

IRAQ | CIVIL AND IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION – 2021: THE YEAR IN VIEW

IN BRIEF

Lack of civil and identity documentation is one of the primary protection issues faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) and IDP returnees. Missing civil documentation impedes one's access to essential public services, such as education and healthcare, and social security benefits, such as the Public Distribution System. It can also lead to restricted freedom of movement at checkpoints, increased risk of arrest and detention, exclusion from restitution and reconstruction programs, and the inability to participate in the country's public affairs. At the same time, numerous barriers make it difficult to obtain and renew civil documentation.

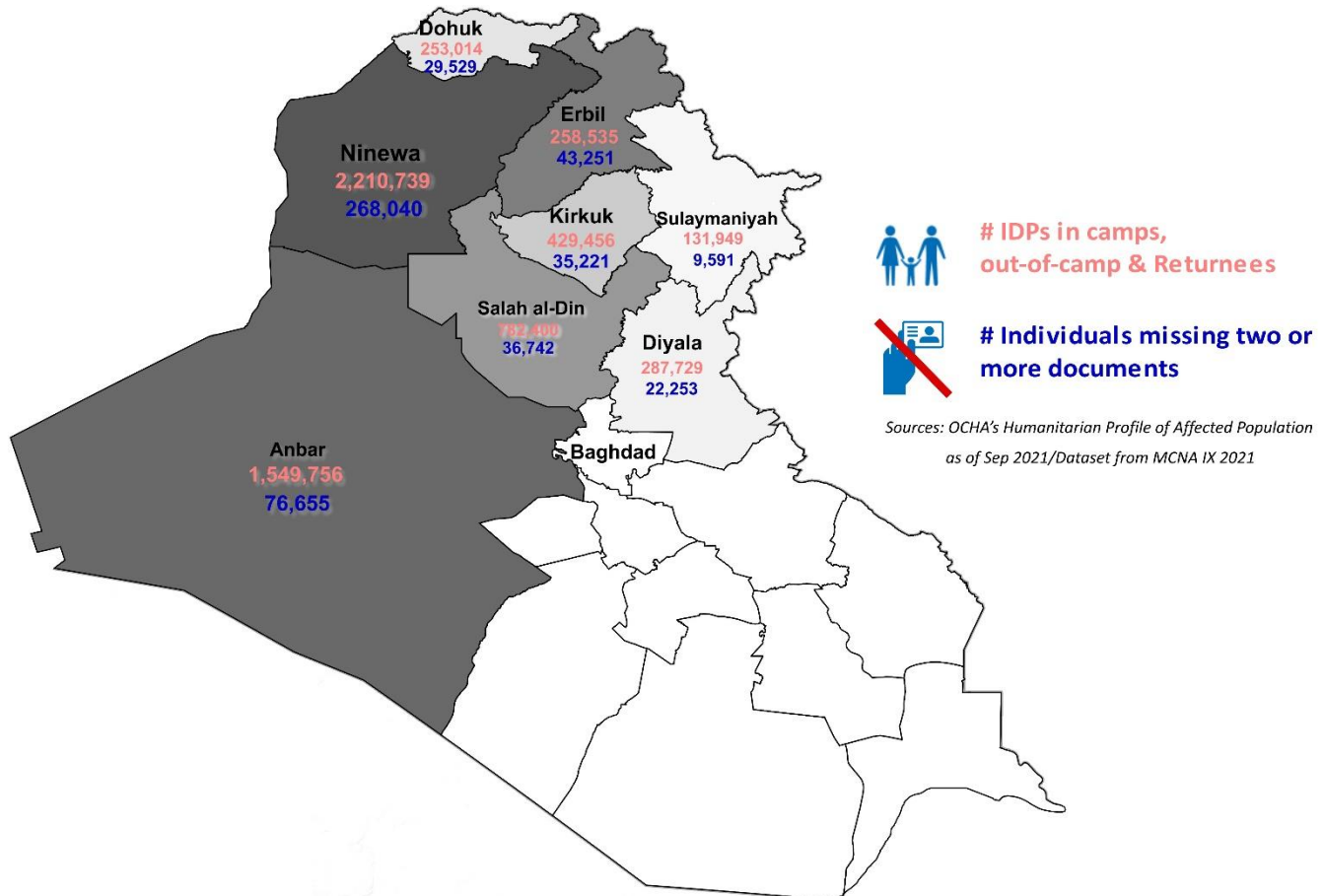
In response, UNHCR, in cooperation with the government and civil society partners, has been implementing projects to enable IDPs and IDP returnees to access civil documentation, including Civil Status IDs, Iraqi Nationality Certificates, Unified National ID Cards and Birth Certificates since 2019.

