



Home Office

## Iraq

# Bulletin: Security situation update 2013

Country of Origin Information Service

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## Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information (COI) bulletin has been produced by COI service, Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum and human rights determination process. The bulletin contains information up to 1 July 2013 and was released on 12 August 2013.
- ii The bulletin provides background information on the security situation in Iraq and a brief introduction to historical and political context to the ongoing violence. For more background information on the socio-economic and human rights situation in general, see the Iraq [COI report of August 2011](#) and the [Iraq country page on Horizon](#).
- iii) The bulletin is a compilation of extracts produced by a range of external information sources, most of which are in the public domain. All information is attributed throughout the text to the original source material. Where the source documents identified are available in electronic form the relevant weblink has been included together with the date that the link was accessed. The term 'sic' has been used to denote incorrect spellings or typographical errors in quoted text. Officials should read the sources quoted in full. If further information is required, please submit [an information request to COI service](#).
- iv) The bulletin is largely based upon source documents issued during the previous two years. However, some older source documents may have been included because they contain relevant information not available in more recent documents. All sources contain information considered relevant at the time this bulletin was issued.
- v) In producing this bulletin, COI Service has sought to provide an accurate, up-to-date and balanced compilation of extracts of available source material on the themes outlined above. Any comments regarding this bulletin or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to COI Service at:

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## Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

- xi The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office's COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI reports and other COI material. Information about the IAGCI's work can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

- xii In the course of its work the IAGCI reviews the content of selected Home Office COI documents and makes recommendations specific to those documents and of a more general nature. A list of the reports and other documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI or the Advisory Panel on Country Information (the independent organisation which monitored the UK Border Agency's (now the Home Office's) COI material from September 2003 to October 2008) is available at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>
- xiii Please note: it is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material or procedures. Some of the material examined by the Group relates to countries designated or proposed for designation to the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Group's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself. The IAGCI can be contacted at:

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# Background to the security situation

## 1. Post-invasion Iraq (2003 – 2011)

This section provides a brief summary of events between 2003 and 2011.

### 1.01 The Amnesty International report 'Iraq: A Decade of Abuses', dated March 2013 explained:

'Following the invasion of Iraq by US-led Coalition Forces, a Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was established as the interim authority in Iraq. On 1 May 2003 US diplomat Paul Bremer was appointed to head the CPA. On 23 May 2003 CPA Order No. 2 disbanded the Iraqi army. UK military forces then assumed control of southern Iraq while US and other foreign forces, took control of the rest of the country, except the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region comprising three provinces in the north-east of Iraq. CPA Order No. 17, issued in June 2004, gave all US and other foreign forces and all foreign contractors operating in Iraq under the auspices of the MNF immunity from prosecution in Iraq for any offences they might commit there.

'On 8 June 2004, UN Security Council Resolution 1546 declared that the occupation of Iraq would end on 30 June 2004, when the CPA would be replaced by an interim Iraqi government (led by Ayad 'Allawi) but that the [Multi-National Force] MNF would remain in Iraq until the end of 2005. Subsequently, the UN Security Council agreed annually to extend the presence of the Coalition Forces until the end of 2008.

'On 30 January 2005 the first post-invasion parliamentary elections were held in Iraq. A Shi'a coalition, the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), won a majority and assumed power. Ibrahim al-Ja'fari, leader of al-Da'wa Party, was appointed prime minister in March 2005 but replaced by Nuri al-Maliki on 22 May, 2006. A new Constitution was adopted following a referendum held on 15 October 2005. Amid rising insurgency, violence and attacks by armed groups, the US military authorities established a series of Awakening Councils in 2006. Also known as Sons of Iraq, these were Sunni militia groups that Coalition Forces armed, trained and financed to fight against al-Qa'ida in Iraq.

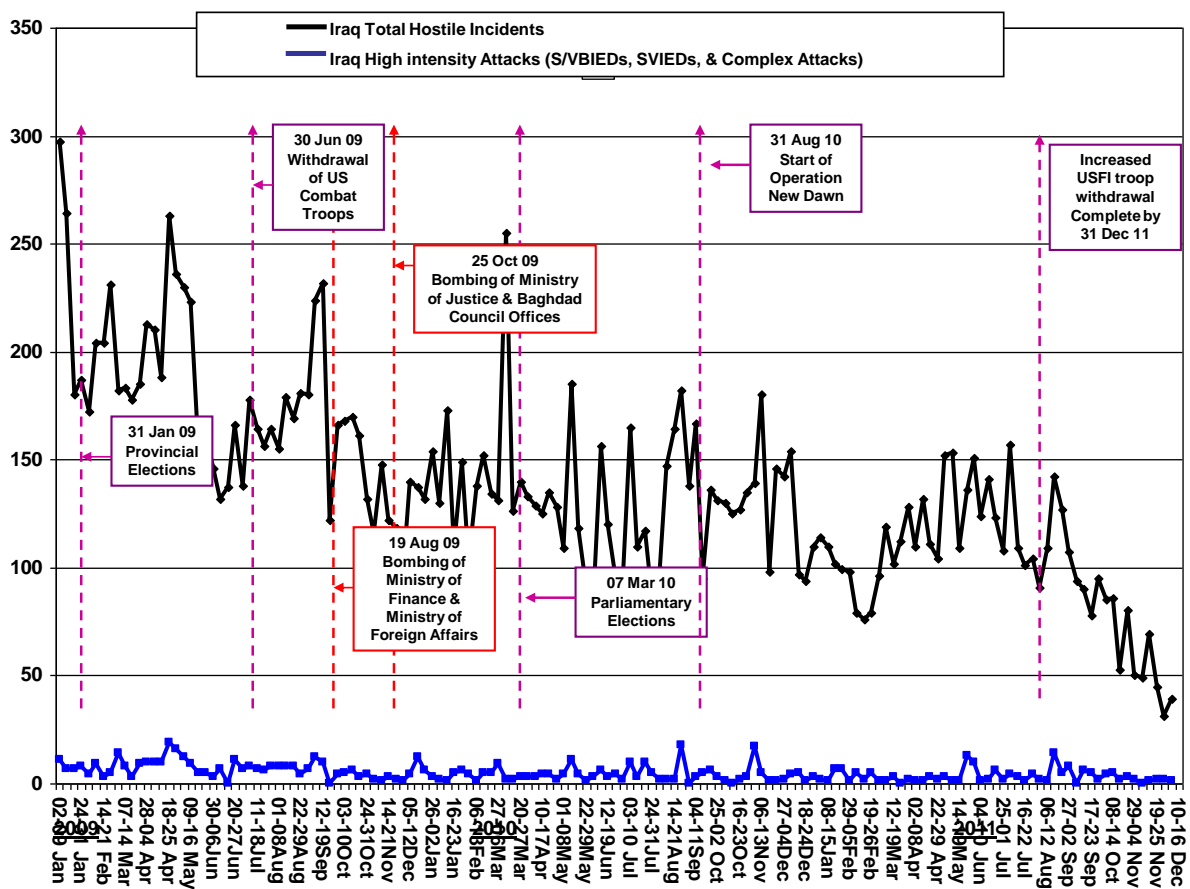
'Violence intensified further and took on an increasingly sectarian character following a bomb attack in February 2006 which largely destroyed the al-'Askari shrine in Samarra, a Shi'a holy place. Thousands of Sunni and Shi'a Muslims were killed in the ensuing violence, most of them civilians, and thousands of other civilians were forced to flee from their homes by sectarian attacks that continued throughout 2006 and 2007. Hundreds of thousands of people were internally displaced within Iraq while hundreds of thousands of others fled as refugees to Syria, Jordan and other countries.

'In November 2008 Iraq's parliament approved the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), a security pact between the governments of Iraq and the USA. This agreement took effect at midnight on 31 December 2008, precisely as the UN mandate providing for the presence of US troops in Iraq expired. ... Under the SOFA, the two governments agreed that US combat forces would pull back from urban areas by the end of June 2009 and withdraw totally from Iraq by the end of 2011, that US forces would either release or transfer to Iraqi custody all the detainees that they held, and that they would transfer the

prisons they controlled - including Camp Cropper, near Baghdad International Airport; Camp Taji, north of Baghdad; and Camp Bucca, near Basra – to the Iraqi authorities.

‘...New national elections were held on 7 March 2010 against a backdrop of continuing attacks by armed groups and other violence. No clear winner emerged and for eight months following the election there was political impasse as parties negotiated to establish a new government. Nuri al-Maliki remained in office through this period and at its end continued in his role of prime minister as the head of a new administration. He also assumed responsibility for the Defence ministerial portfolio in the Iraqi cabinet. All US combat troops withdrew from Iraq before the end of 2011; US non-combat troops remain, however, to train Iraqi security forces.’ [26a](p.75-76)

1.02 The following chart, provided in letter from the British Embassy Baghdad dated 7 April 2012, illustrates security incidents in Iraq over the period 2003 – 2011:



[8a]

For further background information see [Annex B: Historical snapshot: including ethnic and religious divisions before and during the US invasion \(post-2003\)](#)

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## 2. Political crisis (2011 – 2013)

This section gives a brief summary of the recent political crisis which provides useful background when assessing the wider Security situation in the country.

- 2.01 According to the CSIS paper, 'Iraq: Patterns of Violence in Iraq', dated 24 October 2012, '[t]he most important single factor that now divides Iraq, and encourages internal violence, is now the level of division at the top of its leadership, and the ... lack of effective governance and progress towards development and removing underlying causes of violence.' **[6a](p.49)** In an interview with the Council on Foreign Affairs, dated 10 January 2013, Meghan L.O'Sullivan, a former official in the Bush administration, similarly remarked that few of the key issues that divided Iraqis had been addressed, with 'little reconciliation between the country's groups and no development of a shared vision for the country...'. Commenting specifically on the political situation in the country at the end of 2012, Ms O'Sullivan explained further:

'...[O]n the political side, the trajectory is clearly downward. The year 2012 was marked by continuous political crises, beginning almost immediately after the American withdrawal was complete. Today, the logjam between Baghdad and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) seems more intractable than ever, with the forces of each side nearly coming to blows just two months ago. Sunni political leaders are claiming their community is being "ghettoized" and sharply excluded from the political process; thousands of Sunnis have taken to the streets motivated by these feelings. There is even a political crisis within the Shiites, with Muqtada al-Sadr accusing the prime minister of turning Iraq into "a farce" and seeking to rally his own supporters in street protests. For the second time in less than a year, Iraqi watchers are doing the math and trying to determine whether a feasible combination of opposition parties have the parliamentary votes to bring a vote of no confidence against the prime minister.' **[18d]**

- 2.02 Amnesty International in the report, 'Iraq: A decade of abuses', dated March 2013 observed that 'a new political crisis arose in December 2011', following accusations that [Sunni] Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi had been responsible for political killings and organising death squads. **[26a](p.76)** On 20 December 2012 Mr Maliki also moved against '... another perceived Sunni adversary by arresting ten bodyguards of Finance Minister Rafi al-Issawi...', prompting demonstrations in Sunni cities including Anbar, Salahuddin and Nineveh, as well as Sunni parts of Baghdad. (Kenneth Katzman, Congressional Research Service, 'Iraq: Politics, Governance and Human Rights, 3 June 2013) **[4a](p.13)** Referring to the largely Sunni demonstrations which followed in late 2012, the International Crisis Group article, 'Iraq after Hawija: Recovery or Relapse?', dated 26 April 2013, described the protest movement as 'symptomatic of a widespread sense of disenfranchisement [among Sunnis]...'. The source further observed:

'Demonstrators feel alienated from Baghdad (perceived as the seat of a newfound Shiite power); from their purported representatives (blamed for focusing on their own parochial interests at the expense of their constituents'); and from security forces (accused of committing human rights abuses on a sectarian basis). The war in Syria also plays a significant part: as the conflict intensifies, Sunni Arabs experience mounting solidarity with their brethren next door and share feelings of hostility toward a purported Shiite axis linking Hizbollah, Damascus, Baghdad and Tehran. Sunni Arab tribal chiefs, religious leaders and politicians – including some previously co-opted by Prime Minister



Nouri al-Maliki – soon threw their lot in with grassroots protesters, seeking to reap political benefit; remnants of both the former regime and the insurgency that spread after its demise followed suit.’ **[13a]**

See also: [Security by region, ‘Northern and Central Iraq \(excluding Baghdad\)’](#) and the subsection [‘Sunni protests in northern Iraq and escalating violence in 2013’](#)

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### 3. The impact of the Syrian conflict

- 3.01 An article by Michael Goldfarb, ‘The roots of renewed sectarian violence in Iraq and Pakistan’, published in the Global Post, dated 20 February 2013, noted that some experts considered the conflict in Syria to be, at least in part, linked to the upsurge in violence in Iraq. As noted:

“The Syrian conflict,” is the cause [of the upsurge in violence in Iraq], says Fawaz Gerges, director of the Middle East Centre at the London School of Economics. “The Syrian conflict has exacerbated tensions across the region,” Gerges adds. “You cannot isolate Iraq from its neighbors. There are linkages and connections.” Syrian President Hafez Assad’s regime, he says, “portrays itself as protecting minorities: Shia, Alawites, Christians.” In Iraq the reverse is true. The Sunni are the minority but the government is dominated by the majority Shia. Salafists — Sunni extremists — fighting in Syria see the battle as being the same in both countries. “The Shia represent a fifth column against the true faith and so are more dangerous than the kuffar, or unbelievers,” explains Gerges. “Killing Shia is a religious duty.” **[41a]**

- 3.02 The Congressional Research Service (CRS) paper ‘Iraq: Politics, Governance and Human Rights’, dated 3 June 2013 similarly noted that some observers saw armed unrest in Syria by Sunni militants against President Assad as aggravating the political unrest in Iraq, with Sunnis becoming ‘emboldened’ to ‘...escalate armed activities against the Maliki government.’ **[4a]** The Guardian Weekly (based on a report for the Washington Post), in an article dated 21 May 2013, also acknowledged that the increase in sectarian violence in Iraq at the time may be tied to unrest in neighbouring Syria, ‘... where a mostly Sunni rebel movement’ aimed to topple the ‘Shia-dominated regime’ of President Assad. **[38a]** The New York Times, in an article dated 27 October 2012 further observed that both Sunnis and Shias from Iraq were being drawn into the conflict in Syria, with Iran, another Shiite majority state, apparently mobilising Iraq’s Shiite militants to fight in Syria. As the article explained:

‘Many Iraqi Shiites increasingly see the Syrian war — which pits the Sunni majority against a government dominated by Alawites, an offshoot of Shiite Islam — as a battle for the future of Shiite faith. This sectarian cast has been heightened by the influx of Sunni extremists aligned with Al Qaeda, who have joined the fight against the Syrian government much as they did in the last decade against the Shiite-led Iraqi government. ... “Syria is now open to all fighters, and Al Qaeda is playing on the chords of sectarianism, which will spur reactions from the Shiites, as happened in Iraq,” said Ihsan al-Shammari, an analyst and professor at Baghdad University’s College of

Political Science. “My biggest fear from the Syrian crisis is the repercussions for Iraq, where the ashes of sectarian violence still exist.”[15c]

- 3.03 A report from the BBC dated 10 April 2013 highlighted that Al Qaeda in Iraq had confirmed that the Syrian Islamist group, the al-Nusra Front, or Jabhat al-Nusra, was part of its network. [17a]
- 3.04 The Institute for the Study of War, in an article entitled ‘Iraq’s sectarian crisis reignites as Shi’a militias execute civilians and remobilize’, dated 31 May 2013, remarked that the re-mobilisation of the Shiite militias in Iraq, notably Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq (AAH), coincided with the formal announcement that the Lebanese Hezbollah, a Shi’ite organisation, was active in the Syrian civil war. According to the source, Hezbollah were a ‘top priority’ target for Jabhat al-Nusra, the Al-Qaeda in Iraq affiliated group, which had also clashed with Abu Al-Fadhel Al-Abbas Brigade in Syria, a Shi’a militant group backed by AAH. In light of these wider regional factors, the source indicated that AAH was able to justify its mobilisation in both Syria and Iraq, to protect Shiite areas and shrines from attack by Al Qaeda and its affiliates. [19b](p.8-9)

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# Security situation

## 4. Trends in violence

To understand the current security situation it is recommended to also refer to section 9, 'Protection provided by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and implementation of the rule of law', and in particular the subsection, 'Security and the ISF's counter-insurgency capabilities'. For a brief historical background to the violence in Iraq post-2003, refer to section 1 'Post-Invasion Iraq (2003 – 2011)' above.

### Overview

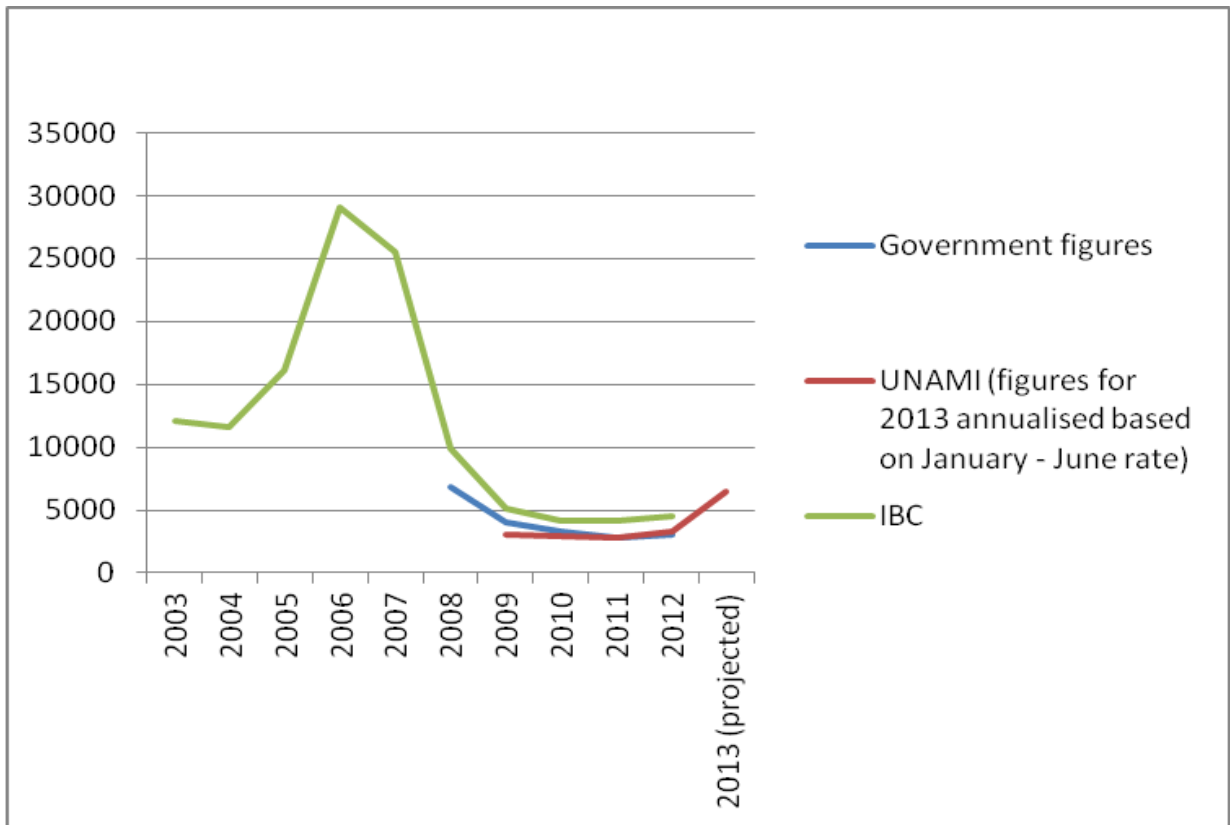
4.01 The following graph, based on data obtained from the Iraq Body Count database (accessed 21 June 2013) and statistical data reported by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (including Iraqi government figures)<sup>1</sup>, illustrates civilian fatality figures from 2003 to June 2013. Users should however be aware that UNAMI figures for 2013 are annualised, based on fatalities reported over the period January to June.

COI Service would also highlight that the 2008 UNAMI Human Rights Report, 1 July – 31 December 2008, includes only annual figures from the Iraqi Ministry of Health, no figures are provided based on UNAMI reporting. **[2e](p.3)** The earlier UNAMI Human Rights Report, 1 July – 31 December 2007 acknowledged that 'UNAMI has no independently verifiable statistical data on violent deaths' **[2f](p.4)** and included no annual fatality figures from the Iraqi government. It is also noted that UNAMI recommended that the Government of Iraq '[i]ssue on a regular basis mortality data compiled by the Ministry of Health ... together with details of the methodology used to calculate the figures.' **[2f](p.5)** Given such reporting limitations users are recommended to refer to IBC data wherever possible to understand long term trends. At the time of writing, complete IBC data covering 2013 was available up until March 2013. Further data will become available in due course via the following link: <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>

In order to consider data reporting discrepancies, users should refer to the relevant data-sets (see [annexes C](#) and [D](#)) and should also refer directly to the source to understand applied methodologies which may differ between sources (refer to [annex J](#) to access sources).

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<sup>1</sup> COI Service has relied on statistical data included in the UNAMI Human Rights Reports (covering 2008 – 2012), accessible via the following link: together with data reported by UNAMI on the webpage 'Civilian casualties'. Government figures cited in the report are based on those included in the UNAMI Human Rights Reports listed.



