



HUMAN RIGHTS
Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for
Human Rights



UNAMI
United Nations Assistance Mission
for Iraq – Human Rights Office



Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 1 May – 31 October 2015

“Despite their steady losses to pro government forces, the scourge of ISIL continues to kill, maim and displace Iraqi civilians in the thousands and to cause untold suffering. I strongly reiterate my call to all parties of the conflict to ensure the protection of civilians from the effects of violence. I also call on the international community to enhance its support to the Government of Iraq's humanitarian, stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in areas retaken from ISIL, so that all Iraqis displaced by violence can return to their homes in safety and in dignity and that affected communities can be reestablished in their places of origin.”

– Mr. Ján Kubiš

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Iraq, 5 January 2016, Baghdad

“Armed violence continues to take an obscene toll on Iraqi civilians and their communities. The Government of Iraq, supported by the international community, must continue its efforts to provide appropriate care and protection for the hundreds of thousands of civilians who have suffered from human rights violations and abuses. The international community, including the United Nations Security Council and the Human Rights Council, should continue to closely follow the situation in Iraq with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of gross violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law are held accountable.”

- Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 5 January 2016, Geneva

Contents

Summary	i
Introduction	1
Methodology	1
Background	2
Legal framework	4
Impact of the conflict on civilians	5
Civilian casualties	5
Conflict-related displacement of civilians	6
Access to basic services and humanitarian assistance	7
Violations and abuses committed by ISIL	8
Killings and abductions	8
Conduct of operations	14
Attacks on individuals on the basis of sexual orientation	17
Attacks on women and children	17
Attacks on ethnic and religious minority communities	19
Denial of other fundamental rights and freedoms	19
Violations and abuses committed by Iraqi security forces and associated forces	20
Restrictions on freedom of movement	20
Unlawful killings	21
Abductions	22
Attacks against ethnic and religious communities	23
Conduct of operations	23
Violations and abuses committed by unidentified actors	27
Unlawful killings	27
Abductions	28
Bombings of civilians and civilian infrastructure and property	29
Shelling	29
Mass graves	30
Conclusions and recommendations	31
Annex 1: Glossary	35

Summary

This Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq is published jointly by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It covers the period of 1 May to 31 October 2015.

Civilians continue to suffer the most from from the non-international armed conflict in Iraq. From 1 January 2014 through 31 October 2015, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded at least 55,047 civilian casualties as a result of the conflict, with 18,802 people killed and 36,245 wounded.

*During the reporting period, from 1 May to 31 October 2015, the ongoing violence caused a minimum of 10,911 civilian casualties, killing at least 3,855 persons and wounding 7,056. **Baghdad** was the most affected governorate, with a minimum of 6,168 civilian casualties (1,875 killed and 4,293 wounded), followed by **Anbar** (452 killed and 1,421 wounded) and **Diyala** (658 killed and 918 wounded).*

Owing to difficulties in undertaking verification of incidents recorded by UNAMI/OHCHR, the actual number of civilian casualties could be much higher than recorded. Figures for casualties in Anbar Governorate (which cover the full reporting period except for October 2015) were provided by the Anbar Health Directorate and might not fully reflect the actual number of casualties in those areas due to the increased volatility of the situation there and the disruption of services.

In addition, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of armed conflict and violence – such as lack of access to basic food, water or medical care – is unknown.

Civilians continue to flee their homes and communities in massive numbers. From January 2014 through 29 September 2015, a total of 3,206,736 persons became internally displaced in Iraq, including over 1 million school age girls and boys. 87 per cent of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) originate from three governorates – Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din. The persistent violence and scale of the displacement continue to impact IDPs' access to basic services, such as housing, clean water and education.

The violence suffered by civilians in Iraq remains staggering. The so-called “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL) continues to commit systematic and widespread violence and abuses of international human rights law and humanitarian law. These acts may, in some instances, amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and possibly genocide.¹

During the reporting period, ISIL killed and abducted scores of civilians, often in a targeted manner. Victims include those perceived to be opposed to ISIL ideology and rule; persons affiliated with the Government, such as former Iraqi security forces (ISF), police officers, former public officials and electoral workers; professionals, such as doctors and lawyers; journalists; and tribal and religious leaders. Others have been abducted and/or killed on the pretext of aiding or providing information to Government security forces. Many have been subjected to adjudication by ISIL self-appointed courts which, in addition to ordering the murder of countless people, have imposed grim punishments such as stoning and amputations.

ISIL continues to target members of different ethnic and religious communities, systematically persecuting these groups and subjecting them to a range of abuses and violations. These acts exemplify ISIL apparent policy of suppressing, permanently expelling, or destroying some communities. Women and children remain particularly vulnerable, with ongoing reports of sexual

¹ See Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Iraq in the light of abuses committed by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated groups of 13 March 2015, A/HRC/28/18. Available online at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Documents/A_HRC_28_18_AUV.doc#sthash.nSedR2BP.dpuf> accessed 10 November 2015.

violence, including sexual slavery, and the forcible recruitment and use of children in hostilities. ISIL severely restricts all fundamental rights and freedoms across all areas under its control.

ISIL has continued to attack civilian and protected objects in the conduct of its operations. Sites of religious and cultural significance are particularly targeted. Civilian homes have also been destroyed, sometimes because they belonged to members of groups targeted by ISIL, or to relatives or perceived sympathizers of those fighting ISIL. Reports on the use of chemical weapons continue to be received, although these could not be verified by UNAMI/OHCHR.

UNAMI/OHCHR also continued to receive reports of violations and abuses of international human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by ISF and associated forces, including militia and tribal forces (Shi'a, Sunni and others), popular mobilization units (PMUs), and Peshmerga (pro-Government forces).

Concerning reports have been received of unlawful killings and abductions perpetrated by pro-Government forces. Some of these incidents may have been reprisals against persons perceived to support or be associated with ISIL.

Moreover, as civilians move around the country, fleeing violence, they have continued to face Government restrictions on their ability to access safe areas. Once they reach such areas, some have experienced arbitrary arrest in raids by security forces and others have been forcibly expelled.

The conduct of pro-Government forces' operations raises concern that they are carried out without taking all feasible precautions to protect the civilian population and civilian objects. In particular, UNAMI/OHCHR continued to receive reports of civilian casualties caused by airstrikes. Reports have also been received of pro-Government forces apparently deliberately destroying civilian infrastructure.

In a number of cases, it has been impossible to identify the perpetrators of violations and abuses committed, largely within liberated areas under Government control, during the reporting period. These include instances of murder, intimidation and threats, abductions, and the use of improvised explosive devices, vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, and suicide bombers to target civilians or civilian infrastructure.

Serious concerns for the well-being of civilians, particularly the most vulnerable, persist. Parties to the conflict must take all feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effect of hostilities and take all necessary measures to respect, protect, and meet the basic needs of the civilian population. Violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law must be investigated by the Government of Iraq effectively, promptly, thoroughly, and impartially.

The Government of Iraq is again strongly urged to undertake legislative amendments to grant Iraqi courts jurisdiction over international crimes and to become a party to the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) or to refer the current situation in Iraq to the ICC. In addition, as soon as practicable after the re-taking of areas from ISIL control, the Government of Iraq should ensure that responsibility for law and order is restored to civilian control and that the human rights and basic humanitarian needs of civilians in those areas are met.

Introduction

This report on the *Protection of Civilians in the Non-International Armed Conflict in Iraq* is published by the Human Rights Office of United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in cooperation with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), under their respective mandates.²

This report presents a summary of incidents received and verified by UNAMI/OHCHR involving violations and abuses of international human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as other human rights concerns, linked to the non-international armed conflict between the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) (and affiliated armed groups) and the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and from acts of terrorism committed in that context.³

The report covers the period of 1 May to 31 October 2015.

Methodology

The information contained in this report is based, where possible, on testimonies obtained directly from the victims, survivors, or witnesses of violations and abuses of international human rights law and/or violations of international humanitarian law. UNAMI/OHCHR continued to conduct interviews with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), Kirkuk and Diyala Governorates, and other areas of Iraq, as well as with other victims, survivors, and witnesses of incidents.⁴ Information was also obtained from a variety of sources,⁵ including Government and non-government agencies and organizations, and United Nations entities. Unless specifically stated, all information presented in this report has been cross-checked and verified using independent, credible, and reliable sources.

The security situation in Iraq has affected the capacity of UNAMI/OHCHR to undertake direct monitoring and verification of many incidents in many areas of the country. UNAMI/OHCHR has encountered difficulties in verifying incidents that took place in conflict areas and in areas under ISIL control. In some cases, sources were reluctant to speak to UNAMI/OHCHR due to threats, intimidation, and/or fear of reprisal. Where reports of incidents have not been cross-checked or verified, they have not been included in this report

As a result, the actual numbers of civilian casualties and scale of incidents could be much higher than those recorded by UNAMI/OHCHR. Furthermore, examples of violations and abuses contained in this report are emblematic and do not present a comprehensive account of all abuses and violations that were reported to UNAMI/OHCHR and verified.

² In resolution 1770 of 10 August 2006, the United Nations Security Council requested UNAMI to “promote the protection of human rights and judicial and legal reform in order to strengthen the rule of law in Iraq...” (paragraph 2(c)). UNAMI mandate was extended in the same terms for 2015/2016 by Security Council resolution 2233 of 29 July 2015. In accordance with its mandate, UNAMI Human Rights Office conducts a range of activities aimed at promoting the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including undertaking independent and impartial monitoring of, and reporting on, armed violence and its impact on civilians and on violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

³ For background on ISIL see UNAMI/OHCHR, *Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Non International Armed Conflict in Iraq: 5 June – 5 July 2014* (18 August 2014) available online at <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI_OHCHR_POC%20Report_FINAL_18July2014A.pdf>.

⁴ As of 31 October 2015, UNAMI had conducted 1783 interviews with IDPs in areas where they have concentrated. UNAMI also interviewed 36 detainees held in the Kurdish Intelligence (*Asayish*) detention facility in Erbil to gather information on specific cases of human rights violations. UNAMI also conducts telephone interviews with victims and witnesses of human rights violations, civilians who remain trapped in ISIL-controlled areas or who have fled to other areas of Iraq.

⁵ These include Government officials and institutions, local and international media, local non-governmental organizations, human rights defenders, tribal leaders, religious leaders, political figures, and civil society actors, as well as United Nations entities operating in Iraq.

Background

During the period covered by this report, the governorates of Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewa and Kirkuk continued to be the scene of much of the fighting between Government and associated forces and ISIL, as the opposing sides fought for control of strategically important regions and cities.

In the first week of May, ISIL launched a major offensive against Iraq's largest oil refinery, located in Baiji, 200 kilometres north of Baghdad. At the same time, Government forces and ISIL continued their struggle to control the strategic city of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar, Iraq's largest governorate, only 100 kilometres north west of Baghdad. Ramadi eventually fell to ISIL in mid-May in what was a significant blow to the Government since the fall of Mosul in June 2014. The capture of Ramadi by ISIL caused the displacement of thousands of people, many heading east towards Baghdad. The Government relied on popular Mobilization Units (PMUs – *al Hashid al-Sha'bi'*) in an attempt to retake Ramadi. Fighting for control of Ramadi continued throughout the reporting period, with several incidents in which Government forces and PMU took heavy casualties. On 24 May, the strategic border crossing with Syria, at al-Walid, Anbar Governorate, was taken by ISIL when depleted Government forces were forced to withdraw.

On 2 June, ISIL closed the gates of a dam in Ramadi, which reduced the level of the Euphrates River and caused water shortages and increased salinity downstream as far as Basra Governorate. Poor water quality was to be one of the complaints that would be raised during mass protests that swept the country towards the end of July. Fighting continued in June in different parts of Anbar Governorate, with Government forces and PMUs repelling two attacks by ISIL on al-Habbaniyah airbase and the town of Husseiba. Government forces also reportedly launched an offensive against the ISIL positions near to Samarra, north of Baghdad, killing at least 55 fighters - according to Government sources. Government advances against ISIL in some parts of the country allowed the return of previously displaced families. On 15 June, around 200 families had returned to Tikrit, two and a half months after Government and associated forces reclaimed it from ISIL control.

On 8 July, the Iraqi Central Criminal Court in Baghdad sentenced 24 ISIL members to death for their membership in a terrorist group and participation in the Camp Speicher massacre that occurred near Tikrit on and after 12 June 2014. Four other defendants were acquitted for lack of evidence. Another 604 suspects are wanted in connection with the killings. UNAMI/OHCHR has raised concerns regarding the conduct of the trial and its compliance with constitutional and international standards. UNAMI/OHCHR has repeatedly called on the Government of Iraq to ensure accountability for the killings and appropriate care and support to the survivors and their families and to the families of the victims.

On 13 July, days after Government forces and PMUs repelled an ISIL attack on the town of Khalidiyah, a large-scale offensive to force ISIL out of Anbar began. Government forces, backed by PMU, reportedly captured villages and areas around Fallujah, halfway between Baghdad and Ramadi. In the meantime, Coalition forces continued their airstrikes against ISIL near Ramadi, reportedly hitting 67 ISIL targets. On 17 July, on the eve of Eid al-Fitr, at least 108 people were killed and 167 were injured in Khan Bani Saad, Diyala, by an IED for which ISIL claimed responsibility. This was the first major attack in Diyala by ISIL since the province had been liberated by Government forces in November 2014. While the offensive in Anbar gathered pace, a wave of bombings took place across the country on 21 July, the deadliest of which killed 22 people and wounded 32 in the mainly Shi'a district of New Baghdad, north-eastern Baghdad. On 26 July, Government troops, with support from Coalition airstrikes, entered and eventually captured Anbar University in Ramadi in an important first step towards retaking the city. According to a Government spokesperson, the university was a significant military objective as it was used by ISIL as a central command post for staging operations around Ramadi.

Reconstruction efforts in areas retaken from ISIL were boosted on 12 July, when the Government signed an agreement with the World Bank for the provision of a \$350 million loan to fund emergency reconstruction in towns recaptured from ISIL. The money is reportedly to be used for infrastructure works such as repairing roads and bridges, electricity networks, water and sewage. The precarious state of Iraq's finances due to the conflict with ISIL has been exacerbated by the falling price of oil, and the World Bank loan was seen as an important measure to boost national coffers and bolster reconstruction. Iraq has also reportedly received pledges of financial support for reconstruction from the United States of America, Japan, the European Union and individual European countries.

