



European Asylum Support Office

EASO Country of Origin Information Report

Iraq Key socio-economic indicators



February 2019

SUPPORT IS OUR MISSION



EASO

Country of Origin
Information Report

Iraq

Key socio-economic
indicators

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Estonia, Estonian Police and Border Guard Board

Hungary, Immigration and Asylum Office, Centre for Documentation

Additionally, the following individual expert reviewed this report:

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

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Disclaimer

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

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

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

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

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

The drafting of this report was finalised 9 January 2019. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).

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

Glossary and Abbreviations

BHSP	Basic Health Services Package
CEDAW	UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
ILA	Integrated Location Assessment
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IQD	Iraqi Dinar
ISIS, ISIL, IS, Daesh	The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Islamic State (IS), or Daesh
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party, Kurdish political party in Iraq
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex persons
MoMD	Ministry of Migration and Displacement
NCCI	NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq
PDS	Public Distribution System
PHCC	Primary Health Care Centre
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party, a Kurdish armed movement in Turkey
PMU or PMF	Popular Mobilisation Units, also called Popular Mobilisation Forces, or Hashd al Shaabi
PUK	The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Kurdish political party in Iraq
<i>Takfiri</i>	An Arabic word meaning 'unbeliever'; extremist Islamist ideology employed by ISIL to declare individuals as apostates or impure
YPG	Kurdish People's Defense Units
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

<i>Wasta</i>	Networks of support based on patronage
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Introduction

This report was drafted by the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (Department of Documentation and Foreign Cooperation) together with the EASO COI sector.

The report aims to provide information on key socio-economic indicators in Iraq focusing on Basrah, Erbil, and Baghdad, and highlighting aspects of the situation of women and IDPs in those areas. Such information is relevant for international protection status determination (PSD; refugee status and subsidiary protection). The terms of reference can be found at the end of this report. This report is focused on socio-economic aspects only; issues of access/entry/freedom of movement are not covered in this report. Those aspects are covered under the EASO COI Report on Iraq: Internal mobility.

This report should be read in conjunction with the EASO COI report, [EASO COI Report - Iraq: Internal mobility](#), which provides additional information on issues of access, freedom of movement, relocation, and civil documentation, as well as practical and legal requirements for entry and residence.

Methodology

The definition of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the report was based on the Iraqi context, taking into account a survey sent to EU+ countries² prior to the development of the ToR. Outcomes of the survey were taken into account in the development of the ToR. It was determined that the report will concentrate information on the main urban areas of Basrah, Erbil, and Baghdad, within the relevant national context. Members of the EASO COI Specialist Network and the EASO Country Guidance Network were consulted and gave input on the ToR prior to its finalisation.

Information in the report is the result of desk research of public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources over the period of July 2018 – August 2018, and additional information was added as part of a quality review in August - September 2018 by EU+ COI experts, EASO, and an external reviewer, Dr Geraldine Chatelard. This quality review process led to the identification of several key points for improvement and a second review by Dr Chatelard and EASO during December 2018. For quality control purposes, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and experts listed in the [Acknowledgments](#) section of this report. All comments made by reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report. During this quality review process, new information was included. Furthermore, two newly published key sources (IOM Integrated Location Assessment III and UNOCHA's Humanitarian Needs Overview for Iraq – 2019) were added after the review process ended, as these were key sources in the original draft that required updating.

The general time frame set for the content of this report was to capture trends in 2017-2018, referencing relevant context related to the ISIL conflict since 2014. Drafters noted that not all sources clearly indicated whether information related to Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) or not. Sometimes a distinction is noted in the source, while at other times it was not. Where possible, the distinction is made in the report.

² EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland

Structure and use of the report

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

The report is divided into chapters relating to relevant sectors: economic overview, employment and livelihoods, poverty, food/water security, housing and living conditions, health, education, support and assistance, and (informal) networks of support. Within each chapter, there is general information, and where available, specific city or governorate level information for Basrah, Erbil, Baghdad, as well as for women, children, and IDPs.

Map



Map No. 3835 Rev. 6 UNITED NATIONS
July 2014

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

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

1. Country overview

1.1. Demographics

Accurate and updated demographic figures for Iraq are not available. Those that are available are only estimates and post-2003 efforts to collect full census data have been hindered by insecurity, internal displacement and capacity problems.³ In 2015 the United Nations (UN) estimated that Iraq has 36 115 649 inhabitants. This includes the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).⁴ The UN states that as of 2017 the population was estimated to be 38 375 000 people⁵ and the US estimated in 2018 it was 40 194 216 inhabitants.⁶

Iraq has a very high proportion of young people, with about 39 % of the population aged between 0 and 14 years old.⁷ More than 70 % of the population lives in an urban environment, with much of the population concentrated in the north, central and eastern parts of Iraq, mainly around the larger urban centres. The major cities are the capital Baghdad (6.6 million inhabitants), Mosul (1.5 million), Basrah (1.3 million), Kirkuk (0.9 million) and Erbil and Najaf (both 0.8 million).⁸

The country is administratively divided into 18 governorates, with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah, Erbil) governed as an autonomous region by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).⁹

The three largest demographic groups in Iraq are Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds.¹⁰ It is estimated that 75-80 % of the inhabitants are Arab and 15-20 % are Kurdish. Minority groups include those such as Turkmens, Yazidis, Shabaks, Kaka'is, Bedouins, Romanis, Assyrians, Circassians, Sabaeen-Mandaens and Persians. Islam is the country's official religion, with 95-98 % of the population being Muslim (roughly 64-69 % Shia and 29-34 % Sunni). Christians make up between 1 and 5 % of the population.¹¹

The majority of the population of the KRI identifies ethnically as Kurdish and is of Sunni Muslim religion. Kurdish is the most widely spoken language in the KRI.¹² The most widely spoken language in the rest of the country is Arabic. Few Iraqis speak both Arab and Kurdish. This amounts to a language divide between north and south, though there has been some overlap,¹³ for example, Baghdad has a large Kurdish community that speaks both languages.¹⁴ Kurds in Baghdad number about 300 000 according to Kurdish media source, Rudaw.¹⁵

³ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 7

⁴ UN, World Population Prospects: the 2017 Revision, [url](#)

⁵ UNSD, UNdata, Country Profile – Iraq, n.d. [url](#)

⁶ US, CIA, The World Factbook; Iraq; Economy, 15 November 2018, [url](#)

⁷ US, CIA, The World Factbook; Iraq; Economy, 15 November 2018, [url](#)

⁸ US, CIA, The World Factbook; Iraq; Economy, 15 November 2018, [url](#)

⁹ US, CIA World Factbook – Iraq, n.d. [url](#)

¹⁰ MRG, Iraq, May 2018, [url](#)

¹¹ US, CIA World Factbook – Iraq, n.d. [url](#)

¹² Encyclopaedia Britannica, Kurd, 21 September 2018, [url](#); IWPR, Arabic-Kurdish Language Divide, 21 July 2006, [url](#)

¹³ IWPR, Arabic-Kurdish Language Divide, 21 July 2006, [url](#)

¹⁴ IWPR, Arabic-Kurdish Language Divide, 21 July 2006, [url](#)

¹⁵ Rudaw, Baghdad's Kurdish population sees dramatic decline, official data shows, 9 April 2016, [url](#)

1.2 Humanitarian context

For more detailed information on civil documentation and other issues relating to relocation, this report should be read in conjunction with the EASO COI report, [EASO COI Report - Iraq: Internal mobility](#).

Iraq has seen recent decades of successive conflict, namely with the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), the invasion of Kuwait by the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein in 1990, which triggered the First Gulf War and international sanctions; the 2003 invasion by a US-led coalition against Saddam Hussein followed, including subsequent domestic battles, high levels of civil and sectarian conflict after the downfall of the Baathist party in 2003, instability, the ‘Arab Spring’, and the arrival of Syrian refugees into Iraq due to the 2011 conflict in Syria. In 2013-2014 the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) started to take possession of Iraqi territory, which marked the beginning of a conflict period through 2014-2017; ISIL lost possession of its last territory in Iraq at the end of 2017.¹⁶

In 2014, the Salafi jihadist group Islamic State of Iraq in Syria and Levant (ISIL) conquered one third of Iraq’s territory and forced the sudden collapse of Iraq’s state security forces.¹⁷ Between June 2014 and December 2017, in the territories it attacked and controlled, ISIL applied a ‘sustained and deliberate policy of executing civilians’ as a means of exerting control and instilling fear. The group committed mass killings, targeted civilians and imposed strict codes of social behaviour, killing those not in conformity with their Islamic *Takfiri* (‘unbeliever’, an extremist Islamic ideology to declare individuals as apostates or impure) doctrines.¹⁸ The UN found that ISIL’s targeted violence against civilians and minorities in particular may constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide.¹⁹ The conflict and military interventions sparked an internal displacement crisis in Iraq, and opened further deep distrust in the population.²⁰

After three years of military campaigns, in December 2017, Prime Minister al-Abadi declared that ISIL was defeated²¹ and Iraqi territory was liberated from them, though the situation remains unstable and they continue to carry out targeted attacks against civilians²² and asymmetric attacks across Iraq.²³ Civilians continue to be subjected to conflict-related violence, with 8 079 casualties in 2017, totalling 85 123 from June 2014 to the end of 2017.²⁴

¹⁶ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Iraq, 25 October 2018, [url](#)

¹⁷ International Crisis Group, Iraq’s Paramilitary Groups: The Challenge of Rebuilding a Functioning State, 30 July 2018, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on her mission to Iraq, 14 to 23 November 2017 (A/HRC/38/44/Add.1), 5 June 2018 [url](#), pp. 4-5

¹⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on the human rights situation in Iraq in light of abuses committed by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated groups (A/HRC/28/18), 13 March 2015, [url](#), p. 5

²⁰ MRG, Iraq, May 2018, [url](#)

²¹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on her mission to Iraq, 14 to 23 November 2017 (A/HRC/38/44/Add.1), 5 June 2018, [url](#), pp. 3-4

²² USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), p. 1; UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – July to December 2017, 8 July 2018, [url](#), p. 1

²³ UN Secretary-General, Implementation of resolution 2367 (2017) – Report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/359), 17 April 2018, [url](#), para. 18

²⁴ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq – July to December 2017, 8 July 2018, [url](#), p. vi

1.2.1 Humanitarian needs

According to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) humanitarian response system, as of November 2017, the situation in Iraq was categorised as 'Level 3' (L3)²⁵, a response level 'activated in the most complex and challenging humanitarian emergencies, when the highest level of mobilization is required'.²⁶ One month after the conclusion of the military operations against ISIL in December 2017, the L3 emergency response for Iraq was 'deactivated'.²⁷ UNOCHA stated that during 2018 the humanitarian operation in Iraq will contract significantly, focusing on the most vulnerable people.²⁸

In response to Iraq's significant reconstruction needs in liberated areas following the ISIL conflict, the Iraqi government put in place a 'comprehensive reconstruction package' to address stabilisation needs in the main governorates affected.²⁹ In July 2018, regarding the funding of Iraq's humanitarian response plan, UNOCHA stated that at the end of that month, donors had contributed USD 362.3 million (EUR 319 million), filling 41 % of the required budget of USD 569 million (EUR 501 million) for Iraq's humanitarian response plan.³⁰ As of 6 October 2018, 60.3 % of the budget requirements were funded.³¹ The main funding gaps are around food, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene; as well as non-food items.³² UNOCHA stated that if funding requirements were not met, critical humanitarian programs closures would impact 'the most vulnerable Iraqis'.³³

In February 2018, UNOCHA assessed that an aggregate number of 8.7 million persons was in need in Iraq. This included 1.5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), 2.1 million returnees and 3.8 million 'highly vulnerable residents', which was defined as families living in camps or substandard accommodation. UNOCHA specified that the number of 8.7 million is not absolute since persons may be counted under more than one category.³⁴ The February 2018 OCHA report also notes that there were 14 million people living in 'conflict-related areas' (down from 15 million in December 2016).³⁵ Out of the estimated 8.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in February 2018, 3.8 million (44 %) were 'highly vulnerable residents in host communities', 4.2 million (48 %) were children, 0.4 million (5 %) were elderly (aged 59 and over), 4.3 million (50 %) were female.³⁶ By November 2018, UNOCHA assessed that the 8.7 million figure had dropped to 6.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection (18 % of Iraq's population); however, this included (overlapping categories): 3.3 million children under 18, 3.3 million women and girls, 2 million IDPs (about 1.5 million outside camps (70 %) and 480 000 in IDP camps), 4 million returnees, 389 000 people in 'host communities' and 251 000 refugees.³⁷

UNOCHA reported in February 2018 that nearly 80 % of those 8.7 million people were concentrated in Ninewa, Kirkuk, and Anbar governorates, as Ninewa 'remains the epicentre of the crisis' at the time of the February 2018 plan. Forty-six percent of those people in need were in Ninewa (4 million), with 1.6 million in Kirkuk, including in Hawija, and another 1.3 million in Anbar.

²⁵ IASC, L3 IASC System-wide response activations and deactivations. 1 November 2017, [url](#)

²⁶ UNOCHA, Current emergencies, n.d., [url](#)

²⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, p. 14, [url](#)

²⁸ UNOCHA, Iraq 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, February 2018, p. 12, [url](#)

²⁹ Iraq, Reconstruction and Investment, February 2018, [url](#), pp. 2-3

³⁰ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Bulletin, July 2018, [url](#), p. 4

³¹ UNOCHA, Iraq 2018 Humanitarian response plan, Financial Tracking Service [url](#)

³² UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Bulletin, July 2018, [url](#), p. 4

³³ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Bulletin, July 2018, [url](#), p. 4

³⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) pp. 2, 5, 8

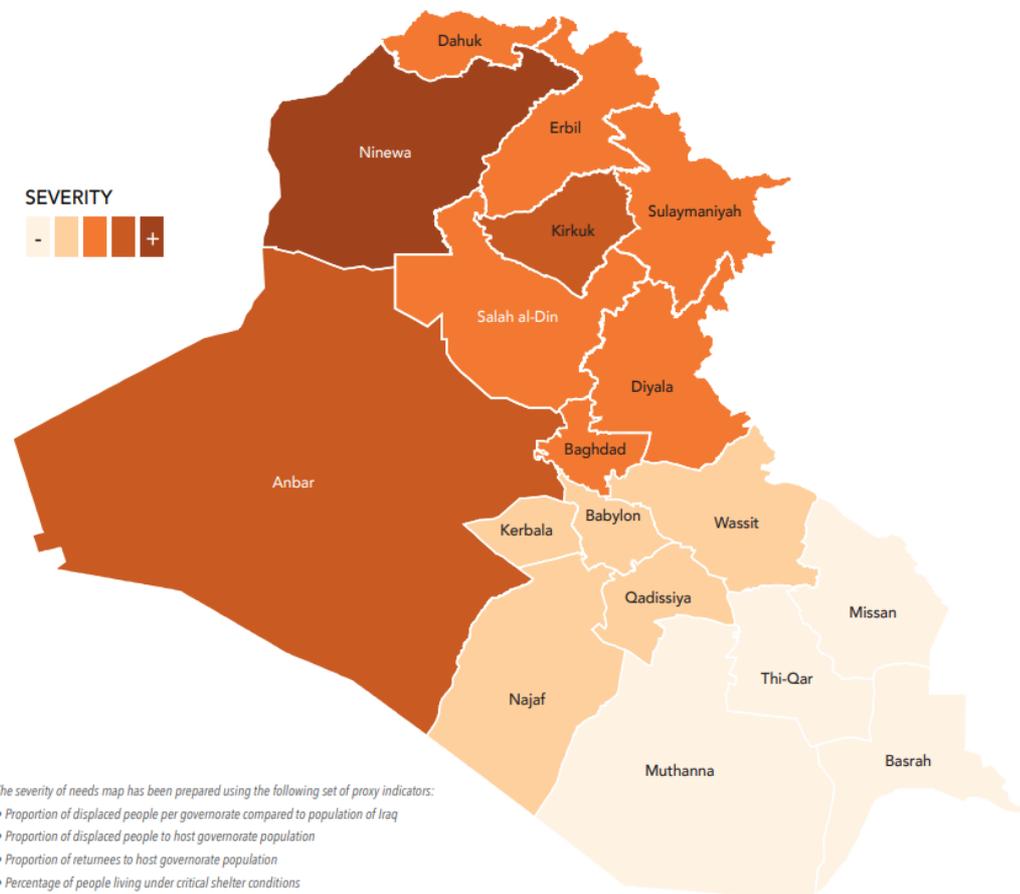
³⁵ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 6

³⁶ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 9

³⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 4

In 2017, thirty percent of all IDPs were concentrated in KRI, along with 226 000 Syrian refugees.³⁸ By November 2018, UNOCHA's 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview continues to show that Ninewa has the most people in need with 30 % (2 168 222 million), followed by Anbar (1 352 562 million), Salah al-Din, Dahuk, Erbil, and Kirkuk.³⁹ Ninewa also had the highest number of returnees in December 2018 (38 %), followed by Anbar (32 %), but also experiences the highest severity in terms of lack of humanitarian access. UNOCHA in December 2018 reported that the highest severity hotspots for returnees were in Ninewa, Salah al Din, Kirkuk, Diyala, and Anbar.⁴⁰ They deem 'high severity' to be based on indicators of lack of livelihoods, basic services, social cohesion, or security'.⁴¹

In February 2018, UNOCHA produced a map on the severity of humanitarian needs based on the proportion of displaced persons in the governorate, the proportion of displaced people being hosted, and the proportion of returnees to host population, as well as the percentage of people living in critical shelter conditions.⁴²



Map: UNOCHA Severity of needs map, February 2018⁴³

³⁸ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 10

³⁹ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), pp. 2, 6

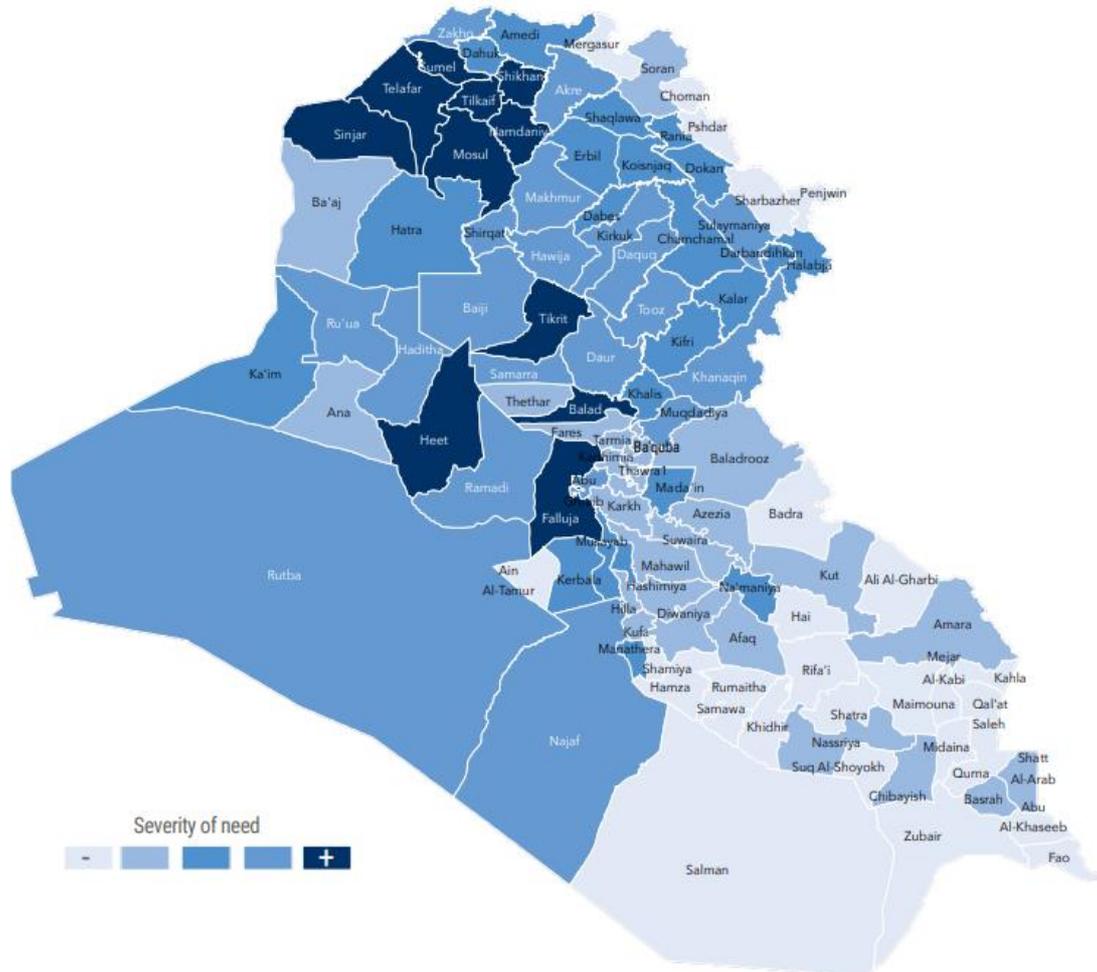
⁴⁰ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁴¹ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁴² UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 10

⁴³ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 10

In December 2018, UNOCHA published an updated map of severity of needs, based on a composite of indicators that weigh the humanitarian profile and population movements in the area, basic services, livelihoods, overall return conditions and displacement, accessibility, safety and security. The December 2018 severity of needs map indicates that the ‘most urgent needs’ are in areas of past hostilities where infrastructure has been most damaged, services have broken down, social cohesion is eroded, and a sizeable displaced population is present:⁴⁴



Source: Severity of needs is established based on a composite index of 12 indicators structured across four domains definitive of the current humanitarian crisis. This is further explained in the methodology section. Data comes from MCNA, IOM DTM, ILA, and cluster-specific sources. Analysis above was complemented with MCNA VI Severity Index and IOM/DTM Returns Index.

Map: UNOCHA severity of needs map, December 2018⁴⁵

⁴⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁴⁵ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

1.2.2 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees

Conflict with ISIL led to large-scale displacements in Iraq, and post-2014, the situation has been described as complex, given the mixture of large-scale movements of populations during several waves of conflict, as a result of ISIL, military operations against it, or both.⁴⁶ However, Iraq also has historically been affected by displacement, and before the start of the ISIL crisis there were already more than 2 million IDPs in Iraq. In 2017, 1.85 million returnees were recorded, and at the end of 2017, there were 2 648 000 IDPs in Iraq.⁴⁷ After ISIL was officially declared by the government of Iraq to have been ‘defeated’ in December 2017, the displacement crisis shifted and the number of returnees began to exceed the number of IDPs for the first time since the beginning of the crisis.⁴⁸ As of August 2018, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded more than 1.9 million IDPs and more than 4 million IDP returnees.⁴⁹ By October 2018, there were 1 866 594 million families displaced and 4 113 624 returnees, showing a slowdown in the pace of displacement and returns.⁵⁰ Overall IDP numbers decreased since 2017, and decreases have been recorded across all governorates hosting IDPs, particularly in Baghdad, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, but not Sulaymaniyah.⁵¹ In October 2018, IOM reported that the governorates with the highest numbers of IDPs were Ninewa, Dahuk, Erbil, Salah al Din, Sulaymaniyah, and Kirkuk.⁵²



Figure: IOM - Number of IDPs and returnees from April 2014 to October 2018⁵³

⁴⁶ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁷ IDMC, Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁸ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 13

⁴⁹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 102, August 2018 [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁰ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 106, October 2018 [url](#), p. 1

⁵¹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 6

⁵² IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 106, October 2018 [url](#), p. 1

⁵³ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 106, October 2018 [url](#), p. 1

GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT	GOVERNORATE OF ORIGIN								
	ANBAR	BABYLON	BAGHDAD	DIYALA	ERBIL	KIRKUK	NINEWA	SALAH AL-DIN	TOTAL
ANBAR	66,000	3,234	144	-	-	-	522	174	70,074
BABYLON	876	14,742	300	48	-	12	3,486	198	19,662
BAGHDAD	44,850	5,022	564	1,962	-	600	17,028	5,022	75,048
BASRAH	1,542	132	174	222	-	732	2,586	2,484	7,872
DAHUK	462	-	126	-	-	90	346,032	522	347,232
DIYALA	1,218	540	690	53,094	-	162	618	5,976	62,298
ERBIL	71,514	-	4,932	1,362	6,168	16,308	92,562	20,556	213,402
KERBALA	588	924	150	138	-	300	20,508	114	22,722
KIRKUK	4,566	120	828	4,620	-	65,532	14,346	23,676	113,688
MISSAN	168	36	156	96	-	576	1,362	348	2,742
MUTHANNA	138	6	126	30	-	96	714	96	1,260
NAJAF	156	-	-	42	-	90	14,940	36	15,264
NINEWA	102	-	-	-	-	11,166	570,132	3,120	584,520
QADISSIYA	318	-	282	90	-	1,494	9,672	156	12,012
SALAH AL DIN	840	-	-	1,506	-	19,212	1,848	128,614	151,920
SULAYMANIYAH	25,470	10,332	21,300	27,816	-	9,870	14,748	41,334	150,876
THI-QAR	954	24	12	72	-	606	2,424	222	4,038
WASSIT	954	120	174	624	-	822	8,292	1,032	12,018
TOTAL	220,440	35,232	29,958	91,722	6,174	127,668		233,580	1,866,594

Figure: IOM - IDP Movements per governorate of origin and governorate of displacement, October 2018⁵⁴

Most IDPs come from Anbar and Ninewa, with higher rates of return to Anbar than to Ninewa, as of September 2018.⁵⁵ The vast majority of IDPs are living outside of camps in ‘protracted displacement’ according to an IOM/REACH assessment conducted in 2016⁵⁶ and IOM reported that 70 % were ‘out camp’ in October 2018, with 3 % in ‘critical shelters’.⁵⁷ According to the report 3 % of IDP populations were hosting at least one accompanied minor, though this was highest in Salah al-Din, where the proportion rose to 10 %. Pregnant/lactating women made up 14 % and minors made up 51 % of those living outside camps in protracted displacement situations.⁵⁸

IOM notes that certain IDP households were more vulnerable than others in their ability to return and find durable solutions to displacement, including low income people, female-headed households, child-headed households, people with disabilities, and people of certain ethnic, religious, or tribal identities.⁵⁹ The most frequently cited vulnerabilities in IOM’s ILA III (December 2018) were IDPs and returnees who were persons with disabilities, female- and minor-headed households.⁶⁰

IDPs who relocated to the south reported to IOM that they are ‘mainly integrated’ due to the safety and presence of family and extended networks, while those in north-central areas are mostly ‘involuntarily’ relocated there, having lost everything and having no means to return. IOM remarked that ‘safety, services, and job opportunities’ were the reasons for relocating to KRI.⁶¹

⁵⁴ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 106, October 2018 [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁵ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁵⁶ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), p. 12

⁵⁷ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 106, October 2018 [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁸ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), p. 12

⁵⁹ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), p. 18

⁶⁰ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 6

⁶¹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 6

Among the IDPs who remained displaced according to its January 2019 Integrated Location Assessment III, IOM reported that 48 % are hosted within their governorate of origin, 35 % are hosted in the KRI, 14 % are in northern-central governorates, and 3 % are hosted in the south. Nearly half of current IDPs have been displaced for more than 3 years, 38 % for 1-3 years, and 8 % less than a year.⁶² IDPs in ‘protracted displacement’ faced depleted financial resources; limited availability of livelihoods for IDPs has negatively impacted their access to essential services, food, health, and shelter, which remained important priorities for IDPs, in addition to healthcare access.⁶³ IOM remarked in its January 2019 report that ‘basic needs are not yet satisfied for most returnees and IDPs’ and are generally more important than recovery needs such as compensation for lost documents, or rights violations.⁶⁴ IDPs were mainly concerned with employment/livelihoods and associated difficulties accessing food, household items and shelter; while returnees were primarily concerned with health, water, education, as well as employment.⁶⁵

IOM’s ILA III found that obstacles to return cited by IDPs were destroyed housing (71 %), lack of jobs at home (54 %), insecure/unsafe area of origin (40 %), fear of ethno-religious demographic change (27 %), lack of money for the trip (19 %), fear of loss of aid/humanitarian assistance (18 %), security forces blocking return (16 %), lack of services in area of origin (11 %), no information on situation in area of origin (3 %), their house being inhabited (2 %), or lack of documentation/unable to replace documents (1 %).⁶⁶

Returnees

In June 2018, IOM observed that since July 2016, during the intensification of the campaign against ISIL, returns have been sustained, ‘with the periods October –November 2016 (aftermath of the offensive to retake the Anbar districts of Ramadi, Heet and Fallujah as well as eastern districts of Ninewa), May–June 2017 (Mosul operations) and September–December 2017 (last advance of the retaking campaign) witnessing the highest numbers of returns’.⁶⁷ In June 2018, there were 3.9 million returnees⁶⁸, which rose to 4.1 million as of October 2018.⁶⁹ IOM’s Integrated Location Assessment III⁷⁰, published in January 2019, states that governorates with the highest number of returnees were Ninewa, Anbar, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk, Diyala, followed by Baghdad, Erbil and Dohuk.⁷¹ Ninewa accounts for 38 % of all overall returns, noting a 200 % increase in returns since May 2017.⁷²

⁶² IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 6

⁶³ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), pp. 26-27

⁶⁴ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 33

⁶⁵ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 34

⁶⁶ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 6

⁶⁷ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Returns Dashboard, June 2018, [url](#), p.1

⁶⁸ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 6

⁶⁹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 106, October 2018 [url](#), p. 1

⁷⁰ IOM’s Integrated Location Assessment III was carried out from 6 March to 6 May 2018 and covered 4 177 locations hosting one or more IDP/returnee family, reaching 609 891 returnee families (3 659 346 individuals; including 12 356 returnee families from abroad) and 248 632 IDP families (1 491 792 individuals).

⁷¹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 106, October 2018 [url](#), p. 1

⁷² IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 13

GOVERNORATE OF RETURN	LAST GOVERNORATE OF DISPLACEMENT												
	ANBAR	BABYLON	BAGHDAD	DAHUK	DIYALA	ERBIL	KER-BALA	KIRKUK	NINEWA	SALAH AL-DIN	SULAY-MANIYAH	OTHERS	TOTAL
ANBAR	610,290	8,862	278,742	894	-	173,898	-	134,604	-	3,396	72,606	-	1,283,292
BAGHDAD	-	4,050	75,606	-	-	3,828	48	-	-	-	600	120	84,252
DAHUK	-	-	-	780	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	780
DIYALA	-	-	1,032	-	174,882	468	150	25,914	-	-	19,896	-	222,342
ERBIL	-	-	-	-	-	36,642	-	5,094	42	-	-	-	41,760
KIRKUK	-	18	234	-	-	20,466	-	125,946	4,044	24,876	138,204	-	313,788
NINEWA	180	16,920	35,928	140,532	288	148,512	42,900	13,932	1,084,194	4,386	8,670	95,292	1,591,734
SALAH AL-DIN	-	-	28,032	2,334	192	90,474	1,482	157,152	906	262,314	30,780	2,010	575,676
TOTAL	610,470	29,850	419,574	144,540	175,362	474,270	44,580	462,642	1,089,186	294,972	270,756	97,422	4,113,624

Figure: IOM Return movements by direction (overall), October 2018⁷³

Return trends have been mixed: the general trend is towards return to places of origin in 2018, and though the pace is slowing, new displacements have been minimal. Population movements have continued as some families returning to their places of origin have experienced ‘continued insecurity or violence, low social cohesion or fear of retaliation’ or they have been unable to access basic services, forcing some families into secondary displacement, whereby they had to return to their area of displacement.⁷⁴ IOM also listed house destruction, fear of discrimination and community tension, lack of livelihoods, security (blocked return, perceived insecurity), and mental health issues as key issues preventing return.⁷⁵

Ethno-religious minorities

IOM’s ILA III noted that since the beginning of the ISIL crisis, ethno-religious groups have taken varied displacement and return routes; noting the pattern in which ‘most groups clustered in displacement to form homogenous ethno-religious “hotspots”’ and that groups tended to concentrate in the areas where they are predominant.⁷⁶ Arab Sunnis were reportedly displaced throughout the ISIL crisis, while nearly all minorities fled in the summer of 2014 during the ISIL advance. Kurdish minority movements were associated with the summer 2014 conflict and with the change of control over disputed areas in late 2017 when the Peshmerga left some areas following the Kurdistan independence referendum.⁷⁷

According to IOM, return conditions can vary by ethno-religious group, noting that for returnees who are Arab Sunnis, this group mainly encounters freedom of movement issues (60 % live in areas requiring special permits from a security actor), while minorities were more concerned with livelihoods, with Yazidis in particular being concerned with rights violations and family reunification.⁷⁸ Access to livelihoods/employment was a top concern for returnees generally, followed by difficulties accessing healthcare and drinking water, food, and education.⁷⁹

⁷³ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 106, October 2018 [url](#), p. 1

⁷⁴ UNICEF, Iraq Humanitarian Situation Report, May 2018, [url](#), p. 2

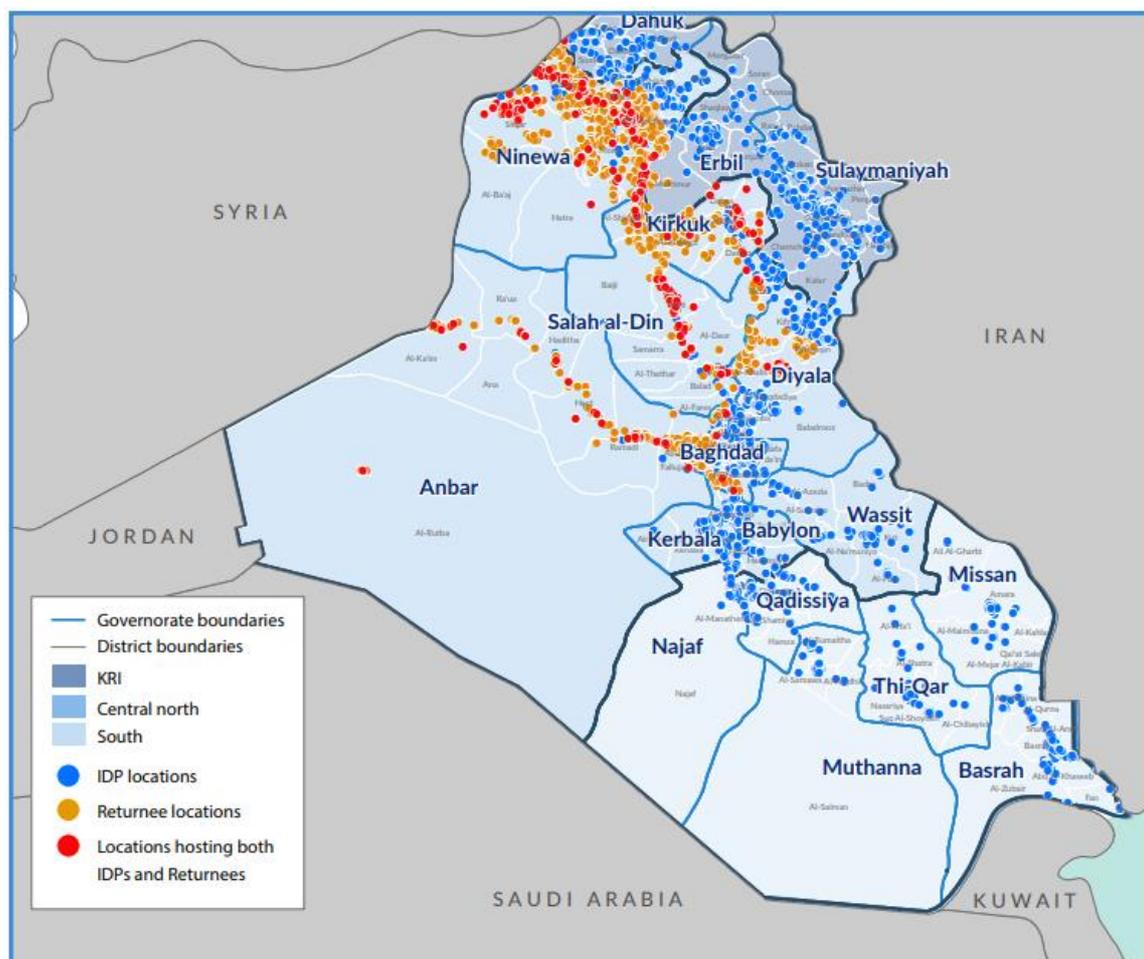
⁷⁵ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), pp. 6, 13-17

⁷⁶ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 57

⁷⁷ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 59

⁷⁸ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 6

⁷⁹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 5



Map: IDPs and returnees location map, October 2018, IOM⁸⁰

According to UNOCHA 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview, the geographically concentrated returns locations with a 'very high and high severity of conditions' were:⁸¹

Ninewa	Salah al-Din	Kirkuk	Diyala	Anbar
Sinjar Centre	Baiji	Taza Khormatu	Al-Adheim	Falluja-Ramadi strip
Telafar Centre	Tooz Khurmatu/Sulaiman Beg	Hawija Centre	Saadiya/Jalawla	Ana Centre
West Mosul	Balad/Duloeiya	Al Abassy		
Al Ba'aj				
Desert strip of Al Tal, Hatra, and Muhalabiya				

