

IRAQ | IDPs - CIVIL & IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION (JAN-MAR 2021)

IN BRIEF

Civil documentation is vital to one's enjoyment of fundamental rights. Missing civil documentation impedes one's ability to access basic services, education, healthcare, and social security benefits and can lead to restricted freedom of movement, increased risk of arrest and detention, exclusion from restitution and/or reconstruction programmes and the inability to participate in the public affairs of the country. Despite this, lack of civil documentation is one of the main protection issues facing internally displaced persons (IDPs)¹ and returnees who may face numerous barriers seeking to obtain and/or renew civil documentation.

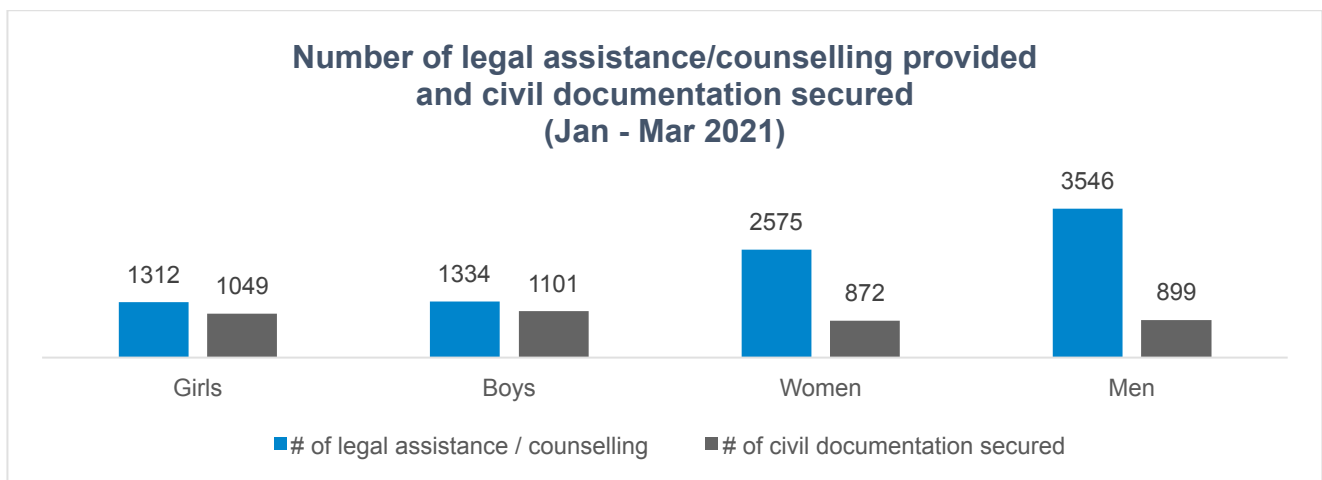
In response, UNHCR, in cooperation with government and civil society partners, implements and supports projects and initiatives to enable IDPs and returnees to access civil documentation.



Issuance of civil documentation in Anbar 2021 © UNHCR

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

As a core activity, in 2021, UNHCR continues to mobilize legal assistance partners so that IDPs and returnees have access to accurate information and quality [legal advice and representation](#) on access to civil documentation. Lack of awareness and the complexity of procedures remain key barriers faced by IDPs in accessing civil documentation, making such assistance critical. Between [January and March 2021](#), UNHCR and partners provided legal assistance and/or counselling to [8,767 individuals](#) resulting in the issuance of [3,927 civil documents](#). Courts and civil affairs offices generally functioned at full capacity during Q1, although renewed limitations were imposed at the end of March. Wherever possible, partner legal assistance was provided face-to-face while observing [COVID-19](#) related precautionary measures. UNHCR and partners have also extended their outreach aiming to reach those [IDPs and returnees affected by the camp closures](#) late last year in Federal Iraq and, where appropriate, ensure referrals for legal assistance for those found to be in need of civil documentation support.



¹ According to the Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment 2020, 55% of IDPs in camps, 47% of IDPs in out-of-camp situations, and 57% of returnees in Iraq miss at least one core document. Core documents as defined by the National Protection Cluster include ID card, Nationality Certificate, birth certificates and PDS cards.

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

UNHCR has continued to support the [rehabilitation of the offices of the Civil Affairs Directorates \(CAD\)](#). Two of these centres in [Rabia and Zummar \(Ninewa\)](#) were formally opened on 27 January, with the event attended by UNHCR, Government officials, and community representatives. It is expected that some 250,000 residents of Zummar sub-district and 130,000 residents of Rabia district will receive the Unified Identity card from these centres. A further project is ongoing in [Qahtaniyah \(Ninewa\)](#), and other similar projects are planned for implementation this year.

MOBILE APPROACHES

At the field level, UNHCR and partners have continued to support mobile missions organized through local CADs. In [Ninewa](#), UNHCR and partners continued to support mobile missions being undertaken by the local CAD to [Salamiyah and Jeda'a camps](#) with a focus on expediting the distribution of documents to IDPs prior to their departure from these camps. Between January and March 2021, 994 Civil Status IDs (CSIDs – 165 in Salamiyah camp and 829 in Jeda'a camp) were distributed, and 37 Iraqi Nationality Certificates (INCs) were issued and submitted to beneficiaries in Jeda'a camp. In total, 11 CAD missions were coordinated in Jeda'a camp by UNHCR and partners. In [Anbar](#), UNHCR continued to strengthen cooperation with the local CADs by organising mobile missions to IDP camps and informal sites to support the processing of core civil documentation for the most vulnerable IDPs, without them having to visit civil affairs offices. As a result, 88 INCs were issued to IDPs in AAF camp, and 77 INCs were issued to IDPs in the low-cost housing site (which hosts IDPs from areas of no return - [Jurf al Sakhar and Al Ewesaat](#)).



Distribution of civil documents through mobile missions in Anbar 2021 © UNHCR

During the first quarter of the year, no mobile missions coordinated through the Federal Ministry of the Interior took place. UNHCR and legal partners did continue to follow-up on applications pending following the last round of missions to [Erbil](#), and continued planning for mobile missions this year commencing with the IDP camps in [Dohuk](#).

ADVOCACY

UNHCR and partners engage in regular advocacy at various levels to resolve obstacles faced by IDPs and returnees in accessing civil documentation. In [Erbil](#), UNHCR partners piloted a project to obtain curatorship documents through the courts for female-headed households whose husbands have been convicted. Through the curatorship, the female head of household is authorized to act legally on behalf of their convicted husband for any legal issue, including obtaining documentation for their children. UNHCR and partners also coordinated with the Erbil Personal Status Courts to facilitate urban and camp IDPs to obtain court birth and marriage certificates without them having to visit the Civil Affairs Offices in their area of origin for records or marriage or approval for birth certificates. In [Sulaymaniyah](#), UNHCR advocated with the Civil Status court to accept copies of civil status records rather than requiring originals, which would require IDPs to return to their area of origin, posing security risks and imposing a financial burden due to the transportation costs.

SPECIAL THANKS TO MAJOR DONORS

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