

Topical Note  
**Iraq: Baghdad - the security situation as of February  
2015**

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## **SUMMARY**

This report builds upon openly accessible sources and in certain cases sources in Iraq that have been consulted by Landinfo.

There seems to be no areas of Baghdad that may be considered as more exposed to conflict related violence than others. What we see is partly warfare, and partly acts of terrorism against civilians, both taking place in parallel. Both may occur across the city. However, warfare seems to dominate in the suburbs. Since violence strikes so broadly, no particular group may be considered to be out of risk of being struck by violence in one form or the other.

While most Baghdad neighbourhoods used to be inhabited by a mix of Sunni and Shiite in the past, the violent sectarian cleansing in the 2000's resulted in the city now appearing as much more segregated and Shiite-dominated.

The most extensive internal flight has occurred inside Baghdad and into the city from parts of the country where war has raged for quite some time. The flight out of the city does not appear nearly as extensive.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This topical note gives an account of the security situation in Baghdad, the city's population composition, the conditions for vulnerable groups and internally displaced people and briefly about how daily life in the city works.

The report is primarily based on open web-based sources and partially on information obtained on a fact finding mission to Amman in November 2014.

## **2. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE SECURITY SITUATION IN BAGHDAD**

### **2.1 ARE THERE ANY "HOT SPOTS"?**

There are no areas which stand out as special "hot spots" for conflict-related violence in Baghdad. The hostilities are between warring parties and attacks on civilians in parallel. These are events which can occur throughout the city, although it seems that the hostilities dominate in the suburbs.

### **2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OVER THE PAST HALF YEAR**

As stated in Landinfo's previous publication on the security situation in Baghdad from July 2014, as a result of ISIL's conquests in Northern and Central Iraq in the early summer, there was uncertainty whether ISIL would also launch an offensive against Baghdad. The government reacted to the situation by reinforcing the defences in and around Baghdad and in mid-July, it did not seem that Baghdad would fall into ISIL's hands at first. It did not happen either, but IS has established advancing military positions out in the suburbs, in addition to having active operations in the city itself.

In the summer of 2014, the most important Shiite militias were mobilised for defence against IS' advance. These militias are closely coordinated with the government army and the lines of command are extremely vague. The initiative to join the Shiite militias in support of the state were reportedly partially made by former Prime Minister Maliki in the spring of 2014 and partially by the religious leader Ayatollah Sistani, as he urged the general mobilisation against IS with a fatwa in the summer of last year. After that, the scope of the Shiite militias' increased dramatically, according to reports..

One of the major Shiite militias – the Badr organisation, for example – is led by former Transportation Minister Hadi al-Ameri. He was the Badr organisation's candidate for Minister of the Interior when the new

government was installed in 2014, but opposition was strong amongst the Sunni parties in parliament. Instead, the more unknown al-Ghabban was picked out as the new Minister of the Interior. He was also a controversial choice, because he was considered to be a core member of the Badr organisation.

The command situation is also unclear for military leaders sent out from Iran, who seem to have key roles in coordination, management and command tasks, both over certain other Shiite militias and over the Iraqi army (Chulov 2014).

Eventually, the US Air Force and US military advisors also arrived at the government's request. The Air Force is primarily engaged against ISIL somewhat north and west from Baghdad and not in the metropolitan area itself.

The Shiite militias have been given broad powers to assist with law enforcement within the city, in addition to serving on the front in the suburbs and further out. The way they perform their duties is criticised in the strongest terms by international human rights organisations and their scope of action has become so large that it is reported that it is the militias who control law enforcement rather than vice versa (HRW 2014).

## 2.3 WHO HAS CONTROL WHERE?<sup>1</sup>

The city of Baghdad and its suburbs are generally considered to be under the government's control. However, as mentioned the government shares exercise of defence and law enforcement power with various Shiite militias. Thus, the government's independent control could be said to be very incomplete and instead alternating or overlapping with control exercised by Shiite militias.

The new Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi announced measures in August 2014 to get the Shiite militias under stricter control of the government forces (AP 2014). It is uncertain what the effect the measures have had so far and will have in the future (ISW 2015).

