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European Asylum Support Office

EASO

Country of Origin Information Report

Iraq

Internal mobility



February 2019

SUPPORT IS OUR MISSION



EASO

Country of Origin Information Report

Iraq

Internal mobility

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Estonia, Estonian Police and Border Guard Board

Hungary, Immigration and Asylum Office, Centre for Documentation

Additionally, Dr. Geraldine Chatelard, Contemporary Historian and Social Anthropologist, reviewed this report. Dr. Chatelard is an independent consultant and social scientist currently associated with the Iraq (Erbil) branch of the Institut français du Proche-Orient (French Institute in the Near East). For the past 15 years, she has conducted research and written on migration and displacement issues in the region, including the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in Iraq. Since 2014, she spends on average one third of her time conducting field research in various regions of Iraq (Kurdistan, Baghdad, Najaf, Karbala, Basra and other southern governorates, and more recently Mosul) including on forced displacement, the return and reintegration of migrants and refugees, and the politics of religious identities.

The review carried out by the mentioned departments and experts contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of EASO.

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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EASO COI Report Methodology (2012) ⁽¹⁾. The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

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

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

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

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

The drafting of this report was finalised in November 2018. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).

⁽¹⁾ The EASO methodology is largely based on the Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI), 2008, and can be downloaded from the EASO website: <http://www.easo.europa.eu>.

Glossary and abbreviations

Asayish	Kurdish intelligence agency with separate bodies for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
<i>bitaqat hawwiyyat al-ahwal al-shakhsiya</i>	Civil status identity card
DIS	Danish Immigration Service
Disputed territories of Iraq	The disputed territories are located in northern Iraq, partly in Erbil, as well as in Kirkuk, Salah al Din, Diyala, and Ninewa; these areas have been contested between the Iraqi and Kurdistan Region governments since 2003. For more information see further sources. ²
IDP	Internally displaced person(s)
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISF	Iraqi security forces
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State (IS), or Daesh
JCC	Joint Crisis Coordination Cell
GRC	Governorate Returns Committees
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq; an autonomous region made up of Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government; responsible for the autonomous region of Kurdistan meaning the governorates of Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah
Laissez-passer	A travel document issued by Iraqi embassies
MoDM	Ministry of Displacement and Migration
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MRG	Minority Rights Group International
<i>Mukhtar</i>	A local level official meaning the lowest form of local administration in Iraq. They are typically the persons to contact to resolve everyday problems and are not elected. They are frequently former security officials who have retired or are of retirement age.
Peshmerga	Armed forces of the Kurdish Regional Government
PMU or PMF	Popular Mobilisation Units or Popular Mobilization Forces; an umbrella group of dozens of mainly Shia-based militia groups of varying affiliations with the government, political actors/parties, and clerics

² Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#))

<i>sijilla al-qayd</i> or <i>sijil al ahwal al-shakhsiyya</i>	Family book or family register; created locally and updated with birth, death, marriage, and civil status information
<i>shahadat jinsiyya</i>	Nationality certificate
<i>Sheikh</i>	Community tribal leaders; involved in resolving disputes
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the issue of legal and practical issues relating to access, freedom of movement and internal mobility in Iraq.

This report should be read in conjunction with the EASO report, [EASO COI Report – Iraq: Key socio-economic indicators](#), which aims to provide information on key socio-economic indicators in Iraq focusing on Basrah, Erbil, and Baghdad, and highlighting aspects of the situation of IDPs in those areas, as well as women and children. Relevant indicators include the general economic situation, access to employment and livelihoods, poverty, food and water security, housing and living conditions, access to health care, access to education, access to support and assistance, and the role of support networks.

Methodology and sources

The terms of reference of this report were defined by EASO based on discussions held and input received from policy experts in EU+ countries within the framework of a Country Guidance Network exercise on Iraq.

Research was carried out for this report in accordance with the EASO COI Report Methodology. The information gathered is a result of researching public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources. EASO contacted expert sources which are listed in the bibliography to supplement information found in public sources. Due to the difficulty of locating accurate and updated information on internal mobility issues and as UNHCR is the only source extensively specifically reporting on certain aspects of entry/residence at the governorate level, this report draws upon UNHCR's April 2017 document titled: Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA) - Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation. Where available newer information was available, it was added, however, this was challenging to ascertain at the same level of detail provided in the report above for Sunni Arabs in particular.

Research was conducted between July 2018 and October 2018 with some additional information added prior during the review process until the end of November 2018. In line with the EASO COI Report Methodology, a peer review was performed by COI researchers from the departments listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgements](#) section; an external review was also carried out. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report.

Structure and use of the report

The report aims to provide relevant information for the assessment of international protection status determination, including refugee status and subsidiary protection, as well as for use in the development of EASO's country guidance exercise on Iraq.

The report is structured to provide a general context to mobility, including internal displacement context and voluntary return context, as well as freedom of movement provisions in the law; this is followed by general information on travel and accessibility to Iraq and within Iraq, covering aspects of documentation needs, flights, travel by road, (re)acquisition of civil documentation, and family links and social capital. A third section covers governorate-level access and requirements, organised by groups for organisational purposes only as follows: Baghdad, Kirkuk and disputed

areas, southern governorates (including Babylon, as well as Kerbala, Najaf, Wassit, Dhi Qar, Missan, Muthanna, Qadissiyah, Basrah), Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah), and Central-northern governorates of Anbar, Salah Al Din, Diyala, and Ninewa. Lastly, issues relating to civil documentation and mobility for certain IDPs, children born under ISIL, and women are provided.

1. General context

1.1 Internal displacement context

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) stated that in June 2018 there were two million Iraqis displaced in Iraq due to the conflict with ISIL. As of June-July 2018, almost four million Iraqis have returned home to their areas of origin ⁽³⁾. During 2017 the government's effort to retake Mosul from ISIL caused more than 800 000 people to be displaced from the city by the fighting ⁽⁴⁾. UNAMI reported that the returnee population to Mosul was 564 120 by the end of 2017 ⁽⁵⁾ and up to 77 200 as of May 2018 ⁽⁶⁾. Returns trends were reported to exceed displacement across Iraq according to 2018 reports ⁽⁷⁾; however, 'new and secondary displacements' continue to be recorded ⁽⁸⁾ mainly due to poor or lacking basic services, livelihoods, security concerns and explosive hazards in the areas of origin ⁽⁹⁾.

During the conflict period with ISIL, ISIL prevented civilians from leaving ISIL-controlled areas and severely punished those attempting to do so ⁽¹⁰⁾. Also, according to Minority Rights Group International (MRG), writing in 2016 about those fleeing the conflict areas, 'access to many governorates is blocked for those without local sponsors or the ability to pay for a local sponsor' ⁽¹¹⁾. A November 2018 study on return by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) observed that in relation to barriers to return for IDPs, 'the rules that govern moving to a new city in another part of the country or even in the same governorate are opaque': IDPs have to present documentation, or are unable to obtain it, encounter movement restrictions that 'appear to be imposed depending on IDPs' ethnic and religious identity', face possible arrest due to alleged ISIL-affiliation, or have difficulties obtaining necessary security clearances to return ⁽¹²⁾. However, the KRI has been credited for accepting large numbers of IDPs fleeing the conflict ⁽¹³⁾. Sources report that the KRI has hosted between 30-40 % (1 million to 1.5 million) displaced Iraqis since the 2014 ISIL crisis ⁽¹⁴⁾.

1.2 Returnees from Europe

A February 2018 study by IOM tracked 675 Iraqi nationals who returned from Europe, finding that the majority of them (64 %) went back with the support of IOM, 26 % returned by their own means,

⁽³⁾ IOM, Returns Continue While Obstacles to Return Remain in Iraq, June 2018 ([url](#)); IOM Iraq: Timeline of displacement and returns (as of 30 June 2018), 10 July 2018 ([url](#)); IOM, Iraq: Displacement Tracking Matrix – DTM Round 100, July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ IDMC/NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018, May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 22.

⁽⁵⁾ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – July to December 2017, 8 July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽⁶⁾ USAID, Iraq – Complex Emergency Factsheet #7, Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 (source: IOM), 11 May 2018, ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽⁷⁾ IOM, Iraq: DTM Round 96, May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 1; IOM, Iraq: Displacement Tracking Matrix – DTM Round 100, July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 1.

⁽⁸⁾ UN, Security Council, Implementation of Resolution 2367 (2017); Report of the Secretary-General [S/2018/677], 9 July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 11.

⁽⁹⁾ UNAMI, Briefing to the Security Council by the SRSG for Iraq Ján Kubiš – New York, 30 May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 15.

⁽¹⁰⁾ UN, Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons on his mission to Iraq (A/HRC/32/35/Add.1), 5 April 2016 ([url](#)), para. 40; MRG, Humanitarian challenges in Iraq's displacement crisis, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 8-9; USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018, ([url](#)), p. 30.

⁽¹¹⁾ MRG, Humanitarian challenges in Iraq's displacement crisis, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽¹²⁾ IDMC/NRC, Nowhere to Return To: Iraqi's Search for Durable Solutions Continues, November 2018, ([url](#)), p. 30.

⁽¹³⁾ Chatham House, Internal Displacement in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Impact, Response and Options 16-18 May 2016, 1 July 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽¹⁴⁾ MERI, Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertain in the Context of Iraq, January 2018 ([url](#)), p. 7.

and 10 % were supported by an NGO ⁽¹⁵⁾. IOM provides Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) that includes travel organisation and ticket booking, support in issuance of travel documents at consulates and in the country of origin, airport assistance upon departure and return, and in-kind reintegration support and cash grants [based on national programs] ⁽¹⁶⁾.

IOM provided AVRR support to 3 607 Iraqis in 2015 ⁽¹⁷⁾, 12 776 Iraqis in 2016, and 7 096 Iraqis in 2017, marking a 44 % decline in voluntary returns from the previous year ⁽¹⁸⁾. The majority of those Iraqis were returning to Iraq from European countries and Turkey:

Country	Iraqis who returned with AVRR in 2017
Germany	2 866
Finland	1 102
Greece	813
Austria	686
Belgium	376
Netherlands	292
Bulgaria	220
Norway	181
Turkey	176
Serbia	80
Switzerland	32
Romania	27
Denmark	20
Luxembourg	15
Macedonia	10
Slovakia	8
Estonia	6
Total	6 910 ⁽¹⁹⁾

According to IOM, when examining migrants' motives for returning with AVRR, 'when looking at return patterns among Iraqi asylum seekers, it seems that a migrant's location of origin in Iraq influences whether she/he will consider returning or not. Put another way, the riskier and more challenging the exit from Iraq, the less likely an asylum seeker is to consider a return' ⁽²⁰⁾. IOM's 2018 study of 675 returnees to Iraq from Europe found that 42 % returned to Iraq after becoming tired of waiting in Europe, 38 % had families who wanted them to return to Iraq, and 26 % were

⁽¹⁵⁾ IOM, Iraq – Returnees from Europe: A DTM Snapshot Report on Iraqi Nationals Upon Return in Iraq (February 2018), 8 May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 19.

⁽¹⁶⁾ IOM and Italy, Assisted Voluntary Reintegration and Return – AVRR of Third Country Nationals hosted in Italy, n.d. ([url](#)); IOM, IOM helps Iraqi Migrants Voluntarily Return Home from Belgium, 2 February 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁷⁾ IOM, Assessing the Risks of Migration Along the Central and Eastern Mediterranean Routes: Iraq and Nigeria as Case Study Countries, 2016 ([url](#)), p. 42.

⁽¹⁸⁾ IOM, Annual Report for 2017 (C/109/4), 18 June 2018 ([url](#)), p. 39; IOM, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration – 2017 Key Highlights, 2018 ([url](#)), p. 13.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Table generated from information in IOM, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration – 2017 Key Highlights, 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 56-65.

⁽²⁰⁾ IOM, Assessing the Risks of Migration Along the Central and Eastern Mediterranean Routes: Iraq and Nigeria as Case Study Countries, 2016 ([url](#)), p. 43.

failed asylum seekers ⁽²¹⁾. The same study asked respondents to identify main challenges that they faced upon their return to Iraq. The study concluded that the ‘overwhelming primary challenge faced by returnees was finding a job or income generating activity (57 %)', a number of other secondary challenges were mentioned: finding affordable housing (17.5 %), mental/psychological issues (12 %), and ‘facing negative reactions’ from family and friends in Iraq (9 %) ⁽²²⁾.

1.3 Freedom of movement provisions

Iraqis have ‘freedom of movement, travel and residence inside and outside Iraq’ provided for under Article 44 of the Iraqi Constitution ⁽²³⁾. The Constitution also provides that ‘[n]o Iraqi may be exiled, displaced, or deprived from returning to the homeland’ ⁽²⁴⁾.

Iraq also has a National Policy on Displacement, dating from July 2008, which provides for a broad range of IDP rights to protection, legal status, basic social services, health, food, shelter, freedom of expression and freedom of movement ⁽²⁵⁾. The National Policy explicitly prohibits arbitrary displacement such as forced evictions, destruction of homes, and expropriation of land ⁽²⁶⁾. Under the provisions on the Right to Freedom of Movement, Section 6.9 states that:

‘The competent authorities have the responsibility to ensure that the IDPs enjoy the right to move freely and choose their place of residence. It also includes the right to return and rehabilitate themselves in their places of origin or habitual residence, local integration or resettlement in other places in Iraq. No person will be arbitrarily or unlawfully forced to remain within a certain territory, area or region, nor shall he or she be made to leave a certain land, area or region. The Government ensures that a person's freedom of movement and choice of place of residence will not be subject to any restrictions save those maintained by the law as they are deemed necessary for reasons pertaining to national security, public order or health, morals or other people's rights and freedoms. The governorates and local authorities shall not prevent IDPs from residing in their areas, and they shall not create obstacles to that effect. The Government of Iraq realizes the consequences that resulted regionally from imposing internal obstacles on those who have been seeking safety’ ⁽²⁷⁾.

The Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), created after 2003, is the federal body entrusted with addressing IDP and returnee issues under the National Policy on Displacement, and maintains offices in all governorates ⁽²⁸⁾.

Following the 2014 ISIL crisis, Iraq established a body called the Supreme Committee for the Relief of Displaced Persons to coordinate the intersectoral response; and in the KRI, the Kurdish Ministry of Interior formed the Joint Crisis Coordination Cell (JCC) to oversee its response to the displacement crisis ⁽²⁹⁾.

⁽²¹⁾ IOM, Iraq – Returnees from Europe: A DTM Snapshot Report on Iraqi Nationals Upon Return in Iraq (February 2018), 8 May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 20.

⁽²²⁾ IOM, Iraq – Returnees from Europe: A DTM Snapshot Report on Iraqi Nationals Upon Return in Iraq (February 2018), 8 May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 20.

⁽²³⁾ Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq 2005, 15 October 2005, ([url](#)).

⁽²⁴⁾ Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq 2005, 15 October 2005, ([url](#)).

⁽²⁵⁾ Iraq, National Policy on Displacement, July 2008 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁶⁾ Iraq, National Policy on Displacement, July 2008 ([url](#)), para. 6.3.

⁽²⁷⁾ Iraq, National Policy on Displacement, July 2008 ([url](#)), para. 6.9.

⁽²⁸⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽²⁹⁾ MERI, Displacement-Emigration-Return: Understanding Uncertain in the Context of Iraq, January 2018 ([url](#)), p. 38.

