



HER ROLE

A STRATEGY FOR PEACE IN IRAQ

A Gender-Sensitive
National Reconciliation Platform

Second Edition

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Strategy for Peace in Iraq: A Gender-Sensitive National Reconciliation Platform (Second Edition) is a policy document presented by a group of 60 Iraqi women peace activists from Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin representing the diverse social fabric of Iraq. The purpose of this document is to provide the Government of Iraq, civil society, and the international community with a blueprint for building peace and promoting gender-sensitive policy priorities. It is also designed to be a discussion document that enables others to consider the condition and future direction for peace in Iraq. When drafting this platform, the women activists considered eight peacebuilding related issues in Iraq that would need to be resolved to enable the creation of a new reality. These issues are: 1) women's empowerment; 2) safety and security; 2) trust and confidence; 4) education and youth; 5) victims and survivors; 6) governance and distribution of resources; 7) health and environment; and 8) agriculture.

Underpinning every issue in Iraq is the lack of trust and confidence coupled with insecurity and absence of safety. This reality inevitably creates obstacles to both women and youth for realizing their full potential and contributes to perpetuating the cycle of violence. Thus, the resolution of one issue contributes to progress on the others. To begin to resolve these issues will require an inclusive and responsive process. Considering the protests and public demands which match the issues and recommendations in this document to a great extent, this reconciliation platform is an effective means that Iraq's political, religious, and tribal leaders at the national and local level should use to engage a broad section of society in initiatives that address the identified challenges within the document. Civil society and the international community can also contribute to advancing the reconciliation process through its close collaboration and support to Iraqi decision makers and promoting the inclusion of women in decision-making spaces.

To address these issues, the women developed 50 comprehensive policy recommendations to serve as a roadmap for peace in Iraq. Through a robust research and public outreach effort, these activists solicited input from citizens, stakeholders, and decision makers from the six provinces to devise policy recommendations that are reflective of the needs, expectations, and priorities of Iraq's diverse population.

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Women's Empowerment

- ▶ Engender participation of women in public and political life.
- ▶ Re-establish an independent government body to promote inclusion and empowerment.
- ▶ Combat violence against women through legislation and gender sensitivity training.
- ▶ Prevent and prohibit early marriage through legislative action and public outreach.
- ▶ Establish protection and rehabilitation centers for survivors of gender-based violence.
- ▶ Establish community learning centers to combat illiteracy and school drop-outs.
- ▶ Issue micro-grants for women-led small businesses.
- ▶ Launch expansive public outreach campaigns to promote the rights of women.

Security and Safety

- ▶ Disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate armed groups into the Iraqi army and Federal police.
- ▶ Continue the professionalization and integration of the Iraqi army.
- ▶ Integrate women into the security sector.
- ▶ Build the security sector's capacity and respect for the rule of law.
- ▶ Build the security sector's administrative and oversight capacity.
- ▶ Build public trust and confidence in local police.

Trust and Confidence

- ▶ Enact confidence-building measures to enhance citizen-state relations.
- ▶ Support civic engagement to monitor progress on government-led coexistence initiatives.
- ▶ Enact confidence-building measures to enhance citizens' trust in state security forces.
- ▶ Implement cross-community dialogue programs.
- ▶ Counter violent extremism through women and youth empowerment.
- ▶ Launch expansive public outreach campaigns to promote peace and reconciliation.

Victims and Survivors

- ▶ Establish rehabilitation and reintegration centers for victims and survivors.
- ▶ Protect the rights of mothers and children born from conflict through legislation and public outreach.
- ▶ Enact confidence-building measures to rebuild victims and survivor trust in society.
- ▶ Provide financial compensation to victims and survivors.
- ▶ Provide support to young victims and survivors to reintegrate into academic life.
- ▶ Launch expansive public outreach campaigns to support social reintegration.
- ▶ Prioritize reconstruction and security in liberated areas.

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Education and Youth

- ▶ Improve School infrastructure and facilities.
- ▶ Develop a modern, inclusive and gender- sensitive curriculum.
- ▶ Develop the skills and capacities of teachers and school professionals.
- ▶ Decrease the school dropout rates and increase enrollment rates.
- ▶ Enhance development opportunities for youth.
- ▶ Issue micro-grants for youth-led small businesses.
- ▶ Launch expansive public outreach campaigns to promote youth empowerment.

Governance and Distribution of Resources

- ▶ Continue the devolution of powers to the provincial government.
- ▶ Strengthen systems of accountability and transparency across government.
- ▶ Improve the administration and delivery of public service.
- ▶ Resolve disputes between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government.
- ▶ Administer fair and equitable budgets across provinces.
- ▶ Enhance the role of underrepresented groups for more responsive and inclusive governance.

Health and Environment

- ▶ Reconstruct and modernize health infrastructure and facilities.
- ▶ Develop medical technologies and provide quality and adequate health services.
- ▶ Develop the skills and capacities of doctors and health care professionals.
- ▶ Establish rehabilitation and reintegration centers for mental health and drug addiction.
- ▶ Protect and maintain a clean environment in Iraq.
- ▶ Launch public awareness campaigns to promote health and protect the environment.

Agriculture

- ▶ Legislate reforms for arable land reallocation and investment.
- ▶ Enhance sustainable agricultural production.
- ▶ Restore sustainable livestock production.
- ▶ Secure Iraq's international water rights and modernize the irrigation system.
- ▶ Develop the skills and capacity of farmers.
- ▶ Raise awareness and develop rural socio-economic infrastructure.

The women peace activists will use this platform as the foundation for their advocacy efforts to promote the timely adoption and implementation of the outlined recommendations, and most importantly, demonstrate their credibility and ability to engage productively in the national reconciliation process. With this document, this group of peace activists will continue to build public support for their platform and participation in the decision-making process in order to realize their vision for peace in Iraq.

OUR CALL TO ACTION

We, the women peace activists, believe that the time for open and honest dialogue between Iraqis has arrived. We are circulating this platform to advocate and stimulate discussion amongst and between government officials, political and religious leaders, protestors, civil society, academia, and the international community on salient national reconciliation issues.

We call on all parties to consider these recommendations seriously in order to make meaningful strides toward a lasting peace in Iraq. The policy recommendations outlined in the platform seek to provide step-by-step measures for addressing the key issues needed to achieve an enduring reconciliation in Iraq and are based on consultations with and on the priorities of Iraqis. Over the last two years, we have gained public support and the respect of the Iraqi people by listening to their concerns and transforming their ideas and priorities into achievable solutions. We are calling on decision makers at all levels of the Government of Iraq, civil society, and the international community, to take immediate action and implement these well researched, representative, and responsive policy recommendations. By taking action on these recommendations, the Government of Iraq and other key stakeholders will demonstrate their commitment to achieving peace and gain the support and legitimacy of the Iraqi people as the solutions provided in the platform are citizen-driven, have already garnered public buy-in and support and above all, resonates with large segments of the public, including the protestors.

Finally, this platform serves as a discussion and advocacy document for all those interested in bringing peace to Iraq. We welcome any peaceful and honest contribution that would help to advance the ultimate goals of this platform to create a new peaceful reality in Iraq and empower and increase the access of women to meaningfully contribute to the national reconciliation process.

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INTRODUCTION

Women in Iraq have long been organizing to make their voices heard in order to meaningfully contribute to public and political life; however, greater inclusion of women and issues important to women in the overall political agenda has yet to be achieved. Previous and current attempts to national reconciliation continue to neglect gender-sensitive considerations despite the fact that women and young girls often disproportionately suffer the consequences of conflict. Public opinion research conducted in 2017 by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in liberated areas revealed that women held strong views with regards to the future of Iraq and their communities. Moreover, according to the same research findings by NDI, 96 percent of respondents believed women should be included in determining the direction of the country.

Along with this strong public desire for women's contribution in decision-making processes on issues related to national reconciliation, research on past peacebuilding efforts from around the world have proven that women are important agents of positive social change and for building sustainable peace. If women have the opportunity to engage meaningfully in public and political life, countries are more likely to be economically prosperous, stable, and resources allocated appropriately to support the next generation. Yet, despite this evidence, women continue to be sidelined from the reconciliation process in Iraq, and many believe that women's exclusion is why little or no significant progress on reconciliation has been made.

A Strategy for Peace in Iraq: A Gender-Sensitive National Reconciliation Platform (Second Edition) seeks to provide the Government of Iraq, civil society, and the international community with a blueprint for peace and promote gender-sensitive policy priorities. The second edition of the strategy, which builds on the original work conducted by 40 Iraqi women peace activists from the liberated provinces of Anbar, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin, includes two new peacebuilding related issues—health and environment and agriculture—as well as conflict maps for Baghdad and Diyala. Twenty new women peace activists from Baghdad and Diyala, along with 20 high-performing “*Champions for Change*” selected from the previous year's cohort, developed these additional chapters.

The program was scaled up in the third year of the program to include 20 additional women peace activists from Baghdad and Diyala. Baghdad is the center of political power—and still one of the largest host communities for displaced persons—and Diyala once served as a staging ground for ISIS insurgency. Including the voices of women from these provinces helped solidify the gains the original cadre of women made to influence the decision-making processes vital to establishing an inclusive social and political framework in post-ISIS Iraq.

This platform presents policy recommendations through a gender lens to ensure that women's voices and needs are no longer excluded from the reconciliation process. The women activists who drafted this platform believe that now is the time for Iraqi women to assume a central role in the decision-making process and contribute to building an inclusive and lasting reconciliation

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in Iraq. As the country of Hammurabi law, a rich history of multiculturalism, religious and ethnic plurality, and a country where women have long served as the backbone of society, the women peace activists present this document to all those who seek to bring peace to Iraq.

METHODOLOGY

When developing this platform, the women considered a vast range of issues that would need to be resolved in order to enable the creation of a stable, prosperous, and peaceful Iraq. In the first phase of the program, the women peace activists from Anbar, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salahaddin classified these issues into six categories: 1) women's empowerment; 2) safety and security; 3) trust and confidence; 4) youth and education; 5) victims and survivors; and 6) governance and distribution of resources. In the second phase, the 20 women peace activists from Baghdad and Diyala, along with the 20 "Champions for Change," identified two additional issues: 1) health and environment, and 2) agriculture, based on additional outreach to their communities, stakeholders, and decision makers at the local and national level. In their research and outreach activities, the 20 women from Baghdad and Diyala and the 20 "Champions for Change" utilized the tested outreach and communication methodology developed by the original cohort.

The issue identification process for the eight topics included an initial round of intensive research by the women activists to assess the roots, triggers, and underlying factors of Iraq's most recent conflict--the ISIS occupation and military operation against the insurgent group. Following a data analysis process and subsequent negotiations and prioritization of the issues, the women further expanded on their preliminary research through consultations with local and national stakeholders and decision-makers. Through interviews and discussions with a wide range of government and non-governmental actors, such as Members of Parliament and Provincial Council Members, governors, lawyers and judges, tribal and religious leaders, security officials, academics, and international and local organizations, the women activists began to identify a robust set of gender-sensitive policy recommendations to address salient and prominent aspects of the eight issue areas. Moreover, through these efforts they started to garner support and buy-in for the platform and their participation in the national reconciliation process.

To further analyze and triangulate their field research in order to develop comprehensive, realistic, and achievable recommendations, the women activists participated in an intensive consultation process with experts in the eight respective thematic issues. NDI facilitated these gatherings to support the women as they consolidated their research into short and long-term actionable solutions targeting the Government of Iraq, civil society, and the international community.

With the preliminary platform drafted, the women activists returned to their provinces to engage in grassroots outreach activities to ensure that the recommendations were inclusive and responsive to the needs and expectations of citizens in their communities. To conduct this outreach, the activists used various outreach methods and tools acquired in NDI training and coaching sessions to solicit and assess the input collected from affected citizens, including vulnerable groups, such as youth, women, minorities, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

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Over the course of their effort to draft the platform and their advocacy, the women activists organized over 2,800 meetings and outreach activities reaching more than 16,000 citizens, as well as over 1,600 stakeholders and 1,200 national and local level decision makers across Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin. Their commitment and perseverance throughout this intensive process has resulted in a comprehensive policy document that presents a thorough analysis of the current reality, articulates a clear vision for the future, and outlines specific policy recommendations reflective of the needs and priorities of their communities.

NDI PROGRAM APPROACH - #HERROLE: INCLUSIVE RECONCILIATION, LASTING PEACE

This platform is the result of an intensive three-year effort by women activists in a program funded by the Government of Canada and implemented by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). It was implemented in its first year in partnership with four local civil society organizations: Al-Tadhamun Iraqi League for Youth (Anbar), National Institute for Human Rights (Kirkuk), Iraqi Institute for Development (Ninewa), and the Justice Centre to Support Marginalized Groups in Iraq (Salahaddin).

The program was designed to provide women from different ethno-sectarian backgrounds, ages, and professions to come together and build a shared understanding for others' experiences and expectations for peace in order to develop a gender-sensitive national reconciliation platform. Operating as a network of women under the umbrella of *#HerRole: Inclusive Reconciliation, Lasting Peace*, the women peace activists worked together as a unified voice to present a cohesive message and model in order to stitch the social fabric of the country back together. Through a series of capacity building trainings and outreach activities to engage and solicit input from citizens, stakeholders, and decision makers, the 60 women peace activists developed the skills and understanding for how to transform conflict dynamics in their provinces; research and identify issues in their communities that are important to reconciliation, particularly to women; and convince key decision makers of the importance of strengthening women's role in reconciliation processes.



Women's Empowerment

The current condition of Iraqi women is that they are marginalized within a patriarchal society. This marginalization is reflected in the political and economic life of Iraq where female voices are often defined by their absence. This vulnerability manifests itself in domestic violence, early marriage, illiteracy, economic dependence, and lack of confidence. Underpinning all of these factors is the simple fact that women are not often included in decision-making processes.

THE CURRENT REALITY

Armed conflict, regardless of its nature or where it occurs, has a devastating impact on society, and contemporary armed conflicts systematically exploit and kill civilians. Yet, women and girls tend to be the hardest hit. While there is no intent to discount or dismiss the suffering of men during conflict, women and girls, often being one of the most vulnerable groups in society, have been known to disproportionately suffer the consequences of conflict since deliberate gender-based violence and discrimination are prevalent and go unchecked in these settings. This is further compounded by the fact that wom-

en are sidelined from key decision-making spaces that dictate and have long-term ramifications on their fundamental freedoms and quality of life.

Under the three-year occupation by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), women and girls endured the darkest sides of humanity: human trafficking and enslavement; forced marriages; and sanctioned rape and physical abuse. According to accounts gathered by Human Rights Watch, women and girls faced severe restrictions in clothing and freedom of movement, were forced to dress

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in niqab, and be accompanied in public by a close male relative. If restrictions were violated, male family members and sometimes the women themselves were beaten or fined, essentially forcing women and girls into almost complete social isolation.

The targeted and systematic rape, sex slavery, and forced marriages of non-Muslim women and girls, including Yazidis and Christians, might be characterized as some of the most heinous war crimes and crimes against humanity to have occurred in contemporary armed conflict. ISIS captured several thousand Yazidi civilians in Ninewa where women and girls were systematically separated from their families and moved between Iraq and Syria through slave markets or were given as “gifts” to combatants. Over 3,000 Yazidi women and girls are still missing.

Women and girls who were forced to flee their homes now face uncertainty about their fates and the fates of their families. Having fled the horrors of ISIS, women and girls—many of whom are now widows or orphans—find themselves in situations without proper mechanisms for protection and support. Whether in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps or if they returned home, women lack proper health services, including psychosocial support, and rates of divorce and violence against women have increased. Prior to displacement, women would often turn to their families but with family members abducted, imprisoned or separated during displacement, many women are now forced to stay with their abusers.

The occupation and ensuing war against ISIS also redefined traditional gender norms and shifted the balance of care-giving, economic, and decision-making responsibilities between women and girls, and men and boys. With many men and boys either killed, captured or recruited to fight by force or volunteered,

women were suddenly thrust into the position of breadwinner. However, economic opportunities for female heads of households remain limited, and the gender norms that maintain men as sole providers further continue to isolate women as the competition for scarce resources persists. Inadequate investment in building the capacity of women and girls—including limiting access to education, resulting in high rates of illiteracy and school drop-outs—has hindered access to labor markets. According to a March 2018 report from the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC), the majority of families returning to IDP camps are female-headed households, with few possibilities for generating income. In addition, as documented and observed by HerRole activists, severe poverty and sheer desperation have led some women and girls to prostitution as they seek out any means for survival. Many have resorted to suicide as a final escape.

While women worked tirelessly to provide for and protect their families and communities, women's participation in public and political life has remained stagnant or decreased in the areas formerly controlled by ISIS. Women remain underrepresented in all major political and public institutions, including political parties and executive bodies, civil society, trade unions, and the media. Where represented, they are often relegated to administrative positions and do not have access to decision-making spaces. This has resulted in discriminatory and exclusionary policies that prevent women from enjoying their fundamental freedoms and economic and social independence. UN Resolution 1325¹ has not been implemented fully, and issues important to women have become secondary on the government's agenda, culminating with the proposed amendments to the personal

¹ UN Resolution 1325 formally recognized the relationship between women, peace and security and the critical role that women play in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

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status law to legalize the marriage of girls as young as nine. Tribal and religious practices also continue to curb progress in areas that would improve women's rights and economic

well-being, such as sanctioning honor killings and domestic violence, supporting polygamy and marriage outside the courts, and using women to settle tribal disputes.

