



# Iraq: Government Attacking Fallujah Hospital

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Iraqi government forces battling armed groups in the western province of Anbar since January 2014 have repeatedly struck Fallujah General Hospital with mortar shells and other munitions, Human Rights Watch said today. The recurring strikes on the main hospital, including with direct fire weapons, strongly suggest that Iraqi forces have targeted it, which would constitute a serious violation of the laws of war.

Since early May, government forces have also dropped barrel bombs on residential neighborhoods of Fallujah and surrounding areas, part of an intensified campaign against armed opposition groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). These indiscriminate attacks have caused civilian casualties and forced thousands of residents to flee.

"The government has been firing wildly into Fallujah's residential neighborhoods for more than four months, and ramped up its attacks in May," said Fred Abrahams, special adviser at Human Rights Watch. "This reckless disregard for civilians is deadly for people caught between government forces and opposition groups."

The armed groups fighting against government forces in Anbar, including ISIS, say they have executed captured Iraqi soldiers. ISIS has also claimed responsibility for suicide and car bomb attacks against civilian targets in other parts of Iraq in response to the assault on Fallujah. Human Rights Watch has found that ISIS abuses probably amount to crimes against humanity.

In Fallujah, ISIS has planted improvised explosive devices along the main highway and other parts of city, and is operating prisons in Fallujah and elsewhere, Fallujah residents said.

Six witnesses Human Rights Watch interviewed, three of them hospital staff, gave credible accounts of repeated strikes by government forces on Fallujah's main hospital since January that have severely damaged buildings and injured patients and medical staff. An Iraqi government security officer based in Anbar, who spoke to Human Rights Watch on condition of anonymity,

said government forces have targeted the hospital with mortars and artillery on 16 separate occasions.

The three hospital employees said mortar shells and projectiles had at various times struck the emergency room, the intensive care unit, the central air conditioning unit, a trailer that housed Bangladeshi hospital staff, and other parts of the hospital. The attacks injured four Bangladeshi workers, three Iraqi doctors, and an unknown number of patients, they said.

Such accounts of repeated strikes over four months, corroborated by photographs of apparent damage to the hospital, strongly indicate the hospital has been targeted, Human Rights Watch said.

Two witnesses to the hospital attacks, one of them a hospital employee, said that non-ISIS anti-government fighters were guarding the hospital and that wounded fighters were receiving treatment there. The Anbar-based government security official said that, according to information he received through his work and from hospital staff, ISIS has partly taken over the hospital, using the second floor to treat wounded fighters and administrative offices to detain high-level local officials.

All hospitals, whether civilian or military, are specially protected under the laws of war. They may not be targeted, even if being used to treat enemy fighters. Under customary international law applicable to the fighting in Anbar, hospitals remain protected unless they are used to commit hostile acts that are outside their humanitarian function. Even then, they are only subject to attack after a warning has been given setting a reasonable time limit, and after such warning has gone unheeded. Armed groups should not occupy or use medical facilities.

Witnesses and residents of Fallujah also described indiscriminate mortar and rocket attacks that have killed civilians, and damaged or destroyed homes, at least two mosques, and one school that were not being used for military purposes.

Accounts from witnesses, residents and the government security official indicate that, since the beginning of May, these indiscriminate government attacks have included the use of barrel bombs, dropped from helicopters, on populated areas of Fallujah. The Anbar-based security official said the army has been using barrel bombs since about May 2 in Fallujah, as well as in the towns of Garma, Saqlawiyya, Ibrahim Ibn Ali, and surrounding areas. "They started using them [barrel bombs] because they want to cause as much destruction as possible," he said. "My government ... decided to destroy the city instead of trying to invade it."

Three Fallujah residents told Human Rights Watch they had seen helicopters drop barrel bombs on the residential Fallujah Hay al-Shorta neighborhood on May 8; four bombs on other populated areas on May 8 and 9; and dozens on the Hay al-Askari neighbourhood between May 3 and May 9. Another resident said he had seen five or six unexploded barrel bombs in the Hay al-Shohadaa neighborhood on May 8. Four other residents said they heard what they thought was a barrel bomb attack, based on the shattering sound and massive explosion. They described extensive destruction in populated areas consistent with damage from barrel bombs.

On May 12, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's office denied that the military had used barrel bombs in Anbar and called the allegations a "defamation campaign." The head of the military's Anbar Operations Command, Lt. Gen. Rasheed Fleih, also denied the charge.

