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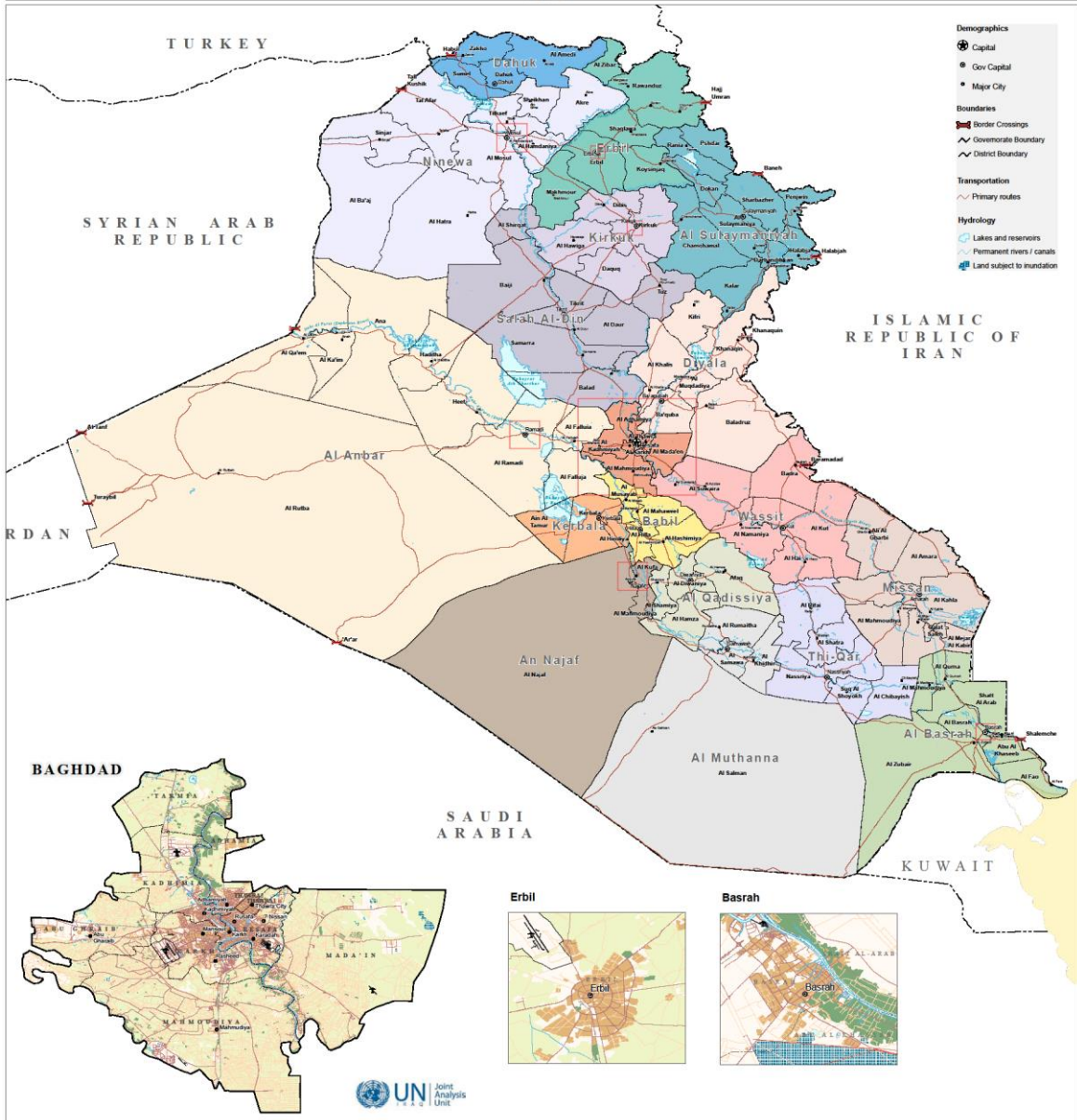
UNAMI  
United Nations Assistance Mission  
for Iraq – Human Rights Office



# Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 11 December 2014 – 30 April 2015



IRAQ - Reference Map  
Jan 2016





*“The United Nations has serious concerns about the thousands of civilians, including women and children, who remain captive by ISIL or remain in areas under the control of ISIL or where armed conflict is taking place. I am particularly concerned about the toll that acts of terrorism continue to take on ordinary Iraqi people. Iraq, and the international community must do more to ensure that the victims of these violations are given appropriate care and protection - and that any individual who has perpetrated crimes or violations is held accountable according to law.”*

– Mr. Ján Kubiš

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Iraq, 12 June 2015, Baghdad

*“Civilians continue to be the primary victims of the ongoing armed conflict in Iraq - and are being subjected to human rights violations and abuses on a daily basis, particularly at the hands of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Ensuring accountability for these crimes and violations will be paramount if the Government is to ensure justice for the victims and is to restore trust between communities. It is also important to send a clear message that crimes such as these will not go unpunished”*

- Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 12 June 2015, Geneva



# Contents

<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Legal framework</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Impact of the conflict on civilians</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Civilian casualties .....	6
Conflict-related displacement of civilians .....	7
<b>Violations and abuses committed by ISIL</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Killings and abductions .....	10
Conduct of operations .....	15
Attacks against ethnic and religious communities .....	19
Attacks on women and children .....	21
Denial of fundamental rights and freedoms .....	23
<b>Violations and abuses committed by Iraqi security forces and associated forces</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Government restrictions .....	25
Unlawful killings .....	26
Abductions .....	27
Attacks against ethnic and religious communities .....	27
Conduct of operations .....	28
<b>Violations and abuses committed by unidentified actors</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Unlawful killings .....	30
Abductions .....	31
Bombings of civilians and civilian infrastructure and property .....	32
<b>Mass graves</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>Annex 1: Report on the Camp Speicher incident</b> .....	<b>37</b>
Methodology .....	37
Background .....	37
12 June 2014 massacre .....	37
Demands for truth and justice by relatives .....	39
Response by Iraq authorities .....	39
Mass graves .....	40
Conclusions .....	40
<b>Annex 2: Glossary</b> .....	<b>42</b>





## 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 11 December 2014 to 30 April 2015.*

*The on-going non-international armed conflict in Iraq continues to take a terrible toll on civilians. From 1 January 2014 through to the end of April 2015, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded at least 44,136 civilian casualties (14,947 killed and 29,189 wounded) in the armed conflict in Iraq. During the reporting period, 11 December 2014 to 30 April 2015, a minimum of 10,768 civilian casualties resulted from the ongoing violence, including at least 3,345 persons killed and 7,423 wounded. Baghdad was the worst affected governorate, with a minimum of 5,724 civilian casualties (1,586 killed and 4,138 wounded) followed by Anbar and Diyala governorates.*

*The hostilities continue to cause massive displacement of civilians. From January 2014 through 25 April 2015, a total of 2,834,676 persons had become internally displaced in Iraq, including an estimated 1.3 million children. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) continues to host a large number of IDPs, with 38 per cent of the total. In the rest of Iraq, **Dohuk governorate** hosts the largest number of IDPs, with 452,496, followed by **Anbar** with 422,586, **Baghdad** with 412,200, and **Kirkuk** with 375,120. IDPs have largely settled in private settings. However, 27 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 eight per cent of IDPs are residing in camps.*

*UNAMI/OHCHR continued to receive reports of the so-called “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL) committing violations of international humanitarian law and gross human rights violations and abuses, with an apparent systematic and widespread character. In some instances, these may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and possibly genocide.*

*In areas under its control, ISIL has directly attacked civilians and civilian objects. Certain groups of civilians have been particularly targeted. Those affiliated with or perceived to be affiliated with the Iraqi Government or security forces have been systematically killed by the group, and many have been kidnapped and subjected to other forms of ill-treatment. Professionals, including journalists and doctors, have come under attack. Those who are perceived to question ISIL authority or refuse to align themselves with the group are punished and often killed. Civilians continued to be murdered, often in grim public spectacles, and were subjected to ill-treatment (including amputations and executions) subsequent to decisions of ISIL self-appointed courts.*

*Members of Iraq’s diverse ethnic and religious communities continued to suffer from a range of violations at ISIL hands. These groups, including Christians, Faily Kurds, Kaka’e, Sabaeans, Shabak, Shi’a Arabs, Turkmen, Yezidi and others, have been systematically persecuted. These acts appear to form part of an on-going policy that aims to suppress, permanently expel, or destroy many of these communities within ISIL areas of control. Women and children have also been specifically targeted. UNAMI/OHCHR continues to receive reports of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated against women, girls and boys, as well as the recruitment and use of children in military operations. ISIL and associated armed groups also murdered captured soldiers and other security forces or government personnel.*

*As many as 3,000 to 3,500 men, women, and children remain in ISIL captivity predominantly from the Yezidi community but also from other ethnic and religious communities, where they are subjected to physical, sexual and other forms of violence and degrading treatment on a daily basis. UNAMI and OHCHR have grave fears for the safety and security of these individuals. Those who have managed to reach areas of safety consistently reported lack of basic necessities, such as food and sanitary items, and alleged that they were subjected to forced labour, forced religious conversions, ill-treatment,*

*murder, and physical and sexual violence including sexual slavery and the trafficking of women and children.*

*In its conduct of operations, ISIL continues its campaign of destruction of civilian objects and places of cultural or religious significance. Reports were received that ISIL had used chlorine gas in attacks in a number of places, such as in Duloeiyah and Tikrit, however, these claims could not be verified by UNAMI/OHCHR.*

*UNAMI/OHCHR also received some reports alleging violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations or abuses committed by ISF and affiliated armed groups that occurred during the reporting period. These included air strikes, shelling and conduct of particular military operations or attacks that may have violated the principles of distinction and proportionality under international humanitarian law. Armed groups affiliated to or supporting the Government also carried out targeted killings, including of captured fighters from ISIL and its associated armed groups, abductions of civilians, and destruction of property.*

*In a number of cases, it has been impossible to identify the perpetrators of violations and abuses committed during the reporting period. These included instances of murder, intimidation and threats, abductions, and the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Vehicle-born Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) and suicide bombers to target civilians or civilian infrastructure.*

*There are serious concerns for the protection and welfare of members of groups at-risk, in particular those displaced or living in areas under ISIL control or areas affected by violence. Of main concern are women, female-headed households, children, people with disabilities, the elderly, and members of diverse ethnic, cultural or religious groups.*

*Parties to the conflict must take steps to ensure the protection and care of the most vulnerable among the civilian population, and are required to prevent violations and abuses from taking place. The Government of Iraq is required to hold alleged perpetrators of serious violations and abuses to account, in particular those that amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. In order to ensure accountability, UNAMI/HRO strongly urges the Government of Iraq to consider legislative amendments to grant Iraqi courts jurisdiction over crimes under international law (war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide) no matter where or by whom those crimes are committed, and that it consider becoming a party to the Statute of the International Criminal Court or referring the current situation in Iraq to the International criminal Court under article 12 of the Court's Statute.*

*UNAMI/HRO also recommends that the Government of Iraq must do all it can to stabilise areas recently liberated from ISIL by ensuring the restoration for security to civilian authorities from those areas and to facilitate the restoration and provision of basic services to ensure the safety, security and well-being of residents of those areas and to ensure that any displaced persons an return to their homes in safety and dignity.*

## 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 High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), under their respective mandates.<sup>1</sup>

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

The report covers the period of 11 December 2014 to 30 April 2015.<sup>3</sup>

## 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 victims, survivors, and witnesses of incidents.<sup>4</sup> Information was also obtained from a variety of sources,<sup>5</sup> including from Government and non-government agencies and organisations, and UN entities. Unless specifically stated, all information presented in this report has been cross-checked or verified using independent, credible, and reliable sources.

The security situation in Iraq has negatively impacted on the capacity of UNAMI/OHCHR to undertake direct monitoring and verification of incidents in many parts 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.

The lack of direct access, combined with difficulties in identifying credible sources, has made the documentation and verification of incidents and their impact on civilians challenging. As a result, the actual numbers of civilian casualties could be much higher than recorded. Reports that have not been verified have not been included. Examples of violations and abuses cited are emblematic but

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<sup>1</sup> In resolution 1770 of 10 August 2006, the United Nations Security Council, at paragraph 2(c) specifically requested UNAMI to “promote the protection of human rights and judicial and legal reform in order to strengthen the rule of law in Iraq;...” UNAMI mandate was extended in the same terms for 2014/2015 by Security Council resolution 2169 of 30 July 2014. 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 violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

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

<sup>3</sup> There is a ten-day overlap between this report and the previous report (11 September to 10 December 2014).

<sup>4</sup> As of 30 April 2015, UNAMI had conducted 702 interviews with IDPs in areas where they have concentrated. UNAMI has 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/witnesses of human rights violations, civilians who remain trapped in ISIL-controlled areas or who have fled to other areas of Iraq.

<sup>5</sup> These include Government officials and institutions, local and international media, local non-governmental organizations, civil society actors, human rights defenders, tribal leaders, religious leaders, political figures, and UN entities operating in Iraq.

do not present a comprehensive account of all violations that were reported to UNAMI/OHCHR and verified.

## Background

During December 2014 military operations continued against ISIL, with Iraqi security forces, including the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KR-I) *peshmerga*, supported by Popular Mobilization Units (PMU - *al-Hashid il-Shaabi*), other militia, tribal fighters and the international community, continuing to reclaim territory from ISIL.<sup>6</sup>

On 17 December, KR-I *Peshmerga* forces began an offensive to break ISIL siege of Mount Sinjar, **Ninewa** governorate. Backed by the international coalition forces' airstrikes, they managed to open a corridor to allow many of the civilians (who were mostly from the Yezidi community) trapped on the mountain to leave.<sup>7</sup>

On 20 to 21 December, *Peshmerga* and Kurdish Syrian forces (*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel* (YPG)) captured Sinjar town, **Ninewa** governorate.<sup>8</sup> In late December, *Peshmerga* launched a ground offensive to drive ISIL out of Gwer, **Erbil** governorate, and several villages were liberated. ISIL counter-attacked on 9 January, inflicting heavy losses on the *Peshmerga*, with at least 24 killed in the surprise attack.<sup>9</sup> After being repelled, ISIL launched another attack on the evening of 18 February. An estimated two hundred ISIL fighters attacked *Peshmerga* positions in Makhmor and Gwer, threatening to overrun defensive positions. However, the following day, with international coalition air support, the *Peshmerga* managed to repel ISIL attack.<sup>10</sup>

Near the end of December, ISF and associated forces, including PMU and allied militia, made gains in **Salah al-Din** governorate, taking Yathrib and Ishaqi sub-districts. The part of Dhuloeiya that had been under ISIL control since mid-June 2014 was also liberated.<sup>11</sup>

From the beginning of January 2015, *Peshmerga* continued fighting with ISIL around the border between **Ninewa** and **Erbil** governorates, managing to liberate the strategically located village of Sultan Abdallah.<sup>12</sup> On 9 March, *Peshmerga* attacked ISIL positions around the city of Kirkuk, backed by coalition air strikes. The *Peshmerga* recaptured about a dozen villages during the offensive as

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<sup>6</sup> For background prior to 1 December 2014, 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](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI_OHCHR_POC%20Report_FINAL_18July2014A.pdf)> and UNAMI/OHCHR, *Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 6 July – 10 September 2014* (26 September 2014) available online<[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI\\_OHCHR\\_POC\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_6July\\_10September2014.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI_OHCHR_POC_Report_FINAL_6July_10September2014.pdf)>; and UNAMI/OHCHR, *Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 11 September – 10 December 2014* (23 February 2015) available online <[http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=164&Itemid=650&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=164&Itemid=650&lang=en)>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30539170> (accessed 19 December 2014).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30569313> (accessed 22 December 2014).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/11/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kurds-idUSKBN0KK0CX20150111> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-31524867>; <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/17/middleeast/iraq-irbil-isis-assault/> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/29/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN0K715F20141229>, 29 December 2014 (accessed 3 January 2015); <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30632134>, 30 December 2014 (accessed 3 January 2015).

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2015/01/iraq-kurds-peshmerga-isil-2015128312941571.html>, 2 January (accessed 3 January 2015).

they faced little resistance from ISIL, whose forces were split in the attempt to hold Tikrit from advancing Government and militia forces.<sup>13</sup>

On 12 February, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2199 (2015) aimed at preventing the financing of ISIL and other terrorist groups, and directing Member States to prevent trade in oil and the flow of funds from private individuals. The Security Council also directed Member States to prevent the sale of cultural property looted by ISIL and other terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria, and to exert efforts to prevent ISIL from benefitting from ransom payments or from making political concessions to secure the safe release of hostages.<sup>14</sup>

Despite some territorial advances by Government and Government affiliated forces, ISIL resisted strongly, launching major attacks in both **Anbar** and **Salah al-Din** governorates. In mid-February, ISIL captured the town of al-Baghdadi, **Anbar**, around 12 kilometers from the Ain al-Asad air base where a large number of U.S. military advisers and trainers were reportedly located. Until its fall on 13 February, al-Baghdadi was one of the few towns in western Anbar still held by the Iraqi Government.<sup>15</sup> By late February, ISF had retaken most of the town, with ISIL fully driven out by 7 March.<sup>16</sup>

March saw the initiation of a campaign by ISF and associated forces to retake Tikrit, **Salah al-Din**, from ISIL, which had held the town since June 2014. Military operations commenced on 2 March with an assault by about 30,000 ISF, PMU, allied militia, and Sunni tribal fighters. As operations commenced, Prime Minister al-Abadi promised amnesty to local residents forced to join ISIL if they surrendered to the Government.<sup>17</sup> Booby-traps, roadside bombs, and snipers impeded ISF and associated forces in taking the town. Although it was reported that by 13 March there were only a few hundred ISIL fighters holding out in the city,<sup>18</sup> the offensive ground to a halt on 14 March, ostensibly to await reinforcements and to allow civilians to leave the city.<sup>19</sup> However, media reported that the offensive had stalled due to heavy casualties suffered by ISF and affiliated forces.<sup>20</sup> On 16 March, senior government officials requested air support from international coalition forces,<sup>21</sup> which commenced on 25 March,<sup>22</sup> reportedly leading to the withdrawal of some Shi'a militia groups in protest.<sup>23</sup> The ground offensive restarted on 27 March and Prime Minister al-Abadi announced the

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/09/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-kirkuk-idUSKBN0M50JY20150309> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Security Council Resolution 2199 (2015), S/RES/2199 (2015).

