

## Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq

### Ability of Iraqis to Legally Access and Settle Durably in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation

November 2022

This document provides decision-makers with specific country of origin information in relation to access and residency requirements applicable to Iraqis who seek to return from abroad to areas other than their area of origin. "Area of origin" for the purpose of this document is defined as the area in which an individual's Civil Status ID Card (CSID) or Unified ID Card (UNID) has been issued.<sup>1</sup>

The information included in this document updates and replaces information on access and residency requirements contained in *Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation* of January 2021.<sup>2</sup> The scope of this document has been expanded to include access and residency requirements for Iraqis originating from all parts of the country for whom an internal flight or relocation alternative (IFA/IRA) may be considered, whereas the previous iteration focused only on those originating from areas formerly held by the Islamic State in Iraq and Al-Sham / ISIS (hereafter referred to as Da'esh) or otherwise affected by conflict.

Furthermore, this document provides detailed information on the Housing Card (Residence Card), an official document that confirms an individual's place of domicile or residency, i.e. a person's permanent home.<sup>3</sup> During the period of large-scale internal displacement in Iraq post-2014, UNHCR's focus was on Iraqis' ability to secure their stay in the area of relocation by way of registration with the concerned local authorities and security forces. However, with the Federal Government's focus on the returns of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the closure of all IDP camps in Federal Iraq except one,<sup>4</sup> this document describes the broader conditions for Iraqis to settle permanently in the proposed area of relocation.<sup>5</sup> The Housing Card is critical in this regard, including by providing the card holder with access to the full range of rights and basic services. This document also describes the limitations to transferring or issuing the Housing Card to / in the new location, depending on a person's place of origin, ethnic or religious profile, sex, or personal status.

<sup>1</sup> "Both the Civil Status ID Card and the Iraqi Nationality Certificate are being progressively replaced since 2016 by the Unified ID Card, a biometric document which serves as both nationality and identity certificate. However, the roll-out of the Unified ID Card has been piecemeal, fraught with administrative and logistical challenges and remains uneven across the country"; Protection Cluster, *Protection Analysis Report: Right to Identity and Civil Documentation*, 31 October 2021, <https://bit.ly/3wifaa4>, p. 5. Law No. 3 of 2016 (National Card Law) describes the National Card (also known as Unified ID Card / UNID) as "the legally approved document which is to be granted to the Iraqi citizen to identify the person to whom it belongs"; Iraq, *National Card Law No. (3) of 2016*, 2016, [www.refworld.org/docid/635673494.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/635673494.html), Article 1(7).

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, *Iraq: Relevant Country of Origin Information to Assist with the Application of UNHCR's Country Guidance on Iraq: Ability of Persons Originating from Formerly ISIS-Held or Conflict-Affected Areas to Legally Access and Remain in Proposed Areas of Internal Relocation*, 11 January 2021, [www.refworld.org/docid/5ffc243b4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5ffc243b4.html).

<sup>3</sup> The Housing Card (in Arabic: *bitaqa al-sakan*, بطاقة السكن) is an official document showing the address where the head of household rents or owns a residence. The General Directorate for Nationality of the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the issuance of the Housing Card. It is used in both Federal Iraq and in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). Law No. 95 of 1978 describes the place of domicile and residence as "the place in which the charged is ordinarily domiciling or residing"; Iraq: *Law No. 95 of 1978, Organization of Places of Domicile and Residence inside Iraq*, 6 December 1978, [www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4ec3c.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4ec3c.html). Article 1(3).

<sup>4</sup> Following a series of camp closures in Federal Iraq, only one camp, Jeddah 5 camp in Qayyara District (Ninewa Governorate), remains open in areas administered by the Federal Government. The Federal Government has expressed its intention to also close the remaining Jeddah 5 camp. In addition, there are 25 camps located in areas under control of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), including in the disputed areas, primarily in Dohuk Governorate (11), followed by Ninewa (7), Erbil (3), Sulaymaniyah (3) and Diyala Governorates (1). The camps are: **Dohuk**: Berseve 1, Berseve 2, Chamishku, Darkar, Dawadia, Kabarto 1, Kabarto 2, Khanke, Bajet Kandala, Rwanga Community, and Shariya. **Ninewa** (either under Dohuk or Erbil administration): Essian, Mamilian, Mamrashan, Sheikhan, Hasansham U2, Hasansham U3, Khazer M1. Erbil: Baharka, Harshm, Debaga 1. **Sulaymaniyah**: Tazade, Arbat IDP, Ashti IDP. **Diyala** (under Sulaymaniyah administration): Qoratu. As at September 2022, close to 180,000 IDPs, or 15 per cent of the total IDP population, remain in camps; Iraq CCCM Cluster, September 2022, [https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/iraq\\_cccm](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/iraq_cccm). The KRG has expressed its intention to keep camps open for the foreseeable future; OCHA, *Iraq: Humanitarian Bulletin, November-December 2021*, 17 January 2022, <https://bit.ly/3QyxseB>, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> "The proposed area must also be legally accessible, that is, the individual must have the legal right to travel there, to enter, and to remain"; (emphasis added), UNHCR, *Guidelines on International Protection No. 4: "Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative" Within the Context of Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 23 July 2003, [www.refworld.org/docid/3f2791a44.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f2791a44.html), para. 12.

This document is not intended to provide comprehensive guidance on the assessment of the availability of an IFA/IRA, which includes an assessment of the relevance as well as the reasonableness of the proposed IFA/IRA.<sup>6</sup> Instead, this document is limited to factual information on access and residency requirements as applicable at the time of writing. Information contained in this document has been collected and verified by UNHCR. The information reflects the situation as of November 2022.

The legal framework regulating access and residency requirements in Iraq is complex and governed by legal pluralism. Further, existing practice is not always in line with the normative framework and varies per location and implementing authority. Sponsorship and other clearance requirements are generally not grounded in law nor are they officially announced. Given the possible changes to regulations and practices concerning access to and residency in other parts of Iraq, decision-makers need to verify the accuracy of the information at the time of making a decision. UNHCR intends to update this document as needed.

---

<sup>6</sup> Further guidance is provided in the 2019 International Protection Considerations with Regard to People Fleeing the Republic of Iraq , which will be updated in due time; UNHCR, *International Protection Considerations with Regard to People Fleeing the Republic of Iraq*, May 2019, [www.refworld.org/docid/5cc9b20c4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5cc9b20c4.html), pp. 116-126.

