



# OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS



APRIL 1, 2019–JUNE 30, 2019

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

In January 2013, legislation was enacted creating the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) framework for oversight of overseas contingency operations. This legislation, which amended the Inspector General Act, requires the Inspectors General of the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State (DoS), and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide quarterly reports to Congress on designated overseas contingency operations. The DoD Inspector General (IG) has been designated as the Lead IG for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). The DoS IG is the Associate IG for OIR. The USAID IG participates in oversight for the operation.

The Offices of Inspector General of the DoD, DoS, and USAID are referred to in this report as the Lead IG agencies. Other partner agencies also contribute to oversight of OIR.

The Lead IG agencies collectively carry out their statutory missions related to these oversight contingency operations to:

- Develop a joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight over the contingency operation.
- Ensure independent and effective oversight of programs and operations of the Federal Government in support of the contingency operation through either joint or individual audits, inspections, and investigations.
- Report quarterly and biannually to Congress and the public on the contingency operation and activities of the Lead IG agencies.

### METHODOLOGY

To produce this quarterly report, the Lead IG agencies gather data and information from their agencies and open sources, including congressional testimony, policy research organizations, press conferences, think tanks, and media reports. DoD, DoS, and USAID officials also provide written responses to quarterly requests for information from Lead IG agencies.

The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of audits, inspections, or evaluations mentioned or referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not verified or audited all the data and information provided by the agencies. For details of the methodology for this report, see Appendix B.

### CLASSIFIED APPENDIX

This report also includes an appendix containing classified information about the U.S. mission to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria. The Lead IG provides the classified appendix separately to relevant agencies and congressional committees.

## FOREWORD

We are pleased to submit this Lead Inspector General quarterly report on Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). This report discharges our individual and collective agency oversight responsibilities pursuant to the Inspector General Act.

The United States launched OIR in 2014 to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and to set the conditions for follow-on operations to increase regional stability. The strategy to defeat ISIS includes military operations, as well as support for local security forces, diplomacy, governance, humanitarian assistance, and stabilization programs.

In response to the ISIS threat, the United States and Coalition partners began training, advising, and assisting Iraqi and Syrian partner forces. In December 2017, the Iraqi government declared ISIS defeated in Iraq after the terrorist organization lost its final stronghold in the city of Mosul. In March 2019, ISIS lost its final territorial hold in Syria's Middle Euphrates River Valley, bringing an end to the group's physical "caliphate" in both Iraq and Syria. Despite the loss of physical territory, thousands of ISIS fighters remain in Iraq and Syria and are carrying out attacks and working to rebuild their capabilities.

This report's Quarter in Review section includes an overview of the major developments and strength and capabilities of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The country-specific sections explore the status of the conflict, actions conducted against ISIS, the role of third parties, capacity building of partner forces, diplomacy and political developments, stabilization, and humanitarian assistance. The support to mission section describes funding and staffing of OIR.

This report also discusses the planned, ongoing, and completed oversight work conducted by the Lead IG Offices of the Inspector General and our partner oversight agencies during the period from April 1, 2019, through June 30, 2019.

Working in close collaboration, we remain committed to providing comprehensive oversight and timely reporting on this contingency operation.



Handwritten signature of Glenn A. Fine in black ink.

**Glenn A. Fine**  
Principal Deputy Inspector General  
Performing the Duties  
of the Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Defense



Handwritten signature of Steve A. Linick in black ink.

**Steve A. Linick**  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of State



Handwritten signature of Ann Calvaresi Barr in black ink.

**Ann Calvaresi Barr**  
Inspector General  
U.S. Agency for International  
Development



**On the Cover**

(Top row): Spanish soldiers fire a machine gun during a training exercise in Iraq (U.S. Army photo); A U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon refuels (U.S. Air Force photo); A Syrian mother and her children walk down the streets of their neighborhood (U.S. Army photo). (Bottom): Iraqi soldiers move through a smokescreen that provides cover during an assault exercise (U.S. Army photo).

## MESSAGE FROM THE LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL



**Glenn A. Fine**

I am pleased to present this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) quarterly report on the status of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). This is the 18th report on OIR summarizing the quarter's events and describing Lead IG and partner agency oversight work relating to OIR. It also includes a classified appendix that is made available to relevant congressional and government agencies.

ISIS remains a threat in Iraq and Syria. This quarter, ISIS continued its transition from a territory– holding force to an insurgency in Syria, and it intensified its insurgency in Iraq. According to the Combined Joint Task Force-OIR (CJTF-OIR), ISIS carried out assassinations, suicide attacks, abductions, and arson of crops in both Iraq and Syria.

During the quarter, CJTF-OIR completed the partial withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria. According to CJTF-OIR, the reduction of U.S. forces has decreased the support available for Syrian partner forces at a time when their forces need more training and equipping to respond to the ISIS resurgence. CJTF-OIR also said that the drawdown could cause U.S.-backed forces in Syria to look for “alternate partnerships and resources” to replace the reduced U.S. support, and that in its assessment such an outcome could be “detrimental to the United States’ mission in Iraq and Syria.”

CJTF-OIR also reported that ISIS has established “resurgent cells” in areas controlled by Syrian partner forces. While Syrian forces carried out clearance operations in northeastern Syria to eliminate these cells, CJTF-OIR reported that U.S.-backed Syrian forces also have limited capacity to hold liberated areas.

U.S. Central Command reported that ISIS is also active in al Hol, a sprawling internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in northeastern Syria where thousands of ISIS family members now reside, and ISIS is likely working to enlist new members from the camp's large population of IDPs. The Department of State (DoS) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) reported that ongoing lawlessness and violence in Syria are preventing IDPs from returning home and hindering the work of humanitarian organizations who are trying to provide assistance.

In Iraq, CJTF-OIR reported that despite improving capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), ISIS is rebuilding in remote territory, which is hard for Iraqi forces to secure. Furthermore, CJTF-OIR reported that Iraq lacks hold forces capable of maintaining security in areas cleared of ISIS. USAID-funded organizations also reported that hundreds of thousands of IDPs do not want to return home in Iraq due to concerns about security and the lack of services and economic opportunity.

In the wake of reports of increased threats from Iran, in May the DoS ordered the departure of non-emergency personnel from the U.S. Embassy and the Diplomatic Support Center in Baghdad and from the U.S. Consulate in Erbil. The DoS reported to the DoS OIG that the departure of staff “eroded” the ability of the Embassy and the Consulate General to carry out stabilization activities in Iraq.

This quarter, the Lead IG agencies and our oversight partners issued 10 oversight reports related to OIR, examining various topics such as combatting trafficking in persons, countering violent extremism programs and projects, and contract management and accountability in overseas contingency operations. Lead IG investigations resulted in one contractor debarment. As of June 30, 2019, the Lead IG agencies and our oversight partners had 24 ongoing and 11 planned oversight projects, and 124 open investigations related to OIR.

My colleagues and I remain committed to providing quarterly reports on activities related to OIR. We thank the dedicated employees of each Lead IG agency who conduct this important work, both in the United States and abroad.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn A. Fine". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Glenn A. Fine**  
Principal Deputy Inspector General  
Performing the Duties of the Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Defense





An Iraqi Federal Policeman clears rooms during a training exercise at the Besmaya Range Complex, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### IRAQI AND U.S.-BACKED SYRIAN FORCES STRUGGLE TO CONTAIN THE ISIS INSURGENCY

Despite losing its territorial “caliphate,” the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) solidified its insurgent capabilities in Iraq and was resurging in Syria this quarter.<sup>1</sup> The Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR), the military command established in 2014 by U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), reported to the Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General (DoD OIG) that ISIS is able to operate as an insurgency in Iraq and Syria in part because the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) remain unable to sustain long-term operations against ISIS militants.<sup>2</sup>

CJTF-OIR said that in Iraq the ISF often lacks the ability to maintain hold forces in cleared territory. In Syria, according to CJTF-OIR, the SDF was “initially limited” in personnel, equipment, and intelligence to confront resurgent cells that ISIS fighters established in the northeast as they fled fighting in the Middle Euphrates River Valley (MERV).<sup>3</sup> CJTF-OIR said that, in response, the SDF sought “every opportunity to continue to train and equip their forces” this quarter and frequently requested training, equipment, and assistance from U.S. and Coalition forces to confront ISIS’s “resurgent cells.”<sup>4</sup>

USCENTCOM reported that ISIS militants in both countries employed similar tactics of targeted assassinations, ambushes, suicide bombings, and the burning of crops, but this quarter did not carry out large-scale conventional attacks or attempt to take and hold territory for more than brief periods.<sup>5</sup> According to the Office of the DoD Deputy Assistant Secretary for Counternarcotics and Global Threats (CN&GT), ISIS is likely reestablishing financial networks in both countries.<sup>6</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported based on open source data that ISIS likely retains between 14,000 and 18,000 “members” in Iraq and Syria, including up to 3,000 foreigners.<sup>7</sup> However, the DoD Office of the Undersecretary for Policy/International Security Affairs (OUSDP/ISA) said that estimates of ISIS numbers from agencies and experts both inside and outside the U.S. government varied greatly.<sup>8</sup> Although ISIS has moved underground in Iraq and Syria, CJTF-OIR said that it maintains an extensive worldwide social media effort to recruit fighters.<sup>9</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG that ISIS in Iraq is attempting to expand its influence over populations in the Sunni-majority provinces north and west of Baghdad, and has reorganized its leadership and established safe havens in rural Sunni-majority areas. CJTF-OIR said that “limited information is available to accurately assess if these changes [in leadership] have been successful.”<sup>10</sup>



Iraqi soldiers move through a smokescreen that provides cover during an assault exercise. (U.S. Army photo)



**ISIS remains capable of conducting “asymmetric operations” and exploiting tension between Iraq’s Shia and Sunni communities.**

CJTF-OIR said that ISIS in Iraq was able to establish a more stable command and control node and a logistics node for coordination of attacks, particularly after the arrival of ISIS fighters from Syria following the fall of the last ISIS stronghold in the MERV in March 2019.<sup>11</sup> ISIS remains capable of conducting “asymmetric operations” and exploiting tension between Iraq’s Shia and Sunni communities and popular discontent over the perceived failures of the Iraqi government.<sup>12</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that ISIS also exploits the gaps between the security forces of Iraq’s central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in a swath of territory claimed by both sides. CJTF-OIR and open-source analysts said that in these areas, ISIS fighters are able to find safe haven to regroup and plan attacks, in part due to a lack of agreement between the ISF and the Kurdish Peshmerga, the security force of the KRG, to conduct joint counter-ISIS operations.<sup>13</sup> For more on ISIS’s ability to exploit tensions between the central government and the KRG, including between the ISF and Kurdish Peshmerga forces, see page 44.



**ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi appeared for the first time in five years in a video released in April 2019. (Video capture)**

According to CJTF-OIR, popular support for ISIS in Iraq remains concentrated in the northern and western provinces, where the ISF lacks sustainable military reach. CJTF-OIR reported that ISIS is still able to recruit in these areas using family and tribal connections.<sup>14</sup> In April, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi released a video for the first time in five years in an attempt to rally support and exhort his followers to continue to fight.<sup>15</sup>

In Syria, USCENTCOM reported to the DoD OIG that ISIS has activated resurgent cells in areas controlled by the SDF and this quarter used these cells to conduct attacks in northeastern Syria and other areas of the MERV. ISIS also conducted multiple attacks against the Syrian regime and pro-regime forces, including an attack in Dara’a province for the first time since August 2018.<sup>16</sup> USCENTCOM said that ISIS’s strategy in Syria is to create turmoil in territory that it has lost to challenge ruling authorities and assert its power.<sup>17</sup> As in Iraq, ISIS tactics in Syria focused on assassinations and the burning of fields of crops.<sup>18</sup>

USCENTCOM reported that ISIS is also active in al-Hol, a sprawling internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in northeastern Syria where thousands of ISIS family members now reside, and is likely working to enlist new members from the camp’s large population of IDPs.<sup>19</sup> USCENTCOM said that transferring residents out of the camp—either to Syrian “guarantors,” Iraqi custody, or in the case of foreign fighters, to their countries of origin—remains critical to reducing ISIS’s recruiting pool.<sup>20</sup>

**SYRIA: SELECTED KEY EVENTS, 4/1/2019-6/30/2019**

**APRIL 4**

ISIS suicide bombers detonate explosives at an SDF headquarters in Raqqah

**APRIL 9**

ISIS suicide blast in Raqqah kills 13 people, mostly civilians

**APRIL 12**

SDF strikes deal with the Iraqi government to repatriate 31,000 Iraqis, mostly women and children, residing in the al-Hol IDP camp in Syria

**APRIL 20**

ISIS attacks kill 35 Syrian regime soldiers in Homs and Dayr az Zawr provinces



**In addition to conducting clearing operations, the SDF this quarter continued to hold about 10,000 ISIS fighters in what CJTF-OIR described as “prisons/pop-up prisons” in northeastern Syria.**

In Dayr az Zawr province in Syria, Arab residents protested against SDF management of provincial affairs, forced conscription of local men, and use of the province’s oil revenues.<sup>21</sup> CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG that as a result, the SDF experienced increased ethnic tensions with local Arab leadership and that grievances were shared during meetings between the leadership of the two groups. CJTF-OIR said that Russia, Iran, the Syrian regime, and ISIS seek to weaken the SDF by leveraging Arab grievances against it, which could result in “overall failure to maintain the mission [against ISIS] in Syria.”<sup>22</sup> USCENTCOM said that ISIS has been successful in portraying the SDF as “the new occupying force in the area” to exploit tension between the Kurdish-led SDF and local Arab residents.<sup>23</sup>

The SDF carried out broad clearance operations across northeastern Syria this quarter, and focused on clearing resurgent cells in population centers in the MERV and in Manbij west of the Euphrates River.<sup>24</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that the SDF also focused on establishing intelligence centers at its headquarters to gather information for clearance operations, reduce threats from homemade bombs and unexploded ordnance, and capture or kill ISIS cell members.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to conducting clearing operations, the SDF this quarter continued to hold about 10,000 ISIS fighters in what CJTF-OIR described as “prisons/pop-up prisons” in northeastern Syria.<sup>26</sup> About 2,000 of the detainees are foreign fighters, and the remainder are Iraqi and Syrian nationals. CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG that the SDF does not have the capacity to detain thousands of ISIS fighters, and OUSD(P)/ISA said that the United States continued this quarter to press countries whose citizens remain in SDF detention to repatriate them to stand trial in their own countries.<sup>27</sup> As of the end of the quarter, seven countries in addition to the United States and Iraq had publicly announced repatriation of their ISIS fighters.<sup>28</sup>

This quarter, the SDF provided perimeter security at several Syrian IDP camps, including al Hol, an IDP camp in Hasakah province that both the United Nations and CJTF-OIR said contains several thousand ISIS family members and supporters.<sup>29</sup> CJTF-OIR said that the SDF’s inability to provide more than “minimal security” at the camp has allowed the “uncontested conditions to spread of ISIS ideology” there.<sup>30</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that due to the drawdown of U.S. forces in Syria, it lacks resources track the humanitarian situation in the camp.<sup>31</sup> USCENTCOM reported that ISIS is likely exploiting the lack of security to enlist new members and re-engage members who have left the battlefield.<sup>32</sup> It said that transferring residents out of the camp thus remains “critical to reducing this recruiting pool.”<sup>33</sup>

The United Nations reported that it expects that approximately 31,000 Iraqi IDPs, primarily women and children, will return to Iraq from the al Hol camp in Syria in the coming months.

#### APRIL 24

Protests erupt against SDF rule in the Arab-majority province of Dayr az Zawr

#### MAY 22

U.S. Ambassador James Jeffrey testifies before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the U.S. strategy for Syria

#### JUNE 1

ISIS car bombing in Raqqah kills 10 civilians and 7 SDF fighters

JUN

According to USAID, the IDPs returning from Iraq will continue to require humanitarian assistance at least through the end of 2019.<sup>34</sup> Questions about how to handle these returning Iraqis have prompted some delay to allow better planning. USAID said there were concerns that creating a special detention camp might become more of a prison, promote radicalization, and impede humanitarian assistance and reintegration of the residents into their home towns and villages.<sup>35</sup>

The DoS and USAID reported that the greatest obstacles preventing IDPs from returning to their places of origin are lack of security and economic opportunity, and damage to housing.<sup>36</sup> IDPs also need legal assistance to recover or renew identification documents, as well as assistance with accessing housing, land, and property rights. A nongovernmental organization (NGO) report released in April identified 45,000 children in Iraq who are at risk of becoming stateless due to a lack of civil documentation.<sup>37</sup>

## **PARTIAL DRAWDOWN OF U.S. TROOPS DECREASES RESOURCES AND SUPPORT TO U.S.-BACKED SYRIAN FORCES**

CJTF-OIR completed a partial withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria this quarter, leaving behind a residual force in northeastern Syria and around a desert garrison near the Jordanian border.<sup>38</sup> Following the drawdown, CJTF-OIR continued to advise and assist Syrian partner forces as they conducted clearing operations and detained suspected ISIS members and facilitators.<sup>39</sup>

As it drew down forces, CJTF-OIR stated that the reduction in personnel, equipment, and a change of mission to counterinsurgency required the Special Operations Joint Task Force-OIR, a component of CJTF-OIR, to perform more partnered training, equipping, and reinforcing of the SDF to enable the SDF to conduct counterinsurgency operations. CJTF-OIR said that the partial drawdown had occurred at a time when these fighters need additional training and equipping to build trust with local communities and to develop the human-based intelligence necessary to confront ISIS resurgent cells and insurgent capabilities in Syria.<sup>40</sup>

According to CJTF-OIR, the drawdown of U.S. forces in Syria also reduced the ability of CJTF-OIR to maintain “visibility” at the al Hol IDP camp, forcing it to rely on third-party accounts of the humanitarian and security situation there. CJTF-OIR said that it lacks the resources to monitor the camp directly, and that the SDF was only capable of providing “minimal security”—a deficiency that CJTF-OIR said has created conditions that allow ISIS ideology to spread “uncontested” in the camp.<sup>41</sup>

## **CITING THREATS FROM IRAN, UNITED STATES EVACUATES NON-EMERGENCY PERSONNEL FROM IRAQ**

In May, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo ordered the departure of non-emergency personnel from the U.S. Embassy and the Diplomatic Support Center in Baghdad as well as the Consulate General in Erbil. The order decreased the number of personnel under “Chief of Mission” authority from 563 to 312 and reduced U.S. Mission Iraq’s portfolio to four objectives: defeating ISIS, countering malign Iranian influence in Iraq, supporting religious and ethnic minorities, and maintaining a viable platform for diplomatic operations. The DoS reported to the DoS OIG that the departure of staff eroded the ability of the Embassy in Baghdad

**CJTF-OIR completed a partial withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria this quarter, leaving behind a residual force in northeastern Syria and around a desert garrison near the Jordanian border.**



**Secretary of State Michael Pompeo meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Abdrabuh al-Mahdi, Baghdad, Iraq. (DoS photo)**

and Consulate General in Erbil to engage in stabilization efforts in Iraq. As of the time of publication of this report, the order had been extended to August 11, 2019.<sup>42</sup>

USAID reported no change in its priorities due to the departure of Embassy staff.<sup>43</sup> USAID reported that it continued to fund stabilization projects through or in coordination with the UN Development Programme’s Funding Facility for Stabilization, including 216 activities in Ninewa province. The United States also announced an additional \$100 million in assistance directed at Anbar province to “reset relations with Anbar Sunnis” and promote the safe return of IDPs.<sup>44</sup>

The departure of U.S. personnel in May came amid increased tensions between the United States and Iran. According to the DIA and media reporting, a number of factors contributed to the rising tensions during the quarter, including the United States designation of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity; the imposition of additional sanctions on Iran; the non-renewal of waivers to eight countries to import Iranian oil; damage caused to six different oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz that the United States said Iran orchestrated; and Iran’s shooting down of a U.S. drone in the Strait.<sup>45</sup> On May 4, Secretary Pompeo travelled to Iraq and described “imminent threats” to U.S. interests in Iraq from Iran or Iranian-backed Shia militias belonging to the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), an umbrella group of Iraqi militias that mobilized in 2014 to fight ISIS.<sup>46</sup>

Despite these incidents, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) reported to the DoD OIG that in its assessment, U.S.-Iranian tension has had no effect on counterterrorism operations in Iraq, and that Iranian-aligned PMF units routinely conduct clearing operations against ISIS.<sup>47</sup> However, USCENTCOM reported to the DoD OIG that the threat from Iranian-aligned forces operating in Iraq has increased this quarter due to heightened U.S.-Iranian tensions.<sup>48</sup>

In Syria, according to the DIA and open-source reporting, Iran continues to field Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps soldiers, support the Lebanese Hezbollah, and command a Shia foreign fighter network that includes militias from Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.<sup>49</sup> The DIA reported that these groups fight on behalf of the Syrian regime against Syrian opposition groups as well as ISIS.<sup>50</sup>

Local Syrians stand over the ruins of a bridge destroyed by ISIS in northern Syria. (U.S. Army photo)



## THE DOS AND USAID CONTINUE STABILIZATION PROGRAMS FOR NORTHEASTERN SYRIA

Despite the U.S. troop drawdown, USAID and the DoS reported that they continued stabilization programs for northeastern Syria to support the enduring defeat of ISIS and other terrorist groups.<sup>51</sup> According to USAID, plans are underway to reopen DoS’s Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) Forward operation, whose staff were evacuated in January following the announcement that U.S. troops would withdraw.<sup>52</sup> The United States and Coalition partners continued calls to fund stabilization and security-related assistance for Syria, including addressing the removal of explosive remnants of war; livelihoods and local recovery; civilian security, social cohesion, and reconciliation; residential protection service, counter-radicalization, and reintegration; basic education; and justice and accountability.<sup>53</sup>

According to the United Nations, humanitarian relief needs are particularly acute at al Hol, a camp with approximately 70,000 IDPs including nearly 50,000 under age 18. The United Nations characterized al Hol as a unique situation due to the disproportionate number of unaccompanied children and children separated from their parents. These children represent a number of nationalities, and many are the children of deceased or imprisoned ISIS fighters.<sup>54</sup> Approximately 35 relief organizations provide humanitarian assistance to the camp, including emergency food assistance for all camp residents, malnutrition screening for nearly 21,000 children, monthly hygiene kits, and water, sanitation, health and hygiene services.<sup>55</sup> The United States continued this quarter to press countries to repatriate their citizens from this camp and elsewhere, with some success.<sup>56</sup>

### IRAQ: SELECTED KEY EVENTS, 4/1/2019-6/30/2019

**APRIL 24**

Iraq’s Counter Terrorism Service conducts clearing operations against ISIS sleeper cells in the Wadi Ashai area of the Hamrin Mountains in northern Iraq

**APRIL 29**

ISIS releases new video of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, his first appearance in five years

**MAY 7**

Secretary of State Michael Pompeo visits Iraq, warns of Americans in danger from Iran and Iranian-backed groups

APR

MAY

The DoS reported to the DoS OIG significant human rights abuses in Iraq by some members of the ISF, particularly Iran-aligned elements of the PMF operating outside of government control.

## IRAQ FILLS TOP GOVERNMENT POSITIONS AMID CONTINUED PROTESTS AND ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

According to media reports, the Iraqi government approved new Ministers of Defense, Interior, and Justice after Grand Ayatollah Ali al Sistani, the country's top Shia cleric, criticized the delays in appointing these ministers and prominent Shia cleric Muqtada al Sadr threatened mass protests.<sup>57</sup> The Iraqi government is still not complete, however, and political maneuvering continued, which may coalesce into a larger opposition alliance.<sup>58</sup> Provincial elections were again delayed to April 2020, subject to further government approvals.<sup>59</sup>

Protests continued in Basrah province this quarter as Iraqis demonstrated against the lack of jobs and basic public services. While for much of the quarter these protests were peaceful and small, in mid-June the deputy governor of the province warned that high unemployment, which local officials said stands above 40 percent and is expected to increase, and the lack of electricity could reignite tensions and prompt widespread demonstrations.<sup>60</sup>

The Iraqi government launched numerous initiatives in response to last summer's protests demanding jobs, electricity, and potable water.<sup>61</sup> The DoS reported that in its assessment these initiatives have made only modest progress addressing the root causes of the problems underlying popular discontent.<sup>62</sup>

The DoS reported to the DoS OIG significant human rights abuses in Iraq by some members of the ISF, particularly Iran-aligned elements of the PMF operating outside of government control. These abuses included blocking freedom of movement for IDPs, minorities, and Sunnis said to have ties to ISIS. Embassy Baghdad and USAID received reports of sexual and financial exploitation of IDPs by camp security forces and others. Accusations of ISIS affiliation resulted in many IDPs choosing to remain in camps rather than returning to their home communities. The Iraqi and Kurdistan governments have been slow to address these issues due to a lack of resource and security concerns, according to the DoS.<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, according to the DoS, significant due process concerns continued for alleged ISIS affiliates who are being held by Iraqi authorities, resulting in trials characterized by some UN agencies and NGOs as arbitrary and unfair. The DoS reported engaging with Iraqi government officials to address these issues, including the need for safe and humane detention, and the release of non-violent prisoners.<sup>64</sup>

### MAY 15

Citing threats from Iran, U.S. evacuates non-emergency U.S. Embassy staff from Baghdad and Erbil

### JUNE 14

Ayatollah Ali al Sistani, Iraq's top Shia cleric, warns of ISIS resurgence in a Friday sermon

### JUNE 15-17

Rockets are fired at the Balad air base and Camp Taji, where U.S. military personnel are based

JUN



## LEAD IG OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

The Lead IG and partner agencies conducted oversight work related to audits, inspections, and evaluations; investigations; and hotline activities from April 1 through June 30, 2019.

### AUDITS, INSPECTIONS, AND EVALUATIONS

The Lead IG and partner agencies completed 10 audit, evaluation, and inspection reports related to OIR from April 1 through June 30, 2019. These reports examined various activities related to OIR, including combatting trafficking in persons; DoD contract support training for military and civilian personnel; emergency preparedness and security at U.S. diplomatic facilities abroad; accountability of DoS grants to fund countering violent extremism programs and projects; contract management in overseas contingency operations; and humanitarian assistance programs in Iraq and Syria. Table 1 lists the released reports by agency.

During this quarter, the Lead IG agencies and their oversight partners had 24 ongoing and 11 planned oversight projects for OIR.

### INVESTIGATIONS

The investigative components of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies continued to conduct investigative activity related to OIR during the quarter. The Lead IG agencies used investigators in Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and United Arab Emirates, as well as in Germany and Washington, D.C., to conduct their OIR-related investigations.

Syrian children play in their neighborhood in Hasakah province, Syria. (U.S. Army Photo)

During this quarter, Lead IG investigations resulted in one contractor debarment following allegations of receiving kickbacks in exchange for awarding contracts supporting the OIR mission.

Investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies closed 12 investigations, initiated 18 new investigations, and coordinated on 124 open investigations. The open investigations involve grant and procurement fraud, corruption, theft, computer intrusions, and human trafficking allegations.

Table 1.

