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Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 1 November 2015 – 30 September 2016



UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR IRAQ
(UNAMI)
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Baghdad
30 December 2016

As this report shows, the Iraqi people have continued to pay a terrible price from the affects of armed conflict, acts of terrorism and violence. While the government is making steady gains in retaking areas seized by ISIL in 2014, hundreds of thousands of civilians continue to be subject to ISIL's criminal brutality on a daily basis. The Government must continue to act with vigilance in the conduct of military operations to ensure the protection of civilians, but it is equally imperative that the Government, and all communities of Iraq, start the process of dialogues, cooperation and reconciliation that will rebuild trust between communities and through which a national settlement and social peace can be attained that will put to an end the cycles of violence to which the people of Iraq have been subjected to for so long. The governments at central and local levels have the responsibility to provide support and to create the conditions for this by vigorously enacting political, economic and social reforms, and by improving governance and delivery of justice and accountability, as requested by the people of Iraq."

– Mr. Ján Kubiš

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Iraq, 30 December 2016, Baghdad

"Deaths and injuries of thousands of civilians, destruction of essential, life-saving infrastructure, the uprooting of entire communities, and the attempted annihilation of peoples and cultures – particularly perpetrated by ISIL and its takfiri doctrines - continue to be the shocking consequences of the ongoing conflict in Iraq. It is numbing when we remind ourselves that the victims of each of the human rights violations and abuses recounted in this report are real people - children, women and men. The perpetrators of these outrages, irrespective of their affiliations, must not be allowed to succeed in their goals with impunity. More generally, none of the parties to the conflict should enjoy impunity in the event crimes of an international nature are being committed. The Government and people of Iraq, assisted by the international community, must do all they can to ensure accountability of those all perpetrators and to provide justice to the victims and survivors. It is only through justice and the full respect and protection of human rights and the rule of law that harmony and cohesion can be restored to Iraq's communities and the people of Iraq will obtain the enduring peace and prosperity that they deserve."

- Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 30 December 2016, Geneva

Land Use

 Built-up Area

Transportation

 Primary routes

Demographics

 Capital
 Gov Capital
 Major City

Boundaries

 Border Crossing
 International Boundary
 Governorate Boundary
 District Boundary
 Coastline

Hydrology

 Lakes and reservoirs
 Major rivers
 Land subject to inundation

Expected names: Boundaries

Elevation map:

Coordination Hubs and Kalle

Oil and Gas resources:

Governorate and district boundaries in Iraq date amongst sources. This map shows names, spellings and administrative boundaries corresponding to the data developed by IOM and OCHA, August 2008.

Map Doc Name: J01_Iraq_Borders_2014.pdf
Creation Date: 29 Jan 2014
Projection/Datum: Geographic WGS 1984

Web Resources:
Nominal Scale at A3 paper size: 1:1,150,265

U 30,000 60,000 152,000 meters
 0 10 20 30 40 50 100 Miles

Scale for inset maps: 1:2,200,000 50 Miles

Map data source(s):
 Satellite: HRT 2005, MNP 4 2005, OCHA 2006, UNAHN 2009, KUNA 2008, UNHCR 2005, MMAP 2006, Admin Boundaries: KIM/OCHA 2006, Imagery: NSA

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Summary

This report is published by the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It covers the period from 1 November 2015 to 30 September 2016.

Armed conflict between the Government of Iraq and armed groups operating in support of the Government of Iraq and the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant ('ISIL' or 'Daesh') continued to take a toll on civilians, causing deaths and injuries, displacement, the destruction of infrastructure, private property, and loss of livelihoods. Such attacks by terrorist and armed groups were often carried out in a manner that deliberately and directly targeted civilians with the aim of killing and wounding as many as possible, or were carried out indiscriminately heedless of the effects on civilians. From 1 January to 30 September 2016, a minimum of 13,833 civilian casualties resulted from the ongoing violence, including at least 4,446 persons killed and 9,387 wounded.

Baghdad was the worst affected governorate, with a minimum of 9,521 civilian casualties (2,603 killed and 6,918 wounded). Anbar followed, with 1,498 civilian casualties (385 killed and 1,113 wounded), then Ninewa, with 908 (595 killed and 313 wounded).

The use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including body-borne (BBIED), vehicle-borne (VBIED) and suicide vehicle-borne (SVBIED) devices were the deadliest tactic employed against civilians, resulting in at least 9,765 civilian casualties (2,401 killed and 7,364 wounded).

ISIL directly attacked civilians, and frequently claimed responsibility for acts carried out in public spaces in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq that caused the loss of civilian lives, injuries to women, children and men, and destroyed public and private property. In areas it controls, ISIL continued to base itself deliberately in civilian infrastructure (including homes, schools, hospitals and public utilities) in order to shield itself from attack. The group also deliberately targeted civilians suspected of opposition to its rule or *takfiri* doctrines, including religious and community leaders, professionals (media, educational, legal and health professionals, including women) and those associated with the Government of Iraq, with threats, intimidation, physical and sexual violence, abduction, and killing.

ISIL continued to target systematically members of ethnic and religious communities pursuant to its *takfiri* doctrines, including destroying places of religious and cultural significance. According to community sources, there could still be more than 1,900 women, children and some men in ISIL captivity, mostly Yezidi, but also people from other ethnic and religious communities. Many have been subjected to sexual enslavement and other forms of physical and sexual violence.

ISIL has abducted children, particularly from minority ethnic and religious communities, indoctrinated them and used them in hostilities as fighters and suicide bombers.

ISIL issued "orders" prohibiting civilians from leaving areas under its control and hunted down those who attempted to do so. The group also deliberately destroyed civilian infrastructure, or laid booby traps and other explosive devices in the remains of civilian infrastructure, including in civilian houses, prior to its withdrawal from many areas, with the intention of killing or otherwise harming civilians returning to their homes, or Government and security personnel tasked with securing and clearing or restoring services to those areas.

Many of the human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law perpetrated by ISIL may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Effective command and control by the ISF of armed groups operating alongside Iraq Security Forces (ISF) remain a source of serious concern as these groups have reportedly subjected civilians fleeing conflict zones – particularly males above the age of 15-16 - to threats, intimidation, physical violence, abductions and killings.

UNAMI/HRO continued to receive reports that in some areas, internally displaced persons (IDPs) were subjected to harassment, threats, expulsions, destruction of property (including the deliberate demolition of houses), and at times abductions and killings, by armed groups operating in support of ISF. Furthermore, some local Government authorities issued orders to forcibly evict family members of people known to or perceived to have been supporters of ISIL and to expel them from the districts or governorates, in clear violation of international law and the Constitution of Iraq that prohibit collective punishments and protect other rights including the freedom of movement and the right to choose a residence.

Airstrikes also were reported to have claimed civilian lives and damaged civilian property and infrastructure in areas under the control of ISIL. However, owing to lack of access and reliable sources, UNAMI/OHCHR is not able to attribute such airstrikes or to state with confidence the civilian casualties they may have caused.

There also continued to be reports that civilians were killed and injured as a result of acts that could not be attributed or could not be attributed with certainty, including the use of various forms of IEDs in public spaces, including markets, restaurants, sporting facilities, and places of religious worship; kidnappings and killings; and unattributed shelling of civilian areas and civilian infrastructure.

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, remain a significant challenge. Presently, the Iraqi courts do not have jurisdiction over international crimes committed in Iraq, and the judicial capacity and processes required to carry out prompt, effective, independent, impartial and transparent investigations and, where supported by evidence the prosecution of alleged perpetrators of such crimes remains extremely weak or is non-existent. Iraq is not a Party to the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and has not accepted the jurisdiction of the ICC under article 12(3) of its Statute. The Government is currently examining national and international mechanisms to address international crimes committed by ISIL. The Government must, as a matter of urgency, restore civilian administration of justice in areas retaken from ISIL, and support investigation and prosecution by law enforcement and judicial authorities of alleged perpetrators of crimes according to law, and in compliance with internationally recognised standards of justice.

The Government must also implement, as a matter of urgency, a range of programmes to provide appropriate care and protection to the victims and survivors of violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law – including appropriate medical and psycho social support, financial support and other assistance aimed at helping people restore their lives and their communities.

To date, 3.6 million Iraqis have been displaced due to the conflict, with concerns that the campaign to liberate Mosul will put up to 1.6 million more people at risk of displacement. As resources for providing humanitarian support are at breaking point, many IDPS are left to rely solely on their own resources or on the resources of host communities that were already in short supply or inadequate before the influx of IDPs. 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.

The international community must, first and foremost, do all within its means to assist and support Iraq in addressing the urgent humanitarian needs of those displaced as a result of the ongoing violence and in restoring individuals and communities to their places of origin in full compliance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The international community must also comply with its obligations to ensure that there will be no gaps in accountability for individuals who have allegedly perpetrated international crimes in relation to the ongoing conflict in Iraq. This entails prosecuting before their domestic courts individuals accused of committing

international crimes in Iraq where, for example, such persons are within their jurisdictions and evidence supports such prosecutions. The international community must also assist and support Iraq in establishing formal and non-formal justice mechanisms functioning according to Iraqi law and in full compliance with international standards to ensure individuals who have allegedly committed crimes are held to account.

Furthermore, the international community must assist Iraq do all it can to institute policies and practices aimed at community and national reconciliation, built on respect for the rule of law and the protection of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in order to break the cycles of violence that have beset the country.

Protection of Civilians in the Ongoing Armed Conflict in Iraq

1 November 2015 – 30 September 2016

Introduction

This report on the *Protection of Civilians in the Non-International Armed Conflict in Iraq* is published by the Human Rights Office of United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in cooperation with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), under their respective mandates.¹

This report presents a summary of incidents received and verified by UNAMI/OHCHR involving violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as other human rights concerns, 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), and from acts of terrorism committed in that context.²

The report covers the period from 1 November 2015 to 30 September 2016.

Methodology

The information contained in this report is based, where possible, on testimonies 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 Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), Kirkuk and Diyala Governorates, and other areas of Iraq, as well as with other victims, survivors, and witnesses of incidents.³ Information was also obtained from a variety of sources,⁴ including Government and non-governmental agencies and organizations, and 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 continued to affect the capacity of UNAMI/OHCHR to undertake direct monitoring and verification of many incidents in many areas of the country. UNAMI/OHCHR has

¹ 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 2299 of 25 July 2016. In accordance with its mandate, the UNAMI Human Rights Office conducts a range of activities aimed at promoting the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including 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.

² 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 <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI_OHCHR_POC%20Report_FINAL_18July2014A.pdf>.

³ As of 29 September 2016, UNAMI had conducted 920 interviews with victims/witnesses of human rights violations or abuses and IDPs in areas where they have concentrated. UNAMI also conducts telephone interviews with victims and witnesses of human rights violations or abuses, civilians who remain trapped in ISIL-controlled areas or who have fled to other areas of Iraq.

⁴ 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.

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. Where reports of incidents have not been cross-checked or verified, they have not been included in this report unless specifically stated otherwise

Thus, 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

During the reporting period, ISF, supported by associated armed groups, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq Security Forces (KSF, composed of the *Peshmerga* and *Asayish*) continued to take ground from ISIL, retaking several areas, in particular in Ninewa and Anbar Governorates. Military operations were backed by international coalition airpower.

On 12 November 2015, KSF launched an offensive to retake Sinjar, in Ninewa Governorate, which was successfully completed on 13 November 2015, with ISIL reportedly offering little resistance. As a result of the operation, KSF were able to secure Highway 47, cutting a strategically significant route that connected ISIL occupied areas of Raqqa in Syria with the Iraqi city of Mosul.

On 28 December 2015, after weeks of fighting, Iraqi authorities announced they had retaken the city of Ramadi in Anbar Governorate. The infrastructure and buildings were significantly damaged during the campaign, and the city was extensively infested with explosive devices planted by ISIL, complicating efforts at stabilization and the safe return of IDPs to their homes.

On 19 March 2016, ISF announced they had commenced operations to retake the city of Heet in Anbar Governorate, which reverted to Government forces on 14 April.

On 24 March 2016, the Iraqi authorities announced they had commenced operations in parts of Ninewa Governorate. On 9 July 2016, ISF announced they had seized control of Qayyara airbase, in Ninewa, which is a strategically significant staging post for the operation to retake Mosul. Military operations, also by KSF, in and around Sinjar, Tal Afar and the Ninewa Plains districts of Ninewa Governorate, which surround Mosul, were ongoing throughout the reporting period. On 25 August, ISF retook from ISIL the city of Qayyara.

On 20 May, ISF retook the town of Rutba, western Anbar. On 22 May 2016, they launched an operation to retake the city of Fallujah, Anbar Governorate, which had been under ISIL control since January 2014. On 17 June, Iraq's Prime Minister, Haider Al-Abadi, declared that Fallujah had been retaken from ISIL. On 17 August, ISF also retook from ISIL Khaldiya town, Anbar.

Military operations against ISIL continued thereafter. On 17 October 2016, the Prime Minister announced the commencement of military operations to retake the city of Mosul. The operations began on two fronts, with Kurdish Peshmerga forces approaching Mosul from the north and east, while Iraqi Security Forces approached from the south.

Legal framework

The international legal framework applicable to the non-international armed conflict in Iraq comprises international humanitarian law and international human rights law.⁵

All parties to the conflict (State actors and non-state armed groups alike) are bound by the customary, and applicable treaty, rules of international humanitarian law.⁶ This means that they must, *inter alia*, respect the fundamental principles of distinction and proportionality when conducting armed operations, take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event to minimize, the impact of violence on civilians, and take steps to ensure the safety and protection of civilians by enabling them to leave areas affected by violence in safety and dignity, and to facilitate their access to basic humanitarian assistance at all times. Parties to the conflict must also take steps to ensure the protection and care of the most vulnerable among the civilian population, and are required to prevent violations and abuses.

Iraq has ratified many of the core international human rights treaties,⁷ which remain applicable in parallel to international humanitarian law notwithstanding the ongoing conflict, unless and until the Government formally derogates from any of their provisions in line with the procedures laid down therein. The State's obligation to protect human rights in accordance with international human rights law is not diminished or replaced even if and where it has lost effective control over a part of its territory.

Under international law, the Government of Iraq is required to hold to account alleged perpetrators of violations or abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law that amount to crimes, in particular those that constitute international crimes, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, irrespective of who the perpetrators may be. The

⁵ Iraq is a party, *inter alia*, to the: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including its Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the Four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. For a more detailed overview of the international law binding on Iraq and other parties to the armed conflict, see 'Legal framework on the Protection of Civilians in Non-International Armed Conflict' section, *Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 5 June to 5 July 2014* (UNAMI/OHCHR July 2014), available online

<http://uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&task=download&id=499_d31007c69700e48cf0446cfaf85c3e48&itemid=6088&lang=en>.

⁶ Iraq is a party to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. It is not party to the 1977 Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, which is applicable to non-international armed conflicts. However, many provisions exist, together with article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions, in customary international law and apply to the conduct of all parties to the non-international armed conflict in Iraq.

⁷ Iraq is a party, *inter alia*, to the: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including its Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;

Government should also ensure that the associated armed groups engaged in hostilities in support of its forces⁸ comply with relevant international and national laws in the conduct of their operations against ISIL, including doing their utmost to ensure the protection of civilians from the effects of violence and their access to humanitarian assistance.

Impact of the Conflict on Civilians

Civilian Casualties

From 1 January 2014 through to September 2016, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded at least 71,611 civilian casualties (24,243 killed and 47,368 wounded) as a result of the non-international armed conflict, terrorism terrorism and other violence in Iraq.⁹

From 1 January to 30 September 2016, a minimum of 13,833 civilian casualties resulted from the ongoing violence, including at least 4,446 persons killed and 9,387 wounded.

Baghdad was the worst affected governorate, with a minimum of 9,521 civilian casualties (2,603 killed and 6,918 wounded). Anbar followed with 1,498 civilian casualties (385 killed and 1,113 wounded), while Ninewa recorded the third highest number of civilian casualties with 908 (595 killed and 313 wounded).

The use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including body-borne (BBIED), vehicle-borne (VBIED) and suicide vehicle-borne (SVBIED) devices, were the deadliest tactic employed against civilians, resulting in at least 9,765 civilian casualties (2,401 killed and 7,364 wounded).

