OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

AND OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO

IRAQ & SYRIA

APRIL 1, 2024–JUNE 30, 2024

We are pleased to present this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) report to Congress on Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). This report discharges our quarterly reporting responsibilities pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. 419).

The United States launched OIR in 2014 to defeat the Islamic State in 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 (DoD), the Department of State (State), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to further the U.S. Government's policy goals in Iraq and Syria during the period of April 1 through June 30, 2024. This report also discusses the planned, ongoing, and completed oversight work conducted by the Lead IG agencies—the DoD, State, and USAID OIGs—and our partner oversight agencies.

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APRIL 1, 2024–JUNE 30, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) mission is to advise, assist, and enable partner forces until they can independently maintain the enduring defeat of ISIS in Iraq and designated areas of Syria to set conditions for long-term security cooperation frameworks.[1] The broader counter-ISIS campaign includes supporting the Iraqi government and local Syrian partners with civilian-led stabilization activities.[2]

Ten years after capturing Mosul, ISIS appeared to be diminishing in numbers but continued to conduct mainly small-scale attacks in Iraq and Syria.[3] The U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) said that ISIS is on pace to more than double the total number of attacks claimed in 2023, an indication that the group is attempting to reconstitute.[4] The commander of Coalition forces said that the conditions that led to ISIS's rise in 2014 remained in Iraq and Syria. He said that while Coalition forces can disrupt ISIS's capabilities, the Coalition cannot resolve the underlying instability that supports ISIS's growth.[5]

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III speaks with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani prior to a meeting at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., on April 15. (DoD photo)

Iran-aligned militias largely maintained a temporary pause in attacks against U.S. and Coalition forces and facilities in Iraq, Jordan, and Syria.

Iran-aligned militias largely maintained a temporary pause in attacks against U.S. and Coalition forces and facilities in Iraq, Jordan, and Syria.[6] However, regional unrest continued, including the Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza, Iran-aligned militia attacks on Israel, and Houthi attacks on shipping in the Red Sea.[7] Coalition personnel continued to focus on force protection which resulted in a reduction of asset allocations to counter-ISIS operations.[8]

The U.S.-Iraq Higher Military Commission continued to discuss how and when to transition the Coalition's operations in Iraq to bilateral security relationships with the United States and other nations.[9] Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani continued to face domestic pressure from some elements to ensure that the discussions result in the removal of U.S. forces from Iraq.[10] Coalition advisers focused on improving the ability of the Joint Operations Command-Iraq to plan operations against ISIS, among other advising and enabling.[11] Prime Minister al-Sudani visited the United States in April to meet with President Biden and other U.S. Government leaders. During the Prime Minister's visit, he signed 18 memorandums of understanding with U.S. companies on energy and economic issues, oil sector development, and the pharmaceutical industry.[12]

Iraq's elections are still more than a year away, but political maneuvering has begun. Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr announced he was rebranding the Sadrist Trend Movement as the National Shia Movement, strongly suggesting that he is interested in running in Iraq's 2025 national elections while attracting attention from Shia political parties and independents.[13] Al-Sadr won a plurality of seats in the Iraqi parliament in the 2021 national elections but failed to form a government, and al-Sadr's National Shia Movement is viewed as a considerable electoral force in next year's elections.[14]

Coaltion advisors continued to advise, assist, and enable the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northeastern Syria and the Syrian Free Army (SFA), which supports operations in the vicinity of the At Tanf Garrison.[15] However, forces loyal to the Syrian regime blocked transport of supplies to the zone around At Tanf, creating a humanitarian crisis at the nearby Rukban settlement. The crisis taxed SFA members and their families and threatened the viability of At Tanf.[16] Turkish airstrikes killed SDF personnel and strained the SDF's ability to maintain its pace of counter-ISIS operations.[17] Damage to electrical and water infrastructure in northeastern Syria by previous Turkish strikes, including the largest gas and electric plant in Syria, affected large portions of the population, and hampered the autonomous governing body's ability to provide services.[18] Tensions with Arab tribal fighters, who received support from pro-regime forces, further stretched SDF forces.[19]

Training for SDF guard forces at detention facilities and security forces at displaced persons camps remained mostly paused.[20] Security forces continued to conduct patrols and operations at the al-Hol displaced persons camp, but lacked sufficient resources to curb ISIS smuggling into and out of the camp.[21] Repatriation of residents from al-Hol to their home countries or communities continued; approximately 41,000 people remained in the camp at the end of the quarter.[22] State said that one of the key efforts in the U.S. Defeat-ISIS mission in Syria remained supporting essential services as a way to stabilize areas liberated from ISIS and enable the return of displaced persons.[23]

Repatriated Iraqis from the al-Hol camp face challenges with reintegration. In addition to delays in the security screening process, returning Iraqis faced barriers to reintegration in host communities due to their affiliation or perceived affiliation with ISIS.[24] Several USAID activities supported the reintegration of Iraqis, including establishing a case management system; social-economic, mental health, and psychosocial support; and support to host communities, to increase acceptance of repatriated Iraqis.[25]

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad participated in the Arab League summit in May after receiving an invitation from Bahrain.[26] During the summit, the Arab League reaffirmed its support for ending the conflict in Syria in line with UNSCR 2254, preserving Syria's territorial integrity, and providing a safer environment for the voluntary return of refugees.[27]

Approximately 16.7 million Syrians are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance. The United Nations estimates that nearly 13 million Syrians are estimated to be food insecure and 90 percent of Syrians live in extreme poverty. Total U.S. assistance from USAID BHA totaled $277 million in FY 2024 and health, food, and included water/sanitation/hygiene assistance assistance.[28] However, insecurity limited the ability of USAID's third party monitors to access certain parts of Syria and monitor humanitarian assistance programming.[29]

The World Food Programme delivers food assistances in Aleppo governorate, Syria. (WFP photo)

The Chief of the General Staff of the Iraqi Armed Forces, General Abdulameer Rashid Yarallah (center) and the Commander of the U.S. Central Command, General Michael Erik Kurilla (not pictured) co-chair the inaugural U.S.-Iraq Higher Military Commission Principals Meeting in Baghdad on April 8. (U.S. Army photo)

MISSION UPDATE

MISSION UPDATE

This section describes U.S. and Coalition activities during the quarter and progress toward meeting the OIR campaign objectives. The following section, "Broader U.S. Policy Goals," describes U.S. diplomatic, stabilization, and humanitarian assistance activities that seek to set the conditions necessary for ultimate success of the OIR mission.

INTRODUCTION

The Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) mission is to advise, assist, and enable partner forces until they can independently maintain the enduring defeat of ISIS in Iraq and designated areas of Syria to set conditions for long-term security cooperation frameworks.[30]

The Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR), which comprises troops from 25 countries, executes the OIR campaign.[31] CJTF-OIR is part of the 87-member Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, led by the United States.[32]

The OIR campaign is organized around four lines of effort.[33] (See Figure 1.) In June 2023, CJTF-OIR issued an amendment to its campaign plan that outlines decisive conditions and conditions-based milestones against which to measure progress of the mission. Specifically, this assessment framework contains milestones to transition OIR activities to a long-term security framework.[34] CJTF-OIR reported that it is working on a new OIR campaign plan and plans to publish it next quarter, pending the outcome of the Joint Security Cooperation Dialogue in July.[35]

Figure 1.

OIR Lines of Effort

OIR is currently in Phase IV, Normalize, during which CJTF-OIR provides security, planning, and support to the Iraqi government and appropriate authorities in Syria.

1. ADVISE, ASSIST, AND ENABLE PARTNER FORCES TO MAINTAIN THE DEFEAT OF ISIS Coalition Forces are focused on transferring the long-term work in the fight against ISIS to local partner forces by providing those forces with advice, assistance, and other measures needed to enable them to maintain the territorial defeat of ISIS.

2. MAINTAIN THE COALITION The protection and preservation of the Coalition is critical to continuing the mission to maintain the defeat of ISIS.

3. ENABLE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENDURING SECURITY COOPERATION FRAMEWORK IN IRAQ This complements parallel efforts at the institutional level by Unified Action Partners (including NATO Mission-Iraq and OSC-I) to set the conditions for the future transition of the OIR mission.

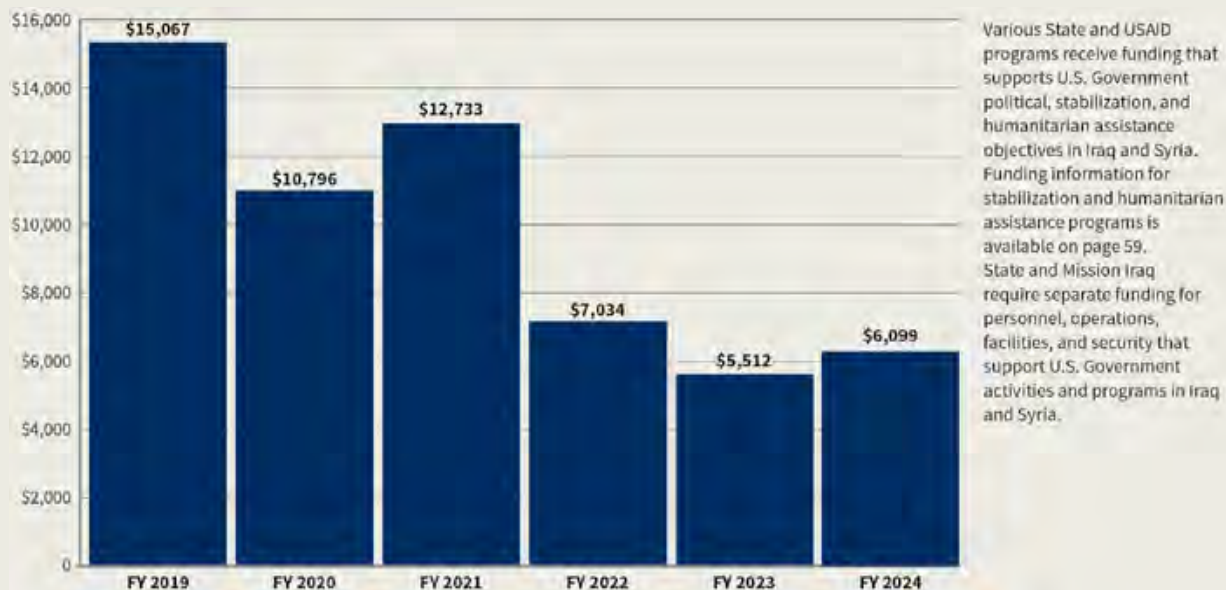**4. MAXIMIZE EFFECTS IN THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT** Through press releases and social media, the Coalition reinforces the messages that support CJTF-OIR's regional partners and combats disinformation from ISIS.

Sources: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 23.1 OIR 004, 12/21/2022 and 23.2 OIR 004, 6/21/2023; CJTF-OIR, vetting comment, 7/18/2023.

DOD FUNDING FOR OIR

DoD Enacted Funding for OIR FY 2019-FY 2024, in $ Millions

Various State and USAID programs receive funding that supports U.S. Government political, stabilization, and humanitarian assistance objectives in Iraq and Syria. Funding information for stabilization and humanitarian assistance programs is available on page 59. State and Mission Iraq require separate funding for personnel, operations, facilities, and security that support U.S. Government activities and programs in Iraq and Syria.

CTEF-funded Support to Iraq and Syria During the Quarter

Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA) Material Support
$12.2 Million

Counterterroism Service (CTS)
$11.4 Million

Peshmerga Food/Bulk Fuel (Class I/III) Support
$3.0 Million

Ministry of Interior (MoI)
$1.2 Million

IRAQ $90.8 Million

Peshmerga Stipends
$45.0 Million

Ministry of Defense (MoD)
$18.0 Million

Provincial Internal Security Forces (PRiSF)
$0.6 Million

Internal Security Forces (InSF)
$0.4 Million

Syrian Free Army (SFA)
$0.1 Million

SYRIA $7.3 Million

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HAT)
$1.3 Million

Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)
$3.2 Million

Commandos (CDO)
$1.8 Million

Notes: Numbers may not add to total due to rounding. Syria funding numbers available for October and November 2023 only.
Sources: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 24.3 OIR FOL016, 7/2/2024; OUSD(C), response to DoD OIG request for information, 7/8/2024.

CJTF-OIR said that counter-ISIS operations and force protection remained the highest OIR priorities in Iraq and Syria during the quarter. While the main line of effort has been on providing advice, assistance, and enabling of partner forces, "notable progress" has been made on setting the conditions for a "post-OIR environment." [36] These conditions include the repatriation of ISIS-affiliated detainees in Syria and displaced persons in both countries, the transition of Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF) funding, and the transition of roles, responsibilities, and relationships to other entities in anticipation of a post-OIR environment. CJTF-OIR noted that partner force capabilities continued to improve in a non-permissive operational environment. [37]

CJTF-OIR uses the CTEF as the primary vehicle for providing materiel and other support to partner forces in Iraq and Syria. Of the $398.0 million CTEF appropriation for FY 2024, $242.0 million was designated to support partner forces in Iraq, of which $116.1 million had been expended as of the end of May. Of the $156.0 million designated for Syrian partner forces, $37.4 million had been expended as of the end of May. [38] (See page 9.)

Additionally, Congress appropriated $1.425 billion for Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for Iraq for FY 2019 through FY 2024. [39] Congress appropriated $175.0 million for FY 2024, even though State had requested a reduced amount, $75.5 million, for FMF because substantial funds previously appropriated for FMF remained available. [40] At the end of the quarter, $913.8 million (73 percent) of available funds had been spent. State reported the allocation of FY 2024 FMF funds is under review and has not yet been finalized or obligated. [41]

STATUS OF ISIS

June marked the 10th anniversary since ISIS captured Mosul, seizing the northern Iraqi city in a matter of hours and precipitating the group's 3-year rule over roughly one-third of Iraq's territory. [42] While the group no longer holds territory in Iraq or Syria, the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) said that ISIS is on pace to more than double the number of attacks it claimed in 2023, characterizing the rise in attacks as an indication that "ISIS is attempting to reconstitute following several years of decreased capability." [43]

In a media interview, the CJTF-OIR Commanding General, Major General Joel Vowell, said that the conditions that helped ISIS rise in 2014 remain in Syria and Iraq. [44] Major General Vowell said that Coalition and partner forces can disrupt ISIS's capabilities but cannot resolve the underlying causes of instability. [45] USCENTCOM said that there were approximately 2,500 ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria. [46]

State said that the U.S. Government's Defeat-ISIS mission remained constant, and resources directed to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS remained consistent. [47] In bilateral and multilateral engagements with Coalition partners, State acknowledged the demand for international attention toward the Israel-Hamas conflict but continued to emphasize the need for sustained commitment to the Defeat-ISIS mission in Iraq and Syria as a critical element of regional stability. [48]

In anticipation of the 10th anniversary of the creation of the Global Coalition in the fall of 2024, State reported that it worked with Coalition partners to identify opportunities to streamline and further operationalize Coalition working groups and regional lines of effort. [49] State continued to urge de-escalation and the continuation of existing ceasefire arrangements, including against Iranian-aligned militia groups, and urged all parties to refrain from attacks on civilian infrastructure. [50]

ISIS ACTIVITY AND CAPABILITY

CJTF-OIR reported that although ISIS **does not control or occupy territory** and appears to have fewer fighters, the group **demonstrated the ability to surge attacks** during the quarter, particularly in Syria.[51] U.S. military officials warned that ISIS continues to operate and has worked to expand its **global presence** through affiliates in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.[52]

ISIS initially **encouraged attacks on Israel** in response to Israel's conflict with Hamas in Gaza and continued to capitalize on the conflict for recruiting and incitement purposes.[53] However, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) observed **no increase in ISIS's ability** to move freely or conduct attacks, or to recruit or fundraise as a result of the conflict.[54]

Attack Trends This Quarter

IRAQ

ISIS displayed **little change in its day-to-day operations**, continuing to sporadically conduct low-level attacks. ISIS conducted two notable, high-casualty attacks in Salah ad-Din province in May.[55]

There were **no significant changes in ISIS's areas of operations or tactics** during the quarter.[56] Attack locations were consistent with previous quarters, spanning across governorates west and north of Baghdad.[57]
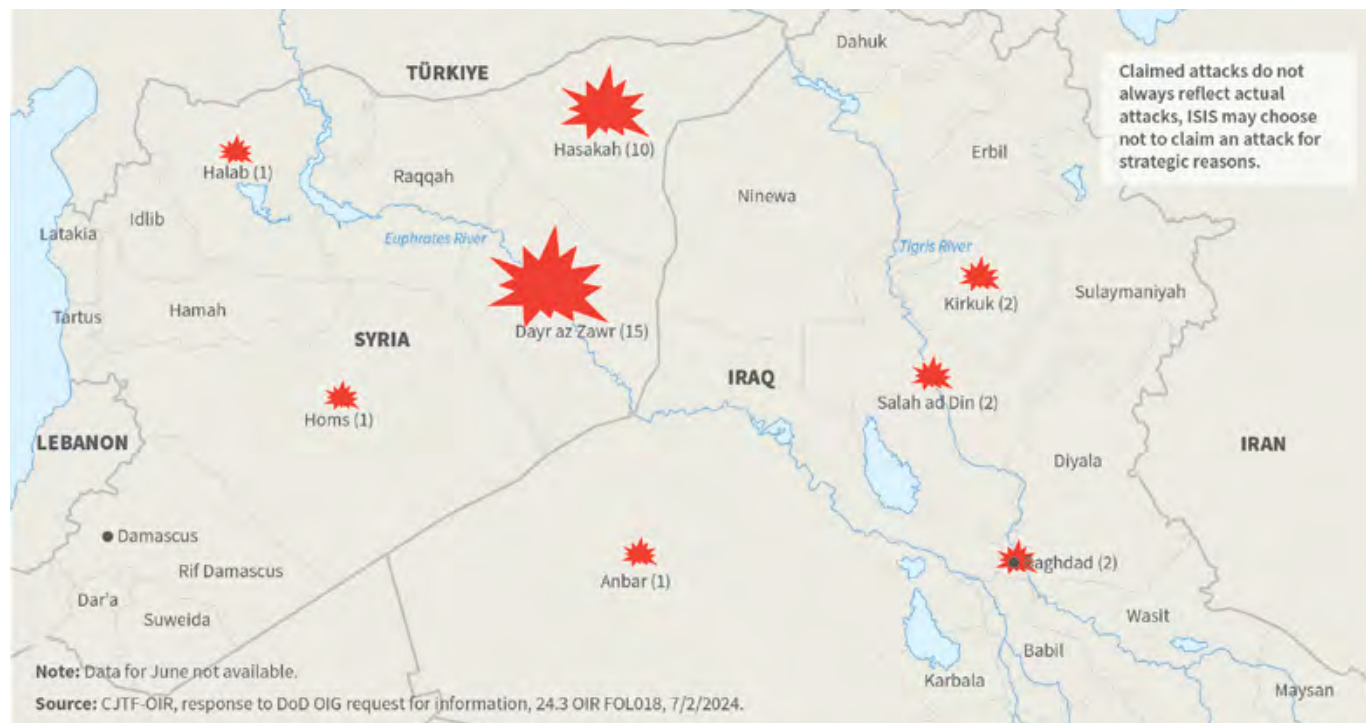
SYRIA

ISIS overall showed **no significant improvement** in operational capabilities or attack sophistication at the strategic level. ISIS attack claims were lower than last quarter, but higher than the same period last year. State noticed that claimed attacks do not always reflect actual attacks, as groups may choose not to claim an attack for strategic reasons.[58] The bulk of ISIS attacks involved small arms and IEDs.[59]

IISIS maintained consistent operations against **Syrian regime transports** and outposts across Homs, Raqqah, and Dayr az Zawr governorates.[60]

However, the group conducted **three vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) attacks** during the quarter, renewing a tactic that it had not used in a year.[61] One attack on May 10 killed three SDF fighters in Dayr az Zawr governorate.[62]

There have been no reports of ISIS attacks targeting **SDF detention facilities** this quarter. However, ISIS likely still retains the ability to conduct influence operations within displaced persons camps.[63]

ISIS-claimed Attacks by Province, April and May

Claimed attacks do not always reflect actual attacks, ISIS may choose not to claim an attack for strategic reasons.

Note: Data for June not available.

Source: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 24.3 OIR FOL018, 7/2/2024.

