

Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

*Report on issuance of the new
Iraqi ID card*

**Report based on interviews in Erbil and
Sulaimania**



Ministry of Immigration
and Integration

The Danish
Immigration Service



LANDINFO
Country of Origin Information Centre

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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EASO COI Report Methodology.¹ The report is based on approved minutes from meetings with carefully selected sources. Statements from sources are used in the report and all statements are referenced.

This report is not, and does not purport to be, a detailed or comprehensive survey of all aspects of the issues addressed in the report and should be weighed against other available country of origin information on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

The report at hand does not include any policy recommendations or analysis. The information in the report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Danish Immigration Service.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

This report differs from other Landinfo products, as Landinfo does not usually publish reports solely based on meeting records. Landinfo's policy is to include analysis based on both interviews and other sources. An exception is made in this case as the report is a result of a common fact-finding mission.

¹ European Union: European Asylum Support Office (EASO), EASO Country of Origin Information report methodology, 10 July 2012. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ffc33d32.html>

Introduction and methodology

The report at hand is the product of a joint mission conducted by Landinfo, the Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre, Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and the Country of Origin Information Division, Danish Immigration Service (DIS) to Erbil and Sulaimania, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, (KRI) from 22 to 30 April 2018. In the planning phase of the mission, contacts were established with relevant sources who confirmed their availability on the given dates of the mission.

The purpose of the mission was to collect updated information on three issues recurring in cases regarding Iraqi asylum seekers in Denmark:

- Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDP) in the disputed areas, including access to KRI
- Women and men in honour-related conflicts
- Issuance of the new ID card

The present report focuses on the issuance of the new Iraqi ID card.

The terms of reference (ToR) for the mission were drawn up jointly by DIS and Landinfo, in consultation with the Danish Refugee Appeals Board as well as an advisory group on COI ('Referencegruppen').² ToR is included at the end of the report (Appendix 2).

In the scope of compiling this report, the delegation consulted two authorities in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG): the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status and the KRG Ministry of the Interior. The sources interviewed were selected by the delegation based on the expertise, merit and role of each source relevant to the mission. Both sources were consulted in Erbil, KRI.

The notes from the meetings with the sources were forwarded to them for approval, giving them a possibility to amend, comment or correct their statements. None of the sources reacted to several requests given for approval of the notes.

The report is a synthesis of the sources' statements relevant to ToR and does thus not include all details and nuances of each statement. In the report, care has been taken to present the views of the sources as accurately and transparently as possible. Both sources' statements are found in Appendix 1 of this report.

For the sake of reader-friendliness, transparency and accuracy, paragraphs in the meeting minutes in Appendix 1 have been given consecutive numbers, which are used in the report when referring to the statements of the sources in the footnotes. The intention hereby is to make it easier to find the exact place of a statement in the meeting minutes.

The Norwegian Embassy in Amman provided valuable assistance in the planning and execution phases of the mission.

² The group consists of Danish Refugee Council, Amnesty International in Denmark, Danish Institute for Human Rights, Dignity, representatives of two Christian organizations ("Europamissionen" and "Åbne Døre"), the National Commissioner of Police and the Danish Bar and Law Society (representing asylum lawyers).

The research and editing of this report was finalised by 14 September 2018.

The report is available on the websites of DIS and Landinfo, thus available to all stakeholders in the refugee status determination process as well as to the general public.

Abbreviations

COI	Country of Origin Information
DIS	Danish Immigration Service
IDP	internally displaced person
IQD	Iraqi Dinar
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
ToR	Terms of Reference
UDI	Norwegian Directorate of Immigration
USD	United States Dollar

Issuance of the new Iraqi ID card

The national ID card is a new electronic and biometric system for the entire country in which each Iraqi citizen will be given their own personal registration number. The main server of the new ID card is located in Baghdad. The system has been implemented in KRI in the bigger cities. However, the old ID card is still being issued outside the bigger cities.³

