

**RESPOND**

## **Working Papers**

### **Global Migration: Consequences and Responses**

Paper 2020/64, August 2020

### **Integration Policies, Practices and Experiences**

### **Iraq Country Report**

**William Kh.Warda & Hamed Shihad Almaffraji**

**Hammurabi Human Rights Organization**

**© Hammurabi Human Rights Organization**

This research was conducted under the Horizon 2020 project ‘RESPOND Multilevel Governance of Migration and Beyond’ (770564). This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Commission. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the RESPOND Project consortium and authors can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union. The European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

Any inquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: [info@hhro.org](mailto:info@hhro.org)

This document is available for download at <https://www.respondmigration.com>

Horizon 2020  
RESPOND: Multilevel Governance  
of Migration and Beyond (770564)



Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 programme  
of the European Union

# Contents

List of tables .....	4
List of abbreviations .....	5
Acknowledgements .....	6
RESPOND project.....	7
Executive summary .....	8
1. Introduction.....	9
3. Integration Policy: Legal and Policy Framework .....	13
3.1. Historic Development .....	13
3.1.1. Changes in Integration Policies Since 2011.....	13
3.1.2. Governance of Integration Policies .....	14
3.2. Legal Framework.....	16
4. Labour Market and Employment.....	20
4.1. Employment at Regulatory Level .....	20
4.2. Labour Market Challenges and the Informal Labour Market.....	21
4.3. Actors in the Labour Market .....	22
4.4. Access to Labour Market: Experiences of Asylum Seekers and Refugees .....	22
5. Education.....	26
5.1. Formal Education, Policies and Implementation .....	26
5.2. Adult Education and Progression to the Universities.....	28
5.3. Role of the Non-State Actors In Education .....	30
5.4. Education Challenges, Vulnerable Groups, Children and Others .....	31
5.5. Education Experiences Among Asylum Seekers and Refugees.....	32
6. Housing and Spatial Integration.....	36
6.1. Housing Policies for Asylum Seekers and Refugees .....	36
6.2. The Implementation of Housing Policies.....	38
6.3. Experiences of Asylum and Refugees with Housing and Spatial Integration .....	41
7. Psychosocial Health, Medical Care and Role of Religion .....	44
7.1. The Regulatory Level and the Infrastructure of Medical Services and Psychosocial Health .....	44
7.2. Access to Health Care Provisions.....	46
7.3. Vulnerable Groups and Access to Health Care .....	46
7.4. The Role of Religion, Faith and Social Relations in Psychosocial Health .....	48
7.5. Experiences of Asylum Seekers and Refugees with Access to Medical and Psychosocial Healthcare .....	48
8. Citizenship, Belonging and Civic Participation .....	52
8.1. Citizenship rights .....	52
8.2. Civic Participation .....	52
8.3. Belonging, Social Transformations and Host Community .....	53
8.4. Adaptation of Asylum Seekers and Refugees to the Host Community.....	55
9. Conclusion.....	62
10. Policy Recommendations .....	64
Appendices.....	66
References .....	68

## List of tables

Table 1. Number of Syrian refugees entered Iraq according the years and their percentages in the camps. p.18

Table 2. Schools number by refugee camps in Iraq, 2018. p.29

Table 3. Shows the distribution of students in the universities of the Kurdistan region of Iraq within the (DAFI) program. p.33

Table 4. Shows number of Syrian refugees in Iraq according to province. p.40

Table 5. The proportions of Syrian refugees by gender and province. p.40-41

Table 6. The number of Syrian refugees living in camps by governorate. p.41

Table 7. Details and locations of refugee camps in Iraq and by governorates. p.41-42

Table 8. The actual interviews for Syrian refugees. p.70

Table 9. The actual interviews for IDPs. p.71

## List of abbreviations

**ACTED:** Agency for Technical Company and Development.

**CSI:** Christian Solidarity International.

**DAAD:** German Academic Exchange Service: The DAAD is the world's largest funding organisation for the international exchange of students and researchers.

**DAFI:** UNHCR's higher education scholarship programme, DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative), for integration and enabling refugees.

**GOI:** Government of Iraq.

**HHRO:** Hammurabi Human Rights Organization.

**IDPs:** Internally Displaced Persons.

**ILO:** International Labour Organization.

**IOM:** International Organization for Migration.

**IRC:** The International rescue committee.

**JCCC:** The Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCCC) of the Ministry of Interior of Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

**KRG:** Kurdistan Regional Government.

**KRI:** Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

**MERI:** The Middle East Research Institute.

**MOLSA:** The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

**MOMD:** Ministry of Migration and Displacement.

**MSF:** Medecins Sans Frontieres.

**NCR:** The comitie National de Secours et d'Alimentation (National committee for Relif).

**NRC:** The Norwegian Refugee Council.

**PAPC:** Protection and Reintegration Centre.

**PCMOI:** Permenant Committee for Refugee Affairs of Minisry of Interior.

**SOS:** Societe de Secours D'urgence .

**SPARK:** Student promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge.

**UNESCO:** The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

**UNHCR:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

**UNICEF:** The United Nations Children's Fund

**UNRWA:** The United Nations Relief and works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

**WFP:** World Food Program.

**WHO:** World Health Organization.

## Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Iraqi research team, formed by the Hammurabi Human Rights Organization (HHRO) that worked collectively and tirelessly to accomplish this research, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Iraqi experts who provided advice and assistance in obtaining the required information, especially the experts of Ministry of Migrations and Displacement.

We would also like to express our thanks to Dr. (Mohamed Turki Al-Obaidi), director of the Human Rights Department at the Iraqi Ministry of Justice for reviewing this report and making valuable comments on it, and adding information related to legislations, laws and governmental policies and international standers on human rights in relation to refugees.

The proof read of the report has been carried out by a volunteer who opted to remain anonymous, so I thank her very much for her efforts and initiative. Many thanks also to Mohammed Esam, Taha Salam and Nawfal Raid for transcribing the interviews.

Here, we should not forget to thank all the interviewees who share their feelings and thoughts about integration in Iraq.

In conclusion, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Mr. Soner Barthoma, project coordinator for RESPOND, for his guidance and following up the work during the reporting period. Special thanks to Dr. Naures Atto (University of Cambridge) and Dr. Onver A. Cetrez (Uppsala University), the leaders of work package #5 (WP5), for their valuable guidance and constructive comments.

William KH. Warda

Iraq Team Leader

Baghdad- July 20, 2020

## RESPOND project

RESPOND is a Horizon 2020 project which aims at studying the multilevel governance of migration in Europe and beyond. The consortium is formed of **14 partners from 11 source, transit and destination countries and is coordinated by Uppsala University in Sweden.** The main aim of this Europe-wide project is to provide an **in-depth understanding of the governance of recent mass migration** at macro, meso and micro levels through cross-country comparative research and to critically analyse governance practices with the aim of enhancing the migration governance capacity and policy coherence of the EU, its member states and third countries.

RESPOND will study migration governance through a narrative which is constructed along five thematic fields: (1) Border management and security, (2) Refugee protection regimes, (3) Reception policies, (4) Integration policies, and (5) Conflicting Europeanization. Each thematic field is reflecting a juncture in the migration journey of refugees and designed to provide a holistic view of policies, their impacts and responses given by affected actors within.

In order to better focus on these themes, we divided our research question into work packages (WPs). This report is concerned with the findings related to WP5, which focuses specifically on **Integration policies, practices and humanitarian responses to the current refugee crisis.**

## Executive summary

This report focuses on a less-researched topic, namely the integration of refugees and displaced populations in Iraq in the period 2011-2017. It elaborates on the extent to which policies, programs and practices at various local, regional and national levels are consistent with the country's general policy and integration plans and are compatible with the norms of international law concerning integration and human rights standards. The report also highlights the factors and reasons that impede the social integration of refugees and displaced populations into Iraqi society, and reflects the prevailing understanding of "integration" among decision-makers, local and regional stakeholders, and refugees. In this respect, the report provides in-depth information about the implementation of integration policies in terms of effectiveness, centralization or decentralization, and the coordination of different levels. The report analyses whether there is a gap or divergence between policies and practices, and between national, local and regional levels.

The report is structured along seven sections. In the first section it provides an overview about the legal and policy framework of integration policies, specifically focusing on the issue of refugee integration in the absence of an asylum law. It explains how the government devoted the prevailing laws and its international obligations in the field of human rights in filling the gap and organizing the conditions of more than 250 thousand refugees entered in the country from 2011 to 2017 – which is the highest number in the history of the modern Iraq which was established in 1921. Moreover, this section includes a historical overview of Iraq's experience with refugees, and the development of related legislation, regulations and the executive decisions in this field.

In other sections the report discusses the topic of integration in labour market, education, housing, mental health, citizenship, and civic participation based on a field work conducted in 2018 and 2019. The empirical material includes interviews with refugees and displaced populations, interviews with governmental officials, local decision makers, practitioners, and representatives of NGOs. The team also organized focus groups with the same actors.

The report pays a specific attention to the experiences of refugees at micro level and integration-related practices at meso level (experts, executives actors and representatives of national and international organizations) and clearly shows that among many of these actors (experts, policy implementers and beneficiaries) the main perception is that Iraq is just a "transit country" for departure to other countries that have an asylum law that guarantees their stability and safeguards their rights as asylum seekers and refugees. This is something common shared by most of the refugees and internally displaced populations as well as policymakers, practitioners and NGO workers. Another important finding of this report is that the country seriously lacks adequate service facilities (e.g. absence of social care, mental and physical health) which makes the question of integration even more complicated. The report indicates the level of humanitarian response to the services provided to asylum seekers, refugees and displaced populations.

The report also points out the lack of coordination and cooperation between federal, regional and local institutions in organizing the integration process of refugees and displaced populations. The report ends with specific insights emerging from the analysis of the data and with policy recommendations.



## 1. Introduction

After the fall of Bath regime, Iraq has become a platform for receiving large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers as a result of political turmoil, insecurity and political instability in the Middle East, compounded by the persecution of religious and ethnic minority groups. Such persecution has indeed led to the increase in violence, extremism, war and armed conflicts in the past two decades.

The report focuses on the period between 2011-2017, the period that was the height of the conflict in Syria. As a result, many Iraqi refugees returned from Syria, back to Iraq, accompanied by an additional 250,000 Syrians, most of them are of Kurdish origin, now seeking refuge in Iraq.

The Iraqi political and legal institutional framework regarding immigration and asylum does not constitute an ideal system for regulating the conditions of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Iraq is, nevertheless, one of the first countries in the region that has legislated a law for political refugees five decades ago, represented by Law No. 51 of 1971. This law at present does not respond to all the elements required for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers according to the standards and rules of international law. The Law No.51 of 1971 is not a comprehensive law capable of regulating the conditions of refugees and asylum seekers in all humanitarian, political and social and economic aspects. It is clear and correct to say, as we have pointed out in our previous reports, regarding the protection issues and the issue of receiving refugees and asylum seekers, Iraq has not joined the International Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 protocol.

Despite that, Iraq acted responsibly towards the protection of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in line with its effective national laws and its permanent constitution of 2005, as well as its commitment to the United Nations contractual and non-contractual mechanisms underlined by international human rights agreements, all of which Iraq has ratified. This includes the mechanisms of the universal periodic review, acceptance of special visits by special rapporteurs, file complaints and others.

The report illuminates the activities of Iraq in managing and organizing the process of integration of refugees and the effectiveness of the legislations that are in force; the policies and regulations that Iraq followed at the federal, regional and local levels; the level of response to urgent needs of refugees and in accommodating any special conditions. The report also explains the efforts by Iraqi governments to adapt its legislation to better organize and manage the integration process of refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally, the report highlights the extent to which strategies have been developed to manage, organize and implement integration according to the constitution and international law and standards.

The report also shows whether the implementation of integration complied with the general line of policies for integration and whether fundamental differences existed between the policies at the national, regional and local levels.

It also assesses how Iraq managed to overcome challenges and fill the gaps in achieving integration, so as to allow asylum seekers secure access to basic services, work, education, health care, legal protection, housing, and naturalization etc. bearing in mind that Iraq had not had similar experience in receiving such large numbers of refugees within a short period.

The report examines the impact of internal displacement and demographic changes on integration policies due to the movement of the population to seek refuge in safer areas as a consequence of the violence and sectarian conflicts that many cities witnessed in Iraq in the years 2005-2007. The report examines the impact of violence over the past ten years, peaking

in 2014, when ISIS occupied Nineveh, Salah al-Din and Anbar Governorate – constituting one third of Iraq and displacing of nearly three million people.

The abovementioned factors posed great challenges to the Central Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, as well as International, national and non-governmental organizations aiming to meet the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced populations.

Finally, the report paves the way to a set of conclusions and policy proposals that aim at develop a national integration plan for refugees and asylum seekers and IDPs.

## 2. Methodology and Sources

Three main approaches were adopted in order to produce this report: the inductive, deductive and experimental approaches. The inductive approach is based on the process of observing phenomena to collect data aiming to discover overall relationships and general principles. This methodology is marked by the researcher's transition from specific to general or from the part to the whole, and divided into two sections: full induction and imperfect induction. The second approach is the deductive methodology that is an inference from the general to the specific, or from the whole to the part. Two methodologies were adopted to complete this report, in which the phenomenon of integration of refugees in Iraq was observed in terms of protecting their rights (to work, education, health and social care, housing, residence and naturalization, adaptation to society, etc.)

Data about integration through official institutions in Iraq (GOI and KRG), as well as international regional and local institutions and organizations was collected. These entities were both official and unofficial, and included books, reports, studies about refugees and asylum seekers and the needed structures for their integration. This informed the formation of general principles for integration.

Data was collected on the level of strengthening the components of integration through official institutions in Iraq, whether the Federal Government or the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, or the international, regional and local institutions and organizations, official or unofficial. These data included official books, reports and studies containing statistics, data, figures, numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, and needed structures for their integration into the host society. The data provided the formulation of general principles for integration, as for example the research team in order to follow up education phenomenon of refugees in the host community in term of its effectiveness or shortages. The team collected data on the educational experience of refugees, related primary and secondary schools inside and outside camps. The language, curricula, teacher qualifications and other trainings were taken into consideration.

The second set of data consists of experiences by the refugee themselves, their situation, vision and perception of government institutions and organizations of all kinds. We also gathered data through policy makers, practitioners and decision-makers, proceeding from the refugee need to the mentioned institutions.

The deductive approach was also used to research general state laws and legislation, decisions and public policies regarding integration, and the performance of international, regional and local organizations and reflection on the refugee with respect to policies on the situation of refugee integration into the host society.

The researchers also benefited from using the experimental approach, which studied the refugees' levels of integration after conducting field research, collecting samples from the ground and a survey to highlight patterns, gaps, etc. We also gathered data through a number of relevant institutions, like semi-public administration, senior officials experts of MOMD, and NGOs. The team conducted a total of seven face-to-face interviews and two by phone, and benefited also from the output of the roundtable meetings conducted with experts from MOMD, International and National NGOs activists, and other governmental representatives.

The team conducted 29 interviews with Syrian refugees: 26 of which had Kurdish origin and 3 were from other minority groups such as Assyrians, Christians, or others. 16 of the refugees were male and 13 were female. 17 arrived in Iraq between 2011 and 2014, while 12 arrived during the period of 2014 -2017. They were distributed to three governorates in the Kurdistan region: 14 to Erbil, 11 to Duhok, and 4 to Sulaimaniyah. The interviews included 17 refugees between the ages of 18 and 38 years (9 males and 8 females). From the age group of 39 to 59 years, 5 were males and 4 were females, and from the age group of 60 and above, 2 were male and one was female.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See table No.7

As for interviews with internally displaced people, there were 29 interviewees in total, 14 of which were male and 15 female. 9 represented non-Muslim religious minorities such as Yazidis, Christians, and others. 25 were displaced between 2014 and 2017 and 4 between 2011 and 2014. The interviews also included three age groups: one being (18-38 years), which included 5 interviews with males, 6 with females; another age group (39-59), consisting of 6 males and 8 females; and thirdly age group 60 and above, including 3 males and 1 female. The field team also held two meetings with meso level actors and several meetings at the level of decision makers at the macro level.<sup>2</sup>

The use of these three approaches has led to conclusions and recommendations for achieving a local and accessible integration of refugees in general and Syrians in particular in Iraq to end their suffering, feelings of alienation, homelessness and to enable them to live a normal life in Iraq.

<sup>2</sup> See table No.8

## 3. Integration Policy: Legal and Policy Framework

### 3.1. Historical Development

Mesopotamia has a long history of accepting refugees and migrants before its modern state was formed in 1921, and waves of immigrants and refugees have merged into its social structure. Therefore, Iraq is one of the countries with multiple ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity. For its population now numbering to more than 35 million people, it includes religious components such as Muslims, Christians, Yazidis, Sabaeans, Mandaeans, Kakaien, Zoroastrianism, and others. It also includes ethnic groups such as Arabs, who constitute the vast majority, and divided into two main denominations, Sunnah and Shiite; the Kurds, numbering 5 million who are also divided into two major denominations, Sunnis and Shiites (though the majority are Sunnah); Turkmen; Assyrians; Shabaks and others.

The policies of integration in Iraq have been characterized by instability, as a result of changing approaches and ideologies of successive regimes ruling Iraq. Sometimes, changes occurred even within the same government as it shifted its approach. Therefore, legislation and regulations have changed according to these political fluctuations.

There has been a gradual improvement in Iraqi laws and decisions starting with the monarchy. The pace of improvement increased in the republican era, whether during the rule of Abdul Karim Qassim (1958-1963) or in the era of the Ba'ath rule (1968-2003). However, it suffered a setback in terms of legislation, laws and decisions after the fall of the regime in 2003. Therefore, legislations and policies were issued during the monarchy, such as Law No. 5 of 1949 after what was called the 1948 catastrophe and it was called the law (stamp duty). When the republican system came in 1958, a new system of policies was instituted and laws were issued, such as the Refugee Law 114 of 1959. The latter was amended by Resolution No. (10) On 2 K2 1971, which stipulated the formation of a permanent committee to examine, study and address refugee issues during the Baath regime, which had ruled in the period 1968-2003. It was followed by new legislations and policies consistent with the approach of the Arab nationalist system. This meant to review and repeal the amended Law 114 of 1959 as a consequence of the issuance of Law 51 of 1971.

These changes were meant to make the legislation conducive for achieving the integration of Arabic groups in Iraq. This policy continued in the wake of arrival of waves of Palestinians after the so-called 1948 Catastrophe and the War of 1967 and War of October 1973, and applied by the regime in dealing with political oppositions from neighbouring countries and particularly Syria, Iran and others. Unfortunately, the refugee file and the process of their integration have been used as tool for political blackmailing and as an ideological or political card especially against neighbouring countries or against countries Iraq had political differences with.

#### 3.1.1. Changes in Integration Policies Since 2011

Our research focuses on the period of 2011-2017, integration policies were influenced by political factors and their fluctuations, and were controlled by three main factors.

- Political instability in Iraq and internal conflicts, especially between the federal government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government and its impact on refugees, which was evident during and after the Kurdish referendum.
- The demographic changes that resulted from the so-called "Arab Spring" and the resulting disturbance, especially the violence in Syria.

- The expanding role of terrorist groups and the ISIS occupation of large areas in Syria; its occupation of one third of Iraq, after controlling Nineveh, the second most populous governorate of Iraq, and the governorates of Anbar and Salah al-Din; and the displacement of more than three million internally, to safer and relatively stable areas (MOMD, 2017a).

These three factors above cast a shadow over the refugee situation, not only on the policies of integration, but also on the nature of the efforts to receive and protect them in general. This created the need to manage the file of migration and asylum in Iraq, and prompted the Iraqi government – as one of the actors, the main driver and responsible for implementing policies towards refugees and protecting them – to submit a draft law and develop policies mandated to the Permanent Committee for Refugee Affairs of the Interior Ministry as one of the authorities, besides The Ministry of Migration and Displaced, to deal with the file. Accordingly, a comprehensive draft law was presented in 2017 to regulate refugee conditions, but political conflicts and discords have led to its failure to pass to this day.

Iraq is a signatory to all major international human rights conventions and also has a political refugee law, but the definition of refugees in them does not align with international standards. Practically, Iraq has always been welcoming of refugees. There are also some post-Saddam Hussein legislations, which excluded the Palestinians from some protection; and some rights were complex and somewhat negative. There is also little clarity between the new Residency Law of 2017 and the effective provisions of the Law for Refugees of 1971. We believe there is some confusion in terms of application and implementation; the legal system in the KRI, in dealing with refugee issues, does not work with the mandate or authority that the federal government adheres to, and the Kurdistan region of Iraq works within a legal environment based on unconventional residency laws. This makes it difficult for us to provide legal arguments, by referring to national legislation.<sup>3</sup>

### **3.1.2. Governance of Integration Policies**

It is also known that Iraq, through its permanent constitution of 2005, is a federal state in which the Kurdistan region is located, and there are provinces that are not linked to regions, and seeks to strengthen the decentralized system of government. As such, there is a kind of decentralization in the management of integration and protection of refugees and asylum seekers. In other words, there are no strict central plans that the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the governorates and local administrations must implement. Nevertheless, the government of Iraq is responsible for the protection, reception, and integration of refugees, although this is not clear in the constitution, Law 51 of 1971 includes provisions which convey that sense. On the operational level, PCMOI, affiliated to the Ministry of Interior, has expanded its work to undertake the registration process for refugees in the Kurdistan Region. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Iraq and the UNHCR in October 2016 to enhance the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, according to which the Iraqi government provides registration documents and identification for refugees and asylum seekers, while UNHCR provides consultation, technical and logistical support to the aforementioned standing committee of refugees, to facilitate the management of refugees affairs in Iraq.

