



Context

The violence and destruction caused by the group known as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as well as the military operations against them, have caused the **displacement of nearly 6 million people since 2014**.¹ As of March 2022, **1.18 million** people remain displaced throughout 18 governorates of Iraq, of which **180,000** are living in 26 formal camps established for internally displaced persons (IDPs).² Additionally, **4.96 million people have returned to their areas of origin**.³ The Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA) IX (2021) estimated that **180,000 IDP and returnee households (HHs) in Iraq were missing at least one key identity or civil document**.^{4,5} Lack of civil documentation is a multidimensional protection issue which has the potential to impact one's ability to access basic services, including education and healthcare. It can also lead to **restricted freedom of movement** and an **increased risk of arrest and detention**, thus constituting a major barrier to IDPs' safe and sustainable return to their areas of origin.⁶ IDPs and returnees lacking a valid identity document for an extended period of time are also exposed to the risk of losing their legal identity. The MCNA was conducted for the ninth time in Iraq, for which **11,645 returnee, out-of-camp IDPs and in-camp IDPs were interviewed between June 9 and August 16, 2021**. This factsheet summarises key findings from the MCNA IX relating to missing documentation in Iraq, and focuses on priority locations and the primary reasons why in-camp IDPs, out-of-camp IDPs and returnees were missing documentation.

KEY FINDINGS

According to data from the [MCNA IX](#), **18%** of HHs reported missing at least one key household or individual document. **In absolute numbers, returnees were reportedly the largest population group affected by a lack of identity and civil documentation**. More returnee HHs were missing at least one document (circa 130,000 HHs) than both in-camp and out-of-camp IDPs combined (circa 50,000 HHs).⁷

% of HHs nationwide who reported missing at least one key household or individual document, by population group : 🏠 **28%** in-camp IDP 🚶 **25%** out-of-camp IDP 🚶 **16%** Returnee

However, proportionally, IDPs both in and out-of-camp were reportedly more impacted than returnees. In terms of severity, the proportion of HHs who reported missing three key documents or more – and are therefore **considered as having acute needs** by the 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview ([HNO](#)) – is almost identical for all three population groups, at around **5%**. HHs across all three population groups most commonly reported missing a nationality certificate.

% of HHs with at least one child reportedly missing a key individual document :

In-camp IDP: **24%**

Out-of-camp IDP: **19%**

Returnee: **14%**

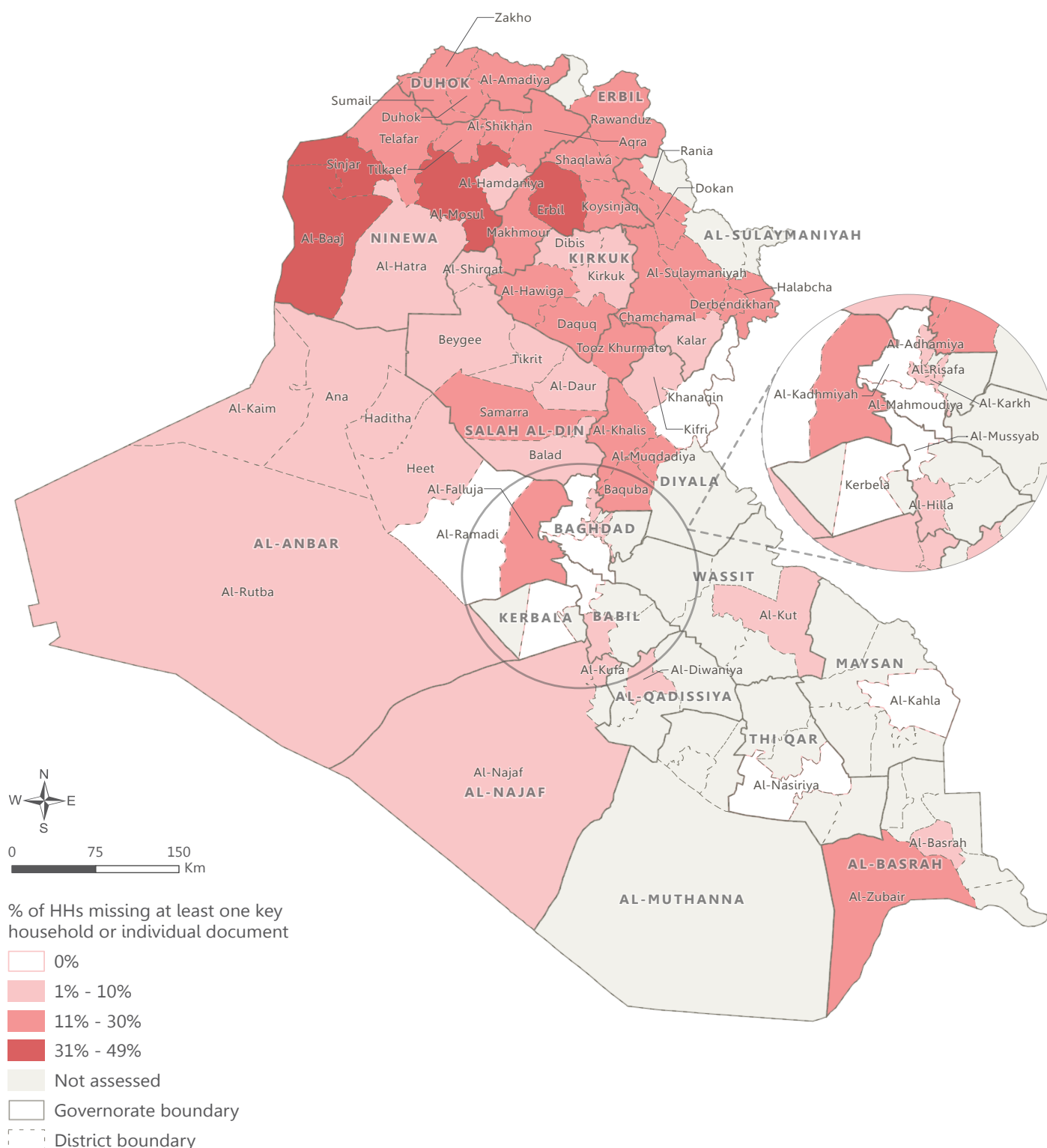
Nationwide, **15%** of HHs reported at least one child missing a key individual document. Across all population groups, the districts with the highest proportion of HHs reporting at least one child missing a key individual document were Sinjar (**39%**), Al-Baaj (**37%**) and Al-Mosul (**35%**).