THE VISION

Women would be politically and economically empowered to contribute to a new, confident, and sovereign Iraq. Increased opportunities for women's political participation and their assumption of decision-making positions within government, political parties, and civil society would result in more gender-sensitive policies and improve government responsiveness to key issues important to women. Women and girls would gain economic independence with increased freedom of movement, a stronger sense of safety and securi-

ty, and more opportunities for education and employment. The full implementation of UN Resolution 1325 would enable women to be agents of peace and transformation in society. Legislation and policies would protect the rights of women against gender-based violence and ensure freedom of choice regarding their marital status. If this vision is achieved, women's equal and meaningful inclusion in the political process and in economic and social life would result in the realization of the full potential of Iraqi society.

THE ACTIONS

1. Engender participation of women in public and political life. The Government of Iraq should institute a quota mandating that 25 percent of key decision-making positions across all government ministries and independent commissions, such as the National Reconciliation Committee and the Independent High Electoral Commission, be women. With the same quota mandating that 25 percent of Members of Parliament (MPs) be women, political parties should adopt the same requirements within their leadership structures. This would ensure that party platforms are responsive and inclusive to the needs of women, which in turn can be translated into more

gender-sensitive legislation. The Council of Representatives should also identify ways to promote opportunities for women, such as formally establishing and backing a women's caucus, and ensuring that women parliamentarians are staffed and resourced just like their male colleagues. The parliament should also promote a safe working environment for women MPs, free from harassment and intimidation, and institute penalties for those who violate codes of conduct. Outside the systems of government, women should be afforded with more opportunities to take on leadership roles in civil society, trade unions, and the media. The international community can support this through targeted capacity

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building trainings and seed funding to support women as they seek to establish themselves as individuals with authority and credibility in public life.

2. Re-establish an independent government ministry to promote inclusion and empowerment. For effective participation of women in public and political life, women must be included in decision-making processes and hold a meaningful seat at the table. An independent government ministry should be re-established and given an annual operating budget to support and monitor the implementation of UN Resolution 1325, in partnership with civil society. The core mandate of the ministry should be to empower women to participate in public and political life through training programs and small grants. The independent ministry would establish a mechanism to issue complaints should the government or other entities violate the rights of women.

3. Combat violence against women through legislation and gender-sensitivity training. The Council of Representatives should pass the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, which was introduced in 2015, within six months of being sworn into office, to address the increase in gender-based violence since the rise of ISIS. To ensure compliance with the law, national and local government bodies responsible for implementation and enforcement should be required to participate in gender sensitivity training and provided with mechanisms for oversight and compliance (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Governance and Distribution of Resources” section), including the authorization to issue penalties or refer violators to the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior should implement an annual gender sensitivity training program for all state-armed security forces to develop better interpersonal skills for how to work

with and support victims of gender-based violence (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Security and Safety” section).

4. Prevent and prohibit early marriage through legislative action and public outreach. Civil society and the international community should continue to mobilize and find areas of mutual cooperation through coalitions and alliances to exert public pressure on the Government of Iraq to amend the Personal Status Law and Penal Code to be more favorable to and uphold the rights of women and girls within one year of the formation of the new government. As the motivation and incentive for early marriage is often financial, civil society and the international community should also conduct a nationwide needs assessment to identify other compensatory mechanisms for families to deter them from early marriage, including the establishment of a government discretionary fund administered and monitored by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

5. Establish protection and rehabilitation centers for survivors of gender-based violence. Where legal measures are not sufficient, the Government of Iraq, through the Ministry of Health, should work with local civil society organizations (CSOs) to establish protection and rehabilitation centers for survivors of gender-based violence. The international community could provide supplemental funding to CSOs and/or work directly with the Ministry of Health to support implementation. The number of centers per province and the locations of protection and rehabilitation centers would be identified through needs assessments conducted by the CSOs in order to identify the most vulnerable and disadvantaged areas in each province. The centers would be tasked with providing psychosocial and basic health support to women, as well as free legal aid. Special attention should also

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be given to female victims and survivors to provide immediate shelter, safety, and health care (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Victims and Survivors” section). The Government of Iraq should also pass measures to ensure the safety and anonymity of victims and prevent external influences from forcing the closure of centers.

6. Establish community learning centers to combat illiteracy and school dropouts. To address significant disparities in literacy rates and education levels between women and men, the Government of Iraq should establish community learning centers targeting women and girls between the ages of 11 and 40. Learning centers established through the Ministry of Education, in partnership with local CSOs, would enhance the literacy and basic life skills of unemployed or underemployed women and girls (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Education and Youth” section). These accredited learning centers would also provide classes to women and girls who dropped out of school to help them obtain their general high school equivalency diplomas, as well as after-school programming to prevent childhood dropout. Child care would be provided to allow widows and female heads of households to attend classes and programs at the learning centers.

7. Issue micro-grants for women-led small businesses. Opportunities to enhance economic and social independence and mobility should be supported through the issuance of micro-grants to empower women

entrepreneurs. Administered through the international community, micro-grants programs should target women between 18 and 45 years of age, with a specific focus on unemployed women, widows, and divorcees, and provide them with funding to launch a small business in their communities. Recipients of the micro-grants would be required to attend vocational and skills training programs in order to establish systems of accountability and oversight, as well enhance the overall capacities and abilities of women to successfully compete in the labor market.

8. Launch expansive public outreach campaigns to promote the rights of women. The Government of Iraq and local CSOs should adopt a multi-pronged advocacy and awareness-raising approach to promote the rights and empowerment of women, and educate and transform the public's thinking on the role of women in public and political life. The international community should provide funding and capacity building to local CSOs to develop organized and robust campaigns. Advocacy and awareness initiatives should target three thematic areas: 1) protection of women's rights, safety, and fundamental freedoms through legislative action; 2) promotion of the role of women in public and political life; and 3) raising public awareness on issues of import to women. Civil society should establish and leverage its relationships with media outlets to highlight key campaign messages, and identify and work closely with tribal and religious allies to develop counter-messages to the traditional practices and customs that disenfranchise and disempower women.



Security and Safety

All developed and stable countries benefit from secure borders, professional security services, the application of the rule of law, and a robust framework for the management of armaments. The absence of these key elements has prevented progress in all other areas of Iraqi life. This reality inevitably creates obstacles for Iraqi society to realize its full potential and contributes to perpetuating the cycle of violence.

THE CURRENT REALITY

The self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which once controlled an estimated one-third of the country's territory, was declared officially defeated in December 2017 by the Government of Iraq. As the footprint of ISIS recedes, the Government of Iraq and its security forces are shifting tactics to transition from offensive operations toward a post-liberation stabilization and democratic consolidation phase.

Yet, the remnants of war, external influence, and debate over the presence (and future) of a multitude of security entities are hindering

progress on the adoption of a strategic approach to post-ISIS stabilization and security. All the while, the immediate effects of the conflict continue to play out throughout liberated areas. The horrors of ISIS and the ensuing war against the insurgent group still reverberates across society. Many who lived under ISIS's tyranny and those who fled are still crippled with fear and mistrust of others, which is further compounded by the threat of ISIS sleeper cells, the proliferation of weapons, tribal disputes, and targeted identity-based killings. And the perceived misapplication and overuse of the 2005 Anti-Terrorism Law against

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Sunnis and the use of citizen informants only adds to the growing a sense of insecurity.

This sense of insecurity and instability across liberated areas is due in part to the security vacuum that resulted from ISIS's downfall. The myriad of armed groups present in these areas—including the Iraqi army, police, and Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs)—are contributing to an environment of chaos and a breeding ground for corruption. For example, HerRole activists documented and witnessed cases of bribery or ransoming by security officials. The lack of coordination and communication between different groups and the various centers of decision-making have also led to disjointed and conflicting security protocols, such as the lack of a unified list of wanted ISIS combatants and informants or the establishment of different detention centers with little oversight and respect for the rule of law. As a result, citizens in these areas view the various security apparatuses with suspicion and mistrust.

The deployment and expansion of these different armed groups across liberated areas therefore appears to be hindering rather than helping to maintain the fragile security environment. Moreover, since liberation, these armed groups have been jockeying for control over the territory abandoned by ISIS, with the most successful being the predominantly Shia PMUs taking hold of Sunni and minority areas. Although residents generally feel indebted to and grateful for the sacrifice of the PMUs, they are also eager for their withdrawal. According to accounts collected by HerRole activists, the presence of PMUs in these areas generates tension across and within communities. Moreover, as different PMU units and other armed groups try to maintain their hold on territory, checkpoints and other travel restrictions have become more prevalent, diminishing the overall living conditions in these areas, which are already struggling

with poor infrastructure and lack of services. The spread of these armed groups has also led to the proliferation of light and heavy artillery weapons, some of which have fallen into the hands of tribes and their respective paramilitary forces, as well as other irregular armed groups.

The fractured nature of the security apparatus, coupled with the varying loyalties of armed groups to different political leaders, tribes, or foreign actors, has complicated critical security priorities. For example, the encroachment and partitioning by armed groups of liberated territory have resulted in more military-style command and control management, creating a sense of occupation rather than liberation. In turn, the presence of these groups has also prevented or at least slowed the transition of responsibility for safety and security to local police. And questions over the future status of these armed groups have yet to be answered. There are conflicting views and expectations ranging from complete dissolution to full integration into the Iraqi army, which many also expect will undergo restructuring to ensure all components are represented in combat and leadership roles. Regarding the Iraqi army, however, it is important to note that in contrast to other armed groups, the army emerged as a potent symbol of cross-sectarian pride. And its success against ISIS brought with it a sense of unity and support for the army, which is perceived as becoming more diverse and inclusive.

This tense and chaotic environment is acutely felt by women and girls. The presence of armed groups, the looming (and frequently actualized) threat of ISIS still in the air, and the underlying societal tensions and fears have prevented women and young girls from establishing some level of normalcy in their everyday life. The almost complete absence of females in the security apparatus further perpetuates this insecure and distressing

environment for women and young girls. Male-dominated armed groups, including local police, are untrained and ill-prepared to address the safety needs of women and girls, which is particularly detrimental during a time when gender-based and domestic violence are on the rise. There have also been frequent accounts of armed groups and the police harassing and mistreating women at check-

points as they lack the interpersonal skills and professionalism for how to appropriately interact with women. In addition, women are often discouraged or prevented from working in the security sector, which has an immediate and negative impact on how decision makers address (or do not address) the specific safety and security needs of women and young girls.

THE VISION

A safe and stable Iraq with secure borders, professional security services, and a robust framework for the management of armaments, would end the cycle of violence. In an environment more conducive to the freedom of movement, including the elimination of checkpoints, all citizens would be able to realize their full potential. Women and young people in particular would see the advantages of an improved security situation by opening new spaces for them to work and contribute

to society. With professional and representative security services and the elimination of irregular armed groups, all Iraqis would enjoy an improved sense of safety and security in their homes and communities. If this vision is achieved, a stable security situation would enhance the standard of living and quality of life for all Iraqis, resulting in fewer opportunities for vulnerable groups to be co-opted by violent extremism and fundamentalism.

THE ACTIONS

1 . Disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate (DDR) armed groups. The Government of Iraq should continue the progressive integration and consolidation of the PMUs into the Iraqi army and police. This institutionalization process would assure all components that they would be part of one official military body paying allegiance only to the Iraqi state and moving away from perceptions of sectarianism and foreign influence that would potentially lead to conflict and fragmentation down

the road. Any PMU not willing to fully integrate into the command and control structures of Iraqi security forces, and uphold and be fully accountable to international standards must be completely disarmed and demobilized. All other belligerent and irregular armed groups, such as tribal militias and gangs, should also be included in the DDR process, but if they are unwilling to be fully integrated and abide by international standards they must also be completely disarmed and demobilized. The Government of Iraq should develop a com-

prehensive DDR approach in partnership with international bodies, such as the United Nations and the International Coalition Against ISIS. This approach should include: 1) the establishment of an independent body to oversee the process; 2) agreement on military personnel (domestic, international, or both) to implement the disarmament phase; and 3) involvement of civil society organizations to support the reintegration of ex-combatants who choose to not join state security forces.

2. Continue the professionalization and integration of the Iraqi army. The Government of Iraq should institute compulsory military service as it would further strengthen the unity and expand the representation of the army as all sects and components would be included. Establishing compulsory military services would also provide an outlet for young men to develop their skills and expand their social networks. According to the findings from the HerRole activists outreach, youth, many of whom are currently unemployed, would become “real men” by being given life direction and kept out of trouble. Military leaders and advisors, in close cooperation with the international entities currently engaged in security sector reform, should continue to advance the practice of merit-based promotions and the elimination of sectarian privileges. Advancing a merit-based system would also contribute to the reduction of interference from political parties and foreign influence. Military and police academies should also abide by a merit-based system of recruitment and promotion to ensure equal representation of all components, especially minority groups. In turn, a more united and motivated army would be better positioned to protect the country against threats both foreign and domestic. Integration efforts should also consider the reinstatement of de-commissioned Baathist officers and security personnel not accused of major crimes. Although many Iraqis believe that de-Baathifi-

cation is partially to blame for ISIS’s rise, given the sensitivities of this policy option, an independent international organization should be commissioned to further assess this option with the public and military.

3. Integrate women into the security sector. To be compliant with UN Resolution 1325, the Government of Iraq should allocate 25 percent of key decision-making positions within the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Justice to women (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Women’s Empowerment” section). Specifically, women should have a decisive role in state security forces, state oversight and management bodies, and justice and rule of law positions. Training units within state security forces should also be established and managed by women in order to train security personnel on gender-sensitive practices and procedures for how to respond to the different forms of violence and safety threats that men and women typically encounter. Currently, women make up approximately two percent of the police force. To address this massive gap in representation, the Government of Iraq should recruit and train an additional 30,000 female police officers to be distributed and take an active role in policing on the streets across liberated areas proportionate to population size. Given the conservative nature of society, females are often deterred from reporting cases of violence to male security forces. An increase in female police officers would improve policing efforts related to domestic and gender-based violence. Moreover, with women’s distinct experiences of conflict and violence and knowledge of community priorities, more meaningful engagement would contribute to the development of a security sector that is accountable and responsive to all people.

4. Build the security sectors capacity and respect for the rule of law. In part-

nership with local civil society organizations (CSOs) and the international community, the Government of Iraq should institute a training program for all current and future state security forces to develop awareness and understanding of internationally recognized human rights standards and practices. This could be part of a broader mandated training program implemented by the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior for all security forces which includes gender-sensitivity training to develop better interpersonal skills for how to work with women and support victims of violence (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in “Women’s Empowerment section”). Current and new advisors within the security sector would also be required to regularly attend trainings on the rule of law to build their understanding on how to apply international law, particularly human rights law and international humanitarian law, for stabilization and crisis management. Within these trainings, special attention should be given to how to devise and implement a system of questioning and prosecution of former ISIS combatants and informants, as well as family members of accused ISIS fighters. The Government of Iraq should also undergo an intensive assessment of key legal and military frameworks to ensure they are inline with the UN conventions in which it is a signatory to ensure compliance.

5. Build the security sectors administrative and oversight capacity. The Government of Iraq, in close cooperation with international entities currently engaged in security sector reform, should continue to lead improvements to streamline internal operations and administration, and establish oversight mechanisms to combat corruption. To improve coordination and cooperation, the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Justice should establish a single

database of former ISIS combatants and informants and a separate database of those detained under the Anti-Terrorism Law. All the databases maintained by armed groups should be handed over to these ministries. Better systems for information sharing across these ministries would improve oversight and monitoring capacities to combat terrorism, as well as improve the implementation of due process. The Government of Iraq should also conduct an assessment of the provisions and application the Anti-Terrorism Law to ensure that the law is no longer used to target specific components.

6. Build public trust and confidence in local police. Local communities should be given the opportunity to voice their needs and expectations of a reformed security sector. CSOs and the international community should facilitate opportunities for citizens to interact with security forces to express their concerns and priorities for improved security and safety. Women and women’s-led organizations should be directly involved in these activities given their distinct experiences of conflict and violence and knowledge of community priorities. Additional community policing programs should also be implemented to help increase confidence and open lines of communication between citizens and local police to address and solve community security problems together. This would eliminate the need for informal citizen informants, which creates suspicion and mistrust within and across communities, as community policing programs would formalize and create a more open and transparent process. In addition, the Ministry of Interior should implement an outreach program where local police officers attend monthly meetings in primary and secondary schools to further open lines of communication between police and young people with the aim to rebuild trust and awareness.



Trust and Confidence

After 2003, the differences between Iraqi peoples escalated. The effect has been an ongoing breakdown of trust. The conflicts that followed have reflected this loss of confidence to the point that some now fear other identities as they would be a terrorist. The reality created out of this is the further fragmentation of Iraqi society into single ethno-sectarian factions.

THE CURRENT REALITY

The impact of armed conflict is devastating and encompassing. It creates tangible effects, such as death and injury to civilians, creation of refugees or internally displaced persons, environmental degradation, and destroyed or derelict infrastructure, and intangible effects, such as a lack of trust in government, weak social cohesion, a fragmented and traumatized society, and a perceived sense of fear and insecurity. Addressing both is essential to comprehensive peacebuilding. Yet, the reconstruction of societal and citizen-state relations is what underpins the creation of an enduring peace. Violent conflict erupts when

negative citizen-state and citizen-citizen relations become too unbearable; the conflict itself then destroys the norms and values that bonded communities, in essence breaking the social fabric.

