

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1466
Land:	Irak
Kilde:	UK Home Office
Titel:	Country Policy and Information Note. Internal relocation, civil documentation and returns
Udgivet:	1. juli 2022
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	16. august 2022



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Iraq: Internal relocation, civil documentation and returns

Version 13.0

July 2022

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into 2 parts: (1) an assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note - that is information in the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw - by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- a person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#)/Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate and balanced, which is compared and contrasted where appropriate so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture is provided of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

Feedback

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the Country Policy and Information Team.

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](http://gov.uk).

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Assessment

Updated: 27 May 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of this note

1.1.1 Whether a person:

- (i) can feasibly be returned to Iraq (because they have, or can obtain, the requisite travel documents),
- (ii) can, in general, reasonably relocate elsewhere in Iraq or the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) if they are unable to return to their registered place of origin; and
- (iii) is at risk of serious harm sufficient to breach paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules/Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as a result of their lack of documentation.

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1.2 Points to note

1.2.1 The Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) is referred to as the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI) throughout this document.

1.2.2 The term 'feasible' only refers to the physical process of being able to return someone to Iraq via air and does not take into account any circumstances or situations after arrival in Iraq.

1.2.3 There have been 5 country guidance cases concerning Iraq since 2015. The first of which was [AA \(Article 15\(c\)\) \(Rev 2\) \[2015\] UKUT 544 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 18-19 May 2015 and promulgated on 30 October 2015 (hereafter referred to as 'AA'). This was a wide ranging-case which replaced all previous Country Guidance on Iraq, making findings on returns, documentation, relocation and security issues. In AA it was conceded by the respondent that a civilian with no distinguishing characteristics would, simply by virtue of his presence in one of the contested areas (the governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al Din) be at real risk of suffering serious harm of the type identified in Article 15(c) of the Council Directive 2004/83/EC (the Qualification Directive). For the reasons it gave at [101]-[106], the Upper Tribunal (UT) had no hesitation in endorsing that concession, noting that life in those areas (which were controlled at the time by Daesh) was characterised by systematic and widespread acts of violence and gross violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights. The UT also concluded that certain parts of the so-called Baghdad Belts were affected by an internal armed conflict of such intensity that there was a generalised Article 15(c) risk there. It was not accepted that the remainder of Iraq, including Baghdad City, was affected by such a level of internal armed conflict.

1.2.4 In June 2017, the Court of Appeal, in [AA \(Iraq\) vs Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2017\] EWCA Civ 944](#) ('AA 2017'), remade one specific

Country Guidance point in AA regarding documentation and feasibility of return. The rest of AA's findings were undisturbed.

- 1.2.5 The second Country Guidance case was [BA \(Returns to Baghdad Iraq CG\) \[2017\] UKUT 18 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 24-25 August 2016 and promulgated on 23 January 2017 (hereafter referred to as 'BA'). This case looked at the risk to those perceived as having collaborated with the West and the levels of violence in Baghdad City. The UT proceeded to give guidance which included a conclusion that the level of violence in Baghdad City remained significant but did not justify departing from the guidance in AA (Iraq).
- 1.2.6 The third Country Guidance case was [AAH \(Iraqi Kurds – internal relocation\) Iraq CG UKUT 212 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 27-28 February 2018 and promulgated on 26 June 2018 (hereafter referred to as 'AAH'), which supplemented Section C (about the Civil Status ID (CSID)) and replaced Section E (about return and relocation to the Iraqi Kurdish Region (IKR)) of the Country Guidance annexed to the CoA's decision in [AA 2017](#).
- 1.2.7 The fourth Country Guidance case was [SMO, KSP & IM \(Article 15\(c\); identity documents\) Iraq CG \[2019\] UKUT 400 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 24-26 June 2019 and promulgated on 20 December 2019 (hereafter referred to as 'SMO1'). This case looked at the levels of indiscriminate violence and the humanitarian situation across Iraq, identity documents and internal relocation. In relation to the security situation, the court considered whether return would expose an individual to a risk contrary to Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive. The court concluded that the situation did not generally give rise to such a risk although a fact-specific, 'sliding-scale' assessment will be necessary in all cases. The second issue, which has featured prominently in many if not all country guidance decisions on Iraq, concerned the identity documents an individual requires in order to live and function in Iraq, and how a replacement document could be obtained in the event that they lost the original. The court concluded a claimant might acquire a new document in a variety of ways and that most would be aided in this task by their likely memory of the volume and page reference of their entry in Iraq's locally held Civil Status records, known as the 'Family Book'.
- 1.2.8 The most recent Country Guidance case was [SMO & KSP \(Civil status documentation; Article 15\) Iraq CG \[2022\] UKUT 110 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 4-5 October 2021 and promulgated on 16 March 2022 (hereafter referred to as 'SMO2'). The appellants SMO and KSP sought permission to appeal against the UT decision in SMO1 which was granted on 8 December 2020. On 16 February 2021 the appeals were remitted to the UT "for determination of whether, given the importance of a Civil Status Identity Card, most Iraqi citizens will recall the volume and page reference of their entry in the Family Book." The remaining findings were preserved "save that the Upper Tribunal is entitled to reconsider any such finding if and to the extent that it thinks it right to do so in the light of any developments" since the issuance of the first decision.' (Para 4).
- 1.2.9 There was no further consideration of the UT's conclusions regarding Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive, but both parties agreed that the UT should also consider questions concerning identity documentation and its acquisition as well as onward travel from Baghdad International Airport using

a Laissez Passer and supporting letter (for more information see Para 7-8). [SMO2](#) replaces all existing country guidance on Iraq.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 2.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 People who cannot return and/or relocate because of a lack documentation but are not otherwise at real risk of persecution do not fall within the definition of the Refugee Convention. This is because the reasons for their fear of harm do not relate to their actual or imputed political opinion, race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group.
- 2.3.2 In the absence of a link to one of the 5 Convention grounds necessary for the grant of refugee status, the question is whether the particular person will face a real risk of serious harm sufficient to qualify for Humanitarian Protection (HP).
- 2.3.3 For further guidance on Convention reasons see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 General approach to internal relocation in Iraqi cases

- 2.4.1 In deciding whether a person can return to their home governorate or internally relocate and avoid conditions that may breach paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules/Article 3 of the ECHR, decision

makers must determine whether the person has or can acquire (or reacquire) identity documentation necessary to:

- make their return to Iraq feasible,
- travel within Iraq; and
- access various public and private services.

2.4.2 At paragraph 93-107 in SMO2, the Tribunal considered the significance of documentation, the process of redocumentation, as well as the consequences a lack of documentation would have on the person's ability to function in society. They held that it is necessary for a person to have an CSID or INID in order to live in Iraq without encountering conditions contrary to Article 3 ECHR. They also held that it remains possible for a person to obtain the documentation required to make return to Iraq feasible.

2.4.3 In [AA](#), the UT found that the assessment of whether a person would be at risk of destitution because of a lack of a CSID should **only** be made if return was feasible. However, this position was reversed by the [Court of Appeal \(CoA\) in June 2017 \(Annex: C9\)](#). Decision makers **must** now assess the risk arising from a lack of a CSID **regardless** of 'feasibility of return' (whether a person can be returned or not).

2.4.4 Decision makers must therefore first determine whether a person would face any harm on return stemming from a lack of CSID/INID before considering whether their return is feasible. In cases where a person would be at risk on return due to a lack of documentation (i.e. facing destitution or possible ill treatment due to the requirement to travel internally within Iraq to obtain a CSID/INID) a grant of HP would be appropriate.

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2.5 Feasibility of return

a. Return documentation

2.5.1 If a person has a passport, an expired passport or a laissez-passer then **return is feasible**. If they do not have or cannot obtain either of these, then **return is not feasible**.

2.5.2 The passport and laissez-passer (the term used by the Iraqis for an emergency travel document) are travel documents and should not be confused with civil documentation such as the INID and CSID cards which enables access to various services.

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b. Obtaining passports

2.5.3 Available evidence indicates that to obtain a passport a person (who is 18 or over) needs to go to an Iraqi consulate and present:

- a Civil Status ID (CSID) **and**
- an Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC) **and**
- a Residency card (for those outside Iraq) (see [Documentation – Passport](#))

c. Obtaining Laissez Passers

2.5.4 Regarding Laissez Passers, the UT in [SMO1](#) stated:

‘The Laissez Passer has been a feature of the Iraq CG landscape for years. In AA (Iraq), the Tribunal considered the feasibility of return in some detail, which in turn necessitated consideration of the ways in which an individual might obtain a passport or a Laissez Passer. At that stage, Dr Fatah explained that an individual who wished to obtain a Laissez Passer was required to produce “either a CSID or INC or a photocopy of a previous Iraqi passport and a police report noting that it had been lost or stolen is required in order to obtain a Laissez-passer”. Further enquires made by Dr Fatah with the Iraqi Consulate in London suggest that this is no longer the case, and that an individual must simply be able to establish their nationality in order to obtain a Laissez Passer. In the absence of documentation, an Iraqi national can request family members in Iraq to present documents to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prove the individual’s nationality or, failing that, “legal procedures will then be started to prove the Iraqi nationality of the failed asylum seeker through a list of questions in relation to their life in Iraq”. These details are checked against Iraqi records, and once verified the individual will be issued with a document enabling the individual to return to Iraq. Dr Fatah goes on to state in his report that the website of the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that the resulting document is valid for six months and that it “permits a single entry into Iraq”. (paragraph 375)

2.5.5 After considering evidence regarding Laissez Passers in [SMO2](#), the UT held that ‘There is, in sum, no proper basis upon which to depart from the conclusions previously reached in respect of the Laissez Passer.’ (Paragraph 97)

2.5.6 An application for a laissez-passer is considered on a case-by-case basis by the Iraqi Embassy in London. For the enforced return of a failed asylum seeker there is no interview requirement providing they hold at least one of the following (copy or original, valid or expired) in order for the Iraqi Embassy to issue a Laissez Passer:

- Passport
- Birth Certificate
- Marriage Certificate
- Civil Status ID (CSID)
- Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC)
- Iraqi National Identity Card (INID)
- Iraq Citizenship certificate
- Iraq residency card
- Registration Document (1957)

2.5.7 For those without supporting documents, a mandatory embassy interview is required. The embassy verification process tends to take 10-14 days. [...] All

categories of voluntary cases will be considered (including those without documents) but they will usually require an interview face to face or by phone.