Towards the end of July, Turkish fighter jets began carrying out airstrikes upon Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan/Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) targets inside Iraq, targeting shelters, depots and caves in six areas in the north of **Dohuk** Governorate, inside the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). The strikes were reportedly condemned by the Government of Iraq as a "dangerous escalation and an assault on Iraqi sovereignty". Six corpses and eight wounded people were received on 1 August by a hospital in the town of Soran following an air raid by Turkish fighter jets on PKK targets in the village of Zarkel, Rawanduz area, east of Erbil. The strikes were carried out as part of a two-pronged attack upon both PKK in Kurdistan and ISIL in Syria. Turkey reached an agreement with the United States of America on 25 August to integrate its operations into the anti-ISIL Coalition and to coordinate its airstrikes against ISIL.

At the end of July, precipitated by a heatwave, a movement of protests against perceived Government corruption, incompetence and lack of public services spread across Iraq, particularly in Baghdad and the southern governorates. Demonstrations continued, although diminished, throughout the reporting period. The main complaints centred on frequent disruption of electricity supplies and the poor quality of supposedly potable water, particularly in the south of Iraq. Protestors directed much of the blame at what they saw as corrupt local administrations, and called for the resignation of Governors and other authorities. As the protests grew larger and more vocal in their condemnation of local authorities, threats and other acts of intimidation against demonstrators began to be reported.

In response to the protests, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi proposed a range of reforms aimed at combatting corruption, including ensuring political appointments are based on merit rather than sectarian or party quotas, and eliminating the three positions of Vice-President and three Deputy Prime Ministers. The reform package, which was backed by the most senior Iraqi Shi'a cleric, the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, received the required support of parliament on 11 August.

On 18 August, Fadhil Ahmad al-Hayali (Haji Mutazz), the second-in-command of ISIL, was allegedly killed in a U.S. airstrike as he was travelling near Mosul. According to Iraqi analysts, Hayali was in charge of military operations throughout Iraq and was a valuable strategist to ISIL, although the group was believed to be capable of continuing operations without noticeable hindrance.

On 21 and 23 August, pro-Government forces reportedly suffered heavy losses in two attacks by ISIL in Anbar governorate. In the first incident, around 50 soldiers and PMU fighters were killed in two separate ambushes, while the second attack, which occurred in the rural district of Jaramshah, north of Ramadi, killed 17 soldiers and six Sunni militiamen. ISIL carried out a number of suicide attacks in Anbar Governorate against Government and associated forces towards the end of August and the beginning of September. Eight soldiers were killed in an attack upon a military outpost west of Ramadi on 24 August, while 12 soldiers and allied Sunni militiamen were reportedly killed on 1 September in an assault upon military positions outside the town of Haditha.

On 23 August, the Kirkuk Provincial Council (KPC) announced its decision that IDPs from Diyala Governorate, residing at the time in Kirkuk, should leave the Governorate within one month. The decision was announced by the acting Chair of KPC, reportedly acting on the recommendations of the IDP and Legal Affairs Committees, citing the burdens of the IDP community on Kirkuk residents in

terms of security, social and economic services in the Governorate, as well as the shortage of federal financial allocations for the Governorate to meet these demands. KPC asked the various authorities in Diyala to facilitate this process within the given timeframe. The announcement by the Provincial Council was the latest measure adopted to pressure IDPs to return to their places of origin when they are considered to have been reclaimed by Government and associated forces.

On 2 September, 18 Turkish workers were abducted by men in military uniforms from a sports stadium they were constructing in north-eastern Baghdad. Two days later, a previously unknown Shi'a militia group released a video of the abducted workers and demanded that Turkey stop the passage of militants crossing the border into Iraq, stop the flow of oil from Kurdistan through Turkey, and order a Sunni insurgent alliance to lift its siege of two Shi'a towns in Syria. The abductions were reportedly condemned by the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who called for the release of the captives and accused the militia group of harming the image of Islam. UNAMI/OHCHR confirmed that two of the abductees were eventually released in Basra, in the south of Iraq, on 15 September, while the remaining 16 were released on 30 September in Babil governorate, central Iraq. Another high-profile abduction was that of the Acting Deputy Minister of Justice, who was taken by masked gunmen from his vehicle on 8 September in northern Baghdad. He was eventually released on 10 October. No group has yet claimed responsibility for this abduction and the motive is unclear.

At the end of September, Kurdish *Peshmerga* forces made advances in territory previously held by ISIL to the west of Kirkuk, in the north of Iraq, retaking 12 villages and driving ISIL fighters from an area of 140 square kilometres. On 12 October, the Prime Minister's office announced the beginning of a campaign to drive ISIL from Salah al-Din Governorate, including the Baiji oil refinery. By 16 October, significant gains had reportedly been made towards retaking the refinery, as Government forces continued to push north. At the same time, advances were made around Ramadi, where Government forces closed in from the north and the west, hopeful to establish conditions for an eventual liberation of the city itself.

On 18 October, in the context of the Prime Minister's anti-corruption drive, it was announced that arrest warrants were issued for the Trade Minister and his brother on charges of unspecified corruption.

Legal framework

The international legal framework applicable to the non-international armed conflict in Iraq comprises international humanitarian law and international human rights law.⁶

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

⁶ Iraq is a party, *inter alia*, to the: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including its Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the Four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions.

The Government of Iraq is required to hold to account alleged perpetrators of human rights violations or abuses that amount to crimes and of serious violations of international humanitarian law, in particular those that constitute crimes under international law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, irrespective of who the perpetrators may be. The Government must also ensure that all armed groups engaged in hostilities in support of its forces⁷ comply with relevant international and national laws in the conduct of their operations against ISIL, including doing their utmost to ensure the protection of civilians from the effects of violence and their access to humanitarian assistance.⁸

Impact of the conflict on civilians

Civilian casualties

From 1 January 2014 through to the end of October 2015, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded at least 55,047 civilian casualties as a result of the non-international armed conflict in Iraq: 18,802 killed and 36,245 wounded.⁹

During the period covered by this report, 1 May to 31 October 2015, a minimum of 10,911 civilian casualties resulted from the ongoing violence, including at least 3,855 persons killed and 7,056 wounded.

Baghdad was the most affected governorate, with a minimum of 6,168 civilian casualties (1,875 killed and 4,293 wounded). **Anbar** followed with 1,873 civilian casualties (452 killed and 1,421 wounded), while **Diyala** recorded the third highest number of civilian casualties with 1,576 (658 killed and 918 wounded).

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including body-borne (BBIED), vehicle-borne (VBIED), and suicide vehicle-borne (SVBIED) devices, were the deadliest tactic used against civilians, resulting in at least 7,086 civilian casualties (1,717 killed and 5,369 wounded) during the reporting period.¹⁰

As noted, the actual number of civilian casualties could be much higher than those recorded. Additionally, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of violence, such as lack of access to basic food, water or medical care is unknown. Children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and elderly people remained particularly vulnerable.

⁷ Namely, the *al-Hashid al-Sha'bi*, known in English as the Popular Mobilization Units. Following the seizure of territories by ISIL from 5 June 2014 and the collapse of ISF in those areas, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani called on Iraqis to defend Iraq from ISIL. Al-Sistani's statement was delivered in Karbala by his representative, Abdu al-Mahdi al-Karbali, during a Friday sermon, on 13 June 2014. It provided that "the threats posed obligate the volunteering of those who are capable of carrying arms to defend the homeland and it is a duty on [them]." Al-Karbali also expressed support for ISF, stating that it was the duty of all Iraqi citizens, not just Shi'a, to join the armed forces to protect the country. Ayatollah Bashir al-Najafi, another member of Iraq's clerical establishment, also issued a statement calling on Iraqis to join ISF. On 30 September 2014, the Cabinet passed a resolution calling on Prime Minister al-Abadi to ensure the provision of the *al-Hashid al-Sha'bi* with weapons, logistics, training, and salaries. On 28 October, the Council of Ministers approved a decree regularizing PMUs to fight against ISIL.

⁸ For an overview of international law binding on Iraq and other parties to the armed conflict, see 'Legal framework on the Protection of Civilians in Non-International Armed Conflict' section, *Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 5 June to 5 July 2014* (UNAMI/OHCHR July 2014), available online <http://uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&task=download&id=499_d31007c69700e48cf0446cfaf85c3e48&itemid=6088&lang=en>.

⁹ Monthly civilian casualty figures in this report consist of civilians, including civilian police officers, and include civilian casualties from Anbar Governorate. UNAMI however was unable to obtain casualty figures for Anbar Governorate for the month of October 2015. In general, UNAMI has been hindered in effectively verifying casualties in conflict areas. Figures for casualties from Anbar Governorate are provided by the Anbar Health Directorate and might not fully reflect the actual number of casualties in those areas due to the increased volatility of the situation there and the disruption of services. In some cases, UNAMI could only partially verify certain incidents.

¹⁰ The remaining civilian casualties were attributed to airstrikes, shelling, small arms fire, burning, beheading, knife attacks, unexploded ordnance, and other means.

Conflict-related displacement of civilians

The ongoing hostilities in Iraq continue to cause massive displacement of civilians. From January 2014 through 29 September 2015, a total of 3,206,736 persons had become internally displaced in Iraq,¹¹ including over one million displaced school age girls and boys.¹² The majority (87 per cent) of IDPs are reported to be originally from three governorates: **Anbar**, 42 per cent (1,334,592 individuals); **Ninewa**, 32 per cent (1,011,606); and **Salah al-Din**, 13 per cent (407,142).¹³

The governorates with the highest number of IDPs are **Anbar** and **Baghdad**, with 583,050 and 577,584 displaced, respectively. Other governorates with a significant number of displaced are **Dohuk** (426,966), **Kirkuk** (401,280), **Erbil** (284,310), **Ninewa** (203,652) and **Sulaymaniyah** (161,724). These figures include people displaced within their own governorates as well as to other areas of the country.¹⁴ Central North Iraq hosts 68 per cent of the IDPs (2,162,772 individuals), the KR-I hosts 27 per cent of the IDPs (873,000 individuals) and South Iraq hosts 5 per cent of the IDPs (179,964 individuals).¹⁵

IDPs have largely settled in private settings, such as with host families, rental housing and other paid accommodation, representing 69 per cent of those displaced. However, 20 per cent of IDPs have been forced to resort to critical shelter arrangements, including unfinished and abandoned buildings, religious buildings, school buildings, and informal settlements. Only 8 per cent of IDPs are residing in camps.¹⁶

Between 24 August and 8 September, 11,640 people (1,940 families) were displaced from their villages surrounding Daquq and Hawija districts, **Kirkuk**, following Kurdish Peshmerga advances and the reclaiming of villages under the control of ISIL. Most of the displaced fled to Kirkuk City where they are staying with relatives.¹⁷

On 11 September, about 1,500 people were stranded at the Daquq checkpoint after military operations in Daquq district in **Kirkuk**. The displaced people were reportedly allowed to enter Daquq centre and Kirkuk only after security screenings. Most families settled with relatives or in rented homes or unfinished buildings in Daquq center, while some continued to Kirkuk city.¹⁸

Many IDPs, particularly in **Kirkuk**, have experienced being rounded up in police raids and arbitrarily arrested by security forces on suspicion of terrorism or other grounds such as trespassing on public grounds or failure to present proper identification. Most are released soon after without charge.

As Government and affiliated forces have re-taken areas occupied by ISIL, some of those displaced have been able to return to their areas of origin. As of 29 September 2015, a total of 56,587 families (or 402,660 individuals) were reported to have returned to their location of origin. Approximately 54 per cent of returnees had returned to **Salah al-Din** and 39 per cent to Tikrit district alone, specifically to Merkaz, Tikrit. The rest of the returnees returned to **Diyala** and **Ninewa** (mainly in the northern districts of Tal Afar and Tel Kaif). Those who returned have largely settled back to their location of

¹¹ International Organization for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix, Round XXX – October 2015, p. 1.

¹² Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis, Situation Report No. 62 (16-29 September 2015), p. 5.

¹³ United Nations Iraq, "Displacement in Iraq Exceeds 3.2 Million: IOM," Baghdad, 16 October 2015 <http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4391:displacement-in-iraq-exceeds-3-2-million-iom&Itemid=605&lang=en> last accessed 17 October 2015.

¹⁴ International Organization for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix, Round XXX – October 2015, p. 2.

¹⁵ The Central North includes the Anbar, Babylon, Baghdad, Diyala, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Wassit Governorates; the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) includes the Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah and Erbil Governorates; and South Iraq includes the Basrah, Missan, Najaf, Thi-Qar, Qadisiya and Muthana Governorates.

¹⁶ International Organization for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix, Round XXX – October 2015, p. 8.

¹⁷ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis, Situation Report No. 60 (2-8 September 2015) p. 1.

¹⁸ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis, Situation Report No. 62 (16-29 September 2015) pp. 1-2.

usual residence (87 per cent), although 13 per cent have returned to abandoned or unfinished buildings because of damage to or destruction of their homes.¹⁹

Those returning have encountered continuing insecurity, large-scale destruction of civilian infrastructure, severely impacted delivery of basic services, booby-traps and explosive remnants of war. For instance, on 19 September, about 960 people returned from Khanaqin to Saadiya district, **Diyala** Governorate, to find that many of the houses had been destroyed. Initially armed militia were preventing residents from returning to the district, but they were eventually permitted back after a security screening.²⁰

The Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) reported that 720 people had returned to al-Kharma in **Anbar** during the week of 22-29 September, bringing the number of returnees to 3,176 in two sub-districts: 1,976 in al-Khayrat and 1,200 in al-Jazeera. Access to the area was restricted due to unsafe roads leading to al-Kharma. Most of the returnees were previously displaced in Baghdad.²¹

Access to basic services and humanitarian assistance

The armed conflict and other forms of violence, as well as the scale of displacement, continued to impair IDPs' access to basic services including housing, healthcare, clean water and education.

Eviction or risk of eviction for IDPs has been reported in some governorates. For example, in the first week of 2-8 September, 540 IDPs (90 families) living in the Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Kilani school, **Baghdad**, were threatened with eviction by local authorities. Similarly, in **Kirkuk**, 150 IDPs (25 families) at the Shoqaq Saddam complex were threatened with eviction.²²

Also, on 9-15 September, IDPs in **Anbar**, **Babil** and **Baghdad** faced eviction or risks of eviction. Those affected were staying in public buildings, particularly school buildings, but also apartments or houses, which were allocated to Government employees, or could no longer pay a rent. Only a limited number of IDPs were provided alternative accommodation such as in camps.²³ On 16-29 September, about 1,440 displaced people from Tal Afar and the Ninewa plains were threatened with eviction from the Qas Suailim apartment complex in **Babil**. At the time of writing, no clear deadline to evacuate the apartments had been given to the IDPs residing there.²⁴

Displaced people have also faced difficulties accessing clean water in some governorates. For example, between 9-15 September, water and sanitation infrastructure in two camps in Zakho district, **Dahuk** (housing around 20,400 displaced people) failed due to lack of adequate maintenance and repair. Shortages of water directly affected 3,206 displaced people when the water network failed.²⁵

On 15 October, it was reported that 56,546 families had returned to reclaimed areas of **Salah al-Din** since January 2015.²⁶ They returned to their places of origin in Dhuluiya district and Tikrit district (al-Alam sub-district, al-Ishaqi sub-district, al-Botoamah sub-district, al-Hegag sub-district, al-Mazraah village, and to Tikrit City). However, public services in many of these areas were either not available or inadequate. Most of the Government properties in these areas had either been destroyed or

¹⁹ International Organization for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix, Round XXX – October 2015, pp. 10-12.