2. General travel and accessibility

2.1 Return travel documents

The law from the previous Baathist regime requiring exit permits for travel to external destinations has not been formally abrogated, as is the case with most of the body of laws and regulations from before April 2003. However, they are legally superseded by the 2005 Constitution and the laws passed by the Iraqi Council of Representatives since 2006. Hence, the provisions of the Constitution on freedom of movement should be taken as the reference ⁽³⁰⁾. The requirement for ‘exit permits’ was reportedly ‘not routinely enforced,’ according to the US Department of State (USDOS) ⁽³¹⁾. DFAT described exit without a permit as ‘illegal’ but also stated that it is ‘not aware of prosecutions (...) for irregular exit’ ⁽³²⁾.

The Danish Immigration Service (DIS) noted after its 2015 fact-finding mission that ‘Iraqi citizens, who wish to enter Iraq through an airport in KRI, must be in possession of a valid passport or an Iraqi laissez-passer’ ⁽³³⁾. This is the current situation in all entry points to Iraq, according to Geraldine Chatelard, who stated that expired passports must be replaced by a laissez passer ⁽³⁴⁾.

The website of the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs says that Iraqis can be issued with a ‘single trip’ *laissez passer* document at consular missions abroad for entry into Iraq ⁽³⁵⁾. Laissez-passer documents are not valid for onward travel ⁽³⁶⁾.

Such documents can be issued abroad in the following cases:

- ‘If an Iraqi national wants to return to Iraq, but has lost his/her passport
- If an Iraqi national has had his/her passport confiscated and wants to return to Iraq
- If an Iraqi national is deported to Iraq
- If a foreign national comes to Iraq from an unknown destination, or is a citizen of a country that has no representation in Iraq and wants to return to his/her home country, provided that the home country’s authorities accept the return’ ⁽³⁷⁾. To issue the laissez passer, the Iraqi office will verify identity/nationality of the returnee against source documents in Iraq, confirm the person is returning voluntarily, and check for outstanding criminal records against Ministry of Interior records ⁽³⁸⁾.

Upon entry at all international airports identity information is recorded, regardless of nationality, and authorities will arrest individuals who have committed a criminal offence and have warrant for their arrest ⁽³⁹⁾.

⁽³⁰⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽³¹⁾ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018, ([url](#)), p. 30

⁽³²⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

⁽³³⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service), The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI); Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation; Report from fact finding mission to Erbil, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and Beirut, Lebanon, 26 September to 6 October 2015, 12 April 2016 ([url](#)), p. 133.

⁽³⁴⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽³⁵⁾ Iraq, MoFA, Pass Doc, n.d., ([url](#)).

⁽³⁶⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 30.

⁽³⁷⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents (Source: Iraq, MFA – broken link), 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽³⁸⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 30.

⁽³⁹⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 30.

2.2 International flights into Iraq and domestic air travel

Commercial international flights arrive in Iraq at several airports: Baghdad International Airport (BGW/ORBI) ⁽⁴⁰⁾, Erbil International Airport (EBL/ORER) ⁽⁴¹⁾, Sulaymaniyah International Airport (ISU/ORSU) ⁽⁴²⁾, Najaf International Airport (NJF/ORNI) ⁽⁴³⁾, Basrah International Airport (BSR/ORMM) ⁽⁴⁴⁾. Nasiriyah airport is reportedly only a small facility ⁽⁴⁵⁾ receiving primarily domestic flights and a few flights from Iran mostly seasonally (during the Shiite mourning and pilgrimage season) when Najaf Airport capacity is overstretched ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

There are several domestic airlines operating flights between cities in Iraq such as Iraqi Airways, Iraq's flying between to Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, Najaf, Nasiriyah, and Sulaymaniyah ⁽⁴⁷⁾; Fly Baghdad, operating domestic flights between Baghdad, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah ⁽⁴⁸⁾.

2.3 Travel by road and through checkpoints

Crossing checkpoints is a daily fact of life in Iraq; passing through checkpoints requires giving one's identity ⁽⁴⁹⁾ by providing identification papers ⁽⁵⁰⁾. Checkpoints are frequently run by different armed actors aligned with the government with unclear rules and subject to the 'whims' of those running the checkpoint ⁽⁵¹⁾. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), road security is impacted by the ongoing conflict and 'unpredictable variations on accessibility' occur, with ISF and Kurdish forces controlling areas with various checkpoints ⁽⁵²⁾. Geraldine Chatelard noted in her review of this report that:

'Permanent check points are set at the entrance of all governorates on all main roads. In the Central and Southern regions, they are manned by the Federal Iraqi Police. Between governorates of KRI, they are manned by the Kurdish Asayesh. Other permanent checkpoints are set at the entrance of all major cities, manned by the local police. There are other permanent or temporary checkpoints on several thoroughfares inside cities, and to enter administrative buildings or complexes (such as airports). In Baghdad and other cities, access to entire neighbourhoods may be controlled through series of checkpoints, at times with access restricted to special permit holders as in Baghdad's International Zone. Identity controls are not systematic and depend on the level of security. If and when prompted, travellers need to present identity papers which may be of different kinds: for government employees, a professional card may be enough. In other cases, travellers may be asked to provide several identity documents, at the least their national ID and their citizenship card. In case of travel between provinces, travellers may be asked to present a written justification (such as a letter from their employer, a certificate from a hospital, or, better, a letter from the organisation or public body they will visit in the governorate they are seeking

⁽⁴⁰⁾ BIA, Baghdad Airport Arrivals, Dated: 26 June 2018, ([url](#)).

⁽⁴¹⁾ EIA, Flight Information, Dated: 26 June 2018, ([url](#)),

⁽⁴²⁾ Sulaymaniyah International Airport, Arrivals, n.d., ([url](#)), accessed 27 June 2018

⁽⁴³⁾ Flightradar24, Al Najaf International Airport (NJF/ORNI), Arrivals, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Flightradar24, Basra International Airport (BSR/ORMM), Arrivals, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Niqash, Dhi Qar's New Airport Mocked by Iraqis, n.d., ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Iraqi Airways, Domestic Flights, n.d., ([url](#)); Iraq's Economic Center, The First International Flight From Nasiriyah Airport to Iran, 21 May 2017, ([url](#)).),

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Fly Baghdad, Home, n.d. ([url](#)).),

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslim i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.5.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ EU, EC, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations – Iraq, 23 January 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵¹⁾ New York Times (The), In Iraq, I Found Checkpoints as Endless as the Whims of Armed Men, 2 April 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵²⁾ WFP, Logistics Capacity Assessment - 2.3 Iraq Road Network, 29 May 2018 ([url](#)).

to enter into) of their reason for traveling to a certain province. This is the case throughout Iraq and regardless of ethno-religious affiliation. There are movements of Sunnis to Shiite majority areas, and vice versa. There are also movements between KRI and the rest of Iraq. However, moving without the proper documentation is risky and being from the same ethno-religious group as the armed forces manning a particular check-point does facilitate passage in the case of absence of proper documentation.

There is a specific situation in the governorates retaken from ISIS, where several PMU militias have set checkpoints on main and secondary roads as a way to establish control on the territory and movements. Remarks below are most relevant in that specific context.

Furthermore, between KRI and Ninewah, Kirkuk, Salah el-Din and Diyala, the Asayesh (Kurdish security police) man checkpoints controlling access to KRI, and within visual distance there are other checkpoints manned by the Iraqi Federal Police to control access into these governorates. There, identity controls are systematic' ⁽⁵³⁾.

According to the Director of Minority Rights Group International (MRG) who spoke at an EASO meeting of Iraq COI experts in April 2017, checkpoints may be run by a variety of different militias, often with 'different sectarian or ethnic identities' and giving the opinion that 'it has become impossible to move around in the country unless your paperwork is in order and unless in many cases you are from the right ethnic or religious group that enables you to have access to that particular region or governorate of Iraq' and having 'immediate consequences for the safety of individuals' ⁽⁵⁴⁾. Security forces at checkpoints reportedly run people's names through names databases of wanted persons suspected of IS affiliation, and according to Human Rights Watch can be detained and disappeared or risk detention ⁽⁵⁵⁾. A local Ninewa police officer interviewed by the conflict monitoring organisation, the Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights ⁽⁵⁶⁾, in 2018 gave a similar explanation that when a new person visits the neighbourhood, police ask for their ID and retain it until the person leaves again. If they do not have an ID, their family will be called to bring ID documents; if they do not, they are seen as a 'suspect' and the local *mukhtar* ⁽⁵⁷⁾ will be consulted and police may bring the person in ⁽⁵⁸⁾. These are official instructions, but they are rarely implemented in practice ⁽⁵⁹⁾.

A Norwegian Embassy official interviewed by Landinfo for a 2017 report stated that at checkpoints, Sunnis have more difficulty crossing checkpoints as they can be particularly targeted for arbitrary arrest on suspicion of sympathy with ISIL and as such may be subjected to abuse ⁽⁶⁰⁾. UNHCR gives the assessment that Sunni Arabs and Sunni Turkmen from former ISIL-areas are reportedly

⁽⁵³⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ EU, EASO, Practical Cooperation Meeting Report – Iraq in April 2017 (Source: Mark Lattimer, MRG), July 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 17-18.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ EU, EASO, Practical Cooperation Meeting Report – Iraq in April 2017 (Source: Belkis Wille, HRW), July 2017 ([url](#)), p. 13.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights is an international civilian-led group that conducts conflict monitoring in Iraq and promotes civilians rights in conflict situations. Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, Civilian-led monitoring in Iraq, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁷⁾ A *mukhtar* is described by UNHCR as a local official of the lowest form of local administration in Iraq. They are typically the persons to contact to resolve everyday problems and are not elected. They are frequently former security officials who have retired or are of retirement age (Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 8.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post-ISIS, May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 9.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslimer i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.5, para. 4.5, and para. 4.6.

particularly ‘at risk of discriminatory treatment’ when crossing checkpoints through road movements between governorates and between Baghdad airport and the city ⁽⁶¹⁾.

Corruption and bribery at border control points and major internal checkpoints is reportedly ‘rampant’ with some political parties and paramilitary groups being involved in human trafficking and drug smuggling ⁽⁶²⁾. Official security forces and private groups reportedly often make deals to control checkpoints in order to extract ‘informal taxation’ ⁽⁶³⁾.

Road travel in Iraq is described by the UK Foreign Office as highly dangerous, due to continued road side bombings and attacks on vehicles, false checkpoints, and robbery ⁽⁶⁴⁾. The highway between Baghdad and Kirkuk is described by sources as particularly dangerous, with fake ISIL checkpoints and incidents of kidnappings of civilians and security forces reported during 2018 ⁽⁶⁵⁾.

2.4 Civil documentation

2.4.1 General

In Iraq, proper civil documentation is necessary to one’s ability to carry on daily life and access basic rights ⁽⁶⁶⁾, public services ⁽⁶⁷⁾, education ⁽⁶⁸⁾, food assistance ⁽⁶⁹⁾, housing ⁽⁷⁰⁾, employment ⁽⁷¹⁾, register in order to receive state aid ⁽⁷²⁾ or welfare benefits, to rent a house, register with the police in one’s neighbourhood, or to sell vehicles or large items ⁽⁷³⁾. Civil documentation is necessary for movement in and around Iraq and passage through security checkpoints ⁽⁷⁴⁾. Several sources state that individuals without valid identity documentation have restricted freedom of movement and may be at risk of being arrested ⁽⁷⁵⁾.

⁽⁶¹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 3.

⁽⁶²⁾ Hasan, H., Beyond Security: Stabilization, Governance, and Socioeconomic Challenges in Iraq, Atlantic Council, July 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 12-13.

⁽⁶³⁾ Hasan, H., Beyond Security: Stabilization, Governance, and Socioeconomic Challenges in Iraq, Atlantic Council, July 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 12-13.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ UK, Foreign Travel Advice – Iraq, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁶⁵⁾ National (The), ISIS attacks resurgent on Iraq’s ‘Highway of Death’, 7 July 2018 ([url](#)); Reuters, Islamic State makes comeback in Iraq with switch to guerrilla tactics, 24 July 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽⁶⁶⁾ UNHCR, UNHCR IDP Operational Update 1-31 January 2016, 31 January 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁶⁷⁾ EU, EASO, Practical Cooperation Meeting Report – Iraq in April 2017 (Source: Mark Lattimer, MRG), July 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 17-18; AI, The Condemned: Women and Children Isolated, Trapped and Exploited in Iraq, April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 22-23; Independent, Iraq’s generation of stateless ISIS children are being ‘punished for the crimes of their fathers’, 18 May 2017 ([url](#)); MRG, Humanitarian challenges in Iraq’s displacement crisis, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), p. 9; Human Rights Watch, Iraq: Families of Alleged ISIS Members Denied IDs, 25 February 2018, ([url](#)).

⁽⁶⁸⁾ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 4.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 4.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 4.

⁽⁷¹⁾ UNHCR, UNHCR IDP Operational Update 1-31 January 2016, 31 January 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁷²⁾ MRG, Humanitarian challenges in Iraq’s displacement crisis, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽⁷³⁾ Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post-ISIS, May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 9.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ EU, EASO, Practical Cooperation Meeting Report – Iraq in April 2017 (Source: Mark Lattimer, MRG), July 2017 ([url](#)), p. 17; Independent, Iraq’s generation of stateless ISIS children are being ‘punished for the crimes of their fathers’, 18 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post-ISIS, May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 9; Human Rights Watch, Iraq: Families of Alleged ISIS Members Denied IDs, 25 February 2018 ([url](#)); UNHCR, UNHCR IDP Operational Update 1-31 January 2016, 31 January 2016 ([url](#)); Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 31.

2.4.2 Family register, national civil status ID cards, nationality certificates

All Iraqis are required to have a national civil status ID card, which is issued by the Civil Status Affairs Directorate, under the General Directorate for Nationality in the Ministry of Interior ⁽⁷⁶⁾. In Arabic, it is called *bitaqat hawwiyat al-ahwal al-shakhsiya* ⁽⁷⁷⁾. It is issued in the district where a person is registered and on the basis of information in the person's family register ⁽⁷⁸⁾. Family registers (also known as family book, or family census or *sijilla al-qayd* or *sijil al ahwal al-shakhsiyya* ⁽⁷⁹⁾) 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' ⁽⁸⁰⁾.

The ID card is described by Landinfo as the 'most important personal document' for Iraqis because it is required for all contact with authorities, and to obtain services such as health, social welfare, education access, and when buying and selling property such as houses or vehicles. It is also the gateway document necessary for other official legal documentation such as passports ⁽⁸¹⁾.

A nationality certificate (*shahadat jinsiyya*) is issued to all Iraqi nationals upon application and 'is necessary when applying for work in the public sector, in education contexts and when using other public services. In addition, the nationality certificate is a required breeder document when applying for a passport, birth certificates for own children, a marriage certificate and death certificate' ⁽⁸²⁾. Children normally obtain them around the age of 12 ⁽⁸³⁾.

In practice, both the ID card and nationality certificate are required to obtain the services listed in the second paragraph above, and may also be requested from people crossing check points. Iraqis reportedly 'always keep both documents on them' ⁽⁸⁴⁾.

2.4.3 Lost, missing, or destroyed civil documentation

During the conflict period with ISIL, there were frequent cases of missing or lost civil identification due to fleeing or destruction of homes ⁽⁸⁵⁾. Many Iraqis who lived in ISIL areas lost one or more of their pieces of civil documentation or had them confiscated by ISIL ⁽⁸⁶⁾ or were issued with documents from IS unrecognised by the government ⁽⁸⁷⁾. The UN estimated in 2016 that as many as 50 % of displaced families had at least one family member missing essential civil identity documents ⁽⁸⁸⁾. MRG's 2016 research report on IDPs from Ninewa and Anbar found that 78 % of the more than 50 IDPs interviewed, mostly Anbaris who had been displaced to Baghdad, had encountered difficulties re-obtaining civil documentation linking this to high illiteracy and exacerbated by communal suspicion of Arab Sunnis from former IS areas ⁽⁸⁹⁾. Landinfo stated that internally displaced people frequently require assistance to re-obtain their national ID card if they live elsewhere than where they are registered as ID cards are issued in their home district according

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 17-18.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015, ([url](#)), pp. 17-18.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), p. 15.