(continued on next page)

ISIS Attacks by Month, January 2022–June 2024

Source: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 24.3 OIR FOL018, 7/2/2024.
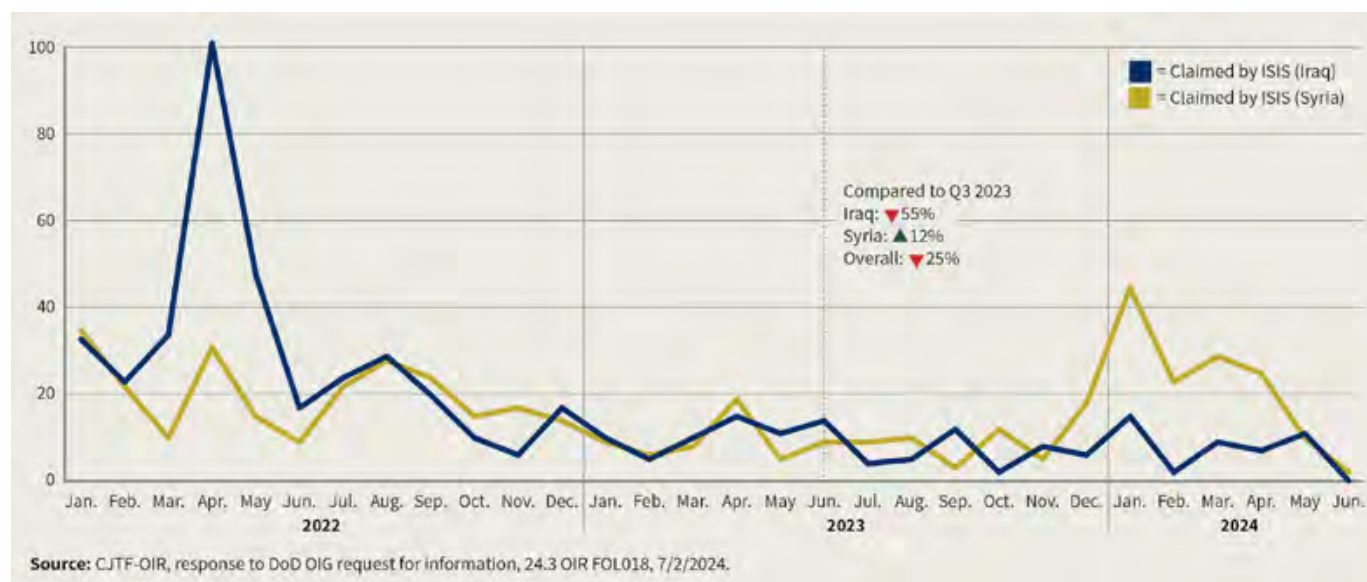
ISIS CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

LEADERSHIP: In May, the SDF **killed an ISIS cell leader** in Syria who was responsible for an attack that killed three SDF personnel. In June, a U.S. airstrike in Syria killed an ISIS "facilitator." Local media sources reported that Iraqi forces arrested a "top" ISIS member south of Baghdad.[64]

STRATEGY AND CAPABILITY: There was no indication of any significant change in ISIS recruiting efforts or ability in either Iraq or Syria and the DIA reported no change in the number of estimated ISIS fighters in Syria during the quarter.[65] In late May, the SDF arrested an individual involved in ISIS efforts to **smuggle children located in the al-Hol displaced persons camp** in Syria to training camps in the Syrian Desert.[66]

EXTERNAL OPERATIONS: ISIS senior leaders in Syria almost certainly remain committed to enabling **extra-regional operations**.[67] ISIS affiliates claimed a May 19 attack in Afghanistan that killed three Spanish tourists and injured Norwegian, Australian, and Lithuanian nationals.[68]

Nine ISIS affiliates in Libya, Afghanistan, West Africa, the Sahel, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and Somalia have been designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations.[69] Less operationally active Foreign Terrorist Organizations affiliated with ISIS operate in Bangladesh, Egypt, and the Philippines.[70]

In its 2024 Annual Threat Assessment, the U.S. Intelligence Community assessed that while ISIS has been forced to rely on regional branches, the group will **remain a centralized global organization** and will attempt to conduct and inspire global attacks against the West and Western interests.[71]

INFORMATION OPERATIONS: ISIS debuted a new form of propaganda during the quarter to broadcast its activities, creating **artificial intelligence-generated news anchors and graphics** designed to imitate CNN and Al-Jazeera. The videos presented reports in multiple languages on ISIS's expansion in Africa and the ongoing conflict in Syria, and touted ISIS-claimed attacks.[72] The videos are part of a new weekly ISIS program called News Harvest produced by a pro-ISIS group called War and Media.[73] The campaign also used a network of social media accounts engineered to look like they were affiliated with the news outlets. YouTube removed the videos.[74]

FINANCES: ISIS leaders maintain access to significant funds, estimated between **$10 million and $20 million**, which are mostly held in cash and other liquid assets. Regional ISIS networks also continue to extort local populations as part of their effort to exert influence in parts of Iraq and Syria. In addition, ISIS members continue to receive contributions from sympathizers through informal funds transfer networks, known as "hawalas," intended to help secure the release of ISIS associates from detention, particularly in northeastern Syria.[75]

ISIS supporters use a combination of **cash, the hawala system, virtual currencies, and online fundraising platforms** to transfer funds, including to individuals in al-Hol. The group's supporters have gathered and sent funds to intermediaries in Türkiye, who smuggle the cash into Syria or send the funds to hawala dealers operating in the camp. In al-Hol, ISIS supporters have received up to $20,000 per month via the hawala system. The majority of those funds transfers have originated outside Syria or passed through neighboring countries such as Türkiye.[76]

MILITIA ATTACKS

Iran-aligned Militia Groups Maintain Pause in Attacks on U.S. and Coalition Forces

The DIA reported that the Iran-aligned militias largely maintained a temporary pause in attacks against U.S. and Coalition forces and facilities in Iraq, Jordan, and Syria. The militias initiated the pause in February after a militia attack killed three U.S. Service members in Jordan.[77]

The DIA said that the militia leaders maintained the pause in attacks at Iran's urging probably out of fear of retaliatory U.S. airstrikes and to provide opportunity for political negotiations between the United States and Iraq regarding the future of U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria.[78] Prior to the pause, Iran-aligned militias had attacked U.S. and Coalition facilities dozens of times since mid-October 2023.[79]

The DIA reported that one exception to the pause occurred in April, when the militias likely conducted near-simultaneous unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attacks in Iraq and rocket attacks in Syria.[80] The militias did not claim responsibility for the attacks, but the attacks occurred after militia-linked media accused a "foreign entity" of causing an explosion at a militia weapons storage facility, the DIA said.[81]

CJTF-OIR reported no significant changes in the level of Iranian government involvement in militia activity.[82] The DIA said that Iranian guidance will be the largest determinant in whether the militias resume attacks, and that the militias will lobby Tehran to influence that guidance.[83]

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI), the front group behind the attacks, said that its operations were in support of Palestinians in Gaza, where Israel has been waging a war against Hamas, and to "expel the American occupation" from Iraq.[84]

IRI militia Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada warned again in June that it would resume attacks on U.S. forces if Iraq's government failed to reach an agreement with the United States on a timetable for U.S. troop withdrawal from the country.[85]

State reported that the United States continues to press the Iraqi government to prevent attacks on U.S. facilities or on Israel from Iraqi soil.[86] A State spokesperson said that the United States remains "concerned that individuals in the Popular Mobilization Forces (which includes members of the IRI) are not responsive to the Iraqi commander-in-chief and are engaged in violent and destabilizing activities in Iraq and Syria."[87]

In late May, Iran-aligned militias issued a statement calling on their followers to protest the war in Gaza by targeting U.S. restaurant franchises in Iraq.[88] Over the next few weeks, assailants vandalized several U.S. and American-style food chains, including KFC and Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken, and chased out patrons, according to media reports.[89] The attacks stopped after Iraq deployed forces from its Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) to patrol the central Baghdad neighborhood where several international franchises were located and make arrests.[90]

The DIA said that the militia leaders maintained the pause in attacks at Iran's urging probably out of fear of retaliatory U.S. airstrikes and to provide opportunity for political negotiations between the United States and Iraq regarding the future of U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria.

Meanwhile, Iran-aligned militias increased attacks outside of the OIR area of responsibility, launching cruise missiles at Israeli targets "regularly" in May and June, according to news agencies.[91] Most of the attacks were intercepted by U.S. and Israeli defenses.[92] Houthi militias in Yemen also continued to attack military and commercial ships in the Red Sea, including a May missile and drone attack on the USS Mason.[93] The Houthi attacks have prompted the United States and other countries to protect shipping and to preemptively attack Houthi positions.[94]

U.S. Forces Continued to Prioritize Force Protection

CJTF-OIR reported that the threat level from potential militia attacks or the larger regional conflict did not change during the quarter. Coalition personnel remained at an elevated force protection level and continued to allocate assets away from counter-ISIS operations and toward force protection. Coalition forces prioritized using air movement rather than ground routes for essential movement of forces.[95] However, Coalition advisement of partner forces remained largely unaffected.[96]

USCENTCOM reported that Coalition forces did not conduct airstrikes against Iran-aligned militias operating in Iraq or Syria during the quarter.[97] CJTF-OIR reported that Coalition forces remained ready and capable to counter militia attacks.[98]

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

The Coalition's Military Advisory Group continued to advise, enable, and assist the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)—including the Iraqi Air Enterprise and the Iraqi Ground Forces Command—and Kurdish Security Forces (KSF) in bases in Baghdad and Erbil.[99] The Special Operations Advisory Group advised, enabled, and assisted the CTS from bases in Anbar province.[100] (See page 15.)

Higher Military Commission Continues to Assess Key Factors to Determine U.S.-Iraqi Bilateral Security

In April, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani met with Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III. During the visit, Iraqi Prime Minister al-Sudani affirmed his government's commitment to an enduring U.S.-Iraq bilateral defense relationship and to a strong Iraq that is capable of self-defense in support of a more stable and peaceful region.[101] The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)) reported that the two officials addressed ongoing U.S.-Iraqi security cooperation, joint efforts to address persistent security threats to the United States and Iraq, and the future of the mission in Iraq of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.[102]

The meeting occurred amid ongoing discussions of the U.S.-Iraq Higher Military Commission (HMC) on how and when the Coalition will transition to an enduring bilateral security partnership.[103] The transition is based on three mutually agreed factors: the threat from ISIS; the operational and environmental requirements; and the ISF's capability.[104]

Coalition personnel remained at an elevated force protection level and continued to allocate assets away from counter-ISIS operations and toward force protection.

COALITION ADVISING IN IRAQ

Kurdish Security Forces

Within Kurdistan, Coalition advisors work with the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA) to implement a 4-year reform plan agreed upon between the U.S. Department of Defense and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The reform plan seeks to unify partisan Peshmerga forces under the MoPA which is responsible for maintaining the territorial integrity of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) and coordinating with the Ministry of Defense in Baghdad.

Counterterrorism Service

Coalition military advisors work with the CTS at the strategic and operational levels. The advising focuses on air-to-ground integration, ISR, site exploitation, and other areas to develop and assess CTS capabilities.

Iraqi Security Forces

Coalition military advisors have daily contact with Ministry of Defense (MOD) leaders at Joint Operations Command-Iraq (JOC-I), located at Union III in Baghdad. ISF advising focuses on the four areas most important for defeating Da'esh: sustainment/logistics, air operations, command and control, and intel. The advisors have recently established irregular contact with ISF personnel outside of Union III, to include Ministry of Defense headquarters and Iraq Ground Forces Command to meet the focus area advisory requirements.

Non-OIR Advising and Support

The Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I) at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad conducts bilateral security assistance and security cooperation activities, including training, with partner forces. NATO Mission-Iraq advises ISF leaders at the ministerial level.

Note: OCs may not be shown in their actual location within each province.

Source: CJTF-OIR, vetting comment, 7/16/2024.

The OUSD(P) reported that the Secretary and Prime Minister discussed efforts to modernize the ISF and the KSF and build their capabilities.[105] The Secretary and the Prime Minister also highlighted ongoing efforts between the DoD and the Iraqi Ministry of Defense to protect key sites across Iraq from aerial threats, including sites in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.[106]

Independent analysts cautioned that without "active and continuous deterrence," ISIS forces may be able to exploit security and governance vacuums in areas of Iraq formerly under the group's control.[107] According to media reports, concerns include the political and military influence of Iran-aligned militia groups that operate under the aegis of the Popular Mobilization Forces but are heavily guided by Iran.[108]

The OUSD(P) reported other areas of discussion during the meeting, including Iraq's intention to move forward with a $550 million Foreign Military Sales (FMS) purchase using a new flexible payment mechanism and plans to accelerate the repatriation of Iraqi nationals residing in displacement camps and detention facilities in northeastern Syria.[109] Last year, Iraq repatriated approximately 4,100 Iraqis.[110]

State said that it monitored the progression of the U.S.-Iraq Higher Military Commission and would adjust strategy and efforts according to any agreements reached in that process.[111]

Higher Coordinating Committee Meets for Second Time

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken hosted Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Tamim on April 15 in Washington, D.C., to inaugurate the second U.S.-Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee (HCC) meeting under Prime Minister al-Sudani's government and the 8th overall session of the HCC. Deputy Prime Minister Tamim said the HCC would "contribute in transforming our relationship, our strategic relationship to a different phase that will activate the Strategic Framework Agreement," which would involve developing Iraq's service economy, pursuing financial and political reform, and achieving energy independence.[112]

The HCC was established under the 2008 Strategic Framework Agreement to monitor overall implementation of the agreement and develop mutual objectives. The April 15 HCC meeting included six working group sessions that discussed advancing Iraq's energy independence, financial and banking reform, democracy and the rule of law, transportation and health, water and climate change, and higher education.[113]

During the HCC working group meeting, participants discussed anti-corruption activities. During a meeting with President Biden, Tamim discussed Iraq's progressive efforts to reform the financial and banking sector to connect Iraq to the international economy and increase trade while shielding the Iraqi people from the harmful impacts of corruption and money-laundering, a White House statement said.[114]

In the HCC joint statement released after the meetings, the United States and Iraq reaffirmed the importance of their bilateral partnership and "Iraq's critical role in regional security and prosperity."[115] The delegations said they wanted to expand the relationship between the two countries, including the areas of energy independence, financial reform, services for the Iraqi people, strengthening democracy and the rule of law, and enhancing educational and cultural relations.[116]

U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Tamim co-chair a U.S.-Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee meeting at the Department of State in Washington, D.C., on April 15. (State photo)

Prime Minininister Al-Sudani Faces Continued Domestic Pressure to End U.S. Military Presence in Iraq

Prime Minister al-Sudani continued to face domestic pressure from some elements to ensure that the U.S.-Iraqi negotiations on future bilateral security arrangements result in the removal of U.S. forces from Iraq.[117] Iraqi militia leaders consistently demanded the announcement of a firm timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, according to Iraq experts.[118] The DIA assessed that hardline militia factions will agitate loudly to persuade Iran to allow resumed attacks against U.S. forces if the negotiation process does not result in the announcement of a timeline.[119]

Iran may consider issuing guidance to the militias to resume attacks on U.S. forces if it assesses a lack of progress related to negotiations on ending the Coalition and drawing down U.S. forces.[120] Iran may also approve resumed attacks against U.S. interests in Iraq or Syria if the United States or a U.S. partner carries out an attack that crosses an Iranian red line, according to experts. Iran may calibrate its decision based on its desire to avoid outright war with the United States.[121]

According to media sources, Iraqi militias paused attacks on U.S. interests at Iran's direction, in part to provide Prime Minister al-Sudani an opportunity to pursue negotiations.[122] In June, the spokesman for one of the militias belonging to the IRI stated that it would resume military actions if the negotiations failed to result in the withdrawal of U.S. forces.[123]

No Major Operations against ISIS During the Quarter

CJTF-OIR reported that the ISF did not conduct any "significant" operations against ISIS during the quarter. Two planned operations were cancelled or downgraded to local operations that were managed at the provincial Operation Command level.[124] The ISF focused instead on providing security as Iraqi pilgrims travelled to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj.[125]

U.S. Army Soldiers participate in a live-fire exercise utilizing the M119 Howitzer, in Iraq. (U.S. Army National Guard photo)

Local media reported that the ISF launched the latest round of the Waad al-Haq operation against ISIS in Salah ad-Din in May and carried out airstrikes against ISIS positions in Diyala and Kirkuk provinces in June.[126]

Coalition Advisers Provided Advice Mainly on Operational Planning

The primary venue for Coalition advising of the ISF is the JOC-I, a cross-functional organization based in Baghdad that employs Ministry of Defense assets and reports to the Prime Minister.[127]

However, the JOC-I is a relatively small organization that does not perform "operational command and control" in a "Western sense," but rather directs operations on behalf of the prime minister and provides reports on security concerns to the political leadership.[128] In essence, the JOC-I operates as a strategic-to-operational interface between the prime minister and multiple government agencies, including the ISF.[129] There is limited coordination between the JOC-I and the Minister of Defense, which CJTF-OIR said is a challenge.[130]

CJTF-OIR reported that Coalition advisers sought mainly to improve the ability of the JOC-I and its subordinate commands to plan operations against ISIS.[131] The ISF planning efforts lack structure and do not fully integrate warfighting functions, CJTF-OIR said.[132] To address this deficit, CJTF-OIR has conducted three joint operational planning symposiums, an advanced planning symposium, and a leadership training program.[133]

During the quarter, the JOC-I planned one major counter-ISIS operation but did not execute it.[134] CJTF-OIR said that operations are primarily planned and carried out by the Iraqi Ground Forces Command, while the JOC-I maintains situational awareness, tracking, and reporting of activities of the different components of the ISF.[135]

Additionally, CJTF-OIR reported that the orders and planning documents were relatively limited but included a "good level" of coordination to deploy forces and services of different departments.[136]

CJTF-OIR advisers continued to support the ISF in the following warfighting functions:

- **Command and Control:** Coalition advisers continued to emphasize the use of the Harris C2 communications system, which has been deployed to the JOC-I and ISF personnel down to the brigade level. However, CJTF-OIR reported that the system continues to be underutilized. The JOC-I leadership held a training exercise in June to further demonstrate the system and encourage its use.[137] CJTF-OIR reported that the exercise was conducted with "optimistic results" and that ISF leadership ordered increased implementation of the Harris C2 system.[138]

- **Fires:** By design, the JOC-I does not have a fires cell with permanent artillery personnel positions in charge of planning and conducting operations. Instead, these tasks are under the responsibility of the Iraqi Ground Forces Command. Coalition advisors assisted the JOC-I's artillery directorate in coordinating training activities.[139]

- **Logistics and Sustainment:** Advisors provided logistics and sustainment support through CTEF while emphasizing the need for the ISF to shift away from acquiring new equipment and toward generating its own ability to provide sustainment, training, and organization.[140]

- **Airstrikes:** Iraqi aircraft conducted nine airstrikes during the quarter. (See Figure 2.) CJTF-OIR said that ISF objectives were met for all strikes and that strikes were leveraged in the information domain to message to the people of Iraq that the ISF remains committed to the enduring defeat of ISIS.[141]

Figure 2.

Counter-ISIS Airstrikes by Iraqi Aircraft, April 2022-June 2024

OPERATIONS DURING THE QUARTER
Locations: Kirkuk, East Salah ad-Din, Diyala OC
Targets: 18 Fighters in bed-down locations
Platforms Used: F-16, Mi-1, AC-208

Source: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 24.3 OIR FOL031, 7/2/2024.

End-use Monitoring and Leahy Vetting

Articles provided to Iraq under the Arms Export Control Act are subject to end-use monitoring (EUM) and a small subset of these articles require enhanced EUM (EEUM). Iraq is considered a "hostile environment" by the DoD, with movement and security restrictions that limit U.S. personnel from conducting the mandated regular observations of the articles' status. Therefore, the Iraqi government routinely provides EUM reports to the DoD to supplement direct observations by U.S. personnel. Both State and DoD said this approach best ensures that inventory tracking remains up to date despite operational challenges.[142]

Iraq's Ministries of Defense and Interior and Counter Terrorism Service currently conduct approximately 90 percent of EUM. In addition, the U.S. Government uses third parties at locations that are inaccessible to U.S. personnel. Though bar codes are normally used to track the equipment, they are not on every item, including the largest category of equipment, night vision devices. In the absence of bar codes, monitors check serial numbers, which appear on most defense articles.[143]

State reported that it was not aware of any instances during the quarter where the United States provided assistance to the ISF or KSF in violation of the Leahy law. The Leahy law refers to two statutory provisions prohibiting the United States from providing certain assistance to a unit of a foreign security force if the U.S. Government has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. State vets proposed recipients of such assistance to determine if there is credible information that they have committed a gross violation of human rights.[144]

KURDISH SECURITY FORCES

In September 2022, the United States revised and renewed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the KRG's Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA) to support reform measures that seek to create a unified, nonpartisan military that operates under MoPA command.[145] The non-binding MoU serves as an organizing framework for DoD counter-ISIS support to the MoPA since 2016 and encourages continued MoPA reform. The MoU will remain in effect until the end of September 2026, subject to the availability of funds.[146]

A key element of the reform plan is the transfer to the MoPA of forces belonging to the two biggest political parties: the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Specifically, the MoU calls for the transfer of the PUK's 70s Units and the KDP's 80s Units to the command of the MoPA.[147]

In line with the reform plan, thousands of personnel have transferred from these politically affiliated forces to the MoPA, where they have been organized into units known as Regional Guard Brigades assigned to one of the MoPA divisions.[148] The transfers are ongoing with the aim of uniting all units under the MoPA's command by September 2026, according to a news report quoting MoPA Minister Shoresh Ismail.[149]

Political Tensions Hinder MoPA Reform Efforts

CJTF-OIR reported that the MoPA completed a plan to unify the 70s and 80s forces and expand its electronic funds transfer salary disbursement system. Last quarter, the 1st and 2nd Divisions achieved full operational capability.[150]

However, CJTF-OIR reported that several milestones have not yet been achieved. These include the following:

CJTF-OIR reported that significant factors hinder reform efforts, including mistrust and increased political tensions between the PUK and KDP due to disputes over regional parliamentary elections and other matters.

- **A KRG plan to reorganize 70s and 80s Forces systematically under MoPA authority over next 3 years**. In May, the MoPA minister approved a plan that seeks to create 11 divisions organized under 2 area commands by the time the MoU is fully executed, and that the plan is now pending approval of the KRG prime minister and president.[151]

- **The development of a sustainable vision for the MoPA's future force structure**. On July 10, the MoPA minister endorsed the KSF's Force Operating Concept, which outlines a sustainable vision for MoPA's future force structure. This document now requires approval from the KRG prime minister and president.[152]

- **A plan to financially sustain a 125,000-strong MoPA force structure**. During the annual MoU assessment meeting in January 2024, senior leaders agreed to adjust the target date for this milestone to align with the creation of area commands beginning in March 2025 and achieving completion in September 2025.[153]

- **The formation of two additional MoPA divisions comprising Regional Guard Brigades and associated units that are aligned exclusively under MoPA appointed personnel**. During the monthly MoU assessment in May, senior leaders agreed to adjust the target date for this milestone to August 2024 due to delays in constructing division headquarters facilities.[154]

CJTF-OIR reported that Coalition advisers, including advisers from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States, continued to encourage the MoPA to work toward meeting the milestones.[155]

Additionally, CJTF-OIR reported that significant factors hinder reform efforts, including mistrust and increased political tensions between the PUK and KDP due to disputes over regional parliamentary elections and other matters.[156]

Citing local media, the DIA said that the MoPA reforms were slowed not only by KDP-PUK political disputes, but also operations against ISIS, relations between the KRG and the federal government in Baghdad, and the disputes over the KRG's share of the federal budget.[157]

According to the DIA, KDP leader Masoud Barzani perceives the PUK as trying to weaken the KDP with the assistance of the federal government in Baghdad.[158] The DIA said that the threatened election boycott had risked the legitimacy of the KDP-dominated KRG at a time at a time when it is struggling financially and has already ceded some of its legal authorities to the federal government as a result of pressure from Shia political parties in Baghdad.[159]

CJTF-OIR said that the KDP made overtures to improve relations with Iraq's federal government and with Iran during the quarter, and that these actions had eased some of the tensions between Kurdish parties.[160] According to local news reports, KRG president

Nechirvan Barzani met with senior federal government officials to discuss contentious issues, such as the budget, oil, and KSF salaries.[161]

U.S. Soldiers conduct a Command Post Exercise with members of the Peshmerga Army. (U.S. Army photo)

Plans for Joint Brigades Continue to Stall

The DIA reported that plans for joint KSF-ISF brigades continued to stall during the quarter.[162] Although the KRG's representative to Iraq's Joint Operations Center indicated that joint brigades would begin operations in June, the DIA said that as of July 1, they had no indication that the joint brigades were conducting operations.[163]

Efforts to establish the joint brigades have been under way since 2021, but have been repeatedly postponed.[164] The DIA reported that the formation of the joint brigades has been slowed by a year-long process to form Iraq's central government following the 2021 elections, a lack of funding, and a lack of trust between the two forces.[165] Once established, the brigades will be under Baghdad's control and tasked with securing areas between federal Iraq and the IKR where ISIS takes advantage of a security vacuum.[166]

In June, officials from Iraq's federal government and the KRG met to discuss security issues, including unifying intelligence to carry out operations, according to local media reports.[167]

MoPA Continues Mission Planning, Improves Command and Control Capabilities

CJTF-OIR reported improvement in some warfighting functions, including mission planning, but the MoPA's Operations Command (MoPOC) is not yet fully capable of command and control of operations against ISIS.[168] (See Table 1.)

Table 1.

