



Weekly Iraq .Xplored report

8 April 2017

Prepared by Risk Analysis Team, Iraq

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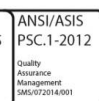


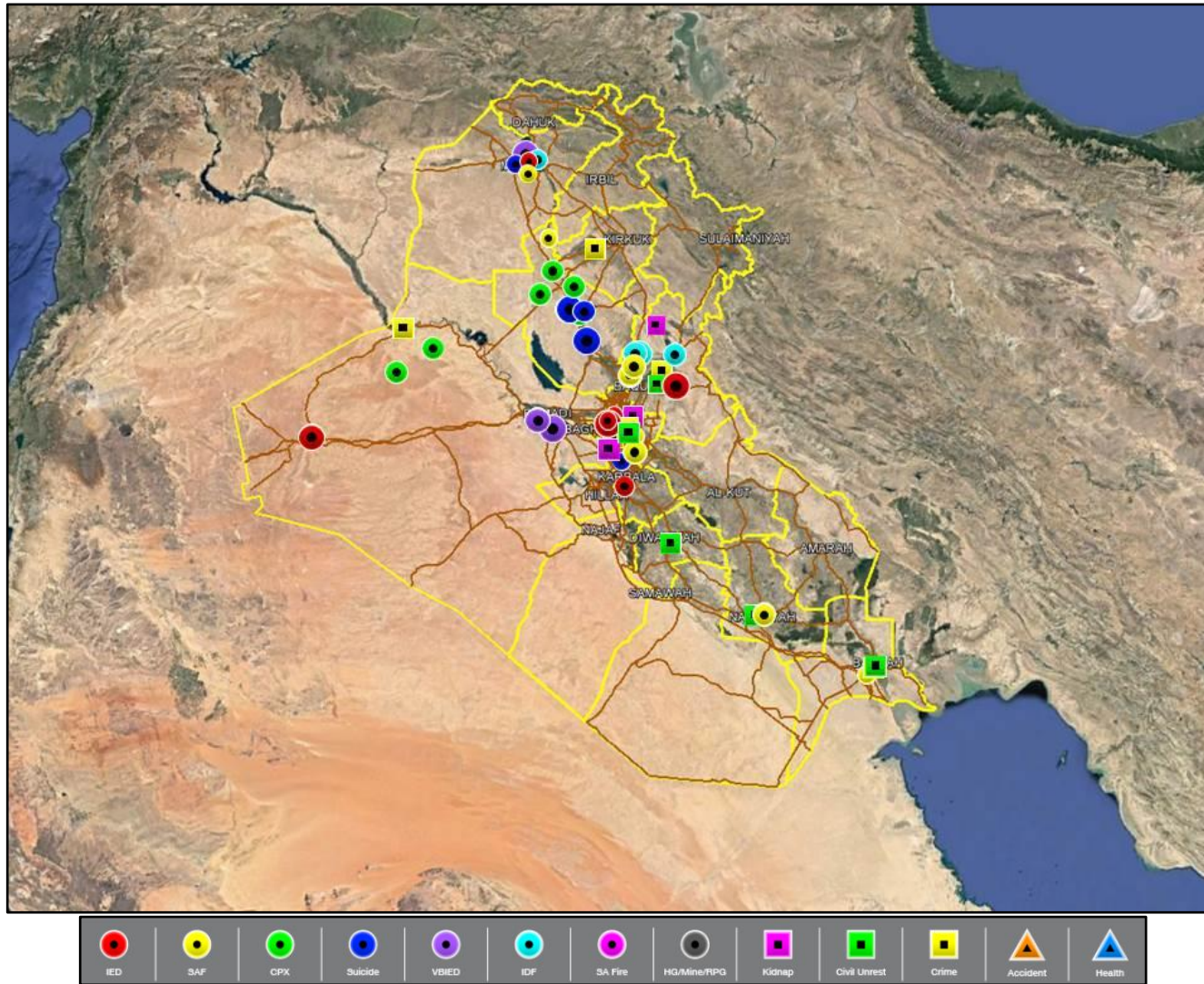
TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
ACTIVITY MAP	3
OUTLOOK	4
Short term outlook	4
Medium to long term outlook	4
SIGNIFICANT EVENTS	5
After Mosul, ISF focus will switch to Kirkuk, Tal Afar, Sinjar and Euphrates River Valley	5
Erdogan: Next phase of Euphrates Shield to include Iraq	5
Turkish 'Operation Tigris Shield' to target PKK locations in Sinjar	5
THREAT MAP	6
LATEST DEVELOPMENTS	7
Mosul Update	7
Security	8
Political	9
Foreign Affairs	9
Economy	9
WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT	10
Countrywide Military/Security Situation	10
ACRONYM LIST	16
GARDAWORLD INFORMATION SERVICES	17
GARDAWORLD	17

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ACTIVITY MAP



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OUTLOOK**Short term outlook**

- As the Mosul operation continues, there is a heightened risk of high-profile attacks in permissive areas across Iraq including Baghdad, Salah ad Din and Diyala, as IS retains intent to increase sectarian tensions and force a redeployment of ISF resources away from Mosul. This is underlined by recent VBIED attacks in Shia-dominated areas of Baghdad City as well as multiple lower level IEDs, especially in eastern Baghdad. With ethno-sectarian tensions currently heightened in Kirkuk, there is also an increased possibility of high-profile attacks in Kirkuk City, although IS capability to conduct such an attack is assessed as less than in those areas with a majority Sunni demographic. An increase in attacks can also be expected in eastern Anbar, in particular the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah, as evidenced by recent high-profile attacks in the region.
- The security footprint and other local factors in the south, particularly in Baghdad, will severely constrain IS ability to mount sustained complex attacks of the sort seen in the north and the west of the country, though the threat from low-level IED and SAF attacks remains. There may be an increased level of ISF deliberate actions to disrupt and deter insurgent and criminal activity during the Mosul operation, especially in the northern areas of Baghdad province.