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31449976> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31773357>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/iraqi-forces-retake-al-baghdadi-isil-150307050409010.html>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/08/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN0M40LZ20150308> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/03/world/middleeast/iraq-tikrit-isis.html?ref=world&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/03/world/middleeast/iraq-tikrit-isis.html?ref=world&_r=1) (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/iraqi-forces-advance-isil-held-tikrit-150308054623411.html>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31822701> (accessed 9 May 2015); [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/in-battle-against-is-iraqi-forces-retake-town-near-tikrit/2015/03/10/5dd2c83c-c713-11e4-bea5-b893e7ac3fb3\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/in-battle-against-is-iraqi-forces-retake-town-near-tikrit/2015/03/10/5dd2c83c-c713-11e4-bea5-b893e7ac3fb3_story.html) (accessed 10 March); <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/iraqi-forces-pound-isil-targets-tikrit-150313124030099.html> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/iraqi-forces-recapture-tikrit-72-hours-150314101959153.html> (accessed 9 May 2015); [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/17/world/middleeast/islamic-state-tikrit-iraq-offensive.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/17/world/middleeast/islamic-state-tikrit-iraq-offensive.html?_r=0) (accessed 17 March 2015).

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/iraqi-offensive-for-tikrit-stalls-as-islamic-state-inflicts-casualties/2015/03/16/258a6dec-cb58-11e4-8730-4f473416e759\\_story.html%20-%2017%20March%202015](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/iraqi-offensive-for-tikrit-stalls-as-islamic-state-inflicts-casualties/2015/03/16/258a6dec-cb58-11e4-8730-4f473416e759_story.html%20-%2017%20March%202015) (accessed 17 March 2015).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/16/idUSL6NOWI0YA20150316> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2015/03/led-coalition-pounds-isil-targets-tikrit-150326022916415.html>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-32035340> (accessed 26 March 2015).

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/tikrit-offensive-isil-150327200838026.html>; [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/iraqi-army-weighs-cost-of-us-led-strikes-in-tikrit-as-militiamen-leave/2015/03/29/83d5204a-d62a-11e4-bf0b-f648b95a6488\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/iraqi-army-weighs-cost-of-us-led-strikes-in-tikrit-as-militiamen-leave/2015/03/29/83d5204a-d62a-11e4-bf0b-f648b95a6488_story.html) (accessed 9 May 2015).

liberation of Tikrit on social media on 31 March, although pockets of fighting were still ongoing.<sup>24</sup> In the days that followed, it was alleged that a number of shops and houses were looted and burned, reportedly by militia members who had targeted property belonging to former commanders of the Iraqi Army under Saddam Hussein.<sup>25</sup>

On 19 March, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights presented to the Human Rights Council the findings of the Investigation mission that was dispatched to Iraq pursuant to the Human Rights Council resolution S-22/1 of 1 September 2014.<sup>26</sup> Based on first hand witness accounts and other evidence, the report concluded that members of ISIL may have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, and highlighted violations, including killings, torture and abductions, allegedly carried out by ISF and associated forces.<sup>27</sup> In a visit to Baghdad on 30 March, the United Nations Secretary-General expressed his extreme concern about the security crisis in Iraq and its impact on civilians and urged the Government to do all it could to ensure the accountability of perpetrators of human rights violations or abuses<sup>28</sup> while also encouraging ongoing national reconciliation efforts. In meetings with President Masum, Prime Minister al-Abadi, Foreign Minister al-Jaafari, Speaker of the Council of Representatives al-Jabouri and President Barzani of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the Secretary-General reiterated the continuing and full support of the United Nations for the advancement of peace, development, humanitarian assistance and human rights in Iraq.<sup>29</sup>

On 7 April the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution requiring all ministries and State institutions to treat the Popular Mobilization Commission as a formal institution linked to the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

On 13 April, ISIL launched a complex attack<sup>30</sup> on Iraq's largest refinery in Baiji, **Salah al-Din**, surrounding the complex and setting fire to three oil storage tanks. Fighting between ISIL and ISF inside the refinery was reported on 15 April.<sup>31</sup> The facility is strategically important, accounting for more than a quarter of Iraq's oil refining capacity, and has been the subject of ongoing fighting, notably from the time it was partially taken by ISIL in June 2014 until it was retaken by ISF in November 2014.<sup>32</sup> Although the Iraqi Government and coalition partners reportedly regained full control of the refinery on 19 April,<sup>33</sup> clashes were continuing around the refinery at the time of writing.

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<sup>24</sup> [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/syrian-media-islamic-state-attacks-government-held-village/2015/03/31/fa96ab5e-d78d-11e4-bf0b-f648b95a6488\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/syrian-media-islamic-state-attacks-government-held-village/2015/03/31/fa96ab5e-d78d-11e4-bf0b-f648b95a6488_story.html) - Reuters:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/31/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-tikrit-idUSKBN0MR1G420150331> (accessed 1 April)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/03/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-tikrit-special-re-idUSKBN0MU1DP20150403> (accessed 9 May 2015)

<sup>26</sup> 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 (A/HRC/28/18)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15720&LangID=E%20-%20sthash.pTAPap7A.dpuf> (accessed 10 May 2015).

<sup>28</sup> Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 'Remarks to the press in Baghdad, Iraq', 30 March 2015, [http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments\\_full.asp?statID=2555#.VSfNlxaabds](http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments_full.asp?statID=2555#.VSfNlxaabds) (accessed 10 May 2015).

<sup>29</sup> Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 'Remarks to the press in Baghdad, Iraq', 30 March 2015, [http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments\\_full.asp?statID=2555#.VSfNlxaabds](http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments_full.asp?statID=2555#.VSfNlxaabds) (accessed 10 May 2015).

<sup>30</sup> A complex attack is a deliberate and coordinated attack that includes a suicide device, more than one attacker, and more than one tactic (for instance, a SVBIED and small arms fire). All three elements must be present for an attack to constitute a complex attack.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/16/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-idUSKBN0N72H920150416> (accessed 5 May 2015).

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/13/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-refinery-idUSKBN0N414W20150413> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>33</sup> <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/4/19/iraq-government-said-to-have-retaken-baiji-refinery-from-ISIL.html> (accessed 9 May 2015).

On 9 April, the Iraqi Government began military operations against ISIL in Anbar; the next day, ISIL launched an attack on Ramadi district on multiple fronts.<sup>34</sup> By 15 April, ISIL had overrun several towns on the edge of Ramadi;<sup>35</sup> and by 28 April, over 100,000 people had fled from the city from fear of ISIL and on-going fighting between ISIL and Government forces.<sup>36</sup> Large numbers of IDPs made their way towards Baghdad, Karbala and Babil governorates, although many were denied entry unless they had a sponsor resident in those governorates – and there were reports that some families were only being admitted if the adult men agreed to join the PMU.

Reports also emerged in mid-April that Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, a former Vice President under Saddam Hussein and associated with the “Naqshbandi Order”<sup>37</sup> armed group, was killed during hostilities in **Salah al-Din**. The Shi’a militia *Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq* claimed responsibility. Al-Douri was considered to be the highest-profile official from the former regime to have evaded capture subsequent to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and he is believed to have played a key role in ISIL advance in June 2014.<sup>38</sup>

By the end of April, conflict was on-going throughout parts of **Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk** and **Diyala** governorates. Other instances of violence and acts of terrorism continued to take place in **Baghdad** and other areas of the country not directly affected by ongoing hostilities.

## Legal framework

The international legal framework applicable to the non-international armed conflict in Iraq comprises international humanitarian law and international human rights law.<sup>39</sup>

International law requires that all parties to the conflict in Iraq (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 minimise, 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 from taking place.

Nothing in international law bestows immunity from prosecution on non-state actors participating in a non-international armed conflict or for any crimes or violations they may commit. 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

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<sup>34</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/10/middleeast/iraq-isis/> (accessed 14 April 2015); <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-32284356> (accessed 14 April 2015); [http://www.todayszaman.com/latest-news\\_isil-attacks-iraqi-provincial-capital\\_377695.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/latest-news_isil-attacks-iraqi-provincial-capital_377695.html) (accessed 15 April 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Reinforcements of local security forces reportedly temporarily improved the situation, but by 16 May, the city had fallen to ISIL, sparking another wave of displacement. See online <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/15/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-anbar-idUSKBN0N611G20150415> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/police-personnel-residents-return-to-iraqi-city-of-ramadi-as-panic-subsides/2015/04/22/6f8e7b44-e8f0-11e4-8581-633c536add4b\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/police-personnel-residents-return-to-iraqi-city-of-ramadi-as-panic-subsides/2015/04/22/6f8e7b44-e8f0-11e4-8581-633c536add4b_story.html) (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>37</sup> *Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqa al-Naqshbandia*

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32347036>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/20/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-douri-idUSKBN0NB1OF20150420> (accessed 9 May 2015).

<sup>39</sup> 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.

genocide, irrespective of who the perpetrators may be. The Government of Iraq must also ensure that all armed groups engaged in hostilities in support of its forces<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup>

## Impact of the conflict on civilians

### Civilian casualties

From 1 January 2014 through to the end of April 2015, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded at least 44,136 civilian casualties (14,947 killed and 29,189 wounded) as a result of the non-international armed conflict in Iraq.<sup>42</sup>

During the period covered by this report, 11 December 2014 to 30 April 2015, a minimum of 10,768 civilian casualties resulted from the ongoing violence, including at least 3,345 persons killed and 7,423 wounded.

**Baghdad** was the worst affected governorate, with a minimum of 5,724 civilian casualties (1,586 killed and 4,138 wounded). **Anbar** governorate followed with 3,360 civilian casualties (765 killed and 2,595 wounded), while **Diyala** governorate recorded the third highest number of civilian casualties with 608 (317 killed and 291 wounded).<sup>43</sup>

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 5,403 civilian casualties (1,167 killed and 4,236 wounded). This amounted to half of all verified casualties.<sup>44</sup>

As noted, the actual number of civilian casualties could be much higher than recorded. Additionally, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of violence, such as lack of access

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<sup>40</sup> Namely, the *al-Hashid al-Sha'bi*, known in English as the People's Mobilization Units. Following the seizure of territories by ISIL from 5 June 2014 and the collapse of the 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 regularising PMU to fight against ISIL.

<sup>41</sup> 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](http://uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&task=download&id=499_d31007c69700e48cf0446cfaf85c3e48&itemid=6088&lang=en)>.

<sup>42</sup> Monthly civilian casualty figures in this report consist of civilians, including civilian police officers, and include civilian casualties from Anbar Governorate. 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 real number of casualties in those areas due to the increased volatility of the situation on the ground and the disruption of services. In some cases, UNAMI could only partially verify certain incidents.

<sup>43</sup> The remaining casualties in descending order were recorded in Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Kirkuk, Basra, Babil, Karbala, Erbil, Maysan, Wasit, Dhi-Qar, and Najaf governorates. As stated above, figures for casualties from Anbar Governorate are provided by the Anbar Health Directorate.

<sup>44</sup> The remaining 5,365 civilian casualties were attributed to airstrikes, shelling, small arms fire, burning, beheading, knife attacks, unexploded ordnance, and other means.



to basic food, water, or medicine is unknown. Children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and elderly people were particularly vulnerable.

## Conflict-related displacement of civilians

The on-going hostilities in Iraq continue to cause massive displacement of civilians. From January 2014 through 25 April 2015, a total of 2,834,676 persons had become internally displaced in Iraq,<sup>45</sup> including an estimated 1.3 million children.<sup>46</sup>

The governorates with the highest number of IDPs are **Ninewa** and **Anbar**, with 1,047,789 and 901,560 displaced, respectively. **Salah al-Din governorate** has seen 435,900 people displaced. These figures include people displaced within their own governorates as well as to other areas of the country.<sup>47</sup>

The KR-I continues to host a large number of IDPs, with 38 per cent of the total. In the rest of Iraq, **Dohuk** governorate hosts the largest number of IDPs, with 452,496, followed by **Anbar** with 422,586, **Baghdad** with 412,200, and **Kirkuk** with 375,120. IDPs have largely settled in private settings, such as rental housing and other paid accommodation, representing 65 per cent of those displaced. However, 27 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 eight per cent of IDPs are residing in camps.<sup>48</sup> Nearly 90 per cent of those displaced have expressed a desire to return to their areas of origin.<sup>49</sup>

While the largest displacement occurred from June to August 2014,<sup>50</sup> displacement continues across several areas of Iraq due to armed conflict and insecurity. For instance, on 10 January, another wave of displacement took place from Makhmor district, **Erbil** governorate, and Qayara sub-district, **Ninewa**, to Debaga, **Erbil**, following hostilities. Approximately 700 families settled in and around a mosque, an abandoned farm, and a ceremony hall, and at time of writing remain in need of food, water, sanitation and hygiene assistance.<sup>51</sup> In early to mid-January 2015, over 340 families displaced by fighting in **Salah al-Din** arrived in the Arbat IDP Camp in **Sulaymaniyah** governorate.<sup>52</sup>

On 2 March, ISF began military operations to retake Tikrit, **Salah al-Din**, from ISIL, which had held the town since June 2014. Thousands of families fled to Samarra city where up to 4,000 families were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>53</sup>

During April, thousands of people started to flee hostilities in and around Ramadi, **Anbar**, resulting in the displacement of over 100,000 people by 28 April.<sup>54</sup> Significant restrictions on the movement on those fleeing Ramadi were reported, with thousands of people queuing at checkpoints to enter Baghdad, only being permitted to pass if sponsored by a resident of Baghdad.<sup>55</sup> Elsewhere, men between 18 and 50 years of age were denied entry into **Babil** governorate, while other IDPs required sponsorship to enter. In **al-Qadisiya** governorate, males older than 18, were reportedly not

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<sup>45</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM) DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX | DTM, Round XIX – April 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 41 (22 – 28 April 2015), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

<sup>47</sup> IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX | DTM, Round XIX – April 2015.

<sup>48</sup> IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX | DTM, Round XIX – April 2015.

<sup>49</sup> IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX | DTM, Round XVIII – April 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Over 1.5 million people fled their homes during this period. IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX | DTM, Round XIX – April 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 29 (24 – 30 January 2015), OCHA; Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 27 (10 – 16 January 2015), OCHA.

<sup>52</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 27 (10 – 16 January 2015), OCHA.

<sup>53</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 34 (28 – 6 March 2015), OCHA.

<sup>54</sup> OCHA Flash Update, Iraq Crisis - Anbar Displacement, No. 8 | 30 April 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Iraq CRISIS, Situation Report No. 40 (15 – 21 April 2015), OCHA.

permitted to enter. No new IDPs were permitted to enter **Najaf** or **Wassit** governorates.<sup>56</sup> On 15-16 April, around 1,000 families who had left the Ramadi area were reportedly stopped in the area between Habanya and Amyriat al-Fallujah, eastern **Anbar**, by ISIL.

Widespread displacement has heavily impacted host communities, with tensions between host communities, IDPs, and refugees increasing. For instance, local media reported growing resentment towards IDPs amongst host communities in **Baghdad** at the end of April, apparently driven by fears that entry of IDPs also may have permitted ISIL fighters to enter the city. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that IDPs who had found shelter in Baghdad mosques were evicted by members of the host community.<sup>57</sup>

Several reports were received concerning the killing and abduction of individuals displaced from Anbar into Baghdad. For instance, on 29 April, Iraqi Police found the remains of two males who died from gunshot wounds: one in Amil, south-western Baghdad, and another in Bayaa, eastern Baghdad. The victims were reported to have been IDPs from Anbar and it was alleged that they had been killed by a Shi'a militia. A source reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that Shi'a militias in Amil threatened Anbar IDPs that they would be killed if they did not leave. Such threats were reportedly not issued to members of the Sunni community normally resident of the area.

