

Report

**Iraq: Travel documents and other  
identity documents**



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For information on all of the reports published by Landinfo, please contact:

**Landinfo**  
**Country of Origin Information Centre**

Storgata 33A

P.O. Box 8108 Dep

NO-0032 Oslo

Norway

Tel: +47 23 30 94 70

Email: [mail@landinfo.no](mailto:mail@landinfo.no)

Website: [www.landinfo.no](http://www.landinfo.no)

## **SUMMARY**

New passports in series A were first issued on 1 October 2009. These passports are produced in Baghdad and issued in all governorate capitals and most embassies. A temporary travel document can be issued to Iraqis abroad. The A-series passports may contain incorrect information about the holder as a result of incorrect information in the documents submitted when applying for the passport.

All Iraqi citizens should carry a national ID card. The ID card is issued at the local offices of the Civil Status Affairs Directorate, situated all over the country. Iraqis abroad can give a relative in Iraq a power of attorney to apply for a replacement of a lost or damaged ID card or apply through an embassy. Many fraudulent ID cards are circulating.

All Iraqi citizens have the right to a nationality card. The nationality card is issued in all governorate capitals. The nationality card is issued in Iraq only, and one has to apply in person, either in Iraq or at one of the embassies abroad. Many fraudulent nationality cards are in circulation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

All Iraqi nationals are obliged to register with their local registration office, which is organised under the population register (the Civil Status Affairs Directorate). The Civil Status Affairs Directorate is, in turn, organised under the General Directorate for Nationality (GDN) in the Ministry of Interior. There are several population registration offices in each governorate. In principle, all Iraqis have a personal ID card and are entitled to a nationality certificate.

As a result of the upheavals in Iraq after 2003, it has, at times, been difficult to obtain the ID documentation required to be issued a passport. A high number of counterfeit ID documents have been in circulation since 2003.

Many people have used fake documents, which have been readily available on the open market both in and outside Iraq.

Today, the procedures for obtaining a passport and other ID documents work well all over the country except in areas in the Nineveh and Anbar governorates, which are controlled by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

This report describes the most important ID documents issued in Iraq and the procedure for obtaining them lawfully. In addition, information is presented that is deemed to have a bearing on the documents' notoriety, including verification and registration of identity information and the extent of corruption.

This report is an updated version of the one published in January 2014. The report is based both on information openly available on the internet and on meetings Landinfo has had with Iraqi authorities and embassies, as well as with diplomats in the Middle East who are familiar with Iraqi documents. Among other things, Landinfo had a meeting with the Director-General of the General Directorate for Nationality (GDN) in Baghdad in April 2012. The Director-General gave Landinfo a tour of the main passport office in Baghdad, where we got to see the whole process from an application is submitted until a passport is issued. Landinfo also visited the main civil ID card office in Baghdad. The most recent information was obtained from the Iraqi embassy in Norway and the Norwegian embassy in Amman.

## 2. PASSPORTS

Iraqi passports (*jawas*) are designated by a letter indicating when they were issued. Passports in the M, N and H series were issued under the Ba'th regime and retained their original validity after Saddam Hussein was overthrown.

New foreign passports in the S-series have been issued since July 2004. Iraqi S-series passports have a dark green cover, measure 12.5 x 9 cm and have 36 pages.

In the second half of 2006, Iraqi authorities introduced G passports. G-series passports are machine-readable and of a far better quality than previous passports. They also adhere to international standards and are therefore somewhat more

difficult to forge. A further improved edition, the A-series, was introduced on 1 October 2009.

In addition to the above-mentioned passports, service passports (E-series) and diplomatic passports (D-series) are issued, but they will not be described in more detail in this document.

### **3. A-SERIES PASSPORTS**

The new A-series passports have been issued since 1 October 2009 (German embassy in Jordan, 2009). Passports in the G-series are thus no longer issued, but they are still valid until their expiry date. However, 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. This means that real G-series passports issued after 2009 may be in circulation.

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.

#### **3.1 ISSUING BODY**

Passports are issued by passport offices organised under the Passport Directorate. This Directorate is organised under the General Directorate for Nationality (GDN), which in turn belongs under the Ministry of Interior.

On the passport, it says that the issuing body is the General Directorate for Nationality – Department of Passport. It is written in Arabic, Kurdish and English.

#### **3.2 WHERE IN THE COUNTRY ARE PASSPORTS ISSUED?**

A-series passports are issued in all Iraqi governorates and at several of the country's foreign service missions. All passport applications must be submitted electronically to GDN in Baghdad for approval, but the governorates issue the passports themselves once the application has been approved in Baghdad. Passports are personalised locally in the governorates, and the name of the governorate where the passport was issued is listed as the place of issue (General Director of Passport & Nationality in Erbil, meeting in Erbil, November 2013; the Iraqi embassy in Oslo, email, July 2015). A complete list of all passport offices in Iraq is available on GDN's website.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of offices in Baghdad, see the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, n.d.c. For an overview of governorate offices, see the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, n.d.d.

There are several passport offices in Baghdad. The main office is called the Passport Affairs Directorate and is located in Hayy al-Wahda, near the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The main office houses several of the city's district passport offices, such as Rusafa, Karrada and New Baghdad. There are also passport offices in Adhamiyya, Khadamiyya Mansur and Slaykh, situated in the Qahira district in the north-eastern part of the city.

Iraqi nationals can apply for a passport in the governorate where they live even if their ID documents were issued in a different governorate.

Passports issued by the Iraqi embassy in Stockholm are produced and personalised in Baghdad (Iraqi embassy in Stockholm, telephone conversation, November 2013). They are sent by diplomatic post to Sweden. In these passports, Baghdad is stated as the place of issue (Iraqi embassy in Oslo, email, July 2015).

### **3.3 APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

An electronic application form is available on GDN's website (Iraqi Ministry of Interior, n.d.a). Applicants must fill in this form, print it and submit it to their local passport office or to an embassy if they live abroad.

In Iraq, the passport is either issued at the main passport office in Baghdad or in the governorate where the applicant lives. When submitting an application, the applicant is given a receipt that must be presented when the passport is collected. In Baghdad, the passport can be issued on the same day as the ID documentation is submitted. Iraqi nationals living abroad who have applied for a passport at an embassy can collect the passport in person at the same embassy.

When the passport is collected, the applicant's fingerprints are checked against the fingerprints that were given when the application was submitted. Applicants must also present a receipt to document that the fee has been paid.

