



Country Information Sheet for Return and Reintegration Counsellors



Republic of Iraq





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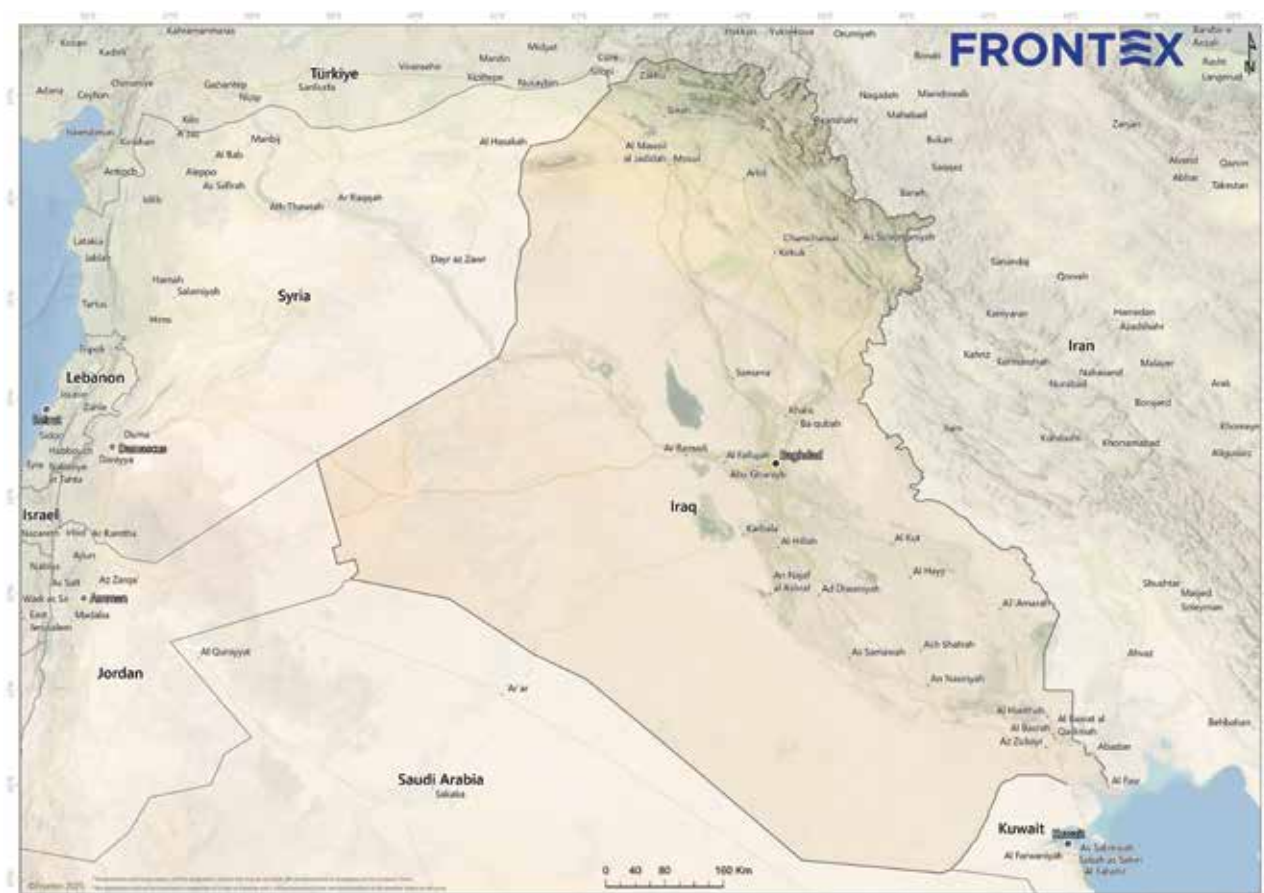
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1. General information



Population

Total: 46.1 million

Ethnic groups

Arabs: ~ 75–80%

Kurds: ~ 15–20%

Other ethnicities: ~ 5% combined. These include:

- Turkmen
- Yezidi
- Shabak
- Kaka'i
- Mandaean (Sabeian-Mandaean)
- Assyrian
- Sabeian-Mandaean

Languages

Iraq has two official languages at the national level:

1. Arabic – Widely spoken across most of Iraq and used in government, media, and education.
2. Kurdish – Official in the autonomous Kurdistan Region in the north and recognized nationally.

