The largest protests have taken place in Baghdad. With an interruption due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020,⁹⁶ demonstrations continued into 2021. In February 2021, forceful crackdowns were reported, but growing poverty was one factor that kept them going.⁹⁷ However, small businesses had to deal with losses and suffered from the ‘halt in commerce and outright destruction of property’ in the context of the protests.⁹⁸

The COVID-19 lockdowns initiated in Baghdad on 17 March 2020, including curfews and restrictions of movement, impacted opening hours and business activities as well as limited foot traffic,

⁸⁵ Rawabet Center for Research and Strategic Studies, Economy of the largest cities of Iraq “Baghdad”, 4 October 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁶ Chambers, R. L. et al., Iraq, n.d., last updated 3 September 2021, [url](#); ISX, About us, n.d., [url](#); AFCM, Iraq Stock Exchange (ISX), n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁷ ISX, About us, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁸ Rawabet Center for Research and Strategic Studies, Economy of the largest cities of Iraq “Baghdad”, 4 October 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁹ Jiyad, S. et al., Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p.26

⁹⁰ Schreiber, A. et al., Study of the impact of military factors and security threats on construction projects in Baghdad, 20 May 2021, [url](#), pp. 1, 5-6

⁹¹ WFP, Iraqi Dinar Devaluation and the Price of the Food Basket, 3 March 2021, [url](#), p. 5

⁹² Iraq Heritage, Al Kathimayn Shrine, Baghdad, n.d., [url](#)

⁹³ NPR, In Iraq’s ‘Dire’ Economy, Poverty Is Rising — And So Are Fears Of Instability, 3 February 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁴ Chatham House, Networks of power – The Popular Mobilization Forces and the state in Iraq, February 2021, [url](#), p. 15

⁹⁵ Sirri, O., Destructive Creations: Social-Spatial Transformations in Contemporary Baghdad, 23 April 2021, [url](#), p. 24

⁹⁶ Hasan, S., A Perfect Storm has Hit Iraq’s Economy, LSE [Blog], 22 October 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁷ NPR, In Iraq’s ‘Dire’ Economy, Poverty Is Rising — And So Are Fears Of Instability, 3 February 2021, [url](#); Tung, N., A Fragile Inheritance: An Iraqi Youth Uprising against a Dire Economy and Foreign Intervention, 21 September 2020, [url](#), p. 56

⁹⁸ Al Jazeera, Ruined: Baghdad small businesses ravaged by months of protests, 14 February 2021, [url](#); see also, New York Times (The), Iraq, Struggling to Pay Debts and Salaries, Plunges Into Economic Crisis, 4 January 2021, [url](#)

consumption and earning opportunities. In June 2021, night curfews still applied between 9 pm and 5 am.⁹⁹

2.1.2 Basrah

The city of Basrah encompasses a population of between around 1 380 000¹⁰⁰ and 1 500 000.¹⁰¹ The city's main economic sectors are the oil and petrochemical industries, since Basrah governorate has the largest oil reserves in the country.¹⁰² After the mid-1970s, the government shifted its economic focus toward heavy industrialisation and import substitution. This led to the rapid development of the manufacturing sector. A great expansion of petrochemical production and oil refining in Basrah was propelled by the construction of petrochemical, iron and steel plants at Khawr al-Zubayr.¹⁰³ Exploration, drilling, and refining was boosted by foreign investment. But instead of creating local job opportunities and a rise in wages, foreign oil companies caused anger and frustration by their hiring practices, culminating in protests against patronage and corruption within the oil industry in 2018 and 2019 (for more information on the protests in Basrah, see section 2.3.2 Basrah in this report).¹⁰⁴ Basrah is a wealthy province due to its large volume of oil exports which secure 80 % of Iraq's oil budget. However, Basrah's citizens 'do not benefit from services in line with the value of its exploited resources.'¹⁰⁵ Corruption and nepotism reportedly occurred 'widespread' in the form of 'failed contracts' between local authorities and companies, which resulted in non-executed or incomplete projects funded by the Iraqi federal government. Furthermore, powerful militias are heavily involved in the smuggling of oil and drugs.¹⁰⁶ Basrah's governor, Asa'ad Al-Eidani, distributed financial and natural resources and projects among factions of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), on the one hand, in order to limit their political influence, and on the other, to secure their support.¹⁰⁷

With all six of Iraq's ports and an international airport located in Basrah, major industries in shipping, logistics and transport have developed in the city.¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, in October 2020, UN-Habitat identified the following main economic issues: a damaged industrial sector in need of financial resources and investment plans; the fact that only two of the six ports (Khor Al-Zubair and Umm Qasr) were operational; damaged infrastructure, ships and bridges preventing access, heavy siltation, lack of security as well as decreasing water levels of the inland waterways hindering movement of freight from the Shatt Al-Arab and Shatt Al-Basrah.¹⁰⁹

As of August 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, income stability decreased, particularly affecting taxi drivers, whose income decreased by 90 % due to the curfew. The income of crop production farmers was affected by a decrease of 25 % and that of animal husbandry farmers by 15 % in the

⁹⁹ World Bank (The), Iraq High Frequency Phone Survey (IHFPS) - To Assess the Impact of COVID-19 on Firms, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 8-9

¹⁰⁰ US, CIA, The World Factbook, Iraq, last updated 20 October 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ UN-Habitat, Basra Urban Profile, October 2020, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁰² Jiyad, S. et al, Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p.26

¹⁰³ Chambers, R. L. et al., Iraq, n.d., last updated 3 September 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Jiyad, S. et al, Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p. 26

¹⁰⁵ Al-Jaffal, O. and Khalaf, S., Basra Governorate: A Locality in Crisis – Local Government Crisis and Conflict with the Federal Government, 18 May 2021, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰⁶ Al-Jaffal, O. and Khalaf, S., Basra Governorate: A Locality in Crisis – Local Government Crisis and Conflict with the Federal Government, 18 May 2021, [url](#), pp. 12, 19

¹⁰⁷ Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy, A Thousand Hezbollahs: Iraq's Emerging Militia State, 4 May 2021, [url](#), p. 43

¹⁰⁸ Jiyad, S. et al, Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p. 26

¹⁰⁹ UN-Habitat, Basra Urban Profile, October 2020, [url](#), p. 20

Basrah governorate.¹¹⁰ The nationwide lockdown, including closed borders, travel restrictions and curfews, had ‘a significant negative impact on non-oil activity’. In 2020, oil prices declined. This resulted ‘in a sharp fall in oil revenues’.¹¹¹ Already in the months before the COVID-19 pandemic, an oil crisis as well as a decline in global demand and oil prices had been affecting the economy. In April 2020, prices of Basrah oil reached their lowest level.¹¹²

2.1.3 Sulaymaniyah

For 2021, the Iraqi CSO (Central Statistical Organization) estimated the governorate’s population at 2 336 191 with around 450 295 people living in rural and around 1 276 114 in urban areas.¹¹³

In Sulaymaniyah, natural water reserves, favourable climatic conditions and a rather calm security situation bring potential advantages to the economy. However, infrastructural and bureaucratic barriers impede the development of the private sector.¹¹⁴ The city is an important point of trade for local farm products and maintains active trade links between Baghdad and Tabriz in Iran.¹¹⁵ Moreover, several news reports mentioned smuggling to be an issue in Sulaymaniyah, including illegal trade of livestock, drugs and organs.¹¹⁶

On 6 April 2021, KRG Deputy Prime Minister Talabani established the parliamentary Anti-Corruption and Integrity Committee, under decree 3662, its function being the investigation of corruption cases and irresponsible spending within the jurisdiction of the municipality of Sulaymaniyah. Moreover, the committee aims to increase accountability and integrity in the public sector.¹¹⁷ However, as the chairwoman of the Kurdistan Region parliament’s integrity committee told Rudaw in September 2021, ‘as long as the political parties are powerful in the Kurdistan Region, the role of parliament will be weak. That’s why the committees haven’t garnered results for things that are their responsibility.’¹¹⁸ Levels of corruption are high in the entire KRI and undermine economic reform.¹¹⁹

A study published in August 2021 found that, from a sample of 30 entrepreneurs, men in Sulaymaniyah city had more entrepreneurial opportunities than women, and that, therefore, the number of male entrepreneurs (67.3 %) was significantly higher than that of women (36.7 %). The age group of 18- to 24-year-olds was most active in the entrepreneurial field. 40 % of the entrepreneurs draw income from financial support by their families. Management of taxes, business registration, as well as dealing with government procedures was mentioned as particularly challenging for entrepreneurs.¹²⁰

In Sulaymaniyah, a part of agricultural production is rainfed. Insufficient rainfall in November 2020, March and early April 2021 impacted winter cereal production. In May 2021, extremely high

¹¹⁰ UNSDG, Iraq Socio-Economic Response Plan, 31 August 2020, [url](#), p. 49

¹¹¹ IMF, Policy Responses to COVID-19 – Iraq, last updated 2 July 2021, [url](#)

¹¹² WFP, Regional Market Analysis: Economic Trends across RBC Region, End 2020 Update, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 22

¹¹³ Iraq, CSO, 2021 تقديرات سكان العراق حسب المحافظات والبيئة والجنس لسنة 2021 [Demographic and population indicators, Estimates for the population of Iraq by governorate, environment and gender for the year 2021] (table), n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴ IAU, Sulaymaniyah Governorate Profile, November 2010, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica, Al-Sulaymāniyyah, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁶ INA, KRG Takes New Decision to Confront Smuggling Via Borders, 8 August 2021, [url](#); Financial Tribune, Rise in Livestock Smuggling Into Iraqi Kurdistan, 6 July 2020, [url](#); Rudaw, Sulaimani Asayish arrest drug dealer with 106 kg of heroin, 5 July 2021, [url](#); Bas News, Police Arrests Eight Organ Traffickers in Sulaymaniyah, 16 July 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ Iraq, KRG, Deputy PM Qubad Talabani meets with the Anti-Corruption and Integrity Committee in Sulaymaniyah, 8 June 2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ Rudaw, Chair of Kurdistan Region parliament’s integrity committee resigns, 7 September 2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2020 Country Report: Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

¹²⁰ Salem, R., Challenges Facing Entrepreneurs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Sulaymaniyah, 5 August 2021, [url](#), pp. 40, 42, 47

temperatures brought droughts.¹²¹ Therefore, winter cereal production 'is expected to significantly decline compared to the previous year'.¹²²

A survey undertaken in June 2020 in Sulaymaniyah and other northern and Kurdish governorates showed that firms significantly reduced opening hours and 15 % closed altogether until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reduction of revenues were reported by 75 % of the surveyed firms, many of which responded by reducing their wage bill, laying off their workers or stopping to pay social security and health insurance for their workers.¹²³ Enterprises suffered from reduced production activity and worsened economic status.¹²⁴

The pandemic and related response measures impacted household incomes, but coping mechanisms were limited, as a June 2020 survey showed. 84 % of households in the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI) and the northern governorates did not have any savings. They rather relied on loans from their families or friends (70 %) and/or took on debts from a shop owner nearby (66 %). The majority neither received cash nor in-kind assistance.¹²⁵

2.2 Employment

For general information on employment in Iraq, please see section 2.2.1 Country overview of EASO's COI report [Iraq: Key socio-economic indicators - For Baghdad, Basra and Erbil](#) from September 2020.

2.2.1 Baghdad

The state both stimulates and monopolises most economic activities, and functions as the city's principal employer. Public sector employment includes the civil service, government-run educational institutions as well as government-owned industrial and commercial enterprises.¹²⁶ University graduates suffer from lack of jobs and employment opportunities. Therefore, the announcement of an employment stop and a delay in payment of public sector salaries shocked and frustrated people in Baghdad and beyond, particularly the youth, who took to the streets protesting.¹²⁷

After protests for better employment had started in Basrah, they spread to Baghdad in October 2019 and continued into 2021 with some interruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see section [2.1 Economy](#) above).¹²⁸ In early 2021, protests against the government's employment policy for 2021 took place in central Baghdad. Protesters rejected the government's decision to suspend new jobs in the public sector for the year 2021 and demanded an amendment of this policy.¹²⁹ The

¹²¹ FAO, GIEWS Update – The Republic of Iraq: Drought in northern parts of the country, 11 June 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-2; FAO, GIEWS Country Brief – The Republic of Iraq, 11 June 2021, [url](#), p. 1; see also, MEE, Iraq's Kurdish farmers in anguish as drought kills harvest season, 24 April 2021, [url](#)

¹²² FAO, GIEWS Update – The Republic of Iraq: Drought in northern parts of the country, 11 June 2021, [url](#), p. 3

¹²³ World Bank (The), Iraq High Frequency Phone Survey (IHFPS) - To Assess the Impact of COVID-19 on Firms, June 2021, [url](#), p. 10

¹²⁴ ILO and Fafo, Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Populations and Small-Scale Enterprises in Iraq, 16 July 2020, [url](#), p. 30

¹²⁵ ILO and Fafo, Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Populations and Small-Scale Enterprises in Iraq, 16 July 2020, [url](#), pp. 18-19

¹²⁶ Marr, Ph. A. and Bahry, L., Baghdad: Economy, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁷ MEMO, Thousands of Iraqis protest government employment policy, 1 February 2021, [url](#); Jiyad, S. et al, Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p. 56; Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi university graduates take to the streets again, 10 August 2020, [url](#); AP, Bloated public salaries at heart of Iraq's economic woes, 23 October 2020, [url](#); Al Arabiya, Oil-dependent Iraq must 'diversify rapidly' as challenges stifle young population, 8 November 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁸ Al, Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights, 7 April 2021, [url](#), p. 196; Chatham House, Networks of power: The Popular Mobilization Forces and the State in Iraq, February 2021, [url](#), p.14

¹²⁹ MEMO, Thousands of Iraqis protest government employment policy, 1 February 2021, [url](#); Peoples Dispatch, Iraqis protest government's 2021 employment policy, demand public sector jobs, 4 February 2021, [url](#)

economic and unemployment crisis was severe.¹³⁰ According to information published in July 2021 by the National Committee for Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Planning (MoP), the unemployment rate in Baghdad governorate was 9.3 % and the youth unemployment rate 15 %.¹³¹

The World Bank published a report in spring 2021, stating that in Baghdad over two thirds of female and male employees in the private and public sector had difficulties finding a job because of the limited job opportunities. The World Bank linked these challenges to the economically hampering effects of the 2003-2011 and 2014-2017 Iraq wars as well as to the high dependency on oil, which hinders employment potential in productive sectors.¹³² In 2019, oil accounted for 43 % of the GDP in Iraq¹³³ and the budget revenues stemming from the oil exports are used, among others, to pay salaries and benefits to state employees¹³⁴.

The above-mentioned World Bank report showed a clear difference in preferences of men and women in Baghdad and other regions regarding employment in the private or public sector: men mostly preferred to work in the private sector, whereas most women preferred the public sector due to prevailing gender norms and perceived benefits, such as a secure income and fewer working hours. For self-employed people a lack of financial support or capital was the main challenge for starting their self-employment activities.¹³⁵

Usually, foreign oil companies are obliged to recruit 85 % of their employees from Iraq's labour market. However, as an assessment conducted in Baghdad, Basrah and Erbil showed, this rule is widely thought to be ignored in practice, and, in general, recruitment is instrumentalised 'as a means for patronage and appeasement of different tribes and loyalties.' To see the central government profit from a flourishing oil industry, yet locals not benefitting much, caused high frustration among the population.¹³⁶

A survey on the labour market in Al-Mahmoudiya district, located close to the governorate's capital, Baghdad, suggested a preference of jobseekers for entrepreneurship. The given reason preventing the opening of an own business was lack of financing. For not accessing the desired job, the reasons were lack of jobs, lack of connections, lack of resources, lack of skills and lack of equipment. Key informants to the survey named construction, retail in malls, retail in groceries, agriculture and restaurants as the sectors employing most people.¹³⁷

The employment of IDPs in Baghdad in the public and private sector is not restricted, however, as all other citizens of Baghdad, IDPs face problems in finding jobs because of the difficult economic conditions. The local authorities also noted that 'some IDPs with reasonable financial capacity have been able to open businesses without any restrictions'.¹³⁸

No additional information could be found on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment in Baghdad.

¹³⁰ Peoples Dispatch, Iraqis protest government's 2021 employment policy, demand public sector jobs, 4 February 2021, [url](#); see also GardaWorld, Iraq: Security forces kill at least one protester and wound 11 others in clashes with anti-government protesters in Baghdad May 25 /update 1, 25 May 2021, [url](#)

¹³¹ Iraq, MoP, The Second National Voluntary Review Report on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, July 2021, [url](#), p. 96

¹³² World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor: Seizing the Opportunity for Reforms and Managing Volatility, Spring 2021, [url](#), p. 23

¹³³ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 18

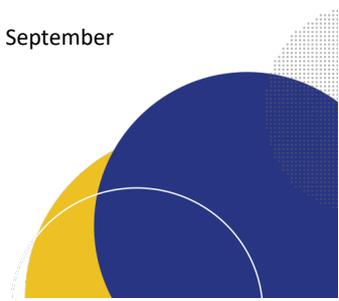
¹³⁴ US, CRS, Iraq and U.S. Policy, last updated 4 June 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹³⁵ World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor: Seizing the Opportunity for Reforms and Managing Volatility, Spring 2021, [url](#), pp. 25-27

¹³⁶ Jiyad, S. et al, Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p. 26

¹³⁷ IOM, Labour Market Assessment: Covid-19 and Labour Markets - Al-Musayyab Babylon Governorate [sic], September 2021, [url](#), pp. 6-8

¹³⁸ IOM, Cities as Home: Location Factsheets and Case Studies of Local Integration, 6 January 2021, [url](#), p. 41



2.2.2 Basrah

As mentioned above (in section 2.2.1 Baghdad), among the local population there is high frustration about politicised employment practices in the oil industry and lack of benefit from its profits and employment potential.¹³⁹ In Basrah, similarly to Baghdad, lack of jobs and employment opportunities highly affect university graduates. Even engineering graduates suffer from unemployment after graduation despite Basrah's oil wealth.¹⁴⁰ Protests for better employment opportunities and public services erupted in Basrah in July 2018.¹⁴¹ Nationwide protests followed in October 2019 and continued into the first months of 2020 until the COVID-19 pandemic caused them to stop, but they resumed on a smaller scale in May 2020.¹⁴² According to information published in July 2021 by the National Committee for Sustainable Development of the MoP, the unemployment rate in Basrah governorate was 7.6 % and the youth unemployment rate (age 15-29) was 16.5 %.¹⁴³

The influx of populations from neighbouring provinces since 2010 was another factor that reduced the number of available jobs for local citizens.¹⁴⁴

As of May 2020, the sectors employing the highest numbers of people in Basrah city were drinking water bottling plants, water desalination, construction, carpentry, manufacturing, restaurants, cafes, malls, medical centres, banks, services in general, as well as oil and gas. The average salary was 460 US dollars for skilled workers and 322 US dollars for unskilled workers. A perspective on female employment showed that generally, women owned businesses related to tailoring, nursing care and health care, food processing, agriculture and livestock (particularly calves raising and fish), or worked in beauty, administration, medical labs, education, kindergartens and fitness centres. The average salary for women was 220 US dollars per month. However, IOM stated that only 31 % of women contributed to household income.¹⁴⁵ In interviews, women mentioned restrictions by patriarchal structures in society as obstacles to women's employment.¹⁴⁶

Similarly to Baghdad, in Basrah over two thirds of female and male employees in the private and public sector experienced challenges finding their current job because of the limited job opportunities. Men preferred employment in the private sector, women in the public sector.¹⁴⁷ In a 2021 interview study on young Iraqis' economic situation, a 22-year-old woman in Basrah was quoted stating that there were generally too few job opportunities, that women in particular had a hard time finding employment in the private sector, and that social constraints on working women

¹³⁹ Jiyad, S. et al, Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p. 26

¹⁴⁰ MEMO, Having unemployed oil engineers in oil-rich Iraq is unacceptable, 23 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹ AP, Soaring unemployment fuels protests in southern Iraq, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

¹⁴² AI, Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights, 7 April 2021, [url](#), p. 196; Chatham House, Networks of power; The Popular Mobilization Forces and the State in Iraq, February 2021, [url](#), p.14; Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi university graduates take to the streets again, 10 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴³ Iraq, MoP, The Second National Voluntary Review Report on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, July 2021, [url](#), p. 105

¹⁴⁴ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Living Among the Hashd: Relations Between Citizens and Security Actors in Five Iraqi Provinces, IRIS, July 2021, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁴⁵ IOM, Labour Market Opportunities and Challenges: Basra District, Basra Governorate, May 2020, [url](#), pp. 4, 8

¹⁴⁶ Jiyad, S. et al, Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 32-33

¹⁴⁷ World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor: Seizing the Opportunity for Reforms and Managing Volatility, Spring 2021, [url](#), pp. 23, 26-27

prevailed.¹⁴⁸ For the self-employed, lack of financial support or capital challenges the initial start of their businesses.¹⁴⁹

As reported in August 2020, lockdowns and curfews, which had started in March 2020,¹⁵⁰ had a negative impact on the employability of daily casual labour and low-income workers. Basrah was among the most affected regions regarding unemployment as a result of COVID-19-related movement restrictions.¹⁵¹

2.2.3 Sulaymaniyah

According to information published in July 2021 by the National Committee for Sustainable Development of the MoP, the economic activity rate of people between the age of 15 and 29 was 44.7 % in Sulaymaniyah governorate (above the national average of 36.8 %), however the unemployment rate in this group was high at 27.7 %.¹⁵² Compared to the rest of Iraq, unemployment among women (28 %) and youth (42 %) was particularly high in the KRI already before the COVID-19 pandemic. The construction sector and the service sector were the strongest sectors for employment in the KRI before March 2020.¹⁵³

A survey published in May 2020 showed that 77 % of jobseekers interviewed preferred to own their business. In Sulaymaniyah's Khabat community, where many IDPs and their host families reside, many young people found job opportunities in one of three sweets factories; young men worked with government police units, Peshmerga departments, or in the private trade and service sectors. Female business owners and employees were engaged in breadmaking, hairdressing or tailoring. Trade was mentioned as the sector with most opportunities for employment, hiring the largest number of people in the city, along with the service sector. Respondents particularly mentioned marketing, working with larger companies, tourism services and supermarkets. IOM provided different amounts for the average salary. For unskilled workers it was 265 US dollars, for skilled workers 429 US dollars. Among the businesses in and around Khabat, average monthly wages for skilled and unskilled workers reached up to 900 US dollars. Consumers' monthly incomes were 362 US dollars, and, according to job-seekers, women-owned businesses earned on average 296 US dollars per month.¹⁵⁴

In December 2020, mass protests erupted against the delay in payment of public sector employees' salaries by the Kurdish regional government.¹⁵⁵

2.3 Poverty

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (UNOCHA) Humanitarian needs overview for 2020 stated that the poverty rate in Iraq was expected to possibly double and

¹⁴⁸ Jiyad, S. et al, Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p. 57

¹⁴⁹ World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor: Seizing the Opportunity for Reforms and Managing Volatility, Spring 2021, [url](#), p. 25

¹⁵⁰ IMF, Policy Responses to COVID-19 – Iraq, last updated 2 July 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵¹ UNSDG, Iraq Socio-Economic Response Plan, 31 August 2020, [url](#), p. 47

¹⁵² Iraq, MoP, The Second National Voluntary Review Report on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, July 2021, [url](#), p. 99

¹⁵³ ILO and Fafo, Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Populations and Small-Scale Enterprises in Iraq, 16 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ IOM, Labour Market Opportunities and Challenges: Sulaymaniyah District, Sulaymaniyah Governorate, May 2020, [url](#), pp. 5, 7

¹⁵⁵ EPC, Sulaymaniyah-Erbil Disagreement: Scenarios of Division in Iraqi Kurdistan, 21 March 2021, [url](#); MRG, Minority and Indigenous Trends 2021 – Focus on Covid-19, 30 June 2021, [url](#), p. 154; AI, Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights, 7 April 2021, [url](#), p. 197

increase by up to 14 % leading to possibly 12.4 million Iraqis living in poverty in 2021 (adding 5.5 million newly poor to the 6.9 million already considered poor).¹⁵⁶

For more general information on poverty in Iraq, please see section 2.3.1 Country overview of EASO's COI report [Iraq: Key socio-economic indicators - For Baghdad, Basra and Erbil](#) from September 2020.