Medium to long term outlook

- In the absence of concerted engagement with the Sunni population in areas currently under IS control, it is possible that the post-IS security environment will be characterized by sectarian flash points between radical Sunni tribes and Shia militia groups especially in Nineveh province and western Kirkuk. Limited reporting has already indicated displaced Sunni families being advised or directed to leave Kirkuk. It is almost certain that in areas retaken by ISF, an insurgency will be established by Sunni insurgents including remaining IS affiliates.
- Low-level incidents related to criminality, personal disputes and tribal tensions are likely to continue in Basra and the southern provinces in general. This is assessed to be facilitated by large segments of the security forces currently being involved in operations to retake IS-held areas of the country. In the long-term, there will be tensions driven by the return of Shia militia factions, who will expect material and social rewards for the contribution in the national campaign against IS.
- While the Mosul operation has refocused attention away from Abadi's reform program, the risk of politically motivated demonstrations against corruption in front of government institutions remains extant.



SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**After Mosul, ISF focus will switch to Kirkuk, Tal Afar, Sinjar and Euphrates River Valley**

The chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Corps Gen. Joe Dunford stated on April 4 that after Mosul, the campaign against IS will focus on Tal Afar, Kirkuk and the Euphrates River valley near the Iraqi-Syrian border.

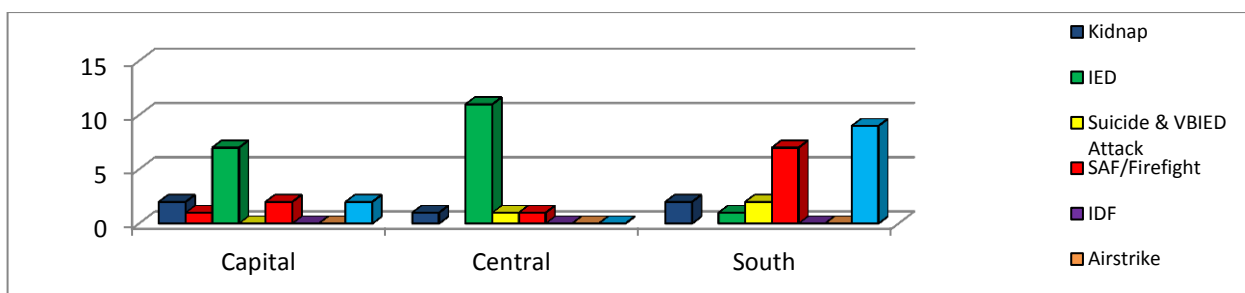
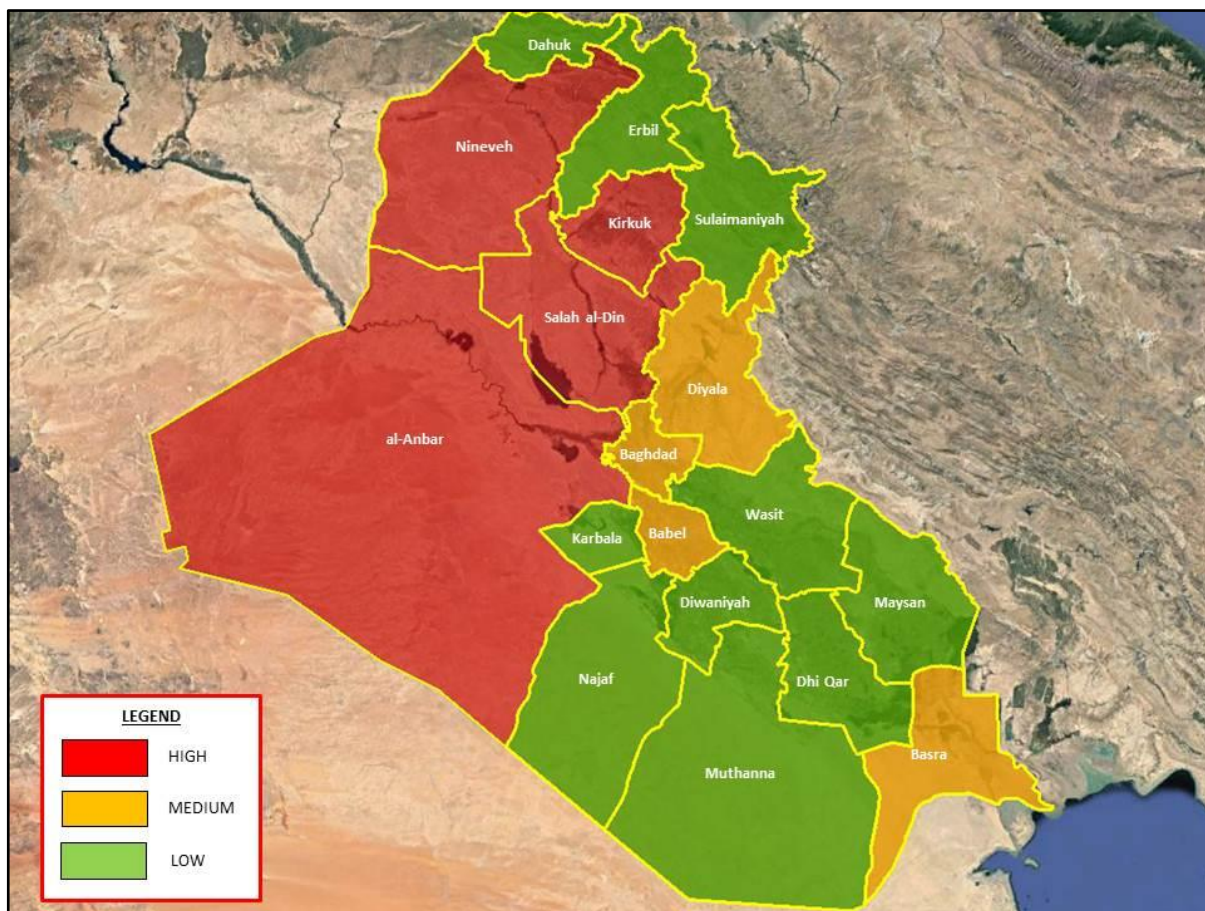
Erdogan: Next phase of Euphrates Shield to include Iraq

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated on April 5 that the next stages of the recently concluded Turkish military's "Euphrates Shield" counter-terrorism operation will be broader, suggesting that Turkey would move on areas in Iraq.

