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Country Information and Guidance

Iraq: The security situation in the 'contested' areas of Iraq

22 August 2014

Preface

This document provides guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling claims made by nationals/residents of Iraq as well as country of origin information (COI) about Iraq. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum or humanitarian protection owing the general security situation and escalation of violence in the northern and central governorates.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the guidance contained with this document; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Within this instruction, links to specific guidance are those on the Home Office's internal system. Public versions of these documents are available at <https://www.gov.uk/immigration-operational-guidance/asylum-policy>.

Country Information

The COI within this document is based on source material available up until 2 July 2014 and has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the [Common EU \(European Union\) Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the European Asylum Support Office's research guidelines, [Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), dated July 2012.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve the guidance and information we provide. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this document, please email: CPI@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

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

It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy.

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1. Guidance

Updated: 22 August 2014

1.1. Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 The following guidance aims to examine whether a person who is from the 'contested areas' of Iraq would qualify for Humanitarian Protection, as set out under [paragraph 339C of the Immigration Rules](#).

1.2. Summary of issues

- 1.2.1 To consider the above claim type, decision makers need to address:
- Is the person from a contested area of Iraq?
 - If so, is there a real risk of serious harm in the contested areas, owing to the general security situation?
 - Is internal flight available?

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1.3. Consideration of issues:

Is the person from a contested area of Iraq?

- 1.3.1 For the purposes of this instruction, the contested areas of Iraq are those areas controlled by non-government armed groups, notably by the Islamic State (formerly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS)), and those territories where active internal armed conflict has occurred, or where control of territory has changed between government and non-government forces. It may also include territory that is highly likely to be contested imminently, based on an assessment of available, relevant, country facts.
- 1.3.2 At the current time the Home Office assesses the 'contested areas' of Iraq to include the governorates of Kirkuk; Diyala; Anbar; Salah al Din and Ninewa.
- 1.3.3 Although the city of Kirkuk is currently controlled by Kurdish peshmerga forces, limitations in reporting; together with the general insecurity in Kirkuk governorate and the surrounding areas, mean that at the current time Kirkuk city should also be included in the contested areas.
- 1.3.4 Baghdad, governorates in the south and the semi-autonomous

For further guidance on how to assess the general security situation in a country, decision makers are advised to see the Asylum Instruction on [Humanitarian Protection](#).

Humanitarian Protection as set out under paragraph 339C of the Immigration Rules is commonly referred to as 'subsidiary protection', and is defined under Article 15 of the [European Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 \('the Qualification Directive'\)](#)

See country information on the [Islamic State](#)

See [country information](#), including map on the control of terrain (included at paragraph 2.1.2) See also: [Latest COI](#)

Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), should not at the current time be assessed as being 'contested', although decision makers should note that the security situation throughout the country is volatile and therefore may change quickly. The latest country information must always be used.

- 1.3.5 The contested areas of Iraq should be considered as meeting the circumstances of internal armed conflict.
- 1.3.6 Based on the above, the case law of HM and others (Article 15(c)) Iraq CG [2012] UKUT 00409(IAC), 13 November 2012 ('HM2 Iraq') **should not be followed** when considering return to the governorates of Kirkuk; Diyala; Anbar; Salah al Din and Ninewa. Instead decision makers should follow the guidance laid down in this instruction.
- 1.3.7 If a person states they are from the contested areas of Iraq, this will be a material fact in their claim for protection and should be properly assessed to ensure the individual has provided a credible account that they do originate from the contested areas.
- 1.3.8 In assessing a persons account of events, decision makers should be mindful that the situation may have changed since the person was last in Iraq and therefore an applicant's account of events may not be consistent with current objective information. Due regard should be given to such discrepancies.

- 1.3.9 The Home Office assesses the 'contested areas' of Iraq to include the governorates of Kirkuk; Diyala; Anbar; Salah al Din and Ninewa.

Is there a real risk of serious harm in the contested areas, owing to the general security situation?

- 1.3.10 Before considering whether a person qualifies for Humanitarian Protection (HP), decision makers must consider whether the person qualifies for protection as a refugee.
- 1.3.11 If a claim for HP under Article 2 or 3 of the ECHR is unsuccessful, decision makers should assess whether a claim will succeed solely under Article 15c of the Qualification Directive.
- 1.3.12 Consideration as to whether a person is at real risk of serious harm owing to the general security situation, gives rise to several questions both legal and factual. These are:

See caselaw: [HM and others \(Article 15\(c\)\) Iraq CG \[2012\] UKUT 00409\(IAC\), 13 November 2012 \('HM2 Iraq'\)](#)

See Asylum Instruction: on [Considering the asylum claim and assessing credibility](#)

For further guidance see Asylum Instruction [Humanitarian Protection](#)

See: caselaw of [QD](#)

What is the legal basis for assessing risk on return to areas which the Home Office has identified as ‘contested’?

1.3.13 On assessing whether the general security situation may breach Article 15c, the caselaw of QD Iraq which held that whilst there is no need for an internal armed conflict to be ‘exceptional’ in its nature for 15c to be breached, what is required is an intensity of indiscriminate violence ‘which will self-evidently not characterise every such situation and which is great enough to meet the test set out in Elgafaji.’

Do the country facts show that there is a real risk of serious harm to civilians in the ‘contested areas’?

1.3.14 In considering whether a civilian would face a real risk of serious harm decisions makers must consider the following relevant country facts:

- **The nature of the internal armed conflict**

1.3.15 Sources consistently demonstrate that in the ‘contested areas’ of Iraq, the nature of the internal conflict has dramatically evolved since June 2014, following the launch of a major territorial offensive by the Islamic State. Whereas previously rebel groups carried out mainly terrorist related attacks, with varying frequency; now the evidence shows that in the contested areas, this violence has evolved to encompass both conventional; guerrilla and terrorist based violence. This trend looks set to continue.

1.3.16 This new offensive is focused around control of strategic urban centres, where civilians will reside. Although significant numbers have fled the violence, and will continue to do so, others – for a variety of reasons – remain in areas which are, or which are likely to be, subject to internal armed conflict between various armed actors. In such areas there is a risk of serious and individual threat to civilians.

1.3.17 In addition some reports have indicated that as part of the government’s counter-insurgency operations, air strikes (involving imprecise ‘barrel bombs’) have been used by the Iraqi armed forces in civilian areas or close to areas where civilians reside. Currently reports of civilian casualties from air strikes have been relatively low, but it remains a real risk throughout the contested areas and especially in those areas of high intensity fighting.

1.3.18 Travel by road in the contested areas is also currently very dangerous, due to road blocks; the high number of various armed groups present in contested areas (including government forces); and the use of land mines or Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Although reports of targeted road-side attacks

[\(Iraq\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2009\] EWCA Civ620, 24 June 2009 \(‘QD Iraq’\)](#) and specifically paragraph 36

See also: caselaw of [Elgafaji v. Staatssecretaris van Justitie, C-465/07, European Union: European Court of Justice, 17 February 2009 \(‘Elgafaji’\)](#)

See: [The nature of conflict](#)

Additionally refer to: [Security situation in the central and northern governorates](#)

or ambushes have been reported, currently the evidence indicates these are predominantly focused against combatants rather than civilians.

1.3.19 Nonetheless, given the tactical importance of roads and highways; the proliferation of armed groups using roads and setting up road blocks, together with the indiscriminate risk posed by IEDs and other devices, there is inevitably a real risk to those civilians who choose to travel by road through contested areas.

- **Civilian fatalities and the threat of being killed**

1.3.20 Based on current available evidence, civilian casualty levels have risen significantly over the last few years and jumped in June 2014 to over 1,500 for the month, this is highest level since 2007. These trends demonstrate a worsening security situation and indicates that as the conflict in Iraq evolves into a conventional civil war, focused on control of territory, this is likely to place civilians at greater risk.

1.3.21 At the current time however, relative to the total civilian population in the contested areas, there is limited objective evidence to indicate substantial levels of indiscriminate or random civilian fatalities, caused by direct conflict between armed protagonists; although in certain localised areas, where active fighting is occurring, the risk will be substantially higher. Additionally decision makers should note that civilian fatality data being reported (such as by the Iraqi Body Count or UN Assistance Mission for Iraq) will include data on persons who have been killed for 'targeted reasons'.

1.3.22 Nonetheless in considering more broadly insecurity in the contested areas, very high levels of new population displacement has occurred recently (over 1 million persons), with survey-based data showing that the ongoing security situation was the overwhelming factor driving displacement.

- **Human rights abuses and the rule of law in the contested areas**

1.3.23 There have been numerous reports of human rights abuses occurring in the contested areas, which have been perpetrated by various armed actors, including government forces. Evidence indicates that in some areas controlled by the Islamic State, a new 'rule of law' has been enforced which seriously breaches human rights.

1.3.24 Sources also report police stations have been destroyed and police officers have fled their posts. Although widespread civil unrest or looting has not been reported in the contested areas, it remains a likely risk. Access to justice can not be said to exist currently in the contested areas.

See [Overview](#)

Additionally refer to: [Security situation in the central and northern governorates](#)

See: [Human rights abuses committed by government forces and pro-government militia; human rights abuses in ISIS controlled areas and the rule of law in ISIS controlled/contested areas](#)

Additionally refer to: [Security situation in the central and northern governorates](#)

- **Individual risk factors**

1.3.25 Any assessment of an application for international protection must be carried out on an individual basis taking into account, the individual position and personal circumstances of the applicant, including factors such as background, gender, or age and to assess whether the applicant's personal circumstances would amount to persecution or serious harm.

See: [Human rights abuses committed by government forces and pro-government militia and human rights abuses in ISIS controlled areas.](#)

1.3.26 Limitations in reporting mean it is difficult to accurately identify individual groups at risk. Often reports are partial; or can not be independently verified. However current evidence indicates that the following groups will be at increased risk in the contested areas:

Additionally refer to: [Security situation in the central and northern governorates](#)

- religious or ethnic minority groups, including Christians;
- Shiites;
- Kurds (where they are a local minority);
- women;
- children;
- LGBT persons;
- persons affiliated to the government of Iraq (e.g. former officials or members of the Iraqi Security Forces or police);
- persons affiliated to the Kurdistan Regional Government (e.g. Peshmerga).

1.3.27 It is important however not to treat this list as exhaustive, given the wide number of armed actors present in the area; the majority of which are known to have committed human rights abuses and pursue extremist agendas.

1.3.28 It should also be noted that whilst the current violence can be characterised as sectarian in nature; with the marginalisation of Sunnis by a Shiite led government, a clear driver of violence; intra-Sunni violence has also been documented in the contested areas, resulting in fighting, general violence and targeted killings between various, fragmented, Sunni groups. Such violence may be based on local tribal affiliations or other allegiances (e.g. local political affiliations) which are difficult to understand and verify.

1.3.29 It is difficult to fully assess to what extent a Sunni, from a particular tribe or area, would be at risk of persecution/serious harm from agents of the Islamic State, if they returned to the contested areas. However given clear evidence of intra-Sunni violence, together with reports of human rights abuses by government forces against Sunnis and the ongoing generalised

violence in the region, Sunnis should also be considered at risk of serious harm in the contested areas.

- **Limitations in reporting and a lack of currency concerning country facts**

1.3.30 Obtaining relevant country facts from sources on the ground is difficult to obtain, because of limitations in reporting; a lack of independent human rights organisations in the contested areas; and the speed with which events change.

1.3.31 Reports have also indicated that most fatalities in Iraq are perpetrated by 'unknown perpetrators'; and anecdotal evidence indicates that misreporting of information regarding the security situation in Iraq is likely.

1.3.32 Limitations in objective evidence and a lack of currency will of course affect all protection decisions, but decision makers should be especially mindful that this is likely to occur when dealing with those claims from Iraq which relate to the general security situation.

1.3.33 Decision makers are reminded to refer to the very latest country information available. The COI module provides relevant links to frequently updated sources.

Does return to the contested areas of Iraq breach Article 15 of the Qualification Directive?

1.3.34 Although all cases must be considered on their individual merits, based on the current objective evidence, decision makers are advised that in the vast majority of cases, the combined individual and collective risk factors, are such that return to the contested areas of Iraq would be in breach of Article 15 of the Qualification Directive, and therefore a grant of Humanitarian Protection (HP) would be appropriate if internal relocation was not possible.

1.3.35 However it should be noted that the collective risk factors present in the contested areas, do not by themselves indicate a general intensity of indiscriminate violence, such that it breaches Article 15c of the Qualification Directive specifically. It is only when these risk factors are considered alongside the individual risk factors which inevitably would arise, is Article 15 likely to be breached.

Is internal relocation available for those from contested areas?

1.3.36 Any assessment of internal relocation must consider whether the person would be subject to persecution/serious harm if they moved to a different part of the country and secondly, whether relocation to the intended area is reasonable, based on both the general circumstances prevailing in that part of the country; and

Difficulties in identifying armed groups and intra-Sunni fighting, including fighting with tribal militias

See: Latest COI

For further guidance on how to assess internal relocation see the Asylum Instruction: Internal Relocation

the personal circumstances of the individual. Where internal relocation is either unsafe or unreasonable, a grant of refugee status or humanitarian protection would be appropriate.

1.3.37 All cases should be considered on their individual merits.

1.3.38 Decision makers should specifically consider the following points when assess if internal relocation is reasonable in Iraq:

- **Consideration of the security situation**

1.3.39 Current objective evidence indicates that those areas being contested are Kirkuk; Diyala; Anbar; Salah al Din and Ninewa. Others part of the country remain under the control of the government of Iraq or Kurdistan regional government.

1.3.40 Although the general security situation remains fragile across Iraq, evidence indicates that Baghdad; governorates in the south and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq are currently not being openly contested. As persons returned to Iraq, will arrive either at Baghdad International airport or Erbil International airport, return to the non-contested areas should not involve travel through areas identified as being contested.

1.3.41 To support a consideration of internal relocation to Baghdad, decision makers should apply the case law of HM2 Iraq which found that the evidence did not establish that the degree of indiscriminate violence characterising the conflict in Baghdad was at such a high level to breach Article 15c. Although the Home Office recognises that the security situation is volatile, at the current time there are no cogent reasons to indicate that the security situation in Baghdad has changed significantly since HM2, such as to make its conclusions unreliable.

- **Consideration of the need to acquire civil documentation**

1.3.42 The case law of MK (documents – relocation) Iraq CG [2012] UKUT 00126 (IAC) ('MK Iraq') found that a lack of documentation relating to identity in the form of the Civil Status ID, Iraqi Nationality Certificate and Public Distribution System card is not ordinarily an insuperable problem, and therefore not likely to make return to any part of Iraq unsafe or unreasonable. This was based on the country facts which demonstrated that procedures are in place to reacquire lost documentation. HM2 Iraq reinforced the position of MK Iraq, by finding that the evidence presented before the Tribunal did not warrant any departure from its conclusions.

1.3.43 Although the Home Office recognises that the country situation has changed, with recent widespread displacement both within and from the contested areas. At the current time there are no cogent reasons to indicate that internal relocation to a non-contested area would be unduly harsh owing to difficulties in

See [country information](#), including map on the control of terrain (included at paragraph 2.1.2). See also: [Annex D: Maps of major roads through northern and central Iraq](#)

See caselaw: [HM and others \(Article 15\(c\)\) Iraq CG \[2012\] UKUT 00409\(IAC\), 13 November 2012 \('HM2'\)](#) and paragraph 360

See caselaw: [MK \(documents – relocation\) Iraq CG \[2012\] UKUT 00126 \(IAC\)](#) and paragraph 88

See caselaw: [HM and others \(Article 15\(c\)\) Iraq CG \[2012\] UKUT 00409\(IAC\), 13 November 2012 \('HM2'\)](#) and paragraph 360

See also country information contained within the Home Office bulletin, '[Treatment of persons returning to Iraq, including failed asylum seekers; the situation of internally displaced persons and procedures to re-obtain documentation to access services and facilitate internal movement](#)', dated April

acquiring civil documentation.

- **Consideration of entry and residence in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq**

1.3.44 The above-mentioned case law of MK additionally found that relocation to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq was reasonable and there were no specific restrictions to either entry or residence, beyond reference to the fact that an Arab may need a sponsor, but a Kurd will not.

1.3.45 HM2 Iraq reinforced this position and noted that evidence presented to the Tribunal, and in particular the UK/Danish fact finding mission report of 2011, tended to show that no one needed a sponsor, both for residence or entry. However the Tribunal stopped short of making any findings beyond that set out in MK, on the basis that it accepted the situation was a 'trend' and not a 'fixed conclusion' and so may be subject to change.

- **Concluding findings on internal flight from the contested areas**

1.3.46 For those persons identified as originating from the contested areas, decision makers should carefully consider if return is possible to Baghdad; the governorates in the south or the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, based on the individual circumstances of the case.

1.3.47 In general return to Baghdad; the governorates in the south or the Kurdistan Region of Iraq would not be unreasonable.

2012.

See caselaw: [MK \(documents – relocation\) Iraq CG \[2012\] UKUT 00126 \(IAC\)](#) and paragraph 88

See caselaw: [HM and others \(Article 15\(c\)\) Iraq CG \[2012\] UKUT 00409\(IAC\), 13 November 2012 \('HM2'\)](#) and paragraph 360 and 348.

See also country information contained within the Home Office/Danish Immigration Service fact finding report, '[Update \(2\) on entry procedures at the Kurdistan Regional Government \(KRG\) checkpoints; residence procedures in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq \(KRI\) and arrival procedures at Erbil and Suleimaniyah airports \(for Iraqis travelling from non-KRI areas of Iraq\)](#)', March 2012

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1.4. Policy summary

- The contested areas of Iraq include: Kirkuk; Diyala; Anbar; Salah al Din and Ninewa and should be considered an area of internal armed conflict for the purposes of risk assessment.
- Decision makers should ensure that a person is able to provide a credible account that they do originate from the contested areas.
- In the vast majority of cases, the combined individual and collective risk factors, are such that return to the contested areas of Iraq would be in breach of Article 15 of the EC Qualification Directive.
- However the contested areas are not currently assessed as being a region of Iraq which breach Article 15c of the Qualification Directive specifically.
- Internal relocation remains viable as a general position, to areas outside those identified as contested, i.e. to Baghdad, governorates to the south or the Kurdistan Region of Iraq
- Where internal flight is not an option, a grant of Humanitarian Protection (HP) for those who do originate from the contested areas, would normally be appropriate.

