# Humanitarian Implications of Violence in Northern and Central Iraq

## 2 July 2014

### Key Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected impact</th>
<th>Insignificant</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for international assistance</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Urgent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Anticipated scope and scale

Over three weeks after the start of the Islamic State (IS) ‘Ramadan offensive’ an estimated 1.2 million people have been displaced. According to OCHA planning figures, the fighting in Anbar in January and the more recent IS offensive have left over 1.5 million people in need of humanitarian aid. The situation is expected to deteriorate.

## Most affected areas

High levels of conflict have been reported from Ninevah (Mosul), Kirkuk, Salah al Din, and Diyala. IDPs have been dispersed to 17 of Iraq’s 18 governorates, with the largest caseloads residing in Anbar, Dahuk, Ninevah and Erbil.

## Priorities for humanitarian intervention

Shelter support and food assistance to IDPs residing in collective shelters, camps and sub-standard housing, including congested public buildings such as schools.

Evacuation of civilians from contested areas, including Fallujah, and protection of all civilians in areas facing insecurity, including Anbar.

Support to communities in areas affected by the current crisis to prevent further displacement.

Provision of water to Hamdaniya area. Access to healthcare where hospitals have been damaged by fighting (e.g. Mosul) or are overstretched due increased demand (e.g. Erbil and around Mosul).

## Humanitarian constraints

Threats by both insurgents and military operations are significantly hampering national and international NGOs’ operations outside the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). Civilians in Fallujah city, western districts of Anbar, Mosul, and Tel Afar are particularly hard to reach. Several key supply routes have been blocked, including routes around Mosul city, Tel Afar, and the Baghdad-Sammar-Tikrit-Beji-Haditha route.

## Priority concerns June 26th - July 2nd

1. **Protection**: Over 1,500 Iraqi civilians had been killed in June alone, making the current violence the most deadly since the height of sectarian warfare in 2007. Deliberate targeting of minorities and individuals suspected of supporting a party to the conflict is widespread, with reports of abductions, summary executions and arbitrary arrests.

2. **Access**: The majority of those in need cannot be reached by national and international humanitarian actors due to road blockades, insecurity and military offensives. On 27 June, IOM officially called for humanitarian corridors to access those in need.

3. **Shelter**: Recent assessments in IDP hosting communities highlight the need for shelter and rental support. Most IDPs are relying on savings and face difficulties continuing to renting apartments and hotel rooms. 11% of the 240,000 IDPs registered by IOM is residing in sub-standard housing, including public buildings and informal tented settlements.
Conflict Drivers

- IS’s current push into Iraq’s central region proceeds from its intention to establish a Sunni Islamic caliphate across Syria and Iraq, which it declared on 30 June. The mobilisation of thousands of Shi’ites and their large-scale rallies across Baghdad exacerbate the danger of sectarian conflict escalating (ICG 01/07/2014, Washington Post 11/06/14, ISW 11/06/14).
- The ongoing civil war in Syria, with which Iraq shares an extremely porous border, has had a destabilising effect on the region, particularly in Iraq, causing a surge in weapons and trained fighters in the region. Among else, the crisis in Syria caused an influx of over 200,000 Syrian refugees.
- Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki’s perceived alienation of Sunnis is argued to have fuelled the current crisis: the ISF, for example, is seen as an increasingly Shia entity. Without a more inclusive approach from the Government, a sustainable long-term solution is unlikely (ICG 14/06/13, Brookings 14/06/14, Foreign Affairs 18/06/2014).

For more information on the stakeholders, see Annex A.

Political and Conflict Developments

- On 30 June, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) declared an Islamic caliphate, a political institution to govern the global Muslim community, stretching from Diyala province, Iraq, to Aleppo in Syria. The armed group changed its name to Islamic State (IS, used throughout this document to refer to the group). IS’s leader, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, was proclaimed caliph and leader of Muslims worldwide. Multiple statements urging Muslims around the world to join the jihad followed. This development is likely to result in increased support, more funding, and more fighters for the newly established caliphate (Reuters 01/07/2014).
- Major clashes between IS and Iraqi forces are ongoing in Mosul, Hamrin, Samarra, Mashada, Fallujah, and Tikrit. Over two million civilians are residing in these areas according to 2003 GoI estimates. On 27 June, Iraqi government forces launched a military operation to retake Tikrit, the largest offensive to regain ground currently under IS control. Air forces have launched attacks on IS positions and heavy fighting is ongoing on the southern outskirts of the city (Reuters 30/06/2014, AFP 28/06/2014, ISW 01/07/2014, GeoHives 2003).
- Despite international and national pressure to form a more inclusive national unity government, attempts to do so have failed so far. On 1 July, the parliament was due to elect a new president after confirming the speaker. However, no agreement was reached on the speaker and the session has been adjourned for a week. On 25 June, Prime Minister Nuri al Maliki ruled out forming a national emergency government to address the crisis (Al Jazeera 29/06/2014, Al Jazeera 01/07/2014).
Crisis Impact