Turkish 'Operation Tigris Shield' to target PKK locations in Sinjar

Further to reporting on April 5 that Turkey may extend its counter terrorist operations into Iraq itself, Turkish press is reporting that President Erdogan is planning to launch a new cross border military incursion to oust the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) from the Sinjar region of northern Iraq "in the next few weeks".

THREAT MAP



LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Mosul Update

Tactical Update

Iraqi Federal Police (IFP) units continue operations in Old Mosul, whilst CTS forces have reportedly made progress in the west of the city, claiming control of al-Maghrib and al-Yarmouk districts situated east of Highway 1. On April 3, CTS declared they had cleared Rajm al-Hadid district of western Mosul, following reports IS militants had recaptured parts of the district after launching a counter-attack on Sunni tribal militia positions. IS have continued to robustly contest IS advances, with ISF sources cited as saying IS 'snipers' were a major problem in the Old City, though Iraqi Federal Police (IFP) are understood to have killed 'tens' of IS militants in fighting for the district.

West of the city, ISF have claimed control of Old Rayhaniya, New Rayhaniya and Ghzelwa villages, north of the Atshana mountains. ISF and coalition strikes have continued to attrit ISF ranks and leadership throughout the operational area, with reports of further senior figures of Iraqi and foreign nationality being killed or fleeing the city. An Iraqi attack helicopter crashed in east Mosul after being struck by a rocket fired from the west of the city,

The humanitarian crisis continues to deepen. The UN reports a continuous flow of IDPs from west Mosul to Hammam al-Alil as Prime Minister Abadi chaired a meeting of the National Security Council to discuss progress in Mosul and the humanitarian situation. Over 300,000 have now been displaced since the commencement of operations to retake Mosul on 17 October. Iraqi Federal Police (IFP) have opened safe passages in Old Mosul to allow all civilians to leave, and the Iraqi Air Force has dropped 'millions' of leaflets, extolling civilians to stay in their homes and avoid IS locations that are likely to be targeted. Civilian casualties continue to be attributed to IS, ISF and coalition actions. In Yarmouk a tribal Sheikh, his wife and son's wife were reportedly killed by an airstrike targeting a militant on their roof, while a family of three were reportedly killed in a coalition airstrike in New Mosul, east of the Old City. IS have reportedly killed dozens of civilians attempting to flee Mosul in recent days, hanging several dead bodies from electricity poles, according to Iraqi officials and witnesses cited by international media.

Iraqi premier says "victory" achieved in Mosul

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has hailed the success of Mosul operation against IS, saying that the ISF are in the last quarter of the city. In a TV interview on April 3, Abadi stated "Victory has been achieved; the outskirts of Mosul, which IS controlled and used as a starting point, were the most difficult but we have liberated these areas completely.

New atrocities by IS in Mosul

IS have reportedly killed dozens of civilians attempting to flee Mosul in recent days, hanging several dead bodies from electricity poles, Iraqi officials and witnesses said Friday

Iraqi forces reportedly kill IS "Minister of War"

Iraqi forces have killed Islamic State's 'Minister of War' in an air strike in the western province of Anbar. The Iraqi military intelligence service said warplanes targeted an IS military hideout in the Al-Qa'im area, along the Syrian border, killing Iyad al-Jumayli (also known as Abu Yahya). The intelligence service added that al-Jumayli is also a second in command to IS chief, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

ISF open safe passages from Mosul Old City; finds mass graves

The Iraqi Federal Police have opened safe passages to evacuate all inhabitants from the Old City in western Mosul. Federal Police Chief Raid Shaker Gawdat said that the densely-populated Old City "will be completely emptied of residents in preparation for a large-scale military offensive" against IS. Meanwhile, Iraqi security forces have found 20 civilians bodies during operations near Mosul. The corpses belong to women and children

whom IS executed as they were trying to flee the western side of Mosul.

IS claims west Mosul hospital continuously targeted by enemy fire

IS has issued a video accusing Iraqi forces and the US-led coalition of continuously targeting a medical complex in western Mosul. The two-minute video, which was produced by IS's news outlet Amaq, showed footage of thick smoke rising up in the sky allegedly from the complex, damage to buildings and helicopters firing.

Security

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Iraqi PM hails army forces as "most powerful" in Middle East

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has hailed the role of the forces of the Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) in fighting Islamic State, describing them as "becoming the number one force in the Middle East".

National Security Council submits interim security report to PM

Prime Minister al-Abadi reportedly chaired a meeting of the Ministerial Council for National Security on April 2 during which the Council submitted a 'semi-annual' report which assessed stability in Iraq's provinces and also addressed some of the weaknesses therein. The Council also discussed the progress of the Mosul operation and the current IDP situation in Nineveh province.

Iraqi minister says 45 per cent of displaced return home

Iraqi Minister of Migration and Displaced Jasim al-Jaf has stated that 45 per cent of those displaced from Mosul have returned to their homes. He also hailed the UN humanitarian efforts to provide assistance for the displaced. Al-Jaf made these statements after visiting Hasan Sham refugee camp in western Mosul with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Up to 50 years to clear UXO from Iraq and Syria

The United Nations says it will take 40 to 50 years to clear the mines, improvised explosive devices and other unexploded ordnance from Iraq and Syria.

IS releases defiant message

Islamic State group has released a message of defiance from its spokesman Abu-al-Hasan al-Muhajir saying that the jihadist group will be victorious despite setbacks. But, according to the BBC, the title of the audio message telling Muslims to "be patient" and aspects of its content, betrayed its tone of confidence and indicated that the group was desperate to get soldiers, sympathisers and Sunni Muslims to rally around IS at this critical stage of its existence.

Political**Abadi defends Iraqi Shia militia, warns against divisions**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has once again defended the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMU). In statements aired live by state-run Iraqia News TV on April 1, Abadi warned against internal divisions and urged Iraqis to keep the Shia militia away from the political struggles.

CENTCOM Commander voices concerns over PMUs

US Army General Joseph Votel, US CENTCOM Commander expressed his concerns about the presence of the 100,000 plus Shia paramilitary forces in Iraq. In a statement to the media on April 2, Votel said "I share in your concern about Iran and their long-term intentions in Iraq - and certainly with the 100,000 plus Shia militia group members (Popular Mobilisation Units) on the ground there, this is an extraordinarily big concern as we move forward".

