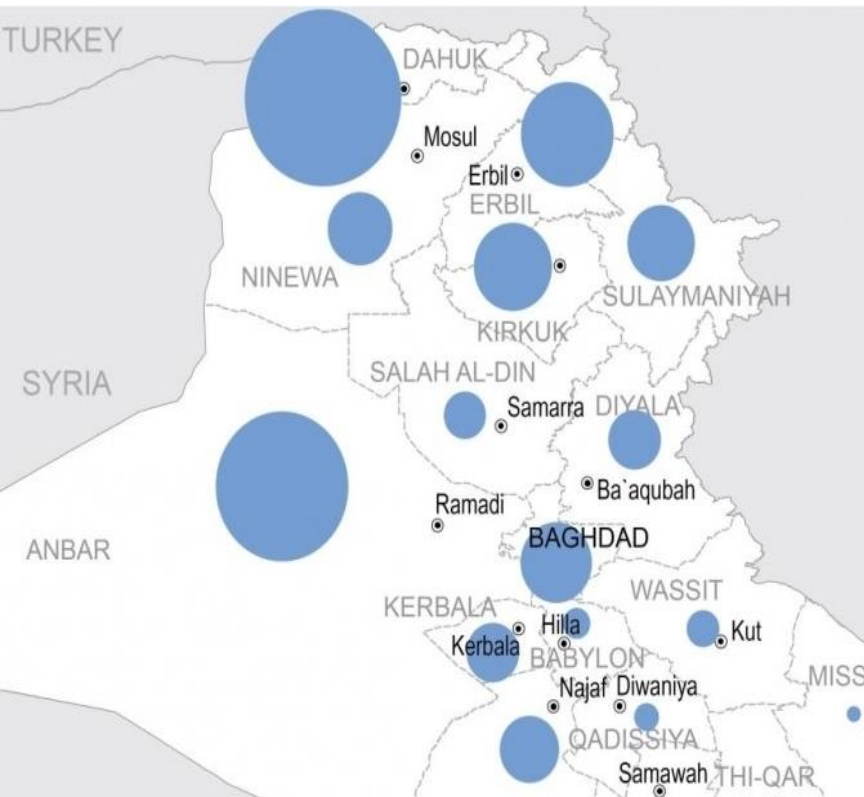




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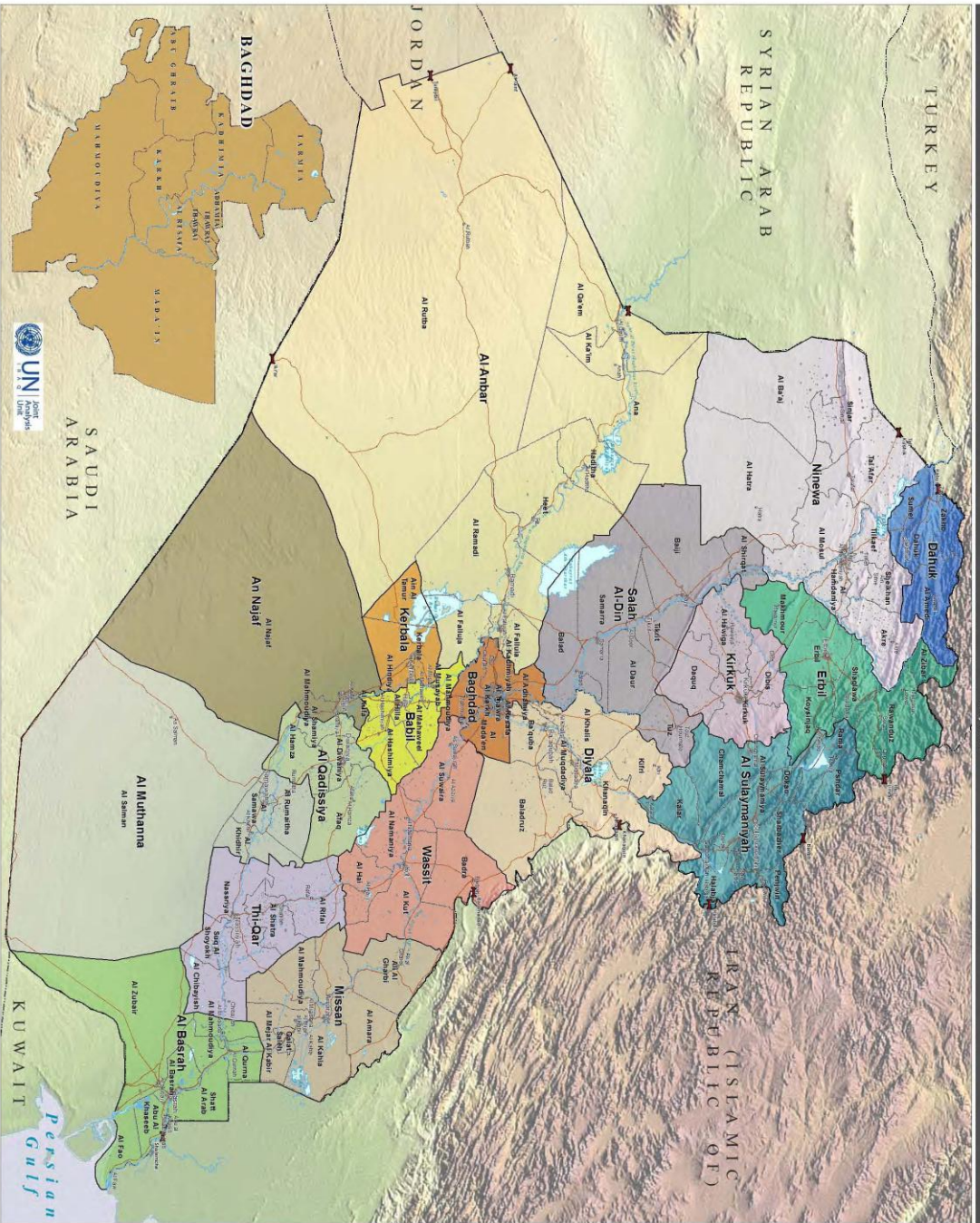
UNITED NATIONS Assistance
Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)
Human Rights Office



Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 6 July – 10 September 2014

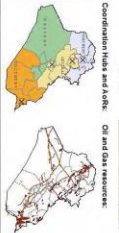
IRAQ - District Map

July 2014



Legend

- Land Use**
- Built-up Area
 - Transportation**
 - Primary roads
 - Demographics**
 - Capital
 - Gov. Capital
 - Major City
 - Boundaries**
 - Border Countries
 - National Boundary
 - Governorate Boundary
 - District Boundary
 - Coastline
 - Hydrology**
 - Urban and watercourses
 - Major rivers
 - Land subject to inundation
 - Other**
 - District Internal Boundary. Enclave map



Government and district boundaries in Iraq were among the first to be digitized. The map data was compiled by CIA and US State Department in 2009. The map data was compiled by CIA and US State Department in 2009. The map data was compiled by CIA and US State Department in 2009.

Map data source(s):
 Bounding Box: 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000, 6000, 7000, 8000, 9000, 10000, 11000, 12000, 13000, 14000, 15000, 16000, 17000, 18000, 19000, 20000, 21000, 22000, 23000, 24000, 25000, 26000, 27000, 28000, 29000, 30000, 31000, 32000, 33000, 34000, 35000, 36000, 37000, 38000, 39000, 40000, 41000, 42000, 43000, 44000, 45000, 46000, 47000, 48000, 49000, 50000, 51000, 52000, 53000, 54000, 55000, 56000, 57000, 58000, 59000, 60000, 61000, 62000, 63000, 64000, 65000, 66000, 67000, 68000, 69000, 70000, 71000, 72000, 73000, 74000, 75000, 76000, 77000, 78000, 79000, 80000, 81000, 82000, 83000, 84000, 85000, 86000, 87000, 88000, 89000, 90000, 91000, 92000, 93000, 94000, 95000, 96000, 97000, 98000, 99000, 100000.



“International law requires that both the Iraqi State and armed groups take all measures to minimize the impact of violence on civilians, respect the principles of distinction and proportionality when carrying out military operations, 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 access basic humanitarian assistance at all times.”

– Mr. Nickolay Mladenov

UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq, 26 September, Baghdad

“Ethnic and religious groups and other vulnerable groups continue to suffer premeditated attacks. All parties to the conflict must dedicate urgent efforts to protect these groups in full compliance with the rules and principles of international human rights and humanitarian law”.

- Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

High Commissioner for Human Rights, 26 September, Geneva

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Summary

This report 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 from 6 July to 10 September 2014 (“the reporting period”) and follows on from UNAMI/OHCHR’s first published report on protection of civilians in the ongoing non-international armed conflict in Iraq covering the period from 5 June to 5 July 2014, released on 18 August 2014.

The conflict between the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and affiliated forces, on the one hand, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and associated armed groups, on the other, continues to take a heavy toll on civilians. Gross human rights abuses and acts of violence of an increasingly sectarian nature, committed by armed groups, have exacerbated the effect on civilians and contributed to the deterioration in the human rights situation and the rule of law, in many parts of the country.

Overall, at least 24,015 civilians have been killed or injured in Iraq during the first eight months of 2014. Of these, at least 8,493 civilians were killed and 15,782 were wounded. From the spread of the conflict from Anbar to other areas of Iraq, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded at least 11,159 civilian casualties between 1 June and 31 August. This number includes at least 4,692 civilians killed, and 6,467 wounded. The actual numbers could be much higher. Additionally, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of violence, such as lack of access to basic food, water or medicine, after fleeing their homes or who remained trapped in areas under ISIL control or in areas of conflict are unknown. Children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and elderly people have been particularly vulnerable.

As of August 2014, an estimated 1.8 million Iraqis had been displaced due to the ongoing violence. Some 1,000,000 are displaced in areas under the control of ISIL and associated armed groups or in areas under Government control, while 800,000 were displaced in the Kurdistan Region. Ensuring the protection and basic humanitarian needs of all civilians remains of critical importance.

UNAMI/OHCHR has received reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross abuses of human rights that have been perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups, with an apparent systematic and widespread character. These include attacks directly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, executions and other targeted killings of civilians, abductions, rape and other forms of sexual and physical violence perpetrated against women and children, forced recruitment of children, destruction or desecration of places of religious or cultural significance, wanton destruction and looting of property, and denial of fundamental freedoms.

Members of Iraq’s diverse ethnic and religious communities, including Turkmen, Shabak, Christians, Yezidi, Sabaeans, Kaka’e, Faily Kurds, Arab Shi’a, and others have particularly been affected by the situation. ISIL and associated armed groups intentionally and systematically targeted these communities for gross human rights abuses, at times aimed at destroying, suppressing or cleansing them from areas under their control. ISIL and associated armed groups also murdered captured soldiers and other security forces or government personnel. UNAMI/OHCHR notes that many of the violations and abuses perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

UNAMI/OHCHR also received some reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross violations or abuses of international human rights law committed by ISF and affiliated armed groups that occurred during the reporting period. These included air strikes and shelling as well as 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, and abductions of civilians.

In a number of cases, it has been impossible to identify the perpetrators of violations and abuses committed during the reporting period. These included summary executions, inter-sectarian violence, and the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) and suicide bombers targeting 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.

International law requires that both the State and armed groups respect the principles of distinction and proportionality when carrying out 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 access 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. 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.

Introduction

This report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict in Iraq is published by the Human Rights Office of UNAMI in cooperation with OHCHR, under their respective mandates.¹

The ongoing armed conflict in Iraq continued to take a heavy toll on civilians. Overall, at least of 24,015 civilians have been killed or injured in Iraq during the first eight months of 2014. Of this total, at least 8,493 were killed and 15,782 were wounded. From the spread of the conflict from Anbar to other areas of Iraq, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded at least 11,159 civilian casualties between 1 June and 31 August. This number includes at least 4,692 killed, and 6,467 wounded.² The actual numbers could be much higher. Additionally, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of violence, such as lack of access to basic food, water or medicine, after fleeing their homes or who remained trapped in areas under ISIL control or in areas of conflict are unknown. Children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and elderly *people* are particularly vulnerable.

The report presents a summary of accounts received concerning violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, as well as other human rights concerns, arising from the non-international armed conflict, including between Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and armed groups and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)³ and its associated armed groups. The report covers the recent serious escalation of armed violence from 6 July to 10 September 2014.

¹ 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.

² Monthly civilian casualty figures in this report consist of civilians and civilian police, and include civilian casualties from Anbar. As UNAMI does not have access to Anbar, the statistics for civilian casualties in the governorate have been provided by local medical sources.

