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Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Iraq: Internal relocation, civil documentation and returns

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Preface

Purpose

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

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis of COI; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Analysis

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment on whether, **in general**:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- Claims are likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

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

Country of origin information

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

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

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the ‘cut-off’ date in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after this date is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion.

Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

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

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

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

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

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

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

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Analysis

Updated: 17 October 2018

1. Key considerations

1.1.1 Whether a person:

- (i) can, in general, reasonably relocate elsewhere in Iraq if they are unable to return to their registered place of origin; and
- (ii) is at risk of serious harm sufficient to breach Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) / Article 15(b) of the Qualification Directive as result of their lack of documentation; and
- (iii) can feasibly return to Iraq (they have the requisite travel documents).

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2. Consideration of Issues

2.1 Credibility

2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Convention reason

2.2.1 People who cannot relocate (and are not otherwise at real risk of serious harm or persecution due to a Convention reason), lack documentation or cannot feasibly return do not fall within the definition of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. This because their circumstances do not relate to actual or imputed political opinion, race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group (a 'Convention reason').

2.2.2 In the absence of a link to one of the five Convention reasons necessary for the grant of refugee status, the question to be addressed in each case will be whether the particular person will face a real risk of serious harm sufficient to qualify for Humanitarian Protection (HP).

2.2.3 For further guidance on Convention reasons and particular social groups, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.2.4 For information and analysis about particular categories of claims, see the [country policy information notes on Iraq](#).

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2.3 Exclusion

- 2.3.1 If it is accepted that the person has been involved in serious human rights abuses, decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must nevertheless be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.3.2 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.4 Legal context

- 2.4.1 The main Country Guidance case on Iraq is [AA \(Article 15\(c\)\) \(Rev 2\) \[2015\] UKUT 544 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 18-19 May and promulgated on 30 October 2015 (hereafter referred to as 'AA'). This was a wide-ranging case which replaced all previous Country Guidance on Iraq, making findings on returns, documentation, relocation and security issues (paragraph 204 (22)).
- 2.4.2 In June 2017, the Court of Appeal (CoA), in [AA \(Iraq\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2017\] EWCA Civ 944](#) ('AA 2017'), remade one specific point in [AA](#) (see [2.6.18](#)). The rest of AA's findings were undisturbed.
- 2.4.3 The other key Country Guidance case is [AAH \(Iraqi Kurds – internal relocation\) Iraq CG UKUT 212 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 27-28 February 2018 and promulgated on 26 June 2018 (hereafter referred to as 'AAH'), which supplemented Section C (about the Civil Status ID (CSID) – see [2.6.13](#)) and replaced Section E (about return and relocation to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) – see [2.5.10](#)) of the Country Guidance annexed to the CoA's decision in AA 2017.

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2.5 Internal relocation

a. Relocation in general

- 2.5.1 Where a person who is at risk of persecution or serious harm on return cannot relocate internally to escape that risk, a grant of asylum or Humanitarian Protection (HP) will be appropriate if they do not meet one of the exclusion clauses.
- 2.5.2 For general guidance on considering internal relocation, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.5.3 It is unreasonable for any person to relocate to any area of Iraq which meets the threshold of Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive. For analysis and information about areas in which conditions are likely to amount to a breach of 15(c) see the country policy and information note on [Iraq: Security and humanitarian situation](#).
- 2.5.4 For information and analysis about relocation with regard to particular categories of claims, see the [country policy information notes on Iraq](#).

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b. Relocation to Baghdad and the southern governorates

2.5.5 In [AA](#), the Upper Tribunal (UT) of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber (IAC) found:

‘As a general matter, it will not be unreasonable or unduly harsh for a person from a contested area [defined as Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewah, Salah al-Din and certain parts of the ‘Baghdad Belts’ (the urban environs surrounding the city), specifically the parts bordering Anbar, Diyala and Sala al-Din] to relocate to Baghdad City or....[certain parts of] the Baghdad Belts [not the parts described above]’ (paragraph 204 (14)).

2.5.6 See the country policy and information note on [Iraq: Security and humanitarian situation](#) for information and analysis on the security situation.

2.5.7 The UT in [AA](#) also observed that, when deciding upon internal relocation to Baghdad and the ‘Baghdad Belts’, decision makers should take into account whether a person:

- has a CSID or will be able to obtain one;
- can speak Arabic (those who cannot are less likely to find employment);
- has family members or friends able to accommodate them and provide them with assistance;
- is a lone female (women face greater difficulties than men in finding employment);
- can find a sponsor to access a hotel room or rent accommodation;
- is from a minority community;
- can access any other support bearing in mind there is some evidence that returned failed asylum seekers are provided with the support generally given to IDPs [Internally Displaced Persons] (paragraphs 197, 198, 202 and 204(15))

2.5.8 The UT in [AAH](#) found that there are two checkpoints ‘in the immediate vicinity’ of Baghdad International Airport (BGW) (para 135 (5)). See [2.5.12](#)

2.5.9 In assessing the reasonableness of relocation to the southern governorates (Basra, Kerbala, Najaf, Muthanna, Thi-Qar, Missan, Qadissiya and Wassit), decision makers must consider whether it is safe to journey from Baghdad to the south. The UT in [AA](#) found ‘There is not a real risk of an ordinary civilian travelling from Baghdad airport to the southern governorates, suffering serious harm en route to such governorates so as engage Article 15(c).’ (paragraph 204 (16)). See the country policy and information note on [Iraq: Security and humanitarian situation](#) for information and analysis about areas in which conditions are likely to amount to a breach of Article 15(c).

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c. Relocation to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

2.5.10 In general, Kurds who do not originate from the KRI can relocate to the region. Information suggests that ethnic Kurds are free to enter the KRI,

although some sources say this may depend on certain circumstances (see [Entry to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq \(KRI\) – Entry requirements](#)).

2.5.11 In [AAH](#) the UT found:

‘For [a person] ... in possession of a valid CSID or Iraqi passport, the journey from Baghdad to the IKR [Iraqi Kurdish Region – another name for the KRI], whether by air or land, is affordable and practical and can be made without a real risk of [the person] ... suffering persecution, serious harm, Article 3 ill treatment nor would any difficulties on the journey make relocation unduly harsh.’ (paragraph 135 (3))

2.5.12 The UT in [AAH](#) also found:

‘[A person] will face considerable difficulty in making the journey between Baghdad and the IKR by land without a CSID or valid passport. There are numerous checkpoints en route, including two checkpoints in the immediate vicinity of the airport. If [a person] ... has neither a CSID nor a valid passport there is a real risk of ... [a person] being detained at a checkpoint until such time as the security personnel are able to verify ... [a person’s] identity. It is not reasonable to require ... [a person] to travel between Baghdad and IKR by land absent the ability of ... [a person] to verify his identity at a checkpoint. This normally requires the attendance of a male family member and production of ... [a person’s] identity documents but may also be achieved by calling upon "connections" higher up in the chain of command.

‘Once at the IKR border (land or air [Erbil International Airport (EBL)/Sulamaniyah International Airport (ISU)] ... [a person] would normally be granted entry to the territory. Subject to security screening, and registering presence with the local mukhtar, ... [a person] would be permitted to enter and reside in the IKR with no further legal impediments or requirements. There is no sponsorship requirement for Kurds.

‘Whether ... [a person] would be at particular risk of ill-treatment during the security screening process must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Additional factors that may increase risk include: (i) coming from a family with a known association with ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, aka Daesh], (ii) coming from an area associated with ISIL and (iii) being a single male of fighting age. [A person] ... is likely to be able to evidence the fact of recent arrival from the UK, which would dispel any suggestion of having arrived directly from ISIL territory.’ (paragraph 135 (5-7))

2.5.13 A letter dated 5 September 2018 to the Home Office from the Iraqi Ambassador to the United Kingdom confirmed that ‘all the returnees’ papers are checked on arrival and they are received with courtesy at Baghdad International Airport [BGW] and may be provided with a certification letter.’ The Ambassador further confirmed that a laissez passer or ‘certification letter’ can be used to ‘continue their onward journey to their final destination in Iraq ... [including by] road ... which help them pass through other designated checkpoints.’ (see [Annex A](#))

2.5.14 Information about the ‘certification letter’ can be found in a letter from the Iraqi Embassy in London dated 2 October 2018 (see [Annex B](#)).

2.5.15 The UT in [AAH](#) also found:

‘Decision makers must therefore give careful consideration to the circumstances in each case. A returnee who has, for instance, friends or relatives in Baghdad with whom he could stay temporarily, and who is in a good position to make contact with documented male family members, has someone in position in his home area who could attend the civil registry for him and/or is already in possession of much of the material he would need to obtain a new CSID, it would not be unreasonable to expect him to remain in Baghdad until he has secured his papers. Conversely a returnee who has no connection with Baghdad, is entirely undocumented and whose family are not themselves in a position to assist could be facing potentially lengthy - and potentially repeated - periods of detention at various points between Baghdad airport and the IKR. We do not consider that this would be a ‘reasonable’ means to access the place of internal flight.’ (paragraph 116)

- 2.5.16 Decision makers must explore whether relocation to the KRI is an option for non-Kurds. A person’s ability to relocate to the KRI will depend on their circumstances (see [Entry to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq \(KRI\) – Entry requirements](#) and [Entry restrictions](#)).
- 2.5.17 The UT in [AAH](#) found that: ‘The only persons who are required to obtain a permit are Arabs, Turkmen and Christians’ (paragraph 121). Decision makers must consider each case on its facts.
- 2.5.18 Decision makers should consult the country policy and information note on [Iraq: Security and humanitarian situation](#) for information and analysis about the security and humanitarian conditions in the KRI region.

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2.6 Assessment of risk arising from a lack of documentation

a. General points

- 2.6.1 In deciding whether a person can avoid humanitarian conditions that may breach Article 3 of the ECHR it is critical to determine whether they can acquire (or reacquire) identity documentation.
- 2.6.2 If applicable, decision makers must read this section carefully to determine whether a person can obtain documentation (in particular, the Civil Status ID (CSID)). Decision makers should note that obtaining Iraqi civil and travel documentation can be complex and circular. For example, to obtain a passport a person needs a CSID, but they can also use a passport in support of an application for a CSID.
- 2.6.3 In a letter dated 5 September 2018, the Iraqi Ambassador to the UK noted that ‘most’ returnees ‘may be in possession of copies of their National IDs which may have not been disclosed previously.’ (see [Annex A](#))
- 2.6.4 The onus is on the person to show why they cannot reasonably obtain necessary documentation.

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b. The Civil Status ID card (CSID)

- 2.6.5 The CSID is the key document to enable a person to access services such as financial assistance, employment, education, housing and medical

treatment. It is also a gateway to obtaining other documents (see [Civil Status ID Card \(CSID\)](#)).

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c. Obtaining a CSID in the UK

2.6.6 The UT in [AA](#) found:

‘...that it is possible for an Iraq national living in the UK to obtain a CSID through the consular section of the Iraqi Embassy in London, if such a person is able to produce a current or expired passport and/or the book and page number for their family registration details. For persons without a passport, or who are unable to produce the relevant family registration details, a power of attorney can be provided to someone in Iraq who can thereafter undertake the process of obtaining the CSID for such person from the Civil Status Affairs Office in their home governorate.’ (paragraph 177)

2.6.7 Information from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in May 2016 suggests that a power of attorney cannot be provided to representatives of IDPs in Baghdad and that such a person will need to present themselves in person to re-obtain their CSID (see [Redocumentation – Assistance](#)).

2.6.8 The UT in [AA](#) also found that ‘the process of obtaining a CSID from Iraq is likely to be severely hampered if the person wishing to obtain the CSID is from an area where Article 15(c) serious harm is occurring.’ (paragraph 177)

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d. Obtaining a CSID in Iraq

2.6.9 The UT in [AA](#) found:

‘Where return is feasible [see [2.7.7](#)] but ... [a person] does not have a CSID, [a person] ... should as a general matter be able to obtain one from the Civil Status Affairs Office for ... [a person’s] home Governorate, using an Iraqi passport (whether current or expired), if ... [a person] has one. If ... [a person] does not have such a passport, [a person’s] ... ability to obtain a CSID may depend on whether ... [the person’s] knows the page and volume number of the book holding ... [the person’s] information (and that of ... [the person’s] family). [A person’s] ... ability to persuade the officials that ... [the person] is the person named on the relevant page is likely to depend on whether ... [the person] has family members or other individuals who are prepared to vouch for ... [the person].’ (paragraph 204 (12))

2.6.10 Information from the UNHCR in May 2016 suggests that there are various documents needed to re-obtain a CSID (see [Redocumentation – Civil Status ID \(CSID\)](#)).

2.6.11 The UN’s Protection, Assistance and Reintegration Centres (PARC) may be able to assist with redocumentation (see [Redocumentation – Assistance](#)).

2.6.12 The UT in [AA](#) found:

‘[A person’s] ... ability to obtain a CSID is likely to be severely hampered if ... [the person] is unable to go to the Civil Status Affairs Office of ... [the person’s] Governorate because it is in an area where Article 15(c) serious

harm is occurring. As a result of the violence, alternative CSA Offices for Mosul, Anbar and Saluhaddin have been established in Baghdad. The evidence does not demonstrate that the "Central Archive", which exists in Baghdad, is in practice able to provide CSIDs to those in need of them. There is, however, a National Status Court in Baghdad, to which ... [the person] could apply for formal recognition of identity. The precise operation of this court is, however, unclear.' (paragraph 204 (13))

2.6.13 Further information from the UNHCR in May 2016 suggests that alternative CSA offices for certain parts of Ninewah have been set up elsewhere in Iraq, including in Dohuk, Kerbala and Najaf (see [Re-documentation – Assistance](#)).

2.6.14 The UT in [AAH](#) supplemented Section C of the Country Guidance annexed to the CoA's decision in AA 2017 with the following guidance:

'Whilst it remains possible for an Iraqi national returnee (P) to obtain a new CSID whether ... [a person] is able to do so, or do so within a reasonable time frame, will depend on the individual circumstances. Factors to be considered include:

- i) Whether ... [a person] has any other form of documentation, or information about the location of his entry in the civil register. An INC [Iraqi Nationality Certificate], passport, birth/marriage certificates or an expired CSID would all be of substantial assistance. For someone in possession of one or more of these documents the process should be straightforward. A laissez-passer should not be counted for these purposes: these can be issued without any other form of ID being available, are not of any assistance in 'tracing back' to the family record and are confiscated upon arrival at Baghdad;
- ii) The location of the relevant civil registry office. If it is in an area held, or formerly held, by ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant aka ISIS aka Daesh], is it operational?
- iii) Are there male family members who would be able and willing to attend the civil registry with ... [the person]? Because the registration system is patrilineal it will be relevant to consider whether the relative is from the mother or father's side. A maternal uncle in possession of his CSID would be able to assist in locating the original place of registration of the individual's mother, and from there the trail would need to be followed to the place that her records were transferred upon marriage. It must also be borne in mind that a significant number of IDPs in Iraq are themselves undocumented; if that is the case it is unlikely that they could be of assistance. A woman without a male relative to assist with the process of redocumentation would face very significant obstacles in that officials may refuse to deal with her case at all.' (paragraph 135 (1))

2.6.15 In September 2018, the Iraqi Ambassador to the United Kingdom confirmed that 'all the Civil Status Records are preserved and held digitally by each Governorate Directorate of Civil Status Affairs and are accessible to assist in determining a returnee's identity with reference to the register and page.' (see [Annex A](#)).