At the national level, the Ministry of Interior is responsible for the contents of the MoU, while other government ministries undertake responsibilities for other national projects commensurate with their capabilities. Among these ministries are, for instance, the Ministry of Migration and Displaced, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Obviously, most of the burden is on the Ministry of Interior, but the rest of the ministries have a role in protecting and providing services to refugees and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Interior deals with the issue of documents, registration, residency, etc., and the Ministry of Migration and Displaced in

<sup>3</sup> Interview (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-No.2), 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

providing services. Unifying the myriad of entities responsible for the various elements of refugee integration remain a challenge.<sup>4</sup>

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the (KRI), the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), has not incorporated any legal provisions into domestic legislation to regulate the refugee situation, nor does the 2009 draft of the region's constitution, despite the increased number of refugees there, make any reference to refugees.

To follow up on the affairs of the region (KRI), UNHCR is working closely with the Ministry of Interior and its Residency Directorate, the Asayish and the Ministry of Planning. In regard to changes during the period 2011-2017, there has been no fundamental change except for the authorities in Baghdad beginning to register Syrian refugees in the KRI in 2018. This was the most significant change since 2011.<sup>5</sup>

The government in coordination with other international actors, especially the United Nations, did not stand idle by on the issue of refugees and displaced persons. The government worked diligently to improve their conditions and protect them in accordance with previous effective laws and international standards on human rights ratified by Iraq. In this regard, and concerning the issue of integration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Iraq revealed on June 20, 2018, that Iraq is hosting 300,000 refugees, of whom 250,000 are Syrian refugees, and the Kurdistan region of Iraq hosts 97% of the Syrian refugees in Iraq. As Mr. Bruno Geddo, the representative of the agency, said: "Refugees are generously receiving services and equal access to work, education and social services for the local population" (RUDAW, 2018).

These numbers of refugees in Iraq are part of the total refugee population in the world, which amounts to approximately 68 million people who have been displaced around the world due to conflict, human rights violations and natural disasters (RUDAW, 2018). Also, the reports of the Ministry of Migration and Displaced and its official data seen by the research team confirm the ministry's; interest in registering Syrian refugees in the governorates of central and southern Iraq, managing their data in an integrated manner; and commitment of the Iraqi government to host them, provide them with humanitarian support, and enable them to overcome the challenges they face, especially in the legal and economic aspects.

**Table 1. Number of Syrian refugees entered Iraq according the years and their percentages in the camps (MOMD, 2013-2017).**

Year	Syrian Refugees No. in Iraq	Syrian Refugees No. in KRI	Number inside the camps in KRI	% In the camps	% outside camps
2013	210,612	204,374	79,114	38,71%	61,29%
2014	228,484	220,541	93,800	41,73%	58,27%
2015	248,503	240,285	93,088	38,07%	61,93%
2016	227,971	219,468	87,099	38,87%	61,13%
2017	239,639	231,393	90,816	37,9%	62,10%

The bilateral communications also include the request to agree; to accept the document issued by the High Commission for them (the protection document), which is the basic document, in case they do not have accompanying documents; to coordinate with the Kurdistan Regional Government for the purpose of cooperation in exchanging data and information on Syrian refugees and the management of camps in the region; that the Ministry interferes in the process of obtaining information about their whereabouts and needs; and to coordinate with the Ministry of Interior regarding granting temporary residence, and preparing programs to provide financial assistance and material resources in coordination with the UNHCR or the authoritative actors (MOMD, 2017b).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Table 1 shows the numbers of Syrian refugees who entered Iraq for the period (2013-2017), and their numbers in the Kurdistan region, as well as the percentages of those who are residing inside and outside the camps.

The table indicates that only 38% of refugees reside inside formal camps, meaning that the majority of refugees reside outside of camps, in urban town and cities. It also shows from the table that the largest proportion of Syrian refugees reside in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as the total average number is 223,212 Syrian citizens.<sup>6</sup>

Refugees in Iraq are classified and numbered as follows:

1. Palestinian refugees: Those who have entered Iraq since 1948. There are 9,500 refugees, most of whom live in Baghdad in a government housing complex (Mujama'a Al Baladiat, municipal complex), and their number reaches more than 5,000 refugees, while the others live in other Iraqi provinces. The state provides them with all the rights that are provided to the Iraqi citizen, such as education, health, ration card, and other social services such as their inclusion in the social protection network (MOMD, 2017c).

2. Syrian Refugees: Approximately 252,000<sup>7</sup>, residing in central and southern governorates, although the majority, approximately 231,000, reside in the Kurdistan region of Iraq (Warda, W. et al, 2018).

3. Sudanese refugees: There are 830 Sudanese refugees in Iraq, most of whom live in Baghdad.

4. Turkish Kurdish refugees: They number about 11,500 and live in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

5. Iranian Kurdish refugees: They number about 8,500 refugees, and live in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

6. Al-Ahwazi refugees: They number 153 refugees and live in Baghdad, Basra, and Qadisiyah (Warda, W. et al, 2018).

### 3.2. Legal Framework

As was pointed out in our Iraq country report WP1 on legal and policy framework (Warda, W. et al, 2018), Iraq has not joined the International Refugee Convention of 51 and its 1967 protocol, nor does it possess a comprehensive and clear legal framework to deal with refugee affairs in general. It rather handles these matters according to the circumstances and in the light of the prevailing conditions on case-by-case basis. This generates inconsistencies depending on approaches and the prevailing political environment in every stage of the processes. As previously explained, Iraq has not yet enacted a comprehensive refugee law. There is only a draft law, which the government sent to Parliament on 12/28/2017, but it did not pass in the end, for the reasons that were mentioned in our previous report WP4 on refugee reception (Warda, Al maffraji and Khorshid, 2020).

It is noteworthy though, that Iraq does have a law for political refugees only, regulating their humanitarian, economic, social and educational conditions, namely, Law 51 of 1971, which accords political refugees the same rights that Iraqi citizens and enable them to benefit from health and cultural services, the practice of professions, business, employment and the right to family reunion or reunion with their legally dependent individuals. These people are granted the right to reside as long as they have the right to asylum. This law also gives the right to refugees to obtain agricultural land in accordance with the provisions of the Agrarian

<sup>6</sup> The rate was calculated by the number of refugees who arrived in the Kurdistan region during the years 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 according to the statistics of the Ministry of Migration and Displaced.

<sup>7</sup> Interview (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-No.2)



Reform Law. However, the land is not registered in the name of a refugee until after he has acquired Iraqi citizenship. The President of the Republic, based on a proposal by the Minister of Interior, is entitled to grant some or all of the refugees other rights that the Iraqi citizens enjoy.<sup>8</sup>

The adaptation of laws for refugees is not controlled in Iraq, and not all refugees are treated equally.<sup>9</sup> This has resulted from the change of political systems and their different manners. In the period of the previous political system that spanned from 1968 to 2003, the Revolutionary Command Council issued several decisions to regulate Palestinian refugee affairs in Iraq, such as the Resolution 379 of 1979 related to the inclusion of Palestinian citizens residing in Iraq in the provisions of the Compulsory Education and Compulsory Literacy Laws, and Resolution 202 of 2001,<sup>10</sup> which gives Palestinian refugees all the rights of an Iraqi citizen with the exception of his right to obtain citizenship, which was repealed after the issuance of the Residency Law No. 76 of 2017. In addition there is Resolution 366 of 1969, the first paragraph of which refers to the establishment of popular housing complexes for Palestinian refugees stipulating that all conditions and services should be provided, in these houses, for the benefit of the Palestinians as long as they are in Iraq. The second paragraph calls for the equality for the Palestinians with Iraqis, in appointment, promotion, retirement, vacations, scholarships, and entry to universities and colleges in addition to the military college.<sup>11</sup>

However, the Foreigners' Residency Law No. 76 of 2017 repealed their Residence Law No. 118 of 1978, and the provisions of the new law affected the Palestinian refugees, causing them to lose many of their rights and privileges acquired under the Political Refugees Law 51 of 1971, and the decisions of the Revolutionary Command Council of the former regime as mentioned above. The cancellation of the Revolutionary Command Council Decision No. 202 has many repercussions on Palestinian families. Currently, the successor is deprived of retirement and the ration card was withheld from Palestinian refugees in June 2018, which led to 106 Palestinian families being deprived of food rations.<sup>12</sup> The Immigration Department of the Ministry of Migration and Displaced stated that the repeal of Resolution 202, caused a setback in the protection that Palestinian refugees were receiving. For example, when the Palestinians were displaced in 2006-2007, and after 2014, they were treated the same way as displaced Iraqis in term of employment, university studies and other privileges.

However, the Residence Law No. 76 of 2017 overruled the rights previously granted to them and deprived them of acquisitions of, such as, the ration card and retirement. As such, it negatively impacted the humanitarian situation of Palestinian refugee children, despite the fact that the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers issued a clarification about the law. He clarified that it is not based on legal foundations,<sup>13</sup> and that the Aliens Residence Law No. 76 of 2017 came to regulate the residency of foreigners and has nothing to do with the issue of asylum, suggesting that what was stated regarding the violation of the rights of Palestinian refugee guests in Iraq is dealt with according to the law Refugees No. 51 for the year 1971. This indicates that the abolition of the dissolved Revolutionary Command Council Decision No. 202 of 2001 which treated the Palestinian as an Iraqi in terms of rights and duties, except for his right to obtain citizenship, under the Aliens Residence Law No. 76 of 2017 does not in

<sup>8</sup> Law 51 of 1971, Article 11.

<sup>9</sup> Sana Fadel, UNHCR, (Roundtable) organized by the Iraqi Respond Team with government experts and representatives of international and local organizations on 15/12/2018 in Baghdad.

<sup>10</sup> Iraqi laws and regulations, decision of the dissolved Revolutionary Command Council, [online] Available at: [wiki.dorar-aliraq.net](http://wiki.dorar-aliraq.net)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Sana Fadel, op.cit.

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Hantouk, Director of the Migration Department, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, the roundtable organized by the Iraqi Respond Work Team with a government experts and representatives of international and local organizations on 15/12/2018 in Baghdad.

any way prejudice the rights of the resident Palestinian In Iraq, which were organized by decisions and regulations still in effect for them.

The statement of the secretariat added:

These decisions include his [the Palestinian's] right to appointment; his right to compulsory education; entry to universities and colleges; the exemption of the students among them from fees for entry permits to Iraq; sending him on scholarships, and his right to obtain leave to study, etc. It confirmed that the rights that have been pointed out, with regard to our Palestinian brothers, are fixed and respected.<sup>14</sup>

This statement raised many questions, and afterwards, the Palestinian ambassador to Iraq (Ahmed Aqel) visited the Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jubouri, who promised to complete a legal formula that equalizes the Palestinian community with their Iraqi peers in rights and duties.

A researcher specializing in Palestinian affairs in Iraq, Hassan Al-Khaled, said in an interview, with the newspaper (Quds Press), that the speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, Salim al-Jabouri's talk with the Ambassador Ahmed Aqel about searching for a legal formula on the Palestinian situation in Iraq, nullifies all clarifications that were issued by General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers or even by the Prime Minister himself in his speech at his weekly conference that followed the clarification of the General Secretariat where he said:

*The decisions issued regarding the residency of foreigners in Iraq do not affect Palestinian refugees in Iraq, neither from near nor from afar, despite the cancellation of Resolution 202 for the year 2001, which stipulates that the Palestinian be treated like an Iraqi except for citizenship and the service of science and political action.*

He affirmed that "there are laws that regulate the treatment of Palestinians in Iraq and that all the media has reported is lies and slander." Khalid questioned that, If the Prime Minister's talk was correct why did Jubouri, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, promise the Palestinian ambassador to accomplish a legal text regulating the lives of Palestinian refugees in Iraq in the coming days?"<sup>15</sup>

Among the legal problems Syrian refugees and refugees from neighbouring countries are facing is the fact that Iraq, according to paragraph 3 of Article Two of the Political Refugees Law No. 51 of 1971, considers them displaced from the border areas into the Iraqi territory and are not given the status of asylum seekers. Thus, the law deals with them as trespassing the borders, and they are sentenced according to Iraqi law for violating the border.

Recently, a decision was issued by the National Security Council No. 9 of 2019 that the Ministry of Interior undertakes to issue a personal identification card to them in coordination with the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq and accord them legal status as displaced from the border areas to Iraqi territory. For this reason, the Iraqi courts have been hesitant to issue judicial decisions against those who crossed the border, and thus they are being released until the identification documents are completed in Iraq. Whereas, the Ministry of Interior gives a temporary personal identity to them through which the refugees can work and enrol in schools and universities.<sup>16</sup>

The first problem a refugee faces is the legal adaptation of his condition. The problem in Iraq is the presence of several refugee classifications. Some are registered as refugees, some others are registered as asylum seekers and still others are registered as external or (across the border) displaced. Article 11 of the Political Refugees Law No. 51 of 1971, which guaranteed the refugee the right to enjoy all services (such as health, education, etc.) similar

<sup>14</sup> Source: <https://www.alsumaria.tv/news/224984/> Accessed 23 May 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Source: <https://www.qudspress.com/index.php?page=show&id=39846> Accessed 23 May 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with an expert on the Standing Committee for Refugees on February 15, 2020.

to Iraqis, including the right to own property, is subject to approval by the Minister of the Interior.<sup>17</sup>

The existence of a law in Iraq for political refugees in 1971, which has already been mentioned, in line with the laws on refugees in general in Europe and in developed countries, should have been made the basis for further improvements. After 50 years of its enactment, the law should have been improved to include all refugees, and not to be limited to political refugees, and to be in line with the standards of international law and international agreements and instruments, especially those concerned with human rights, all of which Iraq has ratified. The issuance by Iraq of the Residence of Foreigners Law No. 76 of 2017, and the cancellation of previous concessions that had been granted to refugees by previous laws and decisions, represents a retreat in the legal frameworks and public policies for refugees. These have inflicted losses on political refugees in Iraq (Palestinians and Syrians), who were made subject to the Residence of Foreigners Law No. 76 for the year 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Sana Fadel, *op.cit.*

## 4. Labour Market and Employment

### 4.1. Employment at Regulatory Level

As previously mentioned, the statistics of the Iraqi Ministry of Immigration and Displacement reveal that the number of Syrian refugees in Iraq reaches about a quarter of a million people. 97% of them reside in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the rest are scattered throughout different regions of Iraq. Because of the policies in Iraq, asylum seekers have access to the labour market after obtaining residency and security investigation<sup>18</sup>, just as the Political Refugees Law No. 51 of 1971 has given refugees the right to work and access to health and educational services as they are Iraqis.

There are provisions in the Residence Law in the Kurdistan region of Iraq that grants asylum applicants the right to enter the labour market when they obtain residency<sup>19</sup>, and that those who reside in the camps according to the data of the Ministry of Immigration who are (38%)<sup>20</sup> can work freely in the camps even if they do not obtain residency. At the same time the Iraqi authorities allow them to work outside the designated camps after they are sponsored by known Iraqi people, or if the employer guarantees them to work in companies, institutions or the private sector after taking the necessary security clearances (Warda, Al maffraji and Khorshid, 2020).

The large influx of internally displaced people to the Kurdistan Region in 2014 had several repercussions. There were 1,123,177 internally displaced people who fled from the ISIS- held areas, alongside Syrian refugees (about 249,293), resulting in a 28% increase in the population of the region (MERI, 2019) The region witnessed a financial crisis due to the cost of the war against ISIS, the humanitarian crisis, low oil prices and the lack of adequate financial allocations in the budget from the federal government. Refugees and host communities suffered from this.

In fact, the unemployment rate in the region increased almost five times from 3% in 2013 to 14% in 2016, and the poverty rate increased dramatically from 6% to 14%. Despite this, the local population generously welcomed refugee families and with fundraising campaigns to help them as they were facing poverty (MERI, 2019).

According to the World Bank report, these problems caused a shortage of resources in the labour sector. There was a general decline in wages and the report also indicates that since 2011, the poverty rate in Kurdistan region of Iraq increased from 3.5% to 8.1% (MERI, 2019).

The lack of income due to unemployment or under employment is a factor that causes many problems, including the inability to pay housing rent and the cost of basic family needs (IOM-Iraq, 2013). It has even driven some families to displacement, as they were unable to send children to schools and had difficulty obtaining specialized health services (IOM-Iraq, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Interview (Irq-1DGHY-Meso- F-No.1),24<sup>th</sup> Jan,2019

<sup>19</sup> Interview (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-No.2),op.cit.

<sup>20</sup> See table No.1

## 4.2. Labour Market Challenges and the Informal Labour Market

One of the biggest obstacles that asylum seekers and refugees face in entering the labour market is the language barrier. With regard to Kurds in the north, there is the issue of certificates and recognition, especially when wishing to engage in official business. The issue of certificates is important not only to enter into the workforce, but also to reach higher education as well. Refugees must bring it before fleeing for the professional work and there are provisions or procedures for recognition that are not necessarily known, but most refugees or asylum seekers prefer informal work than doing the equivalent of their diplomas.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, most of the jobs that are usually performed by asylum seekers and refugees are private and unofficial work and sometimes do not align with the refugees' educational background and training. The legal complexities affect the refugees' ability to access work due to the many security clearances and legal documents needed to apply for many positions.<sup>22</sup> The multiplicity of classifications for refugees generates discrimination against them in the labour market, and, as mentioned above, Iraq has different decisions to deal with different categories of refugees, as well as the policies pursued between the region and the centre affects the refugee right to work and the opportunities available, and the popular view of different refugee groups results in discrimination in the labour market.<sup>23</sup>

Refugees have more opportunities to integrate into the labour market than asylum seekers, for example, that the Palestinians have largely integrated into the labour market in Iraq as well as Syrians in the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI), but the issue of residency is important that gives them the right to work for one year. The access for asylum seekers to the labour market is determined by the issue of residency, permanent residency does not exist<sup>24</sup>, and even Palestinians are granted temporary renewable residency because citizenship is prohibited for them.<sup>25</sup> Those classified as refugees have more opportunities to integrate into the labour market than asylum seekers. For example, Palestinian refugees were given temporary, but renewable residencies, which allows them to enter into the labour market more easily than those classified as asylum seekers.

Although Syrian refugees are allowed to work, there are legal obstacles in professional such as law, pharmacy, dentistry, and taxi driving, whereby professional certifications are required (MERI, 2019). A small number of Syrian refugees are able to establish companies or have individual ownership interests due to the provisions of the Law of 1971. There are those who have been able to organize small projects such as barber salons, medical clinics and cosmetic clinics. There is no doubt that there is a variation in the legal treatment of refugees. For example, Palestinians had more opportunities for doing business, according to the Iraqi legal system <sup>26</sup> which was more tolerant to them, because Iraq was not within the areas of

<sup>21</sup> Interview (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-No.2).

<sup>22</sup> Interview (Irq-1DGHY-Meso-F-No.1).

<sup>23</sup> Sanaa Fadhil, op.cit.

<sup>24</sup> Interview (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-No.2).

<sup>25</sup> Iraq is committed to Arab League resolutions, which prohibit Arab countries from granting citizenship to Palestinians, to ensure their rights to return to Palestine in light of the Arab-Israeli conflict. See, Article 6, second of the Iraqi Nationality Law No. 26 of 2006, states that "Iraqi citizenship may not be granted to Palestinians as a guarantee of the right to return to their homeland.

<sup>26</sup> Interview (Irq-1DGHY-Meso- F-No.1).

(UNRWA) activity because the authority in Iraq granted the Palestinian refugees a lot of rights, aid and protections (Palestine Today Magazine, 2012).

