OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

JULY 1, 2021–SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

ABOUT THIS REPORT

A 2013 amendment to the Inspector General Act established the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) framework for oversight of overseas contingency operations and requires that the Lead IG submit quarterly reports to Congress on each active operation. The Chair of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency designated the DoD Inspector General (IG) as the Lead IG for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). The DoS IG is the Associate IG for the operation. The USAID IG participates in oversight of the operation.

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

The Lead IG agencies collectively carry out the Lead IG statutory responsibilities to:

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

METHODOLOGY

To produce this quarterly report, the Lead IG agencies submit requests for information to the DoD, the DoS, USAID, and other Federal agencies about OIR and related programs. The Lead IG agencies also gather data and information from other sources, including official documents, congressional testimony, policy research organizations, press conferences, think tanks, and media reports.

The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of audits, inspections, investigations, or evaluations referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not audited the data and information cited in this report. The DoD, the DoS, and USAID review the reports for accuracy prior to publication. For further details on the methodology for this report, see Appendix B.

CLASSIFIED APPENDIX

A classified appendix to this report provides additional information on Operation Inherent Resolve. This quarter's classified appendix will be delivered to relevant agencies and congressional committees.

FOREWORD

We are pleased to submit this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) quarterly report on OIR to the U.S. Congress. This report discharges our individual and collective agency oversight responsibilities pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978.

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

This quarterly report describes the activities of the U.S. Government in support of OIR, as well as the work of the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development to promote the U.S. Government's policy goals in Iraq and Syria, during the period of July 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021.

This report also discusses the planned, ongoing, and completed oversight work conducted by the Lead IG agencies and our partner oversight agencies during the quarter. During the quarter, the Lead IG agencies and our oversight partners issued 12 audit, evaluation, and inspection reports related to OIR.

Working in close collaboration, we remain committed to providing comprehensive oversight and timely reporting on Operation Inherent Resolve.

Sean W. O'Donnell
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense

Diana Shaw
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of State

Thomas J. Ullom
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Agency for International Development

On the Cover
(Top row): Coalition forces operate Bradley Fighting Vehicles in Hasakah Governorate, Syria (U.S. Army photo); A technician from the Ifras Water Center in Erbil, Iraq, adjusts intake settings (IGPA/Takamul Project photo); A CH-47 Chinook helicopter sits on the landing pad at a forward operating base in Syria (DoD photo); Peshmerga soldiers run through squad movement drills at Zeravani Tiger Training Center in Erbil, Iraq (U.S. Army photo). (Bottom row): Coalition forces transfer CTEF-funded Humvees to Iraqi Security Forces at al-Asad Air Base, Iraq (U.S. Air Force photo).

MESSAGE FROM THE LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL

Sean W. O'Donnell

I am pleased to present this Lead IG quarterly report on Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). During the quarter, the United States, through the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, continued to support partner forces in Iraq and Syria as they conducted counter-ISIS operations. In July, the United States and Iraq announced that the security relationship between the two countries will fully transition to training, advising, and intelligence-sharing by December 31, 2021, and there will be no U.S. forces with a combat role in Iraq. The DoD said that this transition will not have a significant impact on U.S. capabilities to support Iraqi partner forces and will not impact counter-ISIS operations or logistics in Syria.

Although ISIS remained entrenched as a low-level insurgency, it conducted several complex attacks in Iraq during the quarter, suggesting a higher level of operational maturity in that country. In Syria, ISIS appeared poised to expand its activity and increased attacks against Syrian regime forces in September.

While noting some areas of progress during the quarter, Combined Joint Task Forces-OIR (CJTF-OIR) reported that partner forces continued to rely on Coalition support for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), intelligence integration, and air strikes. In particular, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) continued to demonstrate poor operational security, a lack of reliable information on operations against ISIS, complacency, and poor tactical control and coordination of strike assets.

During the quarter, the Iraqi government, with support from the international community, including the United States, focused on preparing for parliamentary elections. The Coalition advised the ISF as it conducted pre-election security operations. USAID supported training for poll workers and election observers. The elections took place in October against a backdrop of civilian protests, a weak economy, and threats by major parties to boycott the polls. Preliminary results showed gains for Iraqi nationalist parties, including one headed by Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, and a decrease in seats for Iran-aligned parties.

In July, Iran-aligned militias in Iraq launched near-daily rocket and drone attacks against facilities hosting U.S. and Coalition personnel, followed by a notable pause in attacks since then. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) assessed that the militias ceased their attacks to avoid disrupting the U.S.-Iraqi announcement to transition U.S. forces to a non-combat role. In northeastern Syria, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) remained concerned about the potential for Turkish or Turkish-supported offensive operations in SDF areas of operations.

Both Iraq and Syria continued to experience economic crisis, drought conditions, and the effects of the coronavirus disease–2019(COVID-19) pandemic, all of which contributed to instability and provided fertile ground for ISIS to expand its influence. USAID continued to adjust some of its stabilization projects in Syria due to reduced funding. The UN Security Council authorized an extension of the humanitarian use of a major Syrian border crossing, Bab al-Hawa; for the first time this authorization permits the passage of water, sanitation, health, education, and shelter early recovery projects, in addition to lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

We will continue to report on the status of OIR, including the counter-ISIS mission, effects of malign actors on the mission, and U.S. Government efforts to address underlying factors that influence stability in Iraq and Syria. I look forward to working with my Lead IG colleagues to provide continuing oversight of and report on OIR, as required by the IG Act.

Sean W. O'Donnell
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense

A U.S. Army AH-64 Apache attack helicopter flies over northern Iraq. (DoD photo)

CONTENTS

July 1, 2021–September 30, 2021

A U.S. Air Force F-16
Fighting Falcon
conducts a mission in
support of CJTF-OIR.
(U.S. Air Force photo)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) mission is to achieve the enduring defeat of ISIS
in Iraq and Syria, while setting the conditions for follow-on activities to improve regional
stability.[1] OIR is currently in Phase IV ("Normalize"), the final phase of the OIR campaign
plan. During this phase, the Coalition has transitioned from training, developing, and
assisting partner forces in Iraq and Syria to advising and enabling them.[2]

Combined Joint Task Force–OIR (CJTF-OIR) said that Coalition and partner force military
efforts are "preventing an ISIS resurgence, supporting whole-of-government efforts to
establish a stable and secure environment."[3]

STATUS OF OIR

There will be no U.S. forces with a combat role in Iraq by the end of 2021. As part of
the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Dialogue session in July, the two countries announced that their
security relationship will fully transition the role of U.S. forces to training, advising,
assisting, and intelligence-sharing by December 31, 2021.[4] The OIR mission will maintain
most of its current capabilities.[5] The transition does not impact operations against ISIS or
logistics in Syria.[6]

**Senior leaders of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS met virtually on September 9
to discuss the ISIS threat.** The statement issued at the close of the meeting stressed
the need to intensify civilian counterterrorism efforts against ISIS in Iraq, the need for
continued stabilization efforts to prevent a resurgence of ISIS in Syria, and the ongoing
security challenge posed by the thousands of ISIS fighters detained in northeastern Syria
and their associated family members in displaced persons camps.[7] Coalition partners also
discussed the growing threat posed by ISIS branches outside of Iraq and Syria.[8]

**The ordered departure of U.S. Embassy staff in Baghdad was extended to mid-
November.** The embassy recommended termination of the ordered departure, in place
since March 2020, noting that the number of rocket attacks against diplomatic facilities had
declined. However, the DoS extended the order until November 14.[9] The ordered departure
of U.S. Consulate General staff in Erbil ended on July 22, 2020.[10]

STATUS OF ISIS

**ISIS was weakened but remained a priority threat to U.S. interests during the
quarter.**[11] ISIS-claimed attacks decreased significantly in Iraq and Syria during the
quarter, compared to the same period in 2020.[12] The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)
reported that the group appeared poised to increase activity in Syria after a period of
recuperation and recovery, and ISIS attacks targeting regime forces in the Syrian desert
rose in September.[13] In Iraq, ISIS conducted attacks against Iraqi security forces including
complex attacks such as a high-casualty bombing in Baghdad in July—suggesting a higher
level of operational maturity.[14] ISIS continued to focus recruitment efforts on displaced or
disaffected populations but lacked resources and popularity to expand recruitment.[15]

ISIS continued to operate in small clandestine cells across rural areas of Iraq and Syria as a well-entrenched, low-level insurgency, conducting small arms, IED, and hit-and-run attacks.[16] There were no notable changes to the group's internal cohesiveness or to its overall strategy to rebuild, influence, and reestablish itself as a governing organization in Iraq and Syria.[17] ISIS continued to exploit security gaps and sectarian tensions and operate in difficult terrain.[18] CJTF-OIR reported that the group remained unable to sustain coherent military operations against Coalition partner forces and could conduct only isolated insurgent and terrorist attacks.[19]

ISIS remains active in the al-Hol displaced persons camp amid efforts to improve security.[20] International organizations documented dire conditions at al-Hol, where 59,000 people live in overcrowded conditions with insufficient services or healthcare.[21] The DIA reported that despite clearance operations in the camp in March, ISIS retained its ability to "radicalize, intimidate, recruit and conduct attacks" in the camp.[22] Though killings continued during the quarter, they were less frequent than before the March security sweep.[23] Efforts to reduce the population of al-Hol continued with camp authorities facilitating the return of some Syrians and Iraqis to their areas of origin, the repatriations of some foreign families, and the transfer of some foreign families to the Roj camp, also in northeastern Syria.[24]

IRAQ

The ISF remained dependent on Coalition support. CJTF-OIR reported that the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) made "no significant achievement" during the quarter in their ability to carry out operations independent of Coalition assistance, though they continue to develop their own capabilities and processes.[25] Iraqi military leadership continued to request Coalition support for air strikes; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); and intelligence integration to carry out operations against ISIS.[26] The Iraqi Air Force demonstrated poor tactical control and coordination of strike assets.[27] CJTF-OIR reported that ISF operations consisted of routine daytime presence patrols that "almost never" made contact with ISIS fighters. Larger operations were often forecast in advance, had poor operational security, and were predictable.[28] CJTF-OIR noted that it has little visibility into the execution and results of ISF operations against ISIS that are conducted from provincial operations commands, where it does not provide direct support.[29]

Plans continued for establishing joint brigades of the ISF and Kurdish Security Forces, also known as the Peshmerga. The joint brigades will operate along the Kurdistan Coordination Line, a swath of territory in northern Iraq that runs along the divide between the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and the rest of federal Iraq.[30] CJTF-OIR reported that the ISF and Peshmerga have agreed in principle to the brigades, but still must put the deal in writing. CJTF-OIR said that the joint brigades will minimize opportunities for ISIS to operate in the territory."[31]

Iran-aligned militias paused attacks to evaluate U.S. intentions. While the militias launched near daily rocket and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attacks between July 2 and July 8, the DIA reported that this quarter saw a notable pause in militia attacks since July. The DIA assessed that the pause stems from various factors including the militias' desire to manage escalation and evaluate U.S. intentions following the July announcement that there will be no U.S. forces in Iraq with a combat role by the end of the year.[32]

CJTF-OIR reported that the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) made "no significant achievement" in their ability to carry out operations independent of Coalition assistance, though they continue to develop their own capabilities and processes.

SDF soldiers patrol during a joint operation with U.S. Army Soldiers in Syria. (U.S. Army photo)

The U.S. Government provided support for Iraq's parliamentary elections. The Coalition's Military Advisor Group advised the ISF on pre-election security operations ahead of the October 10 parliamentary elections.[33] USAID supported training for poll workers and election observers, as well as efforts to increase voter turnout and combat disinformation.[34] The DoS reported that the ISF was successful in their planning of election security.[35] The DoS said that Iraqi voter apathy and distrust of political parties remained high.[36] The elections took place against a backdrop of attacks against Iraqi journalists and boycotting by major parties citing violence and corruption.[37]

USAID announced new awards to support climate change efforts, return of displaced persons, and anti-radicalization television programs.[38] During the quarter, humanitarian organizations also continued to raise concerns about forced evictions of displaced persons from informal sites in Iraq.[39] In addition, relief organizations reported instances where the Iraqi government denied them access to populations in need, despite recent efforts to improve the system for authorizing such access.[40]

SYRIA

The pace of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) counter-ISIS operations decreased compared to the previous quarter, but the number of unilateral SDF operations increased.[41] The SDF continued to rely solely on human intelligence for its intelligence collection. It lacked the ability to conduct persistent surveillance or maintain situational awareness.[42] Coalition forces continued to provide both hands-on training and "train the trainer" instruction to multiple SDF forces, including Internal Security Forces (InSF), Provincial Internal Security Forces (PrISF), SDF commandos, and military intelligence.[43]

The SDF continued to work to improve conditions at detention facilities holding ISIS fighters and the SDF's abilities to hold those fighters moderately improved.[44] However, while CJTF-OIR continued to provide materiel and support to the SDF to improve the physical security, capacity, and conditions in the facilities, detainees continued to live in substandard and overcrowded living conditions.[45] CJTF-OIR said the poor living conditions increased the chance of breakouts.[46] There was one escape attempt by detainees during the quarter.[47]

Iran-aligned militias in Syria conducted limited attacks on Coalition forces during the quarter, while multiple parties vied for influence across Syria.[48] The DIA reported that Iran-aligned militias likely conducted their second rocket attack against U.S. forces in Syria

Lead IG Oversight Activities

Travel restrictions due to the coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continued to constrain the Lead IG agencies' ability to conduct oversight of projects this quarter. Despite these constraints, the Lead IG agencies completed 12 reports related to OIR during the quarter. These reports examined various activities that support OIR, including the effectiveness of the Defense Logistics Agency's oversight of bulk fuel contracts in Iraq; security for additive manufacturing systems used by DoD Components; the Army's implementation of corrective actions identified in a previous DoD OIG report related to transportation programs in the Middle East; and DoS audits, inspections, and a management assistance report related to contract actions, acquisitions, and contract management. As of September 30, 2021, the Lead IG agencies had 13 projects ongoing and 14 projects planned.

During this quarter, Lead IG investigations related to OIR resulted in one conviction resulting from a Defense Criminal Investigation Service (DCIS) and U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command investigation into kickback schemes for OIR-related contracts. The investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies closed 10 investigations, initiated 2 investigations, and coordinated on 71 open investigations. The investigations involve a variety of alleged crimes, including procurement fraud, corruption, grant fraud, theft, program irregularities, computer intrusions, and human trafficking.

Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints 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. The DoD OIG has an investigator to coordinate the hotline contacts among Lead IG agencies and others, as appropriate. During the quarter, the investigator referred 92 cases to Lead IG agencies or other investigative organizations.

this year following U.S. strikes against militia targets in June.[49] Social media channels affiliated with the militia claimed responsibility for at least six attacks after June 21.[50] Iranian forces also continued to support pro-regime military operations against opposition forces in Dar'a, where regime forces and their Russian backers laid siege to the city, attacking it with artillery and bombs and preventing transit of food and supplies to tens of thousands of people.[51] A Russia-mediated ceasefire deal went into effect in September. Russian military police will continue to patrol the city and operate checkpoints.[52] Tensions between Turkey and the SDF also escalated during the quarter, raising concerns of a possible Turkish incursion deeper into SDF-held territory.[53]

The Syrian Constitutional Committee made little progress during the quarter due to stalling tactics by the Syrian regime.[54] UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen proposed a series of bilateral meetings in Geneva between the United Nations and stakeholder countries in addition to convening a constitutional committee whose participants have for years failed to write a new Syrian constitution.[55]

The UN Security Council extended humanitarian use of the Bab al-Hawa border crossing.[56] The resolution also recognizes that humanitarian support should include support to essential services through water, sanitation, health, education, and shelter early recovery projects, in addition to addressing immediate needs.[57]

Peshmerga soldiers run through squad movement drills at Zeravani Tiger Training Center in Erbil Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

STATUS OF OIR

STATUS OF OIR

MISSION

U.S. and Iraq Transition Security Relationship of U.S. Troops to a Noncombat Role

In July, the U.S. government and the Iraqi government announced that there will be no U.S. forces with a combat role in Iraq by December 31, 2021. The DoD Office of the Undersecretary for Policy for International Security Affairs (OUSD(P) ISA) said that the security relationship between the two countries will fully transition to training, advising, assisting, and intelligence sharing.[58] The announcement reflects the understanding reached by representatives of the United States and Iraq in June under the framework of the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Dialogue. Discussions under the Strategic Dialogue began in 2020, in accordance with the 2008 Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relationship of Friendship and Cooperation between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq.[59]

The DoS said that during the talks in July, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to a robust bilateral relationship with Iraq.[60] The two governments also discussed public health, economic cooperation, energy independence, humanitarian aid, human rights, and cultural and education exchange.[61] There were no significant changes to current diplomatic efforts between the two countries.[62]

While there will be no U.S. troops in Iraq with a combat role by the end of 2021, it is not clear if the total number of troops, including those operating in an advisory capacity, will change.[63] DoD OUSD(P) ISA said that the decision to transition in-country troops to an advisory role is consistent with the transition to OIR Phase IV. OIR will maintain most of the capabilities it currently has, including defensive capabilities.[64] DoD OUSD(P) ISA said that CJTF-OIR's objective in Iraq—the enduring defeat of ISIS—remained unchanged and that the transition "will not have a significant impact on the fight against ISIS."[65]

In September, the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) announced that Combined Joint Task Force–OIR (CJTF-OIR) had been redesignated from a three-star command to a two-star command. General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Commander of USCENTCOM, said that the redesignation reflects the transition "from a warfighting headquarters to one focused entirely on advising and assisting our hosts in those areas where we can be most helpful."[66]

No Change to OIR Mission in Syria

The outcome of the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Dialogue did not impact counter-ISIS operations or logistics in Syria, DoD OUSD(P) ISA said.[67] DoD OUSD(P) ISA reported that there were no changes to DoD policy in Syria during the quarter and that CJTF-OIR "remains committed to executing its sole mission in Syria: the enduring defeat of ISIS." [68] USAID reported that the National Security Council is continuing to conduct a thorough review of U.S. Government policy toward Syria.[69]

To achieve its mission, U.S. and Coalition forces continued to work "by, with, and through" the SDF and other vetted local partner forces.[70] In addition, DoD OUSD(P) ISA said that the U.S. and Coalition military presence and support continued to support civilian-led humanitarian and stabilization efforts to address the underlying grievances that facilitated ISIS's rapid expansion.[71]

About Operation Inherent Resolve

Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) began in 2014, after the United States and its partners in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS initiated military activity to support local partners combatting ISIS in Iraq and Syria.[72] Comprising former al-Qaeda fighters and new recruits, ISIS exploited instability in Iraq and Syria and rapidly seized major cities in the two countries.[73]

CJTF-OIR executes OIR according to a four-phase operational campaign plan.[74] (See Figure 1.) During the first three phases of the campaign, Coalition forces conducted air strikes and special operations raids against ISIS. U.S. and Coalition forces also worked "by, with, and through" Iraqi and Syrian partner forces in their actions against ISIS by training, advising, and providing equipment and other forms of assistance to those forces. By March 2019, Coalition and partner force operations succeeded in ending ISIS territorial control in Iraq and Syria. In July 2020, CJTF-OIR transitioned to Phase IV ("Normalize") of the campaign plan.[75]

Consistent with Phase IV operations, CJTF-OIR shifted from tactical-level training and building the capacity of partner forces in both Iraq and Syria to primarily advising them and providing targeted support for their operations.[76] CJTF-OIR's timeline for Phase IV and the desired end state are not publicly releasable.

USAID, the U.S. Government lead for implementing stabilization activities in Iraq, focuses on restoring essential infrastructure and services by working with local partners to identify priorities for recovery; improve social cohesion; and help marginalized and displaced populations return to and rebuild their places of origin.[77] The DoS seeks to help Iraq chart an independent security and foreign policy path separate from that of Iran or other powers, enable political and economic reform, support vulnerable minority populations, and achieve reconciliation among communities.[78] In Syria, the DoS seeks to advance a durable political solution to the Syrian conflict that "represents the will of all Syrians," the enduring defeat of ISIS, the successful reintegration of displaced persons, and the repatriation of foreign terrorist fighters.[79]

Figure 1.

The OIR Campaign Plan

PHASE I	PHASE II	PHASE III	PHASE IV
Degrade	**Counterattack**	**Defeat**	**Normalize**
2014–2015	2015–2016	2017–2020	2020–Present

Source: CJTF-OIR, "History of CJTF-OIR," 9/2020.

Partners, Adversaries in Iraq and Syria React to Afghanistan Withdrawal

The rapid withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in August prompted Iraqi defense leaders to accelerate the diversification of their sources for training and procurement. The DIA reported that the Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MoD) increased procurement of close air support and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft from Pakistan and Turkey, "probably in an effort to strengthen those capabilities in the event of a U.S. realignment."[80] The MoD also launched a campaign to reinforce troop morale and obligation to duty. The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) displayed no decrease in operational tempo since August, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) said, despite initial concerns from ISF leaders about the withdrawal.[81] In Syria, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) leader General Mazloum Kobani expressed concern that the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan could portend a similar withdrawal in Syria, according to press reporting.[82]

ISIS criticized the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan as a false peace inconsistent with the jihadist ideal. However, the DIA assessed that "ISIS would probably attempt to capitalize on any U.S. forces withdrawal from Iraq," should it occur, to increase recruitment and attacks.[83] Iran-aligned militias trumpeted the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan as evidence of the United States' weakness as a security partner. The DIA reported that militias publicly juxtaposed the Taliban takeover of Kabul with their own role of preventing the ISIS takeover of Baghdad in 2014.[84] Further information about reactions to the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is available in the classified appendix to this report.

Global Coalition Meets, Discusses ISIS Threat

During a meeting in September, senior diplomatic representatives from the Small Group of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS reaffirmed their support for continued counterterrorism pressure against ISIS in Iraq and Syria to consolidate gains. Coalition members confirmed their commitment to the global defeat of ISIS and bringing ISIS members to justice.[85]

During the meeting, the Acting U.S. Special Envoy for the Global Coalition, John Godfrey, stressed the need to intensify civilian counterterrorism capacity-building efforts for the sustained defeat of ISIS within Iraq. In Syria, stabilization efforts in areas liberated from ISIS remain a "core component" of efforts to prevent a resurgence of ISIS, Special Envoy Godfrey said.[86] He highlighted the ongoing security challenge posed by the thousands of ISIS fighters detained in northeast Syria and their associated family members in displaced persons camps and stressed the need for their repatriation to help prevent ISIS from redeveloping its capability in Iraq and Syria.[87]

The Coalition partners also discussed the growing threat posed by ISIS branches outside of Iraq and Syria and noted ISIS-Khorasan's "horrific attack" on August 26 in Kabul. Small Group representatives determined to focus their work in the Coalition's communications, countering-ISIS finance, and foreign terrorist fighters working groups to counter the ISIS-Khorasan threat. They also discussed leveraging Coalition expertise and working group capabilities to address the threat posed by ISIS branches in Africa.[88]

The rapid withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in August prompted Iraqi defense leaders to accelerate the diversification of their sources for training and procurement.

FUNDING

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND PARTNER SUPPORT

For FY 2021, Congress appropriated $12.7 billion for OIR. The DoD Comptroller reported that $4.8 billion of those funds had been disbursed by the end of June 2021.[89]
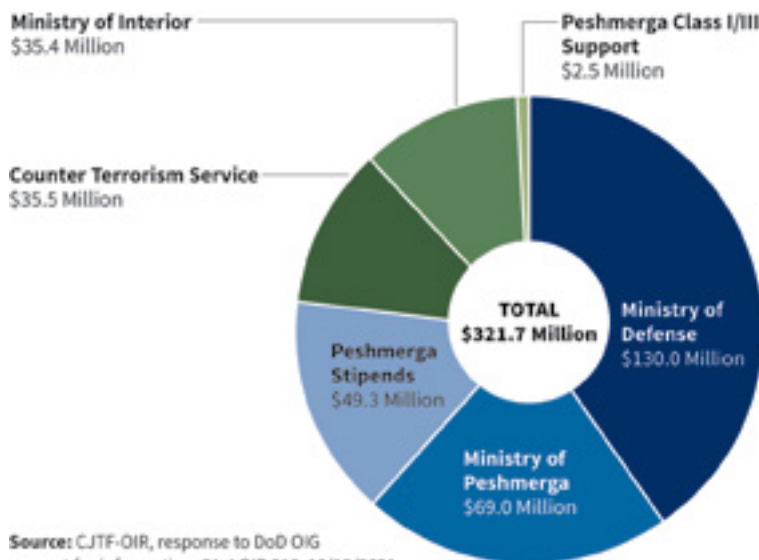
The OIR appropriation includes $710 million for the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF), which assists the ISF and vetted Syrian opposition groups and individuals in conducting the defeat-ISIS mission under OIR. CTEF assistance has steadily decreased in recent years, CJTF-OIR said, due to the evolving situation in Iraq and Syria and increased independence of partner forces.[90]

The majority of CTEF funding ($510 million) is designated for use in Iraq.[91] CJTF-OIR reported that assistance to vetted partner forces in Iraq during the quarter was approximately $321.7 million. This assistance included transfer of equipment purchased during previous quarters.[92] (See Figure 2.) During the quarter, the DoD approved expenditures for support to the Iraqi ministries of Defense, Interior, and Peshmerga Affairs. This support included: joint headquarters communication equipment, commando battalion weapons, and other equipment for the MoD; training materials, ammunition, and Unmanned Aircraft Systems replacement parts for the Counter Terrorism Service (CTS); Peshmerga stipends; and other forms of assistance.[93]

The remainder of CTEF funds ($200 million) support vetted partner forces in Syria.[94] CJTF-OIR reported that plans for the 2-year (FY 2021/2022) CTEF-Syria funds include support for training and equipping; logistical support; partner force stipends; replacement parts; and materials to repair and renovate infrastructure.[95]

Figure 2.

CTEF-Iraq Expenditures, July–September 2021

Ministry of Interior
$35.4 Million

Counter Terrorism Service
$35.5 Million

Peshmerga Stipends
$49.3 Million

Peshmerga Class I/III Support
$2.5 Million

TOTAL $321.7 Million

Ministry of Defense
$130.0 Million

Ministry of Peshmerga
$69.0 Million

Source: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 016, 10/12/2021.

The FY 2021 State and Foreign Operations approriation, which is in addition to CTEF, included $250 million for the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program in Iraq. The DoS said that as of the end of the quarter, these funds had not yet been obligated for specific programs, because, as with the majority of FY 2021 funds, the FMF has not yet been notified to Congress. The FY 2022 budget submitted to Congress in May requested another $250 million for Foreign Military Financing for Iraq.[96]

The Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq (OSC-I) said that during the quarter, $1,494,608 in FY 2019 FMF funds were spent on police riot gear for three battalions from the Special Security Division that provides security for the International Zone. In addition, $250 million was allocated for future programs but not expended.[97]

STABILIZATION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

USAID and the DoS work with the United Nations, NGOs, and other implementing partners to fund a variety of programs and services in Iraq and Syria, including—but not limited to—food assistance, cash assistance, shelter, health, and education in Iraq, Syria, and neighboring countries.[98] (See Table 1.)

Globally, the United States remains the largest single donor to the humanitarian response in Iraq and Syria. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that, as of the end of the quarter, the U.S. Government had committed approximately $113.7 million in humanitarian assistance toward the needs identified in the 2021 UN Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq, and $513.4 million in humanitarian assistance for the 2021 response plan for Syria.[99] The DoS said that these UN totals do not fully incorporate all forms of support for the Syria response, as there are frequently delays in funding being reported by the UN's Financial Tracking System.[100]

Table 1.

U.S. Government Funding Available for the Iraq and Syria Humanitarian Response

IRAQ HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FY 2020–21			
	USAID BHA	DoS PRM	TOTAL
Humanitarian Funding for Complex Emergency	$176,834,092	$209,950,134	**$386,784,226**
COVID-19 Response	$32,500,000	$14,505,000	**$47,005,000**
TOTAL	**$209,334,092**	**$224,455,134**	**$433,789,226**

SYRIA REGIONAL RESPONSE FY 2021			
	USAID BHA	DoS PRM	TOTAL
Crisis Response	$449,186,643	$144,800,000	**$643,986,643**
Humanitarian Funding for Countries that Host Syrian Refugees			
Egypt	$20,280,000	$17,436,039	**$37,716,939**
Iraq	N/A	$31,890,000	**$31,890,000**
Jordan	$72,800,000	$118,573,703	**$191,373,703**
Lebanon	$105,520,000	$182,739,543	**$288,259,543**
Turkey	$10,760,000	$95,350,000	**$106,110,000**
Regional	N/A	$7,500,000	**$7,500,000**
TOTAL	**$708,046,643**	**$598,290,185**	**$1,306,836,828**

Sources: USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #2," 3/11/2021; USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #3," 6/16/2021; USAID, "Syria-Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #10," 9/3/2021; USAID BHA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

PERSONNEL

MILITARY PERSONNEL

The number of U.S. military personnel in Iraq and Syria remained unchanged during the quarter, according to DoD OUSD(P) ISA.[101] (See Table 2.)

Table 2.

U.S. Military Personnel in Iraq and Syria

	Iraq	Syria
U.S. Military (as of June 2021)	Approx. 2,500	Approx. 900
DoD Contractor (as of July 2021)	4,516	

Sources: DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 10/18/2021; DoD OSD(AS), "Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility," 7/2021.

CJTF-OIR reported that there were 207 coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) positive cases among CJTF-OIR personnel in Iraq, Syria, and Kuwait during the quarter. As of the end of the quarter, 82 percent of U.S. military personnel, 80 percent of DoD civilians, and 75 percent of contractors in the CJTF-OIR area of operations were vaccinated.[102]

CJTF-OIR said that COVID-19-related inter- and intra-theater movement restrictions remained in place during the quarter, along with other disease mitigation strategies, such as mask wearing, screening, and closure of public and community-based programs. Base commanders receive daily updates on COVID-19 and adjust their force health protection measures accordingly.[103]

DIPLOMATIC AND AID PERSONNEL

Mission Iraq Staffing and Ordered Departure

According to the DoS, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center have been on ordered departure status—a procedure by which the number of government employees at the post is reduced—since March 2020. The embassy has recommended termination of the ordered departure, noting that attacks against Department diplomatic facilities have decreased significantly in 2021. However, the DoS extended the ordered departure until November 14.[104]

The DoS terminated ordered departure for the Consulate General in Erbil on July 22, 2020, and has not re-imposed it despite significant attacks by UAVs on facilities near those used by the U.S. Government there. In addition to the staffing shortages caused by the ordered departure, Mission Iraq continues to operate under the Department's 300-person cap for U.S. direct hire staff in-country, which was imposed in 2019 after a Zero-Based Staffing Review. Approximately 2,000 contractors also work at the embassy, primarily providing security, food service, and life support.[105]

Reduced Staffing Affects Special Immigrant Visa and Refugee Processes

The USAID Mission in Iraq expressed concern about backlogs in Priority 1 and Priority 2 case files of Iraqi nationals under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program as well as the Special Immigrant Visa process there.[106] The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program provides

opportunities for refugee resettlement through a Presidential Determination that establishes an overall admission level and regional allocation of refugees for an upcoming fiscal year.[107] The U.S. Government uses priority designations to determine which of the world's refugees are of special humanitarian concern to the United States.[108]

The Iraq Special Immigrant Visa program is divided into several categories, including one for interpreters and translators and another for Iraqis who were employed in other capacities by the U.S. Government.[109] While the Special Immigrant Visa program is available to Iraqi and Afghan interpreters and translators who worked with U.S. forces or under Chief of Mission authority in Iraq or Afghanistan, this program has an annual limit of 50 visas. The Special Immigrant Visa program for Iraqis who were employed in other capacities by or on behalf of the U.S. Government sunset on September 30, 2014, and is no longer accepting applications.[110]

The USAID Mission in Iraq reported that personnel from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have not been able to conduct preliminary interviews for the past 2 years due to security concerns and logistical challenges caused by the ordered departure and COVID-19.[111] With the recent evacuation of Afghan nationals who assisted the U.S. Mission in Afghanistan, and the ongoing security and logistical challenges in Iraq, staff at the USAID Mission in Iraq said that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is considering conducting the first preliminary interview virtually; however, a final determination had not been made as of the end of the quarter.[112]

Impact of COVID-19 on Mission Iraq

The embassy's management office reported that as of August 24, 99 percent of U.S. Mission Iraq's population (U.S. direct hires, locally employed staff, and contractors) was fully vaccinated, compared to 75 percent as of June 12. U.S. Mission Iraq includes the Baghdad Embassy compound, Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center, and the Consulate General in Erbil.[113] COVID-19 mitigation measures remained in effect for all personnel accessing U.S. Mission Iraq facilities. The pandemic had slowed construction projects; however, the embassy reported that all ongoing construction efforts continue with full contractor staffing with COVID-19 mitigations in place.[114] Since the middle of August, Mission Iraq had experienced one or two breakthrough cases of COVID-19 infections per day, with most cases being asymptomatic or with mild symptoms. Infected employees were isolated before returning to work. The embassy considered this rate of infection manageable.[115]

With nearly all personnel now fully vaccinated, U.S. Mission Iraq took steps to resume normal operations. Locally employed staff at the Consulate General in Erbil returned to work in August, and the Chief of Mission approved a plan for the phased return of locally employed staff to the embassy compound and Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center. In addition, the Iraqi government relaxed some of its COVID-19 restrictions and is allowing a significant number of third-country national employees and contractors to enter the country.[116]

The embassy's management office reported that as of August 24, 99 percent of U.S. Mission Iraq's population (U.S. direct hires, locally employed staff, and contractors) was fully vaccinated, compared to 75 percent as of June 12.

FACILITIES

There were two indirect fire attacks against U.S. diplomatic facilities during the quarter. A new Iran-aligned front group called Thar al-Muhandis claimed the attack targeting the International Zone in Baghdad.[117] There were no reports of casualties or damage.[118]

During the quarter, there were two explosive-laden drone attacks on Erbil International Airport and Erbil Air Base. The first, on July 6, hit the Erbil Air Base. The KRG's Counter-Terrorism Directorate (CTD) reported that a fire broke out at the impact site and was extinguished by civil defense teams. On September 11, two explosive-laden drones attempted to strike unidentified targets located within the Erbil International Airport. The CTD reported that at least three blasts occurred, all outside the airport perimeter. Following both attacks, the CTD and CJTF-OIR reported there was no structural damage to Erbil Air Base facilities or any injuries or casualties. This latest attack brings the number to four attacks against the airport this year.[119]

U.S. Mission Iraq continued to engage at all levels with Iraqi government about threats against U.S. coalition and diplomatic personnel and assets. Several embassy sections and agencies met with counterparts from other international missions located in the International Zone to collaborate on security mitigations that benefit all foreign missions. The Defense Attaché Office and Regional Security Office at the embassy worked with host-nation partners on physical security upgrades to International Zone infrastructure. The Regional Security Office met regularly with Iraqi partners in charge of security for the International Zone. Several embassy sections also met with commanders that provide external security to the Baghdad Embassy Compound, Union III, and other diplomatic international organization facilities.[120]

Consulate Compound in Erbil Marks Construction Milestone

On September 22, the Erbil Consul General marked the "structural completion" of the New Consulate Compound. The "structural completion" milestone signifies that the last concrete has been poured. The project is 60 percent complete; remaining work includes plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning, lighting, interior walls, and fixtures. Upon occupancy, the New Consulate Compound will be the largest U.S. consulate in the world. Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Masrour Barzani and other KRG officials attended the event. The U.S. Consul General said the new consulate building is a sign of the United States' long-term commitment to the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and its residents.[121]

During the quarter, 1,500 construction workers and staff worked at the New Consulate Compound Erbil construction site.[122] The original substantial completion date for the project was April 2022, and it has been delayed until September 2023, with an occupancy of December 2023, according to the DoS Overseas Buildings Operations project director's monthly cable.[123] The contractor is working on a recovery plan to mitigate time lost because of COVID-19. The DoS anticipates completing the project during the period of performance required by the contract, once outstanding requests for equitable adjustment are considered.[124]

CUI

CUI

U.S. Soldiers conduct registration and calibration for a M777 A2 Howitzer weapon system in Syria. (U.S. Army photo)

STATUS OF ISIS

STATUS OF ISIS

Coalition and international officials stated during the quarter that although ISIS is weakened, the group remains a threat and the fight to achieve the enduring defeat of ISIS is not over.[125] In September, Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence, said that ISIS in Iraq and Syria remain priority threats to the U.S. homeland.[126]

Combined Joint Task Force–OIR (CJTF-OIR) noted that its forces remain in Iraq and Syria to help partner forces "consolidate hard-fought gains" against ISIS.[127] General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Commander of the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) has previously stated that sustained pressure on ISIS is critical to preventing the group's resurgence.[128]

ISIS Attack Claims Decrease, but the Group's Capabilities and Strategy Remain

During the quarter, ISIS attack claims dropped in both Iraq and Syria compared with the same period in 2020. CJTF-OIR reported that in Iraq, ISIS claimed responsibility for 182 attacks during the quarter, compared to 230 attacks during the same period in 2020. In Syria, the decline in ISIS-claimed attacks was even greater, according to CJTF-OIR. ISIS claimed responsibility for 19 attacks during the quarter, an 86 percent reduction from the 132 attacks it claimed during the same period in 2020.[129] CJTF-OIR said that ISIS remained unable to sustain coherent military operations against Coalition partner forces and was restricted to conducting isolated insurgent and terrorist attacks.[130]

The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) reported that ISIS continued to operate across rural areas of Iraq and Syria as a well-entrenched, low-level insurgency.[131] The DIA said that there were no notable changes to ISIS's internal cohesiveness during the quarter and no observable changes to its recovery strategy or operational objectives.[132] ISIS sustains aspirations to resurge and to control territory. The group's overall strategy remained to maintain its notoriety, rebuild influence among the local populace, and reestablish itself as a governing organization in the region.[133]

TACTICS: The DIA reported that ISIS continued to exploit security gaps and target anti-ISIS forces across both countries while also seeking to exploit sectarian tensions.[134] ISIS attacks targeting security forces in Iraq were also lethal and complex, such as a September 5 attack targeting an Iraqi Federal Police checkpoint in southwestern Kirkuk, which killed at least 13 people.[135]

The DIA said that ISIS continued to conduct hit-and-run and IED assaults and used small arms to attack security forces as well as community and tribal leaders that pose a threat to the group's resurgence.[136] The DIA noted that while ISIS tactics were similar in both countries, the group was able to carry out a greater number of complex attacks compared to their counterparts in Syria—including a high-casualty bombing in Baghdad on July 19—suggesting a higher level of operational maturity.[137]
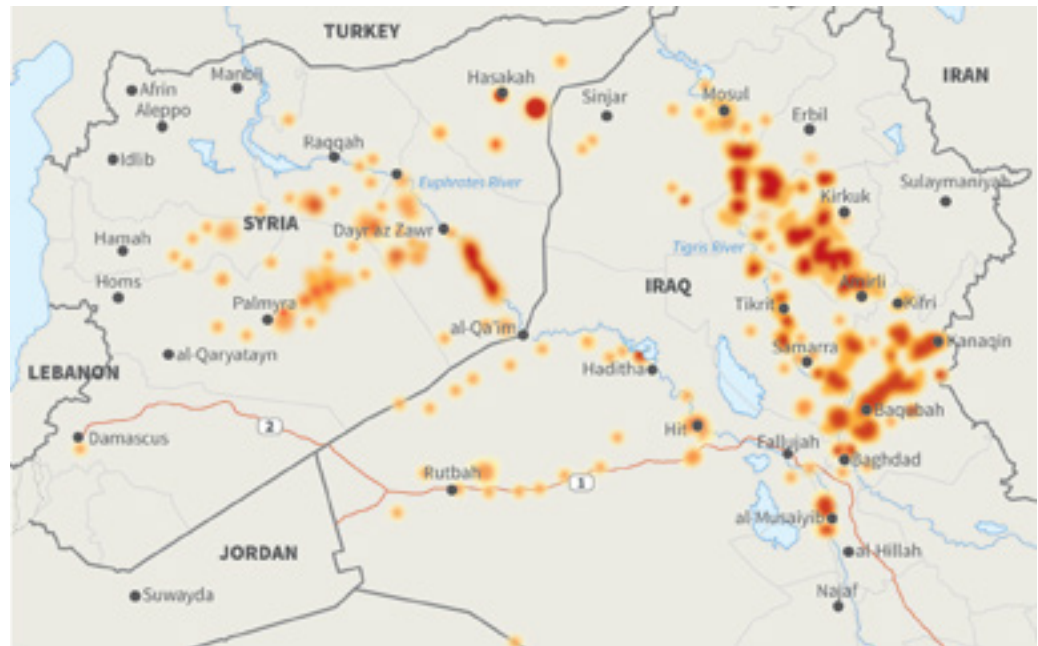
The group's overall strategy remained to maintain its notoriety, rebuild influence among the local populace, and reestablish itself as a governing organization in the region.

ISIS ACTIVITY IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

July 1, 2021–September 30, 2021

IRAQ During the quarter ISIS expanded its attacks on energy infrastructure in areas of central and northern Iraq. While attacks trended down overall, the group demonstrated a continued ability to conduct complex attacks on rural security outposts resulting in high casualties.

SYRIA Attacks also trended downward in Syria during the quarter, but assassinations of IDPs by suspected ISIS members rose slightly within the al-Hol displacement camp despite recent security operations. While ISIS attacks within SDF-controlled territory noticeably declined, ISIS demonstrated a continued ability to conduct highly lethal ambushes of pro-regime forces in central Syria.

