

Sources

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In accordance with EUAA COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: COI reports by governments; information from civil society, advocacy groups, humanitarian organisations, and NGOs; international and NGO human rights reports; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Iraq and regionally-based media; academic publications, think tank reports and specialised sources covering Iraq. In addition to using publicly available documentary sources, interviews with experts were conducted in order to supplement information gaps and/or to further corroborate some information. The chapters related to entry, residency requirements and access to civil documentation and services and the chapters on Palestinians in Iraq extensively rely on information provided by UNHCR. Sources were assessed for their background, publication history, reputability, and current knowledge of the situation on the ground. All the public and oral sources referenced in this report are cited and described in the bibliography

Sources on security incidents

For data on violent incidents, publicly available curated datasets from the organisation Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) have been used. ACLED is a project collecting, analysing and mapping information on crisis and conflict in Africa, South and South-east Asia and Middle East and provides datasets on conflict incidents. It collects data on violent incidents in Iraq, coding each incident with the time and place, type of violent incident, the parties involved and the number of fatalities. The information is collected in a database that is openly accessible, searchable and kept continuously up to date. The data primarily come from secondary sources such as traditional media reports, but also from reports by international institutions and non-governmental organisations, targeted new media platforms, and data provided by local partners of ACLED.3 On Iraq, ACLED incorporates data from a number of partners, including Aid Worker Security Database, Airwars, Front Line Defenders, Liveuamap, and the Center for Civilians in Conflict.4

ACLED codes security incidents as follows:

- **Battles**: violent clashes between at least two armed groups. Battles can occur between armed and organised state, non-state, and external groups, and in any combination therein. Sub-events of battles are armed clashes, government regaining territory and non-state actor overtaking territory.
- **Violence against civilians**: violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants. It includes violent attacks on unarmed civilians such as sexual violence, attacks, abduction/forced disappearance.
- **Explosions/remote violence**: events where an explosion, bomb or other explosive devices were used to engage in conflict. They include one-sided violent events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the targets to engage or defend themselves and their location. They include air/drone strikes, suicide bombs, shelling/artillery/missile attacks, remote explosive/landmine/IEDs, grenades, chemical weapons.
- **Riots**: are a violent demonstration, often involving a spontaneous action by unorganised, unaffiliated members of society. They include violent demonstrations and mob violence.
- **Protests**: public demonstration in which the participants do not engage in violence, though violence may be used against them. They include peaceful protests, protests with intervention, excessive force against protesters.
- **Strategic developments:** information regarding the activities of violent groups that is not itself recorded as political violence, yet may trigger future events or contribute to political dynamics within and across states. It includes agreements, change to group/activity, non-violent transfer of territory, arrests.[5]

For the purpose of this report only the following type of events were included in the analysis: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians. Security incidents numbers and associated graphs/maps at country and governorate level are based on a publicly available ACLED dataset for Middle East.[6]

Additionally, ACLED codes actors involved in security incidents as follows: Actor1 is the ‘named actor involved in the event’ and Actor2 is the ‘named actor involved in the event’, while “[i]n most cases, an event requires two actors, noted in columns ‘ACTOR1’ and ‘ACTOR2’”. However, event types ‘Explosions/Remote violence’, ‘Riots’, ‘Protests’, and ‘Strategic developments’ can include ‘one-sided events’.[7] The ACLED coding of Actor1 and Actor2 does not necessarily indicate that one is the aggressor (e.g. Actor1) and the other one (e.g. Actor2) the target or victim.[8] When focusing on the involvement of specific actors within certain regions, the drafters based their analysis on all those incidents, where ACLED coded the relevant actor either as ‘Actor1’ or as ‘Actor2’. This approach aims to illustrate the general level of involvement of the respective actors in the conflict without distinguishing between Actor1 and Actor2, as these categories, according to ACLED's methodology, do not indicate any differentiation in terms of content/semantics.

Potential limits for COI use of ACLED data include:

- Data primarily come from secondary sources such as media reports. Secondary sources used by ACLED are of variable quality, may be politically biased, and may lack comprehensiveness.

- Certain secondary sources might be overrepresented in ACLED datasets covering security incidents in a specific country/province.
- Lack of reporting or underreporting for specific countries/provinces can occur.
- Geographical precision of security incidents is variable: the provincial capital will represent the region if no further details are available and may be over-represented.

To mitigate these challenges and limitations, ACLED data on security incidents has been corroborated/contrasted with information from other sources which were available over the reference period.

Sources on civilian casualties

The main source on civilian casualties and civilians killed in Iraq used in this report is the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). UNAMI figures/data on casualties (killed and injured) were received from UNAMI-HRO (Human rights Office) upon request. UNAMI no longer provides publicly available casualty figures for Iraq. The number of incidents provided by UNAMI-HRO were only those armed conflict-related incidents which had directly impacted on civilians (causing civilian casualties) and on the civilian nature of property and protected areas (such as civilian houses, cropland, schools, health facilities and mosque).[9] UNAMI-HRO verifies every single incident with at least three independent sources of information. These sources include victims, family members of victims, witnesses, local tribal elders and Sheikhs, local journalists, local civilian authorities (including mayors and district administrators), local health facilities and health professionals and security officials (primarily local police) who witnessed or have knowledge of the incident.[10]

Additionally, data on civilian deaths collected by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) have been also included. The UCDP is a 'data collection project for civil war'.[11] The UCDP provided EUAA with a Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) covering the reference period of the report. The UCDP's methodology is explained on its website as well as its GED Codebook.[12] The unit of analysis of the UCDP is the 'event'[13] which is defined as '[a]n incident where armed force was used by an organised actor against another organised actor, or against civilians, resulting in at least 1 direct death at a specific location and a specific date.'[14] This leads, among other things, to 'seemingly low estimates' because 'a number of factors can preclude a potential conflict event from inclusion in the UCDP GED', for example, unclear actors or uncertainty about whether fatalities occurred.[15] The UCDP provides three estimates for fatalities for each event – a low estimate, a best estimate, and a high estimate. In addition, the UCDP provides an estimate of the number of civilian deaths.[16] According to the UCDP, 'it is quite likely that there are more fatalities than given in the best estimate, but it is very unlikely that there are fewer'.[17]

The stricter definition of an event of the UCDP excludes violent incidents that are recorded by ACLED. This definition includes ACLED's option to assign violent events to 'unidentified armed groups'. The difference in definitions is one explanatory factor of why the number of events recorded by ACLED can be significantly higher than the number recorded by the UCDP.[18] In this report, the UCDP data has been used to contrast ACLED data and to provide figures on civilian deaths. To reflect the security dynamic in Iraq, where the actor behind many security incidents is unknown, EUAA not only includes events that meet all the UCDP's set criteria (codified as 'clear' events in the UCDP dataset), but also include events codified as 'unclear' and 'not

applicable’.

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  ACLED, Methodology, April 2019, url ACLED, FAQs: ACLED Sourcing Methodology, March 2023, url

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  ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2023, url, pp. 10-20

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  ACLED, Data Export Tool, Middle East (29 March 2024), url

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  ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2023, url, p. 22

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  ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2023, url, p. 4

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  UCDP, About UCDP, n.d., url

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  UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., url; UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, url, p. 4

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  UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, url, p. 4

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  UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., url

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  UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, url, pp. 5, 11, 24

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  UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., url

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  ACLED, Comparing Conflict Data, Similarities and Differences Across Conflict Datasets, August 2019, url, pp. 5–7

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