### 4.3. Actors

One of the most important actors in supporting refugees and asylum seekers to access the labour market in Iraq is the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) which is effective in this direction. There is a general understanding between (UNHCR) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to communicate and analyze the needs of the market to find training opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to increase their chances of finding work. The International Labour Organization (ILO) does not have a physical presence in Iraq but has agents working for it and carrying out training programs implemented with the Iraqi government. There are also smaller actors represented by national and local civil society organizations contracted with international organizations that train life skills for refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>27</sup>

### 4.4. Access to Labour Market: Experiences of Asylum Seekers and Refugees

With regards to work policies, as mentioned earlier, the language barrier is an important factor for one's ability to enter the labour market. Likewise, is the issue of academic certificates and their recognition, particularly when it comes to entering official businesses. The issue of certificates is important not only to obtain work but also to continue higher education. It is also required for professional work, for which there are legal provisions, although it is not necessary to detail them here. "But most refugees or asylum seekers prefer informal work, rather than attempting to equalize their certificates." (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

In general, integration into the labour market differs among refugee groups, as well as in terms of their place of residence. As for the Palestinians, they have integrated in the labour market in Iraq, and the Syrians in the KRI as well. But the residency permit gives them the right to work for one year (renewable), so obtaining residency confers the right to work. The refugees have the right to work according to the law. As for asylum seekers, they are subject to Residency. Permanent residency does not exist. Even Palestinians depend on temporary and renewed residency, and there is no granting of the Iraqi citizenship to them. (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2)

Within the framework of field work with Syrians, after conducting 29 interviews with asylum seekers, several points and patterns were noted concerning the refugees' involvement in the labour market, their integration with their fellow refugees and the local population of the country regarding treatment, allocation of tasks, and appropriateness of work assigned to them in terms of appropriateness of the jobs and their compatibility with their previous work and their skills in their home country.

A number of asylum seekers and refugees confirmed that they had found work in which they can make use of their skills. A Syrian refugee said:

I looked for work and it took two months. I have on my own searched for the job and got it. I did not have problems getting work. Sometimes I resort to my friends in order to find work. I have not faced violations or problems at work. I have myself found my current work. (Irq-25AWH-Micro-Syr-M-No.25).

<sup>27</sup> Interview (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

Another Syrian refugee said:

I did not experience problems at work, and I am comfortable. Relationships were difficult at first, but things changed with more mixing, and the situation became better, and things got easier after we got to know a man from Baghdad who helped us and we are still working with him. I work as a tailor in Ankawa. After I came here, there were language difficulties and then we got used to it and getting along well with everyone. Our nature in Syria differs. Particularly, in Syria there is diversity; we live with Christians, Arabs and others. I had to work as a simple worker and got the job through my brother. The work day in the current job is very long but I have to work because to meet my needs and I am comfortable (Irq-8ABA-Micro-Syr-M-No.8).

Another person said:

My work has been going on since I arrived until now, and in my work, I feel comfortable despite the length of work that exceeds 12 hours a day, and I work in the management of the restaurant. The hotel owners treat me well and treat me like one of their sons. I have not faced a bad situation in order to ask for help. I have not failed to attend the job. (Irq-6SHMH-Micro-Syr-M-No.6).

Another Syrian refugee states:

I learned here the trade of electrician and worked in companies in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil within this profession. The work I do is appropriate to my desire and skill and I feel comfortable in my work as an electrician. I had difficulties finding work, my Syrian friends helped me find work. (Irq-20RKA-Micro-Syr-M-No.20).

Many refugees were forced to work in occupations that do not match their skills in order to make a living. A Syrian refugee said:

The most difficult thing that happened to me was not getting a job, since I had eleven months without work. The most important requirement for integration is having a job whereby I can provide education for my children. Because of financial hardship, I work at the market. That was not compatible with my profession, my education, nor my language. I used to run it. Then I left work and spent two and a half months until I got work through Iraqis. It was by chance. I worked out of my profession and the work was not compatible with my education, but I worked below my qualifications because I had no choice. (Irq-1HFK-Micro-Syr-M-No.1).

Another refugee describes the work that he did:

I work in Kurdistan, in various occupations, metal workers for cement (construction), washing cars, working in a beverage factory, and currently I work as a waiter in a hotel. At the beginning of my work at the hotel I earned very little for a month during the training. But I had no choice. (Irq-4RLM-Micro-Syr-M-No.4).

Another refugee describes the work that he practiced:

I work in Kurdistan and have worked in various occupations (mourning armament (construction), washing cars, working in a beverage factory) and currently I work as a waiter in a hotel and at the beginning of my work in the hotel and for a month of training I did a little So I had to "(Irq-4RLM-Micro-Syr-M-No.4).

Another refugee added:

I got a job two months after my arrival in Iraq, and work in Iraq is not the same as what I used to have in Syria. I am now working as a hotel guard, and I am not satisfied with it. I would have preferred another job. I had problems while looking for a job. A relative of mine who used to help in finding job has travelled. My work changed four times. I worked as an accountant at the University of Sciences, then an accountant

in the cola company and then in a restaurant, and then I worked as a guard at the hotel. (Irq-5HFM-Micro-Syr-M-No.5).

And another explained:

You have to work hard. I iron customers' clothes. The work is not compatible with my skills, I do not feel comfortable. I preferred to work in trading, I did not face formal obstacles at work and my relatives helped me to get to work. (Irq-7MSA-Micro-Syr-M-No.7).

A person also added that he was able to find work for only few days. As a Syrian refugee said:

I work as a daily labourer with daily wages. The Kurdish dialect here differs and now I am better integrated with society. I cannot find work continuously, my work does not match my qualifications, work is difficult, lack of skills I have, somewhat feel comfortable in my work because it meets me my needs. I face obstacles to find work, I find work with difficulty. I ask my friends and I look for work, sometimes I go to the yard where the workers are and other colleagues ask me to work with them, there is cooperation with my friends to find work. (Irq-17AFA-Micro-Syr-M-No.17).

Another refugee said:

I work with daily wages, and of course this does not make me feel comfortable. The way I work is that I wait daily in the square, and sometimes through contact, and if there is a fixed job or job that would be better, and I know the languages in the host country. My work is compatible with my skills. There are no insults or violations regarding work. The lack of continuous work constitutes an obstacle to me.(Irq-22MAR-Micro-Syr-M-No.22).

Another refugee said:

I am a day labourer, one day I find work, and twenty days I cannot find one. In the whole last three months, I worked only for two days. I go out to the square, until an employer comes, but if they do not come, I stay until evening and then go back home without a job. There are a lot of graduates who work as day labourer. Most of the jobs do not fit with my skills. I am a construction worker, but other than construction does not agree with me. I would not be comfortable when I don't find a job, but I feel comfortable when I work. Yes, I face obstacles in finding work because there is little opportunity. I get assistance for work from my acquaintance and friends when I contact them. They help me and contact me when they find me a job. (Irq-24KJK-Micro-Syr-M-No.24).

Another refugee asserted:

The nature of my work here is that I am an ordinary worker – I work for one day and go without a job for two months. I have difficulty finding work and I call on factories and workshops. But if you are not known to them or have not been recommended by someone known, you will not be employed. In the beginning, it took five months until I found a job through relatives recommending me. Currently, I have been unemployed for two years. My work in Syria was compatible with my skills, but here I am an ordinary worker (Irq-29NSRR-Micro-Syr-M-No.29).

Some of the refugees faced problems obtaining employment due to the war against ISIS and the decrease in job opportunities at the time. As a refugee said: "I had difficulties finding work and stayed for a long time without work due to the war with ISIS and the decrease in job opportunities" (Irq-23ASHA- Micro-Syr- M –No.23). And another refugee added:

Two years ago there was work, after 2014 job opportunities were reduced due to the large number of refugees, here you either join the peshmerga and get a salary of 250,000 Iraqi dinars or remain on the sidewalk (Irq-24KJK-Micro-Syr-M-No.24).



Some people were discriminated against on the basis of nationality and were exploited financially, in the sense that they received less wages than individuals from host communities. Sometimes employers did not pay their salaries or wages. The discrimination may have been due to the fact that they do not speak the language. As one refugee states, "My job is 12 hours a day for only \$400 a month." (Irq-3OMK-Micro-Syr-M-No.3). This is less than what Iraqis get in KRI. Another person resents that he faced some difficulties in working with a Turkish contractor. "He did not pay my full wage and left for Turkey while still owing me \$500" (Irq-20RKA-Micro-Syr-M-No.20).

And another Syrian Christian refugee, complains about his condition, because he does not know the prevailing language in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, as he says, "I face problems in obtaining work, and I am not preferred at work because I do not speak Kurdish" (Irq-1HFK-Micro-Syr-M-No.1). Some also added that they are unable to work for many reasons, "I did not look for work because I have five children and I am sick and have a stomach ulcer" (Irq-16SHMB-Micro-Syr-F-No.16).

## 5. Education

### 5.1. Formal Education, Policies and Implementation

Education is a basic human right affirmed by most international human rights treaties and conventions and the rights of the child, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 26, which states that "everyone has the right to education" and, other international instruments developed by the United Nations focused on it later, including *The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966), the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education. And that crises, conflicts, wars and other disasters may lead to imbalances in the continuation of education and the deprivation of many of it as a result of displacement, fleeing and search for livelihoods.

Therefore, we see the necessity of studying it and its importance in relation to the integration of refugees in host countries. As for the refugees in Iraq, the civil war in Syria that started in 2011 led millions of people to seek safety in neighbouring countries, including Iraq, and large numbers of people poured across the borders into western Iraq in Ramadi and in the Kurdistan region of Iraq in the north. The number of Syrian refugees who fled to Iraq has reached 252,000,<sup>28</sup> and as was mentioned earlier, up to 97% of them reside in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and 38% reside in 9 refugee camps in the governorates of Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah. The rest are hosted within urban and rural communities.<sup>29</sup>

In the same context, the total number of individuals from the Syrian refugees residing in the governorates of (Baghdad, Anbar, Kirkuk, and other places) reached 8,246 refugees, representing 3.4% of the total number of Syrians in Iraq (Muftin, 2017). In the border governorate of Anbar with Syria, Syrian asylum seekers arriving in Iraq received attention in education. A school has been opened in each of the three camps in Al-Qa'im for children of primary school age in Al-Qa'im camp by Al-Qa'im Education Directorate, and they relied on Iraqi educational curricula and civil society NGOs supported by UNICEF have opened supplementary schools for children from other stages, to play games and sports (Muhammad, 2020).

After the refugee's legal status becomes legally sound, the refugee parents have the right to register their children in any Iraqi public school. As for universities, they are free for Palestinian refugees only<sup>30</sup>. For non-Palestinians, university education is subject to the instructions of the expatriate department in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, whether it is free or not. In the Kurdistan region of Iraq, a report issued by the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCCC) of the Ministry of Interior in the Kurdistan region of Iraq reveals that:

- 34% of the Syrian refugees are children between the ages 0-11 years.
- 62% of Syrian children between the ages of 6-12 years are not enrolled in education in formal or informal schools.

Students are distributed as follows:

- The number of Syrian refugee children enrolled in schools is 32,198, of which:
  - Erbil 16,088
  - Duhok 12,796
  - Sulaymaniyah 3,314 (JCCC, 2019).

<sup>28</sup> Interview (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

<sup>29</sup> See table No.1,p.17.

<sup>30</sup> Mohamed Hantouk, Director of the Refugee Division at the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, roundtable meeting 12/15/2018.

In the same context, the report of the Harmoon Centre for Contemporary Studies indicates that the number of schools in the camps of the Kurdistan region reached 31 schools until the academic year 2018, in addition to kindergartens existing in all camps, and its work focuses on recreational activity more than the educational aspect and schools are distributed as shown in table 2.

**Table 2. Schools number by refugee camps in Iraq, 2018**

Name of the Camp	No. of Schools	Details
Darshakran	4	2 primary, 1 prepatory, 1 secondary
Gawerkosk	4	2 primary, 1 intermediate, 1 secondary
Basirma	2	1 basic education from first to ninth grade, 1 secondary.
Qushtapa	3	2 primary, 1 secondary
Domiz1	8	7 basic education, 1 secondary
Doniz 2	4	3 basic education, 1 secondary
Adrah	1	1 basic education
Giwelan	2	1 primary, 1 secondary
Barika	3	2 primary, 1 secondary
Total number	31	

The increase in the number of refugees residing outside the camps and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis from Mosul, Ramadi and Salah al-Din to the Kurdistan region of Iraq in 2014, prompted the Kurdistan Regional Government to cooperate and support international organizations to create other schools in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, so the total number of schools for refugees until March 2019 reached the number of 55 schools distributed as follows:

- Erbil 28 schools
- Duhok 18 schools
- Sulaymaniyah 9 schools (JCCC, 2019)

At the end of 2018, the number of Syrian refugees who received primary education support was 15210 (UNHCR-Iraq, 2018). A report issued by the Harmoon Centre for Contemporary Studies confirms that despite the increase in the number of schools, there is a dense number of students in the classroom (HCCS, 2018). The overcrowding of the classes is due to a lack of teaching staff and the addition of more lessons in a shorter time (UNHCR, 2016). It is also due to the fact that schools that were established in cities after the displacement of the people of Mosul, Sinjar and the areas of the Nineveh Plain in 2014, where classes are conducted in Arabic. Many Syrian refugees joined them to complete their education, leading to overcrowding. There was some difficulty with integration due to the fact that Syrian refugees had a different culture and customs, and were not learning under normal psychosocial conditions (UNHCR, 2016).

In Duhok Governorate, there are more than 10,000 student refugees distributed in 14 schools that lack sufficient educational resources. In one of Domiz camp schools, in the city of Duhok, which accommodates approximately 35,000 refugees (Dearic, 2016), there are 1,100 students in one school, but only eight teachers (Ahmed, S. and Ahmed, R., 2019). "There are 14 refugee schools in Duhok governorate, of which 12 are elementary and two preparatory schools and its educational level is the same as the other schools in Governorate", Darbas Mustafa, the Director of Education in Simel town said, and he adds: "the problem of the shortage of educational personnel exists, and it is getting more and more complicated year after year" (Ahmed, S. and Ahmed, R., 2019).

In response to the increase in students at the secondary stage and the implementation of educational support projects in the camps for Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cooperated with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq in to finance the construction of three secondary schools in each of the camps (Domiz, Darshan Corcus). This includes 1,000 students, providing training for teachers in the three schools with funds mobilized through the Emergency Relief Fund and the Central Emergency Response Fund (UNESCO, 2014).

Each of these schools includes classrooms, halls, administrative rooms, laboratories, libraries, and playgrounds. Each of the schools accommodates more than 500 students at the secondary level (HCCS, 2018), in addition to providing teachers with courses in the areas of teaching skills, education science, effective learning and psychological support. This promotes the psychological well-being of students and improve the skill set of teachers working in the camps (UNESCO, 2014).

Teaching in camps is handled by group of teachers appointed by the Education Directorates to which these schools belong, and they are mostly Syrian refugees residing in those camps with the exception of Kurdish language teachers, including citizens of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The Syrian teachers have established a union in Erbil in 2014 to defend their rights and called the Syndicate of Kurdistan Teachers Syria (HCCS, 2018).

UNESCO is active in expanding its participation activity through the establishment of additional secondary schools, with a special focus on training the teachers, organizing compensation classes for out-of-school children, expanding the scope of information and communication technology courses and increasing access to information for young people (HCCS, 2018). However, despite the fact that the percentage of Syrians who do not reside in the camps is 62%,<sup>31</sup> the enrolment rate in schools of the camps reaching 71% compared to 46% outside the camps (MERI, 2019). This means that the rate of education deprivation for those residing in urban and rural areas is more than that inside the camps.

## **5.2. Adult Education and Progression to the Universities**

Regarding students who have lost years of studies due to their displacement, the temporary education centres in the camps offer lessons in arithmetic and literacy in addition to sports and recreational activities, but they are not a substitute for formal education, especially since 48% of Syrian refugees are not enrolled in schools. According to a report by the World Bank and the Ministry of Planning in Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, and this is partly due to the lack of capabilities in the education system in the Kurdistan region (MERI, 2019), and The Barzani Charitable Society oversees the cultural centres and kindergartens in some camps, which in turn carry out educational activities for adults, in addition to the financial and in-kind support to these centres (HCCS, 2018).

<sup>31</sup> See table No.1

Alexandra Sayeh, Media Director of the Norwegian Council in Iraq, said about the rights of refugees in the Norwegian Refugee Council, which establishes temporary educational centres in the Gawelan camp that belongs to the town of Bardarash, one of the districts of Dohuk Governorate in the region Iraqi Kurdistan: "Although families affected by conflict often consider education a priority, it is not always placed among the priorities of donors in responding to emergencies" (Al-Fanar, 2020). Regarding progression to university education, refugees who passed the secondary certificate in scientific and literary branches of Iraqi schools apply to the general comparison of universities in Iraq, as do Iraqi students. The expatriate department in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research organizes their admission, and sets instructions and conditions for admission for Syrian refugees.

As for undergraduate students, refugees who have deviated from their university studies in their home country undergo a process to align their completed courses with the courses in Iraqi universities to complete their specialization according to Iraqi standards. If they require loading them with two additional study materials (subjects) according to the Iraqi criteria that are not presented in the system of their country, Syria, but they are present in Iraq, they must pass the examination of these subjects in the following academic year. But if they are loaded with more than two subjects (three or more), they are accepted at a lower stage than they were or are transferred to another specialization or another college.

As for the students who have completed their secondary education in their home country, when they are applying to Iraqi universities, they are subject to the conditions specified by the Expatriate Department at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research mentioned above. Their degrees are subject to ratification and recognition by the Iraqi Ministry of Education and then they must apply to Iraqi universities just like Iraqi students (Muhammad, 2020).

The percentage of admitted students to universities in the Kurdistan Region is low. There are a limited number of seats allocated to them due to the large number of applicants and the limited budget from the government. Therefore, refugee applicants are often put on waiting lists for scholarship programs. In this regard, the European Union has allocated \$350,000 in study grants for the Syrian refugee students coming from other countries, whose number is 178, to study in the universities of the Kurdistan region (MHE-KRG, 2017).

In this context, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Kurdistan region indicates that this number of Syrian students and other countries are accepted to study in the universities of the region for the academic year 2017-2018 according to the above-mentioned European Union program. Aram Ibrahim, Director of Central Admission at the Ministry of Higher Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq said: "The European Union and the International Refugee Organization have allocated the aforementioned financial amounts to complete (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq," and he also added, "The grant allocated by the European Union and the refugee organization, include tuition fees, housing, transportation, and health insurance" (MHE-KRG, 2017).

In the opinion of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Iraq (UNHCR), refugee education was severely affected by the conflict in the region. On the level of higher education, only 1% of refugees attended universities compared to the prevailing percentage globally, which is 34%. Mr. Bruno Geddo, representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Iraq, emphasizes that after six years have passed since the Syrian crisis, it has become necessary to think later on the first line of emergency response to the needs of Syrian refugees and giving them the opportunity to complete their university studies. Education opens up prospects for them to progress in planning their future and build their societies (UNHCR, 2016).

In this context, there is a program that started two years ago and this program is supported by the German government to help refugees and asylum seekers to complete their university studies in countries of asylum. A representative at the UNHCR office in Iraq asserts, "We

support refugee students to enter universities in the KRI within this program that started two years ago, as well as one year ago started in the central and southern regions of Iraq” (Irq-2KWV-M-F-N0.2).

120 male and female students were accepted for the academic year 2016-2017 and more than 100 students were accepted for the current year 2017-2018. The initiative known as DAFI covers study expenses and monthly salaries throughout the duration of their studies, as well as health insurance, transportation and university housing (HCCS, 2018).

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq confirms that the European Union has allocated, in accordance with the above-mentioned (DAFI) program, an amount of \$264,684 to Syrian refugee students, in addition to that the Ministry of Education in the region agreed to accept 116 students in the universities of the Kurdistan region of Iraq, after the cooperation of the German organization (DAAD), the International Organization for Migration and British Council with the support of the European Union. The students were distributed among the universities of the Kurdistan region of Iraq as follows (MHE-KRG, 2017b):

**Table 3. Shows the distribution of students in the universities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq within the (DAFI) program.**

University	Number of students	Total University Cost\$
Duhok Polytechnic	7	\$17,500
Duhok University	39	\$103,000
Hawler Polytechnic	5	\$12,000
Koya University	5	\$9,125
Salahaddin University	38	\$70,059
Suly University	10	\$26,000
Zakho university	3	\$9,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>\$264,684</b>

### 5.3. Role of the Non-State Actors In Education

With regard to international aid and civil society organizations, many international and local organizations have played a significant role in helping with education and have provided funds to promote education for Syrian refugees in Iraq, such as the French agency for Technical and Development Cooperation (ACTED), and the SPARK organization, a non-governmental organization, which has had initiatives to provide fellowships for young Syrian refugees in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and the German DAAD that implement the HOPES project in cooperation with the British Council and the French Campus France organization, as the project supports the education sector and small businesses involved in education, especially for Syrian refugees and provide aid and scholarships for Syrian students to gain access to universities in the Middle East countries (MERI, 2019), (MHE-KRG, 2017c).

It also assumed a number of international organizations and bodies working in the field of humanitarian relief and the field of education in following up and developing the education file and securing the necessary supplies for Syrian refugees in cooperation with the Kurdistan Regional Government and local governments there, such as UNESCO, which established a number of secondary schools in the camps of Domiz, Darshkran, Korkusk and equipped with

supplies necessary for education, such as stationery and school bags, insurance for teachers' salaries, and numbers of volunteers to work in the education field.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), established a number of schools in the camps, securing their requirements, qualifying educational cadres, and paying the salaries of teachers working as volunteers. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), has carried out awareness-raising and counselling programs and courses for refugee students and set up remedial courses for poor-level students and also established a number of schools and equipped them with supplies such as stationery and others, and paid the salaries of informal teachers who worked with them. The French International Primary Relief Organization (NCR) has conducted surveys of areas where there are no schools for Syrian refugees in order to ensure their transfer to camp schools and address the problem of student dropouts. And the organization (Save the Children) took care of children and programs to provide schools with informal educational cadres, who are assigned to help them and pay salaries for them in order to raise the level of the education of children at low levels, in addition to providing students with stationery and bags (HCCS, 2018).

