

# Report on the Protection of Civilians in the context of the Ninewa Operations and the retaking of Mosul City, 17 October 2016 – 10 July 2017



©Raber Aziz/IOM Iraq, 2017



United Nations Assistance Mission for  
Iraq (UNAMI)

بعثة الأمم المتحدة لمساعدة العراق  
(يونامي)

<http://uniraq.org>



United Nations  
**Human Rights**

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



## Table of Contents

Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	4
Methodology .....	5
Background .....	5
Timeline of Events .....	6
Civilian casualties .....	9
Section 1 Phase 1: the Approach to Mosul City .....	11
<b>1-A: Violations and abuses perpetrated by ISIL</b> .....	11
▪ Abductions .....	11
▪ Ill-treatment / intimidation .....	12
▪ Mass killings .....	13
▪ Forced displacement of the civilian population and use of civilians as human shields .....	15
▪ Use of alleged chemical agents .....	16
▪ Recruitment and use of children .....	17
▪ Destruction of civilian objects .....	17
<b>1-B: Violations committed by ISF and associated forces</b> .....	18
▪ Abductions and unlawful killings .....	18
▪ Shelling .....	18
<b>1-C: Airstrikes</b> .....	19
<b>1-D Acts that may amount to collective punishments</b> .....	19
Section 2 Phase 2: the Battle for Eastern Mosul .....	20
<b>2-A: Violations and abuses committed by ISIL</b> .....	20
▪ Abductions .....	20
▪ Mass killings .....	20
▪ Attacks using IEDs .....	20
▪ Targeting civilians trying to flee areas controlled by ISIL .....	22
▪ Forced displacement of the civilian population by ISIL .....	23
▪ Use of civilians as human shields .....	23
▪ Shelling .....	23
▪ Attacks against medical personnel .....	24
▪ Destruction of civilian objects .....	24
<b>2-B: Violations committed by ISF and associated forces</b> .....	24

▪ Allegations of ill-treatment .....	25
▪ Abductions and unlawful killings .....	25
<b>2-C: Airstrikes</b> .....	26
<b>2-D: Acts that may amount to collective punishments</b> .....	26
▪ Forced displacement and forced evictions .....	27
<b>2-E. Incidents attributable to unidentified perpetrators</b> .....	27
▪ Abductions .....	27
▪ Killing.....	27
Section 3.....	28
Phase 3: the Battle for Western Mosul .....	28
<b>3-A: Violations and abuses committed by ISIL</b> .....	28
▪ Killings .....	28
▪ Use of IEDs resulting in civilian casualties.....	29
▪ Targeting of civilians trying to flee areas controlled by the group .....	30
▪ Use of civilians as human shields .....	31
▪ Shelling.....	32
▪ Alleged use of weaponised chemical agents .....	33
▪ Recruitment and use of children by ISIL .....	34
▪ Destruction of civilian objects and other specifically protected objects by ISIL .....	34
<b>3-B: Violations committed by ISF and associated forces</b> .....	35
▪ Abductions and unlawful killings .....	35
▪ Shelling.....	36
<b>3-C: Airstrikes</b> .....	36
<b>3-D: Acts that may amount to collective punishments</b> .....	39
<b>3-E. Incidents attributable to unidentified perpetrators</b> .....	41
▪ Killings .....	41
▪ Unidentified bodies.....	42
▪ Bodies delivered to ISF.....	42
Section 4.....	42
Discovery of mass graves .....	42
Section 5.....	44
Impact of armed conflict on journalists and media personnel covering the conflict.....	44
Conclusions and recommendations .....	46

# Report on the Protection of Civilians in the context of the Ninewa Operations and the retaking of Mosul City, 17 October 2016 – 10 July 2017

## Summary

This report covers the period of the Ninewa military operations conducted by Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), and affiliated armed groups—with air support provided by Operation Inherent Resolve<sup>1</sup> and the Iraqi Air Force—to retake the city of Mosul and surrounding areas from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The operations lasted from 17 October 2016 to 10 July 2017 and were divided in three military phases.

The first phase of the operations to retake Mosul officially started on 17 October 2016, when Prime Minister and Commander of Iraqi Military Forces Haidar Al-Abadi, announced the launch of the military operation ‘Qademoun ya Ninewa’ to reclaim areas under ISIL control in Ninewa Governorate, including Mosul City. This first phase of the battle focused on districts and subdistricts of Ninewa Governorate, in particular rural areas in the approach to the city of Mosul. It was followed by the second phase—the battle for eastern Mosul, that started in mid-November 2016. On 24 January 2017, Prime Minister Al-Abadi declared that ISF had retaken eastern Mosul. On 19 February 2017, ISF commenced the third and final phase of operations against ISIL in western Mosul. On 10 July 2017, Prime Minister Al-Abadi publicly announced from Mosul City that the third phase of the operations has been successfully completed with western Mosul totally reclaimed.

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) monitored the human rights situation throughout the operations, with an emphasis on the impact of conduct of hostilities on civilians and civilian objects, and investigated over 650 incidents involving allegations of civilian casualties. This report depicts categories of violations and abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law by parties to the conflict during the three phases of the operations.

Prior to the commencement of the operations, UNAMI/OHCHR provided principles to the Government of Iraq on the protection of civilians by security forces during the conduct of operations, particularly on the conduct of security screening. The principles were transmitted to ISF and disseminated to commanders of the main field units in Ninewa Governorate and Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) in Arabic, Kurdish and English. In conformity with those principles, the Government of Iraq announced that

---

<sup>1</sup> Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve is the name for the coalition created to formalize military operations against ISIL in Iraq and Syria. For a list of states involved see <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/About-Us/Coalition/>.

screening would only be conducted by lawfully authorized authorities in clearly identified locations and would be conducted in a transparent manner with safeguards in place to ensure that legal standards and humanitarian needs would be respected. UNAMI/OHCHR visited screening sites throughout the phases of the operation and had access to certain detention facilities, ordinary and counter-terrorism courts in Ninewa and engaged with judges and penitentiary officials regarding conflict related detention.

Throughout the three phases, information gathered by UNAMI/OHCHR strongly suggests that **international crimes may have been perpetrated in Iraq by ISIL**. UNAMI/OHCHR investigators received an overwhelming number of reports indicating serious and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and gross violations and abuses of human rights law that have been perpetrated by ISIL. Reports include mass abductions of civilians and using thousands as human shields, killings of civilians, intentional shelling of civilians and civilians' residences in what appears to be a deliberate policy to punish civilians in reclaimed areas, and indiscriminate targeting of civilians trying to flee areas under its control. In early November 2016, in areas of Mosul under ISIL control, ISIL announced through loud speakers that residents of areas retaken by ISF were considered as "legitimate targets" because they were not fighting against ISF. This so-called 'fatwa' was accompanied by a sustained campaign of ISIL attacks on eastern Mosul that directly targeted civilians. Tactics included shelling, use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and shooting fleeing civilians. Additionally, ISIL introduced the weaponisation of airborne drones by equipping them with explosives to carry out attacks from a distance.

While ISIL was defeated in areas under its control, the group planted a huge number of IEDs in heavily populated residential areas with no consideration of the harm it may cause to residents before fleeing their areas. According to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Iraq, explosive hazards in Mosul consist of extensive contamination with IEDs, some containing multiple explosive charges, that have been placed to target returnees. In addition to IEDs there is also contamination with other conventional as well as improvised ammunition that has been fired but has failed to function, so called unexploded ordnance (UXOs). For example, UNMAS reports that, in the al-Shifa hospital complex in western Mosul, approximately 1,500 explosive items have been rendered safe as of 2 October 2017. The items included spent ammunition, IEDs, explosive vests and hand grenades. Additionally, the High Court building in the same area contained approximately 1,000 items rendered safe as of the same date, including 72 aerial-delivered IEDs and 44 explosive vests, including one that appeared to be too small for adult use.

The survey and clearance of explosive hazards is made more difficult by the existence of rubble from collapsed buildings. It is expected that explosive contamination is more extensive in western Mosul than what was encountered in eastern Mosul and that the contamination of both IED and UXO will hamper the clean up the city for many months to come.

ISIL continued its deliberate campaign of destruction of civilian objects and places of cultural or religious significance, or desecration of religious sites. The destruction of cultural and religious sites, which constituted a policy for ISIL in areas under its control during its three-year rule, culminated in the destruction on 21 June 2017 of al-Nuri Mosque and its leaning minaret in the Old City of Mosul. The al-Nuri mosque was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and it was from there that ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the creation of a new "caliphate" on 4 July 2014.

At the start of military operations to retake Mosul, ISIL elements carried out systematic mass abductions in all areas under the control of the group or while withdrawing from areas later reclaimed by ISF. ISIL forcibly moved thousands of civilians into conflict zones and locations where ISIL was conducting military operations to deliberately place them between ISF and their own forces, and to increase civilian casualties from military operations, including air raids and ground engagements. While waves of abductions by ISIL targeted primarily civilians in south and east of Mosul subdistrict, ISIL also targeted former members of ISF and their families, and families whose members have joined pro-government forces. ISIL also targeted those who were perceived by the group as pro-ISF, or those who attempted to flee ISIL controlled areas.

By the third phase, and as more territories were being retaken from ISIL, mass graves continued to be discovered. Since June 2014, at least 74 mass graves were discovered in areas previously held by ISIL in Iraq.<sup>2</sup> While some contained only several bodies, others are estimated to contain the remains of up to thousands of victims. Exhumations have been mainly conducted with regard to mass killings, such as the Camp Speicher mass killing in June 2014, and remain to be done in a large number of cases. Some mass graves were discovered in places where ISIL carried out mass killings, including in Kocho village, Sinjar district of Ninewa Governorate, the Badoush Prison of Mosul district and the al-Khasfa sinkhole of Alathba village of Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul district.

With regard to **ISF and associated forces**, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded instances of alleged violations and abuses of human rights. In some cases, the information available suggested the involvement of ISF members, but conclusive information could not be obtained. In other cases, alleged incidents were filmed on videos that were posted on social media. UNAMI/OHCHR advocated with Iraqi authorities for prompt and thorough investigations to be carried out and for those responsible to be brought to justice. For example, on 24 May, the Ministry of Interior announced the opening of an investigation on allegations of violations committed by its forces fighting ISIL in Ninewa. The allegations were first reported by the German magazine *Der Spiegel*. Four Emergency Response Division members were reportedly arrested for investigation. On 17 August, Iraqi authorities announced on social media that, after completing the investigations, they could determine that some of the alleged violations occurred and those accused have been referred to the judiciary. At the same time, it is also stated that some of the allegations reported by the magazine were inaccurate. No details on specific allegations were provided.

**Airstrikes** also claimed civilian lives and damaged civilian property and infrastructure in areas under the control of ISIL during the period covered by this report. In many investigations UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to determine responsibility due to insufficient information or contradictory statements regarding the incidents.

UNAMI/OHCHR also documented instances of **threats to families alleged to have ISIL-affiliated members and forced evictions**. In some cases, unidentified groups made the threats through so-called night letters ordering people to leave or face dire consequences. In other cases, local authorities took

---

<sup>2</sup> Update of 23 August 2017

the lead or have followed the wave of resentment amongst certain segments of the population; and disregarding respect of rule of law.

Media personnel also suffered casualties while covering the fighting. At least five media staff were killed and at least 19 others were wounded.

UNAMI/OHCHR regularly advocated with national and international actors with regard to protection of civilians and the respect of principles of international humanitarian law, notably those of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attacks and against the effects of attacks. This advocacy has been consistently undertaken with both senior government and military leaders, as well at the operational level with unit commanders.

Ensuring accountability for the abuses and violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including those constituting international crimes, allegedly committed in the context of the ongoing armed conflict, no matter when, where or by whom such crimes, violations or abuses were committed, remains a significant challenge. Presently, the Iraqi courts do not have jurisdiction over international crimes committed in Iraq. Additionally, Iraq is not a Party to the Statute of the International Criminal Court and has not accepted the jurisdiction of the Court under article 12(3) of its Statute. The Government is currently examining national and international mechanisms to address international crimes committed by ISIL.

According to the International Organization for Migration, as of 11 July, 137,339 families (824,034 individuals) were displaced as a result of the Mosul operations which began on 17 October 2016.<sup>3</sup> Women, children, people with disabilities, aged persons and persons from Iraq's diverse ethnic and religious communities remain particularly vulnerable and are in need of urgent support and assistance.

## Introduction

This report on the *Protection of Civilians in the context of the Ninewa Operations and the retaking of Mosul City, 17 October 2016 – 10 July 2017* is published by the Human Rights Office of United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), under their respective mandates.<sup>4</sup>

This report presents a summary of incidents investigated and verified by UNAMI/OHCHR involving violations and abuses of international human rights and violations of international humanitarian law linked to the non-international armed conflict between the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and affiliated armed groups, and the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/EmergencyTracking.aspx> (accessed 11 July).

<sup>4</sup> In resolution 1770 of 10 August 2006, the United Nations Security Council requested UNAMI to "promote the protection of human rights and judicial and legal reform in order to strengthen the rule of law in Iraq..." (paragraph 2(c)). UNAMI mandate was extended in the same terms for 2016/2017 by Security Council resolution 2367 of 14 July 2017. In accordance with its mandate, UNAMI Human Rights Office conducts a range of activities aimed at promoting the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including undertaking independent and impartial monitoring of, and reporting on, armed violence and its impact on civilians and on violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

<sup>5</sup> For background on ISIL see UNAMI/OHCHR, *Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Non International Armed Conflict in Iraq: 5 June – 5 July 2014* (18 August 2014) available online at



This report covers the period of the military operations by ISF and affiliated armed groups to retake areas of Ninewa Governorate and Mosul city from ISIL. The operations lasted from 17 October 2016 to 10 July 2017.

## Methodology

The information contained in this report is based, where possible, on accounts obtained directly from the victims, survivors, or witnesses of violations and abuses of international human rights law and/or violations of international humanitarian law. UNAMI/OHCHR continued to conduct interviews with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the KR-I and Ninewa Governorate as well as with other victims, survivors, and witnesses of incidents.<sup>6</sup> Information was also obtained from a variety of sources,<sup>7</sup> including government and non-government organizations, representatives of civil society and other United Nations entities. Unless specifically stated, all information presented in this report has been cross-checked and verified using independent, credible, and reliable sources.

The security situation in Iraq has affected the capacity of UNAMI/OHCHR to undertake direct monitoring and verification of many incidents in many areas of the country. UNAMI/OHCHR has encountered difficulties in verifying incidents that took place in conflict areas and in areas under ISIL control. In some cases, sources were reluctant to speak to UNAMI/OHCHR due to threats, intimidation, and/or fear of reprisal. As a result, the actual numbers of civilian casualties and scale of incidents could be much higher than those recorded by UNAMI/OHCHR. Furthermore, examples of violations and abuses contained in this report are emblematic and do not present an exhaustive account of all abuses and violations that were reported to UNAMI/OHCHR and verified.

## Background

Mosul, a city with an estimated population of more than 1.5 million inhabitants, fell to ISIL in June 2014;<sup>8</sup> it was retaken by ISF after nearly three years of being under the control of ISIL.

On 17 October 2016, ISF launched operation 'Qademoun Ya Ninewa' to retake territories under the control of ISIL in Ninewa Governorate, in particular Mosul City. Iraqi Security Forces included Federal Police, Iraqi Army, Counter-Terrorism Forces, Peshmerga, the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs), Tribal Mobilization Units, and allied tribal and local volunteers, with air support by Operation Inherent Resolve

---

[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI\\_OHCHR\\_POC%20Report\\_FINAL\\_18July2014A.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI_OHCHR_POC%20Report_FINAL_18July2014A.pdf) (accessed 29 April 2017)

<sup>6</sup> Since the fall of Mosul in 2014, in total UNAMI/OHCHR had conducted 1033 interviews with victims/witnesses of human rights violations/abuses and IDPs in areas where they have concentrated regarding incidents taking place throughout Iraq. UNAMI/OHCHR also conducts telephone interviews with victims and witnesses of human rights violations/abuses, civilians who remain trapped in ISIL-controlled areas or who have fled to other areas of Iraq.

<sup>7</sup> These include Government officials and institutions, local and international media, local non-governmental organizations, human rights defenders, tribal leaders, religious leaders, political figures, and civil society actors, as well as United Nations entities operating in Iraq.