2.6.16 In [AA](#), the UT found: 'The evidence does not demonstrate that the "Central Archive", which exists in Baghdad, is in practice able to provide CSIDs to those in need of them. There is, however, a National Status Court in Baghdad, to which [a person] ... could apply for formal recognition of identity. The precise operation of this court is, however, unclear.' (paragraph 204 (13)). However, in October 2018, the Iraqi Embassy noted that 'there is a central register back up in Baghdad that includes all the civil records of all the provenances [sic] in the event of any form of damages or destruction. This civil registration backup (Microfilm) covers all records from 1957.' (see [Annex B](#))

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e. Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC)

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

2.6.18 For information on how to obtain (or re-obtain) an INC, see [Redocumentation – Iraqi Nationality Certificate \(INC\)](#).

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f. Iraqi National ID Card (INID)

2.6.19 The Iraqi National ID Card (INID) replaces the INC and the CSID. However, old IDs are still accepted and the INIC is only implemented, so far, in the cities (not the suburbs) of the KRI. If applicable, decision makers must carefully consider whether a person can obtain this document (see [Iraqi National ID Card \(INID\)](#)).

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g. Where a person is unable to obtain a CSID

2.6.20 A person who is unable to:

- a. replace their CSID; and
- b. obtain support from family members or others

is likely to face significant difficulties in accessing services and humanitarian conditions which are likely to result in destitution sufficient to amount to a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR / Article 15(b) of the QD. In these circumstances a grant of Humanitarian Protection (HP) will be appropriate.

2.6.21 In [AA](#), the UT found that the assessment of whether a person would be at risk of destitution because of a lack of a CSID should **only** be made if return was feasible. However, this position was reversed by the [Court of Appeal \(CoA\) in June 2017](#) (Annex: C 9). Decision makers **must** now assess the

risk arising from a lack of a CSID **regardless** of ‘feasibility of return’ (whether a person can be returned or not).

2.6.22 If a person is

- unable to obtain a passport or a laissez-passer (i.e. their return is not feasible)
- unable to obtain documents, including a CSID, **and**
- claiming they are at real risk of destitution based on their lack of documents

then a person has not established a need for protection and decision makers should consider the [Discretionary Leave \(DL\) policy](#) and, if appropriate, grant a person leave in accordance with this policy, pending future reviews of their ability to feasibly return to Iraq. These are very specific circumstances. Decision makers must explore whether a person can reasonably obtain a travel document before they find that a person’s return is not feasible.

2.6.23 A person in the above circumstances has not established a need for protection because there is a relationship between feasibility of return and risk arising from a lack of documents: once a person obtains a passport then this will have a positive impact on their ability to obtain a CSID.

2.6.24 A person who **can** be feasibly returned, and is at real risk of destitution because of a lack of documents, should be granted HP. It should be noted that this is the case for whatever reason the person’s return becomes feasible. However, it is likely that a person whose return is feasible will be able to obtain a CSID. This is because a passport is a route to an CSID. Alternatively, if a person is returned on a LP they may already possess a CSID because the CSID is a route to an LP (see [2.7.11](#))

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2.7 Return

c. Place of return

2.7.1 The UT in [AA](#) found: ‘Return of former residents of the Iraqi Kurdish Region (IKR) will be to the IKR and all other Iraqis will be to Baghdad.’ (paragraph 204(5))

2.7.2 The UT in [AAH](#) found that: ‘There are currently no international flights to the Iraqi Kurdish Region (IKR). All returns from the United Kingdom are to Baghdad.’ (paragraph 135 (2)). However, the Government of Iraq has now lifted the ban on international flights to the Kurdistan region (see [Returns to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq \(KRI\)](#)).

2.7.3 The UT in [AAH](#) found: ‘[A person] ... is unable to board a domestic flight between Baghdad and the IKR without either a CSID or a valid passport.’ (paragraph 135 (4)).

2.7.4 The Court of Appeal (CoA) in [SG \(Iraq\) \[2012\] EWCA Civ 940](#) found that ‘decision makers and tribunal judges are required to take country guidance determinations into account, and to follow them unless very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence are adduced justifying their not doing so. To do otherwise will amount to an error of law.’ (paragraph 47).

- 2.7.5 In a letter dated 5 September 2018, the Iraqi Ambassador to the United Kingdom confirmed that a laissez passer or a 'certification letter' can be used to board a domestic flight at Baghdad International Airport (BGW) (see [Annex A](#)). The Home Office believes that as this is official confirmation relating to airport procedures this evidence amounts to very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to depart from AAH's finding explained at paragraph 135(4) (section 2.7.3 above).
- 2.7.6 A letter from the Iraqi Embassy dated 2 October 2018 confirmed that the 'same procedures are applied to all the returnees onward travel from Baghdad to KRG [Kurdistan Regional Government] or any city in Iraq' and that: 'Representatives from the repatriation committee would be available at Baghdad International Airport and ready to receive a returnee' (see [Annex B](#)).
- 2.7.7 Previously the KRG authorities had responsibility for immigration; this is now centralised with the authorities in Baghdad deciding on immigration matters for the whole of Iraq. Former residents of the KRI who do not return voluntarily are returned to Baghdad, from where they will travel to their destination. Those who are prepared to obtain a travel document can return to the KRI voluntarily, to either Erbil or Sulamaniyah, without having to transit Baghdad.

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b. Travel documents

- 2.7.8 The UT in [AA](#) found: 'The Iraqi authorities will allow an Iraqi national (P) in the United Kingdom to enter Iraq only ... [the person] is in possession of a current or expired Iraqi passport relating to ... [the person], or a laissez passer' (paragraph 204 (5)) and that: 'No Iraqi national will be returnable to Baghdad if not in possession of one of these documents.' (para 204(6))
- 2.7.9 The passport and laissez passer are travel documents and they should not be confused with civil documentation such as the Civil Status ID card (CSID), which enables access to services (although there is a relationship between the two types of documents). If a person has a passport or laissez-passer then return is **feasible**.
- 2.7.10 The UT in [AA](#) found: 'Where ... [the person] is returned to Iraq on a laissez passer or expired passport, ... [the person] will be at no risk of serious harm at the point of return by reason of not having a current passport or other current form of Iraqi identification document.' (paragraph 204 (10))
- 2.7.11 If a person does not have a current or expired passport, or a laissez-passer, then return is not feasible. This is a technical obstacle to return, and not a reason itself to grant a person leave.
- 2.7.12 The central Iraqi authorities state that to obtain a passport, a person (who is 18 or over) needs to go to an Iraqi consulate and present:
- a Civil Status ID (CSID) and
 - an Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC) and

- a Residency card (for those outside Iraq) (see [Redocumentation – Passport](#))
- 2.7.13 An application for a laissez-passer is considered on a case-by-case basis by the Iraqi Embassy in London. The applicant needs to produce:
- a Civil Status ID (CSID) or
 - an Iraqi Nationality Card (INC) or
 - a photocopy of a previous passport and a report confirming that the passport had been lost or stolen (paragraph 170 of [AA](#))
- 2.7.14 Iraqi Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) who have served time in the United Kingdom can be issued with a laissez-passer when enrolled onto an interview and documentation scheme run by the Home Office in conjunction with the Iraqi Embassy. See [Country Returns guide: July 2018](#)
- 2.7.15 The onus is on the person to provide documentary evidence to substantiate their claim that they are unable to obtain the necessary documentation, for example by a letter from the Iraqi Embassy confirming what was submitted by the person to verify their identity but that their identity and/or documentation could not be confirmed or issued.

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2.8 Certification

- 2.8.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.8.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country Information

Updated: 17 October 2018

3. Evidence in Country Guidance cases

- 3.1.1 Read the Determination and the Annexes for further information about the evidence used in the Country Guidance cases of [AA \(Article 15\(c\)\) \(Rev 2\) \[2015\] UKUT 544 \(IAC\)](#), [\[2017\] EWCA Civ 944](#), [\[2017\] WLR \(D\) 466](#) and [AAH \(Iraqi Kurds – internal relocation\) Iraq CG UKUT 212 \(IAC\)](#).

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4. Return of Iraqi nationals

4.1 Returns to Baghdad

- 4.1.1 To return to Iraq, a person needs a valid passport, expired passport or laissez passer (an emergency travel document issued by an Iraqi Embassy). The Iraqi authorities introduced these procedures in October 2011. EU letters are currently not accepted for any returns to Baghdad.¹
- 4.1.2 The British Embassy in Baghdad advised in a letter dated 8 April 2012 that the Iraqi Embassy in London played no part in the re-documentation process for enforced returnees. The letter explained that when the then UK Border Agency (now Home Office) sought to enforce the return of an Iraqi national, a person had to be interviewed by a senior Iraqi immigration officer, although they still had to possess a passport, expired passport or potentially a laissez passer.²
- 4.1.3 The British Embassy letter also noted that on arrival at Baghdad International Airport (BGW) all passengers, irrespective of nationality, had their biometric details captured.³
- 4.1.4 The British Embassy letter concluded: ‘Since the introduction of the new system (i.e. not to return on EU letters), there have been no detentions upon arrival in Iraq. With so many checks and balances, in our opinion, the new revised procedures will prevent a returnee being detained upon arrival as they have adequate documentary evidence of their identity and nationality.’⁴
- 4.1.5 The source also noted:
- ‘I have not heard of any reports of ethnic or religious discrimination in applying procedures at BIAP [Baghdad International Airport] e.g. specifically targeted at Kurds. It is important to understand that a Kurdish returnee from

¹ British Embassy Baghdad, ‘Renewal or reissuance of a civil status ID card and the provisions to change place of residence in Iraq’, 22 January 2012, Annex B and British Embassy Baghdad, Return Procedures for UK failed asylum seekers’, 8 April 2012, available on request.

² British Embassy Baghdad, Return Procedures for UK failed asylum seekers’, 8 April 2012. Available on request.

³ British Embassy Baghdad, Return Procedures for UK failed asylum seekers’, 8 April 2012. Available on request.

⁴ British Embassy Baghdad, Return Procedures for UK failed asylum seekers’, 8 April 2012. Available on request.

Iraqi Kurdistan is an Iraqi Citizen so can return anywhere in Iraq...[I]f an enforced returnee who originates from Iraqi Kurdistan is sent via BIAP it is important to understand that they have been pre-cleared for arrival and have a valid or expired passport or laissez passer passport. Assuming they have no outstanding warrants of arrest for criminal activity unrelated to immigration matters, they would not be detained and would not be escorted back to Iraqi Kurdistan.’⁵

- 4.1.6 The Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) advised the British Embassy in April 2012 that no Iraqi would be arrested on return, even if they had left illegally. The only exception to this would be if they had committed a criminal offence and a warrant had been issued for their arrest. The MoDM advised that any detention under such circumstances was implemented by the Iraqi police, located a couple of kilometres away from BIAP. The letter also noted:

‘There are no detention facilities within BIAP; the nearest facility is at a small police station a few kilometres away. None of the organisations we contacted could describe the facilities but MoDM emphasised that Enforced Returnees or Voluntary returnees would not be detained on arrival. None of the organisations we contacted could elaborate on whether in the past any enforced returnees had been detained. IOM [International Organisation of Migration] had heard of returnees “having problems” i.e. being “questioned for longer”, especially if returned on Laissez Passer documents. If this was the case in the past, this pre-dates the new Iraqi policy (October 2011) that requires returnees to obtain a Laissez Passer document if they do not have a passport. Qandil have confirmed that all cases they have managed under the Assisted Voluntary Returns programme have been processed satisfactorily.’⁶

- 4.1.7 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, dated January 2012, explained: ‘The MoDM and MOI [Ministry of Interior] said that they [a person with a valid or expired passport, or laissez passer] would be able to pass through Iraqi security check points explaining they were heading home. Similarly, they would be able to rent a property, stay with friends or relatives or temporarily in a hotel until such time as their records are regularised.’⁷

- 4.1.8 A letter from the British Embassy, dated 7 April 2012, noted:

‘The MOI and MoDM have told us that one of these documents [expired or valid passport, or laissez passer] is sufficient in the first instance to pass through check points on return to their home or temporary accommodation following which they need to regularise their Civil ID card. The UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees]/IRC [International Rescue Committee] said they were not aware of the policy of allowing passage through a check point using an expired passport or laissez passer travel

⁵ British Embassy Baghdad, ‘Return Procedures for UK failed asylum seekers’, 8 April 2012. Available on request.

⁶ Letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, ‘Monitoring of Returnees at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP)’, 8 April 2012. Available on request.

⁷ British Embassy Baghdad, ‘Renewal or reissuance of a civil status ID card and the provisions to change place of residence in Iraq’, 22 January 2012. Available on request.

document. To the knowledge of UNHCR/IRC/Qandil and the Embassy there has been no case to date in which the airport authorities have provided a facilitation letter but we have been advised by the MoDM and MOI that passing through check points is permitted upon first entry and return home and there have already been a number of successful returnees who have returned using an expired passport.⁸

- 4.1.9 This was corroborated in a third letter from the Baghdad Embassy dated 8 April 2012.⁹ A November 2011 UNHCR Baghdad paper stated that '[n]o [civil] documentation would be issued at the airport, but a letter would be issued to facilitate the individual's movement back to their place of origin / relocation.'¹⁰

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4.2 Returns to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

- 4.2.1 There are international flights to [Erbil International Airport \(EBL\)](#)¹¹ and [Sulamaniyah International Airport \(ISU\)](#)¹².

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5. Documentation

5.1 Civil registration system

- 5.1.1 A paper published in the Canadian Studies in Population in 2014, based on a UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) funded field visit to Iraq, explained that all births, deaths, marriages and divorces are updated on the family registry. The source explained that family records were held locally at the daa'ira (local civil registration office), where a new event, for example a birth, marriage or divorce, would be manually input onto the family register.¹³
- 5.1.2 The registrar would record the following information: serial number, name, title, father's name, mother's name, sex, relationship to head of household, occupation, literacy, religion, date of birth, place of birth, and date of registration.¹⁴
- 5.1.3 The paper explained the precise way in which family records were maintained, based on three unique information markers: the sijil (family

⁸ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

⁹ British Embassy Baghdad, 'Return Procedures for UK failed asylum seekers', 8 April 2012. Available on request.

¹⁰ UNHCR Baghdad, 'Response to inquiry regarding returnees/deportees: Documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport', 3 November 2011. Available on request.