Displacement

Estimated number of displaced people since 5 June as of 2 July 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Governorate</th>
<th>Total identified IDP Sites</th>
<th>Total IDP Families</th>
<th>Total IDP Individuals</th>
<th>% of total IDPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nineveh</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27812</td>
<td>166872</td>
<td>44.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erbil</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13100</td>
<td>78600</td>
<td>20.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulaymaniyah</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8814</td>
<td>52884</td>
<td>14.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salah al-Din</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3110</td>
<td>18660</td>
<td>4.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahuk</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2975</td>
<td>17850</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkuk</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2709</td>
<td>16254</td>
<td>4.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diyala</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>1.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerbala</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>4656</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Najaf</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>3744</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anbar</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>2736</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>2490</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adissiya</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>1536</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basrah</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missan</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasit</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thi-Qar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>390</strong></td>
<td><strong>62559</strong></td>
<td><strong>375,354</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IOM, 02/07/2014.

The most recent data on the number of IDPs stems from 2 July, with an estimated 1.2 million people displaced due to the crisis in Anbar and more recent IS related clashes. Due to the fluidity of the situation, with large-scale secondary displacement and return to areas perceived as safe, any figures on displacement are rapidly outdated. In addition, there are concerns over inflation of the IDP figures and several assessments by aid agencies have not find the same scale of IDPs as reported by authorities. As a result, the table above is solely an indication of the situation and should be verified before use.

- In the period from 5 June to 2 July, the DTM has identified 375,354 individuals – or 62,559 families – in 390 different locations (IOM, 02/07/2014).
- Further displacement, as a result of clashes, human rights violations, or the stabilisation of an area are likely. Most people flee to areas within their governorate of origin. The main motivation for IDPs to leave a governorate is to join family members.
- Displaced families are frequently subjected to multiple displacements: a recent assessment in 15 villages and towns showed that over 80% of IDPs assessed were displaced at least once before arriving at their current location (REACH 01/07/2014, UNICEF 24/06/2014).

Protection

- **Conflict-affected areas**: A June UNAMI and OHCHR report on the protection situation in Iraq cites alleged abuses by both the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and IS, including:
  - Summary executions of captured soldiers and detainees – research by Human Rights Watch indicates that IS conducted mass executions of between 160 and 190 individuals in Tikrit after seizing control of the city on 11 June.
  - Indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas – air raids by Iraqi forces on neighbourhoods of Fallujah have reportedly caused several civilian casualties.
  - Deliberate targeting of individuals based on their religion or ethnicity, including Shia and minority groups such as Turkemens, Shabak, Christians and Yezidis (UN News Service 29/06/2014, HRW 27/06/2014, Amnesty 01/07/2014).
- Indiscriminate attacks on civilians in areas not directly affected by the current fighting are ongoing, with a suicide bomber killing at least 19 people in Baghdad on 24 June.
- **IDP hosting areas**: A protection assessment between 10 and 19 June in Erbil governorate highlights common protection concerns faced by IDPs in KR-I. Within KR-I, specific permits are required to reside in the area and access services such as healthcare. The type and length of permit provided to IDPs entering KR-I differs according the profile of the IDP and the point of entry: some receive 7-day permits (to be renewed) while others are allowed to stay indefinitely. This ambiguity primarily affects those residing in urban areas, who primarily rely on public services (PWG 06/2014).
- An assessment of over 20 villages showed that the majority of IDPs are relying primarily on savings. Once savings are depleted, families are likely to start engaging into dangerous coping strategies such as borrowing, begging, and sale of assets (REACH 01/07/2014).
• According to War Child, recruitment of young combatants is widespread and ongoing in central and southern Iraq (War Child 26/06/2014).
• Women and girls are deliberately targeted by armed groups, with reports of kidnapping, rape and forced marriage. Violence against women and girls was already widespread before the most recent crisis. The 2006/2007 Family Health survey indicated that 1 in 5 married Iraqi women are subject to physical violence. UNFPA reports that 20,000 women and girls could face an increased risk of sexual violence during the current crisis, although it is unclear how this figure has been computed (UNFPA 30/06/2014, WHO/GoI 2007, UN Women 2014/07/01).

