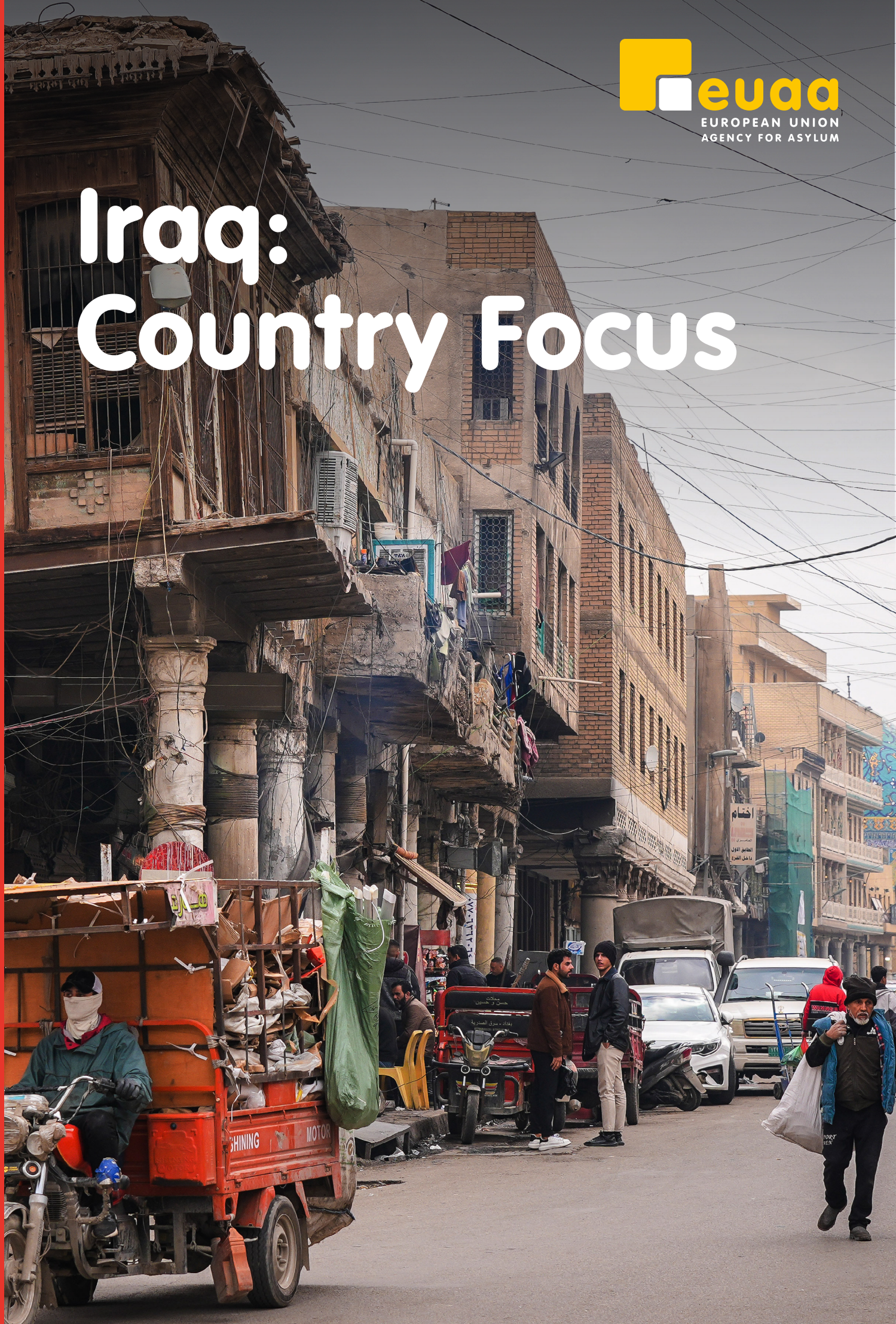


# Iraq: Country Focus





## **Iraq - Country Focus**

### **Country of Origin Information Report**

**October 2025**





Manuscript completed in September 2025

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The review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report, but it does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of EUAA.





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# Disclaimer

This report was written according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#). The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with the utmost care within a limited timeframe. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

‘Refugee’, ‘risk’ and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EUAA nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 12 September 2025. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).



## Glossary and abbreviations

Each term of the glossary and each definition begin with a capital letter. Borders of the glossary are transparent.

Term	Definition
<b>ACLED</b>	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
<b><i>Asayish</i></b>	Internal security and intelligence services of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq
<b>CJTF-OIR</b>	Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve
<b>CTS</b>	Counter Terrorism Services
<b>DTM</b>	IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix
<b>ERW</b>	Explosive Remnants of War
<b><i>Fasliya</i></b>	A practice of trading women/girls to settle tribal disputes
<b>FGM/C</b>	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
<b><i>Ghasl al-yar</i></b>	Shame-washing; action taken, such as honour killing, to remove shame
<b>HTS</b>	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IED</b>	Improvised Explosive Device
<b><i>Ikhhbar</i></b>	A tribal procedure aimed at reporting a relative with perceived affiliation to ISIL





Term	Definition
<b>IRGC</b>	Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps
<b>IRGC – QF</b>	Quds Forces of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps of Iran
<b>ISF</b>	Iraqi Security Forces
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State (IS), or Daesh
<b>ISW</b>	Institute for the Study of War
<b>FP</b>	Federal Police
<b>Jaafari school</b>	School of Islamic jurisprudence
<b>KDP</b>	Kurdistan Democratic Party
<b>KH</b>	Kata'ib Hezbollah (Battalions of the Party of God); Iranian-backed Shia militia that is part of the Popular Mobilisation Units. KH was designated by the US as a terrorist organisation on 2 July 2 009.
<b>KRG</b>	Kurdistan Regional Government
<b>KRI</b>	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
<b>KSF</b>	Kurdish Security Forces
<b>KSS</b>	Kata'ib Sayyid Al-Shuhada
<b><i>Mudawana</i></b>	Personal Status Code
<b><i>Mukhtar</i></b>	Local community leader





Term	Definition
<b>PDS</b>	Public Distribution System card for food assistance
<b>Peshmerga</b>	Military forces of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq
<b>PKK</b>	Kurdistan Workers' Party. The PKK is on the European Union's list of designated groups which have been involved in terrorism, as well as being listed as a terrorist organisation by Türkiye, the United States, and Australia.
<b>PMF</b>	Popular Mobilization Forces or Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), also called <i>Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi</i> in Arabic
<b>PUK</b>	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
<b>Tabriya</b>	A tribal procedure aimed at disowning a person, e.g., in cases of affiliation with ISIL
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNAMI</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
<b>USDOS</b>	US Department of State
<b>UXO</b>	Unexploded Ordnance
<b>YBS</b>	Sinjar Resistance Units







# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information for the assessment of international protection status determination, including refugee status and subsidiary protection.

The report provides information on the security situation, the treatment of selected profiles by state and non-state actors as well as on humanitarian and socio-economic situation in the country. The reference period is 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025.

The report is to be read as an update of the [EUAA COI report: Iraq – Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#), and of the [EUAA COI report: Iraq - Country Focus, May 2024](#).

## Methodology

This report was drafted by the EUAA and reviewed by EUAA and national COI departments in EU+ countries, as mentioned in the [Acknowledgements](#) section. This report is produced in line with the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#)<sup>1</sup> and the [EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide \(2023\)](#).<sup>2</sup> It is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

## Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference (ToR) of this report were defined by EUAA based on discussions held and input received from COI experts in the EUAA COI specialist network on Iraq. The ToR also built on previous EUAA COI reports on Iraq covering the same topics. The Terms of Reference for this report can be found in [Annex 2: Terms of Reference](#).

## Collecting information

This report is based on information gathered from extensive desk research using predominantly public and electronic sources as well as written exchanges with experts until 18 August 2025. All information from these sources was consulted within time constraints. Some limited additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 12 September 2025.

## Quality control

To ensure that the authors respected the EUAA COI Report Methodology and that the Terms of Reference were comprehensively addressed, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and organisations listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgements](#) section. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were

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<sup>1</sup> EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>2</sup> EUAA, Writing and Referencing Guide for EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, February 2023, [url](#)



implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 12 September 2025. EUAA also performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

## Sources

In accordance with EUAA COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: COI reports by governments; information from civil society, advocacy groups, humanitarian organisations, and NGOs; international and NGO human rights reports; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Iraq and regionally-based media; academic publications, think tank reports and specialised sources covering Iraq. In addition to using publicly available documentary sources, interviews with experts were conducted in order to supplement information gaps and/or to further corroborate some information. The chapters related to entry, residency requirements and access to civil documentation and services and the chapters on Palestinians in Iraq extensively rely on information provided by UNHCR. Sources were assessed for their background, publication history, reputability, and current knowledge of the situation on the ground. All the public and oral sources referenced in this report are cited and described in [Annex 1: Bibliography](#).

### Sources on security incidents

For data on violent incidents, publicly available curated datasets from the organisation [Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project \(ACLED\)](#) have been used. ACLED is a project collecting, analysing and mapping information on crisis and conflict in Africa, South and South-east Asia and Middle East and provides datasets on conflict incidents. It collects data on violent incidents in Iraq, coding each incident with the time and place, type of violent incident, the parties involved and the number of fatalities. The information is collected in a database that is openly accessible, searchable and kept continuously up to date. The data primarily come from secondary sources such as traditional media reports, but also from reports by international institutions and non-governmental organisations, targeted new media platforms, and data provided by local partners of ACLED.<sup>3</sup> On Iraq, ACLED incorporates data from a number of partners, including Aid Worker Security Database, Airwars, Front Line Defenders, Liveuamap, and the Center for Civilians in Conflict.<sup>4</sup>

ACLED codes security incidents as follows:

- **Battles:** violent clashes between at least two armed groups. Battles can occur between armed and organised state, non-state, and external groups, and in any combination therein. Sub-events of battles are armed clashes, government regaining territory and non-state actor overtaking territory.
- **Violence against civilians:** violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants. It includes violent attacks

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<sup>3</sup> ACLED, Methodology, April 2019, [url](#) ACLED, FAQs: ACLED Sourcing Methodology, March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>4</sup> ACLED, Research & Local Data Collection Partners, nd., [url](#)



on unarmed civilians such as sexual violence, attacks, abduction/forced disappearance.

- **Explosions/remote violence:** events where an explosion, bomb or other explosive devices were used to engage in conflict. They include one-sided violent events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the targets to engage or defend themselves and their location. They include air/drone strikes, suicide bombs, shelling/artillery/missile attacks, remote explosive/landmine/IEDs, grenades, chemical weapons.
- **Riots:** are a violent demonstration, often involving a spontaneous action by unorganised, unaffiliated members of society. They include violent demonstrations and mob violence.
- **Protests:** public demonstration in which the participants do not engage in violence, though violence may be used against them. They include peaceful protests, protests with intervention, excessive force against protesters.
- **Strategic developments:** information regarding the activities of violent groups that is not itself recorded as political violence, yet may trigger future events or contribute to political dynamics within and across states. It includes agreements, change to group/activity, non-violent transfer of territory, arrests.<sup>5</sup>

For the purpose of this report only the following type of events were included in the analysis: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians. Security incidents numbers and associated graphs/maps at country and governorate level are based on a publicly available ACLED dataset for Middle East.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, ACLED codes actors involved in security incidents as follows: Actor1 is the 'named actor involved in the event' and Actor2 is the 'named actor involved in the event', while "[i]n most cases, an event requires two actors, noted in columns 'ACTOR1' and 'ACTOR2'". However, event types 'Explosions/Remote violence', 'Riots', 'Protests', and 'Strategic developments' can include 'one-sided events'.<sup>7</sup> The ACLED coding of Actor1 and Actor2 does not necessarily indicate that one is the aggressor (e.g. Actor1) and the other one (e.g. Actor2) the target or victim.<sup>8</sup> When focusing on the involvement of specific actors within certain regions, the drafters based their analysis on all those incidents, where ACLED coded the relevant actor either as 'Actor1' or as 'Actor2'. This approach aims to illustrate the general level of involvement of the respective actors in the conflict without distinguishing between Actor1 and Actor2, as these categories, according to ACLED's methodology, do not indicate any differentiation in terms of content/semantics.

Potential limits for COI use of ACLED data include:

- Data primarily come from secondary sources such as media reports. Secondary sources used by ACLED are of variable quality, may be politically biased, and may lack comprehensiveness.

<sup>5</sup> ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2023, [url](#), pp. 10-20

<sup>6</sup> ACLED, Data Export Tool, Middle East (29 March 2024), [url](#)

<sup>7</sup> ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2023, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>8</sup> ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2023, [url](#), p. 4



- Certain secondary sources might be overrepresented in ACLED datasets covering security incidents in a specific country/province.
- Lack of reporting or underreporting for specific countries/provinces can occur.
- Geographical precision of security incidents is variable: the provincial capital will represent the region if no further details are available and may be over-represented.

To mitigate these challenges and limitations, ACLED data on security incidents has been corroborated/contrasted with information from other sources which were available over the reference period.

## Sources on civilian casualties

The main source on civilian casualties and civilians killed in Iraq used in this report is the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). UNAMI figures/data on casualties (killed and injured) were received from UNAMI-HRO (Human rights Office) upon request. UNAMI no longer provides publicly available casualty figures for Iraq. The number of incidents provided by UNAMI-HRO were only those armed conflict-related incidents which had directly impacted on civilians (causing civilian casualties) and on the civilian nature of property and protected areas (such as civilian houses, cropland, schools, health facilities and mosque).<sup>9</sup> UNAMI-HRO verifies every single incident with at least three independent sources of information. These sources include victims, family members of victims, witnesses, local tribal elders and Sheikhs, local journalists, local civilian authorities (including mayors and district administrators), local health facilities and health professionals and security officials (primarily local police) who witnessed or have knowledge of the incident.<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, data on civilian deaths collected by the [Uppsala Conflict Data Program \(UCDP\)](#) have been also included. The UCDP is a 'data collection project for civil war'.<sup>11</sup> The UCDP provided EUAA with a Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) covering the reference period of the report. The UCDP's methodology is explained on its website as well as its GED Codebook.<sup>12</sup> The unit of analysis of the UCDP is the 'event'<sup>13</sup> which is defined as '[a]n incident where armed force was used by an organised actor against another organised actor, or against civilians, resulting in at least 1 direct death at a specific location and a specific date'.<sup>14</sup> This leads, among other things, to 'seemingly low estimates' because 'a number of factors can preclude a potential conflict event from inclusion in the UCDP GED', for example, unclear actors or uncertainty about whether fatalities occurred.<sup>15</sup> The UCDP provides three estimates for fatalities for each event – a low estimate, a best estimate, and a high estimate. In addition, the UCDP provides an estimate of the number of civilian deaths.<sup>16</sup> According to the UCDP, 'it is

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<sup>9</sup> UNAMI, email to EASO, 11 November 2021

<sup>10</sup> UNAMI, email to EASO, 11 November 2021

<sup>11</sup> UCDP, About UCDP, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>12</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#); UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>13</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>14</sup> UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>15</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>16</sup> UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), pp. 5, 11, 24



quite likely that there are more fatalities than given in the best estimate, but it is very unlikely that there are fewer'.<sup>17</sup>

The stricter definition of an event of the UCDP excludes violent incidents that are recorded by ACLED. This definition includes ACLED's option to assign violent events to 'unidentified armed groups'. The difference in definitions is one explanatory factor of why the number of events recorded by ACLED can be significantly higher than the number recorded by the UCDP.<sup>18</sup> In this report, the UCDP data has been used to contrast ACLED data and to provide figures on civilian deaths. To reflect the security dynamic in Iraq, where the actor behind many security incidents is unknown, EUAA not only includes events that meet all the UCDP's set criteria (codified as 'clear' events in the UCDP dataset), but also include events codified as 'unclear' and 'not applicable'.

## Structure and use of the report

The report's first chapter provides information on the security situation, including information on political developments in the country, the current security situation, impacts of the security situation on civilian population at national level. Sub-chapter 1.4 includes a governorate-level description of the security situation, except for the southern governorates and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq sub-chapters, where the information has been clustered. Each governorate chapter includes a brief description of the governorate, actors involved in the conflict, recent security trends, including information on civilian casualties, civilian infrastructure impacted and the existence of unexploded ordnances (UXO) and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), as well as information on displacement and return.

The governorate chapters of the report follow the order: Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Southern governorates, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah). At the beginning of May 2025, Halabja officially became Iraq's 19<sup>th</sup> governorate, separating it from Sulaymaniyah governorate.<sup>19</sup> However, for the purposes of this report, data on Halabja is clustered with Sulaymaniyah governorate, as the majority of sources did not treat it as a separate governorate, with the exception of UCDP in the section on civilian casualties. Furthermore, the administrative change only applied to the last three months of the 12-month reference period (see [section 1.4.8](#)). For organisational purposes only, this report groups together several governorates under 'southern' chapter: Babil, Basrah, Thi-Qar, Kerbala, Missan, Muthanna, Najaf, Qadissiya, and Wassit.

This is followed by [Chapter 2](#) which is divided into ten sub-chapters. First sub-chapter outlines the general human rights situation in the country. Each sub-chapter contains information on the general situation of selected groups of individuals or profiles within the Iraqi society as well as their treatment by state, state-affiliated actors and non-state actors. For better readability, cross-links among the sub-chapters of the report are provided where information regarding one or more profiles overlaps with information related to other profiles

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<sup>17</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>18</sup> ACLED, Comparing Conflict Data, Similarities and Differences Across Conflict Datasets, August 2019, [url](#), pp. 5–7

<sup>19</sup> Rudaw, Halabja becomes Iraq's 19th province, 5 May 2025, [url](#)







covered in this report. Thereafter, chapter 3 outlines the humanitarian and socio-economic situation, including updates on requirements needed to enter and settle in some governorates/cities, and the requirements needed to access civil documentation and services.



**IRAQ**

**TURKEY**

**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

**SAUDI ARABIA**

**KUWAIT**

**Persian Gulf**

**Legend:**

- National capital
- Governorate capital
- Town, village
- Airport
- International boundary
- Governorate boundary
- Expressway
- Main road
- Secondary road
- Railroad

**Scale:** 0 50 100 150 200 300 km / 0 50 100 150 200 mi

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map No. 3835 Rev. 6 UNITED NATIONS July 2014

Department of Field Support Cartographic Section

<sup>20</sup>Map 1: UN, Iraq - Map No. 3835 Rev.6, July 2014

# 1. General description of the security situation

## 1.1 Political developments in Federal Iraq and in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

In a December 2024 briefing to the UN Security Council, Mohamed al Hassan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), described Iraq as ‘more secure, stable and open’ than in previous years. He highlighted the successful completion of the national census in November 2024 and the parliamentary elections in the KRI as significant achievements. At the same time, he warned that these achievements risk being undermined by persistent and systemic corruption, which continues to hinder governance and development efforts.<sup>21</sup>

During the reference period, Iraq made progress on a national level to resolve political gridlock. After nearly a year of political stalemate, the Iraqi Parliament elected Sunni lawmaker Mahmoud Al-Mashhadani as its new speaker in late October 2024.<sup>22</sup> In February 2025, controversial legislative changes came into force, including the Property Restitution Law and amendments to the General Amnesty Law and the Personal Status Law. The latter drew significant criticism from NGOs and Iraqi civil society, including Human Rights Watch, which highlighted that the amendments endangered the rights and protections of women and girls.<sup>23</sup> (For further information on the latest legislation impacting civil and human rights see [section 2.2.](#)) Meanwhile, preparations are underway for the national parliamentary elections scheduled for November 2025. The ruling Shiite alliance, the Coordination Framework, has announced that its constituent parties will run separately, with plans to reunite post-election.<sup>24</sup>

In the realm of regional diplomacy, Iraq hosted the 34<sup>th</sup> Arab League Summit in Baghdad in May 2025.<sup>25</sup> Following the takeover of Damascus by a coalition of armed groups led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in December 2024, the Iraqi state rapidly recalibrated its foreign policy, shifting from its prior support of ex-president Bashar Al-Assad to a posture of cautious engagement with the new Syrian authorities. This strategic adjustment was framed primarily around safeguarding Iraq's border security and fostering stable bilateral relations.<sup>26</sup> Amid the escalation of the Israel-Iran conflict in June 2025, the Iraqi federal government and the

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<sup>21</sup> UN Press, Despite Many Obstacles that Remain, ‘Iraq Today Is More Secure, Stable and Open’, Special Representative Tells Security Council, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>22</sup> Al Jazeera, Iraq's parliament elects new speaker, ending yearlong deadlock, 1 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>23</sup> UN Press, Despite Many Obstacles that Remain, ‘Iraq Today Is More Secure, Stable and Open’, Special Representative Tells Security Council, 6 December 2024, [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>24</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, Major Shiite parties to run separately in Iraq's November election amid disagreements, 23 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>25</sup> Iraq, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Washington D.C., Baghdad to Host the 2025 Arab League Summit: Iraq's Renewed Regional Role, n.d., [url](#); Al Jazeera, Arab League calls for funds to rebuild Gaza at summit in Baghdad, 17 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>26</sup> Arab Center Washington DC, Pragmatism Shapes Iraq's Position Toward Post-Assad Syria, 1 July 2025, [url](#)



.Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) both condemned Israeli airstrikes and emphasised their refusal to be drawn into the confrontation, publicly calling for de-escalation.<sup>27</sup>

At the international level, UNAMI is preparing to conclude its mandate by the end of 2025.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, in September 2024, the United States and Iraq jointly announced a two-phase plan for the drawdown of coalition operations, with the first phase scheduled to be completed by September 2025.<sup>29</sup> For further information on US involvement in Iraq, please see [section 1.2.2 1.2.2 International involvement](#).

### 1.1.1. Political developments in the KRI

In October 2024, the KRI conducted its long-delayed parliamentary elections, originally scheduled for 2022 but repeatedly postponed due to political disagreements. The vote resulted in the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) securing 39 out of 100 seats, while the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) won 23 seats, reaffirming their status as the region's dominant political forces.<sup>30</sup> However, by May 2025, the newly elected parliament remained deadlocked, unable to form a government or elect a speaker. Persistent disputes between the KDP and PUK led to calls for dissolving the parliament and organising new elections. In response to the prolonged impasse, acting speaker Mohammed Sulaiman of the opposition New Generation Movement (NGM) urged the regional president to formally dissolve parliament for failing to meet constitutional deadlines.<sup>31</sup> The NGM subsequently brought the matter before Iraq's Federal Supreme Court, seeking a legal mandate to compel the dissolution of the regional parliament,<sup>32</sup> which was dismissed by the court in July due to being outside of its jurisdiction.<sup>33</sup>

In further developments, at the beginning of May 2025, Halabja officially became Iraq's 19<sup>th</sup> governorate, separating it from Sulaymaniyah governorate.<sup>34</sup> For a detailed description of the KRI on a governorate level see [section 1.4.8 Kurdistan Region](#).

In mid-July, public demonstrations erupted across the KRI in response to prolonged electricity outages. During a protest in Erbil governorate, one civilian was killed by a gunshot allegedly fired by security forces, according to a relative of the deceased.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ford, R., Iraq tries to assert state authority during crisis, MEI, 26 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>28</sup> UN Press, Security Council Hears, as UN Iraq Mission Winds Down, of Progress Won, Work Yet Remaining, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>29</sup> Wilgenburg, W. and Caggins, M., After the Coalition: Evaluating the Next Steps for Foreign Forces in Iraq and Syria, New Lines Institute, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>30</sup> Al Jazeera, Ruling KDP in Kurdish region of northern Iraq wins delayed elections, 30 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>31</sup> New Arab (The), Iraqi Kurdish politics in paralysis after parliament dissolved, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>32</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi Kurdistan faces two-pronged legal challenge to autonomy amid US-Iran showdown, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>33</sup> Rudaw, Iraq's top court rejects lawsuits against Kurdish parliament, 21 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>34</sup> Rudaw, Halabja becomes Iraq's 19th province, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>35</sup> New Arab (The), Iraqi Kurds protest power cuts, one killed: residents and medical source, 14 July 2025, [url](#)



### 1.1.2. Relations between Baghdad and Erbil

During the reference period, relations between the federal government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil remained strained, shaped by enduring political, territorial, and financial disputes.<sup>36</sup>

A longstanding source of contention has been the allocation of federal budget funds and the management of oil revenues.<sup>37</sup> Since the suspension of oil exports through the Kurdistan pipeline to Türkiye's Ceyhan port in 2023, financial tensions have intensified. Erbil has since received only partial budgetary transfers in the form of monthly advances, rather than the full payment.<sup>38</sup> This has led to prolonged salary delays and suspensions for civil servants in the Kurdistan Region, including a full halt to payments in May 2025.<sup>39</sup> The Iraqi Minister of Finance, Taif Sami, justified the suspension by asserting that the KRG had exceeded its budget allocation and failed to transfer agreed oil and non-oil revenues to the federal treasury.<sup>40</sup>

The oil and gas sector remains a central point of dispute. The KRG has criticised the federal government for attempting to exert control over hydrocarbon resources in disputed territories without consultation, which it views as an infringement on its constitutional rights.<sup>41</sup> Conversely, the federal Ministry of Oil has rejected recent contracts signed by the KRG with US-based companies, deeming them illegal and in contravention of federal law,<sup>42</sup> and has accused the regional government of persistently smuggling oil out of the country, threatening legal actions.<sup>43</sup>

## 1.2 Overview of recent security developments

### Counter-ISIL Operations

Since August 2024, Iraq has continued counter-ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) operations in response to diminishing, yet ongoing insurgent activity. While the number of attacks declined for the fourth consecutive quarter, ISIL remains active, particularly in Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah Al-Din governorates.<sup>44</sup> The International Crisis Group reported several low-scale ISIL attacks during the reference period, targeting primarily Iraqi security forces (ISF).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Winthrop, R., Focus on implementation as Baghdad, Erbil hail fiscal breakthrough, Amwaj.media, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>37</sup> Winthrop, R., Focus on implementation as Baghdad, Erbil hail fiscal breakthrough, Amwaj.media, 27 February 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Eid al-Adha salary standoff: Kurds criticize Baghdad over unpaid wages, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>38</sup> Shafaq News, Eid al-Adha salary standoff: Kurds criticize Baghdad over unpaid wages, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>39</sup> Zoom News, Kurdistan Parties favor dialogue with Baghdad but warn all options remain on the table over salary funds, 31 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>40</sup> Rudaw, KDP warns of 'serious stance' if Baghdad fails to pay KRG's financial entitlements, 29 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>41</sup> Rudaw, Baghdad's plan to unilaterally sell oil in disputed areas violates constitution: KRG, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>42</sup> Rudaw, Baghdad, Erbil in 'serious talks' to resolve dispute over KRG deals with US firms: Source, 29 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>43</sup> Reuters, Iraq holds Kurdish government legally responsible for continued oil smuggling, 5 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>44</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/323, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para. 20

<sup>45</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., [url](#)





## Türkiye's Military Expansion and PKK dissolution

Throughout the reference period, Türkiye continued its military operations against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq,<sup>46</sup> conducting frequent air and drone strikes, as well as ground operations,<sup>47</sup> which resulted in the deaths of both PKK members<sup>48</sup> and civilians.<sup>49</sup> In response to the PKK founder's (Abdullah Öcalan) call for disarmament, the PKK leadership in Iraq's Qandil Mountains declared a unilateral ceasefire, followed by a formal dissolution announcement on 12 May 2025. Despite the announcement, Turkish operations continued.<sup>50</sup> In June, at least 550 strikes were recorded, with the majority taking place in Duhok's Amedi district, resulting in the destruction of hundreds of dunams of farmland.<sup>51</sup> In July, Kurdish PKK fighters held a symbolic ceremony in the town of Dukan, northwest of Sulaymaniyah, during which they burned their weapons to mark the beginning of the disarmament process.<sup>52</sup> Following the ceremony, Turkish military strikes in Iraqi Kurdistan dropped by 97 % compared to the previous month, with only 18 bombardments and airstrikes recorded in July—mainly in Duhok's Amedi district. However, on 29 July, Türkiye launched a new ground operation in the Batifa district of Zakho, deploying around 250 soldiers, establishing a military base and restricting civilian movement.<sup>53</sup>

## Iran-Backed Militias and Regional Tensions

US and coalition facilities in Iraq were targeted during the reference period. On 5 August 2024 a rocket attack carried out by Iran-backed militias on Ain Al-Asad airbase injured at least five US personnel, prompting condemnation from the Iraqi military and subsequent arrests.<sup>54</sup> Further attacks, some unclaimed, targeted facilities such as the Victory Base<sup>55</sup> and the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center.<sup>56</sup> Iran-backed militias in Iraq operating under the umbrella of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq stopped claiming responsibility for attacks on US targets after early February 2025.<sup>57</sup>

At the end of June 2025, during the final stages of armed hostilities between Israel and Iran, several small-scale drone attacks targeted Iraqi military sites and bases operated by the Iraqi security forces, resulting in damage to radar systems. These installations were known to host US personnel and contractors, who were presumed to be the target of the attacks. Although Iran-aligned Shiite militias were suspected of involvement, the identity of the perpetrators remained unconfirmed.<sup>58</sup> In July, oil fields in the KRI were subjected to a series of drone

<sup>46</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>47</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/323, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para. 22

<sup>48</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>49</sup> Rudaw, Turkish strike kills a civilian in NE Erbil: CPT, 3 September 2024, [url](#); MEE, Turkish drone kills two Kurdish journalists in northern Iraq, officials say, 24 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>50</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/323, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para. 22; France24, Turkey attempts to neutralise PKK tunnels in Iraq despite dissolution of Kurdish militant group, 10 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>51</sup> CPT, Turkish Military Attacks Hold Steady in June, Remain Concentrated as Symbolic PKK Disarmament Ceremony Approaches, 10 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>52</sup> Reuters, Kurdish PKK militants burn weapons in Iraq to launch disarmament, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>53</sup> CPT, Turkish military attacks reduce by 97%, amid ongoing peace developments and new Turkish military operation, 11 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>54</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>55</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>56</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2024/857, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para. 16

<sup>57</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2024/857, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>58</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, Iraqi military bases targeted in overnight strikes, 24 June 2025, [url](#)



attacks.<sup>59</sup> While no group formally claimed responsibility,<sup>60</sup> specialised security experts believed Iran-backed militias to be responsible.<sup>61</sup> See [section 3.1 Overview of the humanitarian and socio-economic situation](#).

## 1.2.1 Armed Actors

### Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)

During the reference period, the ISF continued their operations against ISIL,<sup>62</sup> as part of which they conducted joint operations with US troops.<sup>63</sup> The ISF were further reported to having been involved in the fight against drug trafficking,<sup>64</sup> intervention in cases of tribal feuds<sup>65</sup> and increased border security with Syria as part of their fight against ISIL.<sup>66</sup> In October 2024, Amnesty International reported that Iraqi security forces engaged in ill-treatment and torture during the interrogation of individuals detained in Al-Amal Centre (formerly known as Jeddah 1), many of whom had been transferred there from Al-Hol detention facility in Syria and are alleged to have links to ISIL.<sup>67</sup>

For general information about the composition of the ISF, please refer to section 1.4 of the previous [EUAA COI report: Iraq Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#).

### Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF)

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), whose units operate partially under formal state command while many continue to function under independent leadership structures,<sup>68</sup> have

<sup>59</sup> AP, Iraqi oil field on fire after drone strike during attacks in Kurdish region, 15 July 2025, [url](#); Reuters, Drone strikes shut oil fields in Iraq's Kurdistan, cut output by up to 150,000 bpd, 16 July 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Kurdistan oil fields targeted for third day in a row in drone attacks, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>60</sup> New Arab (The), Drone attacks continue on Kurdistan oil fields as investigations underway, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>61</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Militias defy Baghdad's warnings as drone attacks on Kurdistan's oil facilities persist, 29 July 2025, [url](#); Malik, H. et al., Militias Strain Credibility by Denying Involvement in Kurdistan Drone Attacks, 25 July 2025, TWI, [url](#)

<sup>62</sup> EPIC, ISHM: December 12 - 19, 2024, 19 December 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: January 16 - 23, 2025, 23 January 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Iraqi security forces ramp up efforts to combat drug trafficking, ISIS remnants, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>63</sup> Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>64</sup> Rudaw, Iraqi security forces ramp up efforts to combat drug trafficking, ISIS remnants, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>65</sup> NINA, نزاع عشائري جنوب ميسان يسفر عن 3 قتلى وإصابات بين المدنيين والجيش [Tribal dispute in southern Missan leads to three killed and several wounded among civilians and soldiers], 9 July 2025, [url](#); Al-Mirbad, نزاع إثر آخر وإصابة مواطن مقتل [One civilian killed and another injured in tribal dispute in southern Missan], 18 February 2025, [url](#); Al-Mirbad, إصابة شخصين بنزاع عشائري مسلح في قلعة صالح [Two persons wounded in armed tribal clash in Qalaat Salih], 6 August 2024, [url](#); Al-Sumaria, ببغداد عشائري نزاع أثر سكنية منازل في نيران اندلاع [Tribal conflict in Baghdad causes fire in homes], 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>66</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq Strengthens Border Security Amid Ongoing Cooperation with Coalition Forces, 26 January 2025, [url](#); USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>67</sup> Amnesty International, Iraq: People held in Al-Jed'ah Centre subjected to torture and enforced disappearance after arrests – new investigation, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>68</sup> BBC Monitoring, Explainer: Who are Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces?, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

actively participated in counterterrorism operations<sup>69</sup> and contributed to border security initiatives as part of their role within Iraq's broader national security framework.<sup>70</sup>

In March 2025, the Iraqi parliament introduced a draft law aimed at restructuring the PMF, placing the force directly under the authority of the Prime Minister and instituting reforms such as mandatory retirement for senior commanders.<sup>71</sup> The draft bill was later withdrawn, as a result of sustained political discord and differing interpretations of its provisions within Shiite blocs.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, the government formally incorporated approximately 20 000 fighters from various armed factions into the PMF and other state security agencies in April 2025. These forces were redeployed to strategic positions on the outskirts of Baghdad to reinforce security and enhance state oversight over irregular armed groups.<sup>73</sup> Efforts were also made to upgrade its status to that of a ministry.<sup>74</sup>

Beyond their security role, the political wings of the PMF have become deeply embedded within the Iraqi state. They occupy ministerial positions, influence key bureaucratic appointments, and maintain control over revenue-generating state-owned enterprises. According to Iraq analyst Renad Mansour, this institutional entrenchment contributed to the relative restraint demonstrated by armed PMF factions during the Israel-Iran conflict in June 2025.<sup>75</sup>

For further information about the history and composition of the PMF, please refer to section 1.4 of the previous [EUAA COI report: Iraq Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#).

### **Peshmerga**

During the reference period, Peshmerga forces engaged in joint operations with the Iraqi army, particularly in the disputed territories claimed by both the federal and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). These collaborative efforts aimed to fill persistent security gaps in areas vulnerable to insurgent activity, especially from ISIL remnants.<sup>76</sup> On a regional level, structural and political divisions continued to hinder comprehensive unification of the different Peshmerga forces under one ministry.<sup>77</sup>

### **Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)**

On 12 May 2025, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) announced the end of its armed struggle and the dissolution of its organisational structure, following its 12<sup>th</sup> party congress. However,

<sup>69</sup> Rudaw, Iraqi forces disrupt ISIS fuel network in Anbar, 18 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraq's PMF foils ISIS bombing attempt in Kirkuk, 2 February 2025, [url](#); INA, كركوك غرب شمال أسلحة ويضبط الإرهابي لداعش مضافة يدمر الشعبي الحشد [PMF destroy ISIL hideout and seize weapons northwest of Kirkuk], 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>70</sup> Shafaq News, PMF conducts border security operation on Iraqi-Syrian border, 13 January 2025, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, Iraq's PMF Reinforces Deployment on Border with Syria, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>71</sup> Rudaw, Iraq advances PMF law amid US calls for greater control over the force, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>72</sup> EPC, Risky Maneuvers: Iraq's PMF Law Between Internal Disputes and External Pressures, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>73</sup> Shafaq News, SOURCE: Iraq absorbs 20,000 fighters into PMF, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>74</sup> Shafaq News, Iraqi lawmakers push to elevate PMF to ministry status, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>75</sup> Mansour R., Iraq's fragile stability is threatened by a shifting Middle Eastern order, Chatham House, 25 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>76</sup> Rudaw, Iraqi army, Peshmerga launch joint anti-ISIS op in disputed areas, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>77</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p.49



uncertainty remains regarding the practical implementation of disarmament, the future of PKK fighters in Iraq, and whether the announcement will result in a substantive de-escalation regarding hostilities with Türkiye.<sup>78</sup> In July, 30 PKK fighters held a symbolic ceremony in the town of Dukan, northwest of Sulaymaniyah, during which they burned their weapons to mark the beginning of the disarmament process.<sup>79</sup>

For further information about the PKK's previous presence and activities in Iraq, please refer to section 1.4 of the previous [EUAA COI report: Iraq Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#).

### **Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL)**

In its quarterly report covering the period from 1 April to 30 June 2025, the United States Department of Defense (USDOD) assessed that ISIL maintained a low operational profile, prioritising survival, and posed only a 'marginal threat' to the ISF and Iraqi civilians.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile, the Secretary-General's report to the UN Security Council noted that ISIL continued to carry out asymmetric attacks during their report's reference period of May to November 2024, primarily in the governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah Al-Din, with most attacks targeting Iraqi security forces.<sup>81</sup> Although sustained counter-terrorism pressure has constrained its activities, ISIL sought to rebuild its networks and restore operational capacity in Iraq's desert regions.<sup>82</sup> Clashes between ISIL militants and security forces, as well as operations against the former were reported throughout the reference period.<sup>83</sup>

## **1.2.2 International involvement**

### **USA**

While some sources reported that, as of June 2025, approximately 2 500 US troops were stationed in Iraq,<sup>84</sup> in the same month the US Department of Defense stated that around 1 500 individuals, including diplomatic staff, contractors, and non-essential personnel, departed Baghdad and Erbil 'out of an abundance of caution' amid heightened regional tensions.<sup>85</sup>

US troops are distributed across four primary bases: Erbil Air Base, the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center near Baghdad airport, Union III in Baghdad's Green Zone, and Al-Asad Air

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<sup>78</sup> BBC Monitoring, Explainer: What does the PKK decision to disband mean for Iraq?, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>79</sup> Reuters, Kurdish PKK militants burn weapons in Iraq to launch disarmament, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>80</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025, 29 July 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>81</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2024/857, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para. 19

<sup>82</sup> UNSC, Twenty-first report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat, 1 August 2025, [url](#), paras 8-9

<sup>83</sup> Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 31 December 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: January 9 - 16, 2025, 16 January 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: February 6 - 13, 2025, 13 February 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: March 27 - April 3, 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: May 1 - May 8, 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>84</sup> Shafaq News, Pentagon reaffirms Iraq withdrawal timeline, 3 June 2025, [url](#); Wilgenburg, W. and Caggins, M., After the Coalition: Evaluating the Next Steps for Foreign Forces in Iraq and Syria, New Lines Institute, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>85</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025, 29 July 2025, [url](#), p. 41





Base in Anbar.<sup>86</sup> In September 2024, the US and Iraq jointly announced a two-phase plan to conclude coalition operations by September 2026, the first phase of which is set to conclude by September 2025.<sup>87</sup> The implementation of this plan was reaffirmed by the US in June 2025,<sup>88</sup> although by the end of July 2025, no significant progress had been publicly reported.<sup>89</sup> Rather than a complete withdrawal, the coalition mission was undergoing a structural transformation, with US forces expected to maintain a presence in Iraq to continue supporting counter-ISIL operations at least until September 2026.<sup>90</sup> The administration of Prime Minister Mohammed Al-Sudani has consistently expressed its interest in sustaining military cooperation with the US and other Western partners.<sup>91</sup> Throughout the reference period, US forces remained actively engaged in partnered counterterrorism raids.<sup>92</sup> The Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) continued to assist Iraqi forces, supported by the Counter-ISIL Train and Equip Fund, which provides salaries, weapons, vehicles, and non-lethal assistance.<sup>93</sup>

## Iran

Iran maintains strong influence in Iraq through its support for powerful Shia militias, including Kata'ib Hezbollah, Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haq and Harakat Hezbollah Al-Nujaba.<sup>94</sup> In April 2025, Iran reportedly supplied advanced missiles to Iraqi militias.<sup>95</sup> Meanwhile, political ties have deepened, with Iran's president, Masoud Pezeshkian, visiting the KRI for the first time in September 2024 after years of tensions. In parallel, the Iranian president also signed multiple agreements to enhance bilateral cooperation in with Baghdad.<sup>96</sup>

While, during the Israel-Iran conflict, Iranian-affiliated armed groups demonstrated relative restraint, Iraq remains, according to International Crisis Group, a 'central theatre for US-Iran confrontation', particularly through these proxies.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Wilgenburg, W. and Caggins, M., After the Coalition: Evaluating the Next Steps for Foreign Forces in Iraq and Syria, New Lines Institute, 18 March 2025, [url](#); USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025, 29 July 2025, [url](#), p. 43

<sup>87</sup> Wilgenburg, W. and Caggins, M., After the Coalition: Evaluating the Next Steps for Foreign Forces in Iraq and Syria, New Lines Institute, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>88</sup> Shafaq News, Pentagon reaffirms Iraq withdrawal timeline, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>89</sup> AP, Iraq's prime minister seeks closer US ties while keeping armed groups at bay, 29 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>90</sup> Breaking Defense, US announces coalition mission in Iraq to end by 2025, but US 'not withdrawing', 27 September 2024, [url](#); USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025, 29 July 2025, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>91</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report: Iraq after the Israel-Iran War, June 13 - July 3, 2025, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>92</sup> Wilgenburg, W. and Caggins, M., After the Coalition: Evaluating the Next Steps for Foreign Forces in Iraq and Syria, New Lines Institute, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>93</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 45

<sup>94</sup> CRS, Iran-Supported Groups in the Middle East and U.S. Policy, 26 September 2024, [url](#); Iran Wire, Iran's Deepening Influence in Iraq: Proxy Forces, Politics, and Power, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>95</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran update, April 9, 2025, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>96</sup> Al-Monitor, Iran president makes 'historic' visit to Iraqi Kurdistan, 12 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>97</sup> Mansour R., Iraq's fragile stability is threatened by a shifting Middle Eastern order, Chatham House, 25 June 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Iraq, 25 August 2025, [url](#)





## Türkiye

As of December 2024, Türkiye reportedly maintained at least 136 military sites and had built 660 kilometres of roads in northern Iraq, enabling control over 2 000 square kilometres.<sup>98</sup> A series of Turkish airstrikes in northern Iraq was reported in the first half of the reference period.<sup>99</sup> Turkish airstrikes and incursions continued into early 2025.<sup>100</sup> Despite the PKK's declaration of an end to its armed struggle in May 2025, Türkiye maintained its military presence,<sup>101</sup> citing concerns over defections and the potential rise of PKK splinter factions.<sup>102</sup>

For information on the impact of Turkish operations on civilians, please see [sections 1.3.1 Security incidents](#) and [1.4.8 Kurdistan Region of Iraq \(Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah\)](#).

## 1.3 Impact of the security situation on civilian population at national level

As described in [section 1.20](#), the security situation in Iraq is characterised by different conflicts and sources of tension. Consequently, different areas of the country have specific security dynamics, trends and patterns. More detailed background information on the security situation in the different governorates can be found in [section 1.4 Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by governorates](#).

During the reference period, ACLED data showed a discrepancy between the number of incidents of explosions/remote violence in a specific region and the number of incidents of violence against civilians. For instance, while there were 2 507 incidents of explosions/remote violence recorded in Dohuk governorate (the vast majority of which involved attacks by the Turkish military and the PKK against each other), just 6 incidents of violence against civilians were recorded in the same governorate during the reference period. Most incidents of violence against civilians were recorded in Baghdad (74), Missan (50) and Thi-Qar (28) governorates, followed by Basrah (24), Kirkuk (16) and Erbil (12) governorates, with the vast majority of perpetrators being unknown.<sup>103</sup>

In the southern governorates of Missan, Thi-Qar and Basrah, tribal conflicts resulted in frequent armed clashes, some of which required intervention by the Iraqi military. These confrontations commonly involved light to medium firearms and, on occasion, the use of mortar shells. The violence is often rooted in longstanding disputes over agricultural land,

<sup>98</sup> BBC News, Life inside Iraq's 'Forbidden Zone' controlled by Turkey, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>99</sup> VOA, Turkish airstrikes kill 17 Kurdish militants in northern Iraq, ministry says, 12 August 2024, [url](#); Guardian (The), Turkey strikes targets in Syria and Iraq after attack on Ankara aviation company – video, 24 October 2024, [url](#); CPT, Turkish Military attacks hold steady in June, remain concentrated as symbolic PKK disarmament ceremony approaches, 10 July 2025, [url](#); CPT, Turkish military attacks since Abdullah Öcalan's call for peace, 6 March 2025, [url](#); CPT, Turkish military strikes intensify two months into ceasefire, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>100</sup> Shafaq News, Unprecedented Turkish expansion in Iraq with 40 bases, MP warns, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>101</sup> Reuters, Turkey continues operations on PKK in Iraq, Syria despite Ocalan call, 6 March 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Operation Claw-Lock: Türkiye hits PKK cave in northern Iraq, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>102</sup> BBC Monitoring, Explainer: What does the PKK decision to disband mean for Iraq?, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>103</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)



water access, and control of border crossings.<sup>104</sup> However, as of May 2025, a notable decline in tribal violence was reported in Thi-Qar, marking a potential shift after years of recurrent conflict in the governorate.<sup>105</sup> See [section 2.10. Persons involved in and affected by blood/land disputes](#).

While the majority of ISIL attacks during the reference period targeted Iraqi security forces,<sup>106</sup> civilians also continued to be affected. ISIL was responsible for sporadic incidents involving abductions,<sup>107</sup> including a killing and the destruction of civilian property.<sup>108</sup>

Turkish military operations on Iraqi territory, primarily aimed at targeting PKK fighters,<sup>109</sup> were also reported to have impacted civilians in northern Iraq.<sup>110</sup> Some operations resulted in civilian casualties.<sup>111</sup>

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that they registered over 1 500 new cases of missing persons during 2024, while 343 cases were resolved.<sup>112</sup> No further information was provided by the source on the reasons behind such disappearances.

### 1.3.1 Security incidents

According to ACLED data, 5 084 security incidents (battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) were recorded between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025: 794 were coded as battles, 4 009 as explosions/remote violence, and 281 as violence against civilians.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Rudaw, Tribal violence leaves 1 killed, 8 injured in Basra, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>105</sup> New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>106</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>107</sup> Shafaq News, Peshmerga rescue shepherds abducted by ISIS near Tuz-Khurmatu, 19 February 2025, [url](#);

Musings on Iraq, Iraq's Pro-Iran Factions Making Show Of Force At Start Of July, 15 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>108</sup> Shafaq News, ISIS attack claims shepherd's life in Iraq's Al-Anbar, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>109</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., [url](#)

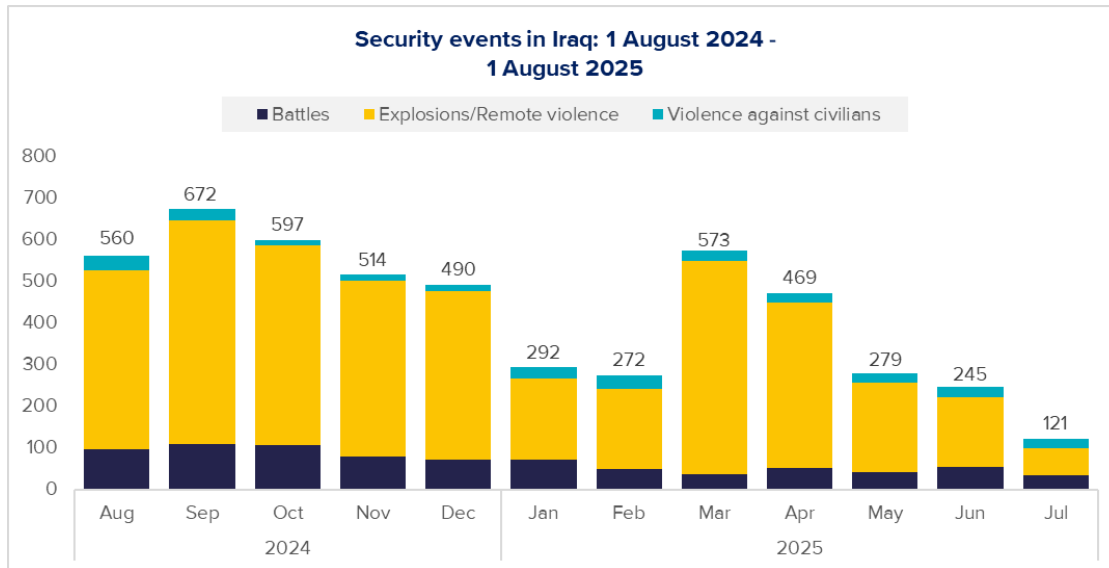
<sup>110</sup> BBC News, Life inside Iraq's 'Forbidden Zone' controlled by Turkey, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>111</sup> MEE, Turkish drone kills two Kurdish journalists in northern Iraq, officials say, 24 August 2024, [url](#); Rudaw, Turkish strike kills a civilian in NE Erbil: CPT, 3 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>112</sup> ICRC, Activity Report, Iraq 2024, [url](#), p.6

<sup>113</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#). No incidents coded as battles, explosions/remote violence or violence against civilians were recorded on 1 August 2025.