Additionally, there are regional languages and minority languages that have official recognition in certain areas:

- Turkmen (Turkoman) – Spoken by the Turkmen minority, especially in northern Iraq.

- Assyrian (Neo-Aramaic) – Recognized in areas with Assyrian populations.
- Armenian – Used by the Armenian community in some local contexts.

Religions

Muslim (official) 95–98% (Shia 61–64%, Sunni 29–34%), Christian 1% (includes Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Assyrian Church of the East), other 1–4%, Yazidism: Less than 1%.

Population growth rate

2,10%

Government type

Federal parliamentary Republic

Capital

Baghdad

Telephone code

964

2. Reintegration partner

In Iraq Kurdistan, South and Central Regions, we work with the European Technology and Training Centre (ETTC). ETTC is a non-profit organisation, that works to contribute to sustainable development in Iraq. ETTC has been implementing reintegration programmes, vocational

training sessions and good governance projects in public administration since 2009. Assistance will be offered via the ETTC Offices in KRG (Erbil, Duhok & Slemani) and in Baghdad and South Central, including Basra office and mobile teams in South & Central and Kirkuk.



 Baghdad, Al-Karada, Al-Tahriyat Square, near Barely Restaurant; Al-Wahda Neighbourhood, Alley: 904, Quarter: 56, Number: 10	 +964 750 423 5767 +964 751 868 7618	 https://www.ettc-iraq.net/
	 Sunday - Thursday 8:30am - 5pm (local time)	 drei@ettc-iraq.net baghdad1@ettc-iraq.net
 Erbil, Newroz Street, next to Municipality 6	 +964 751 868 7618 +964 750 423 5767	 https://www.ettc-iraq.net/
	 Sunday - Thursday 8:30am - 5pm (local time)	 drei@ettc-iraq.net
 Duhok, Zakho Way, Mazi Complex, Building B1 Apartment B 102	 +964 750 331 7001	 https://www.ettc-iraq.net/
	 Sunday - Thursday 8:30am - 5pm (local time)	 dohuk@ettc-iraq.net
 Slemani, Salm Street, Rand Gallery, Sixth Floor, Apartment 6	 +964 750 104 5839	 https://www.ettc-iraq.net/
	 Sunday - Thursday 8:30am - 5pm (local time)	 sulem@ettc-iraq.net
 Basra, Aljubailia Region, near Time Square Mall, in front of Institute of Fine Arts	 +964 770 841 8810 +964 750 010 4930	 https://www.ettc-iraq.net/
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3. Travel documents

3.1 Types, procedure and required documents

Laissez passer to return:

Returning Iraqis who are not in possession of an Iraqi passport must apply for a laissez passer at an Iraqi embassy or consulate abroad. To issue a laissez passer, an Iraqi diplomatic mission verifies the identity and nationality of the returnee against source documents in Iraq.

The citizen fills in a form containing his/her name, birth date, place of residence, former passport number (if any), and before his/her address in Iraq with the names and addresses of people they know.

The information and photo of the citizen and accompanying citizens are put in the passport; the photos are stamped with the Consulate stamp, indicating the passport number and date of expiry (usually limited to 6 months).

Additional notes are made in the visa page: "We have issued this passport for the loss of the passport of the holder to enable him to return to Iraq."

Note:



1. This passport is used for a single trip, to return to Iraq, and is handed-over at the point of entry into the Iraqi territories.
2. It is necessary to write the reason for granting the passport in one of its pages and send a telegram to the Consular Department with the passport number and date of issuance and the border point through which the citizen wishes to enter.

Biometric passport

Issued by the Directorate of Nationality and Civil Status, e-passports can be obtained at designated passport

offices within Iraq or at Iraqi consulates and embassies abroad.