2.3.1 Baghdad

A report by Mac Skelton and Zmkan Ali Saleem from the Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS) categorised Baghdad's districts Sadr City, Al-Shu'ala, Al-Hurriya and Al-Za'faraniya as 'poorer' Shia neighbourhoods¹⁵⁷ and identified a 'concentration of economically disadvantaged Shia population in eastern and southern Baghdad'¹⁵⁸.

Since PMU contacts often function as middlemen with government or private entities, particularly people in poorer areas in eastern and southern Baghdad and among the youth resort to relying on or joining PMU groups – the dominant factions there being Saraya Al-Salam (SS) and the Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haq (AAH). Poverty and structural inequality limit the agency of residents of Baghdad's poorer neighbourhoods and create dependence upon SS and AAH for jobs, access to public and/or private services as well as bureaucratic approval.¹⁵⁹

In April 2020, the World Bank published figures on poverty in Baghdad governorate. The multidimensional poverty (MP) headcount ratio¹⁶⁰ in the governorate regarding the entire population was 3.2 %. The multidimensional poverty (MP) headcount ratio of internally displaced households (IDH) was 9.8 %. The MP headcount ratio of non-IDHs was 2.7 %.¹⁶¹

In Baghdad's Adhamiya neighbourhood, people told Reuters in May 2020 that the COVID-19 pandemic '[had] driven their families into the worst poverty they [could] remember'.¹⁶²

In July 2020, UNICEF, The World Bank and Iraq's Ministry of Planning (MOP) presented figures on vulnerability in Iraq¹⁶³, stating that in Baghdad governorate 20-40 %¹⁶⁴ of the population or

¹⁵⁶ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 19

¹⁵⁷ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Living Among the Hashd: Relations Between Citizens and Security Actors in Five Iraqi Provinces, IRIS, July 2021, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁵⁸ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Living Among the Hashd: Relations Between Citizens and Security Actors in Five Iraqi Provinces, IRIS, July 2021, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁵⁹ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Living Among the Hashd: Relations Between Citizens and Security Actors in Five Iraqi Provinces, IRIS, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 5, 8, 11, 32-33; Chatham House, Networks of power – The Popular Mobilization Forces and the state in Iraq, February 2021, [url](#), p. 15

¹⁶⁰ The multidimensional headcount ratio is the share of individuals experiencing multidimensional deprivation over the total population. A household is considered MPI poor if the total of its weighted deprivations is 33 percent or more of all possible deprivations. (World Bank (The), Multidimensional Poverty Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq, April 2020, [url](#), pp. 7-8)

¹⁶¹ World Bank (The), Multidimensional Poverty Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq, April 2020, [url](#), pp. 36-37, 42

¹⁶² Reuters, Pandemic pushes some Iraqis, broken by conflict, into poverty, 6 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³ Figures are based on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), which is defined as: 'a multidimensional index tailored to measure social deprivation in dimensions affected by the crisis. The index includes four dimensions measured at household level, namely education and health dimensions capturing access to services, and living conditions and financial security dimensions capturing household living standards and resilience to cope with shocks. The index is calculated as the product of the percentage of the population that is vulnerable and the average intensity of deprivations among vulnerable people. The Household is considered vulnerable if they are deprived in more than a quarter of the weighted indicators.' (UNICEF et al., Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability in Iraq, July 2020, [url](#), p. 2)

¹⁶⁴ The percentages of 0.2-0.4 % given in the source on p. 17 are obviously a mistake, see p. 22. 20-40 % are more realistic assuming a total population size of estimated 8-9 million people in Baghdad governorate (Iraq, CSO, (2019) تقديرات سكان العراق [Iraq population estimates (2019)], November 2019, [url](#), p. 9)

2.5-3 million people were vulnerable. Baghdad housed 17.6 % of Iraq's (monetarily) poor population.¹⁶⁵

The highest rate of increase in poverty in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic was 14.5 % in the central governorates, which include Baghdad.¹⁶⁶

In parts of Baghdad, the severity of livelihood conditions and basic services was rated 'medium' between July and October 2020.¹⁶⁷ By November 2020, more than 1.8 million people in need were living in districts in Baghdad and other governorates that were affected by moderate to high access constraints for humanitarian actors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶⁸

The UNOCHA Humanitarian needs overview for 2020 stated that in Baghdad governorate, out of 31 000 IDPs living in out-of-camp settings in Baghdad governorate, 20 000 were in need and 8 000 out-of-camp-IDPs were in acute need. According to the same source, all of the documented in-camp-IDPs in Baghdad governorate were in need (1 000 IDPs) or in acute need (300 IDPs). Additionally, more than 50 000 returnees were in need.¹⁶⁹

2.3.2 Basrah

In Basrah, more than 30 % of the population live in poverty despite the city's rich resources. Therefore, poverty and inequality are 'defining issues in the city and province'.¹⁷⁰ According to REACH, 60-80 % of households in Basrah were in severe or extreme need (MSNI¹⁷¹ score 3-4) in September 2020.¹⁷²

According to the World Bank report from April 2020, in Basrah governorate, the MP headcount ratio of IDHs was 3.2 %, despite hosting high numbers of IDPs. The MP headcount ratio of non-IDHs was 8.0 %.¹⁷³

The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) assessment from July 2020 showed that in Basrah governorate, the share of Iraq's (monetarily) poor was 5.9 %. In the southern governorates, among them Basrah, the COVID-19 pandemic-related increase of poverty was 8.5 %.¹⁷⁴

As stated in an academic publication from May 2021, Basrah 'witnessed no stimulus of the economy nor a decrease in poverty'.¹⁷⁵

In 2020, out of 6 000 documented out-of-camp IDPs, 2 000 were in need and 458 in acute need in Basrah governorate.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁵ UNICEF et al., Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability in Iraq, July 2020, [url](#), pp. 17, 20

¹⁶⁶ UNICEF et al., Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability in Iraq, July 2020, [url](#), pp. 9, 22

¹⁶⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 22, 24, 106 footnote 72

¹⁶⁸ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁶⁹ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 46-47

¹⁷⁰ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Living Among the Hashd: Relations Between Citizens and Security Actors in Five Iraqi Provinces, IRIS, July 2021, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁷¹ "Severity" signifies the "intensity" of needs, using a scale that ranges from 1 (minimal/none) to 4 (extreme). Sixty percent (for severe or extreme needs) and twenty-five percent (for extreme needs) were the minimum percentages found. (REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2, footnote 1; see also p. 14)

¹⁷² REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁷³ World Bank (The), Multidimensional Poverty Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq, April 2020, [url](#), pp. 35-37

¹⁷⁴ UNICEF et al., Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability in Iraq, July 2020, [url](#), pp. 9, 20, 22

¹⁷⁵ Al-Jaffal, O. and Khalaf, S., Basra Governorate: A Locality in Crisis – Local Government Crisis and Conflict with the Federal Government, 18 May 2021, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁷⁶ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 46

2.3.3 Sulaymaniyah

In April 2020, with 0.8 %, the World Bank published the second lowest MP headcount ratio for IDHs, even though Sulaymaniyah was the IDPs primary governorate of residence. The MP headcount ratio for non-IDHs was 2.2 %.¹⁷⁷

A May 2020 IOM study focussing on Sulaymaniyah's Khabat district found that many of the approximately 350 IDP families and 2 700 host community individuals were estimated to be living below the poverty line. Yet, people were generally better off than in Iraq's southern governorates.¹⁷⁸

The MVI assessment from July 2020 showed that in Sulaymaniyah governorate, the share of Iraq's (monetarily) poor was 3.8 %. In the Kurdistan region, including Sulaymaniyah governorate, the increase in poverty induced by the COVID-19 pandemic was 6.4 %.¹⁷⁹

According to REACH, in Sulaymaniyah governorate 80.1-90 % of households were in severe or extreme need (MSNI¹⁸⁰ score 3-4) in September 2020.¹⁸¹

By November 2020, more than 1.8 million people in need were living in districts in Sulaymaniyah and other governorates that were affected by moderate to high access constraints for humanitarian actors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸²

UNOCHA's humanitarian needs overview for 2020 stated that, out of 119 000 IDPs living in out-of-camp settings in Sulaymaniyah governorate, 92 000 were in need and 49 000 out-of-camp-IDPs were in acute need. According to the same source, all of the documented in-camp-IDPs in the governorate were in need (11 000 IDPs) or in acute need (6 000 IDPs).

2.4 Food Security

For general information on food security in Iraq, please see section 2.4.1 Country overview of EASO's COI report [Iraq: Key socio-economic indicators - For Baghdad, Basra and Erbil](#) from September 2020.

2.4.1 Baghdad

Food production

Although vegetable production increased near urban centres, the country was highly dependent on food imports.¹⁸³ Tomatoes and potatoes were the most important crop for domestic agriculture. Reportedly, in the area north-west of Baghdad there was potential for vegetable production, since it had formerly been an important region for potato production.¹⁸⁴ Fishing in Baghdad governorate

¹⁷⁷ World Bank (The), Multidimensional Poverty Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq, April 2020, [url](#), pp. 35-37

¹⁷⁸ IOM, Labour Market Opportunities and Challenges: Sulaymaniyah District, Sulaymaniyah Governorate, May 2020, [url](#), pp. 5, 10

¹⁷⁹ UNICEF et al., Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Poverty and Vulnerability in Iraq, July 2020, [url](#), pp. 9, 20, 22

¹⁸⁰ "Severity" signifies the "intensity" of needs, using a scale that ranges from 1 (minimal/none) to 4 (extreme). Sixty percent (for severe or extreme needs) and twenty-five percent (for extreme needs) were the minimum percentages found. (REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2 footnote 1; see also p. 14)

¹⁸¹ REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁸² UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁸³ World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor - Turning the Corner: Sustaining Growth and Creating Opportunities for Iraq's Youth, With a Special Focus on Transforming Agriculture for Economic Diversification and Job Creation, Fall 2019, [url](#), p. 22

¹⁸⁴ World Bank (The), Iraq Economic Monitor - Turning the Corner: Sustaining Growth and Creating Opportunities for Iraq's Youth, With a Special Focus on Transforming Agriculture for Economic Diversification and Job Creation, Fall 2019, [url](#), pp. 21-22

was prohibited in rivers, marshes and lakes during breeding season usually extending from early March to early May.¹⁸⁵

Explosive hazards as a consequence of past conflicts constrained agriculture in Baghdad governorate, where in a few areas between 2.5 % and 12 % of surface areas had been classified as hazardous.¹⁸⁶

Food prices

In the first half of 2020, prices for vegetables ‘fluctuated wildly’.¹⁸⁷ During August 2020, tomato prices increased by 50 % in Baghdad from 500 to 750 Iraqi dinar per kilogramme (EUR 0.29-0.44¹⁸⁸). An increase in price from 400 to 750 Iraqi dinar (EUR 0.23-0.44¹⁸⁹) was recorded regarding potatoes.¹⁹⁰

Due to the devaluation of the Iraqi dinar in December 2020, prices for some imported essential foods rose.¹⁹¹ In Baghdad, the price of the food basket¹⁹² increased by 36 % in late December 2020.¹⁹³ It was also Baghdad where the highest variation in price was observed between January and April 2021.¹⁹⁴ This negatively affected food security at the household level. Loss of employment and income because of the COVID-19 pandemic challenged the situation additionally.¹⁹⁵ Between the end of December 2020 and the beginning of January 2021, prices for milk powder increased in Baghdad by 75 % from 4 000 to 7 000 Iraqi dinar (EUR 2.35-4.11¹⁹⁶) per kilo.¹⁹⁷ In mid-February 2021, the price for vegetable oil increased in Baghdad by 38 % (from 2 000 to 2 750 Iraqi dinar per kilogramme [EUR 1.18-1.62¹⁹⁸]).¹⁹⁹

Food support

As reported in January 2020, Tamwini, an online application of the Public Distribution System (PDS), was rolled out in a first pilot phase in Baghdad and the second pilot phase was in preparation.²⁰⁰ The smartphone app was launched on 8 July 2020 as a pilot project in Baghdad. It was supposed to enable households to remotely update family information using their smartphone.²⁰¹ As of April 2021, the second phase of expanded pilots had not started yet. The delay was explained by the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁰² For more information on the PDS, please see section [3.1.6 Public Distribution System \(PDS\) card](#).

¹⁸⁵ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor – Bi-weekly Update, Issue 28, 16 February 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁸⁶ WFP, Iraq Socio-Economic Atlas 2019, 30 March 2020, [url](#), p. 19

¹⁸⁷ FAO et al., Food Security in Iraq – Impact of COVID-19: With a Special Feature on Digital Innovation, June-August 2020, 23 September 2020, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁸⁸ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October 2021

¹⁸⁹ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October 2021

¹⁹⁰ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor – Bi-weekly Update, Issue 16, 25 August 2020, [url](#), pp. 1-2

¹⁹¹ WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2020: Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024, 20 April 2021, [url](#), p. 7; FAO et al., Food Security in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19, with a Special Section on Water Shortages and Adaptation, 3 October 2021, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁹² More information on the (composition of the) Food Basket can be found here: WFP, Iraqi Dinar Devaluation and the Price of the Food Basket, 3 March 2021, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹³ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor - Bi-weekly Update, Issue 25, 5 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁹⁴ FAO et al., Food Security in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19, with a Special Section on Water Shortages and Adaptation, 3 October 2021, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁹⁵ WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2020: Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024, 20 April 2021, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁹⁶ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

¹⁹⁷ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor - Bi-weekly Update, Issue 25, 5 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

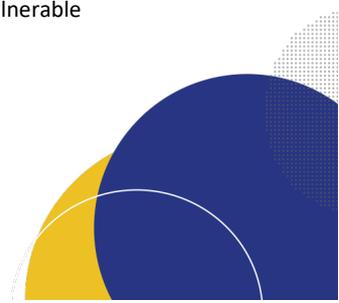
¹⁹⁸ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

¹⁹⁹ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor – Bi-weekly Update, Issue 28, 16 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰⁰ SIPRI and WFP, The World Food Programme’s Contribution to Improving the Prospects for Peace in Iraq, Working Paper, January 2020, [url](#), p. 10; WFP, With Continued Support From the United States, WFP Assists Thousands of Vulnerable Families in Iraq, 30 November 2020, [url](#)

²⁰¹ CaLP, Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection in Iraq, 28 January 2021, [url](#), p. 13

²⁰² WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2020: Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024, 20 April 2021, [url](#), p. 20



In some parts of Baghdad city, sugar commodity was distributed via the PDS in early 2021.²⁰³ As of 2 March 2021, 7 602 tons of sugar were distributed in Baghdad.²⁰⁴

Returnees, IDPs and hosts living in out-of-camp settings were reached through emergency food baskets as well as agriculture inputs, animal feed and health inputs in January 2021.²⁰⁵

In September 2021, the Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF) launched a campaign to distribute an estimated total of 1 000 food parcels to low-income families in Baghdad. The first parcels were distributed to poor families in the Jamila area in Rusafa, additional ones were planned to be distributed to the poor on the Al-Karkh side of Baghdad and in the Al-Fadhil area.²⁰⁶

Insufficient food consumption

In September 2020, 0.1-5 % of IDP households in Baghdad's Al-Khadhimiyah, Al-Risafa, and Al-Karkh districts had a food security LSG (living standards gap)²⁰⁷. In Al-Mahmoudiya district, 5.1-10 % of IDP households had a food security LSG, and in Al-Adhamiya a number of 10.1-15 % of IDP households had a food security LSG.²⁰⁸

Data collected on 15 November 2020 showed that 10 % of people in Baghdad governorate had insufficient food consumption.²⁰⁹ In comparison, between 2016 and 2018, 99 % of households in Baghdad governorate had an acceptable level of food consumption, the remaining 1 % had a borderline level of food consumption. 53 % of the households were food secure, 46 % were marginally food secure and 1 % was food insecure.²¹⁰

2.4.2 Basrah

Hardly any information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security in Basrah could be found.

Food production

In July 2021, an economist told France 24 that cultivating land no longer created sufficient income, which is why many farmers near Basrah have sold their plots. Linked to urban population growth, agricultural land was increasingly turned into residential areas.²¹¹

The reduced flow of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers was one reason for increasing salt water intrusion from the gulf. This caused problems for farmers in Basrah and destroyed thousands of hectares of farmland. One of the farmers said that everything they planted died, including those plants that normally tolerated salt water.²¹²

Increasingly frequent and intense droughts in central and southern Iraq were an additional threat to agricultural production and contributed to the problem of water scarcity. Poor water governance, out-dated infrastructure and poorly maintained irrigations systems also worsened Iraq's situation of

²⁰³ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor – Bi-weekly Update, Issue 28, 16 February 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²⁰⁴ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor - Bi-weekly Update, Issue 29, 25 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰⁵ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor – Bi-weekly Update, Issue 25, 5 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰⁶ Kurdistan 24, Barzani Charity Foundation hands out 1,000 food baskets to needy Baghdad families, 18 September 2021, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ 'The food security LSG composite indicator consists of the following indicators: % of households with a 'borderline' or 'poor' Food Consumption Score; % of households spending more than 65% of their total expenditure on food, and % of households with a 'moderate' to 'severe' (2-6) Household Hunger Scale.' (REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 5)

²⁰⁸ REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 5

²⁰⁹ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor – Bi-weekly Update, Issue 22, 16 November 2020, [url](#), p. 1

²¹⁰ WFP, Iraq Socio-Economic Atlas 2019, 30 March 2020, [url](#), p. 101

²¹¹ France 24, For war-scarred Iraq, climate crisis the next great threat, 8 July 2021, [url](#)

²¹² France 24, For war-scarred Iraq, climate crisis the next great threat, 8 July 2021, [url](#)

water scarcity. Irrigators mainly use flood irrigation methods. However, this consumes more water than modern methods and increases soil salinity. Alarming low water levels and high salinity on the Shatt Al-Arab in Basrah governorate have rendered its waters unsuitable for human consumption or agriculture.²¹³ In summer 2021, shrunken Tigris tributaries, which had cut-off or decreased river flows, caused a major water crisis and losses for farmers in Basrah and other central and southern regions. A serious impact on food security and access to drinking water was apprehended.²¹⁴ For more information on the water crisis in Basrah, please see section [2.7.2 Basrah](#).

Food production in Basrah included fishing which was prohibited in rivers, marshes and lakes during breeding season usually extending from mid-February to mid-April.²¹⁵

Food retailers in Basrah reported a decrease in sales between June and August 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more specifically mostly because of the movement restrictions.²¹⁶

Food support

In some parts of Basrah city, sugar commodity was distributed via the PDS in early 2021.²¹⁷ As of March 2021, 2 569 tons of sugar were distributed in Basrah.²¹⁸

In Basrah, among other regions, humanitarian organisations reached returnees, IDPs and hosts living in out-of-camp settings through emergency food baskets as well as agriculture inputs, animal feed and health inputs in January 2021.²¹⁹

Food security

The Shatt Al-Arab River water supplied most households in Basrah governorate with drinking water. Almost half of the governorate's inhabitants informed UN-Habitat that the availability of drinking water was bad or very bad and less than half of the people with access to the public water network had water available for the full day. Environmental problems threatened Basrah's fresh water supply and limited the availability of drinking water. Due to its low quality and high salinity, drinking water requires treatment, provided by treatment plants, compact units or desalination units before consumption.²²⁰

In September 2020, none of the IDP households in Basrah had a food security LSG.²²¹

2.4.3 Sulaymaniyah

Food production

WFP warned in September 2021 that barley and wheat crops could be negatively impacted by below average rainfall, particularly in the KRI.²²² In October 2021, 'sporadic and insufficient precipitation during the cropping season (2020-21)' in portions of Sulaymaniyah were 'expected to affect rainfed winter cereal production significantly compared to [2020]'.²²³

²¹³ FDI, Iraqi Food Security at Risk in a Year of Mounting Disasters, 13 August 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²¹⁴ IFRC, Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA), Iraq: Droughts, 2 September 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-2

²¹⁵ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor – Bi-weekly Update, Issue 28, 16 February 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²¹⁶ FAO et al., Food Security in Iraq – Impact of COVID-19: With a Special Feature on Digital Innovation, June-August 2020, 23 September 2020, [url](#), p. 16

²¹⁷ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor – Bi-weekly Update, Issue 28, 16 February 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²¹⁸ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor - Bi-weekly Update, Issue 29, 25 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²¹⁹ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor – Bi-weekly Update, Issue 25, 5 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²²⁰ UN-Habitat, Basra Urban Profile, October 2020, [url](#), pp. 36, 38

²²¹ REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 5

²²² WFP, WFP resilience projects respond to water shortages in Iraq, 6 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²²³ FAO et al., Food Security in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19, with a Special Section on Water Shortages and Adaptation, 3 October 2021, [url](#), p. 21; see also p. 31

Water shortages caused losses in irrigated barley production and will potentially cause a 50 % reduction in irrigated wheat production in the KRI in 2021, where also grazing areas and rangelands were 'greatly reduced' and prices of animal fodder increased. Irrigated areas of Sulaymaniyah have been impacted.²²⁴

Explosive hazards as a consequence of conflict constrained agriculture in Sulaymaniyah governorate, where, in a few areas, between 2.5 % and 12 % of surface areas had been classified as hazardous.²²⁵

Food prices

In a nationwide comparison, the Sulaymaniyah food market was the least impacted by the devaluation of the Iraqi dinar.²²⁶

Food support

According to a study published in December 2019, the KRI's consumption of rationed items was the lowest in Iraq.²²⁷

In January 2021, humanitarian partners distributed food baskets to IDPs in Sulaymaniyah.²²⁸ In April 2021, during Ramadan, BCF delivered 1 500 food parcels to Sulaymaniyah.²²⁹ In May 2021, the WFP assisted families whose relatives contracted COVID-19 and were held in isolation in IDP camps with ready-to-eat food packages.²³⁰ In July 2021, following a fire in the Ashty IDP camp in Sulaymaniyah, the WFP provided ready-to-eat food packages to the four families affected.²³¹

In summer 2020, the KRG distributed a one-time-disbursement of 100 000 Iraqi dinar (EUR 58.77²³²) to vulnerable households in Sulaymaniyah on occasion of the Eid Al-Adha.²³³

Food security

In Sulaymaniyah, 22 % of respondents to a survey by Oxfam from June 2020 did not have access to nutritious food. 50 % of them were women. 44 % indicated that their access to nutritious food had changed since the outbreak of COVID-19. Influencing factors for that change were high prices, limited incomes, closure of markets, the suspension of mobile shops.²³⁴