- 2.5.8 The information obtained from Returns Logistics [see [Annex C](#)] further stated that family members in Iraq can present any of the documentation listed in the paragraph above to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Iraq in order to help prove the person's nationality. Additionally, phone numbers or signed affidavits from family members in Iraq are also useful to the verification process. Once a person's verification in Iraq is complete it is sent to the Iraqi Embassy in London to issue a laissez-passer, however straightforward verification of documents can be done locally at the Embassy in London. Verification takes between 10 and 14 days if done locally, however if enquiries are required in-country it could take up to 30+ days.
- 2.5.9 Foreign National Offenders who have completed their custodial sentence in the UK can be issued with a laissez-passer after being enrolled onto an interview and documentation scheme run by the Home Office in conjunction with the Iraqi Embassy (see Returns Logistics information on the Iraq country page on Horizon and the [Country returns guide](#) (this guide is updated regularly)).

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d. Lack of return documentation

- 2.5.10 A lack of documentation, in itself, is not sufficient to be granted HP. It is only where a person would be at real risk of serious harm because of that lack of documentation that HP would be appropriate.
- 2.5.11 In SMO2, the UT concluded:

"In light of the Court of Appeal's judgement in HE (Iraq) and Others v Secretary of State for the Home Departments ([2013] EWCA Civ 1276, an international protection claim made by P cannot succeed by reference to any alleged risk of harm arising from an absence of a current or expired Iraqi passport or a Laissez passer, if the Tribunal finds that P's return is not currently feasible on account of a lack of any of those documents." [144(9)]

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2.6 Feasibility of internal relocation

a. Process of return

- 2.6.1 In [SMO1](#), the Tribunal held that:
- 'Where internal relocation is raised in the Iraqi context [i.e. within the areas controlled by the Government of Iraq], it is necessary to consider not only the safety and reasonableness of relocation but also the feasibility of that course, in light of sponsorship and residency requirements in operation in various parts of the country. Individuals who seek to relocate within the country may not be admitted to a potential safe haven or may not be permitted to remain there.' [425(46)]

- 2.6.2 Decision makers must start by considering where the person would be returned to, where the proposed destination for internal relocation would be (or return to their home area), and the internal travel required to achieve that.
- 2.6.3 Failed asylum seekers and foreign national offenders can now be returned to any airport in Federal Iraq and the KRI.

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b. Requiring a CSID or INID for onward travel

- 2.6.4 In [SMO2](#), the Tribunal held that in order to enter and pass through security checkpoints, a person will require a civil identity document (a CSID or INID).

‘As a general matter, it is necessary for an individual to have... [either a [Civil Status Identity Card \(CSID\)](#) or a [Iraqi National Identity Card \(INID\)](#)]...in order to live and travel within Iraq without encountering treatment or conditions which are contrary to Article 3 ECHR. Many checkpoints in the country are manned by Shia militia who are not controlled by the GOI [Government of Iraq] and are unlikely to permit an individual without a CSID or an INID to pass.’ (Paragraph 11)
- 2.6.5 Decision makers must therefore assess whether a person will be returned to Iraq in possession of the necessary civil documentation or could obtain replacement documents in a reasonable timeframe. This can also be done through the Iraqi Embassy in London and/or via family (or proxies) in Iraq with the right supporting evidence. They may be met on arrival by family members who can provide them with either their original documentation or a replacement document (i.e. their family members have obtained a replacement CSID from a CSA office in Iraq).
- 2.6.6 Decision makers must read the Documentation section carefully to determine whether a person can obtain civil documentation (in particular, the Civil Status ID Card (CSID) or the Iraqi National Identity Card (INID)).
- 2.6.7 The onus is on the person to show why they cannot reasonably obtain necessary documentation.
- 2.6.8 Those persons whose return is feasible and who would arrive in Iraq or the IKR in possession of a CSID or an INID, or could be provided with an original or replacement document soon or shortly after arrival, would be able to return to their home governorate via the various security checkpoints and are, in general, unlikely to encounter treatment or conditions which are contrary to paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules/Article 3 of the ECHR.
- 2.6.9 However, those who return to Iraq or the KRI without a CSID or INID, cannot obtain one via a family member on arrival and who would be required to travel internally to a CSA office in another area of Iraq or the IKR to obtain one **would** be at risk of encountering treatment or conditions which are contrary to paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules/Article 3 of the ECHR. In these cases, a grant of Humanitarian Protection is therefore appropriate (unless the person is excluded from such protection).

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c. Passports and Laissez Passers for onward travel

2.6.10 The Tribunal in [SMO2](#) held that:

‘...A valid Iraqi passport is not recognised as acceptable proof of identity for internal travel by land.

‘Laissez Passers are confiscated on arrival and will not, for that reason, assist a returnee who seeks to travel from Baghdad to the IKR by air without a passport, INID or CSID. The Laissez Passer is not a recognised identity document for the purpose of internal travel by land.

‘There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate the existence or utility of the “certification letter” or “supporting letter” which is said to be issued to undocumented returnees by the authorities at Baghdad International Airport.’ [11, 17-19]

2.6.11 For information about residency requirements, see [Entry and residency requirements in central and southern Iraq](#) and [Entry and residency requirements in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region \(IKR\)](#).

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2.7 Key civil documentation

d. Iraqi National Identity Card (INID)

2.7.1 The Iraqi National Identity Card (INID) replaces the Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC) and the Civil Status ID Card (CSID). However, CSIDs are still accepted and are being produced in Civil Status Affairs Offices (CSAs) offices where INID terminals are not yet installed (see [Documentation – Iraqi Nationality Identity Card \(INID\)](#)).

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e. Civil Status ID Card (CSID)

2.7.2 The CSID is the key document to enable a person to access services such as financial assistance, employment, education, housing and medical treatment and persons must possess one in order to be able to travel internally across the country. It is also a gateway to obtaining other documents (see [Documentation - Civil Status Identity Card \(CSID\)](#)).

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f. Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC)

2.7.3 The Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC) is another important document, although not as important as the INID or CSID. The tribunal in [AAH](#) held that an INC ‘simply serves to confirm that the holder is an Iraqi citizen. It does not hold the practical significance of a CSID... An Iraqi in possession of a CSID can ordinarily use that document to obtain a replacement INC and in any event, the absence of an INC would not have any particular consequences for his ability to function in society. Conversely possession of an INC could assist the holder in replacing a lost CSID.’ (paragraph 95)

2.7.4 For more information on how to obtain an INC see [Documentation – Iraqi Nationality Certificate \(INC\)](#).

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g. Obtaining an INID in the UK

- 2.7.5 At the time of writing INIDs cannot be obtained while an individual is in the United Kingdom. The UT in [SMO2](#) held that 'In order to obtain an INID, an individual must personally attend the Civil Status Affairs ("CSA") office at which they are registered to enrol their biometrics, including fingerprints and iris scans.' (Para 11)
- 2.7.6 For more information on how to obtain an INID see [Documentation – Iraqi Nationality Identity Card \(INID\)](#).

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h. Obtaining a CSID in the UK

- 2.7.7 The UT in [SMO2](#) held (emphasis added):

'Notwithstanding the phased transition to the INID within Iraq, replacement CSIDs remain available through Iraqi Consular facilities but only for those Iraqi nationals who are registered at a CSA office which has not transferred to the digital INID system.

'... Whether an individual will be able to obtain a replacement CSID whilst in the UK also depends on the documents available and, critically, the availability of the volume and page reference of the entry in the Family Book in Iraq, which system continues to underpin the Civil Status Identity process. **Given the importance of that information, some Iraqi citizens are likely to recall it. Others are not. Whether an individual is likely to recall that information is a question of fact, to be considered against the factual matrix of the individual case and taking account of the background evidence.** The Family Book details may also be obtained from family members, although it is necessary to consider whether such relatives are on the father's or the mother's side because the registration system is patrilineal.' (Paragraph 14-15)

"... the Family Book details amount to a few short numbers. In the case of the volume number, it is likely to be a maximum of four digits. The numbers have a special significance to the family, given that they define your identity ... and because the volume number relates directly to the individual's place of origin. On any proper view, it would stretch credulity to suggest that a businessman with a family who travels throughout Iraq buying and selling property would be unable to remember these details, particularly if he has only left Iraq recently. Such an individual would produce his own card and that of his family members regularly; he would be required to produce the Family Book details in his property dealings and he might well struggle to persuade a tribunal of fact that he did not have the numbers at his fingertips." (Paragraph 81)

"In the case of other Iraqi citizens, it might be equally surprising if they were able to recall their Family Book details. [The] example of the single, young farmer who never had any need to travel outside his village is a good one, with respect, as such a person would be unlikely to need to carry or to produce his identity documents at checkpoints or in any dealings with officialdom." (Paragraph 82)

“... Given the interconnected nature of the Family Book records, it is highly likely that an individual who is in contact with family members in Iraq would be able to learn their own Family Book details from their family members. Given the patrilineal nature of the record keeping, that would particularly be the case if the individual asylum-seeker is in contact with male members of the family...” (Paragraph 83)

“... A judge considering [an assertion that a person cannot recall their Family Book details] might properly have regard to the individual’s age, the frequency with which they will have been required to produce or enter their Family Book details, and any dealings they might have had with officialdom during which those details would have been given, whether in respect of the individual in question or their family members...” (Paragraph 84)

- i. The UT additionally stated: ‘We consider it more likely than not that CSIDs continue to be available through the Iraqi Embassy in the UK but only for individuals who are registered at a Civil Status Affairs office which has not transferred to the digital INID system.’ (Para 60)
- ii. See [Annex D](#) for the Civil Status Affairs offices still issuing CSIDs.

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i. [Obtaining a CSID or INID in Iraq](#)

2.7.8 The UT in [SMO2](#) held:

‘In order to obtain an INID, an individual must personally attend the Civil Status Affairs (“CSA”) office at which they are registered to enrol their biometrics, including fingerprints and iris scans. The CSA offices in which INID terminals have been installed are unlikely - as a result of the phased replacement of the CSID system - to issue a CSID, whether to an individual in person or to a proxy. The reducing number of CSA offices in which INID terminals have not been installed will continue to issue CSIDs to individuals and their proxies upon production of the necessary information.

