

IRAQ | UNHCR CIVIL DOCUMENTATION FOR IDPS

IN BRIEF

According to the Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment 2020, 55% of IDPs in camps, 47% of IDPs in out-of-camp situations, and 57% of returnees¹ in Iraq miss at least one key civil document.² Civil documentation serves as proof of one's legal identity. Due to the lack of civil documentation, many IDPs and returnees are unable to access basic services such as education and health care, experience restrictions on their freedom of movement, are exposed to an increased risk of arrest and detention and may be excluded from restitution and/or reconstruction programmes. The lack of civil documentation may also increase the risk of statelessness for undocumented children.

IDPs and returnees cite various challenges in obtaining civil documentation, such as a lack of knowledge of procedures, high transportation costs incurred accessing government offices in places of origin, complex court procedures, and meeting *de facto* requirements such as security clearances. COVID-19 related precautionary measures imposed earlier this year exacerbated these challenges as relevant Government offices were closed or worked at a reduced capacity.

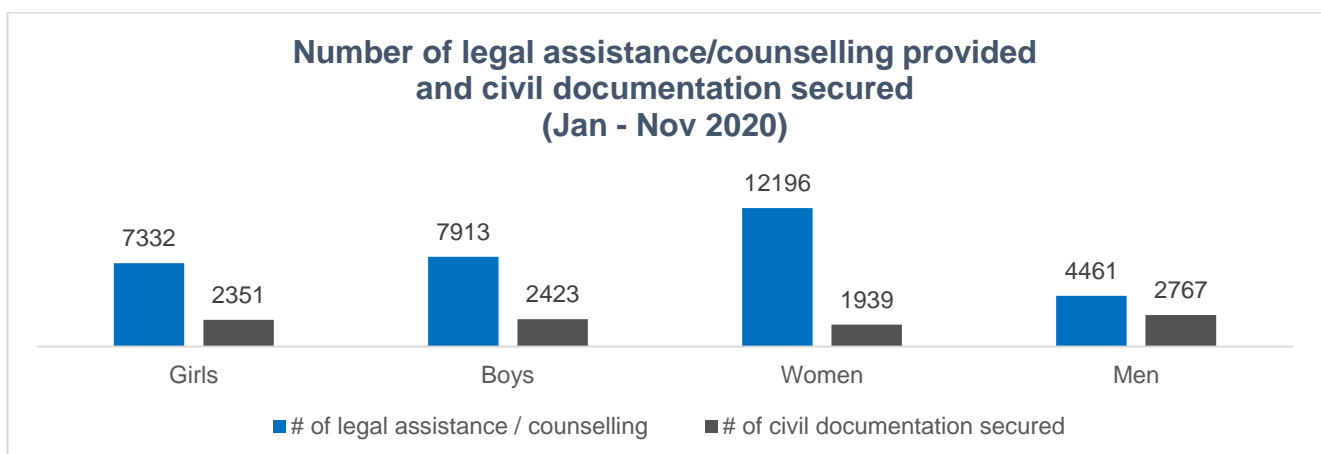
Given the grave consequences and challenges faced by IDPs and returnees who lack key civil documents, UNHCR, in cooperation with government and civil society partners, has implemented and supported a number of projects to enable IDPs and returnees to access civil documentation.



Inauguration ceremony of the National Identification Card Centre in Ninewa Governorate @ UNHCR

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

As a core activity UNHCR continues to mobilize legal assistance partners so that IDPs and returnees have access to accurate information and quality legal advice and representation on access to civil documentation. Between January and November 2020, UNHCR and partners had provided legal assistance and/or counselling to 41,902 individuals, of which 9,480 individuals successfully secured civil documentation. Restrictions from March to September related to COVID-19 had a significant impact on the provision of legal assistance services³ which had to be undertaken remotely. Courts and civil affairs offices functioned at reduced capacities resulting in delays and critical needs being unmet.



¹ There are some 1.28m IDPs and 4.8m returnees in Iraq, [UNHCR Iraq Fact Sheet November 2020](#), 20 November 2020.

² Key documents include Civil Status (or Unified) ID card, Nationality Certificate (or Unified ID card), PDS card and birth certificates for children.