³ ISIL grew out of a number of Islamist extremist insurgency and terrorist groups, most importantly *Jamaat al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad* (founded in 1999 and led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi) and later ‘al-Qa’eda in Iraq’ (AQ-I/ *Tanzīm Qā’idat al-Jihād fī Bilād al-Rāfidayn*). ISIL root organization, AQ-I, was established in October 2004 following an oath of loyalty by al-Zarqawi to Osama Bin Laden. In January 2006, and later in October 2006 following the death of al-Zarqawi in June that year, the organization was merged with a number of other insurgent groups operating in Iraq to form an umbrella organization known as the *Mujahideen Shura Council*, which included AQ-I, *Jeish al-Fatiheen*, *Jund al-Sahaba*, *Katayeb Ansar al-Tawhid wal Sunnah*, *Jeish al-Taiifa al-Mansoura*, and other Sunni based groups. The organization retitled itself the ‘Islamic State of Iraq’ (ISI/ *al-Dawla al-Islāmīyah fī al-‘Iraq*) with Abu Abdullah al-Rasheed al-Baghdadi as its ‘emir’ and Abu Ayyub al-Masri as its tactical leader. Its field of operations were originally in the Iraqi governorates of Baghdad, al-Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, and parts of Babil and Wasit. With the deaths of both al-Rasheed al-Baghdadi and al-Masri in April 2010, the leadership was assumed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who is believed to have been born in Samarra in Iraq. With the group’s expansion into the Syrian civil war, it was renamed ‘Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (in Arabic, *-is-Sham*) (ISIL/ ISIS - *Dawla al-Islāmīyah fī al-‘Iraq wa al-Sham*). On 29 June, after seizing Mosul in northern Iraq, it announced it would refer to itself as the ‘Islamic State’ (IS – *al-Dawla al-Islāmīyah*). It is often referred to colloquially as ‘*daesh*’, which is an abbreviation of the group’s name in Arabic. ISIL claims to have fighters from the UK, France, Germany and other European countries, the US, and the Caucasus, as well as a large number of Arab and Islamic countries. ISIL operated largely independently from other Islamist radical terrorist and insurgent groups, most importantly *Jabhat al-Nusra* (al-Nusra Front), which is the official al-Qa’eda affiliate in Syria. The organization is believed to have received substantial financial support from wealthy individuals from the Gulf but its coffers have been considerably swelled by its seizure of oil fields in eastern Syria and Iraq and the reserves of the Iraqi Central Bank held in Mosul when the city fell on 10 June 2014. ISIL is on the al-Qa’eda Sanction List of the Security Council in resolutions 1267 of 1999, and 1989 of 2011, which imposes financial sanctions, an arms embargo and a travel ban on its members.

Methodology

The information contained in this report is based on testimony obtained, wherever possible, directly from witnesses or victims of violations and abuses.

Information was also obtained from a variety of governmental and non-governmental sources as well as United Nations entities⁴. In particular, UNAMI conducted interviews with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Erbil and Dohuk.⁵ Unless specifically stated, all reports of violations and abuses contained in this report have been verified or cross-checked through a number of independent, credible and reliable sources.

Limitations imposed by the deteriorating security situation have affected the capacity of UNAMI to undertake direct monitoring and verification in many instances. In addition to the incidents that UNAMI/OHCHR was able to verify, hundreds of other reports concerning killing of civilians were received, which could not be verified due to lack of direct access and problems identifying credible sources. Information included in this reports is comprehensive, but not exhaustive. Unverified incidents have not been reported. Figures provided in this report should therefore be regarded as absolute minimums.

Background

On 29 June, ISIL spokesperson, Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, announced the formation of an 'Islamic Caliphate' via an audio statement posted online, at the same time rebranding ISIL simply as "the Islamic State" (*al-Dawla al-Islamiyya*).⁶ A few days later, on 1 July, ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called on Muslims worldwide to obey him as 'the Caliph', and to come to the new "Caliphate" to defend it. Throughout July, the armed conflict continued between ISIL and associated armed groups, and ISF and armed groups in various areas of Ninewa (in the districts of Sinjar and Tal Afar, and the Ninewa Plains), and the governorates of Salah al-Din (particularly around Tikrit, Samarra, Tuz and Duloeliyah), Kirkuk (around Hawijah and Jalawla) and Diyala (around Buhriz, Khallis and Baquba). Throughout July, violence also extended increasingly into Babil Governorate south of Baghdad.

From 2-3 August, ISIL and associated armed groups rapidly advanced through al-Qahtaniya, Ataniya and al-Shammal sub-districts of Sinjar followed quickly by al-Ayadiya, Rabaeea'a, and Zammar sub-districts of Tal Afar district (which borders the Mosul Dam along the frontier with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I)). The defending KR-I Peshmerga forces were forced to withdraw from these areas to defensive positions on the KR-I border of Dahuk, including the "Mish Khabur" bridge, where fighting went on for several days to control the Mosul Dam. On 3 August, Peshmerga forces, backed by Iraqi Air Force, launched a counter-attack on ISIL elements and managed to reclaim parts of Sinjar but were later forced to withdraw. Forces from Syrian Kurdish armed groups and the Kurdish People's Protection Units (*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel* or 'YPG'), were also reported to have engaged with ISIL in Rabaeea'a for control of border crossings into Syria. Simultaneously, ISIL and associated armed groups maintained their attacks in Salah al-Din, Kirkuk and Diyala governorates, seizing more towns and areas from the Government in the process, and extending their attacks into areas of Babil Governorate south of Baghdad.

⁴ These include government officials and institutions, local and international media, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society actors, human rights defenders, tribal leaders, religious leaders, political figures, and United Nations entities operating in Iraq.

⁵ As of 1 September, UNAMI had conducted 465 interviews with IDPs in areas where they have concentrated, including: Khazir (Al-Hamdaniya); Erbil city, 11th Azar Quarter in the Kasnazan Compound, Baharka, Gwer, Makhmur, Dolob (Erbil); Dohuk city, Avapiroz, Garmawa, Shariya, Yezidi Castle, Shamel, Khanake Camp, Polytechnic Institute, Zakho and surrounding areas; Khanke; Bajet Kandala IDP camp (Dohuk); Sulaymaniyah city, Kalar, Raniya and Qalat Diza (Sulaymaniyah); Khanaqin (Diyala). UNAMI/OHCHR has also interviewed 36 detainees in the Asaysh detention facility in Erbil to get information on specific cases of human rights violations.

⁶ For an overview of events that took place from January to 5 July 2014, see 'Background' in *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=608&lang=en>

After the fall of Sinjar, UNAMI/OHCHR began receiving a high number of reports alleging serious human rights abuses perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups, including the intentional and systematic targeting of members of ethnic and religious communities in the areas it had seized. Ethnic and religious groups include Yezidi, Shi'a Turkmen and Shabaks, Christians, Sabaeans, Kaka'e, Faili Kurds communities. As a result of the fighting and direct targeting by ISIL, tens of thousands of civilians fled their homes, many of whom have taken refuge in Jabal Sinjar in al-Qahdissiya sub-district, while others fled to Dohuk in KR-I or to other areas of Iraq. Others remained trapped in their villages. Many of those displaced or trapped were reported to be in urgent need of basic items, including food, water, and medicines.

On 6 August, a planned offensive by KR-I Peshmerga forces against ISIL did not materialize, as ISIL launched a lightning attack, overrunning the Ninewa Plains and Shirkhan District as far as Makhmour on the southern edge of Erbil Province of KR-I, sparking another massive round of displacement, mostly into the Kurdistan Region.

On 8 August 2014, following an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council, and at the request of the Government of Iraq, the United States of America (USA) initiated airdrops of humanitarian aid for the civilians trapped on Jabal Sinjar, followed by the United Kingdom, France, and Australia in subsequent days. The US also commenced airstrikes aimed at stopping the advance of ISIL. Strikes continued in subsequent days around Sinjar and near Erbil. These and other countries also organized shipments of humanitarian aid to assist the Kurdish and Iraqi authorities address the needs of the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons who continued to stream across the border into KR-I and other areas of Iraq. The Peshmerga retook Makhmour and al-Gweir on 10 August. On 14 August, with the assistance of USA airstrikes, the YPG forces were able to open a corridor to Jabal Sinjar, providing tens of thousands of Yezidi civilians who had been trapped there the opportunity to escape. On 16 August, USA conducted air strikes against ISIL positions at the Mosul dam, enabling Iraqi and Kurdish forces to fully retake and secure the facility by 18 August.

In other areas of the country, ISF launched counter-offensives to push back ISIL and associated armed groups from territory they had seized. On 19 August, ISF and affiliated armed groups again attempted to retake Tikrit from ISIL, but the operation failed, resulting in the loss of military positions in the southern area of the city that ISF had managed to retake only a few weeks before. Meanwhile, ISIL and associated armed groups stepped up their attacks in many areas, particularly in Salah al-Din, Kirkuk, Diyala and Babil governorates.

On 31 August, ISF, affiliated forces and the KR-I Peshmerga broke the siege of the town of Amerli, in Tooz District in Salah al-Din Governorate, which had been surrounded by ISIL and associated armed groups since 15 June, and where 13,000 civilians had been trapped in dire humanitarian conditions.

At time of writing, conflict was ongoing through parts of Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk and Diyala governorates. Other terrorist attacks and instances of violence continued to take place in Baghdad and other areas of the country not directly affected by the recent armed conflict.

Legal framework on the protection of civilians in armed conflict

The international legal framework applicable to the situation in Iraq comprises both international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL).

International law requires that both the State and armed groups respect the principles of distinction and proportionality when carrying out 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 access 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. 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.

For an overview of international law binding on Iraq and other parties to the armed conflict ongoing in the country, see section 'Legal framework on the Protection of Civilians in Non-International Armed Conflict', in

Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 5 June to 5 July 2014 (UNAMI/OHCHR July 2014).⁷

Impact of the conflict on civilians

Conflict-related displacement of civilians

As of 30 August 2014, almost 1.8 million persons have been displaced within Iraq – 50 per cent (862,458) are in KR-I; 343,284 in Anbar; and 503,436 in other areas of Iraq. The Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) has established a number of camps within the region housing at least 26,000 people, while the remainder are housed within the communities where they have sought refuge, many in unfinished buildings, schools, mosques, churches, and other premises.

With the initial takeover of Mosul by ISIL on 10 June, some 500,000 people fled the city. On 22 July, the Chaldean Patriarch informed UNAMI that about 20,000 Christians had left Mosul and were sheltering with relatives and community members in different locations in the Ninewa Plains and KR-I.

Beginning on 2 August, entire villages of ethnic and religious minorities began to flee from areas in Sinjar District, as well as Zummar and Rabee'a sub-districts, in Tal Afar in Ninewa Governorate as ISIL fighters took control of the areas. Reports were received that hundreds of thousands of residents, predominantly Yezidi, Turkmen, but also Shabak and Christians, had fled from newly captured districts – with tens of thousands fleeing to Jabal Sinjar in al-Qahdissya sub-district from towns such as Ba'shiqah, Tal al-banat, al-Snoni, Tal Qasab, Kahbul, Khan Sour and al-Abasiyah. Some sources reported that as many as 200,000 had sought safety on the mountain, while others made their way into Dohuk in KR-I. Among them were a number of Turkmen families, including some who had previously been displaced from Tal Afar. Those who fled to the mountains were encircled by ISIL fighters in control of the surrounding areas at the base of the mountains. The displaced persons, including thousands of women, children, people with disabilities, and elderly had travelled long distances, many on foot, and were in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, including water, food, shelter and medicine. Others remained trapped in their villages, particularly in the predominantly Yezidi towns of Solagh, Amadin, Khocho, and Mazar Sharafadin, in similarly dire humanitarian conditions as they were surrounded by ISIL forces.⁸ On 5 August, the United Nations International Child's Fund (UNICEF) reported that families who had fled to Jabal Sinjar, including up to 25,000 children, were in immediate need of assistance, including drinking water and sanitation services. It was also reported that around 40 Yezidi children had died as a consequence of hunger, thirst and dehydration⁹. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that as of 12 August, an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people were still displaced in that area and access to them was limited¹⁰.

The advance of ISIL on 6 August into areas of the Ninewa Plains and Shirkhan District as far as Makhmour on the border of Erbil Governorate sparked a further mass exodus of up to 180,000 individuals into areas of KR-I and other areas of Iraq, including Christians, Shabak, Turkmen, Yezidi, Shi'a Arabs and Sunni Arabs.

Following the raising of the siege of Jabal Sinjar on 14 August, tens of thousands of Yezidi civilians who had been trapped there had the opportunity to escape. Most fled via Syria with the assistance of the Syrian based YPG into KR-I.

According to United Nations' agencies, two thirds of the displaced persons were located in areas under the control of ISIL and associated armed groups or were in areas affected by the conflict – rendering access to them for the provision of humanitarian assistance particularly difficult. Additionally, many members of ethnic and religious communities had sought refuge in areas that were increasingly subject to ISIL attack –

⁷ 'Legal framework on the Protection of Civilians in Non-International Armed Conflict', in *Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict in Iraq: 5 June to 5 July 2014* (UNAMI/OHCHR July 2014), online <http://uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&task=download&id=499_d31007c69700e48cf0446cfaf85c3e48&Itemid=608&lang=en>

⁸ Jabal Sinjar is largely barren and [treeless], with temperatures soaring up to 50 degrees plus during the day time.

⁹ http://www.unicef.org/media/media_74676.html

¹⁰ <http://www.unhcr.org/print/53e9fe2d9.html>

including northern Sinjar (around Tal Kayf), Zummar sub-district in Tal Afar District bordering Dohuk, and the Ninewa Plains (Hamdaniyah, Bartilla, Ba'shiqa and al-Qosh).