### **3.4 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

In order to be issued a passport, the applicant must, in addition to the completed application form, present the following documents (Iraqi Ministry of Interior, n.d.b; the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.d):

- A national ID card (*Bitaka Shakhsiyeh / Jinsiya / Hawiya*).
- An Iraqi nationality certificate (*Shahadet Jinsiya*).
- A certificate of residence (*Bitaka Sakan / Zanyari*). This applies to applicants living in Iraq. Applicants who live outside Iraq must enclose their residence permit from the country they live in. Only heads of households must present a certificate of residence (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012). According to the Director-General of GDN, it is not strictly necessary to present this card, but it will be required if there is any doubt about the place of residence.
- Two colour passport photos (three for persons applying from abroad) against a white background. In addition, 25,000 Iraqi dinars (or an amount equivalent to USD 20) must be included, and fingerprints must be given upon submission and collection.



At the embassy in Stockholm, the fee is SEK 200 for a new passport (Iraqi embassy in Sweden, telephone conversation, August 2011).

### **3.4.1 Documentation requirements for children**

Children under the age of 18 must have confirmation from a guardian in order to be issued a passport (Iraqi Ministry of Interior, n.d.b). The guardian must enclose a copy of his/her own identity documents and appear in person when the applicant submits his/her passport application and fingerprints.

Children under the age of 10 can only be issued a passport if their father can document Iraqi citizenship (Iraqi Ministry of Interior, n.d.b).

### **3.4.2 Documentation requirements for women**

Women over the age of 18 no longer need confirmation from their guardian or husband in order to be issued a passport, neither in the KRI region (Kurdistan Region of Iraq) nor in the rest of the country (NDI 2009; the Iraqi embassy in Oslo, telephone conversation, 2014; the Iraqi Ministry of Interior n.d.b).

## **3.5 VERIFICATION OF BREEDER DOCUMENTS**

Iraq has a central population register (the Civil Status Affairs Directorate), but all registrations are made locally in one of the country's more than 300 registration offices for ID documents, hereinafter called local population registration offices (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012). The Civil Status Affairs Directorate has departments at governorate and sub-district level. In the sub-districts, the Directorate has local offices in the cities (IOM, email, February 2010).

At a meeting with the Director-General of GDN (Baghdad, April 2012), it was stated that the ID documents forming the basis for the passport applications undergo a technical inspection in Baghdad. In connection with the meeting, Landinfo was given a tour of the main passport office in Baghdad, where all passports in Iraq are produced. The first step in this process, once the applicant has filled in a passport application online and scheduled an appointment for submitting the application and ID documents, is to come to the office in person for a review of the application. Applicants living in the Rusafa, Karrada and New Baghdad districts can go to the main passport office in Hay al Wahda to submit and have their application reviewed. Each of the districts has its own office in this building.

First, the original documents are checked by police officers working in the passport office where the applicant submits the application. Already at this stage, the police can look at the documents' appearance and serial number and uncover clear cases of forgery. They also check that the application has been filled in correctly. Once the application and the ID cards have been verified, the applicant gives electronic fingerprints and signs the application. Applicants who are unable to write their name use fingerprints with ink to sign the application. After this initial verification, an electronic version of the application and the ID card are sent for what the Iraqi passport authorities call a technical inspection. Around 20 people work in the technical inspection room, each with their own computer. They check passport applications from all parts of Iraq and from all the country's embassies. The most important part of the work that takes place here is to check that the number codes in

the documents tally with the place the applicant comes from. All cities, districts and governorates have their own codes that are found in all the ID documents. In addition, the scanned versions of the ID cards are checked for any technical errors that can be detected on a screen.

Sometimes, the inspection uncovers fake ID cards. It was difficult for the Director-General to estimate the scope of this problem, but, when asked, he indicated around one per cent. That means that, on a day where 7,000 passports are issued, 70 fake ID cards are uncovered.

According to an ID expert at the Norwegian embassy in Amman (email, December 2015), however, it is not possible to detect all types of forgeries on a screen.

A technical inspection of a document means investigating the production methods, including printing techniques and other security elements. The original document must be available and also some equipment is needed, such as a magnifying glass. It is therefore not accurate to call the inspection carried out by the passport-issuing body in Baghdad a 'technical inspection'.

The personal data submitted in the application are not checked against the population register, but it is verified that the serial number and register number tally with the card holder's place of origin. Inadequate verification of personal data against the population register may give rise to incorrect personal data in G-series and A-series passports (see also section 5.2)

After the inspection, the passport is sent for printing in a separate room with several printers. First, the serial number is perforated through the passport (photo 1), and then the photo and the rest of the data are printed (photo 2). The next step is to laminate the passport, after which all finished passports are sent for a final quality check.

Photo 1

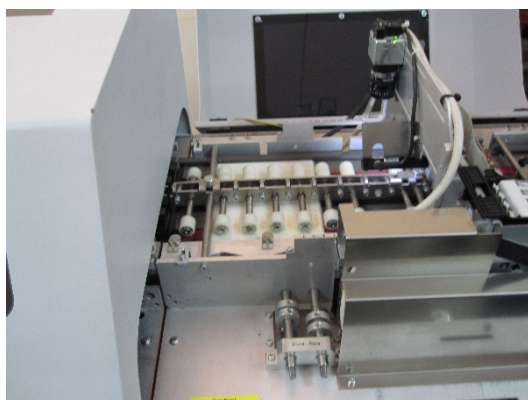


Photo 2

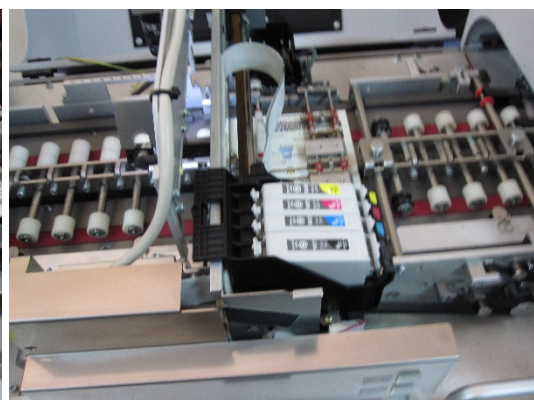


Photo: Landinfo.

### **3.6 PASSPORTS ISSUED VIA A PROXY**

A-series passports can only be issued to the owner, who must collect the passport in person. A proxy will not be accepted. To ensure that it is actually the owner who collects the passport, he/she must give fingerprints both when submitting the

application and when collecting the passport (Iraqi Ministry of Interior n.d.b). (See also section 3.7.1, Possibility of applying from abroad via a proxy.)

