1.4.1 Anbar

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Anbar

Map 2. Anbar governorate, © UNOCHA and MapAction.[162]

For a general description of the governorate, please refer to section 2.1 of the EUAA COI Report Iraq – Security Situation (May 2024). For 2022, the Iraqi Central Statistical Organization (CSO) estimated the governorate's population at 1 963 346.[163]

As of the end of 2024, several PMF brigades were operating in Anbar along the border with Syria, among them the 17th Brigade[164] and the 13th Brigade (Liwa Al-Tafuf) which reportedly had close ties with Kata'ib Hezbollah.[165] Additionally, Iran-backed Iraqi militias that had withdrawn from Syria before the fall of the Assad government in December 2024, relocated to the Iraqi border towns of Al-Qaim, Hasiba Al-Gharbiya and Al-Rummanah.[166] In April 2025, it was reported that Iran-backed PMF brigades stationed in Al-Qaim near the Syrian border would be replaced by 72nd PMF Brigade operating under the Defence Ministry and loyal to Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani.[167] At the start of 2025, the Anbar police command was reportedly set to take over the security responsibilities in the governorate, including border areas and checkpoints manned by armed factions.[168] However, in a joint article released in April 2025, the U.S.-based think tank Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) stated that they had not observed redeployment of Iranian-backed armed groups away from the border area.[169] A June 2025 article published by US-funded Al-Hurra channel, described Al-Qaim district on the border with Syria as a 'hub for Kataib Hezbollah, Saraya al-Khorasani, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, and Liwa al-Tafuf'.[170]

During the reference period, the Iraqi army[171], the PMF[172] and the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS)[173] carried out anti-ISIL operations within the governorate.

ISIL reportedly operated in sleeper cells in rural areas of the governorate, capable of carrying out hit-and-run operations.[174] The group carried out sporadic attacks in remote desert regions of Anbar governorate,[175] burning the trucks of shepherds it accused of cooperating with security forces[176] and killing a shepherd in Al-Rutba district.[177] In August 2024, a joint operation carried out by Iraqi security and international coalition forces, which targeted safe houses and weapons manufacturing bases in Al-Rutba, resulted in 14 ISIL leaders being killed.[178] In February and March 2025, several airstrikes launched against ISIL reportedly led to

further ISIL operatives being killed.179

Several IED explosions were reported during the reference period, targeting the vehicles of a tribal leader180, a local official181 and a PMF commander.182 Some IED remnants also led to the death of civilians, such as in December 2024, when a woman was killed by a mine in Haditha district183 and in May 2025, when the explosion of an IED remnant in the desert between Anbar and Ninewa governorates reportedly killed a 10-year-old boy herding animals.184

Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), there were 43 security incidents recorded by ACLED in Anbar governorate, of which 13 were coded as battles, 22 as explosions/remote violence, and 8 as incidents of violence against civilians. Security incidents were recorded in almost all governorate districts, more than half of which in the three districts of Falluja (9), Ramadi (9) and Al-Rutba (7).185

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Figure 7: Security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Anbar between August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.186

According to ACLED data, government forces (military and police) were in sum involved as main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in 17 security incidents, ISIL militants were involved in 22 security incidents, followed by unidentified armed groups with 8 incidents and unidentified tribal militia with 6 incidents.187 For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, UCDP recorded 8 security events in Anbar governorate, leading to 41 casualties.188

Civilian casualties

During the reference period, UNAMI did not record any civilian casualties in Anbar governorate, 189 while UCDP recorded 1 civilian death in the governorate.190

Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

No information on new conflict-related infrastructure damage in the reference period could be found within the time constraints of this report. A spokesperson at the Iraqi Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) stated, in August 2024, that Anbar governorate is one of four governorates with the largest mine-contaminated areas.191 As of the end of 2023, the Mine Action Review estimated that about 11 216 039 square metres of the governorate’s area were contaminated with cluster-munition.192

Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)193 unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September – December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, Anbar governorate was hosting 33 120 displaced people, 17 160 of them in Falluja district, followed by Ramadi district with 6 372 and Al-Rutba district with 2 676. The number of IDPs hosted in Anbar decreased by about 2 % in 2024 compared to 2023. 71 % of these IDPs were displaced within the governorate and 28 % originated from Babil governorate.194 As of December 2024, Anbar

had recorded over 1.5 million returnees, with the principal districts of return being Ramadi (603 384) and Falluja (572 928). This amounted to a return rate[195] of 93 %.[196]

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  Mine Action Review, Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2024 [Table 1], 1 August 2024, url, p. 56

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  Please note that IOM differentiates between displacement induced by conflict/violence and displacement driven by natural disasters. The displacement due to natural disasters is not included in the DTM data, see IDMC, Country Profile Iraq, n.d., url

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  The return rate is calculated by dividing the number of returnees per governorate by the total number of returnees and IDPs originating from that governorate. (IOM Iraq, Returns in Iraq: 2021 Overview, December 2020 (Round11) to December 2021 (Round 14), February 2022, url, p. 2 footnote 5)

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