Many villages inhabited by the Yezidi, Turkmen, and Shabak in northern Sinjar District and parts of Tal Afar District were virtually surrounded by ISIL and associated armed groups. Furthermore, many of those displaced had sought refuge with relatives, friends and community members, particularly Christians who had sought protection with relatives and fellow Christians in villages and towns in the Ninewa Plains. The large numbers of displaced persons stretched scarce local resources to the limit. The precarious situation faced by civilians has been exacerbated by the fact that ISIL had cut the electricity and water supply to many of these areas.

The United Nations has been working with the Government of Iraq (GOI) and civil society groups to assist in the coordination of delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need, greatly supported by the provision of humanitarian aid from members of the international community. At time of writing, 47 cargo flights have arrived in Erbil carrying almost 7,000 metric tons of humanitarian assistance. The United Nations' Strategic Response Plan is undergoing a re-evaluation to address the latest wave of displacement, with a balance of USD 571 million in donor contributions to date¹¹.

The United Nations has also been organizing direct services to the displaced, including, but not limited to, assisting one million IDPs with food, medicines and medical supplies; 500,000 with humanitarian clusters' assistance; 300,000 displaced with shelter; and 150,000 with emergency kits.

Violations and abuses committed by ISIL and associated armed groups

According to information corroborated by different sources, ISIL and associated armed groups carried out attacks deliberately and systematically targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, with the intention of killing and wounding civilians. ISIL and associated armed groups also continued to systematically perpetrate targeted assassinations and abductions, including community, political, and religious leaders, government employees, education professionals, journalists, and health workers.

In areas under its control, ISIL perpetrated widespread, systematic attacks against civilians, and implemented policies that fundamentally violated their rights. Among the victims were Sunni Muslims who refused to pledge allegiance to ISIL or to live by its rules, captured members of ISF or government employees or persons known to be associated with the Government, prisoners or detainees from Shi'a and other ethnic and religious communities, IDPs fleeing the conflict, and members of diverse ethnic and religious communities. Many of these attacks caused scores of victims and were carried out in a methodical, systematic and deliberate manner. In the case of attacks targeting diverse ethnic and religious communities, these appear to have been deliberately and systematically perpetrated with the intention of suppressing these communities or cleansing them permanently from areas under ISIL control, or in some instances of destroying some communities.

The deliberate or indiscriminate targeting of civilians, the use of civilians as shields, hindering civilians from access to humanitarian assistance or areas of safety, as well as any other acts mentioned above, are in violation of IHL, IHRL, and/or the laws of Iraq, and may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Unless specifically stated, UNAMI has verified the following serious violations of IHL and gross abuses of IHRL perpetrated by ISIL or associated armed groups.

Executions/targeting killings and enforced disappearance

ISIL and associated armed groups carried out executions, assassinations and killings. Particular targets included members of ISF and police, GOI or KRG or those associated with them, and other individuals who refused to swear their fealty to the organization, or whom the organization and its associates deemed to be

¹¹ The Government of Iraq has allocated a total of USD 860 million to the Higher Committee for IDPs, but the disbursement has been protracted.

a threat. These ranged from local community and religious leaders, professionals (such as doctors, teachers, and journalists and media workers, etc.) to ordinary civilians. Such killings perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups took place in all areas under their control, as well as in areas affected by conflict.

Executions following illegal/irregular/unlawful courts, in disrespect of due process and fair trial standards

On 21 August, a 31-year old man was stoned to death by ISIL after a self-appointed court sentenced him to death for adultery. On 28 August, seven individuals, allegedly Sunni, were executed by ISIL after being condemned to death.

Between 3 and 4 September, ISIL executed six men, all in their thirties, by shooting them in the head, after they were sentenced to death by ISIL self-appointed court. On 4 September, ISIL executed another 14 men after sentencing them to death. On 7 September, ISIL executed 40 people in Mosul after they were convicted in the same manner.

Women have not been spared from ISIL self-appointed courts. On 5 September, ISIL executed three Sunni women in Mosul. According to some reports, they were executed after ISIL's self-appointed courts sentenced them to death, allegedly for refusing to treat ISIL fighters. UNAMI/OHCHR was not able to verify the identity of those executed. On 9 September, two women were executed by ISIL by being shot in the back of the head.

Enforced disappearance and killings of members of ISF and Police, and those associated with them

ISIL directly targeted members of ISF and police or those associating with them, who did not 'repent' (in the case of Sunni or Shi'a) or who refused to pledge their fealty to ISIL and its self-proclaimed 'Caliph'. In one particular serious incident referred to in UNAMI/OHCHR previous report, 1500 soldiers and security force personnel from former Camp Speicher military Base in Salah al-Din were captured and killed around 12 June. ISIL claimed responsibility for the killing. A number of bodies were recovered in subsequent days from a number of sites, including around Tikrit and from the Tigris river, but UNAMI/OHCHR was unable to confirm directly whether these were the soldiers and personnel from Camp Speicher.

Relatives of the victims staged several demonstrations in Baghdad, Hilla, and Nassiriyah in August and September demanding that the Iraqi authorities shed light on the fate of their missing relatives. On 10 August, demonstrators in Nassiriyah threatened to break into the Nassiriyah Central Prison (al-Hoot), and to kill detainees accused of terrorism related charges. On 2 September, relatives of the victims forced their way through a checkpoint in the Green Zone in Baghdad and broke into the building of the Council of Representatives (CoR). On the following day, CoR held a special session on the issue. Local media reported that the Deputy Governor of Thi-Qar stated that the local government's committee dealing with this issue had a list of 597 persons missing from Thi-Qar and other governorates.

UNAMI/OHCHR received multiple reports that ISIL had previously issued a dictate that all Sunni and Shi'a ISF personnel and people associated with the Government had to show 'repentance' in order to be forgiven by ISIL for their association with the Government, or face judgment in a court and punishment (including a possible execution). More recently, ISIL issued a special document for those who have repented which 'certifies' their 'repentance'. Known ISF members and those associated with the Government are asked to show this proof when captured or encountered at check-points. Since end of July 2014, ISIL has publicly posted 'wanted lists' in Tikrit and other areas of names of current and former ISF members or those associated with the Government who have failed to 'repent' or who have 'recanted'. Reportedly, families of those ISF members have been warned that their houses would be destroyed should they hide their relatives.

Massive executions have been reported in Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Diyala, Kirkuk governorates. The following examples are illustrative of a serious trend. Corroborated reports indicate that on 16 July, 42 soldiers captured after clashes between ISF and armed groups were executed in Awenat, south Tikrit in Salah al-Din. On 25 July, the remains of 18 Iraqi police officers were reportedly found on the side of the road in Abbasiyah, south of Tikrit. According to reports, the officers were executed after being forced to 'repent' by ISIL. On 27 July, approximately 40 bodies were found in a ditch by residents of al-Sharqat in an uninhabited area of the sub-district near Jumela village in Salah al-Din.

According to reliable sources, on 2 August, ISIL abducted two brothers from Tuz Khurmatu District, Salah al-Din. Reportedly, one of the two brothers was beheaded for collaborating with ISF and for refusing to swear allegiance to ISIL. The fate of the second brother remains unknown.

ISF discovered two mass graves in Sulaiman Bek at the end of August. In the first, it found the remains of six males believed to be truck drivers abducted on 10 June by ISIL. In the other, they discovered the remains of at least 15 ISF members captured and killed between 13 and 20 June. The deceased had all died from gunshot wounds, many to the head. Six bodies have so far been identified and delivered to their families in Balad, Diwaniya, Karbala and Najaf.

UNAMI/OHCHR received reports that, on 25 August, ISIL or associated armed groups abducted two policemen and two *Sahwa*¹² members from Hawija, Kirkuk. On 26 August, the body of one of the policemen was received by a hospital in Hawija. No information was available on the fate of the others.

On 13 July, the bodies of 12 men with gunshot wounds were found in Tawakkul village, northeast of Baquba in Diyala after ISIL had advanced into the area a day earlier.

On 29 August, the bodies of seven executed soldiers were found in Wahda town in Diaya. On 31 August, reports received indicated that 19 Sunni were executed in Saadiya by ISIL for not pledging allegiance to them. ISIL had earlier issued a statement listing 19 tribal leaders who refused to pledge allegiance on their kill-list. On 31 August, it was reported that the remains of five policemen, who died from gunshot wounds to the head, were found in Baquba.

On 28 August, ISIL released a video appearing to show the beheading of a Kurdish man who was alleged to have been a captured member of Peshmerga forces. The video showed several hostages [in orange jumpsuits] mentioning that they belonged to specific units of the security forces of KR-I. The place of the alleged execution was identified as al-Ziraie area in eastern Mosul in Ninewa Governorate. In the video, a member of ISIL criticized USA and threatened the President of KR-I that ISIL would execute all captured Peshmerga if they continued to fight against ISIL.¹³

Killing of community and religious leaders and other civilians

UNAMI/OHCHR received information that at least 13 members of two displaced families belonging to a religious group were stopped at an ISIL checkpoint in Kifar al-Haloubi, and executed.

On 22 July, ISIL killed a Sunni Imam in eastern Baquba because he had denounced the organization. Reports allege that on 9 September, another Imam was executed in western Mosul for failing to declare his fealty to ISIL. Reliable reports indicate that on 15 August, the remains of 12 men who died of gunshot wounds were found in Tikrit after they had been abducted by ISIL. On 4 September, ISIL executed a candidate in the general election in April along with his two brothers. The execution was carried out in public in al-Houd village, around 40 km south of Mosul.

Abductions of community and religious leaders and others

ISIL and associated armed groups abducted members of ISF and police, GOI, KRG or those associated with them, and other individuals who refused to swear their fealty to the organization, or whom the organization and its associates deemed to be a threat. These included local community and religious leaders, and professionals such as doctors, teachers, and journalists. Abductions attributable to ISIL and associated armed groups took place in all areas under their control, as well as in areas affected by the conflict. The exact whereabouts or fate of many of the individuals abducted by ISIL remains unknown.

¹² The National Council for the Salvation of Iraq, also known as the Sunni Salvation movement, National Council for the Awakening of Iraq, the Sunni Awakening movement, or the Sons of Iraq were and are coalitions of tribal leaders and Sheikhs that were founded in 2005 and united to maintain security of their communities from al-Qa'eda associated groups.

¹³ On 19 August ISIL posted online video footage depicting the beheading of abducted journalist and US citizen, James Foley, followed by a video released on 9 September showing the killing of another journalist and US citizen, Steven Sotloff. Both Foley and Sotloff were abducted by ISIL in Syria. It is unknown precisely where the killings took place but ISIL claimed these were in retaliation for US involvement in military operations against the organisation.

On 9 July, UNAMI/OHCHR received reports that ISIL had kidnapped at least 60 former Iraqi Army officers from Shura area, southern Mosul, and al-Thubbat and al-Baath areas in eastern Mosul. Local sources suggested that ISIL is carrying out such kidnapping to pre-empt any potential rebel threat. On 25 July, ISIL or an associated armed group, abducted two young Sunni Arab men from the district of al-Masaref in Mosul and took them to an unknown location after accusing them of collaborating with ISF. On 27 July, ISIL abducted 20 young students and a Sufi Muslim leader in Mosul. The students were studying the Holy Qur'an when the attack was carried out on the al-Rawtha al-Muhamadiya Mosque in the Muthanna District, eastern Mosul. The gunmen also destroyed some tombs of Sufi sheikhs located inside the mosque. The whereabouts of the abducted students is unknown. Families of the abducted students have pleaded with the Sunni leadership of ISIL in Mosul to release their family members.

On 7 August, ISIL gunmen abducted 11 civilians from Samra village, north Tikrit, for allegedly colluding and providing information on ISIL to ISF. On 24 August, ISIL abducted a sheikh and a tribal leader of Khuthrniya village, al-Sharqat District in Salah al-Din. On 8 July, ISIL abducted a candidate in the last general election held at the end of April, who had run for the Motahidun bloc, and a judge of the Misdemeanour Court in Ninewa. Corroborated reports were received that on 11 August, ISIL had kidnapped the head of the Hawija *Sahwa* forces from his house.

On 3 September, two former Iraqi Army officers and four civilians were abducted by ISIL fighters from Gheda village in Daquq area, Kirkuk. On 4-5 September, ISIL abducted around 40 men from Tal Ali village, Hawija District, after villagers burned ISIL flags following its withdrawal on 3 September. On 7 September, ISIL freed 20 of them, reportedly after torturing them. It was also reported that the remaining men were subsequently freed, but UNAMI/OHCHR has been unable to confirm the report.

Conduct of Operations: Attacks against civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure

In the conduct of their operations, ISIL and associated armed groups have shown no consideration to protect civilians or civilian infrastructure, and at times, have carried out such operations deliberately to directly target civilians and civilian objects. UNAMI/OHCHR received a number of such reports from all conflict areas where ISIL and associated armed groups are operating. A majority of these attacks appear to be of a sectarian nature. UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports that ISIL systematically destroyed civilian property and civilian infrastructure as a way of punishing those whom it believed had opposed them.

In Baghdad, on 23 July, ISIL claimed responsibility for an SVBEID attack that killed 28 civilians including five policemen, and wounded at least 50 others at a checkpoint north Kadhimiya in a predominantly Shi'a area of northwest Baghdad. An ISIL suicide bomber blew himself up among worshippers who were leaving a Shi'a mosque in the blacksmith area of New Baghdad, killing ten and wounding another 24 on 25 August. ISIL claimed responsibility on social media and websites for this attack, purportedly in revenge for the killing of Sunni worshippers in Bani Wais, Diyala, on 22 August.

