

Report

**Iraq: Travel documents and other  
identity documents**



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## **SUMMARY**

New passports in series A were first issued on 1 October 2009. These passports are produced in Baghdad and issued in all provincial capitals and most embassies. A temporary travel document can be issued to Iraqis abroad. The series A passports may contain incorrect information about the holder as a result of incorrect information in the documents submitted when applying for the passport.

All Iraqi citizens should carry a national ID card. The ID card is issued at the local offices of the civil registry, situated all over the country. Iraqis abroad can give a relative in Iraq a power of attorney to apply for a replacement of a lost or damaged ID card or apply through an embassy. Many fraudulent ID cards are circulating.

All Iraqi citizens have the right to obtain an Iraqi nationality certificate. These certificates are issued in all provincial capitals, but only in Iraq, and one has to apply in person, either in Iraq or at one of the embassies abroad. There are many fraudulent nationality certificates in circulation.

# CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Passports</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>3. A-passports</b> .....	<b>7</b>
3.1 Issuing body.....	7
3.2 Where are passports issued?.....	7
3.3 Application process .....	8
3.4 Documentation requirements.....	8
3.4.1 Documentation requirements for single women and children.....	8
3.4.2 Documentation requirements for married women.....	9
3.5 Verification of breeder documents .....	9
3.6 Specified birthplace in passports for children born abroad .....	10
3.7 Passports via proxy.....	11
3.8 Applying for a passport abroad .....	11
3.8.1 Applying from abroad via proxy.....	11
<b>4. Other travel documents</b> .....	<b>12</b>
4.1 Emergency passports .....	12
4.2 Temporary travel documents (laissez-passer) .....	12
4.2.1 Procedure for Iraqis with ID documentation .....	12
4.2.2 Procedure for Iraqis without ID documentation .....	12
<b>5. Manipulation and falsification of passports</b> .....	<b>13</b>
5.1 Changing of pictures or ID information in passports .....	13
5.1.1 Problems related to transcription of names and name changes.....	13
5.2 Forgeries .....	13
5.3 Corruption.....	14
<b>6. Family registry</b> .....	<b>14</b>
6.1 Information in the family registry .....	15
6.2 Transferring registered information in connection with relocation .....	15
<b>7. National civil ID card</b> .....	<b>15</b>
7.1 Issuing body.....	16
7.2 Where are ID cards issued? .....	16
7.3 Application process .....	16
7.4 Documentation requirements.....	16
7.5 Verification of ID information .....	17
7.6 ID cards via proxy .....	17

7.7	Acquiring ID cards from abroad.....	17
7.7.1	Applying for a national ID card from abroad.....	17
7.7.2	Issuance of ID cards to children born abroad.....	18
<b>8.</b>	<b>Changes and variations in issuing procedures for ID cards .....</b>	<b>19</b>
8.1	Changes to ID cards since 2003 .....	19
8.2	Exemptions from technical requirements.....	19
8.3	ID cards with errors.....	19
<b>9.</b>	<b>Forgeries of ID cards .....</b>	<b>20</b>
9.1	Corruption and nepotism.....	21
<b>10.</b>	<b>Iraqi nationality certificate.....</b>	<b>21</b>
10.1	Issuing body.....	22
10.2	Where are the documents issued?.....	23
10.3	Documentation requirements.....	23
10.3.1	Additional requirements for people returning to Iraq without a nationality certificate.....	23
10.3.2	Additional requirements for applicants living outside Iraq.....	23
10.4	Replacement of lost or damaged nationality certificate.....	23
10.5	Application procedures for people <i>with</i> passports living outside Iraq.....	24
10.6	Application procedures for people <i>without</i> passports living outside Iraq .....	24
10.7	Issuance to proxies .....	25
10.8	Corruption.....	25
10.9	Forgeries.....	25
10.10	Exemptions from technical requirements.....	26
<b>11.</b>	<b>Birth registration and certificates.....</b>	<b>26</b>
11.1	Issuing body.....	26
11.2	Procedures for registering new-borns.....	26
11.3	Registration of children born abroad at Iraqi embassies .....	27
11.4	Issuance of birth certificates in Iraq for children born abroad.....	27
11.5	Forgeries.....	27
<b>12.</b>	<b>Death certificate .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>29</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every Iraqi citizen is obligated to register at their local registration office, sorting under the Civil Status Affairs Directorate. This directorate sorts under the General Directorate for Nationality, GDN, in the Ministry of the Interior. There are multiple registration offices in each province. In principle, all Iraqis have a personal ID card and are entitled to an Iraqi nationality certificate.

As a result of the upheavals in Iraq after 2003, it has at times been difficult to obtain the necessary ID documents required to obtain a passport. Counterfeit ID documents have flourished in the period after 2003.

Many people have used false documents, which have been readily available on the open market both in Iraq and abroad.

This report will describe the most important ID documents issued in Iraq and how they are obtained legally. In addition, information is presented which is considered to be of significance for the documents' notoriety, including verification and registration of identity information and the extent of corruption.

This report is an update of the one that was published in November 2013. The report is based both on openly available online information and on meetings Landinfo has had with Iraqi authorities and embassies, as well as diplomats in the Middle East with knowledge of Iraqi documents. Landinfo met with the Director-General of GDN in Baghdad in April 2012. The Director-General showed Landinfo around the main office for issuing passports in Baghdad and we got to see the entire process, from application to issuance of passports. Landinfo also visited the main office for issuance of civil ID cards in Baghdad. The latest information was obtained from the Iraqi consul in Norway and the fact-finding trip to Iraq in November 2013, amongst other sources.

## 2. PASSPORTS

Iraqi passports (jawas) are designated with a capital letter indicating the period in which they were issued. Passports in the series M, N and H were issued during the Ba'th regime and retained their originally specified validity after Saddam Hussein was overthrown.

In July 2004, new foreign passports in the S-series were issued. The Iraqi passports in the S-series have dark green covers, measure 12.5 x 9 cm and have 36 pages.

In the second half of 2006, Iraqi authorities introduced G-passports. The G-passports are machine-readable and of far better quality than previous passports. They are also in accordance with international standards and are thus more difficult to forge. A further improved version, series A, was introduced on 01 October 2009.

In addition to the passports mentioned, service passports (E-series) and diplomatic passports (D-series) are also issued, but these are not discussed further in this document.

### **3. A-PASSPORTS**

As of 01 October 2009, new passports were issued in the A-series (German Embassy in Jordan, 2009). Therefore, passports in the G-series are no longer issued, but such passports are still valid until the expiration date.