Abadi says Iraq fights corruption despite challenges

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has said that "Iraq has come a long way in fighting corruption despite the challenges it faces, namely the war on terror and the drop in oil prices". According to Iraqi press, Abadi told a workshop on combating corruption that the government works to bridge the gap between officials and citizens as part of the transparency policy that aims at easing the burdens suffered by the poor.

Foreign Affairs**Iraq says "rushed actions" in Syria negatively affect counter-terror efforts**

Iraq's Foreign Ministry has said that "interventions and rushed actions could have a negative effect on counter-terrorism efforts", in a statement that followed a US strike on a Syrian air base. "Iraq expresses concern over the gravity of the escalation in the ongoing conflict in Syria without reaching an agreement on a comprehensive plan to end it".

Iraq to supply Kuwait with gas soon

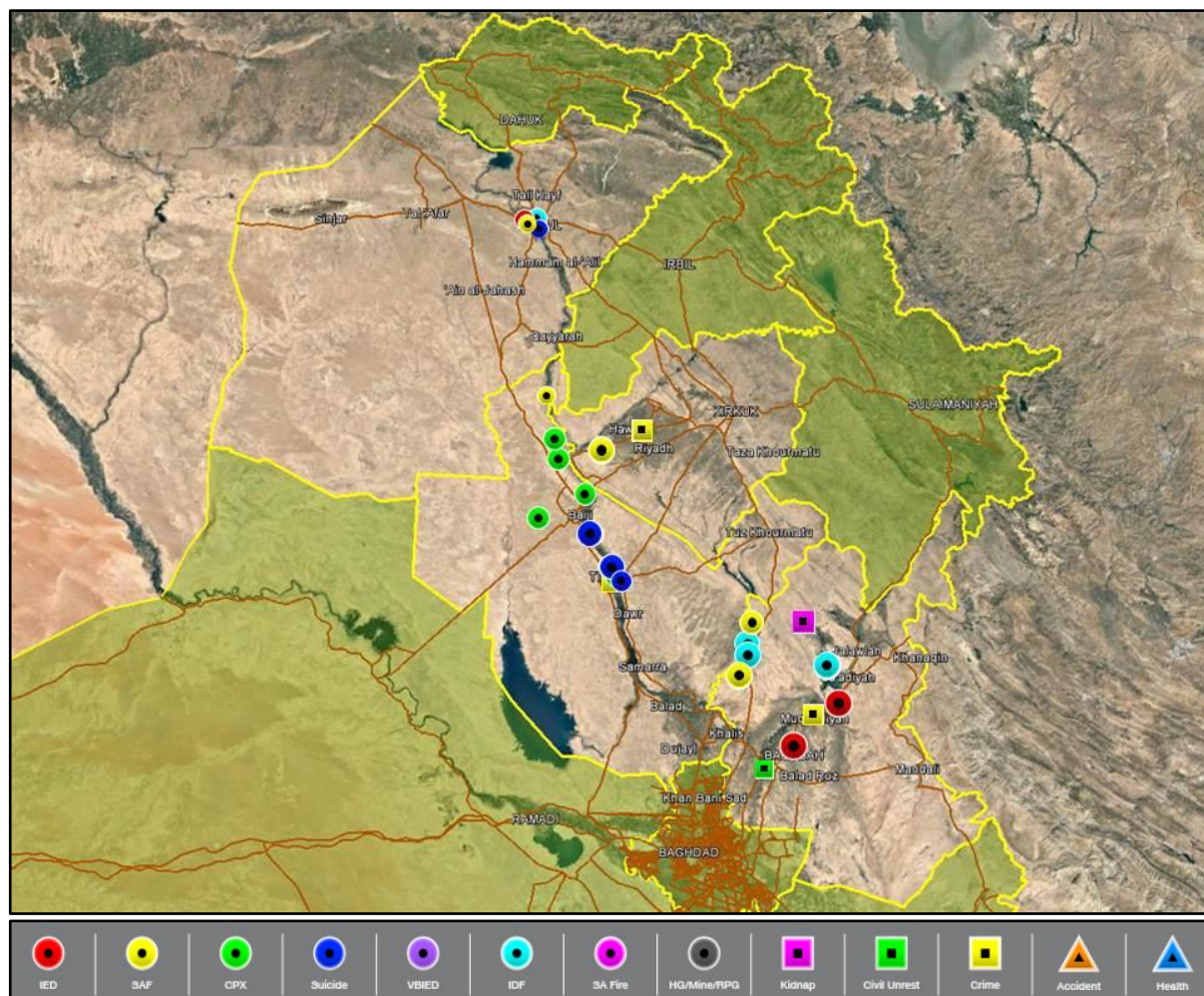
Iraqi Oil Minister Jabar al-Luaibi has stated that his country will soon complete a project for supplying gas to Kuwait in line with an earlier agreement hammered out between both sides.

Economy**Abadi says economic reform achieved in Iraq despite fighting IS**

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has said that corruption is "as dangerous as terrorism", noting that fighting terrorism and recapturing territories have not distracted the government from reforming the economy and state institutions.

Iraq Plans to Raise Oil Output to 5 million BPD

Iraqi Oil Minister Jabar al-Luaibi has stated that Iraq has plans to increase oil output to five million barrels per day (bpd). Speaking at the Iraq Energy Forum held in Baghdad on April 2 and 3, Luaibi said the ministry will "seriously try to develop oil production in the country".

WEEKLY OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT**Countrywide Military/Security Situation****Northern Provinces (Kirkuk/Salah al-Din/Diyala)**

IS has claimed responsibility for a high-profile attack in the northern Iraqi city of Tikrit which prompted the government to impose a curfew and close non-essential public offices for the day. Around 26 people were killed and 40 injured in Tikrit when at five or more militants conducted a complex attack with two suicide bombers against an ISF patrol in the city's Zuhoor district. ISF initially reported killing two other militants and arresting another one, with later reporting stating that a third suicide bomber had been shot and killed elsewhere in Tikrit on April 5. The local government imposed a curfew in Tikrit following the overnight 4/5 April attack to allow security forces to search the city for any remaining militants.