Food retailers in Sulaymaniyah reported a decrease in sales between June and August 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly because of the movement restrictions.²³⁵

In September 2020, 5.1-10 % of IDP households in Sulaymaniyah had a food security LSG.²³⁶

²²⁴ FAO et al., Food Security in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19, with a Special Section on Water Shortages and Adaptation, 3 October 2021, [url](#), p. 33

²²⁵ WFP, Iraq Socio-Economic Atlas 2019, 30 March 2020, [url](#), p. 19

²²⁶ FAO et al., Food Security in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19, with a Special Section on Water Shortages and Adaptation, 3 October 2021, [url](#), p. 28

²²⁷ Krishnan, N. et al., Estimating the Welfare Costs of Reforming the Iraq Public Distribution System: A Mixed Demand Approach, 6 December 2019, [url](#), p. 97

²²⁸ FAO et al., Iraq Covid-19 Food Security Monitor - Bi-weekly Update, Issue 25, 5 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²²⁹ Barzani Charity Foundation [Twitter], posted on: 29 April 2021, [url](#)

²³⁰ WFP, WFP Iraq Country Brief, May 2021, 31 May 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²³¹ WFP, WFP Iraq Country Brief, July 2021, 31 July 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²³² Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InfEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

²³³ FAO et al., Food Security in Iraq – Impact of COVID-19: With a Special Feature on Digital Innovation, June-August 2020, 23 September 2020, [url](#), p. 11

²³⁴ Oxfam, Gender Analysis of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Iraq: Conducted in Kirkuk, Diyala and Sulaimaniyah Governorates, June 2020, 22 June 2020, [url](#), p. 23

²³⁵ FAO et al., Food Security in Iraq – Impact of COVID-19: With a Special Feature on Digital Innovation, June-August 2020, 23 September 2020, [url](#), p. 16

²³⁶ REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 5

2.5 Healthcare

2.5.1 Baghdad

According to the Ministry of Health's 2020 Annual Statistical Report, Baghdad governorate had 260 primary health care centres (PHCs), including 213 main health care centres and 47 health sub-centres. Almost 90 % of all PHCs (in exact numbers: 232), were administered by a physician, while 28 PHCs were administered by other health professionals. On average, each PHC served a population of about 33 000. Moreover, Baghdad had 51 specialised health centres, including 20 dental centres, 3 specialised centres for respiratory diseases, 2 centres for asthma and allergies and 26 other specialised health centres. Nine medical institutions were operating as training health centres.²³⁷ On secondary and tertiary-care level, Baghdad had 105 hospitals and other inpatient specialised health centres; 52 of them were public and 53 private clinics. Of the total number of 52 public hospitals, 18 were teaching and 34 non-teaching facilities. 19 were general hospitals, 28 specialised hospitals and 5 provided tertiary-level health care. Statistically, the number of public hospitals on secondary and tertiary-care level available per population of 100 000 was 0.6.²³⁸

A World Bank report published in May 2021 and based on data from the Ministry of Health noted that some private hospitals also provided publicly financed medical services, such as a clinic in Baghdad offering dialysis care.²³⁹

According to the Health Ministry's 2020 Statistical Report, Baghdad disposed of the nationwide highest bed availability in public hospitals – 1.6 beds per 1 000 people -, with a total number of 13 628 beds, among them 10 729 general hospital beds and the remainder being labelled as 'emergency beds'. Baghdad's private hospitals offered an additional 2 342 general hospital beds. Numbers concerning the availability of 'emergency beds' in private medical facilities were not included in the report.²⁴⁰

With regard to other health-related institutions, there were 1 008 private laboratories, 1 561 pharmacies, 977 pharmaceutical offices and 304 drugstores located in Baghdad in 2020.²⁴¹

In 2020, 9 622 physicians were working in Baghdad, that is, statistically, 11.24 physicians per 10 000 people. Other health personnel included 4 466 dentists (5.21 per 10 000 people), 5 353 pharmacists (6.3 per 10 000 people), 12 334 nursing staff (a ratio of 14.4, making Baghdad the second-last in Iraq with regard to nursing staff available per 10 000 people), 22 437 paramedical staff (26.2 per 10 000) and 1 479 midwives.²⁴² Regarding maternity health, maternal mortality was 42.2 per 100 000 births, while perinatal mortality was 20.4 per 1 000 births, according to the Health Ministry's 2020 Statistical Report.²⁴³ A report by the UK Home Office on medical and healthcare provision in Iraq, published in January 2021, listed some examples found on the MedCOI website of hospitals/clinics that treated diseases such as cancer, heart conditions, mental health issues and diabetes as well as pharmacies/clinics that provided appropriate medication.²⁴⁴

Dr. Abdulameer al-Shammary, the former head of the Iraqi Medical Association, noted in an interview with Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) in April 2021 that in Iraq the numbers of health professionals and centres were very low and did not match the population growth. He stated that

²³⁷ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 100, 102

²³⁸ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 138-139

²³⁹ World Bank (The), Addressing the human capital crisis. A Public Expenditure Review for Human Development Sectors in Iraq, 31 May 2021, [url](#), p. 52

²⁴⁰ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 141, 143

²⁴¹ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), p. 210

²⁴² Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 215, 233, 236, 240, 243, 244

²⁴³ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 72, 95

²⁴⁴ UK Home Office, Country Policy and Information Note Iraq: Medical and healthcare provision, January 2021, [url](#)

‘there is a lack of medical supplies and mismanagement of human resources. The waiting list in public hospitals is very long. Patients prefer to go to the private sector. There are no guidelines for treatment or proper sanitation or disposal of waste’.²⁴⁵

A nurse in Baghdad noted in June 2021 that patients had to pay 2 000 IQD (EUR 1.18²⁴⁶) for a ticket at a public primary health care centre. This included a medical consultation and, if necessary, basic medication or other basic medical supplies (e.g., dressing material). In case of a referral to a specialised hospital, patients had to buy another ticket for a similar price. If a certain drug or other material was not available, patients had to acquire it in a private pharmacy at their own account. According to the nurse, those patients who could afford it would prefer going to private specialists. Costs for an appointment were between 15 and 25 US-dollars, but additional examinations had to be paid for separately. Costs for private surgery ranged from several hundred to thousands of US-dollars.²⁴⁷

The COVID-19 pandemic only aggravated the existing situation. One medical doctor in Baghdad told PHR in a phone interview that during the peak of infections, he often had to examine more than 100 patients per day, which made it ‘impossible to give enough time to each patient’, leaving ‘doctors so exhausted and the patient frustrated’.²⁴⁸ Another doctor who worked on a COVID-19 ward in Baghdad told AFP, as quoted in AsiaNews, they were ‘collapsing’, after working a 48-hour shift.²⁴⁹ The relative of a COVID-19 patient in Baghdad’s al-Kindi hospital told PHR that the ‘service and the treatment were very bad.’²⁵⁰

In April 2021, 82 people died in a fire in the COVID-19 intensive care unit of Ibn al-Khatib Hospital when an oxygen tank exploded. According to the deputy director of the hospital, the number of patients being treated at the intensive care unit at the time of the explosion was about four times its capacity and reportedly there was also an unspecified number of relatives staying with them.²⁵¹ Poor construction of medical facilities and negligence of safety measures made doctors worry about further incidents.²⁵²

The ongoing healthcare crisis resulted in an increased number of attacks on doctors by the families of patients who died of COVID-19, according to a UNDP report of June 2021,²⁵³ and in September 2020, doctors publicly protested in Baghdad for better protection of medical professionals.²⁵⁴ Medical college graduates and other health workers joined the protests to demand employment as many had been unable to find a job due to the government’s lack of funds for the health sector.²⁵⁵

Moreover, in some areas people reportedly prohibited their family members from going to the hospital, as they believed that being taken into quarantine meant being taken into detention.²⁵⁶ Women, in addition, feared stigmatisation if they had to stay alone at a hospital without family

²⁴⁵ PHR, Challenges Faced by the Iraqi Health Sector in Responding to COVID-19, April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²⁴⁶ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October 2021

²⁴⁷ ACCORD, Anfragebeantwortung zum Irak: Medizinische Behandlung von Fettgewebsnekrose; Zugang zu und Kosten von bestimmten Medikamenten [a-11610-1] [Query response on Iraq: Medical treatment of fat necrosis, access to and cost of certain medicines [a-11610-1]] [source: nurse in Baghdad], 30 June 2021, [url](#)

²⁴⁸ PHR, Challenges Faced by the Iraqi Health Sector in Responding to COVID-19, April 2021, [url](#), p. 3

²⁴⁹ AsiaNews, COVID-19: Iraqi doctors near collapse; for Fr Paul, the situation is ‘critical’, 30 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁰ PHR, Challenges Faced by the Iraqi Health Sector in Responding to COVID-19, April 2021, [url](#), p. 3

²⁵¹ TNH, What was really behind Baghdad’s hospital fire?, 26 April 2021, [url](#)

²⁵² Arab Weekly (The), Doctors beg for donations as Iraq loses battle against pandemic, 16 July 2021, [url](#)

²⁵³ UNDP, Iraq, Sustainable recovery from COVID-19 in Iraq: Key findings, June 2021, [url](#), p. 13

²⁵⁴ Reuters, Violence mounts against Iraqi doctors as COVID cases spike, 23 September 2020, [url](#); PHR, Challenges Faced by the Iraqi Health Sector in Responding to COVID-19, April 2021, [url](#), p. 4

²⁵⁵ Hasan, S., A Perfect Storm has Hit Iraq’s Economy, LSE [Blog], 22 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ UNDP, Iraq, Sustainable recovery from COVID-19 in Iraq: Key findings, June 2021, [url](#), p. 13

guardians²⁵⁷ and in many conservative families women were thus reluctant to seek medical help or their families would not let them go to hospital even if they had COVID-19 symptoms.²⁵⁸

Most IDP camps in Baghdad had no health centre or medical teams to take care of emergencies, and people lacked the money to pay for private doctors.²⁵⁹

2.5.2 Basrah

In 2020, Basrah governorate counted 135 PHCs, including 49 main health care centres and 86 health sub-centres, each serving approximately 22 700 people. 49 of the PHCs were administered by a physician (that is, 36.6 % of the total number), while the remaining 86 were administered by other health professionals. The governorate's 18 specialised health centres included 2 dental centres, 1 centre each for respiratory diseases and for asthma and allergies and 14 other specialised health centres. Moreover, Basrah had 2 training health centres.²⁶⁰

Basrah had 21 hospitals and specialised centres, 14 of them were public and 7 private. Among Basrah's 14 public hospitals and inpatient health centres, 11 were general hospitals and 3 specialised institutions, one of them offering tertiary-level health care. The ratio of public hospitals per 100 000 people was 0.5. The total number of 4 227 available beds in public hospitals, including 3 323 general and 904 'emergency beds', signified a ratio of 1.4 beds per 1 000 people. Basrah's 7 private hospitals offered an additional 282 general beds. The report included no data on the availability of 'emergency beds' in private hospitals.²⁶¹

According to the Ministry's 2020 Statistical report, other health-related facilities included 94 private laboratories, 729 pharmacies and 19 pharmaceutical offices as well as 42 drugstores.²⁶²

The number of physicians working in Basrah in 2020 was 2 513, which meant that statistically 8.2 physicians were available per population of 10 000. Moreover, there were 525 dentists (1.71 per 10 000), 718 pharmacists (2.3 per 10 000), 4 063 nurses (13.3 per 10 000), 5 084 paramedics (16.6 per 10 000) and 321 midwives working in Basrah's health sector.²⁶³ As regards maternity, health, maternal mortality was 54.0 per 100 000 births – the second-highest number nationwide –, while perinatal mortality was highest in Basrah with 25.8 per 1 000 births, according to the Health Ministry's 2020 Statistical Report.²⁶⁴

According to UN-Habitat's October 2020 urban profile of Basrah, 98.4 % of the population was able to reach the closest health centre in less than one hour. The main obstacles with regard to access to public hospitals were linked to the unavailability of doctors in general, of female doctors or nurses and of medical equipment. The report noted that 23.3 % of the population assessed the health care services in Basrah as 'bad', while 47.2 % said they were 'neither bad nor good'. The Governorate of Basrah named 'shortage in financial resources and lack of authority granted to health services', shortage in specialised medical devices and insufficiently trained technical personnel and 'poor and inadequate control over medicines and private pharmacies' among their main concerns with regard to the health sector.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁷ New York Times (The), Stigma Hampers Iraqi Efforts to Fight the Coronavirus, 14 April 2020, [url](#); UNDP, Iraq, Pathways to reintegration: Iraq. Families formerly associated with ISIL, February 2021, [url](#), p. 14

²⁵⁸ PHR, In Iraq, Those Infected with Coronavirus Face Shame and Stigmatization, 23 April 2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ Euro-Med Monitor, Exiled At Home: Internal displacement resulted from the armed conflict in Iraq and its humanitarian consequences, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 29, 34-35

²⁶⁰ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 100, 102

²⁶¹ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 138, 139, 141, 143

²⁶² Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), p. 210

²⁶³ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 215, 233, 236, 240, 243, 244

²⁶⁴ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 72, 95

²⁶⁵ UN-Habitat, Basra Urban Profile, October 2020, [url](#), p. 40

Basrah has been one of the hotspots of social protests that erupted in 2018, continued into autumn 2019 and 2020 and flared up again in the summer of 2021²⁶⁶, with demands for better public services, employment opportunities and combating local mismanagement and corruption.²⁶⁷ Better healthcare services such as better access to cancer treatment featured prominently among the demands, as Reuters reported in March 2020. The report described the situation in the city's children cancer hospital: lack of beds, doctors and nursing staff, technical equipment and of cancer drugs, which had to be acquired through the Ministry of Health that often was experiencing shortages itself.²⁶⁸

Medical personnel - in particular in Basrah, Baghdad and Thi Qar - has come under increasing attack by relatives of patients who have died during the COVID-19 pandemic, blaming the doctors for the death of their family members. Moreover, in some areas people reportedly prohibited their family members from going to the hospital, as they believed that being taken into quarantine meant being taken into detention.²⁶⁹

2.5.3 Sulaymaniyah

According to the Ministry of Health's 2020 Annual Statistical Report, Sulaymaniyah governorate had 492 PHCs, including 115 main health care centres and 377 health sub-centres. With statistically 21.6 health centres per population of 100 000, the governorate had the nationwide highest density of primary health facilities. 13.2 % of all PHCs were administered by a physician, while the vast majority – 86.8 % - was administered by other health personnel. In addition, the governorate had 30 specialised health centres, including 5 dental centres, 1 for respiratory diseases and 24 with other specialisations.²⁷⁰ Sulaymaniyah had 63 hospitals, 38 of them public (including 1 offering tertiary health care) and 25 private hospitals. The total bed availability in public hospitals was 3 519 (including 3 080 general beds), the total general bed availability was 3 847 (3 080 public beds plus 767 beds in private hospitals). No data were given regarding the availability of 'emergency beds' in private hospitals.²⁷¹ With regard to other health-related infrastructure, the report mentioned 356 pharmacies and 40 pharmaceutical offices and drugstores. No data were available for private laboratories.²⁷²

In 2020, Sulaymaniyah's medical and health workforce included 2 676 physicians (11.75 per 10 000 people), 294 dentists (1.29 per 10 000), 375 pharmacists (1.65 per 10 000), 4 054 nursing staff (17.8 per 10 000) and 5 785 paramedical staff (25.39 per population of 10 000) as well as 395 midwives.²⁷³ With regard to maternal health, in 2020, no woman was reported to have died giving birth, while perinatal mortality was 0.1 per 1 000 births.²⁷⁴

Data from the Kurdistan Region Statistic's Office of the KRI's Ministry of Planning differed slightly or was not directly comparable due to a different mode of presentation.²⁷⁵

Both the Ministry of Health's report and the KRI Statistics Office website offered data only with regard to governorates, not specific cities. A document published by UNCHR on health information for refugees and internally displaced persons listed the 15 main hospitals of Sulaymaniyah

²⁶⁶ Al Jazeera, Basra protests erupt as power cuts hit scorching Iraq, 8 July 2021, [url](#)

²⁶⁷ Jiyad, S. et al, Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 9-10

²⁶⁸ Reuters, The medical crisis that's aggravating Iraq's unrest, 2 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁶⁹ UNDP, Iraq, Sustainable recovery from COVID-19 in Iraq: Key findings, June 2021, [url](#), p. 13

²⁷⁰ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 100, 102

²⁷¹ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 138,139, 141, 143

²⁷² Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), p. 210

²⁷³ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 215, 233, 236, 240, 243, 244

²⁷⁴ Iraq, Ministry of Health and Environment, Annual Statistical Report 2020, 2021, [url](#), pp. 72, 95

²⁷⁵ Iraq, KRG, Kurdistan Region Statistics Office, Indicators: Health and Education, n.d., [url](#)

governorate, with 14 of them located in Sulaymaniyah city and one psychiatric hospital located in Raparin district.²⁷⁶ The NGO Emergency has been running a centre for physiotherapy and prosthetic treatment for landmine victims in Sulaymaniyah since 1998 and had also patients from other regions referred to its facilities.²⁷⁷ A report by the UK Home Office on medical and healthcare provision in Iraq, published in January 2021, included data on several health facilities in Sulaymaniyah city that offered dental treatment, treatment for heart and eye conditions, tuberculosis and other diseases.²⁷⁸ A report by the Swiss Refugee Council on psychiatric care in Sulaymaniyah of May 2020 included information on available outpatient and inpatient psychiatric care in public hospitals and with private providers.²⁷⁹

2.6 Education

For general information on education in Iraq, please see section 2.6.1 Country overview of EASO's COI report [Iraq: Key socio-economic indicators - For Baghdad, Basra and Erbil](#) from September 2020.

2.6.1 Baghdad

On the primary school level, the gross enrolment rate for the school year 2019/2020 in Baghdad governorate was 100 % for girls and 104 %²⁸⁰ for boys. The net enrolment rate was 92 % for girls and 94 % for boys.²⁸¹ On the secondary school level, the gross enrolment rate for the school year 2019/2020 was 81 % for girls and 82 % for boys. The net enrolment rate was 70 % for girls and 62 % for boys.²⁸² School completion rates in Baghdad governorate were 73 % for primary school, 44 % for lower secondary school and 32 % for upper secondary school. Out of school rates were 8 % on the primary, 20 % on the lower secondary and 46 % on the upper secondary level.²⁸³

The latest United Nations human development report from 2014 stated that the rate of illiterate youth in Baghdad was 9.6 % (11.5 % females, 8.2 % males).²⁸⁴ The fact that students were not able to attend literacy centres during the COVID-19 pandemic probably worsened the state of illiteracy.²⁸⁵

According to the NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq (NCCI), Baghdad hosted 'a large number' of primary and secondary schools.²⁸⁶ With 48 % of the country's universities or colleges and 53 % of scientific departments, Baghdad hosts the highest share of tertiary educational institutions among all governorates.²⁸⁷

²⁷⁶ UNHCR, Iraq, Health Information for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), [2017], [url](#)

²⁷⁷ Emergency UK, Sulaymaniyah Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration Centre, December 2020, [url](#)

²⁷⁸ UK Home Office, Country Policy and Information Note Iraq: Medical and healthcare provision, January 2021, [url](#)

²⁷⁹ Swiss Refugee Council, Irak: Psychiatrische Versorgung in Sulaimaniyya [Psychiatric care in Sulaymaniyah], 13 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ 'A high [gross enrolment rate (GER)] generally indicates a high degree of participation, whether the pupils belong to the official age group or not. A GER value approaching or exceeding 100% indicates that a country is, in principle, able to accommodate all of its school-age population, but it does not indicate the proportion already enrolled. [...] GER can exceed 100% due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students because of early or late entrants, and grade repetition.' UIS, Glossary: Gross enrolment ration, n.d., [url](#)

²⁸¹ Iraq, CSO, The net and gross enrollment rate at the primary level, including (governmental, private, religious) by governorate and gender for the academic year 2019/2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁸² Iraq, CSO, The net and gross enrollment rate at the secondary school stage (governmental, private and religious) by sex and governorate year 2019/2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁸³ UNICEF, Iraq Education Fact Sheet 2020 – Analyses for learning and equity using MICS data, 2020, [url](#), pp. 9, 15

²⁸⁴ UNDP, Iraq Human Development Report 2014: Iraqi Youth – Challenges and Opportunities, 20 July 2016, [url](#), p. 157

²⁸⁵ Rudaw, خمسة ملايين أتي في العراق.. والتربية تعزو ارتفاع النسبة لعدة عوامل [Five million illiterate people in Iraq.. Education attributes the high rate to several factors], 3 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁶ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, updated December 2015, [url](#), p. 2

²⁸⁷ Iraq, MoP, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), p. 197

Six years of schooling between ages six and twelve are compulsory for children in Baghdad, as in the rest of Baghdad-governed Iraq.²⁸⁸

In Baghdad, it is not uncommon that public schools operate in shifts, since different schools and school types share a building. Numbers of children in class range around 50.²⁸⁹ There is, furthermore, a lack of qualified teachers. The quality of education in the public system but also in many private schools does not meet international standards. Education standards and enrolment costs in private schools vary greatly.²⁹⁰

Schools in Baghdad closed due to COVID-19-restrictions in late February 2020 and partly reopened on 29 November 2020, with fewer days of attendance per week.²⁹¹ Schools reportedly opened for six instead of five days to make up for lost time and maintain physical distancing.²⁹² Different days of attendance were allocated to the different levels. Online teaching remained an alternative option, for which the Ministry of Education (MoE) had launched applications for online classes and a TV channel. According to a local school teacher 'private schools and some public ones in central Baghdad are well equipped for the new situation, but those in poor or rural areas such as Yousifiyah struggle to cope.' He teaches in a school in Yousifiyah operating out of caravans because of lack of public funding. He said, furthermore, that most families that opted for online learning for their children cannot afford smartphones or computers for the study online. Additionally, poor electricity supply and internet made online learning hard.²⁹³ The WFP supported reopening schools through their Urban Livelihoods activities in Baghdad and other cities in 2020.²⁹⁴

Further disruption in secondary school and university classes was caused by students' participation in protests in late 2019 and through 2020.²⁹⁵

During April 2020, 64 % of children aged 5-17 in four IDP camps in Baghdad governorate surveyed by Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid reportedly did not receive any kind of schooling.²⁹⁶ This pointed to 'significant shortcoming[s] in the initial shift to remote learning'.²⁹⁷ Their illiteracy rate was reported as 12 %.²⁹⁸

A survey published in March 2021 showed that for 38 % of IDPs in Baghdad, functioning schools were the best aspect of living in the current location compared to their area of origin.²⁹⁹ In September 2020, in Baghdad's Al-Adhamiya, Al-Khadhmiah, Al-Risafa, Al-Karkh and Al-Mahmoudiya

²⁸⁸ IRFAD, Iraq Education, n.d., [url](#)

²⁸⁹ Al-Monitor, Decline in education threatens future Iraqi generations, 15 April 2016, [url](#)