As noted, the actual number of civilian casualties could be much higher than recorded. Additionally, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of the conflict and other forms of violence, such as lack of access to basic food, water or medicine is unknown. Children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and elderly people remained particularly vulnerable but owing to restrictions on accessing information, the impact of the conflict and other forms of violence on these groups remains unquantifiable.

Abuses committed by ISIL

Attacks against civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure and objects

ISIL continued to target civilians directly for attack or carried out attacks heedless of the toll on civilians. In many instances, ISIL claimed responsibility for the attacks online; in other cases, the

⁸ Namely, the *al-Hashid al-Sha'bi*, known in English as the Popular Mobilization Units. Following the seizure of territories by ISIL from 5 June 2014 and the collapse of ISF in those areas, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani called on Iraqis to defend Iraq from ISIL. Al-Sistani's statement was delivered in Karbala by his representative, Abdu al-Mahdi al-Karbali, during a Friday sermon, on 13 June 2014. It provided that "the threats posed obligate the volunteering of those who are capable of carrying arms to defend the homeland and it is a duty on [them]." Al-Karbali also expressed support for ISF, stating that it was the duty of all Iraqi citizens, not just Shi'a, to join the armed forces to protect the country. Ayatollah Bashir al-Najafi, another member of Iraq's clerical establishment, also issued a statement calling on Iraqis to join ISF. On 30 September 2014, the Cabinet passed a resolution calling on Prime Minister al-Abadi to ensure the provision of the *al-Hashid al-Sha'bi* with weapons, logistics, training, and salaries. On 28 October 2014, the Council of Ministers approved a decree that purported to regularise the PMUs to fight against ISIL.

⁹ UNAMI/OHCHR did not obtain the civilian casualty figures for October and November 2015, and May, July and August 2016 from the Anbar Health Directorate.

targets and the modality of the attacks bore the hallmarks of previous ISIL attacks and reliable sources provided information strongly suggesting that ISIL was responsible.

ISIL carried out several mass casualty attacks or attacks intended to cause a large number of civilian casualties in **Baghdad**. For instance, on 25 February, two suicide attackers detonated explosive vests in a coordinated attack on Rasul al-Azam Shi'a mosque in Shula (northwestern Baghdad), killing eight civilians and wounding 18 others. On 28 February, two suicide attackers targeted the al-Muridy public market in Sadr City (eastern Baghdad) – one detonating an explosive vest, the other detonating a motorcycle laden with explosives – killing 24 civilians and wounding 62 others. ISIL claimed responsibility for both attacks.

On 29 March, an attack by an individual wearing an explosive vest among a group of day labourers in Tayaran Square (central Baghdad) reportedly killed at least one civilian and wounded at least 18 others. ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack online.

On 22 April, an attack by an individual wearing an explosive belt targeting the Imam Ali Shi'a mosque in Radhwaniya (southwestern Baghdad) killed at least three individuals and wounded at least 16 others. Another suicide attacker was reportedly shot and killed by ISF before he could set off his explosives. The suicide attackers were wearing ISF uniforms. ISIL claimed responsibility online.

On 25 April, an attack by an individual driving a vehicle laden with explosives near al-Baydha'a Cinema intersection, in New Baghdad (eastern Baghdad), killed at least seven individuals (three civilians and four Iraqi Police officers) and wounded at least 12 others. ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack online.

On 2 May, a suicide car bomb attack targeting pilgrims at the Darwish Intersection area between Saydiya and Doura areas (southern Baghdad) killed at least 10 individuals (seven civilians and three Federal Police members) and wounded at least 11 civilians. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack online.

On 11 May, three mass casualty attacks took place in different areas of Baghdad. In the morning, an attack using a vehicle laden with explosives killed at least 28 individuals (26 civilians and two Iraqi Police officers) and wounded at least 74 others in a market in Sadr City (northern Baghdad). In the afternoon, an attack by an individual driving a vehicle laden with explosives at a checkpoint in Kadhimiya (northern Baghdad), killed at least six people (four civilians and two Iraqi Police officers) and wounded at least one Police officer. Other reports indicated far higher casualty figures for this incident but UNAMI/OHCHR were unable to verify these claims. Also in the afternoon, an attack by an individual driving a vehicle laden with explosives in Adil (western Baghdad) killed nine people and wounded 15 others. ISIL claimed responsibility for all these attacks online.

At dawn on 15 May, several suicide attackers broke into a gas plant in Taji (northern Baghdad); clashes ensued and some gas storage tanks were reportedly set alight by explosions. According to one source, four Iraqi Police officers were killed during the incident. According to another source, three Iraqi Police officers and four employees were killed, while five Iraqi Police officers and an undetermined number of civilians were wounded. The attackers were reported to have been killed or died when they detonated their explosives. ISIL later claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 17 May, a complex attack involving an individual wearing an explosive belt and a nearby explosive device simultaneously targeted the '4000 market' in Shaab (northeastern Baghdad), killing at least 13 individuals and wounding at least 37 others. On the same day, a vehicle laden with explosives driven by a suicide attacker detonated in Sadr City (eastern Baghdad) in the Jameela vegetable market, killing at least 11 individuals and wounding 30 others. Other reports indicated much higher casualty figures in this incident. ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the attacks online.

On 9 June, a suicide car bomb detonated near al-Baydha'a cinema in Baghdad al-Jadida/New Baghdad (east Baghdad), killing 12 civilians and wounding 49. ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack online.

On 30 June, an attack by an individual wearing an explosive vest in Shurta al-Rabi'a (western Baghdad) killed six civilians and wounded 19 others. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack online.

On 3 July, an attack by an individual driving a vehicle laden with explosives in Karrada (central Baghdad, Shi'a majority) led to the death of 292 individuals and wounded 200 others, according to casualty figures released by the Minister of Health. It was reported that people were trapped in buildings, including a mall, which caught fire due to the explosion. In the days following the attack, Iraq's Prime Minister dismissed the Head of Baghdad Operations Command and other security officials and later accepted the resignation of the Minister of Interior for their failure to prevent the attack and lack of coordination and inadequacy of the response of the civil services in its aftermath.

Late in the evening of 5 September an attack by an individual driving a vehicle laden with explosives killed 13 individuals and wounded 18 others in Karrada (central Baghdad, Shi'a majority). ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 9 September, two attacks by an individual wearing an explosive vest and an individual driving a vehicle laden with explosives, within a few minutes of each other, killed at least five people and wounded at least 23 others near al-Nakheel Mall, in the Palestine Street area (eastern Baghdad). ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack online.

On 27 September, an attack by an individual wearing an explosive vest near a car show, in Bayaa (western Baghdad), killed nine civilians and wounded 26 others.

Attacks by ISIL also targeted **Babil** Governorate. On 6 March, a suicide attacker detonated a truck laden with explosives at the main checkpoint at the entrance to Hilla city, reportedly killing 31 civilians and 10 Police members. Seventy civilians and 11 Police members were reportedly wounded in the attack. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack online.

On the afternoon of 25 March, an attack by an individual wearing an explosive vest in a football stadium in al-Hasswa area (also called al-Kariya al-Asriya village), Iskandariya sub-district, killed at least 25 individuals – including two Iraqi Police officers and one militia member – and wounded at least 59 others – including one Iraqi Police officer and five militia members. Other reports indicated higher casualty figures and that children were particularly targeted: according to sources, 23 boys were killed and 58 were wounded in the blast, all aged between 10 and 17. Videos apparently showing the attack and its aftermath were posted online. ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack.

In **Kirkuk**, on 21 August, a suicide attacker, alleged to have been a teenager, detonated himself near the Ja'afar al-Sadiq Shi'a mosque in the Wasiti quarter, southern Kirkuk city, reportedly wounding two ISF members and two civilians. ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack.

In May, two major attacks in **Salah al-Din** directly targeted civilians. On the night of 12 May, three attackers targeted civilians in a café in a predominately Shi'a area in the centre of Balad district, south of Tikrit, using hand grenades and small arms fire. According to sources, the café was a popular gathering place for football fans. The attack resulted in the killing of 15 civilians and wounding of 22 others. On 21 May, an attack by a suicide bomber driving a motorcycle in a market, in the Zahra'a area, in the city centre of Shi'a Arab majority Dujail district, near the Dujail Police Directorate, killed at least 12 individuals (including two Police officers) and wounded 33 others (including three women and four children – one female and three males). ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack online.

On 16 June, the convoy of the Turkmen Shi'a Chief of Tuz Khurmatu Police was targeted by ISIL in an attack, in which the Police Commander, who was also leading the 7th Federal Police Battalion, as

well as four other high-ranking officers were killed. The attack triggered a reprisal attack on the Amerli¹⁰ police station on 16 June (see below).

On 18 June, an attacker inside a truck laden with explosives detonated himself on the main street in front of the main office of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), in Tuz Khurmatu district. The incident occurred on the main road that connects Baghdad to Kirkuk, passing through the middle of the city, near the offices of other Kurdish political parties. One police officer and two civilians were killed in the incident, which wounded 11 other people, most of whom were believed to be civilians. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack on affiliated websites.

On 7 July, gunmen wearing explosive vests attacked the Sayyid Mohammed Shi'a shrine in Balad district, south of Tikrit. The gunmen, reportedly wearing ISF-like uniforms, threw hand grenades on people in the shrine area and engaged in gunfire with security forces guarding the shrine. The attackers detonated their explosive vests near the gate and in an area with shops close to the shrine wall. According to sources, 34 civilians and one member of the Popular Mobilisation Units (PMU) member were killed and more than 60 civilians were wounded. ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the incident online.

On 2 September, a vehicle laded with explosives was detonated in Shah Saiwan village, northwest of Tuz Khurmatu district. A gunman opened fire on civilians gathered at the place of the explosion and detonated an explosive belt he was wearing. Five civilians and two PMU members were killed and nine civilians (including women and children) were wounded. The village is predominantly inhabited by Shi'a Turkmen with a few Sunni Kurdish and Arab families. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack online.

ISIL carried out a number of attacks targeting civilians in **Diyala**. On 11 January, two suicide attackers wearing explosive vests detonated themselves in Asri quarter of Muqdadiya district, northeast of Baquba. The attacks killed 30 civilians and wounded 55 others, mostly men.

On 29 February, a suicide attacker detonated an explosive vest at a Shi'a funeral ceremony close to al-Quds mosque, in the Asri quarter of Muqdadiya district, northeast of Baquba, killing 19 civilians and wounding 33 others. Fifteen PMU members were also killed and 10 were wounded in the attack.

On 9 May, a car laden with explosives driven by a suicide attacker detonated in a market and nearby a local restaurant in the predominantly Shi'a Shafra area, in the centre of Baquba city. According to sources, 14 civilians were killed and 38 were wounded in the incident. Sources reported that a number of children were amongst the casualties. Media reports indicated that ISIL had claimed responsibility for the attack and that the target was a gathering of PMU members.

On 29 May, a suicide bomber with an explosive belt detonated himself near a café in Mualimeen quarter, near the teachers syndicate, in the city centre of Muqdadiya district. The attack reportedly killed seven people and wounded 35, most of whom are believed to have been civilians. Mualimeen quarter is predominantly Sunni Arab and most of the victims are believed to be from the Sunni Arab community. According to media reports, the perpetrator was 14 years old who had been reported missing by his mother to police three days prior to the attack. ISIL claimed responsibility on social media for the attack.

On 2 September, an individual wearing an explosive vest reportedly tried to approach a Shi'a mosque in the Hussein area of Mandali city centre, east of Baquba. The attacker was allegedly prevented from reaching the mosque by a Police officer, but was still able to detonate his vest,

¹⁰ Amerli is a Shi'a Turkmen area, which was under siege by ISIL from June to end of August 2014. Since that time, militias have had a strong presence in the area. Several villages surrounding Amerli and Sulaiman Beg were burned and destroyed by militias in the weeks following the broken siege on Amerli town, and Sunni Arab residents from of these areas have since not been permitted to return.

killing one Police officer and one boy. According to the source of information, the attacker was a teenager.

Two attacks occurred in **Karbala** Governorate. On 7 June, a suicide VBIED exploded in al-Mowadhafeen district, approximately three kilometres away from the city centre, reportedly killing eight civilians and wounding 18 others. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack online. On 28 August, five individuals wearing explosive vests entered Hay al Hussein neighbourhood, in Ain Al-Tamr village (western Karbala), where a wedding was taking place. One of the assailants threw hand grenades at the participants, fired gunshots from a rifle, and blew himself up. The four other assailants were killed by ISF. At least 17 civilians were killed and at least 25 were wounded in this incident. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack.

Although quieter than the rest of the country, the **south of Iraq** experienced a number of IED attacks that led to civilian casualties. in the southern governorates of Basra, Thi-Qar and Muthanna. ISIL claimed responsibility for all these attacks. On 4 April, a suicide VBIED detonated in the al-Khore area in central Basra - an area busy with shops, restaurants and offices - killing six civilians and wounding 16 others. Also on 4 April, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive belt inside a restaurant, on the highway between Basra and Nasiriya. A bus load of PMU members returning from the front were at the restaurant at that time. The explosion resulted in the death of five PMU members and one civilian, while 22 PMU members and four civilians were wounded. On 1 May, two vehicles laden with explosives were detonated in the "Southern Gate" area of Samawa City, about 500 meters and 10 minutes apart. The first device exploded near Government offices, while the second exploded at a bus stop. The explosions killed 41 people and wounded 75 others.

Shelling

UNAMI/OHCHR recorded several incidents in which shelling by ISIL caused civilian casualties and/or caused material damage to civilian infrastructure or objects. In many of these attacks, ISIL appeared to be directly targeting civilian areas.

In **Kirkuk** Governorate, on 27 April, nine rockets launched from ISIL-held territory hit Taza and Kirkuk cities. According to sources, seven rockets landed in different areas of Taza sub-district, wounding at least one civilian. Three sources reported that two rockets reportedly also landed in Kirkuk city: one striking a *Husseiniya* in the al-Baath neighbourhood, and the second landing on a civilian house in Wahed Huzairan neighbourhood; both in the southwestern part of the city. No casualties were reported in the *Husseiniya* incident but a woman and a child were wounded in the Wahed Huzairan strike. While three sources reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that the Kirkuk incidents involved indirect fire, at least one source and several media reports stated that the incident in the al-Baath neighbourhood was caused by an IED.

In **Diyala**, on 6 May, two mortar rounds struck a residential area near a primary school in the Abu Taba village of Abu Saida sub-district, northeast of Baquba, wounding three residents (one woman and two children). The area is inhabited predominantly by the Shi'a Arab community, and sources reported that mortar rounds were believed to have been launched by an ISIL presence in the area.

In **Anbar**, on 9 February, shelling hit Amiriyat al-Fallujah, wounding nine to 13 individuals, while on 26 February, mortar rounds impacted in Al-Faris Al-Arabi Complex in Amiriyat al-Fallujah, killing one civilian and wounding five others.

On 27 February, 12 civilians were wounded when mortar rounds, allegedly fired by ISIL, impacted in Habbaniya, east of Ramadi. On 28 April, shelling hit the Haditha General Hospital, wounding six civilians, and on the same day, shelling reportedly wounded five civilians in Barwana sub-district, east of Haditha.

On 6 May, shelling killed four civilians and wounded three others in Heet. On 13 May, shelling killed five individuals in Khalidiya, east of Ramadi. On 16 May, according to one source, repeated shelling caused 28 civilian casualties, including school children. Another source reported that five civilians

were killed and 27 wounded; elderly, women and children were among the casualties. UNAMI/OHCHR received pictures purporting to show the effects of the shelling. In one of the pictures, two bodies can be seen, one of which appears to be a child. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the pictures.

On 17 July, shelling killed one male civilian in Heet. Also in Heet, on 19 September, shelling killed a young man and wounded one woman and her two children.

On 26 March, in the **Kurdistan Region of Iraq**, shelling by ISIL hit the garden of a house in Mahana village, Makhmur district, Erbil Governorate, wounding six civilians. Three of them (including a girl aged 12 and a boy aged 16) subsequently died from their wounds.

Alleged use of weaponised chemical agents

Several reports were received during the reporting period that ISIL had used weaponised chemical agents in attacks. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the actual use of weaponised chemical agents in these attacks and their use has not been officially confirmed. However, the consistency of the reports and the symptoms reported are suggestive that a chemical agent of some kind is being used by ISIL.