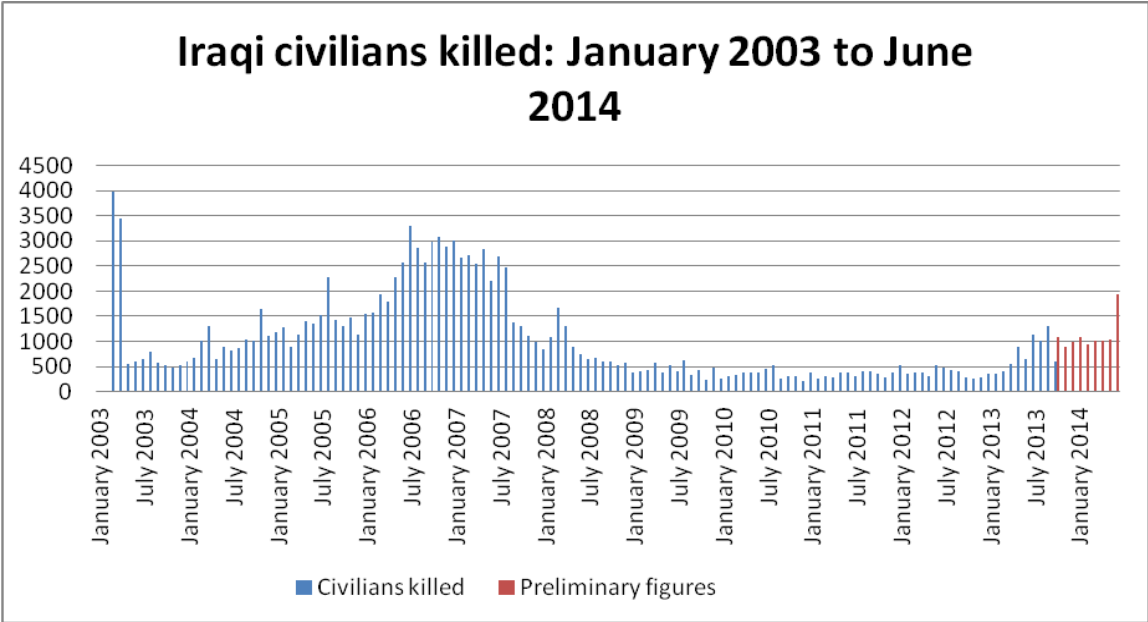
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2. Information

Updated: 2 July 2014

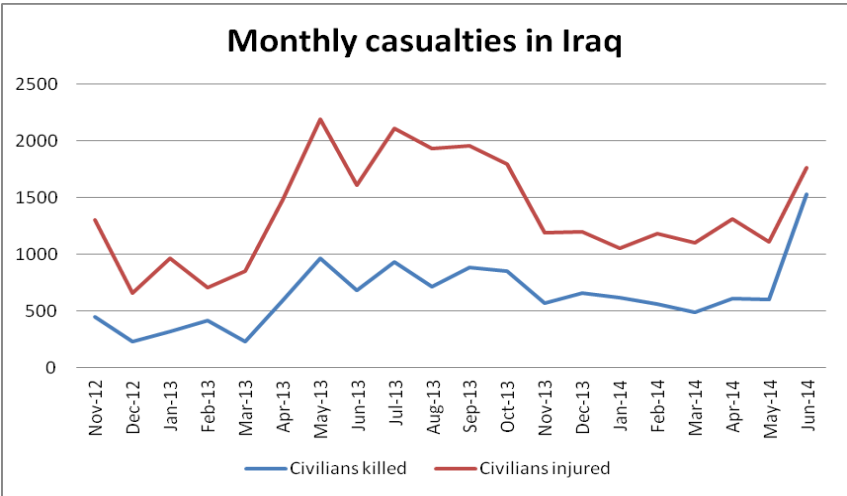
2.1. Overview

2.1.1 The [Iraq Body Count database](#) shows fatality trends in Iraq since the start of the conflict in 2003:



1

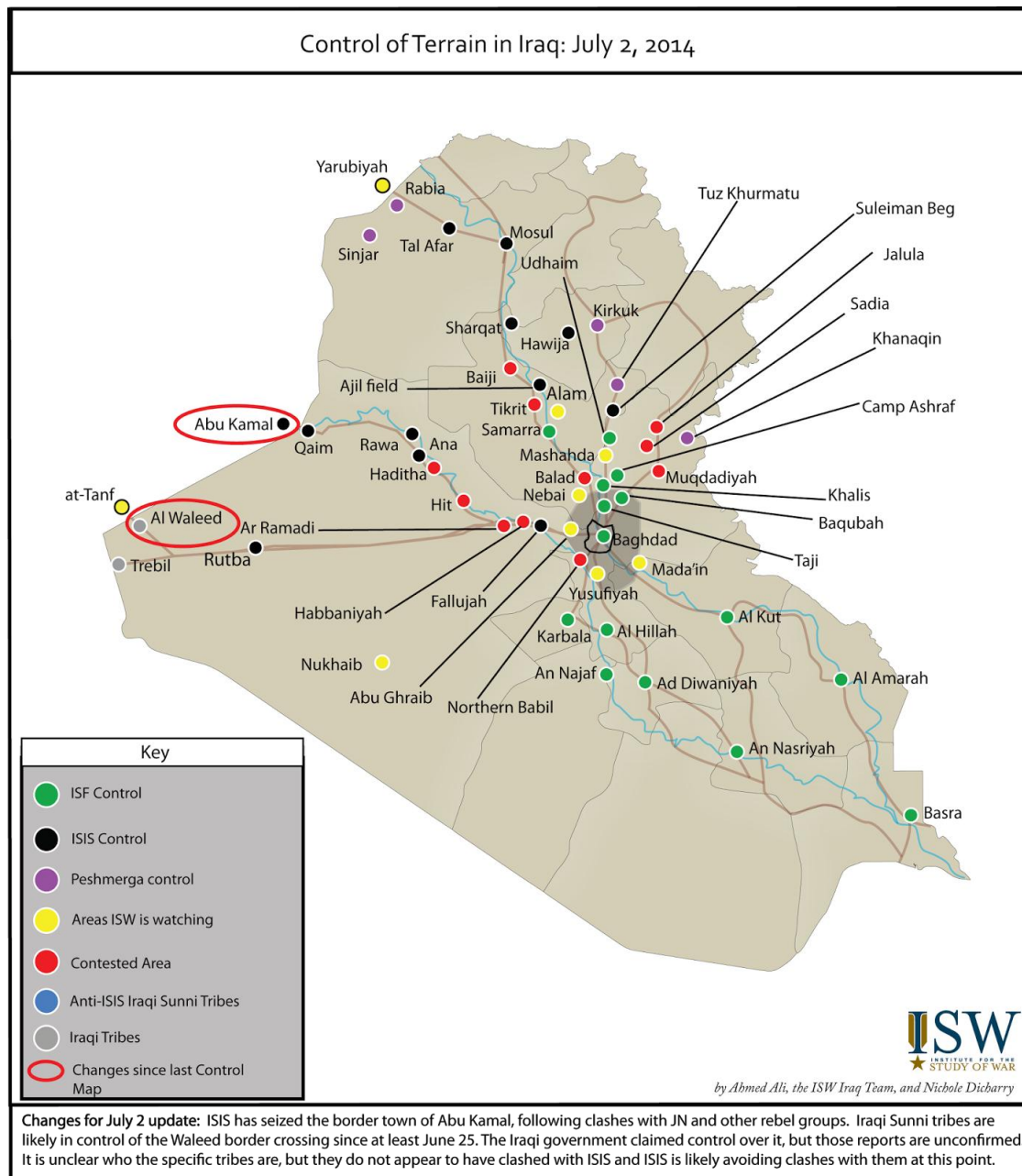
2.1.2 The following charts shows fatality trends over recent years, based on data from the [UN Assistance Mission for Iraq \(UNAMI\)](#). The figures do not include fatalities or casualties resulting from Iraqi Army’s operations in Anbar governorate, which are reported on separately by the Health Directorate in Anbar:



2

¹ Iraq Body Count, database up to and include June 2014, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/> accessed: 6 August 2014

2.1.3 The Institute for the Study of War, provided the following snapshot showing control of terrain in Iraq, as of 2 July 2014. For access to the latest map refer to the source directly:

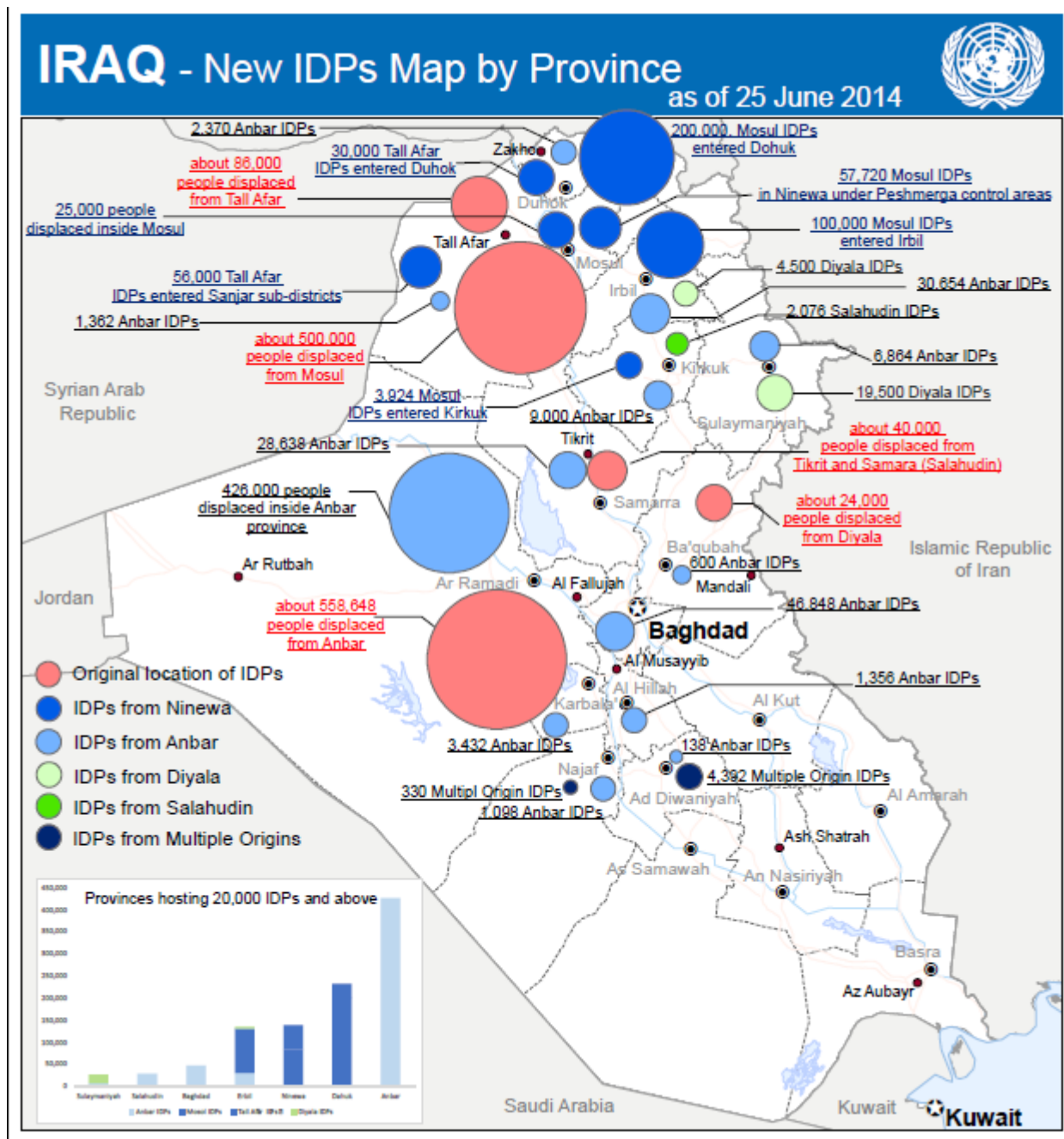


3

2.1.4 The following map shows new population displacement across Iraq as of 25 June 2014 (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs):

² UNAMI, 'Civilian casualties', updated monthly up to an including figures for 1 July 2014
http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=159&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 6 August 2014

³ Institute for the Study of War, 'Control of Terrain in Iraq', 2 July 2014,
<http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/control-terrain-iraq-july-2-2014>, date accessed: 3 July 2014



4

2.1.5 Commenting on the drivers of displacement, a report from the REACH initiative⁵, based on survey data collected between 21 and 26 June from IDPs seeking to enter Dohuk and Sulaymaniah governorates in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), found that 97% of those interviewed reported the ongoing conflict in Iraq as the cause of their displacement to

⁴ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Iraq: New IDPs map by province', as of 25 June 2014, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Iraq%20New%20IDPs%20Map%2025%20June%20v1.1.pdf>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁵ 'REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organisations, ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives, and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH was created in 2010 to facilitate the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts.', REACH, 'About REACH', <http://www.reach-initiative.org/reach/reach-overview>

KRI.⁶ To access the study see: [‘REACH, ‘Entry Point Monitoring: Kurdish Region of Iraq’, Data collected: 21-26 June 2014, 26 June 2014](#)

2.1.6 For further historical background on population displacement and reports of ‘ethnic cleansing’ during periods of earlier civil unrest, see: [COI Service bulletin, Security situation, August 2013](#) and section 8.

Latest sources of COI

2.1.7 For the latest country information on the situation in Iraq decision makers should refer to the followings sources or contact Country Policy and Information Team (CPIT):

- [Institute for the Study of War](#)
- [Long War Journal, including the Google map of ‘Iraqi and Syrian Towns and Cities seized by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham and its allies’, updated 30 June 2014](#)
- [Musing on Iraq, a blog by Joel Wing](#)
- [BBC News, Middle East](#)
- [Al Jazeera, Middle East](#)

2.1.8 Additionally decision makers are recommended to refer to the current COI library resources available on Iraq, these include:

- [COI Service bulletin, Security situation, August 2013](#)
- [COI Service report, Iraq, August 2011](#)

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⁶ Reach, ‘Entry Point Monitoring, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Data collected: 21-26 June 2014, http://www.reach-initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/REACH_KRI_EntryPointMonitoring_29062014.pdf, date accessed: 31 July 2014

2.2. Security situation in central and northern governorates of Iraq

Ninewah

Security situation as at June 2014

2.2.1 The Institute for the Study of War, Control of Territory report, dated 2 July 2014, listed the cities of Mosul and Tal Afar as under ISIS control.⁷ The following table details fatality and displacement figures for Ninewah in June (refer to the source footnoted for further details):

Population	3.2 million⁸
Civilians killed	470 killed in June. ⁹ Based on Iraq Body Count (IBC) data between January 2003 and October 2013, the average number of civilians killed in Ninewa Governorate per month was 94.125 ^{10 11}
Civilians injured	327 injured in June ¹²
Number of persons displaced	500,000 people displaced from Mosul as of 25 June 2014 86,000 people displaced from Tall Afar as of 25 June 2014 ¹³

2.2.2 The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS)¹⁴, in their humanitarian report dated 2 July 2014 ('ACAPS Humanitarian Report July 2014') noted that 'high levels' of conflict had

⁷ Institute for the Study of War, 'Control of Terrain in Iraq', 2 July 2014, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/control-terrain-iraq-july-2-2014>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁸ Figure from Central Statistical Organization – Republic of Iraq, 2009, <http://cosit.gov.iq/en/population-manpower-statistics/life>, cited in IOM, Iraq Mission, 'Governorate Profile: Ninewa', April 2014, <http://iomiraq.net/reports/ninewa-governorate-profile-0>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

⁹ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 'UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded', 1 July 2014, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁰ Iraq Body Count database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 06 August 2014

¹¹ Whilst UNAMI and IBC both record civilian fatality data, the methodology applied will vary and should be considered in any like-for-like comparison. For further details refer direct to the sources.

¹² UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 'UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded', 1 July 2014, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹³ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Iraq: New IDPs map by province', as of 25 June 2014, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Iraq%20New%20IDPs%20Map%2025%20June%20v1.1.pdf>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

¹⁴ The ACAPS is an initiative of a consortium of three NGOs (HelpAge International, Merlin and Norwegian Refugee Council created in December 2009 with the aim of supporting the humanitarian community with needs

been reported in Ninevah (Mosul).¹⁵ The same source, citing an IOM source, noted that in Ninevah, there was no access to Hamam Al Alil and Qayara in Al Hamdaniyah, Hatra and Al Ba'ak districts. The source also noted that the key routes around Mosul city and Tel Afar were controlled by armed groups and identified as one of a number of roads connecting affected cities, which were (occasionally) closed due to roadblocks and military operations.¹⁶ See also: [Security between urban areas \(by road\)](#)

2.2.3 A report produced by the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR), obtained and translated by the British Embassy based on a visit to Mosul conducted by members of the HCHR in June 2014 (after the fall of Mosul to ISIS), provided information from sources about security in Mosul. The report noted that:

'View points were conflicting about the security situation in Mosul; where some have considered the situation as unsafe and asked for help from the government while others thought it was quite safe and they feel that it is a better situation when all of the concrete walls were taken away and opening the side roads connecting the neighborhoods, but on the other hand they were anxious and worried about their future with ISIL being all over Mosul. ... Some of the contacts said that: ... People started fleeing late at night on foot heading towards Kurdistan. They have been kept on the borders for long hours[;] ... Vehicles of police and army were left burning in the streets in addition to burning some governmental establishments (like the Directorate of Iraqi ID, the Directorate of Education and the building of Mosul Governorate).

'... The stance of the tribes was at variance too, where some of them stayed home while carrying guns to protect their families and belongings, because they are wanted by ISIL. Some of the tribe- a very small number of them- have joined ISIL because they were suffering from marginalizing previously according to them! ... People of Mosul were appreciative of Sistani's Fatwa which called for jihad and defending Iraq; while others were worried that ISIL would use this Fatwa for their own benefit through the media.'¹⁷

2.2.4 The Institute for the Study of War, provided a chronology of events covering ISIS' attack on the city of Mosul, which began on 5 June 2014. The source indicated that this began with shelling in az-Zuhur (district) IVO in Eastern Mosul; involved clashes the following day, between ISF and ISIS in both east and west Mosul city and included on the same day (6th June), two suicide car bomb attacks against a mosque in the village of Muqtadiyah, east of Mosul city (the attack killed 5 and wounded 43). By 9 June 2014, the source reported that ISIS had seized control of several western neighbourhoods in the city, including 17 Tammuz and ar-Rabi; shutting down the Mosul General hospital and

assessments, see:

http://www.acaps.org/resourcecats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246

¹⁵ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014,

http://www.acaps.org/resourcecats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

¹⁶ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.5,

http://www.acaps.org/resourcecats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

¹⁷ IHCHR, 'Crisis Cell report about Nineveh-Mosul during June 2014', 18 June 2014 (Hardcopy only), p.2

seizing control of Mosul airport; the regional army HQ and several police stations and private banks.¹⁸

See also: [Annex B: Map of Mosul](#).

- 2.2.5 A BBC report dated 2 July 2014, claimed that in Mosul, ISIS had asserted itself as the main authority, as indicated from the "city charter" issued by the group, which suggested an intention to turn Mosul into Iraq's version of the city of Raqqa, its de facto capital in Syria.¹⁹ See also: [Human rights abuses in ISIS controlled areas](#)
- 2.2.6 The above-referenced IHCHR report, dated 18 June 2014, also noted that in Tala'afar, 200,000 persons had fled, and that 'there are injured people, martyrs, chaos and the fighting is still going on. ... The city witnesses big military operations resulted in demolishing the governmental establishment and the privet buildings.'²⁰ By contrast however, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, listed the number of persons displaced from Tall Afar to be significantly lower, at around 86,000.²¹
- 2.2.7 Ninewa is home to a significant population of Iraqi minority groups, such as Turkomen, Shabak, Christians, and Yazidis (IOM, Ninewah Governorate Profile, April 2014)²². In considering objective country information relating to the treatment of minority groups in the contested areas, see: [Human rights abuses in ISIS controlled areas](#)
- 2.2.8 See also: [Annex C: Ethno-religious and tribal groups](#). Additionally refer to the [COI Service bulletin, Security situation, August 2013](#) and section 10 on non-state protection, which includes information on tribal and political militias, and the risks to religious and ethnic minorities.

