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Iraq: Security Situation

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR ASYLUM

Iraq: Security situation

Country of Origin Information Report

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Cover photo: ERBIL, IRAQ - MARCH 17: Fuel filled bottles on the outskirts of town on March 17, 2026 in Erbil, Iraq. Recent drone attacks in the region have forced some oil refineries here to cease operation, while others continue, Sedat Suna ©Getty Images, 2026, https://www.gettyimages.it/detail/fotografie-di-cronaca/fuel-filled-bottles-on-the-outskirts-of-town-on-fotografie-di-cronaca/2267050512?adppopup=true

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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023). It 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 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 15 September 2026. 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

Term	Definition
AAH	Asaib Ahl Al-Haq. Iranian-backed Shia militia that is part of the Popular Mobilisation Forces. AAH was designated by the US as a terrorist organisation on 3 January 2020
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CF	Coordination Framework
DMA	Directorate for Mine Action
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
HAAA	Harakat Ansar Allah Al-Awfiya
HAN	Harakat Al-Nujaba (Harakat Hezbollah Al-Nujaba)
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission
IKMAA	Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency
INIS	Iraqi National Intelligence Service
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces

Term	Definition
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State (IS), or Daesh
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KDPI/PDKI	Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran
KH	Kataib Hezbollah; Iranian-backed Shia militia that is part of the Popular Mobilisation Forces. KH was designated by the US as a terrorist organisation on 2 July 2009.
KIA	Kataib Imam Ali
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
KSS	Kataib Sayyid Al-Shuhada
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoPA	Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGM	New Generation Movement
PAK	Kurdistan Freedom Party
PJAK	Kurdistan Freedom Life Party
PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces or Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), also called Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi in Arabic

Term	Definition
PKK	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
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

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 reference period is 1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026.

The report is to be read as a partial update of the EUAA COI report: Iraq – Country Focus (October 2025).

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. It is produced in line with the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023))[1] and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023).[2] 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, specialised paper-based, and electronic sources. 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 15 September 2026.

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

[1] EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, url
[2] 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 15 September 2026. EUAA also performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

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.

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. Sources were assessed for their background, publication history, reputability, and current knowledge of the situation on the ground. All the sources referenced in this report are cited and described in Annex 1: Bibliography.

Sources on security incidents and estimated fatality data

Since the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) conclusion of the mandate on 31 December 2025, reliable data and sources on casualty recording in Iraq has been limited.

Data on security incidents were drawn substantially from the organisation Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED). ACLED is an independent conflict monitoring organisation 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 accessible via registration, 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.[3] 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.[4]

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.

[3] ACLED, Methodology, April 2019, url ACLED, FAQs: ACLED Sourcing Methodology, March 2023, url
[4] ACLED, Research & Local Data Collection Partners, n.d., url

- **Violence against civilians**: violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants. It includes violent attacks 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.[5]

For the purpose of providing information for the assessment of serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict (Article 15(c) of the Qualification Regulation), only the following types of events were included in the analysis: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians. Security incident numbers and associated graphs/maps at country and governorate level are based on ACLED dataset for Middle East.[6]

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'.[7] 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.[8] 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:

[5] ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, pp. 9-22
[6] ACLED, Data Export Tool, Middle East (29 March 2024), url
[7] ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Codebook, 3 October 2024,
[8] ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Codebook, 3 October 2024,

- 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;
- the coding of events as 'Battles', 'Explosions', or 'Violence against civilians' is independent from their actual impact on civilians. While acts of 'violence against civilians' are always co-coded as 'civilian targeting',[9] 'explosions' may be or may not, depending on whether civilians were the main or only target;[10] 'battles' instead, never are;[11]
- 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

Data on civilian casualties were drawn substantially from the organisation Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED).

Characteristics and potential limits for COI use of ACLED data for civilian casualties are:

- ACLED's database only provides figures of direct deaths or fatalities per event,[12] not of injured persons and casualties; indirect deaths resulting from security events, which in the relevant literature range in average between 3 and 9 more deaths per fatality, are also not taken into consideration;[13]
- ACLED's database does not distinguish between civilian and non-civilian fatalities;[14]
- all ACLED fatality figures provided in this EUAA COI report are estimates based on ACLED's methodology. In ACLED's codebook their methodology is explained;[15] all fatality figures reported by ACLED and included in this report are estimates based on ACLED's methodology, as described in its Codebook. Although ACLED researchers seek to triangulate fatality figures reported by sources, these figures are not independently verified. ACLED cautions that fatality data are particularly susceptible to bias and manipulation. The figures should therefore be understood as indicative estimates of reported fatalities rather than definitive counts.[16]

[9] ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, p. 18
[10] ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, pp. 16, 23
[11] ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, p. 12
[12] ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, p. 38
[13] Geneva Declaration Secretariat, Global burden of armed violence, 2008, url, pp. 31-42
[14] ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, pp. 12, 16, 38
[15] ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, p. 38
[16] ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, p. 38

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'.[17] It 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.[18] The unit of analysis of the UCDP is the 'event'[19] 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.'[20] 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.[21] 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.[22] According to the UCDP, 'it is quite likely that there are more fatalities than given in the best estimate, but it is very unlikely that there are fewer'.[23]

The stricter definition of an event of the UCDP excludes some 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.[24] 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 does not only include events that meet all the UCDP's set criteria (codified as 'clear' events in the UCDP dataset), but also includes 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 and impacts of the security situation on the civilian population at national level. Chapter 2 includes a governorate-level description of the security situation, except for the southern governorates sub-chapter, where the information has been clustered. The southern governorate Basrah has its own chapter. Each governorate chapter includes a brief description of the governorate, actors involved in the conflict, recent security trends, including information on civilian casualties, the impact on civilian infrastructure and the existence of unexploded ordnances (UXO) and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), as well as information on displacement and return.

[17] UCDP, About UCDP, n.d., url
[18] UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., url; UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, url, p. 4
[19] UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., url
[20] UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, url, p. 4
[21] UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., url
[22] UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, url, pp. 5, 11, 24
[23] UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., url
[24] ACLED, Comparing Conflict Data, Similarities and Differences Across Conflict Datasets, August 2019, url, pp. 5–7

The governorate chapters of the report follow the order: Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Basrah, Southern Iraq. For organisational purposes only, this report groups together several governorates under 'Southern Iraq': Babil, Thi-Qar, Kerbala, Missan, Muthanna, Najaf, Qadissiya, and Wassit.

Maps



Map 1. Iraq[25]

[25] UN, Iraq - Map No. 3835 Rev.6, July 2014, url

1. General description of the security situation in Federal Iraq and in the KRI

1.1. Political developments in Federal Iraq and in the KRI

Federal Iraq

Iraq held Council of Representatives (parliamentary) elections in November 2025[26] after the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) disqualified hundreds of potential candidates from running, including people who had criticised the armed forces and militia groups.[27] The IHEC provided 43 883 polling stations (located in 9 539 polling centres) for general voting, which took place on 11 November. Special voting for members of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and IDPs was held two days before the main election day, on 9 November. As per electoral law, of the total 329 parliamentary seats, 83 seats were reserved for women and nine for minority groups.[28]

Media reports cited by the UN noted a peaceful and orderly voting process with isolated small-scale security incidents occurring in the vicinity of a limited number of polling centres. According to the IHEC, the election turnout was 56.11 % (a 12.57 % increase from the previous parliamentary elections held in 2021).[29] The elections were followed by numerous claims by candidates who pointed to irregularities in the voting process and electoral procedure.[30] By 21 November 2025, the IHEC reported that it had received 872 complaints and appeals from candidates and parties contesting the results. As of 4 December, the electoral judicial committee had dismissed over 800 of these claims.[31] Several candidates who stood in the elections were retroactively disqualified by the IHEC on various grounds after 11 November.[32]

Preliminary election results were announced on 12 November.[33] According to the final results, released on 17 November, the most seats were won by Mohammed Al-Sudani's Reconstruction and Development Coalition (46 seats), Mohammed Al-Halbousi's Taqaddum party (30 seats), Nouri Al-Maliki's State of Law Coalition (29 seats), followed by the Asaib Ahl Al-Haq (AAH) militia's Sadiqoon Bloc (27 seats) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) (27 seats). The Badr Organization obtained 18 seats, while the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) secured 15.[34]

[26] UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/757, 20 November 2025, url, para. 3; Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights – Iraq 2025, 21 April 2026, url, p. 208
[27] EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 2 – 9, 2025, 9 October 2025, url
[28] UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/757, 20 November 2025, url, para. 3, 7-8
[29] UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/757, 20 November 2025, url, para. 4, 7
[30] Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights – Iraq 2025, 21 April 2026, url, p. 208
[31] EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url
[32] EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: November 13 – 20, 2025, 20 November 2025, url
[33] UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/757, 20 November 2025, url, para. 6
[34] EPIC, ISHM: November 13 – 20, 2025, 20 November 2025, url

On 17 November 2025, the Federal Supreme Court ordered the termination of the work of the outgoing parliament and restricted the powers of Prime Minister (PM) Al-Sudani's government to those of a caretaker administration. The same day, the Shia Coordination Framework (CF) announced that it had formed the largest bloc in the new parliament, its parties having won around 165 seats, giving them a narrow majority in the 329-seat legislature.[35] Shia parties as a whole obtained around 180 seats,[36] with over 80 of these seats representing parties with direct links to Iran-aligned armed groups.[37] Notably, these parties included the AAH-affiliated Al-Sadiqoon bloc (27 seats), the Badr Organization (18 seats), Harakat Hoquq (six seats, affiliated with Kataib Hezbollah (KH)),[38] and the Khadamat Alliance (five seats, affiliated with Kataib Imam Ali (KIA)).[39] Meanwhile, among Sunni Arab parties, which collectively won around 70 seats,[40] five major factions on 23 November announced the creation of the National Political Council, a new political coordination body apparently mimicking the Shia CF. The initiative included Al-Halbousi's Taqaddum.[41]

After the ratification of the election results by the Federal Supreme Court on 14 December 2025, the country entered a period which involved disputes among various influential figures aiming to secure power within a future government, as well as attempts by militias to secure guarantees against attacks from external actors, including the United States.[42] A long period followed, marked by inability to form a government.[43] In January 2026, the caretaker PM Al-Sudani withdrew from the competition to become the CF's nominee for the country's premiership and paving the way for former PM, AL-Maliki,[44] whom CF went on to nominate later the same month.[45] Nevertheless, the alliance between the two politicians soon fractured.[46] A new stalemate followed, which saw Al-Maliki and Al-Sudani contending for the nomination.[47] However, Al-Maliki's candidacy was strongly opposed by the US government,[48] while Al-Sudani saw his position weakened by his inability to keep the country outside the

[35] EPIC, ISHM: November 13 – 20, 2025, 20 November 2025, url
[36] Al Azzawi, R., Iraq After the Elections: Political Trajectories and Strategic Expectations, GRC, January 2026, url, p. 47
[37] Soufan Center (The), Iraq's New Government Confronts Challenges on All Fronts, 4 June 2026, url; National Context (The), Iraq elections: militias designated as terrorist organizations by the US take 80 parliamentary seats, 17 November 2025, url
[38] Makhzoomi, K., Pro-Iran Militias Are the Big Winners in Iraq's Election, TWI, 25 November 2025, url; National Context (The), Iraq elections: militias designated as terrorist organizations by the US take 80 parliamentary seats, 17 November 2025, url
[39] National Context (The), Iraq elections: militias designated as terrorist organizations by the US take 80 parliamentary seats, 17 November 2025, url
[40] Al Azzawi, R., Iraq After the Elections: Political Trajectories and Strategic Expectations, GRC, January 2026, url, p. 47
[41] EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url
[42] Al Azzawi, R., Iraq After the Elections: Political Trajectories and Strategic Expectations, GRC, January 2026, url, p. 47
[43] Bakawan, A., Irak : les défis d'un pays fragile dans un Moyen-Orient en guerre [Iraq: The challenges facing a fragile country in a Middle East at war], April-June 2026, p. 16
[44] EPIC, ISHM: January 8 – 15, 2026, 15 January 2026, url
[45] EPIC, ISHM: January 22 – 29, 2026, 29 January 2026, url
[46] EPIC, ISHM: February 5 – 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, url
[47] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url
[48] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: January 22 – 29, 2026, 29 January 2026, url; BBC, Former Iraqi PM Maliki denounces Trump threats to end support if he returns to power, 28 January 2026, url

US/Israel war with Iran that started on 28 February 2026[49] and to control militia groups launching military attacks.[50] The military conflict further reinforced existing rifts between 'pro-U.S.' and 'pro-Iran' political camps, hampering the government formation process.[51]

On 11 April 2026, the Iraqi parliament elected Nizar Mohammed Amedi (PUK) as the country's new president.[52] As for the premiership, eventually, following an intervention by Faiq Zaidan, the politically influential president of the Supreme Judicial Council,[53] the Shia CF unanimously agreed to nominate Ali Al-Zaidi,[54] a businessman with no prior government experience[55] who had previously been unknown to most Iraqis.[56] On 14 May 2026, parliament gave its approval to a government headed by Al-Zaidi as the new PM[57] and confirmed 14 out of 23 nominees for ministerial posts.[58] Both the United States and Iran welcomed Al-Zaidi's appointment.[59]

Against the backdrop of a continuing US/Israel war with Iran and Iran-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) militia factions launching attacks on installations in the Gulf states,[60] the government has sought to prevent Iraqi armed militias from pulling the country further into conflict, an effort supported by some PMF leaders. The new government has also been faced with increasing pressure from the Trump administration to take more decisive action against Iran-aligned armed groups.[61] Thus, in late June 2026, the new government set a 30 September 2026 deadline for all armed groups to disarm, the date coinciding with the planned end of the presence of the US-led Global Coalition against ISIL in Iraq.[62] Al-Zaidi, who in his first official foreign visit in July 2026 met US President Donald Trump, has indeed been seen to seek closer ties to Washington.[63] Heeding a US demand, he has not nominated any individuals to ministerial posts who are affiliated with the Qais Al-Khazali's Sadiqoon bloc, the political arm of Iran-backed AAH, although it constituted the third largest Shia party in parliament.[64] However, appointments for the heads of the transport and water resources

[49] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url
[50] Beaumont, R., L'Irak dans l' œil du cyclone : Bagdad face aux recompositions du Moyen-Orient [Iraq in the eye of the storm: Baghdad facing the reshaping of the Middle East], April-June 2026, p. 22
[51] Soufan Center (The), Iraq Unable to Avoid the U.S.-Iran Crossfire, 16 March 2026, url
[52] EPIC, ISHM: April 9 – 16, 2026, 16 April 2026, url
[53] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url
[54] Schenker, D., Tempering U.S. Expectations About Iraq's New Government, TWI, 28 May 2026, url
[55] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: April 23 – 30, 2026, 30 April 2026, url
[56] Asharq Al-Awsat, Who Is Iraq's PM-Designate Al-Zaidi?, 29 April 2026, url
[57] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 7 – 14, 2026, 14 May 2026, url
[58] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 1; Soufan Center (The), Iraq's New Government Confronts Challenges on All Fronts, 4 June 2026, url
[59] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url
[60] Schenker, D., Tempering U.S. Expectations About Iraq's New Government, TWI, 28 May 2026, url
[61] Chatham House, Can Iraq's new prime minister finally rein in its armed factions?, 10 June 2026, url
[62] Middle East Council on Global Affairs, Iraq's High-Stakes Calculus on Corruption and Militia Disarmament, 10 September 2026, url; Asharq Al-Awsat, Iraq Sets September 30 Deadline for Pro-Iran Groups to Disarm, 29 June 2026, url
[63] Calabrese, J., Iraq is emerging as the Middle East's strategic connector – but can it turn foreign competition into advantage?, The Conversation, 21 July 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Iraq PM heads to Iran: Can Baghdad redefine its relationship with Tehran?, 23 July 2026, url
[64] Soufan Center (The), Iraq's New Government Confronts Challenges on All Fronts, 4 June 2026, url

ministries were figures affiliated with the Iran-linked Badr Organization[65] as the new administration also sought to maintain the country's longstanding ties with Iran.[66] The Iraqi and Iranian governments signed several bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) in Tehran the same month,[67] covering foreign affairs, the economy, finance and energy.[68] The two governments also agreed to draft a long-term comprehensive strategic partnership.[69]

Meanwhile, the new Al-Zaidi administration in late June 2026 conducted an extensive anti-corruption campaign, ordering the arrests of dozens of political and government figures, including members of parliament (MPs) linked to former prime minister Al-Sudani and the leader of the Sunni Azm party. However, as Lahib Higel, a researcher with International Crisis Group, observed at the time, the campaign had thus far only targeted second and third-tier politicians and officials, suggesting that the government was reluctant to disrupt the highest echelons of the country's political elite. Former prime ministers Al-Maliki and Al-Sudani, for their part, publicly voiced their support for the campaign, which came amid pressure from the Trump administration to crack down on corruption, particularly on arrangements that allowed Iran to bypass US sanctions via Iraq's financial and oil sectors.[70]

Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

The Iraqi Constitution of 2005 formally recognised the region as a federal entity, granting it significant rights and autonomy. However, according to Kurdish observers, successive federal Iraqi governments have infringed upon the constitution's special arrangements for the KRI, including power-sharing in the disputed territories (e.g., Kirkuk), federal budget allocation, and control of oil and gas resources.[71] Following a 2017 referendum in the KRI that favoured the region's independence, federal forces reasserted control over large parts of the disputed territories,[72] in Kirkuk, Diyala, Salah Al-Din and Ninewa.[73] Federal Iraqi court rulings since 2022 have found the regional Oil and Gas Law of Kurdistan to be unconstitutional and declared electoral arrangements in the KRI to be invalid.[74]

Since 2019,[75] KDP leader Masoud Barzani's nephew, Nechirvan, has been holding the post of the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), while Masoud Barzani's son, Masrour, has been the KRG prime minister.[76] The monopoly of power exercised by the Barzani family in the region's governance since 1997 continued to provoke criticism from other Kurdish

[65] FDD, Iraq forms new government with only 14 of 23 ministers, 15 May 2026, url
[66] Calabrese, J., Iraq is emerging as the Middle East's strategic connector – but can it turn foreign competition into advantage?, The Conversation, 21 July 2026, url
[67] Arab Weekly (The), Iraq, Iran expand strategic partnership with raft of new agreements, 24 July 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Iraqi PM makes first official visit to Iran in bid to deepen ties, 23 July 2026, url
[68] Al Jazeera, Iraqi PM makes first official visit to Iran in bid to deepen ties, 23 July 2026, url
[69] Arab Weekly (The), Iraq, Iran expand strategic partnership with raft of new agreements, 24 July 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Iraqi PM makes first official visit to Iran in bid to deepen ties, 23 July 2026, url
[70] Higel, L., Iraq is Targeting Corruption, but the Future of Reform is Uncertain, International Crisis Group, 29 June 2026, url
[71] WKI, From Constitution to Collapse: The Kurdish Struggle in Post-2003 Iraq, 9 July 2025, url
[72] BBC News, Iraq takes disputed areas as Kurds 'withdraw to 2014 lines', 18 October 2017, url
[73] LSE Middle East Centre Report, IRAQ's disputed internal boundaries after ISIS, February 2019, url, p. 9
[74] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 2
[75] TWI, Iraqi Kurdistan's New Government, 11 July 2019, url
[76] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 2

factions.[77] In the latest Kurdistan Region parliamentary election, held in October 2024, the KDP and the PUK obtained the most seats in the regional legislature.[78] However, amid a resurgence of historic rifts between the two parties in recent years[79] and political paralysis, the newly elected regional legislature has thus far only met once (in January 2025).[80] No new KRG cabinet has been formed as of late September 2026.[81] Key areas of dispute included the composition of the new KRG cabinet[82] and the allocation of entitlements within the KRI parliament and of federal-level positions such as the country's presidency and posts in ministries.[83] Due to this deadlock and lack of a new cabinet, the previous KRG led by prime minister Masrour Barzani has been governing the KRI in a caretaker capacity.[84]

As of late April 2026, the KDP, the largest Kurdish party, was believed to be seeking to abandon traditional joint administration arrangements with the PUK (led by Bafel Talabani).[85] Meanwhile the PUK, whose power has been in decline for years as a result of internal leadership disputes and dissent,[86] aimed to reclaim its historical status as the KDP's equal, demanding a substantive share of power in any regional government to be formed.[87] As the prospects of forming a KDP-PUK government appeared to fade, the PUK began to consider alternative options, entering a partnership with the New Generation Movement (NGM),[88] an opposition party known for its reformist stance that has sought to challenge the KDP-PUK dominance,[89] in view of a possible coalition arrangement. The PUK also invited other parties to join the initiative.[90] A power-sharing deal was signed between PUK and NGM in May 2026, reflecting a shift from the NGM's previous consistent refusal to join a government with either the KDP or the PUK.[91]

As a result of the prolonged political deadlock and failure to form a new cabinet, it was noted in September 2026 that the KRG was no longer exercising unified authority across the KRI.[92] A de facto administrative split divided the region into a KDP administration whose power was

[77] Kurd Press, 29 years of power is monopolized by two members of the same family, 29 April 2026, url; EPC, Growing Concern in a Divided Home: Syrian Consequences on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 12 February 2025, url
[78] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 2
[79] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 2; Rodgers, W., Political deadlock has left Iraq's Kurdistan Region dangerously exposed amid Iran war, Chatham House, 29 April 2026, url
[80] Asharq Al-Awsat, Iraq Court Delays Ruling on Dissolving Kurdistan Parliament, Government, 21 September 2026, url
[81] Rodgers, W., Behind Iraqi Kurdistan's cabinet deadlock, a quiet contest for Erbil, Amwaj Media, 25 September 2026, url; FDD, Kurdistan Region of Iraq announces Peshmerga unification, 23 September 2026, url
[82] Asharq Al-Awsat, Iraq Court Delays Ruling on Dissolving Kurdistan Parliament, Government, 21 September 2026, url
[83] Al Azzawi, R., Iraq After the Elections: Political Trajectories and Strategic Expectations, GRC, January 2026, url, p. 49
[84] Saeed, H.H., A divided Kurdistan region: A strategic risk for Europe, EU Reporter, 15 September 2026, url
[85] Rodgers, W., Political deadlock has left Iraq's Kurdistan Region dangerously exposed amid Iran war, Chatham House, 29 April 2026, url
[86] Mède, H., Kurdistan irakien : le PDK, le véritable centre du pouvoir ? [Iraqi Kurdistan: The KDP, the true centre of power?], April-June 2026, p. 79
[87] Rodgers, W., Political deadlock has left Iraq's Kurdistan Region dangerously exposed amid Iran war, Chatham House, 29 April 2026, url
[88] EPIC, ISHM: January 15 – 22, 2026, 22 January 2026, url
[89] New Region (The), Power, pressure, and paralysis: the politics behind the PUK–NGM deal, 24 May 2026, url
[90] EPIC, ISHM: January 15 – 22, 2026, 22 January 2026, url
[91] New Region (The), Power, pressure, and paralysis: the politics behind the PUK–NGM deal, 24 May 2026, url
[92] Saeed, H.H., A divided Kurdistan region: A strategic risk for Europe, EU Reporter, 15 September 2026, url

concentrated in Erbil and Dohuk and a PUK administration controlling Sulaymaniyah.[93] At the same time, there were reported signs of intensification in talks between the KDP and PUK to reactivate the new KRI parliament and form the KRG cabinet.[94]

1.2. Overview of recent security developments

After years of conflict, a state of relative,[95] albeit fragile,[96] stability prevailed under former prime minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani from 2022[97] through to 2025.[98] The threat posed by ISIL has diminished following sustained anti-terrorism operations.[99] In recent years, Iraqi political elites across ideological, sectarian and ethnic affiliations remained wary of the prospect of the country becoming entangled in a regional conflict. Even factions with traditionally close links with Iran for the most part showed restraint after 7 October 2023 Hamas attacks, Israel's war in Gaza, and the ensuing regional conflict.[100] Some armed factions, however, launched attacks on US and Israeli targets that were claimed under the name of the Islamic Resistance of Iraq (IRI).[101] Since the beginning of the US/Israel war with Iran on 28 February 2026, the Iraqi state has been faced with a new situation in which it could no longer maintain any monopoly on the use of force[102] and was unable to prevent the conflict from infringing upon Iraqi territorial sovereignty.[103] Iraqi armed groups linked to Iran, disregarding the government's declared policy of neutrality,[104] have launched hundreds of

[93] Saeed, H.H., A divided Kurdistan region: A strategic risk for Europe, EU Reporter, 15 September 2026, url; National Context (The), Two Power Centres: How the KDP and PUK Became Different Kinds of Useful, 8 July 2026, url
[94] Kurdistan 24, KDP Says Talks Intensify to Reactivate Kurdistan Parliament, Form New Government, 19 September 2026, url
[95] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 1; UNHCR, Iraq at a Glance – October 2025, 20 October 2025, url
[96] HRW, World Report 2026 – Iraq, 4 February 2026, url, p. 235
[97] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 1
[98] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 1; HRW, World Report 2026 – Iraq, 4 February 2026, url, p. 235
[99] UN Security Council, Letter dated 3 February 2026 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-seventh 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/2026/44, 4 February 2026, url, para. 63; US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 1
[100] Chatham House, Iraq's fragile stability is threatened by a shifting Middle Eastern order, 25 July 2025, url
[101] TWI, Tracking Anti-U.S. and Anti-Israel Strikes From Iraq and Syria During the Gaza Crisis, 14 October 2024, url
[102] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url
[103] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url; Soufan Center (The), Iraq Unable to Avoid the U.S.-Iran Crossfire, 16 March 2026, url
[104] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url

attacks from Iraqi territory[105] against targets in the Gulf region[106] while also striking targets inside Iraq,[107] including US forces and sites in Kurdistan.[108]

Meanwhile, there have been external attacks by the main parties to the war against targets on Iraqi territory,[109] including US airstrikes on PMF sites[110] and Iranian strikes on assets of Iranian Kurdish opposition groups.[111] For more information on the security-related impact on Iraq of the US and Israeli war with Iran, see section 1.2.3. Impact of the Middle East regional conflict on the security situation in Iraq and the sections on the security situation and conflict impact on civilians by geopolitical area/governorate.

At the same time, the reference period saw several instances of political violence in the run-up to the November 2025 Council of Representatives elections, including attacks on candidates representing Sunni political alliances[112] such as the 15 October 2025 assassination of Safaa Al-Mashhadani in the town of Tarmiyah by an IED planted under his vehicle,[113] and the killing of a bodyguard of a Badr Organization MP by unidentified gunmen in Kirkuk City later the same month.[114]

In the KRI, the arrest of Lahur Sheikh Jangi, leader of the People's Front party, in Sulaymaniyah in August 2025 led to heavy clashes that left several people dead and dozens of Jangi supporters injured.[115] In the same region, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in May 2025 announced its decision to dissolve and cease its armed operations.[116] In a ceremony following a peace agreement reached with Türkiye in July 2025, the PKK laid down their arms. Nonetheless, thousands of villagers could not return to their homes as Turkish forces, who remained present[117] in northern Iraq throughout the reference period of this report,[118] had transformed many villages into military positions and barracks after displacing their residents[119] and reportedly prevented individuals from proceeding to their former villages.[120]

[105] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 1
[106] Soufan Center (The), Iraq's New Government Confronts Challenges on All Fronts, 4 June 2026, url; Schenker, D., Tempering U.S. Expectations About Iraq's New Government, TWI, 28 May 2026, url
[107] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 1; Schenker, D., Tempering U.S. Expectations About Iraq's New Government, TWI, 28 May 2026, url
[108] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 1; Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[109] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url
[110] EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Iraq pulled into Iran war as US targets Iran-aligned groups, 23 March 2026, url
[111] Al Jazeera, Iranian Kurdish parties in Iraq face a delicate balance amid Iran attacks, 1 August 2026, url; Asharq Al-Awsat, Komala: A Frequent Target of Iranian Attacks in Iraqi Kurdistan, 17 July 2026, url
[112] AFP, Two wounded in attack on office of Iraqi parliamentary candidate, 18 October 2025; Amwaj Media, Killing of Sunni candidate casts shadow over Iraqi elections, 21 October 2025, url
[113] Iraq, Supreme Judicial Council, Karkh Criminal Court: Death Sentence and Life Imprisonment for the Killer of Baghdad Provincial Council Member Safaa al-Mashhadani, 21 January 2026, url; Amwaj Media, Killing of Sunni candidate casts shadow over Iraqi elections, 21 October 2025, url
[114] ISW and CTP, Iran Update, October 29, 2025, 29 October 2025, url
[115] ACLED, Leaders tighten control as repression shapes Iraq's 2025 elections, 5 November 2025, url
[116] France 24, Kurdish militant group PKK to disband and end armed struggle with Turkey, 12 May 2025, url
[117] Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights – Iraq 2025, 21 April 2026, url, p. 208
[118] Euronews, Turkish forces to withdraw from strategic military base in northern Iraq, 25 September 2026, url
[119] ANHA, Turkish Military Bases remain major obstacle to return of IDPs of Serê Kaniy, 22 July 2026, url
[120] ANF News, Turkish soldiers prevent residents from returning to their villages in Zakho countryside, 15 June 2026, url; ANHA, Turkish Military Bases remain major obstacle to return of IDPs of Serê Kaniy, 22 July 2026, url

Amid government efforts to establish a state monopoly on weapons,[121] a security crisis erupted in Samarra (Salah Al-Din governorate) in June 2026. Members of Saraya Al-Salam, an armed faction affiliated to the cleric Moqtada al-Sadr with a strong presence in the area,[122] deployed across several locations in the city in a standoff against a move by the PMF leadership to appoint the AAH-affiliated Sammara operations commander Youssef Mizan Naseef Ragheef[123] in replacement of the previous Saraya Al-Salam-affiliated commander Ali Jakhifa Lafta al-Shammari. These tensions reflected persisting deep-seated rivalries between powerful Shiite armed groups.[124]

1.2.1. Armed actors

Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)

According to Global Firepower (GFP),[125] a source questioned by experts,[126] the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) included 180 000 army personnel, 5 000 navy personnel and 3 000 air force personnel as of 2026.[127] Abdulamir Yarallah remained chief of staff of the Iraqi armed forces during the reference period.[128] The ISF further comprised police forces and militias operating as part of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).[129] The Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) exists outside the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI)[130] as an independent, quasi-ministerial institution.[131] As in previous years,[132] the ISF continued to conduct operations targeting ISIL hideouts.[133] For further information about the composition of the ISF, please refer to section 1.4 of the EUAA COI report: Iraq Security Situation (May 2024).

Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)

[121] Asharq Al-Awsat, Tension in Samarra Tests Iraq Govt's Plan to Impose State Monopoly over Arms, 16 June 2026, url
[122] Faris, M., Iraqi factions' cosmetic disarmament masks deep institutional limbo, Amwaj Media, 22 July 2026, url
[123] Shafaq News, New Samarra commander sparks tensions with Saraya al-Salam, 16 June 2026, url; MEO, Samarra standoff tests Iraq's bid to bring armed factions under control, 17 June 2026, url
[124] MEO, Samarra standoff tests Iraq's bid to bring armed factions under control, 17 June 2026, url
[125] Global Firepower (GFP) is a US-based website that ranks the military capabilities of 145 countries using internet sources. Although frequently cited by media outlets, the website does not publicly disclose the identity of its human operator. GFP, Global Firepower 2026, n.d., url; GFP, Site Disclaimer, last updated 23 January 2026, url; Whois, globalfirepower.com, n.d., url; See, for example, Agenzia Nova, Egypt first in North Africa for military aircraft, Algeria second and Morocco third, 28 September 2026, url; Al Jazeera, What are Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan's joint military capabilities?, 11 August 2026, url
[126] Kuzmenko, O., Ukrainian President Cites Clickbait Ranking in National Address, Bellingcat, 29 June 2018, url; Korea JoongAng Daily, Lee's claim that South Korea's military is the world's fifth-strongest faces a reality check, 19 June 2026, url
[127] GFP, 2026 Iraq Military Strength, 20 January 2026, url
[128] Janes, Iraq establishes new Desert Operations Command, 8 September 2026, url; Shafaq News, Iraq reshuffles senior army and defense commanders, 30 July 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: February 5 – 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, url
[129] Al Jazeera, Iraq begins high-stakes security balancing act as US troops withdraw, 29 September 2026, url
[130] USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve – Lead Inspector General Report To The United States Congress, July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025, 17 February 2026, url, p. 43
[131] Tactics Institute for Security and Counter-Terrorism, Iraqi counter-terrorism forces destroyed 18 ISIS hideouts, 22 February 2025, url
[132] Rudaw, Iraqi security forces ramp up efforts to combat drug trafficking, ISIS remnants, 2 March 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: January 16 - 23, 2025, 23 January 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: December 12 - 19, 2024, 19 December 2024, url
[133] Arab Weekly (The), Airborne Iraqi operation hits ISIS hideouts in remote Kirkuk valley, 21 July 2026, url; QNA, Iraqi Forces Launch Three Airstrikes on ISIS Positions in Northern Iraq, 5 July 2026, url

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF, Hashd Al-Shaabi[134]), nominally part of the ISF,[135] were formed in 2014 to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group. The PMF were formalised by a 2016 parliamentary decree as an independent arm of the Iraqi armed forces. Their structures of command were thus left separate from the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Constituting an umbrella force[136] of mostly Shia militia groups,[137] the PMF is a large and disparate institution that comprises around 230 000 personnel and some 60 to 70 brigades[138] under 11 regional operations commands.[139]

While some PMF units operate within a predominantly Iraqi national framework (e.g., factions linked to the country's Shiite holy shrines), the PMF's core commands and operational capabilities are reported to be controlled by Iran-aligned factions.[140] Factions under the PMF umbrella include, amongst others, the Badr Organization (Iran-aligned,[141] commanding 15 PMF brigades), Kataib Hezbollah (KH, Iran-aligned with control over several PMF brigades),[142] Kataib Sayyid Al-Shuhada (KSS, Iran-aligned), Harakat Al-Nujaba (HAN, Iran-aligned),[143] Asaib Ahl Al-Haq (AAH, Iran-aligned, three brigades), Saraya Al-Salam (loyal to Shia cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr, three brigades),[144] Kataib Imam Ali (KIA, active in one brigade along with subsidiary formations such as a Christian unit),[145] the Atabat Brigades (linked to the holy shrines in Najaf and Karbala and viewed as loyal to the Iraqi state), as well as Tribal Mobilization units (Sunni tribal fighters).[146]

Militarily powerful groups like KH, comprising as many as 10 000 fighters,[147] have been known for their hybrid status. On the one hand, they are a state-affiliated part of the formal PMF architecture[148] and receive funding from the Iraqi state. On the other, they operate autonomously from Iraqi state command[149] and have obtained external support, especially from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).[150] They may pursue Iranian agendas, but also their own individual or situation-driven interests in their operations.[151] KH as well as

[134] Higel, L., Iraq Forms New Government amid Regional Turmoil [Commentary], International Crisis Group, 28 May 2026, url
[135] Soufan Center (The), Iraq Unable to Avoid the U.S.-Iran Crossfire, 16 March 2026, url
[136] Faris, M., Iraqi factions' cosmetic disarmament masks deep institutional limbo, Amwaj Media, 22 July 2026, url
[137] Al Jazeera, Will Iraq integrate the Popular Mobilization Forces into the state?, 18 August 2025, url
[138] Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[139] ISW and CTP, The Leadership and Purpose of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, April 2025, url, pp. 4-5
[140] Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[141] FDD, Deadline for Iraq's Militias To Disarm Nears but Tehran's Proxies Show They're Above the Law, 21 August 2026, url; Knights, M. and Smith, C., Badr Organization: Iran's Oldest Proxy in Iraq, Hudson Institute, 3 June 2025, url
[142] Draw Media, Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces: Growing Numbers and a Multi-Billion Dollar Budge, 22 July 2025, url
[143] Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[144] MBN/Al-Hurra, Exclusive: Iraq Unveils Plan to Integrate Armed Factions, 5 June 2026, url; Draw Media, Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces: Growing Numbers and a Multi-Billion Dollar Budge, 22 July 2025, url
[145] MBN/Al-Hurra, Exclusive: Iraq Unveils Plan to Integrate Armed Factions, 5 June 2026, url
[146] Draw Media, Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces: Growing Numbers and a Multi-Billion Dollar Budge, 22 July 2025, url
[147] Reuters, Explainer: Who are Iraq's Iranian-backed armed groups?, 29 July 2026, url
[148] Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[149] Soufan Center (The), Iraq's New Government Confronts Challenges on All Fronts, 4 June 2026, url; Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[150] Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[151] Rudolf, I., Beyond the Unity of Arenas: Understanding the agency and domestic motivations of Iraq's Shi'a Resistance militants, ICSR, 28 March 2025, url

groups like KSS, HAN[152] and Harakat Ansar Allah Al-Awfiya (HAAA),[153] AAH and KIA,[154] all designated by the US Department of State (USDOS) as foreign terrorist organisations,[155] reportedly coordinate through the Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee, an entity that coordinates Iran-aligned Iraqi militia groups[156] (around 10 factions totaling around 50 000 fighters).[157]

Some of these Iran-backed PMF groups have capabilities that go beyond those commonly associated with militia groups,[158] including their own missile and drone production facilities, including in Jurf Al-Sakhr [159] (officially Jurf Al-Nasra),[160] a stronghold of KH.[161] Attacks launched by such groups have, since October 2023,[162] often been claimed using façade names[163] to provide the actual perpetrators plausible deniability.[164] In the political realm, since 2018, some armed factions have increased their presence in governance institutions,[165] with certain Iran-aligned militia commanders playing influential roles inside the Shia CF.[166] Since the start of the US/Israel war with Iran, factions such as KH have escalated their rhetoric against security services maintaining ties with the United States, including the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS).[167] For information on attacks launched by or against Iran-aligned factions in the context of this conflict, see section 1.2.3. Impact of the Middle East regional conflict on the security situation in Iraq.