⁽⁸¹⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), p. 17.

⁽⁸²⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), p. 24.

⁽⁸³⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), p. 24.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ MRG, Humanitarian challenges in Iraq's displacement crisis, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ AI, The Condemned: Women and Children Isolated, Trapped and Exploited in Iraq, April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 22.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ UNHCR, Thousands of displaced Iraqis obtain vital legal documents with UNHCR's help, 22 January 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽⁸⁸⁾ UN, Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons on his mission to Iraq (A/HRC/32/35/Add.1), 5 April 2016 ([url](#)), para. 14

⁽⁸⁹⁾ MRG, Humanitarian challenges in Iraq's displacement crisis, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), p. 5.

to their family registration ⁽⁹⁰⁾. The same holds true for the nationality certificate ⁽⁹¹⁾. DIS/Landinfo wrote in November 2018 that the lack of civil documentation for functioning in Iraqi society is a ‘major obstacle’ for IDPs to return ⁽⁹²⁾.

2.4.4 (Re)acquiring ID card and nationality certificate from inside Iraq

Civil Status Affairs Directorate offices are situated across the country, numbering approximately 300 offices ⁽⁹³⁾. Landinfo explained that to apply for an ID card, applicants must contact the said office where they are registered and present necessary documentation (filled application signed by head of household/guardian/lawyer), proof of identity such as birth certificate or ID card of a close relative such as father or grandfather which is checked against central population registers, 1 000 Iraqi dinar fee, two passport photos ⁽⁹⁴⁾.

As regards the nationality card, people have to apply through the Nationality Directorate (*Da’irat al-Jinsiyya*) in the governorate in which they are registered. Except in Baghdad, there is one such directorate in each governorate. A first degree family member must provide their own nationality certificate showing the number under which the family is registered in the family census (*sijillat al-qayd*) and certify that the applicant is related to them ⁽⁹⁵⁾. In order to re-acquire civil documentation, IDPs have to go to offices in areas where they originated ⁽⁹⁶⁾ for both of these documents ⁽⁹⁷⁾. However, since 2014 and the territorial takeover of ISIL in parts of Ninewa and Anbar, there have been interim issuance offices set up in Dohuk, Baghdad and Kerbala ⁽⁹⁸⁾. Landinfo stated that ID cards can be issued via an authorised proxy representative who has necessary documentation and information to establish identity. However, Landinfo stated that if the card was lost, a card can only be issued to the holder who attends the office in person ⁽⁹⁹⁾.

There are also new electronic biometric ID cards issued since September 2015. These cards are intended to replace the old ID and nationality certificate. They cannot be issued through Iraqi embassies ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ and Iraqis abroad must go to Iraq to get one ⁽¹⁰¹⁾. The cards cannot be issued to a proxy representative due to the need for fingerprints and iris-scans ⁽¹⁰²⁾. According to Dr Chatelard, ‘despite repeated announcements that the ID and nationality were going to be merged into one document including a personal identification number, implementation has been delayed’ ⁽¹⁰³⁾. DIS/Landinfo reported in November 2018 that the system had been implemented in bigger cities in KRI, stating that 11 out of 43 branches in Erbil can issue the card and that

⁽⁹⁰⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), p. 18.

⁽⁹¹⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽⁹²⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 30.

⁽⁹³⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), p. 15.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 18-19.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽⁹⁶⁾ MRG, Humanitarian challenges in Iraq’s displacement crisis, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 5, 11; Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 31.

⁽⁹⁷⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽⁹⁸⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), para. 7.2.

⁽⁹⁹⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015, ([url](#)), pp. p. 18-19.

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card, November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card, November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽¹⁰²⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter, 11 April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 4, para. 6.5.

⁽¹⁰³⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

approximately 180 000 people out of a population of 2 million have received the new ID ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. Old ID cards are still in use and still being issued ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

In 2014, UNHCR reportedly assisted with re-documentation efforts, supporting the Ministry of Migration and Displacement and the Ministry of Interior with establishing re-documentation centres for IDPs who fled Mosul, Salah al Din, Diyala, Anbar, and Kirkuk, as well as in Anbar. It assisted 7 000 IDP children in 2015-2016, many of whom were supported in acquiring civil documentation ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. UNHCR reported that in the course of 2017, 18 600 ‘vulnerable Iraqis’ had received legal documents and more than 23 300 had received legal assistance in relation to documentation through its centres, mobile courts, or mobile documentation teams ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾.

According to experiences described by IDPs interviewed by MRG, there are ‘no standard registration of application requirements’ that government offices follow, the process of applying for reissuance is complex, ‘non-standardized and fraught with allegations of corruption’ ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

Human Rights Watch reported on the denial of IDs to families of IS suspects; those seeking new or replacement civil documentation must ‘first obtain an application form from a judge and take it to the Civil Service Directorate, where intelligence and National Security Service officers run a security check’. Applicants automatically fail if they appear on a wanted list and the application is then denied ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. Obtaining a security clearance is also necessary in order to claim government compensation for losses or damage to property caused by the conflict under the Law No. 20 on Compensating the Victims of Military Operations, Military Mistakes and Terrorist Actions (2009) ⁽¹¹⁰⁾. Human Rights Watch reported in 2018 that Iraqi National Security Service forces denied security clearances to immediate family members of suspected ISIL members ⁽¹¹¹⁾.

2.4.5 Reacquiring ID card and nationality certificate from outside Iraq

Information on procedures and requirements for obtaining types of civil status documentation from abroad is available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, available in English from the Iraqi Consulate in London. That website gives instructions to applicants who have a lost/damaged civil status ID card and need a replacement:

- The application form (available in the Embassy) shall be attached to the request.
- The form shall be filled by the master of family, mistress of family, record holder, guardian or attorney at law, with their explicit signatures and full names.
- The Consul shall note down the applicant’s statement on the reverse of the abovementioned form, state the full name of applicant and have his/her thumbprint placed thereon. The statement shall be signed by the Consul ⁽¹¹²⁾.

Landinfo stated that if an applicant is unable to verify his/her identity it will be difficult for the person to reacquire a card from abroad ⁽¹¹³⁾.

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card, November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card, November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ UNHCR, In Search of Solutions: Addressing Statelessness in the Middle East and North Africa, September 2016 ([url](#)), p. 9.

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ UNHCR, Thousands of displaced Iraqis obtain vital legal documents with UNHCR’s help, 22 January 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ MRG, Humanitarian challenges in Iraq’s displacement crisis, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 5, 9.

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Human Rights Watch, Iraq: Families of Alleged ISIS Members Denied IDs, 25 February 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post-ISIS, May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 9; Human Rights Watch, Iraq: ISIS Suspects’ Homes Confiscated, 19 April 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹¹¹⁾ Human Rights Watch, Iraq: ISIS Suspects’ Homes Confiscated, 19 April 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹¹²⁾ Iraq, MoFA, Iraqi Embassy to the UK, Frequently Asked Questions, n.d. ([url](#)); Iraq, MoFA, FAQ’s, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽¹¹³⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015 ([url](#)), p. 19.

For nationality certificates, applications are also received through embassies that refers applications to relevant directorate. However, a first degree relative will need to also provide their own nationality certificate showing the number under which the family is registered in the family census (*sijillat al-qaid*) and certify that the applicant is related to them ⁽¹¹⁴⁾.

2.5 Family links and social capital

IOM's Integrated Location Assessment II, published in October 2017, found that for 30 % of displaced families in Iraq surveyed by IOM for that study, the choice of destination inside Iraq was mainly motivated by the presence of extended family, relatives, and friends as well as the presence of a similar ethno-religious community ⁽¹¹⁵⁾. Regarding the situation of minorities who relocate, MRG comments that minorities could face difficulties depending on where they relocate to. The same source explained that 'the dominant pattern over recent years has seen many minorities relocated from mixed cities and neighbourhood to areas in which they form the majority' ⁽¹¹⁶⁾.

In relation to those returnees from Europe in particular, IOM observed that based on a 2016 study of the experiences of returnees to Iraq, that social capital or social networks are 'more significant than integration assistance, particularly in instances where asylum seekers decide to return home to reconnect with these networks, despite the instability at origin' ⁽¹¹⁷⁾. A February 2018 study by IOM that tracked 675 Iraqi nationals who returned from Europe, found that 5.9 % of respondents identified the lack of a social support network of family and friends as a primary challenge that they faced upon returning home after a migration attempt to Europe ⁽¹¹⁸⁾. According to MRG, because public institutions in Iraq and KRI are highly influenced by corruption, nepotism, and patronage networks, 'obtaining basic services and performing simple administrative tasks in government offices is extremely difficult without personal or family connections' ⁽¹¹⁹⁾.

DFAT wrote in October 2018 that it assessed internal relocation to KRI as 'difficult for anyone without a sponsor or existing networks within the region' ⁽¹²⁰⁾. According to Kurdish officials interviewed by DIS/Landinfo, rejected asylum seekers who return to Iraq 'would have difficulties in returning, if they do not have a network to support them'. They stated that this was particularly the case for lone women, particularly as there is insufficient space and support given to provide shelters ⁽¹²¹⁾. IOM explained in the same report that the integration process for returnees, community support is essential. Reintegration is easier for those with good family relations, while returnees without family would have difficulty due to the high cost of living. Community capacity and infrastructure were also noted as essential for reintegration by IOM, as opportunities in rural areas are very few, and IOM said that most returnees go to rural areas of Sulaymaniyah, Halabja, and Rania ⁽¹²²⁾.

⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹¹⁵⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part I – Thematic Overview, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽¹¹⁶⁾ Puttick, M., Email to EASO, 3 August 2018.

⁽¹¹⁷⁾ IOM, Assessing the Risks of Migration Along the Central and Eastern Mediterranean Routes: Iraq and Nigeria as Case Study Countries, 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 79-80.

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ IOM, Iraq – Returnees from Europe: A DTM Snapshot Report on Iraqi Nationals Upon Return in Iraq (February 2018), 8 May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 20.

⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Puttick, M., Email to EASO, 3 August 2018.

⁽¹²⁰⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

⁽¹²¹⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 39.

⁽¹²²⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 39.

3. Governorate-level accessibility

3.1 Baghdad

Baghdad airport is located 16 kilometres west of downtown Baghdad ⁽¹²³⁾. A private security company (G4S) ⁽¹²⁴⁾ provides all main aspects of 24 hour airport security and physical security for checkpoint 1 at the main gateway ⁽¹²⁵⁾. Baghdad International airport stated on its website for travellers that the situation in Iraq is unstable and unpredictable, and that passengers arriving in Baghdad airport are recommended to arrange secure onward transportation ahead of arrival at the airport ⁽¹²⁶⁾. Taxis and buses to Central Baghdad are available at the airport. There is also a hotel inside the airport compound that is security-cleared by the UN ⁽¹²⁷⁾.

There are numerous government checkpoints throughout Baghdad itself and improvised checkpoints may also appear without notice ⁽¹²⁸⁾ in some areas ⁽¹²⁹⁾. According to the Norwegian Embassy in Jordan, interviewed by Landinfo, residents of Baghdad have to cross checkpoints daily to go about their daily tasks in the city ⁽¹³⁰⁾.

The police and the army reportedly control the checkpoints on the main roads through Baghdad, while side streets are more often manned by Popular Mobilisation Units (PMUs), including in mixed Sunni/Shia areas of the city ⁽¹³¹⁾. The mainly Shia PMUs have the freedom to operate in the city, according to a source interviewed by Landinfo ⁽¹³²⁾. Baghdad is reportedly divided up into precincts which respective militias control and respect one another's precincts, even though this may not be official; local residents know who dominates the area, while visitors do not ⁽¹³³⁾. Landinfo observes that it can be difficult to identify which militias a militant belongs to, though they usually have prominent logos and flags on their cars and checkpoints ⁽¹³⁴⁾. Their greatest open presence in Baghdad seems to be in Shia areas where they have control, though they operate extensively in the rest of the city also, according to Landinfo ⁽¹³⁵⁾. Without providing a comprehensive list, sources gave the following examples of militia groups dominant in different parts of Baghdad, though Landinfo observed in September 2017 that there may be various militias in each district who dominate in their own area of the city ⁽¹³⁶⁾. Examples include:

- Asaib ahl al-Haq is dominant in Dora and Karrada districts ⁽¹³⁷⁾, Palestine Street in the eastern centre ⁽¹³⁸⁾ and also operates in Shula district ⁽¹³⁹⁾;

⁽¹²³⁾ BIA, Baghdad International Airport – Baghdad Airport (BGW), n.d. ([url](#))

⁽¹²⁴⁾ ISW, email to EASO, 11 July 2018; WFP, Logistics Capacity Assessment - 2.2.1 Iraq Baghdad International Airport, March 2015, ([url](#))

⁽¹²⁵⁾ WFP, Logistics Capacity Assessment - 2.2.1 Iraq Baghdad International Airport, March 2015, ([url](#))

⁽¹²⁶⁾ BIA (Baghdad International Airport), Baghdad International Airport – Baghdad Airport (BGW), n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽¹²⁷⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹²⁸⁾ OSAC, Iraq 2018 Crime and Safety Report Baghdad, 12 February 2018, ([url](#)).

⁽¹²⁹⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹³⁰⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslimer i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.1.

⁽¹³¹⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslimer i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.1.

⁽¹³²⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslimer i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.1.

⁽¹³³⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Militser i Bagdad, 15 September 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽¹³⁴⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslimer i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.1.

⁽¹³⁵⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslimer i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.1.

⁽¹³⁶⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Militser i Bagdad, 15 September 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽¹³⁷⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslimer i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.1.

⁽¹³⁸⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Militser i Bagdad, 15 September 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽¹³⁹⁾ ISW, email to EASO, 11 July 2018

- Saraya al-Salaam (Peace Brigades) dominates in Sadr City (although may be challenged by other militias there ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾), Al-Shaab ⁽¹⁴¹⁾, the Shula district in the northwest of the city ⁽¹⁴²⁾, and is in Rusafa and Karkh ⁽¹⁴³⁾;
- Ashura Brigade dominant in Karrada's outskirts ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾;
- Badr Brigade on the outskirts of Masbakh area of Karada ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾;
- Kurdish Peshmerga in the al-Jadriya area of Karada ⁽¹⁴⁶⁾.

According to UNHCR, writing in April 2017,

'Iraqis of certain profiles who do not originate from Baghdad may be at risk of arbitrary arrest at any of the checkpoints between Baghdad International Airport and Baghdad City. This concerns in particular Sunni Arabs and Sunni Turkmen originating from (previously or currently) ISIS-held areas or areas affected by conflict, in relation to whom there are reports of arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention on the basis of their perceived support for ISIS' ⁽¹⁴⁷⁾.

Dr Chatelard stated similarly that Sunnis might be at risk of harassment by militias or the Federal Police, whose recruits are overwhelmingly Shiite, not necessarily because they reside (or resided) in previously ISIL-held areas, but also added that it may be because they bear family or tribal names related to such areas such as Samarra'i, Rawi, Falouji, or have a first name which is typically Sunni such as Omar, Othmna, Marwan or Sufian ⁽¹⁴⁸⁾.