Passports in the A-series differ from the G-series in that they have Arabic, Kurdish and English text. There is also a change on the page with ID information where the field for signature or fingerprint in the G-series is replaced with a barcode in the A-series. The page with biometric data is laminated, as it also was in the G-series. The passport holder's signature is on page 3 in the passport.

A-passports have 48 pages and are valid for eight years. The passport number is perforated through the passport at the bottom of each page from page 3. Pages 4-48 are for visaing. All A-passports are personal. Children must have their own passport.

#### **3.1 ISSUING BODY**

The passports are issued by passport offices sorting under the Passport Directorate. This is a subordinate directorate to the General Directorate for Nationality, GDN, which itself sorts under the Ministry of the Interior.

On the passport itself it states that the passport issuer is the General Directorate for Nationality - Department of Passport. It is written in Arabic, Kurdish and English.

#### **3.2 WHERE ARE PASSPORTS ISSUED?**

The passports are issued in Baghdad and in the provincial capitals. All passports are produced in Baghdad and therefore "Baghdad" is listed as the place of issue on all passports (Iraqi Embassy in Amman, meeting October 2010; Iraqi Embassy in Oslo, conversation March 2012; GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). However, the passports are personalised locally in the provinces (Nezer Rahmatollah, meeting in Erbil November 2013). A complete list of all passport offices in Iraq is available on the website for GDN.<sup>1</sup>

There are multiple passport offices in Baghdad. The main office is called the Passport Affairs Directorate and is located in Hayy al-Wahda, next to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The main office houses several of the city's district passport offices, such as Rusafa, Karrada and New Baghdad. There are also passport offices in Adhamiyya, Khadamiyya Mansur and Slaykh, located in the Qahira district northeast in the city.

Iraqi citizens can apply for passports in the province in which they live, even if their ID documents are issued in another province.

Passports issued by the Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm are produced and personalised in Baghdad and sent to Sweden by diplomatic mail (Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm, phone conversation November 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of offices in Baghdad, see the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, n.d.c. For a list of offices in the provinces, see the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, n.d.d.

### **3.3 APPLICATION PROCESS**

An electronic application form is available on GDN's website (Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, n.d.a). This form must be completed, printed and delivered to the local passport office, or an embassy if the applicant is residing abroad.

In Iraq, passports are issued either at the main passport office in Baghdad or in the province where the person lives. When the application is submitted, a receipt is issued to be presented at pickup. In Baghdad, passports can be issued the same day the ID documentation is submitted. People living abroad who have applied for passports from an embassy will be able to collect the passport in person at the same embassy.

Upon retrieving the passport, fingerprints are submitted, which are checked against the fingerprints submitted with the application. Proof that the fee has been paid must also be shown.

### **3.4 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

In order to receive the passport, the applicant must also submit the following documents in addition to the application form:

- National ID card (Bitaka Shakhsiyeh/Jinsiya).
- Iraqi nationality certificate (Shahadet Jinsiya).
- Proof of residence (Bitaka Sakan). This applies to people who live in Iraq. People living outside Iraq must submit a residence permit. Only heads of households must present proof of residence (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012). According to the Director-General of GDN, it is not strictly necessary to present this card, but it will be requested if there is doubt about residency.
- Two passport photos in colour (three for people who apply from abroad) with white background. In addition, 25,000 Iraqi dinars must be submitted (equivalent to USD 20) and fingerprints must be taken at delivery and pickup (Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, n.d.b; Iraqi Foreign Ministry, n.d.b).

At the embassy in Stockholm, the fee is 200 Swedish kronor for new passports (Iraqi Embassy in Sweden, phone conversation August 2011).

#### **3.4.1 Documentation requirements for single women and children**

Single Iraqi women (unmarried, divorced and widowed) and children under the age of 16 years must have confirmation from a close male relative (guardian) to be issued a passport. The guardian must submit a copy of their own identification papers and appear in person when the applicant delivers the passport application and submits fingerprints (Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, n.d.b).

In the Kurdistan region, the regulations were amended in 2009 by removing the requirement for confirmation from a guardian for women over 18 years (NDI 2011). This means that adult women who live in this region and apply for passports there do not have to submit confirmation from a male family member. However, women from the Kurdistan region who apply for passports at a passport office in other parts of Iraq or from abroad must still have a guardian or other close male relative to confirm



their passport application (Iraqi Embassy in Sweden, phone conversation August 2011).

#### **3.4.2 Documentation requirements for married women**

A married Iraqi woman must have written permission from their spouse to get a passport issued. The spouse must submit a copy of their own identification papers and meet in person to be fingerprinted when the passport application is submitted.

The changes described in point 3.4.1 for single women in the Kurdistan region also apply to married women in this region.

### **3.5 VERIFICATION OF BREEDER DOCUMENTS**

Iraq has a central population registry which is called the Civil Status Affairs Directorate. However, all registrations are done locally at the country's more than 300 registration offices for ID documentation, hereafter called local population registration offices (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). The central population registry has branches at the provincial and sub-district levels. In the sub-districts, the population registry has local offices in the cities (IOM, e-mail February 2010).

The Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm informed Landinfo in 2009 (meeting in Stockholm, January) that when passports are applied for at an embassy or consulate, the breeder documents are checked at the embassy before being sent to Baghdad for the passport to be issued. According to the embassy in Stockholm, embassies do not check ID information, but the documents' authenticity is assessed based on their quality and stamps. It is the job of the authorities in Baghdad to check the ID information.

The embassy in Stockholm confirmed in a phone conversation with Landinfo on 11 August 2011 that it is still the authorities in Baghdad who check ID information for new passports. With the new electronic equipment needed to issue passports in the A-series, ID cards and nationality certificates are now scanned and sent electronically to the main passport office in Baghdad. Currently this office is responsible for checking the authenticity of the documents (Iraqi Embassy in Sweden, phone conversation August 2011).

In a meeting with the Director of GDN (Baghdad April 2012), it was stated that the ID documents submitted as a basis for the passport applications go through a technical inspection in Baghdad. During the meeting, Landinfo got the opportunity to be present for a round in the main passport office in Baghdad where all passports in Iraq are produced. The first step in the process, after the applicant has delivered passport applications online and agreed on a time to deliver the application and ID documents, is to meet to review the application. At the main passport office in Hay al Wahda, people living in the districts of Rusafa, Karrada and New Baghdad can meet to deliver and review applications. Each of the districts have their own offices in this building.