In Salah al-Din, it was reported that on 8 July, ISIL shelled al-Zewija village in the Baiji area, killing 13 civilians. ISIL had also killed at least 12 young male tribal fighters, including a tribal leader and his son. On 9 July, community sources told UNAMI/OHCHR that after securing the area, ISIL began destroying the houses of those who had resisted them, including houses of members of ISF and *Sahwa*. Approximately 100 residents remained trapped in the village and had been confined to their homes by ISIL under threat of execution. A local source reported that by the evening of 12 July, ISIL had demolished more than 200 houses in the village. On 20 July, the house of Sheikh Anwar al-Asi, the Head of the Obaidi tribe, located in al-Ramel village, was blown up by ISIL after stealing all its properties. The Sheikh had refused to provide ISIL with men and vehicles to fight alongside with ISIL. Also in Salah al-Din, on 30 July, ISIL cut water and electricity connections to the village of Khuthraniya in al-Sharqat District, and demanded that the villagers volunteer to fight with it. The siege continues at the time of writing this report.

In Ninewa, on 11 and 12 July, ISIL blew up more than 15 houses belonging to former police and army elements in Hamma al-Aleel area, southern Mosul, and in Mosul City. On 29 August, ISIL blew up three houses in southern Mosul belonging to officers of the Minister of Interior, and on 4 September, six houses of members of the ISF in Qayyarah, south of Mosul. On the same day, ISIL blew up the house of a member

of the local council in Waizat located south east of Mosul, because he had refused to swear fealty to the organisation.

In Diyala, UNAMI received reports of ISIL destroying civilian property, mostly of people associated with the ISF, GOI, or tribal or religious leaders who would not swear fealty to them. On 21 July, ISIL militants were breaking into empty houses of those who had fled from Tikrit, using them as temporary bases, and looting and damaging property left behind. Sources told UNAMI/OHCHR that ISIL uses the houses for a couple of days before moving on, in order to limit being targeted by ISF. Later on 8 August, ISIL fighters blew up four houses belonging to IDPs who had fled the district of Baiji (some 40 km north of Tikrit) after they had received threats from ISIL because of their association with ISF personnel. ISIL targeted for destruction civic administration buildings in Sulaiman Bek on 19 August, destroying the district offices, municipality building, and the police station. On 27 August, ISIL blew up the house of the leader of the Jehesh Sunni tribe, in Ainzala area in Diyala, because he refused to pledge allegiance to it. On 6 September, ISIL allegedly blew up the house of a tribal sheikh in Jalawla. On 1 September, ISIL blew up the house of a Sahwa leader in al-Muatasam, south east of Samarra.

Shelling

On 29 August, ISIL shelled al-Askari area in Tuz Khurmatu, Tikrit killing five civilians, including one woman and wounding another 25, including five women and six children. The town of On 8 September, ISIL carried out a complex attack with five explosive-laden Humvee vehicles, four of which detonated, as well as a boat rigged with explosives and a bulldozer in order to force entry to Duloeliyah town in Salah al-Din (majority Sunni, and has been contested between ISIL and local tribes since June). Heavy clashes followed the attack and reportedly lasted for several hours. At least 20 civilians, including three children were killed and 120 others wounded by ISIL shelling and as a result of the complex attack. Other clashes were reported to have been ongoing. Casualty figures could not be verified at the time of writing.

On the evening of 4 August, ISIL fired two mortar shells from the direction of the Ninewa Drugs Company site, located in western Tal Kayf, hitting residential areas of the city killing one civilian. Again, on 5 August, ISIL fired mortar rounds into three civilian neighbourhoods in northeast Mosul, including al-Hadba', al-Sukar, al-Baladiyat and al-Sideeq. Two civilians were consequently killed, and 17 injured. The attack sparked an exodus of civilians from these areas to the north side of the Tigris River in Mosul.

Starting from late evening on 19 July until the early hours of 20 July, ISIL and associated armed groups fired at least six mortar rounds directly targeting the al-Bashir village in al-Askari area of Taza sub-district. During the attack, nine civilians were wounded, including four women and two girls aged 13 and 9. According to sources from the area, many citizens of Taza sub-district had fled their houses to Kirkuk when ISIL began its attacks on the area in mid-June. Some villagers had attempted to return around 10 July due to its control by Peshmerga forces, but shelling by ISIL had forced them to flee once again.

Destruction or damage to places of religious and cultural significance

ISIL and associated armed groups continued to attack and wantonly destroy places of religious and cultural significance that did not conform to its *takfiri* doctrine. Sunni and Shi'a mosques, Christian churches and monasteries, Yezidi shrines, Kaka'e shrines, and other religious, historical or cultural significant sites have all been targeted.

Shi'a mosques were particularly targeted. On 7 July, ISIL entered Shanaf village (majority Shabak), in Nimrod District, and Staeh village (majority Turkmen) in al-Hadhar District, and blew up the Shi'a mosques in each village, stole livestock and valuables and forced the residents to flee. On 16 July, ISIL blew up al-Sadraen Shi'a Mosque in Tamim area of Mosul and a Husseinia in al-Sadaa village in Tal Kayf District. On 25 July, several Shi'a mosques in Kirkuk were targeted. One VBIED was detonated after Friday prayers near al-Mustafa Husseiniiyya, killing four civilians and injuring at least 20 others. Also, one IED attacks occurred near al-Zahraa Husseiniiyya in Arafa District, injuring four civilians. On 3 August, ISIL reportedly destroyed the Shi'a shrine of Sayida Zainab located in Sinjar and also the Shi'a shrine of Saiyed Zakariya in Sinjar. On 9 August, ISIL fighters detonated the holy shrine of Imam Ridha (Shi'a Eighth Imam) in Tisikhrab village in Ninewa by an IED.

Sunni shrines were also attacked. UNAMI/OHCHR verified the destruction by ISIL of the following Sunni mosques: on 23 July, ISIL allegedly blew up the Imam Yahya Abu al-Qasim Sunni shrine in al-Shafa, west of Mosul and the Prophet Daniel's Shrines in the Hatherat al-Sada area of western Mosul; on 24 July, Imam Abul Oula Shrine in the Bab al-Jadeed area of central Mosul, Aoun al-Deen Bin al-Hasan Shrine (built in 1248) in Lagash Distruct in central Mosul, Nabi Younis shrine in eastern Mosul, and Ali Al Asghar Bin al-Hasan Shrine (behind Nabi Younis mosque); on 25 July, Prophet Sheet Shrine in Mosul; on 26 July, Nabi Jarjees shrine in western Mosul and Qatheeb al-Ban shrine in Raas al-Jadda District, in western Mosul; on 2 September, Abdulla al-Baqir al-Hasani Sunni mosque (also known as Imam al-Bahir mosque) in the al-Mashahda area, western Mosul and al-Saghirchy Sunni tomb in the Bab al-Toob area of central Mosul, and the Imam Abdul Rahman Sunni tomb, in the Twalib area of western Mosul; and on 3 September, Sheikh al-Shat Sunni mosque, in the Medan area of central Mosul, and Ain Sadda Sunni cemetery, in the Shahwan area of western Mosul.

Sufi shrines were also destroyed. On 27 July, ISIL destroyed the tombs of Sufi sheikhs in the al-Rawtha al-Muhamadiya Mosque in Muthanna District, eastern Mosul. On 24 July, ISIL gunmen detonated the shrine of Sufi Salih located between Tal Hama and Haftaghar villages in Daquq District, south Kirkuk.

Shrines belonging to the Kaka'e community were destroyed by ISIL. On 28 and 31 August, ISIL blew up four ancient Kaka'e shrines in Hamdaniya in the Ninewa Plains; Sayid Hayas, said to be several hundred years old, in Wardk village, and the shrines of Bawah Haidar, Bawah Yadgar and Shawas Quali in Tel Al-Ban village.

Also on 7 July, ISIL had reportedly removed the cross on top of the dome of the St. Ephrem Cathedral in the al-Shoorta area of Mosul. On 15 July, reports indicated that the oldest and largest library in Tal Afar district had been blown up by ISIL. Sources stated that ISIL had earlier occupied the library, using it as a base.

Rights of Women/ gender-based violence including sexual violence

Women have been dealt with particularly harshly by ISIL. ISIL attacked and killed female doctors, lawyers, among other professionals.

On 22 July, a candidate in the general election with the State of Law list was killed when ISIL stormed her house in Sderat village in Qayara sub-district in Ninewa. On 23 July, again in Sderat, ISIL gunmen broke into the house of a candidate in the last election for the Ninewa Provincial Council, killed her and abducted her husband. On the same day, a candidate in the last general election was abducted when ISIL gunmen stormed her house in the Sumer area of eastern Mosul.

It was reported that some female doctors went on strike because of the difficulty in doing their job with their faces covered. On 13 August, a female doctor was killed while resisting ISIL trying to take her away from her home in Tayaran, south of Mosul for having organised or participated in the strike.

UNAMI/OHCHR received information directly from some female doctors in Mosul indicating that ISIL is monitoring the implementation of their *takfiri* regulations at the hospital entrances and, on two occasions, female doctors were stopped and insulted. ISIL also inquired in hospitals into the marital status of the female doctors and stated that married women should wear black, while unmarried females other colours, so as to be easily distinguishable. On one occasion, a female doctor reported that she was stopped from attending to an urgent case because she was not covered properly; after a long heated discussion with the ISIL fighter, she was allowed to perform her duties. In another case – not related to the covering of the face – a male anaesthetist was prevented from providing anaesthesia to a female patient; after arguing that there was no female anaesthetist available and that the life of the patient was in danger, he was permitted to attend to the case.

According to the female doctors on strike, ISIL threatened them with the destruction or seizure of their houses and properties if they did not return to work. Following these threats, a number of women doctors informed UNAMI/OHCHR that they had no choice but to return to work and abide by the dress rules being imposed on them by ISIL. However, sources in hospitals in Mosul reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that the number of staff members working in health care facilities in the city and subsequently had dwindled.

UNAMI/OHCHR received reports that a number of women who had refused to wear the veil were beaten by ISIL in Mosul. On 21 August, media reported that ISIL beat with sticks women who were not wearing the veil in markets in the city. Allegedly, some women reacted, throwing stones at their attackers.

On 25 August, the remains of three females, bearing marks of torture and gunshot wounds, were found west of Mosul.

Denial of Fundamental Freedoms

ISIL has systematically enforced rules and codes of conduct on civilians living within its areas of control, which fundamentally abuse a range of basic human rights protected by international and Iraqi law. It has also enforced its rules summarily, often inflicting harsh penalties, and even death on those who transgress or refuse to accept those rules. Among the range of rights not respected by ISIL and associated armed groups are the rights to freedoms of religious belief, expression, and assembly and association. ISIL has imposed severe restrictions on the right to freedom of movement, particularly on women. It has imposed unlawful trials in areas under its control that do not respect due process or fair trial standards of those brought before them, and breaches in particular the rights and protections required for children.

On 10 June, ISIL sieged the Government's oil refinery in Baiji, and informed the employees and security personnel to 'repent'; otherwise would face severe consequences. The refinery has been under siege by ISIL continuously since that time.

On 4 September, in villages south and west of Kirkuk, ISIL reportedly forced Sunni Imams to pledge allegiance under threat of death and called on young men to join its ranks. On 8 September, ISIL issued a list of 40 Sunni Imams who it has forbidden to perform their functions in the mosques as they had not pledged their fealty to ISIL.

Attacks against ethnic and religious communities

ISIL has directly and systematically targeted Iraq's various diverse ethnic and religious communities, subjecting them to a range of gross human rights abuses, including murder, physical and sexual assault, robbery, wanton destruction of property, destruction of places of religious or cultural significance, forced conversions, denial of access to basic humanitarian services, and forced expulsion. The targeting of ethnic and religious communities by ISIL appears to be part of a deliberate and systematic policy that aims to suppress, permanently cleanse or expel, or in some instances, destroy those communities within areas of its control.

Attacks against Christians

From the beginning of ISIL takeover of Mosul on 10 June, Christians, along with other ethnic and religious communities, have been subjected to the imposition of ISIL *takfiri* doctrine on all civilians in the city. From the beginning of July, ISIL significantly increased its restrictions on the Christian and other communities within the city. Of particular concern is the expulsion of Christians from Mosul and occupation of their houses and seizure of all their belongings, including personal and indispensable food items.

On 16 July, ISIL was distributing leaflets among Christians in the city ordering them either to convert or to pay *jizyah* (toleration/protection tax), to leave or face death. Christian leaders were summonsed to a meeting with ISIL, which was supposed to take place on 17 July, but the Christian leaders refused to attend. ISIL then issued another order stating that any Christian who did not obey the previous order had until noon of 19 July to leave the city without taking any possessions, or be killed. This order was also announced in all the mosques during Friday's prayers on 18 July. On 17 July, ISIL started marking the houses of Christians in al-Arabi and al-Sukar areas of Mosul with the Arabic letter *nun* ("N") (the first letter of the Arabic word '*nasara*') and "property of the Islamic State" (*al-Dawla al-Islamiyya*). A number of Shi'a owned houses were also reported to have been marked with the Arabic letter *raa'* ("R") (the first letter of the Arabic word "*rafidha*" - the name by which ISIL refers to Shi'a). On 8 July, ISIL abducted a Christian family from a church (known locally as Titanic) located in al-Baker neighbourhood of Ninewa and took them to an undisclosed location. On 9 July, ISIL broke into a house belonging to a Christian family in the Ea'alam neighborhood of Mosul and occupied it. The family had already fled Mosul. On 13 July, two nuns and three orphans, who had been abducted on 29 June and held in former Badoush Prison, were released to their

relatives in Dohuk. According to one of the nuns, they had been abducted by ISIL because they had not observed the rule requiring that any female must be chaperoned by a male in public.