Salah ad-Din ISF also reported on April 6 that seven suicide bombers had been identified and confronted in villages outside of Tikrit and Baiji. Three militants wearing suicide vests and military uniform were reportedly killed though another detonated his device inside the private residence of a tribal leader in Albou Ta'mah village north of Tikrit, killing three civilians. To the north, in al-Mazra'a village south of Baiji, three IS militants wearing explosive vests and military uniforms infiltrated from Hawijah in Kirkuk province; all three were killed by ISF without causing any further casualties. IS also made concerted attacks across the north of the province on April 6. Militants targeted PMU positions with SAF and VBIEDs. Twenty-three PMU were reportedly killed in the

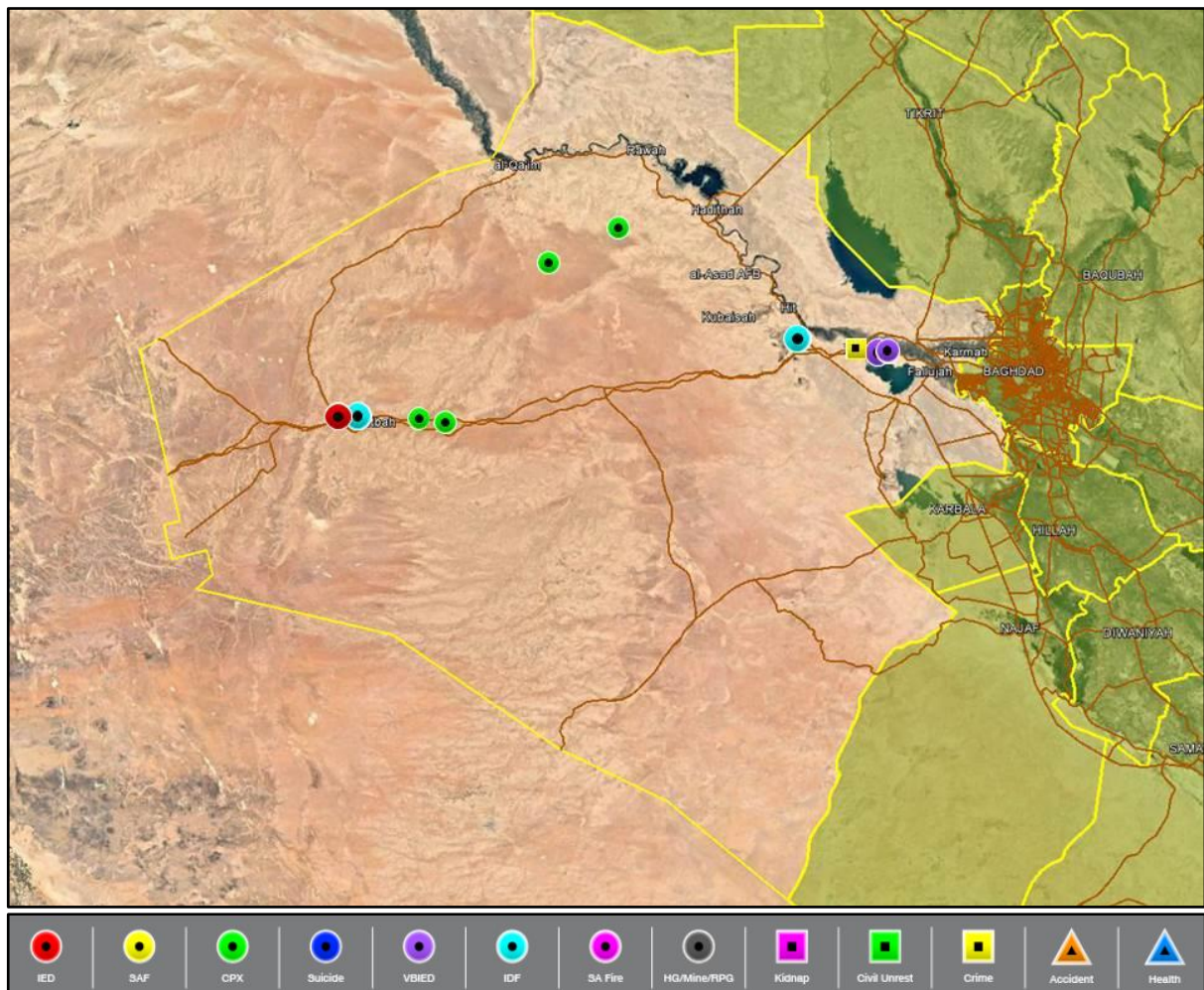
attacks, including one PMU commander.

Provincial security officials have been keen to demonstrate assertive actions against local IS groups, reporting on April 2 the deaths of 40 IS militants in an air strike on a training camp near the in the Shia holy city of Samarra, north of Baghdad. According to a statement by the War Media Cell, the militants had been planning to target the Shia mausoleum of Al-Askari shrine in Samarra city, where hundreds of thousands of pilgrims are preparing to mark the martyrdom of Imam Ali. On April 3, ISF reported dismantling a militant cell responsible for transporting car bombs into Tikrit. Following the Tikrit and Baiji attacks, ISF also started a new operation in Salah al-din to clear IS from redoubts in the province, with the provincial council claiming that ISF had killed a large number of militants.

In Diyala, IS have continued to demonstrate freedom of action around the provincial seam with Salah ad-Din and the Hamrin basin, with lethal or harassing IED, IDF and SAF attacks against ISF/PMU locations and villages. IEDs detonated on five high voltage transmission towers near Imam Wais village, northeast of Baqubah, collapsing three pylons and damaging two. The damage caused electrical outages in some areas of the province.

Reporting from Kirkuk province has been relatively subdued, though types of activity are consistent with long-standing trends. Three people were reportedly killed by IS in Hawija for helping ISF. Militants broke the legs of two others as punishment. Also in the Hawijah enclave, a coalition strike engaged several IS fighters and destroyed a vehicle and a supply cache. Four IS militants are also understood to have been killed when a personal financial dispute escalated to an exchange of fire near Zab in the west of the enclave. The men were reported to have been taking bribes from local civilians to allow them passage out of Hawija.