An exception can be made for elderly, immobile applicants who bring a relative with them when submitting the passport application. This person will then be authorised to collect the passport when it is ready (Norwegian ID Centre, 2013). He/she must also give fingerprints both when the application is submitted and when the passport is collected.

### **3.7 APPLYING FOR A PASSPORT FROM ABROAD**

After the introduction of A-series passports, there was a temporary suspension in the issuing of passports from the Iraqi foreign service missions pending new technical equipment. The embassies in Amman and Damascus were the first to become equipped to issue passports and have been able to do so since July 2010 and the turn of the year 2010/2011, respectively (the Norwegian embassy in Jordan, email, February 2011). The embassies are connected electronically to the passport register in Baghdad and send scanned copies of ID cards and nationality certificates to Baghdad for inspection together with the application form.

The Iraqi embassy in Stockholm received this equipment in summer 2011 and resumed the issuing of passports on 1 July 2011. Due to limited capacity, the embassy then only considered previously submitted applications. Later that autumn, the issuing of passports once again came to a complete standstill at the embassy, and no passports were issued until mid-January 2012.

Iraqi nationals living abroad fill in the application form that is available online. Applicants no longer need to schedule an appointment to submit their application and ID documentation at the Iraqi embassy in Stockholm (the Iraqi embassy in Stockholm, telephone conversation, November 2013). The change of procedure was introduced in October 2013 due to a reduced demand for passports. Applicants can now come at any time during the embassy's opening hours. The embassies require applicants to present their original ID documents (national ID card and nationality certificate) when applying for a passport. They must also enclose their residence permit from the country they live in. The ID card cannot be older than 15 years (Iraqi Ministry of Interior, n.d.b).

The Iraqi embassy in Oslo provides consular services, but does not issue passports. Iraqi nationals in Norway therefore have to travel to the embassy in Stockholm.

A description of the procedure for applying for a passport from abroad is available on the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website (n.d.d).

When a passport application is submitted at the Iraqi embassy in Stockholm, the application and breeder documents are scanned and sent electronically to the main passport office in Baghdad. The passport-issuing body in Baghdad is responsible for verifying the authenticity of the documents (the Iraqi embassy in Sweden, telephone conversation, August 2011).

#### **3.7.1 Possibility of applying from abroad via a proxy**

It is not possible to apply for a passport from abroad via a proxy in Iraq (the Iraqi embassy in Sweden, telephone conversations February 2010 and August 2011; GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012; the Iraqi consul in Norway, conversation, October

2013). One of the reasons why applicants need to come in person is that they must give their fingerprints. However, Landinfo has been informed that the embassy in Amman allows for a proxy to be authorised to collect the passport on behalf of the applicant. In such cases, both the applicant and the authorised person must come in person when the application is submitted and give their fingerprints (Iraqi embassy in Jordan, meeting, October 2010).

## **4. OTHER TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

### **4.1 EMERGENCY PASSPORTS**

Iraqi authorities do not issue emergency passports. This means that, if you lose your passport, you must apply for a new passport. Applicants must then report their old passport missing at a local police station and place an advertisement in the newspaper stating that the passport is missing (Iraqi embassy in Norway, meeting, February 2012). The embassy must then sign a self-declaration stating that the passport is missing, which must be enclosed with the new passport application.

### **4.2 TEMPORARY TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (PASS DOC / LAISSEZ-PASSER)**

#### **4.2.1 Procedure for Iraqi nationals with ID documents**

Iraqi embassies can issue a temporary travel document (pass doc/ laissez-passer) in the following cases (Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.e):

- If an Iraqi national wants to return to Iraq, but has lost his/her passport
- If an Iraqi national has had his/her passport confiscated and wants to return to Iraq
- If an Iraqi national is deported to Iraq
- If a foreign national comes to Iraq from an unknown destination, or is a citizen of a country that has no representation in Iraq and wants to return to his/her home country, provided that the home country's authorities accept the return.

In order to be issued a temporary travel document, the applicant must present a national ID card and/or an Iraqi nationality certificate (Iraqi embassy in Sweden, telephone conversations, March 2011 and August 2011; the Iraqi embassy in Norway, meeting, February 2012; the Iraqi consul in Norway, conversation, October 2013). Applicants can come to the embassy in Stockholm every weekday except Thursdays. Applicants who do not have these documents will not be issued a temporary travel document from the embassy.

#### **4.2.2 Procedure for Iraqi nationals without ID documents**

The National Police Immigration Service (NPIS) issues laissez-passers to Iraqi nationals without ID documents who are returning to Iraq from Norway, whether voluntarily or by force. In such cases, a laissez-passer will only be issued once the Iraqi authorities have confirmed that the person in question is permitted to enter the country (NPIS, telephone conversation, March 2011).

## **5. MANIPULATION AND FORGERY OF PASSPORTS**

### **5.1 ATTEMPTS TO PHYSICALLY ALTER A PHOTO OR PERSONAL DATA IN PASSPORTS**

Iraqi passports are relatively easy to manipulate. The Norwegian police have uncovered several fake Iraqi passports in the G-series and A-series. One forgery method has been to split the personal data page in a genuine passport and replace one layer of the page with a counterfeit (Østfold police district and Kripos, seminar in Oslo, November 2013). This way, it is possible to alter the personal data in an existing passport.

Another possible forgery method is to use fake ID cards and nationality certificates as breeder documents when applying for a new passport. As described in section 3.5, these breeder documents do not undergo a thorough technical analysis when a passport is issued. To uncover forgeries, the original documents must be examined using a magnifying glass and other technical equipment, and this is not done. Nor is the information in the breeder documents checked against the population register. This means that some genuine passports may contain false information.

Fake passports are expensive, but can be purchased. The same applies to fake visas to European countries (Chief of Migration at Bagdad International Airport, meeting, November 2013).

Document experts at Western embassies in Amman (meeting, November 2014) have informed Landinfo that they have seen several passports where the personal ID number and the mother's name have been altered. The experts assumed this was done to make the passport holder seem younger and unaccompanied.

#### **5.1.1 Problems relating to the transcription of names and name changes**

Transcribing Arabic names into the Roman alphabet can be problematic since there are no standardised transcription forms. This can lead to misunderstandings and suspicion of forgery even if the passport is genuine. Another problem, which is also not deemed to constitute forgery, is the fact that the holder's family name, which it was not permitted to use under the Ba'ath regime, is not always entered in the passport even if it was included on the ID card (Iraqi embassy in Norway, meeting, February 2011).

In A-series passports, it is a requirement that the same name is used as in the ID card. If no last name is given on the ID card, the person's third name (the name of the

paternal grandfather) shall be listed as his/her last name (Iraqi Ministry of Interior, n.d.d).

