

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL | REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS



OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE
OPERATION PACIFIC EAGLE-PHILIPPINES

APRIL 1, 2018-JUNE 30, 2018

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, among other things, provide quarterly reports to Congress. The DoD Inspector General (IG) is designated as the Lead IG for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) and Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines (OPE-P). The DoS IG is the Associate Inspector General for OIR and OPE-P. The USAID IG participates in oversight for both operations.

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 and OPE-P.

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

- 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.
- Perform analyses to ascertain the accuracy of information provided by federal agencies relating to obligations and expenditures, costs of programs and projects, accountability of funds, and the award and execution of major contracts, grants, and agreements.
- Report quarterly and biannually to the 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 data call questions 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 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. For further details on the methodology for this report, see Appendix A.

OIR CLASSIFIED APPENDIX

This report also includes an appendix containing classified information related to OIR. This classified appendix is provided to relevant agencies and congressional committees.

FOREWORD

We are pleased to submit the Lead Inspector General quarterly report to the U.S. Congress on Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines. This report discharges our individual and collective agency oversight responsibilities pursuant to sections 2, 4, and 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978.

The United States launched OIR in 2014 to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The strategy to defeat ISIS includes military operations, as well as support for local security forces, diplomacy, governance, and stabilization programs. This report provides information on the status of OIR according to the five strategic oversight areas adopted by the Lead IG agencies:

- Security
- Governance
- Humanitarian assistance
- Stabilization
- Support to mission

Designated a contingency operation in 2017, OPE-P supports the Philippine government in its efforts to isolate, degrade, and defeat ISIS affiliates and other terrorist organizations in the Philippines. This report provides an update on the status of counterterrorism operations, humanitarian assistance, and oversight related to OPE-P. We include OPE-P in this report because it relates to the same broader counter-ISIS mission as OIR.

This report discusses the oversight work conducted by the Lead IG Offices of the Inspector General and our partner oversight agencies during the period from April 1, 2018, through June 30, 2018, as well as ongoing and planned oversight work.

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



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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
and the Broadcasting
Board of Governors



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) A Philippine Marine simulates providing cover fire during an amphibious exercise as part of Exercise Balikatan. (U.S. Navy photo); The Nouri Mosque as it stands in Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo); Iraqi soldiers set up a support by fire position during a training event at Camp Taji. (U.S. Army photo); A man scavenges rebar from a destroyed building in Raqqah, Syria. (U.S. Army photo). (Bottom row): U.S. Army artillery alongside Iraqi Security Force artillery fire at known ISIS locations near the Iraqi-Syrian border. (U.S. Army photo); An Iraqi soldier attending the Baghdad Fighting School urban operations instructor course conducts village clearance drills at Camp Taji, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

MESSAGE FROM THE LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL



Glenn A. Fine

I am pleased to present this Lead Inspector General quarterly report on the status of two overseas contingency operations: Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) and Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines (OPE-P). This is our 14th Lead Inspector General report on OIR and 3rd report on OPE-P. This report summarizes the quarter's events for both operations, and describes completed, ongoing, and planned Lead IG and partner agency oversight work relating to these activities.

During this quarter, Iraqi forces continued to maintain pressure on ISIS, and provided security for major events such as the Iraqi parliamentary elections in May. However, while nationwide violence remained low in comparison to previous quarters, violence rose in the northern provinces of Kirkuk, Diyala, and Salah ad Din, signaling ISIS's resilience. Two separate Shia alliances were projected to win the most seats in Iraq's parliamentary elections, but allegations of fraud forced a ballot recount.

In Syria, U.S.-led operations against ISIS made progress after Kurdish fighters resumed offensive operations on May 1, following a 2-month "pause." The United States and Turkey agreed on a roadmap for the withdrawal of Kurdish People's Protection Units fighters from the northern town of Manbij, which had been a long-standing Turkish demand. Meanwhile, the Administration's March decision to suspend \$200 million in stabilization funds disrupted some programs to clear explosives, remove rubble, restore power and clean water, and promote economic recovery in areas of northern Syria liberated from ISIS.

In the Philippines, U.S. forces continued to conduct training for, and share intelligence with, their Philippine counterparts. According to DoD officials, this quarter the number of jihadist rebels claiming ISIS affiliation diminished, but they still managed to engage in a series of clashes with Philippine forces.

The Lead IG agencies and our oversight partners issued 16 oversight reports related to OIR and 1 report related to OPE-P this quarter. These reports examined various activities, including contract and equipment management, disbursements for contingency operations, and sexual assault prevention and response program management. Lead IG investigations related to OIR resulted in 1 arrest, 2 criminal charges, 29 personnel actions, 3 suspensions, and 12 debarments.

On May 29, 2018, the DoD IG was designated as the Lead IG for three new overseas contingency operations related to counterterrorism activities. Two are in Africa, and one is in the Middle East. These operations, which are currently classified, seek to degrade al Qaeda and ISIS-affiliated terrorists in specific sub-regions of these areas. We anticipate reporting on these operations in our next quarterly report.

My Lead IG colleagues and I remain committed to oversight of both overseas contingency operations. 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 cursive script that reads "Glenn A. Fine".

Glenn A. Fine

Principal Deputy Inspector General Performing the Duties of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense





U.S. Army artillery alongside Iraq Security Force artillery fire at known ISIS locations near the Iraqi-Syrian border. (U.S. Army photo)

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The Nouri Mosque as it stands in Mosul, Iraq. It was on the steps of this mosque that ISIS was announced as a caliphate. (U.S. Army photo)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lead IG agencies combine their required reporting on two contingency operations—OIR for Iraq and Syria and OPE-P for the Philippines—as both operations support efforts to defeat ISIS and other terrorist groups. The following section contains a summary of each operation.

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

As the military campaign unfolded this quarter, the United States refocused efforts to defeat ISIS. The U.S. military emphasized training and stabilization in Iraq. The DoD supported renewed military operations against ISIS in Syria, where a complex and on-going civil war and evolving United States policy posed challenges for the effort to defeat ISIS. In both countries, the DoD reported that ISIS was working to conserve forces for continued insurgent activity.¹

The DoD continued to support the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), including the Peshmerga, and the vetted Syrian opposition through the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund.² As of May 22, 2018, the DoD had used this funding to provide more than \$2 billion of equipment to the ISF, including 1,000 non-tactical vehicles, 1,100 armored vehicles, and personal equipment such as uniforms, small arms, and ammunition to equip 17 Iraqi Army brigades and 20 Federal Police and Border Guard battalions, according to a Coalition official.³

Iraq

U.S. MILITARY BEGAN A NEW EFFORT IN OPERATIONS

With the announcement of the end of major combat operations against ISIS in Iraq, the DoD began a new effort within Operation Inherent Resolve called Reliable Partnership. The new effort shifts the training focus from combat operations to building the capacity of the ISF to train themselves, conduct wide-area security and policing activities, and manage an ISIS insurgency. As of the end of the quarter, about 90 percent of the ISF were engaged in “hold” operations designed to prevent ISIS from reemerging.⁴

With ISIS no longer in control of significant territory in Iraq, violence declined in all but three Iraqi provinces—Kirkuk, Diyala, and Salah ad Din. These provinces experienced upticks in attacks, particularly along the so-called “green line” that runs along territory claimed by the central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The DoD estimated that 15,500 to 17,100 ISIS fighters remained in Iraq, although estimates of the numbers of ISIS fighters have varied sharply among sources and over time. Although there has been an overall decrease in violence, these fighters, organized in small cells, continued to plant improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and to mount terrorist attacks. ISIS also carried out multiple kidnappings and abductions in Kirkuk. Media reports noted that ISIS’s continued ability to launch attacks could exacerbate sectarian tensions between Shia and Sunni communities.⁵

SEPARATE ALLIANCES LED BY ANTI-IRAN CLERIC AND PRO-IRAN MILITIA LEADER PROJECTED TO WIN IRAQ’S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

A Shia alliance headed by nationalist cleric Moqtada al Sadr, was projected to win the most seats in parliamentary elections that were held on May 12. The electoral success of Sadr, the scion of a famous family of Shia martyrs who opposes foreign influence in Iraq, surprised analysts, who attributed his win to low voter turnout and his party’s promises to stamp out

IRAQ: SELECTED KEY EVENTS, 4/1/2018–6/30/2018

MAY 12

Iraq holds national parliamentary elections. Preliminary results show Shia cleric Moqtada al Sadr’s electoral list winning the most seats, followed by the Iran-linked Fateh alliance led by Hadi al-Amiri and by Prime Minister al Abadi’s Nasr coalition.

JUNE 21

Iraq’s Supreme Court orders a partial recount of votes due to allegations of fraud and abuse.

Fighters with the Iran-linked PMF group Kataib Hezbollah exchange fire with Baghdad police after a militia member is stopped on suspicion of vehicle theft. After a standoff with police surrounding the Kataib Hezbollah headquarters, the situation resolves with the suspect handed over to police.

MAY 17

The U.S. Treasury sanctions the Iraqi Al Bilad Islamic Bank as part of implementing sanctions on Iran, causing the Central Bank of Iraq to cut ties with the bank and with its Chief Executive Officer, Aras Habib Karim, who ran for parliament on Prime Minister Abadi’s list.

JUNE 27

Iraqi forces recover the bodies of security personnel who appeared in an ISIS hostage video demanding the release of ISIS prisoners.

An Iraqi volunteer shows the peace sign with one ink-stained finger indicating that he participated in the elections in Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)



corruption, improve living conditions, and create a government of “technocrats.” The Fateh coalition, an alliance including pro-Iran groups, was projected to win the second-largest number of seats. Fateh is headed by Badr Organization leader Hadi al Ameri, who maintains close ties with Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).⁶ Prime Minister Haider al Abadi’s Nasr coalition came in third.⁷ Neither leader from the two alliances projected as front-runners affirmatively supports a long-term U.S. military presence in Iraq. However, according to analysts and media reports, both appear to have softened their positions toward the United States in recent months.⁸

In response to complaints about voting irregularities, Iraq’s parliament voted on June 6 to suspend the results and conduct a 100 percent manual recount of ballots. Iraq’s Supreme Court limited the recount to ballots collected from approximately 5,000 polling stations out of about 56,000 nationwide.⁹ The recount, which started just after the end of the quarter, is not expected to alter the outcome of the election, but could delay the formation of a government.¹⁰ The results underscored the level of popular discontent with Iraq’s political establishment. Almost 75 percent of the incumbent members of parliament, including the speaker, lost their seats.¹¹

Iran wields considerable influence in Iraq through strong trade and bilateral ties, but also through Iranian support for some Shia militias belonging to the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), an umbrella organization of some 50 paramilitary groups. Ameri’s Badr Organization belongs to the PMF, and hundreds of candidates linked to various PMF militias ran in the parliamentary elections.¹²

In response to widespread complaints about voting irregularities, however, Iraq’s parliament voted on June 6 to suspend the results and conduct a 100 percent manual recount of ballots.

KEY CHALLENGES

The following developments created additional challenges in OIR.

BALANCING THE UNITED STATES' RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKEY AGAINST THE NEED TO RELY ON YPG FIGHTERS BELONGING TO THE SDF IN MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST ISIS

The Manbij roadmap highlights the challenge faced by the United States in maintaining a relationship with the YPG, a Kurdish component of the U.S.-backed SDF, while also preserving U.S. relations with NATO ally Turkey. According to the DoS, implementation of the roadmap will require the United States to demonstrate to Turkey that the United States is taking concrete steps to address Turkish security concerns regarding the YPG while not asking the YPG to relinquish control of territory in a way that leaves the YPG feeling vulnerable to future Turkish aggression. However, the YPG appeared to recognize its weakened position. Shortly after the roadmap was negotiated, Kurdish leaders announced their readiness to enter into unconditional negotiations with the Syrian regime.¹³

IMPLEMENTING STABILIZATION PROGRAMS AND MAINTAINING TIES WITH LOCAL SYRIAN ORGANIZATIONS AFTER \$200 MILLION IN U.S. FUNDS WERE SUSPENDED

The suspension of \$200 million in stabilization funds disrupted but did not halt DoS activities in northern Syria, creating a gap in funding that the United States was pressing Coalition members to fill by increasing their contributions to stabilization programs. Designed to create the conditions under which internally displaced people and refugees can return home, DoS-funded activities affected by the freeze include removing explosive remnants of war, restoring essential services such as water and electricity, and building the capacity of local governments to function in areas liberated from ISIS.¹⁴

The suspension of funds may also damage local human and organizational networks cultivated by the United States and the Coalition to promote governance and stabilization.¹⁵ The DoS said that it was conducting a review of its programs in light of the suspension of funds. Contributions from some European countries allowed certain programs, such as the clearing of explosives, to continue or resume.¹⁶ Coalition nations pledged \$95 million for stabilization at a June meeting in Morocco, and some additional funding from Coalition partners was expected to result from a NATO meeting in Brussels.¹⁷ However, some nations expressed reluctance to contribute without U.S. leadership.¹⁸

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH A NEW IRAQI GOVERNMENT LIKELY TO INCLUDE ALLIANCES WHOSE LEADERS HAVE EXPRESSED MIXED VIEWS ON THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN IRAQ

The Iraq elections posed significant challenges to United States-Iraqi relations. In addition to widespread allegations of fraud, which have delayed the formation of a government while a ballot recount takes place, both of the electoral alliances that appear to have won the most votes are headed by Shia leaders who have at times criticized the U.S. military presence in Iraq or openly courted Iranian influence in Iraqi affairs. Prime Minister Abadi's Nasr alliance, which has developed close relations with the United States, came in third. In recent months, both alliance leaders appear to have moderated their stance toward U.S. military presence in Iraq.¹⁹



MORE THAN TWO MILLION IRAQIS REMAINED DISPLACED

Despite the end of major military operations against ISIS, the International Organization for Migration reported that, as of June 30, 2018, there were more than 2 million displaced Iraqis in the country, roughly 10 percent less than the number reported last quarter.²⁰ Overall, the trend toward displaced persons returning home continued.²¹

A reconstruction project in Mosul. (U.S. Army photo)

However, armed groups prevented thousands of people from returning to their areas of origin, often due to their perceived affiliation with extremist groups. Humanitarian organizations reported that many houses remained destroyed or contaminated by unexploded ordnance, or had been occupied by other families.²² The shortage of appropriate shelter, combined with a lack of employment opportunities and threats to safety, also discouraged families from returning home.²³ Faced with these hardships, many people who had gone home returned to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Humanitarian aid organizations expressed concern about the growing need to support a large number of IDPs for potentially lengthy stays in camps.²⁴

The U.S. Government continued to support humanitarian assistance activities through USAID and the DoS Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). The U.S.-funded assistance programs, primarily implemented through the United Nations and non-governmental partners, provided emergency food rations, shelter, medical assistance, and other vital support to IDPs and other affected populations. U.S. Government funding obligations for these efforts in Iraq totaled more than \$1.7 billion as of June 30, 2018.²⁵

STABILIZATION EFFORTS REMAINED UNDERFUNDED

This quarter, stabilization efforts in Iraq faced three major challenges: the difficulty and expense of removing IEDs and other unexploded ordnance amid ongoing military operations against ISIS; the need for stabilization funds, including \$75 million in funds

pledged but not yet delivered by the United States to the UN Funding Facility for Stabilization, which adversely affected stabilization projects in Mosul and Anbar; and renewed allegations that various Iraqi security forces continued to harass and abuse IDPs, particularly IDPs with suspected ties to ISIS.²⁶

There were also accusations that Iraqi courts had allowed summary trials of defendants, including children. The age of criminality in Iraq is nine years old. The DoS reported that the Iraqi government's efforts to address these abuses remained *ad hoc* and ineffective.²⁷

Syria

OPERATIONS AGAINST ISIS CONTINUED DESPITE REVIEW OF UNITED STATES POLICY ON SYRIA

According to the DoD, the U.S. military continued to work with local Syrian forces to defeat ISIS. However, the United States policy in Syria was under review by the Administration.²⁸ In addition to the March freezing of more than \$200 million in DoS funds for stabilization efforts, the Administration appeared to be considering a near-term withdrawal of U.S. troops from the country following President Trump's remarks in April about plans to leave Syria "very soon."²⁹ Toward that end, the United States sought greater regional participation in the military and assistance efforts to stabilize territory liberated from ISIS in northwest Syria and was winding down funding for stabilization programs.³⁰

The DoD reported no change in policy as of June 30, and DoD officials reaffirmed several long-term objectives in Syria, including ensuring an enduring defeat of ISIS, countering Iranian influence, and promoting a unified and stable Syria.³¹ The DoD reported that its operations against ISIS were intended to achieve these long-term goals, but did not respond to DoD OIG questions about whether the possible near-term withdrawal of troops or the

SYRIA: SELECTED KEY EVENTS, 4/1/2018–6/30/2018

APRIL 14

The United States, France, and the United Kingdom launch airstrikes on three targets linked to the Assad regime's chemical weapons program in the wake of the regime's use of chemical weapons in Douma on April 7.

MAY 9

Israel asserts that Iranian-backed forces fired 20 rockets at Israeli positions in the Golan Heights. Israel retaliates with airstrikes targeting alleged Iranian bases across Syria.

JUNE 8

ISIS fighters launch an attack on pro-regime forces in Abu Kamal in eastern Dayr az Zawr province. The attack is the largest ISIS operation since November 2017, but two days after capturing parts of the town they are forced out.

MAY 1

Syrian Kurdish forces return to the counter-ISIS fight, beginning a new phase to defeat the ISIS forces in Syria.

JUNE 4

The United States and Turkey agree to a framework for managing relations around the town of Manbij, agreeing that Kurdish forces will withdraw and that joint patrols between the United States and Turkey will take place.

JUNE 19

Syrian government forces begin major ground and air assault on rebel-held parts of Dar'a province in southern Syria.

A man scavenges rebar from a destroyed building in Raqqah, Syria. (U.S. Army photo)



freezing of stabilization funds had affected the U.S. military's ability to achieve these goals. Rather, the DoD stated that it was continuing to work with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to battle ISIS in two enclaves in northeastern Syria and to support a Syrian opposition group operating from the At Tanf garrison, a desert fortification near Syria's border with Iraq and Jordan.³²

However, DoD officials also said that they expected to "adjust the level of [U.S.] presence" in Syria after ISIS is defeated territorially there.³³ When that happens, DoD officials said, local and regional partners would ideally assume much of the "hold and build" responsibilities and stabilization efforts needed to ensure ISIS's lasting defeat.³⁴

SDF RESUMED OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AGAINST ISIS AND YPG FIGHTERS WITHDREW FROM MANBIJ

On May 1, the SDF, the U.S.-backed force that has been at the forefront in the fight against ISIS, resumed the fight to push ISIS from its remaining strongholds in northeastern Syria.³⁵ The renewed fighting ended a 2-month "operational pause" that resulted when approximately 1,500 Kurdish YPG fighters left the battlefield against ISIS to help Kurds in the northwestern enclave of Afrin fight a Turkish ground incursion.³⁶

The DoD said while Arab members of the SDF maintained defensive positions against ISIS during the pause, they did not conduct offensive operations. As a result, according to the DoD, ISIS capitalized on the YPG forces' redeployment to Afrin to increase its influence in territory held by the Syrian regime and various rebel groups, and was able to regroup and plan attacks.³⁷ By the end of June, aided by Iraqi cross-border air and ground support,

At the end of June, the Syrian regime, with Russian support, launched a separate assault against rebel-held areas of the southern province of Dar'a, which is located in a so-called "de-escalation zone" established between the United States and Russia in 2017.

the SDF had gained territory against ISIS in eastern Dayr az Zawr province. However, by the end of the quarter, ISIS was estimated to still control about 5 percent of Syria and to have roughly 14,000 fighters in the country, although estimates of ISIS force strength vary greatly depending on the source.³⁸

After the Kurdish YPG returned to the fight against ISIS, the United States and Turkey endorsed a roadmap to resolve tensions surrounding the northern Syrian city of Manbij.³⁹ The roadmap laid out a framework for the United States and Turkey to work together to maintain security and stability in Manbij, sustain gains against ISIS, and facilitate efforts to defeat it in eastern Syria.⁴⁰ In accordance with the roadmap, on June 18, U.S. and Turkish armed forces began coordinated, independent patrols along a line of control on the outskirts of Manbij. Turkish and U.S. forces also continued discussing and planning joint patrols along the demarcation line, as laid out in the roadmap. According to a Coalition spokesman, Turkish forces will not enter Manbij, but Kurdish forces would withdraw.⁴¹

Turkey had been demanding their withdrawal from Manbij since Kurdish fighters ousted ISIS and took control of the town in 2016. Turkey viewed YPG control of Manbij as a threat, given the proximity of Manbij to the Turkish border with Syria. Turkey views the YPG as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is waging a violent campaign in Turkey.⁴² Following the announcement of the roadmap, Kurdish YPG fighters announced they would withdraw remaining personnel from Manbij, further reducing territory held by Kurds along Syria's border with Turkey. Shortly afterward, Kurdish leaders announced their intention to negotiate regarding the future of Kurdish-dominated areas of northeastern Syria.⁴³

SYRIA CIVIL WAR: UNITED STATES RESPONDED TO SYRIAN USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS, BUT DID NOT SUPPORT REBELS FIGHTING THE REGIME

On April 14, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom bombed Syrian targets in response to the Syrian regime's April 7 use of chemical weapons against Douma, a rebel-held suburb of Damascus. The missiles, including 105 launched by the United States, targeted 3 Syrian chemical weapons storage and research facilities. The DoD said that the strikes impaired the Syrian regime's ability to deploy chemical weapons in the future, but also stated that there remained a possibility that Syria might again use chemical weapons because U.S. airstrikes "were not intended to eliminate all Syrian chemical weapon capability."⁴⁴

At the end of June, the Syrian regime, with Russian support, launched a separate assault against rebel-held areas of the southern province of Dar'a, which is located in a so-called "de-escalation zone" established between the United States and Russia in 2017.⁴⁵ Intense fighting caused more than 270,000 people to flee, mainly toward the border with Jordan and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Initially, the United States responded by threatening to take "firm and appropriate measures," but later scaled down the threat of retaliation, stating that it was "closely following the situation." As the quarter ended, fighting continued in this strategically vital province.⁴⁶ The DoS expressed dismay at the failure of Russia to honor its commitments to restrain the Syrian regime and reduce violence.⁴⁷

U.S. Army General Joseph Votel, commander of U.S. Central Command, talks to General Chiya, commander of Syrian Democratic Forces in Syria's Middle Euphrates River Valley. (U.S. Army photo)



As the fighting continued in Syria, UN-led efforts to advance a political process in Geneva sought to create a committee to revise Syria's constitution, which negotiators hoped would pave the way for new elections.⁴⁸ UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura described the diplomatic effort as a “cautious step forward.”⁴⁹

UNITED STATES EFFORTS TO CONFRONT IRAN IN SYRIA REMAINED “INDIRECT”

In April, General Joseph Votel, the commander of US Central Command, stated that the U.S. military continued to use “indirect” means to push back against Iranian influence in Syria. These included interdicting weapons shipments, supporting local forces, and bolstering the defenses of regional allies.⁵⁰ While the defeat of ISIS remained the reason for the U.S. military presence in Syria, the DoD reported this quarter that U.S. military presence and support for Syrian opposition groups had the “ancillary benefit” of denying Iran an opportunity to fill vacuums created by ISIS's loss of territory.⁵¹

The DoD also reported that Iran commanded about 3,000 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) members in Syria, as well as thousands of Lebanese Hezbollah and Shia foreign fighters from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, who reportedly conducted operations from at least 10 military bases and 40 other positions across Syria.⁵² While Iranian activity in Syria did not pose an immediate threat to U.S. troops stationed in Syria this quarter, according to the DoD, Iran's training and equipping of foreign fighters in Syria presents an ongoing threat to U.S.-backed forces.⁵³

Iran's presence in Syria and the presence of pro-Iran militias, particularly those located close to the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, also increased tension between Iran and Israel this quarter. On April 9, Iran and Russia blamed Israel for carrying out an airstrike on a Syrian air base near Damascus that killed at least 8 IRGC members. In response, two Iranian-backed militias operating in Syria threatened U.S. forces based at the At Tanf garrison, an isolated desert fortification used by the Coalition to train anti-ISIS forces located near Syria's border with Jordan and Iraq.⁵⁴

FIGHTING IN EASTERN GHOUTA AND DAR'A CREATED NEW DISPLACEMENT

The Syrian civil war continued to create dire humanitarian challenges this quarter. The Syrian regime's April 7 chemical weapons attack on the Damascus suburb of Douma in eastern Ghouta, and its launch of air and ground forces in the southwest province of Dar'a, created new waves of displaced people and disrupted ongoing humanitarian assistance activities.⁵⁵ Humanitarian agencies noted that the Syrian regime and its allies frequently attacked civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and clinics this quarter.⁵⁶ The fighting in Syria has left 13.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance within the country, including 6.6 million people who remained internally displaced.⁵⁷

Residents walk through rubble trying to gain access to other portions of a local neighborhood in Raqqah, Syria. (U.S. Army photo)

In response to the humanitarian crisis, the U.S. Government continued to support assistance activities through USAID and the DoS's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. The U.S. Government-funded assistance programs, which are primarily implemented through the United Nations and other humanitarian assistance partners, provided emergency food rations, shelter, medical assistance and other vital support to internally displaced people and other affected populations. U.S. Government funding obligations for these efforts in Syria totaled more than \$4.9 billion as of June 30, 2018.⁵⁸



Lead IG Oversight Activities for OIR

COMPLETED REPORTS

The Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies completed 16 reports related to OIR from April 1 through June 30, 2018. These reports examined various activities that support OIR, including contracts and equipment management, disbursements for contingency operations, and sexual assault prevention and response program management.

During this quarter, the Lead IG agencies and their oversight partners had 58 ongoing and 19 planned oversight projects for OIR. Table 1 lists the released reports by agency.

Table 1.

OIR Oversight Reports Issued This Quarter

| Report | Release Date |
|---|----------------|
| DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Management of Army Equipment in Kuwait and Qatar</i> DODIG-2018-132 | June 29, 2018 |
| <i>The Trans-Africa Airlift Support Contract</i> DODIG-2018-116 | May 8, 2018 |
| <i>Processing and Disposition of Equipment at the DLA Disposition Services in Kuwait</i> DODIG-2018-112 | May 1, 2018 |
| <i>Defense Information Systems Agency Contract Awards at Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization Europe</i> DODIG-2018-104 | April 13, 2018 |
| DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Audit of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Invoice-Review Process for Worldwide Protective Services Contracts</i> AUD-MERO-18-47 | June 15, 2018 |
| <i>Audit of Food Safety Controls Under Baghdad Life Support Services Task Order</i> AUD-MERO-18-38 | May 3, 2018 |
| AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY | |
| <i>Munitions Management 39th Air Base Wing Incirlik Air Base, Turkey</i> F2018-0032-RA0000 | June 27, 2018 |
| <i>Facilities Maintenance 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar</i> F2018-0031-RA0000 | June 26, 2018 |
| <i>Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Management 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar</i> F2018-0030-RA0000 | June 19, 2018 |
| <i>Munitions Management 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar</i> F2018-0029-RA0000 | June 18, 2018 |

| Report | Release Date |
|---|---------------|
| Munitions Management 380th Air Expeditionary Wing Southwest Asia F2018-0028-RA0000 | June 15, 2018 |
| United States Air Force Central Command Area of Responsibility Aviation Fuels Management F2018-0004-L40000 | June 13, 2018 |
| Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Management 380th Air Expeditionary Wing Southwest Asia F2018-0027-RA0000 | June 5, 2018 |
| Disbursements for Contingency Operations 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar F2018-0026-RA0000 | June 1, 2018 |
| Disbursements for Contingency Operations 386th Air Expeditionary Wing Southwest Asia F2018-0025-RA0000 | May 22, 2018 |
| Emergency Contingency Allowance Equipment 386th Air Expeditionary Wing Southwest Asia F2018-0020-RA0000 | April 9, 2018 |

NEWLY ANNOUNCED PROJECTS

During the quarter, the Lead IG agencies and their partners announced four new projects related to OIR.

The DoD OIG announced three new audits: an audit of operational contract support force development, a summary audit of systemic weaknesses in the *Cost of War* reports, and an audit of Iraqi border guard equipment. The Air Force Audit Agency announced a project related to disbursing operations in Turkey.

INVESTIGATIONS ACTIVITY

During this quarter, Lead IG investigations resulted in 1 arrest, 2 criminal charges, 29 personnel actions, 3 suspensions, and 12 debarments. These cases are related to bid-rigging, bribery, fraud, kickbacks, and labor law violations. Investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies closed 4 investigations, initiated 11 investigations, and coordinated on 92 open investigations involving grant and procurement fraud, corruption, theft, computer intrusions, and human trafficking allegations.

OPERATION PACIFIC EAGLE-PHILIPPINES

Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines (OPE-P), designated an overseas contingency operation in September 2017, supports the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in its efforts to combat ISIS affiliates, also known as ISIS-Philippines (ISIS-P), and other violent extremist organizations in the Philippines. Under OPE-P, U.S. special operations forces provide training, advice, and other assistance, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support to the AFP. OPE-P does not involve any unilateral U.S. counterterrorism operations but rather aims to enable and build AFP capacity. While the DoD coordinates efforts with regional allies, OPE-P is a bilateral operation between the United States and the Philippines, and DoD officials stated there were no plans to expand the effort into a “coalition.”⁵⁹

A severely damaged neighborhood in Marawi (DoD photo)



This quarter, the United States and regional partners took several steps to support Philippine counterterrorism activity, both under OPE-P and separately through the larger bilateral security relationship. In April, the United States and the Philippines broke ground on the first of five planned U.S.-funded facilities at Philippine military installations designed to support bilateral combined efforts.⁶⁰ In May, U.S. and Philippine troops participated in the 34th annual Balikatan joint military training exercise in the Philippines. The number of participating troops increased by 60 percent from 2017, and the exercise focused on counterterrorism training, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief.⁶¹ Apart from these U.S. efforts, the Indonesian government announced plans in June to expand trilateral military patrols with the Philippines and Malaysia to combat ISIS-P. Intelligence sharing among Southeast Asian nations announced this quarter would complement this trilateral effort.⁶²

DoD officials reported that ISIS-P remained weak and continued to lack a formal command and control structure, and the group's operational and financial ties with the core ISIS organization in Syria have been largely severed since October 2017.⁶³ In May 2018, the President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, met with 27 members of ISIS-P to accept their surrender and to encourage other militants to lay down their arms.⁶⁴ Also this quarter, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced its first sanctions against an ISIS-P financier since the group was formally designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization.⁶⁵

The DoD also reported that while ISIS-P has not been able to regain the level of strength it achieved at the height of the siege of Marawi in 2017, the large number of internally displaced persons created by that conflict, combined with the disenfranchised Muslim population of the Marawi area, represented a potential recruitment pool for terrorists.⁶⁶



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte leads the inspection of the firearms surrendered by the ISIS-Maute Group at the Capitol Gymnasium in Sacayo, Marawi City. (Philippines Presidential Communications Office photo)

ISIS-P and other Philippine jihadist groups exploit Muslims' distrust of the government as a recruitment tactic, which is why the Philippine government and moderate Muslim groups viewed legislation to establish enhanced autonomy in the Muslim-populated areas of the country as a necessary step toward reconciliation. In May, the two houses of the Philippine Congress passed competing versions of this legislation, known as the Bangsamoro Basic Law.⁶⁷ According to media reports, the Philippines Senate and House of Representatives came to an agreement in July on a final version of the proposed legislation, which President Duterte indicated he would sign into law.⁶⁸

According to USAID, the number of internally displaced persons who returned to their homes continued to rise this quarter, but complete devastation of Marawi's city center may prevent up to 127,000 residents from returning for years.

According to USAID, the number of internally displaced persons who returned to their homes continued to rise this quarter, but complete devastation of Marawi's city center may prevent up to 127,000 residents from returning for years.⁶⁹ Humanitarian assistance needs continued for more than 214,000 who remained displaced this quarter.⁷⁰ Ongoing military operations also resulted in additional displacement of residents of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao provinces.⁷¹ USAID humanitarian assistance efforts shifted this quarter from planning to implementation of projects that addressed water, sanitation, and hygiene; reestablishment of livelihoods; shelter and settlements; and food distribution.⁷²

This quarter, the DoD OIG completed its first oversight project related to OPE-P, an audit of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's operational contract support, which provides for communications, security, facilities management, and logistics support to the DoD throughout the Philippines. The DoD OIG found that the command did not formally re-validate the contract, valued at \$58 million over 5 years, as required before exercising the first option period of the contract. The audit made several recommendations, which the command accepted, to improve its reviews of contract requirements.⁷³

The DoD OIG had two ongoing projects related to OPE-P this quarter: an evaluation of DoD efforts to train, advise, assist, and equip the AFP; and an audit of the DoD's oversight of logistical support provided to the Philippines through bilateral agreements. Also this quarter, the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group conducted 4 fraud awareness briefings related to OPE-P for 127 participants.





An Iraqi soldier attending the Baghdad Fighting School urban operations instructor course conducts village clearance drills at Camp Taji, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

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OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ

Security

U.S.-LED COALITION BEGAN NEW PHASE OF OPERATIONS

This quarter, the Coalition began a new initiative in the Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) campaign to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The goal of the initiative is to prevent ISIS from being able to hold key terrain and influence major population centers, field forces that can challenge the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the Coalition, build external support networks, or expand influence through information operations.¹

The new effort shifts the emphasis from combat operations to developing self-sustaining Iraqi forces able to prevent a resurgence of ISIS. As part of this effort, the Coalition is supporting “train the trainer” programs designed to enable ISF units to take the lead in developing their own training to maintain readiness and professionalism.² The training seeks to enable Iraqis to maintain security, collect intelligence, and independently manage a continued ISIS insurgency.³

An Aviation Ordnanceman helps load ordnance onto an F/A-18F Super Hornet aboard the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman. (U.S. Navy photo)

SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS

- The Coalition began a new phase of OIR, called Operation Reliable Partnership, focused on building a self-sustaining Iraqi Security Force and augmenting policing capabilities
- ISIS-related violence decreased across most of Iraq, and ISIS was unable to disrupt major events, including the Iraqi elections, Ramadan, and the Kadhimiya pilgrimage

SECURITY CHALLENGES

- Escalating ISIS violence in isolated and rural areas of Iraq presented a key challenge to the ISF in combating a persistent ISIS insurgency
- Clashes between Iran-linked groups within the Popular Mobilization Forces and the police and regular security forces underscored the need for the Iraqi government to create a disciplined force under a unified command

According to the DoD, training will continue at Iraqi bases across the country and will focus on Ministry of Interior units such as the Federal Police, local police, Emergency Response Brigade, and Border Guards, and Ministry of Defense units.⁴ Since the end of major combat operations against ISIS last December, approximately 90 percent of operational ISF units have been engaged in hold operations, including efforts to prevent ISIS from reemerging, while the remaining 10 percent have been engaged in clearing operations.⁵

The DOD reported that the number of U.S. troops deployed to Iraq—approximately 5,200—had not changed since December 2017.⁶ In response to our data request, the DoD stated that in the wake of its military defeat and loss of territory, ISIS has been reduced to the level of an insurgency that indigenous Iraqi security and law enforcement organizations should be able to contain.⁷ For more on Operation Reliable Partnership, see the Classified Appendix.