On 20 July, a total of 400 families had fled the city and had sought refuge in six different locations in Dohuk and Erbil and that many hundreds more were fleeing to predominantly Christian towns in the Ninewa Plains (still under the control of the Peshmerga).¹⁴ According to other officials from Ninewa, Mosul city was largely empty of Christians except for a small number who were too poor or otherwise not able to leave. Many were sheltering with relatives and community members in different locations in the Ninewa Plains and KR-I. Many reported having their possessions stripped from them or that they were physically or sexually assaulted by ISIL fighters at checkpoints as they were fleeing the city. Subsequently villagers from towns in the Ninewa Plains, where many of those displaced from Mosul had fled, reported that ISIL had cut the water and electricity supply to their areas. It was also subsequently reported that around 45 abandoned Christian institutions were demolished, converted to mosques or used as bases by ISIL. On 20 July, ISIL took over the historic Monastery of Mar Behnam, located in the southern part of Hamdaniya District, 30 km southeast of Mosul. Two priests and two families were forced to leave without taking any possessions.

On 5 and 6 August, a subsequent wave of primary and secondary displacement occurred, when thousands of Christians, Yezidi, Shabak, Turkmen and others were forced to flee the rapid advance of ISIL through the Ninewa Plains, Shirkhan and other districts around Makhmour, while fighting was taking place between ISIL, and Peshmerga forces on the borders of Erbil Governorate of KR-I.

UNAMI/OHCHR confirmed that on 22 August, 32 members of the Christian community attempting to leave Hamdaniya, in Ninewa Plains, were held temporarily by ISIL in the health centre of the town. ISIL seized their belongings and took six of them to another room. After about half an hour, the remaining 26 were forced to board a minibus to take them to Khazir Bridge in eastern Hamdaniya District. Before the minibus was about to leave, an ISIL fighter seized a three-year old girl; when the mother, who was on the minibus, begged them to return her daughter to her, ISIL threatened to kill her and her entire family if she did not get back on the bus. The woman was forced to leave her daughter behind. The minibus transported the group to Khazir bridge, from where they walked to the Kalak checkpoint in Erbil manned by the security forces of KR-I. From there they were taken to a church in Ainkawa in Erbil. It was reported that the seven abducted Christians were taken to Mosul, but their fate remains unknown.

Attacks against Yezidi

The Yezidi community continues to be systematically targeted by ISIL and subjected to gross human rights abuses. ISIL regards the Yezidi as *kufara* (non-believers) to whom they give the option of conversion or death.

As of July, UNAMI was able to confirm a number of reports of Yezidi men being taken before ISIL self-appointed courts and forced to convert or face punishment. It was reported that some men who refused to convert were executed.

Beginning of August, entire communities of civilians from ethnic and religious groups began to flee from areas seized by ISIL including, Sinjar District, as well as Zummar and Rabeea'a sub-districts in Tal Afar. Tens of thousands of Yezidi, but also members of Shi'a Turkmen, Shi'a Shabak and Christians fled their homes, mainly towards the Sinjar mountainous area (Jabal Sinjar) in north Sinjar in al-Qahdissiya sub-district. Others fled to Dohuk in KR-I or to other areas in Iraq. Displaced persons included thousands of women, children, people with disabilities, and elderly. They had travelled long distances on foot and were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, including water, food, shelter and medicine. Community leaders among the displaced contacted UNAMI/OHCHR directly, pleading with the international community to provide them with physical protection and humanitarian relief. According to a rapid assessment,¹⁵ 25 per cent of the populations of the Sinjar District had fled to KR-I, while 75 per cent remained trapped within the

¹⁴ Online <http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2230:the-united-nations-is-moving-urgently-needed-humanitarian-assistance-to-families-who-fled-mosul&Itemid=605&lang=en>, accessed 21 July 2014.

¹⁵ <http://www.reach-initiative.org/tag/iraq>.

district.¹⁶ The Iraqi Air Force delivered food and relief through a humanitarian airdrop operation over the mountains on 4 and 5 August. However, civilians trapped on the mountain informed UNAMI that the supplies had not reached the intended targets and those that were insufficient to meet the needs of those trapped there.

UNAMI/OHCHR received numerous reports that on 2 and 3 August, serious and systematic abuses occurred against Yezidi civilians by ISIL and associated armed groups. On 4 August, ISIL fighters reportedly attempted to ascend from the base of Jabal Sinjar, killing 30 Yezidi men and abducting a number of women. UNAMI/OHCHR received calls directly from people trapped on Jabal Sinjar. Victims indicated that on 3 August, more than 12 children who had fled to Jabal Sinjar had died from hunger, dehydration and heat. On 4 August, an additional two children (5 and 3 years old) had died of the same causes, as well as some elderly people and people with disabilities. In a statement¹⁷ issued on 5 August, UNICEF said that some 40 children had died on Jabal Sinjar, and that up to 25,000 children were in immediate need of urgent assistance¹⁸

On 3 August, UNAMI/OHCHR also received a significant number of reports that ISIL and associated armed groups were systematically hunting down and killing Yezidi who had remained in their homes. ISIL also had laid siege to a number of villages in Sinjar. Residents from Khocho village in Qaeyrawan sub-district reported directly to UNAMI/OHCHR that their village was under siege and that ISIL had warned them to convert or die. Others alleged that ISIL had been assisted by neighbouring communities to hunt them down.

On 3 August, ISIL reportedly chased ten Yezidi families fleeing al-Qahtaniya area, killing the male members and abducting the females and children. On 4 August, ISIL reportedly attacked and killed 60 Yezidi men from Hardan village in Sinjar District, abducting their wives and daughters and allegedly taking them to Tal Afar District. There are also some reports that the abducted women and children have been taken to al-Hol camp in al-Hasakah Governorate in Syria.

According to Yezidi community leaders who spoke to UNAMI/OCHHR on 4 August, at least 200 Yezidi had been killed in Sinjar and 60 to 70 more killed in Ramadi Jabal area. They also reported that ISIL had abducted at least 50 women from Tal Binat area. Unverified reports received on 5 August indicated that ISIL had forced some women to convert and were marrying them to ISIL fighters, and was allotting other women who refused to convert as war booty ('malak yamiin') to ISIL fighters or were being sold as slaves.

UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports that ISIL had started to use Yezidi civilians captured in Sinjar as human shields, forcing them to dress like ISIL fighters and detaining them at sites in Sinjar city center, at the former Asayish headquarters and at the main food stores in al-Shuhada'a neighborhood.

On 4 August, ISIL abducted members of three families in Khana Sour village, killed the Yezidi men and took the women away to unknown destinations. On 4 August, ISIL attacked a residential compound of Qairawan sub-district in Sinjar and abducted one young Yezidi woman and her daughter. According to the source, the daughter was later released on the roadside but the whereabouts of the mother remains unknown. On 4 August, ISIL attacked Adnaniyah village in Ninewa and abducted one Yezidi woman and two girls. Their whereabouts are unknown.

It was reported that on 5 August, ISIL had started killing members of displaced Yezidi families from Tal Qasab, Qana village located in the southeast of Sinjar District.¹⁹

¹⁶ Up to 200,000 had sought refuge on Jabal Sinjar, including 75 per cent Yezidi, and 5 per cent Shia Muslims or Christians.

¹⁷ <http://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/statement-child-deaths-iraq-attributable-marzio-babille-unicef-representative>

¹⁸ UNICEF stated that Sinjar's population includes at least 150,000 children, including many who are internally displaced.

¹⁹ On 10 August, Iraq's former Human Rights Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani told Reuters that ISIL fighters have killed at least 500 members of Iraq's Yezidi community in northern Iraq. He claimed that the Ministry had evidence that ISIL fighters had thrown the Yezidi into mass graves, adding that some of those were women and children who had been buried alive. Additionally, 300 women had been forced into slavery, he said.

UNAMI/OHCHR interviewed displaced Yezidi and Christians who reported events that had taken place between 3 and 6 August. Several of those interviewed recounted witnessing mass killings committed by ISIL: more than 50 bodies with visible signs of torture were seen near Dhola village; 100 were killed in Khana Sor village in Snono sub-district; 250-300 were killed (of whom at least ten were beheaded) in Hardan area, after ISIL promised them safety in exchange for giving up their weapons; more than 200 were killed as a result of ISIL's direct mortar shelling of civilians on the road between Adnaniya and Jazeera. Witnesses also reported seeing dozens of bodies on the paved road close to al-Shimal village, Sinjar, where witnesses said that four old men with disabilities had been shot in the head by ISIL.

Witnesses also recounted seeing dozens of dead on the road from Matu village to Jabal Sinjar. Some reported to have seen, while fleeing from Jabal Sinjar, the bodies of at least 200 children who had died from thirst, starvation and heat. Witnesses also stated that some women with their children had thrown themselves off the mountain in desperation. Those interviewed reported cases of abductions; some 500 women and children from Ba'aj and more than 200 from Tal Banat. Survivors also testified to UNAMI/OHCHR that after they fled their villages on 3 August, they had stopped in Qiniyeh village, which has a water source. ISIL fighters arrived in several vehicles, separated men, women and children, and robbed them of their belongings. The men (70-90) were taken to a ditch, lined up and shot.

On 14 August, OCHA²⁰ reported that the majority of displaced persons on Jabal Sinjar had been able to descend from the mountain and had left for Syria or Dohuk Governorate. Since 6 August, around 80,000 displaced persons from Sinjar District (the majority of whom were Yezidi) crossed into KR-I. Only around 700 individuals arrived to KR-I on 14 August. UNHCR²¹ reported that on 12 August there were still an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 displaced on Jabal Sinjar and access to them was extremely limited.

Elsewhere, ISIL continued its campaign of killings directed against the Yezidi and other civilians. Five survivors from Khocho village recounted how on 15 August ISIL gathered all males older than ten years of age at the local school, took them outside the village by pick-up trucks, and shot them. According to survivors, as many as 400 males were killed. Dozens of women and children were abducted according to several interviewees, possibly as many as 1000, and were taken away to unknown destinations in Tal Afar. Reportedly some people were shot by ISIL while trying to escape.

During this time, UNAMI/OHCHR received telephone calls from men and women who had been abducted by ISIL – who had been able to hide telephones or had found telephones where they were being held.²² One Yezidi witness told UNAMI/OHCHR that he had been abducted by ISIL and transmitted to Tal Afar prison, where he was forced to convert to Islam. Women and men were reportedly kept separately in the prison, but children were detained with the women. He related how he saw five elderly Yezidi men, being executed after refusing to convert. According to him, up to 200 Yezidi men were executed for the same reason. This man, together with others who converted, was later brought to an abandoned Turkmen village in Sinjar District.²³ There they were being kept under surveillance of ISIL guards, whose members were foreigners. ISIL allegedly then transferred the single girls and those above five years of age to Mosul and told the source that they “were teaching them the tenets of Islam”. ISIL told him and the other captives that they were under their “protection” and would receive food/water. All men were instructed to shave their moustaches and grow their beards; women were told that they would be provided clothes in accordance with their *takfiri* doctrine. He said that they were forced to pray inside the house, but ISIL told them that a mosque would be built where their praying would be ‘properly’ monitored. ISIL confiscated all identity cards of the group’s members.

²⁰ See OCHA Daily Update, Thursday, 14 August 2014; OCHA Daily Update, Friday, 16 August 2014.

²¹ See UNHCR Briefing Notes, 12 August 2014.

²² Some women said that they had been able to hide their telephones as ISIL fighters made no attempt to physically search them after capturing them. Some men and women said they had been held in abandoned homes where they had found telephones that the occupants had left behind.

²³ UNAMI/OHCHR learned that people held in Tal Afar were taken to Malla Younis, Sinu, Ain Hassan and Kifah villages.

Witnesses confirmed to UNAMI/OHCHR that on 24 and 25 August, ISIL executed 14 elderly Yezidi men in Sheikh Mand Shrine, Jidala village, western Sinjar and blew up the Yezidi shrine there. There were reports that people with disabilities were among the victims.

According to reliable sources, ISIL left up to 65 children from the Turkmen and Yezidi communities in an orphanage in Mosul city. The children (aged from 5 months to 17 years) were reported to be traumatized from having witnessed the murder of their parents. It appears that some of the older children may have been physically and sexually assaulted. Sources from the orphanage reported that they had a shortage of food, infant formula, baby bottles, clothes, diapers, etc. Later ISIL fighters returned to the orphanage and made the children pose with ISIL flags so they could take photos of them. UNAMI/OHCHR received some of these photos.