In mid-May 2026, Iraq's newly elected prime minister Ali Al-Zaidi declared that he was committed to 'reforming the security apparatus by restricting weapons to state control'.[168] Coinciding with the scheduled date of withdrawal of the US-led international coalition from Iraq, he set 30 September 2026 as the deadline for armed factions to fully integrate into the country's security apparatus.[169] In response to this, several major Shia armed factions pledged to disengage from their lead political organisation or the PMF.[170] Regarding Saraya Al-Salam, Sadr announced in late May 2026 that the militia would be separated from his political

[152] ACW, Shia Militias in Iraq: A Backgrounder, 14 May 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 25, 2026, 25 February 2026, url;
[153] ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 25, 2026, 25 February 2026, url
[154] Beaumont, R., L'Irak dans l' œil du cyclone : Bagdad face aux recompositions du Moyen-Orient [Iraq in the eye of the storm: Baghdad facing the reshaping of the Middle East], April-June 2026, p. 20
[155] USDOS, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[156] ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 25, 2026, 25 February 2026, url
[157] Reuters, Explainer: Who are Iraq's Iranian-backed armed groups?, 29 July 2026, url
[158] Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[159] Asharq Al-Awsat, Baghdad Moves to Encircle Positions Run by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Without Confrontation, 12 August 2026, url; Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[160] Shafaq News, Iraqi committee makes rare government visit to Jurf al-Sakhr, 18 August 2026, url
[161] Asharq Al-Awsat, Baghdad Moves to Encircle Positions Run by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Without Confrontation, 12 August 2026, url
[162] Malik, H. and Knights, M., Profile: The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, TWI, 21 October 2023, url
[163] Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[164] Amwaj Media, Deep Dive: To shield weapons, Iraqi armed factions 'regroup into cells', 11 September 2026, url
[165] Salih, M.A., Militias and Iraq's Role in a Multifaceted Regional War, FPRI, 25 March 2026, url
[166] Soufan Center (The), Iraq Unable to Avoid the U.S.-Iran Crossfire, 16 March 2026, url
[167] FDD, Iraqi Security Institutions: The Latest Victims of Tehran's Iraqi Proxies, 25 March 2026, url
[168] Al Jazeera, Iraq's paramilitary groups say they will disarm. Will that ever happen?, 12 June 2026, url
[169] Faris, M., Iraqi factions' cosmetic disarmament masks deep institutional limbo, Amwaj Media, 22 July 2026, url
[170] Faris, M., Iraqi factions' cosmetic disarmament masks deep institutional limbo, Amwaj Media, 22 July 2026, url

organisation and placed under the command of the Iraqi state.[171] Saraya Al-Salam later declared that it rejected any prospect of serving under PMF command.[172]

Shortly after Sadr's declaration, AAH (led by Qais Al-Khazali) and KIA (led by Shibl Al-Zaidi) similarly announced their decision to leave the PMF and place their weapons under the direct control of the Iraqi state.[173] However, as of late July 2026, the status of these factions' fighters remained unclear as none of them appeared to have laid down their weapons and left their administrative posts.[174] Meanwhile, other groups, more deeply involved in Iran's 'axis of resistance', remained opposed to disarmament, including KH,[175] HAN[176] and KSS.[177] These groups have declared that they would not relinquish their weapons until US troops had fully withdrawn from Iraqi territory.[178] While the US announced the completion of its withdrawal from Iraq on 1 October 2026,[179] the Iraqi government announced in September 2026 that the 30 September deadline for the integration of armed militias had been extended to 30 June 2027.[180]

Other armed Iran-aligned militia elements

Iran-aligned armed groups mentioned above have also maintained brigades/factions outside the PMF umbrella[181] that have operated alongside PMF-affiliated militia units to oppose the presence in Iraq of US and coalition troops in Iraq and to occasionally (or repeatedly) launch attacks on US forces, federal Iraqi and KRG forces, or targets in neighbouring countries.[182] In the context of the US/Israel war with Iran, the Iranian IRGC reportedly set up several covert Iraqi cells to launch attacks in the Gulf states. While some members of these small cells were drawn from the IRI network, the cells acted outside its structures of command, reporting directly to the IRGC.[183] In a further similar pattern reported in August 2026, larger established Iraqi militias were reorganising into smaller units of five to ten people with a direct line to the IRGC, moving in unmarked vehicles rather than under a known banner. According to Amwaj Media, these entities, while lacking independent structures of their own, seemed to differ from

[171] Soufan Center (The), Iraq's New Government Confronts Challenges on All Fronts, 4 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 21 – 28, 2026, 28 May 2026, url
[172] Asharq Al-Awsat, Tension in Samarra Tests Iraq Govt's Plan to Impose State Monopoly over Arms, 16 June 2026, url
[173] EPIC, ISHM: May 28 – June 4, 2026, 4 June 2026, url
[174] Faris, M., Iraqi factions' cosmetic disarmament masks deep institutional limbo, Amwaj Media, 22 July 2026, url
[175] Chatham House, Can Iraq's new prime minister finally rein in its armed factions?, 10 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 28 – June 4, 2026, 4 June 2026, url
[176] Chatham House, Can Iraq's new prime minister finally rein in its armed factions?, 10 June 2026, url; Asharq Al-Awsat, Iraq's Nujaba Movement Warns against 'US Plot' to Integrate PMF in New Security Ministry, 24 May 2026, url
[177] EPIC, ISHM: May 28 – June 4, 2026, 4 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 21 – 28, 2026, 28 May 2026, url
[178] Faris, M., Iraqi factions' cosmetic disarmament masks deep institutional limbo, Amwaj Media, 22 July 2026, url
[179] AP, Trump hails the US military's exit from Iraq after 12-year mission against Islamic State, 1 October 2026, url
[180] EPIC, ISHM: September 17 – 24, 2026, 25 September 2026, url; New Arab (The), Can Baghdad ever bring Iraq's militias under state control?, 23 September 2026, url
[181] EPC, Disarming Iraq's Militias: Intertwined Will and Practice, 26 June 2026, url; New Region (The), Iraq vows no compromise on armed groups disarmament initiative, 10 August 2026, url
[182] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 2
[183] Reuters, Iran's Revolutionary Guards set up covert Iraqi cells to attack Gulf neighbors, sources say, 19 June 2026, url

the named façade groups that Iran-aligned IRI factions have used to conduct attacks with plausible deniability.[184]

Kurdish forces

The Peshmerga are a predominantly light infantry force[185] that serves as the KRG's military force and is legally part of ISF.[186] Despite the fact that the KRG president is the formal commander-in-chief of the Peshmerga,[187] loyalty among its ranks was greater towards party leaders than to the KRG leadership.[188] Both the KDP and PUK maintained their separate units:[189] the KDP-commanded the 80 Unit and the PUK-controlled the 70 Unit.[190] However, on 21 September 2026, the KRG announced the unification of the Peshmerga forces under a single military structure.[191] Nevertheless, at the time of writing the report, information on the practical implementation of the announced unification and the extent to which it had been implemented across the Peshmerga forces remained limited.

PKK and Iranian Kurdish opposition groups

Fighters of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) remained present in the KRI, including in the Qandil Mountains,[192] Sidakan[193] and Makhmour,[194] as well as in Ninewa's Sinjar region[195] and Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din governorates,[196] despite the group's May 2025 declaration to disarm and dissolve.[197] According to Iraqi intelligence reports cited by The New Region news website in September 2026, the PKK maintained five brigades with 14 battalions in Iraq, comprising thousands of fighters, including Iraqis (mainly Yazidis) and foreign fighters.[198]

Several Iranian Kurdish opposition groups continued to maintain headquarters and bases in the KRI, including the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI/PDKI),[199] the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK),[200] the Kurdistan Freedom Life Party (PJAK),[201] the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan[202] and the Komala of the Toilers of Kurdistan party.[203] In February 2026, following

[184] Amwaj Media, Deep Dive: To shield weapons, Iraqi armed factions 'regroup into cells', 11 September 2026, url
[185] Levy, I., The Army of Kurdistan: The Peshmerga, MEI, August 2026, url, p. 10
[186] Rodgers, W., In Iraqi Kurdistan, Peshmerga Reform Dies on the Vine, Inkstick, 4 June 2026, url
[187] Levy, I., The Army of Kurdistan: The Peshmerga, MEI, August 2026, url, p. 8
[188] Karam, P., Iraq's Kurdistan Region After the Iran War, ACW, 9 June 2026, url; Rodgers, W., In Iraqi Kurdistan, Peshmerga Reform Dies on the Vine, Inkstick, 4 June 2026, url
[189] Levy, I., The Army of Kurdistan: The Peshmerga, MEI, August 2026, url, p. 8; US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 2
[190] Levy, I., The Army of Kurdistan: The Peshmerga, MEI, August 2026, url, p. 8
[191] KRG, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani Attends Peshmerga Unification Ceremony, 21 September 2026, url
[192] Al-Monitor, 'We chose it': PKK fighters cherish life in Iraq's mountains, 1 December 2025, url
[193] Rudaw, Duhok's bordering villages repopulating amid PKK-Turkey peace process, 6 July 2026, url
[194] Kurdistan 24, Report: Türkiye, Iraq, KRG Reach Understanding to Close Makhmour Camp Under New Peace Framework, 2 August 2026, url
[195] Asharq Al-Awsat, Türkiye Signals May Launch 'Simple' Military Operation Against PKK in Iraq, 11 February 2026, url
[196] New Region (The), Iraq's PMF moves to fill the space left by the PKK, 8 September 2026, url
[197] Reuters, Kurdish PKK militants announce withdrawal from Turkey as part of disarmament, 26 October 2025, url
[198] New Region (The), Iraq's PMF moves to fill the space left by the PKK, 8 September 2026, url
[199] New Region (The), Drone attacks strike KDPI camps in Erbil despite ceasefire, 1 May 2026, url
[200] Al Jazeera, Iranian Kurdish parties in Iraq face a delicate balance amid Iran attacks, 1 August 2026, url
[201] Wilgenburg, W., Potential for Kurdish Militants to Capture Territory in Iran, Jamestown, 17 April 2026, url
[202] Asharq Al-Awsat, Komala: A Frequent Target of Iranian Attacks in Iraqi Kurdistan, 17 July 2026, url
[203] FDD, Iran continues attacks on Kurdish opposition group in northern Iraq, 8 September 2026, url

the suppression of protests in Iran, five Kurdish groups in Iraq and western Iran,[204] among them KDPI, PAK and PJAK, established the Coalition of Political Forces of Iranian Kurdistan[205] with the proclaimed aim to 'overthrow the Islamic republic of Iran' and to 'achieve self-determination for the Kurds'.[206] Since the start of the US/Israel war with Iran, their military and political assets in the KRI have repeatedly come under attack by Iranian missiles and drones.[207]

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

According to the UN, ISIL maintained an estimated 3 000 fighters across Iraq and Syria, most of them located in Syria. In Iraq, the group faced pressure from continuous counter-terrorism efforts. With its leadership fragmented following the losses of senior members, its capacity to mount large-scale operations was limited. In 2025, attacks by ISIL in Iraq were at an all-time low. However, the group maintained a presence in western Anbar as well as in the Hamrin Mountains[208] (located in Diyala and straddling the borders of Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din)[209] and Kirkuk governorate's Wadi Zghaitun area.[210]

1.2.2. International involvement

United States

After major combat operations of the US-led Global Coalition to Defeat ISIL had drawn to an end by 2017, the coalition shifted towards working with Iraqi forces to fight ISIL's remnants.[211] US security cooperation from that point on focused on strengthening the capabilities of the ISF, including its Kurdish Peshmerga troops, as well as on providing military funding and gear, seeing the United States sell aircraft, helicopters, long-range radar, and other equipment to Iraq.[212]

More recently, the US framework on relations with Iraq shifted towards fighting Iranian influence, dismantling militia factions, and transitioning from a large-scale military presence to bilateral partnership.[213] In September 2024, the US and Iraq governments agreed that the forces of the US-led Global Coalition to Defeat ISIL would depart from federal Iraq by

[204] Al Jazeera, Iranian Kurdish parties in Iraq face a delicate balance amid Iran attacks, 1 August 2026, url
[205] Rodgers, W., Kurdish groups in Iran face risky dilemma amid unclear US endgame, Chatham House, 9 March 2026, url
[206] AFP, Kurdish Forces tighten security on Iraqi-Iranian Border: Iraqi official, 4 March 2026
[207] Al Jazeera, Iranian Kurdish parties in Iraq face a delicate balance amid Iran attacks, 1 August 2026, url; Asharq Al-Awsat, Komala: A Frequent Target of Iranian Attacks in Iraqi Kurdistan, 17 July 2026, url
[208] UN Security Council, Letter dated 3 February 2026 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-seventh 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/2026/44, 4 February 2026, url, para. 54, 63, 65
[209] Shafaq News, Iraqi forces kill ISIS commander, four extremists in Hamrin operation, 14 April 2019, url
[210] Arab Weekly (The), Airborne Iraqi operation hits ISIS hideouts in remote Kirkuk valley, 21 July 2026, url
[211] Jeffrey, J., After Operation Inherent Resolve: The Future of U.S.-Iraq Security Relations, TWI, 24 September 2025, url
[212] USDOS, U.S. Security Cooperation with Iraq, 20 January 2025, url
[213] Al Azzawi, R., Iraq After the Elections: Political Trajectories and Strategic Expectations, GRC, January 2026, url, p. 51

September 2025[214] and that the remaining forces would withdraw from the country by the end of September 2026,[215] although a unit of about 300 advisors and security personnel was to remain after that date.[216] By September 2025, US forces had reduced their military personnel in the country from 2 500 to under 2 000 and moved the majority of remaining personnel to the KRI. Finally, some 250 to 350 US personnel who had remained at Ain Al-Asad Air Base[217] (Anbar governorate)[218] departed on 17 January 2026, and the Iraqi army took full control of the base.[219] US personnel also left Baghdad airport.[220] Iraqi authorities announced on 18 January that US-led coalitions forces had completed their withdrawal from federal Iraq.[221] US troops formerly based at Ain Al-Asad and other sites in Anbar were relocated to Harir Air Base in Erbil (KRI),[222] which became the last remaining US military facility in the country.[223] US security cooperation with the Iraqi government continued[224] as the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) between 21 January and 12 February 2026 transferred over 5 700 male former ISIL members from Syrian detention facilities into the custody of Iraqi authorities.[225]

Before the start of the US/ Israel war with Iran on 28 February 2026, the United States primarily exerted diplomatic pressure on the Iraqi government to rein in Iran-aligned PMF groups and imposed sanctions on US-designated terrorist entities.[226] Since the start of the war, the United States have targeted pro-Iranian factions militarily[227] on several occasions, with the aim of curtailing their capabilities and political influence. However, as International Crisis Group observed, Washington faced a dilemma as escalating US attacks risked stirring up anti-US sentiments among Shia groups while reducing the intensity of attacks was likely to enhance their prestige. As of April 2026, the US administration appeared to be undecided about how to proceed with its troop drawdown process.[228] In early August 2026, following attacks near the US consulate in Erbil[229] and on Harir Air Base, preparations were under way to withdraw remaining personnel to locations abroad.[230] Sources cited by The New Arab at the beginning of August 2026 indicated that the evacuation of non-essential US personnel, as

[214] Salih, M.A., Redeployment or Withdrawal: Evaluating U.S. Troop Drawdown in Iraq, Gulf International Forum, 27 October 2025, url
[215] Atlantic Council, Ten questions (and expert answers) on the final withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, 9 September 2026, url; Salih, M.A., Redeployment or Withdrawal: Evaluating U.S. Troop Drawdown in Iraq, Gulf International Forum, 27 October 2025, url
[216] Salih, M.A., Redeployment or Withdrawal: Evaluating U.S. Troop Drawdown in Iraq, Gulf International Forum, 27 October 2025, url
[217] ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 22, 2026, 22 January 2026, url
[218] Asharq Al-Awsat, US Begins 'Pre-Planned' Withdrawal from Iraq's Kurdistan Region, 2 August 2026, url
[219] Independent (The), Iraqi army completely takes over Ain al-Asad air base after US troop withdrawal, 17 January 2026, url
[220] Bakawan, A., Irak : les défis d'un pays fragile dans un Moyen-Orient en guerre [Iraq: The challenges facing a fragile country in a Middle East at war], April-June 2026, p. 17
[221] Le Monde, Iraq announces complete withdrawal of US-led coalition from federal territory, 18 January 2026, url
[222] Asharq Al-Awsat, US Begins 'Pre-Planned' Withdrawal from Iraq's Kurdistan Region, 2 August 2026, url
[223] New Arab (The), US redeploys forces in Erbil ahead of Iraq withdrawal, 3 August 2026, url
[224] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 1
[225] U.S. Central Command, [X], posted on: 13 February 2026, url
[226] International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url
[227] FIIA, The US-Israeli war on Iran: Washington's attempt to remake the Middle East, 6 May 2026, url; International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url
[228] International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url
[229] AA, Explosion heard near US Consulate in Erbil as drone intercepted, 11 March 2026, url
[230] Asharq Al-Awsat, US Begins 'Pre-Planned' Withdrawal from Iraq's Kurdistan Region, 2 August 2026, url; Al-Monitor, US nears full withdrawal from Iraq as bases in Kurdistan Region face attacks from Iran, proxies, 31 July 2026, url

well as the transport of US equipment from Harir Air Base to Erbil International Airport had commenced.[231] By early September, Erbil International Airport was the only remaining place in Iraq where US forces were deployed.[232] Finally, on 30 September 2026, the US government and armed forces announced that the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq had been completed.[233] For information on the security-related impact of US forces on Iraq in the context of the US/Israel war with Iran, see section 1.2.3. Impact of the Middle East regional conflict on the security situation in Iraq and the sections on the security situation and conflict impact on civilians by geopolitical area/governorate.

Iran

Iraq has been central to Tehran's ability to maintain strategic depth outside Iran's borders,[234] exerting influence through Iraq state institutions and mechanisms.[235] After the fall of the Iran-aligned Assad regime in Syria, Iraq gained enhanced strategic value for Tehran in terms of its geography, institutions, and military and diplomatic ties.[236] Tehran looked for Iraqi support to help rebuild its fractured regional influence.[237] Thus, in August 2025, both countries signed a MoU on border security coordination that was intended to formalise arrangements agreed upon with Iran in 2023[238] that required Iraq to disarm and relocate Kurdish opposition groups to places further away from the Iraq-Iran border. In October 2025, Iraq and Iran held further meetings discussing the implementation of the 2023 agreement.[239] By early 2026, amid escalating Israeli and US pressure on Iraq, Iran shifted to content itself with an Iraqi government that neither antagonised the United States nor dismantled Iran-aligned networks, according to Rasha Al Azzawi, a senior researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC),[240] a Saudi Arabia-based think tank.[241] For information on the security-related impact of Iranian forces and Iran-aligned militias on Iraq in the context of the US/Israel war with Iran, see section 1.2.3. Impact of the Middle East regional conflict on the security situation in Iraq and the sections on the security situation and conflict impact on civilians by geopolitical area/governorate.

Türkiye

As of summer 2026, Turkish forces remained present in northern Iraq to fight the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). One year after the PKK announced its disarmament in mid-2025, Türkiye was estimated to maintain some 5 000 troops stationed in around 50 bases of various size in

[231] New Arab (The), US redeploys forces in Erbil ahead of Iraq withdrawal, 3 August 2026, url
[232] AFP, US-led forces begin pullout as Iraq mission ends: Kurdish official, 10 September 2026
[233] AP, Trump hails the US military's exit from Iraq after 12-year mission against Islamic State, 1 October 2026, url; US, CENTCOM, U.S. Forces End Operation Inherent Resolve Mission in Iraq, 30 September 2026, url
[234] Soufan Center (The), Domestic and Regional Challenges Intersect in Iraq, 26 January 2026, url; Al Azzawi, R., Iraq After the Elections: Political Trajectories and Strategic Expectations, GRC, January 2026, url, p. 51
[235] Al Azzawi, R., Iraq After the Elections: Political Trajectories and Strategic Expectations, GRC, January 2026, url, p. 51
[236] Calabrese, J., Iraq is emerging as the Middle East's strategic connector – but can it turn foreign competition into advantage?, The Conversation, 21 July 2026, url
[237] Soufan Center (The), Domestic and Regional Challenges Intersect in Iraq, 26 January 2026, url
[238] EPIC, ISHM: August 7 – 14, 2025, 14 August 2025, url
[239] ISW and CTP, Iran Update, October 22, 2025, 22 October 2025, url
[240] Al Azzawi, R., Iraq After the Elections: Political Trajectories and Strategic Expectations, GRC, January 2026, url, p. 51
[241] GRC, Who We Are, n.d., url

Erbil, Ninewa and Dohuk governorates.[242] The Iraqi government, opposing the Turkish military presence,[243] enhanced its security cooperation with Türkiye under security agreements sealed in 2024 and 2025,[244] declared the PKK a 'banned organisation'[245] and collaborated with Türkiye on PKK disarmament.[246] Meanwhile, in 2026, sources cited by Middle East Eye (MEE) reported that Türkiye, now engaged in peace negotiations with the PKK, had called on Iran to refrain from further attacks on Iranian Kurdish opposition groups in Iraq and Iran, fearing that such actions could prompt these groups to align with Israel.[247]

1.2.3. Impact of the Middle East regional conflict on the security situation in Iraq

Although neutrality in the US and Israeli conflict with Iran was proclaimed by both the Iraqi federal government[248] and the KRG,[249] Iraq has been affected by attacks from both sides of the conflict which began on 28 February 2026.[250]

At the onset of the war, after forces of the US[251] and Israel attacked military sites operated by pro-Iranian PMF militias, Iranian forces and Iran-aligned militias acting under the umbrella of the so-called 'Islamic Resistance in Iraq' attacked US facilities in Iraq. The KRI, the region worst affected as its regional government maintains close ties with Washington, recorded almost 500 drone and missile strikes by Iran and its aligned Iraqi militia groups between 28 February 2026 and the announcement of a ceasefire on 8 April 2026, according to International Crisis Group.[252] By early August 2026, Rudaw recorded that the KRI had been hit by more than 1 000 missiles and drones.[253]

While Iran-aligned groups in the early days of the conflict focused on attacking military bases,[254] they soon expanded their scope to target US diplomatic assets,[255] airports in Baghdad and the KRI,[256] and energy infrastructure,[257] including facilities of US and other

[242] Al Jazeera, Turkiye takes 'historic step' on energy alliance with Iraq, 29 July 2026, url
[243] US, CRS, Iraq, last updated 8 June 2026, url, p. 2
[244] Alaca, M., Can Baghdad and Ankara shift from crisis management to partnership?, Amwaj Media, 31 July 2026, url
[245] International Crisis Group, Strengthening Iraq-Türkiye Ties amid Regional Tensions, 9 December 2025, url, pp. 7-8
[246] Alaca, M., Can Baghdad and Ankara shift from crisis management to partnership?, Amwaj Media, 31 July 2026, url
[247] MEE, Turkey urges Iran to halt attacks on Kurdish groups, 31 July 2026, url
[248] FDD, Saudi Participation in U.S. Airstrikes on Iraq Signals Impatience With Baghdad's Inability To Control Armed Factions, 30 July 2026, url; International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url
[249] Rudaw, Denmark: Kurdistan Region protection not raised at UN Security Council as US pulls defenses, 3 August 2026, url; Alshamary, M. and Hadad, H., Iraq must not be a staging ground for war with Iran [Commentary], Brookings, 5 March 2026, url
[250] International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url
[251] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Evening Special Report, February 28, 2026, 28 February 2026, url
[252] International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url
[253] Rudaw, Denmark: Kurdistan Region protection not raised at UN Security Council as US pulls defenses, 3 August 2026, url
[254] International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: February 26 – March 5, 2026, 5 March 2026, url
[255] International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url
[256] Soufan Center (The), Iraq Unable to Avoid the U.S.-Iran Crossfire, 16 March 2026, url
[257] International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url

foreign oil companies in Basrah.[258] PMF elements also intentionally or accidentally struck civilian sites and were accused of a lethal attack on the INIS headquarters.[259]

Iranian forces, meanwhile, launched heavy attacks against sites of exiled Iranian Kurdish opposition groups,[260] reportedly conducting hundreds of strikes between February and early September 2026 and killing dozens of people.[261] The targeted sites were linked to groups such as KDPI[262] and Komala of the Toilers of Kurdistan,[263] with one strike in July 2026 near Sulaymaniyah killing at least nine Komala members.[264]

In response to attacks by Iranian forces and pro-Iranian groups, US forces, sometimes operating alongside Israeli forces, struck multiple PMF targets linked to Iran-aligned groups such as AAH,[265] the Badr Organization,[266] KH,[267] KIA, as well as shrine-affiliated groups like Liwa Al-Tafuf, Liwa Ali Al-Akbar and Liwa Ansar al-Marjaiya,[268] causing a number of deaths and injuries.[269] In late July 2026, at least 20 PMF members were killed as joint US-Saudi airstrikes targeted several sites[270] across eastern Iraq.[271]

Iraqi health authorities indicated that, between 28 February and 10 June 2026, at least 118 people, most of them affiliated with the PMF, had been killed in the country as a result of the conflict.[272] It remained unclear how many were civilians.[273] Between 28 February and 15 April 2026, Insecurity Insight, recorded four incidents in Anbar and Salah al-Din where US/Israeli airstrikes affected ambulance teams, injuring at least one emergency worker.[274]

[258] Guardian (The), Iraq's impossible predicament: why the country is trapped between Iran and the US, 23 July 2026, url
[259] International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url
[260] Al Jazeera, Iranian Kurdish parties in Iraq face a delicate balance amid Iran attacks, 1 August 2026, url; BBC, Iran targets headquarters of Iranian Kurdish forces in Iraq, 5 March 2026, url
[261] FDD, Iran continues attacks on Kurdish opposition group in northern Iraq, 8 September 2026, url
[262] FDD, Iran continues attacks on Kurdish opposition group in northern Iraq, 8 September 2026, url; New Region (The), Three killed, several injured in renewed attacks on KDPI in Erbil, 18 April 2026, url
[263] FDD, Iran continues attacks on Kurdish opposition group in northern Iraq, 8 September 2026, url; Kurdistan Human Rights Network, IRGC missile strikes kill nine Komala peshmergas in Iraqi Kurdistan, 17 July 2026, url
[264] AFP, Salves de drones en Irak contre des groupes rebelles kurdes iraniens [Salvos of drones in Iraq against Iranian Kurdish rebel groups], 28 July 2026; Asharq Al-Awsat, Komala: A Frequent Target of Iranian Attacks in Iraqi Kurdistan, 17 July 2026, url; Kurdistan Human Rights Network, IRGC missile strikes kill nine Komala peshmergas in Iraqi Kurdistan, 17 July 2026, url
[265] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, March 28, 2026, 28 March 2026, url
[266] EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url; Soufan Center (The), Iraq Unable to Avoid the U.S.-Iran Crossfire, 16 March 2026, url
[267] EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, March 24, 2026, 24 March 2026, url
[268] EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url
[269] Al Arabiya, Iraq allows Iran-backed militia umbrella group to respond to attacks on their positions, 24 March 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, March 24, 2026, 24 March 2026, url; Soufan Center (The), Iraq Unable to Avoid the U.S.-Iran Crossfire, 16 March 2026, url
[270] Knights, M., How to Prevent Militias from Disrupting Iraqi-Saudi Relations, TWI, 30 July 2026, url; BBC, Saudi Arabia joins US in strikes on Iran-backed militias in Iraq, 29 July 2026, url
[271] BBC, Saudi Arabia joins US in strikes on Iran-backed militias in Iraq, 29 July 2026, url
[272] Al Jazeera, US-Israel attacks on Iran: Death toll and injuries live tracker, 10 June 2026, url
[273] Airwars, The human cost of the 40-day Iran war, 19 June 2026, url
[274] Insecurity Insight, The Greater Middle East Conflict: The Impact of Explosive Weapons on Civilian Infrastructure, Essential Services, and the Human Consequences, 25 May 2026, url, p. 9

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

1.3.1. Security incidents

During the current reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 1 142 security incidents across Iraq, of which 696 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 251 as battles, and 195 as violence against civilians. Looking at trends over time, between August 2025 and February 2026, the monthly number of security incidents recorded by ACLED remained between 39 and 70. In March 2026, 411 incidents were recorded, by far the highest monthly incident number during the reference period.[275] This correlates with numerous strikes by Iranian forces and Iran-aligned groups on targets in Iraq reported after the start of the US/Israel war with Iran on 28 February 2026.[276] Following this peak, numbers gradually dropped to 155 in April and further fell, fluctuating between 40 and 82 incidents per month from May to July 2026.[277]

Looking at levels of involvement of actors across all types of incidents, the main actors (coded by ACLED as 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') were those involved in the US/Israel war with Iran, i.e. the military forces of the United States (222), Israel (137) and Iran (175), the Military and police forces of Iraq (332) (notably involved as PMF in incidents that also implicated military forces of the United States), pro-Iranian militia (173), the Islamic Resistance (52), and the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) (45). (The KDPI was almost exclusively coded as 'Actor 2', i.e. as a target of attacks,[278] as reflected in other reporting.[279]) Unidentified armed groups were involved in 218 incidents, tribal militia groups in 194, and ISIL in 69 incidents (ISIL-related incidents were mainly recorded in Anbar, Kirkuk, and Ninewa).[280]

Focusing on the armed actors implicated in the 195 security incidents that were coded as 'violence against civilians' during the current reference period, the vast majority involved unidentified armed groups (95) and various tribal militia groups (66), while 18 incidents implicated the military and police forces of Iraq and 7 involved ISIL.[281]

[275] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[276] International Crisis Group, Iraq in the Vise, 20 April 2026, url
[277] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[278] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[279] FDD, Iran continues attacks on Kurdish opposition group in northern Iraq, 8 September 2026, url; New Region (The), Three killed, several injured in renewed attacks on KDPI in Erbil, 18 April 2026, url
[280] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[281] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

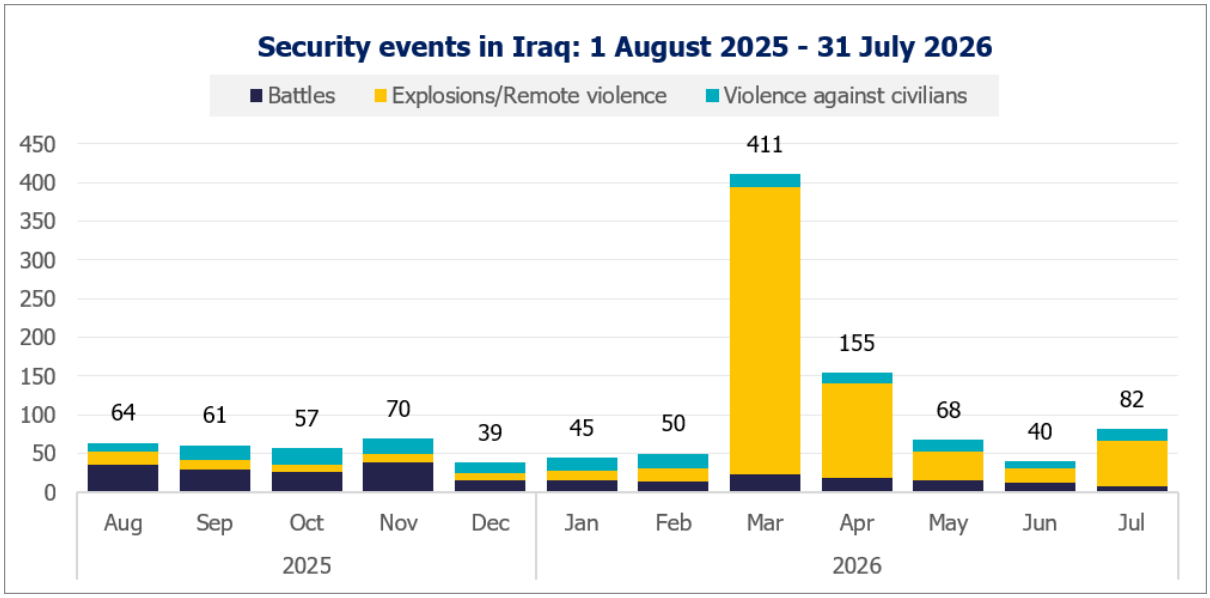


Figure 1: Evolution of security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Iraq between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data.[282]

During the current reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), security incidents were recorded in all Iraqi governorates, those with the highest numbers being Erbil (219), Baghdad (124) and Basrah (117).[283] This distribution correlates with attacks linked to the US/Israel war with Iran that began on 28 February 2026. These strikes heavily targeted Erbil governorate,[284] hitting US and coalition military sites,[285] Kurdish Peshmerga positions[286] and civilian areas in Erbil,[287] as well as US diplomatic assets and the international airport in Baghdad[288] and Basrah-based facilities of oil companies.[289] In Basrah, armed clashes linked to tribal conflicts were also reported throughout the reference period.[290] The governorates that saw the lowest numbers of recorded incidents were Karbala (10 incidents), Najaf (11), Qadissiya (13) and Wassit (12) in southern Iraq. At the same time, the eight southern governorates (Babil, Karbala, Missan, Muthanna, Najaf, Thi-Qar, Qadissiya, and Wassit) cumulatively saw 256 recorded incidents over the reference period, with Missan (105) and Thi-Qar (51) accounting for 61 % of these

[282] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[283] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[284] CPTIK, Three Months of Iran-Linked Attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: 751 Attacks, 22 Killed, 112 Injured, 31 May 2026, url
[285] Reuters, Iran's Shi'ite allies step up strikes despite weakened hand, updated 13 March 2026, url; Reuters, Airstrike on Italian base in Iraq was deliberate, defence minister says, 12 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Harir Air Base in Erbil hit in twin morning strikes, 1 March 2026, url
[286] Reuters, Rocket attack kills six Kurdish Peshmerga fighters in Iraq's Kurdistan, sources say, 24 March 2026, url
[287] Rudaw, Kurdish leaders condemn drone attack in Erbil that killed a married couple, 7 April 2026, url; Shafaq News, Air defenses intercept drones over Erbil, 4 April 2026, url; Kurdistan 24, Drone Strike Hits Civilian Area in Erbil, Injuring Several and Causing Material Damage, 25 March 2026, url
[288] Soufan Center (The), Iraq Unable to Avoid the U.S.-Iran Crossfire, 16 March 2026, url
[289] Guardian (The), Iraq's impossible predicament: why the country is trapped between Iran and the US, 23 July 2026, url
[290] See, for example, EPIC, ISHM: May 7 – 14, 2026, 14 May 2026, url; +964, Weapons and vehicles seized. Basra police arrest two tribal sheikhs, 11 others after armed clash, 16 February 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: November 6 – 13, 2025, 13 November 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 2 – 9, 2025, 9 October 2025, url

incidents.[291] This correlates with frequent armed clashes occurring in these governorates (particularly in Missan) in the context of tribal conflicts.[292]

The 696 incidents coded in the current reference period as explosions/remote violence included aerial strikes (airstrikes and drone strikes), missile strikes, artillery fire and explosive devices. The highest numbers of explosions/remote violence were recorded in the governorates of Erbil (207 such incidents), Baghdad (75) and Anbar (73). Meanwhile, the lowest numbers were seen in Najaf (3), Qadissiya (3), Karbala (4) and Wassit (4) in southern Iraq.[293]

The 251 incidents coded as Battles (armed clashes) were mostly recorded in Basrah (51), Missan (50) and Thi-Qar (32). The lowest numbers of battles were seen in Dohuk (1), Wassit (1) and Erbil (3).[294]

The 195 incidents coded as violence against civilians were most frequently recorded in Missan (42), Baghdad (30) and Basrah (24). The lowest numbers of such incidents were seen in Dohuk (2), Karbala (2) and Qadissiya (3).[295]

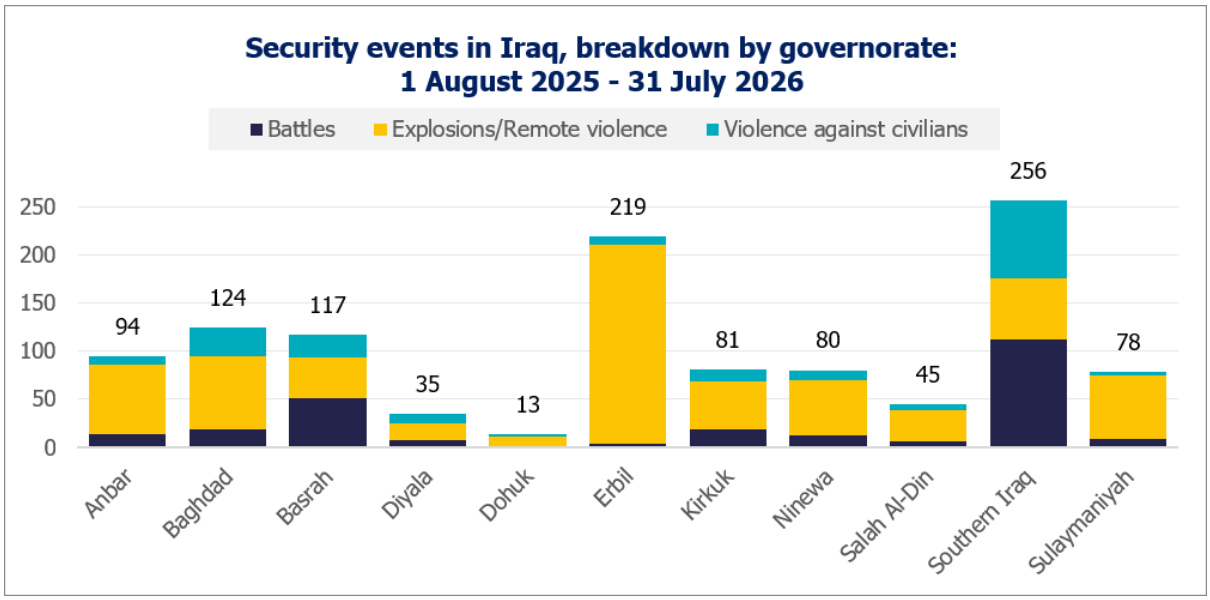


Figure 2: Security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Iraq between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 on governorate level, based on ACLED data.[296]

[291] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[292] See, for example, EPIC, ISHM: May 28 – June 4, 2026, 4 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 21 – 28, 2026, 28 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: April 16 – 23, 2026, 23 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: December 4 – 11, 2025, 11 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url; New Region (The), Tribal dispute in Maysan kills 13, 15 November 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url
[293] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[294] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[295] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[296] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

A comparison between the current reference period and the ACLED data for the previous period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025) indicates a significant decrease in overall security incidents in Iraq, from 5 084 incidents to 1 142,[297] which amongst others was associated with a substantial decline in Türkiye–PKK hostilities.[298]

1.3.2. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED,[299] the total number of fatalities recorded in Iraq during the reference period was 539 (including both civilian and non-civilian). Of these fatalities, 111 resulted from violence against civilians, 281 from explosions/remote violence and 147 from battles.[300] The highest numbers of fatalities were recorded in Anbar (124), Missan (57) and Ninewa (48), while the lowest were seen in Dohuk (2), Karbala (5) and Najaf (5).[301]

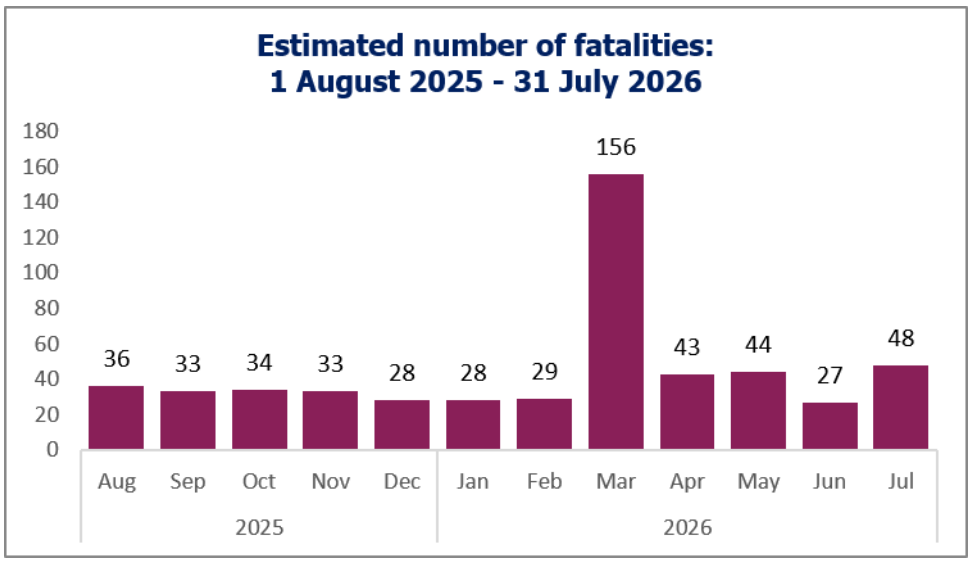


Figure 3: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[302]

For the period between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 the UCDP recorded 43 events leading to 98 casualties out of which 11 were civilian deaths. Anbar, Basrah, Erbil and Missan recorded 2 civilian deaths for each governorate, while Kirkuk, Baghdad and Salah Al-Din recorded 1 civilian death per governorate. The UCDP did not record any civilian deaths in the

[297] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 27
[298] CPTIK, The Fragility of Peace: Turkish Military Expansion and Limited Positive Outcomes for Displaced Villages, 24 February 2026, url
[299] ACLED notes in its 'Codebook' that it does not independently verify reported fatality estimates and acknowledges that data on fatalities are 'typically the most biased and least accurate component of conflict report'. ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, p. 38
[300] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[301] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[302] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

governorates of Diyala, Kerbala, Ninewa, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk, Babil, Muthanna, Najaf, Thi Qar, Qadissiya, Wassit (see Figure 4).[303]