As Government and affiliated forces have re-taken areas occupied by ISIL, those displaced have, in some cases, been able to return to their areas of origin. As of 23 April, an estimated 116,850 individuals, or over 19,000 families, returned to their districts of origin in five governorates, namely **Diyala** (37 per cent), **Salah al-Din** (26 per cent), **Ninewa** (26 per cent), **Anbar** (nine per cent), and **Kirkuk** (two per cent). Those who returned have largely settled back to their location of usual residence, although 19 per cent have returned to abandoned or unfinished buildings.<sup>58</sup>

Those returning are encountering continuing insecurity, large-scale destruction of civilian infrastructure, severely impacted delivery of basic services, booby-traps and explosive remnants of war. For instance in **Anbar**, as of 3 April, the majority of those who had returned did not have access to electricity or potable water.<sup>59</sup> In **Diyala**, infrastructure has been damaged and OCHA reports that returnees were in need of non-food items and tents.<sup>60</sup>

In **Kirkuk**, a number of IDPs returned to Maryam Beg village subsequent to its liberation by Government forces on 10 April. At that time, the village did not have potable water, electricity was limited, a number of buildings had been destroyed, and a number of IEDs reportedly remained. In addition, IDPs from other areas arrived in the village, fleeing hostilities or ISIL occupation. Some made their way through irrigation tunnels to avoid ISIL detection. As security forces and local authorities were reportedly only allowing limited access to the village, the humanitarian situation was dire, with many families in urgent need of shelter, food, and medical facilities.

Approximately 15,000 families returned to Zummar sub-district, **Ninewa**, following the liberation of the area by the Peshmerga in October 2014. Electricity and clean water were reportedly generally available, while medical supplies remained inadequate. Schools and many homes were damaged by military operations and efforts were being made to remove remaining mines. It was reported that a number of civilians who remained in the area were suspected of supporting ISIL and faced reprisal by the militias.

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<sup>56</sup> Iraq CRISIS, Situation Report No. 40 (15 – 21 April 2015), OCHA.

<sup>57</sup> OCHA Flash Update, Iraq Crisis - Anbar Displacement, No. 8 | 30 April 2015.

<sup>58</sup> IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX | DTM, Round XIX – April 2015.

<sup>59</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 38 (28 March – 3 April 2015), OCHA.

<sup>60</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 37 (21 – 27 March 2015), OCHA.

### *Access to basic services and humanitarian assistance*

Armed conflict, violence and the scale of the displacement continued to impact IDPs' access to basic services. For instance, fighting and blocked supply lines have resulted in elevated food prices. OCHA reported that the price of wheat, flour, and sugar has increased substantially in Anbar since February; in **Anbar** and **Diyala**, purchasing power has fallen by a quarter since February.<sup>61</sup> In the face of increasing prices only nine per cent of IDP households had access to income-generating activities, while the remainder were generally forced to rely on charitable donations, support from relatives, and savings. Ten per cent of households had no form of support.<sup>62</sup> As of 9 April, 17 per cent of IDPs indicated that access to income or financial aid was their most urgent need.<sup>63</sup>

Only 31 per cent of displaced children are attending formal education.<sup>64</sup> As of late January, nearly 55,000 IDPs were occupying 500 schools, including 376 in **Anbar** alone. Military forces were occupying an additional 130 schools,<sup>65</sup> severely impacting access to safe and quality education.<sup>66</sup>

In late January, humanitarian agencies regained access to four districts of **Anbar** for the first time since October 2014. Food providers also regained access to Zummar sub-district in **Ninewa**.<sup>67</sup>

After several months of siege, Duloeiyah sub-district of **Salah al-Din**, was completely secured by Government forces in January 2015. Humanitarian agencies, having regained access to the governorate for the first time since September 2014, reported that hundreds of houses had been destroyed, thousands of people had been displaced, and there was a shortage of food, medicines, and non-food items.<sup>68</sup>

Large parts of the town of al-Baghdadi, **Anbar**, fell under the control of ISIL on 13 February following a siege of several months, during which ISIL had prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching residents.<sup>69</sup> ISIL also laid siege to a residential compound trapping 1,200 families. Communications, including mobile phones, ceased functioning, and conditions rapidly deteriorated with families quickly running out of food, water, and medicine.<sup>70</sup> Reports were received that five children died during the siege due to lack of food and drinking water. By 26 February, most of al-Baghdadi was retaken by ISF, supported by local tribes and PMUs, and the siege of the residential compound was broken. Members of the most vulnerable families were airlifted to Baghdad by Iraqi Government authorities.

Haditha district, **Anbar**, experienced several months of siege by ISIL. In October 2014, the district was cut off from its main supply chains as the three main roads linking Haditha to other cities of Anbar were closed. By March 2015, reports were received that the situation was critical. Seventeen thousand families faced acute shortages of basic goods, including food, medicines, and fuel. In mid-March, approximately 80 families a day were reportedly making their way from Haditha through the

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<sup>61</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 38 (28 March – 3 April 2015), OCHA.

<sup>62</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 27 (10 January – 16 January 2015), OCHA.

<sup>63</sup> A preliminary analysis of IDP priority needs indicated that shelter and housing was the most urgent need (20.9 percent), followed by non-food items (20.6 percent), access to income or financial aid (17 percent), and food (13.5 percent). IOM DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX | DTM, Round XVIII – April 2015.

<sup>64</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 41 (22 – 28 April 2015), OCHA.

<sup>65</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 29 (24 – 30 January 2015), OCHA.

<sup>66</sup> Armed forces and non-state armed groups must not use schools for military purposes. Military use also increases children's vulnerability, including to sexual and gender-based violence, can displace students to other schools away from their home communities, impacts the availability of teachers, and can result in long-term school closures due to damage to educational infrastructure, thus directly impacting the right to education.

<sup>67</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report, No. 29 (24 – 30 January 2015), OCHA.

<sup>68</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 27 (10 – 16 January 2015), OCHA.

<sup>69</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 31 (7 – 13 February 2015), OCHA. See also Rule 55, International Committee of the Red Cross, Customary International Humanitarian Law, vol. 1: Rules (2009) ("The parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need...").

<sup>70</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 33 (14 – 20 February 2015), OCHA.

desert towards Nukhaib sub-district.<sup>71</sup> On 18 March, local media quoted the head of the Anbar Provincial Council saying that 10 people, some of whom were women and children, had died from hunger in Haditha, as no aid from Baghdad had reached the area. On 26 March, the Iraqi Government was able to distribute the first shipment of food assistance in Haditha.<sup>72</sup>

## 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, crimes against humanity, and possibly genocide.

### 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, officials of the Government of Iraq or members of parliament or governorate councils, members and former members of the largely Sunni pro-government *Sahwa*, Sunni 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*

UNAMI/OHCHR continued to receive verified reports of the killing of civilians in areas under ISIL control. While the precise reasons for many of the 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. Examples include:

- On 15 December, ISIL killed 11 people inside the Tikrit stadium, in **Salah al-Din governorate**. No further information is available regarding their identities.
- On 20 December, ISIL abducted at least 40 civilians from Abu Afan village, Dhuloeiya sub-district, **Salah al-Din**. Three days later, ISIL killed eight of the abductees; on 27 December, another 20 were reportedly killed. The fate of the remaining 12 is unknown.
- On 6 January, ISIL killed 20 men in the Hammam al-Alil area, south of Mosul, **Ninewa governorate**.
- On 31 January, ISIL killed 13 people in Door district, **Salah al-Din**. Residents of the area who witnessed the event informed UNAMI/OHCHR that those killed were unknown to them and could not be identified.

UNAMI/OHCHR received a large number of verified reports that ISIL killed civilians for refusing to support the group. For instance, on 5 January, in the Ghizlani military base in southern Mosul, **Ninewa**, ISIL murdered a leader of the al-Jabor tribe. The victim had been abducted in August 2014, and had been accused of encouraging people to join the 'Mosul Liberation Movement', an armed group formed to fight ISIL. On 21 February, ISIL publicly executed two men, 29 and 32 years old, in

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<sup>71</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 29 (24 – 30 January 2015), OCHA; Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 33 (14 – 20 February 2015), OCHA; Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 36 (14 – 20 March 2015), OCHA.

<sup>72</sup> Iraq CRISIS Situation Report No. 37 (21 – 27 March 2015), OCHA.

central Mosul by shooting them in the head. It was reported that ISIL had accused the men of encouraging people to resist the group.

Professionals and public servants also continued to be targeted by ISIL. On 14 December in Hawija, **Kirkuk** governorate, ISIL killed a lawyer and a candidate in the April 2014 general election for the Kirkuk Arab Coalition. He had been abducted by ISIL in the first half of November 2014, allegedly in connection with his work as a lawyer. On 29 December ISIL executed four doctors in Mosul. According to local media, two of the doctors were executed for refusing to work in field hospitals or treat wounded ISIL fighters.

On 4 January, ISIL abducted an unknown number of residents of Dour district, **Salah al-Din**, and extrajudicially executed eight of them, including four government employees. The government employees had reportedly ‘repented’, but ISIL killed them anyway. ISIL posted a picture of those executed online.

In **Ninewa**, on 6 January, ISIL extrajudicially executed three female lawyers in central Mosul. The reason for the executions is unknown. On 7 January, ISIL extrajudicially executed four doctors in central Mosul – although the exact reasons for their killing is not known.

On the afternoon of 10 February, ISIL executed a female City Council employee at the Ninewa Provincial Building in Mosul. She had been abducted from her house in al-Baladiyat area of eastern Mosul two days before her execution. On 7 April, the body of a doctor, who had reportedly been abducted from a hospital in Mosul on 17 January by ISIL, was recovered with three bullet wounds to the chest. On 26 April, ISIL killed a journalist in the Bab al-Toub area of central Mosul. The journalist had reportedly been abducted on 6 April for using his mobile phone.

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

ISIL continues to target persons associated with the Iraqi Government. Former members of ISF, police officers, *Sahwa*,<sup>73</sup> and individuals suspected of supporting or aiding Government forces have all been victims of such attacks. In many of these cases, UNAMI believes that the individuals targeted were civilians not directly participating in hostilities.

In **Anbar** on 13 December, ISIL executed at least 15 police officers after taking over the town of al-Wafa. In **Salah al-Din**, ISIL executed a police officer in the Borsa area, al-Alam sub-district, on 18 December. In Salah al-Din, ISIL killed four Iraqi police officers in al-Door district, east of Tikrit, on 25 January. Reportedly, all four had ‘repented’ to ISIL, but had then travelled to Baghdad to re-join the Police Force. The four had returned to al-Door district to collect their families and possessions when ISIL found and killed them.

On 24 December, in Madain, southern **Baghdad**, a suicide bomber detonated his explosive vest among a group of **Sahwa** members, who had gathered near a military base to receive their salaries. The attack killed at least 21 individuals and wounded at least 48 more. ISIL claimed responsibility.

ISIL also killed civilians purportedly for supporting Government forces. Members of tribes known or suspected to be affiliated with Government forces have been particularly targeted.

On 6 January, ISIL killed eight former ISF members in Tikrit, **Salah al-Din**, and threw their bodies into the Tigris River. On 16 January, ISIL killed two former Iraqi Army officers – a colonel and a major – who had been abducted from the centre of Shirqat district, **Salah ah-Din**. On 22 January, ISIL killed eight former ISF members in al-Door district of Salah al-Din. On 30 January, ISIL reportedly killed 10 former members of ISF from different areas of the Baiji district, Salah al-Din, after accusing them of

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<sup>73</sup> *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 them into security forces.

contacting ISF to re-join Army and Police forces. In **Ninewa**, ISIL killed a captured Iraqi Army officer in central Mosul on 1 March, and on 5 March, they publicly killed a former Iraqi Army colonel, also in central Mosul. On 8 March, ISIL killed two former ISF pilots in Aski Mosul town, **Ninewa**, both of whom had been taken from their homes in Badoush sub-district at the beginning of the month.

*On 15 December in Salah al-Din governorate, between Tikrit and al-Alam sub-districts, ISIL publicly executed 13 members of al-Jabor tribe, which is closely associated with the Iraqi Government and has been active in fighting against ISIL. Local media carried several images showing men wearing orange jumpsuits kneeling on the ground in front of armed and masked ISIL fighters. In subsequent photos they were sprawled on the ground, appearing to have been shot in the head. One photo reveals that the killing occurred in a public area, with ISIL flags in the background, in front of a crowd, which included children. Four of the victims were reportedly from one family.*

*Reports were received that on 2 November 2014, approximately 250 male civilians from al-Jabor tribe in al-Alam sub-district were abducted by ISIL. In the days following, several other members of the tribe were also abducted. It is not clear whether those killed in December were among these abductees.*

On 1 January, ISIL executed 15 civilians from the Jumaili Sunni Arab tribe in al-Shihabi area, Garma district, **Anbar**. They were apparently shot dead in front of a crowd because of their cooperation with ISF and for providing information on the whereabouts of ISIL members. On 6 February, ISIL burned three civilians alive before local residents in the Heet district, **Anbar**, for purportedly cooperating with ISF. On 10 April, ISIL killed 15 civilians (seven children, six women, and two men) in Albu-Farraj, north of Ramadi, allegedly for offering food to ISF. On 11 April, ISIL killed 33 civilians, including women and children, in the same area for allegedly cooperating with ISF and affiliated forces. On 15 April, ISIL murdered 32 civilians in Albu-Diab, north-western Ramadi, for alleged cooperation with ISF or the affiliation of one of their family members with ISF.

On 24 January, ISIL murdered six members of al-Gehich tribe in Ghazlani camp, south of Mosul, **Ninewa** after they had been captured following clashes between the tribe and ISIL in Abu Maria village. The six men had allegedly been brought before an ISIL self-appointed court and sentenced to death.

In al-Alam sub-district, north of Tikrit, in **Salah al-Din**, ISIL killed four Sunni Arab civilians with affiliations to the al-Jabor, Jumilat, and Tay tribes, on 27 February. In a video which has not been authenticated by UNAMI/OHCHR, four men were shot at point-blank range after being accused of spying for ISF. The video shows that the killing occurred in a manner associated with ISIL – the civilians were dressed in orange jumpsuits with black-clad masked men behind them.

On 21 April, ISIL killed 11 men from the Qaisi, al-Jabor, and al-Douri tribes who had reportedly been abducted around September 2014. ISIL posted still images online of the 11 men in orange jumpsuits first kneeling before 11 masked gunmen, then laying on the ground. The killings reportedly took place in al-Mazra'a rea, Baiji district, **Salah al-Din**, controlled by ISIL. At that time, the Qaisi tribe was fighting ISIL with the support of ISF just a few kilometres from the area.

In **Ninewa**, on 26 February, ISIL executed a 41-year-old woman in al-Ghizlani camp, south of Mosul, for having cooperated with the ISF. On 26 March, ISIL beheaded three brothers in Jumhuriya Street of central Mosul, purportedly for cooperating with the *Peshmerga*.

On the morning of 18 March, ISIL publicly beheaded three captured *Peshmerga* in al-Ziraie area, northern Mosul, **Ninewa**. They were executed on the same spot where shelling, allegedly by *Peshmerga*, killed three civilians and wounded two more on 16 March. On 20 March, a video

purporting to show the beheadings was posted online. The video purported to show the damage to civilian houses caused by the shelling and ISIL fighters speaking in Kurdish accusing the *Peshmerga* of being responsible for the alleged deaths and injuries. The three *Peshmerga* were allegedly among those shown paraded in cages in the Hawija district, in a video posted online by ISIL on 13 February.

In mid-April in **Kirkuk**, ISIL reportedly killed 24 people from al-Zab district, including local Council members, ISF, and *Sahwa* members. The relatives of the victims were contacted and told to hold funeral services, but no bodies were returned.

#### *Killings and torture and cruel and inhuman treatment following illegal/irregular/unlawful courts*

ISIL carried out numerous murders following sentences imposed by ISIL self-appointed courts that the group has established in Mosul, **Ninewa**. As these courts are not authorised by Iraqi law to exercise judicial authority and do not respect basic principles of due process, any sentence imposed by them is unlawful.

On 20 December, ISIL executed five female members of the Yezidi community in al-Ghizlani camp, a former Iraqi Army base south of Mosul taken by ISIL in June. The females had been sentenced to death by hanging by ISIL self-appointed courts.<sup>74</sup>

On 16 January, a 23-year-old woman was stoned to death after being accused of adultery by an ISIL self-appointed court in the Ghabat area of northern Mosul. Photographs of the woman being stoned were published online. On 17 January, an Imam from Mosul's Grand Mosque and an Imam from the Nabi Younis Mosque in Mosul were abducted by ISIL at their homes in al-Tahreer and al-Zahra neighbourhoods of Mosul. On 18 January, the Imam from Mosul's Grand Mosque was sentenced to death by an ISIL self-appointed court and was executed by being shot in the head on the same day. The whereabouts of the second imam are unknown, as are the reasons for the abduction and killing.

On 1 February, two police officers, a colonel and a captain, were executed after an ISIL self-appointed court sentenced them to death in al-Ghazlani military camp, southern Mosul. On the evening of 18 February, a 27 year-old-male journalist was also executed in al-Ghizlani military camp after being sentenced by an ISIL self-appointed court. The victim, who had been abducted by ISIL along with 13 other journalists in November, used to work as a correspondent for Sama al-Mosul TV channel owned by the Governor of Ninewa. On 11 February, ISIL abducted a 31-year old man from his home inside Mosul city and executed him publicly in Bab Al-Toub district of central Mosul two days later on charges of practicing sorcery after being sentenced by an ISIL self-appointed court in Mosul.