3.1.1 Legal and practical requirements to stay in Baghdad

According to UNHCR, requirements to reside in neighbourhoods of Baghdad and documentation necessary, varies across neighbourhoods and often depends on the person in charge of the specific local area, such as the *mukhtar*, or the officer in charge of checkpoints run by the ISF or PMU ⁽¹⁴⁹⁾. The requirements are 'stricter' in Baghdad districts with higher concentrations of IDPs, such as the mainly Sunni areas of Adhamiya, Karkh, Abu Ghraib, and Mahmoudiyah ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾. Baghdad hosts 14 % of all IDPs, mainly from Anbar and Ninewa, and mainly resettled in Karkh, which has 40 % (20 503) of all IDPs in Baghdad, followed by Abu Ghraib (30 % or 11 558) ⁽¹⁵¹⁾. Other Baghdad neighbourhoods with IDP populations are Adhamiya (5 553), Al-Rusafa (4 526), Kadhimiya (4 180), Mahmoudiyah (2 877), Madain (852), Thawra 2 (679) and Thawra 1 (32) ⁽¹⁵²⁾. Nearly 60 % of IDPs in Baghdad live in rented housing and nearly 40 % live with host families, while 5 % are in critical shelters ⁽¹⁵³⁾. UNHCR stated that persons who settle in 'informal settlements do not usually

⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Militser i Bagdad, 15 September 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslimere i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.1.

⁽¹⁴²⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Militser i Bagdad, 15 September 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽¹⁴³⁾ ISW, email to EASO, 11 July 2018

⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslimere i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.1.

⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Militser i Bagdad, 15 September 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Militser i Bagdad, 15 September 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 3.

⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 3 (Section II).

⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 3 (Section II).

⁽¹⁵¹⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part II - Governorate Profiles, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽¹⁵²⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part II - Governorate Profiles, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽¹⁵³⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part II - Governorate Profiles, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 5.

require a support letter and a sponsor; they however need to undergo security screening and register with the camp authorities' ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾.

Persons arriving from abroad

According to UNHCR, due to 'widespread prejudice and suspicion vis-à-vis persons of Sunni Arab origin, particularly when they originate from an area currently or previously under ISIS control, Sunni Arabs who return to Iraq from abroad are reported to find it difficult to secure a sponsor ⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ or obtain a support letter from the *Mukhtar*/Local Council if they have no pre-existing family or other links in Baghdad' ⁽¹⁵⁶⁾. Dr Chatelard stated that this difficulty may also arise from their family or tribe name ⁽¹⁵⁷⁾.

IDPs, People from former ISIL-held areas

According UNHCR, writing in February 2018, persons originating from ISIS-held areas or conflict-affected areas who wish to settle in Baghdad, either with family or in a rented apartment, 'must, in principle, meet the following cumulative requirements':

- a) 'A support letter from the Mukhtar and the Local Council confirming that the individual is an IDP residing (or intending to reside) in the particular neighbourhood/local council area;
- b) Security clearance from five different security authorities (National Security, Federal Police Intelligence, Local Police Intelligence, Baghdad Operations, ISF Intelligence);
- c) Sponsorship from a resident of the neighbourhood in which s/he seeks to settle [the sponsor should be originally from Baghdad as indicated on his or her ID card. In addition, the sponsor's housing card should show that s/he is a resident of the city]. The sponsor must present four pieces of personal documentation, i.e. ID card, nationality certificate, address card (only accepted if issued in the sponsor's name) and ration/PDS (Public Distribution System) card. In some cases, the sponsor is reportedly asked for additional documentation such as a support letter from the Mukhtar or Local Council confirming that the sponsor is a resident of that area' ⁽¹⁵⁸⁾.

UNHCR stated that the above requirements 'must be obtained without delay upon arrival into the neighbourhood where the person seeks to settle'. Furthermore, UNHCR noted that the requirements are not on the basis of law, officially monitored, or subject to a complaints mechanism. UNHCR stated in February 2018 that 'residency is not guaranteed and remains at the discretion of the concerned local authorities / security organs'. Furthermore, security clearance applications may put certain profiles of Iraqis at risk of arrest under Anti-Terrorism legislation, such as Arab Sunnis and Arab Turkmen from former ISIL-held territory ⁽¹⁵⁹⁾, or those with family ties there ⁽¹⁶⁰⁾.

⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ UNHCR, UNHCR Letter to Legal Counsel in the Netherlands re Guidance on the Application of an IFA/IRA in Baghdad, Iraq, 5 February 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3 (footnote 9).

⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Also called a *Kafil* (sponsor) or *Kafala* (sponsorship); Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 4.

⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ UNHCR, UNHCR Letter to Legal Counsel in the Netherlands re Guidance on the Application of an IFA/IRA in Baghdad, Iraq, 5 February 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3.

⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ UNHCR, UNHCR Letter to Legal Counsel in the Netherlands re Guidance on the Application of an IFA/IRA in Baghdad, Iraq, 5 February 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3.

⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

UNHCR stated that ‘anyone who does not meet all residency requirements listed above is not allowed to reside in Baghdad’ and during security raids and at check points are ‘at risk of arrest and detention’ under the anti-terrorism law ⁽¹⁶¹⁾. IOM told Landinfo that all Baghdad districts require a sponsor and that if an IDP moves from one part of the city to another, another sponsor is required, though it may be the same one. It is necessary to go through the procedure to re-apply for settlement in case of such a move ⁽¹⁶²⁾.

According to the Norwegian Embassy in Jordan, interviewed by Landinfo in 2017, restrictions on traffic in and out of certain parts of Baghdad limit the freedom of movement in the city. For example, IDPs cannot enter the Amiriya district unless they can prove they have a sponsor there ⁽¹⁶³⁾. In its March 2017 report, IOM reported the only cases of IDP discrimination and forced evictions were recorded in the Baghdad district of Thawra 2, one of the two districts of Sadr City ⁽¹⁶⁴⁾. According to IOM’s monitoring, as of October 2017 1 % of IDPs and returnees in Baghdad reported forced evictions, and 90 % reported having freedom of movement ⁽¹⁶⁵⁾.

UNHCR observes that residency requirements in Baghdad for Arab Sunnis from former ISIL-territory ‘usually becomes stricter following security incidents’ because they are ‘broadly attributed’ to Sunnis ⁽¹⁶⁶⁾.

Miriam Puttick, civilian rights officer for the MRG, also observed that due to the homogenising of neighbourhoods in Baghdad as a result of sectarian developments of the years ‘the practicality of relocation to Baghdad is strongly contingent upon ethnic/religious identity, and a person is likely to face tension or discrimination in a neighbourhood in which his or her sect is not the majority.’ She also stated that ‘terrorist violence is a daily reality’ including for Shia, observing further that ‘living within the safer “green” or “orange” zones is very expensive and requires good connections, so it is an option out of reach to most’. The same source explained that

‘there may often be more immediate, practical barriers to accessing Baghdad. At various times due to security concerns, government authorities have placed restrictions on freedom of movement into Baghdad, either restricting entry to residents of other governorates altogether, or insisting that persons seeking entry have a sponsor in Baghdad. Without documentation, a person will also face difficulty getting past the checkpoints, which makes relocation an impractical solution for those who, for a variety of reasons, may not have documentation or have lost their documentation’ ⁽¹⁶⁷⁾.

UNHCR reported in August 2018 that since October 2017, more than 400 IDP families have been evicted from Baghdad. In August, 45 families were evicted from Karkh district by Baghdad Operations Command, and put forward instructions to evict Christian IDPs from Ninewa staying in Al-Khadhraa camp; 42 subsequently left and moved to rental houses in the neighbourhood or returned to their area of origin. UNHCR commented that ‘IDPs often leave Baghdad camps following eviction despite not have security clearance to live outside the camps. This makes them vulnerable to arrests or renewed evictions’ ⁽¹⁶⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁶¹⁾ UNHCR, UNHCR Letter to Legal Counsel in the Netherlands re Guidance on the Application of an IFA/IRA in Baghdad, Iraq, 5 February 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3

⁽¹⁶²⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslim i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.5.

⁽¹⁶³⁾ Norway, Landinfo, Irak: Situasjonen for sunnimuslim i Bagdad, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)), para. 3.5.

⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment: Part 2 – Governorate Profiles, March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part II - Governorate Profiles, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ Puttick, M., Email to EASO, 3 August 2018.

⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update – August 2018, 31 August 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3.

3.2 Kirkuk and disputed areas of Iraq

Kirkuk is a diverse multi-ethnic governorate which has a disputed and unresolved status under the Constitution, with a long history of ‘barely contained conflict’ ⁽¹⁶⁹⁾.

Kirkuk city and its airport were taken over in October 2017 by the Iraqi armed forces following the withdrawal of Kurdish forces during the changeover of control in the region following the Kurdish independence referendum ⁽¹⁷⁰⁾. Media sources reported government officials announced that Kirkuk International Airport will open for international and domestic flights in July 2018 ⁽¹⁷¹⁾ and that the first civilian international flights to operate will be to destinations in Turkey, Lebanon and Iran ⁽¹⁷²⁾. However, flight tracking websites consulted in September 2018 found no flight activity operating from Kirkuk ⁽¹⁷³⁾. Further information on international and domestic flights providing service into Kirkuk could not be found.

DIS/Landinfo wrote that due to the change in control over Kirkuk in October 2017 from Kurdish to Iraqi control, large numbers of people were displaced, and there were conflicting reports on how many Kurdish IDPs had returned with some saying most had and others saying they had not. Other IDPs have reportedly returned, who are mostly Arab IDPs from camps in Kirkuk and KRI ⁽¹⁷⁴⁾.

Dr Chatelard made the observation in October 2018 that if Kirkuk airport reopens at some point, the issue of entry and residency requirements will depend on who has the upper hand on the city and airport. If the situation remains the same as today, requirements will be similar to those in Baghdad. If the Kurds take over control of Kirkuk again, the situation will be similar to that of Erbil or Sulaymaniyah, as was the case before October 2017 ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾.

Please refer to governorate specific chapters for more information relating to the governorates of [Erbil](#), [Ninewa](#), [Anbar](#), [Salah Al Din](#) and [Diyala](#). DIS/Landinfo explained in its report on IDPs in northern Iraq and the disputed areas :

‘Every IDP who wishes to navigate from one place to another needs security clearances:

- Firstly, if an IDP wants to return to his/her area of origin or just want to make a short visit to check on the properties, the conditions etc. the person must first achieve permission from the local communities in the place of displacement. This means that if the IDP lives in a camp, the local camp management must grant the person permission to leave. The camp management can issue a OneDay Access Card in order for the IDP to leave the camp. However, in this case the person must hand over his/her ID-documents and in some cases their phones to the camp management.
- Secondly, the local security actors in the area of displacement must grant the IDP permission to leave.
- Thirdly, the local security actors on the road from the area of displacement to the area of origin must grant permission to pass through.

⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ International Crisis Group, The Contested Iraqi Parliamentary Elections in Kirkuk, 24 May 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ Rudaw, Kirkuk military airfield opens to civilian flights next week: governor, 9 July 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Kurdistan24, Kirkuk International Airport to reopen next week: Governor, 9 July 2018 ([url](#));

⁽¹⁷²⁾ Rudaw, Kirkuk military airfield opens to civilian flights next week: governor, 9 July 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁷³⁾ On 10 September 2018, the following flight tracking websites were consulted for flights operating to Kirkuk (KIK, ORKK) airport and did not show activity: FlightAware, Kirkuk Airport (Kirkuk), n.d. ([url](#)); Flightradar24.com did not list Kirkuk airport; Flightstats, (KIK) Kirkuk Air Base Arrivals, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

- Finally, the local security actors and the local communities, for instance head of civil administration, i.e. the mukhtars, must grant permission for the IDPs to return to the area of origin’⁽¹⁷⁶⁾.

The IDP’s name is checked through security databases of known and ‘suspected terrorist profiles’, for which each security actor has independent databases and the person will therefore be checked against several ones during travel from place to place. If they pass the security clearance, they must register themselves as a returnee to be allowed to travel back to the area of origin; however, there are cases where IDPs have left their area of displacement but not been able to return to the area of origin. Local mukhtars and sheikhs play an important role here: ‘if they vouch for the person, he/she will obtain permission to return’⁽¹⁷⁷⁾.

According to DIS/Landinfo,

‘In some cases, the local communities do not want certain individuals or families to return. For instance, there are specific areas of Kirkuk and Mosul where IDPs or group of IDPs are not able to return to. There can also be local tribal dynamics that can determine whether a person obtains an approval. With regards to Sunni Arabs, it is often only those who clearly show support of the local leadership, who are able to return’⁽¹⁷⁸⁾.

3.3 Southern governorates

For the purpose of this report, governorates included in this section are Babel/Babylon, Kerbala, Najaf, Wassit, Dhi Qar, Missan, Muthanna, Qadissiyah, and Basrah.

General information on entry and residence in southern governorates

According to Dr Chatelard, sponsorship requirements for movement to the south are not specific to people displaced from territories formerly held by ISIS nor to Najaf, but ‘apply across the board’. Dr Chatelard commented that someone wishing to relocate to Najaf or any other province needs a sponsor, explaining that the concept of sponsorship is broad: it may be an employer (there are many cases of IDPs from Ninewah and Anbar who are civil servants and were administratively transferred to the governorate in which they had to flee, including Najaf, so as to continue to work), a relative, or any other type of reputable institution or well-established private company. Noteworthy is that there are Sunni speciality doctors in several hospitals in Najaf, Karbala and several other cities of the Shiite south who work and live there during the week, sponsored by their employer, but generally without their families who stay in Sunni areas of Baghdad or Sunni-majority governorates. The problem is not to be Sunni in a Shiite-majority area, or to have to cross a checkpoint manned by Shiite militias or federal police. Rather, it is the capacity of the person ‘to be able to leverage the right protection’ which is one function of the sponsorship system⁽¹⁷⁹⁾. DFAT explained similarly that in southern Iraq, sources indicate that ‘internal relocation to the south is difficult for ethnic and religious minorities and that Shia without familiar, tribal, or political networks would face difficulty assimilating into the community’. They gave the assessment that

⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 35.

⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 28.

⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 28.

⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

relocation is ‘possible for anyone with local, familial, tribal, or political networks and difficult for those without them’ ⁽¹⁸⁰⁾.

3.3.1 Babel/Babylon

There is no airport in Babel (see [Section 2.2](#) for flight information).

UNHCR stated that Iraqis who are not originally from Babel who wish to settle upon returning to Iraq ‘would generally be treated on par with IDPs’ ⁽¹⁸¹⁾. Further information on residence requirements for individuals from areas other than former ISIL-held territory could not be found.

Iraqis displaced from former ISIL-held territory, especially Sunni Arabs, ‘have not been allowed access to the governorate since April 2015, irrespective of whether they have a sponsor’ ⁽¹⁸²⁾. IOM stated in its October 2017 report on governorate profiles on IDPs/returnees that it had not recorded ‘internal returns’ to the governorate because the security forces in Babel ‘do not allow IDPs from Babylon [Babel] to go back to their areas of origin’ ⁽¹⁸³⁾. The same source noted that virtually all the families who fled Babylon are originally from Jurf Al-Sakhr, which is an area liberated from ISIL by Shia militias in 2015. IOM stated that the majority of them are Sunni Muslims who remain displaced and have not been allowed to return ⁽¹⁸⁴⁾.

3.3.2 Kerbala

Kerbala has no airport but is building one ⁽¹⁸⁵⁾. See [Section 2.2](#) for flight information.