- Over **1 million** Iraqis lack **one** core legal document
- Over **500,000** Iraqis lack at least **two** core documents
- Over **250,000** lack at least **three or more** core documents

** Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment IX (2021) based on Humanitarian Needs Assessment and baseline profiling of People in Need (6 million)*

Core documents as defined by the National Protection Cluster include ID cards (Civil ID and Unified ID), Nationality Certificates, Birth Certificates and Public Distribution System (PDS) cards

DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS LACKING DOCUMENTATION



MULTIPLICITY OF IDENTITY AND CIVIL DOCUMENTS

Various civil documents, enacted at different periods in recent history, exist in Iraq and are unequally available across different governorates. All involve a nominal government fee (max. IQD 5,000). Among others, these include:

- **Birth Certificate (BC):** issued by the Ministry of Health to prove the birth and provides legal recognition of the child's identity, place of birth, and parents.
- **Civil Status ID (CSID):** issued by the Ministry of Interior/Civil Affairs Directorate and commonly used to prove identity, and is obtainable only after having obtained a birth certificate.
- **Iraqi Nationality Certificate (INC):** issued by the Ministry of Interior and is used to prove Iraqi nationality. The INC is the identity document most commonly lost, missing or invalid among those directly impacted by ISIL.
- **Unified National Identity Card (UNID):** is a biometric document replacing the CSID, INC, and Housing Card, issued since November 2019 by the Ministry of Interior/General Directorate of Passports and Nationality.
- **Public Distribution System Card (PDSC):** issued by the Ministry of Trade, enabling Iraqi and non-Iraqi nationals with a residency permit to receive food rations through the public distribution system.

BARRIERS TO OBTAINING DOCUMENTATION

- **Bureaucratic and administrative hurdles:**
 - Applicants are required to file their papers in person in areas of origin, making it particularly difficult and more expensive for displaced populations.
 - Possession of one document is often a requirement for the (re)issuance of another identity or civil document.
 - Complex and multilayered security clearance processes require screening by multiple actors against various security databases to check for affiliation with certain armed [extremist] groups. Without security clearance papers, individuals are unable to renew or apply for civil documentation. Some families are compelled by authorities, including armed/security actors and community/tribal leaders, to renounce ties with family members perceived or accused of being affiliated with extremist groups as a precondition to obtain such clearance.
- **Legal and economic barriers** including birth certificate requirements which negatively affect children with missing, detained or deceased fathers.
- **Accessibility to local Civil Affairs Directorates (CAD)** remains limited due to various reasons, including associated costs of travel and required security clearances to move amongst checkpoints.
- **Limited logistical, human, and financial resources available to CADs** and services disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic leading to unequal access to CAD offices across locations.
- **Lack of community awareness** of the importance of, and about the procedures to obtain, civil documentation.
- **Technical errors** in the online appointments system for the UNIDs in some governorates (Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, and Kirkuk) and general digital illiteracy.

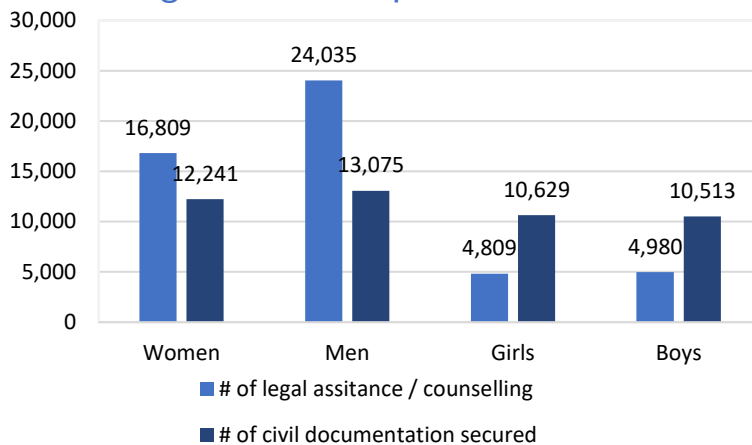
LEGAL ASSISTANCE ON CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

To address the lack of access to civil documentation, UNHCR provides legal assistance through its partners for the recovery/issuance of all types of civil/legal documentation, including:

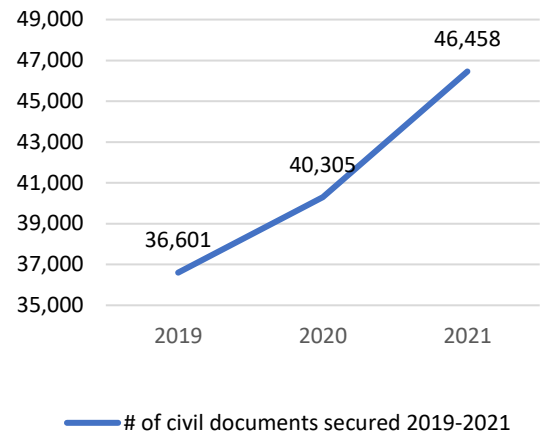
- **Provision of individual legal assistance** (one-on-one legal counselling and representation before authorities and courts).
- **Community awareness** through the delivery of group information and dissemination of tailored information materials on ways to access civil documentation.
- **Coordination of mobile missions** and preparation of required individual documents/forms for the missions.
- **Establishment of new CAD offices** bringing service centers closer to the population in need.
- **Leading local and national level advocacy efforts** to facilitate access and remove barriers to legal and civil documentation for displaced Iraqis, IDP returnees and vulnerable local community members.