### Oversight Reports Issued this Quarter

Report	Release Date
<b>DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL</b>	
<i>Evaluation of DoD Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Kuwait</i> DODIG-2019-088	June 11, 2019
<i>Audit of the Identification and Training of DoD's Operational Contract Support Workforce</i> DODIG-2019-079	April 16, 2019
<i>Evaluation of the Oversight of Intelligence Interrogation Approaches and Techniques</i> DODIG-2019-077 (classified report)	April 15, 2019
<b>DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL</b>	
<i>Audit of the Department of State Implementation of Policies Intended to Counter Violent Extremism</i> AUD-MERO-19-27	June 26, 2019
<i>Compliance Follow-Up Audit: Emergency Action Plan for U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq</i> AUD-MERO-19-32 (classified report)	June 24, 2019
<i>Management Assistance Report: Mission Turkey Safety and Security Infractions Need Immediate Attention</i> AUD-MERO-19-26 (classified report)	May 29, 2019
<i>Lessons Learned from Office of Inspector General Audits Concerning the Review and Payment of Contractor Invoices Supporting Overseas Contingency Operations</i> AUD-MERO-19-19	April 1, 2019
<b>U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL</b>	
<i>Performance Audit on the Adequacy and Compliance of Blumont Holding, Inc.'s Disclosure Statement, January 1, 2018, with Cost Accounting Standards</i> 3-000-19-028-I	June 21, 2019
<i>Audit of Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development under Multiple USAID Agreements for the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2017</i> 3-000-19-008-R	June 12, 2019
<b>DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL</b>	
<i>CBP's Global Entry Program is Vulnerable to Exploitation</i> OIG-19-49	June 24, 2019





Spanish soldiers fire a machine gun during a training exercise at the Besmaya Range Complex, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

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A U.S. Army soldier awaits to travel through recently-liberated territory in March. (U.S. Army photo)

## THE QUARTER IN REVIEW

### MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

*“The so-called physical caliphate is defeated, but [ISIS] as an organization is not.”*  
 –Coalition spokesman James Rawlinson, 6/24/2019

#### **ISIS Resurges as Iraqi and U.S.-backed Syrian Forces Struggle to Sustain a Security Presence in Cleared Territory**

According to the Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) and U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), ISIS was resurging in Syria and continued to solidify its insurgency in Iraq this quarter, despite losing the last vestiges of its territorial “caliphate” in Syria in March 2019.<sup>1</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that ISIS has been able to regroup and sustain operations in Iraq and Syria in part because the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) remain unable to sustain long-term operations, conduct multiple operations simultaneously, or hold territory that they have cleared of ISIS militants.<sup>2</sup> In Iraq, the ISF often lacks the capacity to leave a hold force behind to secure cleared territory, CJTF-OIR said.<sup>3</sup> In Syria, CJTF-OIR reported that the SDF were “initially limited” in their ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations as ISIS fighters fled the Middle Euphrates River Valley

**USCENTCOM reported to the DoD OIG that ISIS militants in both countries employed similar tactics of targeted assassinations, ambushes, suicide bombings in public places, and burning fields of crops, but did not carry out large-scale conventional attacks or attempt to take and hold territory for more than brief periods.**

(MERV) and established clandestine cells elsewhere in northeastern Syria.<sup>4</sup> These deficits in ISF and SDF capabilities allowed ISIS militants to withdraw and regroup even as they sustained losses.<sup>5</sup>

ISIS's reconstitution and transformation into an insurgency in Syria this quarter appears to follow a pattern established in Iraq, where USCENTCOM said ISIS has formed a capable insurgent operation based in several Iraqi provinces north and west of Baghdad.<sup>6</sup> Open source analysts reported that ISIS has long been working to establish conditions for a renewed insurgency, first in Iraq and now in Syria, using such tactics as shifting fighters away from Coalition-supported clearance operations and repositioning them for future fights.<sup>7</sup>

USCENTCOM reported to the DoD OIG that ISIS militants in both countries employed similar tactics of targeted assassinations, ambushes, suicide bombings in public places, and burning fields of crops, but did not carry out large-scale conventional attacks or attempt to take and hold territory for more than brief periods.<sup>8</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that in Iraq in particular, ISIS has established a more stable command and control node and a logistics node for coordination of attacks.<sup>9</sup>

USCENTCOM and CJTF-OIR reported that ISIS's strategy in both countries is to create turmoil in territory it has lost and prevent the ISF or SDF from establishing effective control and maintaining civil order.<sup>10</sup> USCENTCOM reported that ISIS, by maintaining a high operational tempo with multiple attacks taking place over a wide area, "likely aims to show it is everywhere, and can strike with impunity where it pleases."<sup>11</sup> At the same time, targeted assassinations by ISIS are "likely intended to demonstrate ISIS's ability to identify its enemies and eliminate them without apparent hindrance," USCENTCOM said.<sup>12</sup> The DoS said that ISIS attacks were also intended to weaken public support for local governance and security institutions.<sup>13</sup> More recently, ISIS has used the burning of village crops to the same effect.<sup>14</sup>

According to open-source analysts, the targeted attacks caused entire villages to empty, particularly in Diyala and Kirkuk provinces, as residents fled following the assassination of their village leader.<sup>15</sup> In 2018, more than 30 villages in northern Diyala province were emptied after ISIS assassinated more than 30 local leaders there.<sup>16</sup> Recently, ISIS has used the burning of village crops to compel village residents to flee.<sup>17</sup>

CJTF-OIR said that ISIS refers to its overarching strategy as "sahara" (desert), "sahwat" (a derogatory term for Sunnis who fight against ISIS), and "sawlat" (hit-and-run operations) for its desert-based insurgency.<sup>18</sup> As part of this strategy, CJTF-OIR said that in Iraq, ISIS attempted to expand its influence this quarter and carried out attacks in the Sunni-majority provinces where ISIS captured territory in 2014, including Anbar, Ninewa, Diyala, Kirkuk, and Salah ad Din provinces.<sup>19</sup> In Syria, USCENTCOM said that ISIS carried out attacks mainly in Raqqah, Hasakah, and Dayr az Zawr provinces.<sup>20</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported based on open source data that ISIS likely has between 14,000 and 18,000 "members," including "fighters," in Iraq and Syria, including up to 3,000 foreigners.<sup>21</sup> CJTF-OIR defines an ISIS "member" in Iraq and Syria as an individual who has pledged allegiance to ISIS and to the group's so-called "caliph," Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, as distinct from a "fighter" who has taken up arms to fight for ISIS.<sup>22</sup> CJTF-OIR said that it did not have the "granularity and resources" to differentiate between ISIS members and fighters.<sup>23</sup>

In both countries, according to the DoD Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Counternarcotics and Global Threats (CN&GT), ISIS is reestablishing financial networks by decentralizing revenue generation, taking in “quick cash” through extortion of the local populace and skimming money from rebuilding contracts or kidnapping for ransom.<sup>24</sup> CN&GT said that reestablishing financial networks provides senior ISIS leaders with the ability to oversee funding for local priorities and maintain a compartmentalized knowledge base of their accounts. CN&GT said that using smaller caches of money makes it more difficult for the Coalition to detect ISIS’s financial transactions.<sup>25</sup>

In CN&GT’s assessment, ISIS likely generates significantly less revenue due to the loss of control of territory, but likely has lower expenses operating as an insurgency.<sup>26</sup> CN&GT also reported that ISIS’s financial networks continued to be disrupted this quarter as a result of an October 2018 Iraqi-led, Coalition-enabled operation against the largest ISIS financial network, known as the Rawi Network.<sup>27</sup> This quarter, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated as terrorists six individuals and one entity for their connections to the Rawi Network.<sup>28</sup> For more information on Treasury’s actions this quarter to disrupt ISIS financing, see Appendix C on page 89 of this report.

In April, al Baghdadi released a video for the first time in five years. In the video, he vows that ISIS’s territorial defeat will not end the militants’ will to fight.<sup>29</sup> Open-source analysts said that his reappearance after a prolonged absence and rumors of his death served to reassert his leadership and reassure ISIS fighters that the insurgency will continue.<sup>30</sup> In open-source translations of the video, al Baghdadi describes ISIS’s efforts as a prolonged battle of attrition.<sup>31</sup>

The specifics of ISIS’s resurgence in Syria and Iraq are discussed in separate sections of this report on pages 20 and 42.

More information on ISIS’s strength and capabilities to act as an insurgency in Iraq and Syria is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

## Partial Drawdown of U.S. Troops in Syria Decreases Resources and Support to U.S.-backed Syrian Forces

CJTF-OIR completed a partial withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria this quarter, leaving behind a residual force to continue the campaign to defeat ISIS. CJTF-OIR said that most of the withdrawing U.S. forces departed the region, but a small number of U.S. forces with specialized capabilities moved to Iraq to continue to support the OIR mission.<sup>32</sup> Numbers of U.S. troops stationed in Iraq and Syria following the drawdown of forces from Syria are contained in the classified appendix. CJTF-OIR said that it committed \$14.3 million in support of the troop drawdown in Syria, known as Operation Deliberate Resolve.<sup>33</sup>

As it carried out the drawdown, CJTF-OIR stated that “the removal or reduction” of U.S. forces from Syria may cause U.S.-backed Syrian forces to seek “alternate partnerships and resources” or lead to the “collapse of the tentative democratic regional governance structures” that the United States has supported. CJTF-OIR said that these outcomes could be “detrimental to the United States’ mission in Iraq and Syria, especially if the alternative to the United States does not share our vision” for the future

**In both countries, ISIS is reestablishing financial networks by decentralizing revenue generation, taking in “quick cash” through extortion of the local populace and skimming money from rebuilding contracts or kidnapping for ransom.**



**Coalition troops fire mortars from a firing position in Syria. (U.S. Army photo)**

of Iraq and Syria.<sup>34</sup> CJTF-OIR said that the drawdown decreased the amount of resources and support available to these Syrian partner forces at a time when they need additional reinforcing for counterinsurgency operations against ISIS.<sup>35</sup>

CJTF-OIR also said that local forces require much more training and equipment now than during the operations to defeat ISIS territorially. Partner forces must develop new capabilities, such as building “trust and credibility with the local population, and a significantly greater amount of ground-focused, human-based intelligence,” to confront ISIS insurgents effectively.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, CJTF-OIR said that the relationship between the United States and U.S.-backed Syrian forces is “a symbol that holds great weight in the outcome of the region,” and that Syrian partner forces act as a force-multiplier for U.S. troops remaining on the ground in northeastern Syria.<sup>37</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that its mission in Syria continued to be advising, assisting, enabling, and sometimes accompanying U.S.-backed partner forces as they conduct clearance operations.<sup>38</sup> The residual U.S. force also assists with security during raids of ISIS members or facilitators and detention of captured ISIS members, and supports partner forces by providing them with U.S. ground and air assets.<sup>39</sup>

More information on the effect of the U.S. troop drawdown on the fight against ISIS, and other topics related to the reduction of U.S. forces in Syria, is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

## **U.S. Policy and Mission in Syria Remain the Same Following U.S. Drawdown of Forces**

The DoS and the DoD Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy/International Security Affairs (OUSD(P)/ISA) both reported that U.S. policy priorities for Syria did not change this quarter.<sup>40</sup> According to the DoS, the policies include the OIR-focused goal of bringing about an enduring defeat of ISIS as well as al Qaeda affiliates operating in Syria.<sup>41</sup>

The DoS further stated that the United States seeks to achieve policy goals outside of OIR, including a political solution to the Syrian civil war aligned with UN Security Council Resolution 2254, which calls for free and fair elections and a new constitution, among other items.<sup>42</sup> U.S. goals in Syria also include the removal of all Iranian-led forces and proxies in Syria.<sup>43</sup> The DoS told the DoS OIG that the political process would not be successful with “the threat of spoilers like ISIS,” and that the U.S. objective of an enduring defeat of ISIS that is incapable of resurgence “is integral to achieving any durable political solution.”<sup>44</sup>

In March 2019, the President submitted to Congress the “Report on the United States Strategy for Syria” in response to requirements laid out in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018.<sup>45</sup> The Syria strategy report states that in addition to the established U.S. priorities of countering ISIS, al Qaeda and their affiliates, and Iran’s malign influence, it remains vital to U.S. national interests to deter the Syrian regime’s production, proliferation, and use of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>46</sup>

According to the report, other important U.S. interests in Syria are “protecting allied and partner security, ensuring regional stability, alleviating human suffering, and protecting and promoting human rights, including holding perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable.”<sup>47</sup>

More information on U.S. policy in Iraq and Syria following the drawdown of U.S. forces in Syria is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

## **The United States Seeks Increased Coalition Support to Offset the Reduction in U.S. Troops in Syria**

OUSD(P)/ISA reported that the United States continued to engage members of the 80-member Coalition to identify areas where they might “best contribute to [ISIS’s] enduring defeat” and that it remained “confident that Coalition nations will provide the necessary support in Syria.”<sup>48</sup> OUSD(P)/ISA declined to provide unclassified specifics about which Coalition nations may provide additional troops or funding for Syria in the wake of the U.S. troop drawdown because it allows each country to decide whether to make their contributions public.<sup>49</sup> This information is contained in the classified appendix.

According to a news report, the United States has asked 30 Coalition countries to provide additional troops to continue operations against ISIS in Syria.<sup>50</sup> According to other press reports, Germany has rebuffed the request and France and Britain have agreed to send additional troops.<sup>51</sup>

**On May 14, 2019, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo ordered the departure of all non-emergency employees and eligible family members from the U.S. Embassy and Diplomatic Support Center in Baghdad and from the Consulate General in Erbil.**

The DoD Comptroller reported to the DoD OIG that the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF), had received only one direct financial contribution since the account was established in FY 2017.<sup>52</sup> OUSD(P)/ISA reported that the CTEF is a congressionally-appropriated DoD budget line item to support the fight against ISIS in Syria and Iraq and has received more than \$1 billion in funding annually. It said that the fund is also set up to receive financial contributions from Coalition partners, but is this is not the fund's main purpose.<sup>53</sup>

More information on Coalition contributions to Syria following the U.S. drawdown of forces is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

### **Citing Increased Threats from Iran, the United States Evacuates Non-emergency Embassy Personnel from Iraq**

On May 14, 2019, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo ordered the departure of all non-emergency employees and eligible family members from the U.S. Embassy and Diplomatic Support Center in Baghdad and from the Consulate General in Erbil.<sup>54</sup> This action followed Secretary Pompeo's unannounced May 7 trip to Baghdad to discuss with Prime Minister Adil Abd al-Mahdi U.S. intelligence reports of an imminent threat to U.S. interests in Iraq posed by Iranian-backed militias.<sup>55</sup> The ordered departure was subsequently extended to August 11.<sup>56</sup>

Some Iraqi officials were critical of the U.S.-ordered departure of Embassy staff, according to news reports. On May 15, Prime Minister Abd al-Mahdi said there was no information to suggest an increased threat from Iran, and the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the situation in Iraq was stable.<sup>57</sup> However, several Coalition partners increased the threat level for their personnel in Iraq or temporarily suspended training missions of Iraqi personnel in response to heightened tensions, the news reports said.<sup>58</sup>

The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad reported to the DoS OIG that the order to depart had decreased the number of personnel under Chief of Mission authority from 563 to 312 and reduced Mission Iraq's priorities to four areas: defeating ISIS, countering malign Iranian influence in Iraq, supporting religious and ethnic minorities, and maintaining a viable platform for diplomatic operations.<sup>59</sup> The ordered departure eroded the ability of the Embassy in Baghdad and Consulate General in Erbil to engage in stabilization and humanitarian efforts in Iraq, according to the DoS.<sup>60</sup>

The order also affected the approximately 4,750 contractor personnel stationed in Iraq, forcing contractors to determine which staff could be demobilized while still maintaining critical systems, such as safety and security, medical response, firefighting, airfield maintenance, power generation, water purification, fuel, and food delivery and services. Embassy Baghdad reported to the DoS OIG that demobilized contractor personnel were looking for new jobs outside of Iraq due to the uncertainty of the situation, which the Embassy said could become problematic for Mission Iraq if contractor personnel with critical skills were unavailable to return once the order to depart is lifted.<sup>61</sup>

Additional information on the ordered departure of U.S. embassy personnel and Iranian activity in Iraq is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

## EVENTS IN SYRIA

### STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

#### ISIS Resurges in Syria

In Syria, ISIS concentrated insurgent activity this quarter in the northeast, including the MERV, and also carried out several attacks elsewhere against Syrian regime and pro-regime forces. USCENTCOM reported that ISIS demonstrated its strongest insurgent capabilities in Dayr az Zawr province, parts of Raqqah province, and Homs province near Palmyra, where it frequently ambushed pro-regime forces.<sup>62</sup> USCENTCOM and media sources reported that in April, ISIS claimed responsibility for a car bomb in Raqqah that killed eight people, including four SDF fighters, and in May, ISIS claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing on an SDF convoy near Shaddadi in which only injuries were reported. ISIS also claimed a bombing in Manbij against an SDF command post that killed “several” people outside the headquarters of the Manbij Military Council.<sup>63</sup> In June, ISIS claimed an attack on regime forces in Dara’a province for the first time since August 2018.<sup>64</sup>

USCENTCOM said that in the Kurdish-controlled province of Hasakah, ISIS attacks against the SDF were intended to limit SDF movement and produce casualties.<sup>65</sup> In Raqqah, ISIS targeted local elites and conducted terrorist attacks and assassinations intended to prevent the establishment of capable security and governance structures.<sup>66</sup>

In terms of recruitment, USCENTCOM reported that ISIS likely will attempt to enlist new members from the large pool of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at al Hol, a sprawling camp in Hasakah province where USCENTCOM says many suspected ISIS family members reside after fleeing fighting in the MERV.<sup>67</sup> USCENTCOM described the residents of al Hol and other, smaller IDP camps as potentially susceptible to ISIS messaging, coercion, and enticement.<sup>68</sup> USCENTCOM said that transferring Syrian camp residents to “tribal guarantors”—village leaders willing to vouch for them in their villages of origin—and repatriating Iraqis and foreigners to their home countries are critical to reducing this recruiting pool.<sup>69</sup>

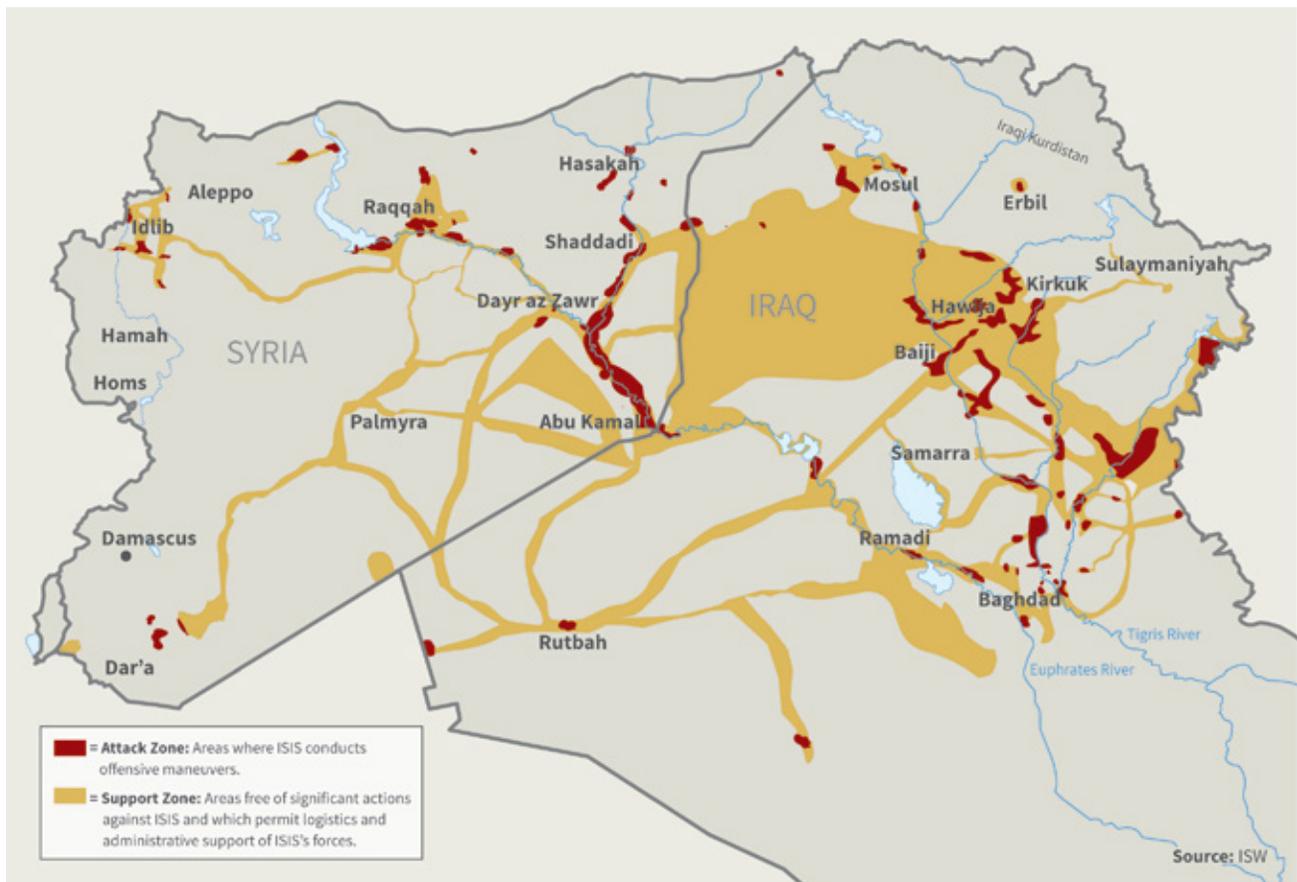
OUS(D)/ISA reported that it remains concerned that ISIS is seeking to establish safe haven in al Hol and preserve access to an already sympathetic population. It said that the challenge remains reintegrating the IDPs into their home communities where they can “disavow ISIS” or “disengage from violence,” or, in the case of children, receive an education that is different from the one they received while living under ISIS’s rule.<sup>70</sup> For more on ISIS presence and influence in Syrian IDP camps, see the section on the al Hol IDP camp on page 25.

USCENTCOM said that elsewhere in Syria, ISIS has been successful in exploiting tension between local Arab residents and the Kurdish-led SDF by portraying the SDF as an occupying force, particularly in Dayr az Zawr province, where Arab residents have protested against SDF fighters operating there.<sup>71</sup> USCENTCOM and the DoS said that ISIS’s goal is to prevent the SDF and its civil counterparts from establishing effective security and governance in the area.<sup>72</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that in its assessment, Russia, Iran, and the Syrian regime will also seek to leverage Arab grievances in Dayr az Zawr province in an attempt to turn Arab residents against the SDF.<sup>73</sup> CJTF-OIR said that while what it called “Arab-SDF fissures” remain

**USCENTCOM reported that ISIS demonstrated its strongest insurgent capabilities in Dayr az Zawr province, parts of Raqqah province, and Homs province near Palmyra, where it frequently ambushed pro-regime forces.**

Figure 1.

**ISIS Operating Areas, as of April 16, 2019**

“minor,” the Syrian regime could foment increased Arab discontent, potentially degrading the SDF.<sup>74</sup> CJTF-OIR stated that such an outcome without additional Coalition force support, “could likely result in an overall failure to maintain the mission [against ISIS] in Syria.”<sup>75</sup>

The popularity of ISIS in northeastern Syria remains difficult to gauge, according to USCENTCOM.<sup>76</sup> However, it said that ethnic differences between the Kurdish-led SDF and the majority Arab residents of the MERV, including Dayr az Zawr province, provide ISIS with an opening to retain a residual foothold. It said that ISIS could exploit other cultural differences, such as the differing gender roles between the “egalitarian SDF” and “traditional Arab society” to gain support. USCENTCOM said that ISIS also used resentment against the forced conscription of local young men into the SDF to foment popular discontent against the SDF.<sup>77</sup> According to media reports, SDF commanders did not make significant concessions to tribal leaders who met with them to address these grievances in May, and the protests were developing into a popular uprising against Kurdish hegemony in Dayr az Zawr.<sup>78</sup> For an overview of areas of Iraq and Syria where ISIS has staged attacks or finds popular support for its activities, see Figure 1.



USCENTCOM reported that ISIS began to reestablish illicit fundraising capabilities in Syria this quarter through extortion and the collection of “taxes” from residents and businesses in areas where it operates.<sup>79</sup> In USCENTCOM’s assessment, ISIS remains unlikely to replace more than a small fraction of the revenue it lost when the SDF gained control of the oil wells in northeastern Syria. However, the funds it obtains using these methods will help it to meet its expenses without depleting stockpiled cash, USCENTCOM said.<sup>80</sup>

USCENTCOM assessed that, while ISIS is resurging in Syria, the overall threat from ISIS in Syria against U.S. forces likely remained unchanged this quarter.<sup>81</sup> It said that ISIS has likely not recovered sufficient conventional capability to mount effective attacks against hardened facilities manned by U.S. military personnel, but is able to target U.S. vehicles with roadside bombs and car bombs, assassinate individual soldiers or small groups of U.S. forces, and fire or launch weapons at U.S. installations.<sup>82</sup>

More information on ISIS’s resurgence in Syria is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

## ACTIONS CONDUCTED AGAINST ISIS IN SYRIA

### SDF Operations Focus on Clearing ISIS from Population Centers

CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG that after the defeat of the ISIS “caliphate,” the SDF carried out Operation Talon Clearance this quarter, across much of northeastern Syria.<sup>83</sup> CJTF-OIR said that the operation focused on security in population centers throughout the MERV and that it “removed a large number of ISIS targets that escaped during the liberation of Baghuz, the last ISIS-held town.”<sup>84</sup>

However, CJTF-OIR also reported that the SDF initially had limited capability to fight an ISIS insurgency following the conventional campaign to destroy ISIS’s territorial holdings. CJTF-OIR said that a majority of SDF fighters were focused on the fighting in Baghuz, which ended on March 23, 2019. SDF forces based elsewhere in northeastern Syria were “lacking in personnel, equipment, and intelligence to support counterinsurgency operations” to counter ISIS fighters as they fled from the MERV to establish clandestine cells in SDF-controlled territory in northeastern Syria, according to CJTF-OIR.<sup>85</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that once the ISIS-held territory was liberated, the SDF established intelligence centers at its headquarters and used the data gathered to inform clearance

**SDF forces uncover hundreds of explosive remnants of war during back-clearance efforts across northeast Syria. (SDF Press photo)**

**ISIS began to reestablish illicit fundraising capabilities in Syria this quarter through extortion and the collection of “taxes” from residents and businesses in areas where it operates.**

operations, reduce threats from homemade bombs and unexploded ordnance, and capture or kill ISIS insurgents.<sup>86</sup> CJTF-OIR said that ISIS remains adaptable and mobile, and that as a result the SDF operated not only in northeastern Syria, but also west of the Euphrates River near Manbij to clear resurgent cells there.<sup>87</sup>

CJTF-OIR said that the SDF reported that it detained 152 ISIS members this quarter and killed another 13.<sup>88</sup> The SDF also said that it has removed more than 8,000 explosive devices from former ISIS-held territory.<sup>89</sup>

More information on SDF operations against ISIS in Syria is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

### **Shia Militias Conduct Cross-border Operations against ISIS**

The DIA reported to the DoD OIG that Iraqi Shia militias aligned with Iran participated in operations across the Iraq-Syria border this quarter, primarily to secure the border and reduce the ability of ISIS fighters in Syria to cross into Iraq.<sup>90</sup> The DIA said that Iran-aligned Iraqi militias joined pro-Syrian regime forces in a number of cross-border operations from al Qaim in Iraq and Abu Kamal in Syria.<sup>91</sup> The DIA reported that these Iraqi militias have probably participated in operations in Syria west of the Euphrates River as well.<sup>92</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that due to limited ISF forces and the length of the Iraq-Syria border, ISIS has been able to identify routes where it can cross freely between countries.<sup>93</sup> Even though the ISF has closed the border at al Qaim and elsewhere, there are hundreds of miles of unsecured areas and berms that ISIS has used to move fighters and materiel into Iraq.<sup>94</sup> CJTF-OIR said that ISIS likely moves in small groups of 20 or fewer to reduce detection and limit loss of personnel if captured.<sup>95</sup>

CJTF-OIR said that the ISF did not plan or conduct any deliberate operations along the Iraq-Syria border this quarter, but daily reports coming primarily from the 15<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division in northwestern Ninewa province often include arrests for illegal border crossing and smuggling. CJTF-OIR said that it identified and informed the ISF of some gaps in border coverage.<sup>96</sup>

Additional information on Iraqi Shia militia activity in Syria is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

### **SDF Struggles to Detain Thousands of ISIS Fighters**

OUSD(P)/ISA reported that the SDF continued to hold about 10,000 ISIS fighters in detention centers in northeastern Syria this quarter. Of these, approximately 2,000 are foreigners from more than 50 countries.<sup>97</sup> The remaining 8,000 are Iraqi and Syrian.<sup>98</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG that the SDF does not have the capability to indefinitely detain thousands of ISIS fighters in what it described as “prisons/pop-up prisons.”<sup>99</sup> The United States has repeatedly called on countries whose citizens are detained in Syria to repatriate them to stand trial in their countries of origin.<sup>100</sup> However, as of the end of the quarter, only six countries in addition to the United States and Iraq had publicly agreed to repatriate suspected ISIS fighters, according to OUSD(P)/ISA and the DoS.<sup>101</sup> According

to media reports, France stated last quarter that it would repatriate the estimated 450 French citizens being held by the SDF on a “case-by-case” basis.<sup>102</sup>

According to media reports, about 800 of the 2,000 foreign fighters in SDF custody are believed to be from European nations.<sup>103</sup> The rest are mainly from former republics of the Soviet Union; the Middle East and North Africa; and South and Southeast Asia.<sup>104</sup> Despite urging by the DoS and the United Nations, most of these countries remain reluctant to repatriate their citizens held in Syria because of a range of legal, security, and political hurdles.<sup>105</sup> OUSD(P)/ISA reported that the United States and Coalition nations engage in quarterly “Foreign Terrorist Fighter Working Group” meetings to discuss a solution to this problem.<sup>106</sup>

To alleviate pressure on the SDF, the Iraqi government has accepted several hundred Iraqi ISIS fighters, 14 Frenchmen, and other foreign ISIS fighters detained in Syria according to media reports.<sup>107</sup> In May, the French citizens were tried and at least seven sentenced to death in an Iraqi court, despite requested repatriation to France and allegations of confessions extracted by torture.<sup>108</sup>

According to media reports, Iraqi Prime Minister Abd al-Mahdi said in June that his country would be willing to prosecute more foreign ISIS fighters held by the SDF, and that talks were ongoing between the SDF and the Iraqi government to transfer additional foreign fighters to Iraq.<sup>109</sup>

Iraq has also tried ISIS fighters, including foreigners, captured in Iraq. According to media reports, Iraqi courts have sentenced 514 foreign ISIS fighters since the beginning of 2018, following trials that UN officials said did not provide adequate due process.<sup>110</sup> The DoS echoed these concerns, telling the DoS OIG that the Iraqi government has conducted rushed trials of non-Iraqi women and children over the age of eight on charges of illegal entry into the country and membership in or assistance to ISIS. Dozens of the women have received death sentences, according to the DoS.<sup>111</sup>

For more on allegations of harsh conditions and inadequate due process for ISIS suspects being held in Iraq, see the section on human rights on page 53 of this report.