¹¹ Website of Erbil International Airport (EBL), <https://erbilairport.com/Main/Main.aspx>. Accessed: 18 July 2018

¹² Website of Sulamaniyah International Airport (ISU), <http://www.sul-airport.com/>

¹³ Sulaiman Bah, 'The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval', published in the Canadian Studies in Population, 41, No 1-2 (spring/summer 2014), pp.112-115, <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/csp/article/viewFile/21887/16367>, accessed 10 August 2016

¹⁴ Sulaiman Bah, 'The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval', published in the Canadian Studies in Population, 41, No 1-2 (spring/summer 2014), pp.112-115, <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/csp/article/viewFile/21887/16367>, accessed 10 August 2016

record) number; sahifa (family page) number and daaira (local civil registration office). As the source explained:

'All vital events occurring to any member of the family are entered into this 'family page. This is done until the child gets married and establishes his own family, in which case a new 'family page' is started for him. Through this innovative system, it can take as little as five minutes to locate anyone's records. From this ID system, three pieces of ID are produced: the civil registration ID, nationality ID, and residence ID (location of house). The retention period for the documents in the local offices is 20 years. As of April 2011, there are 275 civil registration directorates in Iraq, including 30 in the Kurdistan Regional Government.'¹⁵

- 5.1.4 The source commented that when the register was full (each register contains around 200 families), the document would be sent back to the head office for scanning, after which it would be returned to the local office for archiving. The source also noted that the head office was 'generally up to date with their scanning and do not have any backlogs to clear'. It was also noted that at head office 'separate archives exist for records from 1934–1947', whilst information from 1948–1957 had been scanned and stored on CDs. For records from 1958 to the time of writing (2011) scanned images were stored on an external hard drive, with one hard drive for each governorate. However, the source added: 'There are backups up until 1978, but because of staff shortage problems, there are no backups after 1978.'¹⁶
- 5.1.5 As the process was manual, not electronic, there would be some time lag in records being updated: 'The time taken varies, depending on the route taken from the registration of the event to the time the certificate arrives at the 'daaira' for recording into the family register.'¹⁷
- 5.1.6 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, dated 7 April 2012, explained that there was an extensive civil status office network across Iraq, with each district (sub-governorate) or Nahyas (sub-district) having a local ID office. The source reaffirmed that information was retained by the Civil Status Office's local records and that information was referenced using a 'book page number', which was also written on the civil ID card. In the case of marriage, the civil record for the wife was transferred to be inserted with the husband's record (on his family's page).¹⁸
- 5.1.7 A Landinfo report dated 23 January 2014 also confirmed that all personal data was entered onto a family registry at the local population registration office near the family's residence. The source stated there were over 300 population registration offices (unofficially called Civil Status Offices or Civil

¹⁵ Sulaiman Bah, 'The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval', published in the Canadian Studies in Population, 41, No 1-2 (spring/summer 2014), pp.112-115, <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/csp/article/viewFile/21887/16367>, accessed 10 August 2016

¹⁶ Sulaiman Bah, 'The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval', published in the Canadian Studies in Population, 41, No 1-2 (spring/summer 2014), pp.112-115, <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/csp/article/viewFile/21887/16367>, accessed 10 August 2016

¹⁷ Sulaiman Bah, 'The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval', published in the Canadian Studies in Population, 41, No 1-2 (spring/summer 2014), pp.112-115, <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/csp/article/viewFile/21887/16367>, accessed 10 August 2016

¹⁸ British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

Status Departments, or Jinsiya¹⁹) (the Canadian Studies in Population paper puts it as 275²⁰). However, the Landinfo report corroborated that each family had their own registration number, which was listed on the personal ID card. The source also confirmed that any Iraqi could obtain a copy of their page in the family registry.²¹

- 5.1.8 The family registry had several synonymous names in unofficial English translation: family book; family census and family registry 57 (after the 1957 law which introduced civil registration in Iraq following the 1957 census).²²
- 5.1.9 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, dated 22 January 2012, based on information obtained from the MoDM, Mol, IOM and the IRC also corroborated that civil ID records were held locally.²³
- 5.1.10 The IOM Country Fact Sheet on Iraq, dated August 2014, listed addresses for the Department of Civil Affairs in the KRI and Baghdad.²⁴
- 5.1.11 The British Embassy letter, dated 7 April 2012, also confirmed the existence of an archive system in Baghdad: 'In addition to any of the institutions where records are retained following any transaction with these bodies, civil identity records are retained on microfiche in a central archive so e.g. when the records in the civil status office in Basra were destroyed, copies were available on microfiche in Baghdad. It is therefore most unusual for personal civil ID records to go missing.'²⁵
- 5.1.12 Additionally, the source, which cited information from the NGO Qandil, noted: '... even if a family lost all of their documents they can obtain copies from the Central Archives.'²⁶
- 5.1.13 The Landinfo report dated 23 January 2014 similarly confirmed that whilst the family registry system was not electronic, the local population registration offices sent information to the central population registry in Baghdad.²⁷
- 5.1.14 The British Embassy letter dated 4 December 2014 reiterated that back up ID records were retained in the Baghdad Central Archive and further explained: 'Though not as efficient or quick to access as the originals, these central records provide an alternative means of ID verification.'²⁸

¹⁹ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, pp.14-15, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

²⁰ Sulaiman Bah, 'The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval', published in the Canadian Studies in Population, 41, No 1-2 (spring/summer 2014), p. 115, <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/csp/article/viewFile/21887/16367>, accessed 10 August 2016

²¹ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.15, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

²² British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

²³ British Embassy Baghdad, 'Renewal or reissuance of a civil status ID card and the provisions to change place of residence in Iraq', 22 January 2012. Available on request.

²⁴ IOM, 'Country Fact Sheet on Iraq', August 2014, http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/MILo-DB/EN/Rueckkehrfoerderung/Laenderinformationen/Informationsblaetter/cfs_irak-dl_en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile, accessed 10 August 2016

²⁵ British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

²⁶ British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

²⁷ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.17, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

²⁸ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to

- 5.1.15 The Canadian Studies in Population paper, dated 2014, observed that the Iraqi system was unique for several reasons. Firstly, there was multiple record-keeping systems, allowing for parallel processes of documenting information; secondly, copies of the same form were stored at multiple sites which made it ‘... easy to obtain copies of the form if it gets lost...’ and made it more difficult to forge documents; and thirdly, that the system put the family ‘at the core of the registration system, rather than the individual’, which provided permanency and continuity to the system.²⁹
- 5.1.16 The source noted that:
- ‘...the CR/VS [civil registration/vital statistics] system in Iraq has remained largely intact and retained its functionality...This central thesis is partially corroborated by the results of a study done in 2006 by Burnham and colleagues on the mortality in Iraq after the 2003 invasion (Burnham et al. 2006). The data showed that of the 545 deaths reported in the study, death certificates were produced for 501 of them (91.9 per cent). Breakdown of these data according to pre- and post-invasion periods showed that death certificates were available for 92.2 per cent of the 77 pre-invasion deaths and 91.7 per cent of the 469 post-invasion deaths (Kane 2007). A z-test for difference in proportions is not statistically significant at the 5–per cent significance level ($p=0.877$). In other words, the war did not significantly affect the registration process.’³⁰
- 5.1.17 According to the MoDM there were numerous other potential institutions (schools, hospitals, etc) where the civil record could be identified.³¹
- 5.1.18 This was corroborated by information in the Canadian Studies in Population paper of 2014:
- ‘The hospital prepares for birth registration ahead of the birth. When the mother is admitted for delivery, she is advised to bring along her ID document and that of the father. After she delivers the baby, the registration is done, in most cases, while she is still in the hospital. She shows the ID documents and gives the name of the child. The Iraqi culture allows for the child’s name to be given at birth, even if a ceremony is done later. The registrar enters the details of the parents and of the child in the birth certificate. From the parents’ ID document, the sijil (family record) number, sahifa (family page) number, and daaira (local civil registration office) are copied onto the birth certificate. This establishes an administrative link between the parents and the child. This information is used later by the Civil

essential services in host communities’, 4 December 2014. Available on request.

²⁹ Sulaiman Bah, ‘The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval’, published in the Canadian Studies in Population, 41, No 1-2 (spring/summer 2014), p.117, <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/csp/article/viewFile/21887/16367>, accessed 10 August 2016

³⁰ Sulaiman Bah, ‘The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval’, published in the Canadian Studies in Population, 41, No 1-2 (spring/summer 2014), p.117, <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/csp/article/viewFile/21887/16367>, accessed 10 August 2016

³¹ Letter from British Embassy Baghdad, ‘Re-documentation procedures’, 7 April 2012. Available on request.

Registration Office. The registrar enters the information in quadruplicate, and each form has a precise role.³²

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5.2 Overview of key documents

- 5.2.1 Freedom of movement in Iraq is respected under the Iraqi Constitution. Article 44(1) states that 'each Iraqi has freedom of movement, travel and residence inside and outside of Iraq.'³³ However, in practice citizenship documents are required to move around the country and access services. In an interview conducted by the British Embassy in Baghdad in July 2011, representatives from the IOM and the MoDM observed: '...we were told that while there are no laws governing freedom of movement, there are certain "regulations" which are required to be met, for instance the production of certain types of Iraqi documents and, in the presentation of personal information to the local council or police station.'³⁴
- 5.2.2 The Iraqi laws which legislate for the issuance of such documents are:
- The Nationality Law No.26 of 2006;
 - Civil Status Law 65 of 1972 (as amended);
 - Passport Law No.32 of 1999 (as amended);
 - Residence Law No.18 of 1978 (as amended); and the
 - Organisation of Places of Residence Law No.95 of 1978 (as amended)
- 5.2.3 Two of the most important documents used in Iraq are the Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC) and the Iraqi Civil Status ID (CSID). A UNHCR briefing explained that these documents are required for '...any kind of interaction with the authorities, such as an application for a food ration card, school registration, and the issuance of death and birth certificates.'³⁵ The report observed that other documents used in Iraq are Residence Address Cards, food ration cards (also known as the Public Distribution Card (PDS)), birth certificates and death certificates.³⁶
- 5.2.4 The British Embassy in Baghdad, in a letter dated July 2011, corroborated this information. It noted that '...Iraqi nationals are issued with four documents, a Iraqi Nationality Document, a ID card (Jensiya), a Residence Card and a PDS (or ration card). Iraqi nationals are required to present these documents when seeking to relocate, or for any number of other issues,

³² Sulaiman Bah, 'The Iraqi civil registration system and the test of political upheaval', published in the Canadian Studies in Population, 41, No 1-2 (spring/summer 2014), pp.112-115, <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/csp/article/viewFile/21887/16367>, accessed 10 August 2016

³³ Iraqi Constitution, adopted on 15 October 2005 (accessed via World Intellectual Property Organisation website), Article 44, <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/iq/iq004en.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2016

³⁴ British Embassy Baghdad, 'Freedom of Movement and requirements to transfer personal documentation in order to relocate in Iraq', 27 July 2011. Available on request.

³⁵ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Country of Origin Information, Iraq, October 2005, p.132, <http://www.unhcr.org/4709f79a2.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2016

³⁶ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Country of Origin Information, Iraq, October 2005, p.132, <http://www.unhcr.org/4709f79a2.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2016

such as buying a car, obtaining a passport, getting married etc...We were told that in order to relocate from one part of Iraq to another, it was necessary to provide four documents mentioned above.³⁷

- 5.2.5 In October 2005, UNHCR noted: 'Instead of the Residence Address Card, one can also obtain a one-time document certifying a person's residence from the local mayor (mukhtar). In the three Northern Governorates, only one-time documents certifying a person's residence are available.'³⁸
- 5.2.6 In an interview with a UK/Denmark fact-finding mission delegation in November 2011, Brigadier-General Abdulrahman Ismael Aziz, the Erbil Civil Information Card General Director, stated that a new Information Card, legislated under Law 95 of 1978 relating to the Organization of Places of Domicile and Residence inside Iraq, had been issued in the KRI since 4 December 2010.³⁹
- 5.2.7 The UNHCR, in a paper dated September 2014, noted that a lack of civil documentation made it difficult for people to register with the MoDM and apply for residence, limiting 'access to all sets of civil and economic rights'.⁴⁰

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5.3 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

- 5.3.1 The British Embassy in Baghdad, in a letter dated 4 December 2014, observed:

'Owing to their high numbers and continued mobility, IDP registration remains complex and challenging. The UNHCR is working with the GoI [Government of Iraq] and KRG authorities to harmonise registration procedures, including the wide scale use of biometrics, but a common format and practice is unlikely in the short term. In the Kurdistan Region, registration questionnaires and software have been deployed to enhance needs profiling. Across central and southern Iraq, the UNHCR is also funding close to 300 staff positions in MoMD regional offices. However, serious capacity issues remain and practical assistance through these offices is largely limited to cash donations...Against this background, registration is not a pre-requirement for access to shelter and emergency relief being provided by the UNHCR and its partners. In line with its Protection Cluster strategy, the monitoring teams of the UNHCR and its partners have reached close to 700,000 individuals throughout Iraq to determine needs, vulnerabilities,

³⁷ British Embassy Baghdad, Freedom of Movement and requirements to transfer personal documentation in order to relocate in Iraq, 27 July 2011. Available on request.

³⁸ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Country of Origin Information, Iraq, October 2005, p.132, <http://www.unhcr.org/4709f79a2.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2016

³⁹ UK Home Office / Danish Immigration Service fact finding report to Erbil and Dahuk conducted between 11 and 22 November 2011, 'Update (2) on entry procedures at Kurdistan Regional Government checkpoints (KRG); residence procedures in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and arrival procedures at Erbil and Suleimaniyah airports (for Iraqis travelling from non-KRI areas of Iraq)', published March 2012, p. 48, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/6F71106D-2B7B-49F4-B870-EF2E95E33BE5/0/IraqKRIFFMReportPUBLICATION.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2016

⁴⁰ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'Emergency Response for the Iraq situation, Revised Supplementary Appeal', September 2014, <http://www.unhcr.org/5412b1e09.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2016

registration status, demographic information and accommodation circumstances.’⁴¹

- 5.3.2 A fact-finding mission undertaken by the Danish Refugee Council and Danish Immigration Service to the KRI between 26 September and 6 October 2015 (‘the Danish fact-finding report’) observed:

‘Qandil said that the demand for recovery of documents among IDPs is big, and that recovery of documents is a lengthy process. In a significant number of cases, Qandil is not able to assist, for example, with regard to documents for IDPs from Anbar.

‘Two sources stated that, before the conflict, an Iraqi citizen should hand in an application for recovery of a lost document to the office that issued the lost document which means the area where he or she was registered before the flight. However, the two sources said that in the current state of emergency, temporary issuing offices for civil documents have been set up at different places in Iraq. Qandil further said that these offices are under the authority of the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad...

‘There are several challenges for IDPs who have lost their documents. UNHCR stated that, generally, it is not possible to travel without ID documents. If IDPs manage to travel back to renew documents, they run a risk of not being able to be readmitted to KRI. Qandil said that, to enter Baghdad itself, IDPs without documents would have to fly in, since they would not be able to enter Baghdad by road due to various risks travelling by land, such as (1) discrimination between Shia and Sunni, (2) lack of money for bribery, (3) checkpoints and (4) Shia militias in the area.

‘According to Human Rights Watch, in Erbil, there have been examples of arrests of people who did not have ID and who were put in detention and interrogated for months without charges and without access to a lawyer.

‘According to UNHCR, generally speaking, there is no effective access to new civil status documents for IDPs. This presents challenges to the IDPs, since a number of documents are essential for registration and access to social services.’⁴²

- 5.3.3 A UNHCR document, dated May 2016, noted:

‘Loss of civil documentation remains another concern for IDPs across Iraq. Without civil documentation, and particularly without civil ID card, IDPs cannot access basic rights, services or employment, face restrictions on their freedom of movement and may be at risk of arrest and detention. Limited financial resources and lack of official documents reportedly hamper IDPs’ access to health services. The influx of IDP children is reported to

⁴¹ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, ‘Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities’, 4 December 2014. Available on request.

⁴² Danish Refugee Council & The 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’, April 2016, pp. 25-26, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

overburden the education system, resulting in severe overcrowding. IDP children lacking official documents may be unable to enrol into schools.⁴³

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5.4 Civil Status ID Card (CSID)

5.4.1 In Arabic the Civil Status ID (CSID) card is called Bitaka shakhsyeh, but it is also referred to as Bitaqa hawwiya⁴⁴, Al-Bitaqat al-Shikhsiya⁴⁵ or Jensiya.⁴⁶

5.4.2 The CSID is a form of photo identification.⁴⁷ A Landinfo report dated January 2014 noted that ID cards contained a person's:

- full name;
- date of birth;
- birthplace;
- parents' names;
- civil status;
- religious affiliation;
- a registry number which specifies the number of the family book in which the person is registered (this is located to the right side on the front of the card). The serial number is printed on the top left. Using this information and the issuer's signature, it is possible to authenticate an ID card.⁴⁸

5.4.3 The FCO, in a letter dated April 2012, noted that the card contained a person's:

- photograph (on the front of the card);
- district of registration and governorate;
- record number;
- page number from the main identity record book held by the Civil ID Office;
- name;

⁴³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA) in Baghdad for Sunni Arabs from ISIS-Held Areas', May 2016, p. 27, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1465288084_575537dd4.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁴⁴ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.17, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁴⁵ Middle East Consultancy Services, Iraqi Civil Status Identification Card or Al-Bitaqat al-Shikhsiya, 9 September 2012, <http://mideastconsultancy.com/new/mecs/auth.php?sid=3&id=29>, accessed 10 August 2016

⁴⁶ British Embassy Baghdad, Freedom of Movement and requirements to transfer personal documentation in order to relocate in Iraq, 27 July 2011. Available on request.