³ By comparison, in 2019 UNHCR and partners provided legal assistance and/or counselling to 47,172 individuals.

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

UNHCR has continued to support the rehabilitation of the offices of the Civil Affairs Directorate (CAD) or related institutions in various locations in Iraq. In 2019 and 2020 (to date), 7 such projects have been completed, all in Ninewa Governorate (Al Hamdaniyah, Mosul, Talafar). A further 4 projects are ongoing in Diyala (Khanaqin) and Ninewa (Sinjar, Tal Abta and Ba'aj).

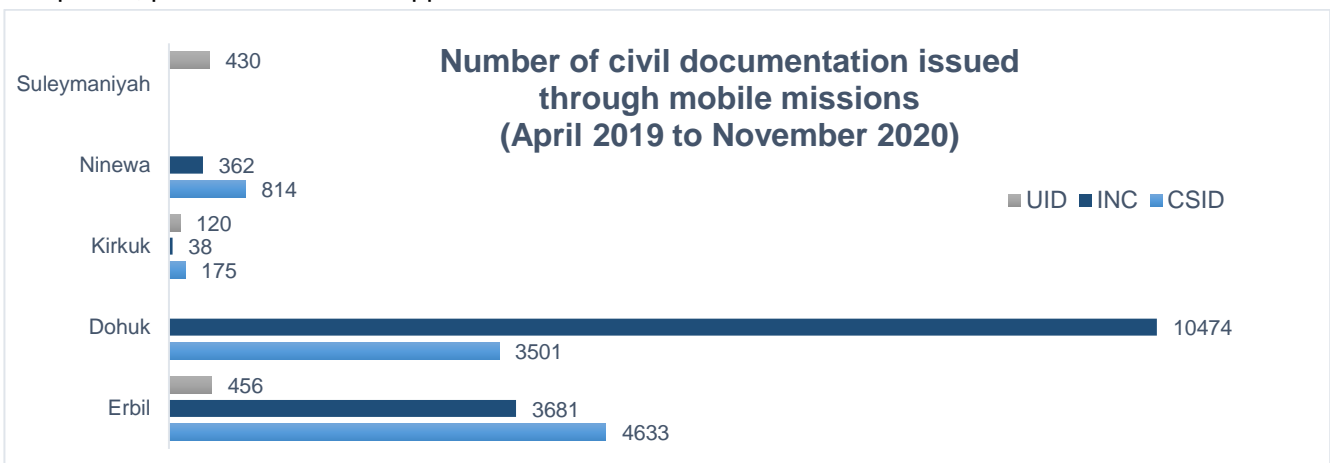
MOBILE CIVIL DOCUMENTATION PROJECTS

Since April 2019, UNHCR has collaborated with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) of the Federal Government of Iraq to implement mobile missions dispatching government officials to issue civil documentation to IDPs in camps and out-of-camp locations. To date, with the collaboration of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), MoI has launched missions to issue Civil Status IDs (CSIDs), Iraqi Nationality Certificates (INCs) and Unified National IDs (UNIDs) to IDPs across Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk Governorates. For much of this year these missions were suspended owing to the COVID-19 related closure of civil affairs offices, with only distributions of documents applied for in 2019 taking place during this time. The missions are to resume in December and will continue into 2021, focusing on the remaining IDP camps. As of the end of November, MoI had issued a total of 8,309 CSIDs, 14,193 INCs and 1,006 UNIDs to IDPs through these mobile missions since the project was initiated in 2019.



Distribution of civil documents in Bersive camp in Duhok Governorate @ Harikar C. Missouri.

UNHCR and partners have also helped facilitate mobile missions undertaken by CAD offices in Ninewa to IDP camps within the Governorate. So far this year 16 such missions to 3 IDP camps have been undertaken resulting in the issuance of 362 INCs and 814 CSIDs. Further missions are planned for December as well. Throughout the missions, UNHCR and partners provided material and technical support to officials by preparing applications, establishing registration centres, and providing necessary equipment such as computers, printers and office supplies.



SPECIAL THANKS TO MAJOR DONORS

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