Barrel bombs are unguided weapons typically constructed from large oil drums, gas cylinders, or water tanks, filled with high explosives and scrap metal to produce shrapnel, and dropped from helicopters. Barrel bombs have wide blast effects and, when deployed in populated areas, may cause substantial civilian loss of life and property. The uncertainty that barrel bombs will accurately target legitimate military objectives in populated areas probably makes their use indiscriminate, in violation of the laws of war.

According to the government, the fighting in Anbar has displaced over 70,000 families since January. The United Nations estimates that the fighting has displaced at least 5,000 families since the start of May, and other sources put this number at 10,000. Since January, the government has hindered civilians from leaving the area and humanitarian aid from reaching people inside.

The lack of functioning medical facilities and telecommunications, particularly in the Fallujah area, have hindered efforts to count the dead. Anbar's health directorate reported that 589 people were killed and 2,494 injured between December 31, 2013, and April 30, 2014. The directorate gave no breakdown of civilian and combatant casualties. The government security official in Anbar told Human Rights Watch he estimated more than 1,000 people, mostly civilians, had died in government attacks on Fallujah, Garma and Saqlawiyya since January, but added that "there is no way to know an accurate number."

The fighting in Anbar broke out in January between government forces and an array of Sunni anti-government armed groups, including ISIS and local "tribal" militias with longstanding grievances against the government.

A commander of the anti-government forces, whose name is withheld for security reasons, told Human Rights Watch that 11 armed opposition groups are fighting in Anbar. He said all of them except ISIS "fight under the flag" of the Anbar Military Council, a coalition of fighters affiliated with Anbar's tribes and other armed groups. The numbers and affiliations of anti-government fighters in Fallujah remain unclear.

Some residents Human Rights Watch interviewed said opposition forces were only positioned on the periphery of Fallujah, but others said that fighters, including from ISIS, were in the city itself. The armed opposition commander said that both ISIS and fighters under the Anbar Military Council were in Fallujah, but he gave no indication of their numbers.

ISIS has frequently posted videos and photographs of its executions of Iraqi soldiers and carried out suicide or car bomb attacks against both security forces and civilians. On May 13, ISIS claimed responsibility for nine car bomb attacks in Shia areas of Baghdad that killed at least 34 people. A video posted on a website associated with ISIS said the attacks marked the beginning of a "revenge" campaign for the "aggression against our people in Fallujah."

The United States in particular, which has sent military aid including Hellfire missiles, ammunition and surveillance drones to the Iraqi government since the Anbar conflict began, should warn Iraq that it risks losing military assistance if its unlawful attacks do not cease, Human Rights Watch said.

Foreign military aid to units with a proven record of human rights abuses should be halted, in line with US law, until the government halts its unlawful attacks and reins in abusive security forces.

"The crimes by some opposition armed groups are abhorrent, but the Iraqi government cannot use them to justify its own unlawful attacks," Abrahams said. "Iraq's allies should condemn the targeting of civilian infrastructure, the apparent use of barrel bombs and other indiscriminate attacks."

For more information on violations by government and anti-government forces in Anbar, please see below.

## Methodology

Human Rights Watch has been researching abuses committed by government and anti-government forces in Iraq's Anbar province since fighting broke out there in January 2014. Because of insecurity in Anbar, Human Rights Watch has not been able to visit the province. The information presented here is based on interviews with residents and witnesses from Fallujah, including

medical personnel at Fallujah General Hospital, a government security official based in Anbar, and a commander of one of the anti-government armed groups fighting in the province. Most of those interviewed requested anonymity for their own security.

Human Rights Watch interviewed more than 50 residents of Anbar and witnesses to the events described by telephone and in person between January and April 2014. Since the escalation of fighting at the start of May Human Rights Watch interviewed another 20 Anbar residents and witnesses who had fled from Anbar to Iraqi Kurdistan, 3 by phone and 17 in person.

The Human Rights Watch arms division has reviewed photographs of damage caused to Fallujah General Hospital. Human Rights Watch has also reviewed statements, videos and photographs posted by ISIS, including videos depicting executions of captured soldiers.

The information presented below includes responses of the Iraqi government to written requests for further information on the events documented.