Status of MoPA Warfighting Functions During the Quarter

Function	Capability
Mission Planning	**The MoPA is finalizing an operating concept to clarify the role of the MoPOC in mission planning.** The MoPA plans missions that occur within the IKR and the MoPOC is supposed to plan missions along the Kurdistan Coordination Line (KCL), an area that divides the IKR from the rest of Iraq, in coordination with the ISF, but this separation of responsibilities remains under development. Mission planning that will become the responsibility of the MoPOC is currently carried out by other echelons. Coalition advisers worked with the MoPA to develop the ministry's mission planning capability but have had limited success.
KSF Ground Operations	**The MoPA's subordinate units are effective in executing counterinsurgency operations in their areas of responsibility.** CJTF-OIR assessed that ISIS does not have the freedom of movement to conduct operations north of the KCL, due largely to a highly effective human intelligence network and the deterrent effect of the wide dispersal of overt and covert KSF personnel throughout the IKR.
Intelligence	**CJTF-OIR assessed that the KSF's collection of information within the IKR is "efficient."** Coalition forces continued to advise the Directorate of Intelligence and other relevant stakeholders at the MoPA.
Command and Control	**The MoPOC continued to develop command and control capabilities but is not fully capable of exercising command and control of operations at a large scale.** Leaders continued to clarify roles and responsibilities as the MoPA navigates organizational reform. Currently, two chains of command exist for the dissemination of orders and tracking of operations, one at the MoPA and one at the MoPOC. CJTF-OIR assessed that it is "unclear" whether the two entities will be able to efficiently divide responsibilities. Additionally, a "disconnect" remained between the MoPA and the 1st and 2nd Divisions, and division commanders expressed concern over a lack of command authorities as well as MoPA Chief of Staff priorities.
Artillery	**The MoPA's artillery capabilities reside within two Support Forces Commands.** Both commands have demonstrated proficiency in delivering accurate indirect fires; however, they have not supported combined arms operations since 2017. Artillery regiments hold exercises twice a year with live ammunition, but only in battery and smaller-sized formations that are disconnected from maneuver formations. Coalition advising focused on helping the MoPA understand how to employ artillery in support of their formations. The MoPA has been receptive to the advice and Support Forces Commanders appear willing to support concept development.
Logistics and Sustainment	**The MoPA is making steady progress in improving the logistics and sustainment of its force.** Two Regional Logistic Hubs have sufficient facilities, manpower, and equipment to conduct basic operations. Coalition advisers focused their efforts on developing these basic operations as the hubs work to become fully operational, at which time advisers will shift advising to inventory, accountability, maintenance management, and other tasks.
Information Operations	**The General Directorate for Media and National Awareness used social media to publicize information and photos about counter-ISIS operations conducted by MoPA units and joint operations conducted with the ISF.** However, most information activity highlights cooperation with the Coalition and KSF training and the directorate continues to lack the ability to publish information in support of an ongoing operations. CJTF-OIR assessed that integrating information operations into KSF military doctrine will likely "take some time to fully implement." Coalition advisers focused efforts on creating an assessment process for the directorate to review its own information activities. Advisers also provided advice on how to link information operations into operations planning and better coordinate between the media cells of the 1st and 2nd Division headquarters and those of the Regional Guard Brigades.

Source: CJTF-OIR, response to DoD OIG request for information, 24.3 OIR 032 and 24.3 OIR 033, 6/13/2024.

Why is Türkiye Active in Iraq and Syria?

The PKK, a Kurdish separatist group that has waged an insurgency against Türkiye since the 1980s, is considered a terrorist group by Türkiye, the United States, and the European Union.[169] The PKK is headquartered in Iraq's Qandil mountains.[170] Its presence in northern Iraq has prompted Turkish airstrikes on PKK positions in northern Iraq for decades, punctuated by brief truces.[171]

The PKK also operates in northern Syria, where it has maintained a presence since the late 1970s.[172] Türkiye makes no distinction between the PKK and either the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES)—the de facto authority in northeastern Syria—or the multiethnic SDF.[173] The backbone of the SDF is the predominantly Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which Türkiye considers the PKK's Syrian militia. Türkiye also considers the Democratic Union Party, which is affiliated with the YPG and dominates politics in northeastern Syria, to be an element of the PKK.[174]

Turkish Operations Continue in Iraqi Kurdistan Region

According to media reports, Türkiye continued military operations in Iraq during the quarter, launching artillery strikes against targets in several villages in Dohuk province.[175] Hundreds of Turkish forces and tanks crossed the border in the second half of June, and Turkish bombardments and military operations had forced the displacement of several villages along the border, according to media and monitor reports.[176]

The strikes were part of Operation Claw-Lock, a military air and ground assault launched in 2019 to target the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in areas of Iraq and Syria along the Turkish border.[177] Since 2018, Türkiye has established 40 military bases and more than 100 military outposts in the IKR.[178]

CJTF-OIR reported that the Turkish operations did not directly hinder the OIR campaign during the quarter.[179] However, according to media reports and Iraq experts, the operations complicate political and security dynamics in the IKR upon which MoPA reform objectives depend.[180]

According to Iraq experts Türkiye partners with the KDP, the region's largest political party, to obtain information about PKK movements in the IKR and to secure areas it has cleared of PKK militants.[181] The PKK has responded by forging alliances with Iran-aligned militia groups and maintaining close relations with the PUK, the IKR's second-largest political party and rival of the KDP.[182]

The alliances have exacerbated tensions between the KDP and PUK and provoked Türkiye to take retaliatory measures against the PUK, such as the closing of its airspace to Turkish commercial aircraft taking off from and landing in the PUK stronghold of Sulaymaniyah, Iraq experts said.[183]

According to local news reports, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced in the spring that Türkiye would launch a major operation against the PKK in Iraq during the summer to "permanently" resolve the security issues it faces along the border.[184] In April, Türkiye said it would conclude its aerial operation against the PKK in Iraq before the end of the summer.[185] The announcement followed a meeting between President Erdogan and Iraqi Prime Minister

Since 2018, Türkiye has established 40 military bases and more than 100 military outposts in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR).

al-Sudani, during which the two leaders reportedly discussed steps they could take against the PKK.[186] President Erdogan welcomed Iraq's designation of the PKK as a banned group.[187] Türkiye and Iraq also agreed to develop a land corridor leading from southern Iraq, through the IKR, into Türkiye, and on to Europe.[188]

SYRIAN PARTNER FORCES

To achieve its mission, CJTF-OIR works with vetted local partner forces in Syria, including the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northeastern Syria and the Syrian Free Army (SFA), further south along Syria's southeastern border.[189]

The SDF operates in Hasakah governorate, in areas of the Dayr az Zawr and Raqqah governorates east of the Euphrates River, and in portions of the Aleppo governorate.[190] Coalition forces operate and support the SDF in the Eastern Syria Security Area (ESSA), which includes Hasakah governorate and parts of Dayr az Zawr east of the Euphrates.[191] Coalition forces also support SDF operations in Raqqah governorate.[192]

The SFA operates in a deconfliction zone that extends 55 kilometers around the At Tanf Garrison, near the confluence of Syria's border with Jordan and Iraq.[193] (See page 26.)

Blockade of Road to Rukban Creates Risk to OIR Mission at At Tanf

On April 21, forces loyal to the Syrian regime blocked the only road into the Rukban displaced persons settlement, preventing the regular delivery of food, fuel, and other necessities to its residents.[194] CJTF-OIR reported that the crisis at Rukban directly impacted the At Tanf Garrison, because SFA personnel and their families live at the camp.[195]

The SFA provides force protection for U.S. forces at At Tanf in the surrounding deconfliction zone, where ISIS and Iran-aligned militia operate.[196] CJTF-OIR stated that the SFA maintains outposts throughout the 55-kilometer deconfliction zone and provides early warning of incursions into the zone, particularly low-flying UAVs, giving Coalition forces added reaction time.[197] The SFA communicates the mood of residents within the deconfliction zone—including at Rukban and among Bedouin families in the area—and the activities of malign actors outside the deconfliction zone.[198] CJTF-OIR reported that the crisis created a growing possibility that the SFA could depart the region and stated that should Rukban and the SFA collapse, the long-term viability of the U.S. force presence at At Tanf Garrison would be at risk.[199]

This was not the first time that Russian and pro-regime forces have blocked access to Rukban.[200] CJTF-OIR reported that the current blockade was imposed under orders from the Syrian regime, which seeks to pressure Rukban residents to leave the camp, knowing it would jeopardize the Coalition's efforts in southern Syria.[201] During the current blockage, shortages grew so severe that at least six children died from malnutrition and disease, according to CJTF-OIR.[202]

CJTF-OIR noted that ongoing disruptions of supplies by Syrian and Russian forces have created "deplorable living conditions" in the camp since 2019, causing all but 8,000 of the 50,000 residents in the Rukban settlement in 2019 to depart.[203] CJTF-OIR stated that many in the camp consider returning to Syrian regime-held territory a death sentence, as Rukban

THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT IN SYRIA

Coalition forces in Syria operate in a complex political and military environment. Violence associated with the Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, has destabilized the country and led to the deaths of more than half a million people. Today, the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, with military support from Russia and Iran, controls most of the country.

The Coalition supports partner forces in areas not under regime control, including the SDF in the northeast and the SFA near the At Tanf Garrison. Russian and pro-regime forces also operate in these areas. Türkiye exercises influence over territory along the northern border and conducts cross-border operations that often target SDF forces. All of these rival forces operate in close proximity, often restricting Coalition and partner force movement, distracting partner forces, limiting humanitarian access, and putting civilians at risk.
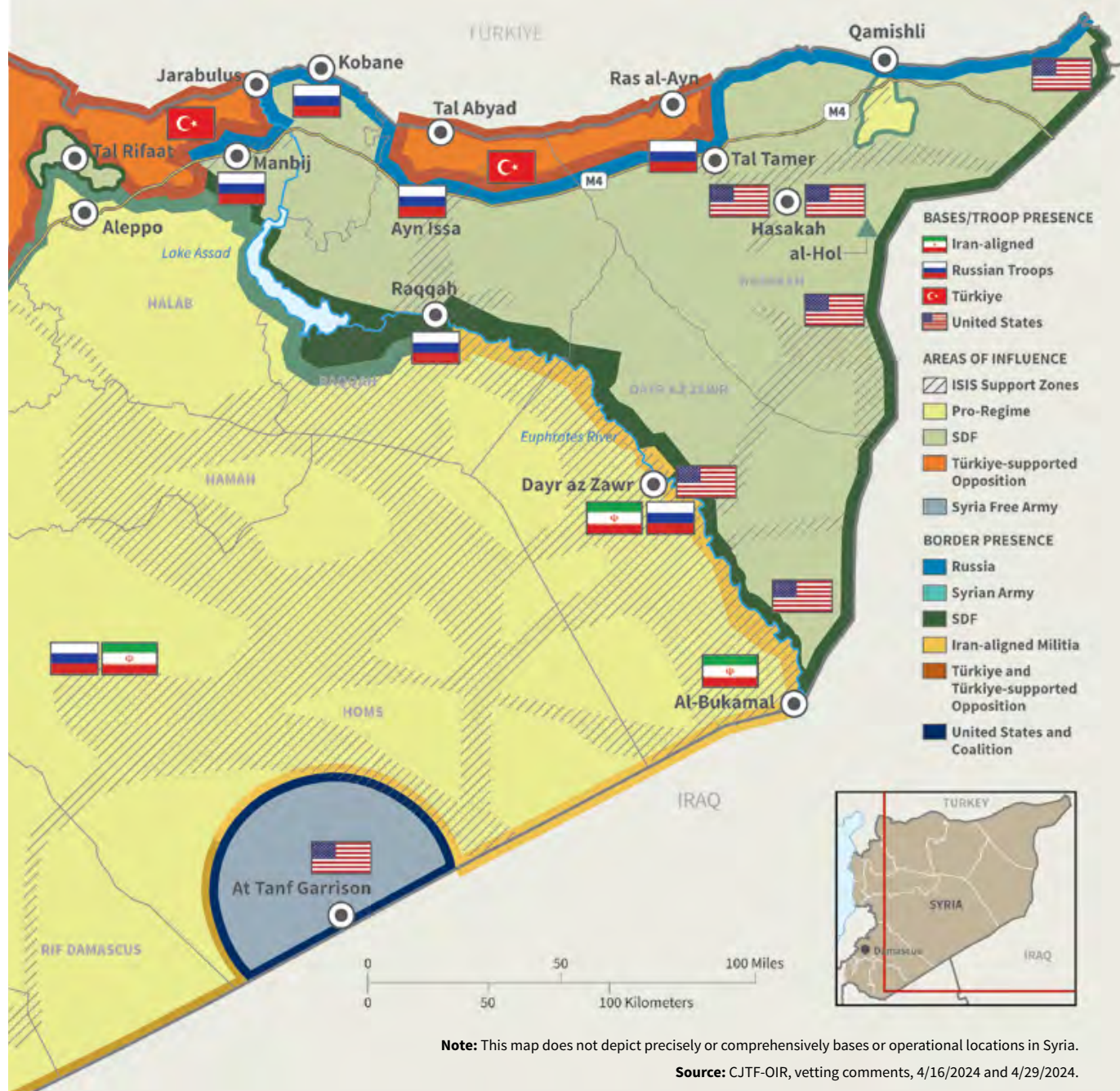
BASES/TROOP PRESENCE
- Iran-aligned
- Russian Troops
- Türkiye
- United States

AREAS OF INFLUENCE
- ISIS Support Zones
- Pro-Regime
- SDF
- Türkiye-supported Opposition
- Syria Free Army

BORDER PRESENCE
- Russia
- Syrian Army
- SDF
- Iran-aligned Militia
- Türkiye and Türkiye-supported Opposition
- United States and Coalition

Note: This map does not depict precisely or comprehensively bases or operational locations in Syria.

Source: CJTF-OIR, vetting comments, 4/16/2024 and 4/29/2024.

residents have reportedly been killed or tortured by regime security forces when they left the camp for regime-held areas.[204]

CJTF-OIR reported that the U.S. Government continued to work to alleviate the crisis.[205]

Turkish Military Operations Strain SDF Resources, Limit Counter-ISIS Operations

CJTF-OIR stated that Turkish bombing and artillery strikes inside of SDF-held areas strained and/ or destroyed SDF resources and personnel, causing the SDF to limit counter-ISIS operations so they could focus on their livelihoods and families.

CJTF-OIR stated that Turkish bombing and artillery strikes inside of SDF-held areas strained and/or destroyed SDF resources and personnel, causing the SDF to limit counter-ISIS operations so they could focus on their livelihoods and families.[206] Meanwhile, the SDF continued to perceive that Coalition forces were not pressuring Türkiye to stop its attacks and remained concerned that the consolidation of U.S. forces on fewer sites in Syria due to Iran-aligned militia threats reduces the deterrent effect on Türkiye, CJTF-OIR stated.[207]

Turkish strikes in the ESSA continued to claim the lives of SDF personnel. CJTF-OIR stated that these losses, along with attacks by Iran-aligned militias and ongoing ISIS attacks in the Middle Euphrates River Valley, stretched the SDF ability to maintain its pace of operations against ISIS.[208] Turkish strikes targeted key energy infrastructure in SDF-held areas, probably degrading the SDF's ability to conduct and fund operations in the ESSA, CJTF-OIR said.[209] CJTF-OIR said that although there has not been a significant reduction in operations yet, the SDF continued to struggle to maintain security in the ESSA.[210] Despite the many pressures, SDF cohesion remained intact, and relations between the SDF and Coalition forces remained positive, CJTF-OIR said.[211]

Meanwhile, the degradation of civilian infrastructure caused by Turkish strikes resulted in reduced capacity for the SDF-aligned governing body, the DAANES, to provide electricity, fuel, water and even food to populations in regions it controls, CJTF-OIR said, citing publicly available sources.[212] (See page 52.) CJTF-OIR stated that the conditions are also affecting SDF military readiness, and ongoing tensions with Arab tribal fighters in the Middle Euphrates River Valley demonstrated continuing grievances and possibly indicated that the SDF is under political strain.[213]

SDF Commander General Mazloum Abdi stated in a media interview during the quarter that ISIS was exploiting destabilizing actions by Türkiye and other parties and a grave economic crisis in Syria to increase its attacks against the SDF and boost its recruitment.[214] The General Mazloum noted that the Turkish airstrike damage to infrastructure disrupted electricity in the region, including in detention facilities and displaced persons camps[215]

SDF Seeks to Improve Relations in Meeting with Arab Tribes

SDF forces were further stretched by the tensions with Arab tribal fighters. CJTF-OIR stated that while there were no signs of significant intensive fighting between the SDF and Arab tribal fighters in the Middle Euphrates River Valley during the quarter, periodic clashes forced the SDF to retain reinforced units and fighters in defensive positions on the east bank of the Euphrates.[216] CJTF-OIR reported that in addition to degraded infrastructure and services in northeastern Syria, tensions are also fueled by disputes over security arrangements, ethnic and political tensions, and control over land rich in resources, particularly oil fields.[217]

To alleviate the tensions, the SDF continued to engage with Arab tribal groups.[218] In May, the SDF commander and General Command members met with tribal leaders and dignitaries from Dayr az Zawr governorate to discuss security, economic strains, and public services.[219] The SDF Press Center reported that security discussions included the status of SDF-held detainees and the disruptive actions of the Syrian regime and its allies in Dayr az Zawr attempting to sow discord among the tribes.[220]

Tribal leaders committed to supporting efforts against ISIS and other terrorist threats but requested that the SDF re-evaluate its tactics.[221] The SDF commander emphasized the crucial role that tribes continue to play in combating ISIS and committed to investigate alleged SDF violations and hold violators accountable.[222]

The SDF General Command reiterated its plans to restore public infrastructure, including strategies to bolster agricultural activities and facilitate support for farmers.[223] Participants agreed to resume operations at humanitarian crossings, which were suspended due to security incidents, and to accelerate implementation of improvements to services, security, and administration in the region that had been agreed to in a previous conference.[224] The tribal leaders agreed to participate in an upcoming tribal forum planned by the SDF, and pledged their ongoing collaboration with the SDF and the DAANES to maintain security and stability throughout northern and eastern Syria.[225]

Another key topic at the meetings was the reintegration of individuals returning from al-Hol displaced persons camp.[226] The DIA said that following negotiations between the SDF and tribal leaders, some Syrian women and children from the al-Hol displaced persons camp also were allowed to return to their homes.[227] The DIA stated that an April report by the human rights organization Amnesty International alleging SDF human rights abuses in detention facilities and displaced persons camps could exacerbate existing tribal tensions.[228] (See page 31.)

The DIA said that there were no indications that SDF and Arab tribal tension is at high enough levels to support an ISIS resurgence.[229] CJTF-OIR stated that while in previous quarters ISIS attempted to exploit the clashes between the SDF and local tribal fighters to hide ISIS attacks, there were no such claims this quarter.[230] The DIA said pro-regime forces support to Arab tribal fighters continued at the comparatively low pace as the previous quarter. The DIA did not observe any change in support for the Arab tribal fighters from Turkish supported forces during the quarter.[231]

According to State, popular support remained with the SDF rather than the Syrian regime.[232] State said that Syrian interlocutors in Dayr az Zawr underscored the importance of the DAANES implementing reforms announced in October 2023 related to governance and services in Dayr az Zawr to undercut the ability of malign actors to infiltrate the community and undermine support for the SDF and DAANES.[233] However, State interlocutors outside of the administration in Dayr az Zawr expressed dissatisfaction with the DAANES's slow implementation of governance and service delivery reforms announced at the October 2023 conference. For their part, DAANES officials pointed to Turkish attacks on civilian infrastructure in October, December, and January as inhibiting their ability to improve service delivery in Dayr az Zawr.[234]

SDF forces were further stretched by the tensions with Arab tribal fighters.

Russian Forces Continue to Violate Deconfliction Protocols

In Syria, where Coalition forces operate in close proximity to Russian forces, Russian aircraft have often violated deconfliction and safety protocols established in 2015, presenting a risk to Coalition forces and creating and the possibility of unintended escalations, according to CJTF-OIR.[235]

CJTF-OIR reported a slight increase in Russian overflight violations compared to last quarter but characterized the violations as less egregious in nature.[236] Russian forces did not interfere with the OIR campaign; however, Russian pilots did conduct several safe but unprofessional acts towards Coalition aircraft, both manned and unmanned assets.[237]

However, CJTF-OIR said that Coalition forces on the ground continued to take additional force protection measures whenever Russian aircraft flew over their areas of operation to ensure the safety of their forces.[238]

CJTF-OIR said that the At Tanf Garrison remained the "greatest point of contention" between the Russian military and Coalition forces.[239] The Coalition's presence at the At Tanf Garrison is "loosely" covered by the U.S.-Russian military protocols, but not codified the way that they are for other deconfliction zones. CJTF-OIR said that the Russian military used the garrison's purportedly "dubious status" as a justification to conduct overflights.[240] Additionally, Russia's military uses Coalition ISR flights in western Syria, which are not deconflicted with the Russian military, as a pretext to conduct safe but unprofessional actions at the At Tanf Garrison.[241]

CJTF-OIR described Russian violations of protocols as "posturing," and said that the reasons for the violations included reciprocal actions for Coalition violations, asserting Russian presence, and intelligence collection.[242] CJTF-OIR said that Russia's military routinely refers to itself as "the sole guarantor of peace and stability in Syria, legally invited by the rightful government of Syria."[243] Additionally, the Russia military wants to portray itself as protecting the sovereignty of Syria and preventing the freedom of movement of Coalition forces outside of northeastern Syria.[244] Russian media portrays the Coalition as the party violating protocols and accuses it of conducting unsafe air activity and intentionally destabilizing Syria.[245]

TRAINING AND OPERATIONS

SDF Partners with Coalition Forces to Capture ISIS Leaders and Facilitators

The SDF conducted 27 partnered operations as well as independent operations during the quarter, capturing ISIS commanders and facilitators.[246] On May 15, the SDF captured ISIS leaders in Qamishli and in Raqqa in two separate operations. CJTF-OIR, citing the SDF Press Center, noted that one of the ISIS leaders had been involved in a vehicle bombing 5 days earlier.[247] In a May 23 operation, SDF forces captured a prominent ISIS leader believed to be responsible for ISIS cells in Raqqa and for involvement in most assassination operations in the governorate. He was captured with weapons, ammunition, explosive belts, and other equipment. [248]

CJTF-OIR reported that there was no change to Coalition advisor objectives for the SDF and affiliated partners; CJTF-OIR's intent is for the SDF to be able to independently sustain the defeat of ISIS and develop the ability to train its own instructors and forces in order to independently expand guard forces for detention facilities and security forces for displaced persons camps.[249]

CJTF-OIR reported that SDF operations demonstrated its ability to conduct operations with large units and maintain counterterrorism pressure on ISIS relatively independently.[250] SDF forces also continued to increase their ability to conduct conventional-type operations.[251] However, the SDF continues to rely on Coalition capabilities and assets.[252]

CJTF-OIR reported that there were no significant changes in Coalition advisement of the SDF and affiliated partners since the previous quarter.[253] Guard force training was delayed multiple times during the quarter due to Turkish strikes.[254] Much of the training delivered by Coalition forces focused on more specialized skills including detention facility operations, medical skills, marksmanship, and tactical ground maneuvers.[255] CJTF-OIR said the training is a mix of Coalition force-led and train-the-trainer courses.[256]

SDF Forces Delay Most Guard and Security Force Training for Detention Facilities and Camps

CJTF-OIR conducted a course for SDF detention facility wardens during the quarter.[257] Other than this, CJTF-OIR reported that the training of SDF detention facility guards and security forces for SDF-run displaced persons camps remained paused at the SDF's request.[258] While the number of trained guards remained stagnant, CJTF-OIR stated that a train-the-trainer session was completed in early June.[259] CJTF-OIR said that it relies on the SDF for updated information on where trained personnel are assigned.[260]

CJTF-OIR reported that an estimated 9,000 ISIS detainees remain in SDF detention facilities in Syria.[261] The physical security of the facilities varies depending on the facility.[262] CJTF-OIR said that ongoing site assessments will give the Coalition a better understanding of physical, structural, and security conditions or risks at the facilities.[263]

There were no reported ISIS attacks against SDF detention facilities during this quarter.[264] Nor were there ISIS uprisings or reported escapes at SDF detention facilities during the quarter.[265] CJTF-OIR reported that the only detention facility violence involved detainees in a juvenile detention facility in Raqqah who are being held on drug-related charges. That violence resulted in leading to two deaths and 10 injuries.[266]

Coalition forces assisted with two detainee transfer events during the quarter. In April, 50 Iraqi detainees being held in SDF detention in Syria were transferred to Iraqi custody. CJTF-OIR said that in May, three high-value detainees who were suspected of participating in the 2014 ISIS massacre of Iraqi cadets in Tikrit known as the Camp Speicher massacre, were transferred to Iraqi custody. In both events, Coalition forces provided security at the border crossing and ensured the handover of custody of the detainees to Iraqi government officials.[267]

The SDF conducted 27 partnered operations as well as independent operations during the quarter, capturing ISIS commanders and facilitators.