The successor after the Mehdi army, which now calls itself the Peace Brigades, appears to be particularly strong in Sadr City. The district was formerly strongly dominated by the Mehdi army (Siegel 2014).

According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW 2015), various militias are particularly strong in the districts of Kadhimiya, Adhamiya, Mansour and Saydiya. In all of these districts, they were reported to enjoy freedom of movement and in Kadhimiya, they reportedly have a particularly strong presence. Two strong Shiite militias, AAH and the Peace Brigades, would be rivals for dominance there. After Kadhimiya, Saydiya in southern Baghdad is reported to have the largest presence of militias and the increase there is said to have become significant after Mosul's fall in 2014.

The open presence of militias in the Shiite-dominated areas of Sadr City, Hurriyah, Shula and Khadimiya is ascribed to an increase in ISIL attacks around and in Baghdad over time.

The control which the militias exercise locally is not necessarily official. For

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<sup>1</sup> A good overview map of Baghdad can be found on ISW's websites:  
<http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Baghdad.pdf> [downloaded 13 February 2015]

example, HRW (2014) quotes local residents as saying that "everyone knows that AAH controls the Shaab neighbourhood [...], their people hang around the police station." According to what the residents told HRW, the militiamen are easily identified in that "they always have beards, civilian clothes and camouflage pants." They have apparently become dominant enough to no longer bother to hide that they are the ones actually in control.

In the suburbs, fighting has been ongoing throughout the summer between ISIL and Iraqi forces supported by Shiite militias and the US Air Force. Here the army and Shiite militias are trying to prevent ISIL from taking control, which would give them the ability to direct attacks against the city from the suburbs. According to Jessica Lewis (2014) in ISW, ISIL is trying to keep and expand the positions they acquired in the summer in order to be able to surround the city and launch attacks on a larger scale.



## 2.4 THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN 2014

HRW reported in July about a noticeable increase in the violence in Baghdad through the 2nd quarter of 2014. According to figures from Iraq Body Count (IBC) for 2014, Baghdad is the province which has the highest number of civilians killed: an entire 4,767 people. This is almost double compared with the previous year (IBC 2015). IBC counts police amongst civilians in their counts.

IBC has not yet laid out complete figures for Baghdad for 2014, but based on information from a reliable international source (A) who follows the situation daily (e-mail January 2015) and Lewis (2014), we assume that the frequency of events should generally be considered to be high and that any district may be affected and is actually affected. We have not been able to find information which gives accurate figures for individual districts.

In addition to Baghdad city, the province includes the suburbs as well as larger and smaller cities and towns. Experience shows that the figures for casualties for the type of violence which is prevalent in Baghdad are about triple the number killed. UNAMI's monthly reports through 2014 show slightly different figures than IBC, and also a fairly even distribution per month (police are also included here) (UNAMI 2014):

Month	Baghdad
January	297
February	239
March	180
April	252
May	315
June	390
July	415
August	246
September	352
October	379
November	332
December	320
Total	3717

It is normal for figures from different sources to not entirely agree. This is due to the difficult reporting conditions.

## 2.5 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VIOLENCE?

The principal players are Shiite Muslim militias, Sunni Muslim armed groups - and particularly ISIL - tribal militias and armies and police. It goes with the situation that all these players, in addition to directing attacks

against the civilian population and government, also take part in hostilities between warring parties.

A relatively new group are the Popular Mobilisation Units (PMU) formed by volunteers who signed up for service after Sistani's fatwa in summer 2014. Officially the PMU are led by the Iraqi security forces (a collective term for the armed forces). The security forces are responsible to the leader of the National Security Council, Faleh al-Fayad. He is suspected of having extremely close links to the leader of Kata'ib Hezbollah, al-Muhandis, who is in turn thought to be a personal representative in Iraq for the leader of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force<sup>2</sup>, Qassem Suleimani (Filkins 2014).

Asai'b al-Haq (AAH), Kata'ib Hezbollah and the Badr organisation are the militias which dominate on the Shiite side (HRW 2014). AAH is reported to be the strongest of these and fighters from this group is also said to have become incorporated into both the army and the police (Lewis 2014).