⁴⁷ Middle East Consultancy Services, Iraqi Civil Status Identification Card or Al-Bitaqat al-Shikhsiya, 9 September 2012, <http://mideastconsultancy.com/new/mecs/auth.php?sid=3&id=29>, accessed 10 August 2016

⁴⁸ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.15, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

- father's and grandfather's name;
- surname or tribal name;
- sex;
- signature

as well as the:

- signature of the Authorising Officer;
- signature of the Issuing Officer;
- date of issue⁴⁹

5.4.4 On the reverse of the card was listed a person's:

- occupation/job;
- (written and numerical) date of birth;
- place of birth;
- significant markings e.g. scars;
- marital status;
- spouse's name;
- place of registration;
- eyes, hair and face colour;
- height; and
- blood group⁵⁰

5.4.5 The CSID card is governed under the Civil Status Law 65 of 1972 (amended).⁵¹ According to the Second Secretary, Embassy of Iraq, (interviewed in London on 5 January 2012), the CSID card is required by law and issued to each Iraqi national, both inside and outside of Iraq, upon production of a birth certificate. CSID cards are issued by the Ministry of Interior, Iraqi Civil Card Directorate.⁵² The Landinfo report dated 23 January 2014 largely verified this information, although referred to the Civil Status Affairs Directorate, under the jurisdiction of the General Nationality Directorate, as the issuer of the document.⁵³ UNHCR also broadly corroborated this information.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ British Embassy, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

⁵⁰ British Embassy, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

⁵¹ British Embassy Baghdad, Freedom of Movement and requirements to transfer personal documentation in order to relocate in Iraq, 27 July 2011. Available on request.

⁵² Note of meeting with Hassanain Hadi Fadhil, Second Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq, London, 5 January 2012. Available on request.

⁵³ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.15, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁵⁴ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Baghdad, 'Response to inquiry regarding returnees /deportees: documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport', 3 November 2011. Available on request.

5.4.6 The CSID card is considered the most important personal document and is used for all contact with public authorities, health care, social welfare, schools and for the purchase and sale of homes and cars. The CSID card is also required when applying for other official documents, such as passports.⁵⁵ Shelter for Life International, in a report dated September 2014, observed that government issued ID was required to access bank accounts.⁵⁶ A British Embassy letter dated May 2011 noted that an individual's identity document may be requested for any number of reasons, including applying for a job.⁵⁷

5.4.7 A representative of IOM informed the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada in November 2013 that the CSID card was the 'basic' ID card and 'main card' for identification in Iraq and should be held by all citizens.⁵⁸ A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, dated 27 July 2011, indicated that without civil documentation, it would not be possible to transit security checkpoints.⁵⁹ A letter from the British Embassy dated 9 May 2011 also noted that a person's identity document may be requested by police at security checkpoints.⁶⁰ However, a letter from the British Embassy dated April 2012 instead noted:

'Driving around town car occupants are not routinely asked to produce their ID cards at check points. The driver of a car is more likely than any person to be asked at a check point to show their ID where they may be asked to show their car registration, driving licence and ID card. But this is far from a common occurrence except during high profile events e.g. the Arab League Summit (which took place in late March 2012) when security is particularly strict. On a recent return journey to and from the airport, a middle ranking locally engaged Iraqi member of the Embassy was asked to show his car registration and ID at a check point but none of his occupants were asked to show their ID which he explained is normal. It's important to understand that nothing in his personal identification or car papers indicates where he works. On a visit to see his sister in-law at a hospital who had recently given birth, he was not asked to show any identification.'⁶¹

5.4.8 A letter from the British Embassy, dated 9 May 2011, based on consultations with a senior advisor to the UK Police Advisory Team, an intelligence analyst

⁵⁵ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.16, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁵⁶ Shelter for Life International, 'Rapid Assessment of IDPs in Erbil City in Search of Alternative Approaches to Shelter and Settlement: Findings and Recommendations', September 2014, p. 4, accessed via sheltercluster.org, <https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/Assessment%20of%20Urban%20IDPs%20in%20Iraq.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2016

⁵⁷ British Embassy Baghdad, 'Mixed Sunni/Shia marriages', 9 May 2011. Available on request.

⁵⁸ Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 'Iraq: Civil Status Identification Card, including purpose and validity; requirements and procedures for the issuance, renewal and replacement of cards, including the location of issue; frequency of fraudulent identity cards (2011-November 2013)', <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/eoir/legacy/2014/02/04/IRQ104654.E.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2016

⁵⁹ British Embassy Baghdad, Freedom of Movement and requirements to transfer personal documentation in order to relocate in Iraq, 27 July 2011. Available on request.

⁶⁰ British Embassy Baghdad, 'Mixed Sunni/Shia Marriages', 9 May 2011. Available on request.

⁶¹ British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

from a commercial company working in Baghdad and a representative of an international NGO, stated that whilst a person's religious sect is not identified on any identity documents, in practice an individual's tribal name and place of birth would give a clear indication of their religious identity.⁶² This was partially corroborated by a report from the Financial Times, dated 26 June 2014, based on reporting in Baghdad, which gave the example of a person from the mainly Sunni Azzawi tribe, who would so be identified as a Sunni Arab because their tribal origin would be stated on their ID card. The source further indicated that sect could be identified through a person's name, tribal affiliation or the name of a father or grandfather.⁶³

- 5.4.9 The Landinfo report dated January 2014⁶⁴ and UNHCR Baghdad paper dated November 2011⁶⁵ were broadly consistent that, to obtain a CSID, an application form, birth certificate, photographs and a small fee, needed to be submitted to the person's local population registration office.
- 5.4.10 However, information submitted by UNHCR Baghdad in November 2011 also reported that, to obtain a CSID, a person needed to present their:
- housing card (or supporting letter from the local council to confirm the subject's residence);
 - Public Distribution System (PDS) card; and
 - fiscal stamp (IQD 750), available from the book shop of the Police Families' Martyrs.⁶⁶
- 5.4.11 The Landinfo report noted that, to obtain a CSID, an ID card from a close relative such as a father or grandfather was required.⁶⁷ This was corroborated by the IOM Country Fact Sheet, August 2013. The IOM source noted that a Nationality Certificate, or the Nationality Certificate of the applicant's father, was also required.⁶⁸

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⁶² British Embassy Baghdad, 'Mixed Sunni/Shia Marriages', 9 May 2011. Available on request.

⁶³ Financial Times, 'Iraq Crisis: Sunni anger returns with revival of Shia militias', 26 June 2014, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/920dac6f-fd3e-11e3-8ca9-00144feab7de.Authorised=false.html?_i_location=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.com%2Fcms%2Fs%2F0%2F920dac6f-fd3e-11e3-8ca9-00144feab7de.html%3Fsiteedition%3Duk&siteedition=uk&_i_referer=#axzz3KpyCXsO, accessed 10 August 2016

⁶⁴ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, pp.16-17, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁶⁵ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Baghdad, 'Response to inquiry regarding returnees /deportees: documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport', 3 November 2011. Available on request.

⁶⁶ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Baghdad, 'Response to inquiry regarding returnees /deportees: documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport', 3 November 2011. Available on request.

⁶⁷ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, pp.16-17, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁶⁸ International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 'Country Fact Sheet on Iraq', August 2014, http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/MiLo-DB/EN/Rueckkehrfoerderung/Laenderinformationen/Informationsblaetter/cfs_irak-dl_en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile, accessed 10 August 2016

5.5 Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC)

- 5.5.1 The Nationality Certificate (INC) in Arabic is called shahadat jinsiyya⁶⁹ or shahdat al-Jinsiya al-Iraqiya⁷⁰. The INC is regulated under the Iraqi Nationality Law No.26 (2006). Essentially, the document proves that someone is an Iraqi citizen. It is issued by the General Nationality Directorate (GND) of the Ministry of Interior (MOI).⁷¹ Hassanain Hadi Fahlil, Second Secretary at the Iraqi Embassy in London, clarified in January 2011 that ‘...the issuance of the Iraqi Nationality Certificate...was overseen by the General Directorate of Nationality, which was...part of the Ministry of Interior.’ The Second Secretary clarified that the General Directorate of Nationality and Iraqi Civil Card Directorate worked closely together as both the CSID card and INC were required to issue an Iraqi citizen with an Iraqi passport.⁷²
- 5.5.2 The website for the General Directorate for Nationality, in an undated post, confirmed that it was responsible for implementing the Citizenship Act No 26 of 2006, Civil Status Law No.65 of 1972 (as amended), Passport Law No.32 of 1999 (as amended) and the Commercial Housing Regulatory Act No.95 of 1978 (as amended).⁷³
- 5.5.3 The Middle East Consultancy Services, in an article dated September 2012, confirmed that the INC is a booklet upon which the picture of the owner is fixed. The cover is black.⁷⁴
- 5.5.4 According to Landinfo, the INC is necessary when applying for work in the public sector and to access other public services. It is also required to apply for other documents, such as passports and birth, marriage and death certificates.⁷⁵ This was partially corroborated by a UNHCR Country of Origin report on Iraq dated 2005, which noted that the INC, together with the CSID, were ‘requested for any kind of interaction with the authorities, such as an application for a food ration card, school registration, and the issuance of death and birth certificates.’⁷⁶ The Landinfo source further noted that children can get an INC from an early age, but it is common to get them from the age

⁶⁹ Landinfo, ‘Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents’, 23 January 2014, pp.16-17, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁷⁰ MECS, ‘Iraqi Nationality Certificate or Shahdat al-Jinsiya al-Iraqiya’, 9 September 2012, <http://mideastconsultancy.com/new/mecs/auth.php?sid=1&id=28>, accessed 10 August 2016

⁷¹ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Baghdad, Response to inquiry regarding returnees/deportees: Documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport, 3 November 2011. Available on request.

⁷² COI Service, cover letter and note of meeting with Hassanain Hadi Fadhil, Second secretary, embassy of the Republic of Iraq, London, 5 January 2011. Available on request.

⁷³ The Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Interior, General Directorate for Nationality, Duties and Activities, undated, http://www.iraqinationality.gov.iq/activities_en.htm, accessed 10 August 2016

⁷⁴ MECS, ‘Iraqi Nationality Certificate or Shahdat al-Jinsiya al-Iraqiya’, 9 September 2012, <http://mideastconsultancy.com/new/mecs/auth.php?sid=1&id=28>, accessed 10 August 2016

⁷⁵ Landinfo, ‘Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents’, 23 January 2014, pp.16-17, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁷⁶ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Country of Origin Information, Iraq, October 2005, p.132, <http://www.unhcr.org/4709f79a2.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2016

of 12.⁷⁷ The UNHCR Baghdad paper dated 3 November 2011 confirmed that the INC proved that a person was an Iraqi citizen.⁷⁸

- 5.5.5 According to Nezar Rahmatollah Aziz, General Director of Passport and Nationality in the Kurdistan Region, INCs were issued at the General Directorate of Nationality's local offices, found in all governorate capitals, although the certificates were only produced in Baghdad.⁷⁹ This was corroborated by information provided from UNHCR Baghdad in November 2011.⁸⁰
- 5.5.6 There is slightly conflicting information about the documents a person needs to apply for an INC. Reports from UNHCR Baghdad, dated 3 November 2011, and Landinfo, dated 23 January 2014 (which cited undated information from UNHCR), were consistent that a person needed a:
- completed Iraqi Nationality Certificate application form (with two 500 Iraqi Dinar stamps);
 - Public Distribution Card (PDS);
 - Housing card (or supporting letter from the local council to confirm the applicant's residence);
 - personal photo(s);
 - father's INC, or, in the event that this is lost, a brother's, grandfather's or uncle's INC^{81 82}
- 5.5.7 However, the UNHCR Baghdad source, dated November 2011, stated that an original and a copy of the father's, grandfather's or uncle's INC was required⁸³, whereas the information documented by Landinfo noted that only a copy was required.⁸⁴
- 5.5.8 The Landinfo report, which cited an undated UNHCR source, also noted that a person needed their:

⁷⁷ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, pp. 21-22, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁷⁸ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Baghdad, Response to inquiry regarding returnees/deportees: Documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport, 3 November 2011. Available on request.

⁷⁹ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 23, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁸⁰ Baghdad, Response to inquiry regarding returnees/deportees: Documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport, 3 November 2011. Available on request.

⁸¹ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Baghdad, Response to inquiry regarding returnees/deportees: Documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport, 3 November 2011. Available on request.

⁸² Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 23, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁸³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Baghdad, Response to inquiry regarding returnees/deportees: Documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport, 3 November 2011. Available on request.

⁸⁴ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 23, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

- birth certificate (this must be issued by a consul if the person was born outside Iraq);
- ID card;
- parents' marriage certificate; and
- parents' ID cards⁸⁵

5.5.9 A report from UNHCR dated 2011 noted that when applying for an INC the required documents would be submitted in person to the General Nationality Directorate in each governorate. The source noted that for more complicated applications where a person did not have the required documentation to prove Iraqi citizenship the process may need to take place in Baghdad.⁸⁶

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5.6 Iraqi National ID Card (INIC)

5.6.1 The Iraqi National ID Card is issued by the Iraqi Ministry of Interior. It replaces the Nationality Certificate and Civil Status ID.⁸⁷

5.6.2 The front side contains the information:

- Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Nationality;
- Photo of ID card holder;
- Document number (12 decimal digits);
- Access number for RFID [Radio Frequency ID] chip (9 alphanumeric digits);
- Given name;
- Father's name;
- Grandfather's name (paternal);
- Surname (only if holder has one);
- Mother's name;
- Grandfather's name (maternal);
- Gender;
- Blood type⁸⁸

5.6.3 The rear side contains the following information:

- Issuing authority;
- Date of issue (YYYY/MM/DD);

⁸⁵ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 23, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁸⁶ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Baghdad, Response to inquiry regarding returnees/deportees: Documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport, 3 November 2011. Available on request.

⁸⁷ British Consulate General, Erbil, 'Iraqi National ID Card', 20 June 2017. Available on request.

⁸⁸ British Consulate General, Erbil, 'Iraqi National ID Card', 20 June 2017. Available on request.

- Date of expiry (YYYY/MM/DD);
 - Place of birth (only the city/town of birth, no country);
 - Date of birth (YYYY/MM/DD);
 - Family number⁸⁹
- 5.6.4 Old IDs are still accepted and the Iraqi National ID card is only implemented, so far, in the cities not suburbs in the KRI.⁹⁰
- 5.6.5 The plan for the new card is a merger of both the CSID (Hawya Ahwal Al mdani) and the Iraqi Nationality (Jinsiya) in one solid document. The aim is to complete the process by end 2018. By end 2018 the new ID will be used instead of the current information card (Bitaqat Al Ma3lumat). The aim is to renew, update and clean the old database system to stop attempts of duplications and forgery; and to unify all different type and issued ID for both regional and central government for the period of 1991 – 2003 then 2003 - 2016.⁹¹
- 5.6.6 The procedure to obtain a new card is to:
- submit an application for the new biometric ID + fees (the form contains all personal and family data, address and other relevant details)
 - present both the CSID and INC and hand them over to the department of civil states;
 - submit biometrics and digital photo
- Children under 12 are not entitled to this process and they can keep their ID (this does not apply to new births)⁹²
- 5.6.7 The new card is processed by the department sending the collected data to the central database at Iraq's MOI to be checked and recorded centrally, then permitting the department to process and issue the new card. No deadline is identified because of operational/technical issues which related to the security and military operations taking place in other parts of Iraq.⁹³

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6. Redocumentation

6.1 Assistance

- 6.1.1 The British Embassy Baghdad, in a letter dated 4 December 2014, explained that given the long history of displacement in Iraq, there were 'well established' procedures whereby those not in possession of their civil documents could obtain replacement documents.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ British Consulate General, Erbil, 'Iraqi National ID Card', 20 June 2017. Available on request.