ISIS ACTIVITY IN IRAQ DECLINED NATIONWIDE BUT PERSISTED IN SEVERAL PROVINCES

The DoD, the United Nations, and media sources reported a decline in violence in all but three provinces in Iraq.⁸ Civilian casualties during the first 5 months of 2018 fell 76 percent compared to the same period in 2017.⁹ Both the number of deadly vehicle-borne IED attacks and IED casualties declined as well.¹⁰

Lead IG analysis of open source information found that ISF deaths fell also, down to 126 killed in insurgent violence this quarter from 171 last quarter.¹¹ The DoD reported that overall the pressure from ISF operations has kept ISIS on the move and denied the group the ability to coalesce to launch deliberate attacks.¹²

The provinces of Anbar, Ninewa, and Baghdad experienced the biggest decline in insurgent incidents this quarter. In April, security forces protected more than 9 million people traveling through Baghdad during the Kadhimiya pilgrimage and prevented at least 2 attempted suicide bombings targeting pilgrims.¹³

In Ninewa, security forces focused on increasing stability in Mosul and preventing ISIS infiltration from Syria. In early June, three divisions moved to western Ninewa to establish blocking positions and support Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) operations across the border in Syria.¹⁴

However, the DoD warned that ISIS networks in areas north of Baghdad city continued to pose a threat to the capital.¹⁵ In addition, in contrast to the national trend, insurgent activity increased in Kirkuk, Diyala, and Salah ad Din provinces during the quarter. Most of the violence occurred along the so-called “green line,” a swath of territory in northern Iraq claimed by both the central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).¹⁶ In these areas, militants were able to move around and establish checkpoints at night with relative ease, exploiting the seam between at times competing security forces. Residents of some villages reportedly evacuated or abandoned their homes due to threats from remaining ISIS elements.¹⁷

ISIS also carried out multiple kidnappings and abductions in Kirkuk, even as Coalition officials asserted that the province was getting safer.¹⁸ According to media reports, an increase in violence in northern Diyala prompted residents to stage a general strike to protest the absence of the Kurdish Peshmerga, which withdrew from the province following a failed Kurdish referendum on independence in May.¹⁹ Salah ad Din experienced the sharpest increase in violence, with incidents more than doubling this quarter compared to last quarter.²⁰ In the 2 most violent of those incidents, militants killed 12 members of a single family and bombed the funeral of 3 Sunni tribal fighters, killing at least 10.²¹

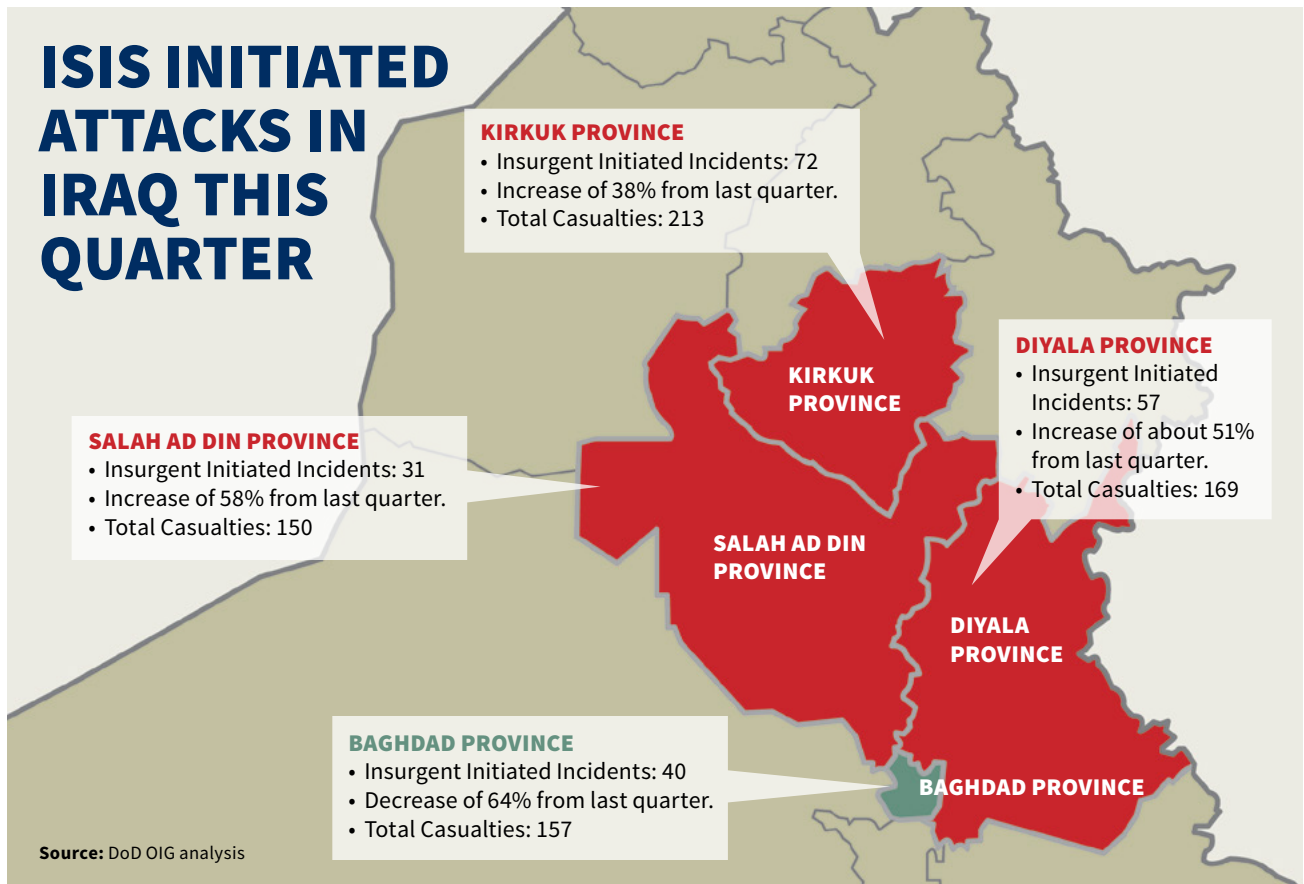
ISIS fighters sought to intimidate and punish groups or individuals who opposed them, or whom they suspected of collaborating with the ISF. In May, ISIS fighters in military clothes infiltrated a village north of Baghdad and killed 21 members of the Albu Faraj tribe.²² There were also multiple reports of ISIS fighters burning farmland and bombing a power transmission line to punish suspected ISF supporters or those who refused to pay protection money to the group.²³

Several incidents illustrated the extent to which ISIS attacks exacerbated sectarian tensions and raised human rights concerns.²⁴ For example, at the end of June, ISIS fighters kidnapped six members of the PMF and released a video threatening to execute the hostages if the Iraqi government failed to release detained ISIS fighters, specifically Sunni women.²⁵ The kidnapping prompted criticism of the government and created significant political pressure on Prime Minister Abadi, resulting in multiple police and military operations to recover the kidnapped personnel.²⁶ On June 27, security forces recovered the mutilated bodies of the hostages. Shortly thereafter, Abadi called for the immediate execution of all convicted terrorists on death row, resulting in the execution of 12 convicts.²⁷ The incident not only underscored tensions between the Sunni and Shia populations, it also caused human rights groups to raise concerns about the speed of trials for terrorist suspects in Iraq, unlawful detentions, and the lack of evidentiary standards and due process for the accused.²⁸ For an overview of casualties caused by insurgents, by province in Iraq this quarter, see Figure 1.

ISIS also sought to target Iraq’s election infrastructure and attempted to disrupt parliamentary elections held this quarter.²⁹ While relatively minor compared to previous quarters, ISIS attacks included a car bomb targeting a candidate for the Turkmen Front in Kirkuk province that killed 1 civilian and injured 11 other people, a shooting at the

ISIS fighters sought to intimidate and punish groups or individuals who opposed them, or whom they suspected of collaborating with the ISF.

Figure 1.

Overview of Casualties Caused by Insurgent Attacks in Iraq this Quarter

convoy of another member of Parliament, an improvised explosive device (IED) attack that injured the Secretary General of the Free National Current Party in Kirkuk, and a double suicide bombing at the headquarters of the al-Hal Party, which killed 3 security personnel and wounded 7 others including a parliamentary candidate.³⁰ The ISIS-affiliated Amaq News Agency released a video showing ISIS militants executing two “election advocates,” likely in an effort to prevent voters from participating in the vote.³¹ In May, shortly after the election, ISIS claimed a suicide bombing at a public park in Baghdad that killed 15 people and wounded another 19.³²

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE, CORRUPTION, AND POLITICIZATION PERSISTED IN THE ISF AND PESHMERGA

Accusations in the Iraqi media of ISF abuse and corruption persisted this quarter. For instance, press reports suggested that some ISF had forced families to pay bribes to recover the corpses of dead ISIS fighters in Mosul, which the ISF denied.³³ Police also issued an arrest warrant for the commander of the Special Weapons and Tactics forces in

Kurdish Security Force students learn a wide range of leadership topics during an advanced instructor course at the Kurdistan Training Coordination Center in Erbil, Iraq. (German army photo)



Kirkuk and 20 of his subordinates for alleged involvement in assassinations, robberies, and other criminal activity.³⁴ In Fallujah, residents were generally complimentary of the professionalism and non-sectarian nature of the ISF, according to a Saudi news outlet, but complained about corruption among some of the troops stationed in the city.³⁵

Persistent allegations of corruption and abuse could undermine efforts to prevent ISIS from reemerging. However, the DoD noted that allegations of abuses rose at higher rates against the PMF, Federal Police, and Kurdish Asayish internal security and intelligence services.³⁶

In the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, the May 12 parliamentary election campaign highlighted the continued disunity within the Kurdish Peshmerga forces, who remain divided by loyalties to various Kurdish political parties. According to press reports, the political nature of the Peshmerga forces has prevented the development of an apolitical unified force and impeded democratic reform in Kurdistan, which could perpetuate entrenched Kurdish parties and lead to increased unrest.³⁷ When asked if the Coalition would work to support unifying the Peshmerga, Coalition officials stated that Peshmerga unification is a political problem, although they are training Regional Brigade Guards organized under the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Peshmerga.³⁸ Additionally, the United States continued providing stipends to the Ministry of Peshmerga intended for nonpartisan Peshmerga units. According to the DoD, this support may have the indirect benefit of encouraging Peshmerga unity.³⁹

IRAN MAINTAINED SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE IN IRAQ

Iran continued to play a significant role in Iraq, mainly through its support of some Shia militias belonging to the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), but also through continued bilateral ties. The DoD reported that Iran has continued to support specific PMF militias with training, funding, equipment, and guidance, and that Iran uses allies in the Iraqi government to lobby for the political aspirations of Shia PMF.⁴⁰ Iranian influence over several large and influential Shia PMF militias remains strong.⁴¹ These militias include the Badr Organization, whose commander, Hadi al Ameri, headed an electoral alliance that won the second-largest number of seats in preliminary results of the parliamentary

Iran continued to play a significant role in Iraq, mainly through its support of Shia militias belonging to the PMF, but also through continued bilateral ties.

Isolated gun battles occurred this quarter between PMF militias, and between some militias and the ISF, illustrating ongoing power struggles between various forces as well as the inability of the Iraqi government to exert complete control over the PMF.

elections. However, the DoD noted that while Ameri touts his Iranian ties, he and other pro-Iran militia leaders appeared to have set aside hostility to the United States this quarter and signaled a willingness to accept a continued United States military presence to train Iraqi forces.⁴²

In addition to its support for Shia PMF militias, Iran has strengthened economic ties with Iraq. In April, Iran's defense minister visited Iraq and signed a cooperation agreement on transferring defense technology and enhancing Iraq's domestic defense industry.⁴³ Despite the planned re-imposition of U.S. sanctions on Iran, Iraq's Oil Minister announced that a prior agreement between Iraq and Iran to swap oil would not be affected.⁴⁴

The DoD reported that Iran's influence in Iraq did not affect Coalition forces this quarter, which continued to focus on ISIS and not on countering Iranian influence in Iraq.⁴⁵ Coalition officials also stated that there was no change in Iranian behavior toward the Coalition after the United States withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, known as the Iran Nuclear Deal.⁴⁶ The U.S. Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on an Iraqi bank called the Al Bilad Islamic Bank for Investment and Finance, as well as on its Chief Executive Officer, Aras Habib Karim, for transferring funds to Hezbollah and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).⁴⁷ The sanctions caused the Central Bank of Iraq to cut its ties with the bank and prompted protests from Mr. Karim, who ran as a candidate in parliamentary elections as part of the Nasr Coalition of Prime Minister Abadi.⁴⁸

POPULAR MOBILIZATION FORCES REMAIN POLITICALLY POTENT

The PMF—a collection of militias created in 2014 to combat ISIS—continued to pose both military and political challenges for the Iraqi government. Some of the PMF militias are aligned with Iran.⁴⁹ Although the PMF militias are legally elements of the broader Iraqi security establishment, organized under the Popular Mobilization Committee which answers directly to the Prime Minister, the Iraqi government struggled to exert direct and effective control over some PMF elements.⁵⁰

Isolated gun battles occurred this quarter between PMF militias, and between some PMF militias and the ISF, illustrating ongoing power struggles between various forces as well as the inability of the Iraqi government to exert complete control over the PMF. Government officials, including Prime Minister Abadi, pressured the PMF to integrate into the ISF following an explosion at an unauthorized arms depot in Baghdad that killed 18 people.⁵¹ Iraqi courts issued 20 arrest warrants for suspects in connection with the attack.⁵² Prime Minister Abadi also issued a broader warning to the PMF not to stockpile weapons and accused groups within the PMF of wanting to be “stronger than the state.”⁵³

Shia cleric Moqtada al Sadr called for a nationwide disarmament campaign, and stated that his militia would disarm in Baghdad and Basrah.⁵⁴ Coalition officials reiterated that the PMF are officially part of the ISF, and should take direction and guidance from the Prime Minister.⁵⁵ However, the focus on elections this quarter, and the political uncertainty that followed, prevented any meaningful efforts to integrate the PMF into the ISF or the Ministries of Defense or Interior.⁵⁶

Despite these incidents, the PMF retained significant political support in Iraq. According to an organization of Iraq analysts called 1001 Iraqi Thoughts, the PMF boasts a 65 percent favorability rating, including in Sunni-majority provinces. Many militias have bolstered their popularity by helping to rebuild war-torn areas. Some Sunnis who left the police force to join the PMF reportedly said that they would rather remain with the PMF than rejoin the police due to the prestige and support the PMF receive, according to media reports.⁵⁷ While the Popular Mobilization Committee's budget and command are separate and distinct from the ISF, the DoD reported that tactical level coordination between the PMF and the ISF is routine.⁵⁸

UNREST IN BASRAH COULD DISTRACT FROM OPERATIONS TO DEFEAT ISIS

Tribal violence and unrest increased in the southern province of Basrah this quarter, drawing security resources from elsewhere in Iraq. Independent analysts tracked 62 tribal-related violent incidents in April, up from 42 in March.⁵⁹ Additionally, press reports described how thousands of unemployed Iraqis have poured into Basrah to escape ISIS violence or to look for work, but have mostly been pushed into informal settlements without employment opportunities, further straining provincial resources.⁶⁰

The DoD said that security in Basrah was solely an Iraqi responsibility, but noted that three ISF brigades and an ISF divisional headquarters had been dispatched to the area to restore order in late 2017.⁶¹ Two of the brigades were later withdrawn for training, leaving one brigade to manage provincial security.⁶²

The DoS said that security forces from the province that were sent to fight ISIS in 2014 have not yet returned. Officials in Basrah and neighboring Maysan province warned that without additional forces, these provinces risked an increase in arms proliferation, tribal feuds, militancy, and smuggling, all of which could erode confidence in the governance of the region.⁶³

Governance and Civil Society

TWO SHIA ALLIANCES GARNERED THE MOST VOTES IN PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM IRAQ'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

On May 12, two Shia-dominated alliances were projected to have garnered the most votes in Iraq's first parliamentary elections since the government declared ISIS defeated in December 2017. Nationalist Shia cleric Moqtada al Sadr's Sairoon (Moving Forward)

GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENTS

- Parliamentary elections resulted in projected wins for the electoral lists of Shia cleric Moqtada al Sadr, who has expressed opposition to foreign involvement in Iraq, and Badr Organization commander Hadi al Ameri, who openly supports Iranian influence in Iraq

GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY CHALLENGES

- The United States must maintain strong ties with Iraq as it forms a new government that is likely to be headed by Shia-dominated alliances whose leaders have at times expressed opposition to United States involvement in Iraq or openly supported Iranian influence in Iraqi affairs



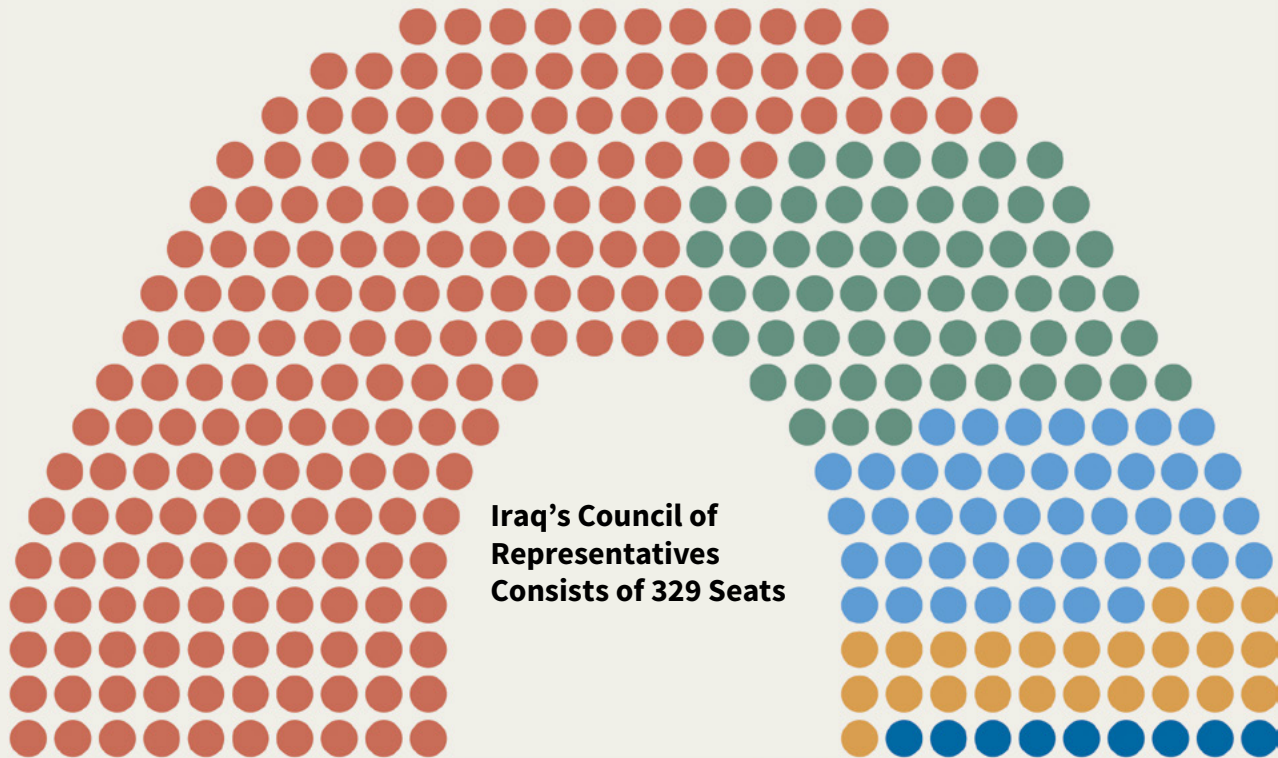
Colonel Ali Hussain Ali Jaloud, the Iraqi Army security commander for Ninewa Operations Center, shows his ink-stained finger one day after the Iraqi elections in Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

coalition—led by Sadr’s Istiqama (Integrity) Party, the secular Iraqi Communist Party, and the Iraqi Republican Party—received the most votes, and was projected to win 54 seats. The Fateh (Conquest) coalition, headed by pro-Iran Badr Organization leader Hadi al Ameri and comprising many PMF-affiliated parties, finished second with a projected 47 seats. Prime Minister Abadi’s Nasr (Victory) Coalition came in third with a projected 42 seats, while former Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki’s State of Law coalition finished a distant fourth with 25 projected seats.⁶⁴ The election also resulted in 240 of 328 parliament members, including the speaker, losing their seats.⁶⁵

According to the DoS, low voter turnout, a disciplined campaign, and widespread popular contempt for the incumbent elite contributed to Sadr’s victory. Sadr’s declared rejection of foreign interference, and his promise to eliminate corruption and install a technocratic government were staples of his platform. The DoS noted some early indications that Sadr may be amenable to preserving productive relations with the United States, and that his vision of a technocratic, nationalist, cross-sectarian government could align with U.S. interests.⁶⁶

Fateh campaigned on promises to maintain security and restore order and rule of law in Iraq, while some elements within that coalition called on Prime Minister Abadi to encourage the United States to leave Iraq.⁶⁷ However, the DoS reported that Ameri’s policy agenda remained unclear.⁶⁸ Abadi ran on a platform declaring his desire to unify all of Iraq, citing his efforts to block Kurdish attempts at independence and his success at defeating ISIS.⁶⁹ Maliki ran on what analysts characterized as a traditional Shia platform that nominally focused on security, national reconciliation, reconstruction, and improving services.⁷⁰

IRAQI 2018 COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES ALLOCATION BY ELECTORAL LISTS



| Shia-Led | Kurdish-Led | Sunni-Led | Secular-Led | Minority |
|---|---|---|---|----------|
| 194 Seats | 58 Seats | 44 Seats | 24 Seats | 9 Seats |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saaroon: 54 • Fateh Alliance: 47 • Victory Coalition: 22 • State of Law Coalition: 25 • Hikma Coalition: 19 • Four Others: 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KDP: 25 • PUK: 18 • Goran: 5 • Four Others: 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iraqi Decision: 14 • Iran Friendly: 17 • Six Others: 13 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wataniya: 21 • Two Others: 3 | |

In the Iraqi Kurdish Region, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan did better than expected, with the Kurdistan Democratic Party projected to retain its 25 seats and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan projected to drop only 3 seats to 18. As predicted, the Goran Party, a reform party that initially had gained a lot of attention, lost nearly half its seats, dropping from nine to five projected seats.⁷¹ Figure 2 provides an overview of the projected election results by electoral lists and approximate number of seats awarded to each party.⁷²

Figure 2.

After the recount results are ratified by the Iraqi Supreme Court, the newly elected president of the parliament will direct the nominee for prime minister from the coalition with the greatest number of seats to form a new government.

Wataniya, an alliance of religious, secular, and national parties including both Sunni and Shia led by Vice President Ayad al-Allawi, will likely garner 21 seats. This alliance advocated an anti-sectarian and secular ideology focused on national reconciliation and opposition to outside interferences.⁷³ The Hikma Party, led by Shia cleric Amar al-Hakim, won a projected 19 seats on a broad platform emphasizing non-sectarianism, youth, women, education, and a technocratic government.⁷⁴ The Muttahidoon (Iraqi Decision) coalition, led by Vice President Osama al-Nujaifi, won a projected 14 seats and finished first among the Sunni-led electoral lists. Iraqi Decision maintained a conservative platform; Nujaifi sought to be named Speaker of Parliament in the new government, a position he held during the second Maliki-led government.⁷⁵ For more information on the Iraqi elections, see the Classified Appendix.

ALLEGATIONS OF FRAUDULENT VOTING LED TO A RECOUNT

On June 6, the Iraqi parliament voted to suspend the election results after significant allegations of voting irregularities and fraud arose from across the political spectrum. Personnel from the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), Iraq's main elections oversight body, were also accused of manipulating the election results.⁷⁶ As a result, the parliament voted to strip the IHEC of its powers, and replaced the commissioners with a nine-judge panel to oversee a manual ballot recount.⁷⁷ On June 21, Iraq's Supreme Court ordered a partial recount, which led the panel of judges to limit the number of polling stations that would be subject to a recount to about 5,000 of 56,000 stations.⁷⁸

The parliament also voted to nullify ballots including those cast by Iraqis living overseas; from Iraqis displaced in the mainly Sunni provinces of Anbar, Salah ad Din, Diyala, and Ninewa; and from the Kurdish Peshmerga. The Supreme Court overturned parliament's decision and allowed the ballots to be counted.⁷⁹

Recounts were scheduled to take place in the provinces of Kirkuk, Sulaimaniyah, Erbil, Dohuk, Ninewa, Anbar, Salah ad Din, Najaf, Qadisiyyah, and Karbala. Overseas ballot boxes from Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States will be brought to Baghdad for counting.⁸⁰

FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT WAS LIKELY MONTHS AWAY

After the recount results are ratified by the Iraqi Supreme Court, the newly elected president of the parliament will direct the nominee for prime minister from the coalition with the greatest number of seats to form a new government.⁸¹ Similar failures of a pre-existing alliance or electoral list to win an absolute majority of seats occurred in the 2010 and 2014 national elections, leading to months-long caretaker governments.⁸²

On June 30, the parliament's term ended and it disbanded, as required by the Iraqi constitution, but not before failing at an attempt to extend that term, an attempt which the Iraqi Supreme Court held unconstitutional. The next parliament will not convene until ratification of the election results by the Supreme Court. Until the new parliament is seated, the Council of Ministers will approve cabinet decisions.⁸³

UNAMI Concerned about Challenges to Election Recount

On July 2, 2018, the DoS OIG interviewed the Principal Election Advisor of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Dr. Aamir Arain, who has spent the last 5 years providing technical support to the IHEC and the Iraqi parliament, known as the Council of Representatives. Following the interview, he traveled to Kirkuk to support the first recount of votes cast in the May 12 parliamentary elections.

During the interview, Dr. Arain described UNAMI's frustration with the Iraqi government's use of new electronic voting machines, which cost \$500 million to install at 56,000 polling stations. Because this was an untested voting system, UNAMI had recommended conducting a pilot test of the machines or a random recount of 30 percent of the ballots nationwide, but the Iraqi government rejected both suggestions. As a result, there was little testing of the machines. While voting cards were to be matched in advance to individual voters, there were reports that polling place officials were handing out cards as the voters arrived. Dr. Arain concluded that, in essence, there were no internal controls over the voting cards at some polling places.

Dr. Arain pointed out that 240 of 328 members of the Council of Representatives lost their reelection bids, including Speaker Salim Jabouri, and much was at stake when the Council approved a law mandating a nationwide recount of votes. The first recount was to begin July 3 in Kirkuk, one of the areas where a large number of allegations of voting irregularities were registered. The panel of judges conducting the recount told Dr. Arain that the timeline from voting to government formation would likely extend 8-9 months, including conducting the recount, ratifying the election results, and convening the new Council of Representatives.

Dr. Arain discussed attempts to disrupt the recount. In June, a warehouse storing election ballots for Baghdad burned down. Two days before the recount began, a suicide attacker drove a car bomb into a complex of government warehouses housing ballot boxes in Kirkuk, reportedly killing 1 person, and wounding 20 others.

Dr. Arain was also concerned that the validity of the recount would be questioned, leading to more legal proceedings and calls for a new election. In his view, a few seats changing hands would not cause tumult or unrest; however, a radical reversal of the election results could lead to violence.

In light of the recount, Dr. Arain emphasized that the current political jockeying to form a government was premature. Until the ballots are verified, he said, it remained impossible to predict which alliance would get to choose the country's next prime minister.

According to the United Nations, tribal feuds made it difficult for thousands of IDPs to return safely to their homes, while thousands more chose not to return due to discrimination.

Humanitarian Assistance

IDPs FACED NUMEROUS OBSTACLES TO A SAFE RETURN HOME

Approximately 200,000 displaced Iraqis returned to their homes this quarter, but the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that, as of June 20, 2018, approximately 2 million remained displaced.⁸⁴ More IDPs returned from non-camp settings than from camps, and as a result, the percentage of the IDP populations sheltering in camps increased, even though overall IDP numbers had declined. As of late May, nearly 598,000 people—approximately 29 percent of IDPs—were sheltering in camps, compared to 23 percent in camps a year ago.⁸⁵

A combination of factors kept many IDPs from returning to their areas of origin. Many homes were in areas with damaged infrastructure, disrupted services, little prospect for employment, and unsafe conditions, including explosive hazards.⁸⁶ Restrictions imposed by security forces on movement of IDPs and inter-communal tension also limited IDP returns.⁸⁷ IDPs from ethnic and religious minority communities often faced discrimination, harassment, and abuse from other groups, including PMF militias and Kurdish security forces.⁸⁸

According to the United Nations, tribal feuds made it difficult for thousands of IDPs to return safely to their homes, while thousands more chose not to return due to discrimination based upon their perceived affiliation with extremist groups. For example, local armed groups who control certain areas of Baiji in Salah ad Din province continued to bar returns.⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch cited instances in which the ISF blocked IDPs from returning home in Anbar province due to alleged ties to ISIS, which it said amounted to “collective punishment.”⁹⁰

Despite these challenges, thousands of IDPs returned home. However, many fled again, creating new waves of displacement as some decided that a tent city or ramshackle housing camp was preferable to the uncertainty of their place of origin.⁹¹ Humanitarian agencies warned that without food, water, or basic services, people “may be forced into another cycle of displacement, compromising their well-being and potentially undermining the long-term recovery of Iraq.”⁹²

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE DEVELOPMENTS

- More than 2 million Iraqis remained displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance, including some who returned to find their homes unsafe or uninhabitable, causing a second displacement
- The U.S. Government prioritized assistance this quarter to Iraqi communities in need that have significant numbers of vulnerable Christians and Yazidis

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE CHALLENGES

- The premature or involuntary return of IDPs to their homes continued to be a significant concern. Humanitarian organizations emphasized the importance of ensuring that those returning are safe and that returning is voluntary and done in a dignified manner
- Humanitarian agencies expressed concern that conditions faced by IDPs who return home may force them to return to IDP camps, swelling the number of camp dwellers and requiring significant additional financial commitments

Iraq's parliamentary election may also affect the pace of returns. While the government of Prime Minister Abadi embraced a plan to close all IDP camps by the end of 2018, the intentions of the new government, still being formed, are not yet clear.⁹³ The ability of the new government to bridge Iraq's deep sectarian divisions, which have long fueled violence and insecurity in the country, could have a major impact on the ability of IDPs to return home safely.⁹⁴

FORCED RETURNS AND EVICTIONS OF IDPs FROM CAMPS REMAINED A SERIOUS CONCERN

Along with the challenges facing those who want to return home voluntarily but cannot, forced returns and evictions remained a serious threat to IDPs and a concern for humanitarian organizations.⁹⁵ Some Iraqi officials appeared to be pushing for policies designed to compel IDPs to return home whether their area of origin was safe or not. For instance, some supported evicting IDPs from camps and other locations where they were sheltering, while others favored consolidating IDPs in camps with the least amount of services.⁹⁶ Non-governmental organizations reported continuing to register complaints against the ISF, including police, and PMF militias, for seizing displaced persons' land and property.⁹⁷ Humanitarian organizations continued to advocate for safe, dignified, and voluntary returns of all people displaced.⁹⁸

To encourage what they view as a more principled approach to camp closures and the returns process, UN agencies, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and representatives of non-governmental organizations have joined with local authorities to form five Governorate Returns Committees, which became operational this quarter. Three more were planned or under discussion. According to the UN, these committees seek to establish a consultative mechanism that will ensure that the returns of displaced people are voluntary, safe, and dignified. They are also expected to better address the needs of displaced people who continue living in camps by relocating them to camps that offer better services, improved protection, and greater access to humanitarian organizations.⁹⁹

For the nearly 600,000 IDPs in camps, services such as water, sanitation, schools, and protective spaces for displaced children and their families remained costly to provide. During summer, temperatures throughout Iraq can reach over 50° Celsius (122° Fahrenheit), adding to the risks IDPs faced while living in tents and in makeshift shelters.¹⁰⁰ Low levels of rainfall and the filling of dams upriver in Turkey and Iran exacerbated conditions.¹⁰¹

The humanitarian community prepared seasonal assistance measures, including the distribution of extra water and water storage capacity, cool boxes, protection from sun, and mechanical cooling. Humanitarian organizations also provided cash assistance to allow families to prioritize their needs in the most flexible way. In April, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) provided immediate response rations—sufficient to meet a 5-person household's food needs for 5 days—to nearly 27,000 households, or 143,000 people. WFP also reached more than 68,000 households with family food rations, each sufficient to support the needs of a 5-person household for 1 month, and provided nearly 38,000 households with cash-based transfers to purchase food commodities in local markets.¹⁰²

IRAQ: QUARTERLY FOCUS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

NINEWA

Nearly one-third of Iraq's two million IDPs reside in Ninewa province, which this quarter consistently received an influx of displaced people, particularly in the Zummar sub-district, due to perceived insecurity from the presence of Kurdish Peshmerga and ISF. USAID partners completed a needs assessment in nine districts in Ninewa, where many ethnic and religious minorities live. The assessment will support the expansion of programs to provide shelter, water, and other humanitarian aid.