In **Ninewa**, on 11 February, ISIL mortar attacks on the Peshmerga in Domez area, in the south of Sinjar District, resulted in at least nine Peshmerga officers suffering from vomiting, suffocation, sneezing and sore eyes. UNAMI/OHCHR received further information at the end of February that among over 175 Peshmerga affected by this attack, some were reportedly suffering from other symptoms after the incident, including fever and chest pain.

On 25 February, ISIL rocket attacks in Sinjar reportedly resulted in at least four Peshmerga and three civilian returnees suffering from symptoms that may have suggested the use of a chemical agent – including vomiting, suffocation, sneezing and sore eyes. Separate single source information claimed that over 100 people, mainly Peshmerga, suffered breathing difficulties, headaches, nausea and vomiting after the ISIL rockets impacted on the Sinjar frontline and in Sinjar city.

On 2 March, ISIL rocket attacks in Kahazer village, Zummar sub-district, Tel Afar district, resulted in two civilians (both women) and six Peshmerga personnel suffering from suffocation, dizziness and sore eyes.

On the morning of 30 April, ISIL attacked Peshmerga positions on the frontline in Khazir, Hamdaniya District. Local media reported that ISIL used mortar rounds filled with chemical agents in the attack. Two sources contacted by UNAMI/OHCHR reported that the Peshmerga were attacked by approximately 32 mortar rounds, but that no chemical agents were used. However, two other sources, including an eyewitness, reported that after the attack, three Peshmerga had problems breathing, were vomiting, and had pain in their eyes. The sources claimed that sulphur could be smelled following the attack and that on detonation, the devices emitted a yellow smoke.

On 23 August, local media reported that ISIL had shelled Iraqi army positions in al-Qayyarah sub-district of Mosul with Katyusha rockets reportedly containing chlorine gas. Three soldiers reportedly suffered from suffocation following the attack. HRO could not confirm the report.

On 14 April, in the **Kurdistan Region of Iraq**, following an ISIL rocket attack in Abushita village in eastern Makhmur district, four Peshmerga soldiers reported suffering from breathing difficulties. One of the soldiers died on 15 April, allegedly as a result of the attack.

On 16 April, ISIL rocket attacks in Jar Allah and Kubeiba villages, Makhmur district, Erbil Governorate, resulted in eight Peshmerga soldiers suffering from serious breathing difficulties, three of them also suffered from swelling of the face and eyes.

On 14 May, ISIL rocket attacks at the Peshmerga in Abo Shi'a village, Gwer sub-district, Makhmur District, Erbil Governorate, resulted in 14 Peshmerga soldiers suffering from eye irritation, breathing difficulties, and headaches.

In **Kirkuk**, on 8 March 2016, up to 41 rockets fired from ISIL-held territory impacted areas in and around the predominately Turkmen Taza district, south of Kirkuk city. According to sources, an odour emitted from some of the rockets caused breathing difficulties to a number of people who were subsequently admitted to hospital. Symptoms reported included difficulty breathing, skin redness and irritation or burning sensations, and several cases of vomiting. A three-year-old girl died on 11 March, reportedly due to complications from symptoms she suffered after the attack. On 18 March, a nine-year-old girl also died from complications believed to stem from the attack (reportedly, initially breathing difficulty and then organ failure).

According to sources, at least 200 people affected by the 8 March attack were recorded at the hospital. Most were suffering from minor irritation while 23 more serious cases involved symptoms such as breathing difficulty, skin redness and irritation or burning sensation, and vomiting. Some media and other reports later reported that up to 2,000 people were affected by the attack. However, UNAMI/OHCHR directly followed up with health and medical sources in the area who were dealing with those affected by the incident, and this number could not be substantiated.

On 2 May, ISIL attacked PMU positions in Basheer village, south of Kirkuk city, with ten rockets. According to sources, some of the rockets emitted a gas that caused skin irritation and breathing difficulties to those present in the area. Thirteen PMU members were affected and taken to hospital. On the morning and early afternoon of 8 May, ISIL launched 42 rockets toward the village of Basheer, south of Kirkuk, which had been retaken from ISIL on 30 April. According to sources, upon detonation, the rockets released a bad odour that caused breathing difficulties and nausea as well as skin redness and irritation. Two civilians, a technician from the electricity department and a resident who had returned to survey his property after the village was retaken, as well as 50 Police officers from Basheer Police station, were reportedly affected. A number of rockets struck the outskirts of the village, in addition to those that hit the village centre in the vicinity of the Police station.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 19 January, the impact of several rockets in the Zuhor area of Tikrit city centre wounded four civilians. According to source information, ten persons (six civilians and four police officers) were subsequently admitted to hospital with breathing problems. All were released the same day. A local source reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that a bad odour was smelt after one of the rockets struck.

ISIL targeting of persons perceived to be opposed to its takfiri ideology

Throughout the reporting period, UNAMI/OHCHR received reports that ISIL continued to target directly any individual perceived to be opposed to its *takfiri* ideology or control. The incidents presented below are representative of a far longer list of human rights abuses committed by ISIL and documented by UNAMI/OHCHR.

In **Ninewa**, ISIL carried out numerous murders, some of which followed 'sentences' imposed by ISIL self-appointed courts. As these so-called courts are not authorized by Iraqi law to exercise judicial authority and fail to respect basic principles of due process, any sentence they impose is unlawful.

On 22 November 2015, ISIL reportedly killed two men for alleged homosexual acts in Fallujah city by throwing them from a building. On 23 November, ISIL posted a series of images to social media showing two blindfolded men being thrown from the rooftop of a building by masked men, and their bodies on the ground as seen from the rooftop. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the images.

On 4 January, ISIL reportedly killed a male teacher from the Palestine School in Mosul city, allegedly because he was refusing to propagate ISIL doctrines to students.

On 8 January, ISIL killed eight men, including six former ISF members and Police officers, at the Ghabat military base in Mosul. The victims were accused by an ISIL self-appointed court of cooperating with ISF and were shot in the head.

On 10 January, ISIL killed five men, including two former Police officers, in al-Ghazlani military base in Mosul. An ISIL self-appointed court accused the men of various “infractions”, including disobeying ISIL instructions and cooperating with ISF. The victims were reportedly crushed with a bulldozer.

On 15 January, three female teachers were killed in the Ghabat military base, north of Mosul. The victims had been accused by an ISIL self-appointed court of providing information to ISF and were burned to death.

On 7 February, ISIL publicly killed four young men by throwing them from the top of the National Insurance Company building, in the Dawasa neighbourhood of central Mosul. The victims were accused of cooperating with ISF.

On 18 February, ISIL shot and killed three female former employees of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) in northern Mosul. They had been abducted in January 2016.

On 5 March, ISIL shot and killed 12 former Iraq Police officers (all men) in Ein al-Jahash village, al-Qayyarah sub-district of Mosul, allegedly for cooperating with ISF. The killing followed a decision of an ISIL self-appointed court. On 30 March, ISIL publicly electrocuted 15 civilians in the al-Shuhada’ Garden, in Dawasa neighbourhood of central Mosul, following a decision of a self-appointed court. The victims were accused of cooperating with ISF, and their murder was filmed by ISIL.

On 14 May, ISIL publicly stoned to death 18 men and a woman at the gate of al-Zahra’ mosque in the Tahreer neighbourhood of eastern Mosul, allegedly for adultery. The victims were killed following a decision of an ISIL self-appointed court. They had been abducted by ISIL from different areas in Mosul on 9 May together with 17 other people. On 17 May, ISIL killed 21 civilians who were accused of leaking information about ISIL locations to ISF. The victims were reportedly drowned in a basin of nitric acid.

On 6 June, a woman was publicly stoned to death by ISIL in the Tahrir neighbourhood of Mosul, next to al-Zahra’ mosque. She had been accused by an ISIL self-appointed court of committing adultery. ISIL elements ordered that her corpse be left in the street for a full day before being removed.

On 11 September, ISIL reportedly killed eight civilians by drowning them in a swimming pool in the Dawasa area of central Mosul. The victims were killed allegedly for collaborating with the Government of Iraq and Peshmerga forces.

ISIL also carried out a large number of abductions in Ninewa during the reporting period. For instance, during the first week of January, ISIL reportedly abducted five male teachers from Hay al-Hadba’a, Hay al-Sedeeq, Hay al-Kindy, Hay al-Yarmouk and Hay al-Tayaran areas of Mosul city. It was alleged that all were taken following their refusal to propagate ISIL doctrines to students.

On 1 February, ISIL reportedly abducted three internet café owners in Mosul. The victims were providing services that allowed users to access sites which ISIL considers to be immoral, for instance allowing to watch movies and football. The victims were taken to an unknown location.

From 3 to 9 March, ISIL abducted at least 15 motorcyclists in Mosul for allegedly tearing up ISIL flags in the city.

On 5 September, ISIL launched a search campaign in different areas in Mosul and abducted 43 civilians, including two women, for different reasons, such as having family members in ISF or the Peshmerga forces or, in some cases, for their alleged disloyalty to the “Caliphate”, or accusations that they were plotting to flee the city. ISIL seized the properties of the abductees.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 14 May, ISIL abducted nine men from one family in the Jallam area of al-Dour district, southeast of Tikrit. According to sources, the men are from the Shimmari tribe and mostly work in the field of agriculture, but two of them were members of the Iraqi Army.

In **Diyala**, on 30 May, gunmen wearing military uniforms stormed into a house in Thawra village, Qara Tapa sub-district, north of Baquba. A father and his two sons were killed, along with a relative who was an Imam. The victims were from the Sunni Arab Azza tribe. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack on social media.

In **Kirkuk**, ISIL continued to kill, abduct and punish civilians within the areas it controlled in Hawija district. For example, on 28 February, ISIL reportedly killed four young men in a public yard of that district, by gunfire. UNAMI/OHCHR received mixed reports on the reason for the execution, with some sources indicating that they were killed for attempting to flee ISIL-controlled areas, whereas others indicated the victims may have scrawled anti-ISIL slogans on a wall. Their bodies were hung on poles in Hawija city centre.

Additionally, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded instances of ISIL abducting civilians. For example, on 6 and 7 May, ISIL launched a campaign targeting civilians in several villages of Hawija district, abducting more than 20 civilians, reportedly for assisting families to escape from ISIL-controlled areas, cooperating with ISF, and having relatives serving in security forces.

ISIL also punished civilians for infringing its rules. For example, on 18 January 2016, ISIL members in Hawija cut off the hands of three men in al-Zab sub-district, southwest of Kirkuk. According to sources, ISIL members reportedly carried out a decision of an ISIL self-appointed court that had accused the men of robbery.

In **Anbar**, on 1 February, ISIL reportedly murdered by stoning a woman accused of prostitution in Heet. The murder reportedly took place in public, with people forcibly gathered to watch it. According to the source of information, the woman had refused to marry an ISIL fighter who then accused her of prostitution.

On 5 May, ISIL killed five civilians in al-Qaim. The victims were allegedly accused of cooperating with ISF.

ISIL targeting persons attempting to flee areas under its control.

Throughout the reporting period, UNAMI/OHCHR received reports that ISIL continued to target civilians attempting to flee the areas under their control. The cases below are representative of a longer list of incidents documented by UNAMI/OHCHR.

In **Ninewa**, on 15 January, approximately 70 civilians reportedly tried to escape from the ISIL-controlled areas south of Mosul city by crossing the Tigris River into Makhmour district, Erbil Governorate. Approximately 18 men and two women from Haaj Ali and Safina villages in al-Qayyarah sub-district, Mosul District, were captured by ISIL as they were fleeing. They were subsequently shot and killed by ISIL in front of other residents.

On 29 February, ISIL shot and killed a father and son (aged between 14 and 16 years) in Haj Ali village, al-Qayyarah sub-district, Mosul, and hanged their bodies on an electricity pole in the village. The victims were caught in an unspecified area somewhere between the Makhmur frontline and al-Qayyarah sub-district as they were trying to flee Haj Ali village.

On 22 April, ISIL publicly shot to death four civilians (three women and one man) from Tan Tarrah, Dwerzat Tahatani, Makuk and Haj Ali villages of al-Qayyarah sub-district of Mosul. They had been caught the previous night in Haj Ali village (together with an undetermined number of children), fleeing towards Makhmur district, Erbil Governorate.

On 31 May, ISIL shot and killed 11 civilians, including a 16-year-old boy, after they were caught fleeing from al-Qayyarah city, on 29 May, close to the al-Qayyarah bridge which links al-Qayyarah sub-district, Ninewa Governorate, with Makhmur district, Erbil Governorate.

During the reporting period UNAMI/OHCHR verified a high number of incidents of families who were attempting to flee ISIL-controlled areas in Hawija, **Kirkuk**, to seek safety in Kirkuk city, were targeted by explosive devices planted to deter their escape, or were killed and wounded by ISIL members while fleeing or after being caught.

For example, on 1 February, an explosive device detonated on a family of five who were fleeing Hawija district in southwest Kirkuk through the Himreen hills toward Al-Alam. The explosion reportedly killed two adults and wounded one girl who was taken to Al-Alam Hospital by ISF. The Himreen hills are frequently used by families trying to flee from the ISIL-occupied areas in Shirqat and Hawija, but are a dangerous path as civilians have been exposed to IEDs, attacks by militants or have sometimes become lost while attempting to access Al-Alam undetected.

On 6 March, ISIL reportedly killed three young men after they were captured while attempting to leave Hawija. The victims were executed by firing squad in a village in Hawija district. Sources indicated the victims' bodies were left on the ground, and ISIL prevented people from removing them for burial.

In an incident on 20 March, an explosive device reportedly targeted IDP families near Peshmerga frontlines, close to Maktab Khalid, as they were fleeing Hawija district, southwest of Kirkuk. Sources indicated that four civilians from one family were killed, including one child, and three others were wounded, including one child. The family was reportedly seeking to enter Kirkuk as IDPs.

On 24 April, ISIL elements killed four male civilians accused of attempting to flee from ISIL-held areas in Hawija district, southwest of Kirkuk. According to sources, the victims were from the same family and were captured while attempting to flee from Hawija. Sources stated that the killings were carried out in a public place in Hawija city by a firing squad and that ISIL left the bodies for display on the ground.

On 5 May, an IED detonated in the Mojamma'a area of Riyadh sub-district, southwest of Kirkuk. The IED was placed on a route leading toward Kirkuk City, targeting families attempting to escape from the ISIL-controlled areas in Hawija. One 15-year-old girl was wounded in the incident. On 23 May, a family trying to escape the ISIL-controlled Hawija area and to reach Kirkuk city was hit by the detonation of an IED near Kubaiba village, Dibis district. One civilian was killed and another wounded.

On 9 June, an IED detonated on civilians fleeing from an ISIL-controlled area, near Gharra village, Dibis district, west of Kirkuk. One woman was killed and four children were injured. The IED was set on a route used by IDP families fleeing from Hawija towards Kirkuk city through Dibis district.

On 2 September, ISIL shot and killed two children who were trying to flee ISIL-held Hawija with their mother.

UNAMI/OHCHR continued to receive reports of ISIL killing civilians within the ISIL-controlled Shirqat district, **Salah al-Din**. For example, in the afternoon of 29 January, ISIL killed 10 civilians and former ISF members in the Askari quarter in the city centre of Shirqat district. They were shot in the head in public, following a decision by an ISIL self-appointed court. According to the source of information, four of the victims were accused of raising the Iraqi flag over the Communication Department building in Shirqat and the other six were accused of cooperating with ISF.

Between 9 and 11 March ISIL killed a spate of civilians in different areas of Shirqat district. On 9 March, ISIL killed five civilians in Eitha village on the 'left side' of Shirqat district. The five victims, who were all Sunni Arabs of the Jubour tribe from Eitha village, were shot in the head, allegedly for participating in an armed attack on an ISIL media centre in Shirqat, preparing additional attacks

against ISIL, and having contacts with ISF. On 10 March, ISIL killed five civilians in the city centre of the district. Two of the victims were shot and three others beheaded. All the victims were Sunni Arabs from the Jubour tribe, from the Shirqat district. They were allegedly killed for participating in armed actions and other expressions of opposition against ISIL in Shirqat. The killings were done in public, with three of the victims murdered in the main Shirqat market. A video was released on ISIL media depicting the killings of two of the above-mentioned victims, but was later removed. On 11 March, ISIL killed one civilian by gunfire. The victim was a resident of the al-Askari quarter of Shirqat, who was alleged to have joined a secret cell involved in small-arms attacks against ISIL in Shirqat.