²⁹⁰ IRFAD, Iraq Education, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹¹ Al Jazeera, COVID-19: 10 million Iraqi children back to school, 29 November 2020, [url](#); see also HRW, World Report 2021 - Iraq, 13 January 2021, [url](#); National (The), Coronavirus: Iraqi children resume education despite difficulties, 7 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁹² Al Jazeera, COVID-19: 10 million Iraqi children back to school, 29 November 2020, [url](#); National (The), Coronavirus: Iraqi children resume education despite difficulties, 7 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁹³ National (The), Coronavirus: Iraqi children resume education despite difficulties, 7 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁹⁴ WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2020: Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024, 20 April 2021, [url](#), p. 17

²⁹⁵ ACAPS, Education in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19, protests, and pre-existing crises on needs, 9 November 2020, [url](#), p. 5; see also National (The), Coronavirus: Iraqi children resume education despite difficulties, 7 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁹⁶ Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid, Health and Educational Status of Iraqi Children in IDP Camps During COVID-19: An Assessment of Children in IDP Camps in Salah Al Din, Anbar, Ninewa, and Baghdad Governorates of Iraq, May 2020, [url](#), pp. 3-4, 9

²⁹⁷ ACAPS, Education in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19, protests, and pre-existing crises on needs, 9 November 2020, [url](#), p. 8

²⁹⁸ Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid, Health and Educational Status of Iraqi Children in IDP Camps During COVID-19: An Assessment of Children in IDP Camps in Salah Al Din, Anbar, Ninewa, and Baghdad Governorates of Iraq, May 2020, [url](#), p. 4

²⁹⁹ IOM, An Analysis of Urban Displacement in Iraq, 14 March 2021, [url](#), p. 14

districts, the education living standards gap (LSG) severity score³⁰⁰ among IDPs was between 10.1 and 25 %.³⁰¹

2.6.2 Basrah

On the primary school level, the gross enrolment rate for the school year 2019/2020 in Basrah governorate was 102 % for girls and 104 % for boys. The net enrolment rate was 91 % both for girls and boys.³⁰² On the secondary school level, the gross enrolment rate for the school year 2019/2020 was 77 % for girls and 84 % for boys. The net enrolment rate was 52 % for girls and 46 % for boys.³⁰³ School completion rates in Basrah governorate were 72 % for primary school, 42 % for lower secondary school and 24 % for upper secondary school. Out of school rates were 6 % on the primary, 24 % on the lower secondary and 52 % on the upper secondary levels.³⁰⁴ In the southern provinces of Iraq, including Basrah, a much higher percentage of children were out of school than in the north.³⁰⁵

The latest United Nations human development report from 2014 stated that the rate of illiterate youth in Basrah governorate was 14.9 % (16.7 % females, 13.4 % males).³⁰⁶ The overall literacy rate in Basrah governorate was 81.9 % in 2015.³⁰⁷ In September 2020, the education LSG score among IDPs in Basrah city was between 1 and 10 %.³⁰⁸

Six years of schooling between ages six and twelve are compulsory for children in Basrah, as in the rest of Baghdad-governed Iraq. In primary school, classes can be mixed or separated by sexes. On the secondary level sexes are separated. The public education system is centralised and state-funded including tertiary education.³⁰⁹

In Basrah, it is not uncommon that public schools have up to three class shifts as different schools and educational levels share the same building.³¹⁰ There is a 'severe shortage in the number of school buildings throughout the governorate due to the lack of land allocated for construction and in places that suffer from overcrowding such as the centre of the province and its urban areas'.³¹¹ Numbers of children in class range around 50.³¹² Lack of electricity in schools bring hardship on hot summer or cold winter days.³¹³ In 2018, of the 1 068 primary schools in Basra, only 682 (64 %) had

³⁰⁰ The education LSG score considers the '% of households reporting barriers to education related to a lack of household resources; % of households with at least one child not attending formal or informal education regularly (at least 4 days a week) prior to the COVID-19 outbreak; % of households with no child attending formal or informal education regularly (at least 4 days a week) prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, and % of households without a functioning primary or secondary school within 2km of their dwellings.' REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

³⁰¹ REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

³⁰² Iraq, CSO, The net and gross enrollment rate at the primary level, including (governmental, private, religious) by governorate and gender for the academic year 2019/2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁰³ Iraq, CSO, The net and gross enrollment rate at the secondary school stage (governmental, private and religious) by sex and governorate year 2019/2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁰⁴ UNICEF, Iraq Education Fact Sheet 2020 – Analyses for learning and equity using MICS data, 2020, [url](#), pp. 9, 15

³⁰⁵ UNICEF, Iraq Education Fact Sheet 2020 – Analyses for learning and equity using MICS data, 2020, [url](#), p. 13

³⁰⁶ UNDP, Iraq Human Development Report 2014: Iraqi Youth – Challenges and Opportunities, 20 July 2016, [url](#), p. 157

³⁰⁷ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, updated December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

³⁰⁸ REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

³⁰⁹ IRFAD, Iraq Education, n.d., [url](#)

³¹⁰ RFE/RL, Iraq's Basra Province Struggles To Meet Demand For Schools, 13 April 2011, [url](#); Altai Consulting et al., Economic Relief, Recovery, and Resilience Assessment for Southern Iraq: Final Report, May 2021, [url](#), pp. 25-26

³¹¹ UN-Habitat, Basra Urban Profile, October 2020, [url](#), p. 40

³¹² Al-Monitor, Decline in education threatens future Iraqi generations, 15 April 2016, [url](#)

³¹³ IRFAD, Iraq Education, n.d., [url](#)

water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Out of these, 494 (72 %) were served by the public sewage network and 396 (58 %) had access to public water, 'which is mostly not drinkable'.³¹⁴

There is, furthermore, a lack of qualified teachers. The quality of education in the public system but also in many private schools does not meet international standards. Education standards and enrolment costs in private schools vary greatly.³¹⁵

Schools in Basrah closed due to COVID-19-restrictions in late February 2020 and partly reopened in November 2020 with fewer days of attendance per week.³¹⁶ Schools reportedly opened for six instead of five days to make up for lost time and maintain physical distancing.³¹⁷ Different days of attendance were allocated to the different levels. Online teaching remained an alternative option, for which the MoE had launched applications for online classes and a TV channel. However, poor electricity supply and internet made online learning hard.³¹⁸ Further disruption in secondary school and university classes was caused by students' participation in protests in 2019 and 2020.³¹⁹

The WFP supported reopening schools through their Urban Livelihoods activities in Basrah in 2020.³²⁰ Together with the Basrah Directorate of Education and UNICEF, it developed a new pilot project in 2021 supporting 2 500 girls transition from primary to intermediate education through financial support for the girls' families during the academic year.³²¹

UNESCO provided technical and vocational education and training courses in construction to 50 young people in Basrah Governorate. They also supported the enrolment of students in catch-up classes, provided transportation support, psychological support as well as case management for students between February and early May 2021.³²²

People with disabilities in Basrah governorate face difficulties in accessing education due to inadequate and far-away schools and too few institutions catering for their specific disability.³²³

Partly, since it is almost impossible for persons with disabilities to secure employment after completing their education, parents are little aware of the importance of education for children with disabilities, especially females.³²⁴

2.6.3 Sulaymaniyah

School completion rates in Sulaymaniyah governorate were 91 % for primary school, 72 % for lower secondary school and 45 % for upper secondary school. Out of school rates were 2 % on the primary, 9 % on the lower secondary and 20 % on the upper secondary levels.³²⁵ Thus, in the Kurdish north, a much lower percentage of children were out of school than in the southern provinces of Iraq.³²⁶

³¹⁴ UNDP, United Nations Joint Programme Document: Response to Basra water crisis-Iraq, 4 November 2020 [url](#), p. 6

³¹⁵ IRFAD, Iraq Education, n.d., [url](#); UN-Habitat, Basra Urban Profile, October 2020, [url](#), pp. 40-41

³¹⁶ Al Jazeera, COVID-19: 10 million Iraqi children back to school, 29 November 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁷ Al Jazeera, COVID-19: 10 million Iraqi children back to school, 29 November 2020, [url](#); National (The), Coronavirus: Iraqi children resume education despite difficulties, 7 December 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁸ National (The), Coronavirus: Iraqi children resume education despite difficulties, 7 December 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁹ ACAPS, Education in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19, protests, and pre-existing crises on needs, 9 November 2020, [url](#), p. 5; National (The), Coronavirus: Iraqi children resume education despite difficulties, 7 December 2020, [url](#)

³²⁰ WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2020: Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024, 20 April 2021, [url](#), p. 17

³²¹ WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2020: Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024, 20 April 2021, [url](#), p. 19

³²² UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2522 (2020), S/2021/426, 4 May 2021, [url](#), para. 65

³²³ ACAPS, Education in Iraq: Impact of COVID-19, protests, and pre-existing crises on needs, 9 November 2020, [url](#), p. 15

³²⁴ Optimum Analysis and Handicap International, Barriers to Accessing Services for Persons with Disabilities in Basra Governorate Iraq - July 2020, 2020, [url](#), pp. 4, 24, 50

³²⁵ UNICEF, Iraq Education Fact Sheet 2020 – Analyses for learning and equity using MICS data, 2020, [url](#), pp. 9, 15

³²⁶ UNICEF, Iraq Education Fact Sheet 2020 – Analyses for learning and equity using MICS data, 2020, [url](#), p. 13

The latest United Nations human development report from 2014 stated that the rate of illiterate youth in Sulaymaniyah was 5.4 % (6.1 % females, 4.7 % males).³²⁷ According to information published in July 2021 by the National Committee for Sustainable Development of the MoP, the illiteracy rate in Sulaymaniyah governorate was 24 %.³²⁸ In September 2020, the education LSG score among IDPs in Sulaymaniyah was between 25.1 and 35 %.³²⁹ Access to schooling for children is only possible with the required ID documents (please see also section [3.2 ID documents and access to services](#)).³³⁰

In the KRI, primary education for the first six years of schooling and until age 15 is compulsory and free of cost to citizens.³³¹

Schools in Sulaymaniyah closed due to COVID-19-restrictions in late February 2020.³³² Primary and secondary schools reopened temporarily in October 2020, while university teaching remained online.³³³ The Education and Health Ministries in the KRG issued a mask mandate for all students and reduced the number of students in classrooms and school buses, amongst others.³³⁴ Schools were constantly closed and reopened again into the year 2021.³³⁵

A teacher reported that lack of internet access was ‘a driving factor for why students could not attend school virtually’. For the small number of students with access to internet and a computer, power outages that constantly interrupted connectivity were a problem hindering their study.³³⁶

2.7 Housing and Living Conditions

For general information on housing and living conditions in Iraq, please see section 2.7.1 Country overview of EASO’s COI report [Iraq: Key socio-economic indicators - For Baghdad, Basra and Erbil](#) from September 2020.

2.7.1 Baghdad

A population boom in Baghdad³³⁷ put pressure on utilities and housing. As reported in February 2021, 18 % of the population were affected by water service interruptions. Lack of housing led to a growing number of informal settlements.³³⁸ As reported in February 2020, the 1 022 informal settlements in Baghdad represented around 26 % of the total housing sector. An estimated 3.3 million inhabitants (12.9 % of the local population) lived in informal settlements.³³⁹

Housing prices

³²⁷UNDP, Iraq Human Development Report 2014: Iraqi Youth – Challenges and Opportunities, 20 July 2016, [url](#), p. 157

³²⁸ Iraq, MoP, The Second National Voluntary Review Report on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, July 2021, [url](#), p. 99

³²⁹ REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

³³⁰NRC, Desperate Measures: Syrians fleeing Turkey’s military operation, 17 December 2019, [url](#), p. 5

³³¹ USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 47

³³² Al Jazeera, COVID-19: 10 million Iraqi children back to school, 29 November 2020, [url](#)

³³³ Asharq Al-Awsat, Schools Reopen in Iraqi Kurdistan Region Despite COVID-19 Outbreak, 15 October 2020, [url](#)

³³⁴ Epic, ISHM: February 4 - February 11, 2021, 11, February 2021, [url](#)

³³⁵ Epic, ISHM: March 25 - April 1, 2021, 1 April 2021, [url](#); Atlantic Council, An “illiterate generation”—one of Iraq’s untold pandemic stories, 26 July 2021, [url](#)

³³⁶ Atlantic Council, An “illiterate generation”—one of Iraq’s untold pandemic stories, 26 July 2021, [url](#)

³³⁷ According to a February 2021 report, Baghdad’s population was estimated to be around 7 million people. Jiyad, S. et al., Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p.26

³³⁸ Jiyad, S. et al., Economic Drivers of Youth Political Discontent in Iraq: The Voice of Young People in Kurdistan, Baghdad, Basra and Thi-Qar, February 2021, [url](#), p.26

³³⁹ UN-Habitat and IsDB, Informal Settlements in the Arab Region: “Towards Arab Cities without Informal Areas” - Analysis and Prospects, February 2020, [url](#), p. 36

According to IOM, current rental costs have slightly decreased due to COVID-19-related restriction of work and income generating activities. In the first quarter of 2021, the rent for a house with two bedrooms, one bathroom, one toilet, kitchen and living room close to the city centre of Baghdad cost around 500-800 US dollars. Housing locations further away from the city centre had cheaper rents, with costs around 300-600 US dollars, depending on the location and services available within the area. Utilities - depending on the lifestyle and needs- were about 100-150 US dollars per month for electricity, power generators, water, and internet.³⁴⁰

According to a real estate agent in Al-Mansour, a traditionally wealthy district in the west of the city, a house with a floor area of 100 square metres and three floors, including four bedrooms, cost 1 000 US dollars per month as of January 2021. A house with a floor area of 300 square metres and two floors cost between 1 700 and 1 800 dollars rent per month. The real estate agency charged an additional monthly rent for the brokerage. There was no deposit, but it was likely that landlords would insist on receiving several months of rent in advance. The potential tenant had to show his or her identity and residency card. In Al-Ghadeer, a middle-class neighbourhood east of the city, an older house for a family of eight cost one million Iraqi dinars (EUR 587.72³⁴¹) per month. In the less affluent suburban neighbourhood of Sadr City in Baghdad's east, a house of 144 square metres and two floors cost 400-500 US dollars per month. In the new urban project of Bismaya, 10 kilometres southeast of Baghdad, a 140 square metre flat with four bedrooms for rent cost 600 US dollars per month.³⁴²

Water and sanitation

In Baghdad, high concentrations of cadmium were found in drinking water in 2018 and 2019, which can cause kidney failure and cancer diseases among other health problems. Highest concentrations of cadmium were found in water from the Tigris River and water wells, but also bottled water was polluted.³⁴³

The sewer system in Baghdad serves between 75.9 and 90 % of the city's households but it is old and, therefore, inefficient.³⁴⁴ The city's electricity supply from the grid is insufficient to power the sewage treatment plant. Therefore, the levels of water pollution continue to be dangerous.³⁴⁵

Electricity

According to BBC's Middle East analyst Alan Johnston, 'Iraq's power network has been in a dire state for years, largely on account of bad management and corruption.' Repeated power cuts in Baghdad affect peoples' lives and living conditions especially in summer, when temperatures rise above 50 degrees Celsius.³⁴⁶ In July 2021, private generators served as a solution alternative to the public

³⁴⁰ IOM, ZIRF Counselling: Wohnsituation, 1. Quartal 2021 [Housing situation, 1st quarter 2021], n.d., [url](#)

³⁴¹ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

³⁴² ACCORD, Anfragebeantwortung zum Irak: Versorgungslage Bagdad (Lebensmittel, Wasser, Strom), Wohnungsmarkt, Schulbesuch [Query Response on Somalia: General Information on Sufism in Somalia; Information on the treatment of Sufi members in Mogadishu by society and al-Shabaab, political representation of Sufis], [a-11469-2], 20 January 2021, [url](#)

³⁴³ Abdul Jabar, M. A. B. and Thabit, J. A., Chemical Pollution Risks for Many Drinking Water Sources in Baghdad City, Iraq, 28 September 2020, [url](#), pp. 1205, 1207

³⁴⁴ Iraq, MoP, National Development Plan 2018-2022, June 2018, [url](#), pp. 38, 163; Iraq, CSO, 2018 الموجز الإحصائي بغداد [Statistical Summary Baghdad 2018], n.d., [url](#)

³⁴⁵ Chatham House, Same Old Politics Will Not Solve Iraq Water Crisis, 15 April 2020, [url](#)

³⁴⁶ BBC News, Iraq power cuts stir protests as summer temperatures scorch country, 2 July 2021, [url](#)

power network, but ‘these often overheat or run out of fuel.’³⁴⁷ Power cuts in times of extreme heat in July 2021 led to protests in Baghdad and Iraq’s southern regions.³⁴⁸

IDPs

As of July 2021, there were 26 856 IDPs or 4 476 IDP households in Baghdad governorate. The highest number of IDPs lived in Mahmoudiyah (7 236 individuals in 1 206 households), followed by Abu Ghraib (5 316 individuals in 886 households) and Karkh (5 088 individuals in 848 households). Fewest IDPs lived in Thawra 1 district (six individuals in one household).³⁴⁹ Data collected between March and December 2020 showed that Baghdad and Abu Ghraib hosted 19 506 IDPs or 3 251 IDP households in 365 neighbourhoods. The IDP to host population ratio was 0.29. The displacement situation in Baghdad was the most dynamic compared to other urban centres in Iraq. IDPs mentioned as the best aspects of living in Baghdad and Abu Ghraib proximity to relatives and friends that can offer support (27 %) and affordable cost of living (24 %). The latter probably related to the high proportion of heads of household that were working (87 %). 2 % of IDPs lived in a house they owned, although 36 % of IDPs still owned a property in their area of origin.³⁵⁰

In October 2020, three IDP camps closed in Baghdad governorate³⁵¹ leaving some IDP households unable to return ‘displaced in random areas suffering from difficult humanitarian conditions.’³⁵² Subsequently, the number of IDPs in slum areas and on Baghdad’s outskirts and governorate’s borders reached 13 477.³⁵³ The camp closures followed a government’s policy aiming at closing all IDP camps in the Baghdad-controlled regions by December 2020.³⁵⁴ UNOCHA reported that ‘large-scale closures of IDP camps and informal sites in Baghdad’ and other regions continued in December 2020, which resulted in ‘not well-coordinated’ movements and protection issues.³⁵⁵

10.1-25 % of IDP households in Baghdad governorate’s Al-Khadhmiah and Al-Mahmoudiya districts suffered from a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) living standards gap (LSG)³⁵⁶. In Al-Adhamiya and Al-Karkh 0.1-10 % suffered from a WASH LSG. In Al-Rusafa district 0 % suffered from a WASH LSG.³⁵⁷

2.7.2 Basrah

Basrah city’s Hay Al-Jaza’ir, Breeha, Manawi Basha and Al-Baradhiyah are middle- and upper-class neighbourhoods.³⁵⁸ Since 2010, the expansion of the oil sector attracted an influx of populations from neighbouring provinces. As a result, Basrah city’s ‘already dilapidated infrastructure’ was

³⁴⁷ BBC News, Iraq power cuts stir protests as summer temperatures scorch country, 2 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁴⁸ BBC News, Iraq power cuts stir protests as summer temperatures scorch country, 2 July 2021, [url](#); AP, Power outages hit Iraq amid scorching temperatures, 2 July 2021, [url](#); DW, How to solve Iraq’s hellishly hot power crisis, 8 July 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Iraqis protest over power, water cuts amid heat wave, 2 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁴⁹ IOM, DTM: IDP Master List 31-07-2021, 31 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁵⁰ IOM, Urban Displacement in Federal Iraq, 14 March 2021, [url](#), p. 6

³⁵¹ Euro-Med Monitor, Exiled AT Home: Internal displacement resulted from the armed conflict in Iraq and its humanitarian consequences, June 2021, [url](#), p. 20

³⁵² Euro-Med Monitor, Exiled AT Home: Internal displacement resulted from the armed conflict in Iraq and its humanitarian consequences, June 2021, [url](#), p. 14

³⁵³ Euro-Med Monitor, Exiled AT Home: Internal displacement resulted from the armed conflict in Iraq and its humanitarian consequences, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 20-21

³⁵⁴ HRW, Iraq: Camp Expulsions Leave Families Homeless, Vulnerable, 2 December 2020, [url](#)

³⁵⁵ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 25

³⁵⁶ ‘The WASH LSG indicator consists of the following indicators: % of households without access to an improved water source; % of households without access to a sufficient quantity of water for drinking and domestic purposes; % of households without access to improved functional sanitation facilities, and % of households treating their water prior to drinking.’ (REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 6)

³⁵⁷ REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 6

³⁵⁸ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Living Among the Hashd: Relations Between Citizens and Security Actors in Five Iraqi Provinces, IRIS, July 2021, [url](#), p. 19

further challenged by the rapid expansion of illegal settlements.³⁵⁹ As reported in February 2020, Basrah had 667 informal settlements.³⁶⁰ Particularly, the middle-class population in the city centre perceived themselves as deprived due to the increased competition over jobs and oil revenues.³⁶¹ As of 31 July 2021, Basrah city housed 2 376 IPDs or 396 IDP households.³⁶²

Housing prices

In September 2021, monthly rent for a three-bedroom apartment in Basrah ranged between 200 000-600 000 Iraqi dinars (EUR 117.54-352.63³⁶³), depending on the neighbourhood.³⁶⁴ In September and August 2021, a house for rent was available from 400 000 Iraqi dinars (EUR 235.09³⁶⁵) per month.³⁶⁶

Water and sanitation

In Basrah, water and sanitation are provided as a public service, but are supplemented by private providers where the public provision is deficient. There exists only one wastewater treatment facility. The city's sewage system is obsolete and sewerage services are deteriorating. Officially, 93.6 % of the residents have access to improved sanitation. However, only 24.8 % are served by piped systems, while 37.8% use a covered external canal. 60 % of Basrah's inhabitants are served by a sewerage network, 35 % rely on septic tanks and 5 % are not served at all. A lack of specialised equipment and technical staff, the increasing demand of urban growth and the growing number of slums without adequate connection to the drainage network, intensify the problematic situation.³⁶⁷ Protests in Basrah continued in July 2021 demanding from the local government to address chronic electricity cuts and poor public services.³⁶⁸ Already in 2018, failings in water management were at the heart of massive protests that erupted in Basrah city as residents demanded improvements in public services. The increased use of polluted water from the Shatt Al-Arab triggered an outbreak of water related illnesses. Public water infrastructure had deteriorated due to decades of armed conflict and tap water has been undrinkable since the 1990s. Therefore, most households had to purchase water privately from mobile tankers or in bottles. In 2020, one ton of water, covering the needs of an Iraqi family for about seven days, costed about 8 000-10 000 Iraqi dinars (US 5.50–6.80 US dollars). Low-income households had to rely on tap water.³⁶⁹

Compact water treatment units (CWTUs), dominantly used for purification, supplied 83 or 85 % of treatment capacity across Basrah Governorate and 92 or 95 % in Basrah city. However, the efficiency of CWTUs supplying Basrah city was negatively affected by irregular flows from the Bada'a Canal to

³⁵⁹ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Living Among the Hashd: Relations Between Citizens and Security Actors in Five Iraqi Provinces, IRIS, July 2021, [url](#), p. 18; see also Al-Jaffal, O. and Khalaf, S., Basra Governorate: A Locality in Crisis – Local Government Crisis and Conflict with the Federal Government, 18 May 2021, [url](#), p. 8

³⁶⁰ UN-Habitat and IsDB, Informal Settlements in the Arab Region: "Towards Arab Cities without Informal Areas" - Analysis and Prospects, February 2020, [url](#), p. 36