ISIS Attacks by Month, January 2020–September 2021

Legend:
- = Attributed to ISIS (Iraq)
- = Claimed by ISIS (Iraq)
- = Attributed to ISIS (Syria)
- = Claimed by ISIS (Syria)
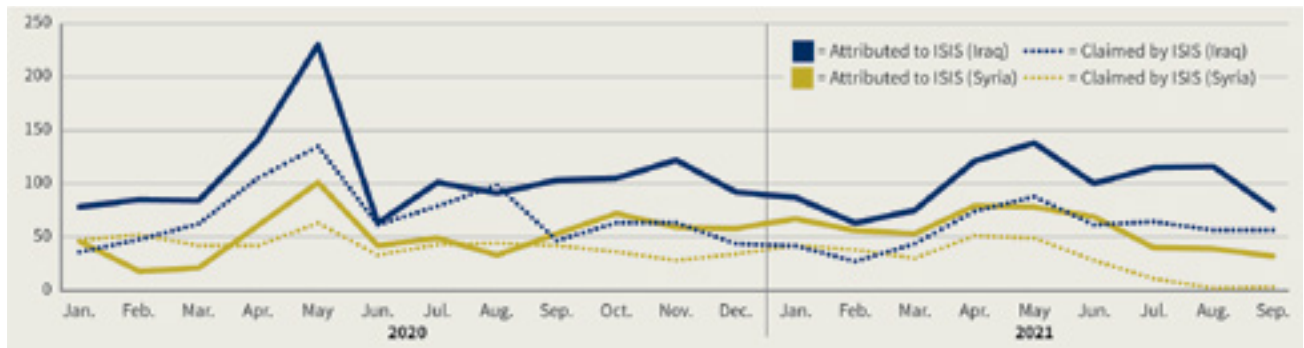
ISIS Attacks by Tactic, January 2020–September 2021

IRAQ
- Other (Assassination, Suicide Bombing) 3.6%
- Kidnapping 3.3%
- Sniper 4.6%
- Complex 5.5%
- Indirect Fire 8.1%
- Sabotage Infrastructure 11.1%
- IED 20.8%
- Small Arms Assault/Hit and Run 43.0%

SYRIA
- Other (Kidnapping, Sabotage Infrastructure, Anti-air) 4.5%
- Indirect Fire 4.5%
- Complex 5.4%
- IED 9.0%
- Assassination 18.0%
- Prison Riot/Attempted Escape 3.6%
- Small Arms Assault/Hit and Run 55.0%
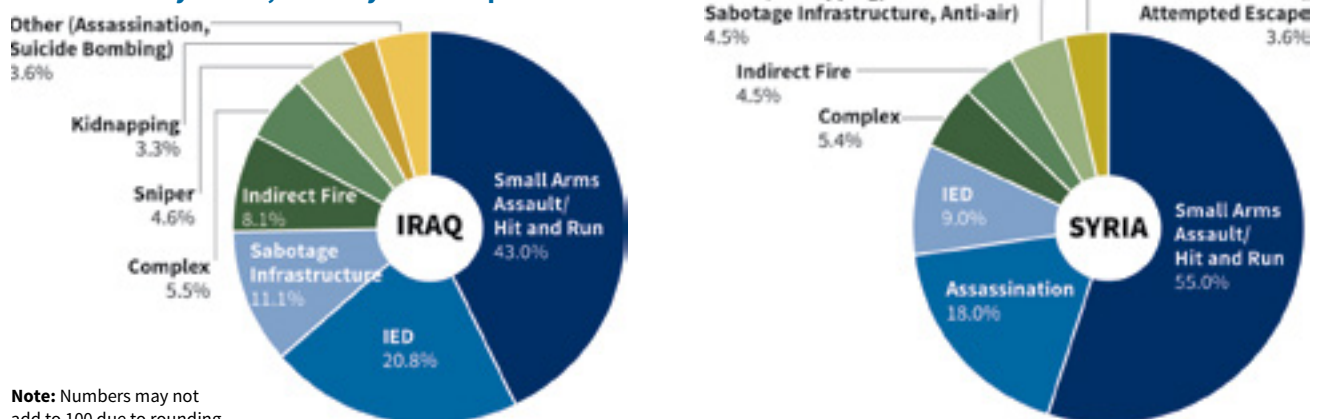
Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES: The DIA reported that the long border between Iraq and Syria runs through the center of ISIS's core operating area, which suggests "a high level of importance for cross-border operations."[138] ISIS operates smuggling routes to move weapons, supplies, people, and cash across the border using its own personnel, established local networks, and existing infrastructure, including tunnels.[139] The DIA said that ISIS's smuggling activities allow the group to more efficiently distribute resources between its Iraq and Syria branches and "almost certainly" serve to improve operational capabilities on both sides of the border.[140]

The DIA identified several elements that contribute to a permissive environment for cross-border smuggling, including weak or absent governance along the Syrian side of the border, endemic bribery, long-established routes and networks, the cross-border nature of tribes that live in the region, and the presence of Iranian forces and militias under Iranian influence.[141] The open desert region that spans across the border between the central Syrian desert and Iraqi deserts, stretching as far east as Iraq's Hamrin and Makhmur mountains, also enables ISIS smuggling activities.[142]

The DIA said that ISIS fighters who move across the border between Iraq and Syria often proceed to provinces where ISIS operates.[143] In Iraq, both Ninewa and Anbar provinces are vital for moving and protecting fighters.[144] To facilitate its freedom of movement, ISIS targets influential figures within the Iraqi government and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) as well as prominent Sunni community members who pose obstacles to the group.[145]

Along the Syria-Turkey border, ISIS activity remained subdued. The U.S. European Command reported that Turkey's sustained counter-ISIS activities and security presence along its borders with Syria and Iraq deterred ISIS cross-border activity and disrupted the group's ability to conduct and support attacks in and from Turkey.[146]

RECRUITING AND SUSTAINMENT: In both Iraq and Syria, ISIS continued to focus recruitment efforts on disaffected, marginalized, and insecure Sunni Arab populations, as well as individuals who already had connections to ISIS members, affiliates, and supporters.[147] The DIA said that while ISIS actively seeks to recruit new members, the group lacks the resources and popularity needed to expand recruitment.[148]

According to the DIA and a research organization, ISIS seeks to secure a facilitating environment for its activities within the Sunni community in Iraq, and targets influential community leaders who are viewed as obstacles to attracting more young people into its ranks as well as to limit security cooperation that could expose ISIS members and hideouts.[149] In Syria, ISIS continued to use the al-Hol displaced persons camp in northeastern Syria as a key source for its recruitment effort, maintaining indoctrination programs targeting minors, who the group sometimes smuggles out for training, according to the DIA.[150]

The DIA said that nevertheless, ISIS is probably struggling in Syria to effectively respond to counterterrorism pressure and competition from the former al-Qaeda-linked jihadist group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, which is principally based in western Syria's Idlib governorate.[151] The DIA said that this overall strain on ISIS appeared to extend to recruitment activity, and the number of new members probably modestly declined during the quarter.[152]

The DIA said that ISIS's smuggling activities allow the group to more efficiently distribute resources between its Iraq and Syria branches and "almost certainly" serve to improve operational capabilities on both sides of the border.

FINANCES: ISIS's financial situation remained largely unchanged during the quarter.[153] The Department of the Treasury (Treasury) reported that ISIS probably has tens of millions of U.S. dollars available in cash reserves that are dispersed across the region. However, Treasury, which participates in the Counter-ISIS Finance Group of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, said that it did not know the amount of money ISIS distributed during this quarter.[154] Treasury said that ISIS continued to raise funds through extortion of oil smuggling networks in eastern Syria, kidnapping for ransom, targeting civilian businesses and populations, extortion, looting, and the possible operation of front companies.[155]

ISIS continued to move funds in and out of Iraq and Syria, often relying on ISIS facilitators in Turkey and in other financial centers, Treasury said.[156] The group continued to transfer funds in Iraq and Syria and internationally using money services businesses, including hawalas—a financial network based on trust and family or regional connections—located throughout Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.[157] ISIS also continued to use networks of couriers to smuggle cash between Iraq and Syria.[158] In addition, ISIS supporters relied on virtual currencies and online fundraising platforms.[159]

According to Treasury, al-Hol remained one of the largest concentrations of ISIS-affiliated individuals who continue to receive donations from ISIS supporters internationally.[160] Treasury said the Tawasul hawala in al-Hol served ISIS members and transferred payments for ISIS from outside Syria.[161] ISIS members in Iraq collected and sent funds to intermediaries in Turkey, who then smuggled it to al-Hol or other displaced persons camps in northeastern Syria or sent the funds to hawalas operating in the camp.[162]

Treasury said it continued to work with interagency and Coalition partners, including the Iraqi government, to identify ISIS's financial reserves and financial leaders, disrupt ISIS financial facilitation networks in Iraq, and designate ISIS facilitators for sanctions, front companies, and fundraisers in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and elsewhere.[163]

EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: Although U.S. officials continue to view ISIS as a priority threat to the homeland, the DIA reported that ISIS probably remains unable to effectively direct external operations against the U.S. homeland, and most of its branches also lack the ability to direct such attacks.[164] The DIA said the external ISIS threat continues to take the form of small-scale attacks by individuals to demonstrate the group's reach outside its normal operating areas.[165] The DIA said that lone actors based in the United States or Europe that are inspired by ISIS propaganda constitute the most serious security threat to Western homelands as they can use simple weapons and launch attacks with little or no warning.[166]

The DIA assessed that ISIS probably continues seeking to develop the capability to conduct directed attacks in Europe. While 14 people suspected of ISIS links were arrested in Germany and Denmark in February, including several Syrian nationals with bomb-making material, ISIS has not claimed responsibility for any inspired attacks in Europe in 2021.[167]

In Iraq, ISIS Conducts "Better-planned, High-profile Attacks"

ISIS fighters in Iraq continued to focus on expanding the insurgency to reestablish physical control of territory.[168] The DIA reported that ISIS exploited security gaps, conducted attacks against security forces and infrastructure, and projected influence on local Sunni populations—including recently returned individuals from displaced persons camps—to shape the environment in ISIS's favor.[169]

The DIA reported that ISIS also exploited poor interoperability and coordination between Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in various Iraqi provinces to conduct operations.[170] The DIA said that poor coordination and communication between security forces in Iraq increased ISIS's success, especially in areas along the boundary of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.[171]

ISIS also continued to rely primarily on restrictive terrain throughout the country such as deserts, valleys, and mountains to provide safe haven for its fighters.[172] The DIA said that the coordination among ISIS's leaders allowed the group to continue exploiting weaknesses in local security, establish safe havens, and target security forces engaged in counter-ISIS operations.[173]

The DIA said that ISIS remained active in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Salah ad Din, and Baghdad provinces and in the rural areas surrounding Baghdad and Mosul.[174] In Anbar province, ISIS remained resilient despite high pressure from counterterrorism operations, exploiting gaps in security coverage to target vulnerable Iraqi and Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) security forces with improvised explosive device (IED) attacks and ambushes.[175]

The DIA said that it did not observe any change in ISIS's overall strategy during the quarter.[176] However, the group slightly shifted its operational strategy to focus on better-planned high profile attacks like the July 19 bombing in Sadr City in Baghdad, which killed 35 people and wounded dozens.[177] The Baghdad attack was ISIS's third bombing in a densely populated area in 2021.[178] The DIA said that the Sadr City bombing also demonstrated that ISIS is capable of conducting attacks outside the vicinity of its normal safe havens.[179]

ISIS attacks targeting security forces in Iraq were lethal and complex, such as a September 5 attack targeting an Iraqi Federal Police checkpoint in southwestern Kirkuk, which killed at least 13 people.[180] According to a media report, during the coordinated attack, perpetrators detonated roadside bombs to prevent police reinforcements from reaching the area under attack, where fighting went on for 2 hours. ISIS claimed credit for the attack.[181]

ISIS also increased its attacks on electricity and oil infrastructure to undermine support for the Iraqi government.[182] The DIA said that during the last quarter, the group targeted at least 134 electrical towers.[183] In September, the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS reported in a video that ISIS and other non-state militias had attacked hundreds of electrical pylons across Iraq and damaged power plants that supply hospitals, water stations, and other critical infrastructure causing an estimated $4 million in damage.[184] The Coalition said that attacks decreased by 50 percent after ISF and the Ministry of Electricity deployed drones and thermal cameras to address the threat.[185]

ISIS attacks targeting security forces in Iraq were also lethal and complex, such as a September 5 attack targeting an Iraqi Federal Police checkpoint in southwestern Kirkuk, which killed at least 13 people.

In Syria, ISIS Readying for Increased Activity, Next Stage of Insurgency

In Syria, ISIS continued to focus on consolidating personnel and materiel in the Syrian desert to serve as a staging area for what the DIA termed "the next stage of its insurgency."[186] While ISIS's claimed attacks fell significantly during the quarter, the DIA said there were signs that the group is "poised to increase activity in the coming quarter after a period of recuperation and recovery."[187] The DIA said that ISIS moved some of its fighters during the quarter from the Syrian desert back into Iraq and northeastern Syria, which ISIS perceives to be important operating environments.[188]

The DIA cited reporting from the Counter Extremism Project indicating that ISIS claimed attacks in Syria dropped in August to the lowest level since March 2020.[189] The DIA said attacks in the Syrian desert decreased due to increased pro-regime counter-ISIS operations.[190] The decrease in ISIS operations was also possibly due to the repositioning of some ISIS fighters, with some members of the group moving deeper into the desert, while some fighters repositioned from the Syrian desert back into Iraq and northeastern Syria.[191]

According to the DIA, ISIS stepped up its activity in September, particularly in the central desert. The DIA reported that ISIS relied primarily on small-arms attacks and ambushes against Syrian regime forces in the central desert during this period.[192] The Counter Extremism Project research organization said that ISIS killed as many as 56 pro-regime fighters and 7 civilians, and wounded at least 22 people, in Homs, Dayr az Zawr, Raqqah, and Aleppo governorates in September.[193] The research group said that more half of the attacks were conducted in the Homs governorate, where ISIS cells appeared to have launched a "mini-offensive" across multiple areas in an apparent effort to preempt counter-ISIS operations by regime forces and their Iranian and Russian backers.[194] The Counter Extremism Project assessed that the shift away from IEDs implied greater operational capability and freedom of movement and hinted at an impending surge in ISIS activity.[195]

The DIA reported that ISIS's hierarchical command-and-control structure remained intact and the group relies on it to administer its organization and to carry out hit-and-run attacks throughout Syria. There were no notable changes to the group's internal cohesiveness.[196]

The DIA said that ISIS attacks against the Syrian regime forces were concentrated primarily in the central desert regions of Raqqah and Homs governorates.[197] Compared with the previous quarter, ISIS was likely less active in Hamah governorate in the areas northwest of the central desert.[198] Against Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) targets, the organization focused on the Arab-majority regions near the Euphrates in Dayr az-Zawr and Raqqah governorates.[199]

The DIA said that despite pro-regime clearance operations in the Syrian desert, ISIS remained capable of carrying out attacks, though its ability to carry out high profile attacks was limited.[200] One successful operation was a September 15 attack targeting an Iran-aligned militant position in Homs governorate, in which ISIS killed and wounded 17 militia members. The DIA said that during the attack, ISIS ambushed an Iranian-led reaction force that attempted to assist the militia.[201] ISIS also conducted attacks on critical fuel infrastructure and supply routes.[202] In September, ISIS conducted a high-profile attack near

Damascus, claiming responsibility for detonating explosives along a section of gas pipeline. The attack briefly disrupted power in parts of the country.[203]

ISIS activity also dropped significantly in the Middle Euphrates River Valley (MERV), where SDF and Coalition forces operate to the east of the river, and regime forces and their supporters operate on the west. The DIA reported that there were fewer IED attacks, ambushes, and executions attributed to ISIS compared to previous quarters.[204] Despite the notable drop in activity, ISIS continued to challenge the SDF and pro-regime forces with hit-and-run tactics on targets of opportunity like security checkpoints and military convoys, which are easily identifiable and can result in a higher volume of casualties, the DIA said.[205]

The DIA reported that despite the high financial costs, ISIS continued to prioritize the smuggling and recruiting from al-Hol and other displaced persons camps in northeastern Syria.[206] ISIS also kidnapped and executed of soldiers and targeted civilians for killings, particularly in the Syrian desert.[207] The DIA said this could cause strife between local Arab tribe members and the various entities they depend on for security.[208] In one such attack in the MERV, ISIS militants arriving on motorcycles stormed the home of an SDF commander in a town near Dayr az Zawr and murdered him in front of his family.[209]

In other parts of Syria, ISIS remained under pressure from rival groups.[210] The DIA said that despite persistent targeting by rival extremist group Hay'at Tahir al-Sham in Idlib, the areas controlled by the opposition Syrian National Army in northwestern Syria likely remain semi-permissible locales to house senior leaders.[211] In the southwestern Dar'a governorate, fighting between opposition elements and regime forces probably provided an opportunity for ISIS to regain influence in the governorate. The DIA noted that ISIS historically has thrived in regions with poor coordination between security forces or in areas where its adversaries are fighting.[212]

ISIS Remains Active in al-Hol Camp

The DIA reported that ISIS continued to prioritize its operations in the al-Hol displaced persons camp during the quarter, taking advantage of the camp's isolation and an established group of ISIS-associated residents.[213] According to the United Nations, more than 59,000 residents remain in the camp—the vast majority of them children—living in what humanitarian officials described during the quarter as dire conditions.[214]

The DIA reported that during the quarter, ISIS members exploited overcrowding, poor living conditions, and the presence of unaccompanied minors in displaced persons camps to continue recruitment and indoctrination activities.[215] ISIS operatives smuggled people from the camp, sustained recruitment efforts and programs to indoctrinate children, and assassinated residents seen as "informants" cooperating with authorities.[216]

The DIA said that ISIS has maintained programs to indoctrinate and instruct under-age adolescents and boys in the camp, and they are sometimes smuggled out to ISIS training camps in Iraq and in the Syrian desert.[217] The DIA said that despite operations to reduce ISIS's influence in al-Hol earlier in the year, ISIS "retains the capability to radicalize, intimidate, recruit, and conduct attacks" in the camp.[218]

Despite the notable drop in activity, ISIS continued to challenge the SDF and pro-regime with hit-and-run tactics on targets of opportunity like security checkpoints and military convoys, which are easily identifiable and can result in a higher volume of casualties, the DIA said.

During the quarter, international organizations and media reports described ISIS tactics of killings and threats in al-Hol to spread and enforce its ideology, including ongoing activities by religious or moral police known as "hisba" units who enforce ISIS's version of Islamic law.[219] These activities were mostly ascribed to radical women in the camp.[220]

The humanitarian agency Save the Children reported that while women in the camps are often portrayed as monolithic ISIS adherents, and their children labelled as "ISIS children," in reality the camp populations are diverse.[221] Save the Children said that "a small number of ideologically committed women create a constant sense of danger" in al-Hol.[222] The reports described how "hisba" units punish camp residents believed to be deviating from ISIS doctrine or spreading negative ideas about ISIS.[223] These can include such actions as not wearing a veil, smoking, dancing, listening to music, and wearing pants.[224]

An August report by a journalist described how ISIS acts to spread its ideology by indoctrinating children in the camp, most of whom are growing up inside al-Hol with little or no formal education.[225] The report said that ISIS ideology is therefore filling the gap in children's education and radicalizing the camp's youth, raising concerns from officials from the SDF-affiliated Self-Administration of North and East Syria (SANES) and human rights organizations that the camp will create a new generation of ISIS militants.[226]

Further information about the situation at al-Hol and other displaced persons camps during the quarter can be found on page 83. Additional information can be found in the classified appendix to this report.

Coalition forces transfer CTEF-funded Humvees to Iraqi Security Forces at al-Asad Air Base, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photo)

IRAQ

IRAQ

According to the DoS Integrated Country Strategy for Iraq, U.S. strategic priorities in the country include reforming and strengthening the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), supporting the development of a capable and responsive Iraqi government, building a strong Iraqi Kurdistan Region, encouraging economic reform, and providing support to vulnerable communities as they transition from stabilization to recovery.[227]

SECURITY

During Phase IV, Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) has shifted from tactical-level advising and support during Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) ground operations to providing limited training and operational and strategic advising to high-level Iraqi commanders in the Joint Operations Command-Iraq (JOC-I) in Baghdad and the Kurdish Coordination Center in Erbil. The ISF conducts operations from nine provincial Operations Commands in northern and western Iraq. (See Figure 3.) Coalition advisers continue to support ISF operations against ISIS with intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and intelligence integration, in addition to Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF) assistance.[228] CJTF-OIR's advisory efforts seek to enhance the skills that the ISF requires to build an independent military and execute independent operations against ISIS.[229] CJTF-OIR said that there were no significant changes to Coalition force locations in Iraq or the rules of engagement during the quarter.[230]

The Coalition supports many elements within the ISF—including ISF divisions under the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Counterterrorism Service (CTS)—as well as the Kurdistan Security Forces (KSF), also known as Peshmerga, that operate under the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). CJTF-OIR primarily advises and enables the ISF and the KSF from the two operations centers located in Baghdad and Erbil. In addition
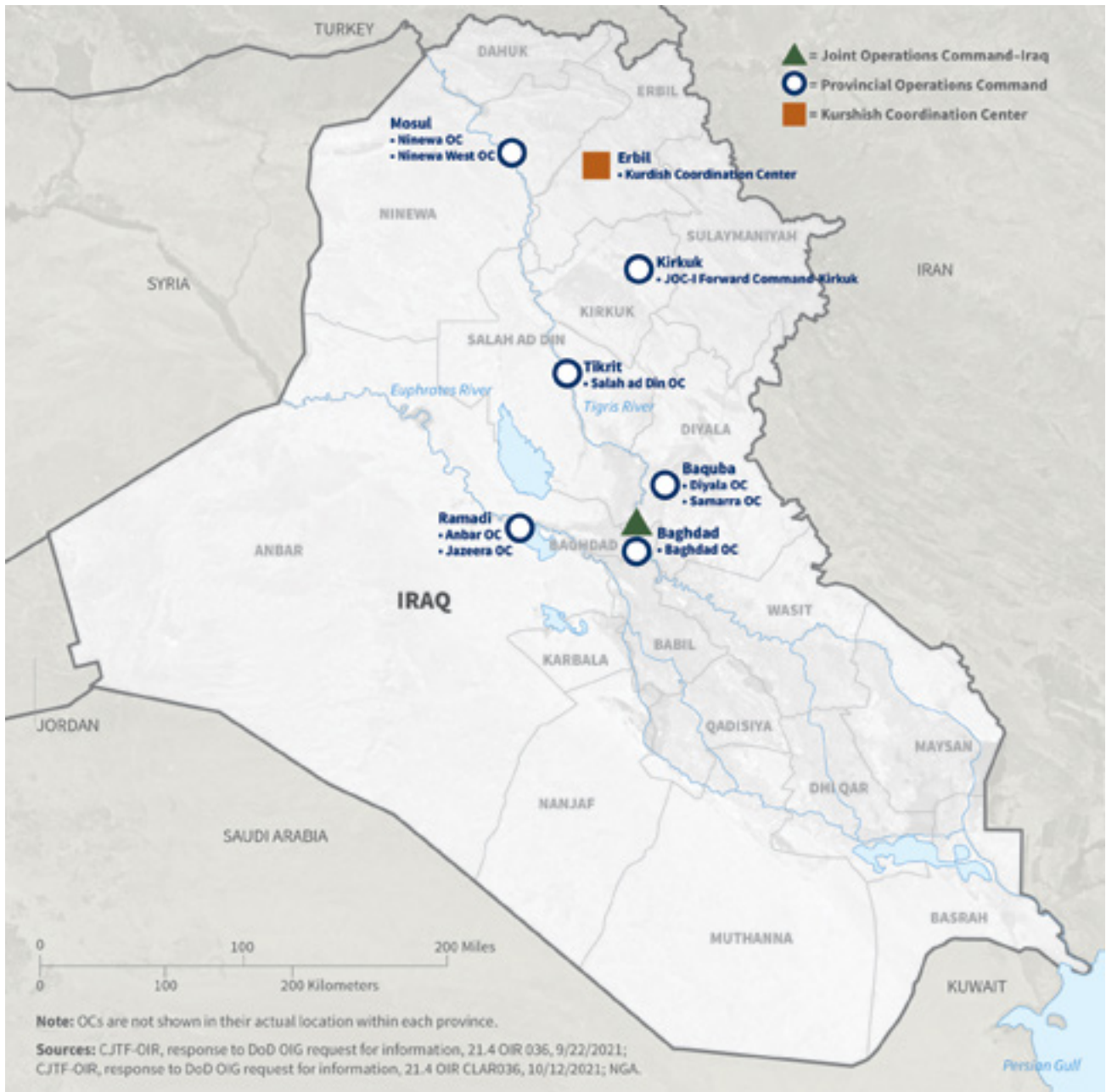
Figure 3.

Joint Operations Command-Iraq (JOC-I) and provincial Operations Commands (OCs) as of September 2021.

to these two locations, CJTF-OIR supports partner forces from al-Asad Air Base in Anbar province.[231] CJTF-OIR reported that it uses CTEF assistance to support select security forces under the MoI, MoD, CTS, and KSF. CJTF-OIR reported that it does not partner with the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) or the Tribal Mobilization Forces (TMF).[232] (See Figure 4.)

COALITION ACTIVITY

The Coalition Continues to Advise the ISF

The Coalition's Military Advisor Group (MAG) continued to provide operational-level advice to the ISF during the quarter, including on the integration of different types of intelligence,

Figure 4.

Iraqi Security Institutions

FEDERAL IRAQ

PRIME MINISTER (as Commander-in-chief)

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE
- GROUND FORCES
  - Army Divisions
  - Special Forces (Qwat Khasah)
  - Special Security Division (Green Zone Protection)
  - Commando Brigades
- ARMY AVIATION COMMAND
- AIR FORCE
- NAVY
- AIR DEFENSE COMMAND

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
- EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION
- FEDERAL POLICE
- BORDER GUARD FORCE

COUNTER TERRORISM SERVICE

POPULAR MOBILIZATION COMMITTEE*
- POPULAR MOBILIZATION FORCES
- TRIBAL MOBILIZATION FORCES

IRAQI KURDISTAN REGION

KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

KURDISTAN SECURITY FORCES (PESHMERGA)
Several Kurdish security units under the command of Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government constitute the KSF, also known as the Peshmerga, and operate in the semi-autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

*In 2016, the Iraqi parliament passed a law incorporating the PMC into the Iraqi armed forces, however PMF units have continued to operate outside of official government channels.

Sources: Jessa Rose Dury-Agri, Omer Kassim, and Patrick Martin, "Iraqi Security Forces and Popular Mobilization Forces: Orders of Battle," Institute for the Study of War, December 2017; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 036, 9/22/2021 and 21.4 OIR CLAR036, 10/12/2021; Lead IG analysis.

air operations, and fires during ISF operations against ISIS.[233] The support, part of the defeat-ISIS mission, sought to disrupt ISIS's planning and fighter networks, hideouts, and facilitation routes, CJTF-OIR said.[234] The operations were conducted in locations that Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi deemed priorities.[235] Several units of the ISF, including Ground Forces, Federal Police, Air Force, Border Guards, CTS, and Army Aviation, sought to bolster security ahead of the elections to disrupt potential high-profile attacks.[236]

SELECTED KEY EVENTS, JULY 1, 2021–SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

JULY 7
Iran-aligned militias launch 14 rockets at al-Asad Air Base, where Coalition forces are based, wounding two personnel.

JULY 26
The United States and Iraq announce during bilateral Strategic Dialogue talks the decision that there will be no U.S. troops with a combat role in Iraq by December 31, 2021.

JUL

AUG

JULY 19
A roadside bomb explodes in Baghdad's Sadr City, killing at least 35 people celebrating the Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday; ISIS claims responsibility.

AUGUST 28
Iraq hosts regional Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership, attended by leaders and top diplomats from nine countries.

Figure 5.

Coalition Airstrikes Against ISIS in Iraq, July 2020–September 2021

Sources: CJTF-OIR, press releases, "CJTF-OIR Strike Summary Report," 2/13/2020, 3/24/2020, 4/30/2020, 6/24/2020, 9/8/2020, 10/29/2020, 12/14/2020, 1/6/2021, 2/4/2021, 7/6/2021, 7/7/2021, 7/9/2021, 8/4/2021, and 9/20/2021.
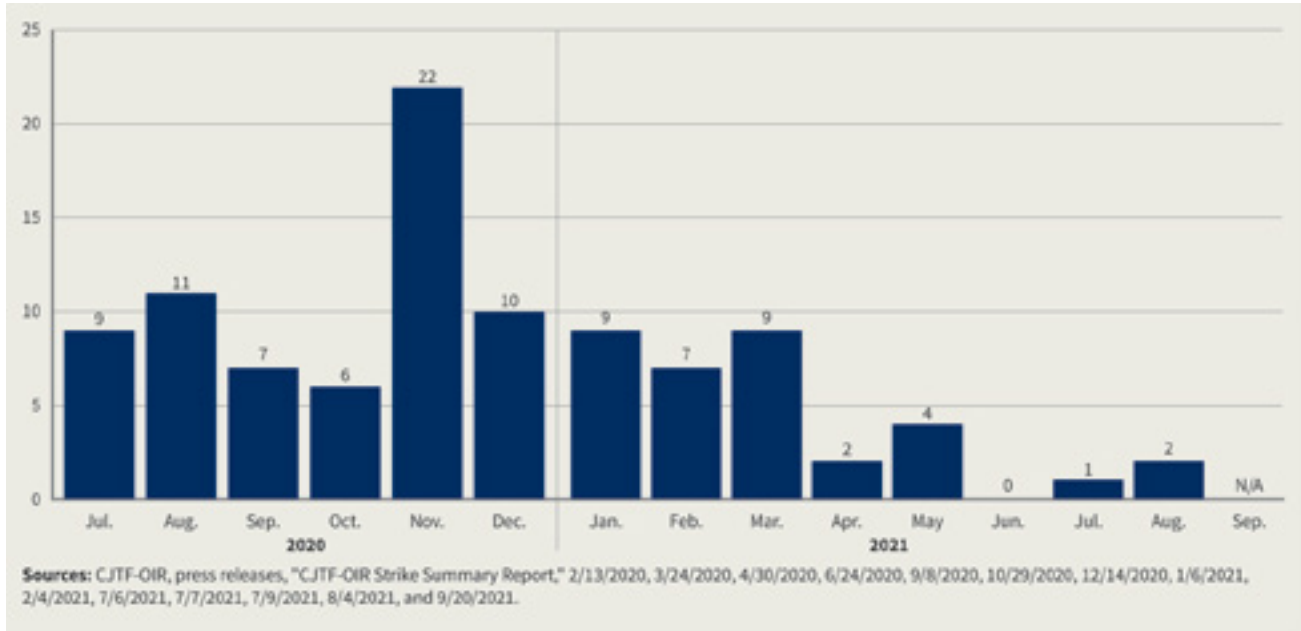
CJTF-OIR reported that the MAG also supported Iraqi plans to develop joint ISF-KSF brigades that will operate along the Kurdistan Coordination Line, a swath of territory that runs along the divide between the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and the rest of federal Iraq.[237] CJTF-OIR said the joint brigades would operate primarily in these disputed areas.[238] ISIS has been able to exploit the lack of coordination between forces to operate in the ungoverned territory.

Coalition Conducts Fewer Air Strikes

The Coalition conducted fewer air strikes in support of ISF operations against ISIS this quarter than last quarter, striking ISIS targets in Iraq once in July and twice in August.[239] The number of strikes conducted in September was not available.[240] (See Figure 5.)

AUGUST 29
A UNICEF report on water scarcity in Iraq finds that almost 60 percent of children in Iraq do not have access to clean water; half of Iraqi schools do not have any water at all.

SEPTEMBER 9
Diplomatic representatives from the Coalition's Small Group discuss efforts to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS.

SEP

SEPTEMBER 5
ISIS conducts a complex attack on a rural police checkpoint in Kirkuk province, killing at least eight Federal Police personnel.

SEPTEMBER 22
UNAMI officials say the United Nations planned to have at least 800 elections monitors in place to observe Iraq's October 10 parliamentary elections.

OSC-I Continues to Support Security Cooperation

The Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I) provides security cooperation and assistance, including training and foreign military sales, to the ISF and operates at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad under Chief of Mission authority. This quarter, it reported that it remains understaffed, and that the lack of staffing limits its capability to work within the Iraqi MoD or to understand the Iraqi government's force management capabilities, strategic planning, doctrine, budgeting, and program processes, or enable reforms in these areas. However, OSC-I assessed that the Iraqi government needs to greatly improve budgeting and programming processes, and that the ISF's ability to execute effective budgeting and procurement programs is limited due to unpredictable government revenues closely linked to the oil trade and lack of monetary reserves.[241]

OSC-I reported that the ISF relies heavily on contractors to provide logistics and maintenance support for its aircraft and drones, although the ISF continues to develop internal logistics and maintenance capabilities.[242] The ISF has greater self-sufficiency in maintaining vehicles and small arms, OSC-I said.[243] OSC-I reported that there are varying levels of contractor logistics support for ISF systems based on the maturity and self-sufficiency of the programs. OSC-I noted that that the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA) aims to reduce its reliance on contractors by 25 percent each year.[244]

OSC-I reported that foreign military sales and foreign military financed cargo, equipment, and supplies have been delayed since March 2021, when the Iraqi government discontinued a process that had enabled quick divestment of materiel. The termination of that process has affected the readiness of multiple fleets of equipment, including helicopters, ISR aircraft, tanks, and other vehicles.[245] Prime Minister al-Kadhimi has since approved a new process for materiel provided through the Foreign Military Sales program, OSC-I said.[246]

OSC-I reported that understaffing has also limited its capability to work with the MoI and the CTS. However, OSC-I continued to partner with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), NATO Mission-Iraq, and the European Union Advisory Mission to better shape and synchronize Iraqi security sector reform efforts.[247]

OSC-I said that reform efforts include establishing a human resource management system for the MoD, MoPA, and MoI that can be used to combat corruption through digital, traceable, and accountable personnel payment processes. Ministries will be able to import data and support the ability to audit for accuracy. Efforts also included tri-national (U.S., Iraqi, and Jordanian) training events for Iraqi Border Guards, the first of which occurred in May 2021 in Jordan.[248]

PARTNER FORCES CAPABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

The ISF Remains Dependent on Coalition Support

The ISF continued to rely on the Coalition for support during operations against ISIS. CJTF-OIR reported that security forces made "no significant achievement" in their ability to carry out operations independently during the quarter though they continue to develop their own capabilities and processes.[249] While the ISF continues to develop its own capability and processes for executing operations against ISIS, the Iraqi military leadership also continued to request Coalition support for air strikes, ISR, and the integration of intelligence to carry out those operations.[250]

CJTF-OIR reported no significant improvement in communications between the JOC-I leadership in Baghdad and the ISF's provincial operations commands located in the northern and western Iraqi provinces of Salah ad Din, Ninewa, Anbar, Kirkuk, Baghdad, and Diyala, which are the provinces where ISIS remains strongest.[251] CJTF-OIR said that the JOC-I's information operations, logistics, and command and control "still requires development."[252]

CJTF-OIR reported that the ISF also needs to improve its intelligence-led planning efforts to better enable the development of operations from beginning to end.[253] CJTF-OIR cited as an example a major operation planned and conducted in Anbar province over 5 days in August that relied solely on intelligence provided by a reported ISIS fighter in Iraqi custody.[254] CJTF-OIR said that the operation also suffered from a lack of operational level command and control, poor logistics support, and "general lack of tactical level execution which included operational units stopping for the day around mid-morning."[255] ISF planners did not inform the MAG of the operations until 2 days prior to its start.[256]

Additionally, MAG advisors said that the ISF either does not have or does not use established logistics or sustainment programs. Instead, the ISF sustains its operations using Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Funds.[257]

Corruption in the ISF Remains Endemic

The ISF continued to face challenges from corruption at every level.[258] USCENTCOM said that OSC-I did not directly observe corruption challenges during this quarter. However, examples of persistent corruption in the ISF include "pay-to-play" schemes, nepotism, and purchasing positions with an eye toward personal financial gain.[259] Factors that directly contributed to ISF inefficiencies and ineffectiveness included the practice of impeding progress or movement of crucial paperwork due to personal vendettas; infighting within and between ISF units and the Defense and Interior ministries; and conflict between the ISF and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) for resources and influence.[260]

USCENTCOM reported that OSC-I continued to support the implementation of a human resources management system to oversee salary and retirement payments to Iraqi security personnel, and said that the system may help mitigate corrupt practices such padding payrolls with "ghost soldiers" by unit commanders.[261]

The DIA reported that the reduction in security funding in Iraq's 2021 budget, which the Lead IG reported on last quarter, was intended to "right-size" each security service's

> While the ISF continues to develop its own capability and processes for executing operations against ISIS, the Iraqi military leadership also continued to request Coalition support for air strikes, ISR, and the integration of intelligence to carry out those operations.

budget in response to anti-corruption efforts in the MoD and MoI that uncovered fraud, waste, or abuse of personnel salaries and retirement accounts.[262] The DIA reported that the decrease in budgets had "no discernable impact" on the ability of the ministries or the CTS to conduct counter-ISIS operations, and that these organizations had maintained their operational tempo.[263]

Coalition Reports Low Visibility into Provincial Operations Against ISIS

CJTF-OIR reported that the ISF's leadership in the JOC-I demonstrates a "nascent" ability to plan and conduct operations against ISIS, and that some operations involve the Iraqi Army and the Federal Police, as well as other ISF service components.[264] The majority of the ground operations are unilateral search and clearance operations that are executed through provincial operations commands located in Anbar, Ninewa, Salah ad Din, Kirkuk, Diyala, and Baghdad provinces.[265]

CJTF-OIR reported that it has low visibility into the execution and results of ISF operations conducted from provincial operations commands because the MAG does not directly advise ISF service components, such as the Iraqi Army, or provide tactical-level support.[266] Instead, MAG advisors receive information from operations commands during regular briefings and daily meetings with JOC-I leadership and select liaisons.[267] CJTF-OIR reported that the JOC-I leadership visits what it called "high interest" provincial commands when required, but that the MAG does not accompany them on these visits.[268]

CJTF-OIR reported that during these briefs, some provincial operational commands consistently do not provide reports on daily or weekly operations, and that the JOC-I leadership did not provide the MAG with a reason for the incomplete reporting.[269] The information gathered is relatively low quality, lacking detail, and often inaccurate or incomplete.[270] Operations commands reported on night operations at the briefings, but often did not provide the results of those operations to senior ISF leaders or MAG advisors.[271] CJTF-OIR reported that senior ISF leaders were beginning to question the accuracy of the information provided and asking the operations commands why information is late or missing.[272]

CJTF-OIR reported that, based on these briefings, the operations commands in Baghdad, Diyala, and Salah ad Din, and the JOC-I Joint Forward Command in Kirkuk appeared to conduct the most operations, but also said that it cannot verify the accuracy of the information provided in the briefings.[273]

Moreover, CJTF-OIR reported that JOC-I leadership appeared reluctant to include Coalition forces during some aspects of the planning for operations against ISIS.[274] In particular, the MAG had not seen JOC-I planning documents, even when they requested the documents or when they offered support to the planned operation.[275] Instead, in most instances, JOC-I leadership sent final operational documents 1 or 2 days prior to the start of an operation.[276]

In August, the ISF's artillery directorate provided a liaison officer to the JOC-I at the Coalition's request, and removed him without explanation or a replacement 2 weeks

CJTF-OIR reported that JOC-I leadership appeared reluctant to include Coalition forces during some aspects of the planning for operations against ISIS.

CJTF-OIR reported that the Iraqi CTS remains capable of effectively carrying out simple counter-ISIS missions and has a reasonable intelligence capacity to identify targets.

later, before he had established connections with the MAG or provided any significant information.[277] CJTF-OIR reported that the ISF did not consider the liaison a priority or a benefit at the operational level.[278]

CTS Reliant on Coalition for Equipment; Faces Recruitment Challenges

CJTF-OIR reported that the Iraqi CTS remains capable of effectively carrying out simple counter-ISIS missions and has a reasonable intelligence capacity to identify targets. CTS units are able to rapidly deploy forces when required, either on direction from the Iraqi Prime Minister or in support of their own operations.[279]

According to CJTF-OIR, CTS operations are mostly unilateral in nature and are typically undertaken in compliance with warrants issued by a lawful authority.[280] The scope of their operations ranges from simple reconnaissance or presence patrols and targeted detention operations by small units, to multi-battalion large-scale clearance operations. CJTF-OIR reported that between July 1 and September 30, CTS conducted 426 operations.[281] (See Table 3.)

This quarter, CJTF-OIR said that cooperation between the CTS and other elements of the ISF is improving, with a Joint Intelligence Coordination Center working to develop intelligence sharing across ISF organizations. CJTF-OIR reported that during the quarter, the CTS jointly planned and executed operations with the ISF, including providing security to Iraq's October elections. Additionally, the CTS used Iraqi Air Force elements for ISR and air strikes; the Coalition provided training to improve this process.[282] During two large-scale clearance operations, CTS units operated jointly with the Iraqi Army, the Emergency Response Division, and the Iraqi Air Force. CJTF-OIR reported that while the CTS routinely engages with the MoD and the MoI through the JOC-I, there is a considerable lack of trust between ISF elements.[283]

Table 3.

Counter Terrorism Service Operations by Type, July 1–August 31, 2021

Operation Type	July	August	September	TOTAL
Partnered	2	4	7	**13**
Direct Detention Operations	18	25	16	**59**
Warranted Individuals Detained	19	26	19	**64**
Reconnaissance	37	68	50	**155**
Cache/Clearance	5	7	6	**18**
Force Protection	47	69	54	**170**
Other	0	5	5	**10**
TOTAL	**109**	**160**	**157**	**426**

Source: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOLA061, 10/12/2021.