This is in addition to the international organizations and bodies mentioned above. National and local organizations have contributed to supporting education by securing education and transportation expenses and paying salaries for teaching staff and health insurance such as the Barzani Charitable Association and Hammurabi Organization for Human Rights (HHRO) that built a school for the displaced and refugees in Al-Hamdaniya (Nineveh Plains) with the support of a group of French organizations, as well as providing some schools with water purification systems, stationery and other education requirements in cooperation and coordination with Christian Solidarity International (CSI), which has effectively contributed to supporting the financing of supplying projects the displaced and refugees Schools with water purification systems to supply drinking water, as well as HHRO provided stationery, blackboards, and other educational supplies for some schools. This was done in cooperation with (CIS) and also with (SOS) which established a caravan school for the displaced and refugees in the region (Mankesh) outside the camps (Marquos, 2020).

#### **5.4. Education Challenges, Vulnerable Groups, Children and Others**

Syrian refugees face great challenges in the field of education, which negatively effects their integration into society and impacts their living and psychological conditions, including: Marginalized groups of children with special needs or disabled persons. There are many such groups in refugee camps, and their situation requires special care in order to assist and rehabilitate them with the aim of integrating them into society. These groups are the most affected, and many remain without education because, due to lack of resources.

In every camp there are dozens of people with Down syndrome or autism who suffer from delayed growth and developmental delay, and there are those who are paralyzed, deaf and dumb and affected by psychological trauma because they have witnessed and endured violence and conflicts in their countries (HCCS, 2018). Such cases do not receive adequate treatment or special programs for rehabilitation and integration programs.

In this context, too, girls face cultural difficulties and barriers, in addition to physical barriers in going to schools, especially when this requires movement outside the camps to perform exams, because the baccalaureate exams are outside the camps and usually take place in schools located in cities and large towns, and thus adds financial burdens on the family, which reduces the desire to continue studying. A lack of family income, increases the likelihood of dropping out of school and the increase in child labour, as some have turned to

begging or working in the streets (MERI, 2019). Among the most impactful challenges are the economic hardships that followed the ISIS occupation of Mosul in June 2014, the increase of internally displaced persons, the decrease in global oil prices, and the suspension of the federal government to pay the region's share of the public budget (UNHCR, 2016).

Teachers' fees were reduced to less than \$200 dollars a month (previously they were paid \$400 a month), and what the United Nations was giving them about \$200 dollars was stopped, for volunteers in humanitarian work. This led many of them to drop out of education, searching for another job, or migrate to European countries. The education sector lost a large number of teachers with expertise and specialization. 10% of teachers left primary schools and were unable to continue without pay (UNHCR, 2016). This forced schools to replace qualified teachers with new, less experienced and less qualified staff, that are being subjected to training courses on curricula and teaching methods (HCCS, 2018).

A report of the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCCC) of the Ministry of Interior in the Kurdistan region indicates that at the end of 2018, UNESCO and UNICEF announced that the teachers' contract was not renewed, especially since the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq provides salaries to 81 permanent teachers and 302 contracted teachers in 55 schools for refugee students, and that UNICEF and UNESCO provided salaries to 1240 teachers and staff, and the centre warned that without an immediate response from all donor countries and international organizations in providing material and technical assistance to the Kurdistan Regional Government, this would lead to a risk of closure a high percentage of schools therefore, refugee students will not be able in the school-age to register and continue to study (JCCC, 2019).

It is reported that between 2012 and 2014, the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq allocated \$90 Million dollars from its budget for humanitarian aid and basic services for refugees, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq had to increase its spending and invest an additional \$20 million dollars in the Office of Immigration and Displaced, yet the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCCC) acknowledged that the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq cannot provide such assistance to Syrian refugees without the help of the international community, For example, in 2018, partners requested \$226.8 million for Syrian refugees in Iraq (as of April 2018) but the international community provided only 11.3% of the amount requested, and this is up to \$17 dollar for each Syrian refugees annually (MERI, 2019).

The other challenge was the lack of schools that teach the Arabic language. The Kurdistan Regional Government's adoption of the Kurdish language in government schools, and the student's transition from Arabic schools to Kurdish, led to the prevention of large numbers of Syrian students continuing their education. Additionally, private schools that were opened to educate refugees outside the camps as a temporary solution were unable to accommodate such large numbers of refugees (62% of the total number of student). This left most children who arrived in the region between 2013 and 2014 without education (Lateef, 2015). Also the students who were admitted to universities struggle with English curricula. This requires them to enter remedial courses in the language, which adds additional burdens to their educational expenses and increases the impact of their hard economic conditions (HCCS, 2018).

## **5.5. Education Experiences Among Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

Education is one of the basic requirements for integration, especially for children, since they can mingle with the children of the local population or other refugee children, the results of field interviews showed a great weakness in terms of interest in education. Most of the Syrian Kurdish refugees did not face problems in teaching their children in terms of language, especially young children of primary school age, because education in government schools is in the Kurdish language for all levels of education, public primary and secondary, among others.



A Syrian refugee said: "My children are in free public schools, and I pay \$100 a month in transportation fees. I receive aid from the organizations for 280,000 Dinars annually for every child in the school." (Irq-6SHMH-Micro-Syr-M-No.6). Having a school in the area of residency is a reason for satisfaction. A Syrian female refugee said: "One of the benefits of my housing is that the school is close, and the clinic is close" (Irq-26FAR-Micro-Syr-F-No.26). And another confirmed, "And the positive elements are that there are schools and a dispensary" (Irq-14SHRO- Micro-Syr-F-No.14), while others mentioned "the positives are the availability of schools and our presence together with family members as well as the relationship with neighbours and the availability of safety" (Irq-18MYA-Micro-Syr-F-No.18). Some, especially Syrian refugees other than Kurds (Arabs or Assyrian Christians), expressed their dissatisfaction at the lack of government schools in the Arabic language, as education is only in the Kurdish language.

A Syrian Christian refugee expresses her concern for her children in education,

The shortcomings that I suffer from lack of knowledge of the Kurdish language, and there is a problem with schools, because our language is Arabic, studying in Erbil is in the Kurdish language, and Iraqi government schools that teach in Arabic do not accept Syrian students. (Irq-2AFSH-Micro-Syr-F-No.2).

Here the refugee means that the schools affiliated to the federal government in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, which opened after 2014, due to the increasing number of Arab IDPs to the Kurdistan region from the governorates of Nineveh, Kirkuk, Ramadi and Salah al-Din, as they only accept children in primary education, while enrolment in middle and secondary educations is conditioned by bringing school documents from the home-country before fleeing, and the legal position properly in terms of accommodation and provide the necessary security statements recognized in Baghdad. Another Syrian refugee complains "there are no Arabic language schools nearby" (Irq-8ABA-Micro-Syr-M-No.8).

And some added that only private education and private schools were teaching in the Arabic language, which burdened the parents with greater expenses in order to educate their children. Others who could not afford were deprived from education because of the economic burden on these refugee families. A Syrian refugee said: "Because there is no work. That affected my children and were deprived from school. My son has lost 3 years of education, my daughter lost 2 years. My son is 20 years old and my daughter is 12 years old". (Irq-1HFK-Micro-Syr- M-No.1).

And another refugee said:

The most important issue is that my son has become 5 years old. I am unable to pay \$3,000 so that he can learn. The most expensive things in Erbil are transportation and education. I want to go to country whose language I can understand. Here, it is the Kurdish language and I do not know Kurdish Language, there are no Arabic schools in Erbil. (Irq-3OMK-Micro-Syr-M-No.3).

Many faced the problem of registration in the schools of the host country due to the difficulty of obtaining educational certificates from previous schools in the home country. As a refugee asserted, "My children cannot go to school because of the lack of documents from Syria because I had to bring them" (Irq-16SHMB- Micro-Syr- F-No.16).

Some refugees expressed fear of the deterioration and poor services in some schools, especially after the economic crisis faced by the Kurdistan Region after the referendum for separation of the Kurdistan region of Iraq on September 25, 2017 from the centre.

As the Syrian refugee said: "Schools are available but not stable (there are talks about changing curricula and failure of paying teachers' salaries), and there is fear in the case of teachers withdrawing from teaching" (Irq-13SAA-Micro-Syr-F-No.13).

Many Syrian asylum seekers indicated the availability of educational courses and training workshops conducted by local and international civil society organizations, including vocational training courses and English language courses, and other courses to empower women and care for children, in which many Syrian asylum seekers and displaced have Iraqis participated.

In the same context, representatives of local and international organizations confirmed that "there is vocational training provided for refugees or asylum seekers, but not at the level of a large scale program" (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2), and that "there is training involving activities, such as making pastries, sewing, make-up, hairdressing, sports and clubs, so that it responds to the need of market, especially since the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs made an assessment in this direction for refugee and displaced camps" (Irq-1DGHY-Meso- F-No.1). In the above context, a Syrian refugee says: "I entered a hairdressing course along with my son, paid for by the Social Organization of Ankawa" (Irq-1HFK- Micro-Syr-M-No.1).

Another refugee added:

I participated in courses for civil organizations to solve social problems, that I attended a month-long English language course that IRC organized and also participated in a workshop on the role of women in society organized by Khair Khawazi Organization (Irq-13SAA-Micro-Syr-F-No.13).

Another refugee spoke about her participation in a lot of workshops, childcare and special needs. She mentioned that:

There were no workshops and lectures on integration at the beginning, but later they held courses on integration, but I did not attend, because I was working in Acted and Save Children and other organizations (Irq-21PMF-Micro-Syr-F-No.21).

The field research also revealed that some Syrian asylum seekers were unable to participate in vocational training courses and workshops, despite their availability, because of their own concerns and circumstances; caring for children or seeking to earn a living. In this context, a Syrian refugee confirms, "I did not attend any training or vocational course because of the lack of time to attend or participate because my economic condition does not allow me to attend courses" (Irq-25AWH-Micro-Syr-M-No.25).

Another added, "I did not participate in any integration training activities, nor did I participate in any professional training such as tailoring or any other business" (Irq-8ABA - Micro-Syr-M-No.8). Another refugee has also asserted the same impression:

There is the ability to integrate and there is no difficulty in that, since I am Kurdish and I live in a Kurdish region, and I did not participate in integration courses or any professional courses for civil society organizations (Irq-4RLM- Micro-Syr-M-No.4).

Another spoke "I did not receive lessons or training courses" (Irq-5HFM-Micro-Syr-M-No.5). And another added, "I did not participate in professional / linguistic courses" (Irq-6SHMH - Micro-Syr-M-No.6).

Another refugee said: "I participated actively to integrate through the camp administration, and we worked for a cultural integration committee and I am one of the founders of it, but I did not continue and did not want to be counted on a specific persuasion" (Irq-19EMS-Micro-Syr-M-No.19). The person means here, that he withdrew from the cultural committee because it became politicized in the interest of political parties in the region, thus he preferred to withdraw. Other Syrians also reported that they did not have the opportunity to participate in educational or vocational courses due to some discriminatory practices, patronage, and affiliation.

As a Syrian refugee said: "We hear from Syrian Kurds who have received language training because they have relatives working in UN who are helping them, that is, it is matter of connections" (Irq-3OMK-Micro-Syr-M-No.3).

Another refugee explains about his experience with vocational training,

I attended a three-day sanitation installation training course in the camp conducted by an organization. I do not know its name. Some of those who run it were Iraqis and other foreigners. We benefited from that and were given certificates and gained experience. There are courses, but it is difficult to get them, because of favouritism and affiliations. The Syrian Mukhtar [an elder who holds information about the residents in an area and the authorities trust their support letter] play a role in choosing (the candidates for the courses). (Irq-24KJK-Micro-Syr-M-No.24).

Some of the refugees talked about failing to benefit from some of these courses, for a variety of reasons, as they highlighted from their personal perspective. As a refugee said: "I enrolled in dress making courses, but I did not learn. It was not given enough importance. We were up to 100 women and there was only one trainer. So how could one learn?" (Irq-27RHH-Micro-Syr-F-No.27).

## 6. Housing and Spatial Integration

### 6.1. Housing Policies for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The housing of Syrian refugees is distributed geographically in most cities of Iraq, but as previously mentioned, it is concentrated in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Table 3 shows the numbers and percentages of Syrian refugees in Iraqi provinces distributed in 10 large camps in western and northern Iraq. The continued flow of refugees to Iraq since the summer of 2012 and the increasing numbers between 2013-2017, led to the establishment of a camp by the Iraqi government in western Iraq, the border town of Al-Qaem between Iraq and Syria, within Al-Anbar governorate. It was then expanded into three nearby camps. In the Al-Obeidi camp the number of refugees at the end of 2013 reached 5093 (MOMD, 2013). The Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq opened the Domiz camp in Duhok on April 1, 2012, which is the first and the largest camp in Iraq, as the number of refugees amounted 58,500 until February 28, 2014 (Aziz, Hutchinson and Maltby, 2014).

However, numbers decreased to 31,901 on January 30, 2017 (MOMD, 2017), and the moving of large number of refugees to live in urban and rural areas among the population of Iraq was followed by the opening of other camps in Duhok, such as Domiz 2, also called Faيدا camp, near the basic camp of Domiz about 3 km, and Giwêlan camp in late 2013, 100 Km south of the city of Duhok, which is administratively followed by the district of Bardarash one of the districts of Duhok province, and Aqrah Camp (Akri) (Established in summer 2013), which is located about 100 km (HCCS,2018 b), south east of Duhok, within the boundaries of Aqrah town.

In 2013, with the increased toll of Syrian asylum seekers, the Kurdistan Regional Government opened four other permanent camps in Erbil called Gawerkosk camp (established on 15 August 2013), Qushtapa camp (established 19 August 2013), Basirma camp (established 26 August 2013), and Darashakran Camp (established 29 September 2013). The number of the Syrian refugees registered in Iraq reached 225.548 until 28 February 2014 (UNHCR, 2014).

At the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2012, the Federal Government established a camp in Al-Qaem, western Iraq, within the Anbar Province, which was expanded to three camps in Al-Qaem and Al-Obeidi area and called Al-Obeidi camp, bringing the number of camps in Iraq to ten housing about 38% of the total refugee population in Iraq, which reached 239,639 Syrian refugees<sup>32</sup> in April 2017, While the Syrian refugees who preferred to be outside the camps and percentage reach 62%, living in urban and rural areas within the population of the host community, especially with the approval of Iraqi authorities after obtaining residency and legal position, and among those who reside in the host community, 81% of them rent houses, and less than 3% own homes, and 9% stay as guests with their friends or relatives (IOM–Iraq, 2013). Housing is a major concern for most of the Syrian refugees living outside the camps. It was found through field work and interviews with refugees and internally displaced persons (58 interviews) that the most important factors affecting the place of residence of the refugees were the religion and ethnicity. Syrians of Kurdish origin sought to reach the Kurdistan region and reside in Duhok or Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, while Sunni Arabs favoured the western areas of Iraq to live (Anbar province), because the population of these areas is Sunni Arabs.

Assyrian Christians from Syria took refuge in Iraqi Christian villages and towns in Duhok, such as Bakhtami, Badarash, Babilo, etc. and the town of Ankawa in Erbil. Other factors in the choice of accommodation were also at play depending on the presence of relatives and the different basic services, assistance and employment opportunities, economic situation varying from one city to another.

<sup>32</sup> See Table No. 1, p.17. Table No.4, p.42. Table No.6 and No.7.p (42-44)

**Table 4. Number of Syrian refugees in Iraq according to province**

Provinces	Individuals	Ratio	Families	Ratio
Duhok	83,239	35%	23,567	30%
Erbil	116,857	49%	41,074	52%
Sulaymaniya	31,297	13%	11,156	14%
Anbar	4,461	2%	1,135	1,4%
Mosul	1,606	1%	549	1%
Kirkuk	958	0.4%	341	0.4%
Baghdad	355	0.1%	177	0.2%
Other places	866	0.3%	508	1%
Total	239,639	100%	78,507	100%

Source: Ministry of Migration and Displaced 2017

**Table 5. The proportions of Syrian refugees by gender and province**

Province	No. of people	Female	Male	Total
Duhok	83,239	71,3%	28,7%	100%
Erbil	116,857	66,3%	33,7%	100%
Sulaymaniya	31,297	66,6%	33,4%	100%
Anbar	4,461	81%	19%	100%
Mosul	1,606	not available	not available	not available
Kirkuk	958	not available	not available	not available
Baghdad	355	not available	not available	not available
Other places	866	74,1%	25,9%	100%
Total	239,639	---	---	---

Source: Ministry of Migration and Displaced 2017

**Table 6. The number of Syrian refugees living in camps by governorate**

	Camps	Province	Individuals	Ratio	Families	Ratio
1	Domiz 1	Duhok	31,901	35%	8,433	36%
2	Domiz 2	Duhok	8,552	9%	2,072	9%
3	Gawerkosk	Erbil	9,040	10%	2,460	11%
4	Darashakran	Erbil	12,403	13%	2,927	12%
5	Qushtapa	Erbil	7,807	8%	2,124	9%
6	Arabat/ Barika	Sulaymaniya	8,308	9%	2,172	9%
7	Agrah	Duhok	1,164	1%	284	1%
8	Basirma	Erbil	3,454	4%	805	3%
9	Giwêlan	Duhok	8,187	9%	1,918	9%
10	Al-Obaidi	Anbar	1,519	2%	319	1%
	Total	----	92,235	100%	23,514	100%

Source: Ministry of Migration and Displaced 2017

**Table 7. Details and locations of refugee camps in Iraq and by governorates**

	Governorate	The name of the camp	Address
1	Duhok	Domiz 1	The largest camp in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, is about 20 km south of Duhok, and it is affiliated to Faida district. Established on 1 April 2012.
2	Duhok	Domiz 2	Also known as Faida Camp, 3 km south or less from the Domiz basic camp.
3	Duhok	Aqrah	This camp is administered to Duhok Governorate, located about 100 km southeast of the city of Duhok within Aqrah district established in the summer of 2013, it was formerly a military barrack. There are no concrete camps, but large concrete dormitories, and these large halls were divided among refugees from within according to the size of families and the number of their members.
4	Duhok	Giwelan	Located 100 km southeast of Duhok, administratively attached to the Bardarch district of Duhok Governorate, about 30 km from the centre of the district within the triangle between Duhok and Mosul Erbil, and away from the main road linking Duhok and Erbil about 3 km. The camp established in late 2013.
5	Erbil	Darashakran	Located northwest of the city of Erbil and is 35 km away. Established on September 29, 2013.
6	Erbil	Qushtapa	Located south of the city of Erbil, approximately 20 km on the Erbil-Kirkuk road, near the intersection of Makhmour. Established on August 19, 2013
7	Erbil	Gawerkosk	Located about 20 km west of Erbil on Erbil-Duhok road, not far from the Darashakran camp.
8	Erbil	Basirma	Located 50 km to the north of Erbil, established on August 26, 2013 administratively affiliated to the district of Basirma in the tourist area of Shaqlawa.
9	Sulaymani-ya	Arbat/ Barika	Located in the Sulaymaniyah governorate, on the Arabat side which is south of the Sulaymaniyah district, as the camp is located in the north of the district and is about 30 km from the centre of the city.
10	Anbar	Al-Obaidi	In Qaem west of Anbar established in the summer of 2012, at the entrance to Al-Obaidi district, 330 km northwest of Baghdad, strategically located on the border between Iraq and Syria, opposite the Syrian city of Albukamal. The area was occupied by ISIS in June 2014 and recovered in November 2017.

## 6.2. The Implementation of Housing Policies

The State takes security into account in locating the camps, and therefore takes measures to ensure spatial protection, such as the case concerning the Al-Tash camp in Ramadi before 2003, in which Iranian refugees of Kurdish origin were hosted. Most of the refugees in Iraq were at the time opposed to the policies of neighbouring countries and fled for political reasons, but they were unable to integrate with the society in Ramadi, and there were some clashes between inhabitants and camp residents, so the government decided to move the camp to the Kurdistan region.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Mohamed Hantok, Roundtable Meeting, on 12/15/2018

Security also played an important role in determining the place of residence for refugees, especially whenever requesting to move from camps to urban or rural areas, with the aim of getting work or being unable to cope with the conditions in the camps. Mr. Mazhar Hassan, a member of the Anbar Provincial Council in western Iraq, confirms that a governmental resolution issued granting Syrian refugees the right to leave the camps (Al-Nasrawi, 2012) after they complained of poor conditions. The decision stipulated the sponsorship of a citizen from the governorate for a refugee or family wishing to leave the camps (Warda, Al Maffraji and Khorshid, 2020).