Years of brutal occupation by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, (ISIS) followed by the destructive war against it, devastated communities and families and eroded basic levels of trust in society. Unfortunately, the entrenched and historical grievances that served as the catalyst for ISIS continue to play out today. A potent sense of insecurity and instability still

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remains in liberated areas. Many groups are vying for control of liberated territory and in some instances using financial incentives or violence to influence demographic changes. Lack of economic opportunity and lagging reconstruction efforts are creating a new breeding ground that will leave vulnerable groups, particularly young men, susceptible to extremist ideology. And the multitude of armed groups such as the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) used in the fight against ISIS appear to benefit from the precarious environment as they try to justify their continued presence in these areas.

There remains a significant trust deficit between the state, citizens, and the armed forces that are meant to protect them. The fear that security and stability may never take hold is reinforced by citizens' perpetual state of displacement, meager efforts to address human rights violations, and limitations in freedom of movement with increased checkpoints and travel restrictions. While checkpoints may be used to create the appearance of law and order, armed groups use them to preserve their hold on territory and remnants of ISIS have used false checkpoints to maintain its insurgency and instill fear and mistrust. The perceived weakness and inefficiency of the government in addressing these issues has led to a crisis of confidence. Coupled with that is the fact that government institutions have been relatively slow in reconstruction and providing assistance, hindering the rate of return of displaced persons, and as a result trust in government to be responsive to citizens' needs is backsliding. Institutional inefficiencies, such as poor service delivery, corruption, a lack of an independent judiciary, and the legacy of political sectarianism further feeds into this lack of confidence and mistrust in the state.

Women and young people in particular do not trust the government to meet their ba-

sic needs given that their voices in decision-making are muffled. The lack of representation and decision-making authority of women and young people in the political and security arena has led to policies and legislation that do not serve their best interests. This is particularly clear in their absence from decision-making on national reconciliation issues. Women in particular are more intimately connected to and knowledgeable about the needs and fears of their communities, and their exclusion from the national reconciliation process has proven to be a major misstep. Efforts to rebuild citizens' trust and confidence in the government and within society requires all voices and views, especially given they make up 50 percent of the population.

Rebuilding people's trust and confidence with others outside their communities has been slow but is progressing. Considerable grassroots efforts are being implemented by local civil society organizations (CSOs), activists such as those involved in HerRole, and the international community to provide avenues for the renewal of trust and cooperation across components. However, the deeply-rooted fears and suspicion of others still remains and frequently resurfaces with the slightest spark. At hand are also the blatant discriminatory practices aimed to disenfranchise certain components of society from economic, professional, and educational development, as well as prevention of the practice of certain cultural or religious traditions openly and without retribution, all perpetuating the feeling of animosity. Revenge also appears to have filled the trust gap between citizens. Retaliatory practices either through revenge killings or falsely accusing others of being former ISIS combatants under the auspices of the 2005 Anti-Terrorism Law are on the rise. Many of today's tribal disputes are, in fact, being played out in this way as some were sympathetic or directly involved with ISIS.

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The period since the defeat of ISIS has also witnessed a re-emergence of groups turning inward to preserve and defend their identities, especially Yazidis and Christians whose very existence was threatened by ISIS. In turn, this has slowed the pace for the adoption and endorsement of a single national identity which would help to unify the country. The inward-looking trend is further fueled by the sectarian and fundamentalist rhetoric espoused by some religious, political, and tribal

leaders as it has caused an increase in stereotyping and ‘othering’ of different groups. This act of ‘othering’ plays out especially on social media, where people blame different components for past conflicts and current grievances. It has even resulted in the rise of ‘sect lords,’ as documented by HerRole activists, with individuals trying to take advantage of this situation by appearing to defend certain components when in reality it is for their own political or economic gain.

THE VISION

In a peaceful environment, trust and confidence would flourish. Men and women would work alongside each other to enhance community relations in order to strengthen trust and confidence across components and confront issues of discrimination and exclusion. Iraqis would engage in open dialogue to build religious and cultural awareness of other communities to move away from fundamen-

talist and extremist ideology. Through that process, they would develop a shared understanding and acceptance of a single national identity that encapsulates and represents Iraq’s diversity. If this vision is achieved, Iraqi society would become more integrated and tolerant of ethno-sectarian differences resulting in peaceful coexistence where their love of country binds them together.

THE ACTIONS

1 . Enact confidence-building measures to enhance citizen-state relations. To rebuild the legitimacy and trust of the state in the eyes of citizens, the Government of Iraq should take robust legislative action that is in line with international standards and practices to: promote peaceful coexistence; protect minority rights; renounce the use of discriminatory and inflammatory hate speech; and criminalize the use of practices that disenfranchise certain components from economic,

professional, and educational opportunities. This process should also include a thorough review and revision of the 2005 Anti-Terrorism Law to ensure the law can no longer be used to target certain components (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in “Security and Safety section”). The Government of Iraq should also provide a clear mandate and substantial funding and backing to the Implementation and Followup Committee for National Reconciliation to promote peaceful coexistence, including opening and staff-

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ing branch offices within six months of the formation of the new government. Offices should be opened across liberated provinces in rural and urban centers in order to serve as an effective interlocutor between citizens and government. A minimum of 50 percent of the staff in branch offices should be women and young people under the age of 45.

2. Support civic engagement to monitor progress on government-led coexistence initiatives. The Government of Iraq should create the space for civil society and citizens to participate in the oversight of government actions. This includes monitoring the implementation of the described legislation, as well as the monitoring of state-sponsored media outlets to report discriminatory or inflammatory messages. For this to be effective, the Government of Iraq must provide access for civil society and citizens to government data and statistics (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in “Governance and Distribution of Resources section”). This would not only promote their participation but also instill confidence in the public as to the government’s commitment to improving transparency. On a bi-annual basis, the Government of Iraq, through the Implementation and Followup Committee for National Reconciliation, should convene local civil society organizations (CSOs) and the international community at an implementers meeting where they would submit a progress report and proposed action for further improvement (similar to the UN shadow report process). The Government of Iraq should respond within 90 days to the report. The international community should support this process by providing funding and capacity building trainings to local CSOs and activists on political process and media monitoring, as well as to these independent government bodies to improve the efficiency and efficacy of implementation and responding to recommendations in the bi-annual reports. Assistance from the

international community may also include supporting the establishment of a network of human rights activists and organizations from liberated areas for a more coordinated monitoring and reporting effort. This could include a centralized reporting structure on the current conditions in liberated areas with regard to stability, security, and social cohesion to keep the network appraised in real-time of the current operating environment.

3. Enact confidence-building measures to enhance citizens’ trust in state security forces. While the Iraqi army and police undergo extensive capacity building and professionalization efforts (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Security and Safety” section), the Government of Iraq should institute a process for the incremental withdrawal of armed groups from liberated areas, which includes the decommissioning of their checkpoints. By the end of 2020, all security forces not integrated into the Iraqi army or police should be removed from liberated areas. In the interim period, CSOs should serve as interlocutors and conveners of local government officials and armed groups to devise and implement a plan to unify decision-making processes and improve coordination in order to create a more manageable security environment. Meaningful efforts to improve the day-to-day security environment would instill confidence in victims and survivors in the state security apparatus, and encourage displaced persons to return home, physically and psychologically helping to eliminate the barriers that isolated communities. Part of this process should include gender-sensitivity and human rights training to all armed groups by civil society, as well as organizing community forums between citizens and security officials to strengthen communication and cooperation (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Security and Safety” section). Specific attention should be given to engaging young people and wom-

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en in the organization and participation of these forums and trainings. Monitoring efforts by civil society should also be supported by the Government of Iraq and the international community to document violations and abuses by armed groups

4. Implement cross-community dialogue programs. The Government of Iraq, in partnership with civil society, should implement a robust community dialogue initiative to break down barriers of isolation and provide a safe space to confront their deep-rooted fears and mistrust of others. As a central organizing point and to streamline initiatives, the Implementation and Followup Committee for National Reconciliation should be given the mandate from the Government of Iraq to plan and coordinate with local CSOs to implement a series of cross-community dialogue programs in all liberated areas. Over the course of two years, dialogue sessions in rural and urban centers should occur on a bi-monthly basis and be open to anyone who wants to participate. To be effective, dialogue sessions must seek to convene all components from the area and ensure that women and young people participate. Specific sessions should also be organized to bring together political, religious, tribal, and community leaders from all components to develop trust and understanding and build constructive relationships, as these leaders could influence and promote messages of peaceful coexistence. A dedicated series of dialogue sessions facilitated by CSOs, religious and tribal leaders, and community leaders should convene family members of ISIS combatants with other community members to rebuild a foundation of trust and a process for reintegration and acceptance. Dialogue sessions targeting minority groups should also take place in mixed-communities, especially in Ninewa and Kirkuk, in order to identify avenues in which trust and confidence with other components can be established. The international com-

munity should support this effort by providing skills-building trainings and technical support to the Implementation and Followup Committee for National Reconciliation and civil society on how to effectively convene and facilitate cross-community dialogues.

5. Counter violent extremism through women and youth empowerment. To effectively counter violent extremism, women and young people must be empowered to lead reconciliation efforts and promote alternative narratives of peace and coexistence. With support from the international community, civil society should implement programs that develop the skills and capacity of women and youth to recognize threats that lead to violence and have the tools to respond to the challenges resulting from such threats. This should include the ability to address rising tensions where they serve as mediators and interlocutors within and across communities, through which they could identify broader systemic challenges or violations that generate frustration and grievances. As such, part of this process should also include the development of stronger links (formal and informal) between women and youth and higher-level political actors. In addition, civil society should leverage the social media savviness of young people to push out counter messages against radical propaganda and move the narrative away from 'othering' and extremist ideology. Other avenues could also include youth festivals built around peace and coexistence that bring together the cross-section of Iraq's diverse communities to share experiences and promote cultural awareness, and efforts that highlight the role of women and their successes in bridging communities and promoting peace.

6. Launch expansive public outreach campaigns to promote peace and reconciliation. A multi-pronged approach for advocacy should be adopted by the Gov-

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ernment of Iraq and local CSOs to promote messages of peaceful coexistence and social cohesion. The international community should provide funding and capacity building to local CSOs to develop organized and robust campaigns. Advocacy and awareness initiatives should target four thematic areas: 1) implement and enforce laws that promote peaceful coexistence, protect minority rights, renounce discriminatory and inflammatory hate speech, and criminalize practices of disenfranchisement; 2) promote messages that

counter violent extremism and fundamentalism; 3) highlight Iraq's expansive history and multicultural attributes to solidify the notion of a single national identity; and 4) endorse the participation of women and young people as agents of positive social change. Civil society should establish and leverage its relationships with media outlets to highlight key campaign messages, and identify and work closely with tribal and religious allies to develop and disseminate counter narratives to discriminatory or inflammatory messages.



Victims and Survivors

Rebuilding Iraq's social fabric is tied to the reintegration and rehabilitation of victims and survivors. The suffering of victims and survivors is particularly acute among women and children. Women who survived forced marriages and rape are ostracized by their own communities and families, and their children born from the conflict are left to confront questions regarding their identity and nationality. Continued exploitation, a lack of economic support, and sexual harassment have led to increased suicide rates and poor mental health among women victims and survivors.

THE CURRENT REALITY

With the declared victory over the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Iraq finds itself once more at a crossroads. A country riven with violence, sectarian conflict, and terrorism must now begin to look forward to the rehabilitation and reconciliation of its citizens. Those who were victims of and survived the horrors of ISIS occupation are now looking to their fellow citizens, the government, and the international community to restore their livelihoods and humanity and put safeguards in place to ensure that this atrocity does repeat itself.

As ISIS was taking hold of Iraqi territory in 2014, nearly 10,000 people were killed by acts of terror, in addition to the hundreds of thousands of civilians who were injured, displaced, and kidnapped.² As part of its brutal campaign to take over the country, ISIS captured thousands of innocent civilians, including children and women, who were forced to endure torture, rape, sex slavery, human trafficking, forced conversions, forced and

² Statista, *Number of deaths in Iraq due to terrorism between 2006 and 2016*. Retrieved at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/202861/number-of-deaths-in-iraq-due-to-terrorism/>

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child marriage, and unwanted pregnancies. Having survived the horrors of their captivity, these victims are now facing social stigmas, psychological and emotional trauma, ostracization, and complicated legal battles. Non-muslims, such as Yazidis and Christians, as well as Shia communities, were specifically targeted by ISIS. For example, by the time ISIS took control of Mosul in August 2014 nearly 6,300 people had been abducted, a majority of them Yazidi women and girls. By mid-May 2016, just over 2,500 Yazidis have reportedly managed to escape ISIS captivity (934 women, 325 men, 658 girls, 670 boys).³ However, human rights groups report that 2,500 to 3,000 Yazidi women and young girls and boys remain captive and are reportedly being trafficked across the border to Syria.

In the aftermath of the conflict, many believe that the Government of Iraq has fallen short in its response to address the immediate needs of victims and survivors, let alone preparing a comprehensive long-term plan. While the international community, local civil society organizations (CSOs), and individual activists are earnestly trying to fill the gap, larger efforts, such as proper service provision, comprehensive health care, psychosocial support, protection and reintegration, have yet to be put in place and will require broader efforts. For example, with over 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), many of whom are still residing in camps, some for the better part of almost six years, camps still lack adequate infrastructure, rehabilitation centers, trained and specialized staff, and standard medical services. And for those who return home, they are confronted with substandard living conditions that have caused many to even turn around and go back to the camps. And as observed by HerRole activists, the lin-

gering physical, emotional, and psychological effects of the conflict, which are further compounded by the poor quality of life for IDPs, have caused many to resort to drugs, begging, and even suicide.

The lack of attention and effort to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims and survivors perpetuates a sense of hopelessness, loss, and marginalization. Very little is currently being done to support and empower victims and survivors to help them transition back into society. Although some efforts implemented by the government have been made, they unfortunately backfired and have had adverse effects. For example, in an effort to distribute funds to victims and survivors, the government included them as part of its social safety net program, which is primarily meant to serve poor and vulnerable individuals. This caused resentment among victims and survivors who believe that their harrowing experience should be acknowledged and compensated by the government accordingly.

The perceived inadequacies in the government's response to the needs of victims and survivors has left them in a weak and fragile position as they continue to remain socially, economically, and legally vulnerable. Female victims and survivors are especially impacted under this state of stagnation. Many who were raped and forced to marry ISIS combatants are now single mothers who may or may not know the whereabouts of the father of their children either because they used a false name, fled the country, or were killed or captured in combat. By no fault of their own, many women and young girls are now stigmatized and pushed to the margins of society as they are perceived to have brought shame to their families. In many unfortunate instances, if the father and/or husband can be identified, regardless of if they were a former ISIS combatant or sympathizer, the woman is forced to marry and stay with the

³ UNAMI, A Call for Accountability and Protection: Yazidi Survivors of Atrocities Committed by ISIL: Retrieved at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMIR12Aug2016_en.pdf

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man in order to preserve the family's honor, despite the risk of her being victimized and traumatized all over again.

Children born from the conflict—though most are no more than five years old—are facing considerable social and legal hurdles. Due to the fact that ISIS-issued marriage contracts and birth certificates are not recognized by the government as legal documents, their citizenship and patrilineage are in question. In many cases, given the backlash, many women have not reported that their children were fathered by ISIS fighters, which has resulted in inaccurate data collection and diffi-

culty identifying and cataloging these cases. Those families who submit their cases confront endless bureaucracy and dragged-out legal procedures given the inaccurate data and inefficient processes, while those mothers who cannot identify the father, or children who have neither parents nor families to account for them, find no clear path forward. According to Iraqi law and Islamic Sharia jurisprudence, a mother cannot pass on her nationality to her children without proof of a legal marriage, nor can a relative and or legal guardian, therefore, these children have been deemed stateless without any legal rights or protections.

THE VISION

Victims and survivors would find a society that embraces them. Individuals targeted by violence would be protected under the law and reintegrated back into society and their families free from stigma and discrimination. Acknowledging their suffering would create an environment of tolerance to openly confront the atrocities committed against them without fear of shame or repercussion. Basic needs would be provided to economically empower

victims and survivors, particularly women and young girls, to elevate their standing in society, including the provision of employment opportunities and tailored educational and health care services. If this vision is achieved, victims and survivors would feel safe and accepted by their families, communities, and country, and in turn, would be empowered to ardently contribute to advancing a democratic, economically prosperous, and peaceful Iraq.

THE ACTIONS

1. Establish rehabilitation and reintegration centers for victims and survivors. The Government of Iraq should lead a comprehensive and coordinated response effort with the international community and local CSOs to support the rehabilitation of victims

and survivors, and ensure their full reintegration to society. This response effort should focus on two core areas: 1) develop rehabilitation centers that provide psychosocial support, healthcare, and vocational training; and 2) establish employment centers that provide professional and skills development and sup-

port job placement efforts in the public and private sector. In addition to providing much needed services, these centers should also serve as a safe space in the community where victims and survivors attend support groups and forums, and interact with other members of the community to share their experiences and reintroduce themselves. The number of centers per province and the locations of the centers would be identified through needs assessments conducted by the CSOs in order to identify the most appropriate areas in each province. Tribal and religious leaders, as well as public figures from different backgrounds, should be involved in these centers as advocates and volunteers, and work alongside civil society to provide support to victims and survivors in order to help restore trust and confidence in their communities. The international community can also support this through targeted capacity building training to CSOs and funding to support the construction and resourcing of the centers.