Health
• Conflict-affected areas: Hospitals and clinics in central Iraq are struggling to operate at full capacity due to crossfire, electricity and fuel shortages, and displacement of staff. There have been several attacks on health facilities in contested areas. Two hospitals in and around Mosul have been damaged by shelling and an MSF clinic in Tikrit was severely damaged by shelling, preventing the provision of medical care to approximately 40,000 people displaced by the conflict (ICRC 27/06/2014, WHO 21/06/2014, IRIN 27/06/2014, MSF 20/06/2014/06/20). Hospitals in areas close to the fighting report shortages of medicines and equipment due to the increase in demand. Two hospitals around Mosul, Hamadaniyah and Sinjar, report critical shortages while staff are not able to reach the facilities because of insecurity (ICRC 27/06/2014/06).
• IDP hosting areas: Hospitals in IDP hosting areas of KR-I are overstretched due to the IDP influx and the KR-I Ministry of Health has reported shortages in medicines and medical supplies. Regular supplies of medicines and vaccines from the central Government of Iraq in Baghdad have halted since the violence began due to insecurity and blocked roads (WHO 18/06/2014, UNFPA 30/06/2014).
• UNFPA warns that, of the over one million people currently displaced, over 60,000 women are expected to be pregnant and in need of urgent care. Approximately 1,000 pregnant women each month will encounter life-threatening complications. The number of unassisted childbirths is expected to increase (UNFPA 30/06/2014).
• There is an increased risk of disease outbreak due to strains on housing, water supply, and sanitation. Cholera is of particular concern as it is endemic in the northern part of Iraq. Large-scale outbreaks of cholera were reported in the Kurdistan region in 2007, 2008 and 2012 (WHO 27/06/2014, WHO 2012).
• The spread of measles and polio is a high risk. Measles is endemic in parts of Iraq. In neighbouring Syria, a measles outbreak was confirmed mid-June, with over 160 cases. A second case of polio was confirmed in Baghdad in May 2014, while vaccination campaigns have been disrupted due to insecurity. The sub-national Immunisation Day could only take place in only 25–30% of areas in Mosul due to accessibility issues. The increase in temperatures compounds the risk of disease outbreaks (WHO 21/06/2014, UNICEF 15/06/2014, WFP 24/06/2014, WHO 20/06/2014).

Food Security
• GIEWS issued a special alert over serious food security concerns. Loss of assets and income opportunities together with disruption of marketing activities, transport networks, and farming have exposed large number of people to severe food insecurity (GIEWS 25/06/2014, FAO 25/06/2014).
• Harvesting of barley, wheat, millet, and sorghum crops is well underway. The most affected governorates, Ninevah and Salah al Din, normally produce over one third of national wheat and barley production. However, the large-scale displacement from these areas is likely to have resulted in labour shortages at the critical harvesting period. The current insecurity is expected to negatively impact on the ongoing harvesting and post-harvesting activities. As a result the yields of the current harvest will probably be below average, impacting food availability and household income for farmers (GIEWS 25/06/2014, FAO 25/06/2014).
• To address the decrease in domestic production, cereal import requirements in the 2014/15 marketing year (July/June) are expected to increase (GIEWS 25/06/2014, FAO 25/06/2014). As the Iraqi Government normally maintains three to six months’ supply of wheat in its food stocks, widespread food shortages will not immediately become apparent.
• Food price data for the month of June is not yet available, however it can be expected that the increase in fuel prices and insecurity have led to above-average prices for food and non-food commodities. Should the situation continue, prices of basic food and essential non-food items are expected to rise despite continuing Government subsidies, particularly if cross-border movement of goods is hampered by insecurity (GIEWS 25/06/2014).
• An assessment in over 15 villages showed that the majority of people have been relying on savings. Many families and individuals are starting to struggle to secure the financial resources they need to support themselves beyond the end of June (IFRC 30/06/2014, REACH 01/07/2014).

WASH
• Conflict-affected areas: Hamdaniyah district is most affected by water shortages, after IS took control the main water system in eastern Mosul. Local media reports that IS limits water provision to 90 min. per day creating a water crisis in several villages in Hamdaniyah district (PI 25/06/2014, Local Media 01/07/2014).
Access to water is increasingly used as a military resource. If IS takes control of other main water infrastructure, including Haditha dam, the second largest hydroelectric power plant in Iraq, more areas will face critical water shortages (PI 06/2014). The accumulation of waste in residential areas affected by violence has been reported due to displacement of employees and lack of fuel (PI 25/06/2014, Local Media 01/07/2014).

Shelter
- IDP hosting areas: Although the majority of IDPs are residing with host families (55%), a significant number (11%) are staying in public buildings, informal settlements, or collective centres. The majority of the 5,000 IDPs assessed in 15 villages between 19 and 26 June highlighted shelter and rental support as a priority need (REACH 25/06/2014, IOM DTM 25/06/2014).
- An assessment among IDPs in Erbil found access to shelter as the main priority need (the priority for over 60% of households assessed). There are indications that the Kurdistan Regional Government is moving towards a camp-based approach to hosting, encouraging aid agencies to provide support primarily to the camps (PI 06/2014).
- A displacement assessment in Erbil governorate showed that secondary displacement is generally influenced by the need for lower living costs. The assessment showed that the 225 IDP households assessed paid, on average, IQD 253,223 (c. USD 217) per week for a rented apartment and IQD 476,577 (c. USD 409) for a hotel room (REACH 25/062014).

Fuel and electricity
Insecurity and battles over oil refineries in Iraq have led to fuel shortages throughout the country, including KR-I, and there are reports of hoarding and long lines at gas stations. The fuel shortage is likely to drive an increase in costs of all goods and transport in the coming months and will likely further exacerbate power cuts, which are already a common occurrence across Iraq. This will have a negative effect on health facilities as well as immunisation campaigns, which rely on cold storage (AJE 29/06/2014, BBC 20/06/2014, WHO 18/20/2014).