First, the original documents are checked by the police who work at the passport office where the applicant is submitting their application. Even at this early stage the police can discover any forgeries by studying the documents' appearance and serial number. At the same time the police also check that the application is completed correctly. When the application and ID cards are checked, the applicant submits an electronic fingerprint and signs the application. People who cannot write their own name use fingerprints with ink as a signature on the application. After this first

check, an electronic version of the application and ID card are sent for technical inspection. There are about 20 people, each with their own PC, in the room for technical inspection. Passport applications are checked here from all over Iraq and from all of the country's embassies. The bulk of the work which goes on here is to check that the number codes in the documents correspond to the place the applicant is from. All cities, districts and provinces have their own codes that are specified in the ID documents. In addition, the scanned versions of the ID cards are checked for any technical errors.

The inspections sometimes reveal false ID cards. It was difficult for the director to estimate how widespread the problem was, but he suggested it was around one percent. This means that on a day where 7,000 passports are issued, 70 false ID cards are discovered.

The ID information submitted in the application is not checked against the population registry, but through the technical inspection it is checked that the serial number and register number correspond to the cardholder's place of origin. The fact that the ID information is not checked against the population registry can be the source of erroneous ID information in passports in the G-series and A-series (see also section 5.2).

After the technical inspection, the passport is sent for printing in a separate room with several printers. First the serial number is perforated in the passport (figure 1), then the photo and the rest of the information are printed (figure 2). The next step is the lamination of the passport and then all finished passports are sent for a final quality check.

Figure 1

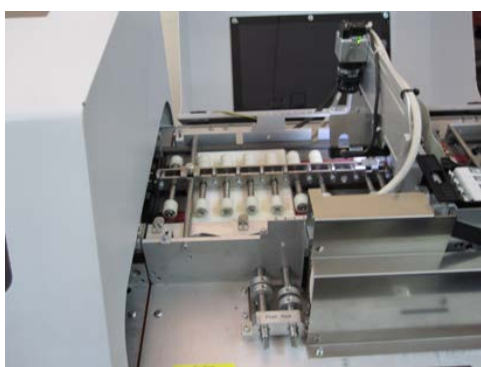


Photo: Landinfo.

Figure 2



### **3.6 SPECIFIED BIRTHPLACE IN PASSPORTS FOR CHILDREN BORN ABROAD**

A child born abroad will always have their father's place of birth listed on their own passport, regardless of their own place of birth (Iraqi Embassy in Jordan, meeting in Amman October 2010; GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). This means that even if a child is born in Oslo, Baghdad will be listed if this was their father's place of birth. According to the Iraqi consul in Amman (meeting October 2010), the Iraqi authorities are aware that this is a problem.

### **3.7 PASSPORTS VIA PROXY**

A-passports can only be issued to the holder, who must meet in person to receive the passport. Proxies are not accepted. In order to ensure that it is actually the holder who is receiving the passport, fingerprints must be submitted both when the application is delivered and when the passport is retrieved (Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, n.d.). (See also 3.8.1. Opportunities to apply from abroad via proxy).

Exceptions may be made for the elderly and immobile persons. They are allowed to bring a relative with them when delivering the passport application who has power of attorney to collect the passport when it is ready (National ID Centre 2013). The person must then submit to fingerprinting both when delivering the application and when retrieving the passport.

### **3.8 APPLYING FOR A PASSPORT ABROAD**

After the introduction of passports in the A-series, there was a temporary intermission in passport issuance from the Iraqi embassies pending new technical equipment. The embassies in Amman and Damascus were the first ones able to issue passports and have been able to do this since July 2010 and the end of 2010, respectively (Norwegian Embassy in Jordan, e-mail February 2011). The embassies are electronically connected to the passport registry in Baghdad and send scanned copies of ID cards and nationality certificates to Baghdad for inspection along with the application form.

The Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm got this equipment in the summer of 2011 and resumed passport issuance on 01 July 2011. Then, for capacity reasons, they only handled previously submitted applications. Later in the autumn, there was another full stop in passport issuance at this embassy. The intermission lasted until mid-January 2012. Everything has worked as it should since then.

Iraqi citizens living abroad complete the application form available online. Applicants no longer need to set an appointment to deliver the application and ID documentation (Iraqi Embassy in Sweden, phone conversation November 2013). This was changed in October 2013 due to a decreasing demand for passports. People can now come any time within the embassy's business hours. The embassies require that the original ID documents (national ID card and nationality certificate) be submitted when applying for a passport.<sup>2</sup> In addition, proof of residence from the country they live in must be submitted.

The Iraqi Embassy in Oslo performs consular services, but cannot issue passports. Iraqi citizens in Norway must therefore travel to the embassy in Stockholm. According to the Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm (phone conversation November 2013), it takes 2-3 months to get a passport at the embassy in Stockholm.

#### **3.8.1 Applying from abroad via proxy**

It is not possible to apply for a passport from abroad via proxy in Iraq (phone conversation with the Iraqi Embassy in Sweden, February 2010 and August 2011; GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012; conversation with the Iraqi consul in Norway

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<sup>2</sup> There are application instructions on the website for the Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm: <http://www.iraqembassy.se/e/issus%20new%20passport.htm>

October 2013). The reason why people must appear in person is that fingerprints must be submitted, amongst other things. However, Landinfo has been informed that it is possible at the embassy in Amman to give a proxy power of attorney to retrieve the passport. For this to be possible, both the applicant and the person with power of attorney must appear in person when the application is handed in to submit fingerprints (Iraqi Embassy in Jordan, meeting October 2010).

## **4. OTHER TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

### **4.1 EMERGENCY PASSPORTS**

Iraqi authorities do not issue separate emergency passports. People must apply for a new passport if they lose their passport. The person must then report that the old passport was lost to a local police station and put an advertisement in the newspaper that the passport is lost (Iraqi Embassy in Norway, meeting February 2012). The embassy must then sign a declaration stating that the passport is lost and this must be submitted with the new application for a passport.

### **4.2 TEMPORARY TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (LAISSEZ-PASSER)**

#### **4.2.1 Procedure for Iraqis with ID documentation**

Iraqi embassies can issue a temporary travel document in the following cases (Iraqi Foreign Ministry, n.d.f):

- When an Iraqi citizen wants to return to Iraq, but has lost his/her passport.
- When a child who is only listed in the parents' passports or who for other reasons does not have a passport wants to return alone to Iraq.
- When someone has had their passport confiscated and wants to return to Iraq.
- When an Iraqi citizen who is unable to obtain a passport must be sent back to Iraq.