²⁰ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis, Situation Report No. 62 (16-29 September 2015) p. 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis, Situation Report No. 60 (2-8 September 2015) p. 3.

²³ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis, Situation Report No. 61 (9-15 September 2015) p. 2.

²⁴ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis, Situation Report No. 62 (16-29 September 2015) p. 2.

²⁵ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis, Situation Report No. 61 (9-15 September 2015) p. 20.

²⁶ International Rescue Committee, Return of Internally Displaced Persons to Salah al-Din, Update: 15 October 2015, p. 1.

looted. The restoration of water and electricity services has proved to be a significant challenge, exacerbated by the security situation and lack of resources.²⁷

Furthermore, it has been reported that over one million school-aged girls and boys are displaced. About 70 per cent of them have lost almost one full year of education, and only about 30 per cent of them had access to any form of education at the end of the school year. Where available, most schools were overcrowded and could not accommodate all displaced students.²⁸

Violations and abuses committed by ISIL

ISIL continues to commit systematic and widespread violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. In some instances, these may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Killings and abductions

ISIL continued to carry out a range of killings in areas under its control and in those areas affected by conflict. Targets included persons perceived to be opposed to ISIL ideology or control, captured members of ISF, former members of ISF, members of the police, former public officials and candidates for public office, officials of the Government of Iraq or members of parliament or governorate councils, religious and tribal leaders, and professionals, including journalists, lawyers, doctors and other civilians.

ISIL continued to perpetrate abductions, targeting persons perceived to be opposed to their ideology and control, members and former members of ISF, and traditional tribal, religious and community leaders. The fate of many of those abducted remains unknown.

Killings of civilians, including community and religious leaders

On a number of occasions, ISIL executed former candidates for public office in the areas under its control. On 11 July, a former candidate for the **Ninewa** Provincial Council elections from Qayyara sub-district was killed by ISIL in the al-Ghizlani military base in Mosul, **Ninewa**. The victim was shot in the head after his abduction from his home in Qayyara by ISIL, on 20 June 2014. Similarly, on 12 July, ISIL killed a former candidate for the Ninewa Provincial Council elections by shooting him in the head in the al-Izza military base in Qayarra sub-district, Mosul district. The victim had been abducted by ISIL in March 2015.

On 18 August, ISIL killed three former candidates for the parliamentary elections from the *Mutahidoun* Alliance in Mosul, **Ninewa**. The women, who were abducted from their homes in Mosul on 12 August, were shot in the head in the al-Ghizlani military base. Around 14 September, a former candidate for the Coalition List was shot and killed by ISIL. The victim had been abducted from her home in Mosul city approximately two months earlier and had been held in an unknown location. On or around 11 June, three former parliamentary candidates were abducted from their homes. On 21 June, they were executed by firing squad at the al-Izza military base in Qayyara district, south of Mosul, following a decision of an ISIL self-appointed court.

Employees and former employees of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) continued to be targeted by ISIL for abduction and murder. UNAMI/OHCHR confirmed reports that on the evening of 24 July, ISIL abducted 53 employees of IHEC in Mosul, **Ninewa**, taking them to an unknown location. On the morning of 25 July, 28 of those abducted, including 11 women, were executed in al-Ghizlani military base, south of Mosul. According to one source, an ISIL self-appointed court had ordered the abduction of all former employees of IHEC, however UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify this information.

²⁷ International Rescue Committee, Return of Internally Displaced Persons to Salah al-Din, Update: 15 October 2015, p. 4.

²⁸ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Iraq: Humanitarian Crisis, Situation Report No. 61 (9-15 September 2015) p. 4.

On 8 August, ISIL reportedly executed at least 300 civil servants employed by IHEC in Mosul, **Ninewa**. Sources claimed to UNAMI/OHCHR that the victims were executed by firing squad at al-Ghizlani military base in Mosul. Fifty of the victims were alleged to have been women. A statement issued by IHEC on 8 August claimed that ISIL had executed an unconfirmed number of its current and former employees. On 21 August, 12 former IHEC employees, including four women and a senior member of the electoral station in Mosul, were executed by ISIL, having been abducted from their homes three weeks earlier. ISIL notified relatives directly of the executions. However, UNAMI/OHCHR has not been able to verify the exact locations of the killings.

Other victims were murdered after being accused by ISIL of providing information to Government and associated forces. For instance, on 23 June, ISIL posted a video showing the killing of 16 men. The video, of seven minutes duration, showed the killing of the men in three batches – by a rocket-propelled grenade fired at a car in which some men were placed, by placing others in a cage that was submerged into water, and by decapitating the remainder with explosives. The men were allegedly accused of cooperating with ISF. The men, dressed in red jumpsuits, are shown allegedly confessing in parts of the video.

On the evening of 3 July, ISIL killed the former local Mayor (*Mukhtar*) of Ain Marmiya village, Makhmour district, south-east of Mosul, **Ninewa**. The victim, who was shot in the head, had been abducted by ISIL from his house on 21 June, accused of cooperating with the Peshmerga and ISF.

On 10 July, after Jum'a (afternoon) prayers, nine people were killed by ISIL in the Bab al Tob area of central Mosul, **Ninewa**. The victims were forced to lie down on the street and a bulldozer was driven over them. The victims reportedly included at least one former ISF officer. The killings occurred in front of a large crowd and were intended as a warning to the population. Before the execution took place, a statement condemning the victims was broadcast by al Bayan radio station, which provided a range of reasons for the killings, including providing information to ISF and Peshmerga and collaborating with the PMUs.

On 4 September, ISIL executed four civilians by shooting them in the head in a public market in Shirqat district, **Salah al-Din** Governorate. Two of the victims were accused of cooperating with ISF while the other two were accused of helping people to flee from Shirqat. On 9 September, ISIL abducted 42 men from al-Jabouri tribe in Qayarra district and took them to Shirqat district, **Salah al-Din** Governorate. Sixteen of these men were later executed. ISIL accused them of having provided information to ISF and for being related to al-Hashid al-Sha'bi fighters who are combating ISIL in the Gwer frontline in Makhmour.

ISIL murdered other victims for attempting to flee areas under its control or for assisting others to flee. In July and August, ISIL murdered civilians on charges of attempting to flee areas in Hawija, south west of **Kirkuk**. Bodies were frequently hung publicly from electricity poles in order to discourage others considering fleeing toward southern **Salah al-Din** and **Kirkuk** city. One source confirmed that following such murders, ISIL usually sends letters to the families of the victims confirming the killings. In other cases, ISIL hanged the bodies on electricity poles near the villages or towns entrances. On 24 July, ISIL killed four men from Baghdad in the Bab al-Tob market in Mosul, **Ninewa**, by shooting them in the head in front of a crowd. The victims were drivers accused by ISIL self-appointed courts of smuggling residents of Mosul into Baghdad. On 5 October, in the Shirqat district, **Salah al-Din**, ISIL murdered three civilians, including a 15 year-old child, for attempting to flee ISIL-controlled areas to KR-I. The two men were reportedly beheaded, while the child was shot dead. On 30 September, a family fleeing fighting between ISIL and Peshmerga forces in the Kubaiba area west of **Kirkuk**, was fired upon by ISIL fighters. Three women and one man were killed in that incident.

ISIL also murdered specific individuals for breaching their rules or on suspicion of failing to support them. On 13 September, ISIL executed three *Imams* for failing to praise ISIL in their sermons. They were shot in the head in the al-Izza military base in Hammam Ali sub-district of Mosul. On 25 September, two female lawyers were executed by ISIL in the al-Izza military base in Qayarra sub-district, Mosul district. The victims were reportedly shot for violating the regulations of Shari'a by practicing law in the criminal court.

Killings of former ISF members, Police, and those associated with them

ISIL continues to target persons associated with the Government of Iraq. Former members of ISF, police officers and individuals suspected of supporting or aiding Government forces have been victims of such attacks. In many cases, UNAMI/OHCHR believes that the individuals targeted were civilians not directly participating in hostilities.

On 15 May, ISIL murdered two police officers (a captain and a major) by shooting them in the head in Badoush prison, Mosul, **Ninewa**. Both victims had been abducted by ISIL on 10 June 2014. On 10 June, six former ISF members were killed by ISIL, in Badoush district, west of Mosul, by firing squad. The victims were reportedly sentenced by an ISIL self-appointed court and had been abducted by ISIL in early July 2014. On 25 June, ISIL murdered seven former police officers who had been abducted from their homes in Hamam al-Aleel district, south of Mosul, in April 2014. The men were shot in the head in the al-Ghizlani military base, in Mosul.

On 27 June, ISIL murdered 11 former police officers (al-Jubour tribe members) from Saf al-Toth village in Hamam al-Aleel district, south of Mosul, **Ninewa**. The men, who were shot in the head, were killed five kilometers away from their village following the decision of an ISIL self-appointed court. ISIL had abducted the men in May 2015. The families received written notification of the killings along with a list of the men's names.

On 3 August, ISIL reportedly murdered eight former ISF members in Hawija district, **Kirkuk**. The men, who were shot in the head, were publicly executed for providing support to ISF and PMUs. ISIL hung the bodies from power lines and displayed them at checkpoints. On 26 August, in Mosul, **Ninewa**, ISIL killed a retired member of ISF and of the Ninewa Provincial Council by shooting him the head. The victim had been abducted on 12 July but the reason for the killing is not known.

On 2 September, ISIL burnt four men to death in Hammam Ali sub-district, Mosul district. The victims were members of al-Jabouri tribe and were accused by ISIL of spying for ISF and International Coalition forces by providing them with targets for airstrikes. On 13 October, ISIL murdered 21 civilians, including eight former Iraqi Army officers, in the al-Izza military base in southern Mosul, for allegedly cooperating with, and providing information to ISF and PMUs. The victims, who were abducted from their homes in various parts of Mosul during the course of the year, were shot in the head and chest.

ISIL also killed relatives of members of ISF and associated forces, such as in the case of the abduction and murder on 4 October of 70 members of Albu Nimr tribe from al-Tharthar area, north of Ramadi, **Anbar** Governorate. According to one of the tribal leaders, all of those killed were civilians whose fathers and brothers had joined ISF and *Sahwa*²⁹ groups to fight ISIL.

²⁹ *Sahwa* is Arabic for "awakening". This movement was a coalition between predominantly Sunni tribes, initially funded by the United States Government as an *ad hoc* security force at the community level. It has largely been dissolved, as former Iraqi Governments have refused to integrate many of the movement's members into security forces.

Killings and torture and cruel and inhuman treatment following condemnation by illegal/irregular/unlawful courts

ISIL carried out numerous murders following sentences imposed by ISIL self-appointed courts established in Mosul, **Ninewa**. As these courts are not authorized by Iraqi law to exercise judicial authority and fail to respect any semblance of basic principles of due process, any sentence imposed by them is irreconcilable with international law. Journalists were frequently targeted by these self-appointed courts as ISIL perceives them to be spies or in league with the Government or associated forces.

On 17 May, ISIL murdered a journalist who worked for the Ninewa Alqad television channel. On 17 April, ISIL had broken into the victim's house in Qadisiyah area, north east of Mosul, **Ninewa**, searching his phone, computer and documents. He was then beaten and taken away, blindfolded and handcuffed, and later presented before one of ISIL self-appointed courts which condemned him for espionage and 'treason'.

On 1 July, ISIL beheaded three men near the Bahha Alddin Mosque in Hay al-Najar, eastern Mosul. ISIL accused the men of blasphemy, with the public killings carried out following a decision by ISIL's self-appointed court. On 5 July, ISIL posted a series of images of the executions on social media. The images show three men bound, blindfolded, and kneeling in a street; an ISIL member reading out the self-appointed court decision; the beheading of one man; and a sword raised above the head of a second man. There are also images of the assembled crowd watching the killings.

On the evening of 5 July, ISIL murdered a 28 year-old female journalist in al-Dakki area, western Mosul, **Ninewa**. She had been abducted from her home in al-Akha' area, eastern Mosul, on 30 June. The victim was shot in the head and chest following a decision of an ISIL self-appointed court, purportedly for cooperation with ISF. On 10 August, ISIL murdered three journalists, all brothers, in al-Izza military base in Hamam al-Aleel, southern Mosul, **Ninewa**. The victims were shot in the head following the decision of an ISIL self-appointed court, which accused them of providing information to local and international media on ISIL movements, bases, and on daily life in Mosul. Another journalist who worked for Sama Mosul satellite TV channel was murdered by ISIL on 4 October, in Mosul, **Ninewa**, following a decision of an ISIL self-appointed court.

Imams who did not conform to ISIL doctrine or ideology, or who were perceived as critical of ISIL, were also targeted by ISIL self-appointed courts. On 12 July, ISIL abducted four *Imams* from their homes in Qayyara sub-district, Mosul, **Ninewa**. On the morning of 13 July, they were accused by an ISIL self-appointed court of conducting *taraweeh* prayers (special evening prayers held during Ramadan), which ISIL had forbidden. Two days later, the *Imams* were shot in the head in the al-Izza military base, Qayyara.

On 20 July 2015, at around 08:00, in Musherfa village, western Mosul, ISIL publicly killed the *Imam* of Hamid Mosque in Mosul, **Ninewa**, by shooting him in the head, following a decision by an ISIL self-appointed court. The victim had been abducted from his home by ISIL on 17 July 2015 for allegedly criticizing the group.