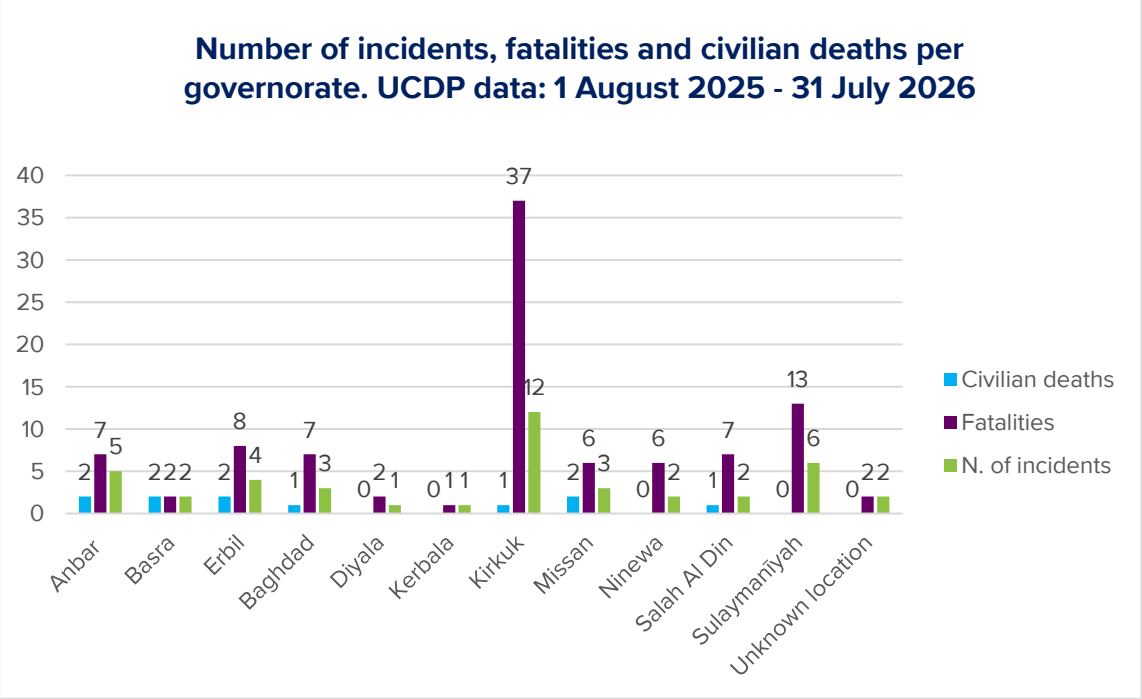


Figure 4: Number of incidents and civilian casualties per governorate. UCDP data for the period between 1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026[304]

Amongst all fatalities, Community Peacemaker Teams Iraqi Kurdistan (CPTIK), a US/Kurdish NGO, recorded 22 fatalities arising from attacks by Iranian and Iran-affiliated Iraqi armed groups across the KRI between the start of the US and Israeli war with Iran on 28 February 2026 and 28 May 2026.[305] Further local casualties resulted from tribal and communal clashes/attacks in Missan,[306] Thi-Qar,[307] Baghdad[308] and Anbar.[309]

Airwars recorded that aerial strikes (including drone strikes) conducted between 1 March and 7 April 2026 left at least 4 civilians dead and between 43 and 59 others injured.[310] Amongst others, a civilian linked to the discovery of a covert Israeli military site in Anbar governorate

[303] EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 28 August 2026
[304] EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 28 August 2026
[305] CPTIK, Three Months of Iran-Linked Attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: 751 Attacks, 22 Killed, 112 Injured, 31 May 2026, url
[306] Shafaq News, Land dispute kills six in Iraq's Maysan, 15 November 2025, url; New Region (The), Tribal dispute in Maysan kills 13, 15 November 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 30 – November 6, 2025, 6 November 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url
[307] EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url
[308] New Arab (The), Baghdad tribal clashes kill six, including four police, 7 September 2025, url
[309] EPIC, ISHM: April 30 – May 7, 2026, 7 May 2026, url
[310] Airwars, Civilian Casualty Archive – Iraq, n.d., url, set filters to 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2025 and Iraq

was killed by alleged US/Israeli forces in early March 2026,[311] while at least two further strikes by US/Israeli forces or Iran-affiliated Iraqi militia killed civilians in Baghdad.[312]

A number of casualties, including civilian fatalities, arose as unidentified gunmen opened fire at civilian vehicles in Baghdad[313] and Qadissiya[314] and attacked a Shia mosque in Basrah governorate,[315] as well as from clashes resulting from tribal and family disputes in Basrah, Kirkuk[316] and Wassit governorates.[317] In the run-up to the parliamentary elections in 2025, an IED attack in Baghdad governorate's Tarmiyah district killed an election candidate and injured four of his associates.[318]

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

Drone and missile strikes launched in the context of the US and Israeli war with Iran that began on 28 February 2026 caused damage to houses, vehicles and businesses across the KRI, especially in Erbil governorate.[319] In Erbil city, strikes hit a residential development area[320] and the UAE consulate general.[321] In Baghdad, missiles and drones were reported to have struck the US embassy compound,[322] structures at Baghdad airport[323] and the city's Al Rasheed Hotel,[324] with falling debris from intercepted drones reportedly causing further damage to infrastructure.[325] Moreover, drones struck oil fields and related infrastructure in Basrah,[326] Erbil[327] and Dohuk, and hit an UN office and communication towers in Sulaymaniyah.[328]

[311] Al Arabiya, Al Arabiya reveals how Iraqi shepherd exposed secret Israeli base during Iran war, 21 May 2026, url; New York Times (The), In Iraqi Desert, Two Israeli Outposts Were Kept Secret for Months, 19 May 2026, url
[312] Airwars, DEBIRQ260407b, 7 April 2026, url; Airwars, IRIRQ260321b, 21 March 2026, url
[313] Shafaq News, Iraq security sweep: Arrests and fata shooting, 26 February 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: September 18 – 25, 2025, 25 September 2025, url
[314] EPIC, ISHM: October 9 – 16, 2025, 16 October 2025, url
[315] EPIC, ISHM: February 5 – 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, url
[316] +964, Two killed, three wounded in tribal shooting in northern Basra, 7 February 2026, url
[317] AFP, Iraq tribal clashes kill eight: security official, 15 November 2025
[318] Amwaj Media, Killing of Sunni candidate casts shadow over Iraqi elections, 21 October 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 9 – 16, 2025, 16 October 2025, url
[319] KRG, 809 Drone and Missile Attacks Target the Kurdistan Region; 20 Civilian Fatalities Reported, 25 April 2026, url
[320] EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url
[321] UAE, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UAE Strongly Condemns Targeting of Its Consulate General in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 10 March 2026, url
[322] Beaumont, R., L'Irak dans l' œil du cyclone : Bagdad face aux recompositions du Moyen-Orient [Iraq in the eye of the storm: Baghdad facing the reshaping of the Middle East], April-June 2026, p. 22; AP, Smoke, fire seen coming from US embassy compound in Baghdad after reported missile strike, 14 March 2026, url
[323] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url
[324] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; Le Monde, Baghdad's Green Zone targeted in drone attack, 17 March 2026, url
[325] Al Jazeera, Iraq's capital Baghdad rocked by powerful blasts near US embassy, 17 March 2026, url
[326] ShaMaran Petroleum Ltd., ShaMaran Reports Incident at Sarsang Facility, 1 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Drone evades defences, ignites fire at southern Iraq oil facility, 6 March 2026, url
[327] FDD, Iranian drones and missiles hit regional oil fields, airports, military bases, and ports (March 13-16 updates), 16 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url
[328] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url

According to Insecurity Insight data, six of a total of 14 recorded attacks on healthcare facilities (mostly attributed to Iranian, US and Israeli forces),[329] as well as two of a total of seven recorded attacks on educational facilities (mostly attributed to the IRGC, unidentified actors and tribesmen) resulted in material damage.[330]

Targeted attacks in the run-up to the parliamentary elections in 2025 damaged the vehicle of a State of Law coalition election candidate in Basrah[331] and premises and vehicles of the Kurdistan Communist Party in Kirkuk.[332] Further structural damage resulted from armed tribal clashes.[333] Damage to civilian structures also resulted from attacks by unidentified individuals targeting homes[334] and a mosque under construction in Diyala.[335]

Regarding levels of contamination with explosive remnants of war (ERW), Iraq's Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) stated that, in 2025, in governorates outside the KRI, there were 436 hazardous areas confirmed to be containing anti-personnel mines and 42 others suspected to be contaminated by such mines. These areas had a total surface of 1 096.9 million square metres. As regards contamination with IEDs, there were 1 147 hazardous areas with confirmed IED contamination and 460 others suspected to be contaminated. The confirmed and suspected IED-contaminated areas had a total surface area of around 293.5 million square metres. Most contamination with anti-personnel mines was found in Basrah and Missan, while the heaviest presence of IEDs was found in Anbar, Ninewa, Kirkuk, Diyala, and Salah Al-Din governorates, with Anbar showing the largest concentration of affected areas.[336]

In the KRI, in 2025, some 205 million square metres of land were known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, while a smaller area of around 3.1 million square metres was estimated to be affected by IED contamination.[337] The Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) declared in August 2026 that 14 million square metres of land across the KRI, encompassing 316 minefields, had been cleared by mine clearance teams since the beginning of the KRG's ninth cabinet term[338] in July 2019.[339]

In 2025, at least 12 people were killed and another 16 wounded by ERW and landmines across the KRI,[340] with further incidents reported in 2026.[341] The reference period moreover saw

[329] Insecurity Insight, 2016-2026 Attacks on Health Care Incident Data, as of 7 September 2026, url
[330] Insecurity Insight, 2016-2026 Education in Danger Incident Data, as of 7 September 2026, url
[331] EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url
[332] EPIC, ISHM: September 4 – 11, 2025, 11 September 2025, url
[333] EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url
[334] Shafaq News, Iraq security brief: killings, arrests, accidents mark start of 2026, 1 January 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: December 4 – 11, 2025, 11 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url
[335] EPIC, ISHM: September 18 – 25, 2025, 25 September 2025, url
[336] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, pp. 14, 20
[337] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, pp. 17, 22
[338] Kurdistan 24, IKMAA Clears 14 Million Square Meters of Land During KRG's Ninth Cabinet, 19 August 2026, url
[339] KRG, Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States, THE GOVERNMENT: 9th Cabinets Agenda, n.d., url
[340] Rudaw, Landmine explosions killed dozen people in Kurdistan Region this year: Official, 22 December 2025, url
[341] +964, Landmine blast costs shepherd his leg in Soran, 30 June 2026, url; New Region (The), Landmine kills father, injures son in Erbil's Choman, 21 February 2026, url

multiple civilians being killed or injured by explosives across a number of other governorates, including Salah Al-Din,[342] Anbar,[343] Diyala,[344] Kirkuk[345] and Basrah.[346]

1.3.4. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[347] unit stated in its most recent Iraq Master List Report 135 (covering the period September – December 2025) that, as of 31 December 2025, there were approximately 997 300 IDPs in Iraq, a decrease of about 34 100 persons compared to the previous data collection period (September – December 2024).[348] More recent data on IDP numbers was not available as of mid-2026.[349] Of the approximately 997 300 IDPs recorded, the majority were located in the governorates of Ninewa (about 208 500 individuals), Dohuk (about 205 700) and Erbil (about 202 600). While the KRI governorates of Dhouk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah exclusively or overwhelmingly hosted IDPs originating from other parts of Iraq, other governorates with sizeable IDP populations such as Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah Al-Din, Diyala and Anbar mainly hosted IDPs from areas within the same governorate.[350] In September 2026, Karim Al-Nouri, the deputy minister of migration and displacement, stated that since Syrian authorities in February 2026 closed Al-Hol camp, a facility in Syria's Hasaka governorate that housed families allegedly with ISIL, including Iraqi nationals, a total of 21 540 Iraqis had returned to Iraq.[351]

During the period from September to December 2025, IOM's DTM observed a total of about 31 900 new IDP movements, mostly recorded in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Ninewa governorates.[352] The majority of these movements (around 26 500 or 83 %, mostly seen in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah) were relocations chiefly driven by better living conditions in the area of destination. These were followed by IDPs undergoing secondary displacement (3 168 or 10 %, predominantly in Erbil). Another 1 512 individuals (5%, mainly in Ninewa's Hatra district) experienced failed returns, i.e. were forced to depart again after their return due to lack of services and drought at their place of origin.[353]

Since the beginning of the US/Israel war with Iran in February 2026, uncertainties regarding the security situation and fear of further escalation, including in Baghdad, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah,

[342] Shafaq News, War remnant injures shepherd in Iraq's Saladin, 30 August 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 14 – 21, 2026, 21 May 2026, url
[343] +964, Two shepherds killed by bomb in Anbar's Rawa, 26 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 7 – 14, 2026, 14 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: July 31 – August 7, 2025, 7 August 2025, url
[344] EPIC, ISHM: September 11 – 18, 2025, 18 September 2025, url
[345] EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url
[346] EPIC, ISHM: December 4 – 11, 2025, 11 December 2025, url
[347] 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
[348] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 1-2
[349] UNHCR and IOM, Update on Internal Displacement in Iraq (As of June 2026), 9 August 2026, url, p. 1
[350] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 4
[351] Shafaq News, 1K+ Iraqis yet to return after Al-Hol closure, 16 September 2026, url
[352] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 2
[353] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135, March 2026, url, p. 2

Diyala, Wassit, Maysan, and Basra, have prompted precautionary relocations among people living near areas perceived to be at risk. According to the Red Cross, many families relocated temporarily to stay with relatives or host communities.[354]

According to data collected by IOM's DTM for its Iraq Master List Report 135 (September – December 2025), there were approximately 4 954 500 returnees in the country, an increase of about 26 600 persons compared to the previous period (September–December 2024).[355] The country-wide return rate[356] was 83 %. The highest return rates (increases in returnee numbers) were recorded in Ninewa, Anbar and Salah Al-Din governorates. At the same time, as of the end of 2025, IOM identified 293 'locations of no return' across Iraq, defined as places where displacement was recorded in the past but that have either not seen any return movements or where all returnees have subsequently been displaced again.[357] IOM mapped Ninewa's Markaz Hatra subdistrict (in Hatra district) as the subdistrict showing the highest number of overall locations of no return' in the country.[358]

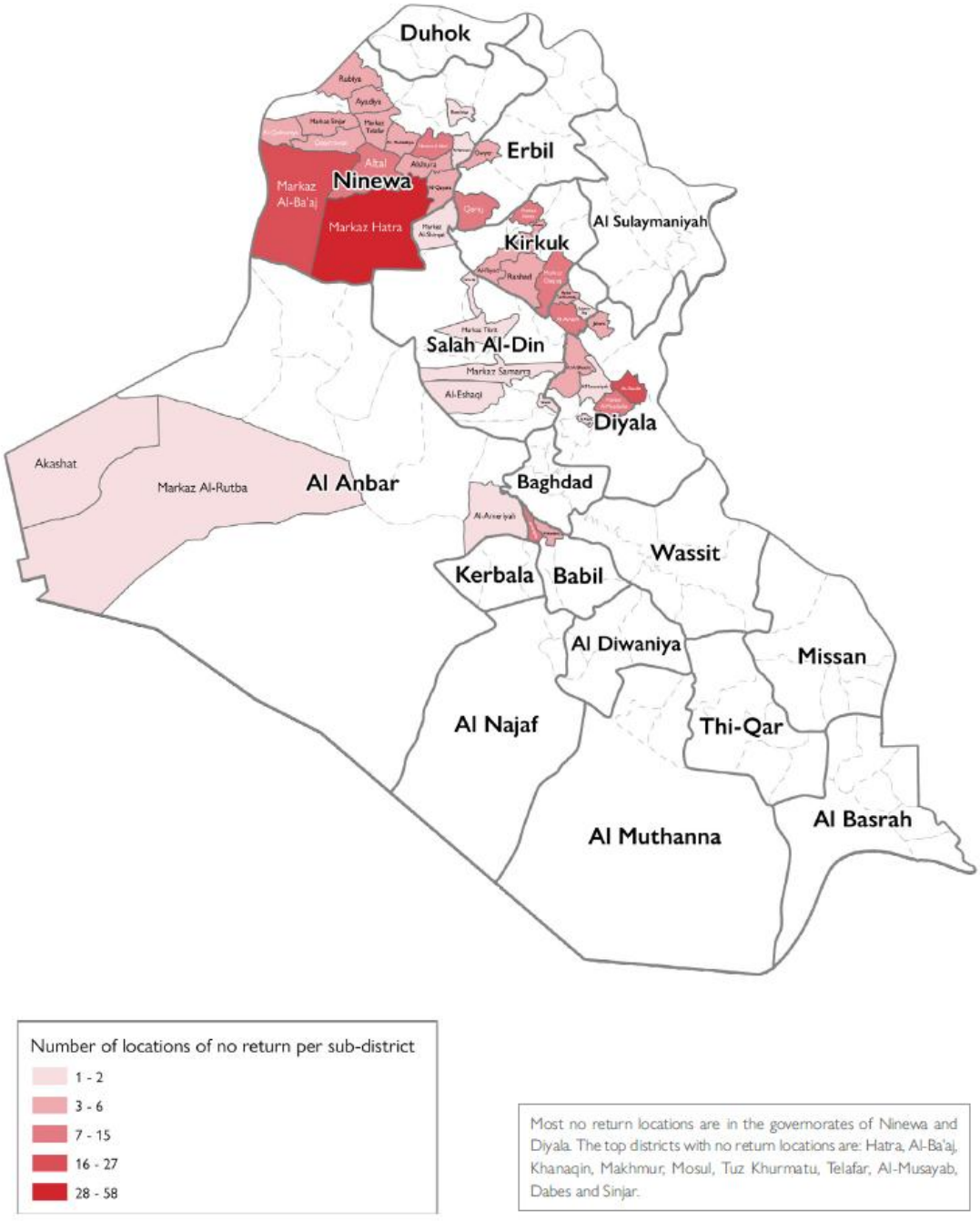


Figure 5: IOM, Number of IDPs and returnees over time[359]

Security concerns were identified as the main obstacle to return in 90 locations classified as locations of no return, most of which were in Ninewa, Erbil and Kirkuk. In another 60 locations (mainly in Diyala and Ninewa), returns were prevented by the destruction of residential

[354] IFRC, Imminent DREF Final Report: Iraq Imminent Population Movement 2026, 1 September 2026, url, p. 2
[355] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 1, 8
[356] 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)
[357] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025 [Map], March 2026, url, p. 8
[358] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025 [Map], March 2026, url, p. 12
[359] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 1

buildings. Moreover, in 42 locations (chiefly in Anbar, Ninewa, Salah Al-Din and Babil), returns were blocked by security forces.[360]



Map 2.: IOM, Areas of no return as of December 2025[361]

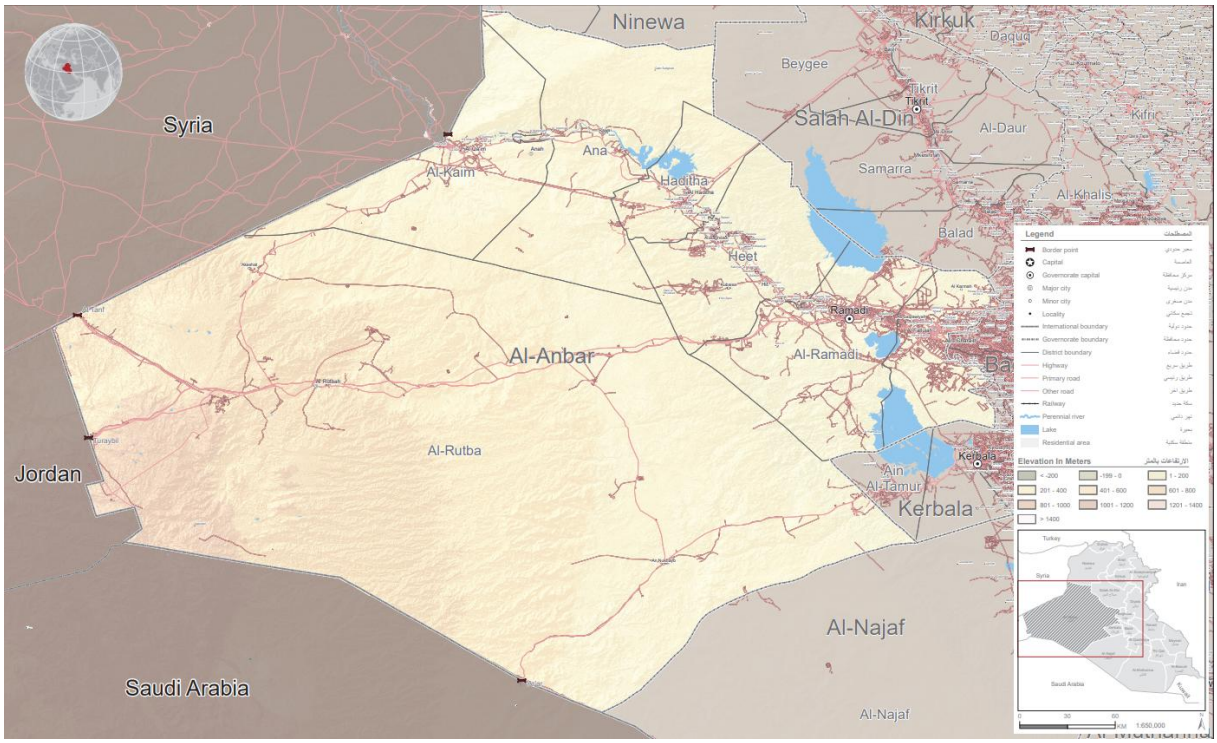
[360] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 8
[361] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 12

A July 2026 study by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on situations of return in Anbar and Salah Al-Din Iraqi governorates found that Iraqi returnees from Al-Hol, being frequently perceived as having been affiliated with ISIL (often based on family ties), faced 'heightened scrutiny – if not outright discrimination' when attempting to pass security checkpoints to return to their former agricultural lands.[362]

[362] UNIDIR, Return to Dry Lands: How Agricultural Decline Impedes Post-Conflict Reintegration in Iraq, 6 July 2026, url, p. 9

2. Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by geopolitical areas/governorate

2.1. Anbar



Map 3. UNOCHA and iMMAP, Anbar[363]

2.1.1. Administrative division and population estimates

The 2024 census data shows that the population of Anbar was estimated at 2 004 418.[364] The governorate is divided into 12 districts: Al-Ramadi, Heet, Al-Falluja, Ana, Haditha, Al-Rutba, Al-Qaim, Rawa, Al-Amirya, Al-Habbaniya, Al-Garma, Al-Obour.[365] The governorate's capital is Ramadi. The population of Anbar is predominantly Sunni Arab and the majority belongs to the Dulaim tribal confederation.[366]

[363] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Al-Anbar Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url
[364] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Anbar governorate
[365] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Anbar governorate; Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, p. 13
[366] EPIC, ISHM Reference guide, updated August 2025, url; CNA, June 2014, url, p. 5

2.1.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

As in the previous reporting period,[367] several PMF brigades reportedly maintained a presence in Anbar governorate, including brigades affiliated with Shia shrines or with Iran-backed militias.[368] In August 2025, the PMF reportedly reinforced its presence on the Iraqi-Syrian border by deploying the 27th brigade, which is affiliated with the Badr Organization, in Anbar governorate.[369] According to Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, Anbar witnessed an overlapping presence of various armed groups. These included KH, HAN, KSS, Badr, KIA, Al-Tufuf, Al-Abdal, Ansar Allah Al-Awfiya, and Ashura. Additionally, a Sunni tribal mobilisation force was present in Haditha, Heet and Al-Fallujah districts.[370]

As of late 2025, the UN Security Council assessed that ISIL's activity had narrowed to low-impact operations, with the group maintaining a presence in western Anbar.[371] In January 2026, the US-led coalition forces to combat ISIL withdrew from the Ain Al-Asad Airbase in Anbar, after which the Iraqi military took control of the Airbase.[372]

2.1.3. Security trends

The overall security situation in Anbar was described as relatively stable as of the end of September 2025.[373] The governorate became one of the areas most affected by attacks amid the escalation involving the US, Israel, Iran, and Iran-backed militias that began on 28 February 2026.[374] US forces reportedly conducted several airstrikes against PMF bases in Anbar. The National Context listed at least 31 attacks between 28 February and 1 April 2026. The central targets of attacks were PMF bases in the district of Al-Qaim on the Iraqi-Syrian border and the PMF headquarters in Al-Habbaniya.[375] EPIC reported ongoing attacks at the beginning of April.[376] Sources reported of several ISIL attacks[377] and the arrest of ISIL militants

[367] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 38; ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 9, 2025, 10 January 2025, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 29, 2024, 30 December 2024, url
[368] EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url
[369] ISW and CTP, Iran Update, August 29, 2025, 29 August 2025, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, الحشد الشعبي يعزز انتشاره على الحدود العراقية ـ السورية غرب الأنبار [The Popular Mobilization Forces are reinforcing their deployment on the Iraqi-Syrian border west of Anbar], 28 August 2025, url
[370] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url
[371] UN Security Council, Letter dated 3 February 2026 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-seventh 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/2026/44, 4 February 2026, url, para. 63
[372] TRT World, Iraq takes full control of Ain al Asad airbase after US withdrawal: defence ministry, 18 January 2026, url
[373] UNDP, Quarterly Progress Report. Funding Facility for Stabilisation. July-September 2025, 1 February 2026, url, p. 15
[374] Belgium, CGRS- CEDOCA, De invloed van de Iran-oorlog op de veiligheidssituatie in Irak [The impact of Iran war on the security situation in Iraq], 19 May 2026, url, p. 3
[375] National Context (The), Bombed by Both Sides, Iraq Faces a War That Could Unravel It From Within, [Infographic] 2 April 2026, url, set filters to Anbar governorate
[376] EPIC, ISHM: April 2 – 9, 2026, 9 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url
[377] Jummar, هل يهدد داعش العراق من جديد؟ تراجع العمليات واحتمالات إعادة التشكل [Is ISIS threatening Iraq again? Declining operations and the possibility of its resurgence], 16 April 2026, url; EPIC, IHSM: February 5 – 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 16 – 23, 2025, 23 October 2025, url

or affiliates during the reporting period.[378] Iraq's Joint Operations Command reportedly destroyed two ISIL hideouts in Rawa district in December 2025,[379] and carried out two airstrikes targeting ISIL hideouts in a desert area of Anbar in June 2026.[380] Several IED explosions were reported during the reference period.[381]

2.1.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 94 security incidents in Anbar governorate, of which 73 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 13 as battles and 8 as incidents of violence against civilians. The main actors (coded as either Actor 1 or Actor 2) of all security incidents were military forces of the United States and/or of Israel, involved in 46 incidents, followed by the PMF, involved in 38 incidents. Security incidents were recorded in 7 districts, with the majority being documented in Al-Qaim (24), Al-Rutba (21) and Al-Falluja (21). The highest number of incidents in Anbar governorate was recorded in March 2026 with 37 incidents. In the 8 security incidents coded as violence against civilians during the current reporting period, unidentified tribal militia was coded as the main actor.[382]

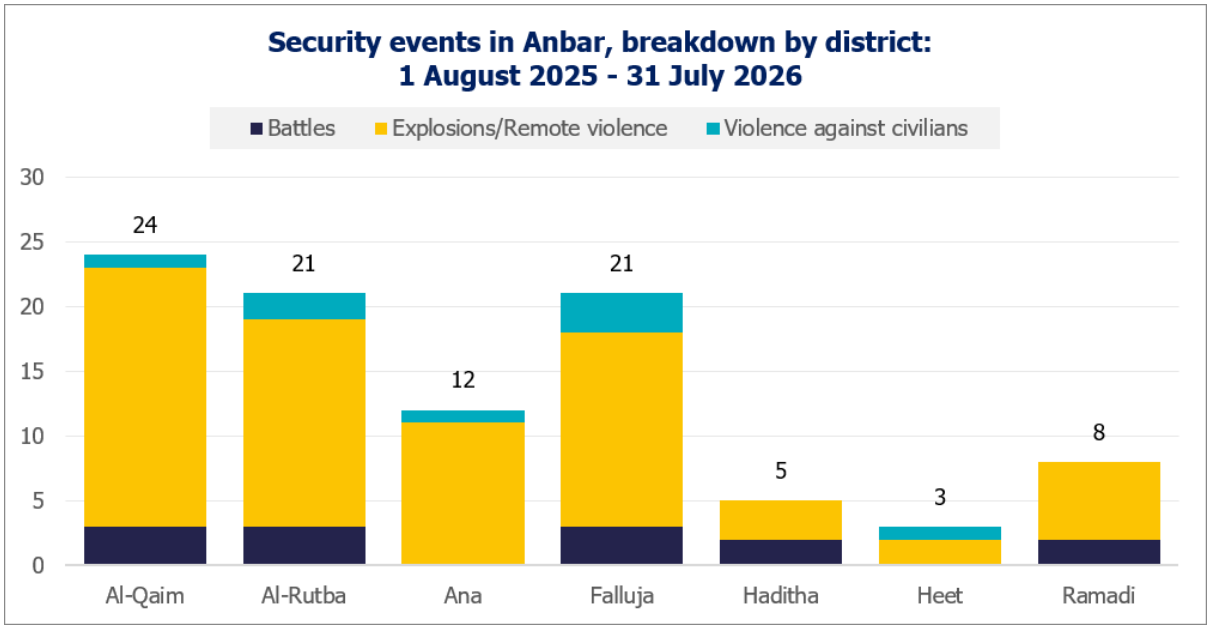


Figure 6: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Anbar between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[383]

[378] Shafaq News, Four ISIS suspects held in Al-Anbar arms raid, 27 July 2026, url; Shafaq News, Iraqi forces arrest senior ISIS financier in al-Anbar, 13 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: January 22 – 29, 2026, 29 January 2026, url
[379] Baghdad Today, (فيديو) بضربة دقيقة..صقور F-16 تدك أوكار داعش شمالي راوة بالانبار [With a precise strike, F-16 fighter jets pound ISIS hideouts north of Rawa in Anbar (video)], 19 December 2025, url
[380] EPIC, ISHM: June 18 – 25, 2026, 25 June 2026, url
[381] Shafaq News, انفجار عبوة ناسفة في هيت بالأنبار [A roadside bomb exploded in Hit, Anbar province], 8 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 2 – 9, 2025, 9 October 2025, url; Al Jazeera, مقتل عنصري أمن وإصابة ثالث بانفجار عبوة ناسفة في الأنبار العراقية [Two security personnel killed and a third injured in an explosion caused by an improvised explosive device in Anbar, Iraq], 21 September 2025, url
[382] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[383] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

A comparison between the current reference period and the ACLED data for the period 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025, indicates an increase in security incidents in Anbar governorate, from 43 incidents to 94 incidents. While the number of incidents coded as battles and violence against civilians remained similar, explosions/ remote violence increased from 22 to 73.[384] Al-Qaim evolved to become the district with the highest numbers of incidents (from 4 to 24), correlating with hostilities related to US-Israeli attacks against Iran-backed militias.[385] The military forces of the United States and/or of Israel and the PMF emerged as new major actors during the reporting period, while ISIL and unidentified armed group became less relevant.[386]

2.1.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED, the total number of fatalities recorded in Anbar during the reference period was 124 (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian), of which 6 occurred in the context of violence against civilians.[387] UCDP recorded 7 fatalities, including 2 civilian deaths.[388]

[384] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url
[385] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url; National Context (The), Bombed by Both Sides, Iraq Faces a War That Could Unravel It From Within, [Infographic] 2 April 2026, url, set filters to Anbar governorate
[386] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url
[387] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[388] EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 28 August 2026

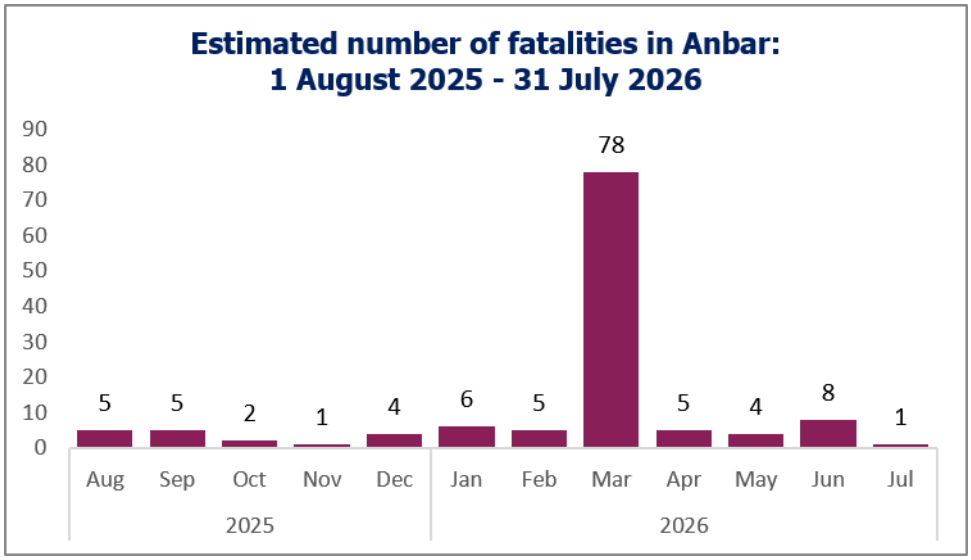


Figure 7: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Anbar between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[389]

2.1.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information on new conflict-related infrastructure damage in the reference period could be found within the time constraints of this report. The governorate recorded the largest concentration of IED contamination across the country, especially in the Haditha, Al-Ramadi, Ana, and Al-Falluja districts.[390] As of the end of 2024, the Mine Action Review estimated that 11 216 039 square metres of the governorate's area were contaminated by cluster munitions,[391] a figure unchanged from the previous year.[392] Several instances of ERW explosions were reported over the reference period with at least 13 wounded people and 2 fatalities.[393]

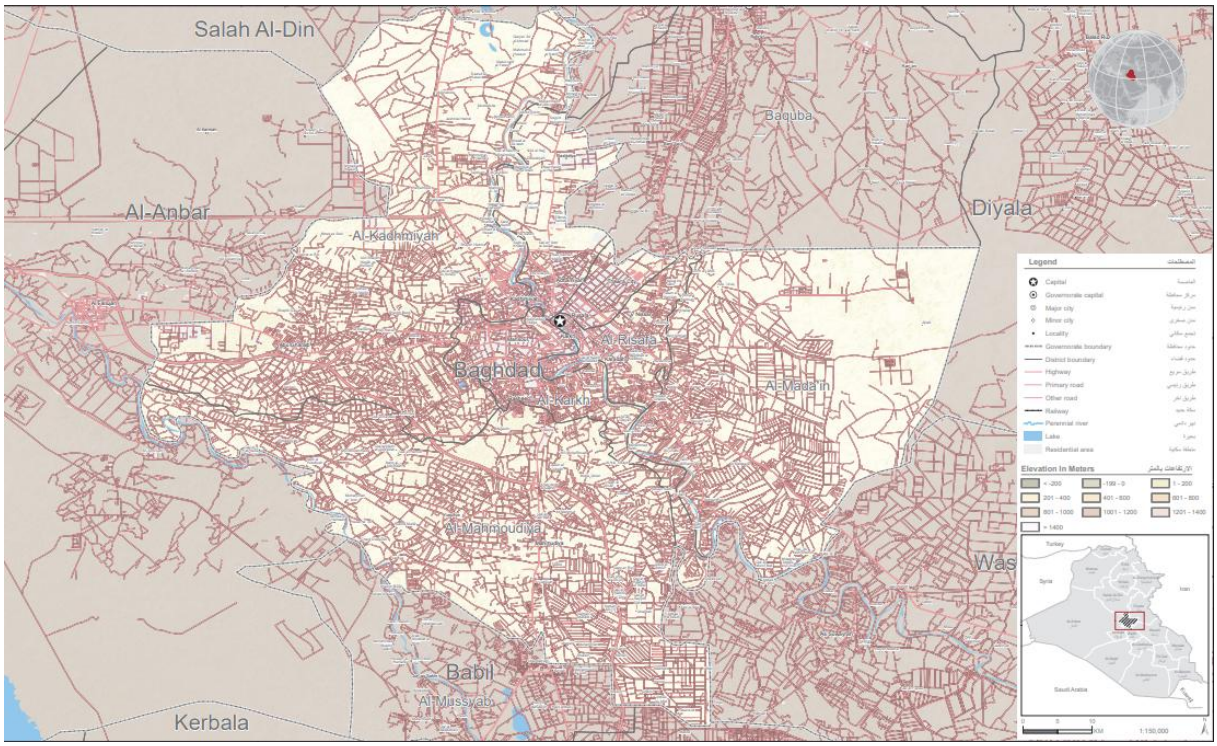
2.1.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to IOMs Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM),[394] Anbar hosted approximately 32 800 displaced people, about 17 200 of them in Falluja district, as of 31 December 2025. This represented a decrease of 342 people compared to 2024. 70 % of IDPs were displaced

[389] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[390] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, p. 12
[391] Mine Action Review, Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2025 [Table 1], 2025, url, p. 51
[392] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 41; Mine Action Review, Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2024 [Table 1], 2024, url, p. 56
[393] EPIC, ISHM: June 25 – July 2, 2026, 2 July 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: June 4 – 11, 2026, 11 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 7 – 14, 2026, 14 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: December 18, 2025 – January 8, 2026, 8 January 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: August 28 – September 4, 2025, 4 September 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: July 31 – August 7, 2025, 7 August 2025, url; Alma Al-Omah, انفجار عبوة ناسفة على دورية للجيش غربي الأنبار [A roadside bomb exploded targeting an army patrol in western Anbar], 25 August 2025, url
[394] 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

within the governorate.[395] Anbar is one of the governorates with the highest returnee numbers overall,[396] including from Syria's Al-Hol camp.[397] As of December 2025, the total number of returnees in Anbar stood at approximately 1 557 600, amounting to a return rate[398] of 93 %, with returns mostly driven by movements from camps.[399] Most returnees had previously been displaced within Anbar (43 %), followed by returnees from Baghdad (21 %), Erbil (16 %), Kirkuk (10 %) and other areas of Iraq (10 %). While the IOM reported that security forces blocked some returns in Anbar,[400] the International Rescue Committee (IRC) stated that returns continued in Anbar. Due to damaged houses and inadequate services, many of the returnees were forced to relocate to areas other than their original neighbourhoods.[401]

2.2. Baghdad



Map 4. UNOCHA and iMMAP, Baghdad[402]

[395] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 4
[396] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 8
[397] UNDP, European Union Strengthens Support for Iraq's Community Reintegration Efforts, 9 February 2026, url
[398] 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)
[399] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 8, 10
[400] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 8, 10
[401] IRC, Rapid Needs Assessment, October 2025, url, p. 8
[402] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Baghdad Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url

2.2.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Baghdad governorate contains Baghdad City, the capital of Iraq and the country's largest city.[403] The governorate is divided into 15 districts: Al-Risafa, Al-Adhamiya, Al-Sadr 1, Al-Sadr 2, Al-Karkh, Al-Kadhimiya, Mahmudiya, Abu-Ghraib, Al-Tarmiya, Al-Mada'in, Al-Zawra'a, Al-Zohour, That al Salasil (Sama Al-Kadhimiya), Fada Al-Kadhimiya (Al-Taji) and Al-Rashdia. The districts are further divided into 37 administrative units.[404] According to the 2024 census, the population of Baghdad governorate was about 9 780 400, with approximately 8.33 million inhabitants living in the metropolitan area of Baghdad City.[405]

2.2.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

As in the previous reference period,[406] Shia militias maintained a significant presence in Iraq's capital,[407] while security in Baghdad and its surrounding area falls under the responsibility of the Iraqi Security Forces' Baghdad Operations Command.[408] Baghdad continued to serve as a central hub for the political and security activities of armed factions, whose influence extended into parliamentary representation, ministerial positions, state institutions and political decision-making.[409] The capital was reportedly divided into undeclared spheres of influence: Badr and Asaib Ahl Al-Haq were active in eastern and southern Baghdad, while Kataib Hezbollah retained particular influence in the Baghdad belt and other strategic areas. Saraya al-Salam (the 'Peace Brigades' in English), maintained a significant presence in Sadr City and the eastern outskirts of Baghdad. Sunni armed factions were also present on the outskirts of the capital.[410]

ISIL retained some presence or networks in Baghdad governorate during the reference period, mainly evidenced by arrests of suspected members,[411] particularly in northern and southern Baghdad[412] and in Tarmiya.[413]

US/coalition personnel were reportedly in the process of scaling back their presence in Baghdad and shifting towards the Kurdistan Region, particularly Erbil. The few US troops to

[403] Encyclopaedia Britannica, Baghdad, last updated 9 September 2026, url
[404] Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, pp.14-15
[405] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Baghdad governorate
[406] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 42; MBN/Al-Hurra, Iraqi Militias Mobilize as Iran-Israel Tensions Reignite Talk of "Unified Front", 21 June 2025, url
[407] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url; MBN/Al-Hurra, Exclusive: Iraq Unveils Plan to Integrate Armed Factions, 5 June 2026, url
[408] ISW and CTP, Iran Update, August 25, 2026, 25 August 2026, url
[409] Chatham House, Can Iraq's new prime minister finally rein in its armed factions?, 9 June 2026, url
[410] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url
[411] Shafaq News, Iraq captures top ISIS operative south of Baghdad, 20 August 2025, url; QNA, Iraq Arrests 5 ISIS Members in Baghdad, 5 October 2025, url; Shafaq News, Iraq security brief: Border security reaches peak levels, ISIS members arrested, 17 December 2025, url; Shafaq News, Security forces capture ISIS operative north of Iraqi capital, 11 June 2026, url
[412] Shafaq News, Iraq captures top ISIS operative south of Baghdad, 20 August 2025, url; QNA, Iraq Arrests 5 ISIS Members in Baghdad, 5 October 2025, url
[413] Shafaq News, Security forces capture ISIS operative north of Iraqi capital, 11 June 2026, url

remain in Baghdad will focus on bilateral security cooperation rather than counter-ISIL operations.[414]

2.2.3. Security trends

During the reference period, Baghdad was affected by the US-Israeli war with Iran, and the ensuing regional escalation in March and April 2026. Reuters reported rocket and drone attacks targeting the US embassy and a US diplomatic facility near Baghdad International Airport in March 2026.[415] EPIC reported rocket and drone attacks on targets in Baghdad, including a drone strike on the Iraqi National Intelligence Service headquarters and militia rockets striking a Counter-Terrorism Service base near Baghdad airport.[416] At the same time, US and Israeli airstrikes targeted PMF leaders and bases across the country, including in Baghdad.[417] In April 2026, a rocket struck a house in Al-Amiriyah, western Baghdad, killing two civilians. Other rockets or drones reportedly struck a house, university dormitories and vehicles in other parts of the capital.[418] In early July, shrapnel and stray rounds from a drone interception over the Green Zone were reportedly found in Sadr City and Palestine Street areas of the capital.[419] In contrast to the previous reference period,[420] no reports of inter-militia clashes in Baghdad governorate could be identified.