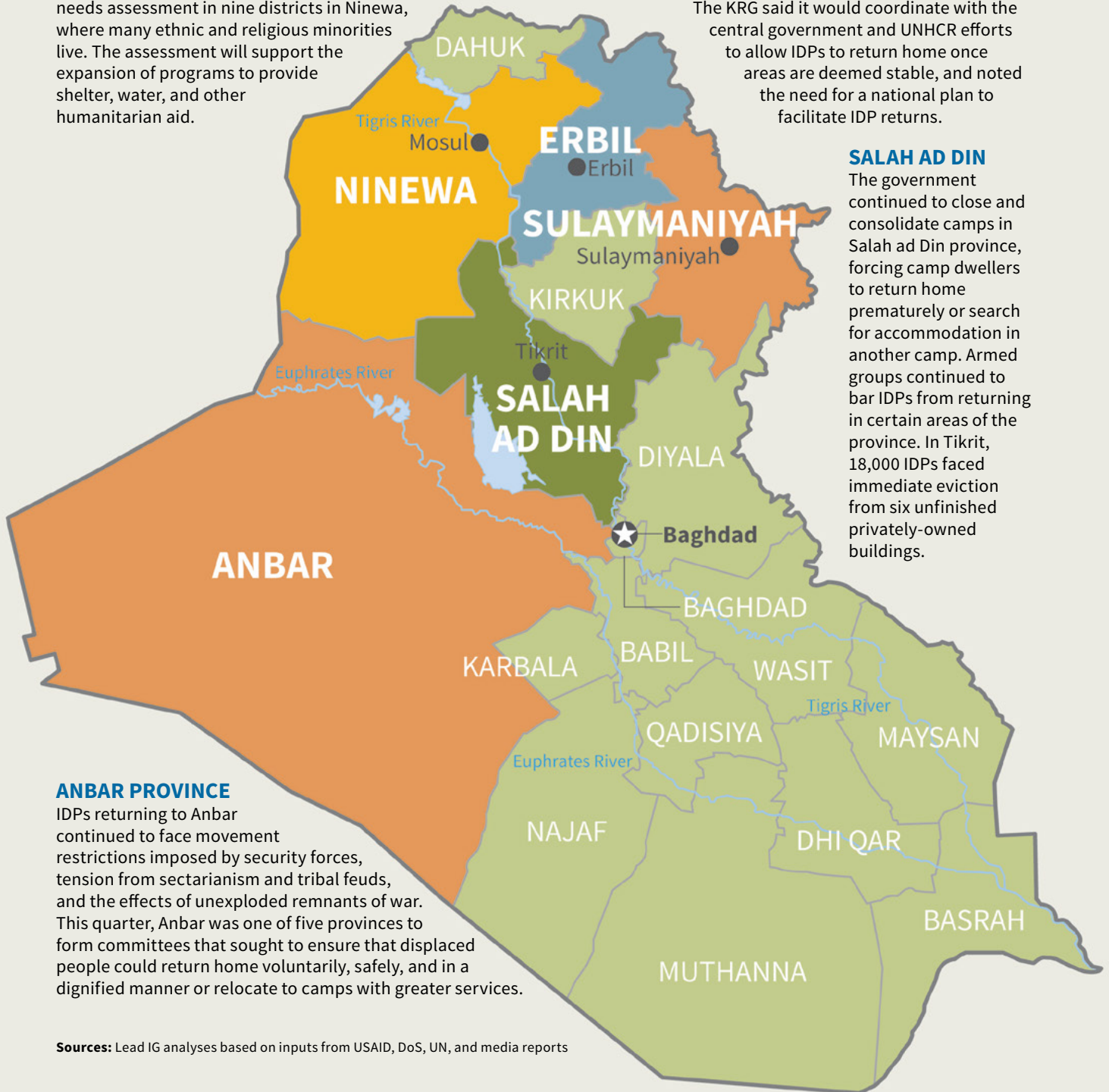
ERBIL AND SULAYMANIYAH

Roads opened up in the IKR this quarter, resulting in greater access to IDPs, but checkpoints manned by armed groups continued to hamper relief organizations.

The KRG said it would coordinate with the central government and UNHCR efforts to allow IDPs to return home once areas are deemed stable, and noted the need for a national plan to facilitate IDP returns.

SALAH AD DIN

The government continued to close and consolidate camps in Salah ad Din province, forcing camp dwellers to return home prematurely or search for accommodation in another camp. Armed groups continued to bar IDPs from returning in certain areas of the province. In Tikrit, 18,000 IDPs faced immediate eviction from six unfinished privately-owned buildings.



ANBAR PROVINCE

IDPs returning to Anbar continued to face movement restrictions imposed by security forces, tension from sectarianism and tribal feuds, and the effects of unexploded remnants of war. This quarter, Anbar was one of five provinces to form committees that sought to ensure that displaced people could return home voluntarily, safely, and in a dignified manner or relocate to camps with greater services.

Sources: Lead IG analyses based on inputs from USAID, DoS, UN, and media reports

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS REMAINED AT RISK

The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reported that nearly half of the school-aged IDPs in Iraq—an estimated 335,000 children—were not enrolled in school this quarter. Children who lived in areas formerly controlled by ISIS were thought to be in need of psychosocial support, vaccinations, educational support, and safe spaces for recreation.¹⁰³ Mental health services continued to be a challenge for the Iraqi government because the country has few clinically trained psychologists and psychiatrists.¹⁰⁴ In June, the National Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services launched a working group in Baghdad to help identify and address gaps in services.¹⁰⁵

The new UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Marta Ruedas, noted that other protection issues require specific attention, especially those related to the presence of armed actors in camps across Iraq. She raised concerns about protection incidents in camps, including sexual harassment of women and girls, shooting incidents, and restrictions on freedom of movement.¹⁰⁶ OCHA reported that gender-based violence in Iraq continued to be widespread and was exacerbated by the vulnerabilities of displaced persons.¹⁰⁷ According to a recent report by Amnesty International, women and children with perceived ties to ISIS were singled out for violations and abuse by armed forces operating in the camps, camp authorities, and others. Many were denied access to food, water, and health care, and their freedom of movement was severely restricted; some may have lacked proper documentation or camp authorities blocked them from leaving, placing them in de facto detention. According to the report, some of the women have been subjected to sexual violence including rape and sexual exploitation.¹⁰⁸

In response to such concerns, USAID announced a worldwide “zero tolerance” approach to sexual exploitation and abuse by employees working for USAID’s partner organizations.¹⁰⁹ The USAID OIG worked with USAID’s Legal Counsel and the Chairman of the Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct to develop new language for incorporation into all new awards.¹¹⁰ The new guidance puts USAID grantees on notice that sexual abuse and exploitation by their staff toward beneficiaries is strictly prohibited.¹¹¹ Based on input from the USAID OIG, the guidance was modified to 1) broadly expand the definition of prohibited sexual conduct which must be reported; 2) require implementers to report all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by its employees to USAID, which then must refer the misconduct to the OIG; and 3) extend the reporting requirement to sub awardees.¹¹²

For humanitarian partners of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), the DoS policy on the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse requires the reporting and investigation of any alleged incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse. The policy also requires each implementing partner to establish a code of conduct that complies with the “Six Core Principles” adopted by the Interagency Standing Committee, which demand ethical behavior and the prompt reporting of any suspicions of abuse. PRM personnel, including refugee coordinators, program officers, and third-party contractors, insist on compliance with all such codes of conduct and monitor information from partners regarding staff training and awareness of reporting requirements and the beneficiaries’ knowledge of their rights. PRM reported that when allegations arose involving non-

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A Red Crescent Society worker provides emotional support to children in east Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

humanitarian Iraqi security personnel, the government of Iraq also took action to address the problem. PRM also stated that it follows the investigations of these cases closely and will intervene if needed to insure that partners investigate all allegations and act to mitigate future incidents.¹¹³

U.S. GOVERNMENT PLEDGES ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The U.S. Government has made restoring the rights and property of communities in Iraq with significant Christian and Yazidi populations a top priority. In June, the Administration directed agencies to stop using “slow, ineffective and wasteful United Nations programs” and instead to distribute assistance through USAID to provide faster and more direct aid to these communities. In addition, Vice President Pence directed USAID Administrator Mark Green to travel to Iraq and to report back with an immediate comprehensive assessment addressing any issues that could delay aid distribution.¹¹⁴ Administrator Green and Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Samuel Brownback completed a trip to northern Iraq from June 30 to July 3, where they met with religious leaders, Yazidi representatives, and members of the Iraqi and Kurdish governments.¹¹⁵

As part of its response to these concerns, USAID announced two new projects to address the long-term barriers that prevent displaced persons from returning in Ninewa.¹¹⁶ The first project, budgeted for \$5 million, will focus on requirements for durable returns of diverse minority and majority identity groups (such as relevant tribal, religious and/or ethnic identities, including Yazidi, Christian, Sunni and Shia Muslim identities, as well as Shabak and Turkman identities).¹¹⁷ The second project, budgeted for \$5.7 million, is intended to build resilience for survivors of human rights abuses, and specifically targets communities with significant Christian, Yazidi, and mixed ethnic populations.¹¹⁸ Likewise, PRM reported that it has identified religious and ethnic minority communities, including Christians and Yazidis targeted by ISIS, as among the most vulnerable populations. PRM assistance is

The U.S. Government has made restoring the rights and property of communities in Iraq with significant Christian and Yazidi populations a top priority.

reaching them as well. PRM also reported a FY 2018 modification to its formal request for proposals that was designed to make it more explicit that PRM is interested in receiving proposals that address the needs of vulnerable ethnic minority populations.¹¹⁹

U.S. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FUNDING AND STAFFING

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

- **USAID/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)** works with United Nations and international NGOs partners to provide support to IDPs and other conflict-affected populations.
- **USAID/Office of Food for Peace (FFP)** provides food assistance to IDPs, refugees, and others in need who have been affected by the crisis in Iraq.
- **DoS/PRM** works through the United Nations and international and local NGOs to protect and support IDPs, refugees, and other victims of conflict in Iraq, and provides assistance to others in the surrounding countries who have been affected.¹²⁰

USAID and PRM also 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. OFDA and FFP primarily use International Disaster Assistance funds. FFP also uses a small amount of funding authorized by Title II Food Aid of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (Public Law 480) to respond to the Syria and Iraq complex crises. PRM uses Migration and Refugee Assistance funds for this purpose.¹²¹ Each office awards funds to implementing partners, which include various international organizations such as UNICEF, the WFP, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the IOM as well as private non-governmental

Table 2.

Status of Cumulative FY 2015, FY 2016, FY 2017, and FY 2018 U.S. Government Humanitarian Assistance Funds for the Iraq Crisis, as of 6/30/2018 (in millions/rounded)

| Office | Iraq Obligated | Iraq Disbursed |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| OFDA | \$569.5 | \$587.4 |
| FFP | \$412.9 | \$160.0 |
| PRM | \$732.8 | \$743.5 |
| TOTAL | \$1,715.2 | \$1,490.9 |

Notes: USAID and the DoS reported disbursements that may exceed obligations because some disbursements in the reporting period were made against awards obligated prior to fiscal year 2015. In OIR reports prior to March 31, 2016, the DoS reported disbursements only from funds obligated from FY2015 forward. Data on disbursements can provide valuable information about how much money has been spent on activities as well as the amounts of funding that remain available for expenditure. If they are provided a letter of credit from the U.S. Government, however, humanitarian assistance implementing partners may accrue expenses before drawing down on agency funds. For this reason, expenditures on humanitarian assistance activities sometimes exceed disbursements. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Sources: USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP, Response to USAID OIG request for information, 7/11/2018; DoS, PRM, Response to DoS OIG request for information, 7/11/2018.

organizations. These organizations carry out assistance programs on the ground in Syria, Iraq, and neighboring countries hosting Syrian and Iraqi refugees.¹²²

OFDA, FFP, and PRM rely on several types of personnel to execute their work, including U.S. Government employees, personal services contractors, and institutional contractors. Thirteen personnel are assigned full-time to manage the Iraq humanitarian assistance response, with 5 stationed in Baghdad, 2 in Irbil, and the remainder in Washington DC. The program in Iraq is also supported by an additional 42 personnel who work on regional OIR humanitarian response issues.¹²³

Stabilization

EXPLOSIVES REMOVAL CONTINUED AMID ONGOING MILITARY OPERATIONS

Explosive hazards planted by retreating ISIS fighters or left over from battle remained a significant danger to displaced persons seeking to return home. The clearing process remained slow, in part because only the ISF was tasked with clearing private houses and it had limited capacity to do so. The slow progress led to a heightened risk that displaced people would return before their homes were cleared and may try to clear explosives themselves.¹²⁴ The Iraqi Directorate of Mine Action supported U.S.- and internationally-funded explosives removal teams and issued accreditation, but continued violence impeded clearing activities in some areas. DoS-funded organizations continued to employ and train Iraqis to clear explosives.¹²⁵

SECURITY FORCES CONTINUED TO HARASS AND DETAIN ISIS SUPPORTERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

The DoS said it had received credible complaints about the treatment of persons suspected of being ISIS members or supporters, and their families. These included complaints that the Ministries of Interior and Defense and the CTS had detained people without allowing them proper access to attorneys and family members; that government forces segregated, restricted, harmed and killed suspected ISIS family members; and that the justice system allowed summary and unfair trials of defendants as young as 9 years old. The means of retaliation against persons suspected of affiliating with ISIS ranged from loss of property to trauma and violence, including sexual violence.¹²⁶

According to the DoS, the Iraqi government's efforts to address such abuses remained *ad hoc* and only temporarily or locally effective, despite the continued advocacy efforts of UN agencies and its partners, and ongoing engagement by Embassy Baghdad.¹²⁷

STABILIZATION DEVELOPMENTS

- Some Iraqi Security Forces were accused of killing IDPs and ISIS family members and confiscating their property

STABILIZATION CHALLENGES

- The removal of explosives remained a slow, expensive, and dangerous effort
- Stabilization efforts remained underfunded, although projects were underway throughout Iraq

UN STABILIZATION ACTIVITIES SUFFERED FROM A LACK OF FUNDING

The Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS), administered by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), remained underfunded this quarter by \$575 million, according to the UNDP's Resident Representative in Iraq.¹²⁸ As of June 30, USAID had not released the second tranche of \$75 million in U.S. Government funding for the FFS pledged in July 2017. The lack of funding delayed the start of stabilization projects in Mosul and western Anbar, so that areas that had suffered the longest under ISIS control were getting the least assistance.¹²⁹

For 2018 and 2019, the UNDP and the Iraqi government identified five key strategic areas needing the most stabilization support: Mosul, western Ninewa, the Baiji-Hatra corridor in Salah ad Din province, the Hawija district of Kirkuk, and western Anbar province.¹³⁰

Support to Mission

FUNDING

On July 18, 2018, the DoD Comptroller released the DoD's congressionally-mandated quarterly *Cost of War* report, which details the DoD's spending on Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) through March 31, 2018. According to this report, the DoD has spent \$1.5 trillion in support of overseas contingency operations since September 11, 2001. The total cost of operations in Iraq over that time (including operations in Syria) was \$754.5 billion, of which \$23.5 billion has been obligated in support of OIR since that operation began in 2014.¹³¹

The Comptroller reported that the DoD obligated \$3.3 billion for OIR during the first half of FY 2018, which was \$200 million more than the amount spent on OIR in the first half of FY 2017. Average monthly spending on all OCO in FY 2018 was reported at \$3.4 billion, of which \$600 million was in support of OIR.¹³²

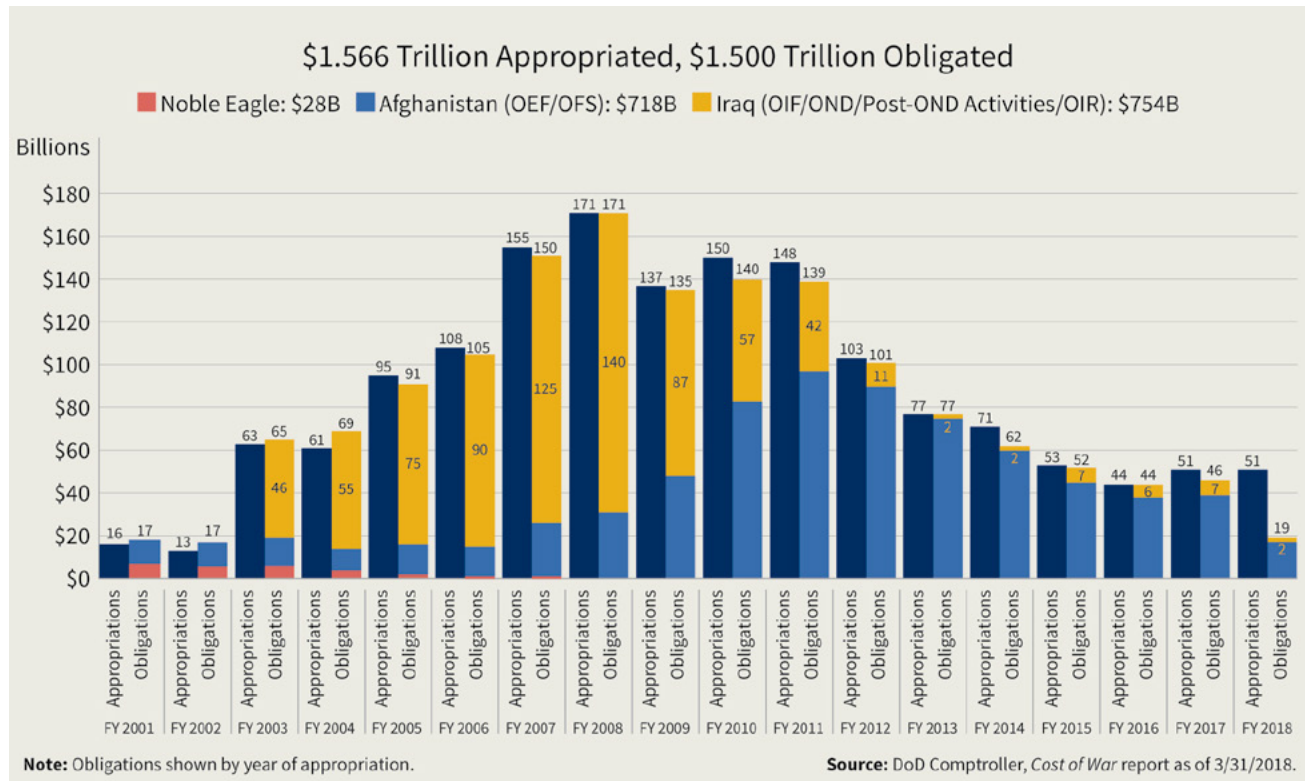
The President's Budget for FY 2019 requests a total of \$69 billion in OCO funding, of which \$15.3 billion is for OIR, an increase of \$2.3 billion from the FY 2018 request.¹³³ Within the FY 2019 President's Budget request for OIR, \$1.4 billion is for the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF), the principal funding stream used by the DoD to provide training, assistance, and equipment to partner security forces in Iraq and Syria. This includes \$850 million for the ISF, \$300 million for Syrian partners, and \$250 million for border security.¹³⁴

Through the CTEF, the DoD provides weapons, ammunition, vehicles, equipment, stipends, and other support to members of the ISF, including the Peshmerga, and the vetted Syrian opposition.¹³⁵ The CTEF was established in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2017, which combined the existing Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Funds to provide the DoD greater flexibility. Unlike most Federal funding, which is generally available for obligation for only 1 year, CTEF appropriations are made available to the DoD for 2 years.¹³⁶ The FY 2019 request is a decrease of \$369 million from the amount requested and appropriated in FY 2018.¹³⁷ The FY 2019 request for the CTEF shifts the focus from supporting active combat operations to building and maintaining partner capacity.¹³⁸

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Figure 3.

Total DoD War-Related Appropriations and Obligations from September 11, 2001 through FY 2018



8,000 ISF IN TRAINING THIS QUARTER

This quarter, U.S. forces trained approximately 8,000 Iraqi security personnel, including 400 Counter Terrorism Service trainees who graduated from basic training in Baghdad, and 20 sharpshooter trainees who graduated from a Special Weapons and Tactics -designed marksmanship course in Mosul.¹³⁹ According to Coalition spokespersons, more than 150,000 Iraqi security personnel have been trained in areas such as basic combat skills, demining, and elite counterterrorism response.¹⁴⁰ The Coalition also provided funding and equipment to improve and expand training sites, as well as providing additional “train the trainer” courses, to enable the ISF to train new recruits.¹⁴¹

The ongoing shift from major combat operations to policing and wide-area security was reflected in organizational changes in the U.S. training mission this quarter. At the end of April, the Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command disbanded and folded its responsibilities into the larger Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) headquarters.¹⁴² Coalition representatives also noted that since the end of major combat operations, there has been a reduction in the number of tactical-level advisers in Iraq, and that a large amount of Coalition operations now involves training rather than advising.¹⁴³ The majority of training is performed by non-U.S. personnel.¹⁴⁴

CJTF-OIR provided additional details about how Coalition personnel assess Iraqi units trained by Coalition forces. Trainees are assessed on specific tasks both at the start of training and after training is complete. However, because assessments are focused on the skills that are being trained, not all combat capabilities are assessed.¹⁴⁵ After graduation from training courses, personnel at training sites provide reports on the unit's performance in individual training, small unit training, command control and communications, intelligence, combined arms, sustainment, leadership, discipline, morale, and cohesion. According to the DoD, these reports help identify weaknesses and enable the DoD to schedule future training.¹⁴⁶ Units are observed in the field by U.S. Operational Command and Assist teams, and the overall success of the training mission is measured by monitoring the decrease of attacks on infrastructure and the local population, and the number of enemy militants killed or captured, weapons caches captured, IEDs neutralized, and hideouts discovered during operations.¹⁴⁷

The success against ISIS in Iraq has prompted some reconfiguration in Coalition forces in the country. In June, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg described plans to upgrade NATO's activity in Iraq to include a non-combat training mission, deploying several hundred NATO personnel to develop Iraqi military schools.¹⁴⁸ This deployment will expand the training mission focused on police training that has been led by Italy and a small NATO contingent, restructuring it as the NATO Training and Capacity Building Mission-Iraq.¹⁴⁹

DOD REPORTS THAT THE ISF DEMONSTRATED IMPROVED CAPABILITIES

The DoD reported that the ISF demonstrated improved capabilities and capacity to conduct complex military operations.¹⁵⁰ The DoD said that the Iraqi Air Force also continued to improve its capabilities this quarter. Iraq has reopened its air academy and now has a fully established squadron of fixed wing pilots.¹⁵¹ Iraqi forces have also become more adept at using laser-guided GBU-12 bombs, although they still require assistance with operations such as air refueling.¹⁵² About 120 Iraqi forward air controllers have been trained, with another 40 in training.¹⁵³ Iraq is also increasingly gathering its own intelligence through air reconnaissance, and is using unmanned drones and surveillance aircraft.¹⁵⁴

As an example of ISF's increasing proficiency at complex operations this quarter, a Coalition spokesperson noted a helicopter-borne raid that flew 200 kilometers into the desert and captured a group of ISIS fighters. Multiple Iraqi military units, including the Army and Air Force, planned and conducted the raid.¹⁵⁵ The DoD also reported that overall the ISF is increasingly able to plan and execute joint, division-level operations. The DoD reported that improvements in actionable intelligence, integration of artillery and other fire support with offensive operations, and aviation support helped deny ISIS the ability to regain territory or plan deliberate attacks.¹⁵⁶

However, the ISF continued to struggle with effectively managing logistics and intelligence, particularly in operations that involved gathering intelligence from drones and integration of this information with other forms of intelligence.¹⁵⁷ The role of unmanned aerial systems has been especially crucial in the Coalition's counter-ISIS fight, and Coalition representatives stated that the ISF's ability to target and destroy ISIS remnants



Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service members demonstrate their martial arts by breaking concrete blocks with their knees at a CTS Graduation ceremony in Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo)

is directly related to the constant overhead presence of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms.¹⁵⁸

IRAQI AIR FORCE RELIED ON UNITED STATES FOR SUPPORT

The Coalition Aviation Advisory and Training Team (CAATT) continued to train the Iraqi Air Force, Army Aviation Command, and Air Defense Command.¹⁵⁹ While the DoD reported that Iraqi aviation leadership has been satisfied with the squadron sorties developed and flown by Iraqi pilots and aircrews, the force remains dependent on the Coalition to provide contract logistics support for aircraft maintenance, supply chain management, and formal training courses.¹⁶⁰ The CAATT is working on 11 plans to develop Iraqi capabilities in medical evacuation, logistics and supply chains, and command and control units. The goal is to build forces and commands capable of generating, sustaining, and employing forces that rely on their own training, maintenance, and logistics.¹⁶¹ The DoD projected that the CAATT mission would endure for 2 to 5 years.¹⁶²

CTS CONDUCTED OPERATIONS AGAINST ISIS, BUILT UP POLICING AND INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES

Since April 1, the DoD reported that the Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) trained approximately 500 new members.¹⁶³ The DoD reported that throughout the quarter, the CTS engaged in counter-ISIS operations around the country, building up both capabilities and trust amongst the Iraqi populace.¹⁶⁴ The CTS has been actively working to develop and improve warrant-based targeted procedures, increasing cooperation with the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior, as well as seeking out additional training courses in skills such as evidence collection, preservation, and presentation.¹⁶⁵

However, the CTS continued to engage in missions that are not part of its primary mission of warrant-based counterterrorism. Specifically, the CTS has been tasked with securing

critical infrastructure such as the Mosul Dam.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, because of the popular perception of the CTS as a legitimate non-sectarian force, CTS units have been deployed to maintain order in key cities and areas of strategic significance due to internal sectarian tensions.¹⁶⁷ While these missions are outside of the defined primary mission set of the CTS, the DoD reported that the missions are a primary concern for the stability of Iraq and therefore remain an important requirement for the CTS.¹⁶⁸ For more on CTS operations and capabilities, see the Classified Appendix.

NEW ERBIL CONSULATE WILL BE LARGEST IN WORLD

On April 23, 2018, U.S. Ambassador Douglas Silliman, joined by KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, announced the start of construction of a new U.S. consulate compound in Erbil, the capital of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.¹⁶⁹ The new consulate compound will be the largest U.S. consulate complex in the world.¹⁷⁰

The DoS estimated the cost of the 51-acre consulate complex at approximately \$600 million and projected its completion in 2022.¹⁷¹ The new consulate complex will include a new office building, Marine security guard residence, consulate general residence, shops, maintenance facilities, perimeter security, staff housing, visitor accommodations, and a community center with bathhouse/cabana.¹⁷² Figure 4 provides a drawing of the proposed complex.

The DoS awarded the original construction contract on June 30, 2017, for \$422,470,379. Over the past 12 months, it has approved 7 contract modifications adding \$9,532,605 to the construction cost. At the end of the quarter, the DoS Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Construction Manager summarized work completed as including securing the perimeter of the complex, the Overseas Building Operations Housing Compound, and the construction staging area.¹⁷³

Figure 4.
Rendering of the New U.S. Consulate Compound to be Built in Erbil (DoS image)



The DoS estimated the cost of the 51-acre consulate complex at approximately \$600 million and projected its completion in 2022.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA

Security

OPERATIONS AGAINST ISIS CONTINUED AS THE UNITED STATES RE-EVALUATED ITS POLICY TOWARD SYRIA

This quarter, the DoD continued to work “by, with, and through” local Syrian forces to defeat ISIS amid significant uncertainty about U.S. policy in Syria. In addition to the March suspension of more than \$200 million in DoS funds for stabilization efforts, President Trump stated in April that he sought to withdraw troops from Syria “very soon.”¹⁷⁴

In June, Brett McGurk, the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, suggested that the last ISIS strongholds would be liberated in “4 to 5 months.”¹⁷⁵ The DoD reported this quarter that the U.S. presence in Syria is “fundamentally predicated on the campaign to defeat ISIS.”¹⁷⁶ However, the DoD and the DoS have repeatedly emphasized publicly that territorial defeat is necessary but insufficient to ensure ISIS’s lasting defeat.¹⁷⁷

The DoD said that as of June 30, that there had been no change in policy and reaffirmed several long-term objectives in Syria. According to the DoD, policy goals remained ensuring an enduring defeat of ISIS, promoting a unified and stable Syria, countering Iranian influence in Syria, eliminating Syrian weapons of mass destruction, and supporting efforts to create an environment where displaced civilians can safely and voluntarily return home.¹⁷⁸

The DoD said that it would continue operations to liberate “100 percent of ISIS-held territory in Syria” and ensure that ISIS is unable to “direct, inspire, or enable attacks against the U.S. homeland or U.S. persons or interests.”¹⁷⁹ The DoD also said that it expected to support a “longer-term presence” in Syria to enable DoS and USAID-led efforts to enhance security and governance in liberated territory.¹⁸⁰ The DoD noted that significant work would remain following the conclusion of combat operations to set the conditions necessary to prevent the reconstitution and resurgence of ISIS elements.¹⁸¹

SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS

- The United States and Turkey endorsed a roadmap that called for the Kurdish YPG to withdraw from Manbij. The roadmap sought to address Turkish security concerns while also continuing to support the Kurds in the fight against ISIS
- The SDF resumed offensive operations against ISIS following a 2-month hiatus during which hundreds of Kurdish militiamen halted the fight against ISIS to aid Kurds fighting Turkey in Afrin

SECURITY CHALLENGES

- Balancing the United States’ relationship with Turkey, a NATO ally, against the continued need to rely on the YPG, the key fighting force in the U.S.-backed SDF, in ongoing military operations against ISIS

SDF RESUMED OPERATIONS AGAINST ISIS AFTER 2-MONTH ‘PAUSE’

On May 1, the U.S.-backed SDF resumed operations to push ISIS from its remaining strongholds in the middle Euphrates River Valley after about 1,500 Kurdish YPG fighters belonging to the SDF returned to the fight there.¹⁸² The renewed fighting ended a 2-month “operational pause” that resulted when hundreds of YPG fighters left the battlefield in northeastern Syria to help Kurds in the northwestern enclave of Afrin fight a Turkish ground incursion.¹⁸³ The DoD and media sources reported that ISIS gained control of some additional territory in eastern Syria in areas under Syrian regime control as a result of the “pause.”¹⁸⁴ In June, ISIS suicide bombers killed at least 25 Syrian regime fighters in a coordinated attack in Abu Kamal, near the Iraqi border.¹⁸⁵ The DoD said that the pause in fighting had also enabled ISIS fighters to retrench, plan, and carry out attacks against the SDF.¹⁸⁶

The DoD said that returning Kurdish YPG fighters reintegrated into the SDF with “very little tension” between them and the Arab forces of the SDF, that had maintained defensive positions while the YPG fighters were in Afrin.¹⁸⁷ The loss of Afrin represented a major setback for the Kurds.¹⁸⁸ The DoD described Turkish military operations in Afrin this quarter as “focused on stabilizing the situation.” However, human rights organizations alleged abuses by Turkish-backed rebels.¹⁸⁹

By June, renewed SDF ground operations had liberated 13 villages in northeastern Syria from ISIS, including 12 in the Dashisha area and one along the Iraq-Syria border.¹⁹⁰ The SDF also stated that it had liberated a swath of territory around Badia and cleared ISIS fighters from part of the middle Euphrates River Valley.¹⁹¹

Coalition airstrikes against ISIS positions in Syria dropped dramatically during the time the YPG fighters were fighting in Afrin, according to DoD airstrike data. In January, prior to the YPG fighters’ departure for Afrin, the Coalition conducted 215 airstrikes in support of SDF operations against ISIS. In March and April—the 2 months when offensive operations stopped—that number dropped to 38 and 74, respectively, suggesting that the halt in the ground offensive had also affected the number of airstrikes. In May, after the YPG fighters returned, the number of airstrikes surged to 197.¹⁹²

The DoD estimated that 13,100 to 14,500 ISIS fighters remained in Syria, but cautioned that due to continual clearing operations, these numbers were likely in flux.¹⁹³ The DoD estimated that 4,000-6,000 of them remained in the U.S. military’s areas of operation in northeastern Syria.¹⁹⁴ For more on SDF operations against ISIS, see the Classified Appendix.

THE SDF COORDINATED WITH IRAQI SECURITY FORCES IN RESUMED OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AGAINST ISIS

This quarter, the SDF and the ISF coordinated operations against ISIS in eastern Syria. The Iraqi Air Force carried out airstrikes to prevent ISIS militants from crossing into Iraq as they came under fire from both the SDF and Syrian regime forces in Dayr az Zawr. Many of the Iraqi airstrikes were also de-conflicted with the Syrian regime.¹⁹⁵ The DoD reported that as a result of Iraqi air and ground operations, ISIS fighters were forced westward towards Syrian regime lines.¹⁹⁶

In April, Iraqi fighter jets, aided by Coalition intelligence and surveillance of ISIS targets, attacked ISIS targets near Abu Kamal.¹⁹⁷ In June, Iraqi aircraft targeted a meeting of ISIS senior leaders in Syria. According to media reports, several of the senior leaders were killed, including a personal courier for ISIS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi.¹⁹⁸ In May, Iraqi intelligence personnel captured five senior ISIS commanders, resulting in exploitable intelligence on ISIS communications and funding streams.¹⁹⁹

The ISF also provided ground support to the SDF this quarter. In May, the ISF, supported by U.S. Marines, set up a temporary base in western Iraq to fire artillery at ISIS positions across the border in Abu Kamal.²⁰⁰ Iraqi ground forces also worked to secure the Iraq-Syria border, coordinating with both the SDF and the Syrian regime to prevent ISIS fighters from escaping from Syria by deploying artillery batteries and additional border guards, and constructing new fortifications along the border.²⁰¹

A Syrian Democratic Forces soldier fires his AK-47 assault rifle at a target during a live-fire training exercise. (U.S. Army photo)

THE UNITED STATES AND TURKEY AGREED ON ROADMAP IN MANBIJ, RESULTING IN WITHDRAWAL OF KURDISH YPG FIGHTERS

On June 4, the United States and Turkey announced that they had agreed on a roadmap for the northern Syrian town of Manbij. On June 5, pursuant to the roadmap, YPG leaders announced that they would withdraw their remaining military personnel from the town,



SYRIA: AREAS OF U.S. AND COALITION MILITARY OPERATIONS

MANBIJ

The United States and Turkey agreed to conduct joint patrols in Manbij and to withdraw Kurdish forces linked to the YPG.