In order to get a temporary travel document, the person must submit a national ID card and/or Iraqi nationality certificate (Iraqi Embassy in Sweden, phone conversation March 2011 and August 2011; Iraqi Embassy in Norway, meeting February 2012; conversation with the Iraqi consul in Norway, October 2013). The person can meet at the embassy in Stockholm any weekday except Thursdays. Applicants who do not have these documents cannot be issued a temporary travel document from the embassy.

#### **4.2.2 Procedure for Iraqis without ID documentation**

The Norwegian police, more precisely the police immigration unit (PU), issue laissez-passer for paperless Iraqi citizens returning to Iraq from Norway, both voluntarily and forcibly. In such cases, a laissez-passer is only issued after the Iraqi authorities have confirmed that the person has permission to enter the country (PU, phone conversation March 2011).

## **5. MANIPULATION AND FALSIFICATION OF PASSPORTS**

### **5.1 CHANGING OF PICTURES OR ID INFORMATION IN PASSPORTS**

Iraqi passports are relatively easy to manipulate. The Norwegian police have discovered many false Iraqi passports in the G-series and A-series. One method of forgery has been to take out the personal page in a genuine passport and replace one of the layers of the page with a new one (Østfold Police and Criminal Police, seminar in Oslo November 2013). This way someone can change the ID information in an already existing passport.

Another possible method of forgery is to use false ID cards and nationality certificates as breeder documents when applying for a new passport. These documents are not subject to a thorough technical examination at passport issuance. This allows for certain genuine passports to contain false ID information.

False passports are expensive, but can be purchased. The same applies to false visas to European countries (Chief of Migration at Bagdad International Airport, meeting November 2013).

#### **5.1.1 Problems related to transcription of names and name changes**

Transcription of Arabic names to Latin letters can be problematic, since there is no standardised form of transcription. This can lead to misunderstandings and suspicion of forgery even if the passport is genuine. Another problem which is also not a forgery is that family names which were not allowed to be used during the Ba'th regime are not always listed in the passports even if they are included on the ID card (Iraqi Embassy in Norway, meeting February 2011).

When A-passports are issued, it is required that the same names be listed as are on the ID card. If there is no last name on the ID card, the person's third name (grandfather's name) is listed as a last name (Iraqi Embassy in Sweden, n.d.).

According to Iraqi naming law, it is possible to change the first name and last name once in a lifetime. However, some Iraqi citizens living in Norway have changed more of their names and can therefore have problems when applying for a passport because the new name, which was approved in Norway, is not approved in Iraq (Iraqi Embassy in Norway, meeting February 2012).

### **5.2 FORGERIES**

According to information Landinfo has received via the Norwegian Embassy in Amman, which in turn is based on the statements of document experts, Iraqi documents generally have a low notoriety. A high percentage of Iraqi documents are found to be false or counterfeit.

In connection with verification of Iraqi passports, diplomatic sources in Amman have told Norwegian authorities that the passport issuing body in Baghdad will only check the authenticity of the passport itself and not the registries on which the breeder documents are based. The passport will then be genuine and technically error-free, but may contain incorrect information.

This is the main source of errors in G-passports and A-passports. Landinfo has not found any information indicating that this source of errors is being corrected. Consequently there is a possibility that there might be incorrect ID information in

passports in the G-series and A-series, cf. section 3.5 (diplomatic sources in Amman, meetings 2007-2010).

During Landinfo's visit to the office which produces all passports in Iraq, it was confirmed that only the technical details of breeder documents are checked at passport issuance and that the serial number on the ID card corresponds to the place from which the passport applicant comes (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). However, the Director-General of GDN believed that the likelihood of obtaining passports in the A-series with incorrect information was very small, since there are now many people involved in the inspection and issuance of passports.

### **5.3 CORRUPTION**

The Iraqi government is notorious for their widespread corruption. The country is ranked as one of the most corrupt in the world by Transparency International.<sup>3</sup>

However, that is not to say that there is a lot of room to bribe public officials at the passport offices. Since all passports are produced at the main office in Baghdad, it can be difficult to bribe the employees, since there is no personal contact between the applicant and those who inspect and issue the passports. Admittedly there is personal contact when delivering the application, but even in this process there may be several people involved. At the passport office Landinfo visited in Baghdad, there was one person who went through the application with the applicant and who received the ID documentation and scanned it. Another person went through the documents on the screen to check that everything was in order before being sent on for technical inspection.

The occurrence of false ID information in genuine passports indicates a lack of checks against population registries. However the existence of bribery of employees at the passport offices obviously cannot be ruled out either.

## **6. FAMILY REGISTRY**

All personal data which is entered into the population registry is collected in a large family registry at the local population registration offices near the family's place of residence. All registrations are handwritten in large books in A0 format (841 x 1189 mm). Each register contains information on 200 families.

Each family has a double page in this registry. This page is updated when there are changes to civil status and at births and deaths.

When a man and woman marry, they must go to the local population registration office and have a new joint page created in the registry with reference to the page from which the information was taken. Upon divorce, the two will be returned to their parents' families.

There are over 300 population registration offices (unofficially called Civil Status Offices or Civil Status Departments in English, locally called Jinsiya offices) in Iraq,

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<sup>3</sup> Iraq ranks as number 169 out of 174 on the Corruption Perceptions Index 2012 (TI 2012).

spread throughout the country (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). This office registers newborn children in the family's family registry based on birth certificates. It usually takes three months to obtain a birth certificate from the hospital.

The family registries are made manually and not electronically. Each office works separately.

The family registry forms the basis for the issuance of national ID cards and nationality certificates, which in turn forms the basis for issuance of passports.

The family registry has several synonymous names in unofficial English translation: family book, family census, family registry 57 (after the relevant law, which is from 1957).

Any Iraqi can obtain a copy of their page in the family registry.

## **6.1 INFORMATION IN THE FAMILY REGISTRY**

The following ID information about each family member is registered in the family registry: Full name, father's and mother's name, place of birth, date of birth, civil status and religion.

Each family has their own registration number, which is also listed on the personal ID card.

## **6.2 TRANSFERRING REGISTERED INFORMATION IN CONNECTION WITH RELOCATION**

According to the U.S. Embassy in Jordan (meeting in Amman November 2009), the family registry can be transferred from the original residence to a new address. The person in question must report to his/her local population registry, which then transfers the information to the population registry at the new address. The information will probably not be transferred before the relocation has actually taken place.

A police liaison at the German Embassy has told us (meeting in Amman November 2009) that the family registry is normally kept at the local registry office at the family's original place of residence, but that it is possible to transfer it to the new address if you wish. In such cases, the person in question must ask for this himself/herself. There is no automatic communication between the population registration offices.