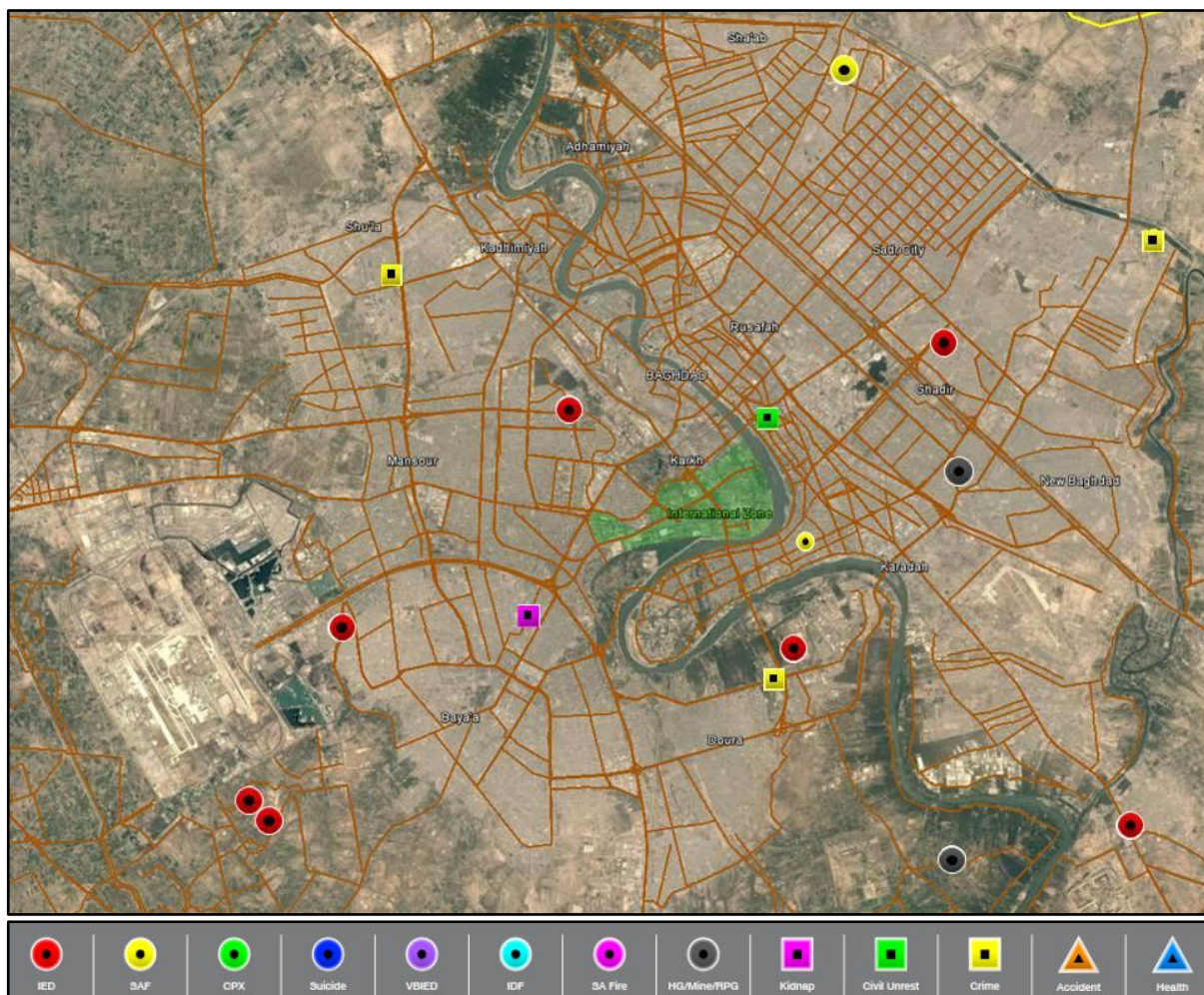


Anbar Province

IS have continued to target urban centres and ISF with IEDs. Two VBIEDs were discovered and prematurely or control detonated outside Fallujah over the course of the week. To the east of Rutbah, four ISF were killed and one civilian injured by an IED strike. Reporting late in this period has stated that one Iraqi bomb disposal operator was killed and two others injured when an IED functioned inside a hospital in eastern Ramadi, the victims were employed by al-Fahad demining company.

On April 5, US-backed Sunni Tribal Fighters launched a security operation to clear the desert near Rutbah of IS militants. ISF also reportedly conducted a clearance operation in Umm Wazz and Almayorum in the desert west of Haditha on April 6. Security forces are also understood to have imposed a curfew in Hit, 70km north west of Ramadi, between the hours of midnight and 0500hrs.