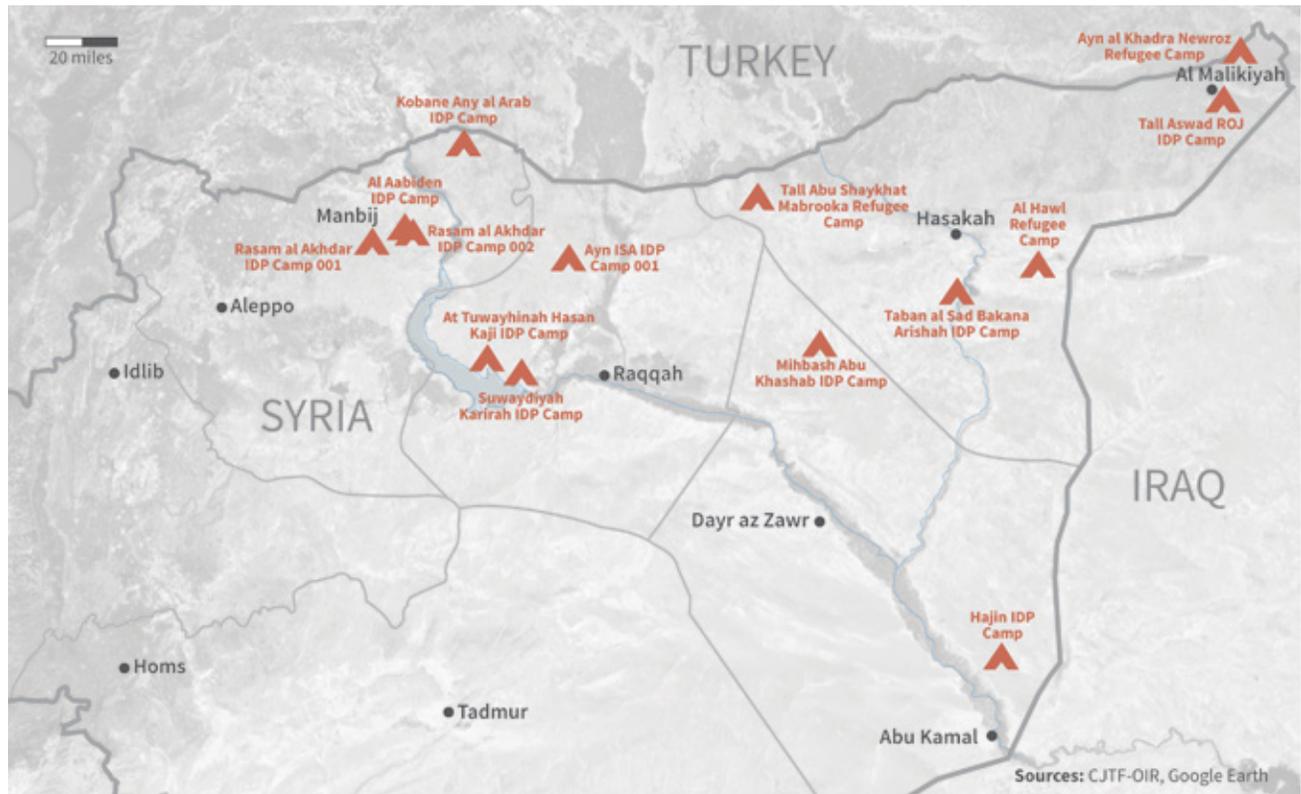
More information on SDF detention centers in Syria is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

### **SDF’s Ability to Secure Camp Filled with ISIS Supporters Is “Minimal”**

In addition to securing detained ISIS fighters, the SDF also provides security at the perimeters of a number of IDP camps in Syria, including al Hol. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights estimates that 11,000 of al Hol’s estimated 70,000 residents are family members of foreign ISIS fighters. It said that of the 11,000, 27 percent were estimated to be women and 67 percent were children under the age of 12.<sup>112</sup>

CJTF-OIR told the DoD OIG that it estimates that 45,000 “ISIS supporters” reside at the camp. CJTF-OIR stated that the “uncontested spread” of ISIS’s ideology in the camp reflects the SDF’s inability to provide more than minimal security around the camp’s perimeters, which the DoS

Figure 2.

**SDF-Supported IDP Camps**

said was due to the “humanitarian nature of the camp.”<sup>113</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that it provides security support to SDF elements that secure the perimeter of the al Hol camp through the CTEF.<sup>114</sup> This support includes renovation materials, generators, lights, and security equipment including cameras and biometric enrollment gear.<sup>115</sup> However, CJTF-OIR reported that due to the drawdown of U.S. forces in Syria, it lacks resources to track the humanitarian situation in the camp.<sup>116</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that the SDF and the Kurdish internal police, known as the Asayish, maintain perimeter security at the al Hol camp and a few others, however, most of the 16 IDP camps in northeastern Syria have little to no SDF presence and a few are thought to have closed.<sup>117</sup> CJTF-OIR said that the Asayish controls access to the camps and that its largest units are posted at al Hol, Roj, and Ain Issa IDP camps.<sup>118</sup> CJTF-OIR said there have been reports of Asayish and Kurdish Women’s Protection Units (YPJ)—female Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG)—detaining ISIS-affiliated family members at al Hol in response to security threats or as part of the ongoing efforts to repatriate ISIS wives and children to their countries of origin.<sup>119</sup> For an overview of IDP camps in Syria, see Figure 2.

More information on ISIS’s presence in IDP camps in Syria is provided in the classified appendix to this report.

## ROLE OF THIRD PARTIES IN SYRIA

### Despite Hostilities with Turkey, Kurdish Elements of the SDF Continue Counter-ISIS Fight

In northern Syria, tension continued this quarter between Turkey and Kurdish elements of the U.S.-backed SDF. CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG that numerous skirmishes between the forces occurred, including weapons fire across the Syrian-Turkish border.<sup>120</sup> As reported by CJTF-OIR, the SDF and the Manbij Military Council (MMC) refrained from conducting operations along Syria's border with Turkey "to prevent escalation of tensions or misinterpretations of intent that could lead to armed conflict [with Turkey] along the border."<sup>121</sup>

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan again threatened to launch unilateral Turkish operations in Syria east of the Euphrates River, possibly with Russian consent, according to news reports.<sup>122</sup> According to these news reports, Turkey has threatened since 2015 to conduct a unilateral military operation to target the YPG, the main fighting force in the SDF.<sup>123</sup> Turkey considers the YPG a subordinate component of a U.S.-designated terror group, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been waging an armed insurgency in Turkey for more than 30 years.<sup>124</sup>

Citing press reporting and analysis from a Turkish think tank, the DIA reported that Turkey considers the YPG's territorial and political control in northern Syria a threat to Turkey because, in Turkey's view, YPG control enables it to attack Turkish forces in Syria and serves as a platform for PKK activities inside Turkey.<sup>125</sup> In Turkey's view, a Kurdish force could advance westward across the Euphrates River, join with forces in other Kurdish-governed enclaves, and support the PKK's violent insurgency, which, according to the Congressional Research Service, already operates from safe havens in Syria and Iraq.<sup>126</sup>

To prevent this outcome, Turkey has pressed for the creation of a 20-mile-wide buffer zone in Syria along the Turkish border. Citing press reports, the DIA reported to the DoD OIG that U.S. and Turkish officials continued negotiations this quarter over the creation of the zone, but that Turkey continued to insist that its forces control it.<sup>127</sup> OUSD(P)/ISA reported that the United States conducted discussions with Turkish authorities regarding the possibility of creating the zone.<sup>128</sup>

More information on Turkey's activity in Syria is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

### U.S. Troops Conduct Joint Patrols with Turkish Troops near Manbij

The DoD also continued to conduct U.S.-Turkish combined joint patrols along a demarcation line that separates Turkish-backed forces from territory held by the Kurdish-led SDF near the northern Syrian town of Manbij.

The patrols, which began in November 2018, are part of the Manbij Roadmap, a June 2018 agreement between the United States and Turkey that seeks to allay Turkish concerns by

**Amid increased tension with the United States this quarter, Iran continued operations in Syria in support of the Assad regime.**

removing YPG elements of the SDF from Manbij.<sup>129</sup> The DoS reported that the Manbij Roadmap includes four primary elements:

- Jointly maintain security on the demarcation line, including combined patrols with uniformed Turkish, U.S., and Coalition military forces;
- Remove the YPG and the Democratic Union Party from Manbij and from the city’s security and political leadership, respectively;
- Ensure mutually accepted and vetted security and governing bodies;
- Facilitate the safe and voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons to Manbij.<sup>130</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that as of early June, U.S. forces had conducted nine joint patrols with their Turkish counterparts this quarter.<sup>131</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that the soldiers on patrol conducted biometric enrollments of suspected ISIS facilitators and uncovered an ISIS smuggling safe house, weapons, and facilities.<sup>132</sup>

Additionally, CJTF-OIR reported that the U.S. military also conducted “reassurance patrols” on a near-daily basis throughout the quarter.<sup>133</sup> Citing Turkish officials, the DIA said elements of the Roadmap other than the patrols have yet to be fully implemented. However, the DoS reported to the DoS OIG this quarter that joint vetting was underway. Turkey has publicly criticized the United States for implementing the Roadmap too slowly and failing to remove the YPG from Manbij, according to Turkish press reporting.<sup>134</sup>

Additional information on the effectiveness of the joint U.S.-Turkish patrols, the Manbij Military Council, and the proposed “safe zone” is contained in the classified appendix.

### **Turkish and Kurdish Forces Wage Low-level Conflict in Afrin**

Citing press reports, the DIA reported to the DoD OIG that Turkish forces continued to fight Syrian Kurdish forces in the northwestern Syrian enclave of Afrin in Aleppo province.<sup>135</sup> The conflict between Turkish and Turkish-backed forces and Syrian Kurdish forces in Afrin, a traditionally Kurdish enclave, is not part of OIR, although fighting there has twice diverted the attention of Kurdish elements of the SDF to such an extent that fighting against ISIS in the MERV was temporarily suspended. Turkish forces have occupied Afrin since launching an operation to clear the enclave of YPG fighters in January 2018, and Turkey continues to back Syrian opposition forces operating there.<sup>136</sup>

### **Amid Heightened Tensions, U.S. Forces Closely Monitor Iranian Activity in Syria**

Amid increased tension with the United States this quarter, Iran continued operations in Syria in support of the Assad regime. Open source analysts estimate that Iran has deployed up to 3,000 members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to Syria and commands a network of Shia foreign fighters from Lebanese Hezbollah and various militias manned by Iraqis, Afghans, and Pakistanis.<sup>137</sup> Reports indicate that more than 100,000 Shia fighters trained and funded by Iran are operating in Syria and have improved their capabilities to launch missiles and drones.<sup>138</sup>

The DIA reported that among the militias that Iran supports in Syria, Iraqi Shia militias maintain a presence primarily in eastern parts of the country and participate in cross-border operations against ISIS around the Abu Kamal area and in Syrian regime-held territory on the western banks of the Euphrates River.<sup>139</sup> The Iraqi militias and others also operate around the At Tanf Garrison, a desert outpost near the Jordanian border occupied by U.S. troops.<sup>140</sup>

USCENTCOM reported to the DoD OIG that despite the presence of these militias, there was no specific increase in threats to U.S. forces in Syria from Iranian-backed forces this quarter, and that no aggressive actions by these forces were identified around At Tanf.<sup>141</sup> However, CJTF-OIR reported that Iran, along with Russia and the Syrian regime, sought to leverage Arab grievances in Dayr az Zawr province, where violent protests erupted this quarter over popular discontent with SDF management.<sup>142</sup> According to media reports, Iranian forces in the province distributed food and household items, offered scholarships to study in Iran, and took control of public services in an attempt to win influence.<sup>143</sup>

The United States has sought the removal of Iranian and Iranian-proxy militias from Syria as part of broader goals to defeat ISIS and bring an end to Syria's 8-year civil war.<sup>144</sup> However, Iran showed no signs of decreasing its activities in Syria this quarter, and in some instances increased its presence. In April, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani ordered the IRGC to undertake reconstruction efforts in Syria, according to news reports.<sup>145</sup>

DoS officials and open sources stated that one of Iran's core interests in eastern Syria is to secure a land route to transport heavy weapons and manpower from Iran to Lebanon.<sup>146</sup> According to news reports, Iranian-aligned militias are positioned around Abu Kamal and along a nearby highway that runs through the Syrian Desert.<sup>147</sup> The border crossing at At Tanf has also been identified as a point of strategic interest to Iran for this purpose, possibly because it is located on a route from Iraq to Syria that does not pass through SDF-held Abu Kamal and the MERV.<sup>148</sup>

More information on Iranian activity in Syria is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

## Russia Blocks Aid, Blames United States in Disinformation Campaign

Russia continued this quarter to prevent humanitarian assistance from reaching Syrians stranded at the Rukban settlement, a desert encampment located near the At Tanf Garrison near the Jordanian and Iraqi borders. Described by the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) as "a no man's land," Rukban has very few services, no basic health care, and very limited access to clean water. Syrian families began arriving at the camp in late 2015, hoping to cross to safety in Jordan. They have been trapped in the settlement since Jordan closed its border there in 2016.<sup>149</sup>

USCENTCOM reported that Russia has halted aid to the settlement to undermine the legitimacy of U.S. forces stationed at the garrison by creating poor humanitarian conditions and then orchestrating a disinformation campaign to blame the United States for the dire state of the camp. USCENTCOM said that Russia hoped to use controversy over Rukban to force U.S. troops to leave.<sup>150</sup>

**Russia continued this quarter to prevent humanitarian assistance from reaching Syrians stranded at the Rukban settlement, a desert encampment located near the At Tanf Garrison near the Jordanian and Iraqi borders.**

**Between March and May 2019, nearly 14,300 people, including an estimated 5,900 children, left Rukban for five shelters in areas of Homs province controlled by the Syrian regime.**

CJTF-OIR said that camp residents benefit from the security patrols conducted in the area by the U.S.-backed Mughawir al Thawra (MaT), a 300-strong Syrian militia.<sup>151</sup> The militia, however, was not responsible for the security of the camp, according to CJTF-OIR. Camp residents have established an unofficial police force and other armed groups, some that were historically supported by Jordan, to provide security within the settlement, CJTF-OIR said.<sup>152</sup>

CJTF-OIR said that Russia has claimed that the U.S. troop presence at At Tanf made it impossible for the Syrian regime to deliver aid to Rukban.<sup>153</sup> Russian propaganda also claimed that the United States is harboring “ISIS terrorists” in the camp, and that any aid provided to Rukban would thus support ISIS, according to CJTF-OIR.<sup>154</sup> Russian officials charge that Rukban residents are “hostages” and claim that 95 percent of camp residents want to leave.<sup>155</sup> The Russians have also threatened the men from the camp with forced enrollment into the Syrian army unless they leave the area, CJTF-OIR said.<sup>156</sup>

Between March and May 2019, nearly 14,300 people, including an estimated 5,900 children, left Rukban for five shelters in areas of Homs province controlled by the Syrian regime.<sup>157</sup> According to USAID, the number of weekly departures from Rukban decreased at the end of May due to a lack of vehicles and the high cost of transportation out of the settlement. However, humanitarian aid organizations said they expect departures to continue due to persistent adverse humanitarian conditions in the settlement.<sup>158</sup>

The DoS continued this quarter to call for regular, sustained humanitarian access to Rukban, and for displaced people to depart in a safe, voluntary, and dignified manner if they wish to do so, and is pursuing diplomatic avenues to promote these outcomes.<sup>159</sup>

Additional information on Russian activity in Rukban is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

## CAPACITY BUILDING OF PARTNER FORCES

### Syrian Partner Forces Transition to Post-combat Operations

With the territorial defeat of ISIS in Syria and the shift toward a counterinsurgency campaign, the composition of the Syrian partner forces is evolving. According to CJTF-OIR, its plan is to help increase the overall partner force size by 10 percent and have the new forces distributed among all partner components.<sup>160</sup>

As of this quarter, there were three main components of the Syrian partner forces and a few smaller elements. The largest combat force is the SDF, which consists primarily of the Syrian Arab Coalition (SAC) and the YPG. According to CJTF-OIR, the SDF is a “broad-spectrum security apparatus” that conducts “counterinsurgency operations, [local] patrols, checkpoint operations, detention operations, and clearance patrols.”<sup>161</sup>

The second partner force is the Provincial Internal Security Forces (PRISF), composed of fighters recruited from the provinces where they are based. PRISF units conduct operations similar to the SDF at the provincial level—akin to the U.S. National Guard—according to CJTF-OIR. In addition, they “provide a layer of intelligence and more specialized units capable of conducting targeting operations and providing additional resources to SDF operations.”<sup>162</sup>

The third main group of partner forces is referred to as the Internal Security Forces (InSF), which operate as a wide-area security force in areas cleared of ISIS. The InSF includes units such as the Raqqah Internal Security Force, Manbij Internal Security Force, and Dayr az Zawr Internal Security Force.<sup>163</sup> These forces are drawn from the local communities and reflect the ethnic composition of the areas where they are based.<sup>164</sup>

In addition to these three groups, there are separate, smaller entities, such as the MaT and counterterrorism forces that receive training and support from the Coalition.<sup>165</sup>

The end strength for these main partner forces this quarter was around 100,000.<sup>166</sup> According to CJTF-OIR, the desired end strength is 110,000, consisting of: 30,000 SDF, 45,000 PRISF, and 35,000 InSF. CJTF-OIR stated that achieving this force distribution would require a reduction in SDF forces, since they are trained largely for conventional combat and the growing need is for more PRISF and InSF counterinsurgency and hold forces.<sup>167</sup>

This quarter, CJTF-OIR said that the SDF reported 134 casualties: 31 killed and 103 wounded.<sup>168</sup> Partner force recruitment this quarter was estimated at 1,600.<sup>169</sup>

This quarter, CJTF-OIR reported that the Coalition provided support to the same partner forces that were receiving support prior to the drawdown of U.S. forces. CJTF-OIR said that it supplied the SDF and various InSF forces with items and equipment, including AK-47 rifles, ammunition, vehicles, medical supplies, area security materials, organizational clothing, and individual equipment.<sup>170</sup>



**Syrian partner forces fires their AK-47 Kalashnikov rifles during advanced marksmanship training with Coalition force instructors. (U.S. Army photo)**

Table 2.

**Cost of Training Provided to Vetted Syrian Opposition Groups**

Group	As of June 14, 2019	YTD Since October 2018
InSF	\$3,333,247.00	\$35,132,763.29
SDF	\$2,409,420.33	\$42,200,065.32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,742,667.33</b>	<b>\$77,323,828.61</b>

Table 3.

**Cost of Weapons and Other Material Provided to Vetted Syrian Opposition Groups**

BIN	Obligated Q3	Amount Obligated Cumulative*
Weapons, Ammo, Equipment	\$22,583,978	\$276,662,837
Base Life Support	\$162,947	\$15,804,798
Transportation, Staging	\$21,772,888	\$87,943,780
Operational Sust/Emerging Costs	\$35,984,185	\$95,778,306
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$80,503,998</b>	<b>\$476,189,721</b>

\*Cumulative totals are for CTEF program only and does not include STEF data or funds held at DSCA

Table 4.

**Stipends Provided to Vetted Syrian Opposition Groups**

Group	Obligated Q2	Program Total Obligated
1st Eng BDE		\$103,500
MMC	\$404,300	\$7,057,540
DMC	\$262,000	\$4,000,400
RISF	\$579,500	\$7,568,330
5th ENG RMCO	\$10,950	\$263,684
DISF	\$80,600	\$458,200
51st BDE		\$5,200,000
LaH		\$8,821,150
LaM		\$5,346,800
VSOLT		\$30,950
MaT	\$433,900	\$3,665,650
SHQ		\$439,900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,771,250</b>	<b>\$42,956,104</b>

Source: CJTF-OIR

For a breakdown of support provided to Syrian Partner Forces, also referred to as Vetted Syrian Opposition, see Tables 2-4.

CJTF-OIR also said that the primary purpose of all support to the SDF was to continue the fight against ISIS forces in the MERV. CJTF-OIR reported that force generation and training for wide-area security remained the primary purpose of support for the SAC, the Raqqah Civil Council, and the Raqqah Internal Security Force and PRISF. CJTF-OIR said the training was intended to enable these forces to prevent the resurgence of ISIS in previously cleared areas of northeastern Syria.<sup>171</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG that it provided Syria Train and Equip Fund (STEF) support to the SDF and InSF to develop their capability to conduct counterinsurgency operations, prison security operations, and counter-improvised explosive device and unexploded ordnance operations. CJTF-OIR reported that district/regional fusion cells track counterinsurgency operations through metrics including ISIS personnel captured and killed and equipment seized during operations against ISIS. CJTF-OIR reported that metrics to



**Members of the SDF stand in formation at Omar Academy, Dayr az Zawr, Syria. (U.S. Army photo)**

track prison security operations include “guard forces trained, prison population to guard ratios, and any issues caused by detained personnel in prisons.”<sup>172</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that SDF capabilities to fight an ISIS insurgency after the liberation of Baghuz were “initially limited.” With a majority of the SDF focused in Baghuz, CJTF-OIR reported that many of the local forces lacked personnel, equipment, and intelligence to support counterinsurgency operations as ISIS fighters fled ISIS-held territory to establish clandestine cells. CJTF-OIR said that the SDF frequently requested counterinsurgency training, equipment, and assistance from U.S. and Coalition forces this quarter.<sup>173</sup>

According to CJTF-OIR, the SDF this quarter was capable of unassisted raids against lower risk targets and advisor-assisted raids for higher risk targets. Additionally, SDF forces are tasked to guard and manage prisons for the thousands of ISIS fighters in captivity. CJTF-OIR reported that the SDF is short on trained prison staff, and in need of international support to manage the challenge of securing the al Hol IDP camp in particular.<sup>174</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that the goal for the Train, Advise, Assist, and Equip support to the SDF is to “help the SDF gain the skills and experience necessary to become self-sufficient while reducing the risk to stability in the region caused by ISIS.” CJTF-OIR reported that it measures progress “in the reduction of ISIS presence and attacks in northeast Syria and the skill of the partner forces.”<sup>175</sup>

According to CJTF-OIR, the SAC “has broad capabilities that range from waging conventional combat to local policing.” CJTF-OIR reported that the SAC lacks the quantity of personnel and equipment “necessary for success.”<sup>176</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that the desired end state for the SAC and metrics to track progress are the same as for the rest of the SDF.<sup>177</sup>

More information about training, equipping, and other support provided to vetted Syrian opposition groups is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

## Syria Civil War: Fighting Escalates as Peace Efforts Stall

The United States reiterated this quarter its support for the UN-led peace process to resolve the Syrian civil war, now in its 8th year. In a DoS cable sent in May 2019, the Special Representative for Syria Engagement and Special Envoy to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, Ambassador James Jeffrey, said that “only a political solution can end this conflict” through a “nationwide ceasefire; the establishment of a credible, inclusive, non-sectarian governance that respects the rights of the Syrian people; constitutional revision; and free and fair elections.”<sup>178</sup>

Since 2015, the United States has backed the UN-led peace process, which is guided by UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and includes the elements for a solution to the conflict that Ambassador Jeffrey named in the cable. That process, however, has not gained traction, in part due to the existence of a second negotiating track organized by Russia, Turkey, and Iran, known as the Astana Process. The United States does not participate in the Astana Process.<sup>179</sup>

Much of the UN-led effort has centered on the creation of a new Syrian constitution in preparation for free and fair elections.<sup>180</sup> The United States and European Union have also implemented economic sanctions on Syria, Iran, and the Lebanese Hezbollah in an effort to pressure the Syrian regime to end the war and agree to elections.<sup>181</sup> According to Ambassador Jeffrey, the regime is “under crushing U.S. and [European Union] imposed economic sanctions, complemented by...additional sanctions against Iran and Hezbollah. It faces strong UN Security Council demands for political change and is subject to a boycott on reconstruction assistance and [U.S.] diplomatic recognition, including any return to the Arab League.”<sup>182</sup>

In addition to the UN-led process, the United States participates in a diplomatic effort, known as the “Small Group on Syria,” with the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan. This group convened this quarter to discuss the possibility of meeting with members of the Astana Process.<sup>183</sup>

Separately, the UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen met in April with members of the Syrian regime and Syrian opposition leaders and announced that he had made “serious progress” on establishing a 150-member constitutional committee, consisting of the Syrian regime, civil society, and opposition groups, to reform Syria’s constitution.<sup>184</sup> The Syrian regime opposes the creation of the committee because it would include opposition forces backed by Turkey.<sup>185</sup> In February 2019, Syrian President Bashar al Assad said that his country would not negotiate over the constitution.<sup>186</sup>

### **SYRIAN REGIME LAUNCHES LIMITED OFFENSIVE IN OPPOSITION-HELD IDLIB**

On April 30, the Syrian regime, backed by Russian airpower, launched an aerial and ground offensive against rebel-held areas in northwest Syria, where more than 3 million people live.<sup>187</sup> The offensive contravened a September 2018 Idlib ceasefire, known as the Sochi agreement, reached between Russia and Turkey, which called for the establishment of a 15-20 kilometer buffer zone between rebels and the regime.<sup>188</sup> Following weeks of fighting, Syrian regime

*(continued on next page)*

## Syria Civil War: Fighting Escalates as Peace Efforts Stall

*(continued from previous page)*

fighters recaptured approximately 1 percent of northwest Syria and lost almost the same, according to nongovernmental organization reports cited by the media.<sup>189</sup>

The regime's offensive lacked Iranian ground support and was also thwarted by Turkey's provision of assistance to opposition groups. According to the Middle East Institute, the Syrian-Russian alliance has shifted to a strategy of collective punishment in Idlib by massively escalating aerial and artillery bombardment without discriminating between military and civilian targets.<sup>190</sup> Since May, the offensive has killed 420 civilians and displaced more than 400,000.<sup>191</sup> Syrian regime and Russian airstrikes have also killed two employees of USAID implementers.<sup>192</sup> The United States called for an immediate ceasefire in Idlib at a UN Security Council session on May 29.

In testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee in May, Ambassador Jeffrey said that the United States had repeatedly called on Russia to halt the offensive in Idlib.<sup>193</sup> However, as of the end of the quarter, the fighting in Idlib was continuing, and on June 28, a Syrian human rights organization said that the Syrian regime began bombing parts of Hamah province, another area held by Syrian opposition groups located just south of Idlib.<sup>194</sup>

The DoS stated in a June 2019 briefing paper that the U.S. Government is gravely concerned that, absent an immediate and full return by all parties to the 2018 Sochi Agreement ceasefire line and immediate restoration of the de-escalation agreements, the humanitarian conditions in Idlib and northwest Syria could soon surpass the international community's capacity to provide assistance.<sup>195</sup>

The humanitarian consequences of the fighting in Idlib are discussed in more detail in the Humanitarian Assistance section on page 38.

## STABILIZATION

### Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Council Faces Mounting Discontent in Arab-majority Areas in Northeast Syria

According to the DoS, establishing governance and delivering services in liberated parts of Syria are ongoing challenges exacerbated by sectarian, tribal, and ethnic differences. Since being liberated from ISIS, areas of Dayr az Zawr province have been governed by the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), the civilian counterpart of the SDF. The SDC is in turn controlled by the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), according to the DoS.<sup>196</sup>

Protests have broken out in Dayr az Zawr province, the oil-rich region where Arab residents complain of lack of services, discrimination, forcible conscription, and a failure to release prisoners.<sup>197</sup> Residents also protested the YPG's sale of crude oil to the Syrian regime, which they said robs them of their wealth and causes local shortages.<sup>198</sup>

The DoS annual human rights report noted that, while the SDF and SDC generally facilitated the safe and voluntary return of IDPs to their areas of origin in Dayr az Zawr and Raqqah provinces, allegations were raised that the SDC and members of the Kurdish Autonomous Administration operating in these provinces confiscated the identification cards of IDPs in camps and prevented their freedom of movement.<sup>199</sup>

Media reports have described “deadly unrest” between Arab civilians and Kurdish leadership in the province.<sup>200</sup> One analyst quoted in the media warned that protests could develop into a popular uprising.<sup>201</sup>

Additional information on SDF activity and Arab protests in Dayr az Zawr province is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

### **The DoS’s START Forward Program Has Not Yet Resumed in Syria**

The DoS and USAID reported that they continued this quarter to undertake stabilization initiatives that they said would support the enduring defeat of ISIS and al Qaeda and ensure that these organizations do not resurface in a new form. The DoS stated that contingent on adequate security and funding, it plans to continue stabilization assistance for the foreseeable future despite the reduction in U.S. forces in Syria.<sup>202</sup>

Stabilization planning for liberated areas in northeastern Syria calls for assistance to be programmed along four major lines of effort:

- Creating a secure environment through training and the removal of explosive remnants of war;
- Promoting representative local governance and civil society;
- Rehabilitating basic infrastructure;
- Promoting economic growth and development.

