



Iraq – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 15 December 2009

Reports on internal relocation in Iraq.

In a section titled “IFA/IRA in the Central and Southern Governorates” (paragraph 88) the most recent *UN High Commissioner for Refugees* eligibility guidelines for Iraqi asylum seekers states:

“With respect to refugee claims of Iraqi asylum-seekers from the Central and Southern Governorates of Iraq, it is UNHCR’s assessment that an internal flight alternative is not available for persons fleeing State persecution, as the agent of persecution would be able to pursue the individual throughout the territory.” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (April 2009) *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Iraqi Asylum-Seekers*, p.43)

Paragraph 89 of this document states:

“When assessing whether an individual fleeing persecution from non-State actor(s) is able to find an internal flight alternative elsewhere in the Central or Southern Governorates, key considerations include whether the individual can practically, safely and legally access the area of internal flight alternative (the 'relevance analysis'), and whether the individual could live a relatively normal life in that area without facing undue hardship (the 'reasonableness analysis').” (ibid, p.43)

Paragraph 90 states:

“Generally, no internal flight alternative will be available because of (i) the ability of non-State agents of persecution to perpetrate acts of violence with impunity, (ii) the ongoing levels of violence in mainly the Central Governorates of Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah Al-Din giving rise to new persecution, (iii) access and residency restrictions, and (iv) the hardship faced in ensuring even the basic survival in areas of relocation. When, however, the availability of an internal flight or relocation alternative must be assessed in a national asylum procedure, it should be examined cautiously and in the context of the individual claim. UNHCR’s Guidelines on Internal Flight/Relocation Alternative should be taken into account.” (ibid, p.43)

Paragraph 93 states:

“Persons seeking to relocate to other areas may be at risk of facing renewed violence. UNHCR Protection Monitoring showed that IDPs suffered from general violence, interethnic/ religious violence, general criminality, targeted attacks, detentions, kidnappings, and military operations. Some 14% of IDP communities

informed UNHCR of detentions. In Muthanna Governorate, it was reported that IDPs endure forced recruitment by armed groups and in the Governorates of Al-Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Najef and Salah Al-Din, IDPs reported abuse and harassment. IDPs in Diyala are reported to have been targeted specifically by armed groups. In Basrah Governorate, there are anecdotal reports of trafficking of young girls to nearby countries, notably the Gulf States. In Kirkuk, IDP families displaced from Diyala to Al-Multaqa sub-District were attacked.” (ibid, p.44)

Paragraph 96 states:

“Groups of IDPs in the Centre and the South reported pressure to return or relocate elsewhere from local authorities, armed groups and host communities. For example, the provincial authorities of Salah Al-Din declared that all IDPs originating from Diyala must return home for security reasons.”(ibid, p.45)

Paragraph 101 concludes:

“Overall, for the reasons set out below and as demonstrated by the difficulties faced by IDPs in the Central and Southern Governorates, UNHCR considers it unreasonable to expect an individual fleeing persecution in Iraq to relocate to another area in the Central and Southern Governorates. Such an individual would not be able to lead a relatively normal life without undue hardship. Lack of basic facilities and difficulties with livelihoods and survival render it extremely harsh for persons to live normal lives at even basic subsistence levels within the Central and Southern Governorates.” (ibid, p.47)

Also attached for reference are the *UN High Commissioner for Refugees* guidelines on international protection

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

References:

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (April 2009) *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Iraqi Asylum-Seekers*
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/49f569cf2.pdf>
(Accessed 15 December 2009)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (23 July 2003) *Guidelines on International Protection: “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*
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/3f2791a44.pdf>
(Accessed 15 December 2009)

Sources Consulted:

BBC News

Danish Immigration Service

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information

Google

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

Lexis Nexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

UK Home Office

UNHCR Refworld