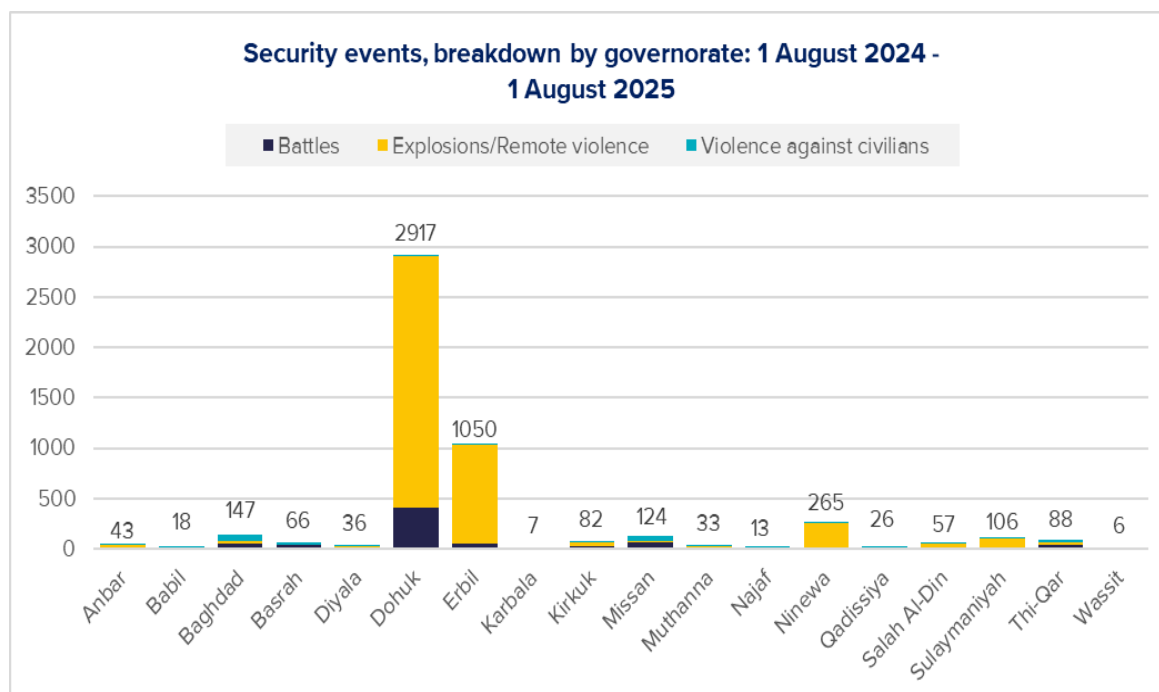


**Figure 1: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Iraq between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>114</sup>**

The highest number of security incidents was recorded in Dohuk (2 917), followed by Erbil (1 050) and Ninewa (265) governorates. The lowest security incidents figures were recorded in Najaf (13), Karbala (7) and Wassit (6) governorates.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>114</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#). No incidents coded as battles, explosions/remote violence or violence against civilians were recorded on 1 August 2025.

<sup>115</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)



**Figure 2: Security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Iraq between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on governorate level, based on ACLED data.<sup>116</sup>**

Explosions/remote violence, which includes explosive devices, artillery fire and air strikes, is the category with the highest number of individual incidents by far with 4 009 incidents recorded by ACLED between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025. The largest number of explosions/remote violence was registered in Dohuk (2 507), followed by Erbil (981) and Ninewa (246) governorates. Karbala, Najaf and Wassit were the governorates with the lowest rate of explosions/remote violence with no incidents recorded.<sup>117</sup>

Battles (armed clashes) is the category with the second most registered security incidents. During the reference period, there were 794 battles recorded by ACLED. Most battles were recorded in the governorates of Dohuk (404), Missan (65), and Erbil (57). The lowest number of battles were recorded in Najaf and Ninewa (9 each), Karbala (4), and Wassit (2).<sup>118</sup>

As for the category violence against civilians, ACLED recorded the highest number of incidents in Baghdad (74), Missan (50) and Thi-Qar (28) governorates. The lowest number of incidents were recorded in Najaf, Sulaymaniyah and Wassit (4 each) as well as Karbala and Babil governorates (3 each).<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>117</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>118</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>119</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

Between 1 August 2024 and 15 May 2025, the blog Musings on Iraq<sup>120</sup> documented 214 security incidents between 1 August 2024 and 21 July 2025, with 177 of the incidents attributed to pro-Iranian groups, happening almost exclusively between August and November 2024 and experiencing a new spike in July 2025, which was attributed to the attacks on oil fields in the Kurdistan Region.<sup>121</sup> For the latter, no group has formally claimed responsibility, despite security experts likely attributing them to Iranian-backed militias<sup>122</sup> (see [section 1.2 Overview of recent security developments](#)). The blog further logged 36 attacks attributed to ISIL, declining steadily since the second half of 2022.<sup>123</sup>

For the reference period, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) recorded a total of 234 security events, including 222 incidents of state-based violence, 5 incidents of non-state violence and 7 incidents of one-sided violence.<sup>124</sup>

### **Type of weapons and tactics used**

According to the reports by the UN Secretary-General, the majority of civilian casualties between 1 May and 21 October 2024 were caused by explosive remnants of war (ERWs) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), followed by aerial attacks, small arms fire, and indirect fire<sup>125</sup> and, in the period from 1 December 2024 to 31 March 2025 by ERWs, with further incidents resulting from aerial strikes, indirect fire, and small arms fire.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Musings on Iraq is a blog by Joel Wing, that specialises on the ‘politics, economics, security, culture and history of Iraq’. Musings on Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>121</sup> Musings on Iraq, Security In Iraq Jul 15-21, 2025, 22 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>122</sup> New Arab (The), Drone attacks continue on Kurdistan oil fields as investigations underway, 17 July 2025, [url](#); Arab Weekly (The), Militias defy Baghdad’s warnings as drone attacks on Kurdistan’s oil facilities persist, 29 July 2025, [url](#); Malik, H. et al., Militias Strain Credibility by Denying Involvement in Kurdistan Drone Attacks, 25 July 2025, TWI, [url](#)

<sup>123</sup> Musings on Iraq, 2nd Month In A Row With No Islamic State Attacks In Iraq, 2 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>124</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 19 August 2025.

<sup>125</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2024/857, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para.58

<sup>126</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/323, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para.54

### 1.3.2 Civilian casualties

Broken down by gender, age and police, UNAMI data shows that 4 women, 17 men and 27 children were killed (20 boys and 7 girls) during the reference period (see Figure 3).

Number of incidents	Women casualties		Children casualties <sup>127</sup>		Police casualties <sup>128</sup>		Civilian men casualties		Total civilian casualties (killed + injured)
	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured	
55	4	1	27 (20M,7F)	30 (24M,6F)	0	2	17	27	106

**Figure 3. Civilian casualties recorded in Iraq by UNAMI between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025. Breakdown by age, gender and police.**<sup>129</sup>

The majority of civilian casualties recorded by UNAMI were caused by unexploded ordnances (UXOs), explosive remnants of war (ERWs), air attacks, mortars and rockets, and small arms fire (see Figure 4).<sup>130</sup>

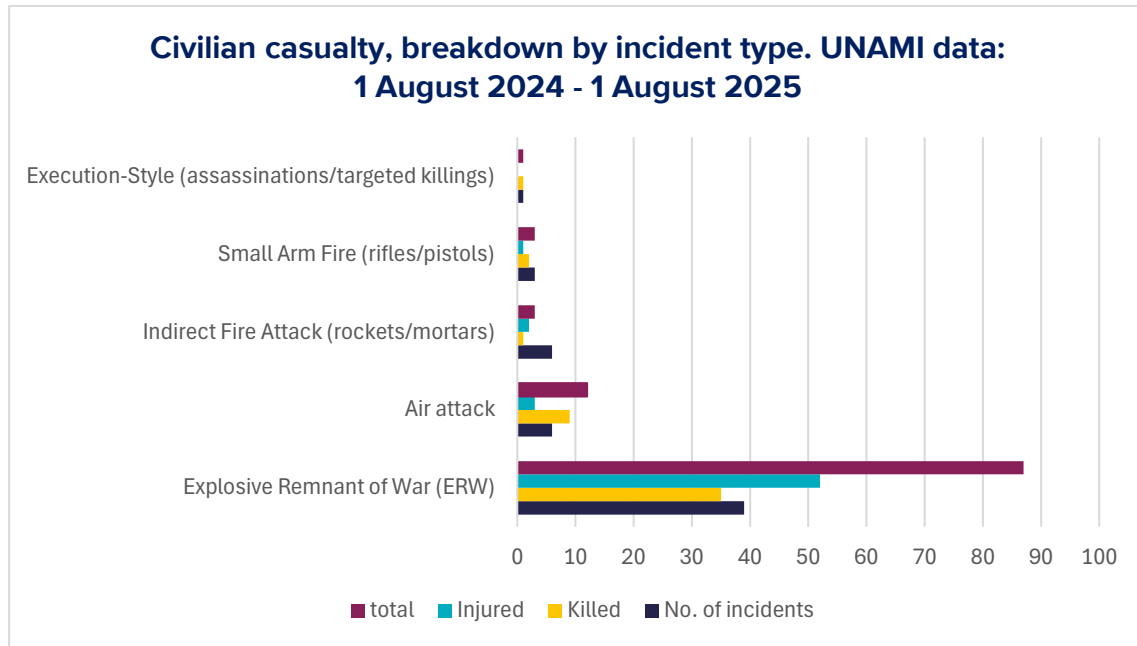
<sup>127</sup> “M” for Male and “F” for Female.

<sup>128</sup> Iraqi police due to their civilian functions related to law enforcement at the time of the incident are considered as civilians (not directly taking part in hostilities – DPIH)

<sup>129</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. UNAMI, Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>130</sup> UNAMI, Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025



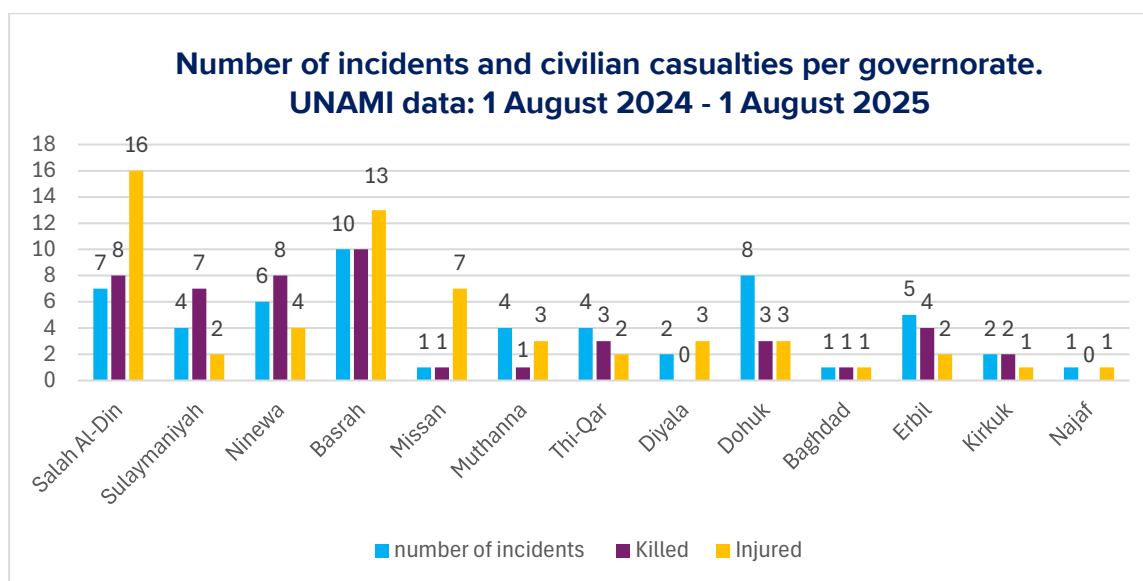


**Figure 4. Civilian casualty figures by incident type. UNAMI data for the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025.<sup>131</sup>**

According to UNAMI data (see Figure 5), the highest number of civilian casualties recorded during the reference period was in Salah Al-Din governorate (24, including 8 deaths), followed by Basrah (23, including 10 deaths), Ninewa (12, including 8 deaths), and Sulaymaniyah (9, including 7 deaths). No civilian casualties were recorded in the governorates of Anbar, Babil, Karbala, Qadissiya and Wassit.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>131</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. UNAMI, Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>132</sup> UNAMI, Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

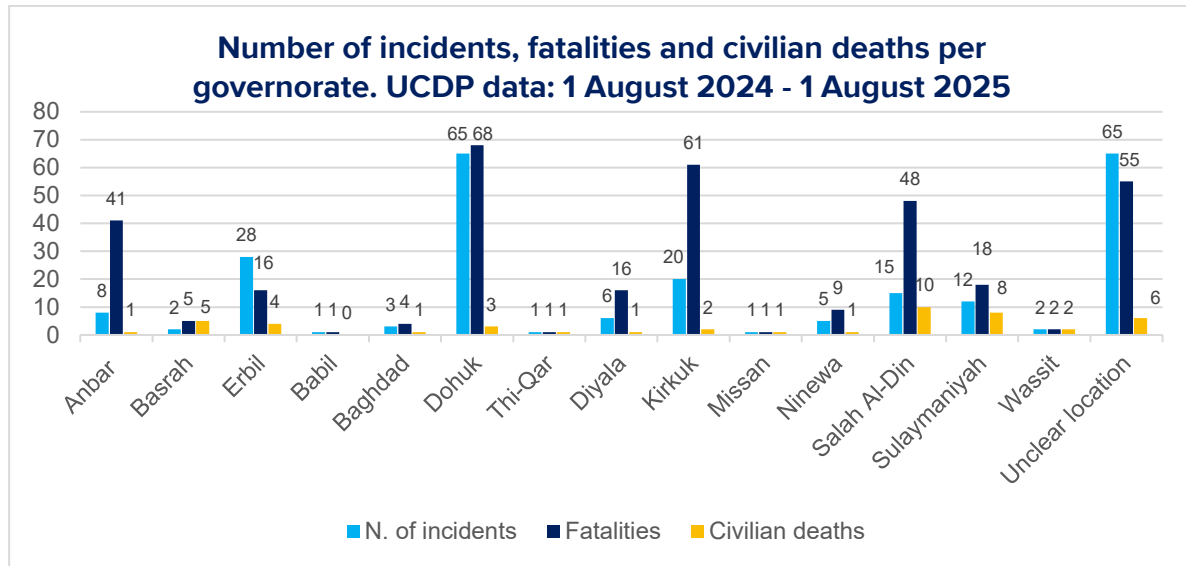


**Figure 5. Number of incidents and civilian casualties per governorate. UNAMI data for the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025.**<sup>133</sup>

For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025 the UCDP recorded 234 events leading to 346 casualties out of which 46 were civilian deaths. The largest number of civilian deaths was recorded in the governorates of Salah Al-Din (10) and Sulaymaniyah (6). There were also 6 civilian deaths recorded by UCDP without being able to attribute a precise location in one of the governorates. UCDP did not record any civilian deaths in the governorates of Babil, Karbala, Muthanna, Najaf and Qadissiya (see Figure 6).<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. UNAMI, Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>134</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025



**Figure 6. Number of incidents and civilian casualties per governorate. UCDP data for the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025.<sup>135</sup>**

Iraq Body Count (IBC),<sup>136</sup> an independent data project that documents violent civilian deaths caused by US-led coalition forces, Iraqi government forces, anti-government forces, ISIL or unknown actors in Iraq, documented 262 civilian deaths (which were marked as preliminary data) due to violence between August 2024 and February 2025.<sup>137</sup>

Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)<sup>138</sup> reported in May 2025 that they recorded 111 casualty-causing incidents of explosive violence in Iraq in 2024.<sup>139</sup>

### 1.3.3 Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Comprehensive information on recent conflict-related damage to civilian infrastructure in Iraq during the reference period of this report was scarce across all consulted sources. Throughout the latter, wildfires resulting from aerial bombardments were reported and local residents complained of aerial attacks causing destruction of agricultural land and farms.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore,

<sup>135</sup> For reasons of consistency with UNAMI and ACLED datasets used in this report, data for Halabja governorate have been incorporated into Sulaymaniyah governorate. Please refer to section [Kurdistan](#) for further details. For reference, UCDP recorded one security event, two fatalities, and two civilian deaths in Halabja governorate in the reference period. EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>136</sup> Iraq Body Count (IBC) is an independent data project that documents violent civilian deaths caused by US-led coalition forces, Iraqi government forces, anti-government forces, ISIL or unknown actors in Iraq. IBC, About the Iraq Body Count project, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>137</sup> IBC, Documented civilian deaths from violence, [url](#), accessed 16 June 2025

<sup>138</sup> AOAV is a research and advocacy organisation that records incidents and resulting casualties caused by explosive weapons at the global level. For more information about AOAV see AOAV, What do we do?, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>139</sup> AOAV, Explosive Violence Monitor 2024, 21 May 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>140</sup> Shafaq News, Turkish shelling ignites farms in Duhok, 17 June 2025, [url](#); AP, Iraq's displaced Kurds hope to return home after Turkey's Kurdish militants declare a ceasefire, 2 March 2025, [url](#)



a series of unclaimed drone attacks targeted several oil fields in the KRI in July 2025 and caused damage to the energy infrastructure.<sup>141</sup>

For information on reconstruction efforts please refer to section 1.5 of the previous [EUAA COI report: Iraq Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#).

### **Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) / Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and landmines**

As of spring 2025, estimates by United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) indicated that more than 2 700 square kilometres of land remains contaminated by landmines and explosive remnants of war.<sup>142</sup> These areas include extensive and complex contamination in territory formerly held by ISIL,<sup>143</sup> but also older minefields dating back to the Iran–Iraq war, as well as, to a lesser extent, to the Gulf war and the 2003 invasion.<sup>144</sup> Approximately 26 % of the contamination is found in agricultural areas, limiting farmers' access to land and livelihood opportunities. Another 20 % affects infrastructure, obstructing reconstruction and service delivery, while 19 % is located along roads, complicating safe movement and trade. An additional 22 % blocks access to water resources, further worsening living conditions in affected areas. From beginning of January to end of June 2025, UNMAS removed 7 401 ERWs and 399 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Ninewa governorate alone.<sup>145</sup> Simultaneously, reports indicated that a suspension of demining operations in 2025 was prompted by aid reductions from the United States, which had been the leading contributor to mine action in Iraq—providing 60 % of total assistance in 2023.<sup>146</sup>

In April 2025, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimated that at least 2 100 square kilometres - equivalent to roughly 300 000 football fields - remain contaminated. Between 2023 and 2024, 78 casualties from ERWs were recorded, and in early 2025, three students were killed by ERWs in Basrah governorate.<sup>147</sup>

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) reported that landmines and UXO are found in cities like Mosul and Falluja, as well as on farms, roads, in public buildings, particularly in former war zones, including in the governorates of Ninewa, Kirkuk, Anbar, Salah Al-Din and Diyala. The border areas, especially along the Iran–Iraq border, are heavily mined. Contamination also affects oil fields, pipelines, and old military sites. These hazards not only restrict civilian mobility and economic activity but also prevent the safe return of displaced populations.<sup>148</sup>

As for the KRI, the Kurdistan Region Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) reported that roughly 250 million square kilometres are still contaminated, with 40 % of these areas uncleared – 47 % of which are in Erbil governorate. According to the source, several civilians have been killed or injured in mine explosions since the start of 2025.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Reuters, Drone strikes shut oilfields in Iraq's Kurdistan, cut output by up to 150,000 bpd, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>142</sup> UN Iraq, Safe Future Starts Here: UNMAS and UNICEF Call for Urgent Action to Protect Iraq's Children from Landmine Threats, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>143</sup> UNMAS, Iraq, n.d., accessed 8 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>144</sup> HI, The challenge of explosive contamination in Iraq, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>145</sup> UNMAS, Iraq, n.d., accessed 8 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>146</sup> Inkstick Media, US Aid Cuts Put the Future of Iraq's Demining Efforts at Risk, 5 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>147</sup> ICRC, Iraq: Landmines and explosive remnants cast long shadow amid recovery efforts, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>148</sup> HI, The challenge of explosive contamination in Iraq, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>149</sup> Rudaw, 40% landmine areas remain to be cleared in Kurdistan Region: Official, 15 April 2025, [url](#)



During the reference period (1 August 2024 - 24 July 2025), the US-based civil society organisation Enabling Peace in Iraq Centre (EPIC), documented more than 40 IED and ERW incidents between 1 August 2024 and 24 July 2025. These incidents resulted in over 40 people being injured, and at least 20 others killed.<sup>150</sup>

For more detailed information on ERW/UXO contamination in the different governorates, please see [1.4 Security situation and conflict impact on civilians](#) by governorates.

### 1.3.4 Conflict-induced displacement and return

After the official defeat of ISIL in Iraq in 2017, more than 1.1 million Iraqis remain internally displaced, primarily in the KRI.<sup>151</sup>

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>152</sup> unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, 1 031 475 individuals were reportedly displaced across the country. They were spread across in 2 507 locations in 102 districts of 18 governorates, with a decrease of 92 188 IDPs or 8 % compared to the number of IDPs recorded in reporting round 131 (covering September – December 2023).<sup>153</sup> As of 31 December 2024, the governorates hosting the largest numbers of IDPs were reported to be Ninewa (221 911 IDPs), Dohuk (211 028 IDPs) and Erbil (204 990 IDPs).<sup>154</sup> See [section 3.3 on the situation of IDPs](#).

Although a general decrease in the number of IDPs across the country was reported, IOM documented 8 797 newly displaced persons during the period between September and December 2024. 57 % of these cases involved IDPs who were relocated and 42 % experienced secondary displacement, due to camp closures or better living conditions. In addition, 73 cases of failed return were reported, the majority of which involved persons originating from the districts of Sinjar and Al-Baaj. Reasons for the failed return included a lack of employment opportunities and public services.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Figures based on EPIC's Iraq Security and Humanitarian Monitor (ISHM) weekly reports that documented IED or ERW incidents with casualties. EPIC, ISHM: May 1 - May 8, 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: April 24 - May 1, 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: March 20 - March 27, 2025, 27 March 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: February 20 - 27, 2025, 27 February 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: February 6 - 13, 2025, 13 February 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: January 9 - 16, 2025, 16 January 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: January 1 - 9, 2025, 9 January 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: December 12 - 19, 2024, 19 December 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: November 14 - 21, 2024, 21 November 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: November 7 - 14, 2024, 14 November 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: October 24 - 31, 2024, 31 October 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: October 17 - 24, 2024, 24 October 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: October 10 - 17, 2024, 17 October 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: October 3 - 10, 2024, 10 October 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: September 26 - October 3, 2024, 3 October 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: September 12 - 19, 2024, 19 September 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: August 29 - September 12, 2024, 12 September 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: August 22 - 29, 2024, 29 August 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: August 15 - 22, 2024, 22 August 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: August 8 - 15, 2024, 15 August 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: August 1 - 8, 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>151</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#); UNHCR, Iraq at a Glance, February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>152</sup> Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>153</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>154</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>155</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 2



In terms of return, IOM's DTM identified 4 927 890 individual returnees between April 2014 and end of December 2024, depicting an increase of 64 818 individuals or 1 % by 31 December 2024 compared to the reporting round 131 (covering September - December 2023). Between September and December 2024, the governorates of Salah Al-Din and Ninewa saw the highest increase in people returning.<sup>156</sup> In Ninewa governorate, the most significant population increase was observed in Sinjar, with 18 246 individuals, followed by Al-Baaj, which recorded 13 722 of them. In Salah Al-Din, Balad experienced the largest rise with 7 542 individuals, while Fares and Baiji saw increases of 5 346 and 5 040 respectively.<sup>157</sup> See [section 3.3 on the Situation of IDPs](#).

## 1.4 Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by governorates

From 20 to 21 November 2024, a nation-wide census was carried out, according to which Iraq's total population, including foreigners and refugees, was approximately 45.4 million.<sup>158</sup> The census excluded questions related to ethnicity and sect.<sup>159</sup> The final population figures of the census released in February 2025 do not contain numbers on governorate level.<sup>160</sup> According to a statement made by a spokesperson of the Ministry of Planning in February 2025, population data for each governorate will be announced by the respective provincial governors at a later stage.<sup>161</sup> At the finalisation of this report, no such figures had been made public yet.

<sup>156</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>157</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>158</sup> Al-Rubaie, A., Population Census in Iraq: A Step Towards Future Development or Imminent Political Conflict?, TWI, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>159</sup> DW, Could Iraq's census further destabilize the country?, 19 November 2024, [url](#); Ezzedine, N., Deep Dive: Inside Iraq's population-guessing game, Amwaj.media, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

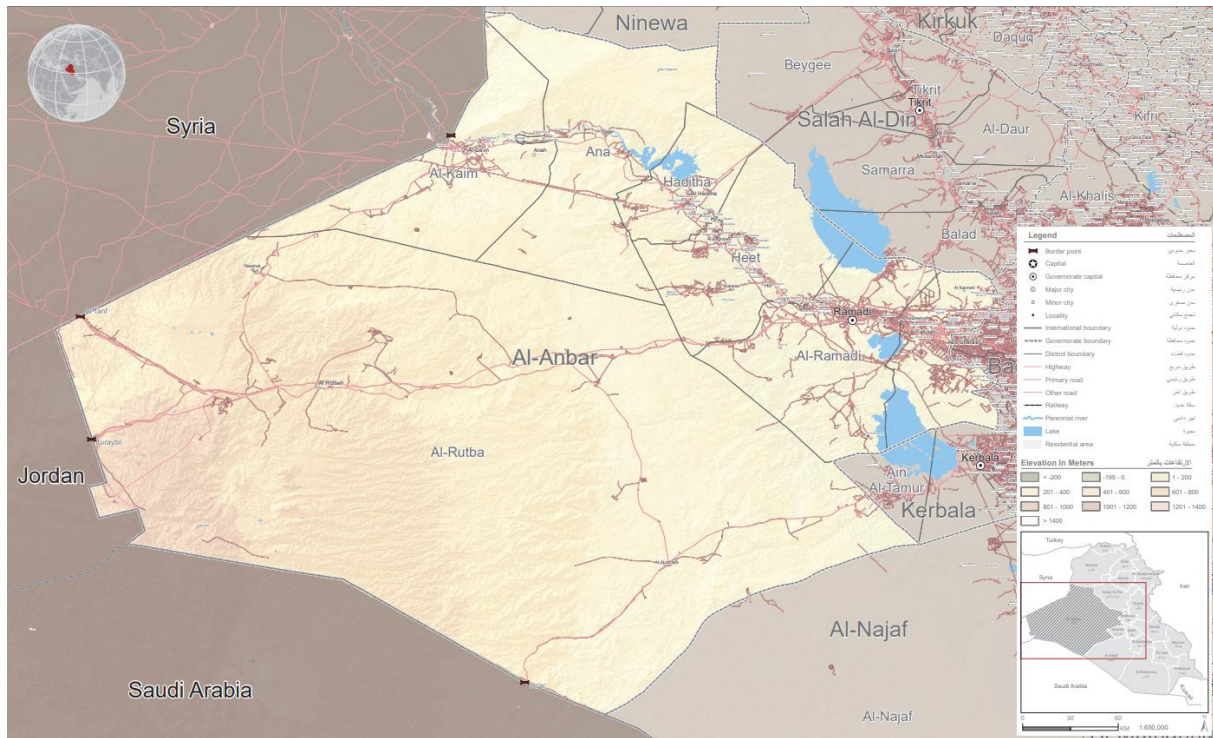
<sup>160</sup> Iraq, Commission of Statistics and GIS and Iraqi Ministry of Planning, -2024 العراقي العام السكان والمسكن في العراق مشروع التعداد العام السكان والمسكن في العراق 2024-2025 – Final Results], February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>161</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq's population count finalized, province breakdown coming, 24 February 2025, [url](#)





## 1.4.1 Anbar



**Map 2. Anbar governorate, © UNOCHA and MapAction.<sup>162</sup>**

For a general description of the governorate, please refer to section 2.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Iraq – Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#). For 2022, the Iraqi Central Statistical Organization (CSO) estimated the governorate's population at 1 963 346.<sup>163</sup>

As of the end of 2024, several PMF brigades were operating in Anbar along the border with Syria, among them the 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade<sup>164</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade (Liwa Al-Tafuf) which reportedly had close ties with Kata'ib Hezbollah.<sup>165</sup> Additionally, Iran-backed Iraqi militias that had withdrawn from Syria before the fall of the Assad government in December 2024, relocated to the Iraqi border towns of Al-Qaim, Hasiba Al-Gharbiya and Al-Rummanah.<sup>166</sup> In April 2025, it was reported that Iran-backed PMF brigades stationed in Al-Qaim near the Syrian border would be replaced by 72<sup>nd</sup> PMF Brigade operating under the Defence Ministry and loyal to Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani.<sup>167</sup> At the start of 2025, the Anbar police command was reportedly set to take over the security responsibilities in the governorate, including border areas and

<sup>162</sup> UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Al-Anbar Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, [url](#)

<sup>163</sup> Iraq, CSO, [الحصانية المجموعة 2023-2022 الباب الثاني](#) [Statistical Collection 2022-2023, Part Two], 21 August 2023, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>164</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 29, 2024, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>165</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 9, 2025, 9 January 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 29, 2024, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>166</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: Iraqi militias to redeploy farther from Syrian border amid pressures, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>167</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, April 18, 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: April 10 - April 17, 2025, 17 April 2025, [url](#)

checkpoints manned by armed factions.<sup>168</sup> However, in a joint article released in April 2025, the U.S.-based think tank Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) stated that they had not observed redeployment of Iranian-backed armed groups away from the border area.<sup>169</sup> A June 2025 article published by US-funded Al-Hurra channel, described Al-Qaim district on the border with Syria as a 'hub for Kataib Hezbollah, Saraya al-Khorasani, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, and Liwa al-Tafuf'.<sup>170</sup>

During the reference period, the Iraqi army<sup>171</sup>, the PMF<sup>172</sup> and the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS)<sup>173</sup> carried out anti-ISIL operations within the governorate.

ISIL reportedly operated in sleeper cells in rural areas of the governorate, capable of carrying out hit-and-run operations.<sup>174</sup> The group carried out sporadic attacks in remote desert regions of Anbar governorate,<sup>175</sup> burning the trucks of shepherds it accused of cooperating with security forces<sup>176</sup> and killing a shepherd in Al-Rutba district.<sup>177</sup> In August 2024, a joint operation carried out by Iraqi security and international coalition forces, which targeted safe houses and weapons manufacturing bases in Al-Rutba, resulted in 14 ISIL leaders being killed.<sup>178</sup> In February and March 2025, several airstrikes launched against ISIL reportedly led to further ISIL operatives being killed.<sup>179</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Shafaq News, Source: Iraq's Al-Anbar police set to take over security, including sites held by armed factions, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>169</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, April 18, 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>170</sup> Al-Hurra, Iraqi Militias Mobilize as Iran-Israel Tensions Reignite Talk of "Unified Front", 21 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>171</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq destroys key ISIS hideout in Al-Anbar, 19 March 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraq's PMF launch major operation in desert region, 18 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>172</sup> Rudaw, Iraqi forces disrupt ISIS fuel network in Anbar, 18 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraq destroys key ISIS hideout in Al-Anbar, 19 March 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, PMF launches anti-ISIS operation in Anbar, 17 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>173</sup> Rudaw, Iraq arrests ten suspected ISIS members in separate operations, 24 July 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraq: ISIS hideouts destroyed, senior leader captured in Al-Anbar, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>174</sup> UNSC, Letter dated 6 February 2025 from the President of the Security Council acting in the absence of a Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-fourth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/71/Rev.1, 6 February 2025, [url](#), para.66

<sup>175</sup> Shafaq News, ISIS attack claims shepherd's life in Iraq's Al-Anbar, 15 May 2025, [url](#); Baghdad Today, بالفيديو.. التنظيم يعاود الظهور في الرطبة ويحرق الشاحنات ويهدد الرعاة [Video: ISIL reappears in Al-Rutba, burning trucks and threatening shepherds], 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>176</sup> Baghdad Today, بالفيديو.. التنظيم يعاود الظهور في الرطبة ويحرق الشاحنات ويهدد الرعاة [Video: ISIL reappears in Al-Rutba, burning trucks and threatening shepherds], 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>177</sup> Shafaq News, ISIS attack claims shepherd's life in Iraq's Al-Anbar, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

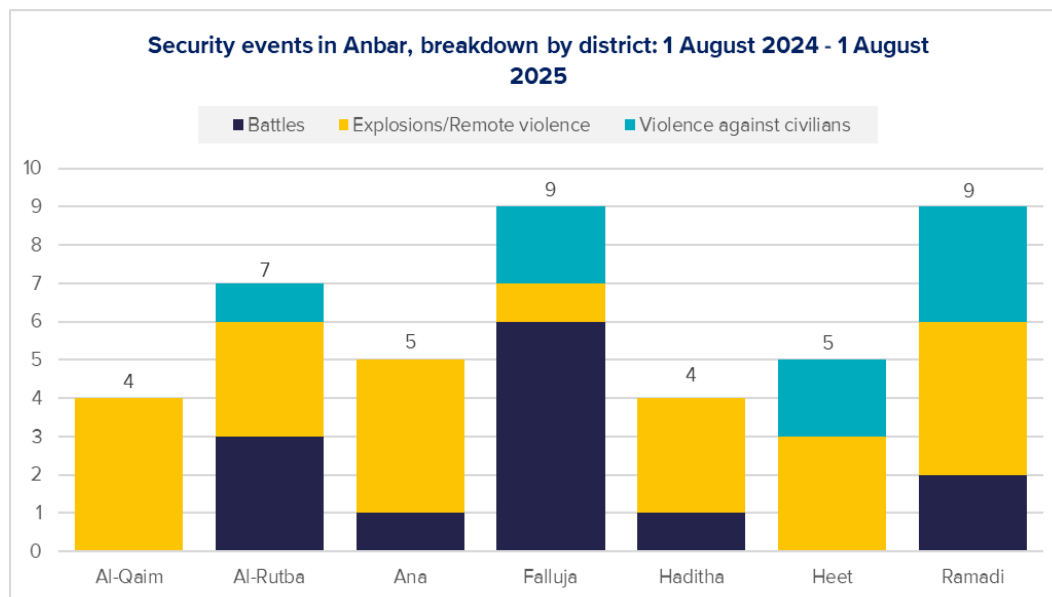
<sup>178</sup> UNSC, Letter dated 6 February 2025 from the President of the Security Council acting in the absence of a Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-fourth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/71/Rev.1, 6 February 2025, [url](#), para. 64

<sup>179</sup> Rudaw, Iraqi strike kills two ISIS suspects in Anbar, 29 March 2025, [url](#); BBC News: Islamic State leader in Iraq and Syria killed, US says, 15 March 2025, [url](#); INA, العمليات المشتركة: قتل 5 إرهابيين داخل مضافة شمالي راة غربي الأنبار [Joint Operations: 5 terrorists killed inside a guest house north of Rawa, west of Anbar], 12 February 2025, [url](#)

Several IED explosions were reported during the reference period, targeting the vehicles of a tribal leader<sup>180</sup>, a local official<sup>181</sup> and a PMF commander.<sup>182</sup> Some IED remnants also led to the death of civilians, such as in December 2024, when a woman was killed by a mine in Haditha district<sup>183</sup> and in May 2025, when the explosion of an IED remnant in the desert between Anbar and Ninewa governorates reportedly killed a 10-year-old boy herding animals.<sup>184</sup>

### Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), there were 43 security incidents recorded by ACLED in Anbar governorate, of which 13 were coded as battles, 22 as explosions/remote violence, and 8 as incidents of violence against civilians. Security incidents were recorded in almost all governorate districts, more than half of which in the three districts of Falluja (9), Ramadi (9) and Al-Rutba (7).<sup>185</sup>



**Figure 7: Security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Anbar between August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.**<sup>186</sup>

According to ACLED data, government forces (military and police) were in sum involved as main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in 17 security incidents, ISIL militants were involved in 22 security incidents, followed by unidentified armed groups with 8 incidents and

<sup>180</sup> Baghdad Today, [نجاح الشيخ عواد الجغيفي من محاولة اغتيال في الانبار](#) [Sheikh Awad Al-Jughayfi survives assassination attempt in Anbar], 16 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>181</sup> EPIC, ISHM: January 9 - 16, 2025, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>182</sup> EPIC, ISHM: February 6 - 13, 2025, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>183</sup> Shafaq News, [مقتل امرأة وإصابة 3 من أفراد عائلتها بانفجار لغم غربي الأنبار](#) [Woman killed and three family members injured in mine explosion in western Anbar], 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>184</sup> EPIC, ISHM: May 1 - May 8, 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>185</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>186</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)



unidentified tribal militia with 6 incidents.<sup>187</sup> For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, UCDP recorded 8 security events in Anbar governorate, leading to 41 casualties.<sup>188</sup>

### Civilian casualties

During the reference period, UNAMI did not record any civilian casualties in Anbar governorate,<sup>189</sup> while UCDP recorded 1 civilian death in the governorate.<sup>190</sup>

### Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

No information on new conflict-related infrastructure damage in the reference period could be found within the time constraints of this report. A spokesperson at the Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) stated, in August 2024, that Anbar governorate is one of four governorates with the largest mine-contaminated areas.<sup>191</sup> As of the end of 2023, the Mine Action Review estimated that about 11 216 039 square metres of the governorate's area were contaminated with cluster-munition.<sup>192</sup>

### Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>193</sup> unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, Anbar governorate was hosting 33 120 displaced people, 17 160 of them in Falluja district, followed by Ramadi district with 6 372 and Al-Rutba district with 2 676. The number of IDPs hosted in Anbar decreased by about 2 % in 2024 compared to 2023. 71 % of these IDPs were displaced within the governorate and 28 % originated from Babil governorate.<sup>194</sup> As of December 2024, Anbar had recorded over 1.5 million returnees, with the principal districts of return being Ramadi (603 384) and Falluja (572 928). This amounted to a return rate<sup>195</sup> of 93 %.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>187</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>188</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>189</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>190</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>191</sup> Rudaw, One-third of Iraq's landmine-contaminated areas remain to be cleared, 12 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>192</sup> Mine Action Review, Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2024 [Table 1], 1 August 2024, [url](#), p. 56

<sup>193</sup> Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>194</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

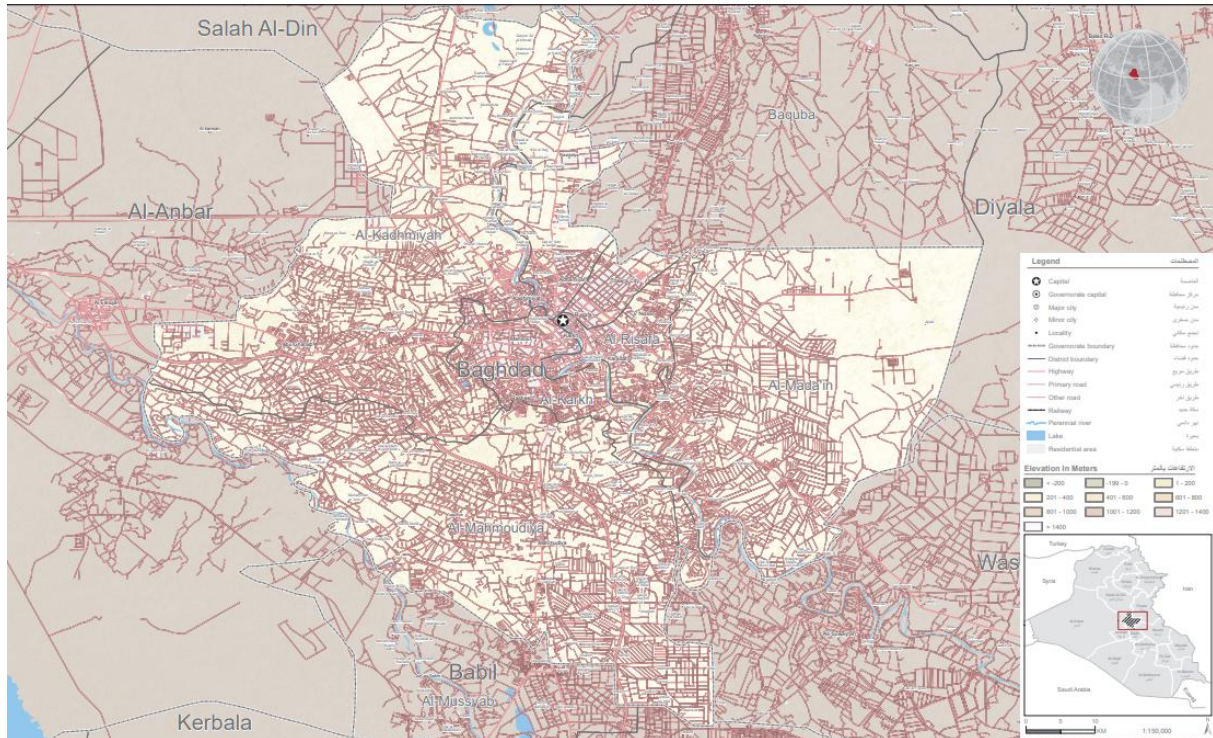
<sup>195</sup> The return rate is calculated by dividing the number of returnees per governorate by the total number of returnees and IDPs originating from that governorate. (IOM Iraq, Returns in Iraq: 2021 Overview, December 2020 (Round11) to December 2021 (Round 14), February 2022, [url](#), p. 2 footnote 5)

<sup>196</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 10





## 1.4.2 Baghdad



**Map 3. Baghdad governorate, © UNOCHA and MapAction.<sup>197</sup>**

For a general description of the governorate, please refer to section 2.3 of the [EUAA COI Report Iraq – Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#). Baghdad governorate's population according to the latest available figures of 2022 was estimated to be 9 006 001.<sup>198</sup> As of 2025, the metropolitan area of Baghdad city was estimated to have about 8.06 million inhabitants.<sup>199</sup>

According to a June 2025 article published by Al-Hurra channel, all key pro-Iranian militias had a 'significant presence' in the country's capital.<sup>200</sup> In April 2025, Iraqi outlet Shafaq News reported that 20 000 members of armed factions had been integrated into the PMF and other security institutions, then redeployed around the capital in the Baghdad belt.<sup>201</sup> Disagreements about the role of militias and the lack of state authority over them reportedly almost led to clashes between fighters from Muqtada Al-Sadr's armed group Saraya Al-Salam and Iran-backed Kata'ib Hezbollah in the capital in July 2025.<sup>202</sup> Later that same month, fighters from PMF brigades linked to Kata'ib Hezbollah stormed the Ministry of Agriculture to thwart the appointment of a new director, leading to at least one police officer being killed in the ensuing gun battle.<sup>203</sup>

<sup>197</sup> UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Baghdad Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, [url](#)

<sup>198</sup> Iraq, CSO, *الحصائية المجموعة 2023-2022 الباب الثاني* [Statistical Collection 2022-2023, Part Two], 21 August 2023, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>199</sup> Iraqi News, Baghdad ranks 43rd in world's largest cities by population, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>200</sup> Al-Hurra, Iraqi Militias Mobilize as Iran-Israel Tensions Reignite Talk of "Unified Front", 21 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>201</sup> Shafaq News, SOURCE: Iraq absorbs 20,000 fighters into PMF, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>202</sup> Al-Kaabi, A., Game On: Sadr and the Iraqi "Resistance" Clash Over State Control of Arms, TWI, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>203</sup> Al Jazeera, Gunfight in Baghdad kills one as paramilitary group storms ministry, 27 July 2025, [url](#)

There were several instances of rocket or drone attacks on areas with US forces presence, such as Baghdad International airport,<sup>204</sup> as well as Taji military base, which formerly hosted US and international coalition forces.<sup>205</sup> In terms of ISIL-related activity, there was limited reporting on the group's presence in Baghdad governorate, mostly in the form of arrests of ISIL suspects.<sup>206</sup> In January 2025, four Iraqi soldiers were reportedly killed in clashes with ISIL militants in Tarmiya district, north of Baghdad.<sup>207</sup> Additionally, the governorate experienced recurrent armed violence linked to tribal disputes.<sup>208</sup> According to the media organisation Daraj, at least four tribal clashes were recorded between mid-January and mid-April 2025 in and around the capital, specifically in the areas of Zafaraniya, Mada'in, Mahmoudiya, and Al-Shu'la.<sup>209</sup> Some of the armed disputes affected uninvolved civilians, killing a 12-year-old boy in Al-Shu'la<sup>210</sup> and causing a fire to break out in several homes in Husseiniya.<sup>211</sup>

### Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), ACLED recorded 147 security incidents in Baghdad governorate, of which 47 were coded as battles, 26 as explosions/remote violence, and 74 as incidents of violence against civilians. Security incidents were recorded in about half of all 14 governorate districts, the districts with most recorded incidents being Kadhimiya (36), Thawra (26), Adhamiya (24) and Rusafa (18).<sup>212</sup>

<sup>204</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report: Iraq after the Israel-Iran War, June 13 - July 3, 2025, 3 July 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Rockets strike US military base near Baghdad airport as Iraqi interior ministry launches probe on attacks, 1 October 2024, [url](#); Cradle (The), 'Suspicious' attack hits US outpost at Baghdad airport ahead of Iranian president's visit, 11 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>205</sup> Reuters, Drone targets Iraq's Taji military base, no casualties, state news agency says, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>206</sup> Shafaq News, ISIS crackdown: Iraq arrests three suspects, destroys multiple hideouts, 13 April 2025, [url](#); +964, Arrest made in Abu Ghraib – Iraq's counter-terrorism forces destroy ISIS hideouts in Diyala, Salah Al-Din, 19 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>207</sup> Basnews, Four Iraqi Troops Killed in Clashes with IS Near Baghdad, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>208</sup> Baghdad Today, القبض على متهم ظهر بمقطع فيديو وهو ينفذ دكة عشائرية في بغداد [Arrest of suspect who appeared in a video carrying out a tribal attack in Baghdad], 28 May 2025, [url](#); Al-Sumaria, اندلاع نيران في منازل سكنية اثر نزاع عشائري [Tribal conflict in Baghdad causes fire in homes], 7 May 2025, [url](#); Baghdad Today, مقتل واصابة 4 مدنيين جراء [One civilian killed and four injured in tribal dispute in Abu Ghraib], 15 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, "دكة عشائرية" تنتهي بنفوق بقرة وإصابة أخرى [Baghdad – One cow killed and more injured in tribal Dakka], 15 February 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, قتيلا واعتقالات في بغداد نتيجة خلافات عشائرية [Two killed and arrests in Baghdad due to tribal disputes], 16 January 2025, [url](#)

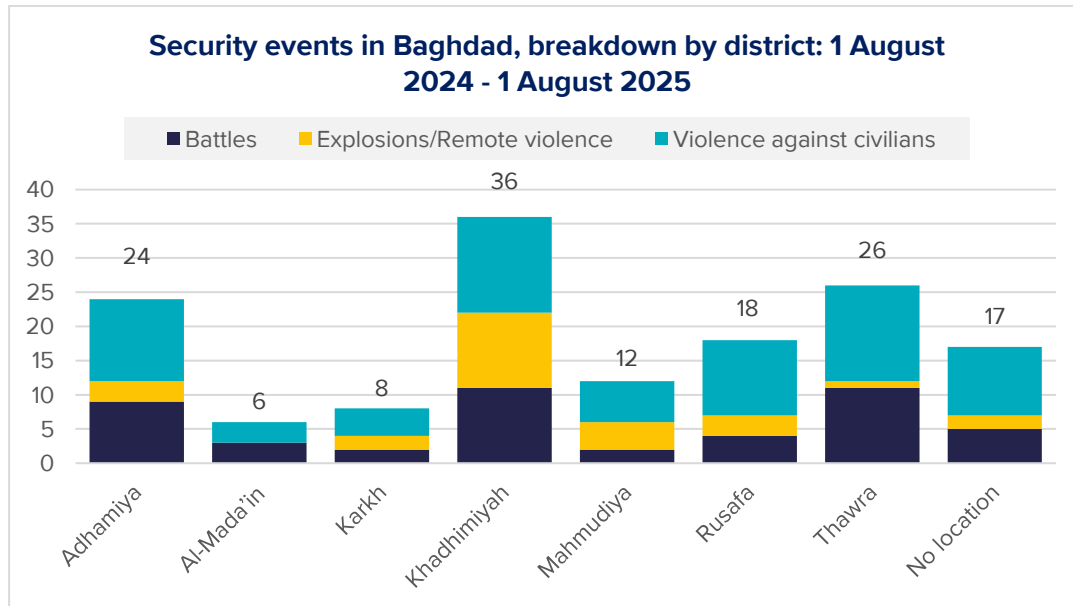
<sup>209</sup> Daraj, المعارك العشائرية في العراق... فضّ النزاعات تحت تهديد السلاح [Tribal battles in Iraq – Settling disputes under threat of arms], 17 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>210</sup> Daraj, المعارك العشائرية في العراق... فضّ النزاعات تحت تهديد السلاح [Tribal battles in Iraq – Settling disputes under threat of arms], 17 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>211</sup> Al-Sumaria, اندلاع نيران في منازل سكنية اثر نزاع عشائري ببغداد [Tribal conflict in Baghdad causes fire in homes], 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>212</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)





**Figure 8: Security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Baghdad between August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.<sup>213</sup>**

According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as main actor (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') in 93 incidents, followed by unidentified tribal militia with 26 incidents.<sup>214</sup> For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, UCDP recorded 3 security events in Baghdad governorate, leading to 4 casualties.<sup>215</sup>

### Civilian casualties

During the reference period, UNAMI recorded 2 civilian casualties in Baghdad governorate (1 civilian killed and 1 injured).<sup>216</sup> UCDP likewise reported one civilian fatality.<sup>217</sup>

### Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

No information on new conflict-related infrastructure damage could be found in the reference period within the time constraints of this report. Occasionally, security forces reportedly seized war remnants such as mortar shells and other explosive devices in the vicinity of Baghdad city.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>213</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>214</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>215</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>216</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>217</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025.