³⁶¹ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Living Among the Hashd: Relations Between Citizens and Security Actors in Five Iraqi Provinces, IRIS, July 2021, [url](#), p. 18

³⁶² IOM, DTM: IDP Master List 31-07-2021, 31 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁶³ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

³⁶⁴ OpenSooq, شقق للإيجار [Semi-detached house for rent], 26 September 2021, [url](#); OpenSooq, شقق للإيجار [Apartments for rent], 17 September 2021, [url](#); OpenSooq, شقة للإيجار في الموقية نظيفة [Clean apartment for rent in Al-Muwafiqiya], 17 September 2021, [url](#); OpenSooq, شقق للإيجار في مناوي لحم [Apartments for rent in Manawi Lajim], 14 September 2021, [url](#); OpenSooq, بيت للإيجار بل حيانيه شوف الوصف [House for rent in Hianiya, see description], 6 September 2021, [url](#); OpenSooq, مشتمل تجاوز للإيجار [Illegal small house to rent] 3 September 2021, [url](#)

³⁶⁵ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

³⁶⁶ OpenSooq, بيت للإيجار [House for rent], 4 September 2021, [url](#); OpenSooq, بيت للإيجار في الموقية [House for rent in Al-Muwafiqiya], 30 August 2021, [url](#)

³⁶⁷ UN-Habitat, Basra Urban Profile, October 2020, [url](#), p. 38

³⁶⁸ Al Jazeera, Basra protests erupt as power cuts hit scorching Iraq, 8 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁶⁹ Al-Rubaie, A. et al., Failing Flows: Water Management in Southern Iraq, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 6, 20 footnote 28; Al-Fanar Media, Study Blames Mismanagement for Water Crisis in Southern Iraq, 8 September 2021, [url](#); see also BBC News, How water shortages are brewing wars, 17 August 2021, [url](#)

the main water treatment plant as well as limited operational capacity due to underinvestment in their maintenance.³⁷⁰ Water from the public water network was non-potable and not suitable for washing dishes and showering.³⁷¹

Iraq obtains nearly all its water from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The summer of 2021 was 'intolerably harsh' and, together with historically low water levels due to a lack of winter rainfall in the region as well as snowmelt in the mountains of southern Turkey, has created major water shortages in Basrah, Diyala and Ninewa governorates. Access to drinking water was jeopardized.³⁷² In the course of the COVID-19 pandemic 'the need for clean water has become even more urgent for residents'.³⁷³

Electricity

According to BBC's Middle East analyst Alan Johnston, 'Iraq's power network has been in a dire state for years, largely on account of bad management and corruption.' Repeated power cuts affect peoples' lives and living conditions in southern Iraq especially in summer, when temperatures rise above 50 degrees Celsius.³⁷⁴ In July 2021, private generators served as an alternative to the public power network, but 'these often overheat or run out of fuel'.³⁷⁵ Power cuts in times of extreme heat in July 2021 led to protests in Basrah and other southern regions.³⁷⁶

2.7.3 Sulaymaniyah

In Sulaymaniyah, the demand for housing was growing. People moved from the villages to the city, attracted by employment opportunities.³⁷⁷ It was reported that there are non-financial barriers for certain groups when it comes to accessing certain types of housing. According to UNHCR, 'single men and women face restrictions on areas and types of rental accommodation. For instance, they are not permitted to rent apartments in Sulaymaniyah city centre, unless the apartment is part of an apartment complex'.³⁷⁸

Housing prices

A one-bedroom apartment in a guarded compound in Sulaymaniyah cost 350 000 Iraqi dinars (EUR 205.70³⁷⁹) rent per month.³⁸⁰ A three-bedroom apartment for sale in Sulaymaniyah's industrial area was available at 123 750 000 Iraqi dinars (EUR 72 730.63³⁸¹).³⁸² A house with three bedrooms near the airport was available for sale at 9 250 000 Iraqi dinars (EUR 5 436.43³⁸³).³⁸⁴ A house with three bedrooms near universities and malls was available at 195 000 000 Iraqi dinars (EUR

³⁷⁰ Al-Rubaie, A. et al., Failing Flows: Water Management in Southern Iraq, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 6, 11;

³⁷¹ Al-Fanar Media, Study Blames Mismanagement for Water Crisis in Southern Iraq, 8 September 2021, [url](#)

³⁷² IFRC, Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) Iraq: Droughts, 2 September 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-2

³⁷³ UNICEF, Up to 960,000 people in Basra to have access to safe drinking water thanks to the Netherlands' support to UNICEF and UNDP, 21 December 2020, [url](#)

³⁷⁴ BBC News, Iraq power cuts stir protests as summer temperatures scorch country, 2 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁷⁵ BBC News, Iraq power cuts stir protests as summer temperatures scorch country, 2 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁷⁶ BBC News, Iraq power cuts stir protests as summer temperatures scorch country, 2 July 2021, [url](#); AP, Power outages hit Iraq amid scorching temperatures, 2 July 2021, [url](#); DW, How to solve Iraq's hellishly hot power crisis, 8 July 2021, [url](#); VOA, Iraqis Protest Electricity Cuts as Temperatures Top 50 C, 1 July 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Basra protests erupt as power cuts hit scorching Iraq, 8 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁷⁷ Jamal Ali, B. et al., Factors Shaping Customer Satisfaction with Residential Flats: Evidence from Sulaymaniyah City, 10 May 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-2

³⁷⁸ UNHCR, Access to and Residency in Sulaymaniyah – Response to ACCORD, 25 October 2021, p. 3

³⁷⁹ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

³⁸⁰ Offers of real estate rentals in Sulaymaniyah [السليمانية عقارات في السليمانية][Facebook], شقة شاري نمونتي [Apartment in Nemonahi City], 2 October 2021, [url](#)

³⁸¹ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

³⁸² OpenSooq, شقة للبيع في مجمع صائب سبي [Apartment for sale in Sa'ib City complex], 17 August 2021, [url](#)

³⁸³ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

³⁸⁴ OpenSooq, منزل للبيع في السليمانية [House for sale in Sulaymaniyah], 12 September 2021, [url](#)

114 605.84³⁸⁵).³⁸⁶ IOM assessed average monthly expenses for rent in Sulaymaniyah's Khabat district to be 195 US dollars per month. In Khabat, rent was reportedly less than in other districts of the governorate.³⁸⁷

Water and sanitation

In June 2021, drought impacted Sulaymaniyah city, and in the whole governorate contaminated water caused a rise in diseases due to the consumption of non-potable water. The drought-related decline of publicly provided potable water forced people to buy it from private tankers.³⁸⁸ In August 2021, protests erupted in Tangro, 30 kilometres east of Sulaymaniyah, because of water shortages in the past five years. According to one protester, people had to pay for potable water from private tankers, one tanker costing 20 000 Iraqi dinars (EUR 11.75³⁸⁹).³⁹⁰

Electricity

In contrast to other regions in Iraq, which can only provide a few hours of electricity a day, Sulaymaniyah governorate provides on average 12 hours of electricity a day.³⁹¹

IDPs

ISIL-related conflict between 2014 and 2017 caused 'systematic and widespread destruction, looting, and confiscation of housing', which contributed to the displacement of people in Iraq's northern and western regions. Their houses having been ruined or being occupied or disputed, limited ability to access compensation for damage as well as lack of security were barriers for IDPs to return to their places of origin.³⁹² Particularly in Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah a large percentage of IDPs from the first waves of displacement in 2014 and 2015 was still present. IDPs in Sulaymaniyah and other regions in KRI lived in camps and in out-of-camp settings.³⁹³

According to UNOCHA, Sulaymaniyah, with 123 000, had the third largest overall number of out-of-camp IDPs in KRI in January 2021. 90 % of them lived in private, rented housing and about 500 IDPs lived in critical shelter in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil.³⁹⁴

IOM reported that Sulaymaniyah city hosted 90 075 IDPs living in 15 364 households as of 31 July 2021. The largest camp is the Ashti IDP camp holding 9 100 individuals or 1 820 households.³⁹⁵ No camps for IDPs were closed, and no closures are planned.³⁹⁶ The camps are equipped with six amps of electricity for each caravan, which can generate electricity around the clock.³⁹⁷ In Sulaymaniyah district, 0.1-10 % of IDP households suffered from a WASH LSG.³⁹⁸

Hardly any information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on housing and living conditions in Sulaymaniyah could be found.

³⁸⁵ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

³⁸⁶ OpenSooq, خانه‌ی 100 متری چوارگوشه (10 * 10) له‌باشترین شوونی به‌کره‌جۆی تازه‌دا, [100 square metres house in the best part of 'new Bakraj'], 19 August 2021, [url](#)

³⁸⁷ IOM, Labour Market Opportunities and Challenges: Sulaymaniyah District, Sulaymaniyah Governorate, May 2020, [url](#), p. 5

³⁸⁸ Kurdistan 24, Sulaimani warns of surge in waterborne illness as region feels drought effects, 10 June 2021, [url](#)

³⁸⁹ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 14 October

³⁹⁰ Shafaq News, Demonstrators in al-Sulaymaniyah block roads to protest potable water shortage, 15 August 2021, [url](#)

³⁹¹ AA, Oil-rich Iraq grapples with power outages for 30 years, 8 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁹² IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), p. 23

³⁹³ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), p. 48

³⁹⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 7 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 48-49, 105 endnote 24

³⁹⁵ IOM, DTM: IDP Master List 31-07-2021, 31 July 2021, [url](#)

³⁹⁶ Although a committee formed by the Iraqi Prime Minister aimed at closing all IDP camps in the KRI by 2021 (HRW, Iraq: Camp Expulsions Leave Families Homeless, Vulnerable, 2 December 2020, [url](#)).

³⁹⁷ Euro-Med Monitor, Exiled At Home: Internal displacement resulted from the armed conflict in Iraq and its humanitarian consequences, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 22, 30

³⁹⁸ REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 6

3. Overview of the situation as regards ID documents, security clearances, and COVID-19

3.1 Requirements to obtain ID documents

There are four documents in Iraq which were often required to update one another: the civil status ID³⁹⁹ [also called national ID⁴⁰⁰, *hawwiyat al-ahwal al-madaniya*⁴⁰¹, *bitaqa shakhsiya*⁴⁰², *bitaqa hawwiya*⁴⁰³], the nationality certificate⁴⁰⁴ [also called nationality card⁴⁰⁵, *shahadat al-jinsiya (al-'iraqiya)*⁴⁰⁶, *shahadat jinsiya*⁴⁰⁷], the Public Distribution System (PDS) card⁴⁰⁸ [also called ration card⁴⁰⁹, *al-bitafaq al-tamwiniya*⁴¹⁰] and the residency card⁴¹¹ [also called housing card⁴¹², housing information card⁴¹³, residence card⁴¹⁴, *bitaqa al-sakan*⁴¹⁵]. Furthermore, a combination of those four documents was required to access a number of services. Civil documentation processes are interlinked: in order to get a birth certificate for a child or a civil status ID for example, individuals had to present other documents such as official marriage certificates, birth certificates or death certificates. Since Iraq does not have a centralised, digitised civil registry, the relevant directorates often still relied on paper documents. Hence, a loss of those documents significantly complicated the procedure.⁴¹⁶ In the governorates Anbar, Ninawa and Salah Al-Din, which were all affected by

³⁹⁹ 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. 8

⁴⁰⁰ Signpost Project, Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?, July 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰¹ Iraq, Directorate of National Card Affairs, Home, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁰² Signpost Project, الوثائق والمستمسكات الرسمية العراقية: ما هي وكيف يمكنني الحصول عليها؟ [Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?], July 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰³ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 23

⁴⁰⁴ 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. 8

⁴⁰⁵ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 11

⁴⁰⁶ Signpost Project, الوثائق والمستمسكات الرسمية العراقية: ما هي وكيف يمكنني الحصول عليها؟ [Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?], July 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁷ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 23

⁴⁰⁸ CaLP, Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection in Iraq, 28 January 2021, [url](#), p. 12

⁴⁰⁹ 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. 15

⁴¹⁰ Signpost Project, الوثائق والمستمسكات الرسمية العراقية: ما هي وكيف يمكنني الحصول عليها؟ [Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?], July 2021, [url](#)

⁴¹¹ 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. 8

⁴¹² NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 17

⁴¹³ 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. 8

⁴¹⁴ Canada, IRB, Iraq: Nationality Certificate, including purpose and validity; requirements and procedures for the issuance, renewal and replacement; frequency of fraudulent certificates (2011-November 2013), 25 November 2013, [url](#)

⁴¹⁵ Signpost Project, الوثائق والمستمسكات الرسمية العراقية: ما هي وكيف يمكنني الحصول عليها؟ [Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?], July 2021, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 17

ISIL and the military operations against ISIL⁴¹⁷, reportedly challenges related to civil documentation access were most frequent.⁴¹⁸

In September 2015, the issuance of new electronic and biometric unified national cards⁴¹⁹ [also called new national card⁴²⁰, new ID card⁴²¹, *al-bitaqa al-wataniya al-muwahhada*⁴²², *al-bitaqa al-wataniya al-jadida*⁴²³] started in Iraq. The unified national card is supposed to replace the civil status ID and make the nationality certificate and ultimately the residency card obsolete, so that Iraqis will eventually have only one official ID document, while it was uncertain when the residency card will also be included.⁴²⁴ By obtaining a unified national card Iraqi citizens will be given a personal registration number.⁴²⁵ As of 2018, the civil status ID was still being issued in Civil Affairs Directorates (CAD) lacking the necessary equipment for the unified national card. Reportedly, some offices that had the equipment to issue unified national cards were also issuing civil status IDs as a temporary solution because of the long waiting time for the unified national card.⁴²⁶ As of September 2021, both identification systems reportedly existed in Iraq.⁴²⁷

3.1.1 Unified national card

According to a diplomatic source in Amman interviewed by Landinfo, both the unified national card and the civil status ID were issued at the local offices of the Directorate of National Card Affairs, situated all over the country⁴²⁸ and were referred to as Civil Affairs Directorate (CAD) offices.⁴²⁹ This directorate is part of the Directorate of Civil Status, Passports and Residencies of the General Directorate of Nationality which belongs to the Ministry of Interior.⁴³⁰ The offices can be found in most cities and in the provincial capitals. Both types of ID cards could only be issued in the district where the family was registered, which made it difficult for IDPs to obtain new documents as they often needed help if they lived in a province other than where they were registered.⁴³¹

Individuals applying for the unified national card had to book an appointment with the local office via the website of the Directorate of National Card Affairs and download an application form, which had to be completed and taken to the appointment. In addition, they had to submit their civil status ID and their nationality certificate. The website of the Directorate of National Card Affairs also requested applicants to submit their residency card with the application and it stated that the

⁴¹⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan Iraq, February 2021, [url](#), p. 9

⁴¹⁸ GPC, Protection Monitoring System, Report 1, February 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁴¹⁹ Signpost Project, Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?, July 2021, [url](#)

⁴²⁰ Signpost Project, Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?, July 2021, [url](#)

⁴²¹ Norway, Landinfo and Denmark, DIS, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card, November 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁴²² Signpost Project, الوثائق والمستمسكات الرسمية العراقية: ما هي وكيف يمكنني الحصول عليها؟ [Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?], July 2021, [url](#)

⁴²³ Signpost Project, الوثائق والمستمسكات الرسمية العراقية: ما هي وكيف يمكنني الحصول عليها؟ [Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?], July 2021, [url](#)

⁴²⁴ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents] [source: Norwegian embassy in Amman; Iraqi embassy in Norway], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 18

⁴²⁵ Norway, Landinfo and Denmark, DIS, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card [source: Director General Sami Jalal Hussein, Ministry of Interior, KRG], November 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁴²⁶ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents] [source: diplomatic source in Amman], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 22

⁴²⁷ Signpost Project, Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?, July 2021, [url](#); see also: Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 17 August 2020, [url](#), p. 65

⁴²⁸ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents], [source: diplomatic source in Amman], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 19

⁴²⁹ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs – Civil identity and documentation (June - July 2021), 9 September 2021, [url](#), pp. 1, 2

⁴³⁰ Iraq, Directorate of National Card Affairs, Home, n.d., [url](#)

⁴³¹ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents] [source: diplomatic source in Amman], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 19

original documents needed to be presented.⁴³² Referring to information of 2016, Landinfo noted that the PDS card had to be handed in as well and that all of the aforementioned documents would be considered invalid upon issuance of the unified nationality card and would be retained.⁴³³

It is mandatory for applicants to appear in person to submit their application, because a photo, an iris scan and fingerprints will be taken. Subsequently, the application is sent to a central office in Baghdad together with the biometrics, where the information is checked.⁴³⁴ It costs 5 000 Iraqi dinars (IQD) (EUR 2.90⁴³⁵) to get the unified national card issued, both at the first issuance and upon renewal after the expiration of the validity period. Should the card be damaged or get lost, the issuance of a new card costs 10 000 IQD (EUR 5.80⁴³⁶) and 25 000 IQD (EUR 14.51⁴³⁷), respectively.⁴³⁸ In accordance with the Act on National ID Cards of 2016 a new unified national card has to be issued in the event of loss or damage to the card.⁴³⁹ All newborns will be given the unified national card provided that they are registered in an area where the population registration office has the necessary equipment.⁴⁴⁰ No information was found regarding the requirement for children in Iraq to give biometric data, such as an iris scan and fingerprints, for the application. In the KRI, however, children below the age of 12 were reportedly not required to give biometry to get a unified national card.⁴⁴¹

With a few deviations, the aforementioned procedure applies for the KRI. According to Abdulrahman Ismael Azaz, Director of the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status in Erbil, which belongs to the Ministry of the Interior of the KRG, interviewed in 2018 by Landinfo and DIS, in Erbil, people did not need to make an appointment via the website, because many people did not have internet access. Applicants needed to present their civil status ID, their nationality certificate and their residency card with the application. The documents handed in were first checked at the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status and only after the document check was finished, they were sent to the main servers in Baghdad, where the personal identification number was produced. According to Director Azaz, the applicants' fingerprints of all ten fingers had to be taken as well.⁴⁴²

The card was valid for ten years but, when the civil status changed, e.g., through marriage or divorce, a renewal was required by submitting a new application for the issuance of a new unified national card.⁴⁴³

In the KRI, only a picture was required when applying for the unified national card for children under the age of 12. Furthermore, the parents needed to present a court document attesting the marriage

⁴³² Iraq, Directorate of National Card Affairs, Home, n.d., [url](#)

⁴³³ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Innføring av nytt nasjonalt ID-kort og digitalisering av folkeregisteret [Iraq: Introduction of a new national ID card and digitization of the population register] [source: Norwegian embassy in Amman], 16 February 2017, [url](#), p. 3

⁴³⁴ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Innføring av nytt nasjonalt ID-kort og digitalisering av folkeregisteret [Iraq: Introduction of a new national ID card and digitization of the population register] [source: Norwegian embassy in Amman], 16 February 2017, [url](#), p. 3; Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents] [source: Norwegian embassy in Amman], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 24;

⁴³⁵ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 7 October 2021

⁴³⁶ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 7 October 2021

⁴³⁷ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 7 October 2021

⁴³⁸ Iraq, Act on National ID Cards, 1 February 2016, [url](#), Art. 37 (1-3)

⁴³⁹ Iraq, Act on National ID Cards, 1 February 2016, [url](#), Art. 34

⁴⁴⁰ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 21

⁴⁴¹ Norway, Landinfo and Denmark, DIS, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card, November 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁴⁴² Norway, Landinfo and Denmark, DIS, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card [source: Director Abdulrahman Ismael Azaz, Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status, Erbil, Ministry of the Interior, KRG], November 2018, [url](#), pp. 6-7

⁴⁴³ Norway, Landinfo and Denmark, DIS, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card [source: Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status], November 2018, [url](#), p. 6

as well as two witnesses. When the child reached the age of 12, it had to give full biometry to get a unified national card.⁴⁴⁴

Iraqi women with either deceased or missing husbands, who needed to have civil documentation issued, had to undergo a lengthier and more complex process of proving the circumstances of their husband's death and providing a marriage certificate, which were necessary to obtain birth certificates, nationality certificates or civil IDs for their children.⁴⁴⁵

The unified national card was reportedly criticised by human rights monitoring bodies for being discriminatory, limited in regard to freedom of religion and lacking equal status for men and women. The registration of a child's name for example was reportedly only allowed under the father's name, because only he can establish affiliation, while a mother did not have the right to request an ID card for her child. This situation led back to Article 19(2) of the National Identity Card Law of 2016. Moreover, according to Article 20(2) of the same law, foundlings were considered to be Muslim and Iraqi, which was discriminatory in regard to other religions and denied individuals the right to choose their own religion. Similarly, Article 26 allowed non-Muslims to change their religion, but it did not refer to a possible change of religions of Muslims.⁴⁴⁶

3.1.2 Civil status ID

While the civil status IDs were being phased out, they were still issued where the correct equipment was not available for the issuance of the unified national card.⁴⁴⁷ As of 2018, in the KRI, the unified national cards were being issued in the bigger cities, while outside them, the civil status ID was still being issued.⁴⁴⁸

According to information obtained in a meeting with the General Directorate of Nationality in Bagdad in 2012 by Landinfo, it was necessary to fill out an application form, which had to be signed by the head of the household, the guardian or lawyer, and to attach two passport photos, when applying for an old type of ID card. In addition, the applicant's identity had to be documented by presenting a birth certificate at the first issue and an ID card from a close relative such as a father or grandfather. The fee for getting civil status ID is 1 000 IQD (EUR 0.58⁴⁴⁹)⁴⁵⁰. A webpage of the information service Signpost Project, dealing with civil documentation in Iraq, stated that a residence card as well as a 'residence support letter' were also required for the application and that was possible to process the application in one day in case no information or document was missing.⁴⁵¹ Children below the age of two years were not required to hand in a photo and photos of women in hijab were accepted. Authorities in the Kurdistan region required four photographs.⁴⁵²

A husband or father can apply for the civil status ID for his wife or children, unless the civil status ID gets lost, in case of which the applicants have to appear in person. This does not apply to children under the age of twelve. It is possible to authorize another person to apply for the civil status ID and

⁴⁴⁴ Norway, Landinfo and Denmark, DIS, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card [source: Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status], November 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁴⁴⁵ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁴⁶ Yassen, A. O., Report on Citizenship law: Iraq, European University Institute, May 2021, [url](#), p 18; see also: Iraq, National Card Law No (3) of the year 2016 [قانون البطاقة الوطنية رقم (٣) لسنة ٢٠١٦], 2016, [url](#), pp. 15, 18

⁴⁴⁷ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 22

⁴⁴⁸ Norway, Landinfo and Denmark, DIS, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card [source: Director General Sami Jalal Hussein, Ministry of Interior, KRG], November 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁴⁴⁹ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 7 October 2021

⁴⁵⁰ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents] [source: General Directorate of Nationality], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 23

⁴⁵¹ Signpost Project, Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them, July 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁵² Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 23

it is common to ask a relative for help. The identity of both the applicant and the person authorized has to be documented. In the KRI, it has also been possible to issue civil status IDs via a proxy.⁴⁵³

3.1.3 Birth certificate

Parents must obtain a birth certificate from the hospital where the child was born in order to register a new-born child in Iraq. In case the child is born outside of health facilities, the certificate can be obtained from the obstetrician or a licensed nurse or midwife.⁴⁵⁴ According to the results of a household survey published in 2018, 16,4 % of children in Iraq were born at home.⁴⁵⁵ DRC, IRC, and NRC reported that the civil IDs of both the child's father and mother as well as a state-issued marriage certificate, in case the IDs were not updated in that regard yet, were cited by members of focus group discussions⁴⁵⁶ as a general requirement across the three governorates Anbar, Ninawa and Salah Al-Din previously held by ISIL for giving birth in a hospital.⁴⁵⁷

UNICEF and UNAMI reported that a distinction had to be made between children born in areas under the control of ISIL. On the one hand, there were cases in which both parents were Iraqi nationals and were married before ISIL gained control of the provinces they lived in. On the other hand, there were couples who got officially married under ISIL control but were not affiliated with ISIL. In the first case, both parents had to go to the Personal Status Court which issued proof of paternity and a birth certificate for the child. If one of the parents was deceased or unknown, the death certificate for the deceased spouse had to be presented. In case the unknown parent was the father, the child was termed a foundling under Iraqi Law. In order for the mother to keep the child, she had to prove that she was the biological mother by undergoing a DNA test.⁴⁵⁸

For married couples who got married under ISIL control slight variations to the beforehand described general procedure applied. The marriage was treated as a marriage conducted outside the court and had to be registered again.⁴⁵⁹ Marriages in Iraq have to be registered in a Personal Status Court, which issues the marriage certificates.⁴⁶⁰ This court had to decide regarding proof of paternity and registration of the birth certificate for the child and had to inform the relevant Directorate of Civil Status, which then issued the birth certificate.⁴⁶¹

Once the marriage was registered in a state court, the couple was able to update their marital status in their ID cards, which was 'a complicated and lengthy process'.⁴⁶² In case both partners still possessed their ID cards, it was possible to retroactively register the marriage in a Personal Status Court by bringing along two witnesses. With the thereupon obtained marriage certificate, they were able to update their marital status on their ID cards and subsequently get a birth certificate for their child.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵³ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 24

⁴⁵⁴ UNHCR, Birth registration, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁵⁵ Moazzem Hossain, S. M. et al., Maternal and Neonatal Health in Select Districts of Iraq: Findings from a Recent Household Survey, 2018, [url](#), pp. 5, 7

⁴⁵⁶ Research was conducted in Anbar, Ninawa, and Salah Al-Din governorates. Six focus group discussions in each governorate and a total of 18 across all three governorates were conducted.

