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EASO publishes updated 'Country Guidance: Iraq'



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The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has published an update of the '**Country Guidance: Iraq**'. The January 2021 update replaces the first edition of the guidance of June 2019.

In 2020, Iraq remained one of the top five countries of origin of applicants for international protection in the EU+. According to EASO Early warning and Preparedness System (EPS) data, applicants from Iraq lodged some 18 200 applications for international protection in 2020. Similarly to other countries of origin, the number of applicants from Iraq declined significantly since March, when the COVID-19 pandemic reached Europe, resulting in a 40 % decrease.

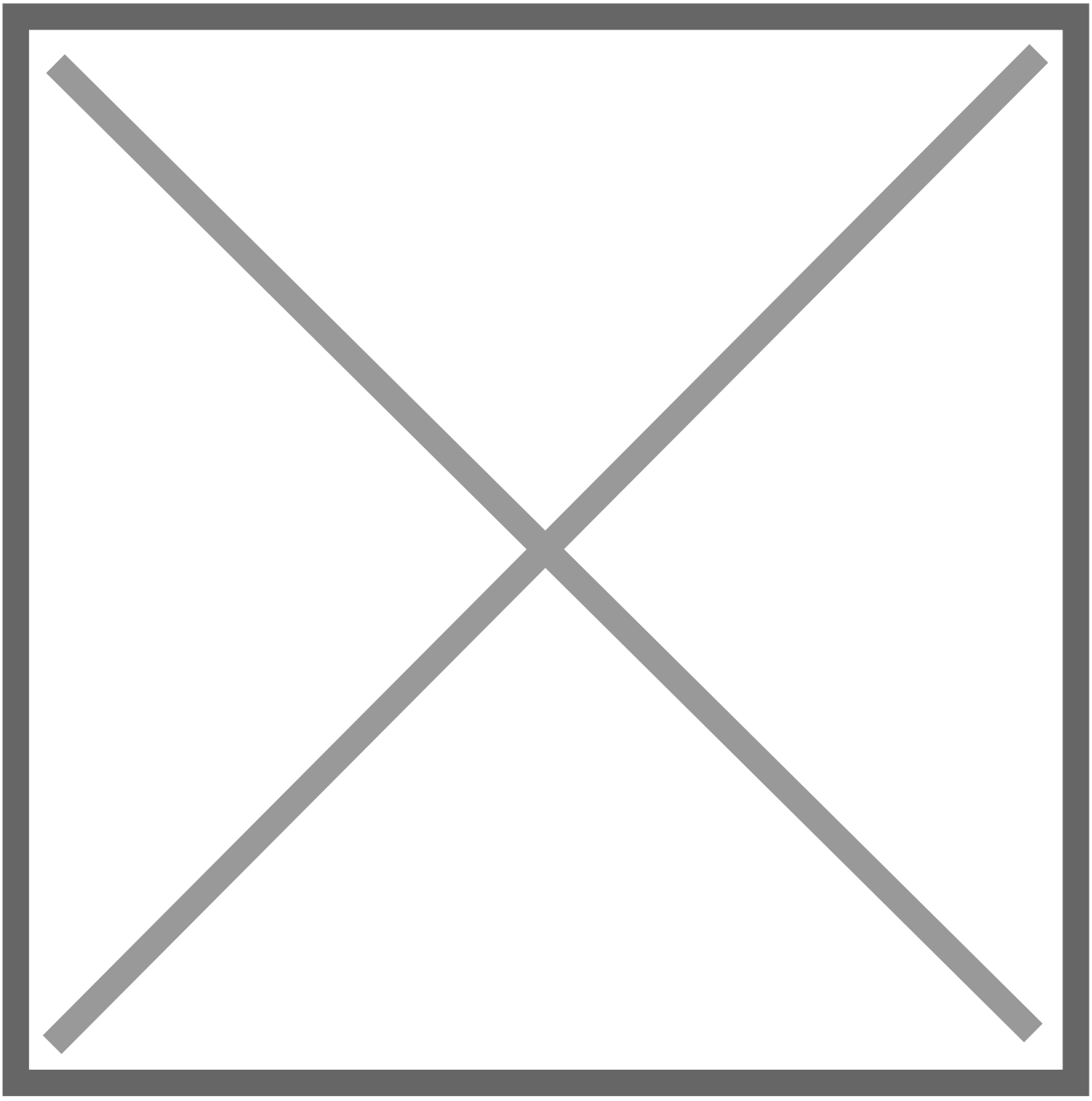
Some 22 200 first instance decisions were issued to Iraqi applicants in 2020 and, similarly to 2019, almost two in every five decisions were positive, granting refugee status or subsidiary protection. At the end of the year, the number of Iraqi pending cases at first instance stabilised to fewer than 15 000 cases, the smallest backlog since late 2014.

The ‘Country Guidance: Iraq’ publication provides an in-depth country-specific analysis in a practical tool for asylum officials examining the cases of Iraqi applicants. It addresses all elements considered in the examination of international protection needs of Iraqi nationals and stateless persons whose former habitual

residence was in Iraq. Without replacing the individual assessment required in each case, the Country Guidance aims to assist decision-makers and to ensure that similar cases are treated and decided on in a similar manner and in accordance with the applicable international and EU legislation.

In this update, the following sections have been reviewed in light of up-to-date common country of origin information, published by EASO in 2020:

- Main actors of persecution or serious harm;
- The analysis of some of the most commonly encountered profiles of asylum seekers from Iraq;
- Subsidiary protection under Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive;
- Internal protection alternative; and
- The applicability of exclusion clauses.



The ‘Country Guidance: Iraq’ publication is available in a user-friendly electronic book format, as well as in pdf.

The Country Guidance is drafted by national experts, with the support of EASO and with valuable input from the European Commission and UNHCR. The final text is agreed on by senior policy officials from EU+ countries and endorsed by the EASO Management Board.

This publication follows the recent update on Afghanistan (December 2020), and the publication of the ' Country Guidance: Syria' (September 2020) and the 'Country Guidance: Nigeria' (February 2019).

For more information about EASO's role in fostering Member States' efforts towards convergence in the assessment of international protection needs and the work on country guidance, visit https://easo.europa.eu/country-guidance.

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