With regard to ISIL-related activity, as in the previous reference period,[421] reporting on the group's presence in Baghdad governorate remained limited and mostly concerned arrests of ISIL suspects.[422] Regarding violence linked to tribal disputes, clashes were reported in the Al-Ma'amil area of eastern Baghdad in September 2025,[423] and similar violence continued in the capital in 2026.[424]

Politically motivated security incidents were also reported. On 15 October 2025, a member of the Baghdad Provincial Council and a candidate in the then upcoming parliamentary elections, was killed when an IED exploded under his vehicle in Tarmiya, north of Baghdad.[425] In early March 2026, Yanar Mohammed, founder and president of the Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) and a prominent women's rights defender, was shot and killed by two

[414] Reuters, Pentagon says Iraq mission being scaled back, 1 October 2025, url; AP, US military starts drawing down its mission in Iraq countering the Islamic State group, 1 October 2025, url
[415] Reuters, Rocket and drone attacks resume on US embassy and diplomatic facility in Baghdad, sources say, 17 March 2026, url
[416] EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url
[417] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url
[418] EPIC, ISHM: April 2 – 9, 2026, 9 April 2026, url
[419] EPIC, ISHM: June 25 – July 2, 2026, 2 July 2026, url
[420] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 42
[421] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 43; 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
[422] Shafaq News, Iraq captures top ISIS operative south of Baghdad, 20 August 2025, url; QNA, Iraq Arrests 5 ISIS Members in Baghdad, 5 October 2025, url; Shafaq News, Iraq security brief: Border security reaches peak levels, ISIS members arrested, 17 December 2025, url; Shafaq News, Security forces capture ISIS operative north of Iraqi capital, 11 June 2026, url
[423] EPIC, ISHM: September 4 – 11, 2025, 11 September 2025, url
[424] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[425] EPIC, ISHM: October 9 – 16, 2025, 16 October 2025, url

gunmen outside her residence in Baghdad.[426] At the end of March 2026, Kataib Hezbollah kidnapped American journalist Shelly Kittleson in central Baghdad.[427] She was released one week later.[428]

2.2.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 124 security incidents in Baghdad governorate, of which 75 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 30 as violence against civilians, and 19 as battles. According to ACLED data, US and/or Israeli military forces were involved as main actors (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') in 38 incidents, followed by unidentified armed groups in 39 incidents and pro-Iranian militia in 29 incidents.

Security incidents were recorded in seven of the 15 governorate districts, the districts with most recorded incidents being Al-Kadhimiya (57), Al-Karkh (16) and Al-Adhamiya (9). Most incidents in Al-Kadhimiya involved drone strikes linked to the US/Israel-Iran conflict. Additionally, 20 incidents occurred in unspecified locations in the governorate. ACLED data shows a peak in security incidents in March 2026, when 52 incidents were recorded, which dropped to 17 incidents in April.[429] This peak correlated with hostilities related to the US/Israeli war against Iran.[430]

Throughout the remainder of the reference period, the monthly number of recorded security incidents remained at or below 8. Of the 30 security incidents coded as 'violence against civilians', 18 involved unidentified armed groups and 8 were conducted by unidentified Iraqi tribal militias.[431] Military forces of the United States and/or Israel as well as pro-Iranian militia emerged as new major actors during the reference period.[432]

[426] EPIC, ISHM: February 26 – March 5, 2026, 5 March 2026, url
[427] New Arab (The), Iraq sentences kidnapper of US journalist to 15 years in prison, 31 August 2026, url
[428] EPIC, ISHM: April 2 – 9, 2026, 9 April 2026, url
[429] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[430] FDD's Long War Journal, Strikes continue hitting Iran-backed Iraqi militias, Kataib Hezbollah declares temporary US embassy ceasefire, 20 March 2026, url
[431] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[432] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 43

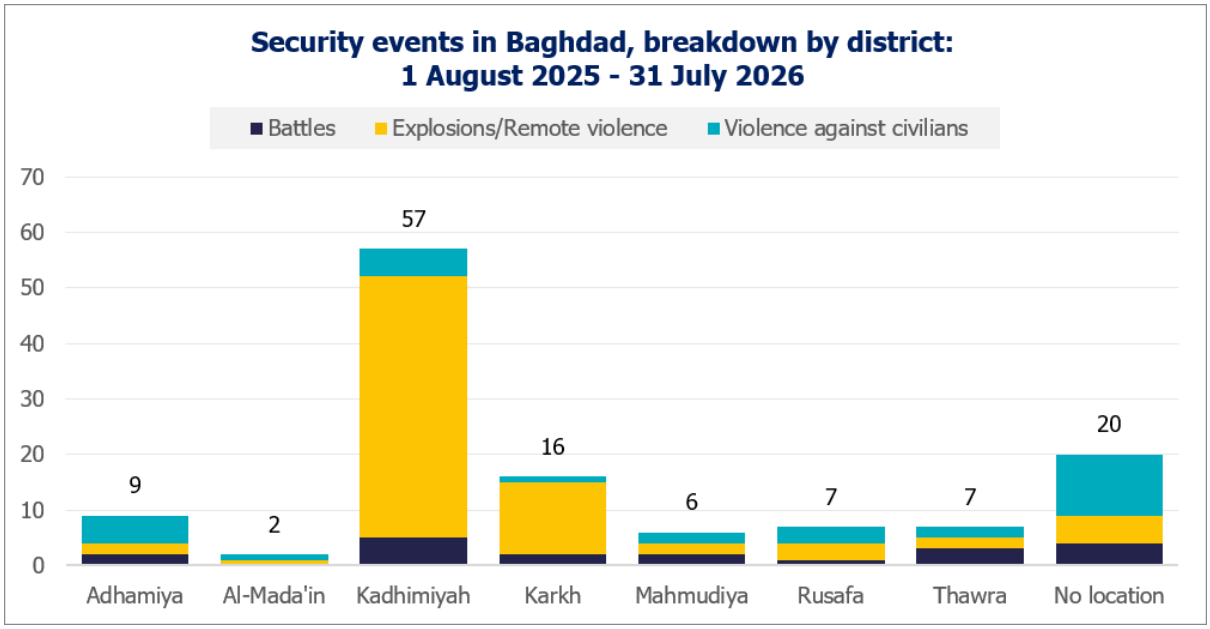


Figure 8: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Baghdad between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[433]

A comparison between the current reference period and ACLED data for the period 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025 indicates a decrease in security incidents in Baghdad governorate, from 147 to 124 incidents. While the current period saw a decrease in events codified as 'battles' (from 47 to 19) and 'violence against civilians' (from 74 down to 30), the number of events codified as 'explosions/remote violence' increased from 26 to 75 events, driven by incidents related to the US/Israel-Iran conflict in March and April 2026. Al-Kadhimiya remained the district with the highest number of incidents recorded, while the number of incidents in Al-Thawra decreased (from 26 to 7).[434]

2.2.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED, the total number of fatalities recorded in Baghdad during the reference period was 43 (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian). These fatalities resulted from explosions/remote violence (17), violence against civilians (17) and battles (9).[435] UCDP recorded 7 fatalities, including 1 civilian death in the governorate.[436]

[433] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[434] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, pp. 43-44
[435] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[436] EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 28 August 2026

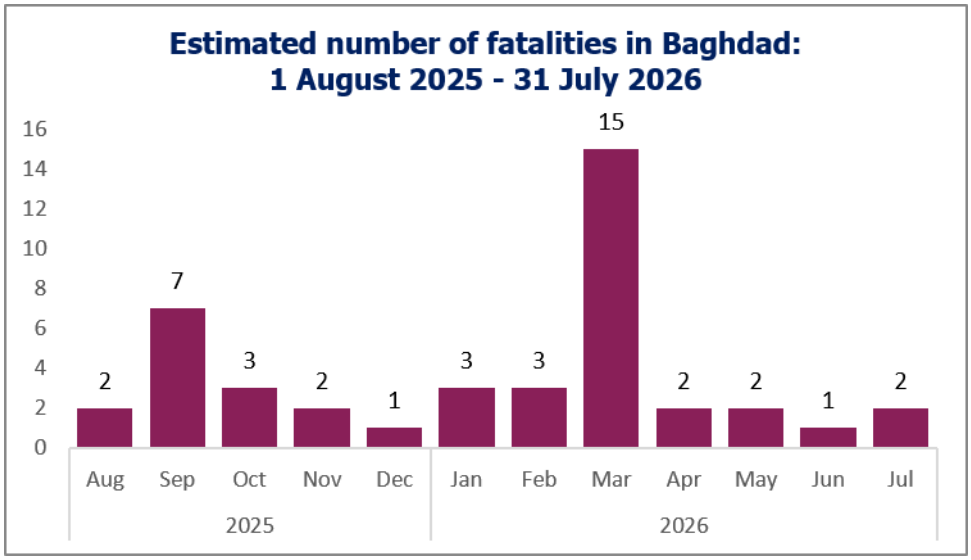


Figure 9: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Baghdad between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[437]

2.2.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

From March onwards, strikes related to the US/Israel–Iran war affected civilian buildings[438] and targeted diplomatic[439] and security facilities in Baghdad.[440] Rockets or drones reportedly struck houses, university dormitories and vehicles,[441] while targets included the US embassy, a US diplomatic facility near Baghdad International Airport, the Iraqi National Intelligence Service headquarters and a Counter-Terrorism Service base near the airport.[442]

For 2025, the Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) reported several smaller hazardous locations in Baghdad, indicating concentrated, site-specific contamination rather than broad territorial contamination. The DMA listed four hazardous locations in the district of Al-Karkh.[443] National media occasionally reported controlled detonations of war remnants.[444]

[437] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[438] EPIC, ISHM: April 2 – 9, 2026, 9 April 2026, url
[439] Reuters, Rocket and drone attacks resume on US embassy and diplomatic facility in Baghdad, sources say, 17 March 2026, url
[440] EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url
[441] EPIC, ISHM: April 2 – 9, 2026, 9 April 2026, url
[442] EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: June 25 – July 2, 2026, 2 July 2026, url
[443] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, p. 12
[444] Al-Sumaria, بعد قليل..تفجير في بغداد [Briefly... an explosion in Baghdad], 19 August 2025, url; Shafaq News, تفجير مسيطر عليه لمخلفات حربية قرب مقر الدعم الدبلوماسي بمطار بغداد [Controlled detonation of unexploded ordnance near the diplomatic support headquarters at Baghdad Airport], 2 May 2026, url; Baghdad Today, عمليات بغداد تنوه عن تفجير مسيطر عليه قرب المطار [Baghdad Operations Command reports a controlled explosion near the airport], 17 May 2026, url; Baghdad Today, عمليات بغداد: تفجير مسيطر عليه لمخلفات حربية جنوب العاصمة صباح اليو [Baghdad Operations: A controlled detonation of unexploded ordnance took place south of the capital this morning], 19 May 2026, url

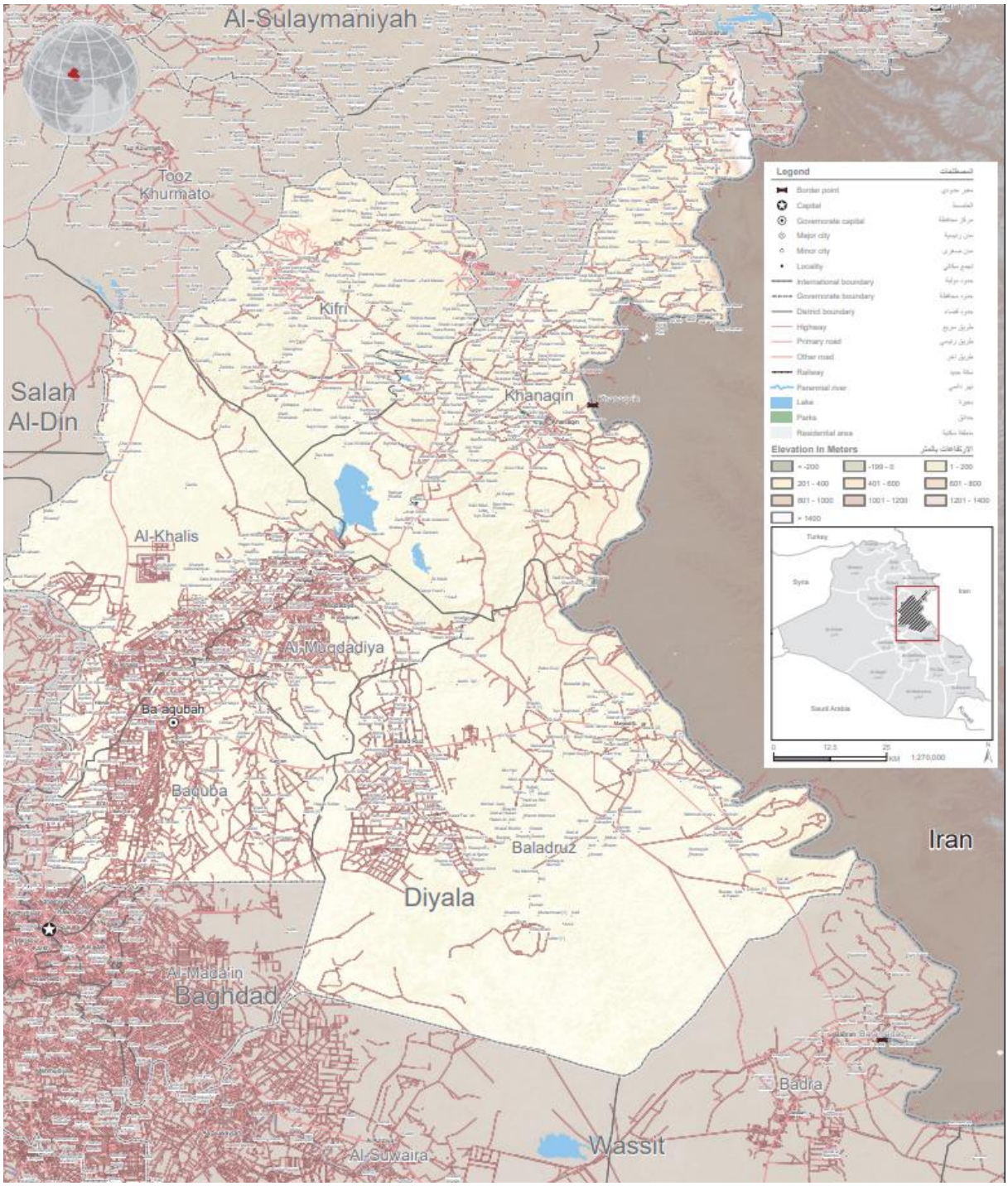
2.2.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[445] unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 135 (covering the period September – December 2025) that, as of 31 December 2025, Baghdad governorate hosted approximately 25 000 displaced people. Of these, about 8 700 were in Mahmoudiya district, followed by Abu Ghraib district with around 4 900 and Karkh district with about 4 300. The majority of IDPs in Baghdad had been displaced from Babil and Anbar governorates, each accounting for about 37 % of IDPs in Baghdad, followed by Ninewa, with about 16 %, and Salah Al-Din, with around 6 %.[446] More than 9 500 of Baghdad's IDPs lived in 'critical shelters',[447] where residents may face constraints in accessing livelihood opportunities and basic services.[448]

As of December 2025, the return rate[449] in Baghdad governorate was 70 %. Baghdad recorded 96 900 returnees, most of whom had been displaced within the governorate (89 %). The principal districts of return were Mahmoudiya (about 51 900) and Abu Ghraib (around 24 700).[450] The figures indicate a similarity to the IDP situation in Baghdad compared with the same period in 2024, with a slight decrease in the number of IDPs hosted in the governorate (from about 25 700[451] to around 25 000). In addition, as of 31 December 2025, IOM documented a total of about 40 900 IDPs across Iraq who originated from Baghdad governorate. The vast majority of these were hosted in Sulaymaniyah (about 29 700) and Erbil (around 8 700) governorates.[452]

[445] 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
[446] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[447] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[448] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 3
[449] 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)
[450] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 10
[451] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 134 (September – December 2024), 12 February 2025, url
[452] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url

2.3. Diyala



Map 5. UNOCHA and iMMAP, Diyala[453]

[453] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Diyala Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url

2.3.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Diyala governorate was divided into eight districts according to the 2024 population census: Al-Baquba, Al-Khalis, Al-Muqdadiya, Khanaqin, Baladruz, Mansuriya, Kifri and Batifa.[454] According to news reports, two additional districts have since been created by elevating Khanaqin's former subdistricts Qara Tapa (July 2025)[455] and Jalawla (February 2026)[456] to district status. Parts of Diyala governorate belong to the so-called disputed territories, which are claimed by both the Iraqi federal government and the KRG.[457] Diyala's capital is Baquba city.[458] 2024 census data show that the governorate's population was around 1 934 500.[459] Diyala's population is ethnically and religiously diverse: Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen live in the governorate and its religious communities include Sunni and Shia Muslims, Christians and Yazidis.[460]

2.3.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

Several PMF brigades operated in Diyala during the reference period, according to reporting by the PMF.[461] As in the previous reference period (August 2024 – July 2025),[462] in June 2026 Diyala was described as dominated by the Badr Organisation, militarily and politically, through the local government.[463] The organisation was present in the governorate through numerous PMF brigades[464] and also controlled the PMF base Camp Ashraf.[465] Furthermore, the

[454] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Diyala governorate. Please note that different sources report diverging administrative divisions. The Annual Statistical Abstract by Iraq's Central Organisation for Statistics, CSGIS, lists seven districts as of 2024, excluding Kifri and Batifa, but including a district named Mandhy. Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, p. 12

[455] Kirkuk Now, Qaratapa to Court: Districtization Ongoing Despite Kurdish Protests, 28 September 2025, url

[456] Rudaw, Iraq's planning ministry upgrades Jalawla to district despite opposition, 23 February 2026, url; Shafaq News, Baghdad officially promotes Jalawla to district status, 23 February 2026, url

[457] Kirkuk Now, Khanaqin Under Pressure as Jalawla and Qara Tapa Gain District Status, 4 March 2026, url

[458] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Diyala Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url

[459] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Diyala governorate

[460] EPIC, ISHM Reference Guide, updated August 2025, url

[461] Iraq, Al-Hashed, قوة من اللواء 24 بالحشد الشعبي والامن الوطني يضبط كدس قنابر في ديالى [A unit from the 24th Brigade of the Popular Mobilisation Forces and the National Security Forces seizes a cache of grenades in Diyala], 9 June 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, الحشد الشعبي ينقذ أكثر من 80 دونما زراعيا من حريق في ديالى [The Popular Mobilisation Forces save more than 80 acres of farmland from a fire in Diyala], 29 May 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, بالصور: تشييع شهداء اللواء 41 بالحشد الذين ارتقوا جراء القصف الصهيوني الأميركي في ديالى [In pictures: Funeral procession for the martyrs of the 41st Brigade of the Popular Mobilisation Forces who were killed in the Israeli-US bombardment in Diyala], 1 March 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء الرابع بالحشد ينفذ عملية أمنية في ديالى [The 4th Brigade of the Popular Mobilisation Forces carries out a security operation in Diyala], 13 February 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 110 في الحشد الشعبي يعثر على كدس عتاد بمحافظة ديالى [The 110th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces finds an ammunition cache in Diyala Governorate], 16 December 2025, url

[462] MBN/Al-Hurra, Iraqi Militias Mobilize as Iran-Israel Tensions Reignite Talk of "Unified Front", 21 June 2025, url; Knights, M. and Smith, C., Badr Organization: Iran's Oldest Proxy in Iraq, Hudson Institute, 3 June 2025, url

[463] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, الانتشار ومواقع والأسماء النشأة خريطة: "الشعبي الحشد"بـ ارتباطها تفك عراقية فصائل [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[464] Iraq, Al-Hashed, قوة من اللواء 24 بالحشد الشعبي والامن الوطني يضبط كدس قنابر في ديالى [A unit from the 24th Brigade of the Popular Mobilisation Forces and the National Security Forces seizes a cache of grenades in Diyala], 9 June 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, الحشد الشعبي ينقذ أكثر من 80 دونما زراعيا من حريق في ديالى [The Popular Mobilisation Forces save more than 80 acres of farmland from a fire in Diyala], 29 May 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء الرابع بالحشد ينفذ عملية أمنية في ديالى [The 4th Brigade of the Popular Mobilisation Forces carries out a security operation in Diyala], 13 February 2026, url

[465] TWI, The Fatemiyoun/Zainabiyoun Influx: Iraq's Intensified Hosting of Two U.S.-Designated Terrorist Groups, 11 February 2025, url

commander of the PMF's Diyala Operations Command, Talib al Musawi, is affiliated with the Badr Organisation.[466] Other armed factions active in Diyala included Kataib Al-Imam Ali, AAH[467] and KH.[468] The Arabic edition of the news website The New Arab, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, also listed Saraya Al-Khorasani and KSS. These armed factions managed security, property disputes and the return of displaced persons.[469] In addition, as of February 2026, some estimated hundreds of members of the Iran-aligned Fatemiyoun and Zaynabiyoun militias, previously deployed in Syria, were present in Iraq, including in Diyala's Camp Ashraf and other PMF bases.[470] Both brigades crossed into Iraq from Syria after the fall of the Assad-regime.[471] Although ISIL lost control of the large areas it had held until January 2015, pockets of the group remain present.[472] Mutaybija, an area bordering Diyala and Salah Al-Din,[473] was named as a 'key sanctuary' for ISIL by Shafaq News.[474] The Iraqi army and the Peshmerga cooperated in some provinces to fight ISIL, including Diyala.[475]

2.3.3. Security trends

The overall security situation in Diyala governorate was described as relatively stable as of the end of September 2025.[476] ISIL attacks in Iraq in 2025 'were at an all-time low'. However, in some governorates, some low-impact operations occurred, including in Diyala. At the same time ISIL was reported to be under 'sustained counter-terrorism pressure' in Iraq,[477] with security forces conducting operations against ISIL hideouts, including along the border between Diyala and Salah Al-Din in August 2025,[478] and Baladruz district in June 2026.[479] On 11 June, two suspected ISIL militants were killed in an airstrike conducted by Iraqi fighter jets in Diyala's Buhruz subdistrict,[480] and a further two suspected ISIL militants were killed in an Iraqi airstrike that destroyed a hideout near the Hamrin Mountains on 11 September. Lake Hamrin

[466] ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 11, 2025, 12 January 2025, url; TWI, The Fatemiyoun/Zainabiyoun Influx: Iraq's Intensified Hosting of Two U.S.-Designated Terrorist Groups, 11 February 2025, url
[467] MBN/Al-Hurra, Exclusive: Iraq Unveils Plan to Integrate Armed Factions, 5 June 2026, url; Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, الانتشار ومواقع والأسماء النشأة خريطة: "الشعبي الحشد"بـ ارتباطها تفك عراقية فصائل [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url
[468] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, الانتشار ومواقع والأسماء النشأة خريطة: "الشعبي الحشد"بـ ارتباطها تفك عراقية فصائل [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url; Ozcelik, B. and Shiban, B., Is This Game Over for the Houthis?, FP, 19 March 2025, url
[469] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, الانتشار ومواقع والأسماء النشأة خريطة: "الشعبي الحشد"بـ ارتباطها تفك عراقية فصائل [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url
[470] National Interest (The), Iraq's Growing Foreign Militia Crisis, 26 February 2026, url
[471] National Interest (The), Iraq's Growing Foreign Militia Crisis, 26 February 2026, url; TWI, The Fatemiyoun/Zainabiyoun Influx: Iraq's Intensified Hosting of Two U.S.-Designated Terrorist Groups, 11 February 2025, url
[472] EPIC, ISHM Reference Guide, updated August 2025, url
[473] Iraqi News, Twenty IS militants killed in heavy shelling on Diyala-Salahuddin borders, 13 June 2017, url
[474] Shafaq News, Iraq targets ISIS hideouts in Saladin and Diyala under Fourth Deterrence, 8 February 2026, url
[475] Rudaw, Iraqi army says cooperation with Peshmerga, coalition continues against ISIS, 24 September 2025, url
[476] UNDP, Quarterly Progress Report. Funding Facility for Stabilisation. July-September 2025, 1 February 2026, url, p. 15
[477] UN Security Council, Letter dated 3 February 2026 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-seventh 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/2026/44, 4 February 2026, url, para. 63
[478] New Region (The), PMF, security forces conduct ISIS sweep between Diyala, Salahaddin, 24 August 2025, url
[479] Shafaq News, Iraqi forces neutralize ISIS weapons stash in Diyala, 7 June 2026, url
[480] EPIC, ISHM: June 11 – 18, 2026, 18 June 2026, url

was closed off following a reported kidnapping attempt of three fishermen by ISIL militants in September 2026.[481]

Since the US/Israel operations against Iran began on 28 February 2026, the PMF has claimed that Diyala was affected by US airstrikes targeting PMF bases.[482] Airstrikes were reported in March,[483] April,[484] and June 2026.[485] News reporting also included violence by unidentified gunmen.[486] Furthermore, Shafaq News reported on a tribal dispute in January in the Bani Saad subdistrict, in which five people were killed.[487]

2.3.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 35 security incidents in Diyala governorate, of which 18 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 10 as violence against civilians, and 7 as battles. Main actors (coded as either Actor 1 or Actor 2), involved in 10 incidents, were armed groups or tribal militias that could not be identified. Other actors included Pro-Iranian militias involved in 6 incidents and the military forces of the US and Israel, involved together in 5 incidents. Incidents were recorded in the districts of Al-Baquba (12), Al-Khalis (8), Al-Muqdadiya (6) and Kifri (5) as well as Khanaqin (4). The highest number of incidents was recorded in March (10), most of which were drone strikes by unidentified military forces. 10 of the 35 total security incidents were coded as violence against civilians, 4 of which were attributed to unidentified armed groups and 4 to a tribal militia.[488]

[481] EPIC, ISHM: September 10 – 17, 2026, 17 September 2026, url
[482] FDD's Long War Journal, Dozens of airstrikes target Iran-backed militias across Iraq, 13 March 2026, url
[483] EPIC, ISHM: February 26 – March 5, 2026, 5 March 2026, url; National Context (The), How the Strikes on Iraq's Militias Followed the Country's Divide, 11 March 2026, url
[484] EPIC, ISHM: April 2 – 9, 2026, 9 April 2026, url
[485] EPIC, ISHM: July 23 – 30, 2026, 30 July 2026, url; BBC, Saudi Arabia joins US in strikes on Iran-backed militias in Iraq, 29 July 2026, url
[486] EPIC, ISHM: February 12 – 19, 2026, 19 February 2026, url; Shafaq News, Iraq security forces investigate mortar and RPG attacks in Diyala villages, 13 February 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 16 – 23, 2025, 23 October 2025, url
[487] Shafaq News, Iraq security brief: arrests, killings and unrest, 3 January 2026, url
[488] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

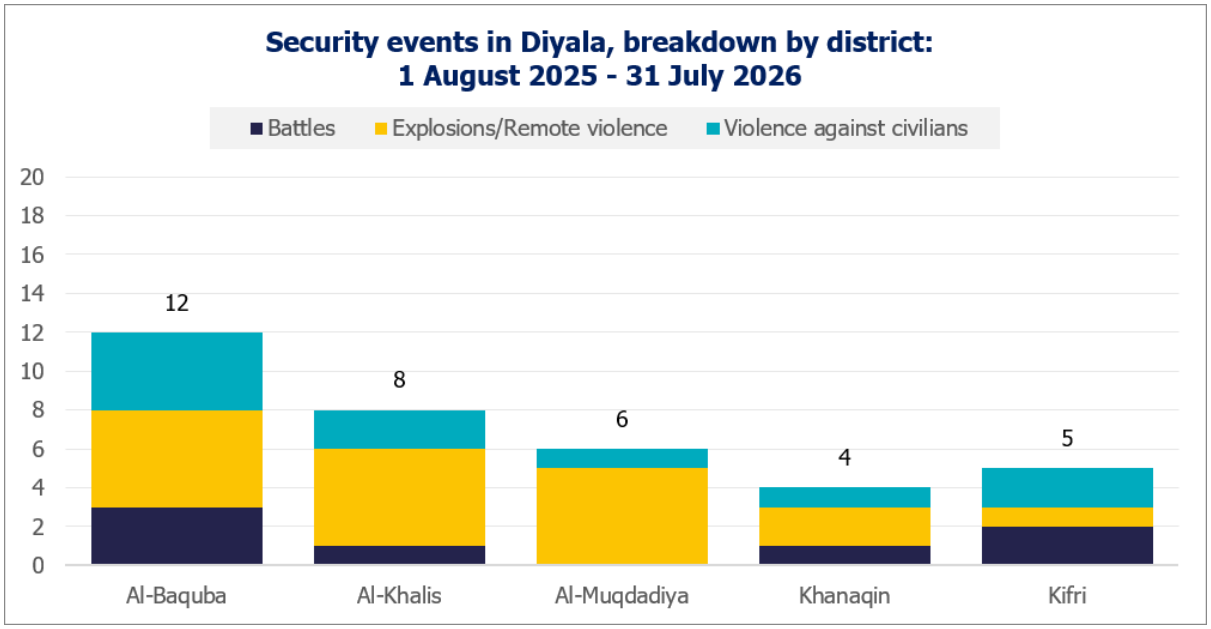


Figure 10: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Diyala between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[489]

A comparison with ACLED data for the previous year shows a consistent level of recorded security incidents, with 36 incidents documented between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025. The distribution of incident types remained broadly similar, although the number of explosions/remote violence incidents increased slightly from 16 to 18 and incidents coded as battles decreased from 10 to 7, while incidents of violence against civilians remained stable at 10. In terms of local distribution, there was a shift from Al-Khalis to Al-Baquba as the district with the highest number of recorded security incidents. Unidentified armed groups used to be the major actors during August 2024 – 1 August 2025 as well, but were followed by ISIL (10 incidents), which was involved in less incidents during the current reference period when only 3 ISIL-related security incidents were recorded.[490]

2.3.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED data for the period from 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, a total of 23 fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) were recorded in Diyala during the reference period. No fatalities were associated with incidents coded as violence against civilians.[491] UCDP recorded 2 fatalities and no civilian deaths over the reporting period.[492]

[489] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[490] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url p. 48
[491] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[492] EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 28 August 2026

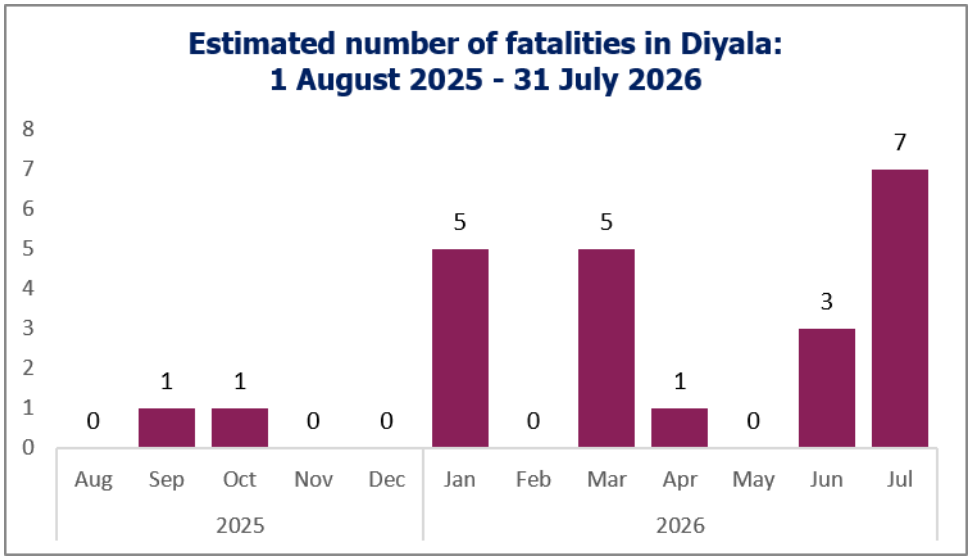


Figure 11: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Diyala between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[493]

2.3.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

In February 2026, it was reported that Diyala province still faces recovery challenges related to the former presence of ISIL, including damaged infrastructure.[494] No information on new conflict-related infrastructure damage in the reference period could be found within the time constraints of this report. According to the Iraqi DMA, Baladruz and Khanaqin were assessed as having significant areas – over 153 square kilometres – of known and suspected areas containing anti-personnel mines. In addition, nearly 69 square kilometres were known or suspected to contain IEDs.[495] Along the Diyala-Iran border, including in Qazaniya and Mandali, there are multiple minefields, remnants of the 1980s war. Clearance has been limited for decades by technical, financial, and security challenges.[496] During 2025, one person was killed and another one injured by anti-personnel mines in Diyala.[497] In January 2026, two children were injured in Khanaqin by a leftover landmine, which is thought to have been swept from mountainous areas by recent floods.[498] In September two farmers were slightly injured by the detonation of an ERW on their farm northeast of Al-Baquba.[499]

[493] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[494] UNDP, Quarterly Progress Report. Funding Facility for Stabilisation. July-September 2025, 1 February 2026, url, p. 5
[495] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, pp. 15-16, 21
[496] Shafaq News, Iraq reports 30K casualties from unexploded ordnance, 5 April 2026, url
[497] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, p. 65
[498] +964, Playground blast. Land mine explosion injures two children in Khanaqin, 7 January 2026, url
[499] EPIC, ISHM: September 10 – 17, 2026, 17 September 2026, url

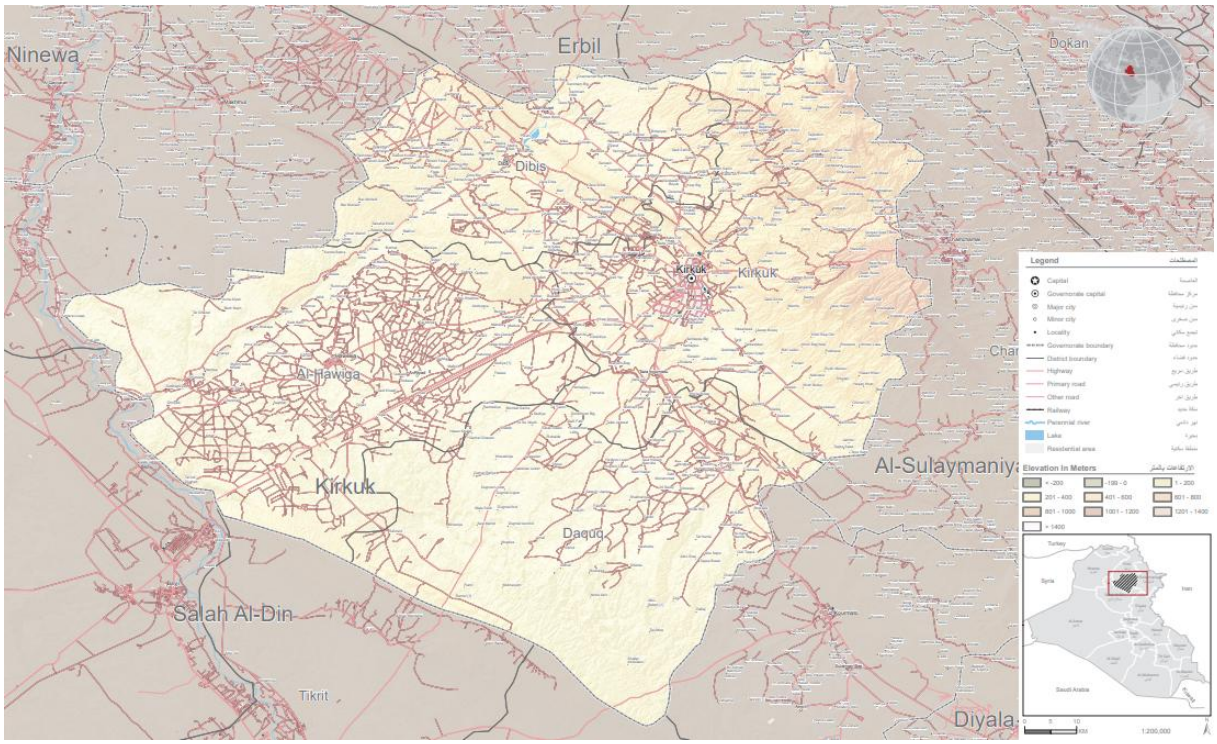
2.3.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM),[500] Diyala hosted approximately 38 800 IDPs at the end of December 2025,[501] representing a decrease of around 1 800 IDPs compared with December 2024.[502] 90 % of Diyala's IDPs have been displaced within Diyala governorate. The largest share of IDPs (about 17 400) were staying in Al-Baquba, followed by Khanaqin (about 12 100). Khanaqin was also among the top districts of IDP origin.[503] More than 1 500 of Diyala's IDPs lived in 'critical shelters',[504] where residents may face constraints in accessing livelihood opportunities and basic services.[505]

IOM counted approximately 242 900 returnees in Diyala governorate; as of December 2025, most had returned to Khanaqin district (about 106 300). 67 % of IDPs originating from the governorate reported residential destruction as the primary barrier to return. As of December 2025, Diyala was also mentioned as one of two governorates with the most 'no return locations', defined as areas where displacement was recorded during or after the 2014-2017 conflict with ISIL, but where no returns have been recorded or where all returnees have subsequently been displaced again.[506] An initiative implemented by UNDP supports returns from Syria's Al-Hol camp to Diyala.[507]

[500] 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
[501] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[502] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 134 (September – December 2024), January 2025, url
[503] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 4, 6
[504] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[505] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 3
[506] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 8, 10, 12
[507] UNDP, European Union Strengthens Support for Iraq's Community Reintegration Efforts, 9 February 2026, url

2.4. Kirkuk



Map 6. UNOCHA and iMMAP, Kirkuk[508]

2.4.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Kirkuk governorate is divided into the four districts of Kirkuk, Al-Hawija, Daquq and Dibis.[509] Its population was approximately 2 034 600 as of 2024, about three-quarters of which lived in Kirkuk district (1 549 500).[510] Kirkuk City is the governorate's capital.[511] Kirkuk is part of the so-called disputed territories[512] and the oil-rich governorate is described as central in the disputes between the Iraqi federal government and the KRG.[513] It is home to Kurds as well as Arabs and different minority groups, including Turkmen.[514]

[508] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Kirkuk Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url
[509] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Kirkuk governorate; Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, pp. 11-12
[510] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Kirkuk governorate
[511] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Kirkuk Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url; EPIC, ISHM Reference Guide, updated August 2025, url
[512] New Arab (The), Iraq's Kirkuk governor post to rotate to Turkmen for first time since 2003, 15 April 2026, url; Faris, M., Competition over Kirkuk: Between Internal Conflicts and Regional Rivalries, TWI, 30 August 2024, url
[513] DW, Kirkuk: Dispute between Kurds and Iraq, 16 October 2017, url; International Crisis Group: Oil for Soil: Toward a Grand Bargain on Iraq and the Kurds, 28 October 2008, url, p. 1
[514] Faris, M., Competition over Kirkuk: Between Internal Conflicts and Regional Rivalries, TWI, 30 August 2024, url