‘... Once in Iraq, it remains the case that an individual is expected to attend their local CSA office in order to obtain a replacement document. All CSA offices have now re-opened, although the extent to which records have been destroyed by the conflict with ISIL is unclear, and is likely to vary significantly depending on the extent and intensity of the conflict in the area in question.

‘An individual returnee who is not from Baghdad is not likely to be able to obtain a replacement document there, and certainly not within a reasonable time. Neither the Central Archive nor the assistance facilities for IDPs are likely to render documentation assistance to an undocumented returnee.’ (para 12, 15-16)

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2.8 [Impact of the security and humanitarian situation on onward travel](#)

j. [‘contested’ and ‘formerly contested areas’](#)

- 2.8.1 Decision makers must consider the country’s humanitarian and security situation when assessing internal relocation. This is because it relates to the ability to travel to and/or through a particular place, as well as whether e.g.

the level of destruction of some of the cities (in particular Mosul) rendered them suitable for living. This was an issue considered by the UT in [SMO1](#).

- 2.8.2 The Tribunal in [SMO1](#) held that any civilian returning to Iraq would, in general, not face a real risk of being subjected to indiscriminate violence amounting to serious harm [...] with the exception of the small mountainous area north of Baiji in Salah al-Din (see [Annex A](#)). The UT found this area to remain under doctrinal control by Daesh (paragraph 425 (30-31)). The UT in [SMO1](#) held that ‘the living conditions in Iraq as a whole, including the Formerly Contested Areas, are unlikely to give rise to a breach of Article 3 ECHR or (therefore) to necessitate subsidiary protection [...], However] any such circumstances require individualised assessment in the context of the conditions of the area in question.’ [425(35)].
- 2.8.3 However, the UT in [SMO1](#) also held that ‘The situation in the Formerly Contested Areas (the governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewah and Salah Al-Din) is complex, encompassing ethnic, political and humanitarian issues which differ by region. Whether the return of an individual to such an area would be contrary to Article 15(c) requires a fact sensitive, “sliding scale” assessment...’ (paragraph 425 (32))
- 2.8.4 For information and a detailed assessment of risk in light of the general country situation, see country policy and information note, [Iraq: Security and humanitarian situation](#).
- 2.8.5 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account, see the asylum instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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k. Relocation within/to the Formerly Contested Areas

- 2.8.6 In [SMO1](#) the tribunal held:
- ‘Where relocation within the Formerly Contested Areas is under contemplation [...] the ethnic and political composition of the home area and the place of relocation will be particularly relevant. In particular, an individual who lived in a former ISIL [Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant also known as Daesh] stronghold for some time may fall under suspicion in a place of relocation. Tribal and ethnic differences may preclude such relocation, given the significant presence and control of largely Shia militia in these areas. Even where it is safe for an individual to relocate within the Formerly Contested Areas, however, it is unlikely to either be feasible or reasonable without a prior connection to, and a support structure within, the area of question.’ (paragraph 425 (47))
- 2.8.7 Available evidence indicates that a civil identity document (CSID or INID), or an Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC) is required to pass checkpoints and be admitted into the governorates in south and central Iraq. Therefore, only those who are documented or who could obtain either original or replacement documents (i.e., a CSID via proxy) from a family member would be able to enter governorates in south and central Iraq.

- 2.8.8 In a report published in January 2021, UNHCR indicated that a passport can also be used to cross checkpoints in south and central Iraq. However, the Tribunal in SMO2, promulgated on 16 March 2022, considered this issue. They held that that passports are not an accepted form of identification document for the purpose of confirming identities and passing through checkpoints. Therefore, only those who currently hold accepted forms of identification, (i.e. a CSID, an INID) – or who could obtain either original or replacement documents (i.e. a CSID via proxy) from a family member – would be able to enter governorates in south and central Iraq (see [Entry and residency requirements in central and southern Iraq](#)).

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l. Relocation within/to Baghdad

- 2.8.9 The Tribunal in [SMO1](#) held:

‘Baghdad is generally safe for ordinary civilians but whether it is safe for a particular returnee is a question of fact in the individual case. There are no on-entry sponsorship requirements for Baghdad but there are sponsorship requirements for residency. A documented individual of working age is likely to be able to satisfy those requirements. Relocation to Baghdad is likely to be reasonable for Arab Shia and Sunni single, able-bodied man and married couples of working age without children and without specific vulnerabilities. Other individuals are likely to require external support, i.e. a support network of members of his or her family, extended family or tribe, who are willing and able to provide genuine support. Whether such a support network is available is to be considered with reference to the collectivist nature of Iraqi society, as considered in [AAH \(Iraq\) \[para 96\]](#)’ (paragraph 425 (48)).

- 2.8.10 The UT held that a civil identity document (CSID or INID) is required to pass checkpoints and be admitted into Baghdad. Therefore, only those who are documented or who could obtain either original or replacement documents (i.e. a CSID obtained via proxy) from a family member would be able to enter the Baghdad. For information see [Entry and residency requirements in central and southern Iraq](#).

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m. Relocation within/to the IKR

- 2.8.11 In general, Kurds who do not originate from the IKR can relocate to the region. Available country information suggests that ethnic Kurds are able to enter the IKR, although some sources say this may depend on certain circumstances. Available evidence indicates that a civil identity document (CSID or INID) are required to pass checkpoints and be admitted into the IKR. Therefore, only those who are documented or who could obtain either original or replacement documents (i.e. a CSID obtained via proxy) from a family member would be able to enter the IKR (see [Entry and residency requirements in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region \(IKR\)](#)). The risk of ill-treatment during the security screening process must be assessed on a case-by-case basis taking into account any additional factors that may increase this risk.
- 2.8.12 In [SMO1](#) the Tribunal held:

'For an Iraqi national returnee (P) of Kurdish origin in possession of a valid CSID or Iraqi National Identity Card (INID), the journey from Baghdad to the IKR [Iraqi Kurdish Region] is affordable and practical and can be made without a real risk of P suffering persecution, serious harm, or Article 3 ill treatment nor would any difficulties on the journey make relocation unduly harsh.

'P is unable to board a domestic flight between Baghdad and the IKR without either a CSID, an INID or a valid passport. If P has one of those documents, the journey from Baghdad to the IKR by land is affordable and practical and can be made without a real risk of P suffering persecution, serious harm, or Article 3 ill treatment nor would any difficulties on the journey make relocation unduly harsh.' (paragraph 425 (50-51))

2.8.13 However, the Tribunal in [SMO1](#) also held:

'P will face considerable difficulty in making the journey between Baghdad and the IKR by land without a CSID or INID. There are numerous checkpoints en route, including two checkpoints in the immediate vicinity of the airport. If P has neither a CSID or an INID there is a real risk of P being detained at a checkpoint until such time as the security personnel are able to verify P's identity. It is not reasonable to require P to travel between Baghdad and IKR by land absent the ability of P to verify his identity at a checkpoint. This normally requires attendance of a male family member and production of P's identity documents but may also be achieved by calling up "connections" higher up in the chain of command.

'Once at the IKR border (land or air) P would normally be granted entry to the territory. Subject to security screening, and registering presence with the local mukhtar, P would be permitted to enter and reside in the IKR with no further legal impediments or requirements. There are no sponsorship requirements for entry or residence in any of the three IKR Governorates for Kurds.

'Whether P would be at particular risk of ill-treatment during the security screening process must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Additional factors that may increase risk include: (i) coming from a family with a known association with ISIL, (ii) coming from an area associated with ISIL and (iii) being a single male of fighting age. P is likely to be able to evidence the fact of recent arrival from the UK, which would dispel any suggestion of having arrived directly from ISIL territory.

'If P has family members living in the IKR cultural norms would require that family to accommodate P. In such circumstances P would, in general, have sufficient assistance from the family so as to lead a "relatively normal life", which would not be unduly harsh. It is nevertheless important for decision-makers to determine the extent of any assistance likely to be provided by P's family on a case-by-case basis.

'For Kurds without the assistance of family in the IKR the accommodation options are limited:

- (v) Absent special circumstances it is not reasonably likely that P will be able to gain access to one of the refugee camps in the IKR; these

camps are already extremely overcrowded and are closed to newcomers. 64% of IDPs are accommodated in private settings with the vast majority living with family members;

- (vi) If P cannot live with a family member, apartments in a modern block in a new neighbourhood are available for rent at a cost of between \$300 and \$400 per month;
- (vii) P could resort to a “critical shelter arrangement”, living in an unfinished or abandoned structure, makeshift shelter, tent, mosque, church or squatting in a government building. It would be unduly harsh to require P to relocate to the IKR if P will live in a critical housing shelter without access to basic necessities such as food, clean water and clothing.
- (viii) In considering whether P would be able to access basic necessities, account must be taken of the fact that failed asylum seekers are entitled to apply for a grant under the Voluntary and assisted returns scheme, which could give P access to £1500. Consideration should also be given to whether P can obtain financial support from other sources such as (a) employment, (b) remittances from relatives abroad, (c) the availability of ad hoc charity or by being able to access PDS rations.