Education
The current school year ended in May and education is therefore not significantly disrupted so far. However, if the crisis continues until the start of the new school year in September, occupation of schools by IDPs and displacement of children and staff will disrupt access to education.

Humanitarian Access
Threats imposed by both insurgents and military operations are significantly hampering both national and international NGO operations outside KR-I. The following locations are particularly hard to reach:
- In Babylon, there is no access to the north-west of the governorate (the Jurf Al Sakhar sub-district) and often access is restricted to the Al Mussaiyab district;
- In Diyala, all areas within the governorate are currently inaccessible, with the exception of Khanaqeen and Kalar, as they are under control of Peshmerga forces;
- In Baghdad, there is no access to Al Taji and Al Tarmiya in the north; to Al Hussainiya and Al Rashidiya in the district of Al Istiqial, north-west Baghdad; in Al Madain, east Baghdad; in Al Rasheed sub-district, AL Yussifiya, Al Mahmodiya and Al Latifiya in southern Baghdad; and the district of Abu Ghraib;
- In Salah Al Din, there is limited access in the districts of Al Shirqat, Baiji and Balad. There is no access to locations in Samarra, Tooz and Al Fares districts;
- In Kirkuk, there is limited access in Dakuk district and Al Hawija;
- In Ninevah, there is no access to Hamam Al Alil and Qayara in Al Hamdaniyah, Hatra and Al Ba‘ak districts (IOM, 02/07/2014).
- Fallujah city, due to high levels of conflict.
- Western districts of Anbar, where there is a high risk of security incidents.
- A number of roads connecting affected major cities are reportedly (occasionally) closed due to roadblocks and activities of armed groups and military operations including:
  - vehicle routes to Fallujah,
  - main routes in Salah al Din, Kirkuk, and Diyala,
  - key routes around Mosul city and Tel Afar, which are under control of armed groups, and
  - the Baghdad-Sammara-Tikrit-Beji-Haditha route.

The humanitarian coordination system for Iraq is divided between actors that were operational from Baghdad before the most recent evacuation, and those operating from KR-I, causing difficulties in coordination and response. In addition, limited funding is hampering the required up-scale of the response (WHO 18/06/2014).
Information Sources and Gaps

Between 26 June and 3 July, the following information on the humanitarian situation has become available:

- REACH IDP factsheets providing an overview of the displacement situation in 15 villages/towns, covering over 5,000 IDPs. Findings of the assessment highlight that most of those assessed were residing in rented apartments and were reliant on savings (REACH 01/07/2014).
- Results of Rapid Protection Needs Assessments conducted for newly arrived IDPs in Ninevah, Duhok, and Erbil governorates in June. The assessment identified access, residency, shelter, support for persons with specific needs, and registration as the main protection concerns.
- A Human Rights Watch report confirmed that mass executions by IS took place in Tikrit at the start of June (HRW 26/07/2014).
- UN Casualty Figures indicate that month of June has the highest number of civilian casualties in 2014 (over 1,500) (UNAMI 01/07/2014).

However, large information gaps remain. Immediate information needs include:

- Timely information on protection concerns in IS-controlled areas, particularly the treatment of minorities.
- Clarifications regarding temporary permits issued to IDPs in KR-I, and renewal procedures.
- Tracking of negative coping mechanisms.
- Morbidity patterns relating to communicable diseases between Syria and Iraq, given the volume of cross-border movement.
- Updated estimates on the number of people residing in contested areas.
- A profile of coping mechanisms, especially of the most vulnerable.
- An approximate cost of living index (price movements of commodities and essential items) in the weeks following IS’s takeover.
- Functionality of health infrastructure in areas affected by conflict.
- Clarifications about the status of healthcare as well as clean water supply in Mosul and other areas affected by water shortages.
- The priority needs of the vulnerable affected population which has not (yet) been displaced.

Potential Aggravating Factors

- **Displacement flows:** Iraq continues to receive a large number of Syrian refugees (over 225,000 Syrians are currently registered by UNHCR in Iraq), and an unknown number of Iraqi citizens have returned from Syria. The large numbers of refugees, returnees, and now IDPs are placing even greater strain on local infrastructure and essential services. Socioeconomic development is stagnating, and institutional capacity is limited, which will hamper the ability of IDPs and refugees to re-assimilate into society (UNHCR, 2014).

- **Influx of experienced fighters:** The call-to-arms and redeployment from Syria of Iraqi Shi'ite volunteer fighters threatens to increase the level of sectarian violence already endemic within Iraq. This will lead to further protection concerns, including summary executions and persecution of individuals based on their ethnic/sectarian background. This will be more pronounced if there is insufficient military discipline and command-and-control among Shi'ite militia. Between January and end June 2014, UNAMI estimates that at least 4,500 Iraqis were killed and another 7,500 injured in conflict and terrorist-related violence (OHCHR 13/06/2014, UNAMI 01/07/2014).