2.4.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

Several PMF brigades were reported by the PMF to operate in Kirkuk,[515] including both 'shrine-affiliated'[516] and Iran-aligned units.[517] Furthermore, armed Turkmen factions are integrated in the PMF.[518] The Badr Organisation is reportedly the most influential armed group in Kirkuk, particularly in Daquq and Taza Khurmatu. Other groups present are AAH and KH, undertaking specific security tasks.[519] Members of the IRGC-controlled Fatemiyoun and Zaynabioun brigades[520] were reportedly stationed at the Bashir base[521] in Taza Khurmatu.[522] ISIL remnants and hideouts were reported, particularly in the Wadi al-Shay region[523] in southern Kirkuk.[524] Peshmerga forces were reportedly present in the governorate,[525] as was at least one joint operations centre operated by the Kurdish Peshmerga and the Iraqi Army.[526]

2.4.3. Security trends

As of the end of September 2025, the overall security situation in Kirkuk governorate was described as relatively stable.[527] On 6 November 2025, the day of the Iraqi parliamentary elections, violence was reported in Kirkuk when supporters of the PUK clashed with

[515] Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 16 في الحشد الشعبي يلقي القبض على ثلاثة متهمين بجرائم سرقة في كركوك [The 16th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces arrests three individuals accused of theft in Kirkuk], 3 August 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 52 بالحشد الشعبي يؤمن قوافل الزائرين على طريق كركوك – بغداد)صور [The 52nd Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces secures convoys of visitors on the Kirkuk-Baghdad road], 24 July 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 61 بالحشد ينفذ عملية دهم وتفتيش غرب كركوك [The 61st Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces carries out a raid and search operation west of Kirkuk], 29 May 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 40 بالحشد الشعبي يعزز انتشاره في كركوك :بالصور [In pictures: The 40th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces reinforces its deployment in Kirkuk], 15 February 2026, url

[516] The term 'shrine-affiliated' refers to alignment with the Iraqi Shiite religious authorities under Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani. Belgium, CGRS- CEDOCA, De invloed van de Iran-oorlog op de veiligheidssituatie in Irak [The impact of Iran war on the security situation in Iraq], 19 May 2026, url, p. 12

[517] EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url

[518] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url; TWI, The Fatemiyoun/Zainabiyoun Influx: Iraq's Intensified Hosting of Two U.S.-Designated Terrorist Groups, 11 February 2025, url

[519] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[520]TWI, The Fatemiyoun/Zainabiyoun Influx: Iraq's Intensified Hosting of Two U.S.-Designated Terrorist Groups, 11 February 2025, url

[521] TWI, The Fatemiyoun/Zainabiyoun Influx: Iraq's Intensified Hosting of Two U.S.-Designated Terrorist Groups, 11 February 2025, url; National Interest (The), Iraq's Growing Foreign Militia Crisis, 26 February 2026, url

[522] TWI, The Fatemiyoun/Zainabiyoun Influx: Iraq's Intensified Hosting of Two U.S.-Designated Terrorist Groups, 11 February 2025, url; TWI in this article refers to the Bashir base as being located in Tuz Khormatu. That appears to be a confusion with Taza Khormatu. Tuz Khormatu is located in Salah Al-Din governorate, whereas Taza Khormatu, in Kirkuk governorate, was described in earlier TWI reporting as a base for Quawat al-Turkment, the PMF'S 16th brigade. TWI, Infighting Between Northern Hashd Units Requires IRGC-QF Mediation, 6 July 2023, url

[523] New Region (The), Iraqi army kills four ISIS members in Kirkuk, 23 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 14 – 21, 2026, 21 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 9 – 16, 2025, 16 October 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: September 11 – 18, 2025, 18 September 2025, url

[524] Shafaq News, Iraqi airstrike hits ISIS hideouts in southern Kirkuk, 12 August 2025, url

[525] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url; Al-Mayar, قيادي في البيشمركة يكشف عن أسباب زيادة تحركات داعش في أطراف كركوك [A Peshmerga commander reveals the reasons behind the increased ISIS activity on the outskirts of Kirkuk.], 17 June 2026, url

[526] Rudaw, Iraqi army says cooperation with Peshmerga, coalition continues against ISIS, 24 September 2025, url

[527] UNDP, Quarterly Progress Report. Funding Facility for Stabilisation. July-September 2025, 1 February 2026, url, p. 15

supporters of the Turkmen Front, resulting in the deaths of two police officers and several civilians being injured.[528] Throughout the reporting period, Iraqi security forces regularly conducted strikes against ISIL cells and hideouts in Kirkuk governorate,[529] with several operations targeting the Wadi al-Shay region.[530] In March and April 2026, several airstrikes hit PMF targets and resulted in fatalities and injuries among PMF personnel.[531] Sources attributed the airstrikes to US and Israeli military forces.[532] On 28 July 2026, Kirkuk was struck during a joint mission by forces of the US and Saudi Arabia which targeted PMF bases across several Iraqi governorates.[533] Peshmerga reportedly clashed repeatedly with Iraqi armed groups on the outskirts of Kirkuk city.[534] Sources with links to the Kurdistan Region claimed that a process of Arabisation was taking place in Kirkuk with the support of Iraqi security forces.[535] Land disputes between Arab residents and Kurdish landowners persisted in Kirkuk during the reporting period.[536] Unidentified armed men reportedly ambushed two Kurdish farmers near the subdistrict of Prde (Altun Kupri), injuring one and reportedly abducting the other. According to local authorities, Iraqi security forces subsequently exchanged fire with the unidentified gunmen, resulting in injuries to two Iraqi soldiers.[537]

2.4.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 81 security incidents in Kirkuk governorate, 49 of which were coded as explosions/remote violence, 19 as battles, and 13 as violence against civilians. Main actors (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2'), involved in 46 of 81 security incidents were the military forces of Iraq, including PMF. They were followed by unidentified Iraqi armed groups, Iraqi tribal militias or military forces,

[528] ACLED, Middle East Overview: December 2025, 8 December 2025, url
[529] Shafaq News, Iraq destroys eight ISIS hideouts in Kirkuk, 10 August 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: July 2 – 9, 2026, 9 July 2026, url; New Region (The), Iraqi army kills four ISIS members in Kirkuk, 23 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 14 – 21, 2026, 21 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 9 – 16, 2025, 16 October 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: September 25 – October 2, 2025, 2 October 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: September 11 – 18, 2025, 18 September 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: August 14 – 21, 2025, 21 August 2025, url
[530] Shafaq News, Troops sweep Kirkuk ISIS hideouts after Iraqi strikes, 10 September 2026, url; New Region (The), Iraqi army kills four ISIS members in Kirkuk, 23 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 14 – 21, 2026, 21 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 9 – 16, 2025, 16 October 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: September 11 – 18, 2025, 18 September 2025, url
[531] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, April 7, 2026, 7 April 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Air strikes in Iraq kill three PMF fighters, two police, 28 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; Kirkuk Now, One Dead, Seven Injured After Airstrike Hits PMF Headquarters in Kirkuk, 12 March 2026, url; National Context (The), How the Strikes on Iraq's Militias Followed the Country's Divide, 11 March 2026, url;
[532] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, April 7, 2026, 7 April 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, March 28, 2026, 28 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, March 17, 2026, 17 March 2026, url
[533] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, July 29, 2026, 29 July 2026, url; BBC, Saudi Arabia joins US in strikes on Iran-backed militias in Iraq, 29 July 2026, url
[534] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url
[535] Kurdistan 24, Kurdish Farmers in Kirkuk Face Forced Evictions and Land Drying Policies, 22 October 2025, url; Kurdistan 24, Kirkuk Farmers Urge Unified Kurdish Front to Defend Lands and Rights, 1 September 2025, url; Rudaw, Iraqi army officers interfering in farmers' properties must be removed: MP, 6 January 2025, url
[536] Rudaw, Land disputes between Kurdish farmers, Arab residents resurface in Kirkuk, 2 February 2026, url
[537] Rudaw, Unidentified gunmen attack Kurdish farmers in Kirkuk, 19 September 2025, url

involved in 23 incidents and ISIL, involved in 21 incidents. Incidents were recorded across all four districts, however, Kirkuk and Dibis accounted for the highest numbers, with 38 and 31 incidents respectively. A peak in the overall number of security incidents can be seen in March 2026 with 29 incidents, 25 of which were coded as explosions/remote violence,[538] corresponding with reporting on the series of airstrikes by the combined forces of the US and Israel targeting PMF bases.[539] 13 events were coded as violence against civilians, most of which (8) were attributed to unidentified Iraqi armed groups.[540]

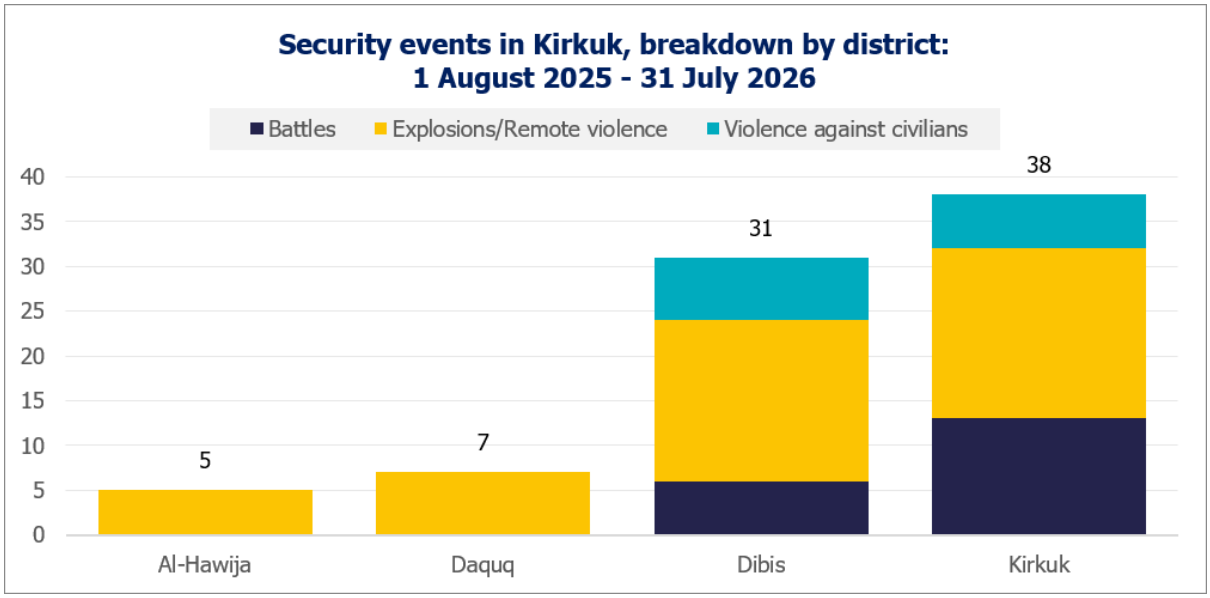


Figure 12: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Kirkuk between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[541]

Compared to ACLED data for the previous year (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), the number of security incidents remained nearly unchanged, with 82 and 81 incidents documented in both reference periods. However, the distribution of type of incident changed. The number of incidents coded as explosions/remote violence increased from 38 to 49, while the number of incidents coded as battles decreased from 28 to 20. Incidents coded as violence against civilians also declined slightly, from 16 to 13. Regarding local distribution, although the overall number of incidents in Kirkuk district declined from 46 in the previous reference period to 38, it remained the most conflict-affected district. In contrast, Dibis showed a significant increase, from 12 to 31 incidents during the current reporting period. At the same time, the number of security incidents in the districts of Al-Hawija and Daquq fell from 13 to 7 and from 11 to 6, respectively. ISIL involvement also declined, from 37 to 21 incidents, and the group was

[538] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[539] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, April 7, 2026, 7 April 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, March 28, 2026, 28 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, March 17, 2026, 17 March 2026, url
[540] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[541] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

overtaken by the military forces of Iraq as the actor involved in the highest number of recorded security incidents during the reporting period.[542]

2.4.5. Civilian casualties

ACLED recorded a total of 69 fatalities for the period from 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, without distinction between civilian and non-civilian fatalities. 7 fatalities were associated with incidents coded as violence against civilians, 4 of which occurred in Kirkuk district and 3 in Dibis.[543] An analysis of ACLED data regarding the circumstances of the fatalities related to battles and explosions/remote violence indicates that at least three civilians were killed by IED or mine explosions.[544] UCDP recorded 37 fatalities and 1 civilian casualty.[545]

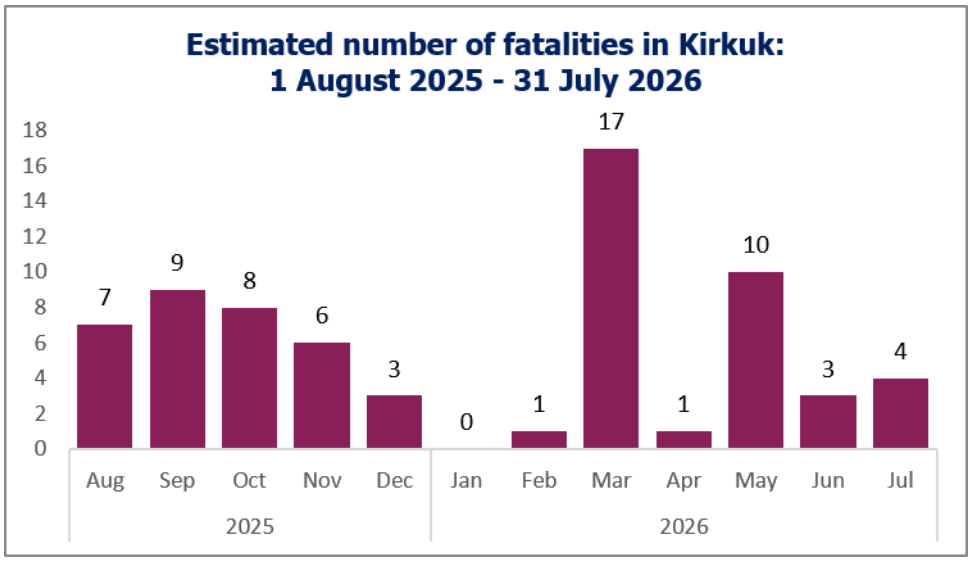


Figure 13: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Kirkuk between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[546]

2.4.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Like other governorates that were formerly affected by the presence of ISIL, it is reported that Kirkuk still faces challenges in terms of recovery, including damaged infrastructure.[547] No information on new conflict-related civil infrastructure damage could be found during the reporting period. According to the Iraqi DMA, about 10 000 square metres in the districts of Daquq and Kirkuk are known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines. A further

[542] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 53
[543] ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, Event IDs: IRQ68947, IRQ 68862, IRQ 68168, url
[544] ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, Event IDs: IRQ68947, IRQ 68862, IRQ 68168, url
[545] EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 28 August 2026
[546] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[547] UNDP, Quarterly Progress Report. Funding Facility for Stabilisation. July-September 2025, 1 February 2026, url, p. 5

approximately 28 square kilometres across all four districts, but predominantly in Daquq, are known or suspected to contain IED contamination.[548] On 20 July 2026, the PMF reported that 200 anti-personnel mines were found and destroyed in the village of Talou'iya in the south of the governorate.[549] At least three civilians[550] and a police officer[551] died as a result of IED or mine explosions during the reporting period. One such incident was recorded in each of the districts of Daquq, Al-Hawija and Dibis.[552] Furthermore, on 11 August 2026 three Iraqi soldiers were injured near Wadi Al-Shay by an explosive device.[553]

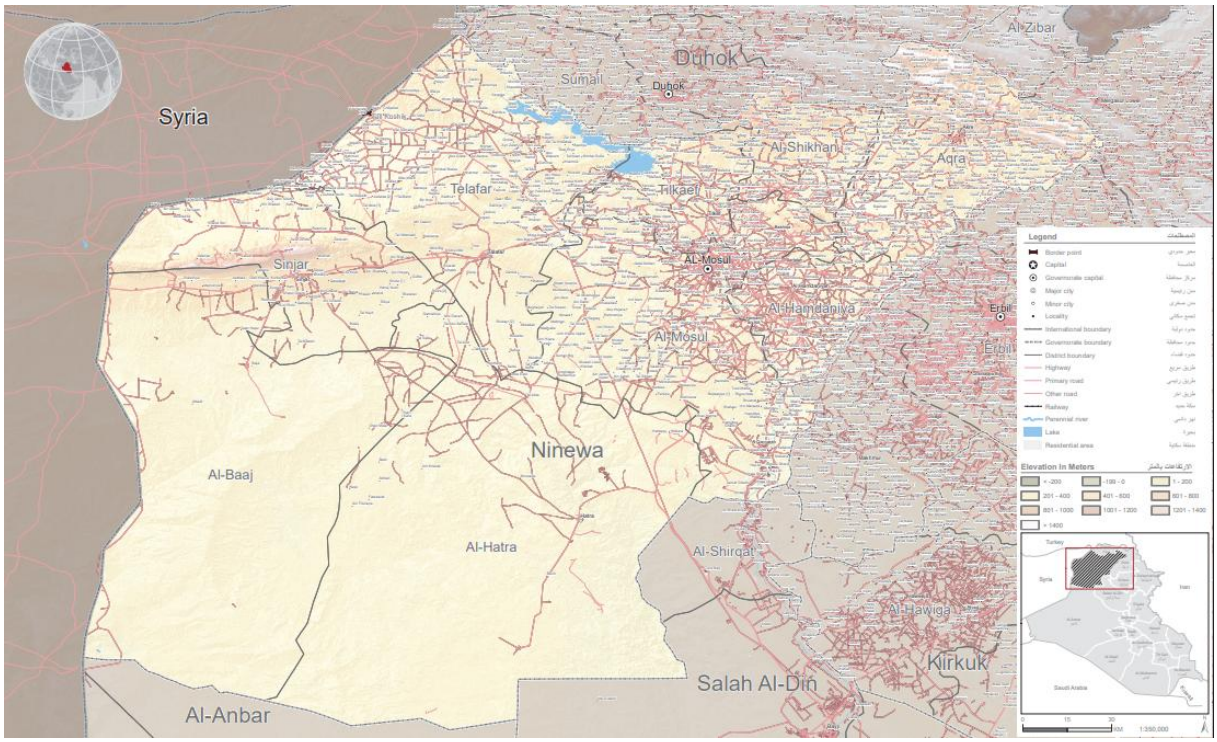
2.4.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

As of the end of December 2025, approximately 93 000 IDPs resided in Kirkuk governorate, according to IOMs Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM),[554] a figure almost unchanged from December 2024.[555] The largest share of IDPs (around 83 900) resided in Kirkuk district, making it one of the four districts country-wide with the highest IDP numbers. 58 % of these IDPs have been displaced within the governorate and about 22 % originate from neighbouring Salah Al-Din. Almost 11 000 IDPs reportedly stayed in critical shelters, which are characterised by limited access to basic services and livelihoods.[556]

193 350 returnees to Kirkuk governorate were counted by IOM as of December 2025, most of whom had returned to Al-Hawiga district from other parts of Kirkuk governorate.[557] Kirkuk is among the governorates with the highest numbers of returnees from the Syrian Al-Hol camp.[558]

[548] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, pp. 16, 18
[549] Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 16 بالحشد الشعبي يزيل خطر 200 لغم مضاد للأشخاص جنوب كركوك [The 16th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces removes the threat of 200 anti-personnel mines south of Kirkuk.], 20 July 2026, url
[550] EPIC, ISHM: February 5 – 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url
[551] EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url
[552] ACLED, Data Export Tool, Iraq, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 6 August 2026, Event IDs: IRQ68947, IRQ 68862, IRQ 68168, url
[553] Shafaq News, Three Iraqi soldiers wounded in Kirkuk roadside bombing, 11 August 2026url
[554] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url; 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
[555] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 134 (September – December 2024), January 2025, url
[556] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 3-4, 7
[557] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 10
[558] UNDP, European Union Strengthens Support for Iraq's Community Reintegration Efforts, 9 February 2026, url

2.5. Ninewa



Map 7. UNOCHA and iMMAP, Ninewa[559]

2.5.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Ninewa is divided into nine districts: Mosul, Tel Afar, Tel Kayf, Al-Hamdaniya, Makhmour, Sinjar, Al-Ba'aj, Al-Shikhan and Al-Hatra.[560] In 2024, its population was approximately 4 262 000, more than half of which were residents of Mosul district.[561] Mosul city is the governorate's capital.[562] Ninewa is home to a significant Sunni Arab population as well as Shia Arabs, Kurds, Yazidis, Christians, Shabak and other minorities.[563] Some districts, such as Akre,[564] Sinjar and Makhmour, are part of the so-called disputed areas, claimed by both the federal government and the KRG.[565]

[559] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Ninewa Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url
[560] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to 'Nineveh' governorate; Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, pp. 10-11
[561] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to 'Nineveh' governorate
[562] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Ninewa Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url
[563] EPIC, ISHM Reference Guide, updated August 2025, url
[564] Modern Diplomacy, Northern Iraq and the Kurdistani Disputed Territories, 20 November 2022, url
[565] Kirkuk Now, Ninewa Plains support constitutional roadmap for disputed territories, 1 August 2023, url; New Humanitarian (The), In Iraqi Kurdistan, reality bites as independence dream fades [Map], 26 September 2019, url

2.5.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

According to reporting by the PMF, as in the previous reference period (August 2024 – July 2025),[566] several PMF brigades operated in Ninewa,[567] including shrine-affiliated as well as Iran-aligned units.[568] Iraqi Army brigades were also deployed in the governorate.[569] Reportedly, due to its large population, ethnic and religious diversity, economic factors and borders with Syria, Türkiye and the KRG, more than 40 armed groups were present in Ninewa.[570] These included, among others, the Badr Organisation,[571] KH,[572] AAH, Babylon Brigades,[573] Sayyid Al-Shuhada,[574] Kataib Al-Imam Ali,[575] and Hashd Al-Shabak.[576] In Sinjar district, three Yazidi militias with links to the PKK were also active.[577] ISIL remnants remained present in Ninewa throughout the reference period,[578] Ninewa being a governorate that was once an ISIL stronghold.[579]

[566] Iraq, Al-Hashed, الفياض يفتتح المقر الجديد للواء 75 بالحشد في ناحية ربيعة بمحافظة نينوى [Al-Fayyad inaugurates the new headquarters of the 75th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces in the Rabi'a district of Nineveh Governorate], 25 July 2025, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 30 بالحشد الشعبي يطيح بـ"داعشي" في سهل نينوى [The 30th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces eliminates an ISIS member in the Nineveh Plains.], 29 May 2025, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 14 في الحشد الشعبي يؤمن المصلين في نينوى [The 14th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces secures worshippers in Nineveh], 31 March 2025, url

[567] Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 73 في الحشد ينفذ واجباً أمنياً مشتركاً مع الجيش لتعزيز الأمن والاستقرار في نينوى [The 73rd Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces is carrying out a joint security operation with the army to enhance security and stability in Nineveh], 15 July 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 33 بالحشد يشارك في تأمين زيارة عاشوراء بنينوى ويتولى حماية مقام الإمام زين العابدين (ع) [The 33rd Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces participates in securing the Ashura pilgrimage in Nineveh and takes over the protection of the shrine of Imam Zain al-Abidin (peace be upon him)], 25 June 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 74 بالحشد الشعبي يواصل تأمين المناسبات الدينية والاجتماعية في نينوى [The 74th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces continues to secure religious and social events in Nineveh], 21 May 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, اللواء 59 بالحشد يواصل عملياته الأمنية لليوم الثاني على التوالي في نينوى [The 59th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces continues its security operations for the second day in a row in Nineveh], 17 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url

[568] EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url

[569] Rudaw, نينوى.. انتشار لواءين من الجيش العراقي في المناطق المتاخمة لإقليم كوردستان [Nineveh: Two brigades of the Iraqi army deployed in areas bordering the Kurdistan Region], 9 March 2026, url; Kirkuk Now, Airstrikes Push PMF to Leave Positions in Nineveh, Lower Flags in Diyala, 10 March 2026, url

[570] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[571] ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 26, 2026, 26 January 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update, October 29, 2025, 29 October 2025, url

[572] Al Jazeera, خريطة الفصائل.. من يرفض حصر السلاح في العراق؟ [A Map of the Factions... Who Opposes Restricting Weapons in Iraq?], 30 July 2026, url; Knights, M. et al., Standing With Iran: The Integrated Combat Performance of Iraqi Militias During Operation Epic Fury, June 2026, url, p. 15

[573] Knights, M. et al., Standing With Iran: The Integrated Combat Performance of Iraqi Militias During Operation Epic Fury, June 2026, url, p. 14

[574] Kurdistan24, تصعيد ميداني في نينوى.. استهداف مقرات لفصائل "الحشد الشعبي" في الموصل وبعشيقة [Field escalation in Nineveh: Popular Mobilization Forces headquarters targeted in Mosul and Bashiqa], 4 March 2026, url

[575] Shafaq News, Airstrike hits PMF site in Mosul for 2nd time in 24 hr, 7 March 2026, url

[576] National Context (The), Kataib Hezbollah Bears the Heaviest Toll as U.S.-Israeli Air Campaign Strikes Dozens of PMF Sites Across Iraq, 28 March 2026, url

[577] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[578] Shafaq News, Iraq's JOC strikes ISIS hideouts in Nineveh, 6 February 2026, url; Iraqi News, Iraqi forces arrest 11 terrorists, destroy hideouts, 12 August 2025, url

[579] Shafaq News, Bomb blast wounds Iraqi soldier in Nineveh, 3 May 2026, url

2.5.3. Security trends

The overall security situation in Ninewa was described as relatively stable as of the end of September 2025.[580] From early March to April 2026, PMF bases in Ninewa, and particularly the Ninewa Plains,[581] were repeatedly struck by airstrikes,[582] which were attributed by sources to the US.[583] In March, brigades of the Iraqi Army were deployed to several areas bordering the Kurdistan Region, which had previously been controlled by the Iran-aligned 30th[584] and 50th PMF brigades.[585] According to the head of the Ninewa Provincial Council, the deployment aimed to prevent attacks on the Kurdistan Region from the Ninewa plain.[586] Several drone and missile attacks targeting the Kurdistan region have been traced back to the Ninewa plain.[587] At the end of July, PMF targets were struck in US/Saudi airstrikes.[588] Shafaq News reported that the Iraqi-Syrian border was frequently crossed by ISIL fighters.[589] Throughout the reference period, ISIL remnants were targeted in operations by Iraqi security forces, which resulted in numerous arrests[590] as well as the killing of suspected ISIL members.[591]

2.5.4. Security incidents

Between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, ACLED recorded 80 security incidents in Ninewa governorate,[592] 58 of which were coded as explosions/remote violence, 12 as battles, and 10

[580] UNDP, Quarterly Progress Report. Funding Facility for Stabilisation. July-September 2025, 1 February 2026, url, p. 15
[581] National Context (The), The Logic Behind Iraq's Militia Strike Campaign, 22 March 2026, url
[582] Knights, M. et al., Standing With Iran: The Integrated Combat Performance of Iraqi Militias During Operation Epic Fury, June 2026, url, p. 15; Shafaq News, Airstrike targets PMF base in Nineveh, no casualties reported, 3 April 2026, url; Shafaq News, Airstrikes kill 4 PMF officials in Iraq's Nineveh, 1 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url; Shafaq News, Airstrikes hit PMF site in Iraq's Nineveh, 21 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Strike on Al-Basaer complex injures four in Iraq's Nineveh Plain, 14 March 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 4, 2026, 4 March 2026, url
[583] Knights, M. et al., Standing With Iran: The Integrated Combat Performance of Iraqi Militias During Operation Epic Fury, June 2026, url, p. 15; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 4, 2026, 4 March 2026, url
[584] EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url
[585] Rudaw, نينوى ..انتشار لواءين من الجيش العراقي في المناطق المتاخمة لإقليم كوردستان [Nineveh: Two brigades of the Iraqi army deployed in areas bordering the Kurdistan Region], 9 March 2026, url; Kirkuk Now, Airstrikes Push PMF to Leave Positions in Nineveh, Lower Flags in Diyala, 10 March 2026, url
[586] Rudaw, نينوى ..انتشار لواءين من الجيش العراقي في المناطق المتاخمة لإقليم كوردستان [Nineveh: Two brigades of the Iraqi army deployed in areas bordering the Kurdistan Region], 9 March 2026, url
[587] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Evening Special Report, August 14, 2026, 14 August 2026, url; Knights, M. et al., Standing With Iran: The Integrated Combat Performance of Iraqi Militias During Operation Epic Fury, June 2026, url, p. 15; Rudaw, نينوى ..انتشار لواءين من الجيش العراقي في المناطق المتاخمة لإقليم كوردستان [Nineveh: Two brigades of the Iraqi army deployed in areas bordering the Kurdistan Region], 9 March 2026, url
[588] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, August 4, 2026, 4 August 2026, url
[589] Shafaq News, Large-scale security sweep targets terrorist hideouts in Iraq's Nineveh, 16 February 2026, url
[590] EPIC, ISHM: February 5 – 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, url; +964, Suspect linked to ISIS propaganda apprehended in Nineveh operation, 21 January 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, بعد قدومه من تركيا ..قوة من اللواء 30 بالحشد الشعبي تطيح بعنصر من داعش الارهابي في نينوى [After arriving from Türkiye, a force from the 30th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces captured a member of the ISIS terrorist group in Nineveh.], 19 November 2025, url; Shafaq News, Iraq arrests six ISIS members in Nineveh province, 8 September 2025, url; Shafaq News, Nineveh: 7 ISIS members arrested, 22 August 2025, url
[591] Shafaq News, PMF says three ISIS militants killed in western Nineveh operation, 2 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: February 5 – 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, url
[592] These numbers include Akre district, which is part of the so-called disputed territories claimed by both the federal Iraqi government and the KRG. The district is formally part of Ninewa but is administered by the KRG.

as violence against civilians. Most security incidents were recorded in Mosul (28), followed by Al-Hamdaniya (20) and Al-Hatra (9). US/Israeli airstrikes on PMF targets[593] resulted in a distinct peak of 42 security incidents in March, 38 of which were coded as explosions/remote violence. By April, the number of incidents had declined to 10. The main actors (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') were the military forces of the US and/or Israel, recorded as actors in 41 security events, followed by the PMF, involved in 36 out of 80 incidents.[594]

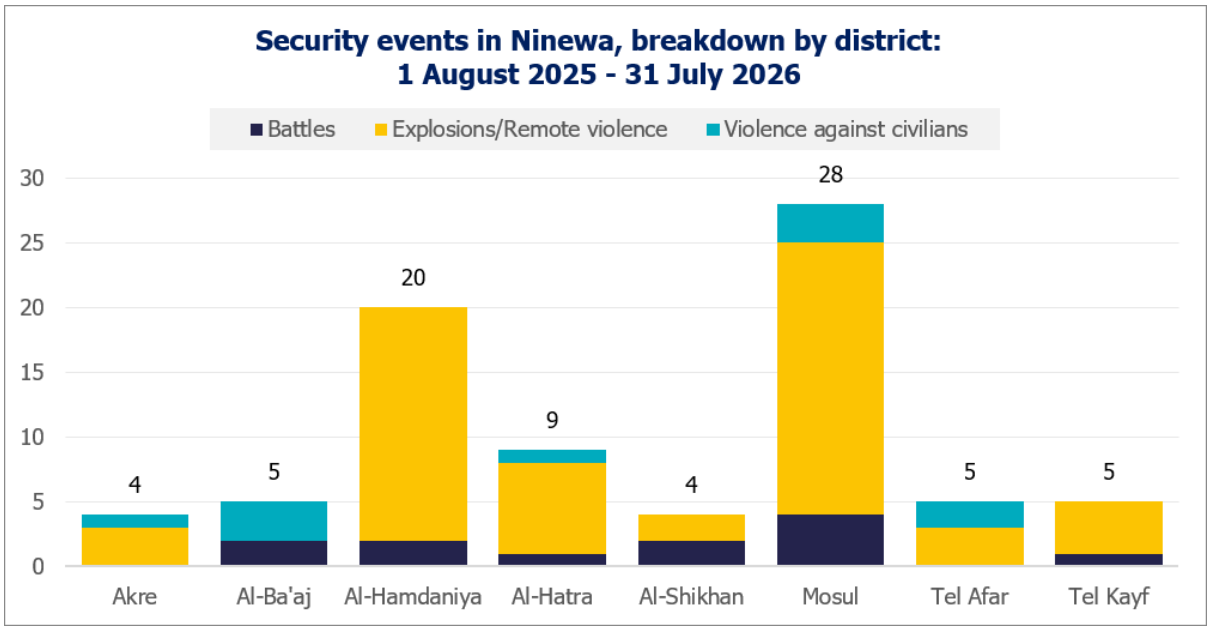


Figure 14: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Ninewa between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[595]

Compared with ACLED data for the previous reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), the overall number of security incidents declined sharply, from 265 to 80 during the current reference period. This decline is related to the disputed Akre district,[596] where the recorded security events decreased from 225, mostly attributed to Turkish army attacks against the PKK,[597] to only 4 during the current reference period. If Akre district is excluded from the comparison, the overall number of recorded security events almost doubled. Incidents increased from 13 to 28 in Mosul district and from 1 to 20 in Al-Hamdaniya district,

Modern Diplomacy, Northern Iraq and the Kurdistani Disputed Territories, 20 November 2022, url; According to Census 2024 data and CSGIS, Akre is a district of Dohuk governorate. National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to 'Duhok' governorate; Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, p. 23

[593] National Context (The), The Logic Behind Iraq's Militia Strike Campaign, 22 March 2026, url; Knights, M. et al., Standing With Iran: The Integrated Combat Performance of Iraqi Militias During Operation Epic Fury, June 2026, url, p. 15; Shafaq News, Airstrike targets PMF base in Nineveh, no casualties reported, 3 April 2026, url; Shafaq News, Airstrikes kill 4 PMF officials in Iraq's Nineveh, 1 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url; Shafaq News, Airstrikes hit PMF site in Iraq's Nineveh, 21 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Strike on Al-Basaer complex injures four in Iraq's Nineveh Plain, 14 March 2026, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 4, 2026, 4 March 2026, url

[594] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

[595] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

[596] Modern Diplomacy, Northern Iraq and the Kurdistani Disputed Territories, 20 November 2022, url; Kirkuk Now, Qaratapa to Court: Districtization Ongoing Despite Kurdish Protests, 28 September 2025, url

[597] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 56

due to strikes by the military forces of the US and/or Israel[598] in context of the US/Israel war with Iran.[599]

2.5.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED data, a total of 48 fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) were recorded in Ninewa during the reference period from 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026. 9 of those were associated with incidents coded as violence against civilians, 3 of which occurred in Mosul district and 3 in Ba'aj district.[600] UCDP recorded 6 fatalities and no civilian casualties.[601]

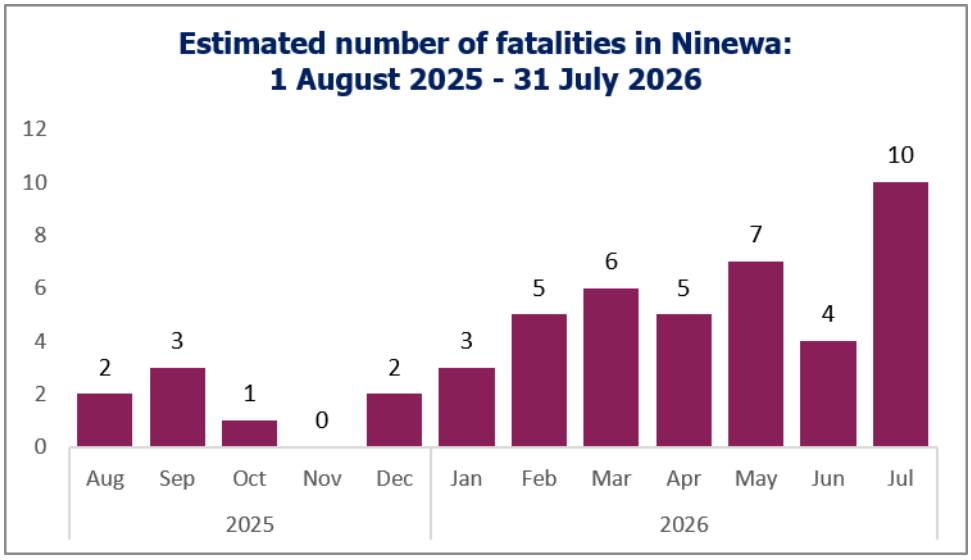


Figure 15: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Ninewa between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[602]

2.5.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Ninewa reportedly continued to face recovery challenges, including damaged infrastructure dating back to ISIL's presence in the governorate.[603] On 17 March 2026, Ninewa's deputy governor said that, as of that date, no government or civilian facilities were hit in Ninewa following the outbreak of the US/Israel war with Iran.[604] According to the Iraqi DMA, almost

[598] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url
[599] Knights, M. et al., Standing With Iran: The Integrated Combat Performance of Iraqi Militias During Operation Epic Fury, June 2026, url, p. 15; ISW and CTP, Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 4, 2026, 4 March 2026, url
[600] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[601] EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026 provided by courtesy of UCDP by email, 28 August 2026
[602] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[603] UNDP, Quarterly Progress Report. Funding Facility for Stabilisation. July-September 2025, 1 February 2026, url, p. 5; CIVIC, "What's lost is not just stones": Civilian Preferences for Amends in Mosul, Iraq, November 2025, url, p. 16
[604] Kirkuk Now, No Government or Civilian Facilities Targeted, Deputy Governor of Nineveh, 17 March 2026, url

687 000 square metres across the districts of Makhmour, Sinjar, Tel Afar and Tel Kayf were known or suspected to be contaminated with anti-personnel mines, as of December 2025. In addition, more than 36 square kilometres were known or suspected to contain IEDs.[605] Media sources reported at least five civilians killed, including one child, and several others injured by ERWs.[606]

2.5.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to IOMs Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM),[607] as of December 2025, Ninewa was home to approximately 208 500 IDPs, with almost 99 % of those being displaced from within the governorate.[608] This represented a decrease on governorate level by about 13 400 compared to December 2024.[609] Mosul was both the Iraqi district hosting the highest number of IDPs (about 73 700) and the district from which the most IDPs originated. By the end of 2025, Ninewa showed a return rate of 78 %. From September to December 2025, IOM recorded several drivers for returns to and within Ninewa, including emotional desire and rehabilitation of houses.[610] Ninewa was also among the governorates with the highest numbers of returnees from Syrian Al-Hol camp.[611]

[605] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, pp. 16, 21

[606] Shafaq News, ISIS war remnant kills two shepherds in Nineveh, 26 June 2026, url; Shafaq News, 5 مقتل وإصابة أشخاص بانفجار عبوة من مخلفات داعش غربي الموصل [Five people were killed and wounded in an explosion caused by an ISIS remnant west of Mosul], 4 January 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: December 11 – 18, 2025, 18 December 2025, url; Shafaq News, محافظتين في..طفل مقتل بانفجار وعامل سوري يقضي غرقاً [In two governorates, a child was killed in an explosion and a Syrian worker drowned], 3 August 2025, url