Civilian fatality levels in Ninewah from 2003 to October 2013

- 2.2.9 The follow table, based on data obtained from the Iraq Body Count, shows fatality trends in Ninewah up to an including October 2013 (the latest available data)²³:

¹⁸ Institute for the Study of War, 'Recent chronology of the fall of Mosul', 10 June 2014, <http://iswiraq.blogspot.co.uk/2014/06/recent-chronology-of-fall-of-mosul.html#!/2014/06/recent-chronology-of-fall-of-mosul.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

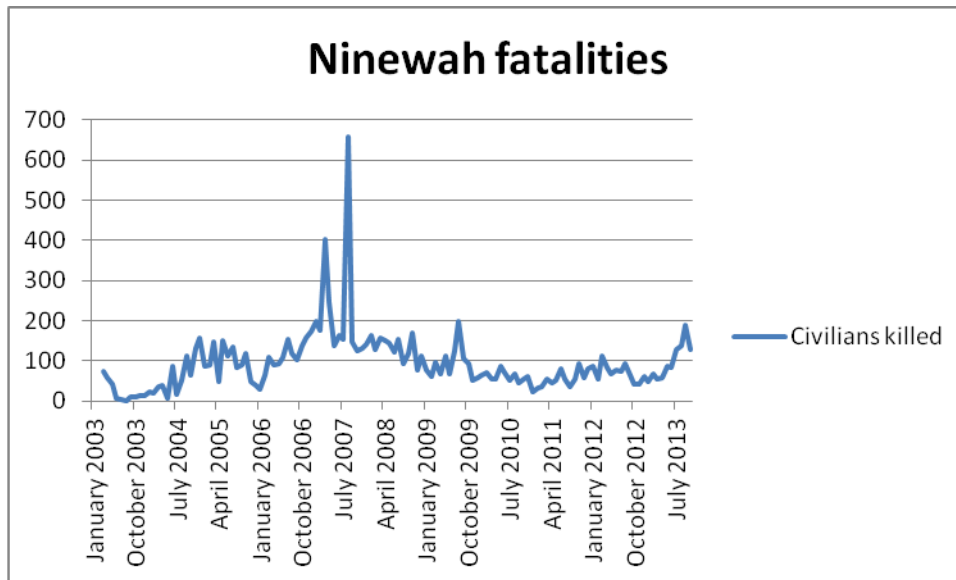
¹⁹ BBC, 'Iraq crisis: Key players in Sunni rebellion', 1 July 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28053496>, date accessed: 7 July 2014

²⁰ IHCHR, Crisis Cell report about Nineveh-Mosul during June 2014, 18 June 2014 (Hardcopy only), p.5

²¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Iraq: New IDPs map by province', as of 25 June 2014, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Iraq%20New%20IDPs%20Map%2025%20June%20v1.1.pdf>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

²² IOM, Ninewah Governorate Profile, April 2014, <http://iomiraq.net/reports/ninewa-governorate-profile-0>, date accessed: 11 August 2014

²³ Iraq Body Count, Database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 11 August 2014



Governorate background

2.2.10 For general background information on Ninewah see²⁴:

- UN Joint Analysis Unit (UNJAU), [‘Governorate Profile: Ninewah’, 2013](#)
- IOM, Iraq Mission, [‘Governorate Profile: Ninewa’, April 2014](#)

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²⁴ Some information included in the the governorate profiles provided by UNJAU and IOM may be out of date, caution should be exercised when using this material.

Salah al Din

Situation as at June 2014

2.2.11 The Institute for the Study of War, Control of Territory Report, dated 2 July 2014, listed Tikrit, Balad and Baiji as currently contested areas. The towns of Suleiman Beg and Sharqat were designated as under ISIS control.²⁵ The following figures were provided by sources in June on fatalities and displacement from Salah al Din during the month of June.

Population	1.3 million ²⁶
Civilians killed	365 civilians killed in June. ²⁷ Based on IBC data, between January 2003 and October 2013, the average number of civilians killed in Salah al Din governorate per month was 63.97 ^{28 29}
Civilians injured	323 civilians injured in June ³⁰
Number of persons displaced	About 40,000 people displaced from Tikrit and Samara (Salahudin) The region also hosted approximately 28,638 IDPs from Anbar. ³¹

2.2.12 The ACAPS Humanitarian Report July 2014³² noted that 'high' levels of conflict had been reported in Salah al Din. The same source, citing IOM, noted with regard to humanitarian access, that in Salah al Din there was 'limited access' in the districts of Al Shirqat, Baiji, and Balad and no access to locations in Samarra, Tooz and Al Fares

²⁵ Institute for the Study of War, 'Control of Terrain in Iraq', 2 July 2014, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/control-terrain-iraq-july-2-2014>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

²⁶ Figures cited in the UN Joint Analysis Unit, 'Governorate Profile: Salah al Din', 2013, <http://www.jauiraq.org/documents/468/GP-Salah%20Al-Din%202013.pdf>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

²⁷ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 'UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded', 1 July 2014, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

²⁸ Iraq Body Count, Database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 11 August 2014

²⁹ Whilst UNAMI and IBC both record civilian fatality data, the methodology applied will vary and should be considered in any like-for-like comparison. For further details refer direct to the sources.

³⁰ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 'UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded', 1 July 2014, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

³¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Iraq: New IDPs map by province', as of 25 June 2014, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Iraq%20New%20IDPs%20Map%2025%20June%20v1.1.pdf>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

³² Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.1 http://www.acaps.org/resourcescats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

districts. The source also noted that the main routes into Salah al Din, together with the Baghdad-Samarra-Tikrit-Beji-Haditha route, were identified as one of a number of roads connecting affected cities, which were (occasionally) closed due to roadblocks and military operations.³³ An earlier BBC report, dated 28 June 2014, citing an army spokesperson interviewed by Agence France-Presse, claimed that Iraqi forces were now in control of a 'key road from Baghdad to Samarra'.³⁴ The source did not indicate if civilians were, at the time, using this road. See also: [Security between urban areas \(by road\)](#)

2.2.13 An Institute for the Study of War, Situation report, dated 30 June 2014, reported that Iraqi Army Aviation had attacked the neighbourhoods of Risala, Asri and Tamim in Baiji. According to the source, the incident resulted in six fatalities and wounded 10, including women and children. The source did not indicate whether those killed were combatants.³⁵ The same source also reported that in the city of Tikrit, clashes continued between ISIS and ISF, near local government buildings and around the military camp, Camp Speicher.³⁶ Earlier, the BBC reported that on 24 June a major offensive took place on Tikrit, involving thousands of troops, tanks and air support. A resident interviewed by the BBC explained that, at the time of interview, the fighting was still ongoing in the city, in both northern and southern districts. However most civilians were 'scared of being stuck in the middle of all the fighting' and so had fled for Mosul or Kirkuk. The resident however claimed that five families in his street remained in Tikrit.³⁷

Civilian fatality levels from 2003 to 2014

2.2.14 The follow table, based on data obtained from the Iraq Body Count, shows fatality trends in Salah al Din up to an including October 2013 (the latest available data)³⁸:

³³ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.5,

http://www.acaps.org/resourcescats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

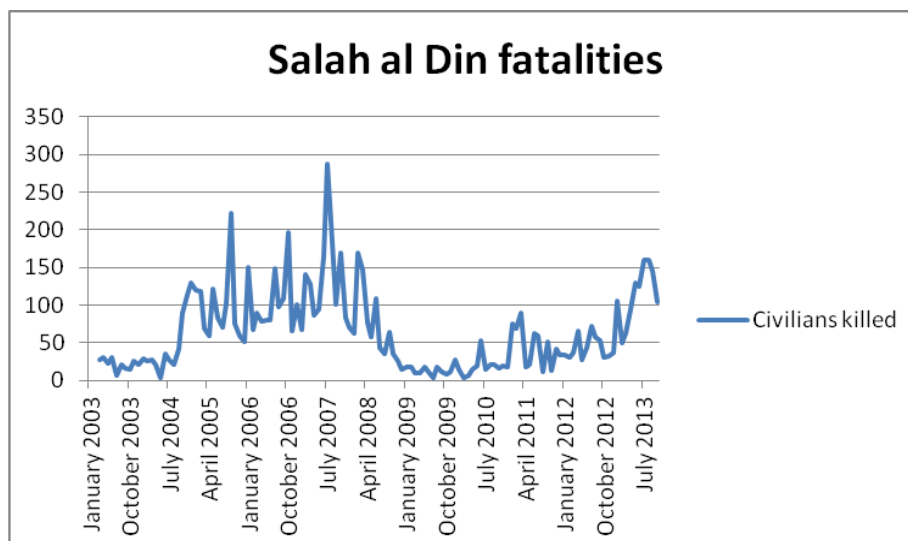
³⁴ BBC, 'Iraq army 'routs Isis rebels' in offensive on Tikrit', 28 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28069800>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

³⁵ Institute for the Study of War, 'Iraq Situation Report: 30 June 2014', <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iraq-situation-report-june-30-2014>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

³⁶ Institute for the Study of War, 'Iraq Situation Report: 30 June 2014', <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iraq-situation-report-june-30-2014>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

³⁷ BBC, 'Iraq army 'routs Isis rebels' in offensive on Tikrit', 28 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28069800>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

³⁸ Iraq Body Count, Database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 11 August 2014



Governorate background

2.2.15 For background information on Salah Al Din see:

- UN Joint Analysis Unit, [‘Governorate Profile: Salah al Din’, 2013](#)

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Anbar

Situation as of June 2014

2.2.16 The Institute for the Study of War, Control of Territory Report, dated 2 July 2014, listed the majority of the urban centres in Anbar governorate as either ISIS controlled or contested. Notably ISIS remained in control of the city of the Fallujah³⁹, which fell to ISIS back in January 2014.⁴⁰

2.2.17 The following figures were provided by sources in June on fatalities and displacement from Anbar during the month of June.

Population	1.5 million ⁴¹
Civilians killed	244 civilians killed in June; 91 killed in Ramadi; 124 killed in Fallujah and 29 killed in Al-Qaim. ⁴² Based on IBC

³⁹ Institute for the Study of War, ‘Control of Terrain in Iraq’, 2 July 2014, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/control-terrain-iraq-july-2-2014>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch, ‘Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital’, 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁴¹ Figure from Central Statistical Organization – Republic of Iraq, 2009, <http://cosit.gov.iq/en/population-manpower-statistics/life>, cited in IOM, Iraq Mission, ‘Governorate Profile: Anbar’, April 2014, <http://iomiraq.net/reports/anbar-governorate-profile-0>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

⁴² UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), ‘UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded’, 1 July 2014, data provided to UNAMI from the Health Directorate of Anbar, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

	data between January 2003 and October 2013, the average number of civilians killed in Anbar governorate per month was 79.5 ⁴³ ⁴⁴
Civilians injured	588 civilians injured in June; 268 in Ramadi; 244 in Fallujah and 96 in Al-Qaim. ⁴⁵
Number of persons displaced	About 558,648 people displaced from Anbar ⁴⁶

2.2.18 The ACAPS Humanitarian Report July 2014, did not highlight Anbar governorate as an area of 'high' conflict⁴⁷, but noted that major clashes had taken place in Fallujah, between ISF and ISIS forces, despite the high civilian presence in the area. The source further observed that the evacuation of civilians from the city of Fallujah remained a humanitarian intervention priority.⁴⁸ The same source, citing IOM, noted with regard to humanitarian access, that Fallujah city was especially hard to reach, due to 'high levels of conflict'; whilst in western Anbar districts, access was also difficult due to a 'high risk of security incidents'.⁴⁹ See also: [Security between urban areas \(by road\)](#)

2.2.19 A BBC article, dated 1 July 2014, observed: '[I]n Falluja[h], Isis has not issued a similar charter and has been more tolerant of practices it deems un-Islamic, illustrating that it still does not exercise full control over the city and has to share power with a military council composed of a variety of insurgent groups in the wider area, backed by tribal support.'⁵⁰

Eye-witness accounts from Fallujah

2.2.20 In Fallujah city, six eye witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch (HRW), in a report dated 27 May 2014, gave credible accounts that government forces had repeatedly launched mortar and artillery attacks on Fallujah hospital, whilst an Iraqi government

⁴³ Iraq Body Count, Database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 11 August 2014

⁴⁴ Whilst UNAMI and IBC both record civilian fatality data, the methodology applied will vary and should be considered in any like-for-like comparison. For further details refer direct to the sources.

⁴⁵ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 'UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded', 1 July 2014, data provided to UNAMI from the Health Directorate of Anbar, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁴⁶ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Iraq: New IDPs map by province', as of 25 June 2014, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Iraq%20New%20IDPs%20Map%2025%20June%20v1.1.pdf>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁴⁷ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.1

http://www.acaps.org/resourcescats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁴⁸ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.1-2

http://www.acaps.org/resourcescats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁴⁹ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.5

http://www.acaps.org/resourcescats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁵⁰ BBC, 'Iraq crisis: Key players in Sunni rebellion', 1 July 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28053496>, date accessed: 7 July 2014

security officer based in Anbar, who spoke to Human Rights Watch on condition of anonymity, said government forces had targeted the hospital with mortars and artillery on 16 separate occasions. The article continued:

‘... [T]hree hospital employees said mortar shells and projectiles had at various times struck the emergency room, the intensive care unit, the central air conditioning unit, a trailer that housed Bangladeshi hospital staff, and other parts of the hospital. The attacks injured four Bangladeshi workers, three Iraqi doctors, and an unknown number of patients, they said. ... Such accounts of repeated strikes over four months, corroborated by photographs of apparent damage to the hospital, strongly indicate the hospital has been targeted, Human Rights Watch said.

‘Two witnesses to the hospital attacks, one of them a hospital employee, said that non-ISIS anti-government fighters were guarding the hospital and that wounded fighters were receiving treatment there. The Anbar-based government security official said that, according to information he received through his work and from hospital staff, ISIS has partly taken over the hospital, using the second floor to treat wounded fighters and administrative offices to detain high-level local officials.’⁵¹

2.2.21 In a written response HRW received from the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, dated 15 May 2014, asking for information about the reported attacks on Fallujah General hospital, General Fliih, head of Anbar’s Operations Command responded, [and] denied that the military had targeted the hospital.⁵²

2.2.22 The HRW report also noted that in Fallujah city residents and witnesses had described ‘indiscriminate mortar and rocket attacks that have killed civilians and damaged or destroyed homes, at least two mosques, and one school that were not being used for military purposes.’ According to HRW, the government of Iraq had also hindered civilians from leaving the area, and had restricted humanitarian aid from reaching civilians inside the city.⁵³ The source later explained:

‘The government has carried out indiscriminate attacks in and around Fallujah since the fighting began in January [2014], wounding and killing civilians, residents said. Residents said mortar shells and other munitions have hit residential areas where no fighting was taking place, damaging or destroying shops, homes, mosques, and at least one school. Among the hardest-hit neighborhoods are Hay al-Risala, Hay al-Dhubat, Hay al-Shorta, and Hay al-Shohadaa. ... Human Rights Watch interviewed two people who were injured in attacks on Hay al-Risala, a residential neighborhood next to the Euphrates. Shrapnel from a mortar or rocket on a market hit a nine-year-old girl in the head on or around April 30 while she was out to buy flour. The girl’s mother said she saw the attack from the family home, next door: ... [“]I saw her clothes get burned. Many people got injured that day. It was a busy day and many people were out. The owner of the shop and his son were badly hurt. It was just one rocket, and hit directly inside the market right as [she] was about to enter.[”]’⁵⁴

⁵¹ Human Rights Watch, ‘Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital’, 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁵² Human Rights Watch, ‘Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital’, 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

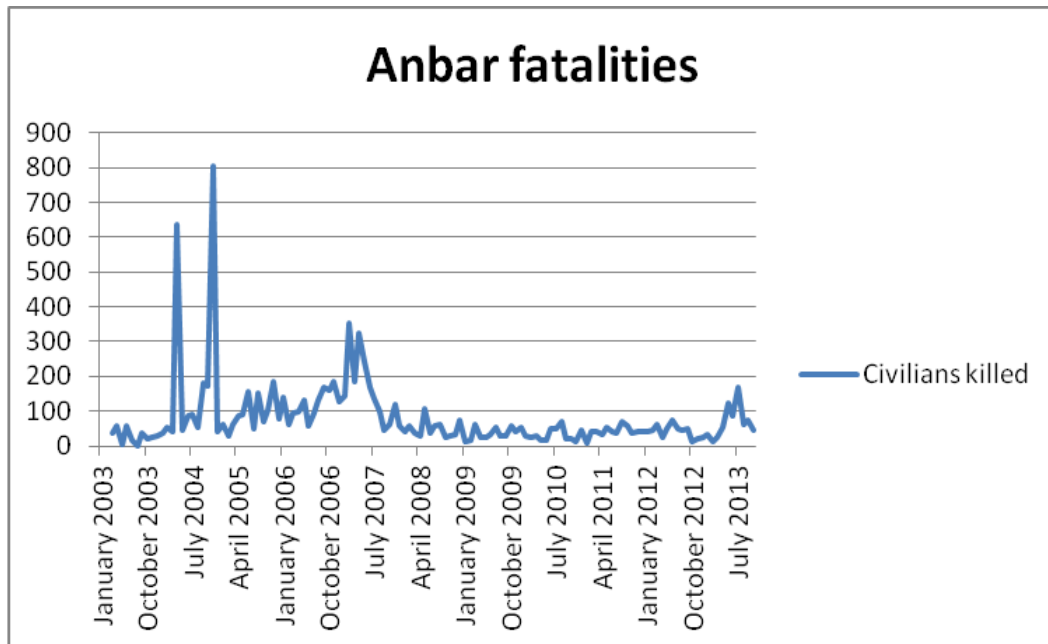
⁵³ Human Rights Watch, ‘Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital’, 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch, ‘Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital’, 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

2.2.23 For additional first hand accounts documented by HRW, refer direct to the source.⁵⁵

Civilian fatality levels from 2003 to 2014

2.2.24 The follow table, based on data obtained from the Iraq Body Count, shows fatality trends in Anbar up to and including October 2013 (the latest available data)⁵⁶:



Governorate background

2.2.25 For background information on Anbar see:

- UN Joint Analysis Unit, '[Governorate Profile: Anbar](#)', 2013
- IOM, Iraq Mission, '[Governorate Profile: Anbar](#)', April 2014

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⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital', 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁵⁶ Iraq Body Count, Database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 11 August 2014

Kirkuk/Tameen

Situation as of June 2014

2.2.26 The Institute for the Study of War, Control of Territory Report, dated 2 July 2014, listed Kirkuk city as now under the control of the Kurdish Peshmerga forces. The source noted that areas to the south, notably the city of Hawija, were under the control of ISIS.⁵⁷ The following figures were provided by sources in June on fatalities and displacement from Kirkuk during the month of June.

Population	1.3 million ⁵⁸
Civilians killed	58 civilians killed in June ⁵⁹ Based on IBC data between January 2003 and October 2013, the average number of civilians killed in Kirkuk/Tameen governorate per month was 33.71 ⁶⁰
Civilians injured	83 civilians injured in June ⁶²
Number of persons displaced	Not known ⁶³

2.2.27 The ACAPS Humanitarian Report July 2014, noted 'high levels of conflict' had been reported in Kirkuk⁶⁴; highlighting that in Kirkuk governorate, there was limited access in Dakuk district and Al Hawija. The source further noted that the main routes into Kirkuk

⁵⁷ Institute for the Study of War, 'Control of Terrain in Iraq', 2 July 2014, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/control-terrain-iraq-july-2-2014>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁵⁸ Figure from Central Statistical Organization – Republic of Iraq, 2009, <http://cosit.gov.iq/en/population-manpower-staatistics/life>, cited in IOM, Iraq Mission, 'Governorate Profile: Kirkuk', April 2014, <http://iomiraq.net/reports/kirkuk-governorate-profile-0>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

⁵⁹ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 'UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded', 1 July 2014, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁶⁰ Iraq Body Count, Database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 11 August 2014

⁶¹ Whilst UNAMI and IBC both record civilian fatality data, the methodology applied will vary and should be considered in any like-for-like comparison. For further details refer direct to the sources.