## **7. NATIONAL CIVIL ID CARD**

All Iraqi citizens must have a national civil ID card. The card contains the following data:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Birthplace
- Name of both parents

- Civil status
- Religious affiliation

To the right on the front side of the card is a registry number which specifies the number of the family book in which the person is registered. The serial number is printed on the top left. Using these numbers and the issuer's signature, one can get an indication of the authenticity of the card (Swedish Migration Board 2009).

In Arabic, the card is called *Bitaka shakhsiyeh*, but it is also referred to as *Bitaqqa hawwiya*.

All Iraqi citizens are issued this card based on information in the family registry. New-borns receive their first ID card based on the birth certificate and the parents' ID cards (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). The card can be renewed many times in a lifetime and should be renewed when changing to a new civil status. New cards are given a new date of issuance and a new serial number. There are no duplicates of the ID card, but the old serial number is written under the new one by hand. Sometimes "renewal" is written over the new serial number (National ID Centre 2013). According to the Director-General of GDN, it is common for children to have an ID card from the age of one year.

The ID card is considered the most important personal document, since it is used for all contact with public authorities, health care, social welfare services, schools and the purchase and sale of homes and cars. In addition, the ID card must be submitted when applying for other official documents, such as passports.

## **7.1 ISSUING BODY**

The overall authority for issuing ID cards is the Civil Status Affairs Directorate, which sorts under the General Nationality Directorate (GDN) in the Ministry of the Interior.

## **7.2 WHERE ARE ID CARDS ISSUED?**

ID cards are issued at the local population registration offices (Civil Status Departments). These are spread throughout the country and are located in most cities and provincial capitals.

ID cards can only be issued in the resident district where the family is registered. This means that internally displaced refugees must often obtain assistance to get new documents if they live in a province other than where they are registered.

## **7.3 APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applicants must visit the local population registration office in the province where they reside and submit necessary documentation (see next section).

A husband can apply for and obtain civil ID cards for his wife and children. The exception is when applying for lost ID cards. Then everyone must appear in person, except for children under the age of 12 (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012).

## **7.4 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

In order to obtain an ID card, the person must fill out an application form signed by the head of the household, guardian or lawyer and submit two passport photos. In



addition, the person must be able to document his/her identity by submitting a birth certificate (at first issuance) and ID card from a close relative such as his/her father or grandfather.

It costs 1,000 Iraqi dinars (about USD 8) to have an ID card issued (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). Stickers for paid fees must be pasted on the card for it to be valid (UNHCR 2008).

Photos are not required for children under the age of 1-2 years. Photos of women in hijab are accepted. The authorities in the Kurdistan region require four photos.

## **7.5 VERIFICATION OF ID INFORMATION**

The population registration offices have the task of issuing ID cards to Iraqi citizens locally. The offices conduct checks against the family registry before the ID card is issued. The system is not electronic, but the local population registration offices send information to the central population registry in Baghdad (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). If the ID card is lost, the applicant's identity can be approved based on their father's or brother's ID card, which is then checked in the same way (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012).

## **7.6 ID CARDS VIA PROXY**

A person can obtain an ID card via proxy in Iraq. A husband and father can apply for ID cards for his wife and children. However, if someone loses their card, they must appear in person to get a new card (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). This does not apply to children under the age of 12 years.

It is also possible to give another person power of attorney to apply for an ID card. The most common approach is to ask a relative for help. ID documentation of both the applicant and the person with power of attorney then has to be provided.

One can also obtain an ID card via proxy with power of attorney in the Kurdistan region. All internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in the Kurdistan region can, for example, get help from a lawyer at the Protection Assistance Centre (PAC) to update their ID card if they are registered in Baghdad or other places which are far away from the Kurdistan region. PAC is run by non-state organisations on behalf of UNHCR. The authorities require that all Iraqis update their ID cards whenever there is a change in their civil status.

According to the Iraqi volunteer organisation Public Aid Organization (PAO), which runs the Protection Assistance Centre in Erbil (e-mails January 2011), every Iraqi citizen can give another person power of attorney to obtain new national ID cards for them. This is confirmed by the Iraqi consul in Norway (conversation October 2013).

There are PAC centres in all provinces.

## **7.7 ACQUIRING ID CARDS FROM ABROAD**

### **7.7.1 Applying for a national ID card from abroad**

An Iraqi citizen can apply for a new ID card via the Iraqi Embassy in Oslo (Iraqi Embassy, e-mail March 2013). An Iraqi in Norway can alternatively give a proxy power of attorney to apply for and retrieve an ID card at the local population registration office where the applicant is registered. When applying for a new card

via proxy, the applicant must write a power of attorney for a person in their home country. The power of attorney must be sent via the embassy in the country in which they are staying and the embassy must stamp the letter. However, this can be difficult if the person cannot identify himself/herself. This means that he/she must either have a passport, a birth certificate, an old ID card or a nationality certificate. When the consul in Norway was asked to assess the likelihood that a local population registration office would issue new ID cards via proxy for payment even if power of attorney was not authorised by an embassy, the consul answered that it could probably happen (Iraqi Embassy in Norway, phone conversation March 2012).

An ID card issued to a proxy without power of attorney authorised by an embassy is considered valid in Iraq if the ID card itself is genuine.

All ID documents issued in Iraq to citizens who are living or staying abroad must be confirmed by an Iraqi embassy or a consul in the country they are living in, or by another embassy if the country they live in does not have an Iraqi embassy (Iraqi Foreign Ministry, n.d.b). Iraqis in Norway can get the documents confirmed at the Iraqi Embassy in Oslo (Iraqi Embassy in Norway, meeting February 2012).

### **7.7.2 Issuance of ID cards to children born abroad**

Children born outside Iraq can be registered at one of Iraq's embassies. The parents must present the following documents:

- The child's birth certificate, confirmed by the Foreign Ministry of the country of birth
- Their own Iraqi ID cards (from both mother and father)
- Their own nationality certificates (from both mother and father)
- Marriage certificate if it is not stated on their ID cards that they are married to each other.

Based on this documentation, the Iraqi embassy can issue an Iraqi birth certificate to the child and add this to the parents' application for an ID card for the child.

If the parents do not have the necessary documentation, the embassy cannot issue an Iraqi birth certificate to Iraqi children born abroad (Iraqi consul, e-mail April 2013). The child therefore cannot get an Iraqi ID card either.

