

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

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Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the [Knowledge and Information Management Unit](#).

23 August 2017

### IRQ105845.E

Iraq: Requirements and procedures to obtain one of the new national identity cards, including from abroad and by proxy; information on the expansion of the issuance program, including when, where and to whom the new national identity cards have been issued; security features of the new cards; incidents of fraud (2014-2017)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. New National Identity Cards and National Registry

According to a 2013 press release by Giesecke & Devrient GmbH (G&D), a German company that provides identity management products and solutions (G&D 31 Oct. 2013), G&D was awarded a contract to provide the Iraqi government with "electronic personal ID card[s]" and "card supply" would begin in 2014 (G&D 31 Oct. 2013). According to the head of the Iraqi national ID program, as reported by the KNN Satellite TV news program based in Iraqi Kurdistan and summarized by BBC Monitoring [1], the new national identity card would be distributed starting in mid-2015 to replace the "national ID, citizenship ID, ration form and address form" (BBC 14 May 2014). A Landinfo [2] report published in February 2017 similarly states that

[translation]

[the new ID card will replace the present national ID card. In addition, it replaces:

- Proof of citizenship;
- Proof of residence; and
- Ration card (PDS-card) [Public Distribution System] (Norway 16 Feb. 2017, 1).

According to information published on the English website of Veridos GmbH, a Germany-based provider of identification and identity solutions, which is affiliated with G&D (Veridos n.d.a), in Iraq, the company provides solutions for the

[d]elivery of the new National Register, the IT and data acquisition infrastructure, the entire personalization system, ID Card production and delivery, all associated services, such as Training, Technical Support and Maintenance. It also comprises the electronic archiving of the Civil Status records. (Veridos n.d.b)

In its 2013 press release, G&D states that, in Iraq, the company "will set up around 2,500 data acquisition stations and 25 regional personalization centers across the country as well as a redundantly designed IT data center in the framework of this major project" (G&D 31 Oct. 2013). In its 2015 annual report, G&D indicates that the company has been involved in the creation of an Iraqi "citizen database" (G&D Apr. 2016, 2). The same source further states that "[s]ome 40,000 handwritten family books, the documents previously used in Iraq, have already been digitized" and "important records from the analog era have been preserved ... for the future in the new National Registry" (G&D Apr. 2016, 2). Similarly, the 2017 Landinfo report, citing information provided in correspondence from the Norwegian embassy in Amman in May 2016, states that the new national ID card program, which began in 2013,

[translation]

includes the transition from a national register entered manually and based on hand-written family books to a central digitized national register. A newly established directorate under the Department of Domestic Affairs [Ministry of Interior] (The Directorate for National ID Card, in Arabic called *Mudiriyyat shu'un al-bitaqua al-wataniyya*) is responsible for the project. (Norway 16 Feb. 2017, 1)

The same source further states that

the Iraqi national register is going to be digitalised. This implies that all handwritten family books from local offices will be gathered and that the information contained in these will be copied into a digital central register. The family books, according to the Directorate, will then be kept in central archives and thus be accessible if it becomes necessary to consult this information later. Exactly when this will be done is, as far as the embassy can see, not mentioned on the Directorate's home pages. (Norway 16 Feb. 2017, 4)

According to the Iraqi General Directorate for Nationality website, the Directorate "was formed to issue National ID Cards with very high security features through the use of advanced systems such as the Civil Registry and the Unified [National] Database which includes citizens and legal residents" (Iraq n.d). According to the same source,

[t]he General Directorate for Nationality aims at:

1. Building a Unified National Database which includes all Iraqi citizens and legal residents.
2. Granting a National Number for every Iraqi citizen which is unique and a key for record relationships within the Unified Database.
3. Issuing a modern National ID [card] which is very difficult to counterfeit for all Iraqi citizens and legal residents.
4. Evolving the current Civil Registry system from manual into electronic.
5. Using the National ID [card] as the basis for passport issuance. (Iraq n.d)

Further information on the national registry could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

## 1.1 Appearance and Security Features

According to the 2017 Landinfo report,

[translation]

[t]he embassy in Amman (2016) says that the new card is a so-called electronic ID card because it has a chip where, among other things, biometric data can be stored. According to the representatives of KRG with whom the embassy spoke in April, the chip will contain the owner's photo and iris information. For the time being, it is not clear whether fingerprints can be stored on the chip as well. On the back of the card there will also be a machine readable code in accordance with the ICAO standard.

A German company by the name of Giesecke & Devrient is producing the ID card, which is a plastic card of the same size as a credit card. According to this company (as reported by Norway's embassy in Amman 2016), the card contains a series of safety features. (Norway 16 Feb. 2017, 2-3)

The October 2013 press release published on the G&D website explains that

[t]he contactless personal ID smart card meets the highest security requirements, including the option to integrate a variety of biometric features. As well as the personal data, the new ID card has a photo of the holder and can be used as standard photo ID. In addition, the personal data and multiple biometric features of the holder are stored securely and digitally in the chip. The new ID card is also equipped with a range of visible and invisible features which effectively protect against counterfeiting. (G&D 31 Oct. 2013)

Further information on the appearance and security features could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sample images of the new Iraqi national identity card, extracted from the official website of the Police Directorate in Dhi Qar Governorate and various Iraqi media, are attached to this Response.