Required Documents:

- National Civil Status Identity Card (only Iraqi National Card), original and a colour photocopy.
- Iraqi Citizenship Certificate (only Iraqi National Card), original and a colour photocopy.
- Photographs: Two passport-sized recent colour photos with a white background.
- Completed application form available on the official website of the General Passports Directorate and the passport fee receipt.¹

3.2 Fees

IQD 95 000 – for issuing a passport (65 U.S. dollars or its equivalent in other currencies)

¹ <https://baghdad.eregulations.org>

4. Transport

Main airports

IATA	Name	City	Airlines	Destinations
BGW	Baghdad International Airport / New Al Muthana Air Base	Baghdad	12	13
EBL	Erbil International Airport	Arbil	20	20
NJF	Al Najaf International Airport	Najaf	11	9
BSR	Basra International Airport	Basra	8	7
ISU	Sulaymaniyah International Airport	Sulaymaniyah	8	8

Public transportation

By train

Railway services are limited to the Baghdad–Basra and Baghdad–Fallujah lines, operating from the Al-Alawi station in Baghdad. The remaining routes toward Mosul, Kirkuk, and Al-Qaim have been suspended. Significant investments are being made to rebuild and modernize ([Iraq Railways Extension and Modernization \(IREM\) Project](#)) the railway infrastructure and services between Umm Qasr Port in southern Iraq and Mosul in northern Iraq reducing travel time, increasing freight volumes and providing users with improved access to sustainable transport infrastructure and services.

Taxis and Ride sharing

Taxis are widely available in cities like Baghdad and Erbil. You can either hail a taxi on the street or use ride-sharing apps such as Careem where available. Always agree on the fare before starting your journey to avoid misunderstandings.

Buses

Intercity buses are a popular means of travel for both locals and tourists. They offer a budget-friendly way to travel through Iraq, with routes connecting major cities. (Al-Mansour Transport and Zain Transport- are two reliable companies)

Minibuses

Minibuses are another affordable option for getting around cities even though they are often crowded and may not have fixed schedules.

5. Emergency contacts

- Iraqi Civil Defence Hotline: 112
- Ambulance: 122
- Police: 104
- Fire: 115

6. Health-care

6.1 Overview

The Iraqi healthcare system is primarily central, with certain allocation of government funding going towards the sector per year. According to the World Health Organization, there are 1,146 primary health centres headed by mid-level workers; and 1,185 health centres, headed by medical doctors. There are 229 hospitals, including 61 teaching hospitals.

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq remains one of the largest and most volatile in the world. Conflict has destroyed livelihoods and infrastructure, and many have been threatened, displaced, and injured. Over the past years, Iraq's health system has faced enormous challenges as a result of shortages in basic and essential health services, weakened infrastructure, and limited supplies and health workforce.

The HeRAMS project was initiated in 2022 and finalized in 2023, bringing digitization to Iraq's health system. HeRAMS will facilitate the digitization of the health system by providing a backup list of the country's public health facilities in their entirety and identifying gaps in the health services delivered.

Public health care in Iraq is a government-funded system that provides medical services at low or no cost to all citizens. It includes primary, secondary, and tertiary

care through hospitals and clinics across urban and rural areas. Despite challenges like limited resources and infrastructure, it aims to ensure basic health services are accessible to the entire population.

Preventive and Public Health Programs: The public health system also provides vaccination campaigns, maternal and child health programs, infectious disease control, and health education initiatives.

Insurance and Affordability: Services are generally free or very low-cost, making public health care the main source of medical treatment for lower-income populations.

Urban-Rural Disparity: Urban areas tend to have better-equipped hospitals and more specialized services, while rural areas often have limited access to specialized care.

Private health care in Iraq refers to medical services provided by privately funded and managed institutions. It is characterized by higher costs, better quality of care, modern facilities, and shorter wait times compared to public health care. Primarily located in urban areas, private health care is more accessible to middle and upper-income individuals who can afford these services or have private insurance.

6.2 Health insurance

Currently 96,4% of Iraqi-s are without health insurance. There is no health insurance system to serve the public, and so they rely on the Iraqi central government-run public health care system, with little advocacy or diversity of treatment options.

Iraq's public health system remains severely impacted by years of conflict, the loss of specialists, and the shortage of salaries for civil servants. These conditions

have limited the health system's ability to maintain regular programmes and services, such as immunization and maternal and child health.²

A comprehensive mapping of the operational status of health facilities can be found here: [herams-iraq-baseline-report-2023-part2-operational-status-of-the-health-system.pdf \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/health-coverage-report-2023-part2-operational-status-of-the-health-system)

² <https://www.irfad.org/>



7. Education

7.1 Overview

Public education is free of charge and no loans or stipends are necessary. Primary education is mandatory.

