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Iraq: Political fragmentation, security challenges and persistent human rights concerns



The EUAA has just published two Country of Origin Information (COI) reports on Iraq, providing a thorough update on the latest security trends and the treatment of select profiles by state and non-state actors, and the socio-economic situation in the country.

Following the November 2025 parliamentary elections, prolonged political negotiations delayed the formation of a new federal government until May 2026, when Ali Al-Zaidi became prime minister. Meanwhile, no new Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has been formed since the October 2024 regional elections. Disputes between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) over the cabinet composition and the allocation of regional and federal positions have stalled the process. As of September 2026, the political deadlock persisted, with the regional parliament largely inactive and the outgoing government led by Masrour Barzani remaining in office in a caretaker capacity. The prolonged stalemate also contributed to a de facto administrative division within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

Although overall security incidents declined substantially compared with the previous reporting period (August 2024 - July 2025), they peaked sharply in March 2026, following the outbreak of the US-Israeli war with Iran. Incidents subsequently decreased in April and returned to comparatively lower monthly levels

between May and July 2026. Nevertheless, regional hostilities, militia attacks, tribal violence and ISIL activity continued to affect Iraq. The withdrawal of US troops, completed in September 2026, marked a further shift in Iraq's security environment.

The reports also highlight persistent human rights concerns, including restrictions on freedom of expression, intimidation and prosecution of journalists and activists, enforced disappearances, inadequate accountability and detention-related concerns. Legislative developments raised additional concerns, particularly regarding women's and children's rights. In October 2025, the Ja'afari Personal Status Code entered into force, following amendments to the Personal Status Law adopted in January 2025. This new framework expanded the role of religious authorities in family matters and raised concerns regarding discrimination against women in divorce, inheritance, maintenance and child custody. Domestic and gender-based violence remained widespread, while several draft laws intended to strengthen human rights protections were still pending.

Corruption, political patronage and weak institutional accountability continued to undermine governance. Meanwhile, displacement and sustainable return remained major challenges due to insecurity, damaged housing, inadequate public services, drought, livelihood constraints and restrictions imposed by security forces.

EU Asylum situation for Iraq nationals

Between July 2025 and August 2026, **Iraqi nationals lodged around 11 000 asylum applications in the EU+**. Over a third of them were lodged in **Germany** (3?900), followed by **Greece** (1?900) and **Italy** (1?100). Compared to the first seven months of 2025, applications in the same period in 2026 decreased by over a fifth, continuing the downward trend ongoing since late 2023.

While Iraq featured in Eurostat's list of low-recognition rates (? 20%) in 2025, during the first seven months of 2026, the recognition rate increased to 26%. During the reporting period (August 2025 – July 2026), **EU+ countries issued around 17?000 first instance decisions** to Iraqi nationals, **with an overall recognition rate of 21%**. Germany (9?600) issued the most decisions, accounting for more than half of the total, followed at a distance by Greece (1?800) and the **Netherlands** (1?200).

Background

The EUAA regularly updates its Country-of-Origin Information reports, which aim to provide accurate and reliable up-to-date information on third countries to support EU+ asylum and migration authorities in reaching accurate and fair decisions in asylum procedures, as well as to support national policymaking.

Read the Country of Origin Information reports here:

Iraq: Security Situation
Iraq: Country Focus

Any further information may be obtained from the European Union Agency for Asylum's Press Office at the following email addresses:

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