AFRIN

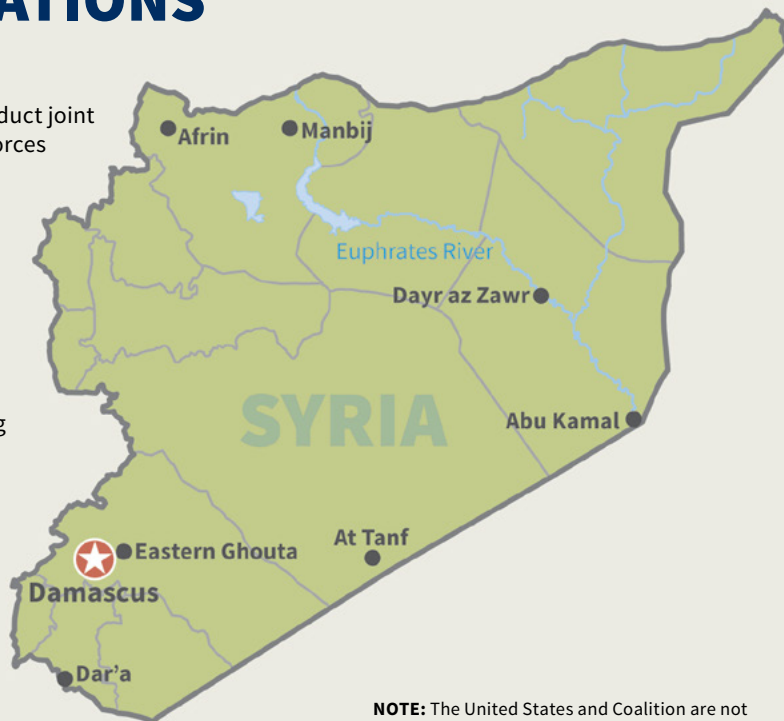
While some insurgent violence continued, Turkey solidified control over Afrin.

AT TANF

The U.S.-allied Mughawir al-Thawra group continued to patrol within the 55 km deconfliction zone around At Tanf, capturing several ISIS fighters and destroying an ISIS drug shipment.

ABU KAMAL

Fighting continued around Abu Kamal, with the SDF, regime, and ISIS fighting, and with the Iraqi Security Forces providing cross border assistance to the SDF.



NOTE: The United States and Coalition are not involved in the civil war. Combat between Syrian regime forces and their allies against opposition fighters and ISIS occurs throughout Syria.

Source: Lead IG analysis

according to media reports. On June 18, in accordance with the roadmap, U.S. and Turkish armed forces began coordinated, independent patrols to maintain security along a line of control on the outskirts of Manbij. Turkish and U.S. forces continued discussions and planning of joint patrols along the demarcation line.²⁰²

Turkish officials publicly emphasized the provision of the roadmap that called for the departure of YPG fighters from Manbij, which Turkey had been demanding since Kurdish fighters ousted ISIS and took control of the city in 2016. Turkey views YPG control of Manbij, located near the Turkish border, as a threat because of the YPG's ties to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has been waging a campaign of violence in Turkey.²⁰³

According to some analysts, the Manbij agreement sent a signal to the Kurds that they could not necessarily count on additional support from the U.S. military, even as the United States continued to rely on the Kurdish YPG to defeat ISIS.²⁰⁴ On June 10, the Syrian Democratic Council, the political arm of the SDF, announced that it was open to unconditional talks with the Syrian regime on the status of Kurdish-controlled enclaves in northeastern Syria.²⁰⁵

Figure 5.

Locations in Syria Where Major Events Occurred This Quarter

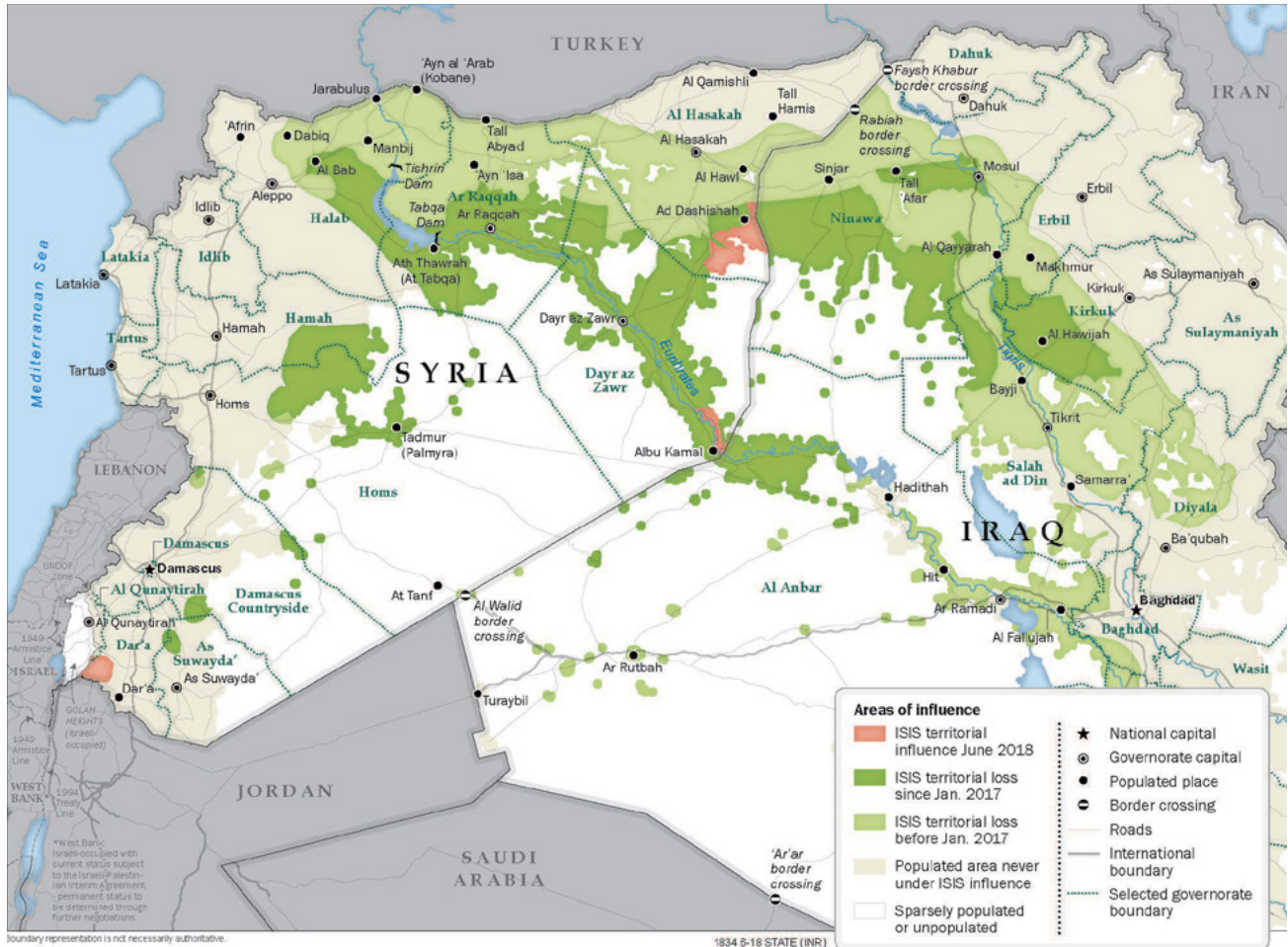


Figure 6.
**ISIS-
Controlled
Territory in
Syria, as of
June 2018**

Syrian President Bashar al Assad criticized the Manbij agreement, reiterating his goal to regain control of all of Syria.²⁰⁶ The Syrian regime issued a statement expressing its “strong condemnation and absolute rejection” of United States and Turkish presence near Manbij, calling it an “aggression on Syria’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity” and a violation of international law.²⁰⁷ The Syrian foreign minister warned that “[n]either Turkey nor the U.S. has the right to negotiate the [fate of] Syrian cities.”²⁰⁸

Prior to their withdrawal from Afrin and Manbij, the Kurds were estimated to hold about 25 percent of Syria, including territory along the border with Turkey east of the Euphrates River, as well as Syria’s richest oil fields according to media reports.²⁰⁹ For an overview of events in Syria this quarter, see Figure 5.

ISIS TERRITORY SHRANK BUT THE ORGANIZATION REMAINED A THREAT

Speaking at a meeting of the Coalition political directors on June 26, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy McGurk said that ISIS continued to hold about 2 percent of the territory once under its control in Iraq and Syria. Its remaining territory was concentrated in two

pockets in eastern Syria, the Middle Euphrates River Valley, and rural areas of southern Hasakah province, as well as a third pocket in the Yarmuk Basin in Dar'a province south of Damascus.²¹⁰ U.S. officials said ISIS militants still maintained widespread clandestine networks and were primarily fighting in small groups of three to five people.²¹¹ These ISIS cells, often moving through tunnels, carried out several lethal attacks in multiple provinces, including high-profile attacks against Syrian regime and pro-regime forces and attacks against the SDF.²¹²

In Raqqah province, for instance, ISIS claimed an IED attack on a checkpoint that killed an SDF fighter, and a bombing that killed five SDF fighters on patrol.²¹³ In June, ISIS detonated several IEDs in Idlib, killing commanders of the opposition Free Syrian Army and Islamist Hayat Tahrir al Sham.²¹⁴ For an overview of territory under ISIS's control in Syria this quarter, see Figure 6.

In Dayr az Zawr province, ISIS used at least 10 suicide bombers to kill regime soldiers in Abu Kamal.²¹⁵ ISIS also struck Russian artillery positions in Dayr az Zawr, killing four Russian soldiers.²¹⁶ In the south, ISIS launched a series of attacks on regime forces from positions in the Syrian desert, but lost control of the Yarmouk refugee camp south of Damascus.²¹⁷

The DoD reported that ISIS has not yet identified itself as an insurgency but rather continued to see itself as a state with a standing army. The DoD reported that ISIS was conserving its forces for an insurgency that the DoD predicted would stretch across the desert in eastern Syria and western Iraq, terrain that is well suited as a base for guerilla warfare.²¹⁸ The DoD predicted that ISIS would rely on a rural and desert insurgency in addition to urban warfare to recruit members and “lay the groundwork for a comeback.”²¹⁹ The desert terrain would allow them to regroup, run sleeper cells, rebuild finances through extortion, and plot attacks.²²⁰

The DoD reported that ISIS significantly reduced its financial operations in Syria this quarter.²²¹ ISIS generated revenue from limited oil activities, extortion and taxation, and other illicit trafficking activities, but suffered shrinking cash reserves.²²² On June 19, an airstrike killed a senior ISIS operative in charge of managing revenue generation from illicit oil and gas sales, which the DoD said would further hamper ISIS illicit finance efforts.²²³

FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS HELD BY SDF POSED A THREAT

The DoD said that the SDF held hundreds of foreign ISIS fighters in repurposed structures that were “not conducive to long-term detention operations.”²²⁴ The DoD expressed concern that the detention facilities were a drain on SDF resources and a “breeding ground for radicalism.”²²⁵ The DoD also stated that protracted detentions were neither desirable nor feasible, particularly amid ongoing political instability. The DoD said that the U.S. Government was working with the SDF and the international community to facilitate the repatriation of the detainees to their home countries, where they can be prosecuted, rehabilitated, or otherwise prevented from returning to Syria.²²⁶ For more on foreign ISIS fighters in Syria, see the Classified Appendix.

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Syrian Civil War

SYRIA LAUNCHED ASSAULT ON OPPOSITION IN SOUTHWEST DE-ESCALATION ZONE

On June 19, the Syrian regime began an intensive ground and air attack on rebel-held areas in Dar'a province in southwest Syria. The areas under attack fall within the “de-escalation zone” created in a July 2017 agreement between the United States and Russia intended to decrease fighting there. Russia joined the regime offensive on Dar'a with airstrikes that began on June 24 and targeted medical facilities and rescue workers, according to media accounts.²²⁷

Until the latest Syrian offensive, U.S. officials had referred to the de-escalation agreement as evidence of successful cooperation with Russia on counterterrorism and an indication that a political solution to Syria's civil war was possible. However, in congressional testimony, in June, Secretary of State Pompeo accused Russia of violating the agreement. Russian government statements said that Russia remained committed to the de-escalation agreement, and was assisting Syria with the fight against what it referred to as “terrorists” in Dar'a province.²²⁸

According to media reports, the United States has “steadily walked back” its warnings of American responses to violations of the de-escalation agreement. On May 25 and June 14, 2018, the DoS warned that the United States would take “firm and appropriate measures” in response to violations of the agreement. After the Syrian operation was underway, on June 21, the DoS warned of “serious repercussions.” However, on June 23, the DoS issued no warning of any repercussions, stating only that it was “closely following the situation” and that Russian and U.S. adherence to the de-escalation agreement was “critical.”²²⁹

According to media reports, the United States also issued an electronic warning to opposition commanders and fighters in Dar'a not to assume or expect military assistance from the United States.²³⁰ The chief negotiator for the opposition groups at the UN-sponsored peace talks stated that the United States' silence in the face of renewed regime attacks on rebel-held areas could only be explained by “a malicious deal,” according to press reports.²³¹

The regime offensive triggered a humanitarian crisis. According to the United Nations, more than 270,000 civilians had fled the area by July 1, mainly heading toward Jordan and Israel, both of which maintained closed borders but provided limited humanitarian aid including food and medical assistance. UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura reported to the UN Security Council that he was “gravely concerned” and warned that the situation could produce a repetition of the carnage that occurred in Aleppo and eastern Ghouta when the Syrian government sought to crush the opposition.²³² According to the United Nations, more than 750,000 civilians were at risk from the fighting.²³³

As of June 30, 2018, media reports suggested that rebel towns and forces in Dar'a province were negotiating agreements with the Syrian regime to turn in heavy equipment, halt the fighting, and allow government forces to take over the areas.²³⁴

(continued on next page)

Syrian Civil War *(continued from previous page)*

THE SYRIAN REGIME USED CHEMICAL WEAPONS TO GAIN REBEL-HELD TERRITORY NEAR DAMASCUS

On April 7, the Syrian government dropped chemical weapons on Douma, a city in eastern Ghouta near Damascus, forcing rebels to surrender and agree to withdraw to areas of northwestern Syria that were still under the control of Syrian opposition groups.²³⁵

In response to the chemical attack, on April 14, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom conducted airstrikes against Syrian chemical weapons storage and research facilities near Damascus and Homs.²³⁶ According to the DoD, these strikes significantly impaired the Syrian regime's ability to "develop, deploy, and use chemical weapons in the future."²³⁷

The DoD said that Syria's use of chemical weapons in Douma was designed to terrorize and subdue opposition fighters and the civilian population, and to minimize regime casualties.²³⁸ As a result of its actions, the Syrian regime gained key territory outside of Damascus and freed up large portions of pro-regime forces to conduct operations in Syria's southwestern provinces.²³⁹

According to the DoS, the Syrian regime's military operations in eastern Ghouta and Homs violated the terms of de-escalation agreements for those areas that were reached in Astana, Kazakhstan, and supposedly guaranteed by Russia, Turkey, and Iran. As of June 30, 2018, only the Idlib de-escalation area remained somewhat intact, although earlier in the month the regime launched airstrikes on several towns in that province.²⁴⁰

THE PEACE PROCESS TOOK A "CAUTIOUS STEP" FORWARD AMID FRESH FIGHTING

On June 27, 2018, UN Special Envoy de Mistura briefed the UN Security Council on meetings held in May and June to advance the Syrian peace process under the auspices of the United Nations. Although he noted "intensified efforts" and "some movement toward a political process," describing these meetings as "a cautious step forward," he stated that he was "gravely concerned" by the fighting in the southwest de-escalation zone, which he said could upset any political progress and inflame regional tensions beyond Syria.²⁴¹

UN efforts focused this quarter on steps to establish a "Syrian-owned" and "Syrian-led" constitutional committee to rewrite the Syrian constitution, which negotiators hoped would pave the way for new elections.²⁴² UN Special Envoy de Mistura, who was charged with creating this committee, said he wants to ensure that it has credibility and international legitimacy. He said it should comprise a diverse and representative spectrum of Syrians, including independents, civil society, experts, and tribal leaders and have women constitute at least 30 percent of the committee.²⁴³ On May 28, the Syrian government sent de Mistura a list of 50 names for the committee, including 13 women. De Mistura said in June that he anticipated receiving a list of names from the opposition "shortly."²⁴⁴ For more on the Syrian Civil War, see the Classified Appendix.

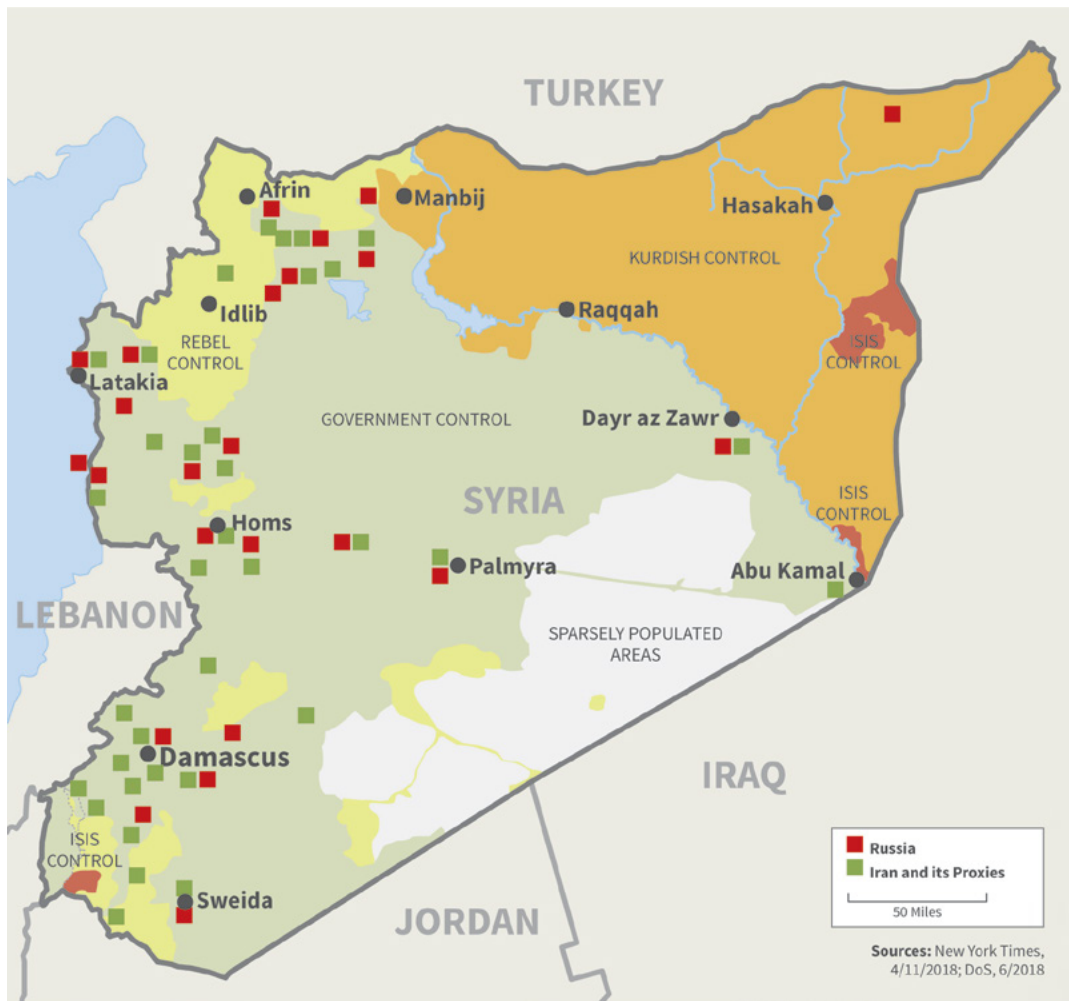


Figure 7.
Locations of
Russian and
Iranian Bases
in Syria

RUSSIA SUPPORTED THE SYRIAN REGIME IN FIGHT AGAINST REBELS, DISCUSSED ISRAELI CONCERNS OVER IRANIAN PROXIES

Russia continued to support the Syrian regime this quarter from approximately two dozen military bases it maintains in Syria.²⁴⁵ Additionally, Russian police were reportedly gearing up to patrol Syria's southern provinces.²⁴⁶ For an overview of Russian bases in Syria, see Figure 7.

Russia also engaged with Israel over concerns that Iranian-backed forces, including the Lebanese Hezbollah, were gaining strength in southern Syria near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. On May 9, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met to discuss an escalation of military activity in Syria between Israel and Iran as well as Hezbollah activity in southern Syria near Israel's border.²⁴⁷

The United States and Russia had set up a so-called "de-confliction hotline" in 2015 to prevent aircraft collisions or other military mishaps as both sides conduct operations in close proximity in Syria. The DoD said that de-confliction between U.S. and Russian military operations in Syria had slowed this quarter, which was consistent with the decrease in airstrikes and the pause in the fighting. However, the two sides de-conflicted operations in late April and early May in Dayr az Zawr province. In early June, Coalition

forces again used de-confliction channels as both forces struck ISIS fighters fleeing west across the Euphrates River.²⁴⁸

The DoD also said that Russia recently claimed to have reduced its military footprint in Syria, citing a lack of operations. According to the DoD, Russia said that it had withdrawn 14 jets, 13 helicopters, and 1,140 service members from Syria this quarter.²⁴⁹ However, in media reports, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russia had no plans to pull its military out of Syria, adding that Russian troops would stay “as long as it is to Russia’s advantage.”²⁵⁰ For more on Russian support of the Syrian regime, see the Classified Appendix.

IRAN CONTINUED TO SUPPORT SYRIAN REGIME AND PRO-REGIME FORCES

Iran continued to support the Syrian regime from nearly three dozen bases in Syria used by Iranian forces and proxy Shia militias whose fighters number in the tens of thousands.²⁵¹ For an overview of the location of Iranian and proxy militia bases in Syria, see Figure 6.

The DoS reported that Iran views Syria and its relationship with the Syrian regime as crucial to its effort to supply weapons to Lebanese Hezbollah and as a key to maintaining its regional influence. According to the DoS, Iran has stood idly by as the regime has committed atrocities—including using chemical weapons—against civilians in rebel-held areas. In addition to providing arms, financing, and training, Iran funnels Iraqi, Afghan, and Pakistani Shia fighters into Syria to support the regime. The DoS said Iran has sent members of the IRGC-Quds Force to Syria as “advisors,” many of whom have taken part in direct combat operations. According to the DoS, Iran’s support of the Syrian regime has enabled it to avoid seeking a constructive, negotiated end to the conflict.²⁵²

The DoD reported that Iranian activity in Syria did not pose an increased threat to Coalition and U.S. forces this quarter, but that Iran’s continual training, funding, equipping, and deploying of Shia foreign fighters in Syria presented an enduring threat to friendly forces in Syria.²⁵³ The DoD reported that forces in Syria under Iranian command or influence include about 3,000 IRGC-Quds Force members; about 9,000 Lebanese Hezbollah; about 10,000 Shia foreign fighters from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; as well as an unknown number of Syrian national or tribal forces, who align with Iran’s ideology or receive payment from Iran.²⁵⁴

The DoD said it continued to counter Iran by also supporting stabilization programs, which it considered a “strategic counterweight to Iranian influence in Syria.”²⁵⁵ The DoD said that while the defeat of ISIS remained the primary reason for the U.S. military presence in Syria, denying Iran an opportunity to fill vacuums created by ISIS’s loss of territory was an “ancillary benefit.”²⁵⁶

In April, General Joseph Votel, commander, U.S. Central Command, stated that the U.S. military also countered Iran’s influence in Syria by interdicting weapons shipments, supporting local forces, and bolstering the defenses of regional allies.²⁵⁷ According

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A display shows Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles components. It accompanies a multi-national collection of evidence proving Iranian weapons proliferation in violation of United Nations Resolutions 2216 and 2231. (DoD photo)

to analysts, the U.S. military's position at the At Tanf garrison in southern Syria also provides a bulwark against Iran and Iranian-backed militias who operate just beyond the 55-kilometer "de-confliction zone" the U.S. military has established around the isolated desert garrison.²⁵⁸

At the same time, the DoD reported that the Iranian government viewed ISIS as a threat not only to the sovereignty of Syria but also to Iran.²⁵⁹ The DoD said that it expected Iran to maintain its alliance with Syria, to remain in Syria at the invitation of President Assad, and to continue to support Iranian-backed militias that operate in Syria.²⁶⁰ According to the DoD, Iran and Syria portray the United States as uninvited occupiers who support ISIS and spread this misinformation to regional populations.²⁶¹ The DoD also said that Iran has not altered its behavior in Syria since the United States announced on May 8 that it was withdrawing from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran nuclear deal.²⁶² For more on Iranian activity and support for Shia militias in Syria, see the Classified Appendix.

ISRAELI ACTIONS ESCALATED IN SOUTHERN SYRIA

Israeli actions in Syria escalated this quarter, as Syrian regime and Iranian-backed Hezbollah forces moved south toward the Jordanian border and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.²⁶³ On April 9, eight IRGC members were killed in an air strike on a Syrian air base near Damascus that Syria and Russia said was carried out by Israel. Following the strike, Israeli media published images and maps of five Syrian airbases where Iranian drones and cargo aircraft were reportedly based, as well the names of three senior officers of the IRGC-Quds Force believed to be commanding military efforts in Syria.²⁶⁴

Thousands of pills of an illegal drug known as Captagon, seized during a counter-ISIS operation, are poured into a burning barrel for destruction in Southern Syria. (U.S. Army photo)



Shortly afterward, two Iranian-backed groups threatened U.S. forces based at the At Tanf garrison, a desert fortification used by the U.S. and Coalition troops to train anti-ISIS forces located near Syria’s border with Jordan and Iraq.²⁶⁵ One of the groups, calling itself the Popular Resistance in the Eastern Region, claimed a rocket attack on U.S. forces, while another group, called the Baqir Brigade, declared “jihad” against U.S. and Coalition forces.²⁶⁶ In May, Israel accused Iran’s IRGC—Quds Force of launching 20 missiles toward Israeli positions on the Golan Heights.²⁶⁷ For more on Israeli actions in Syria, see the Classified Appendix.

U.S. TROOPS CONTINUED TO SUPPORT SYRIAN OPPOSITION FORCE AROUND THE AT TANF GARRISON

The DoD said that there has been no change to Coalition operations at the At Tanf garrison this quarter. It said the Mughawir al Thawra (MaT), a 300-member Syrian tribal force supported by the Coalition, continued to patrol a 55-kilometer “de-confliction zone” surrounding the garrison. This quarter, the MaT constructed five new combat outposts there to “project combat power,” disrupt ISIS networks, and prevent ISIS fighters from entering the zone.²⁶⁸

The DoD said that ISIS attempted to covertly enter the zone to smuggle weapons and drugs and was exploiting gaps between the edge of the zone and Syrian regime forces to move weapons and equipment to eastern Syria.²⁶⁹ The DoD also reported that the MaT had destroyed a large narcotics cache worth about \$1.4 million that was seized during counter-ISIS operations within the zone.²⁷⁰ For an overview of events around the At Tanf Garrison this quarter, see Figure 4 on page 44.

SYRIA “MOST AGGRESSIVE ELECTRONIC WARFARE ENVIRONMENT”

In April, General Raymond Thomas, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, stated that Syria has become “the most aggressive electronic warfare environment on the

planet,” with Russian and Syrian electronic warfare systems working to disable or jam American aircraft.²⁷¹ According to media reports, several U.S. military officials confirmed that the jamming affected U.S. operations.²⁷² Media reports quoting four U.S. officials said that the Russians began jamming U.S. drones after the Syrian regime dropped chemical weapons on civilians in eastern Ghouta in April 2018. According to media sources, the DoD has employed countermeasures to ensure the safety of the drones.²⁷³ Despite the hostile environment, the DoD reported that there had been no “negative impacts” on the U.S. military’s ability to conduct operations against ISIS in Syria as a result of electronic warfare.²⁷⁴ For more on electronic warfare in Syria, see the Classified Appendix.

UNITED STATES MILITARY INFORMATION SUPPORT OPERATIONS COUNTERED RUSSIAN AND IRANIAN PROPAGANDA

The DoD reported that it continued to conduct Military Information Support Operations (MISO) in Syria to defeat ISIS, counter disinformation, and build up U.S. partners’ ability to conduct MISO operations.²⁷⁵ The DoD reported that the military has a long-standing relationship with other U.S. Government agencies, including the Department of the Treasury and the Global Engagement Center (GEC), an interagency organization created in April 2016 pursuant to an executive order and housed at the DoS.²⁷⁶

The GEC’s mission is to “lead, synchronize, and coordinate” U.S. Government efforts to “recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts aimed at undermining United States national security interests.”²⁷⁷ According to the DoS, the GEC has supported DoD counter-ISIS operations, integrating DoD, partner nation, and law enforcement efforts to degrade ISIS media and disseminate content online to discredit ISIS.²⁷⁸ The GEC has funded research on the impact of ISIS nostalgia, in anticipation of returning fighters becoming a vector of ISIS disinformation, and has refocused its information operations to reflect ISIS’s change from an occupying force to a terrorist insurgency.²⁷⁹

In addition to counter-terrorist messaging, the GEC’s role was expanded by the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act to include countering the adverse effects of state-sponsored propaganda and disinformation, including fighting Iranian and Russian propaganda in Iraq and Syria.²⁸⁰ The DoS stated that beginning in January 2018, the GEC began countering both Russian and Iranian propaganda, with an average of 70 messages a week.²⁸¹ With respect to countering Russian disinformation generally, the DoD and the DoS are coordinating with each other and with the relevant congressional committees regarding approximately \$40 million in DoD funding to be transferred to the DoS for the GEC’s use.²⁸² However, according to media reports, bureaucratic debates about the funding have hampered the ability of the GEC to engage in this broader mission. According to public reporting, the GEC was slated to receive \$60 million in funds transferred from the DoD in FY 2017, but did not take action to request the funds, which have still not been delivered.²⁸³ Additionally, the GEC has suffered from the loss of analysts and delays in hiring new personnel due to the government-wide hiring freeze in 2017.²⁸⁴ For more information on U.S. MISO efforts in Syria, see the Classified Appendix.

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Humanitarian Assistance

Displaced people in Syria were still in need of humanitarian assistance, including 6.6 million IDPs.²⁸⁵ The United Nations observed that civilians in Syria continue to be caught up in horrific violence, including attacks on residential areas, hospitals, markets, and schools.²⁸⁶ Intensified military operations in the southern part of the country created additional refugees and disrupted humanitarian response activities.²⁸⁷ During this reporting period, the number of people residing in besieged areas was reduced from 413,900 to approximately 11,100 people, largely due to the recapture of eastern Ghouta by the Syrian forces.²⁸⁸ However, the United Nations noted that there are still some 1.5 million people in hard-to-reach areas where sustained humanitarian programming was difficult to deliver.²⁸⁹

THE SIEGE OF EASTERN GHOUTA ENDED, BUT CONTINUED FIGHTING DISPLACED THOUSANDS MORE

In mid-April, Syrian government forces regained control of eastern Ghouta, following a siege of nearly 5 years. During the siege, air attacks and ground bombardments by pro-government forces killed hundreds of men, women, and children and destroyed numerous homes, markets, and hospitals. A UN Commission of Inquiry condemned these attacks, and the continual denial of food and medicine to the besieged population, as “crimes against humanity and war crimes” that caused serious mental and physical suffering as well as avoidable deaths.²⁹⁰

According to UN estimates, more than 66,000 fighters, family members, and other civilians from eastern Ghouta were evacuated to northwestern Syria, primarily Idlib province and adjacent areas,²⁹¹ while PRM estimated that another 28,500 IDPs remained in 8 IDP camps in rural Damascus.²⁹² A report to the UN Human Rights Council stated that for those evacuated “in no instance did the warring parties provide accommodation to those displaced, nor were the displacements effected in satisfactory conditions of safety, nutrition, health, or hygiene. Rather, displaced civilians most often found themselves in overcrowded camps that lacked basic services and were ill prepared to receive them.”²⁹³

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE DEVELOPMENTS

- Tens of thousands of IDPs have returned to Raqqah city. However, explosive hazards contamination hampered humanitarian access and posed a serious threat to the returning population, with civilian casualties reported
- Following a chemical attack on eastern Ghouta, rebel fighters and their supporters surrendered and evacuated to Idlib and other northwestern provinces, where their arrival strained the capacity of humanitarian agencies to respond
- A new Syrian regime offensive in the south province of Dar’a created hundreds of thousands of new IDPs

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE CHALLENGES

- Responding to the needs of women and girls who faced war-related dangers such as domestic abuse, child marriage, and sexual exploitation
- Reaching an estimated 1.5 million people in besieged areas amid restrictions on movement imposed by the Syrian regime and other armed groups and risks posed by hazards such as unexploded ordnance

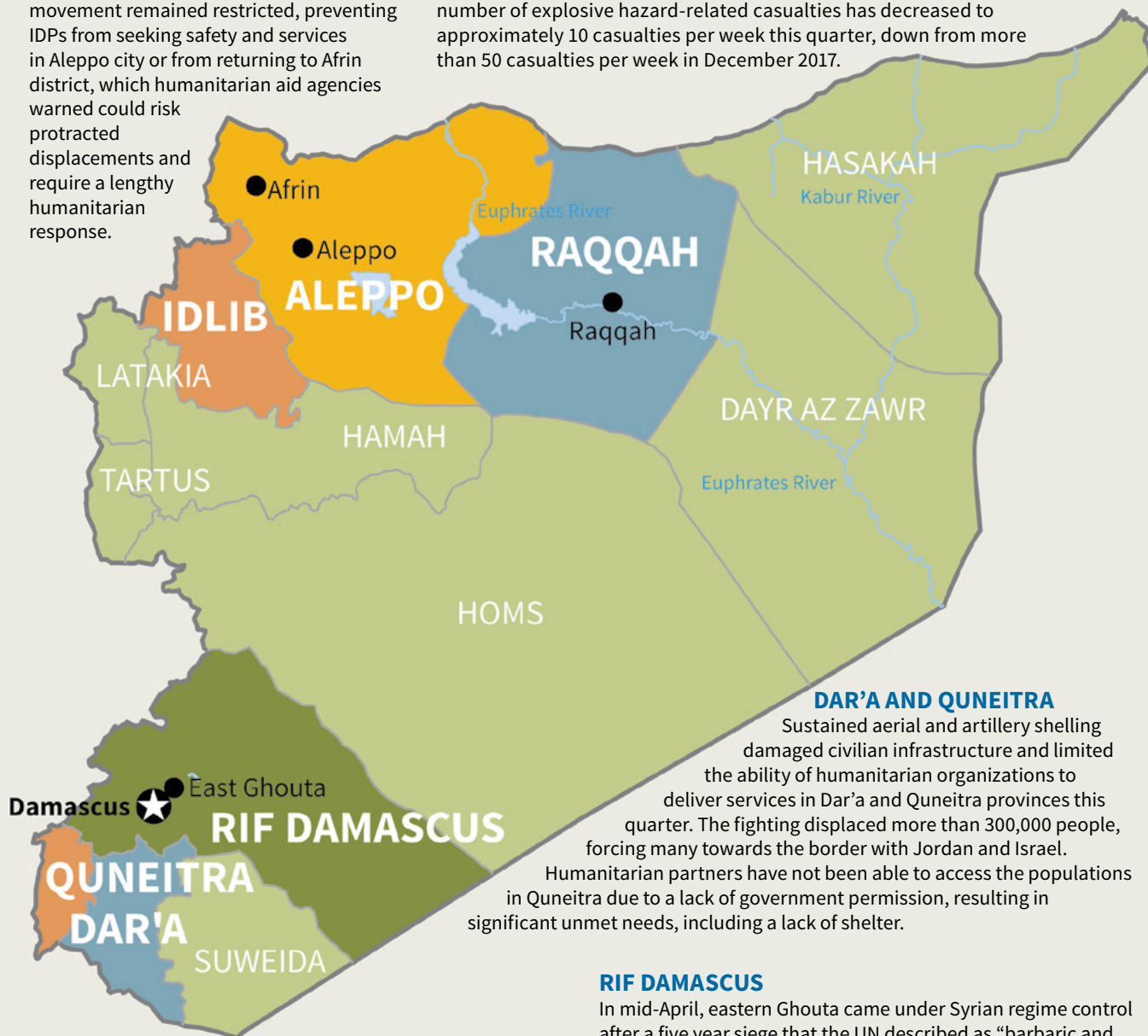
SYRIA: QUARTERLY FOCUS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

ALEPPO

Turkey's military offensive in Aleppo's northwestern Afrin district displaced an estimated 137,000 people. Freedom of movement remained restricted, preventing IDPs from seeking safety and services in Aleppo city or from returning to Afrin district, which humanitarian aid agencies warned could risk protracted displacements and require a lengthy humanitarian response.