4.02 The UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Iraq, 31 May 2012, (UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012) noted that violence in Iraq had fallen significantly since the worst of the sectarian conflict between 2006 and 2007. **[5a](p.44)** A paper from Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A Friedman and Jacob N. Shapiro, 'Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?', published mid-2012, stated that in the period 2004 to mid-2007 Iraq was an 'extremely violent' place with civilian casualties by August 2006 averaging more than 1,500 a month. **[7a](p.7)** The Iraq Body Count (IBC) paper, 'Civilian deaths from violence 2003 – 2011', dated 2 January 2012, observed that 'Iraq's violence peaked in late 2006, but was sustained at high levels until the second half of 2008 – nearly 90% of the deaths occurred by 2009'. **[3c]** Another IBC paper commented that the 'most intense' period of civilian fatalities occurred at the very beginning of the war in 2003, when more than 6,700 people were killed in 3 weeks (from 20 March to 9 April: a rate of 320 per day for 21 days); whilst the 'most sustained period for high-level violence' occurred between March 2006 to March 2008, when some 52,000 individuals died. (IBC, 'The War in Iraq: 10 years and counting', 19 March 2013) **[3d]**

4.03 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, based on information from various interlocutors, dated 7 April 2012, attributed the drop in violence across Iraq since mid-2007 (to the time of writing, i.e. April 2012) to the '...increase in multinational troop levels, allied with increased capability in Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) [which] succeeded in separating Sunni extremists from their support base and marginalising their influence. Once these factors began to take effect the level of attacks began to reduce significantly year on year; though the trend of comparatively busier summers and quieter winters is still evident.' According to the letter: '...by the time US Forces withdrew in Dec[ember]

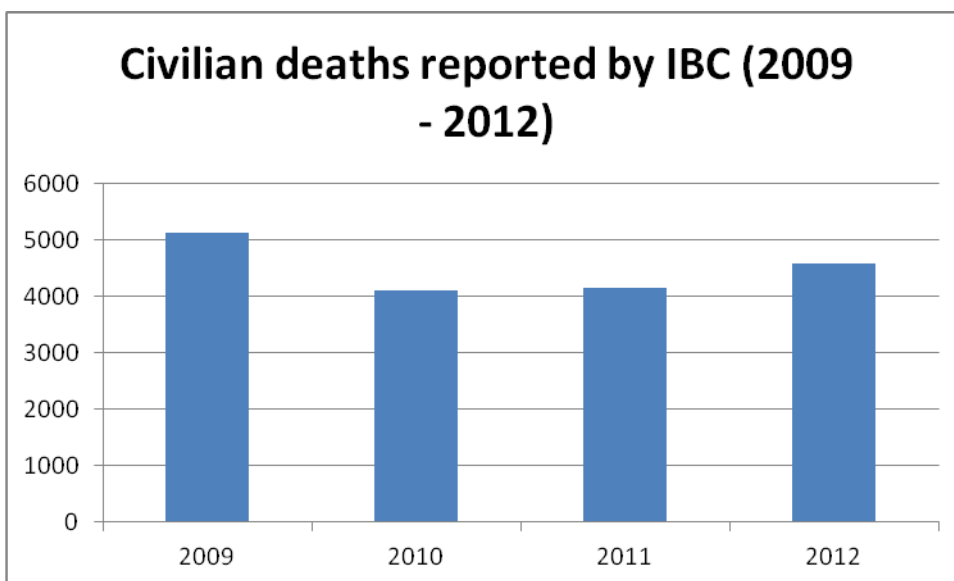
2011 the average number of weekly incidents had fallen to below 50, in contrast with 300 seen in early 2009.' [8a]

- 4.04 However, insecurity in Iraq has prevailed in recent years. The IBC paper, 'The War in Iraq: 10 years and counting', dated 19 March 2013 characterised the conflict in Iraq as '... entrenched and pervasive, with a clear beginning but no foreseeable end, and very much a part of the present in Iraq.' [3d] Whilst according to the UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012, 'bombings, shootings and assassination by armed groups continued on a daily basis to impact on the civilian population, with violence occurring 'mostly in central Iraq'. Baghdad, Ninewa and in particular Mosul, were identified as the most violent places, followed by '...Kirkuk, Al-Anbar, Babel, Diyala and Salah Al-Din' [5a](p.44-45) More recently, sources repeatedly noted an uptake in sectarian related violence over 2013 (for example in the BBC article, 'Increase in sectarian violence in Iraq, 26 April 2013' [17b] or Reuters report, 'Iraq violence kills 761 in June: U.N.', 1 July 2013 [1a]), with a marked increase in fatalities from April through to June 2013 (Agence France-Presse, 'Iraq: Violence surges in Iraq as rows persist', 1 July 2013 [14a])

## Security in 2012

In considering trends in violence in 2012, users are recommended to also read the sub-section on '[Limiting factors to understanding the causes and nature of violence](#)'

- 4.05 The following chart, based on data from the Iraq Body Count database (accessed 21 June 2013) [3a], compares civilian fatalities in 2012 to recent years:



[3a]

For a further breakdown refer to datasets. See [Annex C: Data-sets covering violence in Iraq: 2011 and 2012](#)

- 4.06 The Iraq Body Count paper, 'Iraq deaths from violence in 2012', dated 1 January 2013 confirmed a small rise in the number of civilian fatalities in 2012 compared to the previous 12 month period, with 4,471 deaths from violence, compared to 4,136 in 2011. The same source stated that 2012 marked the first year since 2009 where the death toll

had actually increased, following two years in which levels of violence, as measured by civilians killed, were 'almost identical.' **[3b]**

[NB: Figures provided by the Iraq Body Count database, accessed 21 June 2013 reported 4,573 civilian deaths in 2012, compared to 4,147 in 2011 (Iraq Body Count database)[3a]] For further details see: [Annex C: Data-sets covering violence in Iraq: 2011 and 2012](#)

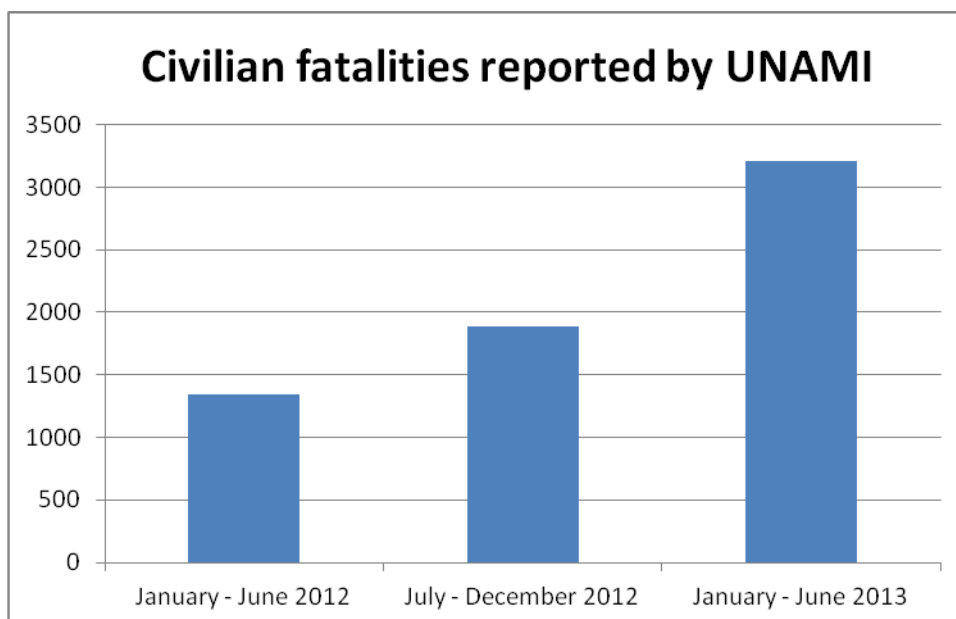
- 4.07 According to the Report on Human Rights in Iraq: January to June 2012, UNAMI Human Rights Office and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, dated October 2012, figures for the first half of 2012 indicated that the 'decline in violence and impact on civilians experienced in 2007 may be levelling off', suggesting Iraq may continue to suffer from a '...sustained level of violence ... for the near future.' **[2b](p.2)** However the same title, covering the period July to December 2012, noted that information gathered by UNAMI indicated a sharp increase in the death and injury toll in the latter part of the 2012, despite a 'relatively stable' number of violent attacks across the year. According to the source, compared to the first half of the year, over the period July to December 2012, civilian fatalities rose 40.6 per cent and civilian injuries increased by 83.6 per cent. **[2a](p.2)**

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## Security in 2013 (January to June)

In considering trends in violence in 2013, users are recommended to also read the subsection on '[Limiting factors to understanding the causes and nature of violence](#)'

- 4.08 The following chart, based on UNAMI reporting, compares violence between January and June 2013 to the preceding six month periods of January to June 2012 and July to December 2012 (see [annex C](#) and [annex D](#) for data sets):



- 4.09 According to the Iraq Body Count database, accessed 21 June 2013, there were 1,109 civilians killed in the first three months of 2013 (January – March), compared 1,257 over the same period in 2012 (again based on IBC data).<sup>2</sup> [3a] However sources repeatedly noted an uptake in sectarian related violence over 2013 (for example in the BBC article, ‘Increase in sectarian violence in Iraq, 26 April 2013’ [17b] or Reuters report, ‘Iraq violence kills 761 in June: U.N.’, 1 July 2013 [1a]), with a marked increase in fatalities from April through to June 2013 (Agence France-Presse, ‘Iraq: Violence surges in Iraq as rows persist’, 1 July 2013 [14a]) . For further background information see the section [Political crisis \(2011 – 2013\)](#) and related links. See also the graph at paragraph 4.01 which, includes 2013 data, to the understand how this latest upturn in violence compares historically with earlier levels of violence.
- 4.10 Weekly security updates from the ‘Assaye Risk’ are published via the Iraq Business News website. To refer to the latest security update, refer to the link: <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/category/security/weekly-security-update/>. Additionally refer to UNAMI civilian casualties:<http://unami.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=5397&language=en-US> and the Iraq Body Count database: <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>

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## Methods of attack, ‘risk groups’ and limiting factors to understanding violence

In considering methods of attack and groups at risk, users are recommended to also read the sub-section on [‘Limiting factors to understanding the causes and nature of violence’](#)

### Methods

- 4.11 There were mixed reports over preferred methods of attack used by insurgents. The UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012 observed that in 2011 the number of civilian deaths from suicide attacks and car bombs decreased to an average of 6.6 per day, whilst still accounting for the highest number of civilian casualties. Those killed by gunfire/executions rose to an average of 4.6 per day in 2011, suggesting an increase in individually targeted attacks. **[5a](p.8)**
- 4.12 An IBC paper entitled ‘Iraqi deaths from violence in 2012’, dated 1 January 2013, observed that during the height of sectarian violence, between 2006 and 2007, most deaths were ‘... from small arms fire, often in targeted killings.’ **[3b]** Although the source recognised that ‘[s]uch killings continue[d] ... [and that i]n 2012 there were 929 reported incidents involving deadly shootings, or cases of bodies found shot dead, with a death

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<sup>2</sup> At the time of writing, complete figures were not available from the IBC for April – June 2013 to allow for further comparisons. For a breakdown of relevant datasets see [Annex D](#)

toll of 1,571', the report went on to observe that: 'Since mid-2008 the majority of deaths have been caused by explosives which generally result in a higher death toll per incident and, on average, leave 3 wounded for every person killed.' **[3b]**

- 4.13 Referring to analysis of bomb attacks in 2012, the same paper explained: 'In 2012 941 bombings in Iraq killed 2,764 civilians [out of 4,471 reported for the year] and left another 7,422 wounded. This equates to around 18 bombings claiming 53 civilian lives and wounding 143 others every week. The dozen largest-scale bombings killed over 400 and wounded more than 1,000.' **[3b]** A background briefing from the Institute for the Study of War, dated 31 May 2013 considered that, following a 'wave' of incidents in May 2013, that vehicle-borne improvised-explosive devices (VBIEDs) a tactic often used by Al Qaeda in Iraq, were re-emerging as a 'primary attack type, reverting to a trend first seen as the sectarian war expanded in 2006'. **[19b]**

## Risk groups

- 4.14 The IBC paper, 'War in Iraq: 10 years and counting', dated 19 March 2013 paper noted that, based on a sample of 50,000 civilians about whom IBC had demographic data, 77 per cent killed were men, 8.7 per cent women and 8.4 per cent children. The source also stated that adult males tended to be more often directly or individually targeted than women or children. **[3d]**
- 4.15 According to the UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012, Shi'ites civilians, which comprised 60 to 65 per cent of the population (CIA World Fact book, Iraq, updated frequently **[10a]**), were 'most affected' by violence in Iraq. **[5d](p.8)** However the US State Department, 2012 Human Rights, Iraq, published 19 April 2013, (USSD Report 2012) noted that 'militants and terrorists targeted ... Shia, Sunni, as well as members of other religious groups or ethnicities'. **[9a](Executive summary)**
- 4.16 Analysis carried out by the IBC, published in March 2013, on professions affected by the violence over the last 10 years showed, from a sample group of 23,600, that 'by far the greatest number' of persons killed were police (10,238). Other documented groups included: neighbourhood and private security (2,783); officials and public sector workers (1,605); community and religious leaders (751); journalists and media workers (288) and medics and health care workers (265). (IBC, 'War in Iraq: 10 years and counting', 19 March 2013) **[3d]** The USSD Report 2012 stated that terrorists targeted security forces, places of worship, religious pilgrims, schools, public spaces, economic infrastructure, and government officials. **[9a](Executive summary)**
- 4.17 Dr Michael Knights, fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, in an interview published by aforementioned institute, dated 31 July 2012, observed that for an Iraqi who was a priority target, such as a politician or local security force member, many areas of Iraq remained as dangerous as ever. **[39a](p.2)** However Dr Knights also observed that '[f]or most Iraqis, insecurity is about inconvenience, frustration and the knowledge that there are things one must not risk, and places one must not go, and people one must not offend. This latter category resembles many people in post-conflict societies around the world and it comprises the majority of Iraqis.' **[39a](p.2)**
- 4.18 However a background briefing from the Institute for the Study of War, dated 31 May 2013, suggested that Al Qaeda in Iraq was shifting from its campaign of July 2012, which focused on attacks against Iraqi government officials, security forces, Sahwa



(Awakening) leaders and Shi'a civilians, to a strategy advocating greater use of VBIEDs (Vehicle-Borne Improvised-Explosive Devices), with coordinated attacks being carried out to target 'Shi'a civilians in known sectarian hot-spots.' **[19b](p.1-2)**

## Limiting factors to understanding the causes and nature of violence

- 4.19 The Iraq Body Count (IBC) in the paper 'The War in Iraq: 10 years and counting', dated 19 March 2013, explained that 'a proper understanding of the war's human consequences, both past and present, remains to be established'. The source further observed that of the 122,438 documented civilian deaths held by the IBC (covering the period 20 March 2003 to 14 March 2013) only 7 per cent were 'even nominally identified'. The IBC report also commented that police and journalists were '...most likely to have their profession mentioned [i.e. recorded], and hence to have been most completely recorded.' **[3d]** An interview with Dr Michael Knights, fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (published by aforementioned institute), dated 31 July 2012, noted that violence in Iraq had become very localised, a situation which had become more pronounced since 2009, as violence became more concentrated in key urban neighbourhoods, towns and rural areas. **[39a](p.2)** Given the localised nature of the unrest in Iraq, it is therefore likely this will also limit the extent to which violence can be analysed and trends understood.
- 4.20 A research article published by the Public Library of Science (PLOS), by Madelyn Hsiao-Rei Hicks, Hamit Dardagan, Gabriela Guerrero Serdan, Peter M Bagnall, John A Sloboda and Michael Spagat entitled 'Violent Deaths of Iraqi Civilians, 2003-2008: Analysis by Perpetrator, Weapon, Time and Location', dated 15 February 2011 explained: 'Most Iraqi civilian violent deaths during 2003–2008 of the Iraq war were inflicted by Unknown perpetrators, primarily through extrajudicial executions that disproportionately increased in regions with greater numbers of violent deaths. Unknown perpetrators using suicide bombs, vehicle bombs, and mortars had highly lethal and indiscriminate effects on the Iraqi civilians they targeted.' **[40a](Conclusions)** According to the PLOS published article, the research was based on data analysed from the Iraq Body Count database '...of 92,614 Iraqi civilian direct deaths from armed violence occurring from March 20, 2003 through March 19, 2008, of which Unknown perpetrators caused 74% of deaths (n = 68,396), Coalition forces 12% (n = 11,516), and Anti-Coalition forces 11% (n = 9,954).' **[40a](Methods and Findings)**
- 4.21 The Danish Immigration Service report, 'Security and Human Rights in South/Central Iraq, Report from Danish Immigration Service's fact-finding mission to Amman, Jordan and Baghdad, Iraq, 25 February to 9 March and 6 to 16 April 2010', published 10 September 2010, referring to information provided by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also observed: 'Reporting limitations make it difficult to determine if violence could be considered indiscriminate or not... compiling analyses with reference to ethnic and religious indicators is complex as government and some organisations and agencies are against it.' **[16a](p.5)** The same report citing a 'reliable' source in Baghdad observed that: 'Individuals can be targeted for their professional background, due to their ethnicity or religion or other reasons. The environment of chaos and a lack of effective state authorities are behind this current [security] situation.' According to the 'reliable' source: '... to speak of or define systematic targeting of a certain group is difficult. It would be easy to interpret incidents that occur, including targeted killings, in this light, however they must be understood in the context in which they happen and the lack of state authority. Having said this, there are incidents that

definitely are tainted by the appearance of systematic targeted killings.’ [16a](p.6) The same report, citing Fyras Mawazani, Executive Director, NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq (NCCI), Amman, similarly remarked: ‘... even though insurgents target foreign and Iraqi troops and government institutions, including ministries it is very often civilians who become victims of such attacks.’ [16a](p.5)

- 4.22 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, based on information from various interlocutors, dated 7 April 2012, noted: ‘Following the departure of US Forces, the incident levels have been more difficult to quantify, as the withdrawal has meant a lack of entirely accurate data from a single source. Rather than working from corroborated reporting, security companies now use a ‘best estimate’ system based on open sources, limited Iraqi Security Force reporting, limited US reporting and an unofficial network among western security companies.’ [8a]
- 4.23 To consider data-reporting discrepancies in fatality figures, refer to [Annexes C and D](#) to compare differing sources. Additionally read the [Congressional Research Service report, ‘Iraq Casualties: U.S. Military Forces and Iraqi Civilians, Police, and Security Forces’](#), dated 7 October 2010. Users are also recommended to refer directly to the source to understand applied methodologies which may differ between sources.

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## 5. Drivers of violence

### Overview

The following section should be considered together with section 6 [‘Main actors involved in the violence’](#).

- 5.01 The latest ‘Report on Human Rights in Iraq: July to December 2012, from the UNAMI Human Rights Office and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’, dated June 2013 explained:
- ‘Motivations for attacks remain complex – including political, ethnic, and religious. Some attacks appear to have been in response to political developments. Of concern was the announcement by a number of insurgent groups in March 2012 that they were recommencing their programme of hostilities – in particular Al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq. Events in neighbouring countries, particularly in Syria, also had a destabilising effect on patterns of violence, with information suggesting that fighters and insurgents may be moving back and forth across the border.’ [2a](p.3)
- 5.02 A paper by Stuart Elden and Alison J Williams, ‘The territorial integrity of Iraq, 2003 – 2007: Invocation, violation, viability’, published in *Geoforum*, Volume 40, Number 3, dated May 2009 also noted that whilst there was clear evidence of increased factionalism in Iraq, post 2003, drawn largely between Sunnis, Shia’s and Kurds, identifying this to be a purely ethnic conflict failed to ‘... illuminate the complex nature of the post-2003 situation’ and failed to recognise ‘how events since 2003 had ‘shaped and embedded new factionalisms across the country.’ The paper citing various sources,

also highlighted how historically Iraqis had a 'strong sense of national identity', with one source suggesting that 'decades of living together wove innumerable personal ties'. Sunni, Shi'a and Kurds were not 'discreet groups', but rather were interconnected: 'As well as intermarriage which inevitably complicates straightforward division – al Shaikly claimed that '50% of the Iraqi population are of mixed nationality' – the majority of Kurds are Sunni Muslims. And while popular conceptions of Iraq commonly suggest that these three groupings are based in discreet geographical localities in reality this is only significantly true for the Kurds.' [30a]

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## Terrorism

5.03 The US State Department, 2012 Human Rights Report: Iraq, 19 April 2012 (USSD Report 2012) noted that: 'Violence by illegal armed groups against the general population, security forces, government officials, and civilian infrastructure remained a significant problem during the year, and bombings, executions, and killings were regular occurrences throughout the country.' [9a](Section 1a) The Foreign and Commonwealth, Human Rights and Democracy 2012, released April 2013, observed that Al Qaeda was believed to be responsible for 'a large proportion' of the violence in 2012, with them aim of 'seeking to cause sectarian divide and destabilise the country.' [11a]

5.04 A paper by Kenneth Katzman for the Congressional Research Service (CRS) entitled 'Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights', 3 June 2013, explained:

'The violent component of Sunni unrest is spearheaded by the Sunni insurgent group Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I) as well as groups linked to the former regime of Saddam Hussein. These groups, emboldened by the Sunni-led uprising in Syria, are conducting attacks against Shiite neighborhoods and Iraqi Security Force (ISF) members with increasing frequency and lethality. The attacks appear intended to reignite all-out sectarian conflict and provoke the fall of the government. As violence escalates, there are concerns whether the 700,000 person ISF can counter it without U.S. troops to provide direct support.' [4a]

See also: [Main actors involved in the violence](#)

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## Sectarian and ethnic conflict

5.05 A Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) paper entitled 'Iraq After US Withdrawal: US Policy and the Iraqi Search for Security and Stability', dated 18 July 2012, explained that one of the contributing factors to continuing levels of violence in Iraq were the '... range of political crises at the national to the local level, and by sectarian and ethnic divisions ...' [6b](p.30) A later CSIS paper entitled 'Patterns of Violence in Iraq: Working Draft, dated 24 October 2012, explained further:

'The level and types of violence ... [that] have continued and risen since the US withdrawal can be partially explained as the inevitable result of the initial turbulence that

had to follow the departure of US forces. Current events in Iraq aggravate tensions between the central government in Baghdad and factional groups that feel disenfranchised from Iraq's political and economic system.

'Tensions are mounting between Shi'ite and Sunni, and among all of Iraq's ethnic and political factions, with Sunnis and Kurds threatening to withdraw support from and sever ties with Baghdad's central government. ... At the same time, the tensions that now strain relations between Iraq's main ethnic and sectarian over issues like autonomy, authority, and control of Iraq's petroleum revenues and natural resources are scarcely new. They long precede the founding of modern Iraq. They were the source of a violent Kurdish separatist effort in the 1960s and early 1970s, new conflicts between the Kurds and Central government after the beginning of the Iraq-Iraq War in 1980. They led to serious tensions between Arab Sunni and Arab Shi'ite from 1980 through 2003.

The overall mix of ethnic, sectarian, and tribal tensions causes a civil war from 2005 to 2008, and has remained a source of violence ever since.' **[6a](p.8)**

- 5.06 The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Annual Report 2013, Iraq, covering events between 31 January 2012 and 31 January 2013, published April 2013, remarked that '[l]ongstanding, unresolved Sunni-Shi'i and Arab-Kurdish tensions' had escalated over the past year, threatening Iraq's 'fragile security.' According to a nationwide poll conducted in October 2011, 75 per cent of Sunnis felt unfairly treated by the government, whilst 60 per cent felt their sect was unfairly treated by society. The report referred to continuing reports of torture and abuse in detention facilities allegedly along sectarian lines; limited progress in integrating the Sunni 'Sons of Iraq' armed militia into the security forces; attempts to bar Sunnis from the political process for 'alleged Baathist ties' and actions taken by the Shi'a government against 'leading Sunni officials', as contributing to increasing sectarian tensions. **[12a](p.3-4)**
- 5.07 Commenting on events in 2013, an Agency France-Presse source, dated 1 July 2013, similarly raised concerns that Iraq was '... slipping back to all-out bloodshed...' following months of protests by Sunnis; tensions over the 'disputed territories' in northern Iraq with the Kurdistan Regional Government and political deadlock between the main political parties. **[14a]** An International Crisis Group paper, 'Iraq after Hawija: Recovery or Relapse?', dated 26 April 2013, specifically identified events on 23 April 2013, when the Iraqi Security Forces raided a Sunni protest camp in Hawija (Kirkuk governorate) killing 50, as representing a turning point in the previously restrained approach taken by the security forces. The source recommended: 'Only by credibly addressing the protesters' legitimate demands – namely, ensuring genuine Sunni Arab representation in the political system – can the government ensure that the current Sunni Arab leadership [do] not remain beholden to, or gradually be abandoned by, an increasingly frustrated street. And only by doing so can Iraq stem a rising tide of violence ...' **[13a]**
- 5.08 A report from the Council on Foreign Relations, entitled 'Renewed Violence in Iraq', dated August 2012, explained that continuing tensions existed in Iraq between the Kurdistan Regional Government [KRG] and central government in Baghdad over the contested territories known as the 'Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIB)'. **[18a]** The CSIS paper 'Patterns of Violence in Iraq', dated 24 October 2012, also observed that the consolidation of power over the security forces by Prime Minister Maliki had polarised the Kurds, pushing them to preserve their own security forces, pesh merga, in addition to maintaining '...military and police control over Kurdish dominated areas in

the North and along the borders with the areas under the control of the central government.’ According to the source, ‘... the resulting tensions are particularly severe in the Mosul and Ninewa areas, and have sometimes come close to open fighting between the two sets of forces.’ **[6a](Executive Summary, p.4)**

- 5.09 In late 2012, ‘... spurred by the lack of any progress in recent years [to resolve the DIB]’, a commercial dispute between an Arab and Kurd in Tuz Khurmatu, a town on the Baghdad-KRG border, resulted in clashes between ISF and KRG forces. In May 2013, peshmerga forces advanced their positions in Kirkuk governorate, following redeployment of ISF to areas of Sunni demonstrations. (CRS, ‘Iraq: Politics, Governance and Human Rights, 3 June 2013) **[4a](p.19)**

See also: [The impact of the Syrian conflict; Protection provided by ethnic and religious groups; Political crisis \(2011 – 2013\)](#) and [Security by region, ‘Northern and central Iraq \(excluding Baghdad\) and the subsection, ‘Sunni protests in northern Iraq and escalating violence in 2013’](#)

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## Political

- 5.10 An article by Michael Goldfarb entitled, ‘The roots of renewed sectarian violence in Iraq and Pakistan’, published in the Global Post, dated 20 February 2013, explained:
- ‘Most analysts from the region emphasize the unique nature of Sunni-Shia conflict. [Fawaz] Gerges [director of the Middle East Centre at the London School of Economics (LSE)] sees it as less religious conflict and more about real world politics. Iraq's Sunni and Shia communities aren't fighting about the succession to the Prophet Mohammed 1,400 years ago — the origin of Islam's religious schism. Salafists excepted, the conflict isn't about trying to establish a new Caliphate to unite the Muslim world. The rival groups are fighting to get their share of the new Iraq's political and economic pie.’ **[41a]**
- 5.11 A paper by Stuart Elden and Alison J Williams, ‘The territorial integrity of Iraq, 2003 – 2007: Invocation, violation, viability’, published in Geoforum, Volume 40, Number 3, dated May 2009 similarly recognised how reducing post-2003 conflict in Iraq to one of ethnic and religious factionalism, failed to recognise ‘how events since 2003 had ‘shaped and embedded new factionalisms across the country.’ **[30a]**
- 5.12 Michael Goldfarb in the article, ‘The roots of renewed sectarian violence in Iraq and Pakistan’, published in the Global Post, dated 20 February 2013, citing LSE professor, Fawaz Gerges, director of the Middle East Centre, suggested that local governorate elections due in April 2013 may be tied to recent violence. According to the article ‘[a]ll politics is local, even violent sectarian politics.’ The source went on to explain: ‘There is anger in Iraq's Sunni heartland of Anbar Province with the Iraqi government and its face on the streets, the security services, which they regard as Shia-dominated.’ **[41a]**
- 5.13 An interview with Dr Michael Knights, fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (published by aforementioned institute), dated 31 July 2012, also noted that violence in Iraq had become very localised, a situation which had become more pronounced since 2009, as violence became more concentrated in key urban

neighbourhoods, towns and rural areas. **[39a](p.2)** Dr Knights also stated that armed groups had an important role in politics. According to Dr Knights, militias, criminal gangs, even 'shadowy parts' of the security forces were used by political blocs 'to bring pressure on their rivals', with every major faction having an armed wing of some description. **[39a](p.4)**

See also: [Main actors involved in the violence, including Sunni insurgents](#). For further information on the Sunni unrest in Iraq from late 2012 see: [Political crisis \(2011 – 2013\)](#) and [Security by region, 'Northern and central Iraq \(excluding Baghdad\) and the subsection, 'Sunni protests in northern Iraq and escalating violence in 2013'](#)

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## Criminality

- 5.14 The UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines 2012 noted that: 'Crime is widespread and some armed groups reportedly engage in extortion, kidnappings and armed robberies to fund their other, politically – or religiously, or ideologically - motivated activities, conflating acts of persecution and criminality. Consequently, the line between persecution and criminality appears to be increasingly blurred.' **[5a](p.8)** Similarly, the Report on Human Rights in Iraq: January to June 2012, UNAMI Human Rights Office and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, dated October 2012, referring to assassination attacks against civilians, including government officials and others with a public profile, noted that the '... [m]otives behind these attacks are often unclear: it is possible that some victims were targeted for personal or criminal motives, but there may also have been political, ethnic or sectarian motivations behind many such killings.' **[2b](p.3)**
- 5.15 The Danish Immigration Service report, 'Security and Human Rights in South/Central Iraq, Report from Danish Immigration Service's fact-finding mission to Amman, Jordan and Baghdad, Iraq, 25 February to 9 March and 6 to 16 April 2010', published 10 September 2010, referring to an interview with an international NGO in Amman, commented that '... small and medium-sized groups are organising themselves in[to] criminal gangs...' and that reports of kidnappings '... may well be linked to these sort of criminal gangs rather than political [sectarian] groups. Some of these criminal gangs or persons within the gangs [also] enjoy some sort of protection that may be tribally linked.' **[16a](p.15)** However the same report, citing information given by IOM Baghdad (David Helmey, Operations Officer and Rania Guindy, International Caseworker), noted that there was '... a fine line between criminal gangs and the newly-established ideologically-based [sectarian] groups.' **[16a](p.14)**

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## 6. Main actors involved in the violence

The following section should be considered together with information in section 5, ['Drivers of violence'](#). Additionally users are recommended to read section 7, ['Security by region'](#).