⁸⁰ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 106, October 2018 [url](#), p. 1

⁸¹ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

Personal safety of IDPs and returnees

Security conditions for returnees have reportedly improved since 2017 and are less reported as an obstacle to return in 2018 (40 %) compared to 2017 (70 %); however security incidents (arbitrary arrest, abduction, kidnapping, explosive remnants of war (ERW), landmines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), for example) still impacted 40 % of the returnee locations that IOM assessed during 2018, remarking that ‘the situation is hardly uniform and pockets of instability and fear remain’, particularly in Salah al-Din.⁸² IOM reports that tensions between population groups and unequal access to resources affected almost half of returnee locations, and that episodes of violence (9 %) and threats/mistrust (16 %) were reported in some locations; however tribal conflicts remained ‘the main source of tension’.⁸³

Mainstream protection issues for IDPs are diverse, according to UNOCHA, and relate to challenges obtaining civil documentation, lack of employment, irregular access to food, health, shelter, education, noting that IDPs ‘with perceived affiliation to extremist groups have been identified as the most vulnerable beneficiaries that humanitarians serve’. Sexual and gender- based violence was also identified as a key widespread issue in both in-camp and out-camp settings, exacerbated for women and girls who head households or have a perceived ISIL affiliation.⁸⁴

Blocked, forced relocation and premature return

The ‘involuntary inability’ of an IDP to return to their origin location due to security reasons can be for a range of factors, either due to blocking of returns of perceived ISIL affiliation, as well as security reasons such as the presence of landmines or clashes among militia groups.⁸⁵ IOM reported in November 2018 that about 14 % of IDPs may be ‘involuntarily stuck in displacement’ because authorities have prevented their return due to security fears, noting there is ‘very limited data’ on those potentially stopped from returning on the basis of ‘perceived affiliation to extremists groups or who may be in some form of detention’.⁸⁶

In their January 2019 ILA III, IOM stated that 11 % of returnee locations across Iraq had evidence of involuntary returns continuing, mainly in Baghdad (42 %), Erbil (19 %), Diyala (16 %), and Anbar (15 %).⁸⁷ They have been encouraged by the Governments of Iraq and the KRI.⁸⁸ IOM states that forced return is likely to result in secondary displacement, which they noted in 6 % of ILA III assessed locations, mainly in Dohuk (20 %), Kerbala (17 %), Erbil (16 %), Kirkuk (14 %), Ninewa (10 %), and Salah al-Din (10 %).⁸⁹

Obstructed returns were also reported by IOM in January 2019, in 255 locations across Iraq (8 % of displacement locations), faced by IDPs who originate from Salah al-Din, Babylon, and to lesser degrees by those from Ninewa, Diyala, and Anbar.⁹⁰ In a briefing dated June 2018, UNHCR states that, across Iraq, there were continued reports of families with perceived affiliation with extremists being denied the possibility to return; some people also reported relatives being arrested while trying to return. UNHCR spoke to many IDPs who had returned to camps after having being denied

⁸² IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 5

⁸³ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 5

⁸⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 22

⁸⁵ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), p. 17

⁸⁶ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), p. 16

⁸⁷ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 26

⁸⁸ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 26

⁸⁹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 27

⁹⁰ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 26

access at checkpoints by government-affiliated armed groups; some returnees told UNHCR they were forced to leave their areas of origin (and return to camps) because of threats from the community. Three families in Ninewa told UNCHR that their property had been burned by members of the community. According to UNHCR, 'these families originate from Anbar (Al Qa'im), Kirkuk (Hawiga), Ninewa (Rabea, Qayarra, Beiji, Sinjar, Badush, Al-Hawija, Telafar, parts of Mosul city) and Salah al-Din (Shirqat, Baiji).'⁹¹

In August and September 2018, UNHCR stated that there were continued reports of incidents of forced relocation and premature return of IDPs to their areas of origin, including under threat and with confiscation of ID documents, throughout different parts of central and south Iraq⁹², including in Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Anbar⁹³ and Salah al-Din.⁹⁴ UNHCR reported that since October 2017, 3 000 families from Salah al-Din, 2 400 from Anbar, and 400 from Baghdad have been forcibly evicted from camps and informal settlements.⁹⁵ IDP camps in Ninewa and Anbar reported harassment by armed actors; and military and police conducted security operations inside camps.⁹⁶ UNHCR noted:

'Many IDPs reported repeated displacement due to military operations, financial difficulties, or unsuccessful attempts to return to their area of origin due to lack of services. Others experienced threats or were denied return over perceived affiliation with extremists or other forms of collective punishment in their area of origin, while some female-headed households also reported moving to camps after incidents of sexual harassment in non-camp settings. Significant gaps in services, particularly around mental health and psychosocial support as well as medical services, WASH, and shelter support continue to be reported in governorates hosting large concentrations of IDPs (Anbar, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Sulaymaniyah).'⁹⁷

The same source documented acts of 'collective punishment' against IDPs whereby tribal leaders, security actors and communities 'continue to impede or deny permission to families with perceived links to extremists to return to areas of origin in Anbar, Kirkuk and Ninewa. In Hajj Ali camp in Ninewa, a family, originally from Hawija, Kirkuk, reported that they are afraid of further retaliation after their house and belongings were burnt by the community and members of government-affiliated armed groups'. Denied returns were documented in numerous camp locations in central Iraq in 2018, such as Ninewa and Salah al-Din.⁹⁸

Poor living conditions, security volatility, lack of shelter, services, and basic livelihoods, as well as explosive ordnance contamination were some reasons for continued displacement of IDPs.⁹⁹ Despite the availability of health facilities and care within walking distance, many IDPs in camps still sought care that was costlier and further away, highlighting gaps in available care quality.¹⁰⁰

⁹¹ UNHCR, Iraq Monthly Protection Update, June 2018, [url](#) p.3

⁹² UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, September 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁹³ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, September 2018, [url](#); UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, August 2018, [url](#); UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, July 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁴ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update July 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁵ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, August 2018, [url](#), p. 43

⁹⁶ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, August 2018, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update – September 2018, [url](#), p. 1-2

⁹⁷ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, September 2018, [url](#), pp. 1-2

⁹⁸ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, September 2018, [url](#), pp. 1-2; UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, August 2018, [url](#); UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, July 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁹ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, July 2018, [url](#), p. 1; IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), pp. 14-16

¹⁰⁰ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 21-22

A joint report published in November 2018 by IOM, Returns Working Group (RWG) and Social Inquiry, identified five key reasons for protracted displacement in Iraq, including obstacles concerning housing, livelihoods, access to basic services, security, mental and psychological support.¹⁰¹

Loss of documentation

According to Landinfo, an ID card is essential, 'since it is used in all contact with the public authorities, the health service, the social welfare services, schools, and when buying and selling houses and cars. In addition, the ID card must be presented when applying for other official documents, for example a passport.'¹⁰² According to the US Department of State report for 2017, women could not obtain the Civil Status Identification Document without the consent of a male relative. This document is required for access to public services, food assistance, health care, employment, education, and housing and particularly affected women in conflict-affected areas.¹⁰³

IOM reported that those having lost official documentation – IOM mentions that about 13 % of IDP families reported this – encountered numerous difficulties in having them reissued. This is described as time-consuming and expensive, since it often involves travelling back to the place where the document was issued. A relevant factor in this regard also was whether or not the applicant had local connections. IDPs in Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah were reported to have the most difficulties in replacing documentation.¹⁰⁴

For more detailed information on civil documentation and other issues relating to relocation, this report should be read in conjunction with the EASO COI report, [EASO COI Report - Iraq: Internal mobility](#).

1.3 Background information on key cities

1.3.1 Basrah

Demographics

Basrah governorate has a population estimated to be about 4.5 million, over half of whom are under the age of 24.¹⁰⁵ According to estimates, the population of Basrah City is about 1.9 million¹⁰⁶ to 2.4 million.¹⁰⁷ The population has a 50-50 gender ratio.¹⁰⁸ About 78.2 % of Basrah governorate's population is urban, while 21.8 % is rural.¹⁰⁹ Basrah district is the most populated, with nearly 50 % of the population of the governorate living there, and al-Zubair is next, with 16.8 %; other districts are less populated.¹¹⁰

¹⁰¹ IOM, Reasons to remain: categorizing protracted displacement in Iraq, 21 November 2018, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰² Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015, [url](#), p. 17

¹⁰³ USDOS, Country report on human rights practices for 2017 - Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), p. 43

¹⁰⁴ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), pp. 30-31

¹⁰⁵ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰⁶ UNIAU, Basrah Governorate Profile, November 2010, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰⁷ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015 [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰⁸ UNIAU, Basrah Governorate Profile, November 2010, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰⁹ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 71

¹¹⁰ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 67

The vast majority of the population of Basrah governorate and the south of Iraq are Shia Muslim Arabs.¹¹¹ The south of Iraq is populated by African-descended Iraqis, Faili Kurds (estimated 10 000), Christians and Sabean-Mandaens. Most Sabean-Mandaens live in southern Iraq, including in Basrah, with a few in Baghdad and the KRI.¹¹² Assyrian and Chaldean Christians are also present in Basrah governorate.¹¹³ Basrah also has a considerable Sunni community.¹¹⁴ According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT), previously religiously mixed areas have become more homogenous and ‘usually Shia or Sunni’. Nevertheless, the tolerance of religious minorities remains higher in southern Iraq than in central Iraq.¹¹⁵ Dr Chatelard commented that there is much less demographic diversity in the south than in any other region of Iraq. Nowhere in the south is there a ‘critical mass’ of Sunnis to create religiously homogenous neighbourhoods. She noted that Sunnis, Christians, and Sabean-Mandaens tend to cluster in neighbourhoods with a similar sect but within the majority Shia areas.¹¹⁶ There are hundreds of Arab tribes and clans in the Basrah governorate.¹¹⁷

Southern Iraq consists of Basrah, Missan, Najaf, Thi-Qar, Qadissiya and Muthana governorates.¹¹⁸

Southern Iraq has largely escaped the ISIL violence that hit the rest of Iraq and many thousands of Iraqis from southern Iraq went to fight against Islamic State in 2014.¹¹⁹ Southern Iraq is ‘more secure’ than other parts of the country, although problems of criminality, drug abuse, and violence between Shia armed groups involved in militia and tribal groups also occur¹²⁰, including organised crime by militias¹²¹, as well as kidnapping, extortion¹²², and sex trafficking.¹²³ Criminal gangs in Basrah have exploited the security gap and there has been a rise in robberies, kidnapping, murder, and drug trafficking while the Iraqi security forces struggle to keep security among competing armed groups.¹²⁴ NRC reported that Basrah tribes are known to be well-armed and that clashes are the main source of violence in the area.¹²⁵ In 2017 this included tribal fighting between rival Shia tribes over ‘farmland, state construction contracts and land ownership’ which threatened security at oil installations in the south.¹²⁶ Drug usage and drug trafficking were reported to be widespread in Basrah in 2018, a phenomenon which officials blamed on corruption and unemployment.¹²⁷

Longstanding public grievances over corruption, government neglect, unemployment and lack of basic services such as water and electricity, and a developing public health crisis have created

¹¹¹ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 2; Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 29

¹¹² Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 29

¹¹³ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015 [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁴ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018 [url](#), pp. 2-3; NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁵ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 29

¹¹⁶ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

¹¹⁷ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015 [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁸ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 104, September 2018 [url](#), p. 1

¹¹⁹ New York Times (The), In Strategic Iraqi City, a Week of Deadly Turmoil, 8 September 2018, [url](#)

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

¹²¹ New York Times (The), In Strategic Iraqi City, a Week of Deadly Turmoil, 8 September 2018 [url](#)

¹²² National (The), Fear has become a fact of life in Basra, 9 January 2016, [url](#)

¹²³ New Arab (The), The Iraq Report: Baghdad’s ‘most-wanted’ list gives Islamic State leader a pass, 8 February 2018, [url](#)

¹²⁴ USDOS, OSAC, Iraq 2018 Crime & Safety Report: Basrah, 20 March 2018, [url](#)

¹²⁵ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 4

¹²⁶ Reuters, Tribal clashes, political void threaten oil installations in Iraq’s south, 11 September 2017, [url](#)

¹²⁷ New Arab (The), Basra: The epicenter of Iraq’s drug problem, 2 January 2018, [url](#)

heightened public anger and violent protests in the south in July 2018.¹²⁸ The government promised to create 10 000 jobs and announced plans to create public service projects, such as refurbishing the water department in Basrah.¹²⁹ 15 protesters died and hundreds were injured in September 2018 as protests continued. The government has used violence to quell protests in July, killing several protesters, and detaining, beating and firing on protesters.¹³⁰ The protests spread to other parts of southern Iraq in July 2018.¹³¹

IDPs

Since 2014, Basrah has received some 10 000 IDPs from northern governorates.¹³² A constant flow of IDPs arrived in Basrah until April 2015. Only sporadic arrivals were recorded after that.¹³³ IOM reported in September 2018 that there were 7 914 IDPs living in Basrah governorate, most of whom have settled in Basrah district.¹³⁴ The majority of IDPs in Basrah came from Ninewa (2 592), Salah al-Din (2 478), Anbar (1 566) and Kirkuk (750).¹³⁵ Most displaced persons in Basrah are Arab Shia (52 %) and Arab Sunni (44 %); 2 % Christian and 1 % Turkmen.¹³⁶

IDPs were reported to have been attracted to Basrah due to the availability of family, friends or relatives in the region (over 40 %), and the presence of security and stability (25 %). They cited the insecure and unsafe situation in their area of origin as the main obstacle to return (83 %).¹³⁷

In October 2017 it was reported that over half of Basrah governorate's IDPs were located in Basrah district (813 families), followed by about 20 % in Al-Zubaid (368), about 14 % in Abu Al-Khaseeb (244 persons), and smaller numbers in Shatt Al-Arab (89), Al-Midaina (84), Al-Qurna (74), Fao (14).¹³⁸ About 45 % of the IDP population in Basrah was reported to be under 18; most IDPs were 18-59 (53 %).¹³⁹ In March 2017, it was reported that 13 % of the households in Basrah were female-headed; this was the second highest percentage of female-headed IDP households in Iraq.¹⁴⁰ Basrah is a 'non return governorate' according to IOM.¹⁴¹

¹²⁸ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 1; Schweitzer M., Protests in Southern Iraq Intensify, Is Instability to Follow?, International Peace Institute Global Observatory, 24 July 2018, [url](#); NPR, Months of Protests Roil Iraq's Oil Capital, Basra, 27 September 2018, [url](#); Guardian (The), 'Iraq is dying': oil flows freely but corruption fuels growing anger, 27 August 2018, [url](#)

¹²⁹ Al Monitor, Oil installations hit by protests in southern Iraq, 13 July 2018, [url](#)

¹³⁰ New York Times (The), In Strategic Iraqi City, a Week of Deadly Turmoil, 8 September 2018, [url](#); VOA, Iraqi City of Basra Seethes Over Water Crisis, Unemployment, 10 September 2018, [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Security Forces Fire on Protesters, 24 July 2018, [url](#)

¹³¹ HRW, Iraq: Security Forces Fire on Protesters, 24 July 2018, [url](#)

¹³² NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 4

¹³³ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), pp. 34-35

¹³⁴ IOM, IOM-Iraq, Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 36

¹³⁵ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 104, September 2018, [url](#), p. 1

¹³⁶ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), pp. 34-35

¹³⁷ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), pp. 34-35

¹³⁸ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), pp. 34-35

¹³⁹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), pp. 34-35

¹⁴⁰ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assessment II : Governorate Profiles, March 2017 [url](#), p. 16

¹⁴¹ IOM, IOM-Iraq, Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), pp. 34-35

1.3.2 Erbil

Demographics

The city of Erbil is the capital of Erbil governorate which is located north-west of Iraq and is administered by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).¹⁴² It is the fourth largest city in Iraq and the most populated city in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)¹⁴³ housing an estimated 821 000 individuals.¹⁴⁴

According to IOM, 'in Erbil governorate there is no tangible distinction in gender distribution; males and females each represent 50 % of the population. Just over 76 % of the governorate is urban and 24 % is rural.'¹⁴⁵ The population of Erbil governorate is predominantly of Kurdish ethnicity, but the governorate is also home to Assyrian, Arab and Turkmen minorities.¹⁴⁶ The majority of Erbil's inhabitants are Sunni Muslims, but a number of Christian (Chaldeans, Assyrians and Armenians), Yezidi and Kaka'i communities are also living across the area.¹⁴⁷

IDPs

Due to its relative stability and the better quality of services provided, Erbil has attracted a large number of IDPs and Syrian refugees.¹⁴⁸ According to a KRG government representative, interviewed during a joint mission conducted by Landinfo and the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) to Erbil and Sulaymaniyah (KRI), from 22 to 30 April 2018, 'there are approximately 1.4 million internally displaced persons (IDP) and Syrian Refugees in KRI.'¹⁴⁹ The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) assessed in its Humanitarian Response Plan for 2018 that 30 % of all displaced people in Iraq were hosted in Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah governorates, with Erbil hosting the third largest displaced population, many of whom have been displaced since August 2014.¹⁵⁰ UN OCHA further estimated in February 2018 that there were 140 000 'vulnerable residents in host communities in KRI', while there were 'about 358 000 vulnerable people in Erbil governorate in need of some form of humanitarian assistance in 2018'.¹⁵¹ As of 31 August 2018, IOM estimated that Erbil governorate hosted 216 570 IDPs out of which 190 698 were in Erbil City.¹⁵²

¹⁴² IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 135

¹⁴³ REACH, IDP Factsheet: Erbil City, 23-24 June 2014, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁴⁴ US, CIA, World Factbook, 21 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 135

¹⁴⁶ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#) p. 135

¹⁴⁷ NCCI, Erbil Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴⁸ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017 [url](#), p. 136; UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴⁹ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 79

¹⁵⁰ UNOCHA, Iraq 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, February 2018, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁵¹ UNOCHA, Iraq 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, February 2018, [url](#), pp. 10, 32

¹⁵² IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 102, August 2018, [url](#), p. 4

In September 2018 the UNHCR noted that ‘some 250 184 Syrian refugees are registered in Iraq. About 99 % of Syrian refugees in Iraq reside in the Kurdistan region, with 126 226 persons in Erbil.’¹⁵³

1.3.3 Baghdad

Demographics

Baghdad governorate is the most populous of Iraq’s governorates, with a population of almost 8.5 million, representing 23 % of Iraq’s inhabitants.¹⁵⁴ The population of Baghdad City is estimated to be about 6.6 million.¹⁵⁵ The gender distribution is even, and the governorate is 87 % urban and 13 % rural.¹⁵⁶ Baghdad governorate is divided in 14 districts. The districts of Adhamiyah, Al-Karkh (Karkh), Kadhimyah, Mansour, Sadr City, Al Rashid, Rusafa and 9 Nissan are part of Baghdad City, while the districts of Al-Mada’in, Taji, Tarmiya, Mahmudiya and Abu Ghraib comprise the rest of the governorate.¹⁵⁷ Within Baghdad, Al-Karkh has 22 % of Baghdad’s total population, Sadr city is the second most populated, with 18 %.¹⁵⁸

NCCI explained that development indicators for Baghdad ‘differ between different districts in the governorate’ and that public services like electricity, drinking water and sewage ‘are also less reliable or even completely unavailable for residents of certain areas’.¹⁵⁹

According to NCCI, Baghdad is ‘one of the few areas’ with a mixed Sunni and Shia Muslim population, next to a number of smaller Christian communities.¹⁶⁰ DFAT notes that Shias are the majority in Baghdad and predominate in the south/east. Furthermore, conflict has caused ‘religiously mixed areas becoming more mono-religious’ more sharply since ISIL:

‘The number of areas considered mixed in Baghdad is diminishing. Some districts of Baghdad still have significant Sunni communities, including the districts of Mansour and Abu Ghraib. There are also smaller pockets of Sunni communities in the districts of A’adamia, Rusafa, Za’farania, Dowra and Rasheed. Mixed Sunni – Shia communities are mainly located in the districts of Rusafa and Karada, although there are also smaller mixed communities located in the districts of Dowra, Rasheed, Karkh, Mansour and Kadhimiya.’¹⁶¹

IOM explains that many families left Baghdad due to previous sectarian violence which peaked in 2006-2008. Families resettled along sectarian lines in Sunni and Shia neighbourhoods, which continue to divide the city, especially after the predominantly Sunni neighbourhoods of Al Adhamia

¹⁵³ UNHCR, Iraq: Syrian Refugee stats and locations, 30.09.2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix , Integrated Location Assessment, part II Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁵⁵ US, CIA, The World Fact Book, People and Society, 21 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 50

¹⁵⁷ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#) p. 2

¹⁵⁸ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#) p. 50

¹⁵⁹ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#) p. 4

¹⁶⁰ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#) p. 2

¹⁶¹ Australia, DFAT, Iraq – Country Information Report, 9 October 2018, [url](#) p. 7

had a wall built around it to 'isolate it' from Shia areas.¹⁶² However, in some neighbourhoods Shi'a and Sunni families peacefully coexist, 'and there are cases of isolated Sunni families in strongly Shi'a neighbourhoods such as Sadr City where they have managed to gain the protection of neighbours and militias'.¹⁶³

Dr Chatelard noted:

'Residents of Baghdad live with insecurity and go about their daily business despite it. Public places, such as parks, shopping malls and restaurants, are crowded on evenings and week-ends. However, people have adopted personal security measures: they move accompanied by people they trust; women on their own will only travel with taxi drivers they know; Sunnis will not disclose their sectarian affiliation to a Shiite taxi driver or someone encountered casually; Sunnis will not go to Shiite residential areas and vice versa; people who can afford it have security guards looking after their properties.'¹⁶⁴

She explained that kidnappings and extortions are more immediate concerns and also affect people without means, whom gangs expect to call on extended families to pay ransoms.¹⁶⁵ In January 2018, the head of the Baghdad Province's security committee told the New York Times that suburbs areas in the west of the capital, home to bomb factories for Al Qaeda, remained insecure.¹⁶⁶ A 2018 UN report states that, between 20 February and 30 March 2018, 52 attacks against security forces and civilians occurred in Baghdad, killing 20 people, including 17 civilians.¹⁶⁷

IDPs and returnees

Baghdad has historically hosted large numbers of IDPs; this was the case in waves of violence post-2003¹⁶⁸, as well as during the ISIL crisis beginning in 2014 (along with KRI, Anbar and Ninewa who also hosted large IDP populations).¹⁶⁹ In later waves of displacement, this stabilised and was reduced as IDP policies on access in Iraq became stricter, causing IDPs to more frequently remain in their governorates of origin.¹⁷⁰ During July 2018, nationally, the overall number of IDPs went down by about 2 %, noting decreases across all of Iraq's 18 governorates. Baghdad witnessed the largest drop in IDPs in that period.¹⁷¹

In 2015, there were nearly 600 000 IDPs hosted in Baghdad, which dropped to over 400 000 in 2016, and down to less than half a million in 2017, and by October 2017, this was 304 560 individuals.¹⁷² In July 2018, IOM reported that Baghdad was hosting 90 852 IDPs, the majority of whom originated from Anbar and Ninewa, and who were living across 585 locations in Baghdad.¹⁷³

¹⁶² IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#) p. 48

¹⁶³ Chatelard, G., Comments made during the review of this report, 30 October 2018

¹⁶⁴ Chatelard, G., Comments made during the review of this report, 30 October 2018

¹⁶⁵ Chatelard, G., Comments made during the review of this report, 30 October 2018

¹⁶⁶ New York Times (The), Suicide Bombings in Baghdad Puncture Newfound Hope, 15 January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution S/2018/359, para. 21, 17 April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁶⁹ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), p. 7 ; REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁷⁰ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁷¹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 100, July 2018, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁷² IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 100, July 2018, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁷³ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 100, July 2018, [url](#), p. 5

Most IDPs in Baghdad (mainly Anbaris and from Ninewa) re-settled in Karkh district, which has hosted 40 % of Baghdad's IDPs due to the proximity to conflict-affected Ramadi and Fallujah.¹⁷⁴ Based on IOM Integrated Location Assessment (ILA) in 2017, between 2016 and 2017 there was a significant trend of spontaneous return within Iraq¹⁷⁵, with more than 700 000 IDPs returning to their homes during the first six months of 2017. In Baghdad, half of the IDPs who fled in 2014 and 2015 (26 712) had returned to their districts of origin, mainly in Kadhimia, Abu Ghraib, Mahmoudiya.¹⁷⁶

As of July 2018, Baghdad also had 77 878 returnees, the majority of whom went to Mahmoudiya, followed by Abu Ghraib and a smaller number to Kadhimia; returnees to Baghdad lived in 85 different locations.¹⁷⁷ IOM wrote in October 2017 that most IDPs (84 %) were Sunni Arabs, followed by Turkmen Shia (8 %), Shia Muslim Arabs (7 %), and Kurdish Sunnis (1 %). Most returnees (71 %) were also Sunni Arabs (71 %) and Arab Shia (20 %).¹⁷⁸

IOM reported in 2017 that Baghdad had high scores for conflict, mistrust, incidents and threats including physical attacks reported by IDPs.¹⁷⁹ Community tensions between groups were highest in Abu Ghraib and Thawra 2, and to a lesser extent in Khadimia and Mamoudiya.¹⁸⁰ In October 2017, a quarter of IDPs and returnees reported that they are in a tense security situation, while domestic violence (91 %), petty crime (73 %) and sexual assault (7 %) affected the population, mainly in Abu Ghraib.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁴ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁷⁵ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁷⁶ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁷⁷ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 3.

¹⁷⁸ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Part 1 – Thematic Overview, October 2017, [url](#), p. 16

¹⁷⁹ IOM Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁸⁰ IOM Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁸¹ IOM Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 6

2. Economic overview

2.1 General

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2018 statistical report on human development in Iraq, Iraq is a 'middle development country' ranking 120th out of 189 countries.¹⁸² Iraq's successive conflicts, including the Iran-Iraq war, followed by the UN embargo of 1990 and the heavy burdens of subsequent wars have caused a reduction in economic self-reliance in Iraq; and while the market economy has grown since the fall of Saddam Hussein, the private sector remains small, cannot absorb unemployment, and 'does not contribute significantly to income generation' in Iraq.¹⁸³ A rentier state, Iraq's oil sector accounts for 99 % of export earnings, while the agricultural sector has continuously declined.¹⁸⁴ The Iraqi economy is largely state-run and is dominated by the oil sector that is reported to account for 90 % of the government revenue and more than 55 % of the GDP. The KRG is selling gas and oil abroad independently of the Baghdad government. A pipeline to Turkey enables the KRG to do this. The distribution of oil and gas revenues is an issue of ongoing controversy between the Baghdad government and the KRG.¹⁸⁵ Since 2014, the economic growth excluding the part driven by oil was negative; however, in 2017, a non-oil sector growth of 4.4 % was reported.¹⁸⁶ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported a gradual growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita from IQD 3 818 213 (EUR 2 819) in 2004 to IQD 4 896 116 (EUR 3 615) in 2014.¹⁸⁷

The World Bank indicates that the Iraqi economy faces significant challenges due to the declines in oil prices in 2015-2016 and the ISIL conflict, which has negatively affected economic activity, contracting the non-oil sector economy by 21.6 % since 2014.¹⁸⁸ The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), dated June 2017, states that '[a]dverse economic impacts have been exacerbated by a lack of economic institutions, a very large public sector and underdeveloped private sector, low levels of productivity and outdated infrastructure'.¹⁸⁹

The World Bank stated that Iraq's growth outlook is expected to improve, but that this higher growth will be short-lived in the absence of structural reforms. On the one hand risks to the economic outlook arise from the volatility of oil prices; on the other hand there are significant social and political risks in the form of lingering political tensions, weak administrative capacity and widespread corruption.¹⁹⁰ In the 2017 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index Iraq scored 18 points on a scale of 100, 0 meaning 'highly corrupt' and 100 meaning 'very clean'. Iraq thus ranked 169 out of 180 scored countries, position 180 being for the country where most corruption was perceived.¹⁹¹ Corruption is reported to be deeply rooted into the political and

¹⁸² UNDP, Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update Briefing note - Iraq, 2018 [url](#), p. 1

¹⁸³ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁸⁴ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁸⁵ US, CIA, The World Factbook; Iraq; Economy, 15 November 2018, [url](#); TRT World, what happened to Iraq's economy post-US invasion?, 10 May 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018, [url](#), p. x

¹⁸⁷ IMF, World Economic Outlook Database, 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018, [url](#), p. x, 4

¹⁸⁹ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 26 June 2017, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁹⁰ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018, [url](#), p. xii

¹⁹¹ Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index, 21 February 2018, [url](#)

economic system of the country.¹⁹² Public sector services provided by the government were described as ‘low quality’.¹⁹³

The World Bank ranked Iraq 44.9 out of 100 on the ‘Doing Business index’, 100 indicating the most favourable and 0 meaning the least favourable business environment. Iraq thus ranked 168 out of 190 economies, below the regional average of 56.7/rank 115.¹⁹⁴

2.2 Conflict damage and reconstruction

Iraq is facing significant reconstruction challenges following deep economic strains from the ISIL conflict, and the need to rebuild infrastructure and provide employment to the population, in addition to dealing with the ‘legacy of past conflict and neglect’ as well as poverty, especially in the south.¹⁹⁵ The 2018 OCHA report notes that, based on damage and loss assessments conducted by the Ministry of Planning and analysed by the World Bank, it is estimated that it will take at least 10 years to rebuild Iraq, for a cost of over USD 88 billion [EUR 77 billion].¹⁹⁶ Efforts to address the World Bank’s USD 88 billion estimate for post-ISIL reconstruction costs have been met with USD 30 billion -worth of international commitments in the form of loans and guarantees at the February 2018 Kuwait Conference, however, due to political uncertainty, reconstruction efforts may be delayed.¹⁹⁷

OCHA explains that efforts to reconstruct the country have already started, with retaken areas being cleared of explosive hazards and debris. Works to restore electricity, water and sewage grids are also underway, as well as efforts towards relaunching local economies, opening schools and health facilities. Despite the efforts, many vulnerable people are unable to return without assistance. OCHA states that IDPs who originate from areas that are not yet stable ‘are likely to delay going home until conditions improve and will continue to need support’.¹⁹⁸

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq faces pressure on local services, including schools, health facilities, water, sanitation and waste management.¹⁹⁹ Widespread unemployment²⁰⁰ and competition for jobs have increased, resulting in a sharp decline in living conditions across the three governorates. After the Kurdish referendum on KRI independence, in September 2017, the situation has deteriorated, due the fact that international flights to the airports in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah were suspended, therefore impacting economic and commercial activities. In mid-October 2017, security forces were redeployed in Kirkuk and several disputed districts, resulting in more than 180 000 people leaving their homes, most of whom seeking safety and support in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.²⁰¹

¹⁹² Independent (The), After Isis is gone, Iraq will continue to be a deeply corrupt country, 6 July 2018, [url](#); Foreign Affairs, Is there hope for reform in post-election Iraq?, 17 October 2018, [url](#); Guardian (The), ‘Iraq is dying’: oil flows freely but corruption fuels growing anger, 27 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹³ IOM, Iraq - Country Fact Sheet 2017, August 2017, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁹⁴ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁹⁵ World Bank, The World Bank in Iraq – Overview [11 October 2018 update], 11 October 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 5

¹⁹⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 5

¹⁹⁸ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 5

¹⁹⁹ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 32

²⁰⁰ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 5

²⁰¹ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 32

2.3 Basrah

Basrah has one of the strongest economies in Iraq due to the presence of the hydrocarbons industry and international trade through Umm Qasr port, which is, however, undermined by aging infrastructure. Agriculture development is affected by unexploded ordinance from the Iran-Iraq war.²⁰² Since 2010, Basrah City became an international hub for oil development. The wealth that this created was visible in the growth of the city's urban cafes, restaurants, malls, and showrooms.²⁰³ Basrah's oil economy is a primary driver of the Iraqi economy,²⁰⁴ with 80 % of Iraq's proven oil reserves being in the south. Much of the wealth generated however does not remain in Basrah.²⁰⁵ Baghdad has centralised control over Basrah's oil industry revenues, leaving local economic development as a lower priority.²⁰⁶ Transportation, especially via Umm Qasr Port, Iraq's only shipping hub, is an economic priority; while agriculture plays a smaller role in the Basrah economy.²⁰⁷ Corruption represents a significant problem for Basrah's economy, as those with government, tribal, political and paramilitary connections control contracts.²⁰⁸ A combination of militias, tribes, and smuggling cartels are said to 'dominate every aspect of commercial life in Basrah'.²⁰⁹

Decades of war, mismanagement and corruption have eroded public services and infrastructure²¹⁰ and created chronic unemployment, poverty, and poor public services.²¹¹ Recently, since July 2018, large-scale and violent protests have occurred in Basra due to government failures to address problems of youth unemployment, infrastructure, the quality of water and electricity services and public health.²¹²

2.4 Erbil

The KRI economy is dominated by government employment, construction, wholesale and retail trade, and agriculture. It also has a growing oil industry.²¹³ In a 2016 report, the World Bank described the KRI economy as being dominated by government employment which amounts to more than 50 % in total employment, and by a high dependency on the oil sector.²¹⁴ According to a Minority Rights Group International 2017 report '90 % of all Kurdish government revenues come from the oil and gas sector.'²¹⁵

²⁰² IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 69

²⁰³ Guardian (The), Basra after the British: division and despair in Iraq's oil boomtown, 4 July 2016, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ Stratfor, Iraq: Baghdad Names Basra the Economic Capital, 27 April 2017, [url](#); CNN, There's more at stake in the Basra protests than dirty water and oil, 7 September 2018, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ CNN, There's more at stake in the Basra protests than dirty water and oil, 7 September 2018, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ Stratfor, Iraq: Baghdad Names Basra the Economic Capital, 27 April 2017, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ UNIAU, Basrah Governorate Profile, November 2010, [url](#), p. 1

²⁰⁸ Guardian (The), 'Iraq is dying': oil flows freely but corruption fuels growing anger, 27 August 2018, [url](#); VOA, Iraqi City of Basra Seethes Over Water Crisis, Unemployment, 10 September 2018, [url](#); Arab News, Oil firms' multi-million-dollar bribery racket bringing death to the streets of Iraq's Basra, 4 April 2018, [url](#)

²⁰⁹ Guardian (The), Basra after the British: division and despair in Iraq's oil boomtown, 4 July 2016, [url](#)

²¹⁰ Reuters, In Iraq's crumbling Basra, a yearning for a better past, 11 May 2018, [url](#)

²¹¹ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), pp. 2-3

²¹² New York Times (The), In Strategic Iraqi City, a Week of Deadly Turmoil, 8 September 2018, [url](#); Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), pp. 17-18

²¹³ Georges, V., et. al, Initiatives to Improve Quality of Education in the Kurdistan Region — Iraq: Administration, School Monitoring, Private School Policies, and Teacher Training. Kurdistan Regional Government, 2016, [url](#), pp. 3-4

²¹⁴ World Bank, The Kurdistan region of Iraq - Reforming the economy for shared prosperity and protecting the vulnerable, 2016, pp. x-xi [url](#)

²¹⁵ MRG, Crossroads: The future of Iraq's minorities after ISIS, 7 June 2017 [url](#), p. 21

The Erbil governorate is the commercial and administrative centre of KRI. It is rich in natural resources, especially oil and gas, while the food supply is dependent on agriculture and food products imported from Iran and Turkey.²¹⁶ According to IOM, ‘the city of Erbil is a trade center in Iraq and a transit point for most imported materials reaching Iraq from abroad, particularly from Turkey.’²¹⁷ Its attractiveness to tourists makes Erbil the most visited region of the KRI, representing two thirds of tourist arrivals.²¹⁸ According to a 2017 analysis by Mark A. DeWeaver, economist at the American University of Iraq Sulaimani, the KRI has entered in the third year of an economic recession that has started with the 2014 crash in world oil prices (which fell by over 50 % in the second half of that year).²¹⁹ Following tensions in 2014 over oil revenue sharing between the regional and federal government²²⁰, the relations between Erbil and Baghdad worsened after the KRG held an independence referendum in September 2017 that saw 93 % of voters overwhelmingly endorsing the secession from Iraq.²²¹ The vote, which was opposed by Baghdad and Iraq’s neighbouring countries, Turkey, Iran and Western powers, was met with military and economic retaliation from Baghdad, which included forced closure of Erbil International Airport and re-gaining control of disputed territories such as the oil-rich area of Kirkuk.²²²

The World Bank noted in April 2018 that as a result of Iraq’s punitive measures ‘KRG has lost half of its oil revenue’ and the ‘federal budget proposes to reduce transfers to KRG from ID12 trillion [about EUR 8.86 billion] in 2017 to ID6.7 trillion [about EUR 4.95 billion] in 2018 and requires KRG to transfer the entirety of its remaining oil export receipts to the federal government.’²²³ The World Bank pointed out that lower level of transfers could be insufficient to pay salaries to KRG’s civil servants and the military and ‘could further increase vulnerability in KRG’.²²⁴ In a May 2018 report the United States Institute of Peace estimated that ‘KRG’s debt is at least USD 17 billion [about EUR 15 billion], an unsustainable level that is probably in excess of 100 % of the region’s GDP.’²²⁵

2.5 Baghdad

Baghdad City is the capital of Iraq, home to the Iraqi federal government. A large part of Iraq’s manufacturing is located in Baghdad, with the exception of heavy industry. The government is the city’s principal employer.²²⁶ The governorate of Baghdad is the centre of the Iraqi economic, commercial, banking and financial sectors. It is also an important hub for the oil and gas industry, as well as for the production of tobacco, leather and cement industries. Baghdad International Airport is the main airport in Iraq and the capital is well-connected by roads and rail to the rest of the country. Baghdad City is home to four universities and a number of educational and research institutions.²²⁷

²¹⁶ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 138

²¹⁷ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 138

²¹⁸ World Bank, The Kurdistan region of Iraq - Reforming the economy for shared prosperity and protecting the vulnerable (Vol. 2): Main report, 2016 [url](#), p. 52

²¹⁹ DeWeaver, M. A., Making Ends Meet: Economic Reforms in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in IRIS Iraq Report , American University of Iraq-Sulaimani, 2017, [url](#), p. 2

²²⁰ CRF, The Time of the Kurds, 29 July 2015, [url](#)

²²¹ Reuters, Iraqi Kurds gear up for elections hoping to end turmoil, 11 September 2018, [url](#)

²²² IPS, Homebound: Hardship Awaits Internally Displaced Iraqis, 18 April 2018, [url](#)

²²³ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018 [url](#), p. x

²²⁴ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018 [url](#), p. 15

²²⁵ USIP, Kurdistan Region’s Debt Crisis Threatens Iraq’s Economy, 9 May 2018, [url](#)

²²⁶ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 51

²²⁷ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 2

3. Employment and livelihoods

3.1 General overview

The population participating in the labour force is estimated to be 9 million workers.²²⁸ The World Bank estimated that in 2016 about 2.5 million persons in Iraq were unemployed out of the total working population participating in the labour force. This number includes IDPs.²²⁹ The World Bank reports that prior to the ISIL crisis, the unemployment rate was declining, but the conflict has increased unemployment to above 2012 levels, with almost a quarter of the working population being ‘underutilized’ (unemployed or underemployed).²³⁰ Labour market statistics indicate a decline in the population’s welfare as a result of increased unemployment and poverty rates due to the conflict.²³¹ The World Bank states that ‘unemployment is high and labor force participation remains exceedingly low, especially for women and youth and in the areas affected by conflict.’²³² Youth unemployment is estimated to exceed 40 %.²³³ The World Bank reported that youths tend to be underrepresented in government employment and that the private sector offers few opportunities for them.²³⁴

As of 2017, the public sector is Iraq’s largest employer, representing an estimation of 42 %-50 %²³⁵ and as high as 60 % of all jobs.²³⁶ The sector employs people mainly in education, defence, and the Ministry of Interior. The same trend is noted in the KRI. Public sector wages accounted for 40 % of the government’s budget in 2017.²³⁷ The same trend is noted in the KRI. It is estimated that in 2016 the public sector, excluding the one of the KRG, accounted for approximately 1.8 million employees. The Ministry of Education provided the most jobs, more than 650 000.²³⁸ It is estimated that the public sector in the KRI in 2018 provides for 682 021 jobs.²³⁹

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that in 2017 approximately 40 % of the total employment in Iraq was self-employed.²⁴⁰ In the private sector, construction is ‘the single largest employment sector’ and one of the larger sectors of employment as a whole. Agriculture provides about 20 % of employment but its potential has been ‘severely diminished by conflict and insecurity’, and this sector is a ‘large employer for women’. The oil sector currently employs only 1 % of the total labour force.²⁴¹

²²⁸ ANND, Informal Labour – Iraq, 2016, [url](#)

²²⁹ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 10

²³⁰ World Bank, The World Bank in Iraq – Overview [11 October 2018 update], 11 October 2018, [url](#)

²³¹ World Bank, The World Bank in Iraq – Overview [11 October 2018 update], 11 October 2018, [url](#)

²³² World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018, [url](#), p. 10

²³³ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 10

²³⁴ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor: From War to Reconstruction to Economic Recovery, Spring 2018, [url](#), p. 10

²³⁵ IMF, Iraq – Selected Issues: IMF Country Report 17/252, August 2017, [url](#), pp. 5-6.