In other words, there is no clear difference between Shiite militias, army and police (Hagan et al. 2013, p. 8). At the same time, the militias largely operate on their own. Thus, there may be gradual shifts between who dominates where: militias, army and/or police.

ISIL, which, as elsewhere in the country, appear as a mixture of an army and a terrorist group, operates in a different way in Baghdad. Inside the city they operate in small terror teams which keep themselves hidden until they conduct their large and small attacks. In the suburbs, they act more like an army which fights to capture and hold strategic positions.

Local tribal leaders, both Shiite and Sunni, keep their own militias in many places. These may be engaged either with or against the government forces or in the defence of their own communities.

The state's organs of power – the army, police and security agencies – are principal players who are also infiltrated by Shiite militias.

Finally, it should be mentioned that criminal elements have broad freedom of action in the prevailing situation. Amongst the criminal elements, it is common to operate in the gap between criminal and political activities, for example, robbery and kidnapping for the purpose of gaining income for a militia. Other crimes may be conducted only for its own gain.

We can list the various players as such:

- Shiite militias:
  - Asaib Ahl al-Haq/(AAH (the largest)
  - Kata'ib Hezbollah
  - The Badr organisation
  - The Peace Brigades (Saraya al-Salam - formerly the Mehdi army, also

called JAM)

- Kata'ib Hezbollah Mujahidun
- PMU
- Sunni militias:
  - ISIL (most prominent at the time)
  - Various small groups
- State power bodies:
  - The army

- The police
- Security/intelligence agencies
- Tribal militias:
  - Small groups
  - Practicing vigilantes
  - Locally based
  - Both Sunni and Shiite
- Criminal elements.

Amongst the civilian population, there is also a gradual shift between being a civilian and, for example, a militia member or assistant. For example, you could be at the same time an unemployed civilian and a paid militia soldier, or actually any civilian who takes odd jobs such as setting out roadside bombs for armed groups.

## **2.6 WHAT CHARACTERISES THE VIOLENCE?**

The violence in Baghdad seems to be a mixture of bombings and other explosions. Car and roadside bombs are reported, as well as assassinations, kidnappings and violent crime. Violent acts commonly consist of:

- Bombs, grenades, suicide bombings and shooting at civilians.
- Executions of civilians, usually by shooting (HRW 2014), but also by other means such as beheading. For example, the heads of two girls were found in a school bag in a district in the south (international source in Baghdad (B), e-mail January 2015).
- Kidnappings. It is reported that Shiite militias frequently conduct kidnappings in Baghdad (Habib 2014).
- Targeted violence against people, institutions and assemblies of civilians are particularly used by ISIL and other militant Sunni Muslims.
- Attacks against buildings for public or religious use, such as ministries, police stations, restaurants and mosques.
- Attacks against markets.
- Attacks against state power bodies such as police checkpoints, police stations and military personnel and installations.

Ayatollah Sistani's fatwa from 2014 was reported as having been taken as a signal that it is now open season on Sunnis (HRW 2014). The AAH militia, for example, according to HRW (2014), executed people in broad daylight in view of army troops at a checkpoint without the troops intervening. But whether it is militias who do this in their own name or whether it is militiamen within the police or army who commit these acts is not always clear. In particular, the areas of Saidiyya, Dora, Ghazaliyya, Shoa`la, Washash and Mansour have received numerous bodies of slain Sunni Muslims.

Jessica Lewis of ISW wrote in June (Lewis 2014) that she expected that ISIL would conduct various types of attacks against public, military and civilian targets, with the goal of breaking Baghdad as the centre of government in Iraq. The developments in the autumn and winter seem to confirm that parts of these tactics have been implemented, but without the goal having been achieved. Amongst measures we have seen since the summer of 2014 are frequent use of suicide bombers and car bombs inside the city.

From positions out in the suburbs, ISIL has acquired the ability to shell the entire urban area and airport with heavier and more long-range artillery. However, so far they have met sufficient resistance that they have not been able to make full use of the opportunities. Still, the extent of the activities they have actually managed to perform is large enough that no part of the city is said to be beyond their reach. For example, a passenger plane coming from Dubai was shot at during landing at Baghdad International Airport in January 2015 (Al Jazeera 2015).

