



Iraq – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 9 July 2015

Any information on the adequacy or otherwise of state protection for members of the families of persons who worked for the U.S. in Iraq from attack by militia.

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to a request for information, in a section titled “Government Protection of Minorities”, offers the following opinions on the ability of the Iraqi government to provide protection:

“The Post-Doctoral Researcher expressed the view that in the autonomous region, the KRG is ‘quite effective at protecting regions under its rule,’ however, the source notes that ‘the Iraqi government is ineffective at protecting anyone, regardless of their religion’. Similarly, according to the representative of MRG, ‘in practice, the Iraqi federal government has been completely ineffective in providing protection’.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (10 July 2014) *IRQ104909.E – Iraq: Situation of religious minorities, including practitioners of "Zoroastrianism" and [Yazidi]; treatment by other groups (including the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham, ISIS) and the government; state protection (2011-July 2014)*)

An article from The New Yorker on the situation in Iraq for former US army employees states:

“Ali is a self-described ‘agnostic Shiite’ who lives in Baghdad. Karim lives in Sinjar, the badlands between Mosul and the Syrian border, in a town made up of Yazidis—believers in an ancient faith related to Zoroastrianism. Ali and Karim (they asked to be given pseudonyms) are Iraqis in their thirties, married with children. Both worked for the United States Army when there were American troops in Iraq. From 2004 to 2008, Ali interpreted for soldiers on patrol in tense neighborhoods, then helped in the training of Iraqi security forces. In 2009, he became a freelance journalist and a researcher for Western non-governmental organizations in Baghdad, including Human Rights Watch. Karim, an engineer, signed on in May, 2003, after American troops entered Sinjar, supervising water projects and the renovation of schools in areas too dangerous for the Army to reach. In 2005, he left his job with the American military and went to work for an American medical charity outside Mosul. Few Iraqis offer so many armed groups so many reasons to kill them as Ali and Karim. Over the years, both men have been threatened repeatedly—by phone calls, by strangers appearing at their front doors, by carloads of gunmen. Once, travelling on a highway outside Tal Afar, insurgents fired AK-47s at Karim, who survived only because he was driving a faster car. In 2010, Ali had to leave his family and go into hiding, after Human Rights Watch issued a report on a secret prison, and a government spokesman proclaimed that an Iraqi researcher was feeding the organization lies. But Ali and Karim stayed in Iraq long after others in their situation had fled.” (The New Yorker (21 July 2014) *Trapped in Iraq*)

An article from the Wall Street Journal states:

“American troops have come home from Baghdad, Fallujah and Mosul, but many of the Iraqis who risked their lives to aid U.S. forces are still waiting for their tickets out of danger. Hundreds of American allies, who worked as interpreters or provided valuable intelligence, are caught in a bureaucratic morass at the departments of State and Homeland Security. In 2008 Congress created the Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa to help these brave men and women. Since then 6,378 applicants have received visas to resettle in the U.S. But more than 1,800 applicants have ended up stuck in limbo, told neither ‘yes’ nor ‘no,’ their applications endlessly pending. All the while, they face the constant threat of retaliation for having assisted the U.S. mission. In February the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project, where I work, along with Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of nine of these Iraqis whose visa applications have been pending without answer for an average of four years and three months. They include several interpreters, a doctor and an engineer, but they are identified by code names in court documents because of the danger they face.” (Wall Street Journal (11 April 2015) *The Friends We Left Stranded in Iraq*)

This article quotes a former US army interpreter as follows:

“My life is now in grave danger due to my service to the U.S. Army. I have survived two car bombs near my home. I have received phone calls and text messages from unknown numbers threatening to put a bullet through my head. One of my brothers was brutally beaten by militiamen. He survived only because the militiamen said they wanted to kill all of us brothers – ‘a family of traitors’ -- together. I have three young children whom I cannot send to school regularly because they may be kidnapped or killed. My wife and I leave the house only to get essential items. I have no stable source of income and cannot reveal my work history to potential employers.” (ibid)

The Introduction to a report from Amnesty International states:

“It is difficult to establish the true scale of the killings and abductions that ISIS has committed. Amnesty International has gathered evidence about scores of cases. To date, ISIS does not appear to have engaged in mass targeting of civilians, but its choice of targets – Shi’a Muslims and Shi’a shrines – has caused fear and panic among the Shi’a community, who make up the majority of Iraq’s population but are a minority in the region. The result has been a mass exodus of Shi’a Muslims as well as members of other minorities, such as Christians and Yezidis. Sunni Muslims believed to be opposed to ISIS, members of the security forces, civil servants, and those who previously worked with US forces have similarly fled – some after they and their relatives were targeted by ISIS.” (Amnesty International (14 July 2014) *Northern Iraq: Civilians in the Line of Fire*, p.4)

