



1.2.2 International involvement

1.2.2 International involvement

USA

While some sources reported that, as of June 2025, approximately 2 500 US troops were stationed in Iraq, [84](#) in the same month the US Department of Defense stated that around 1 500 individuals, including diplomatic staff, contractors, and non-essential personnel, departed Baghdad and Erbil 'out of an abundance of caution' amid heightened regional tensions.[85](#)

US troops are distributed across four primary bases: Erbil Air Base, the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center near Baghdad airport, Union III in Baghdad's Green Zone, and Al-Asad Air Base in Anbar.[86](#) In September 2024, the US and Iraq jointly announced a two-phase plan to conclude coalition operations by September 2026, the first phase of which is set to conclude by September 2025.[87](#) The implementation of this plan was reaffirmed by the US in June 2025,[88](#) although by the end of July 2025, no significant progress had been publicly reported.[89](#) Rather than a complete withdrawal, the coalition mission was undergoing a structural transformation, with US forces expected to maintain a presence in Iraq to continue supporting counter-ISIL operations at least until September 2026.[90](#) The administration of Prime Minister Mohammed Al-Sudani has consistently expressed its interest in sustaining military cooperation with the US and other Western partners.[91](#) Throughout the reference period, US forces remained actively engaged in partnered counterterrorism raids.[92](#) The Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) continued to assist Iraqi forces, supported by the Counter-ISIL Train and Equip Fund, which provides salaries, weapons, vehicles, and non-lethal assistance.[93](#)

Iran

Iran maintains strong influence in Iraq through its support for powerful Shia militias, including Kata'ib Hezbollah, Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haq and Harakat Hezbollah Al-Nujaba.[94](#) In April 2025, Iran reportedly supplied advanced missiles to Iraqi militias.[95](#) Meanwhile, political ties have deepened, with Iran's president, Masoud Pezeshkian, visiting the KRI for the first time in September 2024 after years of tensions. In parallel, the Iranian president also signed multiple agreements to enhance bilateral cooperation in with Baghdad.[96](#)

While, during the Israel-Iran conflict, Iranian-affiliated armed groups demonstrated relative restraint, Iraq remains, according to International Crisis Group, a 'central theatre for US-Iran confrontation', particularly through these proxies.[97](#)

Türkiye

As of December 2024, Türkiye reportedly maintained at least 136 military sites and had built 660 kilometres of roads in northern Iraq, enabling control over 2 000 square kilometres.⁹⁸ A series of Turkish airstrikes in northern Iraq was reported in the first half of the reference period.⁹⁹ Turkish airstrikes and incursions continued into early 2025.¹⁰⁰ Despite the PKK's declaration of an end to its armed struggle in May 2025, Türkiye maintained its military presence,¹⁰¹ citing concerns over defections and the potential rise of PKK splinter factions.¹⁰²

For information on the impact of Turkish operations on civilians, please see sections [1.3.1 Security incidents](#) and [1.4.8 Kurdistan Region of Iraq \(Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah\)](#).

- [84](#)

Shafaq News, Pentagon reaffirms Iraq withdrawal timeline, 3 June 2025, [url](#) ; Wilgenburg, W. and Caggins, M., After the Coalition: Evaluating the Next Steps for Foreign Forces in Iraq and Syria, New Lines Institute, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

- [85](#)

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. 41

- [86](#)

Wilgenburg, W. and Caggins, M., After the Coalition: Evaluating the Next Steps for Foreign Forces in Iraq and Syria, New Lines Institute, 18 March 2025, [url](#); 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. 43

- [87](#)

Wilgenburg, W. and Caggins, M., After the Coalition: Evaluating the Next Steps for Foreign Forces in Iraq and Syria, New Lines Institute, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

- [88](#)

Shafaq News, Pentagon reaffirms Iraq withdrawal timeline, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

- [89](#)

AP, Iraq's prime minister seeks closer US ties while keeping armed groups at bay, 29 July 2025, [url](#)

- [90](#)

Breaking Defense, US announces coalition mission in Iraq to end by 2025, but US 'not withdrawing', 27 September 2024, [url](#); 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. 42

- [91](#)

ISW and CTP, Iran Update Special Report: Iraq after the Israel-Iran War, June 13 - July 3, 2025, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

- [92](#)

Wilgenburg, W. and Caggins, M., After the Coalition: Evaluating the Next Steps for Foreign Forces in Iraq and Syria, New Lines Institute, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

- [93](#)

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. 45

- [94](#)

CRS, Iran-Supported Groups in the Middle East and U.S. Policy, 26 September 2024, [url](#); Iran Wire, Iran's Deepening Influence in Iraq: Proxy Forces, Politics, and Power, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

- [95](#)

ISW and CTP, Iran update, April 9, 2025, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

- [96](#)

Al-Monitor, Iran president makes 'historic' visit to Iraqi Kurdistan, 12 September 2024, [url](#)

- [97](#)

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

- [98](#)

BBC News, Life inside Iraq's 'Forbidden Zone' controlled by Turkey, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

- [99](#)

VOA, Turkish airstrikes kill 17 Kurdish militants in northern Iraq, ministry says, 12 August 2024, [url](#); Guardian (The), Turkey strikes targets in Syria and Iraq after attack on Ankara aviation company - video, 24 October 2024, [url](#); CPT, Turkish Military attacks hold steady in June, remain concentrated as symbolic PKK disarmament ceremony approaches, 10 July 2025, [url](#); CPT, Turkish military attacks since Abdullah Öcalan's call for peace, 6 March 2025, [url](#); CPT, Turkish military strikes intensify two months into ceasefire, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

- [100](#)

Shafaq News, Unprecedented Turkish expansion in Iraq with 40 bases, MP warns, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

- [101](#)

Reuters, Turkey continues operations on PKK in Iraq, Syria despite Ocalan call, 6 March 2025, [url](#); Shafaq News, Operation Claw-Lock: Turkiye hits PKK cave in northern Iraq, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

- [102](#)

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