⁶² UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 'UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded', 1 July 2014, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁶³ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Iraq: New IDPs map by province', as of 25 June 2014, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Iraq%20New%20IDPs%20Map%2025%20June%20v1.1.pdf>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁶⁴ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.1, http://www.acaps.org/resourcescats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

city, were reportedly (occasionally) closed due to roadblocks and military operations.⁶⁵ This was partially corroborated by a report from the Institute for the Study of War, dated 30 June 2014, which noted clashes involving mortar fire and heavy artillery, between ISIS and Peshmerga in Taza district, southern Kirkuk, in the vicinity of Bashir village (Bashir village is predominantly populated by Shia Turkmen).⁶⁶ The sources referred provided no information on whether entry into Kirkuk city from the KRI was restricted. See also: [Security between urban areas \(by road\)](#)

2.2.28 Kurdish peshmerga forces had taken full control of Kirkuk city by 12 June 2014, following the withdrawal of Iraqi Security Forces (BBC, 12 June 2014).⁶⁷ The Kurdish President, Massud Barzani, said on 27 June that there was no going back on autonomous Kurdish rule in the oil city of Kirkuk and other towns that were now being defended by peshmerga against Sunni militants.⁶⁸

2.2.29 The governorate of Kirkuk is ethnically diverse, including populations of Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens (IOM, Kirkuk Governorate Profile, 10 June 2014).⁶⁹ In considering objective country information relating to the treatment of minority groups in the contested areas, see: [Human rights abuses in ISIS controlled areas](#)

2.2.30 See also: [Annex C: Ethno-religious and tribal groups](#). Additionally refer to the [COI Service bulletin, Security situation, August 2013](#) and section 10 on non-state protection, which includes information on tribal and political militias, and the risks to religious and ethnic minorities.

Civilian fatality levels from 2003 to 2014

2.2.31 The follow table, based on data obtained from the Iraq Body Count, shows fatality trends in Kirkuk/Tameem up to and including October 2013 (the latest available data)⁷⁰:

⁶⁵ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.5, http://www.acaps.org/resourcesscats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

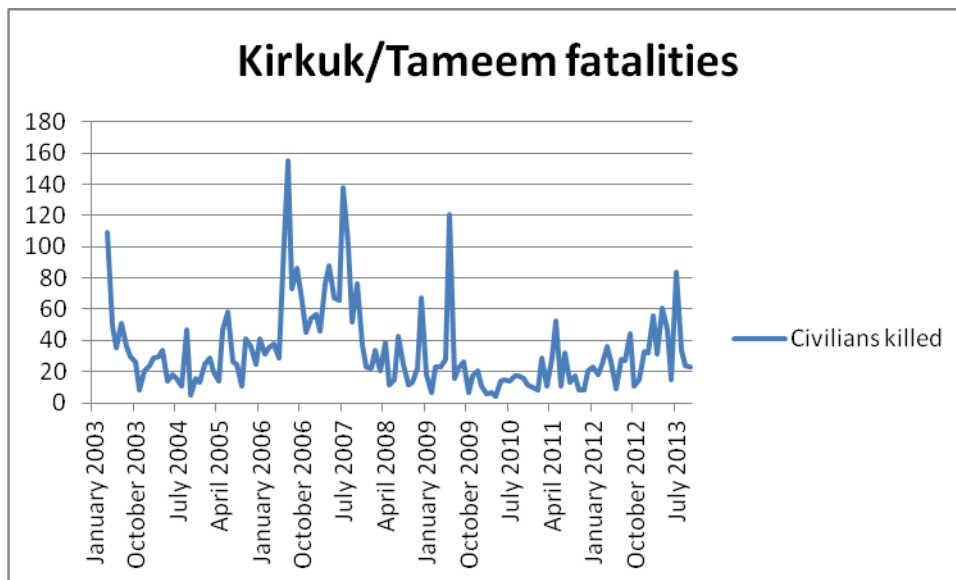
⁶⁶ Institute for the Study of War, 'Iraq Situation Report: 30 June 2014', <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iraq-situation-report-june-30-2014>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁶⁷ BBC, 'Iraqi Kurds 'fully control Kirkuk' as army flees', 12 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27809051>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

⁶⁸ Agence France Presse, 'Iraq's Barzani says Kurdish self-rule in Kirkuk to stay', 27 June 2014, http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/iraq-s-barzani-says-kurdish-self-rule-in-kirkuk-to-stay_943222.html, date accessed: 8 August 2014

⁶⁹ IOM, Iraq Mission, 'Kirkuk Governorate Profile', 10 June 2014, <http://iomiraq.net/reports/kirkuk-governorate-profile-0>, date accessed: 29 July 2014

⁷⁰ Iraq Body Count, Database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 11 August 2014



Governorate background

2.2.32 For background information on Kirkuk see:

- UN Joint Analysis Unit, [‘Governorate Profile: Kirkuk’, 2013](#)
- IOM, Iraq Mission, [‘Kirkuk Governorate Profile’, April 2014](#)

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Diyala

Situation as of June 2014

2.2.33 The Institute for the Study of War, Control of Territory Report, dated 2 July 2014, listed several areas of Diyala governorate as 'contested', but did not (at the time of reporting) claim any towns or cities to be controlled by ISIS.⁷¹ The following figures were provided by sources in June on fatalities and displacement from Diyala during the month of June.

Population	1.4 million ⁷²
Civilians killed	158 civilians killed in June. ⁷³ Based on IBC data between January 2003 and October 2013, the average number of civilians killed in Diyala governorate per month was 112.5 ⁷⁴
Civilians injured	134 civilians injured in June ⁷⁵
Number of persons displaced	About 24,000 people displaced ⁷⁶

2.2.34 The ACAPS Humanitarian Report July 2014, noted 'high levels of conflict' had been reported in Diyala⁷⁸. The source further listed Diyala as one of several areas where the main routes by road had reportedly been (occasionally) closed due to roadblocks and the activities of armed groups and military operations. Additionally the source noted that all

⁷¹ Institute for the Study of War, 'Control of Terrain in Iraq', 2 July 2014, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/control-terrain-iraq-july-2-2014>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁷² Figure from Central Statistical Organization – Republic of Iraq, 2009, <http://cosit.gov.iq/en/population-manpower-staatistics/life>, cited in IOM, Iraq Mission, 'Governorate Profile: Diyala', April 2014, <http://iomiraq.net/reports/diyala-governorate-profile-0>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

⁷³ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 'UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded', 1 July 2014, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁷⁴ Iraq Body Count, Database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 11 August 2014

⁷⁵ Whilst UNAMI and IBC both record civilian fatality data, the methodology applied will vary and should be considered in any like-for-like comparison. For further details refer direct to the sources.

⁷⁶ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 'UN Casualty Figures for June 2014, the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014, Anbar province excluded', 1 July 2014, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2155:un-casualty-figures-for-june-2014-the-highest-number-of-civilian-casualties-in-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en, date accessed: 1 July 2014

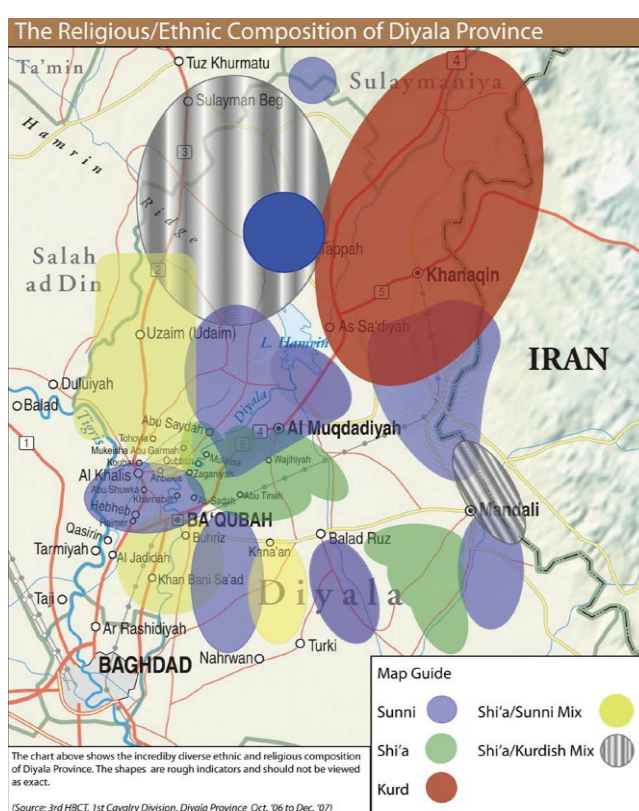
⁷⁷ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Iraq: New IDPs map by province', as of 25 June 2014, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Iraq%20New%20IDPs%20Map%2025%20June%20v1.1.pdf>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁷⁸ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.1, http://www.acaps.org/resourcescats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

areas within the governorate were currently inaccessible to humanitarian access, with the exception of Khanaqeen and Kalar, as they were under control of Peshmerga forces...⁷⁹ This was partially corroborated by the ISW, Control of Territory Report, dated 2 July 2014, which listed Khanaqin as under Peshmerga control.⁸⁰ See also: Security between urban areas (by road)

A second ISW situation report noted that on 30 June, in north eastern Diyala, ISIS killed three civilians and wounded a fourth in the village of Mkhalda, in response to civilians taking down an ISIS flag.⁸¹ The source provided no further background information on those who were killed.

2.2.35 The ISW noted that the governorate of Diyala comprised mainly Sunni, Shia and Kurdish communities (ISW, 2009)⁸². The source did not indicate what if any ethnic or religious minorities were based in Diyala. The ISW provided the following map, based on a US army source, which illustrated the geographical locations of different ethnic and religious groups in Diyala, including mixed areas:



⁷⁹ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014, p.5, http://www.acaps.org/resourcescats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_northern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 3 July 2014

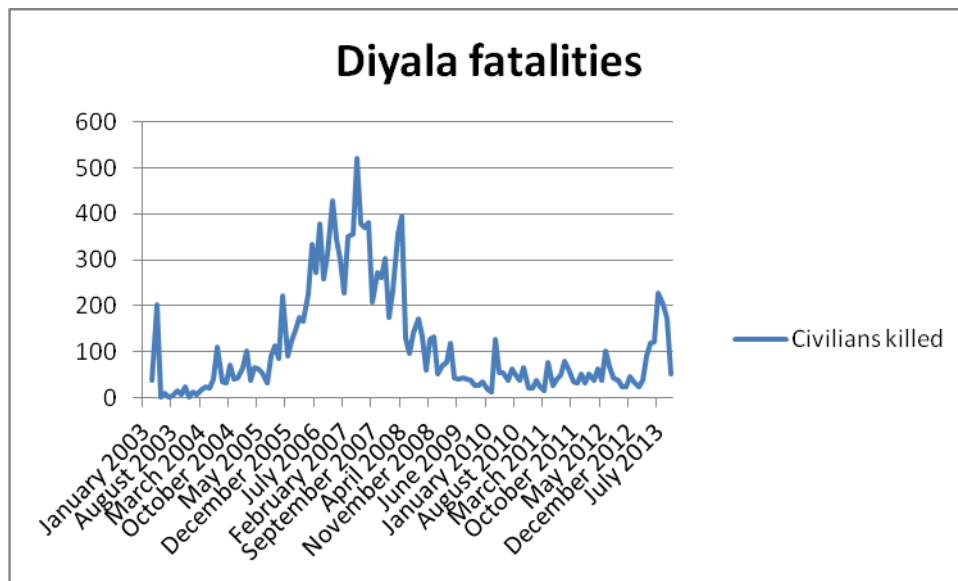
⁸⁰ Institute for the Study of War, 'Control of Terrain in Iraq', 2 July 2014, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/control-terrain-iraq-july-2-2014>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

⁸¹ Institute for the Study of War, 'Iraq Situation Report: 30 June 2014', <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iraq-situation-report-june-30-2014>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁸² Institute for the Study of War, 'The religious and ethnic composition of Diyala province', 9 December 2009, based on US army source, circa 2007, https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ReligiousEthno%20CompDiyala_LARGE.jpg, date accessed: 8 August 2014

Civilian fatality levels from 2003 to 2014

2.2.36 The follow table, based on data obtained from the Iraq Body Count, shows fatality trends in Diyala up to and including October 2013 (the latest available data)⁸⁵:



Governorate background

2.2.37 For background information on Diyala see:

- UN Joint Analysis Unit, '[Governorate Profile: Diyala](#)', 2013
- IOM, Iraq Mission, '[Diyala Governorate Profile](#)', 10 June 2014

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2.3. Actors involved in the fighting

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) now known as the Islamic State

2.3.1 A BBC report dated 16 June 2014 explained:

'ISIS was formed in April 2013 and grew out of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). It has since been disavowed by al-Qaeda, but become one of the main jihadist groups fighting government forces in Syria and is making military gains in Iraq. ... The final "S" in the acronym ISIS

⁸³ Institute for the Study of War, 'The religious and ethnic composition of Diyala province', 9 December 2009, based on US army source, circa 2007, https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ReligiousEthno%20CompDiyala_LARGE.jpg, date accessed: 8 August 2014

⁸⁴ This map is dated 2009 and therefore some information, in particular with regard to 'mixed areas', may be out of date, following recent population displacement.

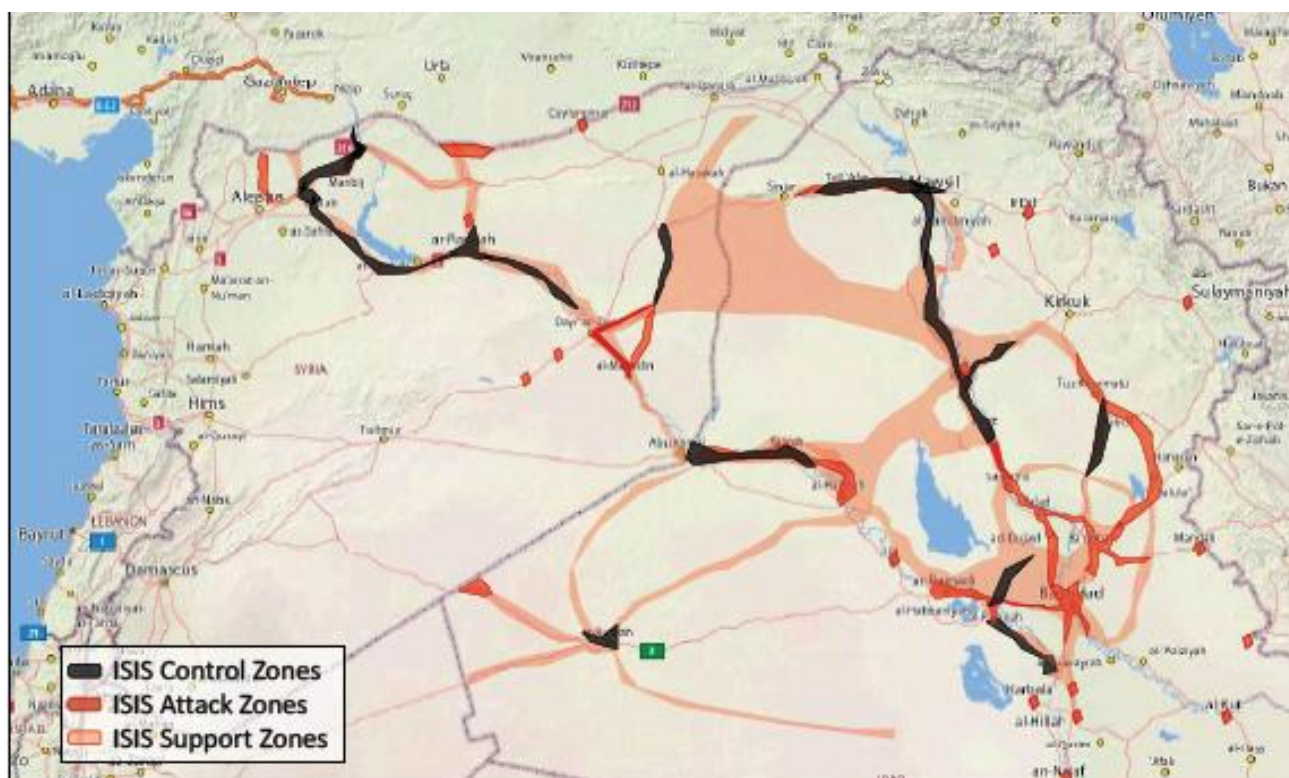
⁸⁵ Iraq Body Count, Database, data used between January 2003 and October 2013, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>, date accessed: 11 August 2014

stems from the Arabic word "al-Sham". This can mean the Levant, Syria or even Damascus but in the context of the global jihad it refers to the Levant. ... Its precise size is unclear but it is thought to include thousands of fighters, including many foreign jihadists. Correspondents say it appears to be surpassing al-Qaeda as the world's most dangerous jihadist group.

'The organisation is led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Little is known about him, but it is believed he was born in Samarra, north of Baghdad, in 1971 and joined the insurgency that erupted in Iraq soon after the 2003 US-led invasion.'⁸⁶

2.3.2 ISIS is said to have significant financial resources, with funding from individuals in Arab Gulf states, together with income streams from oil fields it now controls and from smuggling and extortion (BBC, 30 June 2014).⁸⁷ In addition to its military gains in Iraq, the group has also had considerable military success in Syria, and in March 2013, took over the Syrian city of Raqqa (BBC, 16 June 2014). See: [COI Service report, Syria, 11 September 2013](#).