According to the DoS, assistance programs do not include reconstruction or nation-building components.<sup>203</sup>

The DoS’s Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) implements stabilization programs to “restore basic services and provide support to local government and civil society efforts...to prevent the return of ISIS.”<sup>204</sup> According to the DoS, the programming is “aimed at combating extremism and denying ISIS and other terrorist organizations the fertile territory from which they once drew recruits.”<sup>205</sup> Among its programs, START supports six Syrian radio stations, one satellite TV station, and one online platform to allow Syrians to project moderate voices and provide trusted information, including news and current affairs.<sup>206</sup>

According to the DoS, START and the Southern Syria Assistance Platform are interagency assistance coordination platforms based in Turkey and Jordan, respectively. Members of these teams, as well as DoS and USAID personnel and contractors located elsewhere, make up the majority of those deployed into Syria, referred to as START Forward.<sup>207</sup> START Forward staff members have visited partner offices and worked with civil councils, civil society organizations, and other local actors in Syria to support and coordinate humanitarian and stabilization assistance activities.<sup>208</sup>

Following President Trump’s December 2018 announcement of plans to withdraw U.S. forces from Syria, all START Forward staff were evacuated from Syria.<sup>209</sup> According to USAID, the DoS is planning to resume START Forward operations with some changes to enhance security, and to maintain staff in-country when operations restart.<sup>210</sup>

Additional information on the START Forward program is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

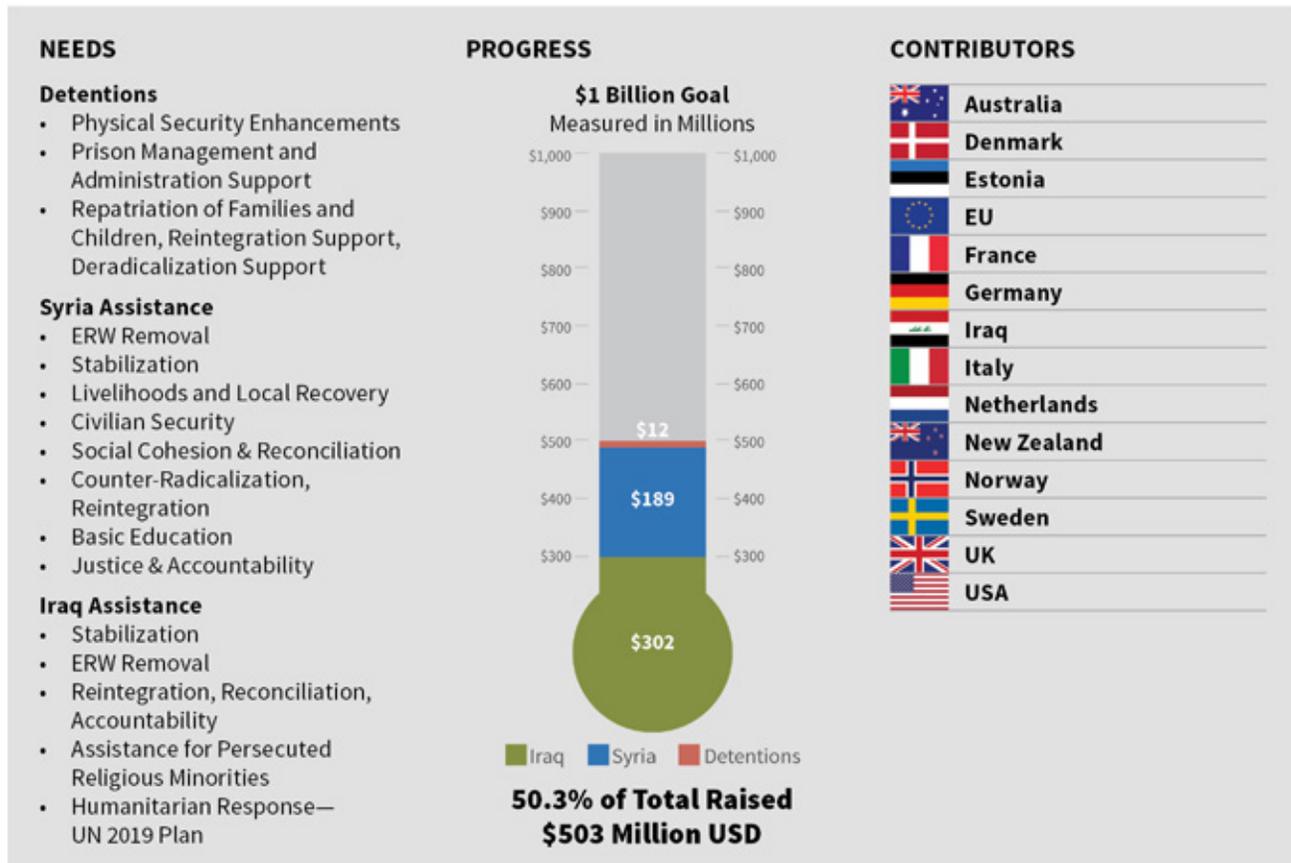
### The United States Secures Contributions and Pledges for Stabilization Efforts in Syria

From April 2018 to December 2018, the U.S. Government secured more than \$325 million in contributions and pledges from 15 Coalition partners to support stabilization and early recovery initiatives in areas liberated from ISIS in Syria. These contributions include \$100 million from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and \$50 million from the United Arab Emirates.<sup>211</sup> The United States has limited its stabilization funds for Syria for use only in areas liberated in Coalition-backed military operations.<sup>212</sup>

Some Coalition partners are funding bilateral programs directly, while others are providing resources to U.S.-implemented programs. Some funds from other countries come with additional restrictions on the use for those funds, for example the funds may be earmarked

Figure 3.

D-ISIS Coalition 2019 Pledge Drive-Status Update, as of June 30, 2019



for de-mining or for implementation through community-based organizations rather than through local governance institutions.<sup>213</sup>

In June, as part of the broader effort to encourage Coalition partners to fund stabilization and security-related assistance in Iraq and Syria, the Political Directors from the Coalition Small Group of 28 Coalition nations announced pledges for 2019 from 14 partners totaling more than \$189 million for Syria and \$302 million for Iraq.<sup>214</sup>

For an overview of the status of the D-ISIS Coalition 2019 pledge drive, see Figure 3.

The pledge drive seeks additional assistance to detain captured ISIS members in areas of Iraq and Syria liberated by Coalition-backed military operations. This includes physical security enhancements; prison management and administration support; repatriation of families and children; and reintegration and de-radicalization support.<sup>215</sup>

For Syria, the needs include funding to supplement the humanitarian response in al Hol and other areas of northeast Syria.<sup>216</sup>

For Iraq, contributions are intended to fund a variety of programs and efforts: the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Funding Facility for Stabilization; explosive remnants of war removal through international humanitarian mine action groups, DoS-funded contract mechanisms, and the UN Mine Action Service; reintegration, reconciliation, and accountability through the UN Response and Recovery Plan and the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL; assistance for persecuted minorities; and other needs set out in the 2019 UN Humanitarian Response Plan.<sup>217</sup>

However, the DoS reported to the DoS OIG that the United States has “a significant way to go if we are to ensure our military gains are accompanied and cemented by a robust stabilization response,” and stated that these pledges are important in achieving that objective.<sup>218</sup>

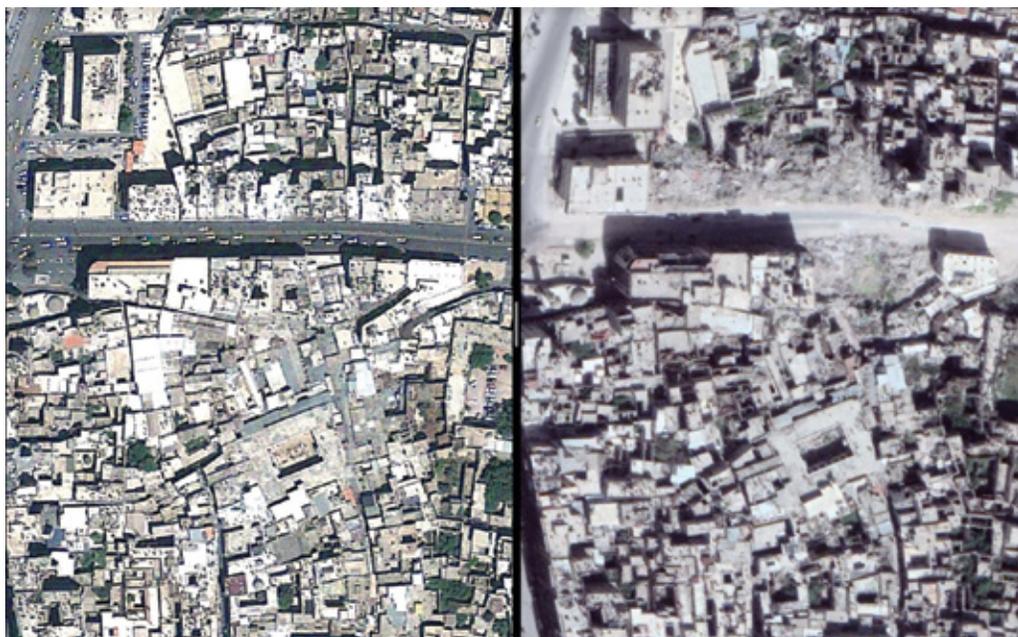
### **Syrian Regime Struggles to Restore Critical State Functions**

Although the Syrian regime has regained control over most of Syria's territory, it is struggling to restore critical state functions. According to a think tank analysis, the Syrian regime lacks the resources and capacity to restore services in some of the most devastated areas under its control. The regime is focusing on limited “quick fixes” rather than “strategic projects to repair infrastructure,” according to the analysis.<sup>219</sup> Syrians in regime-held areas complain of severe fuel shortages and long lines for basic necessities, such as bottles of cooking gas.<sup>220</sup> Although Russia provided extensive military support to the Syrian regime, it has not offered to rebuild destroyed cities.

The United States and the European Union have stated that they cannot provide assistance for reconstruction unless there is a political transition.<sup>221</sup> According to analysis of damage data obtained through satellite imagery reported by USAID's GeoCenter, in some cities and towns across Syria nearly all buildings have been entirely destroyed, while others show severe or moderate damage to structures.<sup>222</sup> An example of the destruction is provided in Figure 4 on page 38.

Figure 4.

**Before and after images of Hamah, Syria, May 2, 2019 and June 30, 2019**



Source: USAID GeoCenter

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

### UN Leadership for Whole of Syria Humanitarian Response in Flux

The United Nations has designated two humanitarian coordinators to lead the UN Syria response. One position, in Damascus, coordinates aid to areas held by the regime. This position has been vacant since December 2018 pending regime approval of the UN's nominee. The second, based in Amman, Jordan, coordinates deliveries across international borders to areas under opposition control, but, according to media reports, may face elimination.<sup>223</sup>

Consolidating all Syria humanitarian assistance for collection and delivery through Damascus would increase existing challenges, according to USAID.<sup>224</sup> UN agencies operating in Damascus have had challenges moving aid convoys without the Syrian regime's permission, and in 2018 the Syrian regime approved only half of the UN's requests for humanitarian assistance deliveries originating from Damascus.<sup>225</sup> Removing the senior humanitarian coordinator outside of Damascus for areas beyond regime control, where approximately 4.5 million Syrians live, could undermine the UN's mission to deliver aid to all areas of the country, according to USAID OIG.<sup>226</sup>

As of late June, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator told donors and NGOs that he intended to keep the existing leadership structure in place and that he recognized the importance of separate leadership roles to address humanitarian needs separately for areas under Syrian regime control and areas outside of that control.<sup>227</sup>

**The United Nations reported supplying Russian officials with the coordinates of hospitals in the region in hopes of preventing strikes, but eight of those facilities were subsequently hit.**

## **Syrian Regime’s Assault on Idlib Spurs Humanitarian Crisis**

According to the United Nations and news reports, the Syrian regime’s air and ground assault on opposition-held areas of northwestern Syria has caused more than 300,000 civilians to flee towards the Turkish border, which remains closed.<sup>228</sup> According to USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), many of the displaced are living in open areas and shared spaces, without access to water or sanitation facilities. Health care needs have also increased due to temporarily suspended health programs and as a result of damaged and destroyed health facilities, OFDA said.<sup>229</sup>

Since the outset of the fighting, at least 34 hospitals and health facilities have been attacked, leaving many civilians with nowhere to go for treatment.<sup>230</sup> The United Nations reported supplying Russian officials with the coordinates of hospitals in the region in hopes of preventing strikes, but eight of those facilities were subsequently hit. In early June, doctors in northwestern Syria ceased sharing the coordinates of medical facilities with the United Nations, according to press reports.<sup>231</sup> According to the UN’s Emergency Relief Coordinator, “A number of partners...have drawn the conclusion that hospital bombings are a deliberate tactic aimed at terrorizing people.”<sup>232</sup> According to the Red Cross, international law holds that military operations are not to target “a zone established to shelter the wounded, the sick and civilians from the effects of hostilities.”<sup>233</sup>

Since 2011, the NGO Physicians for Human Rights has documented at least 566 attacks on medical facilities in Syria; humanitarian organizations have reported resorting to building hospitals underground or in caves to prevent them from being bombed.<sup>234</sup> Due to ongoing hostilities, at least 30 health facilities and 18 vaccination centers, including 6 associated with USAID implementers, have partially or completely suspended operations in northwest Syria.<sup>235</sup> Suspended medical facilities had provided more than 171,000 medical outpatient consultations, 2,760 major surgeries, and 1,424 newborn deliveries monthly.<sup>236</sup>

According to an NGO assessment conducted in May, children in Idlib are exhibiting signs of severe distress amid intensified fighting. Observed signs of psychosocial distress in children included introversion, aggression, not speaking, and the discontinuation of play.<sup>237</sup>

According to media reports, members of the UN Security Council proposed a draft statement expressing concern for the humanitarian catastrophe in Idlib. The draft statement called for humanitarian access to the region, the voluntary, safe return for refugees and IDPs, and adherence to international humanitarian law on protecting civilians. However, in early June, Russia blocked the UN Security Council from issuing the statement.<sup>238</sup>

## **Relief Organizations Try to Meet Needs at al Hol Camp**

Described by the United Nations as a “children’s camp,” more than 67 percent of the population at al Hol, or 49,000 of 70,000 people, are under the age of 18.<sup>239</sup> More than 20,000 residents are under the age of 5, born after ISIS captured territory in Syria and Iraq in 2014.<sup>240</sup> According to the United Nations, al Hol presents a unique situation due to the disproportionate number of children of foreign-born parents who arrived at the camp unaccompanied or separated from their parents. Many of them are children of deceased or imprisoned ISIS fighters.<sup>241</sup>

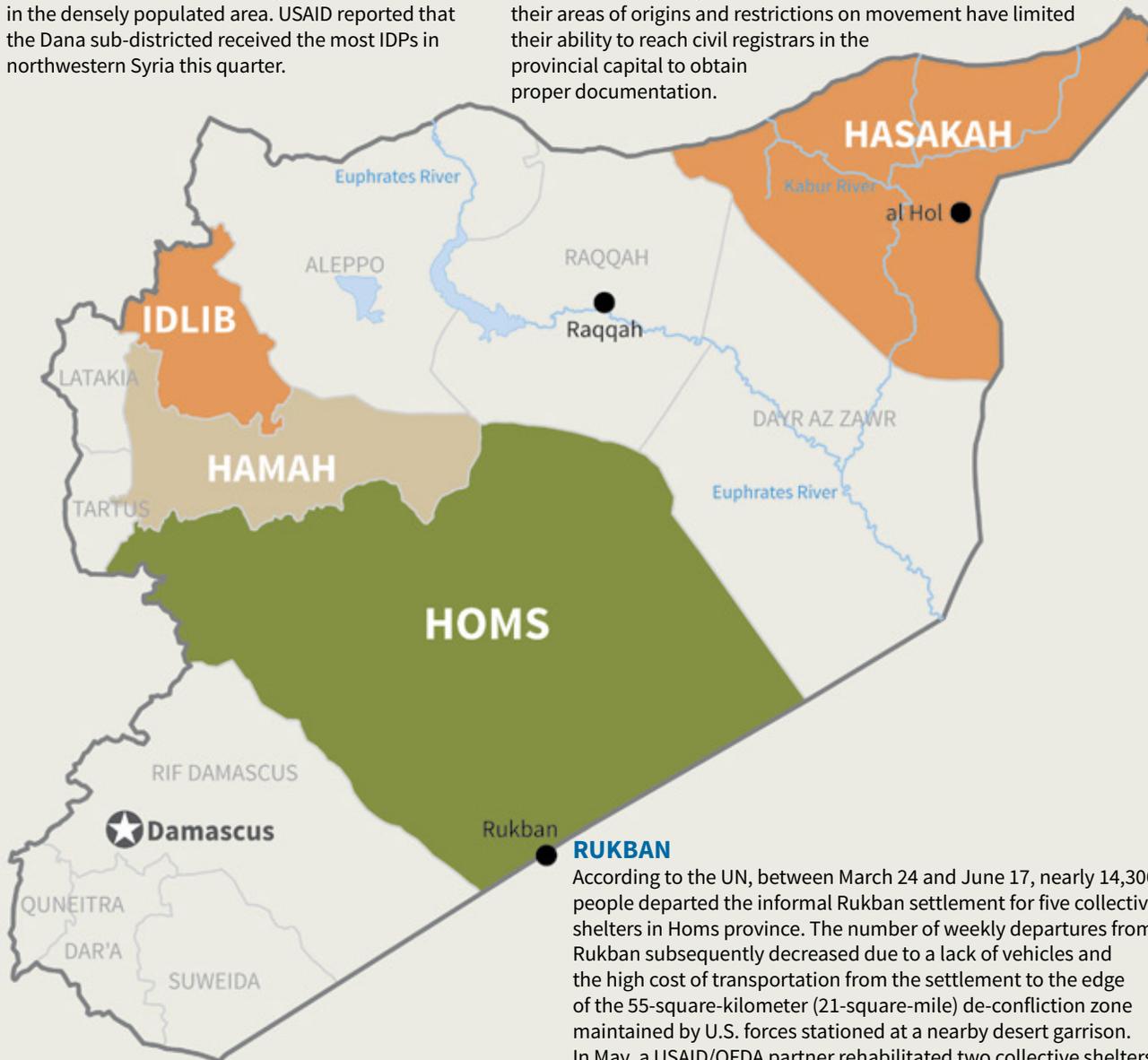
# SYRIA: QUARTERLY FOCUS ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

## IDLIB AND HAMAH

Ongoing Syrian regime and Russian artillery shelling in Idlib and Hamah provinces endangered and displaced civilians this quarter. As of May 22, nearly 104,000 IDPs arrived at displacement sites and reception centers, while more than 203,000 people remained displaced outside of formal camp sites. More than half of the new displacements fled to Idlib's Dana sub-district, exacerbating humanitarian needs in the densely populated area. USAID reported that the Dana sub-district received the most IDPs in northwestern Syria this quarter.

## AL HOL

Relief organizations provided multiple services at the al Hol IDP camp in Hasakah province this quarter, including services for unaccompanied children, referral services, adequate lighting, and improved water and sanitation. According to the UN, as of May 29, the camp hosted approximately 480 children who arrived at the camp unaccompanied or were separated from their parents, including nearly 90 children who remain in interim care units waiting for family reunification. According to USAID, IDPs lacking civil documentation faced challenges returning to their areas of origins and restrictions on movement have limited their ability to reach civil registrars in the provincial capital to obtain proper documentation.



## RUKBAN

According to the UN, between March 24 and June 17, nearly 14,300 people departed the informal Rukban settlement for five collective shelters in Homs province. The number of weekly departures from Rukban subsequently decreased due to a lack of vehicles and the high cost of transportation from the settlement to the edge of the 55-square-kilometer (21-square-mile) de-confliction zone maintained by U.S. forces stationed at a nearby desert garrison. In May, a USAID/OFDA partner rehabilitated two collective shelters in Homs province to provide shelter, water, and hygiene supplies, and protection to IDPs coming from Rukban. As of mid-June, an estimated 500 people remained at the shelters.

Source: USAID, "Syria Complex Emergency Fact Sheet," 6/24/2019.

Of the camp's residents, approximately 43 percent are Iraqi refugees, 42 percent are Syrian IDPs, and 15 percent are third-country nationals.<sup>242</sup> The United Nations reported that approximately 11,000 children aged 6 to 18 have not been exposed to any school environment for at least 5 years.<sup>243</sup> The United Nations has identified a need to scale up assistance to unaccompanied children in the camp.<sup>244</sup>

According to the DoS and USAID, approximately 35 relief organizations continue to provide humanitarian assistance to al Hol, including emergency food assistance for all camp residents, malnutrition screening for nearly 21,000 children, monthly hygiene kits, and water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Health organizations continue to respond to ongoing health care needs among residents at al Hol and 3 field hospitals containing up to 100 beds opened in the camp during June. In addition, the World Health Organization plans to conduct a health education campaign on hygiene practices and prevention measures to prevent waterborne diseases. As temperatures continue to rise in the area, relief organizations are working to increase the availability of water in the camp and improve sanitation services, including garbage collection and fumigation services.<sup>245</sup>

According to the DoS and media reports, approximately 1,000 Syrian IDPs returned to Tabqa and Dayr az Zawr province this quarter, and thousands of third-country nationals living in Syria were repatriated, including 4,500 to Russia and the Caucasus, 317 to Uzbekistan, 209 to Kazakhstan, 188 to Turkey, and 110 to Kosovo.<sup>246</sup> However, according to OFDA, not all of the repatriated families came from al Hol.<sup>247</sup> Other third-country nationals, predominantly women and children, continue to be repatriated in smaller numbers on a case-by-case basis, including to the United States, France, and Belgium, according to the media.<sup>248</sup>

### **Destruction of Farmland Is New Tactic in Conflict**

Beginning in May, a series of fires across northern Syria destroyed tens of thousands of acres of farmland containing wheat and barley crops that had been ready to harvest. Farmers in the region expressed concern regarding the loss of food supplies and income.<sup>249</sup> According to the United Nations, the fires were linked to dry conditions exacerbated by bombing, and in some cases were intentionally started.<sup>250</sup> In its weekly newsletter, ISIS claimed responsibility for some of the initial fires.<sup>251</sup> In northwestern Syria, the United Nations attributed crop fires to fighting between Syrian regime and rebel forces. Videos released by opposition groups claim to show phosphorous shells fired by Syrian regime forces exploding in wheat fields, triggering fires.<sup>252</sup> In response, the SDF called for full security mobilization to fight the crop fires.<sup>253</sup>

According to OFDA, there is a significantly greater amount of land to be harvested this year. Seasonal rains were the strongest they have been in 8 years and, despite the fires, Syria is anticipating a higher than average harvest. USAID does not anticipate additional food shortages as a result of the fires.<sup>254</sup> According to the World Food Programme, approximately 6.5 million Syrians are nevertheless food insecure.<sup>255</sup> In response, USAID/Food for Peace Program continues to program emergency food assistance across northeastern and northwestern Syria and intends to continue to expand support for agricultural development in FY 2019.<sup>256</sup>

**Beginning in May, a series of fires across northern Syria destroyed tens of thousands of acres of farmland containing wheat and barley crops that had been ready to harvest.**

## EVENTS IN IRAQ

### STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

#### ISIS Reorganizes Leadership, Continues to Establish Safe Havens in Iraq

CJTF-OIR reported that ISIS in Iraq continued this quarter to reorganize its leadership and organizational structure to give more control to local leaders, but said that it had limited information to assess whether the structural changes have been successful.<sup>257</sup> ISIS also persisted with its attempts to re-establish safe havens in rural and mountainous areas of the Sunni-majority provinces north and west of Baghdad.<sup>258</sup> In addition to likely orchestrating a string of unclaimed bombings this quarter, ISIS accelerated a campaign of assassinations of local leaders and adopted a new tactic of burning crops in the field.<sup>259</sup>

CJTF-OIR and open-source analysts said that ISIS's strategy is intended to foment distrust of the Iraqi government for its inability to secure its citizens.<sup>260</sup> The targeted killings, particularly of village mayors, coupled with the destruction of crops, has caused mass civilian displacement, sometimes of entire villages in provinces north of Baghdad, analysts said.<sup>261</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that it expects ISIS to continue such assassinations as well as bombings and other "asymmetric attacks" to destabilize the security environment and increase tension between Iraq's Shia and Sunni communities.<sup>262</sup>

CJTF-OIR said that ISIS's presence in Iraq has increased with fighters who fled the battlefield in Syria's MERV last quarter. The increased ISIS presence "has brought more funding for attacks, a more stable [command and control] node, and a logistics node for coordination of attacks," CJTF-OIR said.<sup>263</sup>

According to analysts at the Institute of the Study of War, a Washington D.C. think tank, ISIS has been reconstituting key capabilities in Iraq since late 2018 that will enable it to wage an aggressive insurgency in the coming months. These analysts reported that ISIS remnants have regrouped in mountainous and desert areas in northern and western Iraq, such as the Makhmour Mountains in Ninewa province and the Jazeera Desert in Anbar province. The analysts said that ISIS stages attacks from these areas and has hidden caches of cash, weapons, and food.<sup>264</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that popular support for ISIS in Iraq comes largely from these isolated and rural areas where the Iraqi government cannot sustain its military reach and that ISIS likely retains support in pockets in the same provinces where it is most active: Anbar, Ninewa, Salah ad Din, Kirkuk, and Diyala. CJTF-OIR said that while much of the support is ideological or tribal, some people in these areas are likely coerced into supporting ISIS or may be attracted by the promise of payment.<sup>265</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that ISIS in Iraq continues to recruit from these same areas, drawing from family and tribal connections and exploiting perceived weaknesses and failures of the

**CJTF-OIR reported that popular support for ISIS in Iraq comes largely from these isolated and rural areas where the Iraqi government cannot sustain its military reach and that ISIS likely retains support in pockets in the same provinces where it is most active: Anbar, Ninewa, Salah ad Din, Kirkuk, and Diyala.**

**The ISF carried out nearly 1,000 operations against ISIS during the quarter, which resulted in the death or capture of more than 550 suspected ISIS insurgents.**

Iraqi government, particularly in Sunni areas where the population may feel neglected.<sup>266</sup> CJTF-OIR said that ISIS has also developed an extensive worldwide social media recruitment effort to draw foreigners to the cause.<sup>267</sup>

More information regarding ISIS's resurgence and capabilities in Iraq is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

## **ACTIONS CONDUCTED AGAINST ISIS IN IRAQ**

### **ISF Clearance Operations Result in Short-term Gains**

According to CJTF-OIR, the ISF carried out nearly 1,000 operations against ISIS during the quarter, which resulted in the death or capture of more than 550 suspected ISIS insurgents.<sup>268</sup> CJTF-OIR stated that ISF divisions made progress in their ability to carry out coordinated clearing operations against ISIS cells.<sup>269</sup> Additionally, CJTF-OIR said that the number of ISF operations increased this quarter “due to favorable ground conditions,” which resulted in more requests from the ISF for Coalition intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) support.<sup>270</sup>

This quarter, the ISF carried out coordinated operations in mountain areas, deserts, and *wadis* (low-lying area), and across provincial boundaries.<sup>271</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that ISF clearing operations created short-term disruptions in ISIS facilitation activities and attacks, and displaced ISIS from their support zones.<sup>272</sup> The cumulative result of those operations had a “positive effect on the ISF and a negative effect on ISIS,” according to CJTF-OIR although it also characterized the effect as “minimal.”<sup>273</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that the gains from clearing operations are short term due the ISF's lack of hold forces. As a result, “the displaced fighters have the ability to move back to their former support zones with relative ease.”<sup>274</sup> Furthermore, some areas, such as the Hamrin Mountains, are “restrictive terrain” where ISIS is able to preserve combat power.<sup>275</sup>

More information on ISF operations against ISIS this quarter is provided in the classified appendix to this report.