Background information about the Iraqi Security Forces, including information about its ability to counter insurgent violence is provided in section 9 and in particular the subsection Changes in security and the ISF's counter-insurgency capabilities.

## Overview

- 6.01 The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) paper 'Patterns of Violence in Iraq', working draft, dated 24 October 2012, stated that despite 'limited signs' that a few insurgent groups may be willing to lay down arms and enter into the political process, '...the circumstances on the ground demonstrate that most [insurgent] groups remain committed to using violence to achieve their goals.' **[6a](p.45)** The UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012 also noted that, according to Iraqi Government officials, there were 'dozens of armed groups active in Iraq, comprising thousands of members.' The source went on to explain that although armed groups were '... largely split along sectarian lines, i.e. Sunni or Shi'ite', some operated independently, while others were 'openly or secretly affiliated with political parties or [had]... transformed into political parties [though] ...this did not mean they had necessarily disarmed.' **[5a](p.9)**
- 6.02 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, based on information from various interlocutors, dated 7 April 2012, additionally noted:

'...Broadly speaking the threat of terrorist incident can be broken down along ethnic lines between Sunni extremists (Al Qaeda Iraq (AQI), Islamic State of Iraq) and Shia militias (Jaysh Al Mahdi (JAM), Asa'ib Ahl Al Maq (AAH), Kita'ib Hizballah (KH) (Hizballah Brigade). Our interlocutors report that, over the past four months it can safely be assumed that at least 90% of incidents are attributable to Sunni extremists; - Sunni extremists presently have high intent to carry out attacks, but moderate capability; whereas Shia militia have low intent but high capability.' **[8a]**

## Intra-sectarian violence and collaboration across sects

- 6.03 Sources indicated the occurrence of intra-sectarian conflict (i.e. violence between Sunni groups or between Shia groups) as well as collaboration between groups across sect. An Associated Press report dated 15 January 2013, referring to the assassination of a Sunni parliamentarian in Fallujah who was also a founding member of Fallujah's branch of the Sahawa [also known as the Sons of Iraq], noted for example that the Sahawa, were a 'group of Sunni Arabs who joined forces with the US military to fight [the Sunni group] al-Qaeda at the height of Iraq's insurgency.' The source further commented that 'Shawa members have been frequent targets for Sunni insurgents, who consider them traitors.' **[42a]** Whilst a paper from the Council on Foreign Relations entitled 'Renewed Violence in Iraq', dated August 2012, highlighted the ongoing risk of intra Shia violence, following the 'tenuous peace among the major Shia factions' which had held 'since the end of the final battle for Sadr City [in Baghdad] in mid-2008. The same source, went on to identify future risk factors to stability as including increased coordination among militant groups, this included: 'Signs that AQI [Al-Qaeda in Iraq] is rebuilding links with dormant Sunni insurgent groups and/or extreme Shia militias such as Hezbollah in Iraq [and] are re-establishing links with the dormant [Shiite] Jaysh al-Mahdi militia[. This] will be a serious warning indicator of renewed conflict and the emergence of ethno-sectarian violence.' **[18a]**

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## Difficulties in identifying armed groups

- 6.04 The Report on Human Rights in Iraq: January to June 2012, published by the UNAMI Human Rights Office and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, dated October 2012, referring to insurgent attacks over the reporting period, noted that: '[T]he perpetrators of such attacks are often unknown, the frequency of such attacks and the victims that result, indicate that a number of insurgent and terrorist groups operating in Iraq continued to engage in a sustained campaign of violence directed primarily against civilians or execute their agenda heedless of the toll inflicted on civilians.' **[2b]**
- 6.05 The Danish Immigration Service report entitled 'Security and Human Rights in South/Central Iraq: Report from the Danish Immigration Service's fact-finding mission to Amman, Jordan and Baghdad, Iraq – 25 February to 9 March and 6 to 16 April 2010', published 10 September 2010 citing information provided by UNHCR Iraq noted that on the subject of armed groups '... the situation is fluid, and while there are some 'official' militias that are known, and each political party has its own militia, underneath this there are a number of 'invisible' militias that one does not know about. Many would say that one worries about the militias one does not know about.' **[16a](p.14)**

For further information see: on [Limiting factors to understanding the causes and nature of violence](#)

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## Sunni insurgents

- 6.06 The UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012, provided the following background on Sunni groups:
- 'After 2003, a range of armed Sunni groups emerged, generally referred to as the "Sunni insurgency". ... These groups appeared to be united only by the goals of liberating Iraq from "foreign occupation" and undermining the new political order in the country. In terms of ideology, membership and tactics, they reportedly had little in common and at times even turned against each other. Today, the Sunni armed groups considered responsible for most of the violence perpetrated against the Iraqi Government and the civilian population are Islamic State of Iraq / Al-Qa'eda in Iraq, Ansar Al-Islam and the Naqshbandi Army. These three groups, although independent, are reported to cooperate to some extent. Other Sunni armed groups are said to have been mainly, though not exclusively, focused on fighting the Multi-National Forces in Iraq (MNF-I) / United States Forces in Iraq (USF-I) and their "collaborators" such as the ISF, armed Shi'ite groups and the Sahwa; they are said to reject targeting Iraqi civilians at large. After the withdrawal of the USF-I from Iraq in December 2011, these groups reportedly shifted their focus to the Iraqi Government, in addition to the remaining US presence in the country.' **[5a](p.9-10)**



- 6.07 A paper from the Council of Foreign Relations entitled 'Renewed Violence in Iraq', dated August 2012, observed that when terrorist attacks occurred against Shia civilians, for example those conducted by al-Qaeda, the main Shia armed groups had 'remained calm' in response, 'probably because they believe that the Sunnis can not reverse their defeat in the civil war'. **[18a]** A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, based on information from various interlocutors, dated 7 April 2012, similarly remarked that '[a]lmost all attacks are currently attributable to Sunni extremists', with Sunni groups having greatest influence in northern and western Iraq although they also retained a presence in parts of Baghdad, notably, Mansour. **[8a]** However more recent reports indicated that Shiite groups had remobilised: see [Shi'ite insurgents](#).
- 6.08 The above-referenced British Embassy letter, dated 7 April 2012 indicated that the 'vast majority' of Sunni extremist activity was targeted against [Iraq Security Forces] ISF and government forces, with such attacks being 'clearly planned ... against specific targets ...'. Additionally Al Qaeda and their affiliates retained a 'capability for large scale coordinated attacks.' **[8a]**
- 6.09 However the Congressional Research Service (CRS) report, 'Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights', dated 3 June 2013, noted that the Sunni political unrest in 2012-3 provided 'political space' for violent groups to escalate attacks against the political system with the intended aim of '...de-stablising Maliki and his Shi'ite-led government.' Targets included Shi'ite pilgrims; Shi'ite neighbourhoods and businesses; ISF; government installations and Sunni groups supportive of the government. **[4a](p.16)** A New York Times article dated 16 June 2013, similarly acknowledged the increase in Sunni extremist-inspired violence in 2013, observing: 'Sunni extremists have stepped up their efforts to undermine the Shiite-led government and to stoke sectarian divisions since the beginning of the year. Nearly 2,000 Iraqis have been killed since April, according to the Interior Ministry, making it the country's most violent period since 2008.' **[15a]** A blog post by Bill Roggio, managing editor of The Long War Journal, in a post for the aforementioned journal, dated 1 July 2013, also acknowledged that at the current time 'Al Qaeda in Iraq is evidently having no problem cranking out recruits to conduct suicide bombings. In the past 16 days, al Qaeda in Iraq has executed 14 suicide attacks, according to a count by 'The Long War Journal'. **[27b]**
- 6.10 A profile by the BBC of Syria's al-Nursa Front, dated 10 April 2013, noted that the head of the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, [the name under which Al Qaeda operates in Iraq] had announced the merger of ISI and the Syrian insurgent group Jabhat Al -Nursra. According to al-Baghdadi, the two groups would be amalgamated into 'one state under one name: The Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant.' **[17a]**

See also: [The impact of the Syrian conflict](#)

- 6.11 The CRS paper 'Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights', dated 3 June 2013, commented that other Sunni extremist groups that were prominent during the insurgency against US forces '... remained allied with AQ-I or active independently, including an ex-Baathist group, the Naqshabandi Order, otherwise known as JRTN [Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabandia] which was 'based primarily in Nineveh province.' **[4a](p.17)** A paper from Institute for the Study of War (ISW), dated 21 June 2013, noted that JRTN had been present at Sunni protest sites, including Hawija [in April 2013] and that it appeared JRTN was 'now resurgent in Mosul and fighting the Iraqi Security Forces.' **[19a]**
- 6.12 The same ISW paper, citing Iraq analyst Stephen Wicken, additionally commented that '... the rising violence trends, and in particular, the attacks that do not bear the AQI/ISI hallmark, suggest that some Sunni have given up on the political process and are resorting to arms to resist the Maliki government. This trend has accelerated also after the fall of al Qusayr in Syria, which, because of the involvement of Hezbollah, has become a rallying cry for Sunni in the region.' **[19a]**

See also: [Annex E: Insurgent groups in Iraq](#)

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## Shi'ite insurgents

- 6.13 According to Kenneth Katzman in the Congressional Research Service paper, 'Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights', dated 3 June 2013, there were several Shi'ite militias operating in Iraq, all of which were breakaway factions of the Mahdi Army [otherwise known as Jaysh Al-Mahdi, the armed wing of the Sadrist Movement led by Shi'ite cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr]. These included Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH, League of the Righteous), Khata'ib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Battalions) and the Promised Day Brigade. The source further clarified that such groups were backed by Iran, purportedly as part of an effort to ensure US withdrawal from the country. **[4a](p.23)**
- 6.14 A letter from the British Embassy in Baghdad, based on information from various interlocutors, dated 7 April 2012, noted that:
- 'Shia militias have predominantly been seen to operate in most areas of eastern Baghdad, generally emanating from the Sadr City area. They do also have a presence in the more ethnically mixed areas of central and western Baghdad. Shia militia tend to have a far higher capability to carry out lethal acts [than Sunni groups], though their intent is presently very low. Their agenda is far more linked to the political situation and as their leadership attempt to move into power-brokering they have far less of an inclination to use violence openly. Previously most of their attacks specifically targeted US Forces, though these started to tail off mid 2011 with the understanding that US Forces would withdraw entirely by the end of the year. In 2012 thus far [i.e. up to April 2012] it would be difficult to attribute more than a handful of incidents to Shia militia, and most of these would be down to in-fighting between different factions, or criminal disputes.' **[8a]**

- 6.15 The US State Department Country Report on Terrorism 2012, Middle East and North Africa Overview, dated 30 May 2013, noted that in 2012 ‘Shia militant groups Kata’ib Hizballah, Asa’ib Ahl Haqq, and the Sadrist Promised Day Brigades [had] adhered to the cease-fire they declared in the latter half of 2011 and early 2012 [with s]ome former Shia militant leaders ... engaging in the political process and competing for political influence.’ **[9b]** A Council on Foreign Relations paper, dated August 2012, also noted that Shi’ite armed factions appeared to have either integrated into the ISF or demobilised, with ‘a few small but notable exceptions.’ **[18a]**
- 6.16 However there were mixed reports on whether Shi’ite insurgent groups had resumed violent attacks in 2013. Whilst the Congressional Research Service paper, ‘Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights’, dated 3 June 2013 stated that ‘[t]here have not been reports of Shiite militias retaliating against Sunni communities in the context of the 2013 Sunni demonstrations and escalating violence’, although the prospect of this remained a concern. **[4a](p.23)** An Institute for the Study of War (ISW) paper entitled, ‘Weekly standard: The Iraq War is Not Over’, dated 21 June 2013, stated: ‘Shia militias have mobilized in Iraq and have resumed extrajudicial killings in Baghdad, Diyala, and Hillah.’ The same source further noted:
- ‘...By early June [2013] [Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq AAH] had resumed some of the violent behaviors that characterized Shia militant attacks against Iraqis in 2006-07: establishment of false checkpoints, ID checking, kidnapping people from their cars or public places, and executing them. For example, two people were kidnapped from a bus stop near Baghdad University in the late afternoon, and their bodies were found in western Baghdad at a traditional 2006 dumping site, hands bound, shot in the head or chest, a few days later. AAH has also resumed executions with silenced weapons of other targets with an intent to intimidate: whether pulling shopkeepers from their homes and killing them and their families; executing teachers; executing liquor store owners and conducting other morality policing. These events have occurred in areas not far from Sadr City, as well as in Diyala, in places familiar during the violence of 2006--07. The militias are evidently reasserting their control of East Baghdad while projecting checkpoints into West Baghdad. ... Some of the militia activity is occurring within sight of Iraqi Security Forces checkpoints. Maliki is either tolerating it or has lost control over the escalation.’ **[19a]**
- 6.17 An earlier ISW report entitled ‘Iraq’s sectarian crisis reignites as Shi’a militias execute civilians and remobilize’, dated 31 May 2013, similarly acknowledged:
- ‘Social media posts and isolated reports have been circulating ... that Iraqi Shi’a militias, primarily Asai’b Ahl Al-Haq (AAH), have been patrolling streets of Baghdad, setting up “false checkpoints,” and conducting extra-judicial killings against Sunnis. Residents have been expressing fear of extra-judicial killings since early May. The evidence is clear; Shi’a militants have mobilized in Baghdad and are conducting executions of civilians. ... Sunni mosques were also attacked in Baghdad neighbourhoods of Mansour and Saydiyah and twice in Diyala province, which clearly points to Shi’a militancy.’ **[19b](p.4-5)**
- 6.18 The same source also commented that recent assassinations which had taken place in May 2013, were ‘historically characteristic of Shi’a militant groups’. This included not only attacks against Sunni targets, but also violence, predominantly in the Shia districts

of Baghdad, which was characteristic of ‘intra-Shia violence.’ **[19b](p.5)** An article posted on the ISW blog, entitled ‘Iraq Update #23: Sadrists and Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq Fight for Baghdad’, posted around mid June 2013 by Ahmed Ali, also stated that ‘...AAH [Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq] activities appear to go on without resistance or objection from Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, although it is difficult to prove his complicity.’ **[19d]**

See also: links to [Security by region, ‘Baghdad’](#); [‘Intra-sectarian violence and collaboration across sect’](#) and [Annex E: Insurgent groups in Iraq](#)

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## 7. Security by region

Further information on areas where the main insurgent groups operate is included in the preceding section, [Main actors involved in the violence](#). Additionally see: [Drivers of violence](#), to understand the causes of violence across Iraq; [Population displacement, including ‘sectarian cleansing’ and population shifts](#) and [Security and the ISF’s counter-insurgency capabilities](#), and specifically the subsection [Attacks against the ISF and the growing insurgent threat](#)

### The Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI)

7.01 The Iraq Body Count paper ‘Iraqi deaths from violence in 2012’, dated 1 January 2013 provided the following statistical analysis on deaths in Iraq’s governorates. The following table shows figures for KRI’s three governorates:

Province	Deaths in 2012	Deaths per 100,000	Population	Province capital
Erbil	10	0.62	1,612,692	Erbil
Sulaymaniyah	36	1.92	1,878,764	Sulaymaniyah
Dahuk	6	0.53	1,128,745	Dahuk

#### **[3b]**

7.02 The ‘Report on Human Rights in Iraq: July – December 2012, UNAMI Human Rights Office and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’, dated June 2013 noted that over the reporting period, ‘the Kurdistan Region remained largely free of violence.’ **[2b](p.2)** A report from the same title, covering events between July and December 2012, highlighted that from July 2012, aerial bombardments and mortar attacks took place on along the border with Turkey, as a result of conflict between Turkish security forces and the rebel Kurdistan Workers Party or PKK. **[2a](p.6)** However an updated report from Assaye Risk, covering the security situation between 19 and 26 June 2013, noted that following a fragile peace deal brokered between the Turkish authorities and PKK earlier in 2013, the situation in northern Iraq was considered currently ‘calm’, but ‘...with the potential to ignite on both sides of the border.’ **[22a]**

7.03 The UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers From Iraq, dated 31 May 2012, described the security situation in KRI as 'relatively more stable' than the rest of Iraq but 'it remains a potential target for terrorist operations...' **[5a](p.46)** According to the report from the Joint Finnish-Swiss 'Fact Finding Mission to Amman and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) Area, May 10-22, 2011', published 1 February 2012, several sources noted that the security situation in the Kurdistan Regional Government area (i.e. KRI) was 'good', with security forces visible and able to carry out checks. There had not been a terrorist attack in the KRG area for 'several years.' **[43a](p.10)**

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### Northern and central Iraq (excluding Baghdad)

7.04 The Iraq Body Count (IBC) paper 'Iraqi deaths from violence in 2012', dated 1 January 2013 provided the following statistical analysis on deaths in Iraq's governorates. Governorates in northern and central Iraq (not including Baghdad) are identified as Ninewa; Tameem; Salah al-Din; Diyala and Anbar:

Province	Deaths in 2012	Deaths per 100,000	Population	Province capital
Ninewa	834	25.50	3,270,422	Mosul
Tameem	284	20.35	1,395,614	Kirkuk
Salah al-Din	510	36.22	1,408,174	Tikrit
Diyala	543	37.63	1,443,173	Baqubah
Anbar	498	31.89	1,561,407	Ramadi

#### [3b]

7.05 According to the UNAMI Human Rights Office and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, over the period July to December 2012, 'as in the first half of the year', most security related incidents were concentrated in Ninewa, Kikuk, Anbar and Salahiddin [i.e. northern and central Iraq], as well as Baghdad. (Report on Human Rights in Iraq: July – December 2012, UNAMI Human Rights Office and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, June 2013)**[2a](p.2-3)** A paper from IBC entitled 'The War in Iraq: 10 years and counting', dated 19 March 2013 observed that, '...when measured against the size of the population...', Diyala province had seen the highest violent death rate in Iraq over the last 10 years, with 9 civilians killed per 1,000 (based on IBC data documenting 112,017 – 122,438 civilian deaths from violence between 20 March 2003 and 14 March 2013). Other 'highly-affected' provinces included Anbar (which includes the city of Fallujah), which had a rate of 6 deaths per thousand and Salah al-Din with a rate of 5 deaths per thousand. **[3d]**

7.06 The UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012 regarded the Governorates of Ninewa and Kirkuk (i.e. Tameem) to continue to be volatile, whilst the ethnically mixed regions of Diyala and Salah Al-Din were 'among the most unstable governorates.' The UNCHR guidelines also observed that the Sunni governorate of Al-Anbar had experienced 'a surge in violence since the summer of 2009.' **[5a](p.45)**

- 7.07 An interview with Dr Michael Knights, fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (published by aforementioned institute), dated 31 July 2012, explained that at the time (i.e. mid-2012), Mosul city suffered perhaps 40-60 serious reported attacks a month (and probably around 100 actual attacks if unreported incidents were added). Based on a population of 1.8 million people in Mosul, Dr Knights suggested that the majority of Mosul's citizens, providing they were not involved in politics, would '...not personally be in serious danger unless they happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, a very unlikely occurrence...' Dr Knights further noted that whilst most citizens from Mosul would hear explosions, or read about a lot of violence, they would see very few incidents because most attacks were very sudden, involving small arms fire against particular targets.' **[39a](p.2)**
- 7.08 Dr Knights did however acknowledge that most of Iraq's violent incidents occurred in the provinces of Ninewa, Salahaddin and Diyala, and there were no areas within these governorates which '...were completely safe or quiet each month'. The three northern governorates also had a 'significantly greater' security force presence than in other governorates, with 'tense crossing points' between the areas of KRG and federal control. **[39a](p.3)** The Report on Joint Finnish-Swiss Fact Finding Mission to Amman and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) Area, May 10-22, 2011, dated 1 February 2012, similarly '... heard that there were continued tensions in disputed areas such as Kirkuk, due in part to the recent deployment of additional Peshmerga to the governorate.' **[43](p.11)**

See also: [Drivers to violence](#), ['Sectarianism'](#) and [Protection provided by ethnic and religious groups](#)

### Sunni protests in northern Iraq and escalating violence in 2013

- 7.09 A paper from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) entitled 'The Iraq war is not over', dated 21 June 2013, raised concerns that the Sunni protests which began in late 2012, spreading from Anbar to across all the northern provinces of Iraq, risked evolving from a peaceful protest movement to becoming 'an insurgency in northern Iraq.'**[19a]** An article in the New York Times, dated 24 April 2013 commented that protest camps in Ramadi and Fallujah, both in Anbar province, had become bases for armed militants. **[15b]** The above referenced ISW paper also noted that the neo-Baathist group, Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandia, (JRTN) had a presence at protest sites including Hawija [a town near Kirkuk]. **[19a]**
- 7.10 An article from Al Jazeera, dated 25 April 2013, provided further background explaining that since December 2012, large scale protests involving 'tens of thousands' of protestors had occurred in the Sunni-dominated provinces of Anbar, Nineweh, Salaheddin, Kirkuk and Dyala. **[20a]** The source further noted that in response to security forces raiding a protest camp in Hawija, [on 23 April 2013, according to the source a reaction, allegedly, to attacks against police and army checkpoints] there were outbreaks of violence in other Sunni areas, with attacks against security forces in 'Ramadi and Fallujah, and in Suleiman Beg and Mosul.'**[20a]** The ISW report, 'The Iraq war is not over', dated 21 June 2013, also explained that since the raid on Hawija, there had been 'an uptick in the number of highly accurate small-arms attacks inside Mosul proper [Ninewa governorate], as well as [Improvised Explosive Devices] IEDs in Qayarah, the approach to Mosul from the south [but also in Ninewa].'**[19a]**

- 7.11 An earlier ISW background briefing entitled 'Iraq's sectarian crisis reignites as Shi'a militias execute civilians and remobilize', dated 31 May 2013, observed that Al Qaeda in Iraq had sharply escalated its attacks in April and May 2013 and that the group was manoeuvring '...among anti-government protests and Iraqi Security Force deployments to project attacks throughout Iraq, most prominently in Baghdad, Salah ad-Din and Ninewa provinces.' The source also noted that reports from Diyala indicated Shi'a militia groups had mobilised and were carrying out extra-judicial killings. **[19b]**