Human Rights Group Alleges SDF Abuses in Prisons and Camps

In April, Amnesty International issued a report that accused the SDF and the DAANES of widespread human rights abuses in SDF detention facilities and in the al-Hol and Roj displaced persons camps, where families of ISIS fighters have resided since the territorial defeat of ISIS in 2019.[268] These alleged violations included disappearances, arbitrary arrest and detention, killings, gender-based violence, and war crimes such as torture, cruel treatment, and outrages on personal dignity.[269] The report called the detentions unlawful and charged that they are characterized by systemic, inhumane conditions, unlawful killings, and torture.[270]

Amnesty International concluded that the U.S. Government "likely violated its obligations under Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions to ensure the autonomous authorities' respect for international humanitarian law."[271] According to the report, the United States was likely in breach of these obligations when it provided support or intelligence to the SDF that led to the detention of individuals for alleged ISIS affiliation, because the United States would have been aware that these detained individuals would be subjected to the violations documented in the report.[272]

In a May 26 statement responding to the report, the DAANES called on the international community to fulfill its responsibilities by providing the needed support and financial resources for the DAANES to properly manage the camps and detention facilities holding suspected ISIS fighters. In a statement, the DAANES said that it did not have adequate resources to meet these needs. It noted that the region faced political and security challenges, especially Turkish attacks that undermined security and stability.[273]

State reported that the United States takes reports of human rights abuses in Syria seriously and is deeply concerned about them.[274] State urged actors in Syria to respect human rights, treat detainees humanely, protect civilians, and respond appropriately to allegations of abuse and civilian harm.[275] As the report indicated, needs at al-Hol and for the SDF are vast and the international response is significantly underfunded.[276]

State said it remained committed to helping the international community address these shared security and humanitarian challenges, and pressed U.S. partners to provide additional resources.[277] The DoD agreed and added that the U.S. Government complies with applicable international and domestic law in providing support to partner forces, such as the SDF. The DoD noted that the United States may have different understandings of the applicable law and relevant facts than those reflected in reports by non-governmental organizations regarding U.S. activities.[278]

These alleged violations included disappearances, arbitrary arrest and detention, killings, gender-based violence, and war crimes such as torture, cruel treatment, and outrages on personal dignity.

SFA Continues to Progress in Warfighting Skills, With Full Reliance on Coalition Support

Though the humanitarian crisis at Rukban took a toll, the SFA conducted 47 partnered training operations during the quarter. CJTF-OIR stated that 29 of the SFA partnered operations involved building proficiency with a focus on marksmanship and another 12 were joint patrols that Coalition forces conducted with the SFA throughout the deconfliction zone to maintain security and prevent ISIS activity in area.[279] The SFA regularly patrols the deconfliction zone, and each of the four companies has at least one partnered patrol with Coalition forces per week.[280]

CJTF-OIR noted that during the quarter, the SFA provided early warning detection of several low-flying UAVs in the deconfliction zone.[281] The SFA also supported Coalition forces in the recovery of four UAVs that Coalition forces shot down, and provided overnight security at one crash site until Coalition forces arrived.[282]

CJTF-OIR reported that the SFA made progress during the quarter in multiple weapons and fighting capabilities and continued to develop as a professional fighting force.[283] But the force remained largely unable to conduct operations without significant Coalition support.[284] While the SFA could sustain a short fight with current arms and ammunition, it is completely dependent on Coalition logistics for all its needs.[285] CJTF-OIR stated that without Coalition support, the local economy would fall apart, the SFA would not have

U.S. Army Soldiers conduct maintenance on top of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicle in northeastern Syria. (U.S. Army Reserve photo)

sufficient access to food, fuel, and equipment, and it would not be able to sustain its position in the deconfliction zone.[286]

During the quarter, Coalition forces took steps to provide more capabilities to the SFA by updating numerous contracts, including a fuel contract, that allows the SFA to conduct more patrols throughout the deconfliction zone.[287]

The SFA continued to build proficiency in maneuver skills (mounted and dismounted) while incorporating mortars, using communications equipment, performing medical tasks, and messaging in the information environment, as well as conducting individual weapons training.[288] SFA forces showed progress in sharpening their marksmanship skills and then advancing to live fire team exercises.[289] The SFA also trained on machine guns and mounted fire operations and successfully fired illumination rounds in the deconfliction zone following classroom instruction on mortar systems.[290]

CJTF-OIR noted that it also provided a training course for senior SFA members and leaders on the International Law of Armed Conflict.[291] The training followed the installation of a new SFA leader after the previous leader was removed.[292] SFA members signed a Law of Armed Conflict commitment and pledged to defend the Syrian people, defeat ISIS, liberate Syria from oppressors, treat all women, children, elderly, wounded terrorist fighters and prisoners humanely, and not to discriminate against people because of their ethnicity, religion, sect or politics.[293]

Syrian Regime, Russia, and Türkiye Conduct Counter-ISIS Operations

The DIA reported that third parties operating in Syria—including the Syrian military, backed by Iran-aligned fighters and Russian air support—continued periodic engagements against ISIS in central and eastern Syria, which eliminated some ISIS fighters in the area.[294]

Local media reported that a Syrian regime brigadier general was injured and a lieutenant was killed in separate ISIS attacks carried out in eastern Homs governorate and in the al-Rusafah Desert in June.[295]

Additionally, Turkish security services continued operations against ISIS in Türkiye, including arrests of ISIS financiers suspected of facilitating transfers to ISIS members in Syria and seizures of ISIS assets and ISIS-affiliated companies.[296]

The DIA reported three such incidents. In June, Turkish police conducted an operation against suspected ISIS financiers, resulting in the seizure and freeze of suspected ISIS-affiliated assets and companies.[297] In May, Turkish police conducted simultaneous counterterrorism operations in four provinces arresting at least 56 suspected ISIS members and supporters.[298] In April, Turkish police detained 41 suspected ISIS suspects across 12 governorates, seizing chemicals and disrupting explosive manufacturing.[299]

DISPLACED PERSONS CAMPS

Security Remains a Challenge in al-Hol

The security situation in al-Hol remained a challenge for local security and humanitarian partners, State reported.[300] Property-related incidents and non-fatal violence remain the two most common types of security events.[301]
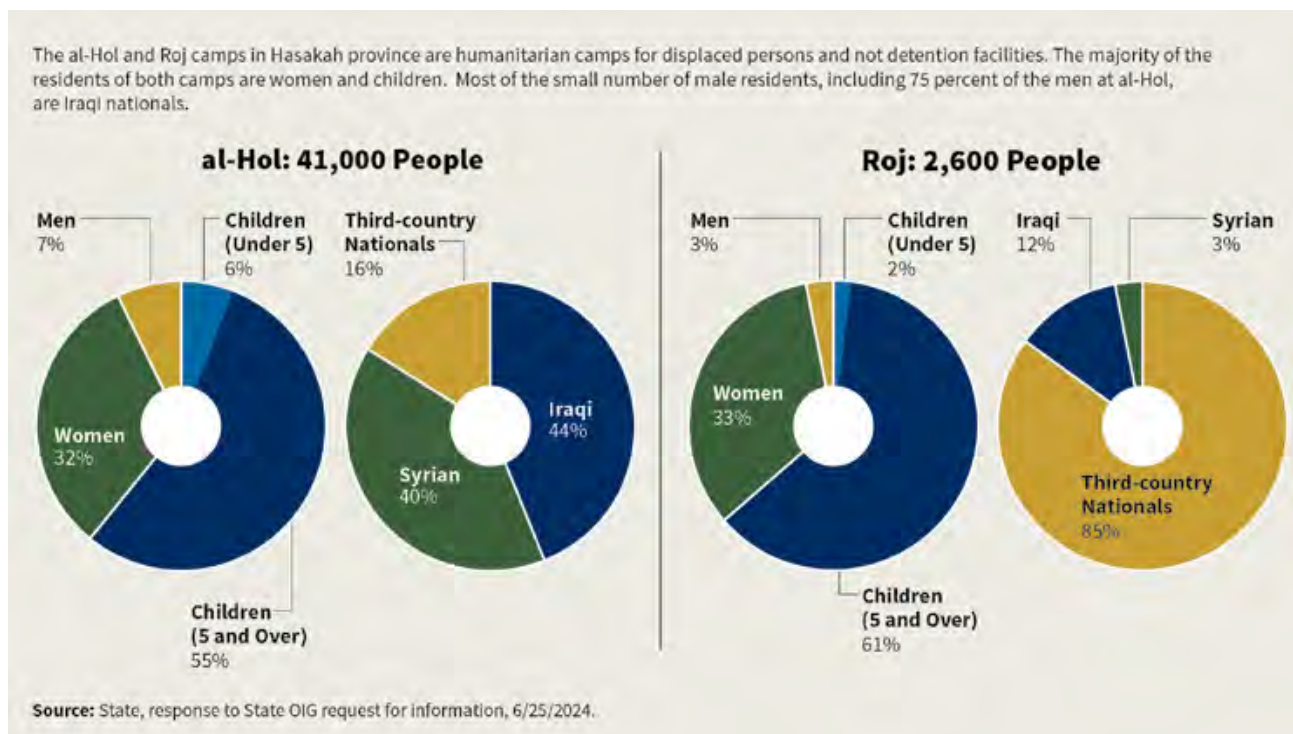
The DoD, State, and USAID coordinate with the SDF to ensure security efforts at the camp take into account humanitarian concerns.[302] This included ensuring there is freedom of movement for camp residents within the camp to access services, as well as reducing displacement of resident homes during the construction of fencing and other security outposts.[303]

Sweeps Continue in al-Hol

CJTF-OIR reported that the SDF internal security forces (Asayish) in al-Hol comprise approximately 1,000 personnel tasked with providing security for camp residents, humanitarian workers, and camp administration staff.[304] CJTF-OIR said that the Asayish in the camp are capable of conducting security operations, intelligence collection and limited riot control. They conduct roving patrols each day throughout most of the camp, though they lack regular access to the foreign annex.[305]

Figure 3.

Demographics of al-Hol and Roj Displaced Persons Camps

The al-Hol and Roj camps in Hasakah province are humanitarian camps for displaced persons and not detention facilities. The majority of the residents of both camps are women and children. Most of the small number of male residents, including 75 percent of the men at al-Hol, are Iraqi nationals.

al-Hol: 41,000 People

Men 7%
Children (Under 5) 6%
Third-country Nationals 16%
Women 32%
Iraqi 44%
Syrian 40%
Children (5 and Over) 55%

Roj: 2,600 People

Men 3%
Children (Under 5) 2%
Iraqi 12%
Syrian 3%
Women 33%
Third-country Nationals 85%
Children (5 and Over) 61%

Source: State, response to State OIG request for information, 6/25/2024.

CJTF-OIR, citing externally collected data, reported that security forces at al-Hol conducted searches, raids and arrests during the quarter.[306] A Syrian war monitor reported that the security forces conducted a raid in late April and detained 25 ISIS operatives in al-Hol.[307] The SDF Press Center reported that on May 30, its forces captured an ISIS operative that was smuggling children out of al-Hol for ISIS training in the Badiyah desert, along with women affiliated with ISIS.[308] On June 3, the Asayish identified and freed a kidnapped Yazidi woman and two children whom ISIS had abducted in 2014.[309]

However, the Asayish face challenges. CJTF-OIR stated that they are minimally equipped, with small arms, radios, and trucks, and they do not have the resources to curb the key challenge of smuggling.[310] CJTF-OIR reported that there is minimal scrutiny at the entrance to the camp, where humanitarian workers, vendors, contractors, and employees enter daily.[311] Due to a lack of resources, the camp's main entrance does not have adequate infrastructure to mitigate the smuggling of weapons, phones, personnel, or other contraband in or out of the camp.[312] There are no metal detectors for weapons detection and no barriers to create lanes and separate vehicle types.[313] The Asayish possess only one mirror for searching the undercarriage of vehicles, and they lack armored vehicles, night vision devices, metal detectors, and nonlethal crowd-control armament.[314]

CJTF-OIR reported that CTEF-funded items, including guard towers, provided by the Coalition to the SDF for al-Hol security or humanitarian efforts are not being used for their intended purposes to improve conditions in the camp.[315] CJTF-OIR was not aware of any instance during this quarter of other security provisions or equipment provided by the Coalition for al-Hol that were not implemented as intended and that it was working to address these issues through an accountability process, which involves periodic engagements with local forces and routine visits to al-Hol.[316] The Combined Special Operations Joint Task Force-Levant stated that it had no indicators that equipment was not used as expected at al-Hol.[317]

CJTF-OIR stated that the Asayish displayed professionalism and concern for humane treatment of residents, even as it continued to conduct security operations and worked with the SDF to disrupt ISIS activity and networks in the camp.[318] However, complications arising from the difficulties of balancing security and humanitarian efforts at al-Hol remained.[319] CJTF-OIR reported that the during a major security clearance operation in the camp in January, the Asayish sought to protect residents from the cold and told them to wait inside the tent of a nongovernmental organization while the resident's tent was being searched for weapons.[320] CJTF-OIR stated that though well-intentioned, this action inadvertently associated the NGOs—whose role requires them to remain unaffiliated with security forces—as being complicit with security operations in the eyes of the residents.[321]

CJTF-OIR stated that the Coalition efforts seek to address security vulnerabilities through security force training programs and materiel divestments.[322] CJTF-OIR assessed that these efforts, along with repatriation operations, are helping to reduce security challenges in the camp.[323]

Limited Number of al-Hol Residents Return to Their Communities

According to State, the only durable solution to the humanitarian and security crisis in the displaced persons camps and detention facilities in northeastern Syria is for countries to repatriate, rehabilitate, and reintegrate their citizens, and, where appropriate, ensure accountability for wrongdoing.[324] The U.S. Government urged thoughtfulness and flexibility to ensure that family units remained intact.[325] While most al-Hol residents are from Iraq and Syria, individuals from more than 60 countries outside Syria remained in the al-Hol and Roj camps, the majority of whom are children, according to State.[326]

State and USAID worked to support the return and reintegration of Iraqi and Syrian residents from al-Hol to their home communities. (See pages 53-58.)

In early June, Iraq announced that it had reached an agreement with the United Nations to repatriate all Iraqi families from al-Hol by 2027.[327] The Iraqi National Security Adviser Qasim al-Araji stated in March that there are 20,000 Iraqis below the age of 18 in the camp, where they remained vulnerable to ISIS indoctrination.[328]

On May 7, the United States repatriated 11 U.S. citizens including 5 children, according to State.[329] The United States also resettled a 9-year-old non-U.S. citizen who is a sibling to one of the U.S. minors.[330] This presented the largest single repatriation of U.S. citizens from northeastern Syria.[331] As part of the same operation, the United States facilitated the repatriation of six Canadian citizens, four Dutch citizens, and one Finnish citizen, according to a State press release.[332]

Syria: On May 8, the Syrian Democratic Council, in coordination with the SDF and tribal elders, facilitated the return of 69 Syrian families (254 individuals) from al-Hol to their communities in eastern and western Dayr az Zawr governate, according to a media report.[333] After meeting with the SDF, tribal sheiks and community leaders agreed to sponsor the returnees and their integration into the communities.[334]

Iraq: On April 28, Iraq repatriated 191 families (about 700 individuals). On June 4, Iraq repatriated a second group of 178 families (634 individuals).[335] The families traveled by buses, guarded by SDF forces, to the Iraq border, where ISF received them.[336] Iraqi authorities brought the families to the Jeddah 1 camp to undergo a rehabilitation program.[337] CJTF-OIR said an additional 197 Iraqis not living in displaced persons camps were repatriated from Syria to Iraq during the quarter.[338]

Tajikistan: On April 25, Tajikistan repatriated approximately 50 women and children. Kurdish-led authorities in northeastern Syria transferred the Tajikistanis to a delegation headed by the Tajikistani ambassador to Kuwait, according to a media report.[339]

Azerbaijan: On June 5, Azerbaijan repatriated six citizens (one woman and five children), according to a news media outlet.[340] Representatives of the Azerbaijani government met the returnees in Türkiye to conduct initial medical and psychological examinations.[341] The Azerbaijani Embassy in Türkiye facilitated the necessary coordination efforts, issued return certificates to Azerbaijani citizens, and supervised their return to their country, with plans for social rehabilitation and reintegration of the returnees into society.[342]

While most al-Hol residents are from Iraq and Syria, individuals from more than 60 countries outside Syria remained in the al-Hol and Roj camps, the majority of whom are children, according to State.

The Afro-Basrawi community in Southern Iraq organize and participate in a community cleanup campaign. (USAID photo)

BROADER U.S. POLICY GOALS

BROADER U.S. POLICY GOALS

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Government pursues several policy goals in Iraq and Syria that, while not directly a part of the OIR mission, are integral to the success of the campaign. (See Table 2.) The U.S. Government, primarily through State and USAID, remains the largest donor for stabilization and humanitarian programming in Iraq and Syria.[343] Other U.S. Government agencies, including the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Justice, also contribute to the counter-ISIS mission through sanctions, prosecutions, and technical assistance programs.

DIPLOMACY

IRAQ

Prime Minister al-Sudani Meets with President Biden

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani's visit to the United States in mid-April marked a significant step in the ongoing efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Iraq bilateral partnership, State said. Prime Minister al-Sudani met with President Biden in the Oval Office,

Table 2.

U.S. Policy Goals in Iraq and Syria

Iraq	Syria
Promote inclusive, economic reform	A unified, stable Syria that is governed through a Syrian-led political solution, with accountability and justice for the Syrian people, while contributing to regional stability
Support an Iraqi democracy that delivers for all citizens	Support efforts to achieve the enduring defeat of ISIS and al-Qaeda
Support a resilient Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR)	Reduce violence, including through the observance of ceasefires across the country
Bolster Iraqi independence and advance regional integration	Reduce suffering by improving humanitarian access throughout Syria
	Promote accountability for atrocities and the protection of and respect for human rights
	Advance an inclusive, Syrian-led political solution to the Syrian conflict in line with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254

Source: State, "Integrated Country Strategy-Iraq," 5/30/2023; State, response to State OIG request for information, 4/8/2024.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani signs the Pentagon guest book on April 15. (DoD photo)

opening a pivotal week for both nations as they navigated a complex landscape of regional security, economic challenges, and diplomatic relations. State said that the visit was a joint reaffirmation of their commitment to the Strategic Framework Agreement and their shared vision for a secure, sovereign, and prosperous Iraq. During the visit, Prime Minister al-Sudani held more than 40 meetings in Washington, D.C., Houston, and Detroit, resulting in 18 signed memorandums of understanding with U.S. companies on energy and economic issues, oil sector development, and the pharmaceutical industry.[344]

Prime Minister al-Sudani's visit took place amid a tense security environment in the region, including the Israel-Hamas war, Israel's strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, and Iran's retaliatory attack on Israel. According to a White House press release, Prime Minister al-Sudani highlighted the goal of a 360-degree strategic U.S.-Iraq partnership to allow for a smooth transition from a military security-based relationship to a comprehensive economic, political, environmental, educational, and security partnership.[345] Maintaining and enhancing security cooperation with the U.S. remains crucial for Iraq, given its history with terrorism, particularly the battle against ISIS. The Oval Office visit underscored the mutual commitment to ensuring stability and security in Iraq, which is essential for broader regional stability.[346]

Economic cooperation was at the top of the visit. Iraq, rich in oil resources, faces significant long-term economic challenges, including corruption, unemployment, and the need for economic diversification. During the visit, Prime Minister al-Sudani sought to attract American investment in various sectors including oil and gas, infrastructure, technology, and agriculture. Meetings with business leaders and investors aimed to foster economic partnerships and bring in expertise and capital necessary for Iraq's development. The discussions also included efforts to rebuild and modernize Iraq's oil, electricity, and water infrastructure, which is critical for economic growth and improving the quality of life for Iraqi citizens.[347]

The visit also addressed diplomatic and political cooperation and included meetings with Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, and other key figures in the administration. Participants sought to strengthen diplomatic ties and ensure continued support for Iraq's sovereignty and political stability.[348] Prime Minister al-Sudani highlighted the need for continued support in areas such as healthcare, education, and the rebuilding of war-torn communities. The discussions aimed to secure aid and partnerships that would help address the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, particularly those displaced by conflict.[349]

Turkish President Erdogan Visits Baghdad

In April, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with Iraqi Prime Minister al-Sudani in Baghdad for the first time in 13 years.[350] Prime Minister al-Sudani greeted President Ergogan at Baghdad International Airport on April 22 and received a 21-gun salute upon his arrival at Baghdad's airport signaling their cooperation amid instability in the region.[351] The two leaders discussed security matters and economic and energy cooperation, according to media reports. Türkiye welcomed Iraq's decision to ban the PKK.[352] In advance of President Erdogan's visit, the Iraqi government outlawed the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in March but stopped short of designating it a terrorist organization as the Turkish government advocates. State characterized the visit as a "conciliatory gesture" by the Iraqi government to build trust with the Turkish government.[353]

According to State, bilateral discussions led to 26 memorandums of understanding, including a strategic framework agreement covering security, trade, and energy, which State described as the "roadmap for sustainable cooperation" between the two countries.[354] Other agreements included a four-way understanding among Türkiye, Iraq, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates for cooperation on the construction of a trade corridor that will run from southern Iraq to Türkiye and eventually connect Gulf countries and Europe, and a 10-year water resources management agreement.[355] State said that it remains to be seen how quickly or extensively the substance of the agreements will be developed or implemented.[356]

SYRIA

Syrian Regime Continues to Thwart UN-led Efforts to Resolve the Conflict

The Syrian regime continued to thwart UN-led efforts to resolve the 13-year-old Syrian conflict through a political process in line with UNSCR 2254, a resolution passed in 2015 that calls for an inclusive, Syria-led political process to draft a new constitution and hold free and fair elections.[357] State said that the United States considers UNSCR 2254 to be the only path to a durable political solution to the Syrian conflict.[358]

The 9th round of the Syrian Constitutional Committee, scheduled for April 22 in Geneva as part of the UN-led process, did not convene because the Assad regime refused to participate, according to local media.[359] However, the Assad regime has participated in separate talks in Astana, Kazakhstan, with Iran, Russia, and Türkiye, as part of an alternative process known as the Astana Format. In January, participants of the Astana Format held their 21st

Prime Minister al-Sudani highlighted the need for continued support in areas such as healthcare, education, and the rebuilding of war-torn communities.

meeting, according to a press statement issued by Türkiye.[360] At the meeting, the participants emphasized the leading role of the Astana Format and reiterated the need to preserve Syrian sovereignty and territorial integrity, including with respect to northeastern Syria, among other declarations.[361]

Two other diplomatic configurations—the Arab Ministerial Joint Liaison Committee, comprising Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia, and the "Western Quad," comprising France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States—have contributed efforts to resolving the Syrian conflict.[362]

The UN Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Syria, Geir O. Pedersen, called for a new approach to solving the Syria crisis that involved all parties interested in finding a peaceful solution, including participants in the Astana Format, the Geneva process, the Arab Ministerial Joint Liaison Committee, and the Western Quad.[363]

State said that the United States will not normalize relations with the Assad regime until there is authentic progress toward a political solution in line with UNSCR 2254. State also said that U.S. sanctions remained in full effect.