²³⁶ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 30 ; Mirza, A. “The Rentier Trap in Iraq: Comments and Recommendations”, cited in: Atlantic council, Beyond Security: Stabilization, Governance, and Socioeconomic Challenges in Iraq, July 2018, [url](#)

²³⁷ IMF, Iraq – Selected Issues: IMF Country Report 17/252, August 2017, [url](#), pp. 5-6

²³⁸ IMF, Middle East and Central Asia Department, Public Wage Bills in the Middle East and Central Asia, 2018, [url](#), p. 51

²³⁹ LSE Middle East Centre Blog, Analysing Growth Trends in Public Sector Employment in Iraq, 31 July 2018 [url](#)

²⁴⁰ World Bank Data, Self-employed, total (% of total employment) (modelled ILO estimate), September 2018, [url](#)

²⁴¹ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018, [url](#), p. 10

An ID card is a required when applying for a job.²⁴² Applying for public sector employment such as in education or public services also requires a nationality certificate.²⁴³

Unregistered or informal work accounts for about 20 % of Iraq's employment.²⁴⁴ Iraqis face competition on the job market by foreign workers, residing and working in Iraq either legally or illegally. The media reported that employers may prefer foreign workers either because of specific qualifications or because they may accept lower wages.²⁴⁵

Patronage through political connections to the ruling parties is a key way to obtaining work in both Iraq and Kurdistan.²⁴⁶ Networks and favouritism matter in hiring and promotions.²⁴⁷ The Independent reports that obtaining a job in the government or in the army requires paying bribes. In this article corruption is described as a daily reality of life for Iraqis, including in KRI, which is made more difficult for those who cannot afford to pay bribes.²⁴⁸ According to Dr Chatelard, 'beyond statistical categories, in real life Iraqi families generally rely on more than one source of income. They also pool resources between household members who often include several generations and married couples under one roof (married sons living with their parents). Salaries and/or pensions are complemented by self-employment or informal labour (in small businesses, as drivers, etc.), some agricultural production in rural and semi-rural areas, help from relatives in case of hardship. IDPs may also receive limited cash assistance provided by charities and humanitarian organisations and some have continued to receive public sector wages despite their displacement in accordance with an income stability policy adopted by the GoI [Government of Iraq].'²⁴⁹

3.1.1 Women

In the period 2005–2017, 17 % of Iraqi women of working age participated in the labour force, compared to 74 % of the Iraqi men of working age.²⁵⁰ For women with intermediate or lower levels of education this percentage is lower than 10. Women who did participate in the labour market are more often unemployed than men.²⁵¹ In 2017 about 56 % of the women aged 15-24 were unemployed.²⁵² The World Bank stated that, irrespective of sector, women earn significantly less than men with similar characteristics.²⁵³ In the same report the World Bank reported that women with low levels of education and skills are often self-employed and concentrated in private sector activities. These are usually informal, low-paying jobs without access to benefits such as health insurance, maternity leave or pensions, and those employed in the informal economy are excluded

²⁴² British Embassy Baghdad, 'Mixed Shia/Sunni Marriages' (9 May 2011), cited in UK, Home Office, Country Policy and Information Note Iraq: Internal relocation, civil documentation and returns, October 2018, [url](#), p. 28

²⁴³ Norway, Landinfo, Iraq: Travel documents and other identity documents, 16 December 2015, [url](#), p. 17

²⁴⁴ Gunter, F. R., *The Political Economy of Iraq*, Cheltenham, Elgar 2013, p. 195

²⁴⁵ Arab Weekly (The), Foreign workers seeking jobs in Iraq despite perils, 18 February 2018, [url](#), 2018; Washington Post (The), Protests are mounting in Iraq? Why?, 21 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁶ Independent (The), Iraq 10 years on: How Baghdad became a city of corruption, 4 March 2013, [url](#); Van den Toorn, C., The solution to Iraq's political problems? Better education, 5 June 2014, [url](#)

²⁴⁷ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 65

²⁴⁸ Independent (The), Iraq 10 years on: How Baghdad became a city of corruption, 4 March 2013, [url](#)

²⁴⁹ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

²⁵⁰ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 10

²⁵¹ Krishnan, N., Olivieri, S., Losing the Gains of the Past: The Welfare and Distributional Impacts of the Twin Crises in Iraq 2014, in World Bank Group Policy Research Working Paper 7567, February 2016, [url](#), p. 14

²⁵² World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 10

²⁵³ World Bank, Iraq systematic country diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 50

from Labour Code protections. Of the women who do participate in the labour force, 70 % are employed in the public sector and usually possess secondary or higher education.²⁵⁴

The wars with Kuwait, Iran, UN sanctions, and the ISIL conflict have reportedly negatively impacted the economic position of women, particularly war widows.²⁵⁵ Women experience economic discrimination in access to employment, credit and pay equity.²⁵⁶

3.1.2 IDPs and returnees

According to UNOCHA's December 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Iraq, the lack of livelihoods for IDPs has compounded their ability to meet basic needs, and the lack of livelihoods and basic services in areas of origin have led to slowed returns. UNOCHA remarks that the 'main recovery need' for IDPs is access to employment and work, the third most important reported need for IDPs and returnees after food and medical care.²⁵⁷ IOM's ILA III, published in January 2019, states that access to employment and livelihoods is a top concern for IDPs in nearly all of the over 4 000 locations it assessed in 2018.²⁵⁸ The lack of livelihoods translated into difficulties accessing basic needs such as food, household/non-food items, and shelter.²⁵⁹

The World Bank explains that IDPs have been hit with multiple economic shocks due to the ISIL conflict, including losing wealth due to destroyed assets, having family members die or become injured at a high rate, and lost employment and businesses, which has strained this population's ability to cope. Furthermore, fewer IDPs have jobs than Iraqis generally, and employed IDPs are supporting an average of six other household members.²⁶⁰ Unemployment among IDPs negatively affected their poverty levels.²⁶¹ IOM reported that Ninewa (81 %) and Erbil (68 %) were the locations where most individuals have no jobs. IDP employment rates were 43 % on average, but even lower in some areas: 13 % in Diyala, 20 % in Salah al-Din, 23 % in Ninewa, 31 % in Anbar).²⁶²

In the period between December 2017 and January 2018, 5 591 household-level interviews were conducted across 61 formal IDP camps in the governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah.²⁶³ One of the key findings of the 2018 REACH assessment report was that IDP households in camps were increasingly reliant on humanitarian and government aid, indicating a lack of access to more sustainable livelihoods sources. Lack of access to sustainable livelihoods sources was cited by 77 % of households who were resorting to survival strategies, such as selling assistance, taking on debt, and spending savings.²⁶⁴ The 2018 OCHA report also states that nearly one third of displaced families are currently relying on 'negative coping strategies' (forcing children to work, dropping out of school, for example).²⁶⁵ Female-headed households without livelihoods were vulnerable to 'exploitative

²⁵⁴ World Bank, Iraq systematic country diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 49

²⁵⁵ Al Jazeera, Iraqi women: 'Things were so much better before', 8 March 2015, [url](#); Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi women shackled by cultural constraints, 6 November 2016, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 26 June 2017, [url](#), p. 21

²⁵⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), pp. 51-52

²⁵⁸ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 6

²⁵⁹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), pp. 6, 34-35

²⁶⁰ World Bank, The World Bank in Iraq – Overview [11 October 2018 update], 11 October 2018, [url](#)

²⁶¹ World Bank, The World Bank in Iraq – Overview [11 October 2018 update], 11 October 2018, [url](#)

²⁶² IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 35

²⁶³ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons Living in Camps, Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 3

²⁶⁴ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons Living in Camps, Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 2

²⁶⁵ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 5

practices' and having to sell off assets, according to UNOCHA.²⁶⁶ In November 2018 the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) published the results of interviews with different categories of more than 130 Iraqi displaced persons and returnees. The report states that more than 40 % of the interviewed returnees said they were not working because no jobs were available, while two thirds of the interviewed returnees said they found it 'difficult or impossible to survive on their current income'. Returnees and IDPs both reported challenges accessing services in areas they returned to, with much infrastructure having been damaged or destroyed.²⁶⁷

In the period December 2017 and January 2018, 5 591 household-level interviews were conducted across 61 formal IDP camps in the governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah. Of those interviewed, 10 % of the households reported no livelihood source in the thirty days preceding data collection.²⁶⁸

IOM reported in January 2019 that returnees commonly cited employment issues being lack of sufficient jobs (75 %), 74 % of government employees were receiving their salaries, most returnees had jobs (50 %), 17 % lacked training or job supports, and 7 % reported being in low-paid, underqualified/unequal jobs.²⁶⁹ IOM's 2019 ILA III reported that frequently jobs do not provide sufficient income, especially in Kirkuk and Ninewa. As a result, returnee families often have multiple income sources (86 % have paid jobs, 35 % have paid pensions), while 47 % of returnee families rely on informal labour, farming (38 %), private business (36 %) or private sector work (29 %). IOM stated that the situation was 'more precarious' for those families who have reliance on informal earnings, noting the high proportion in Erbil (88 %), Ninewa (64 %) and Baghdad (45 %).²⁷⁰

3.2 Basrah

Basrah had lower unemployment rate than other parts of Iraq²⁷¹ and in 2016, UNHCR reported that Basrah was considered to be more developed, with better job opportunities than other areas of the south.²⁷² Reuters reported in 2018 that due to private sector development and oil, Basrah had a largely employed middle class, unlike the rest of Iraq.²⁷³ However, since 2014, oil prices have collapsed, and government subsidies have decreased; oil companies have laid off 30-80 % of employees in Basrah.²⁷⁴ According to the Deputy Governor of Basrah, cited in the media in August 2018, unemployment in the governorate has risen sharply to 30 %.²⁷⁵ Employment opportunities in southern Iraq are described as 'limited' due to the dominance of the oil industry and DFAT reported in 2018 that people are reportedly moving to other areas of Iraq such as Baghdad, in search of employment.²⁷⁶

²⁶⁶ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 51

²⁶⁷ NRC/IDMC, Nowhere to return to: Iraqis' search for durable solutions continues, November 2018, [url](#) p. 28

²⁶⁸ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons Living in Camps, Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 3

²⁶⁹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 35

²⁷⁰ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 36

²⁷¹ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

²⁷² UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 3

²⁷³ Reuters, In Iraq's crumbling Basra, a yearning for a better past, 11 May 2018, [url](#)

²⁷⁴ Schweitzer M., Protests in Southern Iraq Intensify, Is Instability to Follow?, IPI (International Peace Institute) Global Observatory, 24 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁷⁵ Al Monitor, Basra protests spark government scramble to create jobs, 22 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁷⁶ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 30

Oil dominates the economy, but provides only one percent of the labour force nationally.²⁷⁷ Oil companies in Basrah frequently hire foreign workers instead of Iraqis, fuelling frustrations of the local population with higher unemployment rates in the south.²⁷⁸ In response, the government approved a regulation that requires that 50 % of oil workers employed by foreign companies are Iraqis.²⁷⁹

Rural employment in Basrah governorate is mainly agriculturally based; the sector has been negatively impacted by water salinity and shortages in 2018.²⁸⁰ According to NRC, tribal connections influence the allocation of jobs in the oil industry in Basrah, which has ‘fuelled resentment and competition over employment opportunities’.²⁸¹ Associated Press reported that paying bribes and having political connections to obtain a job is also often required.²⁸² An NRC Fact Finding Mission from September 2018 found that residents of Basrah stated that unemployment had worsened in recent years and armed groups are ‘often the only employer’, noting that it is extremely hard to find employment, even in day labour.²⁸³ Some analysts stated that returning former Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) members who left to fight ISIL have put additional pressure on services and demand for employment.²⁸⁴

3.3 Erbil

In Erbil governorate, employment opportunities had largely withstood the impact of the IDP and refugees influx and the host community population ‘has maintained similar employment rates to those prior to the crisis’.²⁸⁵ Despite the governorate having received the largest share of the Syrian refugee population and a large number of IDPs, Erbil City has been able to generate more employment opportunities than other urban areas.²⁸⁶ UNHCR 2016 data revealed that ‘Erbil district center absorbs about half of the employed population, with the majority in the public sector. The Erbil district periphery has less governmental employment and people rely more on private sector jobs in a diversity of sectors - although mostly concentrated in the construction and small services sector.’²⁸⁷ According to the IOM 2018 demographic survey, the labour force participation in Erbil City was registered at 65.9 % of men and 14.8 % of women.²⁸⁸ Regarding the type of occupation, IOM data showed that 43.7 % of Erbil’s city labour force had been working in the public sector, 13 % in the private sector, 18.7 % were self-employed, and 19.2 % were daily wage workers.²⁸⁹ The rate of unemployment in Erbil City was 10.2 %, with higher unemployment registered for women (16.1 %) than for men (8.7 %).²⁹⁰

²⁷⁷ National (The), In Iraq’s oil-rich Basra, shanty towns flourish, 19 April 2018, [url](#)

²⁷⁸ National (The), In Iraq’s oil-rich Basra, shanty towns flourish, 19 April 2018, [url](#); Al Monitor, Basra protests spark government scramble to create jobs, 22 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁷⁹ Al Monitor, Basra protests spark government scramble to create jobs, 22 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

²⁸¹ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 1

²⁸² Journal Gazette (The), Soaring unemployment fuels protests in southern Iraq, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁸³ NRC, Basra Fact-Finding Mission Report #2, 22 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3

²⁸⁴ FP, Northern Iraq May Be Free, but the South is Seething, 9 November 2018, [url](#) ; NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 2

²⁸⁵ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 30

²⁸⁶ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 30

²⁸⁷ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 33

²⁸⁸ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 105

²⁸⁹ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 100

²⁹⁰ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 105

In Erbil governorate, the majority of the population is employed in the public sector, and 78 % of the employed population had a written employment contract whereas informal employment was more prone to take place in sectors such as construction and wholesale/retail sectors.²⁹¹ In these sectors, UNHCR writes, 'only 30 % of workers are legally employed and receive wages instead of salaries.'²⁹²

As part of austerity measures the KRG introduced a salary-saving system in 2016. This cut wages of public employees, in some cases by more than half.²⁹³ Since early 2018 protests by civil servants against the government's failure to pay wages on time or in full, have regularly taken place in Erbil and other areas of the KRI.²⁹⁴ A KRG representative, interviewed during the April 2018 Landinfo and DIS joint mission to Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, stated that 'government employees have not been paid their salaries regularly and the salaries are four months in arrears since January 2018. Last month, KRG received a part of the state budget from Baghdad; however, the amount does not cover the expenses.'²⁹⁵

2016 data for Erbil governorate puts employment rates for working children aged 6 to 14 under 2 % for residents and slightly above 2 % for IDPs.²⁹⁶ In its 2018 KRI participatory assessment that focused on IDPs and refugees living in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dohuk governorates, UNHCR identified child labour as a prevailing issue which has as underlying causes the poor economic situation and cultural beliefs.²⁹⁷

According to an August 2016 article in Rudaw, the number of underage workers has increased in KRI's larger cities, partly due to the influx of displaced families from Iraq and Syria. The Kurdistan Region's Ministry of Social Affairs announced legal action to curb this trend.²⁹⁸ In 2017 KRG representatives stated that around 1 700 children are believed to be working in cities in KRI, often as street vendors or beggars, making them particularly vulnerable to abuse.²⁹⁹

According to the IOM 2018 demographic survey on the KRI, at Erbil governorate-level, 10.7 % of women were employed, with a higher percentage in urban areas (11.1 %) compared to rural ones (8 %).³⁰⁰ The World Food Programme (WFP) reported in 2016 that 'the percentage of women participating in the labour force increased compared to the 2007 but high percentages of women remain outside of the labour force.'³⁰¹ Few employment opportunities for women exist outside of public sectors jobs. According to a UNHCR 2016 report 'female employment tends to be concentrated in Erbil district centre and the towns, due to the higher prevalence of governmental

²⁹¹ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 34

²⁹² UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 30

²⁹³ Rudaw, Erbil civil servants plan general strike for Monday, 25 March 2018, [url](#)

²⁹⁴ Rudaw, Fed up with austerity, civil servants protest across Kurdistan, 25 March 2018, [url](#)

²⁹⁵ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 81

²⁹⁶ WFP, Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, 2016, [url](#), p. 52

²⁹⁷ UNHCR, Participatory Assessment Report Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 5 December 2017, [url](#), p. 7

²⁹⁸ Rudaw, Kurdistan: New laws in the works to curb 'forced' child labor in Kurdistan, 24 August 2016, [url](#)

²⁹⁹ Rudaw, More than 400 children in Sulaimani forced to beg, live on busy streets, 30 May 2017, [url](#)

³⁰⁰ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 39

³⁰¹ WFP, Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, 2016, [url](#), p. 50

positions available there as opposed to the periphery areas.³⁰² According to 2018 data regarding the type of occupation for women in Erbil City, 82.3 % of the working women who are employed were employed in the public sector, 10.5 % in the private sector, 2.9 % were self-employed, and 1.9 % were daily wage workers.³⁰³

Traditional cultural norms and beliefs across communities regarding the role of women, coupled with lack of education, exclude a large number of women from the labour market.³⁰⁴ In Erbil governorate women with higher educational degrees had greater labour force participation, with 33.7 % of women with at least secondary education being employed compared to only 4.6 % of women who had primary intermediate and basic education.³⁰⁵

IDPs

Camp management in Baharka and Harsham IDP Camps, Erbil governorate, interviewed by DIS in 2016, stated that 'KRI is overpopulated in terms of general resources and jobs, and even before the big waves of refugees and IDPs that have come in, there was a lack of job opportunities in the region.'³⁰⁶ A lawyer working for an international NGO in the KRI, who was interviewed by DIS noted that 'the general effect of the rise in IDPs on the labour market is increased competition for a limited number of jobs' but that 'it was not impossible for IDPs to get a job since employers were willing to hire IDPs as cheap or free labour force.'³⁰⁷

According to a 2017 assessment by the DIS and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) 'in Erbil governorate 53 % of male IDPs aged between 15 and 64 were employed.'³⁰⁸ In 2016, data from UNHCR put the employment rates for IDPs living in Erbil governorate at 53.3 % for IDP men and 10.2 % for IDP women.³⁰⁹ 88 % of IDP women living in Erbil governorate were inactive³¹⁰ as high illiteracy rates among adult women and opposition from male family members prevented them from accessing job opportunities.³¹¹

Lack of jobs was cited as cause for concern in 75 % of the Erbil governorate locations hosting IDPs and in 87 % of those hosting returnees assessed by IOM in 2017.³¹² IDPs living in camps had more difficulties in finding a job, with half of male IDPs surveyed at KRI level in the 2018 IOM KRG demographic survey having lost hope in finding a job.³¹³

³⁰² UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 31

³⁰³ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 100

³⁰⁴ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 38; UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 31

³⁰⁵ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 39

³⁰⁶ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 160

³⁰⁷ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), pp. 92-93

³⁰⁸ UNDP, Iraq: 3RP Monthly Update - August 2017: Livelihoods, 31 August 2017, [url](#)

³⁰⁹ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 31

³¹⁰ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 31

³¹¹ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 31

³¹² IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 27

³¹³ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 42

Regarding the legal conditions of employment, UNHCR 2016 survey findings showed that 71 % of employed IDPs in Erbil governorate held a written contract. Sectors such as construction and wholesale/retail were more prone to informality with only 30 % of workers having a legal contract.³¹⁴ According to a 2017 IOM assessment 'IDPs' main sources of income come from pensions and informal labour, whereas returnees also rely on pensions and farming.³¹⁵ The DIS 2016 report noted that 'in an area like Shaklawa, it is "not a problem" for an IDP to open a shop. In Erbil it is impossible as Erbil has stricter policies and is much more expensive.'³¹⁶

Sources interviewed by the 2016 DIS fact-finding mission to KRI stated that IDPs encounter barriers to access the job market in Erbil, such as the requirement of a residence permit, the lack of a network, and language.³¹⁷ Although Arabic is spoken to some degree in the host community, the preference for Kurdish creates a language barrier between locals and IDPs that leads to a lack of interaction.³¹⁸ DFAT noted that finding employment in KRI is difficult without having networks as 'patronage and nepotism significantly influence employment opportunities.'³¹⁹

The economic crisis in KRI is also impacting the relationship between the host community and IDPs. UN OCHA representatives interviewed during the April 2018 Landinfo and DIS joint mission to Erbil and Sulaimania stated that 'IDPs are struggling with the sentiment in the host communities that the IDPs/refugees are taking the jobs from the Kurdish population. As a result, the source noted that there were forceful expulsions of especially young Sunni Arab men.'³²⁰ The expulsions had security pretexts but the source assessed that the real cause was that the IDPs were viewed as 'competitive workforce'.³²¹

3.4 Baghdad

According to NCCI, Baghdad's unemployment rate of 9.7 % is lower than Iraq's average unemployment rate of 11.3 %, though there are large numbers of unemployed urban youth.³²² IOM stated that private sector jobs constitute the main source of income for 44 % of the population of Baghdad.³²³ In Baghdad, large numbers of youth are estimated to be unemployed.³²⁴ According to a 2014 survey by UNDP, a total of 22.2 % of youth were employed in Baghdad (34.3 % men and 6.6 % women)³²⁵, while an estimated 13.1 % of young adults (17 % male 8.2 female) were

³¹⁴ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 34

³¹⁵ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 27

³¹⁶ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), pp. 78-79

³¹⁷ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 53

³¹⁸ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 26

³¹⁹ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 28

³²⁰ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 52

³²¹ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), pp. 52-53

³²² NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

³²³ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment, part II Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 11

³²⁴ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

³²⁵ UNPD, Iraq human development report 2014: Iraqi youth, 17 December 2014, [url](#), p. 164

unemployed and seeking work.³²⁶ In July 2018, protests against chronic unemployment and corruption were held in Basrah and Baghdad.³²⁷

Women and IDPs

Labour force participation for women in Baghdad is low.³²⁸ According to UNPD data, less than 10 % of women are employed outside of the agricultural sector in Baghdad, as of 2012.³²⁹ In 2015, for the first time in Iraqi history, a woman, Dr Zikra Alwash, was appointed mayor of Baghdad.³³⁰

IOM noted in October 2017 that access to employment was a top concern for both IDPs and returnees to Baghdad, that employment opportunities are broadly insufficient, low paid, or inaccessible due to under-qualification (4 %) or discrimination (4 %).³³¹ In 2016, REACH/IOM reported that 29 % of the IDP population living outside camps in Baghdad did not have an income from work, business or through pensions; 24 % were employed in agricultural waged labour, and 17 % were employed in skilled labour, while 15 % were civil servants and 6 % were on a pension.³³² Most IDPs are allowed to work in the private sector and most jobs for IDPs are in construction, carpentry, blacksmithing, or trade; some have been unable to find work.³³³ Favouritism was reportedly a factor in granting jobs according to IDPs.³³⁴

³²⁶ UNPD, Iraq human development report 2014: Iraqi youth, 17 December 2014, [url](#), p. 165

³²⁷ New Arab (The), The Iraqi report: Basra's fury spreads to Baghdad as new protests erupt, 19 July 2018, [url](#)

³²⁸ World Bank, Baghdad Water Supply and Sewerage Improvement Project (P162094), 9 January 2018, [url](#), p. 9

³²⁹ UNPD, Iraq: Women's Economic Empowerment Integrating Women into the Iraqi Economy, 29 September 2012, [url](#), p. 14

³³⁰ Newsweek, Baghdad gets first female mayor in 1,250-year history, 25 February 2018, [url](#)

³³¹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 7

³³² REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), p. 14

³³³ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 50

³³⁴ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment, part II Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 7

4. Poverty

4.1 General overview

The World Bank stated that the poverty rate was 18.9 % in 2012³³⁵, and this increased in 2014 to be estimated at 22.5 % while ‘recent labour market statistics’ suggested a further deterioration since then.³³⁶ There are no recent concrete poverty rates available. It is assumed that in areas that fell under ISIL control the poverty rate is about double the mentioned national figure of 22.5 %.³³⁷ Poverty rates are higher in rural areas.³³⁸ The ISIL crisis has negatively affected all of Iraq, though the intensity is felt in some areas more than others, with poverty rates having most severely impacted ISIL-affected areas and KRI, respectively doubling/quadrupling poverty levels. Smaller increases in poverty have been noted in the rest of the northern part of southern Iraq and Baghdad, though the south had a higher share of people living close to the poverty line prior to 2014.³³⁹ Other main factors contributing to poverty include political instability, bureaucracy, high unemployment rate, corruption, decrease in education level and internal displacement.³⁴⁰ In February 2018, the Government of Iraq launched a second Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS2) 2018–2022, targeting in particular the most vulnerable groups, including women, children returnees, IDPs and returnees.³⁴¹

According to DFAT, ‘societal discrimination against ethnic minorities is also widespread and ethnic minorities regularly reported difficulty in accessing employment, housing and services, including education. This is generally due to nepotism, sectarian identity and societal prejudice rather than discriminatory government policies.’³⁴²

4.1.1 Women-headed households

Dr Chatelard commented that women without male relatives, including women-headed households, divorced women and widows are placed in a vulnerable position economically and in terms of exposure to harassment, and have difficulty finding employment, noting that the situation is not markedly better for widows, who also ‘lack the protection of a male relative and necessary connections to find employment and sustain dependent children’.³⁴³ UN OCHA reported in 2017 that IDPs, particularly women in female-headed households, widows, disabled women and girls and teenage girls, were at risk of falling victim to abuse and experienced difficulties in getting humanitarian aid.³⁴⁴ IDPs in Baghdad with female-headed households had a higher proportion of

³³⁵ World Bank, The World Bank in Iraq – Overview, 11 October 2018, [url](#)

³³⁶ World Bank, Iraq’s Economic Outlook – April 2018, April 2018, [url](#)

³³⁷ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 9 ; FT, Militant threat haunts Iraq’s race to revive economy, 27 March 2018, [url](#), 2018 ; Krishnan, N., Olivieri S., Losing the Gains of the Past: The Welfare and Distributional Impacts of the Twin Crises in Iraq 2014, in World Bank Group Policy Research Working Paper 7567, February 2016, [url](#), p. 14, 21

³³⁸ BTI 2018, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 17

³³⁹ World Bank, Iraq – Systematic Country Diagnostic Report No. 112333-IQ, 3 February 2017 [url](#), pp. 29-30, 37

³⁴⁰ BTI 2018, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 17

³⁴¹ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 1 April 2018, [url](#), p. 7

³⁴² Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq , 9 October 2018, [url](#)), p. 10

³⁴³ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

³⁴⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian needs overview, January 2017, p. 15, [url](#)

people reporting having no livelihood source and a high reliance on humanitarian aid and government assistance to cover their basic needs.³⁴⁵

Traditional social norms designate a family-centred and domestic role for women rather than work outside the home.³⁴⁶ DFAT reported that women routinely need permission from husbands or male relatives in order to engage in economic activities outside the home.³⁴⁷ In Iraqi culture a single parent is presumed unable to simultaneously be breadwinner and caregiver.³⁴⁸ It is socially not acceptable that women live on their own without men. Those who do not conform to this will often encounter negative attitudes from society and are at a particularly high risk of violence.³⁴⁹ According to the USDOS trafficking report for 2018, there were previous cases of IDPs and Syrian refugee women forced into prostitution through trafficking networks including in cities in the south, Basrah and Baghdad.³⁵⁰

Iraq's recent history of conflicts and subsequent IDP movements has made it necessary for some women to be the head of a household, due to the loss of their husbands, or male breadwinner. In 2011 ICRC reported that women who are female heads of households are 'particularly vulnerable' and although 'society had become more inclined to accept working and independent women', 'that change was slow and job opportunities scarce' with women and their children at risk of 'absolute poverty', and had difficulty making ends meet due to gaps in income, often borrowing means from family or relatives to cover basic expenses.³⁵¹ In 2013 IOM reported that one in ten households were female-headed.³⁵² In 2017 IOM reported that in the governorate of Wasit 17 % of the IDP families were female-headed and in the governorate Basrah 14 % of the IDP families were female-headed.³⁵³

Multiple reports state that working women commonly experience sexual harassment on the street and in the workplace.³⁵⁴ In August 2018 two women who worked in beauty clinics were murdered. In September 2018 a women's rights activist and a former beauty queen were murdered. It is not known what the motives were and whether these four murders are related.³⁵⁵

Displaced women

Displaced women were described by the DIS as 'particularly vulnerable'; the source noted in its 2016 FFM report regarding single IDP women in camps:

³⁴⁵ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), p. 18

³⁴⁶ Dietrich, L., Carter S. E., Gender and conflict analysis in ISIS affected communities of Iraq, May 2017, [url](#), p. 5 ; Oxfam, Including women in livelihoods programming in Iraq, October 2016, [url](#), p. 3 ; Hassig, S., (et al.), Cultures of the world – Iraq, Cavendish Square Publishing, New York, 2015, [url](#), p. 76

³⁴⁷ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#)

³⁴⁸ New York Times (The), Iraq's Forgotten Casualties: Children Orphaned in Battle With ISIS, 31 August 2018, [url](#)

³⁴⁹ CARE, Multi-sector needs assessment, April 2015, Kirkuk city/Iraq, April 2015, [url](#), p. 11 ; Finnish Immigration Service, Overview of the status of women living without a safety net in Iraq, 22 May 2018, [url](#), p. 41 ; CARE, Multi-sector needs assessment, April 2015, Kirkuk City/Iraq, April 2015, [url](#), p. 27 ; NBC News, Life in Iraq: War Forces Women into Non-traditional roles, 29 December 2015, [url](#)

³⁵⁰ USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Iraq, June 2018, [url](#)

³⁵¹ ICRC, Households headed by women in Iraq: a case for action, August 2011, [url](#), p. 2, 6, 8

³⁵² IOM, Livelihoods and Coping Mechanisms, 29 September 2013, [url](#), p. 5

³⁵³ IOM, Integrated location assessment part II Governorate Profiles; March 2017, [url](#), p. 16, 40

³⁵⁴ New Arab (The), Knives and guns: How Iraqi women handle street harassers, 5 December 2017, [url](#) ; Al-Monitor, Sexual harassment common even for Iraqi women professionals, 2 February 2017, [url](#) ; Niqash, An Immoral Trade: Wasit Council Bans Women From Working in Cafes, 8 June 2017, [url](#)

³⁵⁵ Guardian (The), Deaths of high-profile Iraqi women spark fear of conservative backlash, 2 October 2018, [url](#) ; New York Times (The), A Social Media Star is Shot Dead in Baghdad. Iraqis Fear a Trend, 29 September 2018, [url](#)

'Various sources pointed to single IDP women and female headed households as being particularly vulnerable. (...) Two sources referred to single women living in IDP camps being vulnerable to harassment. IRC said that as regards divorced women with children, it would be easier for them to live by themselves in the sense that it would socially be more acceptable. ERC stated that inside the IDP camps, the conditions for single women are very controlled, but outside the camps, the conditions for single women are uncertain. (...) According to three sources, the scenario of an unmarried single woman living alone in KRI (outside camps) is hypothetical; there is always some kind of extended family that can take care of a girl or a woman until she is married. IRC said that, even though, single women are rarely able to live by themselves, they will, in some cases, be able to work outside the house. As regards single women travelling by themselves, IRC said that it would be more acceptable if they travelled for work purposes than for leisure.'³⁵⁶

Divorced and widowed women

In 2016, the Iraqi Ministry of Planning and Development conducted a survey that estimated there were 600 000 orphans and 850 000 widows in Iraq, but their survey did not count Anbar and Ninewa, which have been hit hardest by the ISIL situation.³⁵⁷ The traditions prescribe that a woman who has become a widow should move in with her parents or parents-in-law or, in the case of Kurdish customs, should marry a brother of her dead husband.³⁵⁸ Economic circumstances however have made this increasingly difficult.³⁵⁹ The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) noted in 2014 that widows were at risk of becoming victims of violence and abuse, including sexual abuse, because of their insecure financial and social situation. The committee was concerned at the lack of capacity-building and empowerment opportunities for widows.³⁶⁰ An article by Al Monitor describes the situation of a widow forced by her parents-in-law to choose between keeping her child and remarrying.³⁶¹

NBC News in a July 2018 report cited the Deputy Justice Minister saying that there has been 'a huge increase' in requests for divorce in the last three months in former ISIL-held areas where wives of members have been trying to obtain divorces. The article states that in conservative communities in Iraq, divorce is not favoured, though it is accepted by many in Iraq, and both men and women can apply through the courts.³⁶² The Economist stated that between 2004 and 2014 there was one divorce for every five marriages.³⁶³ It is reported that in order to be able to divorce women often have to waive rights for financial compensation or custody of children.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁶ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#).