On 6 February, in **Anbar**, in the Jwaiba area, east of Ramadi, ISIL killed 12 civilians who were trying to flee the ISIL-controlled area. On 14 March, two civilians (allegedly a woman and her son) were reportedly killed by the detonation of an IED outside Heet while trying to flee ISIL-controlled areas.

In areas under its control, ISIL also targeted Sunni religious leaders who failed to promote or adhere to the group's *takfiri* doctrines. On 14 January, ISIL raided two mosques in central Mosul and seized two Imams for violating ISIL instructions with respect to the conduct of prayers and Friday sermons. On 15 January, six Imams in Mosul were abducted after being accused by an ISIL self-appointed court of urging people in their sermons not to join or support ISIL.

On 23 January, ISIL abducted six Imams from their homes in al-Karama neighbourhood, east of Mosul city, for unknown reasons.

On 10 February, ISIL killed the Imam of al-Noorain mosque in Mosul, reportedly for not cooperating with the group. The victim was killed in the Ghabat military base, located in northern Mosul, following a decision of an ISIL self-appointed court. The victim had been abducted from his home on an unspecified date in November 2015.

On 29 February, ISIL killed two Imams by shooting them in the head. One was from the Tabarak al-Rahman mosque, in the Hadba area of northern Mosul, and the other from the Zain al-Abideen mosque, in the Alnour area of eastern Mosul. An ISIL self-appointed court had accused the victims of disobeying the group's instructions and of preventing young people from joining the group. The victims had been abducted from their respective mosques on 26 February.

On the evening of 22 April, ISIL abducted three Imams from their homes in Zanjilly, Bab al-Toob and Dawasa areas, central Mosul, and took them to an unknown destination. The victims were allegedly accused of not following ISIL rules. Their whereabouts and condition remain unknown.

Attacks on places of religious and cultural significance

ISIL continued to destroy and loot places of cultural significance that it views as contrary to its interpretation of Islam.

In **Ninewa**, on 14 November 2015, ISIL blew up the al-Farouq Sunni mosque in Ayathiya sub-district, Tal Afar district. ISIL reportedly destroyed these mosque because it contained tombs and graves which were venerated by local people.

On 10 April, ISIL reportedly destroyed the 2000 year-old ancient gate of Mashqe, located in the north of Mosul city, using IEDs and bulldozers. On 15 May, ISIL's *Wilayat Ninewa* media office posted photos on social media showing the destruction of the gate. In some of the photos, a bulldozer is seen destroying the ancient gate, with subsequent pictures showing the demolished gate in rubble.

On 23 May, ISIL published on social media pictures depicting the removal of ancient artefacts from the Nergal Gate in Mosul. In one of the pictures, an empty space where a winged bull used to be is shown. A source reported that on 22 May, ISIL took two winged bulls from the Nergal Gate to an unknown destination.

Around noon on 4 June, ISIL blew up the 2,800-year-old temple of Nabu, in Nimroud Sub-district, Hamdaniya District. ISIL posted pictures and videos of the destruction on social media.

Attacks on ethnic and religious communities

ISIL continued to deliberately target ethnic and religious communities through a range of abuses. According to information provided to UNAMI/OHCHR in May 2016, an estimated 1,934 Yezidi women and children remained under ISIL captivity.

Most of the reports of attacks by ISIL against minority communities took place in **Ninewa**.

For example, in the morning of 16 January, ISIL held an “auction” in the Qasim al-Khayat yard, western Mosul, to sell property owned by Christians who fled the city in July 2014. Reportedly, 400 houses, 19 buildings, 167 shops, and furniture were put up for sale. ISIL announced the auction through loudspeakers mounted on vehicles in different areas of Mosul. Some Mosul residents reportedly bought houses belonging to their former neighbours with the intention of returning the property to them some day. It should be noted that no Christians remain in Mosul.

On 22 January, ISIL murdered two Yezidi men in a square in Ba’aj district after capturing them in Sakiniya village, where the men had gone to retrieve their tractors. The victims had left the tractors in Sakiniya village as they fled from Tal Uzeer villages in Sinjar district in August 2014. Two sources reported that the victims were killed by hanging, whereas one source reported that they were shot before being hanged.

On 31 January, ISIL killed a 17-year-old Shabak boy in Bajrbog village, Ba’shiqa sub-district, Mosul district, by shooting him in the head. The victim had been abducted around the beginning of January and was accused by an ISIL self-appointed court of spying for Peshmerga forces.

On 8 March, six women were killed by ISIL south of Mosul. Four of them were reportedly from the Yezidi community and had tried to escape from ISIL captivity the previous day, but were caught in Hatra district, south of Mosul.

On 13 March, ISIL killed nine men from the Shabak community in Bairbog village, Ba’shiqa sub-district, Mosul district. The victims had been abducted several months before and were killed pursuant to an order of an ISIL self-appointed court, purportedly for cooperating with the Government of Iraq.

On the morning of 22 March, ISIL informed residents of the Wadi Hajar and al-Mansour neighbourhoods of Mosul, via loudspeakers mounted on vehicles, to stay indoors in the early morning. Early the next day, ISIL blew up three houses in Wadi Hajar and one in al-Mansour, using explosives. The homes reportedly belonged to Shi’a residents who had fled the city in June 2014. They had been used by ISIL to store weapons, IEDs, and other military equipment.

Forced recruitment and use of children

In **Ninewa**, on 13 March, ISIL moved approximately 25 children between 10 and 17 years of age from the Bara’am orphanage in the Zuhoor neighbourhood of Mosul to a training camp for children in Tel Afar district. Reportedly, the children were from the Turkmen Shi’a community. All had been abducted by ISIL on or around 17 July 2014.

On 30 March, in Kharbirdan village, Makhmour district, Erbil Governorate, ISIL launched an attack against the Iraqi Army and Sunni tribal fighters. The attack included six individuals wearing explosive vests. Two of the attackers were aged between 15 and 16 years old and were killed by the Iraqi Army while they were detonating the explosive vests.

Children recruited by ISIL were also killed while fleeing the battlefield. For instance, on 12 May, ISIL allegedly shot and killed six of its fighters, including two minors, in Hamam Ali sub-district of Mosul, allegedly for fleeing from battle in al-Mahana village, al-Qayyarah sub-district of Mosul.

In **Kirkuk**, on 4 June, ISIL reportedly gathered a number of civilian youth, including children under the age of 18, in a local market in Hawija district town centre, and loaded them onto a bus, allegedly to force them to fight for them. According to one source and media reports, the youths numbered approximately 19 and included unknown number of boys under the age of 18. The civilians were reportedly taken to an ISIL training facility near Riyadh sub-district.

In **Diwala**, on the night of 2 June, a suicide attack was carried out by a minor, using an explosive belt detonated inside a taxi, close to Al-Salam sub-district, on the main road leading to Baquba. Two civilians and two police officers were killed in the incident. The attacker reportedly entered the taxi as a passenger, and detonated the explosive belt after a checkpoint operated by the security forces. According to ISIL, which claimed responsibility for the incident on social media, the boy was 17 years old.

Violations committed by Iraqi Security Forces and associated forces

Unlawful killings and abductions

In the **north of Iraq**, on 26 March, ISF shot and killed a civilian man in Kharbadan village, Makhmour district. ISF had retaken half of the village on 25 March and had moved civilians to the area they had recaptured. On the morning of 26 March, ISF announced to civilians in the other part of the village that they were to be moved out. The victim had reportedly requested, and was granted permission by ISF to tend to his animals before leaving the village. As he was moving through the village to do so, he was intercepted by other ISF soldiers who, believing he was a member of ISIL, shot him in the leg. Sources reported that the soldiers then took the man to a rural area outside of Kharbadan and took pictures and videos of themselves with him, claiming that he was a member of ISIL. After approximately one or two hours, the man was shot dead by an ISF soldier using a gun mounted on a vehicle.

In **Ninewa**, on 14 May, Peshmerga forces shot a 21-year old Yezidi IDP in Bear Qasim village, Snouny sub-district, Sinjar district. The victim was shot whilst in a moving vehicle after collecting bricks from the village, together with five other civilians. The six men were allegedly initially allowed by the Peshmerga to enter the village and collect bricks; however, they were later told by the same Peshmerga that it was forbidden to collect bricks from the area. Before leaving the village, the six men were asked by the Peshmerga if they had guns. Two of the men had guns and refused to hand them over. As they were leaving the village, Rojava Peshmerga, who had just arrived in the area, opened fire on the men's moving vehicles and wounded one of them. Witnesses reported that the Peshmerga initially refused to take the victim to hospital, only agreeing to do so approximately one-hour and 45 minutes later. The victim died on the way to the hospital.

Following the capture of Sinjar by Peshmerga and associated forces in November 2015, reports were received that Yezidi armed groups associated with KSF were engaging in retaliatory attacks against Sunni Arab civilians and property. On the morning of 15 November, a Yezidi armed group reportedly entered al-Qabousiya village and shot the *Mukhtar* and his brother. One source also reported that, on the morning of 15 November, Yezidi forces killed seven members of a Sunni Arab family in Domiz complex, south of Sinjar. As a result of these incidents, large numbers of Sunni Arab civilians fled villages in Qairawan sub-district, with some estimates as high as 70,000 people, moving south towards Tel Afar and Ba'aj district.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 12 February, local media reported that unidentified gunmen had abducted three members of the Iraq Presidential Guard, four truck drivers and four Border Police on the main road between Baghdad and Kirkuk, close to Amerli sub-district. Two witnesses reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that the abductors spoke in Turkmen and were wearing military uniforms associated with an armed Shi'a group affiliated with ISF. One of the sources alleged that only one militia group

was responsible for the abduction. All of the abductees were from the Kurdish community. According to one source, they were physically and verbally assaulted during their confinement.

Sources reported that between 1 and 5 March, approximately 500 to 550 Sunni males from the Khumrani and Juza villages, in the Jazeera Tikrit area, were taken away by Asayib Ahl al Haq (AAH) following a security operation carried out jointly by Federal Police (according to one source) and militias. As of mid-August, 400 to 450 of those captured remained unaccounted for. Some residents of Juza alleged that they had been physically ill-treated during the incident or while they were being held.

On 16 June, an attack claimed by ISIL that resulted in the death of the well-known head of the Tuz Police and of four other high-ranking police officers (see above) triggered a reprisal attack on the Amerli¹¹ police station, where at least six Sunni Arab detainees were killed. The detainees had reportedly been arrested at different times for various alleged crimes, including under the Anti-Terrorism Law no. 13 of 2005. One source reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that the victims were beaten, strangled and shot. Some witnesses informed UNAMI/OHCHR that the perpetrators were members of a militia that is part of PMU, while other sources suggested that residents from Amerli community were involved.

On 18 June, PMU issued a statement claiming that unidentified gunmen had stormed the police station and shot the detainees. The statement also denied that PMUs were involved, noting they were out of town at the time of the incident. UNAMI/OHCHR has received reports that there may have been additional casualties that resulted from the incident, including possible attacks on separate 'unofficial' detention centres in the area; however, UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to verify these claims. Over several days following the incident, members of a militia associated with PMU reportedly drove through the streets of the al-Askari and Tin quarters of Tuz Khurmatu, using threatening language to members of Sunni Arab, Sunni Turkmen and Kurdish communities and ordering them to leave the area as soon as possible.

On 11 April, security forces discovered the bodies of five civilians on a sub-road in the Hajjaj area of Baiji district, north of Tikrit. The victims were blindfolded, handcuffed, and had gunshot wounds to the head and chest. The victims were from the Sunni Arab community - three from the Hajjaj area and two from Tikrit city. They were part of a group of eight civilians who were abducted around 6 to 8 April by gunmen wearing military uniforms and driving four-wheel drive vehicles. Sources alleged that the perpetrators were from a militia group that operates under PMU and was controlling the Hajjar area at the time of the incident.

On 28 May, a member of AAH killed a 17-year-old boy in Tikrit. According to sources, the victim and his teacher were arguing over examinations at the al-Usra al-Ta'alimiya school, Arba'een street, in the centre of Tikrit city. A student reportedly called friends in AAH and reported the problem. Members of AAH arrived at the school and a fight erupted between AAH and police officers guarding the school, as the latter would not allow AAH to enter. When the victim heard that AAH was trying to enter the school, he became frightened and tried to run away. As he was attempting to flee, AAH members shot and killed him. The victim was an IDP from Baiji district. Seven members of AAH were reportedly detained in relation to the incident, but UNAMI/OHCHR was unable to determine if any charges were brought against them.

In **Diyala**, on 1 March, gunmen who were described by sources as militia members, abducted seven civilians from different quarters of Muqdadiya and Baquba districts. Four civilians were reportedly abducted from the city centre of Muqdadiya, one from Tahrir quarter, and two from Mualimeen

¹¹ Amerli is a Shi'a Turkmen community area that was under siege by ISIL for several months in 2014. Since that time, militias have had a strong presence in the area. Several villages surrounding Amerli and Sulaiman Beg were burned and destroyed by militias in the weeks following the lifting of the siege on Amerli town, and Sunni Arab and Turkmen residents of these areas have since not been permitted to return.

quarter of Baquba district. All of the abductees were from the Sunni Arab community. Their whereabouts remains unknown at time of writing.

On 2 March, gunmen – reported by sources to have been militia members operating under the PMU – stormed three houses in al-Ahemar village, west of Muqdadiya, and shot and killed a civilian in each house. All the victims were reportedly members of the Sunni Arab community.

On 23 April, gunmen allegedly belonging to militia groups operating under PMU attacked a civilian vehicle on a small road near Wajihiya sub-district, northeast of Baquba. According to a source, three adult male civilians were killed and one woman was wounded. The victims were all from the Sunni Arab community and all were residents of Bet Darb in Wajihiya sub-district.

On 22 May, gunmen – allegedly members of militias operating under PMU – shot and killed one Sunni Arab civilian in the Falastin area, in the Asri quarter, Muqdadiya district.

On 31 July, gunmen – alleged to have been militia members operating under the PMU – riding in a civilian car shot and killed one civilian in Jurf al-Milh area, northeast of Baquba. The victim was reportedly a leader of the Khazraj tribe from Sunni Arab community.

On 13 August, militiamen operating under PMU abducted four Sunni Arab residents from Zaghniya Kabira and Zaghniya Saghira villages; the bodies of two of the victims were found later in the same area, presenting gunshot wounds.

In **Babil**, on 4 January, gunmen – alleged to have been militia members operating under PMU – shot and killed the Muezzin of the Abdallah Jubouri mosque, in Hasswa sub-district, Iskandariya district.

On 28 March, three days after an attack by an individual wearing an explosive vest in a football stadium in al-Hasswa area, skandariya sub-district (see above), gunmen – alleged by sources to be militia members operating under PMU – attacked the Alexandria Sunni Big Mosque in Alexandria city centre, killing the son of the Muezzin. On the same day, uniformed gunmen reportedly stormed a house in al-Hasswa area, Iskandariya sub-district, wounding one civilian and abducting four others. All the victims of these attacks were members of the Sunni community.

It was reported that on 1 May, one member of AAH died due to the wounds he sustained in the 25 March ISIL attack in al-Hasswa on 25 March. Unverified reports were received that after the news of his death was reported, four people were killed and three others abducted in the al-Shuhadaa and al-Intissar areas of al-Hasswa in revenge attacks by AAH. In the evening of 2 May, gunmen alleged to be members of a militia operating under PMU broke into a pharmacy in al-Shuhadaa, al-Hasswa, and killed the owner and abducted an assistant. The victims of these incidents were members of the Sunni Arab community, with most coming from the Janabi Sunni tribe.

On 9 July, one male civilian from the Sunni community was shot and wounded in Shuhadaa area of Iskandariya sub-district, north of Hilla. The man died on 11 July. It was reported that the incident was part of a campaign of retaliation carried out by militiamen operating under PMU for the suicide attack at the football stadium.

In **Anbar**, UNAMI/OHCHR received reports that between May and October 2015, members of the Sunni community from Anbar were abducted, allegedly by militias operating under PMU, after passing to the Baghdad side of Bzebiz Bridge. Some were reported to have been freed after payment of ransoms, while others were allegedly killed. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify many of these reports.