‘Whether P is able to secure employment must be assessed on a case-by-case basis taking the following matters into account:

- (vii) Gender. Lone women are very unlikely to be able to secure legitimate employment;
- (viii) The unemployment rate for Iraqi IDPs living in the IKR is 70%;
- (ix) P cannot work without a CSID or INID.
- (x) Patronage and nepotism continue to be important factors in securing employment. A returnee with family connections to the region will have a significant advantage in that he would ordinarily be able to call upon those contacts to make introductions to prospective employers and to vouch for him;
- (xi) Skills, education and experience. Unskilled workers are at the greatest disadvantage, with the decline in the construction industry reducing the number of labouring jobs available;
- (xii) If P is from an area with a marked association with ISIL, that may deter prospective employers.’ (paragraph 425 (52-57))

2.8.14 The Tribunal in [SMO1](#) held the following in regard to non-Kurdish returnees’ ability to relocate to the IKR:

‘The ability of non-Kurdish returnees to relocate to the IKR is to be distinguished [from Kurdish returnees]. There are no sponsorship requirements for entry or residence in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, although single Arab and Turkmen citizens require regular employment in order to secure residency. Arabs from former conflict areas and Turkmen from Tal Afar are subject to sponsorship requirements to enter or reside in Dohuk. Although Erbil and Sulaymaniyah are accessible for such individuals,

particular care must be taken in evaluating whether internal relocation to the IKR for a non-Kurd would be reasonable. Given the economic and humanitarian conditions in the IKR at present, an Arab with no viable support network in the IKR is likely to experience unduly harsh conditions upon relocation there.' (paragraph 425 (58))

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2.9 Assessment of risk arising from a lack of documentation

n. Conditions on return for **undocumented** persons

- 2.9.1 A person who is unable to replace their CSID and/or obtain an INID is likely to face significant difficulties in accessing services and thus risk being exposed to humanitarian conditions which are likely to result in destitution sufficient to amount to a breach of paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules/Article 3 of the ECHR.
- 2.9.2 A person who can be feasibly returned and is at real risk of destitution because of a lack of documents should be granted Humanitarian Protection (unless the person is excluded from such protection).
- 2.9.3 Where a person is unable to obtain a CSID or INID within a reasonable time frame, consideration must be given to their other means of support (i.e. family members etc). While a family may be able to provide support, it may not be possible for the returnee to access it. As an example, while a wealthy family based in Mosul could provide an undocumented person with food and shelter, the undocumented person would not be able to travel internally from their airport of arrival to Mosul without being at risk of encountering treatment or conditions which are contrary to paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules/Article 3 ECHR at the various security checkpoints along the route. In cases such as these, a grant of Humanitarian Protection is appropriate (unless the person is excluded from such protection).

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o. Conditions on return for **documented** persons

- 2.9.4 The situation is different for documented persons returning to their home area. They would not, in general, face conditions which breach paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules/Article 3 ECHR. In considering whether it would be in breach of Articles 3 and 8 ECHR to return a documented person to their home area within the Formerly Contested Areas or Baghdad the UT in [SMO1](#) held that:

'Nevertheless, we remind ourselves that the threshold is that in *N v UK* and we accept the respondent's submission that **the cumulative difficulties faced by a healthy, documented male returning to their place of origin in the formerly contested areas do not cross that threshold. Such an individual would be able to access food through the PDS or other humanitarian assistance programmes. They would have access to the limited employment options available. There is some primary healthcare available there. The risks of food insecurity and water scarcity, together with the risks from disease and unexploded ordnance, even in the worst affected areas and even in respect of those**

who would be required to live in a critical shelter arrangement, do not reach the high threshold required for us to conclude that there is a general risk of conditions which breach Article 3 ECHR, or engage Article 15(b) QD. A healthy, documented male returning to a home area in the formerly contested areas, therefore, will not generally be able to establish that theirs is a very exceptional case where the humanitarian grounds against removal are sufficiently compelling to require such protection.’ (paragraph 331) [emphasis added].

2.9.5 However the UT in [SMO1](#) also held that:

‘It is imperative to recall that the minimum level of severity required by Article 3 is relative and depends on all the circumstances of the case, including the duration of the treatment, its physical and mental effects and the sex, age and state of health of the individual concerned: *Saadi v Italy* (2009) 49 EHRR 30. Although it is clear to us that a documented, healthy male would not, on return to a home area in the formerly contested areas, encounter conditions in breach of Article 3 ECHR, additional vulnerabilities including those considered under the ‘sliding scale’ of Article 15(c) might conceivably combine to cross the *N v UK* threshold. In considering any such submission, decision makers will nevertheless wish to recall that that the combination of factors in *Said*, including mental health problems and a lack of family support, offset by clan support and remittances from the UK, were held by the Court of Appeal to be so short of the *N v UK* threshold that remittal to the Upper Tribunal would serve no purpose: [32]-[33] refers.’ (paragraph 332)

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2.10 Certification

2.10.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

2.10.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 26 May 2022

3. Return of Iraqi nationals

- 3.1.1 Failed asylum seekers and foreign national offenders can now be returned to any airport in Federal Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

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Section 4 updated: 12 July 2022

4. Documentation

4.1 Legal Context

- 4.1.1 In October 2021 the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) published a report written by Protection Cluster Iraq (PCI) entitled 'Protection Analysis Report – Right to identity and civil documentation' which stated:

'The right to legal identity is the right to be recognized by the State as a person before the law, which allows the person to access further rights, benefits and responsibilities in the country. In practice, one's legal identity is established through the issuance by the State of identity documents, which provide official recognition of someone's nationality and identity. Consequently, identity documents (Civil Status ID Card, Iraqi Nationality Certificate, Unified ID Card [also known as the Iraqi National Identity Card INID]) are different from, but a requirement for, civil documents (Birth, Death or Marriage Certificates). In Iraq, the right to a legal identity and to civil documentation is enshrined in various bodies of law, including the Constitution of the Government of Iraq of 2005, the Civil Status Law No. 65 of 1972, the Civil Status System Law No. 32 of 1974 and the Iraq Nationality Act No. 26 of 2006.'¹

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4.2 Civil registration system

- 4.2.1 A paper published in the Canadian Studies in Population (CSIP) in 2014, based on a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) funded field visit to Iraq, explained that all births, deaths, marriages and divorces are updated on the family registry. The source explained that family records were held locally at the daa'ira (local civil registration office), where a new event, for example a birth, marriage or divorce, would be manually inputted onto the family register².
- 4.2.2 The same source noted that the registrar would record the following information: serial number, name, title, father's name, mother's name, sex, relationship to head of household, occupation, literacy, religion, date of birth, place of birth, and date of registration³.

¹ PCI via UNOCHA, '[Protection Analysis Report – Right to... documentation](#)', (p4), Oct 2021

² CSIP, '[The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval](#)', (p.112-115), 22 April 2014

³ CSIP, '[The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval](#)', (p.112-115), 22 April 2014

- 4.2.3 The paper explained the precise way in which family records were maintained, based on three unique information markers: the sijil (family record) number; sahifa (family page) number and daaira (local civil registration office). As the source explained:
- ‘All vital events occurring to any member of the family are entered into this “family page”. This is done until the child gets married and establishes his own family, in which case a new “family page” is started for him. Through this innovative system, it can take as little as five minutes to locate anyone’s records. From this ID system, three pieces of ID are produced: the civil registration ID, nationality ID, and residence ID (location of house). The retention period for the documents in the local offices is 20 years.’⁴
- 4.2.4 The source commented that when the register was full (each register contains around 200 families), the document would be sent back to the head office for scanning, after which it would be returned to the local office for archiving. It was also noted that at head office ‘separate archives exist for records from 1934–1947’, whilst information from 1948–1957 had been scanned and stored on CDs. For records from 1958 to the time of writing (2011) scanned images were stored on an external hard drive, with one hard drive for each governorate⁵. CPIT was unable to find any information regarding how information is currently archived in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 4.2.5 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad (BEB), dated 7 April 2012 (available on request), explained that there was an extensive civil status office network across Iraq, with each district (sub-governorate) or Nahyas (sub-district) having a local ID office. The source reaffirmed that information was retained by the Civil Status Office’s local records and that information was referenced using a “book page number”, which was also written on the Civil Status ID card (see [Civil Status Identity Card \(CSID\)](#)). In the case of marriage, the civil record for the wife was transferred to be inserted with the husband’s record (on his family’s page)⁶.
- 4.2.6 A Landinfo report dated 16 December 2015 also confirmed that all personal data was entered onto a family registry at the local population registration office near the family’s residence. The source stated there were over 300 population registration offices (unofficially called Civil Status Offices or Civil Status Departments, or Jinsiya⁷). The report stated that each family had their own registration number, which was listed on the personal identity cards. The source also confirmed that any Iraqi could obtain a copy of their page in the family registry⁸.
- 4.2.7 The family registry had several synonymous names in the unofficial English translation: family book; family census and family registry 57 (after the 1957 law which introduced civil registration in Iraq following the 1957 census)⁹.

⁴ CSIP, ‘[The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval](#)’, (p.112-115), 22 April 2014

⁵ CSIP, ‘[The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval](#)’, (p.112-115), 22 April 2014

⁶ BEB, ‘Re-documentation procedures’, 7 April 2012 (available on request)

⁷ Landinfo, ‘[Travel documents and other identity documents](#)’, (page 15), 16 December 2015

⁸ Landinfo, ‘[Travel documents and other identity documents](#)’, (page 15), 16 December 2015

⁹ BEB, ‘Re-documentation procedures’, 7 April 2012 (available on request)

4.3 Importance of identity documents

- 4.3.1 The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) (which has since changed its name to the European Union Agency for Asylum) published a report entitled 'Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad, Basrah and Sulaymaniyah' in November 2021, citing various sources. The report stated that proper civil documentation is:

'... [R]equired 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. In addition, possession of a legal identity enables access to humanitarian assistance for displaced persons... [They are] 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. 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.'¹⁰

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4.4 Iraqi National Identity Card (INID)

- 4.4.1 The Iraqi National Identity Card (INID) is also known as the Unified National Card or, Unified Card or Unified National Card in several sources.

- 4.4.2 The EASO report, citing various sources, published in November 2021 stated:

'In September 2015, the issuance of new electronic and biometric unified national cards (also called new national card, new ID card, al-bitāqa al-watāniya al-muwahhada, al-bitāqa al-watāniya al-jadida) 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.

'... According to a diplomatic source in Amman interviewed by Landinfo... [the INID is] issued at the local offices of the Directorate of National Card Affairs, situated all over the country and were referred to as Civil Affairs Directorate (CAD) offices [Note: CPIT and the Home Office refer to these as 'Civil Status Affairs' offices]. 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. The offices can be found in most cities and in the provincial capitals. Both types of ID cards [INIDs and CSIDs] could only be issued in the district where the family was registered, which made it difficult for IDPs [Internally Displaced Persons] to obtain new documents as they often needed help if they lived in a province other than where they were registered.