Under Iraqi naming law, people are allowed to change their first name and last name once during their life. Many Iraqis took opportunity of this in the wake of the sectarian war that began in 2006. It is primarily persons with the names Omar, Abu Bakr and Osman, which can be associated with Sunni Muslims, who want to change their name (Bassem, 2015). However, some Iraqis living in Norway have changed several of their names, which can cause problems when they apply for a passport because their new name, which is approved in Norway, is not approved in Iraq (Iraqi embassy in Norway, meeting, February 2012).

## **5.2 FORGERIES**

According to the information Landinfo has obtained through the Norwegian embassy in Amman, which in turn is based on statements from document experts, Iraqi documents generally have low notoriety. It is found that a large proportion of Iraqi documents are either fake or forged.

In connection with the verification of Iraqi passports, diplomatic sources in Amman have informed the Norwegian authorities that the passport-issuing body in Baghdad will only check the authenticity of the passport itself, and not the data from the registers on which the breeder documents are based. This means that a passport can be genuine and without technical errors, but may contain incorrect information.

This is the main source of errors in G-series and A-series passports. Landinfo has found no information indicating that this source of errors has been corrected. Incorrect personal data may therefore have been entered in G-series and A-series passports; see section 3.5 (diplomatic sources in Amman, meetings, 2007–2010).

During Landinfo's visit to the office that makes all passports in Iraq, it was confirmed that only the technical details of the breeder documents are checked when passports are issued, as well as whether the serial number on the ID card tallies with where the applicant comes from (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012). The Director-General of GDN nevertheless believed that it is very unlikely that A-series passports are issued on the basis of incorrect information, since there are so many people involved in the control and issuing of passports.

It is important to point out that the inspection does not correspond to a complete technical inspection, as it is carried out on a screen and does not involve an inspection of the document in paper format. It is more difficult to uncover fake prints and stamps on a screen than when examining the original ID document through a magnifying glass.

## **5.3 CORRUPTION**

The public administration in Iraq is notorious for its widespread corruption. Transparency International has ranked the country as one of the most corrupt in the world (TI, 2014).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Iraq is ranked as number 170 of 175 on the Corruption Perceptions Index for 2014 (TI, 2014).

That does not necessarily mean that there is much room for bribing public servants at the passport offices. Even if all passports are checked and approved by the main office in Baghdad, they are personalised and issued locally. There may be room for bribery in the last link of the chain. There is personal contact when the application is submitted, but there may be several different persons involved in this process, which makes corruption more difficult. At the passport office that Landinfo visited in Baghdad, one person reviewed the application together with the applicant, received the ID documents and scanned them. Another person reviewed the documents on a screen to check that everything seemed to be in order before sending them for what is known as a technical inspection.

The occurrence of false personal data in genuine passports may be an indication of inadequate verification against the population registers and of fake breeder documents. It can nonetheless not be ruled out that bribing of passport office staff takes place.

## **6. FAMILY REGISTERS**

All personal data entered in the population register are collected in a more comprehensive family register at the local population registration offices near the family's place of residence. All registrations are entered in handwriting in large books in A0 format (841 x 1,189 mm). Each register contains information about 200 families.

Each family has a double page in the register. The information is updated in connection with births, deaths and changes in marital status.

When a man and woman get married, they must go to their local population registration office to create a new joint page in the register, with reference to the page from which the information is obtained. In the case of divorce, they will be returned to their parents' family page.

There are around 300 population registration offices (unofficially referred to as a Civil Status Offices or Civil Status Departments in English, locally referred to as Jinsiya offices), spread all over the country (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012). The offices register new-born babies in the family register on the basis of birth certificates. It usually takes three months for a birth certificate to be sent from the hospital.

The family registers are kept manually and not electronically. Each office works independently of each other.

The family register forms the basis for the issuing of national ID cards and nationality certificates, which in turn form the basis for the issuing of passports.

The family register has several unofficial English names: family book, family census, family registry 57 (after the relevant act of 1957).

All Iraqis can be issued a transcript of their page in the family register.

## 6.1 WHAT INFORMATION IS REGISTERED IN THE FAMILY REGISTER?

The following personal data are registered about each family member in the family register: full name, mother and father's names, place of birth, date of birth, marital status and religion.

Each family has a registration number that is also entered on their personal ID cards.

## 6.2 TRANSFERRING REGISTERED PERSONAL DATA IN CONNECTION WITH RELOCATION

When a person moves, their family information can be transferred from one local family register to another. According to Act No 94 of 1978, all family members must have a housing card and a registration number. Once the family is registered, the information is transferred to the register in Baghdad, which is updated monthly (General Director of Passport & Nationality in Erbil, meeting in Erbil, November 2013). For example, if a person moves from Baghdad to Erbil, he/she must send his/her housing card to the relevant authority in Baghdad and apply to have it transferred to the new place of residence. The same authority then issues a letter that the person must present when he/she arrives in Erbil, and, based on this, he/she will be issued a new housing card and registration number in Erbil.

Even if a family that moves is registered in a new family register in the new place of residence, the old family register is still kept at the local population registration office where the family used to live. A comment is then entered in both family books stating that the family has moved.

## 7. NATIONAL CIVIL ID CARD

All Iraqi nationals must have a national civil ID card. The card must include the following data:

- Personal name (*ism*)
- Name of father and paternal grandfather (*nasab*)
- Surname (*laqab*)
- Name of mother and maternal grandfather
- Gender
- Signature of authorised representative
- Date of issue
- Signature of issuer
- Full name of issuer
- Date of birth in digits and letters
- Place of birth
- Marital status



- Name of spouse
- Religious affiliation

The right-hand side of the card's front page contains the name of the issuing regional office, a register number indicating the number of the family book in which the person is registered, as well as the page number in the family book. The serial number is entered on the top left-hand side. The font of the serial number is serif, and the figures increase in size. These digits and the signature of the issuer give an indication of the authenticity of the card (Swedish Migration Agency, 2009).

The card is called *Bitaka shakhsiyeh* in Arabic, but is sometimes also called *Bitaqahawwiya*.

All Iraqi nationals are issued such a card on the basis of the information in the family register. New-borns are issued their first ID card on the basis of their birth certificate and their parents' ID cards (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012). The card can be renewed several times and should be renewed in connection with changes in marital status and relocation. A new date of issue and a new serial number are entered on the new card. There are no duplicates of the ID card, but the old serial number is entered by hand below the new serial number on the new ID card. Sometimes the word 'renewal' is written above the new serial number (Norwegian ID Centre, 2013). According to the Director-General of GDN (Meeting, April 2012), it is normal for children to be issued an ID card from the age of one. ID cards must be renewed at the population registration office where the person is registered.