⁹⁰ British Consulate General, Erbil, 'Iraqi National ID Card', 20 June 2017. Available on request.

⁹¹ British Consulate General, Erbil, 'Iraqi National ID Card', 20 June 2017. Available on request.

⁹² British Consulate General, Erbil, 'Iraqi National ID Card', 20 June 2017. Available on request.

⁹³ British Consulate General, Erbil, 'Iraqi National ID Card', 20 June 2017. Available on request.

⁹⁴ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities', 4 December 2014. Available on request.

- 6.1.2 The British Embassy in Baghdad in April 2012 noted that a returnee would need only to provide his passport (valid or expired) or laissez passer to the MoDM to receive assistance in re-acquiring civil documentation. The source explained that in Baghdad there were four locations where a returnee could seek assistance from the MoDM; there were two locations in central Karkh; one in Karadah and a fourth on the edge of the International Zone, at the MoDM Head Office.⁹⁵
- 6.1.3 According to the Iraqi Consul in Norway in February 2012 and October 2013, in order to obtain a replacement passport and other ID documents from outside Iraq, the General Directorate of Nationality would need to submit to the Passport Directorate the following information: 'full name, place of birth, mother's name, ID card number, page number in the family registry, Iraqi nationality certificate number and date of issue.'⁹⁶
- 6.1.4 UNHCR Baghdad, in a paper dated November 2011, noted:
 'The network of PARC [Protection Assistance and Reintegration Center]s, comprising fixed centres and mobile teams, provide legal counselling, assistance and referrals to appropriate service providers. PARC lawyers can provide legal representation in court and before administrative bodies, assist in the filing of complaints and in advocacy with local authorities. PARCs also provide advice and assistance on registration with MoMD, rights and entitlements...Types of legal cases / issues with which the PARC lawyers assist include: Civil ID / Nationality, birth / death certificates, marriage, divorce / separation, inheritance, passport, PDS, education, moveable / immoveable property, compensation.'⁹⁷
- 6.1.5 The British Embassy in April 2012 also noted that a returnee could seek assistance with civil documentation through the UNHCR's network of PARCs and Protection Assistance Centres (PACs) which were located across Iraq.⁹⁸ The source further explained:
 'UNHCR and its partners provide support to returnees with the acquisition of Civil IDs and other critical civil status documentation. Contact points and means of access vary: returnees can directly seek assistance by visiting MoMD, Return Assistance Centres (or branch offices in governorates) or other field offices in person, by contacting lawyers through the phone numbers listed on brochures distributed through field visits in various governorates, or they can be referred by other service providers, the MoMD, and other stakeholders.'⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Letter from British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

⁹⁶ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 23, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

⁹⁷ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Baghdad, 'Response to inquiry regarding returnees /deportees: documentation, assistance and conditions at Baghdad airport', 3 November 2011. Available on request.

⁹⁸ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures, 7 April 2012. Available on request.

⁹⁹ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures, 7 April 2012. Available on request.

- 6.1.6 The British Embassy letter dated 4 December 2014 clarified: 'For those IDPs from provinces now under the control of ISIL, replacement civil documents can be obtained with the help of the UNHCR's network of Protection Assistance & Reintegration Centres (PARC), Protection Assistance Centres (PAC) and partner organisations (for example, in the Kurdistan Region, UNCHR are supported by Qandil in Erbil, Harikar in Duhok and CDO in Sulaymaniyah) operating elsewhere across the country.'¹⁰⁰
- 6.1.7 The British Embassy in Baghdad, in a letter dated 4 December 2014, noted that the UNHCR had established joint centres with the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad and Najaf to assist IDPs with re-documentation. According to sources consulted by the embassy, these were 'working well'.¹⁰¹
- 6.1.8 UNHCR in October 2014 noted that special offices had been established in Baghdad and Najaf to replace documents. The source noted that IDPs in other parts of the country, especially the KRI, faced difficulties, such as high travel costs, in accessing these services.¹⁰²
- 6.1.9 However, a report from the British Embassy in Baghdad, dated 4 December 2014, noted:
- '...The UNHCR has...recently established joint centres with the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad and Najaf to assist IDPs with re-documentation and we are told these are working well. As a minimum, individuals are required to identify their book page and page number or that of a family member. All Iraqi nationals will know or be able to easily obtain this information...While there is a risk that the original civil ID records held in provincial capitals such as Mosul and Ramadi may have been destroyed by the occupying ISIL forces, back-up ID records are retained in the Baghdad Central Archive. Though not as efficient or quick to access as the originals, these central records provide an alternative means of ID verification. In addition to civil ID records, other potential sources for independent verification include school and hospital records. A more detailed and still valid account of re-documentation procedures can be found in this Embassy's letter of 7 April 2012. It remains this Embassy's considered view that Iraqis returning from overseas will be able to reacquire their civil documents through these more regular means.'¹⁰³
- 6.1.10 A UNHCR report, dated May 2016, noted:
- 'In Iraq, civil status documentation is generally issued and renewed at the local civil status office in a person's place of origin where the original records are maintained a prospect that is not feasible for those originating from areas under ISIS control or conflict areas. In response to the large-scale

¹⁰⁰ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities', 4 December 2014. Available on request.

¹⁰¹ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities', 4 December 2014. Available on request.

¹⁰² UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'UNCHR position on returns to Iraq', October 2014, p. 9-10, accessed via Refworld, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/544e4b3c4.html>, accessed 10 August 2016

¹⁰³ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities', 4 December 2014. Available on request.

displacement since 2014, alternative civil status offices have been opened in various parts of the country to issue/renew different types of civil status documentation. Nevertheless, administrative procedures involved to recover lost identification documents is reportedly filled with obstacles.

‘Persons displaced from Salah Al-Din and Al-Anbar governorates cannot issue/renew their civil ID card in Baghdad. Rather, the civil ID card has to be issued/renewed in Samarra/Salah Al-Din (for IDPs from Salah Al-Din), and Ameriyat Al-Fallujah/Al-Anbar (IDPs from Fallujah).

‘For IDPs from Ninewa, several alternative directorates of civil ID have been established in January 2015 to deal with IDPs from specific areas (none of which is in Baghdad):

Location of Alternative Directorate	IDP Place of Origin
Al-Qosh (Ninewah)	Talkeif district, Wana sub-district, Al-Quah sub-district
Sheikhan (Dohuk)	Mosul district
Al-Faroq (Zalikan) sub-district	Other districts and sub-districts of Ninewah
Najaf	Telkeif, Al-Mosul Al-Ayser (left bank of Mosul), Bashiqa, Bartella, Hamdaniah and Nimrod
Kerbala and Najaf	Tel Afar

‘IDPs from Diyala governorate cannot issue/renew their civil ID card in Baghdad. An alternate Directorate of Civil ID has been established in Al-Salam sub-district of Diyala to serve IDPs of Al-Udhaim and Al-Mansouriyah sub-districts and another directorate located in the centre of Baquba receives IDPs from Jalawla, Al-Sa'adiya, and Kifri sub-districts.

‘Repeated changes to applicable instructions and the specified locations have reportedly caused confusion among IDPs and lawyers as to which office to approach. Access to the alternative directorates may prove difficult for IDPs in Baghdad for security reasons, including the need to pass by checkpoints (where civil documentation is required). A power of attorney is not accepted and the applicant has to appear in person. Moreover, there is reportedly insufficient staff working in these offices, resulting in delays.¹⁰⁴

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¹⁰⁴ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), ‘Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA) in Baghdad for Sunni Arabs from ISIS-Held Areas’, May 2016, pp. 27-28, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1465288084_575537dd4.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

6.2 Passport

- 6.2.1 The website of the Passport Affairs Directorate, General Directorate of Nationality, Ministry of Interior detailed that to obtain an Iraqi passport a person (who is 18 or over) needs to present:
- a form with completed person information, filled out exactly according to the information on the Civil Status ID (CSID);
 - a CSID;
 - an INC;
 - a Residency card (for those outside Iraq);
 - photographs;
 - a cheque for 25 thousand Iraqi Dinars (about £16¹⁰⁵)
- to an Iraqi consulate, where they will also take a person's fingerprints.¹⁰⁶

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6.3 Civil Status ID Card (CSID)

- 6.3.1 The British Embassy stated, in 2012¹⁰⁷ and 27 July 2011¹⁰⁸, that to obtain a replacement CSID an individual would usually return to the Civil ID Office where his or her original family record was held. This was also acknowledged in the Landinfo report dated January 2014.¹⁰⁹
- 6.3.2 However, the Embassy letter dated 22 January 2012 explained that this is not necessary if the individual did not feel safe doing so. In such a situation a person could report to the MoDM who would '... be able to support the transfer of the record to the area they wish to live in now'. The source also noted that if the individual was abroad they could apply through an Embassy.¹¹⁰
- 6.3.3 The British Embassy letter, dated April 2012, clarified that a Civil Status Office would be unable to assist an Iraqi citizen if they had no information about the book and record page where the civil record was held, because there was no database of civil status records. However, the source noted that the book page information could be obtained through other offices that held records, for example the Passport Directorate or court that issued a marriage certificate.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=25000&From=IQD&To=GBP>, accessed 10 August 2016

¹⁰⁶ Passport Affairs Directorate, General Directorate of Nationality, Ministry of Interior, The Republic of Iraq, http://www.iraqinationality.gov.iq/passport_en.htm, accessed 10 August 2016

¹⁰⁷ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Renewal or reissuance of a civil status ID card and provisions to change place of residence in Iraq', 22 January 2012. Available on request.

¹⁰⁸ British Embassy Baghdad, Freedom of Movement and requirements to transfer personal documentation in order to relocate in Iraq, 27 July 2011. Available on request.

¹⁰⁹ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, pp. 16-17, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹¹⁰ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Renewal or reissuance of a civil status ID card and provisions to change place of residence in Iraq', 22 January 2012. Available on request.

¹¹¹ Letter from British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on

- 6.3.4 A letter from the British Embassy dated January 2012 noted that if CSID card had been lost an individual would need to produce a written statement declaring the circumstances around the loss, which would be seen by an investigation court; a notice would also need to be placed in a local newspaper. The Embassy letter commented that whilst this sounded quite involved, one interlocutor described it as being 'simple and straightforward'.¹¹² The Second Secretary at the Iraqi Embassy in London, in an interview dated January 2012, partially corroborated the information about this procedure; he noted that when an individual had lost their ID card they would be required to report the incident to the local police, where they would be given a police report. The source indicated that this needed to be done in person.¹¹³
- 6.3.5 The British Embassy in Baghdad, in a letter dated 4 December 2014, reiterated that other potential sources, for example a school or hospital, could be accessed to independently verify a person's ID.¹¹⁴
- 6.3.6 A letter from the British Embassy Baghdad dated 7 April 2012 explained that the Civil Status Law 65 of 1972 required Iraqi consulates to liaise with the Nationality Directorate to enable citizens living overseas to acquire their CSID card. This could be completed by filing an application from any of the following: the head of family (male or female); the applicant (record holder); a guardian; or a lawyer with the power of attorney.¹¹⁵
- 6.3.7 The source explained that to obtain a replacement CSID card, a person should provide a copy of the lost ID, or the ID of a close relative such as a father or brother. According to interlocutors an ID 'book page' record number remains the same throughout their entire life and the pages are closely related to their relatives: if their own ID or a copy is not available it is usually straightforward to identify the citizen from other relative's records.¹¹⁶
- 6.3.8 Landinfo's January 2014 report noted if the ID card was lost, the applicant's identity could be verified based on their father or brother's ID card.¹¹⁷
- 6.3.9 The website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted:
- 'In case of request a lost identity replacement the Consul should write down the statement of the applicant in the back of the [application] form in addition to the above. The statement must include answering three questions, namely, (Where do you think the place of loss of the identity card, when do you lost it and how do you lost it?) The statement must be signed by the

request.

¹¹² Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Renewal or reissuance of a civil status ID card and provisions to change place of residence in Iraq', 22 January 2012. Available on request.

¹¹³ Note of meeting with Hassanain Hadi Fadhil, Second Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq, London, 5 January 2012. Available on request.

¹¹⁴ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities', 4 December 2014. Available on request.

¹¹⁵ Letter from British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

¹¹⁶ Letter from British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

¹¹⁷ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.17, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

applicant and install the full name and left thumb fingerprint and signed by the consul and stamped by the stamp of the consulate and sent with the application form a copy of the lost identity card, a copy of the identity card of his father, his brother or non-married sister - certified by the consul being as a replica. In case of request damaged replacements the applicant must write down a statement signed by him and signed and stamped by the Consul and attach the damaged identity with the form. The applicant must attach with the application of lost replacement or damaged a recent photograph of him.¹¹⁸

6.3.10 The Landinfo report outlined that it was possible to give power of attorney to 'retrieve' an ID card in Iraq:

'An Iraqi in Norway can alternatively give a proxy power of attorney to apply for and retrieve an ID card at the local population registration office where the applicant is registered. When applying for a new card via a proxy, the applicant must write a power of attorney for a person in their home country. The power of attorney must be sent via the embassy in the country in which they are staying and the embassy must stamp the letter. However, this can be difficult if the person cannot identify himself/herself. This means that he/she must either have a passport, a birth certificate, an old ID card or a nationality certificate. When the consul in Norway was asked to assess the likelihood that a local population registration office would issue new ID cards via proxy for payment even if power of attorney was not authorised by an embassy, the consul answered that it could probably happen (Iraqi Embassy in Norway, phone conversation March 2012).¹¹⁹

6.3.11 The source also observed:

'An ID card issued to a proxy without power of attorney authorised by an embassy is considered valid in Iraq if the ID card itself is genuine...All ID documents issued in Iraq to citizens who are living or staying abroad must be confirmed by an Iraqi embassy or a consul in the country they are living in, or by another embassy if the country they live in does not have an Iraqi embassy (Iraqi Foreign Ministry, n.d.b). Iraqis in Norway can get the documents confirmed at the Iraqi Embassy in Oslo (Iraqi Embassy in Norway, meeting February 2012).¹²⁰

6.3.12 The British Embassy letter dated 7 April 2012 also noted that it was possible to acquire new ID cards for children born outside of Iraq. If a child was not registered to a local Civil Status Office in Iraq, they could be registered with the Iraqi Embassy.¹²¹ The Landinfo report, which cited a representative of the Iraqi Embassy in Oslo (March 2013), corroborated that it was possible to obtain a new ID card from an overseas Embassy and that children born

¹¹⁸ Republic of Iraq, 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Consular services, the civil status ID, <http://www.mofa.gov.iq/en/submenu.php?id=64>, accessed 10 August 2016

¹¹⁹ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, pp.17-18, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹²⁰ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.18, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹²¹ Letter from British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures', 7 April 2012. Available on request.

outside Iraq can be registered at one of Iraq's Embassies. However, the source explained that the parents must present:

- the child's birth certificate, confirmed by the Foreign Ministry of the country of birth;
- their own Iraqi ID cards;
- their own nationality certificates; and
- marriage certificate (if it is not stated on their ID cards that they are married to each other)¹²²

6.3.13 According to the General Directorate of Nationality in April 2012, it was possible to obtain an CSID card via proxy or for a lawyer or relative to be given power of attorney to obtain a replacement CSID, so that an individual did not need to return to their local office in person:

'A person can obtain an ID card via proxy in Iraq. A husband and father can apply for ID cards for his wife and children. However, if someone loses their card, they must appear in person to get a new card (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). This does not apply to children under the age of 12 years...It is also possible to give another person power of attorney to apply for an ID card. The most common approach is to ask a relative for help. ID documentation of both the applicant and the person with power of attorney then has to be provided.

