

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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> Responses to Information Requests

## Responses to Information Requests

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](#).

13 July 2017

### IRQ105844.E

Iraq: Information on the appearance of passports, including whether there have been any changes since 2009, including the placement of fields on biometric data page; whether passports issued in the Kurdistan region differ in appearance compared to those issued in Baghdad (2009-July 2017)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. G-Series Passports

According to the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, the Directorate of Passports of Iraq stopped issuing the G-series passport (also called passport electronic edition (G) or passport edition (G)) in 2009 (Iraq n.d.a). In contrast, according to a 2015 report titled *Iraq: Travel Documents and Other Identity Documents*, produced by the Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (Landinfo), "in autumn 2014, a document expert at a Western embassy in Amman informed Landinfo (meeting in Amman, November 2014) that the Iraqi authorities were still issuing G-series passports" (Norway 16 Dec. 2015, 7). For further information on the G-series passports, see Response to Information Request IRQ103919 of December 2011.

#### 2. A-Series Passports

Without providing further details, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs website states that the A-series passport (also called passport edition (A) or (A) series passport), which started to be issued in 2009, is "considered as a completion of the [G-series passport] but not a substitution for it" (Iraq n.d.a). According to the 2015 Landinfo report, the A-series passport, which is a "further improved edition" of the G-series, was first introduced on 1 October 2009 (Norway 16 Dec. 2015, 7). Without providing further details, information posted on the website of the embassy of Iraq in London indicates that, as instructed by the Directorate of Passports of Iraq, a new process for the A-series passport application would begin on 1 February 2010 (Iraq n.d.b).

According to a 10 October 2013 press release published by Giesecke & Devrient GmbH (G&D), a Germany-based company specializing in identity management products and solutions (G&D 10 Oct. 2013), the government of Iraq contracted G&D to provide machine-readable passports starting in late 2013 (G&D 10 Oct. 2013). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. Information on any differences between the 2009 and 2013 A-series passports could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

#### 2.1 Passports in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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

Iraqi passports are issued by one central entity which is the Iraqi Directorate General of Nationality. All passport authorities through the country are organizational offices connected with the central issuance authority that is in Baghdad. (Legal Counsel 25 June 2017)

A 2013 article published on Iraqi News, a private, English-language, and Bahrain-based Iraqi online newspaper (Iraqi News n.d), states that the "Passports Directorate of Erbil province announced that the Federal Government decided to issue an electronic passport for Iraqi people throughout Iraq and Kurdistan Region" (Iraqi News 24 Nov. 2013). According to the same source, the Director of Erbil Passports Directorate, as quoted by the Kurdistan Regional Government, states that the issuance of electronic passports will begin in 2015, with priority given to the replacement of passports that are either filled-up or lost (Iraqi News 24 Nov. 2013). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

### 3. Appearance and Security Features

The legal counsel stated that the G-series passport is completely different from the A-series one (Legal Counsel 25 June 2017). Images of the information page, including biometric data fields, of a G-series Iraqi passport issued in 2008 and an A-series Iraqi passport issued in 2015, which were provided to the Research Directorate by the Legal Counsel in Erbil, are attached to this Response.

In its 2015 report, Landinfo provides the following information:

A-series passports differ from G-series passports in that they contain text in Arabic, Kurdish and English. There is also a difference on the page containing personal data -- G-series passports have a field for the passport holder's signature or fingerprints, while in A-series passports, this field has been replaced by a bar code. The page containing biometric data is laminated, as it was in the G-series. The passport holder's signature is on page 3 in the passport. A-series passports have 48 pages and are valid for eight years. The passport number is perforated through the bottom of each page starting from page 3. Pages 4-48 are visa pages. All A-series passports are personal. Children must have their own passport. (Norway 16 Dec. 2015, 7)

The 2013 Iraqi News article reports that an electronic chip storing the passport holder's information would be located in the front cover of the new passports and it "will be impossible to be forged" (Iraqi News 24 Nov. 2013). According to the 2013 G&D press release, the "[s]ecurity measures incorporated into the printing mean that the Iraqi passports are highly resistant to forgery" (G&D 10 Oct. 2013). G&D provides "[a]ll components of the machine-readable HIGHSEC passports" while Papierfabrik Louisenthal, its subsidiary, supplies "the security paper complete with cylinder mold watermark" (G&D 10 Oct. 2013). The same source further states that the passports are

printed in an offset and intaglio printing process and come with security features such as G&D's Printed and Embossed Anti-Copy Key (PEAK). Fine lines in carefully selected shades are embossed to produce a three-dimensional, optically variable image. This shows different information and colors depending on the viewing angle. (G&D 10 Oct. 2013)

Further and corroborating information on the physical characteristics of Iraqi passports, including security features, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. For further information on fraudulent documents in Iraq, including passports, see Response to Information Request IRQ105418 of 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.

### References

Giesecke & Devrient GmbH (G&D). 10 October 2013. "[Giesecke & Devrient Contracted to Supply Passports to Iraq](#)." [Accessed 17 May 2017]

Iraq. N.d.a. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "[Passport Issuance](#)." [Accessed 3 May 2017]

Iraq. N.d.b. Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in London. "[Latest News](#)." [Accessed 29 June 2017]

Iraqi News. 24 November 2013. Layla Mohammed. "[Iraqis to Be Issued Electronic Passports in 2015](#)." [Accessed 3 May 2017]

Iraqi News. N.d. "[About Iraqi News](#)." [Accessed 29 June 2017]

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

Norway. 16 December 2015. Landinfo. [Iraq: Travel Documents and Other Identity Documents](#). [Accessed 17 May 2017]

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Giesecke & Devrient GmbH; Iraq – Embassy in Ottawa, Representative of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Representative of the KRG Liaison Office in Washington, DC.

**Internet sites, including:** Agencia EFE; Al Jazeera; Amnesty International; Article 19; BBC; CBC; China News Services; Deutsche Welle; *The Economist*; European Union – Public Register of Authentic Travel and Identity Documents Online; *Le Figaro*; *Financial Times*; *Forbes*; France 24; Freedom House; *The Globe and Mail*; *The Guardian*; Human Rights Foundation; Human Rights Watch; International Crisis Group; International Federation for Human Rights; Iraq – Embassy in Ottawa, Consulate in Montreal; Iraq 123 News; Iraq Business News; Iraqi Daily Journal; Iraqi Reporter; *Jane's Intelligence Review*; Keesing Document Checker; Middle East Media Research Institute; Migration Policy Institute; *Le Monde*; *The National Post*; *The New York Times*; Open Society Foundations; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries; Radio France internationale; Reporters sans frontières; Reuters; RT News; Transparency International; UN – Refworld; US – Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State; *The Washington Post*; Xinhua News Agency.

## Attachment

Iraq. N.d. Copies of a G-series Iraqi passport issued in 2008 and an A-series Iraqi passports issued in 2015. Sent to the Research Directorate by a Law Counsel in Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq, 25 June 2017.

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