### Legal Analysis

In Anbar province, the situation on the ground appears to constitute an armed conflict of non-international character, and thus would be governed by international humanitarian law, also known as the laws of war.

The applicability of international humanitarian law to a conflict situation that involves non-state actors - such as opposition forces, is determined by two key factors: the intensity, including protracted nature, of the conflict and the level of organization and command control of the non-state party. To be recognized as a party to a non-international conflict, an armed group should have a minimum degree of organization and discipline - enough to enable the group to respect international humanitarian law. In other words, it should be an organization capable of planning and carrying out sustained and concerted military operations and also imposing discipline in the name of a de facto authority.

Given the prolonged nature of the conflict, now in its fifth month, the array of military weapons used, and the number of casualties, the situation in Anbar appears to meet the intensity requirement. The armed opposition forces, which include ISIS and groups fighting under the umbrella of the Anbar Military Council, are conducting ongoing operations and appear to meet the organization test.

### Strikes on Fallujah General Hospital

Fallujah General Hospital, the main medical facility in the city, is in the central neighborhood of Hay al-Dhubat, surrounded by homes. Since fighting began in January, government-fired mortars and other munitions have struck the hospital repeatedly, according to six witnesses and a government security officer in Anbar. Strikes intensified in February and March, they said. Human Rights Watch viewed photos and videos of the hospital that appear to corroborate their accounts.

All of the witnesses, including three hospital employees, said that no armed men were present during the attacks. One Fallujah resident and one hospital staff member said the hospital was treating wounded opposition fighters. The government security official told Human Rights Watch that ISIS was treating wounded fighters on the second floor, and using the administrative offices to detain local officials. Neither use would be a lawful basis for attacking the hospital.

The six witnesses, interviewed separately, said they had seen strikes on the hospital since January. One of the hospital staff said there had been "dozens of strikes on the hospital," including direct hits on the building that caused damage to the emergency room, intensive care unit, radiology department, heart surgery unit, maintenance department, doctors' residence, central air

conditioning unit, and the neurosurgery department, which was under construction. One mortar shell hit a trailer that housed Bangladeshi hospital staff, injuring four of them, one of them seriously, he said. The other attacks injured three doctors and an unknown number of patients.

The hospital employee said the attacks started about one week after the fighting began in early January, and have continued ever since. In addition to mortar fire, a rocket-assisted projectile - a direct fire weapon - struck the hospital on April 1, he said.

"I don't know why they are targeting the hospital, because there are no armed men there except for the ones who guard the outside gate," he said. "They never come into the hospital with their weapons."

Another hospital staff member said he saw many strikes hit the hospital, most recently on May 1. He said he had seen random shooting all over Fallujah but, due to the repeated strikes, he thought the military was targeting the hospital:

A month and a half ago [early April], in one day, there were 14 mortar rounds. The first was at 10 a.m., and [the attacks] continued until 10 or 11 at night. Four mortar shells hit the center of the hospital - these hit the ICU, air conditioning, and other parts of hospital buildings themselves. Then 10 others hit around the hospital - in the garage, garden, parking lot. One person died and two were injured. The Bangladeshis' housing and belongings were all completely destroyed.

Two weeks later, the housing for doctors completing their residencies was hit, injuring two of them. One of the injured doctors is married with children. One week later, the heart surgery unit was hit.

Human Rights Watch spoke to Abu Ahmed, a 33-year-old carpenter and father of five, on May 14 in a hospital in Iraqi Kurdistan, where he had undergone an operation on his leg for a damaged sciatic nerve. He said he saw three mortar shells hit the hospital grounds between one and two minutes apart around 8 p.m. one evening in late January. One hit the trailer where the Bangladeshi staff was living:

There were some pharmacies next to the emergency room entrance. I went to the pharmacy and on the way back I saw the mortar shell hit the hospital. I saw the mortars come from the east, from Mazraa [military base]. There were three mortar rounds. They struck about one or two minutes apart.

In late January or early February, another mortar shell landed in the street outside the hospital's main gate, Abu Ahmed said. He said he was in the hospital visiting his brother, who works there, and saw the shell hit. Abu Ahmed said he did not see any armed fighters in or around the hospital during on either date.

Another Fallujah resident, 52-year-old Abu Qutaiba, told Human Rights Watch that he fled Anbar with his family on May 9 after a projectile struck directly in front of his house in Hay al-Dhubat, just behind the hospital. He said he saw mortar shells repeatedly strike the hospital building and grounds, and saw the damage from strikes on the emergency room door, the intensive care unit and the operating room.

