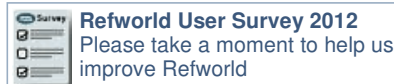


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Country Reports on Terrorism 2011 - Iraq

Overview: Iraqi security forces made progress combating al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI), Sunni insurgent organizations, and Shia extremist groups. In 2011, overall violence was down from previous years, despite the persistent threat of car bombs, road-side bombs, and indirect fire from armed groups and terrorists. The Iraqi government improved its ability to provide internal security for the country, and Iraqi counterterrorism forces successfully secured multiple large public religious gatherings and improved their ability to conduct operations without U.S. support. The government concentrated its counterterrorism efforts against AQI and Sunni-affiliated terrorist organizations. Security forces in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region were especially effective in preventing terrorist attacks. Despite this progress, terrorist bombings and other attacks continued to occur.

The departure of U.S. military forces from Iraq continued through the last quarter of 2011, with the last troops departing in mid-December. The drawdown poses opportunities and challenges to Iraq's counterterrorism efforts. Iraqi leaders sought to use the U.S. withdrawal to urge extremist groups to renounce violence and join the political process. The departure of U.S. forces also affects the scope of Iraq-U.S. counterterrorism cooperation, with programs now being directed through the embassy and more narrowly focused on intelligence and technical support, as is consistent with our relations with other countries in the region.

AQI remained capable of large-scale coordinated attacks and conducted numerous high-profile suicide and car bombings on government and civilian targets, aiming to increase tensions among Iraq's diverse ethnic and sectarian elements and undercut public confidence in the government's capacity to provide security. AQI operated primarily in regions with majority Sunni Arab populations, but it also conducted successful attacks in Shia-majority areas. AQI aggressively sought to recruit members of the Sons of Iraq (SOI) forces and attacked SOI members who refused to cooperate.

Shia extremist groups conducted multiple attacks, focusing on Iraqi and U.S. government targets, although attacks against the United States abated beginning in June. Iran continued to provide lethal support to a variety of Shia extremist organizations, including Kataib Hizballah (KH), Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), and the Sadrist Promised Day Brigades. These groups operated primarily in majority-Shia regions, but they also conducted attacks in areas with mixed populations. The Iraqi government tried to bring these groups into the political process and urged them to renounce violence.

Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqah al-Naqshabandiyah (JRTN), a Sunni nationalist insurgent group with links to the former Baath Party, also continued attacks during the year. JRTN largely targeted Iraqi and U.S. forces in northern Iraq.

Inflows of foreign fighters linked to AQI and Sunni extremist groups decreased. Members of Shia extremist groups enjoyed relative freedom of movement traveling to and from Iran.

Terrorist tactics evolved during the year. AQI continued to conduct numerous suicide bombings and was able to mount multiple coordinated attacks on several occasions, while Shia extremist groups used rockets and mortars to attack Iraqi and U.S. government sites. Terrorists increasingly used assassinations to target government officials and tribal leaders. On two occasions, KH and AAH conducted deadly attacks on U.S. sites using improvised rocket-assisted

munitions.

2011 Terrorist Incidents: Terrorist organizations conducted numerous attacks throughout Iraq. The deadliest involved suicide bombings and targeted security forces, government buildings, and religious gatherings.

- On January 18, a suicide bomber attacked police recruits in Tikrit, killing at least 60 and wounding more than 119.
- On January 20, three suicide car bombers attacked Shia religious pilgrims in Karbala, killing at least 50 and wounding more than 180.
- On January 24, terrorists set off car bombs against Shia religious pilgrims in Karbala and Baghdad, killing 30 and wounding more than 100.
- On January 27, terrorists attacked a funeral in a mainly Shia neighborhood of Baghdad, killing over 45 and wounding more than 120.
- On March 29, AQI suicide bombers and gunmen assaulted the Provincial Council building in Tikrit, taking hostages. The attack left over 56 dead and nearly 100 wounded.
- On May 22, terrorists set off a series of car bombs throughout Baghdad, killing at least 19 and wounding more than 80.
- On June 21, a suicide bomber attacked the Provincial Governor's compound in Diwaniyah, killing at least 27 and wounding more than 30.
- On July 5, AQI conducted a double bombing against a government building in Taji, killing at least 37 and wounding more than 54.
- On August 15, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, AQI executed a series of coordinated suicide bombings, car bombs, and small-arms attacks throughout Iraq, killing at least 70 and wounding more than 180.
- On August 28, a suicide bomber attacked Baghdad's largest Sunni mosque after evening prayers, killing at least 24, including a parliamentarian, and wounding more than 30.
- On October 12, terrorists conducted multiple car and roadside bomb attacks against police stations around Baghdad, killing at least 28 and wounding more than 55.
- On October 27, terrorists set off twin bomb blasts in a mainly Shia neighborhood of Baghdad, killing at least 38 and wounding more than 78.
- On December 5, during the Shia religious commemoration of Ashura, terrorists conducted a series of bomb attacks against pilgrims throughout central Iraq, killing at least 30 and wounding nearly 100.
- On December 22, AQI conducted a wave of coordinated suicide and vehicle bombings across Baghdad, striking at least 14 neighborhoods, killing at least 63, and wounding more than 194.

