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6.4.1. General situation

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: November 2024

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus 2024, 2.1.1, 2.2.8, 2.3.8; Security Situation 2024, 2.1; Arab Tribes, 2.2; 3.1.6. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

The general circumstances prevailing in Baghdad and Sulaymaniyah, in relation to food security, housing and shelter, water and hygiene, basic healthcare and means of basic subsistence, do not preclude the reasonableness to settle in these cities.

More specifically, in relation to:

☐ **Food security**

Iraq depends widely on imports of food to supply citizens with subsidised food from the Public Distribution System (PDS). All Iraqis are eligible to the PDS. To obtain a PDS card, it is necessary to present a civil ID and residency card.

Reportedly, food prices have seen an unprecedented increase in Iraq, especially in the KRI. The rise in food prices negatively affected the food security at the household level. As of 1st August 2023, **Baghdad** rated as 4th top governorate with the highest prevalence of insufficient food consumption.

As of 1st August 2023, **Sulaymaniyah** ranked 11th among the governorates with the highest prevalence of crisis or above crisis level food-based coping strategies.

☐ Housing and shelter

The country is reported to have a large housing deficit. Housing prices have increased in areas hosting many IDPs. As of December 2023, the IDP population in Iraq stood at over 1.14 million.

Rents are increasing extremely across the country, including in **Baghdad**. Lack of housing led to a growing number of informal settlements, with Baghdad having the highest concentration of slums. Informal settlements are mostly substandard temporary structures, overcrowded and mostly lacking services and infrastructure. Most homes in these settlements in Baghdad were built illegally, putting residents at risk of eviction. Repeated power cuts in southern Iraq, including Baghdad, affect peoples' lives and living conditions especially in summer, when temperatures rise above 50 degrees Celsius.

In **Sulaymaniyah**, the demand for housing was growing. In contrast to other regions in Iraq, the power system in Sulaymaniyah is more reliable, but electricity shortages are still common. People living in temporary shelters in IDP camps and in informal settlements are particularly impacted by the recurrent power cuts.

☐ Water and hygiene

Dirty and unsafe water is a major health hazard at country level.

Accessing clean drinking water is one of the most pressing challenges in Iraq, including in **Baghdad**. Water contamination is the cause of an increase in disease cases, including in the capital city. The sewer system in Baghdad has been reported to be old and suffering from various deficiencies.

The KRI, including **Sulaymaniyah**, faces water shortages and long periods of drought, causing threats to the population's general well-being. The lack of safe water, the poor sanitation and hygiene, triggered an outbreak of cholera in 2022, affecting several governorates including Sulaymaniyah and Baghdad.

☐ Basic healthcare

Over the past two decades, the quality and efficiency of the Iraqi public healthcare system have severely deteriorated. Iraqi free public health services require valid civil documentation, limiting access for those without ID documents. However, a survey found no link between missing documentation and healthcare access, with 94% of households reporting they could access healthcare regardless of their documentation status.

Hospitals, doctors and other health services are heavily concentrated in urban areas. Disproportionately large numbers of doctors, healthcare professionals and beds are located in **Baghdad**. Most IDP camps in Baghdad have no health centre or medical teams to take care of emergencies, and people lacked the money to pay for private doctors.

In the **KRI**, the quality and availability of healthcare is described as slightly better than in the rest of the country, however much of the capacity is concentrated in urban areas and several public hospitals were forced to suspend some services due to shortages of medical supplies and medications.

☐ Means of basic subsistence

After the sharp recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Iraq’s economy rapidly recovered in 2022 thanks to increase in oil-selling, resulting in accelerated GDP growth. Nevertheless, due to its strict dependency on oil, Iraq economy is highly instable and vulnerable to fluctuations of oil prices and global demand. Many IDPs and returnees in Iraq, in both urban and rural areas, often face challenges in accessing basic services and employment. The access to employment is dominated by nepotism along family, tribal, ethno-sectarian, and political lines.

Unemployment, especially among young people and women, and poverty are high across the country and large sections of the population, including in **Baghdad** governorate. Sadr City, a suburb of Baghdad, has been the city's poorest neighbourhood for decades, and the lack of economic opportunities in this neighbourhood forced the youth to rely on or join PMF groups. Moreover, the people from Baghdad’s poorest neighbourhoods often depend on PMF for access to public and/or private services, jobs, bureaucratic approval, as well as aid support.

In **Sulaymaniyah**, according to the latest available data from 2021, the unemployment rate in the governorate remains high. The lack of employment opportunities, especially among young people, has been a push factor, forcing many to migrate (both rural-urban migration and emigration). Reportedly, poverty in KRI particularly affects the returnees to some governorates, including Sulaymaniyah.

The general circumstances prevailing in Baghdad and Sulaymaniyah as described above would not make it unreasonable to settle in the cities. However, a careful examination of the individual circumstances of the applicant is required.

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