2.3.3 A report from the Institute for the Study of War, dated 27 June 2014, provided the following map outlining ISIS support, attack and control zones as of 23 June 2014 across both Iraq and Syria:



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2.3.4 Information regarding the size of ISIS' forces is difficult to determine; Charles Lister, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Doha Center in Qatar, reported in an article carried by CNN that ISIS was the largest of the Sunni militant groups currently active in Iraq, with

⁸⁶ BBC, 'Profile: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS)', 16 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24179084>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁸⁷ BBC, 'Is this the end of Iraq?', 30 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27815618>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁸⁸ Institute for the Study of War, 'ISIS battle plan for Baghdad', 27 June 2014, p.3, <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISIS-not-culminated.pdf>, date accessed: 6 August 2014

about 8,000 fighters.⁸⁹ However a report from Al Monitor indicated that the ISIS assault on Mosul involved only around 2,000 fighters (Al Monitor, 'ISIS weighs approach on Baghdad', 11 June 2014).⁹⁰

- 2.3.5 In late June 2014, ISIS announced the formation of a Caliphate state across territory it held in Syria and Iraq, and identified itself under a new name – the 'Islamic State'. The groups leader, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, was referred to as "kalifah Ibrahim" (LWJ, 29 June 2014).⁹¹ To see the text issued by ISIS, refer direct to the source.
- 2.3.6 An article in the New York Times, dated 30 June 2014, referring to ISIS' dramatic rise to power, noted that the group now represented a direct threat to Al Qaeda as a rival global jihadist organisation. The source noted that although Al Qaeda has remained committed to using terrorist tactics against the West and Arab governments, the group had criticised ISIS for killing civilians and fighting other Muslims. Hassan Abu Hanieh, a Jordanian expert on Islamist movements, noted the attraction of ISIS was largely among a new, more radical generation and that this had created a rivalry over how to fight jihad and what, exactly, an Islamic state would look like.⁹²
- 2.3.7 Given available time and resources, no information is available to identify whether ISIS has mistreated Iraqi nationals returning to Iraq from Europe, including failed asylum seekers. However it was noted that ISIS have made claims that fighters from the UK, France, Germany and other European countries as well as the US, the Arab world and Caucasus has joined their ranks (BBC, 16 June 2014).⁹³ Videos evidence also suggests nationals from the west have gone to Iraq and Syria to take up jihad, and participate in the fighting (see for example BBC media article, 'Iraq crisis: Isis video 'shows UK and Australian fighters'', 20 June 2014⁹⁴ or BBC, 'Syria conflict: Father of UK jihadi Nasser Muthana speaks', 20 June 2014)⁹⁵.
- 2.3.8 For further information on The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) see:
- [BBC, 'Profile: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant \(ISIS\)', 16 June 2014](#)

Other groups involved in the fighting

- 2.3.9 A report from the Long War Journal, dated 20 June 2014, highlighted that whilst ISIS was the most prominent group involved in the offensive against the government of Iraq, it was not the only group involved in the conflict. The source noted that Baathist and other

⁸⁹ CNN, 'ISIS a fanatical force -- with a weakness', 17 June 2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/06/16/opinion/lister-isis-iraq/index.html>, date accessed: 1 August 2014

⁹⁰ Al Monitor, 'ISIS weighs approach on Baghdad', 11 June 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/06/iraq-mosul-fall-army-breakdown.html>, date accessed: 1 August 2014

⁹¹ Long War Journal, 'ISIS announces formation of Caliphate, rebrands as 'Islamic State'', 29 June 2014, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2014/06/isis-announces-formation-of-ca.php#>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁹² New York Times, ISIS threatens Al Qaeda as Flagship Movement of Extremists, 30 June 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/01/world/middleeast/isis-threatens-al-qaeda-as-flagship-movement-of-extremists.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁹³ BBC, 'Profile: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS)', 16 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24179084>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁹⁴ BBC, 'Iraq crisis: Isis video 'shows UK and Australian fighters'', 20 June 2014', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27944348>, date accessed: 28 July 2014

⁹⁵ BBC, 'Syria conflict: Father of UK jihadi Nasser Muthana speaks', 20 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27950695>, date accessed: 28 July 2014

organisations, including jihadist groups had been involved, among which was the group known as Ansar al Islam (AAI). AAI had claimed responsibility for at least 14 operations on its Twitter feed since the beginning of the rebel offensive in June.⁹⁶ The source also clarified that rivalry between ISIS and other jihadist groups had been a point of contention among jihadist circles. The article in particular noted a rivalry between ISIS and the Al Nursah Front, an official branch of Al Qaeda, operating in Syria.⁹⁷

2.3.10 A report from the BBC dated 1 July 2014, also noted that ISIS' control of territory varied and often dependent on local actors present in the region. Comparing the situations in Mosul, Tikrit and Fallujah for example, the source noted:

'In Iraq, Isis has a presence in most of the localities that have fallen into insurgent hands, spearheading the takeovers of Mosul and Tikrit. ... In both cities, Isis has asserted itself as the main authority. Indeed, from the "city charter" issued by Isis for Mosul, the group has made it clear it wishes to turn Mosul into Iraq's version of the city of Raqqa, its de facto capital. ... Conversely in Falluja, Isis has not issued a similar charter and has been more tolerant of practices it deems un-Islamic, illustrating that it still does not exercise full control over the city and has to share power with a military council composed of a variety of insurgent groups in the wider area, backed by tribal support.'⁹⁸

2.3.11 Human Rights Watch, in a report dated 27 May 2014, citing a commander of anti-government forces, noted that 11 armed opposition groups were fighting in Anbar province, all of which, with the exception of the ISIS, fought under the Anbar Military Council, a coalition of fighters affiliated with Anbar's tribes and other armed groups.⁹⁹ The New York Times, in a report dated 17 June 2014, referred to an Iraqi intelligence source, who noted that other Sunni militant groups active included the 1920 Revolution Brigades and the Islamic Army, both of which had a long presence in Diyala province.¹⁰⁰

Difficulties in identifying armed groups

2.3.12 A report from Human Rights Watch highlighted the lack of accurate reporting in conflict areas, and difficulties in identifying actors of violence. For example, the source noted that there were mixed reports over which groups held control of Fallujah general hospital. According to information obtained by HRW, two witnesses to the hospital attacks (one a hospital employee), said that non-ISIS anti-government fighters were guarding the hospital and that wounded fighters were receiving treatment there. However an Anbar-based government security official said that, according to information he received through his work and from hospital staff, ISIS has partly taken over the hospital, using the second floor to treat wounded fighters and administrative offices to detain high-level local

⁹⁶ Long War Journal, 'Ansar al Islam claims attacks against Iraqi military, police', 20 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/operating_in_iraq_w.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁹⁷ Long War Journal, 'Ansar al Islam claims attacks against Iraqi military, police', 20 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/operating_in_iraq_w.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

⁹⁸ BBC, 'Iraq crisis: Key players in Sunni rebellion', 1 July 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28053496>, date accessed: 7 July 2014

⁹⁹ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital', 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁰⁰ New York Times, 'As Sunnis Die in Iraq, a Cycle Is Restarting', 17 June 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/18/world/middleeast/sectarian-violence-appears-to-spread-to-streets-of-baghdad.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

officials.’¹⁰¹ The source went on to observe that the ‘number and affiliation of anti-government fighters in Fallujah remained unclear.’¹⁰²

2.3.13 More dated sources have also recognised the difficulties in identifying the perpetrators of violence in Iraq. For example Dr Michael Knights, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (in a paper published on 31 July 2012), noted that violence in Iraq had become very localised, a situation which had become more pronounced since 2009, as violence became more concentrated in key urban neighbourhoods, towns and rural areas.¹⁰³

2.3.14 Whilst a research article published by the Public Library of Science (PLOS), by Madelyn Hsiao-Rei Hicks, Hamit Dardagan, Gabriela Guerrero Serdan, Peter M Bagnall, John A Sloboda and Michael Spagat entitled ‘Violent Deaths of Iraqi Civilians, 2003-2008: Analysis by Perpetrator, Weapon, Time and Location’, dated 15 February 2011 explained: ‘Most Iraqi civilian violent deaths during 2003–2008 of the Iraq war were inflicted by Unknown perpetrators, primarily through extrajudicial executions that disproportionately increased in regions with greater numbers of violent deaths. Unknown perpetrators using suicide bombs, vehicle bombs, and mortars had highly lethal and indiscriminate effects on the Iraqi civilians they targeted.’¹⁰⁴

2.3.15 According to the PLOS published article, the research was based on data analysed from the Iraq Body Count database ‘...of 92,614 Iraqi civilian direct deaths from armed violence occurring from March 20, 2003 through March 19, 2008, of which Unknown perpetrators caused 74% of deaths (n = 68,396), Coalition forces 12% (n = 11,516), and Anti-Coalition forces 11% (n = 9,954).’¹⁰⁵

2.3.16 For further background information related to the difficulties in identifying armed groups, see: [COI Service, ‘Iraq bulletin: Security situation update 2013’, August 2013](#) and the section entitled: ‘Limiting factors to understanding the causes and nature of violence’

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2.4. Sectarian drivers of violence

2.4.1 Sources consistently indicate that the recent fighting in Iraq, marked a resurgence of sectarian based violence between Sunni and Shia Muslims.¹⁰⁶ An article from the Long War Journal for example highlights how Maliki’s policies have fuelled Sunni anger, which has been capitalised on by ISIS; and that the ISIS offensive has included an array of

¹⁰¹ Human Rights Watch, ‘Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital’, 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁰² Human Rights Watch, ‘Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital’, 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁰³ The Washington Institute, Michael Knights, ‘What is Security Like Today in Iraq?’, 31 July 2012, p.2 <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/KnightsInterview20120731.pdf>, date accessed: 31 July 2014

¹⁰⁴ Public Library of Science, ‘Violent Deaths of Iraqi Civilians, 2003-2008: Analysis by Perpetrator, Weapon, Time and Location, dated 15 February 2011’, Conclusions, <http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000415>, date accessed: 25 July 2014

¹⁰⁵ Public Library of Science, ‘Violent Deaths of Iraqi Civilians, 2003-2008: Analysis by Perpetrator, Weapon, Time and Location, dated 15 February 2011’, Methods and Findings, <http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000415>, date accessed: 25 July 2014

¹⁰⁶ For example see: BBC, ‘Is this the end of Iraq?’, 30 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27815618>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

other Sunni groups, including the Naqshbandi Army (made up predominantly of former Baathists), together with jihadist groups, such as Ansar al Islam and Jaish al Muhajideen. The article also highlighted how wider Sunni groups, such as the Sunni Muslim Scholars Association or Sunni tribal leaders, such as Sheikh Ali Hatim Al-Suleiman (the emir of the Dulaimi tribal confederation), have sought to capitalise on the recent unrest as part of a broader Sunni or tribal resistance movement, rather than a ISIS offensive.¹⁰⁷

- 2.4.2 However a report from Al Shorfa Mawtani, dated 17 June 2014, indicated that both Sunni and Shia clerics met in Baghdad on Sunday 15 June 2014 to urge Iraqi citizens to back the security forces and condemn the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL). The source continued: 'The clerics, meeting at al-Shawaf Mosque in the capital, drafted and signed a resolution they then sent to mosques across Iraq.'¹⁰⁸ A spokesperson for the al-Shawaf mosque, Sheikh Jamaluddeen al-Kurwi explained:

"The fatwa was distributed to more than 50,000 mosques and houses of worship in various cities in Iraq so it could be posted on the gates and broadcast through loudspeakers following every prayer of the day, ... Support of the security forces, and stripping the ISIL of its facade of faith and Islam, is very important for Iraqis, in order to avoid fitna, and to unify their ranks on the same issue, ... The fatwa did not attempt to define ISIL to the people, except by what the Iraqis themselves are seeing in reality: the killing of women and children, the slaughter of young people, the blowing up of homes with the occupants still inside and the tearing up of human bodies in marketplaces, ... All of these are enough to show everyone that this group is not in any way linked to their faith, or to any specific sect, and it must be fought to save the lives of the innocent."¹⁰⁹

- 2.4.3 Head of the Iraqi cabinet's scholars committee, Sheikh Khalid al-Mulla, said that the joint fatwa considered ISIS an "un-Islamic terrorist organisation that does not represent the Sunni community, or any other group in Iraq ... [it] ... makes it incumbent on all Sunnis and Shias in Iraq to resist [ISIS] with all means, and to work alongside the [Government of Iraq] army and police forces to regain control of the areas of which [ISIS] took control, making the residents virtual prisoners", he added. (Al Shorfa Mawtani, 17 June 2014)¹¹⁰

Intra-Sunni fighting, including fighting with tribal militias

- 2.4.4 A BBC report dated 1 July 2014, provided an outline of Sunni militia groups known to be operating in Iraq. The sourced listed several Sunni groups as hostile towards ISIS, this included the jihadist group Jamaat Ansar Al-Islam (JAI), based primarily in Nineveh (particularly Mosul), Kirkuk and Salahuddin provinces; and the Islamist group, Jaysh al-Mujahideen (JAM). JAM dates back to the 2003 invasion, and, according to the BBC source, had forged a 'special relationship' with JAI, to counter the 'extremist' threat of ISIS. According to the BBC report, there had been reports of coordination between JAM and JAI in the Hawija area, near Kirkuk city.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Long War Journal, 'Analysis: A protracted struggle ahead for Iraq', 24 June 2014,

http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/analysis_a_protracte.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁰⁸ Al Shorfa Mawtani, 'Failure to stand up to ISIL is sin: Iraq's Sunni, Shia clerics', 17 June 2014, http://mawtani.al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/iii/features/2014/06/17/feature-01, date accessed: 3 July 2014

¹⁰⁹ Al Shorfa Mawtani, 'Failure to stand up to ISIL is sin: Iraq's Sunni, Shia clerics', 17 June 2014, http://mawtani.al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/iii/features/2014/06/17/feature-01, date accessed: 3 July 2014

¹¹⁰ Al Shorfa Mawtani, 'Failure to stand up to ISIL is sin: Iraq's Sunni, Shia clerics', 17 June 2014, http://mawtani.al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/iii/features/2014/06/17/feature-01, date accessed: 3 July 2014

¹¹¹ BBC, 'Iraq crisis: Key players in Sunni rebellion', 1 July 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28053496>, date accessed: 7 July 2014

- 2.4.5 The same source also indicated that the baathist Naqshbandi Order (Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqa al-Naqshbandia, or JRTN); had worked with ISIL not only in Mosul, but also in Tikrit and Diyala province, although clarified that ‘...co-ordination with Isis is not admitted [by JRTN]’¹¹² However a report from the ISW, dated 30 June 2014, described the coordination between ISIS and the Tribal Military Councils in Anbar as a ‘notable’ exception to the ISIS-JRTN clashes occurring in other parts of the country.¹¹³ A second ISW report, dated 1 July 2014, also noted that JRTN had launched mortar attacks at ISIS along the Hamrin ridge area in Diyala province. However the same source also noted that gumen from JRTN, along with ISIS and several other anti-government groups, were negotiating with representatives of the Haditha based Jaghaifa and Albu Salman tribes, to gain peaceful access to the Haditha, suggesting some level of collaboration between these groups.¹¹⁴
- 2.4.6 The Long War Journal, in a report dated 20 June 2014, noted that the Ansar al Islam had ‘repeatedly come to blows with the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), before it expanded into Syria, and [with] the ISIS as well.’ However, a review of statements made by AAI indicated the group had from late 2012 until recent months (the most recent being March 2014), attempted to reconcile and ‘quell its fight with the ISIS’, but ISIS had not responded.¹¹⁵
- 2.4.7 An article by Erin Evers, HRW researcher based in Baghdad, dated 24 June 2014, provided the first hand account of a Sunni man named as ‘Ahmed’, who previously worked as a translator for the US forces and feared he would be targeted by insurgents should he attempt to flee his hometown (not specified, but located in the ‘Sunni triangle’ area of Iraq, north of Baghdad). The source provided further insight into the nature of sectarianism, and risks to some (Sunni) tribes and divisions between Sunni groups:
- ‘Ahmed is Sunni, like the members of ISIL. The population of the town where he lives, which lies close to Saddam Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit, is Sunni. But that affords them little protection. ISIL has surrounded the town and repeatedly attacked it using mortars. So far, the town’s community leaders had managed to keep the ISIL fighters at bay, Ahmed said, but he didn’t know how long they would hold out—hence his family’s imminent departure. “A lot of the people in this town are former translators for the United States, judges, soldiers,” he said. ISIL frequently targets those who work for the United States and the Iraqi government, regardless of their sect. “If ISIL gets in, they will assassinate us all.”’¹¹⁶
- 2.4.8 The same source also confirmed that in Tikrit, ISIL forces had killed former members of the Sunni ‘Awakening councils’ (milita groups set up by Sunni tribal leaders to defeat al Qaeda during the previous insurgency).¹¹⁷ The source concluded: ‘... I asked Ahmed

¹¹² BBC, ‘Iraq crisis: Key players in Sunni rebellion’, 1 July 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28053496>, date accessed: 7 July 2014

¹¹³ Institute for the Study of War, ‘Iraq Situation Report: 30 June 2014’, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iraq-situation-report-june-30-2014>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹¹⁴ ISW, ‘Situation report: 1 July 2014’, <http://iswiraq.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/iraq-situation-report-july-1-2014.html#/2014/07/iraq-situation-report-july-1-2014.html>, date accessed: 7 August 2014

¹¹⁵ Long War Journal, ‘Ansar al Islam claims attacks against Iraqi military, police’, 20 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/operating_in_iraq_w.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹¹⁶ Politico magazine, Erin Eavers, ‘No way out’, 26 June 2014, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/06/no-way-out-108200_full.html#print, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹¹⁷ Politico magazine, Erin Eavers, ‘No way out’, 26 June 2014, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/06/no-way-out-108200_full.html#print, date accessed: 1 July 2014

where he will go if ISIL enters his town. He paused for a long time. Then, crying softly, he said, "I will hide in the orchards." ¹¹⁸

2.4.9 The Congressional Research Service, in their report 'Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights', dated 2 July 2014, explained that many of the (predominantly Sunni) Sons of Iraq (Sol) fighters (a local tribal militia force) were linked to the tribes of Anbar province. The source indicated that in early 2014 the bulk of the Sol did not join the ISIL led Sunni uprising, although a further (unspecified) number did join the June 2014 offensive. The CRS noted that originally the Sol amounted to some 100,000 fighters and clarified that: '[a]bout 70,000 were integrated into the ISF or given civilian government jobs, while [a further] 30,000-40,000 continued to man checkpoints in Sunni areas', being paid about \$500 per month by the government. It was not clear however from the source whether this information was current and accurately reflected the situation on the ground, as of June 2014.¹¹⁹ The source further noted: 'The tribal leaders, such as Ahmad Abu Risha and Hatem al-Dulaymi, do not want an Islamic state or Islamic law imposed, but they do want a more representative central government in Baghdad as well as the stability to facilitate commerce.'¹²⁰

2.4.10 An article from the Institute for the Study of War, dated 27 June 2014, further corroborated reports of intra-Sunni fighting, noting that ISIS was still engaged in fighting with other Sunni forces in Hawjah and the southern Hamrin ridge, in northern Iraq and remarked that in this area, ISIS may yet face 'sturdy resistance from Sunnis...'¹²¹ A likely end-goal for ISIS in this area and to complete its 'northern offensive' would be control over the city of Ramadi, which ISW assessed as being the 'symbolic and real home of the [Sunni] Anbar Awakening.'¹²²

2.4.11 See also: Annex C: Ethno-religious and tribal groups, which includes reference to Sunni tribal groups known to exist in Iraq. Additionally refer to the COI Service bulletin, Security situation, August 2013 and section 10 on non-state protection, which includes information on tribal and political militias, and the risks to religious and ethnic minorities.