A third Fallujah resident said he witnessed an attack that injured five or six people while taking his sick son to the hospital around April 1:

It was close to 9 a.m. when they launched the first rocket. I was outside [when] the first rocket hit the air conditioning unit, near the eastern door at the reception area, so we went inside. Then the second rocket hit, in the reception area. Then the third one hit the trailers where the Bangladeshi workers lived. I was just hiding inside the hospital for two hours, but it was obvious they could do nothing for my son so I took him home.

When I got inside, I saw many people injured on their shoulders, back, and head from the second strike on the reception area. Some people waiting in the reception [had arrived there] injured.... Most of the injured people were women and kids. I saw three children injured in their legs from shrapnel, one with shrapnel in his head and two in his back, and they were injured again [in the mortar strike], along with two women in the reception area. Another girl had already lost her leg in a previous mortar strike and when they took her to the hospital she was injured in her back with shrapnel. I didn't see anyone killed, but their injuries were serious. There were five or six injured in the attack.

Human Rights Watch viewed more than 80 photographs, taken between January and April, of what appeared to be extensive damage to several areas of the hospital, including a mortar shell lodged in the destroyed central air conditioning unit; the damaged ICU; destruction of housing units for workers and doctors in residence, and damage from mortar shells on the hospital roof.

The second hospital staff member said government forces had also hit the maternity hospital, a separate hospital across the Euphrates River in western Fallujah, with mortar shells three times since about April 1, most recently around April 23. A man from Hay al-Risala neighborhood, near the maternity hospital, separately told Human Rights Watch that this hospital had been hit.

Since the Anbar fighting began in January, most of the hospital's medical staff has fled. Government forces were also blocking doctors who commute from outside the city, one of the hospital employees said. "We have very limited medical supplies, a lack of employees and doctors," one of the hospital workers said. "Our supplies are at a minimum, we have supplies and doctors only for serious wounds."

On May 10, Human Rights Watch sent letters to the Interior, Defense, and Human Rights Ministries, and to the Office of the Prime Minister, asking for information about the reported attacks on Fallujah General Hospital. The Interior Ministry responded on May 15, citing General Flieh, head of Anbar's Operations Command, denying that military forces had targeted the hospital. Iraqi military forces "only target the terrorist groups that exist within the area of its military operations," Flieh said.

That appears to contradict the report by the Anbar-based government security official Human Rights Watch interviewed on May 16 that the army had hit the hospital 16 times.

### Barrel Bomb Attacks

Human Rights Watch interviewed 14 Fallujah residents between May 7 and 24 who said helicopters had dropped barrel bombs on the city. The Anbar-based government security official told Human Rights Watch that barrel bomb attacks had killed about 40 people in Fallujah between May 3 and 15, though the residents interviewed did not know whether the attacks had caused deaths or injuries. Witnesses did say however that these attacks caused widespread destruction of property.

By using barrel bombs on densely populated areas, Iraqi government forces used means and methods of warfare that could not distinguish between civilians and combatants, making attacks most likely indiscriminate and therefore unlawful.

"They are huge explosions - completely different from the rockets and mortars," said Abu Aya, a Fallujah resident of Jughaiyya al-Awal, who said he saw helicopters drop barrel bombs on Hay al-Shorta on May 8, even though he did not see any armed men or hear fighting in the area at the time. "The rockets and mortar shells hit the roof and make holes, but with the barrels it was total destruction," he said:

I was in Hay al-Jolan at my uncle's house. I was on the roof trying to get a phone signal because, as you know, communications have been cut. At around midnight I saw an enormous explosion in

Hay al-Shorta, about 2 kilometers away. I saw a helicopter, and then I saw a huge explosion with a huge flame. I know it was a barrel bomb because they had been using barrel bombs for almost a week and a half and so I knew by then how to distinguish it. Every day they shot between 8 and 10 barrels, sometimes as many as 16.

Human Rights Watch also reviewed eight videos and 10 photographs of what appeared to be remnants of exploded barrel bombs and unexploded barrel bombs, all but one posted on the website of the blogger Brown Moses, who tracks the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Human Rights Watch also viewed a video of destruction on a Fallujah street that appears to be consistent with barrel bomb damage.