After ISIL took control of Mosul in June, the violence increased further in Baghdad. Since Shiite Muslims constitute a majority of the population and are particularly subjected to explosions, we find the highest share of fatalities amongst them. Amongst the victims of executions, most are Sunni Muslims (HRW 2014). This may indicate that the Shiite militias have intensified their actions against Sunni Muslims as a reaction to an increased threat from ISIL.

## **2.7 THE EXTENT OF THE VIOLENCE**

Attacks of various types have been conducted throughout the city. There are no areas/neighbourhoods which differ significantly. A good map of Baghdad's neighbourhoods can be found on ISW's websites: <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Baghdad.pdf>).

There are frequent attacks in the pure Shiite neighbourhoods on the east side, particularly directed against civilians, for example, in markets. Most of the actions can probably be attributed to ISIL and possibly other Sunni militias, but they can also take place in connection with internal skirmishes on the Shiite side (Landinfo 2013). According to HRW (2014), the Shiite militias' executions and abductions generally take place in areas with mixed Shiite/Sunni population.

The spread of violence can be illustrated by the following: On a typical day in January 2015, a reliable international source (A) who follows the situation daily, but does not want to be quoted (e-mail January 2015), registered the following 15 events (neighbourhood in parentheses). One of the events is a military conflict.

1. The army fired rockets at ISIL camps slightly northwest of the city, 13 ISIL people were killed in Taji, a suburb in the north
2. Explosives attached to passenger cars exploded, three civilians were injured (Adhamiya)
3. Homemade bomb exploded on a shopping street, four civilians were injured (Tabchi)
4. Armed men threw hand grenades into a private home, two civilians were injured (Shula)
5. Armed men shot and killed a civilian (Ameriya)
6. The body of a man with gunshot wounds was found (Jihad)
7. The body of a man with gunshot wounds was found (Ilam)

8. Five explosions went off near the international airport (Mansour)
9. Homemade bombs exploded, one killed and five injured (Doura)
10. Armed groups dropped grenades down from a bridge onto a police post under the bridge, 1 police officer killed and 4 injured (Jadiriya bridge in the southeast, near the centre)
11. Homemade bombs exploded near a local market, two civilians killed and eight injured (Maamil)
12. Three armed men arrested at a police checkpoint so that one kidnapped person was freed (Baladiyat)
13. Armed men abducted five police officers from their checkpoint (Sadr City)
14. Homemade bombs exploded on a city bus, one civilian killed and six injured (Qahira)
15. Homemade bombs went off, four civilians injured (Husseiniyah suburb to the north)

Most of the events that day took place in neighbourhoods located in a belt around central parts of the city. A couple of the events took place in the city centre.

## **2.8 LEVEL OF CRIME AND EXTENT OF OFFICIAL PROTECTION**

We assume that the level of crime is high, even though there are no systematic crime statistics or other relevant figures available to us.

Government protection seems inadequate, because the police's abilities are limited by resources and skills, while the will to provide protection is limited by religious affiliation and corruption. As mentioned, the police have been strongly infiltrated by Shiite militias, to such extent that they should be considered to be potentially biased with regards to sectarian lines of conflict.

There is a lot of overlap of criminal and political violence, which often manifests in connection with kidnapping/torture/killings. For example, HRW (2014) reported a case of a family having paid ransom to a militia to get their kidnapped son back, but who even then got him back dead. Amnesty International (2014, p. 9) refers to the source statement in Baghdad that Shiite militiamen enrich themselves by stealing from their victims and by taking their share of the profit through various types of extortion. They often take the victims who are easy to get, be they Sunnis, Christians, Kurds or sometimes other Shiites. Amnesty's local sources (p. 9) believe that no one can feel safe from militiamen, but that it is easiest to assault Sunnis without



punity, because Sunnis can always be labelled terrorists.