<sup>218</sup> Central, ضبط مخلفات حربية جنوب بغداد [War remnants seized south of Baghdad], 1 June 2025, [url](#); Baghdad Today, ضبط مخلفات حربية لعصابات "داعش" الإرهابية في محيط بغداد [War remnants of ISIL gangs seized near Baghdad], 29 December 2024, [url](#)



### Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>219</sup> unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, Baghdad governorate was hosting 25 698 displaced people, 8 724 of them in Mahmoudiya district, followed by Abu Ghraib district with 4 998 and Karkh district with 4 350. About 38 % of these IDPs were displaced from Anbar governorate, while 35% were displaced from Babil governorate.<sup>220</sup> As of December 2024, the return rate<sup>221</sup> in Baghdad governorate was 70 %. Baghdad recorded 96 216 returnees, most of whom had been displaced within the governorate (90 %), with the principal districts of return being Mahmoudiya (51 714) and Abu Ghraib (24 390).<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

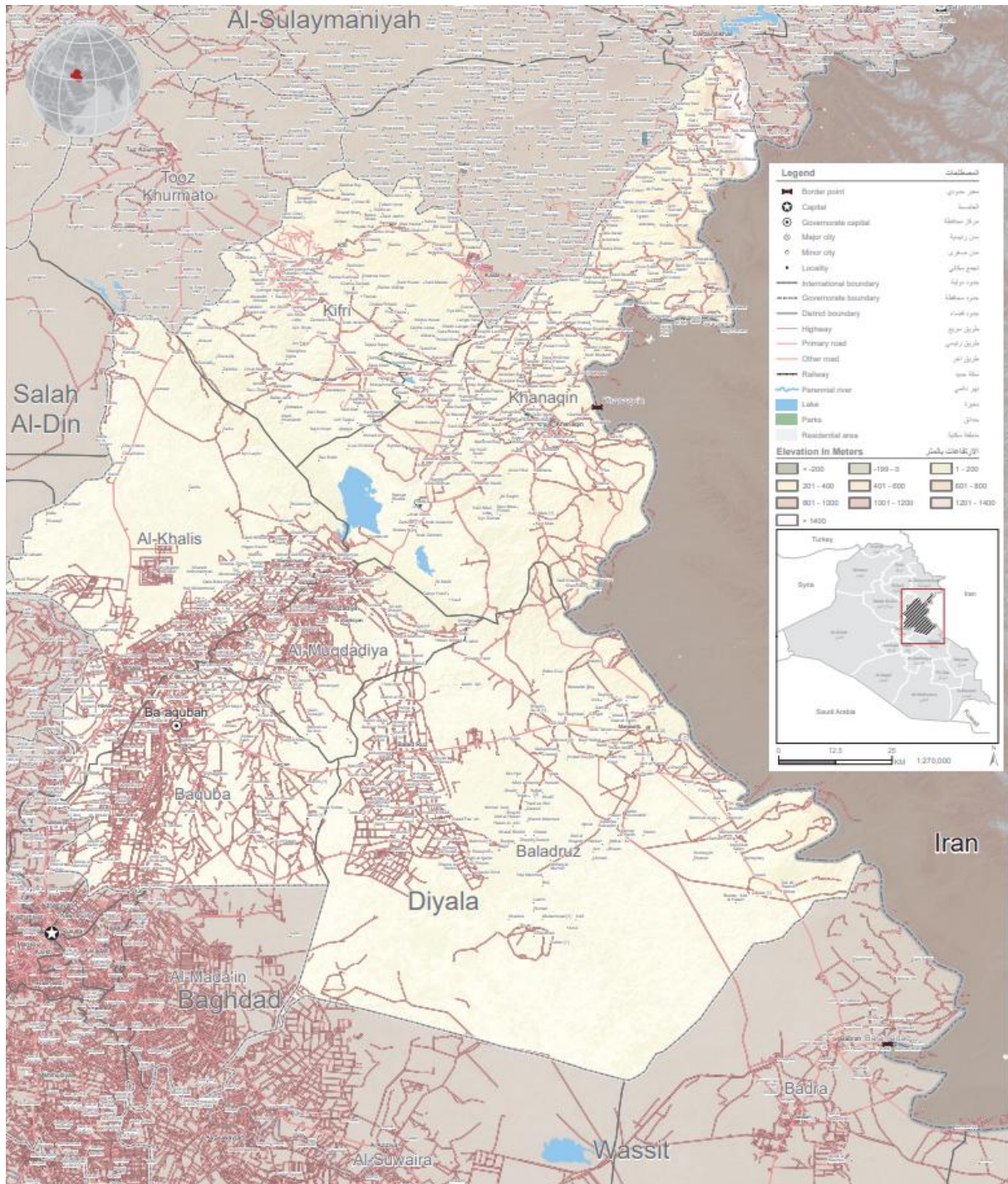
<sup>220</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master Lists 134, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>221</sup> The return rate is calculated by dividing the number of returnees per governorate by the total number of returnees and IDPs originating from that governorate. (IOM Iraq, Returns in Iraq: 2021 Overview, December 2020 (Round11) to December 2021 (Round 14), February 2022, [url](#), p. 2, footnote 5)

<sup>222</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 10



### 1.4.3 Diyala



Map 4. Diyala governorate, © UNOCHA and MapAction.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>223</sup> UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Diyala Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, [url](#)

For a general description of the governorate, please refer to section 2.4 of the [EUAA COI Report Iraq – Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#). According to the latest available figures of 2022, Diyala governorate's population was estimated at 1 814 368.<sup>224</sup>

The Badr Organisation, led by Hadi Al-Ameri, reportedly had control over the local army division (5<sup>th</sup> Division) and maintained a base at Ashraf camp.<sup>225</sup> This camp was apparently also hosting Pakistani fighters from the Liwa Fatemiyoun and Afghan fighters from the Liwa Zainabiyoun, both supported by the IRGC.<sup>226</sup> Several PMF brigades operating in Diyala were described as being controlled by the Badr Organisation and taking part in security operations under the Diyala Operations Command, whose commander was also affiliated with the Badr Organisation.<sup>227</sup>

Next to the Badr Organisation, Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haq (AAH) and Kata'ib Hezbollah also reportedly had a prominent presence in the governorate.<sup>228</sup> Based on confidential sources, the US news publication Foreign Policy (FP) reported in March 2025 that Houthi fighters from Yemen were being trained in a camp run by Kata'ib Hezbollah in Diyala,<sup>229</sup> a claim denied by the Iraqi authorities.<sup>230</sup> Furthermore, Saraya Al-Salam, the military arm of the movement led by cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr, maintained a base east of Baquba.<sup>231</sup>

A member of the Diyala Provincial Council stated in December 2024 that ISIL activities were limited to the border areas of the governorate, with limited operational capacities.<sup>232</sup> The US-based civil society organisation EPIC (Enabling Peace in Iraq Centre) recorded two attacks on security forces carried out by ISIL members over the reference period.<sup>233</sup> The Iraqi army, CTS and PMF, carried out anti-ISIL raids,<sup>234</sup> destroying hideouts and supplies of ISIL militants<sup>235</sup> as well as killing several ISIL suspects<sup>236</sup>.

<sup>224</sup> Iraq, CSO, *الحصائية المجموعة 2023-2022 الباب الثاني* [Statistical Collection 2022-2023, Part Two], 21 August 2023, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>225</sup> Knights, M. and Smith, C., *Badr Organization: Iran's Oldest Proxy in Iraq*, Hudson Institute, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>226</sup> Knights, M. and Smith, C., *Badr Organization: Iran's Oldest Proxy in Iraq*, Hudson Institute, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>227</sup> ISW and CTP, *Iran Update*, January 11, 2025, 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>228</sup> Al-Hurra, *Iraqi Militias Mobilize as Iran-Israel Tensions Reignite Talk of "Unified Front"*, 21 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>229</sup> Oszelic, B. and Shibani, B., *Is This Game Over for the Houthis?*, FP, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>230</sup> Rudaw, *العراق ينفي استخدام الحوثيين لمعسكر تدريبي على أراضيه* [Iraq denies that Houthis are using a training camp on its territory], 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>231</sup> Shafaq News, *Iraq's Saraya Al-Salam "on alert" following Diyala headquarters rocket attack*: Source, 17 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>232</sup> Shafaq News, *Diyala urges intensified intelligence efforts against ISIS remnants*, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>233</sup> EPIC, ISHM: October 3 - 10, 2024, 10 October 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: March 13 - March 20, 2025, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>234</sup> +964, *Arrest made in Abu Ghraib – Iraq's counter-terrorism forces destroy ISIS hideouts in Diyala*, Salah Al-Din, 19 August 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, *Terrorist cells in Diyala: Iraq launches major operation to restore stability*, 21 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, *ISIS hideout busted in Iraq's Diyala*, 28 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>235</sup> EPIC, ISHM: August 15 - 22, 2024, 22 August 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, *ISIS crackdown: Iraq arrests three suspects, destroys multiple hideouts*, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

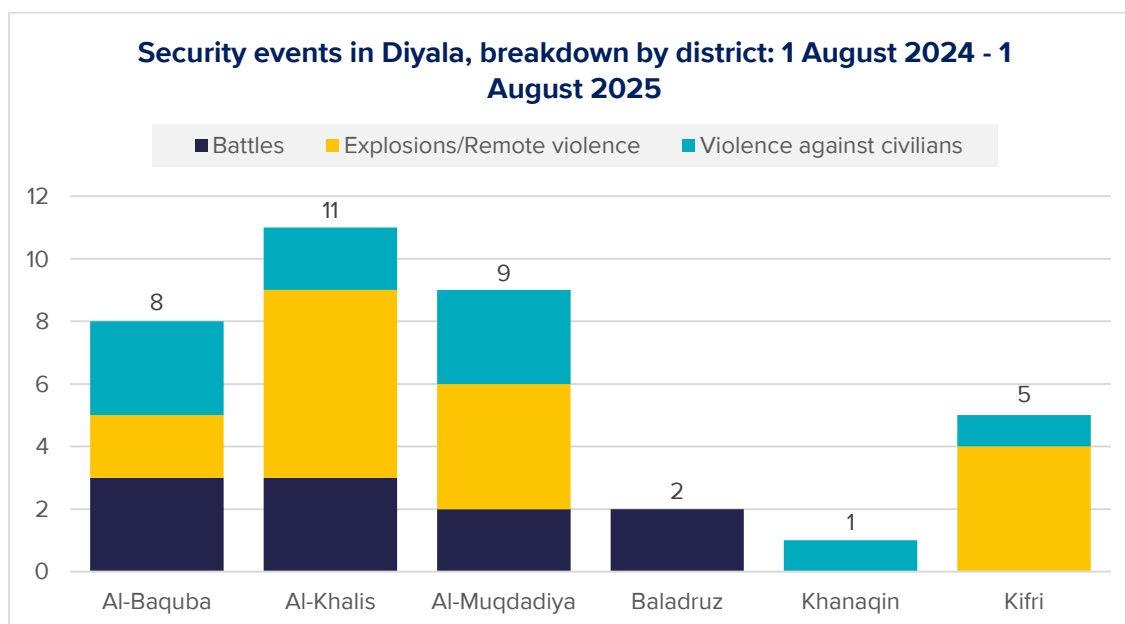
<sup>236</sup> EPIC, ISHM: December 5 - 12, 2024, 12 December 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: January 9 - 16, 2025, 16 January 2025, [url](#)



Several IED explosions were reported during the reference period, among them IEDs targeting armed forces and PMF,<sup>237</sup> but also affecting residential areas.<sup>238</sup>

### Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), there were 36 security incidents recorded by ACLED in Diyala governorate, of which 10 were coded as battles, 16 as explosions/remote violence, and 10 as incidents of violence against civilians. Security incidents were recorded in all six governorate districts, about 30 % of which being documented in Al-Khalis district.<sup>239</sup>



**Figure 9: Security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Diyala between August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.<sup>240</sup>**

According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in the majority of security incidents (18), followed by ISIL with 10 incidents and unidentified tribal militia with 5 incidents.<sup>241</sup> For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, UCDP recorded 6 security events in Diyala governorate, leading to 16 casualties.<sup>242</sup>

<sup>237</sup> Al-Sumaria, عبوة بانفجار عبوة "الصهوة" بالسيارة 3 عناصر من "الصهوة" بالسيارة [Diyala – IED injured three tribal mobilisation members], 25 April 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: March 6 - March 13, 2025, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>238</sup> EPIC, ISHM: October 10 - 17, 2024, 17 October 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: February 20 - 27, 2025, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>239</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>240</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>241</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>242</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025



## Civilian casualties

During the reference period, UNAMI recorded 3 civilian casualties in Diyala governorate<sup>243</sup> without any fatalities,<sup>244</sup> while UCDP recorded 1 civilian fatality for the same reference period.<sup>245</sup>

## Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

No information on new conflict-related infrastructure damage in the reference period could be found within the time constraints of this report. A spokesperson at the Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) stated in August 2024 that Diyala governorate is one of four governorates with the largest mine-contaminated areas.<sup>246</sup> Several instances of ERW explosions were reported over the reference period, leading to injuries and material damages.<sup>247</sup>

## Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>248</sup> unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, Diyala governorate was hosting 40 584 displaced people, 18 360 of them in Baquba district, followed by Khanaqin district with 12 420. The number of IDPs hosted in Diyala decreased by approximately 7 % in 2024 compared to 2023. 90% of the IDPs were displaced within the governorate, 6 % were from Salah Al-Din and 4% from other governorates.<sup>249</sup> As of December 2024, the return rate<sup>250</sup> in Diyala was 78 %. The governorate recorded 241 830 returnees, with the principal districts of return being Khanaqin (105 810), Al-Khalis (74 322) and Al-Muqtadiya (60 198).<sup>251</sup>

<sup>243</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>244</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>245</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>246</sup> Rudaw, One-third of Iraq's landmine-contaminated areas remain to be cleared, 12 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>247</sup> Shafaq News, إصابات مزارع بانفجار مخلف حربي في العثمانية [Details concerning explosion near Baquba], 11 August 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: August 15 - 22, 2024, 22 August 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, إصابة مزارع بانفجار مخلف حربي في العثمانية [Farmer injured in ERW explosion in Al-Uthmaniya, central Diyala], 10 January 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, نفوق حمارين جراء انفجار عبوة من مخلفات داعش في ديالى [Two donkeys perish after an explosive device left behind by ISIS explodes in Diyala], 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>248</sup> Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>249</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

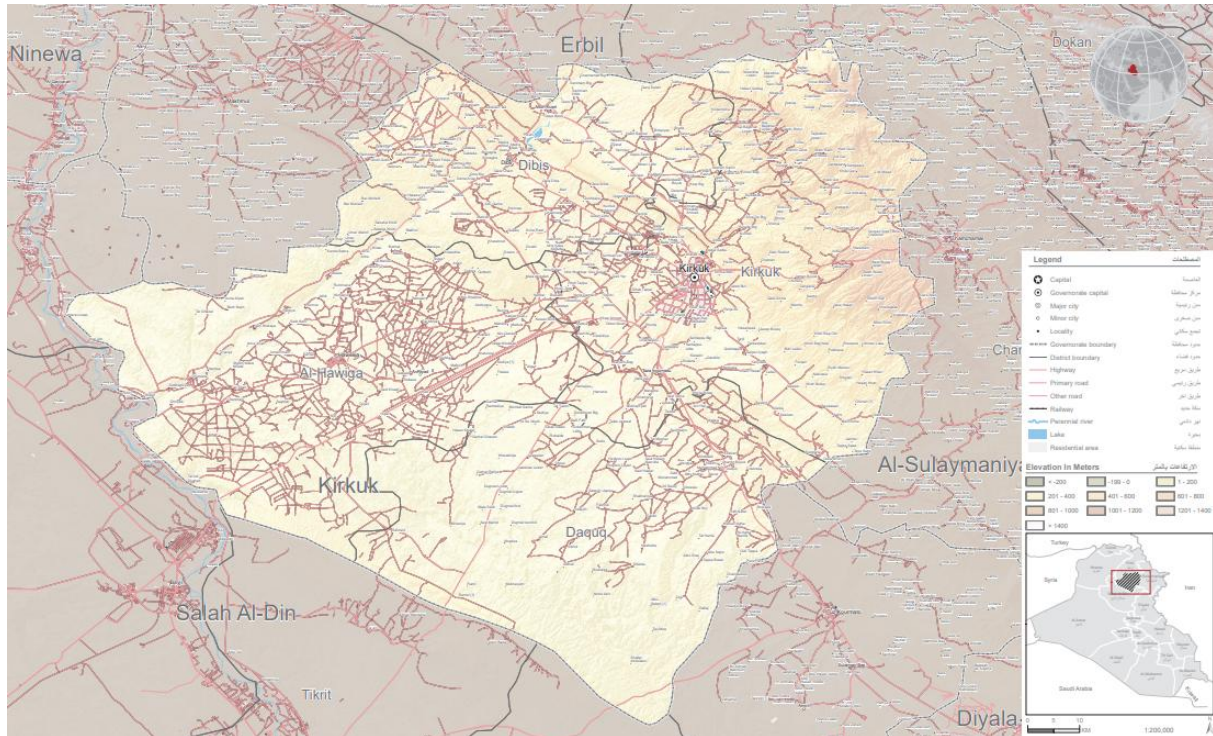
<sup>250</sup> The return rate is calculated by dividing the number of returnees per governorate by the total number of returnees and IDPs originating from that governorate. (IOM Iraq, Returns in Iraq: 2021 Overview, December 2020 (Round11) to December 2021 (Round 14), February 2022, [url](#), p. 2 footnote 5)

<sup>251</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 10





## 1.4.4 Kirkuk



**Map 5. Kirkuk governorate, © UNOCHA and MapAction.<sup>252</sup>**

For a general description of the governorate, please refer to section 2.5 of the [EUAA COI Report Iraq – Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#). Kirkuk governorate's population according to the latest available figures of 2022 was estimated to be 1 814 368.<sup>253</sup>

Kirkuk is described as ethnically and religiously diverse, with Arab, Kurdish and Turkmen populations<sup>254</sup> as well as Christian and Mandaean religious minorities.<sup>255</sup> From 20 to 21 November 2024, a nation-wide census was carried out.<sup>256</sup> This was considered by some as a politically sensitive undertaking, especially in the disputed territories such as Kirkuk governorate, where there were Kurdish concerns that new population figures might undermine Kurdish claims.<sup>257</sup> Therefore, it was finally decided to exclude questions related to ethnicity and sect from the census.<sup>258</sup> See [section 2.3 on Ethnic and religious minorities](#).

In an analysis of August 2024, Iraqi journalist Mohanad Faris describes the fragmented nature of the security landscape in the governorate, characterised by the lack of local political

<sup>252</sup> UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Kirkuk Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, [url](#)

<sup>253</sup> Iraq, CSO, *الخصائص السكانية المجمعة 2023-2022 الباب الثاني* [Statistical Collection 2022-2023, Part Two], 21 August 2023, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>254</sup> Mahmud, R., How Arabs and Kurds are sidelining Iraq's Turkmen community, Al Majalla, 10 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>255</sup> Al Jazeera, *كركوك على مفترق طرق.. التعداد السكاني هل يعمق الخلافات أم يحلها؟* [Kirkuk at a crossroads- will the population census deepen the divisions or solve them?], 9 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>256</sup> Al-Rubaie, A., Population Census in Iraq: A Step Towards Future Development or Imminent Political Conflict?, TWI, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>257</sup> Ezzedine, N., Deep Dive: Inside Iraq's population-guessing game, Amwaj.media, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>258</sup> Ezzedine, N., Deep Dive: Inside Iraq's population-guessing game, Amwaj.media, 26 November 2024, [url](#); DW, *Could Iraq's census further destabilize the country?*, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

consensus as well as the presence of numerous tribal forces and armed militias. He goes on to mention the continued interference of regional powers Iran and Türkiye, both of which have interests in the governorate's oil fields and provide material and financial support to local rival armed groups.<sup>259</sup>

The ISF maintained a Provincial Operations Command in Kirkuk city.<sup>260</sup> A joint force of Iraqi army and Peshmerga forces, formed in 2021 under the Joint Operations Command for operations in territories disputed between the KRI and the central government,<sup>261</sup> also conducted operations to target ISIL cells in the governorate.<sup>262</sup> Their deployment near Turkmen villages was however reportedly obstructed by local PMF forces.<sup>263</sup> At the same time, PMF factions remained active in security operations within the governorate,<sup>264</sup> including actions targeting ISIL militants.<sup>265</sup> In February 2025, a gas field in Sulaymaniyah was struck by an explosive drone.<sup>266</sup> The drone originated from an area in southern Kirkuk where the PMF 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade were reportedly deployed. However, the PMF denied involvement in the incident.<sup>267</sup> In June 2025, a PMF fighter reportedly killed an 11-year-old child playing near a checkpoint in southwestern Kirkuk.<sup>268</sup>

ISIL reportedly operated in sleeper cells in rural areas of the governorate, capable of carrying out hit-and-run operations.<sup>269</sup> As of August 2024, the Turkmen-settled areas of Tuz Khormatu (see [section 1.4.6 Salah Al-Din](#)), Daquq and the Ghaeda (Gaida) subdistrict were described as some of the last areas of regular ISIL activity in the country.<sup>270</sup> In February 2025, ISIL militant activity between Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din governorates reportedly intensified, with a notable rise in cross-governorate movements.<sup>271</sup> As of June 2025, the group's remaining presence was described to be in the mountainous areas of the governorate, particularly in the Hamrin Mountains, Wadi Al-Shay and Wadi Zghaytoun.<sup>272</sup> Local news media regularly reported on anti-ISIL operations carried out in Kirkuk by the Iraqi army and the CTS during the reference

<sup>259</sup> Faris, M., Competition over Kirkuk: Between Internal Conflicts and Regional Rivalries, TWI, 30 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>260</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 44

<sup>261</sup> +964, Joint Peshmerga-Iraqi army brigade deployed to secure ISIS stronghold, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>262</sup> Shafaq News, Joint Operations Command confirms killing 4 militants between Saladin and Kirkuk, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>263</sup> Knights, M. and Almeida, A., Militia Schisms: The Dissolution of the PMF Northern Axis, TWI, 5 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>264</sup> Almaalomah, الحشد الشعبي ينفذ عملية أمنية في كركوك لتأمين أجواء محرم [PMF carry out security operation in Kirkuk to secure Muharram], 1 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>265</sup> Shafaq News, Iraqi forces launch major operation against ISIS in southern Kirkuk, 9 September 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraq's PMF foils ISIS bombing attempt in Kirkuk, 2 February 2025, [url](#); INA, الحشد الشعبي يدمر مضافة لداعش [PMF destroy ISIL hideout and seize weapons northwest of Kirkuk], 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>266</sup> EPIC, ISHM: January 30 – February 6, 2025, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>267</sup> VOA, VOA Kurdish: Gas field attack sparks tensions over Iraqi troops in region, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>268</sup> Kurdistan24, PMF Fighter Kills 11-Year-old Child in Kirkuk, 10 June 2025, [url](#); +964, Boy shot dead by PMF gunman in Kirkuk village, residents say, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>269</sup> UNSC, Letter dated 6 February 2025 from the President of the Security Council acting in the absence of a Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-fourth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/71/Rev.1, 6 February 2025, [url](#), para.66

<sup>270</sup> Knights, M. and Almeida, A., Militia Schisms: The Dissolution of the PMF Northern Axis, TWI, 5 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>271</sup> VOA, VOA Kurdish: Increased ISIS activity in Iraq raises security concerns, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>272</sup> Shafaq News, Iraqi army takes full control of ISIS stronghold in Kirkuk, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

period.<sup>273</sup> These security measures involved clashes,<sup>274</sup> air strikes<sup>275</sup> and arrests.<sup>276</sup> Some of these operations were carried out in coordination with KRI Peshmerga or the KRI internal security forces, *Asayish*.<sup>277</sup>

In January 2025, the Iraqi parliament voted on a contentious bill to return farmland seized by the Baath government in Kirkuk and other disputed areas back to its original Kurdish and Turkmen owners.<sup>278</sup> This property restitution law came into force on 18 February 2025, however, the day before, confrontations erupted between Iraqi armed forces and farmers in Sargaran subdistrict.<sup>279</sup> The army had blocked Kurdish farmers from accessing their previously confiscated lands, leading to clashes.<sup>280</sup> In May 2025, some Kurdish farmers reportedly still faced threats and harassment by the Iraqi army while trying to access their land.<sup>281</sup> See section [2.2 on Latest legislation impacting civil and human rights](#).

There were sporadic reports of IED explosions, such as an IED planted on the roadside near an army vehicle in the Ghara mountain area killing two officers<sup>282</sup>, an IED detonation near an army patrol in Wadi Al-Shay<sup>283</sup> and an IED detonating in a Turkmen neighbourhood of Kirkuk city, injuring nine civilians.<sup>284</sup>

### Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), ACLED recorded 82 security incidents in Kirkuk governorate, of which 28 were coded as battles, 38 as explosions/remote violence, and 16 as incidents of violence against civilians. Security incidents were recorded in all governorate districts, with more than half being documented in Kirkuk district.<sup>285</sup>

<sup>273</sup> Shafaq News, Iraqi army launches joint security operation in Kirkuk, 6 October 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, Joint Operations Command confirms killing 4 militants between Saladin and Kirkuk, 31 January 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: January 30 – February 6, 2025, 6 February 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraqi F-16s target ISIS sites in Kirkuk, 11 May 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraqi Counter-Terrorism launches operation against ISIS in Kirkuk, 20 June 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Iraqi army details anti-ISIS operation in Kirkuk, 26 June 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Three suspected ISIS members killed in Kirkuk operation, 1 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>274</sup> Rudaw, Three suspected ISIS members killed in Kirkuk operation, 1 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>275</sup> Shafaq News, Joint Operations Command confirms killing 4 militants between Saladin and Kirkuk, 31 January 2025 [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraqi F-16s target ISIS sites in Kirkuk, 11 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>276</sup> Al-Sumaria, اعتقال عناصرين بارزين بـ"داعش" في كركوك [Arrest of two prominent ISIL members in Kirkuk], 4 June 2025 [url](#)

<sup>277</sup> Kurdistan24, Joint Peshmerga, Iraqi Army operation targets ISIS hideouts, 18 August 2024, [url](#); Al-Sumaria, اعتقال عناصر من "داعش" وتدمير أوكار لهم [Asayish: ISIL members arrested and their hideouts destroyed], 6 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>278</sup> EPIC, ISHM: January 16 - 23, 2025, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>279</sup> Amwaj.media, Multi-ethnic Kirkuk rocked by clashes as Kurdish farmers claim land ownership, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>280</sup> Rudaw, PM Sudani orders probe into Iraqi army clashes with farmers in Kirkuk, 18 February 2025, [url](#); Amwaj.media, Multi-ethnic Kirkuk rocked by clashes as Kurdish farmers claim land ownership, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

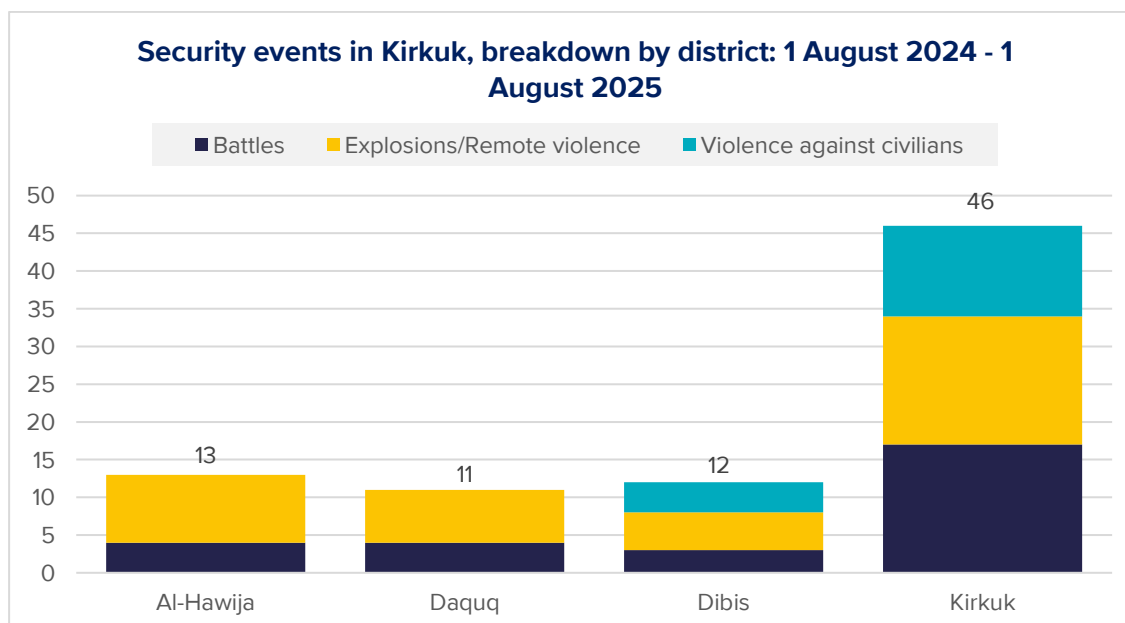
<sup>281</sup> Kurdistan24, Kurdish Farmers in Kirkuk Face Ongoing Military Pressure, 16 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>282</sup> +964, Explosion kills two Iraqi officers, injures two in Kirkuk's Dubz district, 5 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>283</sup> EPIC, ISHM: February 20 - 27, 2025, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>284</sup> EPIC, ISHM: October 3 - 10, 2024, 10 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>285</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)



**Figure 10: Security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Kirkuk between August 2024 and July 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.<sup>286</sup>**

According to ACLED data, ISIL was involved as main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in 37 security incidents, 31 of which also involved Iraqi military forces as an actor, followed by unidentified armed groups with 23 incidents.<sup>287</sup> For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, UCDP recorded 20 security events in Kirkuk governorate, leading to 61 casualties.<sup>288</sup>

### Civilian casualties

During the reference period, UNAMI recorded 3 civilian casualties (2 killed, 1 injured) in Kirkuk governorate.<sup>289</sup> Likewise, UCDP recorded 2 civilian fatalities.<sup>290</sup>

### Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

On 1 July 2025, as two rockets struck the military section of Kirkuk airport, another rocket caused material damage when it hit a house in Kirkuk city.<sup>291</sup> In terms of ERW contamination, the Mine Action Review as of the end of 2023 estimated that 79 109 square metres of the

<sup>286</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>287</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>288</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>289</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>290</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>291</sup> New Arab (The), Rockets fired at Iraq airport, two wounded: security official, 1 July 2025, [url](#); Kurdistan24, Three Rocket Strikes Hit Kirkuk Airport and Civilian Home, Causing Injuries and Major Damage, 1 July 2025, [url](#)

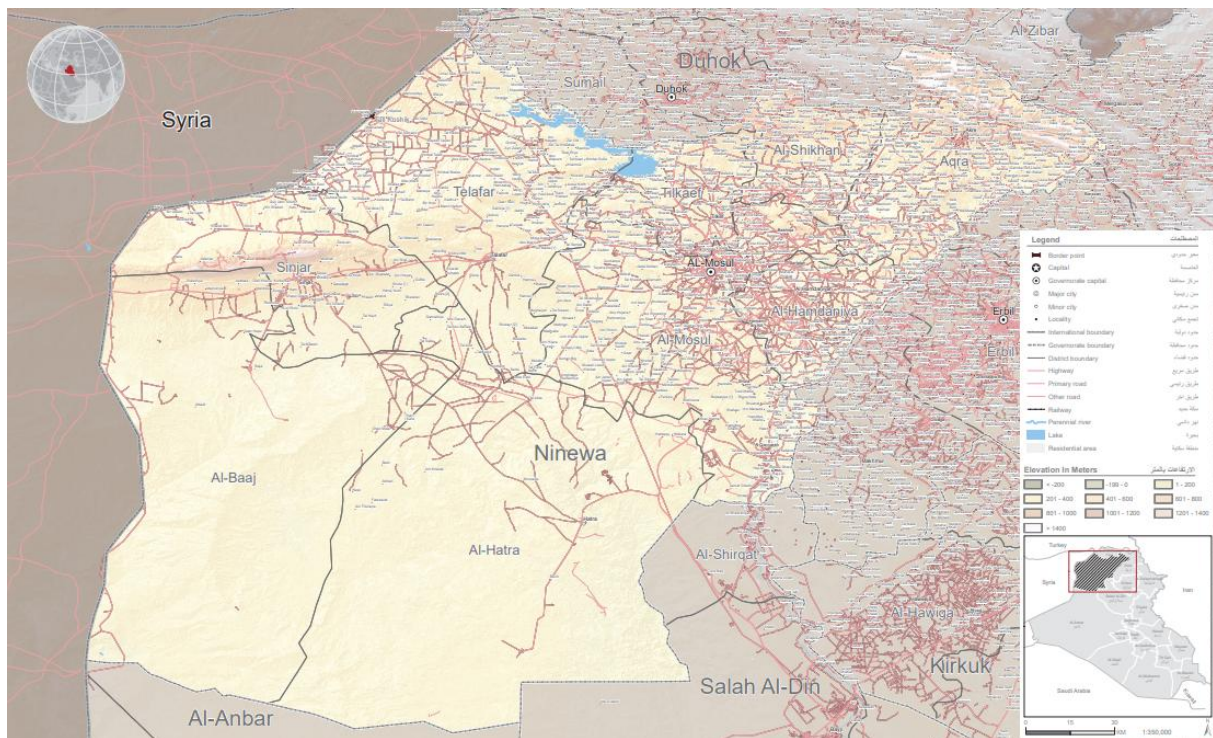


governorate's area were contaminated with cluster munition.<sup>292</sup> In February 2025, a child was killed and another wounded by an explosion of an ERW in Riyadh subdistrict.<sup>293</sup>

### Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>294</sup> unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, Kirkuk governorate was hosting 92 916 displaced people, most of them (83 778) in Kirkuk district. This represented an increase by about 0.3 % compared to 2023. 58 % of these IDPs were displaced within the governorate, 22 % were from Salah Al-Din and 9 % from Ninewa.<sup>295</sup> As of December 2024, Kirkuk had a return rate<sup>296</sup> of 74 %. The governorate recorded 193 014 returnees, with the principal district of return being Al-Hawiga (175 722).<sup>297</sup>

## 1.4.5 Ninewa



Map 6. Ninewa governorate, © UNOCHA and MapAction.<sup>298</sup>

<sup>292</sup> Mine Action Review, Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2024 [Table 1], 1 August 2024, [url](#), p. 56

<sup>293</sup> EPIC, ISHM: January 30 – February 6, 2025, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>294</sup> Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>295</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>296</sup> The return rate is calculated by dividing the number of returnees per governorate by the total number of returnees and IDPs originating from that governorate. (IOM Iraq, Returns in Iraq: 2021 Overview, December 2020 (Round11) to December 2021 (Round 14), February 2022, [url](#), p. 2 footnote 5)

<sup>297</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>298</sup> UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Ninewa Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, [url](#)



For a general description of the governorate, please refer to section 2.6 of the [EUAA COI Report Iraq – Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#). Ninewa governorate's population in 2022 was estimated at 4 133 536.<sup>299</sup>

The city of Mosul and surrounding areas remained under the influence of several larger PMF factions, including the Badr Organization. Control over the Ninewa Plain continued to lie with the PMF, particularly the 30<sup>th</sup> Brigade, affiliated with the Shabak community, and the Babylon Brigade.<sup>300</sup> Led by Rayan Al-Kildani and backed by Iran, the Babylon Brigade presents itself as a Christian militia but also comprises Shiite fighters from southern Iraq.<sup>301</sup> It has been accused of displacing Christian and Yazidi officials, seizing land, and obstructing the return of displaced persons, thereby consolidating control on behalf of Iranian interests.<sup>302</sup> In January 2025, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani launched a government initiative to integrate more Christians into the local police force in Ninewa, aiming to enhance stability, support reconstruction, and preserve Iraq's Christian heritage.<sup>303</sup> In March, approximately 1 200 Yazidi officers, initially affiliated with the KDP's Peshmerga, defected to join the Babylon Brigades, reportedly due to salary and deployment grievances. This defection reportedly heightened existing tensions between Baghdad and Erbil over the governance of disputed territories and deepened the fragmentation among Iraqi security forces.<sup>304</sup>

Parallel to these developments, the district of Sinjar remained highly contested, with the Shingal Resistance Units (YBS), believed to be affiliated with the PKK, maintaining control over parts of the area since the ISIL's defeat.<sup>305</sup> Sinjar was host to a wide array of armed actors, including forces affiliated with the PKK, the Iraqi central government, and the KRG.<sup>306</sup> The presence of these competing groups was identified as a key factor contributing to the persistent insecurity in the area, which continued to hinder the return of thousands of displaced residents. Although Baghdad and Erbil signed a normalisation agreement in 2020, implementation has stalled.<sup>307</sup> Since August 2024, the situation remained fragile due to ongoing Turkish drone strikes targeting PKK-linked elements.<sup>308</sup> Despite the PKK's announcement to disarm, the group maintained bases in Sinjar.<sup>309</sup> The same month saw armed clashes between the YBS and Iraqi forces in Sinjar, resulting in injuries on both sides.<sup>310</sup>

<sup>299</sup> Iraq, CSO, *الحصانية المجموعة 2023-2022 الباب الثاني* [Statistical Collection 2022-2023, Part Two], 21 August 2023, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>300</sup> Al-Hurra, *Iraqi Militias Mobilize as Iran-Israel Tensions Reignite Talk of "Unified Front"*, 21 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>301</sup> VOA, *Iran-linked militia leader wresting control of Iraq's Nineveh Plains after IS defeat*, 3 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>302</sup> Medya News, *New threats for Iraqi Christians as Iranian-backed militias gain power in Nineveh*, 23 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>303</sup> SyriacPress, *Iraqi Prime Minister al-Sudani orders increased integration of Christians into Nineveh Police Force*, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>304</sup> New Arab (The), *1,200 Yazidi fighters defect from Kurdish Peshmerga and join an Iraqi Christian militia*, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>305</sup> Rudaw, *PKK expected to remain in Shingal despite dissolution: Yazidi commander*, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>306</sup> Rudaw, *Tensions between Iraqi army, PKK-affiliated force continue in Shingal*, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>307</sup> Rudaw, *PKK expected to remain in Shingal despite dissolution: Yazidi commander*, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>308</sup> New Arab (The), *Mayor of Iraq's Sinjar pledges stability, asserts push against political interference*, 12 August 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, *Turkish drone targets Sinjar Resistance Units vehicle in northern Iraq*, 10 November 2024, [url](#); Arab News, *Five killed in Turkish strikes on PKK allies: Iraqi local sources*, 25 October 2024, [url](#); Medya News, *Turkish drone strike kills young Yazidi man in Sinjar*, 11 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>309</sup> Kurdistan24, *PKK Disarms, and Sinjar Whispers: 'Let This Be a New Chapter, One Defined by Peace'*, 18 May 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, *PKK expected to remain in Shingal despite dissolution: Yazidi commander*, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>310</sup> Rudaw, *Tensions between Iraqi army, PKK-affiliated force continue in Shingal*, 19 March 2025, [url](#)





In the broader context of regional security, Iraq took measures to strengthen its border control in response to escalating tensions in northwest Syria. Starting in November 2024, the federal government intensified border security efforts in Ninewa governorate. According to the Border Guard Forces, over 210 kilometres of concrete barriers were installed, with an additional 100 kilometres planned.<sup>311</sup> The PMF and Iraqi army units, including the 30th Brigade, launched coordinated operations along the Iraqi-Syrian border, taking control of posts previously held by the Syrian Democratic Forces,<sup>312</sup> and expanded their deployment to enhance stability and prevent cross-border infiltration.<sup>313</sup>

Moreover, security operations continued throughout the reference period. In February 2025, Iraqi security forces launched coordinated operations across Ninewa, Salah Al-Din, and Anbar governorates targeting ISIL hideouts.<sup>314</sup> In May, joint Iraqi army and Peshmerga units conducted operations in the Qarachogh mountains in Makhmour district,<sup>315</sup> while the PMF launched an extensive campaign in July to clear the desert region linking Ninewa and Salah Al-Din governorates.<sup>316</sup> In June, the PMF and other Iraqi forces carried out a large-scale operation in southeastern Mosul, involving multiple brigades and intelligence units.<sup>317</sup> In July, operations of the Joint Operations Command, Counter-Terrorism Service, and the PMF were also initiated in western Ninewa to investigate a series of drone attacks targeting oil fields and infrastructure in the KRI.<sup>318</sup>

### **Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)**

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), ACLED recorded 265 security incidents recorded by ACLED in Ninewa governorate, of which 9 were coded as battles, 246 as explosions/remote violence, and 10 as incidents of violence against civilians. Security incidents were reported across all districts of the governorate, with the vast majority (225 out of 265) documented in Akre District, of which 219 constituted attacks by the Turkish army against the PKK.<sup>319</sup>

<sup>311</sup> North Press Agency, Iraq Tightens Border Security Amid Escalations in Northwest Syria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>312</sup> Shafaq News, EXCLUSIVE: Iraqi forces secure key border post from SDF, 14 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>313</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, Iraq's PMF Reinforces Deployment on Border with Syria, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>314</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq: ISIS hideouts destroyed, senior leader captured in Al-Anbar, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

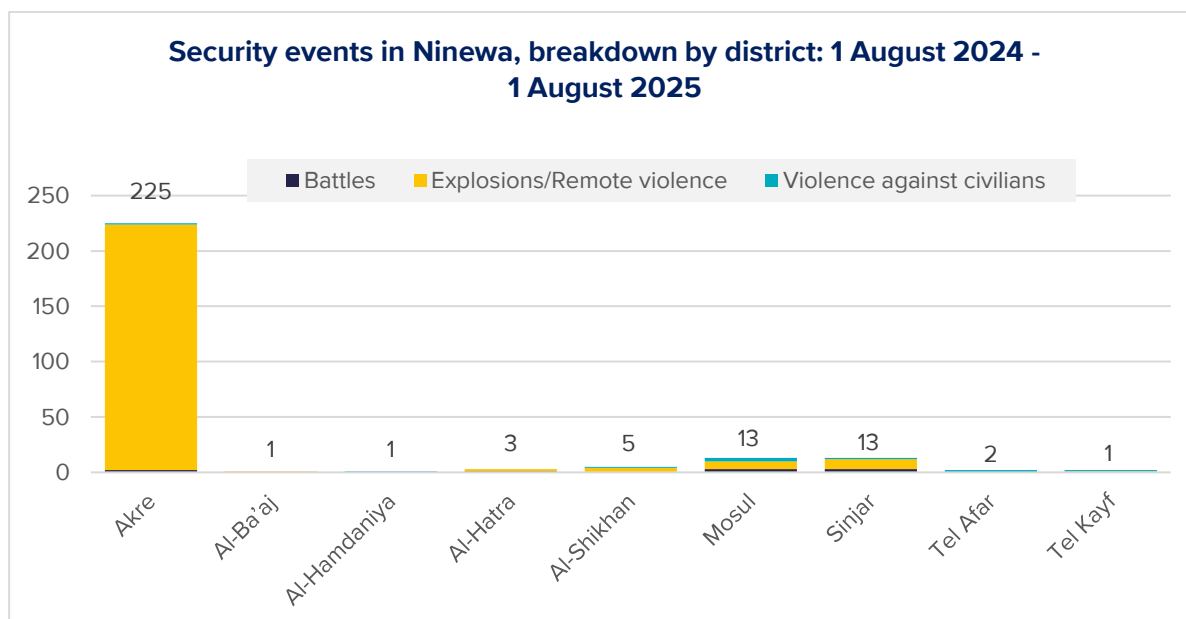
<sup>315</sup> Shafaq News, Operation in Makhmour: Iraqi, Kurdish forces hunt ISIS remnants, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>316</sup> Rudaw, Iraq launches security operation after drone attacks, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>317</sup> Shafaq News, Iraqi forces launch security sweep in Mosul, 7 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>318</sup> Rudaw, Iraq launches security operation after drone attacks, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>319</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)



**Figure 11: Security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Ninewa between August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.<sup>320</sup>**

According to ACLED data, Turkish military forces were involved as main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in 233 security incidents, 225 of which also involved the PKK as an actor.<sup>321</sup> For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, the UCDP recorded 5 security events in Ninewa governorate, leading to 9 casualties.<sup>322</sup>

### Civilian casualties

During the reference period, UNAMI recorded 12 civilian casualties in Ninewa governorate,<sup>323</sup> including 8 civilian deaths.<sup>324</sup> For the same reference period, UCDP recorded 1 civilian fatality.<sup>325</sup>

### Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

Comprehensive information on recent conflict-related damage to civilian infrastructure in Iraq during the reference period of this report was scarce across all consulted sources.