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## Baghdad

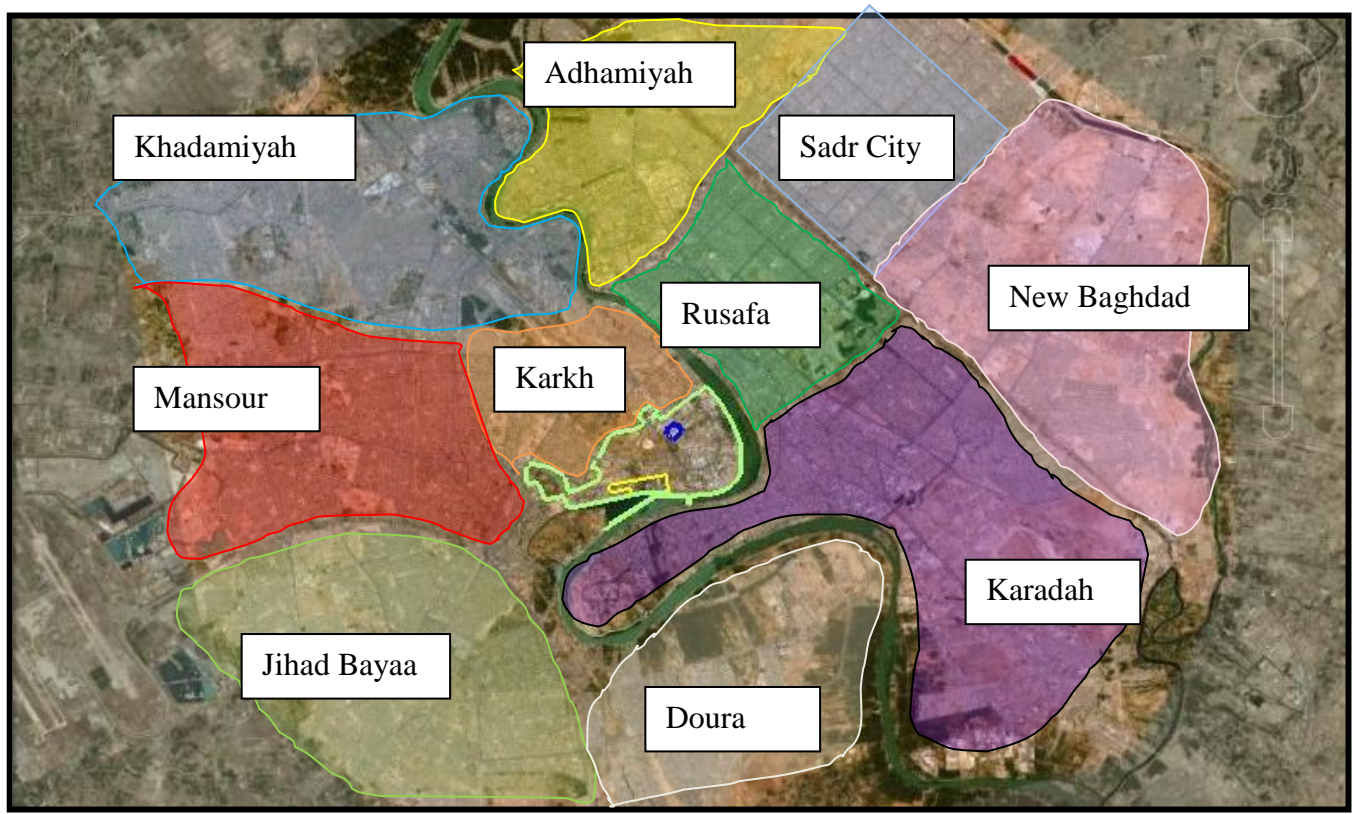
- 7.12 The Iraq Body Count (IBC) paper 'Iraqi deaths from violence in 2012', dated 1 January 2013, provided the following statistical analysis on deaths in Baghdad:

Province	Deaths in 2012	Per 100,000	Population	Province capital
Baghdad	1,086	15.39	7,055,196	Baghdad

### **[3b]**

- 7.13 Baghdad continued to see 'daily bombings, shootings and assassinations.' (UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines 2012)**[5a](p.45)** A report from the IBC, entitled 'The War in Iraq: 10 years and counting', dated 19 March 2013, observed that over the last 10 years Baghdad had seen the greatest loss of life overall with 58,252 persons killed (48 per cent of all deaths, based on IBC data documenting 112,017 – 122,438 civilian deaths from violence between 20 March 2003 and 14 March 2013). The capital also continued to see 'the largest number of deaths year on year [compared to other provinces]' **[3d]**, with 43 per cent of all civilian deaths in 2012 occurring in Baghdad and Ninewa (IBC, 'Iraqi deaths from violence in 2012', 1 January 2013) **[3b]**. However it was noted that 'when measured against the size of the population', Baghdad was listed second, behind Diyala governorate, as having the highest civilian violent death rate, with 8 deaths recorded per thousand against Diyala's rate of 9 per thousand. (IBC, entitled 'The War in Iraq: 10 years and counting', 19 March 2013)**[3d]**

- 7.14 A letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, dated 7 April 2012, provided the following map showing Baghdad by area:



**[8a]**

- 7.15 According to the British Embassy letter, dated 7 April 2012, based on information provided by various interlocutors, Baghdad's more volatile security areas at the time included: Mansour, a predominantly Sunni area where targeted attacks against ISF [Iraqi Security Forces] were 'fairly common', although it was rare to see indiscriminate attacks in this area; Jihad Bayaa, a mixed area which saw sporadic attacks against ISF or Gol [Government of Iraq] interests; Rusafa a '... largely mixed area containing both the Ministry of Interior and Baghdad Police College...' where Sunni extremists targeted ISF with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Under Vehicle IEDs (UVIED) and Shi'ite insurgents used advanced IEDs to target US private security companies and Adhamiyah, a largely Shia area, with small Sunni enclave where the threat was '...characterised by UVIEDs against ISF or government officials'. In '...the far eastern parts of Adhamiyah, along with Sadr City and New Baghdad ... Sunni extremists '...[were] most likely to employ Vehicle Borne IEDs or IEDs in crowded areas in order to cause civilian casualties. These attacks are indiscriminate generally, and tend to occur early morning.' **[8a]**

For a more detailed description of each area of Baghdad, refer directly to the source listed under [Annex F: Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Indiscriminate Violence in Iraq', 7 April 2012.](#)

- 7.16 Dr Michael Knights, fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (published by aforementioned institute), in an interview dated 31 July 2012, noted: 'In neighbourhoods with significant milita presence, like Sadr City, Hurriya, Shula, or Jihad or where



relations with the security forces are bad like Abu Ghraib, Ghazaliya, amongst many, there is a very tense feeling.’ Although Dr Knight in the July 2012 interview further remarked that: ‘In general, the city [i.e. Baghdad] feels surprisingly normal.’ **[39a](p.2-3)**

- 7.17 However more recent sources indicated a deterioration in security in Baghdad. An ISW background briefing entitled, ‘Iraq’s sectarian crisis reignites as Shii’a militias execute civilians and remobilize’, dated 31 May 2013, highlighted that VBIED attacks in late May 2013 demonstrated Al Qaeda’s ‘... capacity to stage [attacks] in the locations around the outskirts of Baghdad (the Baghdad belt) from which it had launched attacks in 2006-7 ... and to project force into Shi’a communities and mixed areas within Baghdad. **[19b](p.2)** A more recent paper from the ISW, dated 21 June 2013, noted that since January 2013 Al Qaeda in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) had conducted ‘spectator attacks in Baghdad’ as well as in the south of Iraq, with an increase since March 2013 in the use of VBIEDs to target Shia religious sites and neighbourhoods. The same source also assessed that such attacks had increased over the past month [i.e from around May 2013], following increased mobilisation of Shia militia groups in Baghdad, who were ‘conducting execution-style killings of Sunnis and morality killings in Shia neighbourhoods.’ **[19a]**
- 7.18 A report on the ISW blog, entitled ‘Iraq Update #23: Sadrists and Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq Fight for Baghdad’, posted around mid June 2013, reported the occurrence of small arms exchanges between Sadrists and Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq in Baghdad’s Kadhmiyah neighbourhood, resulting in the hospitalisation of a major Sadrist leader and death of a suspected Promised Day commander. According to the source, the clashes ‘signal AAH’s mobilisation against the Sadrist Trend...’. The same source raised concerns that the move could prompt the Sadrist Trend to, in turn, mobilise their armed wing, the Promised Day Brigade. **[19d]**

See also: [Population displacement](#), including ‘[Sectarian cleansing](#)’ and [population shifts](#)

## Southern Iraq

- 7.19 The Iraq Body Count paper ‘Iraqi deaths from violence in 2012’, dated 1 January 2013 provided the following statistical analysis on deaths in Iraq’s governorates. Those in south Iraq are identified as Wassit; Babylon; Kerbala; Najef; Qadissiyah; Missan; Thi-Qar; Mutanna and Basrah:

Province	Deaths in 2012	Per 100,000	Population	Province capital
Wassit	62	5.12	1,210,591	Kut
Babylon	323	17.74	1,820,673	Hillah
Kerbala	30	2.81	1,066,567	Kerbala
Najef	6	0.47	1,285,484	Najef
Qadissiya	52	4.58	1,134,313	Diwaniyah
Missan	20	2.06	971,448	Amarah
Thi-Qar	65	3.54	1,836,181	Nasiriyah
Mutanna	1	0.14	719,069	Samawah
Basrah	101	3.99	2,531,997	Basra

**[3b]**

- 7.20 A profile briefing paper on Basrah governorate produced by the UN's Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit (now the Joint Analysis and Policy Unit (JAPU)), dated February 2011, explained that a government security operation in the governorate of Basrah in March 2008 led Shi'ite cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr to call a ceasefire at the end of the month, improving considerably the security situation in Basrah in the second half of 2008. **[21a]** The UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers From Iraq, 31 May 2012, described the security situation in southern Iraq as a 'mixed picture', with Sunni attacks continuing in those areas closest to Baghdad, notably in Babel [Babylon], although such groups were also capable of launching attacks further south, 'including Basrah, Nasseriyah, Kerbala and Najef.' **[5a](p.46)** An interview with Dr Michael Knights, fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (published by aforementioned institute), dated 31 July 2012 observed that at the time, southern Iraq suffered 'few security incidents' and those which did occur were of a local and constrained nature, such as a shooting. Such insecurity had very little impact on civilian life. **[39a](p.3)**
- 7.21 According to the Report on Human Rights in Iraq: January to June 2012, published by the UNAMI Human Rights Office and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, October 2012, the main security incidents in the first half of 2012 were concentrated in 'Baghdad and its surrounding areas, and in the Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) areas around Mosul and Kirkuk.' By contrast the source acknowledged that '...Basra saw far fewer attacks.' **[2b](p.2)**. An updated report from the same title, covering events between July and December 2012, similarly noted, '[a]s in the first half of the year, violent incidents were most concentrated in the Governorates of Baghdad, Ninewa, Kirkuk, Anbar and Salahiddin'. **[2a](p.3)** However, the source went on to clarify that '... there were some sporadic acts of violence outside of these areas...' **[2a](p.3)** and later highlighted that in September 2012, for the first time since January of that year, the southern provinces of Basra, Missan and Thi Qar suffered attacks that appeared targeted against civilians. The source further suggested that these attacks may have been in response to the death sentence passed against [Sunni] vice president Al Hashemi. **[2a](p.3)** A later report from the Institute for the study of War, dated 21 June 2013, noted that since January 2013, Al Qaeda in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq had carried out 'spectacular attacks' in Baghdad and attacks in the south of the country, including Basra. **[19a]**
- 7.22 The UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012 also commented that following past intra-Shia violence in southern Iraq, such groups 'reportedly continued to engage in assassinations of "score settling and intimidation" against security officials, religious and political rivals.' **[5a](p.46)**

See also: [Shi'ite insurgents](#)

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## 8. Population displacement

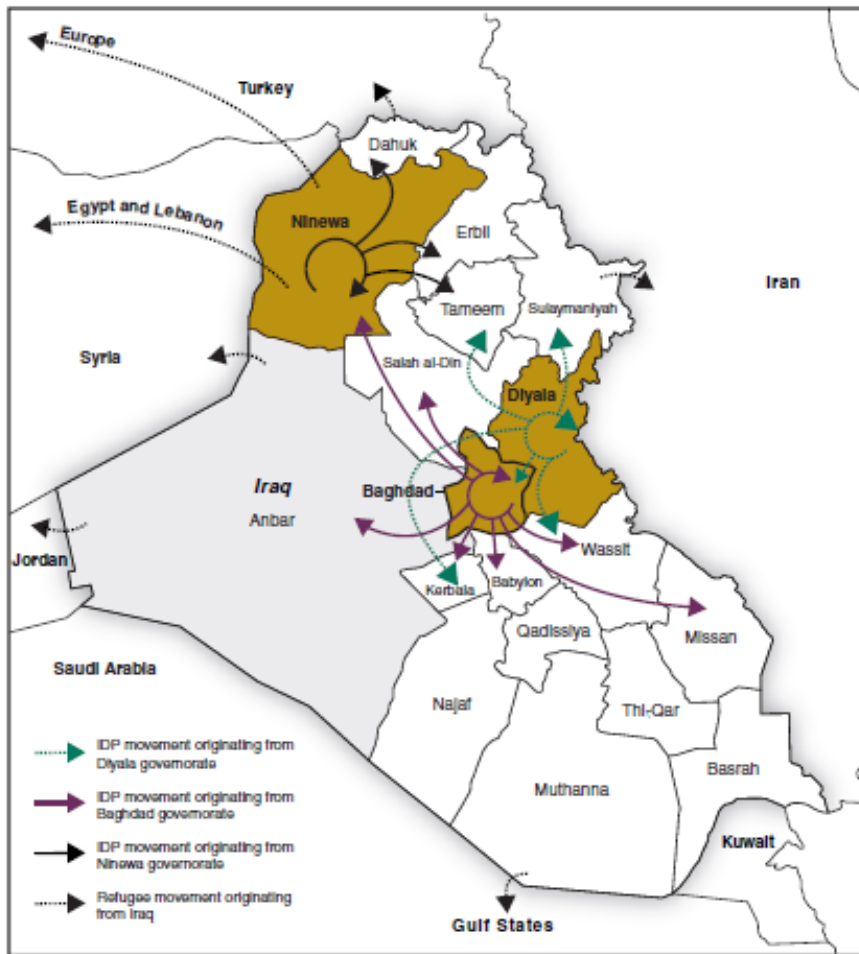
Violence in Iraq, particularly since the fall of former regime in 2003, has led to widespread population displacement both internally and outside the country. Levels of displacement and the movement of displaced persons, who either return to their place

of origin, integrate locally into 'host' communities, or remain in state of protracted displacement, can therefore provide useful background information when considering the security situation in the country. Additionally users should note that there have been reports that armed militias have deliberately employed policies of sectarian cleansing to change the demographic make up of particular areas. This will therefore be relevant when considering issues related to internal movement and relocation. For further information see: ['Sectarian cleansing' and population shifts](#). Additionally see: [Drivers of violence, 'sectarian and ethnic conflict'](#)

## Background

- 8.01 An article by Elizabeth Ferris, senior fellow in Foreign Policy (FP) and co-ordinator of the Brookings London School of Economics project on Internal Displacement, dated 18 March 2013, explained that the displacement problem in Iraq dated back to regime of Saddam Hussein, when '... some 500,000 Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), displaced under the former regime, returned to their place of origin.' **[22a]** According to a US Government Accountability Office (GAO) paper, dated December 2010, the former regime's policies included the 'arabisation' of parts of the country to strengthen political control, forcing out 'many non-Arabs from Kirkuk and the surrounding areas and replaced them with Arab citizens.' **[23a](p.6-7)**
- 8.02 In the period 2003 to 2006, more than a million Iraqis were displaced due to violence. In February 2006, the bombing of the Al-Askaria Mosque and its violent aftermath pushed the internally displaced population up to 2.7 million. (Elizabeth Ferris, 'Remembering Iraq's displaced', 18 March 2013) **[22a]** UNHCR reported in '... December 2009 that an estimated 2.76 million individuals were displaced in Iraq, 1.2 million of which had been displaced prior to 2006. ... According to [the International Organisation for Migration] IOM, as of September 2008, about 90 percent of the post-2006 IDPs in Iraq originated from Baghdad, Diyala, and Ninewa governorates.' (US Government Accountability Office, 'Displaced Iraqis: Integrated International Strategy Needed to Reintegrate Iraq's Internally Displaced and Returning Refugees', December 2010) **[23a](p.6-7)**

8.03 The following map outlines key movement of displaced Iraqis from 2006 to September 2008:



Sources: GAO analysis of maps from UNHCR and OCHA; IOM (data); Map Resources (map).

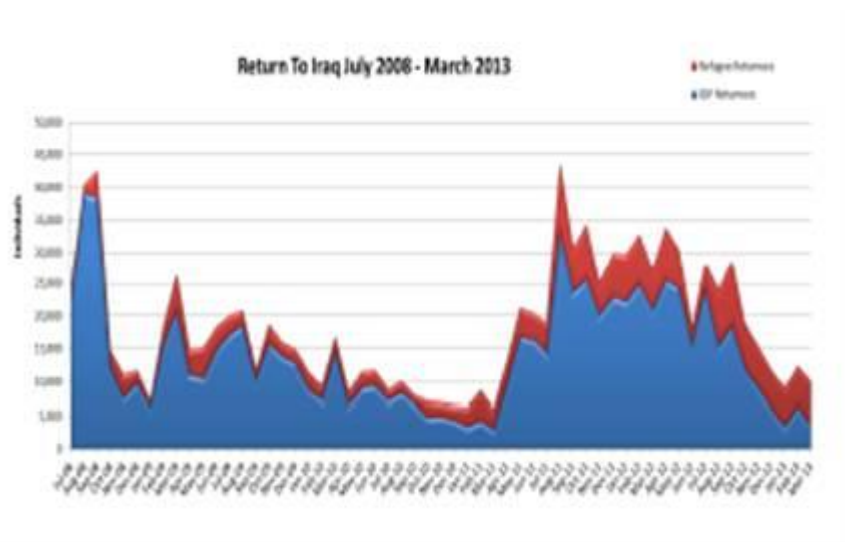
**[23a](p.7)**

8.04 A paper from the Refugee Studies Centre, entitled ‘Unlocking protracted displacement: An Iraqi case study’, dated August 2011, highlighted that ‘...the IDP estimate was revised downwards from 2.6 to 1.55 million people. This new figure excludes the pre-2003 IDPs in Iraq who are now considered to be integrated in their host communities. In addition, close to 168,000 Iraqi IDPs were reported to have returned to their homes during 2009.’ **[24a](p.10)** Additionally the source noted with regard to the registration of IDPs by the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (IMoDM): ‘Only post-2006 IDPs are allowed to register with IMoDM for assistance, leaving out those who fled as a result of the 2003 change of regime. Furthermore, IDP registration at the governorate level has started and stopped in fits with the most recent wave of registration in these administrative regions (in 2010) being taken for statistical purposes rather than for any possible assistance or benefits.’ **[24a](p.10)**

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## Current levels of displacement and return

- 8.05 The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled ‘Displaced Iraqis: Integrated International Strategy Needed to Reintegrate Iraq’s Internally Displaced and Returning Refugees’, dated December 2010, acknowledged that by 2010, new displacement in Iraq was ‘rare’, although there remained a sizeable number of persons who remained displaced. **[23a](p.7-8)** According to recent figures available from the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (and Bureau of Displacement and Migration in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq), there were 1,131,810 IDPs registered as at January 2013. This figure was down 31 per cent from September 2008 figures (which recorded 1,630,383 IDPs). (UNHCR Iraq Operation – Monthly Statistical Update on Return – March 2013) **[5b](p.1)** Data broken down by governorate is listed under Annex H: Internal displacement figures (post February 2006) as at January 2013.
- 8.06 The UNHCR Iraq Operation, ‘Monthly Statistical Update on Return – March 2013’ also noted that an estimated two million Iraqis were displaced into neighbouring countries after the war and sectarian violence, although the actual figure was not known. The same source, based on information from the UNHCR Data Analysis Group, dated February 2013, reported that there were 47,623 registered Iraqi cases (125,508 individuals) in the region (namely in Syria, Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council states (of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). **[5b](p.2)**
- 8.07 The total number of registered returns to Iraq (including both IDPs and refugee returns) increased by 15.5 per cent in Iraq from 2011 to 2012, from 260,690 to 301,060, based on data recorded by UNHCR field offices. (UNHCR Monthly Returns Update 2013) **[5b]** The following chart shows registered returns to Iraq from July 2008 to March 2013 (both IDP and refugee returnees):



(UNHCR Monthly Returns Update 2013)**[5b]**

- 8.08 According to the UNHCR Monthly Returns Update 2013 the improved security/political situation in Iraq was ‘given by Returnees as the primary reason for returns to Iraq’, which

the source noted was 'consistent with the marked decline in all security related incidents in Iraq in the previous period.' However the report went on to observe that 'March 2013 recorded a decrease in the registered returnees due to the unstable situation in some of the Iraqi governorates.' **[5b](p.1)** Similar trends were also noted in survey data captured by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Iraq, based on field work carried out between January 2009 and June 2012 (NB: The source does not therefore account for the deterioration in the security situation in 2013). **[25a](p.3)** Based on a sample of 2,713 returnee families, improved security in their place of origin was cited as the main reason for return (97 per cent). Other reasons included difficult conditions in displacement (74 per cent); benefits of returnee payments (53 per cent); assistance from the local community (31 per cent) and improved relations with the local community (25 per cent). **[25a](p.8)** However, the same source also acknowledged that the situation facing IDPs differed across Iraq. For example, only 3 per cent of assessed families from Qadissyia cited the poor security situation as the reason preventing return, compared to 90 per cent from Babylon. **[25a](p.8)**

### 'Sectarian cleansing' and population shifts

- 8.09 An article by Elizabeth Ferris, senior fellow in Foreign Policy and co-ordinator of the Brookings London School of Economics project on Internal Displacement, dated 18 March 2013, noted that the period 2003 to 2006, saw significant levels of displacement as '... sectarian militias battled for control of specific neighbourhoods.' The report further explained that when considering sectarian violence circa 2003 – 2008:

'It is important to underscore that this displacement was not just a by-product of the conflict, but rather the result of deliberate policies of sectarian cleansing by armed militias. ... The internally displaced were the most vulnerable -- and perhaps the clearest sign of the success of sectarian cleansing as entire neighborhoods were transformed. Sunnis and Shiites alike moved from mixed communities to ones where their sect was the majority. And while the displacement of Sunnis and Shiites was massive, proportionately the displacement of religious minorities was even more sweeping in effect.' **[22a]**

- 8.10 Referring to Iraqi refugees displaced to neighbouring countries, a report from the Refugee Studies Centre, dated August 2011, citing UNHCR's Iraqi Support Unit (referred to by Andrew Harper in the paper 'Iraq's refugees: Ignored and unwanted', International Review of the Red Cross 90: 169-170), stated that '... 80 per cent of those registered with UNHCR originate from [Baghdad]...' The report further explained that this largely urban refugee population was "... hardly surprising given that much of the sectarian violence has occurred in the mixed Sunni and Shiite areas, which are overwhelmingly urban." **[24a](p.11)**
- 8.11 The IOM report Displacement and Monitoring Needs Assessment, Final Report 2012, observed that the '... ethnic and religious character of the last decade's violence in Iraq ...[had] changed the demographic landscape of the country.' The source observed that Shia [IDP] families had 'largely moved to Baghdad (38%) with smaller numbers displaced throughout other governorates (<10% each).' Sunni IDPs by comparison had located '... primarily in Diyala (18%), Salah al-Din (18%) Kirkuk (17%) and to Baghdad (15%), with smaller numbers across the other governorates'. **[25a](p.7)**

8.12 The same source also noted that survey data indicated the intention of IDPs had changed as their displacement became more prolonged. According to the report only 25 per cent of IDPs in 2006 intended to integrate into their host community, with the majority, 45 per cent, intending to return to their place of origin. However survey data from 2012 indicated this figure had been reversed significantly, with 85 per cent of IDPs intending to integrate and only 6 per cent suggesting they would return home. [25a](p.5) The source further explained:

‘As the period of displacement increases, families become dramatically less inclined to return, choosing instead to integrate into their locations of displacement. As the years pass, families may begin to feel settled in their new locations by establishing themselves within the community, enrolling their children in schools, and perhaps obtaining employment. Additionally, conditions in their communities of origin may make return impossible or undesirable. Most of Iraq’s IDP families see local integration as their most realistic option.’ [25a](p.6)

8.13 For further information on the ethno-religious demographic changes in Baghdad, compare Columbia University’s (The Gulf 2000 Project) reports, [Ethno-religious neighbourhoods in Metropolitan Baghdad, end of 2009](#) and [Ethno-religious neighbourhoods in Metropolitan Baghdad 2003](#)

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## 9. Protection provided by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and implementation of the rule of law

### Security force organisation

9.01 According to the UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers From Iraq, dated 31 May 2012, (UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines 2012) the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) numbered around 930,000 members. [5a](p.13) The Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) paper, ‘Iraq after US Withdrawal: US policy and the Iraqi Search for Security and Stability’, dated 18 July 2012 (Iraq after US Withdrawal 2012), put the number of personnel in the Iraqi Security Forces, as at 10 October 2011, to be 933,103. This comprised:

- Forces under the command of the Ministry of Defense (totalling 279,103), which included the Iraqi army (200,000); Training and Support (68,000); Air Force (5,053); Navy (3,650) and Army Air Corps (2,400) and
- Forces under the Ministry of Interior (totalling 649,800) which included the Iraqi Police (325,000); Facilities Protection Service (95,000); Training and Support (89,800); Department of Border Enforcement (60,000); Iraqi Federal Police (45,000) and Oil Police (35,000).