Those accused of collaborating with Government and associated forces were also murdered in grim public spectacles at the order of ISIL self-appointed courts. On 4 August, ISIL beheaded a former ISF officer and his two sons in front of a crowd in the Wadi al-Hajer area of Mosul, **Ninewa**. The murders followed the decision of an ISIL self-appointed court, which accused the men of collaborating with ISF. On the morning of 12 September, ISIL abducted and executed a former Director of Rasheed Radio in Mosul, **Ninewa**, accusing him of providing information to ISF. The victim was shot in the

head at the al-Ghizlani military base in Mosul, following the decision of an ISIL self-appointed court. On 8 October, ISIL murdered a former Director of al-Ba'aj Police Directorate, accusing him of cooperating with ISF. The victim was shot in the head in the al-Ghizlani military base, in southern Mosul, following the decision of an ISIL self-appointed court.

ISIL also imposed cruel and inhuman punishments, including on minors, in areas under its control. Such a case occurred on 2 September, when ISIL cut off the hand of a boy aged around 13 years in the Bab al-Tob market, centre of Mosul, reportedly after accusing him of theft.

Killings of captured Government ISF and associated forces personnel

Captured personnel from Government and associated forces were frequently killed by ISIL, either in public executions or in prisons inside military bases. For example, on 20 May, ISIL hanged a soldier from a bridge in Fallujah, **Anbar** (*Jisr al-Muadhafeen* or Employees' Bridge). The soldier had reportedly been captured earlier in the Garma area, north of Fallujah, after allegedly being wounded and running out of ammunition. Pictures posted online showed the soldier being paraded in a truck and his body hanging from a bridge. The murder was condemned by the Ministry of Human Rights.³⁰

On 3 June, ISIL murdered a captured soldier in the context of a meeting in which several sheikhs and tribal leaders pledged allegiance to ISIL in Fallujah, **Anbar** Governorate. A video emerged online of the supposed meeting, showing the soldier being forced by an ISIL member to kneel in front of the sheikhs and tribal leaders. The video ends with the body of the soldier lying on the ground, with his head in a pool of blood, and two hooded ISIL fighters close by. According to a statement issued later by the General National Congress of the Faili Kurds, the soldier murdered by ISIL was a member of that community.

On or around 10 June, ISIL killed five captured ISF members in Badoush prison, Mosul, **Ninewa**. It is reported that the victims were in charge of the security of the prison prior to its capture by ISIL on 9 June 2014. On 13 June, ISIL killed 27 captured ISF members in Badoush prison for unknown reasons, and on 21 June, ISIL murdered an Iraqi Army officer and his son, also a soldier, in the Bab al-Tob market, in the centre of the Mosul city, **Ninewa**. The killings were carried out by firing squad, the men having been abducted from their home in July 2014. On 18 June, ISIL executed three captured Iraqi Army officers in a central area of Heet, **Anbar** Governorate.

Other killings

ISIL has also killed members of its own group for refusing to fight or acting against its interests, as well as captured combatants from Government and associated forces. The murders were frequently conducted in public spaces, and the bodies of captured Government forces personnel were sometimes displayed afterwards. On occasion, ISIL displayed the bodies of its own members who it had murdered, as a deterrent to other ISIL members who might consider disobeying orders or otherwise acting against its interests.

UNAMI/OHCHR received a number of reports of ISIL killing its own members, either for disobeying orders, suspicion of passing information to ISF, or otherwise conspiring against ISIL. On 29 June, ISIL murdered a member of its *al-Hisba* (morality 'police')³¹ by firing squad, at a marketplace in Mosul city, Ninewa, following the decision of an ISIL self-appointed court. On the same day, ISIL reportedly murdered a member of its Walayat Mosul Shura committee, at al-Ghizlani military base, Mosul, having accused him of conspiring against the group. On 28 June, ISIL murdered 32 of its own members in Ramadi and Fallujah for allegedly passing intelligence to ISF.

³⁰ ³⁰ <http://www.humanrights.gov.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=4584>, 28 May 2015 (accessed 7 June 2015); representatives of the Iraqi Ministry of Defence visited the family of the deceased (<http://www.mod.mil.iq/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=779>, 28 May 2015, accessed 7 June 2015).

³¹ The *al-Hisba* is a group of special police that ensures adherence to ISIL rules.

On 8 August, ISIL executed six of its members for fleeing a battle with ISF and PMUs in Ramadi, **Anbar**. Subsequently, on 1 October, ISIL executed an unknown number of its own fighters in Hawija district, southwest of **Kirkuk**, after detaining them as a punishment for retreating from a battle with Peshmerga, on 30 September.

On or around 9 September, ISIL executed 34 members of the *Naqshbandi* group in Hawija district, **Kirkuk**. The group, also known as *Jaish Rejal al-Tariqa al-Naqshbandi*, or Army of the Men of the Naqshbandi Order, is a former insurgency group that was initially believed to have been allied with ISIL but more recently has been reported to have been involved in armed clashes with them. The victims were accused by ISIL of “apostasy and betrayal”.

On 16 September ISIL killed seven women from its al-Khansaa Battalion for disobeying orders. The victims were shot and their bodies were left at the entrance of the Battalion’s headquarters in Jamia Street, central Mosul, as an example of what happens to those who disobey its orders.

Abductions

ISIL continued to carry out a large number of abductions, including of children, in the areas under its control. The reasons for many of the abductions are often unknown, although information suggests the victims were targeted due to perceptions that they were opposed to ISIL ideology or control, that they were ‘strategically’ targeted in order to be used as leverage against third parties or, in the case of children, to be trained as combatants. Multiple reports of abductions were received from **Ninewa** and **Kirkuk**.

Examples of abductions of those perceived by ISIL to be conspiring against it or supporting Government and associated forces include nine members of the al-Jabour tribe, including four sheikhs, whom ISIL abducted on 10 June in Sahil al-Malih village, Ayathiya sub-district, **Ninewa** Governorate. It was reported that they had been accused of being affiliated with forces mobilizing to liberate Mosul. The whereabouts and condition of the victims are unknown. On 1 and 2 July, ISIL abducted 54 civilians in Shirqat district, **Salah al-Din** Governorate, reportedly in retaliation for anti-ISIL graffiti and slogans in support of PMUs appearing on walls in the area (one slogan reportedly read: “*Hashd al-Sha’bi* are coming”). The fate and whereabouts of those abducted remain unknown.

ISIL allegedly carried out some abductions in order to pressure third parties. On 10 October, ISIL abducted around 100 people in Hai Soumar neighbourhood of Mosul, **Ninewa**, reportedly including relatives of the newly elected Ninewa Governor, as well as former Government security officers. Thirty abductees were released on the same day, while the others were reportedly taken to an unknown location. On 10 and 13 October, ISIL abducted 60 former ISF members who were also related to the new Ninewa Governor. ISIL has demanded that Albo Hamad tribal leaders (Sunni Arabs) in Hatra pledge allegiance to ISIL in order to secure the group’s release.

Between 2 and 7 September, ISIL abducted around 50 civilians from different areas in Hawija district, **Kirkuk**, including, four civilians in al-Zab area and two others in al-Abbasi area, on 7 September. The reasons for the abductions are reportedly varied: suspicions that some were planning to flee ISIL-controlled areas; suspicions of cooperation with ISF and PMUs; and refusal to volunteer to fight alongside ISIL. The fate and whereabouts of the abductees are unknown.

On 14 and 15 September, ISIL abducted dozens of civilians in ISIL-occupied Hawija, **Kirkuk**. Militants from ISIL raided several villages on the way from Minizla village on the **Kirkuk**-Hawija road, to Hawija centre, including Hawija town itself. During the raids, ISIL abducted dozens of civilians, mainly males aged 20 to 40. The individuals were abducted on charges of alleged collusion and conspiracy with so-called enemy forces, and planning to form an armed group. One source indicated that the incident occurred following ISIL execution of members of the *Naqshbandi* group, and may have been linked to a fear of reprisal by supporters.

On 19 September, ISIL conducted a campaign of abductions in Hawija district, southwest of **Kirkuk**. According to sources, ISIL abducted at least 10 *Imams* known as “moderate” Salafists, in Abbasi sub-district and surrounding villages. The abductions reportedly stemmed from the alleged distribution of leaflets, in and around Abbasi, voicing opposition to ISIL ideology and indicating that it was not representative of Islam. A “moderate” Salafist group allegedly signed the leaflets. Sources reported that on the same day, ISIL abducted 15 civilian youths in al-Khan village, east of Hawija, on charges of cooperating with ISF. The whereabouts of the *Imams* and the youths is unknown.

Reports were received of the mass abduction of children by ISIL in order to train them as combatants. On 21 June, local media reported that ISIL had abducted 1,227 children aged between nine and 15 years from various districts of Mosul, **Ninewa**. The children were reportedly being forced to undergo training at ISIL camps on the eastern outskirts of Mosul. On 23 June, the Ministry of Human Rights issued a statement confirming the abduction of the children, adding that they were being held at the al-Salamiya Camp in Mosul. The statement further claimed that children who refused to obey ISIL orders were flogged, tortured or raped. However, information received and verified by UNAMI/OHCHR on 25 June claimed that the number of abducted children was lower than initially reported, being between 800 and 900. The children were divided into two groups: those aged between five and 10 were placed in a religious education camp; and those aged between 10 and 15 were forced into military training. The children have been taken to ISIL al-Izza and al-Ghizlani camps in the south of Mosul.

A variety of reasons were reported for other abductions. On 22 June, ISIL took six Sunni clerics captive in Mosul, **Ninewa**, for failing to comply with an ISIL instruction forbidding the practice of the *taraweeh* prayers. The fate and whereabouts of the clerics are not known. On or around 1 August, four journalism students at the University of Mosul were abducted by ISIL from their homes in Mosul, **Ninewa**, for allegedly cooperating with the international press. Reportedly, the students had been abducted for publishing images of the, “...land of the caliphate,” on social media, thereby “cooperating” with the international press. The students were allegedly taken to al-Ghizlani military base to await being brought before a self-appointed ISIL judge. UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to verify this incident.

Conduct of operations

Attacks against civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure and objects

ISIL continued to deliberately target civilians and civilian objects for attack, and carried out attacks heedless of the effects on civilians. It continued to base its fighters among civilians or in civilian areas so as to shield its fighters from attack. Deliberately targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, carrying out attacks heedless of the effects on civilians, and locating fighters among civilian and civilian infrastructure constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and can constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. A number of cases of the destruction of houses were received, particularly those belonging to Christian families and other minority religious and ethnic communities, and relatives or perceived sympathizers of those fighting against ISIL.

UNAMI/OHCHR continued to verify reports of the direct targeting of civilians by ISIL as a deliberate tactic, particularly the use of vehicles or suicide borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED/SBIED), taking a heavy toll upon the civilian population. For example, on the evening of 17 July, as the *Eid al-Fitr* celebrations marking the end of Ramadan commenced, a suicide vehicle laden with explosives (SVBIED) detonated in the main public market of Khan Bani Saad sub-district south of Baquba, **Diyala**, killing at least 108 people and wounding 167. Three police officers were killed and seven were wounded among the casualties. The incident devastated the area, destroying more than 50 shops and 70 cars, and leaving behind a large crater. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack in

social media posts, declaring the three-ton explosive attack targeted the Shi'a community, allegedly to avenge the killing of Sunnis in Hawija. The United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Iraq both condemned the attack and offered their condolences to the families of victims in separate statements.³²

On 10 August, a SBIED attack took place in a crowded market place, in Hwaider village, just outside of Baquba city, **Diyala**. According to reports, the perpetrator deliberately drove his vehicle into a crowd of people gathered at the marketplace. The explosion killed at least 61 people and wounded at least 88, including four children. An unverified number of ISF members are believed to have been among the casualties. A **Diyala** faction of ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack on social media. On the evening of 5 October, a mini-bus rigged with explosives was detonated in a main market in Khalis district, northwest of Baquba, killing at least 40 civilians and wounding at least 60 others. Between 10 and 20 people remain missing. The majority of casualties are believed to have been civilians, including a significant number of women and children. ISIL-associated media claimed ISIL responsibility for the attack.

In **Baghdad**, on 13 August, a VBIED detonated at the Jameela wholesale market in the Shi'a majority Sadr City, in the east of the city. According to reports, at least 45 people were killed and at least 72 wounded by the blast, for which ISIL claimed responsibility. The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq condemned the attack and offered his condolences to the families of victims.³³ On 6 October, ISIL detonated an IED in the al-Zubair district, west of **Basra** city, killing 10 civilians and injuring 25. The IED was planted in a vehicle that was parked on the street, in the centre of al-Zubair and also caused extensive damage to nearby shops and cars. ISIL claimed responsibility for the blast on its website soon after, stating that it was connected to several other coordinated blasts that had occurred around the country, and aimed at killing and injuring members of the Shi'a community. This was the second attack of this kind that took place in southern Iraq this year – after the attack at Um Qassar Port, Basra Governorate, on 18 March, when an IED detonated, killing five people and injuring at least five others.

While the precise reasons for many of the targeted killings are unknown, information indicates that ISIL continues to target particular individuals and groups, such as those opposed or perceived to be opposed to it and its ideology. Former candidates for public office, employees and former employees of IHEC, and those suspected of passing information to Government and associated forces were particularly targeted.

On 2 June, ISIL destroyed eight houses belonging to Christian families in Hamdaniya district, north of Mosul, **Ninewa**. On 22 June, it also blew up houses belonging to Christians in Hay al-Arabi, north of Mosul, and in the al-Zahoor area, in the centre of Mosul city. Eight houses were destroyed in Hay al-Arabi, while as many as 14 were reportedly destroyed in al-Zahoor. On 1 July, ISIL destroyed a Christian house in the Hay al-Shifaa area of Mosul.

The houses of relatives or perceived sympathizers of those fighting ISIL were also targeted for destruction as punishment by proxy and to serve as an example to others. On 29 July, ISIL used IEDs to destroy 15 houses belonging to elders of the Sbaaween clan in Gwer in Makhmour district, **Erbil**. The houses were allegedly targeted because of the elders' affiliation with the *National Crowd Force* (also known as the 'National Mobilization to Liberate Ninewa').³⁴ On 1 August, ISIL allegedly used IEDs to destroy three houses in Dwezat Tahtani village, in Qayarra sub-district of Mosul. The houses

³² http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4073:statement-attributable-to-the-spokesman-for-the-secretary-general-on-a-bomb-attack-north-of-Baghdad&Itemid=605&lang=en and http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4070:un-envoy-expresses-his-deepest-sorrow-following-devastating-massacre&Itemid=605&lang=en (accessed 23 July 2015).

³³ http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4153:acting-un-envoy-condemns-in-the-strongest-terms-devastating-baghdad-bomb-attack&Itemid=605&lang=en.

³⁴ The National Crowd Force (also known as the National Mobilization to Liberate Ninewa) is a group was specifically formed to liberate Mosul and is to be distinguished from PMUs / *al-Hashid al-Sha'bi*.

were also reportedly targeted because their owners were *al-Hashd al-Sha'bi* members, currently fighting ISIL in the Gwer frontline in Makhmour.