RAQQAH

Explosive hazard contamination continued to pose risks for returnees in northeastern provinces. Amid increased returns, humanitarian agencies are scaling up mine risk education programming in Raqqah city, where the average number of explosive hazard-related casualties has decreased to approximately 10 casualties per week this quarter, down from more than 50 casualties per week in December 2017.



DAR'A AND QUNEITRA

Sustained aerial and artillery shelling damaged civilian infrastructure and limited the ability of humanitarian organizations to deliver services in Dar'a and Quneitra provinces this quarter. The fighting displaced more than 300,000 people, forcing many towards the border with Jordan and Israel.

Humanitarian partners have not been able to access the populations in Quneitra due to a lack of government permission, resulting in significant unmet needs, including a lack of shelter.

RIF DAMASCUS

In mid-April, eastern Ghouta came under Syrian regime control after a five year siege that the UN described as "barbaric and medieval." Since the end of hostilities, the Syrian regime had permitted very limited access by humanitarian organizations until July 1, when the UN, Red Crescent, and the WFP were allowed to deliver emergency food, health, nutrition, and sanitation assistance to approximately 25,000 people. The UN continued to advocate for unimpeded humanitarian access to eastern Ghouta.

IDLIB

USAID estimated that more than 66,000 fighters, family members, and other civilians from eastern Ghouta were evacuated to northwestern Syria, primarily Idlib province and adjacent areas. The United Nations reported that IDP camps in Idlib province were overcrowded and lacked basic services, and operated at about four times their expected capacity.

Sources: USAID, DoS, UN, and media reports.

While the UN no longer identifies eastern Ghouta as besieged, the region is still defined as “hard-to-reach” due to continued access challenges imposed by local authorities.²⁹⁴ Some of the families displaced from eastern Ghouta have returned despite widespread infrastructure destruction and lack of access to basic services in the area. On May 14, an interagency UN mission accessed towns in eastern Ghouta, marking the first interagency mission to the area since the Syrian government took full control of the region. The United Nations continued to advocate for unimpeded humanitarian access to eastern Ghouta from Damascus; this quarter, such access continued to be dependent on Syrian regime approval.²⁹⁵

In mid-June, Syrian government troops escalated a military offensive in Syria’s Dar’a province, displacing more than 300,000 people, many towards the area’s border with Jordan and Israel. USAID and PRM humanitarian partners responded by providing food assistance, emergency relief items, and health care to displaced populations. Continued violence, however, affected the ability of humanitarian partners to operate, resulting in the temporary suspension of some activities.²⁹⁶

CONDITIONS IN NORTHERN SYRIA REMAINED DIRE

Local displacement and influxes of IDPs following recent evacuation agreements have strained humanitarian assistance and resources in northern Syria. The United Nations reported that IDP sites in Idlib province were operating at approximately four times their capacity.²⁹⁷ Due to fighting between Syrian government forces and opposition groups, many partners found it difficult to operate and sustain access to needy populations.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, the unstable security situation in Idlib raised the risk that combatants might divert humanitarian assistance away from those in need. For example, a USAID/OIG investigation found that employees of a U.S.-based NGO knowingly diverted USAID-funded food kits to the militant organization Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS),²⁹⁹ which has been designated by the DoS as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.³⁰⁰ The NGO’s employees allowed HTS fighters to be included among program beneficiaries in Idlib province and submitted falsified beneficiary lists to USAID to conceal the fighters’ participation in the food assistance program.³⁰¹

Operation Olive Branch—the government of Turkey’s military offensive in northwestern Syria—displaced an estimated 137,000 people from Aleppo’s Afrin district during the quarter, according to USAID.³⁰² The United Nations reported in May that freedom of movement remains restricted, preventing the displaced population from seeking safety and services in Aleppo city or from returning to Afrin district. This may increase the risk of protracted displacements, requiring a lengthy humanitarian response.³⁰³ The United Nations reported that humanitarian assistance remained insufficient in Afrin, particularly for populations in IDP sites and rural areas, due to access restrictions.³⁰⁴ According to PRM, in early June, a UNHCR partner completed the installation of 300 shelter kits in 357 individual empty houses in Tal Rifaat, where about 4,000 people from Afrin were sheltering.³⁰⁵

Humanitarian groups slowly increased their presence in Raqqah city. As of early May, at least nine international NGOs, including USAID partners, were providing some

In mid-June, Syrian government troops escalated a military offensive in Syria’s Dar’a province, displacing more than 300,000 people, many towards the area’s border with Jordan and Israel.



A Syrian family examines the reconstruction efforts and reopened markets near the Naim traffic circle, Raqqah, Syria. (U.S. Army photo)

humanitarian assistance in Raqqah city. For example, WFP distributed 6,000 family food rations, sufficient for 30,000 people for 30 days, marking the first WFP distribution in the city since 2014.³⁰⁶ USAID and PRM staff assigned to the Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) - Forward directly monitor these activities. USAID staffs two positions on START Forward: a Syria Humanitarian Advisor; and a rotating slot for technical and programmatic specialists.³⁰⁷

Explosive hazard contamination remained a significant concern and hampered humanitarian operations and the safe return of IDPs in northeastern Syria.³⁰⁸ Despite the risks, an estimated 175,000 people have returned to Dayr az Zawr province and approximately 132,000 people have returned to the city since late 2017.³⁰⁹ Humanitarian groups are ramping up their mine risk education programming, which—along with clearance efforts—has helped reduce the number of explosive hazard-related casualties from more than 50 per week in December 2017, to approximately 10 casualties per week by May 2018. However, USAID and PRM noted that explosive hazard contamination continues to pose risks for returnees throughout northeastern Syria due to insufficient explosive hazard mapping and removal efforts.³¹⁰

CIVILIAN POPULATION CONTINUED TO FACE EXTREME HARDSHIPS

In Idlib province, which is largely under al Qaeda control, 37 attacks on health care infrastructure were reported this year, including numerous attacks on hospitals, health centers, ambulance stations, a blood bank, and a medical warehouse.³¹¹ Airstrikes also damaged a medical facility in Bennsh, resulting in the temporary suspension of non-emergency services.³¹² Some facilities were allegedly hit after the United Nations provided their locations to the United States and Russia in an effort to de-conflict and thus protect

them; the United Nations is investigating these allegations.³¹³ Airstrikes also prompted two of six FFP-supported bakeries to suspend operations in the province. The closures affect the delivery of bread for more than 70,000 people sheltering in northern Idlib’s IDP camps.³¹⁴

In May, militant groups using vehicle-borne IEDs and other weapons killed at least 24 civilians, including 6 children, and injured dozens of individuals in Idlib and Hamah provinces. On May 12, a car bomb detonated near Idlib Hospital, killing 9 civilians and injuring 25 others.³¹⁵ Attacks on hospitals and health care centers are occurring at nearly twice the rate as in 2017, with more than 92 attacks and 89 related deaths reported as of June 2018.³¹⁶

After 7 years of war, Syria is now recognized as one of the world’s most dangerous countries for women, with experts on women’s issues sounding the alarm over access to healthcare, domestic abuse, and sexual exploitation.³¹⁷ The United Nations said that early marriages were reportedly emerging as a “protection mechanism” in some IDP sites, where community networks and safe environment have been disrupted.³¹⁸

U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FUNDING AND STAFFING IN SYRIA

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

- **OFDA** works with UN and international NGO partners to provide support to IDPs and other conflict-affected populations.
- **FFP** provides food assistance to IDPs, refugees, and others in need who have been impacted by the crisis in Syria.
- **PRM** works through the UN and other partners to protect and support IDPs, refugees, and other conflict victims in Syria, and provides assistance to others in the surrounding countries who have been affected.³¹⁹

OFDA, FFP, and PRM rely on several types of personnel to execute their work, including U.S. Government employees, personal services contractors, and institutional contractors. A total of 34 personnel are assigned full-time to the Syria humanitarian assistance response, with 11 stationed in Turkey, 7 in Jordan, and the remainder in the United States (primarily Washington, DC). The Syria effort is also supported by an additional 42 personnel who work on regional OIR humanitarian response issues.³²⁰

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. OFDA and FFP primarily use International Disaster Assistance funds. FFP also uses a small amount of funding authorized by Title II Food Aid of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (Public Law 480) to respond to the Syria and Iraq complex crises. PRM uses Migration and Refugee Assistance funds for this purpose.³²¹ Each office awards funds to implementing partners, which include various international organizations such as the UNICEF, the WFP, the UNHCR, and the IOM, as well as private NGOs. These organizations

Table 3.

Status of Cumulative FY 2015, FY 2016, FY 2017, and FY 2018 U.S. Government Humanitarian Assistance Funds for the Syria Crisis, as of 6/30/2018 (in millions/rounded)

| Office | Syria Obligated | Syria Disbursed |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| OFDA | \$902.9 | \$758.2 |
| FFP | \$1,490.1 | \$1,530.4 |
| PRM | \$2,547.2 | \$2,849.2 |
| TOTAL | \$4,940.2 | \$5,137.8 |

Notes: USAID and the DoS reported disbursements that may exceed obligations because some disbursements in the reporting period were made against awards obligated in prior to fiscal year 2015. In OIR reports prior to March 31 2016, the DoS reported disbursements only from funds obligated from FY2015 forward. Data on disbursements can provide valuable information about how much money has been spent on activities as well as the amounts of funding that remain available for expenditure. If they are provided a letter of credit from the U.S. Government, however, humanitarian assistance implementing partners may accrue expenses before drawing down on agency funds. For this reason, expenditures on humanitarian assistance activities sometimes exceed disbursements. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Sources: USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP, response to USAID OIG request for information, 7/11/2018; DoS, PRM, response to DoS OIG request for information, 7/11/2018.

carry out assistance programs on the ground in Syria, Iraq, and neighboring countries hosting Syrian and Iraqi refugees.³²²

As mentioned above, President Trump announced the suspension of \$200 million in unobligated funding for stabilization assistance in Syria pending a reassessment of the U.S. strategy there. The suspension did not immediately affect U.S. delivery of humanitarian assistance, according to OFDA, FFP, and PRM. However, the suspension of funds did affect stabilization and early recovery efforts.³²³ For example, USAID curtailed or reduced 22 USAID-funded activities in liberated areas intended to strengthen communities' ability to resist extremist groups, and maintain and increase the influence of strategic moderate actors.³²⁴

Stabilization

STABILIZATION EFFORTS IN SYRIA AFFECTED BY SUSPENSION OF \$200 MILLION IN STABILIZATION FUNDING

On June 14, 2018, the President authorized USAID and DoS to release approximately \$6.6 million of the \$200 million in stabilization funds that he suspended last quarter. The \$6.6 million will support the Syrian Civil Defense Group, first responders better known as the White Helmets, and the UN's "International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism," which assists in the investigation of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses.³²⁵ The rest of the \$200 million remained frozen and the DoS reported that it has begun redirecting some of this funding.³²⁶

While the freeze did not immediately affect humanitarian aid, it has reportedly disrupted stabilization programs to clear explosives, remove rubble, restore power, clean water, and promote economic recovery in areas of northeastern Syria liberated from ISIS by the

SDF.³²⁷ It also has affected programs meant to counter extremism in areas like Idlib. The fallout from the suspension of funds has also damaged the local networks cultivated by the United States and the Coalition to promote governance and stabilization, and made it difficult to sustain supporters and employees of stabilization projects.³²⁸

The DoS reported that it continued to support some stabilization efforts in Syria this quarter, including programs to remove explosive remnants of war, restore essential services, and build local capacity to support longer-term sustainability, particularly in northern areas liberated from ISIS.³²⁹

In addition to its evaluations of stabilization assistance, the DoS also worked with partners and allies to increase their support for stabilization efforts.³³⁰ Contributions from some European countries have allowed certain programs to continue or resume, in particular the clearing of explosives.³³¹

Coalition nations pledged \$95 million for stabilization at the June 26, 2018 meeting of political directors in Morocco. Additional funding to share the burden was discussed at the July NATO meeting in Brussels.³³² However, the suspension of U.S. funding is affecting other potential contributors more broadly, as some nations have expressed reluctance to contribute without U.S. leadership.³³³

The DoD reported that humanitarian assistance and stabilization activities were ongoing throughout northeastern Syria. These included removing rubble, reducing explosive devices, training internal security forces, repairing water pumping stations and irrigation infrastructure, and coordinating support to local governance.³³⁴

Like-minded countries have repeatedly emphasized that there will be no international reconstruction assistance absent a credible political process in Geneva that leads unalterably to constitutional reform, UN-supervised elections, and a political transition that reflects the will of the Syrian people.³³⁵ Syrian President Assad announced in a June 24, 2018 interview that Syria would not accept any Western funds to help rebuild the country.³³⁶ For more information on the effects on stabilization efforts caused by the funding freeze, see the Classified Appendix.

SYRIA TRANSITION ASSISTANCE RESPONSE TEAM (START) CONTINUED STABILIZATION EFFORTS

The START is a DoS-led interagency team that works with international organizations, Syrian NGOs, the government of Turkey, and other donor nations to implement and oversee humanitarian assistance and stabilization programs that address the needs of Syrians in Syria and Turkey.³³⁷ The START Director and part of the team are based at the U.S. embassy in Ankara and a sub-group known as START-Forward operates within Syria.³³⁸

The DoS stated that START's staff had increased to 45 this quarter and that START-Forward comprised no more than 11 persons.³³⁹ According to the DoS, START-Forward includes subject matter experts, primarily from the DoS and USAID who rotate through Syria for 1 to 3 months.³⁴⁰



Water flows through a collection tank at the Al-Awghi Water Pumping Station in Shahil, Syria, one of the few currently operational in the region. (U.S. Army photo)

The DoS said that START-Forward allows the U.S. Government to oversee some stabilization programs directly. These programs include the removal of explosive remnants of war and the restoration of essential services such as water, sanitation, and electricity in Raqqah and other liberated areas.³⁴¹ The DoS stated that START-Forward coordinates and operates with the DoD to ensure the security of personnel and to de-conflict stabilization programming.³⁴²

The DoD reported that it had spent an estimated \$14.2 million of the \$20 million Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid fund authorized by the Secretary of Defense for FY 2018 to support these USAID and DoS disaster relief and humanitarian aid efforts in Syria. The assistance includes funding for food, water, temporary shelter, clothing, and medical supplies to people in northeastern Syria and the Middle Euphrates River Valley where USAID, the DoS, and their partners have limited access in the immediate aftermath of military operations.³⁴³

DoD support included transportation, security, logistics support, and follow-on humanitarian relief activities for internally displaced persons and populations in need in northeastern Syria. The DoD also provides transportation to non-DoD and non-U.S. Government personnel and ferries relief commodities to areas in need.³⁴⁴ The DoD's Civil Affairs teams work with USAID and the DoS to assess humanitarian aid needs and assist with the delivery of aid to affected areas.³⁴⁵

This quarter, the DoD reported that it continued messaging campaigns to highlight local civil council efforts to return liberated areas to normality. Messaging also sought to publicize the effectiveness of internal security forces and inform the civilian population of continued efforts to remove explosive devices and implement other stabilization activities.³⁴⁶

Support to Mission

THE DOD PROVIDED STIPENDS TO THREE VETTED SYRIAN OPPOSITION GROUPS THIS QUARTER

The DoD reported that three main vetted Syrian opposition groups remained active in Syria this quarter. These included³⁴⁷:

- **The SDF, an umbrella group that includes the Syrian Arab Coalition and the YPG.** The Syrian Arab Coalition comprises the Manbij Military Council, Dayr az Zawr Military Council and the 5th Engineers;
- **The Internal Security Forces (InSF),** “police-like” forces that operate in Raqqah, Manbij, Dayr az Zawr, and provincially; and
- **The MaT, or Revolutionary Commando Army,** a tribal force based at the At Tanf garrison in southern Syria near the border with Jordan and Iraq.

The DoD reported that some components of these three groups have received stipends totaling more than \$11.7 million since April 2015, including more than \$2.4 million this quarter. These include all components of the Syrian Arab Coalition, one component of the InSF (Raqqah), and the MaT. For a breakdown of funds obligated and disbursed to each group, see Table 4.

The DoD did not provided stipends to other components of the InSF or to other components of the SDF this quarter.³⁴⁸

THE DOD PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED STIPENDS TO SEVEN OTHER VETTED SYRIAN OPPOSITION GROUPS

The DoD reported that seven other vetted Syrian opposition groups had received \$20,045,800 in stipends since October 2016, but this quarter were currently listed as “inactive,” meaning that they no longer worked with U.S. forces to defeat ISIS and did not receive stipends or equipment this quarter.³⁴⁹ Some or all of these groups may be operating in Syria independent of U.S. support.³⁵⁰

Table 4.

CTEF-Syria: Stipends Obligated to Syrian Opposition Groups this Quarter and in Total

| Group | Subgroup | Obligation Start Date | Obligated Q3 | Total Obligations |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Syrian Arab Coalition (SDF) | Manbij Military Council | 3/2017 | \$811,400 | \$4,221,140 |
| Syrian Arab Coalition (SDF) | Dayr az Zawr Military Council | 4/2017 | \$452,300 | \$1,902,300 |
| Syrian Arab Coalition (SDF) | 5th Engineering Rohava Mine Clearing Operation | 4/2017 | \$44,420 | \$140,101 |
| Internal Security Forces | Raqqah Internal Security Forces | 5/2017 | \$942,600 | \$3,062,330 |
| Mughawir al Thawra | — | 10/2016 | \$229,700 | \$2,451,250 |
| TOTAL | | | \$2,480,420 | \$11,777.121 |

Source: DoD

Table 5.

Stipends Paid to “Inactive” Vetted Syrian Opposition Groups

| Group | Total Obligations |
|---|---------------------|
| 1st Engineering Brigade | \$103,500 |
| 1st Aleppo Division | \$103,500 |
| 51st Brigade | \$5,200,000 |
| Liwa al Hamza (also known as Firqa Hamza) | \$8,821,150 |
| Liwa Mu'atasim | \$5,346,800 |
| Vetted Syrian Opposition Logistics Team | \$30,950 |
| Shohada al Qaryatayn | \$439,900 |
| TOTAL | \$20,045,800 |

Note: No stipend payments paid to these groups in Q3 2018.

Source: DoD

Of the seven inactive groups, three—the 1st Engineering Brigade, the 51st Brigade, and the Mu'atasim Brigade—stopped receiving stipends this quarter.⁵¹ The other groups stopped receiving stipends in December 2017.⁵² For an overview of stipends paid to each group, see Table 5.

The Hamza Brigade was placed on “inactive status” last quarter.⁵³ Open media sources reported that some of the Liwa al Hamza fighters, culled from several smaller rebel groups, fought in Afrin against members of the Kurdish YPG. Liwa al Hamza also stopped receiving stipends in December 2017.⁵⁴

THE DOD SPENT \$61 MILLION TO TRAIN AND EQUIP THE SDF AND INSF

The DoD also reported that it has disbursed \$61 million to the SDF and the InSF since October 2016, including almost \$7 million disbursed to the 2 groups through June 6, 2018.⁵⁵ For a breakdown of funds, see Table 6.

Table 6.

CTEF-Syria Program, Training Costs (in millions)

| Group | Q3 Training Costs, as of June 2018 | Total Training Costs since October 2016 |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|
| SDF | \$2.5 | \$43.6 |
| InSF | \$4.19 | \$17.4 |
| TOTAL | \$6.69 | \$61 |





Members of the Iraqi counter-terrorism force and an Italian soldier, take kneeling positions at the flank of an assault during military training in Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

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COMPLETED OIR OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY

This section of the report provides information on completed 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, 2018.

COMPLETED AUDIT, INSPECTION, AND EVALUATION REPORTS FOR OIR

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 the areas of 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 16 reports related to OIR. These reports examined various activities that support OIR, including contract and equipment management, disbursements for contingency operations, and sexual assault prevention and response program management.

Final Reports

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Management of Army Equipment in Kuwait and Qatar

DODIG-2018-132; June 29, 2018

The DoD OIG conducted an audit to determine whether the Army maintained and accounted for Army Prepositioned Stock-5 equipment in Kuwait and Qatar. This equipment includes combat-ready vehicles and weapon systems needed by U.S. military forces deployed in support of operations in Southwest Asia. In 2016, the Army awarded a contract, valued at \$393 million, to maintain this equipment.

The DoD OIG found that the Army did not ensure that the contractors maintained the equipment in accordance with prescribed maintenance schedules. This occurred because Army personnel relied on the contractor to track maintenance schedules and did not verify these schedules. Additionally, the DoD OIG found that the Army did not consistently account for Army Prepositioned Stock equipment. Specifically, Army personnel in Kuwait did not conduct a 100 percent inventory of equipment during a transition between accountability officers.

The DoD OIG recommended that the Army review equipment maintenance schedules as well as oversight procedures for contracting officer representatives. Additionally, the DoD OIG recommended that the Army update regulations to ensure it could completely account for the equipment.

At the time of this report, management had not commented on the DoD OIG findings and recommendations.

The Trans-Africa Airlift Support Contract

DODIG-2018-116; May 8, 2018

The DoD OIG conducted an audit to determine whether U.S. Africa Command conducted a Service Requirements Review Board to develop, analyze, and validate the requirements for the Trans-Africa Airlift Support Contract. The U.S. Transportation Command awarded the Trans-Africa Airlift Support Contract to provide airlift services for the U.S. Africa Command to support its efforts within its area of responsibility. With the spread of ISIS beyond Iraq's and Syria's borders, one of U.S. Africa Command's efforts is to counter the ISIS threat within its area of responsibility.

The DoD OIG determined that neither the U.S. Africa Command nor the U.S. Transportation Command convened the required review boards prior to awarding the contract. As a result, the DoD OIG concluded that the contract's requirements might not be accurate. Specifically, the audit found that the contract's performance work statement included requirements for intelligence that were not clear, as well as requirements for medical services that may unnecessarily increase costs. Moreover, requirements outlined in the performance work statement allow the contractor to refuse any mission for safety reasons, which could delay airlift support, including medical evacuation. Furthermore, the DoD OIG found no evidence that the U.S. Africa Command documented its decision on whether to use a contractor or military support for airlift services.

The DoD OIG recommended that U.S. Africa Command implement a training program for acquisition personnel to ensure that requirements are reviewed and validated prior to awarding contracts. It also recommended that the U.S. Africa Command conduct a requirements review board and modify contracts accordingly, or conduct a requirements review board for each subsequent task order awarded under the contract. The DoD OIG recommended that U.S. Transportation Command develop formal procedures for executing contracts for external activities.

U.S. Africa Command did not respond to a request for comment. The U.S. Transportation Command agreed with the recommendation to develop formal procedures.

Processing and Disposition of Equipment at the DLA Disposition Services in Kuwait

DODIG-2018-112; May 1, 2018

The DoD OIG conducted an audit to determine whether Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Disposition Services properly processed and disposed of equipment in Kuwait. The DLA manages equipment turn-in, reutilization, and sales that benefit the military services and

Federal agencies, as well as state and local governments. DLA Disposition Services–Kuwait provides services for Afghanistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

The DoD OIG found that DLA Disposition Services officials properly processed and disposed of equipment in Kuwait. However, it also found that improvements were necessary to mitigate health and safety hazards that put DLA Disposition Services–Kuwait personnel and contractors at risk of injury. In addition, the audit concluded that while DLA Disposition Services–Kuwait officials had established site-specific pre-receipt processes that resulted in efficiencies, such as reducing backlogs and processing times, it did not document these processes.

During the audit, the DoD OIG advised DLA Disposition Services Kuwait officials of the deficiencies in the safety program and recommended that the DLA Disposition Services Directorate--Central, which includes Disposition Services–Kuwait, establish a schedule to conduct inspections to ensure that personnel wear personal protective equipment, provide employees with a job hazard analyses, and create a job hazard analysis for shredding operations. Additionally, the DoD OIG recommended that DLA Disposition Services Directorate–Central document the pre-receipt processes developed in Kuwait.

The Director of DLA Disposition Services Directorate–Central agreed with the findings and immediately initiated corrective actions. The actions taken were sufficient to close the recommendations.

Defense Information Systems Agency Contract Awards at Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization Europe

DODIG-2018-104; April 13, 2018

The DoD OIG conducted an audit to determine whether the Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization (DITCO) Europe, a component of the Defense Information Systems Agency, properly awarded telecommunication service contracts. The audit team reviewed 30 contracts valued at \$64.5 million. DITCO Europe has contracting responsibility for Europe, Africa, and Southwest Asia telecommunication services, and several of the 30 contracts indirectly support OIR.

The DoD OIG found that DITCO Europe properly awarded the 30-telecommunication service contracts. However, it also found that DITCO Europe did not adequately conduct or document market research, and ensure that contract files were complete. While these deficiencies did not affect award decisions, the audit concluded that failure to follow the required regulations put DITCO Europe at risk for future award protests and possible litigation.

The DoD OIG recommended that the Director, Defense Information Systems Agency, in coordination with the Director, DITCO, provide refresher training to contracting personnel on conducting market research and documenting contract files to comply with the regulations.

The Director, DITCO agreed with the recommendation.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Invoice Review Process for Worldwide Protective Services Contracts

AUD-MERO-18-47; June 15, 2018

The DoS OIG conducted an audit to determine whether the Bureau of Diplomatic Security was following applicable regulations when reviewing invoices under the protective services contracts for guard services in Iraq and Afghanistan; whether there were a sufficient number of qualified staff members to oversee the protective services contracts; and the extent to which the Bureau of Diplomatic Security provided oversight of contractor performance.

The DoS OIG found that the Bureau of Diplomatic Security followed Federal Acquisition Regulation requirements, DoS guidance, and its own procedures in reviewing invoices. However, rather than reviewing all supporting documentation associated with the corresponding invoices, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security desk officers sampled supporting documentation for cost reimbursable invoices to save time and meet payment timeline requirements. The use of such informal sampling increases the risk that unallowable or unsupported costs for high-dollar, high-risk invoices could go undetected.

The DoS OIG also found that staffing shortfalls have affected the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's ability to perform effective invoice review and contract oversight. The DoS OIG concluded that the two offices within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security charged with protective services contract oversight responsibilities had 26 percent fewer staff members than required, as of November 2017. This was due, in part, to a DoS-imposed hiring freeze in addition to staffing challenges that predated the hiring freeze. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security requested two waivers from the hiring freeze but its requests remained pending, as of May 2018.

The DoS OIG made four recommendations that are intended to improve the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's invoice review process and associated contract oversight activity. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security agreed with all four recommendations, and the DoS OIG considered each recommendation resolved pending further action.

Audit of Food Safety Controls Under Baghdad Life Support Services Task Order SAQMMA14F0721

AUD-MERO-18-38; May 3, 2018

The DoS OIG conducted an audit to determine whether the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs provided oversight of food safety controls for the Baghdad Life Support Services food services task order in accordance with DoS and contractual requirements, and whether the Bureau of Administration and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs held the contractor accountable for complying with food safety controls.

The DoS OIG found that Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs officials did not provide sufficient oversight of food safety controls for the task order. Specifically, it did not verify that the

contractor or its subcontractor implemented comprehensive food safety plans that are meant to assess and prevent potential food safety hazards for each site in Iraq. Rather, the subcontractor developed a single food safety plan that covered all sites. The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs officials did not review or approve the single plan or verify that it included pertinent principles. The audit concluded that the lapse in oversight occurred, in part, because the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs officials did not prioritize food safety planning and did not include a review of food safety plans in their oversight process. Additionally, the DoS OIG found that the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs did not plan or conduct sufficient oversight to hold the contractor accountable for complying with food safety controls and contract requirements. Moreover, the contracting officer's representatives and alternate contracting officer's representatives were not properly trained on food safety principles. As a result, the audit found increased risk that food safety hazards could go undetected.

The DoS OIG made seven recommendations to the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs to improve oversight of the Baghdad Life Support Services contract food services task order and one recommendation to the Bureau of Administration to ensure that the improved oversight complies with Federal regulations.

Based on responses received from the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the Bureau of Administration to a draft of this report, the DoS OIG considered five recommendations resolved pending further action and three recommendations unresolved.

AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY

Munitions Management 39th Air Base Wing Incirlik Air Base, Turkey

F2018-0032-RA0000; June 27, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether 39th Air Base Wing personnel accounted for, stored, and safeguarded munitions in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance.

The audit concluded that the Wing personnel properly accounted for the all the munition line items reviewed, properly stored the munitions, and safeguarded the munitions stored at five storage facilities.

Since the audit did not identify any problems, the Air Force Audit Agency did not make any recommendations. Management concurred with the final report.

Facilities Maintenance 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar

F2018-0031-RA0000; June 26, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether 379th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel had implemented corrective actions in response to a 2017 DoD OIG report that had identified health and safety risks including the risk of electrocution, poor air quality, and fire hazards at the Al Udeid Air Base. The Al Udeid installation, the largest and most diverse expeditionary wing of the Air Force, consists of more than 950 facilities.



B-1B Lancers sit on the flightline during sunset at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. (U.S. Air Force photo)

The audit found that Wing personnel had partially addressed the deficiencies identified by the DoD OIG. They had implemented corrective active plans to address 206 of the 253 identified deficiencies. However, the audit also determined that Wing personnel had not addressed 47 deficiencies and the auditors found 13 additional deficiencies related to electrical and fire protection systems.

The Air Force Audit Agency made two recommendations to improve compliance with DoD health and safety standards for facilities at Al Udeid Air Base.

During the course of the audit, the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel implemented two corrective actions that auditors said should address the deficiencies they identified.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Management 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar

F2018-0030-RA0000; June 19, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether 379th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel managed Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program operations at deployed locations.

The Air Force Audit Agency determined that Wing personnel reported cases and incidents in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance and operations support requirements; however, personnel did not comply with personnel assignments, background investigations, and training requirements. Specifically, the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Victim Advocate did not meet the minimum grade requirement of GS-11

or above. Additionally, all 9 (100 percent) of active Sexual Assault Prevention and Response personnel received Defense Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program certifications prior to receiving a favorably adjudicated background investigation. One (11 percent) of 9 Sexual Assault Prevention and Response personnel was granted the certification within 6 months of the adjudication's expiration date. Furthermore, two deputy commanders did not receive Sexual Assault Incident Response Oversight training from the response coordinator upon assuming their command position and the coordinator did not retain documentary evidence to support all Sexual Assault Incident Response Oversight training provided.

The Air Force Audit Agency recommended that the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Commander train all commanders and deputy commanders on sexual assault incident response oversight upon assuming command; require that the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator load certificate dates of Victim Advocates in the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database; and develop standard repeatable processes to verify that commanders and deputy commanders receive sexual assault incident response oversight training and maintain documentary evidence to support training.

Management officials agreed with the audit results and recommendations.

Munitions Management—Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar

F2018-0029-RA0000; June 18, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel accounted for, stored, and safeguarded munitions in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance. As of May 2018, 379th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel maintained munitions valued at over \$1.7 billion.

The audit determined that Wing personnel accounted for munitions, properly stored munitions, and had proper safeguards over access to munitions storage facilities. Since this audit identified no deficiencies, the Air Force Audit Agency did not make any recommendations.

Management officials agreed with the audit results.

Munitions Management 380th Air Expeditionary Wing Southwest Asia

F2018-0028-RA0000; June 15, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel properly accounted for, safeguarded, and stored munitions in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance. As of May 2018, 380th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel maintained munitions valued at approximately \$375.5 million.

The audit found that while Wing personnel properly accounted for and safeguarded munitions, they did not properly store 15,401 munitions valued at approximately \$290 million.

The audit report contained no recommendations because during the audit, management provided an approved plan to start construction for a new munitions storage area to begin in November 2020. Management officials agreed with the audit results.



A U.S. Air Force pilot conducts a walk-around inspection of the aircraft on Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. (U.S. Air Force photo)

United States Air Force Central Command Area of Responsibility Aviation Fuels Management

F2018-0004-L40000; June 13, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether personnel properly accounted for aviation fuel transactions.

The audit found that deployed aircrews did not maintain supporting documentation for 396, or 51 percent, of 772 aviation fuel transactions. Consequently, Air Force units paid over \$5.5 million in unsupported transactions.

The Air Force Audit Agency made two recommendations to address 1) improper oversight and 2) inadequate procedures.

Management concurred with the audit findings and recommendations.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Management 380th Air Expeditionary Wing Southwest Asia

F2018-0027-RA0000; June 5, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel managed the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program at deployed locations.