One video showed destruction of houses on Zobaa Street in Hay al-Risala that was consistent with damage caused by barrel bombs. Two residents of the area told Human Rights Watch that barrel bombs had destroyed four houses on that street, near Fallujah's "New Bridge." One photo showed an unexploded barrel bomb lying in the median of what a resident identified as Expressway 10, the city's main thoroughfare, between Hay al-Mualameen and Hay al-Nizal streets. The device rested in front of a café called al-Basha Coffee, he said.

In the other images, Human Rights Watch was not able to determine the locations. One unexploded barrel bomb was inscribed with the words "revenge for martyrs."

One resident, Abu Samer, said he saw helicopters drop barrel bombs on May 8 and 9 in a residential neighborhood. Speaking by telephone from Iraqi Kurdistan, Abu Samer said he also had seen unexploded barrel bombs on the ground.

Another resident said he saw five or six unexploded barrel bombs in Hay al-Shohadaa, a neighborhood in the southeast that faces the Tariq and Mazraa Iraqi government military bases, on May 8. Another witness told Human Rights Watch he counted seven unexploded barrel bombs in Hay al-Mualameen, Hay al-Nizal, Hay al-Jolan, and Zawaya, that struck between May 6 and May 8. "The worst destruction I saw was in Hay al-Shohadaa," he said. "A barrel bomb struck there on May 5, destroyed three homes and badly damaged a fourth."

Four other residents said they heard unusually loud explosions they believed were caused by barrel bombs and saw the destruction afterward. Two witnesses described seeing helicopters fly overhead in Hay al-Shohadaa and Sirdab, an area close Amiriyyat al-Fallujah, then hearing explosions that made a sound one described as "monstrous." Two Iraqi human rights activists said they had received similar reports from others in Fallujah.

Barrel bombs tend to create larger zones of building destruction than is typically seen with other types of air strikes and artillery fire, often with irregularly shaped blast craters of shallow depth with scalloped edges.

Sixteen residents, interviewed by phone or in person in Iraqi Kurdistan, said the government started dropping barrel bombs in late April on Fallujah and on the city of Garma to the east, and that these attacks had increased when the military began its offensive on Fallujah in early May.

Abu Taha, a retired police officer from Fallujah's Hay al-Shohadaa neighborhood, said he could identify weapons because he had military experience. He said the worst barrel bombing in his area was on May 8. "I saw five to six barrel bombs just in my area alone," he said. Abu Taha said he had not seen any anti-government fighters or heard any fighting in the areas where the barrel bombs struck.

Another Fallujah resident said that on May 8 a barrel bomb struck the Khalsaa School in Hay al-Dhubat, near the hospital. He said that the sound of the explosion, the resulting huge cloud of debris, and the extent of the damage led him to conclude that the weapon had been a barrel bomb.

Witnesses said that barrel bombs had struck a wide swath of residential neighborhoods, including those in which most of Fallujah's remaining residents were concentrated, such as al-Mualameen, al-Mohandiseen, Hay al-Risala, and Hay al-Jolan. Barrel bombs also allegedly struck al-Jumhuriyya, Hay al-Askari, Hay al-Shorta, and Hay al-Nizal, and areas outside of Fallujah, including Zowiya, Halabsa, Naamiyya, Jubail, Saqlawiyya, Sirdab and Garma, residents said.

Although the Prime Minister's Office and General Fleih denied the use of barrel bombs in Anbar, the government security officer based in Anbar said that the army used US and Russian helicopters to drop barrel bombs on Fallujah, Garma, Saqlaqiyya and surrounding areas. "They've been using them for the past two weeks," he said, "and they won't stop."

Human Rights Watch has documented extensive use of barrel bombs by government forces in neighboring Syria, where the Syrian military is also fighting armed insurgent groups, including ISIS.

In February, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1239 demanding that all parties in Syria cease their use of barrel bombs and other indiscriminate weapons in populated areas.

### Indiscriminate Attacks

The government has carried out indiscriminate attacks in and around Fallujah since the fighting began in January, wounding and killing civilians, residents said. Residents said mortar shells and other munitions have hit residential areas where no fighting was taking place, damaging or destroying shops, homes, mosques, and at least one school. Among the hardest-hit neighborhoods are Hay al-Risala, Hay al-Dhubat, Hay al-Shorta, and Hay al-Shohadaa.