On 1 September, ISIL set on fire three villages inhabited by the Yezidi community (Kotan, Hareko and Kharag Shafsrsky) in Sinjar district. On 9 September, a mass grave containing the remains of 14 individuals believed to be Yezidi (a young woman, three children and 10 men, one of them an elderly) was discovered by the Peshmerga forces around five km from the Bardi village, Zammar sub-district, on the road to the Mosul Dam. They had all died from gunshots to the head.

During the reporting period, UNAMI/OHCHR received reports of rape and sexual assaults against women and children committed by ISIL. On 2 August, the Yezidi village of Maturat, southern Sinjar witnessed abductions of women who were taken by ISIL fighters to Badoush Prison in Mosul. On 3 August, ISIL herded approximately 450–500 women and girls to the citadel of Tal Afar in Ninewa where, two days later, 150 unmarried girls and women, predominantly from the Yezidi and Christian communities, were reportedly transported to Syria, either to be given to ISIL fighters as a reward or to be sold as sex slaves (*'malak yamiin'*). Victims reported being transferred to Badouch Prison, or transferred to Syria.

By the end of August, local sources informed UNAMI that ISIL had abducted up to 2,500 civilians, predominantly women and children, but also some men from Sinjar, Tal Afar, the Ninewa Plains and Shirkhan. These people were being held in the former Badoush prison outside Mosul, and at a number of sites within Mosul city and Tal Afar, and other locations. A number of men and women who managed to contact UNAMI/OHCHR from where they were being detained stated that teenage children (both males and females) were being sexually assaulted by ISIL fighters. They also stated that ISIL was taking groups of children away on a daily basis to unknown locations. They also recounted how women and children who refused to convert were being allotted to ISIL fighters or were being trafficked as slaves (*'malak yamiin'*) in markets in Mosul and to Raqqa in Syria. Married women who converted were told by ISIL that their previous marriages were not recognised in Islamic law and that they, as well as unmarried women who converted, would be given to ISIL fighters as wives. Men who converted with their wives were told they would be transported to new locations where their conversion would be monitored.

UNAMI/OHCHR was contacted by an adolescent Yezidi girl who had been abducted by ISIL when they attacked her village on 3 August. She stated that ISIL took hundreds of women who had not been able to flee to Jabal Sinjar. ISIL first held them in Si Basha Khidri (al-Jazira compound), and then transferred them to Ba'aj. The girl stated that she was raped several times by several ISIL fighters before she was sold in a market.

UNAMI/OHCHR received a number of reports that an office for the sale of abducted women was opened in the al-Quds area of Mosul city. Women and girls are brought with price tags for the buyers to choose and negotiate the sale. The buyers were said to be mostly youth from the local communities. Apparently ISIL was "selling" these Yezidi women to the youth as a means of inducing them to join their ranks.

As noted above, Yezidi men and women, along with their children, who converted under duress by ISIL were transferred to a number of rural villages in Tal Afar in houses that had belonged to expelled Turkmen Shi'a. One woman among the captives confirmed that ISIL fighters still keep them locked in these houses and monitor their activities.

From late August/early September, UNAMI/OHCHR confirmed reports that a large majority of Yezidi captives, but also Christian, Turkmen and Shabak Shi'a held in Tal Afar were moved to villages in rural areas or to places further afield. Some women managed to inform UNAMI/OHCHR that they had been forced to

convert and were to be married to ISIL fighters and would be taken to unknown destinations. The last contact UNAMI/OHCHR had with the group was from a woman who stated that ISIL had discovered that some of them had phones and were confiscating them.

On 7 September, UNAMI/OHCHR learned that an unknown number of women abducted by ISIL had managed to escape and reached Sinjar Mountain. On 8 September, a man and three children reached Sinjar Mountain. On the evening of 9 September, another 20 (eight women and eight children) were able to reach the mountain after escaping from Kasr al-Mihrab village, Tal Afar district. Kasr al-Mihrab was previously a Shi'a-inhabited village, where ISIL had forcibly settled Yezidi who 'converted' to Islam. It was reported that the number of Yezidi that fled from the village was 27, but seven were later recaptured.

Attacks against Turkmen

Members of the Shi'a Turkmen community were also targeted directly by ISIL and associated armed groups.

On 12 June, ISIL and associated armed forces seized the area around the predominantly Turkmen Shi'a town of Amerli in Salah al-Din Governorate, placing the town and its remaining 13,000 inhabitants (including 10,000 women and children) under siege. UNAMI/OHCHR learned that the forces defending the town against ISIL gunmen were mainly organized by the residents themselves, supported by a few military officers acting as advisors. According to sources, the citizens of Amerli planted IEDs and bombs around the perimeter of the town in order to prevent ISIL from entering. However, ISIL was reported to have shelled the town on an almost daily basis until the siege of the town was broken by a combination of ISF and US air strikes on 31 August. During this time, some food and medical supplies were brought into the town by the Iraqi army, along with weapons and ammunition. However, ISIL had cut electricity supply to the town, which meant that water pumps no longer worked. UNAMI/OHCHR confirmed reports that the residents were suffering from severe shortages of food, medicines and clean water and that some residents had died from lack of access to medical services.²⁴

IDPs from the villages of Qubba and Qubbek, Tal Afar District, interviewed by UNAMI/OHCHR reported that in mid-June, ISIL killed and wounded civilians, destroyed religious buildings and houses, and looted property. At least 38 civilians, all Turkmen Shi'a, were reportedly abducted.

On 7 July, 40 Turkmen were abducted from the village of Rashidiya, northwest Mosul. Local sources confirmed that many Turkmen villagers had actually fled the area in fear of ISIL.

During the week of 20-26 July, unidentified gunmen killed six civilians, including one woman and injured one civilian in targeted killings in Tuz District of Salah al-Din Governorate. Five of the victims were Turkmen Shi'a; the female was the Kurdish wife of one of the other victims. On 7 August, about 100 Turkmen Shi'a men from Tal Afar, who had been displaced in Sinjar were reportedly executed by ISIL. Additionally, ISIL forces searched the houses for Police or Peshmerga members, killing any person they found.

Attacks against Shabak

Members of the Shi'a Shabak community were also singled out for attacks by ISIL. On 12 July, at around noon, ISIL stormed Bazwaya village in Mosul and kept the families in their houses, while it conducted a house-to-house search for specific individuals from the village. They abducted six members of the Shabak group, looted property including jewellery, then left the village without any resistance from the locals. On the same day, before midnight, ISIL reportedly abducted another 10 Shabaks from the villages of Jiliocan and Gogjali in the outskirts of Mosul city. UNAMI/OHCHR also received reports that the Imam of al-Tameem mosque in Mosul during Friday prayers on 11 July had urged Sunnis to kill all Shabaks remaining in Mosul city.

On 21 July, ISIL reportedly abducted a member of the Shabak community from his house in the North Garage/Hay Al-Jaer neighbourhood of Mosul. On 29 and 30 July, ISIL abducted 43 Shabak families from

²⁴ UN Envoy Calls for Immediate Action to Prevent Possible Massacre of Iraqis in Amerli, 23 August 2014, at http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2462:un-envoy-calls-for-immediate-action-to-prevent-possible-massacre-of-iraqis-in-amerli&Itemid=605&lang=en (accessed 10 September 2014)

the al-Jazaer District (10 families), al-Amaliya (10 families) and al-Abrajiya (23 families) in Mosul. The abductees included women, children and elderly people. On 12 August, ISIL blew up the house of a Shabak parliament member. There were no casualties because the MP had fled with his family from Bartilla three days earlier.

On 13 August, UNAMI/OHCHR visited the IDP camp at Baharka, Erbil, which hosts members of the Shabak and Kaka'e communities who had fled mainly from villages in Hamdaniya District in the Ninewa Plains. An elderly member of the Shabak community from Qarqasha village, Namroud sub-district, told UNAMI/OHCHR that his 30-year old son had been abducted on 6 August when ISIL attacked Qarqasha.

UNAMI/OHCHR conducted another mission to Baharka IDP camp on 10 September and again interviewed members of the Kaka'e and Shi'a Shabak communities. Shabaks, who were from Nimrud sub-district, Hamdaniya district and who had arrived in Baharka Camp on 20-21 August, told UNAMI/OHCHR that 26 members of their community had been abducted by ISIL and taken to unknown locations. They also reported that some members of their community had been put through harsh interrogations by ISIL, which was specifically searching for members of ISF and those associated with them, either Shi'a or Sunni.

Attacks against Kurds

Kurds, too, have been targeted by ISIL. On 22 July, media reports indicated that ISIL on 21 July distributed leaflets in Mosul ordering Kurdish families to leave or face being killed. The leaflets were reportedly circulated in neighbourhoods of Mosul mostly inhabited by Kurds. Reports mentioned that about 100 Kurdish families fled the city.

On 19 August, UNAMI/OHCHR carried out 48 interviews with Sunni Kurd IDPs in Erbil. On 10 August, they fled the village of Kanossia because of shelling and/or from fear of being killed by ISIL. Some interviewees reported that Arab militias loyal to ISIL from the area and even from inside the village were freely looting Kurdish homes in the village, seemingly under the protection of ISIL. Some interviewees said that to reach Erbil Governorate they had to pass through checkpoints controlled by ISIL. They mentioned that they managed to cross the checkpoints due to the (paid) help of Sunni Arabs who had connections with ISIL.

Forced recruitment and use of children

UNAMI/OHCHR has received numerous reports alleging that ISIL and some associated armed groups are actively recruiting children as young as 13 as fighters. Witnesses in Mosul and Tal Afar have confirmed seeing children armed and wearing attire similar to ISIL fighters. Sources also spotted underage children accompanying ISIL patrols inside both cities. It was also reported that children were also given the responsibility to guard and arrest individuals. Witnesses reported that these children wear similar attire to that of ISIL gunmen, and sometimes wear masks or *kufeyah* over their faces. Children were seen carrying weapons, sometimes too big for them to carry. Other witnesses claimed that the majority of ISIL elements patrolling the streets of Mosul were underage children, aged 13 to 16 years. These sources believe that ISIL is recruiting and using children to control areas. Some sources indicated that children seen associated with ISIL were the sons or relatives of ISIL elements or orphaned children.

UNAMI/OHCHR has received confirmed reports of children as young as 12 or 13 undergoing military training organized by ISIL in Mosul. Pictures of training sessions in the streets of the city have been posted on social media and websites. One report mentions that ISIL has imposed mandatory military service on single men aged 17-37 in the city of Mosul and any household with more than one eligible recruit is required to provide at least one individual to join ISIL – however, reports are contradictory on this issue. According to another report, a group of recruits had already been sent to join the fight in Syria. Another report stated that ISIL had not imposed mandatory military service in Mosul, but it had opened centres for volunteers, including children as young as 12.

Reports from other areas under ISIL control confirm the use of children as fighters. In al-Sharqat District in Salah al-Din, sources confirmed the use of children by ISIL, mainly to man checkpoints on the road from Qayara (Ninewa) to al-Sharqat. It was also confirmed that the number of children seen manning checkpoints had drastically increased throughout the last weeks of August.

IDPs who had fled from Ninewa Plains and Makhmour during ISIL advance on 6 August told UNAMI/OHCHR that male teenage family members around 15 years and above had been forcibly recruited by ISIL. Some of these boys who had subsequently managed to escape reported to their families that they were forced to form the front line to shield ISIL fighters during fighting, and that they had been forced to donate blood for treating injured ISIL fighters.

ISIL also continues to use children for propaganda; with pictures of children wearing ISIL uniform and parading alongside adults being frequently posted on social media. In the same vein, it was confirmed that, in mid-August, ISIL entered a cancer hospital in Mosul, forced at least two sick children to hold the ISIL flag and posted the pictures on the internet.

Violations committed by the Government of Iraq security forces and associated forces

Air strikes and shelling

An increasing number of civilian casualties have been attributed to airstrikes carried out by ISF. While there is no evidence that ISF have deliberately targeted civilians, the strikes have nonetheless resulted in significant civilian deaths and injuries and destruction of civilian infrastructure. In response to some of these incidents, the Ministry of Defence stated that airstrikes were carried out directly targeting ISIL and associated armed groups, but that these had deliberately positioned themselves within civilian areas or in civilian places, such as hospitals, in an attempt to shield themselves from attack. Irrespective of this, ISF is required to take constant care to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects and take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event minimize incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects. Its operations must also be proportional to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. In response to the increasing civilian casualties attributed to air-strikes and shelling, on 13 September, newly elected Prime Minister Al-Abbadi ordered the ISF to halt strikes on civilian areas and publicly committed to the protection of civilians.²⁵

Air strikes by ISF around Kirkuk have led to several casualties among civilians. These incidents have resulted in the killing of least 17, including seven children, two women. In one significant incident that allegedly occurred on the evening of 14 August, two air strikes in Hawija area killed 15 civilians, including four women and eight children and wounded 20 more. In the morning of 15 August, an air strike killed ten civilians, including four women and three children. Missiles launched beginning of August in Raseem Dareb village of Daquq District lead to the death of 13 civilians, including six females, one children and injury of 17 others, including two women. In Salah al-Din, ISF missiles launched around mid-June resulted in the killing of killing one female and two children and injuring 11 others. On 15 July, air strikes in Baiji hit a house close to the Emergency Hospital, killing six civilians and wounding two.