## Table of Contents

I. BACKGROUND .....	4
II. ACCESS REQUIREMENTS .....	4
A. FEDERAL IRAQ.....	4
1) <i>Governorates Without Sponsorship Requirements</i> .....	4
2) <i>Areas with Sponsorship Requirements</i> .....	4
B. KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ (KR-I) .....	5
1) <i>Dohuk Governorate</i> .....	5
2) <i>Erbil Governorate</i> .....	5
3) <i>Sulaymaniyah Governorate</i> .....	5
III. RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS .....	6
A. TEMPORARY STAY .....	6
B. PERMANENT RESIDENCY.....	6
1) <i>Transfer or Issuance of the Housing Card</i> .....	7
2) <i>Obstacles to Transferring / Obtaining a Housing Card</i> .....	8
3) <i>Consequences of not Holding the Housing Card from the New Location</i> .....	9
IV. RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS BY GOVERNORATE.....	10
A. CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN IRAQ.....	10
1) <i>Baghdad Governorate</i> .....	10
2) <i>Diyala Governorate</i> .....	10
3) <i>Kirkuk City</i> .....	11
4) <i>Mosul City</i> .....	12
5) <i>Southern Governorates</i> .....	12
B. KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ (KR-I) .....	12
1) <i>Dohuk Governorate</i> .....	12
2) <i>Erbil Governorate</i> .....	14
3) <i>Sulaymaniyah Governorate</i> .....	15

## List of Abbreviations and Terminology

<i>Asayish</i>	Kurdish security agency
CSID	Civil Status ID Card
PDS	Public distribution system
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFA/IRA	Internal flight or relocation alternative
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (Da'esh)
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KR-I	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
<i>Mukhtar</i>	Head of local administration
UNID	Unified ID Card

## I. Background

In the face of large-scale displacement of people due to Da'esh's insurgency and subsequent anti-Da'esh military operations between 2014 and 2017, many local authorities introduced stringent entry and residency restrictions, including, among others, sponsorship requirements, while some areas adopted near-complete entry bans for persons fleeing from conflict-affected areas, particularly Sunni Arabs.<sup>7</sup> Following the retaking of territory from Da'esh and the Iraqi Government's declared victory over the group in December 2017, entry and residency restrictions have gradually either ended or have been eased. Yet, depending on the person's profile and place of origin, availability of documents, and connections in the area of relocation, access and residency requirements continue to present obstacles to individuals' ability to relocate and to settle durably in the proposed area of relocation, including in terms of accessing rights and basic services.

## II. Access Requirements

### A. Federal Iraq

An individual's ability to pass checkpoints and be admitted to the proposed area of relocation will require the individual to hold valid identity documentation (such as the CSID/UNID, nationality certificate, or passport).<sup>8</sup> Security screenings remain in place at governorate, district, and city entrance checkpoints.

Additionally, some areas continue to apply sponsorship requirements. This means in practice that the individual needs to know someone in the proposed area of relocation who is a resident of that area and who is willing to act as a sponsor, guaranteeing that the individual does not pose a security risk.

#### 1) Governorates Without Sponsorship Requirements

Most governorates / districts under control of the Federal Government do not impose entry requirements. These include Al-Anbar, Babel, Baghdad, Basra, Dhi-Qar (with exceptions), Diyala (with exceptions), Kerbala, Kirkuk, Missan, Muthanna, Najef, Ninewa (with exceptions), Qadissiyah, and Wassit Governorates.

#### 2) Areas with Sponsorship Requirements

For admission to some areas, a sponsor/guarantor from the area is needed, who needs to receive the individual at the governorate entrance checkpoint:

- Dhi-Qar Governorate: Nasiriyah City;
- Diyala Governorate: Villages in the north of Muqdadiyah District, Saadiyah Sub-District in Khanaqin District, as well as villages located in the north of Al-Udhim Sub-District in Khalis District (bordering Salah Al-Din Governorate). For those from other parts of Iraq seeking to access these areas, it has been observed that such individuals as well as their sponsors were

<sup>7</sup> Unlike the Civil Status ID Card (CSID), the UNID no longer indicates the holder's religion. In practice, a person's names, place of origin, accent and clothes will likely give away information about his/her ethnic/religious/tribal affiliation in many cases. If needed, authorities will also ask for additional documents (e.g. nationality certificate) which indicate the holder's religion.

<sup>8</sup> "Identity documents are also frequently required to pass through checkpoints; without papers, the risk of arbitrary detention and arrest significantly increases"; Danish Refugee Council (DRC) et al., *Life in the Margins: Re-Examining the Needs of Paperless People of Post-Conflict Iraq*, 14 September 2022, <https://bit.ly/3S7TeWU>, p. 14. "Without documents to prove identity, IDPs' and returnees' physical safety is at risk due to potential arbitrary arrests and detention, rights violation at checkpoints, and limited freedom of movement"; OCHA, *2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq*, March 2022, [www.ecoi.net/en/document/2070137.html](http://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2070137.html), p. 28. "The need to show one's Civil Status ID Card to pass through checkpoints is cited as the second main barrier to freedom of movement for affected individuals. (...) The lack of identity documentation directly increases the risk of other serious protection incidents and rights violations for the concerned individuals, especially at checkpoints manned by armed and security actors"; Protection Cluster, *Protection Analysis Report: Right to Identity and Civil Documentation*, 31 October 2021, <https://bit.ly/3wifaa4>, pp. 6, 11.

- asked to surrender their ID cards at the district entry checkpoint and are allowed to collect it upon leaving;
- Ninewa Governorate: Areas with mixed ethnicities, including Tal Afar, Hamdaniyah and Sinjar Districts.<sup>9</sup>

Only persons holding a Housing Card issued from the respective area and living in the area can act as a sponsor.

## B. Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I)

### 1) Dohuk Governorate

#### a) Iraqis from another KR-I governorate

Iraqis who originate from any of the other KR-I governorates can generally enter Dohuk Governorate without restrictions by presenting their CSID/UNID.

#### b) Iraqis from outside the KR-I

Individuals who originate from outside the KR-I, irrespective of their religious/ethnic profile, will, following security screening at the governorate entry checkpoint, be issued by the *Asayish* a temporary entry authorization (“Security Guarantee Card”) valid for 30 days.<sup>10</sup> This entry authorization is issued for short-term visits for the purposes of medical care, business, shopping, or similar reasons. It enables the holder to enter and remain in Dohuk Governorate within the validity period of the authorization. In order to remain in Dohuk beyond the period of 30 days, they must approach the *Asayish* and the *mukhtar* (head of local administration) in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside to regularize their stay (see Section IV.B.1).

### 2) Erbil Governorate

#### a) Iraqis from another KR-I governorate

Iraqis who originate from any of the other KR-I governorates can generally enter Erbil Governorate without restrictions by presenting their CSID/UNID.

#### b) Arabs and Turkmens from outside the KR-I

Iraqi Arabs and Turkmens who originate from outside the KR-I and who enter via Erbil International Airport are required to approach the *Asayish* within 48 hours following entry if they intend to stay beyond this initial period (see Section IV.B.2).

Those entering through road checkpoints will be issued a temporary entry authorization (“Security Guarantee Card”) by the *Asayish*, which is valid for 30 days.<sup>11</sup> This entry authorization is issued for short-term visits for the purposes of medical care, business, shopping or similar reasons. In order to remain in Erbil beyond 30 days, they need to approach the *Asayish* in the neighbourhood in which they intend to reside in order to regularize their stay with the *Asayish* and the *mukhtar* (see Section IV.B.2).