³⁵⁷ Al Monitor, Amid war on IS, Iraq's widows and orphans face neglect, 14 August 2016, [url](#)

³⁵⁸ ICRC, Households headed by women in Iraq: a case for action, August 2011, [url](#), p. 4

³⁵⁹ ICRC, Households headed by women in Iraq: a case for action, August 2011, [url](#), p. 4

³⁶⁰ UN CEDAW, Concluding observations on the combined 4th to 6th periodic reports of Iraq, 10 March 2014, [url](#), p. 14

³⁶¹ Al-Monitor, Amid war on IS, Iraq's widows and orphans face neglect, 14 August 2016, [url](#)

³⁶² NBC News, Divorce on the rise in Iraq as wives cut ties to ISIS militants, 5 July 2018, [url](#)

³⁶³ Economist (The), Breaking up in Baghdad, 17 September 2016, [url](#)

³⁶⁴ MRG, The Lost Women of Iraq, November 2015, p. 15, [url](#); Niqash, In Baghdad, Newly Divorced Women Celebrate Split Their Way, 3 August 2017, [url](#)

The US State Department reported that, as of 2017, women could not obtain the Civil Status Identification Document without the consent of a male relative. This document is needed for access to public services, food assistance, health care, employment, education, and housing.³⁶⁵

4.1.2 Child poverty and child labour

In January 2018, UNICEF announced that one out of every four children in Iraq lives in poverty, and approximately four million children are in need of support following the war against ISIL.³⁶⁶

According to a 2016 World Food Programme report ‘two to four percent of children from ages 6 to 14 years had jobs of some kind – 2.7 percent of residents and 3.4 percent of IDPs’³⁶⁷ noting a decrease in the percentage of working children compared to previous years. In 2016 UNICEF reported that 5 % of the children aged 5-14 in Iraq were engaged in child labour.³⁶⁸ In 2016 the government reported it found 325 cases of child labour violations; in 2017 it reported it found none. In 2017 children were recruited and used in the armed combat against ISIL.³⁶⁹ In a news report from June 2017 about child labour in Mosul it was mentioned that teachers estimated that 10 % of the children do not attend school.³⁷⁰

The US State Department stated that there are reports that some displaced families sell their children to other families in order to secure them a better future. The report continues by stating that among IDPs and refugees child marriages are reported, practiced as a way to reduce the family’s economic hardship, as well as cases where girls are forced into a ‘temporary marriage’, practiced as an instrument to facilitate prostitution, and cases where children are forced by gangs to beg or sell drugs.³⁷¹

4.1.3 IDPs

The US State Department reported that female IDPs were vulnerable to economic exploitation and discriminatory employment conditions.³⁷² In the period December 2017 – January 2018, 5 591 household-level interviews were conducted across 61 formal IDP camps in the governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah; 17 % of the female-headed households reported not having a source of income, compared to 9 % of the male-headed households. It is also reported that female-headed households tended to rely on less stable livelihood sources, and were reliant on sources of income like welfare schemes.³⁷³

³⁶⁵ USDOS, Country report on human rights practises ; Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), p. 43

³⁶⁶ UNICEF, Statement by regional director: At least one in four children in Iraq impacted by conflict and poverty, 19 January 2018, [url](#)

³⁶⁷ WFP, Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, 2016, [url](#), p. 51

³⁶⁸ UNICEF, A fair chance for every child, June 2016, [url](#), p 151

³⁶⁹ US Department of Labor, 2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - Iraq, 20 September 2018, [url](#)

³⁷⁰ DW, Child labor in Iraq, 12 June 2017 (video), [url](#)

³⁷¹ USDOS, Office to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report Iraq, 2018, [url](#)

³⁷² USDOS, Country report on human rights practises; Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), p. 49

³⁷³ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons Living in Camps, Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 3

4.2 Basrah

There are an estimated 123 000 people in southern governorates (Basrah, Muthanna, Qadisiyah, Missan, Thi Qar) who are in need of humanitarian support and protection.³⁷⁴

Basrawis, as the inhabitants of Basrah are called, who live in poverty made up about 5.35 % of Iraq's total population living in poverty in 2015.³⁷⁵ According to UNDP 16 % of the population of Basrah lives below the poverty line of USD 2.50 (EUR 2.22) per day.³⁷⁶ Other sources say the rate is as high as 25 %³⁷⁷ or over one third of the population.³⁷⁸ Child poverty is reported to be about 19 % in Basrah.³⁷⁹

Poverty varies significantly between districts in Basrah governorate.³⁸⁰ The World Bank found in 2015 that Basrah district itself had the highest poverty rate in the governorate, followed by Al Zubair, Al Khaseeb, Al Qurna, Al Hartha, Al Deer, and Shatt al Arab.³⁸¹

In Basrah City, begging has become a growing problem, with beggars forming organised systems and gangs, and become associated with, or run by criminal networks.³⁸² Some female beggars have been reported to drug their children whom they bring with them to beg.³⁸³ In impoverished areas of Basrah, gangs form to make a living from sifting through the garbage of wealthier inhabitants of the city.³⁸⁴

Women

According to information from 2010 provided by the UN OCHA, in Basrah, women's labour force participation is low compared to the national average (4 % compared to 25 % for rural women in Iraq), which the UN posited was because most rural women are employed in agriculture, which is a less significant sector in oil-rich Basra.³⁸⁵ This is among the lowest female labour rates in Iraq.³⁸⁶ The water salinity problems have triggered rural and seasonal workers to move from rural areas into Basrah City, seeking alternative livelihoods, women being those most impacted as they are 'not permitted to work in the market due to cultural constraints'.³⁸⁷ Jobs for women in informal IDP situations in Basrah's districts were those limited to being 'appropriate', such as jobs carried out from home like tailoring, hairdressing, or selling household goods and groceries.³⁸⁸ UNHCR, commenting on the south of Basrah, in 2016 stated that women who 'lack skills and stable income are at heightened risk of different forms of abuse and exploitation'.³⁸⁹

³⁷⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 10

³⁷⁵ World Bank, Where are Iraq's Poor: Mapping Poverty in Iraq, 2015 [url](#), pp. 55-56

³⁷⁶ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), pp. 2-3.

³⁷⁷ National (The), Basra politician presses demand for autonomy, 19 August 2018, [url](#)

³⁷⁸ Niqash, Mister can you spare a dinar – life with the beggar mafia of Basra, 30 January 2014, [url](#)

³⁷⁹ UNICEF, Time to invest Iraq's wealth in its future, 25 October 2016, [url](#)

³⁸⁰ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

³⁸¹ World Bank, Where are Iraq's Poor: Mapping Poverty in Iraq, 2015, [url](#), p. 56

³⁸² Niqash, Mister can you spare a dinar – life with the beggar mafia of Basra, 30 January 2014, [url](#)

³⁸³ Niqash, Mister can you spare a dinar – life with the beggar mafia of Basra, 30 January 2014, [url](#)

³⁸⁴ Niqash, Mister can you spare a dinar – life with the beggar mafia of Basra, 30 January 2014, [url](#)

³⁸⁵ UNIAU, Basrah Governorate Profile, November 2010, [url](#), p. 1

³⁸⁶ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

³⁸⁷ NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 73

³⁸⁹ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 5

Child labour

In Basrah, UNICEF reported in a 2015 study on child labour, working children were highly represented under the age of 14, and most often involved in street vending, begging and scavenging. They found that the majority of child beggars were from families displaced by security and economic problems and that a very large proportion was composed of boys.³⁹⁰ UNHCR, similarly, reported in 2016 that IDP children in the south, including Basrah, were commonly involved in labour activities. They were often boys or male teenagers who have dropped out of school to support their families and who engaged in day labour, construction, painting, or were working in coffee shops for minimum wages.³⁹¹ According to UNICEF, child street vendors in Basrah were subjected to daily beatings by people on the street and police, and were frequently arrested, beaten, or extorted.³⁹² There were reports that popular mobilisation forces militia groups recruited children in Basrah from poor neighbourhoods and that the children left school to join out of religious duty and to earn a living or gain status.³⁹³

Young adults

Youth unemployment is reportedly around 18 %³⁹⁴, and even higher among those with college education.³⁹⁵ Local officials cited in the media stated that youth unemployment might be as high as 30 %³⁹⁶ to 50 %.³⁹⁷ There are 30-50 000 graduates from government universities and institutes in Basrah, most of who are unemployed.³⁹⁸ NRC, based on a September 2018 fact-finding mission to Basrah, reported that university graduates were seeking work as daily workers due to the lack of opportunities, and residents gave examples of youth who joined Popular Mobilisation Units (PMU) due to lack of other means of income.³⁹⁹ Many youths in Basrah participated in the protests in 2018 over the lack of employment⁴⁰⁰ or have returned from fighting ISIL with the popular mobilisation forces and lack jobs upon return.⁴⁰¹

In non-agricultural employment, one of the main constraints for youth in Basrah is the literacy rate and lack of technical skills, as well as lack of funds to attend courses and training.⁴⁰² According to the NRC, private sector employment is available for youth, with large numbers employed in 'construction, hotels, supermarkets, oil companies, transportation and formal employment with NGOs or government'. NRC also reported that 'self-employment opportunities exist for youth and adults with skills to work as mechanics, technicians, barbers and hair dressers, designers, etc.'⁴⁰³

³⁹⁰ UNICEF, Rapid Assessment – Worst Forms of Child Labour: Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 25, 28

³⁹¹ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

³⁹² UNICEF, Rapid Assessment – Worst Forms of Child Labour: Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 41

³⁹³ EASO, EASO COI Meeting Report – Iraq: Practical Cooperation Meeting 25-26 April 2017, July 2017, [url](#), pp. 21-22

³⁹⁴ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 2

³⁹⁵ National (The), In Iraq's oil-rich Basra, shanty towns flourish [source: AFP], 19 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁹⁶ Journal Gazette (The), Soaring unemployment fuels protests in southern Iraq, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

³⁹⁷ FT, Basra: Hopes of Iraq's oil capital going up in flames, 3 October 2016, [url](#)

³⁹⁸ Journal Gazette (The), Soaring unemployment fuels protests in southern Iraq, 26 July 2018 [url](#)

³⁹⁹ NRC, Basra Fact-Finding Mission Report #2, 22 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁰⁰ Al Monitor, Basra protests spark government scramble to create jobs, 22 August 2018, [url](#); Journal Gazette (The), Soaring unemployment fuels protests in southern Iraq, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁰¹ FP, Northern Iraq May Be Free, but the South is Seething, 9 November 2018, [url](#); FT, Basra: Hopes of Iraq's oil capital going up in flames, 3 October 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁰² NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁰³ NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

Since 2013, a drug epidemic involving particularly crystal methamphetamine, has hit Basrah; drug dealing and addiction have drawn in jobless youth in Basra, mostly coming through Basrah's poor district; these youths have become involved in the drug trade.⁴⁰⁴

IDPs

The economic position of IDPs in Basrah south is generally weak.⁴⁰⁵ IDPs are allowed to work and generally receive equal salaries to those belonging to the host communities; 40 % rely on agricultural jobs for their primary livelihood income, 30 % on skilled labour, and 15 % on skilled service employment.⁴⁰⁶ UNHCR, reporting in 2016, stated that nearly half of IDPs were casual employees, mostly men and youth working in the painting and construction sectors; income was described by the source as unstable.⁴⁰⁷ The other half of the IDP population consisted of government employees with 'considerably better living conditions'.⁴⁰⁸

According to IOM, reporting in October 2017, the scarcity of jobs in Basrah was the key barrier to IDPs entering the job market. All IDPs surveyed by IOM in that period stated that their main needs for livelihoods were too expensive (food, non-food items, shelter, health, and education).⁴⁰⁹ In IOM's October 2017 Displacement Monitoring Matrix, access to employment was a concern to 4 % of the IDPs surveyed,⁴¹⁰ there was a lack of jobs noted by IOM in the areas of displacement, marking the main obstacle to improvements in IDP livelihoods.⁴¹¹ UNHCR reported in 2016 that 500 IDPs from the south and Basrah relocated to Najaf and Karbala in search of better work, cheaper living expenses, and charity support from Islamic committees.⁴¹²

4.3 Erbil

The impact of the inflow of IDPs and Syrian refugees has affected KRI leading to an increase in poverty levels from 3.5 % to 12.5 %.⁴¹³ 680 000 people of an estimated 5.5 million in the KRI lived on less than IQD 105 000 (EUR 75) per month, which is the poverty line index in Iraq and KRI according to World Bank standards.⁴¹⁴ The standard of living of the population has deteriorated as KRI is struggling to rebuild its economy and public sector employees, who represent 60 % of the active workforce; employees saw their salaries dropped by 75 %.⁴¹⁵

In a 2016 report UNHCR noted a weakening of the financial positions of households in Erbil governorate as household expenses registered a decrease by more than half during 2012-2015 due

⁴⁰⁴ Guardian (The), Crystal meth epidemic forces Basra's police to pick battles with smugglers, 16 August 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁵ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁰⁶ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 69

⁴⁰⁷ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), pp. 5-6

⁴⁰⁸ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 6

⁴⁰⁹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 36

⁴¹⁰ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 36

⁴¹¹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix – Integrated Location Assessment II : Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), pp. 15-16

⁴¹² UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

⁴¹³ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 18 April 2018, [url](#), p. x

⁴¹⁴ Rudaw, Concerns growing over worsening food security in Kurdistan Region, 12 April 2017, [url](#)

⁴¹⁵ Yahoo, Iraqi Kurdistan struggles to rebuild tattered economy, [Source AFP], 29 September 2018, [url](#)

to the displacement crisis and budget cuts in the public sector.⁴¹⁶ Higher economic vulnerability, reflected by income insecurity, household dependency and expenditure levels was especially registered in Khabat and Rizgari sub-districts of Erbil governorate, and to a lesser extent in Kasnazan, Daratu and Bnaslawā.⁴¹⁷

According to a 2015 World Bank assessment the poverty rate in Erbil governorate was 4.1 %.⁴¹⁸ 2018 data from IOM showed that 29 % of households surveyed in Erbil governorate lived on a monthly income between IQD 500 000 and 750 000 (about EUR 368 – 550) whereas 25.9 % earned between IQD 250 000 and 500 000 (about EUR 184 – 368) and 21.1 % had a monthly income situated between IQD 750 000 and 1 000 000 (about EUR 550 – 735).⁴¹⁹ 8.2 % of the Erbil governorate households surveyed lived on a monthly income lower than IQD 250 000 (about EUR 184). When compared to other KRI governorates higher income households were more prevalent in Erbil (16 %).⁴²⁰

According to a London School of Economics 2018 report on displacement in KRI ‘the impact of the economic crisis is severely felt in camps because a lack of jobs outside the camp both for men and women reduced household incomes and peoples’ purchasing ability.’⁴²¹ IDP households in Erbil governorate mainly relied on humanitarian (58 %) and government aid (30 %) to cover their household needs, suggesting a lack of sustainable livelihood opportunities.⁴²² The primary non-assistance sources of livelihood were unskilled labour (34 %) followed by public sector employment (10 %).⁴²³

Woman-headed households

The IOM 2018 KRI demographic survey findings noted that female-headed households are more prevalent in Erbil (10.7 %) and Sulaymaniyah (11.2 %) and, in general, more in urban than in rural locations (11 % versus 8 %).⁴²⁴ Female-headed households have fewer job opportunities as a result of their responsibilities at home and because of the stigma around working as a divorcee or widow.⁴²⁵ Without having an income source, female-headed households are more likely to be supported by family, friends and institutions.⁴²⁶ IOM writes that ‘nearly 50 % of female-headed households also rely on pensions as a source of income, an expected finding considering that female household headship is often associated with widowhood at older ages.’⁴²⁷

⁴¹⁶ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 39

⁴¹⁷ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 40

⁴¹⁸ World Bank, Where are Iraq’s Poor: Mapping Poverty in Iraq, 2015, [url](#), p. 28

⁴¹⁹ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 44

⁴²⁰ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 44

⁴²¹ Kaya, Z. N. and Luchtenberg, K. N., Displacement and Women’s Economic Empowerment: Voices of Displaced Women in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 2018, [url](#), p. 17

⁴²² REACH, Iraq; Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps; Assessment Report; Round IX; April 2018, April 2018, [url](#), p. 19

⁴²³ REACH, Iraq; Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps; Assessment Report; Round IX; April 2018, April 2018, [url](#), p. 19

⁴²⁴ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 22

⁴²⁵ Kaya, Z. N. and Luchtenberg, K. N., Displacement and Women’s Economic Empowerment: Voices of Displaced Women in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 2018, [url](#), p. 23

⁴²⁶ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 45

⁴²⁷ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 45

Child labour

2016 data for Erbil governorate puts employment rates for working children aged 6 to 14 under 2 % for residents and slightly above 2 % for IDPs.⁴²⁸ According to an August 2016 article in Rudaw, the number of underage workers has increased in KRI's larger cities, partly due to the influx of displaced families from Iraq and Syria. The Kurdistan Region's Ministry of Social Affairs announced legal action to curb this trend.⁴²⁹ In 2017 KRG representatives stated that around 1 700 children are believed to be working in cities in KRI, often as street vendors or beggars, making them particularly vulnerable to abuse.⁴³⁰ In its 2018 KRI participatory assessment that focused on IDPs and refugees living in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dohuk governorates, UNHCR identified child labour as a prevailing issue which has as underlying causes the poor economic situation and cultural beliefs.⁴³¹

4.4 Baghdad

In 2012, the poverty rate in Baghdad was 12 %. However, the rate has probably increased significantly due to the conflict.⁴³² Shantytowns and beggars have become widespread across Baghdad. Interviewed by the Arab Weekly in March 2016, the Deputy Director of Baghdad provincial council, Atwan al-Atwani, stated that local authorities did not have 'data on the numbers of beggars and street children although this phenomenon has increased in an unusual and alarming way lately'. According to Baghdad's provincial council, as of 2016, there were more than 249 complexes occupied by squatters, each hosting between 17 500 and 20 000 people living in poverty.⁴³³ In 2018, the rise in unemployment and the lack of basic services have been the causes of violent protests occurring mainly in southern Iraq and also in Baghdad.⁴³⁴

Baghdad has a high proportion of female-headed IDP households who were living in camps (24 % of those surveyed by REACH as of April 2018).⁴³⁵ IOM also noted in October 2017 high numbers of vulnerable groups in the population: 'Baghdad hosts 17 % of IDPs in need of protection – 30 % of mothers under 18, 18 % of female heads of household and 17 % of all physically and/or mentally challenged individuals. A total of 5 % of physically and/or mentally challenged returnees are also hosted in the governorate.'⁴³⁶

Mentioning data by the Iraqi ministry for women's affairs, a 2012 article by the Guardian estimates approximately 400 000 widows in Baghdad⁴³⁷ facing similar financial challenges as widows across Iraq.⁴³⁸

⁴²⁸ WFP, Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, 2016, [url](#), p. 52

⁴²⁹ Rudaw, Kurdistan: New laws in the works to curb 'forced' child labor in Kurdistan, 24 August 2016, [url](#)

⁴³⁰ Rudaw, More than 400 children in Sulaimani forced to beg, live on busy streets, 30 May 2017, [url](#)

⁴³¹ UNHCR, Participatory Assessment Report Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 5 December 2017, [url](#), p. 7

⁴³² World Bank, Baghdad Water Supply and Sewerage Improvement Project (P162094), 9 January 2018, [url](#), p. 9

⁴³³ Arab Weekly (The), Poverty in Iraq dramatically rises, 4 March 2016, [url](#)

⁴³⁴ Journal Gazette (The), Soaring unemployment fuels protests in southern Iraq, 26 July 2018, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Iraq: Protests rage over poor public services and unemployment, 14 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁵ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), p. 15

⁴³⁶ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 5

⁴³⁷ Guardian (The), Why the war has taken its toll on Iraqi women, 10 December 2012, [url](#)

⁴³⁸ Reuters, The daily struggle of Iraq's widows of war, 9 November 2011, [url](#); Arab Weekly (The), Iraq's widows, abandoned and ignored turn to begging, 15 May 2015, [url](#)

According to UNICEF data, child poverty in the governorate of Baghdad was estimated at 14.9 % in 2012.⁴³⁹ In Baghdad, the shelter operated by MOLSA for victims of human trafficking is also home for children involved in the worst forms of child labour.⁴⁴⁰

IDPs

Internally displaced people and returnees in Baghdad reported that access to employment was a top concern for those living in Baghdad.⁴⁴¹ IOM stated that it was estimated that 88 % of IDPs relied on earnings from informal labour, less than 20 % depended on pensions, 17 % were dependent on support from family and friends, and 26 % relied on cash aid.⁴⁴² The joint IOM/Georgetown University study notes that, compared to other governorates, in Baghdad, the highest percentage of IDPs (73.7 %) reported to be able to have an adequate standard of living. Local charities and aid organisations based in Baghdad play an important role in providing assistance for IDPs living in the capital. Also, a relevant portion of IDPs had already relatives residing in the city, who provided them with support.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ UNICEF, Child poverty in Iraq, January 2017, [url](#), p. 21

⁴⁴⁰ US Department of Labor, 2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - Iraq, 20 September 2018, [url](#), p. 7

⁴⁴¹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 32

⁴⁴² IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 25

⁴⁴³ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 23

5. Food security/water security

5.1 General overview

OCHA reports that approximately 1.9 million Iraqis are food insecure⁴⁴⁴ and that 2.4 million people in Iraq are vulnerable to food insecurity.⁴⁴⁵ The multi-cluster needs assessment published by REACH in 2017 found that food was consistently considered as a priority need across all population groups in both accessible areas and hard-to-reach areas.⁴⁴⁶

The country's capacity to grow its own food has been heavily harmed by the conflict. Agricultural infrastructure has been damaged, and fields have been littered. Regulations restrict the importation and transportation of fertiliser, since this might be used as an ingredient for explosives.⁴⁴⁷ Agricultural production has declined 40 % compared to pre-conflict levels.⁴⁴⁸

Food availability in Iraq was charted in June 2018 by the FAO World Food Programme. It stated that all food commodities tracked were 'widely available' in Babylon, Baghdad, Najaf, Qadissiya, and Salah Al-Din, and 'available' in Kirkuk and in Ninewa. Thi Qar was noted as the area with the greatest food scarcity for all commodities, where items were only 'sparsely available'. The same report from June 2018 noted that the food prices have stabilised since November 2017, but vary by governorate. The most expensive food prices were in Najaf and Kerbala, while they were cheapest in Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk.⁴⁴⁹ FAO stated that although food is generally available, IDPs and those living in areas affected by conflict have significantly lower purchasing power to obtain food, thereby exposing them to higher vulnerability to food insecurity.⁴⁵⁰

All Iraqis are eligible for the Public Distribution System (PDS), a government programme consisting of distribution of food and oil rations on a monthly basis.⁴⁵¹ However, significant inefficiencies in the PDS have been reported.⁴⁵²

Water security

Iraq experienced prolonged drought and decades of aging water infrastructure, which has depleted its ability to provide water and sanitation to the population; rural populations have the greatest difficulty accessing water and sanitation.⁴⁵³ Water access has improved since 2010, however many Iraqis still rely on 'informal wells, government and NGO water trucks and unreliable tap systems' while Iraq's freshwater continues to be depleted.⁴⁵⁴ Water shortages are reported.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁴⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 5

⁴⁴⁵ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁴⁴⁶ REACH, Iraq Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment, December 2017, [url](#), p.4

⁴⁴⁷ FAO, WFP, Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations - A joint FAO/WFP update for the United Nations Security Council, January 2018, January 2018, [url](#), p. 10, 13, 14

⁴⁴⁸ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 5

⁴⁴⁹ FAO, WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 23, June 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁰ FAO, WFP, Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations - A joint FAO/WFP update for the United Nations Security Council, January 2018, January 2018, [url](#), p. 10, 13, 14

⁴⁵¹ UK K4D, Iraqi state capabilities, 18 May 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁵² World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), pp. 7, 8

⁴⁵³ IRIN, Water shortage leads people to drink from rivers, 18 February 2007, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁴ EPIC, Drought in the land between two rivers, 18 July 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁵ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, October 2018, [url](#), p. 6

In 2017 IOM made an assessment of the situation on locations where IDPs and returnees resided. Tap water facilities were reported to be not or not efficiently functioning at nearly half of the surveyed locations in IOM's October 2017 survey.⁴⁵⁶ According to IOM, reporting in January 2019, overall, tap water is available to most residents where IDPs and returnees live in Iraq; however the provision of tap water per week is quite variable depending on the region, with the south having access six days a week and the lowest supply being in Ninewa and Kirkuk, who have access for three days a week on average.⁴⁵⁷

In the period December 2017 – January 2018, 5 591 household-level interviews were conducted across 61 formal IDP camps in the governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah. 61 % of the respondents relied on network water outside of their shelter as their primary source for drinking water. Furthermore, 16 % of households reported issues with the water quality. Furthermore, 92 % of households reported having had no water shortages in the thirty days prior to data collection.⁴⁵⁸

5.1.1 IDPs and returnees

IOM reported in its January 2019 ILA III that access to food was a top concern more for IDPs (51 %) than returnees (40 %), where it was seen as insufficiently available, unreliable, or too expensive.⁴⁵⁹ REACH assessed in December 2017 that for both accessible and hard-to-reach areas, food and healthcare services were priorities among basic needs required. Food was 'consistently identified as a priority need across all population groups in accessible areas' during their multi-cluster assessment, along with medical care and employment opportunities'.⁴⁶⁰

In January 2018, REACH reported that for their short-term food and household needs IDP households in the camps relied for 43 % on humanitarian aid and for 33 % on government aid, while 10 % of these households reported not to have any source of livelihood.⁴⁶¹

UNOCHA reported in December 2018 that the majority of food security needs were focused in Diyala, Ninewa, Dohuk, Anbar, and Erbil governorates. Governorates with the highest number of food insecure returnees were Salah al-Din (76 000), Ninewa (162 000), Anbar (63 000), and Diyala (20 000). Female-headed households were assessed as most vulnerable to food insecurity.⁴⁶² IOM reported that 80 % of IDP/returnee families found food too expensive (except in KRI); 60 % of IDPs in the south found food availability to be unreliable or generally unreliable for IDPs in north-central and southern areas.⁴⁶³ IOM stated that 40 % of returnees were living in areas where food supply was insufficient, peaking at 72 % in Diyala; 25 % of locations had an unreliable food supply, mainly in Ninewa (60 %).⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁵⁶ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 16

⁴⁵⁷ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 32

⁴⁵⁸ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons Living in Camps, Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁵⁹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 40

⁴⁶⁰ REACH, Iraq, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA), December 2017, [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁶¹ REACH, Iraq, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 3, 16

⁴⁶² UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 40

⁴⁶³ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 40

⁴⁶⁴ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 40

Furthermore, 60 % of returnees lived in areas where food was ‘too expensive’ – namely, Erbil and Dohuk. About 10 % of returnees in Baghdad and Salah al-Din found food hard to access.⁴⁶⁵

5.2 Basrah

Food security

Food commodities and prices are relatively stable and available in Basrah for more than 80 % of agricultural products. Markets in the city, where most people access their food needs, are functional.⁴⁶⁶ Most food commodities for basic needs and livelihoods were reportedly available, though prices in Basrah markets were ‘relatively higher’ than in surrounding areas. Prices for locally grown produce (especially vegetables) have increased by 20 % due to water salinity problems in October 2018.⁴⁶⁷

Water security

In 2015, it was reported that Basrah had above average high rates of access to the public water network and ‘improved water sources’, however, the quality of the water was poor.⁴⁶⁸ Access to safe drinking water represents one of the main problems in Basrah.⁴⁶⁹ Southern Iraq’s freshwater, particularly in Basrah, is largely from the Shatt al Arab waterway, which has become heavily salty due to upstream dams, drought, and pollution. In recent years, water shortages have caused reduced cultivation of crops, such as rice and wheat.⁴⁷⁰ Following a fact-finding mission to Basrah City in September 2018, NRC found that the water crisis has negatively impacted livelihoods in agriculture in rural areas around Basrah⁴⁷¹, and forced 3 780 people from rural areas of southern Iraq to be displaced in August 2018.⁴⁷² Due to water scarcity, a rise in rural to urban displacement was noted in Basrah in September 2018.⁴⁷³ In November 2018, IOM reported the number of families displaced by the water crisis and drought in southern governorates was 3 522 (most of whom were in Thi Qar).⁴⁷⁴

The water problem has impacted 4 of Basrah’s 7 districts, including Basrah City, causing a halt to vegetable agricultural production in those areas.⁴⁷⁵ According to local health officials interviewed by NRC, this is the worst water crisis in more than 80 years.⁴⁷⁶ In August 2018, the health department reportedly released a report on the quality of drinking water, which found 100 % of chemical contamination, 50 % bacterial contamination and no chlorination of water.⁴⁷⁷ Basrah’s 2018 water contamination crisis caused an outbreak of gastrointestinal disease, with 100 000 reported cases of waterborne and food-borne diseases, and more cases being reported as of

⁴⁶⁵ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 40

⁴⁶⁶ NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁷ NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁸ NCCI Iraq, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁴⁶⁹ UNIAU, Basrah Governorate Profile, November 2010, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁷⁰ Bloomberg, Basra’s Tap Water is Too Salty and Polluted Even for Washing, 2 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁷¹ NRC, Basra Fact-Finding Mission Report #2, 22 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁷² NRC, Iraq: Basra’s children face disease outbreak in rundown schools, 23 October 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁷³ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9, September 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁷⁴ IOM, Iraq Water Crisis (Central/South), November 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁵ NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁶ NRC, Basra Fact-Finding Mission Report #2, 22 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁷⁷ National (The), Hospitals in Basra flooded with cases of water-borne illness, 23 August 2018, [url](#)

October 2018.⁴⁷⁸ People who could not afford to purchase water often suffered from skin rashes, diarrhea, and other negative health effects.⁴⁷⁹ Water pollution and shortages affected households of various socio-economic classes in Basrah. Bottled water was ‘prohibitively expensive’, particularly for marginalised groups; access to clean water for drinking, hygiene, laundry and non-potable uses absorbed USD 120-140 (EUR 106 to 124) of the monthly household income.⁴⁸⁰ Some families in Basrah told the media that they spent about USD 26 (EUR 23) every two days on water to meet their needs.⁴⁸¹

IDPs

In 2016, IOM reported that 36 % of out-camp IDPs in Basrah said they did not have access to the food Public Distribution System (PDS) since they were displaced; however, this number went down to 3 % as of June 2016.⁴⁸² According to UNHCR, in March 2017, Basrah’s Ministry of Trade suspended food distribution through the PDS to IDPs originating from Anbar and Salah al-Din governorates.⁴⁸³ Further information could not be found.

IOM reported in October 2017 that food distribution was the primary concern to 97 % of the Basrah IDPs it surveyed for its Displacement Monitoring Matrix, followed by non-food items (2 %), and cash assistance (73 %).⁴⁸⁴ In informal sites, 62 % of the IDPs, surveyed by IOM/REACH in 2017, reported that residents had sufficient/reliable access to food.⁴⁸⁵ Most IDPs got their water from trucking sources (62 %), shops (38 %), or illegal pipe extensions (15 %).⁴⁸⁶

5.3 Erbil

Food and water security

Prices of food have continued to stabilise between November 2017 and April 2018, while most commodities have not registered any surge or drop in their prices.⁴⁸⁷ Food was considered to be available in the country and the cost of the national food basket has decreased by 7 % between March and April 2018.⁴⁸⁸ Erbil was registered to be among the cities with the highest food prices.⁴⁸⁹

Access to safe drinking water was nearly universal in Erbil governorate, with 89.7 % of households having the public network/tap as a source of freshwater supply, whereas 8.9 % relied on wells.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁷⁸ WHO, WHO and the Ministry of Health intensify response to gastroenteritis outbreak amid water crisis in Basra, 2 November 2018, [url](#); NRC, Iraq: Basra’s children face disease outbreak in rundown schools, 23 October 2018, [url](#); AP, Carp ‘annihilated’ as Iraq’s water pollution woes worsen, 4 November 2018 [url](#)

⁴⁷⁹ NRC, Basra Fact-Finding Mission Report #2, 22 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁸⁰ NRC, Basra Fact-Finding Mission Report #2, 22 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁸¹ Bloomberg, Basra’s Tap Water is Too Salty and Polluted Even for Washing, 2 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁸² IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 69

⁴⁸³ UNHCR, Iraq: Relevant COI for Assessments on the Availability of Internal Flight or Relocation Alternatives (IFA/IRA): Ability of Persons from (Previously or Currently) ISIS-Held or Conflict Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Relocation, 12 April 2017, [url](#), p. 7

⁴⁸⁴ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix, October 2017, [url](#), p. 36

⁴⁸⁵ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 18

⁴⁸⁶ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 15

⁴⁸⁷ FAO, WFP, IRAQ Market Monitor Report, April 2018 [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁸⁸ FAO, WFP, Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations, August 2018 [url](#), p. 10

⁴⁸⁹ REACH, Iraq: Emerging trends in prices and availability of goods across markets, 26 October 2017 [url](#)

⁴⁹⁰ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018 [url](#), p. 50

Sources indicated that water shortages may occur in KRI as a result of rapid population increase and waste.⁴⁹¹ The quality of Erbil's drinking water was evaluated to be within acceptable limits.⁴⁹² Houses in Erbil governorate are equipped with sanitation facilities, such as connection to the public sewage network with covered canal (25.6 %) or septic tanks (71.8 %).⁴⁹³

IDPs

Various sources reported that IDPs faced difficulties in accessing food rations due to inefficient procedures for obtaining the PDS card.⁴⁹⁴ A January 2018 Reach assessment of five IDP camps in Erbil governorate found out that between 2 % and 41 % of surveyed households reported having received PDS assistance in the month prior to the assessment⁴⁹⁵ whereas in February 2018 WFP noted that 'although PDS access improved in February in Erbil, 70 % of households reported not receiving rations in February.'⁴⁹⁶

IOM reported in 2017 that IDPs and returnees in Erbil governorate considered the food too expensive and that insufficient supply of drinking and household water was reported in the districts of Erbil and Koisanjaq.⁴⁹⁷ Other sources stated that in certain parts of Erbil governorate such as Shamamik the food security situation 'appears to be a substantial challenge, in spite of ongoing distribution activities'.⁴⁹⁸

In February 2018 WFP reported improvements in food consumption among IDPs surveyed households and that 'the percentage of IDPs households who reported using food-related coping strategies fell from 28 percent to 9 percent in Erbil.'⁴⁹⁹

According to sources interviewed by DIS in 2016 the UN standards for water and sanitation were respected in Erbil camps and each family received 150 litres of water per day and had separated sewage systems.⁵⁰⁰ Due to the increase in population water shortages have been reported in Erbil.⁵⁰¹ According to an April 2018 assessment of IDP camps in Iraq conducted by Reach 85 % of the surveyed households in Erbil governorate relied on a water source located inside their shelter whereas 99 % of households reported not having had any water shortage in the thirty days preceding data collection.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹¹ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 59 ; Rudaw, Erbil water shortages to be solved by new pipeline: governor, 8 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁹² Jadoon, S., et al., Evaluation of Drinking Water Quality in Erbil City Kurdistan, Region-Iraq, Journal of Environment and Earth Science, Vol.5, No.21, 2015, [url](#), p. 17

⁴⁹³ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 49

⁴⁹⁴ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 58; FAO, WFP, Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations, August 2018 [url](#), p. 10

⁴⁹⁵ REACH, Erbil IDP Camps Profile, January 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁶ WFP , Emergency Update #16: Focus on conflict-affected groups in Ninewa, Diyala, Erbil and Kirkuk, February 2018 [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁹⁷ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 27

⁴⁹⁸ Carfax Projects, Livelihoods Study Iraqi Kurdistan, October 2017, [url](#), p. viii

⁴⁹⁹ FAO, WFP, Focus on conflict-affected groups in Ninewa, Diyala, Erbil and Kirkuk, February 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁰⁰ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 57

⁵⁰¹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 27

⁵⁰² REACH, Comparative MultiCluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 26-27

Bagdad

Food security

Severe drought has been the cause of huge concerns for the agriculture sector in Iraq, including in areas near Baghdad. The dry seasons have caused not only rainfall shortage but also excessive salinity in water, making it unsuitable for farming.⁵⁰³ As a result of drought, in September 2018, the Iraqi government stated that during the 2018-2019 growing season, irrigated areas planted with wheat would be halved. This measure is likely to have an impact on the country's wheat production, which is expected to decrease by at least 20 %.⁵⁰⁴

Baghdad governorate, along with Ninewa, Salah Al-Din, has recorded the sharpest overall increase of food prices at the end of 2017.⁵⁰⁵ The June 2018 Iraq Market Monitor report stated that in Baghdad all food commodities were 'widely available'. The same source reported that the 'food basket alert indicator alerts in Baghdad', indicated an abnormal high price level compared to the long-term seasonal trend.⁵⁰⁶

Although nationally 96 % of IDPs in camps in Iraq reportedly have acceptable 'food consumption scores', food remained a high priority concern for IDPs in Iraq.⁵⁰⁷ Priority needs for IDPs living in camps in Baghdad, as of April 2018, were food (90 %), employment (55 %), education (49 %), and medical care (34 %).⁵⁰⁸ IOM also reported that 'the provision of services in the governorate is still uneven' and cases of displacement after return were reported due to concerns about the scarcity of water during summer, particularly in the outlying areas of the governorate. The report also states that 'families whose houses have been destroyed do not intend to return unless they receive compensation, which is currently not provided.'⁵⁰⁹

Water security

The World Bank stated that the residents of Baghdad deal with daily water service interruptions, especially in summer. Droughts⁵¹⁰, inadequate infrastructure, along with rapid population growth and the inflow of IDPs have led to water shortages and the outbreak of waterborne diseases. Sewer pipes leakages contaminate drinking water networks. Families are thus forced 'to spend a significant fraction of their income on medical treatment and to purchase bottled water'.⁵¹¹

Drinking and agricultural water available in Baghdad City is of poor quality. It is estimated that the level of organic material pollution in water in the capital is more three times higher than national and WHO's limits. In Sadr City, for example, the only source of clean water is bottled, which is inaccessible for the poorer population.⁵¹²