It can probably be attributed to poor government protection that Sunni Muslims, according to HRW (2014), keep a very low profile and if necessary try to pretend they are Shiite, because in many neighbourhoods with mixed Sunni/Shiite population, Shiite militias have the control and exercise of power. HRW refers to local residents who tell them that Sunni Muslims who live in neighbourhoods where Shiites are the majority, do whatever they can to pass as Shiite when encountering Shiite militias. If they cannot manage this, the possibility is high that they will instead be killed or chased from their homes. Amongst ways to disguise their religious identity, HRW (2014) mentions examples like the falsification of ID documents and memorising relevant texts of the Qoran.

### **3. COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION**

#### **3.1 ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN BAGHDAD AND THEIR CORE AREAS**

According to the Iraqi Central Bureau of Statistics, there are about 7 million inhabitants in Baghdad (Geohive 2015).

Baghdad has traditionally been a city composed of all of the country's ethnic and religious population groups. The majority population naturally consists of Sunni and Shiite Muslim Arabs, but Kurds, Assyrians, Shabak, Mandaeans and Yezid and others have also inhabited the city.

After 2003, large numbers of people from the minorities as well as Sunni Muslim Arabs fled the city. While most Baghdad neighbourhoods previously had a mixture of Sunni and Shiite population, the displacement has resulted in the city now appearing much more segregated and Shiite-dominated. An overview of how the militias have changed the demographics of each neighbourhood is presented in Landinfo 2008 (p. 7-9).

It is not known what proportion of the population are respectively Sunni and Shiite. This is a sensitive political topic in Iraq and a reason why the long-planned census was postponed.

According to HRW (2014), Shiite Muslims dominate in the eastern neighbourhoods, while Sunni Muslims mostly live in the western neighbourhoods and in the Sunni enclave Adhamiya in the north, which is located along the eastern shore of the Tigris. Specifically, most Sunni Muslims live in the neighbourhoods of Ma`alif, Ameriyya, Ghazaliyya, Kahdraa', Doura and Saidiyya. In most of these neighbourhoods, there are also many, if not a majority, of Shiite Muslims. An Iraqi security analyst at an international organisation which Landinfo met with in Amman in November 2014 estimated the number of Sunni Muslims in Adhamiya to be 2.5-3 million. This is reportedly the largest concentration of Sunni Muslims in the city.

Distinctly Shiite neighbourhoods are considered to be Khadimiyah, Shaab and Ur (districts in Adhamiya neighbourhood which also include a Sunni enclave of the same name), Sadr City, Tissa Nissan, Rusafa, Karrada and New Baghdad. The central neighbourhood Karkh seems to be more mixed Shiite/Sunni.

For details of the demographics in each neighbourhood, see Landinfo 2008 (p. 6-10). Most of the displacement took place on to 2008 and the population pattern has hardly changed significantly after that.

It is believed that perhaps as much as half of the Christians left the city after 2003. A significant proportion of the other minorities have also fled the city.

### **3.2 HOW DOES THE CONFLICT AFFECT THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS GROUPS?**

Fear, mistrust and bitterness are what primarily seems to characterise the relationship between Shiites and Sunnis. Minorities keep a low profile and have little room to live openly in line with their traditions.

Traditionally in Iraq and also under the Saddam regime, there were undercurrents of mistrust and fear between Sunnis and Shiites. This is said to have been almost unknown amongst U.S. planners before the invasion in 2003. In the power vacuum which the invasion opened, the mistrust and antagonism between Shiites and Sunnis broke out in an accelerating spiral of more and more brutal violence (Hagan et al. 2013).

Until Saddam Hussein's regime was overthrown in 2003, ethnicity and denomination admittedly played a small role in everyday life, even though undercurrents of conflict existed. This may be attributed to that regime's secular and nationalistic ideology, in which faith, creed and ethnicity were of secondary importance to "the common Arab nation." Iraq, even with its non-Arab minorities, was part of this nation. In a way, Saddam's totalitarian regime kept a thick ideological lid on attempts at identifying with earlier ethnic and religious-based identities.