[607] 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

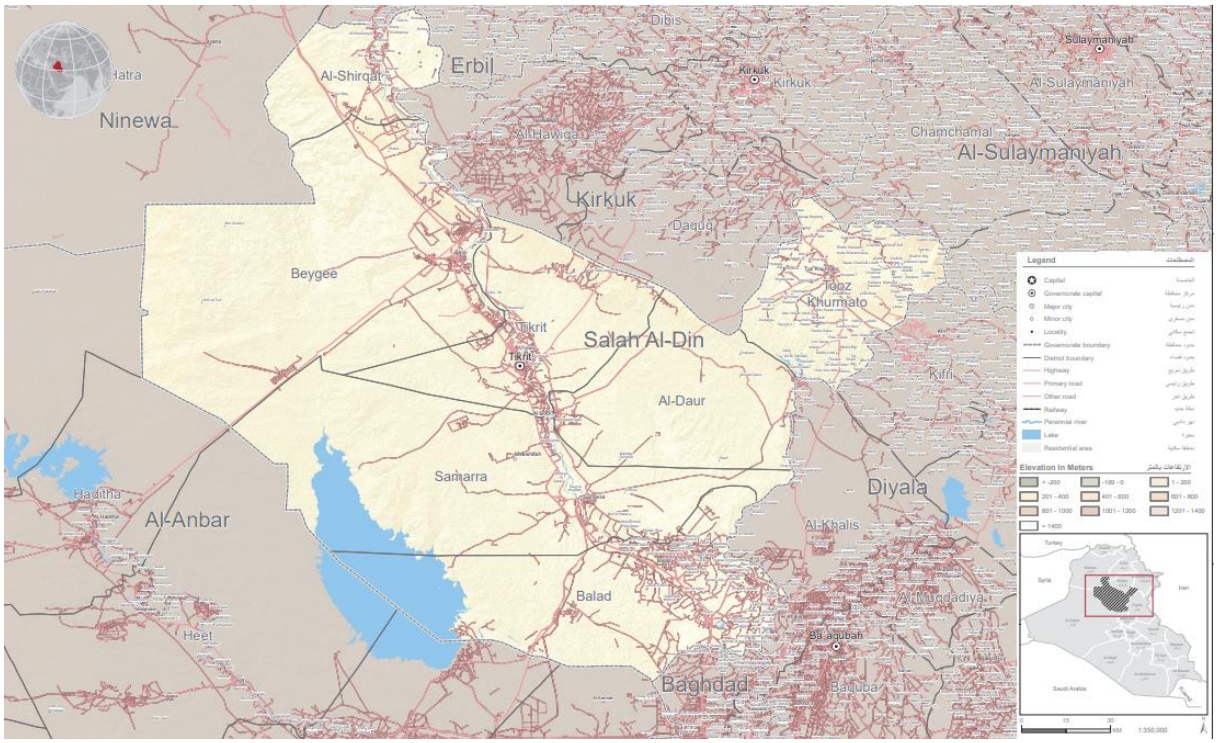
[608] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url

[609] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 134 (September – December 2024), January 2025, url

[610] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 1-4, 10

[611] UNDP, European Union Strengthens Support for Iraq's Community Reintegration Efforts, 9 February 2026, url

2.6. Salah Al-Din



Map 8. Salah Al-Din[612]

2.6.1. Administrative division and population estimates

The 2024 census data shows that the population of Salah Al-Din was estimated at 1 774 500.[613] The governorate is divided into 11 districts: Samarra, Al-Shirqat, Tikrit, Balad, Baiji (Beygee), Tuz Khurmatu, Al-Dijail, Al-Alam, Al-Dholoia, Al-Daur, Amerlaly.[614] Salah Al-Din's capital is Tikrit. Tuz Khurmatu district is part of the so-called disputed territories, claimed by both the KRG and the federal government. The population of Salah Al-Din is predominantly Sunni Arab, though some districts, such as Tuz Khurmatu, have a mixed population where Turkmen and Kurds also live.[615]

[612] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Salah Al-Din Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url
[613] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Salah Al-Din governorate
[614] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Salah Al-Din governorate; Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, pp.17-18
[615] EPIC, ISHM Reference guide, updated August 2025, url

2.6.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

Historically ISIL had a strong presence in Salah Al-Din.[616] However, by 2025, the UN Security Council assessed that ISIL's activity had narrowed to low-impact operations, with the group maintaining a presence in the Hamrin Mountains.[617]

As in the previous reporting period,[618] several PMF brigades and factions were operating in the governorate.[619] According to Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, Salah Al-Din witnessed an overlapping presence of various armed militias, particularly in the districts of Samarra, Balad, Al-Dijail and Tikrit. Badr, Asaib Ahl Al-Haq, Kataib Hezbollah, and Saraya Al-Salam, along with about 12 other factions, such as Kataib Al-Imam Ali and Ansar Allah Al-Awfiya, held influence across the governorate. In addition, Sunni armed factions with tribal and regional ties, which mostly operate within the security frame of the aforementioned militias, were also present.[620] MBN/Al-Hurra reported that in Salah Al-Din, particularly in the districts of Balad and Al-Dijail, was one of the main areas of deployment for AAH forces. KIA maintained full control over the Camp Speicher[621] in Tikrit district. The militia Saraya Al-Salam was integrated into the PMF's Brigades 313, 314 and 315. Brigade 313 was responsible for the security in Samarra district and the other two served as support and security forces across the rest of the governorate.[622]

2.6.3. Security trends

The overall security situation in Salah Al-Din was described as relatively stable as of the end of September 2025.[623] Since the US/Israeli war with Iran started on 28 February 2026, US forces reportedly conducted several airstrikes against PMF bases in Salah Al-Din.[624] The National Context listed at least 19 attacks between 28 February and 1 April 2026.[625] EPIC reported additional airstrikes on PMF bases in Salah Al-Din on 6 and 7 April 2026.[626] Two ambulances were also hit during this period, on 19 and 24 March 2026.[627] On 13 March, US-Israeli airstrikes

[616] Belgium, CGRS- CEDOCA, Veiligheidssituatie [Security Situation], 29 August 2025, url, p. 33
[617] UN Security Council, Letter dated 3 February 2026 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-seventh 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/2026/44, 4 February 2026, url, para. 63
[618] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 60; FK, B., Why Shiites Should Be the Last to Call for U.S. Expulsion, New Lines Institute, 11 December 2024, url
[619] National Context (The), Bombed by Both Sides, Iraq Faces a War That Could Unravel It From Within, 2 April 2026, url; MBN/Al-Hurra, Exclusive: Iraq Unveils Plan to Integrate Armed Factions, 5 June 2026, url
[620] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url
[621] Camp Speicher is the colloquial name for the Tikrit Air Academy, one of Iraq's biggest military- and airbases. UNITAD, Camp Speicher: A Pattern of Mass Killing and Genocidal Intent, June 2024, url, para. 48
[622] MBN/Al-Hurra, Exclusive: Iraq Unveils Plan to Integrate Armed Factions, 5 June 2026, url
[623] UNDP, Quarterly Progress Report. Funding Facility for Stabilisation. July-September 2025, 1 February 2026, url, p. 15
[624] National Context (The), Bombed by Both Sides, Iraq Faces a War That Could Unravel It From Within, [Infographic] 2 April 2026, url, set filters to Salah Al-Din governorate; EPIC, IHSM: April 2 – 9, 2026, 9 April 2026, url
[625] National Context (The), Bombed by Both Sides, Iraq Faces a War That Could Unravel It From Within, [Infographic] 2 April 2026, url, set filters to Salah Al-Din governorate
[626] EPIC, IHSM: April 2 – 9, 2026, 9 April 2026, url
[627] Insecurity Insight, The Greater Middle East Conflict: The Impact of Explosive Weapons on Civilian Infrastructure, Essential Services, and the Human Consequences [Infographic], 25 May 2026, url, p. 9

targeted an AAH headquarters in Salah Al-Din, though it remains unclear whether the strike caused casualties.[628] In June 2026, a security crisis erupted in Samarra when members of the Saraya Al-Salam forcibly resisted the appointment of a PMF commander to oversee the city's security and restructure the local brigades.[629]

EPIC reported on a series of counterterrorism operations against ISIL in Salah Al-Din. Between August and September 2025, Iraqi forces struck several ISIL hideouts, destroying tunnels, weapons and communications equipment, and killing multiple militants, including a senior ISIL figure described as responsible for coordinating remaining cells in the Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din regions.[630] On 30 January 2026, Shafaq News reported further counterterrorism operations targeting ISIL cells in the Balkana mountains within Tuz Khurmatu district, which were part of a broader counterterrorism campaign launched the previous day.[631] At the same time, on 30 January 2026, Peshmerga forces reportedly repulsed an attempted ISIL attack on one of their positions in Tuz Khurmatu district.[632] On 23 August 2026, suspected ISIL members attacked a PMF base in Tuz Khurmatu district without casualties.[633]

2.6.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 45 security incidents in Salah Al-Din governorate, of which 6 were coded as battles, 33 as explosions/remote violence, and 6 as incidents of violence against civilians. According to ACLED data, PMF was involved as a main actor (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') in 21 of 45 recorded incidents, while the military forces of the United States and/or of Israel were involved as the other main actor in 20 incidents. Security incidents were recorded in most governorate districts, with the majority being documented in Tuz Khurmatu (20) and Baiji (12). The highest number of incidents in Salah Al-Din governorate was recorded in March 2026 with 20 incidents. Of the 6 security incidents coded as violence against civilians during the current reporting period, 2 involved an unidentified Iraqi armed group.[634]

[628] FDD's Long War Journal, Dozens of airstrikes target Iran-backed militias across Iraq, 13 March 2026, url
[629] Faris, M., Iraqi factions' cosmetic disarmament masks deep institutional limbo, Amwaj Media, 22 July 2026, url
[630] EPIC, ISHM: September 25 – October 2, 2025, 2 October 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: September 11 – 18, 2025, 18 September 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: August 21 – 28, 2025, 28 August 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: August 14 – 21, 2025, 21 August 2025, url
[631] Shafaq News, Iraq strikes ISIS hideouts in Saladin's Balkana Mountains, 30 January 2026, url; Shafaq News, Counterterrorism forces launch operation against ISIS cells in Hamrin Mountains, 29 January 2026, url
[632] Rudaw, Peshmerga forces thwart ISIS attack in Tuz Khurmatu, 30 January 2026, url
[633] EPIC, ISHM: August 20 – 27, 2026, 27 August 2026, url
[634] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

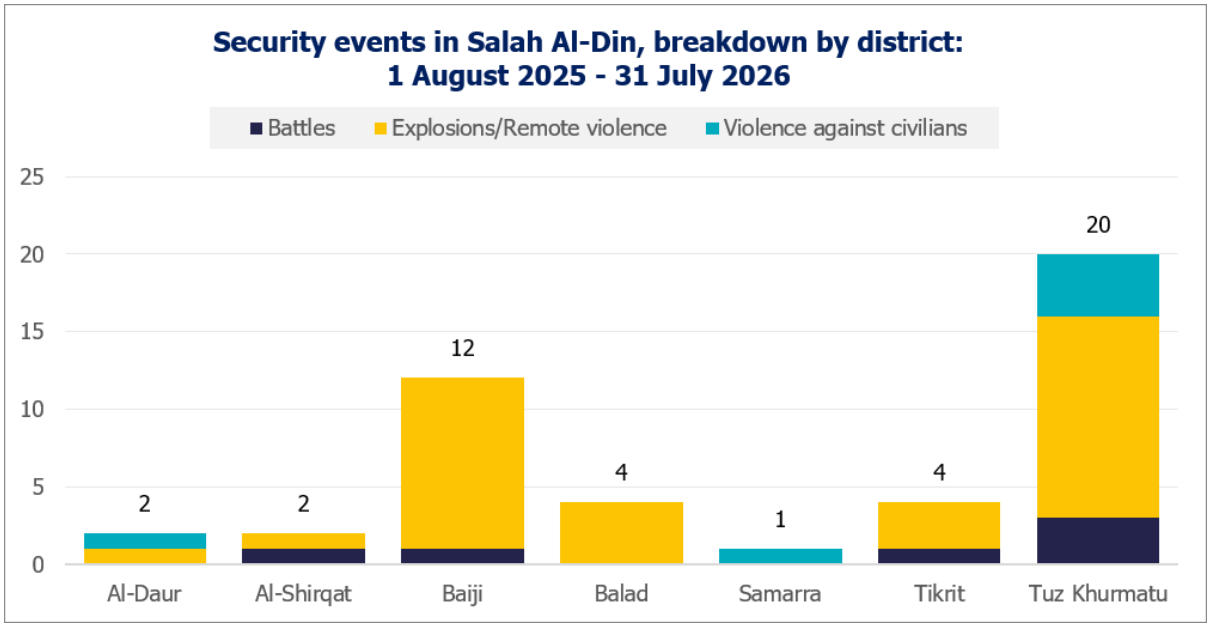


Figure 16: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Salah Al-Din between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[635]

A comparison between the current reference period and the ACLED data for the period 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025, indicates a decrease in security incidents in Salah Al-Din governorate, from 57 incidents down to 45 incidents. The decrease in events is mainly represented in the category of battles, as they dropped from 15 down to 6. Explosions/ remote violence decreased slightly from 35 to 33, as well as the number of incidents coded as violence against civilians decreased marginally from 7 down to 6. Tuz Khurmatu remained the district with the highest numbers of incidents, while the number of incidents in Samarra decreased markedly (from 11 down to 1).[636] According to ACLED, PMF and military forces of the United States and/or of Israel emerged as new major actors during the reporting period, while ISIL and unidentified armed groups became less relevant.[637]

2.6.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED, the total number of fatalities recorded in Salah Al-Din during the referencing period was 9 (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian), of which 3 were reported as incidents coded as violence against civilians.[638] UCDP recorded 7 fatalities and 1 civilian casualty.[639]

[635] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[636] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 61
[637] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 61
[638] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[639] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

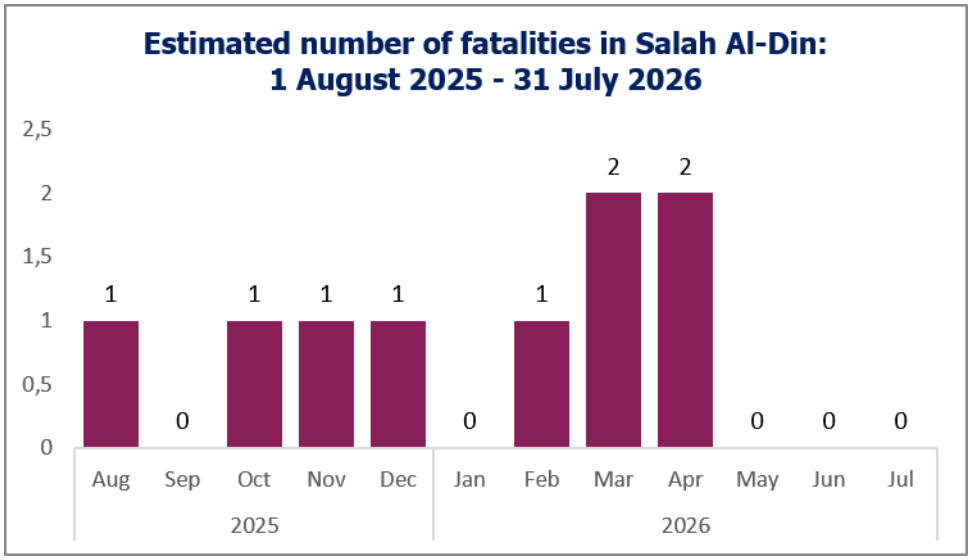


Figure 17: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Salah Al-Din between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[640]

2.6.6 Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

The governorate recorded numerous high-area contamination sites, especially in the Baiji district. Several of these sites are larger than half a million square meters, indicating serious residual explosive hazards.[641] Several instances of ERW explosions were reported over the reference period.[642]

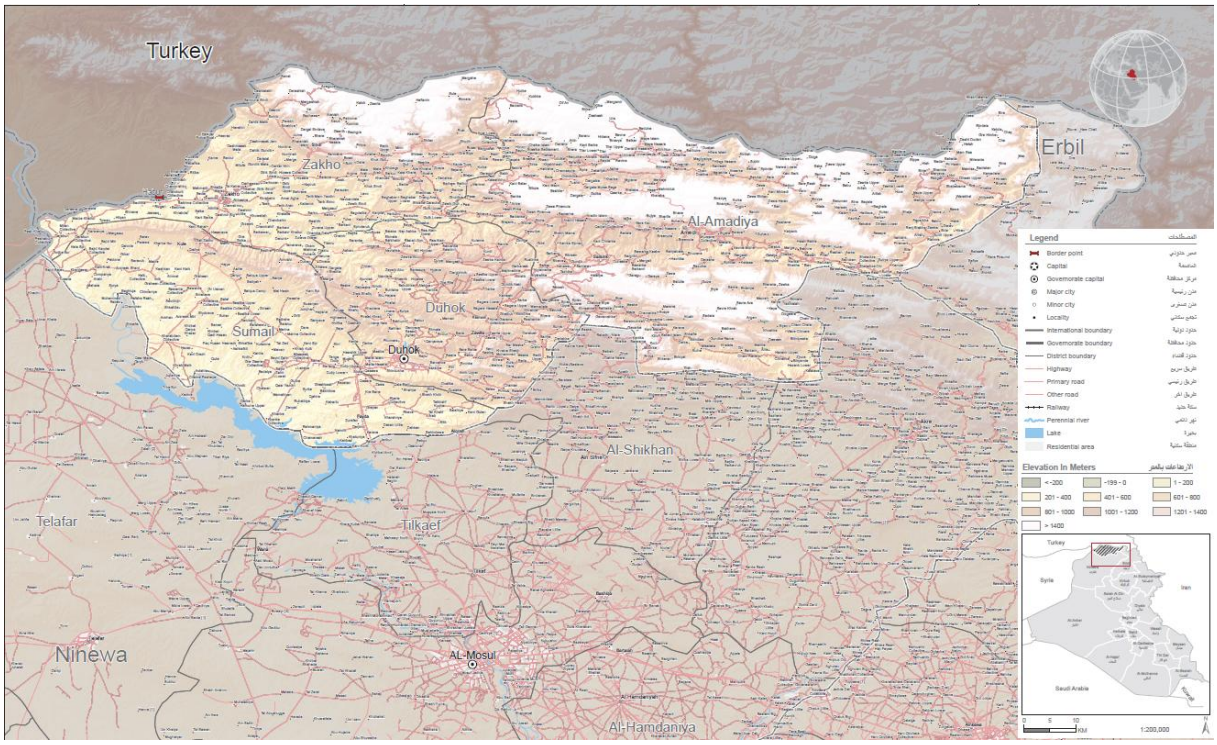
2.3.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[643] unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 135 (covering the period September – December 2025) that, as of 31 December 2025, Salah Al-Din was hosting approximately 39 000 displaced people. Of these, about 15 200 were in Samarra district, and about 14 200 in Tuz Khurmatu district. This represented a decrease on governorate level of about 3 100 people compared to 2024. 97 % of IDPs were displaced within the governorate.[644] Salah Al-Din is one of the governorates with the highest returnee numbers. As of December 2025, the total number of returnees in Salah Al-Din stood at

[640] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[641] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, p. 12
[642] EPIC, ISHM: May 14 – 21, 2026, 21 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 21 – 28, 2026, 28 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: February 5 – 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, url
[643] 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
[644] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 1, 4

789 500. This amounted to a return rate[645] of 88 %. Most returnees had previously been displaced within Salah Al-Din (45 %), followed by Kirkuk (25 %), Erbil (15 %), Sulaymaniyah (7 %) and other areas of Iraq (8 %).[646] According to IOM, some returns were blocked by security forces or failed because of limited job opportunities and public services.[647] Some returnees were forced to find other less conducive housing arrangements as their homes were either occupied or damaged.[648] While the number of returnees living in 'critical shelters' in the governorate declined since 2024, it increased in Tuz Khurmatu district due to high living costs in several subdistricts.[649]

2.7. Dohuk



Map 9. Dohuk[650]

[645] 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)
[646] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 8, 10
[647] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 8, 9, 10
[648] IRC, Rapid Needs Assessment, October 2025, url, p. 8
[649] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 3, 8, 9, 10
[650] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Salah Al-Din Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url

2.7.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Dohuk governorate is located in the northwestern part of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).[651] The governorate's capital is Dohuk city.[652] The governorate is divided into the following districts: Dohuk, Amedi (Al-Amadiya), Al-Shikhan[653] (Sheqan), Akre (Aqra), Btifa, Buradrash (Bardarash), Sumel (Sumail, Simele), and Zakho (Zaxo).[654] According to the 2024 census, the population of Dohuk governorate was about 1 599 900, with nearly 80% of inhabitants living in urban areas.[655]

2.7.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

Dohuk governorate is within the administrative jurisdiction of the KRG[656] and the KDP-dominated political and security sphere.[657] KRG security actors operating in the governorate included Asayish (internal security forces),[658] Peshmerga (military forces)[659] and Zeravani forces (militarised police force).[660] As of November 2025 the former KDP-affiliated Unit 80 was formally integrated into the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA)[661] and reorganised as Zone One Command, with responsibility including Dohuk, although reporting indicated that partisan command structures persisted.[662]

The Iraqi Border Guard Command, in cooperation with the KRG, carried out measures to reinforce security along the border between Dohuk governorate and Syria.[663] Furthermore, Turkish armed forces maintained a substantial presence in northern Dohuk, particularly in Amedi district, including in the Zap, Avashin, Metina and Berwary Bala areas, where military bases, roads and compounds were reported.[664] By contrast, the PKK's presence reportedly decreased during the reference period.[665] In November 2025, the PKK announced the withdrawal of its forces from the Zap area.[666] Further withdrawals from positions on Mount Gara and in other mountainous areas were reported in July 2026.[667]

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[651] UNHCR Iraq, Iraq: Kurdistan Region and Northern Governorates [Map], 22 January 2023, url
[652] Encyclopaedia Britannica, Dahuk, last updated 21 March 2024, url
[653] Please note that the district of Al-Shikhan forms part of Iraq's disputed territories and is for this reason included in Dohuk as well as Ninewa governorates.
[654] Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, p. 23
[655] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url
[656] Kurdistan 24, Duhok Attracts Over $62 Million in Investment During First Half of 2026, 24 June 2026, url
[657] Jerusalem Post (The), Kurdistan's security architecture recast as Peshmerga unification continues, 18 November 2025, url; Amwaj Media, KDP crosses 1M-ballot mark, but elections reflect little change in Iraqi Kurdistan, 14 November 2025, url
[658] GCHR, GCHR's periodic report on human rights violations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, 19 June 2026, url
[659] Amargi (The), Despite Latest Unification Decree, Peshmerga Remains Deeply Partisan, 6 March 2026, url
[660] Italy, MD, Operazione "Prima Parthica": nel 2025 addestrati oltre 1.200 militari curdi [Operation "Prima Parthica": Over 1,200 Kurdish soldiers to be trained by 2025], 12 December 2025, url
[661] New Region (The), KDP-affiliated Unit 80 forces integrate into Peshmerga ministry: Source, 17 November 2025, url
[662] Amargi (The), Despite Latest Unification Decree, Peshmerga Remains Deeply Partisan, 6 March 2026, url
[663] NPA, Iraq expands concrete wall along Syrian border amid security fears, 20 November 2025, url
[664] CPTIK, The Fragility of Peace: Turkish Military Expansion and Limited Positive Outcomes for Displaced Villages, 24 February 2026, url
[665] Al-Mayadeen, Turkey, Iran discuss border security and cooperation in Agri, 11 August 2026, url
[666] New Region (The), PKK withdraws from strategic mountainous area in Duhok, 17 November 2025, url
[667] Bas News, PKK Withdraws From Two Strategic Positions, Turkish Forces Take Control: Report, 7 July 2026, url; Al-Mayadeen, Turkey, Iran discuss border security and cooperation in Agri, 11 August 2026, url

2.7.3. Security trends

During the reference period, security developments in Dohuk governorate were characterised by a marked decline in conflict-related incidents associated with the Türkiye–PKK conflict,[668] in contrast to the previous reference period.[669] At the same time, there were new security risks associated with regional drone and missile activity linked to the wider conflict involving Israel, the United States and Iran.[670] According to Community Peacemaker Teams – Iraqi Kurdistan (CPTIK), September 2025 was the first month since 2015 in which no Turkish bombardments or attacks in the KRI were recorded.[671] This reduction in hostilities largely continued into early 2026. However, in February 2026, Turkish forces reportedly carried out three bombardments and detonated explosive ordnance in Galy Rashava in the Deraluk area.[672]

From late February 2026 onwards, Dohuk was affected by drone and missile incidents linked to wider regional tensions involving Iran and Iran-aligned actors. CPTIK recorded 22 such incidents in the governorate between 28 February and 28 May 2026,[673] with one strike recorded in Dohuk city in March.[674] Reported incidents included drone attacks against the Sarsang oil field as well as other oil infrastructure in Chamanke in March 2026.[675] In June, two drones were reportedly intercepted over Aqra without casualties,[676] while in July drone debris caused fires on agricultural land near Aqra.[677]

2.7.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 13 security incidents in Dohuk governorate,[678] of which 10 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 2 as violence against civilians, and one as battles. The majority of incidents were recorded in the district of Amedi (10 of 13). Two incidents were recorded in Dohuk district and one in Zakho. The highest number of incidents in Dohuk governorate was recorded in August 2025 with five incidents, all of which involved the Turkish military forces and the PKK. Four further incidents, which occurred in March and early April 2026,[679] correlated with hostilities related to the

[668] CPTIK, A Cold Peace: A Ceasefire Without Demobilization, 14 October 2025, url; CPTIK, The Fragility of Peace: Turkish Military Expansion and Limited Positive Outcomes for Displaced Villages, 24 February 2026, url
[669] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, pp. 69-70
[670] Shafaq News, Drone attack targets oil fields in Kurdistan's Duhok, 5 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: April 23 – 30, 2026, 30 April 2026, url; CPTIK, Three Months of Iran-Linked Attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: 751 Attacks, 22 Killed, 112 Injured, 31 May 2026, url
[671] CPTIK, A Cold Peace: A Ceasefire Without Demobilization, 14 October 2025, url
[672] CPTIK, The Fragility of Peace: Turkish Military Expansion and Limited Positive Outcomes for Displaced Villages, 24 February 2026, url
[673] CPTIK, Three Months of Iran-Linked Attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: 751 Attacks, 22 Killed, 112 Injured, 31 May 2026, url
[674] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[675] Shafaq News, Drone attack forces shutdown of Sarsang oil field in Duhok, 6 March 2026, url; Rudaw, Drone attack targets Sarsang oil field in Duhok province, 5 March 2026, url
[676] Rudaw, Two drones intercepted in Duhok, Kurdish opposition base struck in Erbil, 7 June 2026, url
[677] Shafaq News, Drone wreckage sparks fires near Akre in Duhok, 19 July 2026, url
[678] Please note that, for the purposes of ACLED data, Akre district is classified under Ninewa governorate. Incidents recorded in Akre are therefore included in the security incident figures for Ninewa governorate.
[679] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

US/Israeli operation against Iran.[680] Of the two security incidents during the current reference period which were coded as 'violence against civilians', one involved the Turkish military forces and the other an unidentified Iraqi armed group. According to ACLED data, Turkish military forces were involved as main actors (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') in 8 incidents, followed by the PKK in 5 incidents and unidentified armed groups in 3 incidents. The remaining 3 incidents involved pro-Iranian militia and an unidentified military force.[681]

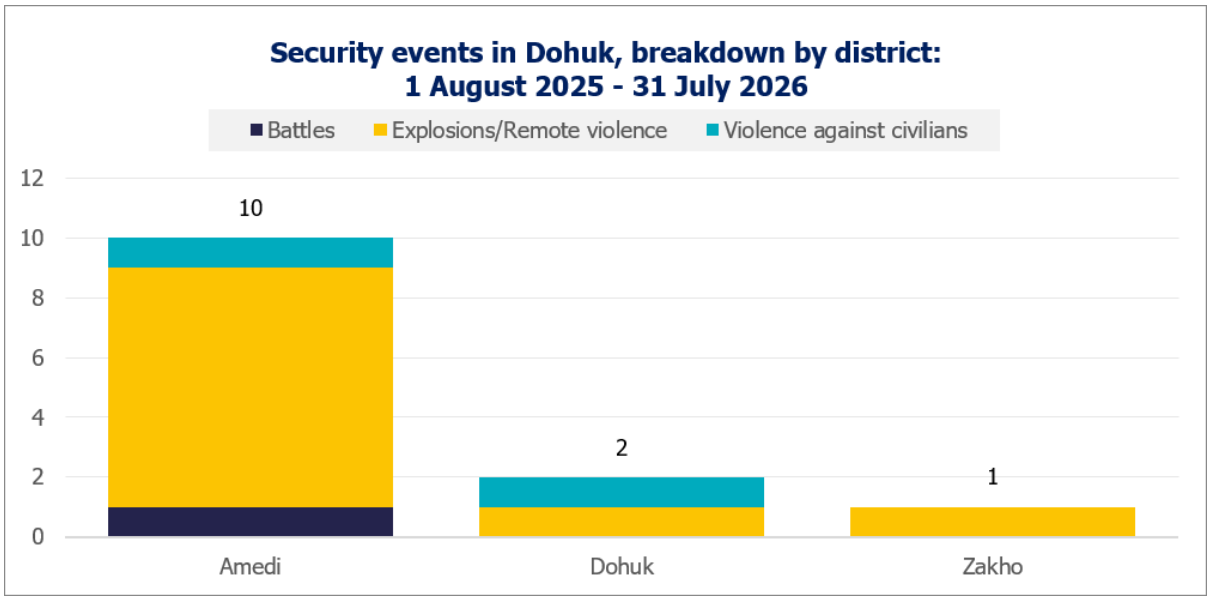


Figure 18: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Dohuk between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[682]

A comparison between the current reference period and the ACLED data for the period 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025 indicates a stark decrease in security incidents in Dohuk governorate, from 2 917 to 13 incidents.[683] The high level of incidents in Dohuk during the previous reference period was due to the Turkish military's ongoing military operation against the PKK, which notably decreased following the disarmament ceremony held by PKK members in July 2025, with no 'battle' recorded in the governorate between January and August 2026.[684]

2.7.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED, the total number of fatalities recorded in Dohuk during the reference period was two (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian). These fatalities resulted

[680] FDD's Long War Journal, Strikes continue hitting Iran-backed Iraqi militias, Kataib Hezbollah declares temporary US embassy ceasefire, 20 March 2026, url
[681] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[682] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[683] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 70
[684] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 70

from explosions/remote violence (1) and violence against civilians (1).[685] UCDP recorded no civilian fatalities during the reference period.[686]

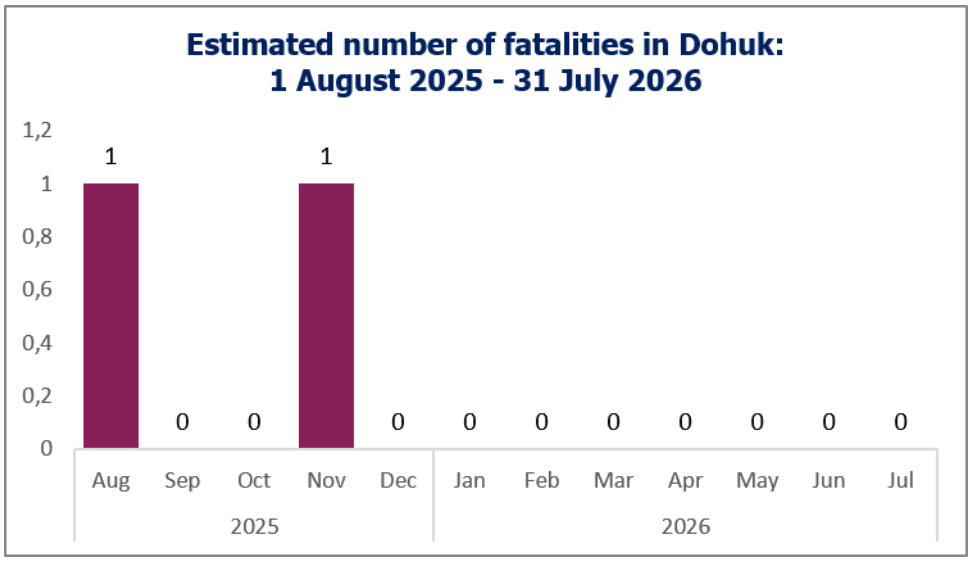


Figure 19: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Dohuk between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[687]

2.7.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to the KRG, 29 drone attacks were recorded in Dohuk governorate between 28 February and 20 April 2026, causing significant damage to residential properties.[688] Drone incidents in the governorate were reported by regional news in the context of the wider conflict involving Israel, the United States and Iran, with some incidents resulting in material damage.[689] In early March 2026, a drone attack led to the temporary shutdown of the Sarsang oil field.[690] In July, debris from a drone reportedly caused fires on agricultural land in the district of Akre.[691]

For 2025, the Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action reported a continuous contamination of Dohuk governorate with anti-personnel mines. The district of Amedi was the most affected district,

[685] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[686] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[687] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[688] KRG, 809 Drone and Missile Attacks Target the Kurdistan Region; 20 Civilian Fatalities Reported, 25 April 2026, url
[689] Channel8, Two Unidentified Drones Crash in Duhok, 28 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Explosive drone strikes Duhok, air defenses down second, 28 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Drone crashes in Kurdistan's Duhok, 20 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Drone attack targets oil fields in Kurdistan's Duhok, 5 March 2026, url
[690] Reuters, Oilfield in Iraqi Kurdistan halts production after drone strike, sources say, 5 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Drone attack forces shutdown of Sarsang oil field in Duhok, 6 March 2026, url; Rudaw, Drone attack targets Sarsang oil field in Duhok province, 5 March 2026, url
[691] Shafaq News, Drone wreckage sparks fires near Akre in Duhok, 19 July 2026, url

followed by Zakho.[692] Demining activities by the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) in Dohuk continued throughout the reference period.[693] In April 2026, authorities reported the destruction of more than 600 landmines and explosive remnants of war collected across the governorate during the first four months of the year[694] and authorities in Darkar subdistrict defused IEDs that had been exposed following flooding.[695] In December 2025, the head of IKMAA stated that mine-clearance operations were expected to continue until at least 2028.[696]

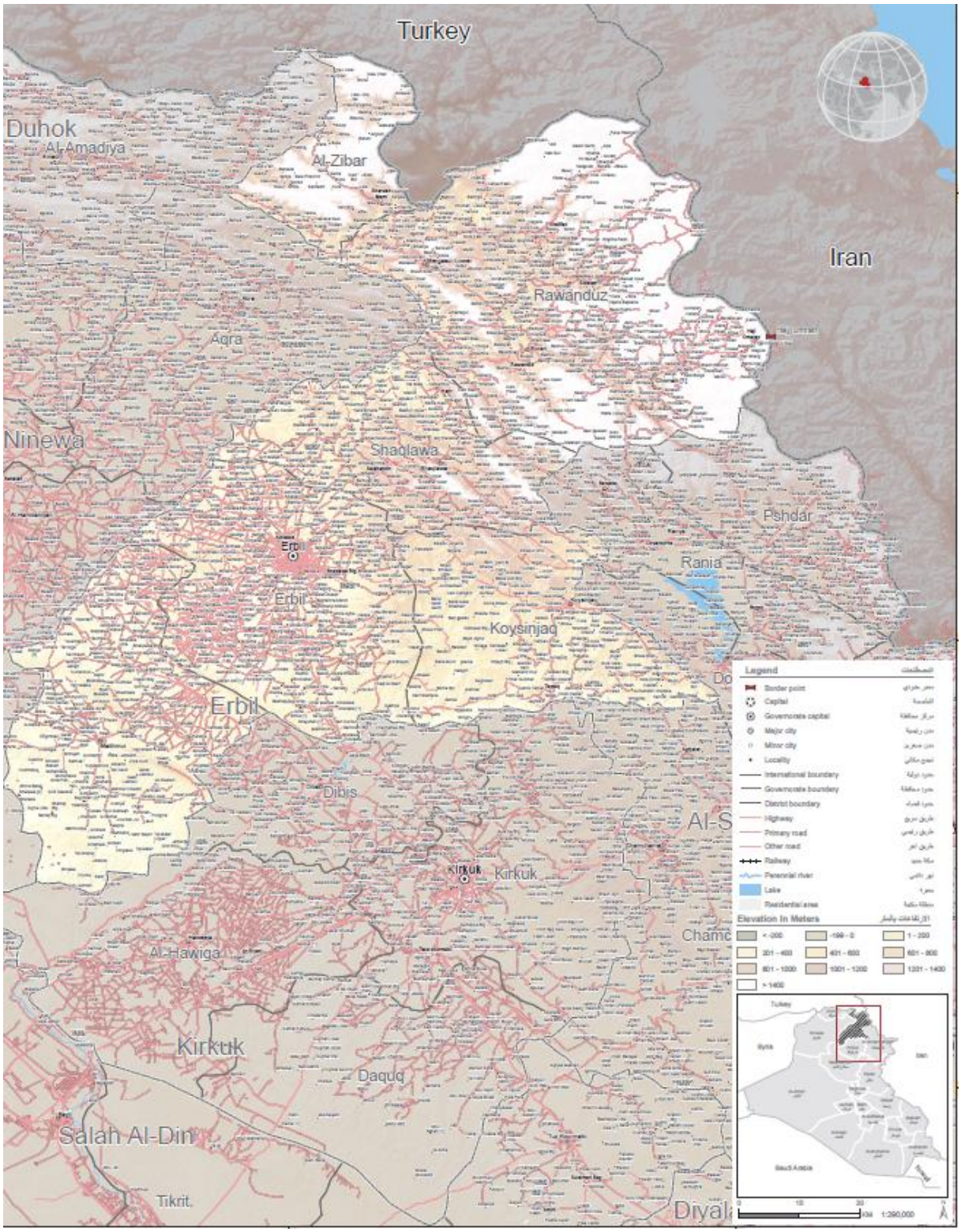
2.7.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[697] unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 135 (covering the period September – December 2025) that, as of 31 December 2025, Dohuk governorate hosted approximately 205 700 displaced people. Of these, about 115 800 were in Sumel district, followed by Zakho district with around 65 100 and Dohuk district with about 22 300. The large majority of IDPs hosted in the governorate originated from Ninewa governorate, accounting for 99.8 % of the total IDP population in Dohuk.[698] More than 14 800 of Dohuk's IDPs lived in 'critical shelters',[699] where residents may face constraints in accessing livelihood opportunities and basic services.[700] According to a UNHCR/IOM update published in August 2026, an estimated 89 700 IDPs were living in camps in Dohuk in June 2026,[701] down from approximately 92 400 in March 2026.[702]

As of 31 December 2025, IOM recorded 744 returnees in Dohuk governorate, all of whom had returned to Zakho district.[703] The figures indicate a broad continuation of the displacement situation in Dohuk compared with the same period in 2024, with a slight decrease in the number of IDPs hosted in the governorate (from about 211 000[704] to around 205 700). As of 31 December 2025, IOM recorded no IDPs elsewhere in Iraq who originated from Dohuk governorate.[705]

[692] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, p. 17
[693] Shafaq News, Kurdistan's Duhok destroys 600+ landmines in 2026, 16 April 2026, url; Kurdistan24, Mine Clearance Progress Advances in Kurdistan Region's Duhok Province, 12 December 2025, url; KRG, KRG's Mine Action Efforts Continue with Clearance of Gre Mire Minefield, 20 October 2025, url
[694] Shafaq News, Kurdistan's Duhok destroys 600+ landmines in 2026, 16 April 2026, url
[695] Shafaq News, Duhok clears four IEDs exposed by recent floods, 2 April 2026, url
[696] Kurdistan24, Mine Clearance Progress Advances in Kurdistan Region's Duhok Province, 12 December 2025, url
[697] Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. Displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., url
[698] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[699] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[700] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 3
[701] UNHCR and IOM, Update on Internal Displacement in Iraq as of June 2026, 9 August 2026, url, p. 1
[702] UNHCR and IOM, Update on Internal Displacement in Iraq as of March 2026, 26 April 2026, url, p. 1
[703] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Returnees Master Lists 135, January 2025, url
[704] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 72
[705] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url

2.8. Erbil



Map 10. UNOCHA and iMMAP, Erbil[706]

[706] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Salah Al-Din Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url

2.8.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Erbil (Arbil, Kurdish: Hawler) governorate is located in the centre of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The governorate's capital is Erbil city.[707] Iraq's Central Organization for Statistics (COS) divides the governorate into nine districts: Erbil, Benselawa (Bnaslawa), Sowran (Soran), Shaqlawa, Chouman (Choman), Koi Sanjaq (Koya), Merka Sour (Mergasur), Kabat (Khabat) and Rawandooz (Rawanduz).[708] The National Context however adds a further six districts against the framework of the consensus, taken in 2024: Pirdam, Harir, Qushtapa, Ankawa, Khalifan and Sidakan[709].[710] The district of Makhmour (Maxmwr), south of Erbil district, is part of the so-called disputed territories,[711] claimed both by the KRG[712] and the national government,[713] with sources varyingly listing it as a district of Erbil or Ninewa governorate. According to the 2024 census, the population of Erbil governorate was about 2 517 500, with over 83 % of inhabitants living in urban areas.[714]