⁵⁰³ Al Jazeera, Iraqi farmers, including in the areas near Baghdad Iraq's farmers hit hard by water shortages, 3 August 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁴ Reuters, Exclusive - Water shortages to cut Iraq's irrigated wheat area by half, 11 September 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁵ FAO, WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Report, Issue No. 17: December 2017, 25 January 2018, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁰⁶ FAO, WFP, Iraq Market Monitor Issue No. 23, Jun3 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁰⁷ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 15-16

⁵⁰⁸ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), p. 15

⁵⁰⁹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, — Displacement Report 98 (June 2018), 19 July 2018, [url](#), p. 2

⁵¹⁰ Al Jazeera, Iraqi farmers, including in the areas near Baghdad Iraq's farmers hit hard by water shortages, 3 August 2018, [url](#)

⁵¹¹ World Bank, Iraq: 5 Million Residents in Baghdad to Benefit from Improved Water Supply and Wastewater Services, 31 February 2018, [url](#); EPIC, Drought in the land between two rivers, 18 July 2017, [url](#)

⁵¹² EPIC, Drought in the land between two rivers, 18 July 2017, [url](#)

IOM notes that inefficient sewerage overall affects 30 % of the population in Baghdad.⁵¹³ According to the World Bank, ‘contaminated water supply and improper disposal of sewage’ cause Baghdad families to spend income on water supplies.⁵¹⁴ Due to poor sanitation conditions and unsafe drinking water⁵¹⁵, Baghdad is one of the governorates experiencing the highest outbreaks of waterborne diseases. In 2011, about 14 % of diarrhea cases reported occurred in Baghdad, and the governorate has seen the highest number of deaths from diarrhea compared to national averages among all governorates. The occurrence of typhoid and other waterborne diseases is also higher in Baghdad than in the rest of the country.⁵¹⁶

IDPs and returnees

Nationally, IDPs living in camps relied heavily on external water sources as their main source of water (61 %). In Baghdad, the average is far lower, having improved from 49 % down to only 19 % of Baghdad in-camp IDPs who had to purchase water externally, as of April 2018.⁵¹⁷ Nationally, 92 % of IDPs in camps had no water shortages. Of those surveyed in Baghdad, only 13 % had water quality problems, and 79 % reported not having any water shortages, though such shortages remained a concern.⁵¹⁸

In 2017 IOM made an assessment of the situation in informal sites and locations where IDPs and returnees resided. At 42 % of the assessed informal IDP sites it was reported that the majority of the residents had a sufficient and reliable access to food.⁵¹⁹

Markets were generally accessible for IDPs/returnees in Baghdad, with 7 % of those interviewed stating they were not accessible in October 2017.⁵²⁰

⁵¹³ IOM, Iraq Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017 [url](#), pp. 6-8

⁵¹⁴ World Bank, Iraq: 5 Million Residents in Baghdad to Benefit from Improved Water Supply and Wastewater Services, 31 January 2018, [url](#)

⁵¹⁵ World Bank, Baghdad Water and Sewerage Improvement Project, 10 February 2017, [url](#), p. 5

⁵¹⁶ World Bank, Baghdad Water and Sewerage Improvement Project, 10 February 2017, [url](#), p. 5

⁵¹⁷ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), p. 26

⁵¹⁸ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 26-27

⁵¹⁹ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 18

⁵²⁰ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 6

6. Housing and living conditions

6.1. General overview

According to UNOCHA, in February 2018, 4.1 million people in Iraq needed shelter⁵²¹ and this figure dropped to 2.3 million in need of shelter and non-food items by UNOCHA's 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview.⁵²²

The country is reported to have a large housing deficit. In 2010 this was estimated to amount to at least 2 million units. As a consequence, much people can only afford 'informal housing' in slum-like conditions. In 2014, it was estimated that 30 to 40 % of the population lived in very poor housing conditions. The situation is particularly bad in places where many IDPs live.⁵²³ The UN reports that more than half of the urban population lives in slum-like conditions.⁵²⁴ As stated in the 2017 World Bank report: 'Up to 90 % of homes built in the last 30 years are self-constructed and likely to be informal. In Baghdad alone, more than 740 000 people were living in slums in 2013, most of whom had no access to water, sanitation, or other basic public services.'⁵²⁵

Destruction of housing is a 'primary issue' keeping people in situations of displacement in conflict-affected areas as well, according to IOM, in 2018, noting that the worst house destruction was reported to be in Anbar, and IDPs were significantly more likely to cite this as a reason for lack of return.⁵²⁶

Electricity, hygiene, sewerage and sanitation

UNOCHA reported in February 2018 that 5.4 million in Iraq were in need of water, hygiene and sanitation assistance.⁵²⁷ They estimated this dropped to 2.3 million people in need of water and sanitation access as of December 2018.⁵²⁸

The delivery of electricity is chronically deficient; already before the conflict, it was reported that supply was insufficient. Years of neglect have led to a dilapidated electricity infrastructure. Power outages are very common.⁵²⁹ IOM reported in its 2019 ILA III that overall, public electricity was available in most residences in locations where IDPs/returnees live, but that the availability of daily hours of electricity was quite varied depending on the region: the southern governorates had 20 hours of electricity per day, while Ninewa and Salah al-Din had the lowest availability at 10 hours per day.⁵³⁰ The same source remarked that nationally, 'the most inefficient [infrastructure and services] sectors appear to be sewerage and waste management/disposal, which exist but are only functioning in locations where around 10 % of returnees and 40 % of IDPs live. While these services are mostly present in KRI, the main problem in the north-central governorates seems to be the

⁵²¹ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#) p. 5

⁵²² UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁵²³ World Bank, Iraq systematic country diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#) p. 44

⁵²⁴ UN Iraq, Country Profile, 2018, [url](#)

⁵²⁵ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 44

⁵²⁶ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#) p. 13

⁵²⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq: 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, 14 February 2018, [url](#), p. 5

⁵²⁸ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), pp. 6, 37

⁵²⁹ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁵³⁰ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 30

absence of both services, whereas malfunctioning was reported in the south.⁵³¹ This marked a slight improvement compared to 2017, when IOM made an assessment of the situation on locations where IDPs and returnees resided. Sewerage was reported to be not or not efficiently functioning at about 30 % of the surveyed locations in that report.⁵³²

Large parts of the Iraqi population are not connected to sewer systems.⁵³³ The conflict with ISIL has impacted the state of critical infrastructure in Iraq, particularly in areas that are difficult to reach, and in recently retaken areas from ISIL, greater damage to water infrastructure was affecting non-displaced populations.⁵³⁴ UNOCHA reported that 1.4 million people, including IDPs from Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, and Anbar, who live in 33 camps, are in need of water and sanitation support and access due to inadequate facilities and sanitation coverage.⁵³⁵

Land/property registration issues

According to IOM, housing, land, and property issues are among the most difficult issues that complicate returns in the midst of the ISIL conflict, and IOM documented evidence of occupied residences of returnees in Anbar, Baghdad, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din.⁵³⁶ The system of land tenure has developed over centuries; it incorporates elements of different cultures and may be called complicated. Sources describe it as deficient.⁵³⁷ The USAID Land and Urban Office reported that the tenure insecurity caused by the recent conflict with ISIL and resulting dislocations is compounded by the difficulties experienced by returnees from numerous earlier displacements. Enforcement of the national land administration system in more peripheral areas is difficult.⁵³⁸

Levels of official property registration vary. In Ninewa governorate it is estimated that only 10 % of the property is formally registered. As a result of the complexity of the system, the costs of formal registration and the destruction of registration documents resulting from the conflict, many persons do not have documentary evidence of their ownership.⁵³⁹ IOM in 2019 reported that 55 % of those with land/property issues had lost documents, 23 % never had them, and 18 % had no issues with property issues on return.⁵⁴⁰ It is reported that mechanisms for reclaiming property are time-consuming and not effective. The government has been overwhelmed by claims.⁵⁴¹

There is also a surge of falsified land and property documents.⁵⁴² IDPs, particularly those in camps (44 %), never had property documentation, while out-camp IDPs also could often not prove ownership (18 %).⁵⁴³ In particular, where the dispossession is supported or instigated by community leaders and authorities, the ability of claimants to actually get their property back is often limited. In particular women, minority ethno-religious groups and IDPs and those who are

⁵³¹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 28

⁵³² IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017 [url](#), p. 16

⁵³³ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018 [url](#), p. 8

⁵³⁴ REACH, Iraq, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA), December 2017, [url](#), p. 4

⁵³⁵ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 37

⁵³⁶ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 45

⁵³⁷ Sonmez S., Murray S., et al, Protecting property: the Iraqi experience, October 2018 [url](#); USAID Land and Urban Office, Landlinks Iraq – Land, March 2018, [url](#)

⁵³⁸ USAID Land and Urban Office, Landlinks Iraq – Land, March 2018, [url](#)

⁵³⁹ Sonmez S., Murray S., et al, Protecting property: the Iraqi experience, October 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁰ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 45

⁵⁴¹ Sonmez S., Murray S., et al, Protecting property: the Iraqi experience, October 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴² USAID Land and Urban Office, Landlinks Iraq – Land, March 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴³ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#) p. 13

accused of having links with ISIL face barriers to accessing their rights.⁵⁴⁴ A specific problem for women can arise when they want to claim property that is registered under the name of a missing or deceased male family member.⁵⁴⁵

6.1.1. IDPs and returnees

According to Global Shelter Cluster, shelter is one of the main concerns of IDPs in general.⁵⁴⁶ As of 31 October 2018, IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix reports that there are more than 1.8 million IDPs in Iraq, residing in 3 263 locations across the country.⁵⁴⁷ The Global Cluster Shelter noted that as of August 2018 data, out of the 1.92 million IDPs present in Iraq at that time:

- 29.7 % resided in camps⁵⁴⁸ (482 000 IDPs in 135 formal camps; 116 000 in 179 informal sites; in KRI – 226 217 in 30 formal camps);
- 61.5 % were living in private settings (in rented accommodation or hosted by relatives);⁵⁴⁹
- 8.6 % lived in critical shelter, such as unfinished and/or abandoned buildings; school/religious buildings and informal settlements;
- and 0.1 % lived in other unspecified types of shelter.⁵⁵⁰

The statistics above were similar in UNOCHA's December 2018 report, showing 29 % living in camps (mainly in Ninewa (92 % of the in-camp population), Dohuk, Anbar (80 %), Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Erbil, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Baghdad); 62 % living in private settings/host families, and 9 % living in informal shelters or abandoned buildings.⁵⁵¹ IOM put the 2018 figure at 13 % of IDPs in critical shelters in its January 2019 report, down from 22 % in 2017.⁵⁵² According to IOM, the most vulnerable conditions for living circumstances were experienced by IDPs in Dohuk, Salah al Din, Ninewa, and Kirkuk.⁵⁵³ In December 2018, UNOCHA stated that the highest shelter needs were in Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din.⁵⁵⁴

Regarding returnees, IOM reports that, as of August 2018, out of the approximately 4 million IDPs who returned to their places of origin, 98 % have returned to their habitual residences⁵⁵⁵, while 2 % remain in private settings (in rented houses or with host families) and in critical shelter arrangements.⁵⁵⁶ In November 2018, IDMC and the NRC published the results of interviews with different categories of displaced persons and returnees. The report states that more than half of the interviewed IDPs outside of camps - in KRG area - said they lived in incomplete, damaged or public buildings, often shared with other families.⁵⁵⁷

Since the beginning of the year 2017, many IDPs have started returning to their places of origin and camps are being consolidated or even closed. However, lack of adequate housing in their areas of

⁵⁴⁴ Sonmez S., Murray S., et al, Protecting property: the Iraqi experience, October 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁵ Sonmez S., Murray S., et al, Protecting property: the Iraqi experience, October 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁶ Global Shelter Cluster Iraq, Shelter Cluster Factsheet: Iraq (Jan. - Dec. 2017), 29 January 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁷ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, 31 October 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁸ Global Shelter Cluster Iraq, Factsheet: Iraq (Jan - Aug 2018), 2018, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁴⁹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 102, August 2018, [url](#), p. 3, 6

⁵⁵⁰ Global Shelter Cluster Iraq, Factsheet: Iraq (Jan - Aug 2018), 2018, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁵¹ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 43

⁵⁵² IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 42

⁵⁵³ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 102, August 2018 [url](#), pp. 3, 6

⁵⁵⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 43

⁵⁵⁵ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 102, August 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁵⁶ Global Shelter Cluster Iraq, Factsheet: Iraq (Jan - Aug 2018), [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁵⁷ NRC/IDMC, Nowhere to return to, November 2018, [url](#), p. 21

origin is one of the factors slowing down a safe and durable return process.⁵⁵⁸ In addition, residential and infrastructure damage is widespread; around 30 % returnees reported to have returned to houses that have suffered ‘significant to complete damage’, and 60 % to ‘moderately damaged residences’ according to IOM’s 2017 location assessment.⁵⁵⁹ IOM’s ILA III published in January 2019 found that residential damage was ‘the main reason’ why returnees were unable to return to their habitual residence (65 %), together with unsustainable rent (19 %), which indicates a decline in living standards compared to prior to the ISIL conflict. IOM reported that housing destruction was the main cause of being unable to return to their original habitual location in Baghdad (100 %), Diyala (87 %), Salah al-Din (82 %), Ninewa (66 %), Anbar (57 %), and Kirkuk (3 %).⁵⁶⁰

Furthermore, 96 % of returnees are in their habitual residence while 4 % remain in rented accommodations and critical shelter arrangement such as informal settlements, unfinished and abandoned buildings, schools, religious structures, and in private settings.⁵⁶¹ Returnees living in critical shelters (including informal settlements and unfinished buildings) were concentrated in four governorates – Diyala (21 500 individuals), Salah al-Din (12 400), Ninewa (7 500) and Kirkuk (800).⁵⁶² Those who are unable to sustain themselves in their areas of origin show a trend of returning to camps.⁵⁶³

Water, sanitation, and hygiene quality and access is of especially poor quality in IDP camps, with a lack of sustained access to such facilities across Iraq exposing the population to risks of waterborne disease.⁵⁶⁴

IOM provided the following information regarding shelter types of returnee families and IDP families living in different return areas of Iraq in its January 2019 ILA III:

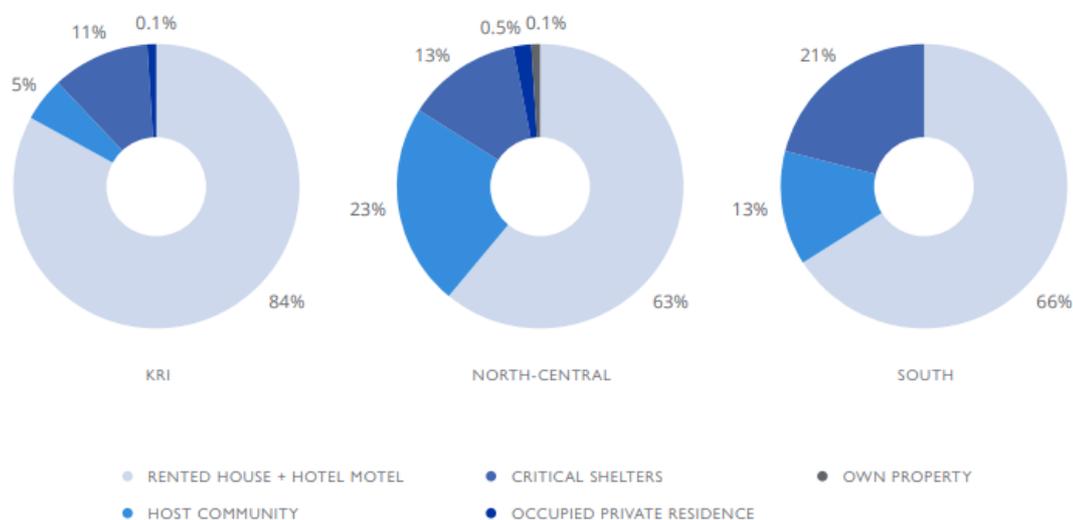


Figure: Shelter types used by IDPs in different areas of Iraq, IOM, January 2019⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁵⁸ Global Shelter Cluster Iraq, Shelter Cluster Factsheet: Iraq (Jan. - Dec. 2017), 29 January 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁹ IOM, Iraq Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017 [url](#)

⁵⁶⁰ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), pp. 44-45

⁵⁶¹ Global Shelter Cluster Iraq, Shelter Cluster Factsheet: Iraq (Jan. - Dec. 2017), 29 January 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁶² IOM, Reconstruction Needed as Displaced Iraqis Continue to Return: IOM Iraq, 20 February 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁵⁶³ Global Shelter Cluster Iraq [website], Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter, Highlights, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶⁴ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 36

⁵⁶⁵ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), pp. 42-43

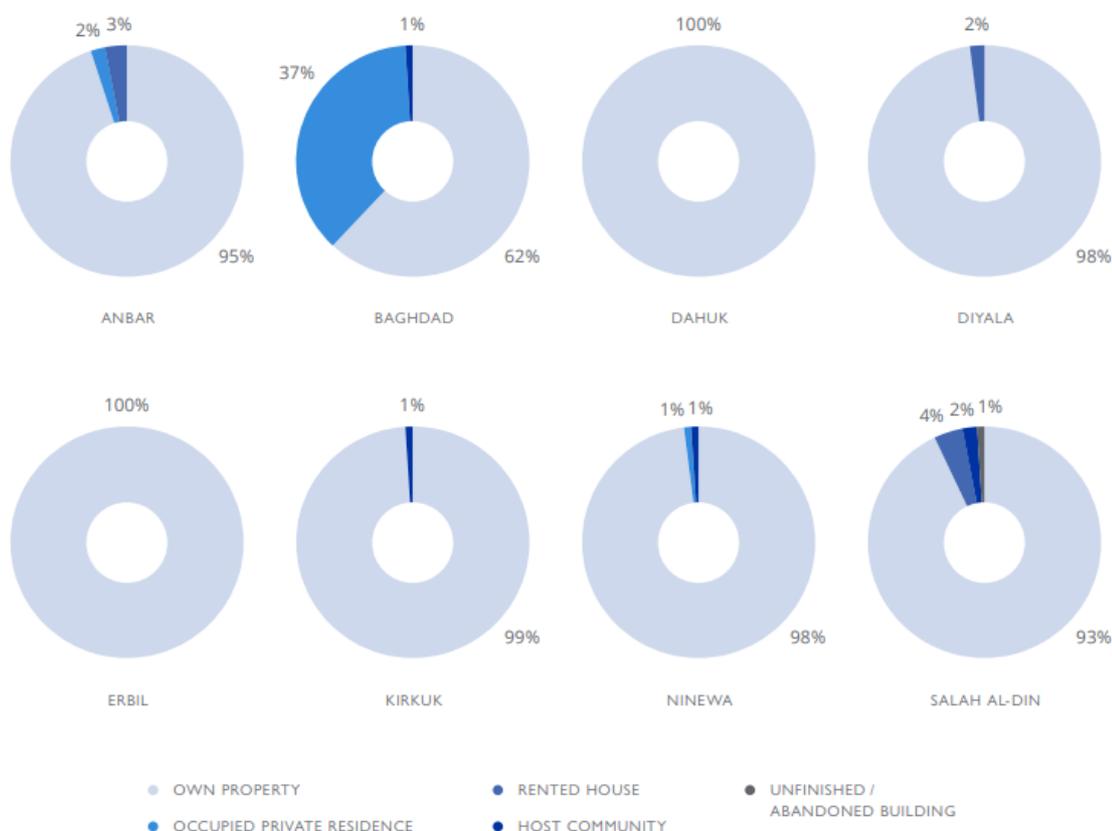


Figure: Shelter types used by returnees to different areas of Iraq, IOM, January 2019⁵⁶⁶

6.2. Basrah

The costs of renting housing in Basrah City is higher than in surrounding areas⁵⁶⁷ and land on the outskirts of Basrah is sought after by low-income locals.⁵⁶⁸ Central areas of Basrah are said to be heavily populated with high rents as much as USD 2 000 (EUR 1 773). Increased displacement and population growth, a lack of residential-use land and oil wealth has driven up rental prices and caused some poorer Basrawis to move to cheaper property in the outskirts.⁵⁶⁹ As of 2018, Basrah has 277 informal settlements, the second highest number behind Baghdad (1 022).⁵⁷⁰ Squatters settlements have grown on land on the outskirts of Basrah as rural people relocate from poverty in surrounding countryside.⁵⁷¹

Within Basrah City, there is a division between affluent neighbourhoods where upper class residents live, such as government officials, MPs, doctors, contractors, and expatriates, and areas

⁵⁶⁶ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), pp. 42-43

⁵⁶⁷ NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁸ Niqash, While Ordinary Basra Families Suffer, A New Upper Class Profits, 6 November 2014, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁹ Niqash, While Ordinary Basra Families Suffer, A New Upper Class Profits, 6 November 2014, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁰ UN-Habitat, New research finds 3.2 million Iraqis living in informal settlements, 19 September 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁷¹ Guardian (The), Basra after the British: division and despair in Iraq's oil boomtown, 4 July 2016, [url](#)

where ordinary Basrah residents live; displaced people tend to live on the poorer outskirts.⁵⁷² House prices in some areas of the city are higher than in Beirut or Dubai.⁵⁷³

According to DFAT, local governments in southern Iraq struggle to provide basic infrastructure services such as electricity and water.⁵⁷⁴ For electricity, more than 80 % of the Basrah population experience multiple daily power cuts in the public network and must rely on private or community power generators.⁵⁷⁵ Basrah City's water and sanitation infrastructure is reportedly not able to handle rapid population increase.⁵⁷⁶ Canals in Basrah City are blocked with garbage and the sanitation system is ineffective⁵⁷⁷ and described as 'open air sewers' by Foreign Policy.⁵⁷⁸ Water and electricity shortages are reportedly common.⁵⁷⁹

Recently, since July 2018, large scale and violent protests have occurred in Basrah due to government failures to address problems of youth unemployment, infrastructure, the quality of water and electricity services and public health.⁵⁸⁰

IDPs

UNHCR reported in 2016 that 2 % of IDPs across the south lived in camps.⁵⁸¹ IDPs had generally found housing, though many lived in low quality housing in the poorest areas of Basrah.⁵⁸² According to IOM, Shatt al-Arab and Al-Quran districts were among the poorest districts, and were those that hosted IDPs living in critical shelter types such as informal settlements and religious buildings.⁵⁸³ IDPs living in informal settlements and critical shelters had deprived access to basic services, according to IOM.⁵⁸⁴ Informal IDP sites in Basrah reported lack of services and poor infrastructure, polluted water, poor sewage, and irregular electricity services.⁵⁸⁵

In October 2017 IOM reported that most IDPs in Basrah lived in rented housing (over 60 %), following by staying with host families (over 20 %), and 18 % lived in critical shelters, mostly informal settlements.⁵⁸⁶ A small percentage lived in hotels, religious buildings, or other accommodations.⁵⁸⁷ All shelter types were described as being in poor condition and sometimes unfurnished; IDPs living in informal settlements and critical shelters were in the poorest areas of Basrah and had deprived access to basic services, according to IOM.⁵⁸⁸ Overcrowding was a

⁵⁷² Niqash, Basra's poor fight for wealthy neighbours' garbage, 13 December 2013, [url](#)

⁵⁷³ Guardian (The), Basra after the British: division and despair in Iraq's oil boomtown, 4 July 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁴ Australia, DFAT, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 30

⁵⁷⁵ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁷⁶ NRC, Basra Livelihoods Technical Assessment, 21 October 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁷ DW, Iraq's protests: What you need to know, 22 July 2018, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Iraq: Basra water pollution risks triggering disease outbreaks, 25 October 2018, [url](#); Guardian (The), 'Iraq is dying': oil flows freely but corruption fuels growing anger, 27 August 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁸ FP, Northern Iraq May Be Free, but the South is Seething, 9 November 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁹ DW, Iraq's protests: What you need to know, 22 July 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁰ New York Times (The), In Strategic Iraqi City, a Week of Deadly Turmoil, 8 September 2018, [url](#); Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), pp. 17-18

⁵⁸¹ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁸² IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 56

⁵⁸³ IOM, Basrah governorate profile, June 2015, [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁸⁴ IOM, Basrah governorate profile, June 2015, [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁸⁵ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 73

⁵⁸⁶ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 36

⁵⁸⁷ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 36

⁵⁸⁸ IOM, Basrah governorate profile, June 2015, [url](#), p. 4

problem for 92 % of IDPs in informal housing and prefabricated buildings were the most commonly reported shelter type in informal IDP sites in Basrah.⁵⁸⁹

Obtaining rent assistance was a concern to 20 % of IDPs.⁵⁹⁰ In October 2017, 6 % of IDPs in Basra stated they were concerned about security; IDPs living in Basrah stated that 46 % of them had some exposure to petty crime; IOM stated that the situation as of October 2017 in the governorate is relatively stable and secure for IDPs.⁵⁹¹ A 2017 study by IOM found Basrah cited the fewest host-IDP problems (80 % of respondents) out of a survey across IDPs in Baghdad, Basrah, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah.⁵⁹² Threat of eviction was noted by 177 families in the south in 2016, including 11 cases in Basrah, though no cases of evictions were reported to have been carried out, according to that report.⁵⁹³

6.3 Erbil

Urban areas in Erbil governorate have developed in the last decade, especially within and around Erbil district centre.⁵⁹⁴ Erbil governorate's rate of urbanisation was estimated to be over 80 % as result of the influx of economic migrants and IDPs.⁵⁹⁵ IOM assessed in 2017 that the infrastructure was mostly functioning in all districts.⁵⁹⁶ IOM 2018 data showed that 'nearly all families in Erbil governorate live in proper housing, such as an entire house occupied by a single household (92.1 %); a house shared by more than one household (6.3 %); or an apartment/flat (1.4 %).'⁵⁹⁷ Rent prices in the KRI have decreased after the September 2017 referendum⁵⁹⁸ but the housing market is expected to recover with the improving of political relations between Baghdad and Erbil.⁵⁹⁹

According to the demographic survey of KRI conducted by IOM in 2018 'access to the electricity grid in the KRI is universal but supply is limited and households have an average supply of 17 hours per day.'⁶⁰⁰ In Erbil governorate the average number of hours per day of public electricity supply was 15.6.⁶⁰¹

Although all Erbil governorate residents in a 2018 UNDP survey expressed a general perception of safety and security⁶⁰², since the beginning of war with ISIL the number of gun ownership among KRI residents has risen significantly, leading to an increase in the rate of murders and suicides in

⁵⁸⁹ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 12

⁵⁹⁰ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 36

⁵⁹¹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 36

⁵⁹² IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 33

⁵⁹³ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁹⁴ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 15

⁵⁹⁵ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 14

⁵⁹⁶ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 14

⁵⁹⁷ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 48

⁵⁹⁸ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 52

⁵⁹⁹ Rudaw, Kurdistan housing market expected to grow after stagnant 2018 start, 29 July 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁰ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 50

⁶⁰¹ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 50

⁶⁰² UNDP, Public Safety and Security Perception Survey in Iraq 2017, 22 January 2018, [url](#), p. 53

the region.⁶⁰³ Increasing economic insecurity and vulnerability of the host community in Erbil governorate has also fuelled the perception that ‘IDPs are taking over the city’ contributing to growing distrust between the two communities.⁶⁰⁴

IDPs

IOM reported that stability and the services provided, considered better compared to other governorates, were the main reasons that attracted IDPs to Erbil.⁶⁰⁵ According to a 2017 assessment by the Danish Refugee Council and the UNDP IDPs benefited from state support in the form of grants, and the PDS, while those with public sector jobs received a salary despite their displacement.⁶⁰⁶ According to an IOM 2017 assessment ‘services are available and accessible in nearly all locations or nearby, and overall, only legal services are unavailable for 30 % of the population and health services for 4 %.’⁶⁰⁷ However, high cost of living in Erbil governorate was a concern for IDPs⁶⁰⁸ and made IDPs move to camps outside the city, especially female-headed households.⁶⁰⁹ The poor quality of housing was also an issue for 91 % of IDP families living in Erbil that were surveyed by IOM in 2017.⁶¹⁰

According to UN OCHA, reporting in 2018, ‘80 % of IDPs in the KRI are living in rented houses or with host families, while the remaining are hosted in camps across Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.’⁶¹¹ Affordability of housing was considered a major problem for IDPs staying in rented accommodation⁶¹² and although the economic crisis in KRI has determined a decrease in the rental prices for housing, prices for IDPs have remained the same as before.⁶¹³ According to various sources in general it is difficult for non-Kurdish IDPs to buy property in Erbil City.⁶¹⁴ Most IDP families in Erbil governorate were settled in rented houses (85 %) or in camps (12 %). These are generally located in the district of Makhmur.⁶¹⁵ In 2017 IOM noted that ‘in the majority of the assessed locations, both IDPs and returnees did not report problems related to their shelter accommodation’⁶¹⁶ and that only 1 % of IDPs in Erbil governorate were living in critical shelters.⁶¹⁷ In July 2018 IOM further reported that no returnees living in critical shelters were reported in, among others, the governorate of Erbil.⁶¹⁸

⁶⁰³ Niqash, As Number Of Guns In Iraqi Kurdistan Increases, So Does Murder Rate, 19 July 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁴ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), pp. 26-29 ; IRI, Social and Political Perspectives of Iraqi IDPs from Ninewa and their Host Communities, 05 September 2018, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁰⁵ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 136

⁶⁰⁶ UNPD (et al.), Iraq: 3RP Monthly Update - August 2017: Livelihoods, 31 August 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁷ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 14

⁶⁰⁸ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 136

⁶⁰⁹ UNHCR, Iraq: Bi-weekly Protection Update; 5 - 18 March 2018, 18 March 2018, [url](#), p. 2

⁶¹⁰ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 30

⁶¹¹ UNOCHA, Iraq 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, February 2018, [url](#), p. 32

⁶¹² IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 136

⁶¹³ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 52

⁶¹⁴ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, p. 89, [url](#) ; Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq , 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 28

⁶¹⁵ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 27

⁶¹⁶ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 27

⁶¹⁷ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 15

⁶¹⁸ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 100, July 2018, [url](#), p. 2

According to sources interviewed by DIS in 2016, evictions of IDP were ‘not common’ in KRI, but they did occur for IDPs living in informal settlements in Erbil during the height of the displacement crisis.⁶¹⁹ Evictions also occurred for IDPs living in rented houses, with higher rates being registered by households not possessing a written rental contract.⁶²⁰ The number of IDP evictions reported for 2015 in Erbil governorate stood at 12 % for IDP households, with the vast majority due to the inability to make rent payments.⁶²¹ According to UNHCR inability to pay rent was the reason for ‘92 % of evicted households in Erbil district centre, 45 % of evicted households in Erbil district periphery and 53 % of households in towns’.⁶²²

Increasing tensions between the host and IDP community in the KRI as a result of the economic and political instability in the area have led to ‘rising number of evictions of IDPs across KRI and increased rent for IDPs’.⁶²³ Citing a source from the International Rescue Committee, the DIS 2016 report noted that ‘in case IDPs are evicted, they can go to the IDP camps’.⁶²⁴

The tense security situation that followed the independence referendum of September 2017 led to approximately 100 Sunni Arabs being forcefully evicted under security pretexts from camps in Debaga to camps outside Makhmour within Erbil governorate.⁶²⁵

In July 2018, there were ongoing reports of forced evictions, with some being delayed or put on hold. The situation is continually changing.⁶²⁶

6.4 Baghdad

IOM stated that overall, infrastructure in Baghdad appears to be mostly functioning.⁶²⁷ Power outages are however commonplace.⁶²⁸ The damage to the housing stock in the governorate of Baghdad is estimated to amount to IQD 337.5 billion (EUR 251.2 million).⁶²⁹ Significant residential damage was mainly reported in Abu Ghraib (3 %) and Mahmoudiya (7 %) areas.⁶³⁰

⁶¹⁹ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, p. 55, [url](#)

⁶²⁰ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), pp 21-22

⁶²¹ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), pp 21-22

⁶²² UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 22

⁶²³ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, p. 55, [url](#)

⁶²⁴ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, p. 55, [url](#)

⁶²⁵ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), 5 November 2018, [url](#), pp. 34, 52, 53

⁶²⁶ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), 5 November 2018, [url](#), pp. 59

⁶²⁷ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), October 2017, [url](#), p. 10

⁶²⁸ Reuters, As Baghdad life improves, some still seek refuge in its past, [url](#)

⁶²⁹ World Bank, Iraq reconstruction & investment part 2 Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates, January 2018, [url](#), p. 16

⁶³⁰ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#) p. 6

The large inflow of IDPs and migrants to urban areas has put notable pressure on the housing market in Baghdad.⁶³¹ According to a 2018 academic study, an estimated 187 000 housing units in Baghdad (around 31 % of the capital housing stock) are inappropriate. The housing shortage, along with lack of construction materials and scarce serviced urban lands, are the main reasons for an increase of housing costs.⁶³² Housing prices in Baghdad can vary depending on the area, with prices being lower outside the centre. IOM reported that an unfurnished house in suburban Baghdad of 200m² can rent for USD 100-300 [EUR 87-263], while inside Baghdad a house of that size would cost USD 750-1000 [EUR 658-877].⁶³³

In terms of living costs in Iraq, IOM states that on average a family will spend monthly: USD 13 [EUR 11] on gas, USD 9-22 [EUR 8-19] on water, USD 22-30 [EUR 19-26] on public electricity, and the same on private or community generators.⁶³⁴

Informal settlements

The government of Iraq stated that there are 250 informal housing settlements in Baghdad.⁶³⁵ A mapping exercise carried out by the Ministry of Planning in Iraq, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, however found that there were at that time 1 022 informal settlements in Baghdad. This was the largest number, out of 3 687 informal settlements recorded in 12 governorates covered by the study and inhabited by about 3.2 million persons.⁶³⁶ As of 2013, approximately 740 000 people were living in slums in Baghdad, without access to basic services, water and sanitation.⁶³⁷

IDPs and returnees

According to the 2015 factsheet about Baghdad by the NCCI,

‘Baghdad’s central location, the relative cheap cost of living and the presence of earlier arrived IDPs are all factors that are pulling new arrivals to the governorate. The majority of IDPs is residing with family or friends in the governorate or is renting housing. Others have sought refuge in religious buildings, schools, military camps, informal settlements or abandoned buildings. A smaller number is residing in camps. IDPs that are living in rented housing often have difficulties paying the rent.’⁶³⁸

IOM reported that the vast majority of IDPs in Baghdad live in rented housing or with host families; 5 % of IDP families lived in critical shelters, mostly in unfinished and abandoned buildings.⁶³⁹ Access to shelter was described as poor quality and too expensive by most of those in Baghdad surveyed by IOM in October 2017, while tap water, public electricity, and sewerage was not efficient for

⁶³¹ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 44

⁶³² Al-Hafith, Omar, B.K. Satish (et al.), A systematic assessment of architectural approaches for solving the housing problem in Iraq, in: *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, July 2018, [url](#), p. 2

⁶³³ IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), pp. 7-8

⁶³⁴ IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁶³⁵ UNCERD, Combined twenty-second to twenty-fifth periodic reports submitted by Iraq under article 9 of the Convention, due in 2017, 22 November 2017, [url](#), p. 34

⁶³⁶ UN – Habitat, New research finds 3.2 million Iraqis living in informal settlements, 19 September 2017, [url](#)

⁶³⁷ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 44

⁶³⁸ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁶³⁹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 8

30 % of the population.⁶⁴⁰ IOM/REACH stated that IDPs and returnees were concerned about water and sanitation in their place of displacement.⁶⁴¹ Low quality shelters increase risks to the health and safety of IDPs. According to REACH's April 2018 assessment of IDP camp locations, low quality shelter in IDP camps such as tents (85 %) was the most common form of shelter, followed by caravans and residential housing units.⁶⁴² In Baghdad, 82 % of IDPs living in camps lived in tents without a concrete floor; 93 % of those residents were also in need of kerosene for winter heating.⁶⁴³

There were no returnees living in critical shelters in Baghdad as of July 2018, according to IOM.⁶⁴⁴ The most commonly reported shelter typology in assessed informal IDP sites in Baghdad was 'unfinished buildings' (45 %).⁶⁴⁵ A majority of the buildings had between 25 and 50 % damage.⁶⁴⁶ The primary water source was most often an illegal extension of water pipes.⁶⁴⁷ At 62 % of the sites reports about bad drinking water were noted.⁶⁴⁸ At 21 % of the sites no waste collection was reported to take place.⁶⁴⁹

IDP camp closures and IDP evictions in Baghdad

UNHCR wrote in September 2018 that all IDP camps inside Baghdad except for Al Ahel and Amal (in Abu Ghraib) are expected to be closed soon.⁶⁵⁰ UNHCR notes that the capacity of these two remaining camps 'is extremely limited and cannot accommodate the majority of the IDPs' affected by the other camp closure.⁶⁵¹

In September 2018, Al Khadhraa camp was closed by authorities and 51 families left the camp; 20 families moved into rental housing in the neighbourhood and others were 'forced to leave', 13 families were sent back to their areas of origin (Anbar/Baghdad), 14 families were sent to Al Ahal IDP camp, and four other families moved into non-camp housing in Baghdad.⁶⁵² UNHCR documented two instances of forced evictions in Baghdad in its August 2018 Protection Update: 45 families from Al Jamea camp in Karkh district, many of whom went back to Ninewa; eviction of Maryam Al-Althra camp in Zayona, mainly of Christian IDPs – 42 IDP families from Anbar left and rented housing and others will be returning to their area of origin or relocating into Al Ahel camp or Abu Ghraib camp.⁶⁵³ In July 2018, 45 families from Ninewa and 402 families from Anbar were informed they had to leave camps in Mansour district and Abu Ghraib districts of Baghdad and 'in most cases return to their area of origin'.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁴⁰ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 7