When the regime disappeared, a political vacuum emerged which was quickly filled by warring religious groups, each of which tried to mobilise their respective religious constituencies for their "cause." From 2006, militias in Baghdad drove large parts of their opponents' constituencies out of their respective residential areas in a large-scale ethnic-sectarian purge of the entire city. Today, Shiites and Sunni both fear each other, and even more, the respective militias. The non-Muslim minorities have traditionally kept to their own quarters around the city. Quite many who belonged to them have now fled, while the rest keep a low profile. These groups do not have their own militias and neither do they get protection from anyone else.

Under the new conditions in 2003, Sunnis and Shiites switched places in society and politics. With a single stroke, the Sunni Muslims went from being politically dominant to becoming marginalised, and the Shiites vice versa. The consequences unfolded through years of mutual persecution, terror and displacement. The Shiites mobilised and organised themselves in parties with militias who took their place opposite the Sunni Muslims. The Sunnis opened armed groups which attacked the Shiites and the new government, and all of them attacked the Americans. As bearers of the old regime, the Sunnis had a long "list of sins" against the Shiites from before. This regime had kept the Shiites in a subordinate position. In the current conflicts, minorities are caught in the middle and do little else than keep their heads down or flee.

These very painful conflicts have undoubtedly contributed to the fear, suspicion and bitterness between Sunnis, Shiites and minorities having now reached a high level.

## **4. VULNERABLE GROUPS**

### **4.1 WHICH GROUPS ARE CONSIDER VULNERABLE AND WHY?**

Since violence now strikes so broadly, no particular group may be considered to be without risk of being struck by violence in one form or the

other.

Even though the Shiite Muslims in a way have the best government protection, this only applies on an overall level, where army, police, security organisations have consistently been subject to Shiite-dominated governments since 2004. Despite this and the Shiite militias' large freedom of action, the regular Shiite Muslim citizens are just as susceptible to terrorism as both Sunni Muslims and those who belong to minorities.

It is the patterns of terrorism which differ from group to group, more than the extent of it. Roughly speaking, it can be said that while Shiites more often tend to become victims of mass attacks, Sunni Muslims more often tend to become arrested or abducted or tortured, beaten, killed and their corpses tossed on the ground (di Giovanni 2014). Amnesty International (2014, p. 4) describes the activities as "a consistent pattern of deliberate killings performed as executions."

Neither the Christians seem to be safe from the Shiite militias, which seem to operate virtually with impunity (Cockburn 2014). Over the past few years, there have also been attacks directed at nightclubs and bars owned and operated by Christian Iraqis in Baghdad. Several of the sources Landinfo and the Swedish Migration Board met in Baghdad in November 2013 believed that the attacks against such places were primarily against outlets of alcohol and not because they were owned by Christians (Landinfo and the Swedish Migration Board 2014, p. 8). It is, however, harming the economy and dangerous for the owners, guests and customers.

Sources which Landinfo and the Swedish Migration Board (2014, p. 6) spoke to in Iraq in the autumn of 2013 all agreed that minorities are amongst those who suffer from the violence. Generally, they are vulnerable because they have a different ethnicity and/or religion than the majority population at the place they live. However, many of the sources believed that at least in Baghdad, minorities were no longer a special target group for rebel groups, but that they suffer from the same poor security regime as everyone else where they live.

Landinfo met with Christian Iraqis who had recently fled to Jordan during a fact finding mission in November 2014 (conversation in Amman). They told that the situation in Baghdad had now become untenable. One of the women we spoke with said that she and her family had fled from place to place in the city because of the uncertain situation and were finally forced to flee from the country. This woman also mentioned that the rector of the university where she had studied, would not issue a diploma to her because she was a Christian.

Civilians are generally greatly affected by the violence. The large mass attacks affect Shiites, Sunnis and minorities. However, civilian authority figures, such as imams, prayer leaders and tribal leaders, should also be included amongst civilian targets.

For example, HRW reported in July 2014 a massacre of a Sunni Muslim tribal leader meeting in a suburb of Baghdad, and about the execution of a Sunni Muslim prayer leader (muezzin) in a Sunni Muslim mosque. HRW also reported that Shiite militias, along with police or army forces, execute Sunni Muslims, as when, for example, 48 men were executed in the suburbs al-Wardiyya, Jisr al-Diyala, al-Heetawy, Tarmiyya and Abu Ghraib.