Quoting a member of Anbar Provincial Council, local media reported on 15 December 2015 that since October 2015, several individuals fleeing from the conflict in Anbar had been abducted at the militia-run Razzaza checkpoint, south of Fallujah. Other sources reported to UNAMI/OHCHR in December 2015 that up to 1,200 individuals had been abducted at that checkpoint in the previous months. UNAMI/OHCHR was able to confirm the identities of around 460 of those who were reportedly abducted at Razzaza. UNAMI/OHCHR verified 11 cases of individuals abducted at Razzaza

checkpoint, at different times in 2015 and 2016, by uniformed armed men believed to be members of PMU. As of 31 October 2016, according to sources, one of these men reportedly died while in captivity; one was being detained by ISF; while the other nine men remained unaccounted for.

Several incidents occurred in Anbar during the military operation to retake Fallujah from ISIL, which lasted from 22 May to 17 June 2016. UNAMI/OHCHR received reports alleging that at least 80 men and boys had been detained and abducted on 27 May by members of armed groups operating in support of ISF, after they fled al-Sejar, in the Abo Sdyrah area, Shyha. According to sources of information, as of 17 August 2016, those abducted remained unaccounted for.

On 29 May, an armed group reportedly operating in support of ISF killed 17 young men in Garma. One source reported that the victims had been abducted by ISIL and detained in a jail; when the armed group operating in support of ISF entered the jail, they believed that the victims were ISIL members and killed them. Another source contradicted this, and reported that the 17 victims were men and youths fleeing Garma with other civilians, but were killed by the armed group operating in support of ISF in an act of revenge against the local population for their perceived support of ISIL. UNAMI/OHCHR has been unable to determine the exact circumstances in which the victims were killed.

In early June, thousands of civilians fled from their village in Saqlawiyah, near Fallujah. Nearly all belonged to the Albo Akash clan of the al Mahamda Tribe. Eyewitnesses subsequently reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that as they were fleeing, they saw in the distance what appeared to be a line of Government forces who hailed them with loudspeakers, telling they had nothing to fear from them. However, once they reached the line, witnesses said that they saw the banners of an armed group identified as *Kata'ib Hezbollah* hidden behind the Iraqi flags. Witnesses reported that the group immediately separated approximately 1,500 men and teenage boys from the women and children. The women and children were transferred to Government-run camps for displaced people near Amiriyat al Fallujah. The males were initially taken to warehouses and then moved on successive occasions over the next four days to a number of other sites between Saqaliwah and Fallujah. Eyewitnesses subsequently interviewed by UNAMI/OHCHR stated that ill-treatment of the men began almost immediately after their capture. Men were crammed into small rooms or halls, sometimes more than 60 to a room in sweltering heat, with little or no ventilation. They were denied water and food. When they asked for water, food or air, they were abused by militia members, told that their treatment was 'revenge for Camp Speicher', and beaten with shovels, sticks and pipes. A number of witnesses attested that some who asked for water or complained about the lack of air were dragged outside and shot, strangled or severely beaten. In addition, witnesses stated that at least four men were beheaded. Others were handcuffed and beaten to death, and the bodies of at least two men were reportedly set on fire.

On 5 June, the men were separated into two groups – one consisting of 605 men and boys, and the other of around 900. The smaller group was then handed over to Government authorities (including the bodies of four men who, based on photographs taken at the time they were handed over, had their hands bound and appeared to have been beaten to death), and were transferred to join the women and children in the Government clearance centre in Amiriyat al-Fallujah. A list was produced from witnesses and family members with the names of 643 missing men and boys, as well as of 49 others believed to have been summarily killed or tortured to death while in the initial custody of *Kata'ib Hezbollah*. Tribal leaders believe that around 200 more men are unaccounted for.

On 6 June, Iraq's Prime Minister announced the establishment of a committee to investigate "any violations of the instructions on the protection of civilians" and issued "strict orders" to hold accountable those responsible for any abuse in the course of the operation in Fallujah.¹² It was specifically tasked with investigating alleged disappearances of displaced persons from the Fallujah

¹² <http://afp.omni.se/42843954-5a45-4ac7-b756-f3a913251787>, 5 June 2014 - accessed 14 June 2016.

area.¹³ The committee is composed of representatives of Anbar local government, Anbar Police, several ministries, security agencies, PMUs, and Iraq's High Commission for Human Rights. On 13 June, Iraq's Defence Minister, Khalid Al-Obeidi, stated that four military personnel were arrested after video footage showed them abusing people displaced from Fallujah. He pledged to prosecute any Iraqi Army member involved in such acts.¹⁴ An Government spokesperson stated that some fighters associated with the PMU suspected of violating human rights had been arrested and were under investigation. UNAMI/OHCHR could not determine whether any charges were brought as a result of these allegations as the Government of Iraq has not responded to requests for information.

On 12 June, Anbar Governor Suhaib Al-Rawi stated that a committee, composed of Anbar officials he had tasked with investigating alleged abuses/violations in Anbar [after the start of military operations in Fallujah] had found evidence that 49 men had been killed when they were intercepted by armed groups operating in support for the ISF, with three of those killed still unidentified; 643 men from Saqlawiya had been abducted and remained unaccounted for; and that others who had been detained by *Kata'ib Hezbollah* and subsequently released had been ill-treated/tortured. The committee confirmed that the incident occurred between 2-4 June near Albu Akash cemetery, in the Saqlawiya area, northwest of Fallujah, and al-Mazra'ah area, east of Fallujah.¹⁵

In July, one source reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that in the last week of June, PMUs released 170 to 180 people from Saqlawiya who had been abducted in early June. They were reportedly hospitalized due to the consequences of beating. Two other sources denied in July that some of these people were released at the end of June. UNAMI/OHCHR received a reply dated 5 September from Iraq's Ministry of Foreign Affairs with regard to an inquiry made on this issue, stating that 707 people from Saqlawiya were still considered as missing persons. At the end of October/beginning of November, two sources reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that none of those missing from Saqlawiya had been released up until that time.

Destruction of property and attacks targeting places of religious significance

It was reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that on 27 December 2015, in **Salah al-Din**, PMUs destroyed two houses – one reportedly used by PMUs as temporary headquarters - in Albu Handhal village, Aziz Balad area, Balad district. According to sources, the majority of the houses had been destroyed by PMUs after the village had been retaken from ISIL in December 2014.

In **Diyala** on 11 January 2016, attackers alleged by witnesses to have be militia members operating under PMU – detonated explosives against and set fire to at least six Sunni mosques in Muqdadiya district, northeast of Baquba. No associated civilian casualties were reported. On 8 April, an explosive device detonated near the al-Falah Sunni mosque, in Omraniya village, Wajihiya sub-district, northeast of Baquba, reportedly killing two civilians – the Imam of the mosque and his son – and wounding another two. The victims were from the Sunni Arab community.

On 1 March, armed men wearing military uniforms, reported to have be militia members associated with PMU, killed a civilian man and destroyed with explosives three houses in different areas of Muqdadiya city centre. The houses belonged to Sunni Arab families. In Hurriya quarter, gunmen stormed and destroyed a house and reportedly killed the adult male owner. In al-Matar quarter, gunmen reportedly removed family members from their house by force before blowing up the house; several civilians were wounded in the incident. In Dour al-Dhubbat, a third house was destroyed, with no associated casualties reported.

¹³ The committee was reportedly established by Administrative order/ S/ 12 of <http://afp.omni.se/42843954-5a45-4ac7-b756-f3a913251787>, 5 June 2014 - accessed 14 June 2016.

¹⁴ https://twitter.com/khalid_alobeidi/status/742334388625625088, 13 June 2016 - accessed 15 June 2016.

In **Ninewa**, on the evening of 14 November 2015, a Yezidi armed group associated with KSF entered two Sunni Arab villages - N'eni'a and Golat - northeast of Sinjar city, looting and destroying property. The villages have been deserted since January 2015.

On 14 January, KSF destroyed more than 20 houses belonging to Sunni Arab families in Der Um Toutha village, Wana sub-district, Tal Kaif. The destruction reportedly followed the forced displacement by KSF of the villagers to an unknown location. Sunni Arab families have reportedly not been allowed to return to the area after it was retaken by Peshmerga in February 2015.

On 3 and 4 January, attacks – alleged to have been carried out by militia members associated with PMU – targeted Sunni mosques in **Babil Governorate**. Late in the evening of 3 January, the Ammar Bin Yassir mosque in Hilla was significantly damaged by explosives. At around 12:15 on 4 January, an explosion destroyed the al-Fatah mosque in Sinjar village, west of Hilla.

On 25 March, hours after an attack by an individual wearing an explosive vest in a football stadium in al-Hasswa area, Iskandariya sub-district (see above), unidentified gunmen – alleged to be militia members – attacked the Osama Bin Zaid Sunni mosque in al-Hasswa area with explosives. The mosque had already been damaged twice by explosives and was being renovated.

In **Anbar**, local media quoting the Chair of the Anbar Provincial Council reported on 9 July that PMUs had destroyed and burned down several mosques in Fallujah. One source reported that some mosques in Fallujah were destroyed, including the Taqwa and Prophets mosques, allegedly by PMU members. A second source reported that Firdaws, Furqan, Abu Obeidiya, Nabi Younis, Mudalal and Enizi mosques were destroyed and burned down, although not all of them by PMUs (other perpetrators unknown). A third source reported that the Furqan, al-Ma'adhedy and al-Noor mosques were destroyed and burned down by PMUs. HRO could not independently verify these reports.

Shelling and Airstrikes

UNAMI/OHCHR received a number of reports alleging civilian casualties directly resulting from shelling and airstrikes – although reports concerning the latter, including the number of casualties and who may have been responsible for these airstrikes, remain largely unverified owing to limitations on access to the sites or lack of credible sources.

In **Ninewa**, on 19 November 2015, an airstrike allegedly hit a dairy processing factory in the Al Karama neighbourhood, central Mosul, killing 17 civilians and wounding 32 others. The airstrike was reportedly targeting an ISIL ammunition store in the al-Karama area.

On 11 January, an airstrike was reported to have hit a bank in the al-Zuhoor neighbourhood of Mosul. Two sources reported that the airstrike killed two civilians, while two other sources reported that three civilians were killed. Sources confirmed that six civilians were also wounded and that an unconfirmed number of ISIL members were killed. International media reported that the bank was a cash storage facility for ISIL, holding millions of dollars - a claim that UNAMI/OHCHR was unable to confirm.

On the evening of 29 January, airstrikes reportedly hit an ISIL headquarters in the Maidan neighbourhood of western Mosul, reportedly wounding six civilians, including two women. The strikes also caused significant damage to the houses surrounding the ISIL headquarters, as well as to a small church, al-Tahira.

On 26 February, an unattributed airstrike on an ISIL headquarters in the Bab al-Jadeed area of central Mosul allegedly resulted in the wounding of four civilians. Three ISIL members were reportedly killed and seven others were wounded in the airstrike.

On the morning of 7 March, unattributed airstrikes allegedly hit an apparent ISIL weapons storage facility in the al-Yabsat neighbourhood of western Mosul, and allegedly killed 21 civilians, including women and children.

On 26 March, airstrikes reportedly hit an ISIL vehicle in the al-Nour area of eastern Mosul, close to A'isha mosque. The attack allegedly killed eight civilians, including two women and two children, and wounded dozens. Three ISIL elements were also reportedly killed. The following day, a young man was shot and killed by ISIL in the location of the airstrike after being accused by an ISIL self-appointed court of providing information to ISF about the movement of the ISIL vehicle.

On 5 April, airstrikes reportedly killed a family of seven (including three women and two children) and wounded three civilians (including one child) in the al-Mohandesin neighbourhood of Mosul. The airstrike reportedly targeted a house in the same neighbourhood allegedly occupied by foreign ISIL members. On 6 April, airstrikes hit al-Hascia village, in the Haj Ali area of Al-Qayyara sub-district, Mosul district, killing 21 civilians –10 women and 11 children. The airstrikes first hit houses that ISIL reportedly used to store chlorine; the next strike hit civilian homes which people had run into to seek shelter from the attack. On 6 April, airstrikes reportedly hit a clothing factory, in the al-Shaffa neighbourhood of Mosul, which ISIL elements had been using to make uniforms for their fighters. The attack killed five members of a family – a couple and their three children – who were in their home beside the factory. During the afternoon of 19 April, an airstrike reportedly hit the al-Hadba' Apartment Complex in Mosul, killing eight civilians, including two women and a child, and wounding 19 others, including six women and five children. The airstrike reportedly targeted an ISIL compound in the neighbourhood.

On 24 May, airstrikes reportedly resulted in 15 civilian deaths in the Seventeen Tamuz and Rashidiyah areas of Mosul. The airstrikes reportedly targeted houses occupied by ISIL elements. On 25 May, an airstrike hit a house in the centre of al-Qayyarah city, al-Qayyarah sub-district, Mosul district, killing a man and his two children, and wounding his wife.

On 11 June, airstrikes reportedly struck Hai al Sakak in al-Qayyarah city, killing a family (one man, one woman, and two children). Reportedly, ISIL fighters had been residing in a house next door.

On 31 July, an airstrike hit the College of Islamic Sciences in al-Minassa Street, northern Mosul, allegedly killing three civilians, and wounding six others.

On 20 September, airstrikes hit several neighbourhoods in Mosul – al-Nabi Sheet, al-Hadba', al-Faysaliya, al-Ghabat, al-Arabi and al-Baith – allegedly killing 11 civilians (including two children and two women) and wounding 36 others. The airstrikes reportedly targeted ISIL compounds in the different neighbourhoods.

In **Kirkuk**, on 18 and 19 March, airstrikes reportedly targeted ISIL-held areas in Hawija district. Among the targets were Hawija General Hospital, the technical institute, Atiba'a street, an ISIL headquarters near Hawija Police station, as well as areas near Mahouz and Madhouriya villages. One source reported that a number of ISIL elements were killed in the airstrike that hit the hospital, while another source stated that most of the casualties were civilians. UNAMI/OHCHR received photos purporting to show the effects of the airstrike on Hawija hospital, but could not determine their authenticity or verify the type and number of casualties.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 15 February, an airstrike reportedly hit a residential home in the Khudhraniya village of Shirqat district, north of Tikrit. The incident reportedly killed five civilians (including two boys under 10 and two women) and wounded another four. According to sources of information, shortly before the strike, ISIL had attempted to abduct the son of the homeowner. An unknown number of ISIL were reportedly killed and wounded in the strike.

On 28 February, a house was reportedly hit by an airstrike in Tareq Al-Sadda area, in the city centre of Shirqat district, north of Tikrit. Seven civilians, including women and children, were allegedly killed.

On 18 April, an airstrike reportedly hit a gathering of civilians in Sidera Ulya village, on the western side of the Tigris River of Shirqat district, allegedly killing 21 civilians and wounding 18 others. The

victims were allegedly young males from the village working in transporting people and goods across the river. A bridge over the river connecting the two sides of Shirqat district was destroyed by airstrikes in mid-March 2016.

On 12 June, an airstrike hit a residential home in Jamila village, Shirqat district and reportedly killed two adult male civilians and wounded eight others, including two women and three children.

In **Anbar**, on 4 February, an airstrike struck a residential area in Heet. According to one source, 15 civilians, including women and children, were killed. According to another source, 15 civilians were killed and wounded (no breakdown killed/wounded available). A third source reported that 11 males were killed in the airstrike.

On 29 February, four civilians, including three children, were reportedly killed when mortar rounds allegedly fired by ISF hit Fallujah.

On 7 March, an airstrike reportedly hit a house in the al-Mohammadiya area in Heet, killing two men, one woman and two children. All victims were reportedly members of the same family. Local media reported that five civilians were killed in the airstrike, with no further details.

On 1 April, an airstrike on Fallujah allegedly killed four civilians, including two children and one woman.

On 8 April, airstrikes reportedly hit an ISIL target in al-Nzizah market area in the Old Fallujah neighbourhood. According to one source, the attack killed 15 civilians and wounded 35 others. On 11 April, an airstrike reportedly hit an ISIL location in Hay Nazal, Fallujah. According to one source, five children were killed.

On 19 April, shelling - allegedly by ISF - hit Fallujah and, according to one source, killed two children (aged five and six) and wounded three other people (a 12-year-old girl and her parents). Another source confirmed the incident, but could not provide information on the number and type of casualties.

On 19 May, an airstrike reportedly hit a residential area in Fallujah, killing eight civilians, including four women and three children, and wounding nine others.