<sup>8</sup> On ISIL takeover of Mosul in June 2014, see Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Non International armed Conflict in Iraq: 5 June – 5 July 2014, at [http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=2220:report-on-the-protection-of-civilians-in-the-non-international-armed-conflict-in-iraq-5-june-5-july-2014&Itemid=650&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2220:report-on-the-protection-of-civilians-in-the-non-international-armed-conflict-in-iraq-5-june-5-july-2014&Itemid=650&lang=en) (accessed 25 June 2017).

and the Iraqi Air Force. The same day, the President of the Iraqi Republic, Fuad Masum, addressed the Armed Forces reminding them to respect and protect civilians.<sup>9</sup> Based on the lessons learned from previous operations against ISIL in Ramadi, Tikrit and Fallujah, the Government of Iraq adopted a humanitarian concept of operations to be used by the ISF, which prioritized the protection of civilians in both the planning and the conduct of the military operations. This was also supported by senior religious figures in Iraq, who urged them to make utmost efforts to secure civilian lives. Also on 17 October, President of the KR-I Masoud Barzani announced the contribution of KR-I forces in the campaign, including Peshmerga, Zerevani, Protection Forces, and Emergency Forces.

On 20 October, Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Abadi addressed an international meeting in Paris on the future of Mosul stating 'We will not allow violations of human rights, and we will set up investigation committees'. He added that the State had brought people to trial, some of whom for violations of human rights during the course of the battles. He praised the great cooperation between Peshmerga and ISF and noted that the majority of air strikes were conducted by the Iraqi Air Force and that coalition forces were only providing logistic support.<sup>10</sup> President of the KR-I, Masoud Barzani also stressed on 16 October 2016 the importance of preserving lives of civilians while conducting hostilities, and that legal action would be taken against military personnel committing breaches.

In his press statement of 21 October 2016, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini welcomed " (...) the public statements by Iraq's leaders that the utmost efforts will be made to protect civilians, as required by international humanitarian law."<sup>11</sup> Also, in his briefing to the Security Council on 9 November 2016, Mr. Jan Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq noted that based on lessons learned from the past, for the Mosul operations, the Government of Iraq and the leadership of ISF and PMU prioritized the protection of civilians in an unprecedented way in the planning and conduct of the military operations, fully cognizant of its domestic and international commitments and obligations, political implications and reputational risk.<sup>12</sup>

## Timeline of Events

Below are the main events of the military operations:

### 2013

At the end of December, ISIL seized Fallujah City in Anbar Governorate.

### 2014

In early June, ISIL launched a series of attacks across several fronts in a bid to seize areas and buildings in the governorates of Salah al-Din, Ninewa, and Diyala.

By 10 June, ISIL had full control of Mosul City.

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://presidency.iq/Details.aspx?id=6162> (accessed 25 April 2017)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=100CW-OragE> (accessed 25 April 2017)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20729> (accessed 24 August 2017).

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=5835:briefing-to-the-security-council-by-srsg-for-iraq-jan-kubis-new-york-9-november-2016-as-prepared&Itemid=728&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=5835:briefing-to-the-security-council-by-srsg-for-iraq-jan-kubis-new-york-9-november-2016-as-prepared&Itemid=728&lang=en) (accessed 24 August 2017).

At the end of October, ISF and PMUs retook Jurf-al Sakhr in Babil Governorate.

## **2015**

On 31 March, the Iraqi Prime Minister announced the liberation of Tikrit, Salah al-Din Governorate.

On 18 May, ISIL took control of Ramadi City in Anbar Governorate.

On 13 November, KR-I forces retook Sinjar in Ninewa Governorate.

On 28 December, ISF retook Ramadi City.

## **2016**

On 17 June, ISF retook Fallujah City in Anbar Governorate.

On 25 August, ISF retook from ISIL the town of Qayyara in Ninewa Governorate.

On 21 October, ISF retook the town of Bartilla (also spelled Bartella), around 15 kilometers east of Mosul.

On 6 November, ISF announced to have retaken the centre of Hammam al-Alil, about 15 kilometers south of Mosul.

On 8 November, KR-I Security Forces announced to have retaken the town of Bashiqa, east of Mosul.

On 13 November, ISF announced to have retaken the ancient city of Nimrud, around 30 kilometers southeast of Mosul. The remains of the ancient city had been destroyed or damaged by ISIL in March 2015.<sup>13</sup>

On 28 December, the last remaining bridge on the Tigris River connecting the eastern and western sides of Mosul was reportedly disabled by an airstrike.

## **2017**

On 24 January, the Iraqi Prime Minister declared eastern Mosul liberated.<sup>14</sup>

On 19 February, ISF launched an offensive to retake Mosul's western half.

On 13 March, the Iraqi Air Force dropped hundreds of thousands of leaflets in the ISIL-controlled neighbourhoods of the western Mosul city, requesting people to take safety measures by listening to ISF instructions on radios, not leaving their home, staying away from ISIL compounds, keeping first aid medications around, using cell phones only in urgent situations, and contacting ISF very carefully.

On 14 March, Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Abadi emphasised again that the protection of civilians is a priority in the battle and also pledged to treat the families of ISIL fighters fairly.<sup>15</sup>

On 12 April, Iraqi Air Force dropped hundreds of thousands of leaflets in the ISIL-controlled

---

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=4058:report-on-the-protection-of-civilians-in-the-armed-conflict-in-iraq-11-december-2014-30-april-2015&Itemid=650&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4058:report-on-the-protection-of-civilians-in-the-armed-conflict-in-iraq-11-december-2014-30-april-2015&Itemid=650&lang=en) (accessed 29 April 2017)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.pmo.iq/press2017/24-1-20171.htm> (accessed 25 January 2017)

<sup>15</sup> Recorded press conference : [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GO53\\_lis69g&feature=youtu.be14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GO53_lis69g&feature=youtu.be14) (accessed 21 March 2017)

neighbourhoods in western Mosul urging civilians to take safety measures and avoid being used as human shields by ISIL and instructing them to: stay at home, lock the doors and stay away from windows; stay one family in a house; go to the basement (if any) when clashes erupt; try to leave their house and sneak out instantly, if ISIL use it for carrying out attacks against ISF, and send information about exact location of ISIL.

On 26 April, PMUs stated they took the ancient city of Hatra, around 100 kilometers southwest of Mosul. The remains of the ancient city had been damaged by ISIL in March 2015.<sup>16</sup>

On 4 May, ISF announced to have launched an attack against ISIL from northwestern Mosul.

On 15 May, the Iraqi Air Force dropped thousands of leaflets in the ISIL-controlled neighbourhoods of western Mosul, urging the civilians not to use their cars or motorcycles for any reason, as ISIL use such vehicles to attack ISF. The leaflet further warned that ISF would target any vehicle or motorcycle from the evening of 15 May.

On 20 May, Iraq's Special Forces declared their aspect of the mission to retake Mosul completed, but declared they stood ready to support any other forces if ordered to do so by the Prime Minister.

On 23 May, PMUs announced the end of their operations to retake Qairawan subdistrict of Sinjar district. PMUs, with support from the Iraqi Air Force, commenced the operations to retake Qairawan subdistrict on 12 May.

On 24 May, the Ministry of Interior announced the opening of an investigation on allegations of violations committed by its forces fighting ISIL in Ninewa.<sup>17</sup> The allegations were first reported by the German magazine *Der Spiegel*.

On 25 May, the Iraqi Air Force reportedly dropped thousands of leaflets in the ISIL-controlled neighbourhoods of al-Shaffa, Zanjilly and the Old City, urging civilians to flee towards ISF-controlled neighbourhoods through secured corridors. UNAMI/OHCHR could not obtain a copy of the leaflet.

On 27 May, ISF announced the launch of operations to retake the last areas of Mosul City still under control of ISIL.

On 2 June, ISF announced to have retaken the Sihha neighbourhood; ISIL remained still in control of the Old City centre, Zanjili and the Medical City.

On 4 June, PMUs announced to have retaken Baaj town, west of Mosul City.

On 13 June, ISF announced to have retaken Zanjili neighbourhood, north of the Old City. On 18 June, ISF launched an assault to retake the Old City in western Mosul. On 20 June, ISF announced to have retaken al-Shifaa neighbourhood and to have encircled the Old City.

The morning of 18 June, the Iraqi Air Force dropped thousands of leaflets over the Old City of Mosul alerting civilians of the final ISF operations to retake Mosul. Civilians were asked to take any opportunity

---

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=4058:report-on-the-protection-of-civilians-in-the-armed-conflict-in-iraq-11-december-2014-30-april-2015&Itemid=650&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4058:report-on-the-protection-of-civilians-in-the-armed-conflict-in-iraq-11-december-2014-30-april-2015&Itemid=650&lang=en) (accessed 29 April 2017)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.moi.gov.iq/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=2533> (accessed 24 May)

to flee through secure corridors opened by ISF.

On 21 June, ISIL using explosives destroyed the al-Nuri Mosque and its minaret in the Old City.

On 28 June, ISF captured the compound of the al-Nuri mosque blown up by ISIL one week earlier.

On 10 July, Prime Minister Al-Abadi declared victory over ISIL in the operations to reclaim the city.

On 10 July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, congratulated the people and Government of Iraq on the liberation of Mosul from ISIL. Mr. Kubiš said “The credit goes first and foremost to the Iraqis themselves. Heroism and martyrdom of the Iraqi Security Forces, the Popular Mobilization Forces, the Peshmerga, and tribal units, with the military backing of the International Coalition, were instrumental in achieving this victory.”<sup>18</sup> On 11 July, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, mentioned the serious human rights violations suffered by Iraqis under ISIL and stated that retaking of Mosul from ISIL by Iraqi Government forces, supported by their International Coalition partners, marked a significant turning point in the conflict, but Iraq faces a series of human rights challenges which, if left unaddressed, are likely to spark further violence and civilian suffering. He stated that threats of collective punishment are an act of vengeance that works against national reconciliation and social cohesion. He urged to “ (...) to step up efforts to create an Iraq grounded in equality and the rule of law”.<sup>19</sup>

On 29 September, a press release by Operation Inherent Resolve stated that 1200-1500 members of the ISF had been killed in the operations to liberate Mosul and a further approximate 8,000 were wounded.<sup>20</sup> No figures were available regarding of ISIL fighters who had been killed or wounded.

## Civilian casualties

From the start of military operations on 17 October 2016 to the public announcement of the liberation of Mosul on 10 July 2017, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded in Ninewa Governorate at least 4194 civilian casualties (2521 killed and 1673 wounded).<sup>21</sup> For reasons stated above, these figures should be considered as an absolute minimum. Additionally, the Civil Defence Corps,<sup>22</sup> as of 26 October 2017, reported that they had recovered the remains of 1,642 civilians from underneath rubble in Mosul,<sup>23</sup> of which 1639 were found in western Mosul—a clear indication of the intensity of fighting and the duration of the operation to retake the final part of the city.

The tactics that caused the highest numbers of civilian casualties during the fighting to retake Mosul were: shelling (1421, of which 1357 caused by ISIL), airstrikes (1091), execution-style killings by ISIL (741)

---

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=7523:un-s-kubis-congratulates-iraqis-on-the-liberation-of-mosul-a-historic-victory-for-iraq-and-the-world-and-a-resounding-defeat-for-daesh-and-terrorism-signaling-their-end-more-work-ahead-for-iraq-on-road-to-recovery-and-lasting-peace&Itemid=605&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=7523:un-s-kubis-congratulates-iraqis-on-the-liberation-of-mosul-a-historic-victory-for-iraq-and-the-world-and-a-resounding-defeat-for-daesh-and-terrorism-signaling-their-end-more-work-ahead-for-iraq-on-road-to-recovery-and-lasting-peace&Itemid=605&lang=en) (accessed 23 August 2017)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21860&LangID=E> (accessed 23 August 2017)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/1329187/combined-joint-task-force-operation-inherent-resolve-monthly-civilian-casualty/> (accessed 1 October 2017).

<sup>21</sup> These figures should be considered as a minimum.

<sup>22</sup> The Civil Defence Corps falls within the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>23</sup> The Civil Defence Corps stated to UNAMI/OHCHR that they only collect bodies of civilians from the rubble whereas the Municipality and Health Directorate are responsible for collecting ISIL bodies. No figures were available from the Municipality at the time of writing.

and attacks using vehicles laden with explosives by ISIL (233). With respect to airstrikes, Operation Inherent Resolve, when reviewing incidents involving claims of civilian casualties, assessed a number of reports as credible that involved in the deaths of 295 civilians, 66 wounded and 36 remaining unaccounted for.<sup>24</sup> Responsibility for the remaining casualties could not be attributed.

The impact of the various tactics on civilians was markedly different in the various phases of the operations. For example, mass execution-style killings by ISIL were predominantly carried out in the first phase of the battle during the approach to the city. During a two-week period (17-29 October 2016) alone, ISIL killed around 550 civilians and former ISF members in districts and subdistricts of Ninewa Governorate that lay in the approach to Mosul. In one single instance, on 26 October, ISIL allegedly shot and killed 190 former ISF personnel in the al-Ghazlani military base in Mosul.

Shelling by ISIL in eastern Mosul<sup>25</sup> caused more than four times as many civilians casualties as in western Mosul:<sup>26</sup> 1069 casualties (285 killed and 784 wounded) were recorded in the former, while 258 (98 killed and 160 wounded) in the latter.

As to suicide attacks by ISIL (both through body-borne IEDs and vehicle-borne IEDs) causing civilian casualties, 29 incidents were recorded in eastern Mosul from mid-November 2016 onwards (the last one occurred on 23 June 2017, after eastern Mosul had been retaken), killing 68 civilians and wounding 122 others. The use of suicide attacks by ISIL in western Mosul was not as prominent: from 19 February 2017 onwards only three incidents were recorded, killing 24 civilians and wounding 32 others. The use of drones carrying explosives was frequent in eastern Mosul, with 19 incidents recorded causing 151 civilian casualties (42 killed and 99 wounded). The use of drones was less frequent in western Mosul, with two incidents causing 28 civilian casualties (14 killed and 14 wounded).

With regard to airstrikes, while during the operations to retake eastern Mosul they caused 40 civilian casualties (29 killed and 11 wounded), their civilian toll increased significantly in the operations to retake western Mosul, totaling 700 civilian casualties (461 killed and 239 wounded). The airstrike known to have caused the highest number of civilian casualties took place on 17 March: 105 civilians were killed, with 36 others unaccounted for, in al-Jadida neighbourhood of western Mosul.<sup>27</sup>

The actual number of civilian casualties from the incidents described above could be much higher than recorded. Additionally, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of violence, such as lack of access to food, water or medicine or whose remains are yet to be recovered is unknown. Children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and elderly people remained particularly vulnerable but owing to restrictions on accessing information, the impact of violence on these groups remains currently unquantifiable.

---

<sup>24</sup> Operation Inherent Resolve publishes monthly reports on its investigations into civilian casualties, see “Combined Joint Task Force—Operation Inherent Resolve Monthly Civiiian Casualty Report”, <http://www.inherentresolve.mil> (accessed 30 October).

<sup>25</sup> From mid-November 2016 until 19 May. Eastern Mosul continued to be targeted by ISIL through shelling and suicide attacks also after it had been retaken by ISF on 24 January 2017.

<sup>26</sup> From 19 February until 9 July.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/1193763/cjtf-oir-completes-airstrike-investigation/> (accessed 24 August 2017).

During rescue operations carried out in Mosul, some members of the Yazidi community previously abducted by ISIL were found amidst the rubble or when clearing buildings in search for ISIL fighters. For example, on 30 June, Iraqi Army members found three Yazidi civilians—two children and a man—in the al-Maydan neighbourhood of the Old City in western Mosul. On 9 August, Iraqi Federal Police found a Yazidi girl in the basement of a house in Sina' neighbourhood of western Mosul.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as of 11 July, 137,339 families (824,034 individuals) were displaced as a result of the Mosul operations, which began on 17 October 2016.<sup>28</sup>

## Section 1

### Phase 1: the Approach to Mosul City

This phase of the military operations focused on those districts and subdistricts of Ninewa Governorate that lay in the approach to Mosul from the south and the east. By the end of this phase, ISF reclaimed al-Shura, Hamam al-Alil, al-Qayarah subdistricts of Mosul District, Nimrod and Bartilla subdistricts of al-Hamadaniya district, al-Qayrawan subdistrict of Sinjar district, al-Tal subdistrict al-Hatra district, and al-Qahtaniyah subdistrict of al-Baaj district.

#### **1-A: Violations and abuses perpetrated by ISIL**

- **Abductions**

UNAMI/OHCHR documented instances involving the abduction of thousands of civilians carried out by ISIL. ISIL also abducted former ISF personnel to hold them in captivity for fear of retaliation or of possible collaboration with ISF or to punish them or kill them for their former functions. Reports were received that many abductees were subsequently killed by ISIL. Abductions started on the very first day of the offensive to retake Mosul. Unless otherwise mentioned, UNAMI/OHCHR could not determine the whereabouts of those abducted. Below are some of the incidents documented by UNAMI/OHCHR.