Note: If the children of returnees have studied abroad, they need to bring a certificate from the school they have attended in the host country (certified by the Iraqi Embassy in the host country, the Ministry of Education/Ministry of Higher Education, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Primary education enrolment in Iraq stands at over 90%, but enrolment rates in intermediate and higher education levels are significantly lower.

Almost 3.2 million school-aged children are reported to be out of school in Iraq, including approximately half of all displaced children.³

A significant shortage of educational infrastructure poses a key challenge for Iraq's education sector and to improve learning. Due to the destruction caused by years of war and conflict, many schools have had to accommodate students from neighbouring schools.

As a result, many students attend school in double or triple shifts, which leads to very limited learning time—sometimes only four hours a day—which can in turn impact student performance. According to the Iraq Ministry of Education, an additional 10,000 school buildings are needed to address the infrastructure shortage and ensure all children have a place to learn.⁴

National Education Strategy for Iraq 2022-2031: [World Bank Document](#)

7.2 Education system structure

In Iraq, the academic year begins in September and ends in June, and the official primary school entrance age is 6. The system is structured so that the primary school cycle lasts 6 years, lower secondary lasts 3 years, and upper secondary lasts 3 years.

Pre-Primary Education: Optional kindergartens for children aged 4–5 years.

Primary Education: Compulsory for children aged 6–11.

Intermediate Education: Covers grades 7–9 for children aged 12–14.

Secondary Education: Grades 10–12, usually divided into general academic and vocational streams.

Higher Education:

- Includes universities, institutes, and technical colleges.
- Overseen by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- Offers undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programmes.

Curriculum:

- Focuses on core subjects like Arabic, mathematics, science, Islamic studies, social studies, and English.
- Vocational streams emphasise practical skills like engineering, agriculture, or trade.

Language of Instruction:

- Arabic is the primary language; Kurdish is used in the Kurdistan Region.

Public vs. Private Education:

- Public education is free and widely available but may suffer from overcrowding, resource shortages, and inconsistent quality.
- Private schools, mostly in urban areas, charge fees and often provide better facilities, smaller class sizes, and English-language instruction.

³ Country of Origin Information: Iraq - Country Focus (ecoi.net)

⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2024/10/29/iraq-improving-quality-of-education-and-access-to-enable-all-students-to-learn>

7.3 Enrolment procedure for public education

Age Requirement:

- Primary Education: Children must be 6 years old to start Grade 1.
- Intermediate and Secondary Education: Students progress automatically if they pass the previous grade.

Documentation Needed:

- birth certificate of the student.
- proof of residence (e.g., residency id or certificate).
- previous school records/report cards (for students transferring from another school or advancing to higher grades).
- vaccination/health record (in some schools, especially for younger children).

Application Process:

- Parents or guardians submit the required documents to the nearest public school.
- Schools typically register students at the beginning of the academic year (usually September).

Placement and Assignment:

- Students are assigned to schools based on residence area.
- Some urban areas with multiple schools may allow parents to choose among a few nearby schools.

Admission Confirmation:

- The school verifies documents and confirms enrolment.
- Students receive a school ID and timetable.

Special Considerations:

- Children with disabilities may be enrolled in specialized schools or provided with additional support.
- Students in conflict-affected or remote areas may enrol in temporary or alternative schools if the nearest school is inaccessible.

8. Economy

Iraq has managed to uphold domestic stability despite regional turmoil and global uncertainty. At the same time, the non-oil economy slowed down in 2024 following a very strong growth in 2023. Inflation has remained subdued amid weaker demand. Financing constraints and lower oil revenues are expected to constrain fiscal spending, taking an additional toll on economic activity.

Against a baseline of low oil prices, fiscal deficits and external accounts are projected to deteriorate further over the medium term unless significant reforms are undertaken to increase non-oil revenues, control the

public wage bill, and boost non-oil growth potential through an ambitious structural reform agenda.⁵

Iraq's social protection programs are expected to continue providing a buffer for vulnerable households against global market volatility and hold poverty rates steady. The cash transfer program reaches more than one-fifth of the population and its public distribution system for food rations is nearly universal. While public sector employment and welfare programs provide a safety net, diversified economic opportunities would offer poor households a more sustainable path out of poverty.⁶

Socio-economic Indicators:

- Unemployment rate: 15%
- Youth unemployment rate: 32,1%
- Employment rate (15 years +): 36,1%
- GDP growth in 2025: 4,1%
- Inflation rate: 1,8%
- Currency: Iraqi Dinar (IQD)

- Minimum monthly wage: IQD 350,000

Average monthly and hourly wages (nominal values in IQD) for manufacturing employees: [Distribution of own-account workers in the manufacturing private sector... | Download Scientific Diagram](#)

9. Labour market

9.1 Overview

Employment: Iraq faces high unemployment rates, especially among youth and women. The public sector dominates employment, while the private sector remains underdeveloped.