## 2. Issuance Procedures

The 2017 Landinfo report, citing information provided by the Norwegian embassy in Amman, provides the following information regarding the issuance procedures:

[translation]

#### Making an appointment

In order to apply for a new ID card, one has to make an appointment with the local Civil Status Office via the website of the Directorate for national ID cards. The application form can be downloaded from the same website and has to be completed before your meeting with the local Civil Status office (Norway's embassy in Amman 2016).

#### Handing in and documentation

When you hand in your application form, you must bring with you your present ID card, proof of citizenship, proof of residence, and your ration card. These documents will be declared invalid and will be kept by the Civil Status Office when the new card is issued (Norway's embassy in Amman 2016).

#### Meeting in person

The applicant must meet in person as a photo will be taken, and there will be scanning of the applicant's iris. The application form with biometry will be sent to a central office in Baghdad where the information is checked. Here the card is also personalized before it is returned to the local Civil Status Office duly completed (Norway's embassy in Amman 2016).

#### Fee

In order to obtain the ID card, you pay a fee of 5000 Iraqi dinars [approximately C\$5.34]. This applies both to the first time the card is issued and to the renewal of an expired card (Norway's embassy in Amman 2016).

#### Period of validity

As to the period the new cards are valid, the embassy notes that this is somewhat unclear and that the embassy has received no official information regarding this. The embassy refers to information from the producer of the card where it may seem that the card will be valid for a period of ten years.

#### Waiting period

Landinfo has received contradictory information about how long it will take to get the new ID card. While Norway's embassy in Amman (2016) says that it can take up to 15 days from the time the application has been submitted until the card can be picked up, the Iraqi consulate in Oslo (telephone conversation in November 2016) states that it takes about three months to get the new card. The new system of adding the personal number to the cards can be the reason why the process takes some extra time, according to the consulate. It can also be that one has to allow some time for an appointment after the application has been handed in, and that the consulate has included this time in its estimate.

#### Application from abroad

According to the information obtained by the Norwegian Embassy in Amman (2016) from the above-mentioned KRG representatives, it is, as of today, not possible to apply for the new ID card from abroad. The Iraqi consulate in Oslo has also informed us (telephone conversation November 2016) that one has to travel to Iraq to obtain the new ID card. To get cards issued outside Iraq, the cards issued will still be old ID cards, probably in expectation of the time when the embassy will be getting the right equipment. As for the old ID cards, the same procedure is used as before whereby one can apply via the Iraqi embassy. Iraqis born in Norway may be issued old ID cards as well.

All newborns get the new cards as long as they are being registered in areas where the necessary equipment is available. Moreover, according to the Iraqi consulate in Oslo (telephone conversation November 2016), there are certain groups that are prioritized, such as some government employees. (Norway 16 Feb. 2017, 3-4)

Further and corroborating information on the issuance procedures could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints to this Response.

### 2.1 Roll-out of the Issuance Program

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a legal counsel from an Erbil-based law firm that provides legal services in areas such as visa, residency, and immigration affairs, stated that

[d]igitization of the National Registry was first commenced in Iraq, but expanded and included the Kurdistan Region since March 2016. Every Iraqi citizen now can approach the competent issuing authorities and claim for the Unified Nationality ID card. (Legal Counsel 25 June 2017)

The 2017 Landinfo report states that,

[translation]

[a]ccording to information available on the home pages of the Directorate for a national ID card (as reported in Norway's embassy in Amman 2016), the new ID card was first issued on September 13, 2015, in Jisr Dyala in Baghdad. Since then, cards are being issued in most parts of Iraq.

The Iraqi consulate in Oslo (telephone conversation November 2016) recently informed Landinfo that all Iraqis will get their own personal number that will be added to the new ID card. This number can be used in every circumstance.

The consulate further informed us that the new ID cards are issued by the same Civil Status Offices or Departments as the old cards. Some of these have still not obtained the equipment necessary to issue the new cards, but the equipment has been distributed to all provinces with the exception of Anbar, Ninewa and Salah-al-Din, where there are ongoing military operations. The consulate noted, however, that it may be that new cards are being issued in some peaceful areas of Salah-al-Din, such as Tuz Khourmatu. Certain areas of Diyala, such as Baquba, have not received the new equipment either.

The new card will also be issued in the Kurdistan region (KRI), but there may be certain smaller towns/villages here where they are still without the necessary equipment to make the new cards. From January 1, 2017, passports will no longer be issued in KRI based on the old ID cards, according to the consulate.