On 17 October 2016, ISIL abducted 15 men from Zuweiya village, al-Qayarah subdistrict of Mosul. On the same day, ISIL abducted 22 men from al-Hood village in al-Qayarah subdistrict of Mosul. In the early morning of 18 October, ISIL also allegedly abducted 100 families from al-Hood village and took them to Zuweiya village. On the same day, 70 families were reportedly later released.

In the morning of 20 October, ISIL reportedly abducted about 100 male civilians in Sufeya village of Shura subdistrict of Mosul. The victims were reportedly put on five mini-buses and taken to an unknown destination. The abductees included former Iraqi Army officers (who had declared repentance to ISIL) and former Ninewa Governorate employees.

On 23 October, ISIL took away five imams from the al-Zuhour area of eastern Mosul on charges of provoking and encouraging people to rebel against the group.

On 1 November, ISIL ordered residents of the al-Kadhra area in eastern Mosul city to gather and then abducted an unknown number of former ISF members, taking them to an unknown destination.

---

<sup>28</sup> <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/EmergencyTracking.aspx> (accessed 11 July 2017).

On 2 or 3 November, ISIL allegedly abducted at least 30 sheikhs (from the Bu Mitait tribe) from Khansi, Pesski and Um Amer villages in Qayrwan (Balij) subdistrict of Sinjar district and reportedly took them to an unknown destination where 18 were executed. ISIL was reportedly wary that the victims would fight the group when ISF started operations to reclaim Qayrwan subdistrict. For the same reason, between 1 and 4 November, ISIL allegedly abducted at least 195 former ISF personnel from Tel al-Saman, Abu Maria, Tamaratand and Mazara three villages in Talafar district.

On 4 November, ISIL allegedly brought an unspecified number of Yezidi women to Talafar town and placed them in a school. ISIL then reportedly sold some of the women to its militants. A source reported that from 27 October until the beginning of November, ISIL took between 64 and 70 Yezidi women from: Ayadiyah subdistrict of Talafar, Muhalabiya subdistrict of Mosul and from Qayrawan subdistrict of Sinjar district, to the 17 Tamouz neighbourhood in western Mosul City.

On 7 November, ISF together with the Engineering Units of the Peshmerga, reportedly found in Shura subdistrict of Mosul an underground prison containing 961 persons. Those kept captive were Sunnis, with most of them allegedly being former ISF officers, and some of them members of the Islamic Political Party. The abductees reportedly exhibited torture signs on their bodies and suffered from malnutrition. One source reported that the prison had cages and rooms measuring 1 meter by 0.5 meter. ISIL reportedly provided food to the abductees once a day and allegedly systematically tortured the abductees.

On 7 November, a 75-year old man and a three-year old girl died of asphyxia reportedly in an ISIL prison in al-Farouq neighbourhood in western Mosul City. Reportedly their deaths were as a result of overcrowding and poor ventilation in a small room where they were being held.

#### ▪ **Ill-treatment / intimidation**

With the start of Mosul operations, and in an attempt to terrorize the population under its control and contain any possibility of the local populace rising up against them, ISIL launched a campaign of intimidation against the residents of Ninewa Governorate, in particular of those in Mosul district through the distribution of threatening pamphlets and public announcement and speeches at mosques. ISIL launched a threatening call to all residents of Mosul to hand over subscriber identity module (SIM) cards for mobile phones otherwise they would be severely punished. Pamphlets included threats to kill anyone who collaborates with ISF or who tries to flee towards ISF areas.

On the afternoon of 19 October, ISIL reportedly abducted six men from their homes and tied their hands to a vehicle and dragged them behind it through Safina village, Shura subdistrict of Mosul, for reportedly being related to a tribal leader fighting ISIL with ISF. The men were also allegedly publicly beaten with sticks and gun butts. The whereabouts of the victims remains unknown. On the same day, ISIL so-called morality police 'al Hisba' put marks on closed stores in Mosul city ordering owners to resume business as usual or face punishment, and further intimidating them amidst ongoing military operations.

On 4 November, ISIL reportedly told residents of al-Kathra neighbourhood of eastern Mosul to stay indoors or be shot despite ongoing risk of shelling in the area. ISIL allegedly feared that civilians would flee towards ISF positions.



In the evening of 5 November, ISIL militants allegedly went around neighbourhoods in Mosul ordering (through loudspeakers mounted on vehicles) residents to demonstrate in the morning of 6 November against ISF and the ongoing Mosul operations. ISIL allegedly threatened to punish those who would not comply with the order.

On 10 November, ISIL posted on its Wilayat al-Jazeera website photos of victims killed by the group for committing breaches of 'shari'a law'. Photos include the killing of a cigarette merchant and cutting off a hand of a alleged thief. The exact dates and locations of the killings are not known. In some photos, children are seen witnessing the announcement of orders and implementation of the punishments. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify this incident or the authenticity of the photos.

ISIL systematically forced residents to vacate their places of origin and forcibly displaced them to other locations within the subdistricts of Ninewa, including inside Mosul from its eastern side to the western.<sup>29</sup>

- **Mass killings**

UNAMI/OHCHR documented many instances of killings carried out by ISIL either in areas surrounding Mosul or in Mosul City itself. In some cases, in particular when former ISF personnel were the victims, it appeared that ISIL considered them as a possible threat in the context of ISF operations to retake Mosul. In other cases, people were killed for not having followed the rules or orders issued by the group or for refusing that ISIL use their houses for military purposes. In many instances, ISIL left the bodies on public display as a warning to the population to abide by their commands or face the same punishment.

In the morning of 17 October 2016, residents of Lazaga and Zuweiya villages, al-Qayyarah subdistrict (50 km south of) Mosul, fought against ISIL killing three of the group's members and burning one vehicle. ISIL abducted eight young men from the village, shot them in the head and left them at the entrance of the village.

In the morning of 18 October, ISIL took an unknown number of men and abducted others in al-Sert village (also known as Hamdiya al Charkiya), al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul. On the same day, ISIL allegedly shot and killed 12 civilians in the Tlul Nasir village, al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul reportedly for inciting residents of the village to rebel against the group.

Repeated killings by ISIL in Hamam al-Alil were reported in the days from 19 to 23 October. On 19 October, ISIL allegedly killed 30 civilians in a former Iraqi Army shooting range known as Maidan al-Rimaya located at the University of Agriculture in Hamam al-Alil City Center. On 20 October, ISIL reportedly killed an additional 10 civilians in the same location. The victims had allegedly been abducted, together with about 350 other civilians, from Lazaga (also known as Upper Hud village) and al-Hud villages in al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul and from Shura subdistrict, also of Mosul, on 18 October. On 23 October, ISIL also reportedly killed 50 former Iraqi Police Officers in the same location. The victims were reportedly abducted in Lazaga and al-Hud villages and had been brought to Hamam al-Alil on the same day.

---

<sup>29</sup> See more under use of civilians as human shields.

On 20 October, ISF discovered the bodies of at least 70 civilians inside houses in Tulul Nasir village in Shura subdistrict of Mosul. The bodies bore bullet wounds and the victims were allegedly recently killed by ISIL.

During the night of 20 October, members of ISIL's 'al Hisba' unit conducted a search operation in Mosul city, entering houses and searching for weapons and mobile SIM cards. They then killed six civilians after confiscation of SIM cards hidden by the victims. Their bodies were hung in Saidati al-Jamila Square in Mosul reportedly as a warning ruling for others.

On 22 October, ISIL allegedly shot and killed three women and three children, and shot and wounded a further four children in Rufeila village of al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul. The victims were allegedly shot for lagging 100 meters behind a group of villagers (number unknown) from Rufeila village (al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul) who were being taken by ISIL to Hamam Ali subdistrict of Mosul. The victims were trailing behind as they reportedly had one female child with a disability. The child was reportedly amongst those shot and killed.

On 24 October, ISIL shot and killed 15 civilians in Safina village, Shura subdistrict of Mosul, and threw their bodies in the Tigris River reportedly in an attempt to spread terror among residents in light of the ongoing Mosul military operations.

On 25 October, ISIL shot and killed 24 former ISF personnel who had been held captive by the group since September 2015 for allegedly cooperating with ISF. The victims were allegedly killed in the Ghabat military base in northern Mosul. On the same day, ISIL shot and killed three former ISF members and hung their bodies from Liberty Bridge in Mosul.

On 26 October, ISIL allegedly shot and killed 190 former ISF personnel in the al-Ghazlani military base in Mosul. The victims had reportedly been recently brought from Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul by ISIL. On the same day, ISIL also reportedly killed 42 civilians in al-Izza military base in Hamam al-Alil City after they reportedly refused to join ISIL. The victims had reportedly been recently brought to Hamam al-Alil city from al-Oreg Village in Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul.

On 27 October ISIL took 50 former Iraqi Army personnel from Safina, Mahana, Um-Manassis villages in Shura subdistrict of Mosul to a military college inside Mosul airport and shot and killed 49 of the victims and wounded the other victim.

On 29 October, 40 former ISF officers, who had reportedly been abducted a week earlier by ISIL from al-Shura subdistrict of Mosul and from surrounding villages of Hamam al-Alil, were allegedly shot dead by ISIL in Hamam al-Alil City. Their bodies were reportedly thrown in the Tigris River.

On 8 November, ISIL reportedly killed by shooting 40 civilians in Mosul City after accusing them of treason and collaboration with ISF. The victims were dressed in orange clothes and words 'traitors and agents of ISF' were written on their corpses in red. The bodies were then hung from electricity poles in several areas of Mosul.

In the evening of 9 November, ISIL reportedly killed 20 civilians by shooting in the Ghabat Military Base, northern Mosul. The victims were reportedly accused of leaking information to ISF. ISIL hung their

bodies at different intersections in Mosul and attached an 'order of execution' to the chests of the victims, on which was also written 'used cell phones to leak information to ISF.'

In the evening of 11 November, ISIL reportedly shot and killed 12 civilians in Bakir neighbourhood in eastern Mosul city for allegedly refusing to allow ISIL to install and launch rockets from the rooftops of their houses.

- **Forced displacement of the civilian population and use of civilians as human shields**

The first phase of the battle saw the highest number of episodes of forced displacement of the civilian population by ISIL. In particular, several instances—involving large numbers of civilians—were recorded in the very first days of the operations (17 to 19 October 2016).

Several cases of forced displacement occurred on 17 October:

ISIL reportedly forced 200 families out of Samalia village by foot to an unknown destination.

ISIL reportedly forced 250 families from Naifa village in Nimrud subdistrict of Mosul to Mosul City.

In Maahed e Salamia village of Nimroud, subdistrict of Mosul, 150 families were forced to walk towards Mosul City.

In Kani village in Nimrud subdistrict, 200 families were ordered by ISIL to leave their village and move to the direction of Mosul.

By 17 October, in al-Abbas village in Nimrud subdistrict (which had then been retaken from ISIL by ISF), at least 300 families had reportedly already been expelled by ISIL, who issued calls from the mosque for villagers to leave.

At least two instances of forced displacement occurred on 19 October:

ISIL reportedly forcibly displaced residents of Tel al-shook, Um al-Manasees, Toulul al-Naser, Hahdrut al-Fadal, al-Bakar, Nusuf al-Tel, al-Safina, al-Nanah, Tuweba and Arasif in Shoura subdistrict of Mosul to other areas within the group's control in Ninewa Governorate, including Mosul and Hamam Ali.

ISIL forced residents of Tel al-shook, Um al-Manasees, Toulul al-Naser, Hahdrut al-Fadal, Al Bakar, Nusuf al-Tel, al-Safina, al-Nanah, Tuweba and Arasif in Shoura subdistrict of Mosul to leave their villages for ISIL-controlled territories in Ninewa Governorate, including Mosul and Hamam al-Alil.

In the early hours of 31 October, ISIL brought dozens of trucks and mini-buses to Hamam al-Alil City, south of Mosul, in an attempt to forcibly displace some 25,000 civilians towards locations in and around Mosul. The civilians had reportedly been abducted from villages in al-Qayyarah, Hamam al-Alil and Shura subdistricts of Mosul. The trucks were reportedly prevented from proceeding towards Mosul by air strikes by planes that were allegedly surveilling the area and the trucks were forced to return to Hamam al-Alil. However, some buses reportedly reached Abusaif, 15 kilometers north of Hamam Al-Alil city, and others Tilkaif district. At midnight on 31 October and 1 November, ISIL reportedly transported an

unknown number of families allegedly using 32 trucks and minibuses to Talafar district. One source reported that before dawn on 2 November, ISIL took 150 families to Mosul.

On 2 November, ISIL—reportedly using loudspeakers—ordered residents of the Lazaghah (some 200 houses) and Arij villages (some 2000 houses), five km from Hamam al-Alil City Centre, to leave the villages for Mosul. ISIL pickup trucks reportedly patrolled houses of Arij village ordering residents to leave the village or otherwise they would be killed if they remained in the village.

On 9 November, ISIL forcibly moved 42 families from their homes in the al-Faisaliya neighbourhood, eastern Mosul, to the western side of the city. The families were reportedly put into houses in which IEDs had been placed.

During the night between 12 and 13 November, ISIL reportedly ordered the residents of the Muharibeen and Tahrir areas of eastern Mosul to leave their homes and move to Mosul city downtown. ISIL told residents that non-compliance would result in the use of female family members as human shields.

- **Use of alleged chemical agents**

Several actions taken by ISIL deliberately caused damage to the environment and caused civilian casualties, as illustrated below by the incidents recorded by UNAMI/OHCHR. Efforts by Iraqi authorities to contain the effects of the incidents, which took place after the end of this phase of the operations, have been included in this section of the report.

On 20 October 2016, ISIL set fire to sulfur fields and a factory in Mishraq village, 25 kilometers from al-Qayyarah, and 45 km from Mosul, before withdrawing from the area. Local fire brigades reportedly doused the fire. The fields are located in Shura subdistrict and surrounded by villages with thousands of inhabitants. On 21 October, a rocket fired by ISIL hit the same fields and factory resulting in gas dissipating towards dozens of surrounding villages. By 22 October, ISF reported that they had contained the fire caused by the rocket at the sulfur gas factory and fields. However, plumes of sulfur gas continued to be seen rising from the sulfur fields.

By 23 October, the World Health Organization (WHO)<sup>30</sup> and the Ninewa Directorate of Health had treated 1000 suffocation patients as a result of the sulfur plumes. As of 23 October, four people (two civilians and two Iraqi Army personnel) had died after inhaling fumes from the burning sulfur. Two of the victims (Iraqi Army personnel) died on 21 October in Safina village in al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul. The other civilian victims died on 21 or 22 October. On 27 October, ISF reportedly contained the dissipation of the gas.

On 26 October, a two-month old boy died from asphyxia as a result of emissions from the Mishraq Sulfur Gas factory and fields in Shura. The child reportedly died as his family fled from Shura City

---

<sup>30</sup> WHO and Ministry of Health accelerate their medical intervention to manage over 1000 cases of suffocation in al-Qayyarah, Ijhala, Haj Ali, and Makhmour, [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=6210:who-and-ministry-of-health-accelerate-their-medical-intervention-to-manage-over-1000-cases-of-suffocation-in-qayarra-ijhala-haj-ali-and-makhmour&Itemid=605&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=6210:who-and-ministry-of-health-accelerate-their-medical-intervention-to-manage-over-1000-cases-of-suffocation-in-qayarra-ijhala-haj-ali-and-makhmour&Itemid=605&lang=en), 24 October (accessed 25 April 2017).

towards al-Qayyarah. Other family members also reportedly suffered from breathing problems on the way to al-Qayyarah.

On 29 March, the Iraqi Ministry of Oil announced to have extinguished all the fires in the oil wells in northern Iraq.<sup>31</sup>

- **Recruitment and use of children**

UNAMI/OHCHR received several reports concerning recruitment and use of children by ISIL.

On 19 October 2016, it was reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that ISIL had reportedly been forcibly recruiting children from nine years old and above in Mosul since the start of the military operations. A witness reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that on 17 or 18 October, ISIL entered a house in al-Karama Quarter in Mosul, and attempted to take by force a 12-year old boy to join the group. The father begged the group to leave the boy. ISIL took the father instead informing the family that he would be fighting ISF.

On 19 October, ISIL child soldiers rigged with explosives were reportedly killed in Shaquli Village in Hamdaniya subdistrict of Mosul when an operation by ISF was launched against ISIL in the area.

On 25 October, ISIL allegedly ordered residents of Hamam al-Alil City, Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul, to surrender children aged at least 10 years of age to the group. A source reported that ISIL used loudspeakers mounted at the back of a vehicle to make the order threatening to kill families that did not obey. Another source reported that ISIL militants knocked at people's houses and ordered them to surrender their sons to the group. ISIL reportedly took the children surrendered to the group to an unknown destination and with the intention of using them as fighters.