On 31 March, a 47-year-old man was publicly stoned to death in Dawasa area of central Mosul. An ISIL self-appointed *court chief* read an 'indictment' before the killing in which it was claimed that the individual was being punished for not following ISIL instructions. On 8 April, a journalist working for a local channel was shot to death in al-Qayyarsh, southern Mosul, after sentencing by an ISIL self-appointed court. On 20 April, ISIL publicly killed a former member of the Mosul City Council by beheading, following a decision by an ISIL self-appointed court. On 27 April, ISIL publicly stoned to death two men, 22 and 26 years old, in central Mosul. The men were accused of adultery and a decision condemning them was read before they were killed.

Allegations were also received that ISIL self-appointed courts had imposed other cruel and inhuman punishments. For instance, on 10 February in central Mosul, two men in their early twenties had

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<sup>74</sup> The reasons they women were condemned and killed is unconfirmed. One source informed UNAMI/OHCHR that the women had been condemned for refusing to convert to Islam and for trying to escape from their 'masters' following their enslavement. Another source suggested that the women were condemned for murdering their master following their capture and enslavement – however these allegations could not be verified.

three fingers from their rights hands cut off as punishment for alleged theft following condemnation by an ISIL self-appointed court. On 11 February, ISIL flogged five civilians in Mosul for using their cell phones to contact their relatives outside of Mosul. Reportedly the men were trying to make phone calls from an area called Almajmoa'ah Althaqfiah, also known as the "Celebration Square" in front of the Technical Institute in central Mosul. On 3 March in Mosul, ISIL cut off the hands of six youths, allegedly accused of stealing, after they were condemned by an ISIL self-appointed court. On 7 March 2015, ISIL cut off the right hand of a man accused of theft in central Mosul. The decision condemning him was read by an ISIL self-appointed chief court.

### *Other killings*

ISIL has also killed members of its own group who refused to fight, as well as captured combatants from Government forces.

On 21 December, ISIL publicly executed 45 of its own members in a square in central Mosul for fleeing the battle field. Those executed had reportedly fled during clashes with the Peshmerga forces in the districts of Sinjar and Tal Afar and the air strikes by the international coalition. On 23 December, ISIL executed 40 of its fighters for fleeing the battlefield in Heet district during clashes with ISF. Another eight ISIL members were executed in al-Qaim because they retreated from the battlefield. On 10 February, ISIL publicly executed six of its fighters who had tried to flee from the battlefield in Tal Kaif district, **Ninewa**. In **Kirkuk**, on 5 March, ISIL hung from the scaffolding at the entrance to the city of Hawija the bodies of ISIL fighters who had reportedly fled operations in Tikrit. ISIL supporters indicated on social media on 8 March that this would be the destiny of any ISIL member who attempted to retreat from battle. A photo emerged online and in the media showing a number of male bodies clad in military uniforms strung up by their feet.

### *Abductions*

On 31 December, ISIL abducted six members of local Councils of al-Zab area, **Kirkuk**: three from al-Zab town, and one each from the villages of Shumeet, Sabaghiya, and Namesa. The six were all members of al-Jabor tribe. ISIL had already abducted local Council members from the area in October 2014. On the evening of 2 January, two ISIL flags were burnt in the villages of al-Shajra and Gharib, west of Kirkuk city. ISIL then raided the two villages and al-Waridiya village and abducted around 130 males, taking them to Hawija. Most of them were freed in the following days, while reportedly nine of them, either ISF or *Sahwa* members, remained detained by ISIL.

In **Ninewa**, ISIL broke into the house of the Imam of the Grand Mosque in the Hamam Ali sub-district of Mosul and abducted him on 1 April. Reportedly, the Imam was abducted because he refused to declare his allegiance to ISIL and refused to call on young people to fight for ISIL.

*On 24 February, ISIL abducted at least 42 members of al-Obeid tribe, including nine children under the age of 14, from Rubaidha village, northeast of Tikrit, **Salah al-Din**. An unspecified number were released on 25 February. This incident was reported widely in the media, with other numbers indicating that up to 100 men had been abducted. According to media sources the abductions were meant to serve as leverage to persuade al-Obeid tribe not to fight alongside ISF against ISIL. A report was received in early March 2015 that four of the abductees – one former Iraqi Army member and three former police officers – had been killed.*

Reasons for many of the abductions perpetrated by ISIL are often unknown – although often information suggests the victims were targeted from perceptions that they were opposed to ISIL ideology or control. Multiple reports of abductions were received from **Salah al-Din** and **Ninewa**. Examples include:



- On 13 December, ISIL abducted 17 civilians, including some teachers, in Hawija. On 14 December ISIL abducted 22 civilians in al-Zab district.
- Between 13 and 16 December, ISIL abducted more than 20 civilians from their homes in different areas of Tikrit, several from the Qadisiya quarter in particular, in **Salah al-Din**.
- On 27 December, ISIL abducted three leaders of al-Leheb tribe in Badoush, west of Mosul, **Ninewa**.
- On 29 December, ISIL abducted two journalists, who are brothers, in al-Nour area of eastern Mosul, **Ninewa**. The two worked for a press agency and television station respectively.
- On 2 January, ISIL abducted 35 residents of al-Dour district, **Salah al-Din**, including civilians, ISF, and *Sahwa* members.
- On 3 January, ISIL abducted 45 residents from several areas of Shirqat district, **Salah al-Din**. The abductees were local Council members, ISF and *Sahwa* members.
- On 4 January, ISIL abducted 80 tribal members from Rbeidha village, east of Tikrit, **Salah ad-Din**; 55 were later freed.
- On 27 January, ISIL abducted 12 civilians, including eight former ISF members, from the Albu-Ajeel tribal area east of Tikrit, **Salah al-Din**. On the same day, ISIL reportedly abducted eight civilians from al-Alam sub-district, north of Tikrit.
- On 9 February, ISIL abducted 30 members of different Sunni tribes from al-Alam sub district, north of Tikrit, **Salah al-Din**, and confiscated their belongings and properties.
- On 12 February, ISIL abducted 29 members of the Ubed tribe from Ribetha village, northeast of al-Alam sub-district, **Salah al-Din**. The abduction occurred during a raid by ISIL while searching for people in contact with or assisting ISF. Those abducted included civilians, including former ISF members, and IDPs from other areas.
- On 13 February, ISIL abducted 41 Kurdish families near Zummar sub-district, **Ninewa**, as they were trying to leave Mosul.
- On 17 February, ISIL abducted 26 Sunni Arab tribal leaders from al-Hadeedy, Albu Hamad, and al-Leheb tribes in the Hamam al-Aleel and Shura sub-districts of southern Mosul. The abductees were accused of joining and supporting *al-Hashid al-Watani* (“National Gathering”), a predominantly Sunni resistance movement opposed to ISIL.
- On 27 February, ISIL abducted nine members of al-Jubor tribe in the Shoura sub-district, **Ninewa**.
- On 4 March, ISIL abducted the Sheikh of Izzat from his home in Sidera Sufla village, western Shirqat district, **Salah al-Din**. The Sheikh is one of the leaders of al-Jabor tribe.
- In **Anbar**, around 4 to 6 April, ISIL abducted 100 men from al-Buchlaib tribe in Ramadi, also burning and destroying their homes.

## Conduct of operations

### *Attacks against civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure/objects*

ISIL continued to deliberately target civilians and civilian objects for attack and carried out attacks heedless of the effects on civilians. ISIL 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.

On 12 December, an attack in Muqdadhiya in **Diyala** governorate by an individual wearing an explosive vest in a Shi'a mosque killed seven civilians. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack on social media.

On 27 December, an ISIL sniper shot dead two civilians in Dhuloeiya, **Salah al-Din** governorate. On 30 December, an ISIL sniper killed a woman and her two children, who were trying to reach Dhuloeiya from Aziz Balad sub-district.

In **Diyala**, on 2 January, shelling by ISIL on civilian areas of Muqdadhiya wounded two children (age and gender unspecified). On 3 and 4 January, shelling by ISIL on al-Askari area killed two civilians and wounded five civilians.

ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack using an improvised explosive device (IED) placed on a traffic route killed seven civilians, including two women and a child, in Shirqat district, **Salah al-Din**, on 2 January.

On 5 January, ISIL stopped a wedding procession in the Ghabat area of northern Mosul because of the decorated cars and loud music. After a disagreement, ISIL fighters started shooting at the wedding party killing the bride and the groom and injuring others.

Also in January, indiscriminate shelling from ISIL positions on Muqdadhiya in **Diyala** claimed a number of civilian casualties. For instance, on 8 January, shelling hit an old market, wounding seriously six civilians. On 10 January, shelling hit Askari area, killing two civilians and wounding three more. On 11 January, shelling hit a playground in the Falastin area, killing three civilians and wounding another eight. It was reported that on 12 January, 19 more civilians were wounded by shelling on the area.

ISIL claimed responsibility for a suicide vehicle-borne IED that was detonated close to a café called Zahawi, in middle of Baquba city, **Diyala**, on 15 January, which killed two civilians and wounded an additional eight who were inside the cafe.

ISIL claimed responsibility for a series of IED attacks in **Baghdad** on 7 February. One IED was detonated in Ur district (eastern Baghdad) leading to the killing of two civilians and the injury of eight others. In the evening, a complex attack consisted of one suicide bomber followed by one IED led to the killing of nine civilians and the injury of 32 in al-Arabi market in Shorja district.

As ISIL retreated from areas, they frequently left booby-traps in civilian houses that appear aimed at killing and injuring civilians returning to their homes. Sources confirmed that as ISIL left the area they had planted mines and IEDs in many of the other houses. Other incidents of booby-traps wounding and killing civilians who had returned to their homes after ISIL departed were confirmed to have taken place on 15 January, killing three women from one family in Heer village, Dujail sub-district. On 17 and 18 January, two more booby-traps detonated in houses in Hor area of Dhuluiya sub-district, killing a total of four civilians as they attempted to enter their homes.

On 17 April, a vehicle laden with explosives was detonated in front of the United States Consulate in Erbil, **Erbil governorate**. Two civilians sitting in a café opposite the site of the detonation were killed and eight more were wounded. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack on social media.

*In **Salah al-Din**, subsequent to the end of clashes in the Dhuloeiya sub-district in late December, some civilians who had fled their communities returned to find that ISIL had planted explosives in their homes. On 7 January, two civilians were killed by a booby-trap left in their house by ISIL. On 15 January, a house laden with IEDs detonated in the residential area of Heer, Dujail district, killing three women from one family. On 17 and 18 January, two more booby-trapped houses detonated in the Hor area of Dhuloeiya sub-district, killing four civilians as they attempted to enter their homes (two respectively on each day). In each of the incidents, those killed were IDPs who had fled to other areas during ISIL occupation. On*

26 March, seven civilians were killed when an explosive-laden house detonated in Farhaniya village, Ishaqi sub-district. Three brothers and four other relatives who had fled as IDPs to Dhuloeiya sub-district were also killed as they returned to their home.

On 10 March, a house that was laden with explosives was destroyed in Arab Faris village, north of Muqdadiya district, **Diyala**, killing two police officers and wounding three others. The house had been booby-trapped by ISIL. The officers had reportedly entered the empty house to perform a check before the owners could return.<sup>75</sup>

In **Kirkuk**, ISIL allegedly blew up the house of a tribal leader, a former *Sahwa* member, in al-Zab area of southwestern Kirkuk, on or around 19 December. From 7 to 8 January, ISIL blew up seven homes belonging to members of the Iraqi Army and Police in Hawija, Riyadh and Zab. One home belonging to a *Sahwa* member was also blown up in Rashad district. The homes were reportedly empty at the time of destruction. From 7 to 8 February, ISIL reportedly destroyed the Kirkuk Deputy Governor's house as well as more than 20 other houses across the Hawija district, including eight houses belonging to the former Education Minister and his brother in and around Mahooz village, and those of several Sunni Arab tribal figures. The houses were allegedly destroyed because they belonged to public officials and local leaders associated with the Government of Iraq who had not demonstrated loyalty to ISIL leaders in the area.

On 16 February in **Ninewa**, ISIL blew up a number of government buildings in Hamdaniya district, east of Mosul, including the Headquarters of the local Police Department, the local Council building, buildings belonging to the Ministry of Justice, Finance and Municipalities, and some buildings under construction. On 1 March, ISIL blew up the Nineveh Operations Command in the 17 Tamouz area, the Nineveh Police Directorate in al-Hawi area, and the Anti-Terrorism office in the al-Mahatta area, all located in western Mosul. On 29 March, ISIL reportedly destroyed the Traffic Police Directorate building in al-Shalalat area of northern Mosul using IEDs. The building was reportedly looted prior to its destruction.

It was reported in local media on 3 February that ISIL had destroyed 90 percent of vital facilities in Muqdadiyah district, **Diyala**, during its occupation since June 2014. The facilities destroyed reportedly included electricity stations, bridges, and the Sedoor Dam.

UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports that ISIL deliberately destroyed bridges in order to forestall or thwart attacks by Government forces but which had the effect of preventing or seriously limiting the movement of civilians from areas affected by conflict. On 7 February, ISIL destroyed several bridges in the southwest areas of **Kirkuk**, including the Kirkuk-Beiji railway bridge. This was apparently an attempt to cut off Hawija district and its sub-districts from Kirkuk in anticipation of an offensive by the ISF and *Peshmerga*, but had the added consequence of impacting on civilian movements. On the same day, ISIL destroyed the Maktab Khalid and Nahrawan bridges which also hindered civilian IDPs from leaving these areas.

#### *Destruction or damage to places of religious and cultural significance*

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

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<sup>75</sup> The use of booby-traps which are in any way attached to or associated with objects or persons entitled to special protection under international humanitarian law or with objects that are likely to attract civilians is prohibited. See Rule 80, International Committee of the Red Cross, Customary International Humanitarian Law, vol. 1: Rules (2009).

The bulk of such reports were received from **Ninewa**. On 1 January, ISIL blew up the Sultan Wais Sunni Mosque, which was built in 1838, in Faruq area of western Mosul. On 2 January, ISIL blew up Sunni Ajeel al-Yawer Mosque in Tayaran area of southern Mosul. On 14 January, ISIL reportedly burned hundreds of books from the Mosul University's central library in the University's football field.<sup>76</sup> On the afternoon of 21 February, ISIL burned more than 6,500 historical books and manuscripts from the Mosul public library in al-Nasir area, eastern Mosul, in front of dozens of people. On the same afternoon, ISIL burned thousands of books in al-Najafi Street, which has many bookshops, in western Mosul. On 22 February, ISIL blew up the Mosul public library.

On 3, 7, and 11 March, ISIL destroyed four Sunni Mosques in Mosul, each of which contained shrines, tombs, or graves of religious leaders. On the evening of 3 March, ISIL destroyed the 150-year-old Ottoman-era Muhammad al-Abareeqi Mosque, in the Bab al-Jadeed area, central Mosul. On 7 March, ISIL destroyed the Hamo al-Qado Mosque in the Maidan area of western Mosul using bulldozers. That same day, ISIL used IEDs to destroy al-Sabonchi Mosque in the Nineveh Street area of western Mosul. On the afternoon of 11 March, using hand-held shovels, ISIL reportedly destroyed the shrines and tombs in the Mosque of Imam Ibrahim in the Ras al-Koor area of western Mosul and, using bulldozers, destroyed the actual building.

On 5 March, using bulldozers, shovels, and drills, ISIL reportedly destroyed or damaged the remains of the ancient city of Nimrud, 30 kilometres south of Mosul. A video released on social media around 12 April appears to depict the destruction and suggests that most of Nimrud has been destroyed. On 7 March, ISIL reportedly did the same in the ancient city of Hatra, 150 kilometres south of Mosul. A video was released on social media on 3 April, purportedly depicting the destruction. On 8 March, using bulldozers, ISIL destroyed the remains of the ancient city of Dur Sharrukin, also known as Khorsabad, around 15 kilometres north of Mosul. The UN Secretary-General condemned in the strongest terms the destruction of Nimrud and expressed outrage amid reports of the razing of the ancient city of Hatra.<sup>77</sup> UNESCO also condemned the destruction of Nimrud.<sup>78</sup>

Other verified examples include:

- On 2 February, ISIL looted the External Tahra Church, located in the Shafaa neighbourhood in Mosul, including the manuscripts, paintings in Syriac, and historical items.
- On 8 February, ISIL looted and then demolished a 1000-year-old Mosque in al-Shafaa neighbourhood, western Mosul. The demolition of the Mosque was reportedly due to the presence of a shrine to a famous Sunni religious scholar named Imam Muhsin.
- On 25 February, ISIL destroyed the Sheikh Mahmoud Sunni Shrine in Wana sub-district. Around midday that same day, ISIL blew up the ancient Sunni al-Khithar Mosque, which contained a shrine, in central Mosul. IEDs had reportedly been planted around the mosque the evening before.
- On 2 March, ISIL reportedly destroyed an Assyrian Christian cemetery in Tal Kaif town using bulldozers.

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<sup>76</sup> On 12 February, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2199 which condemns the destruction of cultural heritage and adopts legally-binding measures to counter illicit trafficking of antiquities and cultural objects from Iraq as well as from Syria."

<sup>77</sup> Statement Attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the destruction of Nimrud in Iraq, New York, 6 March 2015, at <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=8439> (accessed 8 March 2015); Statement Attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the continuing destruction of cultural sites in Iraq, New York, 8 March 2015, at <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=8445> (accessed 9 March 2015).

<sup>78</sup> UNESCO Director-General condemns destruction at Nimrud, 13 April 2015, [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco\\_director\\_general\\_condemns\\_destruction\\_at\\_nimrud/#.VSysmk1O7IU](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco_director_general_condemns_destruction_at_nimrud/#.VSysmk1O7IU) (accessed 20 April 2015).