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, an asylum seeker can live anywhere in the region after obtaining a residence permit, which requires the submission of number of documents, including the form issued by the United Nations, housing endorsement from the neighbourhood mayor, Personal Identification Card, passport and family book (Ishtar TV, 2014). But when the refugee wants to live in areas outside the region, other approvals from the Federal Government are needed.<sup>34</sup>

The governor of Erbil province Nawzad Hadi Mawlood said: "residents of the camps live on the aid they receive, but residents outside the camps depend on themselves," for housing, work, etc., without any restrictions as is the case of any citizen in Erbil, the governor added that " Syrian refugees are qualified people who worked in various fields in Syria, they have added value to our skills and have given good cultures and ideas that have made the city rich in many ways, and I consider this a positive matter. It is true that there was competition but there was no resistance from the local population (UNHCR,2018).

The freedom to move and work for Syrians outside the camps gave them opportunities to integrate and they did not think about returning to their country or requesting resettlement in a third country, and the open policies pursued by the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq towards the Syrian asylum seekers had a clear impact on the issue of integration for many of them. For example Dr. Mohammed, one of the beneficiaries of the approach and open policies of Erbil, says that he was able to support himself and his family without losing his identity and status as is happening to many refugees in the world, adding "assistance should not be financially, but to allow to move and work freely, then will be fine. But if I cannot work, I will not be able to live here, I will have to return to Syria (UNHCR, 2018).

Refugees living in camps are more isolated than others living among inhabitants in host societies, because they rarely mix with the local population so there are fewer opportunities for their integration compared to those who interact daily with local population. The field work showed that, interviews with 29 Syrian refugees representing various groups of Syrian society, men and women, living in different regions, urban, rural, and camp, 16.66% expressed their integration, and their desire to stay in Iraq, while 3.33% wanted to return to Syria, and 76.66% aspired to be resettled, and preferred to live in a third country (Europe, America, Australia) if they had the opportunity to migrate there while 3.33% of them did not decide about the matter and does not know the final destination, whether by returning, staying or migrating.

A report issued by the Middle East Research Foundation (MERI), regarding the desire to integrate into the Kurdistan region of Iraq or seek protection elsewhere, indicates that among 118 Syrian refugees inside and outside the camps, 76 of them consider Kurdistan as the transit station, and that many single young people clearly expressed that since the situation has not improved in the foreseeable future in Syria, they will take the risk of irregular paths to Europe (MERI, 2019).The policies of the Federal States regarding housing in Kurdistan region, focused on the issue of establishing camps in cooperation with international organizations of United Nations, Europe or Japan, and others in the western region of Iraq, three camps were

<sup>34</sup> Interview (Irq-1DGHY-Meso- F-No.1).

established in Qaem and Al-Obeidi and in Kurdistan region and other camps as previously referred to in Table No. (6)<sup>35</sup>.

The Federal Government has also cooperated with international organizations to help pay rent allowances for people with special status who are refugees outside the camps. Satar Nawruz, spokesperson for the Ministry of Migration and Displaced, affirms that "our ministry provides assistance to refugees in cooperation with the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) "related to adapting their legal status and facilitating official transactions, such as residency procedures, etc., in addition to granting the needy and those with special status, including housing allowances to rent houses" (AL-Jubouri, 2015).

UNHCR staff confirmed saying "We support the refugees in reaching their rent payments, within a multi-purpose cash system, and that the amount of the payment depends on the permanent evaluation program" (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2). Iraq in general is looking forward to the return of refugees and asylum seekers to their homes after the stability in Syria, this is reflected in the statements of Iraqi officials, as Farhan Fetekhan, the district governor of western Anbar, says, that the camps in Al-Qaem, west of Anbar, witnessed a major reverse displacement towards Syria after some Syrian areas have a secured status which encouraged the refugees to return adding that "The camps included more than (11) thousand Syrian refugees, while only (4) thousands refugees remained in those camps," adding that "the supervisors are facilitating the process of returning home for those who have the wish."<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, it was not observed that there are sustainable Iraqi national policies aimed at integrating refugees into Iraqi society, but all seems to be solutions to gain time while awaiting the outcome of the future situation in Syria. The Federal Government, as well as the Government of Kurdistan region of Iraq. They allowed the refugees working to alleviate the suffering and the Syrian refugees were absorbed in camps or granted temporary renewable residence and work permits, and access to health care services and government education and freedom of movement. This would allow them to legally settle in communities, but Syrians faced the same crises that Iraqis are facing, especially the mass displacement to Kurdistan region of Iraq, due to the invasion by ISIS of large areas of Iraq, as hundreds of thousands of Iraqis fled to the Kurdistan region because it maintained relative stable.

The consequence of this crisis has been an increase in rental costs, a lack of job opportunities for refugees due to competition between displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees, and a decrease in savings, which has led to conditions for some refugees to move again to camps after all live in the urban areas of Erbil and Duhok or take to the streets to beg, which created a problem in urban areas for losing patience in the host communities for the high level of begging and other harmful adaptation measures such as prostitution and sexual exploitation.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, around (650) family are living in Erbil suffering from bad living conditions and living in partially constructed buildings or temporary shelters, and many others share rooms in small apartments, and their members take turns sleeping on beds (The New Humanitarian, 2013).

Mrs. Wera Jawhar Ahmed the director of Protection and Reintegration Centre (PAPC) in Erbil run by Qandil a Swedish non-governmental organization, which is contracting with UNCR, said: "There are refugees living in incomplete homes, without doors, walls, windows or ceilings, sometimes three families live in each room." She adds, "they collect rotten food from outside shops and begging in restaurants to get crumbs, and sometimes exploited by people providing work at very low wages" (The New Humanitarian, 2013).

The overcrowding of some camps with the continued flow of refugees in the years 2013-2015, especially in the basic Domiz camp in Duhok, which was established to accommodate (2500) refugees, but reached a limit of about twice that number, which resulted in a lack of

<sup>35</sup> See table No.6,p(43-44)

<sup>36</sup> Source: <http://almasalah.com/ar/news/12148/>



necessary services and the required infrastructure, and as a result, some people in it may not get the margin of even a few services.

The Warsiti suburb is one of the residential communities established near the city of Duhok, close to Syrian borders in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, and the majority of its residents are tenants. In recent years, this suburb has been transformed into a Syrian suburb, and popularly known as the "rental camp" because the suburbs are Syrian refugees and Iraqi refugees fleeing the war. Only few refugees get aid through political patronage. The residents of the suburbs have expressed to the media that the services provided to them are poor. The suburbs are far from the city. As for drinking water, the residents only get them for one hour every two days. The supply hour is unknown, as subjected to the mood of the managers (Popular Will Party, 2019).

In an attempt to address the overcrowding, the United Nations has resorted to working with the authorities in the Kurdistan region to allocate more lands to new camps, which made the Kurdistan Regional Government agree to establish two new refugee camps in the region, one in Erbil and the other in Sulaimaniyah (The New Humanitarian, 2013b).

It is necessary to mention that the Iraqi government and the government of the Kurdistan region of Iraq, despite its exceptional efforts to establish camps to host Syrian refugees, despite the great crises to face terrorism and violence that prevailed in most major cities with the exception of the Kurdistan region, did not develop strategic plans and programs to integrate refugees in Iraqi society. Regarding housing, no refugee residential towns have been established, as happened to Palestinian refugees in the seventies of the last century in the Al-Baladiyat district in Baghdad, but rather setting up temporary housing camps, based on the understanding that the Syrian refugees will return to their country if the crisis ends, and on other hand, most Syrians consider Iraq to be a transit point to third countries and not the country of the final destination, so according to their perceptions, there is no need to integrate into Iraqi society as long as a decision has been made in advance to leave Iraq.

On the other hand, the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq have not been established in a practical and systematic way to enhance the merits of integration, including adapting its legislation to grant permanent residence or grant citizenship to asylum seekers according to specific criteria, and to give refugees an opportunity to obtain ownership, and the ability to open interests, companies, etc., as well the shortage of social welfare services, health and the provision of work, which are very important factors in achieving spatial integration.

### **6.3. Experiences of Asylum and Refugees with Housing and Spatial Integration**

Housing has a direct impact on the individual's psychological and social condition, due to its direct effect on a person's life. Housing also influence a person through the social setting and how the surrounding people treat the person. It can result either in getting close to them or keeping away from them. This means that housing plays a significant role in the integration. On the basis of the field work and the interviews at Meso level there is relative freedom in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, KRI, in that asylum seekers or refugees are able to choose where to live and reside following safety check on their legal position and obtaining residency permit. In other parts of Iraq, determining the place of residency is carried out in accordance with the provisions of Refugee Law 51 of 1971, and that requires the approval of the Minister of Interior. The change of the place of residency also requires informing the Ministry of the Interior. In the past we found forced housing of refugees in the centre and south of Iraq in the Kurdistan region because they were not granted residency in the centre and south. Obviously, that was a violation of law. The same thing does not occur frequently now. As we mentioned there is freedom of residency which requires security checks, and that this issue is related to the

Ministry of Interior in Baghdad and its organization of residency for asylum seekers and refugees.(Irq-2KVV-Meso-F-NO.2).

This means that the asylum seeker is not free to choose his place of residence. However, after obtaining the necessary approvals according to the law, he will be free to reside anywhere in Iraq" (Irq-1DGHY-Meso-F-No.1).On the basis of the field interviews and conversations conducted with the refugees regarding housing and spatial integration, the following were noted:

Many refugees lived for long periods in camps, and the issue of housing was one of their urgent priorities. A Syrian refugee says:

The difficulty was housing, but after obtaining it was like a wonderful gift, although how to furnish it was occupying my mind. A very wealthy Christian businessman gave this compound to refugees for free, so, I have no rental wages. The neighbours in the camp were more than mere excellent. I am comfortable in this housing compound. As I said we have not paid for rent in the compound, except for water and electricity. Initially, the feeling about the place was strange. But later the feeling of relief came about. Currently, I do not want to move to another place in Erbil (Irq-2AFSH - Micro-Syr-F-No.2).

And a Syrian refugee said: "We needed housing in the first place, but we moved from the random housing that we lived in for four months to regular housing (Domiz camp), where the housing units consist of three rooms" (Irq-4RLM-Micro-Syr- M-No.4).

Another refugee added:

In the camp, we used cinder blocks to build a two-room house with a bathroom, and a kitchen at our own expense. We do not pay rent or water and electricity, but at the beginning we rented and paid money and I am currently comfortable and happy (Irq-11SHFH- Micro-Syr-F-No.11).

Another refugee said:

We do not pay rent for housing, the type of housing we have is a tent and a room made of block, we have been in this residence since 2013, I am not happy with this housing in this situation. I prefer to move to another place with my children and my family, my current residence is surrounded by a fence, my mother-in-law and her children live with me as her husband died in Syria (Irq-13SAA- Micro-Syr-F-No.13).

It was also found that some refugees did not live in the camps, but rather were able to find housing outside the camps with relatives of them or on their own. As a Syrian refugee said:

The rent of the apartment that I live in now is very expensive, it's been three years, before that, I slept at my workplace. Now I live with my wife and daughter, our relations are good with the neighbours because everyone who lives in the building are Kurds, I have friends and acquaintances and we communicate amongst us. I wish to stay in Erbil, and I do not want to change my place (Irq-5HFM-Micro-Syr-M-No.5).

Another refugee added:

I wasn't expecting the circumstances to go the way they are now, where there is no housing or shelter, things are unstable and I lived in my cousin's house which is small and does not have enough space for everyone, but now a few days ago I rented an apartment inside Dohuk. Our relationship with the camp is still ongoing. We rented the apartment with approval of the Asayish (the security service in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq). I was in urgent need of housing, because I was living with family that did not have a good economic situation (Irq-17AFA-Micro-Syr- M-No.17).

Another refugee describes the multiple changes in his place of residence: "I lived in my uncle's house, then at my workplace, and now I live in a rental house with my family." (Irq-

23ASHA- Micro-Syr-M-No.23).Some asylum-seekers have expressed that they were not satisfied with their current place of residence but were forced to it. As a Syrian refugee says:

We do not feel comfortable and secure continuously in the camp, as my colleague describes it as a detention. A murder has occurred, as someone killed his friend. I prefer to move to another camp, I like to live in a big city, I prefer to live in Erbil, and if I have the opportunity to move elsewhere, I will. The negative aspects of the housing are that there is a discrimination and unfairness in the distribution of staple foods (Irq-14SHRO-Micro-Syr- F-No.14).

Some other Syrians indicate their adaptation to the region and their place of residence. They praised the cooperation of individuals from the host community with them and that they obtained their support. A Syrian refugee said:

The rent of the house is now appropriate. The house that I live in here accommodates my father, mother, and brothers, all on one floor, my wife and I are on the second floor. We feel safe, thank God my wife and family feel safe, we are doomed to stay here, I do not prefer to live in another city, because my job makes me settle down here (Irq-8ABA-Micro-Syr-M-No.8).

Another refugee said:

Previously, I used to live with my father in the camp in Erbil, now I live with my husband outside the camp in the lower Malta area, in an Arabic style house consisting of three rooms and utilities, I am happy in this house, I have lived in it for three years (Irq-21PMF-Micro-Syr-F-No.21).

There is a large number of refugees who have taken Iraq as a temporary refuge due to their desire to exit to a third country (by requesting asylum), and many of them did not care to adapt to the place. As one refugee said:

I live in the camp and communicate with my neighbours and the people who live in the camp. I feel safe. In the camp, I go to visit others, and I visit Iraqis outside the camp. I want to stay in my current place (Domiz Camp), but if I get the asylum to any city, I would do so. I want to live in a city like Erbil. The good things about my place of residence is that everything is close, such as schools, markets and hospitals, and there is also a clinic in the camp. As for things that are not good, I would have preferred to have a hospital in the camp, the roads are not paved, as there are no playing grounds in the camp (Irq-15LYA-Micro-Syr-F-No.15).

Another refugee added: "If I have the opportunity to emigrate to any third country, I will not hesitate for the sake of my children's future" (Irq-19EMS- Micro-Syr- M-No.19). Another refugee said: "I would prefer to go to any European country if I have the opportunity" (Irq-20RKA- Micro-Syr-M-No.20). Another refugee also stresses, "If I have the opportunity to immigrate with my family to a third country, there is no objection to that."

Others expressed their desire to return to their home country due to the difficulties with integration in the current situation. But the continued difficult security conditions in Syria, the spread of violence and fighting between many factions among themselves, on the one hand, and against the Syrian army and the Syrian security forces, on the other hand, prevent their return to their home country.

As a refugee said: "We did not try to make our housing the same as it was in Syria, because our stay in Iraq is temporary" (Irq-11SHFH - Micro-Syr- F-No.11). Another refugee added: "The integration was initially and then things became easy over time, if the situation in Syria improves, we will return" (Irq-14SHRO- Micro-Syr-F- No.14).

## 7. Psychosocial Health, Medical Care and Role of Religion

### 7.1. The Regulatory Level and the Infrastructure of Medical Services and Psychosocial Health

The national health care system had been strong in Iraq, in terms of the availability of infrastructure, including hospitals, specialized medical centres, factories, and Iraqi pharmaceutical companies. However, the presence of professional and experienced medical staff have undergone a deterioration in Iraq for 25 years, due to the impact of the economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations on Iraq in the period (1990-2003). Other challenges have been that the Iraqi urban areas where most health institutions are located are exposed to the destructive results of the second Gulf war in 1991, the conflicts and violence that Iraq witnessed in the period 2003-2011, the subsequent destruction that took place in 2014 of Iraqi infrastructure in general and healthcare in particular, and the escape of specialized medical and expert health staff, as a result of the occupation of armed groups (ISIS) for more than a third of the area of Iraq, when three large governorates were attacked and occupied by ISIS, which are Nineveh, Anbar, and Salahuddin.

Without doubt, Baghdad and Iraqi Kurdistan regions were the most affected regions before and after ISIS in 2014, as hundreds of thousands of people fled from Ramadi and Salahuddin heading Baghdad, as well as Syrian refugees who had previously taken refuge in Ramadi at the beginning of Syrian crisis in 2011.

The number of displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan region reached 1.8 million in the year 2014 (AUIS, 2017), who fled from Syria, Mosul, Ramadi and Salahuddin. Hospitals in the three governorates of the Kurdistan Region as Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk, received thousands of wounded every week as a result of the war, chronic disease patients, cancer patients and others of displaced people from governorates that were exposed to occupation or Syrian refugees fleeing from the war in Syria.

These circumstances created a very weak health-care situation in areas affected by internal conflict with ISIS or violence in Syria, reflected in the conditions of refugees and displaced persons in areas they have taken refuge in, such as Iraqi Kurdistan Region, Ramadi, or Baghdad. Therefore, the burden is bound to fall on existing hospitals and health centres, and civil society organizations, (NGOs) operating in these areas. As long as the conflict with ISIS and terrorist groups remains, this is a long-term challenge not only to areas geographically close to the conflict zones, but also to the increasing capacity and reputation of hospitals in the Iraqi Kurdistan region and Baghdad. As care institutions mature in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the fact of burden that is shared with Baghdad is in a long-term effort to manage health care requirements for war-affected populations in Mosul, Salahuddin and Anbar (AUIS, 2017), as well as Syrian refugees and others. But the efficiency and effectiveness of these institutions are also affected by the economic and political problems that arise from time to time between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Federal Government.

The World Health Organization says that providing health care to about 250,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq presents a great challenge to the local health authorities, the World Health Organization and the humanitarian organizations in Iraq, due to a lack of resources resulting from the big internal displacement crisis 2014. It also affected coordinated efforts to ensure adequate services to reach to the nine camps in the region (Syrian Observatory Human Rights, 2019).

In the Kurdistan region of Iraq, medical centres, hospitals, and clinics are distributed among the nine camps. Refugees can also access medical and health services in hospitals and government clinics in urban areas throughout Iraq, as the Iraqis, provided that their legal position is sound. In Domiz 1 camp, which is the largest camp in Duhok, there are three health

centres, with the German Hospital consisting of two sections, general disease section, and section for chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, cardiology disease, etc., each with specialized doctors and nurses of both sexes. There is also Serpesti Hospital, for women diseases, including two sections, one for gynaecological exams, and another for obstetrics.

The camp also has a service centre called the Jian Centre for Human Rights. This centre offers general treatments for men, women and children, including physical and psychological treatment in addition to offering legal aid. As for camp Domiz 2 in Dohuk, it includes a single health centre, "Primary Health Care Centre" was established by the organization 'Peace Winds Japan'. The centre includes many sections, for general disease, gynaecology, laboratory analysis section, a special section for psychological treatments including specialists in this field, in addition to providing vaccines for children and treating malnutrition and growth for them, while cases that exceed the capabilities of the centre are transferred to hospitals in the city of Duhok, such as Azadi Hospital or others.

As for the Aqrah camp (Akri) in Duhok, there is one health centre with two doctors, a pharmacist and some volunteers to follow up cases of pregnancy and provide awareness sessions in health in general and personal hygiene. As for the severe ambulatory cases, they are referred to the emergency hospital and the Kulan hospital in Aqrah (Akri), which are two government hospitals, and the treatment is free of charge. For Giwelan camp, there is one health centre established by the French organization P.U, but later the management handed over to the Regional government having three doctors specializing in general treatments and a specialized gynaecologist, pharmacy and a laboratory for analysis, and that cases outside the capabilities of the centres are referred to Erbil governmental hospitals (HCCS, 2018b).

As for Erbil camps, which are four large camps, Darashakran camp with one health centre like other camps, including many sections each with specialized doctors, including a dentist and staff, many pharmacies and a laboratory for analysis. The Gawerkosk camp has one health centre, comprised of a general section, a specialist doctor, two nurses of both sexes, a pharmacy and laboratory for analysis also includes a gynaecologic section, a specialist doctor, and the severe cases are referred to Erbil hospitals. In the Basrima camp, the health centre, like other camps, has several sections, in addition to the general section where a psychiatric department is available to serve one day with support from the Italian organization UPP, while the pharmacy of the centre offers very simple medicines. The intractable cases are referred to Shaqlawa State Hospital.

As for Qushtapa camp, south of Erbil, which includes 7,800 refugees, has a typical health centre established by the UNHCR, which has 30 employees of both sexes, and also includes a large store in which aid is distributed to families holding the electronic card of the World Food Program, with which they get the necessary nutrient at a specific value. The camp only has the following sections (HCCS, 2018b). The General Therapy Department, which deals with "chest diseases, bowel inflammation, poisoning cases, skin diseases, burns, superficial wounds, etc." It includes a planning device and a pressure gauge, and a female section for maternity and women's care that includes obstetric analyzes and provides some medications for women such as contraceptives. And it includes a children's section, a nursing unit, and an ambulance department.