2. Protect the rights of mothers and children born from conflict through legislation and public outreach. The Council of Representatives, in consultation with international legal experts and religious authorities, should pass comprehensive legislation within three months of taking office to address the legal status of children born from the conflict. The legislation should grant full Iraqi citizenship to all children in order to guarantee and protect their identities and basic rights, such as access to education, health care, basic services, and inheritance. Full legal status for these children would mean a future alongside their fellow Iraqi citizens as equals and establish a sense of belonging where they could live without fear of marginalization and ostracization. This legislation should also seek to amend the current legal provisions to allow mothers and legal guardians to pass on their nationality and thereby their citizenship to their children regardless of marital status, and af-

ford them all rights and protections under the law. Beyond legal protections, efforts should be made to raise awareness and change public perceptions towards these children and mothers to support their full acceptance and integration into society. Using the legislation as a framework, the Government of Iraq and civil society should conduct a nationwide public outreach campaign to educate citizens on the provisions and benefits of the law.

3. Enact confidence-building measures to rebuild victims and survivor trust in society. Providing opportunities for victims and survivors to constructively address the atrocities they faced and begin to heal their emotional and psychological trauma is a fundamental first step toward reconciliation. To support this process, the Government of Iraq, through the Implementation and Followup Committee for National Reconciliation, should work in partnership with the international community and civil society to implement a transitional justice initiative across liberated areas to restore victims' and survivors' trust and confidence in society. Over the course of two years, trained CSOs, religious and tribal leaders, and legal professionals would have the option to facilitate transitional justice tribunals, community dialogues, and awareness raising forums as per the identified needs and priorities of their communities. Special attention should be given to cases where victims and survivors can confront the families of ISIS combatants to seek justice (emotional and/or financial compensation) through peaceful tribal settlement processes. Because families of ISIS continue to be perceived as a threat they are often isolated from communities, which in turn prevents all parties from seeking justice through official state channels. These dedicated tribal settlement processes would create more opportunities for victims and survivors to confront families of ISIS to seek recognition of their suffering and begin the reconciliation process. To further imbue confidence and

instill trust, the Council of Representatives should draft and execute a legislative agenda that protects and preserves the fundamental rights of victims and survivors. This includes all the proposed legislation stipulated in the recommendations throughout the platform such as: establishing legal protection for minority groups, women, and children; combating violence against women; amending the personal status law; revising legislation that can be used to target certain components; and passing legislation to promote peaceful coexistence and renounce the use of discriminatory and insightful hate speech.

4. Provide financial compensation to victims and survivors. Beyond recognizing their unique status as victims and survivors which provides moral compensation, the Government of Iraq should provide financial compensation to victims and survivors to address both physical and emotional loss through a dedicated fund. The Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs should establish a single discretionary fund to distribute money either in a single payment or administered in the form of a monthly salary. The amount distributed per person or per family would be determined according to a sliding scale based on criteria, such as estimated physical loss, family size, and death or disability. The ministries would also create a single database to track and monitor payment to qualified individuals/families using verified data collected by international bodies, such as the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration. In conjunction with a compensation process, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in partnership with local CSOs and the international community, should provide vocational training programs to support economic empowerment and independence (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Women’s Empowerment” and “Education and Youth” sections).

5. Provide support to young victims and survivors to reintegrate into academic life. The Government of Iraq, through the Ministry of Education and in coordination with the international community, should provide tailored support to young men and women as they reenter the education system. In addition to the legal enforcement for school enrollment (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Education and Youth” section), young men and women should be provided with essential health-care and psychosocial support both prior to enrolling and during the academic year. As many young men and women lost years of schooling during the conflict, the Ministry of Education should also make available accelerated after-school learning programs to allow them to catch up to their peers. Teachers, social workers, and school administration staff should also be trained to provide, at a minimum, basic psychosocial support, as well as to deliver a new national curriculum and pedagogy (as stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Education and Youth” section) that embraces and teaches inclusive and tolerant values to help ease the social reintegration of these young victims and survivors.

6. Launch expansive public outreach campaigns to support social reintegration. A multi-pronged approach for advocacy should be adopted by the Government of Iraq and local CSOs to raise awareness on the rights of victims and survivors and promote their peaceful reintegration back into society. Advocacy and awareness initiatives should target three thematic areas: 1) awareness of the needs and priorities of victims and survivors; 2) promotion of initiatives that support the peaceful rehabilitation and reintegration of victims and survivors; and 3) endorsement of legislation that supports the legal rights of women and their children born

Victims and Survivors

from conflict. CSOs should take a leading role in this process with support from the international community to provide funding and capacity building to develop organized and robust campaigns. CSOs and the international community should also train public figures and religious and tribal leaders to serve as advocates and spokespersons of peaceful reintegration and inclusion. The international community should also support the establishment of women- and minority-led organizations and coalitions to work on cross-community programming focused on transitional justice, rehabilitation, and reintegration. As part of these awareness efforts, the Government of Iraq should ensure that mass media covers issues related to victims and survivors sensitively and professionally in order to avoid further harm and trauma.

7. Prioritize reconstruction and security in liberated areas. The Government of

Iraq should prioritize reconstruction and stabilization of liberated areas to demonstrate commitment to restoring the livelihoods and humanity of victims and survivors. This entails the allocation of funding to all liberated areas based on a thorough needs assessment to identify priorities and set expectations conducted by the international community in conjunction with the Government of Iraq (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Governance and Distribution of Resources” section). In addition, given that deep-rooted fears and mistrust of others remains present, and the threat of ISIS sleeper cells still looms, especially in disputed areas and mixed communities, the Iraqi army and police should serve as the primary security providers in these areas. Other armed groups should begin to transition out and relinquish control to these forces (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Security and Safety” section).



Education and Youth

The future of Iraq is bound to the success and prosperity of the next generation. Currently, young people suffer a poorly resourced and arcane education system, which leads to unemployment, emigration, child labor and other forms of exploitation, and an increase in school dropout rates and drug usage. At worst, while frustrated and seeking a role and identity, youth become vulnerable to extreme ideology and fundamentalism.

THE CURRENT REALITY

Once one of the most thriving sectors in Iraq, the education sector now suffers from chronic, systemic, and fundamental structural problems. Decades of conflict, including the most recent war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), have only deepened and ingrained these systemic challenges that will have long-term consequences for the future of Iraqi youth.

A “lost generation” of youth who were unable to attend school while under ISIS occupation or underschooled as a result of displacement, coupled with decades of young people strug-

gling through a deficient school system, has created a population unable and ill-equipped to contribute to Iraq’s development. Young women and girls in particular faced tremendous impediments and obstacles under ISIS, many unable to even leave their homes to attend school or pursue economic opportunities to sustain their families. Under ISIS, girls and boys were either held back from attending school or were forcibly admitted to a discriminatory and fundamentally violent education system. According to a 2016 Save the Children report, over a million children dropped out of school or were forced to continue their

education using the ISIS-sanctioned curriculum.⁴ While many families opted to suspend their children's education, some still sent their children to school and are now struggling with how to reverse the fundamentalist worldview indoctrinated by ISIS. Moreover, as of February 2020, 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have yet to return home. With reportedly insufficient public funding and government cuts to schools inside IDP camps to encourage displaced families to go home as documented by HerRole activists, a large number of IDP students do not have access to a proper education or dropped out of school due to its inefficiencies.

It is worth considering, however, that the education system and opportunities for youth development in Iraq were suffering from endemic problems even before the occupation of ISIS. The long-term ramifications of these problems have come with disastrous economic and social consequences, such as youth migration, unemployment and underemployment, and child labor, all of which perpetuates the cycle of poverty. On a structural level, according to HerRole activists, the lack of adequate facilities and resources in conjunction with systemic issues, such as an outdated curricula and a dearth of well-trained teachers and administrators have made it difficult to maintain even a minimum standard of education. The lack of even proper vocational training programs or opportunities for young people to return to school is holding back an entire generation. For instance, according to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), in 2013 and prior to the rise of ISIS, 13.5 percent of school-aged Iraqi children (1.2 million children) did not have access to basic education. In ad-

dition, the illiteracy rate among youth and adult populations in Iraq were still as high as 16 percent for males and 19 percent for females in 2014. Moreover, in addition to the fact that the poor education system serves as a deterrent to schooling in and of itself, the current economic crisis has forced parents to keep children out of school either because of the cost or the family's need for additional income. Young women and girls have been critically impacted by the economic situation as parents often opt to send their sons to school over their daughters. Cultural traditions and security concerns are also key reasons why young women and girls often do not complete their education. Limiting access to education for young women and girls further inhibits their ability and opportunity to enjoy economic and social freedoms by forcing them to maintain their dependency on their families and male figures.

The underdeveloped, underfunded, and archaic education system has created an unskilled and unqualified labor force that is not able to compete in the global market, fueling the youth unemployment bubble. Youth constitute over 62 percent of the population, and a 2017 UNESCO report documented over a million young people were unemployed, including a high percentage of educated youth.⁵ Estimates of unemployment rates among youth in 2014 prior to ISIS were 16.2 percent and rose to 17.9 percent in 2017.⁶ With the lack of economic opportunities and inability to see a positive future for themselves, youth have become disillusioned and apathetic toward the political process. Moreover, as youth compete for jobs in a limited market they are deflecting their frustration and grievances

4 Save the Children (June 2016), *Over A Million Children Living Under ISIS In Iraq Have Missed Out On Education: Save The Children*. Retrieved at: <https://www.savethechildren.ca/article/over-a-million-children-living-under-isis-in-iraq-have-missed-out-on-education-save-the-children/>

5 UNESCO, *Fighting Youth Unemployment through Education*. Retrieved at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/iraq-office/education/technical-vocational-education/fighting-youth-unemployment-through-education/>

6 Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. *Youth Unemployment Rate for Iraq*. Retrieved at <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SLUEM1524ZSIRQ>

onto other groups for perceived sectarian or ethnic privileges, further weakening social cohesion and reconciliation. Taken together, all of these factors can create—and have creat-

ed—a breeding ground for recruitment by extremist and fundamentalist groups, as young people, particularly young men, believe that the system is failing them.

THE VISION

A high quality education system made available to all Iraqis would contribute to a stronger, well-informed, and skilled society. The next generation would be better qualified and have the capacity to advance Iraq domestically thereby enabling the country to compete on the world stage. In addition, more opportunities for young girls and women to pursue higher education would help them become more economically and socially independent. Improved schooling conditions, well-trained

teachers and administrators, and well-resourced education services, would lead to lower dropout rates and drug usage, employment opportunities, and the elimination of social exploitation. If this vision is achieved, a reformed and modern education system that teaches inclusive and national values would support reconciliation by molding a new generation of Iraqis to be more tolerant and accepting of others.

THE ACTIONS

1. Improve school infrastructure and facilities. According to a needs assessment conducted by the Ministry of Planning, the Government of Iraq should allocate substantial funding to renovate and build 8,147 primary and secondary schools across Iraq. Currently, some schools have classrooms with over 90 children, inhibiting students' ability to learn. In areas devastated in the battle against ISIS, schools in the formal sense are no longer standing. Mobile schools and libraries supported by trained educators should be made available in remote rural areas to support students from multiple villages. By increasing and improving school infrastructure, Iraqi children would be provided with basic

needs to receive a minimum standard of education. To support this extensive effort, the Government of Iraq, through the Ministry of Municipality and Ministry of Finance, should activate and enforce the Land Acquisition and Allocation Law to facilitate the allocation of land for constructing new school buildings. New and improved schools should also be fitted to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities to improve access and prevent marginalization. The international community can support this development process by offsetting costs for construction, and the Government of Iraq can offer incentives to the private sector and charity organizations to support the effort (similar to the exemptions/incentives given to those that build mosques).

2. Develop a modern, inclusive, and gender-sensitive curriculum. The Government of Iraq, through the Ministry of Education, and in collaboration with the international community and civil society, should conduct a full assessment of the national curriculum in an effort to update and modernize the content. The Ministry of Education would lead the assessment in cooperation with local civil society organizations (CSOs) in each province. The assessment would be completed six months after the new government has formed. Following the assessment, the Ministry of Education and its partner CSOs would begin drafting a new national curriculum with guidance and input from the international community. Particular attention should be given to the following core areas: 1) improving the curriculum for science, technology, engineering, and math, especially through practical skills laboratories; 2) standardizing the curriculum for history to be reflective of the experiences and narratives of all Iraqi components; 3) providing more vocational programs and opportunities to be exposed to the fine arts, music, and sports; and 4) inculcating values and attitudes through lesson plans that promote human rights and inclusive, non-sectarian and gender-sensitive values. The latter can be further supported by engaging CSOs that work with underrepresented communities in the curriculum development process to ensure that their views and experiences engender a new generation that respects and upholds the rights of all Iraqis. This can be done through dedicated lessons on human rights that promote the inclusion of women, minorities, people with disabilities, and other marginalized communities. The new curriculum should be rolled out no more than two years after the assessment is complete. Aspects of the curriculum can be piloted prior to the two-year deadline in select schools (consider five per province) to allow space for revision and adaptation.

To further support this effort, the Council of Representatives should pass legislation to criminalize political and religious interference in the public education system and promote the process that would create a more tolerant and unified society.

3. Develop the skills and capacities of teachers and school professionals. In tandem with the development of a new national curriculum, the Government of Iraq, through the Ministry of Education and its respective directorates across the country should develop and deliver a nation-wide training course for teachers and school professionals, including principles and school counselors, on the updated curriculum. Included in that training course should be an emphasis on new and modern pedagogical methods, including psychosocial support, to ensure students' commitment and engagement in academics. The international community and the expansive network of private education institutions can support this process by administering training programs directly to teachers or through Training-of-Training programs to local CSOs utilizing the new curriculum. The Ministry of Education should also adopt a merit-based system for employment and promotion as it is essential for the development of a modern and professional education system. While a professional and well-trained teaching and administrative staff is vital across all education levels, the Government of Iraq should pay special attention to the selection and development of kindergarten and primary school teachers as they set the tone and have the initial influence over a student's academic career.

4. Decrease the school dropout rates and increase enrollment rates. The Government of Iraq, through the Ministry of Education and its provincial directorates should work to decrease dropout rates through the following measures: 1) activate and enforce the Compulsory Education Act; 2)

provide financial compensation to qualified citizens to receive an annual stipend to fill gaps in income generation and dispel financial justifications for keeping children out of school, including providing funds for school supplies; and 3) conduct annual awareness campaigns at the start of each academic year, in collaboration with CSOs and state and private media outlets, to encourage enrollment (and re-enrollment) of students. The annual stipend would be distributed to qualified citizens (as determined by income level) on a quarterly basis; the first payment would only be distributed with proof of the students enrollment. To encourage the re-enrollment of students, the Government of Iraq should consider the following: 1) provide evening classes at accredited learning centers to obtain general high school equivalency diplomas, especially for young women (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Women’s Empowerment” section); and 2) provide accelerated learning programs and vocational training schools to help young people complete their academics in a timely manner. Both efforts to decrease dropout rates and increase re-enrollment rates should be supported by the increase of school counselors and academic advisors to monitor and work closely with students and families. Graduates in psychology should be used to fill these much-needed roles in the school administration. In addition, an increased role and decision-making authority should be given to local officials at the Directorates of Education, as well as parent and teacher associations to provide input and guidance on how to address challenges in schools.

5. Enhance development opportunities for youth. The Government of Iraq, in partnership with the local CSOs should open vocational training centers and female-friendly public spaces to facilitate opportunities for young people to interact with their peers

and have access to practical skills training and vocational courses. The international community can support this through targeted capacity building trainings and funding to local CSOs. The Government of Iraq should also bolster and empower youth by providing more opportunities to engage in the political process and government affairs through volunteer and apprenticeship programs. Through a merit-based application process, youth would be given the opportunity to work in local government branches and ministries to support the implementation of government programs to further develop and apply their skills. The Government of Iraq and the international community should offer incentives to the private sector and CSOs to offer similar opportunities to youth. In the newly liberated areas where combined efforts are needed to rebuild and revitalize communities, these volunteer opportunities are mutually constructive for both the government and youth.

6. Issue micro-grants for youth-led small businesses. Opportunities to enhance economic opportunities should be supported through the issuance of micro-grants to empower young women and men entrepreneurs (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Women’s Empowerment” section). Administered through the international community and local CSOs, micro-grants programs should target youth between 18-35 years old, with a specific focus on unemployed youth, and provide them with funding to launch a small business in their communities. Interested youth would submit an application and business proposal to the funding organization during an open call for applications. Recipients of the micro-grants would be required to attend vocational and skills training programs in order to establish systems of accountability and oversight, as well enhance the overall capacities and abilities of youth to successfully compete in the labor market.

7. Launch expansive public outreach campaigns to promote youth empowerment. A multi-pronged approach for awareness raising and advocacy should be adopted by the Government of Iraq and local CSOs to highlight the importance of youth engagement in the political process and economic development, and raise awareness about the risks youth face including vulnerability to extremist ideology, disillusionment with the political processes, political apathy, migration, and drug usage. The international community should provide funding and capacity build-

ing to local CSOs to develop organized and robust campaigns. In addition to leveraging traditional and social media outlets to promote campaign messages, these campaigns should be conducted at the national and local level through face-to-face activities with young people, community leaders, political and religious figures, and activists to counter messages of fundamentalism and promote opportunities for empowerment. These face-to-face activities would also create avenues for youth to engage with decision makers to ensure government actions are reflective of their concerns and needs.