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2.5. The nature of conflict

Control of urban areas

2.5.1 Sources consistently indicated that the control of territory by armed actors focused on taking urban centres in Iraq. The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) make reference to ISIS' 'urban offensive'¹²³ and, for example, in their 'Control of Terrain in Iraq' map, dated

¹¹⁸ Politico magazine, Erin Eavers, 'No way out', 26 June 2014, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/06/no-way-out-108200_full.html?print, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹¹⁹ Congressional Research Service, "Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights", 2 July 2014, p.10, <http://fas.org/sqp/crs/mideast/RS21968.pdf?>, date accessed: 9 July 2014

¹²⁰ Congressional Research Service, "Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights", 2 July 2014, p.10, <http://fas.org/sqp/crs/mideast/RS21968.pdf?>, date accessed: 9 July 2014

¹²¹ Institute for the Study of War, 'ISIS battle plan for Baghdad', 27 June 2014, p. 4, <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISIS-not-culminated.pdf>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹²² Institute for the Study of War, 'ISIS battle plan for Baghdad', 27 June 2014, p. 3-6, <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISIS-not-culminated.pdf>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹²³ Institute for the Study of War, 'ISIS battle plan for Baghdad', 27 June 2014, p.1, <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISIS-not-culminated.pdf>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

2 July 2014, listed several towns or cities under the control of ISIS, these included Mosul (pop.1.8 million¹²⁴); Fallujah (pop.325,000¹²⁵) and Hawija (pop.275,559¹²⁶), whilst contested urban areas included Tikrit (pop. 370,000¹²⁷) and Baiji (pop 60,000¹²⁸).¹²⁹

- 2.5.2 A report from the Long War Journal, dated 26 June 2014, corroborated this information, and acknowledged that the advance south by ISIS also included taking control of other urban centres, for example the town of Mansouriyat al-Jabal¹³⁰, or those of Dhuluiyah, Saadiyah and Jalula in Salah al Din and Diyala governorates. (LWJ, 12 June 2014)¹³¹ An earlier Long War Journal article, dated 11 June, similarly highlighted that an ISIS convoy of 60 units had advanced into the city of Baiji (torching several government buildings, court houses and police headquarters and engaging government troops near the Baiji oil vicinity).¹³² It is not known at the time of writing if ISIL's control of these urban centres remained accurate.

Fighting in urban areas

- 2.5.3 A report from the Long War Journal (LWJ), dated 5 June 2014, reported that the ISIS assault on Samarra on the same date, which was mounted from the west, resulted in the group taking control of five neighbourhoods in the city, before being ejected by the military and police. The LWJ, citing an unconfirmed report, indicated that 38 police men were killed during the incident. The source provided no information on non-combatants who were killed or injured during the seize.¹³³ ISIS recommenced their assault on the city on 12 June. (LWJ, 12 June 2014)¹³⁴
- 2.5.4 The Institute for the Study of War, provided a chronology of events covering ISIS' attack on the city of Mosul, which began on 5 June 2014. The source indicated that this began with shelling in az-Zuhoor (district) IVO in Eastern Mosul; involved clashes the following day, between ISF and ISIS in both east and west Mosul city and included on the same day (6th June), two suicide car bomb attacks against a mosque in the village of Muqtadiyah, east of Mosul city (the attack killed 5 and wounded 43). By 9 June 2014, the source reported that ISIS had seized control of several western neighbourhoods in the

¹²⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, 'Mosul', 2003 est, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/393855/Mosul>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

¹²⁵ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 'Iraqi security forces claim gains against Al-Qaeda militants', 11 January 2014, <http://www.rferl.org/content/iraq-anbar-fallujah-ramadi-more-fighting/25225987.html>, date accessed: 13 August 2014

¹²⁶ Rudaw, 'As Arab births in Hawija change Kirkuk demography, Kurds stand to lose out', 13 January 2014, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2014/1/kirkuk804.htm>, date accessed: 13 August 2014

¹²⁷ Al Monitor, 'Iraq: Mixed Legacy in Saddam's Hometown', 20 March 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/03/iraq-tikrit-marginalized.html#>, date accessed: 13 August 2014

¹²⁸ Washington Post, 'In Iraqi Oil City, a Formidable Foe', 19 January 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/18/AR2006011802562.html>, date accessed: 13 August 2014

¹²⁹ Institute for the Study of War, 'Control of Terrain in Iraq', 2 July 2014, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/control-terrain-iraq-july-2-2014>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

¹³⁰ Long War Journal, 'ISIS advances on oil fields in Salahaddin, Diyala', 26 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2014/06/isis_advances_on_oil_fields_in-print.php, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹³¹ Long War Journal, 'ISIS' advance halted at Samarra', 12 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isiss_southward_adva.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹³² Long War Journal, 'ISIS takes control of Baiji, Tikrit in lightning southward advance', 11 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isis_take_control_of_1.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹³³ Long War Journal, 'ISIS takes control of areas in central Iraqi city', 5 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isis_takes_control_o.php##ixzz36V6Re6uO, date accessed: 4 July 2014

¹³⁴ Long War Journal, 'ISIS' advance halted at Samarra', 12 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isiss_southward_adva.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

city, including 17 Tammuz and ar-Rabi; shutting down the Mosul General hospital and seizing control of Mosul airport; the regional army HQ and several police stations and private banks.¹³⁵ Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Deputy Programme Director, Said Boumedouha, stated in a press briefing, dated 11 June 2014, that both sides involved in the conflict for Mosul needed to ensure that civilians did not bear the brunt of violence, as they battled for control of the city.¹³⁶

- 2.5.5 Sources indicated that the one of the reasons for ISIS's rapid territorial gains south were because government forces had either abandoned their positions or conducted strategic withdrawals. Usamah al Nujayfi, the speaker of Iraq's Council of Representatives (whose brother is the governor of Ninewa), speaking with Al Baghdadiyah Satellite Television in June 2014 after the fall of Mosul, accused the Iraqi security forces of abandoning their posts and leaving weapons, ammunition, and armored vehicles behind: "When the battle intensified inside the city of Mosul, these [ISF] forces gave up their weapons and the commanders fled, leaving behind arms, armored vehicles, and locations for the terrorists ... Mosul Airport and some aircrafts and command locations have fallen, not to mention arms warehouses. Prisons have been taken and the prisoners have been released" Nujayfi also warned that the ISIS fighters are "now heading toward Salahaddin Governorate," and that the villages outside of Al Shirqat "have been entirely occupied." (LWJ, 10 June 2014)¹³⁷
- 2.5.6 According to the Long War Journal, it was unclear how many Iraqi soldiers, policemen, and civilians were killed in the fighting in Mosul.¹³⁸ A Reuters report dated 11 June 2014 similarly noted that 250 security personnel had agreed to withdraw from the Baiji oil refinery¹³⁹. A briefing from the Long War Journal, dated 11 June 2014, also observed that: 'ISIS' blitzkrieg from Mosul to Tikrit covered nearly 250 miles in the span of several days. The majority of the Iraqi security forces in the way of the ISIS either abandoned their posts, weapons and equipment, or melted away after brief skirmishes.'¹⁴⁰ See also: [Protection provided by the Government of Iraq to civilians in ISIS controlled/contested areas](#)
- 2.5.7 However other reports have indicated that the government of Iraq had been able to repel advances by ISIS, for example the Long War Journal, in a briefing dated 12 June 2014, indicated that Iraqi security forces in Samarra had stopped an armed ISIS convoy from entering the city of Samarra.¹⁴¹
- 2.5.8 In Fallujah city, which fell to ISIS in January 2014, six eye witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch, in a report dated 27 May 2014, gave credible accounts that

¹³⁵ Institute for the Study of War, 'Recent chronology of the fall of Mosul', 10 June 2014, <http://iswiraq.blogspot.co.uk/2014/06/recent-chronology-of-fall-of-mosul.html#/2014/06/recent-chronology-of-fall-of-mosul.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹³⁶ Amnesty International, 'Iraq: Civilians must be protected following insurgents' takeover of Mosul', 11 June 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-protection-civilians-must-be-priority-amid-mosul-unrest-2014-06-11>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹³⁷ Long War Journal, 'ISIS takes control of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city', 10 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isis_take_control_of.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹³⁸ Long War Journal, 'ISIS takes control of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city', 10 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isis_take_control_of.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹³⁹ Reuters, 'UPDATE 1-Sunni militants push into Iraqi oil refinery town', <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/06/11/iraq-security-baiji-idUKL5N0OS1L620140611>, date accessed: 4 July 2014

¹⁴⁰ Long War Journal, 'ISIS takes control of Baiji, Tikrit in lightning southward advance', 11 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isis_take_control_of_1.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁴¹ Long War Journal, 'ISIS' advance halted at Samarra', 12 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isis_southward_adv.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

government forces had repeatedly launched mortar and artillery attacks on Fallujah hospital, whilst an Iraqi government security officer based in Anbar, who spoke to Human Rights Watch on condition of anonymity, said government forces had targeted the hospital with mortars and artillery on 16 separate occasions.¹⁴²

2.5.9 For further details see: [Eye-witness accounts from Fallujah](#)

The use of air-strikes in urban areas

2.5.10 An ISW Situation report, dated 30 June 2014, reported that Iraqi Army Aviation had attacked the neighbourhoods of Risala, Asri and Tamim in Baiji (in Salah al Din). According to the source, the incident resulted in six fatalities and wounded 10, including women and children. The source did not indicate whether those killed were combatants.¹⁴³ Amnesty International, in a press briefing dated 11 June 2014, noted that government forces had used 'indiscriminate' shelling in Fallujah in the past six months, including on hospitals and in residential areas.¹⁴⁴

2.5.11 A subsequent report from Human Rights Watch, dated 27 May 2014, reported that government forces had dropped barrel bombs on residential areas of Fallujah and the surrounding areas. 14 Fallujah residents, noted between 7 and 24 May that helicopters had dropped barrel bombs. An Anbar based government security official was quoted as saying that the attacks between 3 and 15 May had killed approximately 40 civilians; however residents did not know if the attacks had caused deaths or injuries, but did say the attacks had resulted in the 'widespread destruction of property'. Referring to one such attack, an eye-witness was quoted as saying:

'I was in Hay al-Jolan at my uncle's house. I was on the roof trying to get a phone signal because, as you know, communications have been cut. At around midnight I saw an enormous explosion in Hay al-Shorta, about 2 kilometers away. I saw a helicopter, and then I saw a huge explosion with a huge flame. I know it was a barrel bomb because they had been using barrel bombs for almost a week and a half and so I knew by then how to distinguish it. Every day they shot between 8 and 10 barrels, sometimes as many as 16.'¹⁴⁵

2.5.12 Sources interviewed by HRW consistently indicated that barrel bomb attacks had been carried out in residential areas where there was no military/armed militia presence. In one attack on 8 May, a resident reported that a barrel bomb struck a school in Hay al-Dhubat, near the hospital.¹⁴⁶

2.5.13 For further details see: [Eye-witness accounts from Fallujah](#)

Security between urban areas (by road)

¹⁴² Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital', 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁴³ Institute for the Study of War, 'Iraq Situation Report: 30 June 2014', <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iraq-situation-report-june-30-2014>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁴⁴ Amnesty International, 'Iraq: Civilians must be protected following insurgents' takeover of Mosul', 11 June 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-protection-civilians-must-be-priority-amid-mosul-unrest-2014-06-11>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital', 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital', 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

2.5.14 The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), an initiative of a consortium of three NGOs (HelpAge International, Merlin and Norwegian Refugee Council) created in December 2009, with the aim of supporting the humanitarian community with needs assessments, in a situation report dated 2 July 2014, noted that threats by both insurgents and military operations significantly hampered national and international NGOs operating outside the Kurdistan Regional of Iraq (KRI). The report observed that civilians in Fallujah; western districts of Anbar; Mosul and Tel Afar were particularly hard to reach, with supply routes blocked, including routes around Mosul city; Tel Afar and the Baghdad-Samarra-Tikrit-Beji-Haditha route. The sourced also referred to the presence of road blocks; insecurity and military offensives as a priority concern restricting humanitarian access. IOM has called from humanitarian corridors to be opened.¹⁴⁷

2.5.1 A Long War Journal report, dated 20 June 2014, noted that the jihadist group, Ansar Al Islam had in the month of June, carried out five attacks on the road between Kirkuk and Tikrit and a further attack on the road between Mosul and Baghdad. Nearly all of these attacks had targeted Iraqi military and police.¹⁴⁸

2.5.2 An article by Erin Evers, HRW researcher based in Baghdad, provided the first hand account of a Sunni man named as 'Ahmed', who previously worked as a translator for the US forces and feared he would be targeted by insurgents should he attempt to flee his hometown (not specified, but located in the 'Sunni triangle' area of Iraq, north of Baghdad). The source explained: 'Ahmed has heard that the freed prisoners [those freed by ISIS] are vengefully ambushing people on the road that leads to Kirkuk and, eventually, to Erbil, "looking for people who worked as translators to kill." ... And no one is around to stop them, Ahmed said. ... This is what life is like on the ground in the middle of Iraq's emerging, or re-emerging, civil war. One has a sense of a country totally out of control and wrenched apart by rumor—almost all of it bad.'¹⁴⁹

2.5.3 An article from Niqash, dated 27 June 2014, based on reporting from inside the city of Hawija, noted that Kurdish peshmerga had advised against travel by road past Kurdish checkpoints en route towards the ISIS controlled city of Hawija, and indicated that people had been killed on the road to Hawija or abducted by ISIS. However, based on the reporters own observations, a Sunni family from Hawija had been able to enter the city without any apparent difficulties, and the reporter himself was able to travel by taxi through the ISIS checkpoint and into Hawija. As noted:

'As you pass the last Peshmerga checkpoint, the soldiers there advise you not to go any further unless it is extremely important. People are being killed on this road and also being abducted by ISIS, they say. ... "Be careful, they will ask you well prepared questions about why you're going into this area and they will verify the information you give them," one of the soldiers told me. "If you give them the wrong information, you will be in a lot of trouble." ... I had already taken his advice. I studied at the art school in Hawija for several years, I know a lot of people there and I thought it wouldn't be difficult to enter the area if I carried my ID card from the art school. ... After driving for around 40 minutes past the last Peshmerga checkpoint, we came to another checkpoint. And when we saw the black flag of ISIS we knew that we had reached their area. The checkpoint

¹⁴⁷ Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), 'Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq', 2 July 2014,

p.1http://www.acaps.org/resourcescats/downloader/briefing_note_humanitarian_implications_of_violence_in_north_ern_and_central_iraq_2_july_2014/246, date accessed: 4 July 2014

¹⁴⁸ Long War Journal, 'Ansar al Islam claims attacks against Iraqi military, police', 20 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/operating_in_iraq_w.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁴⁹ Politico magazine, Erin Evers, 'No way out', 26 June 2014, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/06/no-way-out-108200_full.html?print, date accessed: 1 July 2014

was only a few kilometres outside of the Hawija district. Two masked men waved the car down and came towards us. ... The taxi I was in had two other passengers, a Sunni Muslim man and woman, and they were not afraid about coming here because they were originally from Hawija.

'When the men got to the car, one of them asked me why I was going into Hawija; I quickly pulled out my art school ID and said I needed to pick up my graduation certificate so I could apply for a job. The masked man told me that the art school was actually closed and that there are no new jobs going in Kirkuk. So why are you picking it up and what are you actually going to do with it?, he asked. ... I explained that I knew some of the art school staff and that they were going to help me get a job. ... He checked my ID card again, carefully, and then he gave me a copy of the Koran. He gave the other passengers a Koran too. "May God be with you," he said and let us pass.

'Haider, our taxi driver, who drives this road almost every day, said that from the very first day that ISIS took over they had been giving out copies of the Koran to each and every one of his passengers.'¹⁵⁰

2.5.4 See also: [Annex D: Maps of major roads through northern and central Iraq](#)

Landmines and use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

2.5.5 Iraq is a party to the Ottawa Treaty which bans the use of anti-personnel landmines (HRW, 27 May 2014).¹⁵¹ However sources consistently indicated that anti-government forces planted IEDs on roads to target government forces. For example a report from the LWJ, noted: 'The ISIS is adept at laying IEDs [Improvised Explosive Devices] to decimate military convoys as well as using ambushes with small arms, machine guns, and RPGs to interdict supply columns.' The source also highlighted that the group's control of eastern Anbar province, allowed it to use the area as a staging post from which it could launch attacks on Highway 1.¹⁵²

2.5.6 Human Rights Watch, in a report dated 27 May 2014, noted that in Fallujah, following the latest government offensive which commenced in early May to retake the city, residents reported ISIS placing land mines and IEDs on Fallujah's Expressway 10 and car bombs and IEDs throughout the city. One resident who left Fallujah on 12 May told HRW: '[...]The main Fallujah road [Expressway 10] is full of mines. Every 20 meters ISIS has planted mines. ISIS uses the municipality's trucks and machinery in front of Fallujah residents to dig holes in the street, the residents told me. Sometimes the army gets blamed when people are killed when the real cause is the mines[...]'.¹⁵³ In March 2014 a UN report noted that armed groups in Ramadi had booby-trapped residential roads and buildings, preventing displaced persons from returning to their homes.¹⁵⁴

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¹⁵⁰ Niqash, Shalaw Mohammed, 'Visiting Hawija, a town controlled by ISIS extremists', 27 June 2014, <http://www.niqash.org/articles/print.php?id=3478&lang=en>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

¹⁵¹ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital', 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁵² Long War Journal, 'ISIS' advance halted at Samarra', 12 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isiss_southward_adva.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁵³ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital', 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁵⁴ UN Security Council, 'Anbar Province Terrorism Major Threat to Building Democratic State In Iraq, Top United Nations Official Warns Security Council, Permanent Representative Calls for Political Solution to Conflict', 27 March 2014, <https://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/sc11339.doc.htm>, date accessed: 7 July 2014

2.6. Abuses committed by government forces and pro-government militias

2.6.1 Amnesty International (AI) in a reported dated 27 June 2014, claimed that eyewitness accounts suggested that the Iraqi security forces, prior to withdrawing from Tal' Afar and Mosul, had carried out a series of executions against Sunni detainees. Survivors and relatives told AI that on 15 June 2014, 50 Sunni detainees were extrajudicially executed in the Anti-Terrorism Agency building in al-Qala'a, in Tal 'Afar.¹⁵⁵ The report included the following eyewitness account:

“It was about 1.45 at night when four soldiers opened the door and called out a few names; it seems they were trying to check that they had the right room. They started to shoot continuous automatic fire, which went on for a long time... Three had Kalashnikov rifles and one had a machine gun... There were at least three others that I could see behind them; maybe more but I could not see them. I was towards the back of the room and took cover by the toilet and then I was covered by the bodies of detainees who fell on top of me. I was saved by those who died. In the room where I was 46 were killed and I heard that some others were killed next door.”¹⁵⁶

2.6.2 AI also reported of an incident in Mosul, where several Sunni detainees had been killed in the Anti-Terrorism Agency building in Hay al-Danadan district. According to an eyewitness, at around 10pm on 9 June 2014, soldiers took away 13 of the 82 detainees, following which gunshots were heard; at 11.30pm the Iraqi soliders then threw a hand grenade into the cell, killing and injuring a number of detainees.¹⁵⁷

2.6.3 A similar incident was also reported to have taken place in Ba'quba [Diyala governorate] on 16 June, at al-Wahda police station in the Mufaraq district, where 50 people were extra-judicially killed. According to the mayor of Ba'quba (who was interviewed by AI) his nephew, Yassir al-'Ali Ahmed al-Hayali, 21, was among those killed. He stated that Yassir was arrested around a month earlier, during which time he was tortured by security forces (including have his nails removed and being given electric shock treatment). The governor of Diyala, 'Amer al-Mujama'i told AI that the only survivor of the incident, who he spoke with during a visit to Baquba Teaching Hospital, was later abducted from the hospital and killed, his body was found behind the hospital.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Amnesty International, 'Iraq: Testimonies point to dozens of revenge killings of Sunni detainees', 27 June 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-testimonies-point-dozens-revenge-killings-sunni-detainees-2014-06-27>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁵⁶ Amnesty International, 'Iraq: Testimonies point to dozens of revenge killings of Sunni detainees', 27 June 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-testimonies-point-dozens-revenge-killings-sunni-detainees-2014-06-27>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁵⁷ Amnesty International, 'Iraq: Testimonies point to dozens of revenge killings of Sunni detainees', 27 June 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-testimonies-point-dozens-revenge-killings-sunni-detainees-2014-06-27>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁵⁸ Amnesty International, 'Iraq: Testimonies point to dozens of revenge killings of Sunni detainees', 27 June 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-testimonies-point-dozens-revenge-killings-sunni-detainees-2014-06-27>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