When Norway's embassy in Amman met with representatives of the Kurdish authorities for self-rule in April 2016, they were told that all Iraqis will have to acquire the new ID card within five years. Much like the consulate, the representatives of KRG also noted that no one in KRI would be issued a passport after January 1 unless they have the new ID card (Norway's embassy in Amman 2016).

It is not possible to say anything about when the card will be issued in all parts of Iraq, among other things, because of the ongoing military operations in Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah-al-Din. (Norway 16 Feb. 2017, 2)

Additionally, a July 2016 article published on Iraqi News, a private, English-language, and Bahrain-based Iraqi online newspaper, reports that the Civil Status Directorate in Sulaimaniya [Sulaymaniyah], would suspend its work starting in 10 July 2016 "in order to begin the preparation of issuing unified national IDs for the civilians in the mentioned directorate" (Iraqi News 4 July 2016). According to information published on the official website of the Police Directorate in Dhi Qar Governorate [in southern Iraq],

[translation]

[t]he General Directorate for Nationality has decided to suspend [their] work at the Suq Al-Shuyukh Civil Administration in Dhi Qar [from] 3 January 2016 [through] 12 January 2016 to prepare for the [issuance] of the new national ID card in the said Administration. Booking an appointment will be done online via our website: [www.nid-moi.gov.iq](http://www.nid-moi.gov.iq). (Iraq 29 Dec. 2015)

Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints to this Response.

### 3. Incidents of Fraud

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative from the International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s country office in Iraq, citing information provided by the Major General of the General Directorate of Nationality of the Kurdistan Regional Government during a meeting that took place in August 2017, stated that, "with the introduction of the new Iraqi ID card there have not been any cases of reported fraud" (IOM 13 Aug. 2017). Further and corroborating information on incidents of fraud involving the new Iraqi identity cards could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. For information on prevalence of fraudulent identification documents in Iraq, see Response to Information Request IRQ105418 of 18 February 2016.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### Notes

[1] BBC Monitoring, which is part of BBC News and the BBC World Service Group, tracks "the developing media landscape" and "cover[s] major world events and the role that media plays in them" (BBC n.d).

[2] The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre, also known as "Landinfo," is "an independent body within the Norwegian Immigration Authorities. Landinfo provides country of origin information to the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (Utlendingsdirektoratet – UDI), the Immigration Appeals Board

(Utlendingsnemnda – UNE) and the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security" (Norway 16 Feb. 2017, 4).

## References

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Legal Counsel, Erbil. 25 June 2017. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

Norway. 16 February 2017. Landinfo. "[Irak: Innføring av Nytt Nasjonalt ID-kort og Digitalisering av Folkeregisteret](#)." (Iraq: Introduction of a New National ID Card and Digitalisation of the National Register). Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada. [Accessed 4 July 2017]

Veridos. N.d.a. "[Welcome to Veridos](#)." [Accessed 18 May 2017]

Veridos. N.d.b. "[Success Stories: Iraq](#)." [Accessed 18 May 2017]

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral Sources:** Giesecke & Devrient; Iraq – Embassy in Ottawa, Department of Foreign Relations, Kurdistan Regional Government in the Kurdistan Region and in Washington DC; Veridos.

**Internet sites, including:** Agencia EFE; Al Alam International News Channel; Al-Buraq News; Al Jazeera; Al Sham Info; Al Zaman; Alkarama Foundation; Anadolu Agency; *Assaha Magazine*; Aswat al Iraq; *Azzaman*; Carnegie Middle East Centre; China News Service; Council on Foreign Relations; *Daily Sabah*; Deutsche Welle; Doha Insight; Doha News; ecoi.net; Ekurd.net; Europa Press; *Le Figaro*; European Union – European Asylum Support Office (EASO), European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), Public Register of Authentic Travel and Identity Documents Online (PRADO); France 24; *Foreign Affairs*; *Forensic Science Policy and Management*; Germany – Federal Office for Migration and Refugees; *The Guardian*; *Gulf Times*; *Haaretz*; India Times; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; Iraq – Embassy in Ankara; Iraq 123 News; Iraq Daily Journal; *Jane's Intelligence Review*; Keesing's Document Checker; *Kurdish Globe*; Middle East Online; Middle East Press; Minority Rights Group International; *Le Monde*; Nalia Radio and Television; National Iraqi News Agency; The News International [Pakistan]; Qatar Act; Qatar Chronicle; Qatar Gulf News; Qatar Morning Post; Qatar News Agency; Radio France internationale; Reuters; Rudaw.net; Saudi Daily Report; Saudi Press Agency; The Syria Times; Syrian Arab News Agency; Turkey Daily News; United Nations – RefWorld, United Nations Development Programme; United States – Central Intelligence Agency; Veridos; World Bank; Xinhua News Agency.

## Attachment

Document created by the Research Directorate, containing images of Iraqi national identity cards, with a Reference List.

[Tips on how to use this search engine.](#)

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