- **Increased tensions between the Iraqi Government and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG):** De facto Kurdish control of Kirkuk and parts of Mosul, key territorial flashpoints between the Baghdad Government and the KRG, as well as the ongoing budgetary and hydrocarbon dispute have led to increased tensions between the GoI and KRG. If the planned referendum on independence goes ahead, further tensions are likely and could set the stage for another phase of armed conflict. Whether the Kurdish authorities pursue secession is likely to depend primarily on how it assesses the response of some of its immediate neighbours, with whom it maintains significant trade relations (BBC 01/07/2014, Strathfor 17/06/14).

- **KRG policies:** Around 400,000 IDPs are dependent on KRG willingness to provide services and support. A significant change in KRG policy regarding IDP entry, provision of residency permits, and the use of already stretched public resources will affect access to protection and assistance.

- **Implementation of strict Shariah law:** If IS widely imposes the strict branch of justice associated with it in Syria, protection concerns in areas under its control could quickly grow. For now, IS seems to be largely respecting residents and

- **Election-related unrest**: IS's current offensive coincides with the coming deadline for the forming of a coalition government in Iraq. Although Prime Ministers Maliki’s State of Law Bloc has the parliamentary majority since the April elections (92 of 328 seats, nearly three times that of his nearest rival, Moqtada al Sadr), a governing coalition remains to be established. The exclusion of leading Shia and Sunni opponents is highly likely to exacerbate rather than resolve the conflict. On the other hand, the urgency of the current crisis may create the conditions for temporary political unity (ICG 01/06/2014).

- **Prolonged displacement**: With little access to livelihood opportunities, any extended displacement situation will lead to a significant increase in food insecurity and poverty rates. The large number of IDPs residing in schools disrupts access to education facilities.

- **Ramadan leading to increased food insecurity**: The holy month of Ramadan started on 1 July 2014. Food expenditures traditionally peak during Ramadan, and this year the month also coincides with high summer, the harvest season, and conflict. The combination is expected to increase food insecurity.

- **Foreign military intervention**, especially involving ground operations, will almost unequivocally be viewed from a sectarian standpoint and further aggravate prevailing humanitarian concerns and lack of access to those in need.

- **Widespread use of indiscriminate weapons**: The Iraqi Government could resort to the use of barrel bombs, as it allegedly did in response to IS’s advance in Anbar governorate earlier this year. Barrel bombs cause a large number of civilian deaths and high levels of destruction, as illustrated in areas of Syria.

- **High temperatures**: The upcoming summer months will compound existing WASH problems. Inadequate hygiene practices, waste disposal, and water treatment is expected to attend a rise in morbidity patterns such as acute watery diarrhoea and other communicable diseases (WHO 13/06/14).
Conflict Scenarios

Scenario 1: Stalemate and sustained levels of violence along ethnosectarian faultlines

**Summary:** IS areas of control encompass northern, western, central and parts of southwestern Iraq, closely matching that of Al Qaeda in Iraq at its 2006 peak. The mobilised Iraqi Shi'ite population, Kurdish armed groups, and ISF prevent additional gains. As a result, IS focuses resources on consolidating its gains in Ninevah, Anbar, Salah al Din and Diyala, and refrains from an offensive on Baghdad and areas with Shia majority for the foreseeable future. Tactical and operational skirmishes continue along sectarian fault lines, which may involve occasional escalation, though no substantive change in IS’s overall strategy. With the aim of winning hearts and minds, basic services are restored/improved in areas under IS control. (On 1 July Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi urged scholars, judges, doctors, engineers, administrators, military personnel and other experts to bring their knowledge to support the state, which is illustrative of IS’s intention to establish a functioning state.) Protection issues are a main concern, with IS imposing a strict implementation of Shariah law. Minority groups are harassed, kidnapped, and forcibly displaced. Low-intensity attacks by IS in neighbouring countries, including Lebanon, continue. IS may also be looking at consolidating its gains in Iraq before rechanneling resources back into its fight in Syria.

**Assumptions**
- Shi'ite armed mobilisation continues and even steps up with clerical support.
- The central government, with or without Maliki in the next coalition, continues to be perceived as pro-Shi'ite, and fails to implement institutional reforms.
- IS continues to keep a foot in the Syrian front, necessitating the division of manpower, even while it maintains its critical combat resources and financing in Iraq.
- Substantial foreign military intervention, particularly by the US or Iran, is deferred. Syrian airstrikes, in Anbar for instance, do nothing to change the conflict dynamics.