- 2.6.4 The Iraqi police claimed the prisoners were killed when the police station was struck with hand grenades and mortar fire (AI, 27 June 2014¹⁵⁹ and NYT, 17 June 2014¹⁶⁰), however a source at the morgue noted that many of the bodies of the men had been shot at close distance (NYT, 17 June 2014).¹⁶¹
- 2.6.5 The New York Times, in an article dated 17 June 2014, corroborated the above referenced incident in Baquaba, reported by Amnesty, although instead recorded that 44 Sunnis had been killed. The same report also noted that in Baghdad 4 young men had been shot and their bodies dumped in a neighbourhood controlled by Shiite militias. The men were left without their identification, but were believed to be of Sunni origin.¹⁶²
- 2.6.6 Amnesty International, in their above-referenced article dated 27 June 2014, provided no information as to why the Sunni persons in Mosul, Baquba or Tal Afar, had been detained. The article did however clarify with regard to the incident at Tal 'Afar, that most of those interviewed claimed they were killed shortly after being arrested and were being held in pre-trial detention. None had been tried.¹⁶³ An article from the New York Times, dated 17 June 2014, referring to a police source, noted that the detainees killed at Baquba, had been held for suspected ties to insurgents, and detained under anti-terror legislation.¹⁶⁴

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2.7. The rule of law in ISIS controlled areas/contested areas

- 2.7.1 Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Deputy Programme Director, Said Boumedouha, stated in a press briefing, dated 11 June 2014, that the takeover of Mosul by ISIS, a group which had in the recent past committed 'gross human rights abuses', was a 'deeply concerning development'.¹⁶⁵
- 2.7.2 Sources indicated that ISIS had destroyed police stations and other government buildings as part of the groups offensive to take control of cities in Sunni areas of the country. For example, the Long War Journal in an article dated 11 June, highlighted that

¹⁵⁹ Amnesty International, 'Iraq: Testimonies point to dozens of revenge killings of Sunni detainees', 27 June 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-testimonies-point-dozens-revenge-killings-sunni-detainees-2014-06-27>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁶⁰ New York Times, 'As Sunnis Die in Iraq, a Cycle Is Restarting', 17 June 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/18/world/middleeast/sectarian-violence-appears-to-spread-to-streets-of-baghdad.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁶¹ New York Times, 'As Sunnis Die in Iraq, a Cycle Is Restarting', 17 June 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/18/world/middleeast/sectarian-violence-appears-to-spread-to-streets-of-baghdad.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁶² New York Times, 'As Sunnis Die in Iraq, a Cycle Is Restarting', 17 June 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/18/world/middleeast/sectarian-violence-appears-to-spread-to-streets-of-baghdad.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁶³ Amnesty International, 'Iraq: Testimonies point to dozens of revenge killings of Sunni detainees', 27 June 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-testimonies-point-dozens-revenge-killings-sunni-detainees-2014-06-27>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁶⁴ New York Times, 'As Sunnis Die in Iraq, a Cycle Is Restarting', 17 June 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/18/world/middleeast/sectarian-violence-appears-to-spread-to-streets-of-baghdad.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁶⁵ Amnesty International, 'Iraq: Civilians must be protected following insurgents' takeover of Mosul', 11 June 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-protection-civilians-must-be-priority-amid-mosul-unrest-2014-06-11>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

an ISIS convoy of 60 units had advanced into the city of Bayji, torching several government buildings, court houses and police headquarters¹⁶⁶; whilst in Mosul, the ISW, reported that the ISIS assault on the city had resulted in ISIS controlling government buildings police stations and military installations both inside and outside of the city.¹⁶⁷

2.7.3 An eye witness report from inside the ISIS controlled city of Hawija, dated 27 June 2014, carried by the Niqash website, corroborated these accounts, and noted that many of the main government or army buildings had been taken over by ISIS. For example, a building used by the 12th Division in Hawija now had a sign that read 'ISIS – Secret Operations Room'; whilst the art school had become a detention centre, where members of the police and army and other locals had been imprisoned. The district council building had now become the 'ISIS – Public relations – Tribal Section', whilst the former police headquarters had become the ISIS military headquarters. The report also indicated that mosques had been turned into judicial courts and ISIS had plans to appoint a local Wali or Guardian.¹⁶⁸

2.7.4 A report produced by the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR), based on a visit to Mosul conducted by members of the HCHR in June 2014 after the fall of Mosul, explained that ISIS had issued a statement to explain their methods of managing the city and the treatment of citizens. The document, which is known as the 'city document', included 16 points. The source noted that all of these points referred to '... clear human rights breaches.' The source highlighted some, but not all of the points, these were:

'...Women must stay home at all times and not to go out unless for a really urgent matter. [...] ... Refusing the positive laws and considering them as burdens for the Iraqis there. [...] ... Banning assemblies and groups [...] ... Demolishing the shrines, saints' graves.[...] ... Consider the members of police and army as convertors and that they should repent or else they'd be killed. ISIL has considered recruitment to the security forces as conversion from Islam!'¹⁶⁹

2.7.5 The IHCHR report additionally noted that ISIS armed forces had closed barber shops; women's clothes shops and closed all shops that sold cigarettes and alcohol.¹⁷⁰ A news article from Al Shorfa Mawtani, dated 21 June 2014, based on reports obtained from within Baghdad, corroborated this information, making reference to the ISIS issued 'laws'. The article indicated that the laws prohibited football games; ordered the closure of sports and entertainment halls and bars; banned the sale of cigarettes and forbid residents from watching certain satellite channels. Referring to an interview with Hassan al-Mosuli, an IDP who fled Mosul and travelled to Baghdad, the source noted:

'The punishments imposed by ISIL include the beheading of anyone caught "collaborating" with the Iraqi security forces, al-Mosuli said, "while anyone caught drinking alcohol is given whip lashes, and those who smoke get their two fingers chopped off". ... Al-Mosuli told Mawtani he decided to leave the city immediately after the release of this document. ... "I do not want to stay there at their mercy, because [ISIL] are beasts,

¹⁶⁶ Long War Journal, 'ISIS takes control of Bayji, Tikrit in lightning southward advance', 11 June 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/isis_take_control_of_1.php#, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁶⁷ Institute for the Study of War, 'ISIS activity in Mosul and beyond', 11 June 2014, <http://iswiraq.blogspot.co.uk/2014/06/isis-activity-in-mosul-and-beyond.html#!/2014/06/isis-activity-in-mosul-and-beyond.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁶⁸ Niqash, Shalaw Mohammed, 'Visiting Hawija, a town controlled by ISIS extremists', 27 June 2014, <http://www.niqash.org/articles/print.php?id=3478&lang=en>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

¹⁶⁹ IHCHR, 'Crisis Cell report about Nineveh-Mosul during June 2014', 18 June 2014 (Hardcopy only), p.2

¹⁷⁰ IHCHR, 'Crisis Cell report about Nineveh-Mosul during June 2014', 18 June 2014 (Hardcopy only), p.2

savages and murderers. I will not return until the Iraqi security forces "liberate our city", he said.' ¹⁷¹

- 2.7.6 The same article, referring to an interview with Sheikh Hisham Taher, head of the Islamic Cultural Forum in Ninawa, stated that the ISIS document:

"... expresses ISIL's ideology and barbarity and the extent of their paranoid obsession with power and the enslavement of people, as they allow for themselves what they prohibit for others ... The people of Mosul have categorically rejected the document in its entirety, and become certain of the difference between living under the rule [of] law, order and a state constitution, and living under the mercy of gangs who go around distributing pieces of paper containing laws we have never heard of before" ¹⁷²

- 2.7.7 The above-referenced IHCHR report also provided information about damage to religious shrines and churches:

'... One of the Christians of Mosul mentioned that ISIL broke into a number of churches, destroyed all of their contents, destroyed their libraries and ancient relics in addition to destroying the Christians' graveyards and that the terrorists ordered them not to have any religious ceremonies.

'... Some of the media outlets have mentioned that ISIL have damaged shrines of the Prophet Younis and Prophet Sheeth, ordered that both shrines be demolished within days and issued warnings against visiting those tombs. The UNESCO condemned destroying the most important tombs and shrines.' ¹⁷³

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2.8. Human rights abuses in ISIS controlled areas

- 2.8.1 There was limited information at the time of writing within the public domain, to indicate whether ISIS 'laws' were being enforced in Mosul or elsewhere. An article from Al Shorfa Mawtani, dated 26 June 2014, referring to an interview with Maysoon Ahmed, deputy head of Iraq's Higher Independent Human Rights Commission, claimed that ISIS had committed 'numerous crimes and human rights violations [in Mosul]', these included torching sacred sites and killing clerics opposed to the group. The same source, citing Maj. Ahmed al-Obaidi, a spokesman for the Iraqi police in Ninawa, told Mawtani, that the ISIS had already killed persons it claims have violated the rules set out in its document. ¹⁷⁴
- 2.8.2 An article published by Letta Tayler in Foreign Policy, dated 13 June 2014, claimed that prior to the fall of Mosul to ISIS, the group had been 'operating openly for years in Mosul', killing civilians with impunity, manipulating the justice system and collecting 'jihad taxes'

¹⁷¹ Al Shorfa Mawtani, 'Mosul residents ridicule ISIL 'rules': witnesses', 21 June 2014, http://mawtani.al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/iii/features/2014/06/21/feature-01, date accessed: 4 July 2014

¹⁷² Al Shorfa Mawtani, 'Mosul residents ridicule ISIL 'rules': witnesses', 21 June 2014, http://mawtani.al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/iii/features/2014/06/21/feature-01, date accessed: 4 July 2014

¹⁷³ IHCHR, Crisis Cell report about Nineveh-Mosul during June 2014, undated circa 2014 (Hardcopy only), p.2

¹⁷⁴ Al Shorfa Mawtani, 'Mosul residents ridicule ISIL 'rules': witnesses', 21 June 2014, http://mawtani.al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/iii/features/2014/06/21/feature-01, date accessed: 4 July 2014

from local businesses, including state-run cement companies; cellphone firms; doctor's offices; parking garages and farmers markets. Referring to a case involving a metal worker, Laith Hadi Banham, the report highlighted that Mr Banham was killed following an incident in which he refused to repair a silencer for two armed men who entered his shop. The incident was attributed to ISIS by the local authorities, but although there were many witnesses, the authorities did not investigate the case and made no arrests. The article also referred to ISIS involvement in the assassination of journalists and judges; and noted that in practice the authorities were 'too scared to take action' or appeared to be working with ISIS and other armed groups. The report also noted that the security forces also suffered from corruption; intimidation and incompetence. Although the report noted that Mr Banham was a Christian; the source indicated that ISIS intimidated all groups, including Christians; Shiites and Sunnis.¹⁷⁵

- 2.8.3 An eye witness report from inside the ISIS controlled city of Hawija, dated 27 June 2014, carried by the Niqash website, reported that government workers who remained in the city had not attended work, because it was unlikely the Iraqi central government or ISIS, would continue to pay their salaries. The source indicated that in Mosul the government had declared government workers to be under a period of 'open vacation'. According to one former administrator in Hawija, ISIS were calling for people to go back to work, but only a few were responding to these calls. The source did not however indicate that former government workers had been intimidated or coerced to return to their duties.¹⁷⁶
- 2.8.4 A report produced by the IHCHR, obtained and translated by the British Embassy, based on a visit to Mosul conducted by members of the HCHR in June 2014 after the fall of Mosul to ISIL, highlighted that reports regarding the abuse of women in Mosul were difficult to confirm and indicated that intimidation may be factor to explain this. The source also highlighted that the number of women raped by ISIS varied, and went on to indicate that 'some of the residents of Mosul – who are well informed...', indicated that no crimes against women had taken place, and that these were rumours. However the report also referred to some sources who told the delegation: '... [T]hat the armed people have the right to take any women they fancy and rape them on the grounds that those women are booties of war, and that it is the right of ISIL to ask men to divorce their wives and if they refused then ISIL take their daughters instead.'¹⁷⁷
- 2.8.5 A report from HRW dated 27 May 2014, citing several oral sources, referred to a number of examples of human rights abuses having been committed in Fallujah by the various armed actors present in the area. This included the execution by ISIS of captured Iraqi soldiers, car bomb attacks in civilian areas and the running of an unauthorised prison by ISIS in Hay al-Slnaa'y (the industrial zone on the south-eastern edge of Fallujah). The source also reported that other armed groups, fighting under the umbrella of the Anbar Military Council, had committed summary executions during the fighting and that government SWAT forces in Ramadi had executed 11 residents on a main street because they 'were not taking part in the fighting'; prompting revenge attacks by armed opposition groups.¹⁷⁸
- 2.8.6 Citing an individual named as Abu Mohamed, who claimed he was detained by ISIS in Fallujah, the source provided the following account:

¹⁷⁵ Foreign Policy, 'Before the fall', 12 June 2014,

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/06/12/before_the_fall_iraq_isis_mosul, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁷⁶ Niqash, Shalaw Mohammed, 'Visiting Hawija, a town controlled by ISIS extremists', 27 June 2014,

<http://www.niqash.org/articles/print.php?id=3478&lang=en>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

¹⁷⁷ IHCHR, Crisis Cell report about Nineveh-Mosul during June 2014, 18 June 2014, p.4

¹⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital', 27 May 2014,

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

'One Fallujah resident, Abu Mohamed, told Human Rights Watch that three fighters who identified themselves as from ISIS detained him in January, held him for several hours in a house, and released him when they were convinced he was not working for the government. "We are here to protect you," he said they told him. Abu Mohamed, who fled Fallujah after his release, also said that four men who identified themselves as from ISIS had detained a friend of his in Fallujah, a policeman, blindfolding him and holding him for 10 hours. They released him after he promised to stop working for the government, Abu Mohamed said.'¹⁷⁹

- 2.8.7 A report from UNHCR dated 30 June 2014 confirmed that since 25 June as many as 10,000 persons fled their homes from Qaraqosh (also known as Hamdaniya) and sought refuge in Kurdistan, following reports of violence close to their community. According to accounts given by displaced persons, mortar rounds landed close to Qaraqosh prompting the displacement (Qaraqosh has a population of approximately 50,000, and is predominantly a Christian community).¹⁸⁰
- 2.8.8 A report from Human Rights Watch, dated 26 June 2014, provided satellite imagery which strongly indicated that ISIS had conducted mass executions in Tikrit, after seizing control of the city on 11 June 2014. Analysis of the data indicated between 160 and 190 men had been killed in two locations between 11 and 14 June. HRW reported that they were able to speak with one man who fled Tikrit and witnessed ISIS taking prisoners who wore civilian clothes. As noted: 'I saw them with my own eyes. It was late afternoon. It was a long line. I saw about 10 armed gunmen with their guns pointed at the line of men, walking them to military trucks. Some of the gunmen had masks and others showed their faces. The [captured] men were not handcuffed. They wore civilian clothes.'¹⁸¹
- 2.8.9 On 14 June 2014 ISIS posted approximately 60 photographs showing ISIS fighters loading captives in civilian clothing, onto trucks and forcing them to lie in shallow trenches. The source further noted that 'some of the images showed masked gunmen ... firing their weapons at these men.' The HRW also reported that earlier on 12 June, ISIS claimed to have executed 1,700 'Shi'a members of the army' in Tikrit. The source did not however indicate whether the persons dressed in civilian clothing, and who may have been executed, were in fact employed in the Iraqi security forces or of Shiite origin.¹⁸² The HRW concluded: 'Human Rights Watch has previously documented serious crimes by ISIS in other areas of Iraq and Syria, including car and suicide bomb attacks in civilian areas, summary executions, torture in detention, discrimination against women, and destruction of religious property. The evidence documented by Human Rights Watch strongly suggests that some of these acts may amount to crimes against humanity. ... "ISIS is committing mass murder, and advertising it as well," said Peter Bouckaert Director, Emergencies at Human Rights Watch.'¹⁸³
- 2.8.10 Human Rights Watch reported on 27 June 2014, that between 23 and 26 June, ISIS attacked areas north of Mosul, kidnapping at least 40 Shia Turkmen; attacking property and destroying Shia shrines, leading to mass displacement. According to reports from

¹⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: Government attacks Fallujah hospital', 27 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/27/iraq-government-attacking-fallujah-hospital>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁸⁰ UNHCR, 'Iraq – 10,000 displaced from Christian communities near Mosul', 30 June 2014, <http://www.unhcr.org/53ad47569.html>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁸¹ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: ISIS execution site located', 26 June 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/print/news/2014/06/26/iraq-isis-execution-site-located>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁸² Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: ISIS execution site located', 26 June 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/print/news/2014/06/26/iraq-isis-execution-site-located>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁸³ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: ISIS execution site located', 26 June 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/print/news/2014/06/26/iraq-isis-execution-site-located>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

Sunnis, some of the individuals kidnapped had since been executed by ISIS. An eye witness account, referring to events in Guba village, reported that ISIS was checking ID cards, rounding up men and boys and announced over a loud-speaker that 'All of you [Shia] have to leave.' The younger boys, together with Sunnis were told they could leave. An international NGO worker also confirmed that ISIS released 20 of the captives, after determining they were Sunni. In the town of Tal Afar, ISIS also destroyed Shia shrines on 25 and 26 June, leading to 90 per cent of the city's Turkmen population to flee.¹⁸⁴

2.8.11 A report by Letta Tayler, published by CNN on 24 June 2014, noted that in late June, in al-Hamdaniyah district, Ninewa, Sunni extremists kidnapped 26 Shia Turkmen from their homes, prompting 'scores' of other Shia families to flee the area. Whilst in May 2014, ISIS gunmen shot and killed 6 Yazidi farmers; prompting thousands to flee to Sanjar, a town west of Mosul. However according to the article, this placed displaced Yazidi's in an unsafe area, where they were caught between Shia and ISIS groups who were engaged in fighting.¹⁸⁵

2.8.12 According to Louis Sako, Chaldean Catholic Patriarch, the situation [in Ninewa] was 'critical'; Mr Sako went on to explain that with the country moving towards separation between Sunni; Shia and Kurds, this placed Christians in an especially difficult situation (CNN, 24 June 2014).¹⁸⁶ The source provided further background information on the religious minority groups in the Ninewah Plains area.

2.8.13 See also: [Annex C: Ethno-religious and tribal groups](#). Additionally refer to the [COI Service bulletin, Security situation, August 2013](#) and section 10 on non-state protection, which includes information on tribal and political militias, and the risks to religious and ethnic minorities.

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2.9. Protection provided by the Government of Iraq to civilians in ISIS controlled/constested areas

2.9.1 The following section should be read together with information included in the: [COI Service bulletin, Security situation, August 2013](#) and section 9 on 'Protection provided by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and implementation of the rule of law'.

