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Iraq: Updated and fine-tuned EUAA Country Guidance confirms on-going protection needs



The EUAA has published an updated common analysis of the situation in Iraq. It is the joint assessment of EU+ countries and is based on the Agency's latest Country-of-Origin Information (COI). The Agency has taken a new approach on the incorporation of COI in the legal analysis. As a result, the content is more concise and user-friendly.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has published updated Country Guidance on Iraq. While EU+ countries observed that the situation in Iraq **has not undergone major changes** since the Agency's previous publication, some revisions have been made **to provide clearer and more conclusive guidance on Iraqi applications** with the aim of fostering greater convergence at EU level.

EU+ countries confirmed that **different profiles of individuals could be at risk of persecution or serious harm**. In particular, **converts from Islam** or **persons with diverse SOGIESC** would, in general, have a well-founded fear of persecution. For other profiles, such as religious and ethnic minorities and women and girls, the guidance provides a non-exhaustive list of risk-impacting circumstances, to be considered in the assessment.

The latest Country Guidance on Iraq also notes that the civilian population may be exposed to indiscriminate violence in different parts of the country. For example, in the Amedi district of the Dohuk governorate **indiscriminate violence has reached a high level**, while the risk is considered lower for other governorates such as Baghdad, Ninewa and Erbil. For the southern governorates and some areas in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the risk of serious harm in relation to indiscriminate violence would, in general, not be substantiated.

In terms of the availability of protection within the country, the individual circumstances of the applicant such as their home area, ethnicity and gender, must be taken into account when assessing the availability of state protection, either by the Iraqi State or by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

An Internal Protection Alternative (IPA) may be applicable in Baghdad and Sulaymaniyah, taking into account individual circumstances such as the obtention of civil documentation, or ethnoreligious background and family status.

Asylum situation for Iraqi nationals

According to the EUAA's most recent data, Iraqi citizens continued to apply for international protection in most EU+ countries. Between January 2023 and June 2024, **37 000 applications were lodged** in the EU+. **Germany (16 000), Greece (7 300)** and the **Netherlands (3 500)** were the main receiving countries.

During the same period, Iraqi citizens were issued over 30 000 first instance decisions in the EU+. The recognition rate for Iraqi asylum applicants was 40%. However, variations in recognition rates for Iraqi applicants across different EU+ countries remains significant. In this context, the 'Country Guidance: Iraq' is a key instrument to foster convergence in the assessment of such applications by EU asylum policy-makers and case officers in accordance with the EU legislation.

Background

The country guidance documents provide country-specific, common analysis and guidance in relation to the assessment criteria of international protection needs established in the Qualification Directive and in the newly adopted Qualification Regulation. In accordance with Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation, Member States have the obligation to take into account the guidance notes and common analysis when examining applications for international protection, without prejudice to their competence for deciding on individual applications.

Download Country Guidance: Iraq.

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