Denial of access to safety

In mid-November 2015, at least 156 Sunni Arab families from three villages (al-Golat, Aeiashat, and Neainea'a) were displaced by military operations conducted by Kurdish security forces to liberate Sinjar district, Ninewa Governorate. The families were stopped by Peshmerga as they were attempting to access safe areas, approximately five kilometres east of al-Golat, between Peshmerga and ISIL front lines, in an area called Khirbet Mustafa Faris. On 11 February 2016, the families split into two groups: 40 families moved closer to the Peshmerga positions, and the rest close to villages controlled by ISIL. Information received by UNAMI/OHCHR indicates that a number of families were captured by ISIL and transferred to villages controlled by the group, or to a 'detention facility' in south Tel Afar, Ninewa Governorate. The fate of these families is unknown. According to an official from the Ministry of Peshmerga, on 23 February 2016, the 40 families that moved near the Peshmerga comprised 637 individuals - including 165 men, 205 women and 267 children. The families stayed in Khirbet Mustafa Faris in an increasingly desperate situation, with no food or water. Between 5 and 16 February, Peshmerga prevented food items from reaching the families, alleging that they were infiltrated by ISIL elements. In November 2015, a seven-year old child and one elderly woman died due to lack of medication. In December 2015, two shepherds from the group died after stepping on IEDs in a village called Sino. At least one woman, two children and three men reportedly died since the beginning of this crisis due to hypothermia. The group received threats from ISIL on 10 February to either join them or face attack. The group suffered intermittent shelling from ISIL, but with no casualties reported. At least 36 families (475 individuals) from the group reportedly arrived

in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq on 11 July while 175 men, women and children remained in the area as they were not allowed to bring their vehicles and flocks into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Situation of conflict-related IDPs and returnees in Government-controlled areas

UNAMI/OHCHR continued to receive reports of IDPs being subjected to harassment, threats, expulsions and other abuses and violations in Government-controlled areas. It also received reports that some returnees were prevented from returning voluntarily to their places of origin. UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports that civilians had been expelled from areas retaken by Government and pro-Government forces. IDPs were targeted by gunmen in Kirkuk and Salah al-Din.

In **Ninewa Governorate**, between November 2015 and January 2016, at least 80 families were forcibly relocated from Aski Mosul and Huteina villages of Wana sub-district of Tilkaif, to Garmawa IDP camp in Duhok Governorate. Some of the families were instructed by *Mukhtars* (local mayors) to leave their villages for unspecified reasons. Other families claim that they were ordered to leave their villages by the KR-I *Asayish* on account of being related to ISIL members, with *Asayish* having allegedly provided the families with transport. Camp residents claim that they were only permitted to leave Garmawa camp with written *Asayish* permission.

On the evening of 17 April, *Asayish* based in Tel Kaif District, Ninewa Governorate, ordered 26 families (317 individuals), all Sunni Arabs from Aski Mosul town, Huthema and Tal Thahab villages, to prepare to leave the areas on 18 April, allegedly for security reasons. On 18 April, the 26 families were relocated to the Garmawa IDP camp where their mobile phones were confiscated by the *Asayish* based at the camp. They were prohibited from moving outside of the camp without security clearance from the *Asayish*.

In **Kirkuk Governorate**, security forces continued to conduct mass arrests of IDPs in Kirkuk city, frequently citing lack of legal residency documents and/or suspicion of involvement in terrorism. UNAMI/OHCHR is concerned that these arrests are arbitrary in nature and may be a form of harassment, with IDPs often targeted in southern Kirkuk neighbourhoods, arrested in their homes and released on the same day or the following day. In March, UNAMI/OHCHR thus recorded three instances of mass arrests in Kirkuk following which 160 people were detained. For example, on 1 March, police conducted an operation in the Qadisiya area, in southeast Kirkuk city, arresting 96 IDPs, reportedly for not possessing legal residency documents, including 23 persons reportedly wanted on criminal charges. By 2 March, 95 individuals had been released without charge, while one person remained in custody. On 24 March, Kirkuk Police conducted a search and raid operation in the Huzairan neighbourhood, southern Kirkuk city, arresting 51 IDPs, reportedly for lack of identification documents and legal residency documents. The IDPs were held in Adala Police station and were released on the same day. On 31 March, security forces arrested 13 IDPs for lack of residency documentation in Hay al-Mu'alimeen area, Tariq Baghdad, Kirkuk city centre. They were released after a few hours.

On 15 November 2015, Kurdish Security Forces expelled 12 IDP families and residents from Dibis district, northwest Kirkuk, to the external border of the Kirkuk Governorate, instructing the families not to return. Some of the families were from villages near Dibis district that had been recently retaken and who had fled in early September 2015 due to military operations, while others had been evicted from their homes in and around Malha village. Although both the IDPs and Malha families are residents of Kirkuk Governorate, they were moved, initially outside of the Governorate's border via the Daquq checkpoint, south of Kirkuk city. Later, some were permitted to go to Nazrawa camp, in Laylan sub-district, south of Kirkuk city. On 26 November, approximately 25 to 30 other families, also residents from around Malha, were evicted from their homes. The heads of these families had been detained earlier that month, reportedly on suspicion of connections with ISIL, following a coordinated attack in Dibis district on 3 November. Upon release without charge, the families were ordered to leave the area and given the option of either leaving the governorate or relocating to the Nazrawa IDP camp. All were then loaded onto buses and forced to leave their homes and property.

Security forces reportedly told the families that they would be permitted to return after one or two months. However, when UNAMI/OHCHR visited Nazrawa camp at the end of June 2016, 15 families remained there without any information regarding whether they would be permitted to return to their homes in Dibis.

In July, UNAMI/OHCHR received information from multiple sources that for some weeks, a number of IDPs residing in Kirkuk city and surrounding areas were ordered by Assayish forces to leave Kirkuk. Some were instructed to leave in one week, while others were told they had to leave by 1 August or by the end of August. On 16 July, Assayish forces ordered IDPs living in the Sahat Ihtifalat quarter that they would have to leave within one week. They confiscated identification documents, stating the IDPs would recover them when they left through the southern Daquq checkpoint. They were reportedly told that if they did not depart in a timely manner their treatment would be more severe. On 19 July, Assayish forces reportedly notified IDPs residing in Khalobazyani, Qara Hanjeer and Laylan sub-districts that they would have to leave by 1 August, however they did not confiscate identity documents. According to sources, identification documents of IDPs were reportedly confiscated in Rahimawa, Sarchinar and Shoraw as well as Nida'a and Qadisiya neighbourhoods. The IDPs concerned reportedly come from a variety of places, including Salah al-Din, Diyala and Anbar. On 17 July, following a visit of several members of the Salah al-Din Provincial Council to Kirkuk, it was announced in the media that the Governor of Kirkuk had postponed the return operation of Salah al-Din IDPs for two months, based on a request from the Salah al-Din authorities.

On 20 August, an elderly woman reportedly died due to dehydration and malnutrition-related causes at Maktab Khalid checkpoint, southwest of Kirkuk city. She had reportedly fled from ISIL-Hawija and had spent two days waiting for security clearance at the checkpoint before her death.

On 14 April, gunmen alleged to be members of a militia operating under the PMU entered a brick factory in an industrial area south of Kirkuk city and killed an IDP from Ninewa who was staying in the factory. According to one source, the perpetrators burned the body of the victim.

In **Salah al-Din**, several incidents targeting IDPs occurred in Tuz Khurmatu. In January, several IDPs were killed and abducted in Tuz Khurmatu. On 17 January, unidentified gunmen stormed a civilian house in the Tim quarter of Tuz Khurmatu district, abducting a Sunni Turkmen IDP who was originally from another area of the district. On the same day, unidentified gunmen using civilian vehicles abducted two civilians in the Askari quarter of Tuz Khurmatu district. The victims were Sunni Arab IDPs from Sulaiman Beg sub-district. On 19 January, unidentified gunmen using a civilian car shot and killed a civilian in the Tin quarter of Tuz Khurmatu district. The victim was an IDP from the Sunni Arab community, originally from Sulaiman Beg sub-district.

On the evening of 12 March, unidentified gunmen, alleged to be militia members operating under PMU, using two civilian vehicles reportedly abducted two civilians in the Tin quarter of Tuz Khurmatu district. The two abductees were Sunni Arab IDPs from Sulaiman Beg sub-district. IDPs from Sulaiman Beg were displaced during operations around Amerli at the end of August 2014 and have since been unable to return to the militia-controlled sub-district.

IDPs in the Tuz Khurmatu district of Salah al-Din were again targeted in attacks that occurred between 20 and 29 March. On 20 March, gunmen on a motorcycle, alleged to be militia members operating under PMU, shot and wounded one civilian in the Askari quarter of Tuz Khurmatu. The victim was a Sunni Arab IDP from Sulaiman Beg sub-district. On 24 March, unidentified gunmen abducted one civilian from the Sunni Turkmen community in the Tin area of Tuz Khurmatu. On 25 March, unidentified gunmen abducted two children IDPs from the Sunni Turkmen community, in the Tin area of Tuz Khurmatu. Both were later released. On 27 March, unidentified gunmen abducted two IDPs from the Sunni Arab community, in the Askari quarter of Tuz Khurmatu. On 29 March, unidentified gunmen abducted an IDP, a Sunni Turkmen, in the Askari area of Tuz Khurmatu.

With regard to IDPs and security screening, UNAMI/OHCHR received several reports regarding IDPs who had fled through the Hamreen range from ISIL-controlled Hawija toward al-Alam, in Salah al-Din Governorate, according to which males had reportedly disappeared during security screening by PMUs. UNAMI/OHCHR interviewed IDPs who had crossed the Hamreen range between January and February 2016 and who stated that they had not seen their male relatives or received any information about them since being separated for security screening at a PMU checkpoint where initial screenings took place after the IDPs emerged from the Hamreen path. Interviewees recounted stories of men and women being separated for physical screening, checking of identification documents, and screening in the security databases. Those who were cleared were taken to Robaitha police station, in Al-Alam, where the families were to be reunited while those who were not cleared were taken to undisclosed locations.

Tensions relating to IDP returns to areas of Balad district reportedly increased once again¹⁶ on 7 February, when a committee began the process of distributing compensation in the form of *Fasl Ashayri* (blood money) to families of victims of previous ISIL and al-Qaida attacks in Yathrib sub-district and Balad district, south of Tikrit. The receipt of compensation by the victims or victims' families was a condition that had been negotiated earlier with residents of Balad and Yathrib to begin the return of a number of IDPs. UNAMI/OHCHR previously reported on similar tensions and incidents around IDP returns in the area. Despite the agreement, the deliberate destruction of private property by whom? was reported to have taken place between 7 February and mid-day on 9 February. According to a source, in the Qadisiya area of al-Bojeri village in Yathrib sub-district, 72 shops were damaged or destroyed, as well as 17 homes, and two guesthouses belonging to a tribal leader. Brigade 17 of the Iraqi Army as well as several militias reportedly controlled the area at the time. According to one source, the process of compensation distribution resumed on 10 February after an agreement was reached between local PMU leaders and the Governor of Salah al-Din on the amount of compensation to be paid.

On 14 March, members of a militia (alleged by sources to have been AAH) used explosives to detonate at least 20 houses belonging to Sunni Arab IDPs in the Aziz Balad area of Yathrib. Some residents in nearby Dhuluiya reported that they could hear the explosions clearly. The destructions began on the evening of 14 March and continued until the morning of 15 March. AAH militia has been in control of the area since it was retaken from ISIL in December 2014.

In mid-June, UNAMI/OHCHR received information that a number of IDP families had returned to their areas of origin in Yathrib sub-district. The return process began following an agreement between the government of Salah al-Din and local Shi'a tribal leaders from the Yathrib area who had lost family members as a result of attacks by ISIL and al-Qa'eda over the past six years. According to the agreement, the Sunni Arab community must pay *fasl ashayri* to the families of victims of ISIL and Al-Qa'eda attacks in the area. The compensation process has been adopted and managed by the local government of Salah al-Din. After passing a screening process, the families were permitted to proceed to their homes in Yathrib. According to UNAMI/OHCHR sources, families who have a first or second degree relative (according to Iraqi law) wanted by the Iraqi security forces were not permitted to return.

On 7 and 8 August 2016, military vehicles of the Samarra Operation Command drove around the districts of Samarra, Dujail, Balad and the sub-districts of Dhuluya, Yathrib and Ishaqi, using

¹⁶ On 1 November 2015, approximately 300 families were turned back by local militia while attempting to return to several villages in Yathrib sub-district. At the time, sources reported that the return process had failed due to a dispute over compensation. According to a source, on the initial day of compensation distribution the process was reportedly halted due to a dispute between certain clans and the committee regarding the amount of the agreed upon allocation. Reports emerged later on that same day that unidentified groups (believed to be militia members) had started to detonate the houses left behind by Sunni Arab IDPs in areas of Yathrib sub-district and Aziz Balad.

loudspeakers to warn the residents that they were not allowed to receive any IDPs from north of Salah al-Din and south of Mosul areas, threatening that they would otherwise be expelled from their areas of residence. They were also asked to report to security forces about any case of IDP family entering the area. According to sources of information, security forces informed the population that the reason behind this decision was to avoid the ISIL members from entering those areas, arguing that some ISIL militants, using fake IDs, would be able to sneak into Tikrit and al-Alam among returning IDPs.

Sources reported that on 11 August 2016, at least 60 families (most of them originally from Yathrib) had been notified by Police to leave Dhuluiya in 24 hours. According to the sources, the families were forcibly expelled from Dhuluya on 12 August. Sources added that Police informed that the families of individuals accused of collaboration with ISIL would be expelled from the area for seven years, during which their houses would be closed and nobody would be allowed to use them. The expelled families would not be allowed to rent out their houses.

On 30 August 2016, Salah al-Din Provincial Council adopted a decision purporting to expel all the families of members of ISIL from the Governorate for a period of 10 years and preventing those outside the Governorate from returning if a family member was involved with ISIL.

Hundreds of families returned to **Diyala** during the reporting period. On 23 January, 558 IDP families, mainly from the Azza and Ubaid Sunni tribes, returned to their original areas in Udhaim sub-district, northeast of Baquba. The return reportedly took place in the presence of the Secretary-General of the Badr organization Hadi al-Amiri, the Governor of Diyala, the Mayor of Udhaim sub-district, as well as security, political and tribal leaders. The return followed a complicated three-month long process of screening by security committees. A source reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that returnees found extensive damage and destruction to their properties. Since their return, local authorities have reported that they have been able to re-establish water and electricity services.

On 31 March, 354 displaced families returned to Jalawla sub-district and 365 on 4 April. To be allowed to return, they had to pass a security screening carried out by a joint committee composed of representatives of the Jalawla city council and Kurdish *Asayish* forces from the Khanaqin/Jalawla Department. Most of the returnees were from the Kurdish and Turkmen communities and originally came from the areas of Tali'a, Khadhra'a and Uroba. Lack of basic services in Jalawla has been reported as one of the main problems faced by returnees and preventing further returns.

On 16 May, more than 500 IDP families returned to their place of origin in Al-Udhaim sub-district, in Khalis District. According to sources in the area, the return process went smoothly, following security screening procedures. On the same day, several mortars struck different areas of Udhaim. Local sources believe that these were meant to target families who had gathered for the security screening process. No casualties were reported. Similar previous attacks had been reported in other retaken areas of Diyala.

On 18 May, approximately 200 IDP families returned to their areas of origin in Mansouriyat al-Jabal, in Muqdadiya district, northeast of Baquba. They returned from displacement in Baquba and Khanaqin, also following security screening. Most were from the Sunni Arab community and some from the Sunni Turkmen community.

On 22 May, 401 displaced families returned to Tali'a, Uroba and Khadhra'a areas of the city centre of Jalawla sub-district, after passing a security screening carried out by the security forces of Khanaqin and Jalawla, together with Mukhtars and the Jalawla local government. Most of the returnees were from the Arab and Kurdish communities; a few were from the Turkmen community.

On 3 July, 621 IDP families returned to their original areas in Jalawla sub-district, northeast of Baquba, after passing the security screening carried out by Asaysh and the Jalawla local government. IDPs returned to different areas of Jalawla, namely, Shuhada'a, Jamahir, Tali'a, Tali'a Thania, Uroba

and Khadhra'a. More than 90 per cent of returnees are from the Sunni Arab community and most of them were displaced to Khanaqin district.