### **Coalition and “Other Actors” Strike ISIS Supply Routes and Hideouts**

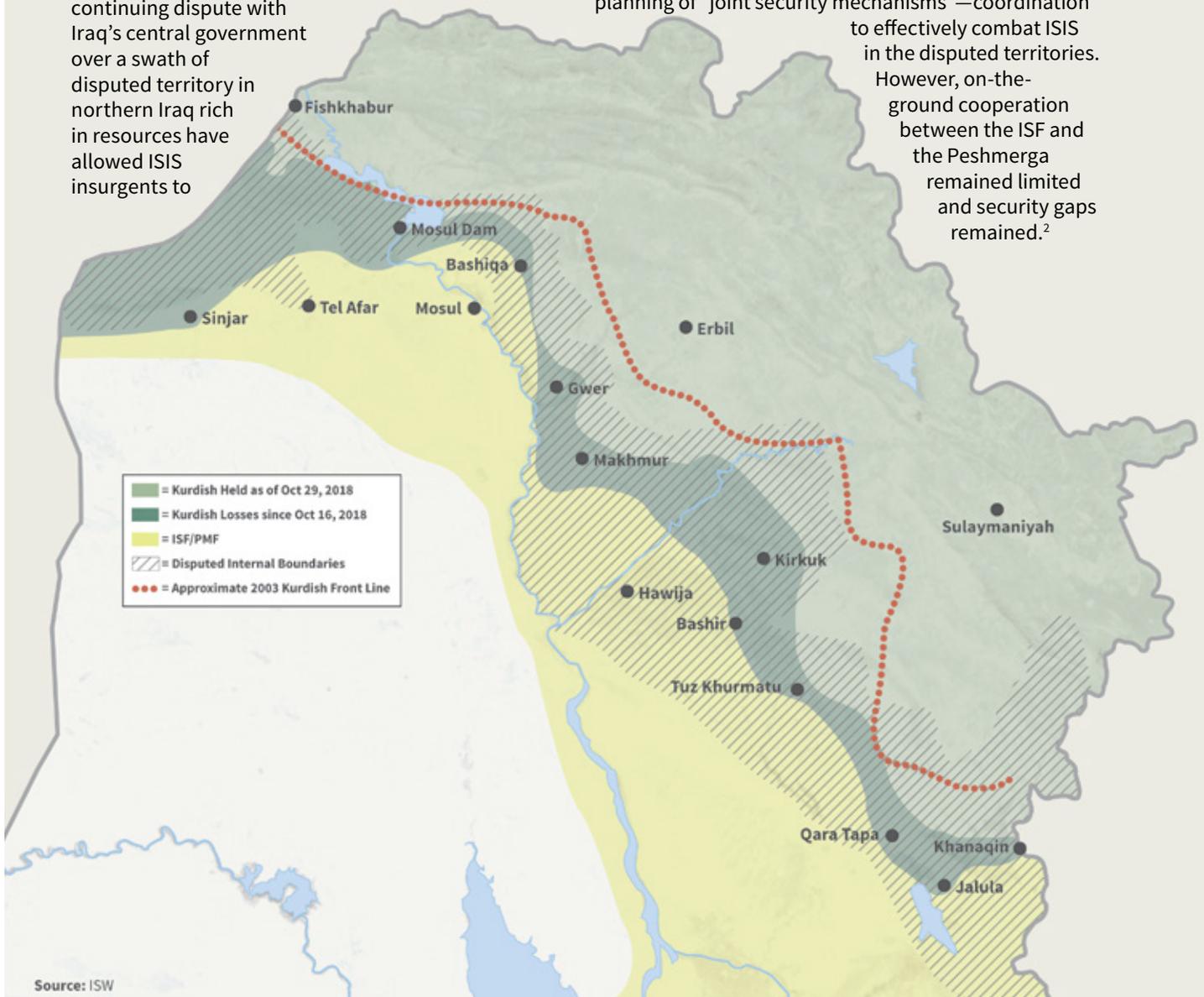
Between March 24 and the end of the quarter, CJTF-OIR conducted 104 strikes against ISIS targets. Of these, 75 were in Iraq and 29 in Syria.<sup>276</sup> Targets included vehicles, supply routes, fighting positions, caves, tunnels, command and control centers, and ISIS tactical units. During the quarter, CJTF-OIR also detected 146 strikes in Syria “from other actors that crossed the Euphrates River Valley,” the de-confliction line between Coalition and pro-regime forces. CJTF-OIR did not identify the actors. Strikes include weapons released by aircraft as well as ground-based rocket-propelled and tactical artillery.<sup>277</sup>

# PESHMERGA DIVISIONS AND TERRITORIAL DISPUTES ENABLE ISIS TO REGROUP

The security forces of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) known as the Peshmerga receive Coalition support and training to combat the ISIS insurgency in Iraq. However, according to CJTF-OIR, deep-seated internal Kurdish political divisions and the Kurds' continuing dispute with Iraq's central government over a swath of disputed territory in northern Iraq rich in resources have allowed ISIS insurgents to

exploit gaps between ISF and Peshmerga forces, which allows ISIS to regroup and plan attacks in the region.<sup>1</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG that the ISF and the Peshmerga has made progress this quarter in ongoing planning of "joint security mechanisms"—coordination to effectively combat ISIS in the disputed territories. However, on-the-ground cooperation between the ISF and the Peshmerga remained limited and security gaps remained.<sup>2</sup>



Source: ISW

CJTF-OIR said that Peshmerga leaders agree that the only way to defeat ISIS in these disputed areas is through implementation of the joint security mechanisms, but according to CJTF-OIR, the ISF does not show the same level of interest in these mechanisms.<sup>3</sup> According to the DoS, political dynamics in the Iraqi government are the cause of the ISF's apparent lack of interest.<sup>4</sup> CJTF-OIR also said Peshmerga leaders warn that the lack of joint security mechanisms is giving ISIS room to reconstitute.<sup>5</sup>

## A HISTORY OF DIVISIONS

The KRG is governed by two main political parties, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Each party maintains its own economic and political structures, including separate intelligence services.<sup>6</sup> The Peshmerga are divided along the same lines: part of the force aligns with the KDP and part with the PUK. In 2010 the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs was reorganized to form 14 Regional Guard Brigades (RGBs) composed of Peshmerga fighters from both parties.<sup>7</sup> By 2013, about 28,000 of the estimated 200,000 Peshmerga were organized into unified brigades.<sup>8</sup>

In 2014, as ISIS took control of much of northern Iraq, the Peshmerga occupied territory long disputed between Iraq's central government and the Kurdish government.<sup>9</sup> Confident after the victory over ISIS, Kurdish leaders held an independence referendum in September 2017. The referendum passed but failed to achieve Kurdish independence. Instead, it intensified political tensions both internally among the Kurds and with the central government, which opposes Kurdish independence. Following the referendum, the ISF moved to reoccupy disputed territories that had been taken by the Peshmerga in their fight against ISIS.<sup>10</sup> The ISF succeeded, in part, because of a strategic retreat staged by PUK-affiliated Peshmerga fighters who withdrew instead of holding their ground and fighting.<sup>11</sup>

## TENSIONS PERSIST

CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG that tensions still persist between the Peshmerga factions, particularly over oil-rich Kirkuk province, an ethnically mixed province where Kurds allege that the central government is forcibly displacing them.<sup>12</sup> CJTF-OIR said that tensions also flared this quarter between the Peshmerga and members of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) who operate with other ISF units along the disputed territories. CJTF-OIR also said that PMF units

prevented the Peshmerga from coordinating operations against ISIS this quarter.<sup>13</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that the Peshmerga established three new checkpoints this quarter to secure an oil pipeline and prevent smuggling in areas of the disputed territories where security gaps exist between ISF and Peshmerga forces. CJTF-OIR said the checkpoints also served to deny ISIS safe haven, and may serve to build trust to enable future joint security cooperation with the ISF in nearby mountainous regions.<sup>14</sup> CJTF-OIR also reported that the Peshmerga had submitted a proposal for joint ISF-Peshmerga counter-ISIS operation to clear a key mountain range based on a joint threat assessment by the Peshmerga and the ISF.<sup>15</sup> However, there were no joint ISF-Peshmerga operations against ISIS this quarter.

## PESHMERGA TRAINING AND REFORM

CJTF-OIR told the DoD OIG that members of each RGB unit tend to be affiliated with either the KDP or the PUK.<sup>16</sup> The leadership of each RGB, however, comes from both parties to decrease the unit's allegiance to one political party.<sup>17</sup> OUSD(P)/ISA reported that the political unification and reform of the Peshmerga remain an important U.S. priority and that the DoD continues to engage with Kurdish leaders to encourage reform.<sup>18</sup>

OUSD(P)/ISA also reported that the Coalition continued this quarter to support the 14 non-partisan RGBs through the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF), which provides stipends and operational sustainment for RGB that are fighting ISIS. The PUK- and KDP-affiliated Peshmerga units do not receive CTEF funding.<sup>19</sup> Last year, the DoD budget included \$290 million for the RGBs to fight ISIS.<sup>20</sup> For 2020, the DoD's budget proposal reduces RGB funds to \$126 million.<sup>21</sup> According to news reports, the Iraqi parliament approved a budget that partly covers Peshmerga salaries for the first time in January 2019.<sup>22</sup> However, media reports said that that money had yet to arrive as of early July, in part due to ongoing disputes over Kurdish obligations to provide oil to the central government as part of the agreement.<sup>23</sup>

CJTF-OIR reported that trainers from multiple Coalition countries continue to train the RGB at the Kurdish Training Coordination Center in Erbil.<sup>24</sup> CJTF-OIR said that the RGB are committed to their training, but warned that as the Coalition begins to transition Peshmerga training responsibilities to the Kurds, the "fragilities between rival political parties" could become an obstacle.<sup>25</sup>

Iraqi soldiers use the tracking camera on an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), at Camp Taji, Iraq. (U.S. Army Reserve photo)



## Coalition and ISF Lack Sufficient ISR Assets to Track Threats

CJTF-OIR previously reported to the DoD OIG that due to the need to monitor Iranian activity in the region, and higher-priority needs in other theaters, the DoD reduced the amount of ISR assets available to CJTF-OIR in 2019.<sup>278</sup> CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG this quarter that the decreased availability of ISR sorties for OIR “has significantly reduced” CJTF-OIR’s capacity to provide continuous coverage for its priority operations and to monitor emerging threats.<sup>279</sup> CJTF-OIR added that the reduction in the number of sorties has resulted in conducting some actions sequentially rather than simultaneously.<sup>280</sup>

In addition to the reduction in Coalition ISR sorties, the ISF has struggled with the availability of its own ISR assets. CJTF-OIR reported that maintenance problems resulted in only one of Iraq’s more than 10 CH-4 aircraft—Chinese unmanned aerial system (UAS) similar in design to the American MQ-9 Reaper—was fully mission capable. Furthermore, CJTF-OIR reported that a combination of Iraqi training in the United States, a lapse in maintenance contracts, and problems with signal interference resulted in only two sorties since March of this year by Iraq’s fleet of more than 10 ScanEagle tactical UASs.<sup>281</sup> CJTF-OIR said that its recent focus is on training Iraq’s Squadron 3, which operates C-208 manned ISR aircraft, to increase its operations.<sup>282</sup>

According to CJTF-OIR, shortfalls have resulted in a 50 percent decrease in Iraq’s fixed-wing ISR sorties compared to the same period last year.<sup>283</sup> While Iraqi F-16s have begun flying “non-traditional ISR” sorties, CJTF-OIR reported that the “operational impact has been negligible as this capability is in its infancy and extremely costly to use.”<sup>284</sup>

Nevertheless, CJTF-OIR reported that Iraqi airborne ISR capabilities continue to improve and show effectiveness when employed and that the Iraqi Air Enterprise has proven capable of striking ISIS “when collection priorities have been set and assets allocated.”<sup>285</sup>

## ROLE OF THIRD PARTIES IN IRAQ

### U.S.-Iranian Tensions Build in Iraq

While OIR is a counter-ISIS mission, and CJTF-OIR has no authority to counter Iran or its proxies in Iraq and Syria (except in cases of self-defense), Iranian activity in the region continues to affect the OIR mission in Iraq. Repercussions range from Iranian-aligned members of Iraq's parliament trying to pass legislation to remove U.S. troops from Iraq to Iranian-backed PMF units harassing CJTF-OIR troops and operations. As a result, USCENTCOM has to devote resources to monitor and deter Iranian activity, and ISIS is able to exploit the diversion of resources and attention.<sup>286</sup>

Tensions ratcheted up between Iran and the United States this quarter, creating heightened security concerns for U.S. forces in Iraq and prompting the DoS to withdraw its non-emergency personnel. At the same time, the United States sent an aircraft carrier and bombers to the region.<sup>287</sup> U.S. administration officials cited intelligence warnings of an imminent Iranian attack on U.S. personnel in Iraq, through Iranian-backed Shia militias belonging to Iraq's PMF.<sup>288</sup>

The Iranian-aligned Shia militia groups of the PMF pose a unique challenge for U.S. and Coalition forces. The PMF is an umbrella group of Iraqi militias that mobilized in 2014 to fight ISIS. As a component of the Iraqi security infrastructure, the PMF remains a strong element in the counter-ISIS effort.<sup>289</sup> OUSD(P)/ISA reported to the DoD OIG that a variety of Iraqi security forces elements, including PMF, routinely conduct security operations against ISIS in Iraq.<sup>290</sup> However, some PMF leadership and units are closely linked to Iran and are geared toward protecting Iranian interests in Iraq.<sup>291</sup> OUSD(P)/ISA reported to the DoD OIG that U.S. forces in Iraq do not partner with PMF elements.<sup>292</sup>

Citing open media reports and analysis, the DIA reported to the DoD OIG that while Iranian-aligned PMF groups remain a threat to U.S. forces in Iraq, the PMF had a "net positive effect" on the counter-ISIS fight this quarter.<sup>293</sup> The DIA told the DoD OIG that PMF brigades actively conducted clearing operations against ISIS and supported other ISF units in Salah ad Din province this quarter.<sup>294</sup> PMF fighters also continued to conduct operations against ISIS on the Iraq-Syria border.<sup>295</sup>

However, the DIA also said that the lack of coordination between the various Iraqi security forces—which compete for resources and superiority—creates a "permissive environment" for ISIS activities and resurgence.<sup>296</sup> The DIA stated that many members of the PMF are involved in criminal activities such as extortion and smuggling.<sup>297</sup> The DoS reported to the DoS OIG that these criminal activities by undisciplined elements of the PMF in liberated areas are creating tensions that ISIS is exploiting.<sup>298</sup>

USCENTCOM reported to the DoD OIG that ISIS exploits Iranian activity in Iraq by disseminating propaganda that uses derogatory terms for Iran and the Iraqi government, highlighting the ties between them, and denigrating them in the eyes of Iraqi Sunnis. USCENTCOM said ISIS also deliberately targets members of Shia-dominated PMF units for their beliefs as well as their alignment with Iran.<sup>299</sup>

The DIA said that Iran-affiliated PMF units routinely made public statements threatening the United States. However, following rocket attacks near the U.S. Embassy in May, leaders

of three key Iranian-backed PMF groups—the Badr Organization, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, and Kata'ib Hezbollah—publicly denounced the attacks. Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri stated that war between Iran and the United States would not be in either side's interest.<sup>300</sup>

USCENTCOM reported to the DoD OIG that the threat from Iranian-backed forces in Iraq increased in the past quarter as Iran sought to respond to the “maximum pressure campaign” that the U.S. has imposed to bring Iran back to the negotiating table.<sup>301</sup> The United States accused Iran of carrying out rocket attacks in Iraq that struck close to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and two bases occupied by U.S. forces, and also a June 19 rocket attack in Basrah. Iran denied involvement in the attacks.<sup>302</sup>

USCENTCOM reported that the Iranian-backed militias were likely responsible for the Basrah attack, which targeted western oil interests. USCENTCOM assessed that this trend of increasingly hostile operations will likely continue into the next quarter.<sup>303</sup>

## CAPACITY BUILDING OF THE ISF

### The DoD Is Developing Long-range Counter-ISIS Plans for Iraq

Operation Reliable Partnership is the sub-operation of OIR that focuses on building the ISF capabilities needed to maintain tactical superiority over ISIS. CJTF-OIR reported to the DoD OIG last quarter that Reliable Partnership prioritizes ISF shortfalls that can be addressed by September 2020.<sup>304</sup> CJTF-OIR stated September 2020 is an “aiming mark” to set capability development plans for the ISF and does not indicate an end date for Reliable Partnership or Coalition assistance to the ISF.<sup>305</sup>

This quarter, OUSD(P)/ISA reported that the DoD is conducting long-range planning for countering ISIS in Iraq. This planning includes ongoing evaluation of conditions on the ground “to determine appropriate and acceptable organizational constructs, force levels, and funding mechanisms that will allow CJTF-OIR, or a successor operational headquarters, to continue pursuit of the U.S. national interest of countering ISIS in Iraq.”<sup>306</sup>

OUSD(P)/ISA stated that funding will be required through FY 2020 to support ISF efforts to contain ISIS's attempts to foment insurgency; achieve an enduring defeat of the group; prevent the spread of ISIS fighters outside of Iraqi borders; and prevent foreign terrorist fighters from crossing into Iraq and neighboring countries to bolster the remnants of ISIS.<sup>307</sup>

The DoS's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs has raised concerns that due to a lack of coordination, short-term requirements have sometimes been met at the expense of long-term strategic goals. The Bureau reported to the DoS OIG that coordination functions between the DoD and the DoS are insufficient for the purpose of planning and executing the ISF's professional military training as well as the permanent transfer of military hardware. The Bureau recommended that formal concurrence mechanisms be required for activities intended to build ISF long-term capacity. The DoS stated that “the importance of shaping the Iraqi security landscape in the context of a whole-of-government vision will become ever-more important as security relationships are normalized, and Embassy Baghdad's Office of Security Cooperation takes on the military equipment responsibility for End-Use Monitoring of the significant amount of defense articles provided to the ISF.”<sup>308</sup>



**An Iraqi Security Forces instructor teaches other Iraqi soldiers to shoot from a sitting position at al Taqaddum, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)**

OUSD(P)/ISA stated to the DoD OIG that the enduring defeat of ISIS in Iraq is contingent upon the development of the ISF into a professional and efficient fighting force.<sup>309</sup> While much of the previous U.S. security assistance to Iraq has focused on providing training, equipment, and material solutions to address shortfalls in the ISF, OUSD(P)/ISA reported that the emphasis going forward will be on Iraq developing and sustaining a force structure that meets its most likely future threats.<sup>310</sup>

This quarter, the DoD OIG asked CJTF-OIR for the desired end states of Reliable Partnership and where the ISF is in terms of meeting the end states. In response, CJTF-OIR provided classified information that is included in the appendix to this report. However, CJTF-OIR also stated that there were no significant changes regarding the achievement of Reliable Partnership end states compared to last quarter.<sup>311</sup> CJTF-OIR further stated that metrics used to track progress are “subjective assessment[s] by subject matter experts on ISF’s ability to conduct core tasks, their functionality by warfighting function and other areas which Coalition forces are involved in supporting.”<sup>312</sup>

While CJTF-OIR stated that most of these assessments are classified, it added that “Coalition efforts to build and enhance ISF capability continue to progress.” According to CJTF-OIR, the ISF (outside of the Counter Terrorism Service) has begun to integrate additional capabilities such as UASs and weapons fire into their operations.<sup>313</sup>

CJTF-OIR stated that its “Build Partner Capacity” model of working with the ISF will gradually “evolve towards greater emphasis on Enhancing Partner Capacity.”<sup>314</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that it continues to focus on transitioning Centralized Training Facility ownership and control to the ISF so that the ISF can carry out its own training at Iraqi-owned and managed facilities.<sup>315</sup> Under this project, CJTF-OIR said that the emphasis is on training Iraqi instructors, “which has now seen thousands of ISF instructors trained and qualified.”<sup>316</sup>

An area of focus identified by CJTF-OIR is building the ISF intelligence apparatus and improving the ability of the ISF to collect, process, and use intelligence to drive operations.<sup>317</sup>

According to CJTF-OIR, this quarter 20 ISF intelligence instructors graduated from the third iteration of the instructor course at Iraq's Intelligence and Military Security School.<sup>318</sup> Furthermore, mobile training teams carried out instruction for more than 50 ISF field intelligence professionals this quarter.<sup>319</sup> CJTF-OIR reported that ISF end states include an Iraqi intelligence instructor cadre capable of training ISF intelligence personnel in disciplines ranging from targeting and exploitation to report production and dissemination.<sup>320</sup>

CJTF-OIR also reported that in April and May, Iraq's Training Directorate oversaw the training of nearly 6,000 ISF and Kurdistan Security Force soldiers and police, and CJTF-OIR expects the total to reach 9,000 by the close of the quarter.<sup>321</sup> Law enforcement entities received training in disciplines ranging from constabulary functions—such as checkpoints, stop and search, arrest techniques, and investigative work—to wide area security required by the more area security focused forces. The Iraqi Army, Kurdistan Security Forces, and Border Guard Forces received training in wide area security, battalion and brigade-level tactics, and conventional warfare.<sup>322</sup>

According to CJTF-OIR, this quarter it implemented a post-training review process for ISF commanders to provide feedback on whether the training they received meets their operational needs. This feedback has identified gaps in training courses and CJTF-OIR reported it is modifying courses to address the gaps.<sup>323</sup>

**The DoS reported that since last year's national elections and violent summer protests in Basrah, the Iraqi people have limited patience and little confidence that the government is capable of improving basic services or defeating ISIS.**

## DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ

### Iraqi PM Names Key Cabinet Positions

The continued inability of the Iraqi government this quarter to improve services to its citizens, reduce high unemployment, or increase the sluggish pace of reconstruction has fueled popular discontent that ISIS may exploit and has also sparked protests across the country.<sup>324</sup>

Nearly eight months after Prime Minister Abd al-Mahdi was elected, he named ministers for key cabinet positions. This came after a statement from Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani that criticized the lack of progress toward forming a government, and prominent cleric Muqtada al-Sadr set a public 10-day deadline on June 17 for the prime minister to form a complete cabinet or face mass protests.<sup>325</sup> One week later, the Iraqi parliament approved the prime minister's nominations to head the Ministries of Defense, Interior, and Justice. The nominee for the Ministry of Education, however, failed to receive enough votes for confirmation.<sup>326</sup>

The DoS reported that since last year's national elections and violent summer protests in Basrah, the Iraqi people have limited patience and little confidence that the government is capable of improving basic services or defeating ISIS.<sup>327</sup> The DoS reported to the DoS OIG that despite government promises, it saw little evidence of government action to combat corruption during the quarter.<sup>328</sup>

The DoS also reported that approximately 1,000 protestors turned out in Baghdad's Tahrir Square on June 21. The protestors called for accelerating government formation, public service reform, and qualified candidates to assume government positions. Protests also occurred in Wasit, Diyala, Dhi Qar, Karbala, Muthanna, and Maysan provinces.<sup>329</sup> In the southern regions, where electrical blackouts last summer sparked violent protests, demonstrations resumed this

quarter, with analysts warning that without significant improvements, they expect similar protests to present a major test for Prime Minister Abd al-Mahdi's government.<sup>330</sup>

News media reported on political maneuvering during the quarter, including by former prime minister Haider al-Abadi. In June, al-Abadi's Victory Alliance announced that it was forming a "reform opposition" to the Iraqi government. Another reformist group (the Hakima Coalition, led by Shia cleric Ammar al-Hakim), sought support from al-Sadr's Sairoon Alliance. In May, al-Hakim met Embassy Baghdad senior leadership and offered to play a role easing tensions between the United States and Iran.<sup>331</sup> These political movements may signal the coalescence of a larger parliamentary opposition.<sup>332</sup>

### Provincial Elections Delayed Until 2020

Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission announced on June 17 that provincial elections across the country will be delayed until April 20, 2020, the second time the date has been changed. Originally scheduled for December 22, 2018, the provincial elections were at first postponed until November 2019. The new postponement must be approved by the Iraqi parliament, the Council of Ministers, and the president.<sup>333</sup>

### Formation of New Kurdish Government Moves Ahead

Parliamentary elections were held in Iraqi Kurdistan on September 30, 2018.<sup>334</sup> The DoS reported to the DoS OIG that during the quarter, the three main political parties—KDP, PUK, and Gorran—reached a final agreement for the distribution of the ministerial positions that each party will receive in the KRG.<sup>335</sup> On June 10, Nechirvan Barzani was sworn in as



Secretary of State Michael Pompeo meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abd al-Mahdi, Baghdad, Iraq. (DoS photo)

president of the KRG, filling the most powerful regional office. The presidency had been vacant since his uncle, Masoud Barzani, resigned in 2017 following the referendum on Kurdish independence.<sup>336</sup>

On June 11, the Kurdistan regional parliament voted to make Masrour Barzani, Nechirvan Barzani's cousin, Prime Minister-designate. He had 30 days from that date to form a cabinet, which will be voted on by parliament.<sup>337</sup> The DoS said that it has encouraged the Kurds to complete the government formation in a timely manner so that the KRG might proceed with administrative, financial, and security-sector reforms and engage with Iraq's central government on issues of mutual interest, including critical security cooperation to counter ISIS.<sup>338</sup>

### **KRG Does Not Comply with its Obligations under the 2019 Iraqi National Budget**

The KRG and the Iraqi government were unable to come to agreement this quarter on critical issues, including the budget, oil, the Peshmerga forces, or a future census in Kirkuk province. A meeting in late June between KRG President Barzani and Iraqi Prime Minister Abd al-Mahdi did not bridge the disagreement. Under the 2019 Iraqi national budget, the KRG is required to deliver 250,000 barrels of oil per day to the Iraqi national oil company. In exchange, the Iraqi government pays KRG employee salaries. For the past six months, the central government has paid the salaries but has not received its share of the KRG oil. KRG President Barzani said that a legal dispute over debt when the Iraqi government cut the KRG budget in 2014 is central to resolving the issue.<sup>339</sup>

### **Some Iraqi Security Forces Abuse IDPs and Vulnerable Groups**

The DoS reported significant human rights abuses in Iraq by some members of the ISF, particularly Iranian-aligned elements of the PMF operating outside of government control. These reported abuses included unlawful or arbitrary killings; abductions; torture; restrictions on free expression, the press, and the internet; restrictions on women's freedom of movement; trafficking in persons; and violence targeting gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons.<sup>340</sup> In its report on trafficking in persons in 2018, released this quarter, the DoS noted that the Iraqi government "did not investigate or hold anyone criminally accountable for continued allegations of unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers."<sup>341</sup>

During the quarter, the DoS reported that Iraqi forces, as well as some PMF units, continued to block freedom of movement for IDPs, minorities, and Sunnis said to have ties to ISIS. U.S. Embassy Baghdad and USAID received reports of sexual and financial exploitation of IDPs by camp security forces and others. Post-ISIS property rights in the liberated areas continued to be an issue, with the Iraqi government slow to provide any meaningful relief. IDPs faced significant challenges returning to their communities of origin because of accusations of ISIS affiliation, resulting in many choosing to remain in the camps. The Iraqi and Kurdistan governments have been slow to address these issues due, the DoS said, to resource and security concerns.<sup>342</sup>

**The DoS said that in some cases, children older than 8 received sentences of up to 5 years in prison for ISIS membership and up to 15 years in prison for participating in violent acts.**

### **Alleged ISIS Affiliates Face Harsh Conditions and Rushed Trials**

The NGO Human Rights Watch reported that alleged ISIS affiliates are often denied due process in trials and subjected to torture and coercion to elicit confessions, inhumane detention facilities, and arbitrary sentencing. After monitoring several hundred trials of alleged ISIS affiliates, the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) human rights office in Baghdad cited significant procedural and policy concerns about the trials. UNAMI cited the overuse of the association clause of the Iraqi counterterrorism law, which allows for individuals with as many as four “degrees of separation” from a known ISIS affiliate to be convicted of being a terrorist associate and sentenced to death. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Extra-Judicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions, any executions resulting from the current ISIS trials may be designated as arbitrary government-sanctioned killing.<sup>343</sup>

In addition, according to the DoS, defense attorneys stated that they rarely had access to their clients before hearings and were threatened for defending them. The DoS stated that judicial officials did not sufficiently take into account the individual circumstances in each case or guarantee the defendants a fair trial.<sup>344</sup> However, a former team leader of the UNAMI Accountability and Administration of Justice section told reporters that some criticism of the Iraqi system was “unfair” and that in some cases, “investigation files are thick. The 10-minute trials are the final hearings which summarized months of fact-finding and investigation that consist[ed] of numerous sessions.”<sup>345</sup>

The DoS said that in some cases, children older than 8 received sentences of up to 5 years in prison for ISIS membership and up to 15 years in prison for participating in violent acts. Dozens of foreign women have received death sentences for violating the counterterrorism law.<sup>346</sup>

According to the DoS, prison and detention center conditions were harsh and even life-threatening due to food shortages, gross overcrowding, physical abuse, and inadequate sanitary conditions and medical care. Al Nasiriyah Central Prison, also known as al Hoot Prison, in Dhi Qar province, was designed to hold 2,400 prisoners, but Iraq High Commission for Human Rights observers reported that the prison held approximately 9,000 prisoners. Women’s prisons often lacked adequate child-care facilities for inmates’ children, whom the law permits to remain with their mothers until age four. Limited and aging infrastructure worsened sanitation, restricted access to potable water, and led to poor food quality in many prison facilities. Authorities kept prisoners confined in their cells for lengthy periods without an opportunity to exercise or use showers or sanitary facilities. The DoS reported that it is engaged with Iraqi government officials to determine how the United States can best support their efforts to detain thousands of ISIS fighters and affiliates in safe and humane conditions, and reduce the prison population by freeing nonviolent offenders.<sup>347</sup>

### **Re-imposition of U.S. Sanctions on Iran Affects Iraq’s Economy**

The DoS reported that the United States sought this quarter to minimize adverse effects on the Iraqi economy from U.S. sanctions that were re-imposed on Iran in November 2018 after the United States withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a multilateral agreement known as the Iran Nuclear Deal. The DoS reported that although it was not able to calculate

the specific impact of the sanctions on the Iraqi economy, the sanctions have reduced revenue from Iranian religious tourism to Iraq but also resulted in higher prices for Iraqi oil exports.<sup>348</sup>

The DoS said that Iraq continues to rely on Iran for natural gas and electricity imports, and Iran exported additional low-cost goods to Iraq. Since the re-imposition of sanctions, Secretary Pompeo has granted waivers to allow Iraq to pay for electricity imports from Iran, while urging Iraq to reduce its dependence on Iranian energy. Iraq's natural gas imports from Iran are not subject to U.S. sanctions.<sup>349</sup> On June 14, Secretary Pompeo informed Prime Minister Abd al-Mahdi that he was granting an additional 120-day waiver on Iraqi imports of Iranian electricity. The DoS continued to urge Iraq to diversify its energy imports to reduce reliance on Iran.<sup>350</sup>

### Baghdad Talks, But Fails to Deliver on Basic Needs of Iraqi Citizens

The DoS reported that for much of the quarter protests from those demanding jobs in Basrah were generally peaceful and small in size.<sup>351</sup> In mid-June, however, the deputy governor of Basrah, Hamed al Hamdi, warned that high unemployment and the lack of electricity could reignite tensions and prompt widespread demonstrations. Deputy Governor al Hamdi reported that the province's unemployment rate is above 40 percent and expected to increase. He stressed that the Iraqi government needs to deliver on its 10-point plan to provide more employment, while predicting that "the youth of Basrah" will begin new demonstrations this summer.<sup>352</sup>

Although the Iraqi government launched initiatives in response to last summer's protestors demanding jobs, electricity, and potable water, these problems persist.<sup>353</sup> Baghdad allocated millions of dollars for high-profile desalination plants that will take at least three years to come online, while infrastructure repair and renovation projects remained underfunded. Further, the DoS reported that the incomplete Franco-Japanese desalination plant started in 2012 faced delays caused by Iraqi customs authorities that could push the already overdue opening until after the summer.<sup>354</sup> In late June, the Basrah Provincial Council Health Committee revealed that Basrah hospitals had recently reported a number of water poisoning cases. At the end of the quarter, however, the situation was not on the scale of last summer's outbreak of water-borne illnesses that affected Basrah residents.<sup>355</sup>