The Air Force Audit Agency determined that Wing personnel reported cases and incidents in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance and complied with personnel assignments, background investigations, awareness, and operations support requirements. However, personnel did not comply with Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program training requirements. The Sexual Assault Response Coordinator did not provide sexual assault incident response oversight training to four deputy commanders as required.

The Air Force Audit Agency recommended the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing Commander require the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator provide sexual assault incident response oversight training to all deputy commanders.

Management officials agreed with the audit results and recommendation.

Disbursements for Contingency Operations 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar

F2018-0026-RA0000; June 1, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether 379th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel 1) maintained cash holding authority to support contingency operations; 2) accounted for and safeguarded on-hand cash balances; and 3) authorized, documented, and supported cash disbursements.

The Air Force Audit Agency determined that Wing personnel maintained cash holding authority to support contingency operations; accounted for and safeguarded on-hand cash balances; and authorized, documented, and supported cash disbursements.

This audit identified no negative audit results related to disbursement for contingency operations; therefore, this report contains no recommendations.

Management officials agreed with the audit results.

Disbursements for Contingency Operations 386th Air Expeditionary Wing Southwest Asia

F2018-0025-RA0000; May 22, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether 386th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel 1) maintained cash holding authority to support contingency operations; 2) accounted for and safeguarded on-hand cash balances; and 3) authorized, documented, and supported cash disbursements.

The Air Force Audit Agency determined that Wing personnel maintained cash holding authority to support contingency operations; accounted for and safeguarded on-hand cash balances; and authorized, documented, and supported cash disbursements.

This audit identified no negative audit results related to disbursement for contingency operations; therefore, this report contains no recommendations.

Management officials agreed with the audit results.

Emergency Contingency Allowance Equipment 386th Air Expeditionary Wing Southwest Asia

F2018-0020-RA0000; April 9, 2018

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether 386th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel managed equipment authorizations and accounted for emergency contingency allowance equipment in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance.

The Air Force Audit Agency found that the Wing did not manage emergency contingency allowance equipment in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance. A review of 615 authorizations, valued at \$13.1 million, indicated that equipment custodians maintained 444 (72 percent) authorizations, valued at \$8.7 million, without a currently tasked unit type code. Equipment custodians also maintained 75 (12 percent) authorizations, valued at \$2.8 million, in excess of authorized quantities.

The Air Force Audit Agency also found that Wing personnel did not account for 125 equipment items, valued at \$3.4 million, on custodian authorization/custodian receipt listings. Additionally, personnel could not locate 10 of 375 equipment items valued at \$252,826 during physical inventories. As a result, wing personnel did not have proper visibility and accountability of equipment items valued at \$252,826.

The Air Force Audit Agency recommended that the Wing commander direct equipment custodians to account for all equipment items not listed on the inventory, locate missing equipment identified during the audit, and initiate a report of survey for each missing item. The Air Force Audit Agency also recommended that equipment custodians complete Block II equipment training.

The 386th Air Expeditionary Wing agreed with the audit results and recommendations.

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

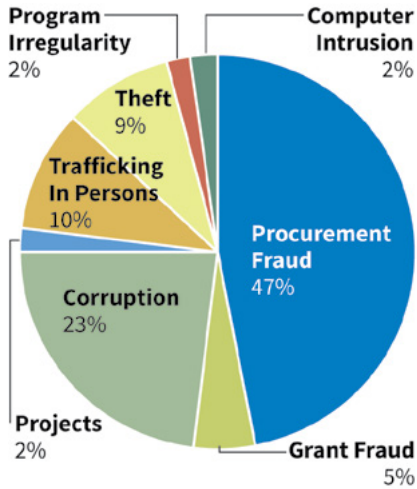
During this quarter, Lead IG investigations resulted in 1 arrest, 2 criminal charges, 2 criminal convictions, fines and recoveries of \$1,881,595. In addition, there were 29 personnel actions, 3 suspensions, and 12 debarments.

Investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies closed 4 investigations, initiated 11 new investigations, and coordinated on 92 open investigations. The open investigations involve grant and procurement fraud, corruption, theft, computer intrusions, and dealing with 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 division), the DoS OIG, USAID OIG, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of Special

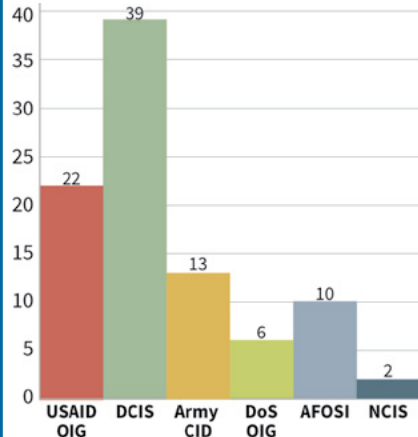
ACTIVITY BY FRAUD AND CORRUPTION INVESTIGATIVE WORKING GROUP

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE
As of June 30, 2018

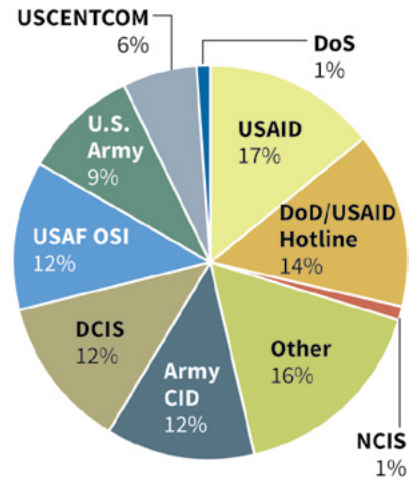


OPEN INVESTIGATIONS
92

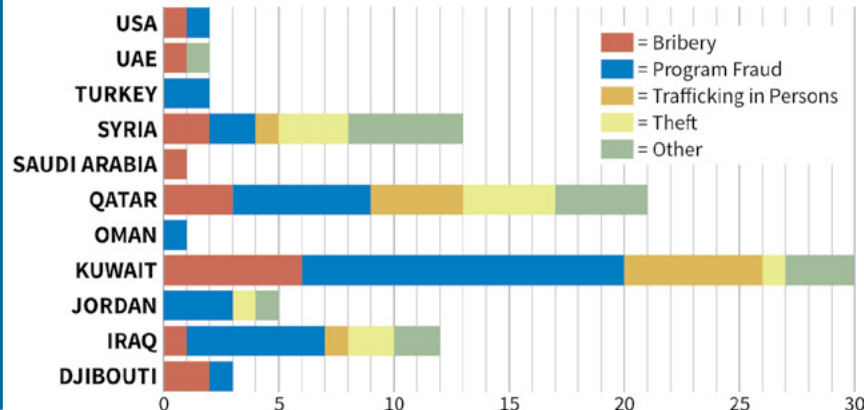
OPEN INVESTIGATIONS BY WORKING GROUP MEMBER*



SOURCES OF ALLEGATIONS



PRIMARY OFFENSE LOCATIONS



Q3 FY 2018 RESULTS

| | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Arrests | 1 |
| Criminal Charges | 2 |
| Criminal Convictions | 2 |
| Fines/Recoveries | 881,595 |
| Suspensions/Debarments | 3/12 |
| Job Terminations | — |
| Personnel Actions | 29 |
| Other Administrative Actions | — |

Q3 FY 2018 BRIEFINGS

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Briefings Held | 29 |
| Briefings Attendees | 168 |

*Some investigations are joint with more than one agency and some are 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 6/30/2018. **Note:** Cumulative since 1/1/2015.

Investigations. This quarter, the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group conducted 29 fraud awareness briefings for 168 participants.

The DoS OIG and USAID OIG are working together on three open investigations.

The dashboard on page 76 contains a consolidated listing of the activities of these investigative components. The following are examples of investigative activities.

RUSSIAN AND SYRIAN NATIONALS INDICTED FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF U.S. ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST SYRIA AND CRIMEA

On June 12, 2018, the Department of Justice indicted five Russian nationals and three Syrian nationals for conspiring to violate U.S. economic sanctions against Syria and Crimea. According to the indictment, they sent jet fuel to Syria and made U.S. dollar wire transfers to Syria and to sanctioned entities in Syria without receiving a license from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The indictment involves transactions conducted by Joint Stock Company Sovfracht, a Russian shipping company and freight forwarder. The U.S. Government imposed sanctions on Syria to thwart Syria's support of terrorism and its pursuit and use of weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. Government imposed sanctions on the Crimean region of Ukraine to deter those who seek to undermine Ukraine's democratic processes and territorial integrity.

The indictment alleges that the defendants used petroleum tankers owned by a Russian-based company to ship jet fuel and other items surreptitiously to Syria. The five Russian nationals are employees of Sovfracht. One of the Syrian nationals worked on behalf of Sovfracht in Syria to coordinate its business there. The other two Syrian nationals are petroleum inspectors at Port Baniyas, Syria. All eight individuals were charged with one count of conspiracy to violate the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and one count of conspiracy to launder monetary instruments.

USAID ISSUES BILL OF COLLECTION FOR MORE THAN \$600,000, DEBARS THREE INDIVIDUALS

An ongoing USAID OIG investigation into bid rigging, collusion, bribery, and kickbacks between Turkish vendors and procurement staff from four NGOs in southeast Turkey resulted in USAID issuing a \$610,782 bill of collection in May 2018 to one of the NGOs whose employees perpetrated the scheme. USAID also debarred three individuals connected to the scheme in June 2018. The investigation has thus far uncovered evidence of Turkish vendors conspiring with procurement staff of USAID implementers that conducted cross-border humanitarian assistance programs for Syrian internally displaced persons.

This ongoing USAID OIG investigation has already led to 7 employee terminations, 1 employee suspension, 5 employee resignations, and 17 debarments of individuals and companies, as well as 13 systemic changes by USAID offices affecting award management, program oversight, internal processes, and fraud prevention efforts. USAID also suspended \$239 million in program funds among the NGOs under investigation.

Forum Discussed Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons

On April 23, 2018, the U.S. Army's 408th Regional Contracting Command sponsored its first-ever Combating Trafficking in Persons forum. Approximately 80 individuals, including representatives from the U.S. Army, military law enforcement agencies, and the DoD OIG, attended the forum. The purpose of the forum was to define human trafficking, differentiate between human trafficking and migrant smuggling, recognize vulnerable populations and common indicators, and identify responsibilities to address and prevent trafficking in persons violations.

The U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait, Lawrence Silverman, began the forum by reminding the group that human trafficking is not merely a moral issue nor one that affects the interests only of the American people, but that it is an issue that threatens international peace and security. He noted that the U.S. military in Kuwait was on the front lines of the trafficking in persons epidemic.

Representatives from DCIS and the DoD OIG Hotline investigator were among the speakers at the forum. U.S. Army Area Support Group-Kuwait Commander, the Foreign Liaison Officer from U.S. Embassy Kuwait, and representatives from the Public Authority of Manpower for Kuwait also spoke. The DoD OIG is conducting an evaluation of DoD efforts to combat trafficking in persons at DoD facilities in Kuwait.

INDIVIDUALS FIRED AFTER USAID OIG INVESTIGATION

From March to May 2018, a USAID-funded NGO fired 27 individuals after an ongoing USAID OIG investigation found that the NGO's employees in Syria participated in a scheme in which USAID-funded food kits were diverted to HTS, a designated terrorist organization operating in northern Syria. The NGO's employees allowed HTS fighters to be included among program beneficiaries and submitted falsified beneficiary lists to USAID to conceal the fighters' participation in the food assistance program.

USAID suspended the \$44.6 million program in February 2018 because of the investigation's findings.

USAID OIG HOSTED FIFTH SYRIA INVESTIGATIONS WORKING GROUP MEETING

In May 2018, USAID OIG and the UN World Food Program co-hosted the fifth meeting of the Syria Investigations Working Group in Rome, Italy. Forty-one members from 18 bilateral donors and Public International Organizations—including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the European Commission Anti-Fraud Office, and the UN Development Programme—participated in meeting and the working group promotes investigative cooperation and collaboration

among agencies, improved information sharing and education on issues affecting cross-border programs into Syria, such as preventing material support for terrorist and armed groups as well as sexual exploitation and abuse.

Hotline

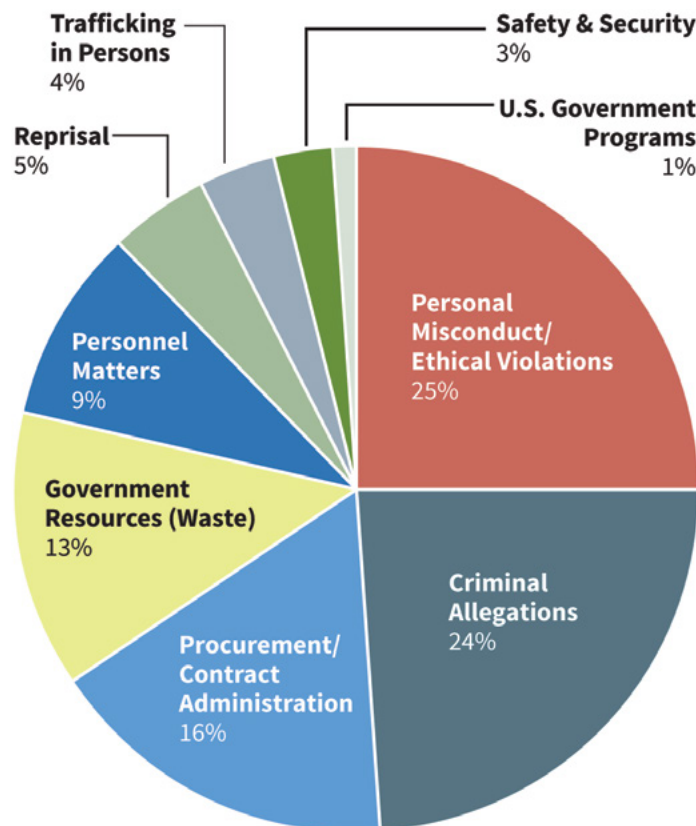
This quarter, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies opened 62 cases as a result of hotline complaints. Hotlines provide a confidential, reliable means to report allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse without fear of reprisal. Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints and contacts specific to its agency. The OIG hotline representatives process the complaints they receive and refer these complaints to the appropriate entity in accordance with their respective protocols. Any hotline complaint that merits referral is sent to the responsible organization for investigation or informational purposes.

The DoD OIG employs an investigator to coordinate the hotline contacts received among the Lead IG agencies and others, as appropriate. Some hotline complaints include

numerous allegations that result in multiple cases. However, not all complaints result in the opening of investigative cases. The cases opened this quarter were referred within the DoD OIG and the IGs for the military services.

As noted in Figure 8, the complaints received during this quarter are related to personal misconduct and ethical violations, criminal allegations, procurement or contract administration irregularities, U.S. Government resources (waste), other personnel matters, reprisal, safety and security, trafficking in persons allegations, and U.S. Government programs.

Figure 8.
Hotline Activities







Iraqi soldiers set up a support by fire position during a culminating training event at Camp Taji. (U.S. Army photo)

ONGOING AND PLANNED OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

- Strategic Planning 82
- Ongoing Oversight Activities for OIR 85
- Planned Oversight Activities for OIR..... 96

A Coalition member screws on a cap to a fuel canister after refilling it at an outpost near Dawr Az Zawr, Syria. (U.S. Army photo)



ONGOING AND PLANNED OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

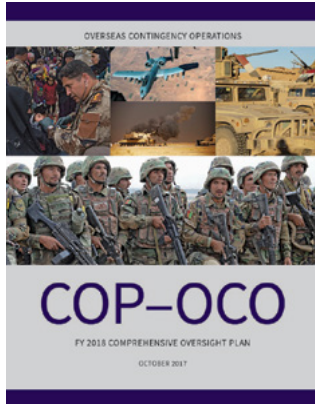
This section of the report discusses the ongoing Lead IG strategic planning process as well as ongoing and planned audit, inspection, and evaluation work. The ongoing and planned oversight projects, as of June 30, 2018, are listed in separate tables.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Pursuant to Section 8L of the Inspector General Act, the Lead IG is required to develop and carry out 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 plan for each operation.

The Overseas Contingency Operations Joint Planning Group Meets Quarterly

The Joint Planning Group serves as a primary venue to coordinate audits, inspections, and evaluations of U.S.-funded activities supporting overseas contingency operations, including those relating to Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and the Philippines. The Joint Planning Group provides a forum for information sharing and 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, Treasury, Energy, and Homeland Security.



**FY 2018
Comprehensive
Oversight Plan
for Overseas
Contingency
Operations**

The meeting in April 2018 featured a presentation by Lieutenant General (ret) Terry Wolff, Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS at the DoS. He provided an update on the Coalition’s campaign to defeat ISIS, the Administration’s Iraq/Syria policy, and stabilization-related activities in Syria.

FY 2018 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for OIR

Starting in 2014, upon designation of the DoD IG as the Lead IG for OIR, the three Lead IG agencies began developing and implementing a joint strategic oversight plan for comprehensive oversight of OIR. That oversight plan has been updated each year. *The FY 2018 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for Operation Inherent Resolve*, effective October 1, 2017, was included in the

FY 2018 Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations. The strategic plan organized OIR-related oversight projects into five strategic oversight areas: Security, Governance and Civil Society, Humanitarian Assistance, Stabilization, and Support to Mission.

SECURITY

Security focuses on determining the degree to which OIR is accomplishing its mission to defeat ISIS by training, advising, and assisting the Iraqi Security Forces and vetted Syrian opposition forces, and conducting counterterrorism operations. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area may include:

- Countering illegal combatants and criminal elements,
- Supporting host-nation military and police, including the Iraqi Army, federal and local police, the Counterterrorism Service (Iraqi), border guard forces, tribal holding forces, the Syrian Democratic Forces, and Kurdish forces,
- Providing equipment and enablers that support targeting and air operations against ISIS and affiliates, and
- Protecting key personnel and facilities.

GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

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

- Building or enhancing those nations’ governance capacity, including the capacity to pay for their activities and services,
- Promoting inclusive and effective democracy, and civil participation and empowerment,
- Promoting reconciliation, peaceful conflict resolution, demobilization and reintegration of armed forces, and other rule of law efforts,

- Fostering sustainable and appropriate economic development activities,
- Fostering fair distribution of resources and provision of essential services, and
- Countering and reducing corruption, inequality, and extremism.

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 may include:

- Protection,
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene,
- Emergency food assistance,
- Relief commodities,
- Shelter,
- Healthcare,
- Education,
- Emergency livelihoods,
- Economic recovery,
- Social cohesion, and
- Coordination of related logistics.

STABILIZATION

Stabilization focuses on U.S. Government efforts to enable persons affected by the overseas 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 may include:

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

SUPPORT TO MISSION

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

- Security of U.S. personnel and property on U.S. installations,
- Occupational health and safety of personnel on U.S. installations,
- Logistical support to U.S. installations,
- Grant and contract management, and
- Program administration.

ONGOING OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES FOR OIR

As of June 30, 2018, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 58 ongoing projects related to OIR. Tables 7 and 8 list the title and objective for each of these projects. Figure 9 describes the ongoing projects by strategic oversight area.

The discussion that follows highlights some of these ongoing projects by primary oversight area.

Security

The DoD OIG, DoS OIG, the Air Force Audit Agency, the Department of Justice (DoJ) OIG, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) OIG, and GAO have ongoing audits related to security.

The DoD OIG is conducting evaluations of DoD intelligence programs related to social media exploitation; airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance processing, exploitation, and dissemination; and special intelligence interrogation methods. These audits will, among other things, determine whether the OIR commander's intelligence requirements are being satisfied and whether the approaches and techniques used by interrogators adhere to applicable DoD policies and regulations. Another audit is examining whether the Combined Joint Task Force-OIR validated the requirements for Iraqi border guard equipment against specific, identified, and demonstrated needs.

The DoJ OIG is reviewing the FBI's efforts to address homegrown violent extremists and the Bureau of Prison's counterterrorism and security efforts. The DHS OIG has ongoing projects to review programs that are intended to protect the nation's critical infrastructure and to secure U.S. borders.

The GAO is evaluating the DoD's approach to the planning, training, and utilization of U.S. military personnel to advise and assist partner forces as a result of lessons learned from their efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. The GAO is also evaluating the special

operations forces' operational tempo to determine the challenges the DoD has faced in providing special operations forces to meet geographic commanders' requirements, and the extent to which the DoD considers the operational tempo when prioritizing and tasking special operations forces.

Governance and Civil Society

Both the DoS OIG and the GAO are conducting oversight projects related to governance and civil society.

The DoS OIG is inspecting governance and stabilization programs in Iraq and Syria funded under the Further Continuing and Security Assistance Appropriations Act, 2017, to determine whether the DoS has been able to deploy funds made available under the Act to support governance and stabilization efforts in Iraq and Syria.

The GAO is reviewing the DoD's and the DoS's global human rights training programs to determine the authorities and key mechanisms through which the DoD and DoS conduct the training of foreign security forces; learn what is known about the program funding; and measure the effectiveness of the training programs.

Humanitarian Assistance

USAID OIG and the DoS OIG have ongoing audits related to the humanitarian assistance effort in Iraq and Syria.

USAID OIG is auditing selected obligations and costs incurred relating to USAID's humanitarian assistance in Syria and neighboring countries. USAID OIG is also conducting a follow-up audit of Syrian implementers under investigation.

The DoS OIG is auditing the Bureau of Population, Migration, and Refugees' assistance to internally displaced persons in Iraq to determine whether the bureau has effective controls in place to ensure that U.S. funds provided to those persons are used for their intended purposes.

Stabilization

USAID OIG is auditing USAID's assistance to public international organizations to determine the risk assessments conducted by USAID offices before awarding funds to these organizations; how the risks were mitigated; how USAID oversees public international organization programs and funds; and if other vulnerabilities exist with USAID assistance provided to public international organizations, notwithstanding established policies and procedures.

Support to Mission

The Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies are conducting audits related to contracting, efforts to combat trafficking in persons, combat readiness, sexual assault prevention, and internal controls.

The DoD OIG, DoS OIG, GAO, and Air Force Audit Agency are all examining contracting policies and procedures in the OIR area of responsibility.

The DoD OIG is evaluating the DoD’s efforts to combat trafficking in persons at DoD facilities in Kuwait to determine whether contracts in Kuwait comply with trafficking in persons requirements in statutes, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, and DoD guidance; and whether DoD officials are providing effective oversight. The DoD OIG is also auditing U.S. Air Force’s C-5 Galaxy readiness to determine whether U.S. Air Force C-5 squadrons have adequate mission-capable aircraft and training to support the U.S. Transportation Command’s readiness and mission requirements. In addition, the DoD OIG is auditing the DoD components’ integration of operational contract support to determine whether the combatant commands have effectively integrated operational contracting support into ongoing operations.

The DoS OIG is conducting an audit of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs’ aviation program’s inventory management, asset usage, aircraft maintenance, and asset disposal to determine whether the bureau is following Federal and DoS guidelines in administering its aviation program, including key internal controls such as inventory management, aviation asset usage, aircraft maintenance, and asset disposal. The DoS OIG is also auditing the Baghdad Life Support Services contract to determine whether the food service operations were conducted in accordance with Federal acquisition regulations and DoS policies and guidance.

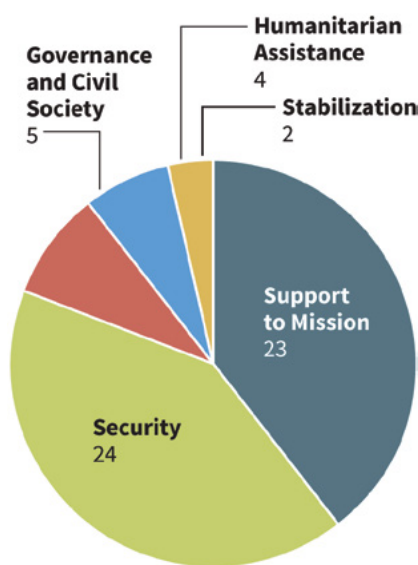
The Air Force Audit Agency is auditing sexual assault prevention and response programs in Kuwait and Turkey to determine whether personnel managed reported cases and incidents in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance, and complied with personnel assignment, background investigations, training, awareness, and operations support requirements.

The Army Audit Agency is evaluating the operations and procedures related to civilian and military pay and entitlements. The Naval Audit Service is evaluating the Navy’s processes and internal controls of the Husbanding and Port Services Provider Program.

The DHS OIG is evaluating the Coast Guard’s oversight of identification credentials of transportation workers to strengthen our nation’s homeland security.

Figure 9.

Ongoing Projects per Strategic Oversight Area



Note: Projects may focus on more than one SOA; therefore, totals do not represent a one-to-one correlation with the count of total projects.

Table 7.

Ongoing Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agencies, as of June 30, 2018

| Project Title | Objective |
|--|--|
| DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Evaluation of Airborne Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance Processing, Exploitation, and Dissemination Process for Operation Inherent Resolve</i> | To evaluate whether the OIR Commander's intelligence requirements are being satisfied by the current airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance processing, exploitation, and dissemination process. |
| <i>Evaluation of Social Media Exploitation for OIR</i> | To determine if the 513th Military Intelligence Brigade, supporting element for Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-OIR is conducting open source intelligence, specifically social media exploitation, in accordance with DoD directives. |
| <i>Audit of DoD Components' Integration of Operational Contract Support</i> | To determine whether the combatant commands have effectively integrated operational contracting support into ongoing operations. |
| <i>Evaluation of DoD Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons at DoD Facilities in Kuwait</i> | To determine whether 1) DoD contracts in Kuwait comply with combating trafficking in persons requirements in statutes, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, Defense Acquisition Regulations System, and other DoD guidance, and 2) DoD officials are providing effective oversight in accordance with command responsibility and contracting regulations, including taking measures to address any instances of non-compliance. |
| <i>Evaluation of U.S. and Coalition Efforts to Train, Advise, Assist, and Equip an Iraqi Police Hold Force in Support of Stability Operations</i> | To assess the U.S. and Coalition efforts to train, advise, assist, and equip Iraqi Police Hold Force in support of stability operations. |
| <i>Under Secretary of Defense (Intelligence) and Defense Intelligence Agency Oversight of Special Intelligence Interrogation Methods</i> | To determine whether the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence's and the Defense Intelligence Agency's oversight of intelligence interrogation approaches and techniques used by the combatant commands adhere to applicable DoD policies and regulations, and the overall effect of these policies and regulations on the interrogation process. |
| <i>Audit of Operational Contract Support Force Development</i> | To determine whether DoD components incorporated operational contract support training into force development for military and DoD civilian personnel. |
| <i>Audit of U.S. Air Force C-5 Galaxy Readiness</i> | To determine if the U.S. Air Force's C-5 squadrons have adequate mission-capable aircraft and training to support the U.S. Transportation Command's readiness mission requirements. |
| <i>Audit of the Military Sealift Command's Maintenance of Prepositioning Ships</i> | To determine whether the Military Sealift Command ensured that prepositioning ships received required maintenance. |
| <i>Audit of Iraqi Border Guard Equipment</i> | To determine whether the Combined Joint Task Force-OIR validated the requirements for Iraqi border guard equipment against specific, identified, and demonstrated needs. |

| Project Title | Objective |
|--|---|
| <i>Summary Audit of Systemic Weaknesses in the Cost of War Reports</i> | To summarize systemic weaknesses in DoD's accounting for costs associated with ongoing contingencies identified in <i>Cost of War</i> audit reports issued between 2016 and 2018. |
| DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Audit of Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq</i> | To determine whether the Bureau of Population, Migration, and Refugees has effective controls in place to ensure that U.S. Government funds provided for internally displaced persons in Iraq are used for their intended purposes. |
| <i>Inspection of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor</i> | To inspect the overall programs and operations of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. |
| <i>Audit of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Aviation Program</i> | To determine whether the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs is administering its aviation program, including key internal controls such as inventory management, aviation asset usage, aircraft maintenance, and asset disposal, in accordance with Federal requirements and DoS guidelines. |
| <i>Inspection of DoS Governance and Stabilization Programs in Iraq and Syria Funded under the Further Continuing and Security Assistance Appropriations Act, 2017</i> | To determine whether the DoS has been able to deploy funds made available under the Further Continuing and Security Assistance Appropriations Act, 2017 to support governance and stabilization efforts in Iraq and Syria. |
| <i>Audit of Logistics and Freight Forwarding Operations provided by Pacific Architects and Engineers, Inc., in Iraq</i> | To determine whether logistics and freight forwarding are being conducted in accordance with acquisition regulations and DoS policies, are being monitored by the DoS and include fair and reasonable prices. |
| <i>Audit of Worldwide Protective Services Task Orders for Iraq and South Sudan</i> | To determine whether the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's management and oversight of the Triple Canopy task order is being conducted in accordance with Federal and DoS regulations and guidelines. |
| <i>Audit of DoS Selection and Management of Contracting Officer's Representatives in Iraq</i> | To determine whether 1) the contracting officer's representative nomination and selection process for Iraq considered qualified candidates as required by Federal and DoS requirements, and 2) the management structure of contracting officer's representative in Iraq allows for effective supervision and accountability for executing their responsibilities. |
| <i>Audit of Baghdad Life Support Services Food Operations/Cost Controls for BLiSS Food Services</i> | To audit the risk areas in in food operations, to include operations and cost control of food services. |

| Project Title | Objective |
|---|--|
| <i>Lessons Learned from Audits of Contracting Officer Representative Responsibility for Overseeing Invoices for Overseas Contingency Operations Contracts</i> | To identify 1) common challenges identified in the DoS OIG’s series of invoice review audits and measures to address them, 2) 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 3) 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 in Iraq. |
| <i>Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Foreign Assistance Program Management</i> | To inspect the foreign assistance program management activities of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. |
| <i>Audit of Worldwide Protective Services Task Orders for Iraq–Medical</i> | To determine whether the DoS Bureau of Diplomatic Security’s management and oversight of the Triple Canopy task order is being conducted in accordance with Federal and DoS regulations and guidelines. |
| U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Audit of Selected Obligations and Costs Incurred Under USAID’s Overseas Contingency Operations Relating to USAID’s Humanitarian Assistance in Syria and Neighboring Countries</i> | To determine whether 1) USAID awarded, obligated, modified, monitored, and reported funds according to established requirements; and 2) the costs incurred were supported, allowable, allocable, and reasonable in accordance with established requirements and award provisions. |
| <i>Follow-up Audit of Syrian Implementers Under Investigation</i> | To determine 1) what corrective actions the selected Syria-response implementer has taken to remedy internal control weaknesses identified by investigations; and 2) if USAID eliminated oversight gaps identified by investigations of the selected Syria-response implementer. |
| <i>Audit of USAID, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance Oversight During a Humanitarian Crisis</i> | To examine the 1) roles of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance and its independent offices in conducting oversight, and 2) their effectiveness at monitoring and addressing program implementation. |
| <i>Audit of USAID’s Assistance to Public International Organizations</i> | To determine 1) the risk assessments conducted by USAID offices before awarding funds to public international organizations; 2) how the risks associated with awards to these organizations are mitigated; 3) how public international organization programs and funds are overseen by USAID offices; and 4) if other vulnerabilities exist with USAID assistance provided to public international organizations, notwithstanding currently established policies and procedures. |
| <i>Audit of USAID/Iraq Activities</i> | To determine the extent UsAID has conducted oversight of its stabilization projects in Iraq. |

Table 8.