As ISF progressively retook areas from ISIL, there were several reported incidents of returnees being killed and wounded by explosive devices left behind by ISIL.

For example, on 21 April, in **Anbar**, at least four IDPs who had returned to their homes were killed by the detonation of IEDs planted in their houses in Ramadi. On 23 April, five IDPs who had returned were killed and seven others were wounded by the detonation of an IED in their house, also in Ramadi.

On 17 May, the head of the municipality of Heet and another staff member were reportedly killed when entering the Municipality Building. According to reports, the building had been heavily booby-trapped with explosives by ISIL.

On 16 September, the detonation of an IED in a booby-trapped house reportedly killed one IDP who had returned to his home in Karma.

In **Babil**, on 23 April, the detonation of explosives planted near three houses in the al-Shuhadaa, Addaye and Intissar areas of al-Hasswa area, Iskandariya sub-district, wounded four civilians and damaged several houses. According to sources, the families targeted were hosting IDPs from Fallujah.

On 26 July, the Babil Provincial Council ordered the demolition of the homes of individuals convicted of being members of ISIL and expelled their family members from the Governorate.

Abuses committed by unidentified actors

Throughout the reporting period UNAMI/OHCHR received consistent reports of attacks and killings targeting civilians for which the perpetrators remain unidentified. In some cases, however, circumstantial evidence or unverified information strongly indicates which group may have been responsible.

Unlawful killings and abductions

Baghdad witnessed frequent unlawful killings during the reporting period.

For example, on around 24 January, three civilians from Anbar were abducted in Zafaraniyah (eastern Baghdad, Shi'a majority) and their bodies were later found in the city, reportedly mutilated – according to one source.

On 21 April, a female doctor was abducted near the clinic where she was employed, in Palestine Street (eastern Baghdad, mixed Sunni / Shi'a) and she was killed a few hours later.

On 9 September, 14 civilians were abducted in Taji (northern Baghdad, Sunni majority) by an armed group. No further information was available on this incident.

A number of targeted killings were documented in the Governorate of Kirkuk. Some of these attacks targeted Arab leaders and public figures in Kirkuk city.

On 1 December 2015, Mohammed Khalil Al-Jubouri, Head of the Arab Bloc of Kirkuk Provincial Council, and his wife were assassinated by unidentified gunmen.

On 17 May, unidentified gunmen using small arms shot and killed a local council member from the Riyadh sub-district council outside his home, in the al-Amal al-Sha'abi neighbourhood, northwest Kirkuk. The victim was from the Sunni Arab community, and had fled from Riyadh to Kirkuk City when ISIL had taken control of the area in June 2014. He had been residing in al-Amal al-Sha'abi neighbourhood since that time.

On 9 June, unidentified gunmen opened fire and wounded a local civic activist near his home, in Kirkuk city centre. The victim was a Kurdish resident of Kirkuk, well-known for his criticism of the local government. On 25 June, unidentified gunmen opened fire on the vehicle of a police officer and killed him instantly. The victim was a member of the Sunni Arab community. He had been the head of the Kirkuk Passport Department of the Ministry of Interior until he was demoted as section head of the Kirkuk Civil ID Department. On 27 June, unidentified gunmen opened fire on the vehicle of a Colonel who headed transportation at the Kirkuk Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Assayish. The victim was driving on the highway between Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah, northeast of Kirkuk city, when he was shot. He and two of his personal security guards were wounded.

UNAMI/OHCHR continued to receive reports of abductions and targeted killings in Tuz Khurmatu district, **Salah al-Din Governorate**, an ethnically mixed area composed of members of the Kurdish, Turkmen and Arab communities. Tensions have continued in the Tuz Khurmatu area since violence broke out in November 2015 between PMUs and Peshmerga, additionally involving members of the Turkmen and Kurdish communities.

On the evening of 11 February, two civilians were killed in the centre of Tuz Khurmatu, in separate attacks by unidentified gunmen. The victims were from the Kurdish and Turkmen Shi'a communities, respectively. In the early morning of 12 February, unidentified gunmen also opened fire on a vehicle carrying three employees of the Taza Electricity Station traveling to Tuz Khurmatu district, in an area south of Kirkuk, between Daquq and Tuz Khurmatu. The three employees were wounded and one died from his injuries. The three victims were from the Turkmen Shi'a community.

On 18 June, unidentified gunmen on a motorcycle reportedly shot and killed a civilian in front of his home, in the Tin quarter of Tuz Khurmatu district. The victim was a Sunni Arab IDP from another area of Tuz Khurmatu district. On 20 June, unidentified gunmen using a motorcycle attacked and wounded one civilian in the al-Askari quarter of Tuz Khurmatu district. The victim was a Sunni Arab IDP.

in **Diyala**, UNAMI/OHCHR continued to record several attacks targeting civilians, often members of the Sunni Arab community. On 15 February 2016, the death of a UNAMI national staff member who had been abducted by unidentified gunmen on 26 April 2015, was confirmed. The staff member had been serving as a Government Liaison Officer in Baquba, Diyala, at the time of his abduction. His body, initially unidentified, was found near Baquba in November 2015, bearing gunshot wounds.

On 28 April, unidentified gunmen reportedly stormed a home in eastern Baquba city, killing two civilians and wounding a third. While an ambulance was transporting the wounded victim to hospital in Baquba, unidentified gunmen reportedly stopped the vehicle and killed him. All victims were from the Sunni Arab community.

On 27 May, unidentified gunmen stormed the village of Dilemat, Buhriz sub-district, south of Baquba, reportedly entering the home of the village *Mukhtar* and killing him and his son. Moreover, five civilians were wounded in the attack, including the daughter of the *Mukhtar*. All victims were from the Dilem tribe and members of the Sunni Arab community.

On 23 June, at least nine unidentified gunmen using four-wheel drive vehicles stopped a Police convoy in a remote part of Harouniya area, between Muqdadiya and Baladruz districts, northeast of Baquba. The Police convoy was reportedly transporting detainees from Muqdadiya to Baladruz, who had been released by a decision issued by the Baquba court. After stopping the convoy, the armed group reportedly forcibly removed detainees from the vehicles and killed five of the detainees with small arms fire. According to a source, the escorting Police did not engage with the armed group or try to prevent the incident. Reportedly, none of the Police were harmed in the incident. The victims were Sunni Arab members of the Al-Waisi tribe. In relation to this event, local media reported that according to a security source in Diyala, unidentified gunmen had opened fire on a Police convoy on

the main road between Muqdadiya and Baladruz, killing only the five detainees who were being transported.

On 1 July, unidentified gunmen reportedly abducted two residents in the Bihipsa area of Wajihya sub-district, east of Baquba.

Although such cases were not frequent in the **south of Iraq**, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded some killings of members of the Sunni community and two members of the former regime in the area. On 16 March, in Abu Al-Khaseeb district, a man was killed, shot at point-blank range by unidentified gunmen. He was the head of a sub-tribe (al-Refai).

On 5 May, the body of a young Sunni man was found with his throat cut in the Shat al-Arab River, in the Abu al-Khaseeb district, in Basra.

On 29 April, unidentified gunmen travelling in a vehicle (reportedly without a number plate) shot and killed a man in the al-Ma'aqal area of central Basra. The victim was a high-ranking member of the Ba'ath party. On 27 September, another former member of the Ba'ath party was shot and killed in the al-Junaina area of central Basra.

On 4 September, the Third Investigative Court in Basra ordered the release of two members of the Sunni community from al-Zubair for lack of evidence. They had been detained since 2011 for affiliation with al-Qaida. After their release, they were abducted on their way home by unidentified gunmen. On 5 September, their bodies were found between Basra centre and al-Zubair district, bearing apparent torture marks and gunshot wounds.

Unidentified bodies

During the reporting period, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded a minimum of 505 cases of unidentified bodies, of which 402 (almost 80 percent of the total) were found in Baghdad Governorate.

In **Baghdad**, for example, on 13 January, the Police found the bodies of 11 men with gunshot wounds in Tarmiya (northern Baghdad, Sunni majority). On 31 January, the Police found the bodies of two men with gunshot wounds in Doura (southern Baghdad, Sunni majority).

On 18 June, the Police found four bodies with gunshot wounds in Sabea al-Boor (northern Baghdad, Sunni majority).

On 16 August, the Police found the body of a man with gunshot wounds in Abu Ghraib (southern Baghdad, Sunni majority).

Unidentified bodies continued to be discovered in **Kirkuk** and surrounding areas. In the reporting period, UNAMI/OHCHR received reports of 45 unidentified bodies in Kirkuk. On 14 September 2016, ISF reportedly found seven unidentified male bodies in Laylan subdistrict. The decomposed bodies were handcuffed and with their legs tied and bore gunshot wounds to the head.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 5 July, security forces found the body of a man with gunshot wounds in the head and chest in al-Dhubbat area, east of Samarra district.

While the majority of bodies recovered were those of men, bodies of women were also found. For example, on 15 January, the Police found the bodies of two women with stab wounds in Abu Dsheer (southern Baghdad, Shi'a majority). On 10 March, the Police found three female bodies with gunshot wounds in Jurf al-Nadaf (southern Baghdad, mixed).

Attacks targeting religious figures or on places of religious significance

In **Kirkuk**, on 24 January, unidentified perpetrators set fire to a Shi'a shrine in Laylan district, southeast of Kirkuk. Sources reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that Makam al-Hasan is a small shrine in Laylan visited by people from all ethnicities.

On 15 April, unidentified gunmen shot and killed a Sunni Imam while on his way to the mosque for the morning prayers in the Huzairan area, southwestern Kirkuk city.

In **Baghdad**, on 3 April, unidentified gunmen shot and killed the Sheikh Othman Al-Janabi, Imam of the Abu Bakr al-Seddiq Sunni mosque in the western Shi'a majority area of al-Amil.

In **Diyala**, on 8 April, an explosive device detonated near Al-Falah mosque in Omraniya village, Wajihya sub-district, northeast of Baquba, reportedly killing two civilians – the Imam of the mosque and his son – and wounding another two. The victims were from the Sunni Arab community.

On 7 June, unidentified gunmen using a civilian car reportedly attacked and killed one civilian near a popular restaurant on the main road between Muqdadia and Baquba. The victim was from the Sunni Arab community and was reportedly the muezzin of a mosque in Muqdadia.

In **Basra** Governorate, on 13 April, a Quran reciter was shot and killed near his house by unidentified gunmen driving in a car in Abu al-Khaseeb district. The victim was from the Sunni community.

Bombings of civilians and civilian infrastructure and property

In **Baghdad**, attacks employing IEDs by unidentified perpetrators occurred on an almost daily basis. For example, on 11 January, armed men conducted a complex attack at al-Jawhara shopping centre in the Shia-majority New Baghdad/Baghdad al-Jadida area of eastern Baghdad. The attack commenced with the detonation of a vehicle laden with explosives, followed by the detonation of vests by suicide attackers, and small arms fire. An undetermined number of hostages were taken when the armed men stormed the shopping centre. ISF ended the siege after approximately one hour. According to sources, 17 civilians (including three Iraqi Police) were killed and 20 others were wounded.

Attacks employing IEDs occurred also in **Babil** Governorate. For example, on 7 February, four Iraqi Police officers were reportedly wounded by the detonation of a roadside IED in the Sneidij village of Jurf al-Sakhr, northern Babil.

On 5 May, an explosion in the cemetery of al-Hasswa, Iskandariya sub-district, reportedly killed five individuals and wounded 12 others. The attack reportedly occurred during the funeral of one individual who had been killed by unidentified gunmen in the cemetery of al-Sahawat, northern Babil, in the evening of 4 May. Media quoting a security source reported that an explosion in a graveyard in al-Hasswa targeted mourners that were preparing to bury a relative, killing five of the mourners and wounding 14 others.

In **Diyala**, on 21 February, a senior officer from the Diyala Police Command was killed near Al-Hayat Hospital in southern Baquba city when an IED attached to his vehicle was detonated.

On 20 April, an IED detonated in a farm, in the Sunni-majority Had al-Akhdhar village, Abbara sub-district, northeast of Baquba, reportedly killing one civilian and wounding two others. The victims were Sunni Arab residents of the same area working as farmers.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 11 April, an explosive device detonated inside a home in the Mikeshifa area, north of Samarra, reportedly killing two civilians. The victims were a husband and wife who had returned home for the first time after having been displaced to Samarra.

The **Kurdistan Region of Iraq** was not spared from IED attacks. On 31 March, an attack by an individual driving a vehicle laden with explosives in front of a police station in Makhmour district, Erbil Governorate, killed three police officers and wounded five others.

Shelling

Unattributed shelling was another major cause of civilian casualties.

At times shelling seemed to target residential areas, with no apparent military objective. For example, on 2 January, shelling reportedly hit a residential area in the Sunni majority Arab Jbour

area of southern **Baghdad**, killing one civilian and wounding eight others. On 11 January, shelling hit the Sunni-majority area of Hor Rajab village, southern Baghdad, killing two civilians and wounding nine others.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 19 January, three rockets struck the Zuhor quarter, in the city centre of Tikrit, wounding four civilians.

In **Diyala**, on 22 April, seven mortars hit the predominantly Sunni Arab village of Mikhesa, in the Abu Saida sub-district of Muqdadiya, northeast of Baquba. The incident reportedly wounded one woman and two boys.

In **Anbar**, on 20 May, shelling hit al-Sejar, north of Fallujah, killing a woman and two of her children, and wounding six other children.

Tribal conflicts

Inter-tribal conflict in the **south of Iraq** has brought with it its own particular challenges regarding the protection of civilians. Tribes frequently come into conflict with one another over issues such as land use and ownership, inter- and intra-family disputes and historic inter-tribal animosities. These conflicts can result in armed confrontations between members of the tribes involved in the dispute, which can result in deaths and injuries, including of innocent bystanders.

The beginning of the reporting period coincided with an increase in the number of tribal clashes, which thus became a main topic of discussion by the Prime Minister and his Council of Ministers when they visited Basra on 11 January 2016. The Prime Minister ordered the deployment of a heavily armed special force to Basra to halt the escalating tribal clashes, with the instruction to confiscate weapons and arrest individuals identified as participating in or instigating the clashes.

Examples of these conflicts include an alleged threat by the al-Halaf tribe, on 11 January, against all members of the al-Garamasha tribe that any member of the latter would be attacked on sight. The nature of the dispute between the two tribes, which are both in the A-I Qurna district, north of Basra governorate, was not identified.

On 20 January, an armed confrontation erupted between members of the Bani Malik tribe near the district's centre, resulting in the wounding of a brother and sister who were not members of the tribe but happened to be at the location of the confrontation.

On 20 February, tribal clashes erupted between the Al-Saber and Al-Dbeis clans - both belonging to the Al-Mishakheel tribe - in Al-Gharraf district (20 km north of Thi-Qar). One person was killed and two wounded. Preliminary investigations indicated that an old family dispute was the cause of the conflict.

On 29 January, an 18 year-old man was wounded as a result of tribal clashes between the Al Halaf and Abu Sahwi tribes. The victim was from the Al-Halaf tribe and was targeted while walking through the Abu Hilwa area in Garfat Ali, al-Hartha sub district north of Basra. The fighting between the two tribes stopped after the arrival of the army and police who arrested suspects and confiscated weapons.

On 2 February, a joint force from Refai district local police and the emergency regiment from Thi-Qar police managed to control tribal clashes that erupted in Refai district (80 km north of Nassiriyah city) in the north of Thi-Qar, between the al-Ziheiriyah and al-Nassar tribes. The joint force cordoned off the area, conducted raids and search operations and arrested three men for their involvement in the clashes, which resulted from a dispute over land ownership.

On 26 March, a flyer was distributed in the centre and north of Basra containing threats against all those associated with the al-Garamahseh tribe. A source contacted by UNAMI/OHCHR stated that

the threat was connected to a series of revenge killings between the two tribes. A second source stated that the threat extended to the whole of Basra Governorate.

On 5 June, armed clashes erupted between members of the al-Sa'ad clan and the al-Saeed clan in Al-Qurna district, north of Basra. According to information received, armed tribesmen broke into five schools in the al-Jum'a quarter and used them as locations from which to shoot at armed members of the other tribe in the al-Nijeirat area. Several schools suffered significant damage as a result of the fighting, and local authorities in Al-Qurna district called upon those in charge of security in Basra to take steps to resolve the conflict. After the arrival of the army, a large number of tribesmen from both tribes were arrested by the security forces.