Commenting in May on the upcoming summer demand for electricity, Iraq's new Minister of Electricity, Luay al-Khatteeb, said that extra power capacity had been added to the country's power grid to provide 22 to 25 percent more power compared to last year, when summer power demand outstripped supply and caused blackouts that contributed to sometimes violent protests in Basrah. In addition, the Ministry of Electricity rehabilitated transmission lines to increase power supply to the areas liberated from ISIS. Minister al Khatteeb said that Iraq is providing all provinces almost 20 hours of electricity a day, except Sunni-populated Anbar, which receives 15 hours.<sup>356</sup>

Earlier this year, Embassy Baghdad projected that Iraq will likely experience demonstrations and protests—possibly turning to violence like last summer—related to the Iraqi and provincial governments' failure to deliver basic public services—potable water and

**Although the Iraqi government launched initiatives in response to last summer's protestors demanding jobs, electricity, and potable water, these problems persist.**

electricity—in summer 2019.<sup>357</sup> The DoS assessed that initiatives taken since last summer have made only modest progress addressing the root causes of the problems underlying popular discontent.<sup>358</sup>

According to media reports, by mid-June, protests in Basrah resumed as demonstrators gathered at the city's new administrative headquarters (the old one was burned down last summer) to vent anger about poor services and a lack of jobs. Basrah residents reported hours-long power outages as temperatures reached 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Residents complained that jobs in Basrah were scarce and blamed international oil companies for hiring foreign workers from South Asia instead of Iraqis. Protesters blamed Iraqi politicians for their failure to address everyday problems.<sup>359</sup>

## STABILIZATION

According to the DoS and USAID, they and other government agencies work together on programs that seek to strengthen infrastructure, stabilize communities, foster economic growth, and help various levels of the Iraqi government better represent and respond to the needs of its people.<sup>360</sup>

### Embassy Staff Reduction Results in Scaled-back Programs

The departure of Embassy personnel this quarter eroded the ability of Embassy Baghdad and Consulate Erbil to manage humanitarian assistance and stabilization efforts in Iraq.<sup>361</sup> The number of U.S. direct hires under Chief of Mission authority dropped from 563 to 312, including 21 of 26 USAID personnel.<sup>362</sup> According to USAID, those evacuated included all USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) staff in both missions.<sup>363</sup> In addition, the DoS Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) coordinator in Erbil and two PRM coordinators in Baghdad were also ordered to depart.<sup>364</sup> USAID and the DoS PRM are responsible for monitoring more than \$585 million in humanitarian assistance programming for vulnerable Iraqi populations inside Iraq.<sup>365</sup> In addition, USAID monitors more than \$150 million in stabilization assistance and DoS PRM monitors more than \$44 million in assistance programming for Syrian refugees in Iraq.<sup>366</sup>

USAID reported that the departures have weakened oversight and complicated the remote management of humanitarian programs by limiting engagement with key stakeholders, such as humanitarian leadership in country, and a large portfolio of UN and NGO partners. USAID reported that these engagements implement life-saving assistance and coordinate on key issues such as forced returns and the imminent return of the Iraqi civilian population from al Hol camp in Syria, as well as continuing programming that supports the Vice President's initiative to assist religious and ethnic minorities.<sup>367</sup>

According to the DoS, the ordered departure eroded the U.S. Embassy's mission's ability to engage substantively and programmatically in support of stabilization efforts in Iraq despite the April pledge of \$100 million in additional stabilization funds for Anbar province.<sup>368</sup> PRM coordinators typically conduct regular diplomatic engagements with their Iraqi government and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) contacts on issues of concern to displaced populations.<sup>369</sup>

**USAID reported that the departures have weakened oversight and complicated the remote management of humanitarian programs by limiting engagement with key stakeholders, such as humanitarian leadership in country, and a large portfolio of UN and NGO partners.**



**A U.S. Explosive Ordnance Disposal team member prepares munitions for disposal. (U.S. Air Force photo)**

According to USAID, USAID-funded stabilization programs are also facing some challenges to sustaining pre-departure levels of engagement with key stakeholders and local partners. Before the ordered departure, all USAID staff members were present inside Iraq to conduct oversight of stabilization programming funded by USAID. As a result of the ordered departure, oversight of stabilization programs is being conducted by 15 USAID staff members in-country and 11 USAID staff members remotely, which the agency said is less optimal.<sup>370</sup> The USAID lead for stabilization nevertheless remained in Iraq throughout the ordered departure given the size and importance of USAID’s stabilization portfolio, which includes countering ISIS programming.<sup>371</sup>

### **The DoS and USAID Attempt to Streamline Priorities**

According to Embassy Baghdad, as the result of staffing limitations imposed by the ordered departure, Chief of Mission priorities were reduced to four: defeating ISIS, countering malign Iranian influence, supporting religious and ethnic minorities, and maintaining a viable platform for diplomatic operations.<sup>372</sup> Other objectives under the Iraq Integrated Country Strategy will likely not be addressed given the staff reduction.<sup>373</sup>

According to the DoS, the ordered departure of personnel eroded the ability of the DoS to meet the previously-established strategic objectives.<sup>374</sup> The ordered departure will likely also prevent USAID from meeting its strategic objectives. However, despite the resulting diplomatic, management, and oversight challenges, and as discussed further in the following sections, the DoS and USAID still fund stabilization and humanitarian assistance efforts to help “meet the immediate, basic needs” of IDPs and refugees in Iraq and reconciliation efforts.<sup>375</sup>

**In April, Embassy Baghdad announced an additional \$100 million in assistance for the UNDP’s Funding Facility for Stabilization, specifically for Anbar province.**

### **Explosive Remnants of War Endanger Residents and IDPs**

According to USAID, the presence of explosive hazards continued to affect the willingness of IDPs to return to areas of origin by impeding public services, reconstruction, livelihoods development, and other activities.<sup>376</sup> To promote safety and increase IDP returns, the DoS continued to fund clearance operations for explosive remnants of war in areas liberated from ISIS.<sup>377</sup>

The DoS reported that explosives clearance operations continued to concentrate on critical infrastructure—including factories, water pipelines, power stations and grids, schools and medical facilities as well as communities of ethnic and religious minorities persecuted by ISIS. U.S.-funded teams cleared thousands of complex improvised devices and other explosive hazards. The fluid security situation and bureaucratic impediments in Iraq and the IKR continued to present challenges for explosives clearance teams and the irregular presence of PMF checkpoints increased transportation times.<sup>378</sup>

### **U.S. Government Increases Funding for Stabilization of Anbar Province**

In April, Embassy Baghdad announced an additional \$100 million in assistance for the UNDP’s Funding Facility for Stabilization, specifically for Anbar province. This \$100 million contribution raises to \$358 million the U.S. Government’s contribution to stabilization efforts in Iraq since 2015. In his announcement, the U.S. Chargé d’Affaires called on Anbar’s elected officials, tribal sheikhs, and residents to protect the project work sites and do their part to re-integrate back into their communities all displaced Iraqis who wished to return home.<sup>379</sup> According to USAID, the FFS had already identified and received approval for dozens of stabilization projects that would benefit from the additional U.S. contribution, including water and power systems, education infrastructure, health facilities, and housing. According to USAID, “the funding announcement served to reset relations with Anbari Sunnis to provide tangible alternatives to malign actors—militias that offer salaries but no hope of rebuilding—and demonstrate that the United States, our coalition partners, and the government of Iraq support Anbar’s recovery.” According to USAID, funding is expected to be allocated no later than the end of July 2019 and USAID/OTI has also begun pilot programming in western Anbar, with a focus on Al Qaim and Anah.<sup>380</sup>

### **International Community Completes Rehabilitation of Mosul Dam**

In June 2019, U.S., Italian, and Iraqi officials announced the completion of the \$530 million project to provide long-term stability of the Mosul Dam. This announcement followed a three-year rehabilitation project undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and an Italian engineering firm working with the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources to stabilize, repair, and secure the dam and transfer to Iraqi technicians the know-how to manage future operations independently.<sup>381</sup> This partnership completed an emergency stabilization project designed to stave off a sudden catastrophic flood that could have endangered millions of people along the Tigris River.<sup>382</sup>

The Mosul dam generates hydroelectricity and provides water for downstream irrigation. At full capacity, it provides electricity to 1.7 million residents of Mosul.<sup>383</sup>

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

### Iraqis Return from al Hol

In a June 24 address, the High Commissioner of the UN Human Rights Council cited estimates by UNICEF that there were 29,000 children of foreign fighters in al Hol camp in northeastern Syria, which houses the population from Baghuz, the last pocket of ISIS-controlled territory. Two-thirds of these children originally came from Iraq, and most were under the age of 12.<sup>384</sup> The High Commissioner stated that, “Children, in particular, have suffered grievous violations of their rights—including those who may have been indoctrinated or recruited by [ISIS] to perpetrate violent acts.”<sup>385</sup> UNICEF has urged member states to provide children who are their citizens or born to their nationals with civil documentation; prevent these children from being or becoming stateless; and support their safe, dignified and voluntary return to and reintegration in their countries of origin.<sup>386</sup>

The United Nations anticipates that approximately 31,000 Iraqi refugees, primarily women and children, will return from al Hol to Iraq in the coming months. According to USAID, returnees will continue to require humanitarian assistance at least through the end of 2019.<sup>387</sup>

According to USAID, humanitarian actors are unable to operate in prisons and detention centers, which would severely reduce the level of services available and put the lives of these children at risk. According to the DoS, the Iraqi government has reportedly agreed not to require all returnees from Syria to be housed in one camp but rather to distribute them among existing camps with sufficient capacity. According to the DoS, some non-ISIS-affiliated Iraqis have voluntarily returned to Iraq prior to the influx into al Hol and other camps in Syria that began in December. The Iraqi government also slowed down the timeline for returns, allowing for better planning by both the government and humanitarian actors.<sup>388</sup>

### Security Bureaucracy Hinders NGO Access

According to the DoS, many NGOs continue to report that some security forces—including PMF units and the ISF—have caused difficulties with access to communities needing assistance. Instead of allowing passage for these NGOs based on access letters from the Joint Crisis Monitoring Center, as sanctioned by national authorities, these security forces have required NGOs to produce access letters from these security forces themselves. According to the DoS, the access challenges have occurred across provinces, with Ninewa reporting the greatest number.<sup>389</sup>

### Protracted Displacement Remains a Problem

The DoS and USAID reported that the greatest remaining challenges facing IDPs wishing to return to their places of origin remained: security, livelihoods, and damage to housing.<sup>390</sup> Protection continues as the largest need for IDPs, given the continuing threat of forced or coerced returns, among other issues. According to the DoS, IDPs also need legal assistance to recover or renew identification documents, as well as assistance with accessing housing, land, and property rights. An NGO report released in April identifies 45,000 children in Iraq who are at risk of becoming stateless due to a lack of civil documentation. According to the report,

**The United Nations anticipates that approximately 31,000 Iraqi refugees, primarily women and children, will return from al Hol to Iraq in the coming months.**

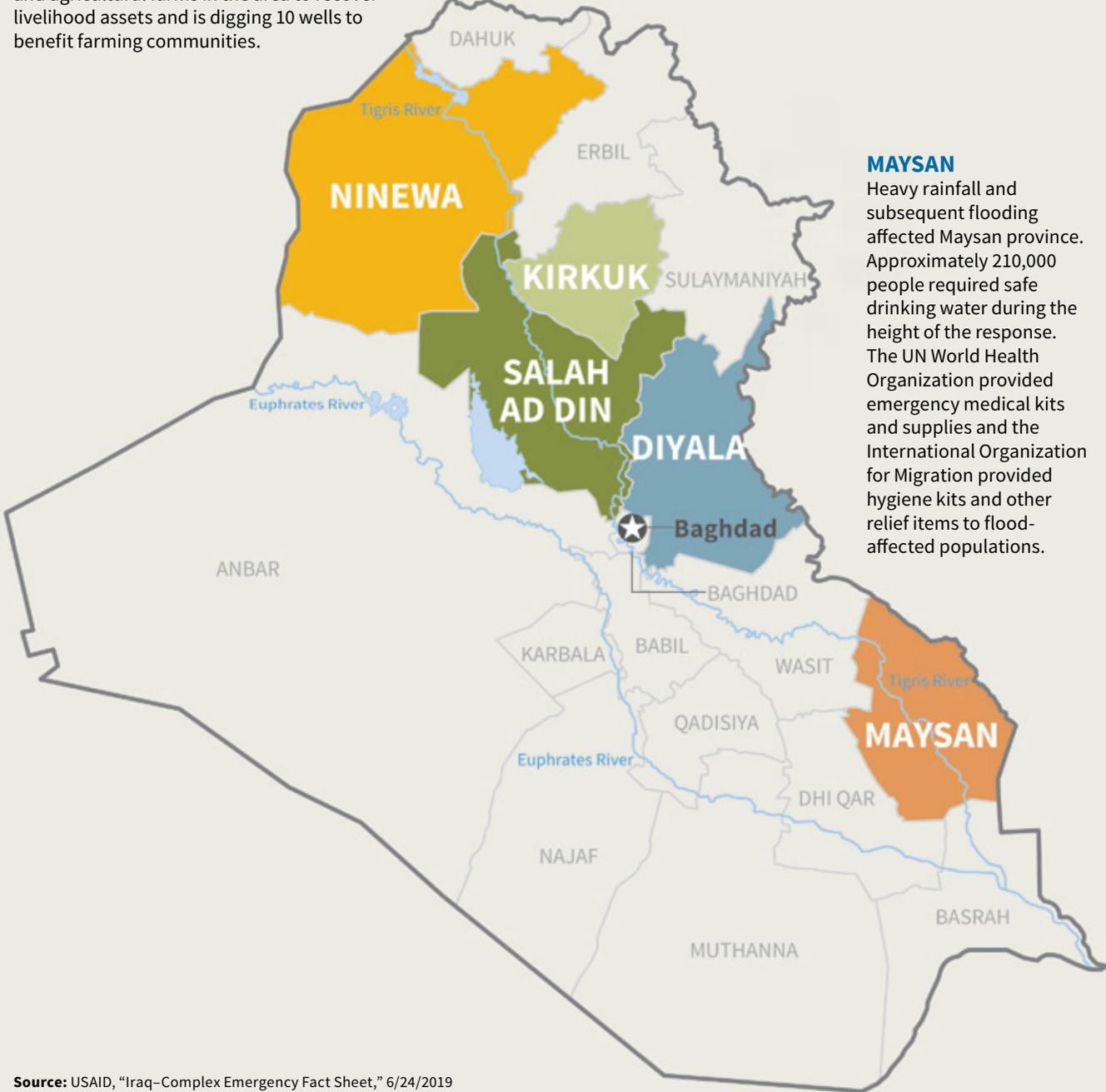
# IRAQ: QUARTERLY FOCUS ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

**NINEWA**

In mid-April, a DoS/PRM partner distributed 110 calves and animal fodder to cattle farmers in Hamdaniya District in the province of Ninewa as part of a project to help reestablish agricultural livelihoods. The PRM partner is also supporting more than 40 additional poultry, sheep, and agricultural farms in the area to recover livelihood assets and is digging 10 wells to benefit farming communities.

**DIYALA, KIRKUK, NINEWA, SALAH AD DIN**

Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah ad Din provinces were most affected this quarter by a rise in incidents in which agricultural crops were burned. The Iraqi government reported more than 37,000 acres of cropland burned in more than 270 separate incidents that occurred between May 8 and June 8, 2019. Unconfirmed origins of the fires include natural causes, controlled burns escalating, and acts of terrorism.



**MAYSAN**

Heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding affected Maysan province. Approximately 210,000 people required safe drinking water during the height of the response. The UN World Health Organization provided emergency medical kits and supplies and the International Organization for Migration provided hygiene kits and other relief items to flood-affected populations.

Source: USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency Fact Sheet," 6/24/2019

**USAID/OTI provided support to Yazda to rent 18 buses to help transport up to 1,200 students to get to school in 15 periphery communities around Snuni and Sinjar. (USAID photo)**



the difficulty obtaining documentation has been linked with perceived, but not proven, ISIS affiliation and resulting collective punishment.<sup>391</sup> According to USAID, many displaced Iraqis lost documents to confiscation either by ISIS or by the ISF due to perceived ISIS ties.<sup>392</sup>

According to USAID, solutions to protracted displacement varied regionally and can have major political consequences, including demographic change. On April 25, Vice President Pence spoke with Kurdistan's Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani about the security situation in Iraq's disputed territories, and Barzani underscored the importance of continued U.S. support to stabilize these areas and allow for the return of more than 1.6 million Iraqis who remain displaced following the defeat of the physical ISIS "caliphate."<sup>393</sup>

During the quarter, DoS PRM partners continued to report intermittent harassment when they attempted to assist individuals who were perceived, but not proven to be ISIS affiliates. In an effort to avoid detention or harassment of staff, DoS partners reported having to check with government security actors prior to assisting some beneficiaries.<sup>394</sup>

## SUPPORT TO MISSION

### U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Funding

The U.S. Government implements humanitarian assistance activities in Syria and Iraq as distinct and separate from military operations through three operating units:

- USAID/OFDA works with UN and international NGO partners to provide support to IDPs and other conflict-affected populations.
- USAID/FFP provides food assistance to IDPs, refugees, and others in need who have been impacted by the crisis in Syria and Iraq.
- DoS/PRM works through the United Nations and other partners to protect and support IDPs, refugees, and other conflict-affected populations, and provides assistance to others in the surrounding countries that have been affected.

USAID and PRM receive appropriations for humanitarian assistance activities that are not designated in advance for use in responding to a particular humanitarian crisis, which allows the U.S. Government greater flexibility in responding to ongoing and emerging crises. USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP primarily use International Disaster Assistance funds. PRM relies on Migration and Refugee Assistance funds for this purpose. Each office awards funds to implementing partners, which include public international organizations such as UNICEF, WFP, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the International Organization for Migration, as well as private non-governmental organizations.<sup>395</sup>

### **DoS and USAID FY 2020 Funding Request for Iraq**

The DoS and USAID FY 2020 budget request contains \$1.2 billion for Iraq. To ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS and stabilize liberated areas, the DoS and USAID are engaging with the Iraqi government, international organizations, regional neighbors, economic partners, and the Iraqi people to support improvements in governance, economic development, and regional relations and to maintain a strong partnership with Iraq under the Strategic Framework Agreement with the United States.<sup>396</sup>

The budget request includes:

#### **Worldwide Security Protection and Ongoing Operations**

These funds (\$808.2 M) support ongoing Diplomatic Security programs in Iraq, including international cooperative administrative support services costs, diplomatic couriers, static/local guards, Embassy Air overseas support costs, premium pay, temporary duty-related costs, armored vehicle replacements, training, and physical and technical security. The budget request includes a decrease of \$50 million due to expected savings associated with the current suspension of operations at Consulate Basrah.<sup>397</sup>

#### **Diplomatic Programs**

These funds (\$118.1 M) provide for Embassy Baghdad and Consulate Erbil operations, staff support costs and salaries, transportation, communications, and aviation programs. The budget request includes \$107.8 million for Program Operations, \$10.3 million for Public Diplomacy (\$5.1 decrease), and \$19.5 million for American salaries.<sup>398</sup>

#### **Aviation Iraq**

These funds (\$157.7 M) support the Aviation Working Capital Fund to provide fixed-wing aircraft service into and out of Iraq and a mixture of airplanes and helicopters to support program missions and movement of passengers within country.<sup>399</sup>

#### **Embassy Security, Construction, and Management**

An unspecified level of funding was requested to pay the costs for security upgrades; repair, improvement and contraction; and management and operations.<sup>400</sup>

#### **UN Assistance Mission in Iraq**

An unspecified level of funding was requested for the U.S. share of the costs of the UN Special Political Mission in Iraq, which uses financial contributions and expertise of other nations to promote U.S. interests, including combating violent extremism; promoting human rights; and forging solutions to the global threats of armed conflict, hunger, poverty, and disease.<sup>401</sup>

**The DoS and USAID FY 2020 budget request contains \$1.2 billion for Iraq.**

### **Economic Support and Development Fund**

These funds (\$115.0 M) support stabilization and recovery in areas liberated from ISIS; reinforce Iraq's own economic and fiscal reforms; strengthen governance and government responsiveness; and promote reconciliation, accountability, and human rights. Additionally, these funds support Iraqi minorities most affected by ISIS.<sup>402</sup>

### **Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs**

These funds (\$46.9 M) are directed toward improving Iraq's ability to defend itself against external threats to internal stability through bilateral conventional weapons destruction, anti-terrorism assistance, and export control and related border security assistance programs.<sup>403</sup>

### **International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement**

These funds (\$3.0 M) will be used to build on previous work with the Department of Justice International Criminal Investigative Training and Assistance Program. An International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement advisor assists key personnel in Ministry of Interior units to develop Iraq-led training programs and strategic plans; conduct criminal investigations and analyze forensic evidence; investigate and pursue organized crime, including illicit finance and money laundering; and conduct internal investigations in accordance with international norms and standards.<sup>404</sup>

### **International Military Education and Training**

These funds (\$1.0 M) seek to enhance the development and professionalism of the Iraqi military forces and their interoperability with the United States and partners within the region and to support reform and institution-building initiatives. Through military education and training, select members of the Iraqi Air Force, Army, Navy, Kurdish Peshmerga, Counter Terrorism Service, and civilian defense and security officials will be exposed to democratic values, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and civilian control over the military.<sup>405</sup>

### **Additional Humanitarian Assistance Activities**

The DoS and USAID also request funds to address worldwide crises that intersect with U.S. national security interests. The DoS and USAID administer these funds, which include portions of the International Disaster Assistance, Food for Peace, and Migration and Refugee Assistance accounts. For FY 2019, Congress approved \$4.4 billion for International Disaster Assistance funds, \$1.7 billion for P.L. 480 Title II/Food for Peace Program, and \$3.4 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance for use worldwide.<sup>406</sup>

## **Iraq Receives \$19.8 Million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF)**

According to the DoS, \$19.8 million of FMF funds for Iraq were expended this quarter. Funds were largely directed toward sustainment costs for night vision devices, procurement of Harris radios, and sustainment and upgrades to existing training simulators. Funds also supported training for the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs. In addition, FMF transactions related to the D-ISIS efforts in Jordan and Lebanon focused mostly on border security. Lebanon expended \$38.2 million toward sustainment and spare parts for combat vehicles; procurement of small arms weapons and ammunition; procurements of medium tactical vehicles; and logistics support. Jordan expended \$24.6 million toward aircraft spare

**\$19.8 million of FMF funds for Iraq were expended this quarter. Funds were largely directed toward sustainment costs for night vision devices, procurement of Harris radios, and sustainment and upgrades to existing training simulators.**

parts and sustainment; spare parts for CHEETAH Air Defense Weapons; procurement of ammunition and guided missiles; and communications equipment.<sup>407</sup>

In response to DoS OIG questions about efforts undertaken to expedite Foreign Military Sales (FMS) cases and related licenses in support of the global fight against ISIS, the DoS described working closely with DoD to identify, process, and implement FMS or pseudo-FMS cases. As of June 20, the DoS had reviewed and cleared 318 OIR-related Letters of Offer and Acceptance this quarter, the vast majority within 48 hours.<sup>408</sup>

### **Ordered Departure Affects Non-Emergency Personnel**

As discussed earlier in the report, the number of personnel serving in Mission Iraq decreased dramatically following the May 14 ordered departure of all non-emergency employees and eligible family members from Embassy Baghdad, Consulate General Erbil, and the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center. For personnel under Chief of Mission authority, the number of U.S. direct hires dropped from 563 to 312.<sup>409</sup>

### **Erbil New Consulate Compound Construction Resumes**

Following the May 14 ordered departure, the DoS contracting officer issued a project suspension order on May 16 to the Erbil New Consulate Compound construction contractor, who successfully demobilized the site within 48 hours. The DoS lifted the suspension order effective June 15. The contractor was fully remobilized by the end of the quarter.<sup>410</sup> The Overseas Buildings Operations bureau reported that it is working to review and analyze the cost and schedule impacts of the project suspension and should be able to provide more information about these impacts by the end of October 2019.<sup>411</sup>







A U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon refuels from a 908th Expeditionary Aerial Refueling Squadron KC-10 Extender. (U.S. Air Force photo)

# OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

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## OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

This section of the report provides information on Lead IG and partner agencies' strategic planning efforts; completed, ongoing, and planned Lead IG and partner agencies' oversight work related to audits, inspections, and evaluations; Lead IG investigations; and hotline activities from April 1 through June 30, 2019.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

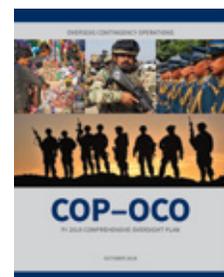
Pursuant to Section 8L of the Inspector General Act, the Lead IG develops and implements a joint strategic plan to guide comprehensive oversight of programs and operations for each overseas contingency operation. This effort includes reviewing and analyzing completed oversight, management, and other relevant reports to identify systemic problems, trends, lessons learned, and best practices to inform future oversight projects. The Lead IG agencies issue an annual joint strategic oversight plan for each operation.

#### FY 2019 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan Activities

Starting in late 2014, upon designation of the DoD IG as the Lead IG for OIR, the three Lead IG agencies developed and implemented a joint strategic oversight plan for comprehensive oversight of OIR. That oversight plan has been updated each year. The *FY 2019 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for Operation Inherent Resolve*, effective October 1, 2018, organized OIR-related oversight projects into five strategic oversight areas: 1) Security, 2) Governance and Civil Society, 3) Humanitarian Assistance, 4) Stabilization, and 5) Support to Mission. The strategic plan was included in the *FY 2019 Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations*.

The Overseas Contingency Operations Joint Planning Group serves as a primary venue to coordinate audits, inspections, and evaluations of U.S. Government-funded activities supporting overseas contingency operations, including those relating to Africa, Southwest Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. The Joint Planning Group meets quarterly to provide a forum for coordination of the broader Federal oversight community, including the military service IGs and audit agencies, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and the OIGs from the Departments of Justice, the Treasury, Energy, and Homeland Security.

The most recent meeting of the Joint Planning Group occurred in May 2019. Richard Outzen, Senior Advisor for Syria Engagement at the DoS, spoke on his role at the DoS and on the evolving U.S. and international policy and other efforts regarding Syria.



**FY 2019  
Comprehensive  
Oversight Plan  
for Overseas  
Contingency  
Operations**

## Lead IG Strategic Oversight Areas

### SECURITY

*Security* focuses on determining the degree to which the OCO is accomplishing its mission to defeat violent extremists by providing security assistance to partner security forces. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Conducting counterterrorism operations against violent extremist organizations
- Training and equipping partner security forces
- Advising and assisting partner security forces
- Advising and assisting ministry-level security officials

### GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

*Governance and Civil Society* focuses on the ability of the host nation, at all government levels, to represent and serve its citizens. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Building or enhancing host-nation governance capacity, including the ability to sustainably resource its activities and services
- Countering and reducing corruption, social inequality, and extremism
- Promoting inclusive and effective democracy, civil participation, and empowerment of women
- Promoting reconciliation, peaceful conflict resolution, demobilization and reintegration of armed forces, and other rule of law efforts
- Fostering sustainable economic development activities
- Encouraging fair distribution of resources and provision of essential services
- Supporting sustainable and appropriate reconstruction activities

### HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

*Humanitarian Assistance* focuses on aid intended to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity during and after conflict, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for such crises. Distinct and separate from military operations, activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Providing food, water, medical care, emergency relief, and shelter to people affected by crisis
- Building resilience by supporting community-based mechanisms that incorporate national disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, and humanitarian response systems
- Assisting and protecting internally displaced persons and returning refugees
- Setting the conditions which enable recovery and promote strong, positive social cohesion

*(continued on next page)*

## Lead IG Strategic Areas *(continued from previous page)*

### STABILIZATION

*Stabilization* focuses on U.S. Government efforts to enable persons affected by the contingency operation to return to or remain in their homes with the expectation of basic security, and government and public services. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Removing explosive remnants of war
- Planning for security forces acceptable to local populations
- Repairing infrastructure and buildings
- Reestablishing utilities and public services
- Supporting local governance structures and reconciliation
- Setting conditions for resumption of basic commerce
- Planning for the provision of humanitarian assistance

### SUPPORT TO MISSION

*Support to Mission* focuses on the United States' administrative, logistical, and management efforts that enable military operations, empower host-nation governance, and provide humanitarian assistance to the local population. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Ensuring the security of U.S. personnel and property
- Providing for the occupational health and safety of personnel
- Supporting the logistical needs of U.S. installations
- Managing government grants and contracts
- Administering government programs

## AUDIT, INSPECTION, AND EVALUATION ACTIVITY

The Lead IG agencies use dedicated, rotational, and temporary employees as well as contractors to conduct oversight projects, investigate fraud and corruption, and fulfill their congressional mandate in strategic planning and reporting. Following an expeditionary workforce model, some oversight staff from the Lead IG agencies are stationed in offices in Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, and Germany. Oversight teams from these offices and from offices in the United States travel to Jordan, Turkey, and other locations in the region to conduct fieldwork for their projects.

This quarter, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies completed 10 reports related to OIR. These reports examined various activities that support OIR, including countering trafficking in persons (CTIP); operational contract support; personnel emergency preparedness and security at U.S. diplomatic facilities abroad; accountability of funds for countering violent extremism programs; contract management in overseas contingency operations; protecting U.S. ports of entry against high risk travelers; and humanitarian assistance programs in Iraq and Syria. As of June 30, 2019, 24 projects were ongoing and 11 projects were planned.

## FINAL REPORTS BY LEAD IG AGENCIES

### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

#### *Evaluation of DoD Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Kuwait*

DODIG-2019-088; June 11, 2019

The DoD OIG conducted this evaluation to determine whether DoD contracts in Kuwait comply with CTIP in statutes, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Defense Acquisition Regulations Supplement, and other DoD guidance; and whether DoD officials are providing effective oversight in accordance with command responsibility and contracting regulations, including taking measures to address any instances of non-compliance.