#### c) Kurds, Christians, Yazidis and members of other minority groups from outside the KR-I

Individuals of minority groups who are of neither Arab nor Turkmen origin who originate from outside the KR-I can enter Erbil Governorate without restrictions by presenting their CSID/UNID.

### 3) Sulaymaniyah Governorate

#### a) Iraqis from another KR-I governorate

Iraqis who originate from any of the other KR-I governorates can generally enter Sulaymaniyah Governorate without restrictions by presenting their CSID/UNID.

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR information, November 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Individuals who hold a “Security Guarantee Card” issued in Erbil are allowed to enter Dohuk without issuance of a new “Security Guarantee Card” at the checkpoint. They can later get a Dohuk-issued “Security Guarantee Card” from the *Asayish* in Dohuk; UNHCR information, November 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Individuals who hold a “Security Guarantee Card” issued in Dohuk are allowed to enter Erbil without issuance of a new “Security Guarantee Card” at the checkpoint. They can later get an Erbil-issued “Security Guarantee Card” from the *Asayish* in Erbil; UNHCR information, November 2022.

#### b) Arab and Turkmen from outside the KR-I

Iraqi Arabs and Turkmen who originate from outside the KR-I will, following security screening at the internal border (not the airport), be granted a temporary entry authorization (“Tourist Visitor Card”) valid for 30 days by the *Asayish*. This entry authorization is issued for short-term visits (for the purposes of medical care, business, shopping, or similar reasons) and enables the holder to enter and remain in Sulaymaniyah Governorate for the validity period of the authorization. Holders of such an entry authorization are not entitled to rent an apartment or access regular employment; they can however rent a hotel room. In order to remain in Sulaymaniyah beyond the period of 30 days, they must approach the *Asayish* and the *mukhtar* in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside (no specific timeframe).

Individuals who arrive in the governorate via Sulaymaniyah airport do not obtain a “Tourist Visitor Card”. If they wish to settle in Sulaymaniyah Governorate, they must approach the *Asayish* and the *mukhtar* in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside (see Section IV.B.3).

#### c) Kurds and Yazidis from outside the KR-I

Iraqi Kurds from outside the KR-I are allowed to enter Sulaymaniyah Governorate without restrictions by presenting their CSID/UNID. In practice, Yazidis from outside the KR-I are treated similarly to Kurds and can enter Sulaymaniyah Governorate by showing their CSID/UNID.

### III. Residency Requirements

This chapter details residency requirements for Iraqis who seek to reside in a governorate from which they do not originate (including individuals who returned to Iraq from a third country).<sup>12</sup>

#### A. Temporary Stay

In order to legally take up temporary residency<sup>13</sup> in a new location, valid identity documents (CSID, nationality certificate, or UNID) are required. Reissuing lost or expired identity documents generally requires that the person returns to the place of origin.<sup>14</sup> In addition, they require the approval (through a confirmation/recommendation/support letter) of the relevant local authority such as the *mukhtar* (or the local council or mayor), depending on the area.<sup>15</sup> In a number of governorates and cities (Baghdad, Diyala, Dohuk, and all of the southern governorates<sup>16</sup>), a sponsor (in Baghdad: two sponsors) is required by the local authorities. In addition, security clearance from relevant security agencies is generally needed in all areas, irrespective of the person’s profile/origin. Sunni Arabs and Sunni Turkmen from formerly Da’esh-held or conflict-affected areas may come under greater scrutiny and be denied security clearance or run the risk of arbitrary arrest and detention under the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2005 (Law No. 13 of 2005) on the basis of broad and discriminatory profiling.<sup>17</sup>

#### B. Permanent Residency<sup>18</sup>

While Iraqis can temporarily regularize their stay by registering with the local authorities and security actors, **only the Housing Card issued in the new location ensures that the individual / family can**

<sup>12</sup> These processes will normally have to be done in person in Iraq and cannot be done from abroad.

<sup>13</sup> of the National Card Law No 3 of 2016 defines temporary residence as: “*The place of residence in which an Iraqi citizen may stay for a period of not more than thirty days (during social visits and other movements) with the intention of returning to the place of permanent residence*”; Iraq, National Card Law No. (3) of 2016, 2016, [www.refworld.org/docid/635673494.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/635673494.html), Article 1 para (32).

<sup>14</sup> A barrier for displaced persons “to access civil documentation is the requirement imposed by the authorities that applications for the Civil Status ID Card, the Iraqi Nationality Certificate and the Unified ID Card need to be done in one’s areas of origin and in-person. (...) However, without identity documents and/or clearance from security authorities, IDPs are often unable to go back to their areas of origin due to various restrictions on their freedom of movement and the risk of arbitrary arrest at checkpoints. (...) Furthermore, Courts and CAD offices usually do not permit lawyers to secure documents for their clients through the use of a Power of Attorney to proceed with cases in absentia”; Protection Cluster, *Protection Analysis Report: Right to Identity and Civil Documentation*, 31 October 2021, <https://bit.ly/3wifaa4>, pp. 6-7. The same requirement is in some cases also applied to the issuance of birth certificates; see p. 6 of the same report.

<sup>15</sup> Normally, the first administrative level in the area, usually the *mukhtar*, or, if no *mukhtar* is available, the local council. In some rural areas, the first administrative level could be the mayor of the sub-district or district.

<sup>16</sup> This document refers to the Governorates of Babel, Basrah, Dhi-Qar, Kerbala, Missan, Muthanna, Najef, Qadissiyah, and Wassit as “Southern Iraq”.

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR, *International Protection Considerations with Regard to People Fleeing the Republic of Iraq*, May 2019, [www.refworld.org/docid/5cc9b20c4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5cc9b20c4.html), pp. 30-39, 59-65 (and sources therein).

<sup>18</sup> Under Law No. 3 of 2016, an Iraqi national’s “*place of residence or accommodation*” is “*the place in which the legally competent person lives or resides*.” Any change of residence, unless it is only for temporary purposes, needs to be reported by the head of family to the Housing Information Office, normally within 30 days. See Iraq, National Card Law No. (3) of 2016, 2016, [www.refworld.org/docid/635673494.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/635673494.html), article 10.

permanently settle<sup>19</sup> and have access to the full range of rights and basic services in the new location, including

- Obtain/renew civil documentation;
- Exercise the right to vote;
- Enter formal rent agreements and buy property;
- Access employment; and
- Access to basic services such as health, education and food rations through the Public Distribution System (PDS).<sup>20</sup>

The consequences of not holding the Housing Card from the new location vary and are detailed in Section III.B.3 and Section IV.