Local media reported that on 9 November, ISIL deployed its "Cubs of the Caliphate" unit in the old town of Mosul, with its members wearing explosive belts.

- **Destruction of civilian objects**

Concomitantly with the beginning of military operations to retake Mosul, ISIL destroyed several public buildings in Mosul City to deny ISF the ability to use them. No casualties were reported during the destruction. Below are the incidents recorded by UNAMI /OHCHR.

On 19 October 2016, ISIL destroyed using explosives the Ninewa Governorate building in the Jumhuriya Street of central Mosul. The same day, ISIL set on fire the General Directorate of Passports and General Directorate of Nationality in Mosul city. ISIL reportedly took thousands of documents and an unspecified number of computers from the buildings before setting it on fire. Additionally, ISIL reportedly destroyed using explosives the Municipality building in the Ba'th neighbourhood of central Mosul.

On 21 October, ISIL destroyed using explosives a building of the General Directorate of Education in al-Nasir neighbourhood of eastern Mosul. ISIL evacuated surrounding buildings before the detonation.

---

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.oil.gov.iq/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=807> (accessed 29 April 2017).

## **1-B: Violations committed by ISF and associated forces**

### **▪ Abductions and unlawful killings**

UNAMI/OHCHR received reports that members of the Iraqi Federal Police summarily executed six men after capturing them in Shura subdistrict of Mosul around 21 October 2016. UNAMI could not confirm the circumstances of these killings and whether those killed were civilians or ISIL fighters who were killed in fighting or had been detained and subsequently killed after being captured. UNAMI also received information that Iraqi Federal Police killed five civilians including three children in Na'naa' village on the 21 October. While some sources said that they were killed 'execution-style', others claimed that the victims were killed in cross-fire between the Iraqi Federal Police and ISIL as they had stayed in the village after all the other residents had vacated. UNAMI has been unable to determine the circumstances of the incident.

On around 11 November, a video was posted online showing uniformed men with a young male in what seems to be a desert area. The young male is forced to lie under a tank's tracks and is shot multiple times by a uniformed man before the tank rolls over his body. In the video there is no element that could suggest on which date the event occurred or the location where it took place. UNAMI/OHCHR contacted Iraqi security authorities in its initial assessment who noted to UNAMI/OHCHR that those in the video are not ISF members. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify this incident or determine location, perpetrators or authenticity of the video. UNAMI/OHCHR advocated with Iraqi authorities for a thorough investigation to be carried out and for those responsible to be brought to justice. On 5 July 2017, Iraqi authorities replied to UNAMI/OHCHR that they considered the video a fabrication.

### **▪ Shelling**

In some of the instances presented below, civilians affected by shelling fired by ISF may have been used by ISIL as human shields.

On 1 November 2016, a rocket—allegedly fired by ISF—reportedly hit a house in Gojali neighbourhood of eastern Mosul City, killing a man and wounding his 12-year-old daughter. Previously ISIL had reportedly forcibly entered the house and launched a rocket targeting ISF from the rooftop of the house.

On 4 November, missiles—allegedly fired by ISF—reportedly hit a house in Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul, killing 18 civilians, including a one-year-old child and an unknown number of women, and wounding four other civilians. Previously ISIL was reportedly launching missiles targeting ISF from the ground in front of the house. The victims had reportedly been forcibly moved by ISIL from al-Safina village in Shura subdistrict of Mosul to Hamam al-Alil City, Hamam al-Alil subdistrict, on 19 October 2016. ISIL reportedly used the victims as human shields. UNAMI/OHCHR interviewed several victims of forcible displacement by ISIL from al-Safina village who reported that hundreds were forcibly moved by ISIL to Hamam al-Alil City on 19 October. At least 22 civilians from three families were forced by ISIL to stay in a house surrounded by ISIL's heavy artillery.

## **1-C: Airstrikes**

UNAMI/OHCHR received several reports of airstrikes causing civilian casualties and damaging civilian property and infrastructure in areas under the control of ISIL during the period covered by this report. In many incidents UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to determine responsibility due to insufficient information or contradictory statements regarding the incidents. Additionally, in some incidents civilians affected by the airstrikes might have been used by ISIL as human shields.

On 24 October 2016, an airstrike reportedly hit a house in Abu-Jarbu'a village in Bashiqa subdistrict of Mosul killing six civilians—two children, two women and two men—from two families and also wounding four civilians—two children, one woman and a man.

In the evening of 2 November, an airstrike hit a residential area in al-Qudus neighbourhood in eastern Mosul, killing four women and wounding 17 other civilians, including women and children.

On 5 November, airstrikes hit two houses in Hamam al-Alil City resulting in the houses collapsing. Twenty-three civilians, including children, were reportedly trapped inside. In the evening of the same day, two children, one seriously wounded, and an elderly woman, were reportedly rescued and taken to hospital. In the morning of 6 November, two female children and three bodies were reportedly taken out from the rubble. On 7 November, eight bodies (husband, wife, three children, mother of the husband and husband's two sisters) and seven wounded civilians—three children, two men and two women—were reportedly taken out from the rubble. ISIL was reportedly shelling ISF positions from behind the houses. Attempts to rescue victims and to take out dead bodies were reportedly also being hindered by ISIL sniper fire.

In the afternoon of 8 November, an airstrike reportedly hit al-Salam neighbourhood of eastern Mosul City killing 14 civilians, including three children and five women, and wounding another 11 civilians, including two women and a child.

Two incidents were recorded on 10 November:

- An airstrike hit Hatra subdistrict of Mosul. According to sources, between two civilians (children, aged seven and nine, respectively) and four civilians (two children and two women) were killed and nine other civilians, including seven women, wounded. HRO could not determine the exact number of casualties.
- An airstrike reportedly hit Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul. Six members of one family (a married couple with four children) were killed and two other family members (a girl and a woman) were wounded. The family had been forcibly relocated by ISIL from Safina village, al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul district, on the same date.

## **1-D Acts that may amount to collective punishments**

In one instance, acts of retaliation targeting people alleged to have been affiliated to ISIL were reportedly carried by civilians in areas in which law and order had not apparently been re-established. In the afternoon of 8 November, several residents of Hamam al-Alil City and of Salhiya village, Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul, reportedly set fire to eighteen houses belonging to individuals from the two

areas, who allegedly worked, joined or cooperated with ISIL. The owners of the houses fled Hamam al-Alil with ISIL when ISF approached their areas. The residents also reportedly expelled eight families alleged to have been affiliated with ISIL in Hamam al-Alil City.

## Section 2

### Phase 2: the Battle for Eastern Mosul

The military operations to retake eastern Mosul from ISIL started in the first half of November 2016 and continued until 24 January 2017 when Prime Minister Al-Abadi declared eastern Mosul retaken. While the majority of incidents included in this section occurred in eastern Mosul, some incidents took place in areas surrounding Mosul where fighting was still ongoing or in areas of Ninewa that remained under ISIL control, such as Talafar City.

Attacks by ISIL in eastern Mosul continued also after eastern Mosul was declared retaken. For reasons of clarity, when incidents occurred before the launching of the ISF operations to retake western Mosul, they have been presented in this section. Instead, those which occurred after the start of the operations to retake western Mosul, have been included in section 3.

#### **2-A: Violations and abuses committed by ISIL**

- **Abductions**

UNAMI/OHCHR documented instances of abductions carried out by ISIL, although fewer than in the first phase of the military operations (Section 1). Abductions also occurred in western Mosul. On 27 November 2016, ISIL abducted 23 shop owners in Bursa neighbourhood in western Mosul for allegedly raising food prices in the city. They were blindfolded and taken to an unknown location. In the evening of 27 December, ISIL launched a search operation in the Zanjily neighbourhood in the western part of Mosul and abducted five civilians accused of having leaflets previously dropped by the Iraqi Air Force.

- **Mass killings**

UNAMI/OHCHR documented instances of killings carried out by ISIL. In most of the cases, those killed were accused of cooperation with ISF and associated forces. On 25 November 2016, ISIL shot to death 27 civilians in Muhandiseen Park in northern Mosul city, for allegedly leaking information to ISF. The victims had been abducted by ISIL the previous week from their homes in the Masarif, Zuhour and Jami'a neighbourhoods of eastern Mosul. In the morning of 2 December, in Dawas neighbourhood of central Mosul, ISIL publicly killed a Mosul University student for allegedly receiving money-transfer cash from one friend (from the Shi'a community) from another area of Iraq. In the morning of 17 December, ISIL members publicly beheaded two civilians allegedly for cooperation with ISF. The victims were killed in the vicinity of Rawtha mosque in the Rifaq neighbourhood of eastern Mosul.

- **Attacks using IEDs**

ISIL carried out several attacks using IEDs, vehicle-borne IEDs or suicide vest IEDs. From the end of December onwards, ISIL started carrying out attacks using drones carrying explosives. Although there had been sporadic reports in the past of ISIL use of weaponised drones, its frequency in the course of



the battle for Mosul represented a new tactic. In some cases civilians were affected because of their proximity to ISF targets; in other cases civilians seemed to represent the target of the armed group. Additionally, explosives left behind by ISIL in areas retaken by ISF also resulted in civilian casualties. The list of incidents presented below should be considered illustrative and not exhaustive.

On 6 November 2016, an ISIL attack using a vehicle laden with explosives in the Samah neighbourhood of eastern Mosul City reportedly killed at least 35 civilians, including an unspecified number of women and children, and wounded at least one woman and one man. Those killed reportedly included at least two families that had fled the al-Bakri neighbourhood of eastern Mosul City due to the military operations and sought refuge in one of three houses destroyed by the impact of the explosion. The car bomb reportedly targeted Iraqi Army Counter Terrorism Forces that had entered Samah neighbourhood.

On 28 November, an ISIL truck laden with explosives detonated at the gate of an elderly persons home in Zuhour area of eastern Mosul, targeting ISF but also killing 11 civilians, (including four women and two children), and wounding 15 others (including six women and three children).

In the night of 2 December, an ISIL vehicle laden with explosives was detonated in al-Qadisiya al-Oula neighbourhood in eastern Mosul, near to al-Mawla Bakery, killing two civilians and wounding three others, including a woman. A house close to the explosion collapsed, with an unknown number of civilians trapped in the rubble. The attack allegedly targeted ISF, but no ISF casualties were reported.

In the night of 6 to 7 December, ISIL launched a counter-attack against ISF using at least three vehicles laden with explosives, and retook from ISF the Salam Hospital in southeastern Mosul City. In the attack 34 civilians (including 11 women and eight children) were killed and 28 civilians wounded (including nine women and four children).

On 1 January 2017, 16 civilians, including five children and three women, were killed and 26 others, including four children and three women, were wounded by the detonations of IEDs planted by ISIL in the newly retaken neighbourhoods of al-Karama and al-Quds of eastern Mosul. On the same day, three civilians were killed and 11 others, including two women and a child, were wounded when an ISIL fighter wearing an explosive vest blew himself up among civilians in the just retaken neighbourhood of al-Karama of eastern Mosul.

On 2 January, five civilians, including two children and one pregnant woman, were killed and 13 others, including three children and two women, were wounded by the detonations of IEDs left behind by ISIL in the retaken neighbourhoods of al-Karama and al-Quds in eastern Mosul.

On 3 January, an attack by two ISIL members driving vehicles laden with explosives targeting ISF in the Falah area of eastern Mosul killed 11 civilians, including four women and two children, and wounded 13 others, including two women and three children. Seven ISF members were also killed in the attack.

In the evening of 24 January, two children were killed and another child wounded after an IED, allegedly previously planted by ISIL, detonated in the recently retaken al-Masraif neighbourhood in eastern Mosul city.

In the morning of 3 February, an attack by ISIL using a drone carrying explosives reportedly hit the al-Mustafa primary school in the Sukkar neighbourhood of eastern Mosul, killing two female teachers and

wounding three pupils. In the afternoon of 3 February, an attack by ISIL using a drone carrying explosives killed one civilian and wounded three others in the Wajih al-Saidaly mosque in the Muhandiseen neighbourhood of eastern Mosul.

In the afternoon of 10 February, an attack by an ISIL fighter wearing an explosive vest inside Sayidaty al-Jamila restaurant, in the Zahur neighbourhood of eastern Mosul city, killed four civilians and wounded 12 others. In the same afternoon, another attack by an ISIL fighter wearing an explosive vest targeted a restaurant in the Masarif neighbourhood of eastern Mosul, killing eight civilians, including two children, and wounding 14 others.

At noon on 11 February, ISIL allegedly conducted a drone attack targeting a funeral ceremony in the al-Arabi neighbourhood of northern Mosul, killing eight civilians, including three women, and wounding 17 others.

In the afternoon of 13 February, two ISIL suicide attackers detonated their explosive vests in a market in the Zahraa neighbourhood (also known as Saddam neighbourhood) of eastern Mosul. The attack killed 13 civilians, including four women and two children, and wounded 21 others, including six women and five children.

- **Targeting civilians trying to flee areas controlled by ISIL**

ISIL repeatedly targeted civilians trying to flee areas under its control. In most cases people were killed or wounded while trying to flee; in other cases they were killed by ISIL after having been captured.

On 21 November 2016, an ISIL sniper killed a 61 year-old man, who was running from his house in ISIL controlled al-Khathra neighbourhood of eastern Mosul towards ISF positions.

On 22 November, an ISIL sniper reportedly killed a seven-year-old child and wounded his brother while they were running towards ISF positions in the Adan neighbourhood of eastern Mosul.

On 26 November, an ISIL sniper killed a 42-year-old civilian man who was holding a raised white flag as he ran towards ISF in al-Qahira neighbourhood in eastern Mosul.

On 3 December, an ISIL sniper killed one civilian, and wounded his son, as they were running towards ISF positions in the al-Qadisiya al-Oula neighbourhood, next to al-Mawla Bakery, in eastern Mosul.

In the evening of 18 December, ISIL publicly killed by shooting four civilians, including a woman, in the Bab al-Toob neighbourhood of central Mosul. The victims were captured by ISIL on 17 December as they were fleeing towards ISF posts in the Tameem neighbourhood of eastern Mosul.

On 31 December, an ISIL sniper shot and killed a 29-year-old man and his father when they left their home in the Muthanna neighbourhood of eastern Mosul to bring drinking water from their neighbours.

Attacks by ISIL targeting civilians were not limited to eastern Mosul, but occurred in other parts of the city.

In the afternoon of 22 January 2017, ISIL snipers allegedly shot and killed three civilians in al-Rashidiya neighbourhood in northern Mosul city, as they were fleeing from the neighbourhood towards ISF positions in Arabi neighbourhood.

On 6 February, ISIL captured 11 people—including three women and four children— attempting to cross the Tigris River in a boat in western Mosul (no information available on the specific location). Later, ISIL reportedly shot and killed all of them.

In the afternoon of 11 February, ISIL allegedly shot and killed five male civilians in Shaikh Muhammad village, western Mosul, for attempting to flee the village towards al-Rashidiya neighbourhood in northern Mosul.

- **Forced displacement of the civilian population by ISIL**

Although less frequent than during the first phase of the operations, cases of forced displacement of the civilian population by ISIL were also reported when the military operations involved Mosul City.

In the evening of 2 December 2016, ISIL forcibly displaced residents of al-Bareed neighbourhood in eastern Mosul towards the western part of the city. The neighbourhood was reportedly completely emptied.

On 12 December, ISIL allegedly forced residents of al-Jazaier and Karaj al-Shimal neighbourhoods in eastern Mosul to leave their homes for other unspecified neighbourhoods in the city. ISIL reportedly wanted to use the houses for military purposes.

On 7 January 2017, ISIL allegedly moved 131 Yezidi women held captive by the group from eastern Mosul to the Askari neighbourhood in Talafar city. On 15 January, ISIL allegedly moved an additional 90 Yezidi women from western Mosul city (under ISIL control) to al-Thamanin and al-Khadra neighbourhoods in Talafar city. The fate of the women are unknown.

- **Use of civilians as human shields**

ISIL continued using civilians as human shields and threatening civilians who opposed the use of their houses by the group for military purposes.

On 26 November 2016, ISIL deployed snipers on rooftops of inhabited houses in the al-Baladiyat neighbourhood of eastern Mosul. ISIL threatened to kill any residents who oppose this practice. Families living in such houses feared ISF return fire.

On 3 December, ISIL forcibly entered civilians' houses in al-Kafaaat and al-Akhaa neighbourhoods of eastern Mosul and engaged ISF by firing mortar rounds from rooftops. The occupants were forced to stay in the houses.

- **Shelling**

UNAMI/OHCHR documented a large number of cases of shelling by ISIL causing civilian casualties.

On 21 December 2016, ISIL shelling killed four aid workers who were distributing food and water to residents in the recently retaken Zuhour neighbourhood of eastern Mosul. At least three civilians, including one woman, were wounded in this attack.