Legislation and Law Enforcement: The Government of Iraq took several steps to improve border security. Iraq continued to install, repair, and improve inspection equipment at ports of entry. The government also expanded the number of ports of entry with the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) biometric data capture, but continued to face challenges linking border security systems. Iraq, with U.S. support, took initial steps to implement the International Maritime Organization's International Ship and Port Facility Security code to improve security for seaports and offshore oil terminals. Iraq also remained an important partner nation in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, which began to shift its focus from training Iraqi Federal Police and Kurdish Regional Government officers in protection of national leadership skills to a broader set of counterterrorism goals.

Iraq's major counterterrorism organizations made progress in investigating cases and arresting terrorists but continued to suffer from a lack of interagency coordination and inadequate cooperation between investigators, prosecutors, and the judiciary. The Major Crimes Task Force, which was composed of U.S. criminal law enforcement agencies, helped train Iraqi government criminal justice and counterterrorism entities to improve their ability to respond to terrorism and violent criminal cases.

Iraq continued to face significant challenges moving criminal cases from arrest to trial. The government carried out few investigations of alleged sectarian-based crimes. While Iraqi security forces made numerous high-profile public arrests of suspected terrorists during the

year, arrests following a murder or other crimes remained rare. Iraqi law enforcement officials, with U.S. training support, improved their investigative skills such as forensic evidence collection.

On October 26, an Iraqi court convicted a former Iraqi army sergeant and sentenced him to life for the 2007 murder of two U.S. soldiers. Despite political pressure, the investigative judge conducted a thorough investigation and took ballistics evidence and the testimony of U.S. witnesses into account.

Political influence over the judiciary remained a challenge. Judges investigating and adjudicating terrorism cases faced threats to their personal safety and that of their families. Some terrorism cases were dismissed due to actual or implied threats, and it was reported that some judges made politically motivated decisions.

Countering Terrorist Finance: Iraq's Anti-Money Laundering/Counterterrorist Finance (AML/CTF) legislation is Coalition Provisional Order Number 93. There has never been a prosecution under this statute. Iraq continued to track and identify overseas assets belonging to members of the former regime and linked to terrorist financing. As of December, Iraq had seized and recovered over U.S. \$200 million of these funds since 2003. The Iraqi government continued to improve its ability to track and identify funds stolen and transferred outside Iraq.

Although money exchangers and transmitters were required to be licensed by the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI), the level of supervision and enforcement was minimal. Money exchangers and transmitters were not required to report suspicious transactions to the CBI. The CBI provided inadequate AML/CTF training to regulators and operators of money exchangers and transmitters. The Iraqi Money Laundering Reporting Office did not have the capacity to oversee and train banks and money exchangers and transmitters on AML/CTF issues. In 2011, Iraq implemented a non-governmental organization (NGO) statute that the legislature passed in 2010. The law provides for the auditing of NGOs and specifies financial reporting requirements. However, the law only requires NGOs to submit an annual "detailed description of the sources of funds" and does not specifically provide for oversight of NGO financing to detect money laundering or terrorist finance.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, we refer you to the *2011 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume 2, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm>.

Regional and International Cooperation: Iraq, Turkey, and the United States continued a trilateral security dialogue as part of ongoing efforts to combat the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in the region. Iraqi leaders, including those of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, held multiple meetings with Turkish counterparts to discuss counter-PKK cooperation.

Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism: In public statements, Iraqi leaders routinely denounced terrorism. The Iraqi government took steps to bring certain Shia extremist groups into the political process. Within the Iraqi correctional system, a few individual prison wardens successfully implemented localized de-radicalization and reintegration programs for detainees. However, the government did not have a centralized terrorist rehabilitation program.