CJTF-OIR reported that CTS units continued to receive enabling support for operations from various Coalition elements on a case-by-case basis. On a daily basis, however Coalition special operation elements support the CTS through training, all factors of the intelligence and targeting cycle, operational planning, and overall preparedness.[284] This quarter the CTS conducted 13 partnered operations with the Coalition that targeted ISIS safe havens, logistics nodes, and bed down locations. CJTF-OIR said that the partnered operations allowed advisor teams to assess the CTS as they executed their core mission set and reinforced the Coalition's commitment to them as an enduring partner during an uncertain time.[285]

CJTF-OIR said that the CTS requires improvement in sustainment and force generation in particular. The CTS relies on the United States for the majority of its equipment and ammunition through CTEF. CJTF-OIR explained that long-term sustainment of some of the equipment previously divested will continue to present a challenge. Additionally, for 2 years the CTS has had insufficient funding to recruit new personnel. CJTF-OIR stated that if the central Iraqi government does not provide sufficient funding then insufficient recruitment will increasingly weaken the CTS.[286]

Meanwhile, CTS forensic capability continues to develop and improve. However, CJTF-OIR said that the CTS currently still has capability and synchronization gaps that preclude it from conducting targeted and unilateral operations against ISIS fighters. This quarter all of the CTS's special forensics investigative laboratory examiners completed initial entry training in latent fingerprint examination and digital forensics. CJTF-OIR noted that current CTS forensic capability consists of latent fingerprint examination; forensic exploitation of cell phones, digital documents, and media; and DNA swabbing.[287]

Iraqi Air Force Hindered by Cumbersome Command and Control

During the quarter, the Iraqi Air Enterprise, which is composed of aircraft from the Iraqi Air Force and Iraqi Army Aviation Command, remained capable of conducting strikes. The Iraqi Air Force continued to work closely with Iraqi Special Operations Forces from the CTS for both training and operations. Of note, CJTF-OIR said that coordination between the CTS and the Iraqi Air Force resulted in a new targeting capability for Iraq's armed Cessna C-208s.[288] Meanwhile the Iraqi Army Aviation Command saw no changes in its capabilities.[289]

During the quarter, Iraqi aircraft performed 26 strikes against ISIS. CJTF-OIR said that the strike part of the targeting cycles was performed independently, demonstrating a positive indication of improving ISF strike capability.[290] Meanwhile, the ISF could not complete other stages of the targeting process—including ISR, kill chain development, and target package development—without Coalition support.[291]

CJTF-OIR reported that Iraqi aircraft conducted fewer strikes this quarter than the previous quarter, when the ISF performed 31 strikes.[292] CJTF-OIR assessed that the "significant decrease" in ISF strike activity could be due to the decrease in overall Iraqi aircraft availability observed for the past 2 months. Additionally, CJTF-OIR said that the decrease

CJTF-OIR reported that while the CTS routinely engages with the MoD and the MoI through the JOC-I, there is a considerable lack of trust between ISF elements.

in strikes could be a result of ISF air assets being concentrated on electrical infrastructure during the quarter, as directed by Prime Minister al-Kadhimi.[293]

Iraqi Air Force F-16s, Iraq's most capable strike aircraft, continued to perform missions despite the departure of U.S. contractors from Balad Air Base last quarter. CJTF-OIR said that during the quarter, the Iraqi 9th and 11th Fighter Squadrons, which operate Iraq's F-16s, flew more than 270 sorties, of which 9 percent were combat sorties and 91 percent were training sorties. This included Iraq's F-16s employing 30 500-pound and two 2,000-pound bombs in support of eight counter-ISIS missions. CJTF-OIR also said that all combat sorties originated or were planned as deliberate strike missions, but that some developed into dynamic target taskings, or unplanned strikes on targets, following takeoff.[294]

CJTF-OIR reported that the most acute shortcomings in the Iraqi Air Force's strike capabilities were the administration of their assets and tactical control and coordination of strikes. While there seems to be a semi-formalized process between the Iraqi Air Force and the CTS regarding mission intent, target development, and desired effects, the strike process and coordination within the JOC-I and the Iraqi Air Force are still lacking. Specifically, CJTF-OIR said that Iraqi Air Force tactical units often did not receive complete strike target information or target descriptions when conducting close air support or strike missions, making it challenging for pilots to identify and strike the correct target. Furthermore, the JOC-I and the Iraqi Army did not have a good grasp on aircraft employment capabilities, maintenance, or sustainability requirements and continue to tax Iraqi Air Force personnel and equipment unnecessarily.[295]

CJTF-OIR also reported that the Iraqi Air Force still requires improvement in command and control.[296] Last quarter, CJTF-OIR stated that the level of authorization required for Iraqi Air Force strikes resulted in potential dynamic strikes evolving into slower more deliberate strikes.[297] CJTF-OIR explained this quarter that when a strike is requested, the party requesting the strike must submit a request letter to the JOC-I. The JOC-I then sends a memo to the Ministry of Defense (MoD) requesting approval. The MoD will either approve or disapprove the request. The memo is then sent back to the JOC-I. If the MoD approves the request, the approved memo is sent to the operations division, or A3, of the air operations cell. The A3 sends that memo to the base operations office, which in turn, will send the memo to the tasked squadron. CJTF-OIR said that the approval memo is often just a memo that states that the squadron has been approved by the MoD to use a designated number of air assets to process targets at a specified grid coordinate in the vicinity of a named province.[298] However, CJTF-OIR noted that there is conflicting information on how the process is implemented for each strike, where at times the process is not followed and the MoD and Deputy JOC-I Commander do not necessarily cooperate on approval.[299] Additionally, the assets tasked are only authorized to strike the targets approved. If they see an additional target during their mission, they have to go through the entire approval process in order to get permission to strike something that was not on the memo.[300]

In addition, Iraqi targeting authority is not normally delegated to lower levels, with the exception of the CTS commander if an on-call close air support mission has been approved.[301] CJTF-OIR said that the JOC-I deputy commander, who has delegated authority

Iraqi Air Force F-16s, Iraq's most capable strike aircraft, continued to perform missions despite the departure of U.S. contractors from Balad Air Base last quarter.

A salvaged Iraqi helicopter awaits removal from a truck bed for delivery to the ISF.
(U.S. Army photo)

directly from the Prime Minister, is the single commanding official who can authorize strikes. If he is not available, his Chief of Staff can authorize strikes after a phone call with the JOC-I deputy commander. For comparison, CJTF-OIR's strike authorization process involves five different command officials, each of which can be summoned to authorize a strike. Legal advice must be sought before Coalition strikes can be authorized to ensure they are following the Coalition rules of engagement. CJTF-OIR said the Iraqi strike process has no written rules of engagement or a legal advisor at the JOC-I, though there may be legal advising at the ministerial levels. However, CJTF-OIR reported that process does not inhibit its strike capability and that it is a "very short" kill chain allowing both deliberate and dynamic actions. The ISF seems to be satisfied with the simplicity and speed of its strike authorization process. CJTF-OIR said the Iraqi's biggest dissatisfaction with the process is that strike information is often leaked before the strikes occur.[302]

Compounding the Iraqi strike process is the fact that the JOC-I is not currently equipped with a certified Iraqi Terminal Air Controller (ITAC), nor does it have the required long-range communication equipment to provide tactical control over strike assets from the JOC-I. According to CJTF-OIR, the current process entails JOC-I generals with no ITAC experience attempting to control strike assets from the JOC-I via unsecured cell phone communication.[303] CJTF-OIR said coordinates are passed verbally through at least one other individual. CJTF-OIR assessed that missed targets are typically not the result of poor pilot performance or equipment failure, but rather the inaccurate coordinates passed to the pilots. Yet, based on the MAG's observation, when the ISF wants to conduct a strike, it is able to put aircraft in the air in a reasonably short period of time in response to a military strike request. CJTF-OIR believes this will continue to improve as the ISF improves its maintenance and logistics process and aircraft availability rates increase.[304] CJTF-OIR added that the absence of training for younger crews on some airframes raises the question of future aircrew, and overall Iraqi Air Enterprise, operational capability.[305]

Table 4.

Status of Iraqi Air Enterprise Aircraft, as of September 2021

Aircraft	Operator	Description	Status
An-32	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing transport	Conducting operations and training missions
C-130J	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing transport	Conducting operations and training missions
C-208	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing armed ISR (manned)	Conducting operations and training missions
F-16	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing multirole strike	Conducting operations and training missions
KA-350	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing manned ISR	Conducting operations and training missions
Bell 407	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Rotary-wing strike	Conducting operations only
Euro EC-635	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Rotary-wing strike and transport	Conducting operations only
Gazelle	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Rotary-wing strike	Conducting operations only
Jet Ranger	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Rotary-wing trainer	Conducting operations only
Mi-17	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Rotary-wing armed transport	Conducting operations only
Mi-28	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Rotary-wing strike	Conducting operations only
Mi-35	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Rotary-wing strike	Conducting operations only
CH-58	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Rotary-wind manned ISR	Conducting operations only
UH-1	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Rotary-wing transport	Conducting operations only
C-172	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing trainer	Conducting training missions only
CH-2000	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing trainer	Conducting training missions only
T-6	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing trainer	Conducting training missions only
L-159	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing strike	Conducting training missions only due to maintenance contract issues and awaiting targeting pod installation. Expected return to operations by the end of first quarter FY 2022.
Su-25	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing strike	Conducting training missions only due to lack of confidence in air-to-ground weapons accuracy (only uses unguided rockets and bombs).
T-50	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing trainer	Grounded due to contracting issues
CH-4	Iraqi Air Force	Fixed-wing armed ISR (unmanned)	Grounded due to contracting issues
ScanEagle	Iraqi Army Aviation Command	Fixed-wing unmanned ISR	Grounded due to contracting issues

Sources: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 057, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 039, 6/24/2021.

Iraqi Target Development Cell Established, ISF Still Relies on Coalition ISR Assets

CJTF-OIR reported that in August the JOC-I established an Iraqi target development cell that is proving effective both for deliberate strike planning and dynamic strike tasking.[306] While the cell is still in its nascent stage, Coalition advisors have been working with the newly appointed cell director on targeting efforts. According to CJTF-OIR, the target development cell has been doing a good job so far of identifying, prioritizing, and developing targets using fused all-source intelligence.[307]

However, CJTF-OIR said that the target development cell was still very hesitant to strike targets without collection from Coalition ISR. The JOC-I use Iraqi Air Force assets to assist with target development but has yet to strike a target that was developed solely using Iraqi assets.[308] Yet, CJTF-OIR said the ISF displayed an ability to conduct independent ISR operations when Coalition forces withheld their assets to concentrate on force protection.[309]

CJTF-OIR reported that Iraqi airborne ISR capability remained stable this quarter. The number of Iraqi ISR sorties increased by more than 30 percent compared to the previous quarter, with a 100-percent increase in August. Iraq's two main ISR platforms, the C-208 and KA-350, were routinely used during operational and training missions.[310] This quarter, the ISF demonstrated that it could surge its ISR units in order to provide protection of electric transmission towers as well as protection for the regional summit held in Baghdad in late August.[311]

However, CJTF-OIR said that the ISF still relies on one to two daily Coalition ISR sorties by MQ-1 and MQ-9 UAVs. CJTF-OIR attributed the ISF's reliance on Coalition ISR to the aircrafts' better sensors, which allow them to fly at higher altitudes; Iraqi C-208 and KA-350 fly at around 10,000 feet during their ISR missions, potentially alerting surveilled targets.[312] Due to capability deficiencies of the ISF's ISR assets, such as noise levels and limited loiter time, they are more suited to supporting ground troops during clearance operations than target development.[313]

CJTF-OIR reported that Iraqi ISR capabilities are also vulnerable to GPS jamming and maintenance issues. For example, CJTF-OIR reported that Iraq's ScanEagle UAVs have not been used since early January 2021 based on the perceived GPS jamming. The Iraqi Air Force determined the aircraft should no longer be used due to safety concerns, including a potential crash if control was not regained after a GPS jamming or failure. The Iraqi Army Aviation Command's 84th Squadron, which operates the ScanEagles, originally had 16 aircraft in service, but lost three to crashes between 2015 and 2017. ScanEagle operations continued through 2020, but the last four flights encountered GPS jamming, resulting in the Iraqis shutting down operations and requesting GPS jamming resistant technology. CJTF-OIR said this technology is part of a current Foreign Military Sale case being negotiated and one of the reasons the ScanEagles have been grounded. CJTF-OIR said Coalition advisors assess that the ScanEagle crashes did not deter the ISF from wanting to use the aircraft, but did deter ScanEagle pilots from wanting to fly the aircraft because each crash promoted a lack of confidence and a fear of accountability since each aircraft costs approximately $700,000.[314]

CJTF-OIR reported that in August the JOC-I established an Iraqi target development cell that is proving effective both for deliberate strike planning and dynamic strike tasking.

CJTF-OIR stated that Iraqi UAV ground operators were reluctant to fly the ScanEagles without being supervised by U.S. contractors because they did not want to be blamed for crashing.

Additionally, CJTF-OIR stated that Iraqi UAV ground operators were reluctant to fly the ScanEagles without being supervised by U.S. contractors because they did not want to be blamed for crashing.[315] The field support representatives remain at al-Asad Air Base and require site activation at Balad Air Base, where the Iraqi ScanEagles have relocated.[316] CJTF-OIR said contractors at al-Asad are for a U.S. Government contract in support of base defense, and not part of a separate Foreign Military Sale case for Iraq's ScanEagle program at Balad. The Foreign Military Sale case, which will enable operations from Balad Air Base, continued to experience delays in contract negotiations and is projected to be awarded in November 2021. However, an initiative by OSC-I, USCENTCOM, and CJTF-OIR to loan contractor representatives from al-Asad to support the ISF's ScanEagles at Balad was implemented to enable the Iraqis to fly during the October elections.[317] USCENTCOM reported that OSC-I was also developing Title 10 Section 333 cases that will increase the number of ScanEagles in the Iraqi Army Aviation Command.[318] Meanwhile, CJTF-OIR said that Iraq's fleet of Chinese-made CH-4 UAVs also remained grounded due to contracting issues.[319] Iraqi partners have said that a contract was awarded and the 100th Squadron that operates Iraq's CH-4s should begin flying within the next two to three months.[320]

Similar to the shortcomings of the Iraqi Air Force's strike capability, the shortcomings that exist for Iraqi Air Force ISR capabilities largely rest in the administration of their assets and coordination of assets. According to CJTF-OIR, Iraqi ISR platforms rarely receive complete mission details for their taskings. Most often, they only receive a set of coordinates, time, and date for the mission without any essential elements of information or mission intent. The MAG has advised the JOC-I on developing a standardized ISR request form, similar to the one the Coalition uses that will be used to help better coordinate taskings from the MoD to the tactical level units.[321]

CJTF-OIR reported that while the Iraqi targeting cell has created positive results in this early stage, it was still waiting for three officers: a geographic information scientist, a data manager, and an imagery analyst. In the meantime, the Iraqi target cell was staffed with liaison officers from Iraqi intelligence agencies and supported by Coalition liaison officers and JOC-I advisors.[322] Despite being understaffed, CJTF-OIR described the brigadier general in charge of the cell as being very efficient and that he relies consistently on Coalition advising from the MAG. A seminar on weapons effects is planned to educate members of the ISF after the Iraqi elections in October. CJTF-OIR added that recent successful strikes on targets developed by the cell are being used to request additional manning from Iraqi authorities.[323]

However, there has been no overall change in ISF intelligence collection capabilities. According to CJTF-OIR, intelligence collection remained driven from the bottom-up and ISF military intelligence staff does not deliver any research guidance. The military intelligence staff started to give some basic analysis, including confronting various information, chronological perspective, and geographical layout. CJTF-OIR added that while the targeting process improved, Iraqi strikes were at 50-percent accuracy during the quarter.[324]

CJTF-OIR stated that while basic target development processes occur at the higher headquarters level, such as at the target development cell and the JOC-I, units at the tactical level rarely receive that developed target information. As noted earlier, more often than

not, the tactical level units only receive a mission approval memo with grid coordinates without any amplifying information, which forces them to conduct rudimentary target development themselves at the unit level, or to rely on low-quality grid coordinates read over cell phones by ISF general officers that are passed to aircrews in flight.[325] CJTF-OIR said that some tactical units, such as the 9th Fighter Squadron, were able to perform basic target development processes such as analysis of imagery provided by ISR flights and annotating callouts of targets, to help with their mission planning, but this is not ideal.[326] CJTF-OIR advisors worked with the ISF to correct this and facilitate better information for the aircrews to mission plan and prepare for strike missions. CJTF-OIR assessed that strikes in late September appear to display progress being made, with units reporting their satisfaction about target package quality.[327]

Tactical Air Units Face Increased Difficulty Resupplying Parts

Last quarter, USCENTCOM reported that U.S. contractors supporting Iraq's F-16 program were evacuated from Balad Air Base due to the deteriorating security situation, and that approximately 25 contractors were relocated to Erbil where they would remotely support the program.[328] This quarter, USCENTCOM and CJTF-OIR said that while F-16 contractors remained off site, they continued to support the F-16 program virtually through video teleconferencing or by making day trips to provide direct hands-on support. The day trips were on contractor charter flights that require flight clearance from the Iraqi government.[329] CJTF-OIR explained that while U.S. contractors' physical presence is more advantageous for onsite operations, aircraft maintenance, and training, their lack of physical presence has not significantly impacted the combat capability of the Balad-based F-16 program this quarter.[330]

USCENTCOM reported that although there was a short-term decrease in contractor logistics support (CLS) effectiveness immediately after U.S. contractors withdrew from Balad Air Base, they believe the current hybrid model shows potential to meet all CLS requirements and enable the Iraqi Air Force to take on more responsibilities. USCENTCOM said that the Iraqi Air Force has proven proficient in some tasks with minimal or remote contractor support and that OSC-I predicts the overall long-term effects will be positive.[331]

USCENTCOM stated that in addition to the CLS program for maintenance support, U.S. contractor support to the F-16 program also consists of a base-support contract at Balad. CLS support is funded by the Iraqi government. The U.S. Government reduced funding for the base-support contract over the past 3 years and is transitioning the contract to be funded by Iraq. USCENTCOM said that it expects this hybrid model will result in a lower-cost CLS maintenance program while continuing to shift more maintenance responsibility to the Iraq Air Force. USCENTCOM said that Iraq requested an extension of the base support and CLS contracts for another year. OSC-I is supporting the Iraqi Air Force as they prepare to start the process of recompeting the base support contract with better defined requirement in the second quarter of FY 2022. USCENTCOM said that the DoD expects this trend to continue as the Iraqi Air Force becomes more proficient and less reliant on civilian contractor support.[332]

CJTF-OIR also reported this quarter that Iraq's tactical air units experienced increased difficulty to resupply their spare parts, with Iraqi customs appearing to be the main cargo choke point.[333]

(CUI) ██
████████

(CUI) ██
██
██
██

(CUI) ██
██
██
██

(CUI) ██
██
██
██

(CUI) ██
██
██
██
██

(CUI) ██
██
██
██

ISF Continues to Exhibit Limited Ability to Secure Iraq's Borders

CJTF-OIR reported no significant changes in the ISF's ability to secure its borders, and no major operations conducted this quarter in support of border security.[346] Last quarter, CJTF-OIR reported that the ISF possessed a "limited ability" to secure Iraq's border with Syria, and that the limitation hindered the ISF and allowed ISIS to slip across the border.[347] The DIA reported last quarter that ISIS exploits security gaps along the border to create facilitation and smuggling routes.[348] CJTF-OIR said that the Iraqi Border Guard Force and some units of the Ground Force Command were responsible for security on the Iraqi side of the border.[349]

According to media reports, the Iraqi Army and Popular Mobilization Forces launched a military operation in August to secure the border.[350] According to media reports citing Iraq's Security Media Cell, the ISF stopped an ISIS attempt to smuggle explosives from Syria into Iraq.[351]

Figure 6.

Kurdistan Regional Government Security Forces Organization Chart

Source: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 036, 9/22/2021.

During the quarter ISF continued to dig a miles-long trench and lay obstacles to secure the border between Syria and Iraq. The Coalition continued to provide equipment such as thermal cameras, concertina wire, sandbags, and wire mesh containers through CTEF.[352] Media reports citing Iraqi officials said that the trench is 10 feet deep and 10 feet wide.[353] The reports also said that Iraq plans to build as many as 150 watch towers along the border.[354]

CJTF-OIR: Peshmerga "Adept" at Disrupting ISIS Activity, Providing Intelligence

CJTF-OIR reported that the Kurdish Security Forces, known as the Peshmerga, maintained the ability to conduct successful counter-ISIS operations, and that the Counter Terrorism Directorate (CTD) and Asayish units in particular had proven "adept" at identifying and detaining ISIS sleeper cells operating in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, and had disrupted three cells this quarter.[355] CJTF-OIR reported that the Peshmerga has also provided a significant quantity of intelligence on ISIS operations south of the coordination line.[356] For an overview of the Kurdish (Peshmerga) Security Forces. (See Figure 6.)

CJTF-OIR reported that the Peshmerga's Regional Guard Brigades conducted most of the daily, low-level, and routine counter-ISIS operations across the Kurdistan region, with a focus on the coordination line. These operations included presence patrols and clearance patrols, maintenance of observation posts and temporary checkpoints, and reconnaissance missions.[357]

CJTF-OIR reported that the Peshmerga conducted 878 independent operations as of September 22, but few missions were partnered with the Coalition or other ISF units this quarter. However numerous operations were regularly deconflicted, particularly when forces cross or operate in the vicinity of the Kurdistan Coordination Line. Additionally, the decrease in coalition force partnered operations is consistent with the transition to Phase IV of the campaign.[358] The Peshmerga did not conduct joint operations with the CTS during the quarter.[359] (See Table 5.)

Table 5.

Peshmerga Operations, July–September 2021

Start Date	Operation Type	KSF Force	Coalition Partnered	ISF Partnered
July 24	Reconnaissance	RGB	Yes	No
July 26	Reconnaissance	70s	Partner Force	No
July 31	Reconnaissance	RGB	Yes	No
August 7	Reconnaissance	RGB	Yes	No
August 12	Reconnaissance	Zeravani	Yes	No
August 13	Reconnaissance	RGB	Yes	No
August 29	Reconnaissance	RGB	Yes	No
September 4	Reconnaissance	RGB	Yes	No
September 19	Reconnaissance	RGB	Yes	No

Note: Yes refers to operations partnered with the Coalition; "Partner Force" refers to operations conducted with a force that is not part of the Coalition, but which receives in extremis support and works in conjunction with CJTF-OIR.

Sources: CJTF-OIR, responses to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 065, 9/22/2021 and 21.4 OIR FOL065, 10/12/2021.

Joint Brigades Still Under Discussion

CJTF-OIR reported that the Coalition continued to facilitate the creation of ISF-Peshmerga brigades to secure disputed territories and counter the ISIS threat there.[360] CJTF-OIR said that patrolling disputed areas is a "chief concern" and that both sides have agreed verbally to establish the joint brigades but still need to formalize the agreement in writing. The joint operations will "ensure a clear command responsibility for operating in the disputed areas and minimize opportunities for ISIS to operate with impunity."[361]

CJTF-OIR reported that the Peshmerga and ISF continued efforts to stand up four Joint Coordination Centers in Diyala, Kirkuk, and Ninewa provinces, and the Makhmur district of Erbil province. CJTF-OIR said that both sides agreed that the joint centers were not functioning optimally due to a lack of clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the officers assigned to them. A fifth joint center located in Erbil city is staffed with six ISF liaison officers and six Peshmerga liaison officers, but remains underused and in need of staff from both sides. The Joint Coordination Center-Erbil is charged with enabling military and civilian crossings along the Kurdistan Coordination Line.[362]

Peshmerga Forces Transferred to Nonpolitical Units

CJTF-OIR reported that the MoPA continued to transfer soldiers from the politically aligned 70s and 80s Units to nonpartisan Regional Guard Brigades under the ministry's control as part of reforms the ministry is undertaking to unify all Peshmerga forces under a single ministry-led command and control structure.[363]

CJTF-OIR said that the ministry transferred 5,500 Peshmerga from the 80s Unit, which is politically aligned with the Kurdistan Democratic Party, to the Regional Guard Brigades.

Figure 7.

**Map of
Northeastern Iraq**
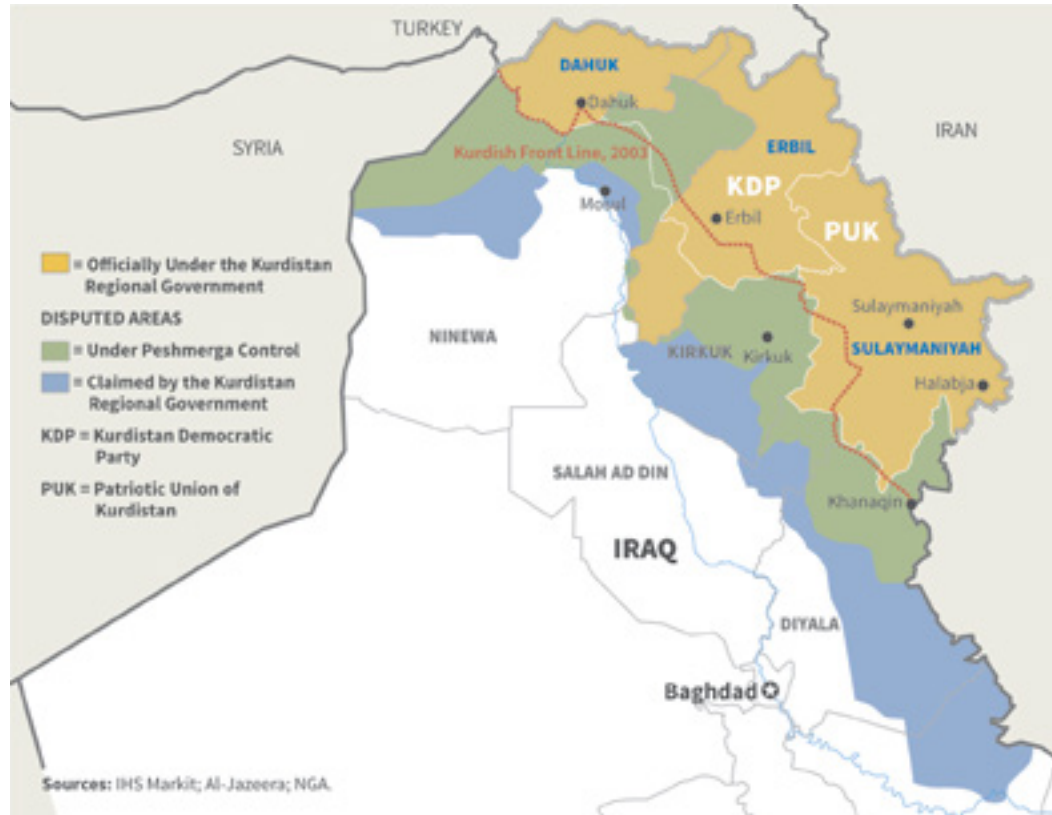
Next quarter, the MoPA plans to transfer additional soldiers from the Patriot Union of Kurdistan's 70s Unit to the Regional Guard Brigades.[364] The personnel transferred from the 70s and 80s Units will form two new Regional Guard Brigades instead of being dispersed among existing brigades, CJTF-OIR said.[365] For an overview of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and territory claimed by the Kurds. (See Figure 7.)

CJTF-OIR reported that the MoPA seeks to unify the Peshmerga under its command but is currently limiting the transfer of personnel from the 70s and 80s Units to the Regional Guard Brigades due to a quarterly $60 million limit on U.S-paid stipends to the Peshmerga. The stipends are disbursed only to vetted, nonpartisan Regional Guard Brigades and may not be disbursed to partisan 70s and 80s Units. However, as members of partisan units join the Regional Guard Brigades, they become eligible for stipends.[366]

CJTF-OIR said that this quarter it had disbursed slightly more than $49 million in stipends to the Regional Guard Brigades, and that this amount could increase because four Peshmerga battalion commanders were waiting to be vetted.[367] If more partisan forces from the 70s and 80s Units transfer to the Regional Guard Brigades and become eligible for stipends, the stipend fund will exceed the stipend limit unless the stipend amount received per Peshmerga soldier decreases or the stipend ceiling is raised.[368]

CJTF-OIR reported that the KDP's 80s Unit was estimated at 65,000 to 70,000 personnel, while the PUK's 70s Unit was estimated at 45,000 to 50,000 personnel.[369]

Role of Third Parties

PRO-IRAN MILITIAS PAUSE ATTACKS

The DIA reported that militias aligned with Iran continued to pose a threat to U.S. personnel operating in Iraq this quarter. Throughout the quarter, Iran continued to provide lethal and financial support to Shia militia groups in Iraq, including to those that dominate the Popular Mobilization Committee (PMC).[370]

During the quarter, Iran-aligned militias launched multiple UAV and rocket attacks against the U.S. Embassy Compound in Baghdad and Coalition forces based at Union III, Bashur Air Base, al-Asad Air Base, and Erbil Air Base. The DIA reported that between July 2 and July 8, the militias launched near daily rocket and UAV attacks, including a rocket attack on al-Asad Air Base on July 7 that involved 14 munitions.[371] According to USCENTCOM, Iran-aligned militias conducted seven UAV attacks on U.S. and Coalition facilities during the quarter, all within the first week of July. USCENTCOM assessed that the militias remain capable of restarting UAV attack operations with little to no warning and that the introduction of attack UAVs allows Iran and the militias to have a standoff capability significantly outside the range that indirect fire attacks allow. Additionally, the UAV systems enable more precise and potentially lethal attacks than IEDs or indirect-fire attacks. USCENTCOM said that the militias almost certainly receive the UAV equipment and training to employ it from Iran.[372]

USCENTCOM also reported that Iran-aligned militias conducted four indirect-fire attacks against facilities housing U.S. personnel in early July, a reduction from the total nine indirect fire attacks that occurred during the previous quarter. Additionally, the militias conducted 19 IED attacks against Coalition-associated logistical convoys, primarily in southern Iraq, a reduction from the 29 IED attacks last quarter.[373] Separately, the DIA said the militias have threatened to target U.S. and Coalition aircraft operating in Iraq. While the militias have not successfully downed a U.S. aircraft, they do have access to some anti-air equipment.[374]

Conversely, the DIA reported that this quarter also saw a notable pause in militia attacks since July. The DIA assessed that the pause stems from various factors including the militias' desire to manage escalation and evaluate U.S. intentions following the July 26 announcement that U.S. forces will transition to a non-combat role by the end of the year. The pause reflects the trend of episodic ebbs in attacks, which historically have been followed by a resumption and escalation in attacks. According to the DIA, the militias publicly tied this halt in attacks to progress towards what the militias are inaccurately messaging as a U.S. withdrawal by the end of the year, suggesting attacks are likely to resume if the militias judge U.S. forces are not taking steps to leave Iraq.[375]

According to the DIA, Iran-aligned militias trumpeted the U.S. departure from Afghanistan and the subsequent Taliban takeover as evidence of the United States' weakness as a security partner and the ineffectiveness of its training missions. The DIA explained that the militias publicly juxtaposed the Taliban takeover in Kabul with their role in preventing ISIS's capture of Baghdad in 2014 and to stress the importance of continued operations of the militia-led PMC to Iraq's security. This year, Iran-aligned militias cited Afghanistan as a model for how to coerce a U.S.

Role of Third Parties *(continued from previous page)*

troop withdrawal and almost certainly perceive the U.S. exit as evidence that military pressure can ultimately force the departure of U.S. forces from Iraq.[376]

The DIA assessed that the PMC maintained good command and control over most of its associated brigades—collectively known as the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)—through resource allocation and salary payments. While most of the brigades in the PMC are Iran-aligned, the DIA said several PMC brigades are aligned with religious and nationalist leaders in Iraq, including Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and Muqtada al-Sadr, who have expressed frustration with Iranian influence in the PMC and the preferential treatment of Iran-aligned units. As a result, four Sistani-aligned PMC brigades began separating administratively from the PMC last year, though the status of the brigades' relationship with the PMC during the quarter remained unclear. The DIA added that there have been no indications that other groups have attempted to separate from the PMC this year.[377]

The DIA observed no change in the relationship between the PMC and the central Iraqi government following the lawful arrest and subsequent judicial release of PMC Anbar Commander Qasim Muslih al-Khafaji in late May. The DIA said that Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi probably refrained from targeting the militias this quarter to avoid exacerbating political tensions prior to the October national elections.[378]

According to the DIA, the Iraqi government's ability to assert control over the PMC or hold its members accountable remains tenuous. As of September, ISF units remained committed to the Iraqi government and follow orders, including to conduct joint operations with PMC elements. The DIA reported that during this period, the Iraqi government issued no orders to the ISF to challenge or confront Iran-aligned militias, leaving no change in ISF commanders' willingness to follow such orders. Through its affiliation with the Fatah Alliance political bloc, the PMC and its affiliated militias maintain influence within Iraq's Council of Representatives and in government ministries, which they use to safeguard their interests. Additionally, the DIA said that the PMC has demonstrated its ability to exert influence in Iraq's judiciary process through the use of intimidation to stymie investigations, as well as leveraging ties with sympathetic judges to have cases dismissed.[379] Media reporting suggested that Iran-aligned militias assassinated at least two Iraqi intelligence officials this year in response to targeting of militia leaders by the al-Kadhimi-led government.[380] The DIA said it found no reporting of Iran-aligned actors intentionally targeting ISF members during the quarter.[381]

The DIA assessed that Iran remained intimately involved in Iraqi politics and attempted to leverage its ties to Shia groups to secure its political influence in Iraq in the October elections. The DIA said that Iran hoped the Fatah Alliance would expand its electoral gains this year to play a leading role in government formation and the selection of Prime Minister al-Kadhimi's replacement to secure Iranian influence, increase political pressure on Baghdad, and advance favorable legislation including the full withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq.[382]

The Fatah Alliance is the main political bloc backed by Iran-aligned, PMC-affiliated militias, including the political wings of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, the Badr Organization, Kata'ib Imam Ali, and Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada. This quarter, Iran-aligned political parties and their militias probably also received financial and advisory assistance from Iran to further their campaign efforts, according to the DIA.[383]

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

The DoS said its principal objective is for a sovereign, stable, united, and democratic Iraq that is a partner of the United States and able to fend off internal and external threats. Strong U.S. engagement is necessary to combat malign foreign influence, particularly from Iran. Protesters have been in the streets in Iraq demanding political and economic reforms that will cut corruption and ensure a more responsive government. Supporting private sector-led economic growth and job creation is a top U.S. priority to address the region's persistent high unemployment and promote stability, directly addressing the needs of Iraq's disaffected youth. Nurturing nascent civil society groups and encouraging governments to allow them space to operate freely is another key goal. The private sector and civil society are partners with whom governments can engage to advance the cause of reform.[384]

Small-scale Protests Continue

The DoS reported that small-scale antigovernment demonstrations continued during the quarter, mainly in Iraq's southern provinces.[385] On October 1, an estimated 1,000 protesters took to the streets of Baghdad to commemorate the second anniversary of the antigovernment demonstrations that resulted in protester deaths, the resignation of the prime minister, and the call for early national elections. The focus of the march was Tahrir Square, where the October 2019 demonstrations began and quickly spread to many areas of southern Iraq.[386]

Violence directed at protesters and activists also continued during the quarter. According to a media report, Ali al-Makdam, a prominent activist, was kidnapped on July 10; he was discovered along a highway in Baghdad 36 hours later and admitted to the hospital. This

kidnapping energized protesters and activists who are pressuring the Iraqi government to prosecute those responsible for killing demonstrators.[387]

Prime Minister al-Kadhimi announced that he had submitted a draft bill to the Iraq parliament to provide funding as compensation to those who were killed and injured (and their families) as a result of their involvement in the protest movement. The DoS said the prime minister publicly indicated that political parties in the parliament had refused to approve it.[388]

The DoS reported that during the quarter, Iraqi authorities arrested some of the alleged killers. On July 24, the Maysan Police Department announced it had arrested two suspects in the March 10 murder of the father of kidnapped protest leader Ali Chasib al-Hiliji. The DoS reported that the Ansar Allah al-Awfia militia had threatened al-Hiliji's father after he accused them of his son's kidnapping.[389] Also this quarter, the Iraqi government announced the arrest of one of the suspected assassins of Hisham al-Hashimi, a prominent political analyst and security expert, who was killed on July 6, 2020. The accused, a lieutenant in the Ministry of Interior, confessed in a July 16 broadcast on Iraq state TV.[390]

USAID Programs Combat Corruption in Payroll and Procurement

The USAID Mission in Iraq continued to support the Iraqi government and the KRG to implement strategic initiatives that strengthen governance and public financial management, bolster transparency, and improve the equitable delivery of services to Iraqi citizens.[391] For example, USAID reported that in the KRG, existing programs have resulted in the identification and removal of over 150,000 ghost employees that, in some cases, doubled salaries for civil servants. These efforts have saved KRG an estimated $37 million per month.[392]

USAID also continued to work with the Iraqi government to implement standardized procurement systems. With USAID assistance, since 2017 the Iraqi government has employed standardized bidding documents for over $3 billion in capital investment procurements for public tenders that reduce opportunities for corruption.[393] USAID's support also addresses corruption issues in the service delivery sector. For example, USAID supported the development of an automated service portal known as Xizmat in the KRG, which standardizes key business processes and reduces opportunities for corruption.[394]

Oil Revenues Continue to Increase, Improving Ability to Fund Budget

Monthly oil revenues continued to increase during the quarter, as they have since January 2021. The revenues sustained income flow that improved the Iraqi government's ability to fully fund the budget, the DoS said.[395] In July and August, Iraq's exports increased slightly and the average price per barrel dropped slightly, producing a small monthly revenue increase. Average daily revenue from oil exports for July, August, and September was $215.34 million compared to the 2021 budget projection of $146.25 million per day.[396] (See Figure 8.)

Prime Minister al-Kadhimi announced that he had submitted a draft bill to the Iraq parliament to provide funding as compensation to those who were killed and injured (and their families) as a result of their involvement in the protest movement.

Figure 8.