9.02 However figures provided by the Brookings Institute, ‘Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Iraq’, dated July 2012, noted the size of the Iraqi security

forces on duty to have increased from 99,600 in 2003 to 670,000 in 2011. **[6b](p.107, figure VII.26)** The Middle East Security Report 10, from the Institute for the Study of War, entitled ‘Maliki’s Authoritarian Regime’, dated April 2013 (ISW Maliki’s Regime 2013), explained that the ISF had six ‘competing’ intelligence agencies:

‘... [T]he Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS); the Ministry of State for National Security Affairs (MSNSA); the military intelligence directorate (M2) within the Ministry of Defense’s Joint Headquarters; the Directorate General for Intelligence and Security (DGIS), also within the Ministry of Defense; the National Information and Investigative Agency (NIIA) within the Ministry of Interior; and the Office of Information and Security (OIS ) within OCINC [Office of the Commander in Chief]. The INIS and MSNSA are rival national-level intelligence agencies that collect human intelligence on internal and external threats. The M2 and DGIS provide operationally focused intelligence support to the Iraqi security forces, although the DGIS also conducts intelligence collection abroad from positions within Iraqi diplomatic missions. The NIIA is often compared to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, but it maintains a greater focus on domestic intelligence collection than its American counterpart. The OIS reports solely to Maliki through OCINC and “carries out undefined special intelligence and security missions.” **[19c](p.15)**

- 9.03 The same source also explained that the Office of the Commander in Chief (OCINC), controlled by Prime Minister Maliki oversaw several of Iraq’s most elite units, including the 56<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 6<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division, also known as the Baghdad Brigade (comprising roughly 3,000 soldiers and T-72 tanks), which had responsibility for security of Baghdad’s Green Zone and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Presidential Brigades. According to the report, the OCINC ‘... can and does override the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior.’ **[19c](p.11)**
- 9.04 Under the Iraqi constitution, the Kurds maintained their own security forces known as the peshmerga, numbering perhaps 75,000. (CRS, ‘Iraq: Politics, Governance and Human Rights’, 3 June 2013) **[4a](p.18)**

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## Security and the ISF’s counter-insurgency capabilities

- 9.05 A blog post by the military analyst Bill Ardolino, on The Threat Matrix, ‘a blog of the Long War Journal’, dated 5 October 2012, identified several factors that US military leaders ‘commonly identified as responsible for the improved security in Iraq...’ which occurred around 2007-2008. These included:

‘...’

- The ‘Surge’ and Counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy
- The Awakening (‘the rise of the Iraqi people and reconciliation’)
- Strengthened Iraqi security forces
- The theory that sectarian cleansing and refugee flight had run their course
- The truce with elements of the [Shi’ite] Mahdi Army
- Improved border control of foreign fighters and weapons’ **[27a]**



9.06 The source in particular highlighted that ‘...the Surge and COIN worked in the context of the Awakening...[i.e. the rise of the Iraqis, predominantly Sunnis, against insurgents]’, explaining that: ‘[This]... was really driven home by the candid admission of Iraqis who credited Americans with giving them the support they needed to find their feet and take the fight to both al Qaeda in Anbar and the Mahdi Army in Baghdad.’ **[27a]** An ISW paper dated April 2013 also noted that ‘...with the launch of offensive counter insurgency operations as part of the ‘Surge’ the ISF established improved command and control mechanisms, with the introduction of ‘operations commands’, intended to ‘better coordinate the actions of the military and police forces in a given area.’ **[19c](p.13)** According to ISW paper, ‘[t]he operations commands proved quite successful at planning and executing security operations , coordinating the efforts of military and police forces in a given area, improving communication across the chain of command, and, consequently, reasserting government control over previously insecure areas.’ **[19c](p.14)**

9.07 The Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) was ‘probably the most effective element in the Iraqi Security Forces for countering ... Al-Qaeda ...’ (according to US Lieutenant General Robert Calsen (Chief of the Office of Security Cooperation – Iraq) interviewed on 13 April 2013 by Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, reported in the Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30 April 2013) **[28b](p.10)** The CTS reported directly to Prime Minister Maliki under the Office of the Commander in Chief (OCINC), an ‘extra-legal body’ that lacked accountability or oversight, but had ‘significant powers and resources...’, including the Iraqi Special Operations Forces. (The ISW Middle East Security Report 10, ‘Maliki’s Authoritarian Regime’, April 2013) **[19c](p.11)**

For further background see: [Securify force organisation](#)

9.08 However, according the UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers From Iraq, 31 May 2012 (The UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012), protection by national authorities, against non-state actors, was ‘unlikely’ to be available in most cases given their ‘limited capacity to enforce law and order.’ The source cited the ISF’s vulnerability to corruption, infiltration by militants, political disunity and the fact that the security forces were themselves a ‘main target’ of insurgent attacks, as limiting factors to the effectiveness of the ISF. **[5a](p.13)** The CSIS paper ‘Iraq after US Withdrawal 2012’, similarly remarked that the Iraqi Security Forces still faced major challenges including ‘growing levels of corruption, politicization, and deterioration in some elements of these forces and within the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior.’ **[6b](p.102)** The US State Department 2012 Human rightst Report: Iraq, 19 April 2013, noted: ‘Problems persisted with the police regarding sectarian divisions, corruption, ties to tribes, and unwillingness to serve outside the areas from which they were recruited. The army and federal police recruited nationwide and deployed soldiers and police to various areas, reducing the likelihood of corruption related to personal ties to tribes or militants.’ **[9a] (section 1d)**

9.09 A quarterly report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), dated 30 October 2012, observed that within the Ministry of Interior (MoI) ‘... the single greatest shortfall in the near term is in the gathering and processing of intelligence’. In particular, following the departure of US forces, the MoI ‘lacks the equipment and training to intercept communications.’ **[28a](p.75)**

## Attacks against the ISF and the growing insurgent threat

The following information should be considered together with material listed under section 6, [‘Main actors involved in the violence’](#).

- 9.10 An Amnesty International report entitled ‘Iraq: A decade of abuses’, dated March 2013, remarked that one of the likely aims from the current trend by armed groups to conduct ‘... suicide and other bombings intended to cause large numbers of civilian as well as other casualties... [was to] undermine public confidence in the present government and its security forces by creating conditions which make it appear that they are incapable of governing the country and protecting the public.’ **[26a](p.9)**
- 9.11 In particular, the increased threat posed by Al-Qaeda, which had ‘... accelerated the pace of [its] attacks on mainly Shiite targets’ since US forces withdrew in late 2011 (Council on Foreign Relations, ‘Al-Qaeda in Iraq’, 18 March 2013) **[18b]**, represented a significant threat to the maintenance of law and order in Iraq. A background briefing from the Institute for the Study of War, dated 31 May 2013, described as ‘noteworthy’ Al Qaeda’s ability to carry out coordinated VBIEDs (Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices) attacks against ‘... strategically selected sites within Baghdad...’ following a series of incidents in May 2013. The source further observed that the use of so many VBIEDs demonstrated a ‘... high degree of technical and organizational skills...’ indicating an ability to produce VBIEDs in large numbers and rapidly – such capabilities indicated the ‘... dramatic extent to which Al Qaeda appears to have recovered...’ since its defeats in 2007 and 2008. **[19b](p.3)**
- 9.12 Underlying sectarian tensions were also identified as one of the challenges facing the Iraqi Security Forces, with the ‘... faltering alliance between Sunni tribal leaders in Sunni dominated areas – particularly in Anbar and Ninewa’ leading to growing Shiite and Sunni tensions, which were already weakened following the Iraqi government’s ‘failure to integrate the Sons of Iraq [which were identified as a key component in reducing violence under the ‘Surge’ counter-insurgency<sup>3</sup>](CSIS, ‘Patterns of Violence in Iraq, 24 October 2012)**[6a](Executive Summary, p.4)**

For further information on the current security situation across Iraq see: [Security by region](#), whilst further material on the wider political crisis in Iraq can be found under the background section, [‘Political crisis \(2011 – 2013\)’](#).

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## Implementation of the rule of law and access to due process

This section aims to provide an overview on the extent to which the Iraqi state is able to provide a rule of law, including access to fair trial standards to its citizens. This is followed by relevant subsections which explore some of the key institutional challenges facing the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), notably sectarian and political divisions and corruption in the ISF.

<sup>3</sup> For further information see the blog post by the military analyst Bill Ardolino entitled ‘Threat Matrix: “Why the violence ... declined in Iraq”, 5 years later’, 5 October 2012 **[27a]**

- 9.13 Several sources including the US State Department (in its 2012 Human Rights Report: Iraq, 19 April 2013) **[9a]**, UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (in their Human Rights and Democracy 2012, Iraq, March 2013) **[11a]** and Freedom House (in its Freedom in the World 2013, Iraq report, April 2013) **[29a]**, raised concerns that the Iraqi Security Forces failed to respect human rights and frequently violated fair trial standards. The UNCHR Eligibility Guidelines 2012 noted that in recent years there were consistent reports of ISF '...using repressive measures such as arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detention (including in "secret" facilities) and torture to silence political opponents, journalists and protestors.' The source also added that there had been reports of ISF abusing LGBTI individuals. **[5a](p.12-13)**
- 9.14 A report from Amnesty International entitled 'Iraq: A decade of abuses', dated March 2013, called on the Iraqi authorities to urgently take measures to address various serious human rights abuses, including detention without trial, torture and other ill treatment, unfair trials and the death penalty. **[26a](p.11)** The same source further remarked that, amid the context of ongoing armed conflict in Iraq '... tens of thousands of Iraqis have been rounded up by the authorities, many of them have been detained for months or years without charge or trial in conditions that facilitate, even invite, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment...' **[26a](p.8)** The report further explained that detainees who were at particular risk were those held 'incommunicado for interrogation' and especially in detention facilities controlled by the Ministry of Interior or Ministry of Defence. **[26a](p.19)**
- 9.15 The same report also observed with regard to the implementation of due process in the country:
- 'When prisoners have been brought before the courts, international fair trial standards also have been frequently and systematically violated. Many defendants have alleged that police or other interrogators tortured and coerced them to make selfincriminating statements while holding them incommunicado in pre-trial detention, and have repudiated such "confessions" at trial. Courts, however, have frequently accepted such "confessions" as evidence despite their repudiation by defendants, and used them as a basis to deliver guilty verdicts. Much of Iraqi justice still functions according to the principle that "the confession is the master of evidence", underscoring the pervasive nature of the "confession culture" that dominates the approach of the police and security forces to obtaining information as a basis for prosecuting suspects before the courts. In many cases... courts have convicted defendants of terrorism or other serious crimes on the basis of confessions that defendants say were coerced from them under torture when they were detained without access to lawyers or any contact with the world outside their place of incarceration. They have also sentenced many such defendants to death.' **[26a](p.8)**
- For further information refer to [Annex I: Torture and other ill-treatment: Voices of survivors](#), which provides an extended extract taken from the above-referenced AI report.
- 9.16 The US State Department, 2012 Human Rights Report: Iraq, dated 19 April 2013, noted that in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) there were '...press reports and credible accounts that KRG [Kurdistan Regional Government] security forces committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.' **[9a](1a)** The Report on Human Rights in Iraq: July – December 2012, by the UNAMI Human Rights Office and Office of the High

Commissioner for Human Rights, dated June 2013 however noted that reports of abuse remained 'low' in KRG prisons and the authorities had 'showed itself generally to be proactive in investigating allegations of abuse or mistreatment within its facilities.' The report did however acknowledge that concerns remained regarding the treatment of those accused of committing acts of terrorism, with accounts of excessive detention without charge or trial '... and in relation to some persons detained in areas around Mosul by Asayish forces.' **[2a](Executive Summary, ix)**

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## Sectarian divisions in the ISF

- 9.19 A slightly dated report from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, entitled 'Withdrawal from Iraq: Assessing the Readiness of Iraqi Security Forces', dated August 2009, noted that although there were no official statistics, the ISF had become '...less Shi'ite dominated, at least numerically...' suggesting that an article in the Christian Science Monitor may be 'roughly correct' in estimating the ISF to comprise 54 per cent Shi'ite, 31 per cent Sunni and 15 per cent Kurdish, resembling the demographic make up of Iraq. **[6c](p.121)** However the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) paper, Middle East Security Report 10, 'Maliki's Authoritarian Regime', dated April 2013, noted that Prime Minister Maliki's increased control over the security forces, which began soon after he took office in mid-2006 **[19c](p.6 and 16)** coincided with a 'shift in the composition of officers in senior command positions', tending towards 'overwhelming Shi'a majorities.' **[19c](p.16)**
- 9.20 The UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers From Iraq, dated 31 May 2012 remarked that in the past decade of sectarian violence, the Iraqi Security forces '...reportedly infiltrated by members of primarily Shi'ite armed groups [had] ... been accused of engaging in frequent kidnappings, torture and summary executions of (mainly) Sunni Arabs.' **[5a](p.12-13)** A letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, dated 9 May 2011, based on consultations '... with a senior advisor to the UK Police Advisory team, currently serving in Baghdad, a[n] Intelligence Analyst from a commercial company working in Baghdad and a[n] Iraqi representative of an International NGO with offices across Iraq...' explained:
- 'It is difficult to offer an accurate assessment of the level of infiltration of the Iraqi Government and Iraqi Security Forces. However, according to our contacts, both Sunni insurgents and Shi'a militias are infiltrated into ministries and the security forces. It is further claimed that ISF, especially the Iraqi Police, are largely infiltrated by Shi'a militias who are funded and directed by Iran. Infiltration is suspected to reach to senior levels in Government and Security circles. We were told that it would be a straightforward process for a senior member of the government or a security body to take advantage of their position to access personal information of any other individual.' **[8b]**
- 9.21 More recently an ISW paper, dated 21 June 2013, referring to the alleged mobilisation of Shiite insurgents in Baghdad, stated that some militia activity was occurring 'within sight of Iraqi Security Forces checkpoints', which suggested that '... [Prime Minister] Maliki is either tolerating it or has lost control over the escalation.' **[19a]** An ISW blog report, posted around mid June 2013, similarly acknowledged that the activities of the Shi'ite insurgent group Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haq (AAH) '...appear[ed] to go on without

resistance or objection from Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki...’ although the source went on to caveat the statement noting that ‘... it is difficult to prove his complicity’. **[19d]** An ISW background brief, dated 31 May 2013, also noted the presence of personnel in civilian clothing at official ISF checkpoints in Baghdad. According to Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MoI) these individuals belonged to formations ‘within the Ministry of Interior’. Additionally there were reports of ‘false checkpoints’ with personnel in civilian clothing ‘who may or may not be security officials’ reportedly checking identity documents and enquiring about sectarian affiliation. According to the source, such activities were similar to those carried out by Shia militia in 2006-7. Although the report was unable to independently verify the identity of such individuals, it observed that such encounters may ‘... feed speculation that the MoI has become re-infiltrated by militias or is itself engaging in sectarian violence.’ **[19b](p.7)**

9.22 Sources also indicated that popular unrest in Iraq may be in part linked to concerns over sectarianism within the ISF. A report from Amnesty International (AI), entitled ‘Iraq: A decade of abuses’ dated March 2013, noted that the large scale protests which had taken place in the country since late 2012 by Sunni communities over alleged discrimination of Sunnis, notably in Anbar, Mosul and Salah al-Din, had led to calls from the demonstrators favouring ‘... greater respect for due process, the enactment of an amnesty law and a review of the country’s anti-terrorism law, and an end to violations of the rights of male and female prisoners and detainees.’ **[26a](p.9)**

9.23 However, the above-referenced AI report additionally acknowledged that human rights abuses in Iraq committed by the ISF were widespread and that the volume of documented material, when taken together, showed that torture and other ill-treatment of detainees was, and remained, ‘...an entrenched feature of the criminal justice landscape in Iraq...’. The source further recognised that the frequency and consistency of reports of abuses occurring to persons held in incommunicado detention and often at undisclosed locations suggested either ‘a regime of systematic torture’ or ‘a conspiracy to impugn the Iraqi security forces that encompasses individuals from across so wide a religious, political, social and geographic spectrum in Iraq as to defy credibility.’ **[26a](p.61)**

See also: [Protection provided by ethnic and religious groups](#)

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## Political influence in the ISF

9.24 According to the ISW Middle East Security Report 10, ‘Maliki’s Authoritarian Regime’, dated April 2013, ‘[T]oday, political and military power in Iraq is highly centralized in the Prime Minister Maliki’s personal office ... Maliki is the dominant force over Iraq’s conventional military forces, special operations units, intelligence apparatus, and civilian ministries.’ **[19c](Executive Summary)** The same source also acknowledged that Maliki was able to further consolidate his power by using “acting” positions to control the top civilian security positions in the country...’ with Maliki in 2010 selected to serve as acting Minister of Defence, acting Minister of Interior and acting National Security Advisor. **[19c](p.17)** The Congressional Research Service (CRS) report, ‘Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights’, dated 3 June 2013, also noted that the government formed in late 2010, allowed Maliki to ‘... retain for himself the Defense, Interior, and

National Security (minister of state) posts pending permanent nominees for those positions.’ **[4a](p.10)**

- 9.25 The CSIS paper ‘Patterns of Violence in Iraq’, dated 24 October 2012, although recognising the challenges faced by Prime Minister Maliki, considered the current sectarian political divisions in Iraq to be significant in undermining stability and security, concluding that ‘... the end result has been to effectively paralyze progress in many forms of governance and the rule of law, and to polarize the Iraqi military, police, and security forces along lines of loyalty to give power brokers or ethnic and sectarian factions.’ **[6a](p.60)** Political factors had, for example, resulted in the appointment of commanders on a temporary basis to bypass parliamentary review and to the establishment of ‘loyal’ units in the ‘... National Police, intelligence services, counter-terrorism forces, and Army to bypass the overall command chain to help secure the Prime Minister’s position’. According to the paper, this politicisation of security forces encouraged further sectarian divisions, with the regular police steadily becoming ... more closely tied to local governments, and at least some Sunni militia elements have reemerged.’ **[6a](p.61)** The same source also stated that, together with corruption, the politicization of the ISF had led to growing problems in securing infrastructure and petroleum facilities and that ‘...severe tensions between the police and military forces...’, that had been kept under partial control while US advisors were present, had become more serious [since they departed]. **[6a](p.4)**

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## Corruption in the ISF

- 9.26 The US State Department 2012 Human Rights, Iraq, 19 April 2013, noted that police corruption and bribery was a problem, with reports that detained individuals, including individuals with judicial release orders, were held arbitrarily until they received payment for release. Press reports quoted detainees who claimed that inmates were required to pay bribes of up to US\$10,000 for release, despite having no legal basis for continued detention. **[9a](1d Arbitrary Arrest or detention)**. The CSIS paper ‘Patterns of Violence in Iraq’, dated 24 October 2012, further observed: ‘Many elements of the regular police and security forces rapidly reverted to local control, taking bribes, selling positions and promotions, and supporting the dominant local authority. Local forces came under Sunni Arab control where Sunnis were dominant and under KRG control where Kurds were dominant.’ **[6a](p.4)** The same source also commented that the escalation in corrupt practices in Iraq, triggered by the US withdrawal, occurred ‘...throughout much of the Iraq military and police...’ and included the sale of appointments and promotions or in positions being awarded ‘... on the basis of nepotism, ethnic and sectarian ties, and political influence.’ This affected all ranks. **[6a](p.61)**

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## 10. Non-state protection, including tribal and political militias, and risks to religious/ethnic minority groups (including Christians)

### Protection provided by ethnic and religious groups

10.01 There is limited information specifically on the direct protection provided by ethnic or religious sects. Some sources raised concerns that considering ‘...post-2003 factionalism in Iraq as simply a conflict between Shi’a, Sunni, and Kurd, is to grossly simplify a complex situation.’ (Stuart Elden, Alison J Williams, ‘The territorial integrity of Iraq, 2003 – 2007: Invocation, violation, viability’, published in *Geoforum*, Volume 40, Number 3, May 2009) **[30a]**

For further information see: [Drivers of violence](#)

10.02 Nonetheless sources note that non-state groups were drawn along sectarian ethnic and religious lines. A paper published by Al Monitor on 14 February 2013, written by Mushreq Abbas, highlighted that all indications pointed to a tendency for Iraq’s three main ‘groups’, namely Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, to ‘... protect themselves through their own armed forces, rather than relying on others.’ **[29a]** According to the paper, following the collapse of the former regime in 2003, social and cultural upheaval prompted sectarian fears which ‘... not only contributed to the emergence of new militias...’ but also ‘... fostered a social environment with people who were sympathetic to militias, who needed them for protection, or who feared the militias so much that they kept their silence.’ The source continued:

‘The announcement [that] the Shiite Mahdi Army’s formation coincided with similar announcements by a number of armed Sunni groups, including the Islamic Army and the 20th Revolutionary Battalion. It also coincided with the emergence of al-Qaeda in Iraq. These armed groups quickly reproduced and became more numerous, with their map growing increasingly complex. Until 2005, their slogan was “resisting the occupation” and “fighting its collaborators.” Most of them changed face between 2006 and 2007, and formed opposing sides in the civil war ... Now the slogan has changed to “in defense of the sect.”’ **[29a]**

10.03 More recently, a report dated 20 June 2013 by Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, observed that militias once thought to have been disbanded had reemerged and new armed groups ‘taken root’ following a rise in violence in the country. **[31a]** For example, following the raid by security forces on Sunni protestors in Hawija, there were reports of local tribes deciding to organise themselves militarily, setting up the “Army of Pride and Dignity.” According to Qusay al-Zain, a senior protest organizer, the purpose of the tribal army is to “defend the honor, freedom, and dignity of the ‘ahl al-sunna’ [Sunnis] from Maliki and his militias.” (Al Monitor, Mushreq Abbas, ‘Militias Persevere in Modern Iraq’, 14 February 2013 **[29a]** and also reported by the Middle East Online, ‘Sunni army’ takes form in Iraq as sectarian tensions boil over’, 28 April 2013 **[32a]**) Similarly Shiite groups such as ‘Jaysh al-Mukhtar’, led by Wathiq al-Battat, sought to ‘defend the Shi’ite sect’ (Al Monitor, 14 February 2013) **[29a]**, by pursuing largely sectarian objectives such as ‘...confronting the Sunni current[ly] supporting the demonstrations in Al-Anbar; [and] ... confront[ing] alleged Gulf support by Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia...’ (‘Report on Iraqi Militias’, Al-Dammam, Al Sharq in Arabic, 27 February 2013) **[31a]**

See also: [Main actors involved in the violence](#)

## Sectarian affiliations in the ISF and Sons of Iraq

10.04 In considering the current distribution of power within the conventional armed forces, the AI Monitor report, dated 14 February 2013, written by Mushreq Abbas, explained that whilst the Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan had their own armed force, known as the Pesh merga and the Shi'ites had control over the largest proportion of the army and police, the '... Sunnis continue[d] to complain about the absence of a balanced distribution of [power in] the armed forces.' **[29a]**

For further information see: [Sectarianism in the ISF](#)

10.05 However some Sunni militia have aligned with the ISF, leading to some integration into the armed forces, whilst the predominantly Sunni group known as the Sons of Iraq (Sol) are commonly identified as one of the main factors responsible for improving security in Iraq (for example see the Long War Journal, Threat Matrix: 'Why the violence ... declined in Iraq, 5 years later', Bill Ardolino, 5 October 2012 **[27a]**, Middle East Forum, 'How the "Sons of Iraq" Stabilized Iraq', by Mark Wilbanks and Efraim Karsh, Fall 2010 **[33a]** or Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A Friedman and Jacob N. Shapiro, 'Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?', Summer 2012, Vol. 37, No. 1, Pages 7-40, Posted Online July 12, 2012 **[7a]**) Initially known as al-Anbar Awakening (Sahwat al-Anbar), the movement appeared in the summer of 2006 '...when local sheikhs [in Anbar governorate], disillusioned with the insurgency that had ravaged the province during the past two-and-a-half years, offered their support to the coalition forces. (Middle East Forum, 'How the "Sons of Iraq" Stabilized Iraq', by Mark Wilbanks and Efraim Karsh, Fall 2010) **[33a]**

10.06 The Congressional Research Service report, 'Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights', dated 3 June 2013, however highlighted that despite promises to fully integrate the 100,000 Sol members into the Iraqi Security Forces or other government jobs, there had been slow progress by Maliki's government, giving rise to Sunni grievances. As of early 2013, about 70,000 had been integrated, while a further 30,000 – 40,000 continued to man checkpoints in Sunni areas, drawing a salary from the government. In early 2013 Sol personnel received a 66 per cent salary increase to prevent desertion to Sunni insurgents, including Al Qaeda in Iraq.' **[4a](p.18)** There were mixed reports over whether this had been successful. According to the CRS source there were '... no indications that a significant number of Sons of Iraq fighters has joined AQ-I or other insurgent groups since Sunni anti-government demonstrations and violence began to escalate at the end of 2012.' **[4a](p.18)** However the CSIS paper 'Patterns of Violence in Iraq', 24 October 2012, observed that the slow pace of integration of Sol led to Sunni frustrations, which in turn led to Awakening fighters being harassed on both sides '...by a reemerging al Qa'ida threat and Shi'ites who question their allegiances.' These frustrations contributed to many Sunnis rejoining al Qa'ida. **[6a](p.78)** The report from AI Monitor entitled 'Militias Persevere in Modern Iraq', dated 14 February 2013, also noted that the Sahwa organisation in Anbar, led by Sheikh Ahmad Abou Risha, began to oppose the government in defense of Sunnis, concluding that the climate was 'conducive' to 'fusing together old and new militias for new, clearer purposes.' **[29a]**



## Ethnic and religious minorities

10.07 A Minority Rights Group paper, dated June 2012, highlighted that Christian militias had been set up in some towns in the Nineveh Plains (by the Kurdistan Regional Government), whilst Turkmen militia had been established in Kirkuk. **[36a](p.9)** A report by Al Monitor, dated 14 February 2013 also made reference to demands by religious minorities, including the Turkmen in Kirkuk and Talafour, the Shabak in Mosul and Christians throughout Iraq, to establish private militias. **[29a]** However sources repeatedly observed that violence in Iraq left minority groups particularly vulnerable, as the UNHCR's 'Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers From Iraq', dated 31 May 2012 explained:

'After the fall of the former regime, Iraqi politics and society largely fragmented along religious and ethnic lines, culminating in the large-scale sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs in 2006 and 2007. While the Iraqi authorities respect freedom of religion and have assumed the responsibility of protecting religious groups in Iraq (e.g., by providing security at places of worship and to pilgrims), armed groups continue to target religious groups, severely restricting the free exercise of religion.