### 1) *Transfer or Issuance of the Housing Card*

The Housing Card was regulated by Law No. 95 of 1978 (Organization of Places of Domicile and Residence inside Iraq). While the Law has been repealed by the National Card Law (Law No. 3 of 2016), the instructions issued under Law No. 95 of 1978 remain in force.<sup>21</sup>

The Housing Card is issued at the household level. Heads of household who already hold a Housing Card in their name from any location in Iraq and who seek to change their place of residency are required to transfer their Housing Card to the new location. Heads of household who do not hold a Housing Card in their name because they are still included in their family's records must apply for a new Housing Card in the place in which they seek to reside.<sup>22</sup>

For either process (transfer or issuance of the Housing Card), the head of household needs to meet a range of administrative and documentary requirements. These are laid out in the Ministry of Interior Instructions on the Housing Card (2018). In practice, the implementation of these instructions can vary.

#### a) *Requirements for the transfer of the Housing Card to the new location*

- Approval from the Housing Information Office<sup>23</sup> in the former place of residency to transfer the individual's records to the new place of residency and deactivate the Housing Card in the former place of residency.<sup>24</sup> This approval is not granted if there is an ongoing investigation or an arrest warrant against the individual or any family member;
- An application form signed and stamped by the *mukhtar* (or local council or mayor)<sup>25</sup> in the new place of residency; and

<sup>19</sup> Since 2021, IDPs and others living in informal sites in urban or suburban areas of Al-Anbar, Baghdad, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah Al-Din Governorates have been under increased threat of eviction. For example, IDPs in the Latifiya informal settlements southwest of Baghdad in early 2022 were ordered to vacate the sites and to move to other locations. IDPs were not forcibly removed and the authorities have shown flexibility with the timeframe. At the time of writing, the remaining 30 IDP families left the sites gradually and moved to nearby locations where they built makeshift shelters on government-owned agricultural lands. While the authorities have shown tolerance relating to their presence given that they are unable to return to their area of origin, Jurf Al-Sakhr (Babel Governorate), they are not legally protected from future eviction. In mid-March 2022, some 300 IDPs in informal settlements built on governmental land in the Urouba and Memdona neighbourhoods in central Kirkuk City and in Chardagli village south of Kirkuk Governorate were also faced with eviction threats. They received eviction notes issued by the police, who forced the residents to sign a pledge vowing to evacuate the targeted homes after the Eid holidays (early May 2022). At the time of writing, the families have not left the locations and remain at risk of eviction. In November 2021, some 15 IDP families were evicted by the *Asayish* from urban areas in Erbil City on account of their alleged Da'esh affiliation. The eviction resulted in their relocation to Ninewa. At least one family approached the *Asayish* to obtain protection after having received threats, which, however, triggered a security check by *Asayish* and subsequently their eviction; UNHCR information, November 2022.

<sup>20</sup> "While not technically a civil or identity document, a housing card is sometimes required to obtain other documents, including identity documents and PDS cards. It is also required to access compensation schemes for damaged and destroyed property or otherwise claim housing, land and property rights"; DRC et al., *Life in the Margins: Re-Examining the Needs of Paperless People of Post-Conflict Iraq*, 14 September 2022, <https://bit.ly/3S7TeWU>, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Iraq, Law No. 95 of 1978, *Organization of Places of Domicile and Residence inside Iraq*, 6 December 1978, [www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4ec3c.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4ec3c.html). The UNID introduced under Law No. 3 of 2016 will eventually also replace the Housing Card.

<sup>22</sup> The Housing Card is issued to the head of household. Single men or women normally remain included in their father's Housing Card until they marry. Once they marry, men can obtain their own Housing Card while women are included in their husband's Housing Card. Single men and women can also obtain a Housing Card in their name if they live independently in their own property (ownership is required). Single men and women who are still included in their family records and do not have access to the family's original Housing Card are generally not able to obtain a new Housing Card in their name (except if they own property in the new location).

<sup>23</sup> The Housing Information Office (in Arabic: *maktab ma'aloumat*, مكتب معلومات) is part of the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>24</sup> Mostly, obtaining this approval does not require the person to approach the Housing Information Office in the former place of residency. However, Kurds and Yazidis from outside the KR-I (including from the "disputed areas") seeking to reside in Dohuk Governorate need to initiate the transfer of their Housing Card in person in their place of origin; see below Section IV.B.1.b. Similarly, persons from other parts of the KR-I seeking to reside in Erbil Governorate need to request the transfer of the Housing Card in their place of origin; however, they can also give a power of attorney to another person; see below Section IV.B.2.a.

<sup>25</sup> The application is submitted at the first administrative level in the area, usually the *mukhtar*, or, if no *mukhtar* is available, the local council. In some rural areas, the first administrative level could be the mayor of the sub-district or district.

- The approval from the concerned security actor/s in the new location, normally the Ministry of Interior Intelligence Department (Federal Iraq) or the *Asayish* (KR-I),<sup>26</sup> respectively.
  - b) **Requirements for the first-time issuance of the Housing Card in the new location**
- Proof of residency or support letter from the *mukhtar* (or the local council or mayor) in charge of the neighbourhood in which the head of household seeks to reside. In Diyala and the Southern governorates, this proof of residency or support letter needs to be signed by one sponsor and in Baghdad by two sponsors, and certified by the mayor's office. In Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah Governorate, endorsement of the mayor's office is also required. In Kirkuk, there is no need for a sponsor, but instead a letter confirming that the head of household is no longer resident in the former place of residency needs to be obtained from the *mukhtar* or local council and endorsed by the local police in the former place of residency; and
- Approval from the concerned security actor(s) in the new location, normally the Ministry of Interior Intelligence Department (Federal Iraq) or the *Asayish* (KR-I), respectively.<sup>27</sup>
  - c) **Documents required for the transfer/issuance of the Housing Card**
- Original CSID and nationality certificate or UNID for all family members;
- Approval letter from the local police department;
- Original Housing Card or, in case of first-time issuance, copy of the Housing Card in which the individual's name was included (e.g., father's Housing Card);
- Marriage contract in case of first-time issuance;
- A rental contract or house ownership deed from the new location; and
- At times, other documents such as the PDS card<sup>28</sup> are also required.

If all conditions are met, the Housing Card will be transferred or issued, usually within 10 to 14 days. Single men, especially Sunni Arabs and Sunni Turkmen from formerly Da'esh-held or conflict-affected areas, may be subjected to additional scrutiny and therefore the process may take longer.

The total cost for the transfer/issuance of the Housing Card, including fees (5,000 Iraqi Dinars) and costs for stamps, photocopies, etc., can reach up to 20,000 Iraqi Dinars.

## 2) *Obstacles to Transferring / Obtaining a Housing Card*

Individuals who do not hold the required identity documents will face difficulties to either transfer their Housing Card from the previous place of residency to the new place of residency, or to obtain a new Housing Card in the new place of residency. Reissuing lost or expired identity documents generally requires that the person returns to their place of origin.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, in some areas, the transfer of the Housing Card itself requires the head of household to return to their place of origin (e.g., Yazidis and Kurds from outside the KR-I seeking to transfer their Housing Card to Dohuk Governorate).