## **8. CHANGES AND VARIATIONS IN ISSUING PROCEDURES FOR ID CARDS**

### **8.1 CHANGES TO ID CARDS SINCE 2003**

According to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB 2008), the following changes have been made to the ID cards since 2003:

- As of mid-2003, the Arabic numbers in the ID cards were changed to our numbers. However, Arabic numbers were still used sometimes. Before mid-2003, our numbers were never used on ID cards.
- In the three autonomous Kurdish provinces in northern Iraq, a stamp with an eagle motif is used. In the rest of Iraq, a palm tree is used as a symbol.

The background print must be clear. The three stars on the eagle's breast must be clear (both vertically and horizontally).

- ID cards which are issued after mid-2003 must have security fibres which are reflected under UV light.
- Kinegrams were introduced mid-2005. However, there are genuine kinegrams on false ID cards.
- In the Kurdish autonomous area, inferior quality printing (inkjet) and paper is used, but the serial number must be embossed.
- When a person dies, one corner of the card must be cut off and the card must be returned to the deceased's family.

According to the Director-General at GDN (meeting in Baghdad April 2012), all ID cards throughout the country have the same quality. All cards are printed at the same place and sent out to the provinces in order of serial numbers. The local population registration offices in the provinces fill in the personal details by hand, paste the photo and stamp it themselves.

### **8.2 EXEMPTIONS FROM TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Exemptions have previously been made from the technical requirements for ID cards. For example, documents which should have had a stamp or sticker could be missing these because the issuer lacked them when the document was issued. When Landinfo visited a population registration office in Baghdad in April 2012, there was a woman who wanted to renew her ID card because the old one was missing the stamp. Missing the stamp had led to many problems for the woman and therefore she had to get a new one issued. The reason it was missing could have been human error at issuance.

Basically, the ID cards issued in the Kurdistan region and the rest of Iraq have the same format, but the serial numbers indicate where the card is issued. The stamps on the cards vary depending on the place of issuance and they can change over the years (Norwegian Embassy in Jordan, e-mail February 2011).

### **8.3 ID CARDS WITH ERRORS**

The ID cards which were issued before 2006 can contain a number of errors and still be genuine. The competence of the personnel who handled the applications, such as

their knowledge of administrative procedures and regulations, may have been inadequate. Likewise, there may have been deficiencies in databases and archive systems. Errors may have occurred as a result of difficulties in transferring relevant information between provinces and because the public employees who handle the applications are often overworked. Sloppiness occurs under such circumstances (Ockenden International 2006).

## **9. FORGERIES OF ID CARDS**

It is a well-known fact that false ID cards can be purchased on the open market at a very low price. Many people do this to save time, since it can take several months to get the card issued properly.

It can be difficult to discover if the document is false or not, since there may be errors and variations in the background printing of genuine cards (UK Border Agency, notification via the UK Embassy in Amman, July 2010). However, such variations no longer occur since all ID card forms are printed at the same location.

The technical quality of the ID cards is poor and they are therefore easy to forge. The staff that processes the applications may be corrupt. It may also be difficult for applicants to obtain all necessary documentation (Ockenden International 2006).

Information Landinfo has received over time via the Norwegian Embassy in Jordan and from diplomatic sources in Amman who do not want to be quoted directly, indicates that up to half of the ID cards in use may be false. According to information from diplomatic sources in Amman in 2011 (as quoted by the Norwegian Embassy in Jordan, e-mail February 2011), it is still relatively easy to buy false or stolen blank ID cards in Iraq.

The same sources tell us that they come across both fabricated false ID documents and genuine ID documents where changes have been made. In cases where the actual ID cards are fabricated, it can often be seen in the paper quality and background printing. These cards have blurry printing and may be missing fibres or have errors in the pattern of the fibres. Many counterfeit ID cards which appear genuine may have both genuine and false ID information. According to diplomatic sources in Amman, the most common counterfeits in these cards are false stamps with spelling errors and false document numbers.

According to a western embassy in Amman (as quoted by the Norwegian Embassy in Jordan, e-mail February 2011), the ID cards are the next most frequently forged ID document after the birth certificates.

Iraqi authorities have plans to issue a new type of ID card with better security features to replace the old ID cards and nationality certificates (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012). Initially, these will be given to those who register for the first time, i.e. new-borns. Consequently, it will take many years before the change is fully implemented.

## 9.1 CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM

Landinfo has no concrete knowledge of the extent of corruption in the part of the government apparatus which issues ID cards. Since the extent of corruption in Iraq is very high, it is fair to assume that corruption also occurs in the issuance of ID cards. However, there must be two employees present when new ID cards are issued and according to the Director-General of GDN, inspections of cheating officials have intensified greatly in recent years.

However, bribes are not unusual. In order to illustrate how corruption takes place in general, a diplomatic source in Baghdad (meeting October 2010) said that for stateless Palestinians living in Iraq, it is often necessary to pay bribes, even to get documents they are legally entitled to. A Palestinian must in such cases expect to have to pay at least USD 100 to get a travel document issued. If they need a proxy to retrieve a document, they must pay about USD 400. Even if all the information provided in the application is correct and all the paperwork is completed without errors, the issuer will still likely find, or invent, one or more "mistakes" and use this to pressure the applicant for money (diplomatic source in Baghdad, meeting October 2010).

It is also possible to pay a bribe to avoid having to appear in person where this would otherwise be a requirement. The mentioned diplomatic source told Landinfo that he himself had been forced to do this when his father became too old and sick to go and renew his ID card.

On one occasion the issue was discussed with PLO's representative office in Amman (meeting November 2010). Here it was said that the extent of corruption connected with the issuance of documents was not known, but that to the extent that it occurs, it was probably through bribes and *wasta* (contacts).

Furthermore, it is not unlikely that bribes are paid to speed up the issuance of ID cards. However, this does not mean that the ID documents are generally false.

Corruption can also occur at the population registries, even if it would be difficult to forge the registry's civil data.

The Director-General of GDN (meeting April 2012) informed Landinfo that the authorities were cracking down on corruption in this system. Just before Landinfo's visit, ten employees had been arrested for having contributed to forging ID cards.

## 10. IRAQI NATIONALITY CERTIFICATE

The Iraqi nationality certificate (*shahadat jinsiyya* in Arabic) is issued to all Iraqi citizens on the basis of application. Granting citizenship is regulated by the citizenship law (Iraqi Nationality Law 2006).