Governance and Distribution of Resources

Establishing a system of good governance, administration, and fair distribution of resources will be a challenge in the current political environment. A weak system of checks and balances has created a sense of inequality among many sections of Iraqi society in terms of budget allocations and distribution of power between central, provincial, and regional governments. The power imbalance has enabled corruption and limited opportunities for marginalized groups such as women and youth.

THE CURRENT REALITY

In the 17 years since Iraq began its transition to democracy the country has experienced cycles of setbacks and progress. In this time, Iraqis wrote and ratified a constitution, established a system of political pluralism, regularly held elections, and adopted a tradition of peaceful transfer of power. While significant accomplishments, the challenges and divisions that presented themselves in the early stages of the transition—ethno-sectarianism, foreign influence, elite predatory behavior, and patronage networks—continue to impact Iraq's road toward democracy. These factors repeatedly came to a head as political

actors and non-state actors stoked sectarian divisions and instigated feelings of injustice (real or perceived), marking Iraq's transition with periods of civil strife and disastrous armed conflict.

Many attest that these symptoms are reflective of a broader challenge in Iraq: poor governance. While ethno-sectarian tensions appear to fuel conflict, the true catalyst is the absence of an accountable, inclusive, and responsive government. In its absence, a growing sense of marginalization, negligence, and exploitation began to take hold, especially within the

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Sunni population and other minority groups, as the primarily Shia-led government has repeatedly failed to deliver meaningful change. It was this inability and perceived unwillingness of the government to respond to these populations, coupled with divisive policies, that enabled the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014. Years of systematic marginalization, poor public services, harassment by security forces, and unwarranted arrests and charges of terrorism, created an environment where ISIS was able to tap into fears and grievances and easily gain a foothold in Sunni-dominated provinces.

While ISIS was ultimately defeated, it left in its wake utter destruction and devastation. Major cities were completely leveled, basic infrastructure totally destroyed, and society's trust and confidence shaken to its core as over three million people were displaced and tens of thousands more were killed or abducted. The road ahead presents a tremendous test for the Government of Iraq but also an opportunity to rebuild and mend a fractured society. However, in the years since the government officially declared victory over ISIS, the next phase of reconstruction, reconciliation, and rehabilitation has been stagnant and unequal. Over 1.8 million people still remain displaced and unable to return home as clean-up efforts are lagging and basic services such as electricity and water are not readily available, let alone access to proper health care or schools. West Mosul for example, once home to over a million people, is completely deserted and reduced to rubble. And many who tried to return home found nothing waiting for them and have since returned back to the camps, despite their meager and desperate living conditions.

The slow pace of restoration, on top of the fact that the government is not able to maintain singular control over security in liberated areas given the presence of various armed

groups, citizen trust and confidence in the government is quickly declining. The implications of these new governance challenges, such as the timely and equitable provision of services and resources, security, and reconstruction, has the potential to reignite the root causes and grievances that gave rise to ISIS. Moreover, the fact that vast segments of society remain on the fringes of the political process inhibits the government's ability to represent and respond to the immediate needs of citizens from liberated areas. Women and young people who tend to disproportionately suffer the consequences of conflict continue to be left outside the decision-making spaces that would determine their futures, despite all evidence pointing to the fact that the inclusion of women and youth contributes to the development of a more enduring peace.

In addition to these new governance-related challenges, Iraq is still grappling with the broader ramifications of years of poor governance that has resulted in weak systems of accountability, an ineffective legislative and parliamentary oversight process, inefficient service delivery, and uneven development. Most of all, poor governance has resulted in rampant and pervasive corruption across all levels of society. According to Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perception Index, Iraq is one of the most corrupt countries in the world ranking 162 out of 180. Despite billions of dollars in international aid in addition to internal revenue streams, citizens continue to suffer from a severe lack of basic services, security, and employment opportunities.

Many also credit the hasty manner in which the transition process was unfolding in 2005 for the current situation Iraq now finds itself. Because ample time was not allotted to allow the different ethno-sectarian factions to negotiate and reach consensus over diverging political aspirations, many unresolved disputes pertaining to issues essential to good

Governance and Distribution of Resources

governance found their way into the constitution. While the intention was to address these issues following ratification, little progress has been made and many Iraqis believe the situation continues to deteriorate the longer these issues go unresolved. For example, questions remain over the composition of the federal courts and their subject-matter jurisdiction; challenges to establishing a second chamber of the parliament persist; disputes over territorial control and distribution of natural resources are ever present; and the extent to which power should be devolved from the federal to the provincial government continues to be debated. Taken together, these outstanding issues are not only negatively affecting governance in Iraq, but are wearing away the social fabric given the divisive nature of the issues.

HerRole activists identified the ethno-sectarian divisions embedded within the constitution as one of the primary structural impediments that negatively impact the effectiveness and cooperative nature of the parliament. The parliament's inability to fulfill its legislative functions due to these divisions is apparent in its inability to pass a budget in a timely manner, which has raised serious concerns among citizens on the integrity and fairness of the budget process. At a vital time when almost one-third of the country needs to be rebuilt, the budget process continues to be a battleground for politicians to show their strength and fuel divisions rather than find areas for compromise. This battle, however, is also seeping into citizens' views of one another as they see funds being diverted primarily to liberated areas, which they perceive to be to their detriment.

THE VISION

Governance in Iraq would adhere to the rule of law and respect provisions within the constitution to improve its domestic performance as well as elevate its standing on the global stage economically and politically. The separation of powers across the three branches of government would be respected, particularly the independence of the judiciary. Resources would be fairly and equitably distributed to guarantee and safeguard a dignified life for all Iraqis. This process would ensure comprehensive and proportionate development of resources and infrastructure across all provinces, raising the

standard of living for Iraq's economically vulnerable groups, such as women and young people. The further devolution of power to local government would streamline administrative processes and improve the delivery of basic services. Civil society would enhance their oversight role and openly monitor the political process. If this vision is achieved, Iraq would reach a state of self-sufficiency and the application of good governance practices would ensure the professional and excellent provision of public services and resources enjoyed by all citizens equally.

THE ACTIONS

1. Continue the devolution of powers to provincial government. The Government of Iraq should institute mechanisms for the devolution of additional powers to provincial governments, represented by the governor's office and provincial directorate generals of the ministries. As provincial councils have been given more power to make decisions on security, finance, and politics, additional powers should also be granted to allow for councils to enact legislation and regulations within its borders, as well as provide oversight on local government's public policies and budget expenditures. To support this process, the Provincial Powers Law and its subsequent amendments drafted in response to the 2013 protests should be fully implemented within six months of the new government's mandate. As per the 2013 amendments, the law established the High Commission for Coordinating the Devolution of Powers to the Provinces headed by the Prime Minister; however, the commission has yet to administer a coordinated and systemized process to devolve powers from all central government ministries to the respective provincial directorate generals. Therefore, by the end of 2021, the federal government through the High Commission and in coordination with provincial governments, should design and begin to implement a strategic plan for decentralization specifying what powers, staff, and budget should be allocated to local government bodies. For this process to be effective, the federal government should revise the current mandate and jurisdiction of the commission to go beyond just an advisory role but expand its authority to execute and oversee the decentralization plan. The international community can support this process by providing technical skills to commission staff and relevant government bodies to design and deliver on a comprehensive decentralization plan.

2. Strengthen systems of accountability and transparency across government. A multi-faceted approach should be instituted across public and civic entities to enhance oversight, combat corruption, and increase government efficiency. On the government side, this includes enhanced capabilities and powers to the parliament and stronger enforcement measures and coordination between government bodies. This also includes the strict enforcement and respect of an independent non-sectarian judicial system. To support this, civil society and the international community should provide specialized training to judges and legal professions to eliminate opportunities for external political or religious influence.

→ Council of Representatives: 1) authority to question ministers and executive officials without fear of retribution through committees and the Independent Commissions of Public Integrity; 2) enact legislation to provide free and easy access to information by citizens and media; 3) enhance legislation to further articulate and operationalize the constitutional principles of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly; 4) amend and modernize the civil service code and strengthen oversight procedures contained with the code in coordination with the federal government; and 5) establish a public, independent television station to broadcast government and parliamentary activities.

→ National and local government: 1) create ombudsman positions across all ministries and government structures at the local and national level; 2) ministries establish coordination and oversight bodies within their provincial directorate generals

Governance and Distribution of Resources

to ensure the efficient and corrupt-free administration of local government, including budget expenditures; 3) enforce the 2018 Asset Declaration Act for all government officials and institute penalties for violations in order to combat corruption; and 4) train public employee on the legal frameworks and codes to strengthen internal integrity and accountability.

On the civic side, this process should include providing civil society with the space and capacity to monitor and report on government activity without fear of retribution, and an independent media service that provides constructive reporting and oversight. To support this, the international community could help civil society organizations and independent media outlets to establish a monitoring network across the country to regularly produce public reports on the government performance, including spending.

3. Improve the administration and delivery of public service. The Government of Iraq (local and national level) should undergo an intensive assessment and modernization of its bureaucratic processes related to service delivery to improve efficiency and timeliness. The lack of basic services is frequently cited as a top grievance of citizens (often tied together with unemployment and corruption) and such complaints are especially prominent in liberated areas where services are barely functioning. Improvements to basic service delivery for items such as electricity, water, sanitation, housing, and transportation could be supported by the development of e-governance mechanisms, removal of red tape and multiple steps, and eliminating embedded systems of bribery and nepotism. The international community can support this process by helping to facilitate a procedural assessment across all relevant ministries and devise a comprehensive plan of action to im-

plement cross-cutting reforms. In the interim, international organizations can fill the gaps in providing basic services that the government cannot operate or does not have the capacity to deliver.

4. Resolve disputes between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government should engage in direct negotiations to resolve outstanding disputes and normalize relations badly strained following the 2017 Kurdish Referendum for Independence and the proceeding military confrontations in disputed areas. The core issues between the two governments stem from the 2005 Constitution of Iraq where questions over disputed borders, security control, and management of natural resources remain unresolved. For example, the mechanisms stipulated under Article 140 of the constitution regarding disputed territories, including Kirkuk, remain unimplemented, and Articles 111 and 112 are open to interpretation given the ambiguity in language concerning the exclusive and shared jurisdictions by the two governments in the management and exploration of natural resources in Kurdistan and disputed areas. To address these outstanding issues, the Council of Representatives should pass the constitutionally stipulated laws and establish state structures outlined in the constitution to operationalize federal arrangements, including: 1) an independent Higher Federal Constitutional Court with the mandate to settle disputes between federal units, provinces, and the federal government; and 2) an upper chamber in the parliament to provide additional monitoring and oversight. Concurrently, as these entities are established, the two governments should continue to negotiate a revenue-sharing deal and budget allocation process, jointly administer security in disputed areas, and jointly manage international air and land borders.

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5. Administer fair and equitable budgets across provinces. According to a World Bank report, the regional development allocation to all provinces (including Kurdistan) was only six percent of all federal investment expenditures in the 2016 budget. To bolster development and to support a robust reconstruction effort in liberated areas, the Government of Iraq should increase budget allocations starting with fiscal year 2021. A more fair and equitable budget allocations process would also support a decentralization effort as local governments would be given more authority to directly manage finances and resources according to the needs and priorities of citizens within the province. To ensure fair and equitable distribution, budget allocations should be determined based on a set criteria, such as population size, level of destruction, quality of infrastructure, and natural wealth. While international funds have been allocated to support reconstruction efforts in liberated provinces, the Government of Iraq should also allocate additional budget funds to fill gaps in financing for a minimum of two years. To diversify revenue streams, the Government of Iraq, in coordination with local governments from provinces rich in natural resources (petroleum, natural gas, and phosphates) should resume the petrodollar system. A minimum of five percent of the revenue generated from the sale of these natural resources would go directly back to the provinces to support development efforts, generate employment opportunities, and enhance municipal services.

6. Enhance the role of underrepresented groups for more responsive and inclusive governance. To build more responsive and inclusive governing institutions, the national and local governments should facilitate opportunities to build stronger bonds between government officials and citizens, especially women, youth, and other marginalized communities. Government officials, as well as political parties, should actively solicit citizens input through public outreach and consultations to draft more responsive legislation and policies, administer a more equitable and inclusive budget, and provide citizens with a voice in political decision-making. In addition (and as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Women’s Empowerment” section) the Government of Iraq should institute a quota mandating a 25 percent quota for women across all government ministries and independent commissions. The international community and civil society can support this process by building the capacity of underrepresented groups to effectively engage in decision-making and promote their inclusion in government and party structures, as well as facilitate opportunities for women, youth, and minority groups to establish issue-based alliances to raise their voice and advocate for their needs and priorities.



Health and Environment

The social and economic well-being of Iraq is tied to the population's health and the environment. Iraqis suffer from acute health and environmental problems which emanate from a wide range of factors, including the lack of a developed health care system and infrastructure, limited access to health supplies and medicine, corruption, and internal armed conflicts. Limited public funding, mismanagement, and poor service provision in the health sector, combined with a polluted and conflict-ravaged environment, have led to an increase of chronic diseases, health epidemics, illicit drug usage, and poor mental health, especially within the most vulnerable communities.

THE CURRENT REALITY

The challenges to Iraq's health care system and the environment are complex and stem from long periods of violent conflict and political turmoil, including poor governance, underfinancing and limited resources, and stalled infrastructure development. Decades of war, including in the recent conflict against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), have impacted the health care and social sectors' capacity to deliver the quality coverage of services needed by citizens.

The onslaught and four-year domination of ISIS, followed by the war to liberate Iraqi

territories, severely damaged and destroyed health care facilities that were already struggling to survive. The war against ISIS resulted in over 3.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), many of whom were confined to under-resourced IDP camps with deficient mental and physical health services and dilapidated living conditions. Now, while a significant number of citizens have returned to their places of origin, leaving approximately 2 million still displaced, those who have returned are finding a health sector that is severely lacking in capacity to address dire health needs, including basic health care and

rehabilitation centers and specialized mental health professionals.

People were cautiously optimistic after liberation that the Iraqi government would work effectively and efficiently to ensure access to some level of quality health care. However, reports indicate that even by the end of 2019, citizens – particularly in areas formerly held by ISIS – still do not have access to a basic level of health care.⁷ For example, the population of Ramadi, the capital and largest city in Anbar, is still without a public hospital after that the city hospital was destroyed almost two years ago. The situation is further compounded by a myriad of other factors in the sector, including poor governance and corruption and lack of an effective health insurance system, adequate human resources (i.e. doctors and health care workers), and medicine. According to a nation-wide public opinion survey conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in late 2019, 68 percent of respondents were extremely or very concerned about corruption in the health care system. As such, access to quality, affordable health care for the average citizen remains difficult. On average, citizens cover over 70 percent of their health care needs out-of-pocket and sometimes even resort to traveling abroad for better health services.⁸

In addition to poor governance and deep-rooted corruption, decades of conflict across Iraq diverted government resources from health and social services to defense and security. Out of 133 trillion IQD in the Iraqi national budget, only 6 trillion IQD (4.5

percent) is allocated to the health sector.⁹ Additionally, the budget-drafting process faces challenges in preparation and in passage by the parliament, as well as the disbursement of funds in a timely and predictable manner. While the decentralization of the health care system has been addressed to a certain degree in national legislation, it has yet to be fully realized, impacting local governments' ability to absorb and implement needed policies and reforms.

Beyond government inefficiencies, the lack of a skilled workforce contributes to the health sector's deficiencies. Like many other sectors, the health care industry is suffering from a brain drain not only in rural areas but even in urban centers. Out of the 1500-1800 medical graduates each year, about a quarter have left to work in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia or more stable provinces in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).¹⁰

Like the public health sector, Iraq is stuck in a vicious cycle of war and environmental degradation. The relationship between the environment and armed conflict generates similar challenges as the ones mentioned above regarding health. According to a UN Environmental Programme report, the environment, in addition to the chronic problems of pollution and degradation, further suffers from systematic and extensive sabotage by ISIS. For example, as a war tactic, ISIS set fire to sulfur plants and oil wells, most famously, Qayyarah oil fires and the Mishraq Sulphur Plant, filling the air with black carbon and thick toxic fumes. Fighting near industrial sites led to the release of chemicals into soil and groundwater, destroying farmlands and leading to fur-

7 Iraqi Ministry of Health and World Health Organization, *Comprehensive Assessment of Health Information System: Iraq*, 2019, p. 11. Retrieved at: <https://moh.gov.iq/upload/upfile/ar/993.pdf>

8 *The Healthcare Situation and Current Problems and Solutions in an Important Report by the Minister of Health* الوضع الصحي: المشكلات والحلول الآتية.. في تقرير هام لوزير الصحة Retrieved at: <http://www.almothaqaf.com/a/qadaya2019/939158>

9 *Ibid.*

10 Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, *Restoring the Iraqi Healthcare Sector: The British National Health Service as a Model*, 2018, p. 10. Retrieved at: <http://www.bayan-center.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/786564532.pdf>

ther desertification.¹¹

Health and the environment are closely interrelated and face similar challenges. Both suffer from a deteriorating infrastructure, poor governance, and lack of financing and human resources. The environmental problems in Iraq, such as climate change and high temperatures in the summer, water contamination and scarcity of potable water, biodiversity loss, war-related air pollution, and sand storms are linked to an uptick in health-related problems. For instance, in the summer of

2018, thousands of people in Basra suffering from acute diarrhea were admitted to the public hospital. At the time, the health directorate stated Basra's water pollution is staggeringly high: chemical contamination stands at 100 percent and bacterial pollution at 50 percent. While this case is a direct result of environmental issues, those issues are in fact the by-product of ongoing conflicts and political turmoil, which in turn sparked new public unrest to feed in the vicious cycle of conflict and the degradation of the health sector and the environment.