State said that the United States supports many of the same goals for Syria as its Arab partners, including expanding humanitarian access across Syria, building security and stability to ensure that ISIS cannot resurge, creating safe conditions for the return of refugees, determining the fate of those missing and unjustly detained, reducing Iranian influence in Syria, and countering trafficking in persons.[364]

State reported that the United States understood that the League of Arab States intended to use the 2023 lifting of Syria's suspension from the League to push for progress in these areas.[365] However, the United States remained skeptical about whether Syria's re-admission to the League would accomplish the resolution's objectives, State said.[366] State said that the United States was coordinating closely with France, Germany, and the United Kingdom to shape Arab countries' engagements with the Syrian regime.[367]

Erbil New Consulate Compound Nearing Completion

U.S. Consulate General Erbil reported that construction of the New Consulate Compound is 95 percent complete and plans to take occupancy in July 2025. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations said that after delays caused by the pandemic and significant security threats, construction work is on schedule. At the end of May, final inspections of 1,753 out of 2,436 rooms had been completed. Significantly, State said more than 50 percent of the rooms inspected did not require any corrections or modifications. At the quarter's conclusion, the project was in the close-out phase, and pre-occupancy training for the consulate's locally employed facility management staff was underway.[368]

International Donors Pledge More than $8 Billion in Aid to Syria, Still Short of What Syria Needs

International donors pledged more than $8 billion in humanitarian assistance to Syria at the Brussels VIII Conference, hosted by the European Union on April 30 and May 27. The conference brought together more than 800 participants representing Syrian civil society, UN stakeholders and agencies, EU member states, third-country representatives, and international NGOs.[369]

The pledges included $5 billion in grants and more than $3 billion in loans to Syria. The European Union pledged more than $2 billion and other members states pledged the remainder, making them the largest donor group of humanitarian and resilience assistance to Syria since conflict engulfed the country in 2011.[370] The United States pledged $593 million for humanitarian assistance at the conference.[371]

According to media reports, the pledges surpassed the $4 billion that the UN had requested, but was less than the pledges made last year, when donors promised $10.3 billion just months after an earthquake hit Türkiye and much of northern Syria. The aid is intended for Syrians inside the country and approximately 5.7 million Syrian refugees residing in Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan.[372]

DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In Iraq, the U.S. Government encourages the development of an inclusive and responsive democracy that is transparent, accountable, and committed to international norms.[373] In areas of Syria liberated from ISIS, the U.S. Government seeks to strengthen local governance and civil society to maintain security, meet community needs, and ensure ISIS cannot reconstitute.[374]

IRAQ

Iraq Steps Up Anti-Corruption Fight

 Iraqi government investigations, announced during the quarter. suggested that it is proceeding with efforts to combat corruption in official institution. In April, Iraq's Board of Supreme Audit announced the findings of an investigation into cash sales by the Central Bank of Iraq, which determined that 151,940 Iraqis had obtained U.S. dollars at the official exchange rate for travel but had never left the country. The investigation, which covered February 1 through July 8, 2023, found that "ghost travelers" included employees of the Central Bank of Iraq, private banks, currency exchange entities, and tourism companies. According to the news source, the "ghost travelers" profited substantially by obtaining U.S. dollars at the official exchange rate and selling them on the black market.[375]

In May, the Iraqi National Security Service and the Supreme Anti-Corruption Commission announced that a separate investigation of the Martyrs Foundation, a government entity that compensates victims of terrorism and war, found that employees had embezzled nearly $760 million from the foundation. Established in 2006 to compensate victims of Ba'ath Party rule under former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the foundation's mandate was expanded in 2009 to include victims of terrorism and others harmed in military operations and again in 2016 to include victims of ISIS. According to media reports, the foundation provides support to nearly 1 million Iraqis, making it one of the largest social services providers in Iraq.[376]

In June, Prime Minister al-Sudani stressed the need to regulate the disbursement of public money during a speech at the first forum of provincial councils with the Integrity Commission, a government body set up to counter corruption. The prime minister also stressed the need for supervisory and legislative roles and provincial policies to curb corruption.[377]

Al-Sadr May Run Candidates in Elections for Parliament in 2025; Al-Maliki Calls for Early Elections

In mid-April, Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr announced he was rebranding the Sadrist Trend Movement as the National Shia Movement. State assessed that al-Sadr is preparing his bloc of Sadr-aligned candidates to run in Iraq's 2025 national elections.[378] In comments to media, al-Sadr and others have fueled speculation that he will lead his party in next year's elections and that some Shia and independent political entities are interested in joining the National Shia Movement to counter the Shia Coordination Framework bloc, a coalition of parties and armed groups united in opposition to al-Sadr.[379]

According to State, independent analysts assess that al-Sadr's grassroots organization remains among the best placed to ensure voter turnout. Al-Sadr won a plurality of Council of Representative seats in Shia provinces in the 2018 and 2021 national elections. Although the elections law was altered following the 2021 elections, State said that al-Sadr's National Shia Movement remains a considerable electoral force.[380]

On June 12, former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki called for early national elections to be held before the end of 2024. According to a media report, al-Maliki claimed that Prime Minister al-Sudani's government was obligated to hold early elections according to a stipulation made at the time the government was formed in October 2022.[381] Amar al-Hakim's Hikma movement and Haider al-Abadi's Nasr Movement issued press statements dismissing al-Maliki's call for early elections. Hikma's statement noted that al-Maliki spoke for himself, stating that early elections are unjustifiable and against Iraq's interest.[382] The media report pointed out that Prime Minster al-Sudani has had some disagreements with al-Maliki over political and administrative visions.[383]

Iraqi Parliament Passes Anti-LGTBQI+ Laws

In April, Iraq's parliament amended the Law on Combating Prostitution of 1988, renaming it the Law on Combating Prostitution and Homosexuality. The law bans homosexuality and sex reassignment surgery and prohibits support to individuals who identify as gay, and use of the term "gender."[384] These offenses carry penalties of up to 15 years in prison.[385]

In June, Prime Minister al-Sudani stressed the need to regulate the disbursement of public money during a speech at the first forum of provincial councils with the Integrity Commission, a government body set up to counter corruption.

USAID reported that the law's language was "generally ambiguous."[386] Specifically, the law states that "any organization that promotes prostitution or homosexuality in Iraq is prohibited from operating."[387] However, no definition or examples of what constitutes "promotion" were given, which indicates the law could be used as leverage against political or social activists and opponents with whom USAID may work.[388]

State publicly expressed concern over the law, which it said could be used to "hamper free speech and expression and inhibit the operations of NGOs across Iraq." It also warned of a negative impact on Iraq's ability to diversify its economy and attract foreign investment, noting that "international business coalitions have already indicated that such discrimination in Iraq will harm business and economic growth in the country."[389]

Iraqi Kurdistan Elections Scheduled After Many Delays

On June 26, IKR President Nechirvan Barzani announced that parliamentary elections would be held on October 20. This decision comes after 2 years of political quarrels and rulings by the Federal Supreme Court. The announcement followed an agreement by all KRG political parties to hold parliamentary elections this year; the KRG Office of the President negotiated with the parties to determine a mutually agreeable date.[390] Ambassador Alina Romanowski offered her congratulations to KRG President Barzani for his efforts to set a date for the elections.[391] Prime Minister al-Sudani issued a statement affirming his support for holding the elections, stating that "the government shows its full readiness to support the requirements for the success of this electoral process."[392] Previously, the Independent High Electoral Commission had signaled its readiness to proceed with election preparations once the new date was announced.[393]

The KRG parliamentary elections were originally scheduled for October 2022. After the initial postponement due to political disagreements, elections were delayed further when the Federal Supreme Court ruled in May 2023 that the extension of the parliament's term, (a by-product of parliamentary elections not taking place), was unconstitutional. In February 2024, the court ruled that the parliament should have 100 members and eliminated 11 ethnic and minority quota seats, causing the Kurdistan Democratic Party to challenge the court ruling and announce a boycott of the elections, then scheduled for June 10. In May, Iraq's Electoral Judicial Panel allocated 5 of the 100 seats to minorities. This latest court decision appears to have brought the political parties into agreement on holding long-delayed parliamentary elections.[394]

The Federal Supreme Court's May 2023 decision ruling that the extension of the IKR parliament was unconstitutional has prevented the Iraqi Kurdistan parliament from passing legislation and impaired KRG ministries' ability to launch or implement programs. The KRG has been able to negotiate with the Iraqi government during this caretaker period, but State assesses that the KRG may be more effective with a functional parliament, which can only be seated following elections.[395]

On June 26, IKR President Nechirvan Barzani announced that parliamentary elections would be held on October 20.

UN Security Council Votes to End Assistance Mission in Iraq

In May, the UN Security Council (UNSC) voted unanimously to end the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), which was established in 2003 to coordinate post-conflict humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and help restore a representative government. The decision requires UNAMI to cease all work and operations by December 31, 2025, except with respect to any remaining liquidation of the Mission.[396]

UNAMI's activities focused on advancing inclusive political dialogue and national and community-level reconciliation; electoral support; facilitating regional dialogue and cooperation; promoting accountability and the protection of human rights and judicial and legal reform; and gender mainstreaming.[397] The Iraqi government requested the end of the UNAMI mission, saying that Iraq had made progress toward stability and UNAMI was no longer needed.[398]

SYRIA

Northeastern Syria Elections Postponed Due to Security Threats

In June, an electoral commission charged with organizing municipal elections in areas of northeast Syria postponed the elections in response to local demands and threats from Türkiye, according to local news reports.[399]

Representatives of the High Electoral Commission of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) said that the elections would instead be held in August following requests by political parties who said that they were unprepared to hold a ballot and a warning from Türkiye that it would "not allow the establishment of a terrorist state in the region," local news reports said.[400]

Independent analysts said that the elections, which would allow some 2.5 million residents in seven governorates to vote for mayors and municipal councils, have been repeatedly postponed due to threats from Türkiye, ISIS, and Iran-aligned militias.[401] Türkiye views the elections as a step toward the creation of a separatist entity that would present a security threat on its border.[402] Media reports said that Türkiye threatened military action if the DAANES holds the elections.[403]

The United States did not support current plans for elections in northeast Syria. A State spokesperson said that, while the United States supports "free, fair, transparent, and inclusive" elections in Syria in general, the conditions for such elections are not in place in those areas of Syria.[404] State interlocutors across the northeast outside of the DAANES administration downplayed the importance of holding municipal elections, instead calling for a renewed focus on improving service delivery and the economy.[405]

Meanwhile, the Syrian Democratic Council, the political wing of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), has been making overtures to Arab countries, including Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, to garner support for Kurds in any solution to the Syrian conflict,

according to news reports.[406] The SDC has also renewed a push for better relations with the Syrian People's Party, headquartered in Aleppo, to gain its support.[407]

In May, SDF Commander Mazloum Abdi said that the SDF was "ready for dialogue with all parties," including Türkiye, but reiterated the SDF position vis-à-vis a solution to the Syrian conflict that Syria cannot return to a "centralized system" and that "gains achieved by the people of north and eastern Syria" must be recognized.[408]

Syria Continues to Violate the Chemical Weapons Convention

In June, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Robert Wood said that the Assad regime had not accounted for or destroyed its chemical weapons arsenal in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and UNSC Resolution 2118, which calls on Syria to refrain from stockpiling or using chemical weapons.[409]

Speaking during a briefing to the UN Security Council, Ambassador Wood said that the United States welcomed the ongoing work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to investigate Syria's residual chemical weapons capabilities in the face of continued obfuscation. The ambassador noted that the OPCW continued to uncover new evidence of Syrian violations, including the discovery of prohibited chemicals in samples collected from several sites in Syria by an assessment team between 2021 and 2023.[410]

According to Ambassador Wood, the OPCW recommended that states take collective measures to prevent the transfer to Syria of dual-use chemicals and equipment and prevent dual-use material from falling into the hands of non-state actors operating in Syria, including terrorist groups.[411]

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Through diplomacy and stabilization programs, State and USAID seek to help Iraq expand its inclusive private sector growth, create opportunities for U.S investment through comprehensive economic reform, implement anti-corruption measures, and diversify Iraq's economy.[412] In Syria, the U.S. Government promotes economic stabilization programs to counter recruitment into ISIS and al-Qaida and humanitarian assistance to reduce human suffering. (See pages 78-83.)

IRAQ

Oil Exports Drop in Face of OPEC Production Quotas

During the quarter, Iraq was under pressure to reduce oil production to comply with OPEC+ quotas after it exceeded the quota during the first quarter of 2024. The production increase occurred despite Iraq's pledge to implement voluntary production cuts during the first 6 months of 2024. To compensate for its overproduction, Iraq's Ministry of Oil agreed to implement extra production cuts from May through December. During the quarter, Iraq's daily oil exports dropped, which, according to industry reports, was the result of the Ministry of Oil's efforts to reduce oil production output to come in line with the OPEC+ production quotas.[413] (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4.

Actual vs. Projected Daily Oil Revenue, in $ Millions, April 2023–June 2024

Sources: Embassy Baghdad, 7/2/2024; Iraq Oil Report, 7/3/2024.

Note: The Ministry of Oil has not released its oil revenues for February and March. The monthly average price per barrel of oil for these months were calculated based on estimates provided by an industry source.

Despite Rising Reservoirs, Water Remains Scarce

For years, Iraqis have suffered from severe water challenges. The Euphrates and Tigris rivers, vital lifelines for the region's agriculture, ecosystems, and communities, have faced increasing threats from upstream water diversions, pollution, and unsustainable water management practices. According to the United Nations, water flows from these rivers, which provide up to 98 percent of Iraq's surface water, have decreased by 30 to 40 percent over the past 40 years. Iraq's overall water supply is expected to decrease by up to 60 percent by 2025, compared to 2015.[414]

Last winter's rainfall refilled reservoirs behind dams, including the Darbandikhan dam in Sulaymaniyah province, raising water levels there to their highest since 2019.[415] However, despite parliamentary reports that the water level, 20 billion cubic meters, is "good" for the summer months, water specialists say Iraq needs up to 50 billion cubic meters to meet agricultural demand, revive the marshes, and satisfy overall consumption.[416]

During an April meeting of the Higher Coordinating Committee, the United States expressed concern about the impacts of climate change being felt by the Iraqi people and pledged continued support to resolve Iraq's water crisis and improve public health. The United States commended Iraq's Supreme Water Committee's work to improve management of water resources. USAID committed to working with Iraq at the local government level to improve water and waste management services. The United States also committed to an International

Visitor Leadership Program and an Ambassador's Water Expert Program to share technical expertise on water management and other needs.[417]

On April 27, Iraq's Ministry of Water Resources hosted the Fourth Annual Baghdad Water Conference, which focused on transboundary water cooperation to address pressing environmental and socio-economic issues. Multinational water experts from Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom attended. High-level officials agreed that Iraq's water scarcity required immediate attention. The Minister of Water Resources said Iraq needed international help to address water management issues and counter the effects of climate change.[418]

Iraq Improves Electricity Generation but Shortages Persist

During his Oval Office visit in mid-April, Iraqi Prime Minister al-Sudani told President Biden that Iraq intends to achieve energy self-sufficiency by 2030. According to State, Iraq is pursuing a multi-pronged approach to energy independence and diversification, which includes upgrading power plants, capturing gas associated with oil production to use as feedstock, developing natural gas fields, installing renewable energy capacity, and integrating with regional electricity grids. In May 2024, Iraq's Ministry of Electricity announced that electrical interconnection with the GCC Interconnection Authority, to bring more power to Iraq's electricity grid, will be completed by the end of 2024.[419]

In the meantime, summer protests have started. An increase in the number of power outages has led to growing public dissatisfaction as protesters call for urgent government action.[420] On June 10, citizens in Najaf, located about 100 miles south of Baghdad, protested the lack of electricity at the city's electricity distribution department.[421] This was followed by a demonstration in Dhi Qar province, home of Iraq's marshlands south of Baghdad, with a sit-in at the Directorate of Electric Power Production. According to a news report, the protestors threatened to paralyze movement within the province if delivery of electricity did not improve.[422]

As the heatwave temperatures were reaching 122°F in Baghdad, Prime Minister al-Sudani limited public sector work hours to 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., a 60-minute reduction in the working day, according to a press report. He also said provincial governors could announce public holidays when temperatures reached 122 degrees. The changes would be in effect until the end of August.[423]

Two Iraqi Oil Pipelines Still Shut Down

In April, the Ministry of Oil announced ongoing repairs to the Iraq-Türkiye pipeline, which has been closed since March 2023 following an international arbitration ruling. On June 9, the Ministry of Oil met with the KRG and international oil companies to discuss resuming exports via the pipeline. Prime Minister al-Sudani previously expressed his desire to reopen the pipeline and affirmed the importance of ensuring Iraqi oil can reach international markets.[424]

However, according to media reports, the Iraqi government plans to re-open the Kirkuk-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which is outside the IKR. The Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline could send

During his Oval Office visit in mid-April, Iraqi Prime Minister al-Sudani told President Biden that Iraq intends to achieve energy self-sufficiency by 2030.

350,000 barrels per day to Türkiye from the Kirkuk oil field. Reopening this pipeline would likely anger the KRG, since it would provide the Iraqi government with an alternative oil pipeline after months of unsuccessful negotiations with the KRG and international oil companies to reopen the Iraq-Türkiye Pipeline. The KRG relied heavily on revenues from the Iraq-Türkiye Pipeline.[425]

According to State, Iraq has an interest in ensuring resilient, diversified export routes for its oil, particularly as it relies on crude oil export revenue for an estimated 95 percent of total government revenue. Iraq's export capacity from its southern ports is constrained by aging infrastructure and security disruptions to maritime routes. Furthermore, State said that Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the partial sanctions on Russian oil supplied to Europe in 2022 diverted a significant portion of Russia's oil from Europe to Asia and created additional opportunities for Middle Eastern crude oil suppliers to send more volumes to Europe.[426]

Banks in Iraq Face Currency and Liquidity Issues

Private banks in Iraq continued to have limited liquidity and technical capacity to lend to small businesses and public trust in the banking sector remains weak.[427] USAID reported that the limited capacity of private banks to assess the creditworthiness of businesses contributes to excessive collateral requirements, insufficient risk-sharing, and higher cost of finance for businesses.[428]

USAID continued to support the Central Bank of Iraq to promote financial inclusion, advance digital payments options, and increase private bank financing for Micro-Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises.[429] USAID also supported the central bank to leverage private banks' capital and improve commercial lending conditions to address micro and small businesses' financing gaps.[430] USAID's CATALYZE activity continued to support private financial institutions to develop their lending portfolio.[431] Another activity supported microfinance institutions to increase lending to micro and small businesses, particularly businesses owned by marginalized groups.[432]

USAID Continues to Support Iraqi Climate, Governance, Water, and Public Services Initiatives

USAID reported that it continued its support of efforts by Iraq's federal government to finalize and adopt a climate investment plan in cooperation with the National Investment Commission.[433]

Additionally, USAID recently launched a governance activity (Ma'an) to support local governments' efforts to improve public service delivery and become more responsive to citizen demands for more effective and responsive public services, particularly related to residential water delivery, solid waste management, and sanitation issues.[434] USAID also continued to promote techniques in the agriculture sector to conserve water and energy resources.[435]

Through Ma'an and other activities, USAID worked with government officials in Najaf province to engage the private sector in recycling initiatives and other innovative solutions.[436] Through its partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USAID supported water

directorates to adopt new technologies to assure better water security and resilience.[437] In partnership with the UN Development Program, USAID promoted water preservation technologies among farmers in southern Iraq and equips youth with technical skills to promote energy saving systems.[438]

USAID said that it plans to award two new programs in FY 2024 to develop local meteorological and data centers across Iraq to disseminate real time information on water scarcity.[439] This data will inform government decisions on strategic measures to combat the impact of drought and internal displacement of farmers.[440] USAID said that it will also support Iraq's water directorates to adopt modern technologies that enhance the water quality and will increase water access to local communities.[441] USAID also said that it will work with local authorities to pilot projects to use reclaimed water for irrigation, and enhance water fee collection.[442]

SYRIA

Ongoing State stabilization programs in non-regime areas of Syria worked with local governance entities, civil society, and Syrian communities to support education, community security, independent media, civil society, reintegration, reconciliation, removal of explosive remnants of war, restoration of essential services, and a political resolution to the Syrian conflict in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254.[443]

USAID operates by five stabilization activities in Syria: Election and Political Processes; Growing Agriculture and Income in Syria; Syria Livelihoods Project; Essential Services, Good Governance, and Economic Recovery; and Economic Management for Stabilization.[444]

Turkish Airstrikes Affect Basic Services in Hasakah Governorate

State reported that Turkish airstrikes in northern Syria conducted between October 2023 and January 2024 and also May 2024 damaged or destroyed infrastructure, including the largest gas and electrical plant in Syria, and that the destruction continued to affect large portions of the civilian population.[445]

Electricity: In Hasakah governorate, the SDF had to replace electrical network linking SDF headquarters and facilities to electrical transmission stations in Hasakah to ensure constant electricity after the Turkish airstrikes damaged the power station.[446] As a result, the SDF cut electricity to Hasakah residents and surrounding areas to maintain electricity to security centers, SDF headquarters, industrial projects, and hospitals.[447] Reduced power to the residents of northeastern Syria impacted services to citizens, farmers, and factories.[448]

Water: The DAANES also struggled to allocate fuel for water pumps in Hasaka governorate, according to a news media outlet.[449] The DAANES allocated half the amount of diesel to water pumps operating in Hasaka because of the Turkish attacks on oil wells, which led to a small amount of fuel imported into the city, according to a news media source who is the co-chair of the hydrocarbons committee in Hasakah.[450] Hasakah residents suffered from a water crisis and local authorities worked to allocate the necessary quantities before summer.[451]