The requirement to obtain security clearance can constitute an obstacle for persons who are wanted on account of their own or their family members' alleged affiliation with Da'esh on the basis of broad

<sup>26</sup> In the KR-I, every individual above 18 years old is given an *Asayish* Code to confirm that s/he is known by the General Directorate of *Asayish* in the new location. Due to prevailing political, security and administrative divisions, the *Asayish* codes vary in each KR-I governorate.

<sup>27</sup> No security clearance is required in Mosul City as part of the process as security clearance must be obtained from the Ninewa Directorate of Intelligence and Counterterrorism prior to relocating to Mosul City; see below Section IV.A.4.a.

<sup>28</sup> The PDS card is a household-level civil document. It is issued by the Ministry of Trade, enabling Iraqi and non-Iraqi nationals with a residency permit to receive food rations.

<sup>29</sup> See above footnote 14.



and discriminatory profiling.<sup>30</sup> Individuals may also be denied security clearance based on similarity between their surname and one that appears on a wanted list.<sup>31</sup>

Single men and women who are still included in their father's Housing Card are generally not able to transfer the Housing Card to the new location nor can they obtain a new Housing Card in their name (except if they own property in the new location).<sup>32</sup>

In Kirkuk City, the transfer of the Housing Card is not permitted altogether given the city's disputed status. In the KR-I, persons of a specific profile/place of origin are not permitted to transfer their Housing Card or to obtain a new Housing Card (e.g., Arabs and members of ethnic/religious minority groups from areas outside the KR-I cannot transfer their Housing Card to Dohuk and Erbil Governorates).

### 3) *Consequences of not Holding the Housing Card from the New Location*

Those unable to transfer their Housing Card, or obtain a Housing Card in the new location, **can normally not access the full range of basic services and rights, depending on the area.** Further details on the access to rights and basic services by area are included in Section IV.

Individuals who do not hold a Housing Card from the new location must normally return to their place of origin in order to obtain or renew civil documentation.<sup>33</sup> Individuals unable to return to their area of origin, including for fear of persecution or lack of documentation to pass checkpoints, may hence be unable to obtain or renew civil documentation.<sup>34</sup> The lack of valid documentation in turn limits their ability to enjoy freedom of movement, access basic services,<sup>35</sup> and obtain other types of documentation.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> "Many IDPs and returnees are or have been subject to allegations by civilian authorities, armed and security actors as well as community members – often without formal criminal charges or evidence provided – that they and/or their family members are or have been affiliated with extremist groups"; Protection Cluster, *Protection Analysis Report: Right to Identity and Civil Documentation*, 31 October 2021, <https://bit.ly/3wifaa4>, p. 7. An individual's inclusion in the "wanted lists" maintained by various security actors may also be on the basis of questionable evidence such as statements from secret informants or as a result of false accusations to settle personal disputes. "Iraqi authorities, for instance, continue to rely on unverified information provided to them by secret informants about former ISIS members and sympathizers. Media and Human Rights Watch reporting has shown that some residents and families have exploited security forces' reliance on often unsubstantiated accusations from informants to settle personal and family disputes"; Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Investigating a Massacre, Iraq Should Address Root Causes*, 19 January 2022, <https://bit.ly/3elxd8M>.

<sup>31</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, *Iraq: Violations Against Persons for Having Similar Names to Suspects Reveal Deplorable Negligence*, 14 February 2022, <https://bit.ly/3AJ2xpR>.

<sup>32</sup> See above footnote 22. They may be able to use the family's Housing Card for administrative processes in the new location, provided they have access to the original Housing Card (no copy).

<sup>33</sup> Unless the individual transfers their Housing Card to the new area of residence, their applications for a CSID/UNID (or to renew the CSID/UNID) and the Iraqi Nationality Certificate need to be submitted in person at the Civil Affairs Directorate (CAD) in their area of origin; see above footnote 14.

<sup>34</sup> The requirement of in-person presence in the area of origin is partly addressed through *ad hoc* mobile missions undertaken by the Ministry of Interior and CADs to reach IDPs in camps and some informal sites/urban areas. However, such missions do not reach all those in need of obtaining or renewing civil documentation. In 2021, over 46,000 CSID cards, nationality certificates and PDS cards were issued through mobile missions in 20 camps, six urban locations and four informal sites in the Governorates of Erbil, Al-Anbar, Ninewa and Dohuk; UNHCR, *Iraq: Civil and Identity Documentation – 2021*, 26 April 2022, <https://bit.ly/3wzB1c6>, p. 3. For 2022, UNHCR aims at supporting the issuance of 100,000 documents. Between January and June 2021, over 24,300 documents were issued; UNHCR, *Access to Civil Documentation IDPs and IDP Returnees in Iraq: 2022 – 2023*, 24 August 2022, <https://bit.ly/3CFTW86>, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> "Missing civil documentation impedes one's ability to access basic services such as education, healthcare, and social security benefits and can lead to restricted freedom of movement, increased risk of arrest and detention, exclusion from restitution and/or reconstruction programmes, and inability to participate in the public affairs of the country"; UNHCR, *Access to Civil Documentation IDPs and IDP Returnees in Iraq: 2022 - 2023*, 24 August 2022, <https://bit.ly/3CFTW86>, p. 1. For example, "[H]ealth facilities often require some form of identity documents to provide routine immunization and health care. The Health cluster reports that whereas identity documentation may not always be needed for outpatient treatment at Primary Health Care Centers (PHCC) it is usually required for admission at hospitals. Similarly, children who do not have any identity documents are often prevented from being registered by schools under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (...). Lastly, benefiting from various social protection schemes such as the Public Distribution System (PDS) – the PDS Card being a key civil document itself – also require having a valid identity document"; Protection Cluster, *Protection Analysis Report: Right to Identity and Civil Documentation*, 31 October 2021, <https://bit.ly/3wifaa4>, pp. 12-13. See also, UNHCR, *Iraq: Civil and Identity Documentation – 2021*, 26 April 2022, <https://bit.ly/3wzB1c6>, p. 1; OCHA, *2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Iraq*, 27 March 2022, <https://bit.ly/3qPutUV>, p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> "Possession of one document is often a requirement for the (re)issuance of another identity or civil document"; UNHCR, *Iraq: Civil and Identity Documentation – 2021*, 26 April 2022, <https://bit.ly/3wzB1c6>, p. 2. "For instance, in order to obtain a Civil Status ID Card, an individual is required to submit his/her Iraqi Nationality Certificate and reversely, thus leaving the individuals who have lost either one or both of these documents unable to apply and obtain the (re)issuance of their identity documents." Furthermore, identity documents are a requirement to issue civil documents such as birth, death or marriage certificates; Protection Cluster, *Protection Analysis Report: Right to Identity and Civil Documentation*, 31 October 2021, <https://bit.ly/3wifaa4>, pp. 4, 5.