Actual vs. Projected Daily Oil Revenue, Monthly Average, January–September 2021, in $ Millions

Sources: Iraq Ministry of Oil, website, "Historical Summary," 10/5/2021; John Lee, "Iraq Oil Exports Increase in September," Iraq Oil and Gas News, 10/1/2021.
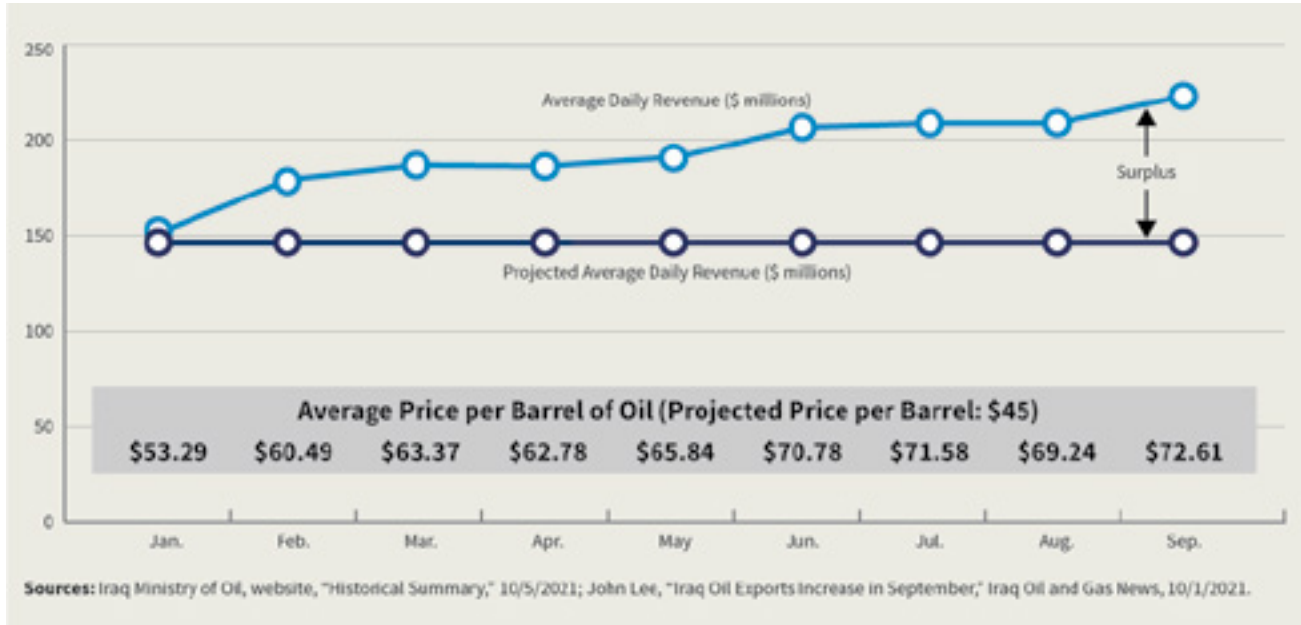
In early September, Iraq's State Organization for Marketing of Oil told the DoS that it was paying millions of dollars in compensation to buyers of Iraqi crude oil exported through Turkey that was of a lower grade than what they had purchased. The Iraqi government was not able to explain how the lower quality oil was graded inaccurately when it entered the pipeline in Iraq, though it speculated that it could be the result of subpar management and maintenance of the Iraq-Turkey Pipeline. The grading discrepancy could result in a decrease in Iraq's oil export revenues. The DoS reported that compensation payments for August could be $8.4 million a month or roughly $101 million a year.[397]

During the quarter, according to media reports, Iraq's central government made two payments of $138 million to the KRG on July 10 and August 29.[398] The central government called these "one-time payments"; they are not understood to be the beginning of regular budget disbursements under the 2021 federal budget. Iraq's central government had not begun, as of the previous quarter, to send the KRG its share of the budget as agreed to in the 2021 Budget Law approved on March 31. The ongoing dispute also involves the failure of the KRG to turn over 250,000 barrels of oil per day to Iraq's state oil marketer for export, as required under the budget law.[399]

On August 1, Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi chaired a meeting of the Higher Committee for Reform and launched Finance Minister Ali Allawi's White Paper on economic reforms, which was designed to address the rampant corruption in Iraq. According to the DoS, the prime minister's speech was meant to elicit political support and buy-in from the public. The White Paper was approved by the Council of Ministers in October 2020. The Iraqi government has tried to introduce some reforms, such as the

devaluation of the dinar in December 2020; however, the 2021 federal budget approved by Iraq's parliament excluded most of the White Paper reforms.[400] The DoS said the Iraqi government planned to implement the White Paper economic reforms in the 2022 federal budget, but it is unclear whether this will occur given the elections and government formation.[401]

Iraq Hosts the First Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership

During the quarter, Prime Minister al-Kadhimi continued his diplomatic engagements with Iraq's neighbors in the region. On August 28, the prime minister convened the Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership, which drew high-level participants from throughout the region, including the heads of government from Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait, and Qatar, as well as the foreign ministers from Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. French President Emmanuel Macron, whose leadership was central to the conference's preparation, also attended, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad reported. The conference focused on Iraq's stability, its economic development, and the upcoming elections.[402]

The embassy reported that the conference was widely recognized to be the culmination of Prime Minister al-Kadhimi's efforts to return Iraq to the regional stage and to demonstrate Iraq's ability to convene several high-level participants, some of whom at odds with one another or meeting the first time.[403] According to a media report, the prime minister intends to make the Baghdad Conference a recurring event with rotating venues in different capitals. On September 21, the Iraqi government convened a follow-up to the Baghdad Conference on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly at the Iraqi ambassador's residence. Foreign ministers and senior representatives of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Kuwait, Egypt, Qatar, Iran, and France participated. While the specifics of the meeting were not reported, they did agree to hold the next session in Jordan on a date to be determined.[404]

Prime Minister al-Kadhimi Visits Iran

On September 12, Prime Minister al-Kadhimi visited the newly elected president of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi, to discuss economic relations. According to media reports, the prime minister was the first foreign leader to meet President Raisi after his election. The visit was consistent with Iraq's diplomatic focus to maintain positive relations with its neighbors and the region.[405]

The visit set in motion a series of government-to-government meetings focused on bilateral relations and coordination on regional and international issues with a goal to strengthen regional security and stability. According to media reports, Prime Minister al-Kadhimi agreed to double the number of visas from 30,000 to 60,000 for Iranian pilgrims so they can visit Shiite holy sites for Arba'een, a Muslim observance when thousands of Iranians travel to Iraq. In addition, Iraq has been trying to mediate relations between Iran and Gulf Arab foes and hosted three rounds of negotiations between Iran and Saudi Arabia with a fourth meeting to be held this year.[406]

On August 28, the prime minister convened the Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership, which drew high-level participants from throughout the region, including the heads of government from Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait, and Qatar, as well as the foreign ministers from Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

Iraqi Nationalist Parties Gain in Election

According to initial results of Iraq's parliamentary election on October 10, parties close to both Iran and the United States lost dozens of seats in parliament, while Shia parties that struck an independent tone gained. The militia-affiliated Fatah Alliance, considered to be close to Iran, suffered notable losses, declining from 48 seats to 29 seats. The National State Forces Alliance, a moderate coalition close to the United States that is headed by former Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and Hikma movement leader Ammar al-Hakim, retained only 4 of 71 seats it held in the previous parliament.[407]

Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's nationalist Sadrist Bloc party won 75 seats, an increase of 21 over the 2018 elections, and former prime minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law coalition gained 12 seats for a total of 37. Parliamentary speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi's Sunni-majority Taqaddum gained 40 seats, an increase of 34 over the 2018 elections. Additionally, 3 parties created in the wake of anti-government protests won 19 seats.[408] (See Figure 9.)

Two parties representing the Iraqi Kurdish Region in northern Iraq gained seats, while one party lost seats. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) gained 9 seats for a total of 34 seats, and the Kurdish opposition party, New Generation movement, gained 5 seats for a total of 9 seats. The KDP's main rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) party, lost 3 seats, dropping to 15 seats.[409]

Figure 9.

Interim 2021 Parliamentary Election Results by Party, Compared to 2018 (as of 10/18/2021)
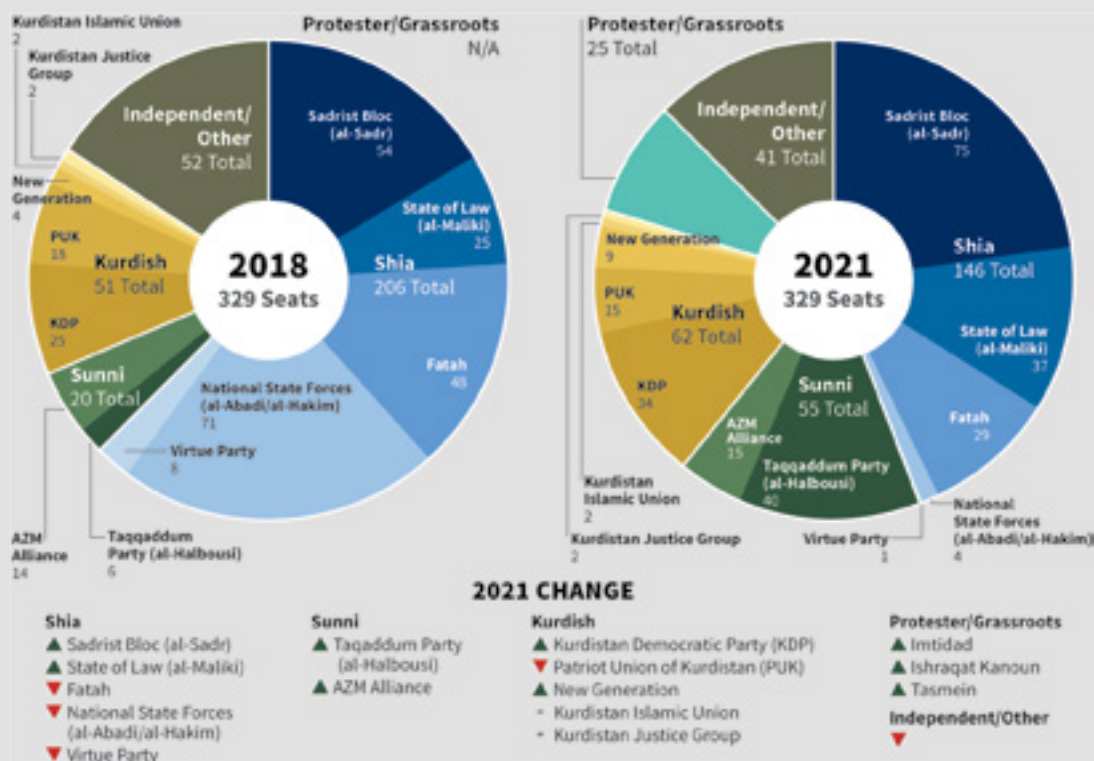
Sources: Mustafa Saadoun, "Sadr and Independents Biggest Winners Under Iraq's New Election Law," Al-Monitor, 10/13/2021; Yesar Al-Maleki, Hafsa Halawa, et al, "Special Briefing: A Reshaping of the Iraqi Political Scene, Despite Low Turnout," Middle East Institute, 10/12/2021; Rudaw, "Iraq Election Commission Releases Preliminary Results," Rudaw.net, 10/11/2021; Iraq: Elections in Review as Government Formation Talks Pick Up," 21 BAGHDAD 737, 10/18/2021.

Iraq Elections Preparations Proceed Amid Mistrust of the Process

Iraq held national elections on October 10, the first early elections since the adoption of its 2005 constitution. Iraqi protestors demanded early elections as part of demonstrations that began in October 2019, which led to the resignation Prime Minister Adil Abd al-Mahdi the following month and the appointment of Mustafa al-Kadhimi as prime minister.[410]

The DoS reported that in the run-up to the elections, the Iraqi parliament enacted a new single nontransferable vote system that divided Iraq's 18 provinces into 83 'gerrymandered' districts.[411] The new election law localizes competition in Iraq to the smaller electoral districts within each province. The new and smaller electoral districts—a demand of the October 2019 protest movement—are intended as a boost to independent candidates to bring candidates closer to their constituency and reduce the influence of traditional political blocs.[412] This resulted in a precipitous drop in the number of registered candidates, from 7,178 candidates in 2018 to 3,249 in 2021.[413]

In the months leading up to the elections, the DoS reported that Iraqi voter apathy and distrust of political parties remained high, and political parties' vote buying, intimidation, and corrupt tactics continued.[414] At the same time, Iraqi journalists and media outlets are facing attacks and pressure from Iran-aligned militias, including an assassination attempt, armed attacks, four media outlet closures, and five lawsuits against journalists.[415]

According to media reports, Iraq's election commission reported that 21 electoral coalitions were vying for parliamentary seats. There were a total of 3,249 candidates, including 951 women and 789 independents.[416]

U.S. Government Supports Election Preparations

In late July, the White House announced $5.2 million in funds to support the electoral monitoring mission for Iraq's national elections.[417] The funds were obligated by the DoS as a pass-through to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) which has been directed by UN resolution 2576 to provide logistical and security support to international and regional election observers and launch a strategic messaging campaign related to election preparations.[418]

During the quarter, the USAID Mission in Iraq and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad established an elections task force to coordinate activities managed by the three U.S. Government offices providing elections support programming. USAID said that its Middle East Bureau and the DoS's Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor share updates received from the field to keep their leadership informed about developments and the potential need for high-level messaging from Washington.[419]

During the quarter, USAID continued to provide elections support programming through the Iraq Provincial Elections Activity and the Iraqi Electoral Assistance Program. Both activities provide advisory and technical support to the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to ensure adequate preparation for the October 10 elections.[420] (See Table 6.)

In the months leading up to the elections, the DoS reported that Iraqi voter apathy and distrust of political parties remained high, and political parties' vote buying, intimidation, and corrupt tactics continued.

Table 6.

USAID-funded Elections Support Activities in Iraq

Project Name/Duration/Budget	
Iraq Provincial Elections Activity September 2018–December 2023 $25.4 million	• Builds on the assistance provided to Iraq's IHEC and civil society organizations to improve the management and administration of Iraq's election systems and processes. • Provides civil society organizations with funding and training to conduct activities aimed at encouraging citizens to register to vote in the period leading up to the provincial elections and to vote on Election Day. • Will continue supporting IHEC and Iraqi civil society after Election Day to ensure that democratic gains are consolidated and that Iraqi stakeholders are better prepared to administer future elections.
Iraqi Electoral Assistance Program February 2021–February 2023 $9.7 million	• Provides additional assistance to the IHEC and will contribute to the recruitment and deployment of seven electoral experts and two information technology advisors to help on electoral preparations at the national and provincial levels. • Builds the capacity of the Governorate Electoral Offices of the IHEC, including advising and supporting electoral planning and coordination efforts and the preparation and management of a Results Management System. • Funding will also develop a code of conduct for political advisors participating in the electoral process.

Source: USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 3/26/2021; USAID ME Bureau, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

Through a Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Bureau DoS project with civil society, the DoS continued to provide election support through efforts to encourage voting, monitor electoral processes, and combat misinformation and disinformation.

During the quarter, the Iraq Provincial Elections Activity completed the first phase of a training-of-trainers program that will provide training to more than 300,000 poll workers supporting the upcoming election.[421] In addition, the project continued supporting the Iraqi electoral commission's strategic communications and public-facing media efforts to develop public service announcements aimed to increase voter turnout.[422] The project also supported the development of an anti-disinformation strategy for the electoral commission.[423]

USAID reported that during the quarter, it continued to mobilize Iraqi civil society organizations to support the electoral process through voter education and registration. Through the Iraq Provincial Elections Activity, USAID provided grants to 17 Iraqi civil society organizations working to improve voter turnout across Iraq. The organizations will focus their effort on groups with low projected voter turnout, using both in-person and online campaigns.[424] The project also provided training to increase the ability of Iraqi civil society organizations to identify disinformation and inform citizens about the disinformation in their communities.[425]

According to USAID, the Iraqi Electoral Assistance Program continued to provide tailored technical assistance to the IHEC, with a focus of GIS mapping, IT hardware, software development, and simulations using the voting technology.[426]

STABILIZATION

Since the 2017 territorial defeat of ISIS in Iraq, the U.S. Government has sought to accelerate restoration of essential services in liberated areas of Iraq that suffered devastation during ISIS occupation and the conflict that followed. In addition, the DoS said, the United States assists ethnic and religious minority communities and supports programs that help internally displaced persons (IDPs) return safely and voluntarily to their homes of origin or settle in other destinations of their choosing. The U.S. Government seeks to establish stability in Iraq so that the Iraqi government can suppress future insurgencies and violent extremist organizations at the local government and law enforcement level.[427]

FFS Marks Completion of 2,900 Stabilization Projects

USAID supports its stabilization objectives through the UN Development Program (UNDP) Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS).[428] UNDP established the FFS in 2015 at the request of the Iraqi government with support from the member states of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. FFS seeks to facilitate the return of displaced persons by rehabilitating critical services and infrastructure to ensure access to basic services, provide employment opportunities, to provide capacity support for municipalities, and foster social cohesion across liberated areas of five provinces: Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah Al Din.[429] UNDP reported at the end of the quarter that FFS had completed more than 2,900 projects that benefitted more than 14.7 million Iraqis.[430]

On September 29, the Greek government made its first contribution to the FFS, making Greece the 29th donor. Greece's EUR 50,000 ($59,400) contribution will support for projects in ISIS-impacted areas that still require support to ensure returnees' access to basic services.[431]

Total donor contributions to the FFS since its inception in 2015 amount to $1.88 billion.[432] USAID contributed more than $405.2 million to FFS during this period, including $154 million in Anbar province.[433] As of the end of the quarter, USAID's budget for FFS remained at $500 million.[434] As of September, USAID had supported more than 900 FFS rehabilitation projects which have included water and electrical infrastructure, schools, housing, and health facilities.[435]

On September 29, USAID and UNDP announced the reopening of five facilities in western Anbar province that will provide essential services to more than 210,000 residents. The projects—implemented through FFS with the support of USAID funding—rehabilitated three municipality buildings in Hit and Rawa, an electricity substation in Al Qaim, and a primary school in Rummanah. The five facilities had been damaged or destroyed during ISIS's occupation.[436]

U.S. Commits Assistance to Iraq for Climate Change and Renewable Energy

As part of the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Dialogue, the U.S. Government said it plans to continue to support Iraq in combatting climate change and boosting renewable energy.[437] During

On September 29, USAID and UNDP announced the reopening of five facilities in western Anbar province that will provide essential services to more than 210,000 residents.

During the quarter, USAID provided an additional $10 million the International Organization for Migration to support the return of displaced persons in Ninewa province, bringing the total value of the award to $42.5 million.

the quarter, USAID reprogrammed $1.5 million to the Water and Energy for Food Partnership and $150,000 to conduct an energy assessment.[438] The partnership includes the European Union, development agencies from the United States, Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It aims to increase food production and strengthen climate initiatives, environmental resilience, and biodiversity through the sustainable, holistic management of natural resources and ecosystems.[439]

USAID reported that in Iraq, the partnership will address the financing needs of Iraqi small- and medium-sized enterprises working at the nexus of the food, water, and energy sectors.[440] The partnership can provide direct financing to Iraqi subject matter experts working in these areas to complement the USAID Mission in Iraq's existing economic growth and private sector activities. The partnership will work with private sector organizations in Iraq, NGOs, research institutions, and other actors that share the goal of increasing food production through sustainable water and efficient energy usage to implement scalable innovations that use water and energy to produce food in more environmentally sustainable ways and adapt to the effects of climate change.[441]

USAID reported that with the additional $150,000 in reprogrammed funding, it will contract an Iraqi Energy Sector Assessment that will examine renewable energy options; generation, transmission, and distribution systems; electricity access, efficiency, and quality of service; electricity demand projections; fuel and electricity imports; and the policy and regulatory environment. The assessment will analyze current private sector engagements and future opportunities. According to USAID, the results from the assessment are meant to inform strategic decisions by the Iraqi government and the KRG to prioritize energy sector reforms and investments that reduce environmental impact.[442]

USAID Awards Support Return of Displaced Persons, Anti-Radicalization Programming

During the quarter, USAID provided an additional $10 million the International Organization for Migration to support the return of displaced persons in Ninewa province, bringing the total value of the award to $42.5 million.[443] According to USAID, the additional funding will expand support to affected populations in the Ninewa Plain and Sinjar province through additional shelter, livelihood and memorialization activities and building cemeteries for the remains of individuals exhumed from mass graves. The funding included support to Nadia's Initiative, an organization that seeks to relocate the destroyed town of Kocho. USAID reported that through the award it will work closely with the Iraqi government's Office of the National Security Advisor on activities to support the prevention of violent extremism in other conflict-affected communities.[444]

On June 16, USAID awarded a new three-year $11 million cooperative agreement with Sesame Workshop that commenced on July 1. Sesame Workshop will develop and implement early education programs that promote inclusion and reflect the diversity of Iraqi society and break down stereotypes. Under the award, Sesame Workshop will develop an Iraq-specific spin-off to its successful Ahlan Simsim television program, which currently broadcasts in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, as well provide direct educational services to children, teachers, and caregivers.[445]

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

According to the United Nations, 2.4 million people in Iraq are in acute need for humanitarian assistance. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there are almost 1.2 million IDPs dispersed across 18 provinces in Iraq.

U.S. Government Commits $155 Million in Humanitarian Assistance

During Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's visit to the White House in late July, President Biden announced a commitment of $155 million in humanitarian assistance to support more than one million IDPs in Iraq.[446] This additional support includes nearly $52 million in assistance from USAID. USAID estimated that the additional assistance would reach more than 1.2 million people by providing critical shelter, essential healthcare, food assistance, and water, sanitation, and hygiene services to vulnerable people across Iraq affected by conflict, displacement, and the COVID-19 pandemic.[447]

DoS said that during the quarter, the chief concerns among IDPs, refugees, returnees, and persons at risk of statelessness across Iraq were: insecurity and the lack of assurance that they will be protected in their communities; lack of acceptable accommodations; lack of proper documentation enabling them to access local services; the inability to access livelihood opportunities as a result of current and previous movement restrictions; and the absence of basic services in their area of origin. Furthermore, this population faces a high risk of secondary displacement. Most individuals affected by displacement were living on daily wages, and the movement restrictions have significantly affected their ability to make ends meet.[448]

DoS reported several events during the quarter that threatened at-risk Iraqi populations. In July, a fire in a Sulaymaniyah province IDP camp killed a 7-year-old boy.[449] Also in July, Human Rights Watch reported that Iraqi security forces forcibly evicted 88 families who had returned to al-Aetha village after being displaced by ISIS, moving them to the Jed'dah 5 IDP camp in Ninewa province. On August 30, two children were killed and five people hurt in an explosion in Qadiya IDP camp in Duhok province. On September 3, a Turkish airstrike hit a house in Makhmur, Ninewa province, without causing any injuries. This attack was preceded by a June 5 Turkish airstrike that hit near the Makhmur refugee camp, which houses some 8,500 registered refugees.[450]

The U.S. Government and the European Union coordinated their efforts during the quarter to provide humanitarian assistance and stabilization programs in Iraq. According to the DoS, USAID and DoS refugee coordinators in Baghdad and Erbil participate in regular donor meetings organized by the United Nations and the European Union. USAID and PRM Refugee Coordinators also met directly with their European Union counterparts as well as other donors to discuss and coordinate on a range of issues including programming for IDPs and refugees, working with the United Nations in implementing the area-based approach and furthering durable solutions. Both the European Union and the U.S. Government are members of the Stabilization Task Force as well as the Stabilization Technical Advisor's Working Group and contribute to the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilization.[451]

During Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's visit to the White House in late July, President Biden announced a commitment of $155 million in humanitarian assistance to support more than one million IDPs in Iraq.

IRAQ: U.S. ASSISTANCE SNAPSHOT

July 1, 2021–September 30, 2021

EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND MINE CONTAMINATION

Approximately 2.7 billion square meters of Iraqi territory contain explosive remnants of war and mine contamination. This has impacted stabilization and reconstruction efforts and U.S. Government-funded humanitarian assistance. According to USAID, the presence of explosive remnants of war and mine contamination remain a key barrier to return for many of the 1.2 million people who remain displaced across Iraq.

IRAQ

The United Nations reported that between January and August 2021, mines and explosive remnants of war contributed to the deaths of 35 children and serious injury to more than 40 children compared to 6 deaths and 12 serious injuries reported during the same period in 2020. The United Nations continued to urge the Iraqi government and humanitarian actors to accelerate mine clearance activities and scale up explosive ordnance risk education at schools and in communities affected by conflict.

DAHUK PROVINCE

On August 30, an improvised explosive device exploded in the Qadiya IDP camp in Duhok province. According to local media, the explosion killed two children and injured several others. Relief organizations said residents required enhanced mental health and psychosocial support services following the incident.

DIYALA PROVINCE

In late August, UNICEF reported two separate incidents in Diyala province that resulted in the deaths of two children. UNICEF expressed concern about the increasing trend of child causalities due to mines and explosive remnants of war.

4.1 million	2.4 million	1.2 million	246,000	4.9 million
People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance	People in Acute Need	IDPs	Syrian Refugees Sheltering in Iraq	IDP Returns Since 2014
UN–February 2021	UN–March 2021	IOM–April 2021	UNHCR–June 2021	IOM–April 2021

COVID-19 VACCINE ROLL-OUT

As of September 26, more than **7.6 million** COVID-19 vaccine doses had been administered, enough to cover more than **9.5 percent** of the population.

Allocated (COVAX)

3,577,140

Doses Delivered

- COVAX/Global–AstraZeneca: **835,200**
- COVAX/Italy–AstraZeneca: **201,600**
- COVAX/USA–Pfizer/BioNTech: **503,100**
- COVAX/Global: **1,554,000**
- China–Sinopharm: **799,000**
- Pfizer/BioNTech (Procured): **100,000**
- Sinopharm (Procured): **1,000,000**
- Other (Procured): **365,000**
- Unknown: **3,648,129**

Sources: UNMAS, website, "Where We Work–Iraq," undated; USAID, press release, "Delivering Mine Risk Education in Sinjar," 3/29/2021; USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #317," 9/23/2021; UNICEF, "Alarming Increase in Children Killed and Injured by Explosive Devices in Iraq," 8/26/2021; USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/30/2021; WHO, website, "WHO COVID-19 Dashboard for Iraq," undated; World Bank, website, "Population, Total–Iraq," undated; UN OCHA, website, "COVID-19 Data Explorer: Global Humanitarian Operations," undated.

Rising Concerns over Forced Relocations and Evictions from Informal Sites

In September, United Nations reported that as of June 2021 an estimated 107,000 IDPs were living in nearly 550 informal sites across Iraq.[452] The United Nations stated humanitarian organizations raised concerns that local authorities in Ninewa province issued evictions to households sheltering in informal displacement sites.[453] Authorities in Mosul also evicted displaced persons as part of a recent push to remove slum areas and retake public sites. Past evictions were often carried out with on short notice, leading to secondary displacement for many households.[454]

In addition, IOM reported that from July 12 to August 1, Iraqi government relocated 88 Iraqi households (351 individuals, including 165 children) from al-Shirqat and nearby areas to Jed'dah 5 IDP camp. The forced relocations began with 23 mostly female-headed households from July 12 to 14, which resulted in cases of family separation.[455] Many of the relocated households had formerly ended their displacement in 2019 and 2020, returning to their areas of origin in or near al-Shirqat after receiving Iraqi government-issued security clearances.[456]

Implementers supported by USAID BHA funding and other humanitarian organizations continue to provide emergency food, health, shelter, and humanitarian protection assistance for the households at the Jed'dah 5 camp.[457] Following high-level UN advocacy, no additional forced relocations to Jed'dah 5 had been recorded as of mid-August.[458] USAID and DoS PRM reported that relief organization are concerned that the recent relocations risk slowing finding permanent homes for persons who displaced across Iraq and many further stigmatize IDPs and returnees as having perceived affiliations to ISIS. U.S. Government representatives, as well as other donor organizations, continued to call for the voluntary return of the recently relocated households and coordinate with stakeholders on further advocacy requirements.[459]

On August 1, the Iraqi government's Anbar Operations Command announced a consolidation of Anbar province's Amriyat al-Fallujah IDP camp by August 4, cautioning the potential relocation of 150 households if they did not comply. The plan also called for the departure of approximately 200 IDPs holding Iraqi government-issued security clearances.[460] Following UN advocacy, the operations command extended the deadline to August 26, allowing humanitarian organizations additional time to prepare the necessary humanitarian infrastructure in the camp.[461]

Jed'dah 1 camp will realistically remain open through the winter to temporarily house Iraqis who have been cleared to depart al-Hol, USAID said. Some of the winterization upgrades and maintenance will be covered under USAID BHA funding which includes installing roofs over baking sites and ensuring tent stabilization in anticipation of heavy rainfall. USAID reported that based on information from the Iraqi government, IDP camps are likely to remain open into 2022. USAID BHA implementers are monitoring the situation in close coordination with national stakeholders and developing contingency plans as appropriate.[462]

Relief organizations reported 13 cases in July in which Iraqi government authorities disrupted the delivery of humanitarian assistance, USAID said.

Access Constraints Persist

Relief organizations reported 13 cases in July in which Iraqi government authorities disrupted the delivery of humanitarian assistance, USAID said. These incidents occurred across eight Iraqi provinces, with nearly two-thirds of the incidents involving restrictions on the movement of humanitarian goods or personnel.[463] In August, there were 21 reported access incidents across 12 Iraqi districts, according to UN OCHA. Roughly 85 percent of the incidents involved movement restrictions; there were also two cases involving interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities and one reported case where three staff from an international NGO were injured during Turkish military operations in and around Sinjar in northern Ninewa province. Approximately 41,000 people in need were affected by the reported incidents in August.[464]

The Iraq Humanitarian Access Working Group reported cases in which Iraqi security forces, citing insecurity, denied relief organizations access despite the organizations having authorization from the Iraqi government.[465] The Iraqi government established the Directorate of Non-Governmental Organizations as the lead for authorizing humanitarian access letters following an August 2020 campaign by international organizations to establish a system of permanent access authorization.[466]

USAID also reported that access to Sinjar continued to be an issue due to the presence of armed groups including the PKK, Turkish military, and Iranian-backed militias. As a result, USAID implementers continued to face difficulties obtaining organizational security approvals to operate in the area.[467] According to USAID, an implementer in Anbar province reported that security forces were harassing NGOs; however, their engagement with local government enabled them to obtain the necessary letter which should prevent further difficulties.[468]

Finally, USAID reported that access to the Jeddah 1 and 5 camps remained a challenge throughout July due to the requirement that relief organizations obtain additional required access letters from the Ministry of Displacement and Migration.[469] At the end of the quarter, BHA said that it had not received any additional updates from BHA implementers or from the Ministry of Displacement and Migration in response to the additional required access letters. BHA reported that in the past, UN OCHA has advocated with the Ministry of Displacement and Migration on behalf of the humanitarian community on access issues.[470]

Livelihoods and Humanitarian Needs Impacted by Water Scarcity

Drought conditions in Diyala province reduced crop and livestock productivity and impacted livelihoods, according to a survey of more than 220 households conducted by a USAID BHA implementer in August. The survey results indicated that nearly 90 percent of households experienced reduced income and that nearly one-half of interviewees had expressed interest to relocate should drought conditions continue.[471] Many of the affected households were unable to afford increasingly costly water trucking services and were forced to reduce water consumption or dig personal wells. According to USAID, the BHA implementer said that individuals relying on well water are at risk of negative health effects due to Diyala's polluted groundwater supply.[472]

IOM reported that drought conditions in Ninewa province prompted more than 370 people from al-Baaj and Hatra districts to relocate to other areas of the province in late August due to a lack of water to grow cattle feed. While temporary relocation due to low water supply is not uncommon during summer months, drought conditions during the quarter forced households to travel farther to find a suitable location. With rainfall not projected to return until mid-October, IOM predicted that the households will experience an extended period of displacement.[473]

COVID-19 Case Numbers Increase; Iraqi Authorities Step Up Vaccinations

During the quarter Iraq experienced its highest rates of coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) cases since the beginning of the pandemic, though the cases declined by the end of the quarter.[474] (See Figure 10.)

The Iraqi government continued administer COVID-19 vaccinations, particularly the high-demand Pfizer vaccine.[475] The DoS reported that as of October 12, the total number of total doses administered amounted to 10.2 percent of the population, but the Iraqi government does not differentiate between those who have received two doses versus those with one dose.[476] In response to the increasing caseload, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) said

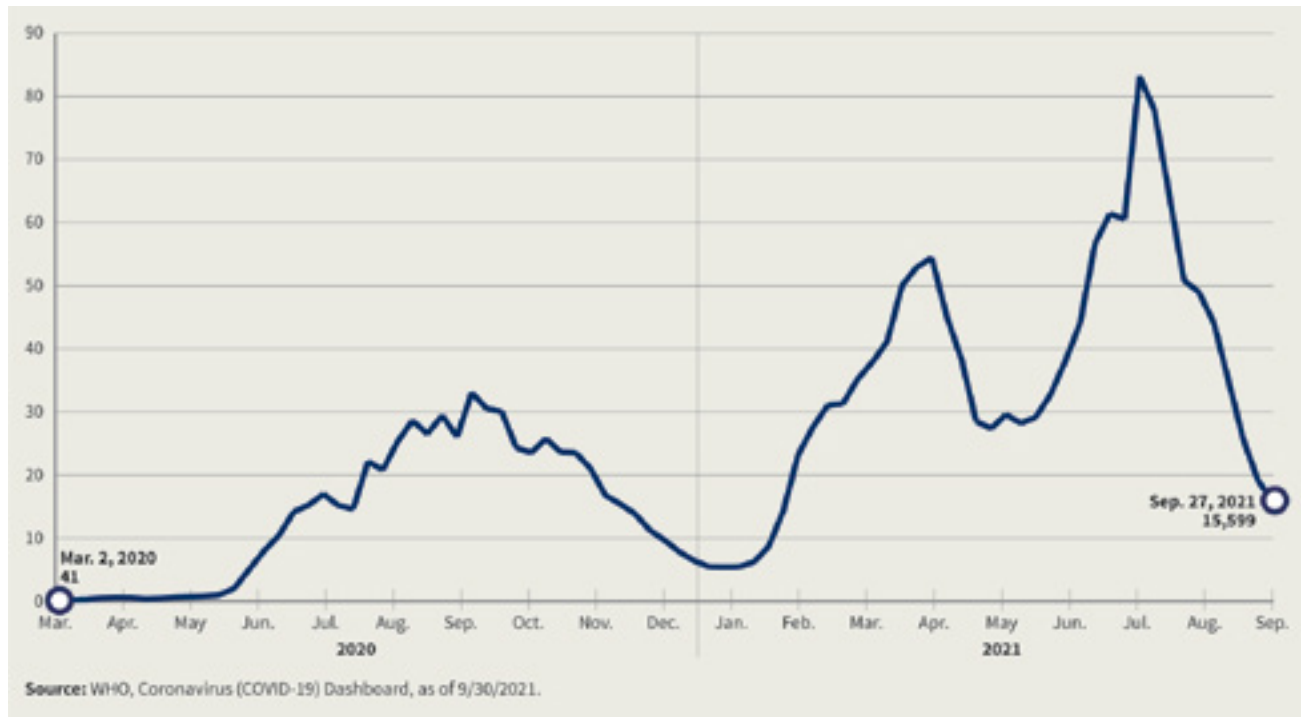**As of October 14, the U.S. Government had donated more than 500,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to Iraq.**

Figure 10.

Total Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in Iraq, March 2020–September 2021, in Thousands

Source: WHO, Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard, as of 9/30/2021.

they were stepping up their health promotion and vaccination campaigns and anticipated that between 20 and 25 million additional vaccines doses would arrive in Iraq by December.[477]

The Iraqi government launched mass vaccination sites in Baghdad in September and passed new COVID-19 mitigation policies, including mandatory vaccinations for government employees and international travelers.[478] The Iraqi government plans to launch dozens of new vaccination sites countrywide and deploy 200 teams to support these efforts, according to WHO.[479]

As of August 12, the U.S. Government had donated more than 500,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to Iraq.[480] This is in addition to the funds the U.S. Government is providing to COVAX to procure more vaccines for Iraq.[481] Iraq has a direct purchase agreement with Pfizer-BioNTech to deliver vaccines on a weekly basis.[482] Iraq also received 1.75 million vaccine doses from China and some from Italy. [483]

In mid-July, CARE-Iraq reported that access to vaccines remained a barrier in Iraq. According to a study conducted among 3,777 Iraqis, 18 percent said they must travel more than an hour to reach a clinic that offered the vaccine. CARE said vaccine hesitancy remained high: 68 percent of respondents were reluctant to take the vaccine and 62 percent said they would not accept the vaccine even if it was readily available. Fear of side effects and belief the vaccines are designed for a purpose other than protection against the disease were cited as the most common reasons for not accepting vaccination.[484]

A USAID BHA implementer survey in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region indicated that respondents' high rates of vaccine hesitancy can be attributed to misconceptions and misinformation about the vaccine, lack of knowledge on where the vaccine is available, and lack of knowledge on how to register for and access the vaccine.[485]

USAID, in partnership with UNDP, has supported the establishment of nine COVID-19 isolation wards in Iraq.[486] After the fire in the COVID-19 ward of the Al-Hussein Teaching Hospital on July 12 that resulted in the deaths of at least 90 people, UNDP reviewed all nine supported COVID-19 wards to identify improvements to increase resiliency against fire.[487] This was the second incident in three months, following a similar fire in April in another hospital in Baghdad.[488] USAID and UNDP have committed to support infrastructure improvements to address the risks of future fires, including the procurement and installation of fire alarm and suppression systems and containment of oxygen tanks in solid block construction away from the isolation wards.[489]

During the quarter, USAID BHA implementers responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by training healthcare workers, conducting hygiene campaigns, and supporting mental health, psychosocial support, and gender-based violence activities in IDP communities.[490] USAID BHA health partners are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by training medical professionals on screening, identification, triage, and treatment of suspected cases; strengthening disease surveillance systems; implementing risk communication and community engagement activities; and providing critical medicines, medical equipment, and other supplies.[491]

Anti-terror Forces (HAT) march in formation in Hasakah Province, Syria. (U.S. Army photo)

SYRIA

SYRIA

The DoS reported that the U.S. Government continued to prioritize the enduring defeat of ISIS, preservation of ceasefires, and provision of life-saving humanitarian aid to Syrian civilians in need to further the conditions for a political resolution to the Syrian conflict as outlined in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254. For force protection purposes, the United States also worked to counter the destabilizing activities of Iran and its supporters and proxies.[492]

SECURITY

The DoD Office of the Undersecretary for Policy–International Security Affairs (OUSD(P) ISA) reported that there were no changes to DoD policy in Syria during the quarter and that Combined Joint Task Force–OIR (CJTF-OIR) "remains committed to executing its sole mission in Syria: the enduring defeat of ISIS."[493] To achieve its mission, U.S. and Coalition forces continued to work "by, with, and through" the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and other local partner forces.[494] In addition, DoD OUSD(P) ISA said that the U.S. and Coalition military presence and support continued to enable civilian-led humanitarian and stabilization efforts to address the underlying grievances that facilitated ISIS's rapid expansion.[495]

Coalition forces operate Bradley Fighting Vehicles in Hasakah governorate, Syria. (U.S. Army photo)

THE COMPLEX OPERATING ENVIRONMENT IN SYRIA

Multiple parties—including Coalition, SDF, Syrian regime, Russian, Turkish, and Iranian-aligned forces—operate across central and eastern Syria. While the non-Coalition forces and the SDF conduct some counter-ISIS operations, their presence restricts SDF and Coalition movement and puts civilians at greater risk of experiencing negative effects from conflict.

AREAS OF CONTROL
- ISIS Support Zones
- Pro-Regime
- SDF
- Turkish-Supported Opposition
- U.S. and Partner Forces

BASES
- Iran-aligned
- Russia
- Turkey
- U.S.

BORDER PRESENCE
- Russia
- Syrian Army
- SDF
- Iran-aligned Militia
- Turkey & Proxies
- U.S. and Coalition
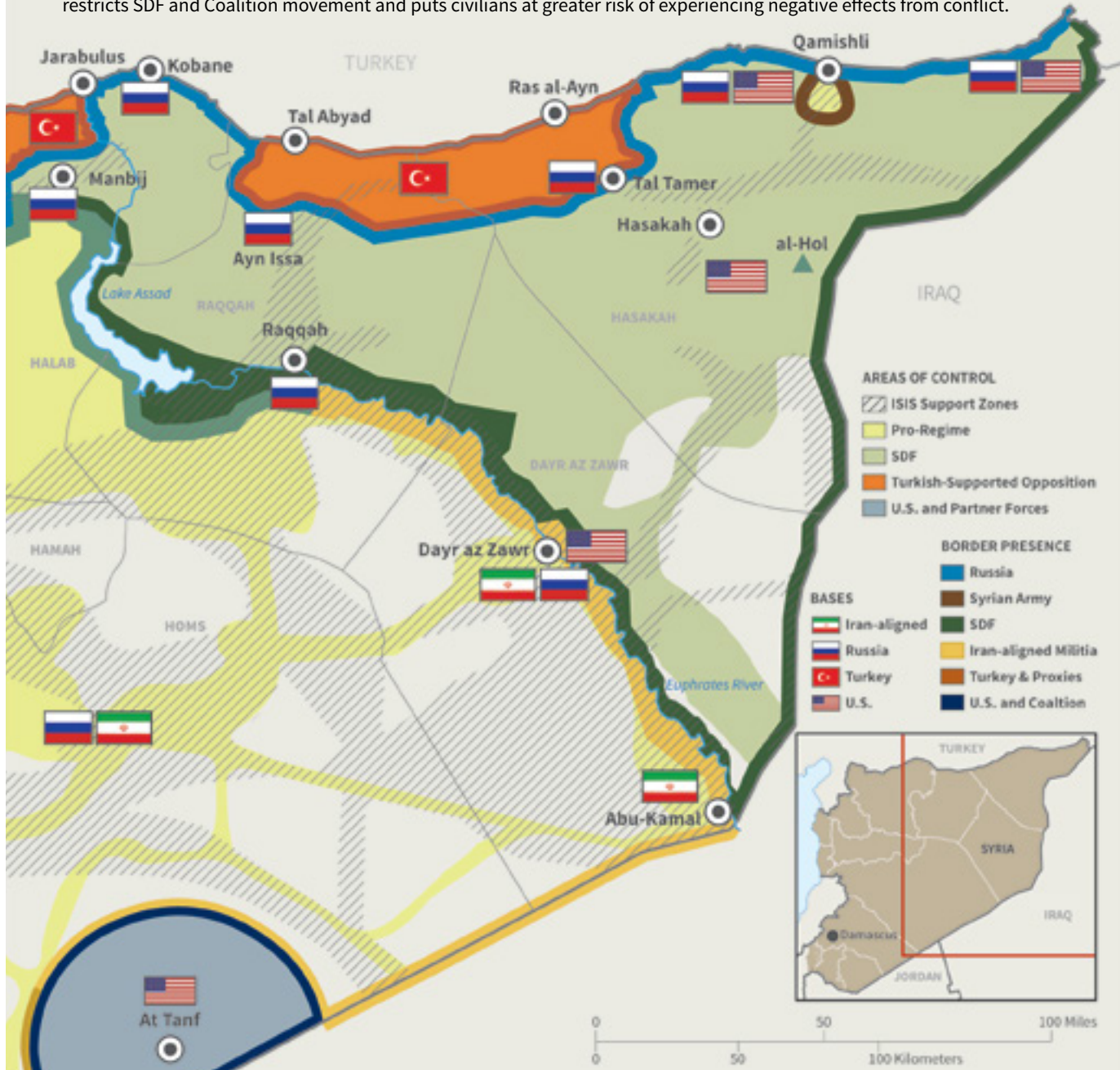
Note: This map is derived from open sources and does not depict precisely or comprehensively bases or operations in Syria.

Sources: Institute for the Study of War, "Syria Situation Report: March 22–April 19, 2021," 4/22/2021; Fabrice Balanche, "The Assad Regime has Failed to Restore Full Sovereignty Over Syria," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2/10/2021; NGA. This map represents general locations as of the dates indicated by the sources.

CJTF-OIR said that there were no changes to the OIR campaign design, objectives, or rules of engagement in Syria during the quarter, and Coalition posture in Syria remained unchanged.[496] Coalition Forces have been operating with the SDF in the Eastern Syria Security Area (ESSA)—which includes parts of Hasakah and Dayr az Zawr governorates east of the Euphrates River—and with Mughawir al-Thawra (MaT) forces in the vicinity of the southern Tanf garrison near the convergence of the Syrian, Iraqi, and Jordanian borders.[497]

According to CJTF-OIR, the most significant threat that it faces in Syria continued to emanate from "malign actors"—including various Iran-aligned militia groups—that conduct harassing attacks using one-way unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and indirect fire attacks onto Coalition bases.[498]

Populations at displaced person camps and detention centers in Syria also continued to be of concern for the Coalition, partner forces, and international agencies.[499] CJTF-OIR said that Coalition forces advising partner forces helped to both increase partner force capacity and advise their strategy to respond to the ISIS threat.[500]

COALITION ACTIVITY

Coalition Forces Continue to Bolster Partner Force Counter-ISIS Operations

CJTF-OIR said that it continued to support Syrian partner forces through the provision of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); support for intelligence integration; and joint operations.[501] CJTF-OIR also continued to provide material assistance to vetted Syrian groups and individuals through the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF).[502]

Coalition forces did not conduct any unilateral operations against ISIS during the quarter, CJTF-OIR said. All of CJTF-OIR's counter-ISIS operations were partnered with Syrian forces.[503]

According to CJTF-OIR, the most significant threat that it faces in Syria continued to emanate from "malign actors"—including various Iran-aligned militia groups—that conduct harassing attacks using one-way unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and indirect fire attacks onto Coalition bases.