The nationality certificate contains the following information with the same numbering as in the list (UK Border Agency 2009):

1. Full name
2. Religion

3. Special characteristics
4. Father's full name
5. Father's place of birth
6. Mother's full name
7. Mother's place of birth
8. Comments
9. Fingerprint of left thumb
10. Signature
11. Passport photo
12. Folder number
13. Certificate number
14. Date
15. Iraqi nationality certificate
16. When it is confirmed that xxx, whose photo is attached, has Iraqi citizenship in accordance with paragraph xxx in the Iraqi citizenship law of (xxx), he/she has received this nationality certificate. Signed by the issuing body.

Under point 16, in a replacement document, it will state that this certificate is issued in accordance with a previously issued nationality certificate. Certificate number and date of previously issued certificates will be entered, along with new date of issue. The new date will be at the bottom right corner of the card.

The nationality certificate is a necessary document when applying for work in the public sector, education and other public services. In addition, the certificate is a necessary breeder document when applying for a passport, birth certificates for one's own children, marriage certificates and death certificates.

Children can get a nationality certificate from an early age, but it is common to get it at the age of 12 (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012).

Feily-Kurds in Iraq lost their citizenship during Saddam Hussein's regime in the 1980s and were later denied access to public services (Campbell 2010). In accordance with the new nationality law, this group, along with others who were deprived of citizenship under the previous regime, had the right to get their Iraqi citizenship back. According to the Iraqi Relocation and Migration Department (as reported by Shafaaq.com 2013), 97 per cent of Feily-Kurds have now gotten their citizenship back. This also includes their descendants born outside Iraq. Those who have still not received this can apply for it. The procedure is the same as for other Iraqis.

## **10.1 ISSUING BODY**

Iraqi nationality certificates are issued by the Nationality Directorate (GDN).

## **10.2 WHERE ARE THE DOCUMENTS ISSUED?**

In accordance with Iraqi law, nationality certificates are only produced in Baghdad (Nezar Rahmatollah Aziz, meeting in Erbil November 2013). However, they can be issued at GDN's local offices, which are found in all provincial capitals. There are multiple offices in Baghdad. The nationality certificates are only issued in Iraq.

## **10.3 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

The following documents must be presented when applying for a nationality certificate (UNHCR, n.d.):

- Completed application form (Iraqi nationality certificate application form) with two stamps of 500 Iraqi dinars.
- Birth certificate (this must be issued by a consul if the person was born outside Iraq).
- ID card.
- Copy of father's, brother's, grandfather's or uncle's nationality certificate.
- Parents' marriage certificate and ID cards.
- Passport photos.

### **10.3.1 Additional requirements for people returning to Iraq without a nationality certificate**

The following documentation must be presented with the application if the person has returned to Iraq without a nationality certificate (UNHCR, n.d.):

- Public Distribution Card.
- Housing card/Residency card or a confirmation of the applicant's home address from a local counsel.
- In the Kurdistan region, confirmation is required from the local mayor (*mukhtar*) of the applicant's home address.

### **10.3.2 Additional requirements for applicants living outside Iraq**

The following documentation must be presented with the application if the person is living outside Iraq (Iraqi Foreign Ministry, n.d.c):

- Copy of the applicant's and parents' passports.
- Confirmation from the parents and two witnesses that the applicant is their child, signed by the consul.

In practice this applies to children, since adults have normally already gotten their nationality certificate.

## **10.4 REPLACEMENT OF LOST OR DAMAGED NATIONALITY CERTIFICATE**

A person can apply to replace a lost or damaged nationality certificate. The procedure is as follows (Iraqi Foreign Ministry, n.d.f):

- Apply in writing to obtain a new nationality certificate on the grounds of loss or damage.
- Complete an application form which is available at GDN's local offices and Iraqi embassies and submit the written application letter.

For applications delivered at embassies, the consul must note the applicant's grounds for application on the back of the application form, along with the applicant's full name, and make sure that the applicant's fingerprints are stamped over the name. The consul must sign this document and seal it with the consulate/embassy stamp. If the applicant needs a renewed nationality certificate because the old one is damaged, the original certificate must be submitted. If the applicant needs a new certificate because the old one is lost, a copy of their father's or brother's nationality certificate must be submitted, with confirmation from the embassy that it is a true copy.

Copy of their father's and mother's passports must also be submitted and these must also have a "true copy" stamp from the embassy.

4 passport photos of recent date are required.

It costs 3,600 Iraqi dinars (equivalent to USD 2) to get a new nationality certificate issued.

The Iraqi consul in Norway has informed Landinfo (meeting in Oslo February 2012) that the consulate at the embassy in Oslo can help submit an application for a new nationality certificate for new-borns and for people who want to replace an old and worn card. However, the embassy cannot assist people who lack ID documentation.

Nationality certificates can be renewed multiple times in one lifetime, provided that applicants specify the reason for wanting a new one (GDN, meeting in Baghdad April 2012).

## **10.5 APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR PEOPLE WITH PASSPORTS LIVING OUTSIDE IRAQ**

An Iraqi citizen living in Norway can apply for a nationality certificate at the Iraqi Embassy in Oslo. The person must complete an application form and submit fingerprints. The embassy then sends the application, copies of the ID documents and passport photos to the Nationality Directorate via the Foreign Ministry in Baghdad. A person with power of attorney can retrieve the document on behalf of the applicant (Iraqi consul in Norway, e-mail March 2013).

If the person does not have any relatives in Iraq to give such power of attorney to, the issuing body can send the nationality certificate to an Iraqi embassy via the Iraqi Foreign Ministry.

## **10.6 APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT PASSPORTS LIVING OUTSIDE IRAQ**

People living abroad who lack both passport and nationality certificate must go through the following procedure to get a new nationality certificate (Iraqi Foreign Ministry, n.d.e):

- Applicants must obtain a confirmation from the authorities in the country of residence that he/she does not possess an Iraqi passport. This confirmation



must be reconfirmed by the country of residence's Foreign Ministry.

- Applicants must submit a passport photo which must be stamped with the embassy's stamp.
- Applicants must submit a written declaration in accordance with the available forms at the embassy that he/she is not in possession of an Iraqi passport.
- Applicants must submit confirmed copies of their father's or brother's nationality certificate.

GDN must submit the following information to the Passport Directorate in order for the applicant to be able to get passports and other ID documents: full name, place of birth, mother's name, ID card number, page number in the family registry, Iraqi nationality certificate number and date of issue. According to the Iraqi consul in Norway, the embassy or consulate cannot forward an application for a new nationality certificate if a person cannot document his/her identity (meeting February 2012 and conversation October 2013).

#### **10.7 ISSUANCE TO PROXIES**

According to the Director-General of GDN (meeting in Baghdad April 2012), a person can only get a nationality certificate by appearing in person and not via a proxy.