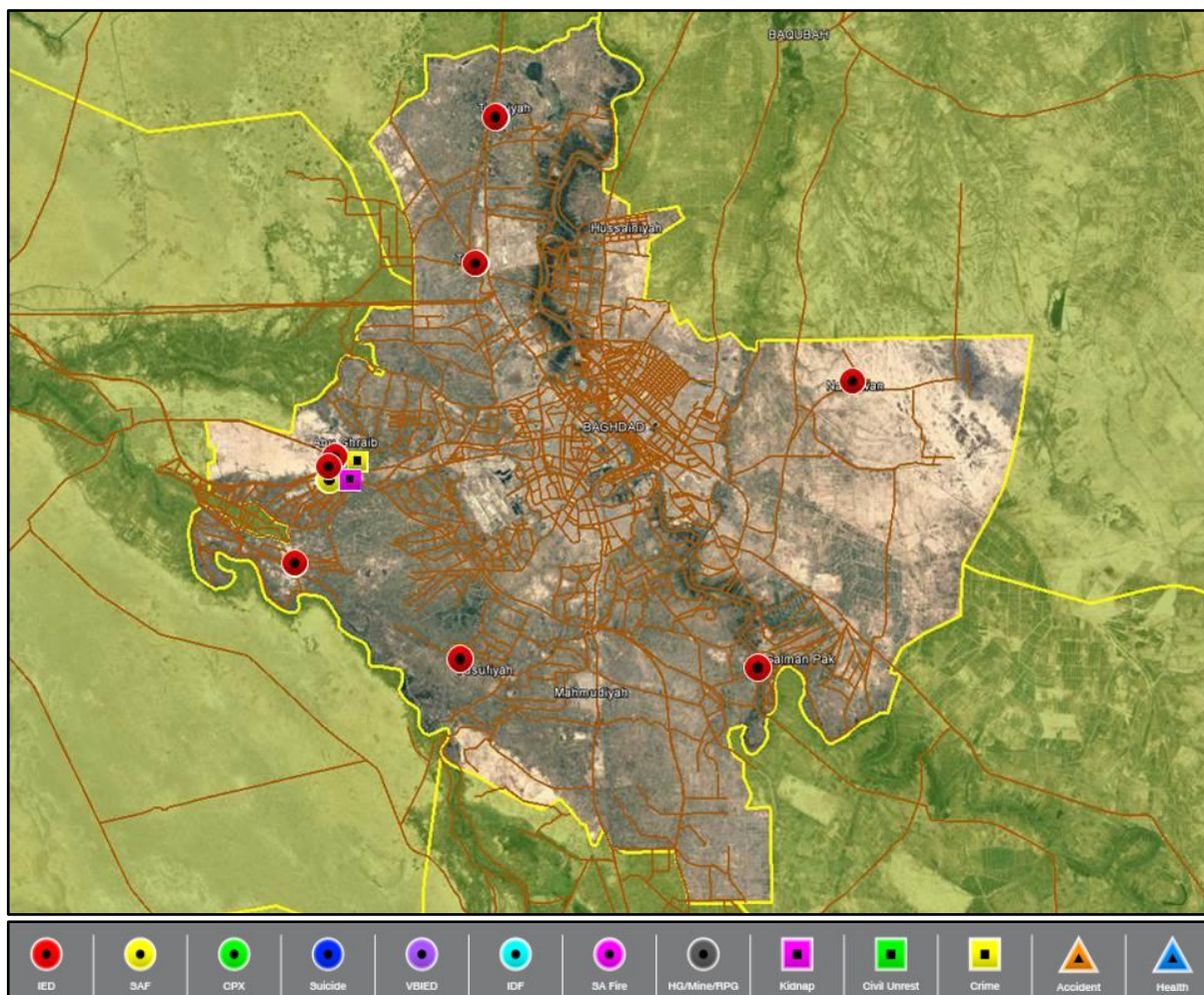
Airstrikes have continued against IS positions or activity around the province. In the Euphrates River Valley (ERV), over 30 militants were reportedly killed by Iraqi airstrikes on al-Karabilah of Qaim near the Syrian border on April 3, following a strike the previous day that killed a senior IS militant. Near Rawah, 170km north west of Ramadi, Iraqi aircrafts reportedly destroyed two IS training camps and killed an unspecified number of militants on April 5. One of the two targeted locations is reported to be the origin for VBIEDs coming into Baghdad. The Mayor of Rutbah, 270km west of Ramadi, also reported the deaths of four children in an airstrike on a residential area on April 5 and has demanded an investigation into the incident.

Capital Region (Baghdad City)

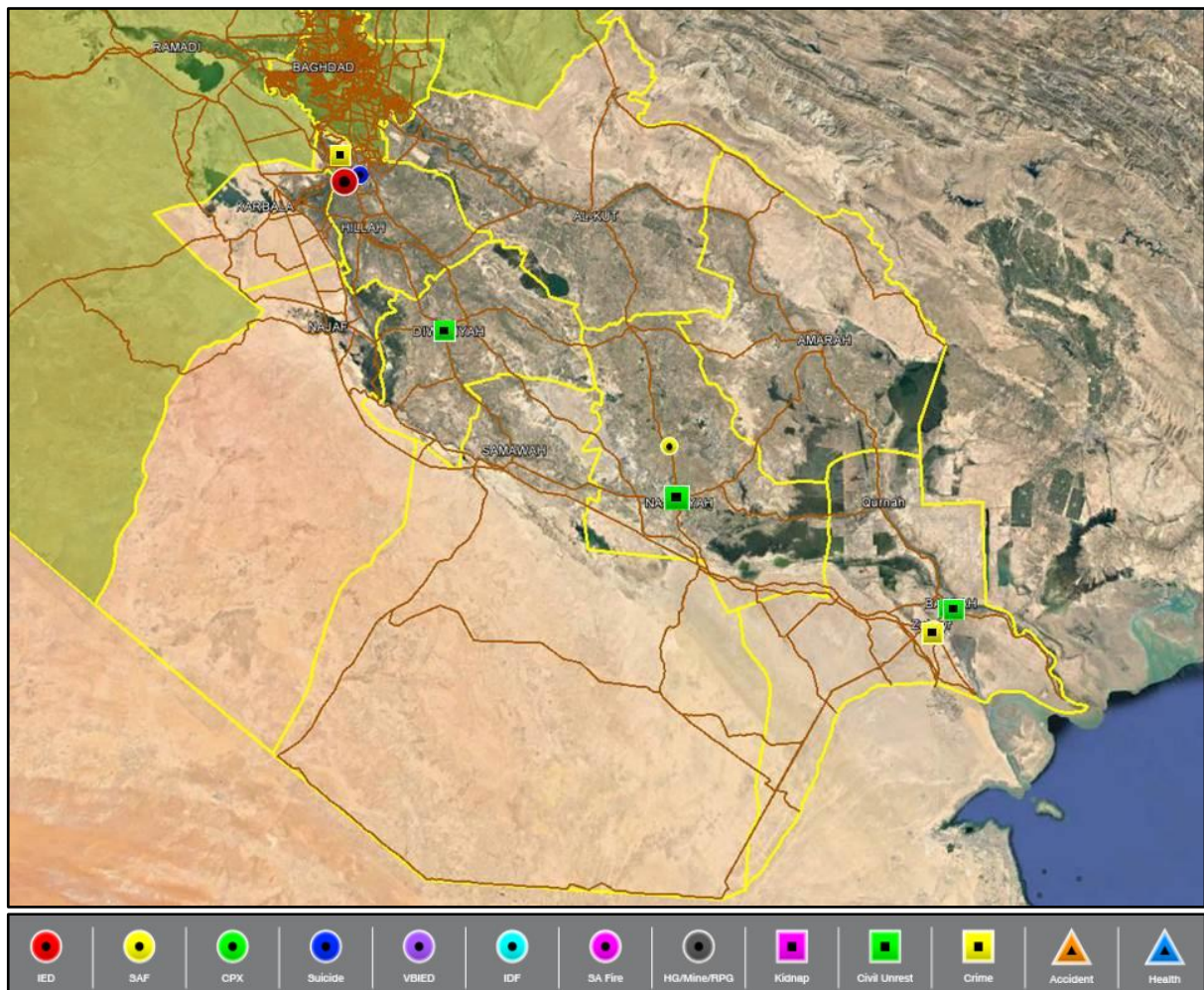
The majority of incidents in Baghdad city were typically low-level during the period, though one device around the Karkh/Mansour administrative boundary killed three civilians and wounded four others as they were awaiting employment as day-labourers. Aside from this, only three other devices caused fatalities in this period, including a UVIED in Dora, East Rashid, in the south of the city.