Lack of valid documentation also puts individuals at risk of arrest and detention at checkpoints or during security raids.<sup>37</sup>

Individuals who do not hold a Housing Card from the new location will normally also not be able to transfer their PDS registration and hence would have to return to their place of origin to obtain food rations through the PDS.

## IV. Residency Requirements by Governorate

This chapter provides further details on the requirements to temporarily regularize one's stay in a new location and to take up permanent residency by way of either transferring the Housing Card or the issuance of a new Housing Card in the new location. It further describes limitations to access to basic services and rights at the governorate level.

### A. Central and Southern Iraq

#### 1) Baghdad Governorate

##### a) Security clearance and registration with the local authorities

Individuals who do not originate from Baghdad Governorate, irrespective of their religious/ethnic profile, require two sponsors from the neighbourhood in which they intend to reside as well as a support letter from the *mukhtar* (or the local council or mayor).<sup>38</sup> The two sponsors need to accompany the individual to the *mukhtar* (or the local council or mayor). The issuance of the support letter incurs a small fee of around 2,000 to 5,000 Iraqi Dinars, depending on the *mukhtar*. The support letter does not have a specified period of validity and does not need to be renewed.

Generally, having two sponsors and a support letter from the concerned administrative unit (*mukhtar*, local council or mayor) as well as security clearance from the concerned security actors is sufficient to regularize one's stay in Baghdad, to rent an apartment, and to access employment. These documents also suffice for access to public and private hospitals (but not to the public health care centres at the neighbourhood level) as well as tertiary education (primary and secondary education normally requires a Housing Card issued in Baghdad).

##### b) Transfer and issuance of the Housing Card

In order to have access to the full range of rights and basic services, the individual / family is required to either transfer their Housing Card from the previous location to the new location in Baghdad, or to obtain a new Housing Card in the location in which they seek to reside in Baghdad.

Once the Housing Card has been transferred or issued, the individual / family has full access to basic services, including primary health care provided by public health care centres in their neighbourhood (including mandatory vaccinations for children). Access to primary and secondary schools is also available and they can request the transfer of their PDS registration to the new place of residency. Furthermore, they can transfer their civil status records to Baghdad and subsequently obtain/renew the CSID/UNID in the new place of residency.

#### 2) Diyala Governorate

##### a) Security clearance and registration with the local authorities

Individuals who do not originate from Diyala Governorate, irrespective of their religious/ethnic profile, require a sponsor from the neighbourhood in which they intend to reside as well as a support letter from the *mukhtar* (or local council or the mayor at the sub-district or district level). The sponsor needs to

<sup>37</sup> See above footnote 8.

<sup>38</sup> The registration is made at the first administrative level, usually the *mukhtar*, or, if no *mukhtar* is available, the local council. In some rural areas, the first administrative level could be the mayor of the sub-district or district.

accompany the individual to the *mukhtar* (or local council or mayor). The support letter does not have a specified period of validity and does not need to be renewed.

Those seeking to reside in villages in northern Muqdadiyah District and Saadiyah Sub-District in Khanaqin District, as well as villages located in the north of Al-Udhim Sub-District in Khalis District require support letters from three different administrative and security entities, namely from the local *mukhtar's* office (or local council or mayor), the National Security and the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS).

#### b) Transfer and issuance of the Housing Card

Concerning the transfer or issuance of the Housing Card and related access to rights and basic services, the same requirements as described for Baghdad apply.<sup>39</sup> The only difference is that in Muqdadiyah District of Diyala, an approval letter from the Army and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) is required instead of an approval letter from the police department.

### 3) Kirkuk City

#### a) Security clearance and registration with the local authorities

Individuals who do not originate from Kirkuk City, irrespective of their religious/ethnic profile, require a support letter from the *mukhtar* (or local council) in the neighbourhood in which they intend to reside. The support letter needs to be submitted to the nearest police station and be checked and stamped by the Ministry of Interior Intelligence Department in that neighbourhood. The support letter contains the basic biodata of each family member seeking to reside in Kirkuk. The support letter is free of charge; however, a small fee may be requested by the *mukhtar* (or local council). The support letter is generally valid for one year (sometimes only six months, depending on the purpose of stay) and renewable.

#### b) Transfer and issuance of the Housing Card

Iraqis from other parts of Iraq are normally not able to transfer their Housing Card to Kirkuk. This is related to Kirkuk's particular status as an area disputed between the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), as well as the continued *ad hoc* administrative processes following the takeover of the city's administration by the federal authorities after the October 2017 Kirkuk independence referendum.

An option might be for the head of household to cancel the existing Housing Card in the former place of residence and then apply for a new Housing Card in Kirkuk, a lengthy process which requires the individual to return to the place of origin in person in order to initiate the cancellation (no proxy allowed). The head of household would need to obtain an attestation letter from the *mukhtar* (or local council) in the place of origin confirming that s/he is no longer resident in the area. This letter must then be endorsed by the local police. The individual could then use this attestation letter to initiate the issuance of a new Housing Card in Kirkuk City.

Given the difficulties related to obtaining a new Housing Card in Kirkuk City, most Iraqis from other parts of Iraq only hold a support letter from the *mukhtar* (or local council) in Kirkuk. They have access to employment<sup>40</sup> and basic services such as education and health. Because the Housing Card is a prerequisite for formal rental contracts (notarial lease), they can only enter informal rental agreements, which will not provide any legal protections (e.g., against eviction). Those only holding a support letter from the local *mukhtar* (or local council) do not have long-term security to remain in Kirkuk as the letter is of short validity (6 or 12 months) and subject to renewal by the *mukhtar* (or local council) and the Ministry of Interior Intelligence Department.

Individuals not originating from Kirkuk City (even if they obtained a Housing from Kirkuk) cannot issue/renew their CSID/UNID in Kirkuk City (instead, they would have to return to the place of origin), nor can they transfer their PDS card to Kirkuk City and need to collect their food rations in the place of origin.

<sup>39</sup> See above Section IV.A.1 ("Baghdad Governorate").

<sup>40</sup> Employment in sensitive public sector positions requires a Housing Card issued in Kirkuk.

#### 4) Mosul City

##### a) Security clearance and registration with the local authorities

Individuals who do not originate from Mosul City and seek to reside there, irrespective of their religious/ethnic profile, must obtain security clearance from the concerned security forces, primarily the Ninewa Directorate of Intelligence and Counterterrorism, **prior** to relocating to Mosul City.<sup>41</sup> The security clearance must be applied for in the area of origin. Persons currently outside Iraq would thus only be able to get security clearance for Mosul City by first returning to their area of origin.

Iraqis approved to relocate to Mosul City do not require a sponsor.<sup>42</sup> They must however register with the *mukhtar* or the local council in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside. This registration process only needs to be done once and does not involve any costs. Once they have regularized their stay in Mosul, they can rent an apartment and access employment. They also have access to public and private hospitals (but not to the public health care centres at the neighbourhood level) as well as tertiary education (primary and secondary education normally require a Housing Card issued in Mosul).