The camp includes a pharmacy and laboratory for analytical test of blood, diabetes, pregnancy, etc. UNICEF and the Barzani Charitable Foundation supply the centre with the necessary medicines, and cases that the centre is unable to treat are referred to Erbil hospitals such as the Republican Hospital, the Emergency Hospital, the Raprin Hospital, and specialized hospitals such as the Cardiology Hospital and Cancer Hospital (HCCS, 2018b). As for the Arabat camp in Sulaymaniyah, it does not differ from the previous centres, as it contains a general treatment section and other sections, a pharmacy and a laboratory, and difficult cases are referred to the hospitals in the city of Sulaymaniyah.

## 7.2. Access to Health Care Provisions

Refugees who reside in urban areas have access to Iraqi government hospitals in the areas where they reside and offer treatment for free if they are Iraqis, but in the centre and south of Iraq they may face restrictions related to their residence status. 32% of Syrian families have an individual who suffers from a serious medical condition that requires special support (MERI, 2019). Also, health problems among individuals living in camps are more common than those living in host societies. This is mostly due to the crowded nature of life in the camps. Therefore, there is a need for a continuous evaluation of the health conditions in the camps and medical intervention to prevent the spread of infectious diseases in the more dense exclusive places, an issue that may be exacerbated by poor living conditions (IOM –Iraq, 2013).

It is already evident that permanent health centres in the camps provide only primary health services, assisted by the World Health Organization, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), UNICEF, other international and local national organizations, and more recently UNHCR oversees health care, and provides the camp population with a health insurance card. The main health issues are referred to local hospitals and pharmacies outside the camps. Addressing the mental health problems, MSF teams have opened a health care centre in Bardarach camp which hosts 11 thousand Syrian refugees. Mr. Bruno Bradal, the director of mental health activities in MSF project in this camp said: "About 50% of the people we examined as part of our mental health assessment in the camp were showing symptoms related to depression and anxiety in addition to medically unexplained physical symptoms such as muscle stiffness, headache and back pain" (MSF, 2019).

Also, referring to this report, "Mental health workers interviewed people with suicidal thoughts, as well as people showing early symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. MSF teams are also working to enhance rapid adaptation by providing residents with advice on how to take care of themselves and others and how to deal with psychological stress." (MSF, 2019). In another report by MSF and in Domiz Refugee Camp, this organization pointed out that in 2012 symptoms of severe mental disorder had appeared in about 7% of patients treated by the organization in Domiz camp. In 2013 this number more than doubled to 15% (MSF, 2013). The organization added that children and teenagers in this camp account for 50% of all new patients of the organization. The organization's program welcomes between 15 and 20 children and teenagers aged 18 years or under. Urination in bed is one of the most common symptoms for children of all ages, a reaction to anxiety and severe fear problems, as well as symptoms of aggressive behaviour for these children and isolating themselves from family and friends (MSF, 2013).

## 7.3. Vulnerable Groups and Access to Health Care

Among the main issues that should be focused on is attention to vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied or separated children, teenagers, abused women, pregnant women, people with mental and psychological trauma, disabled and the elderly, and access to health and psychological care. What concerns mental health care in Iraq is one of the challenges, it is not only bad for the children of refugees and asylum seekers, but also includes all Iraqi children who need mental health care.

There is an obvious shortage of hospitals, specialized health centres and rehabilitation centres that provide such services, especially for autistic patients and diseases of poor mental development, etc., and people who have been subjected to major trauma as a result of fear during armed conflicts or acts of violence in which many have been subjected to torture, rape, kidnapping and captivity and others. So also this case of the lack of providing all health and medical supplies also applies to children with special needs, refugees and Iraqis.

International organizations and Iraqi civil society organizations made unprecedented efforts to fill this deficiency and gaps left by the Iraqi health system, after field assessments

carried out by health institutions with the support of the World Health Organization in the Kurdistan and Al Anbar regions. There was a shortage of medical materials, especially for chronic diseases, as well as lack of special facilities for disable persons, and an urgent need to build the capacity of health staff in the field of monitoring to prevent the spread of infectious diseases (UNIRAQ, 2013).

We must point out that some of the efforts made by some organizations for refugees and internally displaced persons towards vulnerable groups in accessing mental health and services related to psychological trauma and social services for refugees, the UNHCR report (UNHCR, 2014) indicates that the UNICEF Fund in Iraq registered a number of unaccompanied and separated children (81) who entered Iraq, and 43 of them were placed in camps in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, provided that child protection units in each camp are required to follow up on these cases and provide support to these children when necessary, UNICEF and the Department of Labour and Social Affairs have developed a coordinated Child Protection response Plan 2014 in Duhok region that will identify referral routes for children identified as unaccompanied or separated from their parents. MSF organization in Domiz camp received 17 case of mental health issues, and 24 other cases were followed.

The UNICEF Fund, in partnership with the Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs, continued to operate three areas which are the child-friendly space, teenagers and child protection space in Domiz, Aqrah and Giwelan camps, and these friendly facilities monitor the situation of children in camps and identify cases of neglect, abuse and violence against children, also entertainment activities are also provided for about 2013 children per week (660 in Domiz camp, 274 children in Giwelan camp, 252 children in Aqrah camp and 915 children in areas outside the city of Warr). UNICEF provided funding for child and youth friendly spaces in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah to contribute to the psychosocial well-being of about 900 children in January 2014 through arts and games, as well as through music, sports, and individual and group counselling activities (UNHCR, 2014).

These spaces of the Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs continue to provide awareness-raising sessions for children and youth about early marriage, positive behaviour and the promotion of personal hygiene. UNICEF has played a continuous role in successfully providing services (primarily breastfeeding and growth monitoring) to pregnant and non-pregnant Syrian refugee women.

As 377 children under the age of five years received growth monitoring services from UNICEF teams in Darshakran camp (compared to only 255 children in December 2013), and 20 children out of the total of these interventions were identified as being underweight and three very underweight. As for sexual and gender-based violence, civil society organizations have identified many cases of sexual and gender-based violence in the camps of Al-Obaidi in Anbar and Domiz in Duhok and others by listening to women who have received psychosocial and legal support.

The Save the Children Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and other organizations held awareness-raising workshops and sessions on the basic concepts of these two types of violence, their severity and ways of solutions and response. The organizations concerned with children also organized visits for families with autism and children with health problems, as well as special sessions for children who have symptoms of anxiety (suffer from nightmares). The UNICEF Fund provided support to the health directorate services to vaccinate 1144 children in Erbil camps.

## **7.4. The Role of Religion, Faith and Social Relations in Psychosocial Health**

Religion and faith played an important role in the refugees overcoming the difficulties they went through. This aspect was a factor of patience and out of the impact of the shocks of many Syrian refugees and contributed greatly to their integration. In the same context, the relations between family members, close relatives or children played a role in giving an existential incentive to the refugees, which gave a stronger meaning to the continuation of their lives and their integration with the new society.

It is my belief that gives me the motivation to continue life, people close to me influence towards me, and give meaning to my life, so I work for their happiness, and for their lives not to deteriorate, it is my relationship with my family and friends that gives meaning to my life (Irq-20RKA- Micro-Sy- M-No.20).

Thinking about children and their future is a patience and endurance basis, and that my children give meaning to my life, and I must bear my responsibility towards them to continue life, children were and still are the most important in my life, and that life should not stop and Iraqis were kind to us, giving dose in life (Irq-2AFSH- Micro-Syr- F-No.2).

My husband and children being with me helps me to go through my life that my faith and my children give meaning to my life and see the world more beautiful through them (Irq-27RHH- Micro-Syr- F-No.27).

With all of the above, the ability to respond in the health field is weak compared to what is required. Hospitals and health centres, despite the efforts of the international community in support, are still generally not adequately equipped, and are often unable to provide certain treatments, especially for psychosocial support.

## **7.5. Experiences of Asylum Seekers and refugees with Access to Medical and Psychosocial Healthcare**

Refugees and asylum seekers whom the field team met agree on easy access to health care, but at the same time they assert that the services provided by the government side are limited and disproportionate to the scale of suffering, and the opportunities for asylum in health care in the private sector are difficult and not the best alternative because they are expensive measure of the limited income of most refugees. Due to the conflict in the home country, the continuation of armed conflicts, and the flight of many asylum seekers in search of safety, the vast majority of them were significantly affected psychologically. Moreover, the exposure of many of them to illnesses or physical exhaustion due to their flight to escape across the border, the enduring of cold and rainy weather in winter, and severe heat in summer, suffering the lack of water and food, the presence of a large number of people with special needs who have crossed borders call for providing special care, social care and health services for the purpose of treating these cases.

Attending to this aspect of refugees' experience is essential requirement for integration. Health and welfare are among the basic necessities that are required to be available in order to increase the individual's sense of comfort and belonging and this makes it easier for them to manage in their new places of living, whether it is in camps or private residence. As we noted in our review of policies, the refugees who are registered with the PCMOI Standing Committee for Refugees can access the care program provided by the Iraqi state by accepting them into the social protection network run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs MOLSA. They can also access governmental health services. "Up to 200 Palestinian families are included in the services of social protection network," Said Mr. Sadiq Al- Bahadili, the



Director of the Civil Society Organizations Department at Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Baghdad. (Al- Bahadili, 2020).

Moreover, there are international organizations that help Iraq especially regarding Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in regard to health. In this regard, one of representative of such organizations confirms that,

We are working with the Health Department at KRI to integrate Syrian refugees and people of other nationalities into the health system. [...] Asylum seekers do not have the same opportunities as refugees to access services. As for refugees, we have talked about the challenges that Palestinians face according to the Residence Law of 2017. Things have changed regarding access to services and health services, we have noticed many challenges. (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

As for activities concerning mental health services, a number of international organizations have been involved in this aspect, headed by UNHCR and other organizations such as MSF (Doctors Without Borders). These provide services in mental health and PUI Relief. (Irq-1DGHY-Meso- F-No.1).

A representative of one of the organizations says:

We support DOH (Department of Health), local organizations, and civil society organizations to provide psychosocial and mental health support services. Certainly, there is a gap all over Iraq, not only for refugees and asylum seekers, but also in regard to providing services for ISIS survivors. (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

In evaluating the activities related to mental health services, she adds,

The problem is that it's not only bad for refugee and asylum-seeking children, but also for all Iraqi children with disabilities. They face problems in education. We also provide support in that regard, and it depends on the cultural level of the population that we work with. That depends on how health services must be provided. It is a challenge facing the Iraqi government, the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, and the humanitarian community as to how to work together to provide mental health in particular to the people who have suffered torture, kidnapping and rape as a result of ISIS violence. I think there is a flaw, I do not think that the services provided have changed, but I am not a mental health expert. (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

On the basis of field interviews and the work of the research team, many points were observed in this aspect, some were negative and others were positive. A number of refugees praised the health care and availability of hospitals, medical clinics and non-governmental organization assistance. A Syrian refugee said:

We tried not to ask anyone for help because my job makes me not to ask for help. My sister's eyes have been damaged by diabetes. Thank God, life is good we treated her in government hospitals (Irq-8ABA- Micro-Syr- M-No.8).

Another refugee says,

But I suffered because of my daughter who had asthma, humidity and dust make it more difficult. There were difficulties initially, I did not know where to take my sick daughter, and then I got to know the Rafrin Governmental Hospital for children, I got to know the doctors through the pharmacists. (Irq-2AFSH- Micro-Syr-F-No.2).

Another refugee added:

Qandil Organization helped us one time because the children were sick, there was a clinic and it was closed later that was providing us with medicines for free. (Irq-3OMK- Micro-Syr-M-No.3).

Another confirmed, "Hospitals are available here in Erbil, especially the Rabin Hospital for Children, it is for free." (Irq-6SHMH - Micro-Syr-M-No.6). A Syrian refugee said: "Doctors Without Border has provided us with aid." (Irq-11SHFH - Micro-Syr-F-No.11). Many refugees complained about not receiving any aid or medical care, and that hospitals and medical clinics are far away from their places of residence. As a Syrian refugee said:

The hospital is far from me, there is a clinic, but it does not provide the necessary treatments, the problem is in obtaining medicine for my case, I am tired from the trip because I am sick and affected me psychologically, but then we integrated. (Irq-9NASH- Micro-Syr-F-No.9).

Another refugee said:

My health is not good, because I have ulcer and psychologically tired. I go to the clinic for treatment, no one has provided me with any help, and there are not enough medicines in the clinic. (Irq-16SHMB- Micro-Syr-F-No.16).

Another refugee added:

The travelling and asylum process affected me physically, as I suffered from cervical vertebrae disease, it also affected me psychologically, as I sometimes feel depressed, I reached out to a medical committee (Doctors Without Borders), but I did not get help or even a response from them (Irq-19EMS-Micro-Syr- M-No.19).

Another refugee said:

We ask for help from Doctors Without Borders, but to no avail. There is a clinic, but without enough medicines, and we have to buy medicines from outside the camp. (Irq-24KJK-Micro-Syr-M-No.24).

It was also found that most of the refugees suffer from trauma and psychological stress due to the events and calamities that occurred in their home country in addition to the current living conditions. As a Syrian refugee spoke: "I face social and psychological pressure because of the challenges we face." (Irq-1HFK- Micro-Syr-M-No.1)

Another refugee asserted: "The trip did not affect my health physically, but the effect was psychological (depression) my mother was ill and did not receive help from anyone or from medical institutions" (Irq-4RLM- Micro-Syr-M-No.4). Another refugee added: "I felt several times a difficult psychological condition, and I wanted to return to my country, yearning for it and for my mother whom I am in constant contact with." (Irq-5HFM- Micro-Syr-M-No.5). Another said: "My physical health was not affected, but my psychological state was." (Irq-7MSA-Micro-Syr-M-No.7). Another refugee added:

My asylum in Iraq affected me physically, as I have been sick to date and because of the difficult circumstances I have lived in, I have also been psychologically affected a lot, I get depression episodes. So, I go to my neighbours to relieve that. Living in Iraq brings psychological pressures on me. The social life has led to psychological pressure on me because. I have children and there is no work for my husband. These circumstances put a lot of pressure on me when I find my children without schools and I cannot meet their demands (Irq-18MYA-Micro-Syr- F-No.18).

Another refugee spoke:

My uncle and aunt came here seven months before me, and they died here because of their psychological conditions and illnesses. My uncle was 45 years old. My aunt also died here because of a stroke (Irq-24KJK- Micro-Syr-M-No.24).

Another refugee said:

Mental health is not good, I feel depressed and pessimistic, and I keep thinking for four hours before falling asleep. The condition affected our sexual practices. (Irq-27RHH-Micro-Syr- F-No.27).

A number of refugees with physical health problems were monitored, in addition to a number of refugees with special needs among them. As a refugee mentioned:

The asylum journey affected my psyche as a patient with (heart, joints, lungs, and asthma), I had these illnesses in Syria as well, sometimes I get depressed as a foreigner in need for medical assistance (Irq-11SHFH- Micro-Syr- F-No.11).

Another refugee added:

I have health condition that is the Mediterranean Fever, I suffer more from it in Iraq. I felt depressed because my husband is sick (Irq-13SAA -Micro-Syr- F-No.13).

Another refugee said:

During my trip, I suffered from Psoriasis. Sometimes, I feel depressed and pessimistic. I went to the doctor because of my condition which is a skin disease, he gave me an ointment, but it didn't work (Irq-14SHRO-Micro-Syr- F-No.14).

In addition, many Syrian refugees are resorting to doctors, hospitals, and medical clinics on their own expense, which has weighed heavily on their shoulders because of the high cost of medicine and the cost of visiting them. As a Syrian refugee affirmed: "I did not seek medical help, but rather we visited the hospital, private hospitals are very expensive" (Irq-1HFK-Micro-Syr- M-No.1). Another refugee said: "Going to the doctor once costs \$100 - \$150. I took my son to the doctor two days ago and it cost me \$150" (Irq-3OMK-Micro-Syr- M-No.3). Another refugee added: "Physically, I have problems with my eyes, and I cannot see a doctor because it is expensive" (Irq-17AFA-Micro-Syr- M-No.17).

Some refugees added that the level of health services in the host country is very poor and that they send their tests and x-ray results (pictures) and explain the symptoms to their relatives who present them to doctors in their home country for the purpose of diagnosing the condition and prescribe the medicine. A Syrian refugee said:

My children have been infected with a Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD), which is a rare disease, as pimples appear on the hands and feet. The medical services level here is frankly a failure. I send the x-ray pictures to my mother-in-law in Syria. My children's disease, which is a disease transmitted from animals, the patient has vomiting condition for 14 days, I faced great difficulty until my son was admitted to the hospital, he was given a nutrient serum, transportation fees from my area to the hospital are expensive, each time I pay 15 thousand Iraqi dinars, and I don't have a job. I faced horrors so that I could admit one of my children to the hospital, nobody helped me (Irq-3OMK- Micro-Syr- M-No.3).

## 8. Citizenship, Belonging and Civic Participation

### 8.1. Citizenship rights

According to Iraqi laws, refugees have the right to acquire Iraqi nationality and obtain citizenship status, as people registered for more than 10 years as asylum seekers have the right to apply for citizenship on condition that they have not left Iraq during all of that period, except with the approval of the Minister of Interior<sup>37</sup>. But on the actual level there is a difficulty in getting nationality, and former refugees like Palestinians, despite previous decisions of the dissolved Revolution Command Council, mentioned previously and which had the force of law, included with privileges like Iraqis, such as education, health, work and getting jobs, but citizenship was prohibited for political reasons related to Arab League resolutions.<sup>38</sup>

The Minister of Interior may also accept the naturalization of a refugee married to an Iraqi woman or a female refugee married to an Iraqi man, and grant them citizenship, with a period of residence not less than five years in Iraq, provided to remain the marital bond and the conditions set forth in (6) of the Iraqi nationality Act No. 26 of 2006.<sup>39</sup>

After getting the Nationality, refugees have the same rights as Iraqi citizens, except for a special law. The Iraqi Nationality Act referred to above does not permit any Iraqi who obtains Iraqi nationality by naturalization to be a minister or a member of a parliamentary body ten years before the date of his acquisition the Iraqi nationality.

### 8.2. Civic Participation

Participation in public affairs is diverse and not directly comparable across population groups, due to different types of decision-making institutions and bodies, including government, parliament, political parties, national and international commissions. According to Iraqi laws, whether Federal or within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, only Iraqi citizens have the right to establish or become member of political parties.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Iraqi laws do not allow non-Iraqi citizens to participate in the legislative elections or referendums to make constitutional amendments or others. The opportunities for refugees to participate in public life are therefore limited.

The lack of clarity of the legal framework and inconsistency with the goals will remain among the barriers to local integration, which determine the ability of Syrian refugees to own land, open companies, and reach long-term protection or obtain citizenship.

<sup>37</sup> The provisions of Item (First) of Article (6) of the Iraqi Nationality Law No. (26) of 2006, the Minister may calculate the period of asylum spent by a refugee in the Republic of Iraq that exceeds (10) years, related residence for the purposes of naturalization with Iraqi nationality, and that his entry To Iraq legally, adults and not convicted of a felony or misdemeanour of honour, and can support himself by any apparent means of living, and does not have serious transitional diseases.

<sup>38</sup> The provisions of Item (Second) of Article (6) of the Iraqi Nationality Law No. (26) of 2006, it is not permissible to grant Iraqi citizenship to Palestinians as a guarantee of the right to return to their homeland.

<sup>39</sup> According to Article (7) of the Iraqi Nationality Law No. (26) of 2006, the Minister of Interior can approve naturalization of a non-Iraqi married to an Iraqi woman, if the conditions mentioned in Article (6) of the aforementioned law are met, provided that the residence period does not decrease In Iraq for five years, with the marital bond remaining until the date of application. The Minister can, according to Article (11) of the above law, approve the naturalization of a non-Iraqi woman married to an Iraqi, if a period of five years has elapsed since her marriage and residency in Iraq, and the continuation of the marital bond until the date of the application, with the exception of those who were divorced or her husband died and has a boy from the dead or divorced husband.

<sup>40</sup> Article Six (First) of the Political Parties Law No. 36 of 2015 “The party is established on the basis of citizenship and in a manner that does not contradict the provisions of the constitution.”

Nevertheless, Syrians, especially in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, were able to join many bodies and committees for camp management and participate in decision-making on their own affairs, whether they participate in bodies that contribute to strengthening the role of society (such as neighbourhood committees) working with local authorities or in camps to address community concerns and influence in public affairs (Durable Solutions Platform, 2019).

The Syrians have also established professional unions for themselves, such as the Union of Syrian Kurdistan teachers, founded in Erbil on May 12, 2014. In cooperation with the General Union of Iraqi Kurdistan teachers, they managed to provide some services such as the appointment of some Syrian teachers to the territory schools, the admission of students to schools, field visits to schools and families of refugees and the identification of their problems, whether teachers or students. Initially the union included more than 230 teachers both male and female but the number decreased to about 170 due to immigration or the search for higher income jobs because of the lack of salaries and delay in distribution, so for teachers in local bodies in the camps each has its own body to follow up teachers issues, but the union has gradually been reactivated and become unable to meet teachers' demands and needs due to lack of adequate cooperation and coordination with the union, its structures are paralyzed and institutions ineffective and unable to achieve its goals (HCCS, 2018).

