



## 1.2.1 Armed Actors

### 1.2.1 Armed Actors

#### **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Minister and instituting reforms such as mandatory retirement for senior commanders.[71](#) The draft bill was later withdrawn, as a result of sustained political discord and differing interpretations of its provisions within Shiite blocs.[72](#) Meanwhile, the government formally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>

- [62](#)

EPIC, ISHM: December 12 - 19, 2024, 19 December 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: January 16 - 23, 2025, 23 January 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Iraqi security forces ramp up efforts to combat drug trafficking, ISIS remnants, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

- [63](#)

Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

- [64](#)

Rudaw, Iraqi security forces ramp up efforts to combat drug trafficking, ISIS remnants, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

- [65](#)

NINA, شيج لالو نييني ندم لال نيب تاباصواو ىلقتق 3 ن ع رفسى ناسيم بونج يريئاشع عازن [Tribal dispute in southern Missan leads to three killed and several wounded among civilians and soldiers], 9 July 2025, [url](#); Al-Mirbad, عازن رثا رجا ةباصواو نطاوم لتقم [One civilian killed and another injured in tribal dispute in southern Missan], 18 February 2025, [url](#); Al-Mirbad, ةعلق يف حلسم يريئاشع عازن ب نيصخش ةباصوا [Two persons wounded in armed tribal clash in Qalaat Salih], 6 August 2024, [url](#); Al-Sumaria, دادغب يريئاشع عازن رثا ةينكس لزانم يف نارين عال دنا [Tribal conflict in Baghdad causes fire in homes], 7 May 2025, [url](#)

- [66](#)

Kurdistan24, Iraq Strengthens Border Security Amid Ongoing Cooperation with Coalition Forces, 26 January 2025, [url](#); USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 42

- [67](#)

Amnesty International, Iraq: People held in Al-Jed'ah Centre subjected to torture and enforced disappearance after arrests – new investigation, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

- [68](#)

BBC Monitoring, Explainer: Who are Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces?, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

- [69](#)

Rudaw, Iraqi forces disrupt ISIS fuel network in Anbar, 18 April 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Iraq's PMF foils ISIS bombing attempt in Kirkuk, 2 February 2025, [url](#); INA, يبعشلا دشح لال [PMF destroy ISIL hideout and seize weapons northwest of Kirkuk], 5 February 2025, [url](#)

- [70](#)

Shafaq News, PMF conducts border security operation on Iraqi-Syrian border, 13 January 2025, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, Iraq's PMF Reinforces Deployment on Border with Syria, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

- [71](#)

Rudaw, Iraq advances PMF law amid US calls for greater control over the force, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

- [72](#)

EPC, Risky Maneuvers: Iraq's PMF Law Between Internal Disputes and External Pressures, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

- [73](#)

Shafaq News, SOURCE: Iraq absorbs 20,000 fighters into PMF, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

- [74](#)

Shafaq News, Iraqi lawmakers push to elevate PMF to ministry status, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

- [75](#)

Mansour R., Iraq's fragile stability is threatened by a shifting Middle Eastern order, Chatham House, 25 June 2025, [url](#)

- [76](#)

Rudaw, Iraqi army, Peshmerga launch joint anti-ISIS op in disputed areas, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

- [77](#)

USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 - March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p.49

- [78](#)

BBC Monitoring, Explainer: What does the PKK decision to disband mean for Iraq?, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

- [79](#)

Reuters, Kurdish PKK militants burn weapons in Iraq to launch disarmament, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

- [80](#)

USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, April 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025, 29 July 2025, [url](#), p. 8

- [81](#)

UNSG, Implementation of resolution 2732 (2024), S/2024/857, 26 November 2024, [url](#), para. 19

- [82](#)

UNSC, Twenty-first report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat, 1 August 2025, [url](#), paras 8-9

- [83](#)

Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 31 December 2024, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: January 9 - 16, 2025, 16 January 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: February 6 - 13, 2025, 13 February 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: March 27 - April 3, 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#); EPIC, ISHM: May 1 - May 8, 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: [info@euaa.europa.eu](mailto:info@euaa.europa.eu)