

1.2 Overview of recent security developments

1.2 Overview of recent security developments

Counter-ISIL Operations

Since August 2024, Iraq has continued counter-ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) operations in response to diminishing, yet ongoing insurgent activity. While the number of attacks declined for the fourth consecutive quarter, ISIL remains active, particularly in Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah Al-Din governorates.[44] The International Crisis Group reported several low-scale ISIL attacks during the reference period, targeting primarily Iraqi security forces (ISF).[45]

Türkiye's Military Expansion and PKK dissolution

Throughout the reference period, Türkiye continued its military operations against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq,[46] conducting frequent air and drone strikes, as well as ground operations,[47] which resulted in the deaths of both PKK members[48] and civilians.[49] In response to the PKK founder's (Abdullah Öcalan) call for disarmament, the PKK leadership in Iraq's Qandil Mountains declared a unilateral ceasefire, followed by a formal dissolution announcement on 12 May 2025. Despite the announcement, Turkish operations continued.[50] In June, at least 550 strikes were recorded, with the majority taking place in Duhok's Amedi district, resulting in the destruction of hundreds of dunams of farmland.[51] In July, Kurdish PKK fighters held a symbolic ceremony in the town of Dukan, northwest of Sulaymaniyah, during which they burned their weapons to mark the beginning of the disarmament process.[52] Following the ceremony, Turkish military strikes in Iraqi Kurdistan dropped by 97 % compared to the previous month, with only 18 bombardments and airstrikes recorded in July—mainly in Duhok's Amedi district. However, on 29 July, Türkiye launched a new ground operation in the Batifa district of Zakho, deploying around 250 soldiers, establishing a military base and restricting civilian movement.[53]

Iran-Backed Militias and Regional Tensions

US and coalition facilities in Iraq were targeted during the reference period. On 5 August 2024 a rocket attack carried out by Iran-backed militias on Ain Al-Asad airbase injured at least five US personnel, prompting condemnation from the Iraqi military and subsequent arrests.[54] Further attacks, some unclaimed, targeted facilities such as the Victory Base[55] and the Baghdad

Diplomatic Support Center.56 Iran-backed militias in Iraq operating under the umbrella of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq stopped claiming responsibility for attacks on US targets after early February 2025.57

At the end of June 2025, during the final stages of armed hostilities between Israel and Iran, several small-scale drone attacks targeted Iraqi military sites and bases operated by the Iraqi security forces, resulting in damage to radar systems. These installations were known to host US personnel and contractors, who were presumed to be the target of the attacks. Although Iran-aligned Shiite militias were suspected of involvement, the identity of the perpetrators remained unconfirmed.58 In July, oil fields in the KRI were subjected to a series of drone attacks.59 While no group formally claimed responsibility,60 specialised security experts believed Iran-backed militias to be responsible.61 See section 3.1 Overview of the humanitarian and socio-economic situation.

- 44

  UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/323, 30 May 2025, url, para. 20

- 45

  International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., url

- 46

  International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., url

- 47

  UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/323, 30 May 2025, url, para. 22

- 48

  International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., url

- 49

  Rudaw, Turkish strike kills a civilian in NE Erbil: CPT, 3 September 2024, url; MEE, Turkish drone kills two Kurdish journalists in northern Iraq, officials say, 24 August 2024, url

- 50

  UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2025/323, 30 May 2025, url, para. 22; France24, Turkey attempts to neutralise PKK tunnels in Iraq despite dissolution of Kurdish militant group, 10 July 2025, url

- 51

  CPT, Turkish Military Attacks Hold Steady in June, Remain Concentrated as Symbolic PKK Disarmament Ceremony Approaches, 10 July 2025, url

- 52

Reuters, Kurdish PKK militants burn weapons in Iraq to launch disarmament, 11 July 2025, url

- 53

CPT, Turkish military attacks reduce by 97%, amid ongoing peace developments and new Turkish military operation, 11 August 2025, url

- 54

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., url

- 55

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Iraq: August 2024 – July 2025, n.d., url

- 56

UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2024/857, 26 November 2024, url, para. 16

- 57

UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2024/857, 26 November 2024, url, para. 15

- 58

FDD’s Long War Journal, Iraqi military bases targeted in overnight strikes, 24 June 2025, url

- 59

AP, Iraqi oil field on fire after drone strike during attacks in Kurdish region, 15 July 2025, url ; Reuters, Drone strikes shut oil fields in Iraq's Kurdistan, cut output by up to 150,000 bpd, 16 July 2025, url; Rudaw, Kurdistan oil fields targeted for third day in a row in drone attacks, 16 July 2025, url

- 60

New Arab (The), Drone attacks continue on Kurdistan oil fields as investigations underway, 17 July 2025, url

- 61

Arab Weekly (The), Militias defy Baghdad’s warnings as drone attacks on Kurdistan’s oil facilities persist, 29 July 2025, url; Malik, H. et al., Militias Strain Credibility by Denying Involvement in Kurdistan Drone Attacks, 25 July 2025, TWI, url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu