



1.4.8 Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah)

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Map 9. Kurdistan Region of Iraq, © UNHCR.[412](#)

For a general description of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), please refer to section 2.8-2.10 of the [EUAA COI Report Iraq - Security Situation \(May 2024\)](#). This subsection covers the governorates in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), which include Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah. At the beginning of May 2025, Halabja officially became Iraq's 19th governorate, separating it from Sulaymaniyah governorate.[413](#) However, for the purposes of this report, data on Halabja is clustered with Sulaymaniyah governorate, as the majority of sources did not treat it as a separate governorate, with the exception of UCDP in the section on civilian casualties. Furthermore, the administrative change only applied to the last three months of the 12-month reference period.

A population census was carried out in November 2024, however, population figures aggregated by governorate were not released (see section 1.4). The KRG Minister of Planning announced in late November 2024 that according to preliminary census results, the population of the KRI had reached over 6.37 million.[414](#)

The KRG has gone through a years-long process of trying to unify its military forces, especially politically-affiliated Peshmerga units 70 and 80, under a single command.[415](#) During the reference period, the effort to dissolve these factions and merge all forces under the control of the KRG Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA) were still underway. The goal is to create two regional commands, 11 light infantry divisions, and two support commands, with a total force of 138 000 personnel under MoPA. As of March 2025, only four divisions were fully or partly active, as planned timelines were said not to be met.[416](#)

During the reference period, joint Peshmerga and Iraqi units were deployed in areas disputed between the KRG and the central government.[417](#) However, tensions between the forces persisted, as in July 2025 Iraqi military forces advanced on an oil field on the border between the two regions,[418](#) leading to Peshmerga forces to mobilise in Garmian district in southern KRI.[419](#) In a previous incident in August 2024, PMF supported by Iraqi military forces had undertaken a similar movement towards the oil field.[420](#)

In May 2025, the PKK announced it would disband and end its armed struggle, which was followed by 30 PKK fighters destroying their weapons in a symbolic event in Sulaymaniyah city in July.⁴²¹ As of July 2025, it was estimated that there were roughly 2 000 to 5 000 PKK fighters in the Qandil Mountains in the KRI.⁴²² Turkish operations against the PKK were reported throughout the reference period,⁴²³ including airstrikes and shelling,⁴²⁴ which persisted following the PKK announcement.⁴²⁵ According to Community Peacemaker Teams,⁴²⁶ as of June 2025, Turkish military attacks in the KRI remained steady but were increasingly concentrated in Amedi district of Dohuk governorate. Meanwhile, the PKK reportedly carried out several drone attacks against Turkish military bases which it claimed were acts of self-defense ⁴²⁷ (see section 1.2 Overview of recent security developments). The Turkish ban on flights in and out of Sulaymaniyah, initially imposed on 3 April 2023 for three months, has been since extended, most recently for the fifth time in July 2025 for an additional three months, until 6 October 2025.⁴²⁸

Starting in mid-June 2025, the KRI was subjected to a series of drone attacks⁴²⁹ targeting military sites,⁴³⁰ Erbil airport⁴³¹ and oil installations.⁴³² No group claimed responsibility for the drone strikes⁴³³ and while the KRG accused pro-Iranian militias of being behind the attacks, as of late July 2025, no perpetrators had officially been identified.⁴³⁴ One drone hit the Darkar IDP camp near Dohuk city, causing material damage.⁴³⁵

Security incidents (number and type of security incidents)

During the reference period (1 August 2024 – 1 August 2025), there were 4 073 security incidents recorded by ACLED in the KRI, of which 476 were coded as battles, 3 575 as explosions/remote violence, and 22 as incidents of violence against civilians. Of the overall security incidents, 2 917 were recorded in Dohuk, most of them in Amedi (Al-Amadiya) district (2 871), 1 050 in Erbil and 106 in Sulaymaniyah.⁴³⁶ The high level of incidents in Dohuk was due to the Turkish military's ongoing military operation against the PKK, which aimed at driving the PKK out of the areas bordering Türkiye. However, the number of Turkish military strikes notably decreased following the disarmament ceremony held by PKK members in July 2025.⁴³⁷

Figure 14 Iraq

Figure14: Security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq between August 2024 and 1 August 2025 on district level, based on ACLED data.⁴³⁸

According to ACLED data, Turkish military forces were involved as main actor (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') in 3 970 security incidents, in 3 637 of which the PKK was also involved as an actor.⁴³⁹ For the period between 1 August 2024 and 1 August 2025, the UCDP recorded 105 events (65 in Dohuk, 28 in Erbil, 11 Sulaymaniyah, 1 in Halabja), leading to 102 casualties).⁴⁴⁰

Civilian casualties

According to UNAMI data, Sulaymaniyah (including Halabja) recorded the highest number of civilian casualties in the KRI, with 9 casualties (including 7 fatalities). UNAMI recorded 6 civilian casualties in Erbil governorate (including 4 killed) and 6 civilian casualties in Dohuk (including 3 killed).⁴⁴¹

UCDP recorded 15 civilian deaths in the KRI (3 in Dohuk, 4 in Erbil, 8 in Sulaymaniyah).[442](#)

Conflict-related infrastructure damage and ERW

Turkish airstrikes and artillery shelling reportedly caused material damage to farms in Dohuk's Amedi district.[443](#) A series of unclaimed drone attacks targeted several oil fields in the KRI in July 2025 and caused damage to the energy infrastructure.[444](#) An April 2025 BBC report described how a strip of land bordering Türkiye, which in some areas reached up to 40 kilometres into KRI territory, has been heavily affected by Turkish bombardment as well as being de facto under control of a wide network of Turkish military bases.[445](#)

While the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) was carrying out mine clearance efforts throughout the KRI,[446](#) the organisation's director stated in April 2025 that about 40 % of the originally contaminated areas in the KRI, amounting to almost 250 million square kilometres, remained uncleared. 47 % of these uncleared areas were reportedly in Erbil governorate.[447](#) According to Kurdistan24, five civilians lost their lives and four were wounded due to ERW explosions in Erbil governorate in the first half of 2025.[448](#) Several instances of ERW detonations were reported in the mountainous areas of Soran district in 2025, leading to casualties.[449](#)

Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[450](#) unit stated in its Iraq Master List Report 134 (covering the period September - December 2024) that, as of 31 December 2024, Dohuk governorate was hosting 211 028, Erbil governorate 204 990 and Sulaymaniyah 112 710 displaced people. For Dohuk governorate, this figure represented a decrease by about 10 % compared to 2023, for Erbil governorate a decrease by about 9 % and for Sulaymaniyah a decrease by about 14 %. All of the IDPs in Dohuk were originally from Ninewa. In Erbil governorate, 50 % of the IDPs were from Ninewa and 19 % from Anbar, while in Sulaymaniyah, 26 % of IDPs were from Baghdad, 20 % from Diyala, 18 % from Salah Al-Din and 16 % from Anbar.[451](#) According to US official sources, in the first quarter of 2025, approximately 109 000 IDPs were residing in 21 camps in the KRI and three informal camps in Ninewa governorate.[452](#)

As of December 2024, IOM had monitored return movements solely in Erbil governorate, with 64 542 returnees all located in Makhmour district, and in Dohuk governorate, where all 744 returnees were reported in Zakho district.[453](#)

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