Informal Sector: A significant portion of the workforce is engaged in informal employment, lacking job security and social benefits.

The public sector remains the main employer in both Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, while the private sector remains underdeveloped, "stunted and largely informal". Employees in the private sector enjoy limited benefits and protection of their rights, although working conditions for employees in the private sector are expected to improve under new legislation that came into effect on 1 December 2023.

Agriculture is an important source of employment and livelihoods in Iraq, especially in rural areas; however, water

scarcity and the degradation of arable land results in the

⁵ [IMF Executive Board Concludes 2025 Article IV Consultation with Iraq](#)

⁶ [Iraq MPO](#)

increased loss of livelihoods in this sector, especially in southern Iraq.⁷

There are two main **social assistance programmes** in Iraq, the Public Distribution System (PDS), which provides food rations to almost all households in the country, and the

Social Safety Net, a poverty-targeted conditional cash transfer which covers some 1.2 million Iraqi households. Both programmes face challenges and coordination between them (and with the social security system) is considered weak.⁸

9.2 Unemployment safeguards

The government is in the process of reforming the social security fund for private sector workers, with a Draft Social Security Law under preparation which will extend

coverage to self-employed and informal workers, and will establish new short-term benefits for registered workers, including unemployment benefits.

9.3 Recruitment platforms

- Iraq Jobs Scout: <https://iqjscout.com/>
- Bayt: <https://www.bayt.com>
- SES Iraq: <https://www.ses-iraq.com>
- Erbil Manpower: <https://www.erbilmanpower.com>
- Works Academy Jobs: <https://works-jobsiq.com/>
- Warani Manpower: <https://warani.iq/>
- Naukrigulf: <https://www.naukrigulf.com/jobs-in-baghdad>

10. Housing

Iraq's housing market has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by government investments in infrastructure and a growing economy. The rental market is relatively unregulated, with typical lease terms ranging from 6 to 12 months. Deposits are usually required, equivalent to one or two months' rent, and tenant rights are limited. Compared to regional neighbors, Iraq's housing costs are relatively affordable, with prices lower than in Turkey or Iran, but higher than in Jordan or Syria. However, the market is still volatile, with prices fluctuating depending on the location and condition of the property.

The housing market in Iraq is also influenced by the country's security situation, with prices varying greatly depending on the level of safety and stability in different areas. In general, the capital city of Baghdad and other

major urban centres tend to have higher rents and property prices than smaller towns and rural areas. Despite these challenges, the Iraqi government has implemented various initiatives to stimulate the housing market, including subsidies for low-income families and investments in new housing developments.

AVERAGE COSTS FOR RENTING APARTMENTS:

Monthly rent for 85 m² furnished accommodation in normal area: 685,960 Dinars

Utilities 1 month (heating, electricity, gas) for 2 people in 85m² flat: 239,233 Dinars

Monthly rent for a 45 m² furnished studio in normal area: 365,450 Dinars.⁹

⁷ https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2104031/international_protection_considerations_with_regard_to_people_fleeing_the_republic_of_iraq_update_i.pdf

⁸ [Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform | International Labour Organization](#)

⁹ [Cost of Living in Iraq - 2024 prices. \(expatistan.com\)](#)

Apartment Type	City Centre (USD/month)	City Centre (USD/month)	Notes
Studio / Bedsitter	\$150-300	\$150-300	Basic amenities, shared facilities
1 Bedroom	\$200-400	\$100-250	Furnished, air-conditioned, moderate quality
2 Bedroom	\$350-600	\$200-400	Spacious, modern amenities, family -friendly
3 Bedroom	\$500-1.000	\$350-700	Luxury finishes, high-end amenities, secure complexes

Source: <https://360nations.com/asia/iraq/cost-rent-housing.html#housing-market-overview>

11. Security situation

According to the 2024 Global Peace Index (GPI) published by the Institute for Economics and Peace, Iraq is ranked 147 out of 163 countries globally, indicating a very low level of peace.