**Projected Impact and Priority Concerns**
- Protection and human rights issues in IS-controlled areas, particularly where minorities are present. These may range from extortionary taxes to extra-judicial killings.
- Large-scale returns take place to areas considered safe.
- Retaliation against civilians allegedly supporting IS in government-controlled areas.
- If Syria is an indicator, humanitarian access may be very difficult, but possible, in certain areas.
- Poor access to chronic and emergency healthcare
- Power, fuel, and water shortages, which may or may not be exacerbated by IS’s control of critical infrastructure.
- Local and intergovernorate market supply route disruptions, with immediate implications for commerce, livelihoods, and food security.
- Transnational trade disruptions with Jordan (and to an extent, Syria) assuming IS restricts traffic at key crossing points in western Iraq.
- Agricultural activities curtailed as a result of insecurity and displaced labour force.

| Scenario 1: Stalemate and sustained levels of violence along ethnosectarian faultlines |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Affected population: up to 13,000,000 (total population in areas under IS control) | Impact level |
| Probability level | X |

**Scenario 2: IS starts offensive on Baghdad**

**Summary:** IS’s position in Syria is such that it can afford to further divert essential fighting power to Iraq, and its military capabilities and manpower are further enhanced, especially with the inflow of large numbers of foreign jihadists and the acquisition of heavy weaponry. Another option is that IS exhausts the goodwill accumulated among its supporters and faces stiffer resistance from the Sunni populace under its control and Sunni armed groups. Based on either development, IS begins an offensive on Baghdad, primarily with the aim of gaining more support and possibly, parts of the city. In the run-up to the offensive, large-scale displacement from the city occurs, as took place in Mosul. The main northern and eastern supply routes are blocked, causing price increases and shortages in parts of the city, as well as in northern and eastern parts of the country dependent on supply from Baghdad. Heavy fighting in and around eastern and northern neighbourhoods results in additional large-scale displacement as well as significant threats to the safety and security of citizens.

**Assumptions**
- Either IS consolidates its organisational and military strength to unprecedented levels, or it finds itself loosing popular support in the areas it holds.
- Shi’ite militia continue mobilizing and arming in the face of the threat posed by IS, which the latter then exploits for sectarian divisions.
- Iraqi army manages to hold back the IS offense and fighting is limited to northern and eastern neighbourhoods of the capital.

| Scenario 2: IS starts offensive on Baghdad |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Affected population: 6-7 million (Total population of Baghdad) | Impact level |
| Probability level | X |

Projected Impact and Priority Concerns

- Civilians further displaced from Baghdad (est. pop. 6-7 million) to other areas with a similar ethnical/sectarian make up, occasioning as many as 500,000 IDPs – just under a tenth of the capital’s population – in addition to the 648,000 so far displaced by IS’s June offensive.
- Potential displacement of civilians to Iran.
- Essential services such as healthcare and education are disrupted, with little prospect of being supplemented by humanitarian agencies under ongoing hostilities. This will be exacerbated in the event of disease outbreaks.
- Widespread disruptions in the provision of electricity, water, and other utilities.
- Local and inter-governorate market supply route disruptions, with immediate implications for commerce, livelihoods and food security.

### Scenario 3: Foreign military intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affected population: up to 15,000,000</th>
<th>Probability level</th>
<th>Impact level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:** The position of foreign governments regarding military intervention is ambiguous and leaves plenty of room for interpretation. The US is dispatching military advisers but will very likely defer to remote-control warfare should the circumstances deteriorate. IS’s forward momentum, especially if it nears the Shi’ite heartland and the holy cities of Najaf and Kerbala, will threaten core Iranian interests and oblige the Iranian Government to respond more overtly. Iran’s response takes place through allied governments or regional proxies, aggravating the sectarian conflict to levels currently seen in Syria. This scenario posits that any foreign military intervention, including that of the US, is inevitably viewed in sectarian terms and provides the trigger for escalation and a regional proxy war.

**Assumptions**

- The Iraqi Government and allied groups are not able to regain control of IS strongholds.
- Iran takes measures to ensure Iraq remains under majoritarian Shi’ite control and that it poses no security threat. This intervention is widely perceived as an extension of a sectarian conflict and fuels existing tensions along sectarian lines.
- Regional Sunni powers opposed to IS’s expansion are nonetheless drawn into an escalatory dynamic in the wake of pro-Shi’ite intervention.

Projected Impact and Priority Concerns

- With significant support from Iran or Iranian proxies, the Iraqi army will be able to start operations in several areas in the north and east under IS control. Further displacement takes place and due to the increasing use of heavy weaponry, destruction of critical infrastructure impacts access to water and healthcare.
- Protection from sectarian violence is one of the main priority needs, with individuals all over the country increasingly attacked.

### Scenario 4: Cholera outbreak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affected population: up to 20,000</th>
<th>Probability level</th>
<th>Impact level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

**Summary:** An outbreak of cholera is confirmed. The outbreak is caused by the consumption of contaminated water from unsafe sources due to water shortages and the conflict related disruption of water treatment facilities coupled with inadequate hygiene practices and large displacement flows. Similar to the 2007, 2008 and 2012 outbreaks, the disease starts in the northern governorates and afterwards spreads to the centre and southern areas. The population in rural areas and disadvantaged districts of urban areas are most at risk, as access to water supply is particularly challenging. The case fatality rate has remained low during previous outbreaks, primarily due to a timely response, including preventive measures to reduce the risk of transmission to unaffected areas. Building on previous experience and with support of the international community, authorities in the Kurdistan area are able to control the epidemic (At the end of June, WHO for instance sent a cholera preparedness and response team to work with the KRG and aid agencies). However, ongoing fighting and severe access constraints in the central and southern areas of the country hamper an adequate response. As a result, the case fatality rate will be much higher than in previous occasions.

