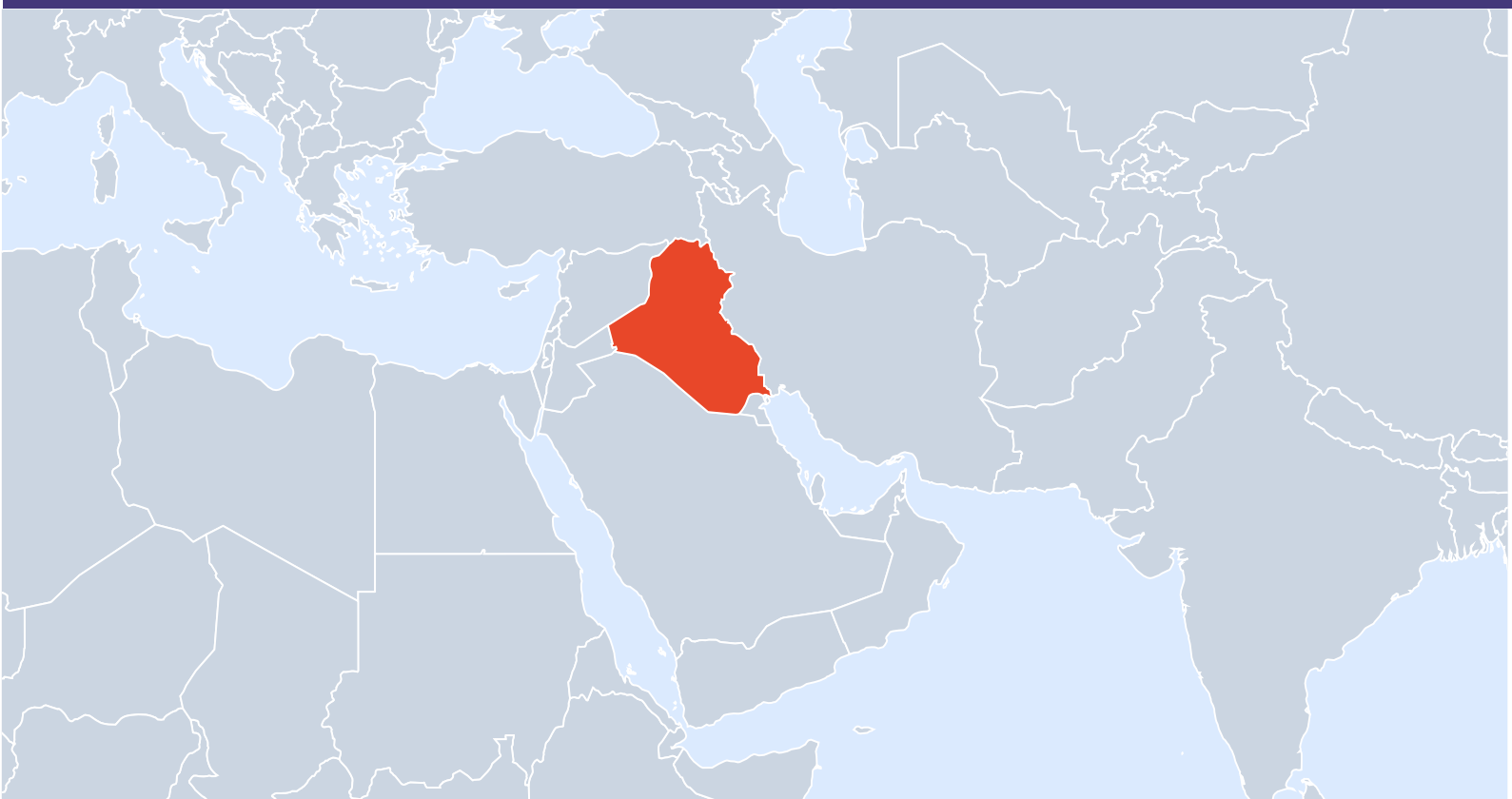


The KidsRights Index 2026

COUNTRY RECOMMENDATIONS

IRAQ



IRAQ

OVERALL

RANK: 166

SCORE: 0,480

LIFE

RANK: 113

SCORE: 0,769

HEALTH

RANK: 51

SCORE: 0,869

EDUCATION

RANK: 130

SCORE: 0,632

PROTECTION

RANK: 100

SCORE: 0,847

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

RANK: 186

SCORE: 0,071

INTRODUCTION TO THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX

The KidsRights Index is the only annual global ranking on how countries worldwide are adhering to children's rights. Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Index synthesizes and ranks the children's rights performance records of state parties to the CRC in relation to the most crucial aspects of children's lives for which global and comparable data is available. Overall, the KidsRights Index presents an accessible, general, and comparative overview of state performance on selected children's rights. It also creates a basis for making concrete and evidence-based recommendations on how governments might improve on various children's rights matters. The five domains that jointly make up the Index are:

- 1. Right to Life**
- 2. Right to Health**
- 3. Right to Education**
- 4. Right to Protection**
- 5. Enabling Environment for Children's Rights**

DATA SOURCES OF THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX

The KidsRights Index rankings are the outcome of an integrated analysis of existing, high-quality data published by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Index also incorporates the 'Concluding Observations' published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child at the end of the periodic state reporting procedure for all states that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹

DOMAIN 5: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Domain 5, the 'Enabling Environment for Children's Rights', is an important and unique domain of the KidsRights Index. This Domain charts how states are faring in creating the conditions that need to be in place for realizing children's rights and/or for making children's rights policies and putting them into effect. It reveals the extent to which countries have operationalized the general principles of the CRC (non-discrimination; best interests of the child; respect for the views of the child/participation) and the extent to which there is a basic 'infrastructure' for making and implementing child rights policy (in the form of enabling national legislation; mobilization of the 'best available' budget; collection and analysis of disaggregated data; and state-civil society cooperation for child rights). The Domain 5 scores for the respective countries are derived from the latest Concluding Observations adopted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