Iraqi religious and ethnic institutions and well-known figures have contributed to the integration of refugees. In the region of Kurdistan, many churches have contributed to the relief of refugees and displaced persons by paying rents, and housing them in Church complexes and camps including Christian, Ezidies, Kakais and other refugees and displaced persons receiving health services, education and other humanitarian assistance, in particular in Ankawa-Erbil, areas in Duhok and in Sulaymaniyah centre, including the complexes of Ashti and Karma in Ankawa, Harsham 1, Harsham 2 in Baharka and other camps in Kaznazan and Kazna in Erbil.

The Assyrians in Duhok contributed by hosting Syrian refugees and displaced Christians in their villages, towns, opening their homes and providing financial aid and supplies, registering their children in schools, especially in the towns of Bakhtami and Badresh in Duhok, offering all kinds of assistance that made refugees not to feel alienated. In Erbil, a Christian businessman Nizar Hanna presented buildings, apartments and complexes for Syrian refugees and Iraqi Christian displaced persons, where they live free of charge, especially in Nishteman and Sakhra compounds in central Erbil.

Human rights and humanitarian organizations carried out various programs in assisting, rehabilitating and integrating refugees, most of them are European organizations and national organizations funded by international organizations, including the Hammurabi Human Rights Organization with its headquarters in Baghdad, which opened two centres to serve Syrian refugees and Iraqi displaced persons. One is in Nishteman camp in central Erbil for children rehabilitation and integration through art, and another is for legal and psychosocial assistance in Nineveh Plains for displaced persons in the town of (Bakhdida/Qaraqosh), within the framework of RESPOND Program funded by the European Union. Also Hammurabi and with support and cooperation of the Swiss-based Christian Solidarity International CSI, provided financial aid to Syrian Christian Assyrian refugees in Duhok, benefitting more than 60 Syrian refugee families.

### **8.3. Belonging, Social Transformations and Host Community**

Although most refugees in the Kurdistan region of Iraq share a common ethnic identity, some expressed a sense of alienation or a sense of inferiority, simply being referred to as a refugee or a Syrian refugee even though they were Kurds ethnically, they felt stigmatised. But in light of the refugees' impression of the treatment of officials in the state, the refugees did not show

any negative reactions to the officials or the state institutions, most of them feel welcomed wherever they are at the official level.

“This (being Kurds) helped us a lot to integrate because there is a high nationalist feeling here, but they still look at us in inferiority, because we are ultimately strangers in this society” (Durable Solution Platform, 2019). Two Syrian refugees interviewed also reported:

We are not all right here, because naming (Syrian) is the basis for dealing with us, and there is always who says he is Syrian, meaning *stranger* (Irq-8ABA-Micro-Syr-M-No.8).

During a debate in the market between my wife and a shopkeeper, my wife's voice rose slightly, the shop owner beat her on her hand saying ‘Listen you are Syrian here, and your voice is louder than necessary (Irq-3OMK-Micro-Syr- M-No.3).

However, 50% of the interviewed refugees expressed a clear sense of comfort in the neighbourhoods and areas where they live and move freely without fear for their lives, while recognizing that their lives were initially difficult, and that their level of relations, integration and adaption gradually improved. 17% reported that they are not comfortable and do not feel happy and safe in their area, and eager to move to other regions or places that may change their situation. 29% did not reveal a clear position about their feelings and 4% said that the degree of comfort was moderate or acceptable.

In any case, I feel comfortable and safe and feel happy when walking around the neighbourhood in which I live and I am not afraid (Irq-1HFK-Micro-Syr-M No.1).

I merged with people, I felt like I was in my country, I am anxious to join my family and country, thanking God that my family recently joined me (Irq-6SHMH-Micro-Syr-M No.6).

We are comfortable in Kurdistan and living is easy and comfortable, but in any case, there is no better place than the own country (Irq-4RLM-Micro-Syr-M-No.4).

I am not happy or comfortable in my residential and prefer to leave this place if the opportunity and possibilities are available (Irq-19EMS-Micro-Syr- M-No.19).

Most Syrian refugees expressed the feeling of being welcomed decreased over time, especially after the increase in the number of Syrians in the country, and became clear after 2014, as a result of the flow of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi emigrants to Kurdistan region from Mosul, Salahuddin and Ramadi, due to ISIS invasion of their regions, and the deterioration of the security and economic situation in the country in general and the region of Iraqi Kurdistan in particular. The capacity and readiness of host communities to receive refugees has decreased, and these communities themselves have been affected by new variables.

In addition, the Federal Government, the Kurdistan Regional Government, the international community, international organizations, the population and civil society organizations have turned much of their attention to internally displaced persons, which has negatively affected on the conditions of refugees in terms of living conditions, as well as employment, education, health and so forth. It can be seen in what the refugees have referred to during the interviews.

## 8.4. Adaptation of Asylum Seekers and Refugees to the host Community

In our interviews, refugees and representatives of organizations have expressed their perceptions and impressions and the nature of their understanding of integration regarding public and political areas, the media, and the main barriers that hinder or prevent the integration of asylum seekers and refugees and the challenges they face. As the representative of one of the organizations working with refugees expresses:

Our understanding of integration is the provision of the same treatment for all asylum seekers and refugees; that everyone has access to health services and education; there is equal treatment; the adoption of the same policy without discrimination among asylum seeker and refugee. [...] The greatest barriers are sometimes the language, customs, traditions and political and religious persuasions (Irq-1DGHY-Meso- F-No.1).

While the representative of another organization concerned with refugee affairs says:

There are provisions in Law (51) of 1971 for political refugees, in favour of the integration of the Palestinians, but they were never able to obtain citizenship (for reasons mentioned previously). In regard to Syrians in Iraq, in general, there is nothing mentioned in law regarding their integration, but it is taking place practically in the KRI; that the authorities give all Syrians the ability to return, or stay as long as they want, they also have access services and other things. [...] The big challenge is for other groups that have been staying for more than 10 years. These are mainly Kurds from Iran and Turkey who have been in KRI and partly in the Nineveh province. They have been de facto integrated. Recently, though they have been facing economic challenges in accessing general and municipal services (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

Elsewhere the same person mentions:

I think that the refugees and asylum seekers in Iraq are from multiple cultures and ethnicities, and also the Iraqi community is multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural, so asylum seekers and refugees go to places where they assume, they will be more welcomed. Take, for example, the Sudanese in Baghdad, they are different from Iraqis, but they reside in Baghdad, and find work because of the Arabic language. As such, they have integrated well. Likewise, the Yemeni Shiites prefer to be close to the Shiite religious shrines in the central and south of Iraq. They are Shiites and find justifications for practicing their religion and rituals there. (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

With regard to refugees, more than 46% of those interviewed in the Kurdistan region feel that their entire lives and social relations have changed in terms of their practices and behaviour within family duties, marriage, sex, religion, politics, relations with relatives, children, and others. This is evident from what the refugees themselves have reported, some of which changed for the worse, while others changed for better. A Syrian Christian Refugee has expressed that:

What has changed in my life, I found myself living with my family in poverty, the future is unknown and the fear is inherent to us, social relations are broken or there are no relations at all, because working hours are long and I am waiting to leave for another country, there is a difference in looking at my wife here. Because my wife is not veiled while the majority of the women are veiled here, and we are bound socially and religiously (Irq-3OMK-Micro-Syr-M-No.3).

Other persons mention:

I married eight months after we arrived Erbil, my life changed to the best, we came to Erbil with parents, three sisters and one brother, and we adapted to the new society (Irq-10ARJ-Micro-Syr- F-No.10).

My relationship changed because my husband left me before coming (Irq-16SHMB-Micro-Syr-F-No.16)

Friends, neighbours and relatives have changed and they are away from each other, but conditions have not affected my social and family relations (Irq-19EMS-Micro-Syr-M-No.19)

I have had a social change in my life, I married at a small age in Iraq, my children became responsible for their education, while I need those who can take care of me, because I married at age of school, that the change happened after we left Syria, there we did not have a psychological concern, and that all we were worried about was how we would do our school duties. But here in Iraq, everything is changed, and responsibility became greater (Irq-21PM-Micro-Syr-F-No.21).

Many refugees emphasized the ease of adjustment and praised the acceptance of the indigenous citizens for them. As one of the refugees expresses his understanding of the normally occurring integration in the KRI, "My concept of integration is mixing with people, knowing their language and customs, and I personally mingled with many people. The contractor I worked with made me mix with the Iraqis and other people, our reception was good by the people" (Irq-29MSRR-Micro-Syr-M-No.29). In describing his situation, one says;

I merged with society in Erbil, but the homeland (Syria) remains irreplaceable. I met relatives of me in Erbil and they lived in Iraq through residency and not through asylum. At the present time, I live better after the integration and the Iraqis have treated us with loyalty (Irq-5HFM- Micro-Syr-M-No.5).

A Syrian refugee describes his integration,

I merged with the people and had a feeling as if I was in my own my country. ... I have good relations with my neighbours, and I am happy. In addition to the good security situation in Kurdistan, there is good interaction with the Iraqis. My relationship with Syrians is little. My favourite place to live in Ankawa, and also Dohuk. I do not like to live in another country. The advantages of the area, where I live, is the social life (Irq-6SHMH-Micro-Syr-M-No.6).

Another refugee prefers to integrate into a society which is close to him in terms of culture, saying, "There is a kind of integration in Kurdistan society, and this is better than the integration in Europe, according to what we hear." (Irq-7MSA-Micro-Syr-M-No.7). Some interviewees noted that language has a major impact on their integration, as they had difficulty adapting because of it. A Syrian refugee said:

For me, integration is mixing with the people and learning their language. On the day we came, we had language problems because our dialects are different. In Duhok they do not know the Arabic language, but we got to know Iraqis, and because of the mingling with them and interactions, our language improved. (Irq-24KJK- Micro-Syr-M-No.24).

Another refugee said: "Language was difficult and an obstacle for me at first, but I learned it later. My integration is better now" (Irq-25AWH-Micro-Syr-M-No.25). Another refugee added:



I knew there was the Kurdish language in Iraq, but now I have difficulty with the Iraqi Kurdish dialect, especially the Sorani dialect spoken by the Kurds in Sulaimania, and I do not mix because of my old age (Irq-28EMH-Micro-Syr-M-No.28).

Another refugee asserts:

There is no mixing with the Iraqis, but only with the Syrians, and we do not know the language here in Sulaimania, and we do not know the dialect of the people in Sulaimania, which is difficult for us (Irq-26FAR-Micro-Syr-F-No.26).

Representatives of international and local organizations note that one of the issues that have emerged and was not expected to prevent the easy integration is the subject of the language. It was found that Syrian refugees of Kurdish origin had difficulty in interacting with the host communities because of the difference in Kurdish dialects. Certainly, the subject of the language is essential. Speaking the same language enables refugees to work, interact and live within the host community. This is an issue; the Syrian Kurds faced some of the language problem because they did not speak the same dialogues. Yes, there is a difference in Kurdish dialects (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

The barriers to integration can be the language, customs, traditions and political and religious orientations (Irq-1DGHY-Meso-F-No.1).

Many refugees maintain that they have not integrated because the host communities do not accept them and because of a clear discrimination against them. A Syrian refugee said:

It seems that the increase in the number of immigrants and the emergence of problems led people to notice the acquisition of their lands and the impact on their jobs, and this has generated resentment among the local people against the large number of Syrians.[...] She also added:- One of the challenges of integration is that there was a problem with dressing when I was in Erbil, and there was also a problem in the language, so that Duhok for me is better than Erbil" (Irq-21PMF-Micro-Syr-F-No.21).

Another refugee said:

There is no good integration, because I have no room to mix with the neighbour and members of society, because relations are few due to the difference in customs, nature, and sometimes discrimination (Irq-23ASHA-Micro-Syr- M-No.23).

Another refugee spoke, "I prefer to live in a city, whether it is small or large, like Erbil or Zakho, because there is no racism like the way it is in Duhok" (Irq-24KJK-Micro-Syr-M-No.24). Another refugee added: "I have no contact with the neighbours, as the neighbours do not deal with the Syrians very much." (Irq-25AWH-Micro-Syr-M-No.25). Another refugee said:

I do not expect that the Syrians here are comfortable and most of them are like me, there is no mixing with the host community and there is a language problem and I feel that the people here do not like us very much, when we go to doctors, people at the clinic tell us why do not you go back to Syria?, the situation has improved there, so we feel they don't like us (Irq-27RHH-Micro-Syr-F-No.27).

Others spoke of their unwillingness to integrate or the existence of challenges that did not facilitate their integration. As a refugee said: "We have no opportunities for integration and do not like mixing. I have not participated in an integration program" (Irq-26FAR-Micro-Syr-F-No.26). Another refugee said:

I love to move to another country to receive fertility treatment and have children, I still live happily with my husband, but I do not communicate with the wider community (Irq-10ARJ-Micro-Syr-F-No.10).

Another refugee added:

The challenges of integration are the lack of meeting and visiting, we live in camps and there is no opportunity to communicate with the Iraqis, if we were elsewhere in Dohuk, for example, we could have integrated quickly (Irq-18MYA- Micro-Syr-F-No.18).

Another refugee said:

We have no opportunities to integrate and do not like mixing, as I have not participated in an integration program. [...] I do not leave the house because I am sick, and my daughter is sick too. I do not want to bring headache on myself, I care only about the house (Irq-26FAR- Micro-Syr-FNo.26).

Interviews with refugees and representatives of organizations have expressed their perceptions and impressions and the nature of their understanding of integration regarding public and political areas, the media, and the main barriers that hinder or prevent the integration of asylum seekers and refugees and the challenges they face. As the representative of one of the organizations working with refugees expresses:

Our understanding of integration is the provision of the same treatment for all asylum seekers and refugees; that everyone has access to health services and education; there is equal treatment; the adoption of the same policy without discrimination among asylum seeker and refugee. [...] The greatest barriers are sometimes the language, customs, traditions and political and religious persuasions (Irq-1DGHY-Meso- F-No.1).

While the representative of another organization concerned with refugee affairs says:

There are provisions in Law (51) of 1971 for political refugees, in favour of the integration of the Palestinians, but they were never able to obtain citizenship (for reasons mentioned previously). In regard to Syrians in Iraq, in general, there is nothing mentioned in law regarding their integration, but it is taking place practically in the KRI; that the authorities give all Syrians the ability to return, or stay as long as they want, they also have access services and other things. [...] The big challenge is for other groups that have been staying for more than 10 years. These are mainly Kurds from Iran and Turkey who have been in KRI and partly in the Nineveh province. They have been de facto integrated. Recently, though they have been facing economic challenges in accessing general and municipal services (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

Elsewhere the same person mentions:

I think that the refugees and asylum seekers in Iraq are from multiple cultures and ethnicities, and also the Iraqi community is multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural, so asylum seekers and refugees go to places where they assume, they will be more welcomed. Take, for example, the Sudanese in Baghdad, they are different from Iraqis, but they reside in Baghdad, and find work because of the Arabic language. As such, they have integrated well. Likewise, the Yemeni Shiites prefer to be close to the Shiite religious shrines in the central and south of Iraq. They are Shiites and find justifications for practicing their religion and rituals there (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

With regard to refugees, more than 46% of those interviewed in the Kurdistan region feel that their entire lives and social relations have changed in terms of their practices and behaviour within family duties, marriage, sex, religion, politics, and relations with relatives, children, and others. This is evident from what the refugees themselves have reported, some of which changed for the worse, while others changed for better. A Syrian Christian Refugee has expressed that:

What has changed in my life, I found myself living with my family in poverty, the future is unknown and the fear is inherent to us, social relations are broken or there are no relations at all, because working hours are long and I am waiting to leave for another country, there is a difference in looking at my wife here. Because my wife is not veiled while the majority of the women are veiled here, and we are bound socially and religiously (Irq-3OMK-Micro-Syr-M-No.3).

Other persons mention:

I married eight months after we arrived Erbil, my life changed to the best, we came to Erbil with parents, three sisters and one brother, and we adapted to the new society (Irq-10ARJ-Micro-Syr- F-No.10).

My relationship changed because my husband left me before coming (Irq-16SHMB-Micro-Syr-F-No.16).

Friends, neighbours and relatives have changed and they are away from each other, but conditions have not affected my social and family relations (Irq-19EMS-Micro-Syr-M-No.19)

Many refugees emphasized the ease of adjustment and praised the acceptance of the indigenous citizens for them. As one of the refugees expresses his understanding of the normally occurring integration in the KRI, "My concept of integration is mixing with people, knowing their language and customs, and I personally mingled with many people. The contractor I worked with made me mix with the Iraqis and other people, our reception was good by the people" (Irq-29MSRR-Micro-Syr-M-No.29). In describing his situation, one says;

I merged with society in Erbil, but the homeland (Syria) remains irreplaceable. I met relatives of me in Erbil and they lived in Iraq through residency and not through asylum. At the present time, I live better after the integration and the Iraqis have treated us with loyalty (Irq-5HFM- Micro-Syr-M-No.5).

A Syrian refugee describes his integration:

I merged with the people and had a feeling as if I was in my own my country. ... I have good relations with my neighbours, and I am happy. In addition to the good security situation in Kurdistan, there is good interaction with the Iraqis. My relationship with Syrians is little. My favourite place to live in Ankawa, and also Dohuk. I do not like to live in another country. The advantages of the area, where I live, is the social life. (Irq-6SHMH-Micro-Syr-M-No.6).

Another refugee prefers to integrate into a society which is close to him in terms of culture, saying, "There is a kind of integration in Kurdistan society, and this is better than the integration in Europe, according to what we hear" (Irq-7MSA-Micro-Syr-M-No.7). Some interviewees noted that language has a major impact on their integration, as they had difficulty adapting because of it. A Syrian refugee said:

For me, integration is mixing with the people and learning their language. On the day we came, we had language problems because our dialects are different. In Duhok they do not know the Arabic language, but we got to know Iraqis, and because of the mingling with them and interactions, our language improved. (Irq-24KJK- Micro-Syr-M-No.24).

Another refugee said: "Language was difficult and an obstacle for me at first, but I learned it later. My integration is better now" (Irq-25AWH-Micro-Syr-M-No.25). Another refugee added:

I knew there was the Kurdish language in Iraq, but now I have difficulty with the Iraqi Kurdish dialect, especially the Sorani dialect spoken by the Kurds in Sulaimania, and I do not mix because of my old age (Irq-28EMH-Micro-Syr-M-No.28).

Another refugee asserts:

There is no mixing with the Iraqis, but only with the Syrians, and we do not know the language here in Sulaimania, and we do not know the dialect of the people in Sulaimania, which is difficult for us (Irq-26FAR-Micro-Syr-F-No.26).

Representatives of international and local organizations note that one of the issues that have emerged and was not expected to prevent the easy integration is the subject of the language. It was found that Syrian refugees of Kurdish origin had difficulty in interacting with the host communities because of the difference in Kurdish dialects. Certainly, the subject of the language is essential. Speaking the same language enables refugees to work, interact and live within the host community. This is an issue; the Syrian Kurds faced some of the language problem because they did not speak the same dialogues. Yes, there is a difference in Kurdish dialects, (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2).

The barriers to integration can be the language, customs, traditions and political and religious orientations. (Irq-1DGHY-Meso-F-No.1).

Many refugees maintain that they have not integrated because the host communities do not accept them and because of a clear discrimination against them. A Syrian refugee said:

It seems that the increase in the number of immigrants and the emergence of problems led people to notice the acquisition of their lands and the impact on their jobs, and this has generated resentment among the local people against the large number of Syrians.[...] She also added:- One of the challenges of integration is that there was a problem with dressing when I was in Erbil, and there was also a problem in the language, so that Duhok for me is better than Erbil" (Irq-21PMF-Micro-Syr-F-No.21).

Another refugee said:

There is no good integration, because I have no room to mix with the neighbour and members of society, because relations are few due to the difference in customs, nature, and sometimes discrimination (Irq-23ASHA-Micro-Syr- M-No.23).

Another refugee spoke, "I prefer to live in a city, whether it is small or large, like Erbil or Zakho, because there is no racism like the way it is in Duhok" (Irq-24KJK-Micro-Syr-M-No.24). Another refugee added: "I have no contact with the neighbours, as the neighbours do not deal with the Syrians very much" (Irq-25AWH-Micro-Syr-M-No.25). Another refugee said:

I do not expect that the Syrians here are comfortable and most of them are like me, there is no mixing with the host community and there is a language problem and I feel that the people here do not like us very much, when we go to doctors, people at the clinic tell us why do not you go back to Syria?, the situation has improved there, so we feel they don't like us (Irq-27RHH-Micro-Syr-F-No.27).

Others spoke of their unwillingness to integrate or the existence of challenges that did not facilitate their integration. As a refugee said: "We have no opportunities for integration and do not like mixing. I have not participated in an integration program" (Irq-26FAR-Micro-Syr-F-No.26). Another refugee said:

I love to move to another country to receive fertility treatment and have children, I still live happily with my husband, but I do not communicate with the wider community (Irq-10ARJ-Micro-Syr-F-No.10).