**Assumptions**

- High levels of conflict continue, including in areas affected by cholera. As a result, access for health actors remains highly restricted and the flow of medicine, staff and equipment is disrupted.
- National health services are not able to address the caseload or prevent further outbreaks. As a result, a widespread international response is necessary.

Projected Impact and Priority Concerns

- High morbidity and mortality severely impact the health status of the population.
- Internal displacement from areas where cholera has been identified increases.
- Neighbouring countries impose restrictions on border crossings impacting cross-border trade.
- More funding becomes available for humanitarian operations, however attention is diverted to health and WASH interventions limiting the response in other sectors.
ANNEX A - Stakeholders

The Islamic State (IS): an outgrowth of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) originally under Abu Musab al Zarqawi, IS is currently led by Iraqi-born Ibrahim Awwad al Badri al Samarrai, known as Abu Bakr al Baghdadi. IS intends to establish a Sunni caliphate across both Iraq and (Greater) Syria and declared a caliphate in the areas under their control on 30 June. In April 2013, IS fell out with Al Qaeda’s official group in Syria, Al Nusra Front, and with Al Qaeda’s leader Ayman al Zawahiri over al Baghdadi’s refusal to focus exclusively on Iraq. In February 2014, Al Qaeda officially disavowed IS which had adopted a brand of extremism that surpassed Al Qaeda. IS in Iraq appears to be predominantly Arab Iraqi in composition, and numbered at least 10,000 as the June offensive began. Since taking Mosul, IS has requisitioned abandoned military equipment, recruited freed prisoners, and looted over USD 400m from Mosul’s Central Bank, making the group less dependent on foreign donors. IS was assessed to be worth USD 900 million before taking Mosul. It has been engaged in protection rackets, abductions and the sales of crude oil, through its control of oil assets in eastern Syria. By dominating significant swathes of Anbar, Nineva, and Salah al Din governorates, IS secures the minimal territorial continuity across the Jazeera desert to Syria’s northeastern third (primarily Ar-Raqa and Deir-ez-Zor) necessary for its stated goal (Reuters 01/07/2014, IHS Jane’s-Insurgency & Terrorism 18/06/ 2014; WSJ 15/06/14 IBTimes 11/06/14; BBC 16/06/2014; Stratfor 21/06/2014).

Other Sunni groups: Jaysh al Mojahedeen, Ansar al Sunnah, and Jaysh Rijjal al Tariqah al Naqshbandiya (JRTN), among others, have all facilitated IS’s advance. JRTN is composed of surviving secular Baathists, and members of the Mukhabarat and the Special Republican Guard, led by Saddam Hussein’s former deputy Izzat Ibrahim al Douri. In addition, a number of Sunni tribal leaders have allied themselves to IS, often reluctantly, as happened in Fallujah. IS’s successes may be explained by its extensive insurgency experience, but also by its tactical alliances with these Sunni groups. Moreover, their collective advance appears to have been facilitated, or at the very least unimpeded, by Sunni civilians disgruntled with the government (WSJ 12/06/14 Brookings 14/06/14 Independent 13/06/14 ISW 11/06/14 ForeignAffairs 18 June 2014 Reuters 22 June 2014).

Kurdish Peshmerga: Effectively the sovereign armed forces of the Kurdish Regional Government the Peshmerga have filled parts of the vacuum left by ISF, most prominently in the oil city of Kirkuk and on Mosul’s Kurdish eastern bank. With ISF’s growing defections and spiralling morale, the Peshmerga will very likely take on a more crucial operational role. This will notably be the case if anti-Peshmerga attacks are stepped up, as reportedly happened at a checkpoint between Diyala and Sulaimaniya governorates (ISW 23 June 2014 NYTimes 12/06/14).

Iraqi Security Forces (ISF): The ISF has been nicknamed ‘Maliki’s militia’ owing to their increasingly Shi’ite character. 10,000 ISF were deployed in and around Mosul before fleeing. Of 14 divisions, four have reportedly been incapacitated. At the same time, the Prime Minister has announced the formation of reserves to fight IS, in line with Iraqi Grand Ayatollah Ali al Sistani’s general appeal for Shia to defend the country. Recruitment centres are being set up in the key Shi’ite cities, and Maliki has promised salaries for the volunteers (Brookings 14/06/14; Stratfor 11/06/2014; HRW 12/06/2014; Independent 13/06/14 Almada 11/06/14; WashingtonPost 21/06/2014).

The Mahdi Army, and other Shi’ite non-governmental militia: Formed by the Shi’ite cleric Moqtada al Sadr in 2003 in response to the US presence and later, that of Sunni AQI, the Mahdi Army claims a 500,000-strong membership. Following the departure of international forces, it was coopted into the political process at the behest of Ayatollah Sistani, but was never disbanded, and even now is not under official governmental control although the militia’s commanders claim they answer to Baghdad. As IS presses further south and southeast towards the Shi’ite-Sunni faultline, greater numbers of Shi’ite fighters are being mobilised to halt their advance (DeutscheWelle 22/06/2014).