⁴⁵⁷ 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. 13

⁴⁵⁸ UNICEF and UNAMI, Analysis of the legal framework governing civil documentation in Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁵⁹ UNICEF and UNAMI, Analysis of the legal framework governing civil documentation in Iraq, 2019, [url](#), pp. 3-4

⁴⁶⁰ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Muslimska ekteskapsinngåelse og skilsmisse [Iraq: Muslim marriage and divorce], 12 September 2014, [url](#), p. 7

⁴⁶¹ UNICEF and UNAMI, Analysis of the legal framework governing civil documentation in Iraq, 2019, [url](#), pp. 3-4

⁴⁶² NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 17

⁴⁶³ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 17

Some judges from Mosul region were reported to demand an approval of the Public Prosecutor's Office before issuing a proof of paternity certificate though this practice was not backed by the law and was thought to be based on a legal misinterpretation. According to UNICEF and UNAMI 'it is viewed by many as adding another layer of complication, causing further delays and acting as an additional obstacle to obtaining birth registration and civil documentation for children.'⁴⁶⁴ Hospitals reportedly refused to register a birth in the absence of the ID cards of the parents or – in case the father was deceased – the absence of a death certificate.⁴⁶⁵ According to a source of April 2019 'without the marriage certificate and both civil IDs, registering a birth is either delayed until these documents or suitable alternatives are obtained, or not possible at all.'⁴⁶⁶

The birth certificate then needed to be presented to the Directorate of Health in order to be validated and recorded in the Birth and Deceased logs. In the central and southern governorates, a copy of the endorsed birth certificate needed to be delivered by one of the parents to the CAD for the family record.⁴⁶⁷

3.1.4 Nationality certificate

A nationality certificate is issued to all Iraqi nationals upon application. Children normally obtain them around the age of 12.⁴⁶⁸ In practice, both the ID card and nationality certificate were required to obtain certain services such as health services or education access.⁴⁶⁹

Referring to information obtained in 2013 from IOM, the Canadian immigration authorities reported that Iraqis living in Iraq needed to present a nationality certificate from the father or a brother, their own ID card, their own or their father's residency card, their own or their father's PDS card and four passport photos against a white background in order to be issued a nationality certificate.⁴⁷⁰

3.1.5 Residency card

The residency card is a 'proof of an individual's place of residence and must be routinely presented as part of the application procedure for other identity cards and for access to a range of services.' It is issued by the Ministry of Interior to the head of the household.⁴⁷¹ Information on requirements to obtain the residency card in Iraq is scarce. The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada stated in 2013 with reference to an IOM representative in Iraq that for the issuance, renewal and replacement of the residency card applicants needed to present an original and a copy of the nationality certificate for the applicant and the applicant's wife and children, an original and copy of the civil status ID for the applicant and the applicant's wife and children, the original and a copy of the residency card of the applicant's father, the original and a copy of the PDS card of the applicant or his father, the original and a copy of the marriage certificate and a support of residence from the

⁴⁶⁴ UNICEF and UNAMI, Analysis of the legal framework governing civil documentation in Iraq, 2019, [url](#), pp. 3-4

⁴⁶⁵ 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. 14

⁴⁶⁶ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 17

⁴⁶⁷ UNHCR, Birth registration, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁶⁸ Norway, Landinfo, Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 [source: General Directorate of Nationality], [url](#), pp. 23-24.

⁴⁶⁹ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of EASO Report on Internal Mobility, 10 October 2018, cited from EASO, COI Report: Iraq – Internal Mobility, February 2019, [url](#), p. 20, footnote 84

⁴⁷⁰ Canada, IRB, Iraq: Nationality Certificate, including purpose and validity; requirements and procedures for the issuance, renewal and replacement; frequency of fraudulent certificates (2011-November 2013), 25 November 2013, [url](#)

⁴⁷¹ 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. 8

Municipal Council as well as four photos with a white background.⁴⁷² UNHCR explained that furthermore, ‘in order to obtain a housing card, the head of household is required to present an official housing deed or rental contract with his/her name on it’.⁴⁷³

The aforementioned residency card is not to be confused with the residency permit issued in the KRI, which was sometimes also referred to as residence card, but was basically a security clearance permit issued by the *Asayish* to individuals who did not originate from the KRI and wished to stay in the KRI longer than a month, such as Iraqi Arabs or Turkmen, individuals from previously ISIL-held areas or areas affected by the conflict. Those individuals had to register at the *Asayish* office close to their envisaged place of residency.⁴⁷⁴ They then received what was called an ID card⁴⁷⁵, a residency permit⁴⁷⁶ or a residence card⁴⁷⁷. In Dohuk governorate, if they wished to stay longer than a month, a sponsor was further required for the application and the issued residency permit was reportedly valid for up to six months, while for Sulaymaniyah and Erbil, it was stated that the permit was ‘usually valid for a year’. However, single Arab and Turkmen men only received a renewable residency permit for one month in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil. Though it was possible to apply for a one-year permit, it required a proof of regular employment and a support letter from the employee and was reportedly seldomly issued.⁴⁷⁸

3.1.6 Public Distribution System (PDS) card

Holders of the PDS card were provided a monthly food ration via the Public Distribution System of the government, managed by the Ministry of Trade (MoT). The card was issued to the head of household, and contained a list of the names of all household members.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷² Canada, IRB, Iraq: Residence Card and Public Distribution System (PDS) ration card, including purpose and validity; requirements and procedures for the issuance, renewal and replacement of the cards; frequency of fraudulent cards; whether a person can live in the country without these cards (1991-November 2013), 25 November 2013, [url](#)

⁴⁷³ UNHCR, UNHCR eligibility guidelines for assessing the international protection needs of asylum-seekers from Iraq, 31 May 2012, [url](#), p. 207, footnote 1342

⁴⁷⁴ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 4; p. 4, footnote 9

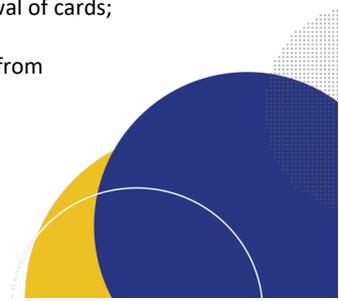
⁴⁷⁵ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 17 August 2020, [url](#), p. 65

⁴⁷⁶ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁷⁷ Canada, IRB, Iraq: The Foreigner’s Residence Card issued in the Kurdistan region, including purpose and validity; status afforded by the card, including access to employment and services and the ability to return and reside in Iraq; requirements and procedures for the issuance and renewal of cards; information included on the card (2015-October 2017), 30 October 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁸ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 4; see also Canada, IRB, Iraq: The Foreigner’s Residence Card issued in the Kurdistan region, including purpose and validity; status afforded by the card, including access to employment and services and the ability to return and reside in Iraq; requirements and procedures for the issuance and renewal of cards; information included on the card (2015-October 2017), 30 October 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁹ 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. 8



Several sources indicated that the PDS card was one of the key civil documents in Iraq⁴⁸⁰ which sometimes also served as an identity document.⁴⁸¹ Humanitarian and UN agencies used the card to verify family units that were out to receive assistance.⁴⁸²

In order to get a PDS card, it is necessary to present a civil ID and a residency card. Should the family composition change in any way, the PDS card had to be updated by handing in a marriage, birth or death certificate respectively.⁴⁸³

In cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP), as of summer 2020, the Government of Iraq was working on the digitalisation of the PDS System in a pilot study via the MoT. The smartphone app Tamwini ('My Food Ration'⁴⁸⁴), which was launched on 8 July 2020 as a pilot project in Baghdad⁴⁸⁵, was supposed to enable households to remotely update family information using their smartphone.⁴⁸⁶

3.2 ID documents and access to services

The ID card and other state-issued civil documents⁴⁸⁷, i.e., the PDS card, the nationality certificate, the residency card,⁴⁸⁸ the passport, and certificates of birth, death, and marriage,⁴⁸⁹ are required to access the rights stipulated by the law, e.g., healthcare, education, and freedom of movement within the country, the state justice system, and social welfare.⁴⁹⁰ In addition, possession of a legal identity enables access to humanitarian assistance for displaced persons.⁴⁹¹

The ID card is used in all contact with public authorities. It is necessary to access health services, social welfare services, schools and for buying and selling a home and a car. In addition, it must be presented when applying for other official documents, such as passports.⁴⁹² Stateless persons who were not able to register for ID cards were reported to be unable to register marriages and to gain access to some government services without ID cards.⁴⁹³

According to a 2015 report, a nationality certificate was required when applying for work in the public sector, educational contexts and other public services. Furthermore, 'the nationality certificate is a required breeder document when applying for a passport, birth certificates for own children, a marriage certificate and death certificate'⁴⁹⁴. In practice, both the ID card and nationality

⁴⁸⁰ CaLP, Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection in Iraq, 28 January 2021, [url](#), p. 12; REACH, Iraq: Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment - Key Findings for Iraq, September 2020, 2 June 2021, [url](#), p. 12, footnote 3; Yassen, A. O., Report on Citizenship law: Iraq, European University Institute, May 2021, [url](#), pp. 8-9

⁴⁸¹ 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. 15

⁴⁸² CaLP, Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection in Iraq, 28 January 2021, [url](#), p. 12, footnote 10

⁴⁸³ 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. 15

⁴⁸⁴ WFP, Iraq Country Brief, June 2020, 27 July 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁸⁵ CaLP, Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection in Iraq, 28 January 2021, [url](#), p. 13

⁴⁸⁶ WFP, Iraq Country Brief, June 2020, 27 July 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁸⁷ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, 30 April 2019, [url](#), p. 11

⁴⁸⁸ 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

⁴⁸⁹ AI, Legacy of Terror: The Plight of Yazidi Child Survivors of ISIS, 30 July 2020, [url](#), p. 51

⁴⁹⁰ 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. 11; 5-6; UNHCR, Iraq – UNHCR Civil Documentation for IDPs, December 2019, [url](#), p. 1; see also AI, Legacy of Terror: The Plight of Yazidi Child Survivors of ISIS, 30 July 2020, [url](#), p. 51; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview – Iraq, February 2021, [url](#), p. 20

⁴⁹¹ AI, Legacy of Terror: The Plight of Yazidi Child Survivors of ISIS, 30 July 2020, [url](#), p. 51

⁴⁹² Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter [Iraq: Travel documents and other ID documents], 11 April 2018, [url](#), p. 18

⁴⁹³ USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 57

⁴⁹⁴ Norway, Landinfo, Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015, [url](#), p. 24

certificate were required to obtain services such as health, social welfare, education access, and when buying and selling property such as houses or vehicles, and could also be requested from people crossing check points.⁴⁹⁵ As mentioned in section [3.1.4 Nationality certificate](#), holders of the unified national card do not need to present their nationality certificate because it is already encompassed in the unified national card.

Paperless Iraqi families in urban areas formerly under ISIL control were not only limited in essential services but also in ‘their ability to recover and rebuild their lives’ after the war due to their lack of necessary documents. In addition to the above-mentioned restrictions, they had limited access to formal employment, government compensation schemes for damaged housing, and opportunities to own or rent property. People without civil documents were barred from accessing a significant portion of Iraq's recovery and reconstruction efforts.⁴⁹⁶

Moreover, people without documents also faced a considerably higher risk of arbitrary detention and arrest. Reasons for individuals lacking documents could be manifold: some lost their documents when fleeing their homes; for others, they were confiscated by various factions in the conflict; and still others received ISIL documents that were of no value anymore.⁴⁹⁷ Especially, IDPs and returnees were reported to be severely impacted by a lack of documentation.⁴⁹⁸ Marginalised groups such as Fails Kurds, Bidoons, the Dom (Roma) and Palestinian refugees also had been barred access to civil documents, such as the ID card or the nationality certificate, or have faced difficulties in accessing them.⁴⁹⁹

In April 2019, it was reported that 45 000 children displaced in camps had not received Iraqi-state issued birth certificates or other documents providing their legal identity. Children without legal documents faced a high risk of being condemned to spend their lives on the margins of society. They were not able to travel within the country, attend formal schools or obtain educational certificates and had no access to health-care or state social-welfare programs. If this issue is not resolved before they reach adulthood, these children are at risk of not having their marriages state-recognized, not being able to own or rent property, and lacking a fair chance at formal employment. Moreover, not owning civil documents puts children at increased risk of statelessness.⁵⁰⁰

Difficulties in obtaining a death or missing person certificate furthermore affected women’s access to services in cases where relevant documents were issued in the names of their husbands or fathers. NRC stated that this included claiming unpaid salaries of spouses.⁵⁰¹ Furthermore, to acquire an ID card, women reportedly needed the consent of a male relative.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁵ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of EASO Report on Internal Mobility, 10 October 2018, cited from EASO, COI Report: Iraq – Internal Mobility, February 2019, [url](#), p. 20, footnote 84

⁴⁹⁶ 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. 6

⁴⁹⁷ 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. 5-6

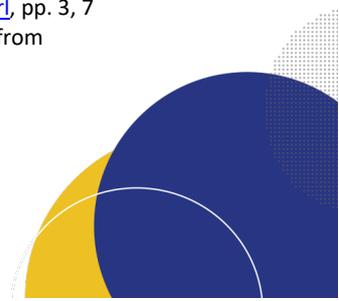
⁴⁹⁸ UNHCR, Over 29,500 internally displaced persons in camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq receive civil identification documents [Press release], 6 July 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁹⁹ Yassen, A. O., Report on Citizenship Law: Iraq, European University Institute, May 2021, [url](#), pp. 8-9

⁵⁰⁰ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), pp. 3, 7

⁵⁰¹ 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

⁵⁰² USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 27



3.2.1 Education

The directives of the MoE stipulate that several types of civil documentation, including the PDS card⁵⁰³ and the ID cards of the students and their parents, are required for school enrolment.⁵⁰⁴ Children from previously ISIL-held areas were reported to face difficulties in school enrolment due to missing required civil documentation and experienced problems obtaining it from the authorities.⁵⁰⁵ This situation was reported to persist despite the issuance of a ministerial directive in 2018⁵⁰⁶ that allows undocumented children to attend school, as a number of education officials interviewed by DRC, IRC, and NRC were unaware of the directive. Furthermore, there was diverging information circulating about what types of civil documents were required to attend school. While some thought that the student's ID card was required, others assumed that the ID card of the father and the mother were also required, and that, in case the father was deceased, his death certificate had to be submitted. The issuance of a death certificate was reported to depict an extremely protracted, expensive, and difficult procedure. In addition, among officials who were aware of a directive, there were discrepancies regarding its content as well.⁵⁰⁷

In a September 2019 published survey, more than half the respondents in Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah Al-Din stated that a woman could not enrol their children in school by using only her papers. Almost half of the respondents indicated that the father's ID card or, if deceased, the father's death certificate was also necessary for this purpose.⁵⁰⁸ The same survey found that 18 % of respondents who said their children lacked civil documentation reported that their children were denied access to education due to this reason.⁵⁰⁹

3.2.2 Health-Care

Basically, all citizens of Iraq have access to the health system, since a health insurance system does not exist in Iraq. Public hospitals can be consulted in order to get checked by a physician for relatively low charges and medicine can be acquired for lower prices than in the private sector.⁵¹⁰ While a 2019 IOM report indicated that a valid ID card must be presented to register for treatment at a health care facility,⁵¹¹ a 2019 NRC report stated that, for routine consultations, civil documents were not required. However, for inpatient stays, surgeries, and other major procedures, an ID card was required. Reportedly, ID requirements varied at health care facilities across the country.⁵¹²

In practice, the documentation requirements for accessing hospitals or medical facilities reportedly varied a lot in Iraq. NRC reported the case of a pregnant woman with a missing husband from Mosul. Because she was not in possession of a valid ID card or a marriage certificate, she was turned down

⁵⁰³ IOM, Country Fact Sheet Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 9

⁵⁰⁴ UNAMI and OHCHR, The Right to Education in Iraq, Part One: The legacy of ISIL territorial control and access to education, February 2020, [url](#), p. 11, see also IOM, Country Fact Sheet Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 9

⁵⁰⁵ HRW, Iraq: School Doors Barred to Many Children, 28 August 2019, [url](#); UN Human Right Council, Visit to Iraq, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons [A/HRC/44/41/Add.1], 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 44

⁵⁰⁶ UNICEF, Iraq: Humanitarian Situation Report, December 2018 [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁰⁷ 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

⁵⁰⁸ 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. 12

⁵⁰⁹ 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. 26

⁵¹⁰ IOM, Country Fact Sheet Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 4

⁵¹¹ IOM, Country Fact Sheet Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 4

⁵¹² 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. 13; see also DSP, Far from Home: Future Prospects for Syrian Refugees in Iraq, January 2019, [url](#), p. 24

by two different hospitals and eventually gave birth at home. For the Hawija area in Kirkuk, it was reported that women without documentation were allowed to give birth in hospitals, however these children were not issued birth certificates by the hospitals. Without a birth certificate, new-borns would not receive vaccinations, which has led to the emergence of children's diseases which were not present in the area before ISIL.⁵¹³

3.2.3 Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

According to a survey published in September 2019, individuals without ID cards were less likely to be the owners of the properties they lived in or to have rental contracts for rented properties, therefore facing an increased risk of eviction. Various types of documents were reported to be required for renting a home, such as the head of household's ID card, nationality certificate, residency card and PDS card. As far as housing, land and property rights were concerned, the local tribal official (*mukhtar*) played the role of an important interlocutor. In some cities, such as Mosul, Tikrit, or Ramadi, the approval from the *mukhtar* had to be obtained first. For Mosul city, it was reported that without a valid ID card, a *mukhtar* would not agree to a tenancy or validate a contract. Furthermore, he needed to be presented the aforementioned documents which he would then submit to the local intelligence office for a final approval. Reportedly, all of these documents, as well as a household-level security clearance, were also necessary in order to file a housing or property dispute in court.⁵¹⁴

Members of the Yazidi community were reported to have only limited chances to restore HLP rights as many had lost civil and property documents during the forced displacement.⁵¹⁵ A study published in May 2020 found that especially in the districts of Sinjar, Tal Afar, and Tal Keif IDPs mentioned the lack of HLP documentation as one of the main barriers to return.⁵¹⁶

Households headed by paperless women were reported to encounter additional hurdles when it comes to claiming housing, land or property rights. This was due to the fact that their names were often not mentioned in property deeds, which could be challenging when a woman's husband was either missing or deceased, and the woman wasn't able to acquire a death certificate, or substantiate her rights.⁵¹⁷

3.2.4 Social Welfare

Iraq's Public Distribution System provides for monthly food distributions, including flour, rice, sugar, beans and cooking oil, for every Iraqi who earns less than 1 million IQD (EUR 580.40⁵¹⁸) per month and is not employed by the government. However, paperless people cannot benefit from the PDS, as a PDS card from the area of origin of the head of the household is needed, for the issuance of which an ID card and a residency card are required. In case the family composition changed in some way, the PDS card has to be updated by presenting a marriage, birth or death certificate, respectively.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹³ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 13

⁵¹⁴ 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. 14

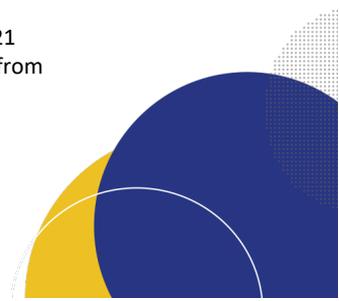
⁵¹⁵ Salih, S.Y and Qadr, K.M., How the Deprivation of Land Ownership Makes Minority Groups more Vulnerable: An Examination of the Case of Yazidis in Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 116

⁵¹⁶ USIP and MERI, Ninewa Plains and Western Ninewa, Barriers to Return and Community Resilience, A Meta-analysis of Existing Studies and Literature, 7 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 31, 33, 36

⁵¹⁷ 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. 14-15

⁵¹⁸ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 7 October 2021

⁵¹⁹ 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. 15



In order to receive additional welfare services provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), such as unemployment assistance or a disability allowance, applicants had to provide the ID cards and nationality certificates for all household members, as well as a residency card.⁵²⁰ According to another source, to receive social assistance, the Iraqi ID card and a PDS card were required for registration, but the MoLSA could ask for additional documents based on the individual case as well.⁵²¹ As of September 2019, it was reported that the registration for MoLSA cash assistance had been closed in June 2016.⁵²² In September 2021, the Iraqi government announced the launch of a social protection reform in collaboration with UNICEF, the WFP and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the support of the European Union aiming at establishing a ‘sustainable and more inclusive system for those in need’. It is supposed to prioritize children, youth, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, displaced persons and workers in the informal sector. Reportedly, the PDS card (in digitized form) will continue to play a central role even under the new arrangement.⁵²³

3.3 IDPs and returnees

An IOM study which carried out a survey between March and December 2020 found that 8 % of IDPs in Tuz Khurmatu⁵²⁴, 6 % in Baquba⁵²⁵, 3 % in Mosul⁵²⁶, 2 % in Bagdad and Abu Ghraib⁵²⁷ and 1 % in Tikrit⁵²⁸ reported having issues regarding access to documents and security clearance.⁵²⁹ Findings of the National Protection Cluster of Iraq monitoring the protection situation between July and August 2021 show that 49 % of 2 097 interviewed key informants (among them 698 IDPs and returnees) across 18 governorates said that ‘some or most people are facing issues to obtain or renew their civil documentation’, while access to civil documentation was reported to be most hindered in Dohuk, Anbar and Ninawa.⁵³⁰

The Civil Status Law requires applicants to renew their identification documents in their place of origin. Hence, IDPs needed to travel back to their hometown for the relevant application process. However, the return of IDPs to areas previously held by ISIL was described as problematic due to ‘local “decrees” and threats of violence’.⁵³¹ Some IDPs were reportedly blocked from returning to their areas of origin because of the alleged ISIL affiliation of a family member and were therefore, among others, facing difficulties in obtaining civil documents.⁵³² However, UNHCR was implementing mobile missions in order to make it easier for IDPs to access civil documentation.⁵³³ For further information on the mobile missions, please refer to section [3.3.1 Obtaining lost ID documents](#). Meanwhile, the top three reported barriers to accessing civil documentation, according to the

⁵²⁰ 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. 15

⁵²¹ IOM, Country Fact Sheet Iraq, 2019, [url](#), p. 7

⁵²² 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. 15

⁵²³ WFP, The Government of Iraq, UNICEF, WFP and ILO partner to reform social protection with support from the European Union, 21 September 2021, [url](#)

⁵²⁴ IOM, Urban Displacement in Federal Iraq, 14 March 2021, [url](#), p. 33

⁵²⁵ IOM, Urban Displacement in Federal Iraq, 14 March 2021, [url](#), p. 13

⁵²⁶ IOM, Urban Displacement in Federal Iraq, 14 March 2021, [url](#), p. 23

⁵²⁷ IOM, Urban Displacement in Federal Iraq, 14 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8

⁵²⁸ IOM, Urban Displacement in Federal Iraq, 14 March 2021, [url](#), p. 28

⁵²⁹ The study focuses on ten urban centres in Iraq, namely the cities of Baghdad/Abu Ghraib, Baquba, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Mosul, Sulaymaniyah, Tikrit, Tuz Khurmatu and Zakho, where data were collected at household-level between March and December 2020.