The validity of the card is ten years. However, a renewal is required when there is a change in civil status, for instance by marriage or divorce; then a new application must be submitted in order to have a new ID card issued.⁴

Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status, incl. number of branches

There are 43 branches (registration offices) of the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status in Erbil Province. 11 of these branches can issue the new ID card. The remaining branches are still issuing the old type of ID card. So far, approx. 180,000 persons out of a population of 2 million have received the new ID card in Erbil.⁵

Procedure for issuance⁶

Firstly, applicants must download the application form on the Internet.⁷ Secondly, the applicant must fill in the form and sign up for an appointment to visit the local branch of the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status. In Erbil, however, there is an exception in that you do not need to make an appointment, because many citizens do not have an Internet connection.⁸

When submitting the application form, applicants must present their ID card, nationality certificate and residence card (only held by the head of household). These documents will be checked at the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status.⁹

With regard to registration of children under the age of 12, they do not give biometry to get a new National ID card. They only need to have their picture taken. For a child to be registered, the parents must show proof of marriage by the court, and two witnesses. At the age of 12, the child must give full biometry in order to get a new national ID card.¹⁰

³ Ministry of Interior, KRG, Sami Jalal Hussein 22

⁴ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 5

⁵ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 1

⁶ Further information on the procedure of issuance of the new Iraqi ID card can be found in report by Landinfo, *Temanotat Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter*, 11. APRIL 2018, <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Irak-Temanotat-Reisedokumenter-og-andre-IDdokumenter-oppdatering-11042018.pdf>

⁷ Electronic application form can be found on the website of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior / General Directorate of Nationality, <http://www.nid-moi.gov.iq/index.php?name=Pages&op=page&pid=101>

⁸ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 2; Landinfo, *Temanotat Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter*, 11. April 2018, page 21: <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Irak-Temanotat-Reisedokumenter-og-andre-IDdokumenter-oppdatering-11042018.pdf>

⁹ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 3

¹⁰ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 14

All applicants must give fingerprints of all ten fingers, have their iris scanned, and take a colour photo. These data will be stored in the chip placed on the card. Information about a person's religion is also stored in the chip; information about religion does not appear on the ID card.¹¹

When all ID documents have been controlled through three filters, they are sent to Baghdad where the main servers are placed. In Baghdad, a personal identification number is produced for each citizen.¹²

Director Azaz stated that it takes seven to ten days to have a new card issued.¹³ According to the KRG Mol, the processing time is one month.¹⁴

The price for a new ID card is 5,000 Iraqi dinars (IQD)¹⁵. In case the ID card get lost, the price for a reissued ID card is 25,000 IQD; in case the ID card gets lost a second time, the price for a new card will be 50,000 IQD.¹⁶

The extent to which applicant's identity/documents are checked¹⁷

Asked how the authority checks the breeder documents, Director Azaz stated that the employees of the branches in the cities as well as in the rural areas have a lot of experience and that they have received special training. There are many ways to check falsifications. The source added that the registration book at the Civil Affairs Office is also checked. Further asked if the authority ever detected any faked ID cards, Director Azaz answered that the authority has not experienced any problems so far.¹⁸

Possibility for issuance of new ID cards to IDPs

Currently, internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Erbil must go to their place of origin to apply for a new national ID card. There is, however, a plan to open an office for IDPs in Erbil, but it might take more than one year to establish. Director Azaz stated that once this office is established, and, for instance, an IDP from Mosul obtains an ID card from this office, it would appear on the ID card that the card was issued in Mosul. This could potentially cause a problem for IDPs living and getting married in KRI.¹⁹

Possibility for issuance of new ID cards to Iraqis living abroad

Asked what Iraqi citizens abroad can do to either renew an old ID-card or to replace an ID-card that is lost, Director Azaz replied that Iraqi citizens, who live abroad, need to go to Iraq to obtain a new national ID card.²⁰

Possibility for issuance of old ID cards to Iraqis living abroad

An Iraqi citizen abroad, who wants to apply for an old ID card, an ID document that is still in use in Iraq, must go to an Iraqi embassy to have their fingerprints taken. In addition, an applicant must bring a power of attorney, and the three main documents: the old/expiring ID card, the nationality certificate and the

¹¹ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 7

¹² Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 4

¹³ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 6

¹⁴ Ministry of Interior, KRG, Sami Jalal Hussein 22

¹⁵ Corresponds to 4,2 USD.

¹⁶ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 20

¹⁷ Further information on checks of breeder documents can be found in report by Landinfo, *Temanotat Irak: Reisedokumenter og andre ID-dokumenter*, 11. APRIL 2018, <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Irak-Temanotat-Reisedokumenter-og-andre-IDdokumenter-oppdatering-11042018.pdf>

¹⁸ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 10

¹⁹ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 16

²⁰ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 11

residency card (only held by the head of household). The way to prove Iraqi nationality to the embassy is by a power of attorney. The embassy will forward the application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior in Baghdad. The process is very long and can easily take from six months to a year. The source added that there are many problems in the procedure, and that the applicant must give proof of life. When the application is approved, the applicant will be issued an old ID card – not the new national ID card.²¹

²¹ Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status 12

Appendix 1

Director Abdulrahman Ismael Azaz, Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status, Erbil, Ministry of the Interior, Kurdistan Regional Government

The Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status manages three departments: ID card department, Nationality certificate department and Residency department.

Erbil, 25 April 2018

1. Director Abdulrahman Ismael Azaz initially informed the delegation that there are 43 branches (registration offices) of the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status in Erbil Province out of which 11 branches may issue the new ID card. The remaining branches are still issuing the old type of ID card. So far, approx. 180,000 persons out of a population of 2 million have received the new ID card in Erbil. Within 2 years, the new national ID card system will be fully implemented.

Application procedure for the new national ID card

2. Asked about the procedure to apply for the new Iraqi national ID card, Director Azaz explained that applicants must download the application form on the Internet.²² The next step is to fill in the form and sign up for an appointment to visit the public desk at the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status. In Erbil, however, there is an exception in that you do not need to make an appointment, because many citizens do not have access to the Internet.
3. When submitting the application form, applicants must present their ID card, nationality certificate and residence card (only held by the head of household). These documents are checked at the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status.
4. When all ID documents have been controlled through three filters, they are sent to Baghdad where the main servers are placed. In Baghdad, a personal identification number is produced for each citizen.
5. The new national ID card is valid for ten years. Renewal, however, is required when there is a change in civil status, for instance when married or divorced; then a new application must be submitted in order to have a new ID card issued.
6. Director Azaz explained that in Erbil approximately 750 ID cards are issued on a daily basis. The duration to issue a new card is seven to ten days. The cards are printed on a laser printer at a special location in Baghdad Airport and sent to Erbil. The Kurdish authorities wish to have a printer of their own placed in KRI.

²² Electronic application form can be found on the website of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior / General Directorate of Nationality, <http://www.nid-moi.gov.iq/index.php?name=Pages&op=page&pid=101>

Information on the new national ID card

7. There is a chip on the card in which 25 pieces of information is stored, for instance, all ten fingerprints, the iris scan and a scanned colour photo as well as information on the religion of the card holder.
8. All information is now stored on a server in Baghdad, but Director Azaz wishes that the KRI can have its own data server. There is a dialogue going on with the federal government in Baghdad on this issue.
9. Director Azaz also noted that 3 million Iraqis of the older generation had their birthdate decided to be 1 July, since the authorities at the time did not register the birth immediately.

Checks on the breeder documents

10. Asked how the authority checks the breeder documents, Director Azaz stated that the employees in the branches in the cities as well as in the rural areas have a lot of experience and that they have received special training. There are many ways to check falsifications. The source added that the registration book at the Civil Affairs Office is also checked. Further asked if the authority ever detected any faked card, Director Azaz answered that the authority has not experienced any problems so far.

Can Iraqi citizens abroad apply for a new national ID card?