Ninewa governorate remained heavily contaminated with ERWs resulting from the 2014–2018 conflict with ISIL. These include landmines, IEDs and unexploded ordnance (UXO), particularly affecting agricultural areas and posing ongoing risks to civilians. Mosul was cited as an

<sup>320</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>321</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>322</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>323</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>324</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>325</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025.

example of a city where unexploded ordnance and explosives are found within buildings.<sup>326</sup> The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNAMS), between 1 January and 30 June 2025, cleared a total of 7 401 ERWs and 399 IEDs in the governorate.<sup>327</sup>

Throughout the reference period, multiple incidents involving IEDs and ERWs were reported in the governorate. On 1 September 2024, the detonation of a legacy IED in Baaj district killed three children and injured two relatives.<sup>328</sup> On 16 September, four PMF media personnel were injured by an IED in western Ninewa.<sup>329</sup> In January 2025, a legacy device killed a boy near Sheik Younis.<sup>330</sup> In April, a farmer was seriously injured by an ERW in Muhalabiyah, west of Mosul,<sup>331</sup> and in May, three civilians were wounded by an ERW near Wana subdistrict.<sup>332</sup>

### Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>333</sup> unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, Ninewa governorate was hosting 221 911 displaced people, the majority of which in Mosul and Sinjar district, with 85 074 and 40 794 IDPs respectively. This represented a decrease of 17 213 people compared to 2023. 99 % of these IDPs were displaced within the governorate and 1 % from other governorates.<sup>334</sup>

Alongside this decline in displacement, Ninewa experienced one of the highest rates of return in the country, a total of 78 %. The most substantial increases in returnees were observed in the districts Sinjar (18 246 individuals) and Al-Baaj (13 722 districts).<sup>335</sup> As of December 2024, Ninewa had recorded nearly two million returnees, with the principal districts of return being Mosul (1 080 426), Telafar (365 700) and Al-Hamdaniya (177 750). The majority had previously been displaced within Ninewa itself (67 %), followed by displacement in Dohuk (11 %), Erbil (9 %), and other regions (13 %).<sup>336</sup> However, Ninewa, along with Salah Al-Din, also accounted for the highest number of failed returns. In Ninewa, most failed returns were reported in Sinjar District, primarily due to insufficient public services and lack of employment opportunities in areas of origin, according to IOM.<sup>337</sup>

In addition to the absence of essential services, the security situation in Sinjar District remained a major impediment to returns. The continued presence of multiple armed actors,

<sup>326</sup> HI, The challenge of explosive contamination in Iraq, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>327</sup> UNMAS, Iraq, n.d., accessed 8 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>328</sup> EPIC, ISHM: August 29 – September 12, 2024, 12 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>329</sup> EPIC, ISHM: September 12 - 19, 2024, 19 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>330</sup> EPIC, ISHM: January 1 - 9, 2025, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>331</sup> EPIC, ISHM: April 17 - 24, 2025, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>332</sup> EPIC, ISHM: May 1 - May 8, 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>333</sup> Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>334</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

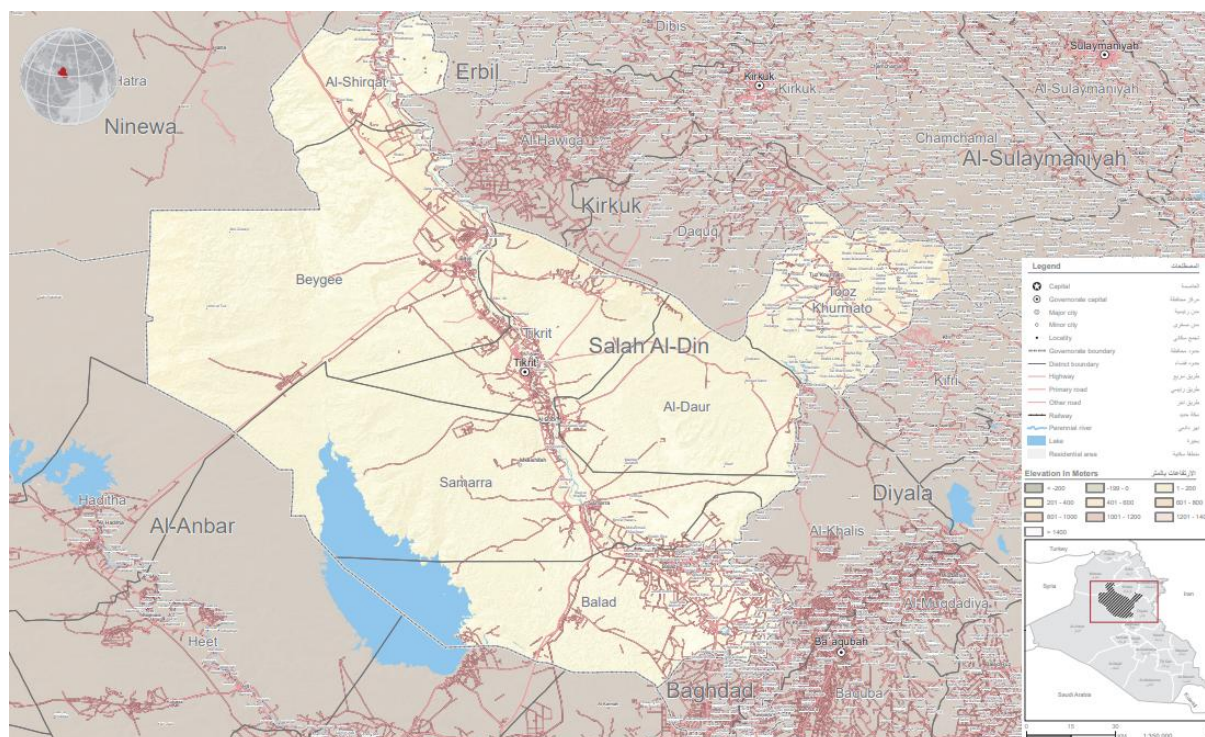
<sup>335</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>336</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>337</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 9

including groups affiliated with the PKK, the Iraqi government, and the KRG contributed to ongoing insecurity.<sup>338</sup> These factors in turn contributed to the protracted displacement of over 40 % of Sinjar's population, many of whom continue to reside in camps in Dohuk and other locations.<sup>339</sup> See section [3.3](#).

### 1.4.6 Salah Al-Din



**Map 7. Salah Al-Din governorate, © UNOCHA and MapAction.<sup>340</sup>**

For a general description of the governorate, please refer to section 2.7 of the [EUAA COI Report Iraq – Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#). The governorate's population in 2022 was estimated at 1 767 837.<sup>341</sup>

Throughout the reference period, Salah Al-Din governorate has been a focal area for counter-terrorism operations by Iraqi forces, targeting remaining ISIL elements. These operations were part of broader security efforts that spanned several governorates, including Kirkuk, Diyala, and Al-Anbar.<sup>342</sup> In Salah Al-Din, airstrikes and ground offensives were conducted in multiple

<sup>338</sup> Rudaw, Tensions between Iraqi army, PKK-affiliated force continue in Shingal, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>339</sup> Kurdistan24, PKK Disarms, and Sinjar Whispers: 'Let This Be a New Chapter, One Defined by Peace', 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>340</sup> UNOCHA and MapAction, Southern Iraq, 22 July 2014, [url](#)

<sup>341</sup> Iraq, CSO, [الحصانية المجموعة 2023-2022 الباب الثاني] Statistical Collection 2022-2023, Part Two], 21 August 2023, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>342</sup> Shafaq News, Iraqi Military Intelligence seize weapons and IED manufacturing facility in Diyala, 24 October 2024, [url](#); +964, Two suspected ISIS members arrested in operations across Sulaymaniyah, Salah al-Din, 22 March 2025, [url](#); Kurdistan24, Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Forces Capture 10 ISIS Operatives in Nationwide Operations, 24 July 2025, [url](#)



regions, notably in Tuz Khurmatu<sup>343</sup> in the Balkana mountain range,<sup>344</sup> in Baiji<sup>345</sup> and in the Al-Zarka region.<sup>346</sup> These actions led to the destruction of ISIL hideouts, the capture of group members, and the killing of high-ranking operatives,<sup>347</sup> including the so-called ‘Wali of Kirkuk’, Daham Mohammed Alawi.<sup>348</sup>

Turkmen-populated areas, notably Tuz Khurmatu and its surroundings, were identified as among the last areas of regular ISIL activity in Iraq.<sup>349</sup> As reported by Shafaq News in November 2024, the city of Tuz Khurmatu was repeatedly targeted by ISIL. The group carried out attacks against civilians and Iraqi forces, including kidnappings and the planting of IEDs.<sup>350</sup> Notable incidents during the reference period included IED attacks in September<sup>351</sup> and November 2024,<sup>352</sup> both of which targeted joint patrols of Iraqi and Peshmerga forces and resulted in casualties.<sup>353</sup> The Balkana mountains – in the district of Tuz Khurmatu – are a known retreat for local ISIL cells,<sup>354</sup> and witnessed operations against the militants throughout the reference period.<sup>355</sup> In February 2025, an increase in ISIL movement was reported between Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din.<sup>356</sup>

Joint security operations involving the Iraqi Army and the Kurdish Peshmerga were implemented under the umbrella of the Iraqi Joint Operations Command, particularly in areas between Tuz Khurmatu and Kifri.<sup>357</sup> The United States Central Command also supported operations, contributing to the killing and capture of ISIL operatives.<sup>358</sup>

In addition to official security forces, several factions of the PMF and other major armed factions maintained a presence in Salah Al-Din. These included the Badr Organization, Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq, Kataib Hezbollah, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq coalition and Saraya Al-Salam.<sup>359</sup> PMF infrastructure in the governorate included the Martyrs Camp near Amerli and the Al-Imamain Al-Askariyain Training Center in Balad.<sup>360</sup> As of March 2025, the PMF’s 35th Brigade

<sup>343</sup> +964, Joint Peshmerga-Iraqi army brigade deployed to secure ISIS stronghold, 28 September 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, Peshmerga: Kurdish Colonel among victims of deadly attack in Iraq, 17 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>344</sup> EPIC, ISHM: October 24 - 31, 2024, 31 October 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraqi air force strikes extremist hideouts in Saladin, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>345</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq’s air force strikes ISIS in Saladin, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>346</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraqi Forces Eliminate Key ISIS Leaders in Precision Airstrike, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>347</sup> Shafaq News, Iraqi Military Intelligence seize weapons and IED manufacturing facility in Diyala, 24 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>348</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraqi Forces Eliminate Key ISIS Leaders in Precision Airstrike, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>349</sup> Knights, M. and Almeida, A., Militia Schisms: The Dissolution of the PMF Northern Axis, TWI, 5 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>350</sup> Shafaq News, Peshmerga: Kurdish Colonel among victims of deadly attack in Iraq, 17 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>351</sup> EPIC, ISHM: September 12 - 19, 2024, 19 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>352</sup> EPIC, ISHM: November 14 - 21, 2024, 21 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>353</sup> EPIC, ISHM: September 12 - 19, 2024, 19 September 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: November 14 - 21, 2024, 21 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>354</sup> Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 31 December 2024, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>355</sup> EPIC, ISHM: October 24 - 31, 2024, 31 October 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraqi air force strikes extremist hideouts in Saladin, 20 May 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Iraqi warplanes kill suspected ISIS members in Salahaddin, 15 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>356</sup> VOA, VOA Kurdish: Increased ISIS activity in Iraq raises security concerns, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>357</sup> +964, Joint Peshmerga-Iraqi army brigade deployed to secure ISIS stronghold, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>358</sup> USCENTCOM, CENTCOM Supports Partner Forces During Defeat ISIS Operations in Iraq and Syria, 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>359</sup> FK, B., Why Shiites Should Be the Last to Call for U.S. Expulsion, New Lines Institute, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>360</sup> Al-Araji, H. et al., The Fatemiyou/Zainabiyou Influx: Iraq’s Intensified Hosting of Two U.S.-Designated Terrorist Groups, TWI, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

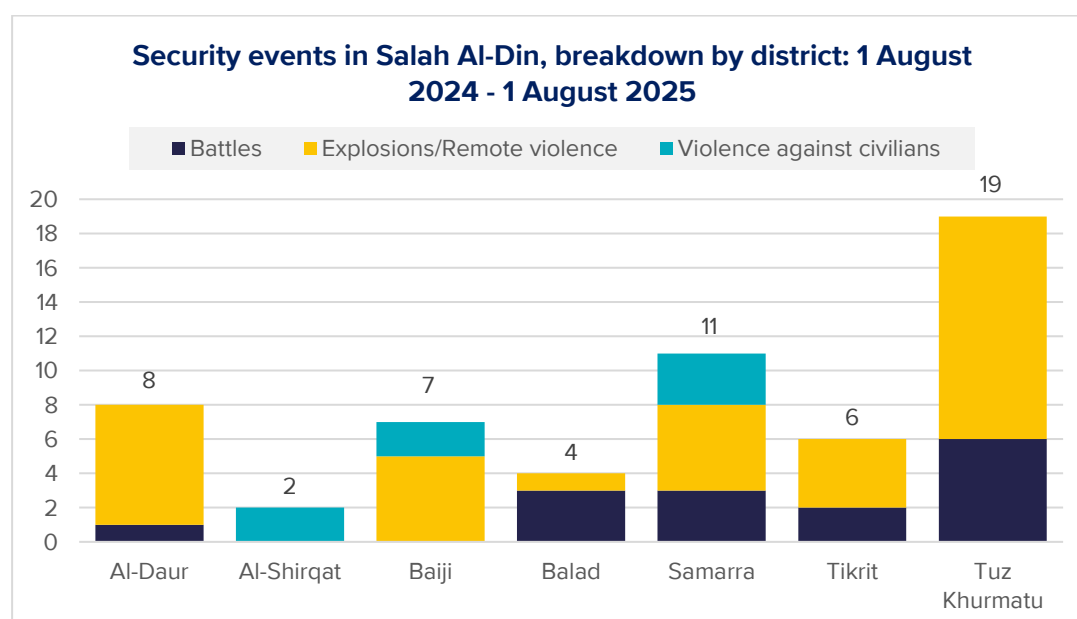




maintained control over Al-Awja, birthplace of Saddam Hussein.<sup>361</sup> Saraya Al-Salam, operating within the PMF framework (brigades 313, 314 and 315), was deployed primarily around Samarra with an estimated force exceeding 10 000 fighters.<sup>362</sup>

### Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), ACLED recorded 57 security incidents recorded by ACLED in Salah Al-Din governorate, of which 15 were coded as battles, 35 as explosions/remote violence, and 7 as incidents of violence against civilians. Security incidents were recorded in most governorate districts, with the majority being documented in Tuz Khurmatu (19) and Samarra (11) districts.<sup>363</sup>



**Figure 12: Security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Salah Al-Din between August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.**<sup>364</sup>

According to ACLED data, ISIL was involved as main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in 39 security incidents, 27 of which also involved Iraqi military forces as an actor. Unidentified armed groups were involved in 12 security incidents.<sup>365</sup> For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, the UCDP recorded 15 security events in Salah Al-Din governorate, leading to 48 casualties.<sup>366</sup>

<sup>361</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq’s Al-Awja: trapped between Saddam’s shadow and the fight to return home, 23 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>362</sup> Jummar Media, Dissolving the PMF, Again, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>363</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>364</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>365</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>366</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

### Civilian casualties

During the reference period, UNAMI recorded 12 civilian casualties in Salah Al-Din governorate (including 8 deaths),<sup>367</sup> while UCDP recorded 10 civilian deaths.<sup>368</sup>

### Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

Comprehensive information on recent conflict-related damage to civilian infrastructure in Iraq during the reference period of this report was scarce across all consulted sources.

Salah Al-Din governorate remained heavily contaminated with ERWs resulting from the 2014–2018 conflict with ISIL. These include landmines, IEDs, and unexploded ordnance (UXOs), particularly affecting agricultural areas and posing ongoing risks to civilians. Since May 2023, clearance efforts by Humanity & Inclusion (HI) in the governorate resulted in the decontamination of over 2.1 million square kilometres of land, and in the destruction of 1 730 IEDs and 1 044 UXOs.<sup>369</sup> Despite these efforts, incidents continued: ERW explosions in Baiji<sup>370</sup> and Al-Alam<sup>371</sup> districts in late 2024 and early 2025 injured civilians.

### Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>372</sup> unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, Salah Al-Din governorate was hosting 42 078 displaced people, the majority of which in Samarra and Tuz Khurmatu district, with 15 186 and 14 724 people respectively. This represented a decrease of 6 150 people compared to 2023. 97 % of these IDPs were displaced within the governorate, 2 % were from Kirkuk and 1% from other places.<sup>373</sup>

In parallel with this decline in displacement, Salah Al-Din also recorded one of the highest increases in returnees nationwide, next to Ninewa governorate. The largest numbers of returnees were reported in the districts of Balad (7 542), Fares (5 346), and Baiji (5 040).<sup>374</sup> As of December 2024, the total number of returnees in Salah Al-Din stood at 779 742, with Tikrit (189 762), Al-Shirqat (166 002), and Baiji (141 606) being the primary districts of return. Most returnees had previously been displaced within Salah Al-Din (45 %), followed by Kirkuk (25 %), Erbil (13 %), and other areas of Iraq (15 %).<sup>375</sup>

<sup>367</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNAMI data. Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>368</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. Email UCDP, data covering from 1 August 2024 to EUAA, 41 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025.

<sup>369</sup> HI, The challenge of explosive contamination in Iraq, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>370</sup> EPIC, ISHM: October 17 - 24, 2024, 24 October 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: January 9 - 16, 2025, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>371</sup> EPIC, ISHM: February 13 - 20, 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>372</sup> Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>373</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>374</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>375</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 10





In Salah Al-Din governorate, return of IDPs remained limited to specific areas due to security-related restrictions. According to IOM, Tuz Khurmatu district records the lowest return rate in the governorate at 65 %, with 33 856 individuals still displaced. Of 45 locations with returns, 19 regained less than half their pre-conflict populations,<sup>376</sup> while 18 locations - ten in Al-Amerli, six in Markaz Tuz Khurmatu, and two in Suleiman Beg - saw no returns due to blocks by security actors.<sup>377</sup> In other parts of the governorate, such as Al-Awja – the birthplace of Saddam Hussein – and Al-Awisat, return remained prohibited,<sup>378</sup> despite the some displaced residents having concluded all legal and security obligations.<sup>379</sup> IOM further reported that Salah Al-Din, along with Ninewa, accounted for the majority of failed returns. In Salah Al-Din, all such cases were reported in Balad District, where the lack of employment opportunities and insufficient financial resources in areas of origin were cited as key obstacles.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> IOM, Prospects for Resolving Displacement in Areas of Limited and No Return in Tuz Khurmatu District, 23 December 2024, [url](#), p.4

<sup>377</sup> IOM, Prospects for Resolving Displacement in Areas of Limited and No Return in Tuz Khurmatu District, 23 December 2024, [url](#), p.10

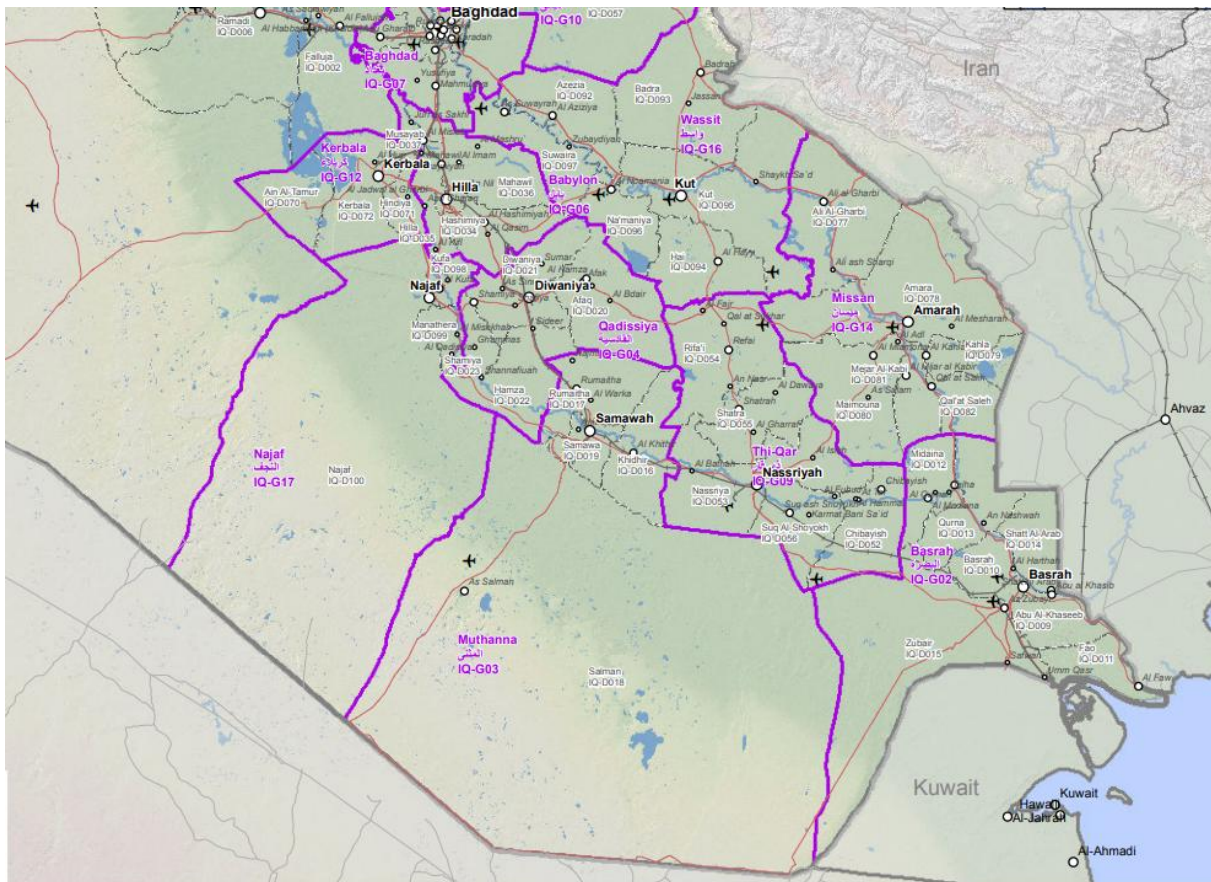
<sup>378</sup> Jummar Media, Dissolving the PMF, Again, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>379</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq's Al-Awja: trapped between Saddam's shadow and the fight to return home, 23 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>380</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 9



### 1.4.7 Southern governorates (Babil, Basrah, Karbala, Missan, Muthanna, Najaf, Thi-Qar, Qadissiya, and Wassit)



**Map 8. Southern governorates, © UNOCHA and MapAction.<sup>381</sup>**

For a general description of the southern governorates, please refer to section 2.2 and 2.11-2.18 of the [EUAA COI Report Iraq – Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#).

The ISF maintained four Provincial Operations Commands in the country's south, located in Karbala, Amarah in Missan governorate, Nasiriyah in Thi-Qar governorate and Basrah.<sup>382</sup> According to a June 2025 article published by Al-Hurra channel, all key pro-Iranian militias had significant economic clout in southern Iraq by controlling commercial activities at ports and border crossings. The town of Jurf Al-Sakhar in Babil governorate was described as being under Kata'ib Hezbollah's control, while hosting fighters from other militia such as Harakat Al-Nujaba, Kata'ib Sayyid Al-Shuhada as well as allied foreign fighters.<sup>383</sup> Furthermore, Kata'ib Hezbollah was reportedly trying to expand its influence in Basrah by fuelling tensions between Basrah's governor and Prime Minister Al-Sudani.<sup>384</sup> Tensions involving armed factions were reported in August 2024, when armed clashes broke out between PMF forces and members

<sup>381</sup> UNOCHA and MapAction, Southern Iraq, 22 July 2014, [url](#)

<sup>382</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 44

<sup>383</sup> Al-Hurra, Iraqi Militias Mobilize as Iran-Israel Tensions Reignite Talk of "Unified Front", 21 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>384</sup> Malik, H. and Knights, M., Kataib Hezbollah Sides with Sudani in Power Struggle Against Eidani, TWI, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

of the Iraqi army<sup>385</sup> near an army checkpoint in Karbala.<sup>386</sup> Furthermore, in May 2025, security forces arrested several security guards of a local Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haq leader, in the north of Basrah, after the killing of a Saraya Al-Salam member.<sup>387</sup>

Armed clashes in the context of tribal conflicts were reportedly a frequent occurrence in Basrah, Missan and Thi-Qar governorates, involving light and medium weapons and in some cases mortar shells. The root causes of these tribal conflicts were issues such as control over agricultural land, water resources, and border crossings.<sup>388</sup> Local media frequently reported on such clashes in the three aforementioned governorates as well as in Wassit and Qadisiya over the reference period<sup>389</sup>, some of which resulted in casualties.<sup>390</sup> The Iraqi army as well as police forces were deployed to contain tribal feuds.<sup>391</sup> See [section 2.10](#).

### Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), ACLED recorded 381 security incidents in the southern governorates, of which 196 were coded as battles, 51 as explosions/remote violence, and 134 as incidents of violence against civilians. Security incidents were recorded especially in the southernmost governorates of Missan (124), Thi-Qar (88) and Basrah (66).<sup>392</sup>

<sup>385</sup> Amwaj.media, Shiite pilgrimage in Iraq marred by tribal violence, army-PMU clash, 23 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>386</sup> Kurdistan24, Clashes between PMF, Iraqi Army in Karbala, 22 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>387</sup> +964, بعد مقتل أحد عناصر سرايا السلام - بالفيديو: قوات الأمن تدهم منزل قيادي في عصائب أهل الحق في البصرة, 25 May 2025, [url](#)

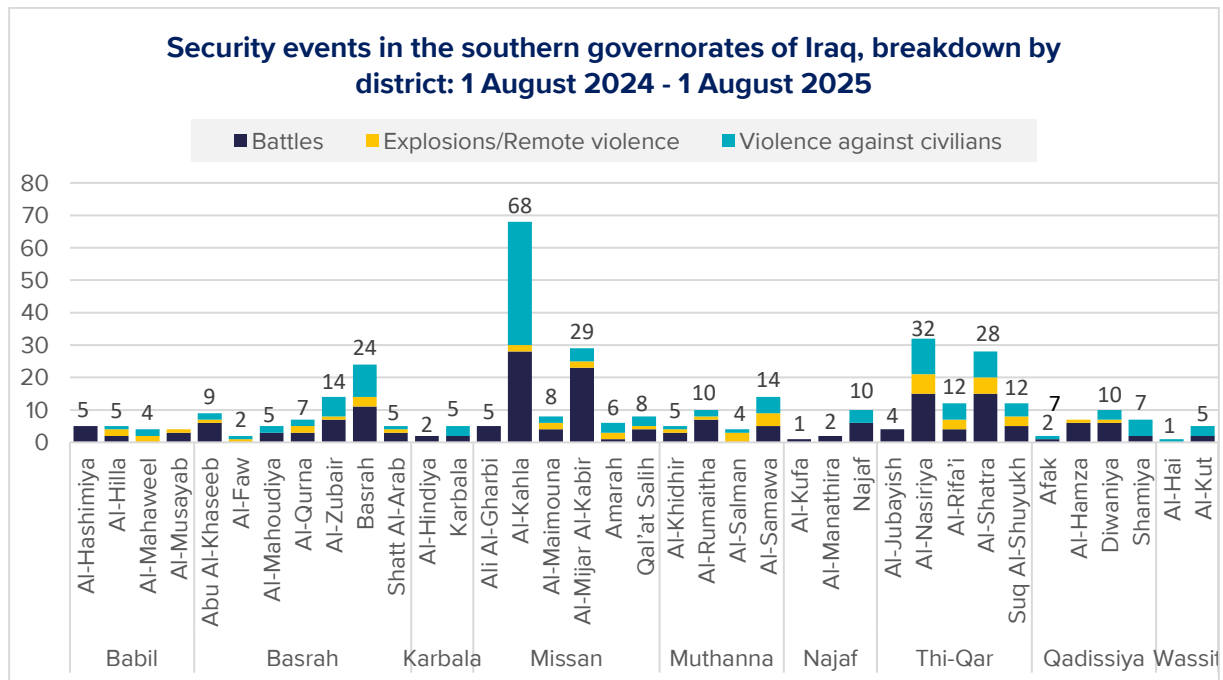
<sup>388</sup> Rudaw, Tribal violence leaves 1 killed, 8 injured in Basra, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>389</sup> Baghdad Today, نزاع عشائري مسلح يقطع الطريق الرابط بين البصرة وميسان, 15 July 2025, [url](#); +964, Ten arrested after tribal clash in Basra's Tamimiya neighbourhood, 7 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>390</sup> NINA, نزاع عشائري جنوب ميسان يسفر عن 3 قتلى وإصابات بين المدنيين والجيش, 9 July 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: May 8 - May 15, 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Five killed in Diwaniyah tribal dispute clash a day after a similar conflict in Basra, 2 April 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Tribal violence leaves 1 killed, 8 injured in Basra, 31 March 2025, [url](#); Al-Mirbad, مقتل مواطن وإصابة [One civilian killed and another injured in tribal dispute in southern Missan], 18 February 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Tribal clashes in Maysan and Wasit leave two dead, six injured, 30 August 2024, [url](#); Al-Mirbad, إصابة شخصين بنزاع عشائري مسلح في قلعة صالح, 6 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>391</sup> NINA, نزاع عشائري جنوب ميسان يسفر عن 3 قتلى وإصابات بين المدنيين والجيش, 9 July 2025, [url](#); Al-Mirbad, مقتل مواطن وإصابة آخر إثر [One civilian killed and another injured in tribal dispute in southern Missan], 18 February 2025, [url](#); Al-Mirbad, إصابة شخصين بنزاع عشائري مسلح في قلعة صالح, 6 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>392</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)



**Figure 13: Security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in the southern governorates between August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.<sup>393</sup>**

According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in 158 security incidents, followed by unidentified tribal militia with 156 security incidents.<sup>394</sup> For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, UCDP recorded 6 security events in southern governorates (1 in Babil, 2 in Basrah, 1 in Missan, 2 in Wassit), leading to 9 casualties. No security incidents were recorded in the governorates of Karbala, Muthanna, Najaf and Qadissiya.<sup>395</sup>

### Civilian casualties

According to UNAMI data, Basrah recorded the highest number of civilian casualties among the southern governorates, with 23 casualties including 10 fatalities, and the second highest number nationwide. UNAMI recorded 8 civilian casualties (including 1 killed) in Missan governorate; 4 civilian casualties in Muthanna (including 1 killed); 1 civilian casualty in Najaf and 5 civilian casualties in Thi-Qar (including 3 killed).<sup>396</sup>

UNAMI did not record any civilian casualties in the southern governorates of Babil, Karbala, Qadissiya and Wassit.<sup>397</sup>

<sup>393</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>394</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>395</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>396</sup> UNAMI, Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>397</sup> UNAMI, Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

Consistent with UNAMI data, UCDP reported the highest number of civilian deaths in Basrah (5) among the southern governorates.<sup>398</sup> UCDP recorded 1 civilian fatality in Missan, 2 in Wassit, and 1 in Thi-Qar.<sup>399</sup> UCDP did not record any civilian casualties in the southern governorates of Babil, Karbala, Qadissiya, Najaf and Muthanna.<sup>400</sup>

### Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

No information on new conflict-related infrastructure damage in the reference period could be found within the time constraints of this report.

A spokesperson at the Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) stated in August 2024 that Basrah governorate is among four governorates with the largest mine-contaminated areas.<sup>401</sup> As of the end of 2023, the Mine Action Review estimated the area of cluster munition-contamination for the southern governorates (excluding Wassit) in the following way: Muthanna (90 117 749 m<sup>2</sup>), Basrah (56 053 577 m<sup>2</sup>), Thi-Qar (43 329 654 m<sup>2</sup>), Najaf (3 704 571 m<sup>2</sup>), Babil (911 758 m<sup>2</sup>) and Karbala (141 910 m<sup>2</sup>). The Mine Action Review further revealed that at the end of 2023, 92% of Iraq's overall contamination was concentrated in Basrah, Muthanna and Thi-Qar governorates, while Missan and Qadissiya were reported to be cleared of cluster-munition contamination.<sup>402</sup> Several instances of ERW explosions were reported over the reference period especially in Basrah governorate,<sup>403</sup> but also in Missan<sup>404</sup> and Thi-Qar,<sup>405</sup> causing deaths and injuries.<sup>406</sup> Basrah governorate, particularly Al-Zubair district, was reportedly especially affected by ERW contamination.<sup>407</sup>

### Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>408</sup> unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, the southern governorates were hosting 46 440 displaced people, 15 912 of them in Babil

<sup>398</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025.

<sup>399</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025.

<sup>400</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025.

<sup>401</sup> Rudaw, One-third of Iraq's landmine-contaminated areas remain to be cleared, 12 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>402</sup> Mine Action Review, Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2024 [Table 1], 1 August 2024, [url](#), p. 56

<sup>403</sup> Shafaq News, War remnants haunt Iraq as Basra leads in contamination, 11 April 2025, [url](#); ICRC, Landmines and explosive remnants cast a long shadow over Iraq amid recovery efforts, 4 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Basra sounds alarm: landmine threat escalates, demands action, 18 February 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Seven injured, mostly children, in war remnant explosion in Basra, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>404</sup> Baghdad Today, ارتفاع حصيلة انفجار المجر الكبير إلى مقتل وإصابة 8 أشخاص [Death toll from large explosion in Al-Majar rises to 1 dead and 8 wounded], 19 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>405</sup> Baghdad Today, إصابة طفل بانفجار لغم عنقودي جنوبي ذي قار [Child wounded in cluster mine explosion in southern Thi-Qar], 1 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>406</sup> Baghdad Today, ارتفاع حصيلة انفجار المجر الكبير إلى مقتل وإصابة 8 أشخاص [Death toll from large explosion in Al-Majar rises to 1 dead and 8 wounded], 19 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Seven injured, mostly children, in war remnant explosion in Basra, 11 February 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Landmine blast kills 4, injures 2 in Iraq's Basra desert, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>407</sup> Shafaq News, War remnants haunt Iraq as Basra leads in contamination, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>408</sup> Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., [url](#)



governorate, followed by Karbala governorate with 9 876 and Najaf governorate with 6 378. 96 % of IDPs in Babil governorate were displaced within the governorate, while in the governorates of Karbala 86 % of IDPs and in Najaf 99 % of IDPs were displaced from Ninewa governorate.<sup>409</sup> The only southern province where IOM had monitored return movements was Babil governorate, with 2 160 returnees. This amounted to a return rate<sup>410</sup> of 5 %.<sup>411</sup>

### 1.4.8 Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah)



**Map 9. Kurdistan Region of Iraq, © UNHCR.<sup>412</sup>**

For a general description of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), please refer to section 2.8-2.10 of the [EUAA COI Report Iraq – Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#). This subsection covers the governorates in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), which include Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah. At the beginning of May 2025, Halabja officially became Iraq's 19<sup>th</sup> governorate, separating it from Sulaymaniyah governorate.<sup>413</sup> However, for the purposes of this report, data on Halabja is clustered with Sulaymaniyah governorate, as the majority of sources did not

<sup>409</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master Lists 134, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>410</sup> The return rate is calculated by dividing the number of returnees per governorate by the total number of returnees and IDPs originating from that governorate (IOM Iraq, Returns in Iraq: 2021 Overview, December 2020 (Round11) to December 2021 (Round 14), February 2022, [url](#), p. 2 footnote 5)

<sup>411</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>412</sup> UNHCR, KRI Operational Context Map, UNHCR Iraq, March 2025, Map, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>413</sup> Rudaw, Halabja becomes Iraq's 19th province, 5 May 2025, [url](#)





treat it as a separate governorate, with the exception of UCDP in the section on civilian casualties. Furthermore, the administrative change only applied to the last three months of the 12-month reference period.

A population census was carried out in November 2024, however, population figures aggregated by governorate were not released (see section 1.4). The KRG Minister of Planning announced in late November 2024 that according to preliminary census results, the population of the KRI had reached over 6.37 million.<sup>414</sup>

The KRG has gone through a years-long process of trying to unify its military forces, especially politically-affiliated Peshmerga units 70 and 80, under a single command.<sup>415</sup> During the reference period, the effort to dissolve these factions and merge all forces under the control of the KRG Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA) were still underway. The goal is to create two regional commands, 11 light infantry divisions, and two support commands, with a total force of 138 000 personnel under MoPA. As of March 2025, only four divisions were fully or partly active, as planned timelines were said not to be met.<sup>416</sup>

During the reference period, joint Peshmerga and Iraqi units were deployed in areas disputed between the KRG and the central government.<sup>417</sup> However, tensions between the forces persisted, as in July 2025 Iraqi military forces advanced on an oil field on the border between the two regions,<sup>418</sup> leading to Peshmerga forces to mobilise in Garmian district in southern KRI.<sup>419</sup> In a previous incident in August 2024, PMF supported by Iraqi military forces had undertaken a similar movement towards the oil field.<sup>420</sup>

In May 2025, the PKK announced it would disband and end its armed struggle, which was followed by 30 PKK fighters destroying their weapons in a symbolic event in Sulaymaniyah city in July.<sup>421</sup> As of July 2025, it was estimated that there were roughly 2 000 to 5 000 PKK fighters in the Qandil Mountains in the KRI.<sup>422</sup> Turkish operations against the PKK were reported throughout the reference period,<sup>423</sup> including airstrikes and shelling,<sup>424</sup> which persisted following the PKK announcement.<sup>425</sup> According to Community Peacemaker Teams,<sup>426</sup> as of June 2025, Turkish military attacks in the KRI remained steady but were

<sup>414</sup> Kurdistan24, Kurdistan Region's population exceeds 6.37 million according to preliminary census, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>415</sup> Rudaw, US-led coalition support for Peshmerga to continue: Peshmerga ministry official, 10 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>416</sup> USDO, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 49

<sup>417</sup> Shafaq News, Joint Operations Command confirms killing 4 militants between Saladin and Kirkuk, 31 January 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Joint Iraqi-Peshmerga brigades to address ISIS in disputed areas, 25 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>418</sup> Kurdistan24, Peshmerga on High Alert as Iraqi Forces Push Toward Kurdistan Territories, 4 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>419</sup> Shafaq News, Baghdad rejects military movements near Kurdistan borders, 4 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>420</sup> Kurdistan24, Peshmerga on High Alert as Iraqi Forces Push Toward Kurdistan Territories, 4 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>421</sup> DW, PKK fighters begin handing over weapons at ceremony, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>422</sup> Al Jazeera, How will the PKK's disarmament play out in the region?, 15 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>423</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>424</sup> Shafaq News, Turkish shelling sparks wildfires in Kurdistan's Duhok, 26 June 2025, [url](#); PBS, Turkey strikes Kurdish militant targets again after deadly attack on military company, 24 October 2024, [url](#); VOA, Turkish airstrikes kill 17 Kurdish militants in northern Iraq, ministry says, 12 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>425</sup> Rudaw, Turkey continues to strike PKK ahead of disarmament: Watchdog, 11 July 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Turkish shelling sparks wildfires in Kurdistan's Duhok, 26 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>426</sup> CPT is a peace initiative sponsored by several Christian denominations and organisations (CPT, About us, n.d., [url](#)) and in one of its worldwide projects monitors Turkish military operations in Iraqi Kurdistan.



increasingly concentrated in Amedi district of Dohuk governorate. Meanwhile, the PKK reportedly carried out several drone attacks against Turkish military bases which it claimed were acts of self-defense<sup>427</sup> (see [section 1.2](#) [Overview of recent security developments](#)). The Turkish ban on flights in and out of Sulaymaniyah, initially imposed on 3 April 2023 for three months, has been since extended, most recently for the fifth time in July 2025 for an additional three months, until 6 October 2025.<sup>428</sup>

Starting in mid-June 2025, the KRI was subjected to a series of drone attacks<sup>429</sup> targeting military sites,<sup>430</sup> Erbil airport<sup>431</sup> and oil installations.<sup>432</sup> No group claimed responsibility for the drone strikes<sup>433</sup> and while the KRG accused pro-Iranian militias of being behind the attacks, as of late July 2025, no perpetrators had officially been identified.<sup>434</sup> One drone hit the Darkar IDP camp near Dohuk city, causing material damage.<sup>435</sup>

### **Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)**

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), there were 4 073 security incidents recorded by ACLED in the KRI, of which 476 were coded as battles, 3 575 as explosions/remote violence, and 22 as incidents of violence against civilians. Of the overall security incidents, 2 917 were recorded in Dohuk, most of them in Amedi (Al-Amadiya) district (2 871), 1 050 in Erbil and 106 in Sulaymaniyah.<sup>436</sup> The high level of incidents in Dohuk was due to the Turkish military's ongoing military operation against the PKK, which aimed at driving the PKK out of the areas bordering Türkiye. However, the number of Turkish military strikes notably decreased following the disarmament ceremony held by PKK members in July 2025.<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> CPT, Turkish Military attacks hold steady in June, remain concentrated as symbolic PKK disarmament ceremony approaches, 10 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>428</sup> Rudaw, Turkey extends flight ban on Sulaimani again, 6 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>429</sup> Kurdistan24, Escalating Drone Attacks Target Kurdistan Region: Latest Strike Hits Garmiyan, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>430</sup> EPC, Drone Attacks in Iraq: Who Is Behind Them And Why?, 29 July 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Drone downed over Peshmerga base near Sulaimani, 10 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>431</sup> Rudaw, Two suicide drones intercepted near Erbil airport, 22 June 2025, [url](#); National (The), Drone carrying explosives shot down near Iraq's Erbil airport, 4 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>432</sup> HRW, Iraq: Damage to Kurdistan Region Oil Fields Puts Rights at Risk, 29 July 2025, [url](#)

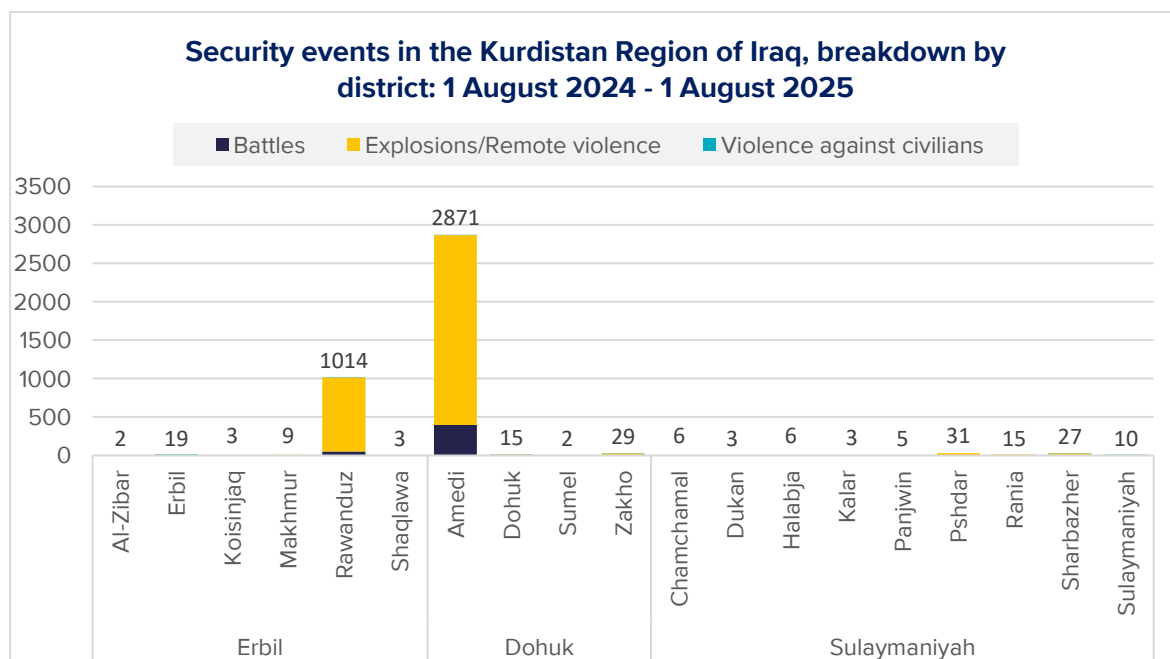
<sup>433</sup> HRW, Iraq: Damage to Kurdistan Region Oil Fields Puts Rights at Risk, 29 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>434</sup> EPC, Drone Attacks in Iraq: Who Is Behind Them And Why?, 29 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>435</sup> Rudaw, UNAMI condemns 'attack' on Yazidi IDP Camp in Duhok, urges probe, 1 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>436</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>437</sup> Van Wilgenburg, W., A Sigh of Relief in Iraqi Kurdistan, Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 12 August 2025, [url](#)



**Figure14: Security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq between August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.<sup>438</sup>**

According to ACLED data, Turkish military forces were involved as main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in 3 970 security incidents, in 3 637 of which the PKK was also involved as an actor.<sup>439</sup> For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, the UCDP recorded 105 events (65 in Dohuk, 28 in Erbil, 11 Sulaymaniyah, 1 in Halabja), leading to 102 casualties).<sup>440</sup>

### Civilian casualties

According to UNAMI data, Sulaymaniyah (including Halabja) recorded the highest number of civilian casualties in the KRI, with 9 casualties (including 7 fatalities). UNAMI recorded 6 civilian casualties in Erbil governorate (including 4 killed) and 6 civilian casualties in Dohuk (including 3 killed).<sup>441</sup>

UCDP recorded 15 civilian deaths in the KRI (3 in Dohuk, 4 in Erbil, 8 in Sulaymaniyah).<sup>442</sup>

<sup>438</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>439</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>440</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

<sup>441</sup> UNAMI, Email to EUAA, 4 August 2025

<sup>442</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2024 to 1 August 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 19 August 2025

### Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

Turkish airstrikes and artillery shelling reportedly caused material damage to farms in Dohuk's Amedi district.<sup>443</sup> A series of unclaimed drone attacks targeted several oil fields in the KRI in July 2025 and caused damage to the energy infrastructure.<sup>444</sup> An April 2025 BBC report described how a strip of land bordering Türkiye, which in some areas reached up to 40 kilometres into KRI territory, has been heavily affected by Turkish bombardment as well as being de facto under control of a wide network of Turkish military bases.<sup>445</sup>

While the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) was carrying out mine clearance efforts throughout the KRI,<sup>446</sup> the organisation's director stated in April 2025 that about 40 % of the originally contaminated areas in the KRI, amounting to almost 250 million square kilometres, remained uncleared. 47 % of these uncleared areas were reportedly in Erbil governorate.<sup>447</sup> According to Kurdistan24, five civilians lost their lives and four were wounded due to ERW explosions in Erbil governorate in the first half of 2025.<sup>448</sup> Several instances of ERW detonations were reported in the mountainous areas of Soran district in 2025, leading to casualties.<sup>449</sup>

### Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>450</sup> unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, Dohuk governorate was hosting 211 028, Erbil governorate 204 990 and Sulaymaniyah 112 710 displaced people. For Dohuk governorate, this figure represented a decrease by about 10 % compared to 2023, for Erbil governorate a decrease by about 9 % and for Sulaymaniyah a decrease by about 14 %. All of the IDPs in Dohuk were originally from Ninewa. In Erbil governorate, 50 % of the IDPs were from Ninewa and 19 % from Anbar, while in Sulaymaniyah, 26 % of IDPs were from Baghdad, 20 % from Diyala, 18 % from Salah Al-Din and 16 % from Anbar.<sup>451</sup> According to US official sources, in the first quarter of 2025, approximately 109 000 IDPs were residing in 21 camps in the KRI and three informal camps in Ninewa governorate.<sup>452</sup>

<sup>443</sup> Shafaq News, Turkish shelling sparks wildfires in Kurdistan's Duhok, 26 June 2025, [url](#); +964, Turkish shelling hits Amedi villages during Friday prayers, 21 June 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, 'We were surrounded by fire': Duhok villagers battle blazes blamed on Turkish bombs, 8 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>444</sup> Reuters, Drone strikes shut oilfields in Iraq's Kurdistan, cut output by up to 150,000 bpd, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>445</sup> BBC News, Life inside Iraq's 'Forbidden Zone' controlled by Turkey, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>446</sup> KRG, IKMAA Destroys Mines, Explosives, and War Remnants in the Kurdistan Region, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>447</sup> Rudaw, 40% landmine areas remain to be cleared in Kurdistan Region: Official, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>448</sup> Kurdistan24, إزالة آلاف الألغام ومخلفات الحروب خلال النصف الأول من 2025 في أربيل وسوران [Thousands of mines and war remnants cleared in Erbil and Soran in the first half of 2025], 8 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>449</sup> Shafaq News, Landmine kills shepherd in Kurdistan Region, 28 June 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, One killed in Sidakan landmine blast, 6 April 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Landmine blast kills tradesman in Soran, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>450</sup> Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>451</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 134 (September-December 2024), January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>452</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 41