Ongoing Oversight Projects by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of June 30, 2018

| Project Title | Objective |
|---|---|
| AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY | |
| <i>Emergency Contingency Allowance Equipment</i> | To determine whether Air Force personnel properly managed emergency contingency allowance equipment. |
| <i>Contract Administration in a Contingency Environment</i> | To determine whether wing personnel properly 1) planned, competed, and awarded contingency contracts (including the trafficking in persons clause); 2) provided oversight and quality assurance over contractor performance (including the trafficking in persons clause); and 3) responded to potential trafficking in persons violations. |
| <i>Disbursing Operations–Turkey</i> | To determine whether personnel 1) identified cash holding requirements; 2) accounted for and executed disbursements; and 3) maintained disbursement supporting documents. |
| <i>Facilities Maintenance–Kuwait</i> | To determine whether personnel complied with DoD health and safety policies and standards for indoor air quality, electrical systems, fire protection systems, and active and inactive fuel systems. |
| <i>Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Management–Kuwait</i> | To determine whether personnel 1) managed reported cases and incidents in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance, and 2) complied with personnel assignment, background investigations, training, awareness, and operations support requirements. |
| <i>Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Management–Turkey</i> | To determine whether personnel 1) managed reported cases and incidents in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance, and 2) complied with personnel assignment, background investigations, training, awareness, and operations support requirements. |
| <i>Munitions Management</i> | To determine whether personnel accounted for, stored, and safeguarded munitions in accordance DoD and Air Force guidance. |
| <i>Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Management</i> | To determine whether personnel 1) managed reported cases and incidents in accordance with DoD and Air Force guidance, and 2) complied with personnel assignment, background investigations, training, awareness, and operations support requirements. |
| ARMY AUDIT AGENCY | |
| <i>Audit of Overtime Pay and Entitlements for Deployed Civilians</i> | To verify that 1) overtime was effectively managed, and 2) downrange entitlements (including danger and post-differential pay) were accurately paid for civilians deployed in support of Operation Freedom’s Sentinel and OIR. |

| Project Title | Objective |
|--|---|
| <i>Audit of the Deployable Disbursing System</i> | To verify that Deployable Disbursing System 1) transactions were controlled, supported, and accurately recorded, and 2) users were properly trained. |
| DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Audit of Information Technology Security Controls over Cargo Areas at Airports and Ports</i> | To determine how the Department of Homeland Security has implemented computer security controls for their systems in the cargo areas at U.S. airports and ports. |
| <i>U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Searches of Electronic Devices</i> | To determine whether the U.S. Customs and Border Protection is conducting searches of electronic devices at or between U.S. ports of entry according to required procedures. |
| <i>Access Control and Security Identification Display Area Badge Covert Testing</i> | To determine whether the Transportation Security Administration implements effective requirements and procedures to safeguard the sterile areas of U.S. airports. |
| <i>Audit of DHS Air Support in the Rio Grande Valley</i> | To determine whether the U.S. Customs and Border Protection receives required air support. |
| <i>Federal Air Marshal Service-International Flight Operations</i> | To evaluate the methodology for Federal Air Marshal international flight coverage and the capabilities for interdicting improvised explosive devices. |
| <i>Transportation Worker Identification Credential</i> | To evaluate the Coast Guard's oversight of transportation worker identification credential enforcement for regulated vessels and facilities. |
| <i>Transportation Security Administration's Prevention of Terrorism Through its Foreign Repair Station Inspections</i> | To determine whether Transportation Security Administration's current inspection process effectively identifies and mitigates aircraft-tampering risks and how it works with the Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration at foreign repair stations where the Transportation Security Administration cannot inspect. |
| <i>Customs and Border Protection's Global Entry Program</i> | To determine to what extent Customs and Border Protection monitors Global Entry participants to ensure their continuous vetting and eligibility redetermination. |
| <i>The Effectiveness of DHS' Coordination Efforts to Secure the Nation's Election Systems</i> | To determine the Department of Homeland Security's effectiveness in coordinating efforts to secure the nation's election systems. |
| <i>Audit of the DHS Insider Threat Operations Center for Unclassified DHS Systems and Networks</i> | To determine whether the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Chief Security Officer has effectively implemented a Department-wide capability to monitor, detect, and respond to malicious insider threat activities on unclassified Department of Homeland Security systems and networks. |

| Project Title | Objective |
|---|--|
| DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Efforts to Protect Seaports and Maritime Activity</i> | To review the Federal Bureau of Investigation's roles and responsibilities for 1) assessing maritime terrorists threats; 2) preventing and responding to maritime terrorist incidents; and 3) coordinating with the Department of Homeland Security components to ensure seaport security. |
| <i>Efforts to Address Homegrown Violent Extremists</i> | To 1) review the Federal Bureau of Investigation's homegrown violent extremist casework and resource management; 2) evaluate the Federal Bureau of Investigation's coordination with relevant components and its strategic and tactical policies and processes to identify and address threats; and 3) assess the Federal Bureau of Investigation field divisions' implementation of strategic and tactical policies and processes to investigate homegrown violent extremist threats. |
| <i>Audit of the Bureau of Prison's Counterterrorism Efforts</i> | To review the Bureau of Prison's 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 its inmate population. |
| GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE | |
| <i>Disposition of Selected U.S. Assistance to Iraq's Security Forces</i> | To determine 1) what policies and procedures are in place to ensure the accountability, physical security, and end use of U.S.-provided equipment through the Iraq Train and Equip Fund after transfer to the government of Iraq, Kurdistan Regional government, and to what extent are these policies and procedures being carried out; 2) what is known about the location and use of equipment provided through the Iraq Train and Equip Fund after transfer; and 3) what controls are in place to ensure the accountability of Iraq Train and Equip Fund-funded cash transfers to the government of Iraq, Kurdistan Regional government, and other recipients. |

| Project Title | Objective |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Institutionalizing Advise-and-Assist Lessons Learned</i></p> | <p>To evaluate the extent to which the DoD has 1) modified its approach for planning for, training, and utilizing U.S. military personnel to advise and assist partner forces based on lessons learned from advise-and-assist efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria; 2) incorporated lessons learned from challenges the DoD has faced in providing and utilizing U.S. military personnel to carry out their assigned advise-and-assist missions in support of geographic combatant commands; 3) incorporated lessons learned from past challenges they have experienced in providing key enablers for the advise-and-assist missions, including air support; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; logistics; or other enabling capabilities; and 4) assessed and institutionalized specific lessons from OIR, Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, and other past and present advise-and-assist missions in various geographic combatant commands to identify and implement necessary changes to doctrine, training, and force structure to support ongoing and future advise-and-assist missions.</p> |
| <p><i>Special Operations Forces Operational Tempo</i></p> | <p>To determine what 1) challenges, if any, has the DoD faced in providing special operations forces to meet the requirements of the geographic combatant commands; 2) extent the DoD considers the operational tempo in prioritizing and tasking special operations forces deployments in support of U.S. Central Command operations, including determining tradeoffs between conventional and special operations forces capabilities and the requirements of other geographic combatant commands; 3) challenges, if any, has the DoD faced in providing deployed special operations forces with key enablers including, but not limited to, airlift, medical evacuation, intelligence, expeditionary base operating support, logistics, and airfield operations; 4) extent the DoD assessed the impact of special operations forces mission and deployment rates on unit readiness and the availability of special operations forces to conduct other missions and support the requirements of other geographic combatant commands; and 5) extent the reliance on overseas contingency operations funding has impacted the readiness of special operations forces and how will it continue to impact special operations forces if funding isn’t shifted to the base defense budget in future years.</p> |

| Project Title | Objective |
|---|--|
| <i>Vendor Vetting</i> | To determine 1) the extent the DoD and its geographic combatant commands have developed guidance on vendor vetting; 2) the extent the DoD and its geographic combatant commands have established and are implementing vendor-vetting processes, including information systems involved in vendor vetting; 3) the extent the DoD and its geographic combatant commands have internal controls in place to ensure that the information used to make determinations of vendor risk, including appeals processes is complete, accurate, and timely, and available to vendors; and 4) the challenges, if any, the DoD is facing regarding vendor vetting. |
| <i>Department of Defense's Strategy for Retrograde, Reconstruction, and Replacement of Operating Forces Used to Support Overseas Contingency Operations</i> | To determine to what extent 1) the DoD developed a policy consistent with leading practices on sound strategic management planning for the retrograde, reconstitution, and replacement of operating forces that support overseas contingency operations; 2) the DoD developed and required the use of consistent information and descriptions of key terms regarding retrograde, reconstitution, and replacement in relevant policy and other guidance; 3) have each of the services developed and implemented service-specific plans consistent with leading practices on sound strategic management planning for the retrograde, reconstitution, and replacement of operating forces that support overseas contingency operations. |
| <i>Global Human Rights Training Review</i> | To determine 1) the key mechanisms and authorities through which the DoD and the DoS conduct training of foreign security forces on human rights and international humanitarian law; 2) what is known about funding for training on human rights and international humanitarian law to foreign security forces; and 3) to what extent the DoD and the DoS assess the effectiveness of training for foreign security forces on human rights and international humanitarian law. |
| NAVAL AUDIT SERVICE | |
| <i>Department of the Navy Husbanding and Port Services Provider Program - U.S. Fleet Forces</i> | To verify that 1) processes and internal controls over management, execution, and oversight of the Navy Husbanding and Port Services Provider Program are in place, functioning effectively, and are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and 2) agreed-to corrective actions on closed recommendations in previous NAVAUDSVC report, "Navy Husbanding and Port Services Contracts," dated September 30, 2014 were properly implemented. |
| DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Survey of Treasury's Coordination within the ISIS Integrated Mission Team</i> | To 1) understand the ISIS Integrated Mission Team's mission and the collaboration amongst participants, and 2) how the Integrated Mission Team is assisting in developing Treasury's plan to disrupt ISIS's financing. |

PLANNED OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES FOR OIR

As of June 30, 2018, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 19 planned projects related to OIR. Tables 9 and 10 list the project title and objective for each of these projects. Figure 10 describes the planned projects by strategic oversight area.

The discussion that follows highlights some of these ongoing projects by oversight area.

Security

The DoD OIG, the DoS OIG, and the Department of the Treasury OIG plan to conduct audits in the areas of intelligence operations, efforts to counter violent extremism, and management of U.S. sanctions.

The DoD OIG will evaluate intelligence programs and operations related to geospatial intelligence collection and DoD biometric-enabled intelligence to determine whether they meet the OIR Commander’s requirements and evaluate the implementation status of previous DoD OIG recommendations.

The DoS OIG will audit grants and cooperative agreements to counter violent extremism in the Middle East to determine whether the DoS has developed goals and objectives for its strategy to counter violent extremism and has monitored funds provided to support those objectives.

The Department of the Treasury OIG will evaluate the Office of Foreign Assets Control’s management of the Counterterrorism Sanctions Program to determine whether the program complies with applicable laws and regulations and whether the Office of Foreign Assets Control officials properly document and approve program decisions and deliberations.

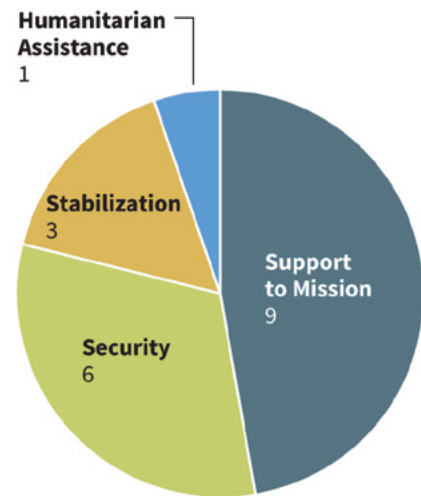
Humanitarian Assistance

USAID OIG will audit the USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance’s role and effectiveness in monitoring and addressing program implementation oversight during a humanitarian crisis. The audit will examine the roles of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance and its independent offices in conducting oversight and their effectiveness at monitoring and assessing program implementation.

Stabilization

The DoD OIG will audit the DoD’s plan for coordinating its reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Iraq with the DoS. The DoS OIG will conduct a follow-up review of the DoS’s oversight assistance provided in Syria. The DoS OIG will also audit DoS policies and oversight of Iraq’s post-conflict development and sustainment.

Figure 10.
Planned Projects per Strategic Oversight Area



Note: Projects may focus on more than one SOA; therefore, totals do not represent a one-to-one correlation with the count of total projects.

Support to Mission

The DoD OIG and the DoS OIG plan to conduct audits related to contracts, property management, equipment accountability, and fuel acquisition and distribution.

The DoD OIG and the DoS OIG will audit OIR-related contracts to determine whether they were properly awarded and administered.

The DoD OIG will audit property management and reporting of DoD-furnished equipment to determine whether the DoD has policies and procedures in place to account accurately for U.S. Government-furnished equipment in accordance with generally acceptable accounting standards. The DoD OIG will also evaluate facilities at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait to determine whether the facilities comply with DoD health and safety policies.

The DoS OIG will audit fuel acquisition and distribution in Turkey to determine whether fuel acquisition, storage, and distribution are performed in accordance with contract terms and Federal regulations. The DoS OIG will also examine the extent to which the DoS Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons' administration and oversight of grants comply with applicable Federal regulations and DoS guidance.

Table 9.

Planned OIR Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agencies, as of June 30, 2018

| Project Title | Objective |
|---|---|
| DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Evaluation of Compartmented Geospatial Intel Collection for OIR Intelligence Requirements</i> | To determine whether compartmented geospatial intelligence collection is being effectively used to satisfy existing collection gaps in OIR intelligence requirements. |
| <i>Evaluation of DoD Biometric-Enabled Intelligence Operations for OIR</i> | To determine whether biometric-enabled intelligence effectively supports the OIR Commander's requirements. |
| <i>Summary Report of Recommendations from OCO Intelligence Evaluations</i> | To determine if recommendations from the DoD OIG intelligence evaluations affecting OIR and Operation Freedom's Sentinel have been implemented. |
| <i>Audit of the DoD Plan for Reconstruction and Stabilization in Iraq</i> | To determine whether the DoD and the DoS effectively planned and coordinated for stabilization efforts in Iraq and Syria. |
| <i>U.S. Military Facility Evaluation - Camp Arifjan, Kuwait</i> | To determine 1) if U.S. military-occupied facilities comply with DoD health and safety policies and standards regarding electrical distribution, and fire protection, and 2) the validity of a DoD OIG Hotline complaint. |
| <i>Evaluation of Theater Linguist Support for Operation Inherent Resolve</i> | To review policies and procedures affecting the OIR and OFS campaigns. |
| <i>Audit of the Award and Administration of the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command DoD Language Interpretation and Translation II Contract</i> | To determine whether the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command DoD Language Interpretation and Translation II contracts and task orders were properly awarded and administered. |

| Project Title | Objective |
|--|---|
| <i>Audit of Property Management and Reporting of DoD Government-Furnished Equipment</i> | To determine whether the DoD has policies and procedures in place to accurately account for Government-furnished equipment in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards. |
| <i>Audit of DoD Oversight of Private Security Contracts at Balad Air Base in Iraq</i> | To determine whether the DoD is providing effective oversight of private security contracts in Iraq. |
| DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Audit of New Consulate Construction—Erbil, Iraq</i> | To determine whether the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations has effective quality assurance processes in place to ensure that the contractor builds the Erbil Consulate to the specifications agreed to in the contract. |
| <i>Audit of Turkey Fuel Acquisition and Distribution</i> | To determine whether 1) fuel acquisition, storage, and distribution are performed in accordance with contract terms and Federal regulations, and 2) the DoS is adhering to policies and procedures to ensure the safety and security of post personnel. |
| <i>Follow-up Review of DoS Oversight Assistance Provided in Syria</i> | To determine whether the DoS implemented actions to address the deficiencies identified in the prior DoS OIG report. |
| <i>Audit of Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Counter Violent Extremism in the Middle East</i> | To determine whether the DoS has 1) developed goals and objectives for its strategy to counter violent extremism, and 2) monitored funds provided to support those objectives. |
| <i>Audit of Iraq's Post-Conflict Development and Sustainment</i> | To determine whether the DoS has policies in place to ensure that its post-conflict foreign assistance programs in Iraq are sustained. |
| <i>Audit of Embassy Baghdad Power Plant Construction Cost Increases</i> | To determine 1) the reasons for cost increases for the construction of the power plant in Baghdad; 2) whether cost increase were supported with required documentation; and 3) whether DoS oversight and management of the project was in compliance with DoS guidance. |
| <i>Audit of Aviation Working Capital Fund Cost Center</i> | 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. |
| <i>Audit of the DoS Armored Vehicle Procurement Process</i> | To determine whether DoS contractors providing armoring services to the DoS comply with contract terms and conditions. |
| <i>Audit of the Administration and Oversight of Grants within the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons</i> | To determine to what extent the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons' administration and oversight of grants are in accordance with applicable Federal acquisition regulations and DoS guidance. |

Table 10.

Planned OIR Oversight Projects by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of June 30, 2018

| Project Title | Objective |
|---|---|
| DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Office of Foreign Assets Control Management of the Counterterrorism Sanctions Program</i> | To determine whether 1) Office of Foreign Assets Control’s Counterterrorism Sanctions program complies with applicable laws and regulations, and 2) Office of Foreign Assets Control officials properly document and approve program decisions and deliberations. |







A Philippine Marine simulates providing cover fire during an amphibious exercise as part of Exercise Balikatan. (U.S. Navy photo)

OPERATION PACIFIC EAGLE- PHILIPPINES

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OPERATION PACIFIC EAGLE-PHILIPPINES

A Philippine soldier stands in the Marawi battle zone. (Stars and Stripes/Seth Robson photo)

THE OPE-P MISSION

The Secretary of Defense designated Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines (OPE-P) as an overseas contingency operation on September 1, 2017. OPE-P supports the Philippine government and military in their efforts to isolate, degrade, and defeat ISIS affiliates and other terrorist organizations in the Philippines. The DoD leads this operation while coordinating efforts with other U.S. Government agencies and international partners.¹

DoD officials stated that OPE-P was designated to address the severity of the threat facing the Philippines after local terrorist organizations associated with ISIS (collectively referred to as ISIS-Philippines or ISIS-P) seized the city of Marawi, a provincial capital with a population of 200,000 on the island of Mindanao, and held it for 5 months. According to the DoD, OPE-P seeks to build upon existing counterterrorism efforts to help the Philippine government respond to the threat posed by ISIS-P and other transnational terrorist organizations

OPE-P MISSION DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

- Philippine forces clashed with ISIS-P fighters in a series of engagements throughout the quarter
- 8,000 U.S. and Philippine troops participated in an expanded annual training exercise
- Indonesia and Malaysia announced plans outside of OPE-P for joint ground patrols with Philippine troops to combat ISIS-P

USINDOPACOM reported that advisory and assistance efforts this quarter included sharing information, enhancing surveillance capabilities, and providing counterterrorism training and guidance.

and to prepare the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to respond to possible future attacks.²

DoD officials stated that the designation of OPE-P as a contingency operation has neither resulted in an increased U.S. military presence nor significantly altered the way in which U.S. forces already in country operate.³ OPE-P is supported by 250 U.S. military personnel, of whom 102 are special operations forces, and an additional 14 contractors.⁴ According to DoD officials, OPE-P does not involve any unilateral U.S. counterterrorism operations but rather seeks to enhance the AFP's capacity to isolate, degrade, and defeat the ISIS elements operating within their country.⁵

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) is charged with primary responsibility for OPE-P. In May 2018, Secretary of Defense James Mattis announced the renaming of this command, formerly known as U.S. Pacific Command, to reflect the 2018 National Defense Strategy's emphasis on broader engagement with Indian and Pacific Ocean partner nations. However, this change in name did not alter the combatant command's structure or area of responsibility.⁶

U.S. Military Supports Philippines Counterterrorism Operations

U.S. military advisors conducted large and small-scale training exercises with the AFP under OPE-P, as they had done before the operation, to enhance Philippine capabilities and build on the strength of the bilateral relationship. The DoD also deploys special operations forces on a rotational basis to provide subject matter expert advice and assistance to their AFP partners. USINDOPACOM reported that advisory and assistance efforts this quarter included sharing information, enhancing surveillance capabilities, and providing counterterrorism training and guidance.⁷ The U.S. military provides assistance exclusively at the request of their Philippine partners, who routinely conduct operations independently.⁸

On May 28, 2018, in response to a directive from Secretary Mattis, the USINDOPACOM Commander submitted the command's strategy for current and future U.S. counterterrorism assistance to the Philippines. According to DoD officials, this classified strategy document includes the metrics by which the combatant command will measure the progress of OPE-P.⁹ In March 2018, USINDOPACOM identified its three primary lines of effort under OPE-P:

- Isolating, degrading, and defeating ISIS-P and priority violent extremist organizations.
- Countering radicalization and violent extremism.
- Building partner capacity to deny terrorist safe havens.¹⁰

DoD officials stated that OPE-P is intended to be a short-term, targeted operation to defeat ISIS-P and other violent extremists without becoming an open-ended commitment.¹¹

The OCO designation affords the command enhanced financial and personnel flexibility to execute OPE-P, including simplified acquisition procedures and benefits for troops deployed in support of the mission.¹² DoD officials anticipated that long-term support and capacity building for the AFP will remain an enduring mission for USINDOPACOM after the conclusion of OPE-P.¹³

The United States conducts OPE-P under the terms of the 1952 Mutual Defense Treaty and in accordance with agreements made by the Security Engagement Board. The Board, which includes U.S. and Philippine military leaders at the 4-star level, meets annually to determine the scope of the upcoming year’s bilateral defense activity. According to the DoD, this framework limits activity under OPE-P to countering internal threats with links to transnational threats, such as al Qaeda and ISIS.¹⁴

USINDOPACOM reported that the U.S. Embassy in Manila and the DoD closely monitor AFP operations, including the Duterte Administration’s war on drugs, to ensure that U.S. security assistance is not used against other domestic enemies of the Philippine government, such as rebels, drug cartels, or political opposition. The Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group, based at U.S. Embassy Manila, is the DoD entity responsible for that coordinates train and equip operations in the Philippines. The Group is responsible for ensuring, through monitoring programs that Philippine military units that have received U.S. counterterrorism assistance use those resources in accordance with the terms under which they were provided.¹⁵

According to USINDOPACOM, Philippine units are also vetted in accordance with Leahy Law requirements, which prohibit the use of U.S. military assistance for a unit of a foreign security force if there is credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights.¹⁶ Leahy Law compliance vetting is coordinated through U.S. Embassy Manila and the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group prior to the approval of assistance or training.¹⁷ DoD policy, under the Leahy Laws, is to cut off security assistance to any AFP unit implicated in human rights abuses.¹⁸

AFP OPERATIONS AGAINST ISIS-P: SELECTED KEY EVENTS, 4/1/2018–6/30/2018

APRIL 9

AFP defuse a bomb planted at a security outpost and arrest 2 ISIS-P militants suspected to be responsible.

APRIL 26

Philippine military and police arrest 2 suspected ISIS-P sympathizers in Laguna province, about 60 miles southeast of Manila, in possession of explosives, firearms, ammunition, and ISIS flags.

MAY 7

Rescue efforts for 2 policewomen abducted by the Abu Sayyaf Group resulted in their release and the deaths of 3 enemy fighters on the island of Jolo.

APRIL 11

3 days of artillery and ground fighting in remote villages of Maguindanao province result in the deaths of 13 ISIS-P militants.

APRIL 29

AFP rescue 2 hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf Group after heavy fighting leaves at least 12 militants dead.



U.S. soldiers guide a UH-60 Black Hawk into a Military Sealift Command's general purpose, heavy-lift vessel in Subic Bay, Olongapo, Philippines, in support of exercise Balikatan 2018. (U.S. Navy photo)

UNITED STATES AND PHILIPPINE TROOPS PARTICIPATE IN BALIKATAN JOINT TRAINING EXERCISE

The 34th annual Balikatan joint U.S. and Philippine military training took place from May 7-18, 2018, at various locations across the Philippines.¹⁹ While this activity was not conducted under OPE-P, this longstanding bilateral exercise seeks to build key competencies in the AFP. According to a DoD press report, this year's Balikatan exercise focused on a variety of mission sets, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counterterrorism, and mutual defense with an emphasis on enhancing interoperability between both nations' armed forces. It also incorporated subject matter expert exchanges designed to improve AFP capabilities in areas such as command and control, flight operations, pararescue, combat operations, and mass casualty response. A Philippine Air Force officer stated that the process afforded both sides opportunities to build cooperation and understanding in functional areas such as base security and airfield operations.²⁰

MAY 14

AFP killed 10 suspected Abu Sayyaf Group militants in a remote village on the island of Jolo. The militants were believed to be behind the abduction of 2 policewomen.

JUNE 17

AFP conduct air and ground assaults against Maute rebels in the province of Lanao del Sur. The operations target senior leader, Abu Dar, but the AFP could not confirm any casualties as a result of these operations.

MAY 9

Philippine troops kill 2 Abu Sayyaf Group members in kidnap rescue operations in the mountainous region of Sulu. Soldiers recover high-powered firearms, including rifles and a grenade launcher.

JUNE 10

15 ISIS-P members are killed, 8 wounded, and 2 captured, including an alleged expert bomb-maker in an AFP offensive in Maguindanao province launched against the forces of Abu Turaiife. AFP soldiers also capture the group's explosives facility.

Media reports indicated that this year's expanded exercise reflected improved bilateral relations between the United States and the Duterte Administration. The two countries have retained robust military ties despite the Philippine President's occasional anti-American rhetoric. While just over 5,000 combined troops participated in the 2017 exercise, a total of 8,000 (5,000 Philippine and 3,000 U.S. forces) participated in Balikatan 2018. Media reports also noted that this year's exercise featured certain activities which had been limited or omitted in recent years, including counterterrorism training with live fire and amphibious raid exercises. This year's Balikatan exercise also focused on military operations in urban settings based on lessons learned from the Marawi siege.²¹

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON NEW UNITED STATES MILITARY FACILITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

On April 17, 2018, U.S. Ambassador Sung Kim and Philippine Secretary of National Defense Delfin Lorenzana participated in a groundbreaking ceremony at Cesar Basa Air Base in Pampanga province for the first of five planned U.S.-funded projects on Philippine military installations. While the Constitution of the Philippines prohibits foreign military bases, the bilateral 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement permits the U.S. Government to build and maintain facilities within Philippine military bases to increase capacity and improve interoperability for combined U.S. and Philippine operations.²²

The first project at Cesar Basa Air Base will serve as a warehouse to preposition equipment and supplies to enhance the United States and Philippines' ability to respond quickly to disasters and humanitarian crises in the region. The DoD has announced plans for similar projects at four additional locations: Fort Magsaysay Military Reservation, Antonio Bautista Air Base, Mactan Benito Ebuen Air Base, and Lumbia Airfield.²³

Planning for these facilities began prior to the designation of OPE-P, and DoD officials stated that they are being constructed as part of the broader bilateral security relationship. However, the site at Lumbia Airfield, once completed, will be available to support future combined efforts on Mindanao.²⁴

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Support Drives Costs for OPE-P

According to USINDOPACOM, the DoD obligated a total of \$32.4 million in FY 2018 funding in support of OPE-P as of June 14, 2018. Most of this funding has been used for unmanned aerial vehicle support to provide video and signals intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to the AFP. A smaller portion of OPE-P spending financed C-17 cargo plane airlift.²⁵

Figure 11.

Philippine Bases where the United States is Establishing Logistical Facilities



Philippine Government Announces 5-Year Military Modernization Plan

According to media reports, President Duterte approved a 5-year plan to upgrade the vehicles, weapons, and equipment of the AFP. Announced in June, this \$5.6 billion planned modernization aims to increase the Philippines' stock of unmanned aerial vehicles, long-range patrol aircraft, light tanks, radar, and offshore patrol ships, including a frigate and submarines to enhance domestic security and patrol the country's porous maritime boundaries. Media reports indicated that a failed upgrade plan in the 1990s left the AFP with a patchwork of donated military hardware from Australia, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States, which includes aging platforms, such as warships from World War II and helicopters from the Vietnam War.²⁶

DoD officials also reported that USINDOPACOM had committed funding for several contracts that were not yet awarded this quarter. This included \$23 million for contractor owned and operated aerial surveillance and \$34.4 million for contracted casualty evacuation support to provide timely transportation of wounded AFP members to critical life support facilities.²⁷ This contract will also cover some passenger and cargo movement. In addition, the DoD obligated \$258,000 for rotation of U.S. military forces.²⁸

The \$324 million total reported by USINDOPACOM does not include pay and benefits for U.S. troops deployed in support of OPE-P, which are paid out of the military personnel base budget appropriations for the relevant Armed Services.²⁹ USINDOPACOM stated that it does not track personnel costs for this operation separately and was unable to provide greater detail on them.³⁰

To date, the DoD has obligated base funds exclusively to support OPE-P, because current Federal budget regulations do not include the Philippines as an eligible location for OCO funding. However, the Office of Management and Budget granted a waiver to these rules for the DoD's FY 2019 budget request, which includes \$108.2 million in OCO funding for OPE-P.³¹ Of this funding, \$41.8 million would be used to provide manned aircraft intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support to the AFP (although the original congressional budget justification incorrectly identified this requirement as ScanEagle UAV). The OPE-P request also includes \$4.9 million to maintain USINDOPACOM facilities used by the U.S. Marine Corps to advise, plan, and execute missions in support of Philippine counterterrorism operations.³²

According to the All Government Contract Spending database, the DoD Contracting Command database containing nearly all U.S. Government procurement activity, the total value of all federal contracts in the Philippines for FY 2018 was \$158 million as of June 30, 2018. Of this total, the DoD was responsible for \$126.5 million in contract obligations. However, not all federal spending in the Philippines is in direct support of OPE-P, and a precise breakdown was not available at this time.³³

Local Partners Increase Support for Philippine Counterterror Operations

In June, Indonesian Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu announced plans to deploy soldiers to the Philippines to conduct joint ground patrols with Philippine and Malaysian forces against ISIS-P militants. Defense Minister Ryacudu noted that the three countries had already established trilateral air and maritime patrols in their adjoining areas of the Sulu Sea, and the joint ground operations on Mindanao were scheduled to begin in August. However, despite increased trilateral patrols, the maritime borders between the three countries, long exploited as smuggling routes, remain porous and a key obstacle to denying terrorists freedom of movement.³⁴

While not a part of OPE-P, planned training exercises among the three countries at the company level will focus on “anti-guerrilla warfare, urban warfare and how to tackle snipers.” Ryacudu noted that the ISIS-P militants were skilled marksmen and counterterror operations would need to be equipped to face that challenge.³⁵

According to an Indonesian Defense Ministry spokesperson, this effort will involve collaboration through the Southeast Asian intelligence sharing initiative “Our Eyes.” Launched in January 2018 and named after the “Five Eyes” intelligence network of English-speaking countries, Our Eyes aims to facilitate the sharing of information to counter mutual threats of terrorism and radicalism against the member nations of Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and Thailand.³⁶

With respect to the local partners sharing intelligence for the benefit of broader counterterrorism activities, the DoD stated that OPE-P is a bilateral operation between the United States and the Philippines.³⁷ While the Philippine government may engage with other nations in its fight against domestic terrorist groups, the DoD is not privy to these relationships and is not engaged in a multinational coalition against ISIS-P.³⁸

STATUS OF ISIS-P

Leaderless, Disorganized, but Persistent

This quarter, USINDOPACOM officials estimated ISIS-P’s total force strength at approximately 200 fighters from different jihadist factions, including the Abu Sayyaf Group, Maute Group, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), and Ansar Khalifah Philippines, each of which the DoD estimated as consisting of approximately 30-50 fighters. DoD officials added that these numbers could increase significantly if individuals with clan or familial ties to ISIS-P members become activated.³⁹ However, as of this quarter, ISIS-P has not been able to recover from the loss of approximately 1,000 fighters who died fighting in Marawi in 2017.⁴⁰

USINDOPACOM previously reported that ISIS-P’s operational and financial ties with the core ISIS organization in Syria were severed with the death of ISIS-P’s so-called “emir,” Isnilon Hapilon in October 2017. DoD officials stated there was no indication that contact had been

STATUS OF ISIS-P DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

■ ISIS-P remained fragmented with several faction leaders vying for the position of emir

■ The U.S. Department of the Treasury issued its first financial sanctions on an ISIS-P supporter under the group's recent foreign terrorist designation

■ The Philippine Congress advanced legislation to establish an autonomous Muslim region in the country's south. Previous delays in this process have enflamed local tensions to the benefit of Islamist groups like ISIS-P

reestablished. Assistance to ISIS-P from its Middle Eastern counterparts this quarter was largely limited to media release support. ISIS in Syria also claimed some activity on the Philippine island of Jolo in the organization's name.⁴¹

ISIS-P's command and control structure remained degraded this quarter with the group lacking a formal power structure since the end of the Marawi siege.⁴² Although a new emir was not formally selected as of this quarter, USINDOPACOM identified five prospective candidates vying for leadership of ISIS-P (many of them known by popular alias): Furuji Indama and Sawadjaan of the

Abu Sayyaf Group; Abu Turaife and Commander Bungos of the BIFF; and Abu Dar of the Maute Group.⁴³ USINDOPACOM attributed ISIS-P's inability to reorganize its leadership in part to AFP operations that denied the group time and space to reconstitute.⁴⁴

USINDOPACOM reported that it observed no change this quarter in ISIS-P's capabilities or the sophistication of its attacks. ISIS-P reportedly makes regular use of improvised explosive devices but has not employed suicide attacks in the style of their Middle Eastern counterparts. The group has not carried out any large-scale attacks since the Marawi siege.⁴⁵ Lieutenant General Rolando Joselito Delizo Bautista, commanding general of the Philippine Army, told reporters that the military had gained intelligence indicating that terrorist cells in the south of the country were capable of carrying out "lone wolf" attacks, although no such attacks were reported this quarter.⁴⁶

According to USINDOPACOM, ISIS-P has not held any territory since its loss of Marawi in October 2017, and no pockets of resistance remained in the city. While several provinces of the southern Philippines, including Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Cotabato, and Sulu contained areas of "contested" space, the AFP continued to conduct active counterterrorism operations in these areas.⁴⁷

AFP Chief of Staff, General Carlito Galvez Jr., told reporters that the Philippine military was engaging with relatives of Maute Group members in the hopes that talks would discourage radicalization and terrorist recruitment. He attributed the Maute Group's inability to recover quickly to the government's policy of martial law, police checkpoints, and other intelligence countermeasures and operations.⁴⁸

Poverty, Crime, and Displacement Aid ISIS-P Recruitment

USINDOPACOM reported that ISIS-P's presence this quarter was limited almost exclusively to the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, which includes the central area of Mindanao and smaller islands in the Sulu Archipelago.⁴⁹ According to USINDOPACOM, the

demographics of the Marawi area combined with the large population of IDPs left in the wake of last year's fighting represented a potential recruitment pool for ISIS-P.⁵⁰

According to a report by the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, the Philippines' domestic drug cartels, another source of instability in the country, played a significant role in supporting the ISIS-P members who launched the Marawi siege. The report stated that criminal gangs engaged in money laundering and the trafficking of drugs, persons, and small arms, but with no ideological interest in jihad, provided material support to ISIS affiliates against their common enemy, the Philippine government. The report concluded that stability in the Philippines will require the government to coordinate its efforts simultaneously against jihadist separatists and criminal gangs.⁵¹

According to USINDOPACOM, ISIS-P utilizes international media and the poor socioeconomic status of Muslims in the southern Philippines to recruit new members, with IDPs seen as especially vulnerable to recruitment.⁵² While the DoD stated that it had no accurate reporting on the success or failure of ISIS-P's recruitment tactics this quarter, DoD officials cited anecdotal reports that recruitment was ongoing, although not in large numbers.⁵³

USINDOPACOM reported that the number of foreign fighters supporting ISIS-P had remained fairly constant at approximately 20 to 30, almost all of whom were Indonesian. While the bodies of fighters from Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan were recovered after the siege of Marawi, USINDOPACOM officials stated that there was a negligible presence of non-Southeast Asian fighters among ISIS-P's ranks as of this quarter.⁵⁴

A security expert at the U.S. National War College told reporters that foreign fighters could unite the disparate jihadist elements left in ISIS-P's wake if they were able to overcome the challenges of geography, poor infrastructure, and factionalism. If so, he stated they would be capable of posing a serious challenge to the AFP.⁵⁵

Terrorist Designation Results in Sanctions Against an ISIS-P Facilitator

On April 30, 2018, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced its first financial sanctions on a member of ISIS-P since the group was designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization in February, 2018. Myrna Mabanza, a Philippines-based facilitator who provided support to ISIS-P, was named as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist for assisting or providing financial, material, or technological support to ISIS-P. As a result of this designation, all of Mabanza's property and interests subject to U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with her.⁵⁶

According to a senior Treasury official, Mabanza "has facilitated substantial financial activity on behalf of senior ISIS-Philippines leadership." This allegedly included conducting financial transactions with then-ISIS-P leader Isnilon Hapilon and serving as an intermediary between Hapilon, various Southeast Asian terrorist groups, and ISIS elements in Syria. This involved transferring funds and facilitating the travel of DoS-designated terrorists into the Philippines.⁵⁷

On April 30, 2018, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced its first financial sanctions on a member of ISIS-P since the group was designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization in February, 2018.