Human Rights Watch interviewed two people who were injured in attacks on Hay al-Risala, a residential neighborhood next to the Euphrates. Shrapnel from a mortar or rocket on a market hit a nine-year-old girl in the head on or around April 30 while she was out to buy flour. The girl's mother said she saw the attack from the family home, next door:

I saw her clothes get burned. Many people got injured that day. It was a busy day and many people were out. The owner of the shop and his son were badly hurt. It was just one rocket, and hit directly inside the market right as [she] was about to enter.

The girl's father said he was about 400 meters away at the time of the attack:

I don't know why they dropped a rocket, because Hay al-Risala is a residential neighborhood and there are no armed men there. Shrapnel went everywhere. About six people were injured - the owner of supermarket, his son, and several others, all kids.

Abu Ahmed, the 33-year-old carpenter, told Human Rights Watch that he was severely wounded on May 8 when an unknown munition landed next to his house in Hay al-Risala. Abu Ahmed said that between 8 and 9 p.m., he went into his garden to add water to the house's cooling system when the munition struck:

There are rocks and bricks surrounding the garden, and the shrapnel from the rocket hit the bricks. Shrapnel from the rocket hit my right leg. Some of my flesh came off and you could see the bone. I watched smoke coming from my leg as the skin burned off. The shrapnel struck me all over: my right leg, the right side of my chest and stomach, my arms, and my neck, face, and head.

Abu Ahmed said he first went to Fallujah General Hospital, and then undertook an "excruciating" 10-hour journey hidden in a car to a hospital in Iraqi Kurdistan for surgery on his leg. A doctor at the hospital told Human Rights Watch that Abu Ahmed needed more shrapnel removed, but that the family could not afford the procedure.

Abu Qutaiba, who witnessed the May 7 attack directly behind the hospital and other apparently indiscriminate attacks on a mosque and two houses, said he had volunteered at a local mosque during the previous five months to clean the bodies of those killed in fighting. He said he saw more than 85 bodies, most of them adults, but also some boys as young as seven or eight. "They were all killed by mortar shrapnel, except two or three who were hit directly by gunshots," he said.

One case Abu Qutaiba described involved a childhood friend, Khalid Khudhair Saleh al-Mihandy, 52, who he said was killed between January 20 and 25 when an artillery shell hit the garden of his house in Hay al-Dhubat, about 700 meters away from Abu Qutaiba's house. When a neighbor tried to retrieve the body, another munition struck and killed him too, Abu Qutaiba said. Abu Qutaiba said that when he found Khalid's body in his garden, "half his face was gone. I recognized him from the other half of his face." Abu Qutaiba said Khalid left behind his wife and five or six children.

Abu Qutaiba also said he saw two artillery strikes on the Ibn al-Khaldoun High School for Girls in Hay al-Dhubat in January, although he saw no fighters in the area. After the first strike, two young men went to check on the guards who lived there with their families, he said. A second round of artillery strikes killed the two young men, who he thought were about 17 and 23-years-old. Abu Qutaiba did not know their names, but said he washed their bodies at the mosque.

Another Fallujah resident told Human Rights Watch that his 14-year-old grandson and the son of the school's guard were killed in the attack on the Ibn al-Khaldoun school. The resident, who did not witness the attack, said mortar fire hit the school on or about January 14. He said two families, the guard with his family and a displaced family from Ramadi, were living in the school at the time.

### Opposition Abuses

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) has claimed responsibility for executions of captured Iraqi soldiers and suicide and car bomb attacks against civilian targets that likely amount to crimes against humanity. ISIS also appears to have planted improvised landmines and car bombs and to be operating at least one prison in Fallujah. Armed groups fighting under the umbrella of the Anbar Military Council also appear to have committed summary executions during the recent fighting.

The Anbar-based government security official told Human Rights Watch that ISIS has 3,000 to 4,000 fighters in Fallujah, in the north in Saqlawiyya and Garma, and in the south through Amiriyat al-Fallujah. ISIS controls the Hay al-Nizal, Jubal, Naameya, and Hay al-Sinaa'y neighborhoods of southeast Fallujah, while insurgent groups that answer to the Anbar Military Council control the central and northern areas, including Hay al-Dhubat and Jolan, he said. Human Rights Watch could not confirm these claims.