Kidnappings are an activity which can affect people from any ethnic/religious group. The question is how much money can be extorted out of someone. If you are rich enough, you may well be in danger of becoming kidnapped.

## **4.2 ARE MINORITY PEOPLE SAFE IN THEIR CORE AREAS?**

Security in Baghdad is so poor that if a person belongs to a particular minority group and lives in an area where the group may be in the majority, he/she will still be subject to conflict-related violence.

In Baghdad, any inhabitant may be exposed to conflict-related violence as described above. While the Sunni Muslims in their areas seem to be particularly exposed to abduction and execution on suspicion of terrorist affiliations, the Shia Muslims in their areas seem to be particularly subject to mass attacks. And there are hardly any areas of the city which are completely spared from such types of attacks.

The districts where Christians and other small minorities are located are too small to give them any good protection. Neither do Christians and other ethnic/religious minorities have their own militias. However, the militia-in-chief can force them to pay "protection money," as a Christian source told Amnesty International (2014, p. 9). The source said that in general there is no guarantee that payment would ensure protection. The Christian minorities are also not linked together in tribal structures which could offer them protection.

## **5. DAILY LIFE**

Daily life in Baghdad walks a crooked line amidst all the violence. Communications, transportation, business and the public sector are all functioning in a way, despite many limitations as a result of years of mismanagement, corruption and poor security.

Baghdad is a big city and the conflict-related violence has not completely strangled daily life. Retail trade runs as normal. Food and consumer goods are offered for sale on a normal daily basis. People go out into the city both day and night and some also go to public events. Some of these may seem a little bizarre under the prevailing circumstances, such as peace festival that was organized to mark the UN International Day of Peace in the autumn of 2014 (Habib 2014).

Traffic is sluggish due to bottlenecks at the many checkpoints and due to overcrowded roads. The countless checkpoints are set up throughout the city, making it a long time to get from point A to point B. Baghdadians are infamous for their hazardous driving style. For example, a local taxi driver who Landinfo used in Kurdistan in 2012 said that he was reluctant to drive in Baghdad more out of fear of its traffic than of bombs and checkpoints. The security has admittedly worsened significantly since then.

As a result of a chronic shortage of public supply of power since Saddam Hussein's time, people in streets and neighbourhoods go together to buy and share their own generators. The drinking water supply and waste and wastewater systems are poor, but more major epidemics have managed to keep from happening.

The public health service delivers, although on a back burner. There is no significant lack of medicines but the quality of medicines and treatment is generally variable and in many cases deficient (Landinfo 2010, p. 3, 12). Schools are open and education has not been significantly interrupted for several years.



## 6. INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

### 6.1 NUMBER

According to IOM (2015), Baghdad had 48,120 IDP families as of January 2015, an increase from 25,356 families in March. It is common to estimate the number of people by multiplying the number of families by five.

The biggest waves of internally displaced people who have arrived in Baghdad in 2014 have come from the Sunni Muslim provinces Anbar, Ninewa, Diyala and Salahaddin. (IOM 2014a). In these provinces, ISIL's advance has led to long-term and extensive violations which have made many cities and towns uninhabitable. After ISIL's offensive in the summer of 2014, there has been a flood of internally displaced people to Baghdad. (IOM 2014a), probably because Baghdad is a relatively better place to live.

According to OCHA (2014b), most of the internally displaced people have a desire to live in neighbourhoods with Sunni Muslim population, such as Amiriya, Khadhra, Ghazaliyya, Mansour, Hay Al-Jameia, Doura and Harthiyya. Dansk Flygtningeråd (the Danish Refugee Council) (2014) also mentions the neighbourhoods Hettin and Adameya as appropriate for Sunni Muslim internally displaced people to settle in.

The most extensive internal flight has occurred inside the city and into the city from parts of the country where war has raged for quite some time. Flight out of the city is relatively less high. In their most recent overview of Baghdad, IOM reported in September 2014 that 500 families had relocated to Sunni Muslim Anbar, while a smaller number of families relocated to the Shiite provinces Wassit, Missan, Kerbala, Basrah, Qadissiya, Thi-Quar and Babylon (IOM 2014b).