OCHA reported²⁶ that on 20 July at around noon a missile hit al-Sharqat General Hospital. In Baiji district, a shortage of staff members at the General Hospital has also been reported due to continuous bombing; the hospital was hit in an air strike on 17 July. The General Hospital in al-Sharqat was struck again on 23 July. According to sources from the area, since approximately 8 July, the Iraqi Air force has attacked the hospital and surrounding area, where there is a small market, at least five times. During the various attacks there had been at least ten persons injured (possibly including also ISIL members). Sources indicated that ISIL had been bringing members wounded to the hospital for treatment. Reportedly, some of the hospital staff members and patients fled around the end of June. On 21 July, ISIL reportedly transferred most of the hospital's equipment and other resources, including lab equipment, to two different destinations in al-Sharqat District in order to avoid being targeted. ISIL is believed to have established two temporary

²⁵ See online <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/13/us-iraq-crisis-idUSKBN0H80LO20140913>. There, the Prime Minister is reported as having stated on his Twitter account "I have ordered the Iraqi Air Force to halt shelling of civilian areas even in those towns controlled by ISIS."

²⁶ See OCHA Daily Update, Sunday, 20 July, 2014.

hospitals in different areas in al-Sharqat district, one in Sakaniya in the south and second in Swedan village in the north.

On 2 August, an aerial strike hit the al-Alam sub-district police station, east Tikrit, which is reportedly being used by ISIL as a military centre. According to sources, one missile hit a house 150 meters from the police station, killing two women and four children and injuring one adult male and four children. All of the victims were from the same family.

On 1 September, an ISF air strike hit the Industrial secondary school in al-Alam sub-district, which was hosting 20 displaced families from Tikrit, killing 34 and wounding 14 more, majority of whom are women and children. On 9 July, air strikes hit civilians swimming in the River Tigris in the al-Shifa neighbourhood in western Mosul, killing 11 and wounding 19. Circumstances are unclear. On 10 July, ISF air strikes hit the offices of the Ninewa Operations Command in the Tayaran area (also known as Hay al-Danadan), southwest Mosul, which is controlled by ISIL. The attack resulted in the killing of five civilians and the injury of eight others. On 16 July, air strikes targeted the soccer field of Mosul University used by ISIL for military training and nine civilians in the compound were wounded. Air strikes hit also al-Maliya (one killed), al-Faisaliya (eight killed and 22 wounded, including four women), al-Rashidiya (two killed and one wounded) and Hammam al-Aleel (a five-year old girl killed).

In Ninewa governorate, on the night between 16 and 17 July, ISF carried out seven air strikes in several districts of Mosul, killing 13 and wounding 18 others, including a woman and a 6-year old boy. On 18 July, an ISF air strike hit a house in al-Shuhada area, southwest of Ba'aj, killing six members of one family, including a woman and a nine-year old boy, and wounding five others. In Mosul, ISF air strikes launched on 21 and 22 July killed nine civilians, including two woman and two children and wounded 12 more.

On 4 August, ISF jet fighters bombed Sinjar Hospital, west of Mosul city, resulting in the killing of 10 civilians and the injury of 13 others. Nearly all civilians including local officials have fled Sinjar after ISIL took over the town on 3 August. An air strike by ISF on 23 August hit a residential area in Qayyara area, south of Mosul, killing five civilians [single source]. Another airstrike on the same day hit a paint shop in central Mosul; further information on this incident is not available. UNAMI/OHCHR learned that on 8 August, families of shepherds from the al-Askari tribe who had remained in ISIL-controlled Saadiya in Diyala, began to flee in large numbers (exact numbers unknown). While fleeing the city, they were hit by an ISF air strike, reportedly killing 20 and injuring five. Those fleeing included women and children, but the exact breakdown and number of casualties is unknown. On 7 September, ISF shelling reportedly killed 16 civilians and wounded another 21 in Albu Awfa, Jurf al-Sakhar area in Babil. After people rushed to the scene, another helicopter reportedly attack struck those assembled.

Extrajudicial killings and summary executions

There have been a number of reports of extrajudicial killings and summary executions perpetrated by ISF or armed groups associated with them. On 27 August, media quoted the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior as saying that any person bearing arms without authorization would be held accountable, and that armed groups outside the legal framework will not be permitted in line with the Iraqi Constitution. Despite this, there are reports of a number of armed groups operating outside of Government control, which are fighting generally in support of the Government, against ISIL and its associated armed groups. These groups are likely to have been responsible for a number of attacks and killings of civilians.

Diyala governorate has witnessed a number of such incidents. On 31 July, it was reported that the bodies of 15 men, alleged to have been captured ISIL fighters, had been executed by the armed group *Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq* (AAH) and were hung from lamp posts in Baquba city. Some reports received by UNAMI/OHCHR alleged that those killed may have been abducted at the beginning of July as part of a campaign of harassment and abductions of Sunni residents of the area waged by armed militias. On 27 July, an additional source from the area witnessed four corpses hanging from lamp posts in Baquba city - one in Balda road-crossing, one in the Khalil Pasha area, one in Shafta and the forth near Diyala stadium. The status of those killed, whether fighters or civilians, could not be determined.

On 22 August, the so-called “volunteers’ units” (*al-Hashid al-Sha’bi* / “People’s Gathering” or “People’s Mobilisation”)²⁷ and possibly tribal militias, mainly from the Zarkoosh tribe, carried out an attack on the Musab bin Omair Sunni Mosque in Bani Wais village (Hamrin area, Khanaqin district). According to some reports, the attack was in retaliation for an earlier IED attack on a gathering of volunteers and militiamen between Shahraban and Khanaqin. Gunmen opened fire on worshippers from the entrance and the windows of the mosque and then other gunmen shot from the roof of the mosque at those who were trying to approach or leave the building. Sources varied greatly on the numbers killed and wounded – ranging between 34-68 killed and 15-38 wounded. While leaving the scene on the main road that links Hamrin to Muqdadiyah, the militiamen kept firing at buildings and people, also killing a policeman at a checkpoint. Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police units were allegedly not far from the scene (100-150m) where the attack took place but they took no action.

Some local officials quoted by media stated that ISIL carried out the attack because of the refusal of prominent Sunni tribes to join them. Local sources contacted by UNAMI, however, rejected the claim that ISIL was operating in an area strongly controlled by ISF and armed militias. The Secretary-General of AAH condemned the killings in Bani Wais and asked for the perpetrators to be held accountable, irrespective of their affiliations. The Speaker of CoR, Salim al-Jbouri, announced that an investigation was underway by a committee composed of security officials and members of CoR. Local sources confirmed that officials of the Ministry of Interior and members of the CoR interviewed witnesses at the village. Diyala Governorate proclaimed three days of public mourning following the incident. On 25 August, Diyala Governor announced the creation of vigilante groups, called National Defence Brigades to protect local residents against attacks by armed militias. UNAMI/OHCHR is seeking additional information.

A number of interviewees claimed they had witnessed or heard about abductions, executions and torching of homes. An interviewee reported the killing of his 73-year old uncle in his house as well as two Sunni neighbours in Sansal village on 23 July by SWAT and AAH. Another interviewee claimed that the ISF allegedly threatened villagers with arrest and killing, if their forces should be attacked by ISIL. Another interviewee reported blowing up and burning of houses by the ISF and affiliated militias in Harwe'ena village, Muqdadiyah District, at the end of July. Three IDPs interviewed by UNAMI/ OHCHR stated that, on 20 July, the Iraqi Army and AAH (also using knives) killed 17-18 Sunni in Nofal village in Sharaban sub-district, Muqdadiyah District in Diyala. UNAMI/OHCHR is seeking additional information on this incident.

Abductions and kidnappings

A number of abductions and kidnappings have also been carried out by armed groups affiliated to, aligned with, or supporting government forces.

On 9 July, members of AAH reportedly abducted some civilians in the al-Mohandiseen area, Palestine Street, eastern Baghdad, and took them to an unknown location. On 10 July, at least 23 farmers were abducted near a vegetable trading market in Balad District (south Salah al-Din). The farmers, who were said to be Arab Sunni from Yathrib sub-district had travelled to Balad to sell their products but were abducted by AAH. The fate of those abducted is unknown.

On 10 July, armed militias were reportedly abducting people at illegal check-points along the road from Kirkuk to Samarra. Sources have indicated that up to 170 people were abducted, but UNAMI/OHCHR have not been able to confirm the figures. The majority of these abductions have occurred in the Jalam area, less than an hour from Samarra city. In some cases, cars of abductees have been spotted being used by militia members in Samarra city in the days that followed the abductions. When authorities and families have inquired with the Iraqi Army for intervention or mediation with the militia groups responsible, the military indicated they have no authority over the militias. Reportedly, at least four different militias are active in Samarra city and surrounding areas with their own leadership making it difficult for families to identify the perpetrators of the abductions. The whereabouts of those abducted are unknown. On 28 August it was reported that two civilians had been abducted by armed militias at a Police checkpoint, south of Baquba.

²⁷ Composed of volunteers that joined ISF in the fight against ISIL since June 2014.

It has been reported that, on 15 August, clashes broke out between ISF and AAH in al-Qahira/al-Dalphia area, and left one Iraqi Army officer dead and three ISF soldiers as well as four AAH members wounded. ISF detained some members of the militia from the area. After that, another group of AAH abducted four soldiers at a checkpoint near the location where the clashes took place. The Ministry of Interior stated that the incidents involved gangs of criminals with no political affiliation.

Destruction of civilian infrastructure or property

Armed groups affiliated with or supporting ISF have also been accused of deliberately destroying civilian infrastructure. On 5 or 6 July, AAH reportedly entered the village of Ballor, Muqdadiya District, and reportedly destroyed nine houses. AAH reportedly destroyed the following Sunni mosques in the sub-districts of Mansouriya and the district of Meqdadiya in Diyala Governorate: the mosque of Amar Ibn Yasser (the oldest mosque in the district); the mosque of Mohammed Rasul Allah; the big mosque of al-Takwa (the biggest and the most recent mosque in the district); the mosque of Shahraban in Meqdadiya and the mosque of Fattah in Meqdadiya. Reports and photos posted on social media and from other sources showing the tomb of Saddam Hussein and his two sons in al-Oja village in Salah al-Din being vandalized by ISF or armed militias. It was not possible to determine the date this occurred.

Excessive use of force

Members of ISF and affiliated armed groups have also been accused of excessive use of force and of harassing or threatening civilians.

On 12 July, an Iraqi Army SWAT team reportedly arrested persons they accused of working with ISIL in al-Ishaqi, near Balad in Salah al-Din. At least nine men were arrested in their homes as well as in a gynaecology clinic where they went to accompany female family members. The military reportedly used excessive force in the clinic, resulting in the destruction of equipment and furniture. All but the three foreigners were released on 13 July.

On the morning of 21 July, three men from Rashad sub-district were arrested in Taza sub-district of Kirkuk by security forces when traveling to find essential non-food items not available in their area. The men were arrested while purchasing gas cylinders, and reportedly accused of supporting ISIL. According to sources, the men were held for several hours at the Taza police station, where they were tortured and humiliated in an attempt to make them confess their involvement with ISIL. Reportedly all three were moved subsequently to the Laylan police station, and their statements were taken regarding what happened involving the Taza police. A complaint alleging torture was then lodged with the Kirkuk Court. The victims reportedly received medical attention and were returned to their homes.

On 22 July, armed militias driving civilian vehicles without plates, reportedly accompanied by Iraqi Army military vehicles, entered the sub-district of Dar'ia (majority Sunni) of Mada'in district (southeast Baghdad), and accused the residents of being ISIL supporters and telling them to leave the area, otherwise they would be arrested. They also fired in the air, wounding two women, and stole two cars. It was reported that after, over 50 families left the area for Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. Officers of the ministries of Interior and Defence reportedly afterwards went to the area to carry out an investigation into the incident.

Violations and abuses committed by unknown perpetrators

UNAMI/OHCHR received a significant number of reports of violations and abuses that were verified as taking place, but for which there was no conclusive information as to who was responsible. While in some instances there were circumstantial factors suggesting responsibility, these factors were not strong enough to attribute such responsibility with confidence. In other cases the perpetrators remain unknown. In some instances the identity and other information about the victims are also unknown.

Assassinations/killings

There were a large number of assassinations and killings recorded from various parts of the country. Baghdad Governorate was particularly affected, where a large number of bodies, often unidentified, had been recovered on a daily basis. Many of the victims were found shot with their hands tied behind their

back executed while a high proportion exhibited signs of having been tortured prior to death. A majority of these attacks appear to be of a sectarian nature.

In July and August 2014, Iraqi police found the remains of a young man who had died of gunshot wounds in Husseiniya (northeast Baghdad). Similar cases were also reported in cities such as Sadr City, Kadimiya, Zafaraniya, Shula, Bab-El sham, Abu Dsheer, al-Sadda, Al Itafiya, Al-Ubaidi, Doura, Mahmoudiya, Suliakh and Taji, al-Dora, al-Ma'mil, al-Sh'ab, al-Baladiyat, al-Bayaa, al-Amil, Zayouna, al-Shaab, and al-Salikh. On 8 July, it was reported that the bodies of 50 men, blindfolded, handcuffed and with gunshots to the head or chest, were found in a field close to al-Khamissiya village, southeast of the city of Hilla, near the Baghdad-Diwaniya highway. The victims were men aged between 20 and 50 and were dressed in civilian clothes. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) confirmed the discovery of the bodies and stated that an investigation is ongoing.