On 30 December, ISIL shelling killed 16 civilians, including two children and five women, and wounded 50 others, including 17 children and five women, in the newly retaken neighbourhood of al-Karama and al-Quds of eastern Mosul. On the same day, 22 civilians, including 19 children, were wounded by mortar rounds fired by ISIL into the newly retaken neighbourhood of Qahirah, Zahraa, Tahrir, Rabajiah, Mushraq, al-Jamaiah, Zahour, and other areas of eastern Mosul.

On 31 December, 85 civilians were reportedly wounded, including 49 children, as a result of a shelling and shooting by ISIL into the newly retaken neighbourhood of Adan, al-Jamaiah, al-Qudas, Baker, Bareed, Qahirah, Muharbien, Mushraq, Rabajiah, Samah, Tahrir, Zahraa, and Zuhour of eastern Mosul. According to reports, most of the wounded suffered serious burns.

On 2 January 2017, ISIL indiscriminately fired mortar rounds into the retaken neighbourhoods of al-Karama and al-Quds in eastern Mosul, wounding 32 civilians, including 17 children.

On 12 January, five civilians, including three children and one woman, were reportedly killed in the al-Dubat neighbourhood in eastern Mosul city by ISIL shelling. According to reports, the shelling took place in an intentional manner to hit civilians. The neighbourhood had been reclaimed earlier and no presence of ISF was recorded at the time of shelling.

In the afternoon of 13 February, ISIL allegedly fired a rocket in Zahraa neighbourhood (also known as Saddam neighbourhood) of eastern Mosul that impacted a civilian home, killing two civilians—a woman and a child—and wounding another child.

In the afternoon of 16 February, in Jazair neighbourhood of eastern Mosul, shelling—allegedly by ISIL—reportedly hit the Sinaa Secondary Girls School, killing two female students and wounding four others civilians, including two teachers.

- **Attacks against medical personnel**

On 22 November 2016, an ISIL sniper hit a doctor in the al-Qadisiya al-Oula neighbourhood of eastern Mosul. The doctor died on the way to the Erbil hospital. On 23 November, an ISIL sniper killed a doctor working with mobile clinics in the Adan neighbourhood of eastern Mosul.

- **Destruction of civilian objects**

During the morning of 7 January 2017, ISIL reportedly burnt the al-Khanzaa hospital in Sukkar neighbourhood of eastern Mosul as ISF was entering the neighbourhood.

In the afternoon of 21 January, ISIL destroyed a considerable part of Mosul Hotel in western Mosul city using explosives. No casualties were reported and the reasons behind the destruction are unknown

## **2-B: Violations committed by ISF and associated forces**

Some of the incidents and alleged violations included in this section occurred in Mosul City, while others took place in areas of Ninewa that had been retaken by ISF before the operations in eastern Mosul started.

- **Allegations of ill-treatment**

UNAMI/OHCHR examined a video posted on social media on 19 January 2017, apparently showing ill-treatment of people at the hands of individuals presented as PMU members.

The video was entitled '*ISIL members captured by PMUs*' and shows two men being interrogated by at least three unseen men (based on the voices heard interrogating the victims). One of the interrogators is heard asking the victims whether they had thought that the *Hashid al-Shabii* (PMUs) would not capture them. In the beginning of the video one of the interrogators calls the victims 'dogs' before asking one of the men how he killed an unidentified soldier. One of the victims is heard saying, "I shot him in the head." During the interrogation, one of the interrogators' hands is seen pointing a gun at one of the victims and ordering him to answer his questions. What appears to be a hose pipe is also seen being used to beat one of the victims with a voice heard ordering the victim to answer a question. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the video.

- **Abductions and unlawful killings**

On 21 January 2017, a video was posted on social media showing men wearing what appears to be Iraqi Army and Iraqi Federal police uniforms beating two men in civilian clothing and subsequently shooting them and a third victim multiple times in an unidentified location allegedly in Mosul city. In the video a man wearing what appears to be an Iraqi Army uniform is seen beating a man in civilian clothing lying on the ground with a bloodied stick. A voice is heard urging the man to kill the victim. A man wearing what appears to be an Iraqi Federal Police uniform is subsequently seen dragging the victim on the ground with two other men kicking the victim as he is being dragged. At least four other men in Iraqi Army uniforms are seen beating another man in black civilian clothing. The two victims, plus a third victim, are subsequently seen being shot at multiple times. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the video. On 21 January, UNAMI publicly called on the Government of Iraq to investigate the incidents showed in the video.<sup>32</sup> On 23 January, the Iraqi Prime Minister ordered an investigation into allegations of violations committed by ISF and associated forces.<sup>33</sup> UNAMI /OHCHR advocated with Iraqi authorities for an investigation to be carried out and to hold to account those responsible. No reply was received from Iraqi authorities and no information was apparently publicly available on the results of the investigation at the time of reporting.

On 5 February, a video emerged on social media showing men—some of whom wearing what appear to be Iraqi Army uniform—shooting one individual and the bodies of two dead people lying on the ground. At least one of the shooters is wearing Iraqi Army insignia. One of them also kicks the head of one of the bodies. According to sources, the killings occurred on 5 February in the al-Noor neighbourhood in eastern Mosul, which had been retaken by ISF at least one week before. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the video.

---

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=6660:unami-calls-on-government-to-investigate-report-of-torture-and-murder-of-captured-terror-suspects-in-mosul&Itemid=605&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=6660:unami-calls-on-government-to-investigate-report-of-torture-and-murder-of-captured-terror-suspects-in-mosul&Itemid=605&lang=en) – accessed 23 January 2017)

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.pmo.iq/press2017/23-1-20171.htm> (accessed 25 January 2017)

## **2-C: Airstrikes**

UNAMI/OHCHR continued to record several cases of airstrikes carried out by ISF and States participating in Operation Inherent Resolve causing civilian casualties. UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to determine the exact nationality of the aircraft involved in the specific airstrikes mentioned below.

UNAMI/OHCHR recorded 40 civilian casualties (29 killed and 11 wounded) as a result of airstrikes in eastern Mosul.

On 29 December 2016, an airstrike hit the parking area of the Ibn al-Atheer hospital in the Majmoua al-Thaqafiya neighbourhood of northeastern Mosul, reportedly killing seven civilians and wounding 14 others. The airstrike allegedly targeted a vehicle transporting ISIL militants. Reports were received that when ISIL took over al-Salam hospital of southeastern Mosul on 5 December, it evacuated the civilian patients from Ibn al-Atheer hospital and reserved the hospital only for the treatment of its militants. ISIL reportedly posted a video showing the effects of the airstrike online. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the video.

In the afternoon of 3 January 2017, an airstrike targeting a gathering of ISIL members reportedly killed five civilians and wounded four others, including one woman, in the Domiz neighbourhood of southeastern Mosul.

In the morning of 6 January, airstrikes targeting an ISIL gathering in the Ziraie neighbourhood of central Mosul killed 17 civilians, including seven women and four children, and wounded 11 others, including four women and two children.

In the morning of 7 January, 15 civilians, including two women and three children, were alleged to have been killed in an airstrike targeting ISIL vehicles at the Hamameel roundabout in the Dargizliya neighbourhood of eastern Mosul.

Additionally, several airstrikes took place in western Mosul that caused a large number of civilian casualties.

In the afternoon of 14 January, airstrikes reportedly targeted the house of an ISIL local leader in the Mosul al-Jadida neighbourhood of western Mosul. The attack resulted in the collapse of the targeted house and of an adjacent house, allegedly killing 19 civilians, including seven women and four children, and wounding 11 others, including three women and a child.

In the evening of 26 January, 27 women and children were reportedly killed and 11 other civilians, including four children and one woman, were wounded in an airstrike targeting an ISIL compound in the Qasir al-Mitran neighbourhood of western Mosul.

## **2-D: Acts that may amount to collective punishments**

UNAMI/OHCHR documented instances of threats against families alleged to have ISIL-affiliated members and forced evictions. In some cases, local authorities seemed to have taken the lead or to have followed the wave of resentments among certain segments of the population. In other cases, unidentified groups made the threats through so-called night letters ordering people to leave or face dire consequences.

- **Forced displacement and forced evictions**

Sources reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that in the beginning of January 2017, around 80 individuals were allegedly forcibly evicted from Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul district by a decision of a local committee and reportedly in line with a tribal agreement on forcibly evicting families of ISIL members. This committee was formed by Sunni tribes of the region (primarily al-Jubour Tribe) who would identify families of ISIL members, confiscate their identity cards and forcibly displace them out of Hamam al-Alil subdistrict. The committee is led by tribal leaders assisted by members of security forces. Those evicted were taken to al-Jadaa' Camp, where the manager refused to receive them because of security concerns. A local official denied this incident and added that around mid-January, a decision was taken to evict four families and to send them four km away of Hamam al-Alil town. He added that they were then brought back in the evening of the same day.

In the morning of 6 February, the Commander of the Christian Mobilization Units (al-Hashed al-Maseehy, also known as the Babylon Mobilization Unit) gathered the community leaders of the Sunni Arab community of Tilkef District and ordered Sunni Arabs to vacate the district by 10 February. He threatened to demolish their houses with bulldozers if they failed to comply. He told them that Tilkef is a Christian territory on which Sunni Arabs were living during the regime of Saddam Hussein after he confiscated it from the Christians. It was reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that due to fear of this order, on 8 February, 34 Sunni Arab community members fled to Mosul.

## **2-E. Incidents attributable to unidentified perpetrators**

- **Abductions**

On the night of 17 January 2017, a civilian was abducted by unidentified gunmen dressed in black clothes in Kokjali village in Bashiqa subdistrict of Mosul district. The victim was an IDP and had returned back to his village recently.

- **Killing**

On 26 November 2016, the body of an Imam from Qayyarah city, south of Mosul, was brought to Qayyarah medical center. The body bore gunshot wounds to the head and the hands were tied. The Imam was abducted on 25 November in al-Qayyarah, in front of his house, by a group of armed men allegedly wearing Iraqi Army uniforms who arrived in three pick-up vehicles without plates or insignia

On 15 January 2017, a male body with gunshot wounds was found in Kokjali village in Bashiqa subdistrict of Mosul district. The identity of the victim and of the perpetrator as well as the reasons for his killing are not known.

## Section 3

### Phase 3: the Battle for Western Mosul

After eastern Mosul was declared retaken by Prime Minister Al-Abadi on 24 January 2017, a lull in the fighting ensued in preparation for the offensive by ISF and associated forces to retake the western part of Mosul. On 19 February, ISF, including the 9<sup>th</sup> Division of Iraqi Army and Iraqi Federal Police and PMUs, commenced operations against ISIL in parts of western Mosul.

Incidents—such as suicide attacks and shelling—sporadically occurred in eastern Mosul after 19 February and their impact has been mentioned in this section.

The list of incidents presented below should be considered illustrative and not exhaustive.

#### **3-A: Violations and abuses committed by ISIL**

- **Killings**

UNAMI/OHCHR documented instances of killings carried out by ISIL. In most of the cases the victims were accused by ISIL of cooperating with ISF. In one incident, ISIL killed civilians punishing them for an alleged attack they had carried out against the group.

In the afternoon of 2 March 2017, ISIL militants publicly shot and killed nine local civilian men in the courtyard of the General Hospital in Shifaa neighbourhood in western Mosul. The victims were accused by ISIL of providing intelligence to ISF.

On 5 April, ISIL publicly burnt three civilian men to death in the ISIL-controlled 17 Tamouz neighbourhood of western Mosul. The victims were accused of cooperation with ISF and they had reportedly been abducted by ISIL from their homes one hour before being killed.

In what appeared to be a new tactic, ISIL members disguised as ISF killed and abducted civilians who greeted them as liberators. For instance, in the morning of 24 April, ISIL members in a black military vehicle and wearing combat uniforms similar to those of the Iraqi Federal Police, arrived in the ISIL-controlled al-Maydan neighbourhood in western Mosul. Local civilians came out to welcome them believing that they were ISF come to liberate the area. The ISIL members then opened fire, killing 17 of them, including six women and three children. ISIL also abducted nine civilian men.

On 13 May, pictures were received of the bodies of seven men handcuffed and blindfolded lying on a roadside between Qahraa and al-Hamad villages in Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul district. Sources reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that, during clashes between ISF and ISIL in early November 2016, ISIL abducted seven civilian men from al-Hamad village, reportedly for allegedly providing intelligence to ISF. In the evening of 11 May, the bodies of those abductees were found on the street between al-Athba and al-Hamad village in Hamam al-Alil subdistrict. All the bodies were hand cuffed, blindfolded, and had head and chest gunshot wounds. The bodies were identified by their family members and buried in al-Hamad village on 15 May.



On 19 May, ISIL shot to death nine civilian men in the Farouq Street in the ISIL-controlled Old Mosul city, western Mosul. According to reports, it was a revenge attack against the victims, as ISIL allegedly accused them of killing three ISIL fighters in the Najafy Street in the same neighbourhood on 18 May.

- **Use of IEDs resulting in civilian casualties**

ISIL carried out several attacks using explosives employing a variety of tactics. Some attacks were carried out by ISIL members wearing explosive vests or by ISIL using vehicles laden with explosives. ISIL continued its use of drones carrying explosives, although less incidents of their use were reported than in eastern Mosul. Other incidents included below were carried out in retaken areas of eastern Mosul or were caused by explosives left behind by ISIL in retaken areas. In some cases civilians were affected because of their proximity to ISF targets; in other cases civilians seemed to represent the target of the armed group. The list of incidents presented below should be considered illustrative and not exhaustive.

In the afternoon of 20 February 2017, in a residential area of Bab al-Toob neighbourhood, western Mosul, a drone carrying explosives, allegedly operated by ISIL, crashed. The explosion killed two civilians, including a child, and wounded five others, including two women.

In the afternoon of 24 February, an IED—allegedly planted by ISIL to target ISF—detonated killing six civilians, including two children as they were fleeing towards ISF in Sahaji area, southern Mosul.

On 1 March, an attack by ISIL using a vehicle laden with explosives targeted an ISF post in the Wadi Hajar neighbourhood of western Mosul city. The attack destroyed two civilian houses located next to the ISF post, killing 11 civilians, including three women and five children, and wounding eight others, including a child and two women. All the victims were from two families and residing in those houses. In the attack, two Iraqi Army members were killed and one other wounded. At the time of the incident, the Wadi Hajar neighbourhood had been partially liberated by ISF and it was then fully retaken on 5 March.

In the morning of 6 April, an IED, allegedly left behind by ISIL, detonated when a group of students was cleaning in Mosul University, western Mosul, killing a student and wounding four others.

On 22 April, ISIL detonated a vehicle laden with explosives targeting an ISF position in al-Thawra neighbourhood, western Mosul. The explosion also destroyed a civilian home that was next to the ISF location, killing two civilian men from the same family. In addition, an undetermined number of ISF personnel were killed and wounded in the attack. ISF retook this neighbourhood on 23 April.

In the afternoon of 21 May, the detonation of an IED—reportedly planted by ISIL—in a residential area in the retaken Hawi al-Kanisa neighbourhood of western Mosul killed two civilians, including a child, and wounded four others, including a woman and a child. Although this neighbourhood had been retaken by ISF on 14 May, sources reported ISIL infiltration in the neighbourhood.

On 2 July, an ISIL militant detonated an explosive vest targeting a group of civilians in the retaken Nabi Jirjis neighbourhood of the Old city, western Mosul. The attack killed a civilian (woman) and wounded nine others, including four women and two children. Sources reported that a rumor that ISIL would return in the retaken areas had been spread and the victims were possibly fleeing towards nearby IDP camps.

On 3 July, a female ISIL member detonated an explosive vest targeting a group of civilians in the ISIL-controlled al-Shahwan neighbourhood of the Old City, while they were fleeing towards ISF positions. The attack killed 11 civilians, including men, women and children. Local and international media also reported an incident on 8 July in which a woman holding a child in her arms was killed after her explosive vest detonated after passing through an Iraqi checkpoint. It was reported that the woman attempted to detonate her explosives at the checkpoint but the mechanism was faulty. The woman and the child died in the explosion.

ISIL's use of IEDs continued to cause civilian casualties also in eastern Mosul. From 19 February until 10 July, 15 attacks were recorded, killing 57 civilians and wounding 104 others.

- **Targeting of civilians trying to flee areas controlled by the group**

ISIL repeatedly and intentionally targeted civilians trying to flee areas under its control. In most cases, people were killed or wounded while trying to flee; in other cases, they were killed after having been captured.

In the afternoon of 2 April 2017, ISIL publicly shot and killed 20 civilian men in the ISIL-controlled Hawa al-Kanisa neighbourhood, western Mosul, for attempting to flee towards ISF positions in the Bawabat al-Sham neighbourhood. On the same date, ISIL killed an Imam in the same neighbourhood for refusing to issue a death sentence against the 20 civilians who had tried to flee towards ISF positions.