According to a research report on internal displacement in Iraq (Chatelard 2009, p. 12), Baghdad and other places in central Iraq have previously accounted for the majority of both internal and external flight. Many from the educated middle class have relocated to KRI or out of the country. Others have relocated to other neighbourhoods in Baghdad where they have relatives, kinsmen and fellow believers.

A large number of people belonging to minority groups, such as Christians and Shabak, have relocated both to KRI and out of the country. Minorities such as these seem to have been heavily decimated due to flight.

In an article in Financial Times (Kerr 2014), it was reported that whenever they have been able to afford it, Sunni Muslims have relocated to neighbouring countries, KRI or safer places near Baghdad. The article mentions a family of less considerable means who came to Ramadi where they had relatives, by paddling up the Euphrates in a canoe and thus avoiding the hostilities and the Shiite militias' roadblocks.

## **6.2 HOW DO THE INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE LIVE?**

The internally displaced people are staying in many types of shelters. The majority live with relatives.

According to IOM (2014b, p. 3) the housing for internally displaced people in Baghdad is divided as such:

- 58 % with relatives
- 21 % in rented housing

- 11 % in "other housing," defined as: unfinished/abandoned buildings, military camps, public buildings, hotels, informal housing, community centres, self-owned housing or unknown housing (1,405 families). According to OCHA (2014c, p. 5), there are 33 community centres for internally displaced people in Baghdad. These house a total of 3,418 people. This group lacks adequate access to water, food, sanitary systems and health services. Recently, two camps were completed for internally displaced people (CCCM 2015).
- 4 % in school buildings
- 3 % with non-relatives
- 3 % in religious buildings.

IOM assumes that with the exception of those living in "other types of shelter," all internally displaced people receive some form or another of food assistance through local NGOs, religious groups and contributions from the local community (2014b, p. 3). The internally displaced people also have access to public services such as water, waste and health services.

Since most internally displaced people fled their homes on short notice, they have brought few belongings with them. Therefore, it is material furnishing which they have the most pressing need for. According to IOM, families have been observed sleeping on mats on the street and the majority of those who live in rented housing struggle to pay the rent (IOM 2024b [2014b?], p. 3).

### **6.3 AID SCHEMES**

The government, international organisations and the civil community all assist the internally displaced people in Baghdad.

The internally displaced people also get various forms of direct assistance from the inhabitants, bakeries and mosques. The mosques take up collections for money, necessities and medicines. Stores and hairdressers give discounts or free items. The government is reported to having appointed a committee to raise funds to assist the internally displaced people, but necessary mechanisms were said not to have been in place immediately set in order to get the funds out to the many who live in an impoverished way (Saleh 2014).

Dansk Flygtningeråd (the Danish Refugee Council) (2014) reports that they are cooperating with the government, the UN and NGOs to assist internally displaced people.

UNHCR (2014a) reports that winter aid has been set in motion for winter 2014/15. Around 131,000 people is considered as being in need of winter

aid. In autumn 2014, UNHCR sent special teams to assist the internally displaced people who have arrived in a large wave from Anbar. A quick analysis of their needs was implemented (UNHCR 2014b).

According to OCHA (2014c, p. 5), special offices have been established which assist internally displaced people with acquiring lost/left-behind documents. For example, internally displaced people in Kurdistan who have lost their documents travel to Baghdad to renew, for example, their food rations card (Mohammed 2014).

#### **6.4 RESTRICTIONS ON INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE'S ACCESS**

Restrictions is being reported to having become imposed on the internally displaced people's access to Baghdad.

OCHA (2014a, p. 2) reports that there are restrictions for internally displaced people who wish to go to Baghdad, but the information has few details. For example, there is little information about the requirements which might apply for entry, but it is said that internally displaced people must have a sponsor in order to be able to enter Baghdad legally (p. 2).

The UNHCR (2014b) reports about sponsorship requirements in Baghdad, as does the IDMC (2014). The IDMC reports that restrictions have generally become more frequently imposed by the various provinces, but for Baghdad's part, they don't have information about the duration of the restrictions. Apart from this we know little about the effective dates and who are included in the restrictions.

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