President Duterte Personally Accepts the Surrender of Former Terrorists

On May 11, 2018, President Duterte met with 27 members of the Maute Group faction of ISIS-P who surrendered to the government, promising shelter and employment assistance to those former militants who commit to peace. Duterte said that the assistance included plans for land reform in the region, which he indicated could grant idle lands on which to cultivate crops to surrendered militants. He stated that individuals seeking such clemency must shun foreign ideologies such as that of ISIS and warned them against forging an alliance with the Philippines' communist rebels. He also indicated that the government would consider granting amnesty to rebels with outstanding arrest warrants who are willing to surrender.⁵⁸

Philippine Congress Advances Legislation Critical to Peace Process

In 2014, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), one of the Philippines' largest terrorist groups, agreed to a peace deal with the government. In exchange for decommissioning its armed militants and engaging in a peaceful political process, the Philippine government promised the MILF legislation to establish a new autonomous entity in the Muslim-populated areas to be called "Bangsamoro." The peace agreement did not include precise details, but only a rough framework on the extent to which Bangsamoro would exercise self-rule.⁵⁹

Since 2014, the Philippine government's slow pace in enacting the agreed upon legislation has caused some members of the MILF to give up on peace and take up arms for ISIS-P, including the faction leader and contender for emir, Abu Turaife. The MILF reportedly has as many as 10,000 members, many of whom are trained fighters with access to stockpiles of weapons. Defectors from this population represent a key source of strength for ISIS-P.⁶⁰

Following years of negotiations, both houses of the Philippine Congress passed differing versions of the agreement's implementing legislation, the Bangsamoro Basic Law, on May 31, 2018, with support from President Duterte.⁶¹ Among the most controversial topics were the creation of a separate Bangsamoro police and armed forces and ensuring that the final legislation be able to withstand judicial scrutiny. The MILF and other Muslim groups have pushed for the greatest possible degree of autonomy as a key condition of honoring their commitment to disarm.⁶²

According to media reports, the two versions of the bill passed by each house were reconciled in a bicameral conference committee, which President Duterte signed into law on July 26, 2018.⁶³ Renamed "the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao," this legislation provides for a referendum to be held in October within the proposed autonomous Muslim political entity on whether to accept the terms provided

in the law. A senior MILF negotiator told reporters that while the group was not entirely satisfied with the level of autonomy provided, they planned to decommission 30 percent of their 40,000 weapons if the referendum is successful.⁶⁴

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Recovery Efforts Shifted From Planning to Implementation

This quarter, USAID reported that it was implementing more than a dozen projects related to the Marawi crisis. USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) supported two projects during the quarter that addressed needs for shelter and settlement; security; recovery and market systems; and water, sanitation and hygiene.⁶⁵ The USAID Mission in the Philippines also funded 11 projects focused on small infrastructure activities, economic recovery, education, health, governance, rule of law, conflict mitigation, and the empowerment of women.⁶⁶ Additionally, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP) supported one program that provided food distribution to IDPs through local and regional procurement.⁶⁷

USAID officials stated that those in greatest need in the Philippines were long-term IDPs from Marawi city. Priority needs included food security, shelter, clean water, livelihoods, and psychosocial support.⁶⁸ On May 4, 2018, USAID announced an additional \$3.5 million to support the evolving needs of humanitarian relief efforts in Marawi, bringing the total U.S. Government contribution to the response to nearly \$26.4 million.⁶⁹ According to USAID, the additional assistance is intended to support the construction of shelters for 58,000 IDPs, as well as expand protection services for women and children, support the local economy, and repair water and sanitation facilities.⁷⁰

IDPs Continued to Return, but Some Will Likely Remain Displaced For Years

During the quarter, an increased number of IDPs returned to their homes, but extensive damage to the city center of Marawi is expected to prevent some IDPs from returning for years. While more than 208,000 people had returned to Marawi city and the surrounding area as of May 30, 2018, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that more than 214,000 IDPs were registered with the Philippine government.⁷¹

A press release from President Duterte's office stated that 70 percent of displaced residents had returned to Marawi, many occupying temporary shelters built by the government. According to the press release, the Philippine government planned to have all 67 evacuation centers in northern Mindanao and parts

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

- IDPs continued to return to Marawi, but the complete devastation of the city center will leave some residents displaced for years
- USAID focused on addressing basic needs that were still lacking, such as food, shelter, and clean water
- Ongoing military operations against ISIS-P, crime, and general instability presented challenges for recovery efforts

Table 11.

**Status of Cumulative FY2018 USAID Funds for the Marawi Crisis
(in millions/rounded)**

| Office | Obligated | Disbursed |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------|
| USAID/Philippines | \$18.2 | \$1.7 |
| USAID/OFDA | \$3.8 | — |
| USAID/FFP | \$2.0 | — |
| TOTAL | \$24.0 | \$1.7 |

Sources: USAID/Asia Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 7/9/2018; USAID/OFDA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 7/9/2018; USAID/FFP, response to USAID OIG request for information, 7/9/2018.

of Lanao del Sur cleared of occupants within the year. The press release stated that 77,700 individuals or 10,835 families were also allowed to return to the areas of the city most heavily impacted by the fighting.⁷²

More than 97 percent of IDPs were sheltered in host communities and nearly 3 percent, an estimated 6,000 people, were located in transitional shelters, according to USAID.⁷³ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) noted that “with response shifting from emergency phase towards early recovery, food donations have dwindled and livelihood opportunities are reaching only a few. A majority of displaced families still depend on relatives or friends for support, while those in evacuation sites continue to struggle with poor living conditions in makeshift camps, increasing their risk of illness.”⁷⁴

USAID officials stated that 24 of Marawi city’s 96 neighborhoods were destroyed during the conflict.⁷⁵ The ICRC reported that this extensive damage will prevent approximately 65,000 residents from returning for the next 2 to 3 years.⁷⁶ However, USAID, citing local and national Philippine government officials, indicated that the number of impacted residents could be as high as 127,000 due to incomplete pre-conflict census reporting.⁷⁷ The ICRC further noted that the transitional shelter location in the city could only accommodate 6,000 of these residents.⁷⁸ Early recovery efforts increased in Marawi city during the quarter with a focus on housing and water supply needs.⁷⁹ Transitional IDP shelters continued to be in great demand, especially for the estimated 27,000 households possibly displaced for years to come.⁸⁰

Philippine Government Outlined Plans to Rebuild Marawi City

BASIC SERVICES AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY STILL LACKING IN MARAWI

OCHA reported that while economic activity in Marawi city was slowly returning in the less affected areas, residents continued to struggle to reestablish livelihoods and generate income for their families.⁸¹ A USAID implementer assessed that IDPs in affected municipalities had lost 50 to 80 percent of their asset and income.⁸² Before the

crisis began last year, Lanao del Sur was the poorest province in the Philippines with more than 60 percent of families living in poverty and nearly half of children already suffering from malnutrition.⁸³ Since the beginning of the crisis, affected families have become even poorer, reducing the quality and quantity of food intake for children.⁸⁴ The UN World Food Programme reported distributing more than 700 metric tons of rice to 55,000 individuals in 21 municipalities in the Lanao del Sur province during the quarter. However, food security remained a concern for USAID, since the Philippine government ended food distribution to Marawi IDPs.⁸⁵

Access to water and sanitation in Marawi did not meet acceptable standards, according to USAID.⁸⁶ With all the main pumping stations destroyed or in need of repair, both host community residents and IDPs faced water shortages and, in some cases, water rationing.⁸⁷ A USAID-funded implementer planned to make emergency repairs to improve water services to approximately 25,000 individuals.⁸⁸ Water was also transported via truck by a USAID-funded implementer to two transitional shelter sites in Marawi.⁸⁹ USAID reported that the Philippine government was drilling boreholes for water wells in one transitional shelter site and exploring other long-term water supply options.⁹⁰

More than half a year after the heavy fighting in Marawi ended, risks to the welfare of children affected by the conflict continued to increase, according to a UN report, particularly malnourishment and their inability to return to school.⁹¹ More than 100,000 children have been displaced by the conflict and may have missed an entire school year, placing some at greater risk for recruitment into extremist groups.⁹² USAID reported that its programs this quarter supported the development of draft school improvement plans, feeding programs for children, school construction, and the distribution of teachers' kits.⁹³

PROPERTY RIGHTS AND LOCAL INPUT WERE KEY CONCERNS FOR MARAWI RESIDENTS

USAID noted that the Philippine government was prioritizing reconstruction in the former downtown area of Marawi, which was destroyed during the conflict.⁹⁴ However, some government projects reportedly stalled, according to OCHA, due to land rights issues.⁹⁵ Some IDPs did not have access to legal property documents that were lost during the conflict.⁹⁶ After seeing the damage and loss to their homes, some IDPs expressed preference to reside permanently with host families and their communities, according to OCHA.⁹⁷ Renters were also concerned that they would not have access to housing assistance if they return to Marawi.⁹⁸

According to media reports, many Marawi residents were fearful that they could lose their land in the sweeping rehabilitation work proposed by the government. Due to the disorganized system of land ownership that existed in the city prior to the conflict, many residents lacked official real-estate titles, and government maps were not entirely reliable. This has fostered uncertainty in an environment where the government is discussing plans to widen roads and make easements along the waterfront that could impact property rights.⁹⁹



Buildings destroyed by last year's fighting in Marawi. (DoD photo)

The Philippine government created an adjudication board – the Land Dispute Arbitration Committee – to address post-conflict disputes over property, but individuals claiming to own property still needed to demonstrate proof of ownership. A report by the Asia Foundation cautioned that if the residents believe the government is stealing land from Muslims, it could contribute to ISIS-P's anti-government narrative.¹⁰⁰

The Philippine government had not released its Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Plan during the quarter.¹⁰¹ However, media reports indicated that the early discussions of the reconstruction plans were controversial among many Marawi residents, with community leaders telling reporters that the residents have not been afforded a significant role in shaping plans to rebuild their city.¹⁰² USAID also reported that residents were concerned that they had not been consulted on reconstruction plans.¹⁰³ This quarter, some residents protested over a perceived lack of local representation on the government's Task Force Bangon Marawi, charged with negotiating the reconstruction contracts.¹⁰⁴

The Philippine government initially declared that Marawi reconstruction would be underway by the end of June 2018, but it was delayed when negotiations with a Chinese-led consortium failed. As of the end of the quarter, construction had not yet begun. A second Chinese government-owned firm was bidding for the rights to develop the most affected area of Marawi, where virtually all infrastructure was destroyed by last year's fighting.¹⁰⁵ USINDOPACOM confirmed that China continued to bid for Marawi reconstruction contracts this quarter.¹⁰⁶ According to USAID, five of the nine companies selected as the likely consortium to rebuild Marawi city were Chinese firms, and the remaining four were Filipino.¹⁰⁷



MILITARY OPERATIONS, UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE, AND LOCAL ELECTIONS PRESENTED CHALLENGES FOR RECOVERY

An AFP spokesperson told reporters in May that military engineers were still working to clear unexploded ordnance, including several 500 pound bombs dropped by the Philippine Air Force during the fight against ISIS-P. Unexploded ordnance is among several issues delaying the rehabilitation work and prolonging the displacement of at least 50,000 residents, approximately a quarter of the city’s population before the siege. According to a May 2018 news report, the AFP estimated the removal of all unexploded ordnance would not be completed until at least October 2018.¹⁰⁸

Ongoing military operations and planned elections also affected humanitarian operations. In mid-June 2018, conflict between the AFP and armed groups in Lanao del Sur’s Tubaran municipality displaced nearly 14,900 people, more than 11,300 of whom were housed in local communities and approximately 3,500 located in evacuation shelters, according to the Philippine government.¹⁰⁹ USAID reported that military operations by the AFP in southern Lanao del Sur province displaced an additional 6,000 civilians and disrupted transportation routes, impacting USAID implementer travel. Further military operations by the AFP against the ISIS-affiliated BIFF militants in northern Maguindanao province temporarily displaced 20,000 civilians for up to several days. As of June 18, 2018, the majority of these newly displaced persons had returned to their homes.¹¹⁰

A senior Philippine government official linked the security situation in Marawi to investment in the city’s reconstruction, telling reporters, “when the millions of pesos will be poured in for the rehabilitation, we have to make sure it will be unimpeded, it

The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan underway in the Philippine Sea, providing a combat-ready force that protects and defends the collective maritime interests of its allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. (U.S. Navy photo)

will be safe and our contractors will not be hampered by any threat of kidnapping or any aggressions from the Maute-ISIS.”¹¹¹

Relief and recovery operations were also briefly suspended during the quarter in the Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte provinces during campaigning leading up to the May 14, 2018, municipal and provincial elections, according to USAID. Elections in Marawi city were postponed.¹¹²

OVERSIGHT OF OPE-P

This section of the report provides information on completed Lead IG and partner agencies’ oversight work, investigations, and hotline activities from April 1 through June 30, 2018; and ongoing oversight projects.

The Lead IG agencies use permanent and temporary employees as well as contractors to conduct oversight projects, investigate fraud and corruption, and fulfill their congressional mandate in the areas of strategic planning and reporting. Oversight teams travel to the Philippines and other locations in the region to conduct fieldwork for their projects. The USAID OIG has a field office in Manila that covers USAID’s operations in Philippines and other countries in the region, enabling it to monitor events on the ground.”

Audit, Inspection, and Evaluation

The Lead IG agencies completed one report related to OPE-P from April 1 through June 30, 2018. This report examined the development, review, and validation of the Philippines Operational Support Contract III requirements.

FINAL REPORTS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Development, Review, and Validation of the Philippines OCS III Requirements

DODIG-2018-124; June 6, 2018

The DoD OIG conducted an audit to determine whether USINDOPACOM (the command) and its subordinate commands developed, reviewed, and validated requirements for the Philippines Operations Support Contract III. This contract, valued at \$58 million over 5 years, provides for services throughout the Philippines such as communications, security, facilities management, and supply.

The DoD OIG found that the command did not formally re-validate the contract before exercising the first option period of the contract. At the time of the contract award, a requirements review board was not required, but after contract award, the guidance for conducting requirements review boards changed. Subsequently, the command should have, but did not, re-validate the first option period of the contract, which was valued at \$8.2 million.

Table 12.

Ongoing OPE-P Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agency, as of June 30, 2018

| Project Title | Objective |
|--|---|
| DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL | |
| <i>Evaluation of Efforts to Train, Advise, Assist, and Equip the Armed Forces of the Republic of the Philippines</i> | To evaluate U.S. train, advise, assist, and equip efforts to build and sustain the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to counter the expansion of violent extremist organizations. |
| <i>DoD Oversight of Bilateral Agreements With the Republic of the Philippines</i> | To determine whether the DoD has proper oversight of the logistical support provided through bilateral agreements to the Republic of the Philippines. |

The DoD OIG recommended that the command conduct a requirements review board before authorizing additional funding for the first option period of the contract. Additionally, the DoD OIG recommended that the command direct all subordinate commands to conduct requirements review boards in accordance with directives and verify compliance with this guidance. During the audit, the command took appropriate actions, and its subordinate command conducted a requirements review board. Therefore, the DoD OIG considers these recommendations closed.

ONGOING OVERSIGHT PROJECTS

As of June 30, 2018, the DoD OIG had two ongoing projects related to OPE-P. Table 12 lists the project title and objective for each of these projects.

U.S. soldiers participate in a blank-fire rehearsal at Colonel Ernesto Rabina Air Base, Philippines, as part of Exercise Balikatan. (U.S. Army photo)



USAID Symposium Highlights Fraud Awareness and Prevention

On May 18, 2018, USAID OIG led a fraud awareness and prevention workshop to discuss fraud-related challenges and prevention related to development and humanitarian assistance programs in the southern Philippines. The all-day event, held in Manila, Philippines, brought together more than 80 USAID implementers, U.S. Government contracting officers and specialists, and U.S. Embassy personnel to learn best practices and share methodology for preventing and reporting fraud in USAID-funded humanitarian aid programs.

During the workshop, USAID Philippines and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance officials described the program supporting the Philippines. Representatives from the DoD OIG's Defense Criminal Investigative Service discussed the Lead IG's role and responsibilities for humanitarian assistance in the OPE-P area of responsibility. USAID OIG presenters addressed the financial audit process, internal controls, and the most common findings; discussed fraud indicators and preventative measures in development and humanitarian assistance programs; and led an exercise on identifying procurement fraud. Finally, DoS OIG officials provided background on the agency's investigative efforts and its partnership with USAID OIG.

Investigations and Hotline Activity

The investigative components of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies continued to conduct investigative activity related to OPE-P during the quarter, with some USAID investigators located in Manila.

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY

The Lead IG agencies and partners 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 division), the DoS OIG, USAID OIG, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. This quarter, the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group conducted 4 fraud awareness briefings for 127 participants.

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; and abuse of authority for independent review. 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 one case related to Lead IG agencies or other investigative organizations.





A child escapes the heat, soaking in a water-filled container in West Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

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 Inspector General for OIR. The DoS Inspector General is the Associate Lead Inspector General for OIR. 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 unclassified report covers the period from April 1 through June 30, 2018.

To fulfill its congressional mandate to produce a quarterly report on OIR and OPE-P, the Lead IG gathers data and information from Federal agencies and open sources. Data and information used in this report are attributed to their source in endnotes to the text or notes to the tables and figures. Except for references to Lead IG and oversight partner agency audits, inspections, evaluations, or investigations in the report, the Lead IG has not independently verified and assessed all the data included in this report. The humanitarian assistance section is based on public UN documents, and information provided by USAID and the DoS.

Data Call

Each quarter, the Lead IG agencies direct a series of questions, or data calls, to agencies about their programs and operations related to OIR and OPE-P. 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 data call 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 testimony
- 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 also provide information to describe the status of OIR and OPE-P, and help the Lead IG agencies assess information provided in their respective agency data call. However, in light of the operational realities and dynamic nature of OIR and OPE-P, 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. As the Lead IG, the DoD OIG coordinates with the DoS OIG and the USAID OIG, which draft sections of the report related to the activities of their agencies. Each of the three OIGs participates in reviewing and editing the entire quarterly report.

The DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG provide the agencies who have responded to the data call with two opportunities to verify and comment on the content of the report. During the first review, agencies are asked to correct any inaccuracies and provide additional documentation. The three OIGs incorporate agency comments, where appropriate, and send the report back to the agencies for a final review for accuracy. Each OIG coordinates the review process with its own agency.

APPENDIX B

OIR Classified Appendix

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 using classified information provided by the DoD and DoS. For the period April 1 through June 30, 2018, the classified appendix includes the following topics:

IRAQ

- Operation Reliable Partnership
- Assessments of Iraq's May 12 parliamentary elections
- The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service

SYRIA

- SDF operations against ISIS
- Foreign terrorist fighters in Syria
- Syrian Civil War
- Russian activity in Syria
- Iranian activity in Syria
- Israeli activity in Syria
- Electronic warfare
- Military Information Support Operations
- Effects on stabilization efforts caused by the funding freeze

APPENDIX C

Department of Justice Prosecutions

Since 2013, Federal prosecutors have publicly charged approximately 120 individuals for foreign terrorist fighter, homegrown violent extremism, or ISIS-related conduct. DoJ prosecutions resulted in people being sentenced, convicted, or pleading guilty during the reporting period. Examples from the DoJ are:

- **On April 26, 2018, in the Eastern District of New York**, Fareed Mumuni was sentenced to 17 years in prison, followed by 10 years of supervised release. Mumuni pleaded guilty to all counts in an indictment charging him with crimes including conspiring and attempting to provide material support to ISIS. Mumuni pledged allegiance to ISIS, and he and a co-conspirator discussed and worked to raise money to travel to ISIS-controlled territories. Mumuni stated that if he were unable to travel to join ISIS, he would fight in the United States.
- **On April 30, 2018, in the District of New Jersey**, Nader Saadeh was sentenced to 10 years in prison, followed by a lifetime of supervised release, for conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. Saadeh admitted that he and others had planned to travel overseas to join ISIS, that he and others watched ISIS-related videos, some of which depicted executions.
- **On May 1, 2018, in the District of New Jersey**, Samuel Rahamin Topaz was sentenced to 8 years in prison, followed by a lifetime of supervised release, for conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. Topaz admitted that he had planned and saved to travel overseas to join ISIS, and discussed these plans with others. He also admitted that he and others watched ISIS-related videos, some of which depicted executions of non-Muslims and individuals regarded as apostates from Islam.
- **On May 16, 2018, in the Southern District of Florida**, Gregory Hubbard, Dayne Christian, and Darren Jackson were sentenced for conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. Hubbard was arrested at Miami International Airport where he had been driven by co-defendant Jackson for a scheduled flight to Berlin, Germany. From Berlin, Hubbard intended to travel to Syria to join ISIS. Hubbard received a jointly recommended sentence of 12 years in prison, followed by a lifetime of supervised release. Christian and Jackson received sentences of 8 and 4 years in prison, respectively, followed by 5 years of supervised release.
- **On May 21, 2018, in the District of Massachusetts**, Alexander Ciccolo, also known as Ali Al Amriki, pleaded guilty to crimes including attempting to provide material support to ISIS. Ciccolo had spoken with a cooperating witness in recorded conversations about his plans to commit acts of terrorism inspired by ISIS, including setting off improvised explosive devices, such as pressure cookers filled with black powder, nails, ball bearings and glass, in places where large numbers of people congregate, like college cafeterias.
- **On June 1, 2018, in the Southern District of Florida**, Vicente Solano was sentenced to 210 months in prison, followed by a lifetime of supervised release, for attempting to provide material support to ISIS. He had planned to detonate an explosive device at a Miami mall.
- **On June 4, 2018, in the Eastern District of California**, Everitt Aaron Jameson pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIS. From about September through December 20, 2017, Jameson had several online interactions with a confidential source in which he expressed support for the October 31, 2017, terrorist attack in New York City and offered his services for “the cause.” He later told an undercover agent that he had been trained by the U.S. military for combat and war. Jameson then met with another undercover agent whom he believed to be associated with ISIS senior leadership, and offered to carry out violent acts and provide financial support for the terrorist organization.

- **On June 7, 2018, in the Eastern District of Missouri**, Safya Roe Yassin was sentenced to 9 years in prison for using Twitter to transmit threatening communications across state lines against several persons, including two FBI employees and two former members of the military and their families, on behalf of ISIS. Yassin admitted that she maintained a series of Twitter accounts that she used to post, or tweet, messages in support of ISIS.
- **On June 11, 2018, in the Western District of New York**, Arafat M. Nagi was sentenced to 15 in years in prison, followed by 15 years of supervised release for attempting to provide material support or resources to ISIS. Nagi had traveled to Turkey twice, in 2012 and 2014, intending to meet with members of ISIS. Before these trips, Nagi purchased a large number of military combat items, including a tactical vest, army combat shirt, body armor, combat boots, a hunting knife, machete, and night vision goggles. Through Facebook, Nagi contacted other individuals who were prepared to help him enter Syria to join ISIS, and exchanged Turkish cell phone numbers.
- **On June 20, 2018, in the Northern District of Ohio**, Amir Said Rahman Al-Ghazi, also known as Robert C. McCollum, was sentenced to 16 years in prison for crimes including providing material support to ISIS. From July 2014 to June 2015, Al-Ghazi made many statements trying to persuade others to join ISIS. He also said that he wanted to perpetrate an attack on the United States and had attempted to purchase an AK-47 assault rifle. Al-Ghazi also communicated with individuals he believed to be members of ISIS in the Middle East and took steps to create propaganda videos for ISIS.
- **On June 20, 2018, in the Northern District of Alabama**, Aziz Ihab Sayyed was sentenced to 15 years in prison followed by a lifetime of supervised release for attempting to provide material support to ISIS. He admitted buying bomb-building ingredients in 2017, aspiring to conduct ISIS-inspired attacks on police stations and Redstone Arsenal in Alabama, and attempting to form a cell to conduct violent acts within the United States.

A member of the Syrian Democratic Forces walks up to his guard position near Shahil, Syria. (U.S. Army photo)



APPENDIX D

U.S. Government's Actions Against Terrorist Finances

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 61 individuals and entities providing support to ISIS pursuant to Executive Order 13224. The Secretary of State may also designate organizations and individuals as Specially Designated Global Terrorists.

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

- Myrna Mabanza, a Philippines-based facilitator, was named as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist for assisting in, sponsoring, or providing financial or other services to or in support of ISIS-P. In January 2016, Mabanza was involved in the transfer of up to \$107,000 with then ISIS-P leader Isnilon Hapilon. In February 2016, Mabanza served as an intermediary between Hapilon and ISIS elements in Syria and in March 2016, Mabanza coordinated another transfer of funds with Hapilon. In April 2016, Mabanza helped facilitate the travel of a Jamaah Ansharut Daulah representative from Indonesia to the Philippines to purchase arms for ISIS-aligned forces in Indonesia and to set up training courses for pro-ISIS recruits from Indonesia with ISIS-P.
- Additionally, the DoS updated designations of ISIS in the Greater Sahara, also known as ISIS-GS, and its leader, Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists. ISIS-GS and al-Sahrawi were originally designated as Specially Designated Global Terrorists in February 2018.
- No individuals or organizations sanctioned for providing support to ISIS were removed from the sanctions list during this reporting period.

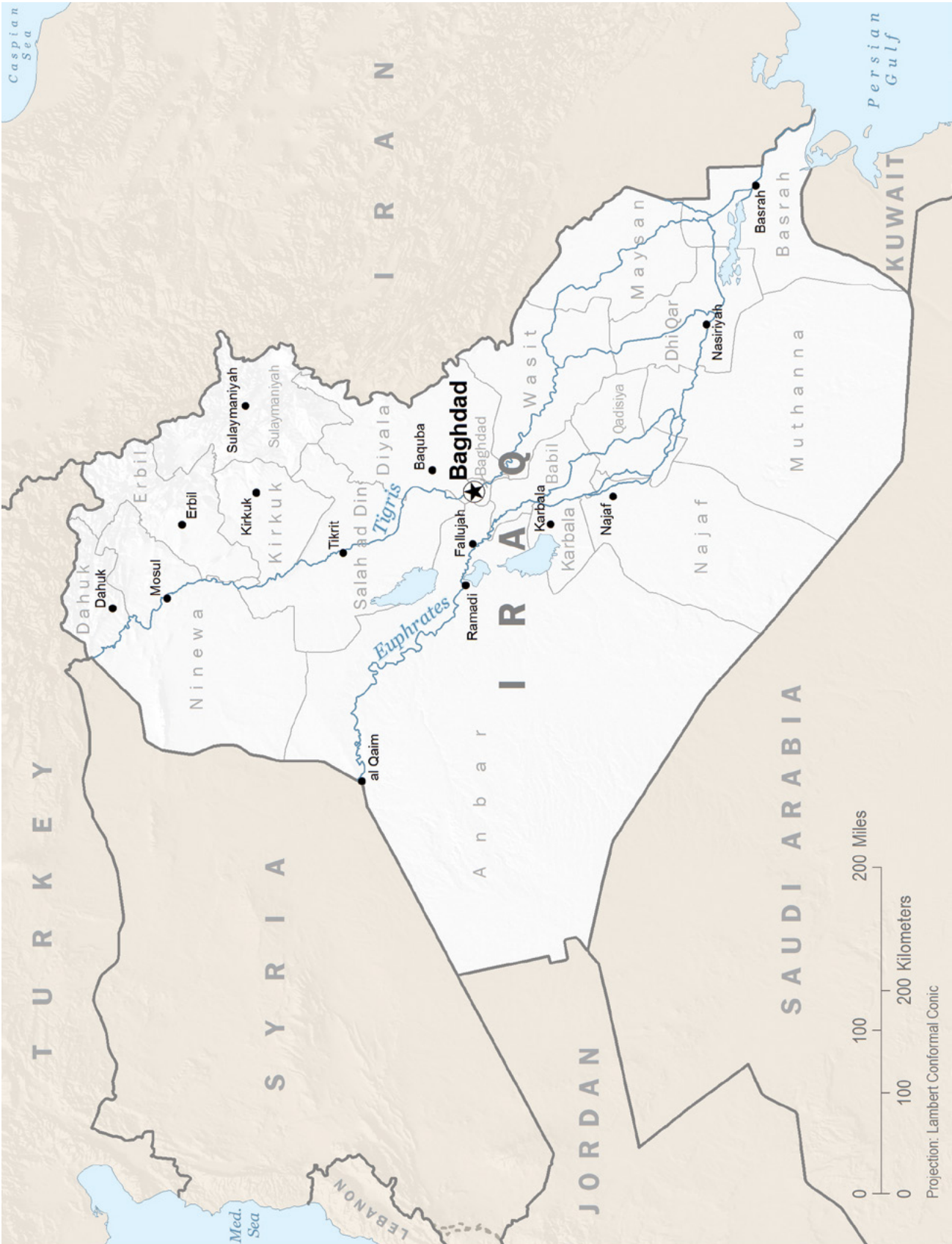


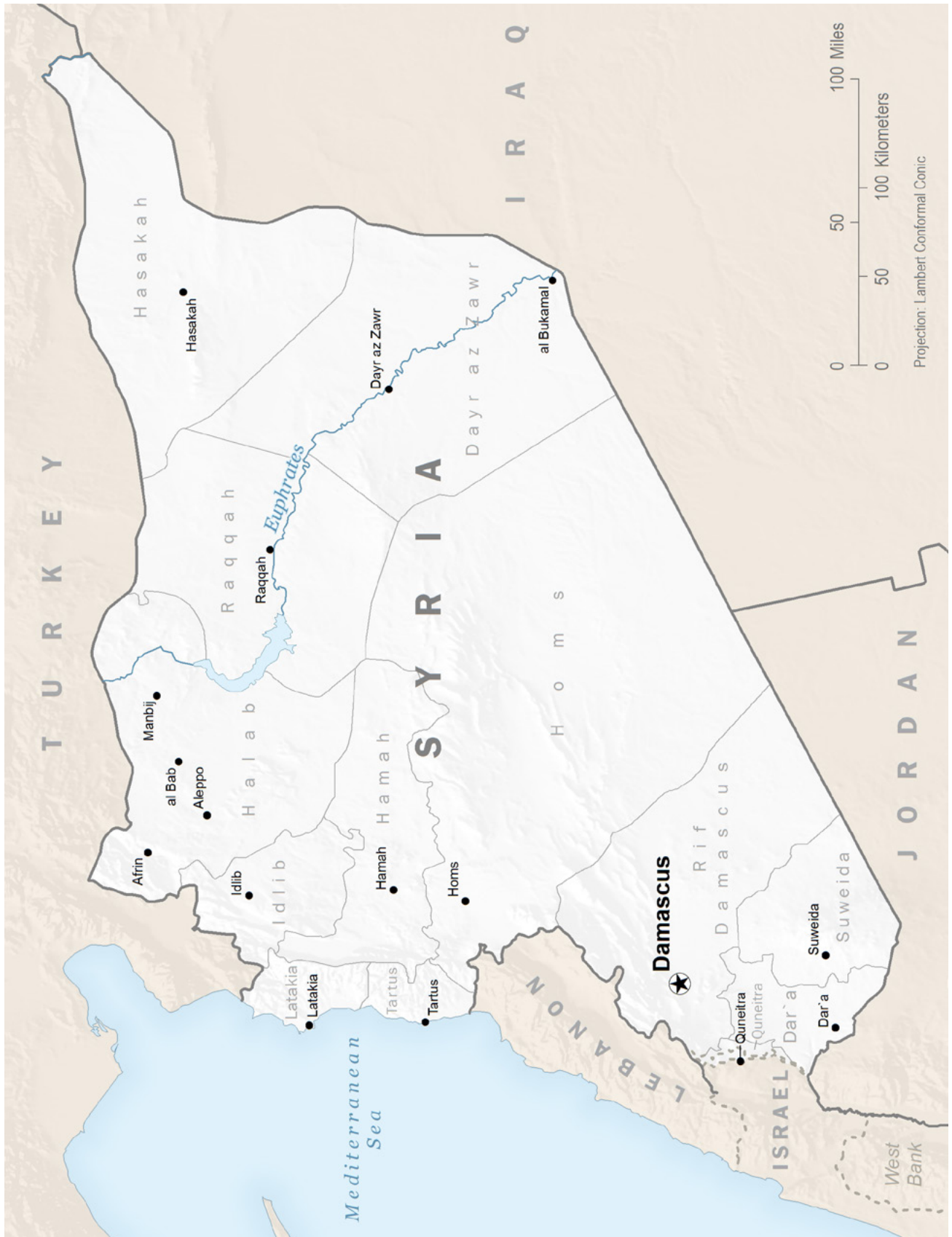
U.S. soldiers fire artillery alongside Iraqi Security Forces artillery at known ISIS locations near the Iraqi-Syrian border. (U.S. Army photo)

ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

| Acronym | Definition |
|-----------------|---|
| AFP | Armed Forces of the Philippines |
| BIFF | Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters |
| CAATT | Coalition Aviation Advisory and Training Team |
| CJTF-OIR | Combined Joint Task Force-OIR |
| CTEF | Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund |
| CTS | Counter Terrorism Service (Iraqi) |
| DCIS | Defense Criminal Investigative Service |
| DHS | U.S. Department of Homeland Security |
| DITCO | Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization |
| DLA | Defense Logistics Agency |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| DoJ | U.S. Department of Justice |
| DoS | Department of State |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| FFP | Office of Food for Peace (USAID) |
| FFS | Funding Facility for Stabilization |
| FY | Fiscal Year |
| GAO | Government Accountability Office |
| GEC | Global Engagement Center |
| HTS | Hayat Tahrir al Sham |
| IDP | Internally displaced person |
| IED | Improvised explosive device |
| IHEC | Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| IRGC | Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps |
| IRGC-Quds Force | Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force |
| ISF | Iraqi Security Forces |
| ISIS | Islamic State of Iraq and Syria |
| ISIS-P | ISIS-Philippines |
| KRG | Kurdistan Regional Government |

| Acronym | Definition |
|------------------|--|
| Lead IG | Lead Inspector General |
| Lead IG agencies | Refers to DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG agencies |
| MaT | Mughawir al Thawra |
| MILF | Moro Islamic Liberation Front |
| MISO | Military Information Support Operations |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| OCHA | UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| OCO | Overseas Contingency Operation |
| OFDA | Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance |
| OFS | Operation Freedom's Sentinel |
| OIG | Office of Inspector General |
| OIR | Operation Inherent Resolve |
| OPE-P | Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines |
| PMF | Popular Mobilization Forces |
| PRM | Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (DoS) |
| SDF | Syrian Democratic Forces |
| SOA | Strategic Oversight Area |
| START | Syria Transition Assistance Response Team |
| Treasury | U.S. Department of the Treasury |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNAMI | United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USINDOPACOM | U.S. Pacific Command |
| WFP | United Nations World Food Programme |
| YPG | Kurdish People's Protection Units |







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