⁵³⁰ Protection Cluster Iraq, Protection Monitoring System/Community Level: Third Round, n.d., [url](#)

⁵³¹ 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

⁵³² CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq’s most vulnerable: The plight of displaced persons, April 2021, [url](#), pp. 1, 12

⁵³³ UNHCR, Iraq: UNHCR civil documentation for IDPs, November 2019, [url](#), p. 2

forementioned National Protection Cluster findings, were the ‘complexity, cost and length of the administrative process’; the inaccessibility of CADs or courts ‘due to distance and/or cost of transportation’; and ‘the inability to provide the required documentation for applications’.⁵³⁴ In addition, according to an interview with a staff member from an NGO working in Mosul, ‘frequent harassment’ of displaced women may prevent them from consulting civil authority offices.⁵³⁵

Regarding the cost for the renewal of lost documents, respondents flagged widespread corruption, bribery, and the need to use interpersonal connections (*wasta*), especially in Mosul. Several respondents indicated that they needed to pay 50 000 IQD (EUR 29.39)^{536]} for a blood test required to formalize marriages in Tikrit, while the blood test had reportedly been free of charge before 2014.⁵³⁷ Moreover, a ‘serious backlog’ in providing civil documentation to people living in former ISIL-held areas was reported in 2019. This was due to ‘the sheer number of people who lost documents over the last four years’ as well as the effects of the conflict on administrative institutions and services, which led to the disappearance of some services in these areas.⁵³⁸ Overcrowdedness of the civil directorates (most serious in Anbar, Salah Al-Din and Ninawa) overstrained courts and bureaucracy made it difficult for Iraqis to obtain documents. In Mosul, IDPs and returnees signaled significant delays in the process of document renewal.⁵³⁹

3.3.1 Obtaining lost ID documents

The first step in the process for obtaining new civil registration documents in Iraq was to apply for security clearance by submitting one’s name to the intelligence forces in the applicant’s area. Security clearances were required for residents of areas formerly under ISIL control. The names were checked against a database of ISIL affiliates, and the application was denied if a relative’s name appeared in the database. Otherwise, the IDP was handed out a document confirming clearance.⁵⁴⁰ However, perceived ISIL affiliation often led to the denial of security clearances by officials and hence, to problems for displaced households in obtaining civil documentation.⁵⁴¹

For detailed information about security clearance and the steps returnees need to take in case they are suspected of ISIL affiliation, please see section [3.3.3 Security clearance requirement for returnees](#).

Persons with a missing or deceased relative were not able to obtain documents until the government located the body of the relative. Due to the difficulty in proving death in Mosul, the relatives were required to declare the person missing in a police station with the testimony of two men or four women. The Criminal Investigation Court then opened a case and the relatives were required to publish a public notice in the newspaper. After two years without any news from the missing persons, the relatives could request that the person be declared dead by the Personal Status Court, although this could take up to four years according to the source.⁵⁴² According to a 2018

⁵³⁴ Protection Cluster Iraq, Protection Monitoring System/Civil Status and Documentation: Third Round, n.d., [url](#)

⁵³⁵ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq’s most vulnerable: The plight of displaced persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 16

⁵³⁶ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 6 October 2021

⁵³⁷ 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

⁵³⁸ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 19

⁵³⁹ 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. 20

⁵⁴⁰ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq’s most vulnerable: The plight of displaced persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 13; HRW, Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures, 3 June 2021 [url](#); UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), pp. 2-3; 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

⁵⁴¹ USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 31

⁵⁴² 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

report citing government sources, Iraqi law provides for something that 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 [Iraqi Security Forces] or affiliated forces.’⁵⁴³

As outlined in section [3.1 Requirements to obtain ID documents](#), in order to obtain new documentation, individuals have to present several civil documents that may be missing as well. ISIL ‘routinely confiscated and destroyed civil and other state-issued documents, instead issuing their own documentation that is not recognized by the Iraqi state’, such as marriage certificates. Therefore, the larger part of the families who lived under ISIL rule between 2014 and 2017 miss certain civil documents. Other reasons for missing civil documentation are the loss of documents during the fighting or having them confiscated by security actors.⁵⁴⁴

Since April 2019, UNHCR has implemented mobile missions in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior through which government officials were sent to IDPs in camps and out-of-camp locations to issue civil documentation.⁵⁴⁵ This enabled IDPs to have access to civil documentation without the need to travel to their area of origin.⁵⁴⁶ IDPs and returnees were furthermore helped to get access to legal advice and representation.⁵⁴⁷ As of July 2021, UNHCR was still supporting the mobile missions and was helping IDPs and returnees to get access to legal advice and representation in collaboration with legal assistance partners.⁵⁴⁸ 25 048 individuals made use of legal assistance and 37 255 civil documents were issued with the support of this programme between January to July 2021.⁵⁴⁹

While courts and civil affairs offices were reported to have worked at full capacity during the first quarter of 2021, some COVID-19 restrictions were imposed by the end of March.⁵⁵⁰ However, some of the restrictions were lifted between June and July 2021 and previously halted applications for the unified national card were processed again, while courts and CADs were said to have been functioning ‘at near full capacities (generally up to 80%) in most locations’⁵⁵¹. Civil documentation for IDPs who live in the KRI were being issued again after a break due to COVID-19 restrictions. By July 2021, 29 593 applications had been processed during 5 missions to 12 IDP camps in Dohuk.⁵⁵²

The first national identification card centre was inaugurated in Ninawa at the end of 2019 by the Ninawa Directorate of Civil Affairs, Passports and Residencies.⁵⁵³ In January 2021, two CADs were opened in Rabia and Zummar in Ninawa governorate.⁵⁵⁴ As of May 2021, 11 CAD offices in Mosul were rehabilitated, 5 of which were functional, while the rest of the offices ‘rehabilitated and furnished between the end of 2020 and 2021 in Ayadiyah, Haman Al-Alil, Qayarah, Tal Abta, Shimal/Sinuni, and Qahtaniya are yet to be officially opened and also await the recruitment of additional staffing by the authorities in order to become fully functional’⁵⁵⁵. Furthermore, another CAD rehabilitation project was still running in Hawija in Kirkuk and one was being planned in Shirqat in Salah al-Din.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁴³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on her mission to Iraq, 5 June 2018, [url](#), para. 75-76

⁵⁴⁴ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq’s most vulnerable: The plight of displaced persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 14

⁵⁴⁵ UNHCR, Iraq: UNHCR civil documentation for IDPs, November 2019, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁴⁶ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs – Civil identity and documentation (June - July 2021), 9 September 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁴⁷ UNHCR, Iraq: UNHCR civil documentation for IDPs, November 2019, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁴⁸ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs – Civil identity and documentation (June - July 2021), 9 September 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁴⁹ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs – Civil identity and documentation (June - July 2021), 9 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁵⁰ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs - Civil & Identity Documentation (JAN-MAR 2021), 11 May 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁵¹ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs – Civil identity and documentation (June - July 2021), 9 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁵² UNHCR, Over 29,500 internally displaced persons in camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq receive civil identification documents, 6 July 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁵³ UNHCR, Iraq: UNHCR civil documentation for IDPs, November 2019, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁵⁴ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs - Civil & Identity Documentation (JAN-MAR 2021), 11 May 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁵⁵ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs - Civil & Identity Documentation (May 2021), 27 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁵⁶ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs - Civil & Identity Documentation (May 2021), 27 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

In the first half of 2021, the Personal Status Courts in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil, in collaboration with UNHCR and partners, were working on facilitating the process for IDPs to obtain birth and marriage certificates without the need to appear in person in the CAD of their areas of origin.⁵⁵⁷

Regarding the issuance of civil status IDs 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 had to submit a 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 had to be filled in by the head of the family, the 'family housewife', the owner of the record, the guardian, or the legal agent. The applicant had to sign and write his full name and address in the cell provided and then the form had to be stamped by the consul.' Moreover, an amount of 750 IQD (EUR 0.44⁵⁵⁸) had to be paid and two 3 x 3 cm photos had to be attached to the form. If the card got lost and the applicant applied for a replacement, the consul had to write down a statement of the applicant on the back of the form stating when, where and how the applicant thought the original ID card was lost. Additionally, a copy of the applicant's lost ID card and a copy of the applicant's father's, brother's or unmarried sister's ID card had to be attached to the form. The copies had to be certified by the consul. In case the ID card got damaged and needed to be replaced, in addition to the applicant's statement, the damaged ID card had to be attached to the form as well as a recent photograph of the applicant and a personal document 'to support the identity of the applicant'. According to the source, the applicant 'can authorize one of the citizens inside Iraq [...] to come to the Civil Affairs Department for the purpose of following-up.' Once issued, the Department of Nationality and Civil Status would send the card to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which in turn would send it to the embassy concerned.⁵⁵⁹ The same information was found on the websites of the Iraqi embassies in Brussels⁵⁶⁰, Berlin⁵⁶¹, Vienna⁵⁶², and Bern⁵⁶³ among others. None of the sources gave information on or referred to modalities of issuance of the unified national card.

Regarding the issuance of a nationality certificate for Iraqi citizens living abroad, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that to obtain one, the applicant needed to fill in an application for a nationality certificate to which two photographs of the applicant needed to be attached. One of the photographs had to be stamped by the consulate. In addition, the applicant's left thumbprint was required in the form and the consul had to validate the information in the form, sign it by providing his full name and stamp it with the consular stamp. Furthermore, the applicant had to attach a coloured copy of the Iraqi nationality certificate of the applicant's father or mother and a coloured copy of the civil ID card of the applicant and his or her father's or mother's ID card. Adult applicants needed to further give testimony. In case the applicant was a minor, a declaration from the father of the applicant was necessary.⁵⁶⁴

In case the nationality certificate was damaged or got lost, the applicant had to fill in the relevant form. Furthermore, the applicant's thumbprint as well as a photograph stamped by the consulate in addition to one more photograph were required. In case of damage, the original Iraqi nationality certificate had to be attached and in case of loss, a copy of the lost certificate was needed for the application. Also, applicants had to attach a coloured copy of their ID card and pay a fee of 1 250 IQD

⁵⁵⁷ UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs – Civil identity and documentation (June - July 2021), 9 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, Iraq: IDPs - Civil & Identity Documentation (JAN-MAR 2021), 11 May 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁵⁸ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 7 October 2021

⁵⁵⁹ Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Civil Status ID, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶⁰ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Brussels, The Civil Status ID, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶¹ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Berlin, The Civil Status ID, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶² Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Vienna, The Civil Status ID, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶³ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Bern, The Civil Status ID, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶⁴ Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nationality Cert, n.d., [url](#)

(EUR 0.73⁵⁶⁵). For the completion of the legal procedures in Iraq, applicants needed to authorise relatives residing in Iraq who had to go to the Directorate of Citizenship and the Civil Affairs Directorate to follow up with the procedures.⁵⁶⁶ The same information was found on the websites of the Iraqi embassies in Brussels⁵⁶⁷, Berlin⁵⁶⁸, Vienna⁵⁶⁹, and Bern⁵⁷⁰ among others.

3.3.2 Requirements of ID documents for family members

Regarding the issuance of a birth certificate for Iraqi children born outside of Iraq, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the family had to present a birth certificate, issued by the relevant authorities of the child's birthplace, and the father's ID card to the consular section of the embassy. This had to happen within two months from the date of birth. Otherwise, a fine of 10 000 IQD (EUR 5.57⁵⁷¹) had to be paid. To make sure the new-born's father had Iraqi citizenship, either the father himself had to go the consular section of the embassy or a marriage certificate had to be presented to prove paternity of the child and to make sure the father agreed with registering the child under his own name. After having verified that the child's father was Iraqi, the consular section of the foreign ministry 'according to Article V of the Law on registration of births and deaths No. (148) of 1971, registers the birth and issues a birth certificate'. The same procedure applied to the issuance of a death certificate.⁵⁷²

The source also mentioned a 'document of birth' which was issued by Iraqi Personal Status Courts to 'children or people who did not get a certificate from an authorized official during birth because they were not born at an empowered hand to organize birth certificate (for example, inside the hospital or [with the help of an] authorised midwife) or other reasons. However, this document could only be issued by Personal Status Courts and the consul needed authorisation from a personal status judge in order to issue this document.⁵⁷³ This document was also needed for children born inside Iraq whose parents were 'married outside the court'⁵⁷⁴ or were late in applying for the issuance of a birth certificate. For this 'document of birth'⁵⁷⁵ or 'proof of birth'⁵⁷⁶, the parents needed to fill out an application form, which was available at the relevant Personal Status Court. Furthermore, the ID cards of the child's father and mother were required in original and in copy as well as a marriage certificate, the residency card and the presence of two witnesses. Moreover, the child's age needed to get estimated by a medical committee and a legal fee of 6 000 IQD (EUR 3.53⁵⁷⁷) had to be paid, before the document for proof of birth was eventually signed by a judge.⁵⁷⁸

For married couples residing in Iraq who did not possess a (valid) marriage certificate, it was possible to retroactively register the marriage, as outlined in section [3.1.3 Birth certificate](#), to get a marriage certificate, update the marital status on the ID card and get a birth certificate for their child.⁵⁷⁹ Please refer to the same section for information on the requirements and procedures for obtaining a birth certificate for children born inside Iraq.

⁵⁶⁵ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 7 October 2021

⁵⁶⁶ Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nationality Cert, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶⁷ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Brussels, Nationality Cert, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶⁸ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Berlin, Nationality Cert, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶⁹ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Vienna, Nationality Cert, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁷⁰ Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Bern, Nationality Cert, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁷¹ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 7 October 2021

⁵⁷² Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Birth certificate, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁷³ Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Birth certificate, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁷⁴ Signpost Project, How to obtain a birth certificate, July 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁵ Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Birth certificate, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁷⁶ Signpost Project, How to obtain a birth certificate, July 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁷ Exchange rates from European Commission, Wechselkurs (InforEuro), n.d., [url](#), accessed on 7 October 2021

⁵⁷⁸ Signpost Project, How to obtain a birth certificate, July 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁹ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 17

Since administrative requirements for the issuance of civil identification documents were reported to ‘heavily rely on existence of documentation possessed by the father’⁵⁸⁰, it was often not possible for mothers to obtain civil documentation for their children, such as a birth certificate or a ID card, in case the father of the children was ‘missing, imprisoned or dead’ and no proof of the event was issued to her by the government.⁵⁸¹ This also applied if she was in possession of a marriage certificate issued by the state. For women in possession of a marriage certificate issued under ISIL rule, it was very difficult to transform the document into a state-approved one, if the father of the child got killed or was missing with no proof confirming this fact.⁵⁸² If a woman wanted to legalise such a marriage certificate, she needed a death certificate to prove her husband’s death. In case she did not have a death certificate, she ‘will have to get her husband’s family to file a claim on his behalf.’⁵⁸³

Regarding the issuance of ID cards for children of Iraqi citizens living abroad, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that to obtain one, a prove of marriage and the birth certificate of the newborn were required. The two documents had to undergo a verification procedure before the citizen was able to apply for an ID card for his child at the embassy.⁵⁸⁴ For details on the requirements for the application, please see section [3.3.1 Obtaining lost ID documents](#) and for the issue of the civil status card or the unified national card for individuals living in Iraq, please refer to section [3.1.1 Unified national card](#) and [3.1.2 Civil status ID](#), respectively.

As for the issuance of nationality certificates for Iraqi citizens living abroad, please refer to section [3.3.1 Obtaining lost ID documents](#) and for the issuance of nationality certificates for Iraqi citizens living in Iraq, please refer to section [3.1.4 Nationality certificate](#).

3.3.3 Security clearance requirement for returnees

Security clearance procedures were required for residents of areas with former ISIL presence and obtained through the relevant security forces in the respective area.⁵⁸⁵ While UNHCR spoke of such a form of clearance needed generally everywhere for the purpose of taking up residence⁵⁸⁶, Human Rights Watch mentioned such a system in place in many areas with former ISIL presence.⁵⁸⁷ It was reported in December 2019 that the Iraqi National Security Council had decided to stop the security clearance procedures in the governorates liberated from ISIL but exempted IDPs residing in camps from that order.⁵⁸⁸

Based on information by key informants gathered across 18 governorates from October 2020 to January 2021, Global Protection Cluster reported that the need to obtain security clearance was

⁵⁸⁰ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 24

⁵⁸¹ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 18

⁵⁸² NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 18

⁵⁸³ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p. 32, endnote 24

⁵⁸⁴ Iraq, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Civil Status ID, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁸⁵ HRW, Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures, 3 June 2021, [url](#); UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), pp. 2-3

⁵⁸⁶ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR’s Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁸⁷ HRW, Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures, 3 June 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁸ Al-Sumaria TV: المحررة الامني يقرر الغاء التدقيق الامني في المحافظات المحررة [National Security Council decides to cancel security clearance for liberated governorates], 26 December 2019, [url](#)

mentioned as the second main barrier to freedom of movement specifically in areas of return⁵⁸⁹, but only mentioned by 1 % of the informants overall as being among the main impediments.⁵⁹⁰

During the reference period, instances of security clearances being carried out were reported in Mosul in Ninawa governorate⁵⁹¹, Jurf Al-Sakhr in Babil governorate⁵⁹², Kirkuk governorate⁵⁹³ and Muqadadiya district in Diyala governorate⁵⁹⁴. IDPs returning from Baghdad to Al-Anbar province in November 2020 reportedly had to go through four separate security screenings carried out by different military forces, despite carrying security clearance papers issued by the army command in Baghdad.⁵⁹⁵

As of October 2020, families of alleged ISIL members needed to pass security clearance both for being able to return and in order to apply for civil documentation.⁵⁹⁶ Furthermore, a woman from Mosul who had lost her husband to ISIL shelling, told local media in December 2020 that she needed a security clearance in order to apply for reparation payments given out to victims of terrorism. She declared that the procedure had been put on hold for more than one year, pending security clearance and it was further mentioned that there were thousands of applicants like her who were still waiting to get clearance in order for the procedure to be completed.⁵⁹⁷ In September 2021 another source still referred to thousands of procedures for reparation halted in Mosul because of outstanding security clearances.⁵⁹⁸

There was no legal basis for security clearance procedures, nor were they officially announced.⁵⁹⁹ A broad interpretation of Iraqi counter-terrorism laws was often used by authorities in order to justify security clearance measures and subsequent denial to issue civil documentation.⁶⁰⁰

A security clearance was described by Human Rights Watch as a stamp obtained from local security forces.⁶⁰¹ IDPs living in camps needed to make a request for voluntary return to the camp management in order to initiate the return process. Part of this request meant providing a security clearance from the relevant security and intelligence authorities in the IDPs' area of former residence, upon which camp management would issue an exit document which would in turn facilitate passing through checkpoints.⁶⁰² In order to obtain security clearance documentation,

⁵⁸⁹ GPC, Protection Monitoring System, Report 1, February 2021, [url](#), p. 6

⁵⁹⁰ GPC, Protection Monitoring System, Report 1, February 2021, [url](#), p. 15, endnote 28

⁵⁹¹ Shafaq News, "مفاجئ" ومحافظ نينوى يعلق [Sudden intensive deployment of security forces in Mosul and the governor of Ninawa comments], 28 January 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹² Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, انفراجة في ملف جرف الصخر: تدقيق أمني يسبق عودة النازحين العراقيين [A breakthrough in the Jurf al-Sakhr file: security check ahead of the return of displaced Iraqis], 4 August 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹³ Baghdad Today, عودة 17 عائلة نازحة الى مناطقهم في كركوك [return of 17 IDP families to their areas in Kirkuk], 17 September 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁴ Shafaq News: ديابي الى مناطق "ساخنة" في ديالى [return of more than 300 displaced families to security risk areas in Diyala], 15 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁵ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁹⁶ International Crisis Group, Exiles in Their Own Country: Dealing with Displacement in Post-ISIS Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁹⁷ Al-Quds Al-Arabi: موقع عراقي: التصاريح الأمنية كابوس يطارد أهالي الموصل و7 آلاف معاملات معطلة [Iraqi site: security clearances are a nightmare chasing the people of Mosul and 7,000 procedures have been put on hold], 8 December 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁸ Yaqin News, مراجعو دائرة تعويضات الموصل يشكون توقف إكمال معاملاتهم بسبب قرار المساءلة والعدالة [Persons consulting the department for reparation in Mosul complain that their transactions have been suspended due to decree on "accountability and justice"], 4 September 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁹ UNHCR, Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁰⁰ NRC, Barriers from birth: Undocumented children in Iraq sentenced to a life on the margins, April 2019, [url](#), p.23

⁶⁰¹ HRW, Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures, 3 June 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰² AI, Marked for Life - Displaced Iraqis in Cycle of Abuse and Stigmatization, November 2020, [url](#), p. 33

displaced individuals were reviewed by several security services. The National Security Service (NSS) was mentioned as also being involved in security clearance procedures needed for return.⁶⁰³

The process usually also involved the *mukhtar*, the local community leader in the returnee's place of original residence.⁶⁰⁴ The *mukhtar* consulting with local residents would be asked by the security services to vouch that the returnee had no affiliation with ISIL.⁶⁰⁵ Once the screening process was completed, the returnee was issued a document confirming that a clearance procedure had been undertaken and that the name of the returnee did not match with any names in any security databases. The security clearance documents were issued by the local authorities in the returnee's area of origin.⁶⁰⁶ Only with such clearance documents IDPs were able to return to their former area of residence.⁶⁰⁷

If during the security screening the returnee's name appeared in any of the government databases containing the names of persons with suspected ISIL affiliation, the returnee would be detained and questioned.⁶⁰⁸ If the returnee was found to have a family member who was suspected of ISIL affiliation, security clearance was denied. The source, however, does not mention cases of detention.⁶⁰⁹ In the eastern and western peripheries of Anbar governorate for example, security clearances for returning IDPs could easily be denied by either the PMU or local tribal entities.⁶¹⁰ Government officials reportedly frequently denied security clearances for displaced families with suspected ties to ISIL, effectively restricting their freedom of movement.⁶¹¹ It was considered impossible to appeal such a denial.⁶¹² Not being granted security clearance also meant not being able to access many public services such as public health-care and a school education for the children.⁶¹³ Undocumented families had no access to food rations distributed through PDS and encountered difficulties when trying to find formal employment, rented housing or applying for compensation or government benefits.⁶¹⁴ For further information on ID documents needed for accessing services, please refer to section [3.2 ID documents and access to services](#).