2.9.2 The Institute for the Study of War provides frequently updated reports, documenting the control of territory held by ISIS and government forces. The most recent report, available at the time of publication, dated 2 July 2014, noted that ISIS still held control of several key urban centres in Iraq, these included Falujah; Mosul; Tikrit and Hawija.¹⁸⁷ To refer to

¹⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch, 'Iraq: ISIS Kidnaps Shia Turkmen, Destroys Shrines', 27 June 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/print/news/2014/06/27/iraq-isis-kidnaps-shia-turkmen-destroys-shrines>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁸⁵ CNN, 'Iraq's minorities left between a scorpion and a hard place', Letta Tayler, <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2014/06/24/iraqs-minorities-left-between-scorpions-and-a-hard-place/>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁸⁶ CNN, 'Iraq's minorities left between a scorpion and a hard place', Letta Tayler, <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2014/06/24/iraqs-minorities-left-between-scorpions-and-a-hard-place/>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁸⁷ Institute for the Study of War, 'Control of Terrain in Iraq', 2 July 2014, <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/control-terrain-iraq-july-2-2014>, date accessed: 3 July 2014

the latest map access the [ISW website](#). The Long War journal also provides a Google map of 'Iraqi and Syrian Towns and Cities seized by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham and its allies', last updated 30 June 2014.¹⁸⁸

2.9.3 The Iraqi armed forces have been supported with over £25bn in training and infrastructure support by the US and its allies; have over 250,000 front line troops (not counting paramilitary police units) and are equipped with almost 400 tanks; 2,500 armoured vehicles and 278 aircraft (The Guardian, 12 June 2014).¹⁸⁹ However despite significantly greater numbers of personnel, resources and equipment, sources have consistently highlighted that as of late June 2014, the Iraqi Security Forces had failed to provide an effective counter-insurgency response to the ISIS threat.¹⁹⁰

2.9.4 An article by Erin Evers, HRW researcher based in Baghdad, provided the first hand account of a Sunni man named as 'Ahmed', who previously worked as a translator for the US forces and feared he would be targeted by insurgents should he attempt to flee his hometown (not specified, but located in the 'Sunni triange' area of Iraq, north of Baghdad). The source commented on the protection available to civilians by government forces, in areas currently being contested, including areas populated by Sunnis. As noted:

'Many Iraqis believe – based on what they've told Human Rights Watch – that Iraq's security forces are overstretched and crumbling. Corrupt or terrified untrained soldiers desert, and others are being slaughtered. ISIL has posted pictures of hundreds of dead Iraqi soldiers and videos of themselves apparently summarily executing border guards who refused to pledge allegiance to the "Islamic State," claiming the group had killed more than 1,000 members of the army. The Shia militias fighting alongside the army polarize and terrify much of Iraq's population due to their history of killings with impunity during Iraq's civil war, and more recent reports of their carrying out summary executions of Sunnis around Baghdad and in Diyala. In turn, ISIL's unmitigated violence, in the form of daily suicide and car bomb attacks, provide the Iraqi government the cover it needs to work with these militias despite their brutality.

'Ahmed told me that community leaders from his town had asked the governor of Salah al-Din, its police chief and the president of the provincial council to intervene against ISIL. "We begged them for help but they told us, 'We can't help you now, we have to wait for zero hour.' When is zero hour? We already have no drinkable water, fuel or gasoline, soon we'll run out of food," he said. ... It has been 14 days since ISIL took control of Tikrit, occupying its presidential palaces, confiscating the weapons of the Iraqi army's 4th Division, occupying police buildings and killing former members of the "Awakening councils," which Sunni tribal leaders organized to defeat al Qaeda during Iraq's previous civil war. Ahmed said that former Iraqi army officers in his town had given the government GPS coordinates for ISIL checkpoints in Tikrit, but that security forces so far had "done nothing."

¹⁸⁸ Long War Journal, Google map of 'Iraqi and Syrian Towns and Cities seized by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham and its allies', updated 30 June 2014

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&oe=UTF8&msa=0&msid=206503076099972915830.0004fb81021906110e889&t=m&source=embed&ll=34.939985,41.616211&spn=6.302619,12.304687&z=6>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

¹⁸⁹ The Guardian, 'How effective is ISIS compared with the Iraqi army and Kurdish peshmerga?', 12 June 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/12/how-battle-ready-isis-iraqi-army-peshmerga>, date accessed: 1 August 2014

¹⁹⁰ For example See: BBC, 'Is this the end of Iraq?', 30 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27815618>, date accessed: 1 July 2014

‘Ahmed felt stuck: When I asked him why he thinks government forces or the Shia militias working with them had not yet come to fight ISIL in his area, he expressed a visceral sense of betrayal. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki “doesn’t care about assassinations of Sunni against Sunni as long as the [majority Shia] south is safe,” he said. Right or not, dozens of moderate Sunnis in Iraq hold similar views: After years of discrimination and persecution by government security forces, they now feel the government has abandoned them to the brutal mercies of ISIL.’¹⁹¹

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¹⁹¹ Politico magazine, Erin Eavers, ‘No way out’, 26 June 2014, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/06/no-way-out-108200_full.html?print, date accessed: 1 July 2014

Annex A: Map of Iraq

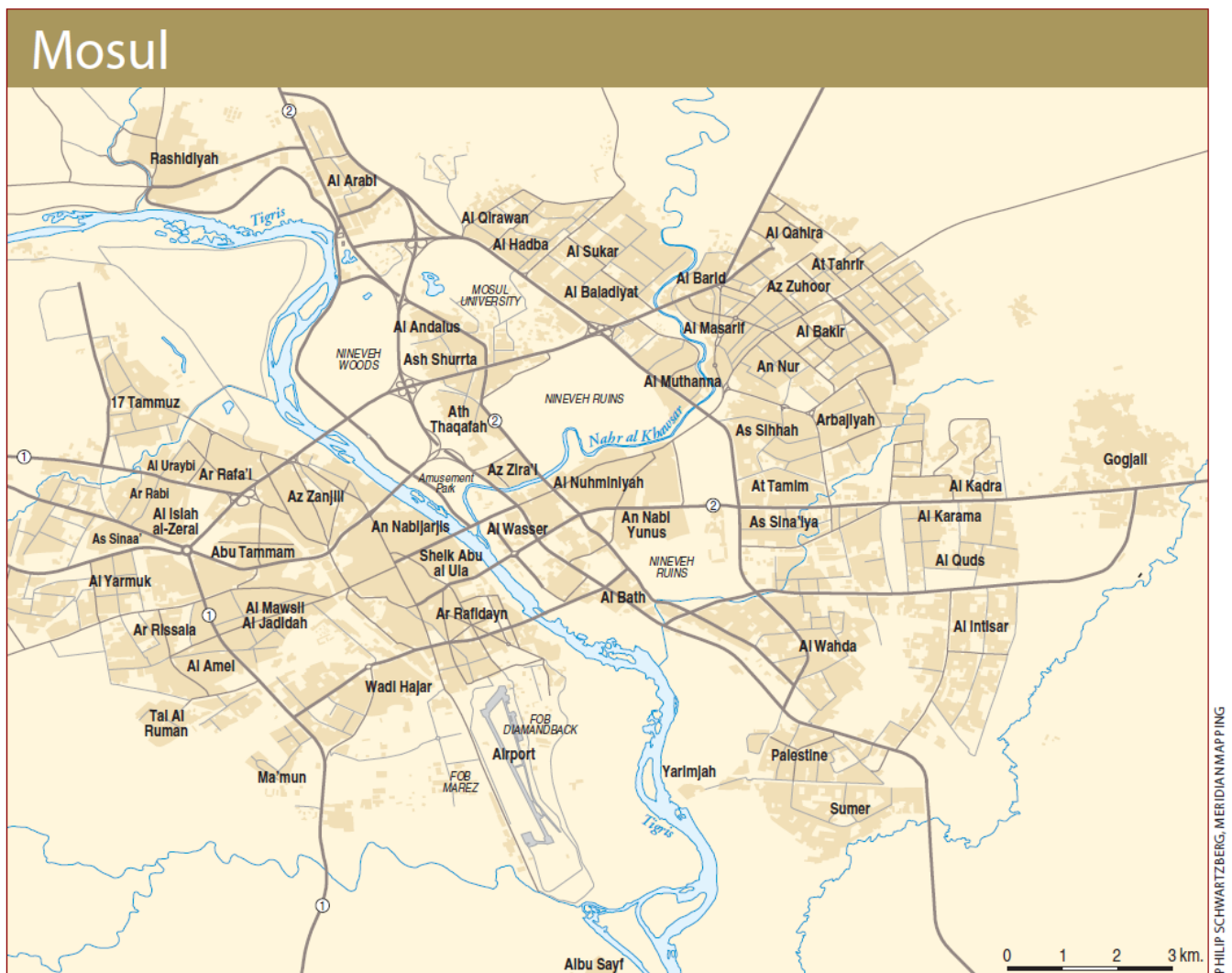


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¹⁹² Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security, 28 October 2009, p.54, <http://www.fas.org/spp/crs/mideast/RL31339.pdf>, date accessed: 26 July 2013
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Annex B: Map of Mosul

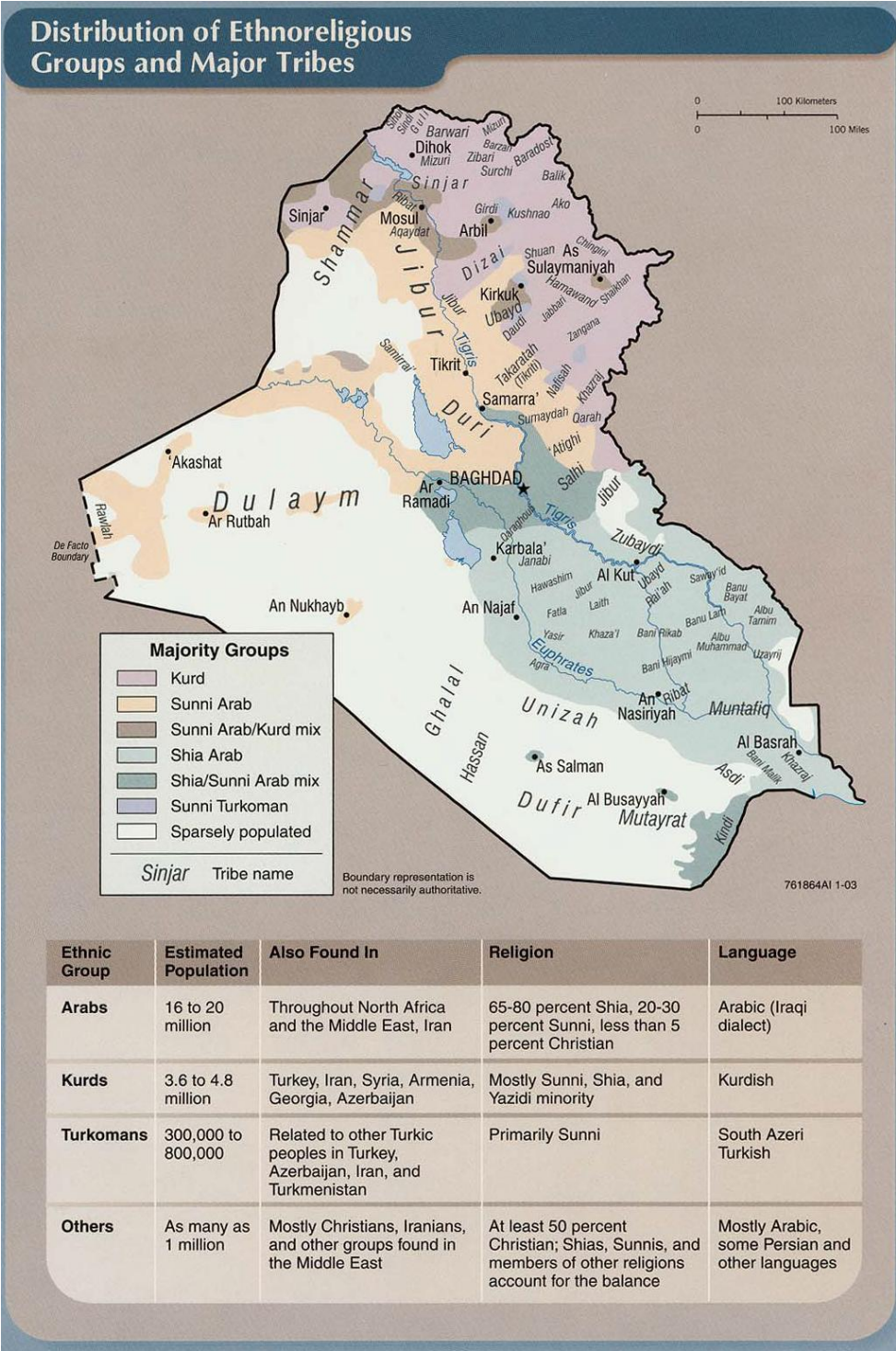


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¹⁹³ ISW, 'Map of Mosul', 10 August 2012, <http://www.understandingwar.org/map/map-mosul>, date accessed: 6 August 2014

Annex C: Ethno-religious and tribal groups

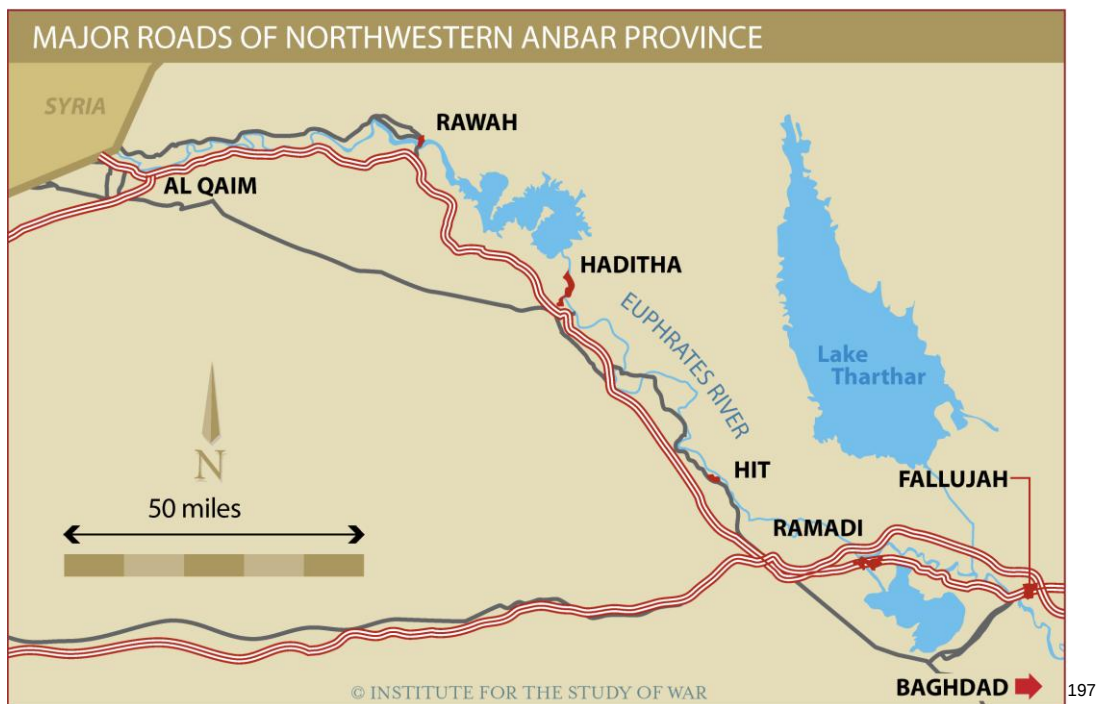
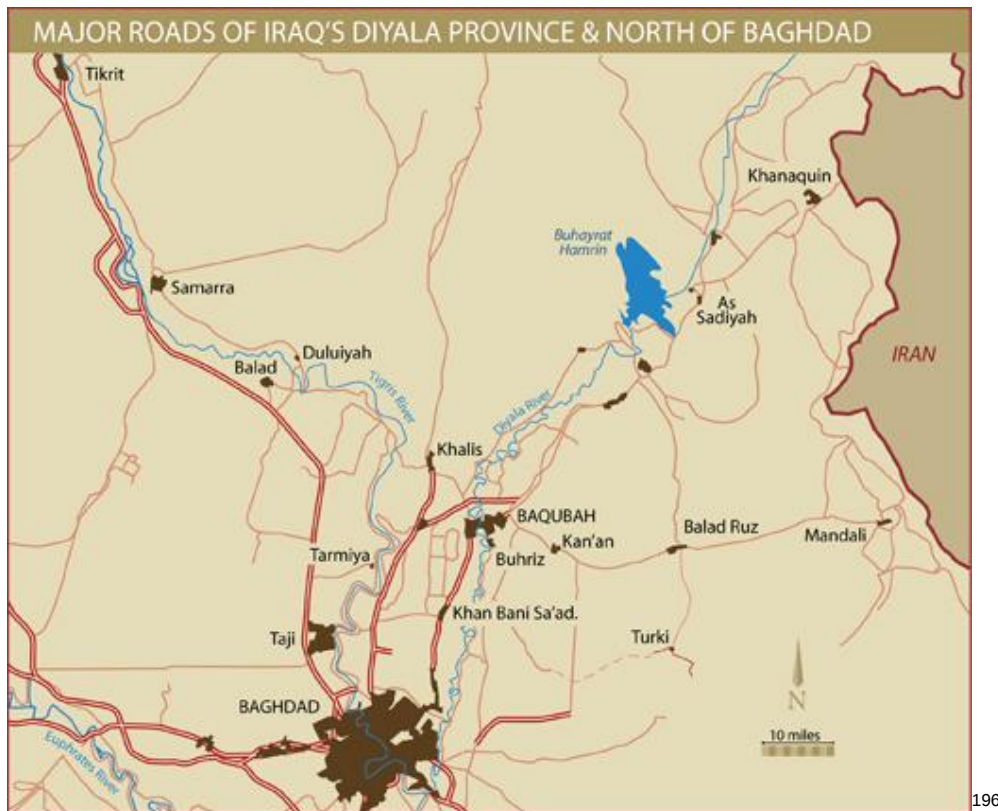


¹⁹⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, Distribution of Ethnoreligious groups and major tribes', 30 June 2003, accessed via reliefweb, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/6E882D37A00386958525728F005BD483-cia_POP_irq030630.pdf, date accessed: 6 August 2014

¹⁹⁵ This source of COI was published in 2003, and therefore will be dated. The information should be used only as a general indicator of the ethno-religious and tribal make up of Iraq

Annex D: Maps of major roads through northern and central Iraq

The following maps are taken from the Institute for the Study of War website:



¹⁹⁶ Institute for the Study of War, 'Major roads of Iraq's Diyala province and north of Baghdad', <http://www.understandingwar.org/map/northern-baghdad-and-diyala-province-roads>, date accessed: 8 August 2014



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¹⁹⁷ ISW, 'Major roads of Anbar province', 13 November 2008, <http://www.understandingwar.org/map/major-roads-anbar-province>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

¹⁹⁸ ISW, 'Central and Northern Iraq', 12 November 2008, <http://www.understandingwar.org/map/central-and-northern-iraq>, date accessed: 8 August 2014

Annex E: Case law

The following case law is relevant to consider the basis of claim in this country information and guidance product. The guidance section above (section 1) outlines relevant sections to consider. The links below provide access to the full text:

- [HM and others \(Article 15\(c\)\) Iraq CG \[2012\] UKUT 00409\(IAC\) \(13 November 2012\)](#)
- [MK \(documents – relocation\) Iraq CG \[2012\] UKUT 00126 \(IAC\) \(25 April 2012\)](#)
- [QD \(Iraq\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2009\] EWCA Civ620 \(24 June 2009\)](#)
- [Elgafaji v. Staatssecretaris van Justitie, C-465/07, European Union: European Court of Justice, 17 February 2009](#)

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