In the evening of 28 April, ISIL captured 63 civilians—women, men, and children—in the ISIL-controlled al-Haramat neighbourhood of western Mosul, while they were fleeing towards ISF locations. In the morning of 29 April, ISIL shot and killed—reportedly in public—all the men (29) in a street in al-Haramat area and took the remaining 34 women and children back to their homes in the same neighbourhood. The bodies of the men were reportedly left in the street.

On 11 May, ISIL captured 65 civilians—women, men, and children—in the ISIL-controlled Zanjilly neighbourhood, western Mosul, while they were fleeing towards the retaken al-Thawra neighbourhood of western Mosul. ISIL shot and killed 36 men (all of them above 30 years of age) in al-Baraka Market Street in the Zanjilly neighbourhood on the same day and took the remaining women and children back to their homes. In the evening of 12 May, the locals buried those bodies in the same neighbourhood, reportedly upon instruction from the local ISIL members.

In the morning of 26 May, ISIL shot at people on the Tigris River side in the ISIL-controlled al-Shifa neighbourhood, western Mosul, killing 27 civilians from four families, including 14 women and five children. Sources reported that the victims were fleeing towards the retaken al-Najar neighbourhood in western Mosul. In the evening of 28 May, the local residents buried the bodies in the same neighbourhood.

In two incidents on 1 and 3 June 2017, ISIL killed more than 200 civilians while they were trying to flee from areas still controlled by the armed group and left the bodies lying on the streets for several days.

In the morning of 1 June, ISIL shot and killed at least 163 civilians, including women and children, in the

street next to the Pepsi factory, while they were fleeing towards ISF positions in the ISIL-controlled al-Shifa neighbourhood, western Mosul. Armed clashes between ISIL and ISF were ongoing in this neighbourhood at the time of the incident and the civilians were reportedly targeted by ISIL to prevent them from fleeing fighting areas, as ISIL allegedly intended to use them as human shields. UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports of an unconfirmed number of missing civilians from this neighbourhood.

In the afternoon of 3 June, ISIL shot at and killed 41 civilians, including women and children, while they were fleeing towards ISF positions in the al-Shifa neighbourhood, western Mosul. Armed clashes between ISIL and ISF were ongoing at the time of the incident.

On 8 June, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called on the Iraqi authorities to ensure that those responsible for these acts be held accountable and brought to justice in line with international human rights laws and standards. He added that the victims of such terrible crimes must not be forgotten.<sup>34</sup>

In the morning of 23 June, an ISIL fighter departed from the Old City mingling with civilians who were fleeing the fighting and reached the ISF-controlled al-Mashahda neighbourhood in western Mosul, where he detonated his explosive belt. The explosion killed 12 civilians, including five women and two children, and wounded 23 others, including seven women and four children.

- **Use of civilians as human shields**

UNAMI/OHCHR received consistent reports of ISIL using civilians as human shields, usually gathering them in buildings and then using those buildings as fighting positions to attack ISF (through shelling and gunfire). Some of these reports are also included below discussing airstrikes, since in some cases UNAMI/OHCHR received information that civilian victims of airstrikes had been possibly used by ISIL as human shields.

On 5 March 2017, ISIL brought 51 civilians from seven local families to a house and placed them on the ground floor in al-the Samoud neighbourhood of western Mosul city. Later, ISIL reportedly moved them to the front lines while fighting with ISF. Sources reported that when ISF observed that civilians were present they ceased the engagement with ISIL. In the afternoon of 6 March, ISF managed to reach that house and were able to rescue 48 civilians alive, including three children wounded by the detonation of explosives used by ISF in the rescue operation to gain entry to the house.

On 18 March, sources reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that since 16 March ISIL had been using civilians as human shields in the ongoing fight in the Nablis and Risala neighbourhoods of western Mosul. ISIL reportedly forcibly put families in some fifteen houses on the frontline between themselves and ISF.

---

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21701&LangID=E> (accessed 8 June 2017).

In the morning of 20 March, in western Mosul, ISIL militants forced 38 families to leave their homes in the Bab al-Beth neighbourhood for the neighbourhood of 17 Tamouze to be used as human shields.

On 23 March, ISF managed to enter a booby-trapped house in retaken al-Jadida neighbourhood in western Mosul, and rescued 18 civilians locked by ISIL in the basement. The civilians spent three days in the basement without food and water.

On 11 June, in the al-Shifaa neighbourhood of western Mosul, ISIL abducted 18 families (up to 73 men, women and children) at gunpoint from their homes and transferred them to the Dakkat Baraka neighbourhood in the Old City and used them as human shields. During the incident, ISIL shot and killed four young male abductees who had attempted to escape.

On 25 June, in the Old city of Mosul, ISIL locked civilians in their houses to prevent them from fleeing and used the roofs of the houses to position snipers to attack ISF.

On 8 July, reports were received that ISIL took a large number of civilians as hostages and used them as human shields while fighting against ISF in ISIL-controlled al-Qaliaat neighbourhood of Old City, western Mosul.

- **Shelling**

In the afternoon on 21 March 2017, shelling—allegedly by ISIL—killed five children and their mother in one house in the al-Jadida neighbourhood in western Mosul.

On 22 March, four mortar rounds—allegedly fired by ISIL—targeted civilians gathered to receive humanitarian aid in the retaken al-Jadida neighbourhood of western Mosul. Two civilians (male) were killed and 15 others wounded, including two women and three children.

In the morning of 26 March, three mortar rounds—allegedly fired by ISIL—fell on a market in the retaken Nabi Younis neighbourhood of eastern Mosul, killing seven civilians, including two women and a child, and wounding 12 others, including four women and two children.

On 1 April, shelling—allegedly by ISIL— hit a civilian home in the retaken Tal al-Ruman neighbourhood, western Mosul, killing three civilians, including a child, and wounding seven male civilians.

In the evening of 23 April, ISIL fired a rocket, reportedly targeting an ISF position that hit a civilian home in the newly retaken al-Thawra neighbourhood, western Mosul. The rocket attack killed two civilians from the same family (a man and a woman).

In the morning of 7 May, in retaken al-Jadida neighbourhood, western Mosul, ISIL shelling hit a shop killing four civilians, including a child, and wounded nine other civilians, including two women and two children.

At around noon of 23 June, shelling—reportedly by ISIL—hit an area of Mosul al-Jadida in western Mosul where civilians were shopping for Eid al-Fitr celebrations. Two civilians were killed and nine others, including four women and two children, were wounded.

Shelling by ISIL continued to cause civilian casualties also in eastern Mosul. From 19 February until 10 July, 18 shelling incidents were recorded, killing 51 civilians and wounding 100 others.

▪ **Alleged use of weaponised chemical agents**

UNAMI/OHCHR received reports of ISIL allegedly using weaponised chemical agents in the period between 27 February and 30 April 2017. In some of these incidents the targets appeared to be ISF; in others, civilians were mainly affected. UNAMI/OHCHR could not independently verify the use of weaponised chemical agents in these incidents.

In the afternoon of 27 February 2017, a rocket allegedly fired by ISIL hit a civilian house in the retaken neighbourhood of al-Nour, eastern Mosul. The attack wounded six civilians, including three women and a child. Sources reported victims to have suffered breathing difficulties and burning skin.

Three incidents in which alleged weaponised chemical agents were used on 1 March:

1. A rocket—allegedly fired by ISIL—hit a camp of the 9th brigade of Iraqi Army and the 26th brigade of PMUs in Badoush subdistrict, Mosul district. Sources reported that 11 PMU members suffered from eye irritation and breathing difficulties. Sources also reported that the rocket released white smoke that caused suffocation, breathing difficulties, and burning skin.
2. In the afternoon, a rocket allegedly fired by ISIL hit a civilian home in the retaken Garag al-Shimal neighbourhood, the eastern Mosul city. The attack wounded five civilians (four children and a woman). Sources reported that the rocket released a strong odor after it exploded inside the living room of the home, causing breathing difficulties and burning skin.
3. Also in the afternoon, a rocket allegedly fired by ISIL impacted a residential area in the retaken Tahreer neighbourhood of eastern Mosul city, killing two civilians, including a woman, and wounding four others. Sources reported that a strong odor spread widely after the rocket landed. Sources also stated that the victims were sitting in that area at the time of the incident and that those killed did not die of explosion-related wounds but because of the effects produced by inhaling what was allegedly a chemical agent that caused breathing difficulties.

On 1 April, three mortar rounds, allegedly fired by ISIL at ISF positions, hit a residential area in the retaken Yabasat neighbourhood, western Mosul, wounding 12 civilians, including 10 children and two women. Several ISF personnel were also wounded. Sources stated that all the victims reportedly suffered breathing difficulties and eye irritations.

On 8 April, mortar rounds reportedly containing chemical agents—allegedly fired by ISIL—hit an ISF position in the al-Matahin neighbourhood, western Mosul.

On 14 April, ISIL fired two mortar rounds targeting Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) forces in the reclaimed al-Yabasat neighbourhood, western Mosul. Mortar rounds allegedly carried toxic agents and resulted in the wounding of six CTS personnel. The wounded CTS personnel reported smelling a strong odor and had difficulties in breathing and had burning skin.

The same day, ISIL fired two mortar rounds, targeting CTS in the reclaimed al-Aabaar neighbourhood, western Mosul. The attack wounded 12 CTS personnel, of whom three died while receiving medical treatment. According to reports, the three soldiers died after having shown symptoms of poisoning resulting apparently from an unknown chemical agent. All the victims reported a strong odor following the explosions, difficulties in breathing, blistering of skin, and eye resolution problems leading to losing sight. Although sources reported that some civilians were also affected in this incident, they were unable to provide further information.

On 17 April, ISIL fired four mortar rounds reportedly targeting ISF in al-Thawra neighbourhood, western Mosul. The mortar rounds, reportedly carrying toxic agents, hit a residential area, wounding five civilian boys. The victims reported of smelling strong odor following the explosion, difficulties in breathing, coughing, and eye burning.

In the afternoon of 30 April, ISIL fired a rocket, reportedly carrying toxic agents, targeting ISF positions in the retaken al-Thawra neighbourhood, western Mosul. The rocket hit a civilian house, wounding two civilian men. The victims reported smelling a strong odor following the explosion, difficulties in breathing, and blisters on the skin.

- **Recruitment and use of children by ISIL**

Children continued to be seen in ISIL propaganda published on social media and websites during the third phase of the operation. Numerous images published by the group showed a number of children who were claimed to be members of the “Cubs of the Caliphate”,<sup>35</sup> carrying out military drills with weapons.

On 7 June, a boy—reportedly 15-years-old—wearing an explosive vest attempted to blow himself up at the gate (main entry point) of the camp of the 16th battalion of the Federal Police in the retaken al-Nour neighbourhood of eastern Mosul. Following warnings the attacker did not stop and he was shot and killed before being able to detonate his explosive vest.

- **Destruction of civilian objects and other specifically protected objects by ISIL**

In the evening of 20 February 2017, in Wadi Hajar neighbourhood, western Mosul, ISIL militants using bulldozers demolished five houses owned by civilians who refused to fight for ISIL and had instead fled to unknown locations.

On 28 May, in the ISIL-controlled al-Shifa neighbourhood of western Mosul, ISIL occupied the Republican Hospital for military purposes and put in the basement nine civilian men from the neighbourhood. The reason for keeping them captive is unknown. In the afternoon of the same day, when ISF was about to reach the hospital, ISIL shot and killed the nine men and set the hospital building on fire before retreating.

---

<sup>35</sup> Also called in some articles “Lions of the Caliphate”.

In the evening of 21 June, ISIL blew up the al-Nuri Grand Mosque and al-Hadbaa minaret in western Mosul. At the time of the explosion, ISF had advanced on both sites to some 50 meters. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, stated on 22 June that the destruction of the historic al-Nouri Mosque and its landmark leaning minaret by ISIL was a clear sign of its collapse and a barbaric act to be added to ISIL crimes against Islamic, Iraqi and human civilization.<sup>36</sup> On 23 June, the Spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the destruction of the al-Nouri Mosque and its minaret, adding that “International humanitarian law clearly prohibits such acts, and perpetrators who target these objects while being aware of their religious and historical character may be held accountable for war crimes (...)”.<sup>37</sup>

### **3-B: Violations committed by ISF and associated forces**

Some of the incidents and alleged violations included in this section occurred in Mosul City, while others took place in areas of Ninewa retaken by ISF before the operations in western Mosul started.

#### **▪ Abductions and unlawful killings**

On 28 April 2017, according to a number of sources, at least 170 men were abducted while they were fleeing—due to fighting between ISIL and ISF—from Hatra district reportedly towards Hammam al-Alil district. One source reported that they were taken away by PMUs. Security sources confirmed to UNAMI/OHCHR that on 28 April, 12 men from Hatra district were arrested on suspicion of having links with ISIL. PMUs reportedly stated that they had not ordered any arrest nor have they been involved in it. On 2 May, the Ninewa Governor held a meeting with Government security agencies and Provincial Council members in eastern Mosul city. A fact-finding team led by the Ninewa Governor to investigate this incident was established; the results of the investigation had not been rendered public at the time of reporting.

On 18 June, a senior officer and four other officers of the Ninewa Police were arrested on charges of killing two civilians on 14 May, while searching for ISIL affiliated persons in the ISF-controlled al-Intisar neighbourhood in eastern Mosul. The five men were suspected of having killed a woman and a man whom they arrested and whose bodies were later found buried near Mosul University.

At the end of June, a Swedish newspaper published a video which appears to show an alleged member of the Iraqi Federal Police and other alleged members of Iraqi Security Forces beating and ill-treating detainees. The footage includes a video interview between a journalist and a soldier—who clearly identifies himself in the videos—who claims to be an expert in beheadings. Subsequent images show him allegedly committing the act and carrying around a head. He also claims to have beheaded fifty persons. The article claims that the alleged perpetrator is fighting with the Iraqi Federal Police Force 5th Division against ISIL. UNAMI/OHCHR could not determine the authenticity of these elements.

---

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=6983:srsg-ján-kubiš-on-destruction-of-historic-mosque-in-mosul-by-daesh-a-clear-sign-of-terrorists-defeat&Itemid=605&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=6983:srsg-ján-kubiš-on-destruction-of-historic-mosque-in-mosul-by-daesh-a-clear-sign-of-terrorists-defeat&Itemid=605&lang=en) (accessed 22 June 2017)

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21796&LangID=E> (accessed 23 June 2017)

UNAMI/OHCHR called Iraqi authorities to investigate promptly and thoroughly the acts shown in the video and to hold to account any ISF member who may have been responsible.

On 11 July, a video posted online showed men in military uniform beating several captives, dragging one of them to the edge of a high wall, then throwing him off the wall and shooting him numerous times as he lays on the ground by a river. Another man, already lying on the ground, is also shot numerous times by the uniformed men. An official source told UNAMI/OHCHR that the uniforms worn by persons in the video resembled those of the Iraqi Ministry of Defence. UNAMI/OHCHR was also informed that a committee has been established to investigate this video to bring perpetrators to court, and will make its findings public. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the video or establish the location where it was shot.

In a press conference on 18 July in Baghdad, Prime Minister Al-Abadi acknowledged that Iraqi forces had committed violations in the battle to retake Mosul from ISIL, but maintained that they were "individual acts" and that the perpetrators would be punished. He also added that any soldiers who committed violations were either "ignorant" of the consequences or had struck a deal with ISIL "to defame us and the security forces."<sup>38</sup> In a media interview on 16 September, the Prime Minister further stated that initial investigations into allegations of abuse by ISF during the Mosul operation found they were carried out by individuals and not "systematic." The Prime Minister added that both soldiers and officers have been held accountable.<sup>39</sup> No further information has been published.

- **Shelling**

In the afternoon of 10 May, a mortar round, reportedly fired by ISF, hit a civilian house in the ISIL-controlled al-Rifae neighbourhood of western Mosul, killing one civilian (man) and wounding another civilian (man).

### **3-C: Airstrikes**

During military operations to retake western Mosul, UNAMI/OHCHR continued to record cases of airstrikes carried out by ISF and States participating in Operation Inherent Resolve causing civilian casualties. In almost all cases, UNAMI/OHCHR could not determine the responsibility for the airstrikes. A significant increase in civilian casualties was recorded in the third phase of the operations compared to the second (centered on eastern Mosul). Whereas in the second phase UNAMI/OHCHR recorded 40 civilian casualties (29 killed and 11 wounded), in the third phase this number reached 700 civilian casualties (461 killed and 239 wounded).