'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

¹⁰ EASO, '[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)', (page 56), 25 November 2021

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 original documents needed to be presented.

‘... 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. It costs 5,000 Iraqi dinars (IQD) [£2.69 GBP¹¹] 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 [£5.39 GBP¹²] and 25,000 IQD (£13.49 GBP¹³), respectively. 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. 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.

‘... With a few deviations, the aforementioned procedure applies for the KRI [Kurdistan Region of Iraq]. 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 [Kurdistan Regional Government], interviewed in 2018 by Landinfo and DIS [Danish Immigration Service], 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.

‘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.’¹⁴

- 4.4.3 In July 2021, Signpost (a ‘global project operating information services in 13 countries’ consisting of a ‘team of skilled frontline responders and support personnel who use journalistic and humanitarian expertise to ensure the right information products are created and adapted to the lived realities’ of ‘people facing complex challenges and crises’¹⁵) published an article entitled ‘Iraqi Official Identification Documents: What are they and how do I get them?’ via its organisation in Iraq called Simaet Bhatha which was ‘launched in 2020 in Iraq to promote access to reliable, up to date information on services relevant to IDPs and refugees’¹⁶ which stated:

¹¹ XE.com, ‘[5,000 Iraqi Dinar to British Pound conversion](#)’, 26 April 2022

¹² XE.com, ‘[10,000 Iraqi Dinar to British Pound conversion](#)’, 26 April 2022

¹³ XE.com, ‘[25,000 Iraqi Dinar to British Pound conversion](#)’, 26 April 2022

¹⁴ EASO, ‘[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)’, (page 50-51), 25 November 2021

¹⁵ Signpost, ‘[What is Signpost?](#)’, no date

¹⁶ Signpost, ‘[Where We Work](#)’, no date

'The national card is accepted by governmental and non-governmental agencies to prove the identity of its owner and identifying their Iraqi nationality. It is an alternative to the Iraqi Nationality Certificate, civil status card and the Residence Card. The Unified National Card Law was enacted in order to unify the Iraqi nationality certificate, the ID card, and the Residence Card form in one document, within a one integrated network of civil information.'¹⁷

4.4.4 The same source additionally published the below image of an INID:



4.4.5 In August 2020 the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) published a country information report on Iraq which stated:

'The Iraqi National ID card is an electronic biometric card issued by the Ministry of Interior, which holders are required to carry at all times. The National ID card is a credit card-sized plastic card with an embedded radio frequency identification (RFID) chip. It is covered with multi-coloured guillochés (an ornamental pattern formed of two or more curved bands that interlace to repeat a circular design). All information on the card is in Arabic and Kurdish. The front side of the card shows the coat of arms of Iraq and the words "Republic of Iraq", "Ministry of Interior" and "General Directorate of Nationality". It also contains the photograph of the holder, the holder's 12-digit national identification number, the 9-alphanumeric digit access number for the RFID chip, the holder's given name, father's, mother's and paternal grandfather's names, tribe and the holder's sex and blood type. The rear side contains the issuing authority, dates of issue and expiry, date and place of birth (city or town), 18-alphanumeric digit family number, and machine-readable zone.'¹⁹

¹⁷ Simaet Bhatha, '[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)', July 2021

¹⁸ Simaet Bhatha, '[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)', July 2021

¹⁹ DFAT, '[Country Information Report – Iraq](#)', (page 65), 17 August 2020

4.5 Civil Status Identity Card (CSID)

4.5.1 In February 2019 EASO published a report, citing various sources, entitled 'Iraq: Internal mobility' which stated that the CSID is called 'bitaqat hawwiyyat al-ahwal al-shakhsiya'²⁰ in Arabic. The same source additionally stated that CSIDs are:

'... [I]ssued in the district where a person is registered and on the basis of information in the person's family register. Family registers (also known as family book, or family census or sijilla al-qayd or sijil al ahwal al-shakhsiyya) are kept manually and created locally in approximately 300 civil status registration offices across Iraq and information is updated with birth, death, marriages, and changes to civil status. Landinfo stated that "the family register forms the basis for the issuing of national ID cards and nationality certificates, which in turn form the basis for the issuing of passports".'²¹

4.5.2 The November 2021 EASO report, citing various sources, stated:

'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.

'... According to information obtained in a meeting with the General Directorate of Nationality in Baghdad 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 [£0.53 GBP²²].

'... 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 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.'²³

4.5.3 The Landinfo report published in December 2015 stated that a CSID must include the following data:

- Personal name
- Name of father and paternal grandfather
- Surname
- Name of mother and maternal grandfather

²⁰ EASO, '[Iraq – Internal Mobility](#)', (page 20), February 2019

²¹ EASO, '[Iraq – Internal Mobility](#)', (page 20), February 2019

²² XE.com, '[1,000 Iraqi Dinar to British Pound conversion](#)', 26 April 2022

²³ EASO, '[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)', (page 52-53), 25 November 2021

- Gender
- Signature of authorised representative
- Date of issue
- Signature of issuer
- Full name of issuer
- Date of birth in digits and letters
- Place of birth
- Marital status
- Name of spouse
- Religious affiliation

‘The right-hand side of the card’s front page contains the name of the issuing regional office, a register number indicating the number of the family book in which the person is registered, as well as the page number in the family book. The serial number is entered on the top left-hand side. The font of the serial number is serif, and the figures increase in size. These digits and the signature of the issuer give an indication of the authenticity of the card.’²⁴

4.5.4 The July 2021 article published by Simaet Bhatha stated the following steps must be taken to apply for a CSID (including a new renewal or a replacement for a lost or damaged card) and also provided an image of a CSID:

‘1. Visit to the Personal Status Department [Civil Status Affairs Office] in your area or where your family is registered and fill out the ID application form.

‘2. Attach the following documents: residence card, residence support letter, ID photocopies (x2)

‘3. The identity card can be processed in one day if the application is complete and has all the required supporting documents attached.’²⁵

²⁴ Landinfo, ‘[Travel documents and other identity documents](#)’, (page 17), 16 December 2015

²⁵ Simaet Bhatha, ‘[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)’, July 2021



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4.5.5 In [SMO2](#) the UT held the following regarding reobtaining a CSID whilst in the United Kingdom:

‘We consider it more likely than not that CSIDs continue to be available through the Iraqi Embassy in the UK but only for individuals who are registered at a Civil Status Affairs office which has not transferred to the digital INID system.

‘... The process for applying for a CSID whilst in the UK was examined at [173]- [177] of [AA \(Iraq\)](#) and it was clear, even at that stage, that the Embassy did not issue the document itself; it would act as an intermediary by sending the completed application for a CSID to the General Directorate for Travel and Nationality – Directorate of Civil Status. (We note the reference to the embassy operating a “post box service” for the Ministry of Interior in the April 2020 communication between the British and Iraqi authorities.) It is logical to conclude that the facility is only available in the UK if it would be available to the same person in Iraq. If an individual is registered at a place where the INID has been rolled out, therefore, they would not be able to apply for a CSID in Iraq or in the UK. If the INID has not been rolled out in their place of registration, they could apply for a CSID in Iraq (in person or by proxy) or from the UK, using the intermediary facility provided by the Embassy.’ (Para 60-61).

4.5.6 See [Annex D](#) for a list of the CSA offices still issuing CSIDs.

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4.6 Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC)

4.6.1 In November 2021 EASO stated:

‘A nationality certificate is issued to all Iraqi nationals upon application. Children normally obtain them around the age of 12. In practice, both the ID card and nationality certificate were required to obtain certain services such as health services or education access.

²⁶ Simaet Bhatha, ‘[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)’, July 2021

‘Referring to information obtained in 2013 from IOM [International Organization for Migration], 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.’²⁷

4.6.2 The July 2021 article published by Simaet Bhatha stated:

‘The Iraqi Nationality Certificate is a document proving the nationality of the Iraqi citizen and is considered as a formal document in governmental and non-governmental institutions. It is granted under the Iraqi Nationality Law (No. 26 of 2006) by the Travel and Nationality Directorates of the Ministry of Interior.

‘Requirements to obtain it:

‘1. Visit the Nationality Department in person (it is not acceptable for agency or representation to visit the nationality departments, and this includes even newborns).

‘2. Complete application form to obtain the Iraqi Nationality Certificate.

‘3. Attach the supporting documents:

‘ - Father’s Nationality Certificate (in the event that the father’s nationality certificate is not present or damaged, the person must bring the Nationality Certificate of the brother, mother, grandfather or uncle)

‘ – Residence card

‘ - Two recent photos of the citizen’²⁸

4.6.3 The article published by Simaet Bhatha also included the following image of an INC:

²⁷ EASO, ‘[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)’, (page 54), 25 November 2021

²⁸ Simaet Bhatha, ‘[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)’, July 2021



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4.6.4 The same source further stated the following regarding Nationality Departments in Baghdad and the procedures for those in Iraq without identification:

‘Nationality Departments in Baghdad:

- ‘ - Iraqi Nationality Certificate Department/Baghdad/Rusafa/General Department - Karada, near the shrine of Sayed Idris
- ‘ - Iraqi Nationality Certificate Department/Baghdad/Rusafa/Al-Waziriya - Al-Maghrib Street
- ‘ - Iraqi Nationality Certificate Department/Baghdad/Rusafa/Sadr City
- ‘ - Iraqi Nationality Certificate Department/Baghdad/Al-Karkh/Al-Mansour
- ‘ - Iraqi Nationality Certificate Department/Baghdad/Al-Karkh/Mahmoudiya

‘As for the governorates, the relevant department is the nationality certificate department in the governorate itself, and the above departments are visited according to the beneficiary's residence card [i.e. residents of the above areas of Baghdad can use these Nationality Departments].