On 2 September, ISIL destroyed 11 homes belonging to members of the Shabak community in eastern Mosul, **Ninewa**. On 3 September, it also blew up three houses belonging to relatives of members of the *National Crowd Force* and volunteers in Qayyara sub-district, south of Mosul. On 21 September, ISIL destroyed up to 21 houses in an unspecified village near Mosul, allegedly to intimidate the population.

Destruction or damage of places of religious and cultural significance

ISIL continued to deliberately and wantonly loot and destroy places of religious and cultural significance. It has targeted ancient sites, as well as churches, mosques, shrines, tombs, and graves, which ISIL considers as un-Islamic. Generally, these sites are looted before being destroyed.

Examples of this destruction include the attack, using two IEDs, upon a Shi'a religious mosque/school in **Kirkuk** city, on 13 July. A first IED was detonated near *Imam* Ja'far al-Sadiq Husseiniya school, in the Wasiti area, southwest of **Kirkuk** city. A few minutes later, a second IED was detonated across the street from the same facility. No casualties were reported in the incident.

Multiple sources confirmed that on 8 May, ISIL looted and then destroyed the biggest Sunni mosque in Badoush sub-district (35 km northwest of Mosul, **Ninewa**) allegedly due to the existence of a tomb inside the mosque, which they objected to. It was reported that on 12 May, ISIL blew up the nearly 200-year-old Maryam Khatoon mosque in the Hawsh Kahn neighborhood of Mosul, **Ninewa**.

On 28 May, PMUs and ISF entered the Saied Khareeb area south of Tikrit, **Salah al-Din**, wherein they allegedly found the Saieed Khareeb shrine destroyed, the body of the holy *Imam* removed from his tomb, and the contents of the shrine looted. The Shi'a Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) issued a statement³⁵ alleging that ISIL was responsible for the destruction and looting of the shrine.

On 3 June, ISIL destroyed a Sunni mosque in Ismail village, in Hawija district, **Kirkuk** Governorate, reportedly because it contained the grave of Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah, a Sunni Sufi scholar who died in 1975 and who was a follower of the well-known Sufi *Imam* Abdulkadir al-Gailani. No civilian casualties were reported.

On the evening of 24 August, pictures were posted on social media depicting the destruction of graves in Qairawan subdistrict, Sinjar district, **Ninewa**. The photos were issued by the media office of *Walayah al-azirah* (which ISIL has proclaimed as an administrative area that includes areas of Sinjar, Tal Afar, Tal Abth, Baaj, Mahlbah and Zummar), with a statement depicting the destruction of 'kufaar' graves and 'manifestations of polytheism'. The series of 10 pictures shows ISIL elements smashing gravestones with shovels and other instruments, and destroying a building with explosives and a bulldozer. It has not been determined if the pictures were taken in a single location.

ISIL also targeted Yezidi and Christian places of worship. While briefly occupying Gabarra village (a Yezidi village, west of Sinjar town), **Ninewa**, ISIL destroyed a Yezidi shrine (Guba Sheikh Hassan) with two rocket-propelled grenades. On 22 August, it destroyed the al-Tahira church, in Mosul city, using bulldozers. The church belonged to the Syrian Orthodox community. On 12 September, ISIL reportedly used explosives to destroy the Syriac Orthodox church in al-Muhaniseen area, east of Mosul. Houses near the church were also reportedly damaged in the explosion.

On 29 August, ISIL destroyed the Sunni Abu Bakr Mosque in Shoura sub---district, Mosul district, **Ninewa**, after removing items from the mosque. It reportedly used IEDs to destroy the mosque because it contained graves which ISIL considered to be 'un-Islamic'. In addition to destroying the

³⁵ <http://www.ara.shafaaq.com/4227> (accessed 26 October 2015).

mosque, ISIL removed historical inscriptions from the front of two churches – the Virgin Mary Church and the Chaldean Church – located in Doctor Street, central Mosul.

Allegations concerning the use of chemical weapons

UNAMI/OHCHR has received information that ISIL has used, or has attempted to use, chlorine gas in attacks. On or around 21 June, ISIL reportedly fired a chemical mortar shell that struck sandbag fortifications at a Kurdish military position near Mosul Dam, **Ninewa**, causing several Kurdish fighters near where it landed to become ill.

On 12 August, ISIL allegedly used chemical weapons against Peshmerga forces stationed on the Gwer frontline, Makhmour district, **Erbil**. International media reported on 9 September that German military intelligence supported the claims that Peshmerga elements had been exposed to mustard gas. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons voiced serious concern over the reports.³⁶

Attacks on individuals on the basis of sexual orientation

UNAMI/OHCHR also verified a number of reports of individuals murdered (by throwing them from buildings) by ISIL for being homosexual.

On 4 June, ISIL killed three civilians for alleged homosexual acts. Two young males and a 60-year-old man were thrown from the National Insurance Company building in the Dawasa area of central Mosul, **Ninewa**. A document condemning the men issued by an ISIL self-appointed court was read before the men were killed. Pictures showing the killings were posted on social media.

On 27 June, ISIL allegedly executed four men it accused of committing sodomy, by throwing them from the tallest building in Fallujah, **Anbar**. A video was put online showing the murders. On 26 July, ISIL posted six images on social media depicting a man being killed in Mosul, **Ninewa**, for allegedly being homosexual. The images show a large crowd gathered in front of a building and the victim, blindfolded, with his hands apparently tied behind his back, kneeling on the ground while a condemnation from an ISIL self-appointed court is read out. Five of ISIL *al-Hisba* stand behind the victim who is then thrown from the top of the building.

On 23 August, pictures were posted on social media depicting a man being thrown from a building in *Walayah Ninawa* (the city of Mosul and surrounding towns). A caption states that the victim was killed for being homosexual. The same day, ISIL members threw nine people from a building in Mosul, **Ninewa**. ISIL reportedly rounded up residents of the city in order to watch the incident, upon orders from an ISIL self-appointed court. It is not known if the report is related to the pictures posted on the same day. On the morning of 8 October, ISIL publicly murdered two men aged 21 and 26, by throwing them from the top of an eight-storey building, in the Palestine area of western Mosul, for allegedly being homosexual. The victims were killed following the decision of an ISIL self-appointed court.

Attacks on women and children

Gender-based violence, including sexual violence

ISIL continued to subject women and children to sexual violence, particularly in the form of sexual slavery. UNAMI/OHCHR continues to believe that the number of people currently being held in

³⁶ <https://www.opcw.org/news/article/dg-concerned-over-alleged-chemical-weapons-use-in-iraq/> (accessed 26 October 2015).

slavery by ISIL numbers approximately 3,500.³⁷ Those being held are predominantly women and children and come primarily from the Yezidi community, but a number are also from other ethnic and religious minority communities. UNAMI/OHCHR continues to have grave concerns for the welfare and safety of those held in ISIL captivity.

A source confirmed to UNAMI/OHCHR that on the evening of 8 May, a 24-year-old Yezidi girl was murdered by ISIL while trying to escape from captivity. She had been held in captivity in Kurse village, Sinjar district, **Ninewa**, after being abducted with her family from Snone sub-district, on 3 August 2014. Her body was reportedly left on the road and later found by Yezidi fighters.

On 25 June it was reported in **Ninewa** Governorate that 42 Yezidi women abducted from the Sinjar region of **Ninewa** in 2014 had been taken to the ISIL-controlled town of Mayadeen, Deir Ezzor Governorate, eastern Syria. The report claimed that the women were being used as sex slaves and that some had been sold to ISIL fighters for between USD500 and USD2,000.

On 3 August, it was reported that ISIL allegedly killed 19 women in Mosul, **Ninewa**, over 1 and 2 August, for refusing to have sex with its fighters. On 10 August, a Kurdish Democratic Party official reported that ISIL fighters had been rewarded by ISIL leadership with the widows of executed men to motivate them to continue fighting.

On 21 June, in Mosul, **Ninewa**, it was reported that ISIL had announced a Quran memorization competition in Mosul on the occasion of Ramadan, stating that the first three winners would reportedly receive 'sex slaves' as prizes.

Forced recruitment and use of children

UNAMI/OHCHR received several reports that ISIL has been forcibly recruiting and using child soldiers. For instance, multiple sources confirmed that on 11 May, the unit of ISIL in charge of recruitment visited high schools in the Hay al-Tamin area of eastern Mosul, **Ninewa**, and informed the students that they must pledge allegiance to the group and join *jihad*. The students were not given the option to decline and their families were not consulted. Local media further reported that ISIL had established military training camps for children in Tal Afar and in Raqqa, Syria.

On 14 May, ISIL used some recruited child soldiers to execute 15 of its fighters who had lost battles or retreated from battles in Bashiqaq sub-district, Hamdaniya district, in the **Ninewa** plains.

On 23 May, ISIL announced at schools and universities in **Ninewa** Governorate that all male students must join ISIL after the completion of their current exams. He announcement stated that the *al-Hisba* section of ISIL, which is responsible for monitoring and disciplining the conduct of residents, would register the names of male high school students of Mosul. It was reported that after the exam period had concluded, students would be convened at the Ma'amon and Hurraiah areas of eastern Mosul, where they would be vetted to ascertain their physical fitness.

On 14 August, ISIL killed 18 young males, all below the age of 18, for having run away from fighting on the frontline in **Anbar**. According to a source, the boys left the front without being noticed, but were identified by residents upon their return to Mosul. An ISIL self-appointed court allegedly ordered their killing.

UNAMI/OHCHR received information, collected from several families who had had their children abducted by ISIL, that the group has possibly recruited hundreds of children in **Anbar** Governorate. Families tried to convince ISIL members not to take their children, which they refused, stating that

³⁷ Official sources in the Yezidi community informed OHCHR/UNAMI HRO that 5,838 people had been abducted by ISIL from August 2014 - 3,192 women and 2,646 men. As of 29 October, 2,258 had reportedly returned / escaped or were released – 311 men, 847 women, 533 girls, and 567 boys.

the children should participate in *jihad*. The source also stated that some tribes in **Anbar** were allowing, and in some cases forcing, families to send their children to join ISIL.

Attacks on ethnic and religious minority communities

ISIL continues to target members of different ethnic and religious communities, intentionally depriving them of their fundamental rights and subjecting them to a range of abuses under international human rights and humanitarian law. These acts appear to form part of a systematic and widespread policy that aims to suppress, permanently expel, or destroy many of these communities within ISIL areas of control.

However, during the reporting period, the number of individual reports of such abuses received by UNAMI/OHCHR markedly decreased from previous reporting periods. It is likely that most of the members of ethnic and religious minority communities formerly located in areas of ISIL control have been killed or abducted by ISIL, or fled those areas during the period starting from June 2014 up to April 2015. However, UNAMI/OHCHR cannot exclude that specific human rights abuses targeting individuals from ethnic and religious communities have continued in areas under ISIL control, but owing to the inaccessibility of these areas, it has not received such reports and is unable to verify them. Other abuses and violations perpetrated by ISIL against members of ethnic and religious communities and verified by UNAMI/OHCHR are listed under other subheadings in this report.

Denial of other fundamental rights and freedoms

Civilians living under ISIL rule are subjected to a harsh system of regulations, facing torture and other cruel and inhuman treatment or punishment, including death, for failing to comply. Regulations touch upon all aspects of everyday life, dictating where people can travel, how they must dress, to whom they can speak, and what they can celebrate.

UNAMI/OHCHR was informed that men are required to grow beards of a certain length, while women face strict regulations concerning their clothing, employment and movements. Sources indicated that women must be fully covered and are only allowed to move in public in the company of what is deemed to be an appropriately related male chaperone.

Multiple sources reported that on 17 May, ISIL issued new rules for the residents of Mosul, **Ninewa** Governorate, for the month of Ramadan (beginning after mid-June) which permitted men to work for only two hours a day, and required they spend the rest of the day praying. Additionally, women would not be permitted to leave their homes from dawn until sunset (time of fasting). After that, women would be allowed to move, but only if accompanied by an appropriate male (a husband, brother, son or father). Furthermore, all stores in Mosul (except food stores and pharmacies) would be closed during the last 10 days of Ramadan. Reportedly, the rules were announced through local television channels in Mosul and on banners hung in the streets. It was also confirmed that on 17 May, ISIL started instructing Mosul's male residents to grow beards and shave mustaches. The measure is allegedly partly intended to make it more difficult to distinguish ISIL members from civilians. On 10 June, ISIL issued a list of instructions confirming these rules.

Aside from regulations imposed for Ramadan, everyday life in areas under ISIL control is reported to be characterized by arbitrary abuse of power and routine control over most aspects of life. Sources reported that in **Ninewa** Governorate, ISIL members frequently steal the possessions of civilians, demand rent from people who fled their villages and moved into abandoned homes elsewhere, and that civilians are forced to pay a tax based on the value of their possessions. Strict dress codes have been imposed on men and women, with women being fined if not fully covered. Under rules issued in May, men must adopt an Afghani style of dress and grow long beards. Those without beards would be jailed for two months. On 24 September, during *Eid al-Adha*, ISIL abducted 36 young men in Mosul, **Ninewa**, for wearing jeans, considered by ISIL as inappropriate. Members of *al-Hisba* reportedly punished the men by shaving their hair and flogging them in the street.

ISIL regularly forces people to gather in public places in Mosul to watch punishments imposed by its self-appointed courts, including stoning and beheadings.

Men are pressured to join ISIL, including through *Imams* at local mosques.

In areas controlled by ISIL many villages are reportedly receiving only a few hours of electricity a day, if at all, and food is becoming scarce. The food available for purchase has become very expensive and people are reportedly beginning to starve. Villagers are not permitted to leave without permission from ISIL and those caught attempting to do so have been tortured or executed. Similar conditions have been reported by people who have escaped from Hawija, **Kirkuk**.

Violations and abuses committed by pro-Government forces

UNAMI/OHCHR has received reports of abuses and violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law perpetrated by pro-Government forces.

ISF and associated forces are bound to respect applicable international humanitarian law in the conduct of military operations. UNAMI/OHCHR continues to receive information that some military operations appear to have directly targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure or were carried out without taking all feasible precautions to protect the civilian population and civilian objects. Reports received by UNAMI/OHCHR also indicate that some associated forces have been operating largely outside of Government control and have perpetrated abuses against civilians, including killings, abductions and destruction of property.

Restrictions on freedom of movement

As huge numbers of civilians continued to move around the country, fleeing fighting or violence or ISIL occupation, they have often faced restrictions that have hampered their access safe areas.