In January, Turkish fighter jets and armed drones attacked the pipeline near Rmeilan, which triggered an environmental hazard of oil released for miles in the Jaghhagh River.[452] The polluted water seeped into nearby fields and decimated crops.[453] The local population unsuccessfully used dry reeds to try to contain the oil spill to save the crops.[454]

Oil: On May 20, Türkiye targeted the Saida oil station with a drone attack, resulting in partial destruction of the station, according to a news media outlet.[455] The Saida oil station is the second largest oil collection station in Hasakah governorate, according to a news media outlet.[456]

State continued assistance support aimed at essential services provision and continued to advocate for de-escalation in northeast Syria, maintenance of ceasefires across the country, and protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.[457]

REINTEGRATION OF DISPLACED PERSONS

IRAQ

Approximately 1.1 million Iraqis are internally displaced, 157,000 of whom are sheltering in IDP camps, according to the United Nations[458] The largest number of IDPs reside in Erbil province, followed by Ninewa, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, Diyala, and Anbar provinces.[459] Approximately 90 percent of IDPs are in the IKR.[460]

While the majority of IDPs became displaced following the ISIS conflict, some Iraqis have become displaced due to drought, water scarcity, environmental degradation and other climatic factors.[461] As of March, more than 23,000 individuals were displaced because of climatic factors across 12 governorates.[462]

IDPs across Iraq continue to face urgent humanitarian needs, lack of access to basic services, and poor conditions in camps.[463] Meanwhile, IDPs who return to their areas of origin continue to face barriers to return and integration, including lack of civil documentation, and face limited access to basic public services, such as education, health care, and social security benefits, according to UN Refugee Agency.[464] Relief agencies continue to advocate that all IDP returns be dignified, durable, informed, non-discriminatory, safe, and voluntary.[465]

State and USAID Provide Support Iraq's IDPs

State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) supports humanitarian programs to fund the IOM's Facilitated Voluntary Movement program, which is designed to advance sustainable solutions for IDPs by enhancing informed decision-making about their preferred options. The program offers support throughout all stages of the IDP's life, including in areas of displacement and in areas of return or relocation. IOM conducts information programs and provides assistance to IDP families to help them prepare for voluntary relocation to their areas of origin or areas of choice, including site visits. IOM also provides cash grants for transportation, departure, and reinstallation. IOM provides reintegration services that include a wide range of support, such as legal services and civil documentation support, livelihood and job opportunities, such health and psychosocial services.[466]

In settlements, USAID BHA partners seek to improve the quality and accessibility of primary health care services—including mental health care services—through staff capacity-building, ensuring the availability of essential equipment and medicines, and training and operation of an Early Warning, Alert and Response Network.[467] USAID-funded organizations provide drinking water through water trucking services, support operations and maintenance for water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure in IDP camps, and promote sanitary living conditions.[468] These organizations provide support related to civil documentation, housing/land/property rights, and gender-based violence.[469] These organizations also support critical camp infrastructure maintenance.[470]

According to USAID BHA, the lack of effective coordination among NGOs has hindered their ability to engage collectively with local authorities and improve humanitarian access.[471] The dismantling of the NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq eliminates an important space for collaboration on messaging. Future efforts to improve humanitarian access will require new mechanisms or modalities to support coordination given the gap.[472]

The United Nations in Iraq continues to work closely with the Iraqi government and the KRG to finalize the "Roadmap for Accelerating the Implementation of the National Plan to Resolve Displacement in Iraq."[473] The Roadmap, which is anchored in the national strategy for IDPs, identifies priorities and actions to create a pathway for solutions to displacement and provides a framework to sustain and monitor progress.[474]

In January 2024, the Iraqi Council of Ministers announced its decision to close all remaining formal IDP camps in Iraq by July 30, 2024.

Iraqi Government Continues to Close IDP Camps

In January 2024, the Iraqi Council of Ministers announced its decision to close all remaining formal IDP camps in Iraq by July 30, 2024.[475] Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) began the camp closure process at Sulaymaniyah provinces' Ashti IDP camp in the IKR, The remaining 22 camps are located in the IKR hosting 30,000 families, around 150,000 individuals.[476] To date, 1,938 families have departed from camps since the decision.[477]

During the quarter, the MoMD relocated IDPs from the Tazade and Ashti camps in Sulaymaniyah province, primarily to their areas of origin in Salah al-Din province. In April, the Tazade IDP camp officially closed. Humanitarian actors noted that most residents of the Ashti IDP camp will leave in coming months.[478] Between April 1 and June 6, IOM recorded the departure of 2,214 families from camps.[479] Many of the Ashti IDPs are returning to destroyed villages that lack basic services and no access to livelihoods.[480]

During the quarter the MoMD outlined an aid package of 4 million Iraqi dinars—approximately $3,000—for IDP households in the camps to return to their areas of origin, integrate, or relocate outside the camps. However, IDP families, including many who have already returned from camps in Sulaymaniyah province to Salah al-Din province, have said that the amount provided is insufficient to restart their lives, according to the United Nations.[481]

In June, through unconfirmed reports, USAID BHA was informed that camps would remain open after the July 30 deadline.

Despite Iraqi government attempts to incentivize voluntary returns, most of Iraqis displaced from Sinjar have not returned to their areas of origin since hostilities ceased in 2017. As of April, 65 percent of towns and villages in the Sinjar district were hosting one-half or less of their populations than prior to the ISIS conflict.[482] According to humanitarian organizations and community representatives, IDPs across all camps consistently list insufficient shelter, insecurity and lack of assurance that they will be safe in their communities, a lack of livelihoods, difficulty obtaining civil documentation, and a lack of basic services as obstacles to their return.[483]

Promised Iraqi government efforts on ongoing barriers to return—including destroyed settlements in areas of origin, exclusion from social welfare programs, issues of terrorism charges and tribal rejection, and lack of civil documentation—remain unaddressed.[484]

According to USAID, the January 2024 camp closure announcement, though expected to be rescinded or not enforced, indicates the Iraqi government overall unwillingness to assume the humanitarian caseload for displaced persons.[485] While return grants for returnees have been provided to some of those who have left camps, the remaining aspects of the closure plan have been largely ignored, including expediting security clearances, clarifying IDPs' legal status, overcoming tribal opposition to IDPs returning, registering IDPs for social welfare, and providing low-cost housing and jobs in areas of return.[486]

Al-Hol Returnees Face Challenges

The Iraqi government continued to repatriate Iraqi nationals from the al-Hol displacement camp in northeastern Syria to the Jeddah 1 transit camp in Iraq.[487] (See Table 3.) The repatriated Iraqis face several challenges, including a lengthy security review and approval vetting process by the Iraqi government and high barriers to return in their areas of origin in Iraq.[488] A large portion of the Iraqis that remain in al-Hol camp are from the post-Baghuz group of Iraqis that are perceived to have stronger ties to ISIS, which further complicates and delays the security screening process that is required for return to Iraq.[489] Iraqis in Jeddah 1 can have more pronounced barriers with reintegration and community acceptance in areas of return due to their affiliation or perceived affiliation with ISIS.[490] Female-led households and children may face significantly higher barriers for reintegration, especially for individuals without a sponsor to help approve their returns to their communities of origin.[491]

Table 3.

Repatriations from al-Hol During the Quarter

Iraqi repatriations during the quarter	June 2024 (16th convoy): 178 families (634 individuals), mostly female-headed households. The convoy included 10 unaccompanied and 3 separated children
Iraqis repatriated from al-Hol since 2024	9,535 Iraqis (more than 1,300 in 2024)
Iraqis remaining at al-Hol camp	Approximately 18,000

Sources: USAID MEB, response to USAID OIG request for information, 6/24/2024; State, response to State OIG request for information, 6/25/2024.

IOM reported that some recent households planning for departure were unable to depart, due to the lack of sponsors: some households experienced challenges in communicating with sponsors when they were informed of their departure with one day's notice, and some sponsors withdrew their support when they were informed of the departure date.[492] While the reasons are unclear, some households mentioned that there had been tribal and community-level tension related to previous departures, especially in the Haditha and Heet districts of Anbar province that may have affected their departure.[493]

State PRM and USAID support repatriated Iraqis, including those perceived to be formerly associated with ISIS, and cleared by authorities, to sustainably (re)integrate back into communities.[494] Reintegration interventions aim to support community members to live freely and peacefully and engage in community social and economic life.[495] The activities focus on creating a supportive and sustainable environment for those who are returning and reintegrating, including local peace structures and local authorities that are able and willing to accept the returnees.[496] Interventions provide socio-economic reintegration support, facilitate the work of local peace structures to include mental health and psychosocial services, and foster a "case management" system, which includes dedicated staff trained to identify the needs of returnees and to monitor progress towards safe and effective (re)integration.[497] USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives supports host communities in areas of origin and alternative areas of return to increase community acceptance of returnees and support their (re)integration.[498]

State PRM provides the majority of humanitarian and camp management assistance in the Jeddah-1 transit camp.[499] USAID said that it remains focused on limited service provision within the camp.[500] In Jeddah 1, USAID continues to provide protection, mental health and psychosocial support and food assistance to Iraqi returnees.[501] With USAID support, IOM delivers the mental health and psychosocial support services, including consultations by psychologists, individual and group and case management, and family and community support services, such as recreational activities.[502] USAID also supports protection monitoring to better understand the camp protection environment.[503] Through USAID support, the World Food Programme provides e-voucher transfers to Jeddah 1 residents that are designed to cover 80 percent of the daily calorie intake of IDPs.[504] It is a top-up to the MoMD monthly food distribution which remains insufficient to meet the caloric needs of Jeddah 1 residents.[505]

Reintegration interventions aim to support community members to live freely and peacefully and engage in community social and economic life.

SYRIA

State said that the plight of detainees and displaced persons must remain at the forefront of the international community's efforts to mitigate the suffering of the Syrian people and work toward a political resolution.[506] The U.S. Government al-Hol action plan intends to address the humanitarian and security crisis at the al-Hol Camp.[507]

Lack of Funding Halts a Medical Referral System for IDP Camp Residents in NE Syria

On June 9, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that it was deeply concerned about the health conditions in the al-Hol camp following WHO's field staff being denied access to the camp by camp administrators on May 9, according to the WHO.[508] The WHO's humanitarian health activities in the al-Hol camp extended beyond hospital referrals.[509] Its services included health sector coordination, routine immunization, risk communication and community engagement, water quality monitoring, disease surveillance and early warning, delivery of medical supplies, technical health expertise, and capacity building for health workers.[510]

On May 9, al-Hol camp administration revoked the WHO's access after funding shortages forced WHO to halt medical referrals, according to the WHO.[511] The WHO served as one of the main health providers in the camp known for immense health needs and public health risks.[512] The funding shortfall halted a medical referral system, funded by the WHO in 11 camps in northeastern Syria, including al-Hol.[513]

As of March, referrals for patients requiring specialist or complex care were no longer funded.[514] Residents in the al-Hol camp and other camps in northeastern Syria no longer had access to secondary and specialist healthcare.[515] Residents, most of them children, sometimes had treatable and preventable diseases and other needs, including for urgent care like surgery.[516] The recent cuts to the WHO mean that few or no options are available to refer life-threatening cases to a hospital outside the camps.[517] According to one NGO, approximately 1,000 patients were awaiting referrals at the camps, including more than 800 requiring specialized health services such as endocrinology; neurology; ear, nose, and throat services; surgery, gastroenterology, and dermatology.[518]

Al-Hol Families Returned to Raqqah, Struggle to Fit in with the Local Population

State and USAID continued to implement the U.S. Government's al-Hol action plan, with their lines of effort focused on the return and reintegration of IDPs from al-Hol back to communities in northeastern Syria.[519] On May 8, the al-Hol camp administration relocated a group 66 families (240 individuals) to Dayr az-Zawr.[520] State and USAID provided support to al-Hol returnees in Raqqah and Dayr az Zawr.[521] (See Table 4.)

Some families who repatriated from al-Hol to Raqqah city have struggled to fit in with the local population, even with the support of international organizations that operated in the city.[522] In one instance, several al-Hol returnees reported that they had not obtained any support from initiatives providing relief to orphans and poor families.[523]

Table 4.

State and USAID Support for al-Hol Residents Returning to Northeastern Syria

Developed a **case management system** and **worked with local stakeholders** to get assistance to the residents and communities who needed it most. As Syrians returning from al-Hol experience different circumstances and different challenges in reintegrating into communities, this system recognizes that there is no "one size fits all" approach.

Funded **rehabilitation of four agricultural complexes** in Dayr az-Zawr during the quarter and continued operation to provide irrigation services in areas hosting al-Hol returnees.

Supported 6 months of **shelter** for 33 families in Raqqah through a local civil society organization. Shelter support ended at the close of the quarter and the civil society organization worked to coordinate an exit strategy for these families living in the 23 transitional shelters.

Supported creation of a **database** at a Social Welfare Center in Raqqah to support and reintegrate returnees from the al-Hol camp with the local community. During the quarter, the center was in the progress of training its staff on case management, strategic planning, human resources, protection, and gender. The center coordinates services with the Raqqah Civil Council and organizations operating in the region.

Provided **livelihood support** to female returnees from al-Hol and women from host communities, including paid internships, access to capital for starting or expanding small businesses, and the establishment of Women's Centers for Economic Empowerment in each governorate in partnership with Women's Committees at the governorate level. The program registered 787 al-Hol returnees and host community women (499 in Raqqah and 288 in Dayr az-Zawr) as of the end of the quarter and provided career guidance and job readiness training to 773 women.

Inspected 1,244 **homes** in different locations in Dayr az-Zawr (30 percent of which are intended for al-Hol camp returnees), certifying 437 for rehabilitation and initiating **rehabilitation** of 217.

Sources: State, response to State OIG request for information, 6/21/2024; USAID MEB, response to USAID OIG request for information, 6/21/2024; North Press Agency, "With the Aim of Equality. Database to Support Returnees from al-Hol in Raqqa," 5/9/2024.

Recognizing the myriad of challenges associated with reintegration, State and USAID have worked to develop mechanisms for more targeted support to returnees and their communities, including a case management system, and worked with local stakeholders to get assistance to the residents and communities who needed it most.[524] Every Syrian returning from al-Hol faced slightly different circumstances and different challenges in reintegrating into communities.[525] State and USAID worked to support returnees and the communities where they will live, recognizing that there is no "one size fits all" approach.[526]

USAID-Funded Organizations Respond to Flooding in Northwestern Syria IDP Sites

Heavy rainfall, strong winds, and flooding beginning on May 1 affected over 12,600 people in 33 IDP sites in Aleppo and Idlib, damaging or destroying over 200 shelters and 2,500 tents by May 7.[527] The storm also caused livestock deaths and crop damage, affecting wheat, barley, and cumin, key income sources for local communities.[528] In response, USAID BHA-funded partners provided shelter repair materials, such as insulation and plastic sheets, to all affected households and distributed one-time cash assistance to more than 300 households in three storm-affected camps in Idlib.[529]

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

IRAQ

USAID-funded Implementers Take Precautions Amid Attacks on U.S.-linked Businesses

During the quarter, Iran-aligned militia groups had launched multiple attacks on U.S.-linked businesses in Iraq.[530] USAID reported that while the attacks had not impacted its operations or status, its implementing partners had been impacted by misinformation and disinformation on social media platforms, which led them to act on incorrect information.[531] Additionally, several USAID-funded organizations reported that they had delayed or canceled travel due to the closure of Iraqi airspace and the cancellation of flights from Baghdad and Erbil.[532]

Additionally, USAID reported that its implementers continued to operate with a low profile, given the potential security threats, including publicly masking names displayed on transport vehicles to shield them from anti-American sentiment.[533]

SYRIA

The U.S. Government pledged nearly $593 million in additional humanitarian aid for Syria at the Eighth Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region.[534] This includes nearly $360 million from PRM and over $233 million from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID BHA).[535] The funds are designed to support life-saving aid for communities in Syria, as well as Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan.[536] The assistance will provide safe drinking water, emergency food and nutrition, health care, psychosocial support, and other protection services.[537]

Health Assistance: USAID BHA funds 12 implementers, including ten NGOs, the UN Population Fund, and the WHO, to provide essential health assistance in Syria.[538] This includes delivering medical supplies and deploying mobile health and nutrition teams to hard-to-reach areas.[539] USAID's implementers also send mobile medical units and surgical teams to treat trauma injuries and provide mental health and psychosocial support services at temporary shelters for displaced populations.[540] Additionally, relief actors offer community-based health education and training for Syrian medical workers.[541]

Food Assistance: USAID BHA supports the UN World Food Programme, the WHO, and 14 NGOs in providing emergency food and nutrition assistance to Syrians, including Syrian refugees.[542] In Syria, this includes cash transfers, food vouchers, monthly food

Table 5.

U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Funding for the Iraq Response in FY 2024

USAID BHA	$3,569,780
TOTAL	**$3,569,780**

Note: Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of June 3, 2024.

Source: USAID, "Iraq–Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #2," 6/3/2024.

Table 6.

U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Funding for the Syria Regional Crisis Response in FY 2024

USAID BHA	$276,547,474
TOTAL	**$276,547,474**

Note: Funds committed or obligated in FY2024. These figures reflect publicly announced funding as of May 27, 2024.

Source: USAID, "Syria Complex Emergency," 5/27/2024.

Table 7.

U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Funding for the Syria Response in FYs 2012–2024

USAID BHA	$ 9,020,525,222
STATE PRM	$ 8,442,280,455
TOTAL	**$17,462,805,677**

Note: The total U.S. Government funding for the Syria regional crisis response does not include $251,475,623 in FY 2023 funding for the 2023 earthquake response.

Source: USAID, "Syria Complex Emergency," 5/27/2024.

SYRIA: U.S. ASSISTANCE SNAPSHOT

April 1, 2024–June 30, 2024

During the quarter, the economic situation in Syria was at its worst: high levels of humanitarian need caused by years of conflict have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, devastating earthquakes, historic levels of drought that decimated food crops, and the collapse of the Lebanese financial sector.

ALEPPO AND IDLIB
Heavy rainfall, strong winds, and flooding affected 33 IDP sites. In addition to destroying shelters and tents, the floods caused livestock deaths and crop damage, affecting wheat, barley, and cumin, key income sources for local communities. USAID BHA partners provided shelter repair materials, such as insulation and plastic sheets, to all affected households and distributed one-time cash assistance to more than 300 households in three storm-affected camps in Idlib.

DAYR AZ ZAWR
SDF checkpoints in Gharanij resulted in movement restrictions, access challenges, and made it more difficult to assess potential activities to support Syrian al-Hol returnees in eastern Dayr az Zawr.

ABU KAMAL
A dispute between Iran-aligned militias and the Syrian regime caused the opening of a river crossing that links the regime areas with the SDF areas to be postponed. The crossing was closed while parties negotiated the fee to be collected at the river crossing and the terms of monetary allocations to Iran-aligned militias and the SDF.

16.7 million	**12.9 million**	**7.2 million**	**90 percent**
Estimated Population In Need of Humanitarian Assistance	Estimated Number of Food Insecure People	Estimated Number of IDPs	Percentage of Syrians Who Live in Extreme Poverty on Less Than $1.90 a Day

U.S. ASSISTANCE IN 2024

$4.1 billion	**2.1 million**	**$938 million**	**$5 million**	**$93 million**
Needed to Meet Humanitarian Needs in 2024, the Highest Funding Request for a Single Country	Average Number of People Who Receive USAID Assistance Each Month	U.S. Funding for Humanitarian Assistance	U.S. Funding to the Syria Recovery Trust Fund	U.S. Funding for Stabilization Activities

Sources: State, response to State OIG request for information, 6/21/2024; USAID MEB, response to USAID OIG request for information, 6/21/2024; USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 6/21/2024; USAID, "Syria Complex Emergency," 05/27/2024; Baladi News, "What is the Reason for the Suspension of the Opening of a Crossing in Albu Kamal?" 5/28/2024.

On May 10, the Syrian regime extended use of Bab al-Salam and al-Rai crossings from Türkiye for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in northwestern Syria until August 13.

rations, and distributing wheat flour and yeast to bakeries.[543] In April, a USAID BHA-funded implementers delivered 225 metric tons of flour and 2 metric tons of yeast to bakeries, providing subsidized bread for nearly 100,000 people in northwestern Syria.[544] On average, WFP and other USAID/BHA implementers provide monthly food assistance to 2.8 million people, including 2.1 million in Syria and 700,000 Syrian refugees in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Türkiye.[545] Additionally, with State PRM support, UNICEF provides child nutrition assistance in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Türkiye.[546]

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: USAID BHA supports multiple NGOs, as well as, the IOM and UNICEF, to deliver water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance in Syria.[547] Their efforts include distributing crucial hygiene items to vulnerable populations and improving facilities by rehabilitating small-scale sanitation and water systems, such as handwashing stations and latrines, in displacement camps and informal settlements.[548] In northern Syria, USAID BHA implementers also work to expand access to safe drinking water through emergency water trucking and the provision of water storage tanks and treatment devices.[549]

USAID BHA funds contractors that independently monitor, verify, and analyze the results of USAID activities in Syria.[550] In areas with ongoing conflict, the contractors coordinate with implementers to take extra precautions to ensure the safety of local staff.[551] However, access constraints and insecurity can sometimes limit the contractors' ability to access certain parts of Syria.[552]

Border Crossings, Checkpoints Remain Concerns for Humanitarian Access

On May 10, the Syrian regime extended use of Bab al-Salam and al-Rai crossings from Türkiye for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in northwestern Syria until August 13.[553] This extension follows the "consent model," in which the United Nations seeks access arrangements with the Syrian government rather than such access being required under UN Security Council Resolutions.[554] On July 10, arrangement for using the Bab al-Hawa border crossing was extended for 6 months and will need renewal to continue after January 13, 2025.[555]

The cross-border relief from Türkiye serves as a lifeline for aid to northwest Syria, where millions await humanitarian assistance, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.[556] The United States welcomed the announcement and confirmed support for UN provision of humanitarian assistance.[557] To enable better planning and cost efficiencies, the United States called on the Syrian regime to support long-term UN access through the Bab al-Hawa crossing and noted that reauthorizing crossings at Bab al-Salam and al-Rai for 90-day increments was not a sustainable approach to addressing the scale of humanitarian needs in Syria.[558]

Despite Constraints, USAID Third-Party Monitors Continued Work

USAID's third-party monitoring system independently monitors, verifies, and analyzes the results of activities in Syria funded by the USAID Middle East Bureau and USAID BHA, and it increases USAID's understanding of the outputs, progress, challenges, successes, and lessons learned in regards to the agency's activities in Syria.[559] In areas with ongoing conflict and clashes, third-party monitoring contractors coordinate with implementing partners to take extra precautions at select sites to ensure the safety of local staff.[560] However, access constraints and insecurity can limit the contractors' ability to access certain parts of Syria.[561] USAID reported the following results of third party monitoring during the quarter.