UNHCR stated that Iraqis who return from abroad and nationals who are not from Kerbala and want to settle there ‘would generally be treated on par with IDPs’ ⁽¹⁸⁶⁾. Further information on residence requirements for individuals from areas other than former ISIL-held territory could not be found.

According to the UNHCR, Kerbala governorate has not permitted displaced Iraqis from formerly ISIL-held territory to access the governorate since 2014 ⁽¹⁸⁷⁾. This has been since June 2014, after the initial displacement prompted by the takeover of Mosul by ISIL ⁽¹⁸⁸⁾.

UNHCR stated that this restriction is in particular related to Sunni Arabs and this restriction applies regardless of whether the person has a sponsor in Kerbala ⁽¹⁸⁹⁾. Dr Chatelard noted that based on her interviews, some Sunni IDPs were allowed entrance in 2014-2015, but after that, in 2016-17 and later, ‘newcomers would not be let in’ ⁽¹⁹⁰⁾.

⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

⁽¹⁸¹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽¹⁸²⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽¹⁸³⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part II - Governorate Profiles, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 31.

⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part II - Governorate Profiles, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 31.

⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

Karbala hosts ‘few IDPs’ according to IOM and IOM reported in October 2017 that there was ‘no apparent conflict’ with the host population, except for occasional incidents in Al-Musayab ⁽¹⁹¹⁾.

3.3.3 Najaf

Al-Najaf international airport is located on the eastern side of the city and had a single runway in 2016 ⁽¹⁹²⁾ and a second added in 2018 ⁽¹⁹³⁾. In July 2018, flights to Najaf Airport were suspended and diverted to Baghdad after the Najaf airport was briefly stormed by protesters during a series of demonstrations in southern Iraq over government corruption and lack of basic services ⁽¹⁹⁴⁾. On 13 July, a demonstrator outside the airport entrance was shot and killed by police ⁽¹⁹⁵⁾. The airport is a ‘flashpoint’ for demonstrations in the south of Iraq ⁽¹⁹⁶⁾. The airport returned to normal operations according to an 18 July 2018 report by the Baghdad Post ⁽¹⁹⁷⁾. Dr Chatelard noted that Najaf airport has heavy security ensured in a coordinated way by private contractors and ISF. However, she remarked that security has not prevented recent security incidents from happening ⁽¹⁹⁸⁾.

Najaf hosts 73 938 IDPs (about 3 % of total), 88 % of whom are Turkmen Shia from Ninewa, 6 % are Shabak Shias, 2 % are Arab Shias, and 2 % are Arab Sunnis ⁽¹⁹⁹⁾.

According to Dr Chatelard, many displaced Shia IDPs, and initially also some Christians, have benefitted from the sponsorship of Shiite religious institutions ⁽²⁰⁰⁾. Regarding displaced Sunnis from Anbar having sponsors in Najaf, she explained that many Arab tribes in Iraq have both Sunni and Shiite sections and these ties can ‘trump’ sectarian affiliations. There is intermarriage for example between members of same tribe but of different sect, and people pay blood money together which maintains solidarity. She noted that during the recent (and previous) IDP displacement from Anbar, a number of Sunnis went to Karbala or Najaf and were let in these governorates because a Shiite relative residing there sponsored them. She has interviewed several such cases, including IDPs who were sponsored by relatives or by their employers (public sector) thus allowing them to find work and housing in Najaf/Karbala ⁽²⁰¹⁾.

UNHCR stated that Iraqis who come from ISIL-held territories, particularly Arab Sunnis ‘would be treated on par with IDPs’ if returning from abroad and that people relocating to Najaf City and that want to reside there they will require a local sponsor who must be a ‘well-known personality such as a tribal leader or a member of the Najaf Provincial Council’ as well as a security clearance from the National Security Agency ⁽²⁰²⁾. Further information could not be found.

Further information on residence requirements for individuals relocating to Najaf could not be found.

⁽¹⁹¹⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part II - Governorate Profiles, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 33.

⁽¹⁹²⁾ WFP, Logistics Capacity Assessment – 2.2.5 Iraq Al-Najaf International Airport, March 2015 (Updated 6 May 2016) ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁹³⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ Reuters, Two protesters killed in clashes with Iraqi police as unrest spreads in the south, 15 July 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ Washington Times, Oil-rich Basra threatens vote to pull away from Iraq, 27 August 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ Washington Times, Oil-rich Basra threatens vote to pull away from Iraq, 27 August 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ Reuters, Two protesters killed in clashes with Iraqi police as unrest spreads in the south, 15 July 2018 ([url](#)). Baghdad Post (The), Najaf international airport reopens: sources, 18 July 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part II - Governorate Profiles, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 49.

⁽²⁰⁰⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽²⁰¹⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽²⁰²⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

3.3.4 Wassit

Wassit has no airport (see [Section 2.2](#) for flight information).

Wassit hosts 1 % (26 346 people) of Iraq's IDP population, most of whom are Turkmen Shias (62 %), Arab Sunnis (16 %), Shabak Shia (9 %) and Arab Shia (8 %) ⁽²⁰³⁾.

According to UNHCR, Iraqis who are not originally from Wassit wishing to settle there upon return to Iraq 'would generally be treated on par with IDPs' ⁽²⁰⁴⁾. Further information on residence requirements for individuals from areas other than former ISIL-held territory could not be found.

Iraqis from former ISIL-held territory, especially Sunni Arabs would reportedly require a local sponsor 'who is known to the local ISF and the Mukhtar of the area' in addition to security clearance ⁽²⁰⁵⁾. Further information could not be found.

3.3.5 Dhi-Qar, Missan, Muthanna and Qadissiyah

There are no airports to these areas, apart from one reportedly in Nasiriyah in Dhi Qar (see [Section 2.2](#) on flights).

According to UNHCR, Iraqis returning from abroad arriving in these governorates 'would generally be treated on par with IDPs' ⁽²⁰⁶⁾. Further information on residence requirements for individuals from areas other than former ISIL-held territory could not be found.

UNHCR stated that those from former ISIL-held areas, especially Sunni Arabs, 'are required to pre-arrange a sponsor to be present at the entry checkpoint', and that sponsors are needed in order to register with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, and obtain a security clearance ⁽²⁰⁷⁾. Sponsors can reportedly be 'long-term residents' in the governorates, such as acquaintances, members of the same tribe, or relatives ⁽²⁰⁸⁾.

3.3.6 Basrah

Basrah international airport is located 10.5 kilometres from the city centre and is the second largest airport after Baghdad ⁽²⁰⁹⁾. In September 2018, unidentified militants reportedly fired three rockets near the Basra airport during violent uprisings in the city; no casualties from the airport attack were reported and air operations were not disrupted ⁽²¹⁰⁾.

⁽²⁰³⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part II - Governorate Profiles, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 61.

⁽²⁰⁴⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽²⁰⁵⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽²⁰⁶⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽²⁰⁷⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽²⁰⁸⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽²⁰⁹⁾ WFP, Logistics Capacity Assessment – 2.3.3 Iraq Basrah International Airport, March 2015 (Updated 6 May 2016) ([url](#)).

⁽²¹⁰⁾ Reuters, Rockets fired at Basra airport as violent protests grip Iraq, 8 September 2018 ([url](#)); GardaWorld, Iraq: Rockets fired near Basra airport September 8, 8 September 2018 ([url](#)).

Dr Chatelard noted that Basra airport has heavy security ensured in a coordinated way by private contractors and ISF. However, she remarked that security has not prevented recent security incidents from happening ⁽²¹¹⁾.

Information on residence requirements for individuals other than those who originate from former ISIL-held territory could not be found.

UNHCR stated that individuals who originate from former ISIL-held areas, particularly Sunni Arabs, 'are required to obtain security clearance from the local security forces and register as IDPs at the local MoMD branch in order to reside legally in the governorate. However, persons originating from an area declared "safe" by the National Operations Centre in the Office of the Prime Minister are not eligible to be registered by the MoMD in Basra and as such, are not able to regularize their stay in the governorate' ⁽²¹²⁾.

No other MoMD branches apply such exclusions. UNHCR stated that as of April 2017, the areas declared safe by the Basrah branch (April 2017) were:

- 'Al-Anbar Governorate: Ameriyat Al-Fallujah, Al-Fallujah, Al-Habbaniyah, Al-Khalidiyah, Ramadi, Al-Wafaa, Al-Furat, Heet, Al-Kubaysah, Al-Baghdadi, Haditha, Al-Rahaliya, Al-Nukaiband Al-Rutba;
- Salah Al-Din Governorate: Baiji, Al-Seiniyah, Yathrib, Suliman Bek, Awja, Aziz Balad; and
- Diyala Governorate: Al-Muqdadiah, Al-Sa'adiyah, Al-Mansouriyah and Al-Udhaim' ⁽²¹³⁾.

UNHCR also noted that those who are eligible to register with MoMD require a sponsor in order to reside in Basrah. Families who do not have such a sponsor can be sponsored by MoMD in order to stay in 5-Miles IDP camp outside Basrah City ⁽²¹⁴⁾. UNHCR further explained that:

'The same applies to individuals with family members who are already present in Basra: if these family members are not originally from Basra themselves, they cannot act as sponsors for their relatives, but the Basra branch of the MoMD can sponsor them. In contrast, single persons who do not have any family members who already reside in Basra are not eligible to be sponsored by the MoMD; they are therefore only able to reside in Basra if they have a sponsor' ⁽²¹⁵⁾.

Dr Chatelard remarked that this only applies to IDPs and that it should be understood that people originating from areas declared 'safe' cannot register as IDPs and claim residence in Basrah on that ground. However, they can still regularise residence with the sponsorship of a relative, institution or private company ⁽²¹⁶⁾. DFAT wrote in October 2018 that a person who wants to relocate to Basrah is required to have a friend or relative to 'guarantee that person is "free from terrorism and

⁽²¹¹⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽²¹²⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 6-7.

⁽²¹³⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽²¹⁴⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²¹⁵⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²¹⁶⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

of good character”’; the guarantor is required to be security-cleared and physically present at the checkpoint to pick them up. If the person relocating is an IDP, they must register with MoMD ⁽²¹⁷⁾.

3.4 Kurdistan Region of Iraq

International flights are operational to Erbil ⁽²¹⁸⁾ and Sulaymaniyah (see Section 1.2.2). WFP assessed that Sulaymaniyah airport has 24-hour security and entry points are ‘sufficiently manned by private security personnel’ ⁽²¹⁹⁾.

Entry

According to DIS/Landinfo, reporting in November 2018, for IDPs, access to KRI has improved, though there are no legal norms, laws, or formal policies in place and procedures are subject to frequent change due to security and political developments ⁽²²⁰⁾.

USDOS wrote that in 2017, ‘the KRG restricted movement across the areas it administered. Authorities required non-residents to obtain permits that authorized limited stays in the IKR’ ⁽²²¹⁾. DIS/Landinfo reported in November 2018 that IDPs can access the KRI if they have identity documents. Two Kurdish officials and IOM stated that every person who crosses the border into KRI must present themselves to the Kurdish intelligence service (Asayish) within 48 hours, and that at checkpoint entry their name and ID-documents are checked against a database and a residence permit is issued for a month ⁽²²²⁾. DIS/Landinfo remarked that every Iraqi citizen returning to KRI via the airports in KRI will be permitted to stay for three days, but after that must approach the Asayish within 48 hours and ‘extension of this three-day residence permit might be difficult to obtain’ ⁽²²³⁾. Dr Chatelard also described the requirements as being in possession of official identity documents (ID card, nationality certification or passport), passing an identity check by the Asayish military police, and having a photo taken on the spot to create a one-month residence card. A fee of 10 000 IQ [about EUR 7.4 ⁽²²⁴⁾] applies ⁽²²⁵⁾.

Sponsorship requirements for entry were ‘eased or discontinued’ after Mosul was retaken in 2017, according to DIS/Landinfo. However, they were also told by sources that some individuals may, on a case-by-case basis, still be required to present a sponsor and some IDPs have been denied entry due to security considerations and certain individuals with ‘heightened security concerns’ in the past have reportedly been detained ⁽²²⁶⁾. According to Australia’s DFAT, writing in October 2018, admission into the KRI is at the discretion of the KRG, ‘which has increased restrictions, including

⁽²¹⁷⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 30.

⁽²¹⁸⁾ FlyErbil, Summer Schedule, n.d. ([url](#)); Kurdistan24, Fly Erbil: Kurdistan Region launches first airline after three-year delay, 18 June 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽²¹⁹⁾ WFP, Logistics Capacity Assessment – 2.2.4 Iraq Sulaimaniyah International Airport, March 2015 (Updated 26 March 2018) ([url](#)).

⁽²²⁰⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 35.

⁽²²¹⁾ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 29-30.

⁽²²²⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 36.

⁽²²³⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 38.

⁽²²⁴⁾ XECurrency Converter, 10,000 Iraqi Dinar to Euro, 10 November 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽²²⁵⁾ Chatelard, G., Comments made during the review of this report, 22 October 2018.

⁽²²⁶⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 36.

requiring individuals to have a sponsor’ though implementation is frequently ‘inconsistent in practice’ (²²⁷).

Sources told DIS/Landinfo that examples of people who require a sponsor for KRI include:

- single female-headed households who cannot explain the absence of their husbands;
- single men and women without families; and
- young Arab men; who had been denied access or had difficulty gaining access to KRI depending on their relations (²²⁸).

USDOS similarly noted that entry into the KRI ‘often was more difficult for men, particularly Arab men traveling without family’ (²²⁹). DFAT noted similarly that Arab Sunnis have faced difficulties entering KRI (²³⁰).

DIS/Landinfo stated in its November 2018 report that some IDPs are denied entry to KRI due to security considerations and this has led to the detention of certain individuals (²³¹). USDOS stated similarly that ‘officials prevented individuals whom they deemed security threats from entering the region’ (²³²). Dr Chatelard commented in her review of this report that a person must be security cleared by Asayish to enter; those who face issues entering KRI are those suspected of being ISIS members who appear on ‘security lists’ (²³³).

In email correspondence with EASO, a civilian rights officer for Minority Rights Group International (MRG) who focuses on Iraq and conducts field research there stated that:

‘The KRG imposes different entry requirements that can vary according to a person’s ethnic and religious identity, or perceived political affiliations. For example, persons of Kurdish ethnicity from any part of Iraq are generally able to enter the KRI with ease, whereas those of Arab or other ethnicities are normally required to show that they have a sponsor inside the KRI before they are allowed to enter. Members of minorities have also experienced differential treatment, with entry generally being easier for Christians and Yezidis than for Shabak and Turkmen, for example. Entry requirements are sometimes arbitrary, poorly communicated, and subject to change with little notice. Perceived political affiliations can also affect a person’s ability to relocate to the KRI and to move freely within the region. KRG officials regularly condition good treatment and access to services on support for the main Kurdish political parties. This affects even religious minorities that the KRG has allowed into the region in large numbers, such as Christians and Yezidis. For example, Christians have been prevented from entering the KRG during times when Christian-led protests were planned, and Yezidis have also reported restrictions on their freedom of movement within the region. Within the KRI, non-Kurdish residents face

(²²⁷) Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

(²²⁸) Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 36.

(²²⁹) USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 29-30.

(²³⁰) Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

(²³¹) Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 36.

(²³²) USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 29-30.

(²³³) Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 22 October 2018.

restrictions on their ability to own property, businesses, and other restrictions’⁽²³⁴⁾.