⁶⁴¹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment, part II Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 11

⁶⁴² REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 24-25

⁶⁴³ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 24-25

⁶⁴⁴ IOM, Iraq: Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 100, July 2018, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁴⁵ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 12

⁶⁴⁶ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 14

⁶⁴⁷ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 15

⁶⁴⁸ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 16

⁶⁴⁹ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 16

⁶⁵⁰ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update – August 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁶⁵¹ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update – August 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁶⁵² UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update – August 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁶⁵³ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, August 2018, [url](#) p. 4

⁶⁵⁴ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, July 2018, [url](#) p. 3

UNHCR noted that 'IDPs often leave Baghdad camps following eviction threats and settle in nearby areas in the city in order to avoid being evicted despite not having security clearance to live outside the camps. This makes them vulnerable to arrests or renewed evictions.'⁶⁵⁵ According to NCCI, 'others who are residing in so called vulnerable housing like schools or unfinished buildings, are at risk of being expelled from these locations.'⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁵ UNHCR, Iraq Protection Update, August 2018, [url](#) p. 4

⁶⁵⁶ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#) p. 5

7. Health

7.1 Health data

Life expectancy at birth (2010-2015)	69.9 ⁶⁵⁷
Maternal mortality rate (2010-2015)	50 per 100 000 live birth ⁶⁵⁸
Infant mortality (2010-2015)	32 per 1 000 live birth ⁶⁵⁹
Under-5 mortality rate (2010-2015)	38 per 1 000 live birth ⁶⁶⁰
Density of physicians (2016)	8.4 per 10 000 population ⁶⁶¹
Density of midwives and nurses (2016)	19,4 per 10 000 population ⁶⁶²
Hospital bed density (2013)	13 per 10 000 population ⁶⁶³

Under the Iraqi Constitution, the right to health care states that the government ‘will maintain public health and provide the means of prevention and treatment’, according to DFAT.⁶⁶⁴

UNOCHA reported in February 2018 that 7.3 million people need healthcare but lacked access to health services;⁶⁶⁵ this figure dropped to 5.5 million people in need of healthcare as of December 2018.⁶⁶⁶ UNOCHA noted that the health sector had been ‘particularly hard hit’ by the ISIL conflict and that 36 % of health facilities in Salah al-Din are damaged or destroyed, while only half of health centres in Ninewa are fully functional.⁶⁶⁷ The Ministry of Health reported that 32 % of hospitals and 14 % of Primary Health Care Centres (PHCC) in Ninewa were destroyed, 35 % of PHCCs in Kirkuk are not functional, and 17 % of hospitals in Anbar are only partially functional.⁶⁶⁸

In February 2018, it was reported that water and power systems that health facilities depend on to function also needed repair.⁶⁶⁹ The supply of medical services does not meet demand, in particular in areas with large numbers of IDPs.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁵⁷ UN, World Population Prospects, volume II: Demographic Profiles, 2017 revision, 2017, [url](#), p. 393

⁶⁵⁸ WHO, Maternal mortality in 1990-2015, Iraq, 2015, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁹ UN, World Population Prospects, volume II: Demographic Profiles, 2017 revision, 2017, [url](#), p. 394

⁶⁶⁰ UN, World Population Prospects, volume II: Demographic Profiles, 2017 revision, 2017, [url](#), p. 394

⁶⁶¹ WHO, Eastern Mediterranean Region - Framework for health information systems and core indicators for monitoring health situation and health system performance, 2017, [url](#), p. 14

⁶⁶² WHO, Eastern Mediterranean Region - Framework for health information systems and core indicators for monitoring health situation and health system performance, 2017, [url](#), p. 14

⁶⁶³ WHO, Eastern Mediterranean Region - Framework for health information systems and core indicators for monitoring health situation and health system performance, 2017, [url](#), p. 16

⁶⁶⁴ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁶⁶⁵ UNOCHA, Iraq 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, February 2018, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁶⁶ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁶⁶⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, February 2018, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁶⁸ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁶⁶⁹ WHO, Investments in health can contribute to peace dividends, 11 February 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁰ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018 [url](#), p. 8

As a result of the conflict, the healthcare system in Iraq, including in Baghdad, has seen a significant deterioration.⁶⁷¹ A weakened health system due to periodic conflict since the 1980s was worsened in 2014 by the ISIL crisis, which led to siege-like conditions in ISIL held areas that left the system in significant need of reconstruction in those areas.⁶⁷² Reconstruction efforts in the medical and health sectors have been hindered by insecurity and a ‘chronic lack of utilities’ such as water and electricity.⁶⁷³ Health infrastructure has ‘suffered from decades of conflict’. Prior to the rise of ISIL, the sector was under-resourced and was lacking skilled health workers. Many health professionals left the country or fled to neighbouring countries or abroad. In conflict-affected areas, ‘health services are limited’.⁶⁷⁴ The population’s access to basic health services has become increasingly impaired.⁶⁷⁵ It is also reported that government doctors – both in central Iraq as in the KRI - work in private clinics outside of their regular working hours. These factors impair the availability of health care for those with limited purchasing power.⁶⁷⁶

Per capita expenditure on health in Iraq is USD 292 (EUR 258) and public spending on health accounts for approximately 6.5 % of overall government expenditure⁶⁷⁷ or about 3 % of Iraq’s GDP, which is less than the Middle Eastern regional average.⁶⁷⁸ The KRG’s health budget has also been under significant strain since the 2014 ISIL crisis and due to displacement of IDPs into the region.⁶⁷⁹

7.2 Healthcare system and access

Since the 1970s the Iraqi health system consists of Public Healthcare Centres (PHCCs) and hospitals. PHCCs provide preventive and basic curative services. They are typically administered by doctors, but PHCCs in rural areas may be staffed with medical auxiliaries only.⁶⁸⁰ Primary care includes ‘examinations, investigations, immunization, prenatal care, and health education’ with simple medications; complex cases are sent to hospitals.⁶⁸¹ Despite poor organisation and shortages of staff and medications in the PHCCs, they are recognised as essential sources of health care provision, particularly for the poor.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷¹ EPIC, Iraq’s Public Healthcare System in Crisis, 7 March 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁷² Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), pp. 11-13, 16

⁶⁷³ EPIC, Iraq’s Public Healthcare System in Crisis, 7 March 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁴ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁶⁷⁵ WHO, Iraq – Primary Health Care, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁷⁶ Cetorelli, V., et al., Health needs and care seeking behavior of Yazidis and other minority groups displaced by ISIS into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, PLOS One, 16 August 2017, [url](#); EPIC, Iraq’s Public Healthcare System in Crisis, 7 March 2017, [url](#); 1001Iraqithoughts, Iraq’s Ailing Healthcare, 17 May 2017, [url](#); Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 11-13, 16, 24-25

⁶⁷⁷ WHO, Eastern Mediterranean Region - Framework for health information systems and core indicators for monitoring health situation and health system performance, 2017, [url](#), p. 13

⁶⁷⁸ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq’s Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁹ Ross C. A., Moore M. et al., Healthcare Sector Reform in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2017, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁸⁰ Godichet, O., (et al.), Iraqi system of primary health care: a communitarian system of family medicine under a dictatorship framework, in: Contemporary Nurse 2004 Jul-Aug;17(1-2), pp. 113-24 [url](#)

⁶⁸¹ IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁸² World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 83

Hospitals and other health services are heavily concentrated in urban areas.⁶⁸³ As a consequence hospitals and other medical facilities are either scarcely or not at all available for inhabitants of the poorer governorates.⁶⁸⁴

Both health services and medication are available in a public and a private sector system. There is no public health insurance system. An ID card and payment are the requirements to get access to healthcare. Patients have to pay for most consultations and treatments, both in the public and the private system.⁶⁸⁵ Primary and preventive care services are limited by electricity shortages and lack of equipment. Primary care includes ‘examinations, investigations, immunization, prenatal care, and health education’ with simple medications; complex cases are sent to hospitals.⁶⁸⁶

The World Bank writes in 2017 that ‘since there are no health insurance schemes in Iraq, the costs of private health care must be met out-of-pocket, which is well beyond the reach of many Iraqis.’⁶⁸⁷ IOM country factsheets published in 2017 stated that no costs are covered by health insurance; the ‘public sector does provide medical services that are lower in price compared to the private sector.’ In the private sector quality and availability is generally better while prices are higher.⁶⁸⁸ As a consequence, those who can afford so seek private healthcare either in private facilities in Erbil and Baghdad or abroad, while those with less means rely on public hospitals and health centres.⁶⁸⁹ PHCCs report that a lack of materials and specialised staff creates difficulties in treating high numbers of patients.⁶⁹⁰

An article published by IRIN news in March 2018 highlights the struggles faced by Yazidi returnees in accessing healthcare in the Sinjar region, north-east Iraq. IRIN also informs that the new fees introduced by the Iraqi government for public healthcare, although modest, – IQD 2 000 [EUR 1.48] for a consultation and IQD 1 000 [EUR 0.74] for a prescription – have impacted some of the poorest members of the community in Sinjar, who cannot afford these costs.⁶⁹¹

Accurate and updated information on available health facilities is difficult to obtain.⁶⁹² 2015 statistics from the Iraqi government stated that there were 212 public hospitals and 95 private hospitals, of which 207 and 93 were ‘fully or partially functioning’.⁶⁹³ According to the WHO’s undated website, Iraq has 229 general and specialised hospitals.⁶⁹⁴ WHO stated that there are 1 185 primary healthcare centres headed by a medical doctor and 1 146 headed by mid-level workers⁶⁹⁵, however, the Iraqi government provided statistics in 2017 that stated that there are

⁶⁸³ Al Hilfi, T.K., R. Lafta et al., Health Services in Iraq, Lancet 2013; 381, 2013, [url](#), p. 942; BTI Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 23

⁶⁸⁴ Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), pp. 6, 2; Al Hilfi, T.K., R. Lafta et al., Health Services in Iraq, 2013, [url](#), p. 944

⁶⁸⁵ IOM, Iraq - Country Fact Sheet 2017, August 2017, [url](#), p. 1-2

⁶⁸⁶ IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁸⁷ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 83

⁶⁸⁸ IOM, Iraq - Country Fact Sheet 2017, August 2017, [url](#), p. 1-2

⁶⁸⁹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq’s Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#); Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 6.; 1001Iraqithoughts, Iraq’s Ailing Healthcare, 17 May 2017, [url](#); EPIC, Iraq’s Public Healthcare System in Crisis, 7 March 2017, [url](#); 1001Iraqithoughts, Iraq’s Ailing Healthcare, 17 May 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁰ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq’s Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁹¹ IRIN, Iraq’s Yazidis return to a healthcare crisis, 16 March 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁹² Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 15

⁶⁹³ Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 14

⁶⁹⁴ WHO, Iraq – Primary Health Care, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁹⁵ WHO, Iraq – Primary Health Care, n.d., [url](#)

2 669 primary healthcare centres.⁶⁹⁶ WHO estimates that there are 0.7 primary health care facilities per 10 000 Iraqis and 13 hospital beds per 10 000. In terms of the healthcare workforce, there are 8.4 doctors and 19.4 nurses/midwives per 10 000 Iraqis.⁶⁹⁷

In terms of health care indicators (such as health expenditure per capita, hospital beds per thousand, nurses/midwives per thousand) Iraq underperforms compared to other countries in the region.⁶⁹⁸ The 2017 REACH report states that improving access to basic healthcare services remains a key priority for all the population in Iraq. It also reported that there was a 'lack of medicines available at hospitals and inability to afford medicines from pharmacies'.⁶⁹⁹ According to a paper published by the Lancet, in 2013, staffing of the medical field lagged behind compared to other countries in the region (Jordan, Syria, Egypt).⁷⁰⁰ Also, the system lacks doctors and medical staff who have reportedly left the country over the past years due to the conflict, lack of payment of salaries⁷⁰¹ and corruption.⁷⁰²

Medical staff are not evenly distributed across the country; disproportionately large numbers of doctors, health care professionals and beds are located in Baghdad while poorer governorates have fewer available medical resources.⁷⁰³ Public health centres (PHCCs) report that a lack of materials and specialised staff creates difficulties treating high numbers of patients.⁷⁰⁴

7.2.1 Maternal and child health

According to 2018 UNDP statistics, for every 100 000 live births, 50 women die from pregnancy-related causes.⁷⁰⁵ UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) states that maternal and women's health in Iraq is hindered by poverty and that main causes of maternal/child deaths are associated with inefficient birth practices, inadequate referral system, unavailability of emergency obstetric care, and high levels of anemia among pregnant women (35 %), which affect particularly rural women and those living in the central and southern regions.⁷⁰⁶ Increased rates of cerebral palsy in children have been attributed to the decline in neonatal and obstetric care during the past few decades in Iraq.⁷⁰⁷

In August 2018, UNPFA announced to have received EUR 5 million of contribution from the EU to support the provision of reproductive healthcare, including obstetric care and clinical services for rape victims across Iraq. UNPFA notes that approximately 825 000 women of reproductive age in Iraq are in need of humanitarian assistance, since the healthcare services 'in both conflict-affected

⁶⁹⁶ Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 15.

⁶⁹⁷ WHO, Eastern Mediterranean Region - Framework for health information systems and core indicators for monitoring health situation and health system performance, 2017, [url](#), p. 14

⁶⁹⁸ IMF, Iraq – Selected Issues: IMF Country Report 17/252, August 2017, [url](#), pp. 5-6

⁶⁹⁹ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment, December 2017, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁰⁰ Al Hilfi, T.K., R. Lafta et al., Health Services in Iraq, Lancet 2013; 381, 2013, [url](#), p. 944

⁷⁰¹ EPIC, Iraq's Public Healthcare System in Crisis, 7 March 2017, [url](#); 1001Iraqithoughts, Iraq's Ailing Healthcare, 17 May 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁰² Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 24-25

⁷⁰³ Al Hilfi, T.K., R. Lafta et al., Health Services in Iraq, Lancet 2013; 381, 2013, [url](#), p. 944

⁷⁰⁴ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq's Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁵ UNDP, Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update Briefing note - Iraq, 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁰⁶ UNFPA, Iraq: Reproductive and maternal health, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁰⁷ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq's Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

areas and Internally Displaced People's hosting areas' have been severely impacted, as a result of the 'devastating war' against ISIL.⁷⁰⁸

7.2.2 Persons with disabilities

In 2017 it was reported that because of protracted conflict, many people with disabilities in Iraq have limited or no access to health care and rehabilitation, mainly due to lack of facilities, and shortage of medication, specialised services and equipment.⁷⁰⁹ Following the conflict against ISIL, many civilians and members of the security forces have been left with injuries and disabilities that require aftercare, prosthetics, and support equipment.⁷¹⁰ In Ninewa, there are an estimated 4 493 people with amputations, 668 of whom were victims of IEDs, mines, or booby traps; UNOCHA estimates that the actual number of amputees in Ninewa and the rest of Iraq is higher than the recorded numbers.⁷¹¹ Many of those who have been disabled complain of lack of sufficient care in the health system.⁷¹² Government and public health facilities that provide secondary treatments to emergency care, especially those treating long-term disabilities, have difficulty providing free treatment.⁷¹³ Local and international organisations attempt to fill gaps in care in the public system.⁷¹⁴

7.2.3 Mental health care

Most public hospitals have a psychiatric department in Iraq; urgent care and hospitalisation is available for short periods in 'some hospitals' in Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk, and Erbil, for a maximum of one month.⁷¹⁵ Although reliable data is sparse for the post-2008 period, the deterioration of the security situation after the ISIL offensive in 2014 has intensified the need for mental care and specialised staff, according to EPIC.⁷¹⁶ In 2018, it was estimated that between 15 and 20 % of the country's population faced mental health issues.⁷¹⁷ WHO representatives, interviewed by Landinfo and DIS, in 2018 noted that with regard to mental health 'there are huge needs and the available services does not meet the demand.'⁷¹⁸ The growing mental health needs haven't been met due to a shortage of specialised staff, as, according to IRIN news, there were only 80 clinical psychologists in the country, working alongside a limited number of psychiatrists.⁷¹⁹

⁷⁰⁸ UNFPA, The EU supports reproductive health services in Iraq with a new contribution to UNFPA, 27 August 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁹ WHO, Rehabilitation & Disabilities, n.d, [url](#); Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq's Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷¹⁰ Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 17-18.

⁷¹¹ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 35

⁷¹² Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 17-18.

⁷¹³ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq's Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷¹⁴ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq's Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷¹⁵ IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁷¹⁶ EPIC, Iraq's quiet mental health crisis, 05 May 2017, [url](#)

⁷¹⁷ Rudaw, Seminar examines mental health challenges in post-conflict Iraq, 2 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷¹⁸ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 54

⁷¹⁹ IRIN News, Iraq's growing mental health problem, 16 January 2017, [url](#)

Iraq is deficient in experts providing care for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and trauma-related mental health problems.⁷²⁰ Iraq's care system for mental health is characterised by institutionalised care for chronic conditions like schizophrenia.⁷²¹ Mental health care provided as part of the Ministry of Health's basic health package remains unclear in its impact.⁷²²

Mental health disorders are a leading cause of ill health in Iraqis over age 5, due to exposure to successive years of conflict, violence and trauma.⁷²³ In 2013, Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) stated that there were four psychiatrists per million inhabitants in Iraq.⁷²⁴ According to a seminar of mental health professionals hosted by MSF, challenges to the mental health system in Iraq include the lack of funding and infrastructure, limited number of mental health professionals, location of services, as they are often too far away for people to travel, as well as stigma.⁷²⁵ In a 2017 article, IRIN informs that Iraq had already a shortage of clinicians in psychological care prior to ISIL, and the conflict has increased the need as hundreds of thousands of civilians have been affected by ISIL rule.⁷²⁶ The WHO reported that, as of July 2018, 12 international partner organisations and 6 national partners were supporting the provision of mental health support services to local populations in 70 locations (30 IDP camps) in 8 governorates of Iraq, mainly in Ninewa, Kirkuk, Dahuk, and Salah al Din; more than 10 000 cases received care in the first half of 2018.⁷²⁷

7.2.4. IDPs and returnees

According to the REACH Multi-cluster assessment of December 2017, 'the impact of the conflict can also be seen in the health and education sectors, as evidenced by the reported lack of medicines available at hospitals and inability to afford medicines from pharmacies.'⁷²⁸ The World Bank reports that basic services for health are 'either non-existent or insufficient' in IDP camps.⁷²⁹ UNOCHA also reported in December 2018 that the lack of medicines and referral services impacts IDPs in particular as they have partial access to prescriptions or lack referral to higher level services.⁷³⁰

In the period December 2017 – January 2018 5 591 household-level interviews were conducted across 61 formal IDP camps in the governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah. The most frequently cited difficulties in accessing healthcare concerned the increasing inability to afford healthcare services. Of the interviewed households 98 % reported having a healthcare facility within walking distance of their home and 40 % of households that required healthcare in the thirty days prior to data collection

⁷²⁰ Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 20

⁷²¹ MSF, Healing Iraqis – The challenges of providing mental health care in Iraq, 29 April 2013, [url](#), pp. 2-3

⁷²² Al-Bayan Centre for Planning and Studies, Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model, 2018, [url](#), p. 20

⁷²³ MSF, Healing Iraqis – The challenges of providing mental health care in Iraq, 29 April 2013, [url](#), pp. 2-3

⁷²⁴ MSF, Healing Iraqis – The challenges of providing mental health care in Iraq, 29 April 2013, [url](#), pp. 2-3

⁷²⁵ Rudaw, Seminar examines mental health challenges in post-conflict Iraq, 2 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷²⁶ IRIN, Iraq's growing mental health problem, 16 January 2017, [url](#)

⁷²⁷ WHO, Iraq: 3W Mental Health Psychosocial Support Services, July 2018, [url](#)

⁷²⁸ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA), December 2017, [url](#), p.4

⁷²⁹ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 84

⁷³⁰ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 35

and sought treatment reported having experienced problems in doing so.⁷³¹ It is reported that in particular in areas with large numbers of IDPs supply of medical services does not meet demand.⁷³²

7.3 Basrah

Health care and treatment

In 2012 Basrah governorate had 13 hospitals per 100 000 inhabitants, compared to 46 in Baghdad. It had 4.6 Primary Health Care Centres (PHCC) per 100 000 inhabitants, compared to 3 in Baghdad and 16.3 in Erbil.⁷³³ Basrah city has four main hospitals.⁷³⁴ Hospitals in Basrah are described by a 2018 FFM report by NRC as 'quite over-crowded' and 'lack the capacity to treat anything beyond basic medical needs'.⁷³⁵ In September 2018, the health ministry stated to the media that 17 000 patients were admitted to local hospitals, treated and dispatched, during Basrah's polluted drinking water crisis. Basrah's local council head stated that the governorate's hospitals had difficulty coping with the number of patients.⁷³⁶ UNHCR's 2016 protection assessment stated that health care services in the south were inadequate, medication and surgical treatments were costly.⁷³⁷ NRC wrote in September 2018 that in Basrah, those requiring special care such as in-patient cancer treatment, for example, travel abroad if they can afford to, in order to access adequate care.⁷³⁸

Maternal health care

In Basrah, a 2010 study of 353 Basrah women who recently gave birth found that women preferred to give birth in a hospital nearly 84 % of the time; compared to 16 % who preferred home delivery. The study stated that hospital delivery was common due to the awareness of the need for safe and secure deliveries; those who chose not to deliver in hospital cited personal support and privacy as the main reasons.⁷³⁹ The governorate has attributed birth defects, cancer rates, and miscarriages in the Basrah population to the long-term impacts of depleted uranium used during the 1990s.⁷⁴⁰

Mental health care

Basrah General Hospital has a psychiatry department. According to the head of the department interviewed in the media, he recommends his patients seek treatment abroad, because Iraq lacks specialised rehabilitation facilities, medicines, and specialists such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers.⁷⁴¹ Iraq was supposed to get its first specialised mental health and rehabilitation centre in Basrah in 2018; however, doctors and psychiatrists were still not hired at the time the article was published in January 2018.⁷⁴² There is a post-surgical recovery centre in Basrah in a

⁷³¹ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons Living in Camps, Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁷³² Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq , 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁷³³ Cetorelli, V., and Shabila N., Expansion of health facilities in Iraq a decade after the S-led invasion, 2003-2012, [url](#)

⁷³⁴ National (The), Hospitals in Basra flooded with cases of water-borne illness, 23 August 2018, [url](#)

⁷³⁵ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁷³⁶ National (The), Basra health crisis: 17, 000 admitted to hospitals for water poisoning, 29 August 2018, [url](#)

⁷³⁷ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

⁷³⁸ NRC, Basra Fact Finding Mission Report #1, 9 September 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁷³⁹ Mahdi, S.S., Habib O.S., A study on preference and practices of women regarding place of delivery, August 2010, [url](#), p. 874

⁷⁴⁰ NCCI, Basrah Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁷⁴¹ New Arab (The), Basra: The epicenter of Iraq's drug problem, 2 January 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁴² New Arab (The), Basra: The epicenter of Iraq's drug problem, 2 January 2018, [url](#)

former palace of Saddam Hussein where amputees, many of whom are former PMU militia fighters with disabilities, seek treatment, including for mental health conditions like PTSD.⁷⁴³

IDPs

In order to access healthcare in Basrah, IDPs must obtain special immigration cards, which they receive when they register officially with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement.⁷⁴⁴ In 2016, IOM found that 73 % of Basrah IDPs said they had access to health services, with a few reporting that it was too expensive.⁷⁴⁵ According to IOM, writing in October 2017, less than 1 % of IDPs surveyed had concerns about access to healthcare.⁷⁴⁶ UNHCR's 2016 protection assessment stated that the most vulnerable IDPs were those with chronic/serious medical conditions, since 'the majority of IDPs cannot afford' costly medication and specialised treatments.⁷⁴⁷ Other persons that UNHCR interviewed stated were highly vulnerable and at risk of exploitation were people with physical and mental disabilities, who lack specialised services; as well as single parent and female-headed families with minor children.⁷⁴⁸

7.4 Erbil

There is a higher number of health facilities in KRI than in other parts of Iraq.⁷⁴⁹ KRI's health care system is primarily provided by 59 public hospitals and hundreds of primary health care centres in the region. Health care is also provided in private clinics, private hospitals, and by private physicians.⁷⁵⁰ KRI's health infrastructure is considered to be better than in the rest of the country due to the relative stability and security of the region.⁷⁵¹ According to a Rand Corporation 2014 report on the health care system in KRI 'all provinces have public general hospitals and at least one emergency and pediatric hospital.'⁷⁵² The large amount of IDPs in the area has however put significant pressure on the health system's capacity, leading to cases where waiting lists for treatment have been issued.⁷⁵³

According to 2014 data the average population size covered by a hospital in Erbil was 89 882.⁷⁵⁴ Erbil had the second most physicians in KRI with 12.9 per 10 000 population⁷⁵⁵ and 36 % of Primary Health Care Centres were staffed with physicians.⁷⁵⁶ A growing number of private hospitals has been registered, particularly in Erbil. These are much smaller in size than the public hospitals.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁴³ National (The), After the battles, Iraq's Shiite militiamen fade from view, 8 July 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁴ IOM, Basrah governorate profile, June 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁷⁴⁵ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 69

⁷⁴⁶ IOM, Iraq Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 36

⁷⁴⁷ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁴⁸ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁴⁹ Cetorelli, V., et al., Health needs and care seeking behavior of Yazidis and other minority groups displaced by ISIS into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, PLOS One, 16 August 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁰ Ross, C. A., Moore, M. et al., Healthcare Sector Reform in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2017, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁵¹ World Bank, Iraq: Systematic Country Diagnostic, 03 February 2017, [url](#), p. 83

⁷⁵² Moore, M., Ross, C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 14

⁷⁵³ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), pp. 59-60

⁷⁵⁴ Moore, M., Ross, C. A., et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 13

⁷⁵⁵ Moore, M., Ross, C. A., et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 97

⁷⁵⁶ Moore, M., Ross, C. A., et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 14

⁷⁵⁷ Moore, M., Ross, C. A., et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 61

Most health facilities in Erbil are concentrated in the centre of the city, attracting a considerable number of qualified specialists that ‘put pressure on the health authorities to work in hospitals and Primary Health Care Centres inside Erbil City’.⁷⁵⁸ At the governorate level Erbil exhibits an urban-rural imbalance with a low density of doctors outside of Erbil City.⁷⁵⁹

During the Mosul crisis between October and January 2017, 1 675 wounded Iraqi civilians were sent for treatment in Erbil’s hospitals⁷⁶⁰ which were described as overloaded, also not guaranteeing entry for some patients due to security checks.⁷⁶¹ 648 cases of measles were recorded in Erbil and other four governorates in the first half of 2018. This has been addressed by the Ministry of Health and international partners through vaccinations and campaigns of immunisation.⁷⁶²

Many of the basic primary care services are provided in the KRI, however not in a consistent way.⁷⁶³ The PHC [Primary Health Care] system covers all Iraqis, including non-Kurdistan Region residents who are Iraqi citizens. However, non-Kurdistan residents who do not have citizenship of Iraq cannot avail themselves of health facilities and medicines under the same terms as Kurdistan citizens.⁷⁶⁴ The same source notes that ‘all citizens are eligible for a broad package of health care, dental, and emergency services in public hospitals and PHCs. The services provided are limited by the budget, available equipment and medicines, and the education and training of the staff’.⁷⁶⁵ Syrian refugees residing in KRI have the right to access public healthcare.⁷⁶⁶ The distribution of PHC centres is not necessarily uniform across the Kurdistan Region, with most main PHCs serving too many people, and most sub-centres serving too few people. The centres providing services to a larger population are, however, equipped with more doctors and nurses than the sub-centres.⁷⁶⁷ In August 2018, Rudaw reported that medication is illegally imported into the KRG and that this includes counterfeit medication.⁷⁶⁸

IDPs

World Health Organization (WHO) representatives interviewed by Landinfo and DIS during a 2018 mission to Erbil and Sulaimania stated that local health authorities are in charge for service provision for IDPs in and out of camps and that WHO is providing support for primary and secondary health care.⁷⁶⁹ According to other sources ‘IDPs can access services at public

⁷⁵⁸ Wahab, M. A., Husein V. M., et.al., Distribution of doctors’ workforce in Erbil Governorate, in Zanko Journal of Medical Sciences 2016; 20(1) [url](#), p. 1139

⁷⁵⁹ Wahab, M. A., Husein V. M., et.al., Distribution of doctors’ workforce in Erbil Governorate, in Zanko Journal of Medical Sciences 2016; 20(1) [url](#), p. 1139

⁷⁶⁰ UNOCHA, Iraq: Mosul Humanitarian Response Situation Report No. 18 (23 January - 29 January 2017), 29 January 2017, [url](#), p. 1

⁷⁶¹ IRIN, Conflict Inside east Mosul’s growing healthcare emergency, 2 February 2017, [url](#) ; WHO, Efforts ongoing to provide trauma care to people in need in Mosul, Iraq, 25 January 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁶² USAID, Iraq – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #10, Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, 30 September 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁶³ Moore, M., Ross C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 70

⁷⁶⁴ Moore, M., Ross C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 60

⁷⁶⁵ Moore, M., Ross C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 60

⁷⁶⁶ Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, Asuda, Broken Lives: Violence against Syrian refugee women and girls in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, March 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁶⁷ Moore, M., Ross C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁸ Rudaw, 27 August 2018, KRG cracks down on counterfeit medications worth millions, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁹ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), pp. 53-54

hospitals.⁷⁷⁰ According to an April 2018 assessment of IDP camps in Iraq conducted by REACH, 99 % of all surveyed households reported having a health centre within two kilometres from their home whereas 29 % of households in Erbil governorate reported medical care as a priority need.⁷⁷¹

According to a UNHCR 2016 survey the access to public health services in urban areas of Erbil governorate has been rated as good or very good by 71 % of households in Erbil district centre, 58 % in Erbil district periphery and 65 % in towns.⁷⁷² Poor access to public health services has been reported primarily in district periphery areas such as Baharka and Kasnazan where 23 % of households reported limited access to services.⁷⁷³ An insufficient number of facilities, low quality of services and unaffordability were listed as the main reasons by Erbil households that were dissatisfied with the public health services.⁷⁷⁴

Various sources interviewed in 2016 by the DIS during its mission to Erbil identified as barriers to health care for IDPs: the lack of ID cards, transportation costs and dependence of the health system in KRI on funding from the federal government.⁷⁷⁵

Representatives of WHO interviewed in 2018 stated that medication is provided by the Federal Ministry of Health and supplemented by WHO to health partners working with IDPs. Shortages of medicines and services have been reported in some public hospitals.⁷⁷⁶ According to a 2017 Inter-Agency Standing Committee irregular transfer of funds from the federal government to KRG has impacted the health care system resulting in approximately 25 % of the region's medication needs being met.⁷⁷⁷ This has led to a situation where 'all humanitarian actors wishing to run health or mental health programmes need to cover 100 % of medications within their respective projects as the KRG-Directorates of Health have openly stated that they cannot support humanitarian actors with medication.'⁷⁷⁸

Maternal and child health care

Maternal and child health care are provided by PHC centres.⁷⁷⁹ In 2015 it was reported that nearly 90 % of all pregnant women in the KRI had access to prenatal health care. In Erbil this was

⁷⁷⁰ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), pp. 53, 59

⁷⁷¹ REACH, Comparative MultiCluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 15-21

⁷⁷² UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 24

⁷⁷³ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 24

⁷⁷⁴ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 24

⁷⁷⁵ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 60

⁷⁷⁶ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), pp. 53-54

⁷⁷⁷ IASC, Support Mission Report and MHPSS Situational Analysis: IDP and Refugee Crisis - Kurdistan, Northern Iraq (KRG) and Mosul-response, Iraq, 5 July 2017, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁷⁸ IASC, Support Mission Report and MHPSS Situational Analysis: IDP and Refugee Crisis - Kurdistan, Northern Iraq (KRG) and Mosul-response, 5 July 2017, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁷⁹ Moore, M., Ross C. A. et al., The future of health care in the Kurdistan Region – Iraq, 2014, [url](#), p. 44

accessible to 100 % of women.⁷⁸⁰ In general, access to prenatal care was lower in some of the poorest districts of KRI, such as Chamchamal, Kalar and in Diyala's Khanaqin district.⁷⁸¹ Compared to prenatal care, access to postnatal services is lower (73 % of lactating women). Although services were available, women tended not to access postnatal care, mainly due to personal reasons, lack of awareness of the existence of these services, or the importance of accessing them.⁷⁸² In KRI, childbirth and pregnancy are major causes of deaths for younger females (around 11 % of all deaths for women aged 0-24). Child mortality in KRI is significantly lower than in other districts in Iraq.⁷⁸³ The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 23 deaths per 1 000 births.⁷⁸⁴ The immunisation rates for polio and measles for children aged 0-59 months vary significantly by district of residence, with highest rate in Dahuk and Ninewa (nearly 92 %) and lowest rate in Erbil governorate (74 %).⁷⁸⁵ In some IDPs camps across Iraq and KRI, women and children with perceived affiliation to ISIL face various form of discrimination, including denial of food, water and access to basic health care.⁷⁸⁶

Persons with disabilities

In the Kurdistan Region, medical facilities are unable to cope with the amount of people in need of treatment, including the refugees and IDPs that are registered in the region. An increase in war-related disabilities, such as amputations, has generated further burden for the health system in KRI.⁷⁸⁷ People suffering from disabilities and physical injuries receive health care in special rehabilitation centres, such as the Helena Centre, which is part of the Erbil General Directorate of Health.⁷⁸⁸ The WHO and a number of civil society organisations play a key role in supporting the health authorities in service provision for the local population and IDPs all across Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region.⁷⁸⁹ However, these organisations are only able to offer support to a limited number of people per day. For instance, at the ICRC Physical Rehabilitation Centre in Erbil, the waiting list for receiving a cast for prosthetic or an orthotic device is three months.⁷⁹⁰

Mental health

The KRI had four government mental health hospitals, one being located in Erbil, 'leaving the weight of providing mental healthcare on non-government organisations such as MSF who provided 11 000 individual mental health consultations for IDPs and returnees in Iraq during the second half of 2017.⁷⁹¹ According to a IOM 2017 assessment of IDPs and returnees 'in most locations of Erbil, psychosocial support is lacking or not adequate, although most IDPs would not

⁷⁸⁰ REACH, Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Hosting Communities Across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, March 2015, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁸¹ REACH, Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Hosting Communities Across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, March 2015, [url](#), p. 24

⁷⁸² REACH, Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Hosting Communities Across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, March 2015, [url](#), p. 24

⁷⁸³ Hossain, S.M. M., El Nakib S., et al., Maternal and Neonatal Health in Select Districts of Iraq: Findings from a Recent Household Survey, in: Journal of Pregnancy and Child Health, Vol.5, 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁴ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 28

⁷⁸⁵ REACH, Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Hosting Communities Across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, March 2015, [url](#), p. 22

⁷⁸⁶ AI, The Condemned - Women and Children Isolated, Trapped and Exploited in Iraq, April 2018, [url](#); UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, 23 March 2018, S/2018/250, [url](#), p. 6

⁷⁸⁷ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq's Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁸ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq's Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁹ UNAMI, Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, December 2016, [url](#), p. 13

⁷⁹⁰ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A Struggle to Care for Iraq's Disabled, 20 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁹¹ Rudaw, Seminar examines mental health challenges in post-conflict Iraq, 2 April 2018, [url](#)

choose to access it because it is considered socially unacceptable.⁷⁹² In 2018 KRG's Ministry of Health has engaged in training and capacity building activities aimed at improving mental health services. The number of international health agencies working in the field in the KRI has dropped from around 30 to six or seven.⁷⁹³

7.5 Baghdad

The general level of maintenance and quality of care provided by public hospitals in Baghdad is described in media as poor.⁷⁹⁴ Shortage of doctors is also a concern, mainly due to security situation and emigration. It is estimated that since 2011 about 5 400 doctors were emigrating annually.⁷⁹⁵ In 2017, Baghdad experienced six attacks on health facilities and medical workers. Four attacks targeted directly clinicians, including a doctor who was killed in his clinic, a dentist assassinated in her home, and two doctors kidnapped in separate incidents.⁷⁹⁶

Availability of treatment and medication

Medications are held in public hospitals and prescriptions from pharmacies in Iraq. There is a general shortage of cancer medication in Iraq which may take months or years to obtain from the government.⁷⁹⁷ Iraq is heavily dependent on the import of foreign medication and other medical products. It is reported that there are no proper regulations for importing medical equipment and pharmaceuticals.⁷⁹⁸

General treatments and specialised centres for care

The WHO Iraq Health Cluster Response Monitoring Interactive Dashboard 2018 indicates that in the Baghdad governorate 6 organisations are operating health facilities on 12 locations. This includes one facility for mental health and eight for treatment of common diseases.⁷⁹⁹ According to the Country Cooperation strategy for WHO in Iraq, inadequate mental health services are provided as primary care across all Iraq. In 2016, two trauma centres were opened in Baghdad. The UNAMI/OHCHR report notes that in 2016 there were 45 NGOs in Baghdad who had registered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and were specifically providing medical support on disability. According to the NGOs surveyed by the UNAMI/OHCHR report, there was only one centre for plastic limbs and medical cushions in Baghdad and one specialised hospital for persons with disabilities with spinal cord injuries.⁸⁰⁰

