



## 1.2.1 Armed Actors

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#### Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)

During the reference period, the ISF continued their operations against ISIL,[62](#) as part of which they conducted joint operations with US troops.[63](#) The ISF were further reported to having been involved in the fight against drug trafficking,[64](#) intervention in cases of tribal feuds[65](#) and increased border security with Syria as part of their fight against ISIL.[66](#) In October 2024, Amnesty International reported that Iraqi security forces engaged in ill-treatment and torture during the interrogation of individuals detained in Al-Amal Centre (formerly known as Jeddah 1), many of whom had been transferred there from Al-Hol detention facility in Syria and are alleged to have links to ISIL.[67](#)

For general information about the composition of the ISF, please refer to section 1.4 of the previous [EUAA COI report: Iraq Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#).

#### Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF)

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), whose units operate partially under formal state command while many continue to function under independent leadership structures,[68](#) have actively participated in counterterrorism operations[69](#) and contributed to border security initiatives as part of their role within Iraq's broader national security framework.[70](#)

In March 2025, the Iraqi parliament introduced a draft law aimed at restructuring the PMF, placing the force directly under the authority of the Prime Minister and instituting reforms such as mandatory retirement for senior commanders.[71](#) The draft bill was later withdrawn, as a result of sustained political discord and differing interpretations of its provisions within Shiite blocs.[72](#) Meanwhile, the government formally incorporated approximately 20 000 fighters from various armed factions into the PMF and other state security agencies in April 2025. These forces were redeployed to strategic positions on the outskirts of Baghdad to reinforce security and enhance state oversight over irregular armed groups.[73](#) Efforts were also made to upgrade its status to that of a ministry.[74](#)

Beyond their security role, the political wings of the PMF have become deeply embedded within the Iraqi state. They occupy ministerial positions, influence key bureaucratic appointments, and maintain control over revenue-generating state-owned enterprises. According to Iraq analyst Renad Mansour, this institutional entrenchment contributed to the relative restraint demonstrated by armed PMF factions during the Israel-Iran conflict in June 2025.[75](#)

For further information about the history and composition of the PMF, please refer to section 1.4 of the previous [EUAA COI report: Iraq Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#).

## **Peshmerga**

During the reference period, Peshmerga forces engaged in joint operations with the Iraqi army, particularly in the disputed territories claimed by both the federal and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). These collaborative efforts aimed to fill persistent security gaps in areas vulnerable to insurgent activity, especially from ISIL remnants.<sup>76</sup> On a regional level, structural and political divisions continued to hinder comprehensive unification of the different Peshmerga forces under one ministry.<sup>77</sup>

## **Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)**

On 12 May 2025, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) announced the end of its armed struggle and the dissolution of its organisational structure, following its 12<sup>th</sup> party congress. However, uncertainty remains regarding the practical implementation of disarmament, the future of PKK fighters in Iraq, and whether the announcement will result in a substantive de-escalation regarding hostilities with Türkiye.<sup>78</sup> In July, 30 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.<sup>79</sup>

For further information about the PKK's previous presence and activities in Iraq, please refer to section 1.4 of the previous [EUAA COI report: Iraq Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#).

## **Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL)**

In its quarterly report covering the period from 1 April to 30 June 2025, the United States Department of Defense (USDOD) assessed that ISIL maintained a low operational profile, prioritising survival, and posed only a 'marginal threat' to the ISF and Iraqi civilians.<sup>80</sup>

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General's report to the UN Security Council noted that ISIL continued to carry out asymmetric attacks during their report's reference period of May to November 2024, primarily in the governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah Al-Din, with most attacks targeting Iraqi security forces.<sup>81</sup> Although sustained counter-terrorism pressure has constrained its activities, ISIL sought to rebuild its networks and restore operational capacity in Iraq's desert regions.<sup>82</sup> Clashes between ISIL militants and security forces, as well as operations against the former were reported throughout the reference period.<sup>83</sup>

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