'One can also obtain an ID card via proxy with power of attorney in the Kurdistan region. All internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in the Kurdistan region can, for example, get help from a lawyer at the Protection Assistance Centre (PAC) to update their ID card if they are registered in Baghdad or other places which are far away from the Kurdistan region. PAC is run by non-state organisations on behalf of UNHCR. The authorities require that all Iraqis update their ID cards whenever there is a change in their civil status...According to the Iraqi volunteer organisation Public Aid Organization (PAO), which runs the Protection Assistance Centre in Erbil (e-mails January 2011), every Iraqi citizen can give another person power of attorney to obtain new national ID cards for them. This is confirmed by the Iraqi consul in Norway (conversation October 2013) ...There are PAC centres in all provinces.'¹²³

6.3.14 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, dated 7 April 2012, further explained that the 'minimum requirements for the UNHCR or PAC/PARC to identifying [sic] the civil status record are the book page and the page number for the applicant or one of his/her family members. Furthermore, a valid housing card or, in some cases, proof of residency letter, is essential in processing of a civil ID case.'¹²⁴ The source noted that the book page

¹²² Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.18, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹²³ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p.17, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹²⁴ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Re-documentation procedures, 7 April 2012. Available on request.

number was key to locating an ID card. An official from the MoDM advised that the minimum a returnee needed to re-acquire their civil ID card would be a passport (expired or valid). Ideally, they would also know their book page number which most Iraqis did know, or a relative could confirm their identity. UNCHR advised that the minimum requirements for identifying a civil status record was the book page number of one member of the family. Qandil corroborated information that if an individual did not know their page number they could submit their parents' ID.¹²⁵

6.3.15 A UNHCR report, dated May 2016, noted:

'In order to apply for the issuance/renewal of a civil ID card, the person must be able to produce the following documents:

- i. Nationality certificate;
- ii. Housing confirmation issued by the City Council of the area of displacement and legalized by the District Commissioner addressed to the Directorate of Civil Status, or support letter from MoDM;
- iii. Housing card (issued from the person's original location);
- iv. Civil ID card of the individual's father or brother to support his/her claim;
- v. Police report (in case of loss of ID card);
- vi. Displacement confirmation letter (for IDPs from Mosul displaced to Najef).¹²⁶

6.3.16 The source also provided the following information:

'The Civil Status Directorate established for IDPs from Talafar (Ninewa) in Najef does not issue civil ID cards without a support letter from MoDM. However, MoDM provides such a letter only after the IDPs register with MoDM, a process which requires original documents, which most IDPs do not have...

'If a woman's spouse was arrested under Article 4 of Iraq's Anti-Terrorism Law, she cannot obtain a housing card in her name, and, as a result, she would not be able to apply for any documentation...

'In Kerbala, MoDM does not supply IDPs with a displacement confirmation letter based on a decision by the Kerbala Provincial Council.'¹²⁷

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¹²⁵ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Renewal or reissuance of a civil status ID card and provisions to change place of residence in Iraq', 22 January 2012. Available on request.

¹²⁶ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA) in Baghdad for Sunni Arabs from ISIS-Held Areas', May 2016, p.28, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1465288084_575537dd4.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹²⁷ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of an Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative (IFA/IRA) in Baghdad for Sunni Arabs from ISIS-Held Areas', May 2016, fns 167-169, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1465288084_575537dd4.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

6.4 Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC)

- 6.4.1 A report from Landinfo dated 23 January 2014, which cited Nezar Rahmatollah Aziz, General Director of Passport and Nationality in the Kurdistan Region), noted that in accordance with Iraqi law INCs were only produced in Baghdad, but could be issued at General Nationality Directorate local offices found in all provincial capitals. Additionally, the source noted that there were multiple offices located in Baghdad.¹²⁸ A source from the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, undated, noted to replace a card the following procedures applied: '...Apply in writing to obtain a new nationality certificate on the grounds of loss or damage... [and c]omplete an application form which is available at GDN's [General Nationality Directorate] local offices (and Iraqi embassies) and submit the written application letter.'¹²⁹
- 6.4.2 According to the Director-General of the General Nationality Directorate, a person could not obtain an INC via a proxy. However, for people with passports living outside of Iraq, 'a person with power of attorney can retrieve the document on behalf of the applicant', or if the person had no relatives the INC could be sent to an Iraqi Embassy via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹³⁰
- 6.4.3 According to Landinfo, INCs are only issued in Iraq.¹³¹ However, according to an undated source in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was possible to obtain either a new or replacement INC from an Iraqi Embassy:
- 'For applications delivered at embassies, the consul must note the applicant's grounds for application on the back of the application form, along with the applicant's full name, and make sure that the applicant's fingerprints are stamped over the name. The consul must sign this document and seal it with the consulate/embassy stamp. If the applicant needs a renewed nationality certificate because the old one is damaged, the original certificate must be submitted. If the applicant needs a new certificate because the old one is lost, a copy of their father's or brother's nationality certificate must be submitted, with confirmation from the embassy that it is a true copy. ... Copy of their father's and mother's passports must also be submitted and these must also have a "true copy" stamp from the embassy ...' in addition to 4 passport photos and 3,600 Iraqi dinars, approximately 2USD.¹³²
- 6.4.4 The Landinfo report observed that for people with passports living outside of Iraq, a person in Iraq with power of attorney could '... retrieve the document

¹²⁸ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 23, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹²⁹ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, pp. 23-24, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹³⁰ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 24, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹³¹ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 23, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹³² Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 24, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

on behalf of the applicant', or if the person had no relatives in Iraq, the INC could be sent to an Iraqi Embassy via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹³³

- 6.4.5 However, the source indicated that for this was only possible where an individual could prove their identity. The Iraqi Consul in Norway confirmed in a meeting in February 2012 that the Consulate could assist those who want to replace an old document, but were unable to assist 'people who lacked ID documentation'.¹³⁴ Landinfo noted: '...the embassy or consulate cannot forward an application for a new nationality certificate if a person cannot document his/her identity.'¹³⁵
- 6.4.6 For Iraqi nationals living abroad who lacked a passport, an individual would be required to apply for a new INC. According to the Iraqi Foreign Ministry (undated), in addition to submitting various declarations that an individual did not already have a passport, they would also be required to 'submit confirmed copies of their father's or brother's nationality certificate.'¹³⁶

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7. Entry to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

7.1 Entry requirements

- 7.1.1 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, dated 4 December 2014, noted that for those arriving by air at Erbil or Sulamaniya airports were directed to report to the nearest Asayish office to regularise their stay.¹³⁷ The letter noted: 'It is worth re-iterating the point that admission does remain at the discretion of Kurdish immigration and border officials and that temporary restrictions can be imposed and withdrawn without notice.'¹³⁸
- 7.1.2 The Danish fact-finding report observed:
- 'According to Osama Al Hababbeh [a journalist], after being allowed entry into KRI, all IDPs must go to an interview with the Asayish. This procedure was confirmed and explained by Head of General Security Directorate, Asayish, Esmat Argushi who said that, after being registered at the checkpoint and moving to the city, the IDP must register at the Asayish office in the neighbourhood where they want to live. There is an extra procedure to re-register with the Asayish to check that there are no problems. The IDP will then be issued a new card proving legal registration. According to the source, this ID card will permit the IDP to move around freely within KRI. Renewal of the ID card can take place at any Asayish office.'

¹³³ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 24, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹³⁴ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 24, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹³⁵ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, p. 25, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹³⁶ Landinfo, 'Report Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents', 23 January 2014, pp. 24-25, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3369/1/3369_1.pdf, accessed 10 August 2016

¹³⁷ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities', 4 December 2014. Available on request.

¹³⁸ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities', 4 December 2014. Available on request.

'The border crossing points in the initial frontline are controlled by the Peshmerga. Further into the Kurdish controlled areas, at the next checkpoint posted at one of the main roads, the Asayish will register and check the travellers' names and IDs.'¹³⁹

7.1.3 The source also commented on the documents required (by IDPs) to enter the KRI (and Kurdish-controlled areas):

'Three sources pointed to a variety of documents needed in order for IDPs to gain access to KRI and other Kurdish controlled areas. According to Journalist Osama Al Hababbeh, besides a sponsorship, IDPs who want to enter KRI must also show their Iraqi nationality certificate (in Arabic: 'shahadet al-jensiyya'). Journalist Shalaw Mohammed indicated that formerly, the authorities required seeing the nationality certificate and the food ration card to identify the origin of the person in question, and he or she was also asked to provide a Kurdish sponsor. Qandil stated that, officially, it is not possible to cross a checkpoint without ID documents. As sources of ID, IDPs can present their civil ID, their residence card or their nationality certificate in order to cross a checkpoint.'¹⁴⁰

7.1.4 The source also noted:

'Various sources said that IDPs can enter KRI by air. Two of the sources said that Iraqi citizens can enter KRI through the airport without having a sponsor. In addition, IRC said that most IDPs are currently arriving in KRI by plane, and that most of these flights are coming from Baghdad. IOM said that IDPs from Baghdad usually have money to support themselves and would be welcome in KRI, if they arrive by domestic airline, not by car. The international humanitarian organisation further stated that entry through the airports was without problems, but that the IDPs cannot stay indefinitely, and they would have to register by the authorities at the airport. According to UNHCR, short-term residential documents are issued at the airport to those who come by air from abroad or from other places in Iraq and are extended at the place of residence upon issuance of security clearance by Asayish. In this respect, IDPs are able to settle in KRI temporarily. UNHCR and two sources stated different durations of the short-term residence permit. According to two sources, this short-term residence permit is being issued by the Asayish. The international humanitarian organisation explained that a person might be able to get away with not registering upon arrival in the airport, but that person would then not be able to move around freely inside KRI, and an unregistered person would not be able to rent a place to live.'¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), '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', April 2016, pp. 18-19, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

¹⁴⁰ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), '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', April 2016, p.19, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

¹⁴¹ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), 'The Kurdistan Region of Iraq

7.1.5 The source further commented:

'Various sources stated that Iraqi citizens who originate from KRI will not face problems returning to KRI. Some of these sources, however, said that if an Iraqi citizen does not originate from KRI, the person must travel onwards to the area he or she is originally from when arriving through an airport in KRI.

'In this respect, Head of the General Security Directorate, Asayish, Esmat Argushi stated that if the person holds a valid passport, the Kurdish authorities will treat the person as an Iraqi citizen, regardless of whether the person is Kurdish or Arabic. Asked if Iraqi citizens from outside KRI can return from abroad on a voluntary basis via airports in KRI, Esmat Argushi replied that forced return does not take place, and no returnees from Baghdad have been seen yet. However, if a person from Baghdad returning to Iraq from abroad tried to enter KRI, he would be returned to Baghdad by the Kurdish authorities. The same goes for a person from Kirkuk. He would be returned to Kirkuk. Similarly, IOM stated that, for a non-Kurdish Iraqi citizen, it is very difficult to enter directly through one of the airports in Sulaimania and Erbil and take residence in KRI.

'PAO [Public Aid Organisation]/KHRW [Kurdish Human Rights Watch] stated that Iraqi citizens who are not citizens of KRI and who return from abroad, need to get a residence permit, or else they have to leave KRI. PAO/KHRW further explained that if IDPs cannot find a sponsor, they have to leave KRI. Journalist Shalaw Mohammed said that a returnee, who has been offered a contract with a company in KRI willing to sponsor him, may be exempted from this rule. In such case, the returnee may be given security clearance and be allowed to live in KRI...

'Three sources said that ethnic Kurds, including Kurds from Kirkuk who can freely enter KRI, are exempted from the requirement of a sponsor. Human Rights Watch said that it is possible for ethnic Kurds with long residency in Kirkuk to gain access to KRI. With regard to the possibility for Kurds from Kirkuk not only to enter KRI but also to settle, Qandil said that ethnic Kurds have no problem settling in KRI. However, Human Rights Watch found it uncertain if ethnic Kurds from Kirkuk could settle in KRI, and added that there are examples of IDPs who are able to get into Kirkuk but not able to go from Kirkuk to KRI. An international humanitarian organisation said that whether or not ethnic Kurds can gain access to KRI would depend on the political affiliation of the individual person, and that it might still be complicated. Head of General Security Directorate, Asayish, Esmat Argushi, however, said that for ethnic Kurds with long-term residency in Kirkuk, the same procedure for entry into KRI applies as for all other Iraqi citizens.

'UNHCR explained that 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

(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', April 2016, pp.19-20, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

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.¹⁴²

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7.2 Residency requirements

7.2.1 The Danish fact-finding report observed:

‘As regards Iraqi citizens who want to apply for a residence permit, various sources stated that it requires a sponsorship. Two of these sources said that, when a person arrives in KRI, he can stay for one to two weeks as a tourist. The same sources, respectively, explained the procedure for applying for a residence permit, including presenting a sponsor, as follows:

‘PAO/KHRW said that if a person wishes to stay longer [than two weeks] in KRI, he must have a sponsor, and after finding a sponsor who must be publicly employed, the IDP must find a place to live and get a support letter from the local mukhtar. PAO/KHRW added that the sponsor should also get a support letter from the government agency where he is employed to confirm that he is still employed. Further, PAO/KHRW said that the IDP and the sponsor should then approach the local Asayish office with the support letter from the mukhtar, the support letter from the sponsor’s employer and all relevant ID, including the national ID card and the Public Distribution System card. PAO/KHRW said that if the request is denied, there is nowhere to lodge a complaint about the decision.

‘IOM said that if a person wants to stay in KRI for more than one week, the person must register at the local mukhtar’s office and the closest Asayish centre in the area where he stays within the first week of the stay. IOM added that if the person stays in a hotel for more than a week, without intention of settling in the neighbourhood, it is only necessary to have approval from the Asayish, and there is no need for approaching the mukhtar. According to IOM, here, the individual or the head of the family must present a Kurdish sponsor in person, a place of residence in KRI, registration details of the car and full name. To the knowledge of IOM, the family is given a paper with all names of the family members as well as the car registration number, and the one week residence permit will be extended for shorter periods of time until the security clearance by the Asayish is issued.

‘Three sources stated, however, that practice is inconsistent. Two of these sources explained that it is unclear which criteria must be fulfilled to obtain a residence permit. In line with this, Human Rights Watch said that there are different ways to obtain a permit, also depending on the governorate within KRI. IRC said that, for someone who is not connected, the registration for a residence permit in KRI can take a couple of years...

¹⁴² Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), ‘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’, April 2016, pp. 20-21, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

'IOM stated that, with regard to processing of applications for residence permits and the duration of renewed residence permits, the procedure is arbitrarily implemented. According to IOM, sometimes, the temporary residence permit is extended for one week or a month or two months or sometimes even three months during the approval process for a permanent residence. To the knowledge of IOM, the decision may depend on the applicant's background and place of origin.

'According to PAO/KHRW, there is no fixed practice ensuring that an IDP can have a permanent residence permit after five years; it varies from place to place. Long-term residents, including IDPs who have lived in KRI for many years, are treated more favourably than new IDPs. However, PAO/KHRW said that they still need to renew their residence permit every three or six months or once a year, depending on the governorate they live in, and Kurdish IDPs do not have to renew their residence permits; only Arab IDPs do.