In the summer of 2017, MSF opened the Baghdad Medical Rehabilitation Centre. The centre provides post-surgical recovery services, including physiotherapy, nursing care, pain management and psychological support to civilian war victims.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹² IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 27

⁷⁹³ Rudaw, KRG improves mental health services, but number of NGOs drops, 03 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁴ Al Arabiya, Iraq's health minister resigns after hospital blaze, 10 August 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁵ EPIC, Iraq's public healthcare system in crisis, 7 March 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁶ Safeguarding health in conflict coalition, Violence on the front line: Attacks on Health Care in 2017, May 2018, [url](#), pp.22, 23

⁷⁹⁷ IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), pp. 5-6

⁷⁹⁸ Export.gov, Healthcare Resource Guide: Iraq (2018), 18 March 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁹ WHO, Iraq Health Cluster Response Monitoring Interactive Dashboard 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁰ UNAMI, Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, December 2017, [url](#) p. 12-13

⁸⁰¹ MSF, Iraq crisis update – November 2017, 30 November 2017, [url](#) ; MSF International (Twitter), 9 August 2018, [url](#)

IDPs and returnees

According to IOM/REACH, medical care is a priority concern for IDPs across Iraq, with 45 % of IDPs listing it as a priority need, and associated high costs being the main barrier to access for IDPs inside and outside camps across Iraq (81 %).⁸⁰² Over the long term, this puts IDPs under strain for households with chronically ill members.⁸⁰³ In Baghdad, 91 % of in-camp IDPs received medical treatments in public hospitals and only 6 % sought care in NGO clinics.⁸⁰⁴ According to IOM 70 % of the returnees in Baghdad are concerned about the quality of health services.⁸⁰⁵

REACH reported that 67 % of in-camp IDP women who were pregnant or lactating had visited obstetric or antenatal care facilities and 33 % had not.⁸⁰⁶ In comparison, IOM noted that 63 % of the assessed informal IDP sites were reported to have no access to care for pregnant and/or lactating women.⁸⁰⁷ Rates of in-camp IDP children vaccinated against polio vary widely by governorate, however in Baghdad, the rate is 38 %.⁸⁰⁸

IOM's assessment from 2017 of informal IDP sites in Baghdad stated that 65 % of the assessed informal IDP sites were reported to have no access to a health facility within two kilometres of their location.⁸⁰⁹ NCCI states that displaced people in Baghdad 'who are residing in so called vulnerable housing like schools or unfinished buildings' are frequently excluded from education and health services.⁸¹⁰

The poor quality of health service (together with the quality of water) is cause of concern particularly in Baghdad, affecting 70 % of returnee families.⁸¹¹

⁸⁰² REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), p. 20

⁸⁰³ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), p. 21

⁸⁰⁴ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 21-22

⁸⁰⁵ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment, part II Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 26

⁸⁰⁶ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 23-24

⁸⁰⁷ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 20

⁸⁰⁸ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 23-24

⁸⁰⁹ IOM, CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 20

⁸¹⁰ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁸¹¹ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017 [url](#), p. 16

8. Education

8.1 General overview

The Constitution provides that primary education is mandatory in Iraq.⁸¹² According to DFAT ‘Iraq was once a leader in education in the region.’ Decades of conflict have however eroded outcomes in the education sector, which is ‘most acute in conflict affected areas hosting large numbers of IDPs’.⁸¹³ UNICEF presented the results of a survey on children’s wellbeing in Iraq in November 2018. According to the survey, 92 % of children are enrolled in primary school. Over half of the children from poorer backgrounds complete their primary education. Less than a quarter of children from poorer backgrounds complete secondary education. The lowest enrolment rates are found in the southern governorates. Half of the public schools need rehabilitation, one in three schools run multiple shifts to accommodate for the demand in education.⁸¹⁴

Boys attend school far more often than girls; in primary and secondary education the girl - boy enrolment ratio is 0.8, in tertiary education it is 0.6.⁸¹⁵ Factors like early marriage, family concerns and traditional views on the role of women in society play a role in explaining this difference.⁸¹⁶ UNICEF noted that primary education enrolment has increased over the past decade at about 4.1 % per year, up to 9.2 million students, noting that girls’ enrolment grew at all levels and at a faster rate than boys’ enrolment, although overall numbers remain lower for girls.⁸¹⁷ Equal access for girls was particularly a challenge in rural areas.⁸¹⁸

UNICEF reported that by the age of 15, 5 % of the women was married and that by the age of 18 this percentage was 24.⁸¹⁹ UNDP reported, based on its 2018 statistics, that ‘38.7 % of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 56.7 % of their male counterparts.’⁸²⁰ The CIA World Fact Book mentions a 2015 estimate on literacy. According to this estimate 91.2 % of the male population of 15 and over can read and write, compared to 73.7 % of the female population.⁸²¹

Public school is free in Iraq, requiring a copy of the child’s ID and parent’s IDs, residence card, food ration card, and four photos to register.⁸²² Primary education, between the age of 6 and 12, is compulsory. In the KRG education is compulsory until the age of 15. The school year consists of two semesters of 16 weeks each.⁸²³ As identity card is needed to enrol in public school, this

⁸¹² Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁸¹³ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁸¹⁴ UNICEF, Deep inequality continues to shape the lives of children in Iraq, 19 November 2018, [url](#)

⁸¹⁵ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 23

⁸¹⁶ World Bank, Iraq systematic country diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 47

⁸¹⁷ UNICEF, The Cost and Benefits of Education in Iraq: An analysis of the education sector and strategies to maximize the benefits of education, 21 May 2017, available at: [url](#), p. i

⁸¹⁸ USDOS, Country report on human rights practices for 2017 - Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), p. 43

⁸¹⁹ UNICEF, Children in a digital world, the state of the world’s children 2017, December 2017, [url](#), p. 183

⁸²⁰ UNDP, Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update Briefing note - Iraq, 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁸²¹ US, CIA, The World Factbook, Literacy, [url](#)

⁸²² IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 9

⁸²³ IOM, Iraq - Country Fact Sheet 2017, August 2017, [url](#), p. 5 ; WENRS, Education system profiles – Education in Iraq, 17 October 2017, [url](#)

prevented many stateless persons from accessing education;⁸²⁴ children without IDs could not enrol in school.⁸²⁵ Parents with enough means can send their children to a private school. The KRG Ministry of Education in 2017 listed 97 private schools on its website.⁸²⁶

The conflict with ISIL has had a severe negative impact on the quality of education. In 2017 alone, more than 150 schools were damaged or destroyed.⁸²⁷ UNICEF reported in 2018 that, based on 2013 numbers, 13.5 % of school-aged children in Iraq did not have access to basic education, noting the reasons were persistently due to ‘violence, insecurity, poverty, poor quality of instruction and politicization of the curriculum’.⁸²⁸ This was particularly noted in ‘conflict-affected governorates’ such as Salah al-Din and Diyala.⁸²⁹ UNOCHA reported in February 2018 that ‘nearly 50 % of children in displaced camps lacked access to quality education and 3.2 million children attended school irregularly or not at all.’⁸³⁰ In December 2018, UNOCHA stated that 2.6 million children required access to education.⁸³¹

Schools in conflict-affected areas had to operate double and triple shifts in classrooms.⁸³²

8.1.1 IDPs and returnees

According to IOM’s ILA III, ‘access to [public] primary schools is universal – overall schools are available at locations (89-90 %) or nearby (9-10 %) for both IDPs and returnees’ among the more than 4 000 areas assessed by IOM in 2018.⁸³³ According to REACH’s multi-cluster assessment of Iraqi displaced and host communities, from December 2017, ‘with respect to education, the poor physical condition of schools was a commonly reported barrier to accessing education for non-displaced and returnee populations in hard-to-reach areas.’⁸³⁴ UNOCHA reported in December 2018 that more than half of the existing schools in former conflict areas required rehabilitation.⁸³⁵

Impacts on education were most acute in conflict-affected areas and areas hosting significant numbers of IDPs.⁸³⁶ Across all population groups in conflict-affected governorates (returnee and IDP children), 25 % lacked access to formal schooling, according to UNOCHA in December 2018.⁸³⁷ However, IOM’s 2019 ILA III remarked that at the governorate level, schools are not accessible for less than 1 % of returnees to Ninewa, Diyala, and Salah al-Din, 4 % of IDPs in Najaf, and less than 1 % of those living in Dohuk, Erbil, Muthanna, Qadissiya and Salah al Din.⁸³⁸ School closures were

⁸²⁴ The USDOS report states that, as of 2016, there are an estimated 54 500 Bidoun people in Iraq who never obtained Iraqi citizenship, therefore remaining stateless. Due to drought in the southern regions of the country, many Bidoun were forced to relocate to urban areas where most received ID documents and access to food rations and basic services; See: USDOS, Country report on human rights practises; Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), p. 33; Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018 [url](#) p. 833

⁸²⁵ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018 [url](#) p. 8

⁸²⁶ WENRS, Education system profiles – Education in Iraq, 17 October 2017, [url](#)

⁸²⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq Humanitarian Fund - Annual Report 2017, 31 December 2017, [url](#), p. 13

⁸²⁸ UNDP, Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update Briefing note - Iraq, 2018, [url](#), p. 1

⁸²⁹ UNDP, Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update Briefing note - Iraq, 2018, [url](#), p. i

⁸³⁰ UNOCHA, Iraq 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, February 2018, p. 4, [url](#)

⁸³¹ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

⁸³² UNOCHA, Iraq Humanitarian Fund - Annual Report 2017, 31 December 2017, [url](#), p. 13

⁸³³ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), pp. 33, 40

⁸³⁴ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA), December 2017, [url](#), p.4

⁸³⁵ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 48

⁸³⁶ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq , 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁸³⁷ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 48

⁸³⁸ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 33

reported in 3 % of locations assessed by IOM in 2018, mainly in Ninewa, Anbar, Salah al-Din, and Diyala.⁸³⁹

IOM remarked in its 2019 ILA III that ‘no access’ to primary school was reported in ‘a few locations’ within districts of Al Hamdaniya, Al Muqdadiya, Al Samawa, Balad, Diwaniya, Erbil, Koisnak, Kufa, Mosul, Najaf, Sinjar, Tikrit, Tilkaif, and Tooz Khurmatu. They also stated that in 40 % of locations assessed in Al Qaim in Ninewa (which serves 40 % of returnees and 74 % of IDPs in the district), schools are closed, though access to primary education is reportedly ‘available in the vicinity’.⁸⁴⁰

In the period December 2017 – January 2018, 5 591 household-level interviews were conducted across 61 formal IDP camps in the governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah. According to the results of the interviews 74 % of children between 6 and 11 years old were attending formal education at the time of the assessment, with 56 % of children aged between 12 and 17 years old. The main reason reported for children not attending school was lack of interest (40 %).⁸⁴¹ UNOCHA reported limited access to education for children in displacement and in/out of camps, remarking that Ninewa, Anbar, Kirkuk, Salah al Din, Sulaymaniyah, Erbil and Dohuk had the greatest need for education services.⁸⁴² UNOCHA reported in December 2018, that 32 % of IDP children who live in camps were not in school; 26 % of those out of camps had no access to formal education.⁸⁴³

In the KRI, USDOS noted that education providers indicated that out-camp IDPs had ‘the poorest school attendance and highest drop-out rates’ out of IDP, refugee, and host populations.⁸⁴⁴ In the KRI most schools only use the Kurdish language. This is reported to be a barrier for a part of the IDPs.⁸⁴⁵

8.2 Basrah

Basrah had a net enrolment ratio in primary education (86.6) just below the national average in 2010 (90.8).⁸⁴⁶ Female-male ratios for enrolment were higher than the national average, at 99.8 %.⁸⁴⁷ In UNDP’s 2014 human development report, it was noted that in Basrah 37 % of the surveyed girls aged 10-24 stated that one of their parents expressed a preference for boys over girls with regard to education or privileges; the report remarked that better treatment for girls was associated with higher human development values in Sulaymaniyah, while the lowest opinions on equality were in Basrah.⁸⁴⁸ Fewer girls attend schools in southern rural areas due to poverty and the strength of traditional attitudes toward education.⁸⁴⁹

⁸³⁹ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 40

⁸⁴⁰ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part III, 2 January 2019, [url](#), p. 33

⁸⁴¹ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons Living in Camps, Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁴² UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 48

⁸⁴³ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 48

⁸⁴⁴ USDOS, Country report on human rights practices for 2017 - Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), p. 33

⁸⁴⁵ MRG, Crossroads: The future of Iraq’s minorities after ISIS, 7 June 2017, [url](#), p. 18

⁸⁴⁶ UNIAU, Basrah Governorate Profile, November 2010, [url](#), p. 1

⁸⁴⁷ UNIAU, Basrah Governorate Profile, November 2010, [url](#), p. 1

⁸⁴⁸ UNDP, Iraq Human Development Report 2014, 2014, [url](#), pp. 70-71

⁸⁴⁹ UNICEF, A Quality Education in Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

In 2015 it was reported that schools operated with classes in shifts due to overcrowding; they often lacked facilities and air conditioning.⁸⁵⁰ Basrah had about 800 000 students and 1 800 public schools in 1 000 buildings across the province, however, the Department of Education stated that the school buildings were ‘unsuitable for teaching’ and there was a need for an additional 700 schools to deal with overcrowding problems. A 2015 article about education in Basrah stated that private schooling has increased and that roughly 20 % of students in Basrah governorate were registered. Since 2007, when there were 5 private schools, this number grew to 466 in 2015.⁸⁵¹ In Basrah children from low and middle class families attended public schools because private schools are only affordable for wealthy families.⁸⁵² In 2015 school fees at private schools were reported to be about EUR 1 000 per year for primary school and EUR 1 950 – 2 375 for secondary school.⁸⁵³

In October 2018, the news portal Kurdistan24 reported that 2 000 students, including 500 from Basrah, had applied to the KRG Ministry of Education to transfer schools, as families from Basrah reportedly sought basic services elsewhere.⁸⁵⁴

Christian students reportedly face harassment in government-run schools. In November 2017, the government issued a permit to create a private mixed Christian school in Basrah City.⁸⁵⁵

IDPs

According to IOM, writing in 2016, 80 % of IDPs had access to education and the rest said it was too expensive.⁸⁵⁶ However, a report by UNICEF on the cost of education in Iraq, which tracked enrolment of IDP children in 2015-2016, estimated that in Basrah, about 70 % of IDP children were out of school.⁸⁵⁷ Schools in some informal settlements in Basrah districts reported that they were operating classes in shifts, lacked furniture and resources and were overcrowded.⁸⁵⁸

UNHCR reported that in the south, culture and tradition in families prevented some girls from attending school and some families gave preference to male children to continue their education. As most IDPs come from rural areas, these families do not consider education to be a priority for female children and girls are ‘forced into early marriage’.⁸⁵⁹

8.3 Erbil

A joint report by the Erbil Refugee Council, IOM, the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre, UNHCR, UN-HABITAT, OCHA and UNFPA stated that ‘[b]asic and high school education are provided mainly

⁸⁵⁰ Niqash, Basra’s Private School Business Booming But So Are Students’ Fees, 10 December 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁵¹ Niqash, Basra’s Private School Business Booming But So Are Students’ Fees, 10 December 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁵² Niqash, Basra’s Private School Business Booming But So Are Students’ Fees, 10 December 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁵³ Niqash, Basra’s Private School Business Booming But So Are Students’ Fees, 10 December 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁴ Kurdistan24, Hundreds of students from Basra submit applications to study in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 6 October 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁵ Al Monitor, Christian school in Basra welcomes Muslim students, 30 November 2017, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁶ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 69

⁸⁵⁷ UNICEF, The Cost and Benefits of Education in Iraq: An analysis of the education sector and strategies to maximize the benefits of education, 21 May 2017, [url](#), p. 23

⁸⁵⁸ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), pp. 76, 80

⁸⁵⁹ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

through public schools, which are free to the residents of the Kurdistan Region.⁸⁶⁰ The economic crisis in KRI has seriously affected education financing which has consistently decreased since 2012-2013, significantly impacting Erbil governorate, where the implementation rate of the education budget dropped from 45.9 % in 2021-2013 to 3.7 % in 2015-2016.⁸⁶¹

Erbil governorate hosts three universities and a number of colleges and other education facilities.⁸⁶² According to IOM's 2018 demographic survey Erbil governorate scored among the highest literacy levels in KRI with around 80 % of respondents being able to read and write.⁸⁶³ School attendance level for Erbil governorate was recorded at 37 %, whereas 45.9 % weren't currently attending and 17.1 % had never attended.⁸⁶⁴ An article on Opendemocracy.net states that 'economic problems' caused most of the drop outs from school in the city of Sulaymania. The article furthermore states that 25 % of the schools in the KRI are 'completely unserviceable' and 50 % of the schools need renovation.⁸⁶⁵ Corroborating information could not be found.

IDPs

The inflow of IDPs has put pressure on the KRI education system, especially in urban areas, in some cases leading schools to operate in classes with two or three shifts.⁸⁶⁶ KRG's Minister of the Interior has said that '80 % of the IDP children are not going to school' and according to other sources cited in a DIS 2016 report many of the IDP children population haven't been attending school for more than a year.⁸⁶⁷ Other sources cited by the Landinfo and DIS 2018 report noted that 'more [than] 1.2 million children have missed school for a longer period.' According to Landinfo and DIS this raises the risk that they will not be able to enrol again.⁸⁶⁸

A 2015 World Bank publication stated that a large majority of IDP children in the KRI remained out of school because of 'economic considerations; the language barrier; the lack of school infrastructure, teachers and school materials; complex administrative procedures for school enrollment and other socioeconomic reasons'.⁸⁶⁹

UNICEF data for 2015-2016 revealed that 'nearly 90 % of IDP student enrolment is located in three governorates: Dahuk (118 415 students), Erbil (106 288 students) and Baghdad (73 682 students).'⁸⁷⁰ According to a 2018 Reach assessment of IDP camps the proportion of children between 6 and 11 years old attending formal school in Erbil governorate was 78 % and decreased

⁸⁶⁰ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), pp. 23-24

⁸⁶¹ UNICEF, The Cost and Benefits of Education in Iraq: An analysis of the education sector and strategies to maximize the benefits of education, 21 May 2017, [url](#), p. 33

⁸⁶² NCCI, Erbil Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 3

⁸⁶³ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 34

⁸⁶⁴ IOM, Demographic Survey Kurdistan Region of Iraq, July 2018, [url](#), p. 35

⁸⁶⁵ Open democracy, Corruption corrodes Kurdish education, 15 October 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁶ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, p. 60-61, [url](#); UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), pp. 23-24

⁸⁶⁷ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), pp. 60-61

⁸⁶⁸ Denmark, DIS; Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 30

⁸⁶⁹ World Bank, The Kurdistan region of Iraq – assessing the economic and social impact of the Syrian Conflict and ISIS, 2015, [url](#), p. 60

⁸⁷⁰ UNICEF, The Cost and Benefits of Education in Iraq: An analysis of the education sector and strategies to maximize the benefits of education, 21 May 2017, [url](#), p. 22

to 54 % for children aged 12 to 17.⁸⁷¹ The main reasons reported for children not attending school in Erbil governorate were ‘child is disinterested’ (33 %), followed by new arrivals (11 %) and school costs (6 %).⁸⁷²

Returnees in Erbil were most concerned about access to education, with 14 % of families surveyed in a 2017 IOM assessment considering that schools had poor infrastructure.⁸⁷³ In Erbil district periphery, where most IDPs are settled, there were fewer schools in general, while in sub-districts such as Baharka, Kasnazan and Rizagari the number was even lower.⁸⁷⁴ Makhmur district in Erbil governorate was flagged by surveyed households for insufficient number of schools and overcrowding.⁸⁷⁵ Similar issues related to the education sector were reported in the districts of Erbil and Koisnajaq.⁸⁷⁶

All public schools teaching in Arabic in Erbil and other areas of KRI are under the oversight of the federal Ministry of Education.⁸⁷⁷ According to MRG, a significant area of concern to non-Kurds IDPs living in Erbil was that their children have to attend KRG Ministry of Education schools and be taught in Kurdish.⁸⁷⁸ Several sources interviewed by DIS in 2016 have pointed to a language barrier for the education of IDPs since the curriculum of the schools in KRI is in Kurdish language as opposed to the Arabic language used at federal level.⁸⁷⁹ Erbil had a total of 20 Arabic language primary schools and 4 Arabic language secondary schools, which led to overcrowding and children having to travel long distances to access them.⁸⁸⁰ According to sources interviewed by Landinfo and DIS in April 2018 during their mission in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, the federal Iraqi Ministry of Education made the decision to stop financing Arab language schools in IDP camps in KRI from the start of September 2018 but after advocacy efforts further decided to not enforce the order and keep the schools open after September 2018.⁸⁸¹ The Kurdish region news site Rudaw reported that the federal Iraqi government intended to stop funding schools in the KRI that were set up for IDPs and that teach in the Arabic language.⁸⁸² Council members of Sulaymaniyah governorate have stated in Arabic media that the central government might stop providing school supplies for IDPs and refugees because ‘the Iraqi government has decided that those IDPs must return to their own cities and that they are no longer ready to provide school supplies for those students.’⁸⁸³

⁸⁷¹ REACH, Comparative MultiCluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 29

⁸⁷² REACH, Comparative MultiCluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps Assessment Report Round IX, April 2018, [url](#), p. 30

⁸⁷³ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 15

⁸⁷⁴ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 23-24

⁸⁷⁵ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 15

⁸⁷⁶ IOM, Integrated Location Assessment Part II – Governorate Profiles, March 2017, [url](#), p. 27

⁸⁷⁷ Chatelard, G., Comment made during her review of this report, 20 December 2018.

⁸⁷⁸ MRG, Crossroads: The future of Iraq’s minorities after ISIS, 7 June 2017 [url](#), p. 35

⁸⁷⁹ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), pp. 60-61

⁸⁸⁰ UNDP, UNHCR, 3 RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2018-2019 , in Response to the Syria Crisis: Iraq, 10 January 2018, [url](#), p. 38

⁸⁸¹ Denmark, DIS; Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), pp. 34-35

⁸⁸² Rudaw, As school starts displaced Iraqi students left in limbo in Kurdistan, 2 September 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁸³ Open democracy, Corruption corrodes Kurdish education, 15 October 2018, [url](#)

Many of IDP women from the rural areas were illiterate or had limited access to education. This negatively impacted their access to the labour market.⁸⁸⁴ Opposition of male family members towards women attending school was cited as one of the main causes that prevented them from accessing education.⁸⁸⁵

8.4 Baghdad

IOM stated that primary schools in Baghdad governorate are mostly functioning and accessible for IDPs and returnees.⁸⁸⁶ There are no special education resources available in Baghdad and the south.⁸⁸⁷ Compared to rural areas and small towns, general requirements for quality education are often met in Baghdad.⁸⁸⁸ According to NCCI, Baghdad has a comparable school enrolment rate than the national average in both primary and secondary school, with higher than the national average for literacy rates (88.1). On the issue of school enrolment, it states that

‘The net enrollment rate for primary education reaches 92,1 %, while the enrollment rates for secondary education are 50,7 %. The Iraqi averages are lower at respectively 90,4 % enrollment rate for primary education and 48,4 % for secondary education. Literacy rates at ages above ten in Baghdad are also significantly higher at 88,1 % compared to the country’s average of 79 %.’⁸⁸⁹

Unlike the rest of the country, where private schools are still underdeveloped, Baghdad has an estimated 5 % of private schools.⁸⁹⁰ Higher quality education in private and international schools in Baghdad are accessed by wealthy families. The average fee for private school is approximately USD 1 300 (EUR 1 145) per month.⁸⁹¹

The 2014 UNPD report showed that the percentage of people aged over 25 with at least secondary education in Baghdad is 37 % for men and 26 % for women.⁸⁹²

IDPs and returnees

High costs of transportation and school uniforms and materials were reported barriers to education for IDPs at the national level.⁸⁹³ REACH notes that overall formal education participation rates for in-camp IDP children nationally aged 6-11 dropped from 73 % in January 2017 to 54 % in April 2018. The rate was 56 % nationally at IDP camps for children aged 12-17; while in Baghdad this number was 68 % (6-11) and 50 % respectively (12-17). Most of the time the reasons for non-attendance were due to lack of child interest or school costs; however, Baghdad was the only

⁸⁸⁴ Kaya, Z. N. and Luchtenberg, K. N., Displacement and Women’s Economic Empowerment: Voices of Displaced Women in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁵ UNHCR, Displacement as challenge and opportunity Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2016, [url](#), p. 35

⁸⁸⁶ IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment, part II Governorate Profiles, March 2017, available at: [url](#), p. 6

⁸⁸⁷ IOM, Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 5

⁸⁸⁸ UNPD, Iraq human development report 2014: Iraqi youth, 17 December 2014, [url](#), p. 89

⁸⁸⁹ NCCI, Baghdad Governorate Profile, December 2015, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁹⁰ World Bank, Iraq: reconstruction and investment, part 2, January 2018, [url](#), p. 25

⁸⁹¹ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 9

⁸⁹² UNPD, Iraq human development report 2014: Iraqi youth, 17 December 2014, [url](#), p. 129

⁸⁹³ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), pp. 24-25

location where households stated that safety/security concerns were the reason for non-attendance.⁸⁹⁴ IOM stated that at 77 % of the assessed informal IDP sites access to formal education was reported.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹⁴ REACH, Comparative Multi-Cluster Assessment of IDPs Living in Camps, April 2018, [url](#), pp. 28-29

⁸⁹⁵ IOM CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 19

9. Support and assistance

9.1 Overview

According to the World Bank, limited employment and increased poverty have ‘increased the population’s dependence on social assistance programs over time’.⁸⁹⁶ The same source notes that

‘social protection in Iraq is inefficient and fragmented. The three main pillars of the system, namely social safety nets, social insurance, and labor markets, were conceived individually, with no links or integration. The social safety net (SSN) and indeed the entire social protection system is dominated by the Public Distribution System (PDS), an in-kind program in which the government purchases imported food to distribute to the public. The PDS is the primary safety net for the poor though it suffers from severe inefficiencies. Other safety net programs, including cash transfers, are not poverty targeted and cover only a small share of the poor. Pensions, though reformed in the past, are a drain on the treasury. They cover few of the poor and only a negligible portion of the private sector.’⁸⁹⁷

A World Bank study on Iraqi social safety nets and social protection remarked that laws and regulations allow citizens to have eligibility for social protection; for the application in practice, the social security system faces many challenges.⁸⁹⁸ Similarly, according to UNOCHA’s 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Iraq, access to the PDS ration system and to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs programs for Cash Transfer and Social Protection is a challenge for returnees and IDPs, with the main access obstacles specific to them being a lack of civil IDs for enrolment, inadequate capacity, and complex registration processes.⁸⁹⁹

9.2 PDS

The Public Distribution System (PDS) is a government-subsidised food and fuel assistance program for all Iraqis.⁹⁰⁰ According to REACH, the PDS food rations are not sufficient to address ‘all household food needs’ but they provide a supply of staple food items.⁹⁰¹ The PDS is the country’s most important welfare scheme.⁹⁰² In 2012 about 95 % of the population received basic food items through PDS.⁹⁰³ Sources cited by the DIS 2016 report noted that under the PDS all Iraqi citizens are eligible to receive food packages on a monthly basis although the quality is not very good.⁹⁰⁴ In 2017 the budget for the PDS was IQD 1.7 trillion (EUR 1 260 000 000). The system is reported to have significant inefficiencies.⁹⁰⁵ The US State Department, writing on 2017, reported that:

⁸⁹⁶ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 85

⁸⁹⁷ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 85

⁸⁹⁸ Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 23

⁸⁹⁹ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), pp. 9, 54

⁹⁰⁰ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA), December 2017, [url](#), p. 74

⁹⁰¹ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA), December 2017, [url](#), p. 74

⁹⁰² UK K4D, Iraqi state capabilities, 18 May 2018, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁰³ Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 36

⁹⁰⁴ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 58

⁹⁰⁵ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), pp. 7, 8

'All Iraqis are eligible to receive food under the PDS; however, authorities implemented the PDS sporadically and irregularly, with limited access in recently retaken areas. Authorities did not distribute all commodities each month, and not all IDPs could access the PDS in each governorate. Low oil prices further limited funds available for the PDS. Citizens could only redeem PDS rations at their place of residence and within their registered governorate, causing loss of access and entitlement following displacement.'⁹⁰⁶

The program is a staple for many Iraqis, and the PDS 'keeps many Iraqis out of deep poverty, but it is costly and inefficient'.⁹⁰⁷ Displaced and host communities surveyed in Iraq by REACH in December 2017 reported that a large number of returnees, host communities, in-camp IDPs, and out-camp households (over 90 %), only received half-rations of PDS. Among those surveyed, 68 % of in-camp-IDPs, one third of out-of-camp IDPs, 16 % of returnees and 19 % of host communities had, in the month of the data-collection, only received half-rations.⁹⁰⁸ The FAO reported in January 2018 that displaced families faced difficulties accessing the PDS.⁹⁰⁹

9.3 Cash transfers

Iraq has a Social Protection Net (SPN) which is a cash transfer program distributing monthly grants to beneficiaries on the basis of household size. In 2012, SPN covered 4 % of the Iraqi population. The program is targeted to include households with orphans, married students, widows, divorced women, and others, however, SPN was described by the World Bank as 'inefficient' noting that 71 % of beneficiaries were 'non-poor', while 89 % of the poor did not receive SPN assistance.⁹¹⁰

UNOCHA remarks that the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA), in the absence of a support package for returnees, has been a 'crucial tool to assist vulnerable Heads of Household Upon return' in support of basic needs upon return to their area of origin following displacement. UNOCHA observed that 80 % of IDPs and returnees had to rely on some form of 'negative coping' such as buying food on credit, selling assets or engaging in illicit behaviour to meet basic needs.⁹¹¹ In 2017, UNOCHA reported that 74 736 households received MPCA: 57 532 received one-month cash assistance and 16 204 received multi-month assistance.⁹¹² Across Iraq, 23 % of families who receive MCPA are female-headed households.⁹¹³

9.4 Pensions

Iraq has two mandatory pension schemes covering public and private sector workers.⁹¹⁴ Most of those covered by the pension system are public sector employees.⁹¹⁵ Pension laws and regulations apply to all state employees; however, in reality, pensions only cover about 15 % of the public

⁹⁰⁶ USDOS, Country report on human rights practises; Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), p. 31

⁹⁰⁷ Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 26

⁹⁰⁸ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment, December 2017, [url](#), p. 74-75

⁹⁰⁹ FAO, WFP, Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations - A joint FAO/WFP update for the United Nations Security Council, January 2018, January 2018, [url](#), p. 22

⁹¹⁰ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 85

⁹¹¹ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 53

⁹¹² UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 53

⁹¹³ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Needs Overview - November 2018, 16 December 2018, [url](#), p. 55

⁹¹⁴ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 87

⁹¹⁵ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 8

sector workforce.⁹¹⁶ Outside the public sector, only 3 % have pensions covered through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.⁹¹⁷ In 2012, 812 669 public sector retirees received pension, against 15 810 pensions that came from other sources.⁹¹⁸ According to the World Bank, ‘pensions reach less than 20 percent of the poor, while about 85 percent of pension recipients belong to non-poor households. Only about 48 percent of the total labor force is currently contributing to and covered by the pension system.’⁹¹⁹

Citizens eligible for retirement pensions must have worked 25 years and be 60 years old (males), while females must have 20 years of service. Eligible citizens must provide official documents proving government service and identity documentation.⁹²⁰ The World Bank described the pension system in 2017 as ‘fragmented, unequal and unsustainable’.⁹²¹

9.5 Family allowances

Those with an income below the national poverty line (IQD 105 000 per month) with little or no income may qualify for a family allowance calculated based on household size.⁹²² Iraq has a social welfare system for vulnerable groups in exceptional circumstances and crises situations such as natural disasters and wars. The target beneficiaries are the unemployed, disabled, minor orphans, married students, families of prisoners and missing persons, people unable to work due to old age and illness, heads of families unable to work due to ‘terrorism’, widows, displaced persons, and divorcees.⁹²³ Without providing details, IOM also states that all vulnerable persons such as orphans, elderly people, family members of ‘martyrs’, widows and people with disabilities are eligible for allowances from the government welfare supports but are required to ‘submit different documents and [meet] conditions’.⁹²⁴

The allowance for an individual is equivalent to USD 55 [EUR 48] per month, which increases with the family size to a maximum of six or more to about IQD 150 000 [EUR 110]. Widows registered with the government receive a stipend of EUR 88 per month, though many are not registered due to the bureaucratic process of registration.⁹²⁵

Several obstacles were reported in the application of the program, with the ‘most serious’ issue being the lack of targeted assistance to beneficiaries, leading to ‘the exclusion of many poor people’ as well as bureaucratic procedures, lack of a clear beneficiaries’ database, among others. In 2014, the total number of beneficiaries was reported to be 472 255 people, of whom 144 788 were unemployed.⁹²⁶

Persons with disabilities in KRI receive support from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of KRG. However, requirements for assistance vary depending on the degree of disability. The KRG

⁹¹⁶ Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 22

⁹¹⁷ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁹¹⁸ Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 36

⁹¹⁹ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, April 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁹²⁰ IOM, Iraq - Country Fact Sheet 2017, August 2017, [url](#), p. 4

⁹²¹ World Bank, Iraq Economic Monitor, From War to Reconstruction and Economic Recovery, 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁹²² Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 23-25

⁹²³ Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 23

⁹²⁴ IOM, Iraq - Country Fact Sheet 2017, August 2017, [url](#), p. 4

⁹²⁵ Al Monitor, Amid war on IS, Iraq’s widows and orphans face neglect, 14 August 2016, [url](#)

⁹²⁶ Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 23-24

also provides a disability pension which is higher compared to the rest of Iraq.⁹²⁷ Disabled IDPs in northern Iraq and KRI remain in poverty, due to underfunding of the social safety system for particularly vulnerable groups.⁹²⁸ In September 2014, 224 768 were estimated to receive social benefits in the KRG. This included 110 745 persons with disabilities.⁹²⁹

9.6 IDPs and returnees

According to a 2015 report on social safety nets in Iraq, commissioned by the WFP and the Centre for Social Protection, ‘social protection mechanisms that cover those who have been displaced have yet to be designed’; however, the ration card system and grants system have been used to support displaced people.⁹³⁰ UNHCR reported that, in order to be able to claim the assistance provided by the Government, IDPs and returnees have to register their status/residence with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement.⁹³¹ According to a study by IOM and Georgetown University carried out in 2017, assistance to IDPs comes from community, relatives, and friends as their main sources of support for their basic needs, although many IDPs receive assistance from the government and charitable organisations as well. IDPs frequently complained that government assistance was not adequate or subject to frequent delays, and limited governmental assistance was also affected by Iraq’s deepening economic problems and corruption.⁹³²

The 2018 OCHA Humanitarian Response Plan describes that at the time of writing 179 partners were active in 46 major operational areas. During 2017, with the expulsion of ISIL nearly five million civilians became newly accessible. In Mosul humanitarian partners accessed and provided assistance to all neighbourhoods in 2017. OCHA stated that displaced and destitute families showed ‘an overwhelming preference for cash assistance’ and that in 2018 25 % of all humanitarian programming will be cash programming.⁹³³ Food assistance was also one of the main kinds of assistance provided.⁹³⁴ REACH reported in December 2017 that humanitarian assistance in the form of cash and food delivered in ‘accessible areas’ was not reaching 12 % of returnees, 24 % of hosting households.⁹³⁵

As of 30 June 2018 humanitarian partners had reached almost one million persons in the governorate of Ninewa, one year after the retaking of Mosul from ISIL; they noted that Ninewa has 4 million of those requiring humanitarian assistance.⁹³⁶ In September 2018 UNOCHA reported that ‘while humanitarians are able to reach approximately 94 % of in-camp IDPs, they are reaching only 10 % of people outside of camp settings.’⁹³⁷

IOM stated that it provides voluntary return and reintegration assistance to Iraqi migrants who return voluntarily to their communities of origin from abroad. This includes counselling upon arrival and provision of individual reintegration assistance. The assistance is funded by the

⁹²⁷ UNAMI, Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, December 2016, [url](#), pp. 16, 17

⁹²⁸ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq: Security situation and the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the disputed areas, incl. possibility to enter and access the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 30

⁹²⁹ Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 38

⁹³⁰ Alzobaidee, H.L.K., Social Protection and Safety Nets in Iraq, December 2015, [url](#), p. 45

⁹³¹ UNHCR, Iraq Situation: UNHCR Flash Update, 2 November 2017, p. 1, [url](#)

⁹³² IOM, SFS/Georgetown, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), pp. 24-25

⁹³³ UNOCHA, Iraq 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, February 2018, p. 12, [url](#)

⁹³⁴ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment, December 2017, [url](#), p. 4

⁹³⁵ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment, December 2017, [url](#), pp. 74-75

⁹³⁶ UNOCHA, Iraq: Humanitarian Bulletin, July 2018, [url](#), p.1-2

⁹³⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin September 2018, 15 October 2018, [url](#), p. 3

respective host country's government. Therefore, the assistance varies in scope and extent from country to country.⁹³⁸