On 4 March, an airstrike reportedly targeted an ISIL convoy in the ISIL-controlled Mahata neighbourhood, western Mosul city. Sources reported that a nearby civilian residential compound was hit, killing 21 civilians, including eight women and six children, and wounding 15 others, including three

---

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tn6wzrsZgZY> (PM's official YouTube channel, accessed 20 July 2017)

<sup>39</sup> <https://apnews.com/a4848b07448b4ced9d06a2d17a5073af> (accessed 3 October 2017).



children and three women. Sources also reported that a number of ISIL militants were killed and their vehicles were destroyed.

In the morning of 5 March, an airstrike reportedly targeted ISIL militants in the Nabi Sheet neighbourhood of central Mosul city. A civilian home was hit, killing 13 civilians, including four children and two women, and wounding seven others, including two women and a child. All the victims were from the same family. Sources reported that a large number of ISIL members were killed and their weapons were destroyed. This area was under ISIL control at the time of the incident and was then retaken by ISF on 7 March.

In the morning of 5 March, an airstrike targeted an ISIL post in the ISIL—controlled residential area of the Souq al-Sha'areen neighbourhood, in central Mosul. Sources reported that a civilian home was hit, killing seven civilians, including two women, and wounding five others, including a woman. In addition, ISIL militants at a checkpoint were also killed.

In the morning of 20 March, an airstrike reportedly targeted ISIL fighters in the neighbourhood of Nabi Jarjees in western Mosul. The airstrike killed 11 civilians—all members of one family, including two women and three children—and wounded five others, including one child. A woman was also reported missing.

#### **The Coalition airstrike in al-Jadida neighbourhood of western Mosul**

Sources reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that multiple airstrikes hit several houses between al-Jadida and al-Risala neighbourhoods of western Mosul from 17 to 23 March. On 17 March, an airstrike hit an area between al-Jadida and al-Risala neighbourhoods, reportedly causing a high number of civilian casualties. It was reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that the casualties might be due to the combination of the airstrike and IEDs planted by ISIL. Witnesses reported that ISIL had forcibly placed at least 140 civilians inside a house in the area and positioned snipers on its roof to target ISF. On 26 March, Iraqi authorities announced that 61 bodies were recovered from a destroyed building in that location, without confirming that the casualties were the result of the airstrike. According to their statement, a detonated explosive-laden vehicle was found next to the destroyed building.<sup>40</sup> Operation Inherent Resolve stated on 26 March<sup>41</sup> that an “(...) *initial review of strike data from March 16-23 indicates that, at the request of the Iraqi Security Forces, the Coalition struck ISIS fighters and equipment, March 17, in West Mosul at the location corresponding to allegations of civilian casualties.*” Both Iraqi authorities and the International Coalition announced that investigations were launched on the incident.

According to information received from UNAMI/OHCHR, 162 bodies had been recovered in that location. UNAMI/OHCHR could not determine if the victims were caused by the 17 March airstrike or by multiple airstrikes on 17 March and in the following days.

<sup>40</sup> Statement from Joint Operations Command, 26 March 2017, at [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1810687085925657&id=1398672927127077](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1810687085925657&id=1398672927127077) (accessed 26 March).

<sup>41</sup> Operation Inherent Resolve, Allegation of civilian casualties in West Mosul, 26 March 2017, <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/News/News-Releases/Article/1130253/allegation-of-civilian-casualties-in-west-mosul/> (accessed 27 March)

On 25 May, Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) announced the results of the investigation on the incident. The investigation found that “(...) *ISIS emplaced a large amount of explosive material in a structure containing a significant number of civilians and then attacked Iraqi forces from the structure.*” The airstrike reportedly targeted two ISIL snipers and, according to the investigation, “*Neither Coalition nor Iraqi forces knew that civilians were sheltered within the structure.*”<sup>42</sup> According to the investigation, “(...) *the secondary explosion of ISIS emplaced material triggered a rapid failure of the structure which killed the two ISIS snipers, 101 civilians sheltered in the bottom floors of the structure, and four civilians in a neighboring structure. An additional 36 civilians who were reported to be connected to the structure remain unaccounted for.*”

In the morning of 27 March, an airstrike hit a warehouse in the al-Batoul Hospital in the ISIL-controlled neighbourhood of al-Zanjilly of western Mosul, reportedly killing three civilians and wounding five others, including a woman.

On 30 March, airstrikes reportedly hit four ISIL sites in the ISIL-controlled Zangele neighbourhood, western Mosul, killing 12 civilians, including a child, and wounding three others, including two children. According to an eyewitness, ISIL members prevented families from recovering bodies of relatives until ISIL had filmed the bodies. It was also reported that victims were used as human shields because ISIL had installed weapons at the incident location.

In the morning of 4 April, ISIL forcibly gathered 34 civilian men in a house in the ISIL-controlled Ma’youf al-Jubouri neighbourhood of Badoush subdistrict, Mosul district. Later that day, an airstrike hit the house, reportedly killing all 34 civilians inside and an unknown number of ISIL fighters. Sources reported no military activity from the house before the incident. UNAMI/OHCHR could not confirm this specific information.

In the morning of 11 April, an airstrike reportedly killed a civilian man and wounded seven other civilians, including a woman, in the ISIL-controlled al-Siha neighbourhood of western Mosul. At the time of the incident, the victims were in their house, which lies near an ISIL compound. Both the compound and the house were reportedly hit by the airstrike.

In the evening of 12 April, an airstrike targeting ISIL in the Farouq neighbourhood, western Mosul, killed seven civilians, including two women and a child, and wounded 11 others, including four women and two children all from the same family. An unknown number of ISIL fighters were killed and wounded. The airstrike hit an ISIL compound and a civilian home adjacent to it.

In the evening of 27 April, an airstrike apparently targeting an ISIL vehicle hit three civilian houses in the ISIL-controlled al-Siha neighbourhood, western Mosul, killing 17 civilians, including six women and two children, and wounding four others, including a woman.

---

<sup>42</sup> The text of the press release is available at <http://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/1193763/cjtf-oir-completes-airstrike-investigation/>.

A summary of the investigation is available at <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/News/News-Releases/Article/1193707/executive-summary-of-the-investigation-of-the-alleged-civilian-casualty-incident/> (both weblinks accessed 25 May)

On 4 May, an airstrike hit a house in ISIL-controlled Hawi al-Kanisa neighbourhood, west Mosul, killing 12 civilians from one family, including four women and six children. According to reports, the head of this family is an ISIL member who was not at home at the time of the incident.

On 15 May, an airstrike targeting passing ISIL vehicles damaged a civilian house in the ISIL-controlled al-Rifae neighbourhood of western Mosul, killing five civilians, including two women and a child, and wounding 11 others, including three women and three children.

On 28 May, an airstrike targeting an ISIL convoy hit a group of civilians while they were walking in al-Najafy Street in the ISIL-controlled Old Mosul city. The airstrike reportedly killed 15 civilians, including four women and two children, and wounded eight others, including a child and three women.

On 31 May, an airstrike targeting an ISIL compound hit several civilian houses around al-Nasi Street in ISIL-controlled Zanjilly neighbourhood, western Mosul. The airstrike reportedly killed 84 civilians, including 31 women and 27 children, and wounded 103 others, including 49 women and 34 children.

Early morning 11 June, in al-Borsa area next to al-Markaziya high school, in ISIL-controlled al-Shifaa neighbourhood in west Mosul, an airstrike hit a house, killing 19 civilians from two families.

### **3-D: Acts that may amount to collective punishments**

UNAMI/OHCHR documented several instances of threats to families alleged to have ISIL-affiliated members and forced evictions. In some cases, unidentified groups made the threats through so-called night letters ordering people to leave the area or face dire consequences. In other cases, local authorities seemed to have taken the lead or to have followed the wave of resentments among certain segments of the population.

On 5 May, under the chairmanship of the al-Sab'awi Sunni Tribal Mobilization Unit leader, the al-Sab'awi Tribal Committee met in Haj Ali village, al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul. The outcome was a written decision that sub-committees would be formed to prepare lists of alleged ISIL members and of families with members suspected of being associated to ISIL, and then evict those on the lists. Later on the same day, in Ein Mozan village, al-Qayyarah subdistrict, 11 members of one family were reportedly evicted by the local al-Sab'awi community. The written decision, which applies to all villages in Mosul district where the al-Sab'awi tribe are the majority and al-Sab'awi Sunni Tribal Mobilization Units have influence, is reported to include the following provisions:

- An ISIL member is defined as anyone who pledged allegiance to ISIL (even for one day), carried arms and wore the ISIL outfit (the folk dress of Afghanistan), or supported or cooperated with ISIL.
- Committees will be formed in all villages of the al-Sab'awi tribe. These committees will prepare and submit lists of names of families of ISIL members, and exile those families from al-Sab'awi areas. Persons with a relative who was with ISIL, or is accused of terrorism charges or cooperation with ISIL cannot be members of these committees.
- If a father has a son who was a member of ISIL and lives in a separate house to his father, and the father has no connection with that son, the father is exempt from eviction but must

file a complaint against his son in a court of law.

- The wife of an ISIL member may return to her fathers' house but cannot bring children she had with that ISIL member.
- If it is proven that a woman married an ISIL member with her parents' consent after he pledged allegiance to ISIL, she will be exiled along with her parent's family. Coerced marriages are exempt.
- Harboring a male child of an ISIL member is prohibited. Any family providing shelter to such a child will be exiled. If a woman becomes pregnant and then has a male child from an ISIL militant, that male child must be exiled but not the mother. Female children born in these circumstances are not to be exiled.
- If the father of an ISIL member ensures that his son quits ISIL and surrenders himself to the police, that father and his family will be excluded from being exiled but the father must file a complaint against his son in a court of law.
- Families of those captured by ISF are not covered by these rules and procedures.

On 16 May, sources in Ninewa reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that the forced eviction process was halted by a decision of the al-Sab'awi Tribal Committee, possibly for concerns regarding the repercussions of these acts following this issue becoming public knowledge and because of reported disagreements between members of the Sab'awi tribe.

On 9 June, leaflets were dispersed by unknown people in different mosques, stores and houses in the eastern part of Mosul city, threatening families alleged of having links with ISIL with killing them if they do not leave the city.

On 16 June, in al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul, during the Friday sermon, the Imam of al-Rummaneh Mosque called for demonstrations against families linked to ISIL. Shortly afterwards in the afternoon, around 400—mostly young—men of the al-Jabouri tribe gathered and announced a campaign to expel families whose members are alleged of being linked to ISIL. The tribes of Jubour reportedly gave 48 hours to "ISIL families" to leave their villages and the area, noting that "238 families of the martyrs of al-Qayyara called families of ISIL to leave because they cannot accept to stay with them and look at them every day". In the afternoon of 17 June, 90 families who felt threatened by the campaign fled al-Qayyara subdistrict for Hamam al-Alil IDP camps and other unknown destinations.

On 21 June, a number of houses in eastern Mosul were marked with words like "leave" and "blood", indicating that their tenants are alleged to have links with ISIL. Also, banners were placed in al-Baladiyat and al-Khathra neighbourhoods in eastern Mosul, calling for the Ninewa Provincial Council to implement the following recommendations submitted by the Mosul District Council on 19 June.<sup>43</sup> The banners also

<sup>43</sup> The recommendations were posted on the page of a social media account of the Chairwoman of the Mosul District Council (<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1800710433573364&set=pcb.1800710500240024&type=3&theater--> accessed 29 June 2017).

urged victims of “ISIL families” to organize demonstrations to accomplish their demands. The recommendations were as follows:

- Not to accept into Mosul “ISIL families” displaced from other districts and subdistricts
- Expel “ISIL families” from Mosul city
- Establish special camps for “ISIL families” and rehabilitate them, and integrate them into society only after confirming their response to rehabilitation
- Stop all other displacement movements from other districts and subdistricts towards Mosul city
- Return all IDPs to their place of origin, where they lived in before 10 June 2014, except those whose homes were destroyed
- Stop the local (inside Mosul city) displacement movements,
- Rely on a residency card as an official document to prove whether or not an individual is originally from Mosul city.

Between 9 and 12 July, the Asayish, the security service in the KR-I, ordered the expulsion of Yezidi families living in IDP camps and communities in Dohuk Governorate because of their relative’s engagement with Popular Mobilization Unit (PMU) or advocating for the rights of Yezidis. As of 30 July, at least 20 Yezidi families, including at least five from IDP camps, were expelled from KR-I. In addition, five other families were also threatened but had not left yet.

### **3-E. Incidents attributable to unidentified perpetrators**

In a number of cases documented by UNAMI /OHCHR, there was no indication of who the alleged perpetrators had been. In other cases, in which large numbers of bodies were recovered from the battlefield or bodies and wounded were received by ISF, no information was available with regard to the circumstances in which the persons were either killed or wounded (or on their status of civilians and combatants). Such information is not presented in this section.

#### **▪ Killings**

On 22 June 2017, gunmen broke into the house of the mukhtar of Qaber Alabd village of Hamam al-Alil subdistrict, Mosul district, and shot dead. The identity of the perpetrators is not known.

On 22 June, gunmen shot dead one civilian—son of a PMU member—in al-Khadra area of Hamam al-Alil subdistrict, Mosul district. The identity of the perpetrators is not known.

On 23 June, gunmen shot and killed the mukhtar and one civilian in Yarramjeh village, southeast of Mosul City. After the incident, ISF allegedly arrested eight suspects, reportedly ISIL supporters.

On 5 July, at least 20 civilians- men, women, and children- were killed and 14 others wounded during the crossfire between ISIL and ISF in ISIL-controlled Imam Gharbi village, al-Qayarra subdistrict of Mosul district.

- **Unidentified bodies**

In the afternoon of 29 April 2017, local residents found 31 unidentified bodies with bullet wounds in heads and chests in a street in the retaken Huzemoya village, Tal Abta subdistrict of Talafar district. Sources reported that the victims were in civilian clothes and there were no weapons on or next to them. Victims reportedly appeared to have been killed recently based on the state of the bodies and wounds. UNAMI/OHCHR could not get further information about the possible perpetrators and the circumstances surrounding their death. Reports indicated that these victims could be of some of those missing from Hatra district (see subsection on ‘Unlawful killings and abductions’ in the section on ‘Violations committed by ISF and associated forces’), but no confirmation was received.

- **Bodies delivered to ISF**

By September, the Civil Defence Corps reported that they have recovered the remains of 1,642 civilians from the streets and rubbles of Mosul, of which all but three came from western Mosul, and that later those bodies were handed over to family members. The Civil Defence Corps reported that they only collect bodies of civilians from the rubble whereas Municipality and Health Directorate are responsible for collecting ISIL bodies. An additional 21 bodies were found in the basement of the al-Shifa Hospital in western Mosul. The bodies—including that of a pregnant woman and four children—had been partially buried in the basement and bore gunshot wounds.

## Section 4

### Discovery of mass graves

As ISF and associated forces progressively retook areas previously under the control of ISIL, mass graves continued to be discovered. The number of bodies contained in these locations varied greatly, from one place containing two partially buried bodies in a village in Shura subdistrict of Mosul to a sink hole, known as al-Khasfa, near Alathba village in southern Mosul, possibly containing several thousand bodies.

On 7 November, a mass grave containing at least 100 bodies was discovered by Iraqi Federal Police in the Agriculture College building in Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul district. Some of the bodies were beheaded and some reportedly bore bullet wounds to the head and chest and were blindfolded and handcuffed at the back. Three of the bodies reportedly wore ISF uniforms, with one of the bodies beheaded. A source reported that the victims were from al-Houd village in al-Qayyarah subdistrict of Mosul and were killed by ISIL on an unspecified date for reportedly rising up against the group when ISF commenced operations to retake Mosul on 17 October. Reportedly the victims include women and children. On 13 April 2017, it was reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that the mass grave in the Agriculture College building contained 125 bodies of civilians from the subdistricts of Shura and Hamam al-Alil and added that ISIL had piled them up and run over them several times with a bulldozer.

A series of media reports regarding alleged discoveries of mass graves were published in second half of November 2016, but UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify these reports:

- On 18 November, ISF discovered a mass grave outside the village of Tall Adh-Dhahab, in Hamam al-Alil subdistrict of Mosul. The mass grave reportedly contained the remains of 40 individuals.
- On 21 November a mass grave containing around 200 bodies was discovered in the Hammam Al-Alil area.
- On 27 November, two mass graves, 150 meters apart, were discovered near the village of Shababik, 30 km from Sinjar city. They reportedly contained at least 18 bodies of members of the Yezidi community (mostly males).

On 29 January 2017, ISF reportedly discovered a mass grave in the Rashidiya area of northern Mosul allegedly containing the bodies of 27 Sunni Turkmen civilians killed by ISIL in an undetermined period. The bodies bore gunshot wounds in the heads and chests.

