



Iraq's recent migration history

- Iraq has a long history of migration movements – both as a migrant hosting and as a sending country.
- European countries have remained important countries of asylum for Iraqi refugees, with almost 250,000 residing in Germany and a similar number living in the UK.
- Iraq hosts almost 2 million IDPs. In the past year, over one million IDP returns were facilitated to their communities of origin.
- Iraq encourages the voluntary return of their nationals. However, to facilitate this, the root causes of forced migration need to be continuously addressed: these include security issues and the lack of economic opportunities.
- Iraq is also a destination country for more than 360,000 migrants. The majority are from the Middle East. In addition, Iraq is hosting approximately 230,000 Syrian refugees. Iraq is also a destination for irregular migration from Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines and other Asian and African countries.



Iraq's Ministry of Interior representatives and ICMPD delegation discuss their collaboration in Baghdad, Iraq.

A Migrant Resource Centre in Baghdad

مركز
موارد
الهجرة

MIGRANT
RESOURCE
CENTRE

An information centre for potential migrants - the Migrant Resource Centre

(MRC) – was established in Baghdad in February 2020. The MRC is placed with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The MRC focused on awareness raising on migration and Covid-19 precautions mainly via social media in 2020. With limited outreach feasible this year, the MRC will be officially inaugurated in December 2020 and a comprehensive media and community outreach campaign launched in 2021.

The MRC provides a wide range of services including:

- Clear, accessible and understandable information for Iraqis on the risks, dangers and consequences of irregular emigration, signs of exploitation and ways of protecting against human trafficking. In this context, the MRC also focuses on vulnerable groups and internally displaced people.
- Information to outgoing, intended and potential migrants on possibilities for safe, legal and orderly migration, as well as rules and regulations.

- Pre-departure orientation and information on work and living conditions abroad, migrants' rights and obligations, access to protection mechanisms and information on return processes.
- Referral to services related to the return process, such as assistance for reintegration in Iraq, provision of technical/vocational training, etc.
- Post-arrival assistance to labour migrants coming to Iraq, providing them with information on their rights and obligations in the country.

MRCs also provide information for governmental and non-governmental stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in the facilitation or communication of migration related issues. MRCs conduct information sessions at vocational and technical training schools, universities, colleges and schools as well as with communities and during webinars, conferences and other events.

This year, the MRC has held 180 virtual individual counselling sessions and the Facebook page has over 20,000 followers. The MRC has also reached 2,2 million people over social media channels.

Law Enforcement Cooperation in the region



Via the Silk Routes project, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is facilitating regional cooperation for law enforcement agencies on irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking, in brief RELEC. This cooperation among Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey started in October 2015. Its aim is to establish a better transnational response against criminal networks involved in migration related crimes. At national level in Iraq, RELEC supports the establishment of a framework for statistical information exchange and analysis of migration trends in order to strengthen national capacities for international cooperation. At regional level, the Ministry of Interior exchange knowledge and experience with the RELEC partner countries to improve international cooperation in the area of irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

The new Policy for Engagement with Iraqis Abroad



The Silk Routes Facility supports the development of a Policy on Engagement with Iraqis Abroad under the leadership of the Ministry of Migration and Displaced. This is close to adoption and is currently being finalised. The Policy aims to foster closer ties between Iraqis abroad and their homeland, in a way that enables investors and people with competencies to participate in the development process in Iraq. It aims to capitalise on these objectives through four key thematic areas: 1) institutional and leadership development; 2) human capital support and investment; 3) financial mobilisation and investment; and 4) state guardianship over Iraqis abroad.

Actions are geared towards building trust and sharing a common identity (including a sense of co-responsibility) between Iraqis abroad and the state; and building institutions and structures that facilitate sustainable engagement. It offers solutions related to developing expert rosters of Iraqis abroad that allow skilled Iraqis to register themselves and be contacted when a specific programme or intervention arises that needs their specific set of skills. In addition, it focuses on supporting members of the Iraqi community abroad to invest in Iraq. An important, and more embedded, approach also relates to the provision of protection and support services to members of the Iraqi population abroad.

Migrant Protection



MIGRA.P supports the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) in expanding its rules and regulations for labour migrants in Iraq as well as for Iraqi workers in other countries. It also provides post-arrival orientation and services for foreign workers, and reinforces the capacities of MOLSA in developing labour skills and market data; strengthening labour inspection and Compliance; as well as improving skills development and training for potential labour migrants.

The “Silk Routes project”

All described activities are conducted under the project “Improving Migration Management in the Silk Routes”, which aims at improving migration governance in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, as well as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

It is funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The project strengthens the regional dialogue on migration under the Budapest Process which was initiated in 1993. The project hosts the Silk Routes Facility, MIGRA.P and RELEC; in collaboration with its partner countries it also operates Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs).

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