



# OIR IN BRIEF

The 24th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) summarizes the quarter's key events and oversight of the U.S. mission to defeat ISIS, support local partners, and improve stability in Iraq and Syria.

## U.S. Reduces Forces in Iraq

pp. 10–11

- The DoD **reduced force levels** in Iraq from 3,000 to 2,500; the DoD said that the reduction **did not significantly impact** the OIR mission.
- Approximately 900 U.S. troops **remained deployed** to Syria during the quarter.

## ISIS Remains a Cohesive, Low-level Insurgency

pp. 12–18

- ISIS **attacks decreased**; ISIS fighters continued to operate mainly in small cells located in rural areas using small arms, IEDs, and assassinations.
- An estimated **8,000 to 16,000 ISIS fighters** remained in Iraq and Syria.
- Apart from ISIS, militias **continued to target** U.S. and Iraqi targets, including a **rocket strike** on the U.S. Embassy compound in December, the largest since 2010.

## The ISF Demonstrates Greater Independence

pp. 23–26

- The ISF carried out more counter-ISIS operations **independently** but still **relied on the Coalition** for airpower, intelligence, and surveillance support.
- ISF operations across northern and western Iraq **restricted ISIS movement, degraded its leadership, and depleted its resources**.
- The ISF and Peshmerga **failed to execute** joint operations to close longstanding security gap in northern Iraq.

## Iraq Political Situation Remains Fragile

pp. 35–36, 46–47

- Iraqis staged **demonstrations** across the country, demanding political and economic reforms.
- A **currency devaluation** and **COVID-19 restrictions** weakened Iraq's economic recovery.
- The Iraqi government **closed 15 IDP camps**, leaving many IDPs without safe housing or necessary services; further closures were **paused** following international pressure.

## The SDF Continues Operations Amid Complex Operating Environment

pp. 53–55, 60–61

- The SDF exhibited **“minimal reliance”** on Coalition forces during operations; however, having no air assets, the SDF continued to **rely on Coalition** air support.
- SDF **critical petroleum infrastructure protection forces** showed greater competence and independence.
- Multiple parties continued to operate in Syria, including those associated with the **Syrian regime, Iran, Russia, and Turkey**; clashes with some of these forces drew SDF attention away from counter-ISIS operations.

## The SDF Releases Syrian Detainees; Facilitates Return of IDPs

pp. 16, 69–70

- The SDF **released** hundreds of Syrians from detention facilities.
- The SDF also facilitated the departure of more than 1,600 Syrians from the **al-Hol IDP camp**.
- The U.S. government and the international community remained concerned about **living conditions, security, and potential radicalization activity** at al-Hol.

## U.S. Invests in Stabilization of Iraq, Humanitarian Assistance in Syria

pp. 44–45, 70–71

- USAID dedicated \$16.3 million to support members of **vulnerable religious and ethnic minorities** in Iraq.
- The DoS and USAID dedicated an **additional \$720 million** for humanitarian assistance in Syria.
- However, a **funding freeze** and **growing insecurity** continued to limit stabilization activities in Syria.

## Lead IG Oversight

p. 84–96

- Lead IG and partner agencies completed 9 reports related to OIR, including reports on **tactical signals intelligence** and USAID's **Journey to Self-Reliance initiative**.