#### **Al-Khasfa and Badoush mass graves**

Two mass graves discovered in the course of military operations were reported to contain large numbers of bodies.

On 24 February, UNAMI/OHCHR received pictures of a mass grave near Alathba village in southern Mosul. Media reported that the bodies were found in a sinkhole, which also contained metal and other refuse dumped there by ISIL. According to reports, potentially thousands of civilians and former ISF personnel were killed by ISIL and dumped in the sinkhole, known as al-Khasfa (also known locally as al-Khafsa). Authorities reported that the area is infested with landmines and remained off limits. International NGOs specializing in exhumations reported that the number of bodies contained in the mass grave could not be confirmed at this stage and that it could take years to exhume and identify the remains due to the difficulties of access and fears of IEDs being placed amongst the remains.

On 11 March, PMUs reported the discovery of a mass grave of about 500 bodies of civilians allegedly killed by ISIL on 10 June 2014 near Badoush prison in Hmedat subdistrict of Mosul district. UNAMI/OHCHR previously reported on a mass killing committed by ISIL near Badoush prison in June 2014.<sup>44</sup>

On 13 April, two sources reported the existence of three new mass graves in Hammam al-Alil subdistrict: a mass grave in al Arij village, containing 35 bodies of former ISF personnel, and two mass graves in Zaghroutiya village containing at least 20 bodies of former ISF personnel.

On 30 May, PMUs reportedly found four mass graves in Kocho village, Qayrawan subdistrict, Sinjar District. It was reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that these four mass graves may reportedly contain the

---

<sup>44</sup> Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Non International Armed Conflict in Iraq: 5 June – 5 July 2014, p. 10, ([http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=164&Itemid=650&lang=en&limitstart=6](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=164&Itemid=650&lang=en&limitstart=6) (accessed 16 March). On 10 June 2014, ISIL stormed Badoush prison and killed execution-style at least 400 Shi'a prisoners in a valley not far from the prison.

remains of around 300 Yezidi victims. UNAMI/OHCHR previously reported on mass killings of Yezidis in Kocho village in August 2015.<sup>45</sup>

On 1 June, PMUs reportedly found five mass graves in al-Qahtaniya subdistrict, Ba'aj district. Three of those mass graves are located in the Siba Shikh Khider residential complex area and two in the Gir Zirkasi village. It was reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that the remains might be of Yezidis killed by ISIL.

On 3 August, the Civil Defence Corps conducted an operation to clear rubble in al-Sha'areen neighbourhood, western Mosul. During the operation, the Civil Defence Corps found a mass grave of 24 bodies in casual dress, including eight children and four women. According to reports, the bodies were found buried in the grave and decomposed. On the same day, Civil Defence Corps handed those bodies to the Department of Health in western Mosul for forensic tests. The victims were reportedly civilians killed by ISIL on an undetermined date.

On 13 August, the engineering troops of Iraqi Federal Police found a mass grave of 25 bodies in Hawi al-Kanisa neighbourhood, western Mosul, while conducting an operation to clear areas from mines and ERW. According to reports, the bodies were buried and decomposed. Some of their body parts, such as hands, fingers and legs were mutilated. On the same day, the Iraqi Federal Police handed the remains over to the hospital for forensic test in western Mosul. According to reports, all the victims were civilian men in casual dress and had reportedly been killed by ISIL.

On 30 September, Peshmerga found a mass grave nearby al-Zaytouna village, six kilometers south of Sinjar city in Sinjar district. The mass grave contained 14 bodies of Yezidis, including four women and three children. Sources stated the victims had reportedly been killed by ISIL in August 2014. On 1 October, a team of Dohuk Provincial Council visited the mass grave site after receiving approval from the Court of Appeal and fenced it for further protection and investigation.

UNAMI/OHCHR continues to advocate with the Government of Iraq for the protection of mass graves, along with appropriate care and measures to excavate such sites and exhume and identify the mortal remains, and to preserve evidence of crimes committed; including any that may lead to the identification of perpetrators.

## Section 5

### Impact of armed conflict on journalists and media personnel covering the conflict

Media personnel also suffered casualties while trying to cover Mosul operations. At least five media staff were killed and at least 19 others were wounded. Whereas in some cases media staff might have been targeted directly, in other cases they were affected due to their proximity to conflict areas. In the majority of the cases, ISIL was responsible for the incidents; in a few other cases, the perpetrators are not known. In two cases, the victim were foreign journalists.

---

<sup>45</sup> Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 11 Sep to 10 Dec 2014, p. 16, at [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=3363:report-on-the-protection-of-civilians-in-armed-conflict-in-iraq-11-september-10-december-2014&Itemid=650&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=3363:report-on-the-protection-of-civilians-in-armed-conflict-in-iraq-11-september-10-december-2014&Itemid=650&lang=en) (accessed 9 June 2017)



Several incidents involving casualties amongst media workers occurred on 20 October 2016:

- Two journalists were reportedly wounded in Qaim Village on the frontline in Nawaran, a subdistrict of Bashiqa district, Ninewa Governorate, when an ISIL fighter driving a vehicle laden with explosives targeted Peshmerga and a TV crew from the Kurdish-language Speda TV channel.
- Near Batnaya Village in Tilkef, 18 km north of Mosul city, two WAAR TV journalists were reportedly wounded by a roadside bomb.
- A journalist with al-Forat TV was wounded by an ISIL mortar shell whilst covering the Mosul operations in Bartalah subdistrict of al-Hamdaniya district.
- A journalist with al-Iraqia TV was allegedly wounded by an ISIL sniper whilst covering the Mosul operations in Bartalah subdistrict of al-Hamdaniya district.

In the morning of 4 November, an al-Iraqiya News correspondent was reportedly wounded by shelling in the al-Khathra' neighbourhood of eastern Mosul. On the same day, an al-Sumariya TV cameraperson was reportedly seriously wounded by a mortar round in the Karama neighbourhood of eastern Mosul.

On 17 November 2016, a rocket fired by ISIL targeting ISF reportedly wounded a K24 TV cameraman in the Tahreer neighbourhood of eastern Mosul.

On 26 November, a journalist working with the PMUs' War Media Cell was reportedly shot and wounded by an ISIL sniper while covering the Mosul operations in Talafar City.

On 10 December, local media reported that ISIL allegedly publicly killed a former journalist in Dawasa neighbourhood in central Mosul. The victim was allegedly accused by an ISIL self-appointed court of cooperating with ISF.

On 14 January, a journalist was shot in the chest by an ISIL sniper while he was broadcasting live in the Jamiah neighbourhood of Mosul.

In the afternoon of 16 January, two journalists were seriously wounded by an attack—allegedly by ISIL—using a drone carrying explosives in the just retaken neighbourhood of Nabi Younis (near Faysaliya) of eastern Mosul.

In the morning of 13 February, an ISIL sniper shot an Algerian female journalist in the head while she was covering military operations in Tal Afar district, west of Mosul. Apparently, the journalist was wearing a Press sign. The victim was transferred to Baghdad for medical treatment due to the severity of her wounds. The victim works for the Algerian TV station 'Mujamma' al-Shurouq.

In the afternoon of 24 February, whilst firing at ISF, an ISIL sniper shot and wounded a journalist from al-Nujabaa TV in Sahaji area in southern Mosul city.

In the afternoon of 25 February, a landmine allegedly planted by ISIL near a mass grave near Alathba village in southern Mosul exploded killing a female journalist from Rudaw Media Network and wounding her cameraman.

On 12 June, in the recently reclaimed Zanjilly neighbourhood, western Mosul, a journalist from Afaq TV channel was shot and wounded. Sources attributed the shooting to ISIL sniper fire. The journalist was hospitalized in a critical condition.

On 19 June, the detonation of a mine at the Old City frontline killed one French journalist and an Iraqi journalist and wounded two French journalists. Media reported on 24 June that one of the wounded journalists died of her wounds.

On 7 July, an ISIL sniper allegedly shot and killed two journalists of Huna Salah al-Din TV while covering the fighting between ISIL and ISF in Imam Gharbi village of al-Qayarra subdistrict, Mosul district.

## Conclusions and recommendations

After a battle that lasted nine months, Iraqi Security Forces and forces operating in support of the Government of Iraq retook Mosul City and its surrounding areas from ISIL and formally ended the campaign with the announcement of Prime Minister Al-Abadi on 10 July 2017. With regard to the battle to retake Mosul and its surrounding areas, the Government adopted a humanitarian concept of operations that prioritised protection of civilians, which was supported by religious leaders (Marjaya).

ISIL has left significant destruction in its wake, having based itself intentionally in civilian property or infrastructure to ensure its destruction, or deliberately destroying infrastructure prior to its departure, or leaving structures (private and public) infested with explosive devices which are proving deadly to civilians remaining in or attempting to return to those areas and to security personnel attempting to ensure security in those areas. Large scale and comprehensive efforts will be required to ensure that IDPs will be able to return to their places of origin in dignity and safety and in full respect for their rights, but also to reconstruct communities that have been shattered as a result of the conflict.

There are ongoing concerns with regard to areas retaken from ISIL, where civilians have been subjected to threats, physical abuse, abductions, destruction of property, and on occasion, killings. In some areas there have been reports of collective punishments, with family members of people accused or suspected of being associated with ISIL being expelled from their homes or their homes destroyed.

Ensuring appropriate accountability mechanisms, including formal and non formal justice mechanisms, will be essential to establish a foundation of personal and community reconciliation that will assist communities to return to their places of origin following displacement, facilitate the restoration and reconstruction of those communities, as well as support the process of rebuilding trust between Iraq's diverse ethnic and religious communities in support of national reconciliation. In this regard, instituting an appropriate documentation process, to document and collect evidence of crimes, human rights violations and abuses that have been committed in connection with the ongoing conflict, no matter when, where or by who these have been committed, is vital as an initial step to ensuring justice for the victims and survivors of these crimes, abuses and violations, but also in enabling the accountability of the perpetrators. Evidence collection and documentation must be carried out at a requisite judicial standard to potentially support formal justice processes, including prosecution, but also to permit the victims and survivors to have their testimonies officially and appropriately documented and collected to enable non-formal justice processes to support their recovery and rehabilitation.

The Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government should ensure that crimes committed in connection to the armed conflict are appropriately subject to the jurisdiction of national courts and tribunals. Currently, Iraqi courts and tribunals do not have jurisdiction over international crimes (such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes)– and prosecutors, police investigators and judges lack capacity to thoroughly undertake the investigation, charge and try persons in relation to such crimes. Iraqi criminal legislation also lacks sufficient guarantees of due process and fair trials standards– which are of particular concern and which will need to be addressed through comprehensive legislative, institutional and policy reforms.

To ensure that national efforts of accountability operate effectively the Government of Iraq should take measures to ensure that no “accountability gap” can exist which can permit perpetrators to evade justice, either nationally or internationally. For this reason the Government of Iraq should consider becoming a party to the Statute of the International Criminal Court, and accept the Court’s jurisdiction in relation to the current conflict under article 12(3) of the Rome Statute, and must identify other ways to ensure that the international crimes committed on its territory can be tried by a competent Court. This would reassure the international community that Iraq is serious about ensuring the accountability of individuals who have committed international crimes, and also support the international community in fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes are brought to justice.

The process of collecting evidence and documentation of the crimes committed during this conflict as well as other violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights law could be used as a basis of extending the process across the country to include all communities and individuals in Iraq as a means of a process of transitional justice, such as through truth telling commissions or other such mechanisms, along with mechanisms of support for the victims of crimes, violations and abuses, and potentially accountability for some of the perpetrators, in a process that will provide some justice for decades of human rights violations that the people of Iraq have suffered, no matter when, where or by whom such violations were committed, and thereby offer a process to rebuild trust between communities in support of a durable, national reconciliation.

As part of this process, the care and protection of evidence is paramount. Mass graves are particularly vulnerable owing to a current lack of forensic capacity and resources, both by the Government of Iraq and the Government of the KR-I. Both Governments currently lack the capacity to protect mass grave sites, with the result that grieving family members open the graves in an attempt to locate the remains of their missing loved ones, or the Governments succumb to public pressure and open the graves without the necessary resources to protect and preserve information and evidence, including information that might be essential to properly identify the victims to ensure the return of the remains to loved ones, and evidence that might serve in ensuring the accountability of perpetrators.

The care and protection of the survivors of crimes, violations and abuses, in the context of the armed conflict, is urgently needed. Thousands of women, children and men have been subjected to gross physical and sexual violence and gross violations and abuses of their human rights. The sheer scale of the suffering is beyond the scant resources available in terms of medical and psycho-social support. Of particular concern is the recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration of women and children, particularly

those subjected to sexual and physical violence, including slavery, as well as children subjected to forced removal from their families and indoctrination by ISIL. Many ethnic and religious communities have been directly affected by ISIL's programme aimed at the permanent suppression, expulsion or elimination of their communities—and ways have to be found that will support vulnerable groups, such as women and children, empower them within their communities, and ensure their care and protection beyond the immediate medical, psycho-social and other support that is required.

Rebuilding trust within communities in Ninewa will also be essential if a true reconciliation is to be achieved. ISIL's actions have created rifts within many ethnic and religious communities, for example, creating divisions between Shi'a Shabak and Sunni Shabak, Sunni Turkoman against Shi'a Turkoman, Yezidi against Yezidi, Christians against Christians, and Arab Shi'a against Sunni, etc. It is essential that initiatives be undertaken to restore trust within these communities, centring on commonalities of interest around issues that affect them all equally, such as security, access to services and respect and protection of their rights as a community, as a means of rebuilding trust within communities but also as a means of promoting the common interests shared by the diverse ethnic and religious groups as a foundation for community reconciliation. This will also be essential if the voices of these communities are to be heard in political and other debates, which may inform the future settlement of Iraq.

### As a matter of urgency, UNAMI/OHCHR recommends the following:

#### **To the Government of Iraq:**

1. Investigate effectively, promptly, thoroughly, and impartially all allegations of violations or abuses of international human rights law and humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict and, where appropriate, prosecute those who are found responsible for such acts. Ensure that the findings of such investigations are made public.
2. Ensure that arrests of individuals in connection with the ongoing conflict are carried out on legal grounds only and supported by credible and sufficient evidence, and that all due process and fair trial rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Iraq and international law are fully respected.
3. Ensure that individuals and families with allegedly ISIL-affiliated relatives are not subjected to threats and forced evictions, which may amount to collective punishment and are in clear contravention of the Constitution of Iraq and international human rights and humanitarian law binding on Iraq, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by Iraq in 1971.
4. Ensure that, as soon as practicably possible after liberation of areas from ISIL control, responsibility for law and order is restored to control of Iraqi civilian authorities, and that measures are taken to ensure the human rights and basic humanitarian needs of civilians residing in those areas or voluntarily returning are met. Also, continue operations to mark and clear the unexploded ordnance from the affected areas immediately after retaking the area from ISIL.
5. Ensure the rights of all victims to an effective remedy, including the right to equal and effective access to justice and adequate, effective, and prompt reparation for the harm suffered.

6. Ensure that survivors of human rights violations, particularly of sexual and gender-based violence, receive adequate support, including psycho-social support and medical care.
7. Urge the Government of Iraq to implement fully the commitments set out in the Joint Communiqué on the Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and to accelerate the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Taskforce to oversee and monitor its implementation.
8. Ensure the protection of mass graves, along with appropriate care and measures to excavate such sites and exhume and identify the mortal remains, and to preserve evidence of crimes committed; including any that may lead to the identification of perpetrators. Conduct independent, public coronial inquiries into each mass grave, to identify the victims, collect evidence of wrongdoing, and fully investigate and determine the circumstances that led to the deaths of the individuals concerned; ensure that family members of victims and missing persons are provided with all available information and adequate and timely financial, material and other assistance.
9. Introduce amendments to the Iraqi Criminal Law to grant domestic courts jurisdiction over international crimes committed in Iraq.
10. Accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As an immediate step, accept the exercise of the Court's jurisdiction with respect to the specific situation faced by the country, pursuant to Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute.

**To the international community:**

11. Thoroughly investigate all incidents which allegedly caused civilian casualties and in which the international community was involved, making the results of the investigations public.
12. The international community, including the United Nations Security Council and the Human Rights Council, should continue to closely follow the situation in Iraq with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of gross violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law are held accountable.
13. The international community should continue to support the Governments of Iraq and Kurdistan Region to address the security concerns and humanitarian needs of persons displaced by the ongoing armed conflict and those returning to their homes in full compliance with humanitarian principles.
14. Provide the Government of Iraq with all necessary assistance in its identification, excavation, and investigation of mass graves.
15. Compensation should be provided to relatives of civilians killed and to civilians wounded in airstrikes in which civilian casualties were proven, such as that in al-Jadida neighbourhood of western Mosul on 17 March.