- On 3 March, ISIL reportedly destroyed the Assyrian Christian Shrine of Mart Shmoni in Tal Kaif.
- On 8 March, ISIL reportedly bulldozed the cemetery of the St. George's Church in al-Arabi area of northern Mosul. This reportedly led to the collapse of a part of the church. In mid-March, ISIL reportedly removed the crosses from the church and damaged religious objects. A video also emerged online purportedly showing images of ISIL fighters damaging the church and replacing a cross with an ISIL black flag.
- On 19 March, using bulldozers and IEDs, ISIL destroyed the ancient Christian Monastery of Mar Behnam in Hamdaniya, south of Mosul.
- On 19 March, ISIL destroyed two Shabak Shi'a shrines in Hamdaniya, south of Mosul.
- On 22 March, ISIL reportedly blew up an ancient minaret in Sinjar district, which was also considered a religious symbol by the Yezidi community.

### *Allegations concerning the use of chlorine gas*

UNAMI/OHCHR has received a number of unverified reports that ISIL has used, or has attempted to use, chlorine gas in attacks.

Such attacks allegedly took place in Duloeiyah in **Salah al-Din** in November and December and in areas of Anbar during December. On 23 December, reports indicated that more than 15,000 civilians fled their homes in Dujail and Yathrib areas in Salah al-Din, reporting that they did so after they received messages from ISIL that they would use chemical agents in these areas. On 24 December it was alleged that ISIL shelled Baghdadi district, western Anbar, with mortar rounds loaded with chlorine gas. On 9 March, a cylinder allegedly containing chlorine gas was detonated as part of an IED in an open area near the old stadium in Samarra, **Salah al-Din**. Witnesses informed UNAMI/OHCHR that the gas from the explosion caused coughing, choking, and breathing difficulties. Witnesses believed that the cylinder contained chlorine due to the odour detected in the air. The Samarra Hospital recorded approximately 190 persons with similar symptoms as a result of this incident.<sup>79</sup>

On 15 March Masrour Barzani (KRG Intelligence Advisor) confirmed in an interview with the BBC that Kurdish authorities had evidence of the use of chlorine gas by ISIL in attacks on Peshmerga fighters. Traces of chlorine were stated to have been identified from samples taken from the scene of a clash between *Peshmerga* and ISIL fighters in Zumar sub-district that took place on 23 January that were tested in a laboratory of a coalition Member State.

### **Attacks against ethnic and religious communities, and on the basis of sexual orientation**

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 and violations 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. ISIL continued to publish "justifications" in electronic media for its ill-treatment of ethnic and religious communities – including the requirement to cleanse lands under the control of its self-declared "Islamic Caliphate" of *kufaar* ('infidels'), forcibly converting, suppressing, expelling or killing people of other faiths or those who do not subscribe to its *takfiri* doctrines. ISIL imposes on Christians and Sabaeans the requirement to convert to Islam, pay *jezyah* (protection or toleration tax), be expelled, or be killed; for Shi'a to repent or face

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<sup>79</sup> On 15 March the BBC profiled a report where the Government of Iraq provided video and other evidence that ISIL was using chlorine as part of crude IEDs <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31846021>>.

penalties (including death) as apostates; and for Yezidi, Kaka'ee and other faith communities (which ISIL regard as infidels) to convert to Islam or be killed. Most recently, ISIL published another 'justification' for the sexual enslavement of Yezidi women and other women from communities it regards as *kufaar* (infidels) in its monthly magazine, *Dabiq* vol. 9.<sup>80</sup>

Thousands of women and children, and some men, particularly from the Yezidi community but also from other religious and ethnic communities, continue to be held by ISIL and subjected to serious violations of their human rights. It is estimated that between 3,000 and 3,500 predominantly Yezidi women and children, along with some men, remain in ISIL captivity, along with members of other minority ethnic and religious communities. It is difficult to verify how many people remain in ISIL captivity, as reports indicate that, in many cases, they are frequently moved, including to Syria, and some may have been killed or died while in captivity. As ISF and Peshmerga make territorial gains, and ISIL comes under pressure from military operations, more captured civilians are managing to escape to safe areas or they are obtaining release through other means. For instance, on 17 January 2015, 196 Yezidi were able to leave ISIL captivity after an alleged payment of 850,000 US dollars was made by two businessmen from Erbil and Kirkuk. It seems that the Yezidi were 'bought' from ISIL as a number of those released confirmed that they were taken before an ISIL self-appointed court to approve their 'sale'. The group consisted of elderly men and women, persons with disabilities, and children. These individuals stated that they had been abducted on 3 August 2014 from Sinjar district, **Ninewa**. They were subsequently taken to Tal Afar district, where they were held for three months before they were taken to Mosul prior to their release.

Civilians who managed to escape from ISIL continued to report that they were subjected to gross violations of their human rights by ISIL while they were in captivity. Many provided testimony that when they were captured by ISIL, the women and men were called upon to convert to Islam. The women who converted were forcibly married to ISIL fighters while those who refused were subjected to sexual slavery. Men who refused to convert to Islam were killed.

On 19 March, 34 members of the Yezidi community (nine women, nine men and 16 children – in all, eight families), who escaped from ISIL custody, reached Sinjar Mountain and from there they arrived in Sharya camp in Dohuk in the KR-I. The group originally came from Dohula complex in Sinjar district and had been abducted by ISIL in early August. Two girls from one family were taken by ISIL to Syria. The abductees had been kept in houses abandoned by members of the Turkmen Shi'a community in Hai al-Khdra village in Tal Afar, where they were forced to convert to Islam. They were also forced to work as farmers and shepherds under the surveillance of ISIL.

On 26 April, UNAMI/OHCHR received a number of reports that ISIL had separated several hundred, possibly up to 700, Yezidi men and boys from their families in Tal Afar, **Ninewa**. As of the time of writing, their fate remains unknown. According to sources, and to some videos posted online, it appears that some of these men and boys were forced to attend an ISIL radicalisation programme. Other sources alleged that hundreds of these men may have been killed, although UNAMI/OHCHR has not been able to confirm this at the time of writing. Some of the Yezidi women and children, meanwhile, may have been moved to villages in the district. ISIL increased security guarding the Yezidi captives to prevent further escapes.

On 28 April, eyewitnesses reported that eight Yezidi men were tortured and killed after a failed escape attempt. The men had attempted to leave Tal-Afar with their family members (a total of 43 individuals) but were forced to return after getting lost.

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<sup>80</sup> *Dabiq* vol. 9 (May 2015) available online < <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/isis-isil-islamic-state-magazine-issue%2B9-they-plot-and-allah-plots-sex-slavery.pdf>>. The magazine is named after the location in Syria where ISIL believes the final battle for the world will be fought between Muslims and the Rum (romans/Christians). For earlier editions of *Dabiq*, see online <<http://www.clarionproject.org/news/islamic-state-isis-isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq>>

ISIL also continued to target members of other ethnic and religious communities.

On 14 December, ISIL abducted ten families from the Kaka'ee community in Alatshana area in Mosul city. Their fate remains unknown, but ISIL has stated in public media that it regards members of the Kaka'ee community as *kufaar* (infidels).

On 23 December, 10 members of a Christian family from Sinjar arrived in Kirkuk. The family informed UNAMI that they had been hiding in their house in Sinjar since June 2014 but had left following clashes between ISIL and *Peshmerga* and Syrian Kurdish fighters. Upon arriving in Mosul, the family was detained by ISIL, brought before an ISIL self-appointed court, and instructed to convert to Islam or face expulsion. Upon their refusal, the court ordered the expulsion of the family from Ninewa. ISIL, however, kept two male members of the family whose fate is unknown.

On 29 December, an attack by an individual wearing an explosive vest inside a tent hosting Shi'a pilgrims in al-Hamamiyat village in Baghdad killed 17 civilians and wounded at least 24 more. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack on social media.

On 1 January, ISF found the remains of three members of the Turkmen community in al-Habbash village, western Tuz Khurmatu sub-district, **Salah al-Din**. They had been abducted by ISIL in August 2014.

On 20 January, an under-vehicle IED reportedly was detonated on a car belonging to a civilian from the Turkmen Shi'a community near Yafa primary school in Tuz district, **Salah al-Din**. The driver of the car was seriously wounded, as well as three school children who were in the vicinity.

Around 20-25 families from the Shabak community including women and children from Bashiqa sub-district in Ninewa Governorate fled from their villages that are controlled by ISIL on 14-18 February. Along the way, clashes occurred between the fleeing families and ISIL that resulted in the killing of two and injury of 17 civilians among the members of the community.

On 1 March, ISIL blew up six houses belonging to members of the Christian community in west Mosul. The houses were abandoned when the Christians were expelled from Mosul in July 2014.

*Reports have been received that ISIL has persecuted persons on the basis of their perceived sexual orientation. On 16 January, two Sunni Arab men, aged 19 and 21 years old, were accused of homosexual acts by an ISIL self-appointed court in Mosul. They were executed on the same day by being thrown from an eight story building in the Dawasa area of central Mosul in front of dozens of people who had gathered to witness the execution. Two photographs were published on ISIL social media sites showing their murder.*

*On 8 March, ISIL beheaded two individuals accused of homosexuality and a third for blasphemy in the Bab al-Toob area of Mosul. The decision condemning them was read out by the chief of the ISIL self-appointed court, flanked by ISIL members. Photographs purportedly depicting the beheadings show three young men kneeling down, blindfolded with their heads bowed down, with an executioner behind holding a sword above their necks. The text on the photos states "implementing execution of homosexuals".*

## Attacks on women and children

### *Gender-based violence including sexual violence*

ISIL continues to subject women and children to sexual violence. Following a visit to Iraq by Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, from 26 to 29 April 2015, which included discussions with women and girls who had escaped ISIL captivity, the Special Representative concluded that sexual violence is being used by ISIL as a deliberate tactic of war to advance key strategic priorities, such as recruitment, fundraising (through the sale of

women and girls in slave markets, the payment of ransoms by their families, and the transfer of women among and between groups); to enforce discipline and order through the punishment of dissenters or family members; and to advance their radical ideology. UNAMI/OHCHR continued to receive reports that civilians in ISIL captivity were subjected to harrowing acts of sexual and physical violence.

As noted above, and as numerous witnesses have affirmed, after capture by ISIL men and women are usually separated. Women, including girls, who refuse to convert are frequently raped and are subjected to sexual slavery. One elderly Yezidi woman reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that after ISIL attacked her village in early August 2014, ISIL took their valuables including gold and money, and separated the men from the women. Men and boys were loaded into cars after which she heard shooting; she believes that her son and all of her male relatives were killed. Women and girls were raped, and some were later allotted to ISIL fighters or sold. An eighteen-year-old woman reported that she was captured by ISIL in August 2014 in the Sinjar district, **Ninewa**, along with 11 other family members. The men and women were separated, and about one hundred women were thereafter taken to Mosul. Once there, married women were separated from unmarried women. The victim pretended to have a mental illness in order to remain with her mother; three of her sisters were taken to Syria and sold. Another woman reported that, after her capture by ISIL, she was taken directly to Syria and kept in a big building with other women. Yezidi women were forced to clean the building. Four other survivors reported being taken to Syria after being sold to ISIL fighters.

Several women reported that, while in captivity, young women and girls were taken and raped on a daily basis by ISIL fighters. An elderly woman reported that the young women would come back after some hours or days in a 'miserable condition'. A young woman recounted that, after her capture by ISIL in Sinjar in August 2014, she was taken to Tal Afar with about a hundred girls and young women. After several days, she and a thirteen-year-old girl were sold to ISIL fighters. The fighter who bought her raped her and if she tried to resist, he would beat her with his shoes. She reported to UNAMI/OHCHR: "I used to hear a lot of cries and screaming from the other girl in the house, as God knows what the man was doing to her. She was too young to understand and probably was very scared."

Those girls who refused to convert or who did so but refused to be married to ISIL fighters were threatened and subjected to physical violence. Some were reportedly killed. For instance, on 23 February, following a decision by an ISIL self-appointed court, ISIL abducted 13 Sunni Arab women from various areas of Mosul, **Ninewa**, for refusing to marry ISIL fighters. On 13 March, ISIL killed nine widows in Qara Quean village, **Ninewa**, after they refused to marry ISIL fighters. The women were reportedly members of the Turkmen Shi'a community whose husbands had been killed by ISIL.

#### *Forced recruitment and use of children*

UNAMI/OHCHR has received several reports that ISIL has been forcibly recruiting and using child soldiers. For instance, local media reported on 6 January that ISIL had been using child soldiers in Zummar sub-district, west of Mosul city in **Ninewa**. These children had been abducted and then trained in the use of weapons. Some were reportedly used to detonate bombs. On 13 January, sources in Mosul reported that ISIL was recruiting young men and boys as young as ten. On 6 February, ISIL told families in Mosul with two or more sons that one son would have to join the group. In mid-April, after the fall of Tikrit, **Salah al-Din**, ISIL began forcibly recruiting men and boys between the ages of 13 and 20. Sources reported that 100 young men, many of them children were forcibly recruited. Previously ISIL had permitted the payment of 500,000 Iraqi Dinar in lieu of service, but this practice was allegedly stopped.

In early February in **Anbar**, ISIL imposed compulsory recruitment of children in Rutba district, west of Ramadi.



On 14 January, a video was posted on social media purportedly showing a new ISIL camp in Tal Afar district, **Ninewa**, which had been established for the recruitment and training of children. In late February, UNAMI/OHCHR obtained a separate ISIL video titled “Farouq Institute for Cubs”, which purportedly shows the training of 15 Yezidi children. The identities of the children were confirmed by relatives, who also confirmed that all of the children shown were below 18 years of age while most were below the age of 15. Most of the children had been taken from Kocho village, Sinjar district, Ninewa. The training took place in Til al-Abyath, ar-Raqqaqah governorate, Syria. The children in the video received three kinds of training: teaching of the Qur’an, specifically related to jihad; weapons training; and how to deal with prisoners.<sup>81</sup>

## 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 even 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 even what they can celebrate.

UNAMI/OHCHR was informed that men were required to grow beards of a certain length, while women faced 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.

According to media reports, ISIL all-female brigade, *al-Khansaa*, issued rules on the role of women in conducting *jihad* on 1 January (entitled “Sister’s [*sic*] role in jihad”). An English-language version of these rules was posted online. The rules suggest that the most important way women can contribute to jihad is to serve as wife and mothers and to teach their children ISIL ideology as early as possible.

Reports were consistently received throughout the reporting period that ISIL has imposed severe movement restrictions on civilians living in its areas of control. In order to leave areas of **Salah al-Din**, **Kirkuk**, and **Ninewa** under ISIL control, residents had to comply with an elaborate authorisation system. From the beginning of December 2014, in the Shirqat district, north of Tikrit in Salah al-Din, any residents wishing to travel had to seek prior permission from ISIL, provide a justification, identify a sponsor, and specify the date of return. If they did not return within the specified period, the sponsor would reportedly face punishment. A similar system was imposed in the al-Zab and al-Riyadh areas of Kirkuk, as well as in Mosul in Ninewa.

In early January, UNAMI/OHCHR received reports that residents of Mosul wishing to travel outside the city must identify a family member to stand as guarantor for their return. However, on 12 February, ISIL suspended that mechanism and instructed all travel agencies to close their offices. This was reportedly done on the basis that other parts of Iraq were under a 'non-Muslim Government' and that travel to those areas was therefore prohibited under Islam. New rules for leaving Mosul were subsequently imposed, as set out in an undated document received by UNAMI/OHCHR in early March. The rules allow, for example, sick people to leave, but only after medical certification by the Health *Diwan* (council). Similarly, students who need to complete their studies were permitted to leave only after securing *Diwan* approval.

At other times, residents have been prevented from leaving their cities or villages entirely. UNAMI/OHCHR was informed in mid-December that ISIL restricted the movement of most residents of Tikrit, **Salah al-Din**, who were told that they could not leave the city. However, it was unclear

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<sup>81</sup> Available online <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qye4r8xMPGU&feature=youtu.be> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHjhAjbLBoQ&feature=youtu.be>> accessed 20 Jan 2015

whether the restriction applied to the entire city as it was issued verbally by individual ISIL fighters. On 14 March, it was reported that ISIL had prevented around 500 families who had fled Tikrit from entering Mosul, **Ninewa**, purportedly as space inside the city was too limited. However, information was also received by UNAMI/OHCHR that ISIL feared creating panic in Mosul should residents learn about military setbacks suffered in Tikrit.

In late April ISIL was preventing around 50 families in Hamidiya area, al-Baghdadi sub-district, **Anbar**, from leaving. The area has been under ISIL control for months and the families had reportedly pledged allegiance to ISIL.

ISIL rule has also resulted in serious curtailment of civilians' access to services, notably health and education.

UNAMI/OHCHR received a number of verified reports that doctors were killed for refusing to treat ISIL fighters. On 29 December, four doctors in Mosul, **Ninewa**, were executed for this reason. On 16 March, ISIL executed two doctors in the Ghabat area of northern Mosul for refusing to go to Tikrit to treat ISIL fighters. In mid-March, ISIL closed down nine private medical clinics in Mosul and required doctors to work in public hospitals, where many ISIL fighters have reportedly been taken for treatment.

