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6.3. Travel and admittance

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: November 2024

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: Security 2024, 2.3; 2.10; Country Focus 2024, 1.1.3, 2.1.2, 2.2, 2.3; COI Update 2024, 4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

If the criterion of 'safety' is satisfied, as a next step, it has to be established whether an applicant can **safely** and **legally travel** and **gain admittance** in the suggested IPA location.

It should be noted that, in the context of Iraq, the three requirements cannot be clearly differentiated.

○ Safe travel

Some security incidents have been recorded in Baghdad and in Sulaymaniyah governorates, including at the proximity of the airports. However, this does not preclude the safety of travel, in general. The International Zone Area of Central Baghdad and Baghdad International Airport are relatively more stable areas than the rest of the city. The Turkish government has imposed a flight ban on Sulaymaniyah International Airport until December 2024

○ Legal travel

There are no legal restrictions for Iraqis to travel in Iraq, therefore, the requirement of legality of travel would in general be met, including for the cities of Baghdad and Sulaymaniyah.

○ Gain admittance

The legal framework for entry and residency in Iraq is complex, regulations are not always implemented and updates or changes to them may not be publicly available. Practices vary depending on locations and implementing authorities. Sponsorship and security clearance requirements are not regulated by law nor are they officially announced. To pass checkpoints and regularise their stay in a certain location, individuals are required to hold valid civil documentation. The risk of being arbitrarily detained and arrested at checkpoints increases for people who do not hold such documentation.

The existence and/or possibility to issue relevant documentation, such as ID, security clearance, housing card etc., **is a crucial factor** to consider when assessing travel and admittance. It is also noted that to get relevant documentation, an applicant may be required to travel to their area of origin.

The assessment of whether the requirement of gaining admittance is likely to be met, should carefully take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant.

More specifically, for the two cities assessed as potential IPA locations, the following could be noted:

For **Baghdad**, there is no sponsorship requirement for entering the governorate. However, there are still certain residency requirements for individuals who do not originate from Baghdad governorate, regardless of their ethno-religious profile. Therefore, the assessment of whether the requirement of gaining admittance is likely to be met should carefully take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant, such as:

- **Existing social ties and having a potential sponsor:** Two sponsors from the neighbourhood where the individuals intend to reside, holding housing cards from

Baghdad, are required as well as a support letter from the *mukhtar*.

- **Security clearance:** Individuals require approval from the security actors. Both real or perceived affiliation with ISIL would pose significant issues in this regard.

- **Housing Card:** Only the Housing Card issued in the new location ensures that the individual / family can permanently settle and have access to the full range of rights and basic services in the new location. In Baghdad, individuals who meet the requirements of sponsorship and security clearance are generally able to regularise their residency, rent an apartment, and have access to employment, public and private hospitals as well as tertiary education.

- **Other documentation:** Valid ID documents are required for residency purposes. Issuance or replacement of documents generally entails that the individual returns to their place of origin which could pose some risks depending on the profile of the applicant and the security situation in the area.

For **Sulaymaniyah**, there are administrative requirements and restrictions to both enter and reside in the city. Residency requirements in the KRI differ based on an individual's place of origin, ethno-religious profile, and family status. Certain individuals are not permitted to transfer or obtain a new Housing Card in the KRI; therefore, the assessment of whether the requirement of gaining admittance is likely to be met, should carefully take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant, such as:

- **Area of origin:** Iraqis from other KRI governorates generally face no entry requirements to Sulaymaniyah governorate, other than presenting their Civil Status ID Card/Unified ID Card.

- **Ethnic origin and family status:** For Iraqi Kurds and Yazidis from outside the KRI, there is generally no entry requirements or restrictions, other than presenting their Civil Status ID Card/Unified ID Card. Arab and Turkmen families from outside the KRI can obtain a one-year renewable residency card without a sponsor by contacting the local *Asayish* in their desired neighbourhoods. Single Arab and Turkmen individuals typically receive a one-month renewable residency permit, although in some cases, they may obtain a one-year renewable card from the *Asayish*. Those with a one-month permit often struggle to secure stable employment and face limitations in finding suitable rental accommodations.

- **Identification documents:** Presentation of Civil Status ID Card/Unified ID Card is required to enter Sulaymaniyah. To obtain or renew their CSID/UNID in Sulaymaniyah, individuals need to return to their place of origin. Individuals who arrive in the governorate via Sulaymaniyah airport must also approach the *Asayish* and the *mukhtar* in the

neighbourhood where they seek to reside.

- **Security clearance:** Iraqi Arabs and Turkmens from outside the KRI undergo security screening at internal borders (not at airports). After this process, they are issued a temporary entry permit by the *Asayish*, known as the Tourist Visitor Card, which is valid for 30 days. Following this initial period of 30 days, they must regularise their status and obtain a residency permit (see above 'Ethnic origin and family status').

- **Housing Card:** Only the Housing Card issued in the new location ensures that the individual / family can permanently settle and have access to the full range of rights and basic services in the new location. Regardless of their place of origin and ethno-religious profile, all Iraqis have access to public education and health services in Sulaymaniyah. For people to access other rights and basic services, including employment and housing, they must regularise their stay with the *Asayish* and transfer their Housing Card. For single Arab and Turkmen men and women, as well as Kurds and Yazidis originating from the disputed territories, the transfer of the Public Distribution System (PDS) is generally not permitted, as they must instead return to the place of origin to obtain the monthly food ration. Moreover, they are reported to face restrictions on types and location of rental accommodation.

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