As of December 2024, IOM had monitored return movements solely in Erbil governorate, with 64 542 returnees all located in Makhmour district, and in Dohuk governorate, where all 744 returnees were reported in Zakho district.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Returnee Master Lists 134, 12 February 2025, [url](#)



## 2. Human rights and treatment of specific profiles

### 2.1 General human rights situation

Over the reference period serious human rights challenges persisted in the country. Authorities failed to hold perpetrators of serious crimes accountable,<sup>454</sup> restricted civic space,<sup>455</sup> and maintained discriminatory legal provisions affecting women<sup>456</sup> and children.<sup>457</sup> Perpetrators of violence against women<sup>458</sup> largely acted with impunity, while legal protections and support services remained limited.<sup>459</sup> Individuals with perceived affiliation with ISIL, including children,<sup>460</sup> faced severe challenges, and limited reintegration prospects.<sup>461</sup> LGBTIQ+ individuals continued to face threats from militias and social persecution.<sup>462</sup> Civil society actors, human rights defenders, and journalists continued to face administrative and legal restrictions on their work, as well as threats and harassment, including online.<sup>463</sup> Arrests of journalists covering protests continued.<sup>464</sup>

The use of torture and ill treatments during arrest and detention persisted over the reference period.<sup>465</sup> Enforced disappearances continued, with estimates ranging between 250 000 and 1 million people missing over the past five decades.<sup>466</sup>

A few years after the Tishreen protests (2019-2021), progress on accountability remained limited.<sup>467</sup> Amnesty International reported that, as of August 2024, out of 2 700 criminal

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<sup>454</sup> AI, Iraq: Five years after Tishreen protests, impunity reigns supreme, 30 September 2024, [url](#); AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>455</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 52; UNSC, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para 54

<sup>456</sup> Martini L.S., The Square Centre, From Personal Status to General Amnesty: A Controversial Political Process in Iraq, 12 March 2025, [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Surging Unlawful Executions, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>457</sup> OHCHR, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>458</sup> Martini L.S., The Square Centre, From Personal Status to General Amnesty: A Controversial Political Process in Iraq, 12 March 2025, [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Surging Unlawful Executions, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>459</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>460</sup> UNSG, Protection of civilians in armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, 15 May 2025, [url](#), para 29; AI, Iraq: People held in Al-Jed'ah Centre subjected to torture and

enforced disappearance after arrests – new investigation, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>461</sup> UNIDIR, Reintegrating Iraqis Returning Home After Conflict: Lessons from Variation Between Four Communities, January 2025, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>462</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>463</sup> UN in Iraq, For Iraq Yearbook 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>464</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 52; UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para 54; AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); GCHR, GCHR's periodic report on human rights violations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>465</sup> GCHR, GCHR's 35th Periodic Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>466</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 56

<sup>467</sup> AI, The State's of World Human Rights, April 2025, [url](#), p. 208





investigations opened, only 10 arrest warrants had been issued and seven convictions handed down.<sup>468</sup>

Conditions in prisons remained dire, and prisoners were denied adequate healthcare. No effective investigations were carried out into deaths in custody.<sup>469</sup> Death penalty is still in force in Iraq,<sup>470</sup> while the KRG has maintained a de facto moratorium on the death penalty since 2008.<sup>471</sup> The number of executions, all for terrorism-related offences, almost quadrupled in 2024 compared to 2023,<sup>472</sup> including reports of secret executions.<sup>473</sup> The counter-terrorism framework and practices in Federal Iraq and the KRI remained non-compliant with international human rights standards.<sup>474</sup>

UNAMI will cease all works and operations after 31 December 2025.<sup>475</sup>

In January 2025, Iraq underwent the fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR), receiving 263 recommendations from 93 countries on a variety of topics including: human rights framework, freedom of expression, death penalty.<sup>476</sup>

Several key draft laws aimed at protecting human rights, including on Anti-Domestic Violence, freedom of Expression, protection from enforced disappearances and protection of minorities, remain pending.<sup>477</sup>

## 2.2 Latest legislation impacting civil and human rights: January 2025 legislative package

On 21 January 2025, the Iraqi Parliament passed three controversial laws in a single legislative package, the outcome of political negotiations among various parliamentary blocs,<sup>478</sup> with each law supported by different religious and ethnic groups.<sup>479</sup>

<sup>468</sup> Al, Iraq: Five years after Tishreen protests, impunity reigns supreme, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>469</sup> Al, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>470</sup> MENA Rights Group, Iraq's human rights record assessed during its fourth Universal Periodic Review, 27 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>471</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>472</sup> Guardian (The), Executions at 10-year high after huge increases in Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>473</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#); MENA Rights Group, Iraq's human rights record assessed during its fourth Universal Periodic Review, 27 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>474</sup> MENA Rights Group, Civil and political rights in Iraq since the 2019 Tishreen protests: Universal Periodic Review of Iraq, 13 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>475</sup> UN in Iraq, UNAMI, For Iraq 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>476</sup> MENA Rights Group, Iraq's human rights record assessed during its fourth Universal Periodic Review, 27 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>477</sup> UN in Iraq, For Iraq Yearbook 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>478</sup> Jummar Media, Three laws in one basket. Iraq insists on division and regression, 27 February 2025, [url](#); Martini L.S., The Square Centre, From Personal Status to General Amnesty: A Controversial Political Process in Iraq, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>479</sup> EPIC, ISHM: January 16 – 23, 2025, 23 January 2025, [url](#); Martini L.S., The Square Centre, From Personal Status to General Amnesty: A Controversial Political Process in Iraq, 12 March 2025, [url](#)



## 2.2.1. Amendment on Personal Status Law

In August 2024, Iraq's parliament read a bill proposing changes to the Personal Status Law,<sup>480</sup> the main legal framework regulating family matters in Iraq.<sup>481</sup> Backed by the Shiite Coordination Framework,<sup>482</sup> the amendments grant Sunni and Shia religious councils the authority to develop their own 'code of Sharia rulings' on matters related to personal status,<sup>483</sup> with significant impact in the legal implementation of gender equality within the Iraqi society.<sup>484</sup> Muslim couples are required to declare their sect when concluding a marriage contract<sup>485</sup> and to choose whether to be governed by the 1959 Personal Status Law or a sect-specific *mudawana* (Personal Status Code).<sup>486</sup> Couples cannot later change this choice.<sup>487</sup> In the final version approved, only Shia couples are granted the option between the Personal Status Law and the *mudawana*,<sup>488</sup> which is to be drafted by the Shia Jafari school of Islamic jurisprudence,<sup>489</sup> while Sunni couples remain subject to the Personal Status Law.<sup>490</sup> The Jaafari Jurisprudence Code was passed by the Iraqi parliament on 27 August 2025.<sup>491</sup>

In its first articulation, the amendment would allow nine year-old girls to be married and limit women's rights regarding custody, inheritance and divorce,<sup>492</sup> and women's alimony would be conditioned on the 'enjoyment' of the marriage by the husband.<sup>493</sup> In January 2025, the law has passed,<sup>494</sup> giving the religious authorities power to decide on family matters and effectively abolishing the ban on child marriage that has been in place since the 1950s.<sup>495</sup> A new code for the Shia Muslims adopting the changes was meant to be drafted within four

<sup>480</sup> HRW, Iraq: Parliament Poised to Legalize Child Marriage, 16 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>481</sup> UNSG, Report of the Secretary-General, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/323, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para. 49

<sup>482</sup> Jummar Media, Three laws in one basket. Iraq insists on division and regression, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>483</sup> The International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Iraq's Legal Crisis Through the Lens of Its Personal Status Law, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>484</sup> Martini L.S., The Square Centre, From Personal Status to General Amnesty: A Controversial Political Process in Iraq, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>485</sup> Watan, News Iraq's Personal Status Law Sparks Controversy, 23 January 2025, [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>486</sup> HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#); LOC, Iraq: House of Representatives Approves Amendments to Law on Personal Status, 14 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>487</sup> Middle East Eye, Iraq: Revised 'sectarian' law that raised fears over child marriage passed without vote, 21 January 2025, [url](#); Brookings, Iraq considers drastic changes to family law, 16 August 2024, [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>488</sup> Martini L.S., The Square Centre, From Personal Status to General Amnesty: A Controversial Political Process in Iraq, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>489</sup> Atlantic Council, Legalizing child marriage in Iraq: Stepping back from the brink, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>490</sup> Martini L.S., The Square Centre, From Personal Status to General Amnesty: A Controversial Political Process in Iraq, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>491</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq passes code on Shia personal status, 27 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>492</sup> Walk Free, Iraq's new law allowing children as young as 9 to marry undermines women and girls' rights, 31 January 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Iraqi women MPs unite to fight legislation that endangers women, girls, 3 August 2024, [url](#); UN Press, Despite Many Obstacles that Remain, 'Iraq Today Is More Secure, Stable and Open', Special Representative Tells Security Council, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>493</sup> IOHR (Iraqi Observatory for Human Rights), Notes on the Proposals to Amend the Personal Status Law, 24 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>494</sup> The International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Iraq's Legal Crisis Through the Lens of Its Personal Status Law, 22 May 2025, [url](#); Walk Free, Iraq's new law allowing children as young as 9 to marry undermines women and girls' rights, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>495</sup> Walk Free, Iraq's new law allowing children as young as 9 to marry undermines women and girls' rights, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

months.<sup>496</sup> While widely supported by Shias clerics, Sunnis were mostly against the amendment,<sup>497</sup> whereby Sunni religious scholars refused to participate in drafting their own *mudawana*.<sup>498</sup> By granting clerics the authority to conduct marriages, the law raised women's organisations concerns over the potential legalisation of the so-called pleasure marriages.<sup>499</sup> Amendment also maintained the existing provisions in the Personal Status Law concerning polygamy.<sup>500</sup> After a suspension by the Iraq's Federal Supreme Court because of the irregularities in the voting process,<sup>501</sup> the amendment eventually entered into force on 17 February 2025.<sup>502</sup> The final text of the personal status codes stipulates that the minimum age of marriage in the *mudawana* must conform with the Personal Status Law of 1959,<sup>503</sup> which sets the legal age for marriage at 18, or at 15 with judicial consent based on the child's 'maturity and physical capacity'.<sup>504</sup> Despite this provision, the amendment 'continues to pose serious risks to the rights of Iraqi women and girls', particularly regarding temporary and unregistered marriages, the regulation of polygamy, and alimony. It also undermines gender equality by granting precedence to the husband's personal status code over that of the wife in cases of disagreement on family matters.<sup>505</sup> Additionally, it is believed that marriages of underage girls will likely unofficially continue or will be registered upon reaching the legal age.<sup>506</sup>

### 2.2.2. The Property Restitution Law

The Property Restitution Law mandates the return of approximately 300 000 dunams (300 square kilometres) of land<sup>507</sup> confiscated during the Baath regime to their original owners 'within two months'.<sup>508</sup> The law responds primarily to longstanding demands from the Kurdish community and other minorities, such as Turkmen, who were dispossessed under Saddam

<sup>496</sup> KSC (Kurdistan Save the Children), Slemani: KSC Addresses Concerns Over Controversial Amendments to Iraq's Personal Status Law - New Amendments Spark Debate on Marriage Age, Custody Rights and Protections for Women and Children, 24 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>497</sup> New Lines Magazine, The Child Brides of Iraq, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>498</sup> HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>499</sup> HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>500</sup> Art 3(4) reads as follows: 'Marrying more than one woman is not allowed except with the authorization of the qadi (judge). Granting this authorization is dependant on the fulfillment of the following two conditions: a- The husband should have the financial capacity to provide for more than one wife, b- There is a legitimate interest, Iraq: Personal Status Law and Its Amendments (1959), [url](#), Art 3(4); HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>501</sup> AP News, Iraq's top court suspends new legislation that activists say undermines women's rights, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>502</sup> HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>503</sup> The International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Iraq's Legal Crisis Through the Lens of Its Personal Status Law, 22 May 2025, [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#); KSC, Slemani: KSC Addresses Concerns Over Controversial Amendments to Iraq's Personal Status Law - New Amendments Spark Debate on Marriage Age, Custody Rights and Protections for Women and Children, 24 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1; UNSG, Report of the Secretary-General, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), 30 May 2025, [url](#), para. 49

<sup>504</sup> HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>505</sup> Martini L.S., The Square Centre, From Personal Status to General Amnesty: A Controversial Political Process in Iraq, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>506</sup> New Lines Magazine, The Child Brides of Iraq, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>507</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq Enacts Landmark Property Restitution Law as Tensions Rise in Kirkuk, 18 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>508</sup> Rudaw, Iraq to begin implementing land return law 'within two months:' Minister, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

Hussein's rule.<sup>509</sup> Although the law does not explicitly mention specific groups or regions, its implementation has focused largely on disputed areas like Kirkuk, a zone of particular concern for Kurdish claims.<sup>510</sup> This has triggered tensions, as ISF reportedly prevented Kurdish farmers from cultivating lands despite legal recognition of their property rights. The narrow application of the law has also sparked dissent among other communities, especially from central and southern Iraq, whose confiscated lands were not addressed, raising concerns about unequal restitution and potential for further intercommunal tensions.<sup>511</sup>

### 2.2.3. The General Amnesty Law

The General Amnesty Law provides for the reopening of investigations and trials reportedly based on confessions obtained under torture, evidence from anonymous informants, or confessions provided by third parties, and extends its applicability to crimes committed up to January 2025.<sup>512</sup> The legislation was strongly backed by Sunni lawmakers, many of whom have long argued that anti-terrorism laws disproportionately targeted Sunni communities in the years after Iraq's clampdown on ISIL.<sup>513</sup> It is also expected to relieve severe prison overcrowding, with facilities holding 67 000 inmates despite a capacity of 25 000.<sup>514</sup> In addition, the amendment expands the list of terrorist offences that are explicitly excluded from amnesty, including crimes of incitement, assistance or recruitment that were committed before 10 June 2014.<sup>515</sup> The change could enable retrials for an estimated 30 000 Sunni detainees. The law applies to both convicted individuals and those under investigation or trial and allows for the review of death sentences.<sup>516</sup> The Amnesty law sparked criticism among Yazidi community, which feared that provisions would allow perpetrators of genocide targeting Yazidis in Sinjar and other areas to escape justice.<sup>517</sup> Additionally, concerns were raised over the potential misapplication of the law for those accused of corruption.<sup>518</sup> (See [section 2.3 on Ethnic religious minorities](#)).

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<sup>509</sup> Amwaj, Parliamentary 'horse-trading' over divisive laws sparks backlash in Iraq, 29 January 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Hopes for property returns, calls for nationwide inclusion in Restitution Law, 25 January 2025, [url](#); Jummar Media, Three laws in one basket. Iraq insists on division and regression, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>510</sup> Amwaj, Parliamentary 'horse-trading' over divisive laws sparks backlash in Iraq, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>511</sup> Bas News, Iraqi Army Blocks Kurdish Farmers From Cultivating Land in Kirkuk, 16 February 2025, [url](#); Kurdistan24, Kurdish farmers stand firm amid tensions with Iraqi army in Kirkuk, 17 February 2025, [url](#); Martini L.S., The Square Centre, From Personal Status to General Amnesty: A Controversial Political Process in Iraq, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>512</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 50

<sup>513</sup> Al Jazeera, Iraq frees over 19,000 prisoners under new amnesty, including some ex-ISIL, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>514</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi amnesty law could set free terrorism convicts, prisoners who fought Americans, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>515</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 50

<sup>516</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi amnesty law could set free terrorism convicts, prisoners who fought Americans, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>517</sup> Nadia's Initiative, Press Release Issued by the Yazidi Community on Rejecting and Condemning the Passage of a Controversial General Amnesty Law by the Iraqi Parliament, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>518</sup> Amwaji, Parliamentary 'horse-trading' over divisive laws sparks backlash in Iraq, 29 January 2025, [url](#)



## 2.3 Ethnic and religious minorities

For background information on ethno-religious minorities in Iraq, see the [EUAA Country Focus, May 2024](#), section 1.2. Ethnic and religious minorities.

Iraq is a diverse country with a range of ethnic and religious groups including Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians, Yazidis, and other minorities. This diversity is a social and cultural asset but has also been a source of political competition and inter-communal tensions.<sup>519</sup> Following the fall of Saddam Hussein, Iraq adopted a sectarian power-sharing system to prevent large-scale violence, aimed at ensuring representation for all major communities. While effective in the short term, this system reinforced sectarian identities, weakening national unity.<sup>520</sup> Ethnic and religious identities have been politically instrumentalised, contributing to divisions, violence, forced displacement<sup>521</sup> and reduced social cohesion.<sup>522</sup>

According to NGO Iraqi Observatory for Human Rights (IOHR), ahead of the November 2025 parliamentary elections political candidates increasingly appeal to sectarian, ethnic, religious, and regional identities, exploiting historic grievances. This trend weakens democratic competition and exacerbates divisions.<sup>523</sup> In parallel, journalist and researcher expert on Iraq, Winthrop Rodgers, affirmed that ‘in the KRI each party acts in self-interested ways that do not align clearly with ethno-sectarian cleavages. For example, the KDP has closer relationships with some Sunni factions and not others and can work with some Shia factions and not others; meanwhile, the PUK and opposition have their own relationships. These change over time based on circumstances’.<sup>524</sup> In November 2024, Iraq conducted its first nationwide census since 1987.<sup>525</sup> The census has sparked controversy over the exclusion of sectarian and ethnic data, with critics accusing Iraq's political establishment of politicising the process<sup>526</sup> and obscuring minority visibility, with potential impacts on resource allocation, electoral law, and federalism debates.<sup>527</sup>

<sup>519</sup> Sabah Al-Kuraiti, F. A., et al., Civil and Political Rights of Minorities in Iraq After 2003. Interdisciplinary Studies in Society, Law, and Politics, 1 January 2025, [url](#), p. 24

<sup>520</sup> Shafaq News, Religion in Iraq: Heritage of civilization or a catalyst for conflict?, 18 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>521</sup> Carnegie Endowment, Iraq's Displacement Crisis, 17 October 2024, [url](#); USIP, Minority Rights in Iraq, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>522</sup> IFAD, Country strategy note – Republic of Iraq, 29 December 2024, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>523</sup> IOHR, Sectarian and ethnonationalist rhetoric on the rise ahead of Iraq's parliament elections, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>524</sup> Rodgers, W., Journalist and researcher expert on Iraq, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 4 July 2025

<sup>525</sup> UN, First Census in Over Three Decades Begins in Iraq, Backed by UNFPA Expertise, 20 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>526</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq's controversial census: exclusion of sect and ethnicity raises concerns, 29 July 2024, [url](#); New Arab (The), Iraq completes landmark census amid fears of political manipulation in disputed areas, 24 November 2024, [url](#) TWI, Population Census in Iraq: A Step Towards Future Development or Imminent Political Conflict?, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>527</sup> TWI, Population Census in Iraq: A Step Towards Future Development or Imminent Political Conflict?, 28 November 2024, [url](#)



## Constitutional and legal framework on religion and minorities

The Iraqi Constitution<sup>528</sup> recognises freedom of religion and belief, stipulating that Islam is the official religion in Iraq.<sup>529</sup> Moreover, Constitution guarantees freedom of religious belief and practice to all individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandeans.<sup>530</sup> The Constitution recognises Iraq as a country with a multitude of nationalities, religions and denominations.<sup>531</sup> Despite the latter, Baha'i, Zoroastrian, and Kaka'i religions are not recognised.<sup>532</sup> While in the KRI Baha'i faith is recognised as a religion,<sup>533</sup> the Federal law prohibits the practice of Baha'i religion under Law No. 105 of 1970<sup>534</sup>, foreseeing sentences up to 10 years of prison for the practitioners.<sup>535</sup> Apostasy cases are adjudicated under Sharia law.<sup>536</sup> Blasphemy is criminalised under the Penal Code<sup>537</sup> and has been used to arrest and intimidate individuals for their religious beliefs.<sup>538</sup> In some cases, blasphemy laws can be used against Christians suspected to proselytise among Muslims.<sup>539</sup>

According to the Iraqi Personal Status Law (IPSL), Muslim men are allowed to marry a non-Muslim woman, while it prohibits Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims.<sup>540</sup> In a marriage where one spouse is Muslim, the right to divorce, child custody and inheritance go almost automatically to the Muslim spouse.<sup>541</sup> Interfaith marriage is reportedly decreasing due to ethnic and religious polarisation, and sectarian tensions have contributed to rising divorce rates among mixed-sect couples.<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>528</sup> Article 2 (1) reads: 'Islam is the official religion of the State and is a foundation source of legislation: A. No law may be enacted that contradicts the established provisions of Islam, B. No law may be enacted that contradicts the principles of democracy, C. No law may be enacted that contradicts the rights and basic freedoms stipulated in this Constitution'. Article 2 (2) reads: 'This Constitution Guarantees the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people and guarantees the full religious rights to freedom of religious Belief and practice of all individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandeans'. Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, 15 October 2005, [url](#), Art. 2 (1), Art. 2 (2)

<sup>529</sup> Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, 15 October 2005, [url](#), Art. 2 (1); Sabah Al-Kuraiti, F. A., et al., Civil and Political Rights of Minorities in Iraq After 2003. Interdisciplinary Studies in Society, Law, and Politics, 1 January 2025, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>530</sup> Article 2 (2) reads: 'This Constitution guarantees the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people and guarantees the full religious rights to freedom of religious belief and practice of all individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandeans', Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, 15 October 2005, [url](#), Art. 2 (2)

<sup>531</sup> Article 3 reads: 'Iraq is a country of multiple nationalities, religions, and sects (...)', Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, 15 October 2005, [url](#), Art. 3

<sup>532</sup> USDOS, Report on International Religious Freedom: Iraq, 30 June 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>533</sup> Open Doors, World Watch List 2025, Iraq, 2025, [url](#), 15 January 2025, p. 8

<sup>534</sup> Faridoun D., Untold Stories: The Bahá'í Faith in Iraq in: EISMENA, 2 June 2025 [url](#); Jummar Media, The Baha'is in Iraq: From closures of places of worship to negotiations over the constitution, 31 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>535</sup> Jummar Media, The Baha'is in Iraq: From closures of places of worship to negotiations over the constitution, 31 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>536</sup> USCIRF, Compendium, [url](#), p. 10; Iraq, Personal Status Law and its amendments, Law N° (188) of the year 1959, [url](#)

<sup>537</sup> USCIRF, Violating rights, Enforcing the world's blasphemy laws, 2020, [url](#), p. 65; ECJL, Christians in Iraq: From 1.5 million in 2003 to 150,000 today, 3 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>538</sup> ECJL, Christians in Iraq: From 1.5 million in 2003 to 150,000 today, 3 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>539</sup> Open Doors, Iraq: Persecution Dynamics, December 2024, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>540</sup> Iraq, Personal Status Law and its amendments, Law N° (188) of the year 1959, [url](#), art. 17; Open Doors, World Watch List 2025, Iraq, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>541</sup> Open Doors, Iraq: Persecution Dynamics, December 2024, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>542</sup> Jad, I. et al., The State of Marriage in the Arab Mashreq: Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon, 30 November 2024, [url](#), p. 158



Despite the absence of any provision regarding conversion in the Iraqi Penal Code,<sup>543</sup> the Personal Status Law prohibits conversion from Islam to other religions,<sup>544</sup> while allowing conversion to Islam.<sup>545</sup> Children with one Muslim parent are automatically registered as Muslim.<sup>546</sup> The National Card Law stipulates that if a person converts to Islam, all their children are considered Muslim, including those from earlier marriages<sup>547</sup> (See section [2.7 on Children](#)). By law, converts to Christianity are considered as Muslims.<sup>548</sup> Sunni-Shia marriages are permissible under Iraqi law.<sup>549</sup>

### 2.3.1 Treatment of ethnic and religious minorities

Decades of conflict and violence have weakened Iraq's historical ethnic and religious diversity, particularly affecting ethno-religious minorities.<sup>550</sup> This has led to demographic shifts in areas such as the Ninewa Plains<sup>551</sup> and an overall significant decline in minority populations across Iraq,<sup>552</sup> although reliable data are lacking.<sup>553</sup> Iraq's minority communities, including Yazidis, Chaldeans and Assyrians, Sabean-Mandaeans, Shabak, Turkmen and others, continued to face significant challenges,<sup>554</sup> including in the KRI.<sup>555</sup> Notwithstanding the recognition of freedom of religion and belief enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution, legislative framework and customs reportedly favour the Muslim majority.<sup>556</sup> Iraq's northern Kurdish governorates host the country's largest, though decreasing, minority communities, including Christians, Kaka'is, Shabak, Turkmen and Yazidis. Many reside in disputed territories along the Kurdistan Region's western and southern borders.<sup>557</sup> PMF-linked militias continued to target religious minorities with checkpoint harassment, property appropriation, extortion, detention, and torture.<sup>558</sup> Hate speech and dissemination of negative stereotypes targeting ethno-religious minority groups (including Roma), people of African descent, stateless persons and non-citizens, both in the media and on the social media, persisted.<sup>559</sup> Concerns have also

<sup>543</sup> Iraq, Penal Code, No. 111 of 1969, July 1969, [url](#); Open Doors, World Watch List 2025, Iraq, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>544</sup> Open Doors, Iraq: Persecution Dynamics, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 23, 34

<sup>545</sup> USDOS, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iraq, 30 June 2024, [url](#), p. 9; Iraq, National Card Law No. (3) of 2016, [url](#), art. 26 (1); Open Doors International, Iraq: Full Country Dossier, January 2024, [url](#), p. 37; Humanists International, Freedom of thought Report, Iraq, 1 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>546</sup> Iraq, National Card Law, No. (3) of 2016, [url](#), art. 26 (2); Open Doors, Iraq: Persecution Dynamics, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 21, 9

<sup>547</sup> Open Doors, Iraq: Persecution Dynamics, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 23-24

<sup>548</sup> Iraq, National Card Law No. (3) of 2016, [url](#), art. 26 (1)

<sup>549</sup> Sanbar S., email communication to EUAA, 16 March 2024

<sup>550</sup> MEI, Addressing challenges to tolerance and religious diversity in Iraq, 5 July 2023, [url](#), RFI, Country Overview Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), p. 4; USCIRF, Issue Brief: Religious Freedom Challenges in Iraq 10 Years After Isis's Genocide, September 2024, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>551</sup> Nirij, Investigative Reports: The Demographic Change Haunts Minorities in the Nineveh Plain, 3 February 2025, [url](#); Ali O.O. et al., Demographic Change and Social Cohesion In Post-Islamic State Iraq, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>552</sup> Shafaq News, Sanctuary under strain: Minorities hold on in Iraq's Kurdistan, 22 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>553</sup> Tadros M. et al., The Handbook of Iraqi People's Heritage, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3; Shafaq News, Sanctuary under strain: Minorities hold on in Iraq's Kurdistan, 22 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>554</sup> USIP, Minority Rights in Iraq, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>555</sup> Rodgers W., Iraqi Kurdistan's Ethnic Minorities Are Under Attack, Foreign Policy, 1 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>556</sup> MEI, Addressing challenges to tolerance and religious diversity in Iraq, 5 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>557</sup> Amwaj, How Iraq's minorities became political pawns for both Kurds and Arabs, 5 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>558</sup> USCIRF, Issue brief: religious freedom challenges in Iraq 10 years after isis's genocide, September 2024, [url](#), p. 5; Open Doors, Iraq: Persecution Dynamics, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 18-19

<sup>559</sup> UN ICERD, Concluding observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 September 2024, [url](#), para 14 (b)

been raised about inadequate political representation in both Iraq and the KRI,<sup>560</sup> including within transitional justice institutions.<sup>561</sup> Reports also indicate persistent discrimination in education, employment<sup>562</sup> and health services.<sup>563</sup>

## Yazidis

Ten years after the ISIL's genocide against the Yazidi community in Sinjar, approximately 2 500 Yazidis remain unaccounted for.<sup>564</sup> Despite the 2023 federal budget allocating 25 billion Iraqi dinars [approximately EUR 16.4 million] to support the Yazidi Female Survivors Act (also known as Yazidi Survivors Law – YSL),<sup>565</sup> effective disbursement remains limited<sup>566</sup> due to difficulties stemming from missing documentation, lack of identification papers, and logistical barriers.<sup>567</sup> Although over 600 Yazidis returned to Sinjar from Duhok governorate in May 2025, most have not received the promised return grant of 4 million dinars [approximately 2 624 EUR] nor the household items pledged by the government.<sup>568</sup> Following the recognition by the Iraqi government of the Yazidi land rights in 2022,<sup>569</sup> in April 2025 the Real Estate Registration Department authorities in Sinjar launched the distribution of 1 338 ownership letters and issued approximately 100 title deeds to Yazidi residents in Dugrey and Tel Uzair Mujama'at (Sinjar).<sup>570</sup> As a result, Yazidi beneficiaries, who were historically denied the right to register land in their names, are now officially recognised as landowners.<sup>571</sup> However, Yazidis still face systemic discrimination<sup>572</sup> and stigmatisation.<sup>573</sup> In August 2024, a

<sup>560</sup> USCIRF, Issue Brief: Religious Freedom Challenges in Iraq 10 Years After Isis's Genocide, September 2024, [url](#), p. 6; UN ICERD, Concluding observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 September 2024, [url](#), para 22 (a)

<sup>561</sup> UN ICERD, Concluding observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 September 2024, [url](#), para 18 (d)

<sup>562</sup> UN ICERD, Concluding observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 September 2024, [url](#), paras 24, 28, 30; USIP, Minority Rights in Iraq, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>563</sup> UN ICERD, Concluding observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 September 2024, [url](#), para 26

<sup>564</sup> Rudaw, More than a decade on, 2,500 Yazidis still missing after ISIS attack, 11 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>565</sup> UNSG, National report submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21\* - Iraq, 30 October 2024, [url](#), para 26

<sup>566</sup> USCIRF, Issue Brief: Religious Freedom Challenges in Iraq 10 Years After Isis's Genocide, September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>567</sup> C4JR, Coalition for just reparations, More than "ink on paper", 1 March 2024, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>568</sup> Rudaw, Over 600 IDPs return to Shingal from Duhok: Migration ministry, 19 May 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Most Yazidis returning to Shingal have not received promised cash: Official, 18 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>569</sup> UN Habitat, Iraq Country Office, Issue December 2022, [url](#)

<sup>570</sup> UN in Iraq, Recognition of Yazidi Land Ownership in Sinjar A Historic Achievement underscoring UN and Iraqi Joint Efforts, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>571</sup> UN in Iraq, Security Council Briefing Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, 10 June 2025, [url](#); UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 37

<sup>572</sup> Yazda, Under Constant Threat: Yazda Launches Report on Hate Speech Targeting the Yazidi Community in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, Urging Action from Both Governments and the International Community, 9 December 2024, [url](#), p. 20; LSE, Ruptured Atlas, A Trauma-Informed Approach To Spatial Storytelling For Survivors Of Genocide (The Case For Yazidis In Iraq), July 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>573</sup> New Humanitarian (The), 10 years into genocide, Yazidi survivors continue to demand their rights, 5 August 2024, [url](#)

new campaign of hate speech<sup>574</sup> prompted a renewed wave of displacement.<sup>575</sup> According to several scientific reviews, Yazidis genocide survivors, especially women, suffer from mental health issues such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression and increased suicide and attempted suicide rates.<sup>576</sup> Under the 2016 National Card Law,<sup>577</sup> children born of rape in ISIL captivity by Yazidi mothers are considered Muslim, thus resulting in an ‘insurmountable’ barrier to reintegration and a limited community acceptance for survivors.<sup>578</sup> This remains a deeply contentious issue within the community<sup>579</sup> (See [section 2.7 on Children](#)).

## Christians

Despite the establishment of committees tasked with restoring Christian-owned property,<sup>580</sup> Christians in the KRI and disputed territories continued to report unresolved property claims, particularly where KRG officials or private individuals are alleged to have appropriated abandoned properties.<sup>581</sup> While the presence of Christians in Ninewa Plains continued to decline, Shabak community continued to expand, with Shia Shabak occupying key roles in the area.<sup>582</sup> The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ)<sup>583</sup> reported that Iraq’s blasphemy laws have been reportedly used to arrest and intimidate individuals for their religious beliefs, including Christians.<sup>584</sup> In April 2025, an individual armed with an axe attacked a parade celebrating the Akitu (Assyrian New Year) in Duhok, resulting in two casualties. According to the Kurdistan Region’s Security Council, initial information indicated that the suspect was a Syrian national who allegedly endorsed the ideology of ISIL.<sup>585</sup>

## Turkmen

The Iraqi Turkmen faced mounting political, social, and institutional setbacks. Once considered Iraq’s ‘third nationality’, their political standing weakened significantly after the Supreme Court abolished their minority quota in the Kurdistan Regional Parliament in February

<sup>574</sup> Yazda, Under Constant Threat: Yazda Launches Report on Hate Speech Targeting the Yazidi Community in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, Urging Action from Both Governments and the International Community, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>575</sup> LSE, Ruptured Atlas, A Trauma-Informed Approach To Spatial Storytelling For Survivors Of Genocide (The Case For Yazidis In Iraq), July 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>576</sup> Lobanov-Rostovsky S, Kiss L. The mental health and well-being of internally displaced female Yazidis in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: a realist review of psychosocial interventions and the impact of COVID-19. Glob Ment Health (Camb), November 2022, [url](#); Kizilhan JI, Mental Health and Collective Trauma among Yazidi Genocide Survivors. J Ment Health Disord, 2025, [url](#); Kizilhan JI, Berger T, Sennhauser L and Wenzel T, The psychological impact of genocide on the Yazidis. Front. Psychol, 2023, [url](#); Shafaq News, Yezidi woman's testimony haunts 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of genocide: two daughters chose suicide over enslavement, 3 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>577</sup> Iraq, National Card Law No. (3) of 2016, [url](#)

<sup>578</sup> Xiao Liu, M., The Enduring Genocide against The Yazidis: How Iraq’s Law on Religious Identity Violates the Human Rights of Yazidi Survivors of ISIS Captivity and Their Children Born of Sexual Violence, 2 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 82, 88, 89, 92-93

<sup>579</sup> C4JR, More than ‘Ink On Paper’, Third Yazidi Survivors’ Law Monitoring Report, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>580</sup> UNGA, Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review\* - Iraq, 27 March 2025, [url](#), para 9; USDOS, 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iraq, 15 May 2023, [url](#), p. 17; Rudaw, Sadr-led committee returns at least 200 occupied properties to their Christian owners, 17 December 2022, [url](#)

<sup>581</sup> USCIRF, Issue brief: religious freedom challenges in Iraq 10 years after isis’s genocide, September 2024, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>582</sup> Nirij, The Demographic Change Haunts Minorities in the Nineveh Plain, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>583</sup> ECJL is an international, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights around the world, [url](#), n.d.

<sup>584</sup> ECJL, Christians in Iraq: From 1.5 million in 2003 to 150,000 today, 3 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>585</sup> EPIC, ISHM: March 27 – April 3, 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

2024, reducing their seats from five to two. Efforts to gain a guaranteed share in state institutions have largely failed.<sup>586</sup>

### **Sunnis**

Sunni Arabs returnees faced discrimination and social friction upon return, particularly from minority communities who perceived them as associated to ISIL. Some Sunni families reported fear of stigmatisation and obstacles to reintegration into diverse communities.<sup>587</sup>

### **Other minorities**

People of African descent face marginalisation and stigmatisation,<sup>588</sup> living in informal settlements with no proper infrastructure or basic services.<sup>589</sup> Roma and people of African descent face discrimination in accessing labour market, health services and education.<sup>590</sup> Additionally, they are not included under the quota system and are not represented in the Council of Representatives.<sup>591</sup> In the Ninewa Plains, Assyrians experienced restriction of movement and arbitrary treatment at checkpoints by the PMF-affiliated 30<sup>th</sup> Brigade. The rapid shift in the demographic change caused tensions between Assyrian and Shabak communities in the Ninewa Plains.<sup>592</sup> Feyli Kurds in Mandali (Diyala governorate) have voiced grievances about neglect and marginalisation, decades after the genocidal campaigns they suffered under Saddam Hussein.<sup>593</sup>

### **Converts and atheists**

For background information on the treatment of converts, including converts to Christianity in Iraq, see the [EUAA Country Focus, May 2024](#), section 1.6.2. Atheists in Iraq reportedly face systemic discrimination. When accessing public services, citizens are often obliged to disclose their religious affiliation.<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> Al Majalla, How Arabs and Kurds are sidelining Iraq's Turkmen community, 10 October 2024, [url](#); New Arab (The), Iraq's top court declares Iraqi Kurdistan parliament's minority quota seats 'unconstitutional', 23 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>587</sup> USCIRF, Issue Brief: Religious Freedom Challenges in Iraq 10 Years After Isis's Genocide, September 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>588</sup> UN ICERD, Concluding observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 September 2024, [url](#), para 28

<sup>589</sup> UN ICERD, Concluding observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 September 2024, [url](#), para 28

<sup>590</sup> UN ICERD, Concluding observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 September 2024, [url](#), paras 24, 26

<sup>591</sup> UN ICERD, Concluding observations on the combined twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 September 2024, [url](#), para 22 (b)

<sup>592</sup> Ali O.O. et al., Demographic Change and Social Cohesion In Post-Islamic State Iraq, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>593</sup> Rudaw, Faili Kurds in Mandali lament neglect decades after genocide, 6 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>594</sup> CFI (Center for Inquiry), CFI Challenges Iran and Iraq on Blasphemy Laws at UN, 7 July 2025, [url](#)



## Inter-sect marriages

Conflict and rising sectarian tensions have led to a sharp decline in inter-sect marriages, a rise in divorces among mixed-sect couples and a growing preference for intra-sectarian marriages.<sup>595</sup>

## 2.4 Individuals perceived as opposing the state and state-affiliated actors

### 2.4.1. Members of political opposition parties, political and human rights activists, protesters

During the reporting period, civil society actors, human rights defenders and journalists faced violence,<sup>596</sup> intimidation,<sup>597</sup> threats and harassment, including online,<sup>598</sup> for criticising public officials and exercising their right to freedom of expression by government authorities.<sup>599</sup>

Authorities have increasingly relied on articles of Iraq's Penal Code pertaining to defamation, vandalism and destruction of government buildings to arrest and convict activists and journalists,<sup>600</sup> with the aim of silencing criticism of influential political and religious figures.<sup>601</sup> Article 226 of the Iraqi Penal Code<sup>602</sup> continued to be increasingly used 'as a tool to suppress civil voices', contrary to Article 38 of the Iraqi Constitution which guarantees 'freedom of expression using all means'.<sup>603</sup> Women's rights and NGO workers reportedly faced judicial harassment.<sup>604</sup> Those who challenged the status quo, particularly women activists, were exposed to increasing threats to their safety and professional livelihoods.<sup>605</sup> In parallel, in early

<sup>595</sup> Jad, I. et al., The State of Marriage in the Arab Mashreq: Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon, 30 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 138, 158

<sup>596</sup> UNSC, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para 54; GCHR, GCHR's periodic report on human rights violations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, 18 March 2025, [url](#); Kurdistan Watch, published on X, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>597</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 52; UNSC, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para 54

<sup>598</sup> UN in Iraq, For Iraq Yearbook 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 18; Shafaq News, Iraq's human rights decline, freedoms face clear threats, says rights center, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>599</sup> GCHR, GCHR's periodic report on human rights violations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>600</sup> AI, Iraq: Lawmakers must ensure that new law does not unduly restrict freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>601</sup> AI, The State's of World Human Rights, April 2025, [url](#), p. 207

<sup>602</sup> Article 226 reads: 'Any person who publicly insults the National Assembly or the government or the courts or the armed forces or any other constitutional body or the public authorities or official or 1 semiofficial agencies or departments is punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding 7 years or detention or a fine.' Iraq, Iraqi Penal Code (Law No. 111 of 1969), 1969, [url](#), Art. 226

<sup>603</sup> Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, 15 October 2005, [url](#), Art. 38; IOHR, published on LinkedIn, 12 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>604</sup> AI, The State's of World Human Rights, April 2025, [url](#), p. 207

<sup>605</sup> Basnews, Armed Factions Arrest Iraqi Lawyer Over Criticism of PMF, 29 June 2025, [url](#); IOHR, Concerns over reported arrest of prominent lawyer and activist Zainab Jawad, 29 June 2025, [url](#)



August 2025, Iraqi Parliament renewed its discussion regarding a disputed draft law on 'Freedom of expression, peaceful assemblies and demonstrations'<sup>606</sup>.

In November 2024, a university lecturer was killed by a colleague in a remote area near Basrah. The alleged killer was reportedly the brother of Basrah's governor, prompting suspicions of a cover-up linked to corruption cases the victim may have uncovered.<sup>607</sup> In June 2025, PMF-affiliated security forces arrested a prominent lawyer and human rights advocate, Zainab Jawad, after she criticised Iran-backed militias on social media and during a television appearance.<sup>608</sup> In July 2025, local authorities in Basrah issued arrest warrants for two activists under Article 226 of the Penal Code for publishing videos criticising government performance and highlighting the water pollution crisis in the city.<sup>609</sup>

According to Winthrop Rodgers, legal protections for freedom of speech and political activity exist in principle in the KRI but are not upheld in practice. He reported the existence of informal, unwritten restrictions, with punishments for violations.<sup>610</sup> In February 2025, at least 12 social media users in the KRI were arrested under the Prevention of Misuse of Telecommunications Equipment Act for content deemed contrary to public morals.<sup>611</sup> In June 2025, KDP security forces detained and beat Sipan Amedi, a Kurdistan Parliament member from the opposition New Generation party, after he publicly criticised KDP leader Masoud Barzani.<sup>612</sup>

In 2024, security forces in central and southern Iraq used excessive force, including water cannons, tear gas and live ammunition, in response to largely peaceful protests over corruption, poor services, economic hardship and lack of accountability.<sup>613</sup>

In August and September 2024, clashes occurred in Baghdad between security forces and medical school graduates protesting a lack of job opportunities, resulting in dozens of injuries.<sup>614</sup> In October 2024, protests erupted in Nasiriyah (Thi Qar governorate) against mass arrests launched by the new police chief. Protesters accused political parties of conflating criminal suspects with activists linked to the Tishreen movement.<sup>615</sup> Police responded with live

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<sup>606</sup> Al, Iraq: Lawmakers must ensure that new law does not unduly restrict freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, 1 August 2025, [url](#)

<sup>607</sup> GCHR, GCHR's 35th Periodic Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>608</sup> Basnews, Armed Factions Arrest Iraqi Lawyer Over Criticism of PMF, 29 June 2025, [url](#); IOHR, Concerns over reported arrest of prominent lawyer and activist Zainab Jawad, 29 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>609</sup> IOHR, published on LinkedIn, 12 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>610</sup> Rodgers, W., Journalist and researcher expert on Iraq, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 4 July 2025

<sup>611</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 52; UNSC, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para 54;

GCHR, GCHR's periodic report on human rights violations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>612</sup> Winthrop Rodgers, Journalist and Researcher, Expert on Iraq, Interview 28-29 October 2024 and 4 July 2025; Draw Media, New Generation Faction: KDP Forces Abduct Sipan Amedi in Duhok, 29 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>613</sup> Al, The State's of World Human Rights, April 2025, [url](#), pp. 63, 208

<sup>614</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025, [url](#); Al, Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025, [url](#); Al, The State's of World Human Rights, April 2025, [url](#), p. 208; GCHR, GCHR's 34th Periodic Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>615</sup> Al, The State's of World Human Rights, April 2025, [url](#), p. 208; Rudaw, Protesters say Dhi Qar police used tear gas, live bullets, 19 October 2024, [url](#); GCHR, GCHR's 34th Periodic Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 19 November 2024, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, Two killed in Iraq clashes after activist given prison term, 20 October 2024, [url](#)



ammunition and tear gas,<sup>616</sup> while sporadic arrests of activists continued until November, with many being released on bail after several days.<sup>617</sup> In December, a protester was killed during a protest over water distribution in Wasit governorate by live ammunition used by Rapid Response forces.<sup>618</sup>

In the KRI, Winthrop Rodgers stated that protests are legally permitted but, in practice, subject to numerous restrictions. In KDP-controlled areas, protests are almost always suppressed unless directly authorised by the party, while the PUK more often allows protests but may prevent or disperse them if they continue for too long.<sup>619</sup> In February 2025, security forces reportedly attacked teachers protesting in Sulaymaniyah.<sup>620</sup>

## 2.4.2. Journalists and media workers

The Iraqi Constitution guarantees freedom of expression<sup>621</sup> in a manner that does not violate public order and morality.<sup>622</sup> Iraq's Penal Code contains several vaguely worded provisions that restrict freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, allowing authorities to prosecute<sup>623</sup> and arrest individuals for expressing their views.<sup>624</sup> For example, Article 403 penalises material that 'violates public integrity or decency' without defining these terms,<sup>625</sup> while Article 434 criminalises defamation and insult.<sup>626</sup> These provisions are frequently used to deter criticism of powerful political and religious figures,<sup>627</sup> particularly targeting independent journalists.<sup>628</sup>

<sup>616</sup> Independent (The), Clashes break out at protests over arrested activists in southern Iraq, 18 October 2024, [url](#); AP, Clashes break out at protests over arrested activists in southern Iraq, 18 October 2024, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, Two killed in Iraq clashes after activist given prison term, 20 October 2024, [url](#); +964media, Activist arrests spark protests in Nasiriyah as demonstrators clash with police, 13 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>617</sup> AI, The State's of World Human Rights, April 2025, [url](#), p. 208

<sup>618</sup> +964, Protester killed, two injured in clashes over water disputes in Wasit, 8 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>619</sup> Rodgers, W., Journalist and researcher expert on Iraq, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 4 July 2025

<sup>620</sup> GCHR, GCHR's periodic report on human rights violations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>621</sup> IOHR, Lawsuit filed against journalist for freedom of expression, 26 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>622</sup> Article 38 reads: 'The State shall guarantee in a way that does not violate public order and morality: A. Freedom of expression using all means. B. Freedom of press, printing, advertisement, media and publication. C. Freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration, and this shall be regulated by law.' Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, 15 October 2005, [url](#), Art. 38

<sup>623</sup> AI, IRAQ: Reigning Impunity Amnesty International: Submission to The 48th Session of The Upr Working Group, January – February 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>624</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); Art. 403 reads as follows: 'Any person who produces, imports, publishes, possesses, obtains or translates a book, printed or other written material, drawing, picture, film, symbol or other thing that violates the public integrity or decency with intent to exploit or distribute such material is punishable by a period of detention not exceeding 2 years plus a fine not exceeding 200 dinars or by one of those penalties. The same penalty applies to any person who advertises such material or displays it in public or sells, hires or offers it for sale or hire even though it is not in public or to any person who distributes or submits it for distribution by any means. If the offence is committed with intent to deprave, it is considered to be an aggravating circumstances.' Iraq, Penal Code, No. 111 of 1969, July 1969, [url](#), art. 404

<sup>625</sup> AI, IRAQ: Reigning Impunity Amnesty International: Submission to The 48th Session of The Upr Working Group, January – February 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>626</sup> Art. 434 reads as follows: 'Insult is the imputation to another of something dishonorable or disrespectful or the hurting of his feelings even though it does not include an imputation to him of a particular matter. Any person who insults another is punishable by a period of detention not exceeding 1 year plus a fine not exceeding 100 dinars or by one of those penalties. If such insult is published in a newspaper or publication or medium it is considered an aggravating circumstance'. Iraq, Penal Code, No. 111 of 1969, July 1969, [url](#), art. 434; IOHR, Lawsuit filed against journalist for freedom of expression, 26 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>627</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>628</sup> GCRS, GCHR's 34th Periodic Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

Therefore, authorities continued to suppress freedom of expression during the reporting period, often under the pretext of maintaining stability or public morality.<sup>629</sup> As such, according to Reporters Without Borders, Iraq ranked 155<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index for 2025.<sup>630</sup> Civil society organisations, human rights defenders and journalists faced prosecution, intimidation, and harassment for criticising public officials,<sup>631</sup> including by targeting their social media accounts.<sup>632</sup> Between May 2024 and May 2025, UNAMI documented 26 cases in which activists and journalists were charged with defamation for criticising government officials or policies.<sup>633</sup> Security forces, both in federal Iraq and in the KRI, used violence against journalists for covering protests.<sup>634</sup>

The Media and Communications Commission suspended political talk shows,<sup>635</sup> restricted broadcasting of certain programmes and banned specific media commentators following objections from the Coordination Framework and Shia clerics.<sup>636</sup> Several television channels reportedly received threats from armed groups.<sup>637</sup> The potential banning of TikTok resurfaced following remarks by the Minister of Communication, Hiyam Al-Yasiri, who claimed the app ‘undermines Iraq’s social fabric’.<sup>638</sup>

In the KRI, security forces and individuals affiliated with powerful political parties continued to intimidate, harass and threaten journalists and activists. Security forces arrested or summoned several journalists<sup>639</sup> for covering protests or conducting investigative reporting.<sup>640</sup>

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) documented the killing of two journalists in Iraq.<sup>641</sup> In August 2024, Asayish forces attacked a journalist and a cameraman, while the latter were covering protests, for refusing to hand over the camera and microphone. In the same month, security forces attacked a journalist in Baghdad for covering a protest by medical school graduates demanding jobs.<sup>642</sup> In October 2024, a female social media activist died, under unclear circumstances, in a Baghdad prison after receiving a two-year sentence from a Kirkuk court.<sup>643</sup> The Ministry of Justice refused to disclose the death report, and some perceived the

<sup>629</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>630</sup> RSF (Reporters Without Borders), Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>631</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 52; UNSC, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para 54; AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); GCHR, GCHR's periodic report on human rights violations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>632</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq's human rights decline, freedoms face clear threats, says rights center, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>633</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 52; UNSC, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para 54

<sup>634</sup> CPJ, Iraqi security forces assault 2 news crews covering protests, 20 August 2024, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>635</sup> CPJ, Iraqi authorities suspend political talk show Al-Haq Yuqal, order past episodes removed, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>636</sup> Carnegie Endowment, The Risks of Deepening Sectarianism in Iraq, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>637</sup> CPJ, Armed group threatens Iraq's Al Rabiaa TV after report on Iran-US talks, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>638</sup> Al-Rubaie, A., Under the Pretext of "Morality": Morality Rhetoric and Freedom of Expression in Iraq, TWI, 15 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>639</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); GCHR, GCHR's periodic report on human rights violations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>640</sup> RSF, Iraqi Kurdistan: RSF calls for the release of investigative journalists Bashdar Bazayani and Sherwan Sherwani, 14 March 2025, [url](#); CPJ, Iraqi security forces assault 2 news crews covering protests, 20 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>641</sup> CPJ, Explore CPJ's database of attacks on the press – Iraq, n.d., (filtered by dates from 2024 to 2025), [url](#)

<sup>642</sup> CPJ, Iraqi security forces assault 2 news crews covering protests, 20 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>643</sup> Kirkuk Now, Kirkuki Social Media Figure Died in a Baghdad Prison, 31 October 2024, [url](#)

case as 'suspicious'.<sup>644</sup> On 23 August 2024, a Turkish drone strike killed two female journalists near Sulaymaniyah;<sup>645</sup> unknown perpetrators attacked their memorial on 11 February 2025.<sup>646</sup> In November 2024, a journalist survived in an attack in which he was stabbed 21 times in Sulaymaniyah after the latter alleged that a Peshmerga Affairs Ministry official obstructed a local electricity project.<sup>647</sup> In June 2025, PMF forces arrested a Kurdish journalist in Baghdad while he covered a protest.<sup>648</sup>

Following the outbreak of the Iran-Israel conflict in June 2025, Iraq's National Security Service (NSS) announced it is actively monitoring social media and will pursue legal action against users posting content deemed to incite sectarian or political tensions.<sup>649</sup>

In February 2025, Iraq's parliament held a first reading of a draft Right to Information Law which, if passed, would further restrict access to information.<sup>650</sup> The draft bill sparked concerns among civil society organisations, journalists, and experts as several provisions would reportedly impose restrictions on access to information in key areas of government activities.<sup>651</sup>

### 2.4.3. Individuals with (perceived) affiliation to ISIL

For more information on individuals with perceived affiliation to ISIL, see the [EUAA Country Focus, May 2024](#), section 1.1.3. Individuals with (perceived) affiliation to ISIL.