In more general criminality, two abductees were rescued by ISF in Bayaa, West Rashid, and Ameriyah, Mansour; the victim in Mansour was reportedly rescued within 15 minutes of their abduction. Two bodies were found with gunshot wounds to the head and chest in Amin, New Baghdad and in Dora, while a civilian was shot and injured by gunmen using suppressed weapons near his home in al-Obeidi, New Baghdad, in the east of the city. Also in New Baghdad, a fight between two groups in Amin, escalated to an exchange of SAF, gunfire injuring a bystander.

The usual Friday protests concerning various aspects of public life passed peacefully, and on April 3 'hundreds' of people gathered outside the Iraqi Football Association near al-Shaab stadium in New Baghdad, demanding resignation of the management board.

Capital Region (Baghdad Belts)

The wider province saw a higher number of incidents than the capital, but it remained in line with historical trends with only low-level IED activity and criminality reported. In total, 17 IEDs were reported around the province, of which eight were disarmed. In total, six people were killed and 32 injured in nine detonations around the province. Two stand out incidents include the killing by ISF of a militant wearing a suicide vest in Abu Ghraib, and a home invasion and robbery that saw attackers steal 85m IQD. ISF also made several counter terror arrests, claiming to have broken up three cells around the province.

Southern Provinces

In the south this week incidents were in-line with established trends. There was the usual mix of low-level violence associated with criminality and personal disputes, though tribal violence has been relatively subdued, with only one incident reported in Dhi Qar. Four people were injured in clashes between al-Fartousi and al-Khennafreh tribes in Shattrah district north of Nasiriya, the dispute allegedly erupted during a wedding party and ISF arrived the scene to restore law and order. ISF later arrested 26 suspects in connection to the incident.

In Basra province two murders were reported in Zubayr, and an arrest was made in connection to a third.

Elsewhere in the south, a suicide attacker detonated an explosive vest during a funeral procession in the Jafjafa area of Iskandariyah, Babel, killing one member of the Sunni Awakening and injuring seven other bystanders. Prime Minister Abadi has commended the individual killed, who was reported to have embraced the attacker in order to lessen the impact of the blast. Also in Babel, three ISF were injured when a roadside IED functioned during an attempt to disarm it in Jurf al-Sakhar, north of Hilla.

ACRONYM LIST

All - Area of Intelligence Interest	MoO - Ministry of Oil
AKA - Also Known As	MoT - Ministry of Transportation
AO - Area of Operations	MSR - Main Supply Route
APC - Armored Personnel Carrier	NFDK - No Further Details Known
APIED - Anti-Personnel IED	NGO - Non-Governmental Organization (aid/charity)
AQ - Al-Qaeda	NSTR - Nothing Significant To Report
AT - Anti-Tank	OCG - Organized Crime Group
ATGW - Anti Tank Guided Weapon	OPF - Oil Protection Force
AVIED - Anti-Vehicle IED	PAX - Person, Persons or Passenger
BBIED - Body Borne IED	PBIED - Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (UN Term)
Bde - Brigade	Pol - Point of Impact (for IDF)
Bn - Battalion	PoO - Point of Origin (for IDF)
BXP - Border Crossing Point	PSAF - Precision Small Arms Fire
CET - Convoy Escort Team	PSC - Private Security Company
CLC - Concerned Local Citizens	PSD - Private Security Detail
CoP - Chief of Police	RCIED - Remote-Controlled IED
CP - Check Point	RPG - Rocket Propelled Grenade
C-PERS - Captured Personnel	RTA - Road Traffic Accident
CPX - Complex Attack (an attack using multiple weapon systems)	SAF - Small Arms Fire
CQA - Close Quarter Assassination/Attack	SAFIRE - Surface to Air FIRE
DBS - Drive by Shooting	SF - Special Forces
Div - Division	SVBIED - Suicide Vehicle Borne IED
DoD - Department of Defense	SVEST - Suicide Explosive Worn Vest
DoS - Department of State	TCN - Third Country National
DoS - US Department of State	TCP - Traffic Control Point
ECP - Entry Control Point	Technical - An improvised weapon-mounted pick-up truck
ECP - Entry Control Point (IZ, BIAP)	TTP - Tactics, Techniques and Practices
EFP - Explosively Formed Projectile	UVIED - Under Vehicle IED
EOD - Explosive Ordnance Disposal (Bomb Squad)	UXO - Unexploded Ordnance
ERW - Explosive Remnants of War	VBIED - Vehicle Borne IED
FoM - Freedom of Movement	VCP - Vehicle Checkpoint
GoI - Government of Iraq	WIA - Wounded in Action
HCN - Host Country National	
HG - Hand Grenade	
HME - Home Made Explosive	
HMG - Heavy Machine Gun	
HVT - High Value Target	
IC - International Community	
IDF - Indirect Fire (i.e.: rockets, mortars)	
IDP - Internally Displaced Persons	
IEC - Independent Electoral Commission	
IED - Improvised Explosive Device	
IM - International Military	
IOC - International Oil Company	
IRAM - Improvised Rocket Assisted Mortar	
IRL - Improvised Rocket Launcher	
IS - Islamic State	
IVCP - Illegal Vehicle Check Point	
IVO - In Vicinity Of	
IZ - International Zone	
KIA - Killed in Action	
LN - Local National/Iraqi Civilian	
MAIED - Magnetically attached IED (aka UVIED)	
MIA - Missing in Action	
MoD - Ministry of Defense	
MoF - Ministry of Finance	
MoFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
MoHE - Ministry of Higher Education	
Mol - Ministry of Interior	
MoJ - Ministry of Justice	

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