SELECTED KEY EVENTS, JULY 1, 2021–SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

JULY 7
The SDF claims that with U.S. support, they foiled a UAV attack on a base housing Coalition forces in northeastern Syria; a monitor says the UAV was launched from areas controlled by Iran-aligned militias.

JULY 15
Nearly 300 Syrians leave al-Hol to return to their homes in Raqqa province

AUGUST 1
The SDF announces the arrest of two prominent ISIS leaders, one for transferring weapons and the other for smuggling ISIS members from the al-Hol displaced persons camp.

JUL — **AUG**

JULY 9
The UN Security Council authorizes extension of the Bab al-Hawa border crossing with Turkey, allowing critical humanitarian assistance to reach Syrians in need.

JULY 28
The Syrian regime intensifies ground clashes and heavy shelling of the city of Dar'a and surrounding villages, resulting in civilian casualties and displacement.

The U.S. Government announces sanctions against a Turkish-supported opposition group and eight Syrian prisons.

Figure 11.

Coalition Airstrikes Targeting ISIS in Syria, July 2020–September 2021

Sources: Sources: CJTF-OIR, press releases, "CJTF-OIR Strike Summary Report," 2/13/2020, 3/24/2020, 4/30/2020, 6/24/2020, 9/8/2020, 10/29/2020, 12/14/2020, 1/6/2021, 2/4/2021, 7/6/2021, 7/7/2021, 7/9/2021, 8/4/2021, and 9/20/2021.
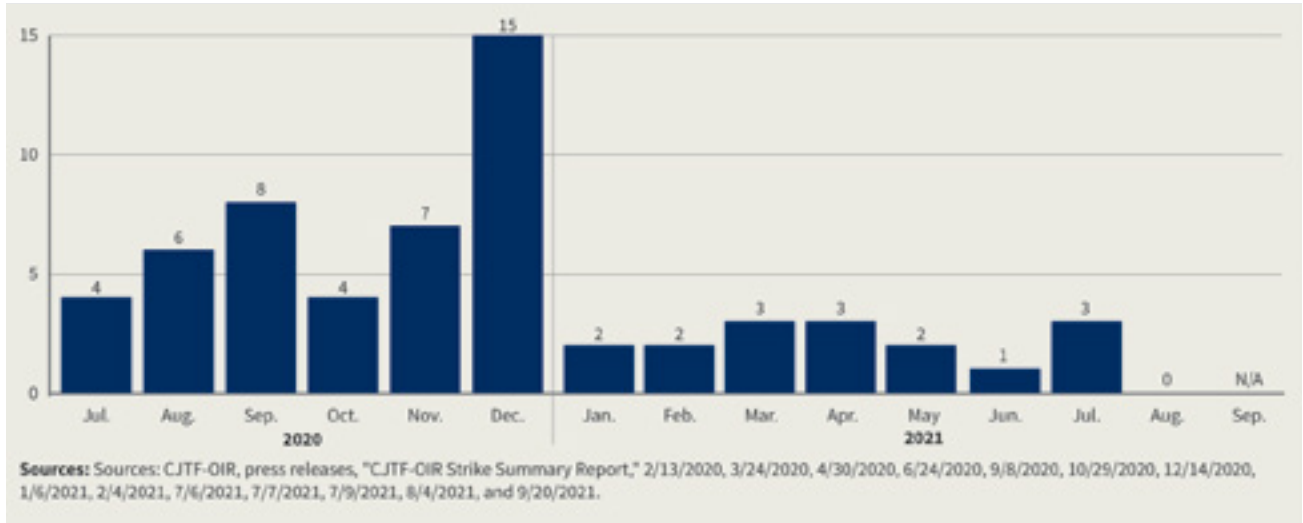
CJTF-OIR continued to employ armored Bradley Fighting Vehicles to enhance the protection of Coalition forces and reassure partner forces in the ESSA.[504] CJTF-OIR said that the vehicles did not have any engagements during the quarter and the deployment continued to demonstrate the United States' "willingness and ability to project force when required."[505] A new rotation of Bradley Fighting Vehicle units deployed during the quarter to relieve the outgoing units, but there was not change to the size of force, and all the equipment remained in place.[506]

CJTF-OIR reported that it conducted three air strikes in Syria in July and no strikes in August against ISIS targets.[507] (See Figure 11.) Airstrike tallies for September were not available.

SEPTEMBER 8
Syrian regime forces enter Dar'a for first time in a decade, setting up checkpoints under Russia-brokered ceasefire deal.

SEPTEMBER 15
ISIS conducts a double ambush on Iranian-aligned forces, attacking a militia group in Homs governorate and ambushing an Iranian-led force coming to their aid.

SEPTEMBER 29
The Iraqi government repatriates 114 families, totaling 487 people, from al-Hol to a camp in Iraq's Ninewa province.

SEP

EARLY TO MID-SEPTEMBER
The Turkish army intensifies attacks against the SDF and YPG commanders in northeastern Syria; Syrian media report that the shelling caused large-scale civilian displacement.

SEPTEMBER 18
ISIS detonates explosives on a gas pipeline outside Damascus, leading to blackouts in parts of the Syrian capital and surrounding area.

PARTNER FORCES CAPABILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

SDF Conduct Fewer Operations but Demonstrate Increased Capacity

CJTF-OIR reported that the pace of SDF counter-ISIS operations during the quarter decreased overall compared to the previous quarter, but the SDF conducted significantly more unilateral operations from late August into early September.[508]

During the quarter, the SDF conducted 26 operations in total, all against ISIS targets in Syria that focused on capturing ISIS weapons facilitators and smugglers.[509] Coalition forces did not accompany the SDF forward to any objectives during the quarter.[510] CJTF-OIR said that the SDF captured 75 ISIS detainees and killed none during the operations.[511]

CJTF-OIR reported that the SDF continued to demonstrate increased ability to plan and conduct unilateral counter-ISIS operations.[512] In the Middle Euphrates River Valley (MERV), Coalition forces observed an increase in SDF operational tempo during the quarter due to an increase in ISIS threats in the region.[513] The SDF operations included disrupting smuggling lines, capture or kill raids on IED facilitation cells and assassination cells, clearance operations, wide-area security operations, and route clearance.[514]

CJTF-OIR said that Coalition forces advised SDF leadership to train and educate their subordinates so that they could accomplish basic tasks with little to no guidance.[515] The SDF also worked to increase the numbers of its personnel posted to checkpoints.[516]

According to CJTF-OIR, SDF finish forces—personnel employed to kill or capture targeted individuals—continued to demonstrate basic operational capabilities, but lacked some advanced abilities.[517] CJTF-OIR said that forces of the Hezen Anti-Terror group (HAT)—the primary SDF Internal Security Forces (InSF) strike force—are trained and capable of conducting point target raids to kill or capture mid-level targets in short periods of time.[518] However, while the HAT is capable of unilateral operations, it relied on Coalition intelligence support.[519] CJTF-OIR said that the HAT is capable of training others in basic skills without Coalition support, but is eager for more advanced Coalition training and divestments.[520]

Similarly, CJTF-OIR said that the SDF commandos—conventional SDF forces that serve as the premier counter terrorism strike force—were generally capable but still lack some capacity.[521] SDF commando units completed complex movements and large-scale clearance operations, detained fighters, and conducted patrols.[522] CJTF-OIR said that they are also eager to learn from Coalition advisors. They also seek to be viewed as the go-to "finish force" by Coalition forces.[523]

Intelligence Remains an SDF Weakness

The SDF continued to depend on Coalition support for intelligence collection.[524] CJTF-OIR reported that the SDF continued to rely solely on human intelligence for intelligence collection, without any ability to conduct persistent surveillance or maintain situational awareness.[525] CJTF-OIR noted that due to the SDF's lack of organic ISR capabilities, this will be the reality for the near future.[526] Under current conditions, it is unlikely that SDF are

During the quarter, the SDF conducted 26 operations against ISIS targets in Syria that focused on capturing ISIS weapons facilitators and smugglers.

capable of operating and maintaining ISR systems and thus will be relying on coalition ISR assets for the foreseeable future, CJTF-OIR said.[527]

CJTF-OIR noted that while the SDF intelligence gathering capabilities remained limited, its forces are able to effectively interpret targeting intelligence once it is received, take action, and coordinate with Coalition forces.[528] As in previous quarters, CJTF-OIR said that trust issues continued to exist among different SDF groups, but the Coalition has observed an increase in willingness to share information.[529]

CJTF-OIR said that individuals within the SDF continued to leak information, resulting in early warning of targets and subsequent dry holes—arriving at a target to find it vacated or empty.[530] However, CJTF-OIR reported that there were fewer dry holes in operations compared to previous quarters and safeguarding of information has improved.[531] CJTF-OIR

Figure 12.

Map of Syria

said that the SDF does not have a policy in place for safeguarding information outside of their own internal vetting of new recruits and current members of their units.[532] Further information about SDF information security is available in the classified appendix to this report.

SDF Trains in Weapons, Vehicle Maneuver, IED Disposal, and Drone Reconnaissance

Coalition forces provided training to multiple SDF units during the quarter, including the InSF, Provincial Internal Security Forces (PrISF), commandos, and SDF military intelligence. CJTF-OIR said that the training included direct hands-on as well as "train-the-trainer" instruction and involved both structured instruction and advising efforts during operations.[533]

The training included marksmanship, use of heavy weapons, operating and maneuvering vehicles, drone reconnaissance, medical training, and communications. The Coalition also trained the SDF in explosive ordnance disposal, focusing on identification of improvised explosive devices (IED), evidence exploitation, and common emplacement in urban environments.[534]

Coalition forces also provided advanced level training to SDF soldiers, CJTF-OIR reported, which enabled the SDF to improve its own training capabilities.[535] Coalition forces also continued to train the SDF in containing the site of a raid during operations, to improve squad control and overall operational efficiency.[536]

MaT Forces Continue Training and Operations Around the Tanf Garrison

In the vicinity of the Tanf garrison, MaT forces continued to train and partner with Coalition forces.[537] CJTF-OIR said approximately 300 MaT soldiers are dispersed in different areas throughout the Tanf garrison deconfliction area, where they conduct daily wide-area security missions and interdiction operations to keep the perimeter area secure.[538]

According to CJTF-OIR, there were no significant incursions or smuggling operations by "malign" operatives during the quarter.[539] CJTF-OIR said the MaT has the ability to conduct independent wide-area security missions and with the assistance of Coalition forces, the MaT successfully conducted conventional operations.[540]

CJTF-OIR said that the MaT force conducted 200 unilateral operations during the quarter, compared to approximately 300 unilateral and 48 partnered operations during the previous quarter.[541] CJTF-OIR said the MaT was not involved in any offensive battles during the quarter and assessed that the MaT "has achieved their operational objectives to secure the deconfliction area" and counter ISIS within their area of operation.[542]

CJTF-OIR assessed that the MaT have become more capable with the more deliberate curriculum-based training provided by Coalition forces.[543] CJTF-OIR assessed that with increased logistical support and resources, their capabilities in the defeat-ISIS mission will continue to increase.[544]

Coalition forces also provided advanced level training to SDF soldiers, CJTF-OIR reported, which enabled the SDF to improve its own training capabilities

CJTF-OIR reported that SDF ability to manage detention facilities continued to improve moderately during the quarter and the SDF continued to bolster its ability to detain ISIS fighters humanely and securely.

CJTF-OIR said that MaT forces have all completed training in basic soldier skills, marksmanship, vehicle maneuver, mine detection, use of indirect fires (such as rockets and mortars), and medical procedures as well as a cumulative exercise to hone their proficiency in all of their training.[545]

Coalition forces also continued to train the MaT in command structure methodologies and logistical processes, including accountability and logistical procurement.[546] CJTF-OIR reported that the MaT forces continued to be constrained by their environment in the deconfliction area, where they are cut off by pro-regime forces that have built continuous-berm emplacements that deny logistical lines for the MaT force, and by adjacent countries whose borders have been closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.[547] CJTF-OIR said that the MaT force is entirely dependent on Coalition logistical support, but this quarter has increased their accountability and processes to improve their internal capabilities.[548]

Overcrowding and Risk of Breakouts Remain at Detention Facilities Despite Divestments, Updates

The security situation at SDF detention facilities remained relatively unchanged during the quarter. CJTF-OIR reported that SDF ability to manage detention facilities continued to improve moderately during the quarter and the SDF continued to bolster its ability to detain ISIS fighters humanely and securely.[549]

CJTF-OIR said that through the SDF, it continued to mitigate the risk of detainee breakouts and prevent ISIS from reconstituting.[550] There was one organized escape attempt from an InSF facility within the ESSA during the quarter, according to CJTF-OIR. No riots or uprisings took place.[551]

However, CJTF-OIR reported that while it continued to support the SDF with CTEF funds and equipment to improve physical security, capacity, and conditions in detention facilities, detainees continued to live in substandard conditions, which CJTF-OIR said increases the probability of an escape attempt.[552] The DoS also stressed the need for Coalition support for the humane and secure detention of ISIS fighters as they await processing, in the case of Syrians, and repatriation to countries of origin, in the case of non-Syrians.[553]

CJTF-OIR reported that through its support, it seeks to reduce continued overcrowding, improve living conditions for detainees, and professionalize the SDF guard force.[554] During the quarter, CJTF-OIR provided food, water, and personal sanitation items to improve detention conditions.[555]

During a visit to Hasakah city in August, outgoing CJTF-OIR Commander Lieutenant General Paul Calvert announced new aid to help secure detention facilities, including $20 million from the United Kingdom to upgrade the main facility holding ISIS fighters near Hasakah, according to media reports.[556] The facility was the scene of at least two riots by ISIS detainees in 2020.[557]

CJTF-OIR said that there were no major operations during the quarter that resulted in large-scale captures or repatriations that measurably increased or decreased the detained population.[558] The SDF continues to hold approximately 10,000 ISIS detainees, including approximately 8,000 Iraqis and Syrians, and about 2,000 from other countries.[559]

CJTF-OIR said that the SDF manages 14 detention facilities in the ESSA, including one that is designated as a youth rehabilitation center for minors.[560] The PrISF remain the primary force guarding the two largest SDF detention facilities, while the InSF serve supporting security roles.[561]

According to CJTF-OIR, 61 percent of the detainees are held in two PRiSF-operated facilities in the Hasakah governorate, in the cities of Hasakah and Shaddadi. Both are repurposed, ad-hoc facilities that receive CJTF-OIR CTEF funds to improve security, capacity, and conditions.[562] Hasakah Central remains the only improved and hardened purpose-built detention facility and holds both ISIS detainees and common criminals. CJTF-OIR said that it does not contribute CTEF funds to this facility.[563]

The United States has continued to call on countries to repatriate their nationals being held in detention in northeastern Syria.[564] CJTF-OIR reported that during the quarter it repatriated 10 detained foreign fighters, 6 women, and 18 children to two countries of origin.[565] CJTF-OIR said that repatriation operations "continue to reduce the detained population, mitigate overcrowding, and reduce the risk of riots, breakouts, or other disturbances that could return ISIS fighters to the organization's ranks."[566]

ISIS Attacks Critical Petroleum Infrastructure

ISIS continued to attack critical fuel infrastructure and supply routes during the quarter. The DIA reported that these attacks divert Syrian regime forces away from counter-ISIS operations.[567] The DIA said that as long as critical petroleum infrastructure remains insecure, ISIS will likely make further attempts to steal oil as a means of funding the organization.[568]

On July 16, ISIS attacked an oil transport owned by the regime-affiliated al-Qaterji oil company, rendering the vehicle inoperable, the DIA said.[569] On September 18, ISIS attacked a natural gas pipeline outside Damascus.[570] The DIA reported that according to press reporting from Iran, the attack cut off a critical power plant from its fuel source and forced the regime to implement electricity rationing.[571] The regime repaired the pipeline and restored electricity within 24 hours.[572]

In previous quarters, CJTF-OIR provided information about the development and operations of SDF Critical Petroleum Infrastructure Guard (CPIG) forces operating in the ESSA. In the previous quarter CJTF-OIR reported that approximately 2,500 trained CPIG forces continued to be deployed to protect 64 oil infrastructure sites across the ESSA. Of those, 500 were posted in the northern ESSA, 500 in the central ESSA and 1,500 operated in the Dayr az Zawr area. An additional 500 recruits were training at the CPIG academy in the northern ESSA last quarter, but CJTF-OIR said that it was understood that those recruits would be distributed among other forces when they completed training, rather than necessarily assigned to CPIG.[573]

CJTF-OIR said that it was not able to provide unclassified information about the CPIG force size and abilities during the quarter.[574] See the classified appendix for more information about the CPIG force.

According to CJTF-OIR, 61 percent of the detainees are held in two PRISF-operated facilities in the Hasakah governorate, in the cities of Hasakah and Shaddadi.

Role of Third Parties

Multiple actors continued to vie for influence in northeastern Syria during the quarter, with rival parties seeking to exploit societal and economic stresses to undermine the SDF.[575] The SDF continued its counter-ISIS operations with Coalition support, but also weathered challenges and security threats across its operating area from regime and pro-regime forces and their Russian and Iranian backers and Turkey and its aligned forces.[576] The U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) described the operating environment as "complex and fragile."[577]

REGIME, RUSSIA, TURKEY, IRAN-BACKED FORCES FIGHT ISIS

Across Syria, rival parties continued to conduct counter-terrorism operations against ISIS.[578] The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) reported that Syrian regime forces and their Russian supporters continued operations against ISIS in Syria during the quarter, particularly in the central Syrian desert, where forces conducted low-intensity ground operations.[579]

The DIA said that Iranian-backed forces also supported Syrian regime counter-ISIS operations.[580] In southwestern Syria, Iran-backed forces continued to support pro-regime counter-ISIS operations on the outskirts of Damascus and strategic towns and villages along the Lebanon-Syria border.[581] The DIA said that Iran also maintains a military presence in Idlib and Aleppo governorates in northwestern Syria to ensure regime territorial integrity and safeguard Shia municipalities.[582] In the east, Iranian-backed forces continued to support counter-ISIS operations in Dayr az Zawr, helping to sustain critical supply routes from Iraq to its forces and partners in Syria and Lebanon.[583]

Turkey expanded its operations against ISIS in Syria during the quarter.[584] The DIA said that the Turkish government reported in early July that the Turkish National Intelligence Organization assisted Turkish-aligned forces in Syria in capturing an ISIS member who was allegedly preparing an attack in Turkey.[585] The intelligence organization also captured the alleged "Turkey head" of ISIS in Syria, Kasim Guler, and transferred him to Turkey.[586]

IRAN-BACKED BACKED MILITIAS CONDUCT LIMITED ATTACKS ON COALITION FORCES

Iran and Iran-backed backed forces, notably Kata'ib Hezbollah, remained active in Syria this quarter. The DIA said that Iran-backed militias likely conducted a rocket attack against U.S. forces in Syria following U.S. strikes against militia targets in June. The DIA said this is likely the second attack against U.S. forces in Syria attributable to Shia militias this year. In April Iran-backed militias began to use advanced systems, including UAVs, to attack U.S. forces in Iraq, but these systems have not been used to attack U.S. forces in Syria.[587]

However, independent analysts noted that militia-affiliated social media channels claimed responsibility for at least six attacks in Syria since June 21.[588] While the CJTF-OIR spokesperson disputed at least one of these attacks, press reporting based on statements by the SDF and unnamed U.S. officials suggested that other attempted attacks occurred in Syria, including those that used UAVs.[589] The DIA assessed, based on Western press reporting, that Iran and Iran-backed actors seek to calibrate operations across the region to compel a withdrawal of U.S. forces without escalating into a direct confrontation or prompting a major U.S. response.[590]

During the quarter, Iran-backed forces also continued to support pro-regime military operations in Dar'a against opposition forces.[591] The head of Israel's military intelligence said in October

(continued on next page)

Role of Third Parties *(continued from previous page)*

that Iran decreased the number of personnel deployed to Syria, but that Iran-backed militias remained entrenched to act against Israel.[592]

Additionally, the DIA reported that Iran remains committed to protecting the Syrian regime's interests in northern Syria, where Iran-backed forces continue to secure key locations including Shia population centers within and around Idlib and Aleppo provinces.[593]

REGIME OPERATIONS IN DAR'A GOVERNATE DIVERT EFFORTS FROM ISIS FIGHT

The DIA reported that continuous military operations of the Syrian Arab Army and their Russian backers in the southern city of Dar'a diverted many of their resources away from the fight against ISIS in the desert. Still, the regime retained one fifth of the Russian-backed 5th Corps 8th Brigade for ISIS clearing operations in the central desert during the quarter.[594] Regime elements were also redirected to the desert in June from the Idlib governorate in the country's northwest.[595] Nevertheless, ISIS still retains freedom of movement in the Syrian Desert, the DIA said.[596]

Dar'a was the site of the first protests against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in 2011, sparking the decade-long civil war that continues to ravage parts of the country.[597] An uneasy truce that had allowed opposition fighters to remain in Dar'a under partial self-rule since 2018 broke down during the quarter, when heavy fighting erupted after residents rejected the Syrian presidential elections as illegitimate and opposition forces refused regime demands to hand over weapons.[598] Syrian regime and pro-regime forces besieged the city, pounding it with missiles, artillery, and improvised rockets, and choking off food and supplies to the city's 50,000 residents.[599]

The DIA said that Iranian-backed forces supported pro-regime military operations in Dar'a against opposition forces.[600] The Dar'a negotiating committee alleged that Iran was involved in multiple violations of Russian-brokered ceasefire agreements that excluded Iranian militia from the city and parts of southern Syria.[601] The DIA said that Iranian-backed militia conducted indirect fire attacks and ground assaults on opposition-held neighborhoods to collapse Russian-backed ceasefire negotiations.[602]

In early September, after weeks of failed Russian-mediated negotiations with Syrian opposition, a ceasefire deal went into effect to halt the fighting and end the nearly 75-day siege.[603] The DIA reported that regime forces are focused on ensuring that Dar'a residents and opposition fighters accept regime authority, confiscating weapons, conducting security sweeps, and establishing nine permanent checkpoints to maintain control over the region.[604] In accordance with the Russian-brokered deal, the regime's 4th Armored Division is withdrawing its reinforcements from Dara's vicinity.[605]

According to the DIA and media reporting, the decision by Russian President Vladimir Putin to back Assad politically and militarily during the Dar'a siege helped Syrian President Bashar Assad gain control of this remaining opposition-held area in southwestern Syria.[606] The DoS reported that President Assad struck a truce which ended the siege and returned some stability to the area.[607]   As part of the Dar'a ceasefire deal, Russian military police will continue patrolling the city and operating checkpoints as the deal guarantor.[608]

RUSSIAN AND PRO-REGIME FORCES CONTINUE TO PRESSURE U.S. AND SDF FORCES IN NORTHEASTERN SYRIA; FIGHTING ESCALATES WITH TURKEY

The DIA reported that Russian and pro-regime forces generally maintained the nature and location of their in northeastern Syria during the quarter and continued to exert pressure on U.S. forces and engage the SDF.[609] USCENTCOM reported that regime and regime-aligned forces were involved in minor skirmishes with the SDF, including reports of regime-aligned forces arresting SDF members.[610] Regime-aligned actors also disseminated messaging to undermine local support for the United States and its mission.[611]

USCENTCOM said that Russian forces continued to conduct multiple patrols in the ESSA as well as "joint" patrols with Turkish forces in multiple areas outside the ESSA from Ayn al-Arab in Aleppo governorate to Ras al-Ayn in Hasakah governorate.[612] The DIA reported that Russian and Turkish forces also carried out a joint patrol in the Hasakah governorate.[613]

After the Turkish incursion into northeastern Syria in October 2019, Russia helped mediate joint patrols with Turkish forces to separate Turkish and SDF forces.[614] However, the DIA reported that there were no indications of Russian operations during the quarter to protect SDF near Ayn Issa, near where Turkey and Turkish-supported opposition forces escalated attacks against the SDF during the quarter.[615] The SDF publicly condemned Russia for its failure to prevent the attacks.[616]

Meanwhile, fighting escalated between Turkish-aligned forces and Russian and Syrian regime forces in northwestern Syria during the quarter, culminating in a strike by Russian and regime forces that killed 11 Turkish-supported opposition fighters on September 26. The DIA, citing press reporting, said that the flare-up threatened a fragile cease-fire between the parties in northern Syria.[617] While a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in late September appeared to somewhat defuse tensions, Turkey reinforced its forces in northern Syria the day after the meeting. The DIA said this reinforcement was likely an effort to deter a pro-regime ground offensive into Turkish-controlled areas.[618]

TURKEY AND ALIGNED FORCES CLASH WITH SDF FORCES

Tensions between Turkey and the SDF, including the People's Protection Units (YPG) militia that makes up the largest part of the SDF, continued during the quarter. Turkish forces and aligned militia continued to conduct attacks targeting the SDF in the vicinity of the 2019 incursion near the northern border.[619] USCENTCOM reported that Turkey, along with Turkish-supported opposition groups, conducted artillery and UAV strikes against SDF forces, inflicting casualties and knocking out power to multiple villages in the northeast.[620]

On September 11, a bomb in Idlib, which Turkey attributed to the YPG, killed three Turkish soldiers.[621] In early October, following a missile attack that Turkey attributed to the YPG that killed two Turkish police officers, President Erdogan stated that he had "no patience left regarding some regions in Syria" from which Turkey was being attacked and Turkey was "determined to eliminate the threats" either militarily or through other means."[622] DoD OUSD(P) ISA said that persistent shelling and occasional clashes along the periphery of the Turkish incursion area continued to "absorb the time and attention of SDF leadership," but did not significantly impact SDF counter-ISIS operations.[623] The SDF remained concerned about the potential for a renewed Turkish or Turkish-supported offensive in northeast Syria, which DoD OUSD(P) ISA said could disrupt the defeat-ISIS campaign in the medium and long term.[624]

DoD OUSD(P) ISA said that the U.S. Government expects Turkey to live up to its commitments under the October 17, 2019, joint statement mediated following the incursion, "including to refrain from offensive operations in northeast Syria."[625] DoD OUSD(P) ISA said that while limited clashes have continued, the parameters set in the joint statement have largely held, and there are no indications that Turkey is currently preparing for offensive operations in northeastern Syria.[626]

Turkey views the SDF as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a U.S-designated terrorist organization that has waged a longtime deadly insurgency against Turkey. In particular, Turkey claims that the YPG, which make up a significant portion of the SDF, are directly linked to the Syrian branch of the PKK.[627]

Role of Third Parties *(continued from previous page)*

The DIA reported that Turkey conducted a series of UAV strikes against PKK leaders in northern Syria throughout the quarter.[628] Several of these strikes resulted in civilian casualties.[629] Turkish forces continued shelling Manbij, and Ayn Issa in August, and increased UAV strikes on targets in Qamishli, Tal Tamer, and Kobani.[630] DoD OUSD(P) ISA reports that although the SDF was able to maintain SDF defeat-ISIS operations in the near term, Turkish strikes distracted SDF leadership attention and resources and could result in further disruptions to the defeat-ISIS campaign in the medium to long term.[631]

In July, Turkey claimed to have "neutralized" 137 PKK terrorists in counterterrorism operations in Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. The DIA said that Turkey also announced that it had detained 186 PKK suspects, arresting 40.[632] Turkey also accused the YPG or PKK of conducting a series of attacks, particularly in the northwest. In June, Turkey blamed the YPG for a hospital attack that killed 14 civilians in Afrin; in late July, an attack on a Turkish military transport in al-Bab killed two soldiers and injured two others.[633] In September, Turkey accused the YPG and PKK of killing three civilians and wounding six in a car bomb attack in Afrin.[634]

At the time of its incursion into Syria in 2019, Turkey said it planned on facilitating a large-scale resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees to the incursion area.[635] The DIA said that while it has reporting that Turkey facilitated the resettlement of families of Turkish-supported opposition forces in the area following the incursion, the DIA has no reporting to indicate that Turkey is conducting a large-scale refugee resettlement in the area.[636] DoD OUSD(P) ISA said these allegations did not impact SDF counter-ISIS operations.[637]

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

UN Envoy Suggests New Way Forward for Constitutional Committee

Stability in Syria and the greater region, the DoS said, can only be achieved through a political process that represents the will of all Syrians.[638] The United States supports the UN-facilitated, Syrian-led process laid out within the parameters of UNSCR 2254. The United States and the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS continued to work with local partners to ensure ISIS's enduring defeat.[639]

The DoS said that the United States and the majority of the international community continued to support UNSCR 2254, which the DoS described as the "best roadmap for the way forward in Syria."[640] However, the Syrian Constitutional Committee made little progress during the quarter due to stalling tactics by the Syrian regime.[641] In his August 24 briefing to the UN Security Council, UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen noted that a lack of trust between parties and a lack of political will had "paralyzed efforts to reach a political solution."[642] He urged parties to work on a wider set of issues to "try and unlock modest steps and gestures that could build some trust."[643]

The DoS said that the United States continued to support the UNSCR 2554 process through DoS-managed programming that provides technical expertise and capacity building for

select Constitutional Committee members. In his September 28 briefing to the UN Security Council, Special Envoy Pedersen announced that that the sixth session of the Constitutional Committee would be held October 18 in Geneva.[644]

STABILIZATION

Upon its inception in September 2014, the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS focused on major combat operations against ISIS' captured territory in Iraq and Syria. Stabilization of liberated areas became a focus following the Coalition's successes first in Iraq and then Syria, where the last ISIS-held territory was liberated in March 2019.

The Coalition's efforts to raise funds for stabilization in areas liberated from ISIS remain a critical element of ensuring the enduring defeat of ISIS. The Coalition's 2020 pledge drive raised $149 million for Syria stabilization. In 2021, the Coalition has pledged $296.5 million for Syria stabilization as of September 18.[645] Stabilization assistance plays a "critical role" in this stage of the OIR mission, the DoS said, by addressing the "economic and social cleavages previously exploited by ISIS," closing gaps in local authority capacity, and supporting civil society to advocate for citizen needs.[646]

> **The Coalition's 2020 pledge drive raised $149 million for Syria stabilization. In 2021, the Coalition has pledged $296.5 million for Syria stabilization as of September 18.**

USAID Stabilization Efforts Continue to Face Funding Limitations

USAID continued to report that its ability to implement programs in northeast Syria during the quarter was hindered by limited resources. In FY 2020, out of a $40 million bilateral funding line, USAID received $10 million, with the remaining $29.5 million supporting DoS stabilization efforts.[647] USAID said that "this has real-time and tangible impacts on the ground, particularly when the fight against ISIS has turned into an economic one."[648] Faced with a looming food security crisis and coupled with the lack of flexibility across the entire Syria stabilization portfolio, this quarter USAID implementing partners scaled back elements of much-needed livelihood programs in order to pivot and meet needs in the wheat sector. This will mitigate the impacts of the wheat crisis but exacerbates USAID's inability to respond to other livelihoods needs.[649]

Several other USAID projects continued during the quarter. For example, USAID made an adjustment to one program that allowed the agency to procure approximately 3,000 tons of high-quality seed ahead of the upcoming planting season in northeast Syria. USAID's implementing partner will transport the seed from Iraq to in early November before the end of the fall planting season.[650]

With USAID technical guidance and partial funding, the Syria Recovery Trust Fund, in collaboration with the Near East Foundation, launched the Revolving Credit Fund. As of the end of the quarter the Revolving Credit Fund had disbursed 289 loans valued at $310,000. These loans enable vulnerable entrepreneurs (including women, youth, internally displaced persons, and returnees) to start and expand businesses.[651]

USAID continued to provide economic advisors to the Self-Administration's Financial Authority and Agriculture and Economy Committee. Work is ongoing on cost recovery,

customs, and private sector development to help diversify revenues and grow investment and employment in the region.[652]

Through the Supporting Livelihoods in Syria program, USAID sought to improve the strategic planning capabilities of the regional councils (Raqqa, Tabqa, Hasakah, and Dayr az Zawr) through the collaborative development of Local Economic Development plans. These plans will guide economic development prioritization and investment in the months ahead.[653]

Programs Seek to Build Trust in Communities' Governance, Media, and Security Forces

This quarter, DoS reported that its stabilization programs continued in northeast Syria with some programs operating at reduced levels to preserve limited funding. The DoS said its stabilization efforts support local governance partners, civil society, and communities in the areas of education, community security, independent media, civil society, social cohesion, transitional justice, accountability, restoration of essential services, and a political resolution to the conflict in line with UNSCR 2254.[654]

The DoS said that while ISIS continues to pose a threat to stability in northeast Syria, ISIS attacks did not directly affect U.S. stabilization activities this quarter. Attacks continued to target individuals affiliated with the Self-Administration of North and East Syria (SANES) and SDF, threatening immediate and longer-term stability in the area.[655]

On August 25, water from the Euphrates River flowed to Hasakah city for the first time in 6 years.[656] The local governance program, FURAT+ (Furat is the Arabic word for Euphrates) partnered with the Executive Council of Jazeera Region and the Dayr az Zawr Civil Council to restore nearly 90 miles of pipeline and replace 32 miles of electrical network in this large-scale water restoration initiative. The work began in January and was completed in August 2021.[657]

The FURAT+ program also helped the Executive Council of Jazeera Region, Dayr az Zawr Civil Council, and the Raqqa Executive Council to strengthen emergency first responder services in their areas by refurbishing fire engines and supporting 151 firefighting and paramedic missions. The DoS said that improving local councils' ability to provide water and other essential services builds trust in local governance, making target communities less susceptible to ISIS influence.[658]

During the quarter, a DoS-funded independent media program, Support for Independent Media in Syria II, conducted evaluations in northeast Syria to assess audience preferences and partner outlet reach. A survey of audiences Raqqa indicated that the program's partners are the most popular radio stations in the province. The evaluations were paired with new performance targets that focused on audience metrics and viewership to direct funding to the best performing outlets, resulting in a consolidation from eight to six media partners, the DoS said.[659]

The program partners with radio, online and television media platforms in northeast and northwest Syria to empower citizens, address the needs of members of minority groups, promote accountability, provide information about COVID-19, and counter violent

On August 25, water from the Euphrates River flowed to Hasakah city for the first time in 6 years.

extremism and disinformation perpetuated by Iranian-backed militias, Russia, the Syrian regime, designated terrorist organizations, and other malign actors, the DoS reported.[660]

Also during this quarter, a DoS program used workshops and dialogue sessions to strengthen capabilities of selected political stakeholders who participate in the Constitutional Committee and other UN-convened negotiations in support of UNSCR 2254 and to foster engagement with Syrian civil society organizations, local governance structures, and Syrian citizens, including members of the Syrian diaspora.[661] The DoS said that lack of access and awareness of the Syrian political process, including UNSCR 2254, has contributed to distrust and a lack of support for the current efforts of the Constitutional Committee. The purpose of these workshops and dialogue sessions is to ensure the Constitutional Committee bridges the gap between local community-based organizations and their local constituents, by facilitating these initiatives to ensure political inclusivity, knowledge sharing, and outreach.[662]

In addition to capacity building support for current and past civil society partners, this quarter, a DoS civil society project launched several activities aimed at promoting social cohesion.

Civil Society Project Promotes Social Cohesion, "Return to Normalcy"

In addition to capacity building support for current and past civil society partners, this quarter, a DoS civil society project launched several activities aimed at promoting social cohesion. The project included awards to local partners to create youth clubs in Hasakah, Dayr az Zawr, and Raqqa governorates to identify challenges to social cohesion that can be addressed through a variety of initiatives. Another local partner convened social and cultural activities with Arab, Kurdish, and Syriac residents of Hasakah city with the goal of promoting coexistence and social cohesion among the community's diverse population. Another initiative supports the creation of a civil society coalition for northeast Syria to enhance collaboration across civil society organizations and develop constructive relations with local authorities. Local partners in Dayr az Zawr sought to identify challenges to reintegration in 12 targeted communities and proposed interventions to promote a "return to normalcy" in those communities.[663]

During the quarter, the United States received $2,356,414 from a European partner. The money is intended to fund essential service restoration and rehabilitation through a DoS local governance project in northeast Syria, the DoS reported.[664]

Efforts to Reduce Tension and Suffering at Displaced Persons Camps

During the quarter, international organizations continued to document desperate security and humanitarian conditions at the al-Hol displaced persons camp in Syria.[665] The camp is overcrowded, with insufficient services or healthcare and rampant illness, according to humanitarian agencies.[666]

REINTEGRATION AND REPATRIATION

The DoS reported that authorities in northeastern Syria continued to advocate with countries of origin and the international community for the repatriation and reintegration

of displaced persons at displaced persons camps.[667] Their presence in al-Hol in particular continues to "strain humanitarian and security resources," the DoS said.[668]

The DoS said the SANES also continued to facilitate returns of Syrians who wish to depart the al-Hol camp to their areas of origin, including 300 residents who departed the camp for Raqqah on September 15.[669] An al-Hol official was cited in a news report as saying that this was the 18th group of Syrians to leave the camp since ISIS lost territorial control in March 2019, bringing the total of Syrian families who have left to 1,600.[670] At the end of September, 117 Iraqi families—totaling 487 people—departed al-Hol for a camp in Ninewa Province, Iraq, the second such return since the start of the year.[671] The DoS said that the majority of these households are headed by women or girls.[672]

The DoS said Syrian internally displaced persons (IDP) require programs that support the return and reintegration of Syrians to their areas of origin. The DoS reported that reducing al-Hol's population will relieve crowding and improve security.[673] Local authorities worked with humanitarian partners to improve camp security without hindering the delivery of humanitarian services.[674] Camp authorities transferred some foreign families to the less crowded, more remote Roj camp to separate them from the conditions in al-Hol.[675] The DIA said that conditions are less permissive for ISIS in Roj camp because it is smaller and relatively easier for administrators to control.[676] Authorities also authorized the departure of some families who have been threatened by ISIS elements in al-Hol camp, for their safety, the DoS said.[677]

On September 29, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced the launch of a Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syria/Iraq Third Country National Returnees to support member states willing to repatriate some 42,000 foreigners who remain in overcrowded camps and detention centers in conditions in Iraq and Syria.[678]

IMPROVING SECURITY

Violence at al-Hol, which decreased following a large security sweep by the SDF and affiliated security forces at the end of March and early April 2021, has since risen but has not reached pre-sweep levels.[679] CJTF-OIR reported that the security situation in the camp remained "largely the same" as the previous quarter.[680]

The DoS reported 19 killings during the quarter in al-Hol camp, noting that while this is an increase from 16 killings the previous quarter, it is a substantial decrease from the first 3 months of the year, when there were 45 killings in the camp.[681] The decrease in violence is likely attributable to the security operation that took place in the camp at the end of March and early April. Most of those killed appear to be camp residents with ties to the security services; the motive for other killings is unclear, but may be attributable to neighbor or tribal disputes.[682]

A top UN official stated that as of August 24, 69 people had been killed in the al-Hol camp in 2021; 12 additional attempts were recorded.[683] Other reports have documented higher tallies of killings in the camp since January.[684] Martin Griffiths, the UN Under-Secretary-

At the end of September, 117 Iraqi families—totaling 487 people—departed al-Hol for a camp in Ninewa Province, Iraq, the second such return since the start of the year.

General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, told the Security Council that there was a "climate of fear" in the camp, and killings and threats to women and girls increased in June and July.[685]

In a report issued in September, the humanitarian agency Save the Children said that children in al-Hol reported seeing and experiencing violence "on a regular basis" and "consistently" said that they felt unsafe walking around the camp, visiting the market, or using latrines and bathing facilities.[686]

The managing authority at al-Hol and Roj camps is the SANES-affiliated Camp Administration. The SDF and affiliated security organizations are responsible for security at the camps, including InSF, who do most of the camp policing, in coordination with the YPJ (Women's Protection Units), the DoS said.[687] The camp administration works with the SDF to remove individuals suspected of criminal or terrorist activity from the camp for the safety of its residents.[688]

The DoS noted that the U.S. Government has no presence within the camp and has no management or security roles within it, but "strongly supports efforts to remove violent actors, active ISIS operatives, and weapons from the camp" because violence hinders safe humanitarian assistance and further traumatizes an already vulnerable population."[689] Coalition forces do not operate in the camp, but have provided training and support to the SDF in its security operations at the camp.[690]

The humanitarian NGO responsible for camp coordination, working with the camp administration, tracks security but is not responsible for responding to security incidents nor detaining or identifying residents conducting criminal activity, the DoS said.[691] While humanitarian partners can report on security incidents, the camp administration responds to criminal acts in the camp and liaises directly with security services to investigate and take action as appropriate.[692]

This quarter, the SANES, security partners, and the humanitarian community continued to explore ways to improve external and internal security without compromising humanitarian access and residents' freedom of movement within the camp. The DoS said it supports both sides coming to a mutually agreeable solution.[693]

In late June, Acting Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and Acting Counterterrorism Coordinator John Godfrey led a delegation to northeast Syria, including visits to al-Hol camp and to a detention center in Hasakah for ISIS fighters to discuss with local partners and see first-hand the substantial need for stabilization support from the Coalition to areas liberated from ISIS, the DoS reported.[694]

Repatriation of Foreign Fighters

The U.S. Government also continued to advocate for the repatriation of ISIS fighters being held in SDF detention facilities to countries of origin for their prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration, as appropriate, to keep these individuals off the battlefield, to alleviate

> **A top UN official stated that as of August 24, 69 people had been killed in the al-Hol camp in 2021; 12 additional attempts were recorded.**

Table 7.

