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3.5. Individuals perceived to be opposed to ISIL

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: June 2019
Minor updates added: November 2024

This profile refers to individuals perceived to oppose ISIL, such as local politicians and tribal leaders as well as members of the ISF, PMF, Peshmerga and local police.

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI report: Targeting 2019, 2.1, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.4; Security 2019, 1.4.1.1; some information included in the Security 2024 and COI Update 2024 has also been added. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

When ISIL took control of large parts of Iraq in 2014, it immediately started targeting a broad array of opponents to their rule, including members of security personnel. In 2018, ISIL's focus increasingly shifted towards targeting local authorities.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which individuals perceived to oppose ISIL could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. As of 2019, the group has killed and kidnapped local authorities, parliamentary candidates, tribal elders, village chiefs and others. Relatives of tribal leaders have been also targeted. Members of the ISF, PMF, Peshmerga and local police have also been subjected to assassinations and abductions by ISIL, including also former members of such forces.

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

ISIL's operational capabilities have diminished and consequently **the threat posed by ISIL to individuals under this profile has also decreased** compared to previous years.

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for an individual perceived to oppose ISIL to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Occupation:** It appears that more recent attacks of ISIL have mostly targeted the ISF and, to a lesser extent, the PMF. However, government officials, community leaders and civilians have also been targeted.

- **Area of work and home area:** End of 2023 it was reported that ISIL was present in Iraq in a 'survival mode' as a low-grade insurgency in rural areas [Security 2024, 1.4]. However, in 2024, sources observed a resurgence of ISIL in Iraq [COI Update 2024, 2.3]. Therefore, in areas where ISIL continues to operate, well-founded fear of persecution may be still substantiated, in individual cases. For more information on areas of presence and activities of ISIL, see 2.4. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

- **Tribal affiliation and the tribe's standing vis-à-vis ISIL:** Belonging to a tribe that has a strong stance against ISIL may increase the risk. In a September 2015 report, anthropologist Hosham Dawod named a number of Sunni tribal confederations opposing ISIL, such as 'Al-Bu Nimr, Al-Bu Fahd, Al-Bu Alwan, Al-Bu Daraj, Jubur, 'Ubaid, etc.'

- **Visibility of the applicant:** The position of the applicant within the community or within the armed force he/she belongs to is to be considered, as a higher position may increase the risk. In the same way, publicly expressing support for the government or condemnation of ISIL's actions could also increase the risk exposure of the applicant.

- **Period since leaving the forces:** For former members of armed forces, having left the forces for a long period may decrease the risk.

- **Personal enmities:** Personal hostilities or rivalries with ISIL members could also increase the risk.

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 the individual would be seen as an opponent by the ISIL. Also, religion is highly likely to be a relevant ground, specifically in cases where the applicant would be accused of being a *takfir* (unbeliever) by ISIL.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as members of the ISF, PMF, Peshmerga and local police may have been involved in excludable acts. See 7. Exclusion.

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