##### b) Transfer and issuance of the Housing Card

Once all of the above steps have been followed, persons wishing to settle in Mosul City are required to request the transfer of the Housing Card to Mosul City. The process to obtain or transfer the Housing Card to Mosul City and related access to rights and basic services is the same as described for Baghdad.<sup>43</sup> The main difference is that no security clearance is required as part of the process as security clearance already needed to be obtained from the Ninewa Directorate of Intelligence and Counterterrorism prior to relocating to Mosul City.

#### 5) Southern Governorates

##### a) Security clearance and registration with the local authorities

Individuals who do not originate from the governorate in which they intend to settle, irrespective of their religious/ethnic profile, require a local sponsor as well as a support letter from the local *mukhtar* (or local council or mayor) in order to legally reside in Babel, Basra, Dhi-Qar, Kerbala, Missan, Muthanna, Najef, Qadissiyah and Wassit Governorates. The sponsor needs to accompany the individual to the *mukhtar* (or local council or mayor). The issuance of the support letter incurs a small fee of around 2,000 to 5,000 Iraqi Dinars, depending on the *mukhtar*.

In addition, the relevant Operations Command at the governorate level must grant specific security clearance. Security clearance by local security actors (e.g. the PMF) may also be required.

##### b) Transfer and issuance of the Housing Card

Concerning the issuance or transfer of the Housing Card to any of the southern governorates and related access to rights and basic services, the same process as described for Baghdad applies.<sup>44</sup>

## B. Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I)

### 1) Dohuk Governorate

#### a) Iraqis from another KR-I governorate

Iraqis from any of the other KR-I governorates have access to public education and health services once they enter Dohuk Governorate. They can also access employment and rent or buy an apartment in Dohuk. Access to other rights and basic services requires that they regularize their stay with the *Asayish* and the local authorities and transfer their Housing Card.

#### Security clearance and registration with the local authorities

In order to remain in Dohuk beyond the initial 30 days, Iraqis from another KR-I governorate need to obtain a “proof of residence letter” from the local *mukhtar* in the neighbourhood in which they intend to

<sup>41</sup> Until 2021, family members of alleged Da'esh members were also required to make a public announcement denouncing the affiliated relative and the crimes he was accused of (“*tabrea*”).

<sup>42</sup> A sponsor is needed in the areas with mixed ethnicities, including Tal Afar, Hamdaniya and Sinjar Districts.

<sup>43</sup> See above Section IV.A.1 (“*Baghdad Governorate*”).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

settle. In addition, both the governor's office and the General Directorate of *Asayish* from Dohuk and the original governorate of residence, respectively, need to clear the change in residency.

Transfer or issuance of the Housing Card

Iraqis from another KR-I governorate are required to either transfer their Housing Card from the governorate of origin to Dohuk Governorate, or obtain a new Housing Card.

Once the Housing Card has been transferred or issued, the individual / family can request the transfer of their civil records to Dohuk and subsequently obtain/renew their CSID/UNID in Dohuk. They can also request the transfer of the PDS card to Dohuk.

**b) Iraqis from outside the KR-I**

Iraqis from outside the KR-I are entitled to rent a house and access regular employment once they enter Dohuk. They also have access to public health and education. Access to other rights and basic services requires that they regularize their stay with the *Asayish* and the local authorities and transfer or obtain the Housing Card in Dohuk.

Issuance of residency permit<sup>45</sup>

Individuals who originate from a governorate outside the KR-I and who wish to stay in Dohuk Governorate beyond the initial one-month period, must approach the local *Asayish* office in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside. They must be accompanied by a sponsor from Dohuk Governorate and apply for a residency permit issued by the *Asayish*. For individuals holding a regular work contract, the employer can serve as sponsor. The employer will normally have to submit the work contract to the *Asayish*. For those renting an apartment, the lease contract can be submitted *in lieu* of presenting a sponsor. If approved, they will be provided with a (renewable) *Asayish*-issued residency permit valid for up to six months, depending on the purpose of stay.<sup>46</sup>

Transfer or issuance of the Housing Card

**Kurds and Yazidis from outside the KR-I** (including from the "disputed areas") are permitted to transfer the Housing Card to Dohuk Governorate. For this purpose, they first need to initiate the cancellation of the Housing Card in the place of origin, which must be done in person (no proxy allowed). The individual will receive a letter confirming the cancellation of the Housing Card.

For the first-time issuance of the Housing Card, the process is the same as described above for "*Iraqis from another KR-I governorate*", except that the person will also need to be issued an *Asayish* code by the General Directorate of *Asayish* in Dohuk.

Once Kurds or Yazidis have transferred or obtained the Housing Card, they can access basic services. However, they cannot obtain/renew their CSID/UNID in Dohuk (instead they must return to their area of origin) nor can they request a transfer of their PDS card to Dohuk.<sup>47</sup>

**Individuals of other profiles from outside the KR-I** (including Arabs, Turkmen, Christians, Shabak, Kaka'i, Sabaeen-Mandaean, etc.) cannot transfer their Housing Card to Dohuk Governorate. Also, they cannot obtain/renew their CSID/UNID in Dohuk Governorate (instead they must return to their area of origin), nor can they transfer their PDS card to Dohuk. They are however entitled to access basic services such as education and health services.

<sup>45</sup> In the KR-I, this permit is commonly referred to as "residency permit"; however, it is a security clearance permit issued by the *Asayish*.

<sup>46</sup> Individuals visiting Dohuk for the purposes of medical care or business, for example, are given a permit valid for only a few weeks. Those who have a legitimate ground to stay for an extended period can request a 6-months residency permit, including individuals holding a work or rental contract valid for six months or more.

<sup>47</sup> Yazidis and Kurds from Sinjar District (Ninewa Governorate) can receive their food rations in Dohuk based on an internal arrangement with the Ministry of Trade if they are registered as "IDPs" with the mayor's office and the Department of Migration and Crisis Response and approved by the *Asayish*.

## 2) Erbil Governorate

### a) Iraqis from another KR-I governorate

Iraqis from any KR-I governorate have access to basic services such as health and education, can access employment, and rent an apartment in Erbil. They are required to regularize their stay with the *Asayish* and the local authorities.

#### Security clearance and registration with the local authorities

Iraqis originating from another KR-I governorate seeking to settle in Erbil are required to register with the local *Asayish* in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside (within 48 hours following entry via Erbil International Airport, 30 days following entry by road). Following this, they need to register with the *mukhtar* of the neighbourhood.

#### Transfer or issuance of the Housing Card

Iraqis from any of the other KR-I governorates can request the transfer of the Housing Card to Erbil or request its issuance in Erbil.

Once the Housing Card has been transferred or issued, the individual / family can obtain/renew their CSID/UNID in Erbil and request the transfer their PDS registration to Erbil.