THE VISION

Iraq would maintain a clean environment and improve access to quality health care to all citizens, with special attention to vulnerable groups. Iraqis would enjoy a healthy and productive life in a society free from widespread diseases and pollution. Citizens of Iraq would live in a physically, psychologically, and socially healthy country that would benefit from increased productivity, economic prosperity and, in turn, political stability. Knowledge and public awareness of the importance of biodiversity and the use of natural resources in a sustainable manner will be widespread

to improve the lives of this generation and the next. Families would have potable water to drink from the tap, enjoy cleaner air, fill up their grocery baskets with home-grown products, and enjoy green and clean spaces in their communities. If this vision is achieved, a reformed and modern health care system and cleaner environment will generate healthy minds and healthy bodies, and citizens will benefit equitably and not resort to public unrest over the scarcity of resources, ending the vicious cycle of violence and environmental degradation.

11 UNEP. *Technical Note – Environmental issues in areas retaken from ISIL: Mosul, Iraq*. 2017. Retrieved at: https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/Iraq/Iraq%20Technical%20Note_September2017.pdf

THE ACTIONS

1. Reconstruct and modernize health infrastructure and facilities. The Government of Iraq (GoI), with support from the international community and civil society organizations (CSOs), should restructure and modernize the health sector to administer and manage a decentralized, transparent, equitable and quality health care system. The decentralization of the health system should give the Provincial Directorate Generals (DGs) the authority to control their budgets. The GoI should appoint personnel to positions based on merit and technical expertise, not along partisan lines. For sustainable development, the Government of Iraq should implement the 2008 Law No. 21, known as the Law of Provinces Not Incorporated into a Region. The provisions of the law stipulate that further powers should be devolved and work with the health DGs at the provincial level to allocate a budget. These funds should then be applied to building and rehabilitating the physical infrastructure of general and specialized hospitals and primary health centers (PHC). The infrastructure development in city centers and towns should also be accompanied by reinstating mobile medical cars and teams as an alternative to PHCs in remote areas. Thirdly, government health committees should be formed to monitor the work of health centers and hospitals, activate the role of health control units, and to tighten the functions of quality control services for imported goods. This will require the reactivation of the applicable laws that impose fines on violations and the regulation of the operations of private health sectors with legislation to protect the rights of patients.

2. Develop medical technologies and provide quality and adequate health services. The GoI and Ministry of Health should allocate funding to bring new medical equipment and medication for the treatment of

chronic and degenerative diseases, and train doctors and medical professionals on these new medicines, as well as on modern techniques and procedures. This would quell the need for seeking medical treatment abroad. The quality control and accreditation of medication should fall solely under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health, and all efforts should be made to end the black market. The Ministry should regulate the cost of medication and medical exams and operations. To do so, a reliable health insurance system needs to be put in place, and the GoI should reactivate the pharmaceutical card for underprivileged and vulnerable patients with chronic and complicated diseases, especially for women, children and the elderly. The Ministry should also regulate the work of the private clinics by conducting quality control tests of their medical equipment. Finally, the Ministry of Health should go through the proper procurement processes to acquire a health care management information system as soon as possible to organize patient information, as well as manage and determine the availability of services, equipment, and staff.

3. Develop the skills and capacities of doctors and health care professionals. One of the primary challenges identified in providing quality health care services is the lack of well-equipped and skilled doctors and medical professionals, particularly in some medical specialties, such as anesthesia, pharmaceutical laboratory, radiology, family medicine, and forensic medicine. As such, the GoI, through the Ministry of Health, and in collaboration with mandated and specialized international organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and local CSOs, should first conduct a nation-wide human resources assessment of the sector to identify gaps and priority areas. Based on the assess-

ment, the Ministry of Health should work on updating and re-standardizing the medical response protocols to further protect the dignity and privacy standards of patients, particularly for women and children, and especially in cases related to gender based violence (GBV) (as also stipulated in the recommendations outlined in the “Victims and Survivors” chapter). Relatedly, the Ministry of Health should initiate training courses to develop the skills of qualified nurses and midwives and managers of health services, as well as find ways to redistribute and balance discrepancies in their deployment to rural and urban areas. On the administrative side, the Ministry of Health should maintain a developed information and data collection and analysis system to support the work of policymakers in the health care sector. Finally, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Higher Education, in collaboration with the WHO and accredited international universities, should update the curricula and accredit educational medical and health institutions.

4. Establish rehabilitation and reintegration centers for mental health and drug addiction. The Government of Iraq through the Ministries of Health, Interior, Defence, Education and Social Affairs should lead a comprehensive response campaign in coordination with local CSOs to address mental health and fight drug addiction in Iraq. This effort should be made through taking different preventive and protective measures, including: 1) the Ministries of Interior and Defence should tighten controls at border crossings to prevent drug smuggling, along with tighter law enforcement for drug dealing inside the country; 2) the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Affairs and Interior should work together and in collaboration with community leaders and CSOs to develop and implement community programs, TV and radio shows, and in-school programs to raise awareness among youth on mental health issues and

drug addiction, along with providing referral information to get support from credible institutions; 3) the Ministries of Health, Social Affairs and Interior should develop rehabilitation centers that provide psychosocial support, health care, and vocational trainings for those suffering from drug addiction and mental health issues. Prior to any of the above moving forward, in the next six-months, the Gol, through the above mentioned ministries and with the assistance from local CSOs, should conduct a needs assessment to identify the number and locations of these centers. The international community can also support this through targeted capacity-building training to CSOs and funding to support the construction and resourcing of the centers.

5. Protect and maintain a clean environment in Iraq. The Council of Representatives and the Gol should draft laws and guidelines to preserve the environment and hold violators of environmental laws accountable. The enforcement of a multifaceted effort to protect the environment requires a high level of collaboration at the cabinet level. As such, under the auspices and full attention of the Prime Minister, the ministerial council should fulfill the functions of a Ministry of Environment. The council should include expertise from the international community and local CSOs and be tasked with identifying and implementing long- and short-term strategies to address the mounting environmental problems pertaining to water, soil and air pollution. The council should provide a strategy paper for the next four years with practical steps to: 1) treat the regions contaminated with radioactive materials, which led to an increase in cases of congenital diseases; 2) build water drainage treatment systems to provide a potable water supply; 3) recycle waste in a safe manner; 4) slow the rate of desertification by stopping the illegal sale of arable lands to housing areas on the outskirts of cities and suburbs, and increasing green spaces; and

5) open investment opportunities for companies to recycle petrochemical waste from oil and gas extraction and refineries.

6. Launch public awareness campaigns to promote health and protect the environment. The Government of Iraq and local CSOs should launch comprehensive advocacy campaigns and implement ongoing awareness and educational programs in schools and in the media to promote the importance of environmental protection and individual and public health. The ultimate goal of this effort should be to educate and transform the public's thinking and appreciation for the preservation of the environment and the protection of individual and public health in the country. Specialized international organizations concerned with health and environ-

ment can provide funding and capacity-building to local CSOs to develop organized and robust campaigns. Advocacy and awareness initiatives should target three thematic areas: 1) preventive measures to protect water, air, and soil from pollution and contamination; 2) promote individual and public health through maintaining personal hygiene and public sanitation; and 3) raise public awareness on issues related to communicable diseases, drug addiction, mental health, and reproductive health. Civil society should establish and leverage its relationships with the governmental ministries, such as the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Affairs and Interior, as well as with media outlets, to convey the messages of these campaigns to the public through different media.



Agriculture

The development of the agriculture sector, which includes growing crops and raising livestock, would contribute to the diversification of Iraq's economy. Currently, the country's economy is heavily reliant on the oil industry, and the decline in the agriculture sector in recent years has resulted in an increase in imports of agricultural products. With imports outweighing domestically-produced products, Iraqis have to pay more for lower quality but more expensive food to feed their families. The decline of the agriculture industry in Iraq is due to a number of factors, such as a weak legal framework to create space for investment and development, poor irrigation systems and water scarcity, armed conflict and instability, poor rural infrastructure, outdated technologies and facilities, and the limited availability of loans for farmers.

THE CURRENT REALITY

The economy of Iraq is dominated by the oil industry, which constitutes approximately 60 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Although the agricultural sector ranks second after the oil industry, its contribution to the country's GDP has been declining since 2002. While Iraq still possesses a number of comparative advantages that would support competitive agricultural production, including arable land, water from the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and human resources, it continues to fail to meet food needs. This deficiency is due to the underdevelopment of rural infrastructure, limited job

opportunities, and the lack of state support through loans and subsidies to small farmers, resulting in large-scale migration to urban areas.

The systemic challenges in the agricultural industry, from poor infrastructure to limited resources, funding, and innovation, are further compounded by the fact that farms, livestock, and the environment writ large have a history of being used as a weapon of war. For example, fighting near industrial sites during the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) led to the release of chemicals

into soil and groundwater, destroying farmlands and leading to further desertification. Pre-conflict estimates show that up to one-third of Iraq's population worked in the agriculture industry, a figure that corresponds to approximately 11 million out of 35 million Iraqis.¹² But, with so many displaced rural populations due to the recent war against ISIS, the number has decreased.

The contentious issue of disputed territory between the Government of Iraq (GoI) and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) is another conflict dynamic negatively affecting the sector. For example, the rights of over 1,200,000 *dunams* (acres) of land in the disputed areas in Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin have yet to be settled as part of the terms stipulated in Article 140 of the constitution. Under the rule of Saddam Hussain, the government redistributed agricultural land based on political affiliation and, following the fall of his regime in 2003, those who had their land taken are now demanding it back. Addressing this issue has preoccupied all successive administrations in the GoI and KRI, hindering agricultural production, especially during peak harvest season when landowners in the disputed areas allegedly set fire to each others' harvests.

ISIS' occupation of parts of the disputed territories also negatively affected the agricultural sector in these areas. For over three years, ISIS confiscated the arable lands of those fleeing their rule and redistributed land to loyal followers who either farmed the lands or sometimes sabotaged the irrigation systems and looted livestock. Today, only 20 percent of farmers are thought to have access to irrigation in these areas, compared with 65 per-

cent prior to their occupation,¹³ and what has not been lost or damaged is in dire need of repairs or replacements, which farmers cannot afford to do. Beyond the formerly ISIS-occupied regions, the irrigation system across the entire country is deteriorating, resulting in water wastefulness and soil salinity. In addition, there is no institutional support and a lack of regulatory framework to control water use and prices, as well as no international water use agreements between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq for the use of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. With Iraq being downstream, the country has and will continue to witness water shortages after Turkey and Syria build new dams and develop their irrigation systems.

The decrease in livestock and fish production has also been impacted by years of conflict, in which animals have been stolen or killed. Additionally, during conflict, farmers cannot maintain livestock because of price hikes on animal feed, no safe land for their animals to graze due to kinetic fighting or explosive ordinances, and limited access to veterinary care.

The structural aspect of developing the agricultural sector is impacted by the GoI's limited capacity to modernize and implement legal reforms that would encourage private investment and transparent markets. Specifically, the capacity of institutions like the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), to provide services and develop responsive development and investment policies for the sector has remarkably deteriorated over the past two decades. Limited institutional support, capacity, and engagement with beneficiaries in decision making has led to inadequate research on new technologies and animal healthcare. Additionally, rather than moving forward national-level policies that would lead to diver-

12 RFSAN, *The Impact of ISIS on Iraq's Agricultural Sector*, Dec. 2016, p. 3. Retrieved at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/07122016_IRQ_Iraq_Agri_Brefing_V2.pdf

13 FAO, *Agriculture Damage and Loss Needs Assessment*, 2017, p. 4. Retrieved at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7810e.pdf>

sification and the opening up of markets, the central government has only worked to control and subsidize farm inputs (i.e. fertilizers, seeds, insecticides, farm equipment and machinery) and set prices of strategic crops. The most important crop, wheat, has been the most controlled and the most affected by the lack of open markets.

Therefore, agribusiness and food and agricultural enterprises have not been able to benefit from international markets, modern production techniques, and global trading standards due to: 1) a complicated and outdated administrative and regulatory system; 2) considerable shortcomings of public agencies that are in charge of advisory and technical services; 3) lack of price policies, inefficient marketing networks, and limited market information; 4) complicated and time consuming

export/import procedures; 5) the absence of credit/loans, which discourages private investment; and, 6) The lack of a functional agricultural statistical system for producing accurate, relevant, and timely statistics on crop, livestock and agro-industry production on a regular basis with standard statistical methodology.³

The long-term impact of an underdeveloped, and in some areas, destroyed, agricultural system has led to food insecurity, increased malnutrition and an undernourished population, especially among women and children, fewer job opportunities, and dependence on food imports. While the demands of the country for imported goods increases, the purchasing power of Iraqis decreases, and as people continue to migrate from rural areas to the cities, stability and conflict prevention become more challenging.

THE VISION

The development of the agricultural industry would diversify Iraq's economy as it would no longer be solely reliant on the fluctuating oil sector, leading to a more stable and globally competitive country. Citizens would enjoy food security and be less vulnerable to unhealthy imported food products. The development of the sector would contribute to the overall development of the country's social and economic infrastructure, including rural development, rural income generation, employment opportunities, and less migration to urban cities and abroad. With good governance and the adoption of responsive legal

reforms, the private sector would invest in the agriculture sector to provide more jobs, land disputes would be solved, international water rights would be preserved, and the integrated and efficient management of water resources would be applied to deter further conflicts. If this vision is achieved, Iraq would reach a state of self-sufficiency. With a stronger economy and safe drinking water and food security, citizens would be able to benefit from the soil and water of the country and turn away from a history of conflict toward a future of stability and peace.

14 FAO, *Iraq: Agriculture Sector Note*, p. 12-14. Retrieved at: <http://www.fao.org/3/i2877e/i2877e.pdf>

THE ACTIONS

1. Legislate reforms for arable land re-allocation and investment. The Council of Representatives (CoR), in collaboration with the Government of Iraq (GoI) through the MoA and MoWR should: 1) amend the 1970 Law No. 117 on agrarian reform to allow large land and big-output private investments and enterprises, including public and private sector joint ventures that can compete with imported products; 2) protect the rights of farmers and agricultural land from unplanned urbanization and compensate farmers whose land was confiscated for residential use; 3) amend the law to distribute plots of land to graduates of agriculture sciences to ensure quality and experimental agricultural production, which in turn would provide a knowledge base for all farmers; 4) expand the role of the public Agricultural Cooperative Bank and raise the ceiling of loans to farmers, as well as allow private agricultural banks to operate; 5) amend laws to establish legal frameworks allowing for public sector and private sector joint ventures to finance agricultural projects, especially pivotal structures, with a focus on manufacturing agricultural machinery, in order to substitute for imports; and 6) settle agricultural land disputes to allow for smooth production in areas of potential conflict.

2. Enhance sustainable agricultural production. The MoA and MoWR and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) in collaboration with the farmers union, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), concerned associations and civil society organizations (CSOs) should initiate a medium-term (approximately three-year) program to revive agriculture production across Iraq. This should include investment programs to: 1) rebuild poor and damaged infrastructure; 2) provide agriculture sup-

port services such as sharing information and technology; 3) provide enhanced credit to farmers for diversifying high-value crop and livestock products; 4) provide technical training and care services to farmers; 5) distribute seed, fertilizer, and pesticides directly to farmers with instructions for safe use and disposal; 6) provide access to post-harvest storage, processing facilities, and markets; 7) increase the number of orchards and replace palm trees through micropropagation; 8) introduce subsidies for data processing to increase access to international markets; and 9) maintain soil fertility and expand arable land through anti-desertification measures and restrictions on the urbanization of agricultural areas.

3. Restore sustainable livestock productions. The MoA through its veterinary directorates in the provinces, and in coordination with Ministries of Health, Water Resources and Municipalities, and international organizations such as the FAO and WFP should initiate comprehensive livestock programs to revive production. The programs should develop the local production of livestock, fisheries, and beehives by upgrading the genetic potential of the local breeds; increasing the technical efficiencies to support aquaculture in closed basins and cages instead of open ponds; increasing the number of dairy cows and water buffaloes by importing fertile cows from high-productivity breeds; and build milk processing plants. In addition to supporting improvements to production, efforts should be made to improve pasture lands, including clearing pastures of unexploded ordnance, intensifying vaccination campaigns and modernizing equipment and facilities including slaughterhouses and refrigeration plants; and supporting farmers with subsidies and in-kind distribution of feed and fodder.

4. Secure Iraq's international water rights and modernize the irrigation system.

The CoR and the Gol through the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, MoWR and MoA, and in collaboration with the specialized international organization, should negotiate with neighboring countries (Turkey, Syria, and Iran) to secure the international water rights of Iraq. At the domestic level, the MoWR and MOA should finalize the Water Master Plan for internal water allocation, which is a long-time source of conflict in Iraq. In the long-term, for integrated management of land and water resources, the MoWR and MoA should work with the farmers union and professional syndicates and chambers of commerce to modernize irrigation methods and rehabilitate the irrigation and drainage infrastructure by introducing modern techniques for cultivation, using high-yielding and salt-tolerant equipment. In the short term, The MoA and MoWR should: 1) repair damaged irrigation systems and provide temporary watering systems in the form of new wells and extended water transportation pipes; 2) provide farmers with modern irrigation and farming techniques and tools, and facilitate better practices; and 3) build small soil dams and ponds to reserve rainwater as an extra source of irrigation and livestock watering.

