



OIR IN BRIEF

The 27th 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 and train, advise, and assist local partners—including the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—to improve regional stability.

United States and Iraq Announce End to U.S. Combat Role by Year's End

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- The U.S.-Iraq security relationship will **fully transition the role of U.S. forces** to training, advising, assisting, and intelligence-sharing.
- No U.S. forces with a **combat role** will be in Iraq after December 31, 2021.

Iran-aligned Militias Pause Attacks

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- **Iran-aligned militias** paused attacks targeting U.S. and Coalition facilities, likely to evaluate **U.S. intentions** in Iraq following the announcement to end the U.S. military's combat role.
- Although attacks against diplomatic facilities fell in 2021, the **ordered departure** of U.S. Embassy personnel in Baghdad was extended to November 14.

ISIS: Fewer Attacks but Demonstrated “Operational Maturity”

pp. 20–27

- ISIS-claimed **attacks dropped** significantly in Iraq and Syria during the quarter.
- In Iraq, ISIS **increased attacks** on **electrical infrastructure** and conducted complex attacks, including a high-casualty bombing in Baghdad, that suggested some **operational maturity**.
- In Syria, ISIS **attacks against regime forces** in the Syrian desert rose in September. The DIA said the group appeared **poised to increase activity**.
- ISIS-related **violence** and **recruitment** continued throughout vulnerable areas of Iraq and Syria and continued to complicate humanitarian efforts.

UN Security Council Extends Humanitarian Use of Syrian Border Crossing

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- The UNSC resolution on the **Bab al-Hawa crossing** followed sustained U.S. Government advocacy.
- For the **first time**, the resolution included language for early recovery projects.

Iraqi Partner Forces Remain Dependent on Coalition Support

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- The ISF **consistently requested Coalition support** for air strikes, ISR, and intelligence integration.
- The Iraqi Air Force was hindered by **poor tactical control and coordination** of strike assets; large ISF operations were often forecast in advance.
- The ISF and Kurdistan Security Forces (or Peshmerga) continued plans for **joint brigades** in disputed territory where ISIS exploits a security gap.
- The U.S. Government provided security, training, and information support for **Iraqi elections**.

Syrian Democratic Forces Slow Pace of Counter-ISIS Operations

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- The pace of **SDF counter-ISIS operations** fell during the quarter; the pace of SDF unilateral operations rose from late August to early September.
- Overcrowding, **substandard conditions** continued in detention facilities in northeastern Syria holding ISIS detainees, despite SDF and Coalition improvements.

COVID-19, Water Scarcity Deepen Humanitarian Crisis

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- Humanitarian organizations warned that 5 million people in Syria could **lose access to clean drinking water**; food crops have been devastated.
- **COVID-19 vaccine** campaigns ramped up as Iraq and Syria experienced the highest number of new cases since the pandemic started.

Lead IG Oversight

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- The Lead IG and partner agencies completed 12 reports related to OIR, including the effectiveness of the Defense Logistics Agency's **oversight of bulk fuel contracts in Iraq** and DoS audits, inspections, and a management assistance report related to **contracts**.