2.8.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

Erbil governorate lies within the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)-dominated security area of the Kurdistan Region.[715] Police and Asayish carried out most internal security and law enforcement functions,[716] while Peshmerga forces performed military functions[717] and supported the internal security forces when required.[718] As part of the Peshmerga unification process, the KDP-affiliated Unit 80 was reorganised as Area Command 1 and placed under the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA) in November 2025.[719] The 11th Peshmerga Brigade maintained headquarters near Degala.[720] US and coalition personnel were stationed at Erbil Air Base[721] and at Harir Air Base,[722] while non-US NATO personnel were reportedly present at Camp Singara.[723] Remaining US troops were expected to leave the Kurdistan Region by the

[707] Encyclopaedia Britannica, Erbil, last updated 22 August 2026, url
[708] Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, pp. 24-25
[709] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url
[710] Please note that research for this report identified discrepancies, sometimes substantial, between sources regarding the administrative divisions of Erbil governorate.
[711] Kirkuk Now, Makhmur Residents Protest Newly Enforced Taxes on Goods from Kurdistan Region, 11 February 2026, url
[712] Iraq, Erbil governorate, Districts of Maxmwar, n.d., url
[713] According to the Iraq government, Makhmur district is part of Ninewa governorate: Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, p. 10; National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url
[714] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url
[715] Levy I., The Army of Kurdistan, The Peshmerga, MEI, 6 August 2026, url
[716] Kurdistan 24, Erbil Authorities Declare Eid Security, Public Service Operations a 'Success' Amid Tourist Influx, 31 May 2026, url
[717] KRG, Statement by the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, 24 March 2026, url
[718] Kurdistan 24, 'I Hope This Election Becomes a Historic Turning Point for Kurdistan,' Says Zeravani Commander, 9 November 2025, url
[719] Kurdistan 24, Kurdistan Region and US Reaffirm Commitment to Peshmerga Reform and Unification, 18 February 2026, url
[720] Kurdistan 24, Drone Attack Targets Peshmerga Headquarters Near Erbil, Ministry Urges Baghdad to Act, 2 March 2026, url
[721] Reuters, What are the main US military bases in the Middle East?, 14 January 2026, url
[722] Shafaq News, Harir Air Base in Erbil hit in twin morning strikes, 1 March 2026, url; New Arab (The), US redeploys forces in Erbil ahead of Iraq withdrawal, 3 August 2026, url
[723] Reuters, Airstrike on Italian base in Iraq was deliberate, defence minister says, 12 March 2026, url

end of September 2026.[724] Iranian Kurdish opposition groups also maintained a presence: for instance, the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK) operated a camp approximately 30 km from Erbil city,[725] Sazman-e Khabat maintained a base in Topzawa,[726] the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI/PDKI) maintained its headquarters in the Koi Sanjaq area,[727] and the Komala party was also reported as present in the governorate.[728] Furthermore, the PKK remained present in areas including the Qandil Mountains[729] and Sidakan,[730] notwithstanding announcing its dissolution and disarmament in May 2025.[731] Turkish armed forces also maintained positions in the governorate,[732] as did the PJAK,[733] the Iranian offshoot of the PKK.[734] Makhmour Camp remained a disputed site: Türkiye alleged that it served as a PKK recruitment and logistical hub, while residents and humanitarian organisations maintained that it primarily housed civilians.[735] In the disputed[736] district of Makhmour, Peshmerga forces conducted joint operations with the Iraqi army,[737] while small numbers of ISIL-elements were reported in the area.[738]

2.8.3. Security trends

In the months between August 2025 and end of February 2026, conflict-related armed activity in Erbil governorate was comparatively limited.[739] Türkiye–PKK hostilities had declined substantially, although Turkish bombardments resumed in Sidakan in February 2026,[740] and both Turkish and PKK elements reportedly remained present there as of July 2026.[741] Small numbers of ISIL fighters were reported between the towns of Makhmour and Gwer in November 2025, with limited activities.[742] Security conditions deteriorated sharply following the outbreak of the regional conflict involving Israel, the United States and Iran on 28 February

[724] Stars and Stripes, Last remaining US troops set to exit Iraq by Sept. 30, capping 2-decade mission, 15 July 2026, url; National (The), US troops prepare to leave Iraqi Kurdistan by September 30, 10 August 2026, url
[725] Le Monde, Iranian Kurdish fighters in Iraq hope Tehran's 'hated dictatorship' will fall, 11 March 2026, url
[726] Al-Majalla, Iranian Kurdish camps in Iraq wait in the wings, 12 March 2026, url
[727] Shafaq News, Drone attack targets Iranian Kurdish Party headquarters in Erbil Province, 3 March 2026, url
[728] Iraq News, Iran launches missiles and drones strike at Kurdish opposition targets in Iraq's Erbil province, 12 August 2026, url
[729] Al-Monitor, 'We chose it': PKK fighters cherish life in Iraq's mountains, 1 December 2025, url
[730] Rudaw, Duhok's bordering villages repopulating amid PKK-Turkey peace process, 6 July 2026, url
[731] Reuters, Kurdish PKK militants announce withdrawal from Turkey as part of disarmament, 26 October 2025, url
[732] Rudaw, Duhok's bordering villages repopulating amid PKK-Turkey peace process, 6 July 2026, url; Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, [Exclusive | The 'Kurdistan Party' withdraws from two locations in northern Iraq to make way for the Turkish army] خاص | الكردستاني "ينسحب من موقعين شمالي العراق لمصلحة الجيش التركي, 6 July 2026, url
[733] Amargi (The), PJAK asserts independence from PKK, says it will not dissolve, 26 August 2026, url
[734] National Context (The), Ranking Iran's Kurdish Opposition: Strategic Depth, Networks, and Potential, 6 December 2025, url
[735] Kurdistan 24, Report: Türkiye, Iraq, KRG Reach Understanding to Close Makhmour Camp Under New Peace Framework, 2 August 2026, url
[736] Kirkuk Now, Makhmur Residents Protest Newly Enforced Taxes on Goods from Kurdistan Region, 11 February 2026, url
[737] Kurdistan 24, Peshmerga Forces, Iraqi Army Conduct Joint Operation Near Mount Qarachugh, 11 January 2026, url
[738] Rudaw, Kurdish forces spot ISIS fighters in Makhmour: Commander, 10 November 2025, url
[739] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[740] CPTIK, The Fragility of Peace: Turkish Military Expansion and Limited Positive Outcomes for Displaced Villages, 24 February 2026, url
[741] Rudaw, Duhok's bordering villages repopulating amid PKK-Turkey peace process, 6 July 2026, url
[742] Rudaw, Kurdish forces spot ISIS fighters in Makhmour: Commander, 10 November 2025, url

2026,[743] triggering hundreds of drone and missile attacks on Erbil governorate.[744] The governorate accounted for 78 % of attacks in the Kurdistan Region between 28 February and 28 May 2026.[745] In March, most attacks were attributed to Iran-affiliated Iraqi armed groups,[746] although Iran also conducted direct strikes.[747] Targets included US and coalition installations,[748] Peshmerga positions[749] and civilian locations.[750] Following the 8 April 2026 ceasefire, direct Iranian attacks became predominant and increasingly targeted Iranian Kurdish opposition groups.[751] Such attacks continued during spring and summer 2026, including strikes on unspecified opposition groups in May,[752] June[753] and on KDPI and Khabat facilities in Koi Sanjaq and Topzawa on 31 July.[754] Clashes between tribal members and security forces were also reported in Khabat district.[755]

2.8.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 219 security incidents in Erbil governorate, of which 207 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 9 as violence against civilians, and 3 as battles. According to ACLED data, military forces of Iran were involved as main actors (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') in 123 incidents, followed by pro-Iranian militia in 57 incidents, and KDPI in 44 incidents. Security incidents were recorded in the whole governorate, the districts with most recorded incidents being Erbil (91), Rawandooz (52) and Koi Sanjaq (43). The highest number of incidents in Erbil governorate was recorded in March 2026 with 108 incidents,[756] correlating with hostilities related to the US/Israeli war against Iran.[757] According to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Erbil

[743] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[744] CPTIK, 14 Killed, 93 Injured: One Month of Iran-Linked Attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 30 March 2026, url
[745] CPTIK, Three Months of Iran-Linked Attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: 751 Attacks, 22 Killed, 112 Injured, 31 May 2026, url
[746] CPTIK, 14 Killed, 93 Injured: One Month of Iran-Linked Attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 30 March 2026, url
[747] Reuters, Trump's mixed messages and Iran's bombs kept the Kurds out of the war, 8 April 2026, url
[748] Reuters, Airstrike on Italian base in Iraq was deliberate, defence minister says, 12 March 2026, url; Reuters, Iran's Shi'ite allies step up strikes despite weakened hand, updated 13 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Harir Air Base in Erbil hit in twin morning strikes, 1 March 2026, url
[749] Reuters, Rocket attack kills six Kurdish Peshmerga fighters in Iraq's Kurdistan, sources say, 24 March 2026, url
[750] Rudaw, Kurdish leaders condemn drone attack in Erbil that killed a married couple, 7 April 2026, url; Shafaq News, Air defenses intercept drones over Erbil, 4 April 2026, url; Kurdistan 24, Drone Strike Hits Civilian Area in Erbil, Injuring Several and Causing Material Damage, 25 March 2026, url
[751] CPTIK, Three Months of Iran-Linked Attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: 751 Attacks, 22 Killed, 112 Injured, 31 May 2026, url
[752] Reuters, Drone strike hits Iranian opposition camp north of Iraq's Erbil, security sources say, 13 May 2026, url
[753] Reuters, Explosive drone targets Iranian Kurdish opposition camp north of Iraq's Erbil, security sources say, 27 June 2026, url
[754] Rudaw, Kurdish opposition group says Iran struck its base near Erbil with drones, 31 July 2026, url
[755] EPIC, ISHM: August 20 – 27, 2026, 27 August 2026, url
[756] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[757] CPTIK, 14 Killed, 93 Injured: One Month of Iran-Linked Attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 30 March 2026, url

governorate recorded 419 drone attacks and 58 missile strikes between 28 February and 20 April 2026.[758]

Between August 2025 and February 2026, the monthly number of recorded security incidents by ACLED remained at or below 4. Meanwhile, between April and July 2026, the number remained at or below 40. Of the 9 security incidents during the current reference period that were coded as 'violence against civilians', 4 involved unidentified Iraqi armed groups, 2 Asayish, 2 military forces of Iran and 1 an unidentified tribal militia.[759]

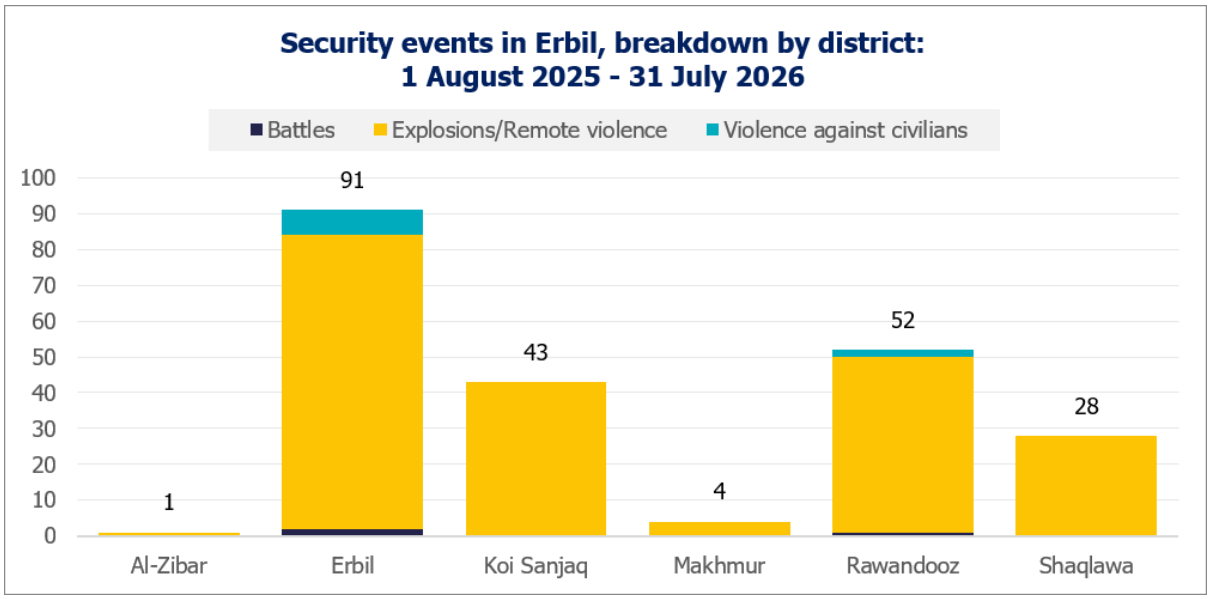


Figure 20: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Erbil between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[760] [761]

A comparison between the current reference period and the ACLED data for the period 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025, indicates a stark decrease in security incidents in Erbil governorate, from 1 050 incidents to 219 incidents,[762] with Turkish military forces and the PKK being the primary actors during the previous reference period.[763]

2.8.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED, the total number of fatalities recorded in Erbil during the reference period was 24 (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian). These fatalities resulted

[758] KRG, 809 Drone and Missile Attacks Target the Kurdistan Region; 20 Civilian Fatalities Reported, 25 April 2026, url
[759] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[760] Please note that the classification of Al-Zibar as a separate district follows the ACLED dataset.
[761] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[762] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 70
[763] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 71

from explosions/remote violence (21) and violence against civilians (3).[764] The KRG reported 10 civilian fatalities in Erbil governorate as a result of attacks between the end of February and 20 April 2026.[765] UCDP recorded 8 fatalities and 2 civilian deaths.[766]

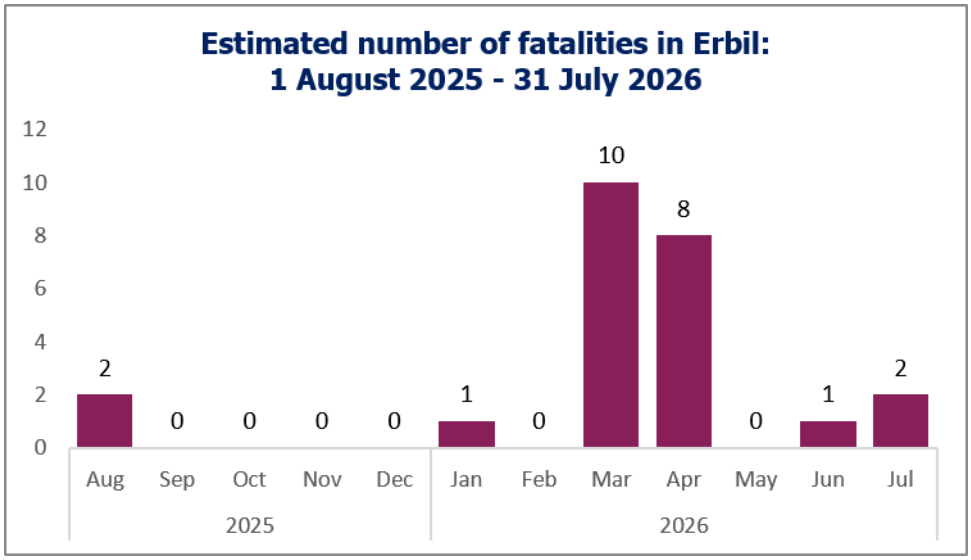


Figure 21: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Erbil between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[767]

2.8.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Erbil governorate recorded 419 drone attacks and 58 missile strikes between 28 February and 20 April 2026, damaging businesses, vehicles and homes of 726 residents. Soran district was targeted by 59 drones and 9 missiles, resulting in material losses for 35 residents.[768] Regional media reported drone and missiles incidents across the governorate in the context of the broader conflict involving Israel, the United States and Iran.[769] Attacks damaged industrial facilities,[770] military installations,[771] camps

[764] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[765] KRG, 809 Drone and Missile Attacks Target the Kurdistan Region; 20 Civilian Fatalities Reported, 25 April 2026, url
[766] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[767] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[768] KRG, 809 Drone and Missile Attacks Target the Kurdistan Region; 20 Civilian Fatalities Reported, 25 April 2026, url
[769] MBN/Al-Hurra, Missiles, Sirens, and Darkness: Erbil's Long Night, 28 February 2026, url; Iraqi News: Over 500 attacks hit Erbil since regional conflict erupted, 2 April 2026, url
[770] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url
[771] EPIC, ISHM: February 26 – March 5, 2026, 5 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url

hosting Iranian Kurdish opposition groups,[772] a diplomatic facility,[773] and residential buildings.[774]

In 2025, Iraq's Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) reported continued contamination of Erbil governorate by anti-personnel mines. Choman was identified as the district with the highest number of contaminated areas, with 187 sites covering approximately 21 million square metres, followed by Soran, where 114 affected areas covered approximately 22 million square metres.[775] Mine-clearance operations by the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) continued throughout the reference period. In 2025, the agency cleared more than 800 000 square metres of mine-contaminated land in Erbil.[776] In June 2026, IKMAA was reported to have destroyed more than 5 000 items of unexploded ordnance in the governorate.[777] In 2025, unexploded ordnance and landmines killed six people in the governorate and led to four amputations.[778] ACLED recorded a further death of a civilian due to an old landmine in February 2026.[779] In December 2025, the head of IKMAA stated that mine-clearance operations were expected to continue until at least 2028.[780]

2.8.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[781] unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 135 (covering the period September – December 2025) that, as of 31 December 2025, Erbil governorate was hosting approximately 202 600 displaced people. Of these, about 189 900 were in Erbil district, followed by Shaqlawa district with around 5 600 and Makhmour district with about 4 400. The majority of IDPs in Erbil had been displaced from Ninewa (48 %) and Anbar governorates (28 %), followed by Salah Al-Din (11 %).[782] Nearly 400 of Erbil's IDPs lived in 'critical shelters',[783] where residents may face constraints in accessing livelihood opportunities and basic services.[784] The figures indicate a broad continuation of the IDP situation in Erbil compared with the same period in 2024, with a slight decrease in the number of IDPs hosted in the governorate (from 204 990[785] to about 202 600). In addition, as of 31 December 2025,

[772] EPIC, ISHM: May 7 – 14, 2026, 14 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: June 4 – 11, 2026, 11 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: June 25 – July 2, 2026, 2 July 2026, url
[773] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url;
[774] EPIC, ISHM: February 26 – March 5, 2026, 5 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 19 – 26, 2026, 26 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url
[775] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, pp. 17-18
[776] Rudaw, Six killed, four amputated by landmines in Erbil last year: Mine agency, 12 January 2026, url
[777] +964, Mine Action Agency announces major clearance operations in Duhok and Erbil, 10 June 2026, url
[778] Rudaw, Six killed, four amputated by landmines in Erbil last year: Mine agency, 12 January 2026, url
[779] ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[780] Kurdistan24, Mine Clearance Progress Advances in Kurdistan Region's Duhok Province, 12 December 2025, url
[781] 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
[782] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 4
[783] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[784] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 3
[785] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 72

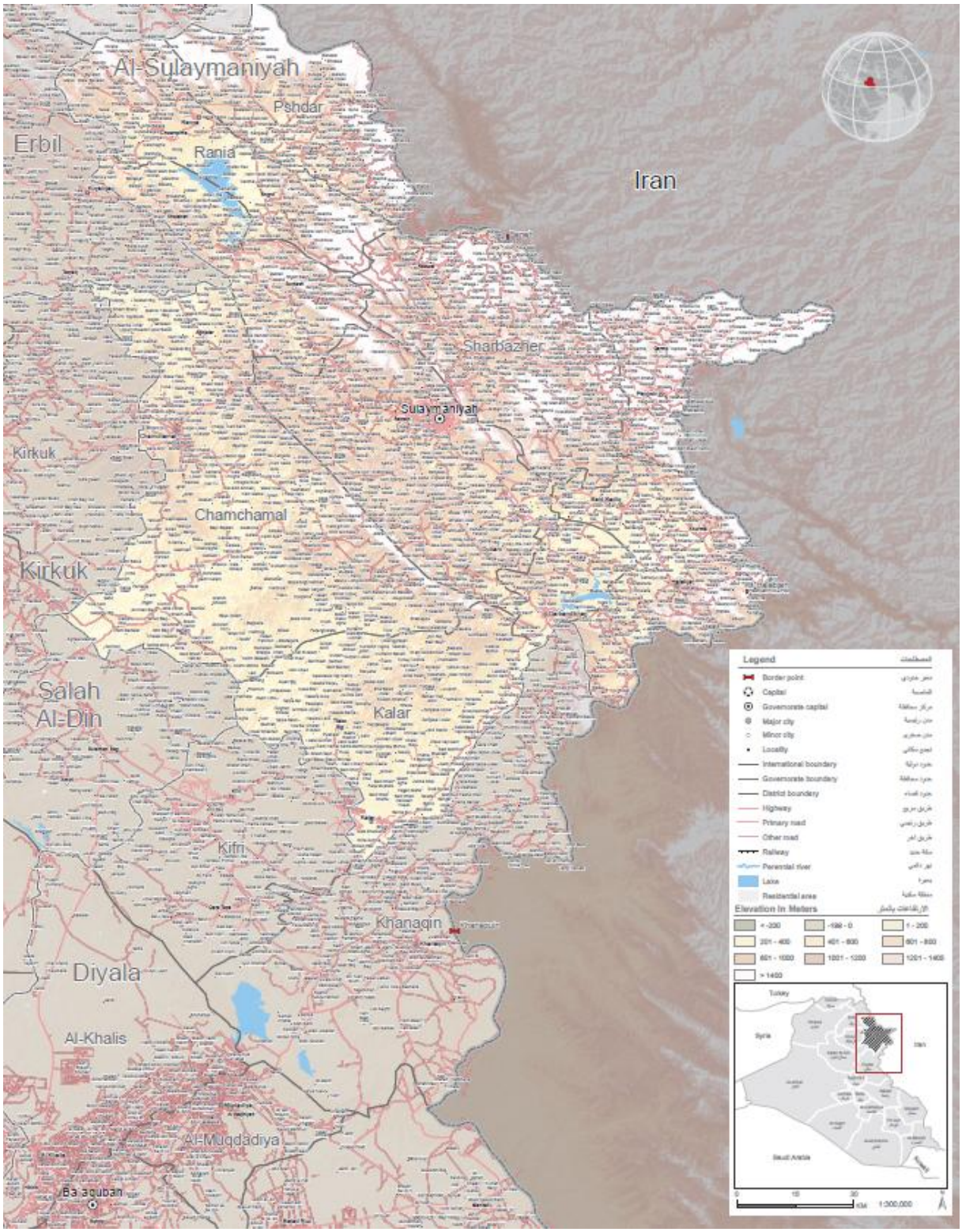
IOM documented a total of about 9 700 IDPs across Iraq who originated from areas in Erbil governorate. The vast majority of these were hosted in other areas of Erbil (around 8 100) and Ninewa (about 1 600) governorates.[786] As of December 2025, the return rate[787] in Erbil governorate was 87 %. Erbil recorded approximately 62 400 returnees, most of whom had been displaced within the governorate (72 %). They all returned to Makhmour.[788]

[786] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url

[787] 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)

[788] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 10

2.9. Sulaymaniyah and Halabja



Map 11. UNOCHA and iMMAP, Sulaymaniyah[789]

[789] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Salah Al-Din Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url

2.9.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Sulaymaniyah (Sulaymaniyyah, Slemani, Sulaimani) governorate is located in the eastern part of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The governorate's capital is Sulaymaniyah city.[790] It is divided into the following districts: Sulaymaniyah, Kara Daq (Qaradagh), Sharazoor, Sead Sadiq (Said Sadiq), Panjwin (Penjwin), Sharbazher (Sharbazeere), Maut (Mawat), Beshdar (Pshdar), Rania (Ranya), Dokan, Derbendikhan (Darbandikhan), Kalar, Kifri (Kfri), Chamchamal and Khanaqin[791] (Khanakeen).[792] The National Context names Hajiawa and Bazian as additional districts.[793] CSGIS and the National Context label Halabja as a district of Sulaymaniya governorate,[794] even though Halabja officially became Iraq's 19th governorate at the beginning of May 2025, which resulted in its separation from Sulaymaniyah governorate.[795] For the purposes of this report, data relating to Sulaymaniyah and Halabja governorates have been presented separately wherever the available sources allow. It should be noted, however, that a number of sources do not report on Halabja as a separate governorate and instead include data concerning Halabja under Sulaymaniyah governorate.

According to the 2024 census, the population of Sulaymaniyah governorate (including Halabja) was about 2 401 700, with nearly 90 % of inhabitants living in urban areas.[796]

2.9.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

Sulaymaniyah is a PUK stronghold[797] and Halabja falls likewise within the PUK security sphere. PUK-affiliated Peshmerga[798] as well as Asayish operated in both governorates;[799] the wider PUK security apparatus also included the Zanyari intelligence service and Counter-Terrorism Group (CTG).[800] The PUK-affiliated Unit 70 was being reorganised as Area Command 2, covering Sulaymaniyah, Halabja and Garmian,[801] although administrative and organisational issues remained unresolved as of the end of June 2026.[802] The Kurdistan Social Democratic Party (KSDP) maintained its own Peshmerga force and a stronghold near Gulkhana village in

[790] Encyclopaedia Britannica, Al-Sulaymāniyyah, last updated 14 July 2026, url
[791] Please note that Khanaqin district is part of the so-called disputed territories, which are claimed by both the Iraqi federal government and the KRG.
[792] Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, pp. 25-27; National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url
[793] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url. Please note that research for this report identified discrepancies, sometimes substantial, between sources regarding the administrative divisions of Sulaymaniyah governorate.
[794] Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, p. 25; National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url
[795] Rudaw, Halabja becomes Iraq's 19th province, 5 May 2025, url
[796] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url
[797] Levy I., The Army of Kurdistan, The Peshmerga, MEI, 6 August 2026, url; Reuters, Iraqi Kurdish PUK security force alleges plot to kill party leader, 27 August 2025, url
[798] iNNOV8, Exclusive Interview with Staff Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Sidiq, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, 14 May 2026, url
[799] Shafaq News, Kurdistan Asayish arrest nine ISIS suspects in Al-Sulaymaniyah, 3 May 2026, url; Shafaq News, Halabja: Three ISIS militants detained, 8 December 2025, url
[800] Levy I., The Army of Kurdistan, The Peshmerga, MEI, 6 August 2026, url
[801] iNNOV8, Exclusive Interview with Staff Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Sidiq, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, 14 May 2026, url
[802] Kurdistan 24, Kurdistan Region To Complete Unified 11-Division Peshmerga Force by September, 30 June 2026, url

Halabja.[803] Iraqi federal border guards were present along the Iranian frontier in both governorates,[804] including Panjwin district in Sulaymaniyah.[805] Sulaymaniyah also hosted Iranian Kurdish opposition camps, including Komala factions at Zirgwez[806] and Surdash,[807] and a PKK presence in the Qandil mountains, despite the group's decision to end its armed struggle in May 2025.[808] Suspected ISIL members remained in Sulaymaniyah[809] and a cell, including an alleged logistics emir, was identified in Halabja in December 2025.[810]

2.9.3. Security trends

On 22 August 2025, PUK-linked forces clashed with armed loyalists of Lahur Talabani during his arrest in Sulaymaniyah city, causing several deaths[811] and injuries.[812] Also in August, an alleged armed incident in Halabja involved KSDP-linked Peshmerga and local security forces.[813] In November, a drone strike on Khor Mor gas field in Chamchamal halted gas production and caused widespread power outages.[814] PKK–Türkiye conflict activity in Qandil declined following the PKK disarmament process,[815] although a Turkish drone was reportedly downed in Raparin in October.[816] From late February 2026, the regional conflict involving Iran, Israel and the United States spilled into the Kurdistan Region,[817] with 135 attacks recorded in Sulaymaniyah and 6 in Halabja during its first three months.[818] Iran and Iran-aligned Iraqi

[803] Rudaw, Kurdish socialist party accuses Halabja security of arresting its Peshmerga, 5 August 2025, url; Erbil Weekly, Halabja Tensions Rise After Kurdish Party Claims Arrests, 6 August 2025, url
[804] At-Taakhi, تعزيز قوات الحدود في محافظتي السليمانية وحلبجة [Reinforcement of border forces in Sulaimaniyah and Halabja provinces], 24 March 2026, url
[805] +964, Infiltration claims denied, Iraq says Iran border secure, cites coordination with Peshmerga, 7 March 2026, url; Rudaw, Iraq says borders protected, denies forces crossing into Iran, 7 March 2026, url
[806] +964, Missile strike kills nine members of Iranian Kurdish opposition group Komala, 17 July 2026, url; Rudaw, Nine killed, several injured in attack on Kurdish dissident group in Sulaimani, 17 July 2026, url
[807] KURDPA, Kurdistan Region of Iraq Continuation of drone and missile attacks on the headquarters and political refugee camps of Kurdistani parties on the fourteenth day of the ceasefire 3 Peshmerga were wounded, 22 April 2026, url; Rudaw, Missile attack targets Iranian Kurdish group in Sulaimani, 22 April 2026, url
[808] Al-Monitor, 'We chose it': PKK fighters cherish life in Iraq's mountains, 1 December 2025, url; Rudaw, Unidentified drone downed in Sulaimani province, 14 October 2025, url
[809] Channel8, Kurdistan Region Security Agency Announces Arrest of Nine ISIS Members, 3 May 2026, url; Shafaq News, Kurdistan Asayish arrest nine ISIS suspects in Al-Sulaymaniyah, 3 May 2026, url; Shafaq News, Asayish arrests two ISIS militants in Al-Sulaymaniyah, 20 July 2026, url
[810] Shafaq News, Halabja: Three ISIS militants detained, 8 December 2025, url; Channel8, Asayish Arrests Several ISIS Fighters in Halabja Following Clash, 9 December 2025, url
[811] Reuters, Iraqi Kurdish PUK security force alleges plot to kill party leader, 27 August 2025, url
[812] New Region (The), Lahur Sheikh Jangi arrest operation leaves 3 dead in Sulaimani, 22 August 2025, url; Rudaw, Lahur Talabany, brothers detained after overnight clashes in Sulaimani, 22 August 2025, url
[813] Erbil Weekly, Halabja Tensions Rise After Kurdish Party Claims Arrests, 6 August 2025, url; Rudaw, Kurdish socialist party accuses Halabja security of arresting its Peshmerga, 5 August 2025, url
[814] Rudaw, Drone attack targets Sulaimani's key gas field, causes outage, 26 November 2025, url; Reuters, Operations restart at Iraq's Khor Mor field, transporting gas to power stations, ministry says, 30 November 2025, url
[815] Rudaw, Basic services return to former PKK-Turkey conflict zones, 11 October 2025, url
[816] Rudaw, Unidentified drone downed in Sulaimani province, 14 October 2025, url
[817] CPTIK, 14 Killed, 93 Injured: One Month of Iran-Linked Attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 30 March 2026, url
[818] CPTIK, Three Months of Iran-Linked Attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: 751 Attacks, 22 Killed, 112 Injured, 31 May 2026, url

groups[819] targeted Peshmerga facilities,[820] communications infrastructure,[821] civilian[822] and diplomatic sites and Iranian Kurdish opposition camps.[823] Attacks continued after the April ceasefire and increasingly targeted Iranian Kurdish opposition groups; between 8 April and 28 May, Sulaymaniyah recorded 24 overall attacks and Halabja none.[824] In mid-July, missiles struck the Komala headquarters in Zirgwez.[825] Suspected members of ISIL were arrested in both governorates.[826] .

2.9.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 78 security incidents in Sulaymaniyah governorate (including Halabja), of which 67 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 8 as battles, and 3 as violence against civilians. Security incidents were recorded in 8 districts, the districts with most recorded incidents being Sulaymaniyah (40), Dokan (14) and Chamchamal (7). The highest number of incidents in Sulaymaniyah governorate was recorded in March 2026 with 33 incidents,[827] correlating with hostilities related to the US/Israeli operation against Iran.[828] In comparison, according to the KRG, Sulaymaniyah and Halabja governorates recorded 194 drone attacks and 41 missile strikes between 28 February and 20 April 2026.[829] Between August 2025 and February 2026, the monthly number of recorded security incidents according to ACLED remained at or below 4. Between April and July 2026, the monthly number of recorded security incidents remained at or below 15. Of the 3 security incidents during the current reference period coded as 'violence against civilians', 2 involved Asayish and 1 an unidentified armed group. According to ACLED data, military forces of Iran were coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2'[830] in 40 incidents, followed by the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KSZK) in 28 incidents, and pro-Iranian militias in 18 incidents.[831]

[819] CPTIK, 14 Killed, 93 Injured: One Month of Iran-Linked Attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 30 March 2026, url
[820] +964, Two killed as drones and missiles strike Erbil, Sulaymaniyah in overnight attacks, 8 March 2026, url; Rudaw, Drone attacks on Erbil, Sulaimani kill two, 8 March 2026, url
[821] Shafaq News, Drone strike hits telecom towers near Iraq's Halabja, 7 March 2026, url; +964, Drone strike telecom towers along Iran border in Darbandikhan and Garmian, 9 March 2026, url
[822] Rudaw, Kurdistan endures some 270 drone, missile attacks since start of Iran war, 12 March 2026, url
[823] Rudaw, Drone attacks on Erbil, Sulaimani kill two, 8 March 2026, url
[824] CPT International, Three months of Iran-linked attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 4 June 2026, url
[825] Rudaw, Nine killed, several injured in attack on Kurdish dissident group in Sulaimani, 17 July 2026, url
[826] Channel8, Kurdistan Region Security Agency Announces Arrest of Nine ISIS Members, 3 May 2026, url; Shafaq News, Kurdistan Asayish arrest nine ISIS suspects in Al-Sulaymaniyah, 3 May 2026, url; Shafaq News, Halabja: Three ISIS militants detained, 8 December 2025, url
[827] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[828] FDD's Long War Journal, Strikes continue hitting Iran-backed Iraqi militias, Kataib Hezbollah declares temporary US embassy ceasefire, 20 March 2026, url; CPTIK, 14 Killed, 93 Injured: One Month of Iran-Linked Attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 30 March 2026, url
[829] KRG, 809 Drone and Missile Attacks Target the Kurdistan Region; 20 Civilian Fatalities Reported, 25 April 2026, url
[830] Please note that ACLED does not distinguish between aggressors and targets. The labels 'Actor 1' and 'Actor 2' identify the parties involved in an event without specifying their respective roles.
[831] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

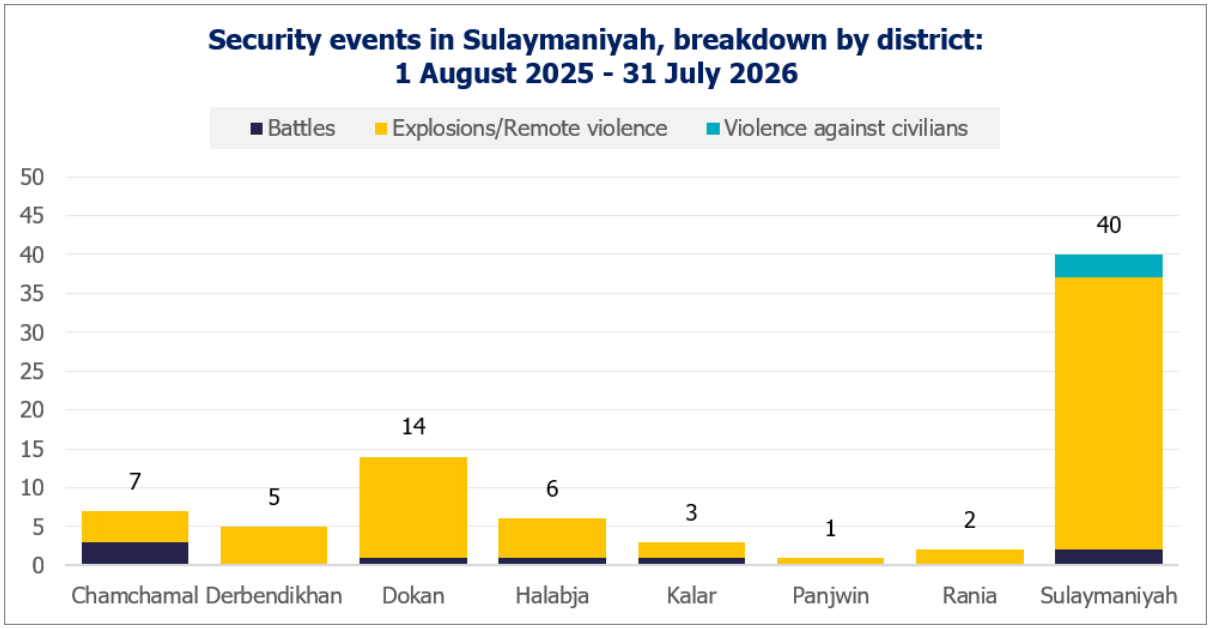


Figure 22: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Sulaymaniyah between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[832]

A comparison between the current reference period and the ACLED data for the period 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025, indicates a decrease in security incidents in Sulaymaniyah governorate, from 106 incidents to 78 incidents.[833]

2.9.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED, the total number of fatalities recorded in Sulaymaniyah, including Halabja, during the reference period was 25 (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian). These fatalities resulted from explosions/remote violence (13) and battles (12).[834] The KRG reported 3 civilian deaths and 6 injuries in Sulaymaniyah and Halabja governorates as a result of attacks between end of February and 20 April 2026 (see figure 22).[835] According to UCDP, 13 fatalities were recorded during the reference period, with no civilian deaths reported.[836]

[832] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[833] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 70
[834] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[835] KRG, 809 Drone and Missile Attacks Target the Kurdistan Region; 20 Civilian Fatalities Reported, 25 April 2026, url
[836] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

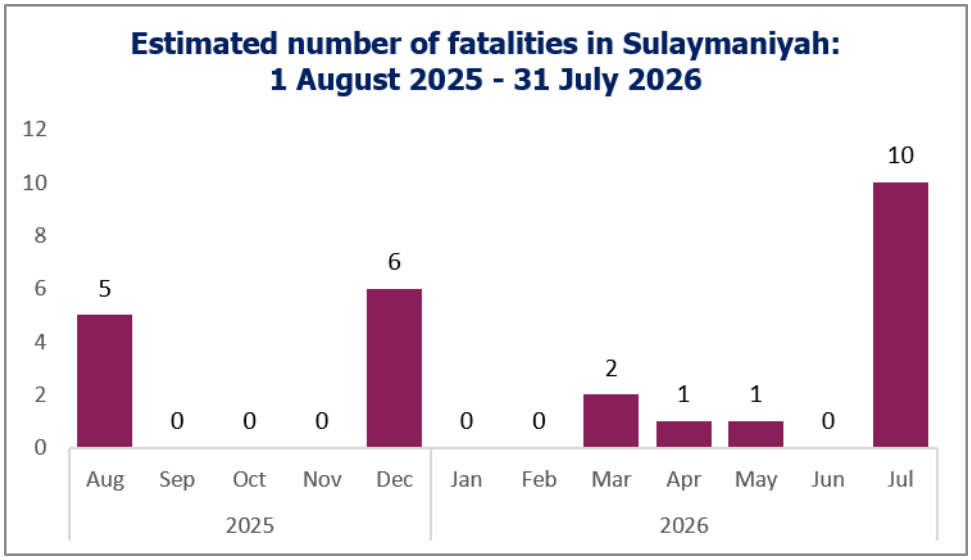


Figure 23: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Sulaymaniyah between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[837]

2.9.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

On 26 November, explosive drones struck the Khor Mor gas field, cutting regional electricity output by 80 %, with authorities not disclosing affiliations of the perpetrators.[838] According to the KRG, Sulaymaniyah and Halabja governorates recorded 194 drone attacks and 41 missile strikes between 28 February and 20 April 2026, 24 of which were directed at civilian locations.[839] Regional media reported of drone incidents and missile strikes across the governorate in the context of the broader conflict involving Israel, the United States and Iran.[840] Attacks damaged communication towers,[841] Peshmerga bases,[842] camps hosting Iranian Kurdish opposition groups,[843] a UN office,[844] and civilian sites.[845]

In 2025, Iraq's Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) reported continued contamination of Sulaymaniyah governorate, including Halabja, by anti-personnel mines. Sharbazher was identified as the district with the highest number of contaminated areas, with 736 sites covering approximately 36 million square metres, followed by Panjwin, where 563 affected