International and Neighbouring Countries’ Relationship to the Conflict
Syria: The Syrian conflict has had clear destabilising consequences for its neighbours. IS’s virtual control of the Jazeera plains spanning both countries enables it to leverage on strategic depth to strengthen its logistical chain, mobilise fighters to different fronts, and improve its interior lines and offensive approaches. The battlespace linkages are evident in that a diversion of fighters to Iraq will dilute IS’s position in Syria and potentially strengthen the Assad government, just as a shift of anti-IS Shi’ite fighters from Iraq to Syria may weaken Maliki’s forces. The Assad and Maliki governments face the same threat in IS, but because both official armed forces are either heavily overstretched or ineffectual, they increasingly depend on a finite pool of non-state Shi’ite fighters (Stratfor 11/06/14; Stratfor 21/06/2014).

Iran: IS’s advance in Iraq poses a core threat to Iran’s security posture. Iran has already positioned troops along the border and begun bolstering its support for Iraq’s Shi’ites and Maliki’s Government. The Prime Minister has yet to formally request Tehran’s help. But if it does, and should IS continue gaining ground and pushing towards the Shi’ite heartland and its holy places, Iran is likely to shift towards a more confrontational stance. The chief of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards’ (IRGC) foreign wing, the Quds Force, recently visited Baghdad for counteroffensive plans and to ‘manage the crisis’, and at least 500 IRGC members are believed to have been dispatched to assist the ISF in Diyala governorate. Alternatively, given the increasing liability associated with
the current Iraqi government’s sectarian character, Tehran might instead opt to push for a national unity government in Baghdad (WSJ 12/06/14; WSJ 12/06/14; Independent 13/06/14; WSJ 12/06/14; CNN 14/06/2014).

**Turkey:** IS’s advance ostensibly weakens Baghdad’s posturing over the KRG’s recent, defiant international oil exports via Turkey. But were IS to redirect its advance on the Kurdish north, which is improbable at present, massive Turkish investments across multiple sectors would be jeopardised. On the ground, Turkish nationals have been directly caught up in the conflict, with some 80 individuals held to ransom, including 49 consulate staff. Ankara has yet to respond firmly to IS operations on both sides of the Syrian–Turkish border, and may now be pushed to do so. Turkey maintains a string of military outposts on the northern fringes of Dohuk governorate, originally intended to monitor PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) activities (Hurriyet 11/06/14; Stratfor 11/06/2014).

**The United States:** The US has invested USD 1 trillion and many lives in stabilising Iraq over the past decade, and has an important stake in containing IS. Washington is refraining from sending ground troops back into Iraq, and has decided instead to send up to 600 Special Forces advisors and trainers to the Maliki Government. Potential cooperation with Tehran, with which it is currently engaged in nuclear negotiations together with the other members of the P5+1, faces formidable obstacles given the historical animosity and Iran’s opposition to any US involvement in Iraq. Anticipating the deepening involvement of the United States in Iraq, the Islamic State and its supporters launched a substantial social media campaign last week threatening the United States with terrorist attacks if it intervenes in the present crisis (NYTimes 16/06/14; IRNA 22/06/2014, Reuters 2014/07/01, Stratfor 2014/06).

**Jordan:** Still grappling with the destabilizing influence of the Arab uprisings on an increasingly fragile social compact, Jordan now has to contend with Islamic militants along the length of its northern and northeastern borders. All of Jordan’s 180km of border with Iraq abuts Anbar governorate, where IS has made the greatest advances. Jordan firmly opposes IS, has an important stake in hamstringing homegrown jihadism, and has suffered at least three suicide bombings in its capital. Insurgents, including jihadists, have used Jordanian territory as a launchpad for attacks against the Syrian Government, and hence the risks of a jihadi ‘backwash’ cannot be discounted. The country’s relations with Israel – both signed a peace treaty in 1994 – also make it a target for IS (Stratfor 17/06/2014).

**Saudi Arabia:** Saudi nationals, among other Gulf states, are thought to be among IS’s financial patrons, or at least in the past, and have been accused of financing Sunni fundamentalist groups in their fight against Bashar Assad’s government and his allies. Some 150 Saudi intelligence officers reportedly entered IS-controlled Mosul through Syria’s al Hasake province, days after Mosul’s takeover. Whatever the truth, Riyadh has key interests in ensuring that Iraq’s Sunnis contain, or at least balance against their Shia counterparts. Conversely, IS’s spectacular military successes and its growing proximity to southern Iraq’s Nukhayb desert – and, by extension, to Saudi Arabia’s borders – may cause unease for some in the Kingdom. Despite the putative links and IS’s stated territorial aspirations, many in the wider jihadist community have voiced opposition to the Saudi Government’s custodianship of the Two Holy Shrines, Mecca and Medina (Aljazeera 17/06/2014; WSJ 22/06/2014; BasNews 19/06/2014).