‘There are special cases that require a person to travel between governorates, such as those of some returnees whose Iraqi nationality has been revoked, or people who do not have identification papers proving their Iraqi identity, which require travel to Baghdad to obtain the required

²⁹ Simaet Bhatha, ‘[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)’, July 2021

identification papers from the General Directorate in Baghdad and located on Rasheed Street. Iraqi nationality is granted to a child born to an Iraqi mother just as it is granted to a child born to an Iraqi father, according to (Article Three of the Nationality Law No. 26 of 2006).³⁰

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4.7 Passport

4.7.1 Landinfo's 2015 report on travel documents, citing various sources, stated:

'In order to be issued a passport, the applicant must, in addition to the completed application form, present the following documents:

- A national ID Card (Bitaka Shakhsiyeh/Jinsiya/Hawiya).
- An Iraqi nationality certificate (Shahadet Jinsiyaa).
- A certificate of residence (Bitaka Sakan/Zanyari). This applies to applicants living in Iraq. Applicants who live outside Iraq must enclose their residence permit from the country they live in. Only heads of households must present a certificate of residence (GDN [General Directorate for Nationality], meeting in Baghdad April 2012). According to the Director-General of GDN, it is not strictly necessary to present this card, but it will be required if there is any doubt about the place of residence.
- Two colour passport photos (three for persons applying from abroad) against a white background. In addition, 25,000 Iraqi dinars (or an amount equivalent to USD 20 [approximately £13.89 GBP³¹]) must be included, and fingerprints must be given upon submission and collection.³²

4.7.2 The July 2021 article published by Simaet Bhatha stated:

'The Iraqi passport is an official document issued by the government to verify the identity and nationality of an individual for the purpose of traveling across international borders. It provides information about the holder, including name, place and date of birth, photograph, signature, and other relevant identifying information.

'How to get an Iraqi Passport:

'1. Pay the application legal fees (25,000 Iraqi dinars) [approximately £13.89 GBP³³] and obtain a certified receipt from any bank approved by the Central Bank of Iraq. (Note: approximate total fees with banks fees and photocopies could reach 50,000-55,000 IQD)

'2. Visit the Passport Department in your governorate and fill out the application form for obtaining a new passport.

'3. Attach the support documents to the application including:

³⁰ Simaet Bhatha, '[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)', July 2021

³¹ XE.com, '[25,000 Iraqi Dinar to British Pound conversion](#)', 10 May 2022

³² Landinfo, '[Travel documents and other identity documents](#)', (page 8), 16 December 2015

³³ XE.com, '[25,000 Iraqi Dinar to British Pound conversion](#)', 10 May 2022

‘a) The original documents (not to be submitted but have to be available through the whole procedure) and colour copies to be submitted of: Civil Status ID or the Unified National Card, Iraqi Nationality Certificate, Residence Card and Ration Card.

‘b) Passport size photos (with white background)

‘c) Passport fee receipt

‘4. The Passport Department staff should then take your fingerprints (biometric information).

‘5. Obtain a date for receiving the passport.’³⁴

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4.8 Residency Card

4.8.1 In November 2021 EASO, citing various sources, stated that the residency card is also called housing card, housing information card or residence card and is bitaqat al-sakan in Arabic³⁵.

4.8.2 The same source additionally stated:

‘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. 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 [Public Distribution System] card of the applicant or his father, the original and a copy of the marriage certificate and a support of residence from the Municipal Council as well as four photos with a white background. UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] 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”.

‘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.’³⁶

4.8.3 The July 2021 article published by Simaet Bhatha stated:

³⁴ Simaet Bhatha, ‘[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)’, July 2021

³⁵ EASO, ‘[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)’, (page 49), 25 November 2021

³⁶ EASO, ‘[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)’, (page 54-55), 25 November 2021

'The Residence Card is an official document which determines the place of residence of a family and includes details related to the ID of the head of the family. Steps to get a residence card:

'1. Visit your local Information Office and complete a Residence Card application

'2. Attach the required supporting documents to the application including:

'a) A Support letter from the Mukhtar addressed to the Central Information Office in the event of a new residence card request, or to the Residence Area Information Office in the case of renewing the old residence card.

'b) Family ration card (original and photocopy).

'c) Family Civil Status IDs (original and photocopy).

'd) Iraqi Nationality Certificates for the family (original and photocopy).

'3. You should receive your Residence Card within a period of two days.'³⁷

4.8.4 The same source also provided the below image of a Residency card:



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³⁷ Simaet Bhatha, '[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)', July 2021

³⁸ Simaet Bhatha, '[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)', July 2021

4.9 Public Distribution System (PDS) card

4.9.1 The November 2021 EASO report, citing various sources, stated:

‘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.

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

‘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.

‘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’), which was launched on 8 July 2020 as a pilot project in Baghdad, was supposed to enable households to remotely update family information using their smartphone.’³⁹

4.9.2 The Simaet Bhatha article published in July 2021 stated that the PDS card (known as a Ration Card in the article) is free of charge and takes one month from the date of submitting the application to receive the card, in Baghdad or the rest of the governorates of Iraq⁴⁰.

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4.10 Possible consequences of not holding identity documents

4.10.1 The report authored by Protection Cluster Iraq and published by UNOCHA in October 2021 stated:

‘The lack of identity documentation directly increases the risk of other serious protection incidents and rights violations for the concerned individuals, especially at checkpoints manned by armed and security actors. Based on protection monitoring data, the risk of arbitrary arrest and detention are ranked as the second and fourth main type of violations affecting civilians, and the need to show one’s civil ID is ranked as the second main barrier to freedom of movement.

‘... Adults who have been lacking a valid identity document for an extended period of time in the context of their protracted displacement and who are unable to obtain or renew such documents are exposed to the risk of losing their legal identity, since they may become unable to prove their Iraqi nationality... In addition, lacking security clearance and/or valid identity documents prevents the affected individual from pursuing legal remedies

³⁹ EASO, ‘[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)’, (page 55-56), 25 November 2021

⁴⁰ Simaet Bhatha, ‘[Iraqi Official Identification Documents...](#)’, July 2021

through judicial institutions for any rights-violations that s/he may be subjected to.

‘...Lacking valid identity and civil documents prevents the affected individuals from accessing basic services and fully enjoying rights and entitlements. Health facilities often require some form of identity documents to provide routine immunization and health care. The Health cluster reports that whereas identity documentation may not always be needed for outpatient treatment at Primary Health Care Centers (PHCC) it is usually required for admission at hospitals. Similarly, children who do not have any identity documents are often prevented from being registered by schools under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, both in areas of displacement and returns. While a few school administrations allow children in such a situation to access education facilities, they are usually prevented from participating in public exams due to their lack of valid documentation.

‘...The submission of claims for compensation related to the damage, loss or destruction of housing, land and property to government Compensation Committees – an essential financial entitlement for IDPs and returnees whose homes have often been totally or partially destroyed during the conflict - also require the applicant to provide a valid identity document. Lastly, benefiting from various social protection schemes such as the Public Distribution System (PDS) – the PDS Card being a key civil document itself – also require having a valid identity document.’⁴¹

4.10.2 The EASO report citing various sources and published in November 2021 stated:

‘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.

‘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. Especially, IDPs and returnees were reported to be severely impacted by a lack of documentation. Marginalised groups such as Faili 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.

‘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

⁴¹ PCI via UNOCHA, [‘Protection Analysis Report – Right to... documentation’](#), (p11-13), Oct 2021

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.⁴²

- 4.10.3 On 27 March 2022 the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) published a report, citing various sources, entitled 'Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022' which stated:

'The lack of identity and civil documents affects all aspects of a person's life, and the impact is multidimensional. People without an official recognition of nationality and identity have limited access to essential services and are often unable to exercise their fundamental rights. Without documents to prove identity, IDPs' and returnees' physical safety is at risk due to potential arbitrary arrests and detention, rights violation at checkpoints, and limited freedom of movement.'⁴³

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Section 5 updated: 26 May 2022

5. Entry and residency requirements in central and southern Iraq

5.1 Country Guidance

- 5.1.1 The UT in [SMO2](#) held the following regarding Baghdad: 'There are no on-entry sponsorship requirements for Baghdad but there are sponsorship requirements for residency. A documented individual of working age is likely to be able to satisfy those requirements.' (Para 25)

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5.2 Entry requirements

- 5.2.1 On 11 January 2021 the UNHCR published a report entitled 'Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation' which stated:

'An individual's ability to pass checkpoints and be admitted to the proposed area of relocation will require the individual to hold valid identity documentation (such as an ID card, nationality certificate or passport).

'... At the time of writing, persons from formerly ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] -held or conflict-affected areas (including persons who returned to Iraq from a third country) do not require a sponsor to enter Babel, Baghdad, Basrah, Dhi-Qar, Diyala, Kerbala, Kirkuk City, Missan, Muthanna, Najef, Qadissiyah, and Wassit Governorates. Sponsorship requirements in order to enter Missan and Muthanna Governorates were lifted in January 2020.'⁴⁴

- 5.2.2 The EASO report, citing various sources, published in November 2021 stated the following regarding the legal and administrative requirements to enter Baghdad:

⁴² EASO, '[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)', (page 57), 25 November 2021

⁴³ UNOCHA, '[Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022](#)', (page 28), 27 March 2022

⁴⁴ UNHCR, '[Ability of Persons... to Legally Access and Remain](#)', (page 2), 11 January 2021

'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.

'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 allowed to pass checkpoints and be admitted into Baghdad.

'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.'⁴⁵

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5.3 Residency requirements

5.3.1 The January 2021 UNHCR report stated the following regarding residency requirements in central and southern Iraq:

'In order to legally take up residency, valid civil documentation is required in addition to the approval (through a confirmation/recommendation/support letter) of the relevant local authority such as the mukhtar (head of local administration) and/or the local council, depending on the area. Depending on the individual's profile, particularly his/her family/religious/ethnic background and place of origin, a sponsor may be required by the local authorities in order to take up legal residency. In addition, security clearance from relevant security agencies is generally needed in all areas, irrespective of the person's profile/origin. Sunni Arabs and Sunni Turkmen from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas may be denied security clearance or run the risk arbitrary arrest and detention under the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2005 (Law No. 13 of 2005) on the basis of broad and discriminatory profiling.

'At the time of writing, UNHCR is aware of the following residency requirements in respect of persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas, particularly Sunni Arabs (including for persons who returned to Iraq from a third country):

'... **Baghdad Governorate** All persons, including persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas, require two sponsors from the neighbourhood in which they intend to reside as well as a support letter from the local mukhtar.