Both the Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13 of 2005<sup>652</sup> in Federal Iraq and the Anti-Terror Law No. 3 of 2006 in the KRI<sup>653</sup> contain vague and broad definitions of terrorism.<sup>654</sup> The KRI's Anti-Terror Law allows courts to accept confessions extracted under duress if supported by other evidence.<sup>655</sup> The Anti-Terror Law provides consecutive sentences for different terrorist acts, ranging from imprisonment for less than 15 years to life imprisonment or the death penalty. By contrast, the Federal Anti-Terrorism Law mandates the death penalty for any person convicted of specified terrorist acts. It imposes the same penalty on those who incite, plan, finance, or assist terrorists.<sup>656</sup>

<sup>644</sup> Kirkuk Now, All Remained Silent in Case of Shayan's "Suspicious" Death, 9 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>645</sup> IFJ, Iraqi Kurdistan: Two women journalists killed and one other injured, 27 August 2024, [url](#); Medya News, Turkish drone strike kills two women journalists and injures others in Iraqi Kurdistan, 23 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>646</sup> Medya News, Memorial to killed Kurdish journalists destroyed by alleged Turkish intelligence agents, 15 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>647</sup> GCHR's periodic report on human rights violations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>648</sup> Rudaw, PMF arrests Kurdish journalist in Baghdad, says father, 21 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>649</sup> Rudaw, Iraq monitoring social media amid regional tensions, 21 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>650</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>651</sup> Art. 19, Iraq: MPs must propose substantive amendments to draft right to information law, 13 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>652</sup> Iraq, Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13 of 2005, [url](#)

<sup>653</sup> Iraq, Law No. 3 of 2006 on Combating Terrorism, [url](#)

<sup>654</sup> MENA Rights Group, Civil and political rights in Iraq since the 2019 Tishreen protests: Universal Periodic Review of Iraq, 13 August 2024, [url](#); OHCHR, Human Rights in the Administration of Justice in Iraq: Trials under the anti-terrorism laws and implications for justice, accountability and social cohesion in the aftermath of ISIL, January 2020, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>655</sup> MENA Rights Group, Civil and political rights in Iraq since the 2019 Tishreen protests: Universal Periodic Review of Iraq, 13 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>656</sup> OHCHR, Human Rights in the Administration of Justice in Iraq: Trials under the anti-terrorism laws and implications for justice, accountability and social cohesion in the aftermath of ISIL, January 2020, [url](#), p. 4

In a report published in October 2024, Amnesty International has documented cases where authorities base ISIL affiliation accusations on weak evidence such as family ties, personal disputes, or false allegations meant to settle private conflicts or justify property seizures, leaving families with heavy financial burdens.<sup>657</sup> For more information on identification of ISIL affiliation and treatment of family members, see the [EUAA Country Focus, May 2024](#), section 1.1.3. Individuals with (perceived) affiliation to ISIL.

Between August 2024 and January 2025, the UN documented 21 executions of individuals convicted under counter-terrorism legislation, including one woman.<sup>658</sup> In total, at least 61 executions were recorded in 2024, marking a near fourfold increase compared to the previous year,<sup>659</sup> with many of them following terrorism-related convictions.<sup>660</sup> However, the Iraqi authorities do not publish official statistics on executions and, according to sources, have not provided such data despite multiple requests. According to the Association for Freedom and Democracy (AFAD), an independent group monitoring human rights in Iraq, the country has experienced an increase in secret executions.<sup>661</sup> Trials are reported as unfair, often relying on forced confessions.<sup>662</sup> Executions took place without prior notice to family members or lawyers, amid allegations of torture as well as other fair trial and due process violations.<sup>663</sup> However, no information on the profile of the individuals who were executed or ordered to be executed was provided by the sources consulted in this report. As of January 2025, over 8 000 prisoners, mostly charged with terrorism-related offenses,<sup>664</sup> were on the death row.<sup>665</sup> The Amnesty Law enacted in January 2025 has led to the release of more than 19 000 prisoners as of May 2025. The Amnesty Law is aimed at easing pressure on an overcrowded prison system, including inmates convicted of being members of ISIL.<sup>666</sup> Detainees will now be permitted to request retrials if they claim their confessions were obtained through torture or coercion while in custody.<sup>667</sup> See [section 2.2 Latest legislation impacting civil and human rights: January 2025 Legislative Package](#).

#### **2.4.4. Return of persons with perceived affiliation to ISIL**

Returnees from Al-Hol detention camp in northeastern Syria and other IDP camps in Iraq undergo security screening<sup>668</sup> by the National Security Service,<sup>669</sup> which includes

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<sup>657</sup> Al, Iraq: People held in Al-Jed'ah Centre subjected to torture and enforced disappearance after arrests – new investigation, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>658</sup> UNSG, Twentieth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat, 31 January 2025, [url](#), para 22

<sup>659</sup> HRW, Iraq: Surging Unlawful Executions, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>660</sup> Guardian (The), Executions at 10-year high after huge increases in Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>661</sup> HRW, Iraq: Surging Unlawful Executions, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>662</sup> OHCHR, UN Human Rights Report, Report 2024, 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 301

<sup>663</sup> HRW, Iraq: Surging Unlawful Executions, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>664</sup> HRW, World Report 2025, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>665</sup> EEAS, Iraq: Statement by the Spokesperson on the executions, 27 September 2024 [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Surging Unlawful Executions, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>666</sup> Al Jazeera, Iraq frees over 19,000 prisoners under new amnesty, including some ex-ISIL, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>667</sup> Al Jazeera, Iraq frees over 19,000 prisoners under new amnesty, including some ex-ISIL, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>668</sup> UNIDIR, Reintegrating Iraqis returning home after conflict: lessons from variations between four communities, MEAC Findings Report 41, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 28-30

<sup>669</sup> USIP, Iraq's Lingering ISIS Challenge and the Role of Dialogue in Return and Reintegration, 21 November 2024, [url](#)



questionnaires and biometric checks against ISIL-affiliate databases. Authorities may deny return or arrest individuals flagged during screening under Iraq's Anti-Terrorism Law, despite concerns about database inaccuracies and false positives.<sup>670</sup> After screening, authorities temporarily transfer individuals to the Al Amal Center (formerly Jeddah 1 Rehabilitation Center),<sup>671</sup> near Mosul. UN agencies and NGOs provide reintegration support in the Center,<sup>672</sup> including assistance with civil documentation, psychosocial care and vocational training.<sup>673</sup>

As of September 2024, Al Amal Center housed 2 223 people, mainly women and children. Since 2021, security forces arrested about 80 individuals charged with ISIL's affiliation, with reports of torture and enforced disappearance during interrogation. In October 2024, Amnesty International reported multiple cases of torture at Al Amal Center during interrogations conducted by Iraqi security forces, as well as reports of unfair trials under the Anti-Terrorism Law.<sup>674</sup>

Humanitarian needs at the Al Amal Center remained significant, especially in protection, legal aid, health, and education.<sup>675</sup> A key issue is the lack of documentation<sup>676</sup> which disproportionately affects female-headed households and their children.<sup>677</sup> Documentation is essential for facilitating movement across checkpoints, for registration with authorities upon return<sup>678</sup> and for accessing essential services.<sup>679</sup> Persons with real or perceived ISIL links face difficulties obtaining civil documentation<sup>680</sup> which increases risk of statelessness, particularly among youth. Fragile social cohesion and strained resources further heighten protection risks for both displaced and host communities<sup>681</sup> (See section [2.7. on Children](#)).

Despite the fast pace of returns from Syria's Al-Hol camp in Iraq,<sup>682</sup> reintegration remains difficult<sup>683</sup> due to damaged housing, limited services, legal barriers<sup>684</sup> and lack of civil

<sup>670</sup> UNIDIR, Reintegrating Iraqis returning home after conflict: lessons from variations between four communities, MEAC Findings Report 41, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 28-30

<sup>671</sup> NRC, NRC's operations in Iraq, Humanitarian overview, Factsheet May 2025, [url](#); UNIDIR, From Al Hol to hope: Navigating return and reintegration challenges, 15 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 8-9; UN in Iraq, UNAMI, For Iraq 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>672</sup> USIP, Iraq's Lingering ISIS Challenge and the Role of Dialogue in Return and Reintegration, 21 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>673</sup> UN in Iraq, UNAMI, For Iraq 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>674</sup> Al, Iraq: People held in Al-Jed'ah Centre subjected to torture and enforced disappearance after arrests – new investigation, 29 October 2024, [url](#); Al, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>675</sup> NRC, NRC's operations in Iraq, Humanitarian overview, Factsheet May 2025, [url](#); UNIDIR, From Al Hol to hope: Navigating return and reintegration challenges, 15 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>676</sup> UNIDIR, From Al Hol to hope: Navigating return and reintegration challenges, 15 August 2024, [url](#), p. 9; GCERF, Working With Returnees From Northeast Syria And Iraq: Rehabilitation And Reintegration Lessons From GCERF, June 2025, [url](#), p. 22; UNICEF, Iraq – Highlights, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>677</sup> UNIDIR, From Al Hol to hope: Navigating return and reintegration challenges, 15 August 2024, [url](#), p. 9; UNICEF, Iraq – Highlights, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>678</sup> UNIDIR, From Al Hol to hope: Navigating return and reintegration challenges, 15 August 2024, [url](#), p. 9; UNICEF, UNICEF, Iraq – Highlights, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>679</sup> UNICEF, Iraq – Highlights, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>680</sup> ILHR, Reclaiming Identity: Strategies for Civil

Documentation in Iraq, 2024, [url](#), p. 17; Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi returnees from Syria's al-Hol camp face uphill task reintegrating society, 14 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>681</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 24

<sup>682</sup> Amwaj, Stepped-up repatriation of 'IS families' presents opportunities, risks for Iraq, 5 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>683</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi returnees from Syria's al-Hol camp face uphill task reintegrating society, 14 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>684</sup> UN in Iraq, UNAMI, For Iraq 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 11



documentation.<sup>685</sup> Observers expressed concerns that fast camp closures may increase the vulnerability of residents and hinder long-term reintegration.<sup>686</sup> Returning IDPs perceived as affiliated with groups like ISIL are subject to harassment, retaliation,<sup>687</sup> stigma and discrimination.<sup>688</sup> In some cases, hate speech and revenge attacks in the host communities are reported.<sup>689</sup>

Return often depends on the *kafala* system, based on Iraq's Criminal Procedure Code (1971). Under this system, a guarantor (*kafeel*), usually a tribal leader, official, or male relative, attests to the individual's disassociation from ISIL and agrees to report any future suspicious activity, though without being legally liable.<sup>690</sup> Although courts have ruled that security clearance is not a prerequisite for issuing civil documents, authorities commonly require clearance for parents, primarily fathers, before issuing legal identity documents, including for children.<sup>691</sup>

Many women whose husbands are missing or accused of ISIL affiliation have reportedly chosen or been encouraged to initiate divorce and pursue the *tabriya* procedure.<sup>692</sup> Spouses of alleged ISIL members are generally required to undergo the so-called *tabriya* (denunciation)<sup>693</sup> or *ikhbar* (notification) process<sup>694</sup> in order to obtain a security clearance for themselves and their children. This process, which varies by court and jurisdiction, typically requires formally declaring the spouse's ISIL affiliation, renouncing the individual, and denying personal involvement.<sup>695</sup> If the court accepts the declaration, judges issue certificates of innocence enabling women and their children to obtain security clearances and civil documentation. Authorities reportedly have eased strict application of this process.<sup>696</sup> Judges often require additional evidence to establish paternity when fathers are suspected ISIL members, including DNA tests or court appearances, even if fathers are missing.<sup>697</sup> When unable to prove paternity, women sometimes declare the child's paternal lineage as 'undetermined', a phenomenon surrounded by significant stigma.<sup>698</sup>

While intended to aid reintegration, *tabriya* can deepen stigma, especially for women and their children. In fact, in some cases, courts have used declarations as evidence of ISIL

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<sup>685</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Country Report 2024, February 2025, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>686</sup> Amwaj, Stepped-up repatriation of 'IS families' presents opportunities, risks for Iraq, 5 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>687</sup> IOM, Iraq Crisis Response Plan 2025, February 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>688</sup> GCERF, Working With Returnees From Northeast Syria And Iraq: Rehabilitation And Reintegration Lessons From GCERF, June 2025, [url](#), p. 23; Save the Children, UNICEF, Working in the Nexus: How Save the Children and UNICEF are working together to strengthen the Child Protection System in Iraq, 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>689</sup> GCERF, Working With Returnees From Northeast Syria And Iraq: Rehabilitation And Reintegration Lessons From GCERF, June 2025, [url](#), p. 23; Arab Weekly (The), Iraqi returnees from Syria's al-Hol camp face uphill task reintegrating society, 14 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>690</sup> UNIDIR, Reintegrating Iraqis returning home after conflict: lessons from variations between four communities, MEAC Findings Report 41, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 28-30; USIP, Iraq's Lingering ISIS Challenge and the Role of Dialogue in Return and Reintegration, 21 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>691</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Child's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>692</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Child's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>693</sup> UNIDIR, Reintegrating Iraqis Returning Home After Conflict: Lessons from Variation Between Four Communities, January 2025, [url](#), p. 31; NRC, Legal Guide to Child's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>694</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Child's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>695</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Child's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 13-14, 20

<sup>696</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Child's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 14, 20

<sup>697</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Children's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>698</sup> ILHR, Reclaiming Identity: Strategies for Civil Documentation in Iraq, 2024, [url](#), pp. 18-19





affiliation.<sup>699</sup> The *tabriya* process remained 'inconsistent' and insufficient to obtain civil documentation for women and their children.<sup>700</sup> (See [section 2.7 on Children](#)). Though not legally required, some tribes have linked *tabriya* to formal judicial processes through *ikhbar*.<sup>701</sup> For more information on tribal aspects related to the treatment of persons with perceived affiliation to ISIL, see the [EUAA COI Iraq: Arab tribes and customary law Report](#), April 2023.

## 2.5 Palestinians in Iraq

Iraq falls outside the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA); therefore, the protection of Palestinian refugees in Iraq is under the jurisdiction of the Iraqi Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>702</sup>

The Palestinian population in Iraq has significantly declined since 2003.<sup>703</sup> As of 6 August 2025, a total of 13 926 Palestinian refugees are registered with the Permanent Committee for Refugee Affairs of the Ministry of Interior (PC-Mol).<sup>704</sup> Of these, 7 420 Palestinians were also registered with UNHCR as of 1 August 2025, including Palestinian refugees who arrived from Syria since 2011.<sup>705</sup> The majority of Palestinian refugees reside in Baghdad, particularly in the Al-Baladiyyat neighbourhood.<sup>706</sup> In the KRI, UNHCR registered 910 Palestinians in Erbil, 69 in Sulaymaniyah, and 9 in Dohuk as of June 2025.<sup>707</sup> Most Palestinians in the KRI hold the PC-Mol card, often expired due to a lack of PC-Mol missions to the KRI, and the UNHCR refugee certificate. Since 2021, Palestinian refugees who irregularly entered the KRI from Federal Iraq during the conflict with ISIL were given the possibility to regularise their stay through a Personal Identification Card (PIC),<sup>708</sup> provided that they meet the following conditions:

- being born in Iraq;
- holding a UNHCR certificate;
- holding a support letter from the Consulate General of the State of Palestine in Erbil;

<sup>699</sup> UNIDIR, Reintegrating Iraqis Returning Home After Conflict: Lessons from Variation Between Four Communities, January 2025, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>700</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Children's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>701</sup> UNIDIR, Reintegrating Iraqis returning home after conflict: lessons from variations between four communities, MEAC Findings Report 41, January 2025, [url](#), p. 31; NRC, Legal Guide to Child's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>702</sup> Boston University, The Campaign to end statelessness in Iraq - حملة إنهاء حالات انعدام الجنسية في العراق, March 2022, [url](#), p. 42; Stateless Journeys, Statelessness in Iraq, Country Position Paper, November 2019, [url](#), pp. 15-16

<sup>703</sup> New Arab (The), Palestinian refugees in Iraq deprived of right to 'own taxis', 15 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>704</sup> Ministry of Interior's Permanent Committee of Refugee Affairs

<sup>705</sup> UNHCR further noted that the increase in registrations with UNHCR (approximately 6 700 in January 2024) is linked to new arrivals from Syria and Lebanon as a result of the challenging security conditions in these countries as well as the registration of newborns and individuals previously registered only with PC-Mol, UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>706</sup> MEMO, Palestinians of Iraq suffer from deteriorating conditions, 3 January 2023, [url](#); UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>707</sup> UNHCR added that the increase since January 2024 is related to the same reasons as detailed under Federal Iraq, UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>708</sup> Formerly known as the Humanitarian Residency Permit (HRP), UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025



- obtaining security and medical clearance.<sup>709</sup>

In 2008, the PC-Mol undertook the registration of Palestinian refugees<sup>710</sup> who were recognised as *prima facie* refugees and were issued national ID cards.<sup>711</sup> ID cards can be distinguished from those issued to Iraqi nationals,<sup>712</sup> making Palestinians easily identifiable as refugees.<sup>713</sup> However, Iraq does not have a comprehensive legal framework governing the status and protection of refugees in line with relevant international standards.<sup>714</sup> Issued by the Ministry of Interior, ID cards are valid for a period of five years for those arrived in 1948 and three years for those arrived in 1967 and subsequently.<sup>715</sup> Palestinians not registered as refugees with PC-Mol have regularised their stay with the Residency Directorate based on, for example, a work or family visa.<sup>716</sup>

According to the 2006 Nationality Law, Palestinian refugees are excluded from naturalisation 'as a guarantee to their right to return to their homeland',<sup>717</sup> and therefore do not qualify for Iraqi citizenship.<sup>718</sup> In 2017,<sup>719</sup> Decree No. 202 of 2001 was repealed.<sup>720</sup> The decree had granted Palestinians the same rights as Iraqi citizens 'until the liberation of all Palestinian soil',<sup>721</sup> including access to public sector employment and membership in trade unions.<sup>722</sup> Its repeal resulted in their legal status no longer being (near) equivalent to that of Iraqi citizens.<sup>723</sup> This legal shift reportedly resulted in legal ambiguity and inconsistent practices, with some Palestinians losing employment and membership in trade unions. UNHCR documented that the revocation of Decree No. 202 also impacted the retirement rights of a Palestinian refugee, depriving his heirs of his retirement salary upon his death.<sup>724</sup>

Art. No. 23 of the Constitution<sup>725</sup> prohibits non-Iraqis from owning property and this restriction equally applies to Palestinians.<sup>726</sup> A new directive that entered into force in 2024 prohibited

<sup>709</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>710</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025; Boston University, The Campaign to end statelessness in Iraq - حملة إنهاء حالات انعدام الجنسية في العراق , March 2022, [url](#), p. 43

<sup>711</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>712</sup> Boston University, The Campaign to end statelessness in Iraq - حملة إنهاء حالات انعدام الجنسية في العراق , March 2022, [url](#), p. 43; UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>713</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>714</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>715</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025; USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Iraq, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 41

<sup>716</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025;

<sup>717</sup> Art. 6 (2) reads as follows: 'Iraqi nationality shall not be granted to Palestinians as a guarantee to their right to return to their homeland.', Iraq, Iraqi Nationality Law, Law 26 of 2006, 7 March 2006, [url](#), art. 6 (2); UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>718</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>719</sup> Iraq: Law on the Residence of Foreigners (2017), [url](#)

<sup>720</sup> Iraq, Resolution by the Revolutionary Command Council on the Treatment of Palestinians Permanently Residing in Iraq as Iraqis (2001), 24 September 2001, [url](#); New Arab (The), Palestinian refugees in Iraq deprived of right to 'own taxis', 15 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>721</sup> Iraq, Resolution by the Revolutionary Command Council on the Treatment of Palestinians Permanently Residing in Iraq as Iraqis (2001), 24 September 2001, [url](#); New Arab (The), Palestinian refugees in Iraq deprived of right to 'own taxis', 15 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>722</sup> UNHCR, email to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>723</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>724</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>725</sup> Article 23 (3 A) reads as follows: 'Every Iraqi shall have the right to own property anywhere in Iraq. No others may possess immovable assets, except as exempted by law.', Iraq, Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, [url](#)

<sup>726</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025



Palestinian refugees from owning taxis, which had been a primary source of income for many.<sup>727</sup> A new directive issued by the Ministry of Interior grants residency to foreigners who purchase residential property, subject to specific conditions; however, it remains unclear whether these regulations apply to Palestinians residing in Iraq or what documentation will be required.<sup>728</sup>

Following the ousting of Saddam Hussein, Palestinians in Iraq faced what has been described as an 'extensive backlash' from society, state institutions, and armed militias. This hostility was linked to perceptions among many Iraqis that the Baath regime had granted Palestinians more favourable conditions, including better access to rights, higher housing standards, and other benefits,<sup>729</sup> and to suspicions of their support for ISIL<sup>730</sup> or, previously, Al-Qaeda.<sup>731</sup> However, following ISIL's defeat, and relative improvements in the security situation in most parts of Iraq, UNHCR did not report major incidents targeting Palestinians since 2019. Palestinians generally face the same challenges as the broader population, including issues related to security, human rights, and weak rule of law.<sup>732</sup>

Conditions for Palestinians are characterised by poverty,<sup>733</sup> unemployment,<sup>734</sup> and overcrowded housing.<sup>735</sup> Holders of PC-Mol-issued ID cards generally have access to public schools, health facilities, Public Distribution System (PDS) for food rations, and they are permitted to rent property.<sup>736</sup> As in the rest of the population, the availability and quality of such services may vary by area and may be inconsistent, poor, or entirely lacking.<sup>737</sup> In the KRI, Palestinian refugees are reportedly allowed to work in the private sector and renew humanitarian residency permits.<sup>738</sup>

Freedom of movement within Federal Iraq can be restricted for Palestinians with expired ID cards. ID cards are not always recognised or respected at security checkpoints, especially outside Baghdad, further limiting their freedom of movement. UNHCR observed that many Palestinian refugees fear harassment and abuse when crossing checkpoints operated by the PMF.<sup>739</sup>

To leave Iraq, Palestinians who arrived in 1948 must obtain a travel document from the Residence Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, while others must use a Palestinian passport issued by the Embassy of Palestine in Baghdad. Travel documents from the

<sup>727</sup> New Arab (The), Palestinian refugees in Iraq deprived of right to 'own taxis', 15 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>728</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>729</sup> Boston University, The Campaign to end statelessness in Iraq حملة إنهاء حالات انعدام الجنسية في العراق, March 2022, [url](#), pp. 42-43

<sup>730</sup> NPR, Palestinians who settled in Iraq have remained stateless for generations, 3 March 2024, [url](#); UNHCR, email to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>731</sup> UNHCR, email to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>732</sup> UNHCR, email to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>733</sup> Al Jazeera, Forgotten generations: Palestinians in Iraq mourn their homeland, via YouTube, Al Jazeera English channel, 13 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>734</sup> UNHCR, email to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>735</sup> UNHCR, email to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>736</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025; USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Iraq, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 41

<sup>737</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>738</sup> USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Iraq, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 41

<sup>739</sup> UNHCR, email communication with EUAA, 6 August 2025



Residence Affairs Directorate are valid for one year and permit re-entry into Iraq.<sup>740</sup> Palestinians risk losing their refugee status if they remain outside Iraq for more than one month;<sup>741</sup> in such a case, upon return, they must obtain an entry visa and re-apply for asylum with the PC-MoI.<sup>742</sup> Many Palestinians in Iraq remain stateless<sup>743</sup> and are reportedly subjected to aid cuts and increasing limitations inscribed in Iraqi law.<sup>744</sup>

No additional information was found regarding the treatment of Palestinians by state and non-state actors within the time constraints of this report.

## 2.6 Women and girls

Women in Iraq are reported to face multiple challenges including violence, poverty, financial exclusion<sup>745</sup> and societal stigma.<sup>746</sup> Women also face limited access to the labour market<sup>747</sup> political marginalisation and limited representation in decision-making bodies.<sup>748</sup> Women and girls continued to struggle against patriarchal norms embedded in Iraq's legal system.<sup>749</sup> Despite continued activism by civil society groups, federal Iraq has still not passed a law against domestic violence, stalled in the parliament for over a decade,<sup>750</sup> while a corresponding law was passed in KRI in 2011.<sup>751</sup> The penal code that is applicable in both territories criminalises physical assaults, but it doesn't mention domestic violence.<sup>752</sup> Domestic violence is on the rise and cases are underreported and inadequately investigated.<sup>753</sup>

### 2.6.1 Violence against women

In a June 2025 report, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reported on harmful practices affecting women and girls in Iraq, including female genital mutilation (FGM), temporary marriages (*mut'ah*), forced marriages, and child marriages conducted by religious leaders that avoid existing legal restrictions.<sup>754</sup> A policy paper focused on the KRI found that violence against women can take many forms, including what it described as the 'patriarchal

<sup>740</sup> UNHCR, email communication with EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>741</sup> UNHCR, email communication with EUAA, 6 August 2025; New Arab (The), Palestinian refugees in Iraq deprived of right to 'own taxis', 15 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>742</sup> UNHCR, email communication with EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>743</sup> NPR, Palestinians who settled in Iraq have remained stateless for generations, 3 March 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Forgotten generations: Palestinians in Iraq mourn their homeland, via YouTube, Al Jazeera English channel, 13 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>744</sup> New Arab (The), Neglected Palestinian refugees in Iraq ask UN for help, 19 July 2022, [url](#)

<sup>745</sup> IFAD, Republic of Iraq, Country Strategy Note, 29 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 10-11

<sup>746</sup> Amnesty International, Daunting and Dire: Impunity, Underfunded Institutions Undermine Protection of Women and Girls From Domestic Violence in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 3 July 2024, [url](#); DRC, JCI, Hawa Organisation, Double Burden, The Lived Experiences of Displaced and Returnee Women in Iraq, [24 February 2025], [url](#), pp. 6-7; New Region – Basra (The), Decades of change; women in the grip of patriarchy, 8 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>747</sup> IFAD, Republic of Iraq, Country Strategy Note, 29 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 10-11

<sup>748</sup> Shafaq News, Women's rights in Iraq: Marginalization and systemic challenges, 17 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>749</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 - Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Hussain, S. F., Violence Against Women: Towards a Policy Understanding of the Patriarchy, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>750</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>751</sup> Rida, N., The Future of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Iraq, 12 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>752</sup> HRW, Iraq: Urgent Need for Domestic Violence Law, 22 April 2020, [url](#)

<sup>753</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 26

<sup>754</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 29

trifecta of oppression': FGM, forced marriages, as well as honour-based violence and killings, which are believed to operate in an interlinked manner, especially in the KRI.<sup>755</sup> Marital rape is not criminalised.<sup>756</sup> Perpetrators of sexual assaults can avoid punishment by marrying their victims.<sup>757</sup> See also [section 2.9 Individuals perceived as transgressing moral and Islamic norms](#). Gender-based violence (GBV) remains widespread in Iraq,<sup>758</sup> and has been on the rise, according to the CRC report published in July 2025.<sup>759</sup> The high prevalence is partially due to prevailing cultural norms, economic dependency of women on men, and a lack of legal protection.<sup>760</sup> Instances of GBV have been further exacerbated by conflict and instability.<sup>761</sup> Comprehensive statistics on the prevalence of violence against women are not available due to underreporting<sup>762</sup> and stigma related to the risk of damaging the 'family honour' if the cases are made public.<sup>763</sup> In addition, violence against women has increased in the online space.<sup>764</sup>

Based on Article 403<sup>765</sup> of the Iraqi Penal Code,<sup>766</sup> in January 2023, the Ministry of the Interior launched the online Ballegh platform,<sup>767</sup> used also to target women.<sup>768</sup> The platform enables the public to submit complaints over so-called 'derogatory or degrading' online content<sup>769</sup> and to facilitate the control of the online content.<sup>770</sup> Government targeted prominent women also

<sup>755</sup> Hussain, S. F., Violence Against Women: Towards a Policy Understanding of the Patriarchy, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>756</sup> Gadd, K., Ubeis, F., "I must care about the reputation of my family. This is very important to me": an exploration of factors affecting Iraqi women's access to justice, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>757</sup> Iraq Business News, LWF: Protecting Women's Rights in Iraq, 13 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>758</sup> GIZ, Driving change for women's rights and representation in Iraq, last updated February 2025, [url](#); Gadd, K., Ubeis, F., "I must care about the reputation of my family. This is very important to me": an exploration of factors affecting Iraqi women's access to justice, 12 April 2025, [url](#); Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 31 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>759</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 26

<sup>760</sup> UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund Country programme document for Iraq, 5 December 2024, [url](#), para. 7

<sup>761</sup> Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, War waged in the home: Rethinking conflict and gender-based violence in Iraq, 16 April 2024, [url](#), pp. 4, 15; UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>762</sup> Amnesty International, Daunting and Dire: Impunity, Underfunded Institutions Undermine Protection of Women and Girls From Domestic Violence in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 3 July 2024, [url](#), p. 11; Kurdistan Center for International Law, Honor killing In Iraq, 2022, [url](#)

<sup>763</sup> New Region (The), Thirty-eight year old woman found dead in Halabja: Police, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>764</sup> Bobseine, H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 13 July 2025; UNAMI, UN in Iraq marks 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls, 26 November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>765</sup> Article 403 reads: 'Any person who produces, imports, publishes, possesses, obtains or translates a book, printed or other written material, drawing, picture, film, symbol or other thing that violates the public integrity or decency with intent to exploit or distribute such material is punishable by a period of detention not exceeding 2 years plus a fine not exceeding 200 dinars or by one of those penalties. The same penalty applies to any person who advertises such material or displays it in public or sells, hires or offers it for sale or hire even though it is not in public or to any person who distributes or submits it for distribution by any means. If the offence is committed with intent to deprave, it is considered to be an aggravating circumstances.' Iraq, Iraqi Penal Code (Law No. 111 of 1969), 1969, [url](#), Art. 403

<sup>766</sup> SMEX, Iraq's Controversial "Ballegh" Platform for "Combating Indecent Content", 15 February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>767</sup> Also spelled Balgh, see: Article19, Iraq : Balgh platform marks two years as a tool of repression, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>768</sup> SecDev Foundation (The), Digital Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East and North Africa, July 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>769</sup> UNSC, Implementation of Resolution 2631 (2022): Report of the Secretary-General, 11 May 2023, [url](#), para. 54; SMEX, Iraq's Controversial "Ballegh" Platform for "Combating Indecent Content", 15 February 2023, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom on the Net; Iraq, 4 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>770</sup> Mena Rights Group, Iraq: the escalating crackdown on civic space, 2 September 2024, [url](#)

through the Ballegh platform, ‘especially those who defy traditional social expectations’.<sup>771</sup> (See also [2.9 Individuals perceived as transgressing moral and Islamic norms](#)).

With regard to FGM, while the federal Iraq does not have a legislation explicitly banning FGM, it has been illegal since 2011 in KRI,<sup>772</sup> following the passing of the Act of Combating Domestic Violence in Kurdistan Region-Iraq.<sup>773</sup> The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported in December 2024 that Iraqi authorities have made ‘significant strides’ in addressing it. According to the report, its prevalence – traditionally the highest in KRI<sup>774</sup> – has been steadily decreasing when comparing 2011 and 2018 data, ‘indicating the steady progress toward the total elimination of FGM in Iraq’.<sup>775</sup> WADI<sup>776</sup> indicated that despite the recorded decline in the practice of FGM in the KRI, in Erbil, it continues to be ‘quietly practiced’.<sup>777</sup>

Since 2023, the ongoing anti-gender speech has worsened conditions for women advocacy groups,<sup>778</sup> which have faced targeted campaigns against them,<sup>779</sup> in particular on Telegram<sup>780</sup> but also on the government’s Ballegh platform.<sup>781</sup> Activists and feminists had to sign forms stating that they would not use the term gender, leading some to quit their work.<sup>782</sup> See also [section 2.8 on LGBTIQ](#). Efforts to combat violence against woman and girls remained limited because of societal norms and inadequate enforcement of existing legislation.<sup>783</sup> Women’s access to justice is impacted by patriarchal interpretation of Islamic law, place of residence, ethnicity and social status.<sup>784</sup> Many violations are unreported<sup>785</sup> and are resolved through traditional tribal mechanisms instead.<sup>786</sup>

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<sup>771</sup> SecDev Foundation (The), Digital Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East and North Africa, July 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>772</sup> WADI, More efforts to end FGM in Iraq needed, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>773</sup> Rida, N., The Future of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Iraq, 12 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>774</sup> Erbil has been reported as having the highest prevalence within both, Federal Iraq and KRI. See: Rida, N., The Future of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Iraq, 12 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>775</sup> UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund Country programme document for Iraq, 5 December 2024, [url](#), para. 8

<sup>776</sup> WADI is an NGO with offices in Germany and KRI promoting human rights in the Middle East, including ‘rehabilitation projects for long-term prisoners, literacy programs, education and training for women, public awareness of and fight against domestic violence as well as campaigns against FGM (Female Genital Mutilation).’ See: WADI, About, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>777</sup> WADI, Combating FGM in Iraqi-Kurdistan means to deal with different realities in each region, 27 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>778</sup> GIZ, Driving change for women's rights and representation in Iraq, last updated February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>779</sup> NGOWG, Monthly Action Points (MAP) for the Security Council: May 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#); Mustafa, Balsam, Gender found Guilty: Anti-Gender Backlash and (Dis) Translation Politics in Iraq, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>780</sup> Mustafa, B., Gender found Guilty: Anti-Gender Backlash and (Dis)Translation Politics in Iraq, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>781</sup> SecDev Foundation (The), Digital Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East and North Africa, July 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>782</sup> Mustafa, B., Gender found Guilty: Anti-Gender Backlash and (Dis)Translation Politics in Iraq, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>783</sup> UNAMI, UN in Iraq marks 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>784</sup> Gadd, K., Ubeis, F., “I must care about the reputation of my family. This is very important to me”: an exploration of factors affecting Iraqi women’s access to justice, 12 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>785</sup> Al Juboori, R., Empowerment through technology: domestic violence acceptance among Iraqi women in an intersectional context, November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>786</sup> Al Juboori, R., Empowerment through technology: domestic violence acceptance among Iraqi women in an intersectional context, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 2-3; New Region (The), Thirty-eight year old woman found dead in Halabja: Police, 9 April 2025, [url](#)



## Domestic violence

Despite the constitutional prohibition of violence, Article 41 of the Iraqi Penal Code permits a husband to use physical violence against his wife<sup>787</sup> under the concept of *ta'dib al-zawja* ('domesticating the wife'), allowing such punishment<sup>788</sup> 'within certain limits prescribed by law or custom'.<sup>789</sup> The Penal Code provides mitigated sentences if the crimes were done for 'honourable motives'.<sup>790</sup>

Some 75 % of women in Iraq experience domestic violence,<sup>791</sup> which remains 'a critical issue', disproportionately affecting women without formal education, younger women, women living in rural areas, women with disabilities,<sup>792</sup> and displaced women and girls.<sup>793</sup> Although some progress has been achieved,<sup>794</sup> notably in the 'policy reforms and awareness campaigns,' efforts to improve the situation of women in Iraq have been hindered by deep-rooted norms and systemic barriers,<sup>795</sup> including a combination of traditional and religious influences on the other.<sup>796</sup> In the KRI, women have continued to experience increased<sup>797</sup> rates of GBV since 2014, particularly in the form of domestic violence, sexual violence, and honour-based violence.<sup>798</sup> In November 2024, authorities in the KRI declared that perpetrators of femicides will not be included in any general amnesties.<sup>799</sup> Kurdistan24 reported on 25 000 cases of domestic violence in Iraq in 2024.<sup>800</sup> In 2024, 48 cases of women killed were documented in the KRI, while between January and May 2025, 14 such cases were recorded.<sup>801</sup> Implementation of Act No. 8 of 2011 on combating domestic violence in the KRI is hindered by the lack of resources.<sup>802</sup>

<sup>787</sup> UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>788</sup> Gadd, K., Ubeis, F., "I must care about the reputation of my family. This is very important to me": an exploration of factors affecting Iraqi women's access to justice, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>789</sup> Al Juboori, R., Empowerment through technology: domestic violence acceptance among Iraqi women in an intersectional context, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>790</sup> Gadd, K., Ubeis, F., "I must care about the reputation of my family. This is very important to me": an exploration of factors affecting Iraqi women's access to justice, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>791</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraqi women face rising domestic violence crisis as legislation stalls, 3 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>792</sup> UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund Country programme document for Iraq, 5 December 2024, [url](#), para. 7

<sup>793</sup> UNAMI, UN in Iraq marks 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls, 26 November 2024, [url](#);

UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund Country programme document for Iraq, 5 December 2024, [url](#), para. 7

<sup>794</sup> Iraq Business News, LWF: Protecting Women's Rights in Iraq, 13 July 2025, [url](#); UNAMI, UN in Iraq marks 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls [EN/AR], 26 November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>795</sup> UNAMI, UN in Iraq marks 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls, 26 November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>796</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraqi women face rising domestic violence crisis as legislation stalls, 3 January 2025, [url](#),

<sup>797</sup> Salih, H. M., Honor Killing in Erbil City; Social Factors A Field Study, 5 May 2025, [url](#), p. 252

<sup>798</sup> Bobseine, H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 13 July 2025; New Region (The), Femicide perpetrators excluded from general amnesties: KRG minister, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>799</sup> New Region (The), Femicide perpetrators excluded from general amnesties: KRG minister, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>800</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraqi women face rising domestic violence crisis as legislation stalls, 3 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>801</sup> Insight International (The), Young Kurdish woman dies under suspicious circumstances in Iraqi Kurdistan, 22 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>802</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 26

## Honour-based violence

Honour killings, referred to as *ghasl al-yar* ('washing away disgrace/shame') are reportedly used to kill individuals involved in 'black cases' (*qadiyah souda*). According to Haley Bobseine, senior Iraq researcher and analyst specialising in tribal affairs, those may include perceived or actual sexual misconduct, rape, or same-sex relations.<sup>803</sup> Honour-based violence is rooted in patriarchal and tribal norms as well as cultural perceptions of women's 'proper' roles.<sup>804</sup> Honour killings are prevalent throughout Iraq and the KRI, occurring more frequently in more conservative, rural, or poor areas. Conversely, the frequency of such crimes is thought to have slightly decreased in cities. According to tribal custom, the female's brother, husband, or father is in charge of 'washing away the dishonour' perceived as caused by their female relative.<sup>805</sup> Honour crimes are perpetrated mostly against females.<sup>806</sup> Cases of honour killings have been falsely reported as suicides to cover up the crimes and avoid legal consequences;<sup>807</sup> killed women were then buried in secret graves found across the country.<sup>808</sup> Up to 70 % of reported suicides are thought to be honour killings not investigated as such due to the tribal influence.<sup>809</sup> In September 2024, the deaths of two teenage girls were reported as suicides, later discovered to be murders to 'expunge shame'.<sup>810</sup> Haley Bobseine observed that honour killings 'are enabled by the Iraqi criminal law and there is not much interest in challenging these norms'.<sup>811</sup> Reportedly, there are no state protection mechanisms towards honour killings, although some NGOs have provided temporary, emergency protection support for some individuals at heightened risk. However, such programs have become targets themselves due to their work and some have ceased operation.<sup>812</sup> Shelters are present in the KRI, run by government authorities and some NGOs, yet they are often inadequate. No official shelters are reported to be present in the federal Iraq.<sup>813</sup> According to a former spokesperson for the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, at least 150 women and girls are killed in Iraq in honour killings annually.<sup>814</sup> In January 2025, a 26-year-old woman affiliated with Peshmerga forces was killed by her brother because of a 'social issue'.<sup>815</sup> In February 2025, a Kurdish woman was killed by her husband in Erbil over a 'social dispute', a

<sup>803</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>804</sup> Hussain, S. F., Violence Against Women: Towards a Policy Understanding of the Patriarchy, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>805</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>806</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>807</sup> ARIJ, The graveyards of "unknown women", 10 March 2025, [url](#); Bobseine, H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024, and email communication, 13 July 2025; New Region – Basra (The), Decades of change; women in the grip of patriarchy, 8 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>808</sup> ARIJ, The graveyards of "unknown women", 10 March 2025, [url](#); Bobseine, H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 13 July 2025

<sup>809</sup> ARIJ, The graveyards of "unknown women", 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>810</sup> ARIJ, The graveyards of "unknown women", 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>811</sup> Bobseine, H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 13 July 2025

<sup>812</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>813</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>814</sup> ARIJ, The graveyards of "unknown women", 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>815</sup> The Insight International, Man kills sister serving in Peshmerga forces in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

euphemism used to describe honour killings, marking eight recorded femicide that year.<sup>816</sup> In May 2025, a man killed his sister in Erbil and, according to the police, the case was about a 'social issue'.<sup>817</sup> In June 2025, a teenagers' body was found in Soran, Erbil, with burn injuries, raising suspicions of an honour killing.<sup>818</sup>

### Forced and unregistered marriage

Unregistered marriages, also called temporary<sup>819</sup> or pleasure marriages (*Nikah Mut'ah*)<sup>820</sup>, have continued to be practiced,<sup>821</sup> although not foreseen by the law.<sup>822</sup> Such temporary arrangements are reported to be widely misused for sexual exploitation, prostitution,<sup>823</sup> trafficking<sup>824</sup> and as a way to circumvent legal restrictions on child marriage,<sup>825</sup> forced marriage and polygamy, as well as to avoid paying spousal maintenance in case of divorce.<sup>826</sup> Human Rights Watch describes the impact of unregistered/temporary marriages on women's rights as significant. Lacking civil status, women in unregistered marriages cannot give birth in state hospitals and are not entitled to social benefits provided to widows, abandoned wives, and divorced women.<sup>827</sup> On another note, consanguineous marriage is increasing in Iraq due to sectarian and ethnic tensions. Polygamy increases as women get older, reaching three times the rate in the 45+ age group.<sup>828</sup> For information on amendments on Personal Status Law, See [section 2.2 on Latest legislation impacting on civil and human rights](#).

### Female-headed households

Unemployment of young females in Iraq exceeds 28 %, driven by limited job opportunities, skill-labour market mismatches, and restrictive social norms and discrimination.<sup>829</sup> Some working women, including divorced women, experience social stigma and their families

<sup>816</sup> The Insight International, Kurdish woman killed by husband in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, police say, Iraqi Kurdistan, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>817</sup> Insight International (The), Sister killed by her brother in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>818</sup> Insight International (The), Young Kurdish woman dies under suspicious circumstances in Iraqi Kurdistan, 22 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>819</sup> Jad, I. et al., The State of Marriage in the Arab Mashreq: Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon, 30 November 2024, [url](#), p. 140

<sup>820</sup> New Lines Magazine, How Temporary Marriages Can Exploit Vulnerable Women in Iraq, 24 April 2025, [url](#); NIRIJ-Daraj, "Pleasure Marriage:" Thinly Veiled Legal Prostitution, 24 March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>821</sup> AP News, Iraqi women fear rise in child marriages as lawmakers consider giving conservative clerics more say, 4 September 2024, [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Unregistered Marriages Harm Women and Children, 3 March 2024, [url](#); NIRIJ, The masculinity of society prevents girls from proving their existence, 20 November 2024, [url](#); Rudaw, 'Assault on childhood': UN condemns Iraqi bill potentially lowering marriage age, 12 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>822</sup> New Lines Magazine, How Temporary Marriages Can Exploit Vulnerable Women in Iraq, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>823</sup> HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#); NIRIJ-Daraj, "Pleasure Marriage:" Thinly Veiled Legal Prostitution, 24 March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>824</sup> New Lines Institute, How Temporary Marriages Can Exploit Vulnerable Women in Iraq, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>825</sup> New Lines Institute, How Temporary Marriages Can Exploit Vulnerable Women in Iraq, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>826</sup> HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>827</sup> HRW, "My Marriage was Mistake after Mistake", The Impact of Unregistered Marriages on Women's and Children's Rights in Iraq, 3 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>828</sup> Jad, I. et al., The State of Marriage in the Arab Mashreq: Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon, 30 November 2024, [url](#), p. 140

<sup>829</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Country Report 2024, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

prevent them from working.<sup>830</sup> Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, particularly in conflict-affected areas, with female-headed households experiencing 30 % higher poverty rates than the national average.<sup>831</sup> Women engaged in informal work cannot benefit from social protection and security.<sup>832</sup> According to UNFPA, state protection services for women are 'limited and poorly coordinated'.<sup>833</sup> Women acting as heads of households face worsened financial situation,<sup>834</sup> high unemployment rates<sup>835</sup> and practical challenges when approaching government officials.<sup>836</sup> A system of social welfare for women has been implemented,<sup>837</sup> which includes the so-called 'social welfare salary' and 'martyr's salary'. However, the existing support is reportedly insufficient to cover basic expenses; in practice, women depend on donations from relatives or humanitarian organisations.<sup>838</sup> In unregistered marriages, difficulties to obtain both marriage and death certificates hinder women's access to these benefits, such as monthly salaries provided to widows, divorcees, and abandoned wives under Social Protection Law No. 11 of 2014.<sup>839</sup> In case of divorce, women are denied the right to inheritance or spousal maintenance.<sup>840</sup>

## 2.7. Children

In June 2023, a draft child protection law was introduced to the Iraqi parliament. The bill aimed at safeguarding the children's fundamental rights and addressed issues such as child labour and child abuse and exploitation.<sup>841</sup> According to a Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) report published in July 2025, the bills aiming at protecting children's rights have still not been adopted neither in the federal Iraq, nor in KRI.<sup>842</sup> The Penal Code allows 'the disciplining by parents and teachers of children under their authority within certain limits prescribed by law or by custom'.<sup>843</sup> CRC reported on a high prevalence of child victims of

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<sup>830</sup> DRC, JCI, Hawa Organisation, Double Burden The Lived Experiences of Displaced and Returnee Women in Iraq, 24 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 6-7; New Region – Basra (The), Decades of change; women in the grip of patriarchy, 8 March 2024, [url](#). The findings of the joint report by DRC, JCI, and Hawa Organisation are based on focus group discussions with 120 women from Diyala, Salah al-Din, and Ninewa governorates in the period of October-November 2024.