In **Anbar**, on 22 April, the two main hospitals in Ramadi (Ramadi General and Ramadi Maternity) were caught in cross-fire between ISF, positioned on the hospitals' rooftops, and ISIL, which was shelling the buildings. Some patients in critical condition were evacuated to Khaldiya Hospital while others were taken away by their families.

On 20 December, the municipal council of Muqdadiya district, **Diyala**, announced the suspension of classes in eight schools (both primary and secondary) due to daily shelling by ISIL of the city. While the buildings had not been directly hit, the decision was taken to protect the children studying in the schools. More than 30 mortar rounds were reported to have been fired by ISIL onto civilian areas of Muqdadiya in the two weeks prior to the announcement.

On 28 December, ISIL had imposed the wearing of a face-covering veil (*niqab*) on females above 13 years of age in Hawija, **Kirkuk**. To avoid harassment by the *al-Hisba* patrols in charge of monitoring the implementation of ISIL-issued rules, families stopped sending their girls to school. On 15 March, ISIL blew up two laboratories in Mosul University, **Ninewa**.

UNAMI/OHCHR received a number of reports that ISIL has killed educators for refusing to submit to their rule or to teach the ISIL curricula. For instance, four teachers were abducted from a high school in Mosul in January 2015 due to their opposition to ISIL. Similarly, on 30 March ISIL had executed a primary school teacher for criticising the group in Tal Afar.

Communications within and outside Mosul, **Ninewa**, has been extremely difficult, with most phone lines and internet shut down by ISIL. Where mobile network coverage still exists, ISIL has punished civilians for making calls. On 11 February, for instance, ISIL flogged five civilians in Mosul for using their mobile phones to contact relatives outside of the city. Reports were also received that ISIL cut off the hands of six young men in Mosul beginning of March after they were caught using their mobile phones.

Civilians have also been punished for voicing their opinions or for taking part in celebrations. On 5 January, ISIL stopped a wedding procession in the Ghabat area of northern Mosul because of the decorated cars and loud music. After a disagreement, ISIL fighters started shooting at the wedding party, killing the bride and groom and injuring others.

On 4 February, ISIL executed two imams of the Nabi Yunis and al-Kabir mosques by firing squad and beheaded four other civilians after these individuals condemned the immolation of a captured Jordanian pilot, 26-year-old Moaz al-Kassasbeh, on their Facebook accounts. On 21 March, ISIL abducted 56 young Kurdish men who had started a fire to celebrate the *Nau Roz* holiday, after

previously warning the Kurdish community not to do so. The families of these abducted men were told they would be released after a payment of 100,000 Iraqi Dinar for each abductee and the memorisation of five verses of the Quran. UNAMI/OHCHR has received no further information on the abducted men. On 15 April, two Yezidi men, 21 and 60 years old, were killed by ISIL in central Mosul for offering congratulations to each other on the occasion of the Yezidi New Year (15 April), which ISIL considers to be un-Islamic.

## Violations and abuses committed by Iraqi security forces and associated forces

UNAMI/OHCHR has received continued reports of abuses and violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law perpetrated by ISF and associated forces, including international military forces, militia groups, and PMUs.

ISF and associated forces are bound to respect applicable international humanitarian law in the conduct of their military operations. UNAMI/OHCHR continues to receive information that some military operations appear to have directly targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure; others may have been 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, including PMUs and Shi'a militia, are operating largely outside of Government control and are perpetrating a range of abuses against civilians, including killings, abductions, and destruction of property.

### Government restrictions

#### *Freedom of movement and right to housing*

As huge numbers of civilians continue to move around the country, fleeing fighting or ISIL occupation, they have often faced Government restrictions on their ability to access safe areas. Broad restrictions have also been imposed within areas of displacement.

For instance, on 23 December, the Governor and the **Kirkuk** Provincial Council Security Committee, in the presence of the acting chairman of the Provincial Council, decided to close all checkpoints leading to Kirkuk city from areas under ISIL control, reportedly in order to ensure the security of the city. The decision was implemented on 25 December effectively restricting access to areas of safety by predominantly Sunni Arab IDPs.

As of mid-December, UNAMI/OHCHR received multiple reports that Sunni Arab IDPs fleeing from **Salah al-Din** and **Ninewa** were being denied access into Kirkuk at checkpoints in the southwest of the city. The checkpoints were located in areas where fighting occurred between ISIL and ISF, forcing IDPs to either remain at the checkpoint or return to the areas from where they had fled. On 26 December, 30 to 40 families were reportedly staying near the Maktab Khalid checkpoint and were in need of humanitarian assistance. On the morning of 4 January, a 15-year-old boy with a serious health condition, who had been displaced from al-Alam, Salah al-Din, was denied permission to pass through the Maktab Khalid checkpoint despite having an official medical referral to a hospital in Kirkuk as well as the required approval of the Governor to pass. His relatives took him back to the Hawija hospital where he died that same day.

The Maktab Khalid checkpoint reopened later on 4 January and, according to humanitarian sources, approximately 3,500 to 4,000 people entered Kirkuk in a few hours. The checkpoint thereafter opened sporadically, including on 19 January, although only Kirkuk governorate identification holders were allowed entry. In late January, approximately 250 individuals were reportedly stopped at the checkpoint, including those in need of medical attention. The IDPs were mainly from Yathrib

sub-district of Salah al-Din governorate, a predominantly Sunni Arab area. Many were stopped for several days, without shelter or assistance. After ISIL attacks on nearby towns on the evening of 29 January, a number of persons who had been denied entry fled. Subsequently, no IDPs or civilians remained at the Maktab Khalid checkpoint.

UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports in March from the Arbat IDP camp in **Sulaymaniyah** governorate that Sunni Arab IDPs had been required by the KR-I *Asayish* to hand over their original Iraqi identification documents, with the result that they could not proceed through the Sulaymaniyah checkpoint into the city. This affected their access to services such as medical care. Other ethnic groups in the camp did not report that they were subjected to the same requirements.

IDPs in **Kirkuk**, particularly members of the Sunni Arab community, have also faced pressure to return to their areas of origin. UNAMI/OHCHR received multiple reports that IDP families from Diyala, Salah al-Din, and Anbar were being evicted from their homes in Kirkuk. For instance, on 11 January, 24 IDP families from Diyala were evicted from their homes in east Kirkuk. The *Asayish* took their identification documents and marked them to prevent re-entry. While local authorities reportedly claimed that the IDPs had built their homes on public land, at least some IDPs claimed to have legal ownership of the disputed properties. Irrespective of this, the *Asayish* reportedly indicated that the IDPs should return to Diyala, since most areas had been retaken from ISIL. No written or official notice of the eviction was provided.

On 23 February, local security forces began to remove illegally built structures in two neighbourhoods in the southwest of **Kirkuk** where a number of IDPs were residing, reportedly on the order of local authorities. Some IDPs had reportedly been living in the area for four or five years, while others had arrived since June 2014. Reportedly, 41 homes were demolished in these areas. That same day, 44 people from those areas were placed in detention for trespassing on government land. They were released on 16 March after signing a commitment that they would not build illegally on government lands again. Similar evictions, the confiscation of identity documents, or notifications to leave Kirkuk reportedly occurred on 13 and 26 January, 24 February, and 2, 6, 7, and 16 March.

Returns to areas of origin pursuant to such measures cannot be considered voluntary. IDP representatives reported concerns about the safety of civilians and the security situation in some areas of **Diyala** governorate where serious cases of human rights abuses by militia forces were documented. Military operations have left a number of towns in Diyala destroyed and many areas lacked basic services, including water and electricity.

Civilians have also faced movement restrictions when they attempted to return to their areas of origin. For instance, in some areas of the Sulaiman Beg sub-district of **Salah al-Din**, Shi'a militias were reportedly preventing Sunni Arab residents, from returning to their villages. In addition, houses of residents in those villages had either been burned or demolished. Local authorities reported that neither they nor ISF had any control or influence over PMU members.

## Unlawful killings

UNAMI/OHCHR received allegations of unlawful killings committed by ISF and associated forces. These incidents included attacks and reprisals against persons believed or perceived to support or to be associated with ISIL, particularly Sunni Arab community members.

*In **Diyala** governorate, on 26 January, PMUs mostly comprising Shi'a militias entered Barwanah village in Muqdadiya sub-district. Many IDPs had fled to Barwanah from surrounding areas during clashes between ISIL and Government-associated forces.*

*PMU members assembled village men in an empty house and inspected their identification documents, mobile phones, and laptops. Some of the villagers were told to leave and return later given the lengthy inspection process. Shortly after these men left, PMU members reportedly started shooting inside the house, killing 40 to 45 villagers. PMU members then*

*opened fire in the village, reportedly killing a further 25 civilians. Around 70 civilians were killed in total, most of them Sunni Arabs.*

*PMU members took the victims' bodies to an unknown location. On 5 February, a joint committee was established by the Government and Council of Representatives to investigate the allegations. Headed by the Minister of Defence, the committee delivered its findings to the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Dr. Salim Al-Jabouri, on 20 March. The Speaker in turn referred the report to the Council of Representatives' Security and Defense Committee for their review and comment. The Committee's findings had not been released at time of writing.*

In **Babil governorate**, on 6 January, Iraqi Police found the remains of four men in Albu Bahani area, northern Babil. The victims, all over 50 years of age, bore gunshot wounds and had been residents of Jurf al-Sakhr. They were reportedly abducted by militia members over a month earlier when ISF and militia groups reclaimed Jurf al-Sakhr from ISIL control.

## Abductions

UNAMI/OHCHR received reports of abductions involving Government-associated forces. For instance, in **Salah al-Din**, on 25 March, Shi'a militia members abducted 125 Sunni Arab residents of Naeb and Tareq Douri villages in the Albo-Khadda and Jalam areas of al-Dour. The whereabouts of the abductees, who include women and children, are unknown.

## Attacks against ethnic and religious communities and sexual violence

UNAMI/OHCHR documented instances of Government-associated forces directing attacks against specific religious communities in **Ninewa**.

*On 25 January, a convoy of Yezidi fighters and Syrian Kurdish Forces, YPG, entered the Sunni Arab village of Om al-Danabuk (also known as Sibayah) in Sinjar district of Ninewa, which is close to the Syrian border. According to sources, the fighters assembled local residents in a schoolyard and separated the men and women. Some residents were allowed to leave the village and travelled to neighbouring Bazona village. When they returned the same night, they found the bodies of ten civilians, including three women and two children. Six of the victims had been shot while the other four, including the two children and an elderly man, had been set on fire. Another eight locals were reportedly found wounded.*

*The Yezidi and YPG forces also burnt and looted the village and took around 80 vehicles and 16 tractors as well as livestock. The Kurdish Regional Government established a fact-finding committee to investigate the allegations. Sources believed that the attacks were directed against Sunni Arabs in retaliation for atrocities against the Yezidi in August 2014.*

*Since the attack, the residents of Sibayah village been displaced to al-Amalh and Bonie villages in al-Ayathiya sub-district, Tal Afar district. Reportedly, the villagers have been prevented from returning by Peshmerga.*

UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports that *Peshmerga* and associated forces, including fighters from the Jarjari Kurdish tribe, conducted retaliatory attacks against Sunni Arab civilians in the Zummar sub-district, west of Mosul, since regaining control of the area from ISIL in late October 2014. As a result, scores of Sunni Arab families have reportedly fled Zummar and relocated to Mosul or Syria.

UNAMI/OHCHR received a report that on 4 January, in **Kirkuk governorate**, Iraqi Police arrested three *Peshmerga* members and a police officer for allegedly raping a woman. The woman – an IDP

from Baghdad – was raped in front of her husband and her three daughters. The attack was linked to an extortion attempt, with the alleged perpetrators having first abducted the woman’s husband and demanded a ransom before assaulting her at her home. The four suspects are in detention awaiting trial.

## Conduct of operations

UNAMI/OHCHR received continued reports of civilian casualties attributed to airstrikes and shelling. Difficulties however arise in attributing airstrikes to specific military forces. Difficulties also arise in assessing whether principles of distinction and proportionality have been adhered to considering that ISIL deliberately bases itself in civilian areas, fails often to distinguish themselves as fighters, and use civilians and civilian infrastructure as shields.

### *Airstrikes*

In **Ninewa**, on 4 April, five members of a Shabak family, including three children, were killed when an airstrike allegedly targeted their home in al Fathiliya village in Ba’shiqa sub-district, north-eastern Mosul. On 21 April, airstrikes reportedly targeting weapons stores in al-Karam area of eastern Mosul allegedly killed three civilians. On 22 April, an airstrike reportedly targeting ISIL locations hit a civilian house in al-Bareed area of northern Mosul, killing four family members: two women, a man, and a five-year-old boy.

UNAMI/OHCHR also received unverified reports of a series of airstrikes across **Ninewa** from late February through to the end of April. On 24 February, airstrikes reportedly hit various areas in and around Mosul (Al-Ghizlani base, al-Zuhor, Bawabat al-Sham, Masarif, Muthana, and Tahreer) allegedly killing at least 11 civilians. On 28 February, it was reported that 17 civilians were reportedly killed and 23 others wounded when an airstrike impacted a residential area of northern Mosul. On 5 March, airstrikes targeting Bartilla sub-district, east of Mosul, allegedly killed 11 civilians, including three women and three children, and wounded seven others. These casualties reportedly included civilian family members of ISIL fighters. On 9 March, an airstrike hit a residential area in Tel Kaif, north of Mosul, reportedly killing eight civilians.

UNAMI/OHCHR received reports of airstrike-related civilian casualties in **Salah al-Din**. On 12 December, an airstrike allegedly hit a residential building in Mu’tasam, south of Samarra, allegedly killing seven civilians. On 2 January airstrikes targeting the villages of al-Farhaniya and al-Subaihat reportedly killed 12 civilians, including women and children, and wounded 23 others. During the week of 27 March, an airstrike in al-Mazra’a area, southern Baiji district, reportedly killed 35 civilians.

Unverified reports received from **Anbar** alleged airstrikes against civilian objects, including hospitals and mosques. On 12 December, an airstrike in the 18th kilometre area between Heet and Ramadi reportedly killed 16 members of a family fleeing Heet. On 25 December, an airstrike by an ISF helicopter allegedly killed seven members of a family in al-Kubaisa area. On 18 February, an airstrike hit a mosque in Haditha district, reportedly killing 15 worshippers and injuring two others. On 5 March, an airstrike impacted on the General Hospital of Garma, east of Fallujah, allegedly killing a doctor and wounding five healthcare personnel. And on 13 April, airstrikes in residential areas of Fallujah reportedly killed 14 civilians and wounded 17 others.

### *Shelling*

In **Diyala**, on 12 December, shelling alleged by witnesses to have been carried out by PMUs and Shi’a militias impacted in Muqdadiya, killing 17 civilians, including four women and three children, and wounding 12 others, including three women and two children.

In **Ninewa**, on 23 and 24 January, shelling by *Peshmerga* targeting ISIL positions in al-Muthana and al-Baladiyat areas of northern Mosul killed seven civilians and wounded five others. According to

local sources, one mortar round landed on a chlorine storage unit at the Musherfa water plant in north Mosul, wounding a number of civilians, including at least three children.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 19 January, three civilians were killed, including a child, and 11 others were wounded when dozens of ISF mortar rounds impacted in the villages of Abbas and Kharja in al-Alam sub-district, north of Tikrit. The mortars were allegedly launched from Tikrit University, which the Iraqi Army occupied as a base. Further, UNAMI/OHCHR received unverified reports that on 10 January, ISF shelling reportedly impacted in a residential area of Mkeisheifa, north of Samarra, allegedly killing nine civilians.

Among unverified reports from **Anbar**, on 22 January four civilians were reportedly killed and six others wounded when ISF shelling allegedly impacted in eastern and southern Fallujah. On 24 February, at least 19 civilians were killed and 28 others wounded in two separate ISF shelling incidents. The first, in Garma area, north east of Fallujah, reportedly killed at least eight civilians (including three women and a child) and wounded 10 others. The second, in central Fallujah, killed 11 civilians (including two women) and wounded 18 others (including five women and two children).

### *Destruction of civilian infrastructure and property*

According to applicable rules of international humanitarian law, civilian infrastructure and property is protected from attack unless and only for such time as it is used by a party to the conflict for military objectives. UNAMI/OHCHR has nonetheless continued to receive reports of Government-associated forces apparently deliberately destroying civilian infrastructure or failing to take adequate precautions in the planning and execution of their operations. Incident reports have increased in tandem with the reclaiming of territory from ISIL control.

*On 1 April, UNAMI/OHCHR received reports from **Salah al-Din** that members of certain militia groups allied to Government forces had begun to loot civilian homes in newly liberated areas of Tikrit. Sources claimed that a number of shops and homes had been looted and torched in Tikrit's Zuhor quarter, Itibba'a street, Arbaeen street, Qadisiya quarter, al-Asri quarter, and Shuhadaa quarter during the first 48 hours of the liberation of Tikrit City. Between the afternoon of 3 April and the morning of 4 April, an additional 700 homes were reportedly looted and burned, and 200 more were allegedly detonated – particularly those belonging to former officers of the Iraqi Army under Saddam Hussein.*

*The looting allegedly included government buildings such as the Departments of Electricity, Health, and Water Supply. Further, on 4 April, the Great Tikrit Mosque (formerly known as the Great Saddam Mosque) was set on fire.*

*On a visit to the city, UNAMI/OHCHR was unable to determine whether the damage to shops and homes had been caused during the fight to liberate the city or subsequently – although it was noted that a number of destroyed/burned houses had graffiti in Farsi painted on the boundary walls which indicated that some of these may have been burned subsequently.*

In **Diyala**, during the week of 23 January, reports were received of the deliberate destruction of four mosques – al-Ugaidat, al-Hamada, al-Tayhat, and Shaqirraq – in Muqdadiya by Shi'a militias after reclaiming the area from ISIL control. The destruction of homes was also reported, resulting in the forced displacement of locals. On 23 March, Shi'a militia members reportedly looted and destroyed eight houses in Saadiya, north of Baquba.