USDOS wrote in its 2017 report that:

‘Citizens (of all ethnosectarian 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 Governorate and the disputed territories. While authorities allowed many IDPs to return to their places of origin in retaken areas, ethnic Arabs originating from disputed territories under control of the Peshmerga forces were generally prevented from doing so. KRG authorities applied restrictions more stringently in some areas than in others. The United Nations and international humanitarian organizations stated that practices regarding the entry of IDPs and refugees seeking to return were more or less restrictive depending upon the ethnosectarian background of the displaced individuals and the area to which they intended to return. There were also reports that authorities sometimes closed checkpoints into the region for extended periods, forcing IDPs to wait’⁽²³⁵⁾.

The same source noted in 2017 that ‘KRG officials generally admitted minority IDPs into the IKR, although security checks were occasionally lengthy’⁽²³⁶⁾. DFAT commented that Christians, Yazidis and Shabaks have been able to enter KRI ‘with relative ease’⁽²³⁷⁾.

Residence

DIS/Landinfo remarked that conditions for residence requirements ‘may vary considerably among the three governorates’⁽²³⁸⁾. UNHCR also stated in 2017 that ‘residency conditions vary considerably among the three governorates of the KRI and depend on an individual’s ethnic/religious background, place of origin and pre-existing links in the KR-I’⁽²³⁹⁾. Dr Chatelard commented that this reflects the ground-level situation⁽²⁴⁰⁾. DFAT observed that people born in the region or with family ties ‘may obtain Kurdish identity paper, including national papers noting residence in Kurdistan’ and that Iraqis from outside the region require a residency card, issued after presenting themselves at the residency office where they wish to reside; the card allows for movement and access to services⁽²⁴¹⁾.

According to an international organisation interviewed by DIS/Landinfo in 2018,

‘The initial entry permit issued to a displaced family or individual can be replaced by a residence permit from the local Asayish office in the neighbourhood where they plan to live. A confirmation letter from the mukhtar/district council is needed in order to obtain the residence permit, which is initially valid for one month. A

⁽²³⁴⁾ Puttick, M., Email to EASO, 3 August 2018.

⁽²³⁵⁾ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 29-30.

⁽²³⁶⁾ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 29-30.

⁽²³⁷⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

⁽²³⁸⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 37.

⁽²³⁹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁴⁰⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽²⁴¹⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

residence permit is renewable for a period of six months and then a further twelve months. Applications should be lodged at the local Asayish Office’ ⁽²⁴²⁾.

Dr Chatelard described a similar procedure, stating that if a person wishes to stay beyond the one-month stay, they must visit an Asayish office within a month to apply for a one-year residence card. She noted that the conditions were to provide a rental contract from a landlord, a certificate from the neighbourhood electricity generator, and another from the local mukhtar ⁽²⁴³⁾.

USDOS, writing in their 2017 annual report, stated that ‘citizens who sought to obtain residency permits for KRG-controlled areas required sponsorship from a resident in the region’ ⁽²⁴⁴⁾. Dr Chatelard noted that a major change compared to the pre-Kurdish referendum period is that sponsors are not required at any stage ⁽²⁴⁵⁾. However, DIS/Landinfo wrote in November 2018, there are no legal norms or rules on sponsorship, noting that sponsorship requirements have been ‘lifted in many cases,’ though there are still groups that require sponsorship for residency. The procedures are subject to frequent change and ‘applied differently on a case-by-case basis.’ Despite the lack of legal norms on sponsorship, DIS/Landinfo stated that ‘sources had the impression that [the] sponsorship requirement still applied to people who wish to obtain a residence permit in the KRI’ ⁽²⁴⁶⁾.

DIS/Landinfo observed in their November 2018 report that in KRI, sponsorship applies for Turkmen and Christians, the latter of whom would normally be sponsored by the Church. IDPs will generally be sponsored by camps and the person must re-register if they have been de-registered ⁽²⁴⁷⁾. The same source stated that a residence permit is required for Arabs and other minority IDPs ⁽²⁴⁸⁾.

According to DIS/Landinfo sources, reporting in their November 2018 report, it is ‘easier’ now for Iraqis originating from Anbar, Ninewa, Salah-al Din and Diyala to obtain residence permits for KRI, depending on their ID documents; those without exit stamps in their passports will be questioned. One source told DIS/Landinfo that there are numerous steps in the process to obtain residency and that Arab single young males would find it ‘very difficult’ to obtain ⁽²⁴⁹⁾. The Asayish must approve all residence applications and rental contracts, for example, which was described as a ‘major blockage’ ⁽²⁵⁰⁾.

⁽²⁴²⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 38.

⁽²⁴³⁾ Chatelard, G., Comments made during the review of this report, 22 October 2018.

⁽²⁴⁴⁾ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 29-30.

⁽²⁴⁵⁾ Chatelard, G., Comments made during the review of this report, 22 October 2018.

⁽²⁴⁶⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 37.

⁽²⁴⁷⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 37.

⁽²⁴⁸⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 37-38.

⁽²⁴⁹⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 38.

⁽²⁵⁰⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 38.

Kurds

According to two sources interviewed by DIS/Landinfo in 2018, Kurds from the rest of Iraq ‘do not need special permission’ and ‘can enter and reside in KRI without any problems’ or the need for a sponsor ⁽²⁵¹⁾. DFAT also stated that people originating from KRI or are ethnically Kurdish should have ‘relative ease’ entering KRI, however, this may vary case-by-case ⁽²⁵²⁾.

Dr Chatelard observed that Kurds from Kirkuk would have to follow the same procedure as others to settle in the KRI and that ‘being Kurdish does not carry specific privileges’ ⁽²⁵³⁾. She also noted that proving Kurdish ethnicity is not necessarily straightforward; she noted that many Kurds who have lived all their lives in governorates outside KRI do not speak Kurdish, and knew of several such cases where people’s ‘Kurdishness’ has been put in doubt when they tried to enter KRI by air of road, and who subsequently have preferred to abide by the sponsorship requirement to avoid problems ⁽²⁵⁴⁾. Regarding ethnic Kurds from Kirkuk, the fact-finding mission report of Danish Immigration Service stated that according to three sources, ethnic Kurds, including those from Kirkuk can enter freely and are exempted from sponsorship requirements in KRI; however, Human Rights Watch said it was uncertain if that is the case, mentioning that there are also ‘examples of [Kurdish] IDPs who are able to get into Kirkuk but not able to go from Kirkuk to KRI’ ⁽²⁵⁵⁾. It is also said in the same report that according to UNHCR, ‘Kurds who are registered as living in Kirkuk cannot re-register or buy property in any part of KRI. If a man from Kirkuk marries a woman from another part of the Kurdish controlled areas or KRI, her file is moved to Kirkuk. A couple like this would not be able to move in and out of Kirkuk, and they would not be able to move to or buy property in KRI’ ⁽²⁵⁶⁾. DFAT wrote in October 2018 that ‘officially, non-ethnic Kurds are unable to purchase property’ ⁽²⁵⁷⁾.

In October 2017, Iraqi federal forces took back Kirkuk from KRG control following the independence referendum in KRI, and Kurds from Kirkuk were given access to Erbil without a residence permit requirement, while Sunnis and Shia did require one ⁽²⁵⁸⁾. Dr Chatelard observed that many Kurdish residents of Kirkuk were allowed into KRI without restriction after October 2017 retaking of Kirkuk ⁽²⁵⁹⁾. Two sources said that it is a challenge for Kurds registered elsewhere to review ID documents and that it is impossible for Kurds from Kirkuk to change registration to Erbil without ‘paying bribes and having the right contacts’ ⁽²⁶⁰⁾.

⁽²⁵¹⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 39.

⁽²⁵²⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

⁽²⁵³⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 22 October 2018.

⁽²⁵⁴⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽²⁵⁵⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service): The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI); Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation; Report from fact finding mission to Erbil, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and Beirut, Lebanon, 26 September to 6 October 2015, 12 April 2016 ([url](#)), p. 21.

⁽²⁵⁶⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service), The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI); Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation; Report from fact finding mission to Erbil, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and Beirut, Lebanon, 26 September to 6 October 2015, 12 April 2016 ([url](#)), p. 21.

⁽²⁵⁷⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

⁽²⁵⁸⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 39.

⁽²⁵⁹⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 22 October 2018.

⁽²⁶⁰⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 39.

3.4.1 Erbil

Entry by air

UNHCR said that generally Iraqis can access Erbil via air without the need for a sponsor, except for Arabs from Ninewa ⁽²⁶¹⁾. According to DIS/Landinfo, regarding entry to Erbil and Sulaymaniyah by the air, the person can present a passport and will be questioned if there is no exit stamp in the passport. Regarding questioning, DIS/Landinfo reported that according to IOM,

There is no procedure according to which extent he or she will be questioned, hence the questioning depends on the security officer at the airport. Returnees, who do not have an exit stamp in their passport, will in a few cases be sent to Baghdad to be checked. The KRG authorities have been given access to the database of the Iraqi federal government. International Organization for Migration (IOM) stated that it is impossible to leave Iraq without an exit stamp in the passport. All passports are stamped upon exit both at the airports and at the land border crossing. At the same time everyone must give fingerprints upon exit from Iraq. In case the passport is lost, it is possible to present a laissez-passer issued by an Iraqi embassy in Europe, together with an ID document. Returnees who present a laissez-passer rather than a passport will go through a more thorough check at the airport. When returning to KRI, people who are originally from KRI will be allowed to access KRI by solely presenting a laissez-passer. Christians from Erbil will only be asked a few questions, whereas returnees from Mosul will be asked more questions. Every Iraqi citizen who returns via the airports in KRI will be allowed to stay in KRI for three days. However, an extension of this three-day residence permit might be difficult to obtain. (...) Recently, no one has been detained at the airports of KRI ⁽²⁶²⁾.

In its November 2018 report, DIS/Landinfo interviewed an international NGO operating in KRI who stated that rules, regulations and security procedures for IDPs entering KRI do not fall under any law, and are subject to change. The same source said that no sponsor is required, regardless of ethnic/religious background, but IDPs go through security screening at land and air entry points including a name cross check ⁽²⁶³⁾. The same source reported that Christians and Kurds 'will not be screened' and that female-headed households of ISIS-fighters 'are not being given access to Erbil governorate' although 'entry is decided on a case-by-case basis' ⁽²⁶⁴⁾.

Residence

According to an international NGO operating in KRI who was interviewed by DIS/Landinfo in 2018, for residency in Erbil, Arabs, Turkmen, and other minorities who are IDPs require a residence permit. Kurds and Christians do not require a sponsor or a residence permit, nor do they need sponsorship. The source stated that there is no sponsorship requirement for Erbil residency. However, the same source also said that families who wish to apply for a residency permit for a

⁽²⁶¹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁶²⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 36.

⁽²⁶³⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 37.

⁽²⁶⁴⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 37.

renewable 6-12 month residence permit must provide a letter from the *mukhtar* and submit applications to the local Asayish. Furthermore, the same source stated that single women who cannot justify their husband's absence by documentation (death/divorce certificate) and single men and women without families may be required to have a sponsor. It is also decided 'on a case-by-case basis' ⁽²⁶⁵⁾.

UNHCR noted in 2017 that residency depends on a person's profile and family situation ⁽²⁶⁶⁾.

People from Ninewa

According to UNHCR, reporting in April 2017, people from Ninewa

'seeking to enter Erbil via Erbil Airport (or via a road checkpoint) have to provide a local Kurdish sponsor, who must be present at the point of arrival and accompany the individual or family to the Asayish office in Ankawa (Erbil) to obtain a letter for the individual/family to remain in Erbil. This letter should be presented to the Asayish branch in the area in which the IDP chooses to reside within 48 hours from the date of issuance' ⁽²⁶⁷⁾.

UNHCR said that this eligibility rule applies to all IDPs from Ninewa regardless of their ethno-religious identity, although it is reportedly implemented 'more stringently' for Arabs, and Turkmen from Tal Afar, compared to Christians, Turkmen other than from Tal Afar, Yazidi, Shabak, and Kakai people from Ninewa ⁽²⁶⁸⁾. UNHCR also noted that 'IDPs who do not approach the Asayish branch within 48 hours would still be issued a residency document ('tourist pass'), however, they would likely be questioned' about the delay ⁽²⁶⁹⁾. Furthermore, UNHCR stated that

'Conditions for obtaining a residency permit ("tourist pass") vary depending on the person's profile and family. Kurds, Turkmen (not from Tal Afar), Yazidis, Shabaks and Kaka'is generally do not require a residency permit in order to legally reside in Erbil Governorate' ⁽²⁷⁰⁾.

Furthermore, 'Turkmen (unless from Tal Afar), Yazidis, Shabaks or Kaka'is can generally reside in Erbil without obtaining residency documents. However, some local Asayish offices (e.g. in Soran) issue Yazidi, Shabak and Kaka'i IDPs with residency cards (following the same procedures as for

⁽²⁶⁵⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 38.

⁽²⁶⁶⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

⁽²⁶⁷⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁶⁸⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁶⁹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁷⁰⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

Arab IDPs). Also, in some cases, those who are undocumented and do not speak Kurdish are required to obtain residency documents from the local Asayish ⁽²⁷¹⁾.

Arabs and Turkmen from Tal Afar

UNHCR stated that after a security check, IDP Arabs are issued with an entry pass for 72 hours. Arabs originating specifically from Ninewa entering KRI via Erbil air or land reportedly require a local Kurdish sponsor who 'must be present at the point of arrival and accompany the individual or family to the Asayish office in Ankawa (Erbil) to obtain a letter for the individual/family' which will then be presented at the local Asayish branch where they wish to relocate, within 48 hours ⁽²⁷²⁾.

UNHCR stated that IDP Arabs, Turkmen from Tal Afar and non-KRI originating Christians are required to obtain a renewable short-term residence permit ('tourist pass') ⁽²⁷³⁾. The tourist permit allows the holder to pass checkpoints, rent accommodation or hotels, and work, although some employers reportedly require a 'yearly residence document' to be hired ⁽²⁷⁴⁾. Furthermore, 'IDPs [Arab, Turkmen from Tal Afar, and Christians from outside KRI] residing in non-camp situations also require a 'tourist pass' [residency permit] in order to register with MoMD'. For those who do live in IDP camps, sponsor support letters can be provided by camp managers to register with MoMD ⁽²⁷⁵⁾.

UNHCR stated in April 2017 that for Arabs and Turkmen from Tal Afar, the initial entry pass for 72 hours must be replaced with a renewable short-term residency permit which is valid for one month. This is issued by the local Asayish office where they plan to reside and following a security check:

- 'Families can obtain a renewable short-term residency document without further requirements.
- Single persons who already have family in Erbil Governorate can be added to their family's file in the local Asayish office.
- Single men and women who do not have family in Erbil governorate require a valid work contract (usually proven through a support letter issued by the employer) in order to obtain a short-term residency document. Those without a valid work contract and without family in Erbil will not be issued a short-term residency document and are subject to expulsion from Erbil Governorate' ⁽²⁷⁶⁾.

⁽²⁷¹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

⁽²⁷²⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁷³⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

⁽²⁷⁴⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

⁽²⁷⁵⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

⁽²⁷⁶⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

Christians

At the Erbil airport after a security check, Christians will be given an entry pass for three to seven days ⁽²⁷⁷⁾. Christians who do not originate from KRI are required to obtain a renewable short-term residence permit ('tourist pass') ⁽²⁷⁸⁾. Christians must approach the local Asayish office to exchange the entry permit for six-month residency document, with the following requirements:

- 'Christian families (except those from Ninewa Governorate) require a support letter from the church or the Mukhtar to prove that they have been displaced to Erbil Governorate;
- Christians families from Ninewa Governorate require a Kurdish sponsor, who needs to accompany them to the Asayish;
- Christian single men and women (from all areas) require a Kurdish sponsor, who needs to accompany them to the Asayish' ⁽²⁷⁹⁾.