¹ These data are drawn from <https://data.unicef.org/>, www.hdr.undp.org/data, and the 'Concluding Observations' published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child at the end of the periodic state reporting procedure for all states that are legally bound by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Domain 5 - 'Child Rights Environment' - is based on the Concluding Observations adopted by the CRC Committee. The Committee's assessment of the country performance on the earlier mentioned 7 indicators that make up the Domain 5 is used to generate scores on a scale between 1 and 3. The actual score assigned to each indicator is exclusively based on the language used by the Committee in the Concluding Observation. The resulting final scores are standardized.

KidsRights Index scoring system for the Domain 5 indicators:

Score 1 'bad'	= only negative remarks
Score 2 'average'	= negative and positive remarks
Score 3 'good'	= only positive remarks
NA	= not addressed

DOMAIN 5: IRAQ

Country (Year in which CO was issued)	Non- discrimination	Best interests of the child	Respect for the views of the child	Enabling legislation	Best available budget / Resources	Collection and analysis of disaggregated data	State-civil society cooperation for child rights
IRAQ 2015	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
IRAQ 2025	1	1	2	1	1	1	1

COUNTRY RECOMMENDATIONS - IRAQ

1. Take effective measures to prohibit all forms of discrimination against girls and eliminate gender-based violence. Girls continue to face multiple forms of discrimination in access to basic services and education, increasing their exposure to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.² It is concerning that the Personal Status Law continues to permit the marriage of girls from the age of 15, with judicial authorization.³ **(Non-Discrimination & Enabling legislation)**
2. Ensure that all professionals working with and for children, including judges, lawyers, law enforcement officials, social workers, teachers, educators, health workers, labour inspectors, and criminal investigators, receive mandatory and continuous training on children's rights and child protection.⁴ Particular attention should be given to strengthening the capacity of labour inspectors and criminal investigators to prevent child labour and improve mechanisms to combat the exploitation of children.⁵ **(Best Interests of the child)**
3. Institutionalize the Iraqi Children's Parliament and ensure its accessibility to children across all regions of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, to facilitate children's meaningful participation in national legislative processes, particularly those affecting their rights.⁶ **(Respect for the Views of the Child)**
4. Amend the Iraqi Nationality Act No. 26 of 2006 to ensure that children born to unmarried parents and children born as a result of conflict-related sexual violence are able to obtain birth certificates and other identity documents.⁷ This issue requires urgent attention, as it is reported that more than 45,000 children in Iraq lack official identification documents, depriving them of access to basic services such as healthcare and education.⁸ **(Enabling legislation & Non-Discrimination)**
5. Amend all the provisions of the Penal Code which recognize "honourable motives" as a mitigating factor for reducing criminal penalties and prohibit the usage of "honour" as a defence for any crime.⁹ **(Enabling legislation)**

² Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq', *UN Doc CRC/C/IRQ/CO/5-6*, 18 July 2025, para. 18(b).

³ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment sets back women's rights', 10 March 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/10/iraq-personal-status-law-amendment-sets-back-womens-rights>

⁴ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq', *UN Doc CRC/C/IRQ/CO/5-6*, 18 July 2025, para. 18(b).

⁵ Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, 'Report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the Republic of Iraq', 2025, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRC%2FNGO%2FIRQ%2F62947&Lang=en, p. 13.

⁶ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq', *UN Doc CRC/C/IRQ/CO/5-6*, 18 July 2025, para. 18(b).

⁷ Ibid., para 24(a).

⁸ Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, 'Report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the Republic of Iraq', April 2025, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRC%2FNGO%2FIRQ%2F62947&Lang=en, p.5.

⁹ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq', *UN Doc CRC/C/IRQ/CO/5-6*, 18 July 2025, para. 27(b).

6. Increase budget allocations for social protection systems, education, and health, and establish a comprehensive budget-tracking system for resources allocated to children.¹⁰ While budget allocations for education increased from 5.7 per cent in 2015–2016¹¹ to 11.5 per cent in 2021, the most recent available data,¹² average class sizes remain approximately 40 students in kindergartens and 64 students in primary schools,¹³ indicating a shortage of school infrastructure and continued pressure on educational services.¹⁴ (Best available budget)
7. Improve the collection and sharing of statistical data and indicators relating to children's rights across all relevant ministries, ensuring coverage of all areas of the Convention, including the sale and trafficking of children, children deprived of liberty, and children deprived of a family environment.¹⁵ Undertake necessary measures to prevent the gaps in qualitative and quantitative data during data collection processes, particularly regarding children sentenced to death or executed.¹⁶ (Collection and Analysis of Disaggregated Data)
8. Adopt effective legislation to protect human rights defenders, including journalists and lawyers working on children's rights, from threats, harassment, and attacks.¹⁷ The absence of specific legal protections for human rights and women's rights defenders continues to leave them vulnerable to reprisals and attacks. (State-civil society cooperation for child rights)

¹⁰Ibid., para 11(b).

¹¹ UNICEF, The cost and benefits of education in Iraq: An analysis of the education sector and strategies to maximize the benefits of education, August 2017, <https://www.unicef.org/iraq/media/251/file>, p.52.

¹² UNICEF (Sector Financing Review), 'Education in Iraq', 30 January 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/iraq/media/3286/file/%20Iraq%20SSFR%20Education.pdf> p.9.

¹³ Ministry of Education., Iraq & World Bank., 'National Education Strategy for Iraq 2022–2031', 18 September 2024, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099091824091030738/pdf/P171165-cfac2b5e-6448-4093-a5a5-2591a8024209.pdf>, p.9.

¹⁴ UNESCO, 'Global Education Monitoring Report 2026: Access and equity-Countdown to 2030', 2026, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000397618> p.135.

¹⁵ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq', *UN Doc CRC/C/IRQ/CO/5-6*, 18 July 2025, para 12(c).

¹⁶ Advocates for Human Rights., the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty., 'Report on the Death Penalty and Children in Conflict with the Law since 1996 for the 99th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child', 15 April 2025, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRC%2FNGO%2FIRQ%2F62946&Lang=en p.5.

¹⁷ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq', *UN Doc CRC/C/IRQ/CO/5-6*, 18 July 2025, para. 16(a).