Based on MCNA IX data, **approximately 150,000 HHs reported having at least one child missing at least one key identity or civil document**.⁸ It is reportedly **common for women and children to be included in the documentation issued under the name of the male head of household**, which could indicate increased difficulties for women and children to access their documentation if the male head of household is missing.⁹ Furthermore, widowed female heads of household reportedly **face difficulties to obtain a birth certificate or pass on their Iraqi citizenship to their child**, as they must submit their late husband's Death Certificate which is itself very difficult to obtain.¹⁰ The governorates where the proportion of female-headed HHs missing at least one civil document was higher than for male-headed households were Erbil (**46%**), Diyala (**26%**) and Al-Basrah (**11%**).

^{1,2,3}IOM-DTM, [Displacement Overview](#) (December 2021). ⁴The Protection Cluster considers the following identity and civil identity documents as essential: Civil Status ID Card, Iraqi National Certificate, Unified ID Card, Birth Certificate and PDS Card. ⁵These figures are projections of aggregated, weighted and representative MCNA sample proportions onto the total population(s) in assessed districts. ⁶Protection Cluster, [Right to Identity and Civil Documentation Analysis](#) (October 2021). ^{7,8}These figures are projections of aggregated, weighted and representative MCNA sample proportions onto the total population(s) in assessed districts. ⁹Norwegian Refugee Council, [Broken Home Report](#) (May 2020). ¹⁰Protection Cluster, [Right to Identity and Civil Documentation Analysis](#) (October 2021).

According to the [MCNA IX](#) 2021 findings, **Ninewa districts hosted the largest proportions of HHs missing at least one key document:** Sinjar (52% of Returnee HHs and 39% of IDPs HHs out-of-camp) and Al-Mosul (47% of IDP HHs out-of-camp, 36% of Returnee HHs, and 20% of IDP HHs in-camp). **Similarly, the largest proportion of IDP HHs in-camp missing at least one key document resided in Al-Hamdaniya, Ninewa (37%),** followed by Al-Falluja and Erbil districts (31% respectively). Ninewa governorate has been affected by ongoing political disputes, including on contested territories, which has contributed to the governorate's issue of missing documentation.¹¹

Map: Proportion of HHs who reported missing at least one key household or individual document, by district.