Minorities and Turkmen who are not from Tal Afar

Turkmen, Yazidis, Shabaks, and Kakais are not required to be given an entry permit at Erbil airport ⁽²⁸⁰⁾. UNHCR stated that Kurds, Turkmen (not from Tal Afar), Yazidis, Shabaks, and Kakais 'generally do not require a residency permit in order to legally reside in Erbil governorate'. Some Asayish offices issue Yazidi, Shabak, and Kakai IDPs with 'residency cards' ⁽²⁸¹⁾.

Dr Chatelard commented that in many cases, people have to prove that they belong to such ethno-religious groups and will need to do so by asking for a certificate from community leaders or relatives who already are legally resident in KRI, which is still a form of sponsorship ⁽²⁸²⁾. In this context, Dr Chatelard noted that the nationality certificate and civil status card include the mention of religion. Legally recognised faiths are Muslim, Christian (no mention being made of sect), Sabeen-Mandean and Yazidis. Members of other faiths have to register under one or the other religion. Furthermore, there is no mention of ethnicity on identity documents although it can often be inferred from an individual's name, and/or that of their father and paternal grandfather which are mentioned on ID documents ⁽²⁸³⁾.

⁽²⁷⁷⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁷⁸⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

⁽²⁷⁹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁸⁰⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁸¹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁸²⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽²⁸³⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

3.4.2 Dohuk

UNHCR stated in its on IDPs in April 2017 that for Dohuk, ‘residency requirements vary depending on the individual’s ethnic/religious background’:

‘Persons of Arab and Turkmen background, who do not originate from the KR-I and who arrive overland via Erbil Airport, require a sponsor who is a permanent resident of Dohuk Governorate, in order to access and legally reside in Dohuk Governorate. Once allowed entry following a security check, the sponsored person has to apply for residency documents with the Asayish in the area in which s/he seeks to settle. Residency documents are issued for either one year or one month, depending on a security assessment undertaken by the Asayish. In practice, Arabs usually obtain renewable residency documents valid for one month only. Those who reside in Dohuk Governorate without a sponsor/residency documents face difficulties in accessing employment and are subject to arrest and forced relocation to Garmawa IDP Camp’ ⁽²⁸⁴⁾.

Persons of Yazidi, Kurdish and Christian background do not require a residency permit ⁽²⁸⁵⁾. They may be required to prove that they belong through certificates from community leaders of relatives legally residing in KRI, which is a form of sponsorship ⁽²⁸⁶⁾. Further information could not be found.

3.4.3 Sulaymaniyah

For information on entry by air to Sulaymaniyah, [see Section 3.4.1](#), which also applies to Erbil.

UNHCR noted that ‘since the beginning of the Mosul military operation on 17 October 2016, access and residency requirements for persons from Ninewa are the same as in Erbil Governorate’ ⁽²⁸⁷⁾. Dr Chatelard also made the observation that entry and residence requirements for Arabs or members of any ethnicity legally residing in a central or southern governorate entering via the airport as the same as in Erbil ⁽²⁸⁸⁾. DIS/Landinfo reported that according to an international NGO working in KRI, permission from the Asayish is required for entry into Sulaymaniyah ⁽²⁸⁹⁾.

UNHCR stated that in reference to Arabs and Turkmen from Tal Afar,

‘Arabs and Turkmen originating from Tal Afar and who return to Iraq from abroad on international flights to Sulaymaniyah Airport, will be issued with a “tourist pass” (valid for 10, 15 or 30 days) following a security check. Within 10 days after arrival,

⁽²⁸⁴⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

⁽²⁸⁵⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), p. 8.

⁽²⁸⁶⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽²⁸⁷⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 8-9.

⁽²⁸⁸⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽²⁸⁹⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 37.

and irrespective of the validity period of the “tourist pass”, they are required to report to the local Asayish office in the area in which they seek to reside. In certain areas, persons of Arab origin require a Kurdish sponsor in order to legally remain [in Chamchamal, Rania, Dukan, Piramagroon, Arbat-Tanjro, Bazyan, Barda Qaraman, and Hajiawa]. Following a security check, the Asayish issues them a so-called “Asayish Code”, which provides them also with access to basic services and the right to work. Although persons of Arab origin seeking to reside in Sulaymaniyah district (including Sulaymaniyah City) do not require a Kurdish sponsor in order to legally remain in the area, they are, in practice, often not issued an “Asayish Code”. Instead, they only obtain short-term extensions of their “tourist pass”. Unlike those with an “Asayish Code”, persons holding a “tourist pass” do not have access to education, are not allowed to work, cannot open a local bank account, and face difficulties with renting accommodation given their uncertain legal status’ ⁽²⁹⁰⁾.

3.5 Central-northern governorates

Please refer to [Section 3.2](#) for additional information on requirements and Kirkuk.

3.5.1 Anbar, Salah al Din, Diyala, Ninewa

IOM found that on return patterns as of June 2018 ‘the largest return population is found in Ninewa governorate (1.4 million; mainly Mosul, Tel-Afar and Al-Hamdaniya districts), followed by Anbar governorate with 1.2 million returnees (Fallujah and Ramadi districts), and Salah al-Din governorate, with over 534 000 returnees. Of the more than 3.8 million returnees, more than 3.7 million have returned to their areas and pre-displacement residence’. In the first half of 2018, 590 000 Iraqis returned home, showing a slowing pace of return with those remaining IDPs facing ‘significant difficulty’ ⁽²⁹¹⁾. DIS/Landinfo remarked in November 2018 that according to sources, ‘on the whole, voluntary return of IDPs to liberated areas is happening and ongoing’ though also noting that about 10% or less of IDPs are reportedly willing to return at this point, depending on the governorate of origin, showing a slowing pace of return ⁽²⁹²⁾.

Returning populations to those areas have been exposed to unexploded ordinances, mines and booby-trapping, as well as ‘complex administrative processes and new local dynamics’ ⁽²⁹³⁾. Sources in June 2018 reported that IDPs reluctant to return to liberated areas cited limited services provision, few livelihood opportunities, and insecurity as the main factors ⁽²⁹⁴⁾. Widespread destruction and contamination with war remnants are a major obstacle to return to former ISIL areas; basic services were also severely lacking in liberated areas of Iraq where infrastructure is destroyed, food and water is lacking, and civil administrations have differing levels of functionality, there is a lack of educational services, and social safety nets for particularly vulnerable groups are not functioning, causing many people, especially disabled people and widows, to remain in

⁽²⁹⁰⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons Originating from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 8-9.

⁽²⁹¹⁾ IOM, Returns Continue While Obstacles to Return Remain in Iraq, June 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁹²⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 26

⁽²⁹³⁾ IDMC/NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018, May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 22.

⁽²⁹⁴⁾ IOM, Returns Continue While Obstacles to Return Remain in Iraq, June 2018 ([url](#)); UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin – Iraq (June 2018), 18 July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 1.

poverty⁽²⁹⁵⁾. According to UNAMI, reporting in July 2018, women, children, people with disabilities, the elderly, and members of Iraq's ethno-religious communities were 'particularly vulnerable' in displacement situations and in need of 'urgent support and assistance'⁽²⁹⁶⁾. UNAMI noted that many members of minority communities remain displaced⁽²⁹⁷⁾. IOM stated to DIS/Landinfo in November 2018 that it does not recommend returns to Ninewa, Anbar, Salah al-Din and Diyala⁽²⁹⁸⁾.

There were reports of smaller scale new displacement of families who returned to their area of origin but were displaced again due to intercommunal violence, fear of retaliation due to perceived ISIL links, and lack of access to livelihoods and services⁽²⁹⁹⁾. Property conflicts in liberated areas have created significant conflicts where houses have been sold off or returnees fear being thrown out upon return⁽³⁰⁰⁾. UNAMI reported in July 2018 that attacks on families of ISIL suspects continued and property was destroyed with the aim of forcing them to leave the area or prevent their return and this occurred particularly in Anbar and Salah al-Din⁽³⁰¹⁾. In a 2016 example, the Salah al-Din governorate council reportedly decreed that individuals found to be complicit or affiliated with ISIL 'had no right of return' to the area and that immediate relatives of ISIL members were subject to a ban of 10 years to life, being able to return only if 'they are deemed "safe"'⁽³⁰²⁾. In another example, the local leaders and security forces in the district of al-Ba'aj in Ninewa province also issued an order in February 2018 stating that male ISIL members were not allowed to return⁽³⁰³⁾. UNHCR reported in September 2018 that tribal leaders, security forces, and communities 'continue to impede or deny permission to families with perceived links to extremists to return to areas of origin in Anbar, Kirkuk, and Ninewa' and reported on instances in Salah al-Din and also in Baghdad⁽³⁰⁴⁾. Between October 2017 and August 2018, Iraqi authorities evicted more than 6 300 households (about 37 800 people) from formal camps and informal settlements in Anbar, Baghdad, and Salah al-Din⁽³⁰⁵⁾.

In an effort to support the safe return of families, the Iraqi government has created and operationalised four out of five Governorate Returns Committees (GRCs). These committees, which are operating in Anbar, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din and partly in Ninewa, are made up of NGOs, officials, and the UN to facilitate the closure of camps and dignified returns of displaced people⁽³⁰⁶⁾. Camp closure decisions continue to occur outside this framework⁽³⁰⁷⁾.

Other examples of reports of forced evictions and bans on returns from 2018 include:

- In September 2018, UNHCR reported incidents of evictions threats and forced relocations in Anbar, Baghdad and Salah al-Din⁽³⁰⁸⁾.

⁽²⁹⁵⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 29-30.

⁽²⁹⁶⁾ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – July to December 2017, 8 July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽²⁹⁷⁾ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – January to June 2017, 14 December 2017 ([url](#)), p. 15.

⁽²⁹⁸⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 39.

⁽²⁹⁹⁾ UNICEF, Iraq – Humanitarian Situation Report (Mid-year 2018), 30 June 2018 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽³⁰⁰⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 30.

⁽³⁰¹⁾ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – July to December 2017, 8 July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3.

⁽³⁰²⁾ HRW, Iraq: Displacement, Detention of Suspected "ISIS Families", 5 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁰³⁾ HRW, Iraq: Local Forces Banish ISIS Suspects' Families, 26 April 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁰⁴⁾ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update – September 2018, 30 September 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 2-4.

⁽³⁰⁵⁾ USAID, Iraq – Complex Emergency Factsheet # 10, Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, 30 September 2018 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽³⁰⁶⁾ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin – Iraq (June 2018), 18 July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽³⁰⁷⁾ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update – September 2018, 30 September 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3.

⁽³⁰⁸⁾ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update – September 2018, 30 September 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 2-4.

- In August 2018, UNHCR reported several incidents of police in Salah al-Din confiscating documents and informing IDPs they had to leave and return to their areas of origin, affecting 58 families in the Al Diorn complex of Tikrit and 36 families in the passport building; they also seized documents of 270 families from Shirwat, Jazerat, Sammara, Jazerate Tikrit, Yathrub, and Jurf al-Sahker and said all IDPs in the Dream City complex had to leave except for 500 from Baiji and Al Saniya ⁽³⁰⁹⁾.
- In July 2018, UNHCR reported on incidents of denial of returns continuing to occur in Anbar, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din; these included evictions of 112 IDP families from an informal settlement in Tikrit, and 20 families with alleged extremist links in the village of Al-Ramadhaniyah ⁽³¹⁰⁾.
- Also in July 2018, 18 000 displaced household were put at risk of eviction when a Salah al Din court gave permission to repossess a complex where the IDPs were sheltering ⁽³¹¹⁾. Local authorities were reportedly permitting households to go back to their area of origin, relocate to IDP camps, or pay rent in Tikrit ⁽³¹²⁾.
- Threats of forced eviction in Salah al-Din were reported in several camps and informal settlements in May-July 2018, such as against 150 IDP families in Shirwat in May-July 2018 ⁽³¹³⁾.
- In Anbar province, a group of displaced families were prevented from returning to their homes in 2018 by Iraqi army forces at checkpoints, which Human Rights Watch attributed to their Sa'ade tribal affiliation and perceived link to ISIL ⁽³¹⁴⁾. The families were reportedly permitted to return home in June 2018 ⁽³¹⁵⁾.
- Human Rights Watch reported that it has documented 'many similar incidents' whereby security and tribal leaders have prevented the return of 50 families to western Anbar in May 2018, creating a secondary displacement situation ⁽³¹⁶⁾.
- In April 2018, Salah al-Din Operations Command gave permission to 17 families to leave Al Shahama camp to return to their areas of origin with sponsorship, or to relocate to Al Karamah IDP camp ⁽³¹⁷⁾.
- In April 2018, Human Rights Watch reported on expropriations of property belonging to alleged ISIL-affiliated people in Mosul; such expropriations of ISIL-members' property is reportedly permitted under the counter-terrorism law ⁽³¹⁸⁾.
- In January 2018, 235 suspected ISIL families from the Hawija area were forcibly displaced into camps and had their homes destroyed by PMF forces ⁽³¹⁹⁾.

Some examples of forced evictions, threats and blocked returns from 2017 ⁽³²⁰⁾ that have been documented include:

- UNAMI documented instances in October 2017 where ISF told ISIL family members to leave Heet city (Anbar) within 72 hours, with several houses being destroyed

⁽³⁰⁹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update – August 2018, 31 August 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3.

⁽³¹⁰⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Monthly Protection Update 28 May – 1 July 2018, 1 July 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹¹⁾ USAID, Iraq – Complex Emergency: Fact Sheet #9, Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, 20 July 2018, ([url](#)), p.2; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin – Iraq (May 2018), 11 June 2018 ([url](#)),

⁽³¹²⁾ USAID, Iraq – Complex Emergency: Fact Sheet #9, Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, 20 July 2018, ([url](#)), p.2; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin – Iraq (May 2018), 11 June 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹³⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Monthly Protection Update 28 May - 1 July 2018, 1 July 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁴⁾ HRW, Iraq: Displaced Families Blocked from Returning, 24 June 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁵⁾ HRW, Iraqi Authorities Finally Allow Group of Families to Return Home to Anbar, 30 June 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁶⁾ HRW, Iraq: Displaced Families Blocked from Returning, 24 June 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁷⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Bi-weekly Protection Update 5-16 April 2018, 16 April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽³¹⁸⁾ HRW, Iraq: ISIS Suspects' Homes Confiscated, 19 April 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁹⁾ HRW, Families with ISIS Relatives Forced into Camps, 4 February 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³²⁰⁾ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – January to June 2017, 14 December 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

afterwards ⁽³²¹⁾. In Tikrit (Salah al-Din), at least 20 houses of such families, located across three villages in Shirqat, were reportedly blown up in November 2017 ⁽³²²⁾.

- 125 families were forcibly displaced and had their homes destroyed by PMF forces in Salah al-Din in March 2017 ⁽³²³⁾.
- In the final months of 2017, the Norwegian Refugee Council's first hand study on returns in Anbar found a sharp increase in forced and threats of eviction, mainly against people in camps. They found that 8 700 individuals from 3 Anbar camps were forcibly returned to their area of origin during the last 6 weeks of 2017, despite safety concerns ⁽³²⁴⁾. In January 2018, Reuters also reported on alleged ISF forced returns of 2 400-5 000 IDPs living in Amriyat al Falluja (AAF) camp back to their place of origin in Anbar between November 2017 and January 2018 amid safety concerns in the area due to booby traps and vigilantism ⁽³²⁵⁾.
- NRC's 2018 report on returns in Anbar noted that 16 % of IDPs in two camps studied were blocked from leaving camps, blocked from returning home by security forces at checkpoints, or stopped by community members ⁽³²⁶⁾.