'Political and religious extremism since 2003 has particularly impacted on ethnic and religious minority groups, which commonly do not have strong political or tribal networks. Minority groups represent "soft targets" for radical elements that consider them to be "infidels" and pressure them to conform to strict interpretations of Islamic rules in terms of their dress, social behaviour and occupations. In the ethnically and religiously mixed "disputed areas", tensions among Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen have been simmering since 2003. Extremist groups are allegedly aiming to exploit those tensions with a view to inciting further violence. Criminal groups have also singled out members of certain religious minorities who are perceived to be comparatively wealthy, in a particularly deadly combination of persecution and crime.' **[5a](p.24)**

10.08 The same source continued: 'As many of Iraq's religious (and ethnic) minority groups such as Christians, Yazidis and Kaka'i, live in the Ninewa Plains, Sinjar District and the city of Kirkuk, all areas which are disputed by the Kurds and the Arabs, they are subject to political pressure and economic marginalization, neglect, and at times harassment and low-level violence. Minority groups have reportedly been pressured to identify as Kurds or Arabs.' **[5a](p.27)**

See also: [Drivers to violence, Sectarian and ethnic conflict](#) and [Security by region, Northern and Central Iraq \(excluding Baghdad\)](#)

10.09 The Minority Rights Group (MRG) paper, 'Improving security for minorities in Iraq', dated June 2012, based field research, identified 'two seemingly contradictory tendencies' among Iraq's minority groups, namely: '[A] deeply held mistrust towards constitutionally recognized security agencies (and disappointment with their capacity to guarantee security), and on the other hand a recognition that, in order to provide effective security for minorities, there is no alternative to these bodies.' **[36a](p.13)**

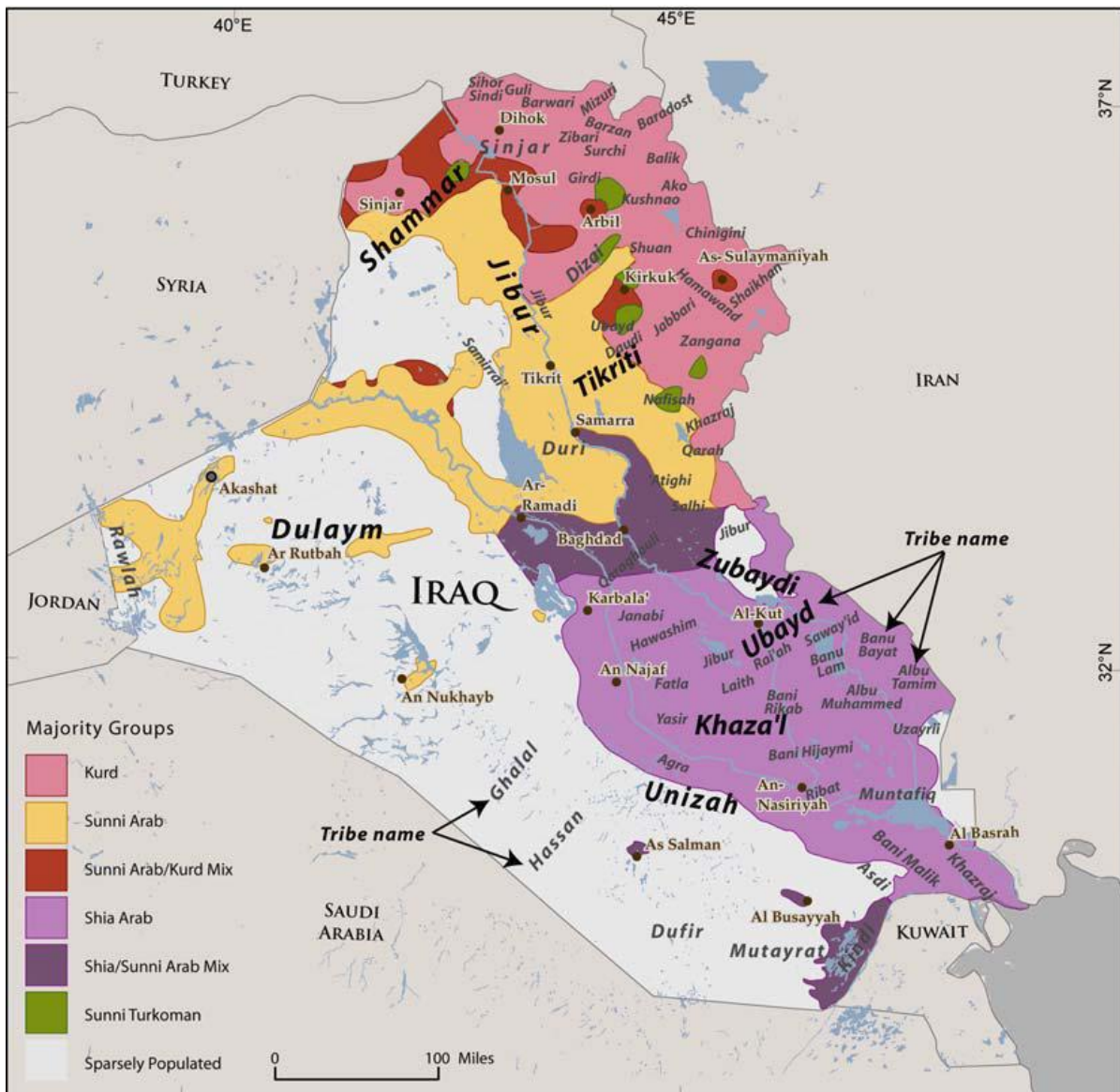
10.10 In considering how ethnic minorities remained especially vulnerable given the current trend towards sectarianism, the MRG paper explained: 'With the larger, more powerful communities often relying on mono-ethnic or mono-sectarian militias to protect them, minorities fear an encroaching "every community for themselves" approach, in which

they will face the choice of being outnumbered and outgunned, or accepting offers of protection made by other communities, with the terms necessarily dictated by the protector.’ [36a](p.14)

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### Protection provided by tribes

10.11 The following map outlines tribes and major confederations in Iraq:



Source: CIA Iraq Country Profile Inset: Distribution of Ethnoreligious Groups and Major Tribes  
 Map: Congressional Cartography, Library of Congress, 2007

(Congressional Research Service (CRS), ‘Iraq: Tribal Structure, Social and Political Activities, 7 April 2008) [4b]

10.12 An article in the Washington Post entitled ‘A House of Tribes for Iraq’, published 25 April 2008, explained that:

The main text of this COI bulletin contains the most up to date publicly available information as at 1 July 2013.

'Iraq has over 100 tribes, some of whose roots trace back 1,000 years. While modernization and urbanization have eroded tribal affiliations, tribal loyalties remain a bedrock of Iraqi society. Indeed, tribal affinities may matter as much as national, ethnic or religious identities. Tribal influences in Iraq have a greater longer-term effect than religion in many parts of the country. The Iraqi tribes, with tens of thousands of members, are based on lineage. They are concentrated in parts of Iraq, yet branch across to Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Gulf region, including the United Arab Emirates.' **[34a]**.

- 10.13 Similar information was also reported in the Congressional Research Service (CRS) paper 'Iraq: Tribal Structure, Social and Political Activities, dated 7 April 2008, which noted that there were about 150 tribes in Iraq, composed of around 2,000 smaller clans, '[t]he largest tribe numbers more than one million people; the smallest a few thousand. Seventy-five percent of the total Iraqi population are members of a tribe or have kinship to one.' **[4b]** The source further explained: 'Scholars believe that, despite the country's many political divides, including religion, ethnicity, and region, one of the least understood is the country's tribalism. Iraq has thousands of tribal groups to which various people pledge their loyalty, ranging from extended family clans that may number just several hundred people to broad confederations of clans that claim the loyalty of a million.'
- 10.14 The CRS paper additionally observed that several of the major tribal confederations, including the Jiburi and Shammar tribes, included both Sunni and Shia groups. **[4b]** This was also reported in an article by the Council on Foreign Relations, entitled 'Iraq: The Role of Tribes', dated 14 November 2003, in which it was noted that tribes were bound together by a mix of '... shared ancestry, geography, and a strict social code that demands allegiance between members.' The source further explained that ethnic background and religion were less important factors, with some tribes having 'Sunni, Shiite and even Kurdish branches...' The report also noted that in some cases tribal affiliations predated religious affiliations, as was the case with a number of southern tribes in Iraq, who only adopted Shiite Islam in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. **[18c]**
- 10.15 According to the above-referenced article from the Council on Foreign Relations, dated 14 November 2003, tribes appeared to have limited influence in Baghdad, although in smaller cities and rural areas, especially in the Shiite dominated south, tribal sheiks emerged as intermediaries between occupying forces and Iraqis. The source further added that tribes were '...regional power-holders' and tribal sheiks often respected members of Iraqi communities. Some experts therefore considered building relationships with tribes, especially in the 'Sunni triangle' [an area of central Iraq to the west and north of Baghdad] on the basis that it could improve security in the region. **[18c]** A report from RAND similarly noted the importance of tribal affiliations to counter the Al Qaeda threat, noting that in mid-2006 the Anbar Awakening, which later became the Iraqi Awakening (and was itself a forerunner to the 'Sons of Iraq' programme), was formed based on agreements from various, mainly Sunni tribes. **[35a](p.149-157)**

For further information about Sons of Iraq, see: [Sectarian affiliations in the ISF and Sons of Iraq](#)

- 10.16 Based on information included in the Danish Immigration Service report 'Security and Human Rights in South/Central Iraq', dated 10 September 2010, '[a] source in Baghdad considered it difficult to find an Iraqi without a tribal network. In terms of return if an

individual is returning after many years abroad, it may be hard to track one's tribal network again. However, it depends on one's family, its position and strength and how many remain in Iraq.' **[16a]** However according to an international NGO in Amman the tribal system had undergone a period of 'some change' since 2003, becoming '...more and more decentralized...' as illustrated by the emergence of self-proclaimed tribal leaders in different areas.' The source, again citing an international NGO in Amman, continued:

'Regarding protection, it was stated that the question of whether or not this is available to a person very much depends on his or her tribal or political network. ... According to the international NGO's own security procedures for its local staff in a situation of conflict, the police would not necessarily be the first instance one should contact. Concerning the security or police forces, it is hard to know 'who is who' and the make-up of the forces, even for locals.

'... The most vulnerable persons when it comes to security are those who are independent of links, i.e. those without a tribal and/or political network. ... Instead of turning to the police, persons under threat have the alternative to turn to tribes and/or political parties. It was underlined that tribes and political parties do not make up two entities and lots of intersections exist among the two. A person under threat would be best off seeking both options for protection if possible. It is impossible to give an overall illustration of this phenomenon and there is no overarching rule with regard to the relationship between tribes and political parties and protection mechanisms. Throughout Iraq, there are different mechanisms of checks and balances between the political system and the tribes, and this arrangement is fluid and prone to change.' **[16a](p35)**

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# Annex A

## Map of Iraq

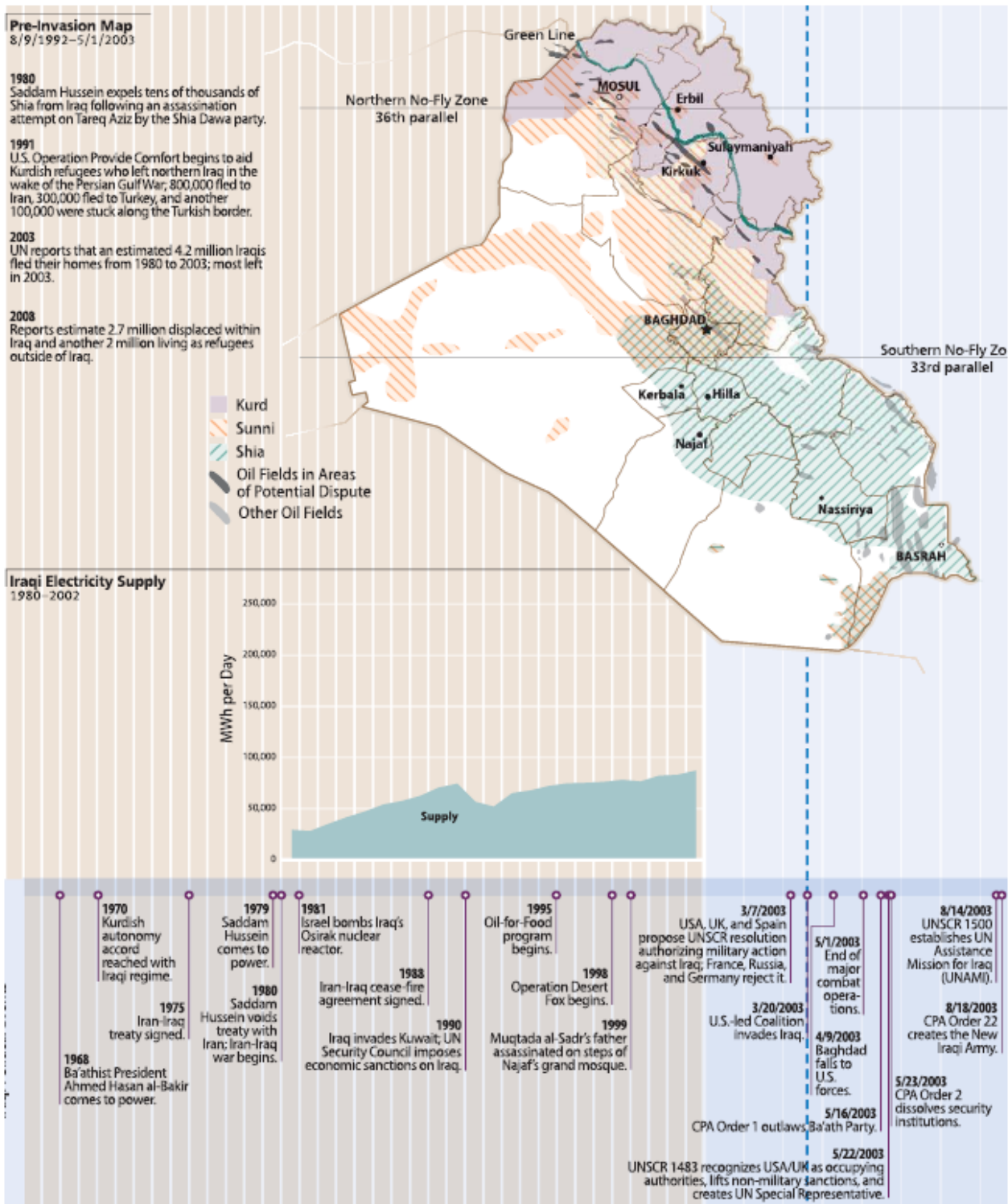


(Congressional Research Service, 'Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security', 28 October 2009) [4c]

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# Annex B

## Historical snapshot: including ethnic and religious divisions before and during the US invasions (post-2003)



(Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 'Patterns of Violence', 24 October 2012, sourced to SIGIR, April 2010)[6a](p.10)

The main text of this COI bulletin contains the most up to date publicly available information as at 1 July 2013.

# Annex C

## Data-sets covering violence in Iraq: 2011 and 2012

### Official government figures

Official Iraqi government figures, cited by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Human Rights Office and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in their human rights reports, recorded 3,102 civilians killed in 2012, compared to 2,781 in 2011. Official figures also recorded 12,146 civilians injured in 2012, compared to 10,386 in 2011. Figures are provided in full below:

Year	Civilians killed	Civilians wounded
January – December 2012 <b>[2a](p.2) and [2b](p.2)</b>	3,102  (1,398 between January and June 2012 and 1,704 between July and December 2012)	12,146  (5,495 between January and June 2012 and 6,651 between July and December 2012)
January – December 2011 <b>[2c](p.2)</b>	2,781	10,386

[NB: Figures for 2011 are referred to the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR)**[2c](p.2)**, 2012 figures are simply referred to as 'official government figures'**[2a](p.2) and [2b](p.2)**].

### UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

Figures compiled from UNAMI's direct monitoring recorded 3,238 civilian fatalities in 2012 compared to 2,771 in 2011. UNAMI figures also listed 10,379 civilians wounded in 2012 in comparison to 7,961 in 2011. Figures are listed below:

Year	Civilians killed	Civilians wounded
January – December 2012 <b>[2a](p.2) and [2b](p.2)</b>	3,238 (1,346 between January and June 2012 and 1,892 between July and December 2012)	10,379 (3,660 between January and June 2012 and 6,719 between July and December 2012)
January – December 2011 <b>[2c](p.2)</b>	2,771	7,961

[NB: 'UNAMI relies on direct investigation, along with credible secondary sources, in determining civilian casualties. UNAMI figures are conservative and may under-report the actual

number of civilians killed and injured for a variety of reasons. Where different casualty figures are obtained for the same incident, the figure as verified by UNAMI is used.' [2a](p.2)

## The Iraq Body Count

The Iraq Body Count database, accessed 21 June 2013, recorded 4,573 civilians deaths in 2012, compared to 4,147 in 2011. [3a] Monthly figures are listed below:

Month	2011	2012
January	389	524
February	252	356
March	311	377
April	289	392
May	381	304
June	386	529
July	308	469
August	401	422
September	397	396
October	366	290
November	279	239
December	388	275
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,147</b>	<b>4,573</b>

[3a]

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# Annex D

## Data-sets covering violence in Iraq: 2013

### UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

Figures compiled from UNAMI's direct monitoring recorded 3,209 civilian fatalities in first six months of 2013 (UNAMI, Civilian casualties) [2d], this compared to 1,346 between January and June 2012. [2b](p.2) There were also 7,756 civilians injured between January and June 2013, (UNAMI, Civilian casualties) [2d] compared to 3,660 over the same period in 2012. [2b](p.2)

Month	Civilian fatalities	Civilians injured
January	319	960
February	418	704
March	229	853
April 2013	595	1,438
May 2013	963	2,191
June 2013	685	1,610
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,209</b>	<b>7,756</b>
<b>Annualised total (based on first six months)</b>	<b>6,418</b>	<b>15,512</b>

[2d]

## The Iraq Body Count

The Iraq Body Count database, accessed 21 June 2013, recorded 1,109 civilians deaths in first three months of 2013 (January – March), compared with 1,257 over the same period in 2012. Complete data was not available for April – June. **[3a]** Monthly figures are listed below:

Month	Civilian deaths
January	357
February	358
March	394
April	493 (not complete)
May	5 (not complete)
June	-

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# Annex E

## Insurgent groups

The following provides background information on known insurgent groups operating in Iraq. The listings below should not be considered exhaustive or complete. Additionally users are recommended to read: [‘Difficulties in identifying armed groups’](#)

### Al-Qa’eda in Iraq

See also: Islamic State of Iraq

‘Al-Qa’eda in Iraq, a radical Salafi organization, has reportedly been the main proponent of the Sunni insurgency since 2003 and is widely blamed for widespread attacks against the MNF-I/USF-I, the ISF and the (mainly Shi’ite) civilian population. Since 2006, Al-Qa’eda in Iraq has claimed to operate under the umbrella of the Islamic State of Iraq. According to US officials, the group has between 800 and 1,000 members in Iraq. It is claimed to be most active in the governorates of Al-Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa (with Mosul being its major urban stronghold) and Salah Al-Din. But it is also present in Babel and Kerbala, and even further south, as evidenced by occasional attacks for example in Kut, Basrah or Nasseriya. Unlike other armed groups, Al-Qa’eda in Iraq has reportedly deliberately targeted Iraqi civilians at large, in particular Shi’ites, apparently with the aim of (re)igniting violence among Iraq’s ethnic and religious groups. Al-Qa’eda in Iraq claims responsibility for continuous attacks against the Shi’ite population and their places of worship - including the attack on the Al-Askari shrine in Samarra in February of 2006, which led to widespread sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi’ite armed groups in 2006 and 2007. Al-Qa’eda in Iraq has also claimed responsibility for attacks against the USF-I, the Iraqi Government, including its political, administrative and security representatives, and anybody considered to be collaborating with either the Government or the USF-I. Persons involved in fighting or openly criticizing Al-Qa’eda in Iraq risk being killed. As a result of diminished popular support, opposition from the Sahwa forces, increased USF-I/ISF offensives as well as high-profile arrests of leaders, the group was weakened and no longer holds territorial control of vast areas in central Iraq. Over time, Al-Qa’eda in Iraq is said to have transformed into a mainly “home-grown” terrorist group made up of Iraqi fighters, including those whose views are said to have radicalized after years in detention.

‘Nonetheless, Islamic State of Iraq / Al-Qa’eda in Iraq remains capable of launching major attacks, including multiple coordinated attacks across the country, 116 and has reportedly resurfaced in former strongholds. While Al-Qa’eda in Iraq originally fought to expel the MNF-I/USF-I from Iraq, it is said to have shifted its focus to combat the Iraqi Government, which it considers to be controlled by Shi’ite Iran. Al-Qa’eda in Iraq is reported to finance its activities through extortion, kidnappings for ransom and other criminal activities, especially since funding from abroad has reportedly slowed. Al-Qa’eda in Iraq professes to pursue a long-term goal of establishing a Sunni Islamic state based on Shari’a law, including by targeting Shi’ites and Sunnis participating in the political process, members of religious minorities, as well as women and men for their behaviour or dress, or professions considered to be “un-Islamic”. Al-Qa’eda in Iraq is also thought to engage in forcible recruitment, including of women and children, as suicide bombers or for other tasks. and target current Iraqi Security Forces, Government of Iraq

(GoI) employees, or very occasionally Shia gathering areas. Most incidents are targeted attacks against specific individuals, with only a small number of indiscriminate attacks.’ (UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers From Iraq, 31 May 2012, (UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines 2012)) **[5a](p.10)**

‘Since 2010, terrorist attacks have primarily targeted Iraqi security forces and government officials, but they have also been aimed at stirring ethnic tensions. AQI has been operating primarily in regions with majority Sunni Arab populations, particularly focusing its efforts in and around Baghdad and Ninewa, but appears unable to command territory or population centers. AQI’s propensity for brutal, high-profile attacks and their determination to control the insurgency resulted in public backlash against their tactics and strategy. The degradation of AQI’s capacities is expected to continue under the pressure of an ISF now more capable of targeting, capturing, and detaining terrorists and disrupting their networks. However, according to DoS, AQI has adapted to the changing security conditions and remains capable of coordinated mass-casualty attacks and assassinations. AQI will likely attempt to exploit widening political rifts that occur along sectarian lines.