<sup>831</sup> UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund Country programme document for Iraq, 5 December 2024, [url](#), para. 3

<sup>832</sup> IFAD, Republic of Iraq, Country Strategy Note, 29 December 2024, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>833</sup> UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund Country programme document for Iraq, 5 December 2024, [url](#), para. 8

<sup>834</sup> DRC, JCI, Hawa Organisation, Double Burden, The Lived Experiences of Displaced and Returnee Women in Iraq, 24 February 2025, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>835</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 - Country Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>836</sup> DRC, JCI, Hawa Organisation, Double Burden, The Lived Experiences of Displaced and Returnee Women in Iraq, 24 February 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>837</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review; Iraq [A/HRC/59/14], 27 March 2025, [url](#), para. 61

<sup>838</sup> DRC, JCI, Hawa Organisation, Double Burden, The Lived Experiences of Displaced and Returnee Women in Iraq, 24 February 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>839</sup> HRW, "My Marriage was Mistake after Mistake", The Impact of Unregistered Marriages on Women's and Children's Rights in Iraq, 3 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>840</sup> HRW, "My Marriage was Mistake after Mistake", The Impact of Unregistered Marriages on Women's and Children's Rights in Iraq, 3 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>841</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>842</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>843</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 26



sexual exploitation, particularly girls, and the stigmatisation of victims, including in the courts.<sup>844</sup>

Despite a constitutional prohibition against violence,<sup>845</sup> corporal punishment of children remained legal, according to a report published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in November 2024.<sup>846</sup> However, a decision of the Supreme Court reportedly banned ‘violence against children in any form’, according to a meeting summary of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child released in May 2025. Courts are obliged to follow this interpretation of the law, and the police have acted on it and responded to around hundred cases.<sup>847</sup> Sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, including for prostitution and pornography, and trafficking of children are banned as per the provisions of the Penal Code.<sup>848</sup>

Violence against children is ‘highly prevalent’ in Iraq.<sup>849</sup> In 2024, the UN verified 58 grave violations against 50 children in the context of armed conflict in Iraq,<sup>850</sup> compared to 47 violations in 2023.<sup>851</sup> A UNICEF study found that some 89 % of children faced ‘violent discipline’, of whom almost 31 % experienced ‘severe physical punishment’.<sup>852</sup> Cases of violence against children are underreported due to a fear of tribal retaliation and the lack of legal protection.<sup>853</sup>

### 2.7.1. Child recruitment by armed groups

Minimum age of recruitment in Iraq is 18 years old; there is no military conscription. The same minimum age applies to armed groups operating in the country under the government’s umbrella.<sup>854</sup> In March 2023, the Iraqi authorities and the UN signed an agreement to prevent the recruitment of children by the PMF.<sup>855</sup> Up to September 2024, no confirmed violations of the agreement by the PMF were recorded.<sup>856</sup> In September 2024, the UN reported a ‘significant increase’ in cases of child recruitment by armed actors – particularly the People’s Defence Forces of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (HPG/PKK) and ISIL – including for combat

<sup>844</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 26

<sup>845</sup> UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>846</sup> HRC, Summary of stakeholders’ submissions on Iraq; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 6 November 2024, [url](#), paras. 129-130

<sup>847</sup> OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Iraq’s Child Rights Strategy, Raise Issues Concerning Child Marriage and Corporal Punishment, 16 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>848</sup> NRC Legal Guide to Children’s Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 37-38

<sup>849</sup> UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>850</sup> UNSG, Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, 17 June 2025, [url](#), para. 83

<sup>851</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Annual Report 2023, 2024, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>852</sup> UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>853</sup> UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>854</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Children’s Rights in Iraq, [November 2024], [url](#), p. 38

<sup>855</sup> UN, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, The Government of Iraq, supported by the United Nations, strengthens its commitment to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed forces, 30 March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>856</sup> Seed Foundation, et al., Children’s right to identity in Iraq, 99th pre-session (September 2024), Combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Report, September 2024, [url](#), p. 2



roles.<sup>857</sup> According to the same report, many cases go unreported or cannot be verified.<sup>858</sup> Recruitment of seven children for combat roles was verified, including six by HPG/PKK and one by ISIL. Eight children were reported to be abducted by armed groups, including for the purpose of recruitment, namely six by HPG/PKK and two by ISIL.<sup>859</sup> In the June 2025 report, CRC welcomed ‘successful implementation’ of the agreement to prevent the recruitment and use of children by the PMF but it also stated that child recruitment has not been criminalised.<sup>860</sup> Out-of-school children were more at risk of exploitation, including recruitment by armed groups.<sup>861</sup>

### 2.7.2. Children with perceived affiliation to ISIL

In 2024, the Iraqi authorities continued to facilitate voluntary returns of families from Syria, including of those with perceived affiliation to ISIL.<sup>862</sup> The majority of returnees were female-headed households with children.<sup>863</sup> In 2024, 1 529 Iraqi children were repatriated to Iraq from northeastern Syria.<sup>864</sup> Families of ISIL fighters, including children, struggled when attempting to reintegrate into society due to financial difficulties and hostility of the society. Often lacking identity documents, they were unable to receive official support from the state.<sup>865</sup>

Children of alleged ISIL members, whose parents’ marriage was not officially recognised, lack birth certificates and cannot obtain additional legal documents,<sup>866</sup> placing them at risk of statelessness.<sup>867</sup> Children born of unofficial marriages and with no birth certificates, including children of alleged ISIL members, are unable to inherit property.<sup>868</sup> For more information on the process of the proof of lineage, see the [EUAA Country Focus, May 2024](#), section 1.1.3 Individuals with (perceived) affiliation to ISIL. According to a September 2024 article by Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ), teenage boys were reportedly at particular risk of being killed if they attempted to return. The same source indicated that such a return was reportedly possible only after the payment of a fee and with the approval of a local clan leader.<sup>869</sup>

According to UNICEF 2024 Country report’s figures, some 2 400 children were in detention in 2024.<sup>870</sup> In a September 2024 report, the UN Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict expressed concern regarding the continued detention of children for their actual or perceived association with ISIL, despite a reported decrease in the number of children held in detention. Detained children faced difficulties when accessing education and social and legal services.<sup>871</sup>

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<sup>857</sup> UN Press, Public Statement by Chair of Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, 9 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>858</sup> UN Press, Public Statement by Chair of Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, 9 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>859</sup> UNSG, Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, 17 June 2025, [url](#), paras. 84, 88

<sup>860</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 5 June 2025, [url](#), para. 51

<sup>861</sup> The Borgen Project, Little-Known Facts About Child Poverty In Iraq, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>862</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Country Report 2024, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>863</sup> Save the Children, UNICEF, Working in the Nexus: How Save the Children and UNICEF are working together to strengthen the Child Protection System in Iraq, 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>864</sup> UNSG, Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, 17 June 2025, [url](#), para. 93

<sup>865</sup> NZZ, Orphans of the IS caliphate face death if they return home, 26 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>866</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Children’s Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 19

<sup>867</sup> ILHR, Reclaiming Identity: Strategies for Civil Documentation in Iraq, 2024, [url](#), p. 17

<sup>868</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Children’s Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 28

<sup>869</sup> NZZ, Orphans of the IS caliphate face death if they return home, 26 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>870</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Country Report 2024, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>871</sup> UN Press, Public Statement by Chair of Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, 9 September 2024, [url](#)





Children may also be detained due to their relatives' perceived links to armed actors, and some have reportedly been subjected to ill-treatment.<sup>872</sup> In its June 2025 report, the CRC raised concern about 'the detention of foreign children related mostly on charges related terrorism and/or affiliation with Da'esh'.<sup>873</sup> See also [Return of persons with perceived affiliation to ISIL](#).

### 2.7.3.Children without civil documentation

Practical obstacles to birth registration, particularly in areas with underdeveloped administrative systems or affected by armed conflict, have resulted in an estimated 45 000 children lacking civil documentation, subsequently excluding them from rights and services.<sup>874</sup> Some hospitals allowed women to give birth in their facilities but did not automatically issue birth certificates for the children when the identity documents of both parents were not submitted.<sup>875</sup> Children without birth certificates are at a risk of statelessness.<sup>876</sup> Moreover, they cannot obtain other civil documentation and face difficulties when enrolling to school, or when accessing services and are at a bigger risk of child labour.<sup>877</sup> Children can be denied access to healthcare and vaccinations if they are not able to produce civil documentation, including the ID and marriage certificate of the mother.<sup>878</sup>

Among particularly affected children due to lack of documentation are displaced children, children perceived as associated with ISIL,<sup>879</sup> and children born from unregistered marriages.<sup>880</sup> For children born out of ISIL sexual violence, obtaining civil documentation is 'exceptionally difficult'.<sup>881</sup> In such cases, women may not know the father's identity or may not want to disclose it, which can as a result in the children becoming stateless.<sup>882</sup> See also [Children with perceived affiliation to ISIL](#).

### 2.7.4.Child labour

The minimum working age in both Federal Iraq and KRI is 15 years. Under Labor Law, child labour in Iraq is illegal for children under 15 years old<sup>883</sup> – with an exception in the KRI for those working in a family enterprise – and punishable with a prison sentence for up to six months and a fine of one million IQD [about 652 EUR]. Cases of child labour are to be investigated by the Ministry of Labour.<sup>884</sup> While about 5 % of Iraqi children are estimated to be

<sup>872</sup> UNSG, Protection of civilians in armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, 15 May 2025, [url](#), para. 29

<sup>873</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 51

<sup>874</sup> Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights, Maat for Peace' report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the Republic of Iraq, April 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>875</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Children's Rights in Iraq, [November 2024], [url](#), p. 30

<sup>876</sup> ILHR, Reclaiming Identity: Strategies for Civil Documentation in Iraq, 2024, [url](#), p. 17

<sup>877</sup> ILHR, Reclaiming Identity: Strategies for Civil Documentation in Iraq, 2024, [url](#), p. ii

<sup>878</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Children's Rights in Iraq, [November 2024], [url](#), p. 30

<sup>879</sup> ILHR, Reclaiming Identity: Strategies for Civil Documentation in Iraq, 2024, [url](#), p. ii

<sup>880</sup> HRW, Iraq: Unregistered Marriages Harm Women and Children, 3 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>881</sup> Seed Foundation, et al., Children's right to identity in Iraq, 99th pre-session (September 2024), Combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Report, September 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>882</sup> HRW, "My Marriage was Mistake after Mistake", The Impact of Unregistered Marriages on Women's and Children's Rights in Iraq, 3 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>883</sup> MEMO, Iraq to raid industrial areas to effort to tackle child labour, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>884</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Children's Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 34



involved in work,<sup>885</sup> according to Kurdistan24, referring to a research done by the Independent Arabia,<sup>886</sup> some 13 % of children 'are engaged in labour deemed hazardous or exploitative'.<sup>887</sup> Reasons why the phenomenon persists include poverty, lack of documentation,<sup>888</sup> unemployment, displacement and weak institutional measures against the practice.<sup>889</sup> Children were reportedly working in services, agriculture, and industries sectors,<sup>890</sup> or collecting recyclable materials in the streets.<sup>891</sup> After the authorities registered 600 cases of child labour in Baghdad in 2024, ten new committees to monitor the issue were formed in January 2025.<sup>892</sup> The authorities have reportedly developed a plan to address child labour that includes 'offering social protection salaries or loans to affected families'.<sup>893</sup> In April 2025, the government has taken measures aiming at reintegrating working children in the school life.<sup>894</sup>

### 2.7.5. Child marriage

Iraq's Personal Status Law sets the minimum legal age of marriage at 18, with the possibility to lower it to 15 years (16 in KRI)<sup>895</sup> under specific circumstances, and with a judge's approval<sup>896</sup> for everyone, irrespective of their religion.<sup>897</sup> According to the *Jaafari* legal practice, followed by many Shia Muslims in Iraq, girls may marry from nine years old and boys from 15.<sup>898</sup> The January 2025 amendment to the Personal Status Law was feared to further increase rates of child marriage.<sup>899</sup> The final version of the personal status codes is required to respect the age restrictions set out in the original Personal Status Law of 1959.<sup>900</sup> However, it is believed that underage marriages of girls are expected to continue informally, or to be registered upon reaching the legal age.<sup>901</sup> (See [also section 2.2](#)) In the KRI, child marriages have been legally recognised as a form of domestic violence.<sup>902</sup>

<sup>885</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq's Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraq's children face alarming crisis: rising labor, violence, and legal gaps, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>886</sup> Independent Arabia is an arabic Version of the British newspaper The Independent. See: Independent Arabia, [LinkedIn], posted on: n.d., [url](#)

<sup>887</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq's Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>888</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq's forgotten children: Orphans of war left to scavenge for survival, 14 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>889</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq's Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>890</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq's children face alarming crisis: rising labor, violence, and legal gaps, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>891</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq's forgotten children: Orphans of war left to scavenge for survival, 14 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>892</sup> MEMO, Iraq to raid industrial areas to effort to tackle child labour, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>893</sup> MEMO, Iraq to raid industrial areas to effort to tackle child labour, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>894</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq's Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>895</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq\*, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>896</sup> Girls Not Brides, Iraq, n.d., [url](#); Rudaw, Iraqi women MPs unite to fight legislation that endangers women, girls, 3 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>897</sup> International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Iraq's Legal Crisis Through the Lens of Its Personal Status Law, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>898</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraqi Parliament advances controversial amendment to legalize child marriage, sparking outcry, 18 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>899</sup> Al-Hadla, B., Iraqi Parliament and Child Marriage: Iraqi Child Rights from One Tight Spot to Another, TWI, 4 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>900</sup> International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Iraq's Legal Crisis Through the Lens of Its Personal Status Law, 22 May 2025, [url](#); HRW, Iraq: Personal Status Law Amendment Sets Back Women's Rights, 10 March 2025, [url](#); KSC, Slemani: KSC Addresses Concerns Over Controversial Amendments to Iraq's Personal Status Law - New Amendments Spark Debate on Marriage Age, Custody Rights and Protections for Women and Children, 24 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1; UNSG, Report of the Secretary-General, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), 30 May 2025, [url](#), para. 49

<sup>901</sup> New Lines Magazine, The Child Brides of Iraq, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>902</sup> New Lines Magazine, The Child Brides of Iraq, 16 July 2025, [url](#)



Child marriage in Iraq is driven by a variety of factors such as poverty, religion, low levels of education and a notion of family honour; such marriages are not recognised by the state, leaving child brides without legal rights in such unions.<sup>903</sup> Prevalence of child marriages in Iraq has been steadily rising since 2003,<sup>904</sup> with ‘thousands of couples’ entering in unregistered marriages every year to circumvent restrictions on child and forced marriage enshrined in the Personal Status Act.<sup>905</sup> Politicians, Shia clerics and social media influencers have increasingly spoken in favour of child marriages, defending them as part of the culture, ‘divinely mandated’, while speaking against them was dismissed as ‘western propaganda’.<sup>906</sup> In *mut’ah* (‘pleasure’) marriages, sanctioned by some Shia clerics but rejected by Sunni Islam, a contract is established between a man and a woman for a fixed period and a specified amount of money. Girls as young as nine years old were reportedly married in these unions. Obligations of husbands cannot be enforced in courts and girls face stigma and risk of honour-based violence if they want to leave.<sup>907</sup> According to UNICEF, 22 % of unregistered marriages involved girls under 14 years old.<sup>908</sup> See [section on Forced and unregistered marriage](#). In 2022, 28 % of girls were married before they turned 18 and 7 % before they turned 15.<sup>909</sup> Concerning the regional prevalence, the highest was found in southern governorates with Shia majorities, reaching around 40 % of marriages in Missan, Najaf, and Karbala.<sup>910</sup> In the KRI, prevalence of forced marriages reached 20 %, with higher prevalence in rural areas.<sup>911</sup>

### 2.7.6. Children in street situations

Even though illegal in Iraq,<sup>912</sup> cases of abandonment of children were reported as ‘alarmingly high’<sup>913</sup> and increasing.<sup>914</sup> Abandoned children are particularly exposed to the risk of abuse and exploitation, including for prostitution networks.<sup>915</sup> There were an estimated five million<sup>916</sup>

<sup>903</sup> Girls Not Brides, Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>904</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 - Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#); New Lines Institute, How Temporary Marriages Can Exploit Vulnerable Women in Iraq, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>905</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>906</sup> New Lines Magazine, The Child Brides of Iraq, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>907</sup> New Lines Institute, How Temporary Marriages Can Exploit Vulnerable Women in Iraq, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>908</sup> New Lines Magazine, The Child Brides of Iraq, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>909</sup> Equality Now, Legal Amendments In Iraq Threaten The Rights Of Women And Girls, 11 February 2025, [url](#); New Lines Magazine, The Child Brides of Iraq, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>910</sup> Equality Now, Legal Amendments In Iraq Threaten The Rights Of Women And Girls, 11 February 2025, [url](#); New Lines Magazine, The Child Brides of Iraq, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>911</sup> Hussain, S. F., Violence Against Women: Towards a Policy Understanding of the Patriarchy, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>912</sup> Rudaw, Kirkuk hospital cares for 2 abandoned children, 27 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>913</sup> iNOV8, Forgotten Lives: Addressing Orphanhood in Iraq, 20 November 2024, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>914</sup> Shafaq News, Years of care, then goodbye: abandoned Iraqi sisters find new home, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>915</sup> Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights, Maat for Peace’ report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the Republic of Iraq, April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>916</sup> iNOV8, Forgotten Lives: Addressing Orphanhood in Iraq, 20 November 2024, [url](#), p. 2; Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights, Maat for Peace’ report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the Republic of Iraq, April 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Seed Foundation, et al., Children’s right to identity in Iraq, 99th pre-session (September 2024), Combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Report, September 2024, [url](#), p. 1



orphans in Iraq (or less than one million, according to the Iraqi authorities<sup>917</sup>), many of them without any civil documentation.<sup>918</sup> Availability of shelters remained limited.<sup>919</sup>

Media sources reported on an increase in child begging in early 2025.<sup>920</sup> In a June 2025 report, OHCHR expressed concerns regarding ‘the large number of children in street situation’ in Iraq.<sup>921</sup> In July 2024, the governor’s office in Erbil, within the KRI, announced the launch of a campaign aimed at removing children from the streets. According to Save the Children, 1 247 children were working in the streets across the KRI as of June 2024.<sup>922</sup> Children who were forced to beg in the streets faced abuse by either organised criminal gangs or their family members and were exposed to the risk of being abducted and trafficked. In the period of 2023-2024, 160 children were documented as victims of trafficking in human beings (THB).<sup>923</sup> Authorities have reportedly targeted suspected leaders of begging rings for arrests.<sup>924</sup> Exploitation of children in Iraq includes begging alongside forced labour.<sup>925</sup>

### 2.7.7. Access to education

Although access to education is free<sup>926</sup> and compulsory for six years of primary schooling, usually until the age of 12 (and for nine years, usually until the age of 15, in the KRI),<sup>927</sup> an estimated two million children were out of school in 2024.<sup>928</sup> Extreme levels of poverty have forced many families to send their children to work instead of going to school.<sup>929</sup> UNICEF identified more than 200 000 out-of-school children in Iraq in 2024. Girls were more affected. Closure of IDP camps during the year affected school attendance of children enrolled in schools within the camps.<sup>930</sup> (See also [section 3.3 on Situation of the IDPs.](#)) Out-of-school children are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, including to child labour.<sup>931</sup>

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<sup>917</sup> Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights, Maat for Peace’ report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the Republic of Iraq, April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>918</sup> iNNOV8, Forgotten Lives: Addressing Orphanhood in Iraq, 20 November 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>919</sup> iNNOV8, Forgotten Lives: Addressing Orphanhood in Iraq, 20 November 2024, [url](#), p. 2; UNICEF, Identifying Opportunities for Coordination Between Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women Efforts in Iraq, December 2024, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>920</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq’s Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraq’s children face alarming crisis: rising labor, violence, and legal gaps, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>921</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>922</sup> Rudaw, Erbil police to remove beggars, children from streets, 17 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>923</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq’s children face alarming crisis: rising labor, violence, and legal gaps, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>924</sup> +964, Baghdad: Rusafa police arrest man for ‘overseeing begging ring’, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>925</sup> Seed Foundation, et al., Children’s right to identity in Iraq, 99th pre-session (September 2024), Combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Report, September 2024, [url](#), p. 3; Shafaq News, Iraq’s children face alarming crisis: rising labor, violence, and legal gaps, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>926</sup> Education International, The Education Crisis in Iraq: A Call for Urgent Reforms, 25 March 2024, [url](#); NRC, Legal Guide to Children’s Rights in Iraq, [November 2024], [url](#), p. 31

<sup>927</sup> Shafaq News, Behind the Bazaar: the hidden world of Erbil’s child laborers, 12 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>928</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq’s children face alarming crisis: rising labor, violence, and legal gaps, 24 November 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, Revitalizing Iraq’s education system: a path to stability and prosperity, 13 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>929</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq’s Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Behind the Bazaar: the hidden world of Erbil’s child laborers, 12 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>930</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Country Report 2024, February 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>931</sup> Borgen Project (The), Little-Known Facts About Child Poverty In Iraq, 21 April 2025, [url](#)



Rules on whether schools allowed education to undocumented children varied.<sup>932</sup> In 2024, Iraqi authorities announced a policy to enrol children without documentation in schools<sup>933</sup> and, the same year, UNICEF reported that over 130 000 children were re-enrolled due to the ‘back-to-learning campaign’.<sup>934</sup> In total, some 290 000 children returned to some form of educational program in 2024.<sup>935</sup> In April 2025, Kurdistan24 reported that a government-led school grant program provided monthly stipends to families enrolled in the social protection network, helping children to return to school.<sup>936</sup> The authorities prioritised re-enrolment of girls, including those who have left because of early marriages.<sup>937</sup>

The educational system suffers from poor infrastructure,<sup>938</sup> overcrowded classrooms,<sup>939</sup> and shortage of qualified teachers.<sup>940</sup> Schools are forced to operate in shifts, thus reducing the time of learning for each child.<sup>941</sup> School infrastructure has been damaged over the years of conflict<sup>942</sup> and 10 000 new schools need to be built to address the infrastructure gap.<sup>943</sup> Approximately half of the existing schools do not have basic services such as water and sanitation.<sup>944</sup> The CRC found that the continued use of schools for military use remains a matter of concern.<sup>945</sup>

## 2.8 LGBTIQ

In April 2024, an amendment to the 1988 anti-prostitution law was adopted, imposing prison sentences for same-sex relations.<sup>946</sup> In addition, the anti-LGBTIQ law explicitly targets transgender women with penalties for ‘imitating women’. The law also outlaws undergoing or performing gender-affirming procedures, except for individuals born with intersex characteristics.<sup>947</sup> While Iraq did not have an explicit anti-LGBTIQ legislation before this

<sup>932</sup> NRC, Legal Guide to Children’s Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>933</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Country Report 2024, February 2025, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>934</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Country Report 2024, February 2025, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>935</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Country Report 2024, February 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>936</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq’s Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>937</sup> UNICEF Iraq, Country Report 2024, February 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>938</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq’s Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#); World Bank (The), Iraq: Improving Quality of Education and Access to Enable All Students to Learn, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>939</sup> Jummar Media, The displacement of schools: Why double shifts and overcrowding in schools won’t end in Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Kurdistan24, Iraq’s Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>940</sup> One Young World, No safe space-what is the impact of conflict on education, [url](#)

<sup>941</sup> World Bank (The), Iraq: Improving Quality of Education and Access to Enable All Students to Learn, 29 October 2024, [url](#); Jummar Media, The displacement of schools: Why double shifts and overcrowding in schools won’t end in Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>942</sup> Borgen Project (The), Little-Known Facts About Child Poverty In Iraq, 21 April 2025, [url](#); World Bank (The), Iraq: Improving Quality of Education and Access to Enable All Students to Learn, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>943</sup> Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights, Maat for Peace’ report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the Republic of Iraq, April 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-11

<sup>944</sup> Jummar Media, The displacement of schools: Why double shifts and overcrowding in schools won’t end in Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights, Maat for Peace’ report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the Republic of Iraq, April 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-11

<sup>945</sup> CRC, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq, 18 July 2025, [url](#), para. 51

<sup>946</sup> AP, Passage of harsh anti-LGBTQ+ law in Iraq draws diplomatic backlash, 28 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>947</sup> IraQueer, Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Iraq, July 2024, [url](#), p. 7



amendment,<sup>948</sup> LGBTIQ individuals faced prosecutions under vague laws,<sup>949</sup> such as those criminalising ‘immodest acts’ and ‘prostitution’, as well as Sharia law.<sup>950</sup> LGBTIQ individuals were reported as living in fear already before the April 2024 legislation.<sup>951</sup> There is no legal protection against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity in Iraq.<sup>952</sup> The situation of LGBTIQ individuals is therefore reported as ‘extremely unsafe’.<sup>953</sup> Individuals face threats to their physical safety, including harassment, assault, arbitrary detention, killings,<sup>954</sup> kidnappings,<sup>955</sup> torture, sexual violence,<sup>956</sup> as well as online targeting.<sup>957</sup> Risks were reported to emanate from armed groups,<sup>958</sup> society at large,<sup>959</sup> family,<sup>960</sup> and state agents.<sup>961</sup> The lack of accountability for abuses, combined with the prevailing patriarchal social norms, exacerbate the situation. LGBTIQ individuals are compelled to keep their identity secret to avoid abuses.<sup>962</sup> Authorities use vague penal code provisions to prosecute LGBTIQ individuals.<sup>963</sup> According to IraQueer, an Iraqi NGO supporting LGBTIQ rights based in Sweden, it is ‘nearly impossible’ to live openly as a LGBTIQ individual in Iraq, which the same source describes as ‘extremely dangerous’.<sup>964</sup> NGOs openly supporting LGBTIQ rights cannot operate in Iraq without risking closure or prosecution.<sup>965</sup>

Since the 2019 Tishreen (October) protests, sociopolitical discourse focused on criticising gender and homosexuality, portraying them as a ‘western plot aimed at undermining Islamic

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<sup>948</sup> Human Dignity Trust, Iraq, last updated 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>949</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes, Global update: The struggle for LGBTQ rights continues in Asia, 1 January 2025, [url](#); The New Arab, Iraq bans media from using term ‘homosexuality’, says must use ‘sexual deviance’, 9 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>950</sup> Human Dignity Trust, Iraq, last updated 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>951</sup> MEE, Gay and trans Iraqis plagued by threats, violence - and now the law, 11 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>952</sup> IraQueer, Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Iraq, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>953</sup> IPS, IRAQ: ‘Tolerance for Abuses Against LGBTQI+ People Has Now Been Made Explicit Through Legislation’, 1 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>954</sup> IPS, IRAQ: ‘Tolerance for Abuses Against LGBTQI+ People Has Now Been Made Explicit Through Legislation’, 1 July 2024, [url](#); Rudaw, Iraqi president ratifies controversial anti-LGBTQ+ law, 27 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>955</sup> Boutier, I., Iraq’s New Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation: A Regressive Step in Upholding Human Rights and Dignity, 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>956</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 - Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>957</sup> Boutier, I., Iraq’s New Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation: A Regressive Step in Upholding Human Rights and Dignity, 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>958</sup> IPS, IRAQ: ‘Tolerance for Abuses Against LGBTQI+ People Has Now Been Made Explicit Through Legislation’, 1 July 2024, [url](#); IraQueer, Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Iraq, July 2024, [url](#), p. 4; Boutier, I., Iraq’s New Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation: A Regressive Step in Upholding Human Rights and Dignity, 2024, [url](#), p. 5; HRW, World Report 2025 - Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>959</sup> IraQueer, Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Iraq, July 2024, [url](#), p. 3; IPS, IRAQ: ‘Tolerance for Abuses Against LGBTQI+ People Has Now Been Made Explicit Through Legislation’, 1 July 2024, [url](#); Rudaw, Iraqi president ratifies controversial anti-LGBTQ+ law, 27 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>960</sup> IPS IRAQ: ‘Tolerance for Abuses Against LGBTQI+ People Has Now Been Made Explicit Through Legislation’, 1 July 2024, [url](#); Outright International, Country overview: Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>961</sup> IraQueer, Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Iraq, July 2024, [url](#), p. 3; IPS, IRAQ: ‘Tolerance for Abuses Against LGBTQI+ People Has Now Been Made Explicit Through Legislation’, 1 July 2024, [url](#); Rudaw, Iraqi president ratifies controversial anti-LGBTQ+ law, 27 June 2024, [url](#); Boutier, I., Iraq’s New Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation: A Regressive Step in Upholding Human Rights and Dignity, 2024, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>962</sup> Boutier, I., Iraq’s New Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation: A Regressive Step in Upholding Human Rights and Dignity, 2024, [url](#), p. 4, 5

<sup>963</sup> HRW World Report 2025 - Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>964</sup> IraQueer, Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Iraq, July 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>965</sup> IPS, IRAQ: ‘Tolerance for Abuses Against LGBTQI+ People Has Now Been Made Explicit Through Legislation’, 1 July 2024, [url](#)



values and societal norms', according to scholar Balsam Mustafa.<sup>966</sup> This trend has had a negative repercussion particularly on female activists, feminists, and LGBTIQ individuals.<sup>967</sup> Starting in 2023, the Iraqi government has forbidden media companies to use the words 'homosexuality' and 'gender' and instructed them to use the word 'sexual deviance' when referring to homosexuality.<sup>968</sup> Public discourse online was reportedly distorted by wrong translations of 'gender' into Arabic and equating the term with homosexuality.<sup>969</sup> NGO and media sources indicated that online space has become increasingly dangerous for LGBTIQ individuals in 2024,<sup>970</sup> LGBTIQ people were also targeted online<sup>971</sup> and people who have expressed their LGBTIQ identity online faced harassment and death threats.<sup>972</sup> In 2024, authorities pressured social media companies to remove LGBTIQ content.<sup>973</sup> Media companies were also reported to contribute to homophobia by referring to LGBTIQ individuals using derogatory language and slurs.<sup>974</sup> Anti-LGBTIQ sentiment has been fuelled in the recent years by politicians, media personalities<sup>975</sup> and religious leaders, describing homosexuality as 'immoral'.<sup>976</sup> Conservative actors have framed homosexuality as an 'western import' that is not in line with Iraqi traditional values<sup>977</sup> (See also [2.6. Women and girls](#)).

Iraqi authorities accentuated their repression of LGBTIQ people in 2024.<sup>978</sup> Since the passing of the April 2024 amendment to the anti-prostitution law, hate crimes against the LGBTIQ people have increased.<sup>979</sup> People wishing to undergo gender-affirming healthcare reportedly do it on their own at home or move abroad for surgeries.<sup>980</sup> Transgender individuals face difficulties when obtaining legal recognition from the authorities,<sup>981</sup> which hinders their access

<sup>966</sup> Mustafa, B., Gender found Guilty: Anti-Gender Backlash and (Dis)Translation Politics in Iraq, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>967</sup> Mustafa, B., Gender found Guilty: Anti-Gender Backlash and (Dis)Translation Politics in Iraq, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>968</sup> Al, Iraq: Authorities must immediately reverse media ban on the terms "homosexuality" and "gender", 9 August 2023, [url](#); The New Arab, Iraq bans media from using term 'homosexuality', says must use 'sexual deviance', 9 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>969</sup> Mustafa, B., Gender found Guilty: Anti-Gender Backlash and (Dis)Translation Politics in Iraq, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>970</sup> DW, Iraqi LGBTQ+ community loses social media safe space, 5 April 2024, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 - Iraq, 16 October 2024, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 - Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#); IraQueer, Safety and Security Guidelines for LGBT+ in Iraq and Kurdistan, [2025] [url](#), pp. 1, 11- 12

<sup>971</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 - Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>972</sup> Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 - Iraq, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>973</sup> Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 - Iraq, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>974</sup> IraQueer, Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Iraq, July 2024, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>975</sup> IPS, IRAQ: 'Tolerance for Abuses Against LGBTQI+ People Has Now Been Made Explicit Through Legislation', 1 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>976</sup> Outright International, Country overview: Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>977</sup> IPS, IRAQ: 'Tolerance for Abuses Against LGBTQI+ People Has Now Been Made Explicit Through Legislation', 1 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>978</sup> Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 - Iraq, 16 October 2024, [url](#); TIMEP, Being Queer in the MENA Region: Guilty Until Proven Innocent, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>979</sup> IraQueer, Safety and Security Guidelines for LGBT+ in Iraq and Kurdistan, 2025 [url](#), pp. 1, 12

<sup>980</sup> Ireland, RDC, COI Query Response - Iraq – Information on access to healthcare, 27 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>981</sup> Ireland, RDC, COI Query Response - Iraq – Information on access to healthcare, 27 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 2-3; Boutier, I., Iraq's New Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation: A Regressive Step in Upholding Human Rights and Dignity, 2024, [url](#), p. 8

to services.<sup>982</sup> According to Haley Bobseine, same-sex relations and perceived violations of gender and sexual norms can also lead to honour killings.<sup>983</sup>

## 2.9 Individuals perceived as transgressing moral and Islamic norms

For more information on individuals perceived as transgressing moral and Islamic norms, see the [EUAA Country Focus, May 2024](#), section 1.6.

### 2.9.1. Honour crimes and behaviours/acts perceived as contravening sexuality and gender norms

In Iraq, traditional patriarchal norms define what is considered as acceptable behaviour.<sup>984</sup> In Iraq, women not following rules of what is considered as an acceptable behaviour risk being excluded from society and losing family support.<sup>985</sup> Honour crimes can include physical abuse, confinement, control of movement, deprivation of education, forced marriage, forced suicide, and public dishonouring.<sup>986</sup> Honour killings target individuals, mostly women, believed to have brought shame or dishonour on their families.<sup>987</sup> Violations of honour encompass acts perceived as contravening sexuality and gender norms. Understanding of honour is deeply influenced by tribal customs, which play a big role in Iraqi society. Most victims are women and girls, and to a smaller extent men. Some behaviours can trigger honour-based killing including: friendships or any correspondence between a woman and a man she is not married to, pre-marital relationships with a member of the opposite sex; ‘disobedient’ behaviour to male relatives; refusal of an arranged marriage; same-sex relationships; marriage against the family’s wishes; seeking a divorce against their family or tribes’ wishes; adultery; being a victim of rape, sexual assault or kidnapping; and ‘shameful’ dress or behaviour, including on social media. In case of a perceived transgression, males relatives such as the brother, father or husband are expected to ‘wash away the dishonour’ of the female relative, or to restore honour to the family and tribe’s reputation, by killing the said relative.<sup>988</sup> See also [section 2.6 Women and girls](#). Legal framework of federal Iraq allows for reduced sentences in cases of honour killings, perpetuating the idea that these are “natural” reactions to perceived family

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<sup>982</sup> Boutier, I., Iraq's New Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation: A Regressive Step in Upholding Human Rights and Dignity, 2024, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>983</sup> Bobseine, H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024, and email communication, 13 July 2025; Salih, H. M., Honor Killing in Erbil City; Social Factors A Field Study, 5 May 2025, [url](#), p. 256

<sup>984</sup> Gadd, K., Ubeis, F., “I must care about the reputation of my family. This is very important to me”: an exploration of factors affecting Iraqi women’s access to justice, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>985</sup> Gadd, K., Ubeis, F., “I must care about the reputation of my family. This is very important to me”: an exploration of factors affecting Iraqi women’s access to justice, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>986</sup> Salih, H. M., Honor Killing in Erbil City; Social Factors A Field Study, 5 May 2025, [url](#), p. 257

<sup>987</sup> Salih, H. M., Honor Killing in Erbil City; Social Factors A Field Study, 5 May 2025, [url](#), p. 252

<sup>988</sup> Bobseine, H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024, and email communication, 13 July 2025

shame'.<sup>989</sup> Haley Bobseine noted that some reports show that honour killings do not affect only Muslim and Arab communities but also Yazidis, Turkmen, and others.<sup>990</sup>

## 2.9.2. Online expression

Iraqi authorities reportedly conduct 'mass surveillance' of the online content.<sup>991</sup> Persons accused of sharing inappropriate content were arrested under the article 403 of the Penal Code<sup>992</sup> which bans any material that 'violates public integrity or decency'<sup>993</sup> and imposes fines and prison sentences of up to two years.<sup>994</sup> 2024 saw an increase in prosecutions of creators for 'inappropriate content' online<sup>995</sup> under the said article.<sup>996</sup> Online harassment campaigns have targeted women and LGBTIQ individuals,<sup>997</sup> including in the form of extortion. In this case, men threaten to publish an incriminating photo of a woman unless they do what they want;<sup>998</sup> these photos can also be AI-manipulated.<sup>999</sup> This is often seen not just as a violation against the individual, but rather as an attack on the family honour.<sup>1000</sup> In August 2024, Iraqi authorities arrested TikTok personality Raghad Muhammad Ghali Jabr Al-Janabi, known online as Natalie, for 'promoting indecent content'.<sup>1001</sup> Another two social media influencers were arrested on the same charges in the same month.<sup>1002</sup> Between February and August 2024, some 152 000 complaints were registered on the Ballegh platform.<sup>1003</sup> According to the NGO Freedom House, those accused did not get due process and faced arbitrary penalties.<sup>1004</sup> In March 2025, the government issued regulations for content creators requiring their registration and to pay fees, in a move that has been seen as a continuation of the crackdown on 'indecent content'.<sup>1005</sup> The use of the Ballegh platform reportedly continued

<sup>989</sup> Hussain, S. F., Violence Against Women: Towards a Policy Understanding of the Patriarchy, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>990</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>991</sup> ODHE, Mass Surveillance In The Maghreb And Mashreq, A critical analysis to protect civil society, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 90-91

<sup>992</sup> Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 - Iraq, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>993</sup> Mena Rights Group, Iraq: the escalating crackdown on civic space, 2 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>994</sup> +964, 'Public decency', Iraqi TikToker arrested for 'indecent content' amid social media crackdown, 22 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>995</sup> +964, 'Public decency', Iraqi TikToker arrested for 'indecent content' amid social media crackdown, 22 August 2024, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 - Iraq, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>996</sup> Article19, Iraq : Balgh platform marks two years as a tool of repression, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Mena Rights Group, Iraq: the escalating crackdown on civic space, 2 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>997</sup> ODHE , Mass Surveillance In The Maghreb And Mashreq, A critical analysis to protect civil society, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 92-93

<sup>998</sup> Bobseine, H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 13 July 2025; Nonviolent Peaceforce International, Protecting Against Gender-Based Cyber Violence in Iraq, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>999</sup> Bobseine, H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 13 July 2025

<sup>1000</sup> Nonviolent Peaceforce International, Protecting Against Gender-Based Cyber Violence in Iraq, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1001</sup> +964, 'Public decency', Iraqi TikToker arrested for 'indecent content' amid social media crackdown, 22 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1002</sup> Arab News, Iraq imposes new fees on social media influencers in latest crackdown on digital content, 27 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1003</sup> SMEX, Google's DNS Ban in Iraq Restricts Internet Freedom, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1004</sup> Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 - Iraq, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1005</sup> Arab News, Iraq imposes new fees on social media influencers in latest crackdown on digital content, 27 March 2025, [url](#)

into 2025, marking two years of operation.<sup>1006</sup> The existence of the platform has reportedly led to a climate of self-censorship.<sup>1007</sup> In October 2024, a female social media activist, Shayan Ali, died in unknown circumstances in a Baghdad prison after being sentenced to two years in prison by a Kirkuk court.<sup>1008</sup> Ali was known for social media videos where she was criticising gender discrimination and argued with police officers. As of June 2025, Iraqi authorities refused to disclose the cause of her death.<sup>1009</sup> Social media users may also be arrested for religious or atheist speech.<sup>1010</sup> In August 2024, a Yazidi Peshmerga commander from Sinjar was charged with blasphemy and arrested by a court in Ninewa for ‘insulting Muhammad (PBUH), the Prophet of Islam, and inciting religious conflict’ in a video posted online.<sup>1011</sup>

### 2.9.3. Individuals selling/consuming alcohol

In November 2024, the Iraqi authorities banned the sale of alcohol in hotels and so-called social clubs, among the few remaining venues serving alcohol, sending letters to businesses in Baghdad and threatening them with ‘legal action’. Fines up to 10-25 million Iraqi dinars (approximately 7 600 to 19 000 USD) are also applicable.<sup>1012</sup> Although the sale of alcohol was already banned since 2016, it continued to be available and was in many cases sold in liquor stores by licensed non-Muslims, including Christian and Yazidi businesses.<sup>1013</sup> Following the ban, alcohol reportedly remained available at the Baghdad International Airport and in the KRI. The announcement led to ‘dozens of establishments’ being closed, leading their Yazidi owners to organise protests in Baghdad. Even though Muslims are also reported as customers and alcohol consumers, the policy has disproportionately affected religious minorities who tend to be the owners of alcohol businesses, mainly Yazidis and Christians.<sup>1014</sup> An Iraqi Christian group described the ban as a ‘commercial matter under a religious disguise’ and warned of spread of drug markets controlled by armed groups.<sup>1015</sup> The ban has also been described as unlawful and unfair towards the religious minorities.<sup>1016</sup> An academic study published in February 2025 has found that the consumption of alcohol in Iraq is more stigmatised than the consumption of other drugs.<sup>1017</sup> In March 2025, while banning public

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<sup>1006</sup> Article19, Iraq : Balgh platform marks two years as a tool of repression, 16 January 2025, [url](#); SMEX, Google’s DNS Ban in Iraq Restricts Internet Freedom, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1007</sup> Article19, Iraq : Balgh platform marks two years as a tool of repression, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1008</sup> Kirkuk Now, Kirkuki Social Media Figure Died in a Baghdad Prison, 31 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1009</sup> Kirkuk Now, All Remained Silent in Case of Shayan’s “Suspicious” Death, 9 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1010</sup> Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 - Iraq, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1011</sup> Rudaw, Iraqi court orders arrest of Yazidi Peshmerga commander, 8 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1012</sup> Washington Post (The), Iraq bans alcohol in hotels and clubs, bringing country close to near-total ban, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1013</sup> Washington Post (The), Iraq bans alcohol in hotels and clubs, bringing country close to near-total ban, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1014</sup> Al Monitor, Iraq’s prohibition zeal threatens Baghdad’s boozy subculture, 21 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1015</sup> Shafaq News, Iraqi Christian bloc condemns alcohol ban, warns of drug proliferation, 18 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1016</sup> Iraqi News, Iraq prohibits alcohol in hotels, social clubs, 20 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1017</sup> Al Ansari, M. et al., Alcohol use in Iraq: Perceptions of interviewed students at three Iraqi universities, 23 February 2025, [url](#)

Iftar<sup>1018</sup> gathering during Ramadan, the government ordered closure of liquor stores and sale of alcohol during the month.<sup>1019</sup> See also [2.3 Ethnic and religious minorities](#).

## 2.10 Persons involved in and affected by blood/land feuds in the context of tribal conflict

For more information on Blood feuds (thar), see the EUAA COI report [Iraq: Arab tribes and customary law Report, April 2023](#).

Since 2003, the weakening of the state authority has led to a resurgence of tribal influence in law enforcement<sup>1020</sup> and state judiciary.<sup>1021</sup> Tribalism remained deeply rooted in Iraq,<sup>1022</sup> including in the KRI, where tribal structures often fill gaps left by the formal judicial system.<sup>1023</sup> Haley Bobseine described customary tribal law as ‘a defining characteristic of modern Iraqi society’, operating in parallel with state law due to a considerable overlap between state and tribal systems.<sup>1024</sup>

Tribal customs and laws may vary across the tribes, as each has its own internal rules. However, broad similarities can be found in their foundational principles.<sup>1025</sup> A defining element of the tribal system is the strong sense of group identity, which often subordinates individual interests. Individuals are expected to conform for group survival, but also for their own protection, which is granted in return for their loyalty.<sup>1026</sup> As historian Mélisande Genat notes in her thesis, criminal liability in sharia is individual, while in tribal custom it is shared.<sup>1027</sup>

Under tribal custom, male members of the extended family (*khamsa*) are duty-bound to avenge the harm or death of one of their own, either by retaliating against a member of the perpetrator’s *khamsa* or, more commonly, by agreeing to financial compensation (*fasl* or *diya*) paid to the victim’s family.<sup>1028</sup> Tribal justice mechanisms, such as *solh al-ashai’iri* (‘tribal

<sup>1018</sup> Iftar is the evening meal eaten by Muslims after the sun has gone down during Ramadan, Cambridge Dictionary, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1019</sup> Syriac Press, Iraq bans public Iftar, alcohol sales, and forces restaurants and cafes to close during Ramadan in controversial move, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1020</sup> Arif, R. Z., Tribes and Democracy in Iraq—Are Iraqi Tribes a Steppingstone on the Path to Democracy?, Open Journal of Political Science, 16 January 2025, [url](#), p. 256

<sup>1021</sup> Kurdistan24, Tribal Justice and State Fragility: The Enduring Influence of Clans in Southern Iraq, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1022</sup> Shafaq News, Al-Sudani urges Iraqi tribes to end disputes, Support business stability, 10 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1023</sup> Nishtiman O. M., Adnan A. F., The Impact of Tribal Mediation on The Judicial System, Specifically in the Context of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Jul-Dec 2024, [url](#), p. 16979

<sup>1024</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>1025</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>1026</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>1027</sup> Genat M., State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), p. 161

<sup>1028</sup> UNHCR, Tribal Conflict Resolution in Iraq, 15 January 2018, [url](#), p. 3; Arif, R. Z., Tribes and Democracy in Iraq—Are Iraqi Tribes a Steppingstone on the Path to Democracy?, Open Journal of Political Science, 16 January 2025, 15(1), [url](#), p. 256

settlements’) held in *diwan al-Arab* (‘guesthouses’), are widely used particularly in central and southern governorates, where formal courts are seen as slow, corrupt, or inaccessible.<sup>1029</sup> Such mechanisms are generally used for property, accidents, and homicides disputes.<sup>1030</sup> Corruption in the police is also a factor pushing citizens to resolve grievances through tribal channels.<sup>1031</sup>

*Fasl* is a tribal custom that includes negotiations to settle a dispute,<sup>1032</sup> involving financial or moral compensation (*diyya*).<sup>1033</sup> It is especially relied upon in cases where the state is absent or ineffective,<sup>1034</sup> including honour killings.<sup>1035</sup> In a 2025 academic study, Reem Zeyad Arif examined the role of Iraqi tribes in the country. The research was based on interviews with 30 participants, including tribal leaders, affiliated members, and subject-matter experts.<sup>1036</sup> Some interviewees expressed concerns that *fasl*, particularly in domestic violence cases, may allow perpetrators to evade accountability and contribute to rising rates of domestic crime<sup>1037</sup> (See [section 2.6 on Women and girls](#)). Tribal conflicts may also be resolved through *fasliyah* – the practice of exchanging or trading women as compensation and as part of settlement of a dispute among tribes<sup>1038</sup> – despite its prohibition under State law.<sup>1039</sup> *Fasliyah* places women and girls at heightened risk of trafficking within the country.<sup>1040</sup>

Blood feuds (*thar*) occur when disputes between tribes remain unresolved.<sup>1041</sup> Although *thar* is a tribal practice, is not considered as part of ‘tribal codes’ nor a tribal conflict resolution mechanism. As Mélisande Genat<sup>1042</sup> observed, ‘vendetta cycles happen precisely because no agreement could be found’.<sup>1043</sup> Acts of revenge are only permitted under specific conditions and must follow several prescribed steps, including repeated efforts to reach a settlement (*fasl*) before blood is shed.<sup>1044</sup>

<sup>1029</sup> Arif, R. Z., Tribes and Democracy in Iraq—Are Iraqi Tribes a Steppingstone on the Path to Democracy?, 16 January 2025, [url](#), p. 256

<sup>1030</sup> Amwaj, ‘Facebook sheikhs’ in focus as Iraqi lawmakers probe ‘blood money’, 29 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1031</sup> Waradana, Iraq: Police Corruption Fuels Tribal Conflicts, 10 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1032</sup> Salah Dagher Al-Okabi, *العشائري الفصل معنى* [the meaning of tribal fasl] [Online video], 5 May 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1033</sup> Arif, R. Z., Tribes and Democracy in Iraq—Are Iraqi Tribes a Steppingstone on the Path to Democracy?, 16 January 2025, [url](#), p. 254

<sup>1034</sup> Arif, R. Z., Tribes and Democracy in Iraq—Are Iraqi Tribes a Steppingstone on the Path to Democracy?, 16 January 2025, [url](#), p. 256

<sup>1035</sup> Bobseine H., Senior Iraq researcher and analyst specializing on tribal affairs, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email communication to EUAA, 13 July 2025

<sup>1036</sup> Arif, R. Z., Tribes and Democracy in Iraq—Are Iraqi Tribes a Steppingstone on the Path to Democracy?, 16 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 249-253

<sup>1037</sup> Arif, R., Tribes and Democracy in Iraq—Are Iraqi Tribes a Steppingstone on the Path to Democracy?, January 2025, [url](#), p. 254

<sup>1038</sup> UNHCR, Tribal Conflict Resolution in Iraq, January 15, 2018, [url](#), p. 2; HRW, Interview with EUAA, 13 March 2023; OWFI, Interview with EUAA, 16 March 2023; Ceasefire for Civilian Rights, Correspondence with EUAA, 16 March 2023, originally cited in EUAA, COI Report, Iraq: Arab tribes and customary law, April 2023, [url](#); Tawfiq Marwan, M., Forced Marriages In Tribal Iraq: A Case Study From Kirkuk, May 2019, [url](#), p. 6-7, 18-19

<sup>1039</sup> UNHCR, Tribal Conflict Resolution in Iraq, January 15, 2018, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1040</sup> USDOS, Annual report on trafficking in persons (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1041</sup> UNHCR, Tribal Conflict Resolution in Iraq, 15 January 2018, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1042</sup> Melisande Genat holds a PHD in History at Stanford University with extensive experience researching tribal justice and conflict resolution mechanisms in Iraq.