9.6.1 Basrah

There are international NGOs and Iraqi national NGOs operating in Basrah that provide assistance to IDPs, however, the lowest number are in Basrah, compared to Baghdad and the north. In 2017 it was reported that there were 4 international and 23 Iraqi national NGOs present in Basrah governorate.⁹³⁹ IDPs had to register with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) to obtain government aid. In a study by IOM/Georgetown University, it was found that 97 % of IDPs in Basrah were registered to receive assistance such as cash, in-kind, non-food items, food, water, housing, and fuel.⁹⁴⁰ For those unable to register for government assistance, the primary barrier was inability to transfer prior registration.⁹⁴¹ According to the same study, compared to Baghdad, Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk, IDPs in Basrah had the lowest ability to provide an adequate standard of living for their families; with only 29 % reporting they were able to do so; the study stated that the low presence of humanitarian organisations and relief aid in the region could be the reason.⁹⁴² UNHCR and partners provided vulnerable families with cash assistance to meet basic needs and children were provided with school kits and uniforms.⁹⁴³ A 2016 survey of IDPs in Basrah noted that 40 % of them intended to stay and integrate locally.⁹⁴⁴ Others reportedly left Basrah to relocate to their areas of origin or to move to KRI to find work, lower rent prices, or avoid the southern summer heat.⁹⁴⁵

9.6.2 Erbil

There are international NGOs and Iraqi national NGOs operating in Erbil that provide assistance to IDPs. According to a 2017 IOM report Erbil registered among the highest combined number of national and international NGOs working with Iraqi IDPs.⁹⁴⁶ IOM noted that government assistance for IDPs consisted of providing them 'the ability to move their place of public employment, new housing loans for the poor, a one-time payment for IDPs of IQD 1 million (approximately EUR 744), and compensation for those who lost homes in the fighting'.⁹⁴⁷ The success of these policies was considered to be mixed as although many IDPs received the IQD 1 million payment and retained their government-sector jobs, none however received compensation for lost homes and few had any information that such compensation was possible.⁹⁴⁸

UNHCR stated it provides shelter assistance and core relief items for vulnerable IDPs in camp and non-camp environments, as well as legal assistance on issues such as 'missing civil documentation, prevention and response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence and sexual exploitation and abuse,

⁹³⁸ IOM, IOM-Iraq - Mission Movement and Assisted Migration, n.d., [url](#)

⁹³⁹ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), pp. 24-25

⁹⁴⁰ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), pp. 24-26

⁹⁴¹ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), pp. 24-26

⁹⁴² IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 41

⁹⁴³ UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁴⁴ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 69

⁹⁴⁵ IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 2016, [url](#), p. 69

⁹⁴⁶ IOM, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq. Part I, April 2017, [url](#), p. 26

⁹⁴⁷ IOM, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq. Part One, 05 June 2017, [url](#), Executive Summary

⁹⁴⁸ IOM, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq. Part One, 05 June 2017, [url](#), Executive Summary

child protection, reunification of separated families'.⁹⁴⁹ In 2018, Erbil governorate, jointly with UNDP, launched eight infrastructure projects to improve basic services such as electricity, water, roads and sewerage for 284 000 people across the governorate.⁹⁵⁰ However, decreases in KRG humanitarian funding from the federal government and international donors to about 59 % of the requested total could affect the availability of assistance for the IDP and refugee population hosted in the region.⁹⁵¹

9.6.3 Baghdad

IDPs are registered by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement in the governorate of Baghdad and are given IDs permitting them to access the Ministry of Displacement and Displaced (MoMD) assistance programs.⁹⁵² According to IOM/REACH, in central Iraq 89 % and in south Iraq 98 % of IDP households living outside camps have been registered with the MoMD, though partial accessibility was reported for cash grants with only 25 % of households in Baghdad receiving this upon registration. IOM/REACH stated that in 2016, country-wide, about 9 % of IDPs have been unable to receive assistance since becoming displaced, though this varied widely and IDPs from Baghdad and Salah al-Din were less likely to have received MoMD assistance.⁹⁵³

In 2016 it was reported that the most common forms of government assistance received by IDPs living outside camps were food assistance (75 %) and cash assistance (69 %).⁹⁵⁴ A 2017 study on four governorates noted that the most common form of aid given to Baghdad IDPs is cash assistance.⁹⁵⁵

In informal IDP sites in Baghdad, 31 % of the assessed sites reported that food assistance was handed out every month. In 2 % of these sites it was reported that this assistance was handed every week and in 49 % this assistance was reported to be handed 'rarely'.⁹⁵⁶ IOM reported that IDPs said favouritism was an issue in aid distribution in the governorate.⁹⁵⁷ Similarly, a 2017 study by Georgetown University noted that aid provided by local councils was perceived by IDPs to be on the basis of 'personal relations and favoritism' and given on the basis of connections.⁹⁵⁸

⁹⁴⁹ UNHCR, Iraq Fact Sheet, October 2018, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁵⁰ UNDP, UNDP supports 284,000 people with access to fundamental basic services in Erbil Governorate, 7 July 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁵¹ Rudaw, Lack of funding by Iraq and donors threatens refugees, IDPs in Kurdistan, 20 September 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁵² IOM, Community Stabilization Handbook: An overview of community transition and recovery achievements in Iraq 2015-2016, 19 January 2017, [url](#), p. 49

⁹⁵³ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), p. 12

⁹⁵⁴ REACH, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (III) of Internally Displaced Persons Outside Camps, June 2016, [url](#), p. 12

⁹⁵⁵ IOM, SFS Institute for the Study of International Migration, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 26

⁹⁵⁶ IOM CCCM Cluster, REACH Initiative, Assessment of informal IDP sites in Iraq (June 2017), 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 18

⁹⁵⁷ IOM, SFS Institute for the Study of International Migration, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 7

⁹⁵⁸ IOM, SFS Institute for the Study of International Migration, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 26

10. Networks of support

10.1 Political and patronage networks

Patronage networks have deep roots in Iraq, and encompass political clientelism, nepotism, and tribal and family ties. Often community leaders, religious figures or political strongmen mediate between state and community and represent communal interests.⁹⁵⁹ Political parties operate as community-based organisations based on clientelistic networks within geographic or sectarian boundaries.⁹⁶⁰ As stated by the 2018 BTI country report, ‘Citizen’s trust toward others remains, if at all, within the margins of the own religious or ethnic community. (...) The conquest of IS and the parallel failure of the Iraqi army has further undermined trust in the state, and pushed families and clans to help themselves instead.’⁹⁶¹ Moreover, the source stressed that ‘while public social assistance is often offered in erratic and unstructured ways, family and tribal bonds have gained increasing importance as a private substitution.’⁹⁶²

Dr Chatelard explained similarly that patronage or clientelism is a structuring force in Iraqi society, and recourse to non-state support networks represents the most frequent coping mechanism adopted by all categories of the population to access social protection and economic resources. In the absence of rule of law and an equitable system for the allocation of public resources (including individual protection), accessing these resources requires the mediation of political strongmen, religious figures and other influential people who represent constituencies in exchange for allegiance. ‘Family ties (of which tribes are extensions), connections within the religious community, political parties, armed groups or militias, together with all other forms of relationships people can tap into with a certain degree of trust (such as neighbours, work colleagues, former classmates or members of the ethno-religious community) may be mobilised to find a job, facilitate administrative procedures, speed up an application for social assistance, gain access to better medical care, borrow money, etc.’⁹⁶³

Networks of support are also linked to mainly sectarian political connections as well, with ‘political parties being the main vehicles through which resources provided by the state are accessed, particularly jobs in the public sector, various social assistance schemes and all administrative services’. Those without the associated political party connections, or the wrong party affiliation in a certain place, are ‘at a particular disadvantage’. This is the case at the local level where certain parties dominate certain constituencies – for example the KDP in Erbil and the PUK in Sulaymaniyah. A similar situation exists in the Shiite south and in Sunni areas of Central Iraq.⁹⁶⁴ Membership of certain political parties gave special privileges, particularly in education and employment.⁹⁶⁵ According to the International Crisis Group, with the growing influence of the Popular Mobilisation Units in Iraq, they have increasingly also filled economic and reconstruction roles, noting that having a connection to the Hashd can facilitate finding a job, for example.⁹⁶⁶

⁹⁵⁹ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 15

⁹⁶⁰ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 15

⁹⁶¹ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 17

⁹⁶² BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#), p. 23

⁹⁶³ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

⁹⁶⁴ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

⁹⁶⁵ USDOS, Country report on human rights practices for 2017 - Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), p. 34

⁹⁶⁶ International Crisis Group, Iraq’s Paramilitary Groups: The Challenge of Rebuilding a Functional State, 30 July 2018, [url](#)

BTI stated that ‘distribution of [employment] positions depends also from ethno-sectarian lines, which inhibits meritocratic job allocation. As a result, positions are often filled with unqualified personnel who use these positions to sustain neo-patrimonial networks.’⁹⁶⁷ Tribal networks and family clans are most prominent in influence in Sunni and southern Iraq. A person’s tribal networks can help them to gain employment, ‘secure government services and protect members from external threats’.⁹⁶⁸

10.2 Wasta

Wasta is an Arabic term used in the Middle East and North Africa meaning to have personal connections in high places through family and friends.⁹⁶⁹ It is a form of social capital in Iraq and Kurdistan meaning the preference for one’s own personal networks, or ‘who you know, not what you know.’⁹⁷⁰ A report published by the War on the Rocks platform, in January 2018, states:

‘about 75 % of Iraq’s population is either a member or close associate of one of the country’s approximately 150 tribes. The tribes, which comprise multiple family-based clans, have wielded considerable influence since modern Iraq’s founding in 1921. In contemporary Iraq, tribes and tribalism are most prominent in Sunni areas — Anbar, Salahadin, Kirkuk, Ninewa — and the southern, mainly Shia province of Basrah. Tribal leaders, called sheikhs, settle disputes within their tribes, some of which cut across ethnic and sectarian lines. Tribal networks can help members gain employment, secure government services and protect members from external threats.’⁹⁷¹

The same source mentions, that while tribalism is ubiquitous throughout Iraq, it is particularly prominent among the Sunni community.⁹⁷² Dr Chatelard also explained that tribes have a lengthy social standing especially among Arabs, noting the collapse of the state and the economy has revived tribes as patronage networks replacing a failing state. Both Sunni and Shiite Arabs and Kurds can usually claim affiliation to a tribe; all tribes have sub-sections. She noted that ‘because Sunni Arabs have been marginalised in the post-2003 political system, they tend to fall back on tribal solidarity more than Shiites Arabs or Kurds.’ However, in southern regions such as Basra, neglected by dominant Shiite political parties, tribal-based patronage also plays a prominent role there.⁹⁷³

In Iraq, *wasta* is frequently more important for getting a job than education or qualifications.⁹⁷⁴ A 2013 Gallup Poll in the region of the Middle East and North Africa about ‘constraints getting a job’ found that Iraq was second highest in the mentioned region for youth’s reported perceptions that jobs are only given to ‘connected people’ (about 33 %), while less than 10 % said it was due to lack of proper training and nearly 20 % said it was due to the lack of good jobs.⁹⁷⁵ When asked if

⁹⁶⁷ BTI, Iraq Country Report, 2018, [url](#) p. 14

⁹⁶⁸ Gharizi, O., Al-Ibrahimi H., Baghdad Must Seize the Chance to Work With Iraq’s Tribes, 17 January 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁹ World Bank, Wasta Once Again Hampering Arab Youth Chances for a Dignified Life, 13 March 2014, [url](#),

⁹⁷⁰ Van den Toorn, C., The solution to Iraq’s political problems? Better education, 5 June 2014, [url](#)

⁹⁷¹ Gharizi, O., Al-Ibrahimi H., Baghdad Must Seize the Chance to Work With Iraq’s Tribes, 17 January 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁷² Gharizi, O., Al-Ibrahimi H., Baghdad Must Seize the Chance to Work With Iraq’s Tribes, 17 January 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁷³ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

⁹⁷⁴ Rudaw, Youth unemployment a major challenge for Iraq’s next government, 16 May 2018 [url](#) ; World Bank, Wasta Once Again Hampering Arab Youth Chances for a Dignified Life, 13 March 2014, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁵ World Bank, Wasta Once Again Hampering Arab Youth Chances for a Dignified Life, 13 March 2014, [url](#)

knowing people in high positions (*wasta*) was critical to securing employment, about 60 % agreed.⁹⁷⁶

In the KRI, the reliance on and preferential treatment of local networks for hiring for labour and work is a cultural barrier encountered by IDPs for both entrepreneurship and their general employment.⁹⁷⁷ IDPs in and around Mosul stated explicitly that hiring is based on relationships. The eligible pool of applicants is often limited to those within a specific social network.⁹⁷⁸

10.3 Family and community networks for support

UNHCR reported that for IDPs, unaccompanied children and children separated from family during displacement are ‘mainly supported by their communities’ and looked after by extended family; however, they face a range of risks from the ‘cultural and customary background’ of their families and due to financial constraints on the family.⁹⁷⁹ IOM, talking about the KRI, stated that support from the community is vital in three different levels: firstly, without family, renting an accommodation might be expensive or otherwise difficult. Secondly, the community’s capacity to absorb is an element. Network is crucial for reintegration and for the access to a job. Thirdly, infrastructure is an important factor; there is often very little opportunity in the rural areas, and public transportation is almost non-existent.⁹⁸⁰

According to IOM, ‘it is hard for single men to rent houses alone’;⁹⁸¹ it noted that it is difficult for a single person to rent housing in Iraq ‘because Iraqi society does not accept single people living alone or with non-relative families,’ particularly females. Furthermore, housing designed for a single person is rare in Iraq as most is made to suit families of two or more people.⁹⁸² Dr Chatelard also commented that single people (male or female) would have difficulty resettling without a support network.⁹⁸³

In its report on return from abroad, dated 30 June 2017, the REACH Initiative stated: ‘All women interviewed in Iraq reported that they had received support from their family upon return. As such, they indicated that they did not face any particular difficulties once back, often because they had support from their family and were glad to be back in Iraq.’⁹⁸⁴ Furthermore, the majority of returnees reported that they could only rely on their families for support, rather than on their local community or organisations.⁹⁸⁵ The IOM’s study conducted among IDPs in Baghdad, Basrah, Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah governorates, published on April 2017, also revealed that across all governorates, 95.8 % of IDPs who borrowed money preferred doing so informally and from relatives or extended family.⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁷⁶ World Bank, *Wasta Once Again Hampering Arab Youth Chances for a Dignified Life*, 13 March 2014, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁷ Tearfund, *Assessment of Livelihood Opportunities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq*, 31 December 2015, [url](#), pp. 20, 24

⁹⁷⁸ IRC, *East Mosul, Iraq Labor Market Assessment*, September 2017, September 2017, [url](#), p. 7

⁹⁷⁹ UNHCR, *Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq*, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁸⁰ IOM, 24 April 2018 and 4 May 2018 (presentation), cited in: Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Northern Iraq, November 2018, p. 88, [url](#)

⁹⁸¹ IOM, *Iraq - Country Fact Sheet 2017*, August 2017, [url](#), p 3

⁹⁸² IOM, *Information on Return and Reintegration in Iraq*, December 2015, [url](#), p. 7

⁹⁸³ Chatelard, G., Email correspondence with EASO, 20 November 2018

⁹⁸⁴ REACH, *Iraqi migration to Europe in 2016: Profiles, Drivers and Return*, 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 26

⁹⁸⁵ REACH, *Iraqi migration to Europe in 2016: Profiles, Drivers and Return*, 30 June 2017, [url](#), p. 31

⁹⁸⁶ IOM, SFS Institute for the Study of International Migration, *Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One*, April 2017, [url](#), p. 27

IOM explains that where IDPs moved post-2014 depended on ethno-religious identity, wealth, social capital, and this was the case particularly if they had to cross between Iraqi and Kurdish controlled territories, or the disputed areas.⁹⁸⁷ Dr Chatelard explained the position of networks on a person's reintegration and relocation noting that, regarding returning to Iraq or relocating within it,

'factors impacting a person's ability to resettle anywhere in Iraq are their ethnic and religious affiliation together with the availability of family network. Sunni Arabs, male and female, originating from areas previously under ISIS control are held in suspicion in all other areas of the country and face challenges relocating to Baghdad, Basrah or KRI. However, on the whole, Sunnis even if they originate from Baghdad or any other area which was not under ISIS control are not easily accepted in areas with a Shiite majority. A Sunni woman married to a Shiite man would be better accepted. But not a Sunni woman on her own. Kurds have difficulties reintegrating anywhere except in KRI, and in Mosul and Kirkuk, if they originally came from there and still have family networks in place. The situation is challenging anywhere for members of minority groups if they do not have networks of members of their faith to help with local assimilation and a degree of protection against abuses by armed groups, including gangs. The safest place is KRI regardless of the minority faith. Furthermore, anyone without family support networks in the area where they relocate, regardless of the area, face greater challenges finding accommodation, accessing the job market, affording health care, completing administrative procedures such as registering with mukhtars/local councils or accessing social assistance, etc, which all require to activate patronage networks first and foremost through family connections.'⁹⁸⁸

Dr Chatelard explained that 'the importance of family and communal ties in displacement and international migration is particularly striking in the case of minorities – Christians, Sabeen-Mandeans, Yazidis, etc. – who have been experiencing chain migration based on family ties embedded in religious ties. As more individuals and families leave Iraq, others from the same community are encouraged to leave because their communal protection and support system in Iraq is weakened.' She further noted that Iraq is not a society where people are detached from their social groups, particularly the extended family. The latter is the social unit within which individuals expect to find resources and protection. Regardless of ethnic or religious affiliations, families are closely tight units reinforced by the prevalence of marriages with the first or second cousin. Several generations often live under one roof, or at least in the same building, and members feel obligations towards each other and pool resources, including networks of patronage which different members can access to support one another.⁹⁸⁹

DFAT reported that 'returning to Iraq can be difficult, particularly if the individual does not return to their original community. Integration within new communities is difficult and complicated by the significant influence of patronage and nepotism that affect many aspects of day-to-day life in Iraq.'⁹⁹⁰ Family connections play a preponderant role in Iraqis society. Not only family links are important in accessing to employment⁹⁹¹, they also determine individuals' movement

⁹⁸⁷ IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#) p. 3

⁹⁸⁸ Chatelard, G., Email correspondence with EASO, 20 November 2018

⁹⁸⁹ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

⁹⁹⁰ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq , 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 30

⁹⁹¹ World Bank, Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, 3 February 2017, [url](#), p. 65

intentions.⁹⁹² According to the IOM's ILS II report 'nearly 30 % of families chose their destination based on whether they had extended family/relatives/friends or a community of similar ethnic-religious-linguistic background there.'⁹⁹³ Dr Chatelard also commented that IDPs and returnees who do not fit the majority ethno-religious make-up of the area to which they relocate are 'extremely likely to face more challenges than others'.⁹⁹⁴ In relation to the situation of minorities and their access to networks, Dr Chatelard commented that like any other Iraqi social group, ethno-religious minorities rely primarily on intra-familial solidarity. She commented further, that 'on all other grounds, they are at a disadvantage to mobilise patronage networks. Even if some small ethnic or religious groups have formed political parties and have representatives in government, these have not been allocated much power and hence can only leverage limited resources for their respective communities. Furthermore, members of minorities do not have access to large tribal networks, nor to the protection or socio-economic benefits provided by the most powerful Hashd militias.'⁹⁹⁵

Regarding the southern areas of Iraq, two recent IOM studies have indicated that IDPs drawn to Basrah were reported to have been attracted there due to the availability of family/friends or relatives in the region: 40 %⁹⁹⁶ and 57 % of those surveyed, respectively.⁹⁹⁷ DFAT, without providing any details, stated in 2017 that 'Iraqis who have sought asylum overseas have returned to southern Iraq without significant difficulty.'⁹⁹⁸ According to DFAT, writing in 2018, relocation to southern Iraq is 'possible for anyone' with local familial, tribal, or political networks, however, it would be difficult for anyone without those connections.⁹⁹⁹ In 2017 DFAT wrote that relocation to the south would be difficult 'for any minority group', including Shias, without such networks. They would have difficulty assimilating.¹⁰⁰⁰ DFAT noted that in the south the willingness of the state to protect minorities located in southern Iraq is 'limited'.¹⁰⁰¹

Regarding Baghdad, IOM's 2017 IDP monitoring matrix stated that for 55 % of IDP families in Baghdad, the presence of extended family explained their relocation to Baghdad.¹⁰⁰² A study on IDPs from Baghdad from 2017 conducted jointly by IOM/Georgetown University also found that for a high number of IDPs in the governorate (44 %), the presence of family and relatives was the main reason for moving to Baghdad during displacement, while 4 % said they had no other choice, and 38 % came because of better security.¹⁰⁰³

Regarding the KRI, according to DFAT, writing in 2017, 'large numbers of Kurds return voluntarily to the Kurdish region, particularly from the United Kingdom and European Union countries (mainly single males). The Kurdish region's relative security compared to other areas of Iraq has

⁹⁹² IOM, Reasons to Remain – Categorizing Protracted Displacement in Iraq, November 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁹⁹³ IOM, IOM-Iraq Mission, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 34

⁹⁹⁴ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

⁹⁹⁵ Chatelard, G., Comment made during the review of this report, 19 October 2018

⁹⁹⁶ IOM, IOM-Iraq, Displacement Monitoring Matrix - Integrated Location Assess II: Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), pp. 34-35

⁹⁹⁷ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), p. 14

⁹⁹⁸ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 26 June 2017, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁹ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰⁰⁰ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq, 26 June 2017, [url](#), p. 29

¹⁰⁰¹ Australia, DFAT, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰⁰² IOM, Iraq Displacement Tracking Matrix, Integrated Location Assessment II, Governorate Profiles, October 2017, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰⁰³ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#), pp. 12-13

encouraged returns.¹⁰⁰⁴ DFAT assessed in 2018 that ‘internal relocation to the Kurdistan Region is difficult for anyone without a sponsor or existing networks within the region. DFAT assesses that certain individuals such as single women and children, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) individuals would face similar risks of official and societal discrimination in the Kurdistan Region as they face in other parts of Iraq.’¹⁰⁰⁵ Other sources also noted that social networks such as familial connections are important for the integration of returnees, especially single women, and particularly in terms of finding employment and affordable housing.¹⁰⁰⁶ DFAT explained that ‘patronage and nepotism significantly influence employment opportunities, making it difficult to internally relocate to the Kurdish region without existing networks.’¹⁰⁰⁷ DFAT further assessed that ‘internal relocation to the Kurdish region is difficult for most minority groups and particularly for Arab Iraqis due to official and societal discrimination.’¹⁰⁰⁸

10.4 Security

In Iraq, across all four governorates surveyed by IOM/Georgetown (Baghdad, Basrah, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk), prior histories and personal ties are directly linked to personal security.¹⁰⁰⁹ For IDPs, their perceptions of security were found to be strongly linked to a range of factors, such as the governmental authority under which they live, the area they live in, their sect, their own individual status, and their prior ties to the area into which they are displaced.¹⁰¹⁰

10.5 Women

According to Minority Rights Group International, in Iraqi society, women are expected to be under the deferential protection of men. Those living outside of the protection of their families are in a situation of ‘extreme vulnerability’ and potential danger; there are no effective shelters for women in Iraq, and women who leave their homes from abuse are vulnerable and may end up taking shelter in prisons or in prostitution.¹⁰¹¹ Dr Chatelard also gave the view that ‘women and unaccompanied minors with no family support networks face additional challenges anywhere, especially single women who are looked down upon for not having a male protector and are at risk of physical abuse. If they have dependent children, those are also at risk of abuse.’ This also applies for unaccompanied minors.¹⁰¹² According to three sources interviewed by the Danish Immigration Service, ‘there is always some kind of extended family that can take care of a girl or a woman until she is married’ regarding the situation of an unmarried single woman living alone in KRI, which was described by DIS as ‘hypothetical’.¹⁰¹³ The same source wrote that ‘single women are rarely able to live by themselves, they will in some cases, be able to work outside the home.’¹⁰¹⁴ The Finnish

¹⁰⁰⁴ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq , 26 June 2017, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰⁰⁵ Australia, DFAT, DFAT, Country Information Report – Iraq, 9 October 2018, [url](#), p. 29

¹⁰⁰⁶ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Women and men in honour-related conflicts, 9 November 2018, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁰⁰⁷ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq , 26 June 2017, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁰⁰⁸ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Iraq , 26 June 2017, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁰⁰⁹ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁰ IOM, SFS/Georgetown University, Access to durable solutions among IDPs in Iraq; Part One, April 2017, [url](#)

¹⁰¹¹ EASO, EASO COI Meeting Report – Iraq: Practical Cooperation Meeting 25-26 April 2017, [source: Mark Lattimer, MRG], July 2017, [url](#), pp. 21-22

¹⁰¹² Chatelard, G., Email correspondence with EASO, 20 November 2018

¹⁰¹³ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 61

¹⁰¹⁴ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 61

Migration Service in 2018 gathered information on the status of women living in Iraq without a safety net and wrote that based on its reading of the sources ‘the principal obstacles to renting a home appear to be financial difficulties, missing documentation needed to confirm the place of residence, discrimination, i.e. the negative attitudes of some parties regarding independent women, and safety risks.’¹⁰¹⁵

10.5.1 Women victims of violence and shelters

In March 2018, UNFPA opened the first shelter providing support to women victims of gender-based violence.¹⁰¹⁶ Public services offering support to women victims of violence are underused in Iraq, mainly because of cultural obstacles or restrictions of movement. Throughout 2017, the government-run shelter in Baghdad providing support to women and children victims of trafficking remained empty.¹⁰¹⁷ Particularly in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Dohuk, women are reluctant to seek help from a counsellor belonging to a different ethnic or religious group.¹⁰¹⁸ Iraqi’s first rehabilitation centre for women was opened in March 2013, in Baghdad.¹⁰¹⁹

Across Iraq, temporary women’s shelters struggle to receive sufficient financial support, leaving women fleeing domestic violence without a safe place to go. In Baghdad, some shelters for women have been attacked. In order to provide protection, in Baghdad and Kirkuk, authorities held women in prisons together with convicted criminals, because these were the only safe place they could provide.¹⁰²⁰ Shelters for victims of gender-based violence were only sparsely available. In the absence of shelters authorities often detained victims for their own protection. Communities often viewed shelters for victims of gender-based crimes as brothels and demanded their closure. To appease these concerns the government regularly closed these shelters while allowing them to reopen later in another location. Shelters have also been attacked.¹⁰²¹

10.5.2 Basrah

According to UNHCR, reporting in 2016, the main types of gender-based violence among IDPs prevalent in Basrah and the south were emotional/psychosocial abuse, child/forced marriage, which were commonly believed to serve as a form of protection, domestic violence, and the ‘denial of rights and opportunities’ to girls and women to meet their basic needs.¹⁰²² Basrah is described as a socially conservative city.¹⁰²³ Sources explained that in Basrah, there have been cases of women targeted by militias for being seen wearing socially unacceptable clothes¹⁰²⁴ and that women have dressed conservatively for fear of provoking a militia response from those patrolling

¹⁰¹⁵ Finnish Immigration Service, Overview of the status of women living without a safety net in Iraq, 22 May 2018, [url](#), p. 45

¹⁰¹⁶ UNFPA, Giving women a second chance; inauguration of the first shelter for GBV survivors in Baghdad, 9 March 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁷ USDOS, url Tier 2 Watch List – Iraq, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁸ Finnish Immigration Service, Overview of the status of women living without a safety net in Iraq, 22 May 2018, [url](#), p. 22

¹⁰¹⁹ UN CERD, Combined twenty-second to twenty-fifth periodic reports submitted by Iraq under article 9 of the Convention, due in 2017, 23 August 2017, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁰²⁰ Finnish Immigration Service, Overview of the status of women living without a safety net in Iraq, 22 May 2018, [url](#), p. 48

¹⁰²¹ USDOS, Country report on human rights practises; Iraq, 20 April 2018, [url](#), pp. 40, 42; EASO, EASO COI Meeting Report Iraq, July 2017, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁰²² UNHCR, Protection Assessment Report (Jan-April 2016) – UNHCR Basra-South Iraq, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁰²³ Niqash, Women in Conservative Basra Seek-And Find-More Freedoms, 28 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁴ EASO, EASO COI Meeting Report – Iraq: Practical Cooperation Meeting 25-26 April 2017, July 2017, [url](#), pp. 21-22

the city.¹⁰²⁵ A June 2018 article by Niqash noted that an influx of investors, immigration and better security have brought less conservative attitudes about women to the city and some women are starting businesses and are more frequently driving a car.¹⁰²⁶

Family protection units within the Ministry of the Interior/police have limited effectiveness; in Basrah they were described as having limited qualified personnel and were located in overcrowded premises inside the police stations.¹⁰²⁷ In 2017, domestic violence victims told UNAMI that they feared that family protection units in the police would immediately refer them to their families if they were approached for assistance.¹⁰²⁸ Several women in prison in Basrah refused to return home after finishing their sentences for fear of harm from their family acting against them for 'dishonour'.¹⁰²⁹

10.5.3 Erbil

Single women and girls living inside IDP camps in Erbil governorate were vulnerable to sexual harassment and theft.¹⁰³⁰ Sources interviewed by DIS in 2016 indicated the availability of few safe houses for single women in Erbil as well as psychosocial support and training provided by NGOs.¹⁰³¹ However, a 2018 UNFPA assessment found that due to the cultural expectance that women should put the family needs first 'IDP women were reluctant to ask or accept psychological help when it was not combined with other services or resources for other family members.'¹⁰³²

IDP women threatened by honour crimes can access support through women centres run by NGOs and special assistance telephone lines that have been set up by the KRG.¹⁰³³ Out of 14 honour killings that were reported in 2017 in KRI three were in Erbil.¹⁰³⁴

According to UNAMI, as of June 2017, the main types of gender-based violence prevalent in KRI among women and girls are physical abuse, 'honour'-based killings, self-immolation, sexual violence and harassment, as well as inequality and social exclusion.¹⁰³⁵ Findings from a 2016 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) assessment across eight governorates in Iraq, including Erbil revealed that 'gender-based violence is pervasive in IDP and refugee communities across all governorates and disproportionately affects women and girls. Violence directed at women and girls within family is normalized and legitimized by survivors, perpetrators and communities through reference to cultural and religious norms.'¹⁰³⁶

¹⁰²⁵ Niqash, Women in Conservative Basra Seek-And Find-More Freedoms, 28 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁶ Niqash, Women in Conservative Basra Seek-And Find-More Freedoms, 28 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁷ MRG, The Lost Women of Iraq, November 2015, p. 15, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁰²⁸ USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Iraq, June 2018, [url](#), pp. 41-42

¹⁰²⁹ USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Iraq, June 2018, [url](#), pp. 41-42

¹⁰³⁰ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 143

¹⁰³¹ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 143 , p. 164

¹⁰³² UNFPA, A report on the GBV assessment in conflict affected governorates in Iraq, November 2016, [url](#), p. 25

¹⁰³³ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), pp. 47-48

¹⁰³⁴ Rudaw, KRG: 14 women dead in reported 'honor' killings for 2017, 13 February 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁵ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq: January to June 2017, 14 December 2017, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁰³⁶ UNFPA, A report on the GBV assessment in conflict affected governorates in Iraq, November 2016, [url](#), p. 7

The KRG and NGOs provided shelters for women seeking protection in Erbil governorate.¹⁰³⁷ 662 women were accommodated in women shelters across the KRI from January to October 2017 with 421 having left the shelter at the time of the reporting period, indicating that their safety problems were considered resolved.¹⁰³⁸

Sources indicated that in Erbil there is one shelter that can accommodate for 30 to 35 women. Access is provided to women until their case is finished, but only after they file a complaint with the police and a judge decides to refer them to the shelter.¹⁰³⁹ Usually the cases were resolved by reaching an agreement through tribal networks or family members.¹⁰⁴⁰

Other sources interviewed during the Landinfo and DIS 2018 mission to Erbil and Sulaymaniyah noted that the shelters can be very unsafe, pointing to a case where at one of the shelters in Erbil women were trafficked by the NGO who was running it.¹⁰⁴¹ According to a 2018 report by the NGOs Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights and Asuda single women fleeing violence from their partners or families would have difficulties in seeking shelter in a hotel as ‘most hotels in the KRI will not allow single women to stay alone.’¹⁰⁴²

10.6 Orphans

There are no recent statistics available on the number of orphans in Iraq.¹⁰⁴³ The New York Times wrote in 2018 that thousands of children lost their parents in the ISIL conflict. The source states there were an estimated 13 000 orphans in Mosul city alone after its liberation, though social workers estimate 20 000 could be a ‘conservative estimate’ of the total number of children who have lost one or both parents. Due to the prevalent societal opinion that a single parent cannot be a breadwinner and a caregiver at the same time, children who only lost one parent are often also classified as orphans and live with extended family.¹⁰⁴⁴

Adoption is not possible under Iraqi law, which permits only ‘guardianship’; as defined by the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, guardianship can only be granted to extended family or friends ‘who can provide for the child’.¹⁰⁴⁵ Orphans in Iraq are typically cared for by their extended family members.¹⁰⁴⁶ Adoption and orphanages are seen as ‘last resorts’ in Iraq.¹⁰⁴⁷

In 2014 it was reported that Iraq has 23 orphanages. It was reported that they did not provide sufficient care and education to orphans.¹⁰⁴⁸ An orphanage in Mosul in September 2018 was

¹⁰³⁷ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Women and men in honour-related conflicts, 9 November 2018, [url](#), p. 48

¹⁰³⁸ UNAMI, Report on Human Rights in Iraq: July to December 2017, 8 July 2018, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁰³⁹ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Women and men in honour-related conflicts, 9 November 2018, [url](#), p. 48, p. 137

¹⁰⁴⁰ Denmark, DIS, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Access, Possibility of Protection, Security and Humanitarian Situation, 11 April 2016, [url](#), p. 137

¹⁰⁴¹ Denmark, DIS, Norway, Landinfo, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Women and men in honour-related conflicts, 9 November 2018, [url](#), p. 48

¹⁰⁴² Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights and Asuda, Broken Lives: Violence against Syrian refugee women and girls in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, March 2018, [url](#), pp. 16-17

¹⁰⁴³ New York Times (The), Iraq’s Forgotten Casualties: Children Orphaned in Battle With ISIS, 31 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁴ New York Times (The), Iraq’s Forgotten Casualties: Children Orphaned in Battle With ISIS, 31 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁵ US, Embassy in Iraq, Adoption, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁶ Dar al Zahra Charitable Schools, About us, n.d., [url](#); New York Times (The), Iraq’s Forgotten Casualties: Children Orphaned in Battle With ISIS, 31 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁷ Alalusi Foundation, n.d., Iraq Orphan Project, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁸ Al Monitor, Number of Iraqi orphans, widows rising with conflict, 17 September 2014, [url](#)

reported to house 33 children, including children of killed ISIL fighters. Some of these children were rejected by their families because of their parent's affiliation.¹⁰⁴⁹ In Baghdad there is another orphanage that houses 'ISIS-orphans'.¹⁰⁵⁰ Dar al-Zahra is a school for Iraqi orphans run by an Islamic NGO in Najaf. It provides assistance to 500 orphans. Children at that school are not provided with accommodation as orphans are typically cared for by family.¹⁰⁵¹

The Al Ayn Social Care Foundation, an Islamic charitable religious foundation, reported that its Basrah branch provided financial and in-kind assistance to over 7 600 orphans across Basrah.¹⁰⁵²

Media reports have observed an increasing number of children of ISIL members and foreign jihadists who have been left as orphans and abandoned in Baghdad.¹⁰⁵³ A number of orphanages in Baghdad¹⁰⁵⁴ provides shelter and support to orphans. For instance, the Salhiya orphanage is a state-run facility in Baghdad which houses children born from foreign ISIL fighters who are either dead or detained, as well as children born to Iraqi women enslaved by ISIL.¹⁰⁵⁵

There are no accurate statistics on the number of abandoned babies in Iraq.¹⁰⁵⁶ Abandoned babies are perceived as disgraceful or the product of illicit sexual relations, and are 'alienated and despised' socially; the mothers are at risk of being killed in honour killings by their families.¹⁰⁵⁷ Children of unknown parentage are not easily accepted in Iraq.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁴⁹ Independent (The), What becomes of the jihadi orphans?, 25 September 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁰ AP, AP Photos: IS militants' children in Iraq's orphanages; 15 October 2018, [url](#); BBC, The Turkish orphans stranded after IS struggle in Iraq, 5 April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵¹ Dar al Zahra Charitable Schools, About us, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁵² ASCF, About Us, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁵³ BBC, The Turkish orphans stranded after IS struggle in Iraq, 5 April 2018, [url](#); AP, IS militants' children in Iraq's orphanages, 15 October 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁴ Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi Safe House for Creativity a haven for orphans amid Baghdad violence, 14 August 2016, [url](#); Husein, H. A., Alwan I.H., et al., Psychological distress among Orphans in orphanage in Baghdad city, January 2015, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁵ AP, IS militants' children in Iraq's orphanages, 15 October 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁶ Al Monitor, Iraq tried to help shake stigma of orphans, 21 September 2015, [url](#)

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Terms of Reference

The report should aim to focus on Baghdad, KRI (focus on Erbil), and southern Iraq (focus on Basra).

The report should aim to address topics on the availability of key socio-economic livelihoods (housing, health, food security, education, employment) and supports to the populations in the mentioned areas, including support networks and the situation of vulnerable groups.

*NB: issues of access/entry/freedom of movement are not covered in this report.



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