In April 2010 a joint US-Iraqi raid near Tikrit killed Abu Ayyub al Masri, who led AQI since al-Zarqawi’s death in 2006. In October 2012, the Associated Press reported that Al Qa’ida in Iraq was “making a comeback”, capitalizing on general government instability by setting up training camps in western Iraq and increasing the number of attacks it carried out. Officials believe many of the fighters responsible the uptick in violence are former prisoners who either escaped from prison during an Al Qa’ida orchestrated jailbreak, or were released by Iraqi authorities after the US military withdrawal in 2011. Throughout 2012 Al Qa’ida in Iraq has taken responsibility for multiple attacks against security forces and government officials that have killed dozens of Iraqis in what it calls “revenge for the elimination and torture campaigns” of Maliki’s Shia-led government.’ (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, ‘Patterns of Violence in Iraq’, 24 October 2012)**[6a](p.45-46)**

See also: The Council on Foreign Relations, ‘Al-Qaeda in Iraq’, 18 March 2013  
<http://www.cfr.org/iraq/al-qaeda-iraq/p14811>

## Ansar Al-Islam

‘Ansar Al-Islam (or Ansar Al-Sunna), established in 2001, is considered to be a “home-grown” Kurdish Sunni extremist group that aims to establish an Islamic state governed by its interpretation of Shari’a law. In spring 2003, the group was largely driven out of Iraqi Kurdistan by joint USKurdish military operations, but subsequently regrouped and reportedly “became one of the most potent elements of the Sunni insurgency in Iraq.” Ansar Al-Islam’s former leader, Abu Abdullah Al-Shafi, who was arrested on 3 May 2010, maintained close ties with Al-Qa’eda in Iraq as well as with Osama Bin Laden and admitted to having conducted joint operations. Ansar Al-Islam is also reported to have close allies in Iran, a country reportedly used as a safe haven by its members. The organization has claimed responsibility for large-scale suicide and car bomb attacks in Mosul, Kirkuk, Erbil, and Baghdad, and is also active in Diyala. Its main targets have been the MNF- I/USF-I, the ISF, the Iraqi Government, as well as Kurdish security forces and political parties (Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan). It is also said to have targeted Sahwa members for their cooperation with the USF-I. Reportedly, it has also targeted Shi’ites, Kurds, Christians, Yazidis, Turkmen and Shabak. Reports indicate that Ansar Al-Islam has assassinated “government officials, politicians, judges, journalists, humanitarian

aid workers, doctors, professors, and individuals thought to be collaborating with foreign forces in Iraq, including translators, cleaners, and others who perform civilian jobs for the U.S.-led Multi-National Force in Iraq (MNF-I).” It has reportedly been involved in the killing of individuals considered to behave in an “un-Islamic” manner.’ (UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines 2012)

**[5a](p.10-11)**

‘Ansar al-Islam, is a Sunni terrorist group with both Kurd and Arab membership, operates in northern Iraq. The group was formed by Abu Abdullah al Shafi in 2001 when Shafi’s Sunni insurgents joined with a splinter Islamic group in Kurdistan. The fundamentalist group seeks the establishment of a Sunni-led government in Iraq guided by a strict interpretation of the sharia law. Ansar al-Islam is reported to have received funds from Al Qa’ida in exchange for providing sanctuaries in Iraqi Kurdistan for Sunni-linked Al Qa’ida militants. ... The group has claimed responsibility for the second-largest number of Sunni terrorist attacks in Iraq (behind only AQI). Ansar al-Islam is opposed to all foreign activities in Iraq, and has attacked Iraq’s current government for what it sees as cooperating with both US and Iranian military and intelligence. In response, Iraqi security forces have cracked down on Ansar al-Islam. In 2010, Iraqi forces supported by US advisors captured the group’s military leader, Abu Abdullah al Shafi.’ (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, ‘Patterns of Violence in Iraq’, 24 October 2012)**[6a](p.46)**

### The Naqshbandi army or Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabandia (JRTN)

‘The Naqshbandi Army (or JRTN) is a Sunni insurgent group with a mainly nationalistic outlook despite its claim to be part of a 14th century order of mystical Islam. It was formed in December 2006 in response to the execution of former President Saddam Hussein and seeks to re-establish the Ba’ath Party’s dominance in Iraq. The Naqshbandi Army has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks against the MNF-I/USF-I in Baghdad, Al-Anbar, Ninewa, Diyala and Salah Al-Din Governorates. It is reportedly also active in Kirkuk Governorate and, owing to Ba`athist ties to southern tribes, it is probably able to conduct limited attacks in southern Iraq. The Naqshbandi Army is opposed to the Iraqi Government, which it considers to be controlled by Iran and as having persecuted Sunnis. It is the doctrine of the Naqshbandi Army not to target Iraqi civilians unless they are considered as collaborators with “the unbeliever-occupier”, i.e. the Iraqi Government and previously foreign forces, apparently making it a more acceptable alternative for supporters than Al-Qa’eda in Iraq. It has been reported that the Naqshbandi Army enjoys sympathy if not support among Sunni security forces. Despite deep ideological differences between them, the Naqshbandi Army is reportedly financing operations for Al-Qa’eda in Iraq, particularly attacks on civilian targets, in order not to be seen to be undermining its policy of not attacking civilians. It reportedly also outsources attacks to other armed groups.’ (UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines 2012) **[5a](p.11)**

‘Jayish Rijal al Tariq al-Naqshabandi is another Sunni terrorist group operating in northern and central Iraq, which emphasizes what it claims to be the religious justifications for its attacks. Shi’a extremist groups – backed by Iranian funding, training, and weapons – also present a threat to Iraqi and US military forces. DoS reported that attacks by these groups have decreased this year, but their Iranian-supported networks continued to operate throughout Iraq’s southern provinces.’ (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, ‘Patterns of Violence in Iraq’, 24 October 2012)**[6a](p.46)**

## Jayish al-Mahdi (JAM) / the Promised Day Brigade (PDB)

'Jayish al-Mahdi (JAM) and its successor, the Promised Day Brigade (PDB), are Shi'a militias that form militant arm of the Sadrist movement led by cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. The Sadrists popularity among Iraq's urban poor translated into significant political power. After it's reemergence in 2003, JAM and its Sadrist political counterparts "effectively replaced the Iraqi state" in Iraq's most heavily Shi'a-concentrated areas, including parts of Baghdad and Basra. Since 2003, JAM has engaged in countless attacks on US forces, Iraqi forces, and Sunni civilians. From 2004-2007 JAM received training and material support from Iran's Quds Force, allowing Iran to "dial up violence in Iraq as it saw necessary."

'The group was responsible for some of the most gruesome sectarian violence in Iraq. During the US military surge in Iraq, JAM was unable to match US and Iraqi military strength, and the group suffered heavy losses. As a result, al-Sadr ordered his followers to stand down, and shortly thereafter, he left for Iran. Following the military campaign in Basra, Sadr City, and al Amarah in the spring of 2008, al-Sadr disbanded his militia. Several months later, he announced the transition of his movement into a non-violent organization called the Munahidoon, but he maintained a small group of Iranian-supported militants called the Promised Day Brigade (PDB).' (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 'Patterns of Violence in Iraq', 24 October 2012)[6a](p.46)

## Assaib Ahl al Haq (AAH, or League of the Righteous)

'Having emerged in 2006, AAH is led by Qais Khazali, who broke with al-Sadr and was officially named the leader of the Iranian backed AAH. Khazali's fighters traveled to Iran for special training by the Revolutionary Guards and members of the Lebanese Hezbollah. They received four to six weeks of training in the camps in the use of mortars, rockets, sniper tactics, intelligence gathering, kidnapping operations, and explosively formed penetrators. AAH conducted attacks on Coalition forces from as early as the summer of 2006 and continues intermittently, also engaging in kidnappings and sectarian attacks. In early 2012, Maliki allowed AAH into the political arena, stating they had renounced violence and were therefore welcome. AAH also serves as a potential counter weight to a loss in confidence of Maliki across the political spectrum. In October 2012, Foreign Policy's Thomas Ricks reported that "Iranian proxies, such as Assaib Ahl Al-Haq (AAH) and Kitaib Hezbollah are being carefully reconciled with Baghdad while retaining arms to threaten those that stand in opposition.'" (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 'Patterns of Violence in Iraq', 24 October 2012)[6a](p.46)

## Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH, or the Hezbollah Brigades)

'KNH has been active in Iraq since 2007. KH operates mainly in Shi'a areas of Baghdad, such as Sadr City, and throughout southern Iraq. Like AAH and the Promise Day Brigade, it is supported by Iran. KH is independent from Muqtada al-Sadr and has operated separately since its inception, albeit with some cooperation and operational overlap. Since 2007, KH members have conducted multiple attacks against US forces using rocket-propelled grenades and improvised rocket-assisted mortars. Since the beginning of 2011, the majority of Iranian-backed attacks have occurred in southern Iraq, with sporadic incidents taking place in northern provinces and in Baghdad. Toward the end of the quarter, Iran-sponsored attacks in northern provinces appeared to be subsiding, although USF-I officials reported that these networks still

possess the capacity to conduct operations.’ (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, ‘Patterns of Violence in Iraq’, 24 October 2012)[6a](p.46-47)

## The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)

The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) is a Sunni umbrella organization of a number Iraqi insurgency groups established on October 15 2006. The group is composed of and supported by a variety of insurgency groups, including its predecessor, the Mujahideen Shura Council, Al-Qaeda, Jeish al-Fatiheen, Jund al-Sahaba, Katbiyan Ansar Al-Tawhid wal Sunnah, Jeish al-Taiifa al-Mansoura, and other Sunni groups. It aims to establish a caliphate in the Sunni dominated regions of Iraq. It claims a presence in the governorates of Baghdad, Al Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Salah ad Din, Ninawa, and parts of Babil and Wasit, etc. It initially claimed Baqubah as its capita. On October 13, 2012 the Islamic State of Iraq issued a public statement of condolence for two Salafi leaders killed by Israel in Gaza. ISI has remained active, and was implicated in a string of attacks on Shiite neighborhoods in Baghdad in October 2012.’ (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, ‘Patterns of Violence in Iraq’, 24 October 2012)[6a](p.47)

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# Annex F

## Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Indiscriminate violence', 7 April 2012



British Embassy  
Baghdad

International Zone  
Baghdad

[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

07 April 2012

### **ISSUE: Indiscriminate Violence in Iraq**

In addressing questions relating to the above issue, I have discussed this with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Baghdad and a number of United Kingdom Security Companies working for Embassies and International Organisations in Iraq. From these sources, we were able to clarify a number of issues pertaining to Indiscriminate violence in Iraq.

The level of violence across Iraq has dropped significantly since mid 2007. The increased multinational troop levels, allied with increased capability in Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) succeeded in separating Sunni extremists from their support base and marginalising their influence. Once these factors began to take effect the level of attacks began to reduce significantly year on year; though the trend of comparatively busier summers and quieter winters is still evident. As can be seen in figure 1 below, by the time US Forces withdrew in Dec 2011 the average number of weekly incidents had fallen to below 50, in contrast with 300 seen in early 2009.



Total incidents across Iraq 2009 – 2011

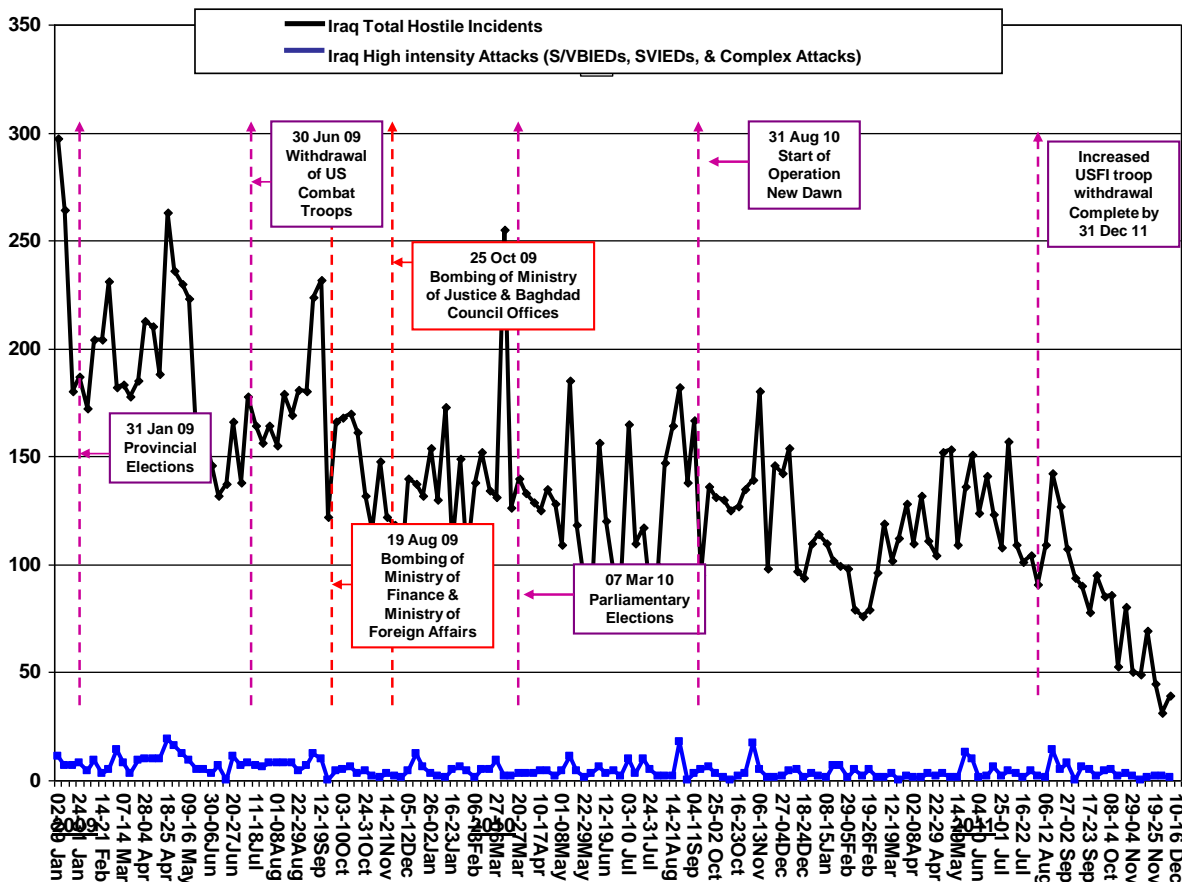


Figure 1

Following the departure of US Forces, the incident levels have been more difficult to quantify, as the withdrawal has meant a lack of entirely accurate data from a single source. Rather than working from corroborated reporting, security companies now use a 'best estimate' system based on open sources, limited Iraqi Security Force reporting, limited US reporting and an unofficial network among western security companies. That said, despite occasional peaks and troughs the level has remained broadly consistent since US Forces withdrawal in late 2011. The only exception to this is the occasional large scale coordinated attacks mounted by Sunni extremists, which can significantly distort small data samples, but still fall far short of activity pre-2009.

Total incidents across Baghdad 2009 – 2011

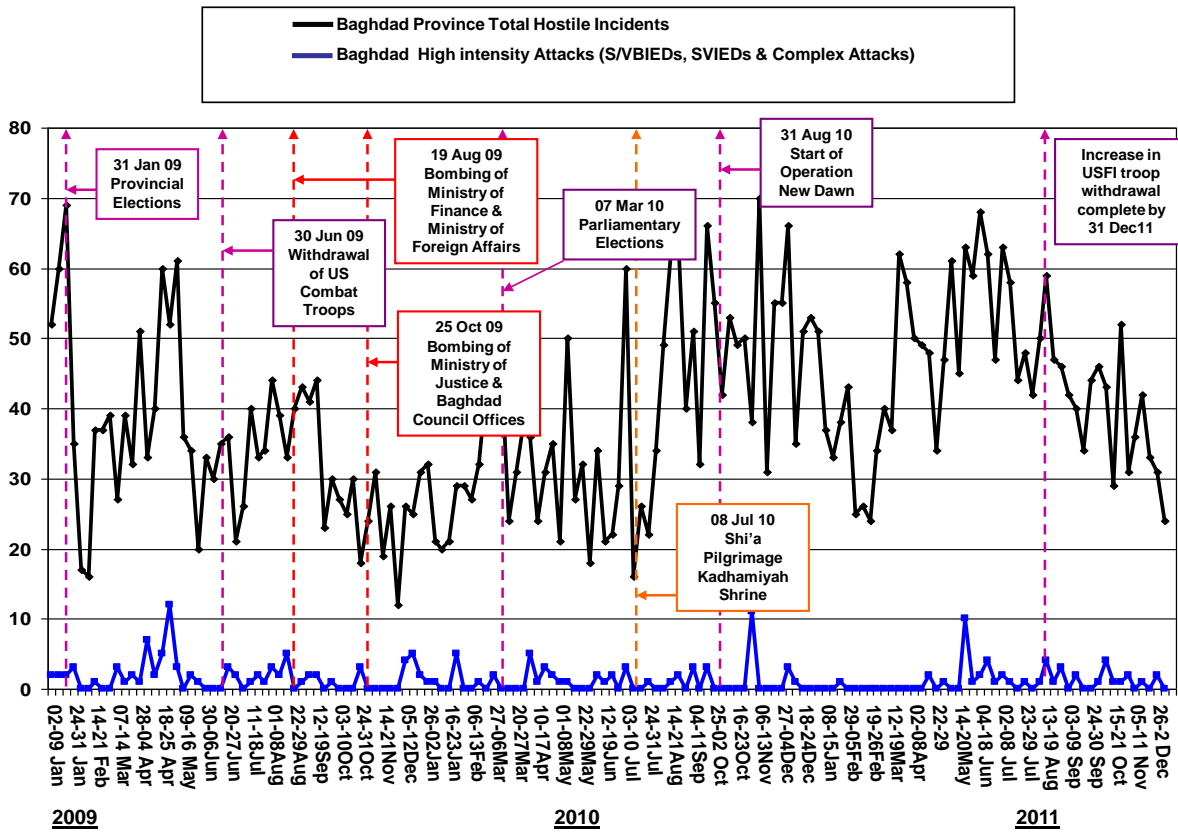


Figure 2

Almost all attacks are currently attributable to Sunni extremists and target current Iraqi Security Forces, Government of Iraq (GoI) employees, or very occasionally Shia gathering areas. Most incidents are targeted attacks against specific individuals, with only a small number of indiscriminate attacks.

**Threat groups:** Broadly speaking the threat of terrorist incident can be broken down along ethnic lines between Sunni extremists (Al Qaeda Iraq (AQI), Islamic State of Iraq) and Shia militias (Jaysh Al Mahdi (JAM), Asa'ib Ahl Al Maq (AAH), Kita'ib Hizballah (KH) (Hizballah Brigade). Our interlocutors report that, over the past four months it can safely be assumed that at least 90% of incidents are attributable to Sunni extremists; - Sunni extremists presently have high intent to carry out attacks, but moderate capability; whereas Shia militia have low intent but high capability.

**Baghdad by area:**

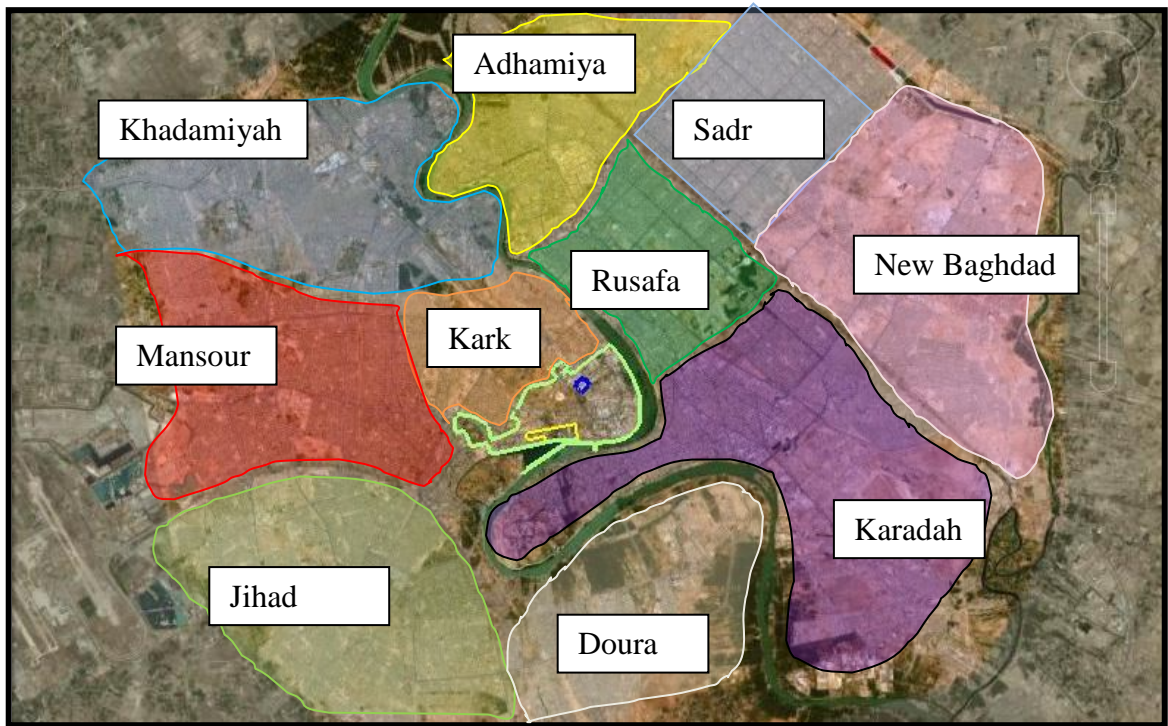


Figure 3

**Sunni extremists:** Sunni extremists have their greatest influence in much of northern and western Iraq, though they also retain a presence in areas of Baghdad (most notably Mansour). Broadly speaking, their agenda is to promote sectarian violence and to undermine the Shia-led government. On a tactical level this is played out in two different ways:

1. The vast majority of Sunni extremist activity is targeted attacks against government officials and Iraqi Security Forces. These attacks are clearly planned and are against specific targets. The attacks are generally carried out using small Under Vehicle (UV) Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) or close quarter shootings. Both of these forms of attack are targeted (and not indiscriminate), and the security company who advised this commented that they “have little practical risk of causing collateral damage”. The targets for these attacks are usually not following basic security advice - driving clearly marked government vehicles or wearing uniform off duty.
2. AQI and their affiliates do retain the capability for large scale coordinated attacks. These are usually in the form of Vehicle Borne (VB) IEDs or roadside IEDs. The devices are capable of causing numerous casualties; however, their lethality is far reduced from the type of devices seen between 2004 – 2007. Typical casualty figures for a VBIED in that period could be as high as 40 – 50 killed in a single incident; whereas presently “we would expect” five to ten. This is probably due to smaller explosive payloads and reduced

professionalism of manufacture, which in turn reflects AQI's comparatively reduced capability. The targets for these attacks are generally either government ministries or Shia gathering areas (market places, restaurants etc) in eastern Baghdad. Due to the reduction in their capacity, AQI are now only capable of mounting this type of attack once a month (the last attacks of note occurred on 22 Dec 11; 24 Jan and 23 Feb 12). Of note, only 22 Dec saw attacks focussed on Baghdad, and coordinated attacks since have been more country-wide with less Baghdad focus. This cyclic pattern of attack - resupply and reorganise – plan – attack is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Sunni extremists are capable of using indirect fire (IDF), though this is a rare occurrence. If it were to be used, it would typically be in the form of small calibre mortars, though due to their short range and limited payload they are not a particularly favoured weapon.

**Shia militia:** Shia militias have predominantly been seen to operate in most areas of eastern Baghdad, generally emanating from the Sadr City area. They do also have a presence in the more ethnically mixed areas of central and western Baghdad. Shia militia tend to have a far higher capability to carry out lethal acts, though their intent is presently very low. Their agenda is far more linked to the political situation and as their leadership attempt to move into power-brokering they have far less of an inclination to use violence openly. Previously most of their attacks specifically targeted US Forces, though these started to tail off mid 2011 with the understanding that US Forces would withdraw entirely by the end of the year. In 2012 thus far it would be difficult to attribute more than a handful of incidents to Shia militia, and most of these would be down to in-fighting between different factions, or criminal disputes.

Shia militia tended to use more technologically advanced methods of attack, though this was developed over time in order to defeat the defensive measures of US Forces. It is highly unlikely that they would seek to deploy advanced IEDs against civilians, as there would be little or no motive behind such an attack and no need to make use of advanced IEDs. Shia militias are capable of assassination-type attacks also, though these are generally against specific targets and certainly not indiscriminate. Shia militias do also have an IDF capability, though this tends to be from rockets rather than mortars. They have a longer range, though are very inaccurate and could cause collateral or indiscriminate damage if off target. Rocket attacks are very infrequent however, with the last being on 06 Jan 2012 when unidentified attackers fired six rockets towards the International or Green Zone where Returnees would not reside.

### **Baghdad by area: See Figure 3**

**Khadamiyah:** Formerly a Sunni area in the Saddam era. Sunnis were largely driven out by Shia militia during sectarian fighting in 2006/7. The area is still mixed, but now with a larger Shia populace than was previously the case. Attacks in this area are relatively infrequent and tend to be inter-factional or criminal. Attacks are generally targeted, using Small Arms Fire (SAF) or UVIEDs against preselected individuals currently involved in Government of Iraq, Iraqi Security Forces or rival criminal gangs.