In **Kirkuk**, on 8 February, *Peshmerga* members allegedly destroyed a number of villages in southwest Kirkuk to prevent ISIL from using them as a base from which to attack Kirkuk city. Substantial damage was reported to the villages of Hindya Sufila, Hindya Uliya, Idress, Khabaz, and Mullah Abdullah in the southwest of Kirkuk. On 14 March, the Sunni Arab village of Shamsiya, located between Taza and Basheer, south of Kirkuk, was reportedly destroyed by Government-affiliated

forces during its recapture from ISIL control. Turkmen Shi'a PMUs from Amerli, Daquq, Taza, and Tuz allegedly participated in the operation.

In **Ninewa**, on 21 April, ISIL members attacked the village of Sahl al-Malih, southern Zummar sub-district, and killed at least five *Peshmerga* members. The following day, *Peshmerga* members reportedly expelled Sunni Arab residents from the village and looted and set fire to their homes, accusing them of supporting ISIL. The residents fled to surrounding villages, including Beer Hilo, Bougha, Broghliya, Kakhorte, Khormir, al-Muthalath, and Qasir Alosh.

## 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, yet were insufficient to warrant firm attribution.

Unidentified perpetrators caused at least 6,388 civilian casualties (1,871 killed and 4,517 wounded). This comprised 59 percent of all casualties during the reporting period. **Baghdad** was the worst affected governorate, with 5,490 casualties (1,481 killed and 4,009 wounded). This comprised 86 percent of casualties attributed to unidentified perpetrators. Tactics tended to involve the use of a variety of improvised explosive devices (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.

*On 13 February, Sheikh Qasim Sweidan Al-Janabi was travelling in a convoy with his nephew, a member of Parliament representing the Iraqi Union Coalition. The convoy was stopped at an illegal checkpoint by armed gunmen dressed in ISF uniforms as it travelled between Latifiya district, northern Baghdad, and Al-Harthiyya district, central Baghdad. Some hours later, Iraqi Police discovered the bodies of Sheikh Qasim Sweidan Al-Janabi, his son, and eight of his bodyguards in Shaab district, northeastern Baghdad. The parliamentarian was abducted but later released. The then Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq, Nikolay Mladenov, publicly condemned the killings and called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.<sup>82</sup>*

Other examples include:

- On 12 December, four members of the Khan Bani Saad City Council, including the mayor, were abducted in Baghdad and taken to an unknown location. On 16 December, Iraqi Police found the body of the mayor and another man in Husseinayah, northern Baghdad. Both had gunshot wounds.
- On 19 January, three employees of the Ministry of Oil in Taji, northern Baghdad were targeted with small arms fire. One man was reportedly killed and the other two were wounded.
- On 25 March, an official of the Organized Crime Directorate of the Ministry of Interior was shot dead in his house in Baladiyat, eastern Baghdad, by gunmen wearing military uniforms.

<sup>82</sup> See "UN Envoy condemns killing of tribal leader", [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=3290:un-envoy-condemns-killing-of-tribal-leader&Itemid=605&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=3290:un-envoy-condemns-killing-of-tribal-leader&Itemid=605&lang=en) (accessed 8 May 2015).



In **Basra**, on 3 February, unidentified gunmen killed a 30-year old woman in al-Nasir village in al-Deear district, north of Basra. The victim was shot in the back three times and died in front of her house. The attack was reportedly an honour killing. And on 17 April, in al-Sankar village of Abu al-Khaseeb district, a Sunni sheikh from al-Ghanim tribe was shot dead in front of his house. The sheikh was a prominent community member and had reportedly served in the intelligence services during the Saddam Hussein regime.

In **Diyala**, on 3 January, gunmen reportedly stormed Zaghinya village and shot dead 11 civilians. On 18 March, the head of the Khalis court and his bodyguard were shot dead on the main road between Khalis and Baquba, near Usod village. And on 20 April, unidentified gunmen travelling in vehicles allegedly opened fire at civilians in different areas of Baladruz sub-district, killing five members of the Sunni Arab community. The first attack, at a public market in Masudiya area, killed three civilians. The second attack, in a residential area near the Abu Ayyub Ansari mosque in Baladruz, killed two brothers, one of whom was a muezzin at the mosque.

In **Kirkuk**, on 23 December, the Head of the Police Anti-Terrorism Unit was shot dead while he was returning home from work. On 28 December, a community leader and member of the Arab Political Council, was abducted from his Kirkuk city home by gunmen wearing military uniforms. His body was discovered by students the next morning, handcuffed and with gunshot wounds to the head, in al-Naser area behind the Shatt al-Arab school.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 18 February, a Sunni Arab imam and another civilian were reportedly shot and killed in the Al-Askari quarter of Tuz district, east of Tikrit.

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 documented 421 unidentified bodies during the reporting period yet was unable to verify a large number of other reports. Of these bodies, 317 (75 percent) were recovered in **Baghdad**.

While the majority of unidentified bodies were men, the bodies of women and children were also recovered. In **Baghdad**, on 24 January, the bodies of two women, both with gunshot wounds to the head and chest, were found in Doura, southern Baghdad. On the same day in Tuz district of **Salah al-Din**, the bodies of two boys aged seven and nine, also with gunshot wounds, were discovered near a riverside known locally as 'mashroo'. The boys were Sunni Arabs from a local IDP community.

## Abductions

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

In **Baghdad**, on 19 February, 30 Sunni Arabs, including members of al-Janabi tribe, were abducted by gunmen wearing Federal Police uniforms at an illegal checkpoint in al-Amil, southwestern Baghdad.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 28 December, gunmen wearing military uniforms reportedly abducted five civilians in Tuz Khurmatu. And on 24 April, unidentified gunmen abducted the Deputy Head of the Sulaiman Beg City Council near the Imam Ahmed area in Tuz Khurmatu district, east of Tikrit. The gunmen reportedly contacted the man's family to demand a ransom, but his whereabouts remain unknown.

In Tikrit in **Salah al-Din**, on 2 April, unidentified gunmen claiming to be from the Prime Minister's office, reportedly dressed in military uniforms, arrived at Dhuloeiyah sub-district Police station, south of Tikrit and demanded that local police handover specific detainees. The local police surrendered two detainees, one of whom was reportedly the former Intelligence Director under the former regime.

## 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 sects and ethnicities, in homogenous and mixed communities. Restaurants, cafes, and markets, public parks and buildings, and places of worship were among places targeted. Where perpetrated by parties to the conflict, such targeted or indiscriminate attacks may amount to war crimes.

### *Improvised explosive devices*

A large number of IED-related civilian casualties were recorded in **Baghdad**. Examples include:

- On 21 January, an IED was reportedly detonated on a bus transporting employees of the Ministry of Industry. The device, detonated in Taji, northern Baghdad, killed two civilians and wounded six others
- On 30 January, an attack comprising a BBIED and an IED was conducted in a crowded market in al-Bab al-Sharji, central Baghdad. A reported 62 civilians were killed and 109 others were wounded. A number of local shops were destroyed or damaged in the blasts
- On 9 February, in Adan Square in Kadhimiya district, northern Baghdad, a suicide bomber detonated his vest near a crowded restaurant, killing 21 civilians and wounding 49 others
- On 2 April, a VBIED was detonated in Bab Al Mu'atham near the Ministry of Human Rights. It killed five civilians and wounded 17 others
- On 18 April, Baghdad was struck by a series of bombings. The blasts included VBIED detonations inside a car dealership in Habibya, eastern Baghdad, and near a market in Amil, southwestern Baghdad, and an IED at a market in Doura, southeastern Baghdad. Fifteen civilians were reported killed and another 67 were wounded in the attacks.

IED attacks also caused death and injury across other parts of Iraq. In **Basra**, on 18 March, a trailer laden with explosives was reportedly detonated at al-Taheer gate outside the Um Qasr Port, southwest Basra, killing five civilians and wounding several others. Civilian property was also damaged, including nearby trucks.

In **Diyala**, on 12 December, a suicide bomber detonated his vest inside a Shi'a mosque in Muqdadiya, killing seven civilians. On 15 January, a SVBIED was reportedly detonated outside a café in the centre of Baquba city, killing two civilians and wounding eight others inside the café. On 28 February, two vehicles packed with explosives were detonated at a vegetable market in Baladruz, killing nine civilians and wounding 30 others. Women and children were among the victims. And on 6 April, a VBIED was detonated inside the parking area of the Imam Abdullah Ibn Ali Al-Hadi Shi'a shrine in the Bawiya area east of al-Abbara sub-district. At least four civilians were killed in the blast.

In **Kirkuk**, on 21 April, an IED was detonated during a funeral service at the Said Allawi cemetery in central Kirkuk. The blast, which targeted the funeral of a PMU member killed in fighting near Basheer village, reportedly killed four civilians and wounded 17 others.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 19 December, a suicide attacker detonated his vehicle south of Samarra, killing five police officers and wounding 11 others. On 7 March, an attack comprising a BBIED and a VBIED was conducted in the vicinity of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's headquarters in Tuz district, east of Tikrit. Six civilians were killed and 37 were wounded in the blasts. On 26 March, in Al-Alam, north of Tikrit, four boys were killed when an IED planted near a water supply project detonated. All of the victims were under 10 years of age. And on 22 April, in Balad district, south of Tikrit, a suicide attacker detonated a device on a bus that was returning Shi'a pilgrims from holy shrines in Samarra. The incident took place on the anniversary of death of Imam Ali al-Hadi and allegedly killed eight people and wounded 15 others.

UNAMI/OHCHR also received unverified reports from **Anbar**. On 30 January, a suicide bomber driving a vehicle rigged with explosives reportedly killed a tribal leader and former Member of Parliament in Nikhaib district, southwest of Ramadi, along with six of the man's bodyguards. On 8 February, an unidentified armed group blew up the Meteorological Building in al-Qa'im district.

### *Shelling*

Unattributed shelling between ISF and armed groups was another major cause of civilian casualties. On 30 and 31 December, in Fallujah, **Anbar**, at least nine civilians were allegedly killed and 18 others wounded when mortar rounds exchanged between ISF and armed groups impacted in residential areas. On 19 and 20 January, six civilians were reportedly killed by shelling and small arms fire exchanged by ISF and ISIL in central Fallujah. And on 5 April, two civilians were reportedly killed and another 30 were wounded when mortar rounds impacted in Ameriyat Al Fallujah. UNAMI/OHCHR could not verify these incidents.

In **Diyala**, on 13 December, 15 civilians were reportedly killed when shelling impacted in Muqdadaya. And on 19 April, in Qara Tapa sub-district, two civilians were killed, including a 13-year-old boy, when two mortars struck a playground. Four other civilians were wounded in the incident.

In **Salah al-Din**, on 27 December, a woman was killed and four children were wounded when mortar rounds struck the residential area of Dhuluiya.

## Mass graves

Mass graves have been discovered in areas of governorates reclaimed by ISF and associated forces from ISIL control, including in **Anbar, Babil, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din 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 persons died or were killed before being buried. The identity of perpetrators is in many cases also unclear. Most graves are believed to contain the bodies of civilians and members of ISF and associated forces killed and buried by ISIL.

On 20 December *Peshmerga* discovered two mass graves in Hardan village, Shamal sub-district, Sinjar district, **Ninewa** governorate, containing the bodies of around 70 and 43 members of the Yezidi community, including women and children. UNAMI/OHCHR had previously received information that 60 Yezidi males had been executed by ISIL in Hardan village on 4 August.

In **Anbar**, on 12 March, a mass grave containing more than 40 male bodies was found southwest of Ramadi. The bodies are yet to be identified but source information suggests that they may be ISIL fighters.

In **Babil**, mass graves were discovered by ISF and PMU in Jurf al-Sakhr and Jurf al-Nasr areas following operations in late October 2014 that recovered territory from ISIL. On 22 December, ISF found a grave in Jurf al-Sakhr containing the bodies of up to 20 males with gunshot wounds. This followed the earlier discovery of a grave containing up to 35 male bodies in the same area on 16 November. On 8 April, ISF members drained a channel in Jurf al-Sakhr and discovered 20 bodies, reportedly a mix of ISF members and civilians killed by ISIL. Identity documents believed to belong to the victims were found at the site. On 13 April, ISF and PMU members discovered a mass grave in Sneideej village of Jurf al-Sakhr containing an unconfirmed number of bodies believed to be civilians killed by ISIL during its occupation of the area. And on 29 April, ISF and PMU members found a mass

grave in al-Hajeer area of Jurf al-Nasr district which reportedly contained six *Sahwa* members killed by ISIL.

In **Diyala**, ISF and associated forces discovered mass graves in areas of Khanaqin district reclaimed from ISIL in late November 2014. Four gravesites have been found in Khanaqin to date: three in Saadiya sub-district (in Kobashi, Cobra Camp and Tal Suaiman), and the fourth near Tahaddi checkpoint in Jalawla sub-district. The Mass Graves Section of the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs exhumed 40 bodies between November 2014 and mid-January 2015. A number of male bodies were recovered with gunshot wounds to the head. This work was handed to the Government of Iraq's Ministry of Human Rights, which visited the sites with the Diyala Department of Health on 21-22 January, recovering five additional bodies. After a break due to military operations in the area, work on excavating the mass graves resumed on 22-23 April during which a Ministry of Human Rights and Ministry of Health team recovered a further 21 bodies in Khanaqin. To date, a total of 66 bodies have been recovered. According to the Mayor of Khanaqin, the killings occurred during ISIL occupation.

In **Kirkuk**, on 14 March, PMU and *Peshmerga* members discovered a mass grave in Shamsiya village, nearby Basheer village, south of Kirkuk, after reclaiming the village from ISIL control. The grave reportedly contained the bodies of 21 Turkmen Shi'a PMU members killed by ISIL during clashes in July 2014.

In **Ninewa**, a number of mass graves containing Yezidi community members were discovered in Sinjar district in western Mosul after it was reclaimed from ISIL in October 2014. On 20 December, two graves were found by *Peshmerga* in Hardan village in Shamal sub-district of Sinjar district. The first reportedly contained 70 bodies and the second 43 bodies, including women and children. On 30 December, media reported the discovery of a further nine mass graves in Sinjar town containing an undetermined number of bodies. On 2 February, a grave was found in Snune sub-district of Sinjar district, near the Syrian border. It reportedly contained 16 bodies and the remains of another 35 bodies including women, children, and elderly persons, all of whom had been killed by ISIL as confirmed by surviving witnesses. On 7 February, local media reported that Iraqi authorities excavated a mass grave in Bardiyah village in Zummar sub-district of Sinjar, allegedly uncovering the remains of 23 Yezidi community members. And on 11 February, another mass grave was reportedly discovered in Zummar sub-district which allegedly contained the remains of a further 37 Yezidi, some of whom were found shackled and blindfolded.

In **Salah al-Din**, mass graves have been discovered since ISF retook al-Alam, east of Tikrit, and Albo-Ajeel, south of Tikrit, from ISIL in March 2015. In Albo-Ajeel, 15 bodies have been recovered. The Secretary General of the Council of Ministers of the Government of Iraq and the Salah al-Din Governor subsequently announced that preliminary DNA tests confirmed that some bodies were al-Jubor tribal fighters from al-Alam sub-district who had been captured and killed by ISIL.<sup>83</sup>

Throughout April, a number of mass graves were uncovered at the former presidential palaces in Tikrit, which were believed to contain victims of the Camp Speicher massacre (see Annex 1).<sup>84</sup> By 24 April, 164 bodies had been recovered at this complex. Excavations continue. The Ministry of Human Rights is leading forensic investigations with the support of the Medical Legal Institute and international organisations.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Statement of 28 April 2015, <http://cabinet.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=6108> (accessed in Arabic 6 May 2015).

<sup>84</sup> Annex 1: Report on the Camp Speicher incident, Salah al-Din, on and around 12 June 2014.

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.humanrights.gov.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=4456> (accessed in Arabic 27 April 2015).

## Conclusions and recommendations

The impact of the current 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, most impacting Sunni Arab IDPs. Those who have returned to their areas of origin as territory is retaken from ISIL are encountering continued insecurity, large scale destruction of civilian infrastructure, severely impacted access to basic services, and booby-traps and explosive remnants of war.

UNAMI/OHCHR is extremely concerned at the situation of civilians in areas of ISIL control. Of particular concern are the approximately 3,500 women, girls and some men predominantly from the Yazidi community but also a number of other ethnic and religious communities, who remain in ISIL captivity. ISIL killing of civilians continues unabated, and the group continues to target deliberately civilians and civilian infrastructure in its campaign of violence and terrorism and employs tactics, such as IEDs and possibly other methods, which are indiscriminate in their impact or are unlawful. 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. ISIL continued to deliberately target ethnic and religious communities for a range of abuses and crimes as part of its policy of suppression, expulsion or elimination of those communities, and employed sexual violence as a tactic of war. ISIL has also killed members of its own group who have refused to fight and captured members of Government forces. Furthermore, ISIL has continued its campaign of destruction of civilian objects and places of cultural or religious significance. These acts constitute violations of Iraqi and international law, and together some of them 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, and 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 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 that appeared to deliberately target civilians or were carried out heedless of their impact on civilians.