In case security clearance was denied, returnees felt pressured to undergo either or both of the following two processes called *tabriya* (tabreea/tabrea) and *ikhbar* as an alternative way to obtain clearance.⁶¹⁵

The *tabriya* (disavowal) process involved denouncing the relative with suspected ties to ISIL as well as the crimes this relative was accused of.⁶¹⁶ It meant declaring to sever all ties with this family

⁶⁰³ USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 17; Iraqi News Agency, الدفاع الهول النيابية: الأمن الوطني يمتلك قاعدة بيانات لجميع العائلات العائدة من مخيم الهول [Parliamentary defence committee is in possession of a database containing all families returning from Al-Hol camp], 26 June 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁴ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 13; International Crisis Group, Exiles in Their Own Country: Dealing with Displacement in Post-ISIS Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁰⁵ International Crisis Group, Exiles in Their Own Country: Dealing with Displacement in Post-ISIS Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁰⁶ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 13

⁶⁰⁷ International Crisis Group, Exiles in Their Own Country: Dealing with Displacement in Post-ISIS Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁰⁸ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 13

⁶⁰⁹ HRW, Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures, 3 June 2021, [url](#);

⁶¹⁰ Skelton, M. and Saleem, Z. A., Displacement and Iraq's Political Marketplace: Addressing Political Barriers to IDO Return, IRIS, February 2021, [url](#), p. 16

⁶¹¹ USDOS, Country reports on human rights practices for 2020 - Iraq, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 31

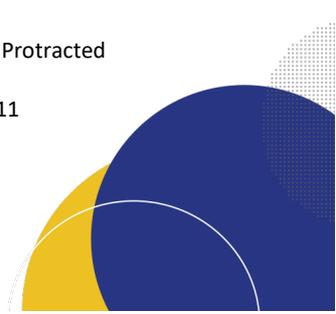
⁶¹² HRW, Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures, 3 June 2021, [url](#); Just Security, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable Displaced Families Undermines US Stabilization Agenda in Iraq, 18 August 2020, [url](#)

⁶¹³ International Crisis Group, Exiles in Their Own Country: Dealing with Displacement in Post-ISIS Iraq, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. 5; CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 13

⁶¹⁴ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 13

⁶¹⁵ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 1; see also IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), pp. 31-32

⁶¹⁶ NRC, Broken Home: Women's housing, land and property rights in post-conflict Iraq, 11 May 2020, [url](#), p. 11



member who had been incriminated and expelled from the tribe.⁶¹⁷ *Tabriya* was described as a concept rooted in tribal justice⁶¹⁸ and was not considered to be an official legal procedure.⁶¹⁹ However, an Iraqi news source reported that in Mosul specifically, residents were asked to undergo *tabriya* on account of their incarcerated relatives and the clearance papers were then issued by local courts resorting not to statutory but to customary law.⁶²⁰ A woman in Mosul for example explained how she denounced her brother - who as an ISIL member was killed in battle - disavowing all ties to him and to ISIL, whereupon she was issued a *tabriya* document indicating that the family had been cleared.⁶²¹ IDPs residing in camps were reported to undergo *tabriya* before being able to return to their homes in Ninawa governorate. A local tribal sheikh in southern Ninawa reportedly asked families to disavow their imprisoned relatives affiliated with ISIL or alternatively to pay blood money to compensate for the tribal members killed at the hands of ISIL.⁶²² A completion of the *tabriya* did not guarantee the right to return home or being issued identification documents.⁶²³ Some IDPs having undertaken *tabriya* were still reported to be living in camps at the end of 2020.⁶²⁴ Moreover, the person undergoing a *tabriya* process risked social rejection and potential violent repercussions from relatives of the accused.⁶²⁵

Ikhbar (denunciation) is a legal complaint made in form of a denunciation in court.⁶²⁶ It involved reporting a relative with suspected ISIL affiliation to an investigative judge.⁶²⁷ *Ikhbar* was described as 'well established in the Iraqi legal system'⁶²⁸ and as being based on Iraqi anti-terrorism law.⁶²⁹ According to IOM, IDPs were requested by security actors in many areas to undertake this process in order to receive permission to return home and IDPs in camps had to do *ikhbar* before journeying to their areas of origin.⁶³⁰ Families faced the dilemma of either undertaking *ikhbar* and risking that their denunciation might be used in a court procedure against the suspected relative or not undertaking this process and thereby not being able to obtain civil documentation needed to access basic services.⁶³¹

IOM mentioned a third possibility of being allowed to return to the former community, namely through tribal sponsorship (*kafala*). In this process, community leaders such as tribal sheikhs sponsored the return of IDPs by officially attesting to security forces involved in return procedures that the returnee in question had not committed an offense despite having suspected ISIL members in the family.⁶³²

⁶¹⁷ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 14

⁶¹⁸ IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), pp. 31-32; CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 14

⁶¹⁹ NRC, Broken Home: Women's housing, land and property rights in post-conflict Iraq, 11 May 2020, [url](#), p. 11; NIRIJ, التبرئة وحدها لا تكفي لإعادة اندماجها.. عائلات داعش ممنوعون من العودة لمناطقهم في نينوى [Tabriya alone is not enough for reintegration ... ISIL families are not permitted to return to their areas in Ninawa], 28 November 2020, [url](#)

⁶²⁰ Yaqin News, مركز حقوقي: كتاب التبرئة إجراء تعسفي بحق النازحين العائدين إلى محافظة نينوى [Human rights centre: undertaking tabriya is an arbitrary process that IDPs returning to Ninawa go through], 20 January 2021, [url](#)

⁶²¹ France 24, تهمة "الانتماء الى الجهاديين" غطاء أحيانا لتصفية نزاعات قديمة في العراق [The accusation of belonging to jihadists is sometimes used as an excuse to settle old scores in Iraq], 8 January 2021, [url](#)

⁶²² Yaqin News, مركز حقوقي: كتاب التبرئة إجراء تعسفي بحق النازحين العائدين إلى محافظة نينوى [Human rights centre: undertaking tabriya is an arbitrary process that IDPs returning to Ninawa go through], 20 January 2021, [url](#)

⁶²³ Just Security, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable Displaced Families Undermines US Stabilization Agenda in Iraq, 18 August 2020, [url](#)

⁶²⁴ NIRIJ, التبرئة وحدها لا تكفي لإعادة اندماجها.. عائلات داعش ممنوعون من العودة لمناطقهم في نينوى [Tabriya alone is not enough for reintegration ... ISIL families are not permitted to return to their areas in Ninawa], 28 November 2020, [url](#)

⁶²⁵ NRC, Broken Home: Women's housing, land and property rights in post-conflict Iraq, 11 May 2020, [url](#), p. 11

⁶²⁶ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 14

⁶²⁷ IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), p. 31

⁶²⁸ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 14

⁶²⁹ IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), p. 31

⁶³⁰ IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), p. 31

⁶³¹ CIVIC, Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons, April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁶³² IOM, Protracted Displacement in Iraq: Revisiting Categories of Return Barriers, 24 January 2021, [url](#), p. 32

At the beginning of 2021, there were still about 2 000 displaced families residing in camps in the governorates Diyala, Kirkuk, Salah Al-Din and Anbar for whom a safe return to their homes was impossible due to tribal disputes, societal rejection and outstanding security approvals.⁶³³

3.3.4 Possible risks considering travel to/through formerly ISIL-controlled areas without personal ID documents

In order to pass through checkpoints across Iraq, people usually needed to show civil identification such as an ID card, a passport or a nationality certificate.⁶³⁴ IDPs leaving the camps were often stopped at checkpoints and prevented by security actors from travelling to their area of original residence.⁶³⁵ According to a woman displaced to Kirkuk, her family was not able to return to their village in Salah Al-Din because they did not possess valid civil documentation in order to pass through checkpoints.⁶³⁶ IDPs without proper documentation risked harassment and arrests at checkpoints when travelling.⁶³⁷ Based on interviews carried out with IDPs during fieldwork between November 2018 and October 2020, Amnesty International (AI) reports on cases in which persons were arrested in Ninawa governorate at checkpoints run by Iraqi army, military intelligence, police, *Asayish* or PMU for not carrying identification documents. Interview partners explained that military and security forces would assume that men and boys leaving ISIL-held areas without documentation must be affiliated with ISIL and were therefore trying to conceal their identity.⁶³⁸ AI does not disclose when exactly these arrests took place but mentions that thousands of men have disappeared after having been arrested.⁶³⁹ An IDP residing in the KRI reported *Asayish* forces confiscating his civil documents and not returning them afterwards. He told AI that he was unable to travel to Mosul to get new identification documents because he feared being arrested by Iraqi forces at a checkpoint if found to be undocumented.⁶⁴⁰ A 2019 report similarly noted that displaced people and returnees in Mosul feared arrest or detention when passing through a checkpoint without identification documents.⁶⁴¹

3.4 Impact of COVID-19 at a national level

The World Health Organisation (WHO) stated that as of 27 September 2021, Iraq has conducted 15 154 796 tests and confirmed 1 996 214 cases of COVID-19, with 22 142 deaths. 1.9 % of all confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been health care workers (37 859 cases) and 323 health care personnel have died of the disease until 27 September 2021.⁶⁴² According to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), as of 27 September 2021, there have been 328 118 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), with 5 819 confirmed deaths.⁶⁴³ UNHCR reported that as of

⁶³³ Al Jazeera, *الخوف والجوع والتشريد... ثلاثية تطارد النازحين في العراق بعد قرار إغلاق المخيمات* [Fear and hunger and displacement – three problems chasing Iraqi IDPs following the decision to close the camps], 30 January 2021, [url](#)

⁶³⁴ UNHCR, *Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation*, 11 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2; see also HRW, *Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures*, 3 June 2021, [url](#)

⁶³⁵ CIVIC, *Ignoring Iraq's Most Vulnerable: The Plight of Displaced Persons*, April 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁶³⁶ HRW, *Iraq: Inadequate Plans for Camp Closures*, 3 June 2021, [url](#)

⁶³⁷ AI, *Marked for Life - Displaced Iraqis in Cycle of Abuse and Stigmatization*, November 2020, [url](#), p. 27

⁶³⁸ AI, *Marked for Life - Displaced Iraqis in Cycle of Abuse and Stigmatization*, November 2020, [url](#), p. 23

⁶³⁹ AI, *Marked for Life - Displaced Iraqis in Cycle of Abuse and Stigmatization*, November 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁶⁴⁰ AI, *Marked for Life - Displaced Iraqis in Cycle of Abuse and Stigmatization*, November 2020, [url](#), p. 31

⁶⁴¹ 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

⁶⁴² WHO, *Iraq, COVID-19 Dynamic Infographic Dashboard Iraq 2020-2021, Situation for 27 September 2021*, 28 September 2021, [url](#), pp. 2, 18

⁶⁴³ Iraq, KRG, *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard*, as of 27 September 2021, [url](#)

15 September 2021 the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 among IDPs and refugees amounted to 2 188, including 103 deaths.⁶⁴⁴

3.4.1 Measures to curb the spreading of COVID-19

According to an IOM report on COVID-19 restrictions and public health measures during the period March to May 2021, the government made the use of masks in public spaces and government offices mandatory as of 29 March 2021. Malls and markets in federal Iraq and KRI were closed; cafes, restaurants and clubs were only allowed to provide outdoor services. Social gatherings such as funerals were prohibited in homes or small spaces such as alleys and travels between KRI and other governorates were restricted to four days per week. During the period of Ramadan from 12 April to 12 May 2021, the government introduced further restrictions such as a total lockdown on Fridays and Saturdays and a nightly curfew during the business week. Schools had to resume online teaching.⁶⁴⁵ A 10-day full lockdown during the Eid al-Fitr festival beginning with 12 May 2021 was announced but later changed to a partial curfew.⁶⁴⁶

IOM noted that as of 31 May 2021, only four points of entry into Iraq were fully open. A further 12 points of entry remained partially closed and 11 were open for commercial transit only.⁶⁴⁷ In March 2021, authorities lifted a previous partial ban on international travel. Travellers were required to present a negative COVID-19 test not older than 72 hours and to self-isolate at home for seven days unless they provided evidence that they had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.⁶⁴⁸ According to the KRG, as of 31 August 2021, all travellers entering KRI have to either be fully vaccinated or tested negative within 48 hours prior to departure.⁶⁴⁹

On 9 June 2021, the Iraqi government decided on new requirements for attending sessions and courses as of 1 September 2021. All students over the age of 18 years, teaching staff and employees of private and public schools, universities and other institutes had to provide evidence that they were either vaccinated or had recovered from a COVID-19 infection within the previous 90 days or present a weekly negative PCR test. The same requirements were extended to employees at ministries, departments and institutions of the public and private sector as well as to visitors at government departments. Anyone failing to comply with these requirements would be considered absent from work or would not be received as a visitor at government departments until providing the necessary evidence. Moreover, the government decided to make the vaccination of all staff working at companies and institutions that were subject to health checks a prerequisite for the granting or renewal of health licenses. Non-compliance would result in closure of these enterprises on 1 September 2021. With regard to international travel, the government decided that starting from 1st October 2021, all Iraqi nationals travelling abroad would be required to present an international COVID-19 vaccine certificate prior to departure.⁶⁵⁰ Authorities advised fully vaccinated persons to have their national vaccination certificates translated and certified at vaccination centres until international documents would be provided through the Ministry of Health.⁶⁵¹ In September 2021, the government announced that they would allow 40 000 foreigners, including 30 000 from

⁶⁴⁴ UNHCR, Iraq, Fact Sheet September 2021, September 2021, [url](#), p. 3

⁶⁴⁵ IOM, Iraq, COVID-19 Mobility Restrictions and Public Health Measures. 1 March to 31 May 2021, June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁴⁶ UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2576 (2021), S/2021/700, 3 August 2021, [url](#), para 8; Iraq, Government of Iraq, The Cabinet imposes a complete curfew for 10 days, and takes several measures regarding Iraqis in India, 5 May 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁷ IOM, Iraq, COVID-19 Mobility Restrictions and Public Health Measures. 1 March to 31 May 2021, June 2021, [url](#), p. 6

⁶⁴⁸ IOM, Iraq, COVID-19 Mobility Restrictions and Public Health Measures. 1 March to 31 May 2021, June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁴⁹ Iraq, KRG, Situation update, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁵⁰ Iraq, Government of Iraq, The Government will continue to require the vaccination of employees, workers, students and teaching staff, 9 June 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁵¹ Health Cluster Iraq, Health Cluster Bulletin No. 8, August 2021, 19 September 2021, [url](#), p. 2

Iran, to attend the Arbaeen pilgrimage, an important Shia religious event, in the city of Karbala. In comparison, in 2019, about 14 million foreigners had participated in the pilgrimage.⁶⁵²

3.4.2 Impact on economy and vulnerable groups

In June 2021, UNDP, in partnership with UN-Habitat and IOM, published a study on the effects of COVID-19 and COVID-19-related restrictions on the livelihoods and socioeconomic situation of vulnerable groups. Loss of income was the 'most ubiquitously reported change' among all vulnerable groups nationwide, although the study noted differences between federal Iraq and KRI. While households in Federal Iraq suffered from reduced non-employment income, households in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq experienced greater losses with regard to employment income. The study noted also differences between different population groups such as women and men or IDPs and the local population. Other impacts included rising food costs, an increase in community insecurity and gender-based violence, payment delays, loss of employment opportunities and reduced access to education and health care services, especially for the youth and disabled persons, as well as reduced access to aid for displaced persons due to office closures.⁶⁵³

3.4.3 Vaccination programme

Vaccination in Iraq started in the first days of March 2021.⁶⁵⁴ WHO stated in its weekly COVID-19 situation report covering the period 23 to 29 August 2021 that, as of calendar week 34, a total of 4 043 632 vaccine doses have been administered in the country. This number indicated that 11.4 % of the target population have received at least one dose of the vaccine. Reportedly, 2 628 559 people have received their first dose while 1 414 676 have been fully vaccinated. WHO based its information on statistics from Iraq's Ministry of Health that were compiled with numbers the Ministry received every day from the Directorates of Health in all governorates.⁶⁵⁵ Specifically with regard to KRI, the KRG spokesperson informed in a message on social media that 581 056 vaccines have been administered until 25 August 2021 in KRI, including 395 427 first doses and 184 629 second doses.⁶⁵⁶ With regard to IDPs and refugees, UNHCR stated that both groups have been included in the national vaccination plan and can register for a COVID-19 vaccine through the official online registration platform. According to UNHCR, as of September 2021, more than 13 675 IDPs and refugees have been vaccinated this way.⁶⁵⁷

Since the beginning of the vaccination programme in March 2021, WHO has periodically noted a gender discrepancy in the number of women and men receiving the vaccine and has cited women's household and family requirements and rumours over side effects – such as infertility, blood clots, birth defects and miscarriage⁶⁵⁸ - as reasons for this difference.⁶⁵⁹ Other factors that were found to contribute to a general vaccine hesitancy among the population were fears over side effects such as fever, allergic reactions and death, fears that the vaccine was not safe or counterfeit, lack of access to information or misinformation about the vaccine and the vaccination process and mistrust in the

⁶⁵² France24, Iraq caps Arbaeen foreign pilgrim numbers at 40,000, 5 September 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁵³ UNDP et al., Iraq, Impact of COVID-19 on Iraq's vulnerable populations, May 2021, [url](#), pp. 6-7

⁶⁵⁴ WHO, Iraq, CoronaVirus Disease (COVID-19), Weekly Situation Report (Week 12), 21 March to 28 March 2021, n.d., [url](#), pp. 2-3

⁶⁵⁵ WHO, Iraq, Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report, Week 34, 23-29 Aug 2021, n.d., [url](#), p. 3

⁶⁵⁶ KGRSpokesperson [Twitter], posted on: 25 August 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁷ UNCHR, Iraq, Fact Sheet September 2021, September 2021, [url](#), p. 3; UNHCR, Iraq, How to register for the COVID-19 vaccine, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁵⁸ Health Cluster Iraq, Health Cluster Bulletin No. 8, August 2021, 19 September 2021, [url](#), p. 3

⁶⁵⁹ See, for example: WHO, Iraq, Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report, Week 34, 23-29 Aug 2021, n.d., [url](#), p. 3; WHO, Iraq, CoronaVirus Disease (COVID-19), Weekly Situation Report (Week 16) 19 to 25 April 2021, n.d., [url](#), p. 3; WHO, Iraq, CoronaVirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report, Week 20, 17-23 May 2021, 24 May 2021, [url](#), p. 5; WHO, Iraq, CoronaVirus Disease (COVID-19), Situation Report, Week 27, 05-11 July 2021, 11 July 2021, [url](#), p. 6

government.⁶⁶⁰ The Iraqi Judiciary addressed the issue of misinformation on social media in a statement reportedly published in August 2021, announcing that anyone spreading misinformation on COVID-19 or the vaccine would be detained and prosecuted.⁶⁶¹

According to WHO's situation report covering the week 23 to 29 August 2021, the Iraqi Ministry of Health has decided to extend the period between the administering of the first and second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to at least eight weeks (56 days) in order to ensure that a greater number of people could receive their first dose at an earlier date. In the same week, the Ministry has issued a recommendation for the use of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech) for pregnant women in or beyond week 16 of their pregnancy.⁶⁶²

3.4.4 Measures in relation to the elections

In the context of preparations for elections on 10 October 2021, UNAMI noted that authorities were procuring COVID-19 protective equipment such as masks, gloves and disinfectants to be distributed to all polling stations across the country for election workers and voters.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶⁰ CARE, COVID-19 Vaccination Uptake. A study of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Marginalized Communities in Iraq, August 2021, [url](#), pp. 5-6; PHR, Latest COVID-19 Surge Pushes More Iraqis to Get Vaccinated, But Hesitancy Still Remains, 12 August 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁶¹ WHO, Iraq, Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), Situation Report, Week 33, 16-22 Aug 2021, n.d., [url](#), p. 9

⁶⁶² WHO, Iraq, Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), Situation Report, Week 34, 23-29 Aug 2021, n.d., [url](#), p. 1

⁶⁶³ UNAMI, Iraq's Electoral Preparations and Processes - Report No. 11, 9 September 2021, [url](#), p. 4; UNAMI, Elections for Iraq's Council of Representatives, Fact Sheet #4 COVID-19, 11 August 2021, [url](#)

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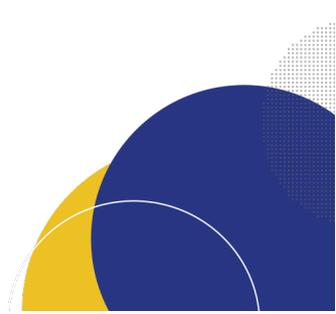
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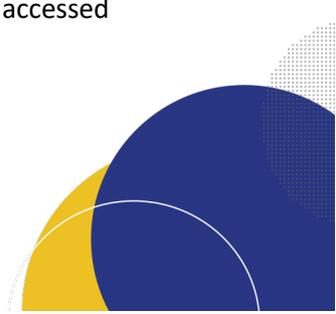
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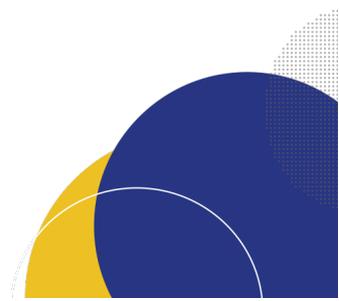
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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

1. Access and residency requirements for Baghdad, Basrah, and Sulaymaniyah (per city)

- Legal and administrative requirements to enter the respective city and their application in practice (including specific rules for different categories of individuals)
- Legal and administrative requirements to settle in the respective city and their application in practice (including specific rules for different categories of individuals)

2. Key Socio-economic indicators in Baghdad, Basrah, and Sulaymaniyah

- economy
- employment
- poverty
- food security
- healthcare
- education
- housing and living conditions (including water and sanitation)

3. Overview of the situation as regards ID documents, security clearances, and COVID-19

- Requirements to obtain ID documents
- ID documents and access to services
- IDPs/returnees
 - Obtaining lost ID documents
 - Requirements of ID documents for family members
 - Security clearance requirement for returnees
 - Possible risks considering travel to/through formerly ISIS-controlled areas without personal ID documents
- Impact of COVID-19 at a national level





Publications Office
of the European Union

doi: 10.2847/7919