### Executions

In February, Human Rights Watch documented ISIS's execution of four members of Iraq's SWAT forces in Ramadi, in Anbar province, on January 20. Evidence of extrajudicial executions of Iraqi army soldiers and SWAT members comes mostly from ISIS itself.

SWAT is the official name given to two different security units, one consisting of elite forces that report directly to Maliki, also known as the "Golden Brigades," and the other an Emergency Response Unit housed in the Interior Ministry. The Anbar-based government security official told Human Rights Watch that several hundred members of both units were participating in the Anbar fighting.

In February, Human Rights Watch viewed a 30-minute video with the ISIS logo, in which fighters apparently affiliated with ISIS ambushed a convoy of Iraqi army vehicles and capture about 20

soldiers. The bodies of the same soldiers are then seen bound and blindfolded in a warehouse, with apparent gunshot wounds in the back of the head. Human Rights Watch has not been able to confirm the veracity of the video.

Armed groups fighting under the umbrella of the Anbar Military Council also appear to have committed summary executions during the recent fighting. A commander of one of the local armed groups interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that fighters affiliated with the council treated captured army soldiers well and then released them, but executed captured SWAT forces. He told Human Rights Watch:

With captured army soldiers, we give them a dishdashda [traditional male dress], some food, and send them home. SWAT prisoners - the Golden Brigades, but we call them the "Dirty Brigades" - are another matter. We show them no mercy, because they are unlawful according to the constitution and they execute people based on their sect. Their only principles are revenge and killing.

He also said that in February, SWAT members had detained and executed 11 Ramadi residents on a main street, Sharia 60, who he said were not taking part in the fighting. Armed opposition fighters then captured and killed 17 SWAT members as revenge, he said. "We took 17 of them, killed them, and cleared the way for soldiers to come pick up their bodies," he said, without giving details, such as the date and place.

Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, applicable to the conflict in Anbar, prohibits the summary execution of persons in custody, as well as torture and other cruel treatment, by parties to the conflict.

#### Unauthorized Prisons

The commander of local armed groups in Anbar told Human Rights Watch that ISIS was operating a prison in Hay al-Sinaa'y - the industrial zone on the southeastern edge of the city - and several other prisons between Yousifiyya and Abu Ghraib, cities between Fallujah and Baghdad in what is known as the "Baghdad Belt." An Iraqi human rights activist working with displaced Anbar residents in Iraqi Kurdistan told Human Rights Watch that some residents had reported armed opposition groups holding as many as 300 people - security force members and residents they perceive as opponents - in abandoned workshops and other buildings in Hay al-Sinaa'y.

The Anbar-based government security official told Human Rights Watch that ISIS was using several administration rooms in Fallujah General Hospital as detention facilities for "VIPs" - high-level local politicians and military council fighters.

One Fallujah resident, Abu Mohamed, told Human Rights Watch that three fighters who identified themselves as from ISIS detained him in January, held him for several hours in a house, and released him when they were convinced he was not working for the government. "We are here to protect you," he said they told him. Abu Mohamed, who fled Fallujah after his release, also said that four men who identified themselves as from ISIS had detained a friend of his in Fallujah, a policeman, blindfolding him and holding him for 10 hours. They released him after he promised to stop working for the government, Abu Mohamed said.

#### Landmines, Car Bombs and IEDs

After the latest government offensive began in early May, ISIS placed landmines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on Fallujah's Expressway 10 and IEDs and car bombs throughout the city, according to residents and the security officer based in Anbar. Three residents, interviewed separately, said they had seen these forces planting mines on the road, or that they saw freshly patched asphalt where other residents told them mines had been placed.

One resident who left Fallujah on May 12 told Human Rights Watch:

The main Fallujah road [Expressway 10] is full of mines. Every 20 meters ISIS has planted mines. ISIS uses the municipality's trucks and machinery in front of Fallujah residents to dig holes in the street, the residents told me. Sometimes the army gets blamed when people are killed when the real cause is the mines.

In March, the UN reported that armed groups in Ramadi had placed booby-traps in residential buildings and along roads, preventing displaced families from returning to their homes.

The use of landmines, including all anti-personnel mines, IEDs and other weapons used in a manner that cannot distinguish between civilians and combatants are inherently indiscriminate in violation of the laws of war. Iraq became party to the Ottawa Treaty, which bans anti-personnel landmines, in August 2007.

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