Repatriations from Syria, July–September

Month	Country	Repatriation
July	Finland	1 woman and 2 children
	Belgium	6 women and 10 children
	Russia	20 children
	Kosovo	6 foreign terrorist fighters, 1 woman and 3 children
	North Macedonia	4 foreign terrorist fighters, 5 women and 14 children
	Albania	5 women and 14 children
August	Palestinian Territories	2 children
September	Sweden	3 women and 6 children
	Iraq	100 detainees, 487 civilians

Source: DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

overcrowded conditions in SDF detention facilities, and to support ISIS accountability efforts, the DoS reported.[695] (See Table 7.)

The DoS reported that different countries approached repatriation of third-country nationals differently. Some countries of origin requested U.S. assistance to repatriate their nationals from northeast Syria, while others organized repatriations directly with local authorities. Countries of origin have shown varying willingness to repatriate their nationals: some proactively repatriate their citizens, while others remain reluctant to do so.[696]

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

This quarter, accelerating rates of the coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) Delta variant and an increase in violent conflict significantly impacted humanitarian operations across all regions of Syria.[697] USAID said that the passage of UNSCR 2585 was a positive development, allowing for the continuation of cross-border humanitarian assistance to reach northwest Syria.[698] However, an economic crisis, energy shortages, a drought, and food scarcity continue to present daily hardships for many Syrians.[699]

UN Security Council Resolution 2585 Authorizes Cross-Border Humanitarian Assistance in Northwest Syria

On July 9, following months of sustained advocacy efforts from the U.S. Government and its humanitarian partners, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted UNSCR 2585.[700] The resolution extends UN humanitarian use of the Bab al-Hawa border crossing—the last remaining border crossing authorized for UN cross-border humanitarian assistance—for 6 months followed by a 6-month extension subject to the issuance of a report by the UN Secretary General (for a total of 12 months).[701] While the international

community anticipated that the Russian government would execute on their threats to veto the resolution, a compromise deal was struck a day before the resolution was set to expire.[702] For the first time, the resolution expands authority beyond discussing the scope of humanitarian activities, recognizing that they include support to essential services through water, sanitation, health, education, and shelter early recovery projects in addition to addressing immediate needs."[703]

USAID reported that a full year of authorization for cross-border assistance will reach 3.2 million people in need of aid in northwest Syria, including the 1.4 million people that the World Food Program (WFP) reaches monthly with general food assistance.[704] The authorization also ensures continuity of funding for local responders, who rely on UN funding to implement emergency response activities; it also allows for the continuation of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign unfolding in northwest Syria.[705]

The WFP successfully completed the United Nations' first crossline humanitarian mission from regime-controlled areas into opposition-controlled areas of northwest Syria on August 31.[706] USAID reported that a WFP convoy of three aid trucks successfully moved food and nutrition supplies intended for nearly 50,000 people from Syrian regime-controlled areas of Aleppo to WFP warehouses in Sarmada, in Idlib governorate.[707] USAID reported that while the mission was momentous, USAID, the United Nations, and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield have all stressed that crossline assistance cannot replicate the size and scope of cross-border operations.[708]

> **USAID reported that there was an increase in air strikes and shelling along the front lines between opposition-controlled and regime-controlled areas in northwest Syria this quarter.**

Increase in Conflict in Northwestern Syria Results in More Displacement and Death

USAID reported that there was an increase in air strikes and shelling along the front lines between opposition-controlled and regime-controlled areas in northwest Syria this quarter.[709] According to UN Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria Mark Cutts, northwest Syria experienced the most serious escalation in bombing since the March 2020 ceasefire—negotiated by Russia and Turkey—was established.[710]

The violence led to an increase in displacements during the quarter. Of the 50,000 displacements throughout Syria in June 2021, 95 percent occurred within the northwestern governorates of Idlib and Aleppo.[711] The United Nations estimates that half of these displacements were driven by escalation of conflict and the other half due to economic reasons.[712] This uptick in violence in northwest, as well as other regions of Syria, contributed to the UN Human Rights Council's determination that Syria "does not yet offer a safe and stable environment for sustainable and dignified returns on refugees, nor for the 6.7 million displaced persons inside the country."[713]

Water Scarcity Worsens Food Insecurity

Lack of access to water, spurred by a combination of climate change and hydro-political factors, remained a central concern for humanitarian organizations operating in northeast Syria.[714] According to a joint press statement by NGOs operating in the region, the water crisis may disrupt access to clean drinking water for over five million people reliant on

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

SYRIA: U.S. ASSISTANCE SNAPSHOT

July 1, 2021–September 30, 2021

DAR'A
Increased conflict in July and August resulted in the displacement of at least 38,600 individuals—the majority of whom were women, children, and elderly men—to communities in surrounding areas, as well as in Dar'a city.

DAYR AZ ZAWR
On September 18, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, an Iran-backed militia, seized three fuel trucks en route to western Dayr az Zawr governorate. The fuel was intended for civilians under the Syrian regime's smart card system.

IDLIB
At least 86 civilians died and 205 were injured as a result of increased hostilities since June 2021, including airstrikes and daily shelling. Violence was particularly frequent the south of M4 highway and around the M5 highway in southern Idlib governorate.

13.4 million	**12.4 million**	**6.6 million**	**4.8 million**	**2.1 million**
In Need of Humanitarian Assistance	People Food Insecure	Estimated Number of IDPs	People Reached by USAID BHA per Month	People Reached by DoS PRM per Month
USAID-September 2021	USAID-September 2021	USAID-September 2021	USAID-September 2021	USAID-September 2021

STABILIZATION

- **Dayr az Zawr** Suwar Canal Opened: Water reaches Hasakah City from the Euphrates River for the time in 6 years thanks to an infrastructure project that helps 300,000 residents facing drought.
- **Raqqah** Audience survey finds Support to Independent Media radio stations the most popular in the region.
- **Hasakah, Raqqah, and Dayr az Zawr** Six youth clubs promote social cohesion and coexistence among diverse populations.

COVID-19 VACCINE ROLL-OUT

More than **1.5 million** COVID vaccine doses have been delivered, enough to cover **4.5 percent** of the population.

Allocated (COVAX)

3,686,401

Doses Delivered
- COVAX/Global–AstraZeneca: **256,800**
- COVAX/Sweden–AstraZeneca: **390,720**
- COVAX/Global: **389,520**
- China–Sinopharm: **300,000**
- Russia–Sputnik V: **250,000**
  TOTAL: 1,587,040

Sources: USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021; Mercy Corps, "Humanitarian Access Team Weekly Report," 9/23/21; UN OCHA, "Syrian Arab Republic: Developments in North-west Syria and Ras Al Ain–Tell Abiad," 8/2021; UN OCHA, "COVID-19 Data Explorer: Global Humanitarian Operations," undated.

the Euphrates River, as well as electricity for a further three million.[715] The water crisis also threatens to exacerbate the transmission of COVID-19 and may expose populations to additional waterborne diseases.[716] Since the reduction in water, communities in Hasakah, Aleppo, Raqqah and Dayr az Zawr governorates, including displaced people in camps, have experienced a rise in outbreaks of water-borne diseases.[717]

USAID said that, if unmitigated, the water crisis will likely compound already rapidly rising rates of food insecurity across the country.[718] Considered the country's breadbasket, Hasakah governorate alone is responsible for producing 45 percent of the country's wheat supply.[719] Agriculture Committee officials from the SANES projected crop harvests would be 75 percent below average in parts of northeast Syria, and international NGOs have warned that the drought is preventing households from accessing sufficient water, devastating incomes of farmers, and reducing food availability.[720] On July 29, the Syria International NGO Regional Forum projected that the number of residents in urgent need of food assistance will increase from 1.4 to 1.8 million people in the coming months.[721]

The threat of massive wheat crop failure comes at a time when food prices, which are already at all-time highs, continue to skyrocket.[722] In Syria, the price of a food basket—defined by the WFP as a group of dry goods providing 2,060 calories per person, per day for a family of five for a month—has increased by an average of 93 percent across all 14 provinces.[723] USAID reported that it continued to monitor the situation, and that its partners are implementing emergency response activities to address the water, sanitation, and hygiene needs of the most vulnerable affected populations.[724]

Uptick in Violence in Southern Syria Delays Humanitarian Assistance Delivery

USAID reported that the blockade of Dar'a al-Balad in the southwestern Dar'a governorate was a humanitarian flashpoint during the quarter.[725] The eruption of large-scale violence in the region followed the Syrian regime's launch of a blockade on the area on June 24, with regime forces blocking commercial and humanitarian goods from entering the neighborhood. Following several weeks of mounting tensions in the region, heavy shelling and ground clashes were reported in the Dar'a neighborhood on July 28.[726] This resulted in critical shortages of food and vital health commodities. The Syrian regime also blocked WFP from conducting its August monthly food distribution to the entire governorate, delaying vital assistance for over 445,000 individuals.[727]

Escalations in violence during the months of July and August resulted in the displacement of at least 38,600 individuals—the majority of whom were women, children, and elderly men—to communities in surrounding areas, as well as in Dar'a city. Despite not having access to Dar'a al-Balad, humanitarian organizations provided multi-sector assistance to individuals sheltering in Dar'a city centers and with host communities.[728] On August 11, the Dar'a al-Balad area's flour and diesel supply had reportedly run out, resulting in the closure of the city's main bakery. USAID reported that electricity and drinking water supplies were also cut off, and at least three USAID NGO partners had to temporarily suspend assistance activities.[729]

By mid-September, humanitarian access was largely restored following the September 6 ceasefire and WFP was able to begin distributions throughout the governorate.[730]

Overcompliance with Sanctions Complicates Provision of Humanitarian Aid

For nearly 30 years, the United States and Europe have maintained and built upon an expansive array of sanctions against Syria's regime, driven by the regime's status as a world leading state sponsor of terrorism.[731] Sanctions currently in place that may affect people operating in Syria include sanctions against: Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, ISIS, Iran, Russia, and the Syrian regime.[732]

The bipartisan Caesar Civilian Protection Act provided new sanctions authorities that target foreign individuals and entities providing significant support to the Syrian regime.[733] At the same time, sanctions have a negative impact on Syrian NGOs operating both within and outside of Syria, according to media reports.[734] Since the Caesar Act sanctions authority became available in July 2020, USAID implementers have increasingly reported difficulties in accessing banking needed to implement their mandates to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance, often attributed to Western banks' fear of doing any business in Syria and resultant over-compliance.[735]

In a report published during the quarter by Impact Civil Society Research and Development, 70 humanitarian aid organizations operating in Syria shared challenges they face related to sanctions compliance. Many financial institutions outside of Syria closed these organizations' bank accounts, prevented them from opening new ones, and blocked them from sending or receiving wire transfers.[736] Some were forced to transact only with EU-based banks. According to the report, these measures usually included no stated justification and were attributed to over-compliance.[737]

USAID reported that its partners operating in Syrian regime-controlled areas have consistently flagged reluctance from banks to transfer funds into Syria. USAID reported that it is consistently working within the U.S. Government and with implementing partners, financial institutions, and relevant regulatory bodies to ensure that sanctions do not hinder a more cost-effective and sustainable response across Syria.[738]

On July 28, the United States imposed sanctions on Turkish-supported opposition (TSO) group Ahrar al-Sharqiya for having engaged in serious human rights abuses in Syria, and also designated two of its leaders—the first time any TSO group has been sanctioned by the U.S. Government.[739] The U.S. Government also sanctioned eight Syrian prisons, five Assad regime officials in the institutions that run those facilities, two militia groups, and two militia leaders.[740] The Department of the Treasury reported that no individuals or organizations were sanctioned during the quarter for providing support to ISIS.[741]

COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign Ramps Up as Cases Reach Highest Levels Since Start of Pandemic

As of September 19, 610,257 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered in government-controlled areas and northeast Syria, and 119,158 doses administered in northwest Syria.[742] The USAID Middle East Bureau (ME Bureau) identified a lack of vaccines and a general lack of adequate financial and staff resources as major challenges in the vaccine rollout.[743] Fewer than 30 percent of vaccines delivered had been administered in northwest Syria during the reporting period.[744] As more doses become available, a major limiting factor will be the lack of cold-chain infrastructure in Syria.[745]

SYRIA

At the end of the quarter Syria was experiencing its highest increase in COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic.

USAID BHA reported that vaccine hesitancy, a general lack of knowledge about vaccines, and pervasive distrust in social institutions due to the conflict has slowed administration of the vaccines.[746] The WHO reported that confidence in vaccines grew after a media campaign on vaccination, increasing vaccine availability, community-level demand generation efforts, and more people receiving vaccines without severe side effects.[747] USAID BHA reported that health providers are increasing risk communication and risk education efforts to promote vaccine uptake and confidence.[748]

At the end of the quarter Syria was experiencing its highest increase in COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic.[749] The emergence of the delta variant, confirmed in northwest Syria and suspected in the northeast, has likely accelerated disease transmission.[750] Shortages of COVID-19 test kits and oxygen were reported in the media amid an outbreak of COVID-19 in Northwest Syria.[751] In northeast Syria, USAID efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic heavily relied on cross-line shipments of vaccines and equipment from Damascus.[752]

Humanitarian organizations reported that patients were turned away from COVID-19 community treatment centers because they were at capacity or diverted to non-COVID health facilities.[753] In response to the increase in cases, USAID BHA implementers provided 247,000 health consultations to patients in 45 health facilities in Aleppo and Idlib governorates in August, and cared for 420 COVID-19 patients in hospital-based isolation units.[754] USAID BHA issued 13 new awards to UN agencies and NGO partners countrywide totaling over $120 million and two funded modifications totaling $66 million, to support public health, mitigate food insecurity, provide protection assistance including through safe spaces and gender-based violence programming, and strengthen humanitarian operations and coordination.[755]

During the quarter, USAID ME Bureau continued to support COVID-19 infrastructure through stabilization activities. The Syria Recovery Trust Fund, of which the U.S. Government is a member, concluded an initial award to the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) to expand critical care capacity of health facilities in Dayr az Zawr. SAMS expanded a hospital's capacity to hold 40 ICU beds, hired necessary and qualified staff to care for patients, procured additional oxygen supplies from nearby oxygen bottling facilities including one that was refurbished by USAID, and conducted 26 training sessions of which 17 were done remotely. Overall, SRTF's support of SAMS enabled a catchment of 630,000 Syrians.[756]

USAID ME Bureau issued two stabilization award modifications related to COVID-19, allocating $4 million during the quarter. This funding will enhance health infrastructure, improve health worker training in COVID-19 diagnosis, and streamline case management.[757] Activities include supporting readiness to administer vaccines, addressing vaccine hesitancy, combatting mis- and disinformation, monitoring and quality control, and supporting public health and evidence-based clinical interventions, including expanding access to diagnostics and therapeutics.[758]

Attacks Impacting Healthcare Workers and Facilities Increase Amid Worsening Primary Health Care Access

During the quarter, healthcare workers in northwest Syria continued to face heightened threats.[759] (See Table 8.) The surge in COVID-19 cases also resulted in the suspension of primary health services due to the number of cases among healthcare workers. The suspension of services and limited supplies affected women and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services.[760] USAID BHA partners also responded to nutrition needs in northwest Syria during the quarter. Out of 3,700 pregnant and lactating women and children under 5 that were screened, 480 were identified as experiencing wasting, including 160 with severe wasting.[761] The identified cases were enrolled in malnutrition treatment programs at health facilities.[762]

According to the DoS, COVID-19 mitigation measures continued to restrict humanitarian access to IDP camps. While life-saving humanitarian assistance continued, most group activities, including education and psychosocial support remained suspended or significantly curtailed.[763]

Table 8.

Attacks Impacting Healthcare Workers and Facilities in Northwest Syria, July–September 2021

Date	Location	Description of Attack
July 3	Western Idlib province	Five USAID implementer volunteer staff conducting emergency health activities were injured as a result of four air raids targeting the implementer's facilities. A facility and several vehicles, including the implementer's ambulances, were significantly damaged.
July 15	Afrin, Aleppo	The USAID BHA-funded al-Shifa'a Hospital partially evacuated due to a missile attack launched on Afrin city, which resulted in 1 civilian death and injuries to 12 others.
July 17	Southern Idlib province	One volunteer for a USAID implementer conducting emergency health activities was killed, and two volunteer staff injured, as a result of a double tap airstrike. The volunteer died while rescuing a family trapped under rubble.
July 25	Afrin, Aleppo	A USAID implementer center conducting emergency health activities was struck by a missile and was rendered inoperative as a result. Eight civilians suffered injuries.
August 5	Not reported	Two volunteers of a USAID implementer conducting emergency health activities were targeted by a guided missile, which resulted in injuries to one volunteer. An ambulance was also destroyed.
August 19	Afrin, Aleppo	A USAID implementer supporting al-Shifa'a Hospital evacuated all non-essential staff due to proximity of rockets launched on Afrin city.
August 30	Afrin, Aleppo	Al-Shifa'a Hospital was attacked by mortars, which resulted in structural damage.

Sources: USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021; WFP, "Syria mVAM Bulletin #58: August 2021," 9/21/2021.

A U.S. Soldier conducts area reconnaissance during civil engagements in Syria. (U.S. Army photo)

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

This section of the report provides information on Lead IG and partner agencies' strategic planning efforts; completed, ongoing, and planned Lead IG and partner agencies' oversight work related to audits, inspections, and evaluations; Lead IG investigations; and hotline activities from July 1 through September 30, 2021.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

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

FY 2021 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan Activities

In 2014, upon designation of the DoD IG as the Lead IG for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), the three Lead IG agencies developed and implemented a joint strategic oversight plan for comprehensive oversight of OIR. The three Lead IG agencies update the oversight plan annually.

The FY 2022 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for OIR is scheduled to be published in November 2021, and will organize OIR-related oversight projects into three strategic oversight areas: 1) Military Operations and Security Cooperation; 2) Governance, Humanitarian Assistance, and Development; and 3) Support to Mission. The *FY 2022 Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations* will include the Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for OIR.

The Overseas Contingency Operations Joint Planning Group serves as a primary venue to coordinate audits, inspections, and evaluations of U.S. Government-funded activities supporting overseas contingency operations, including those relating to the Middle East.

The Overseas Contingency Operations Joint Planning Group meets quarterly to provide a forum for coordination of the broader Federal oversight community, including the military service IGs and audit agencies, the Government Accountability Office, and the OIGs of the Departments of Justice, Treasury, Energy, and Homeland Security.

In August 2021, the Joint Planning Group held its 55th meeting, carried out virtually to accommodate participants because of coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) precautions. The participants discussed OCO-related audits, inspections, and other oversight projects they planned to conduct during FY 2022.

Lead IG Strategic Oversight Areas

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

Military Operations and Security Cooperation focuses on determining the degree to which the contingency operation is accomplishing its security mission. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Conducting unilateral and partnered counterterrorism operations
- Providing security assistance
- Training and equipping partner security forces
- Advising, assisting, and enabling partner security forces
- Advising and assisting ministry-level security officials

GOVERNANCE, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, AND DEVELOPMENT

Governance, Humanitarian Assistance, and Development focuses on some of the root causes of violent extremism. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Countering and reducing corruption, social inequality, and extremism
- Promoting inclusive and effective democracy, civil participation, and empowerment of women
- Promoting reconciliation, peaceful conflict resolution, demobilization and reintegration of armed forces, and other rule of law efforts
- Providing food, water, medical care, emergency relief, and shelter to people affected by crisis
- Assisting and protecting internally displaced persons and refugees
- Building or enhancing host-nation governance capacity
- Supporting sustainable and appropriate recovery and reconstruction activities, repairing infrastructure, removing explosive remnants of war, and reestablishing utilities and other public services
- Countering trafficking in persons and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse

SUPPORT TO MISSION

Support to Mission focuses on U.S. administrative, logistical, and management efforts that enable military operations and non-military programs. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Ensuring the security of U.S. Government personnel and property
- Providing for the occupational health and safety of personnel
- Administering U.S. Government programs
- Managing U.S. Government grants and contracts
- Inventorying and accounting for equipment

AUDIT, INSPECTION, AND EVALUATION ACTIVITY

The Lead IG agencies use dedicated, rotational, and temporary employees, as well as contractors, to conduct oversight projects, investigate fraud and corruption, and provide consolidated planning and reporting on the status of overseas contingency operations.

The COVID-19 global pandemic continued to affect the Lead IG agencies' ability to conduct oversight of projects related to overseas contingency operations. In response to travel restrictions, the Lead IG agencies either delayed or deferred some oversight projects or revised or narrowed the scope of ongoing work. The Lead IG agencies continued to conduct oversight work while teleworking and practicing social distancing.

Prior to the pandemic, oversight staff from the Lead IG agencies stationed in field offices in Qatar, Iraq, Egypt, and Germany, as well as from the United States, would travel to locations in the region to conduct fieldwork for their projects.

DoD OIG oversight and investigative staff maintained their presence in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain during the quarter. While the ordered departure that has been in place since March 2020 continued during the quarter, each of the DoS OIG staff assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad have returned to Iraq. DoS OIG staff stationed in Frankfurt, Germany, primarily worked from home rather than their offices in the consulate.

The Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies completed 12 reports related to OIR during the quarter. These reports examined various activities that support OIR, including the effectiveness of the Defense Logistics Agency's oversight of bulk fuel contracts in Iraq; security for additive manufacturing systems used by DoD Components; the Army's implementation of corrective actions identified in a previous DoD OIG report related to transportation programs in the Middle East; DoS audits, inspections, and a management assistance report related to contract actions, acquisitions, and contract management; as well as Air Force management of installation access controls, communications systems and government purchase transactions at facilities that support the OIR mission.

As of September 30, 2021, 13 projects related to OIR were ongoing and 14 projects related to OIR were planned.

Final Reports by Lead IG Agencies

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of the Defense Logistics Agency Award and Management of Bulk Fuel Contracts in Areas of Contingency Operations

Report No. DODIG-2021-129; September 23, 2021

The DoD OIG conducted this audit to determine whether Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Energy personnel awarded bulk fuel contracts and met bulk fuel requirements, in areas of contingency operations, as required by Federal and DoD guidance. This audit determined that DLA Energy contracting officials complied with Federal Acquisition Regulation and DoD guidance and generally met bulk fuel requirements, valued at $212.9 million, in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, the Philippines, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

CUI

DLA Energy officials ensured contractors fulfilled bulk fuel requirements for 164 of the 180 orders reviewed. For the remaining 16 orders, DLA Energy officials ultimately ensured DoD customers received the fuel needed to meet mission needs. However, to fulfill the bulk fuel requirements, DLA Energy officials needed to use onetime buys that resulted in late deliveries and at an additional cost to the DoD. Further, DLA Energy contracting officers terminated 26 of 180 orders, which cost the DoD an additional $9.1 million for the new bulk fuel contracts due to price increases and other costs, and one termination resulted in a cost savings of $2.7 million due to a lower price per gallon on the replacement contract.

Due to the frequency and nature of terminations in Iraq, this audit includes an analysis of an additional 36 terminated Iraq contracts. For reasons outside of DLA control, there were 38 terminated Iraq contracts which resulted in $50.4 million in additional costs to the DoD due to price increases based on the original and replacement contract values and other costs.

The DoD OIG recommend that the Commander of DLA Energy direct contracting officers to consider a tradeoff source selection, and consider using past performance evaluation factors, in addition to other factors such as cost or price, for bulk fuel purchases in areas of overseas contingency operations. Management agreed with the recommendation.

Audit of the Cybersecurity of Department of Defense Additive Manufacturing Systems

Report No. DODIG-2021-098; July 1, 2021

The DoD OIG conducted this audit to determine whether DoD Components secured additive manufacturing systems to prevent unauthorized changes and ensure the integrity of the design data.

Additive manufacturing, known as "3D printing," is a process that creates physical objects by adding layers of material from a digital description of the product's design. DoD Components, including military units that support OIR, use additive manufacturing systems to build molds for personal protection body armor, parts for tactical vehicles, brackets for weapons systems, and medical implants and prostheses (artificial body parts). The process allows DoD Components to create parts on demand, which reduces the need to store or maintain large on hand inventories.

The DoD OIG determined that DoD officials at five sites reviewed in the audit generally had controls in place for managing user accounts, configuring authentication factors, accounting for additive manufacturing additive manufacturing assets, and implementing physical security controls. However, they did not consistently secure or manage their additive manufacturing systems or design data because additive manufacturing users considered the systems as tools to generate supply parts instead of information technology systems that required cybersecurity controls.

Furthermore, DoD Components incorrectly categorized the additive manufacturing systems as stand-alone systems and erroneously concluded that these systems did not require an authority to operate. By not requiring an authority to operate, DoD Components eliminated the requirement to conduct a risk assessment, identify risks to the system, and implement security controls for identifying and mitigating those risks. As a result, DoD Components

were unaware of existing additive manufacturing system vulnerabilities that exposed the DoD Information Network to unnecessary cybersecurity risks.

The DoD OIG made several recommendations to improve the cybersecurity of additive manufacturing systems, including for DoD leaders to update all additive manufacturing computer operating systems to the latest software; scan all systems for vulnerabilities; and label, secure, and scan, as applicable, all removable media devices connected to additive manufacturing systems in accordance with DoD guidance.

Management agreed with all but one recommendation. The DoD Chief Information Officer disagreed that cybersecurity guidance should be established for additive manufacturing systems. However, the recommendation was considered closed because actions taken and planned by other DoD Components met the intent of the recommendation.

Followup Audit of the U.S. Army's Management of the Heavy Lift Commercial Transportation Contract Requirements in the Middle East

DODIG-2021-097; July 1, 2021

The DoD OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the Army implemented corrective actions identified in Report No. DODIG-2017-095, "U.S. Army's Management of the Heavy Lift VII Commercial Transportation Contract Requirements in the Middle East," June 26, 2017, in the Heavy Lift VIII (HL8) contract to improve oversight and performance.

The DoD OIG determined that the U.S. Central Command and the Army fully implemented corrective actions to address five recommendations and did not fully address one recommendation made in the previous report. The 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) did not develop a systemic process for collecting actual HL8 usage data or implement a system for forecasting HL8 requirements. As a result of Theater officials not fully implementing the recommendation from the prior report, U.S. Army Central and Theater officials cannot rely on the HL8 usage data that is being collected to monitor HL8 contract performance or identify and address poor mission planning that could lead to wasted HL8 assets. As a result, the Army may continue to waste HL8 assets similar to the $53.6 million in wasted assets identified in the prior audit of the Heavy Lift VII contract.

The DoD OIG did not make any new recommendations. However, one of the six initial recommendations remains open. The DoD OIG encouraged the 1st Sustainment Command Commander to fully implement corrective actions to address the intent of the recommendation. The remaining open recommendation from the earlier review was for the 1st Sustainment Command Commander provide supporting documentation showing consistent data that is based on actual loading and delivery dates and evidence that the information is reported uniformly across the different operating areas and deployed movement control battalions. Management agreed to address the remaining recommendation.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of Acquisition Planning and Cost Controls While Transitioning Support Service Contracts in Iraq

AUD-MERO-21-43; September 14, 2021

The DoS OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the DoS complied with Federal and DoS requirements in performing acquisition planning and controlling costs associated with contract actions for two support services contracts in Iraq while preparing for a transition to another, larger support services contract.

The DoS OIG found that the DoS did not fully comply with Federal and DoS requirements for acquisition planning for the transition of the two support services contracts to the larger support services contract. Specifically, the DoS OIG found that ineffective acquisition planning resulted in forgoing requirements and caused delays in awarding the larger support services contract. In addition, the DoS OIG found that incomplete acquisition planning led to 65 noncompetitive contract actions being awarded to continue the two long-existing support services contracts that were supposed to be replaced. As of May 2021, more than 2 years after the larger support services contract was awarded, the DoS had not issued any Iraq-specific competitive task orders and continued to noncompetitively extend the earlier support services contracts. Because Federal law does not permit poor planning as justification for the use of noncompetitive contract actions, the DoS OIG questioned the full $663 million the DoS incurred on the noncompetitive contract actions to extend the long-time support services contracts.

The DoS OIG made eight recommendations in this report, all to the Bureau of Administration, to improve acquisition planning for high-dollar complex contracts and to strengthen cost-control measures when using noncompetitive contract actions to continue services. The Bureau of Administration concurred with all eight recommendations and the DoS OIG considered each recommendation to be resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

Audit of Department of State Compliance with Requirements Relating to Undefinitized Contract Actions

AUD-MERO-21-38; July 27, 2021

The DoS OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the Bureau of Administration, Office of the Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisitions Management complied with Federal and DoS guidelines in the application and execution of undefinitized contract actions (UCA).

The audit included contracts and task orders performed in Afghanistan and Iraq. A UCA is an agreement between the Government and a contractor that allows the contractor to begin work and incur costs before the Government and the contractor have reached a final agreement on contract terms, specifications, or price when there is insufficient time to use normal contracting mechanisms.

The DoS OIG determined that AQM did not fully comply with the Federal Acquisition Regulation in the application and execution of UCAs. The DoS OIG reviewed a sample of 48 high-value DoS contracts and task orders identified in the official, publicly accessible

database as UCAs and found that 36 of the 48 contracts and task orders had been improperly recorded as UCAs in the database. Of the 12 contracts and task orders correctly recorded in the database as UCAs, 11 of 12 did not fully comply with Federal and DoS guidelines.

The DoS OIG made four recommendations in this report, all to the Department's Procurement Executive. The Procurement Executive concurred with all four recommendations and the DoS OIG considered all four recommendations to be resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

Management Assistance Report: Improved Guidance and Acquisition Planning Is Needed to Reduce the Use of Bridge Contracts in Afghanistan and Iraq

AUD-MERO-21-37; July 22, 2021

During an ongoing audit of the DoS's use of noncompetitive contracts in support of overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the DoS OIG determined that the use of noncompetitive "bridge contracts" was permitted in accordance with statutory authorities that allow for contracting without the use of full and open competition. Neither the Competition in Contracting Act of 1984 nor the Federal Acquisition Regulation contain guidance governing the continued use of noncompetitive use of bridge contracts.

The DoS OIG found that the DoS awarded short-term contracts on a sole-source basis as bridge contracts frequently in Afghanistan and Iraq over multiple years to noncompetitively extend contracted services beyond the expiration of an original contract. The DoS OIG reviewed 11 sole-source bridge contracts with a combined value of approximately $571 million that were awarded in Afghanistan and Iraq from October 2014 to June 2020.

The DoS OIG determined that the DoS had used sole-source bridge contracts in lieu of full and open competition because there is no Federal or DoS guidance that establishes parameters on the use, duration, or number of times a sole-source bridge contract can be awarded to an incumbent contractor. In addition, the DoS noted that the DoS's use of bridge contracts can be attributed, at least in part, to the absence of effective acquisition planning and the timely award of follow-on contracts. While the practice of using bridge contracts is not prohibited, the DoS OIG noted that the DoS's practice of using bridge contracts to an incumbent contractor over several years limited the DoS's ability to realize potential cost savings by maximizing full and open competition. For example, in one instance when a contract was recompeted, that action resulted in the DoS saving $6.8 million.

The DoS OIG made three recommendations in this report, all to the DoS's Procurement Executive. The Procurement Executive concurred with all three recommendations and the DoS OIG considered all three recommendations resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

Inspection of the Bureau of Administration, Office of the Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisitions Management, Diplomatic Security Contracts Division

ISP-I-21-15; July 20, 2021

The DoS OIG inspected the contract management, oversight, and support services of the DoS Office of Acquisition Management's Diplomatic Security Contracts Division. This division awards and manages contracts and other acquisition agreements on behalf of the

DoS's Bureau of Diplomatic Security. As such, the Diplomatic Security Contracts Division is the service provider that delivers a range of services and support for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's security, logistics, and service contracts for domestic and overseas operations including but not limited to protective services in Afghanistan and Iraq, local guard forces, and antiterrorism assistance and training.

The DoS OIG found that while the Diplomatic Security Contracts Division fostered collaborative relationship with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the division 1) lacked integrated financial management and procurement information technology systems to support efficient contracting operations and 2) did not have a knowledge management strategy to efficiently store and retrieve information essential to its operations. The DoS OIG noted that the division had success in initiating two informal training sessions that gave contracting officers and contracting officer's representatives a platform to share information on contracting topics.

The DoS OIG made three recommendations in this report, all to the Bureau of Administration. The Bureau of Administration concurred with all three recommendations and the DoS OIG considered each recommendation resolved pending further action at the time the report was issued.

Management Alert: U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq, Body Armor
MA-21-01; July 16, 2021

The DoS issued this management alert during its ongoing audit to determine whether U.S. Embassy Baghdad has implemented internal controls to account for and manage the life cycle of nonexpendable personal property in accordance with Federal requirements and DoS regulations. The management alert report is classified. Details are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

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

USAID Has Contract Termination Guidance That Aligns With Federal Contracting Requirements, but Employees Could Benefit From Additional Resources
9-000-21-009-P; September 23, 2021

USAID OIG conducted this audit to assess to USAID's policies and procedures guiding foreign assistance contract terminations and the extent to which they were applied.

Between FYs 2017 and 2020, USAID spent an average of $20.6 billion annually in acquisition and assistance awards to implement foreign aid and development programs, including those in the OIR area of operations.

USAID OIG determined that USAID's contract termination guidance laid out in USAID's Acquisition Regulations (AIDAR) and Automated Directives System (ADS) was in line with the Federal Acquisition Regulation. For the period reviewed, contract officers terminated foreign assistance contracts in accordance with established policies and procedures. During the time period, USAID terminated five foreign assistance contracts, which were reviewed in the audit.

However, contract officers identified challenges and opportunities to improve USAID's contract termination process. For example, management engagement—from pressure from management to either terminate a contract, not terminate a contract, or to terminate a contract for convenience despite raising the adverse cost implications of doing so, to a lack of leadership support—made termination decisions more difficult. Prudent management of USAID contracts—to include establishing and complying with policies and procedures for award terminations—helps ensure proper stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

USAID OIG made one recommendation to USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance to strengthen its foreign assistance contract termination process. Management agreed with the recommendation.

Final Reports by Partner Agencies

AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY

Installation Access Controls at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait

F2021-0007-RA0000; July 29, 2021

The Air Force Audit Agency (AFAA) conducted this audit to determine whether Air Force personnel manage installation access controls at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait in accordance with guidance. Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait supports operations in the OIR area of responsibility. The report contains controlled unclassified information. Details are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

Personal Wireless Communication Systems 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar

F2021-0036-REE000; July 29, 2021

The AFAA conducted this audit to determine whether Al Udeid Air Base personnel properly accounted for cellular phones and established Personal Wireless Communication System contracts that met mission requirements.

Air Force personnel at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar support operations in the OIR area of responsibility. The Air Force uses land mobile radios to operate a short-range communications network essential to the overall mission. Land mobile radios are managed as personal wireless communication systems. As of May 21, the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing maintained 1,993 land mobile radios on accountable records, valued at over $8.9 million.

The AFAA determined that 379th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel did not account for land mobile radios. Specifically, 3 (23 percent) of 13 accounts had accountability errors. Additionally, 379th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel did not validate requirements for land mobile radios. Specifically, personnel did not validate requirements for all 13 accounts reviewed, nor did the 379th Expeditionary Communications Squadron have a radio life cycle plan.

The AFAA made six recommendations to improve personal wireless communication system program management. Management agreed with the recommendations.

A C-17 Globemaster III lands at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Government Purchase Card Management 386th Air Expeditionary Wing Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait

F2021-0004-RA0000; July 19, 2021

The AFAA conducted this audit to determine whether 386th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel authorized and documented contingency operations government purchase card transactions in accordance with guidance and received services and accounted for assets purchased with government purchase card transactions at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait.

Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait supports operations in the OIR area of responsibility. The government purchase card program provides an efficient means for federal agencies to purchase goods and services directly from vendors. Agencies receive purchase cards and related services from banks through General Services Administration SmartPay 3 Program awarded contracts. During the period of March 2020 through April 2021, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing cardholders made over 2,400 purchase card transactions valued at approximately $6.8 million.

The AFAA determined that 386th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel authorized contingency operations government purchase card transactions. However, Wing personnel did not document receipt for goods and services and account for assets in accordance with purchase card guidance. Properly approving and documenting purchase card transactions and accounting for purchased assets provide assurance that purchases are required to support the Air Force mission, ensures the most efficient use of government funds, and helps minimize the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse.

The AFAA made three recommendations to improve the Wing's accountability for items purchased with the government purchase card. Management agreed with the recommendations and implemented two corrective actions to improve the receipt and accountability of purchased items.

Ongoing Oversight Activities

As of September 30, 2021, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 13 ongoing projects related to OIR. Figure 13 describes the ongoing projects by strategic oversight area.

Table 9, contained in Appendix E, lists the title and objective for each of these projects. Appendix E also identifies ongoing projects that the DoD OIG suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those projects will restart when the DoD OIG resumes normal operations.

The following sections highlight some of these ongoing projects by strategic oversight area.

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the Military Services effectively conducted pre-deployment training to counter an adversary's use of unmanned aircraft systems.

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an evaluation to determine whether USCENTCOM properly screened, documented, and tracked DoD Service members—including those serving in Iraq and Syria—suspected of sustaining a traumatic brain injury to determine whether a return to duty status for current operations was acceptable or evacuation and additional care was required.

SUPPORT TO MISSION

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the deployment process resulted in accurate and timely entitlements and allowances for deployed members of the Military Service Reserves, including those deployed to the OIR area of operations.

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting a follow up evaluation to determine whether corrective actions were taken as identified in the 2019 "Evaluation of DoD Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Kuwait," related to contractors at facilities supporting OIR.

- The **DoS OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the DoS followed acquisition policy in awarding non-competitive contracts in support of overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Figure 13.

Ongoing Projects by Strategic Oversight Area
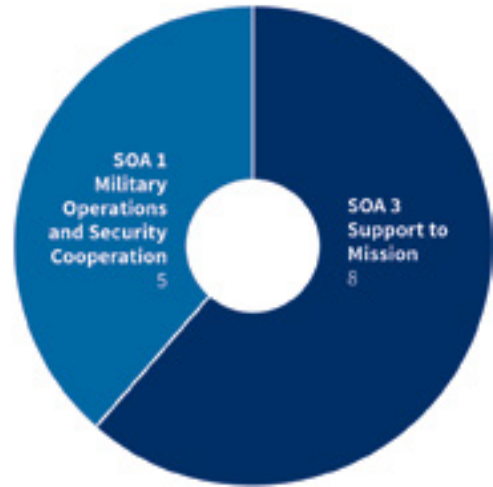
Planned Oversight Projects

As of September 30, 2021, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 14 planned projects related to OIR. Figure 14 describes the planned projects by strategic oversight area.

Table 11, contained in Appendix E, lists the titles and objectives for each of these projects. The following sections highlight some of these planned projects by strategic oversight area.

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether the DoD is implementing effective oversight, controls, and processes to mitigate cybersecurity risks to unmanned systems, including those in the OIR area of responsibility.

- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct an evaluation to determine whether the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency is collecting, analyzing, and distributing geospatial intelligence in support of Combatant Commands' intelligence requirements in accordance with law and DoD policy and guidance, including those in the OIR area of responsibility.

SUPPORT TO MISSION

- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether the Army is meeting mission goals associated with implementing a program to modernize equipment sets in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility, to include Kuwait in support of OIR.

- The **DoS OIG** intends to conduct an audit to determine whether the DoS considered existing and future electrical power needs and infrastructure of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad when designing the new power plant, conducted oversight of the construction and commissioning of the new power plant, and took measures to mitigate design or construction deficiencies, if any.

Figure 14.

Planned Projects by Strategic Oversight Area

SOA 3 Support to Mission 4

SOA 1 Military Operations and Security Cooperation 10
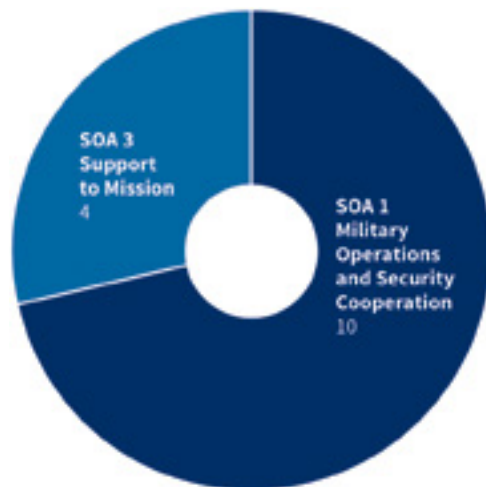
INVESTIGATIONS AND HOTLINE ACTIVITY

Investigations

The investigative components of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies continued to conduct investigative activity related to OIR during the quarter. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lead IG agencies consolidated resources and temporarily closed offices in Iraq. The DoD OIG's criminal investigative component, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), maintained investigative personnel in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar, where they are working cases related to OIR. DCIS agents also worked on OIR-related cases from offices in the United States. DoS OIG and USAID OIG investigators are working on cases related to OIR in Washington, D.C.

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY RELATED TO OIR

During this quarter, Lead IG investigations resulted in one conviction stemming from a DCIS and U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division investigation into kickback schemes for OIR-related contracts. The case is discussed below.

The investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies closed 10 investigations, initiated 2 new investigations, and coordinated on 71 open investigations. The open investigations involve grant and procurement fraud, corruption, theft, program irregularities, computer intrusions, and human trafficking allegations.

The Lead IG agencies and partners continue to coordinate their investigative efforts through the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group, which consists of representatives from DCIS, the DoS OIG, USAID OIG, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. This quarter, the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group conducted 35 fraud awareness briefings for 213 participants.