'According to the international NGO, a permanent residence permit is a permit of one year, and it is renewable. IOM defined a residence permit as a renewable permit with an initial duration of six months.'¹⁴³

7.2.2 The British Embassy in Baghdad, in a letter dated 4 December 2014, noted:

'A significant change in November is that the previous requirement to have a sponsor who is resident in the Kurdistan Region prior to admission has been removed (allegedly because sponsorships were being openly sold at certain checkpoints) and instead a new procedure is now in operation which requires IDPs to present themselves to the nearest Asayish office for screening and approval. Once approved, IDPs are issued with a residency card that entitles them to move freely within the governorates and rent private houses. Transit opportunities still exist for those who have valid plane tickets. Those arriving by air at Erbil or Sulamaniya airports, are similarly being directed to report to the nearest Asayish office to regularise their stay. It is worth re-iterating the point that admission does remain at the discretion of Kurdish immigration and border officials and that temporary restrictions can be imposed and withdrawn without notice.'¹⁴⁴

7.2.3 The Danish fact-finding mission report observed:

'The Head of the General Security Directorate, Asayish, Esmat Argushi, stated that the sponsorship was abolished in 2012 due to the fact that, in many cases, the sponsor did not know the person he sponsored. Four sources confirmed the abolition of the sponsorship requirement. However, the same sources and an independent researcher indicated that the sponsorship, in practice, is still being enforced. Two sources said that the

¹⁴³ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), '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', April 2016, pp. 16-17, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

¹⁴⁴ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities', 4 December 2014. Available on request.

reason why the sponsorship was abolished was due to the fact that selling sponsorships had become a business...

'Various sources stated that it is possible to enter KRI without a sponsorship, however, in order to work or to settle in KRI, a sponsorship is required in practice. In this respect, IOM stated that, upon arrival at the checkpoints at the land border to KRI or at the airport, Iraqi citizens will be granted a one week residence permit. A western diplomat stated that nobody needs sponsorship to enter KRI, but Iraqi citizens do need a sponsorship in order to work in KRI...

'Two sources explained that, since the end of 2014, the authorities have started imposing the requirement for IDPs to have a sponsor. UNHCR said that access to KRI may be very difficult for IDPs, unless they have some form of sponsorship or a certain ethnic or religious profile and some sort of connection to government officials or people employed with the security forces in the area. In the disputed areas, some forms of a sponsorship are also required.

'As opposed to this, a western diplomat said that a sponsorship is not required when Iraqi citizens come as IDPs. IRC differed slightly from this view in saying that a sponsorship is not imposed on IDPs who are living in camps, whereas for IDPs who are living outside the camps, a sponsorship is imposed...

'Journalist Osama Al Habahbeh said that, even for business trip purposes, a sponsorship is required, unless the person concerned has an official invitation from the authorities. Two sources said that Iraqi citizens who wish to work in KRI must have a sponsorship...

'Three sources stated that, at times of a big influx of IDPs, the requirement of sponsorship is imposed strictly, and access to KRI is restricted. Two of the sources further stated that the sponsorship requirement is not being lifted in situations of religious holidays...

'IOM stated that Kurds, including Kurds from Kirkuk, are exempted from the sponsorship requirement. The international humanitarian organisation said that there are some exemptions to the sponsorship requirement if for instance the IDP concerned needs to enter for medical reasons, or if the IDPs are single women or female headed households with children. UNHCR said that exemptions have been made in cases where local tribal or religious leaders succeeded in negotiating access for certain groups of IDPs to Kurdish controlled areas. UNHCR added that, in Kirkuk, some local leaders, for example, succeeded in negotiating access and temporary residence with the governor...

'With regard to procedural matters, two sources said that the sponsor will have to come to the checkpoint to sign papers guaranteeing for the IDP. Differing from this, Head of the General Security Directorate, Asayish, Esmat Argushi said that, instead of the sponsorship requirement, the authorities are now taking fingerprints and photos of non-KRI residents who are entering KRI, in addition to verifying their documents and checking a database with names of people on the so-called the stop list...

'A lawyer working for an international NGO stated that the procedure for entry into Erbil and Dohuk governorates is different from that of entry into Sulaimania Governorate:

'IDPs wishing to enter Erbil or Dohuk Governorates should present themselves to the checkpoint of entry for approval, and Arab IDPs who are not already in possession of valid residence documents from Erbil Governorate will generally be denied entry at the checkpoint. The lawyer working for an international NGO added that Kurds, Yazidies and Christians are generally permitted entry to Erbil or Dohuk Governorates without pre-existing residence documents. However, during periods of heightened security, these groups may also face increased security restrictions.

'With regard to IDPs wishing to enter Sulaimania, the lawyer working for an international NGO said that they must approach the checkpoint with the required documents, and permission is given to enter in the form of a tourist visa valid for thirty days. The source added that, after these thirty days, the IDP must register at the Bureau of Displacement and Migration (BoDM) and the local mukhtar as well as find a sponsor, depending on whether or not the sponsorship is being enforced at the given time.

'The lawyer working for an international NGO further stated that the procedure in all governorates of KRI is very complex, requiring a number of documents that IDPs might have lost....

'Various sources stated that a sponsor must be a Kurdish citizen. PAO/KHRW further said that the sponsor must be male and employed by the government. PAO/KHRW also said that the requirement of the sponsor being a government employee was imposed in 2012, because the sponsorship had become a business for many people. PAO/KHRW added that the majority of people in KRI are employed by the government. Two sources said that if the IDP, whom the sponsor guarantees for, does something wrong, the sponsor will be arrested and held responsible for the actions of the IDP.

'IRC said that, often, the sponsor is the landlord or the employer of the IDP'.¹⁴⁵

7.2.4 The source also commented on economic opportunities in the KRI:

'Three sources said that the number of job opportunities in KRI is very limited for the host community as well as for IDPs. In this respect, ERC stated that, due to the financial crisis in KRI, even people from the host community are losing their jobs. Three sources indicated that the private sector is affected by the crisis, including the construction business and the oil business. Being among these sources, IRC added that many jobs in the oil sector are occupied by foreign labour.

¹⁴⁵ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), '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', April 2016, pp. 14-16, 18, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

'When asked in which fields IDPs typically find jobs, three sources said that IDPs who manage to get a job will often find it in low-skilled fields, for instance construction or casual work in agriculture or restaurants. IRC further stated that IDPs with an education may be able to find work with NGOs; however, the number of jobs available in this field is low.

'It was stated by three sources that the public sector is not adding new jobs, and three sources pointed to the fact that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has not paid salaries to government employees since June 2015. IOM said that it is not possible to live on a salary of a civil servant under the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) administration. Various sources stated that publicly employed IDPs are still supposed to receive their salary from the central government in Baghdad. Two sources, however, said that as of September 2015, there is a delay in the payment.

'Different figures were given by three sources on the current unemployment rate in KRI, ranging from 6.5 percent to 35 percent.

'Three sources pointed to competition for jobs in KRI between host community members, IDPs and Syrian refugees. Three sources said that IDPs are typically willing and able to work for lower salaries than members of the host community. IOM stated that they, as an organisation, are facing difficulties to find employment for Kurdish returnees who went back to KRI from Europe, as many companies downsize their workforce.'¹⁴⁶

- 7.2.5 Refer to the source directly for information about discrimination against IDPs, and access to housing and financial support for IDPs (pages 53-56).

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7.3 Entry restrictions

- 7.3.1 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, dated 4 December 2014, noted that, despite assurances to the contrary, temporary restrictions had been put in place for IDPs seeking to enter the KRI. The letter highlighted that some IDPs families, mostly Arabs, were refused entry through the Sherawa (Kirkuk – Erbil) and Sheikh Abdul Qader (Mosul – Erbil) entry points. Additionally, people travelling back and forth between the KRI and areas occupied by Daesh had been refused entry. The letter highlighted that this reflected 'the Kurdish authorities continuing concern with regard to possible terrorist activity within the Kurdistan Region of the kind most recently witnessed in Erbil city on 19 November when there was an improvised explosive attack close to the Governor's Office. In the days following the incident, several checkpoints were closed and all IDPs seeking access to the Kurdistan Region were refused entry.'¹⁴⁷

- 7.3.2 The Danish fact-finding mission observed:

¹⁴⁶ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), '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', April 2016, pp. 52-53, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

¹⁴⁷ Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Internal movement/civil documentation and access to essential services in host communities', 4 December 2014. Available on request.

'Various sources said that IDPs are no longer allowed to enter KRI, and that the border is closed. Journalist Shalaw Mohammed further explained that access for IDPs to Kirkuk and KRI stopped in February 2015. According to an example given by Shalaw Mohammed, the reason seems to be that the number of IDPs in some villages exceeded the number of host community inhabitants.

'Two sources pointed to cases of IDPs who were let through the border control. Qandil said that exemptions were made for some humanitarian cases, IDPs already registered with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD), IDPs having a local sponsor, students enrolled at an institution in KRI and single women. UNHCR said that flexibility towards members of the Christian community was seen.

'Two sources said that many IDPs were waiting at the borders at the checkpoints, for instance on the road from Baghdad to Erbil, and that de facto settlements have been established. Osama Al Habahbeh said that the IDPs are sitting outside the checkpoint waiting to find a sponsor who can guarantee for them. IRC said that the local community, sometimes, provides accommodation for the IDPs.

'According to Qandil, the procedures at border crossing checkpoints to KRI are inconsistent. Crossing of humanitarian cases is facilitated by UNHCR in coordination with the Asayish, but by the time of the meeting with Qandil, the daily operation of checkpoints was to a great extent dependent on the officers present at a given checkpoint on a given day and time...

'Journalist Shalaw Mohammed said that for IDPs who wish to enter Kirkuk and KRI through checkpoints at the frontline, the access has currently stopped.

'Three sources, including Head of General Security Directorate, Asayish, Esmat Argushi, said that IDPs will be turned away at the checkpoint in case they are on the stop list of the Asayish...

'Various sources said that IDPs can enter KRI by air. Two of the sources said that Iraqi citizens can enter KRI through the airport without having a sponsor. In addition, IRC said that most IDPs are currently arriving in KRI by plane, and that most of these flights are coming from Baghdad. IOM said that IDPs from Baghdad usually have money to support themselves and would be welcome in KRI, if they arrive by domestic airline, not by car. The international humanitarian organisation further stated that entry through the airports was without problems, but that the IDPs cannot stay indefinitely, and they would have to register by the authorities at the airport. According to UNHCR, short-term residential documents are issued at the airport to those who come by air from abroad or from other places in Iraq and are extended at the place of residence upon issuance of security clearance by Asayish. In this respect, IDPs are able to settle in KRI temporarily. UNHCR and two sources stated different durations of the short-term residence permit. According to two sources, this short-term residence permit is being issued by the Asayish. The international humanitarian organisation explained that a person might be able to get away with not registering upon arrival in the

airport, but that person would then not be able to move around freely inside KRI, and an unregistered person would not be able to rent a place to live.’¹⁴⁸

7.3.3 The report also observed:

‘UNHCR said that checkpoints are present in all parts of the Kurdish controlled areas, and sometimes temporary checkpoints are set up inside cities without prior notice. Correspondingly, an international humanitarian organisation said that there are a lot of checkpoints in KRI and other Kurdish controlled areas but not inside Erbil city. According to the international humanitarian organisation, going from one city to another inside the Kurdish controlled areas, people have to pass checkpoints, at least when they leave one city, and when they enter another. IOM explained that, inside KRI, there are fewer checkpoints to pass than when travelling from the Kurdish controlled areas into KRI, and that the checkpoints within KRI are also easier to pass than the checkpoint bordering KRI. Three sources explained that ad hoc checkpoints may be set up within KRI for security reasons and in order to ransack cars when the authorities receive reports on illegal transport of weapons in the area. Various sources said that checkpoints inside KRI are manned by Kurdish authorities, either military forces or security personnel...

‘An international humanitarian organisation said that, in areas controlled by militias, there will be unofficial checkpoints. In line with this, two other sources said that, outside KRI in the contested areas, there are many unofficial checkpoints manned by tribes and armed opposition groups...

‘Different sources mentioned many types of ID documents that can be used for identification at the checkpoints. Head of the General Security Directorate, Asayish, Esmat Argushi explained that, at the checkpoints inside KRI, the procedure begins with a check of the IDP's ID documents to confirm that the IDP in question is an Iraqi citizen. Three sources stated that IDPs can present the nationality certificate in order to cross a checkpoint. One of these sources along with another source also stated that IDPs can present their civil ID. Qandil, however, stated that, without all the following ID documents, an Iraqi national is not able to travel domestically or pass through checkpoints: a civil ID card (in Arabic: 'al-betaqa as-shakhsiyya', also referred to as 'betaqet al-hawwiyya' or just 'al-hawwiyya'), a nationality certificate (in Arabic: 'shahadet al-jensiyya') and a residence card (in Arabic: 'betaqet al-'iqama').

‘Journalist Shalaw Mohammed said that, before the access to KRI stopped, the authorities also required seeing the food ration card (in Arabic: 'betaqet at-tamween') to identify the origin of the person in question. In addition, IOM said that when passing through a checkpoint, a person may be required to present a passport and sometimes a driving license.

¹⁴⁸ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), ‘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’, April 2016, pp. 18-20, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

'IOM added that, in some cases, it is only the head of household who must present his or her documents, and that some people show their Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) or Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) membership card to facilitate their way through checkpoints. IOM explained that Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) cards might work in Erbil and Dohuk, and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) cards might work in Sulaimania.

'Qandil said that it is sometimes possible for travellers without documents to bribe their way through the checkpoints. Along with UNHCR, Qandil also expressed the view that the required type of ID document depends on ethnicity or religious belief. Qandil explained that the residence card is the most important document for Arabs to cross a checkpoint, whereas Christians, Kurds and Yazidis do not need a residence card to pass through checkpoints. UNHCR further stated that Turkmen and Christian IDPs can use the short-term residency to cross checkpoints.

'IOM said that, on an individual level, IDPs are not turned away at the checkpoints if they have lost their IDs. But if a big group of IDPs without documents are coming to a checkpoint at the same time, they might be placed in an IDP camp. According to Qandil, it is common knowledge that checkpoints cannot be crossed without documents, so few IDPs would attempt this. The only cases of detention connected to checkpoint crossing known to Qandil was detention of people suspected of cooperation with Islamic State. The Baharka IDP camp management said that IDPs without documents moving around in Erbil might become stuck somewhere between checkpoints or become caught at an unexpected checkpoint. According to the Baharka IDP camp management, generally speaking, Sunni Arab and Turkmen IDPs face more problems related to the freedom of movement if they do not possess valid residential documents which are allowing for movement in Erbil Governorate...

'According to Head of General Security Directorate, Asayish, Esmat Agurshi, the ID card will permit an IDP to move around freely within KRI. Various sources, however, stated that IDPs face restriction of movement.

'PAO/KHRW said that if an IDP wishes to move from one part of KRI to another, the person would need the approval from the Asayish office in the place he is leaving as well as the approval of the Asayish office in the place he is moving to. Such approval must be brought to the real estate office. There are no specific criteria for getting such an approval; it depends on the individual officer at the Asayish office. Once an IDP is registered, there should not be need for further approval. However, there is restriction of movement for IDPs. If an IDP is registered in for instance Dohuk, the IDP cannot move to Erbil.

'An international NGO explained that with few exceptions, IDPs cannot move between governorates. IDPs have to stay where they were first registered as IDPs. They will not be allowed to pass through checkpoints between governorates unless they have good connections. Human Rights Watch said that for IDPs already living in KRI, it does not mean that they can move freely within the region. Their residence is restricted to one governorate, and they require an additional permit to cross into another governorate.

'A lawyer working for an international NGO stated that when a bombing happens and Sunnis are found to be behind the bombing, then all of a sudden Sunni Arabs are not able to move freely around KRI anymore.

'According to Qandil, the freedom of movement between the governorates fluctuates depending on the security situation at a given time...

'Two sources said that, in many camps in the Kurdish controlled areas, IDPs have to hand in their civil ID card to the Asayish at the gate when they leave the camp. UNHCR further stated that this presents a challenge to the IDPs with regard to freedom of movement. ERC stated that IDPs are free to leave the camps whenever they want and for example go out and find some work in the surrounding area, however, they have to show their registration cards when they come back. UNHCR stated that IDPs suspected of affiliation with Islamic State are being met with restrictions in their freedom of movement from the Kurdish authorities.