The ID card is deemed to be the most important personal document, since it is used in all contact with the public authorities, the health service, the social welfare services, schools, and when buying and selling houses and cars. In addition, the ID card must be presented when applying for other official documents, for example a passport.

When applying for a passport in Iraq, the ID card cannot be older than 10 years. When applying for a passport from abroad, the ID card cannot be older than 15 years.

All ID cards have a hologram affixed to the photo. The hologram is produced outside Iraq, and the number on the hologram is just a serial number from the manufacturer (Norwegian ID Centre, 2013). The Iraqi Directorate of Identity Affairs has informed the Norwegian ID Centre that it registers which hologram series are sent to which offices. The hologram contains a security element that should be destroyed if someone attempts to remove it after the hologram is affixed<sup>3</sup> (Norwegian ID Centre, 2013).

## 7.1 ISSUING BODY

The superior authority for issuing ID cards is the Civil Status Affairs Directorate (the population register), which is organised under the General Directorate for Nationality (GDN) in the Ministry of Interior.

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<sup>3</sup> The Norwegian ID Centre, which obtained this information, states that it has not tested and therefore not verified this claim (Norwegian ID Centre, 2013).

## **7.2 WHERE ARE ID CARDS ISSUED?**

ID cards are issued by the local population registration offices (Civil Status Departments). They are found across the country and in most cities and governorate capitals.

ID cards can only be issued in the district where someone is registered. That means that internally displaced persons often need help obtaining new documents if they live in another governorate than where they are registered.

However, since ISIL took control of large parts of Ninewa and Anbar in 2014, interim offices have been established in Dohuk, Bagdad and Kerbala, where people from areas controlled by ISIL can be issued ID cards (Iraqi embassy in Amman, meeting, 2014). ISIL issues separate ID cards in the area they currently control, but these ID cards are not recognised by the Iraqi authorities.

## **7.3 APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

Applicants must contact the local population registration office in the governorate where they are registered and present the necessary documentation (see next section).

A husband can apply for and be issued civil ID cards for his wife and children, unless it concerns an application to replace a lost ID card. In such case, everyone except children under the age of 12 must meet in person (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012).

## **7.4 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

To be issued an ID card, applicants must fill in an application form signed by the head of the household, a guardian or a lawyer, and enclose two passport photos. They must also be able to document their identity by submitting a birth certificate (upon first issuing) and the ID card of a close relative such as their father or grandfather.

It costs 1,000 Iraqi dinars (approximately USD 8) to be issued an ID card (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012).

No photos are required for children under the age of 1–2. It is acceptable for women to wear a hijab in their photo. The authorities in the Kurdistan region require four photos.

## **7.5 CHECKING PERSONAL DATA**

The population registration offices are tasked with issuing ID cards to local Iraqi nationals. The offices check the information provided against the family registers before issuing ID cards. The system is not electronic, but the local population registration offices send the information to the central population register in Baghdad (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012). If an ID card is lost, the applicant's identity can be approved on the basis of his/her father or brother's ID card, which is then checked in the same way (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012).

## **7.6 ID CARDS ISSUED VIA A PROXY**

In Iraq, ID cards can be issued via a proxy. A husband and father can apply for and be issued ID cards for his wife and children. If the card is lost, however, the holder

must meet in person to be issued a new card (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012). This does not apply to children under the age of 12.

It is also possible to authorise another person to apply for an ID card on one's behalf. In such case, it is normal to ask a relative for help. The identity of both the applicant and the authorised person must then be documented.

ID cards can be issued via an authorised proxy also in the Kurdistan region in Iraq. For example, all internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in the Kurdistan region can receive assistance from a lawyer at the Protection Assistance Centre (PAC) to have their ID cards updated if they are registered in Baghdad or other places far from the Kurdistan region. PAC is run by non-governmental organisations on assignment for the UNHCR. The authorities require all Iraqis to update their ID cards in connection with all changes in marital status.

According to the Public Aid Organization (PAO), an Iraqi non-profit organisation that runs the Protection Assistance Centre in Erbil (emails, January 2011), all Iraqi nationals can authorise another person to obtain a new national ID card on their behalf. This is confirmed by the Iraqi consul in Norway (conversation, October 2013).

There are PAC centres in all the governorates.

## **7.7 OBTAINING ID CARDS FROM ABROAD**

### **7.7.1 Applying for a national ID card from abroad**

Iraqi nationals can apply for new ID cards via the Iraqi embassy in Oslo (the Iraqi embassy in Norway, email, March 2013). Alternatively, Iraqis in Norway can authorise a proxy to apply for and collect an ID card at the local population registration office where they are registered. When applying for a new card via a proxy, the applicant must issue a written authorisation to a person in the applicant's home country. The authorisation shall be sent via the embassy in the country where the applicant is staying, and the embassy must stamp the letter. This can be difficult if the applicant is unable to verify his/her identity, however. This means that the applicant must present a passport, a birth certificate, an old ID card or a nationality certificate. When the consul in Norway was asked whether it was likely that a local population registration office issued new ID cards via a proxy in return for payment in cases where the authorisation had not been certified by an embassy, the consul said that it was possible (Iraqi embassy in Norway, telephone conversation, March 2012).

An ID card issued to a proxy without an authorisation stamped by an embassy is considered valid in Iraq as long as the ID card itself is genuine.

All ID documents issued in Iraq to nationals living or staying abroad must be certified by an Iraqi embassy or consulate in the country where the Iraqi national is staying, or, if relevant, by another embassy if the host country does not have an Iraqi embassy (Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.b). Iraqi nationals in Norway can have their documents certified at the Iraqi embassy in Oslo (Iraqi embassy in Norway, meeting, February 2012).

### **7.7.2 Issuing ID cards to Iraqi children born outside Iraq**

Children born outside Iraq can be registered at one of Iraq's embassies. The child's parents must present the following documents:

- The child's birth certificate, certified by the ministry of foreign affairs in the country of birth
- Their own Iraqi ID cards (both the mother's and father's)
- Their own nationality certificates (both the mother's and father's)
- A marriage certificate unless it is stated in the parents' ID cards that they are married to each other.

Based on this documentation, the Iraqi embassy can issue an Iraqi birth certificate to the child and enclose it with the parents' application for an ID card for the child.

If the parents do not have the necessary documents, the embassy cannot issue an Iraqi birth certificate to an Iraqi child born abroad (Iraqi embassy in Norway, email, April 2013). This means that the child cannot be issued an Iraqi ID card either.