<sup>1043</sup> Genat, M., video interview with EUAA, 4 October 2022, originally cited in EUAA, COI Report, Iraq: Arab tribes and customary law, April 2023, [url](#); Genat, M., State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), p. 372

<sup>1044</sup> Genat M., State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), p. 372





Such feuds are not an isolated phenomenon in Iraq.<sup>1045</sup> Tribal violence is often rooted in honour-based grievances<sup>1046</sup> and retaliation.<sup>1047</sup> Other triggering factors include longstanding land disputes,<sup>1048</sup> border crossings control,<sup>1049</sup> theft,<sup>1050</sup> unemployment, poverty and drug use.<sup>1051</sup> Competition over access to water resources have exacerbated tensions<sup>1052</sup> – especially in southern Iraq, where climate-related issues have been at the front line of the tribal conflict in the area, particularly during years of drought.<sup>1053</sup> Disputes may take months or years to resolve and often require significant intervention from local authorities to restore order.<sup>1054</sup>

The militarisation of tribal groups has further challenged state authority.<sup>1055</sup> Many tribes have access to a large arsenal,<sup>1056</sup> including weapons left over from Saddam Hussein regime and from paramilitary groups.<sup>1057</sup> Tribal weaponry is not limited to light firearms, but includes rockets, machine guns, armoured vehicles and other heavy weapons.<sup>1058</sup> Despite state efforts to control arms through disarmament programmes,<sup>1059</sup> enforcement has been hindered by collusion between security forces and tribal or political actors.<sup>1060</sup> In a May 2025 interview with The New Region, a news outlet covering Iraq and the Middle East, the Sheikh Nafi' al-Shami of the al-Bu Shama tribe stated that weapons are part of tribal identity and cannot be fully confiscated, noting that while the law allows only one licensed weapon per citizen, in reality tribes hold 'unlimited arsenals'.<sup>1061</sup>

An Iraqi parliamentary committee has been reviewing legislation aimed at regulating the practice of blood money (compensation via tribal mediation). Concerns include excessive compensation demands, reportedly up to 1 billion IQD [approximately EUR 656 000], and the involvement of self-proclaimed 'Facebook sheikhs' who reportedly exploit the system for profit. Some settlements have reportedly involved coercive practices such as forced marriage or deterring medical assistance for fear of retaliation. Reform efforts have faced resistance and legal changes are constrained by Article 45 of the Iraqi Constitution, which protects tribal customs unless they conflict with human rights.<sup>1062</sup> Based on the opinion of most Iraqi

<sup>1045</sup> Genat M., State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), p. 377

<sup>1046</sup> Genat M., State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), p. 388; +964, Clashes erupt between tribes in Wasit, security forces arrest several in Sheikh Saad, 7 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1047</sup> +964, Clashes erupt between tribes in Wasit, security forces arrest several in Sheikh Saad, 7 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1048</sup> +964, Clashes erupt between tribes in Wasit, security forces arrest several in Sheikh Saad, 7 October 2024, [url](#); New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1049</sup> Rudaw, Five killed in Diwaniyah tribal dispute clash a day after a similar conflict in Basra, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1050</sup> Genat M., State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), p. 388

<sup>1051</sup> New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1052</sup> Rudaw, Five killed in Diwaniyah tribal dispute clash a day after a similar conflict in Basra, 2 April 2025, [url](#); New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1053</sup> Community Change, Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier: Security and Communal Implications for Iraq, 9 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1054</sup> +964, Clashes erupt between tribes in Wasit, security forces arrest several in Sheikh Saad, 7 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1055</sup> Kurdistan24, Tribal Justice and State Fragility: The Enduring Influence of Clans in Southern Iraq, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1056</sup> New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1057</sup> Rudaw, Five killed in Diwaniyah tribal dispute clash a day after a similar conflict in Basra, 2 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, How does political conflict fuel tribal disputes in Iraq?, 25 April 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1058</sup> Waradana, Iraq: Police Corruption Fuels Tribal Conflicts, 10 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1059</sup> New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1060</sup> Genat M., State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), p. 380

<sup>1061</sup> New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1062</sup> Amwaj, 'Facebook sheikhs' in focus as Iraqi lawmakers probe 'blood money', 29 August 2024, [url](#)



tribesmen interviewed by Mélisande Genat, distortion of tribal justice is the so-called 'fas/ inflation', particularly in southern Iraq where, *diyas* for homicides and injuries are viewed as 'wildly unreasonably'.<sup>1063</sup>

During the reference period, a 'rising tide of tribal violence' was reported, especially in southern governorates,<sup>1064</sup> including Baghdad,<sup>1065</sup> posing a security concern for the government.<sup>1066</sup> In the KRI, due to proliferation of arms, conflicts between families frequently turn violent, resulting in casualties.<sup>1067</sup> In Basrah, the police play a marginal role in managing tribal conflicts.<sup>1068</sup> The overlapping interests of tribal leaders, public officials, and political networks has also had negative implications for public security,<sup>1069</sup> particularly due to tribal loyalties within the security apparatus.<sup>1070</sup> Despite this, some areas have seen a decline in tribal disputes. In May 2025, The New Region reported a 'sharp drop' in such incidents in Thi-Qar governorate, attributed to greater state presence and law enforcement. Sheikh Nafi' al-Shami told The New Region that this drop was due to growing awareness among tribes that 'bloodshed and property attacks solve nothing', along with the establishment of a government committee to address conflicts.<sup>1071</sup>

In August 2024, a violent tribal conflict erupted in Nasiriyah (Thi-Qar governorate) resulting in four individuals being injured and a tribal sheikh's home being burned down. Security forces reportedly faced restrictions accessing the scene.<sup>1072</sup> In the same month, a person was killed in Najaf governorate as a result of a suspect tribal conflict. A total of 70 people were arrested with numerous weapons and ammunition confiscated.<sup>1073</sup> In April 2025, a middle school student was killed in Basrah in a tribal vengeance clash.<sup>1074</sup> In June 2025, in Dohuk, as a result of a family feud, two children of eight and ten years old with no connection to the dispute have been killed.<sup>1075</sup> In July 2025, clashes between the Harki and Goran tribes in western Erbil (KRI) over land disputes tied to the KRG oil pipeline highlighted how tribal loyalties often override

<sup>1063</sup> Genat M., State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), p. 375

<sup>1064</sup> Rudaw, Middle school student tragically killed in tribal revenge attack in southern Iraq, 28 April 2025, [url](#);

Rudaw, Tribal violence leaves 1 killed, 8 injured in Basra, 31 March 2025, [url](#); +964, Ten arrested after tribal clash in Basra's Tamimiya neighborhood, 7 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1065</sup> Baghdad Today, اندلاع نيران في منازل سكنية اثر نزاع عشائري [Arrest of suspect who appeared in a video carrying out a tribal attack in Baghdad], 28 May 2025, [url](#); Al-Sumaria, مقتل واصابة 4 مدنيين جراء نزاع عشائري في بغداد [Tribal conflict in Baghdad causes fire in homes], 7 May 2025, [url](#); Baghdad Today, مقتل واصابة 4 مدنيين جراء نزاع عشائري في بغداد [One civilian killed and four injured in tribal dispute in Abu Ghraib], 15 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, "دكة عشائرية" تنتهي بنفوق بقرة وإصابة أخرى [Baghdad – One cow killed and more injured in tribal Dakka], 15 February 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, قتيان واعتقالات في بغداد نتيجة خلافات عشائرية [Two killed and arrests in Baghdad due to tribal disputes], 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1066</sup> Rudaw, Five killed in Diwaniyah tribal dispute clash a day after a similar conflict in Basra, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1067</sup> Rudaw, Two sisters killed in Duhok family feud, 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1068</sup> New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1069</sup> Genat M., State Law and Tribal Justice in Iraq, March 2023, [url](#), pp. 380, 404

<sup>1070</sup> New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1071</sup> New Region (The), After years of tribal conflicts, Dhi Qar sees decline in violence, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1072</sup> Shafaq News, Tribal clash north of Nasiriyah: four injured, sheikh's home burned, 9 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1073</sup> Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 31 December 2024, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>1074</sup> Rudaw, Middle school student killed in tribal revenge attack in southern Iraq, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1075</sup> Rudaw, Two sisters killed in Duhok family feud, 12 June 2025, [url](#)

formal governance structures,<sup>1076</sup> and reflect tribal dynamics within KDP rule.<sup>1077</sup> In August 2024, the Sudani administration introduced a 'tribal covenant' aimed at reducing tribal clashes.<sup>1078</sup>

For information on honour killings, See also [section 2.9 Individuals perceived as transgressing moral and Islamic norms](#) and [section 2.6 Women and girls](#)).

### 3. Humanitarian and socio-economic situation

#### 3.1 Overview of the humanitarian and socio-economic situation

According to the World Bank classification, Iraq is considered an upper middle-income country,<sup>1079</sup> with upper middle-income economies defined as those having a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita between USD 4 496 and USD 13 935.<sup>1080</sup> The country has one of the fastest-growing regional populations,<sup>1081</sup> as the 2024 population census recorded an increase from 27.9 million in 2004 to approximately 45 million in 2024.<sup>1082</sup> Population growth projections estimate that Iraq's population will reach 74.5 million by 2050.<sup>1083</sup> 60 % of the population is under 25 years old, with 40 % below the age of 15.<sup>1084</sup> The census was described as an essential step towards enhancing the accuracy of economic planning and resource allocation.<sup>1085</sup>

At the economic level, Iraq relies heavily on oil and petroleum products,<sup>1086</sup> which account for around 60 % of its GDP and are the primary source of government revenue and foreign exchange earnings.<sup>1087</sup> This dependence makes the economy vulnerable to shocks, such as

<sup>1076</sup> Kurdistan Watch, published on X, 4 July 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Tribal loyalists clash with Kurdish security forces over land dispute in Erbil, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1077</sup> Amwaj, Clashes in Iraqi Kurdistan show power of tribes acting outside state control, 17 July 2025, [url](#); Kurdistan Watch, published on X, 4 July 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Tribal loyalists clash with Kurdish security forces over land dispute in Erbil, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1078</sup> Amwaj, Shiite pilgrimage in Iraq marred by tribal violence, army-PMU clash, 23 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1079</sup> World Bank, Human Capital Data Portal - Iraq, n.d., [url](#); World Bank, World Bank Country and Lending Groups, Country classification, n.d., [url](#); UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1080</sup> World Bank

<sup>1081</sup> UNDP, Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 29 November 2024, [url](#), para 3

<sup>1082</sup> UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1083</sup> UNDP, Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 29 November 2024, [url](#), para 3

<sup>1084</sup> UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1085</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 4; UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1086</sup> UNICEF, Climate Landscape Analysis For Children and Young People In Iraq, [url](#), p. 16; Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 4 November 2024, [url](#), para 1

<sup>1087</sup> IFAD, Republic of Iraq - Country strategy note, 29 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

the COVID-19 pandemic, electricity shortages, and water scarcity.<sup>1088</sup> While there were signs of economic recovery in 2024,<sup>1089</sup> supported by high oil prices and non-oil revenue growth, Iraq experienced negative GDP per capita growth in five of the past ten years.<sup>1090</sup> Moreover, inflation and Iraqi dinar's devaluation during the covered period have reduced household purchasing power, therefore worsening poverty and food insecurity.<sup>1091</sup>

Systematic corruption across the country<sup>1092</sup> triggers rising anger among citizens.<sup>1093</sup> Iraq's public sector remains a dominant actor of the economy and service delivery, accounting for nearly all formal sector jobs and 40 % of all jobs,<sup>1094</sup> and consuming significant public resources. However, it is marked by overemployment, inefficiency and outdated administrative systems, largely due to limited private sector development and weak institutional capacity. Reliance on oil revenues has sustained this model but discouraged reforms. Economic pressures and oil price volatility have exposed these structural weaknesses, underscoring the urgent need for diversification and public sector reform.<sup>1095</sup> In the KRI, the public sector also dominates, while the private sector remains limited and average incomes are generally low. Although the energy sector is lucrative, only a small share of the population benefits from it. The economy is shaped by 'party patronage networks' of the KDP and PUK, reportedly making it difficult for individuals outside these networks to secure employment or maintain business operations.<sup>1096</sup>

The unemployment rate stood at 15.5 % in 2024,<sup>1097</sup> with women disproportionately affected (30.4 %)<sup>1098</sup> compared to men (13.3 %).<sup>1099</sup> Youth face challenges due to an oversaturated public sector, limited private sector opportunities, and a disconnection between education and labour market needs. Young women encounter additional barriers linked to conservative norms and discrimination.<sup>1100</sup> In the KRI, unemployment remains high, especially among youth and university graduates, within a system dominated by party patronage networks.<sup>1101</sup> In September 2024, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani warned that the state could no

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<sup>1088</sup> UNICEF, Climate Landscape Analysis For Children and Young People In Iraq, [url](#), p. 16; Un, Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 4 November 2024, [url](#), para 1

<sup>1089</sup> UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4; IFAD, Republic of Iraq - Country strategy note, 29 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1090</sup> IFAD, Republic of Iraq - Country strategy note, 29 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1091</sup> UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4; IFAD, Republic of Iraq - Country strategy note, 29 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1092</sup> UNDP, Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 29 November 2024, [url](#), para 11

<sup>1093</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq's Deepening Corruption Crisis Fuels Public Outrage: Citizens Demand Justice and Reform, 11 May 2025, [url](#); Badawi T., Anti-Corruption Protests in Iraq's Muthanna, Sada's Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 13 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1094</sup> IFAD, Republic of Iraq - Country strategy note, 29 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1095</sup> ILO, Measuring Labour Market productivity/Performance in the Public Sector in Iraq, n.d., [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1096</sup> Rodgers, W., Journalist and researcher expert on Iraq, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 4 July 2025

<sup>1097</sup> WB, Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) – Iraq, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1098</sup> WB, Unemployment, female (% of female labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) – Iraq, [url](#)

<sup>1099</sup> WB, Unemployment, male (% of male labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) – Iraq, [url](#)

<sup>1100</sup> UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1101</sup> Rodgers, W., Journalist and researcher expert on Iraq, Interview, 29 October 2024, and email communication, 4 July 2025

longer sustain continued public sector hiring, calling for a diversification of economic drivers.<sup>1102</sup>

Since May 2025, Baghdad suspended salary payments to civil servants in the KRG, citing the latter's alleged non-compliance with the federal budget law and its unilateral oil production and export activities.<sup>1103</sup> Negotiations between the federal government and the KRG over salary payments continued, amid disputes over fund transfers and federal audits of payroll data.<sup>1104</sup> In July, the two parties reached an agreement on oil and non-oil revenue sharing,<sup>1105</sup> leading to the payment of May salaries shortly after.<sup>1106</sup> Although the poverty rate decreased to 17.5 % in 2024,<sup>1107</sup> challenges remain in healthcare, and environmental sustainability domains.<sup>1108</sup> Socioeconomic disparities persisted,<sup>1109</sup> especially in conflict-affected areas like Anbar and Ninewa, where poverty rate exceeded 40 %. Women and individuals with disabilities face higher poverty levels, with female-headed households experiencing rates up to 30 % above the national average (See [section 2.6 on Women and girls](#)).<sup>1110</sup> The southern and northwestern governorates have the highest poverty incidence.<sup>1111</sup> Iraq's Social Protection Law guarantees cash benefits and social services to individuals or families below the poverty line. Two main social assistance programs exist: the Public Distribution System (PDS), providing food rations, and the Social Safety Net (SSN), a poverty-targeted conditional cash transfer.<sup>1112</sup>

As of November 2024, 1.5 million people experienced insufficient food consumption.<sup>1113</sup> The most affected governorates include Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Babil, Kirkuk, Dohuk, Thi Qar, Wassit, Sulaymaniyah, Baghdad, Najaf, Qadisiya, Diyala.<sup>1114</sup> Iraq is heavily dependent on food's import,<sup>1115</sup> particularly from the United States and neighbouring countries such as Türkiye and Iran,<sup>1116</sup> making access to food susceptible to price fluctuations driven by global oil

<sup>1102</sup> Fanack, Iraq's public sector workforce set to shrink, private sector to take lead in a decade, 19 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1103</sup> Kurdistan Watch, published on X, 5 July 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Kurdistan workers urge Iraq's top court to order salary release from Baghdad, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1104</sup> UNSC, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 9

<sup>1105</sup> National Context (The), The Erbil–Baghdad Agreement Binds the KRG with Tough Conditions as Drone Strikes Continue to Hit Oil Infrastructure, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1106</sup> National Context (The), The Erbil–Baghdad Agreement Binds the KRG with Tough Conditions as Drone Strikes Continue to Hit Oil Infrastructure, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1107</sup> UN in Iraq, For Iraq Yearbook 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 12; Rudaw, Iraq to launch 5-year anti-poverty plan as over 7 million live in destitution, 16 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1108</sup> UN in Iraq, For Iraq Yearbook 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>1109</sup> UN, Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 4 November 2024, [url](#), para 3

<sup>1110</sup> UN, Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 4 November 2024, [url](#), para 3

<sup>1111</sup> IFAD, Republic of Iraq - Country strategy note, 29 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1112</sup> NRC, Legal guide to child's rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>1113</sup> The Hunger Map Live by the World Food Programme (WFP) tracks core indicators of acute hunger. As noted by the WFP: 'Acute hunger is measured by key indicators such as household food consumption, livelihood behaviors, child nutritional status, mortality, access to clean drinking water and other contextual factors. The HungerMap LIVE primarily tracks trends on household food consumption, consumption-based coping and livelihood changes to track multiple aspects of food insecurity. As these are outcome level 1 indicators in the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Framework, they can provide early indications of potential shifts in acute food insecurity.' WFP, Hunger Map Live: Iraq insight and key trends, 9 November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1114</sup> WFP, Hunger Map Live: Iraq insight and key trends, 9 November 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1115</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1116</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq Tops Middle East in U.S. Rice Imports, Exposing Agricultural Failures, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

and food prices.<sup>1117</sup> The increasing cost of a nutritious food basket means that access to a healthy diet is challenging.<sup>1118</sup> The shift to the electronic food ration card system announced by the Minister of Trade is expected to streamline the food distribution process and improve efficiency across Iraq's food ration program.<sup>1119</sup>

Access to healthcare in Iraq does not formally require civil documentation, except for inpatient treatment, yet in practice proof of identity is often necessary, although practices vary throughout the country.<sup>1120</sup> The health system has been weakened by decades of conflict, instability, and the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1121</sup> Among the challenges identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) is the departure of many skilled health professionals, limiting access to quality basic healthcare.<sup>1122</sup> Access to medicine is declining, due to the a significant reliance on large-scale import of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment.<sup>1123</sup> The healthcare system faces continued shortages of medicines, infrastructures and qualified personnel.<sup>1124</sup> Healthcare access is particularly challenging for IDPs (See [section 3.3 on Situation of the IDPs](#)).<sup>1125</sup> In response, between 2023 and 2025, the Ministry of Health inaugurated 15 new hospitals,<sup>1126</sup> including Baghdad's first public hospital in 40 years.<sup>1127</sup> It also announced, in July 2024, plans to construct 16 new 100-bed facilities to strengthen national healthcare coverage.<sup>1128</sup> A nationwide school health initiative, launched in November 2024, included the deployment of mobile health teams and the establishment of the first of 2 000 planned school health units, aimed at facilitating access to necessary health services and raise awareness about maintaining a healthy environment in schools.<sup>1129</sup>

According to estimates, more than 200 000 children remain out of school. While primary education enrolment in Iraq exceeds 91.6 %, access to preschool remains low. Gender disparities persist, with girls facing additional barriers such as early marriage and greater domestic responsibilities. The government's closure of IDP camps during 2024 further disrupted education, especially for children dependent on schools within or near the camps.<sup>1130</sup> (See [section 2.7 on Children](#)).

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<sup>1117</sup> WFP, Draft Iraq country strategic plan (2025–2029), [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1118</sup> WFP, Draft Iraq country strategic plan (2025–2029), [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1119</sup> Kurdistan 24, Iraq to launch electronic food ration card system, replacing paper format, 4 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1120</sup> NRC, Legal guide to child's rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>1121</sup> WHO, WHO contribution in Iraq, Evaluation report, 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1122</sup> WHO, WHO contribution in Iraq, Evaluation report, 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1123</sup> WHO, WHO contribution in Iraq, Evaluation report, 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1124</sup> Kirkuk Now, Two out of Three Health Centers Shut Down: Displaced Have no Adequate Access to Public Health Services, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1125</sup> Kirkuk Now, Two out of Three Health Centers Shut Down: Displaced Have no Adequate Access to Public Health Services, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1126</sup> UN in Iraq, Joint Statement by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization in Iraq on the Occasion of World Health Day 2025, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1127</sup> Iraqi News, Baghdad inaugurates Al-Shaab General Hospital, the first public hospital in 40 years, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1128</sup> Kurdistan 24, Iraqi PM inaugurates joint operation program for modern hospitals in Najaf, 29 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1129</sup> IINA, New Health Units Launched in Schools to Improve Student Well-being, 15 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1130</sup> UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 5



Despite being one of the world's richest gas and oil countries,<sup>1131</sup> Iraq suffers from shortages in gas<sup>1132</sup> and electricity supply, with Iraqis relying on costly and polluting private generators.<sup>1133</sup> The country relies heavily on imported natural gas from Iran, and supply disruptions have caused significant power losses and widespread outages,<sup>1134</sup> notably triggering protests across the country in July 2025.<sup>1135</sup> Deterioration in water quality is a major health threat at country level, with rivers said to be polluted.<sup>1136</sup> The United Nations Global Environment Outlook 6 (GEO-6) ranks Iraq as the fifth-most vulnerable country to decreasing water and food availability and extreme temperatures.<sup>1137</sup> Iraq suffers from a housing supply shortage,<sup>1138</sup> resulting in high rental costs amid population boom.<sup>1139</sup> Based on data gathered by the latest census and reported in an article published by Shafaq in May 2025, over nine million people lived in informal settlements.<sup>1140</sup> As of 30 June 2025, over 301 670 Syrian refugees were present in Iraq, with 89 % residing in the KRI and placing additional pressure on public services and infrastructure.<sup>1141</sup>

Despite stabilisation and reconstruction efforts, the situation in Iraq remains fragile,<sup>1142</sup> with protracted humanitarian and development needs.<sup>1143</sup> Ongoing instability, displacement, and poor public services characterise the situation.<sup>1144</sup> Nearly half of Iraqi children are experiencing multidimensional poverty, lacking access to food, water, shelter, education, and healthcare.<sup>1145</sup> Families with disabled members or many children are especially vulnerable.<sup>1146</sup> (See section [2.7 on Children](#)).

## Impact of climate change

Iraq is among the top 15 countries most impacted by climate change<sup>1147</sup> and ranks fifth in vulnerability according to UNEP's GEO-6.<sup>1148</sup> Iraq's vulnerability to climate change<sup>1149</sup> intensifies

<sup>1131</sup> Baker Institute for Public Policy, Iraq's Electricity Shortage and the Paradox of Gas Flaring, 17 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1132</sup> INA, Three-pronged strategy to Address Gas Shortage, Says Electricity Ministry, 30 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1133</sup> Baker Institute for Public Policy, Iraq's Electricity Shortage and the Paradox of Gas Flaring, 17 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1134</sup> Iraq Business News, Drop in Iranian Gas Cuts 3,800 MW from Iraq's Grid, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1135</sup> Stratfor, Iraq's Worsening Electricity Crisis Risks Fueling Bigger Protests, 15 July 2025, [url](#); Shafaq, Baghdad erupts over power cuts, 13 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1136</sup> Shafaq, UN and experts: water pollution crisis threatening Iraq's rivers and millions of lives, 8 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1137</sup> UNICEF, Climate landscape analysis for children and young people in Iraq, 7 May 2024, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>1138</sup> New Region (The), Iraq's housing crisis deepens amid rising rents, failed promises, 6 May 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Iraq grapples with a severe national housing crisis as the country faces a shortfall of over two million homes, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1139</sup> Kurdistan24, Iraq Grapples with Service Shortfalls Amid Population Boom, 12 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1140</sup> Shafaq News, Iraq's Shadow Cities: Inside the rise of informal settlements across the nation, 24 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1141</sup> UNHCR, Iraq Factsheet: August 2023, 13 September 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response: Iraq, updated 10 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1142</sup> ECHO, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (Hip) – IRAQ, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1143</sup> UNHCR, Iraq Factsheet December 2024, 12 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1144</sup> UN, Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 4 November 2024, [url](#), para 3

<sup>1145</sup> UN in Iraq, For Iraq Yearbook 2024, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>1146</sup> UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1147</sup> UNICEF, Country Report – Iraq, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1148</sup> Rudaw, Iraq among top 15 countries most affected by climate change: PM advisor, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1149</sup> IOM, Migration, Environment, and Climate Change In Iraq, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>1150</sup> UN, Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 4 November 2024, [url](#), para 1

existing challenges such as water scarcity,<sup>1150</sup> desertification, rising temperatures<sup>1151</sup> and declining agricultural productivity.<sup>1152</sup> Increased salinisation, desertification, reduced water flows in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and declining rainfall have resulted in the loss of 120 000 square kilometres of arable land, drastically affecting agricultural production.<sup>1153</sup> Agriculture is a crucial sector of Iraq's economy, being the second largest contributor to Iraq's GDP after hydrocarbons.<sup>1154</sup> Drought and water shortage are severely affecting farms in central Iraq.<sup>1155</sup> The country experienced intensified droughts, and flooding.<sup>1156</sup> Sandstorms are becoming more frequent and intense, leading to increased hospitalisations and flight disruptions.<sup>1157</sup> The repercussions of the climate change crisis have disproportionately affected the most vulnerable communities,<sup>1158</sup> particularly displaced persons.<sup>1159</sup> Additionally, those living in Southern Iraq,<sup>1160</sup> Mesopotamian Marshes<sup>1161</sup> and near oil fields<sup>1162</sup> faced severe climate-related challenges, leading to distress and heightened food insecurity.<sup>1163</sup>

Effects of climate change threaten public health, agriculture, water resources and social cohesion, particularly in the Al-Jazira region.<sup>1164</sup> In southern Iraq, reduced water flow and high salinity in the Shatt Al-Arab have degraded arable land.<sup>1165</sup> Armed conflict also continued to degrade the environment.<sup>1166</sup>

### 3.2 Update on Entry, residency requirements and access to civil documentation and services

Iraq's entry and residency framework is complex, shaped by legal pluralism, uneven implementation and varying local practices. Sponsorship and security clearance requirements are often informal and not codified in law. Valid civil documentation is necessary to pass checkpoints and lack thereof increases the risk of arbitrary detention. While most areas impose no entry restrictions, sponsorship is required in certain governorates and districts.

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<sup>1150</sup> Rudaw, Iraq facing worst water crisis in 80 years: Water ministry, [url](#), 25 May 2025; AI, The State's of World Human Rights, April 2025, [url](#), p. 66

<sup>1151</sup> Rudaw, Iraq among top 15 countries most affected by climate change: PM advisor, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1152</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 44

<sup>1153</sup> WFP, Iraq – Country Briefing, March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1154</sup> Georgetown Security Studies Review, Drought in the Land of Plenty: The Impacts of Climate Change on Iraqi Security, 18 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1155</sup> Rudaw, Extreme drought devastates central Iraq farmers, 25 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1156</sup> Rudaw, Iraq among top 15 countries most affected by climate change: PM advisor, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1157</sup> HRW, Iraq's Climate Crisis is a Human Rights Crisis, 27 March 2025, [url](#); AA, Sandstorm sweeps Iraq, hospitalizes over 3,700 people, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1158</sup> WFP, Iraq – Country Briefing, March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1159</sup> AI, The State's of World Human Rights, April 2025, [url](#), p. 66

<sup>1160</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 33

<sup>1161</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 26; ICRC, Iraq: Water, Life, and the Fight Against Climate, [url](#), 22 March 2025

<sup>1162</sup> UNDP, Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Country Programme for Iraq, 29 November 2024, [url](#), para 27

<sup>1163</sup> WFP, Iraq – Country Briefing, March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1164</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 26; ICRC, Iraq: Water, Life, and the Fight Against Climate, [url](#), 22 March 2025

<sup>1165</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>1166</sup> UNSG, Protection of civilians in armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, 15 May 2025, [url](#), para 22



Residency generally requires valid ID documents (Civil Status ID card/Unified ID card, nationality certificate) and, in some areas, a sponsor holding a Housing Card from the area where the individuals are seeking to legally take up temporary residency is required. Approval from the security actors of the area where they are to relocate is also needed. Only Housing Card, an official document used in both Federal Iraq and in the KRI that certifies an individual's place of domicile or residency, allows individuals to permanently settle and access to basic rights and services.<sup>1167</sup>

As communicated by UNHCR to EUAA, information on Entry, residency requirements and access to civil documentation and services have remained the same since the latest [EUAA Country Focus, May 2024](#), section 2.1.2. Entry, residency requirements and access to civil documentation and services, except for few developments listed as follows:

- Civil Status ID cards and nationality certificates are no longer in use. As of 1 April 2024, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior announced the end of the use of the Civil Status Identity Card.<sup>1168</sup> An individual's ability to pass checkpoints and be admitted to the proposed area of relocation will require the individual to hold valid civil documentation (Unified ID card or passport).
- Regarding sponsorship requirements for entry: Nasiriyah and Samarra no longer require a sponsor for entry purposes.
- Regarding sponsorship requirement for residency: a sponsor is also required to regularise one's stay in Samarra (Salah Al-Din governorate).
- Regarding permission to take up residency in the proposed area of relocation: in the KRI, persons of certain profiles/places of origin are not permitted to transfer their Housing Card or to obtain a new Housing Card (Erbil and Dohuk: Kurds who originate from the disputed territories, Arabs, Turkmen and members of ethnic/religious minority groups from areas outside the KR-I; Sulaymaniyah: single Arab and Turkmen men and women). Kurds and Yazidis who originate from the disputed territories are not allowed to transfer their Housing Card to Sulaymaniyah. They are able to obtain a support letter from the *Mukhtar* confirming that they are living in those areas.<sup>1169</sup>

### 3.3 Situation of the IDPs

As of 31 December 2024, the IDP population in Iraq stood at 1 053 038,<sup>1170</sup> predominantly residing in the KRI,<sup>1171</sup> specifically located in the northern governorates of Ninewa, Dohuk and Erbil.<sup>1172</sup> Most IDPs live in private accommodations within urban areas or informal settlements.<sup>1173</sup> However, as of 10 April 2025, 107 549 individuals resided in the 20 remaining

<sup>1167</sup> EUAA, COI Report – Iraq: Country Focus May 2024, section 2.1.2, [url](#), pp. 61-65

<sup>1168</sup> MOFA, Question and Answers, 4 May 2025, [url](#); UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>1169</sup> UNHCR, email communication to EUAA, 6 August 2025

<sup>1170</sup> UNCHR/DTM, Iraq - Population Profile - Breakdown Overview - IDPs and Returnees, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1171</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 – Iraq, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1172</sup> IDMC, NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2025, 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 45-47

<sup>1173</sup> UNHCR, Iraq - Global Appeal 2025 situation overview, November 2024, [url](#), p. 2; UNHCR, Iraq Monthly Update - April 2025, April 2025, [url](#)



formal IDP camps across the KRI (all in Dohuk and Erbil Governorates), with approximately 90% of these camp residents being Yazidis.<sup>1174</sup> Another 84 552 individuals live in critical shelters and informal sites under precarious conditions,<sup>1175</sup> often without access to basic services, thereby increasing tensions in urban centres already struggling with limited water supply, sanitation, and electricity.<sup>1176</sup>

Despite the indefinite postponement of the planned July 2024 camp closures,<sup>1177</sup> government services have remained in place in IDPs camps. Nonetheless, irregular provision of food, hygiene kits, and fuel, primarily due to funding constraints, has worsened living conditions, especially in camps near east Mosul.<sup>1178</sup> Several health centres in IDP camps have closed as part of the ongoing government return policy, causing major healthcare access gaps. For instance, in Dohuk, only 7 of 21 health centres remained operational after aid funding ended, despite the presence of approximately 190 000 IDPs in the governorate. IDPs account for 40 % of hospital patients in the region. The KRG reports over 960 000 IDPs region-wide, with health services costing over 2 million USD daily. Remaining camp clinics face shortages of medicines and qualified personnel.<sup>1179</sup>

IDPs faced ongoing challenges in accessing housing,<sup>1180</sup> water and medical care.<sup>1181</sup> They continued to encounter significant barriers to obtaining civil status documentation,<sup>1182</sup> which restricts access to essential public services such as health and education,<sup>1183</sup> especially for IDPs with perceived affiliation to ISIL.<sup>1184</sup> (See section 2.4 on [Individual with perceived affiliation to ISIL](#) and section 2.7 on [Children with perceived affiliation to ISIL](#)). Overall, many IDPs remained reluctant to return due to persistent insecurity,<sup>1185</sup> lack of stability and public services,<sup>1186</sup> limited reconstruction, inadequate basic services<sup>1187</sup> and lack of livelihood.<sup>1188</sup> On the other hand, those who wanted to return often faced issues related to access to housing, land and property rights and general access to documentation and public services.<sup>1189</sup> The

<sup>1174</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 34

<sup>1175</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 33

<sup>1176</sup> Georgetown Security Studies Review, Drought in the Land of Plenty: The Impacts of Climate Change on Iraqi Security, 18 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1177</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 34; EC, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) IRAQ, 13 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 4-5

<sup>1178</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 34

<sup>1179</sup> Kirkuk Now, Two out of Three Health Centers Shut Down: Displaced Have no Adequate Access to Public Health Services, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1180</sup> IOM, Iraq Crisis Response Plan 2025, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-6; AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#) p. 209

<sup>1181</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 209

<sup>1182</sup> IOM, Iraq Crisis Response Plan 2025, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-6

<sup>1183</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Iraq 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 209

<sup>1184</sup> EC, HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) IRAQ, 13 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1185</sup> Kirkuk Now, Two out of Three Health Centers Shut Down: Displaced Have no Adequate Access to Public Health Services, 30 April 2025, [url](#); IDMC, NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2025, 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 45-47; UNHCR, Prospect partnership in Iraq – Factsheet, January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1186</sup> Kirkuk Now, Two out of Three Health Centers Shut Down: Displaced Have no Adequate Access to Public Health Services, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1187</sup> IDMC, NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2025, 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 45-47; UNHCR, Prospect partnership in Iraq – Factsheet, January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1188</sup> UNHCR, Prospect partnership in Iraq – Factsheet, January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1189</sup> IOM, Iraq Crisis Response Plan 2025, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-6



freezing of US foreign aid<sup>1190</sup> endangered many projects on reconstruction, rehabilitation, and support for displaced people in northern, western, and central Iraq.<sup>1191</sup>

Amnesty International reported about arbitrary arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances carried out at the Al Amal Center, formerly Al Jeddah center, hosting returnees from Al Hol detention camp in northeastern Syria.<sup>1192</sup> (See section 2.4 on [Individual with perceived affiliation to ISIL](#)). In July 2025, a drone exploded in the Darkar camp housing Yazidi IDPs, in Dohuk governorate, Zakho district, injuring a child.<sup>1193</sup>

### 3.3.1 Climate change-induced displacement

As of March 2025, IOM reported that over 172 000 individuals in Iraq remained displaced across 12 governorates due to climate-related factors, highlighting the urgent need for climate adaptation measures like sustainable water management, rural support, and urban planning.<sup>1194</sup> (See section 3.1 on [Impact of climate change](#))

Climate-related challenges<sup>1195</sup> triggered families' displacement, impacted services for children<sup>1196</sup> and often led to violence, conflicts, and the growth of informal settlements.<sup>1197</sup>

Climate change has also negatively affected agriculture, the main livelihood for many returnees, reducing economic stability and hindering durable solutions.<sup>1198</sup> An increasing number of Iraqis are moving to urban areas in search of employment due to the lack of arable land and the disappearance of waterways essential for fishing.<sup>1199</sup> Weak governance and poor resource management exacerbate these issues, undermining stability.<sup>1200</sup> Thi Qar<sup>1201</sup> and Missan<sup>1202</sup> governorates are particularly affected by drought-related displacement whereas limited access to farmland and irrigation affect both returnees and displaced people.<sup>1203</sup>

<sup>1190</sup> Shafaq News, USAID's fall, Iraq's call, losses appal, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1191</sup> New Arab (The), US aid freeze puts dozens of Iraqi development projects at risk, sources warn, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1192</sup> Al, Iraq: People held in Al-Jed'ah Centre subjected to torture and enforced disappearance after arrests – new investigation, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1193</sup> UN in Iraq, United Nations in Iraq condemns attack in IDP camp in Duhok, 1 July 2025, [url](#); Kurdistan 24, Escalating Drone Attacks Target Kurdistan Region: Latest Strike Hits Garmiyan, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1194</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 33

<sup>1195</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 33

<sup>1196</sup> UNICEF, Humanitarian Action for Children, Iraq – Highlights, [url](#), p. 1; UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 33

<sup>1197</sup> Georgetown Security Studies Review, Drought in the Land of Plenty: The Impacts of Climate Change on Iraqi Security, 18 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1198</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024, 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>1199</sup> HRW, Iraq's Climate Crisis is a Human Rights Crisis, 27 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1200</sup> Georgetown Security Studies Review, Drought in the Land of Plenty: The Impacts of Climate Change on Iraqi Security, 18 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1201</sup> IDMC, NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2025 (GRID), 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 48

<sup>1202</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>1203</sup> IDMC, NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2025 (GRID), 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 48; WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 26



### 3.3.2 Situation of returnees

As of 31 December 2024, the returnees population in Iraq stood at 4 897 128,<sup>1204</sup> increasing to 5.1 million of returned IDPs as of 10 April 2025.<sup>1205</sup> Since 2021, the Iraqi government has accelerated repatriation efforts, particularly for individuals from Al-Hol and Rawj camps in northeast Syria.<sup>1206</sup> The pace of the return process further accelerated since January 2025, in light of the recent developments in Syria, notably the takeover of Damascus by a coalition of armed groups led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in December 2024.<sup>1207</sup> In 2024, around 34 % of IDPs left camps in the KRI. Between January and April 2025, 421 families (1 810 individuals) returned, mainly to Ninewa, Salah Al-Din, and Erbil governorates,<sup>1208</sup> with the majority of returnees being children and female-headed households.<sup>1209</sup>

Returnees faced limited access to services,<sup>1210</sup> scarce livelihood opportunities,<sup>1211</sup> and security issues, as some had to return in areas impacted by intra-group violence or areas controlled by multiple security actors.<sup>1212</sup> Returnees, particularly women, girls, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups often face stigma and harassment,<sup>1213</sup> exposing them to negative coping mechanisms,<sup>1214</sup> such as exploitation, gender-based violence, trafficking, economic hardship and renewed displacement due to lack of legal identity documents.<sup>1215</sup> (See [section 2.6 on Women and Girls](#); see [section 2.7 on Children](#)).

Reintegration is also hindered by damaged infrastructure,<sup>1216</sup> landmines and ERW continuing to endanger civilians and impede their movement and livelihoods,<sup>1217</sup> as well as insufficient social services.<sup>1218</sup> Lack of farming land<sup>1219</sup> due to climate change<sup>1220</sup> also influenced return decisions.

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<sup>1204</sup> UNCHR/DTM, Iraq - Population Profile - Breakdown Overview - IDPs and Returnees, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1205</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), paras 40-41

<sup>1206</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), paras 40-41

<sup>1207</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), paras 40-41; Arab Center Washington DC, Pragmatism Shapes Iraq's Position Toward Post-Assad Syria, 1 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1208</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), paras 40-41

<sup>1209</sup> Save the Children, UNICEF, Working in the Nexus: How Save the Children and UNICEF are working together to strengthen the Child Protection System in Iraq, 2025, [url](#) p. 3

<sup>1210</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1211</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3; NRC, NRC's operations in Iraq, Humanitarian overview, Factsheet May 2025, [url](#); UNIDIR, From Al Hol to hope: Navigating return and reintegration challenges, 15 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 8-9; IOM, Iraq Crisis Response Plan 2025, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-6

<sup>1212</sup> IOM, Iraq Crisis Response Plan 2025, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-6

<sup>1213</sup> UNIDIR, From Al Hol to hope: Navigating return and reintegration challenges, 15 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 8-9, 21; IOM, Iraq Crisis Response Plan 2025, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-6

<sup>1214</sup> NRC, NRC's operations in Iraq, Humanitarian overview, Factsheet May 2025, [url](#) p. 2

<sup>1215</sup> UNSG, Protection of civilians in armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, 15 May 2025, [url](#), para 5

<sup>1216</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1217</sup> UNSG, Protection of civilians in armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, 15 May 2025, [url](#), para 5

<sup>1218</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1219</sup> IDMC, NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2025, 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 48

<sup>1220</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 10





Water scarcity caused tensions,<sup>1221</sup> reducing economic stability and hindering durable solutions.<sup>1222</sup>

The delayed return of Yazidi IDPs is largely due to lack of security,<sup>1223</sup> political and legal challenges, including the ‘stalled’ implementation of the Sinjar Agreement between the KRG and the federal Government. Consequently, around 100 000 Yazidis from Sinjar remained displaced and living in precarious conditions,<sup>1224</sup> many of them in the KRI.<sup>1225</sup> In Sinjar, armed groups such as the PKK and PMF compete for control over military, economic, and political power, turning the area into a ‘transnational conflict hub’ and impeding returns.<sup>1226</sup> Many returnees in Sinjar face harsh prospects due to destroyed homes, damaged infrastructure, and the presence of multiple armed groups.<sup>1227</sup>

<sup>1221</sup> IDMC, NRC, Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2025, 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 48

<sup>1222</sup> WFP, Iraq Annual Country Report 2024 Country Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>1223</sup> Institute of Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies, Shivan Fazil – Iraq’s ethnoreligious minorities: Exclusion from power-sharing grand bargains, 1 July 2024, [url](#); UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 36; LSE, Ruptured Atlas - A Trauma-Informed Approach To Spatial Storytelling For Survivors Of Genocide (The Case For Yazidis In Iraq), July 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1224</sup> UN in Iraq, UN Security Council Briefing Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq Dr. Mohamed Al Hassan, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1225</sup> UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, 30 May 2025, [url](#), para 36

<sup>1226</sup> XCEPT/Middle East and North Africa Programme, Responding to instability in Iraq’s Sinjar district, March 2024, [url](#), pp. 4, 6-7; Institute of Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies, Shivan Fazil – Iraq’s ethnoreligious minorities: Exclusion from power-sharing grand bargains, 1 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1227</sup> AP, Ten years on, many Yazidis uprooted by Islamic State onslaught struggle to find stable homes, 29 July 2024, [url](#)



# Annex 1: Bibliography

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Haley Bobseine, interview 28-29 October 2024 and email correspondence to EUAA, 13 July 2025. Bobseine is a senior Iraq researcher and analyst specialising on tribal affairs with experience across UN agencies, think tanks, NGOs, development firms, and private companies. Her areas of expertise include geopolitics, conflict and political risk analysis, the effects of climate change, energy, and related policy issues.

UNHCR representatives, email correspondence with EUAA, 6 August 2025

Winthrop Rodgers, Interview, 28-29 October 2024 and email correspondence, 4 July 2025. Rodgers is a journalist and researcher expert on Iraq. He is an associate fellow with the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House. His work focuses on politics, human rights, political economy, press freedom, diplomacy, labour and the environment in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. His past work has appeared in international publications like Foreign Policy, the Index on Censorship, New Lines Magazine, Al-Monitor and The Dial and local independent outlets in the Kurdistan Region.

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## Annex 2: Terms of Reference

The research **focuses on the period between 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025.**

### ■ General description of the security situation in Federal Iraq and in the KRI

- Political developments in Federal Iraq and in the KRI
- Overview of recent security developments (Including information on armed actors and international involvement)
- Impact of the security situation on civilian population at national level
  - Security incidents
  - Civilian casualties
  - Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war
  - Conflict-induced displacement and return
- Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by geopolitical areas (sub-headings on: security incidents, civilian casualties, conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW)

### ■ Human rights and treatment of specific profiles

- General human rights situation
- Latest legislation impacting civil and human rights: January 2025 legislative package
- Ethnic and religious minorities
  - Treatment of ethno-religious groups
- Individuals perceived as opposing the state and state-affiliated actors
  - Members of political opposition parties, political and human rights activists, protesters
  - Journalists and media workers
  - Individuals with (perceived) affiliation to ISIL
- Palestinians in Iraq
- Women and girls
  - Violence against women
  - Women without male support
- Children
  - Child recruitment by armed groups
  - Children with perceived affiliation to ISIL
  - Children without civil documentation
  - Child labour
  - Child marriage
  - Children in street situation
  - Access to education
- LGBTIQ
- Individuals perceived as transgressing moral and Islamic norms





- Persons involved in and affected by blood/land feuds in the context of tribal conflict
- **Humanitarian and Socio-economic situation**
  - Overview of the humanitarian and socio-economic situation
  - Update on Entry, residency requirements and access to civil documentation and services
  - Situation of the IDPs, including climate change-induced displacement and situation of returnees





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