In a section titled “Attacks and Threats Against the Backdrop of Sectarian Violence” this report states:

“Individuals from all faiths and communities who worked with US forces in previous years, including civilians who worked for private companies hired by

US forces to do cleaning or catering, have similarly been targeted by ISIS.”
(ibid, p.9)

See also the 2015 Amnesty International annual report on Iraq which states:

“IS fighters also killed members of the Sunni community they suspected of opposing them or of working for the government, its security forces or previously for US forces in Iraq. In October, IS killed over 320 members of the Sunni Abu Nimr tribe in Anbar as the government sought to mobilize and arm Sunni tribes to fight against IS. IS fighters carried out summary killings of hundreds of people they captured, including government soldiers. In June, they summarily executed more than 1,000 soldiers and army volunteers taken prisoner as they fled unarmed from Camp Speicher, a major military base in Tikrit. IS posted video footage of some of the killings on the internet. IS forces destroyed or desecrated historical sites and places of worship across all ethnic and religious communities, established Shari’a courts in areas they controlled and called for those who had worked for the government or US forces to repent.” (Amnesty International (25 February 2015) *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 – Iraq*)

A report published by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in a section titled “Conflict and Protection of Civilians”, states:

“Civilians suffered enormously in the conflict with ISIL throughout 2014. The advance of ISIL led to widespread displacement and, in turn, this caused a humanitarian crisis. Along with widespread reports of ISIL abuses, reports from AI and HRW alleged that Shia militias perpetrated human rights abuses against civilians, particularly against Sunnis. These included abductions, killings and extortion. There were also reports of ISF committing human rights violations, including the use of barrel bombs and shelling in civilian areas. Prime Minister Abadi's commitment to the creation of a National Guard, which would bring militia groups under government control, and reform of the ISF, including the dismissal of commanders for corruption, are signs that the Iraqi government is addressing these reports. However, the Iraqi government must hold those responsible for human rights abuses to account, and gather more documentation. Civil society activists continued to be at risk, with reports of disappearances and killings; for example the killing of Saad Abdul Wahab Ahmed, a civil society activist, by unidentified gunmen. The humanitarian situation in Iraq severely deteriorated in 2014 with the displacement of an estimated 2.1 million people. In addition, the UN estimates that 2.2 million people in areas controlled by ISIL and affiliated armed groups are in urgent need of aid and are, with few exceptions, beyond the reach of humanitarian partners. The UK is supporting the international humanitarian effort and has pledged £39.5 million. This funding is providing shelter, winter supplies, food, water, sanitation and medical care to thousands of displaced families, as well as services to protect vulnerable civilians, such as legal assistance and support groups for women.” (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (12 March 2015) *Human Rights and Democracy Report – Iraq*)

The Executive Summary of the US Department of State report on events in Iraq during 2014 states:

“Severe human rights problems persisted. Large-scale and frequent killings, the vast majority of which ISIL carried out, destabilized the country. They

included the June 10 mass killing of more than 600 inmates, almost all Shia, at Badoush prison near Mosul. ISIL also killed, abducted, and expelled from their homes members of religious and ethnic groups, including Christians, Shia Shabak, Shia Turkmen, and Yezidis. Simultaneously, but on a much smaller scale, there were unverified reports of government actors and Shia militias killing Sunni prisoners. Widespread corruption at all levels of government and society exacerbated the lack of effective human rights protections.” (US Department of State (25 June 2015) *2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Iraq*, pp.1-2)

A recent report on civilian casualties in Iraq published by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) states:

“The number of civilians killed was 665 (including 94 civilian police and 136 in Anbar), and the number of civilians injured was 1,032 (including 104 civilian police and 163 in Anbar). A further 801 members of the Iraqi Security Forces (including Peshmerga, SWAT and militias fighting alongside the Iraqi Army / Not including casualties from Anbar Operations) were killed and 655 were injured. Baghdad was the worst affected Governorate with 974 civilian casualties (324 killed, 650 injured). Diyala suffered 87 killed and 157 injured, while Salahadin suffered 75 killed and 52 injured; Ninewa 27 killed and Zero injured; and Kirkuk 07 killed and 08 injured. According to information obtained by UNAMI from the Health Directorate in Anbar, the Governorate suffered a total of 299 civilian casualties (136 killed and 163 injured). ‘The cycle of violence relentlessly continues in Iraq and civilians are bearing the brunt of it’, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Mr. Ján Kubiš said. ‘The terrorists of the so called ISIL and sectarian extremists are largely responsible for this violence which has affected all aspects of life in Iraq’, Kubiš added.” (United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (1 July 2015) *Casualty figures for the month of June 2015 in Iraq continue to be on the high side*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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