5. Develop the skills and capacity of farmers. In close collaboration and coordination with unions, syndicates, international organizations and CSOs, the MoA should provide training and coaching on modern agricultural practices. This effort should include the reactivation of the agriculture extension directorates so that continuous guidance, field visits, training and coaching on the ap-

plication of research to agricultural practices can be readily available to local farmers. The training program should incorporate content and experts from a variety of disciplines, including agriculture, agricultural marketing, health, and business. Entities such as, the World Bank, FAO, and WFP should provide financial and technical support to the MoA and to local organizations to help develop their understanding of new agriculture techniques and technologies.

6. Raise awareness and develop rural socio-economic infrastructure. The Gol, through the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, and Labor and Social Affairs, and in collaboration with CSOs, the media, and community leaders, should launch an expansive awareness-raising effort on the importance of agriculture and food security. These efforts should aim to deepen the political and social awareness of farmers and rural communities by underscoring the need for development, especially deepening the skills and capacity of agriculture professionals. Included in this awareness-raising effort should be information regarding gender inequality and discrimination of women in the field of agriculture and food security. The Ministry of Education, in coordination with MOA, should promote equal learning opportunities to develop the technical skills of young girls and women interested in working in the sector. To achieve that, the Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture, Municipalities, Reconstructions and Labour and Social Affairs should coordinate efforts to build schools, health centres and hospitals, and job centres, to strengthen local infrastructure and improve the socio-economic conditions in rural areas.

ALL VISIONS

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Women would be politically and economically empowered to contribute to a new, confident, and sovereign Iraq. Increased opportunities for women's political participation and their assumption of decision-making positions within government, political parties, and civil society would result in more gender-sensitive policies and improve government responsiveness to key issues important to women. Women and girls would gain economic independence with increased freedom of movement, a stronger sense of safety and security, and more opportunities for education and employment. The full implementation of UN Resolution 1325 would enable women to be agents of peace and transformation in society. Legislation and policies would protect the rights of women against gender-based violence and ensure freedom of choice regarding their marital status. If this vision is achieved, women's equal and meaningful inclusion in the political process and in economic and social life would result in the realization of the full potential of Iraqi society.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

A safe and stable Iraq with secure borders, professional security services, and a robust framework for the management of armaments, would end the cycle of violence. In an environment more conducive to the freedom of movement, including the elimination of checkpoints, all citizens would be able to realize their full potential. Women and young people in particular would see the advantages of an improved security situation by opening new spaces for them to work and contribute to society. With professional and representative security services and the elimination of irregular armed groups, all Iraqis would enjoy an improved sense of safety and security in their homes and communities. If this vision is achieved, a stable security situation would enhance the standard of living and quality of life for all Iraqis, resulting in fewer opportunities for vulnerable groups to be co-opted by violent extremism and fundamentalism.

TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

In a peaceful environment, trust and confidence would flourish. Men and women would work alongside each other to enhance community relations in order to strengthen trust and confidence across components and confront issues of discrimination and exclusion. Iraqis would engage in open dialogue to build religious and cultural awareness of other communities to move away from fundamentalist and extremist ideology. Through that process, they would develop a shared understanding and acceptance of a single national identity that encapsulates and represents Iraq's diversity. If this vision is achieved, Iraqi society would become more integrated and tolerant of ethno-sectarian differences resulting in peaceful coexistence where their love of country binds them together.

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Victims and survivors would find a society that embraces them. Individuals targeted by violence would be protected under the law and reintegrated back into society and their families free from stigma and discrimination. Acknowledging their suffering would create an environment of tolerance to openly confront the atrocities committed against them without fear of shame or repercussion. Basic needs would be provided to economically empower victims and survivors, particularly women and young girls, to elevate their standing in society, including provision of employment opportunities and tailored educational and health care services. If this vision is achieved, victims and survivors would feel safe and accepted by their families, communities, and country, and in turn would be empowered to ardently contribute to advancing a democratic, economically prosperous, and peaceful Iraq.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

A high quality education system made available to all Iraqis would contribute to a stronger, well-informed, and skilled society. The next generation would be better qualified and have the capacity to advance Iraq domestically thereby enabling the country to compete on the world stage. In addition, more opportunities for young girls and women to pursue higher education would help them become more economically and socially independent. Improved schooling conditions, well-trained teachers and administrators, and well-resourced education services, would lead to lower dropout rates and drug usage, employment opportunities, and the elimination of social exploitation. If this vision is achieved, a reformed and modern education system that teaches inclusive and nationalist values would support reconciliation by molding a new generation of Iraqis to be more tolerant and accepting of others.

GOVERNANCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

Governance in Iraq would adhere to the rule of law and respect provisions within the constitution to improve its domestic performance as well as elevate its standing on the global stage economically and politically. The separation of powers across the three branches of government would be respected, particularly the independence of the judiciary. Resources would be fairly and equitably distributed to guarantee and safeguard a dignified life for all Iraqis. This process would ensure comprehensive and proportionate development of resources and infrastructure across all provinces, raising the standard of living for Iraq's economically vulnerable groups, such as women and young people. The further devolution of power to local government would streamline administrative processes and improve the delivery of basic services. Civil society would enhance their oversight role and openly monitor the political process. If this vision is achieved, Iraq would reach a state of self-sufficiency and the application of good governance practices would ensure the professional and excellent provision of public services and resources enjoyed by all citizens equally.

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Iraq would maintain a clean environment and improve access to quality health care to all citizens, with special attention to vulnerable groups. Iraqis would enjoy a healthy and productive life in a society free from widespread diseases and pollution. Citizens of Iraq would live in a physically, psychologically, and socially healthy country that would benefit from increased productivity, economic prosperity and, in turn, political stability. Knowledge and public awareness of the importance of biodiversity and the use of natural resources in a sustainable manner will be widespread to improve the lives of this generation and the next. Families would have potable water to drink from the tap, enjoy cleaner air, fill up their grocery baskets with home-grown products, and enjoy green and clean spaces in their communities. If this vision is achieved, a reformed and modern health care system and cleaner environment will generate healthy minds and healthy bodies, and citizens will benefit equitably and not resort to public unrest over the scarcity of resources, ending the vicious cycle of violence and environmental degradation.

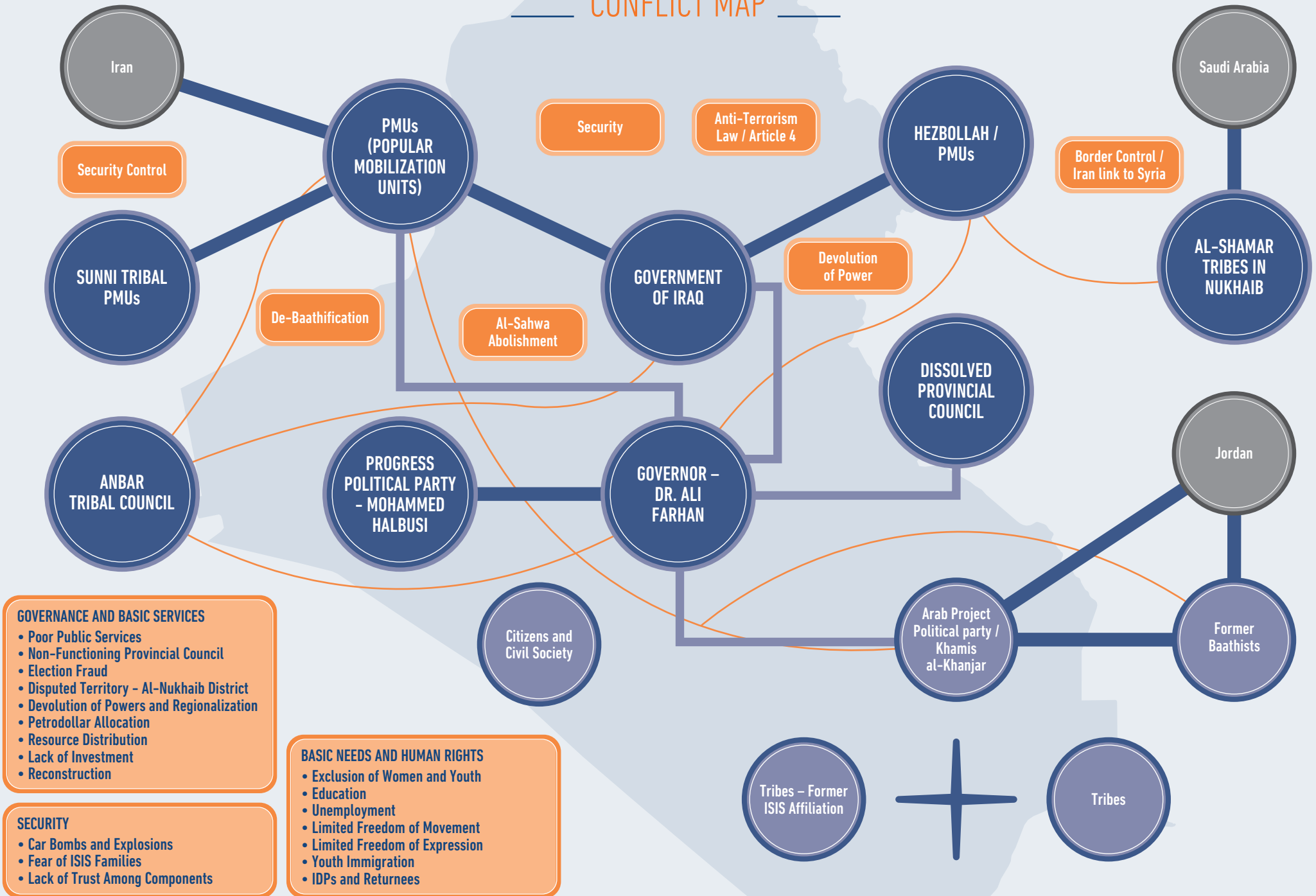
AGRICULTURE

The development of the agricultural industry would diversify Iraq's economy as it would no longer be solely reliant on the fluctuating oil sector, leading to a more stable and globally competitive country. Citizens would enjoy food security and be less vulnerable to unhealthy imported food products. The development of the sector would contribute to the overall development of the country's social and economic infrastructure, including rural development, rural income generation, employment opportunities, and less migration to urban cities and abroad. With good governance and the adoption of responsive legal reforms, the private sector would invest in the agriculture sector to provide more jobs, land disputes would be solved, international water rights would be preserved, and the integrated and efficient management of water resources would be applied to deter further conflicts. If this vision is achieved, Iraq would reach a state of self-sufficiency. With a stronger economy and safe drinking water and food security, citizens would be able to benefit from the soil and water of the country and turn away from a history of conflict toward a future of stability and peace.

The background image is a photograph of a conflict-ridden urban area. It features a large, multi-story building with a complex, layered structure, possibly a residential or institutional building that has been damaged or repurposed. The building is situated on a hillside. In the foreground, there is a dirt road or path leading towards the building. A white bus is visible on the right side of the image, parked or moving along a road. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter, and the text "Appendix: Conflict maps" is centered in white.

