

3.2 Update on Entry, residency requirements and access to civil documentation and services

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Iraq’s entry and residency framework is complex, shaped by legal pluralism, uneven implementation and varying local practices. Sponsorship and security clearance requirements are often informal and not codified in law. Valid civil documentation is necessary to pass checkpoints and lack thereof increases the risk of arbitrary detention. While most areas impose no entry restrictions, sponsorship is required in certain governorates and districts. Residency generally requires valid ID documents (Civil Status ID card/Unified ID card, nationality certificate) and, in some areas, a sponsor holding a Housing Card from the area where the individuals are seeking to legally take up temporary residency is required. Approval from the security actors of the area where they are to relocate is also needed. Only Housing Card, an official document used in both Federal Iraq and in the KRI that certifies an individual’s place of domicile or residency, allows individuals to permanently settle and access to basic rights and services.1167

As communicated by UNHCR to EUAA, information on Entry, residency requirements and access to civil documentation and services have remained the same since the latest EUAA Country Focus, May 2024, section 2.1.2. Entry, residency requirements and access to civil documentation and services, except for few developments listed as follows:

- Civil Status ID cards and nationality certificates are no longer in use. As of 1 April 2024, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior announced the end of the use of the Civil Status Identity Card.1168 An individual's ability to pass checkpoints and be admitted to the proposed area of relocation will require the individual to hold valid civil documentation (Unified ID card or passport).

- Regarding sponsorship requirements for entry: Nasiriyah and Samarra no longer require a sponsor for entry purposes.

- Regarding sponsorship requirement for residency: a sponsor is also required to regularise one’s stay in Samarra (Salah Al-Din governorate).

- Regarding permission to take up residency in the proposed area of relocation: in the KRI, persons of certain profiles/places of origin are not permitted to transfer their Housing Card or to obtain a new Housing Card (Erbil and Dohuk: Kurds who originate from the disputed territories, Arabs, Turkmen and members of ethnic/religious minority groups from areas outside the KR-I; Sulaymaniyah: single Arab and Turkmen men and women). Kurds and Yazidis who originate from the disputed territories are not allowed to transfer their Housing Card to Sulaymaniyah. They are able to obtain a support letter from the *Mukhtar* confirming that they are living in those areas.1169

- 1167

  EUAA, COI Report – Iraq: Country Focus May 2024, section 2.1.2, url, pp. 61-65

- 1168

  MOFA, Question and Answers, 4 May 2025, url; UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

- 1169

  UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

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