**Mansour:** A predominantly Sunni area, and as a result the area of strongest Sunni extremist influence. UVIED attacks against ISF are fairly common, but again targeted. It is rare to see VBIED or indiscriminate attacks in this area as Sunni extremists don't want to alienate the largely Sunni populace.

**Karkh:** This is a mixed area with a strong security presence. Many of the government ministries and foreign embassies are located here, and as such security is better. Day to day activity is low, with incidents very rare. Occasionally Sunni extremists will mount attacks in this area, using VBIEDs to target government ministries.

**Jihad Bayaa:** This is a mixed area, though with more Shia than Sunni. Shia militia were active in the area until 2009, when activity significantly reduced. UVIEDs do still occur sporadically, though these are targeted attacks against Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) or Government of Iraq (GoI) interests.

**Doura:** Previously a Sunni area, though now mixed. The security situation is generally good and the few attacks that do occur are targeted IEDs or UVIEDs against ISF or GoI workers.

**Karadah:** The most prosperous area of the city, housing many business interests, government ministries and foreign embassies. The threat of attack here is fairly low with very few incidents recorded in the past six months. Sunni extremists do occasionally mount VBIED attacks against government buildings in the east of the area as part of their large scale coordinated bombings. The area is ethnically mixed though with Shia predominance in the east.

**Rusafa:** A largely mixed population in a busy area, containing both the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Baghdad Police College (BPC). Attacks here are generally carried out by Sunni extremists targeting ISF with IEDs and UVIEDs. These attacks are again generally targeted and don't lead to collateral damage. Shia militia did use advanced IEDs in this area towards the end of 2011, though these were targeted against US private security companies and again did not lead to collateral damage. Previously attacks on US Forces or western interests were far bolder, with some allegations of ISF collusion.

**Adhamiyah:** A largely Shia area with small Sunni enclaves. The threat is characterised by UVIEDs against ISF or government officials. The far eastern parts of Adhamiyah, along with Sadr City and New Baghdad are the areas where Sunni extremists are most likely to employ VBIEDs or IEDs in crowded areas in order to cause civilian casualties. These attacks are indiscriminate generally, and tend to occur early morning. Sunni extremists are limited in their capability though, and attacks of this nature occur infrequently, perhaps once every few months. The payload of devices is smaller also, hence casualty figures from such attacks are far reduced from similar attacks in 2006/7.

**Sadr City:** Traditionally quite an impoverished area of Baghdad during the Saddam era, the area is entirely Shia. Several Shia militia operated from this area during the previous sectarian violence and clashes against US Forces, and the remnants of these militias are still present though not active. There are occasional shootings in the area, though these are probably attributable to in-fighting between different criminal gangs and are targeted. The only recent incidents of note are occasional IED or VBIED attacks by Sunni extremists, which tend to occur against Shia gathering areas such as markets. These are generally indiscriminate, though with far fewer casualties than was the case in 2006/7.

**New Baghdad:** An entirely Shia area of eastern Baghdad, which shares many of the characteristics of Sadr City. It is not as impoverished, though did have a Shia militia presence during the times of sectarian violence. There are now few incidents in the area, and most of those that do occur are probably criminal or inter-factional. The only recent incidents of note are occasional IED or VBIED attacks by Sunni extremists, which tend to occur against Shia

gathering areas such as markets. These are generally indiscriminate, though with far fewer casualties than was the case in 2006/7.

Iraqi Governates



Figure 4

With the exception of Dohuk, Arbil and Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan, the IOM regard the southern governorates as safer and more stable than the central and northern governorates because they are less ethnically and religiously diverse. AKE agree:

The main text of this COI bulletin contains the most up to date publicly available information as at 1 July 2013.

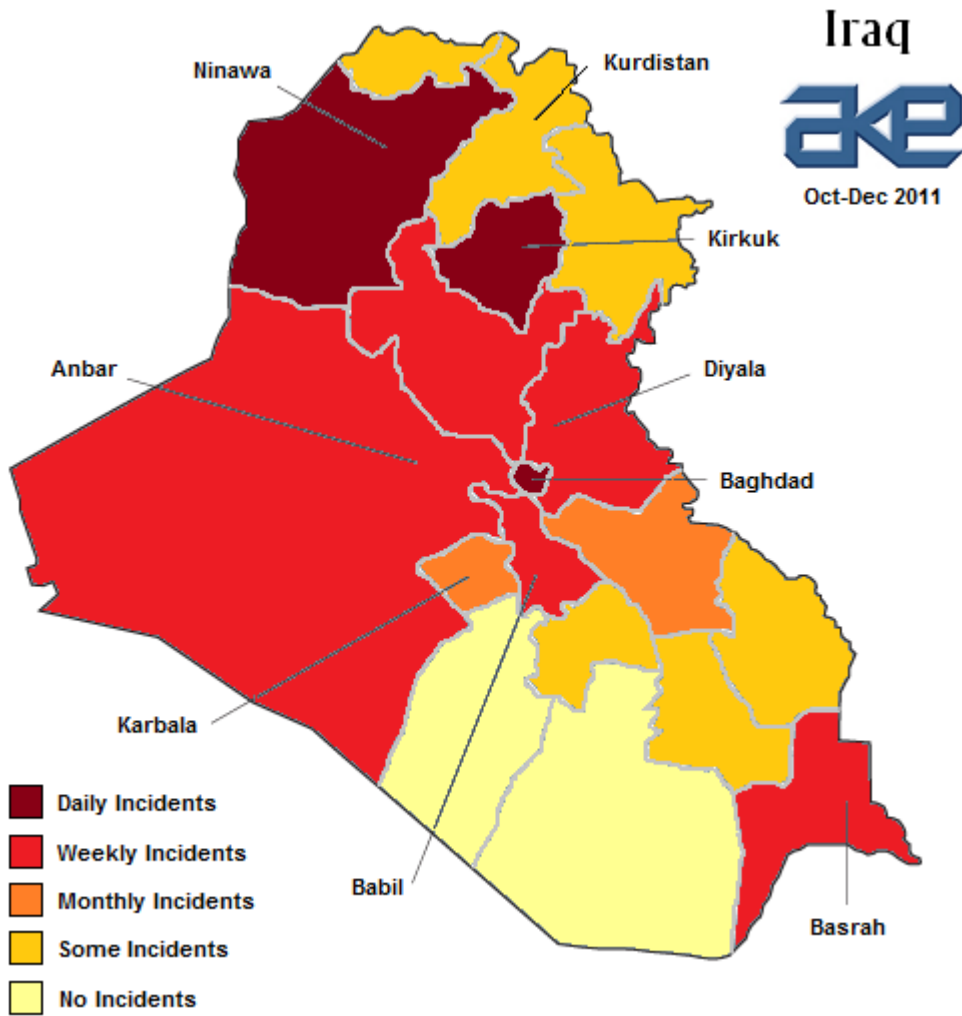


Figure 5

Baghdad is listed by AKE in **figures 5 and 6** as having daily incidents, however this is no longer the case as there are periods of 3, 4 or 5 days e.g. during the Arab League Summit which took place in late March 2012, when there are minimal, perhaps only weekly incidents reported. One of the greatest threats in Baghdad is the threat of kidnap of Westerners including from within the International or Green Zone.

<b>AKE Iraq Violence in Statistics</b>		
<b>Q4 2011 (October - December)</b>		
<b>Province</b>	<b>Frequency of Attacks</b>	<b>Proportion of Countrywide Violence</b>
<b>Anbar</b>	<b>3-4 per week</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Arbil</b>	<b>Fewer than 1 per month</b>	<b>Less than 1%</b>
<b>Babil</b>	<b>3-4 per week</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Baghdad</b>	<b>2-3 per day</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Basrah</b>	<b>1 per week</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Dahuk</b>	<b>Fewer than 1 per month</b>	<b>Less than 1%</b>
<b>Dhi Qar</b>	<b>Fewer than 1 per month</b>	<b>Less than 1%</b>
<b>Diyala</b>	<b>4 per week</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Karbala</b>	<b>Fewer than 1 per month</b>	<b>Less than 1%</b>
<b>Maysan</b>	<b>Fewer than 1 per month</b>	<b>Less than 1%</b>
<b>Muthanna</b>	<b>Fewer than 1 per month</b>	<b>Less than 1%</b>
<b>Najaf</b>	<b>1 per month</b>	<b>Less than 1%</b>
<b>Ninawa</b>	<b>1-2 per day</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Qadissiyah</b>	<b>Fewer than 1 per month</b>	<b>Less than 1%</b>
<b>Salah ad-Din</b>	<b>4-5 per week</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Sulaymaniya</b>	<b>Fewer than 1 per week</b>	<b>Less than 1%</b>
<b>Ta'mim</b>	<b>1 per day</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Wassit</b>	<b>2 per month</b>	<b>1%</b>

Figure 6

### **The Christian minority:**

The IOM have revised the numbers of Christian families displaced as a result of the attacks and targeting of Christians in late 2010 and 2011. The data show a noticeable decrease in IDP families across the northern Kurdish governates. Many Christian IDPs chose to emigrate or return to their place of origin in 2011 due to growing security fears, a lack of work opportunities, and difficulty with the transfer of education documents.

The IOM say that many displaced Christian families registered at churches, going to regions for a short period to seek refuge and assistance. Access to work quickly became a priority for those who remained in displacement, however promises of government support did not materialise and many found it difficult to gain employment on their own.

Movements both to and from the North of Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan) continued throughout 2011; e.g. almost 400 Christian families went to Dahuk in 2011, a larger number left the governorate to emigrate. Most of the movement out of Erbil, occurred specifically from Ainkawa (a



neighbourhood of Erbil with a relatively sizable Christian population), while those displaced to less urban areas in Koysinjaq, Shaqlawa and Dyana generally already had family ties in these areas and were able to integrate more easily. IOM Monitors in Baghdad report that in the last few months of 2011, approximately 150 Christian families returned to Baghdad after experiencing difficulties integrating into communities in the North.

**Security:** IOM Monitors report that the security of Christians in Northern Iraq is still of concern. Christians in Mosul have been repeatedly threatened and targeted for violence. In Dahuk, riots by Islamists encouraged to take action during “Friday Prayers” with arson against Christian-owned properties in late 2011 spread fear in what was a largely safe area for religious minorities. However, the Iraqi Kurdish Government sought to protect their interests and the Migration Delivery Officer heard the Iraqi Kurdistan Minister of Interior robustly defend the right of legitimate businesses in Dahuk not to be attacked in this way; adding that such behaviour was not acceptable. Numerous kidnappings of Christians in Ainkawa, Erbil took place in 2011, most recently in mid-December. The latest incident ended with the man being freed and his kidnappers arrested, but the security incidents of 2011 have left the Christian community nervous and have prompted the emigration of many abroad. A British security company commented on the kidnappings from Ainkawa saying that they are a mixture of sectarian and criminal kidnappings of Christians, “leaning more to sectarian”.

**Property:** Christians in Baghdad are largely unable to sell their homes for a fair price to support themselves while displaced. Monitors report that some in Baghdad have exploited the situation by publishing rumours of impending violence against Christians in order to drive down prices of Christian homes and to force Christians to flee.

February 2012 displacement numbers from MoDM of all ethnic groups were as follows:

Governorate	IDP Families	IDPs as % of population	Number of returnees (from abroad)	Number of returnees (from internal displacement)
Mosul	33234	5.6%	693	1933
Kirkuk	7848	4.5%	70	185
Diyala	19759	6.4%	1482	22039
Anbar	8416	2.9%	1458	962
Baghdad	55435	3.9%	14111	51611
Babylon	6886	2.2%	82	843
Kerbala	7871	4.5%	80	1
Wassit	8182	4.0%	30	579
Salah al-Din	6841	2.9%	414	344
Najaf	6476	2.9%	15	0
Qadissiya	3365	2.0%	83	1
Muthanna	1917	2.0%	7	0
Thi-Qar	6849	2.4%	3	13
Missan	5024	3.8%	33	3
Basra	5673	1.7%	669	966

**13 August 2013**

**Iraq Bulletin: Security situation update 2013**

According to the IOM, new displacements due to violence are no longer occurring in large numbers. Return to some governorates such as Baghdad and Diyala has increased, although most IDP families intend to integrate in their current locations that includes nearly all Christian families in Sulaymaniyah.

British Embassy  
Baghdad

This letter has been compiled by staff of the British Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq entirely from information obtained from the sources indicated. The letter does not reflect the opinions of the author (s) nor any policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The author (s) have compiled this letter in response to a request from UKBA and any further enquiries regarding its contents should be directed to UKBA.

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# Annex G

## Letter from the British Embassy Baghdad, 'Mixed Sunni/Shia marriages', 9 May 2011



British Embassy  
Baghdad

International Zone  
Baghdad

[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

9 May 2011

### ISSUE: MIXED SUNNI/SHIA MARRIAGES

In addressing questions relating to the above issue, we consulted a senior advisor to the UK Police Advisory team currently serving in Baghdad, a Intelligence Analyst from a commercial company working in Baghdad and a Iraqi representative of an International NGO with offices across Iraq. Our contacts explained that personal information relating to an individual's religious identity (e.g. Sunni or Shia) is not disclosed on any identification documents currently used in Iraq. Such information may be disclosed, i.e. to a police officer, but an individual has the right to refuse. In practise though, an individual's tribal name and place of birth will give a clear indication of their religious identity.

An individual's identity document may be requested for any number of reasons, including presentation to security officers/police at check-points, applying for a job, liaison with Government of Iraq departments etc. This documentation is also required as part of the broader process when an individual decides to relocate to a new area of Iraq. In order to relocate, an individual must be in possession of the following documents:

- The personal identification number which is issued by the General Directorate of Citizenship in accordance with Iraqi Civil Law Number 65 (1972);
- Iraqi nationality certificate;
- Letter of confirmation from the Civil Administrator of the intended relocation address;
- Letter from the police station in the intended area of relocation
- Declaration from the security services that the person is not involved in criminal activities.

An individual seeking to relocate without these documents is likely to face difficulties in accessing basic food stuff as part of the ration programme. They may also face difficulties with police and security officials if their identity cannot be verified from centrally held records. An individual may not be given access to a particular area, i.e. with furniture/belongings without presenting identity documents. A Internally Displaced Person (IDP) who isn't able to buy or rent

accommodation in their new location may also face difficulties when the authorities refuse to issue the required Housing Card which allows access to social services and schools etc.

We were told that there are no significant risks to mixed Sunni/Shia families and couples as opposed to those of the same religious affiliation. Marriages are possible through registration at a civil court ceremony without the requirement to provide evidence of one's religious identity. We were told that a marriage certificate will indicate whether the ceremony was carried out in accordance with Sunni or Shia practise. Although records are not maintained, anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of such marriages is increasing. According to our contacts, there are a number of areas in Central Baghdad and other major cities where mixed Sunni and Shia families live together. It was explained however that this is not always the case in rural and tribal areas where mixed marriages are less common. In other areas, it may be possible for a Sunni man to marry a Shia lady but not vice-versa. In rural areas, a mixed marriage couple may also face security risks from groups such as al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State of Iraq occasionally as part of ongoing 'Islamification' activities. Mixed marriage couples in the Kurdistan Region face no problems or security risks.

The Iraqi Government has welcomed mixed marriages and in 2006 introduced a scheme whereby Sunni and Shia couples were able claim US\$2,000 once they were married. This scheme was introduced to help break down sectarian division. We were told by one interlocutor that this programme has since ended. One contact also said that that the Iraqi Government has contributed to the creation of divisions between Sunni and Shia by government departments preferring to employ people from one sect or the other.

It is difficult to offer an accurate assessment of the level of infiltration of the Iraqi Government and Iraqi Security Forces. However, according to our contacts, both Sunni insurgents and Shi'a militias are infiltrated into ministries and the security forces. It is further claimed that ISF, especially the Iraqi Police, are largely infiltrated by Shi'a militias who are funded and directed by Iran. Infiltration is suspected to reach to senior levels in Government and Security circles. We were told that it would be a straightforward process for a senior member of the government or a security body to take advantage of their position to access personal information of any other individual.

2nd Secretary Migration (MDO)  
British Embassy, Baghdad

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## Annex H

### Internal displacement figures (post February 2006) as at January 2013

Governorate	Sep-08 <sup>2</sup>	Aug-09 <sup>3</sup>	Jan-11 <sup>4</sup>	Aug-11 <sup>5</sup>	Jan-12 <sup>6</sup>	Jan-13 <sup>7</sup>	% of the Change since 2008
	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	
Anbar	55,716	70,532	54,337	51,514	46,697	44,365	20%
Babylon	77,197	60,286	54,402	50,300	42,182	31,934	59%
Baghdad	550,099	572,783	358,457	303,394	328,347	263,169	52%
Basrah	35,509	35,226	36,709	35,058	35,477	31,503	11%
Diyala	136,891	121,001	124,611	114,423	118,348	93,845	31%
Dohuk	104,824	63,331	84,402	84,402	123,744	103,290	1%
Erbil	52,007	37,584	42,296	42,296	58,746	70,932	-36%
Kerbala	70,709	48,038	50,311	50,310	48,156	23,517	67%
Kirkuk	43,623	52,041	49,208	46,695	44,042	46,706	-7%
Missan	46,523	42,525	39,818	38,130	35,597	13,626	71%
Muthanna	18,331	15,837	15,181	14,806	14,241	7,049	62%
Najaf	57,716	46,732	42,981	41,952	37,590	24,805	57%
Ninewa	106,623	174,475	178,162	178,314	188,201	206,785	-94%
Qadissyah	25,186	24,362	23,856	22,652	22,168	14,731	42%
Salah al-Din	45,614	56,449	45,136	45,672	45,672	45,008	1%
Sulaymaniyah	80,935	33,375	39,856	39,856	53,232	51,726	36%
Thi-Qar	47,423	44,188	49,742	48,253	41,005	27,195	43%
Wassit	75,457	53,238	54,103	50,907	48,937	31,624	58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,630,383</b>	<b>1,552,003</b>	<b>1,343,568</b>	<b>1,258,934</b>	<b>1,332,382</b>	<b>1,131,810</b>	<b>31%</b>

1,2) Source: IDP Working Group September 2008; 3) Source: MODM 9th report on IDPs August 2009, BDM figures; 4) Source: MODM 10th report on IDPs January 2011; 4) Source: MODM 10th report on IDPs January 2011 BDM figures; 5) Source: MODM 13th report on IDPs August 2011, DDM figures; 6) Source: MODM, BDM figures as of January 2013.

(UNHCR, Monthly Statistical Update on Returns – March 2013)[5b]

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# Annex I

## Torture and other ill-treatment: Voices of survivors

The following extended extract is taken from the Amnesty International Report, Iraq: A decade of abuses, dated March 2013

‘Amid the climate of impunity that prevails in Iraq, many victims of torture fear that if they are identified publicly they will put themselves at risk of reprisals, including possibly renewed detention and torture. The feelings of humiliation that torture survivors often experience, particularly if they have been subjected to sexual attacks or other especially degrading ill treatment, is another factor that militates against exposure and so helps ensure the anonymity of, and impunity for, the perpetrators, as the latter well know. Many former detainees who have spoken to Amnesty International about their torture by Iraqi security forces have done so on condition that their identities are not disclosed. Others, however, have agreed that their identities can be revealed even though they recognize that this may place them at additional risk; some of their cases, all of which relate to events in 2012 in the provinces of Anbar, Kerbela and Suleimaniya, are described below. They are typical of many others that have been reported to Amnesty International during the past 15 months.

‘...RAMADI, ANBAR PROVINCE

Police arrested Nabhan ‘Adel Hamdi and Shakir Mahmoud ‘Anad at separate locations in Ramadi and Mu‘ad Muhammad ‘Abed, a teacher, outside the school where he worked in Fallujah, in late March, and arrested Amer Ahmad Kassar a few days later. They then held all four men incommunicado for several weeks at the Directorate of Counter-Crime (Mudiriyat Mukafaha al-Ijram) in Ramadi where they were reportedly tortured until they “confessed” to committing murder. A local TV station then broadcast film of them providing selfincriminating testimony to having committed capital crimes while they remained in detention and before the authorities brought them to trial.<sup>54</sup> When they appeared at trial, they told the Anbar Criminal Court that interrogators had tortured them and forced to “confess” to a crime that they had not committed, and evidence from a medical examination carried out on one of the four men many weeks after their alleged abuse found injuries that appeared consistent with his alleged torture. Their allegations of torture include being beaten with instruments on various parts of their bodies and being suspended by the wrists with the hands tied to the back. Images obtained by Amnesty International show bruising and other injuries on the bodies of two of the men. Despite this, no investigation into their alleged torture is known to have been conducted and the court convicted all four men under the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2005 and sentenced them to death on 3 December 2012.

One of the four managed to pass on a communication to Amnesty International in which he expressed his shock about the death sentence:

“After a short while I was transferred to Tasfirat Prison [in Ramadi] where I was examined and a medical report was issued. Then we were taken to a Criminal Court in Ramadi. After all the denial, the witnesses to my torture [...], my medical report, the photos of my body showing the traces of ugly torture, the judge did not take it in. Even the defence witnesses, who said that [I] was out of town and we were with him when the incident happened, were not taken into account by the court. The court only took into account the statement of the

plaintiff because he has influence [...]. The judge sentenced me and the others with me to death, ignoring all the reports, the witnesses, the General Prosecution's statement and its request to release me."

#### '... KERBELA

One man, 28, from Kerbela told Amnesty International that in mid-February 2012 six security officials in plain clothes took him from his workplace in Kerbela without producing an arrest warrant, and took him to the Crime Unit at the Kerbela Police Directorate where he was blindfolded and told to confess without being informed what crime he was suspected of committing. He said his interrogators, tied his hands behind his back, securing them at the wrists, then connected a chain and pulled it up so that he was suspended without his feet touching the ground and his full weight was supported only by his wrists and arms. He said that while he was in this painful and vulnerable position, his interrogators whipped him with a cable on his back and legs, and at other times tortured him with electric shocks, beat him on the soles of his feet and threatened him with rape and that his family would be detained and abused until he eventually agreed under this extreme coercion to sign a statement confessing to murder. In mid-May 2012 he and others were sentenced to death by the Kerbela Criminal Court after being convicted of murder.

#### '... SULEIMANIYA, KURDISTAN REGION

Torture and other ill-treatment of detainees continue to be reported also from the semiautonomous Kurdistan Region though on a much lesser scale than elsewhere in Iraq. Hussein Hama Ali Tawfiq, 39, told Amnesty International that he was summoned to the Directorate of General Security (Asayish Gishte) in Suleimaniya but immediately arrested when he arrived there on 27 March, 2012. He said he was blindfolded with a pishtuwin, a traditional Kurdish cloth, that his hands were shackled diagonally across his back, and that officers then insulted, punched and beat him on his back with a piece of wood while demanding that he implicate Suleimaniya's mayor and other local politicians in corruption. When he failed to do so, they again beat him, made him stand in the rain for half an hour and then reversed the position in which his hands were shackled across his back, at which point he lost consciousness. His interrogators threw cold water over him to revive him, then allowed him to recuperate for about two hours before subjecting him to a further sustained beating with a club on his knees, chest, back and calves while threatening to kill him if he refused to sign a statement incriminating the mayor and others. Even so, he continued to refuse and next day was taken before an investigating judge who first authorized his detention for another 24 hours and thereafter, in the following days, extended it for 14 days during which he had to endure further assaults that resulted in his losing consciousness and having two teeth knocked out.

His interrogators threatened him and his family and, he alleges, senior judiciary as well as security officials pressed him to sign a statement that his interrogators had prepared before eventually they decided instead to forge his signature onto it. He was again taken before an investigating judge on 1 April, five days after his arrest, when for the first time his lawyer was allowed to be present. At this, he rejected the incriminatory statement and pointed out injuries on his body that he told the judge had been caused by torture; however, he was returned to detention at the General Security Directorate and his torture continued. Three days later, members of the Human Rights Committee of the Kurdistan parliament visited the detention centre; their written report notes that they had seen the detainee Hussein Hama Ali Tawfiq and that he had been tortured. The lawyer engaged to represent Hussein Hama Ali

Tawfiq requested that he be medically examined to document his torture injuries but, instead, the detainee was taken to hospital and treated. He was charged with bribery and remained in prison until the Suleimaniya Criminal Court acquitted him in November 2012.

In July 2012, while still in custody, he filed a formal complaint against the security officials he accuses of torturing him. The KRG authorities, however, appear to have taken no action in response to this complaint and in February 2013 the alleged torturers were believed to remain in their posts and on active duty.



Traces of beating on the body of a detainee, reportedly inflicted by officers at a detention centre in Ramadi in about April 2012.' **[26a](p.23-25)**



# Annex J

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