FORMER U.S. ARMY EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO KICKBACK SCHEME TO STEER U.S. GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

On July 21 a former civilian employee of the U.S. Army's Directorate of Public Works pleaded guilty for his role in a kickbacks scheme to steer government contracts for work at Camp Arifjan, a U.S. Army base in Kuwait. According to court documents, Ephraim Garcia, 64, admitted that he conspired with Gandhiraj Sankaralingam, aka Gandhi Raj, the former general manager and co-owner of Kuwait-based contracting company Gulf Link Venture Co. W.L.L. (Gulf Link), to steer government contracts to Gulf Link. In his position with the U.S. Army, Garcia was involved in the solicitation, award and management of certain government contracts related to facilities support at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

According to the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division and DCIS investigation, in 2015, Garcia and Sankaralingam approached an employee of the prime contractor responsible for base support services. They offered to pay the prime-contractor employee

ACTIVITY BY FRAUD AND CORRUPTION INVESTIGATIVE WORKING GROUP

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE
As of September 30, 2021

OPEN INVESTIGATIONS*

Trafficking in Persons 6%
Projects 4%
Program Irregularity 1%
Computer Intrusion 7%
Other 6%
Grant Fraud 7%
Theft 8%
Corruption 16%
Procurement Fraud 45%

71

OPEN INVESTIGATIONS BY WORKING GROUP MEMBER*

DCIS 37
Army CID 14
USAID OIG 10
DoS OIG 6
AFOSI 3
NCIS 1

SOURCES OF ALLEGATIONS

USCENTCOM 7%
NCIS 2%
DoS 7%
AFOSI 9%
USAID 12%
DCIS 40%
Army CID 23%

Q4 FY 2021 BRIEFINGS

Briefings Held	35
Briefing Attendees	213

Q4 FY 2021 RESULTS
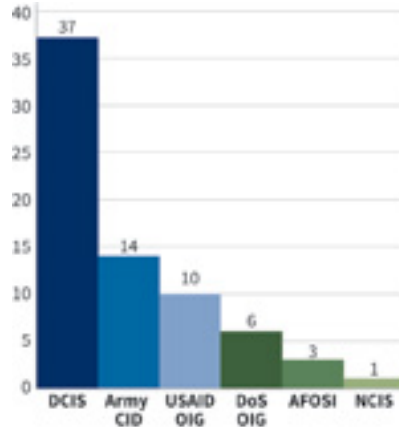
Arrests	—
Criminal Charges	—
Criminal Convictions	1
Fines/Recoveries	—
Debarments	—
Contract Terminations	—
Personnel Actions	—
Administrative Actions	—
Forfeitures	—
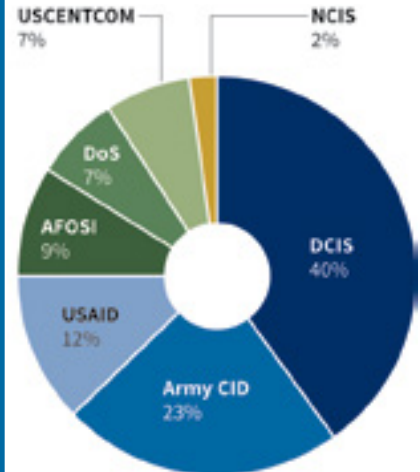
PRIMARY OFFENSE LOCATIONS

Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Oman

IRAQ, KUWAIT, QATAR, SYRIA, UAE, BAHRAIN, LEBANON, SAUDI ARABIA, TURKEY, JORDAN, OMAN

Legend: Bribery, Procurement Fraud, Program Fraud, Theft, Trafficking in Persons, Other

*Some investigations are joint with more than one agency and some not joint with any other agency. Therefore, the total number of Joint Open Cases may not equal the total number of Open Cases. Open Cases as of 9/30/2021.

in exchange for his assistance in steering subcontracts worth over $3 million to Gulf Link. Rather than agree to the scheme, the prime contractor employee reported the kickback offer to authorities. Garcia was arrested in the Philippines in December 2019, and later deported to the United States. On August 19, 2020, Sankaralingam was charged in a superseding indictment with conspiracy to offer a kickback and with paying illegal gratuities to Garcia. Sankaralingam remains a fugitive.

Garcia pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to offer a kickback and one count of offering a kickback. He is scheduled to be sentenced on October 15, 2021, and faces a maximum of five years in prison on the conspiracy charge and 10 years in prison on the kickback charge.

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY RELATED TO LEGACY CASES

The Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies have 6 ongoing "legacy" investigations related to crimes involving the OIR area of operations that occurred prior to the designation of OIR.

Hotline

Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints specific to its agency. The hotlines provide a confidential, reliable means for individuals to report violations of law, rule, or regulation; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; or abuse of authority. A DoD OIG Hotline investigator coordinates among the Lead IG agencies and others, as appropriate.

During the quarter, the DoD OIG hotline investigator received 132 allegations and referred 92 cases to Lead IG agencies and other investigative organizations. In some instances, it is possible for multiple cases to be referred to different Lead IG and other investigative agencies for the same allegations.

As noted in Figure 15, the majority of the allegations during the reporting period were related to personal misconduct, criminal allegations, personnel matters, and retaliation.

Figure 15.

Hotline Activities

Trafficking in Persons
3.0%

Pay and Benefits
0.75%

Safety
0.75%

Waste of Government Resources
6.0%

Other
6.0%

Procurement/
Contract Administration
7.6%

Personal
Misconduct/
Ethics
Violations
28.0%

132
Allegations

Reprisal
14.4%

Criminal
Allegations
17.5%

Personnel
Matters
16.0%

CUI
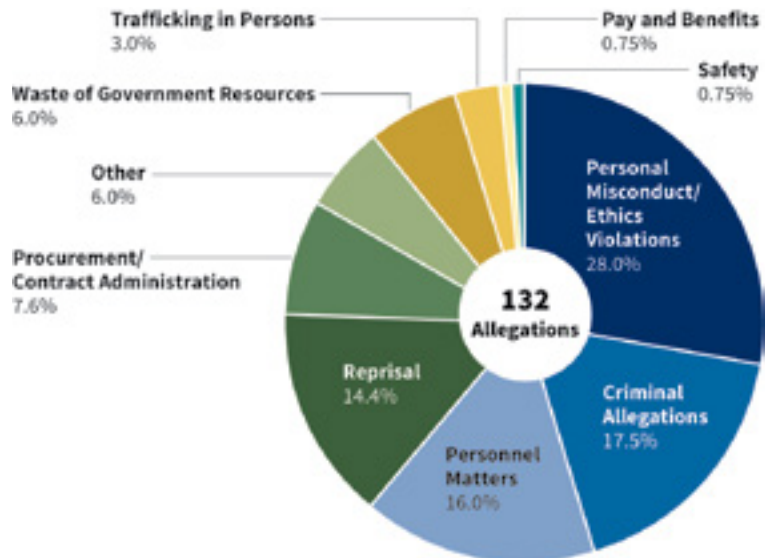
A technician from the Ifras Water Center in Erbil adjusts the intake settings according to the new operations and maintenance protocols introduced by the USAID Governance and Performance Accountability project. (IGPA/Takamul Project photo)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Classified Appendix to this Report

A classified appendix to this report provides additional information on Operation Inherent Resolve, as noted in several sections of this report. The appendix will be delivered to relevant agencies and congressional committees. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID OIG did not provide information for or participate in the preparation of the classified appendix.

APPENDIX B
Methodology for Preparing this
Lead IG Quarterly Report

This report complies with section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, which requires that the designated Lead IG provide a quarterly report, available to the public, on each overseas contingency operation, and is consistent with the requirement that a biannual report be published by the Lead IG on the activities of the Inspectors General with respect to that overseas contingency operation. The Chair of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency designated the DoD IG as the Lead IG for Operation Inherent Resolve. The DoS IG is the Associate IG for the operation.

This report covers the period from July 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021. The three Lead IG agencies—DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG—and partner oversight agencies contributed the content of this report.

To fulfill the congressional mandate to report on OIR, the Lead IG agencies gather data and information from Federal agencies and open sources. The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case audits, inspections, investigations, and evaluations referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not verified or audited the information collected through open-source research or from Federal agencies, and the information provided represents the view of the source cited in each instance.

INFORMATION COLLECTION FROM AGENCIES AND OPEN SOURCES

Each quarter, the Lead IG agencies gather information from the DoD, DoS, USAID, and other Federal agencies about their programs and operations related to OIR. The Lead IG agencies use the information provided by their respective agencies for quarterly reporting and oversight planning.

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

- U.S. Government statements, press conferences, and reports
- Reports issued by international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and think tanks
- Media reports

The Lead IG agencies use open-source information to assess information obtained through their agency information collection process and provide additional detail about the operation.

REPORT PRODUCTION

The DoD IG, as the Lead IG for this operation, is responsible for assembling and producing this report. The DoD OIG, the DoS OIG, and USAID OIG draft the sections of the report related to the activities of their agencies and then participate in the editing of the entire report. Once the report is assembled, each OIG coordinates a two-phase review process within its own agency. During the first review, the Lead IG agencies ask relevant offices within their agencies to comment, correct inaccuracies, and provide additional documentation. The Lead IG agencies incorporate agency comments, where appropriate, and send the report back to the agencies for a second review prior to publication. The final report reflects the editorial view of the DoD OIG, the DoS OIG, and USAID OIG as independent oversight agencies.

APPENDIX C
Department of Justice Prosecutions and Activities Against Terrorism

Since 2014, the Department of Justice (DoJ) has charged more than 210 individuals with international terrorism-related conduct relating to ISIS. Since 2014, the DoJ has obtained more than 160 convictions; the remaining cases remain open. A portion of the aforementioned cases involve individuals who could be described as foreign terrorist fighters or homegrown violent extremists linked to ISIS, as well as those who may have assisted their conduct, obstructed investigations, or otherwise involved an identified link to ISIS.

The following examples include details on indictments, convictions, or sentences related to foreign terrorist fighters and homegrown violent extremists related to ISIS activity from July 1 through September 30, 2021:

- **On August 10, 2021, in the Western District of Michigan, Muse Abdikadir Muse** was sentenced to 78 months in prison and on August 12, 2021, co-defendant Mohamud Muse was sentenced to 98 months in prison for conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. Both defendants were ordered to 10 years of supervised release. On January 21, 2019, special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and members of its Joint Terrorism Task Force arrested Muse at the airport in Grand Rapids, Michigan, after he checked in for a flight to the first of a series of destinations on his way to Mogadishu, Somalia, with the goal of joining ISIS. Shortly thereafter, his brother Mohamud Muse and cousin were arrested as co-conspirators. According to court documents, between December 2018 and January 2019, Muse coordinated with an individual he believed to be a Somali ISIS fighter to wire funds to be used to purchase airline tickets for travel to Mogadishu, Somalia, where he believed he would meet an ISIS representative. All three defendants picked up money to provide Muse the funds to travel to join ISIS, all three defendants pledged allegiance to ISIS in recorded videos, and all three submitted their videos to individuals they believed were associated with ISIS. Additionally, records provided to the Court at sentencing demonstrated that, throughout the conspiracy, all three defendants participated in numerous conversations during which they discussed traveling overseas to join ISIS and even adopted fighter aliases by which they would be known when fighting for ISIS.

- **On August 11, 2021, in the Central District of California, a jury found Mark Steven Domingo** guilty of providing material support to terrorism and attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction for his plan to bomb a rally in Long Beach for the purpose of causing mass casualties. The investigation into Domingo was prompted by his online posts and conversations in an online forum in which he expressed support for violent jihad, a desire to seek retribution for attacks against Muslims and a willingness to become a martyr. After considering various attacks—including targeting Jewish people, churches, and police officers—Domingo decided to bomb a rally scheduled to take place in Long Beach in April 2019. As part of the plot, Domingo asked a confederate—who was working with the FBI as part of the investigation—to invite a bomb-maker into the scheme. Domingo then purchased and provided to the confederate and the bomb-maker—who in fact was an undercover law enforcement officer—several hundred nails to be used as shrapnel for the

bombs. Domingo specifically chose those nails because they were long enough to penetrate organs in the human body. Leading up to the attack, Domingo called for another event like the October 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas. Following an attack on Muslims in New Zealand in March 2019, Domingo called for retribution in an online post. According to the complaint, during an April 3 meeting, Domingo allegedly expressed support for ISIS and said if ISIS "came here," he would swear allegiance to ISIS. Domingo selected the Long Beach rally as his target and, in April 2019, drove his confederate and the undercover officer to Long Beach to scout the location he planned to attack. While there, Domingo discussed finding the most crowded areas so he could kill the most people. On April 26, 2019, Domingo received what he thought were two live bombs, but were inert explosive devices delivered by an undercover law enforcement officer. He was arrested that same day with one of the bombs in his hands.

- **On August 23, 2021, in the Eastern District of New York, Bernard Augustine** was convicted of attempting to provide material support to ISIS. According to evidence presented at trial, in February 2016, the defendant traveled from San Francisco, California, to Northern Africa, with the goal of joining ISIS. In the months leading up to his travel, the defendant watched ISIS propaganda, including videos glorifying ISIS's violence. The defendant conducted internet searches for, among other things, "how to safely join ISIS," and reviewed websites related to ISIS recruitment practices. Augustine also posted numerous statements in support of ISIS and violent extremism on the internet. Augustine then purchased a one-way airplane ticket and traveled to Tunisia so that he could present himself as a willing participant in ISIS's terrorist activity. After arriving in Tunisia, Augustine was detained by local authorities before he could make it to ISIS-controlled territory across the border in Libya. He was subsequently returned to the United States in 2018, where he was brought to the Eastern District of New York for prosecution.

- **On September 2, 2021, in the Eastern District of Virginia, Alexanda Amon Kotey** pled guilty to all eight counts that were pending against him in the United States. According to court records, from in or around November 2012 through on or about February 7, 2015, former British citizen Kotey, 37, served as an ISIS fighter and participated in the captivity of American and European hostages in Syria. Kotey specifically participated in the seizure, detention, and hostage negotiations for four American citizens—James Wright Foley, Kayla Jean Mueller, Steven Joel Sotloff, and Peter Edward Kassig—each of whom died as hostages in ISIS custody. In addition, Kotey participated in hostage operations involving British, Italian, Danish, and German nationals, among others. According to court documents, Kotey and two other ISIS members supervised the terrorist organization's jails and detention facilities at which the hostages were held and were responsible for transferring hostages between detention facilities. Kotey and his co-conspirators engaged in a prolonged pattern of physical and psychological violence against hostages that was meant as an effort to control the hostages. These actions were also intended to compel the victims' family members and the U.S. Government to pay large monetary ransoms for their release, in addition to compelling the U.S. Government to agree to other terms and conditions for the victims' return. Kotey and his co-conspirators participated in forcibly exposing the hostages to the murder of other hostages held by ISIS, including a Russian hostage who was killed in or about February 2014 and a Syrian prisoner who was executed on or about April 25, 2014. After a group of European hostages were forced to witness the execution of the Syrian prisoner, Kotey and his co-conspirators returned the hostages to the prison where they were being held with American and British hostages. From August 2014 through October 2014, ISIS released videos depicting the beheadings of James Foley, Steven Sotloff and British citizens David Haines and Alan Henning. In November 2014, ISIS released a video depicting the decapitated head of Peter Kassig. In January 2015, ISIS released videos depicting the decapitated body of Japanese citizen Haruna Yukawa and the beheading of Japanese citizen Kenji Goto. On or about February 7, 2015, Kayla Mueller's family received an email from ISIS fighters confirming Mueller's death in Syria. Kotey faces a mandatory sentence of life in prison and is scheduled to be sentenced on March 4, 2022, by Senior U.S. District Judge T. S. Ellis, III.

- **On September 13, 2021, in the Northern District of Ohio, Damon Michael Joseph** was sentenced to 20 years in prison for attempting to provide material support to ISIS, and attempting to commit a hate crime, for planning an attack on a synagogue in the Toledo, Ohio area. According to court documents, in 2018, Joseph drew the attention of law enforcement by posting photographs of weapons and various messages in support of ISIS on his social media accounts, as well as a photograph originally distributed by the media wing of ISIS. Beginning in September 2018, Joseph engaged in a series of online conversations with several undercover FBI agents where he repeatedly stated and affirmed his support for ISIS and produced propaganda, which he believed was to be used for ISIS recruitment efforts. Over the next few weeks, Joseph stated to an undercover agent that he wanted to participate in an attack on behalf of ISIS. On December 4, 2018, Joseph met with an undercover FBI agent and discussed conducting a mass shooting at a synagogue. Joseph identified two synagogues in the greater Toledo area as potential targets and discussed the types of weapons he believed would inflict mass casualties. On December 6, Joseph again met with an undercover agent to discuss his plans. Joseph stated specifically that he wanted to kill a rabbi and wrote the name and address of the synagogue where the attack was to occur and stated that he had conducted research to determine when the Jewish Sabbath was so that more people would be present. Later that day, the undercover agent told Joseph that he had purchased rifles for the attack. The two met on December 7, where Joseph took possession of a black duffel bag containing two semi-automatic rifles, which had been rendered inoperable by law enforcement officers so that they posed no danger to the public. Joseph was then arrested.

- **On September 16, 2021, in the Western District of Pennsylvania, Mustafa Mousab Alowemer**, 23, pled guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIS. According to court documents, Alowemer plotted to bomb a church located on the north side of Pittsburgh using an explosive device. His stated motivation to conduct such an attack was to support the cause of ISIS and to inspire other ISIS supporters in the United States to join together and commit similar acts in the name of ISIS. Alowemer also targeted the church to "take revenge for our [ISIS] brothers in Nigeria." Alowemer was aware that numerous people in the proximity of the church could be killed by the explosion. In furtherance of the plot to bomb the church, in May 2019, Alowemer distributed multiple instructional documents related to the construction and use of explosives and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to an individual Alowemer believed to be a fellow ISIS supporter, but who was in fact an FBI employee. Alowemer distributed these documents with the intent that the information be used in the assembly of a destructive device and in furtherance of conducting an attack in support of ISIS. In or around June 2019, Alowemer purchased several items, including nails and acetone (nail polish remover) with the belief that they were necessary to assemble a destructive device and with the intention they be used to construct the explosives that would be detonated in the vicinity of the church. At a June 11 meeting with an FBI undercover employee and FBI confidential human source, Alowemer provided additional details about the bomb plot and provided the materials, including boxes of nails, he had purchased for construction of the device. Alowemer provided printed copies of detailed Google satellite maps, which included hand-written markings identifying the church and routes of arrival and escape. Alowemer also wrote and provided a 10-point handwritten plan outlining details related to his plot to personally deliver explosives in a backpack. Alowemer expressed a desire to meet one more time to conduct planning and coordination prior to carrying out the attempted bombing in July 2019. That meeting was later scheduled for June 19 in the Pittsburgh area, at which time Alowemer was arrested.

In addition, 12 people have been transferred to the United States from Iraq and Syria to face federal criminal charges related to terrorism since 2014.

During the quarter, some DoJ programs designed to train Coalition partners in Iraq and Syria on law enforcement and domestic intelligence as part of counter-ISIS operations, remained on hold due to the DoS ordered departure of personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Despite the ongoing ordered departure, in late August, the Justice Attaché, a senior federal prosecutor, arrived at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad for a 1-year tour to manage the DOJ/Office of the Deputy Attorney General's Rule of Law Office.

Other DoJ programs continued, including through a National Security Division Attaché who facilitated civilian prosecution efforts for foreign terrorist fighters and other terrorists. This included:

- Reviewing intelligence and available information to determine if criminal prosecutions can be brought against suspected foreign terrorist fighters and other terrorists, including those being detained in Syria by partner forces, in either U.S. or foreign courts;

- Navigating the complexities of foreign legal systems and assisting in assembling available information for use by international partners in foreign investigations and prosecutions;

- Assisting both interagency and international partners to review complex legal issues associated with the use of intelligence in criminal investigations and court proceedings, and issues related to converting intelligence into evidence; and

- Training foreign counterterrorism partners on countering terrorist financing.

- Additionally, the DoJ's Office of International Affairs (OIA) is assisting partner nations in developing institutions and best practices needed for effective mutual legal assistance and extradition cooperation. Through OIA's Global Central Authorities Initiative, in coordination with the DoS, experts from OIA work with international counterparts, particularly throughout Asia, Africa and the Middle East, to help partner countries build effective central authorities. These institutions support effective international cooperation in criminal matters and enable the legal processes necessary to bring terrorists and other criminals to justice under the rule of law.

APPENDIX D
Department of the Treasury and Department of State Actions Against Terrorist Financing

Executive Order 13224, as amended, provides the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of State global terrorism authorities that authorize the Department to target activities of extremist groups, including ISIS. The Department of the Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence and its Office of Foreign Assets Control work to disrupt the ability of terrorist organizations to fund their operations. The DoS's Bureau of Counterterrorism leads DoS activities to counter terrorist finance and to designate Specially Designated Global Terrorists and Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY DESIGNATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Since 2014, the Secretary of the Treasury has designated a total of 99 individuals and entities providing support to ISIS pursuant to Executive Order 13224. The Secretary of the Treasury did not sanction any individuals or organizations during the quarter. No individuals or organizations sanctioned for providing support to ISIS were removed from the sanctions list during this reporting period.

The Department of the Treasury (Treasury) leverages its participation and influence to develop a shared understanding of the threat posed by ISIS, as well as to encourage countries to take action within their jurisdictions and in coordination with others to disrupt ISIS financing and facilitation.

Treasury continued to work with interagency and Coalition partners, including the Iraqi government, to prioritize identifying ISIS's financial reserves and financial leaders, disrupting its financial facilitation networks in Iraq, and designating ISIS facilitators, front companies, and fundraisers in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and elsewhere. Treasury also takes a leadership role in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, serving as a co-lead of the Counter ISIS Finance Group along with its counterparts from Italy and Saudi Arabia.

Treasury reported that ISIS's financial situation remains largely unchanged since last quarter. ISIS continued to raise funds through extortion of oil smuggling networks in eastern Syria, kidnapping for ransom targeting civilian businesses and populations, extortion, looting, and the possible operation of front companies. The group relied on money services businesses, including hawalas, throughout Iraq, Syria, and Turkey to transfer funds internationally. ISIS probably has tens of millions of U.S. dollars available in cash reserves dispersed across the region, but Treasury was not aware of the amount of money ISIS distributed during this quarter.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DESIGNATIONS

This quarter the Secretary of State did not make any Specially Designated Global Terrorist designations that were relevant to OIR.

APPENDIX E
Ongoing Oversight Projects

Tables 9 and 10 list the titles and objectives for Lead IG and partner agencies' ongoing oversight projects related to OIR.

Table 9.

Ongoing Oversight Projects Related to OIR by Lead IG Agency, as of September 30, 2021

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of Pre-Deployment Training on Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems
To determine whether the Military Services conducted pre-deployment training to counter an adversary's use of Unmanned Aerial Systems in accordance with the operational requirements of the geographic combatant commands, including those in the OIR area of responsibility.
*Suspended due to COVID-19. The project will restart when force health protection conditions permit.

Audit of Entitlements and Allowances for Deployed Reserve Service Members
To determine whether the DoD Reserve Components mobilization process ensures that entitlements and allowances are accurately identified and processed prior to service members' deployment, including those deployed to the OIR area of responsibility.

Evaluation of Traumatic Brain Injury Screening in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility
To determine whether the U.S. Central Command properly screened, documented, and tracked DoD Service members suspected of sustaining a traumatic brain injury—including those serving in Iraq and Syria—to determine whether a return to duty status for current operations was acceptable, or evacuation and additional care was required.

Audit of the DoD Counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Fund Stipends to the Vetted Syrian Opposition
To determine if the DoD assessed whether Vetted Syrian Opposition groups met DoD requirements prior to the DoD providing stipends from the Counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Fund for Syria to the Vetted Syrian Opposition.

Follow-Up Evaluation of Report No. DoDIG-2019-088, "Evaluation of DoD Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Kuwait," June 11, 2019
To determine whether the DoD implemented corrective actions for the recommendations in report DODIG-2019-088, "Evaluation of DoD Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Kuwait," June 11, 2019, which is related to contractors at facilities supporting OIR.

Evaluation of the U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command Implementation of DoD's Law of War Program
To determine the extent to which the U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command developed and implemented programs in accordance with DoD Law of War requirements in order to reduce potential law of war violations when conducting operations.

Audit of DoD Implementation of the DoD Coronavirus Disease–2019 Vaccine Distribution Plan
To determine whether DoD officials effectively distributed and administered coronavirus disease–2019 vaccines to DoD's workforce, including those serving in the OIR area of operations, in accordance with DoD guidance.

Audit of Army Accountability of Government-Furnished Property Under Base Operations Contracts in Kuwait
To determine whether the Army effectively accounted for Government-Furnished Property provided to the base operations and security support services contractor in Kuwait at facilities that support OIR.

Audit of Tracking, Recovery, and Reuse of Department of Defense-Owned Shipping Containers
To determine to what extent the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps complied with DoD requirements to track, recover, and reuse shipping containers at facilities that support OIR, and included those containers in an accountable property system of record.

Audit of Training Ranges Supporting Units in the U.S. European Command
To determine whether training ranges have the capability and capacity to support combat readiness for units assigned to the U.S. European Command, including facilities that support OIR.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of Nonexpendable Personal Property at U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq
To determine whether the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad has implemented internal controls to account for and manage the life cycle of nonexpendable personal property in accordance with Federal requirements and DoS regulations.

Audit of the Use of Non-Competitive Contracts in Support of Overseas Contingency Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq
To determine whether acquisition policy was followed in awarding non-competitive contracts in support of overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq; and whether, in awarding the non-competitive contracts, the justifications for doing so met the criteria specified in the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the Competition in Contracting Act.

Table 10.

Ongoing Oversight Projects Related to OIR by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of September 30, 2021

ARMY AUDIT AGENCY

Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement Accountability
To determine whether the Army had processes in place to accurately record acquisition and cross-servicing agreement orders in Kuwait.

APPENDIX F
Planned Oversight Projects

Table 11 lists the titles and objectives for Lead IG and partner agencies' planned oversight projects.

Table 11.

Planned Oversight Projects Related to OIR by Lead IG Agencies, as of September 30, 2021

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of Unmanned Systems Cybersecurity Controls
To determine whether the DoD is implementing effective oversight, controls, and processes to mitigate cybersecurity risks to unmanned systems, including those in the OIR area of responsibility.

Audit of U.S. Army Central's Modernized Enduring Equipment Set in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility
To determine whether the Army's implementation of the modernized enduring equipment sets in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility is meeting mission goals.

Follow up Audit of Management of Army Prepositioned Equipment
To determine whether the Army implemented the recommendations identified in DODIG-2018-132, "Management of Army Equipment in Kuwait and Qatar," June 29, 2018, to improve Army Prepositioned Stock–Southwest Asia inventory accountability and maintenance for equipment that supports the OIR mission.

Audit of Oversight of the Department of Defense Language Interpretation and Translation Enterprise II Contract in Afghanistan
To determine whether the Army provided oversight of and appropriately staffed the DoD Language Interpretation and Translation Enterprise II contract in the U.S. Central Command and OIR area of responsibility to ensure the contractors fulfilled requirements.

Evaluation of the Use of Compartmented Geospatial Intelligence Collection for Operation Inherent Resolve
To evaluate National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and U.S. Central Command intelligence collection in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Evaluation of the U.S. Central Command's Defense of Critical Assets Within its Area of Responsibility Against Missiles and Unmanned Aircraft Systems
To determine the extent to which the U.S. Central Command can defend critical assets within its area of responsibility against missile and unmanned aircraft system threats.

Evaluation of the Military Sealift Command's Surge Sealift Readiness in a Global Crisis
To determine the Military Sealift Command's readiness to deploy, operate, and maintain the surge to meet critical supply and equipment requirements through contracts with vendors during a global crisis, and for overseas contingency operations such as OIR.

Evaluation of Service Capabilities to Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems
To determine the extent to which the Military Services have implemented intelligence support and techniques, tactics, and procedures necessary to employ counter-unmanned aircraft systems.

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Security Force Assistance Brigades
To determine the extent to which the Security Force Assistance Brigades are meeting the Geographic Combatant Commands' security force assistance requirements and contributing to improving U.S. Army Brigade Combat Team readiness, including for those deployed or deployable to the OIR area of responsibility.

Evaluation of the U.S. Special Operations Command Joint Military Information Support Operations Web Operations Center
To determine whether the U.S. Special Operations Command's Joint Military Information Support Operations Web Operations Center meets the combatant commander's requirements to support the geographic and functional combatant commander's ability to counter adversary messaging and influence in the information environment, including in support of OIR.

DoD and Service Identification and Screening of Service Members with Traumatic Brain Injuries
To determine the extent to which the Defense Health Agency and Military Service medical departments implemented policies and procedures, and provided oversight, to ensure that Service members who sustained traumatic brain injuries—including those serving in the OIR area of operations—were identified and screened to determine their appropriate level of care.

Audit of Depot-Level Maintenance for U.S. Military Heavy Lift Helicopters
To determine whether the depot-level maintenance for U.S. military heavy lift helicopters enables the fleet to maintain required aircraft availability and readiness rates, including for those deployed or deployable to the OIR area of responsibility.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of the U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq Power Plant Performance
To determine whether the DoS assessed the existing and future electrical power needs and infrastructure of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad when designing the new power plant; conducted oversight of the construction and commissioning of the new power plant; took measures to mitigate design or construction deficiencies, if any.

Audit of the PAE Operations and Maintenance Contract at Embassy Baghdad, Iraq
To determine whether the DoS is administering the PAE operations and maintenance contract for the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq in accordance with Federal and DoS requirements and whether PAE is operating in accordance with the contract terms and conditions.

ACRONYMS

Acronym	
AFAA	Air Force Audit Agency
AQM	Office of Acquisitions Management (Department of State)
BHA	USAID Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance
CJTF-OIR	Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve
CLS	contractor logistics support
COVAX	Coronavirus–2019 Vaccines Global Access
COVID–19	coronavirus disease–2019
CPIG	Critical Petroleum Infrastructure Guard
CTD	Counter Terrorism Directorate
CTEF	Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund
CTS	Counterterrorism Service
DCIS	Defense Criminal Investigative Service
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice
DoS	Department of State
ESSA	Eastern Syria Security Area
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FFS	Funding Facility for Stabilization
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
HAT	Hezen Anti-Terror units
HL8	Heavy Lift VIII
IDP	internally displaced person
IED	improvised explosive device
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission
InSF	Internal Security Forces
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

Acronym	
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
ITAC	Iraqi Terminal Air Controller
JOC-I	Joint Operations Command–Iraq
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KSF	Kurdish Security Forces
Lead IG agencies	The DoD, DoS, and USAID OIGs
MAG	Military Advisor Group
MaT	Mughawir al-Thawra
MERV	Middle Euphrates River Valley
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoPA	Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFS	Operation Freedom's Sentinel
OIA	Office of International Affairs (Department of Justice)
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OSC-I	Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq
OUSD(P) ISA	DoD Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy–International Security Affairs
Peshmerga	Kurdish Security Forces
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
PMC	Popular Mobilization Committee
PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces
PRM	DoS Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
PrISF	Provincial Internal Security Forces
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RGB	Regional Guard Brigades
SAMS	Syrian American Medical Society

Acronym	
SANES	Self-Administration of North and East Syria
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
TMF	Tribal Mobilization Forces
TSO	Turkish-supported opposition
Treasury	Department of the Treasury
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

Acronym	
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
USEUCOM	U.S. European Command
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
YPG	People's Protection Units (Kurdish)

A Task Force Phoenix CH-47 Chinook helicopter sits on the landing pad at a forward operating base in Syria. (DoD photo)

ENDNOTES

1. CJTF-OIR, website, "About CJTF-OIR," undated; USCENTCOM, "Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR)," 4/12/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 4/20/2021.
2. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 4/20/2021.
3. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 007, 9/22/2021.
4. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 012, 9/15/2021.
5. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 004, 9/22/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 013, 9/15/2021.
6. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 013, 9/15/2021.
7. DoS, press release, "Readout of the Political Directors Small Group Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS," 9/9/2021.
8. DoS, press release, "Readout of the Political Directors Small Group Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS," 9/9/2021.
9. DoS NEA, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021; DoS, cable, "Extension of Ordered Departure for Embassy Baghdad and the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center (BDSC)," 21 STATE 95070, 9/15/2021; DoS, cable, "Extension of Ordered Departure for Embassy Baghdad and the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center (BDSC)," 21 STATE 105266, 10/15/2021.
10. DoS NEA, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021; Lead IG, "Operation Inherent Resolve, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, January 1, 2021–March 31, 2021," 5/4/2021, p. 4.
11. Katie Bo Williams, "Top US Spy says Somalia, Yemen, Syria and Iraq Represent Greater Terrorist Threat Than Afghanistan," CNN, 9/14/2021; United Nations Iraq, press release, "UN Security Council Press Statement on ISIS/Da'esh," 8/20/2021; Iraq News Agency, "International Coalition: ISIS Gangs Unable to Occupy Any Land in Iraq," 9/7/2021.
12. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 FOL017, 10/12/2021.
13. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 023, 9/22/2021; DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL017, 10/12/2021.
14. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 21.4 OIR 019, and 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021.
15. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 027, 9/22/2021.
16. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 9/22/2021; DoS SECI, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.
17. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 019, and 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021.
18. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 9/22/2021.
19. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 007, 9/22/2021.
20. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 21.4 OIR 019, and 21.4 OIR 022, 9/22/2021.
21. United Nations, transcript, "Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, Briefing to the Security Council on the Humanitarian Situation in Syria," 8/24/2021; Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021.
22. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 028, 9/22/2021.
23. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 5/28/2021; DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.
24. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/1/2021 and 10/21/2021; Zana Omer and Sirwan Kajjo, "Hundreds of Iraqi Nationals Leave al-Hol Refugee Camp in Syria," Voice of America, 9/30/2021.
25. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 048, 9/22/2021.
26. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 048, 9/22/2021.
27. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.
28. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 044, 9/22/2021.
29. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 034, 21.4 OIR 038, and 21.4 OIR 040, 9/22/2021.
30. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 033, 9/22/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.
31. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 066, 9/22/2021.
32. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 074, 9/22/2021.
33. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 033, 9/22/2021; Reuters, "Iraq Delays General Elections to Oct. 10: State Media," 1/19/2021.
34. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021; Security Council Report, "Iraq: UNAMI Briefing and Consultations," 8/24/2021.
35. DoS, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.
36. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Scenesetter for NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary Gavito's September 26-30 Visit to Iraq," 21 BAGHDAD 1840, 9/23/2021.
37. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: As October 10 Elections Draw Closer, Intimidation and Assassination of Journalists Increases," 21 BAGHDAD 1776, 9/17/2021.
38. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.
39. UN OCHA, "Iraq Humanitarian Bulletin August 2021," 9/13/2021.
40. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/30/2021.
41. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 084, 9/22/2021.
42. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 092, 9/22/2021.
43. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 090, 9/22/2021.
44. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 107 and 21.4 OIR 108, 9/22/2021.
45. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 105 and 21.4 OIR 109, 9/22/2021.
46. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 105 and 21.4 OIR 109, 9/22/2021.
47. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 108, 9/22/2021.
48. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 122, 9/22/2021; USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 083, 9/22/2021.

49. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 122, 9/22/2021.

50. Crispin Smith and Hamdi Malik, "The Muqawama are Focusing Attack Claims on U.S. Bases in Syria," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 7/28/2021.

51. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021; DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021; William Christou, "Syrian Regime and Allied Militias Storm Daraa Al-Balad as Negotiations Fail," Middle East News Agency, 8/24/2021; Sarah Dadouch, "In the Cradle of the Syrian Revolution, Renewed Violence Shows Reconciliation is Still Elusive," Washington Post, 9/19/2021.

52. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021.

53. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 121, 9/15/2021.

54. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

55. Embassy Ankara, cable, "Turkey: Ambassador Meets with UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen," 21 ANKARA 1324, 9/15/2021.

56. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

57. DoS, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

58. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 012, 9/15/2021.

59. DoS, press release, "Joint Statement on the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Dialogue," 6/26/2021.

60. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

61. Sahang Hamasaeed, "Beyond Security, The Quest for a Sustained, Strategic U.S.-Iraq Partnership," United States Institute of Peace, 7/29/2021; DoS, press release, "Joint Statement on the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Dialogue," 7/26/2021.

62. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

63. Embassy Baghdad, vetting comments, 10/19/2021.

64. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 013, 9/15/2021.

65. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 013, 9/15/2021.

66. CJTF-OIR, press release, "Coalition Welcomes New Commander, Continues Mission", 9/10/2021.

67. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 013, 9/15/2021.

68. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 010, 9/15/2021.

69. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

70. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 010, 9/15/2021.

71. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 010, 9/15/2021.

72. CJTF-OIR, website, "About CJTF-OIR," undated.

73. Naval History and Heritage Command, website, "Operation Inherent Resolve," 8/6/2020; The Wilson Center, "Timeline: The Rise, Spread, and Fall of the Islamic State," 10/28/2019.

74. CJTF-OIR, website, "CJTF Campaign Design," undated.

75. CJTF-OIR, "History of CJTF-OIR," 9/2020; CJTF-OIR, vetting comment, #C1, 4/20/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 4/20/2021.

76. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 4/20/2021.

77. USAID, fact sheet, "Iraq Country Profile," 1/27/2021.

78. DoS, "Integrated Country Strategy–Iraq," 8/13/2018.

79. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 6/18/2021.

80. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR SUPP01, 10/8/2021.

81. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR SUPP01, 10/8/2021.

82. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR SUPP01, 10/8/2021.

83. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR SUPP01, 10/8/2021.

84. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR SUPP01, 10/8/2021.

85. DoS, press release, "Readout of the Political Directors Small Group Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS," 9/9/2021.

86. DoS, press release, "Readout of the Political Directors Small Group Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS," 9/9/2021.

87. DoS, press release, "Readout of the Political Directors Small Group Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS," 9/9/2021.

88. DoS, press release, "Readout of the Political Directors Small Group Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS," 9/9/2021.

89. DoD Comptroller, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 014, 9/28/2021.

90. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 015, 9/22/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

91. DoD Comptroller, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 014, 9/28/2021.

92. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL016, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, vetting comment #C4, 10/19/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

93. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 016, 9/22/2021.

94. DoD Comptroller, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 007, 6/24/2021.

95. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 016, 9/22/2021.

96. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

97. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

98. USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #2," 3/11/2021; USAID, "Syria-Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #8," 6/28/2021; DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

99. UN OCHA, Financial Tracking Service for FY 2021, as of 10/2021.

100. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 6/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 7/20/2021.

101. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 001, 6/23/2021.

102. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL002, 10/13/2021.

103. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 002, 9/22/2021.

104. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021; DoS, cable, "Extension of Ordered Departure for Embassy Baghdad and the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center (BDSC)," -21 STATE 105266, 10/15/2021.

105. DoS NEA, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021; Lead IG, "Operation Inherent Resolve, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, January 1, 2021–March 31, 2021," 5/4/2021, p. 4.

106. USAID Mission Iraq, interview with USAID OIG, 8/30/2021.

107. DoS, website, "Special Immigrant Visa (SIVs) for Iraqi and Afghan Translators/Interpreters," undated; USCIS, website, "The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) Consultation and Worldwide Processing Priorities," undated; DoS, vetting comment, 10/27/2021.

108. USCIS, website, "The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) Consultation and Worldwide Processing Priorities," undated.

109. DoS, vetting comment, 10/27/2021.

110. DoS, website, "Special Immigrant Visa (SIVs) for Iraqi and Afghan Translators/Interpreters," undated; USCIS, website, "The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) Consultation and Worldwide Processing Priorities," undated; DoS, vetting comment, 10/27/2021.

111. USAID/Iraq, USAID OIG interview with USAID Mission in Iraq, 8/30/2021.

112. USAID/Iraq, USAID OIG interview with USAID Mission in Iraq, 8/30/2021.

113. Embassy Baghdad, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021; Lead IG, "Operation Inherent Resolve, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, April 1, 2021-June 30, 2021," 8/3/2021, p. 25; DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 6/22/2021.

114. Embassy Baghdad, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

115. Embassy Baghdad, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

116. Embassy Baghdad, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

117. Embassy Baghdad, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021; Embassy Baghdad, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

118. GardaWorld, "Iraq: Rocket Attack Reportedly Targets Green Zone, Baghdad, Early July 8," 7/7/2021.

119. Consulate General Erbil, cable, "Iraq: Two Drones Attempt Attack in the Vicinity of Erbil International Airport," 21 ERBIL 304, 9/12/2021; Consulate General Erbil, cable, "Iraq: Spot Report on July 6 Attack on Erbil Air Base," 21 ERBIL 194, 7/8/2021.

120. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021; Embassy Baghdad, vetting comments, 10/19/2021.

121. Rudaw, "New Construction Will be a Tangible Sign of U.S. Commitment to Kurdistan Region: Consul General," 9/23/2021.

122. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

123. Consulate General Erbil, cable, "Erbil NCC Monthly Cable Report September 2018," 18 ERBIL 308, 10/14/2018; Consulate General Erbil, cable, "Erbil NCC Monthly Cable Report August 2021," 21 ERBIL 302, 9/11/2021.

124. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

125. CJTF-OIR, fact sheet, "Our Mission," 9/15/2021; DoS, press release, "Readout of the Political Directors Small Group Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS," 9/9/2021; Al-Roj Eli Zalla, "US Calls on All Countries Not to Use Iraq as Battleground: Official," Rudaw, 9/25/2021; Katie Bo Williams, "Top US Spy says Somalia, Yemen, Syria and Iraq Represent Greater Terrorist Threat Than Afghanistan," CNN, 9/14/2021; United Nations Iraq, press release, "UN Security Council Press Statement on ISIS/Da'esh," 8/20/2021; Iraq News Agency, "International Coalition: ISIS Gangs Unable to Occupy any Land in Iraq," 9/7/2021.