According to DIS/Landinfo, reporting in November 2018, they did not record forceful returns from the KRI to liberated areas of Iraq recently. In 2017, after the independence referendum in 2017, 100 Arab Sunnis were evicted from camps in Debaga outside Makhmour in Erbil governorate. Also in 2017, 46 Arab IDPs considered a security threat were asked to leave KRI, but were allowed to relocate to Sulaymaniyah after the intervention of humanitarian actors. The same source reported that KRG exerts less coercion on IDPs than local authorities in other areas of Iraq, but did note an increase in KRG pressure on IDPs to return to their areas of origin ahead of elections in September 2018. Some IDPs reported problems renewing their registration in KRI ⁽³²⁷⁾.

The KRG reportedly prevented a significant number of Arab Sunni IDPs from returning to villages in the disputed territories ⁽³²⁸⁾.

Also, attempts to prevent Arab Sunni IDPs returning to Sinjar and reports of prevention of Christian return to Sinjar in 2017-2018 by the KRG was reported by sources to the DIS/Landinfo ⁽³²⁹⁾.

⁽³²¹⁾ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – July to December 2017, 8 July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3.

⁽³²²⁾ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – July to December 2017, 8 July 2018 ([url](#)), p. 3.

⁽³²³⁾ HRW, Iraq: Displacement, Detention of Suspected "ISIS Families", 5 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³²⁴⁾ NRC, DRC and IRC, The Long Road Home - Achieving Durable Solutions to Displacement in Iraq: Lessons from Returns in Anbar, ([url](#)), p. 20.

⁽³²⁵⁾ Reuters, Iraq returning displaced civilians from camps to unsafe areas, 7 January 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³²⁶⁾ NRC, DRC and IRC, The Long Road Home - Achieving Durable Solutions to Displacement in Iraq: Lessons from Returns in Anbar, ([url](#)), p. 21.

⁽³²⁷⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 33-34.

⁽³²⁸⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 32-33.

⁽³²⁹⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), November 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 32-33.

4. Mobility issues for certain groups

4.1 IDPs with ISIL links or perceived affiliation

Please refer to [Section 3.2](#) and governorate chapters for additional information.

Sources report that in 2017, local officials forcibly displaced ‘hundreds’ of families with suspected links to ISIL in Anbar, Babel, Diyala, Salah al Din, and Ninewa ⁽³³⁰⁾. UNHCR reported on cases of families with suspected ISIL links being banned from returning by local tribes or their own tribes ⁽³³¹⁾. Please refer to the governorate level chapters for more information.

According to a 2016 workshop with civil society about displacement in KRI facilitated by Chatham House, ‘the need for relevant documentation was identified as a critical impediment to the ability of IDPs to be mobile and receive services, particularly when moving between areas administered by different authorities’, and that sometimes political reasons prevent IDPs from returning to area where they could live ⁽³³²⁾. AI reported on cases of families living in IDP camps originating from former ISIL-held areas and perceived to have ISIL links who have had ISIL-issued civil documents invalidated, have themselves disposed of any civil documentation due to fear of being affiliated with ISIL, or have had documents taken away from them by camp staff ⁽³³³⁾. According to a 2017-2018 AI study on displaced families, those with perceived ties to IS have been prevented from accessing or replacing identity documents and other civil documentation such as ID cards ⁽³³⁴⁾.

Sources indicate that immediate relatives of suspected IS members are ‘routinely denied’ security clearance by Iraqi forces ⁽³³⁵⁾, described by Human Rights Watch as a *de facto* ban on receiving civil documentation ⁽³³⁶⁾. Security clearances are reportedly required to obtain civil identity documents such as ID cards, birth/marriage/death certificates, welfare cards and passports ⁽³³⁷⁾. According to AI, such displaced families inside camps encounter lengthy delays or are frequently blocked from obtaining new ID by government authorities or the security forces because of background checked on IS ‘wanted lists’ leading to the likely denial of their ID application ⁽³³⁸⁾. UNHCR similarly reported such instances during 2017-2018, for example, 140 individuals in Salah al Din’s Al-Alam IDP camp were denied civil documents due to suspected involvement with ISIL ⁽³³⁹⁾. Individuals with names similar to names of wanted suspects have also been denied IDs ⁽³⁴⁰⁾.

According to sources, families with perceived ISIL links who live in IDP camps face ‘severe restrictions’ on their freedom of movement ⁽³⁴¹⁾. AI stated that IDP families with suspected ISIL links are in ‘de facto detention’ because they are prevented from leaving camps, or are unable to cross checkpoints outside camps due to lack of ID cards or fear of arrest ⁽³⁴²⁾. NRC also documented

⁽³³⁰⁾ HRW, World Report 2018 – Iraq, 9 January 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³³¹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Bi-weekly Protection Update 5-16 April 2018, 16 April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 1-2.

⁽³³²⁾ Chatham House, Internal Displacement in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Impact, Response and Options 16-18 May 2016, 1 July 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 5-6.

⁽³³³⁾ AI, The Condemned: Women and Children Isolated, Trapped and Exploited in Iraq, April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 22.

⁽³³⁴⁾ AI, The Condemned: Women and Children Isolated, Trapped and Exploited in Iraq, April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 22.

⁽³³⁵⁾ Human Rights Watch, Iraq: Families of Alleged ISIS Members Denied IDs, 25 February 2018, ([url](#)).

⁽³³⁶⁾ Human Rights Watch, Iraq: Families of Alleged ISIS Members Denied IDs, 25 February 2018, ([url](#)).

⁽³³⁷⁾ Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post-ISIS, May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 9; Human Rights Watch, Iraq: Families of Alleged ISIS Members Denied IDs, 25 February 2018, ([url](#)); HRW, Iraq: ISIS Suspects’ Homes Confiscated, 19 April 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³³⁸⁾ AI, The Condemned: Women and Children Isolated, Trapped and Exploited in Iraq, April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 22-23.

⁽³³⁹⁾ USAID, Iraq – Complex Emergency: Fact Sheet #8, Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, 8 June 2018 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽³⁴⁰⁾ USAID, Iraq – Complex Emergency: Fact Sheet #8, Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, 8 June 2018 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽³⁴¹⁾ UNHCR, Iraq: Bi-weekly Protection Update 5-16 April 2018, 16 April 2018 ([url](#)); AI, The Condemned: Women and Children Isolated, Trapped and Exploited in Iraq, April 2018 ([url](#)), pp. 24-26.

⁽³⁴²⁾ AI, The Condemned: Women and Children Isolated, Trapped and Exploited in Iraq, April 2018, ([url](#)), pp. 24-26.

restrictions on IDP camp residents who needed security passes (*Kasassa*) to leave 3 camps in Anbar that they studied ⁽³⁴³⁾. A report by the Independent newspaper similarly reported that according to NRC, an international organisation that works with displaced people to replace lost documentation, families without proper documentation have been prevented from leaving IDP camps to return home ⁽³⁴⁴⁾. Furthermore, security clearances are needed for those IDPs who wish to return to their areas of origin and there have been reports that such clearances have been denied, or, that displaced people have been stopped from returning by local authorities on suspicion of being ISIL supporters after receiving a clearance ⁽³⁴⁵⁾.

Information on civil documentation can be found in [Section 2.4](#).

4.2 Children born under ISIL who lack civil documentation

Sources estimate hundreds or thousands of children born under ISIL rule or to foreign fathers and were not registered at birth and lack civil documentation ⁽³⁴⁶⁾. Under Iraqi law, in order to issue a birth certificate both a child's parents' identity must be confirmed ⁽³⁴⁷⁾. Birth certificates are necessary to obtain a national civil status ID card and citizenship certificate ⁽³⁴⁸⁾. Children born to foreign fighters and children whose paternity cannot be confirmed, such as those who were born under ISIS who lack documentation, those who have IS-issued documentation, who were born to women whose husbands are dead or missing, face the risk of growing up without civil identification ⁽³⁴⁹⁾ or risk being stateless because conferring nationality requires a birth certificate ⁽³⁵⁰⁾. Without access to documentation, children are unable to enrol in school ⁽³⁵¹⁾. Civil documentation is needed as described in [Section 2.3](#) and [Section 2.4.1](#)

4.3 Women

Freedom of movement for women is generally not respected by law or custom ⁽³⁵²⁾, on cultural grounds and at times, reinforced by religious norms ⁽³⁵³⁾. According to a workshop on displacement in the KRI, for women without male family members, such as widows or female-headed

⁽³⁴³⁾ NRC, DRC and IRC, *The Long Road Home - Achieving Durable Solutions to Displacement in Iraq: Lessons from Returns in Anbar*, ([url](#)), p. 18.

⁽³⁴⁴⁾ Independent, Iraq's generation of stateless ISIS children are being 'punished for the crimes of their fathers', 18 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁴⁵⁾ Human Rights Watch, *Iraq: Displaced Families Blocked from Returning*, 24 June 2018 ([url](#));

⁽³⁴⁶⁾ Independent, Iraq's generation of stateless ISIS children are being 'punished for the crimes of their fathers', 18 May 2017 ([url](#)); Reuters, *Iraq's children of the caliphate face stateless future*, 15 November 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁴⁷⁾ Independent, Iraq's generation of stateless ISIS children are being 'punished for the crimes of their fathers', 18 May 2017 ([url](#));

⁽³⁴⁸⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

⁽³⁴⁹⁾ MRG, *Humanitarian challenges in Iraq's displacement crisis*, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), p. 52; Independent, Iraq's generation of stateless ISIS children are being 'punished for the crimes of their fathers', 18 May 2017 ([url](#));

⁽³⁵⁰⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), *Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)*, November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 31; Independent, Iraq's generation of stateless ISIS children are being 'punished for the crimes of their fathers', 18 May 2017 ([url](#)); Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, *Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post-ISIS*, May 2018 ([url](#)); Human Rights Watch, *Children of the Caliphate* ([url](#)); Niqash, *Extremist Fighters' Children Live in Stateless Limbo in Iraq*, 12 May 2016 ([url](#)); Human Rights Watch, *Iraq: Displaced Families Blocked from Returning*, 24 June 2018 ([url](#)); Human Rights Watch, *Iraq: Families of Alleged ISIS Members Denied IDs*, 25 February 2018, ([url](#)).

⁽³⁵¹⁾ Denmark, DIS (Danish Immigration Service) and Norway (Landinfo), *Northern Iraq – Security Situation and the Situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Disputed Areas, Including the Possibility to Enter and Access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)*, November 2018 ([url](#)), p. 39; Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, *Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post-ISIS*, May 2018 ([url](#)), p. 9.

⁽³⁵²⁾ USDOS, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq*, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 4.

⁽³⁵³⁾ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 10 October 2018.

households, it ‘may lead to deprivation of income, social protection and support (from extended family and neighbours)’ ⁽³⁵⁴⁾. IOM found that the lack of money was among the main obstacles to return cited by female-headed and minor-female-headed households in its 2017 study on return patterns ⁽³⁵⁵⁾.

Women cannot obtain civil status documentation without the consent of a male relative ⁽³⁵⁶⁾. Women whose husbands are dead or missing and who cannot obtain identity documents for themselves may be unable to receive humanitarian aid or government services because ID documents necessary to receive aid are issued under the name of the male head of household ⁽³⁵⁷⁾ or because they cannot provide documents confirming the deaths of their male guardians ⁽³⁵⁸⁾. UNICEF stated that although there is a legal framework in place to allow children born of sexual violence in Iraq’s conflict to obtain identity documents, ‘in practice obtaining such documents is exceptionally difficult and requires women to publicly expose what they have survived – experiences that their families, culture, tribe and religion consider to be deeply shameful’ ⁽³⁵⁹⁾. MRG stated that Female IDPs have also reportedly found it especially difficult to reacquire documentation due to the need to travel to offices in areas that are ‘impossible to access’ ⁽³⁶⁰⁾. The MRG’s civilian rights officer explained that single women and widows, or women who have to travel alone without a male companion, are likely to face difficulty relocating and re-establishing themselves due to the dominant social norms that view men as the heads of the family and that a woman travelling alone would be seen with suspicion ⁽³⁶¹⁾. MRG commented in correspondence to EASO for this report that widows or divorced women would be particularly prone to being looked down upon or harassed ⁽³⁶²⁾. DFAT similarly noted that single people, but women and children in particular, without existing networks in the region of relocation, would have trouble relocating to the KRI and face similar official and societal discrimination as in other parts of Iraq ⁽³⁶³⁾.

The federal government does not permit civil society groups to run shelters and those few organisations that do so anyway are ‘targeted and stigmatized’, raided by police, or intimidated and threatened by a range of actors according to UNAMI ⁽³⁶⁴⁾. UNAMI reported that there are ‘some’ shelters in Kirkuk and one in Basrah. Also, they reported on a raid by an armed group in October 2017 on a Baghdad shelter; they demanded the release of a woman fleeing domestic violence ⁽³⁶⁵⁾. In the Kurdistan region, organisations are permitted to run shelters, though authorities have reportedly denied licenses to establish them under accusations of fostering prostitution ⁽³⁶⁶⁾.

⁽³⁵⁴⁾ Chatham House, Internal Displacement in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Impact, Response and Options 16-18 May 2016, 1 July 2017 ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽³⁵⁵⁾ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment II: Part I – Thematic Overview, October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽³⁵⁶⁾ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018 ([url](#)), p. 4.

⁽³⁵⁷⁾ Chatham House, Internal Displacement in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Impact, Response and Options 16-18 May 2016, 1 July 2017 ([url](#)), p. 5; Human Rights Watch, Iraq: Displaced Families Blocked from Returning, 24 June 2018 ([url](#)); Human Rights Watch, Iraq: Families of Alleged ISIS Members Denied IDs, 25 February 2018, ([url](#)); Puttick, M., Email to EASO, 3 August 2018.

⁽³⁵⁸⁾ Puttick, M., Email to EASO, 3 August 2018.

⁽³⁵⁹⁾ UNAMI, United Nations Calls for the protection of children born of sexual violence in conflict, 27 June 2018 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁶⁰⁾ MRG, Humanitarian challenges in Iraq’s displacement crisis, 22 December 2016 ([url](#)), p. 5, 9-11.

⁽³⁶¹⁾ Puttick, M., Email to EASO, 3 August 2018.

⁽³⁶²⁾ Puttick, M., Email to EASO, 3 August 2018.

⁽³⁶³⁾ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018 ([url](#)), p. 29.

⁽³⁶⁴⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on her mission to Iraq, 14 to 23 November 2017 (A/HRC/38/44/Add.1), 5 June 2018 ([url](#)), para. 43.

⁽³⁶⁵⁾ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – July to December 2017, 8 July 2018 ([url](#)), para. 5. 3.

⁽³⁶⁶⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on her mission to Iraq, 14 to 23 November 2017 (A/HRC/38/44/Add.1), 5 June 2018 ([url](#)), para. 43.

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Terms of Reference

The report should aim to focus on internal mobility issues in Iraq, mainly areas of Baghdad, KRI (with a focus on Erbil), and southern Iraq (with a focus on Basra).

- ☐ What are the main areas/regions that are relatively more accessible for those outside?
- ☐ Flights, roads, checkpoints, etc.: availability and safety of travel routes
- ☐ Are there any legal requirements for travelling to the area?
- ☐ Are there any legal/practical requirements for gaining admittance to the area?
- ☐ Are there any legal/practical requirements to settling permanently?
- ☐ Are there barriers faced by particular groups more than others?



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