### b) Arab and Turkmen from outside the KR-I

Arabs and Turkmen from outside the KR-I holding a “Security Guarantee Card” (also known as “residency permit”) are allowed to rent a house, seek regular employment and have access to public health and education. They need to regularize their stay with the *Asayish* by extending the “Security Guarantee Card”. They cannot transfer their Housing Card from the governorate of origin to Erbil Governorate and hence do not have access to other rights and basic services.

#### Extension of the “Security Guarantee Card”

Within the period of validity of the “Security Guarantee Card” (48 hours or 30 days, see Section II.B.2), Arabs and Turkmen not originating from the KR-I and seeking to reside in Erbil Governorate must approach the local *Asayish* in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside to extend the validity of the “Security Guarantee Card”.<sup>48</sup> The “Security Guarantee Card” will be extended for up to one year (renewable), if the individual holds a work or rental contract. Those who do not hold a work or rental contract will have their “Security Guarantee Card” renewed for only 30 days, following which they have to request another extension.

Single Arab and Turkmen men and women generally only receive a one-month renewable “Security Guarantee Card”. Given the short validity, they generally face difficulties finding regular employment. Single Arab and Turkmen men who have proof of regular employment and a support letter from their employer can apply for a one-year “Security Guarantee Card”, but few applications are granted.

#### Transfer or issuance of the Housing Card

Iraqi Arabs and Turkmen, even if they hold a “Security Guarantee Card” valid for a year, cannot transfer the Housing Card from their governorate of origin to Erbil, or obtain a Housing Card in Erbil. As a result, they cannot request the transfer of their PDS card to Erbil nor can they obtain/renew their CSID/UNID in Erbil (instead they must return to their area of origin).

### c) Christians, Yazidis and members of other minority groups from outside the KR-I

#### Security clearance and registration with the local authorities

Members of minority groups not originating from the KR-I are permitted to reside in Erbil without the need to obtain a “Security Guarantee Card”. They however need to register with the *Asayish* in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside. Following this, they need to register with the *mukhtar* of the neighbourhood.

Following this process, they do not face restrictions to rent an apartment, take up regular employment and access basic services such as health and education.

<sup>48</sup> In the KR-I, this permit is commonly referred to as “residency card”; however, it is a security clearance permit issued by the *Asayish*.

### Transfer or issuance of Housing Card

Persons of this profile cannot transfer their Housing Card from their governorate of origin to Erbil or obtain a new Housing Card in Erbil. As a result, they cannot transfer their PDS card to Erbil nor can they obtain/renew their CSID/UNID in Erbil (instead they must return to their area of origin).

### 3) Sulaymaniyah Governorate

All Iraqis, irrespective of their place of origin and ethnic/religious profile, have access to public education and health services in Sulaymaniyah. In order to access regular employment, rent an apartment, and access other rights and basic services, they must regularize their stay with the *Asayish* and transfer their Housing Card, with requirements varying depending on their place of origin, ethnic/religious profile and family status as set out below.

#### a) Iraqis from another KR-I governorate

##### Transfer or Issuance of the Housing Card

Iraqis who originate from another KR-I governorate, irrespective of their ethnic/religious background, and who seek to settle in Sulaymaniyah Governorate need to request a new *Asayish* code<sup>49</sup> and either transfer their Housing Card from the governorate of origin to Sulaymaniyah Governorate, or obtain a new Housing Card in Sulaymaniyah Governorate. This process involves the following steps:

The process to take up permanent residency involves an interview by the General *Asayish* Directorate of Sulaymaniyah. They will then be issued with a new *Asayish* code to confirm that the individual/family is known by the General *Asayish* in Sulaymaniyah. Based on the *Asayish* code, the individual can start the process of renting a house; however, s/he will need to transfer the Housing Card or obtain a new Housing Card before being able to sign the rental contract. Once the Housing Card has been transferred/issued, they have access to regular employment and can also transfer their PDS card. They are however not able to obtain/renew their CSID/UNID in Sulaymaniyah (instead they have to return to their place of origin).

Single men and women face restrictions on the locations and types of rental accommodation. For instance, they are not permitted to rent apartments in Sulaymaniyah City Centre, unless the apartment is part of an apartment complex.

#### b) Kurds and Yazidis from outside the KR-I

##### Transfer or Issuance of Housing Card

For individuals of Kurdish or Yazidi background who originate from a governorate outside the KR-I, the same process as described above for "*Iraqis from another KR-I governorate*" applies.

Once their Housing Card has been transferred to or issued in Sulaymaniyah, they have access to regular employment and can request the transfer of the PDS card to Sulaymaniyah (unless they originate from the disputed areas).<sup>50</sup> They are however not entitled to obtain/renew their CSID/UNID in Sulaymaniyah (instead they have to return to their place of origin).

Single men and women face restrictions on areas and types of rental accommodation (see above "*Iraqis from another KR-I governorate*").

#### c) Arabs and Turkmen from outside the KR-I

##### Issuance of residency permit for Arab and Turkmen families<sup>51</sup>

Arab and Turkmen families originating from outside the KR-I must approach the local *Asayish* in the neighbourhood in which they seek to reside in order to obtain a residency card ("*Information Card*"). The residency card is valid for one year and renewable. They do not require a sponsor.

<sup>49</sup> The *Asayish* code is provided to every individual above 18 years old. Due to prevailing political, security and administrative divisions, the *Asayish* codes vary in each KR-I governorate. Therefore, individuals from Erbil, Dohuk or Halabja seeking to settle in Sulaymaniyah Governorate will require a new *Asayish* code.

<sup>50</sup> Kurds and Yazidis from areas disputed between the KRG and the Federal Government cannot request the transfer of their PDS card; instead, they have to return to the place of origin to obtain the monthly food rations. The PDS card can be renewed in Sulaymaniyah; however, new-borns can only be added by returning to the place of origin.

<sup>51</sup> In the KR-I, this permit is commonly referred to as "residency permit"; however, it is a security clearance permit issued by the *Asayish*.

Based on the one-year residency card, Arab and Turkmen families from outside the KR-I can rent an apartment and access informal employment (without formal work contract, primarily in the construction and hospitality sectors).

*Transfer or issuance of the Housing Card*

Families that hold a one-year residency card can request the transfer of their Housing Card to Sulaymaniyah, or obtain a new Housing Card (same process as described above for “*Iraqis from another KR-I governorate*”). Once the Housing Card has been transferred or issued, they can access regular employment based on a work contract. They can also request the transfer of their PDS card to Sulaymaniyah. They are however not entitled to obtain/renew their CSID/UNID in Sulaymaniyah (instead they have to return to their place of origin).

*Issuance of residency permit for Arab and Turkmen single men and women*

Single Arab and Turkmen men and women normally receive only a one-month renewable residency permit. Exceptionally, if they can secure regular employment (with work contract) and submit a support letter from their prospective employer, they obtain a one-year, renewable residency card from the *Asayish*. In practice, holders of a one-month residency card face difficulties to finding regular employment due to the short duration of their permits.

Single men and women face restrictions on the locations and types of rental accommodation (see above “*Iraqis from another KR-I governorate*”).