For instance, on 11 July, around 55 families (composed of 316 individuals, including 50 children) who had fled conflict areas in **Anbar**, **Salah al-Din** and **Kirkuk** were stopped at the Daquq-Tuz Khurmatu checkpoint on their way to **Kirkuk** city. Local security sources confirmed that the **Kirkuk** governor had given instructions to prevent more IDPs from entering **the** city. Responding UN agencies reported a number of humanitarian concerns of those stopped at the checkpoint, including the need for shelter from severe heat and exposure, dehydration, malnutrition, acute medical needs and the need for psychosocial support. UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports that some of the families were able to enter **Kirkuk** city only through the sponsorship of relatives or friends who are **Kirkuk** residents, or through bribes given to local authorities.

On 11 September, around 250 families who had escaped the clashes in villages near Daquq district, **Kirkuk** (including the villages of Tal Raba'a, Albu Mohammed, Dalaf Shagheer, Dalaf Kabeer, Saba'a Nissan, Gumbus, Zaglawa, Smood and Tappa Doo Sar), gathered in a public park near the Daquq-Tuz Khurmatu checkpoint. They were prevented by security forces from proceeding further towards safer areas in Daquq or **Kirkuk** city.

Police raids and arbitrary arrests

UNAMI/OHCHR received reports of IDPs, mostly from **Kirkuk** city, who were able to access safe areas but were subjected to arbitrary arrests in raids by security forces. For example, on 3 June, security forces in **Kirkuk** conducted a raid in the Wahad Huzairan neighbourhood in **Kirkuk** city and arrested 71 IDPs on suspicion of terrorism or trespassing public grounds. The arrested individuals were from Salah al-Din, Anbar, Basra, Diyala and Baghdad. Such raids and arrests were frequent in the southern neighborhoods of **Kirkuk** city where there was a large number of IDPs. The arrested individuals were oftentimes released after a day or two in detention.

On 16 July, security forces in **Kirkuk** conducted a raid in the Khadhra'a area, in the southwest part of the city. Reportedly conducted as a precautionary measure, the raid took place the eve of the *Eid* holidays. Seventy-nine individuals were arrested, most of whom were IDPs residing in **Kirkuk** city. The security authorities allegedly had received information about suspected terrorist activities before and during *Eid* holidays. The arrested individuals were released within two days and without any charge.

On 27 August, police forces conducted a raid in al-Askari neighbourhood, in the southeast of **Kirkuk**, and arrested 53 individuals, most of whom were IDPs. They were detained in Domiz police station and were released after a security screening and background check.

On 1 September, 42 individuals, most of whom were IDPs, were arrested during a raid in the Wahed Huzairan neighbourhood, a predominantly Sunni Arab area in **Kirkuk** city. A total of 31 individuals were arrested for not being registered, not having identification documents, or having fake documents. Eleven others were reportedly wanted for suspected affiliation with ISIL.

On 22 September, security forces conducted a raid in Quriya area of **Kirkuk** city. According to sources, the raid was conducted in neighbourhoods close to the Kirkuk government building, including Quriya, Shatorlu, Ommal Square, Almas and Sahat Tayran. A total of 68 IDPs from different governorates were arrested, with a significant proportion coming from Tuz district in **Salah al-Din**. They were arrested for various reasons, including illegal entry into Kirkuk, failure to register with the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), and failure to present proper identification. Another source stated that security concerns prompted the raid based on the proximity of a large number of IDPs to the Kirkuk government building. According to security sources, all 68 were released on 22-23 September.

Forced evictions

UNAMI/OHCHR verified a number of reports of families and individuals who were able to access safe areas being forcibly moved from such areas and their temporary shelters and structures demolished.

For instance, on 27 July, security forces evicted a number of IDPs living in unlawfully constructed houses in Sayada neighbourhood, in the south of **Kirkuk** city. The IDPs were mainly from **Salah al-Din** and **Diyala**, and had moved to Kirkuk years ago as part of previous waves of IDPs. During the eviction, 39 male IDP residents were arrested by security forces but were released after they promised to vacate their homes. As of 30 July, around 80 homes had been demolished while the security forces claimed that 10 houses were destroyed.

UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports that on 16 August, Peshmerga forces started demolishing an unknown number of houses and structures in Sunni Arab-inhabited areas in Jalawla in **Diyala**. This demolition happened in the Tajneed, Wahda and Shuhadaa areas of the governorate. Photos of the reported demolition were given to UNAMI/OHCHR showing several demolished and burned structures.

Unlawful killings

UNAMI/OHCHR received a number of serious allegations of unlawful killings committed by ISF and associated forces. These incidents included alleged attacks and reprisals against persons believed or perceived to support or to be associated with ISIL.

For example, on 9 June, a video was posted in social media showing a group of men, wearing what appeared to be Iraqi Federal Police uniforms, burning a cadaver and shouting sectarian chants. Sources informed UNAMI/OHCHR that the corpse was found near al-Alam sub-district in **Salah al-Din**, during the operations to liberate Tikrit, in February. In the video, those setting fire to the body were heard saying the deceased's name and that he was a Saudi citizen. They were also heard saying

that this was a gift for the people of al-Hasa and Qatif (areas in Saudi Arabia where there are a significant number of Shi'a Muslims).

In a similar incident, a video was posted online purporting to show members of the Shi'a *Imam Ali Brigades* burning the body of a man hanging by his feet in the town of Garma, northeast of Fallujah, in **Anbar**. In the video, the perpetrators accused the man of being a member of ISIL. According to a local source, the video was shot in the town of Garma. According to another local source, the man killed was a member of ISIL from Fallujah. UNAMI/OHCHR could not independently verify the incident nor the authenticity of the video.

Abductions

UNAMI/OHCHR received reports of abductions allegedly perpetrated by pro-Government forces against Sunni tribes or individuals.

For instance, on 16 July, a group of *Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq* (AAH) members entered Jalludiyat village in Dujail district in Tikrit in **Salah al-Din**, and abducted 12 civilians from the Khazraj tribe (which is a Sunni tribe) reportedly due to a tribal conflict between two families. The brother of a tribal leader was among those abducted.

On 17 July, unidentified armed men abducted a civilian in the al-Askari area of Tuz Khurmatu district, in **Salah al-Din**. The victim was a Sunni Arab IDP from Sulaiman Beg sub-district, south of Tuz Khurmatu. On 18 July, unidentified armed men abducted another civilian in the al-Askari area. The second victim was also an IDP from the Sunni Arab community from Hilewat village in Tuz Khurmatu district. Sources strongly asserted to UNAMI/OHCHR that militia members were behind both these abductions.

On 28 July, armed militia members abducted three civilians on the main road between Abu Saida sub-district and Baquba. The victims were Sunni Arabs from the Zuherat tribe and included the son of a tribal leader.

On 1 September, armed militia members wearing black uniforms stopped police and army vehicles that were transporting at least 40 detainees, all Sunni Arabs from **Salah al-Din**. The militia stopped the convoy near Balad district, Salah al-Din, after firing warning shots into the air and at the tires of the vehicles. They then physically assaulted and disarmed the security forces. The abductees had been arrested in June for terrorism-related offenses and had been detained in the Brigade 17 Iraqi Army detention centre in Dujail, **Salah al-Din**. Reports further stated that, at the time of their abduction, the detainees were being transferred to **Baghdad**.

In the early morning of 27 September, a convoy of 20 pick-up trucks carrying masked gunmen in military uniform arrived in the Alb-Tua'ma area of Hujjaj village, in Baiji district, **Salah al-Din**, and forcibly took at least 28 civilians from the area - which is inhabited by members of the al-Jubour tribe. The victims were all males from the al-Jubour tribe. A source indicated that they were taken in a systematic manner, based on a list of names produced according to intelligence and security information. All abductees allegedly had current or past affiliation with ISIL or family connections associated with ISIL. Other sources reported that the masked gunmen who took the civilians were militia.

On 22 October, PMUs abducted at least 175 civilians from the Askari and Tin areas of Tuz Khurmatu district, Salah al-Din. The victims were Sunni Arabs, who had been displaced to Tuz Khurmatu since June 2014. The operation started at sunset, with people grabbed during house-to-house searches and in the streets, taken to PMUs facilities in Sulaiman Beg and Yengija village, and kept there for two days for questioning. On 23 October, the bodies of three abductees (a Police officer and two civilians) were reportedly found in the Askari area. Around 130 of the abductees were released; the

others remained captive at the time of reporting. The operation was conducted without arrest warrants or coordination with local authorities.

Attacks against ethnic and religious communities

UNAMI/OHCHR received one report involving an alleged attack by Government-associated forces of members of an ethnic or religious community in **Diyala**. On 5 May, three truck drivers were killed at a checkpoint set up by Shi'a militias in Naft Khana area in Khanaqin district, north of Baquba, **Diyala**. According to a source, the victims were Kurds from Sulaymaniyah. Their trucks were reportedly burned. Sources reported that since the beginning of May, Shi'a militias started setting checkpoints in the area and stopped Kurdish drivers and passengers, harassing and assaulting them as well as damaging their vehicles.

Conduct of operations

UNAMI/OHCHR received continued reports of heavy civilian casualties attributed to airstrikes. However, UNAMI/HRO was unable to verify most of these reports. Difficulties also arise in attributing airstrikes to specific military forces. It is also complex to assess whether principles of distinction and proportionality were adhered to, considering that ISIL deliberately bases itself in civilian areas, often fails to distinguish themselves as fighters, and use civilians and civilian infrastructure as shields.

Airstrikes

On 22-23 May, UNAMI/OHCHR received a report that airstrikes hit al-Najjar, al-Rifai and Saha'a areas in western Mosul in **Ninewa**, allegedly killing 30 civilians and wounding 62 others, including women and children. UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to verify this report.

On 3 June, an explosion due to an airstrike³⁸ in **Kirkuk's** Hawija district allegedly killed several ISIL fighters and civilians. Some reports indicated that the structure was a storage facility for chemical fertilizers, while others reported that the warehouse was being used to build vehicle-borne IEDs. A member of the **Kirkuk** Provincial Council was quoted by multiple local sources as stating that around 150 individuals, including women and children, were allegedly killed and wounded in the blast. Pictures and videos have emerged in media and online showing an area purporting to be the blast site that has been almost completely flattened. UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to verify the authenticity of the photos or the videos, nor the number of civilian casualties.

On 8 June, local sources reported that an airstrike in Mosul, **Ninewa**, caused 33 civilian casualties. The report alleged that several residential neighbourhoods in al-Zuhour district were hit, killing 20 civilians, including seven children and nine women, and wounding 13 others, mostly women. The source claimed that there were no ISIL members in the affected neighbourhoods. UNAMI/OHCHR was unable to verify the status of all the casualties nor who was responsible for the airstrikes.

On 11 June, an airstrike reportedly hit an ISIL target near a market in Hawija, **Kirkuk**. According to a source, 10 civilians were killed and wounded in the incident. Other reports mentioned more than 60 civilians killed and over 80 wounded. UNAMI/OHCHR was unable to verify the exact number of casualties nor who was responsible for the airstrike.

On 23 June, a house was allegedly targeted by an airstrike in Baiji district, **Salah al-Din**, which killed six civilians (including four children) and wounded eight others. The house was reported to have been located close to a mosque which, at the time of the attack, was occupied by ISIL. A local source from Baiji stated that the house was hit by mistake and that the target was the ISIL-occupied mosque. The source however could not confirm who carried out the airstrike.

³⁸ In an article published by the Associated Press, a US Air Force official acknowledged the Hawija airstrike was by US forces, with no confirmation of civilian casualties. <<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2015/06/07/us-general-strongly-defends-air-campaign-against-isis/>> (accessed 11 June 2015).

According to a source, on 1 July, 17 civilians, including four children and six women, were reportedly killed in an airstrike conducted in the al-Rifaie area of western Mosul, **Ninewa**. 11 other civilians were reportedly wounded. UNAMI/OHCHR was unable to verify the status of all the casualties nor who was responsible for the airstrike.

On 31 July, up to 40 civilians may have been killed and over 30 wounded when three houses allegedly sheltering IDPs was hit by an airstrike in Rutba, west of Ramadi, **Anbar**. Official sources confirmed the incident and the number of casualties, which included 18 women and 11 children (under 14 years old). The houses were targeted by military jets after receiving information that ISIL elements were allegedly inside the houses. The governor of **Anbar** called for an immediate investigation of the incident. On 3 August, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Iraq and Head of UNAMI issued a press release expressing serious concern at the reported airstrike, and called on the Government of Iraq to investigate the incident.³⁹

On the afternoon of 18 August, a man and his 12 year-old daughter were reportedly killed when an airstrike hit al-Minassa street, northern Mosul. The airstrike allegedly targeted a vehicle carrying three assistants to ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and a judge of an ISIL self-appointed court, who were all killed. Around midnight on 24 August, an airstrike targeted a vehicle carrying ISIL elements in the Majmoua Thaqafiya area of northern Mosul. The attack reportedly killed nine civilians, including one woman and a child, and wounded three other civilians.

In the early morning of 1 August, military jets allegedly carried out airstrikes in Zargali village, Warti sub-district of Rawanduz district, **Erbil** Governorate. The airstrikes killed at least eight individuals and wounded 16. Zargali village is home to around 27 families. According to witnesses interviewed by UNAMI/OHCHR after the attacks, their village was attacked by Turkish military jets on suspicion that combatants from PKK or the Kurdish Workers' Party were present in the area. However, they denied this and indicated that PKK combatants reside in a camp in the Qandil mountains. The interviewees added that four different attacks occurred on 1 August (from 3h50 a.m. to 6h35 a.m.). The first attack reportedly consisted of two strikes; the second attack consisted of a single strike; the third and fourth consisted of four rockets each which hit simultaneously. After the initial attacks, some residents left their homes and sought shelter in a nearby farm. However, witnesses alleged that the ensuing attacks were directed at them and other fleeing residents. Some individuals who tried to assist those wounded were killed or wounded by the later attacks. The attacks destroyed six houses and killed farm animals.

On 3 September an airstrike hit a bridge in Jazeera al-Khaldiya, around 20 kilometres east of Ramadi, **Anbar**, killing 46 civilians and wounding 20. Another source confirmed the incident but stated that the casualties were ISIL members. UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to confirm the number of casualties or their status. On the same day, another airstrike reportedly hit a residential area in eastern Ramadi, killing 28 civilians. A single source reported this second incident and UNAMI/OHCHR was unable to verify it.