11. Asked what Iraqi citizens abroad can do to either renew an old ID-card or to replace an ID-card that is lost, Director Azaz replied that Iraqi citizens, who live abroad, need to go to Iraq to obtain a new national ID card.
12. An Iraqi citizen abroad who wants to apply for an old ID card, an ID document that is still in use, must go to an Iraqi embassy to have their fingerprints taken. In addition, an applicant must bring a power of attorney and the three main documents: the old/expiring ID card, the nationality certificate and the residency card (only held by the head of household). The way to prove Iraqi nationality to the embassy is by a power of attorney. The embassy will forward the application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior in Baghdad. The process is very long and can easily take from six months to a year. The source added that there are many problems in the procedure and that the applicant must give proof of life. When the application is approved, the applicant will be issued an old ID card – not the new national ID card.

Registration at civic registry (Civil Affairs Office)

13. As layed out in the Article 14 of the National Card Law of 2016, members of a family can ask for a *Sorat al Qaid* (an expression in Arabic for proof that the person is registered in Iraq). A person who is not a member of the family will need a power of attorney.
14. With regard to registration of children under the age of 12, they do not give biometry to get a new National ID card. They only need to have their picture taken. For a child to be registered, the parents must show proof of marriage by the court and two witnesses. At the age of 12, the child must give full biometry in order to get a new national ID card.

Implementation of the new national ID card in Erbil

15. The Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status in Erbil issued new national ID cards to 25 percent of the citizens; while in Baghdad, 75 percent of the populations already got their new national ID card.
16. With regard to IDPs in Erbil, they must go to their place of origin to apply for a new national ID card. There is a plan to open an office for IDPs, but it might take more than one year to establish. Director Azaz further said that when this office is established, and, for instance, if an IDP, who is from Mosul, obtains an ID card from this office, it would appear on the ID card that the card was issued in Mosul. This could potentially cause a problem for IDPs living and getting married in KRI.
17. For disabled or very old people, the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status may go to the home of the person to register him or her there. The office will bring a mobile laptop and equipment to take the person's biometrics in their home.

Visit to the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status, Erbil, the public desk

18. Director Azaz and his staff gave the delegation a tour at the public desk of the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status, where the registration takes place.
19. In the procedure, the first step is carried out by one officer who checks the ID cards and nationality certificates; then the case is passed to a second check before the photo and fingerprints were taken. In some difficult cases, the papers were checked again by a specialist.
20. The price for a new ID card is 5,000 Iraqi dinars (IQD)²³. In case the ID cards get lost, the price for a reissued ID card is 25,000 IQD; in case the ID card gets lost a second time, the price for a new card will be 50,000 IQD.
21. During the visit at the case handling offices, the delegation visited the office where the staff is scanning all the family registers. In case a person needs a print-out of his family register, he or she can obtain it at the central office in Erbil city, and does not need to go to his or her place of origin.

Director General, Ministry of Interior, KRG, Sami Jalal Hussein

Erbil, 23 April 2018

22. The national ID card is a new electronic and biometric system for the whole country in which each Iraqi citizen will be given their own personal registration number. The main server of the new ID card is placed in Baghdad. The system has been implemented in KRI in the bigger cities. However, the old ID card is still being issued outside the bigger cities. Five years has been given to implement the system in the whole country. The data is being collected in the provinces and sent to Baghdad where the card is being printed. The issuing process is one month.

²³ Corresponds to 4,2 USD.

Appendix 2 Terms of Reference

Report on issuance of the new Iraqi ID card

1. Short introduction to the issuing authority, Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status, incl. number of branches
2. Procedure for issuance: Date and places of issuance as well as processing time and price
3. Documents required for issuance of new ID card
 - a. The extent to which applicant's identity/documents are checked
4. Possibility to obtain new ID card on the basis of forged ID card and passport (i.e. obtained on the basis of false identity)
5. Possibility for issuance of new ID cards to Iraqis living abroad