[837] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[838] EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url
[839] KRG, 809 Drone and Missile Attacks Target the Kurdistan Region; 20 Civilian Fatalities Reported, 25 April 2026, url
[840] Kurdistan 24, Kurdistan Region Reports 13 Drone and Missile Attacks in Two Days, Most Intercepted, 18 March 2026, url; Rudaw, Kurdistan endures some 270 drone, missile attacks since start of Iran war, 12 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Drone, rocket attacks target Iranian Kurdish opposition sites in Kurdistan, 5 March 2026, url
[841] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url
[842] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url
[843] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: April 9 – 16, 2026, 16 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: April 23 – 30, 2026, 30 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: April 30 – May 7, 2026, 7 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 14 – 21, 2026, 21 May 2026, url
[844] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url
[845] EPIC, ISHM: April 2 – 9, 2026, 9 April 2026, url

areas covered approximately 40 million square metres.[846] Mine-clearance operations by the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) continued throughout the reference period.[847] Between the beginning of 2025 and 22 December 2025, unexploded ordnance and landmines killed four people in the governorate and injured twelve.[848] During the first half of 2026, at least one other person died as a result of a mine explosion in the governorate.[849] A further incident leading to two deaths was recorded by ACLED on 31 August 2026.[850]

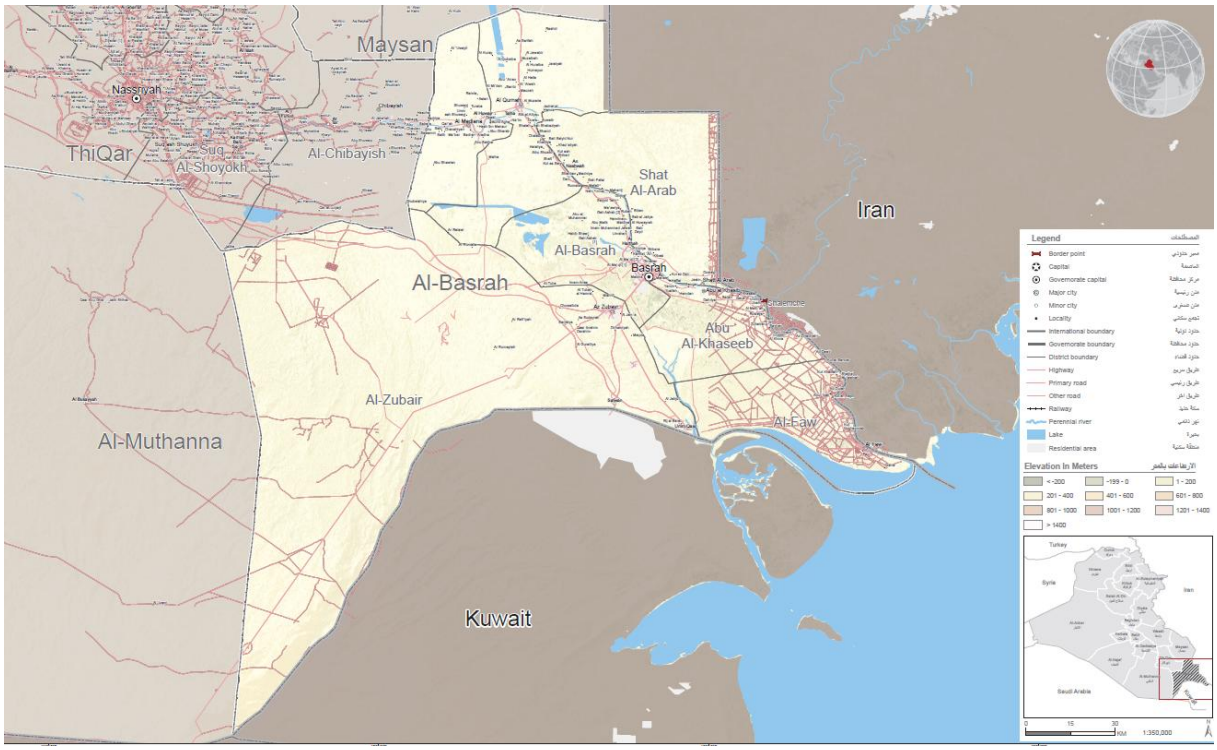
2.9.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[851] unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 135 (covering the period September – December 2025) that, as of 31 December 2025, Sulaymaniyah governorate, including Halabja,[852] was hosting approximately 112 400 displaced people. Of these, 79 800 were in Sulaymaniyah district, followed by Kalar district with about 13 600 and Chamchamal with around 5 100. The majority of IDPs in Sulaymaniyah had been displaced from Baghdad (26 %) and Diyala governorates (20 %), followed by Salah Al-Din (19 %) and Anbar (16 %).[853] About 80 of Sulaymaniyah's IDPs lived in 'critical shelters',[854] where residents may face constraints in accessing livelihood opportunities and basic services.[855] The figures indicate a broad continuation of the IDP situation in Sulaymaniyah compared with the same period in 2024, with a minimal decrease in the number of IDPs hosted in the governorate (from about 112 700[856] to around 112 400).[857] IOM noted that Sulaymaniyah governorate recorded the second highest volume of relocations in the country (27 %), mainly as a result of improved living conditions.[858] As of 31 December 2025, IOM recorded no

[846] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, p. 18
[847] KRG, الهيئة العامة لشؤون الألغام تدمر عشرات الألغام والمتفجرات في السليمانية [The General Authority for Mine Affairs destroys dozens of mines and explosives in Sulaymaniyah], 22 June 2026, url; KRG, KRG's Mine Action Completes Major Mine Clearance in Tanjaro, Slemani, 27 October 2025, url; +964, Mine Action Agency, Demining teams clear landmines, unexploded ordnance in Halabja's Sazan village, 16 October 2025, url; KRG, Kurdistan Mine Action Agency Steps Up Efforts to Eliminate Explosive Threats, 26 September 2025, url
[848] Rudaw, Landmine explosions killed dozen people in Kurdistan Region this year: Official, 22 December 2025, url
[849] Rudaw, Kurdistan Region records nine landmine casualties in first half of 2026, 6 July 2026, url
[850] ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[851] Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. Displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., url
[852] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[853] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 4
[854] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[855] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 3
[856] EUAA, Iraq – Country Focus, October 2025, url, p. 72
[857] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 4
[858] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 2

returnees to Sulaymaniyah governorate since September 2025[859] and no IDPs from Sulaymaniyah living in other Iraqi governorates.[860]

2.10. Basrah



Map 12. UNOCHA and iMMAP, Basrah[861]

2.10.1. Administrative division and population estimates

The 2024 census data shows that the population of Basrah was estimated at 3 664 200.[862] The governorate is divided into 11 districts: Basrah, Abu Al-Khaseeb, Al-Zubair, Al-Qurna, Al-Faw, Shatt Al-Arab, Al-Midaina, Al-Hartha, Al-Dair, Al-Sadiq, Safwan.[863] The governorate's capital is Basrah city. The population is predominantly Shia Arabs.[864]

[859] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Returnees Master Lists 135, January 2025, url
[860] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[861] UNOCHA and iMMAP, Iraq: Salah Al-Din Governorate Reference Map 2020, 5 May 2020, url
[862] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Basrah governorate
[863] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url, set filters to Basrah governorate; Please note that different sources report diverging administrative divisions.
The Annual Statistical Abstract by Iraq's Commission of Statistics and GIS, CSGIS, lists ten districts as of 2024, excluding Safwan. Iraq, CSGIS, Annual Statistical Abstract 2024–2025, Part One: Physical Features, n.d., url, pp. 22-23
[864] EPIC, ISHM Reference Guide, updated August 2025, url

2.10.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

The PMF maintained a presence in Basrah governorate, according to reporting of the PMF.[865] According to Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, several Iran-backed militias operate there, including the Badr Organization, AAH, KH, and Harakat Al-Nujaba.[866] In contrast to other governorates, this presence is not characterised by military bases but rather by political and financial offices,[867] with involvement in key sectors such as ports, border crossing, oil companies and transport and security services.[868] On 16 December 2025, the leader of the Saraya Al-Salam militia Moqtada Al-Sadr ordered a six-month suspension of activities and closure of the militia's offices in Basrah on disciplinary grounds.[869] The Iraqi analyst, Tamer Badawi, stated that Iran-backed militias maintained extensive proxy networks within tribal structures across the southern governorates, including Basrah, and that these networks exert significant influence over provincial politics.[870]

2.10.3. Security trends

Since the beginning of the US/Israel war with Iran on 28 February 2026, US and Saudi forces reportedly conducted one airstrike against a PMF headquarters in Basrah.[871] In March explosive drones of unspecified origin targeted Iraqi military bases[872] and a naval base[873] in the governorate. In the Al-Zubair district, a drone, which was intended to target a neighbouring country, was thwarted.[874] Oil infrastructure facilities were also hit by several airstrikes.[875] In addition, several armed clashes linked to tribal conflicts were reported in Basrah governorate throughout the reference period.[876]

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[865] Iraq, Al-Hashed, (صور) البصرة تحتفي بالذكرى الثانية عشرة لتأسيس الحشد الشعبي [Basrah celebrates the twelfth anniversary of the founding of the Popular Mobilization Forces (Photos)], 14 June 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, للأسبوع الثاني على التوالي.. الحشد الشعبي يواصل عمليات تأمين صحراء البصرة [For the second week in a row, the Popular Mobilization Forces continue operations to secure the Basrah desert], 24 May 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Hashed, خلال جولته في البصرة.. الدكتور العقابي يزور مقر اللواء الرابع بالحشد (صور) [During his tour in Basra, Dr. Al-Aqabi visits the headquarters of the Fourth Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces (Photos)], 14 May 2026, url

[866] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[867] National Context (The), How the Strikes on Iraq's Militias Followed the Country's Divide, 11 March 2026, url

[868] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[869] Arab Weekly (The), Sadr suspends Saraya al-Salam militia in push to restore discipline, 17 December 2025, url

[870] Badawi, T., Iraq's Pro-Iran Groups Aren't Going Anywhere, FP, 8 April 2026

[871] EPIC, ISHM: July 23 – 30, 2026, 30 July 2026, url; Rudaw هيئة الحشد في البصرةإصابة عنصرين بقصف جوي استهدف مقر القيادة [The Popular Mobilization Forces in Basra: Two members were injured in an airstrike targeting the command headquarters], 29 July 2026, url

[872] INA, العمليات المشتركة: إسقاط 5 طائرات مسيرة حاولت استهداف مواقع عسكرية في البصرة [Joint Operations: Five drones that attempted to target military sites in Basrah were shot down], 1 March 2026, url

[873] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url

[874] Al-Sumaria, في البصرة.. إحباط إطلاق صواريخ لاستهداف إحدى دول الجوار [In Basra, a missile launch targeting a neighbouring country was thwarted], 5 March 2026, url

[875] EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Drones hit two oil companies in western Basra, No casualties, 4 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: February 26 – March 5, 2026, 5 March 2026, url

[876] EPIC, ISHM: May 7 – 14, 2026, 14 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: February 12 – 19, 2026, 19 February 2026, url; +964, Weapons and vehicles seized. Basra police arrest two tribal sheikhs, 11 others after armed clash, 16 February 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: November 6 – 13, 2025, 13 November 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 2 – 9, 2025, 9 October 2025, url

2.10.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 117 security incidents in Basrah governorate, of which 51 were coded as battles, 42 as explosions/remote violence, and 24 as incidents of violence against civilians. According to ACLED data, unidentified tribal militia were involved as main actor (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') in 48 of all recorded incidents, followed by unidentified armed groups in 39 incidents.[877] The majority of security incidents were documented in the districts of Basrah (41), Al-Qurna (24) and Al-Zubair (19). The highest number of incidents in Basrah governorate was recorded in March 2026 with 30 incidents,[878] correlating with hostilities related to the US/Israeli war with Iran.[879] Of the 24 security incidents coded as violence against civilians, unidentified armed groups and unidentified tribal militia were recorded as the main actors.

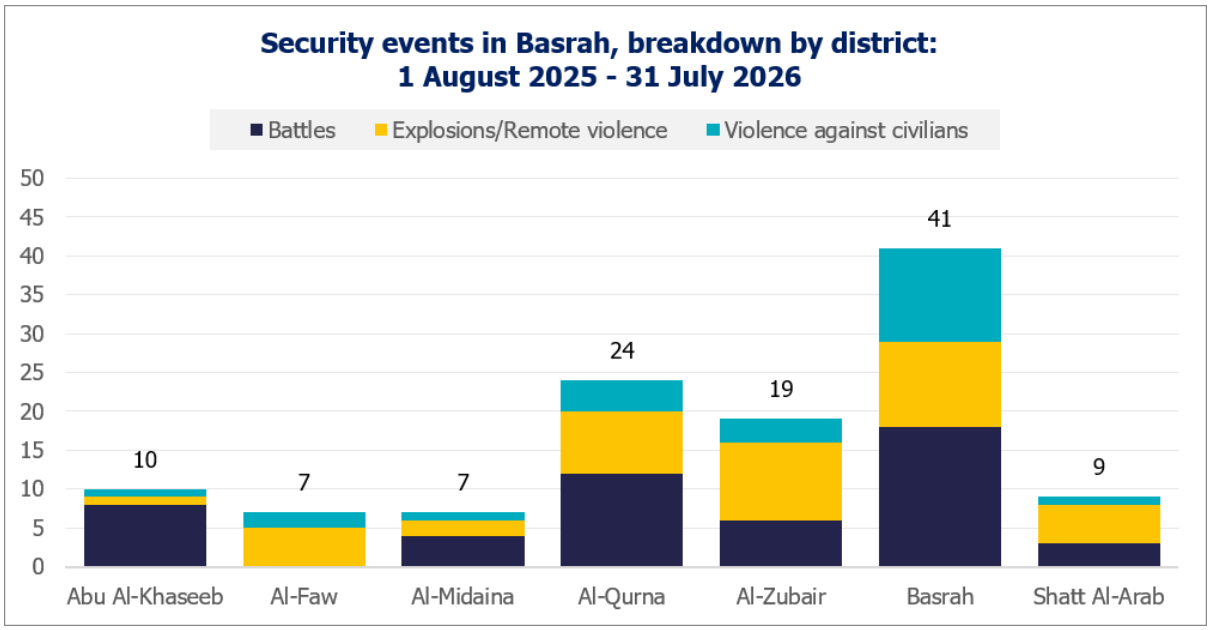


Figure 24: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Basrah between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[880]

A comparison between the current reference period and the ACLED data for the period 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025, indicates an increase in security incidents in Basrah governorate, from 66 incidents to 117 incidents. While the number of incidents coded as violence against civilians remained the same, battles increased from 33 to 51, and explosions/remote violence increased from 9 to 42. Basrah remained the district with the

[877] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[878] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[879] Guardian (The), Iraq's impossible predicament: why the country is trapped between Iran and the US, 23 July 2026, url
[880] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

highest numbers of incidents (from 24 to 42), while Al-Qurna was the district with the second highest numbers (from 7 to 24).[881]

2.10.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED, the total number of fatalities recorded in Basrah during the referencing period was 43 (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian), of which 14 occurred in the context of violence against civilians.[882] UCDP recorded two fatalities, both of which were civilian deaths.[883]

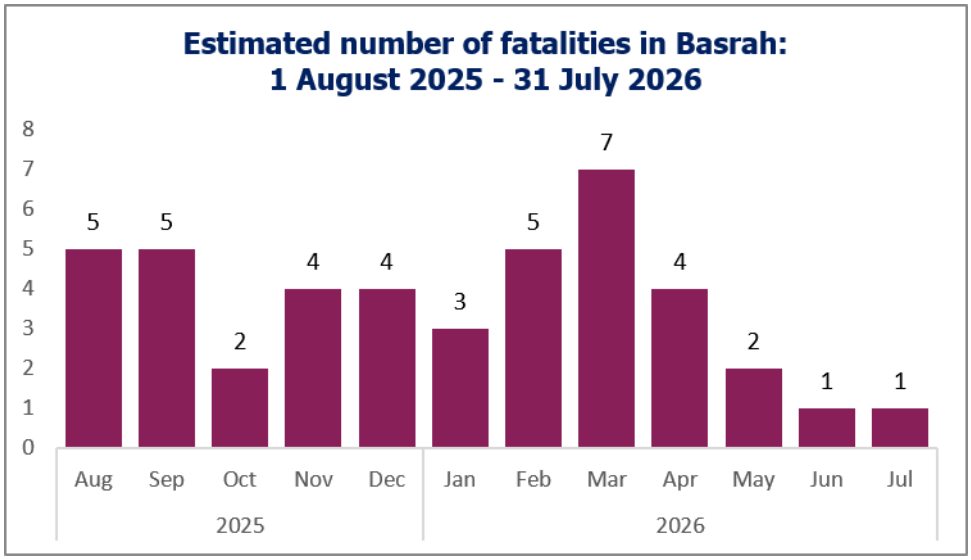


Figure 25: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Basrah between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[884]

2.10.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

In the context of the US/Israel-Iran hostilities, several oil facilities in Basrah were attacked, deepening the vulnerability of Iraq's energy infrastructure.[885] The areas most contaminated by mines in Iraq are mostly concentrated in the south of the country. According to the Iraqi DMA, 801 square kilometres across the districts Abu Al-Khaseeb, Al-Qurna, Al-Zubair, Al-Faw, Shatt Al-Arab were known or suspected to be contaminated with anti-personnel mines, as of December 2025. Within the governorate, contamination is particularly concentrated in the Al-

[881] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, url
[882] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[883] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[884] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[885] Chatham House, Iraqi civilians are paying the price of the Iran war, 1 April 2026, url; MBN/Al-Hurra, Iran Chokes Iraq's Budget, 16 March 2026, url

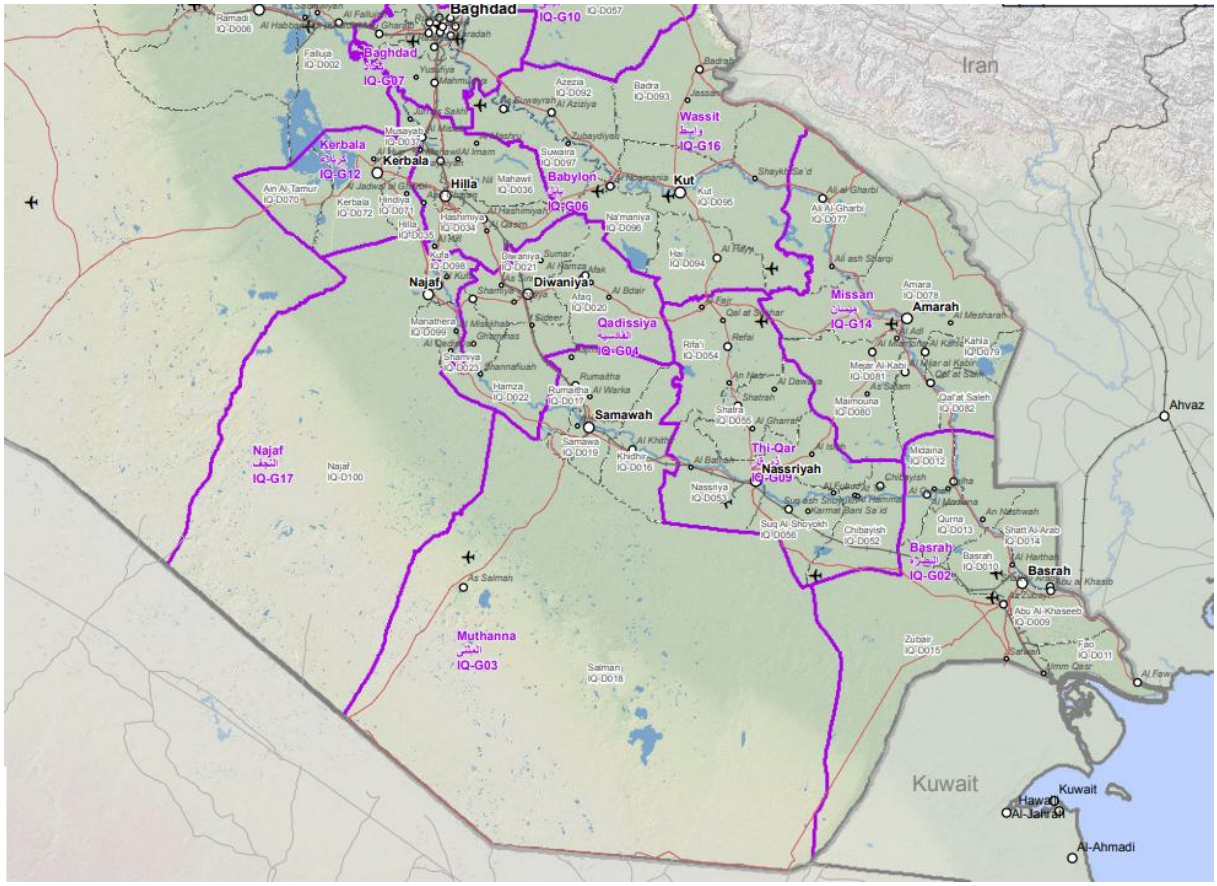
Faw and Shatt Al-Arab districts.[886] As of the end of 2024, the Mine Action Review estimated that approximately 67 square kilometres of the governorate's area were contaminated by cluster munitions. Together, Basrah and the southern governorates Missan and Thi-Qar, accounted for 92 % of the national cluster munition-contaminated area.[887] EPIC reported four instances of ERW explosions.[888]

2.10.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[889] unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 135 (covering the period September – December 2025) that, as of 31 December 2025, Basrah hosted approximately 1 900 displaced people.[890] This represented a decrease on governorate level of about 2 300 compared to 2024.[891] Basrah also recorded the largest decrease of IDP families (385), indicating that these families have been integrated into local communities.[892] The majority of IDPs originated from Salah Al-Din (35 %) and Ninewa (28 %).[893] There is no record of IDPs originating from Basrah, therefore there is no information on return movements.

[886] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, pp. 14, 16
[887] Mine Action Review, Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2025, 2025, url, p. 51
[888] EPIC, ISHM: August 13 – 20, 2026, 20 August 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: December 4 – 11, 2025, 11 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 30 – November 6, 2025, 6 November 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url
[889] 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
[890] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[891] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 134 (September – December 2024), January 2025, url
[892] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, p. 2
[893] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url

2.11. Southern Iraq (Babil, Karbala, Missan, Muthanna, Najaf, Thi-Qar, Qadissiya, and Wassit)



Map 13. UNOCHA and MapAction, Southern governorates[894]

2.11.1. Population estimates

The 2024 census data shows that the southern governorates' population estimates were as follows: Babil 2 482 300, Karbala 1 754 000, Missan 1 294 500, Muthanna 1 043 100, Najaf 1 950 800, Thi-Qar 2 499 500, Qadissiya 1 477 300, and Wassit 1 643 400.[895] The southern governorates are characterised by a Shia majority and a strong influence of tribalism, particularly in rural areas.[896]

2.11.2. Armed actors involved in conflict and control/presence

The PMF reportedly has a presence in southern governorates.[897] Multiple sources indicate that Iran-backed militias, particularly KH, exert significant control over large parts of Babil

[894] UNOCHA and MapAction, Southern Iraq, 22 July 2014, url
[895] National Context (The), Iraq Population & Housing Census, Census 2024 Final Results, n.d., url
[896] EUAA, Iraq: Arab tribes and customary law, April 2023, url, pp. 19-20
[897] Iraq, Al-Ashed, مكتب الحشد في ميسان يتابع ملف توزيع الأراضي للمنتسبين والجرحى مع بلديات المحافظة [The Popular Mobilization Forces office in Maysan is following up on the distribution of land to personnel and the wounded with

governorate, with local governance reportedly largely absent.[898] The town of Jurf al Sakhar in particular has reportedly been under KH's control for around a decade.[899] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed described the group's dominance as extending across most of the governorate, particularly its northern areas, including Jurf al Sakhar, Al-Fadhiliya, Al-Farisiya, Al-Qaraghol, and eastern Al-Latifiya. The Badr organisation and AAH had reportedly also a strong presence in Babil. For the past 12 years, several parts of Babil have been used as training camps and closed security zones, prohibiting the return of their original residents. Additionally, smaller armed groups such as KIA, Liwa Al-Tafuf, Liwa Ali Al-Akbar, KSS, and Ashura were also present. In the other southern governorates, militias had established influence in security and administrative institutions. However, according to Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, the militias avoided open confrontation owing to public discontent over the emergence of a wealthy elite within the armed factions in contrast to the general economic situation.[900] The Saraya Al-Salam militia reportedly had a presence in Najaf governorate.[901] AAH had an economic office in Najaf[902] and strong influence in Missan and Thi-Qar. The militia KIA reportedly maintained a major military facility in Suwayrah district in Wassit.[903]

The Iraqi analyst Tamer Badawi described that Iran-backed militias maintained extensive proxy networks within Iraqi tribal structures. This is especially evident in the southern governorates bordering Iran, where some tribes have members residing on both sides of the border. These cross-border tribal ties enable militias to operate between the two countries, shelter people, and facilitate weapons smuggling.[904]

2.11.3. Security trends

Southern governorates were mostly spared by the US/Israeli attacks even though KH, AAH, Badr, and Harakat Hezbollah Al-Nujaba maintain their political offices and financial infrastructure in these regions. The National Context attributed this to the risk of striking densely populated areas, while the targets in central and northern governorates were mostly isolated military sites.[905]

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the governorate's municipalities], 9 September 2026, url; Iraq, Al-Ashed, السيد عمار الحكيم يزور مكتب هيئة الحشد الشعبي في المثنى [Mr. Ammar al-Hakim visits the Popular Mobilization Forces office in Al-Muthanna], 6 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 26 – April 2, 2026, 2 April 2026, url

[898] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 11, 2026, 11 March 2026, url; MBN/Al-Hurra, Exclusive to Alhurra: Attacks on Militia Sites in Southern Iraq, 28 February 2026, url; Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[899] MBN/Al-Hurra, Exclusive to Alhurra: Attacks on Militia Sites in Southern Iraq, 28 February 2026, url

[900] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[901] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[902] Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, فصائل عراقية تفك ارتباطها بـ"الحشد الشعبي": خريطة النشأة والأسماء ومواقع الانتشار [Iraqi factions break away from the 'Popular Mobilisation Forces': a map of their origins, names and locations], 4 June 2026, url

[903] MBN/Al-Hurra, Exclusive: Iraq Unveils Plan to Integrate Armed Factions, 5 June 2026, url

[904] Badawi, T., Iraq's Pro-Iran Groups Aren't Going Anywhere, FP, 8 April 2026

[905] National Context (The), How the Strikes on Iraq's Militias Followed the Country's Divide, 11 March 2026, url

Since the US/Israel war with Iran started on 28 February 2026, US forces reportedly conducted several airstrikes against PMF bases in Babil,[906] Wassit,[907] Karbala,[908] and Muthanna.[909] In March 2026, ISF were attacked in a desert region between Najaf and Karbala. Unconfirmed reports pointed to US forces.[910] According to the National Context, Jurf Al-Sakhar, in Babil governorate, emerged as an anchor point of the US/Israeli campaign against Iran-backed militias. The region, dominated by KH, was reportedly struck four times between 28 February and 6 March 2026, including a strike on 4 March that killed a senior KH commander.[911] Strikes continued to target KH's Jurf al Sakhr stronghold on 16 March 2026.[912] On 27 March 2026, the US/Israeli forces attacked the headquarters of the militia AAH in Wassit governorate.[913] In April 2026, airstrikes launched from Kuwaiti territory by either US or Kuwaiti forces targeted the Iran-backed militia KH in southern Iraq, killing several people and destroying a communications and drone operations facility.[914] On 11 September 2026, Saudi Arabia's East-West oil pipeline was hit by drone attacks launched from a platform located in Missan. As a consequence, Iraqi authorities closed several border crossings to Iran.[915]

Armed clashes in the context of tribal conflicts were common in Missan[916] and were reported also in Wassit[917] and Thi-Qar[918] governorates. In October 2025, authorities arrested 27 suspects following tribal clashes in Thi Qar Governorate,[919] while in November 2025 major clashes in Missan and Wassit governorates reportedly caused numerous deaths and injuries.[920] Tribal violence is often linked to longstanding disputes over water resources, agricultural land or the control of border crossings.[921] Tribal networks maintain close ties with Iran-backed militias and Shiite political parties, exerting strong influence over provincial politics.[922] Tribal clashes are, especially in southern governorates, a common phenomenon and often turn deadly.[923]

[906] Iraqi News, Airstrikes target PMF positions in central and western Iraq, 31 March 2026, url
[907] EPIC, ISHM: July 23 – 30, 2026, 30 July 2026, url; FDD's Long War Journal, Dozens of airstrikes target Iran-backed militias across Iraq, 13 March 2026, url; Shafaq News, Rocket strike wounds PMF members in central Iraq, 11 March 2026, url
[908] EPIC, ISHM: July 23 – 30, 2026, 30 July 2026, url
[909] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 4, 2026, 4 March 2026, url
[910] EPIC, ISHM: May 7 – 14, 2026, 14 May 2026, url
[911] National Context (The), How the Strikes on Iraq's Militias Followed the Country's Divide, 11 March 2026, url
[912] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, March 17, 2026, 17 March 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: March 5 – 19, 2026, 19 March 2026, url
[913] ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report, March 28, 2026, 28 March 2026, url
[914] Reuters, Exclusive: Saudi warplanes struck militias in Iraq during war, sources say, 13 May 2026, url
[915] Al Jazeera, Iraq seizes drone-launching platform used for targeting Saudi oil pipeline, 13 September 2026, url
[916] EPIC, ISHM: May 28 – June 4, 2026, 4 June 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: May 21 – 28, 2026, 28 May 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: April 16 – 23, 2026, 23 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: December 4 – 11, 2025, 11 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: November 13 – 20, 2025, 20 November 2025, url; New Region (The), Tribal dispute in Maysan kills 13, 15 November 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 30 – November 6, 2025, 6 November 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: September 25 – October 2, 2025, 2 October 2025, url
[917] Asharq Al-Awsat, Iraq Tribal Clashes Kill Eight, 15 November 2025, url
[918] EPIC, ISHM: November 20 – December 4, 2025, 4 December 2025, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 23 – 30, 2025, 30 October 2025, url
[919] Rudaw, Iraqi forces arrest 27 over tribal clashes in Dhi Qar, 27 October 2025, url
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[921] Rudaw, Iraq warns tribal conflicts and 'Degga' to be prosecuted under anti-terrorism law, 21 December 2025, url
[922] Badawi, T., Iraq's Pro-Iran Groups Aren't Going Anywhere, FP, 8 April 2026
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2.11.4. Security incidents

During the reference period (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026), ACLED recorded 256 security incidents in the southern governorates, of which 112 were coded as battles, 80 as incidents of violence against civilians, and 64 as explosions/remote violence. According to ACLED data, unidentified tribal militias were involved as main actors (coded as either Actor 1 or Actor 2) in 95 of all recorded incidents, followed by unidentified armed groups in 87 incidents. US-Israeli forces appeared as a main actor mainly in Babil governorate, alongside the PMF,[924] correlating with hostilities related to the US-Israeli operation against Iran.[925] Security incidents occurred primarily in the governorates of Missan (105) and Thi Qar (51). The highest number of incidents was recorded in March 2026 with 47 incidents, most of which were coded as explosions/remote violence. Of the 80 security incidents coded as violence against civilians during the current reference period, 43 involved unidentified armed groups and 30 were conducted by unidentified Iraqi tribal militia.[926]

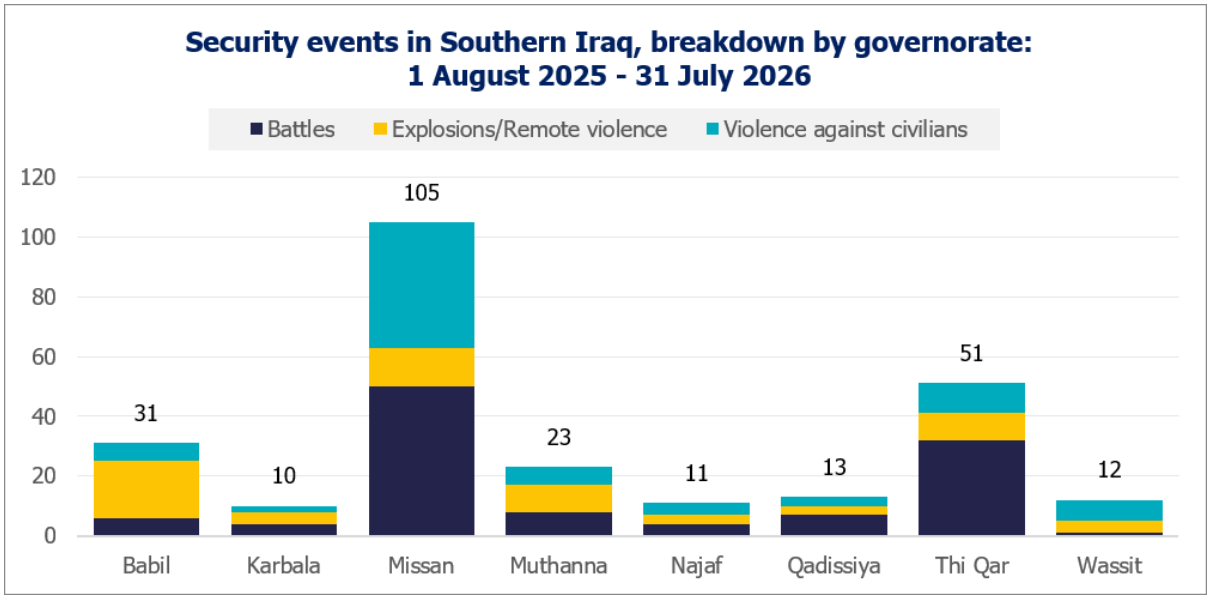


Figure 26: Security events coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Southern Iraq between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[927]

A comparison between the current reference period and ACLED data for the period 1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025, indicates an overall decline in the number of security incidents in the southern governorates, from 315 to 256 incidents. While the current period saw a decrease in events codified as battles (from 163 to 112) and violence against civilians (from 110 to 80), the number of events codified as explosions/remote violence increased from 42 to 64 events, driven by incidents related to the US/Israel-Iran conflict in March 2026. Missan remained the

[924] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[925] National Context (The), How the Strikes on Iraq's Militias Followed the Country's Divide, 11 March 2026, url
[926] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[927] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

governorate with the highest number of incidents recorded, while the number of incidents in Thi-Qar decreased (from 88 to 51).[928]

2.11.5. Civilian casualties

According to ACLED, the total number of fatalities recorded in southern governorates during the referencing period was 129 (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian), of which 51 were in the context of violence against civilians. The highest number of fatalities was recorded in Missan governorate with 57 fatalities, of which 28 occurred in the context of violence against civilians. Wassit followed with 7 fatalities in the context of violence against civilians.[929]

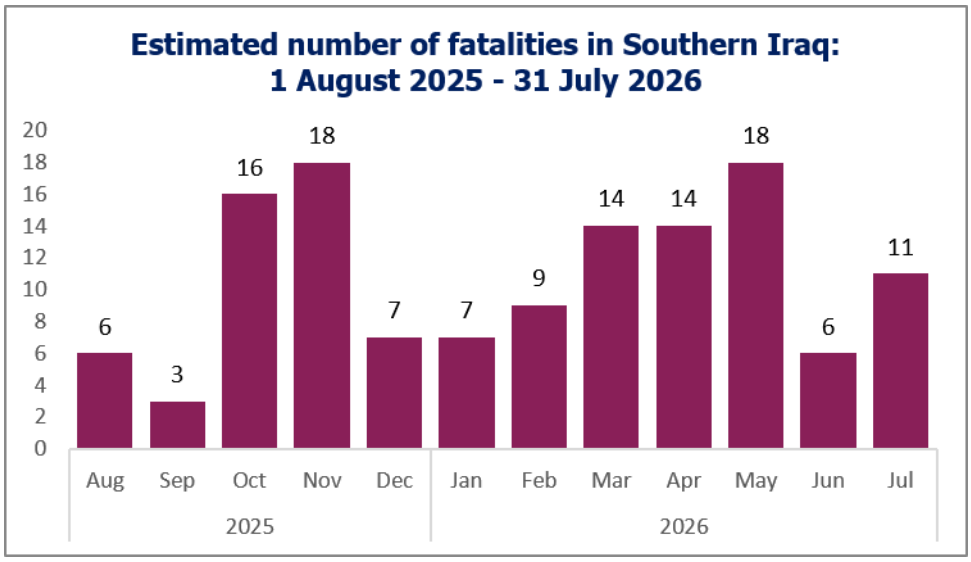


Figure 27: Fatalities (civilian and non-civilian) as a result of armed conflict in Southern Iraq between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, based on ACLED data[930]

Among the southern governorates, the UCDP reported six fatalities, including one civilian death in Missan, and one in Karbala. No civilian casualties were recorded in Babil, Qadissiya, Dhi Qar, Wassit, Najaf, or Muthanna. [931]

2.11.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information on new conflict-related infrastructure damage in the reference period could be found within the time constraints of this report. The Mine Action Review revealed that at the end of 2024, 92 % of Iraq's overall cluster munition contamination was concentrated in

[928] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url; ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 1 August 2025, url
[929] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[930] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url
[931] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, as of 8 September 2026, url

Basrah, Muthanna and Thi-Qar governorates.[932] Several instances of ERW explosions were reported over the reference period in Babil governorate,[933] Missan,[934] Muthanna,[935] Najaf[936] and Thi-Qar.[937] In addition, southern Iraq had the largest share of anti-personnel mine contamination in the country, as of end of 2025. After Basrah, Missan was the second most affected governorate, in particular the districts of Al-Kahla and Amara, which are both located in Missan.[938] Muthanna remains one of Iraq's provinces most heavily affected by landmines. Tens of thousands of unexploded munitions from the 1991 conflict remain buried in the desert areas around Basiyah.[939]

2.11.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[940] unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 135 (covering the period September – December 2025) that, as of 31 December 2025, the southern governorates were hosting approximately 37 600 displaced people, about 15 700 of them in Babil governorate, followed by Karbala governorate with around 8 200 and Najaf governorate with about 6 100. 98 % 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.[941] The only southern governorate where IOM had monitored return movements was Babil, with around 2 200 returnees. This amounted to a return rate[942] of 5 %. Security forces reportedly blocked some returns in Babil.[943]

[932] Mine Action Review, Clearing Cluster Munitions Remnants 2025, 2025, url, p. 51
[933] EPIC, ISHM: April 23 – 30, 2026, 30 April 2026, url
[934] EPIC, ISHM: May 21 – 28, 2026, 28 May 2026, url
[935] EPIC, ISHM: February 5 – 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, url
[936] EPIC, ISHM: June 4 – 11, 2026, 11 June 2026, url
[937] EPIC, ISHM: April 9 – 16, 2026, 16 April 2026, url; EPIC, ISHM: October 2 – 9, 2025, 9 October 2025, url
[938] Iraq, DMA, The 18th Complementary Report provided in accordance with article 7, Paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, 20 April 2026, url, p. 14
[939] Shafaq News, Iraq's Al-Muthanna removes mines from 180 square kilometers, 18 May 2026, url
[940] 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
[941] IOM Iraq, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq IDPs Master List. Dataset Round 135 (September – December 2025), January 2026, url
[942] 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)
[943] IOM Iraq, Iraq Master List Report 135. Data Collection Period: September – December 2025, March 2026, url, pp. 8, 10

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

- **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 (security trends) (Including information on armed actors and international involvement)
    - Impact of Middle East regional conflict on the security situation in Iraq
  - 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/governorate**

The analysis of security trends focuses on geographical areas and governorates. A mixed structure is applied, combining governorate-level chapters with geographical grouping for the southern governorates, which are analysed together due to their continued similar security trends and conflict dynamics.

The structure outlined below is replicated for each geographical area/governorate.

- Very brief description of armed actors involved in conflict during the reference period and control/presence (high-level description of actor; avoid repeating older information; crosslink to previous reports where possible)
- Security trends during the reference period (include information on particularly affected/not affected districts, where available)
- Security incidents
- Civilian casualties
- Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war
- Conflict-induced displacement and return

- Anbar
- Baghdad
- Diyala
- Kirkuk
- Ninewa
- Salah Al-Din

- Dohuk
- Erbil
- Sulaymaniyah
- Basrah
- Southern Iraq

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