## **8. CHANGES TO AND VARIATIONS IN PROCEDURES FOR ISSUING ID CARDS**

### **8.1 CHANGES TO ID CARDS SINCE 2003**

In 2008, the Canadian immigration authorities (IRB, 2008) wrote that several changes had been made to the ID cards since 2003:

- From mid-2003, the Arabic numerals in the ID cards were replaced by Roman numerals. Arabic numerals were still used in some places, however. Roman numerals were never used on ID cards prior to mid-2003. According to an ID expert at the Norwegian embassy in Amman (email, December 2015), this change was only introduced in Central Iraq, and not in the KRI. The KRI did not change the numerals on its ID cards until 2012.
- Until 2012 the three Kurdish autonomous governorates in Northern Iraq used a wet seal with an eagle motif on the ID cards, while a palm tree symbol was used on ID cards issued in Central Iraq.
- The background print must be clear. The three stars on the eagle's chest must be clear (either vertical or horizontal).
- ID cards issued in Central Iraq after mid-2003 must have security fibres that are reflected under UV light. Cards issued in the KRI did not have such security fibres until 2012 (ID expert at the Norwegian embassy in Amman, email, December 2015).

- Kinegrams were introduced in Central Iraq in mid-2005. Genuine kinegrams appear on false ID cards, however. Kinegrams were not introduced in the KRI until 2012 (ID expert at the Norwegian embassy in Amman, email, December 2015).
- When a person dies, one corner of the card must be cut off and the card returned to the deceased's family.

In 2012, the Director-General of GDN (meeting in Baghdad, April 2012) stated that, from then on, all ID cards in the country should be of the same quality. All cards are printed in the same place and sent to the governorates in serial number order. The local population registration offices in the governorates fill in the personal details by hand, affix the photo and stamp the card.

An ID expert Landinfo met with at the Norwegian embassy in Amman in November 2014 stated that Iraqi documents issued after 2012 have a more uniform appearance. Each governorate has its own stamp, but they otherwise look identical.

Cards issued before 2012 can therefore vary as regards stamps, security fibres and kinegrams.

## **8.2 EXEMPTIONS FROM TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Some exemptions from the technical requirements for ID cards have been made in the past. For example, documents that should have contained a stamp or sticker may not have had them because the issuing body lacked them on the day the document was issued. When Landinfo visited a population registration office in Baghdad in April 2012, there was a woman who wanted to renew her ID card because the old one did not have a stamp. The lack of a stamp had caused many problems for this woman, and she needed to be issued a new card. The lacking stamp was due to human error when the card was issued.

In principle, ID cards issued in the Kurdistan region and ID cards issued in the rest of Iraq have the same format, but the serial numbers indicate where the card has been issued.

## **8.3 ID CARDS WITH ERRORS**

ID cards issued before 2006 may contain several errors and nonetheless be genuine. The case officers processing the applications may, for example, have had inadequate knowledge of case processing procedures and regulations. Errors have also occurred in databases and archive systems. Errors may also have occurred as a result of difficulties in transferring relevant information between the governorates, and because the public servants who process the applications are often overworked. In such circumstances, negligence sometimes occurs (Ockenden International 2006).

## **9. FORGED ID CARDS**

It is well-known that fake ID cards are available on the open market at a very low price. Many people take advantage of this opportunity to save time, since obtaining a card lawfully can take several months.

It can be difficult to detect whether the document is fake or not, as errors and variations may occur in the background print on genuine cards (UK Border Agency, notification via the British embassy in Amman, July 2010). However, such variations should no longer occur since all ID card templates are printed in the same place.

The ID cards are of low technical quality and therefore easy to forge. The case officers processing the applications can be corrupt. Furthermore, it can be difficult for applicants to obtain all the necessary documentation (Ockenden International, 2006).

Information that Landinfo has received over time through the Norwegian embassy in Jordan from diplomatic sources in Amman who do not wish to be quoted directly, indicates that up to 50 per cent of the ID cards in circulation may be fake. According to information from diplomatic sources in Amman in 2011 (as quoted by the Norwegian embassy in Jordan, email, February 2011), it is supposedly still relatively easy to buy fake or stolen ID cards in Iraq.

The same sources say that they have seen both fabricated ID documents and genuine ID documents that have been altered. The paper quality and background print will often reveal if the ID card itself is fabricated. These cards have unclear prints and may lack fibres, or there may be errors in the fibre pattern. Many fake ID cards that appear genuine can contain both genuine and false personal data. According to diplomatic sources in Amman, the most common signs of forgery in these cards are false stamps with spelling mistakes and false document numbers.

According to the Norwegian ID Centre (2013), there are quite a few fake Iraqi ID cards with genuine holograms.

According to a Western embassy in Amman (as quoted by the Norwegian embassy in Jordan, email, February 2011), ID cards are the most frequently forged personal documents, second only to birth certificates.

Iraqi authorities plan to issue a new type of ID card with improved security details to replace the old ID card and nationality certificate (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012). This card will initially be issued to people who register for the first time, i.e. new-borns. It will therefore take several years until all the cards have been replaced.

### **9.1 CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM**

Landinfo has no concrete information about the scope of corruption in the part of the public administration that issues ID cards. Since corruption is very widespread in Iraq, it must nonetheless be assumed that corruption also takes place in connection with the issuing of ID cards. The rule is that two members of staff must be present when new ID cards are issued, and, according to the Director-General of GDN, the control of disloyal employees had become much more stringent in the last few years before Landinfo met with him in 2012.

Bribes are not uncommon, however. To illustrate how corruption normally takes place, a diplomatic source in Baghdad (meeting, October 2010) said that stateless Palestinians living in Iraq often have to pay bribes, even to be issued documents they are entitled to by law. In such cases, a Palestinian must expect to pay at least USD 100 to be issued a travel document. If a proxy is needed to collect the document, the price is approximately USD 400. Even if all the information in the application is correct, and all papers have been correctly filled in, the issuer may nonetheless find, or invent, some form of ‘error’ and use it to blackmail the applicant (diplomatic source in Baghdad, meeting, October 2010).

It is also possible to pay a bribe to not have to meet in person in cases where this is otherwise required. The above-mentioned diplomatic source told Landinfo that he himself had been forced to do this when his father became too old and sick to go and renew his ID card himself. Document experts Landinfo met in Amman in 2014 were also of the opinion that it is possible to have a passport issued without appearing in person.