U.S. laws and federal regulations, as well as DoD policies, prohibit contractors, contractor employees, and their subcontractors from practices associated with trafficking in persons, such as withholding passports, charging recruitment fees, or providing wages and housing below host-nation standards. The DoD OIG initiated this evaluation after military criminal investigators substantiated that a DoD contractor violated FAR CTIP conditions.

The contractor, which operated food services for U.S. and Coalition personnel on Camp Arifjan, Camp Buehring, and Ali Al Salem Air Base, all located in Kuwait, failed to pay its employees the legally-required minimum monthly salary. The contractor charged exorbitant recruitment fees, putting its employees in a “state of enslaved bondage” because most of the employees’ salary went to paying off the debt for the fee and its accrued interest. Furthermore, the contractor enforced a 7-day-a-week, 12-hour-workday schedule and no permissible sick leave or regular days off while providing substandard housing. The Army Judge Advocate General Suspension and Debarment Official entered into an Administrative Compliance Agreement with the contractor in July 2017 to remedy the practices.

The DoD OIG determined that DoD officials at U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) did not consistently enforce DoD and command regulations regarding the identification of trafficking in persons and the oversight of CTIP in Kuwait. In addition, Army and Air Force contracting officers did not always confirm that contracts included the required clauses and oversight plans, and Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) personnel did not consistently monitor for contractor CTIP compliance, document their monitoring, and report results to contracting officers. As a result, USCENTCOM is at an increased risk of not detecting or correcting and underreporting labor trafficking in persons on U.S. military bases.

The DoD OIG made 12 recommendations to the USCENTCOM Commander, senior officials of U.S. Air Forces Central Command (USAFCENT) and Army Contracting Command–Rock Island, and the AAFES Chief Executive Officer (CEO) related to improving enforcement of CTIP requirements in Kuwait. For example, the DoD OIG recommended that USAFCENT and Army Contracting Command–Rock Island ensure that contracting officers include the FAR CTIP clause in all contracts, and that the AAFES CEO update the AAFES CTIP policy to provide guidance on monitoring contractor compliance with the FAR CTIP clause.

Management disagreed with eight of the recommendations. For example, the USCENTCOM Chief of Staff advised that USCENTCOM's service components do not always have a headquarters in country to allow for formally designated responsibility for CTIP compliance. The unresolved recommendations remain open.

### ***Audit of the Identification and Training of DoD's Operational Contract Support Workforce***

DODIG-2019-079; April 16, 2019

The DoD OIG conducted an audit to determine whether DoD Components incorporated operational contract support training into workforce development for military and DoD civilian personnel. Operational contract support is the process of obtaining supplies, services, and construction from commercial sources to support military operations. When properly planned, operational contract support can provide services that either cannot be performed by military forces or can be performed more efficiently through contract solutions.

The DoD OIG determined that DoD Components did not consistently integrate operational contract support training into workforce development. For example, the Army developed a training course for non-acquisition personnel, but this training did not adequately prepare personnel to perform operational contract support in theater at the combatant command level. In addition, the Navy has developed training requirements for its operational contract support personnel, but it has not identified which personnel are required to receive the training. Finally, the Air Force and the Marine Corps did not incorporate operational support training into their workforce development policy.

These deficiencies occurred because the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics—the agency responsible for implementing operational contract support—did not provide detailed guidance or establish training standards. Without properly trained personnel to meet combatant commanders' operational contract support needs, the DoD risks poor management of contracted capabilities in contingency operations.

The DoD OIG recommended that the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness conduct a Functional Competency Model assessment for operational contract support personnel. The DoD OIG also recommended that the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment establish training requirements for operational contract support positions. Management agreed with both recommendations.

### ***Evaluation of the Oversight of Intelligence Interrogation Approaches and Techniques***

DODIG-2019-077; April 15, 2019

The DoD OIG conducted an audit to determine whether DoD components' oversight of intelligence interrogation approaches and techniques adhered to applicable DoD policies and regulations. The DoD OIG focused on the roles of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (OUSDI), the U.S. Southern Command, USCENTCOM, and the U.S. Special Operations Command. The DoD OIG did not focus on the Defense Intelligence Agency's role because the Defense Intelligence Agency's responsibility for intelligence interrogations was providing oversight of counterintelligence and human intelligence

training, not overseeing the performance of combatant command intelligence interrogations. Intelligence-Interrogation is the systematic process of questioning a captured or detained person to obtain reliable information to satisfy foreign intelligence collection requirements.

The DoD OIG determined that OUSD/I developed and coordinated DoD policy, and reviewed, approved, and ensured coordination of DoD Component intelligence interrogation policies, directives, and doctrine. The DoD OIG determined that there were inconsistencies in OUSD/I's oversight of the implementation of DoD policy regarding combatant command intelligence interrogation approaches and techniques. The inconsistencies in OUSD/I's intelligence interrogation implementation oversight occurred because OUSD/I officials focused on intelligence interrogation policy reviews rather than developing procedures for, and conducting policy implementation oversight of, intelligence interrogations. As a result, OUSD/I cannot ensure that the combatant commands' intelligence interrogation programs are employing interrogation approaches and techniques consistent with the applicable policies and regulations.

With regard to the three combatant commands, the DoD OIG determined that U.S. Southern Command's intelligence interrogation policies and oversight procedures met DoD requirements, but other details are classified.

The DoD OIG recommended that the OUSD/I develop formal combatant command intelligence interrogation oversight procedures and develop a schedule for conducting intelligence interrogation policy implementation oversight. The DoD OIG also recommended that the Commander of USCENTCOM review and update Central Command regulations to reflect USCENTCOM's current operating procedures for maintaining and overseeing USCENTCOM's intelligence interrogation-related records, and require Headquarters, USCENTCOM personnel to have access to all of the data repositories that maintain its intelligence interrogation-related records.

The full final report is classified. The classified details, including other recommendations and responses, are discussed in the classified appendix to this report.

## **DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

### ***Audit of the Department of State Implementation of Policies Intended to Counter Violent Extremism***

AUD-MERO-19-27; June 26, 2019

The DoS OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the DoS had developed goals and objectives for its strategy to counter violent extremism, and monitored funds provided to support those objectives.

The spread of violent extremism poses significant challenges for U.S. national security. To achieve its overall countering violent extremism (CVE) goals and objectives, the DoS provides funds (generally through grants and cooperative agreements) to implementing partners to execute CVE programs and projects. From FY 2015 through FY 2017, the DoS and USAID reported spending almost \$497 million on CVE programs and projects. DoS bureaus and missions currently provide grants and cooperative agreements to implement CVE programs and projects in 41 countries and locations, including Iraq and Syria.

The DoS OIG determined that the Department had developed goals, objectives, and guidance for its CVE strategy and highlighted them in several documents. These documents include multiple joint strategies with USAID and the congressionally mandated Assistance Strategy and Spend Plan for Programs to Counter and Defeat Terrorism and Foreign Fighters Abroad of 2017.

However, the DoS OIG could not affirm that CVE grants and cooperative agreements were achieving desired results because the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism had not ensured that the strategic plans and activities of DoS bureaus aligned with DoS CVE goals and objectives and spend plan. Specifically, the DoS OIG determined that 5 of 12 (42 percent) CVE grants and cooperative agreements reviewed did not align with or support the Department's CVE goals and objectives. The lack of alignment hinders the DoS's ability to measure the results of CVE awards, identify best practices that could be replicated, or abandon ineffective efforts that do not advance CVE goals and objectives.

The DoS OIG also determined that reporting of funds used to support CVE goals and objectives needs improvement. Specifically, OIG found that reported spending on CVE efforts is inaccurate and incomplete because it included awards that did not align with Department CVE goals and objectives and excluded some spending that supported CVE efforts, such as public diplomacy spending.

The DoS OIG made nine recommendations to relevant bureaus to improve the accounting and reporting of DoS CVE funds. For example, the DoS OIG recommended that the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, in coordination with other relevant DoS offices, develop and implement a single definition for what constitutes a CVE program or project. Management concurred with all but one recommendation. The Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources did not state whether it concurred or did not concur with the final recommendation related to ensuring that operating units differentiate whether the Department or USAID manages funds in reports on countering violent extremism foreign assistance spending.

***Compliance Follow-Up Audit: Emergency Action Plan for U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq***  
AUD-MERO-19-32; June 24, 2019

This report examines whether U.S. Embassy Baghdad has addressed key findings from a DoS OIG 2012 report on the Emergency Action Plan, and whether preparations for foreseeable emergencies reflect the evolving security situation in Iraq. The report is classified. A summary of this report with its findings and recommendations is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

***Management Assistance Report: Mission Turkey Safety and Security Infractions Need Immediate Attention***

AUD-MERO-19-26; May 29, 2019

This report examines whether DoS oversight personnel in Turkey have implemented adequate controls to ensure that the fuel contractor performed acquisition, storage, and distribution of fuel in accordance with contract terms, Federal regulations, and DoS guidance. The report also examines whether the bureaus are adhering to policies and procedures to ensure the safety and security of post personnel. The report is classified. A summary of this report with its findings and recommendations is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

***Lessons Learned from Office of Inspector General Audits Concerning the Review and Payment of Contractor Invoices Supporting Overseas Contingency Operations Contracts***

AUD-MERO-19-19; April 1, 2019

The DoS conducted this audit to identify common challenges identified in the DoS OIG's series of invoice review audits and measures to address them; best practices identified in the DoS OIG's audits that can be replicated across the DoS to improve the invoice review process for overseas contingency operations; and the invoice review practices of other U.S. Government agencies involved in overseas contingency operations that can be adopted by the DoS to improve the efficacy of its invoice review process.

Between March 2017 and June 2018, the DoS OIG issued a series of audit reports assessing the invoice review process used by four DoS bureaus that relied on contracted support to conduct their missions in Iraq and Afghanistan: the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS). At the time the DoS OIG conducted those audits, the combined value of the contracts reviewed was more than \$6.6 billion.

In those earlier audit reports, the DoS OIG identified three common challenges that confronted these bureaus during the invoice review process. First, NEA, INL, and DS experienced staffing shortages that hampered their efforts to thoroughly review invoices. Second, NEA and INL were not fully prepared to monitor contractor performance, which increased the risk that the DoS paid for services that did not meet contract requirements. And third, the use of cost-reimbursable contracts had a significant effect on the workload of the invoice reviewers because of the complexity of the invoices.

In addition to these shortcomings, the DoS OIG identified two best practices that, if adopted DoS-wide, could improve the invoice review process and the accuracy of such reviews. First, the DoS Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS) independently conducts periodic quality control reviews to verify the accuracy of invoices that have been approved for payment by the DoS bureaus. CGFS then communicates the results of these reviews to the bureau involved. Second, NEA developed and implemented contract-specific training that improved the accuracy of NEA's invoice reviews. Similarly, DS implemented training for its invoice review personnel specific to its Worldwide Protective Service contract.

In this capping report, the DoS OIG made seven recommendations to strengthen the invoice review process throughout the DoS. The relevant DoS bureaus concurred with all seven recommendations and the DoS OIG considered each recommendation resolved pending further action at the time this report was issued.

## U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### ***Performance Audit on the Adequacy and Compliance of Blumont Holding, Inc.'s Disclosure Statement, January 1, 2018, with Cost Accounting Standards***

3-000-19-028-I; June 21, 2019

USAID contracted with an audit firm to determine the adequacy and compliance of Blumont Holding, Inc.'s (BHI) original disclosure statement with cost accounting standards. Previously, BHI provided USAID-funded programming in Syria. The audit firm assessed BHI's original disclosure statement and found that it adequately described the contractor's revised cost accounting principles and complied with applicable regulations. USAID OIG reviewed the report and determined the report is in conformance with professional standards.

### ***Audit of Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development under Multiple USAID Agreements for the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2017***

3-000-19-008-R; June 12, 2019

Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), a French non-profit, served as an OFDA implementer in Syria and Iraq in 2017, the year covered by this organization-wide audit. ACTED's awards in the region supported efforts to advance a range of objectives in Syria, including improving the humanitarian situation through multi-sector and rapid needs assessments; enhancing resilience of conflict-affected communities; and providing immediate life-saving assistance to IDPs—including emergency shelter; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and non-food items for those affected by the Raqqah offensive. In Iraq, programs were for situational assessments and trend analysis of IDP displacement and provisions of shelter, non-food items, and WASH assistance to returnees and IDPs.

ACTED contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements. Auditors examined more than \$69 million in expenditures, and concluded that ACTED's fund accountability statement was presented fairly, in all material respects. The auditors did not identify any questioned costs, material weaknesses in internal control, or material instances of noncompliance, and expressed an unmodified opinion on ACTED's indirect cost rate calculations. USAID OIG reviewed the report and determined the report was in conformance with professional standards.

## FINAL REPORTS BY PARTNER AGENCIES

### DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

#### ***CBP's Global Entry Program is Vulnerable to Exploitation***

OIG-19-49; June 24, 2019

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) OIG conducted this audit to determine whether Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) controls over its Global Entry Program prevent high risk travelers from obtaining expedited screening into the United States.

CBP created Global Entry to allow expedited entry for pre-approved, low risk travelers arriving in the United States. The DHS OIG determined that CBP's controls over the Global Entry Program do not always prevent ineligible and potentially high-risk Global Entry members from obtaining expedited entry into the United States. Specifically, during vetting, CBP approved travelers who did not meet the eligibility requirements and should not have been considered low risk. This occurred because CBP officers did not always comply with policies when reviewing Global Entry applications, and were not always able to properly determine an applicant's level of risk.

Additionally, the DHS OIG determined that CBP officers granted some Global Entry members expedited entry during the airport arrival process without verifying the authenticity of their electronic kiosk receipts. Furthermore, CBP officers did not properly respond to security breaches involving kiosk receipts. Security breaches can include finding a discarded receipt or discovering a tampered or counterfeited receipt, or someone using another Global Entry member's receipt. Unless CBP officers authenticate kiosk receipts, someone could use a fake receipt to enter the United States. These weaknesses were due to officers not following policy, as well as CBP's insufficient verification procedures.

As a result of CBP's lack of adherence to its compliance program's policies and procedures, the possibility of individuals using Global Entry to enter the United States with the intent to cause harm or carry out illicit activities increases.

The DHS OIG made six recommendations to CBP management to mitigate vulnerabilities in its Global Entry Program. The recommendations included for CBP to enhance training and oversight to ensure CBP officers at vetting, enrollment centers, and ports of entry follow Federal regulations and Global Entry Program policies and procedures; and for CBP to develop and evaluate improved methods to ensure CBP officers authenticate Global Entry membership prior to travelers exiting the Federal Inspection Service area. Management agreed with the recommendations and initiated corrective actions to address the findings.

## ONGOING OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

As of June 30, 2019, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 24 ongoing projects related to OIR. Figure 5 describes the ongoing projects by strategic oversight area.

Tables 5 and 6, contained in Appendix E, list the title and objective for each of these projects. The following sections highlight some of these ongoing projects by strategic oversight area.

### SECURITY

The Lead IG and partner agencies each have ongoing audits related to security.

- The **DoD OIG** is evaluating whether CJTF-OIR effectively planned and executed military information support operations to counter ISIS in Iraq and Syria.
- The **DoD OIG** is evaluating whether the Air Force has implemented weather support capabilities on the MQ-1 and MQ-9 unmanned aircraft systems.
- The **DoD OIG** is evaluating civilian casualty evaluation and reporting procedures to determine if there are accurate accounts of potential civilian casualties resulting from OIR airstrikes.
- The **DOJ OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the Bureau of Prisons’ policies, procedures, and practices for monitoring inmates with known or suspected ties to domestic and foreign terrorism as well as its efforts to prevent further radicalization among its inmate population.
- The **GAO** is evaluating U.S. Government assistance to Iraq’s Ministry of the Interior to determine the amount and objectives of this assistance to the Ministry of Interior and its forces.

### HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to determine what corrective actions a Syria- response implementer has taken to remedy internal control weaknesses and known gaps identified by USAID OIG investigations.

### STABILIZATION

- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to assess USAID’s management of its transition strategy for humanitarian assistance in Iraq and oversight of its humanitarian assistance and stabilization activities.

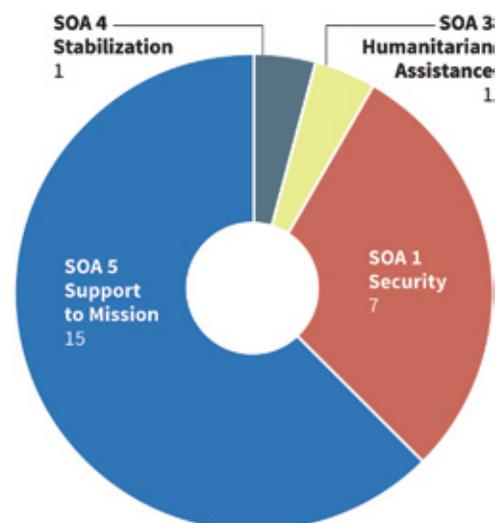
### SUPPORT TO MISSION

The Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies are conducting audits related to contracting, combat readiness, and internal controls.

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the DoD accounted for Counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Fund equipment designated for Syria from procurement through divestment.

Figure 5.

**Ongoing Projects by Strategic Oversight Area**



- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the Army developed adequate controls to ensure proper oversight of base operations support services at Camp Taji, Iraq.
- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the Army has planned and accounted for the retrograde of U.S. military equipment from Syria.
- The **DoS OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether fuel acquisition, storage, and distribution in Turkey and Lebanon are performed in accordance with contract terms and Federal regulations.
- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether implementers are delivering results as intended and to assess USAID's awards management process.
- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to determine how USAID accounts for its workforce and uses information to strategically plan and make workforce decisions.
- The **Army Audit Agency** is conducting an audit to determine whether the Army has taken necessary actions to mitigate risks associated with the expeditionary contracting material weakness.

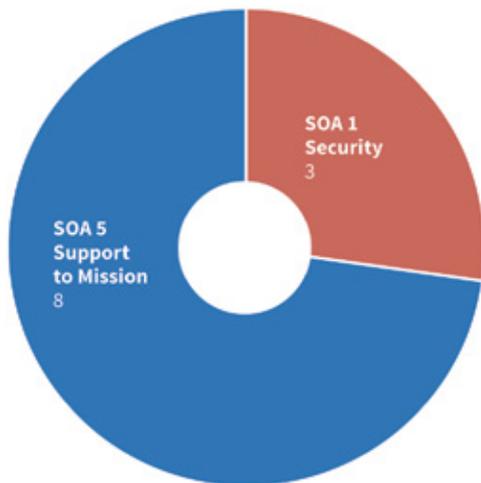
## PLANNED OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

As of June 30, 2019, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 11 planned projects related to OIR. Figure 6 describes the planned projects by strategic oversight area.

Tables 7 and 8, contained in Appendix F, list the project title and objective for each of these projects. The following highlights some of these planned projects by strategic oversight area.

Figure 6.

### Planned Projects by Strategic Oversight Area



### SECURITY

- The **DoD OIG** intends to evaluate whether tactical signals intelligence processing, exploitation, and dissemination support is sufficient to satisfy OIR priority intelligence requirements.
- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether the Military Services pre-deployment training to counter an adversary's use of unmanned aircraft systems is done in accordance with the geographic combatant commands' operational requirements
- The **Treasury OIG** intends to evaluate whether the Office of Terrorist Financing and Intelligence actions are meeting Treasury's responsibilities to disrupt ISIS funding.

### SUPPORT TO MISSION

- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether the Military Services properly stored, tracked, and safeguarded pharmaceuticals at locations supporting overseas contingency operations.

- The **DoS OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether DoS and U.S. Mission Iraq personnel properly accounted for property.
- The **DoS OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether DoS contractors are providing armoring services to the DoS in compliance with contract terms and conditions.
- The **Army Audit Agency** intends to evaluate whether base operations support in Kuwait and Qatar meets mission needs.

## INVESTIGATIONS AND HOTLINE ACTIVITY

### INVESTIGATIONS

The investigative components of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies continued to conduct investigative activity related to OIR during the quarter. The Lead IG agencies used investigators in Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and United Arab Emirates, as well as in Germany and Washington, D.C., to conduct their OIR-related investigations.

### INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY RELATED TO OIR

During this quarter, Lead IG investigations resulted in one debarment of a contractor, which is discussed below.

Investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies closed 12 investigations, initiated 18 new investigations, and coordinated on 124 open investigations. The open investigations involve grant and procurement fraud, corruption, theft, computer intrusions, and human trafficking allegations.

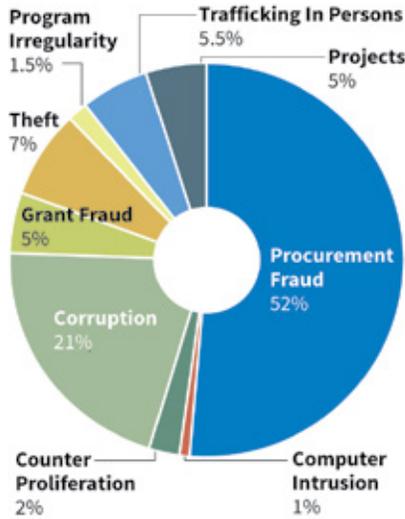
The Lead IG agencies and partners continue to coordinate their investigative efforts through the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group, which consists of representatives from the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS, the DoD OIG's investigative and criminal division), the DoS OIG, USAID OIG, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID), the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. This quarter, the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group conducted 41 fraud awareness briefings for 510 participants.

In other outreach, USAID's Inspector General and the OIG's investigations and audit leadership met with the U.S. Representative for UN Management and Reform, as well as officials in UN oversight bodies, to discuss USAID OIG investigative activities. These meetings highlighted the need for more intensive oversight of public international organizations. USAID OIG discussed the Syria Investigations Working Group, which gathers implementer oversight bodies to discuss cases and fraud trends in complex humanitarian assistance settings, and briefed relevant UN bureaus engaged in humanitarian assistance and oversight on new reporting requirements for public international organizations.

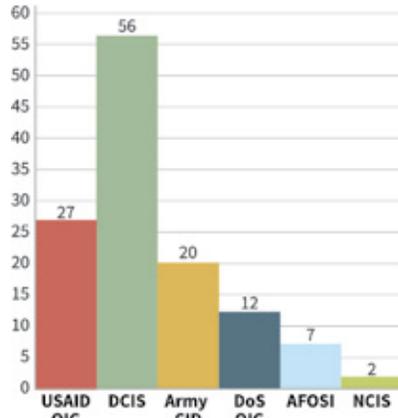
The Dashboard on the opposite page depicts activities of this Working Group.

# ACTIVITY BY FRAUD AND CORRUPTION INVESTIGATIVE WORKING GROUP

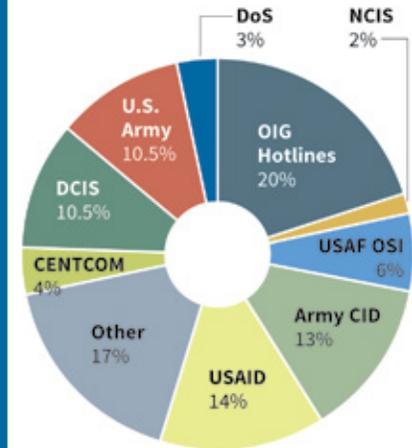
OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE  
As of June 30, 2019



## OPEN INVESTIGATIONS BY WORKING GROUP MEMBER\*



## SOURCES OF ALLEGATIONS



OPEN INVESTIGATIONS\*  
**124**

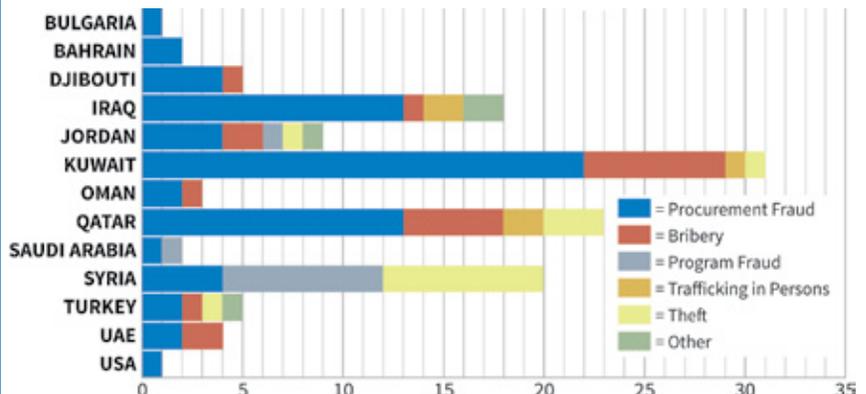
## Q3 FY 2019 RESULTS

Arrests	—
Criminal Charges	—
Criminal Convictions	—
Fines/Recoveries	—
Suspensions/Debarments	—/1
Contract Terminations	—
Personnel Actions	—
Administrative Actions	—

## Q3 FY 2019 BRIEFINGS

Briefings Held	41
Briefings Attendees	510

## PRIMARY OFFENSE LOCATIONS



\*Some investigations are joint with more than one agency and some not joint with any other agency. Therefore, the total number of Joint Open Cases may not equal the total number of Open Cases. Open Cases as of 6/30/2019.

### Contractor Debarred Following Investigation into Kickback Scheme

During the quarter, officials debarred a procurement team leader for contractor SOS International (SOSI) at Camp Taji, Iraq, following allegations of improper contract actions in exchange for kickbacks. In April, Headquarters, CJTF-OIR, Camp Union III, Baghdad, Iraq, barred the team leader from entering all installations or places under the control or jurisdiction of CJTF-OIR. The action was the result of a November 2018 DCIS and CID investigation into allegations that the team leader received the kickbacks in exchange for awarding U.S. Government contracts and received procurement sensitive information. The contracts were miscellaneous purchase order requests for a Base Operations and Support contract awarded to SOSI to support Camp Taji, Iraq.

### INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY RELATED TO LEGACY CASES

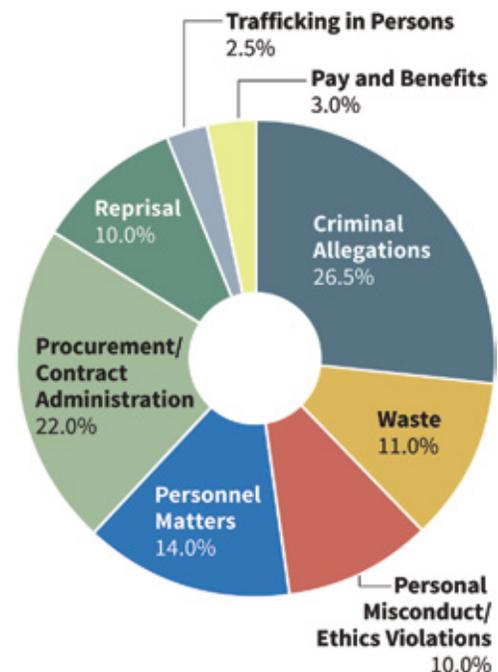
DCIS has 10 ongoing “legacy” investigations related to crimes involving the OIR area of operations that occurred prior to the designation of OIR.

### HOTLINE

Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints and contacts specific to its agency. The hotlines provide a confidential, reliable means for individuals to report violations of law, rule, or regulation; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; or abuse of authority. The DoD OIG has an investigator to coordinate the hotline contacts among the Lead IG agencies and others as appropriate. During the quarter, the investigator referred 72 cases to Lead IG agencies and other investigative organizations.

As noted in Figure 7, the majority of the cases opened during the reporting period were related to procurement/contract administration, criminal allegations, personal misconduct, and personnel matters.

Figure 7.  
Hotline Activities









A Syrian mother and her children walk down the streets of their neighborhood. (U.S. Army photo)

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## APPENDIX A

# Classified Appendix to this Report

This unclassified report includes a classified appendix that elaborates on specific topics related to OIR, as noted in several sections of this report. Each topic is discussed in an unclassified context and then uses classified information from the DoD and the DoS to provide additional information in the classified appendix. For the period April 1 through June 30 2019, the classified appendix includes the following topics:

### MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS:

- ISIS Resurges as Iraqi and U.S.-backed Syrian Forces Struggle to Sustain a Security Presence in Cleared Territory
- Partial Drawdown of U.S. Troops in Syria Decreases Resources and Support to U.S.-backed Syrian Forces
- U.S. Policy and Mission in Syria Remain the Same Following U.S. Drawdown of Forces
- The United States Seeks Increased Coalition Support to Offset the Reduction in U.S. Troops in Syria
- Citing Increased Threats from Iran, the United States Evacuates Non-emergency Embassy Personnel from Iraq

### EVENTS IN SYRIA

- ISIS Resurges in Syria
- SDF Operations Focus on Clearing ISIS from Population Centers
- Shia Militias Conduct Cross-border Operations against ISIS
- SDF Struggles to Detain Thousands of ISIS Fighters
- SDF's Ability to Secure Camp Filled with ISIS Supporters is "Minimal"
- Despite Hostilities with Turkey, Kurdish Elements of the SDF Continue Counter-ISIS Fight
- U.S. Troops Conduct Joint Patrols with Turkish Troops near Manbij
- Turkish and Kurdish Forces Wage Low-level Conflict in Afrin
- Amid Heightened Tensions, U.S. Forces Closely Monitor Iranian Activity in Syria
- Russia Blocks Aid, Blames United States in Disinformation Campaign
- Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Council Faces Mounting Discontent in Arab-majority Areas in Northeastern Syria
- The DoS's START Forward Program Has Not Yet Resumed in Syria

### EVENTS IRAQ

- ISIS Reorganizes Leadership, Continues to Establish Safe Havens in Iraq
- ISF Clearance Operations Result in Short-term Gains
- Coalition and ISF Lack Sufficient ISR Assets to Track Threats
- U.S.-Iranian Tensions Build in Iraq
- The DoD Is Developing Long-range Counter-ISIS Plans for Iraq

### OVERSIGHT

- Evaluation of the Oversight of Intelligence Interrogation Approaches and Techniques
- Compliance Follow-up Audit: Emergency Action Plan for U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq
- Management Assistance Report: Mission Turkey Safety and Security Infractions Need Immediate Attention

## APPENDIX B

# Methodology for Preparing Lead IG Quarterly Report

This report is issued pursuant to sections 2, 4, and 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, which requires that the designated Lead IG provide a quarterly report, available to the public, on an overseas contingency operation. The DoD Inspector General is the designated Lead IG for OIR. The DoS Inspector General is the Associate Lead IG for the operation.