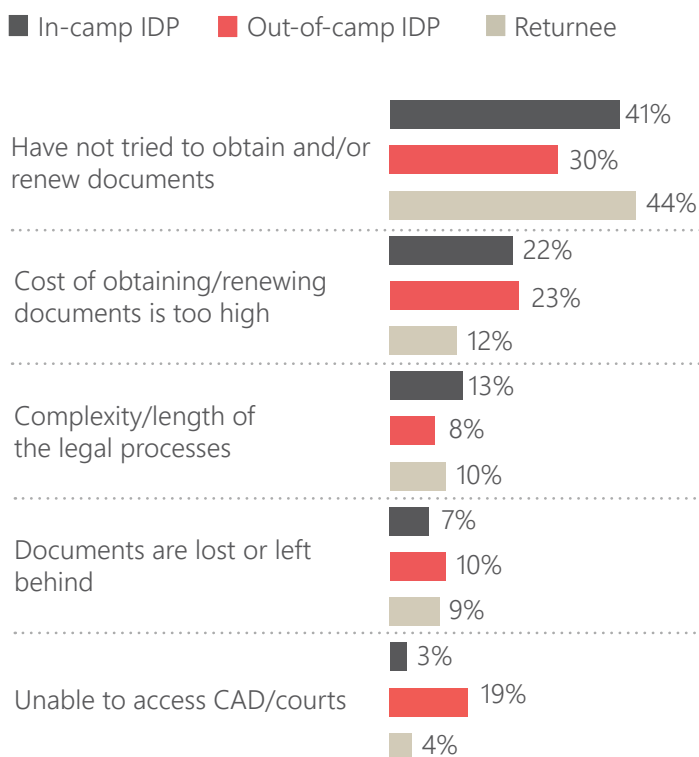


¹¹Ibid.

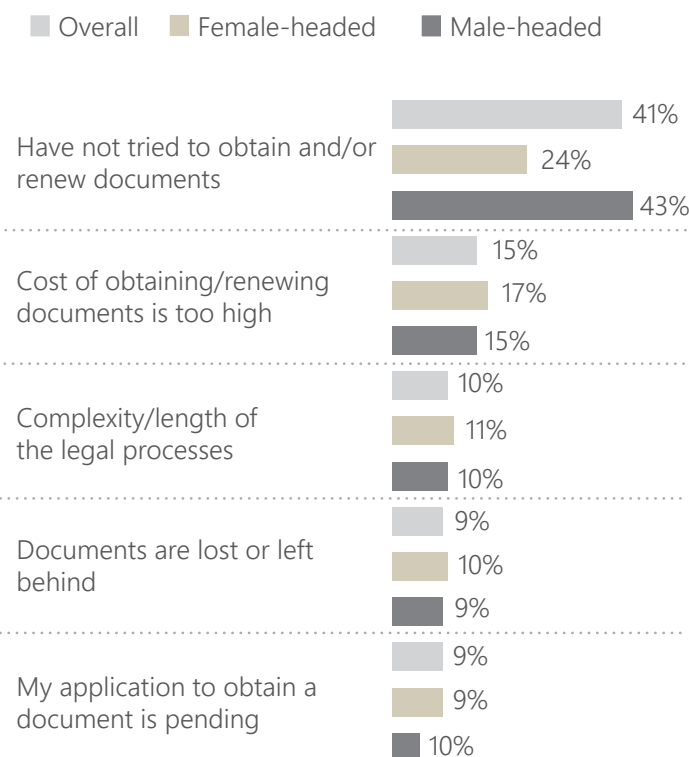
Nationwide, the most commonly reported reasons for missing civil documentation were the **absence of an attempt to obtain/renew (41%)**, **high costs (15%)**, and the **complexity/length of the procedure (10%)***. Out-of-camp IDP households most commonly reported the inability to access civil affairs directorates (CAD)/courts as a key reason (**19%**). There are no substantial differences between population groups when it comes to reported reasons to accessing documentation. However, a **higher proportion of out-of-camp IDPs reported the inability to access CAD/courts**, as **19%** reported this as a reason, in comparison to **3%** of in-camp IDPs and **4%** of returnees.

Substantial proportions of both male-headed (**43%**) and female-headed households (**24%**) reported not having tried to obtain or renew missing documents; considering the importance of civil documentation for households' access to services and legal protection, a greater understanding of why many households reportedly did not try to renew and/or obtain documents is needed. Compared to male-headed households, **female-headed households were less likely to report that they did not make an attempt to obtain or renew documents** but rather mentioned specific reasons such as costs and complexity of the process.

% of HHs who reported reasons for missing civil documentation, by population group :*



% of HHs who reported reasons for missing civil documentation, by gender of head of household :*



Concluding Notes

The MCNA IX findings indicate that a substantial proportion of (formerly) displaced households continue to be affected by the lack of key civil documentation, which is understood to limit their access to basic services and legal protection. **IDP households were proportionally more affected by missing documentation**, although with geographic variance. Future assessments targeting the issue of missing documentation may provide an enhanced understanding of its impact on the daily lives of these households, the gendered aspect of missing (and seeking access to) documentation, as well as perceived procedural barriers to (re-) access documentation. Furthermore, given the high proportion of children reportedly missing documentation, exploring the **impacts of missing documentation on children's access to education and other basic services** could help to better understand the long-term consequences on future generations.

*This was a multiple choice question; findings may exceed 100%.