

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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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.

25 November 2013

IRQ104653.E

Iraq: Nationality Certificate, including purpose and validity; requirements and procedures for the issuance, renewal and replacement; frequency of fraudulent certificates (2011-November 2013)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Purpose and Use of the Nationality Certificate

Sources report that the Iraqi Nationality Certificate [also known as Shahdat al-Jinsiya al-Iraqiya (MECS 9 Sept. 2012)] is one of the main identity documents in Iraq (MECS 9 Sept. 2012; IDMC 10 Oct. 2011, 35). Sources indicate that the Nationality Certificate proves that the holder is an Iraqi citizen (Xinhua 15 June 2008; IOM 23 Nov. 2013). Middle East Consultancy Services (MECS), a London-based company that provides, among other services, authentication of documents from the Middle East (MECS n.d.), notes that the Nationality Certificate is needed for interaction with governmental authorities (MECS 9 Sept. 2012). According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), an international NGO affiliated with the Norwegian Refugee Council that monitors internal displacement worldwide (IDMC n.d.), the Nationality Certificate as well as the "civil status identification document" are needed to access public services, including food assistance through the Public Distribution System (PDS), healthcare, employment, education and housing, as well as to obtain a passport (IDMC 10 Oct. 2011, 35).

MECS describes the Nationality Certificate as a "booklet-like document" with a black cover, which contains a photo of the bearer (9 Sept. 2012). Further information about the appearance of the Nationality Certificate and the information contained in it could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) mission in Iraq, which has over 300 field staff in Iraq working to implement humanitarian and migration initiatives for vulnerable populations affected by displacement (IOM n.d.), said that there is no date indicating the duration of validity of the Nationality Certificate (23 Nov. 2013). Further information about the validity period for the Nationality Certificate could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

2. Issuance Procedures

The General Directorate for Nationality of the Ministry of Interior is responsible for the issuance of the Nationality Certificate (Iraq n.d.c; IOM 23 Nov. 2013). According to MECS, the certificate is issued in accordance with the Iraqi Nationality Law (9 Sept. 2012). Further information about the Nationality Law could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to the representative of IOM's Iraq Mission, the requirements and procedures for the issuance, renewal and replacement of the Nationality Certificate are as follows:

1. original and copy of the Nationality Certificate for the father or the brother for the applicant
2. original and copy of the National Identity Card for the applicant
3. original and copy of the residence card to the applicant or for his father
4. original and copy of the Ration Card to the applicant or for his father
5. Four photos with a white background (IOM 23 Nov. 2013)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs explains the procedures for an Iraqi citizen to apply for an Iraqi Nationality Certificate from abroad as follows:

1. Applying to the embassy in which the person mentions his need of the certificate.
2. Fills the permit of obtaining a nationality certificate.

3. Attach (4) recent colored photo[s] of each individual.
4. A copy of the certificate of nationality of the father and mother and the identity of civil status should be attached to the application and the marriage contract of his father and mother and birth data certified by the [C]onsul.
5. A copy of the passport of the applicant and his father and his mother, certified by the [C]onsul.
6. The applicant father's or mother's statement enhanced by the testimony of two witnesses to link between the applicant and his father and his mother, signed and marked by the Consul. (Iraq n.d.a)

Procedures to obtain a new Iraqi Nationality Certificate if the original is lost or damaged are explained by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as follows:

- Submit a request to obtain a substitute Iraqi Nationality Certificate for one that has been lost or damaged;
- Fill in and attach the application form (available at the embassy) to the request;
- The Consul will take a statement from the applicant on the reverse of the form and include the applicant's full name and thumb print. The Consul will sign the statement and include the consular seal. If the request is to replace a damaged Nationality Certificate, the original shall be attached to the form (Iraq n.d.b).

According to the UNHCR, a housing certificate (which is a document given to people who rent or own a residence) is a prerequisite for obtaining a Nationality Certificate (UN 31 May 2012, 207). According to the IDMC, the procedures to obtain Iraqi documentation are "lengthy, complex and costly" (10 Oct. 2011, 35). Further information about the procedures for obtaining the Nationality Certificate could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to the UNHCR, many Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Iraq lack the documentation needed to access public services, such as Nationality Certificates (UN 31 May 2012, 54). Both the UNHCR and IDMC note that the lack of identity documents restricts freedom of movement and puts IDPs at risk of "arbitrary arrest" (ibid.; IDMC 10 Oct. 2011, 35); the UNHCR adds that it limits their ability to access healthcare, education and food rations through the PDS (UN 31 May 2012, 54).

The representative of the IOM Mission in Iraq indicated that there was "widespread fraud" of identity documents, including Nationality Certificates (23 Nov. 2013). Further information about the frequency of fraudulent Nationality Certificates could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). 10 October 2011. *Iraq: Response Still Centred on Return Despite IDP Demands for Local Integration*. <[http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/CCE717078C732F29_C125792100523DC7/\\$file/Iraq-October-2011.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/CCE717078C732F29_C125792100523DC7/$file/Iraq-October-2011.pdf)> [Accessed 12 Nov. 2013]

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Xinhua News Agency. 15 June 2008. "Iraqis Not Need to Present Nationality Document When Entering Jordan: Envoy." (Factiva)

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact the following representatives were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Canada – Embassy of Canada in Amman; Iraq – Consulate of Iraq in Washington DC, General Directorate of Nationality, Ministry of Interior, The Embassy of Iraq in Ottawa. The Middle East Media Research Institute, the National Document Centre of Canada Border Services Agency and the Middle East Consultancy Services were unable to provide information.

Internet sites, including: Al Jazeera; ecoi.net; Factiva; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; Iraq – Embassy of Iraq in Canada, Embassy of Iraq in Washington, DC; Middle East Media Research Institute; Minority Rights Group International; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; Refugees International; UK – Border Services Agency; United Nations – Integrated Regional Information Networks, Refworld; US – Department of State.

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