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

### **All parties to the conflict:**

1. All parties to the ongoing non international armed conflict must strictly comply with applicable international humanitarian law and 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 safely and with dignity leave areas affected by violence.
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.

**Government of Iraq:**

1. Ensure that all associated armed forces fighting against ISIL are operating under Government 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. 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 resident in those areas or voluntarily returning are met.
4. Ensure that survivors of human rights violations, particularly survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, receive adequate support, including psycho-social support and medical care.
5. Ensure the protection of mass graves along with appropriate care and measures to excavate such sites and to exhume and identify the remains of the dead, 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 to fully investigate and determine the circumstances that led to the deaths of the individuals concerned and ensure that members of victims and missing persons should be provided with all available information and adequate and timely financial, material, and other assistance.
6. 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 and lead to effective remedies for victims.
7. Ensure the rights of all victims to an effective remedy, which includes the right to equal and effective access to justice and adequate, effective, and prompt reparation for the harm suffered.
8. Introduce amendments to the Iraqi Criminal Law to grant domestic courts jurisdiction over international crimes committed in Iraq.
9. Accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As an immediate step, accept the exercise of the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction with respect to the specific situation facing the country pursuant to Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute.

**International community:**

10. The international community, including the United Nations Security Council and the Human Rights Council, should continue to closely follow the situation 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.
11. Provide the Government of Iraq with all necessary assistance in its identification, excavation, and investigation of mass graves.

## Annex 1: Report on the Camp Speicher incident

### Methodology

This report is based on 12 phone interviews conducted from 8 to 19 January 2015 by the UNAMI Human Rights Office (UNAMI-HRO) with survivors of the Camp Speicher incident.

### Background

Camp Speicher (the Camp) is a former American military base that is officially called *Shahid Majid Al-Tamimi* base. It is located north of Tikrit, west of the Tigris River. On 12 June 2014, it was host to soldiers and air force trainees and, according to one interviewee, civilian workers. Witnesses provided a range of the number of personnel they believed were present at the Camp that morning, from 2,000 to 6,000, although given the size of the camp it is not remarkable that ordinary soldiers would not have known the precise number. Some of the soldiers related how they had been moved to the Camp from the Salah al-Din operations base, which was reportedly deemed less safe by commanding officers, on 10 June, 11 June, and some even said that new soldiers were still arriving on the morning of 12 June.

On Thursday, 12 June 2014, a large number of Iraqi soldiers left the Camp dressed in civilian clothes and were captured by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and affiliated armed groups soon thereafter. Information quickly emerged that ISIL and affiliated armed groups had captured large numbers of soldiers from Camp Speicher and were in the process of killing them. ISIL subsequently posted photos and video on social media of the men in civilian clothing being paraded, loaded onto trucks, and then killed in different locations. The exact number of those captured and killed remains uncertain, as does the fate and whereabouts of many of them. ISIL claims to have killed 1,700 captured soldiers, a figure which is consonant with the reports of survivors and information provided by Government sources.

### 12 June 2014 massacre<sup>86</sup>

Soldiers recounted that during the morning of 12 June 2014 military commanders at the Camp ordered personnel to leave. They were specifically told to do so unarmed and in civilian clothing. Some of the interviewees reported that one officer told them not to be afraid because the road had been secured by Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and several local tribes. Another interviewee stated that he was told by an officer that an arrangement to allow them safe passage had been reached with the local tribes. Some soldiers stated that they were instructed by their officers to take two weeks leave and then report to the Camp Taji ISF base north of Baghdad.<sup>87</sup>

One interviewee reported that he saw some of the officers leaving the Camp on the morning of 12 June in civilian cars; another reported that in the area of the camp he was located, it appeared as if all military personnel had abandoned the Camp in a hurry. Two interviewees added that members of

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<sup>86</sup> This report uses the working definition of massacre adopted by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which is ‘an intentional mass killing of civilians not directly participating in hostilities, or hors de combat fighters, by organized armed forces or groups in a single incident, in violation of international human rights or humanitarian law.’ Refer ‘Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/22/59), 5 February 2013 at para. 42, [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColSyria/A.HRC.22.59\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColSyria/A.HRC.22.59_en.pdf) (accessed 7 May 2015).

<sup>87</sup> Also known as Camp Cooke.

the Golden Division<sup>88</sup> posted at the Camp's gate tried to stop some of the soldiers from leaving, but were unable to do so due to the large number of soldiers who were trying to go.

Interviewees provided differing accounts of how they left the Camp. Some said they left in private cars. Others said that they were driven to the main roads (leading to Baghdad and Samarra) by other soldiers or local tribesmen. From this point many related that they began to walk but were stopped at checkpoints manned by ISIL. Interviewees stated that ISIL members were of various nationalities, including Afghan, Egyptian, Iraqi, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, and Qatari. Another interviewee stated that he saw around 200 armed ISIL fighters in al-Aqwas area, but he was not aware of the number of fighters in other locations.

One interviewee related how he pretended to be Sunni and was released from a checkpoint. Others reported that some of their fellow soldiers were caught and killed at the checkpoints, including by being shot or stabbed with knives. Others who were captured related how those not killed immediately were loaded onto trucks and taken to different locations, including the former presidential palaces (the palace)<sup>89</sup> in Tikrit, Tikrit University and, according to one interviewee, unspecified 'tribal areas.'

At the palace, witnesses recounted how ISIL members separated Shi'a from Sunni captives, and military personnel from civilian workers. The Sunni captives, both military and civilian, were then released. Some Shi'a captives claimed to be Sunni in the hope of being released and performed prayers as evidence. One interviewee claimed that 65 such men were killed when they failed to convince the ISIL members that they were in fact Sunni.

Two interviewees claimed that they and other captives were held in what they described as "holes" at the palace. An atmosphere of chaos reportedly reigned in the palace: some captives were beheaded or killed by other means; others were severely beaten. One interviewee claimed to have seen a pile of decapitated bodies in a bathroom.

According to two interviewees, ISIL members took a large number of captives to a valley near the Tigris River and shot them dead. The bodies were dumped into large graves dug out with bulldozers or thrown into the river. The interviewees survived by pretending to be dead in the pile of corpses. ISIL killed hundreds of captives this way, including at a place called "al-Aqwas".<sup>90</sup> Another claimed that despite having been shot and thrown into the river, he survived, and that he remained in the river pretending to be dead for a number of days until he was helped by villagers further downstream.

Four interviewees escaped after being stopped at ISIL checkpoints. ISIL shot at those who fled and some of these soldiers were killed. One of those who managed to run away reported that people in the nearby villages did not want to help him due to fear of ISIL; another maintained that on the following day, Friday, 13 June, local residents informed him that they had been instructed at the mosque not to help members of the "al-Maliki Army". Another interviewee claimed that some local people shot at the soldiers from the rooftops of their houses. Other interviewees who had escaped from the palace, however, said that they received support from local residents. In one case a soldier was given clean clothes and money and taken to al-Jubor tribe members, who gave him a false identification card with a Sunni-sounding name by which he was able to escape.

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<sup>88</sup> The Golden Division is the Iraqi Special Operation Force. It belongs to the Counter-Terrorism Agency, which is under the authority of Prime Minister (the General Commander of the Armed Forces). See <http://www.isof-ig.com/index.php/about.html> (accessed in Arabic 6 May 2015).

<sup>89</sup> The former presidential palaces are located along the west bank of the Tigris River. The complex contains several buildings. For simplicity, 'the palace' is used here but could in fact refer to a number of buildings as it is not clear from interviews which palace(s) were used by ISIL.

<sup>90</sup> Possibly an area in northern Tikrit, near Tikrit University and the highway to Mosul.



## Demands for truth and justice by relatives

Relatives of Camp Speicher victims and missing persons have staged demonstrations across Iraq, demanding action by Iraqi authorities. In Baghdad, on 17 August, up to 100 relatives demonstrated outside the Ministry of Defence in Karrada area, next to the Green Zone. On 25 August, up to 150 demonstrators from Dhi-Qar, al-Muthanna, Maysan, and Diwaniya governorates met with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, members of the Council of Representatives, and heads of political blocs. This was followed by a 2 September demonstration, in which protestors entered the Council of Representatives building, resulting in the evacuation of members and employees of the Council of Representatives. Further demonstrations were staged outside the Green Zone on 16 September, 14 October, and 17 November, and in Tahrir Square on 2 April.

Demonstrations were also staged in Babil, Dhi-Qar, and Diwaniya governorates. On 28 August, a medical team from the Ministry of Defence, coordinating with the Ministry of Human Rights and the Forensic Department of Dhi-Qar Health Directorate, visited Nassiriyah to take blood samples from relatives for use in the DNA analysis of the remains of Camp Speicher victims. It was further reported on 27 August that then Prime Minister al-Maliki ordered that the salaries of missing soldiers continue to be paid.<sup>91</sup>

## Response by Iraq authorities

In a statement issued on 3 September 2014, the then Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq called on Iraqi authorities to conduct a public and independent investigation into the fate of the Camp Speicher soldiers and other persons killed or missing.<sup>92</sup> According to local media, the representative of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, in a Friday prayer speech delivered in Karbala on 5 September, called on the Council of Representatives to investigate the Camp Speicher events.<sup>93</sup>

On 15 September, the High Judicial Council issued arrest warrants for persons suspected of involvement in the Camp Speicher massacre.<sup>94</sup> The Council conceded that apprehending suspects in ISIL-controlled territory would be difficult but confirmed that *in absentia* trials would proceed, travel bans imposed, and assets frozen. The High Judicial Council assigned the Speicher case to one of the Central Criminal Court of Iraq's (CCCI) investigative courts.<sup>95</sup> On 11 November, the CCCI investigative court announced the arrest of several suspects who had allegedly admitted to their involvement in the massacre.<sup>96</sup> At the time of writing, the CCCI is finalising its judicial investigation, before referral to trial. On 4 April, it was announced that the Chief Judge of the CCCI had visited the crime scene.<sup>97</sup> It also announced that provincial courts had been empowered to receive Camp Speicher related claims, which at 11 November numbered around 400 claims in total.

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.alsumaria.tv/news/109158/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%81-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%A8-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%8A/ar>;

<http://www.iraqpressagency.com/ar/?m=2014&paged=306&lang=ar> (accessed 19 May 2015).

<sup>92</sup> Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, [http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=2550:un-envoy-calls-for-investigation-into-camp-speicher-massacre&Itemid=605&lang=en](http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2550:un-envoy-calls-for-investigation-into-camp-speicher-massacre&Itemid=605&lang=en) (accessed 6 May 2015).

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.sistani.org/arabic/in-news/24955/>;  
<http://www.alsumaria.tv/news/109932/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AC%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%82/ar> (accessed 19 May 2015).

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.iraqia.iq/view.2543/> (accessed in Arabic 6 May 2015).

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.iraqia.iq/view.2542/> (accessed in Arabic 6 May 2015).

<sup>96</sup> <http://iraqia.iq/view.2601/> (accessed in Arabic 6 May 2015).

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.iraqia.iq/view.2784/> (accessed 18 May 2015).

Non-judicial bodies have also conducted investigations. On 21 September, the Council of Representatives' Security and Defence Committee established a parliamentary investigative committee into Camp Speicher.<sup>98</sup> Based on testimony collected from several military officers, officials, witnesses, and representatives of the missing men, the investigative committee determined the number of missing men to be 1,721. It further determined that 50 well-armed ISIL members had captured these men. The investigative committee identified a series of failings by Iraqi military personnel at Camp Speicher on 12 June, ranging from commanders to lower ranking officers, and requested the Legal Directorate of the Ministry of Defence to complete an investigation. On 10 March, the Council of Representatives discussed the investigative committee's report.

## Mass graves

On 31 March, Prime Minister al-Abadi publicly congratulated ISF and Popular Mobilization Units on reclaiming large parts of Tikrit from ISIL control. In the following days, local media reported the discovery of mass graves in the former Presidential palaces. According to Ministry of Human Rights investigators, 12 graves had been uncovered and 164 bodies exhumed by 30 April. The bodies had the same clothing worn by soldiers who appeared in ISIL videos of the incident released in June 2014. The remains were transferred to Baghdad for DNA testing against samples collected from family members of missing soldiers. Other graves have been discovered in al-Dour and Balad, which may also contain the remains of Speicher victims. As work to excavate mass graves and identify the bodies is proceeding slowly, these and other sites should be properly secured to preserve evidence.

## Conclusions

On the basis of information gathered by UNAMI-HRO, on 12 June 2014 Iraqi security force personnel of Camp Speicher, largely consisting of ISF members but including some civilians, left the Camp and were captured by ISIL and affiliated armed groups. The exact number of individuals captured and killed is unknown, although information provided by witnesses, accumulated reports of families whose relatives had been posted at Camp Speicher and who went missing on 12 June, and Government sources, indicate that the number of personnel killed was around 1700. From witness testimonies it is apparent that the personnel were captured by ISIL and affiliated armed groups at a number of different locations, mostly at checkpoints controlled by ISIL or affiliated armed groups. Once captured, they were transferred to a number of sites, including the palace in Tikrit city and a valley near the Tigris River. Eyewitnesses confirmed that Sunni personnel were freed. The information indicates that nearly all of those killed were members of the Shi'a community. A significant number were taken to a location near the Palace in a valley near the river and systematically shot as they lay in trenches that had been dug by bulldozers. Others were taken to a location near the river and were shot there, and their bodies thrown into the river. Personnel were killed in a number of other locations.

Subsequent to the liberation of the area around Tikrit in March and April 2015, a total of 12 mass graves have been located at time of writing containing a large number of victims, and substantiating many of the accounts documented in relation to this event.

Based on the testimonies of eyewitnesses and survivors, information from family members and other sources of information, HRO/OHCHR has found that on the 12 June 2014, a large number of military personnel stationed at Camp Speicher military base in Salah al-Din governorate were ordered by their commanding officers to leave the base and to return to their homes. A number of soldiers were assured by their officers that the roads were safe or that their safe passage had been negotiated with local tribes' people. Why the commanders ordered these personnel to leave the

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<sup>98</sup> The decision of the Security and Defense committee was taken in compliance with a decision by the Council of Representatives on 3 September 2014.

camp is unknown. Perhaps 2000 or more personnel left Camp Speicher dressed in civilian clothes and without weapons in obedience to the orders of their commanding officers. While it appears that some soldiers manning the gates tried to prevent them, the large number of personnel leaving the base meant that they could not be prevented. Subsequently a large number of personnel were captured by ISIL and/or associated armed groups and some by local tribes' people, either because they were afraid of ISIL if they did not do so or because they were actively cooperating with the group. A number of those captured were killed where they were captured, while larger numbers were transferred to a number of sites, including the former Palaces of Saddam Hussein near Tikrit, the university of Tikrit and tribal areas. Subsequently, captives who were Sunni were separated from the others and were released. Those remaining were then taken to a number of locations, including near the Palace of Saddam Hussein and an area called al-Aqwas where around 1700 were murdered by being shot and their bodies buried in mass graves or thrown in the river.

The murder of 1700 unarmed ISF personnel constitutes a grave violation of Iraqi law and constitutes a war crime and crime against humanity. IHL prohibits attacks against persons *hors de combat*, which include those in the power of an adverse party. The intentional killing of such persons amount to war crimes.

UNAMI-HRO supports the efforts of the Government of Iraq and political and judicial bodies to determine the fate and whereabouts of the missing, and to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators and other persons who contributed to the massacre through acts or omissions. However, there has been little information forthcoming to assuage public grief and anger over the incident, and there has been little transparency in the processes of inquiry. UNAMI /OHCHR reminds the Government of Iraq that these processes must respect international due process and fair trial standards. Accordingly, UNAMI/OHCHR calls on the Government of Iraq to institute a transparent, public, coronial, judicial investigation of the events surrounding the Camp Speicher massacre, to determine, inter alia, the fate of the mission service personnel, the location of their bodies, the gathering of DNA and other evidence so that bodies of those killed can be identified and returned to their families for burial, and the collection of evidence that may indicate the identity of the perpetrators of this crime. Furthermore, the inquiry should determine the circumstances as to how and why these servicemen came to leave Camp Speicher and whether there was any failures of command, negligence, criminal acts, or individual liability that may have contributed to this tragedy, and to ensure that appropriate action according to law is taken in relation thereto.

UNAMI-HRO also welcomes steps taken by Iraqi authorities to support Camp Speicher survivors and the relatives of victims and the missing. These steps should include adequate and timely financial, material and other assistance, and information on how to access such support.

## Annex 2: Glossary

<b>BBIED</b>	Body-borne improvised explosive device
<b>CCCI</b>	Central Criminal Court of Iraq
<b>IED</b>	Improvised explosive device
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ISF</b>	Iraqi Security Forces
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
<b>KR-I</b>	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PMU</b>	Popular Mobilization Units
<b>SVBIED</b>	Suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAMI</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>VBIED</b>	Vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
<b>YPG</b>	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel

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