In the early morning of 20 September, an airstrike hit the al-Ghabat area of Mosul city, as a result of which five civilians (including two women and one girl) from one family were killed. The family members were inside their home at the time, which was close to an ISIL headquarters. When that

³⁹ United Nations Iraq, "SRSG Kubiš expresses serious concern at reports of civilian casualties in alleged Anbar airstrike," Baghdad, 3 August 2015 <http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4121:srsg-kubis-expresses-serious-concern-at-reports-of-civilian-casualties-in-alleged-anbar-airstrike&Itemid=605&lang=en> last accessed 20 October 2015.

headquarters was hit, weapons and other equipment inside exploded, causing damage to nearby homes and killing the family. Other sources reported that four civilians died in the attack (a 48-year-old man, a 20-year-old man, a 37-year-old woman, and a 13-year-old girl) while two civilians were seriously wounded.

On 29 September, an airstrike was reported to have hit the former Sunni endowment building next to the **Ninewa** Governorate building, in central Mosul. According to some sources, the attack allegedly killed eight civilians (including two women) in addition to 19 ISIL fighters. Around 10 minutes later, as civilians were gathering in the area, another airstrike allegedly hit the same location, killing 12 civilians (including two children and a woman) and wounding seven, some critically. Other sources reported higher casualty figures.

On 5 October, an airstrike mistakenly targeted a civilian house in Atshana village, east of Hawija and southwest of **Kirkuk**, that belonged to the *Mukhtar* of the village, killing eight persons from the same family, including several women and children and the Mukhtar himself.

At 10h30 a.m. on 20 October, seven civilians were killed – including three women and two children – and one was seriously wounded when the minibus in which they were travelling was hit by an airstrike. The victims were all members of one family and were travelling from al-Qawsiyat village in Wana sub-district, Tal Kaif district, to Mosul.

Shelling

UNAMI/OHCHR obtained several reports of civilian casualties resulting from shelling, allegedly by ISF and associated forces, of areas occupied by ISIL fighters. In many of the reports, mortar rounds hit neighbourhoods populated by civilians.

For instance, according to a source, between 30 April and 6 May, 12 men were killed and 35 adults, including one woman, were wounded in **Anbar** Governorate. According to the source, most of the casualties were caused by shelling, allegedly carried out by ISF and associated forces. According to another source, in the evening of 4 June, ISF and associated forces allegedly conducted shelling in the Jolan area, northern Fallujah, **Anbar**, killing a man and wounding his wife and their five children. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify these reports.

On 9 June, local sources in Fallujah confirmed that nine individuals were killed and 12 others wounded during bombardment exchanges between security forces around the city's perimeter and ISIL fighters - who have been occupying the city for more than a year.

According to a source, on 16 June, ISF and associated forces carried out shelling in the Jolan area in northern Fallujah, killing two siblings (a three-year-old girl and a five-year-old boy) and wounding three men. UNAMI/OHCHR received video footage which showed a damaged house with several blood-stained areas, and another video displaying the body of a girl lying on the floor, and the father and a male neighbour claiming that the shelling was carried out by ISF and associated forces. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the videos.

A similar incident is alleged to have occurred on 19 June when, according to a source, shelling, allegedly by ISF and associated forces, on the Jolan area in Fallujah, killed three civilians: two boys (five- and 12-year-old) and a man. 16 civilians, including a woman and two children, were reportedly wounded in the incident. UNAMI/OHCHR received videos and photos showing the bodies of the boys. The videos also showed a public gathering around the bodies of the children and several people condemning the killing, claiming that the deaths were due to the indiscriminate shelling by ISF and associated forces of civilian houses. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the videos and photos.

According to a source, on 21 June, ISF and associated forces allegedly conducted shelling operations in Fallujah, killing a man and wounding six other civilians, including four children. UNAMI/OHCHR

received photos purportedly showing one of the child casualties. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify the authenticity of the photos.

According to a source, during the period 12 to 15 July, 40 bodies (including those of six women and four children) and 94 wounded individuals (including 17 women and 25 children) were brought to a hospital in **Anbar**. Reportedly, most casualties were caused by shelling allegedly carried out by ISF and associated forces. UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to verify this report.

Destruction of civilian infrastructure and property

According to applicable rules of international humanitarian law, civilian infrastructure and property may not be attacked unless the anticipated military advantage to be gained outweighs the harm that the civilian population would suffer as a result of the attack. UNAMI/OHCHR has nonetheless continued to receive reports of ISF and associated forces apparently deliberately destroying civilian infrastructure or failing to take adequate precautions in the planning and execution of their operations.

According to a source, on the afternoon of 9 July, airstrikes hit a marketplace in Shoura sub-district, Mosul district, killing 11 civilians (including three women and four children aged between two and 11) and wounding 12 others. The intended target of the airstrikes was reportedly al-Ameen secondary school, which was allegedly occupied by ISIL fighters at the time of the attacks. The marketplace would have been mistakenly hit instead. UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to verify this report.

In the early morning of 13 August, a maternity and children's hospital in Nassaf village, south Fallujah, was hit by airstrikes reportedly carried out by ISF warplanes pursuing ISIL fighters. Sources confirmed the airstrikes destroyed the hospital and killed at least 22 individuals (including six women and eight children) and wounded 52 (including eight women and 17 children). A local hospital continued to receive casualties until late evening on 13 August. The spokesperson of the hospital reported that 31 individuals were killed and 39 wounded. In a public statement, the provincial council of **Anbar** called on the Defense Ministry to accept responsibility for the attack and to exert caution when targeting areas with a high civilian population.

On 2 and 3 August, Peshmerga forces allegedly destroyed civilian houses and Government buildings in Dibis district, **Kirkuk**. Using IEDs and other explosives, Peshmerga forces also allegedly destroyed civilian houses in Dor Ray Ula and Dor Ray Thania villages, Mullah-Abdullah sub-district, **Kirkuk**. Government buildings located in the city centre of the sub-district, including the City Council building and the Police Department, were also allegedly set on fire. UNAMI/OHCHR could not independently verify these alleged attacks by Peshmerga forces.

On the evening of 20 to 21 August, Turkish airstrikes hit farms in several villages in the Gara mountains, including Sapendari, Meezhi, Gargashi, Dearash, and Mehidai, in Deralok sub-district, Amedi district, in **Dohuk**. The airstrikes reportedly caused fires. During that same evening, Turkish shelling and airstrikes hit villages in Kani Masi sub-district, Amedi district, close to the Turkish border, burning farms and destroying approximately 200 honey farms. On the night of 21 to 22 August, Turkish airstrikes allegedly hit Zharga and Mar Dawa villages, in the foot of the Qandil Mountains, in Pashdar district in **Sulaymaniyah**. A PKK clinic was reportedly destroyed, with wounded PKK members inside. Six PKK were allegedly killed and an unknown number wounded.

After ISF and PMUs reclaimed areas of Baiji, **Salah al-Din**, from ISIL, on 18-19 October, PMUs allegedly destroyed and burned public and private properties. They also reportedly blew up the al-Fattah Sunni mosque and the two-storey Wadhban market in the city centre of Baiji district. After the alleged destruction of the mosque, PMUs asked Police and media to leave several areas of the

district, allegedly because of the need to defuse numerous IEDs in the area. It was further reported that many civilian houses were destroyed during the fighting between ISF and PMUs against ISIL. PMUs allegedly continued to burn houses of residents believed to be associated with ISIL. Sikek and Tal Abu Jarad areas in Baiji were reportedly completely destroyed during the fighting. Similarly, in Siniya sub-district, almost all civilian houses were reportedly destroyed after the fighting ceased. PMUs allegedly consider all the residents of the sub-district as associated with ISIL.

Violations and abuses committed by unidentified actors

UNAMI/OHCHR documented a substantial number of human rights abuses committed by unidentified perpetrators. Circumstantial factors in some cases suggested responsibility but were insufficient to warrant firm attribution.

Unidentified perpetrators caused at least 7,556 civilian casualties (2,365 killed and 5,191 wounded), which comprises 69 per cent of all casualties across Iraq during the reporting period. **Baghdad** was the worst affected governorate, with 5,843 casualties (1,670 killed and 4,173 wounded) and 92 percent of them attributed to unidentified perpetrators. Tactics tended to involve the use of a variety of IEDs, often detonated in public places or where civilians congregate, targeted killings (bombings, shootings, etc.), and abductions.

Unlawful killings

Unlawful killings continued to be recorded in significant numbers. Targeted individuals included parliamentarians, tribal and religious leaders, judges, and other public officials, as well as members of certain ethnic or religious communities, such as the Sunni Arab community in Kirkuk.

Throughout the reporting period, some members of the Sunni Arab community in **Kirkuk** were targeted by unknown gunmen. In perhaps the most high-profile case, on 20 September, unknown gunmen shot the Chief Judge of the Hawija District Court and three of his bodyguards while the judge was leaving his home in Kirkuk City centre. He was seriously wounded and later died in hospital. Other examples include the assassination of the Chairman of the Hawija District Council, on 3 September, and the killing of two Arab engineers from the North Oil Company by unknown gunmen, on 3 August and 3 September.

Other examples of killings that appear to be connected with the victim's ethnicity or religion include that of three civilians from the Sunni Arab community, who were shot and killed in different locations of Muqdadiya district, **Diyala**, on 7 September. On 5 June, a member of the Christian community was abducted from his home and killed, despite his family having paid a ransom. His body was later found in the al-Qanat area, eastern **Baghdad**. The body of another member of the Christian community, who had been abducted on 7 July, was found in the Garage Amana area, also in eastern **Baghdad**.

Persons connected with PMUs were also the victims of unidentified gunmen. In **Basra**, two civilians were shot and killed on 25 June. They were reportedly former police officers in Mosul who, after the fall of the city to ISIL, joined the *Asayib Ahl al-Haq*. On 2 August, security forces found the body of a reported *Asayib Ahl al-Haq* member in *Imam Ahmed* quarter of Tuz Khurmatu district, **Salah al-Din**. The man, who had been abducted by unidentified gunmen on 31 July and had gunshot wounds to the head, was Turkmen Shi'a.

In other cases, the possible motive for the killing was not apparent. On 29 June, the remains of three males, aged around 40, were found in the al-Gbasi area, east of **Basra**. The victims had been handcuffed and blind-folded, and died from gunshot wounds to the back and the head. On 24

August, unidentified gunmen killed the *Imam* of a mosque in Baladruz, east of Baquba, **Diyala**, while he was leaving the mosque after evening prayer.

A large number of unidentified bodies were recovered daily during the reporting period. In many cases, investigations could not reveal the identity of, or other information about, the victims. Bodies often bore gunshot wounds and were sometimes found blindfolded and/or with their hands and/or feet bound. Some also exhibited signs of ill-treatment and torture. UNAMI/OHCHR recorded 551 unidentified bodies during the reporting period, mostly in Baghdad (436). It was unable to verify a large number of other reports of killings.

While the majority of bodies recovered were those of men, the bodies of women and children were also found. Many women were among the bodies that were recovered in Baghdad on a daily basis, the victims of unidentified killers. On 29 June, for example, the bodies of two women were found in different locations in **Baghdad**, both having died of gunshot wounds. On 5 September, in northwest **Baghdad**, the bodies of two children were found, one aged seven and the other 12. The children had reportedly been abducted by unidentified gunmen.

Abductions

UNAMI/OHCHR continued to receive reports of abductions by unknown perpetrators. The whereabouts and fate of many abductees remains unknown.

Several abductions occurred in **Salah al-Din** Governorate, including on 9 July, when unidentified gunmen using two pick-up trucks abducted five civilians from Tuz Khurmatu, east of Tikrit. The abduction happened close to the headquarters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, in Tuz Khurmatu. All victims were IDPs from the Sunni community in Diyala. Also, on 4 July, unidentified gunmen abducted three truck drivers on the road between Amerli and Tuz Khurmatu, Salah al-Din. The abductees were reportedly from Sulaiman Bek area, south of Tuz Khurmatu. It was reported that a ransom was asked for their release. Similarly, on 6 July, unidentified gunmen abducted a local *Sahwa* leader in Hay al-Shurta area, Samarra city centre, Salah al-Din. According to a source, the gunmen belonged to PMUs. Also in Salah al-Din, on 27 September, an unknown military force reportedly arrested at least 28 civilians when a convoy of 20 pick-up trucks carrying masked gunmen in military uniform entered a village in Baiji district, in a pre-dawn raid. A tribal leader was physically assaulted during the incursion.

Unknown gunmen have abducted civilians from the Sunni Arab community in **Diyala**. Between 13 and 15 May, nine civilians, including the *Imam* of a Sunni mosque, were reportedly abducted from the Sunni Arab community in different locations around Diyala. One has since been released after the payment of ransom but the whereabouts of the others remain unknown.

UNAMI/OHCHR also received information regarding a spike in abductions of civilians in and around Baquba district, **Diyala**, in the wake of the suicide car bomb attacks on 10 August, near Baquba, which claimed at least 61 civilian lives. Multiple sources indicated that on 12 August, a large number of abductions targeting the Sunni Arab community took place in Baquba district. On the same day, 17-19 bodies were reportedly recovered from the Diyala River. Local sources estimated that at least 50 people have disappeared.

In **Baghdad**, on 25 May, four civilians were abducted by gunmen dressed in military uniforms at a checkpoint near the military academy, in Canal Street, eastern Baghdad. Also in Baghdad, the Acting Deputy Justice Minister, was abducted by black-clad gunmen on 9 September, in the Bunuk area, northeastern Baghdad. A senior official of the Ministry of Justice and four security guards were reportedly also abducted. All were eventually released. The perpetrators remained unknown at the time of reporting.

Bombings of civilians and civilian infrastructure and property

Terrorist attacks directly targeting civilians or conducted irrespective of their presence took place across Iraq, impacting people of all ethnic and religious communities. Shopping strips, places of worship, hotel parking lots, markets and public swimming pools were among places targeted. Where perpetrated by parties to the conflict, such targeted or indiscriminate attacks may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Improvised explosive devices

A large number of IED-related civilian casualties were recorded in **Baghdad**, where such incidents occurred on a daily basis. Examples include an attack on 2 May, using a VBIED near a crowded ice-cream shop in Karrada, central Baghdad, which killed 12 civilians and wounded more than 40, including two policemen. On 5 May, an attack using a VBIED near al-Khudhairi Sunni mosque and the headquarters of PMU *Kata'ib Imam Ali*, in Arasat area, central Baghdad, killed two civilians and wounded six. On 12 May, an individual wearing a vest of explosives targeted Shi'a pilgrims in central Baghdad, killing eight civilians and wounding 22. On the night of 28 May, an attack was carried out using a VBIED in the parking lot of the Babylon Warwick Hotel in Karrada, central Baghdad, killing eight civilians and wounding 15. A few minutes later, a VBIED was detonated in the parking lot of the Cristal Grand Ishtar Hotel, central Baghdad, killing four civilians and wounding at least six.