Health care in remote areas: The activity focused on increasing access of the most vulnerable populations to health care in remote areas and IDP site. USAID's Third Party Monitor found that while the majority of beneficiaries surveyed were satisfied with the quality of primary health care services, they, along with staff, and camp management, noted shortages of medications and a lack of medical specialists (such as pediatricians).[562]

Rehabilitation of agriculture complex: The activity worked to restore canals to their pre-conflict status, to strengthen food security in northeastern Syria. The third-party monitor found that the rehabilitated complex now has an increased capacity to provide irrigation water, leading to improved food security and job creation in the area.[563] However, farmers expressed concern over the increasing costs of irrigation due to the high fuel prices in the black market.[564]

Gender-based violence: The third-party monitor found that participants and stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the USAID activities.[565] Overall, implementer staff exhibited a good understanding of their case management protocols, although some challenges were present related to material shortages, sensitivities in regards to community traditions and requests, and some business unit improvement.[566] Participants and the local stakeholder also noted a lack of prior community coordination, highlighting limited community involvement and the need for improvement of accessibility for people with disabilities.[567]

Tent distribution: The third-party monitor found that all participants utilized the tents provided by the USAID-funded implementer.[568] The majority of participants expressed a need for mattresses and blankets as additional assistance items.[569] Recommendations for better aid included cement flooring and furniture.[570] While most participants viewed the assistance as accessible and inclusive, feedback from local stakeholders was that the assistance was accessible it did not extend to cover all residents of the camp.[571]

Infant feeding: The third-party monitor noted that all participants reported active participation in a session that focusing on complementary infant feeding.[572] Challenges included delays in receiving financial payments from and interruptions in attending sessions on complementary infant feeding, due to childbirth.[573] Participants were aware of the necessity for registration and selection criteria, which included adult females pregnant or with a child under 2. However, there was little consultation with community stakeholders regarding project needs.[574] The implementer reported actively seeking input from community members to ensure the program was aligned with their needs and priorities.[575]

Treasury Amends Syrian Sanctions Regulations

On June 5, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), in consultation with State, amended the Syrian Sanctions Regulations to incorporate certain sanctions statutes designed to deny the Syrian regime resources that could be used against the Syrian people.[576]

The amendments incorporated and modified certain general licenses to facilitate humanitarian assistance and internet-based communications services to civilians and clarified the applicability of the sanctions regulations to persons sanctioned under other authorities.[577] The amended regulations implement the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019, the Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012, and the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012, as well as relevant provisions of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act and Executive Order 13608.[578]

Notably, OFAC amended the general license related to NGO activities, clarified who the NGO license covers, added new authorized activities, and clarified that U.S. financial institutions may rely on statements of the originator of funds.[579] The General License authorizes NGOs to export/reexport services to Syria in support of not-for-profit activities in Syria, including humanitarian projects that meet basic human needs; democracy-building; education; non-commercial development projects directly benefitting the Syrian people; the preservation and protection of cultural heritage sites; and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs and peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution programs.[580]

OFAC also amended the license to expand the authorization of the official business of international organizations.[581] These amendments added new international organizations authorized by the license, which now cover the following organizations: the International Committee of the Red Cross; the International Federation of Red Cross; the Red Crescent Societies; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.[582]

Since 2014, the Department of Justice has charged more than 244 individuals with international terrorism-related conduct relating to ISIS and obtained more than 207 convictions.

PROSECUTIONS AND SANCTIONS ON ISIS

Several U.S. Government agencies conduct activities to degrade ISIS capabilities in Iraq and Syria as part of a whole-of-government effort to reduce ISIS manpower and disrupt its financing. Efforts include prosecutions of foreign terrorist fighters and homegrown violent extremists linked to ISIS; disrupting ISIS financing; designations of ISIS-linked individuals and organizations as terrorists; support for efforts to repatriate ISIS-affiliated individuals in displacement camps in Syria; strengthening the ISF's ability to gather evidence in support of warrants and prosecutions; and mitigating threats to the homeland posed by ISIS-linked individuals attempting to enter the United States to conduct attacks.[583]

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Since 2014, the Department of Justice (DoJ) has charged more than 244 individuals with international terrorism-related conduct relating to ISIS and obtained more than 207 convictions. The DoJ reported that the remaining cases are in various stages of litigation.[584]

Table 8.

Department of Justice Prosecutions and Activities against Terrorism, April–June 2024

Date and Jurisdiction	Description
Western District of Kentucky **June 11**	**Mirsad Ramic** was found guilty of three terrorism-related charges, including one count of conspiring to provide material support to ISIS, one count of providing and attempting to provide material support to ISIS, and one count of receiving military-type training from ISIS.
	Ramic and two co-conspirators departed the United States, crossed into Syria, and joined ISIS. Ramic then attended an ISIS training camp, where he received military-type training. After joining ISIS, Ramic and his coconspirators remained in contact with each other and discussed, among other things, Ramic's use of an anti-aircraft weapon to shoot at planes, jihad, martyrdom, and fighting for ISIS. Ramic faces a maximum penalty of 50 years' imprisonment.
District of Minnesota **June 13**	**Abdelhamid al-Madioum** was sentenced to 120 months in prison and 15 years of supervised release, after pleading guilty in 2021 to a one count of providing material support and resources to ISIS.
	In July 2015, al-Madioum, traveled to Turkiye from Morocco, where he met with members of ISIS who aided his crossing into Syria and later into Iraq. After receiving military training by ISIS, al-Madioum served for several months as a soldier in ISIS's Tariq Bin-Ziyad battalion. After sustaining injuries while conducting military activities on behalf of ISIS, al-Madioum became a personnel database administrator and remained a member of ISIS. In March 2019, al-Madioum surrendered to the SDF and in September 2020, he was transferred to the custody of the FBI.

Source: DoJ OIG, response to DoD OIG request for information, 24.3 WOG DOJ 01A, 7/15/2024.

The DoJ reported that one person was transferred to the United States from Syria to face federal criminal charges related to terrorism, bringing to 12 the cumulative number of people transferred.[585]

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Treasury continued to use the full range of its authorities to aggressively target ISIS leaders, operatives, financiers, and associated organizations around the world. These efforts have resulted in Treasury designating 180 ISIS-associated individuals and entities since 2014.[586] Treasury said that no sanctioned individuals or organizations were removed from the sanctions list during the quarter.[587]

On June 14, Treasury sanctioned three individuals, including members of an ISIS-linked human smuggling network, for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, ISIS, pursuant to Executive Order 13224.[588] The individuals were:

- **Olimkhon Makhmudjon Ugli Ismailov:** An Uzbekistan-based individual involved in the ISIS-linked human smuggling network.

- **Muhammad Ibrohimjon Niyazov:** A supporter of a human smuggling network who separately provided administrative and logistics support for ISIS members in Türkiye.

- **Muhammadyusuf Alisher Ogli Mirzoev:** Involved in efforts to establish an ISIS military training camp in mid-2023.

Treasury reported that it continues to work with interagency and Coalition partners, including the Iraqi government, to prioritize identifying ISIS's financial reserves and financial leaders and disrupting its financial facilitation networks in the Middle East. Treasury is working to designate ISIS facilitators, front companies, and fundraisers in various countries, and co-leads the Counter ISIS Finance Group, along with counterparts from Italy and Saudi Arabia.[589]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

During the quarter, the Secretary of State sanctioned one group and two individuals with connections to Iraq or Syria, pursuant to Executive Order 13224, as amended:

- **Adam Khamirzaev,** also known as Adam Islamovych Oliferchik for being a leader of ISIS as the emir of the ISIS Georgia Province.[590]

- **Harakat Ansar Allah al-Awfiya**, an Iraq-based, Iran-aligned militia group and part of the "Islamic Resistance of Iraq," a front group comprised of multiple Iraq-aligned militia groups that has claimed responsibility for dozens of attacks against U.S. military personnel in Iraq and Syria.[591]

- **Haydar Muzhir Ma'lak al-Sa'idi**, also known as Haydar al-Gharawi, the Secretary General of Harakat Ansar Allah al-Awfiya.[592]

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement collaborates with other Federal agencies, USCENTCOM, and forward bases to monitor and mitigate threats that ISIS in Iraq and Syria poses to the United States. The Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) office in Amman participates in joint plans and exercises and provides intelligence support to ongoing investigations and oversight of operational and investigative activity in Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. These efforts are synchronized with OIR to ensure that ISIS does not launch attacks against the United States.[593]

HSI, as part of its collaboration with the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) uses its unique customs and immigration authorities in furtherance of the counterterrorism mission. HSI contributes to interagency partners daily, as part of the JTTF task force model, by providing subject matter expertise and operational support as outlined by HSI's unique administrative and criminal authorities to disrupt any threats to the U.S. homeland.[594]

U.S. paratroopers conduct maintenance on a CH-47 helicopter at an undisclosed location. (U.S. Army photo)

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Under the Lead IG framework, the DoD OIG, State OIG, USAID OIG, and partner agencies conduct audits, inspections, evaluations, and investigations related to Operation Inherent Resolve.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

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 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, the Treasury, Energy, and Homeland Security, and of the Intelligence Community.

Pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, the Lead IG develops and implements a joint strategic plan to guide comprehensive oversight of programs and operations for each overseas contingency operation. The Lead IG agencies update the oversight plan annually.

The *FY 2024 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for OIR*, published on September 26, 2023, as part of the *FY 2024 Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations*, is organized into three strategic oversight areas: Military Operations and Security Cooperation; Diplomacy, Governance, Stabilization, and Humanitarian Assistance; and Support to Mission.

FY 2024 Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations.

DoD and State IGs Travel to the Middle East

In June, Department of Defense Inspector General Robert P. Storch and Department of State Inspector General Cardell K. Richardson, Sr., traveled together to Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq, and Syria to visit key leaders executing the OIR mission and U.S. policy priorities in the region.

In meetings with Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR), Combined Special Operations Joint Task Force-Levant, and other military leaders, the IGs received updates on some of the most urgent issues affecting the OIR campaign, including the ISIS threat, Iran-aligned militias, and the future of U.S. forces in Iraq. In meetings with embassy officials in Baghdad and Erbil they discussed the political, economic, and social dynamics that shape the outcome of the OIR mission. At the al-Hol displaced persons camp in Syria, SDF leaders, humanitarian aid coordinators, and camp administrators provided critical insight into the security and humanitarian challenges facing the camp residents.

The IGs from DoD, State, and USAID and their staff engage regularly—both in person and virtually—with U.S. military, diplomatic, development, and humanitarian officials to obtain first-hand updates on overseas operations and discuss the impact of U.S. assistance. During the June visits, U.S. officials expressed their support of the Lead IG's programmatic oversight and investigative work.

AUDITS, INSPECTIONS, AND EVALUATIONS

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.

DoD OIG oversight and investigative staff maintained their presence in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain during the quarter. State OIG staff assigned to Baghdad, Iraq, and Frankfurt, Germany conducted oversight work of the State activities in Iraq and Syria. USAID OIG staff provided oversight of USAID activities in Syria and Iraq from their regional office in Frankfurt and at headquarters in Washington, D.C.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Between April 1 and June 30, 2024, the DoD OIG issued two oversight reports related to OIR, as detailed below. Completed reports by Lead IG agencies are available on their respective web pages.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Evaluation of the Combatant Command Military Deception Planning

DODIG-2024-085; May 21, 2024

The DoD OIG conducted this evaluation to determine the extent to which the combatant commands have effectively conducted military deception planning in support of ongoing OIR operations. The report is classified at a level higher than the classified annex to this report. To file a Freedom of Information Act Request, submit a request to FOIA.gov.

Audit of the Army's Management of Army Prepositioned Stock-5 Equipment

DODIG-2024-083; May 20, 2024

The DoD OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the Army effectively managed contractor execution of storage, maintenance, and accountability requirements for Army Prepositioned Stock-5 (APS-5) equipment in accordance with Federal and DoD regulations and whether Army contracting officials reviewed and approved invoices to verify contractor-reported costs before payment.

The DoD OIG determined the Army did not effectively manage contractor execution of storage, maintenance, and accountability of APS-5 equipment. Specifically, the APS-5 contractor did not protect pieces of equipment from environmental conditions, perform required maintenance on equipment and weapons, account for weapons and sensitive items, and accurately determine operational readiness rates for APS-5 equipment. In addition, Army contracting officials did not review invoices before payment and, as a result, the Army does not have assurance that more than $130 million paid to the APS-5 contractor resulted in the receipt of contracted services.

When officials do not consistently follow quality control procedures to enforce contract requirements, equipment maintenance deficiencies can occur resulting in the issuance of non-

mission capable equipment and loss of sensitive equipment. For example, the 401st Army Field Support Battalion–Kuwait issued two non-operational water purification and other equipment that included inoperable generators and unusable tents to military units in Syria.

The DoD OIG issued 15 recommendations to address the Army's lack of oversight of the storage, maintenance, and accountability of APS-5 equipment, including recommending that the Army update its standard operating procedures to require additional oversight of contractor-completed maintenance work. The Army agreed to 11 of the recommendations and those recommendation are considered resolved. Four recommendations have not been addressed and are unresolved. However, the recommendations will remain open until the DoD OIG receives documentation that all upon agreed upon actions have been completed.

ONGOING AND PLANNED OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

As of June 30, 2024, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 11 ongoing and planned projects related to OIR, including those summarized below. Tables 9 and 10, contained in Appendix F, list the titles and objectives for all ongoing and planned projects.

## Military Operations and Security Cooperation

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the DoD properly stores and secures munitions in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, which includes OIR.

- The **DoD OIG** intends to conduct a follow-up audit related to accountability of equipment provided to Iraqi security and vetted Syrian opposition forces through the Counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Fund.

- **State OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether State's efforts to counter Iran-backed groups have been strategically developed and implemented; executed to promote coordination among implementing bureaus, posts, and interagency partners; and designed to measure performance results and inform adjustments in its approach.

Diplomacy, Governance, Stabilization, and Humanitarian Assistance

- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether USAID has adequately strengthened Iraqi business capacity through economic development activities.

- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether USAID has designed and implemented policies, procedures, and practices to manage humanitarian assistance supplies warehoused in the United Arab Emirates.

Figure 5.

Ongoing and Planned Projects by Strategic Oversight Area

SOA 2
Diplomacy, Governance, Stabilization, and Humanitarian Assistance
2

SOA 1
Military Operations and Security
4

SOA 3
Support to Mission
4
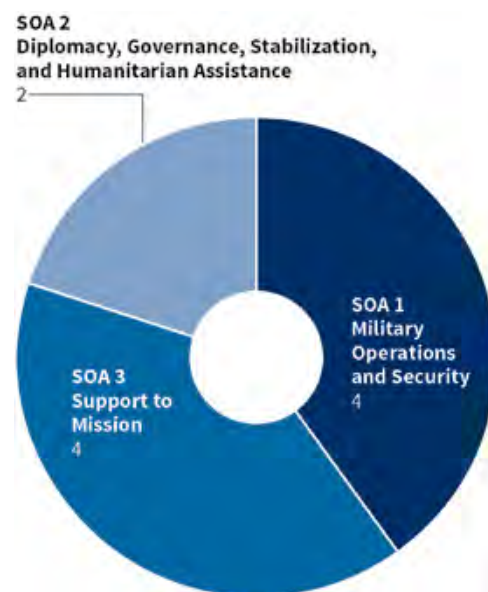
Support to Mission

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an audit to determine whether the DoD requested and received reimbursement from Kuwait for services provided by the DoD.
- **State OIG** is conducting an audit of the Worldwide Protective Services III to determine whether the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's efforts to consolidate initial training have improved training quality, enhanced oversight, and achieved the envisioned cost savings.
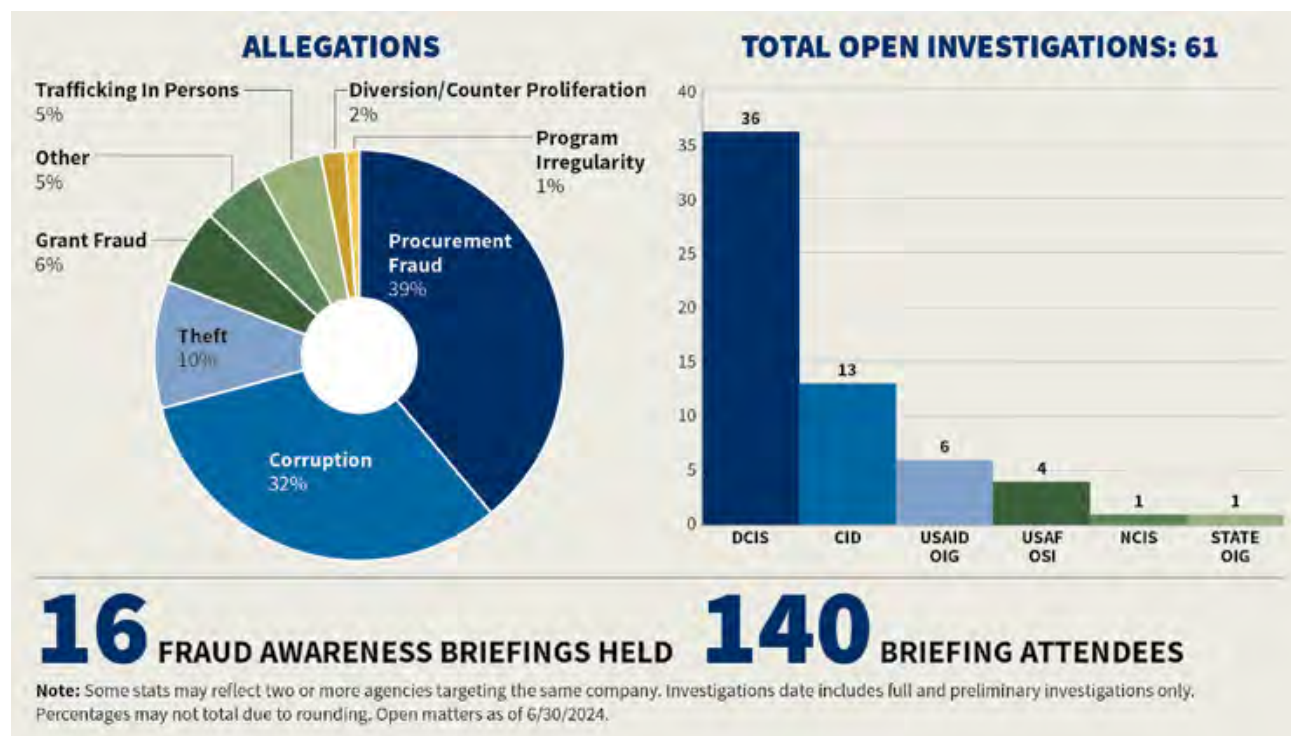
INVESTIGATIONS

The DoD OIG's criminal investigative component, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), maintained investigative personnel in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar, where they worked on cases related to OIR. DCIS agents also worked on OIR-related cases from offices in the United States. State OIG and USAID OIG investigators worked on cases related to OIR from Washington, D.C., El Salvador, Germany, Israel, South Africa, and Thailand.

During this quarter, investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies initiated 4 new investigations, closed 9 investigations, and ended the quarter with 61 open investigations. The open investigations involve grant and procurement fraud, corruption, theft, computer intrusions, and human trafficking allegations.

Figure 6.

OIR-related Investigation Activities, April 1–June 30, 2024

ALLEGATIONS

Trafficking In Persons 5%
Other 5%
Grant Fraud 6%
Theft 10%
Corruption 32%
Procurement Fraud 39%
Diversion/Counter Proliferation 2%
Program Irregularity 1%

TOTAL OPEN INVESTIGATIONS: 61

DCIS 36
CID 13
USAID OIG 6
USAF OSI 4
NCIS 1
STATE OIG 1

16 FRAUD AWARENESS BRIEFINGS HELD
140 BRIEFING ATTENDEES

Note: Some stats may reflect two or more agencies targeting the same company. Investigations date includes full and preliminary investigations only. Percentages may not total due to rounding. Open matters as of 6/30/2024.

The Lead IG agencies and their partners continue to use the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group to coordinate investigative activities, deconflict potential or common targets, and interact for logistical and legal support. The working group framework consists of representatives from DCIS, State OIG, USAID OIG, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

DCIS has three ongoing "legacy" investigations related to crimes involving the OIR area of operation that occurred prior to the formal designation of OIR. Figure 6 displays the primary offense locations, allegations, and other data on investigations related to OIR.

HOTLINE ACTIVITY

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.

During the quarter, the DoD OIG Hotline received 43 allegations and referred 31 cases related to OIR to Lead IG agencies and other investigative organizations. In some instances, a case may contain multiple subjects and allegations. State OIG received 12 allegations and referred 7 cases and USAID OIG received 43 allegations. The majority of allegations during the reporting period related to personal misconduct, procurement and contract administration, personnel matters, and security. (See Figure 7.)

Figure 7.

OIR-related Hotline Activities, April 1–June 30, 2024

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding. In some instances, a case may contain multiple subjects and allegations.
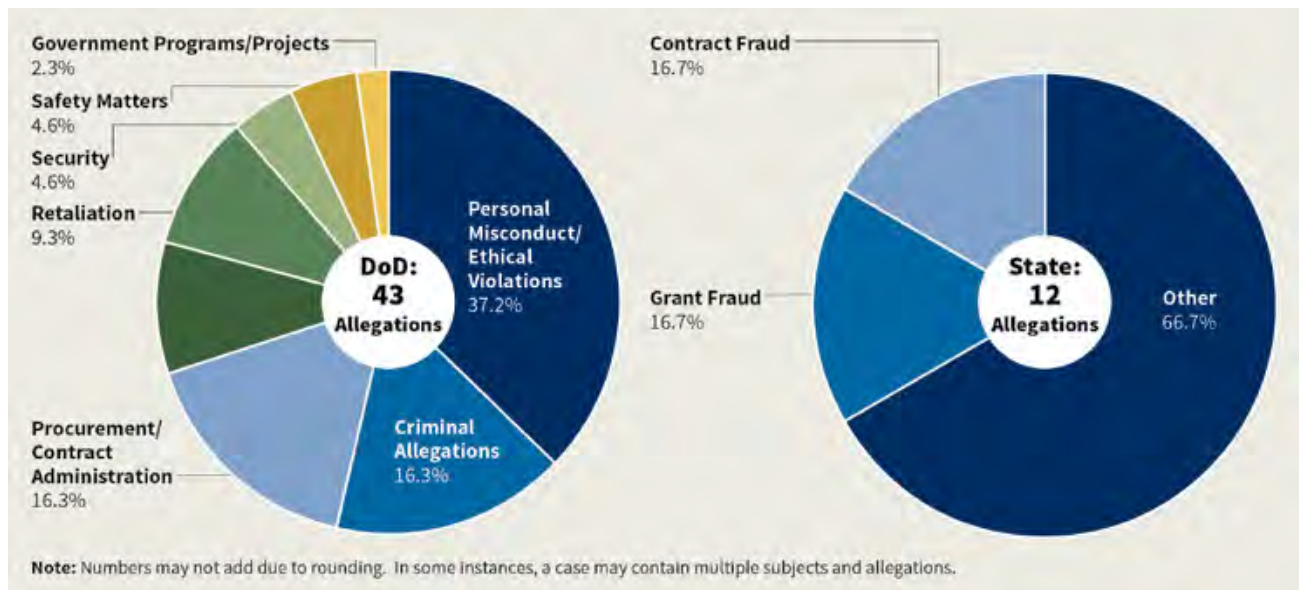
Paratroopers conduct forward arming and refueling point operations during routine flights in support of OIR. (U.S. Army photo)

APPENDIXES

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.