126. Katie Bo Williams, "Top US Spy says Somalia, Yemen, Syria and Iraq Represent Greater Terrorist Threat Than Afghanistan," CNN, 9/13/2021.

127. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 008, 9/22/2021.

128. USCENTCOM, transcript, "General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr. Middle East Institute Engagement Feb. 8, 2021," 2/8/2021; USCENTCOM, "Posture Statement of General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr. Commander, United States Central Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee," 4/22/2021; USCENTCOM, transcript, "General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr. Remarks as Delivered to the National Council on US-Arab Relations," 11/19/2020; United States Institute of Peace, "How ISIS Really Ends: The Road to Violent Extremism Disengagement and Reconciliation Featuring USCENTCOM Commander General Kenneth McKenzie," 8/12/2020.

129. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL017, 10/12/2021.

130. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 007, 9/22/2021.

131. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 9/22/2021.

132. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 019 and 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021.

133. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 019, 9/22/2021.

134. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 9/22/2021.

135. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 9/22/2021.

136. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018 and 21.4 OIR 019, 9/22/2021.

137. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018 and 21.4 OIR 019, 9/22/2021.

138. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 026, 9/22/2021.

139. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 026, 9/22/2021.

140. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 026, 9/22/2021.

141. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 026, 9/22/2021.

142. Shoresh Khani, "The Regrouping of ISIS in the Deserts of Syria," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 8/21/2021.

143. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 026, 9/22/2021.

144. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 026, 9/22/2021.

145. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 026, 9/22/2021.

146. USEUCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 025, 9/8/2021.

147. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 027, 9/22/2021.

148. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 027, 9/22/2021.

149. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 027, 9/22/2021; Raed al-Hamid, "ISIS in Iraq: Weakened but Agile," Newslines Institute for Strategy and Policy, 5/18/2021.

150. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 027, 9/22/2021.

151. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 027, 9/22/2021; Transnational Threats Project Terrorism Backgrounder, "Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)," Center for Strategic and International Studies, undated.

152. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 027, 9/22/2021.

153. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 003, 10/8/2021.

154. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 003, 10/8/2021.

155. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 003, 10/8/2021.

156. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 004, 10/8/2021.

157. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 003 and 21.4 WOG TREAS 004, 10/8/2021.

158. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 004, 10/8/2021.

159. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 004, 10/8/2021.

160. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 004, 10/8/2021.

161. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 004, 10/8/2021.

162. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 004, 10/8/2021.

163. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 002, 10/8/2021.

164. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 021, 9/22/2021; Katie Bo Williams, "Top US Spy Says Somalia, Yemen, Syria and Iraq Represent Greater Terrorist Threat Than Afghanistan," CNN, 9/13/2021.

165. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 021, 9/22/2021.

166. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 021, 9/22/2021.

167. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 021, 9/22/2021.

168. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 019 and 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021.

169. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 019 and 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021.

170. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 022, 9/22/2021.

171. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 024, 9/27/2021.

172. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 022, 9/22/2021.

173. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021.

174. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 024, 9/27/2021.

175. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 024, 9/27/2021.

176. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 019, 9/22/2021.

177. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 020 and 21.4 OIR 022, 9/22/2021.

178. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021.

179. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 022, 9/22/2021.

180. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 9/22/2021.

181. Nayera Abdallah, "Islamic State Says it Carried Out Sunday's Attack on Iraqi Police Near Kirkuk, Killing 10," Reuters, 9/6/2021.

182. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 9/22/2021.

183. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 9/22/2021.

184. The Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, "In Focus, Daesh Attacks on Iraq's Electricity," 9/25/2021.

185. The Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, "In Focus, Daesh Attacks on Iraq's Electricity," 9/25/2021.

186. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 019, 9/22/2021.

187. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL017, 10/12/2021; DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018 and 21.4 OIR 023, 9/22/2021; DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL023, 10/8/2021.

188. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 023, 9/22/2021.

189. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 023, 9/22/2021.

190. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018 and 21.4 OIR 023, 9/22/2021.

191. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 023, 9/22/2021; DIA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

192. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL023, 10/8/2021; DIA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

193. Gregory Waters, "ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency in September 2021," Counter Extremism Project, 10/1/2021.

194. Gregory Waters, "ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency in September 2021," Counter Extremism Project, 10/1/2021.

195. Gregory Waters, "ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency in September 2021," Counter Extremism Project, 10/1/2021.

196. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021.

197. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 022, 9/22/2021.

198. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 022, 9/22/2021.

199. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 022, 9/22/2021.

200. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021; DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL023, 10/8/2021.

201. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 020, 9/22/2021; DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL023, 10/8/2021; Asharq Al-Awsat, "17 Pro-Iran Militants Killed, Injured in ISIS Attack in Central Syria," 9/15/2021.

202. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 113, 9/22/2021.

203. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 113, 9/22/2021; Associated Press, "Attack on Gas Pipeline in Syria Causes Brief Power Outage," 9/18/2021; Reuters, "Islamic State Claims Responsibility for Attack on Syrian Gas Pipeline," 9/18/2021.
204. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 024, 9/22/2021.
205. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 024, 9/22/2021.
206. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018 and 21.4 OIR 019, 9/22/2021.
207. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 024, 9/22/2021; DIA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021; Louisa Loveluck, "Down but not Defeated, Thousands of Islamic State Insurgents Wage Syrian Fight Anew," Washington Post, 9/14/2021.
208. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 024, 9/22/2021.
209. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 024, 9/22/2021; North Press Agency, "Asayish Member Killed in Attack in Syria's Deir ez-Zor Countryside," 8/21/2021.
210. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 9/22/2021.
211. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 019, 9/22/2021.
212. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 019, 9/22/2021.
213. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 027, 9/22/2021.
214. United Nations, transcript, "Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, Briefing to the Security Council on the Humanitarian Situation in Syria," 8/24/2021; Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021.
215. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 022, 9/22/2021.
216. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 018, 21.4 OIR 027 and 21.4 OIR 028, 9/22/2021.
217. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 027, 9/22/2021.
218. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 028, 9/22/2021.
219. John Saleh, "The Women of ISIS and the Al-Hol Camp," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 8/2/2021; Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021; UN, transcript, "Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths," 8/21/2021; Louisa Loveluck, "Syrian Detention Camp Rocked by Dozens of Killings Blamed on Islamic State women," Washington Post, 9/19/2021.
220. John Saleh, "The Women of ISIS and the Al-Hol Camp," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 8/2/2021; Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021; UN, transcript, "Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths," 8/21/2021; Louisa Loveluck, "Syrian Detention Camp Rocked by Dozens of Killings Blamed on Islamic State women," Washington Post, 9/19/2021.
221. Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021.
222. Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021.
223. John Saleh, "The Women of ISIS and the Al-Hol Camp," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 8/2/2021; Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021.
224. John Saleh, "The Women of ISIS and the Al-Hol Camp," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 8/2/2021.
225. John Saleh, "The Women of ISIS and the Al-Hol Camp," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 8/2/2021.
226. John Saleh, "The Women of ISIS and the Al-Hol Camp," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 8/2/2021.
227. DoS, "Integrated Country Strategy: Iraq," 8/13/2018.
228. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 004, 9/22/2021, 21.2 OIR 005, 3/25/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.
229. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 004, 9/22/2021, 21.2 OIR 005, 3/25/2021.
230. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 004, 9/22/2021.
231. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 003, 6/24/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 015, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, CLAR036, 10/12/2021.
232. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 CLAR036, 10/12/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 015, 9/22/2021.
233. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 033, 9/22/2021.
234. CJTF-OIR, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.
235. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 033, 9/22/2021.
236. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 042, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.
237. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 033, 9/22/2021.
238. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 033, 9/22/2021.
239. CJTF-OIR, press release, "CJTF-OIR Strike Summary Report, July 2021," 9/20/2021; CJTF-OIR, press release, "CJTF-OIR Strike Summary Report, August 2021," 9/20/2021.
240. CJTF-OIR, press release, "CJTF-OIR Strike Summary Report, April 2021," 7/8/2021; CJTF-OIR, press release, "CJTF-OIR Strike Summary Report, May 2021," 7/92021; CJTF-OIR, press release, "CJTF OIR Strike Summary Report, June 2021," 8/4/2021; CJTF-OIR, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.
241. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 069, 9/22/2021.
242. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 069, 9/22/2021.
243. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 069, 9/22/2021.
244. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 069, 9/22/2021.
245. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 069, 9/22/2021.
246. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 069, 9/22/2021.
247. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 070, 9/22/2021.
248. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 070, 9/22/2021.

249. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 048, 9/22/2021.

250. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 048, 9/22/2021.

251. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 037, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

252. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 048, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

253. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 040, 9/22/2021.

254. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 040, 9/22/2021.

255. CJTF-OIR, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

256. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 040, 9/22/2021.

257. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 041, 9/22/2021.

258. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 071, 9/22/2021.

259. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 071, 9/22/2021.

260. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 071, 9/22/2021.

261. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 071, 9/22/2021.

262. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 073, 9/22/2021.

263. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 073, 9/22/2021.

264. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 040 and 042, 9/22/2021.

265. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 043, 9/22/2021.

266. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 034 and 040, 9/22/2021.

267. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 038, 9/22/2021.

268. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 037, 9/22/2021.

269. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 037, 9/22/2021.

270. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 038, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLAR038, 10/12/2021.

271. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 042, 9/22/2021.

272. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLAR038, 10/12/2021.

273. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 038, 9/22/2021.

274. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 040, 9/22/2021.

275. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 040, 9/22/2021.

276. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 040, 9/22/2021.

277. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 34, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL034, 10/12/2021.

278. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL034, 10/12/2021.

279. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 060, 9/22/2021.

280. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 060, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 061, 9/22/2021.

281. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 061, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOLA061, 10/12/2021;

282. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 060, 9/22/2021.

283. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 061, 9/22/2021.

284. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 061, 9/22/2021.

285. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOLD061, 10/12/2021.

286. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 060, 9/22/2021.

287. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 060, 9/22/2021.

288. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.

289. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.

290. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 050, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, vetting comment #Q8, 10/19/2021.

291. CJTF-OIR, vetting comment #Q8, 10/19/2021.

292. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 050, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOLA050, 10/12/2021.

293. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 050, 9/22/2021.

294. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 051, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOLA051, 10/12/2021.

295. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.

296. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.

297. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 043, 6/24/2021.

298. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 054, 9/22/2021.

299. CJTF-OIR, vetting comment #Q9, 10/19/2021.

300. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 054, 9/22/2021.

301. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 054, 9/22/2021.

302. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL054, 10/12/2021.

303. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.

304. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.

305. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.

306. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 053, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL054, 10/12/2021.
307. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 059, 9/22/2021.
308. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 053, 9/22/2021.
309. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 059, 9/22/2021.
310. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 057, 9/22/2021.
311. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 057, 9/22/2021.
312. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 057, 9/22/2021.
313. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 059, 9/22/2021.
314. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL059, 10/12/2021.
315. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 059, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 057, 9/22/2021.
316. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 056, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 057, 9/22/2021.
317. CJTF-OIR, vetting comment #C11, 10/19/2021.
318. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 056, 9/22/2021.
319. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 057, 9/22/2021.
320. CJTF-OIR, vetting comment #C11, 10/19/2021.
321. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 057, 9/22/2021.
322. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 059, 9/22/2021.
323. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL054, 10/12/2021.
324. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 058, 9/22/2021.
325. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 053, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLAR058, 10/12/2021.
326. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 053, 9/22/2021.
327. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLAR058, 10/12/2021.
328. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.2 OIR 049, 3/25/2021; USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 042, 6/24/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 4/20/2021.
329. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021; USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 052, 9/22/2021.
330. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.
331. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 052, 9/22/2021.
332. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 052, 9/22/2021.

333. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 049, 9/22/2021.
334. (CUI) ████████████████████
335. (CUI) ████████████████████
336. (CUI) ████████████████████
337. (CUI) ████████████████████
338. (CUI) ████████████████████
339. (CUI) ████████████████████
340. (CUI) ████████████████████
341. (CUI) ████████████████████
342. (CUI) ████████████████████
343. (CUI) ████████████████████
344. (CUI) ████████████████████
345. (CUI) ████████████████████
346. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 039, 9/22/2021.
347. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 030, 6/24/2021.
348. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 015, 6/23/2021.
349. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLARA039, 10/12/2021.
350. Ali Jawad, "Iraq Launches Military Operation to Secure Borders with Syria," Anadolu Agency, 8/31/2021; Mina Aldroubi, "Iraq Launches Security Operations Along Syrian Border," The National, 8/31/2021.
351. Mina Anadolu, "Iraq Seizes Explosives Smuggled In Car from Syria by ISIS," The National, 9/28/2021.
352. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 039, 9/22/2021.
353. Adnan Abu Zeed, "Iraq Ramps Up Border Security Via Tunnels, Surveillance," Al-Monitor, 6/1/2021.
354. Adnan Abu Zeed, "Iraq Ramps Up Border Security Via Tunnels, Surveillance," Al-Monitor, 6/1/2021.
355. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 063, 9/22/2021.
356. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 063, 9/22/2021.
357. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 065, 9/22/2021.
358. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 065, 9/22/2021.
359. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 066, 9/22/2021.
360. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 066, 9/22/2021.

361. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 066, 9/22/2021.

362. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 067, 9/22/2021.

363. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 064, 9/22/2021.

364. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 064, 9/22/2021.

365. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL064, 10/12/2021.

366. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 068, 9/22/2021.

367. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 068, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL016, 10/12/2021.

368. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 068, 9/22/2021.

369. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 064, 9/22/2021.

370. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 074, 9/22/2021.

371. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 074, 9/22/2021.

372. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLAR077, 10/12/2021.

373. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLAR076, 10/12/2021.

374. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 074, 9/22/2021.

375. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 074, 9/22/2021.

376. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR SUPP01, 10/8/2021.

377. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 079, 9/22/2021.

378. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 080, 9/22/2021.

379. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 080, 9/22/2021.

380. Al-Monitor, "Another Iraqi Intelligence Officer Killed in Baghdad," 6/9/2021; Mina Aldroubi, "Senior Iraqi Intelligence Officer Assassinated in Baghdad," The National, 6/8/2021.

381. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 080, 9/22/2021.

382. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 082, 9/22/2021.

383. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 082, 9/22/2021.

384. DoS, "Congressional Budget Justification, Appendix 1, Department of State Diplomatic Engagement, Fiscal Year 2022," 5/28/2021.

385. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

386. Agence France-Presse, "Hundreds of Iraqis Rally to Mark Protests Anniversary," 10/1/2021; Associated Press, "Hundreds of Iraqi Protesters March in Baghdad Ahead of Vote," 10/1/2021.

387. Mustafa Saadoun, "Iraqis Campaign Against Impunity for Violence," Al-Monitor, 7/14/2021.

388. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

389. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Mission Iraq Official Informal: Monday, July 26," 21 MDA 28910, 7/26/2021.

390. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021; Mustafa Saadoun, "Iraqis Campaign Against Impunity for Violence," Al-Monitor, 7/13/2021; Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: GOI Arrests Police Officer Accused of Hisham al-Hashimi's Murder, but Real Accountability Remains Elusive," 21 BAGHDAD 1396, 7/26/2021.

391. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

392. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

393. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021; Lead IG, "Operation Inherent Resolve, Report to the United States Congress, January 1, 2020-March 31, 2020," 5/2020, p. 39.

394. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

395. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

396. DoS OIG calculations based on current public information, 9/29/2021; Iraq Ministry of Oil, website, "Historical Summary," 9/29/2021; John Lee, "Iraq Oil Revenues for July Exceed $6.5bn," Iraq Oil and Gas News, 8/2/2021; John Lee, "Iraq Oil Exports Exceed 3m BPD," Iraq Oil & Gas News, 9/2/2021.

397. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: State Organization for Marketing of Oil Flummoxed by Drop in Crude Quality," 21 BAGHDAD 1718, 9/12/2021.

398. Ben Van Heuvelen and Rawaz Tahir, "Despite One Payment, Baghdad-Erbil Budget Stalemate Continues," Iraq Oil Report, 7/30/2021; Rawaz Tahir and Mohammed Hussein, "Baghdad Makes Second KRG Budget Transfer," Iraq Oil Report, 8/30/2021.

399. Khazan Jangiz, "Baghdad Still Not Decided on Sending Erbil Its Budget Share: MP," Rudaw, 6/14/2021; Ahmed Rasheed, Moayed Kenany, and Nayera Abdallah, "Iraqi Parliament Approves 2021 Budget of $89 Billion," Reuters, 3/31/2021; Lead IG, "Operation Inherent Resolve, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, April 1, 2021-June 30,2021," 9/3/2021, p. 49; Ben Van Heuvelen and Rawaz Tahir, "Despite One Payment, Baghdad-Erbil Budget Stalemate Continues," Iraq Oil Report, 7/30/2021; Rawaz Tahir and Mohammed Hussein, "Baghdad Makes Second KRG Budget Transfer," Iraq Oil Report, 8/30/2021.

400. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Prime Minister Launches White Paper on Economic Reforms at Higher Committee for Reform Meeting," 21 BAGHDAD 1488, 8/5/2021.

401. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

402. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Baghdad Regional Summit Boosts PM Kadhimi and Iraq's Regional Standing Ahead of Elections," 21 BAGHDAD 1662, 8/30/2021

403. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Baghdad Regional Summit Boosts PM Kadhimi and Iraq's Regional Standing Ahead of Elections," 21 BAGHDAD 1662, 8/30/2021; Omar Al-Nidawi, "Will Iraq's Neighbors Seize Chance for a Reset?," Amwaj.media, 9/3/2021.

404. Mohammad Ali Shabani, "Baghdad Conference Goes to NYC as Iran-Saudi Talks to Resume," Amwaj.media, 9/22/2021.

405. Hassan Ali Ahmed, "Iraq's Kadhimi Had Full Agenda for Meetings in Iran," Al-Monitor, 9/17/2021; Agence France-Presse, "Iraq PM Visits Neighbour Iran for Economic Talks," 9/12/2021.

406. Andrew Cawthorne, "Iraq PM Becomes First Foreign Leader to Meet Iran's Raisi," Reuters, 9/12/2021; Hassan Ali Ahmed, "Iraq's Kadhimi Had Full Agenda for Meetings in Iran," Al-Monitor, 9/17/2021; Al-Monitor, "Iraq's Kadhimi Meets with Iranian President," 9/13/2021; Agence France-Presse, "Iraq PM Visits Neighbour Iran for Economic Talks," 9/12/2021.

407. Mustafa Saadoun, "Sadr and Independents Biggest Winners Under Iraq's New Election Law," Al-Monitor, 10/12/2021; Yesar Al-Maleki, Hafsa Halawa, Omar al-Nidawi, Randa Slim, and Robert S. Ford, "Special Briefing: A Reshaping of the Iraqi Political Scene, Despite Low Turnout," Middle East Institute, 10/12/2021.

408. Yesar Al-Maleki, Hafsa Halawa, Omar al-Nidawi, Randa Slim, and Robert S. Ford, "Special Briefing: A Reshaping of the Iraqi Political Scene, Despite Low Turnout," Middle East Institute, 10/12/2021; Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Elections in Review as Government Formation Talks Pick Up," 21 BAGHDAD 737. 10/18/2021.

409. Mustafa Saadoun, "Sadr and Independents Biggest Winners Under Iraq's New Election Law," Al-Monitor, 10/12/2021; Yesar Al-Maleki, Hafsa Halawa, Omar al-Nidawi, Randa Slim, and Robert S. Ford, "Special Briefing: A Reshaping of the Iraqi Political Scene, Despite Low Turnout," Middle East Institute, 10/12/2021; Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Elections in Review as Government Formation Talks Pick Up," 21 BAGHDAD 737, 10/18/2021.

410. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Scenesetter for STAFFDEL GROVE," 21 BAGHDAD 1564, 8/13/2021; Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Scenesetter for NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary Gavito's September 26-30 Visit to Iraq," 21 BAGHDAD 1840, 9/23/2021.

411. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Scenesetter for STAFFDEL GROVE," 21 BAGHDAD 1564, 8/13/2021; Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Scenesetter for NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary Gavito's September 26-30 Visit to Iraq," 21 BAGHDAD 1840, 9/23/2021.

412. Agence France-Presse, "Iraq's Election: How it Works, Main Players," 10/3/2021.

413. Marsin Alshamary, "Iraq's Upcoming Elections: Voters and Likely Winners," Brookings Institution, 6/24/2021.

414. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: Scenesetter for NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary Gavito's September 26-30 Visit to Iraq," 21 BAGHDAD 1840, 9/23/2021.

415. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: As October 10 Elections Draw Closer, Intimidation and Assassination of Journalists Increases," 21 BAGHDAD 1776, 9/17/2021.

416. Ibrahim Saleh, "21 Coalitions to Run in Iraq Parliamentary Elections," Anadolu Agency, 8/1/2021.

417. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021; White House, "Background Press Call by a Senior Administration Official Previewing the Visit of Prime Minister Mustafa al-Khadhimi of the Republic of Iraq," 7/26/2021.

418. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021; UN Security Council Report, "Iraq: UNAMI Briefing and Consultations," 8/24/2021.

419. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

420. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

421. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

422. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

423. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

424. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

425. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

426. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021; USAID ME Bureau, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

427. DoS, "U.S. Embassy Iraq Integrated Country Strategy Stabilization Annex November 2019–November 2020," 12/2/2019.

428. USAID, website, "Funding Facility for Stabilization," 1/14/2021.

429. UNDP, press release, "UNDP Welcomes Greece as the Funding Facility for Stabilization's 29th Funding Partner," 9/27/2021.

430. UNDP, press release, "UNDP Welcomes Greece as the Funding Facility for Stabilization's 29th Funding Partner," 9/27/2021.

431. UNDP, press release, "UNDP Welcomes Greece as the Funding Facility for Stabilization's 29th Funding Partner," 9/27/2021.

432. UNDP, website, "Funding Facility for Stabilization," undated.

433. UNDP, press release, "Western Anbar Communities See Improved Basic Services with the Completion of USAID-funded Projects," 9/29/2021.

434. USAID, website, "Funding Facility for Stabilization," 1/14/2021.

435. UNDP, press release, "Western Anbar Communities See Improved Basic Services with the Completion of USAID-Funded Projects," 9/29/2021.

436. UNDP, press release, "Western Anbar Communities See Improved Basic Services with the Completion of USAID-Funded Projects," 9/29/2021.

437. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

438. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

439. Water and Energy for Food, website, "Water & Energy for Food (WE4F): A Grand Challenge for Development," undated.

440. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

441. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

442. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

443. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

444. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/24/2021.

445. DoS PRM, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021

446. White House, "Background Press Call by a Senior Administration Official Previewing the Visit of Prime Minister Mustafa al-Khadhimi of the Republic of Iraq," 7/26/2021.

447. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/30/2021.

448. DoS PRM, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.

449. BasNews, "Sulaimaniya: Fire Incident at IDP Camp Kills One Child," 7/22/2021.

450. DoS PRM, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.
451. DoS PRM, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.
452. UN OCHA, "Iraq Humanitarian Bulletin, August 2021," 9/13/2021.
453. UN OCHA, "Iraq Humanitarian Bulletin, August 2021," 9/13/2021.
454. UN OCHA, "Iraq Humanitarian Bulletin, August 2021," 9/13/2021.
455. USAID, " Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #316," 8/18/2021.
456. USAID, " Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #316," 8/18/2021; USAID BHA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.
457. USAID, " Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #316," 8/18/2021.
458. USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #316," 8/18/2021.
459. USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #316," 8/18/2021.
460. USAID, " Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #316," 8/18/2021; USAID BHA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.
461. USAID, " Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #316," 8/18/2021.
462. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/30/2021.
463. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/30/2021.
464. UN OCHA, "Iraq: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (as of 31 August 2021)," 9/29/2021.
465. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/30/2021.
466. USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency Factsheet #3," 8/28/2020; USAID, "Iraq-Complex Emergency Factsheet #4," 9/30/2020.
467. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/30/2021.
468. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/30/2021.
469. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/30/2021.
470. USAID BHA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.
471. USAID, " Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #317," 9/23/2021; USAID BHA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.
472. USAID, " Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #317," 9/23/2021.
473. USAID, " Iraq-Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #317," 9/23/2021; USAID, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.
474. WHO, "WHO COVID-19 Dashboard for Iraq," accessed 9/29/2021.
475. DoS NEA-I, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.
476. DoS NEA-I, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.
477. UNICEF, press release, "Iraq Received 100,800 COVID-19 Vaccine Doses Donated by Italy Through COVAX," 9/12/2021; DoS PRM, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/2021; DoS, vetting comments, 10/21/2021.
478. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/27/2021.
479. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/27/2021.
480. DoS, press release, "The United States Donates More than 500,000 COVID-19 Vaccines to Iraq," 8/14/2021; USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/27/2021.

481. DoS PRM, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.
482. DoS PRM, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/20/2021.
483. ChinaDaily, "Iraq Receives 3rd Batch of COVID-19 Vaccines from China," 8/14/2021; UNICEF, WHO, "Iraq Received 100,800 COVID-19 Vaccine Doses Donated by Italy through COVAX," 9/12/2021.
484. CARE-Iraq, "Iraq's COVID-19 Vaccination Uptake Study," August 2021.
485. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/27/2021.
486. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/27/2021.
487. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/27/2021; USAID, "Iraq–Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #315," 7/15/2021.
488. USAID, "Iraq–Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #315," 7/15/2021.
489. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/27/2021.
490. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/27/2021.
491. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/27/2021.
492. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoD OUSD(P), vetting comment, 10/28/2021.
493. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 010, 9/15/2021.
494. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 010, 9/15/2021.
495. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 010, 9/15/2021.
496. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 005, 9/22/2021.
497. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 086, 7/13/2021; USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 089, 6/24/2021.
498. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 005, 9/22/2021, OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.
499. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 007, 9/22/2021.
500. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 007, 9/22/2021.
501. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 005, 9/22/2021.
502. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 005, 9/22/2021.
503. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 084, 9/22/2021 and 21.4 OIR FOL084, 10/12/2021.
504. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 093, 9/22/2021.
505. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 093, 9/22/2021.
506. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 093, 9/22/2021.

507. CJTF-OIR, press release, "CJTF-OIR Strike Summary Report, July 2021," 9/20/2021; CJTF-OIR, press release, "CJTF-OIR Strike Summary Report, August 2021," 9/20/2021.

508. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 084, 9/22/2021.

509. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL084, 10/12/2021; CJTF-OIR, vetting comment #C15, 10/20/2021.

510. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 089, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.1 OIR CLAR096, 1/13/2021.

511. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR FOL084, 10/12/2021.

512. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 086, 9/22/2021.

513. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 086, 9/22/2021; DIA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

514. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 086, 9/22/2021.

515. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 086, 9/22/2021.

516. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 087, 9/22/2021.

517. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 094, 9/22/2021.

518. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 094, 9/22/2021.

519. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 094, 9/22/2021.

520. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 094, 9/22/2021.

521. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 094, 9/22/2021.

522. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 094, 9/22/2021.

523. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 094, 9/22/2021.

524. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 092, 9/22/2021.

525. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 092, 9/22/2021.

526. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 096, 9/22/2021.

527. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 092, 9/22/2021.

528. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 096, 9/22/2021.

529. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 096, 9/22/2021.

530. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 097, 9/22/2021.

531. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 097, 9/22/2021.

532. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 097, 9/22/2021.

533. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 090, 9/22/2021.

534. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 090, 9/22/2021.

535. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 092, 9/22/2021.

536. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 092, 9/22/2021.

537. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 088, 9/22/2021.

538. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 086 and 21.4 OIR 088, 9/22/2021.

539. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 086, 9/22/2021.

540. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 086, 9/22/2021.

541. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 088, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLAR088, 10/12/2021.

542. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLAR088, 10/12/2021.

543. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 086, 9/22/2021.

544. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 086, 9/22/2021.

545. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 091, 9/22/2021.

546. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 092, 9/22/2021.

547. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 092, 9/22/2021.

548. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 092, 9/22/2021.

549. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 107 and 21.4 OIR 109, 9/22/2021.

550. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 107, 9/22/2021.

551. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 108, 9/22/2021.

552. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 105 and 21.4 OIR 109, 9/22/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

553. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/1/2021.

554. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 105 and 21.4 OIR 109, 9/22/2021.

555. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 109, 9/22/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

556. Al-Monitor, "Intel: US-led Coalition Reaffirms Support for Prisons Holding IS Fighters in Northeast Syria," 8/2/2021; Wladimir van Wilgenburg, "Coalition Commander: British Government Invested 20 Million Dollars in Northern Syrian Prison," Kurdistan24, 8/1/2021.

557. Al-Monitor, "Intel: US-led Coalition Reaffirms Support for Prisons Holding IS Fighters in Northeast Syria," 8/2/2021; Wladimir van Wilgenburg, "Coalition Commander: British Gov't Invested 20 Million Dollars in Northern Syrian Prison," Kurdistan24, 8/1/2021.

558. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 106, 9/22/2021.

559. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 105 and 21.4 OIR 106, 9/22/2021.

560. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 105, 9/22/2021.

561. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 105, 9/22/2021.

562. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 105, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, vetting Comment #Q16, 10/20/2021.

563. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 105, 9/22/2021; CJTF-OIR, vetting Comment #Q16, 10/20/2021.

564. Karen De Young, "Blinken Says the Number of ISIS Fighters and Family Members Being Held at Detention Camps in Syria is 'Untenable,'" Washington Post, 6/28/2021; USCENTCOM, transcript, "General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr. Sky News Arabia Interview, May 18, 2021," 5/19/2021.

565. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 106, 9/22/2021.

566. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 106, 9/22/2021.

567. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 113, 9/22/2021.

568. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 113, 9/22/2021.

569. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 113, 9/22/2021.

570. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 113, 9/22/2021.

571. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 113, 9/22/2021.

572. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 113, 9/22/2021.

573. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR CLAR105, 7/13/2021.

574. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR CLAR110, 10/12/2021.

575. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 083, 9/22/2021.

576. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 083, 9/22/2021.

577. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 083, 9/22/2021.

578. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

579. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

580. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

581. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

582. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

583. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

584. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

585. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

586. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

587. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 122, 9/22/2021.

588. Crispin Smith and Hamdi Malik, "The Muqawama are Focusing Attack Claims on U.S. Bases in Syria," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 7/28/2021.

589. OIR Spokesperson (@OIRSpox), tweet, 7/4/2021, 4:48 PM ET; Qassim Abdul-Zahra, "Bases Housing US Troops in Iraq, Syria Attacked, 2 Injured," Associated Press, 7/7/2021; Idrees Ali, "No Injures, Damage in Attack Against U.S. Forces in Syria-Defense Official," Reuters, 7/10/2021.

590. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 122, 9/22/2021.

591. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021.

592. Anna Ahronheim, "Iran Not Getting the Bomb Any Time Soon— Military Intelligence Head," Jerusalem Post, 10/3/2021.

593. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 118, 9/22/2021.

594. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

595. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

596. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021.

597. Sarah Dadouch, "In the Cradle of the Syrian Revolution, Renewed Violence Shows Reconciliation is Still Elusive," Washington Post, 9/19/2021.

598. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021; William Christou, "Syrian Regime and Allied Militias Storm Daraa Al-Balad as Negotiations Fail," Middle East News Agency, 8/24/2021; Sarah Dadouch, "In the Cradle of the Syrian Revolution, Renewed Violence Shows Reconciliation is Still Elusive," Washington Post, 9/19/2021.

599. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 114, 9/22/2021; DIA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021; William Christou, "Syrian Regime and Allied Militias Storm Daraa Al-Balad as Negotiations Fail," Middle East News Agency, 8/24/2021; Sarah Dadouch, "In the Cradle of the Syrian Revolution, Renewed Violence Shows Reconciliation is Still Elusive," Washington Post, 9/19/2021.

600. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021.

601. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021.

602. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021.

603. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021.

604. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021.

605. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021.

606. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021; DIA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021; Sarah Dadouch, "In the Cradle of the Syrian Revolution, Renewed Violence Shows Reconciliation is Still Elusive," Washington Post, 9/19/2021.

607. DoS, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

608. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 123, 9/22/2021.

609. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 118, 9/22/2021.

610. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 083, 9/22/2021.

611. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 083, 9/22/2021.

612. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 118, 9/22/2021.

613. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 118, 9/22/2021.

614. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 113, 6/23/2021.

615. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 118, 9/22/2021.

616. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 118, 9/22/2021.

617. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR SUPP02, 10/8/2021.

618. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR SUPP02, 10/8/2021.

619. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 083, 9/22/2021; DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 119, 9/22/2021; DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 121, 9/15/2021.

620. USCENTCOM, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 083, 9/22/2021.

621. DoS, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

622. Ali Kucukgocmen, "Erdogan says Latest Kurdish YPG Attack on Turkish Police is 'Final Straw'," Reuters, 10/11/2021.

623. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 121, 9/15/2021.

624. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 121, 9/15/2021; OUSD(P) ISA, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

625. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 121, 9/15/2021.

626. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 121, 9/15/2021.

627. BBC, "Turkey v Syria's Kurds: The Short, Medium and Long Story," 10/23/2019.

628. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 119, 9/22/2021.

629. DoS, vetting comment, 10/8/2021.

630. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 119, 9/22/2021.

631. DoD OUSDP/ISA reports that although the SDF was able to maintain SDF Defeat ISIS operations in the near term, Turkish strikes distracted SDF leadership attention and resources and could result in further disruptions to the Defeat ISIS campaign in the medium to long term.

632. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 119, 9/22/2021.

633. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 119, 9/22/2021.

634. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 119, 9/22/2021.

635. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 120, 9/22/2021.

636. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 120, 9/22/2021.

637. DoD OUSD(P) ISA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 120, 9/22/2021.

638. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

639. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/8/2021.

640. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

641. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

642. U.S. Mission to the UN, cable, "United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen Briefing to the Security Council on Syria," 21 USUN NEW YORK 968, 8/24/2021.

643. U.S. Mission to the UN, cable, "United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen Briefing to the Security Council on Syria," 21 USUN NEW YORK 968, 8/24/2021.

644. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/8/2021.

645. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/8/2021.

646. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

647. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

648. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

649. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

650. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

651. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

652. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

653. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

654. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

655. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/22/2021.

656. Consulate General Istanbul, cable, "START Weekly Activity Highlights," 21 ISTANBUL 566, 9/7/2021.

657. Consulate General Istanbul, cable, "START Weekly Activity Highlights," 21 ISTANBUL 566, 9/7/2021; DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

658. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

659. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/8/2021.

660. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

661. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

662. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

663. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

664. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/22/2021.

665. United Nations, transcript, "Statement by Paulo Pinheiro, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, to the 47th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council," 7/6/2021; United Nations, transcript, "Under-Secretary-General For Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, Briefing to the Security Council on the Humanitarian Situation in Syria," 8/24/2021; Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021.

666. United Nations, transcript, "Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, Briefing to the Security Council on the Humanitarian Situation in Syria," 8/24/2021; Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021.

667. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

668. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

669. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

670. Zana Omer and Sirwan Kajjo, "Kurdish Authorities Release 324 Syrian Nationals from Al-Hol Camp," Voice of America, 9/16/2021.

671. Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Mission Iraq Official Informal, Thursday, September 30," 21 MDA 40402, 9/30/2021; Embassy Baghdad, cable, "Iraq: A Second Civilian Repatriation from Al-Hol Is a Step in the Right Direction," 21 BAGHDAD 1898, 10/8/2021.

672. DoS, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

673. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/8/2021.

674. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

675. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/1/2021.

676. DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 028, 9/22/2021.

677. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/1/2021.

678. United Nations, press release, "Launch of the Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syria / Iraq Third Country National Returnees," 9/29/2021.

679. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 6/18/2021; DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

680. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 OIR 030, 9/22/2021.

681. DoS, response to DoS OIG, 6/18/2021; DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS PRM, vetting comment, 10/8/2021.

682. Louisa Loveluck, "Syrian Detention Camp Rocked by Dozens of Killings Blamed on Islamic State Women," Washington Post, 9/19/2021;DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, response to DoS OIG, 5/28/2021.

683. United Nations, transcript, "Under-Secretary-General For Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, Briefing to the Security Council on the Humanitarian Situation in Syria," 8/24/2021.

684. Jeff Seldin (@jseldin), tweet, 9/223/2012, 10:45 AM ET; Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021; Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?" 9/23/2021.

685. United Nations, transcript, "Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, Briefing to the Security Council on the Humanitarian Situation in Syria," 8/24/2021.

686. Save the Children, "When Am I Going to Start to Live?," 9/23/2021.

687. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

688. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

689. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/8/2021.

690. CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 088, 6/24/2021; CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.3 OIR 103, 6/24/2021.

691. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

692. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

693. DoS, vetting comment, 10/8/2021.

694. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

695. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

696. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

697. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

698. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

699. UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, "United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen Briefing to the Security Council on Syria," 8/24/2021; USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

700. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

701. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021; DoD, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

702. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

703. UN Security Council, "Resolution 2585," S/RES/2585, 7/9/2021; DoS, vetting comment, 10/21/2021.

704. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

705. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

706. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

707. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

708. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.; United Nations, "Statement of the Renewal of Humanitarian Lifeline to Millions of People in Northwest Syria," 6/18/2021; United States Mission to the United Nations, "Remarks by Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield at a UNSC Stakeout Following Consultations on the Humanitarian Situation in Syria," 7/6/2021.

709. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

710. UN Security Council Report, "September 2021 Monthly Forecast," 8/31/2021.

711. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

712. UN OCHA, "Syrian Arab Republic: IDP Movements," 6/2021.

713. UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Syrian Arab Republic to the Forty-Eighth Regular Session of the Human Rights Council," 9/14/2021.

714. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

715. ACTED, Action Against Hunger, and CARE, "Water Crisis and Drought Threaten More than 12 Million in Syria and Iraq," 8/23/2021.

716. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

717. ACTED, Action Against Hunger, and CARE, "Water Crisis and Drought Threaten More than 12 Million in Syria and Iraq," 8/23/2021.

718. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

719. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

720. Consulate General Istanbul, cable, "Syria: Drought Exacerbates Agricultural Challenges in Northeast Syria, United States Responds but Gaps Remain," 21 ISTANBUL 546, 9/2/2021.

721. Consulate General Istanbul, cable, "Syria: Drought Exacerbates Agricultural Challenges in Northeast Syria, United States Responds but Gaps Remain," 21 ISTANBUL 546, 9/2/2021.

722. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

723. WFP, "WFP Syria Situation Report #8 August 2021," 8/31/2021.

724. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

725. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

726. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

727. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

728. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

729. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

730. USAID BHA, vetting comment, 10/19/2021.

731. Charles Lister, webinar, "Syria and the West: The Efficacy of Economic Sanctions," Middle East Institute, 8/24/2021.

732. Department of the Treasury, website, "Syria Sanctions," 9/20/2021.

733. Public Law 116-92, "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020," Division F, "Other Matters," Title LXXIV, "Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019," 12/20/2019.

734. Wael Alalwani and Karam Shaar, "A Comprehensive Review of the Effectiveness of US and EU Sanctions on Syria," Middle East Institute, 8/6/2021.

735. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021; USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

736. Wael Alalwani and Karam Shaar, "A Comprehensive Review of the Effectiveness of US and EU Sanctions on Syria," Middle East Institute, 8/6/2021.

737. Wael Alalwani and Karam Shaar, "A Comprehensive Review of the Effectiveness of US and EU Sanctions on Syria," Middle East Institute, 8/6/2021.

738. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

739. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021; DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 6/18/2021.

740. DoS, press release, "Imposing Sanctions in Defense of Human Rights in Syria," 7/28/2021.

741. Treasury OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 21.4 WOG TREAS 001B, 10/8/2021.

742. WHO EMRO, "Update on COVID-19 Vaccination in Syria, 22 September 2021," 9/22/2021.

743. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

744. Save the Children, "Surge in COVID-19 in North West Syria Overwhelming Health System," 9/9/2021.

745. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

746. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

747. WHO EMRO, "Update on COVID-19 Vaccination in Syria, 22 September 2021," 9/22/2021.

748. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

749. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

750. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

751. Al-Monitor, "Northwest Syria Running Low on COVID-19 Tests, Oxygen Amid Conflict," 9/16/2021.

752. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

753. Al-Monitor, "Northwest Syria Running Low on COVID-19 Tests, Oxygen Amid Conflict," 9/16/2021; Save the Children, "Surge in COVID-19 in North West Syria Overwhelming Health System," 9/9/2021.

754. USAID BHA, "Syria Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #722," 9/24/2021.

755. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021.

756. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

757. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

758. USAID ME Bureau, response to USAID OIG request for information, 10/4/2021.

759. USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 9/21/2021; IRC, "Second COVID Wave Hits NW Syria as Hostilities Increase, Tests and 02 Supplies Run Out; IRC Calls for Ceasefire And Urgent Support for COVID Response," 9/15/2021.

760. CARE, "Healthcare System on the Brink of Collapse as New Wave of COVID Hits Northwest Syria," 9/28, 2021.

761. USAID BHA, "Syria Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #722," 9/24/2021.

762. USAID BHA, "Syria Complex Emergency Humanitarian Update #722," 9/24/2021.

763. DoS, response to DoS OIG request for information, 9/18/2021.

TO REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, OR ABUSE RELATED TO
OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS
AND PROGRAMS, CONTACT:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HOTLINE

www.dodig.mil/Components/
Administrative-Investigations/DoD-Hotline

1-800-424-9098

DEPARTMENT OF STATE HOTLINE

stateoig.gov/hotline

1-800-409-9926 or 202-647-3320

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOTLINE

oig.usaid.gov/report-fraud

1-800-230-6539 or 202-712-1023