On one occasion, the question of bribes was discussed with the PLO representation office in Amman (meeting, November 2010). It was said that the scope of corruption in connection with the issuing of documents was unknown, but that, to the extent that it does occur, it probably takes the form of bribes and *wasta* (contacts).

Nor can it be ruled out that bribes are paid to speed up the issuing of ID cards. That is not the same as saying that ID documents in general are fake, however.

Corruption can also occur at the population registers, although it is said to be difficult to forge the personal data in the register.

The Director-General of GDN (meeting, April 2012) informed Landinfo that the authorities crack down hard on corruption in this system. Just before Landinfo’s visit, ten members of staff had been arrested for contributing to the forgery of ID cards.

## 10. NATIONALITY CERTIFICATES

Nationality certificates (*shahadat jinsiyya* in Arabic) are issued to all Iraqi nationals upon application. The awarding of citizenship is regulated by the Iraqi Nationality Law (2006).

The nationality certificate contains the following information, with the same numbering as in the list (UK Border Agency, 2009):

1. Full name
2. Religion
3. Special characteristics
4. Father’s full name
5. Father’s place of birth
6. Mother’s full name

7. Mother's place of birth
8. Comments
9. Fingerprint of left thumb
10. Signature
11. Passport photo
12. Folder number
13. Certificate number
14. Date
15. Iraqi nationality certificate
16. Since it is confirmed that xxx, whose photo is affixed above, has been granted Iraqi citizenship in accordance with Section xxx of the Iraqi Nationality Law of (xxx), he/she has been issued this nationality certificate. Signed by the issuing authority.

In a replacement document, it will be stated under item 16 that the card was issued in accordance with a previously issued nationality certificate. The certificate number and the date of issue of the previous certificate will be entered, as well as the new date of issue. The new date will be entered on the lower right-hand side of the card.

The nationality certificate is necessary when applying for work in the public sector, in education contexts and when using other public services. In addition, the nationality certificate is a required breeder document when applying for a passport, birth certificates for own children, a marriage certificate and death certificate.

Children can be issued a nationality certificate from a young age, but normally obtain one around the age of 12 (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012).

Feyli Kurds in Iraq lost their citizenship under Saddam Hussein's regime in the 1980s and were subsequently denied access to public services (Campbell, 2010). According to the new Iraqi Nationality Law, this group, as well as other groups whose citizenship was taken away during the former regime, are entitled to have their Iraqi citizenship returned to them. According to Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration (as cited in Shafaaq.com, 2013), 97 per cent of Feyli Kurds have now regained the citizenship. This also includes their descendants born outside Iraq. Feyli Kurds who have not regained their citizenship can apply to have it returned. The procedure is the same as for other Iraqis.

## **10.1 ISSUING BODY**

The Nationality Directorate (GDN) issues nationality certificates upon application.

### **10.1.1 Where are the documents issued?**

According to Iraqi law, nationality certificates are only produced in Baghdad (General Director of Passport & Nationality in Erbil, meeting in Erbil, November 2013). It is nonetheless possible to have the document issued at the GDN's local offices, which are available in all the governorate capitals. There are several offices in Baghdad. Nationality certificates are only issued in Iraq.



## **10.2 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

According to information obtained by the Canadian immigration authorities in 2013 (IRB, 2013) from the IOM, Iraqis living in Iraq need the following documents in order to be issued a nationality certificate:

- Father's or brother's nationality certificate
- Applicant's ID card
- Applicant's or father's housing card
- Applicant's or father's ration card
- Four passport photos against a white background

According to the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG, n.d.), it should be sufficient to enclose either the mother's *or* the father's nationality certificate and ID card with the application, in addition to the ration card and housing card. This is in line with the Iraqi Nationality Law, which states that a person born to an Iraqi mother *or* father is entitled to Iraqi citizenship. When Landinfo asked the Iraqi embassy in Oslo, however, it stated that a mother cannot apply for citizenship on behalf of her child without the consent of the child's father (email, December 2014). A father, on the other hand, can apply for citizenship for his child without the consent of the child's mother.

### **10.2.1 Additional requirements for applicants living outside Iraq**

Iraqis who live outside Iraq can apply for a nationality certificate at an Iraqi embassy. The application procedure has been described on the website of the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n.d.c). The following must be enclosed with the application:

- The applicant must fill in an application form and enclose a colour passport photo. The passport photo must be stamped by the consulate and confirmed by a fingerprint of the applicant's left thumb in the designated spot. This, in turn, must be certified by the consul.
- A colour copy of the applicant's father's or mother's nationality certificate
- A colour copy of the applicant's father's or mother's ID card
- An additional colour passport photo
- A self-declaration if the applicant is an adult, or a declaration from the applicant's father if the applicant is under the age of 18.

## **10.3 REPLACING A LOST OR DAMAGED NATIONALITY CERTIFICATE**

It is possible to apply for a replacement of a lost or damaged nationality certificate. The procedure is as follows (Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.c):

- Submit a written application to be issued a new nationality certificate on grounds of loss or damage.

- Fill in the application form available from the Nationality Directorate's (GDN) local offices and Iraqi embassies, and enclose it with the written letter of application.

For applications submitted to embassies, the consul must note the applicant's reason for applying on the reverse side of the application form, as well as the applicant's full name, and ensure that the applicant's fingerprint is stamped above the name. The consul must sign this document in person and seal it with the consulate/embassy's stamp. If the application is for replacement of a nationality certificate because the old one is damaged, the original nationality certificate must be enclosed. If the application is for a new certificate because the old one is lost, a copy of the applicant's father's or brother's nationality certificate must be enclosed, along with confirmation from the embassy that it is a true copy.

A copy of the applicant's father's and mother's passports must also be enclosed, and they must also carry a 'certified true copy' stamp from the embassy.

Four recent passport photos are required.

The cost of being issued a new nationality certificate is 3,600 Iraqi dinars (equivalent to USD 2).

The Iraqi consul in Norway has informed Landinfo (meeting in Oslo, February 2012) that the consulate at the embassy in Oslo can help to send applications for new nationality certificates for new-borns and applicants who wish to replace an old, worn-out card. The embassy cannot assist people without ID documents, however.

A nationality certificate can be issued several times, but the reason why a new one is required must always be stated (GDN, meeting in Baghdad, April 2012).

#### **10.4 ISSUING NATIONALITY CERTIFICATES TO A PROXY**

According to the Director-General of GDN (meeting in Baghdad, April 2012), it is only possible to be issued a nationality certificate by appearing in person, and not via a proxy.

Applicants living abroad can authorise someone in Iraq to follow up the application procedure in Iraq.

