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3.6. (Perceived) collaborators of Western armed forces, organisations, or companies

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: June 2022
Minor updates added: November 2024

This profile includes, in particular, individuals who are or were associated with the US forces and companies contracted by them, such as interpreters, engineers and drivers.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Security 2024, 1.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.14, 2.16; Targeting 2019, 1.9; Targeting 2022, 9.1. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

Targeting of personnel who worked for the US, in particular by Shia militias, was prevalent in the period before 2011, and especially between 2005 - 2008. The assassination of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds Force commander marked a significant increase in the targeting of Iraqis collaborators of western forces between January 2020 – end October 2021 and casualties had been reported.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which (perceived) collaborators of Western armed forces, organisations, or companies could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. Sporadic attacks on convoys of Iraqi companies contracted to carry supplies for the international counter-Daesh coalition continued in a number of governorates in the first half of 2023, causing no casualties. One source reported a total of 14 such attacks between 12 January 2023 and 25 January 2024, a decrease compared for example to 2020 and 2021.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

It seems that **the risk** for (perceived) collaborators of Western armed forces, organisations, or companies **has decreased** compared to the years 2020-2021. The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for such an applicant to face persecution

should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Area of employment:** The attacks on convoys occurred mostly in southern and central Iraq governorates, including Babil, Muthanna and Qadisiyah. In the south of Baghdad, attacks on US convoys transporting material from and to military bases have been more frequent as convoy routes are more concentrated in the area. Strong societal hostility has been also reported, particularly in Shia areas.

- **Type of employment:** Iraqi interpreters working for the US military or the US-led coalition feared targeted attacks from ISIL and Iran-backed militias who view them as *takfir* (unbelievers). Drivers and other escorting convoys have been also killed in the context of attacks at the convoys.

- **Visibility:** Holding a post visible to many people would increase risk exposure.

- **Personal enmities:** Personal hostilities or rivalries could also increase the risk (e.g. revenge killing by someone personally affected by the US presence in Iraq).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where a well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion, as working for western forces would be seen as collaborating with 'the enemy'. Religion is also highly likely to be a relevant ground, specifically in the case of interpreters being viewed as *takfir*.

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