APPENDIX B
About the Lead Inspector General

The Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. Section 419, established the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) framework for oversight of overseas contingency operations. The Lead IG agencies are the Offices of Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (State), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Section 419 requires the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to appoint a Lead Inspector General from among the inspectors general of the Lead IG agencies upon the commencement or designation of a military operation that exceeds 60 days as an overseas contingency operation; or receipt of notification thereof.

Lead IG oversight of the operation "sunsets" at the end of the first fiscal year after commencement or designation in which the total amount appropriated for the operation is less than $100,000,000.

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

- Submit to Congress on a quarterly basis a report on the contingency operation and to make that report available to the public.
- 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, and evaluations.

APPENDIX C
Methodology for Preparing this Lead IG Quarterly Report

This report complies with section the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. Section 419), 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 the Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency designated the DoD IG as the Lead IG for Operation Inherent Resolve. State IG is the Associate IG for the operation.

This report covers the period from April 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024. The three Lead IG agencies—DoD OIG, State 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 of 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, State, 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 OIG, State OIG, and USAID OIG draft input to the sections of the report related to the activities of their agencies and then participate in editing the entire report. Once assembled, each OIG coordinates a two-phase review process of the report 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, State OIG, and USAID OIG as independent oversight agencies.

APPENDIX D
State and USAID Stabilization Programs

USAID-funded Stabilization Activities in Iraq During the Quarter

Program	Activity Highlights
Funding Facility for Stabilization Aims to stabilize areas recently liberated from ISIS by restoring damaged or destroyed essential services and providing the conditions for a dignified, safe, and voluntary return of IDPs to their home. July 2015–December 2025 $457 million award	USAID is the largest contributor to this 29-donor, multilateral program.
Durable Communities and Economic Opportunities Aims to build resilient, adaptive communities and advance economic well-being in target communities in Iraq by addressing underlying drivers of conflict and increasing community leadership of inclusive local development. June 2020–September 2025 (including two option years) $24.5 million award	Engaged selected communities impacted by conflict and their leadership to identify and resolve conflict sustainably and peacefully through inclusive dialogue and practical solutions. Provided training and networking services to Iraqi victims of war to help them gain high-quality and sustainable sources of livelihood.
Shared Future Supports the durable return for IDPs from the Ninewa Plain, focusing on religious and ethnic minority communities. June 2018–September 2025 $29 million award	Worked with youth, community, and religious leaders to increase mutual understanding, tolerance, and trust both within their communities and with other communities. Improved vocational and leadership skills and youth livelihood opportunities through targeted vocational training.
Iraq Response and Resilience Program Supports vulnerable people in areas suffering from limited resources as a result of natural or other disasters, such as acute pollution, to ensure every Iraqi has safe access to water, electricity, health, education, free movement on sealed roads and civil/municipal services, and the opportunity to support their family financially. September 2019–December 2023 $16.3 million award	Rehabilitated nine water treatment units in Basrah that will provide over 640,000 beneficiaries with potable water.
Supporting the Vulnerable Populations in Iraq September 2018–September 2024 $48.5 million award	Supported the return of displaced populations from ethnic and religious minorities in Ninewa Plain and western Ninewa through activities related to livelihoods, housing, community peacebuilding, education, and psychosocial services.
Transitional Assistance to IDPs in Erbil, Iraq Assists vulnerable IDP families with immediate household needs, such as shelter and food, and ease their return home when possible. September 2019–November 2023 $7.4 million award	Provided cash assistance to support the IDPs from Ninewa province in protracted displacement in Erbil and assisted beneficiaries to prepare for durable solutions for their families through targeted information and planning sessions.

Program	Activity Highlights
Strengthening the Ankawa Humanitarian Committee to Response to Communities in Crisis Supports building the capacity of the committee while responding to the ongoing needs of IDPs in Iraq through institutional capacity-building and organizational development. October 2020–September 2024 $3.5 million award	Strengthened the capacity of the Ankawa Humanitarian Committee and prepared it to fully engage with USAID on future development initiatives through strengthened capacity and commitment. The committee provides cash support to small entrepreneurs to establish/improve their small businesses.
Building Resilience in Children Leverages Ahlan Simsim's unique approach that combines locally driven, crisis-sensitive and age-appropriate interventions to increase resilience capacities among children, families, and communities impacted by conflict and violence. July 2021–June 2027 $11 million award	Engaged families and communities impacted by conflict and violence using a combination of original multimedia, direct services, and youth engagement programming to increase resilience capacities that help to counter malign influences and prevent radicalization to violence and violent extremism.
Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Minority Communities in Iraq Aims to contribute to communal healing, intercommunal understanding, and appreciation of the diversity of Iraq, a fundamental step toward the promotion and actualization of democracy. May 2021–May 2024 $2 million award	Partnered with local Iraqi organizations to describe and document the tangible and intangible heritage of religious and ethnic minority communities in Iraq. Created digitally documented collections as databases, built for portability, interoperability, and accessibility.
Iraq Community Resilience Initiative II ICRI Phase II provides direct assistance to Iraqi partners to empower inclusive civic action with the goal of supporting a prosperous and inclusive Iraq. This is achieved by improving positive perceptions of civic engagement among Iraqis and increasing community mobilization around national causes. September 2021–September 2025 $18 million award	Established partnerships with local government authorities, civil society organizations, media, and community groups in an inclusive manner to quickly implement activities that strengthen community resilience. Encouraged collaborative action across diverse segments of Iraqi society to tackle common issues, such as climate change impacts, lack of essential services, and challenges related to hosting returns of displaced Iraqis, while empowering initiatives and platforms that aid communities in responding to these stressors.
Return with Hope February 2024–February 2026 $5 million award.	Provided individualized case-management for Iraqi returnees from al-Hol camp to support their re-integration in their areas of origin and/or areas of return. The program will complement the ongoing work of other organizations already active in the targeted geographic locations and focus on how this program will facilitate the durable return of beneficiaries through the direct provision of specific services, the referral to other available service providers, and building the capacity of social workers from local civil society and relevant government entities.

Source: USAID MEB, response to USAID OIG request for information, 6/24/2024.

State-funded Stabilization Programs in Syria During the Quarter

Program	Activity Highlights
Essential Services and Local Governance Seeks to build trust in local governance entities, making target communities less susceptible to ISIS influence. Funds Expended in FY2024 Q3: $0	Provided operational and infrastructure assistance to municipal vehicle mechanics, firefighters, and emergency response drivers to enhance local council effectiveness in providing essential services across multiple sectors. Conducted capacity building needs assessments of local councils to help determine data driven decisions and enhance overall governance.
Civil Society Seeks to help civil society organizations restore essential services and livelihoods in areas liberated from ISIS. Funds Expended in FY2024 Q3: $0	Supported Syrian civil society organizations to deliver essential services, improve livelihoods, represent Syrians, and strengthen social cohesion in communities liberated from ISIS and in communities with members of religious minority groups. Supported the rehabilitation of the Abu Hardub Agricultural Complex, improved irrigation infrastructure, eased tensions over water access, and strengthened livelihoods for more than 15,000 Syrians in Dayr as Zawr. Supported an information management unit that coordinated with al-Hol camp management and administration to facilitate the return of over 500 individuals from al-Hol camp to communities of return, including a data collection dashboard on individual and family demographic data, needs assessments, and feedback upon return. Other programming rehabilitated drinking water and irrigation infrastructure in Dayr az Zawr to address identified barriers to community reintegration benefitting more than 73,000 individuals in five communities. Built the capacity of civil councils, education committees, and community-based organizations to provide remedial literacy and numeracy, technical and vocational training, psychosocial support, teacher training, and rehabilitation/winterization of schools. Worked with families recently returned from displaced persons camps through a social reintegration program focused on building cohesion in the communities.
Education Seeks to build the capacity of local councils, education committees, and community-based organizations to provide remedial numeracy, primary education, and psychosocial support for children. Funds Expended in FY2024 Q3: $0	Built the capacity of civil councils, education committees, and community-based organizations to provide remedial literacy and numeracy, technical and vocational training, psychosocial support, teacher training, and rehabilitation/winterization of schools. Provided training in computer skills, solar panel repair, carpentry, and other vocations. Worked with families recently returned from displaced persons camps on social reintegration and remedial education.
Support to Independent Media Seeks to promote unbiased, professional, and relevant reporting. Funds Expended in FY24 Q3: $0	Provided capacity building and operational support to independent northern Syrian media outlets that improved access to accurate, unbiased information and countered violent extremism and disinformation perpetuated by Iran-backed militias, Russia, the Assad regime, and other malign actors. Expanded news programs, gender programming, and programming discussing community issues.

Program	Activity Highlights
Support for Community Security Seeks to build the capacity of internal security forces to provide security that supports, and is supported by, the communities they serve. Funds Expended in FY2024 Q3: $0	Supported the security and the governance bodies that oversee them to deliver community policing services that serves, and are supported by, the population. Rehabilitated security stations; held engagements between officers and local community members; and rehabilitated streetlights in under-served areas to address a primary security concern of local communities. Provided a holistic approach to community security, supporting officer trainings, building the capacity of civilian authorities, promoting community engagement, and supporting public safety initiatives.
Humanitarian Mine Action Seeks to clear explosive hazards contamination from areas liberated from ISIS to allow for broader stabilization efforts. Funds Expended in FY2024 Q3: $0	Surveyed, marked, and cleared explosive remnants of war and IEDs from key critical infrastructure sites and areas liberated from ISIS. Delivered explosive ordnance risk education to displaced persons and at-risk communities. Provided local capacity building support.

Source: State, response to State OIG request for information, 6/21/2024.

USAID-funded Stabilization Activities in Syria During the Quarter

Program	Activity Highlights
Elections and Political Processes Seeks to enhance participation of citizens, civil society, and other stakeholders in transitional or electoral processes in Syria and improve inclusive citizen-governance relationships in northeastern Syria. Duration: 4 years (ends August 2025) $12 million award	**Training and Capacity Building:** Provided training and capacity building to 40 local actors trained in best practices for transparent, accountable, and effective local governance. **Community Dialogue:** Engaged with Syrian stakeholders resulted in tangible action from civil society organizations (CSOs) to hold authorities accountable. Facilitated 37 dialogues and roundtables to date on issue identification, effective communications, conflict analysis, and negotiations and mediation for local communities. **Advocacy Campaign:** Worked with a group of CSOs on 11 new campaigns with a range of ideas and objectives focusing on addressing al-Hol returnees and the wider community's key needs and priorities.
Growing Agriculture and Incomes in Syria (GROW) Seeks to improve agricultural production, increase food security, and increase incomes for farmers and agribusiness in non-regime areas of Syria. Duration: 3 years base with 2 option years (ends August 2028) $42 million award	**Baseline development:** Developed a rolling baseline methodology for the program during this quarter and developed a baseline report. **Expressions of Interest for Grants:** Using a market-system development approach, published an Expression of Interest for grants under this contract and developed concept notes for potential grant funding in a co-creation process with businesses in Dayr az Zawr, Hasakah, and Raqqa governorates. **Value Chain selection:** After conducting an in-depth value chain assessment, narrowed down selected value chains to initially work in, including tomato, olive oil, and livestock (dairy and red meat).

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Program	Activity Highlights
Syria Livelihoods Project Increases equitable income generation and access to services for women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, and creates an inclusive enabling environment for economic recovery Duration: 5 years (July 2020–July 2025) $14.55 million award	**Career Opportunities:** Placed 416 job seekers with disabilities in vacant positions; 220 have completed their six-month, part-paid internships and transitioned to permanent employment. Provided training to a local NGO on entrepreneurship and business plan development to 331 beneficiaries. **Case Management:** As of the quarter, the program registered 2,968 beneficiaries with disabilities and referred 126 to requested service providers. **Career Guidance:** Delivered employment readiness sessions and career guidance to 2,307 persons with disabilities through a local disabled persons organization. The beneficiaries can also receive financial support for their businesses, job placements, or referrals to other specialist service providers. **Technical support to North Syria Network's Job-Matching Website (NSjobs.net):** This is an ongoing activity aimed at improving the NSjobs.net website, a job-matching platform operating in northeastern Syria, to serve new users and give vulnerable populations access to employment opportunities. The upgraded job matching website received over 240,000 visits since its release. **Accelerating Inclusive Economic Recovery:** Increased resilience for persons with disabilities in Hasakah and Qamishli to the impacts of climate change. The activity has provided 1,908 career guidance sessions, provided 117 training on entrepreneurship and business planning, placed 136 interns in green jobs, and will support 60 green MSMEs owned by or employing persons with disabilities to start up or expand. **Improving Services for Returnees and Host Communities:** Provided livelihoods support to women returnees from al-Hol and women from host communities, including placing 600 women in paid internships, providing technical and financial support to 198 MSME owners, and establishing a Women's Center for Economic Empowerment in Raqqa, Tabqa, and Dayr az Zawr.
Economic Management for Stability in Northeast Syria Aims to stimulate private sector-led growth and investment for job creation, reduce corruption, and improve the transparency of regional governing authorities, and ultimately reduce the dependency on foreign assistance in non-regime held areas. The program enlists senior advisors to initiate policy dialogue and advisory support in critical economic governance and private sector-led growth areas. Duration: 3 years (ends September 2024) $14 million award	**Payments System:** Launched the pilot for e-wallet services and signing an operational agreement for electronic payment services. Prema committed $4.6 million for key central payment systems, with a total project cost of $13.5 million over 15 years, marking significant progress toward a fully operational electronic payment ecosystem by September. **Private Sector Engagement/Competitiveness Enhancement:** Worked with 22 firms in various sectors, expecting to create 420 sustainable jobs by September 2024. Since the project's inception, partnerships with 98 firms have resulted in 2,088 jobs, with significant market linkages boosting productivity, revenues, and employment, particularly in agro-processing and food processing sectors. These efforts also support import substitution, improving the local economy. **FDI Attraction Support:** Helped firms leverage $100,000 in FDI and $300,000 in local investments. **Business/Investment Enabling Environment:** Helped the Economic Authority establish and operationalize a new Business Registry, streamlining the registration process to align with international best practices. The Registry began processing applications by the end of this quarter, and a detailed RFP for an electronic business registration system was developed. Worked with the authority to draft business activity licensing regulations, emphasizing transparency and anti-competitive practices. Facilitated trade facilitation efforts at the Um-Jaloud Crossing Point, initiated infrastructure rehabilitation, and provided technical support for logistics, with the pilot phase set to conclude by mid-August.

Program	Activity Highlights
Essential Services, Good Governance, and Economic Recovery Aims to restore essential services, including power, water, and health, strengthen inclusive, participatory, accountable, and transparent governance, and restore livelihoods and revive local economies in the agriculture and energy sector in non-regime held areas in northeastern Syria. Duration: 5 years (May 2020–May 2025) $49.9 million award	**Reintegration of Syrian Returnees from al-Hol in Dayr az Zawr Case Management System and Capacity Building:** Implemented an activity to 1) prepare a receiving area for the returnees, 2) provide basic office equipment and furniture to their newly established Community Care Center offices, 3) participate in a needs assessment to identify the specific areas where capacity building is required for oversight and management of the case management system, and 4) coordinate with service providers and develop the system's referral network. **Establishment of Hasakah Table Eggs and Fertilized Eggs Production Farms:** The General Directorate of Agriculture and Animal Welfare in Hasakah continued rehabilitation of farm facilities in efforts to establish a table egg production farm and fertilized egg production farm. During this quarter, the local authority completed civil works, electrical works , and installation of equipment at both facilities.

Source: USAID MEB, response to USAID OIG request for information, 6/21/2024.

APPENDIX E
State and USAID Humanitarian Assistance Programs

State-funded Humanitarian Assistance Activities in Iraq

Program	Activity Highlights
International Organization for Migration Provides a comprehensive response to the humanitarian needs of migrants, IDPs, returnees, and host communities	Worked to improve the conditions for dignified and voluntary returns to areas of origin, local integration, and settlement in new locations, with assistance on civil documentation and legal issues, social cohesion support, financial assistance, health consultations, and protection monitoring and advocacy. Through the Displacement Tracking Matrix, collected data on displacement, conditions in areas of return, and main barriers to return for IDPs and returnees.
UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) Promotes and protects the rights of refugees and other displaced persons, provides assistance, and seek durable solutions.	Led the humanitarian response for Syrian refugees in Iraq in close coordination with humanitarian actors and government authorities, to protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers. Supported activities for refugees, IDPs, and persons at risk of statelessness related to registration and civil documentation; protection monitoring and advocacy; legal aid; health; shelter and camp management; psychosocial support; child protection; prevention, risk mitigation, and response to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse; among other services.
Other International Organizations Support refugees, IDPs, returnees, and other vulnerable communities in Iraq with a range of humanitarian assistance and services.	Provided services to refugees, IDPs, returnees, and other vulnerable communities including support for health, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, legal assistance, shelter, prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV), child protection issues, and more.
NGOs–Education Increases access to education for displaced children.	Supported education services for displaced school-aged children, which is a key need for refugee, IDP, and returnee families. Provided educational kits and materials, incentivized volunteer teachers, conducted service referrals, implemented trainings for teachers, and led targeted, evidence-based advocacy around inclusive education.
NGOs–Livelihoods and Economic Empowerments Helps refugees, IDPs and returnees develop or restore income-generating and livelihoods opportunities.	Supported the restoration of income-generating and livelihoods opportunities, including building the capacity of the local government and institutions to provide services in the agricultural sector, trainings to develop key business knowledge and skills, cash grants for enterprise start-ups, and legal assistance services with livelihoods interventions to support beneficiaries' access to income.
NGOs–Protection Reduces risks for refugees and IDPs and promote their empowerment to exercise rights and access services.	Supported protection activities to reduce risk for refugees and IDPs, including gender-based violence prevention and response activities, legal assistance and awareness-raising to remove legal barriers to durable solutions for displacement-affected individuals, case management, mental health and psychosocial support services, child protection and child safeguarding training, and support for community centers and Women & Girls Safe Spaces.

Source: State, response to State OIG request for information, 6/21/2024.

USAID-funded Humanitarian Assistance Activities in Iraq During the Quarter

Program	Activity Highlights
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	Provided water, sanitation, and hygiene services in Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Anbar provinces. This included solid waste management, desludging and de-blocking services, and hygiene promotion activities, benefiting 1,120 individuals in the targeted camps and collective centers.
Shelter and Settlements	Provided critical shelter upgrades and a distribution of non-food item kits to vulnerable internally displaced person households in Diyala province. The critical shelter upgrades included rehabilitations to windows, doors, ceilings, locks, corridors, hand-rails on stairs, and hand-washing basins. In addition, families received a distribution of a kit that included blankets, bedsheets, mattresses, a stove, jerry cans, a kerosene heater, an electrical heater, a kitchen set and a carpet.
Protection	Provided awareness sessions on gender-based violence and protection from sexual exploitation; case management services; and referrals through a protection center in Ninewa province and other organizations.
Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments	Conducted a Nationwide Cross-Cutting Needs Assessment among out-of-camp IDP and returnee households. Through in-person surveys covering key provinces across the country including Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah.
Food Assistance	Provided unconditional food assistance to Syrian refugees and other crisis affected people.

Note: Activity highlights are illustrative examples and do not represent the full spectrum of USAID BHA activities conducted during the quarter. As a part of the U.S. Government response, USAID BHA funding also supports health, protection, and shelter and settlements programs for vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas of Iraq.

Source: USAID BHA, response to USAID OIG request for information, 3/20/2024.

APPENDIX F
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 Agencies, as of June 30, 2024

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Follow-up Audit of the Counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Train and Equip Fund (CTEF) for Iraq and Syria
To determine the effectiveness of DoD's response to the recommendations in Report No. DODIG-2020-061, "Audit of the DoD's Accountability of Counter Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Fund Equipment Designated for Syria," February 13, 2020, in improving the accountability and safeguarding of equipment provided to Iraqi Security and Vetted Syrian Opposition forces through the Counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Fund.

Audit of Munitions Storage Facilities in Bahrain
To determine whether the DoD stores and secures munitions in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in accordance with applicable safety and security policies.

Evaluation of DoD Support to the Development of the Iraqi Security Forces' Operational Logistics and Sustainment Capabilities
To assess the effectiveness of the DoD's support for the development of operational logistics and sustainment capabilities for the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).

Audit of DoD Reimbursement from the State of Kuwait in Accordance with the Defense Cooperation Agreement
To determine whether the DoD requested and received reimbursement from the State of Kuwait for services provided by the DoD in accordance with the Defense Cooperation Agreement.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of the Worldwide Protective Services III Initial Training Consolidation Initiative
To determine whether the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's efforts to consolidate initial Worldwide Protective Services III training have improved training quality, enhanced oversight, and achieved the envisioned cost savings.

Audit of Department of State Efforts to Counter Iran-Backed Groups
To determine whether the Department of State's efforts to counter Iran-backed groups have been 1) strategically developed and implemented with goals and objectives; 2) executed to promote coordination among implementing bureaus, posts, and interagency partners; and 3) designed to measure performance results and inform adjustments in its approach.

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

Audit of USAID/Iraq's Economic Development Activities
To determine the extent to which USAID has generated employment among poor households and communities, strengthened economic capacity, and improved the Iraq business environment through economic development activities.

Audit of USAID's Management of the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Warehouse in the United Arab Emirates
To determine the extent to which USAID has designed and implemented policies, procedures, and practices to manage humanitarian assistance supplies warehoused in the United Arab Emirates.

Table 10.

Ongoing Oversight Projects Related to OIR by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of June 30, 2024

ARMY AUDIT AGENCY

Audit of International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) Program
To determine whether International Cooperative Administrative Support Services ICASS payments were appropriate and supported.

Operational Contract Support Planning
To determine if the Army's operational contract support planning and requirements development processes support mission readiness.

ACRONYMS

Acronym	
APS-5	Army Prepositioned Stock-5
BHA	USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CJTF-OIR	Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve
CTEF	Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund
CTS	Counterterrorism Service
DAANES	Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria
DCIS	Defense Criminal Investigative Service
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice
EUM	end-use monitoring
EEUM	enhanced end-use monitoring
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FY	fiscal year
JTTF	Joint Terrorism Task Force
IDP	internally displaced person
IED	improvised explosive device
IKR	Iraqi Kurdistan Region
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRI	Islamic Resistance in Iraq
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
JOC-I	Joint Operations Command–Iraq
KCL	Kurdish Coordination Line
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KSF	Kurdish Security Forces

Acronym	
MEB	USAID Middle East Bureau
MoMD	Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement
MoPA	Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OC	operations command
OFAC	Teasury Office of Foreign Assets Control
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OIR	Operation Inherent Resolve
OPCW	Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
OSC-I	Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq
OUSD(P)	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces
PRM	State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SFA	Syrian Free Army
SNA	Syrian National Army
State	Department of State
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	UN Assistance Mission in Iraq
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
WHO	World Health Organization
YPG	People's Protection Units

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