#### **10.8 CORRUPTION**

Landinfo is not aware of the extent to which corruption occurs in connection with the issuance of nationality certificates. However, as previously mentioned, the level of corruption in Iraq is extensive (TI 2012).

#### **10.9 FORGERIES**

According to information Landinfo has received via the Norwegian Embassy in Amman, a high percentage of nationality certificates which were checked by Western embassies in Amman were forgeries. There are indications that it is still possible to purchase various false ID documents at a price of up to 150 U.S. dollars. According to document experts, there are various types for forgeries. In some cases, the information in the documents will be correct, other times it is incorrect. There may be cases where a person pays an intermediary to arrange a genuine ID card, but then the intermediary gives the person a forged/false document (with correct information).

In 2006, the organisation Ockenden International reported the following possible sources of error for nationality certificates:

- Inadequate records and data systems in the population registries.
- Lack of documentation from the applicant.
- Hampered access for applicants to the issuer (security, costs, etc.).
- Unqualified personnel who process the applications.
- Issuer not having access to applicable regulations (complete legal texts are

not available at all offices in question).

According to Ockenden International, this means that nationality certificates may contain inaccurate information, both intentionally and unintentionally.

It should be noted that the quality of public sector services probably have improved over recent years. Some of the sources of error which Ockenden International mentioned in 2006 may therefore no longer be as prominent.

#### **10.10 EXEMPTIONS FROM TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Nationality certificates must have the same standards regardless of the province in which they were issued. However, the quality of the certificates has changed over time. The nationality certificates issued after April 2003 are different, since they lack the security features and watermarks.

### **11. BIRTH REGISTRATION AND CERTIFICATES**

Registration of births and deaths are regulated through Registration of Births and Deaths Law no. 148 of 1971. This law replaced law number 30 of 1947, which made registration of births and deaths mandatory (IIVRS 1980).

Birth certificates were introduced in the mid-1960s (UK Embassy in Iraq 2010). A birth must be registered within 15 days if the child is born in the hospital and within 30 days for a home birth in a city. For a child born at home in a rural area, the deadline is 45 days (Iraq e-GOV Portal 2013a). For children born abroad, the deadline is 60 days. Late registration involves fines.

#### **11.1 ISSUING BODY**

For births at a hospital/clinic, the doctor, midwife or specialist nurse must issue and sign the birth certificate in four copies and keep one copy. Three copies are sent to the Department of Vital Statistics and Civil Status at the Ministry of Health for registration and approval.

#### **11.2 PROCEDURES FOR REGISTERING NEW-BORNS**

There is a standard form for birth certificates which is completed in four copies. One copy is white, while the others are yellow, green and pink, respectively. The issuing hospital retains one copy, while GDN and the Ministry of Health each get one and the parents get the last one.

The parents must bring the birth certificate to their local population registration office to register the child and then the child gets the mandatory national ID card issued.<sup>4</sup> According to the Director-General of GDN, the parents' copy will be green, while the one the Directorate gets is white.

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<sup>4</sup> Typically, children's parents/guardians make sure that the child gets their national ID card issued once before they start school, since it is usually when enrolling in school that they need it for the first time.

In order to be able to register a child after it is 45 days old, one of the parents must go the court and get a court order (CDO and UNHCR Sulaymaniya, meetings April 2010). Then one of the parents must personally deliver the court order to the population registry in the same province in which he/she is registered.

If registration is made within the specified deadline, this can be done by proxy (CDO and UNHCR Sulaymaniya, meetings in April 2010).

If the parents are internally displaced and do not have the opportunity to travel back to their own province to register the child, they can get help from a Protection Assistance Centre. These centres assist internally displaced persons in legal matters, including matters related to registration, and they are found in all provinces in Iraq. However, one must make sure to get the child registered before the deadline.

### **11.3 REGISTRATION OF CHILDREN BORN ABROAD AT IRAQI EMBASSIES**

According to the Iraqi Foreign Ministry (n.d.a), this procedure must be followed to register a child born abroad:

- The parents of a child born outside Iraq must provide a valid birth certificate from the country in which the child was born and submit this to the embassy within two months after the birth. The certificate must be certified by the country of birth's Foreign Ministry. The Iraqi embassy must also attest the birth certificate. Failing to apply to register the child within two months, will lead to a fine of 10,000 Iraqi dinars (equivalent to USD 8.50).
- The embassy registers the birth and issues a birth certificate in accordance with information specified in the local certificate, in four copies. They are sent to the Department of Vital Statistics and Civil Status in the Ministry of Health. The local birth certificate, which must be confirmed by a legal authority, is enclosed.

Iraqis in Norway can have their birth certificate attested at the Iraqi Embassy in Oslo.

### **11.4 ISSUANCE OF BIRTH CERTIFICATES IN IRAQ FOR CHILDREN BORN ABROAD**

According to the Iraqi consul to Norway (e-mail April 2013), a person must submit the following documentation to register a child born abroad in Iraq:

- The child's birth certificate, confirmed by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.
- Both parents' Iraqi ID cards.
- Both parents' nationality certificates.
- The parents' marriage contract if the marriage is not listed on the parents' Iraqi ID cards.

If the parents are divorced, the divorce documents must be attached. For children born before 2007, further documentation may be required.

### **11.5 FORGERIES**

According to a western embassy in Amman (as quoted by the Norwegian Embassy in Jordan, e-mail February 2011), birth certificates are the ID document which this

embassy finds forged most frequently.

One possible reason may be that many people do not have birth certificates, but have needed to acquire one to get an ID card and nationality certificate. The information in a forged birth certificate is not necessarily false.

## **12. DEATH CERTIFICATE**

Death certificates are issued by the hospital, while it is the Ministry of Health which is responsible for registering the death and approving the death certificate with a stamp. There is a standard form and the certificate is issued in four copies, where parents or other close relatives get one, while the other three are archived in the same way as the birth certificates.

If the death occurs in a hospital or clinic, the doctor will make sure to register the death immediately and the death certificate must be sent to the health authorities within 15 days (Iraq e-GOV Portal 2013b).

If a death occurs without medical staff present, either the next of kin will notify the nearest health office or the local mayor will attest the death in consultation with two witnesses and report this to the local health office (IIVRS 1980).

The doctor who is notified must send the death certificate to the health authorities within 15 days (Iraq e-GOV Portal 2013b). A copy is sent to the deceased's local population registration office.

Iraq does not have a central death registry (Karagiozakis 2009).

According to diplomatic sources in Amman, a large number of false death certificates have been discovered (FCG 2010).

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