#### **10.5 CORRUPTION**

Landinfo does not know the scope of corruption in connection with the issuing of nationality certificates. As previously mentioned, however, the scope of corruption in Iraq is extensive (TI, 2014).

#### **10.6 FORGERIES**

According to information that Landinfo has gained access to via Norway's embassy in Amman, a high percentage of nationality certificates verified by Western embassies in Amman are forged. It is stated that it is still possible to buy various fake ID documents at a price of up to USD 150. According to document experts, there are different types of forgeries.

According to the Norwegian ID Centre (2013), nationality certificates are often forged by making a copy using a commercial laser printer. Fully-forged nationality certificates normally do not contain serial numbers in relief printing.

It is also very easy to replace the photo on nationality certificates (Norwegian ID Centre, 2013).

In 2006, the organisation Ockenden International stated the following possible sources of errors in nationality certificates:

- Inadequate archives and data systems in the population registers
- Inadequate documentation from the applicant
- Difficult to access the issuing body (safety/security, expenses etc.)
- Unqualified staff processing the applications
- The issuing body does not have access to the applicable regulations (the complete text of the law is not available in the office in question).

According to Ockenden International, this means that nationality certificates may intentionally or unintentionally contain incorrect information.

It should be noted, however, that the quality of public sector services has improved in recent years, so that some of the sources of errors mentioned by Ockenden International in 2006 are no longer as prominent.

Another forgery method is to obtain a nationality certificate on the basis of fake breeder documents.

## **10.7 TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Nationality certificates issued from and including 2012 shall be of the same standard regardless of which governorate they were issued in. Prior to 2012, however, there were some differences between the eagle motif and the text on the cards issued in the KRI and those issued in Central Iraq, respectively.

The nationality certificates contain no security elements over and above printing techniques, either now or prior to 2003, except for a hologram on the photo, which was introduced in Central Iraq in 2005 and the KRI in 2012. There is not and has never been a watermark on Iraqi nationality certificates (document expert at the Norwegian embassy in Amman, email, December 2015).

## **11. REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND BIRTH CERTIFICATES**

The registration of births and deaths is regulated by the Registration of Births and Deaths Law No 148 of 1971. This act followed law No 30 of 1947, which made the registration of births and deaths mandatory (IIVRS, 1980).

A birth must be registered within 15 days if the child was born in hospital and within 30 days if the child was born at home in a city. If the child was born at home in a rural area, the deadline is 45 days (Iraq e-GOV Portal, n.d.a). The deadline is 60 days for children born abroad. A fine is imposed if the deadline is exceeded.

## **11.1 PROCEDURE FOR REGISTERING NEW-BORNS**

The doctor, midwife or registered nurse assisting the birth is responsible for issuing and signing a birth certificate and for sending it for approval and registration at a dedicated health enterprise (Iraq e-GOV Portal, n.d.a). The health enterprise retains one copy, while a second copy is sent to the relevant health authority and a third copy is given to the child's parents. The health authorities are responsible for sending the birth certificate to the correct population registration office.

In connection with births outside health enterprises, the doctor, midwife or registered nurse shall issue, sign and send the birth certificate to the relevant authority for approval and registration. This must be done within 30 days if the birth takes place in a city, and within 45 days if the birth takes place in a rural area. The first copy of the birth certificate shall be sent to the population registration office, while the two other copies shall be returned to the person who was present during the birth. This person shall retain one copy and give the other one to the child's parents.

The parents must bring the child's birth certificate to their local population registration office so that the child can be issued a mandatory national ID card.<sup>4</sup>

## **11.2 REGISTRATION OF CHILDREN BORN ABROAD AT AN IRAQI EMBASSY ABROAD**

According to the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n.d.a), the following registration procedure applies to children born abroad:

- The parents of a child born outside Iraq must obtain a valid birth certificate from the country where the child was born and present it to the embassy within two months after the birth. The certificate must be certified by the ministry of foreign affairs in the country of birth. The Iraqi embassy must also certify the birth certificate. Failure to apply to have the child registered within two months will lead to a fine of 10,000 Iraqi dinars (equivalent to USD 8.50).
- The embassy registers the birth and issues four copies of the birth certificate in accordance with the information provided in the local certificate. The copies are sent to the Department of Vital Statistics and Civil Status in the Ministry of Health. The local birth certificate, which must be certified by the relevant authority, must be enclosed.

Iraqi nationals in Norway can have their children's birth certificate certified at the Iraqi embassy in Oslo.

## **11.3 ISSUING BIRTH CERTIFICATES IN IRAQ FOR CHILDREN BORN ABROAD**

According to Iraq's consul in Norway (email, April 2013), the following documentation must be enclosed in order to register a child in Iraq who was born abroad:

- The child's birth certificate, certified by the ministry of foreign affairs in the country of birth
- Both parents' Iraqi ID cards

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<sup>4</sup> Normally, a child's parents/guardians will ensure that the child is issued a national ID card sometime before starting school, since school enrolment is often the first time the card is needed.

- Both parents' nationality certificates
- The parents' marriage contract unless the marriage is registered in their Iraqi ID cards.

If the parents are divorced, the divorce documents must be enclosed. Further documentation may be required for children born before 2007.

More detailed information about procedures for how to obtain a birth certificate from abroad is available on the website of the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n.d.a).

#### **11.4 FORGERIES**

According to a Western embassy in Amman (as quoted by the Norwegian embassy in Jordan, email, February 2011), fake birth certificates are the personal documents most frequently uncovered by this embassy.

One possible reason for this may be that many people do not have a birth certificate, but need to obtain one to be issued an ID card and nationality certificate. The information in a fake birth certificate is not necessarily false.

## **12. DEATH CERTIFICATE**

Death certificates are issued by hospitals, but the Ministry of Health is responsible for registering deaths and certifying death certificates with a stamp. A standard form exists, and the certificate is issued in four copies, of which the deceased's parents or other close relatives are given one, while the three others are filed in the same way as birth certificates.

If a death takes place at a hospital or clinic, the doctor shall ensure that the death is registered immediately, and the death certificate must be sent to the health authorities within 15 days (Iraq e-GOV Portal, n.d.b).

If a death takes place without medical personnel present, the next-of-kin must notify the closest health office or the local mayor can certify the death in consultation with two witnesses and report it to the local health office (IIVRS, 1980).

The doctor who is notified must send the death certificate to the health authorities within 15 days (Iraq e-GOV Portal, 2013b). A copy is sent to the deceased's local population registration office.

Iraq does not have a central register of deaths (Karagiozakis, 2009).

According to diplomatic sources in Amman, a large percentage of fake death certificates have been detected (FCG, 2010).

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