On 7 July, an IED attack in Arab Jbour, southern **Baghdad**, killed five Iraqi Police officers, while on 5 August two attacks employing VBIEDs occurred in different part of Sadr City, eastern Baghdad, killing at least eight civilians and wounding at least 20. On 21 July, two attacks occurred in eastern Baghdad, one using a VBIED that killed seven civilians and wounded three, and another carried out by an individual wearing an explosive vest, that killed 22 civilians and wounded 32.

Attacks using IEDs also occurred in other parts of Iraq, killing numerous civilians and injuring more. In **Diyala**, on 6 June, an attack by an individual driving a vehicle laden with explosives at a security checkpoint, at the entrance to Baladruz, near a local market, killed at least 11 civilians and ISF and wounded at least 14. On 16 June, an IED was detonated while a minibus carrying female middle school students was passing in Abu-Saida sub-district, northeast of Baquba. The driver and four students were killed and six students were wounded in the incident. On 23 June, an attack by an individual wearing an explosive vest targeted a gathering of members of the al-Nadawi Sunni tribe, in Haitham Aliwy village, Baladruz area, killing 14 of them and wounding 30. Some local media reports indicated that the attack also involved the use of a VBIED but sources contacted by UNAMI/OHCHR were not able to confirm this.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 25 July, a complex attack targeted a public swimming pool in Tuz Khurmatu district, killing eight civilians, including one child, and wounding 54, including at least five children, many of them seriously. The attacker first detonated a VBIED from a distance and once people gathered at the scene to attend to the casualties, approached the crowd and detonated an explosive belt.

On 22 October, an attack by an individual driving a vehicle laden with explosives near Shuhada'a mosque, in the Askari area of Tuz Khurmatu district, targeted a gathering of civilians commemorating Ashura, killing two (one Sunni Kurd and one Sunni Arab) and wounding 24 (Shi'a and Sunni Turkmen, Shi'a and Sunni Arabs, and Sunni Kurds). ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack on social media, also identifying the suicide attacker. On 23 October, security forces reportedly found the bodies of two males with gunshot wounds, later determined to be PMU members, reportedly killed by mistake during gunfire that occurred after the incident.

Shelling

Unattributed shelling between ISF and armed groups was another cause of civilian casualties.

In **Baghdad**, on 12 May, shelling from unidentified actors killed two civilians and wounded eight in Bob al-Sham, southwestern Baghdad. On 15 May, shelling killed one civilian and wounded five in Arab Jbour, southern Baghdad. On 30 May, shelling reportedly hit a village in the Doura areas, southern Baghdad, killing a civilian and wounding three. On 16 June, shelling reportedly hit Taji area, northern Baghdad, killing a civilian and wounding three. Reports were also received that on 19 June, shelling killed a civilian and wounded seven in Sabea al-Boor, northern Baghdad.

On 16 August, In **Salah al-Din**, shelling hit the Albu Tu'ma area south of Baiji, wounding four civilians. On 21 September, shelling reportedly hit two different areas inside al-Alam sub-district, east of Tikrit. The first incident killed one civilian and the second injured one civilian.

It was reported that on 14 May, shelling occurred on a residential area in central Ramadi, **Anbar**, killing one civilian and wounding two. UNAMI/OHCHR also received information from multiple sources that shelling killed five civilians and wounded 11 in the Khaldiya area of Anbar between 14 and 16 September.

In **Diyala**, on 20 July, shelling reportedly struck near a playground in the Sunni Arab Hided community of Hibhib sub-district, in Khalis district, west of Baquba, killing eight and wounding 20 residents of the area, including two children. Also in Diyala, on 22 July, multiple mortars struck villages on the outskirts of Khan Bani Saad sub-district, reportedly causing a number of civilian casualties. Casualty numbers reported in the media ranged from zero to three persons killed, and between six and 15 wounded. One source reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that 10 persons were killed and 20 wounded.

Mass graves

Mass graves have been discovered in areas of governorates reclaimed by ISF and associated forces from ISIL control, including in **Ninewa** and **Salah al-Din** Governorates. Mass graves from the era of Saddam Hussein were also found in **Basra** and **Kirkuk** Governorates. The Government of Iraq is attempting to conduct forensic and judicial investigations into select gravesites, despite gaps in forensic capacity. All parties to a conflict have an obligation to account for missing persons and to provide their family members with any information they have regarding their fate, as well as to mark the location of graves.

In most cases, basic information relating to graves and bodies is yet to be established. This includes when the bodies were buried, the identity of bodies (including age, sex, ethnicity, religion, and combatant status) and the circumstances in which the individuals died or were killed. The identity of perpetrators is in many cases unclear. Most graves are believed to contain the bodies of civilians and members of ISF and associated forces killed and buried by ISIL and UNAMI/OHCHR continues to follow up on these reports.

A mass grave was found by residents in western **Ninewa** towards the end of May. One report indicated that the remains of 60 people were found in a grave in Badoush, west of Mosul, and two reports stated that a grave containing the remains of 80 people was found in al-Jadaa village, western Ninewa. UNAMI/OHCHR has not been able to clarify whether these reports refer to the same grave. Some sources indicated that the grave may contain members of the Yezidi community.

On 22 June, a mass grave was reportedly discovered in al-Eiadhia area, west of Mosul, reportedly containing up to 70 bodies with identification documents. The remains were reportedly transferred for forensic examination. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify this report.

It was reported that PMUs found two mass graves containing the bodies of Iraqi soldiers near Samarra, **Salah al-Din**, on 30 June. PMUs reported that the two mass graves contained the remains of Iraqi soldiers from Camp Speicher who were killed by ISIL in June 2014 in the west of Samarra, near Muthana military compound, within Anbar Operations Sector. At the time of the discovery of

the graves, it was reported that there was ongoing coordination between the Legal Medical Institute and Ministry of Human Rights to open the graves and identify the remains.⁴⁰

On 3 October, Kurdish Security Forces discovered a mass grave between Tobzawa and Yaichy villages, southwest of **Kirkuk**. Sources indicate that the grave held between 12 and 36 bodies and was believed to contain victims of the former regime. The Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal of the Kurdistan Region Government assisted in excavating the grave and have recovered pieces of military uniforms and Kurdish-style civilian clothing, reportedly both female and male, as well as children's clothing, in the area around the grave.

A local government source informed UNAMI/OHCHR that, on 28 June, Iraqi forensic teams in **Basra** discovered a mass grave containing 377 corpses, including women and children, apparently killed during the 1991 Shi'a uprisings against Saddam Hussein in the east of Basra. The mass grave is reportedly the second largest mass grave found in southern Iraq. The first stage of exhuming the bodies has begun.

Conclusions and recommendations

The impact of the ongoing conflict and acts of terrorism on civilians remains severe and extensive. Since January 2014, acts of violence have killed or wounded tens of thousands of civilians and have displaced over 3 million Iraqis.

Many displaced persons are living in under-resourced locations in poor conditions, and are subject to violence and abuse. Some have faced Government restrictions on their ability to access safe areas. Blanket restrictions have also been imposed within areas of displacement. Many IDPs have experienced threats, harassment and intimidation, including being rounded up in police raids and arbitrarily arrested by security forces on mere suspicion of terrorism or other seemingly spurious pretext. Those who have returned to their areas of origin, as territory is retaken from ISIL, are encountering continuing insecurity, large-scale destruction of civilian infrastructure, severely limited access to basic services, booby-traps and explosive remnants of war, and threats and intimidation at the hands of Government-associated militia.

⁴⁰ On 11 July, a new 23-minute video was released by ISIL containing images, including some previously released sequences, depicting the June 2014 fall of Tikrit City and massacre of captured predominately Shi'a ISF near Camp Speicher military base on 14 June. The video shows scenes from several now well-known locations in the area around the base and in Tikrit city, including within the Presidential Palaces complex. Several of these locations have been the focus of ongoing exhumation processes. The narration of the video often refers to captured soldiers as "cattle" of the "army of the rejecters". It contains several images of men crowded into the back of large trucks, other previously released images show men in civilian clothing being led in a single file, bent over, with their arms on the shoulders of the man in front or tied together. Several scenes depict men tied up and lying on the ground, sometimes in what appear to be pre-dug shallow graves. Multiple shots show prisoners pleading for their lives. Several lengthy, graphic depictions of executions are shown, including multiple armed men shooting at large groups of men lying on the ground. Hundreds of men in civilian clothing are shown lying in a field, dead, with their hands tied behind their backs. The video also shows previous widely viewed images of men in civilian clothing being held on a concrete ledge on the side of the Tigris River, shot and then pushed into the water. Images of multiple bodies floating in red water are shown. At the end of the video, a bulldozer is also shown at night moving piles of bodies. Throughout the video most perpetrators have their faces covered. At the time of reporting, links to the video had been removed from known sites. The video's release occurred just four days subsequent to the sentencing of 24 men to death by the Iraqi Central Criminal Court in connection with the Speicher massacre. The trial lasted four hours and allegations have arisen that confessions put in evidence were obtained under duress. On 22 June the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights issued a statement that 1,697 were missing from the events surrounding the Camp Speicher massacre. On 2 June, the Ministry of Human Rights announced that forensic teams working in the area of the Presidential Palaces in Tikrit had recovered 597 bodies in connection with the massacre.

UNAMI/OHCHR is extremely concerned by the situation of civilians in areas under ISIL control. ISIL continues to deliberately target ethnic and religious communities through a range of abuses and crimes as part of its policy of suppression, expulsion or elimination of those communities, and to employ sexual violence as a tactic of war. Of particular concern are the potentially thousands of Yazidi women and children (and those from some other ethnic and religious communities) who remain in ISIL captivity.

Individuals associated with the Government of Iraq, including former candidates for public office, employees and former employees of IHEC and other institutions, and those suspected of passing information to Government and associated forces, were frequently targeted by ISIL. This was especially prevalent in **Ninewa** governorate.

ISIL continues to punish and kill individuals who refuse to abide by its code of behaviour or whom it perceives are opposed to its ideology. Journalists and homosexuals were targeted for killing; journalists were shot, those accused of being homosexual were thrown from the tops of buildings. Many cases involved killings following hearings by ISIL self-appointed courts.

ISIL continues to deliberately target civilians and civilian infrastructure in its campaign of violence and terrorism and employed tactics, such as IEDs and possibly other methods, which were used indiscriminately or directly targeting civilians.

ISIL has also killed members of its own group who have refused to fight and captured members of Government and associated forces.

These acts constitute violations of Iraqi and international law, and may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and possibly genocide.

ISF and associated forces continue to carry out military operations, including airstrikes, that at times may have violated the principles of distinction and proportionality, or may have been carried out irrespective of the obligation to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effects of attacks. The extent of the Government's command and control over associated forces remains unclear. Some associated forces have reportedly conducted attacks and reprisals against civilians from communities perceived to support ISIL.

Iraqi civilians also continue to be killed and wounded, and infrastructure damaged and destroyed, in acts of violence and terrorism perpetrated by unidentified perpetrators.

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

To all parties to the conflict:

1. All parties to the ongoing non-international armed conflict must strictly comply with applicable international humanitarian law and respect international human rights law. They must take all feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effects of hostilities, and take all necessary measures to respect, protect and meet the basic needs of the civilian population, in particular women and children.
2. All acts of violence or abuse committed against civilians in violation of applicable international humanitarian law and human rights law must cease immediately.
3. All parties to the armed conflict and other relevant actors must refrain from, and take the necessary measures to prevent and respond to, the displacement of the civilian population, including by allowing safe passage and providing safety guarantees for humanitarian actors to reach displaced populations and populations affected by the conflict, and to ensure durable solutions for all displaced populations.

4. All parties must ensure that civilians are protected, that they have unhindered access to medical facilities and humanitarian assistance, and that they are able to leave areas affected by violence safely and with dignity.

5. All parties must agree to and facilitate relief operations that are humanitarian and impartial in character, and to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of relief consignments, equipment and personnel. They should also respect and protect humanitarian workers and facilities.

To the Government of Iraq:

1. Ensure that all associated armed forces fighting against ISIL are operating under the Government's command and control, and ensure accountability for their actions.

2. Ensure that all civilians displaced from their homes are admitted, without undue hindrance, to areas of safety where they can access basic humanitarian services.

3. ISF and associated forces must take steps to ensure full compliance with the principles of distinction and proportionality and the obligation to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians when carrying out military operations.

4. Ensure that arrests of individuals in connection with the ongoing conflict are carried out on legal grounds only and supported by credible and sufficient evidence, and that all due process rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Iraq and international law are fully respected.

5. Ensure that, as soon as practicably possible after liberation of areas from ISIL control, responsibility for law and order is restored to civilian control, and that measures are taken to ensure the human rights and basic humanitarian needs of civilians residing in those areas or voluntarily returning are met.

6. Ensure that survivors of human rights violations, particularly of sexual and gender-based violence, receive adequate support, including psycho-social support and medical care.

7. Ensure the protection of mass graves, along with appropriate care and measures to excavate such sites and exhume and identify the mortal remains, and to preserve evidence of crimes committed; including any that may lead to the identification of perpetrators. Conduct independent, public coronial inquiries into each mass grave, to identify the victims, collect evidence of wrongdoing, and fully investigate and determine the circumstances that led to the deaths of the individuals concerned; ensure that family members of victims and missing persons are provided with all available information and adequate and timely financial, material and other assistance.

8. Investigate effectively, promptly, thoroughly, and impartially any allegations of violations or abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law and, where appropriate, prosecute those who are responsible for such acts. Ensure that the findings of such investigations are made public.

9. Ensure the rights of all victims or their relatives to an effective remedy, including the right to equal and effective access to justice and adequate, effective, and prompt reparation for the harm suffered.

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

11. Accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As an immediate step, accept the exercise of the Court's jurisdiction with respect to the specific situation faced by the country, pursuant to Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute.

To the international community:

12. The international community, including the United Nations Security Council and the Human Rights Council, should continue to closely follow the situation in Iraq with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of gross violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law are held accountable.

13. The international community should provide all material and other support necessary to assist the Government of Iraq address the security and humanitarian needs of persons displaced by the ongoing armed conflict and those returning to their homes in full compliance with humanitarian principles.

14. Provide the Government of Iraq with all necessary assistance in its identification, excavation, and investigation of mass graves.

Annex 1: Glossary

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

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