This report contains information from the three Lead IG agencies—DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG—as well as from partner oversight agencies. This report covers the period from April 1 through June 30, 2019.

To fulfill its congressional mandate to produce a quarterly report on OIR, the Lead IG gathers data and information from Federal agencies and open sources. The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of formal audits, inspections, or evaluations mentioned or referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not verified or audited all of the data and information provided by the agencies. The humanitarian assistance section is based on public UN documents, and information provided by USAID and the DoS.

### DATA COLLECTION

Each quarter, the Lead IG agencies direct a series of questions, or data calls, to agencies about their programs and operations related to OIR. The Lead IG agencies use the information provided by their respective agencies for quarterly reports and to determine where to conduct future audits and evaluations.

The agencies that responded to the request for information for this quarter included the following:

- Department of Defense
- Department of State
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- Department of Homeland Security OIG
- Department of Justice OIG
- Department of the Treasury OIG

### OPEN-SOURCE RESEARCH

This report also draws on current, publicly available information from reputable sources. Sources used in this report include the following:

- Information publicly released by U.S. agencies
- Congressional testimonies
- Press conferences, especially DoD and DoS Briefings
- United Nations (and relevant branches)
- Reports issued by non-governmental or research organizations
- Media reports

Materials collected through open source research provide information to describe the status of the operation and help the Lead IG agencies assess information provided by their agency data calls. However, in light of the operational realities and dynamic nature of OIR, the Lead IG agencies have limited time and ability to test, verify, and independently assess the assertions made by these agencies or open sources. This is particularly true where the Lead IG agencies have not yet provided oversight of these assertions through audits, inspections, or evaluations.

### REPORT PRODUCTION

The Lead IG is responsible for assembling and producing this report. The DoD OIG coordinates with the DoS OIG and the USAID OIG, which drafted sections of the report related to the activities of their agencies. Every Lead IG agency participates in reviewing and editing the entire quarterly report.

The Lead IG agencies provide the offices that have responded to the data call with opportunities to verify and comment on the content of the report. During the first review, the Lead IG asks agencies to correct inaccuracies and provide additional documentation. The Lead IG incorporates agency comments, where appropriate, and sends the report back to the agencies for a final review for accuracy. Each OIG coordinates the review process with its own agency.



## APPENDIX C

# Department of Justice Prosecutions

Since 2014, the Department of Justice (DoJ) has charged more than 150 individuals with international terrorism-related conduct relating to ISIS. Over the same time period, the DoJ has obtained more than 115 convictions; the remaining cases remain pending. These numbers include individuals who could be described as foreign terrorist fighters or homegrown violent extremists linked to ISIS, as well as those who may have assisted the conduct of foreign terrorist fighters or homegrown violent extremists or obstructed investigations, or cases which otherwise involved an identified link to ISIS. DoJ prosecutions resulted in people being sentenced, convicted, or pleading guilty during this quarter.

Examples from the DoJ this quarter are:

- **On April 2, 2019, in the Southern District of New York, Adam Raishani aka “Saddam Mohamed Raishani,”** Akayed Ullah was sentenced to 20 years in prison to be followed by 20 years of supervised release for attempting to provide and conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. Beginning in the fall of 2015, Raishani conspired with another ISIS supporter (co-conspirator 1) to provide material support and resources to ISIS. Raishani and co-conspirator 1 agreed to travel overseas to join and wage jihad for ISIS, with co-conspirator 1 to depart first. Raishani helped coordinate co-conspirator 1’s transportation and accompanied co-conspirator 1 to the airport and, by April 2017, Raishani was actively planning to travel abroad to join ISIS. Raishani indicated that he aspired to join ISIS in Syria. Raishani indicated his intention to meet an ISIS member in Turkey, who would facilitate Raishani’s joining the terrorist organization in Syria. On June 21, 2017, Raishani attempted to board a flight bound for Turkey (via Portugal) at JFK Airport, where law enforcement officers arrested him.
- **On April 22, 2019, in the Eastern District of Wisconsin, Waheba Issa Dais** pleaded guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIS, based upon her conduct in support of the terrorist organization. According to admissions made in connection with her plea, Dais used hacked Facebook accounts in order to support ISIS. Using these accounts, she pledged her allegiance to ISIS on numerous occasions, communicated with and encouraged other ISIS supporters who described their plans to conduct attacks, disseminated information about explosives and biological weapons, and attempted to recruit new members to ISIS’s cause.
- **On April 22, 2019, in the Eastern District of Wisconsin, Yosvany Padilla-Conde** pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting an accomplice’s attempt to provide material support or resources to ISIS. Details of the accomplice, Jason Ludke, were reported in last quarter’s OIR report. Padilla-Conde agreed to assist, and did assist, Ludke’s attempt to join ISIS by traveling from Wisconsin through Mexico to Syria and Iraq. Padilla-Conde also swore allegiance to ISIS and expressed his intent to travel to the Middle East in videos that an undercover employee of the FBI (who Padilla-Conde believed was an ISIS recruiter) and Ludke requested that he make. On October 5, 2016, Ludke and his co-conspirator were traveling to the Texas/Mexico border in order to accomplish their plan to join ISIS, when law enforcement arrested them
- **On May 6, 2019, in the Northern District of Texas, Said Azzam Mohamad Rahim** was convicted of one count of conspiracy to provide material support to ISIS, one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIS, and six counts of making false statements involving international terrorism to federal authorities. According to evidence presented at trial, Rahim moderated a social media channel dedicated to recruiting fighters for ISIS. Rahim was arrested on March 5, 2017, while attempting to board a flight to Amman, Jordan.
- **On June 10, 2019, in the District of South Carolina, Zakaryia Abdin** sentenced to 20 years’ imprisonment followed by lifetime supervised release. In August 2018, Abdin pleaded guilty

to attempting to provide material support to ISIS. The FBI arrested Abdin at the Charleston International Airport on March 30, 2017, as he attempted to board a plane to travel to Jordan. Abdin began his efforts on January 3, 2017, when he created a social media account to attempt to join ISIS. Abdin sought a handler to help him travel to Syria or Egypt to make contact with ISIS. Unbeknownst to him, he instead made contact with an undercover FBI employee, who Abdin believed was affiliated with ISIS.

- **On June 13, 2019, in the Southern District of Ohio, Laith Waleed Alebbini** was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, followed by 25 years' supervised release. On December 6, 2018, Alebbini was convicted of attempting and conspiring to support ISIS. Alebbini was arrested by the FBI on April 26, 2017, after his arrival at the airport to travel overseas. The evidence at trial showed that, at the time of his arrest, Alebbini had a ticket and boarding passes in hand for a flight to Amman, Jordan, with a connection in Istanbul, Turkey. The evidence also showed that Alebbini intended to leave the plane once in Istanbul, forego the flight to Amman, and instead make his way from Turkey into Syria in order to join ISIS.
- **On June 14, 2019, in the Eastern District of New York, Mohamed Rafik Naji** was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment followed by 5 years' supervised release. On February 16, 2018, Naji pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIS. According to documents filed in court, Naji viewed and distributed ISIS propaganda before traveling from New York to Yemen in March 2015 in an effort to join ISIS. While in Yemen, Naji repeatedly tried to travel to areas controlled by ISIS, explaining in emails with an associate in the United States that he was on his fifth attempt to reach ISIS. Following his return to the United States in September 2015, Naji continued to express his support for ISIS and violent jihad.

The DoJ also provided information on DoJ activities to strengthen the rule of law overseas to help counter ISIS. The DoJ stated that during the quarter, the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program met twice with the DoS Counterterrorism Bureau to develop a more robust watch list program for Iraq to identify and prevent travel by known and suspected terrorists and other wanted persons. However, implementation might be delayed or canceled due to the ordered departure of U.S. personnel from Iraq.

Additionally, the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program, in partnership with the FBI's Global Training Unit, engaged in preparations for an Organized Crime Development Train-the-Trainer program for the Iraqi Organized Crime Division that was to be conducted in July 2019. This course will provide new and existing trainers with the skills necessary to deliver organized crime investigation courses. In addition to subject-matter specific content, the course exposes students to adult learning techniques, the foundations of learning, and learning theory. Participants selected to attend this course are current academy instructors or practitioners in the organized crime field, and is relevant to OIR because ISIS also operates as an organized crime enterprise.

## APPENDIX D

# Treasury's Actions Against Terrorist Financing

The Department of the Treasury has global terrorism authorities to target activities of extremist groups, including ISIS. Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence and Office of Foreign Assets Control disrupt the ability of terrorist organizations to fund their operations. Since 2014, Treasury has designated a total of 77 individuals and entities providing support to ISIS pursuant to Executive Order 13224.

Treasury officials reported the following notable designations were made this quarter:

- **Halima Adan Ali (Halima)**
- **Mushtaq Talib Zughayr al-Rawi (Mushtaq)**
- **Umar Talib Zughayr al-Rawi (Umar)**
- **Walid Talib Zughayr al-Rawi (Walid)**
- **Muhannad Mushtaq Talib Zughayr al-Rawi (Muhannad)**
- **Abd-al-Rahman 'Ali Husayn al-Ahmad al-Rawi (Abd-al-Rahman)**
- **Muhammad Abd-al-Qadir Mutni Assaf al-Rawi (Muhammad)**
- **Al-Ard Al-Jadidah Money Exchange Company (Al-Ard Al-Jadidah)**

Treasury designated Halima, Mushtaq, Umar, Abd-al-Rahman, Muhammad, and Al-Ard Al-Jadidah for assisting in, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or financial or other services to, or in support of, ISIS. Treasury designated Walid and Muhannad for assisting in, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or financial or other services to, or in support of, Mushtaq.

The designated entity, Al-Ard Al-Jadidah, served as a money exchange used by ISIS members in Iraq and transferred money for ISIS across Iraq as part of the Rawi Network. Mushtaq facilitated money transfers between the exchange company and hawalas in Iraq. Halima played an integral role in an ISIS financial facilitation network with global reach. She worked with Treasury-designated Waleed Ahmed Zein (Treasury designated Waleed Ahmed Zein on September 7, 2018) to conduct transactions in support of ISIS fighters in Syria, Libya, and central Africa. Mushtaq operated the Rawi Network with the assistance of his son, Muhannad, his brothers, Umar and Walid, and other family members, including Abd-al-Rahman. Walid was purportedly the brains behind the finance operation, while Umar and Abd-al-Rahman managed ISIS transactions. Muhannad facilitated Mushtaq's money through various exchanges. Muhammad also transferred money for Mushtaq, Walid, and other ISIS members.

No individuals or organizations sanctioned for providing support to ISIS were removed from the sanctions list during this reporting period.

## APPENDIX E

# Ongoing Oversight Projects

Tables 5 through 6 list the title and objective for Lead IG and partner agencies ongoing oversight projects.

Table 5.

### Ongoing Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agency, as of June 30, 2019

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

##### ***Audit of U.S. Air Force Contract Augmentation Program IV Government Furnished Property***

To determine whether the U.S. Air Force accounted for the Air Force Contract Augmentation Program IV Government Furnished Property in Southwest Asia.

##### ***Audit of DoD's Accountability of Equipment Designated for Syria***

To determine whether the DoD accounted for Counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Fund equipment designated for Syria from procurement through divestment.

##### ***Audit of Jordan Border Program***

To determine whether the Defense Threat Reduction Agency is ensuring that the contractor-provided equipment, training, and sustainment meet the Jordan Border Security Program requirements.

##### ***Audit of U.S. Military Equipment Retrograde from Syria***

To determine whether the Army has planned and accounted for the retrograde of U.S. military equipment from Syria.

##### ***Audit of the Army's Oversight of the Base Operations Support Services Contract for Camp Taji, Iraq***

To determine whether the Army developed adequate controls to ensure the contractor is providing the base operations support services at Camp Taji, Iraq, in accordance with contract requirements.

##### ***Evaluation of CJTF-OIR's Military Information Support Operations***

To determine whether CJTF-OIR effectively planned and executed military information support operations to counter ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

##### ***Evaluation of Air Force Implementation of Weather Support Capabilities on Unmanned Aircraft Systems***

To determine whether the Air Force has implemented weather support capabilities on the MQ-1 and MQ-9 unmanned aircraft systems.

##### ***Audit of the Cybersecurity of DoD Additive Manufacturing Systems***

To determine whether DoD Components are securing additive manufacturing systems (commonly known as 3D printing) and data to prevent unauthorized changes and ensure integrity of design data.

##### ***Evaluation of U.S. Central Command's Kinetic Targeting Processes and Reporting Procedures***

To evaluate U.S. Central Command's target development and prosecution processes, as well as post-strike collateral damage and civilian casualty assessment activities.

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL*****Audit of Fuel Acquisition and Distribution in Lebanon and Turkey***

To determine whether DoS contract oversight personnel in Lebanon and Turkey have implemented adequate controls to ensure that the fuel contractors performed acquisition, storage, and distribution of fuel in accordance with contract terms, Federal regulations, and DoS guidance, and whether the relevant DoS bureaus are adhering to fuel safety policies and procedures to ensure the safety and security of post personnel.

***Audit of Cost Management and Recovery Efforts of Embassy Air in Afghanistan and Iraq***

To determine whether the fees collected by the Aviation Working Capital Fund cost center were sufficient to cover all costs required to sustain operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

***Audit of Global Engagement Center's Execution of its Mandate to Coordinate Federal Government Efforts to Counter Disinformation and Propaganda Designed to Undermine the United States***

To determine whether the DoS Global Engagement Center has demonstrated progress toward achieving its statutory mission of leading, synchronizing, and coordinating U.S. Government efforts to counter foreign-state and non-state actors' propaganda and misinformation.

**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL*****Audit of USAID's Oversight of Selected Implementer Delivering Humanitarian Assistance in Response to the Syrian Crisis***

To determine what corrective actions the selected Syria- response implementer has taken to remedy internal control weaknesses identified by investigations; and if USAID eliminated oversight gaps identified by investigations of the selected Syria-response implementer.

***Audit of USAID/Iraq Activities***

To assess USAID's management of its transition strategy for humanitarian assistance in Iraq; and USAID's oversight of its humanitarian assistance and stabilization activities.

***Audit of USAID's Award Management***

To determine whether implementers are delivering results as initially intended, and assess USAID's awards management process.

***Audit of USAID's Workforce Transformation and Data Use***

To determine how USAID accounts for its workforce; evaluate how USAID uses information to strategically plan and make workforce decisions; and assess how Human Resources Transformation Strategy activities support strategic workforce planning.

Table 6.

**Ongoing Oversight Projects by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of June 30, 2019**

<b>ARMY AUDIT AGENCY</b>
<p><b><i>Expeditionary Contracting Material Weakness</i></b> To determine whether the Army has taken necessary actions to mitigate risks associated with the expeditionary contracting material weakness.</p>
<p><b><i>Reach-Back Contracting Support</i></b> To determine whether the Army has an effective plan, procedures, and organizational structure in place to directly provide contracting support during contingency/expeditionary operations.</p>
<b>AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY</b>
<p><b><i>Air Force Office of Special Investigations Emergency and Extraordinary Expense Funds</i></b> To determine whether Air Force Office of Special Investigations officials effectively managed and accounted for emergency and extraordinary funds at deployed locations.</p>
<p><b><i>Contract Management, 39th Air Base Wing, Turkey</i></b> To determine whether personnel managed contracts in accordance with guidance.</p>
<b>DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL</b>
<p><b><i>Efforts to Address Homegrown Violent Extremists</i></b> To review the FBI's homegrown violent extremist casework and resource management; evaluate the FBI's coordination with relevant components and its strategic and tactical policies and processes to identify and address threats; and assess the FBI field divisions' implementation of strategic and tactical policies and processes to investigate homegrown violent extremist threats.</p>
<p><b><i>Audit of the Bureau of Prisons' Counterterrorism Efforts</i></b> To review the Bureau of Prisons' policies, procedures, and practices for monitoring inmates with known or suspected ties to domestic and foreign terrorism and its efforts to prevent further radicalization among inmate populations.</p>
<b>GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE</b>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq Activities</i></b> To conduct independent analysis of the DoD and DoS plan to transition the activities conducted by Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq but funded by the DoD to another entity, or transition the funding of such activities to another source, as required by Public Law 114-328.</p>
<p><b><i>U.S. Assistance to Iraq's Ministry of Interior</i></b> To determine the amounts and objectives of U.S. assistance to the MOI and its forces; the extent to which U.S. agencies have assessed their assistance to the MOI and its forces, and the results of the assessments; and the extent to which DoD and DoS have vetted the MOI and its forces for gross violations of human rights and associations with terrorist groups or groups associated with the government of Iran.</p>

## APPENDIX F

# Planned Oversight Projects

Tables 7 through 8 list the title and objective for Lead IG and partner agencies' planned oversight projects.

Table 7.

### Planned Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agency, as of June 30, 2019

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***Evaluation of Tactical Signals Intelligence Processing, Exploitation and Dissemination Support to OIR and OFS***

To determine whether Theater Support Activity's tactical Signals Intelligence Processing, Exploitation and Dissemination support is sufficient to satisfy OIR and OFS priority intelligence requirements.

***Audit of Pre-Deployment Training on Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)***

To determine whether the Military Services conducted pre-deployment training to counter an adversary's use of UAS in accordance with the operational requirements of the geographic combatant commands.

***Audit of Management of Pharmaceutical Inventories in Support of the Overseas Contingency Operations***

To determine whether the Military Services properly stored, tracked, and safeguarded pharmaceuticals at its overseas locations supporting overseas contingency operations.

#### DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***Audit of New Consulate Compound Construction– Erbil, Iraq***

To determine whether the DoS Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations has effective quality assurance processes in place to ensure that the contractor builds the Erbil consulate according to contract specifications.

***Oversight of DoS Armored Vehicle Procurement Process***

To determine whether DoS contractors are providing armoring services to the DoS in compliance with contract terms and conditions.

***Audit of the Property Accountability of U.S. Mission Iraq***

To determine the extent to which the DoS and U.S. Mission Iraq's policies, procedures, controls, and personnel were in place and operating as intended to ensure property was accounted for properly.

***Audit of the Administration and Oversight of Grants within the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons***

To determine to what extent the DoS Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons' administration and oversight of grants are in accordance with applicable Federal acquisition regulations and DoS guidance.

***Audit of Property Accountability and Transfer in Support of the Diplomatic Support Services Contract***

To determine the extent to which the DoS accurately accounted for property under current life support and operations and maintenance contracts in Iraq, and the extent to which the DoS Office of Acquisitions Management and Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs have planned property transfers to the Diplomatic Support Services contract.

Table 8.

**Planned Oversight Projects by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of June 30, 2019**

**ARMY AUDIT AGENCY**

***Base Operations Support–Area Support Groups Kuwait and Qatar***

To determine whether base operations support management and oversight at long term contingency locations in Kuwait and Qatar efficiently and effectively met mission needs; and determine whether base operations support personnel had adequate training and experience to oversee necessary services.

***Theater Provided Equipment–U.S. Army Central Command***

To determine whether theater provided equipment maintenance and reset strategies within the area of responsibility efficiently and effectively supported ongoing operations.

**DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

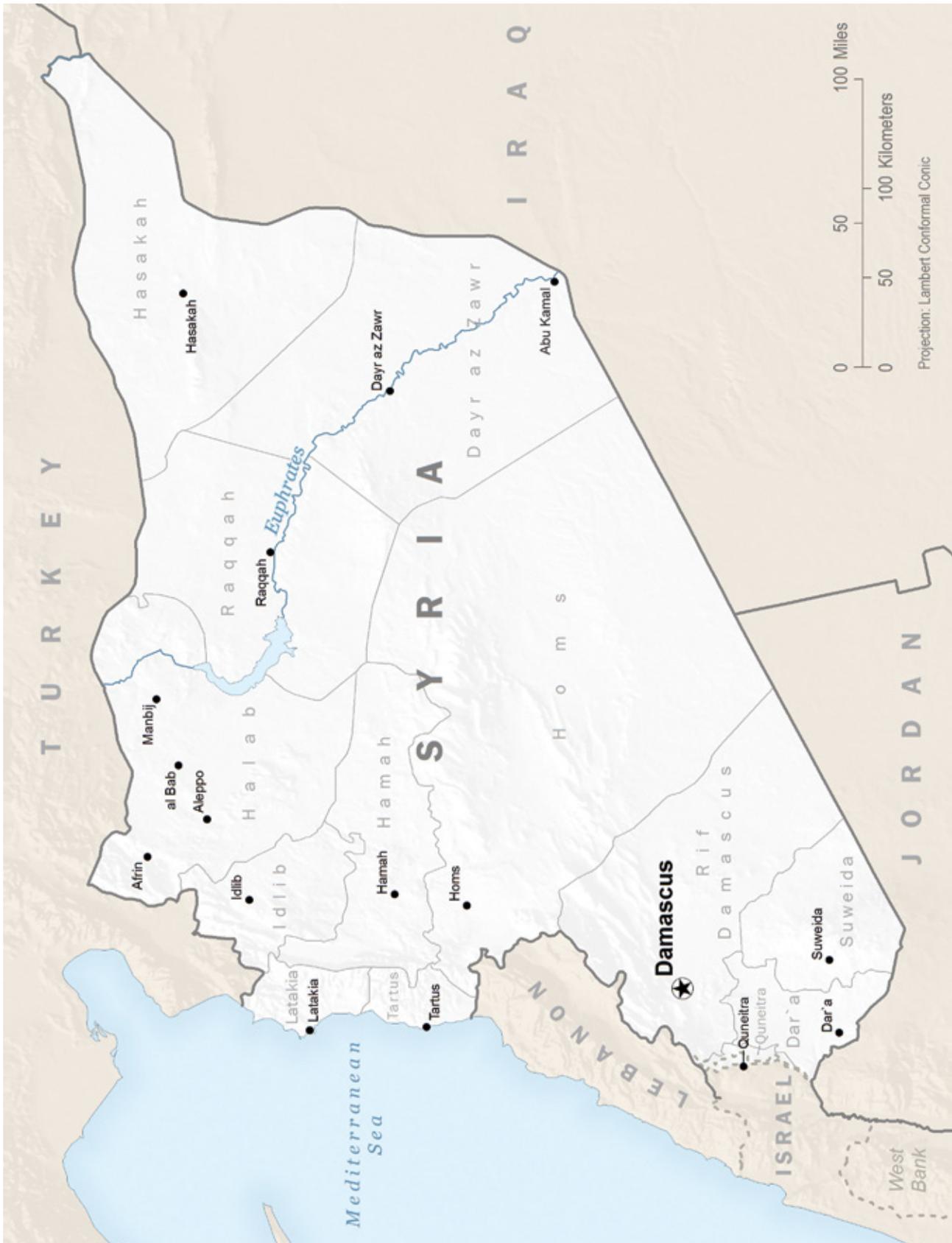
***Terrorist Financing and Intelligence Actions to Disrupt ISIS’ Finances***

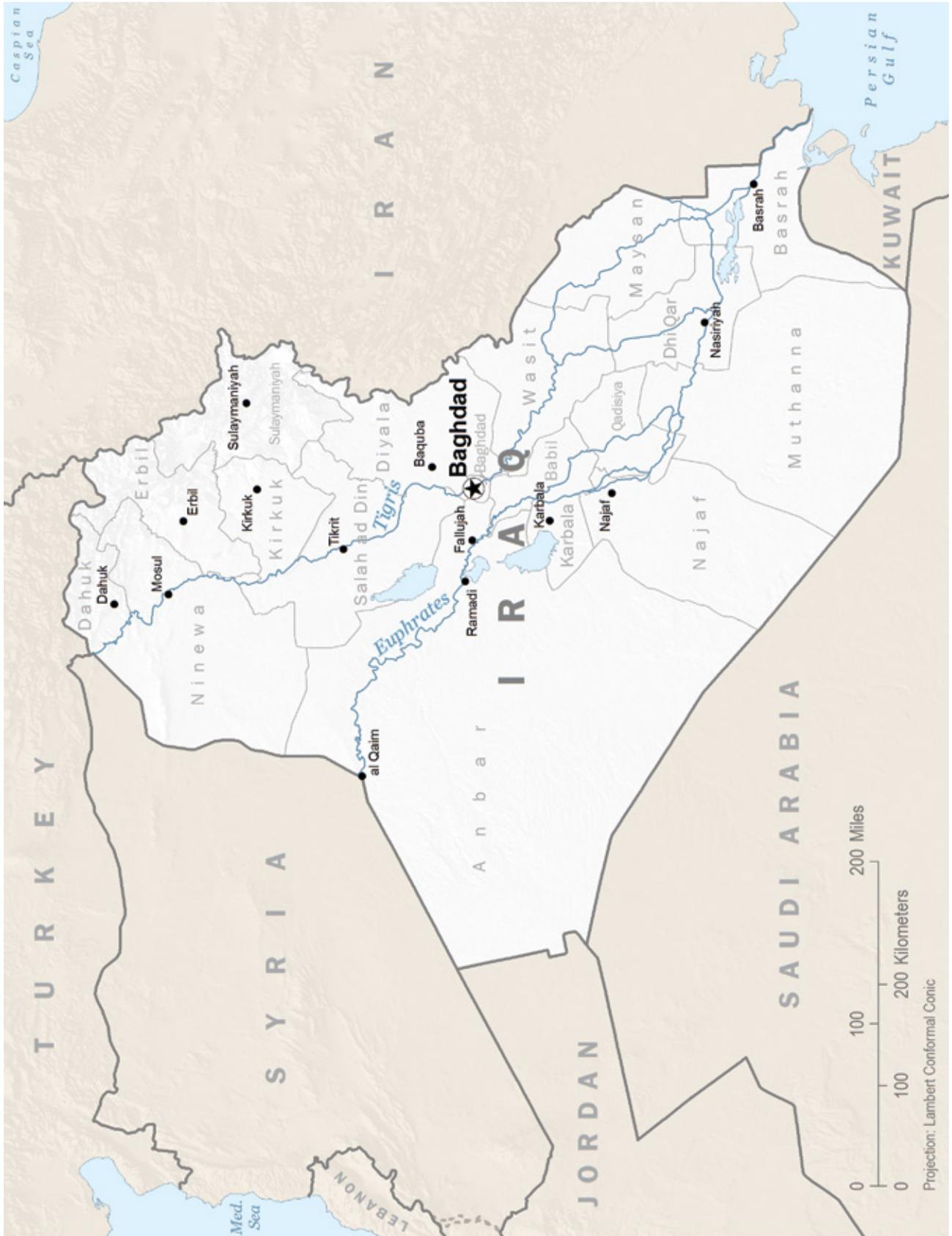
To determine whether Terrorist Financing and Intelligence’s actions are meeting Treasury’s responsibilities to disrupt ISIS financing.



## Acronyms

Acronym		Acronym	
CJTF-OIR	Combined Joint Task Force-OIR	OCO	Overseas Contingency Operation
CN&GT	Counter Narcotics and Global Threats	OFDA	U.S. Aid for International Development, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
CTEF	Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund	OIR	Operation Inherent Resolve
D-ISIS	Defeat-ISIS	ORP	Operation Reliable Partnership
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency	OUSD(P)/ISA	Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
DoD OIG	Department of Defense Office of Inspector General	PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (Turkish)
DoJ	U.S. Department of Justice	PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces
DoS OIG	Department of State Office of Inspector General	PRISF	Provincial Internal Security Forces
FFP	U.S. Agency for International Development, Office for Food for Peace	PRM	Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
FFS	Funding Facility for Stabilization	PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
FMF	Foreign Military Financing	PYD	Democratic Union Party (Kurdish)
FY	fiscal year	RGB	Regional Guard Brigades
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	SAC	Syrian Arab Coalition
IKR	Iraqi Kurdistan Region	SDC	Syrian Democratic Council
InSF	Internal Security Forces	SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps	START	Syrian Transition Assistance Response Team
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces	STEF	Syrian Train and Equip Fund
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria	Treasury	U.S. Department of the Treasury
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance	UN	United Nations
JHAS	Jordan Health Aid Society	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party (Iraqi Kurdish)	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government	UNICEF	United Nation's Children's Fund
Lead IG	Lead Inspector General	USAID OIG	United States Agency for International Development Office of Inspector General
Lead IG agencies	Refers to DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG	USAID OTI	U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Transition Initiatives
MaT	Mughawir al Thawra	USCENTCOM	United States Central Command
MERV	Middle Euphrates River Valley	WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
MMC	Manbij Military Council	YPG	Kurdish People's Protection Units
NGO	Non-governmental organization		
OCHA	U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs		





## ENDNOTES

### Executive Summary

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A set of 81mm mortar rounds are counted and checked for malfunctions before mortar training at Besmaya Training Center, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

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