Another refugee added:

The challenges of integration are the lack of meeting and visiting, we live in camps and there is no opportunity to communicate with the Iraqis, if we were elsewhere in

Dohuk, for example, we could have integrated quickly (Irq-18MYA- Micro-Syr-F-No.18).

Another refugee said:

We have no opportunities to integrate and do not like mixing, as I have not participated in an integration program. [...] I do not leave the house because I am sick, and my daughter is sick too. I do not want to bring headache on myself, I care only about the house (Irq-26FAR- Micro-Syr-FNo.26).

## 9. Conclusions

In this report, integration in all its forms in different fields in Iraqi society has been discussed. We have shown that due to the nature of forced displacement, thousands of Syrians crossed the border into Iraq to escape the harsh and life-threatening conditions, so Iraq cannot be considered as the country of final destination for many of them. But the harsh conditions brought Syrian refugees (Arab, Kurds, Assyrians and others) to make a first stop in Iraq, as Iraq opened its borders for refugees, with many helpful factors, as language, religion, customs, geographical and ethnic proximity.

During the period of reporting and studying 2011-2017, Iraq faced difficult internal or local circumstances that were represented by internal and external displacement. The internal affairs were the result of the political problems that hit the central governorates as Al -Anbar and Salahuddin at the end of 2013, then came the occupation of ISIS in Nineveh province which controlled one third of the area in 2014, and the re-displacement of Iraqis from Syria to Iraq due to the civil war in Syria. The total number of internally and externally displaced persons was over five million (Al- Jaff, 2017).

Despite this difficulty and in the absence of a refugee law to regulate their lives as stated in the details of this report, with the existence of the political asylum Act and the Foreigners Residence Act and in the light of the poor experience of Iraq in the integration of refugees, The Federal government and the Regional government, in particular the governments of Iraqi Kurdistan and the local authority in Al- Anbar governorate, have been able to provide the requirements for integration even at a minimum. Based on the consideration of Syrians as guests deserving hospitality for ethnic, religious and cultural reasons, and not on the basis of commitment to laws or agreements,

As previously mentioned, Iraq had a political refugee law, Law No. (51) of 1971, and it specifically included Palestinian and Syrian refugees displaced from Palestine, and this law is so far acceptable in the region, where the refugees are equal to the Iraqi citizens, while nearly granting them the rights of the Iraqi citizen. Iraq could have developed this law, in a way that includes new non-political refugees. However, the fragile political structure and political interactions between the various forces that control the political process and the conflicts that exist between the Federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government prevented this. Rather, laws in Iraq, especially those concerned with immigration and asylum, started to retreat instead of develop, and this is opposite to life and opposite of the progress of countries towards development.

The integration of Syrian refugees in Iraq is easier, faster and much shorter than integration into European societies or others because the society that most Syrian refugees came from does not differ much from Iraqi society in terms of well-known customs and traditions. Most of the Syrian refugees who are in Iraq came from north eastern of Syria, they are Kurds and Assyrian Christian, and the areas to which they came in Iraq, especially Duhok and Erbil, the populations are also Kurds and Assyrians. In other words the Syrian Refugees did not find societies strange to what is familiar to them, thus most of them did not face difficulty in understanding and coexistence, due to convergence of language, history, geography and affinity, and there is no doubt that cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic proximity plays a positive role for social integration.

The integration of refugees in Iraq has differed from one region to another, where some regions integration is more difficult than other regions, and this is what happened in Duhok province in Kurdistan region of Iraq, as the nature of the host community and its people is more difficult to accept refugees from the province of Sulaymaniyah and Erbil in the same region because it is a closed and tribal society. For example, society in Sulaymaniyah or Erbil is more open to strangers than Duhok, because the society in Duhok is a tribal society, and such societies rarely accept the stranger or anyone who is not from their tribal even if the person is Kurdish to live with them. Likewise, refugees of Kurdish origin were unable to

integrate into the western Arab regions, such as Anbar, because the society there consist of Arab tribes that differ in their traditions and customs than the Kurds and it is not easy for them to accept people who are ethnically and tribally different.

Despite the assistance provided by international organizations such as (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM and MSF) and other local international and national organizations in terms of assistance to refugees and in many cases have taken upon themselves the responsibility to continue to provide services instead of the Iraqi official authorities such as the Ministry of Migration and displacement. However, the level of response of the international community was not sufficient, and is not commensurate with the increasing needs of refugees with the increase in their number in Iraq. Rather, the lack of a rapid response from the international community to the conditions of refugees deprived a generation of refugees of access to education, as a result of having to leave school and go towards work with providing aim of relief to families.

But the biggest challenge remaining is the weakness of livelihoods programs to facilitate integration through the provision of job opportunities and job alignment, support for small businesses and increased vocational training. This will not be possible without reforming the Iraqi legal system and promoting societal development in the form of programs aimed at strengthening the infrastructure for local services, such as expanding educational facilities and supplies, facilitating access to education, and developing a modern and appropriate health infrastructure.

Therefore, the delay in achieving this motivates most refugees to prefer resettlement in a third country, because they find that local integration has legal restrictions, in addition to the absence of political and security stability in Iraq, with the recurrence of economic crises, especially in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, due to repeated political differences with Baghdad.

## 10. Policy Recommendations

### Labour Market

- Governmental authorities must overcome legal obstacles or obstacles for practicing refugee professionals in their work as dentists, pharmacists, lawyers and taxi drivers, and set legal standards to recognize their professional certificates for their practice.
- The authorities should monitor and hold accountable employers who exploit refugees by working longer hours and for less pay than the local population.
- Expanding job opportunities for refugees at the official level, and working to include refugees, whether they are workers, doctors, engineers, or technicians in the health and social security, and in the event of losing his work, they should be included in a social protection network to allocate them a minimum monthly salary.
- Encouraging and facilitating the work of refugees with specializations and competences such as doctors, engineers, technicians and others to employ them in order to benefit from their competencies.

### Education

- Increasing the number of teaching staff in primary, intermediate and secondary schools, and improving teachers' conditions and salaries and training them with modern teaching skills.
- Increase the acceptance rate of refugees in Iraqi universities and facilitate procedures for equivalence and recognition of their degrees.
- Increasing the number of beneficiaries from the fellowship and scholarship programs or increasing the number of seats admitted into the general comparison.
- Paying attention to marginalized groups of students with special needs and providing support and care for their education.
- Increasing allocations in the general budget for schools and education requirements for refugees.
- Urging international organizations and the international community to increase support for education.
- The Federal Government, the Kurdistan Regional Government, as well as the local governments in the provinces, should teach students in the language of the host country as well as opening learning centres so students can continue their studies as quickly as possible.

### Housing

- Reconsidering the legislation and laws on residence and obtaining citizenship essential in giving refugees the right to purchase agricultural and residential lands in Iraq.
- Federal, Regional and local authorities should provide adequate housing for asylum seekers, and provide cash assistance to asylum seekers and refugees with vulnerable people and marginalized groups for housing.
- Improving the infrastructure in the camps to ensure access to water, electricity, sanitation, education and health care services.



## **Health**

- Urging the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to increase interest in psychosocial support and mental health services for Iraqis and refugees alike.
- Increasing the provision of centres and hospitals concerned with health care for refugees with the necessary medicines and medical devices.
- Urging the international community to increase the support devoted to health care financially, and to intensify the development of Iraqi medical cadres and staff with expertise, especially those related to psychosocial support and mental health.
- Provide health care to asylum seekers, and that such care be similar to health care for refugees and Iraqis.
- Include asylum seekers from vulnerable groups, such as the handicapped and those unable to work, in the social welfare network.
- Provide centres for psychological treatment, as many refugees suffer from mental and neurological diseases due to forced asylum and fleeing their country, and that treatment and medication to be free in these centres.
- Make the residence of asylum seekers and refugees not far from service centres such as health and educational institutions.

## **Citizenship, Belonging and Civic Participation**

- Promote greater clarity of political and legal frameworks, identifying and unifying the entity responsible for refugees and asylum seekers, and acting in harmony.
- Reform the legislative system on migration and asylum to achieve sustainable solutions.
- Adopt more comprehensive participation in the design and implementation of projects for refugees and asylum seekers to increase civic engagement.
- Establish organizations and unions concerned with their refugee affairs and their situations.

## **Other recommendations**

- Speeding up the issuance (legislation) for refugees that is consistent with the spirit and provisions of human rights, taking advantage of the Political Asylum Law (51) of 1971, by developing it to be a comprehensive law including all categories of refugees.
- The Iraqi Federal government, regional and local governments must ensure that the humanitarian factor is the motivation for accepting and to dealing with refugees, and not the ethnic, linguistic, or cultural factor, and that this humanitarian factor is the basis of the host community interaction with refugees.
- The Iraqi authorities and relevant international and local organizations should take care of the gender consideration and children for the purpose of qualifying them to integrate into society. As well as caring for the elderly and people with special needs.

## Appendices

Table 8. Interviews with Syrian refugees

Arrival Period 2014-2017	Arrival Period 2011-2014	Other Ethnic Minorities (Assyrian Christians)	Kurdish Origin	Female No.	Male No.	No. Of Interviews	Province
6	8	3	11	7	7	14 (7 women, 7 men)	Erbil
5	6	-	11	4	7	11 (4 women 7 men)	Duhok
1	3	-	4	2	2	4 (2 women and 2 men)	Sulaimaniya
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Anbar
<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>29</b> <b>(13 women and 16 men)</b>	<b>Total</b>

Interviews for Syrian refugees by age group are divided into three categories:

(18-38 years), (9) male interviews, (8) female interviews.

(39-59 years), (5) male interviews, (4) female interviews.

(60 - above), (2) male interviews, (1) female interview.

Table 9. The actual interviews for IDPs

Arrival during 2014-2017	Arrival 2011-2014	Ethnic Religious Minorities (Assyrian Christians, Yazidies, Shabak, Kakai's, Turkmens and Sabeans)	Female No.	Male No.	No. of Interviews	Province
5	1	2	3	3	6 (3 women 3 men)	Baghdad
5	1	2	4	2	6 (4 women 2 men)	Erbil
6	1	3	3	4	7 (3 women 4 men)	Dohuk
3	1	2	2	2	4 (2 women 2 men)	Sulaimaniya
2	-	-	1	1	2 (1 woman 1 man)	Najaf
2	-	-	1	1	2	Babel

					(1 woman 1 man)	
2	-	-	1	1	2 (1 woman 1 man)	Karbala
<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b> <b>(15 women and 14 men)</b>	<b>Total</b>

IDPs by age group are divided into three categories according to the above table data  
(18-38 years), (5) male interviews, (6) female interviews.  
(39 - 59 years), (6) male interviews, (8) female interviews.  
60 - above) (3) Male interviews, (1) female interview.

## References

- Ahmed, S. and Ahmed, R. 2019. More than 1000 students with 8 teachers at a refugee school in Duhok. [online] Available at: [www.kurdistan24.net/ar/news/a9fbf493-68b3-4423-8119-d3012dae9dd8](http://www.kurdistan24.net/ar/news/a9fbf493-68b3-4423-8119-d3012dae9dd8) [Accessed 25 May 2020].
- Al-Jaff, J. 2017 - Statements of the Minister of Migration and Displacement : The number of Iraqi displaced, 5 millions, only 45% has returned to their areas. [online] Available at: <http://www.sotaliraq.com/2017/12/16>, [Accessed 30 April 2020].
- Al Bahadili, S. 2020 (March 15). Director of the Civil Society Organizations Department at Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Baghdad. (Warda. W, Interviewer).
- Al-Fanar, 2020. New Syrian refugees in Iraq struggle for education. [online] Available at: <https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/ar/2020/01/> [Accessed 15 May 2020].
- Al-Jubouri, 2015. Syrian refugees forced into the bitter, [online] Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2015/9/8/>, [Accessed 30 May 2020].
- Al-Nasrawi, S. 2012. Syrian Refugees: Living in camps or with relatives. [online] Available at: <https://www.alhura.com/Iraq/2012/07/28>, [Accessed 30 April 2020].
- AUIS (American University of Iraq, Sulaimani), 2017. War, Health & Refugees in Iraq. [online] Available at <https://auis.edu.krd/iris/sites/default/files/>, [Accessed 30 May 2020].
- Aziz, I., Hutchinson, C., and Maltby, J. 2014. Quality of life of Syrian refugees living in camps in Kurdistan region of Iraq. [online] Available at: <https://researchgate.net/publication/268130429>, [Accessed 15 May 2020].
- Dearic, B. 2016. Syrian employment in Iraqi Kurdistan: exploitation and fraud. [online] Available at: <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/84319#ixzz6LybwRZm6> [Accessed 25 May 2020].
- Durable Solution Platform, 2019. Far from Home: Future Prospects For Syrian Refugees in Iraq. [online] Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/far-from-home-future-prospects-for-syrian-refugees-in-iraq/> [Accessed 10 April 2020].
- HCCS (Harmon Centre for Contemporary Studies), 2018. Report on the educational situation of the Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. [online] Available at: <https://www.harmoon.org/> [Accessed 15 May 2020]
- HCCS (Harmon Centre for Contemporary Studies), 2018b. Health centres in the Syrian refugee camps in the Kurdistan region of Iraq (Qushtapa camp as a model). [online] Available at: <http://harmoon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/>, [Accessed 15 May 2020]. P.8
- IOM-Iraq (International Organization for Migration), 2013. Iraq: Impact of the Syrian, Report, p.27. [online] Available at: <http://iomiraq.net>, [Accessed 10 April 2020].
- Ishtar TV, 2014, Erbil grants residency to Syrian Kurdish refugees within a week, [online] Available at: <http://ishtarTV.com/viewarticle,54308.html>, [Accessed 26 May 2020].
- JCCC (Joint Crisis Coordination Centre), 2019. Report on the state of education of Syrian refugees in KRI. [online] Available at: <https://www.arknews.net/ar/node/8741> [Accessed 28 April 2020].
- Lateef, A. 2015. Language and curriculum are two major obstacles: Kurdish schools host Syrian refugees. [online] Available at: <https://www.niqash.org/ar/articles/society/5107/>, [Accessed 5 May 2020].
- Marquos, L. 2020 (May 5). Vice President of HHRO, interviewed by interviewer (Warda,W).
- MERI (Middle East Research Foundation), 2019. Durable solutions for Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, Report, p.4. [online] Available at: <http://www.meri-k.org> [Accessed 15 May 2020].
- MHE-KRG (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Kurdistan region of Iraq), 2017. [online] Available at: <https://www.mhe-krq.org/ar/node/3636>, [Accessed 26 May 2020].

- MHE-KRG (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Kurdistan region of Iraq), 2017b. Admission of 116 Syrian students to the universities of the region [online] Available at: <https://mhe-krq/ar/node/3583>, [Accessed 26 May 2020].
- MHE-KRG (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Kurdistan region of Iraq), 2017c. Announcement of Ministry of Higher Education for all regional universities. [online] Available at: <https://mhe-krq.org/index.php/ar/node/3645>, [Accessed 26 April 2020].
- Mohammed. Z. S. 2020 (January 21), Director of Registration at Al-Nahrain University, Interviewed by Interviewer Al-Maffragi, H. Also, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2020. Guide to Student Affairs Procedures and Admission Controls and Conditions for the academic, non-Iraqi student admission controls, 2019-2020.
- MOMD (Ministry of Migration and Displacement), 2013. Statistics of Syrian refugees in Iraq . Official letter No. 8707, December 29, addressed to the Prime Minister's Office.
- MOMD (Ministry of Migration and Displacement), 2013-2017. Many official books addressed to the Prime Minister's office includes statistics and information on Syrian refugees.
- MOMD (Ministry of Migration and Displacement), 2017. Letter No. 8707 on 11/26/2017 addressed to the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs - European Department under the title "Meeting".
- MOMD (Ministry of Migration and Displacement), 2017. Letter number 9 on 9/1/2017 from the Refugee Department, addressed to the Minister of Immigration and Displacement, entitled "Syrian Refugees in Iraq".
- MOMD (Ministry of Migration and Displacement), 2017. Statistics of Syrian refugees in Iraq . Department of Immigration Affairs , Official letter, June 15, addressed to the Prime Minister's Office.
- MOMD (Ministry of Migration and Displacement), 2017. Letter No. 6435 on May 28, 2017 addressed to the Foreign Ministry - the Arab Circle entitled (Resolution of the Arab Summit 697) indicates that the number of internally displaced persons (forcibly displaced) is approximately 3,030,000 displaced.
- MSF, 2013. An invisible crisis - Alarming psychological needs among the Syrian refugees in Iraq. [online] Available at: <https://www.msf.org/invisible-crisis-alarming-psychological-needs-among-refugees-iraq>, [Accessed 10 April 2020].
- MSF, 2019. Iraq: Mental health problems appear among the people fleeing northeastern Syria. [online] Available at: <https://www.msf-me.org/ar/node/3317>, . [Accessed 10 April 2020].
- Muftin, A. Q. 2017. The Syrians in Iraq - The reality of the camps and the nature of needs and requirements, the camp of Arbat as a model. Ministry of Immigration and Displacement, Information and Research office, Research and Studies Department.
- Muhammad, A.B. 2020 (Feb. 10). Refugee Services Division Officer, Departments of Immigration Affairs. Ministry of Migration and Displacement, Member of the Follow-up Cell at the Border, 2012-2013. Interviewed by Interviewers, Warda,W; Al-Maffraqi H.
- Palestine Today Magazine, 2012. Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, Issue 2579, Date 7/31/2012, Beirut, Lebanon, p. 26.
- Popular Will Party, 2019. Syrian refugees in Iraqi Duhok: The tip of the flood of suffering. [online] Available at: <https://kassioun.org/syria/item/62673-2019-08-19-08-53-16>, [Accessed 20 May 2020].
- RUDAW (Rudaw satellite TV), 2018. The United Nations reveals the number of Syrian refugees in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. [online] Available at: <https://rudaw.net...arabic/kurdistan/200620187> [Accessed 20 May 2020].
- Syrian Observatory Human Rights, 2019. Quarter of a million Syrians in Iraq face health risks. [online] Available at: <https://www.syriaahr.com/>, [Accessed 20 May 2020].
- The New Humanitarian, 2013. Analysis: The Syrian refugees problem in urban areas in northern Iraq Erbil. [online]

- <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/ar/thlyl/2013/07/24/thlyl-mshkl-lljy-yn-lswryyn-fy-lmntq-lhdry-fy-shml-lrq>, [Accessed 30 May 2020].
- The New Humanitarian, 2013b. Containment of diseases in the Syrian refugees camp in Iraq, Domiz camp – Duhok. [online] Available at: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/ar/thqyq/2013/07/03/htw-l-mrd-fy-mkhym-lljy-yn-lswryyn-fy-lrq>, . [Accessed 30 May 2020].
- UNESCO, 2014. Three schools for Syrian refugees. [online] Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/ar/syria-crisis-response/regional-response/iraq/three-secondary-schools/> . [Accessed 25 May 2020].
- UNHCR, 2018. Iraq [online] Available at: [www.unhcr.org/.cr.org/ar/4be7cc2790a.html](http://www.unhcr.org/.cr.org/ar/4be7cc2790a.html). [Accessed 5 May 2020] .
- UNHCR, 2014. The situation in Iraq, Inter-agency Update - Report No. 58, for the period (25 January-10 February 2014). [online] Available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/>, [Accessed 10 April 2020].
- UNHCR, 2016. Stagnation harms refugee schools in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, [online] Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/ar/news/latest/2016/4/570a12746.htm> [Accessed 8 April 2020].
- UNHCR, 2016. The UNHCR scholarship program helps Syrian refugees to obtain university degrees in Iraq. [online] Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/ar/news/latest/2016/9/57e81e124.html>, [Accessed 21 May 2020] .
- UNHCR, 2018. Erbil city grant unlimited job opportunities to refugees. [online] Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/ar/news/stories/2018/12/5c161ead4.html>, [Accessed 1st 27 May 2020].
- UNHCR, 2014. Monthly information Kit (March 2014), Erbil/Iraq. [online] Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Erbil%20Iraq%20MarchInformationKit.pdf> [Accessed 20 May 2020].
- UNIRAQ (United Nations Iraq), 2013. Health in crisis: Providing health care to Syrian refugees. [online] Available at: [http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=968:health-in-crisis-providing-health-care-to-syrian-refugees&Itemid=606&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=968:health-in-crisis-providing-health-care-to-syrian-refugees&Itemid=606&lang=en) [Accessed 10 April 2020].
- Warda, W., Al Maffraji, H., Toma, Y., Arif N., and Samoeel, A. 2018. "Legal Political Framework, Iraq Country Report", RESPOND: Multilevel Governance of Mass Migration in Europe and Beyond Project (#770564, Horizon2020) Report Series. [online] Available at <http://hhro.org>
- Warda, W., Al Maffraji, H., and Khorshid S. 2020. "Refugee Reception, Iraq Country Report", RESPOND: Multilevel Governance of Mass Migration in Europe and Beyond Project (#770564, Horizon2020) Report Series. [online] Available at: <http://hhro.org>