Mass graves

Mass graves continued to be discovered in areas retaken from ISIL control, including in Anbar, Salah al-Din and Ninewa. The Government of Iraq and the Government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq lack of capacity and resources for ensuring the protection and systematic excavation and investigation of mass-grave sites.

In most cases, basic information relating to graves and bodies is yet to be established. This includes when the bodies were buried, their identity, and the circumstances in which the people died or were killed before being buried. In many cases, the identity of perpetrators is unclear. But most graves are believed to contain the bodies of civilians and members of ISF and associated forces killed and buried by ISIL.

Media reported on 5 January 2016 that a mass grave, allegedly containing the remains of 40 individuals, reportedly civilians, was discovered by ISF in Ramadi, **Anbar** Governorate. According to the media quoting a security source, other mass graves have been identified in the area but their excavation would start only when the areas in which they are located have been fully secured. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify this report.

In the last week of January, international and local media quoted security sources stating that in Jam'iya area, central Ramadi, ISF had discovered a mass grave containing more than 40 bodies, both civilians and ISF. It was alleged that the victims were killed by ISIL in May 2015, after it took over the city. The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior confirmed the discovery to the media. According to one source, the mass grave was discovered on 23 January, and contained around 40 victims, both ISF members and civilians, including men, women and children. According to another source, the remains of around 50 individuals, all male civilians killed by ISIL, were found on the site. UNAMI/OHCHR received photos purporting to show the discovery and excavation of the gravesite, but could not verify the authenticity of the images. UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to determine the number of bodies contained in the mass grave or the status of the victims.

A source further reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that a mass grave containing 18 bodies had been discovered inside Ramadi in mid-January 2016. The victims were reportedly 13 ISF members and five civilians. They had all been killed reportedly by ISIL in mid-2015, allegedly because they were accused of apostasy.

Local media reported on 16 February 2016 that a mass grave containing 50 bodies, including children, had been found in al-Sufiya area, east of Ramadi. One source confirmed the discovery, reporting that 40 bodies were found. Another source reported that three mass graves had been discovered: two in Albu Thiyab area, north of Ramadi, and one in al-Sufiya area, east of Ramadi.

On 2 March, it was reported that a grave containing the bodies of seven Police officers was found in Soufiya area, east of Ramadi. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify this report.

On 12 April, a grave was found in the backyard of a school, in the Ramadi city centre. According to one source, it contained the remains of four ISF members.

International and local media reported that on 19 April, ISF unearthed two or three mass graves in the soccer stadium area of southern Ramadi. The graves reportedly contained 30 to 40 bodies, both of civilians and security personnel. One source reported that one grave contained the remains of 30 ISF members. Another source reported that one mass grave contained the remains of 40 individuals, including women and children. A security source reported that two mass graves were discovered in that area: one containing the remains of ISIL fighters and one containing the remains of men, women and children. HRO could not independently verify the number of the mass graves or the number of bodies they contained.

Local media reported that ISF and PMU had found a mass grave on 5 June in Saqlawiyah district, northwest of Fallujah. The grave reportedly contained the remains of approximately 400 bodies, both of civilians and ISF elements. One local source denied the existence of the mass grave.

Local media reported on 25 June that ISF had found 10 to 17 bodies – both of civilians and military personnel – in an ISIL detention facility in the Second Mu'alimeen area, northern Fallujah. According to a local Police officer quoted by one media outlet, the victims had been shot a few days earlier. Two sources confirmed that bodies were found: one source reported that an undetermined number of bodies of civilians killed by ISIL had been discovered, while another source stated that the bodies of 17 civilians were found in a location in the First Mu'alimeen area. UNAMI/OHCHR could not independently verify the number of bodies found or their status.

One source reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that on 26 June, Iraqi Police had found 15 unidentified bodies in al-Jolan area of northern Fallujah. UNAMI/OHCHR could not independently verify this report.

Quoting a member of the security committee of the Anbar Provincial Council, local media reported on 27 July that the remains of 25 individuals with gunshot wounds had been found in the *al-Mu'alimeen* (Teachers) institute building, central Fallujah. They were reportedly killed by ISIL while it was in control of the city. One source corroborated the report. Another source stated that the bodies – of people reportedly killed by ISIL were found, but could not provide figures.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 11 June, security forces found 10 bodies in a single grave, in a farm in the al-Bojely area of eastern Yathrib sub-district, in Balad district, south of Tikrit. The bodies were reportedly found based on information provided by residents of the area. Security forces were able to identify the bodies through identity cards found in grave and information provided by nearby villagers. The victims were found handcuffed and appeared to have been killed by gunfire as bullet shells were found with the bodies. The victims were reportedly men from the Sunni Arab Azza tribe, with eight reportedly coming from one local family. The victims had allegedly been abducted by ISIL between September and October 2014.

In **Ninewa**, on 7 November 2015, residents of Sheikh Ibrahim village, Muhalabiya sub-district, Mosul district, reportedly found a mass grave containing the remains of 30 persons who were reportedly members of ISF. The victims were reportedly killed by ISIL during its initial capture of the territory in 2014.

Following military operations in Sinjar in November 2015, a number of mass graves were found around Sinjar city. Approximately 10 sites containing potential mass graves were reported around Sinjar city both by security forces who participated in military operations as well as by local authorities. One grave, to the east of the city, was reported to contain the remains of approximately 78 people, predominantly elderly Yezidi women believed to have come from the Kocho village, which had been seized by ISIL in August 2014. Another grave, to the west of the city, reportedly contained the remains of approximately 46 people. It is believed that the victims were all from the

Yezidi community. On 27 November, another mass grave was reportedly found east of Sinjar city, containing an undetermined number of bodies.

Reportedly, some of the graves have been booby trapped with explosive devices. Reports continue to be received that mass graves are not being protected. The Kurdish authorities have stated that they do not have adequate resources to protect or systematically excavate the sites.

On 28 December 2015, a mass grave reportedly containing between 70 and 120 bodies of ISF elements and some civilians allegedly abducted by ISIL since June 2014 was found by local residents in Aski Mosul village, 30km northwest of Mosul.

On 14 January 2016, a grave was located in Sinjar district, north-east of Sinjar city. It is unknown how many human remains the grave contained.

Local media reported on 9 April that a mass grave containing 40 bodies had been found in Al-Qayyara sub-district, Mosul district. Reportedly, residents of the Tel al-Sabet village located the grave and believed it contained the remains of local police officers killed by ISIL in Hamam Ali sub-district. Sources contacted by UNAMI/OHCHR could not confirm the report.

Quoting an ISF official, local media reported on 21 August that ISF had found a mass grave containing the remains of 30 Ninewa police personnel in Jwa'na village, al-Qayyarah sub-district of Mosul. Reportedly, the remains bore signs of torture and gunshot wounds to the head and chest. UNAMI/OHCHR could not confirm the report.

Conclusions and recommendations

ISF and forces operating in support of the Government have made significant gains in retaking territory from ISIL. However, ISIL has left considerable destruction in its wake, including as a result of deliberately positioning its fighters in civilian property or infrastructure to ensure its destruction, deliberately destroying infrastructure prior to its departure, or leaving civilian infrastructure 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. Massive efforts will be required to ensure that IDPs will be able to return to their places of origin safely, in dignity, and in full respect for their rights, and to be able to reconstruct communities that have been shattered as a result of the conflict.

Currently, 3.6 million Iraqis remain displaced due to the conflict. With resources for humanitarian support left to breaking point, many IDPs have to rely solely on their own limited resources, or on communities where they have sought refuge.

There are grave concerns about civilians remaining in areas under the control of ISIL, particularly thousands of women, children and men from minority ethnic and religious communities who are enslaved or imprisoned by the group, people who are perceived by ISIL to reject its control or its *takfiri* beliefs (including women, professionals, community and religious leaders), as well as individuals perceived by ISIL to be associated with the Government of Iraq. Such people continue to be subjected to so-called courts established by ISIL and/or to summary punishments, including murder by various means (including stoning, decapitation, burning, drowning), amputations, beatings, sexual and gender-based violence and other forms physical abuse. There are serious concerns about the 1.6 million civilians affected by the campaign to liberate Mosul from ISIL given the latter's practices of deliberately targeting civilians attempting to leave the areas under its control and using civilians as shields either to protect its fighters or to punish civilians for their rejection of the self-proclaimed caliphate. Moreover, there are concerns that the liberation of Mosul will significantly add to the humanitarian needs and place higher demands on limited resources that will not be able to be met, particularly in light of current resource levels.

There are also ongoing concerns about civilians attempting to leave conflict areas, or remaining in areas that have been retaken by Government and pro-Government forces. There have also been reports that in areas retaken from ISIL, 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. Concerns also exist about IDPs who have sought protection in certain locations, particularly where they are exposed to violence at the hands of associated Government militia. In this regard, reports continued to be received of allegations that civilians attempting to leave ISIL controlled areas were intercepted by such militias and subjected to a range of human rights abuses, including enforced disappearances, killings, and forms of physical abuse and ill-treatment.

Ensuring appropriate accountability mechanisms, including formal and non-formal justice mechanisms, are established and properly functioning, will be an essential component of the personal, community and national reconciliation processes that will assist the return of people and communities to their places of origin and facilitate the restoration and reconstruction of those communities, and contribute to the process of peacebuilding by restoring trust between Iraq's diverse ethnic and religious communities.

In this regard, instituting an appropriate process to collect, secure and analyse information on the violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including those amounting to crimes and that have been committed in connection with the ongoing conflict, no matter when, where or by who these have been committed will be a vital initial step to ensuring both justice for the victims and survivors and accountability of the alleged perpetrators. It will be critical for the information collected, the manner in which it is secured, and any analysis of the information to be of a nature and quality that it could be confidently used in formal justice processes, including prosecution, as well as by other transitional justice mechanisms and processes. The United Nations has been strongly advocating that quasi-judicial or judicial panels be instituted in Iraq, including in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, to oversee the documentation of crimes, violations and abuses committed in connection to the ongoing armed conflict as a means of ensuring prosecution of alleged perpetrators where evidence supports such prosecutions, and also to appropriately identify the victims and survivors with a view to providing them with restorative mechanisms of compensation, medical, psycho-social and other forms of support as well as adequate, effective and prompt reparation for the harm they have suffered.

The care and protection of evidence is paramount. Mass graves, so many of which have been discovered containing the victims of violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in many areas of the country, and other forms of potentially critical information for transitional justice processes are particularly vulnerable owing to a lack of forensic capacity and resources of the Government of Iraq and the Government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Currently, according to the Government of Iraq's Legal Medical Institute, there are severe staffing and other logistic shortages. There are only 31 forensic pathologists in all of Iraq and there is a serious shortage of materials to carry out systematic investigation, excavation and preservation of identification and other evidence from mass graves. Both the Government of Iraq and the Government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq 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. Simultaneously, there is need for urgent legislative reform in relation to the mass graves law, which currently treats the issue of mass graves as an historical matter, granting competence over mass graves dating prior to 2003 to the former Ministry of Human Rights (now abolished) and does not contain appropriate judicial oversight into their systematic investigation and excavation as crimes sites.

Over time, it is essential that properly sequenced transitional justice processes and mechanisms should be established across the country to include all communities and individuals in Iraq. In addition to prosecutions, these judicial and non-judicial measures can include truth and reconciliation commissions, reparations programmes and institutional reforms.

These efforts must be matched by a willingness of the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to ensure that the national courts and tribunals have jurisdiction over the crimes committed in connection with the ongoing armed conflict. Currently, Iraqi courts and tribunals do not have jurisdiction over international crimes (i.e., war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide), and police investigators, prosecutors and judges lack capacity to effectively, promptly, thoroughly, and impartially undertake the investigation, prosecution and trial of persons alleged to have committed such crimes. Criminal legislation lacks sufficient due process guarantees and fair trial standards, which is a particular concern and needs to be addressed through comprehensive legislative, institutional and policy reforms.

To ensure that national accountability efforts are effective, the Government of Iraq needs to ensure that no “accountability gap” can exist which can enable perpetrators to evade justice. It therefore should ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court or accept the Court’s jurisdiction in relation to the current conflict under article 12(3) of the Rome Statute, and identify other ways to ensure that the international crimes committed on its territory can be tried by a competent court. This would demonstrate that the Government of Iraq is serious about ensuring the accountability of individuals who have committed international crimes.

The protection of the survivors of crimes, violations and abuses committed in the context of the ongoing armed conflict is urgently needed. Thousands of women, children and men have been subjected to severe physical and sexual and gender-based violence and gross violations and abuses of their human rights. Addressing 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 who have been subjected to physical and sexual and gender-based violence, as well as those children who have been subjected to forced removal from their families and indoctrination by ISIL. Many ethnic and religious communities have been directly affected by ISIL programme aimed at the permanent suppression, expulsion or elimination of their communities. Ways will have to be found to effectively support vulnerable groups, such as women and children, empower them within their communities, and ensure their protection beyond the immediate medical, psycho-social and other support that is required.

Rebuilding trust within communities will also be essential if a national reconciliation is to be achieved. ISIL actions have created rifts within many ethnic and religious communities, for example, creating divisions between Shi’a Shabak and Sunni Shabak, Sunni Turkomen and Shi’a Turkoman, Yezidi and Yezidi, Christians and Christians, and Arab Shi’a and 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. This will also be essential if the voices of these communities are to be heard in political and other debates, which must take place “the day after ISIL” and which may inform the future political settlement of Iraq.

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

To all parties to the conflict:

1. All parties to the ongoing non-international armed conflict must strictly comply with applicable international humanitarian law and respect international human rights law. They must take all feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effects of hostilities, and take all necessary

measures to respect, protect and meet the basic needs of the civilian population, in particular women and children.

2. All acts of violence committed against civilians in violation of applicable international humanitarian law and international human rights law must cease immediately.
3. All parties to the armed conflict and other relevant actors must refrain from, and take the necessary measures to prevent and respond to, the displacement of the civilian population, including by allowing safe passage and providing safety guarantees for humanitarian actors to reach displaced populations and other populations affected by the conflict, and to ensure durable solutions for all displaced populations.
4. All parties must ensure that civilians are protected, that they have unhindered access to medical facilities and humanitarian assistance, and that they are able to leave areas affected by violence safely and with dignity.
5. All parties must agree to and facilitate relief operations that are humanitarian and impartial in character, and to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of relief consignments, equipment and personnel. They should also respect and protect humanitarian workers and facilities.

To the Government of Iraq:

1. Ensure that all associated armed forces fighting against ISIL are operating under the Government's command and control, and that they are held accountable for their actions.
2. Ensure that all civilians displaced from their homes are admitted, without undue hindrance, to areas of safety where they can access basic humanitarian services.
3. ISF and associated forces must take steps to ensure full compliance with the principles of distinction and proportionality and the obligation to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians when carrying out military operations.
4. 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 rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Iraq and international law are fully respected.
5. Ensure that, as soon as practicably possible after liberation of areas from ISIL control, responsibility for law and order is restored to civilian control, 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.
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. Ensure the protection of mass graves is appropriately legislated, and that appropriate measures are put in place for the protection, care and excavation of such sites and to exhume and identify the mortal remains, and to preserve evidence of crimes committed; 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 death of the individuals concerned; ensure that family members of the victims and missing persons are provided with all available information and adequate and timely financial, material and other assistance.
8. Investigate effectively, promptly, thoroughly, and impartially any allegations of violations or abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and, where appropriate, prosecute those who are allegedly responsible for such acts; ensure that the findings of such investigations are made public.
9. Ensure the rights of all victims or their relatives to an effective remedy, including the right to equal and effective access to justice and adequate, effective, and prompt reparation for the harm

suffered.

10. Introduce amendments to the Iraqi Criminal Law to grant domestic courts' jurisdiction over international crimes committed in Iraq.

11. Accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; as an immediate step, accept the exercise of the Court's jurisdiction pursuant to Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute.

To the international community:

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 international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law are held accountable.

13. The international community should provide all material and other support necessary to assist the Government of Iraq address the security 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.

Annex 1: Glossary

AAH	Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq militia
BBIED	Body-borne improvised explosive device
CCCI	Central Criminal Court of Iraq
IED	Improvised explosive device
IDP	Internally displaced person
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
KR-I	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PKK	Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan/Kurdish Workers' Party
PMU	Popular Mobilization Units
SVBIED	Suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VBIED	Vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel

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