UNHCR and partners provided legal assistance and/or counseling to **50,633 Iraqi individuals** and supported the issuance of **46,458 documents** in 2021.

Legal assistance provided in 2021



Civil Documents Issued



MOBILE APPROACHES

As a key part of addressing the civil documentation needs of IDPs and IDP returnees, UNHCR coordinates and supports mobile missions by the ad-hoc committee under the Mol as well as local CAD missions, to facilitate access to documentation, focusing on locations where the highest number of individuals are missing two or more documents, namely Ninewa, Anbar and Erbil (MCNA IX 2021, refer to map).

In 2021, **34,491 documents** were issued through mobile missions, accounting for **74 percent of the total documents** issued in 2021 with UNHCR support, proving the **efficiency of mobile missions**.



Mol mobile mission, Erbil 2021 @UNHCR

Governorate	Erbil	Anbar	Ninewa	Dohuk	Total
Locations	6 + 1	4	2 + 5 Including Jedda1	12	
# and types of documents issued	2,455 INCs 419 CSIDs	526 INCs 631 INCs + PDSCs	947 INCs 953 CSIDs 64 CSIDs (Jedda 1)	22,094 INCs 6,402 CSIDs	26,422 INCs 7,838 CSIDs 231 PDSCs 34,491 Documents

IDP camps

Urban locations

Informal sites

* Mol missions

* Local CAD missions

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

Destruction of numerous CAD offices during the conflict and the limited logistical, human and financial resources available to the offices, exacerbated by the disruption of services due to the pandemic, has negatively affected access to civil documentation.

UNHCR is implementing projects through its Area-Based Programming for Protection and Solutions (A2PS), including the rehabilitation of CAD offices.

In 2021, four CAD rehabilitation projects were completed in Salah al-Din (Shirqat District) and Ninewa (Ba'aj Qahtaniyah, Al-Shimal, Sinjar District, and Tal Abta, Al-Hadar District).

Across 64 districts assessed, only:

- **37 districts** have **fully operational** CADs (58 percent);
- **17 districts** have **partially operational** CADs (26 percent); and
- **Eight districts** have **no functional** CADs (13 percent) due to the facilities being closed or non-existent.

*As many as 33 percent of key informants report that **CADs are not accessible due to distance and transportation** (NPC Protection Monitoring System, 2021)*

Civil Affairs Directorate Rehabilitation in focus

Shirqat is one of the largest districts in Salah al-Din governorate. Since October 2016 some 162,000 IDPs have returned to the area and most were unable to secure missing documentation because the CAD office was not operational until August 2019. Even once open, damaged infrastructure severely limited the capacity. UNHCR rehabilitated the centre in 2021.

"Previously, we were only able to process some 100 cases per day, but now, with the recent rehabilitation of the centre, we have increased our processing capacity to 500 cases per day", Colonel Al-Luhby, head of the CAD Shirqat

"Because of no documents, I could not enrol my three boys in school. Finally, I managed to secure the national cards for my boys and will get them enrolled in school."
 Mohammed Al-Fattah, a returnee from Rumaila village



Col. Al-Luhby reviewing applications for CSIDs.

ADVOCACY AND OTHER INITIATIVES

UNHCR engages in regular advocacy at various levels to resolve obstacles faced by affected populations in accessing civil documentation and providing favourable outcomes. Most importantly, UNHCR continued to search for solutions for complex documentation cases – in particular for female headed households (FHH) with deceased, detained or missing husbands, who are unable to obtain civil documentation for themselves and their children. As a result of successful advocacy, female-headed IDP and IDP returnee households were able to obtain curatorship documents, thus providing the woman authorization by law to act on behalf of their detained/convicted/missing husbands, enabling them to obtain documentation for their children. Moving forward, UNHCR will ramp up policy level advocacy to simplify the existing procedures and framework to ensure access to documentation for all, including by de-linking the security clearance procedures, allowing IDPs to seek and obtain their identity and civil documents in their area of displacement/current residence, digitalizing civil registry archives to allow IDPs in disputed territories to transfer their files from places of origin to areas of residence, and supporting the new system of digitalized data by facilitating access to UNIDs.

MAJOR DONORS

Special thanks to major donors of un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as donors who have contributed directly to the Iraq operation in 2021:

Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Kuwait | Netherlands | Norway | Private Donors | Qatar | Sweden | Switzerland | United States of America