'**Diyala Governorate** Persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas require a sponsor from the neighbourhood in which they intend to reside as well as a support letter from the local mukhtar. Those seeking to reside in villages in northern Muqdadiah District, Sinsil villages, Saadiyah Sub-District in Khanaqin District, as well as villages located in the north of Al-Udhim Sub-District in Khalis District require support letters from three different administrative and security entities, namely from the local mukhtar's office, the National Security and the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS).

⁴⁵ EASO, '[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)', (page 14), 25 November 2021

‘Kirkuk City Persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas require a support letter from the local mukhtar in the neighbourhood in which they intend to reside.

‘Southern Governorates Persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas require a local sponsor as well as a support letter from the local mukhtar in order to legally reside in Babel, Basra, Dhi-Qar, Kerbala, Missan, Muthanna, Najef, Qadissiyah and Wassit Governorates. In addition, the relevant Operations Command at the Governorate level must grant specific security clearance (in addition to security clearance by local security actors).⁴⁶

5.3.2 The EASO report stated the following regarding the legal and administrative requirements to settle in 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.

‘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. Meanwhile, IOM noted that IDPs need either a support letter from the mukhtar or sponsorship from two residents of the relevant neighbourhood.

‘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.

‘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. Once an IDP has residency documentation, he or she is considered a “resident” and can seek housing and move around within Baghdad. However, IDPs are not allowed to purchase or own property in the city.’⁴⁷

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Section 6 updated: 26 May 2022

6. Entry and residency requirements in the Iraqi Kurdish Region (IKR)

6.1 Country Guidance

6.1.1 The UT in [SMO2](#) held:

⁴⁶ UNHCR, ‘[Ability of Persons... to Legally Access and Remain](#)’, (page 2-3), 11 January 2021

⁴⁷ EASO, ‘[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)’, (page 16-17), 25 November 2021

‘Once at the IKR border (land or air) P would normally be granted entry to the territory. Subject to security screening, and registering presence with the local mukhtar, P would be permitted to enter and reside in the IKR with no further legal impediments or requirements. There are no sponsorship requirements for entry or residence in any of the three IKR Governorates for Kurds.

‘... There are no sponsorship requirements for entry or residence in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, although single Arab and Turkmen citizens require regular employment in order to secure residency. Arabs from former conflict areas and Turkmen from Tal Afar are subject to sponsorship requirements to enter or reside in Dohuk...’ (para 30, 35)

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6.2 Entry requirements

The January 2021 UNHCR report stated the following regarding entry requirements for the IKR:

‘An individual’s ability to pass checkpoints and be admitted to the proposed area of relocation will require the individual to hold valid identity documentation (such as an ID card, nationality certificate or passport).

‘... Iraqis not originating from the KR-I [Kurdistan Region of Iraq], including persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas, do not require a sponsor in order to enter Dohuk, Erbil or Sulaymaniyah Governorates. Upon entry to the KR-I (at either an internal border checkpoint or the airports in Erbil or Sulaymaniyah) and following security screening, the Asayish (Kurdish security agency) generally provides such persons with a temporary entry authorization valid for 30 days. This authorization is issued for short-term visits (for the purposes of medical care, business, shopping or similar reasons). It enables the holder to enter and remain in the KR-I within the validity period of the authorization. The holder of such authorization is unable to rent a house or secure regular employment.’⁴⁸

6.2.1 The EASO report, citing various sources, published in November 2021 stated the following regarding the legal and administrative requirements to enter 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”.

‘... 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. 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.

‘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

⁴⁸ UNHCR, ‘[Ability of Persons... to Legally Access and Remain](#)’, (page 2), 11 January 2021

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 generally provides such persons with a temporary entry authorization (Tourist Visitor Card) valid for 30 days”... 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 document.

‘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 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”.

‘... 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”.’⁴⁹

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6.3 Residency requirements

6.3.1 The January 2021 UNHCR report stated:

‘In order to legally take up residency, valid civil documentation is required in addition to the approval (through a confirmation/recommendation/support letter) of the relevant local authority such as the mukhtar (head of local administration) and/or the local council, depending on the area. Depending on the individual’s profile, particularly his/her family/religious/ethnic background and place of origin, a sponsor may be required by the local authorities in order to take up legal residency. In addition, security clearance from relevant security agencies is generally needed in all areas, irrespective of the person’s profile/origin. Sunni Arabs and Sunni Turkmen from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas may be denied security clearance or run

⁴⁹ EASO, ‘[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)’, (page 15-16), 25 November 2021

the risk arbitrary arrest and detention under the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2005 (Law No. 13 of 2005) on the basis of broad and discriminatory profiling.

‘At the time of writing, UNHCR is aware of the following residency requirements in respect of persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas, particularly Sunni Arabs (including for persons who returned to Iraq from a third country):

‘... **Dohuk Governorate** Iraqis not originating from the KR-I, including persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas, and who wish to stay in Dohuk Governorate beyond one month, must approach the local Asayish office in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside. They must be accompanied by a sponsor and apply for a residency permit issued by the Asayish. If approved, s/he will be provided with a (renewable) Asayish-issued residency permit valid for up to six months.

‘**Erbil and Sulaymaniyah Governorate** Iraqis not originating from the KR-I, including persons from formerly ISIS-held or conflict-affected areas, must approach the local Asayish in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside in order to obtain a residency permit issued by Asayish. A sponsor is not required. Such permit is usually valid for a year.

‘Single Arab and Turkmen men however generally only receive a one-month renewable Asayish-issued residency permit. Holders of a one-month residency permit face difficulties to finding regular employment due to the short duration of their permits. 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, but few of those who do so are successful in obtaining one.’⁵⁰

6.3.2 The November 2021 EASO report stated the following regarding the legal and administrative requirements to settle in 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.

‘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”. In order to obtain residency permission, they need security clearance. While this permit, which is issued in the form of an ID card proving legal registration with the Asayish, is commonly called “residency permit”, it is in fact a security clearance permit that is issued by the Asayish.

⁵⁰ UNHCR, ‘[Ability of Persons... to Legally Access and Remain](#)’, (page 2-4), 11 January 2021

‘According to IOM, these protocols apply for any person from outside the KRI seeking to reside there, regardless of their displacement status. The residency permits are normally valid for a year and can generally be renewed reportedly at any Asayish office.’⁵¹

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Section 7 updated: 26 May 2022

7. Freedom of movement

- 7.1.1 On 28 February 2022 Freedom House published its annual report on political rights and civil liberties covering events in 2021. The report stated:

‘Freedom of movement has improved somewhat as areas formerly controlled by IS [Islamic State] were brought back under government control. However, large-scale destruction of housing and infrastructure, the presence of sectarian or partisan militias, and the ongoing threat of violence has made it difficult for many displaced people to return home. The renewed IS insurgency and the Iraqi Security Forces’ corresponding response in 2021 has constrained the freedom of movement of residents in rural western and northern Iraq.

‘The KRG also continues to prevent Arab families from returning to villages on the border with Syria, from which they fled during fighting between the Peshmerga and IS in 2014.

‘The movement of women is limited by legal restrictions. Women require the consent of a male guardian to obtain a passport and the Civil Status Identification Document, which is needed to access employment, education, and many social services.’⁵²

- 7.1.2 On 12 April 2021 the United States Department of State (USSD) published its annual report on human rights practices in Iraq (covering events in 2021). The report stated:

‘The constitution and law provide for the freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but the government did not consistently respect these rights. Law and custom generally do not respect freedom of movement for women. For example the law prevents a woman from applying for a passport without the consent of her male guardian or a legal representative. Women could not obtain the Civil Status Identification Document, required for access to public services, food assistance, health care, employment, education, and housing, without the consent of a male relative.

‘In some circumstances authorities restricted movements of displaced persons, and authorities did not allow some IDP camp residents to depart without specific permission, thereby limiting access to livelihoods, education, and services. Many parts of the country liberated from ISIS control suffered from movement restrictions due to checkpoints of PMF [Popular Mobilisation Forces] units and other government forces. In other cases local authorities

⁵¹ EASO, ‘[Iraq – Key socio-economic indicators for Baghdad...](#)’, (page 17-18), 25 November 2021

⁵² Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2022 – Iraq](#)’, (Section G1), 28 February 2022

did not always recognize security permits of returnees or comply with the central government's orders to facilitate, but not force, returns.

'The law permits security forces to restrict in-country movement and take other necessary security and military measures in response to security threats and attacks. There were numerous reports that government forces, including the ISF [Iraqi Security Forces], Peshmerga, and PMF, selectively enforced regulations, including for ethno-sectarian reasons, as well as criminal extortion, requiring residency permits to limit entry of persons into areas under their control.

'Multiple international NGOs [Non-Governmental Organisation] reported that PMF units and the Peshmerga prevented civilians, including Sunni Arabs and members of ethnic and religious minority groups, from returning to their homes after government forces ousted ISIS. UNHCR reported that local armed groups barred returns to certain areas of Baiji, Salah al-Din Province. Similarly, Christian CSOs [Civil Society Organisations] reported that certain PMF groups, including the 30th and 50th PMF Brigades, prevented Christian IDP returns and harassed Christian returnees in several towns in the Ninewa Plain, including Bartalla and Qaraqosh. Members of the 30th Brigade also refused to implement a decision from the prime minister to remove checkpoints, and their continued obstruction led to forced demographic change in traditionally Christian areas of the Ninewa Plain.