'According to the Baharka IDP camp management, twenty percent of the IDPs were missing some kind of documentation, and IDPs without documents are not only restricted in their freedom of movement but also at risk of being detained. The Baharka IDP camp management added that, when IDPs leave Baharka camp, they have to leave a form of ID with the Asayish. Management of Baharka camp said that, as a consequence, these IDPs typically cannot register with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD). They cannot obtain residential documents and without residential documents, they are not able to work legally as employees in KRI or to rent a house. Qandil informed that no IDPs living in camps have residence permits in KRI. In December 2015¹⁴⁹, UNHCR informed that, in Erbil Governorate, the authorities had just started to issue residencies to IDPs, which means that they will now have freedom of movement.

7.3.4 The source also noted:

'Three sources said that IDPs who have connections to the Kurdish authorities will be able to enter KRI. Two of these sources further stated that IDPs with money will be able to pay small bribes in order to stay legally in KRI.

'Various sources expressed the view that the difficulties that IDPs are meeting are linked to their ethnic profiles. Various sources mentioned Sunni Arabs, Arabs in general, Turkmen and to some extent Shabaks as ethnicities that face denial of entry or varying degrees of difficulties to enter KRI. However, Human Rights Watch said that, for Sunni Arabs and Turkmen, it is still possible to gain access through the airports. A lawyer working for an international NGO said that access to KRI is more difficult for non-Kurdish IDPs. Journalist Osama Al Habahbeh explained that while all Sunnis must

¹⁴⁹ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), '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', April 2016, pp. 21-24, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

have a sponsor to enter KRI, this is not the case for Christians and Yazidis who are fleeing from the south. Also Kurds and Turkmen are exempted from the sponsorship requirement. UNHCR said that Yazidis and Christians do from time to time experience obstacles similar to other ethnic groups but not with regard to entering KRI proper.

‘UNHCR further stated that, since November 2014, any movement of Arab and Turkmen IDPs into Erbil Governorate has been stopped, except for those who already possess residence documents. An international humanitarian organisation, however, said that even if they hold valid Iraqi residence permits all Sunnis are in general denied entry into KRI. UNHCR said that single men and women of Arab ethnicity can enter Erbil through the airport only. At the time at which they enter Erbil airport, they do not need a Kurdish sponsor. At the airport, single men and women will be issued with entry permit for three to five days which is not renewable, unless they are staying in Erbil for work. Therefore, single men and women will not be issued with a short-term residence document (aka tourist pass) unless they have a job in Erbil.

‘Human Rights Watch said that, according to checkpoint officials, the current regulations are that prior Asayish approval is now necessary for Arabs in order to enter KRI by road, whereas before, a Kurdish sponsor was sufficient.

‘PAO/KHRW pointed to the general view of the Kurdish authorities that Sunnis are part of Islamic State until the opposite is proven. According to PAO/KHRW, even Sunni Arabs who have lived in KRI for a long period of time might experience difficulties crossing border checkpoints or checkpoints inside KRI. Similarly, a lawyer working for an international NGO said that the KRI host community, in general, consider Arab IDPs from Anbar Governorate terrorists, until the opposite is proven. UNHCR further said that entry through road checkpoints for Arab, Turkmen and Christian IDP communities is only possible if they have valid, pre-existing residence documents issued by the Erbil Asayish. However, it appears that some flexibility may be exercised at certain road checkpoints towards members of the Christian community. In line with this, two sources said that entry is generally not possible for Sunni Arab IDPs without a sponsor. IOM had also heard that, when the border is normally working, it may be easier for Christians and Yazidis to enter KRI than for Arabs.

‘Two sources expressed a different view in saying that, in general, there is no discrimination. A western diplomat, however, said that further down south near Kirkuk, Diyala and Salah al-Din, the Sunni Arabs do face problems when they try to enter KRI. IOM noted that if a person is not Kurdish, stricter procedures may be applied when entering KRI. Head of the General Security Directorate, Asayish, Esmat Argushi said that young Arab males are not being denied entry.’¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), ‘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’, April 2016, pp. 26-27, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553->

8. Entry to areas outside the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

8.1 Entry restrictions in Kirkuk

8.1.1 The Danish fact-finding report noted:

‘Journalist Shalaw Mohammed said that if IDPs wished to go to Kirkuk, they had to pass through Daquq, a town 47 km south of Kirkuk, and at this checkpoint, ID documents were required to enter Kirkuk. To the knowledge of IOM, however, the Kurdish controlled part of Kirkuk Governorate is closed for entry of people who are not registered in Kirkuk, though the organisation had heard that, somehow, people still manage to enter. In line with this, Qandil said that Arabs will need a residence card to settle in Kirkuk. With regard to ethnic Kurds, Qandil said that they do not need a residence permit in Kirkuk, and that some ethnic groups who are not Kurdish per se, but who have lived in Kirkuk for a longer period of time are, in this regard, considered equal to the Kurds. According to Qandil, this goes for Shabak, Kakai (Yarsanis), Yazidi and Christians. According to Human Rights Watch, Sunni Arabs and Turkmen in Kirkuk with money and connections may be able to get into Kirkuk.

‘Some sources referred to statements on access for IDPs made by the authorities in Kirkuk. Human Rights Watch said that, as regards the access to Kirkuk, the Governor of Kirkuk has stated that Arabs would not gain access. Three sources said that the authorities in Kirkuk had made a statement saying that IDPs from Diayla and Salah al-Din are asked to return to their areas of origin.’¹⁵¹

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8.2 Entry restrictions in Baghdad and the south

8.2.1 A fact sheet from US Aid, dated June 2015, noted:

‘As of early June, IDPs continued to face access restrictions and sponsorship requirements in Babil, Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, and Sulaimaniyah governorates...While acknowledging the legitimacy of security concerns expressed by Iraqi authorities, the Special Rapporteur condemned population movement limitations, documentation and sponsorship requirements, and checkpoints barring IDP entry, as well as the overall lack of humanitarian access, safety, and support afforded to IDPs and other conflict-affected populations countrywide.’¹⁵²

[5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf](#), accessed 9 August 2016

¹⁵¹ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) & Danish Immigration Service (DIS), ‘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’, April 2016, pp. 24-25, <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/4B4E8C12-84B7-4ACB-8553-5E0218C5689A/0/FactfindingreportKurdistanRegionofIraq11042016.pdf>, accessed 9 August 2016

¹⁵² US Aid, Iraq – Complex Emergency, Fact Sheet # 6, Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, 26 June 2015, http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1788_1438001558_iraq-ce-fs06-06-26-2015.pdf, accessed 1 April 2016

- 8.2.2 A Landinfo report of February 2015, quoting the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), wrote that 'restrictions have generally become more frequently imposed by the various provinces, but for Baghdad's part, they don't have information about the duration of the restrictions. Apart from this we know little about the effective dates and who are included in the restrictions.'¹⁵³
- 8.2.3 An article from Human Rights Watch (HRW), dated 30 May 2015, reported that since April 2015 the government imposed restrictions on entry to Baghdad and Babil, affecting just under 200,000 people, and that the KRI also imposed restrictions. The source commented: 'By requiring those who enter to have local guarantors, the restrictions in practice discriminate against Sunni Arabs.'¹⁵⁴
- 8.2.4 The source, quoting Sabah Karhout, an Anbar Provincial Council member, wrote that the 'provincial authorities only allow displaced people to enter if they can present a local resident as a guarantor, or sponsor, at the entry checkpoints.' The article continued:

'One guarantor, who has to personally come to the entry crossing, can vouch for up to four families, the security forces told them. One showed Human Rights Watch a copy of a guarantee – a post-it sticker with a faded Iraqi Army stamp, the handwritten name of the head of the family entering, the number of accompanying family members, and a signature by an army officer, but not the name of the guarantor, which is entered into an electronic database.'¹⁵⁵
- 8.2.5 The source wrote that when Daesh captured Ramadi in May 2015 Baghdad authorities closed the bridge into the city, even for those with a sponsor, although they reinstated the sponsorship system a few days later.¹⁵⁶
- 8.2.6 The source added:

'According to the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internally displaced persons have "the right to seek safety in another part of the country" and "to be protected against forcible return to or resettlement in any place where their life, safety, liberty and/or health would be at risk." On May 15 [2015], Chaloka Beyani, the United Nations special rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, concluded a visit to Iraq, saying that he was disturbed by "reports of IDPs being barred entry" to Baghdad and other areas "on the basis of their identity," and "deeply concern[ed]" about guarantor requirements.'¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Landinfo, 'Iraq: Baghdad – the security situation as of February 2015', 13 February 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55b7563c4.pdf>, p.29, accessed 1 April 2015

¹⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch (HRW), 'Curbs Put War's Displaced at Risk', 30 May 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/29/iraq-curbs-put-wars-displaced-risk>, accessed 1 April 2016

¹⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch (HRW), 'Curbs Put War's Displaced at Risk', 30 May 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/29/iraq-curbs-put-wars-displaced-risk>, accessed 1 April 2016

¹⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch (HRW), 'Curbs Put War's Displaced at Risk', 30 May 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/29/iraq-curbs-put-wars-displaced-risk>, accessed 1 April 2016

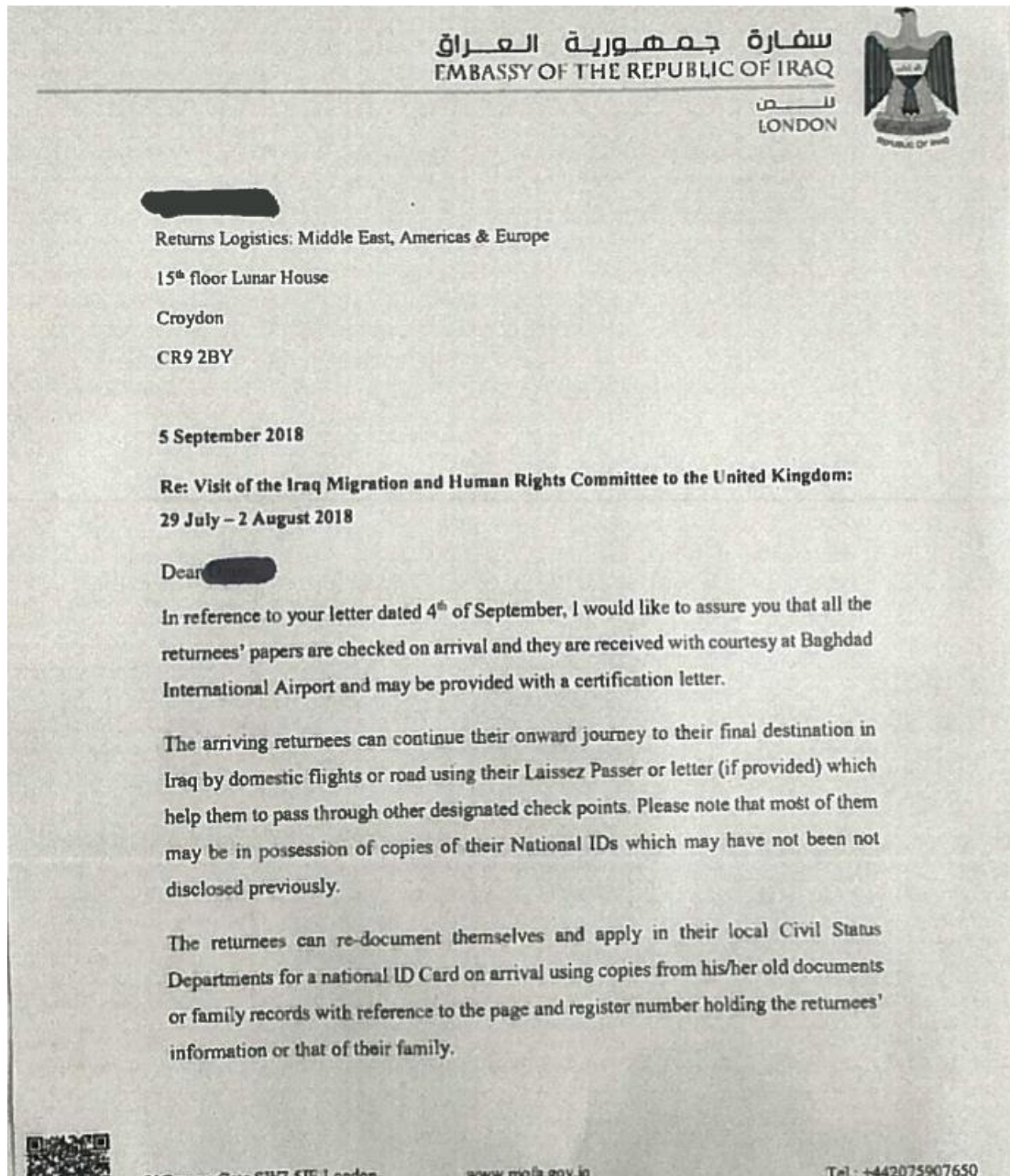
¹⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch (HRW), 'Curbs Put War's Displaced at Risk', 30 May 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/29/iraq-curbs-put-wars-displaced-risk>, accessed 1 April 2016

8.2.7 In May 2015, William Spindler of the UNHCR said: 'Displaced civilians still face serious obstacles at various checkpoints out of Anbar into neighbouring provinces, as local authorities impose restrictions', adding that Babil and Kerbala governorates were closed to displaced people from Anbar. The source also said: 'Onerous requirements for other documentation has also been a concern. UNHCR's partners have spent days helping 600 vulnerable people - many with serious medical conditions or living with disability - get access to Baghdad governorate.'¹⁵⁸

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¹⁵⁸ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'UNHCR concerned at obstacles facing thousands fleeing Ramadi', 29 May 2015, <http://www.unhcr.org/55683c8e9.html>, accessed 1 April 2016

Annex A: Letter from the Iraqi Ambassador to the United Kingdom, 5 September 2018



سفارة جمهورية العراق
EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

لندن
LONDON



We can confirm that all the Civil Status Records are preserved and held [REDACTED] by each Governorate Directorate of Civil Status Affairs and are accessible to assist in determining a returnee's identity with reference to the register and page.

Sincerely,

Dr. Salih Husain Ali

Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the United Kingdom



Annex B: Letter from the Iraqi Embassy of the United Kingdom, 2 October 2018

سفارة جمهورية العراق
EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ
لندن
LONDON



02/10/2018

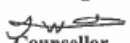
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

In addition to our clarifications outlined in our letter of the 5th of September, please note that same procedures are applied to all the returnees onward travel from Baghdad to KRG or any city in Iraq. the certification letter is issued on a case-by-case and depending on the availability/unavailability documentations (sometimes requested by the returnee), the letter is issued by Baghdad International Airport Police, and contains information about the returnee including name, date of birth and clarification that the returnee landed with a Laissez Passer and his repatriation procedure is completed at the Airport, this letter is sufficient to pass through checkpoints in case of inquiry, please note that in rare occasions they may be questioned at checkpoints. This letter usually not always issued for all the cases, but individually case-by-case. All Civil Status Records have been preserved nationally and there is a central register back up in Baghdad that includes all the civil records of all the provenances in the event of any form of damages or destruction. This civil registration backup (Microfilm) covers all records from 1957.

Representatives from the repatriation committee would be available at Baghdad International Airport and ready to receive a returnee even at the weekends if we are informed in advance that a returnee is on board of a flight. The officers are fully qualified dealing with the repatriation process and they can deal with it with the last minutes notes.

Kind regards


Counsellor
Wael Alrobaaie
Embassy of Iraq - London
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Version Control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **8.0**
- valid from **17 October 2018**

Changes from last version of this note

Changes to policy analysis to reflect new evidence (Annexes)

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