

Query response

Iraq: Education available to IDPs in the Kurdistan Region

- Education available to internally displaced persons
- Language of tuition
- Teaching staff
- Are diplomas from governorates outside the KRI accepted in the KRI?

Introduction

The following query response is an excerpt from Landinfo's report on Iraq: Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees from Syria in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).¹ The report is based on information retrieved during meetings Landinfo held with sources in Amman, Jordan and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq 31st January – 5th February 2016.

Education available to internally displaced persons

Education offered to internally displaced persons is characterized by poor capacity and inadequate financing. There seems to be a shortage of teachers who can teach Arabic-speaking children in their mother tongue. Schools are dependent on finding teachers among the internally displaced persons, which is not always possible. Students will not necessarily be accepted to higher education institutions in the KRI on the basis of diplomas from governorates controlled by the central government.

According to the Ministry of Education (meeting in Erbil, 1 February 2016) of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), no agreement has so far been reached between the KRG and the central government on the division of responsibilities and on funding of education for internally displaced persons. Nor have extra schools been built. Instead, alternative premises are used as a temporary solution, and pupils go to school in shifts.

The Ministry of Education explained that internally displaced children can only attend special classes for internally displaced persons, and that they attend the second of the two daily shifts.

¹ Landinfo temanotat Irak: Internflyktninger og syriske flykninger i Kurdistanregionen (KRI). Available at http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3347/1/3347_1.pdf.

This was confirmed by the Iraqi NGO REACH (Rehabilitation, Education and Community Health) (meeting in Sulaymaniya, February 2016), which added that internally displaced children have their own teachers and their own curriculum.

Outside the camps, according to REACH, hired premises are used to teach internally displaced persons. Less than 10% of internally displaced persons live in camps, and children who live in camps attend schools there. Mobile schools are in the process of being established. If parents arrange for the transport themselves, they can send their children to a place where schooling is offered, without any restrictions. REACH otherwise commented that those who can afford it can send their children to private schools.

Language of tuition

According to the KRG's Ministry of Education, everyone in need of teaching in Arabic can receive this. The teachers who teach Arabic-speaking internally displaced children are themselves Arab internally displaced persons.

Similarly, REACH stated that tuition is provided in Arabic, and that the same textbooks are used as in the children's home governorate. At the same time, it is challenging to find enough Arabic-speaking teachers. In schools located in camps, the children follow the same curriculum as in their home governorate.

A non-Iraqi NGO (meeting in Erbil, February 2016) was of the view that less and less tuition is provided in Arabic to internally displaced persons. There are too few classes for Arabic-speaking internally displaced children, and many of the children drop out. The KRG has tried to find Arabic teachers who can work for free in the camps, but has so far not succeeded.

Teaching staff

In the Ministry of Education's opinion, the teachers who teach internally displaced children are capable of ensuring the same quality of tuition for internally displaced children as for other children. They are qualified teachers and are paid by the central government. Their salary is paid in the KRI (Ministry of Education, meeting in February 2016).

Are diplomas from governorates outside the KRI accepted in the KRI?

According to the Ministry of Education, internally displaced persons who wish to be admitted to study programmes administered by the Kurdish authorities must apply for admission to a special university college in Kirkuk that admits internally displaced persons. Exceptions are made for Christians and Yazidis, because they are not expected to be able to return to where they used to live. In the KRI, the curriculum is different and the requirements are more stringent. The universities in the KRI and the government controlled areas nonetheless make joint individual assessments of people applying for admission in the KRI, according to the Ministry.

According to REACH, students with valid documents and diplomas may, in principle, be qualified for higher education in the KRI, but it is nonetheless uncertain whether they will be admitted. REACH referred to how separate quotas have been defined for the admission to higher education of internally displaced persons and refugees.

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Country of origin information presented in Landinfo's Query responses does not contain policy recommendations nor does it reflect official Norwegian views.

References

Oral sources

- Non-Iraqi NGO. Meeting in Erbil, 1 February 2016.
- Ministry of Education. Meeting in Erbil, 1 February 2016.
- REACH. Meeting in Sulaymaniya, 4 February 2016.

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