On 12 July, gunmen burst into two apartments in a complex in Zayouna, in Baghdad killing 28 women and five men. The apartments were allegedly hosting a brothel.

On 18 August, a human rights activist was shot dead in al-Muqdadiah, northeast of Baquba, Diyala. It was reported that, on 19 August, gunmen shot dead three civilians in a vehicle in Mradiah area, southwest of Baquba. The victims (three brothers, their sister and her son), all Sunni, were travelling in a car when masked men opened fire from another car and killed them. The elder brother, a former officer in the Iraqi Army before 2003, had about a month ago become an officer of the "volunteers' units" (al-Hashid al-Sha'bi). Before the attack, he allegedly received a letter threatening his life if he did not leave the volunteers' unit.

On 24 July, at least 51 detainees and nine police officers were killed in an attack mounted by armed groups in a remote area from Taji to Baghdad. The detainees were allegedly being evacuated because military bases in Taji came under mortar attack. MOI later confirmed the killing of some 44 detainees and two security officers. In July, UNAMI Human Rights Officers received various and credible report about the unlawful killing of civilians in places such as Basra, Jalawla, Abu al-Khaseeb Salah al-Din, Tuz Khurmatu where unedified bodies were regularly recovered by security forces. On 11 September, four members of a family were killed in their house by unknown gunmen in al-Jehaishate, al-Suwaira District.

Bombings of civilians and civilian infrastructure

IEDs, consisting of body-borne IEDs (BBIEDs), VBIEDs, and suicide-vehicle borne IEDs (SVBIEDS) have claimed the lives of scores of civilians. Baghdad was particularly hard hit by IED attacks, but other areas of the country were not immune. Many are placed in public spaces directly targeting civilians or heedless of the impact on civilians. As with killings noted above, circumstantial information may suggest in general terms who may have been responsible, but in regard to the incidents reported below, the perpetrators are unknown, and no group claimed responsibility.

IEDs were detonated in different part of the city, killing dozens of civilians. UNAMI has received various reports and documented such incidents throughout the country in particular in the Capital Baghdad. On 7 July, four IEDs detonated in different areas of the city, of which one near a playground in Nahrawan (southern Baghdad), two placed under civilian vehicles, and a suicide bomber detonating his explosives killed a minimum of five civilians and wounded 22 others. On 10-12 July, eight IEDs exploded in different areas of the city, of which two in local markets in al-Mada'in (south Baghdad) and Shaab (northeast Baghdad) districts, four placed under civilian vehicles and a vehicle rigged with explosives killed at a minimum six civilians and wounded 29 others. On 14 July, two car bombs detonated in central and southwest Baghdad, killing six civilians and wounding 18 others. A VBIED detonated later in the day in Bayaa (southwest Baghdad) killing three and wounding seven.

On 15 July, two car bombs detonated almost simultaneously in al-Hay market in Sadr City (east Baghdad), killing at least three people and injuring 50 others. On 6 August, two car bombs hit Ur (east Baghdad) and Sadr City (east Baghdad) causing the death of seven civilians and the injury of 22 others in Ur and the death of six and the injury of 29 in Sadr city. One VBIED was detonated in the district of New Baghdad (south east Baghdad) killing six civilians and injuring 18 others. On 7 August, a suicide car bomber attacked a police check point in Abdul Muhsen al-Kadhmi square in Khadmiya (north Baghdad) leaving 13 killed and 25 injured. On 12 August, an attack with a vehicle laden with explosives close to Albu Shujaa Husseiniya in

Karrada district (central Baghdad), not far from the house of the Prime Minister-designate, killed at least eight civilians and wounded 51 more. After that, angry residents attacked checkpoints in the area complaining that security forces had failed to prevent incidents. UNAMI/OHCHR also learned that a senior police officer was seriously injured by the protestors, who reportedly had thrown stones at him.

Sunni areas have not spared either. On 17 July, an IED exploded in a market in Taji (northern Baghdad) killing two civilians and wounding five others. On 4 August, an IED was detonated in the district of Ghazaliya (west Baghdad) causing one death and six injuries. On 13 August, a car bomb in al-Amil (central/western Baghdad) killed two and wounded seven. On 20 August, an improvised explosive device in Mahmoudiya (south Baghdad) killed one and wounded four more.

On 10 September, two attacks in New Baghdad (eastern Baghdad), one with a vehicle laden with explosives and the other by an individual driving a vehicle rigged with explosives, killed at least 17 and wounded at least 60.

In many incidents of rockets and shelling in Anbar, information is unclear as to who bore actual responsibility and it is equally possible that armed groups (including ISIL and associated armed groups, or armed groups affiliated with the ISF) were responsible. UNAMI/OHCHR has received reports that ISIL and associate armed groups deliberately positioned themselves in civilian buildings and places, such as hospitals, schools, etc., potentially to shield themselves from attack

On 8 July, four rockets hit Fallujah General Hospital causing material damage. Shelling also claimed a large number of victims. Fallujah General Hospital frequently reported receiving bodies of dead and large numbers of wounded due to shelling. For instance, on 9 July, the hospital received eight bodies (including two children and one woman) and 35 wounded (including 6 children and 4 women). On 11 and 12 July, it received ten bodies (including four children) and 27 wounded (including four children). On 18-19 July, the hospital received the bodies of 18 civilians (including five children and a woman) and 34 wounded (including four children). From 1-3 August, the hospital received 14 bodies and 23 wounded (including one child and two women). From 8-11 August, 30 bodies (including one child and one woman) and 59 wounded (including 10 children and three women) were brought to the hospital.

In Salah al-Din, while a family was driving on a road in the village of al-Mashrooh, sub-district of al-Duloeyah, in Tikrit, a roadside bomb exploded on 30 July killing three children and injuring their mother and two other children. On 6 September, an attack with a vehicle laden with explosives in a market in central Samarra, Salah al-Din killed seven and wounded 14. It was reported that on 9 July, two car bombs exploded in Imam District in Babil, around 50 km north of Hilla, killing two and wounding seven. On the same day, a car bomb exploded in Hilla near the Federal Court, with reports ranging from no to three casualties and burning of cars. On 18 August, Two car bombs hit Iskandariya on 18 August: one was detonated in front of Rafidaeen Bank, wounding three civilians; another one exploded in front of Iskan hospital, killing one civilian and wounding five others. On 25 August, two car bombs exploded in Hilla. One went off near al-Zahraa Shi'a mosque, the other one next to the Governorate building: three civilians were wounded and several cars were burnt.

On 25 August, three explosions hit Karbala, in what seemed to be coordinated attacks. One vehicle laden with explosives went off on Maytham Tamar road, in the area of the city centre close to the Abbas shrine, killing five civilians, wounding ten others and damaging several vehicles. Another car bomb was detonated near a garage at the beginning of the Karbala-Hilla road, killing four civilians, wounding 15 and damaging several vehicles. A third explosion took place in the al-Mowadafin area, with neither casualties nor material damages. On the same day, the Prime Minister visited Karbala and inspected Iraqi Army forces in the area between Karbala and Anbar. After the explosions, local authorities closed all roads leading to the city centre.

On 10 July, a motorcycle rigged with explosives near a police station in 1-June area of Kirkuk city wounded four civilians and three policemen. The following day, an individual driving a mini truck packed with explosives near the Huzayran checkpoint, at the southwest entrance to Kirkuk city, killed 32 (including two children, four women, two Peshmerga, 2 Asayish and three policemen) and wounded 28 (no breakdown available). Some media reports indicated that the second attack was a complex one, with a suicide bomber

and a roadside improvised explosive device. Most of the civilian casualties of the second incident were displaced persons from other provinces trying to get access to Kirkuk city.

On 27 July, two IEDs were detonated in succession in a public market in the Askari quarter of Tuz District (east of Tikrit) killing two women (mother and daughter) and injuring 4 others (all female). On 4 August, an IED was detonated in the sub-district of Hujjaj in Kirkuk city, killing three civilians and injuring at least two other; in addition to causing damages to several houses and vehicles. There are conflicting reports regarding whether the target of the attack was the home of a member of the ISF or an employee of the Kirkuk Health Department.

Abductions and kidnapping

UNAMI/OHCHR has recorded a high number of abductions and kidnappings. In many cases the perpetrators and their motives are unknown, although many appear to be sectarian based.

Reports were received that on 13 July, five Sunni men, aged between 18 and 19, were kidnapped in Abu al-Khaseeb district in Basra. Unknown gunmen riding in 4x4 vehicles forcibly took the young men and brought them to an undisclosed location. According to community sources, the young men were kidnapped because suspected of being members or sympathizers of ISIL. Their families have engaged the services of a lawyer to help them find out what happened to them. The whereabouts of the young men are still unknown as at 17 July.

On 12 August, four young men with covered faces forced their way into a house in a residential neighbourhood of Abu Khaseeb District, Basra governorate, where they shot a 38 year old man twice in the shoulder, before cutting off his head. The victim lived with his mother, his wife and his two young daughters, all of whom were in the house at the time. Local people believe the only reason for the killing was because he was Sunni. He worked as an engineer for an oil company and his family had a good reputation in the neighbourhood, enjoying cordial relations with the community. At the time of the killing there was an army checkpoint in a nearby street, but the soldier posted did not respond to the sound of gunfire. Following the killing a local man carried the victim's body through the checkpoint and informed the soldier present about what had happened, but he again failed to respond. The police were informed and later told UNAMI/OHCHR that they were investigating.

On 17 July, the Imam of the Imam Hussein mosque in Baladiya district (eastern Baghdad) was reportedly kidnapped. UNAMI/OHCHR is seeking additional information. UNAMI/OHCHR learned that, on 22 July, unknown gunmen abducted an employee of Kirkuk University, who was returning from Baghdad to Kirkuk; the abductors allegedly demanded a ransom of USD 30,000. On 1 August, an armed group abducted Judge Sabah Sulaiman Gharab who formerly worked in the Hawija Court. There is no further information about his whereabouts or the reasons behind his abduction. UNAMI/OHCHR is seeking additional information

On 29 July, an armed group in Zab sub-district raided the house of a Sahwa member and attempted to abduct him. The man managed to escape, however the armed group shot and killed his mother. During the afternoon of 23 July, three employees of Kirkuk City Council and Health Department were abducted in Muqdadiya, northeast of Baquba, while on their way to Baghdad. Both institutions denied that the abductions took place. On 6 September, more than 20 males were abducted in Iskandariya in Babil by unknown gunmen.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The conflict in Iraq continued to take a heavy toll on civilians. Everyday scores of Iraqi men, women and children are being displaced from their homes by the violence, or are directly suffering from violence, being killed, injured, and having their livelihoods and essential civilian infrastructure destroyed. The conflict has led to over 1.8 million internally displaced Iraqis, and to a high number of civilian casualties. Subjected to violence and abuse, with no safe places, refugees and displaced persons often live in under-resourced locations in deplorable conditions. Providing effective physical and appropriate material support to the displaced is a continuing challenge. The combined effect of insecurity, inadequate resources, weak government capacity, and constraints from the prevailing political situation, has created a crisis of displacement.

UNAMI/OHCHR is concerned about the extreme vulnerability of civilians caught in the cross-fire or targeted in direct, systematic attacks carried out by terrorist and armed groups, or trapped in areas under ISIL control, in particular vulnerable groups, including minorities, women, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly. Humanitarian access and safety of humanitarian personnel remains a serious concern with the unpredictable nature of ISIL and associated armed groups creating an unstable environment that hinders access and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians in need. Such insecurity also compromises the ability of civilian populations to access essential services, such as healthcare and education.

The parties to the conflict appear to be committing violations of international humanitarian law and gross violations or abuses of international human rights law. The indiscriminate and systematic attacks by ISIL and associated armed groups against civilians may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The ISF and affiliated forces have also carried out military operations that appeared to violate the principles of distinction and proportionality, and the obligation to take precautions to protect civilians from the effects of violence, which may also amount to war crimes. Armed groups associated with the ISF have carried out kidnappings and targeted killings.

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

1. All parties to the ongoing armed conflict must strictly comply with applicable international humanitarian law and human rights law. They must take all feasible precautions to spare civilians from the effects of hostilities, and take all necessary measures to respect, protect and meet the basic needs of the civilian population.
2. All acts of violence or abuse committed against civilians in violation of applicable international humanitarian law and human rights law must cease immediately. 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.
3. In carrying out armed operations, all parties to the conflict must take all necessary precautions to ensure that civilians are protected from the effects of violence.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Iraqi political leaders should use every opportunity and urgently achieve a substantial and effective resolution of the crisis by restoring control over the areas that have been taken over by ISIL and implementing inclusive social, political and economic reforms. Political, civic and religious leaders have a responsibility to ensure social peace through reconciliation.
8. The Government of Iraq is under an obligation to investigate effectively, promptly, thoroughly and impartially any allegations of violations or abuses of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law, and where appropriate, prosecute those who are responsible for such acts (particularly if such acts amount to international crimes). Furthermore, such violations and abuses give rise to a right of 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.

9. The Iraqi Government should consider accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and as an immediate step, to consider accepting 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.

END