'The KRG authorities restricted movements in certain areas for nonresidents and required nonresidents to register with the local Asayish office to obtain a permit. These permits were generally renewable. Citizens of all ethno-sectarian backgrounds, including Kurds, crossing into the IKR from central or southern regions were obligated to cross through checkpoints and undergo personal and vehicle inspection. The government imposed similar restrictions on IDPs from Ninewa Province and the disputed territories.'⁵³

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⁵³ USSD, '[2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Iraq](#)', (section 2d), 12 April 2022

Annex A: Minister Pursglove Letter – New Route of Return



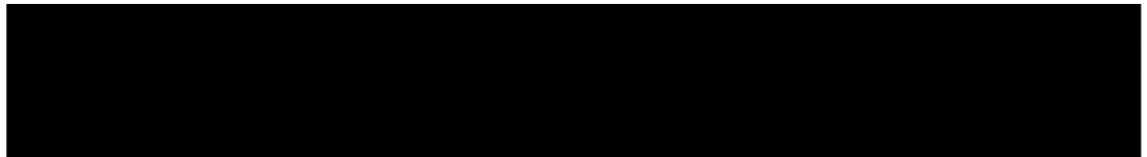
Tom Pursglove MP
Minister for Justice and Tackling Illegal
Migration

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

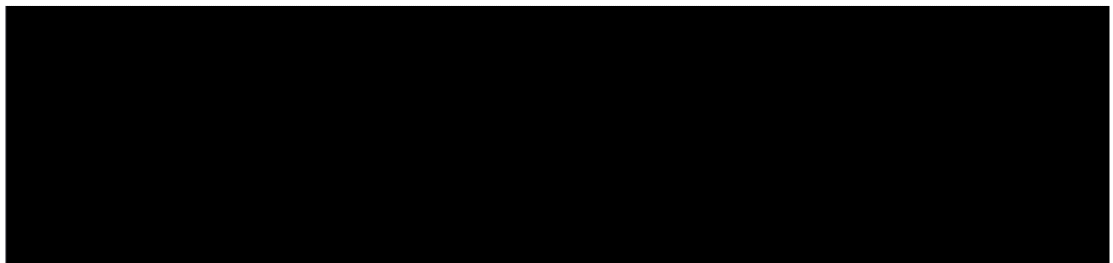
His Excellency Nazar al-Khirullah
Deputy Foreign Minister of Iraq

06 April 2022

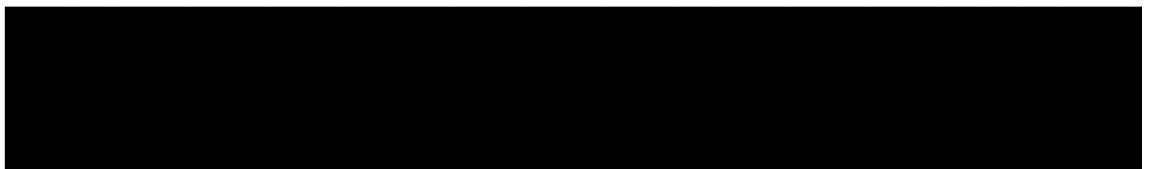
Your Excellency,



I am grateful that we came to agreement on several important issues on repatriation, which I have summarised here for ease:



3. **Repatriation on flights direct to the Kurdistan region** - this will enable the smooth repatriation of Iraqi Kurds, who comprise a significant number of Iraqis in the UK. Thank you also for agreeing to provide documentary assistance that will help overcome any transit obstacles at Baghdad.





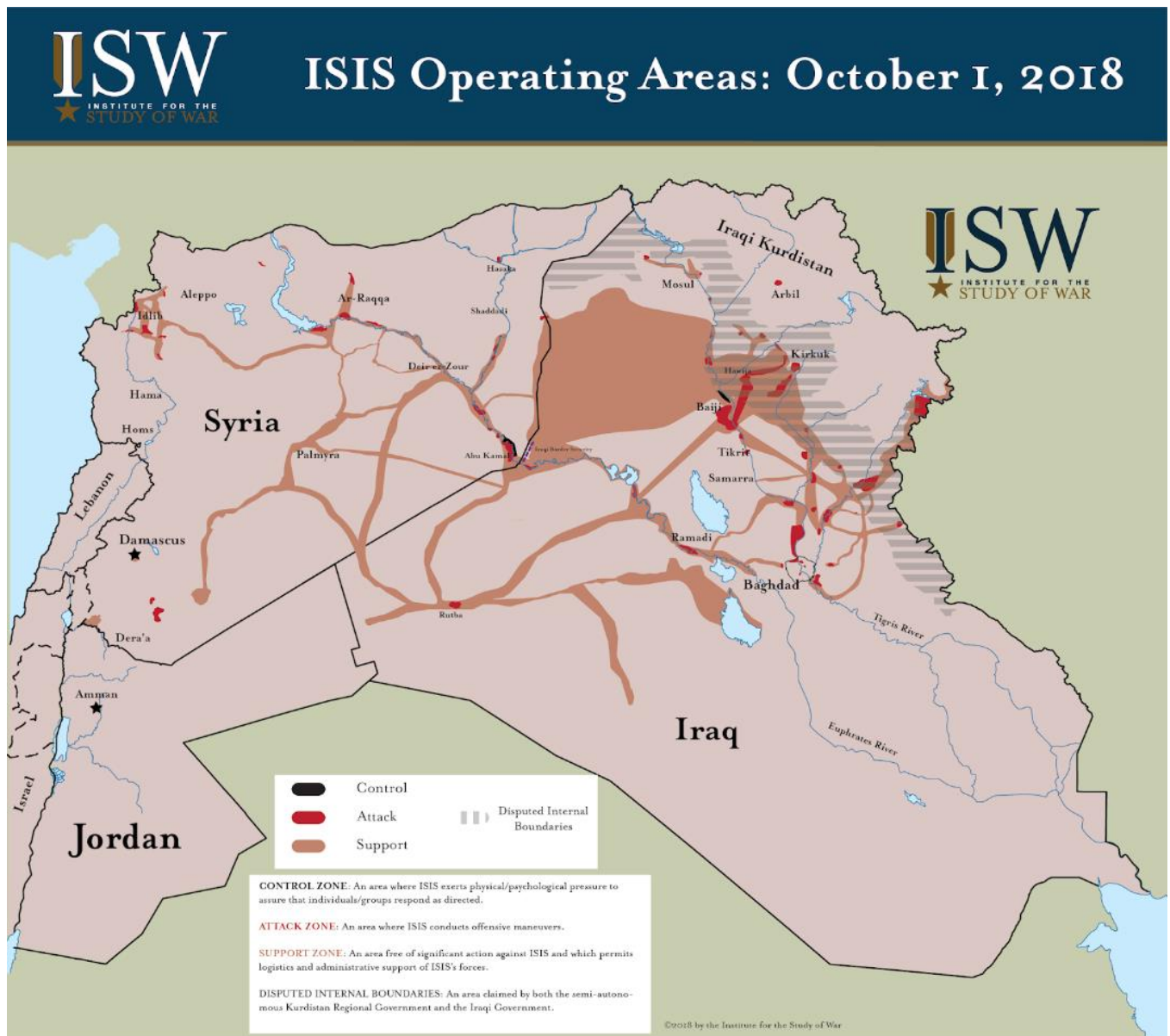
Thank you again for your time and I look forward to speaking in the near future.

Tom Pursglove MP

Minister for Justice and Tackling Illegal Migration

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Annex B: Institute for the Study of War Map of ISIL's Operating Areas – used in the case of SMO1



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Annex C: Information obtained from the Home Office's Returns Logistics Department – April 2020

Failed Asylum Seekers (FAS)

Laissez Passers (LPs)

- 1) Please can you describe the process of obtaining a Laissez Passer for a failed asylum seeker from the Iraqi Embassy in London in as much detail as possible (please include details of what documents are required, if they have to undergo an interview, timescales etc).

For the enforced return of a FAS there is no interview requirement. However, they will need to hold at least one of the following (copy or original, valid or expired) in order for the Iraqi Embassy to issue a Laissez Passer:

- Passport
- Birth Certificate
- Marriage Certificate
- Civil Status ID (CSID)
- Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC)
- Iraq National Identity Card (INID)
- Iraq residency card
- Registration Document (1957)

The embassy verification process tends to take 10-14 days. We only currently have agreement to enforce the return of single males.

All categories of voluntary cases will be considered (including those without documents) but they will usually require an interview face to face or by phone.

- 2) Can an individual obtain LPs for the rest of their family (i.e. spouses, children etc)? **Voluntary cases only. For enforced cases see answer to Q1.**
- 3) What documents do family members in Iraq have to present to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to prove the FAS's nationality? **Any from the list in response to Q1. Phone numbers or signed affidavits from family members in Iraq are also useful to the verification process.**
- 4) What happens once a FAS's nationality is verified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Iraq? i.e. does this verification get sent to the Iraqi Embassy in London to issue a LP? **Yes but most of the straight forward verification of documents can be done locally by the embassy.**
- 5) How long does this verification take? **10-14 days locally, up to 30 days+ if enquiries are required in-country.**
- 6) Are these processes the same for individuals who originate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq? **Yes**

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Annex D: CSA Offices still issuing Civil Status Identity Cards – July 2022

From: [REDACTED]@mofa.gov.iq>
Sent: 07 July 2022 09:52
To: [REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: CSID issuing offices

Good morning [REDACTED]

I sent the inquiry to my colleagues in the Ministry of interior and they confirmed that the below departments in Mosul and the surrounding areas of Nineveh Governorate are still issue the CSID, and the rest of Iraq's departments are issue the Iraqi National Card.

The offices which is still issued the CSID as follows:-

الشيخان ، سنجار، الشمال ، القحطانية ، زيلكان، البعاج، وانه، الشورة

Sheikhan, Sinjar, North, Qahtaniyah, Zelkan, Al-Baaj, Wanh, Shura

Hope this information will help.

Kind regards

Counsellor

[REDACTED]

Minister Office / MOFA

Email: [REDACTED]@mofa.gov.iq

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@mofa.gov.iq>
Sent: 07 July 2022 10:45
To: [REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: CSID issuing offices

Hi [REDACTED]

All departments in Iraq including in IKR are issuing INIDs, all of them operates in a single electronic system for issuing the Iraqi National Card, the only exception as we mentioned in my last email is the departments in Mosul. So I can confirm that the information also covers the IKR.

I will try to find the list of CSA offices in Iraq and send it to you ASAP.

Kind regards

Counsellor

[REDACTED]

Minister Office / MOFA

Email: [REDACTED]@mofa.gov.iq

[REDACTED]

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Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToR, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Return of Iraqi nationals
 - Returns to Baghdad
 - Flights to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)
- Documentation
 - Civil registration system
 - Iraqi National Identity Card (INID)
 - Civil Status ID Card (CSID)
 - Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC)
 - Others
- Entry requirements to the Central/Southern Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR)

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **13.0**
- valid from **12 July 2022**

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official – sensitive: End of section

Changes from last version of this note

Updated COI regarding CSA offices still issuing CSIDs.

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