Due to potential changes in the security situation, it is strongly recommended to regularly consult updated sources such as [USDOS advisories](#) and [UK FCDO travel advice](#). Additionally, it is advised to verify current information directly with other relevant Ministry of Foreign Affairs or embassy websites

12. List of official representations in Europe

<https://embassies.net/iraq-in-Europe>

13. Operational details

Reintegration assistance refers to the **range of services and support provided by ETTC** to returnees who return to their country of origin under the **EURP Programme in Iraq**. This assistance aims to support returnees’ sustainable reintegration into their communities.

ETTC operates **nationwide across both rural and urban areas of Iraq** through a decentralized operational structure. The **main office in Erbil** oversees programme coordination and quality assurance, while **the other offices in Baghdad, Duhok, Slemani, Kirkuk, and Basra** deliver direct reintegration services.

In addition, **mobile teams operate in central and southern regions** to ensure coverage of all governorates and to reach returnees in remote or hard-to-reach areas. This operational presence enables ETTC to provide timely, accessible, and effective reintegration support to returnees throughout Iraq.

Reintegration assistance includes various types of assistance under EURP, such as assistance in setting up a small business, accessing the labour market, purchase of business equipment, school enrolment for children, vocational training, search for temporary housing, purchase of basic household goods, orientation assistance towards medical services, psychological support, and cash support. The scope of reintegration assistance can vary depending on the individual's needs, circumstances, and the goals of the assistance program.

The description of the scope of reintegration assistance also includes the duration of the assistance, the eligibility criteria for receiving it, the expected outcomes, and the criteria for measuring success. Additionally, the scope may also include limitations or exclusions, such as geographic or other constraints.

Description of steps:

Phase 1 Application referral system and pre-departure assistance

- Receiving the application forms and eligibility confirmation and entering them into the database system (RIAT)
- Pre-departure contact and first counselling by phone or online (on request of partners/client) 24/7 service available;

Phase 2 Airport reception and further assistance (Execution on request / at least 14 days before arrival)
Post arrival package (PAP)

- Meet and greet service
- Providing cash assistance
- Providing a welcoming package
- Onward transport support
- Temporary accommodation
- Medical assistance

Phase 3 Meeting and counselling sessions

- Agreement about appointments

- Face-to-face meeting is preferable; if not possible, it will be done by Skype/phone

First meeting:

- Information about ETTC, programme opportunities, and schedule
- Registration and acquisition/assessment of returnee's individual requirements by a counsellor; exchange about support priorities (involving the special interest of family members, children, women)
- Provision of the agreed cash payment (if not provided in Phase 2).

Second meeting

- Update and development of a sustainable reintegration plan, including the need for referrals. Returnees are encouraged to consider their qualification profiles and socio-economic situation, to choose a realistic reintegration plan
- In most cases, the choice is a business start-up, followed by an assessment of all business matters (rental fees, market situation, planned investment) as the basis for a short business plan
- Check of employment opportunities or education/training options
- Set up approaches for next steps (time line and range of activities of returnee and ETTC team)
- After the check of practicability, the ETTC team submits a reintegration plan for approval.

Phase 4 Implementation and further steps

- After confirmation of the planned third phase we monitor the implementation status of the plan (photos and documents), discuss problems and solutions; release the in-kind payment; and sign related documents. The ETTC team, together with the returnee, will purchase the indicated items for the business/reintegration plan.
- Proof of payment of the costs made toward implementing the reintegration plan of returnees will be submitted to the relevant partner. In addition, ETTC monitors those cases by visiting and contacting them to know about their situation after the period of their return and evaluating the project activities and its impacts on the project's target group using the lessons learnt for upcoming reintegration projects.
- Monitoring report and proof of payment will be sent to the partners after the final evaluation of the realisation of the reintegration plan, including completed documentation.

14. Cultural tips



Avoid handshakes with the opposite gender unless they initiate it.



Iraqis value respectful and formal communication, especially in initial interactions.



Show respect for hierarchy: in groups or family discussions, acknowledge elder members first.



Respect religious customs: if a session is held during prayer times, allow breaks.



In Iraq, a raised voice is not always interpreted to be a sign of anger. It is often seen as a signifier of sincerity in the expression of genuine feeling.



FRONT_{EX}



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