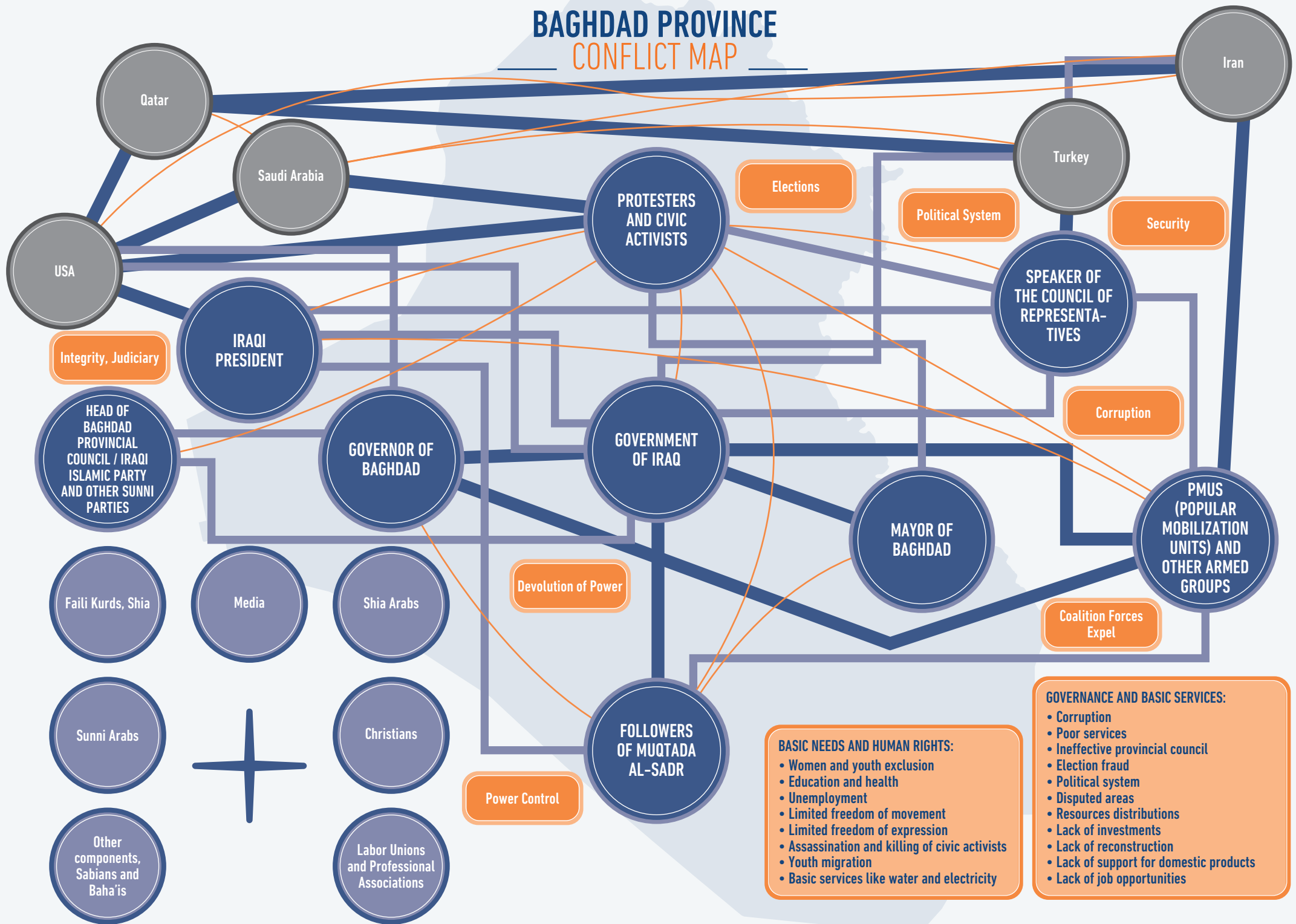
Appendix: Conflict maps

ANBAR PROVINCE CONFLICT MAP



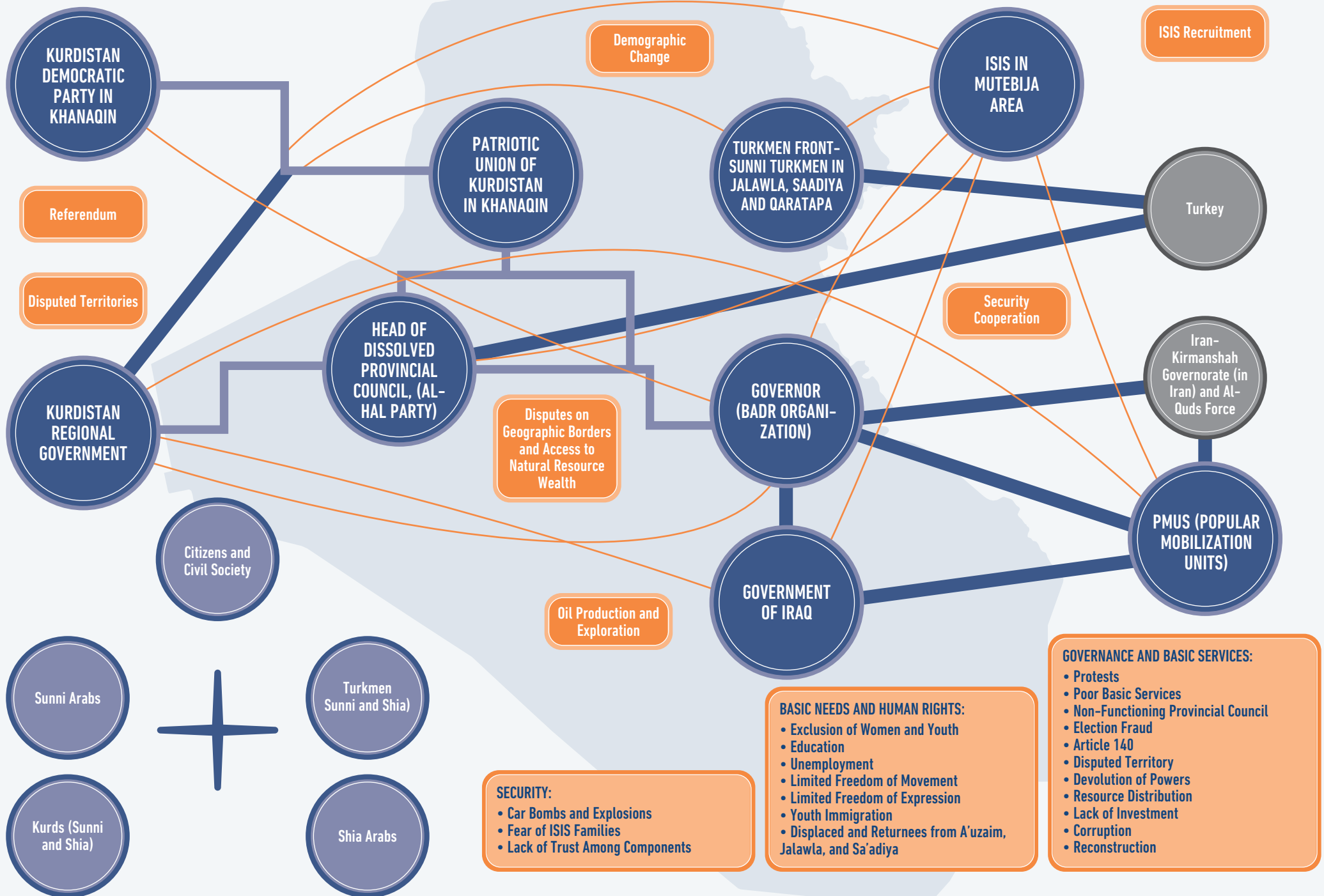
	MAIN ACTORS	The main actors in Anbar include: the Government of Iraq; the Governor, an Arab Sunni supported by the Progress political party founded by the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Mohammed Al- Halbusi; Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs); influential Sunni tribes comprised of al-Sahwa fighters who battled al-Qaeda.
	SECONDARY ACTORS	Citizens in Anbar are overwhelmingly Sunnis, yet they are still segregated along tribal lines. While influential and politically engaged tribes are mapped as main actors, smaller and less influential tribes that were sympathetic to and cooperated with ISIS are considered secondary actors.
	REGIONAL/ EXTERNAL ACTORS	Iran is viewed as having a significant influence in Anbar, particularly in the al-Nukhaib District, and Iraq more broadly, through the presence of the Revolutionary Guard. Iran supported the PMUs and the Government of Iraq during the war against ISIS, and it continues to have a strong influence on these actors. It is believed that Iran is in conflict with and against the influential Sunni tribes and Sunni political parties. Jordan and Saudi Arabia are seen as a counterweight to Iran and are in cooperation with some of the Sunni tribes and political parties to strengthen them and pushback against Iranian influence along the border.
	MAIN ISSUES	There are two main issues in Anbar: 1) the political issues that shape the relationship among the main and secondary actors; and 2) the daily concerns and needs of the broader population in the province. For example, the contentious relationships between the PMUs and the Government of Iraq on one side and the Anbar Tribal Council on the other is fueled by disputes and claims over issues, such as De-Baathification, the Anti-Terrorism Law and Article 4, abolishing the Sahwa Tribal Councils (Sons of Iraq), and random arrests and detentions. Broader citizen issues and concerns in Anbar include lack of basic service, reconstruction, housing, unemployment, and fear ISIS sleeper cells and ISIS families.
	CONFLICT RELATIONSHIPS	This type of relationship often shapes interactions between main actors, secondary actors, main actors and secondary actors, and a main actor and an external actor, as shown in the map. For example, Sunni Arab political parties are in conflict with the Government of Iraq, all main actors of the conflict in Anbar. Linked to the main actors are the secondary actors and external actors who are influenced by the conflict relationship among the main actors. For example, because the influential Sunni tribes and Sunni political parties are in conflict with Iran due to its support to the PMUs, Sunni citizens and smaller tribes in Anbar who are considered secondary actors due to their association with the influential Sunni tribes and Sunni political parties, are also in conflict with Iran.
	CONTENTIOUS COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	Contentious cooperation occurs between two main actors. For example, The Governor of Anbar, who is Sunni, is in a contentious cooperative relationship with the Shia-led Government of Iraq. These two main actors need to cooperate on some issues although they have unsettled issues between them.
	COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	A cooperative relationship occurs when actors have a positive working relationship and typically do not have any major conflicts among them. For example, the PMUs in Anbar are in a cooperative relationship with the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces.
	DISTRUST	Distrust is the core characteristic that defines relationship among the different tribes in Anbar. For example, the tribes and areas that cooperated with ISIS are viewed with suspicion and fear by other tribes. Distrust also characterizes the relationships citizens in Anbar have with the local government but also toward the central government and the PMUs.

BAGHDAD PROVINCE CONFLICT MAP



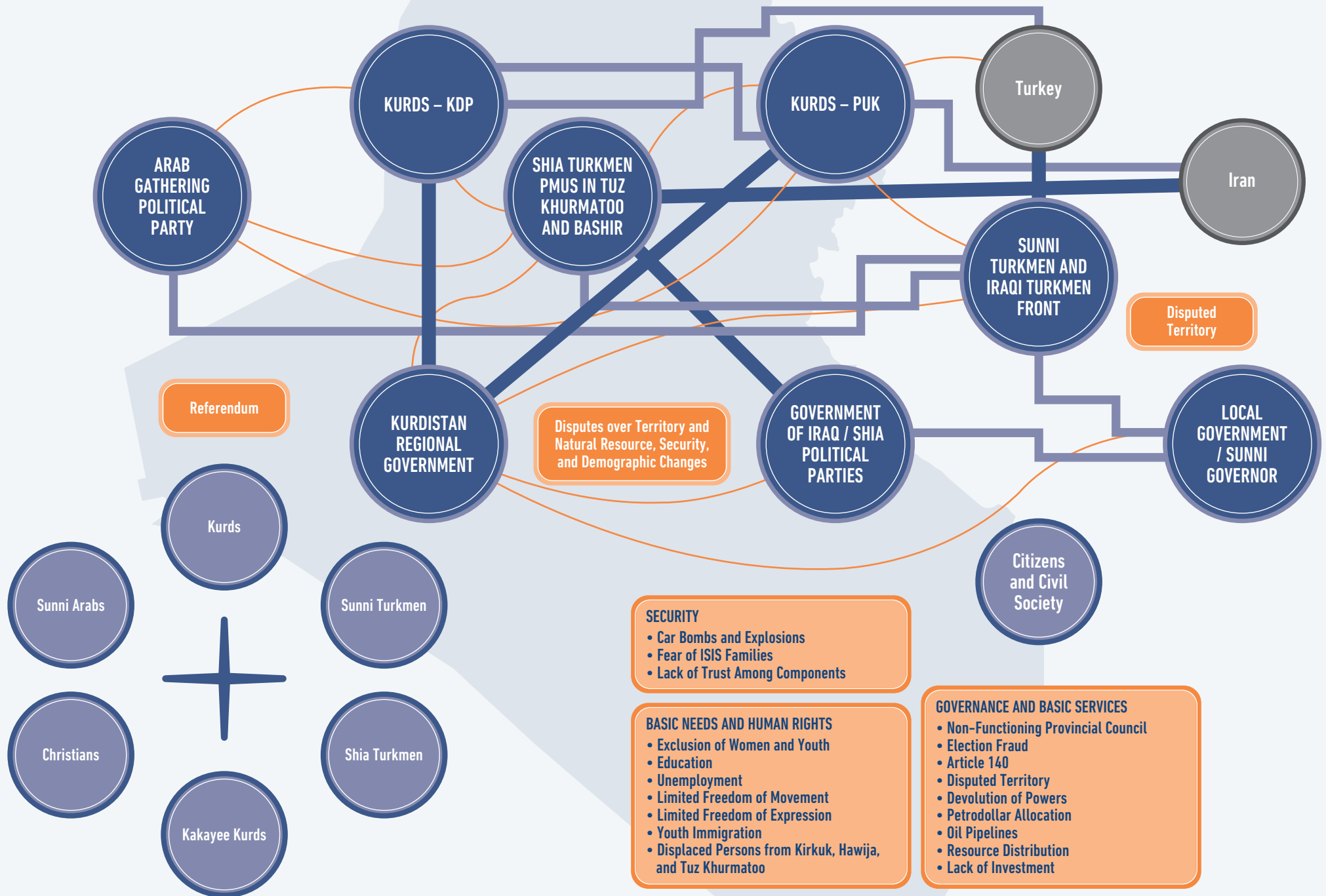
	MAIN ACTORS	<p>The Government of Iraq, including the president, speaker of parliament, and the prime minister (also known as the three presidencies), as well as local government, which includes the mayor's and governor's offices and the former head of the provincial council, the Popular Mobilizations Units (PMUs) and other armed groups, and protesters are the main actors in Baghdad. The primary Shia political parties include the Islamic Da'wa Party, the Sadrist Trend (Sairoon), and the National Wisdom Movement (Hikma). The main Sunni parties include the Solution Party (al-Hal), the Arab Project Party, Mutahidoon Party. The primary Kurdish parties are the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Kurdistan Democratic Union (PUK), and the Change Movement (Gorran). A large number of these parties are included in parliamentary coalitions, such as al-Binaa Bloc (Shia), the Reform and Reconstruction Bloc (Shia), the Iraqi Forces Alliance (Sunni), and Kurdish parties' blocs in the Council of Representatives.</p>
	SECONDARY ACTORS	<p>Secondary actors are the citizens of Baghdad who often live in homogeneous ethnic and sectarian communities, or in several cases also live in mixed ethnic and sectarian neighborhoods, especially minorities in Baghdad. Secondary actors are Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, Faili Kurds (Shia) and Christians, in addition to other components such as Baha'is, Sabians, trade unions, and professional federations. The conflict among these secondary actors is shaped by the conflict among the main actors, but the nature of this conflict can vary in different regions across the province.</p>
	REGIONAL/ EXTERNAL ACTORS	<p>Iran and the U.S. are seen as having significant influence in Baghdad and Iraq more broadly. Through the presence of the Revolutionary Guard, Iran is able to provide support to the PMUs and the Iraqi government during the war against ISIS, and it continues to have a strong influence on these actors. It is believed that Iran is also in conflict with the demonstrators through its alleged support of armed forces or what has become known as the "third party" that suppresses the protests. While Turkey is in contentious cooperative relations with the government of Iraq and Iran, it has a conflict relationship with Saudi Arabia, which is already in a conflict relationship with Iran and the PMUs and supports the Sunni parties in Iraq.</p>
 POLITICAL CONCERNS DAILY CONCERNS	MAIN ISSUES	<p>There are two types of main issues in Baghdad: 1) the political issues that shape the relationship among the main and secondary actors; and 2) the daily concerns and needs of the broader population in the province. For example, the conflict relationship between the central Government of Iraq and protesters is compounded by the conflict between the US on one side and Iran and the PMUs on other based on disputes over governance, the political system, foreign interference, corruption, unemployment, and disputed areas. Broader citizen issues and concerns in Baghdad include the lack of basic services, reconstruction, housing, unemployment, lack of investment, education, and health care.</p>
	CONFLICT RELATIONSHIPS	<p>This type of relationship often shapes interactions between main actors, secondary actors, main actors and secondary actors, and a main actor and an external actor, as shown in the map. For example, the protesters are in conflict with the three presidencies of the Iraqi Government, political parties, armed groups, and PMUs as major players, as well as with foreign countries such as Iran as an external actor.</p>
	CONTENTIOUS COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	<p>Contentious cooperation occurs between two main actors. For example, the relationship among the three presidencies in the Government of Iraq requires cooperation on some issues despite the existence of outstanding and unresolved issues related to the aspirations of the components and political parties they each represent. At the local government level, the Mayor of Baghdad, the Governor of Baghdad have to cooperate on issues, such as security and reconstruction in the province, while the issue of power devolution and delegation remains a contested issue. This relationship can also occur between a main actor and a secondary actor, or between a main actor and an external actor. For example, the relationship of minorities as secondary actors with the Government of Iraq as a main actor is a model of a contentious cooperative relationship, where the Government of Iraq is the entity that minorities turn to in order to ensure and safeguard their rights; however, minorities still have fears and distrust the government to do so. A contentious cooperative relationship can also exist between a main internal actor and an external actor, for example, the relationship of the Government of Iraq with the US.</p>
	COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	<p>A cooperative relationship occurs when actors have a positive working relationship and typically do not have any major conflicts among them. For example, the PMUs in Baghdad are in cooperative relationship with the Government.</p>
	DISTRUST	<p>Distrust is the core characteristic that defines relations among the different components in Baghdad and in Iraq generally. For example, minority components are fearful and do not trust the main Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish components. Christians and other minority components still fear for their future in Baghdad. Distrust also governs the relationship between citizens and the local and central governments as citizens' expectation of good governance, services, employment, education and many other issues have yet to be met.</p>

DIYALA PROVINCE CONFLICT MAP



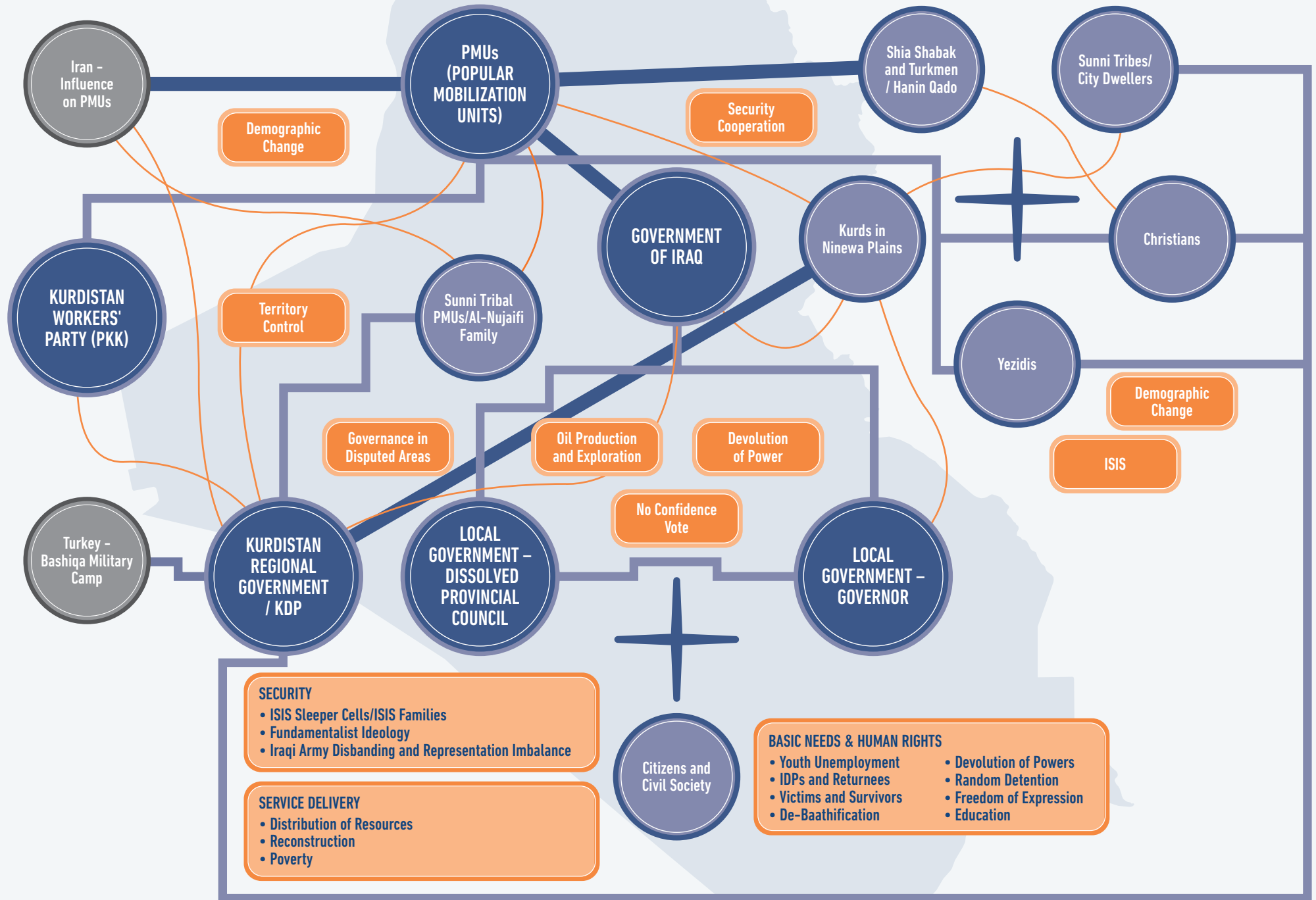
	MAIN ACTORS	The Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the local government, specifically the Arab Shia Governor, Sunni Chairman of the dissolved Provincial Council, and the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) are the main actors in Diyala. For political parties, the main actors are the two main Kurdish parties, Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the Iraqi Turkmen Front, and the Arab Sunni political parties and Arab Shia political parties, which are linked to the PMUs.
	SECONDARY ACTORS	The secondary actors are the citizens of Diyala who are segregated into homogenous ethno-sectarian communities: Sunni Arabs, Kurds (Shia and Sunni), Turkmen (Sunni and Shia), and Christians who exert their influence through the main actors. The conflict among the secondary actors is shaped by the conflict among the main actors, but it can vary across the province. For example, in Baquba, the capital city of Diyala, and in Muqdadiya district, the conflict is characterized as occurring between the Shia Arabs and Sunni Arabs. In other districts, such as Khanaqin, the conflict is between the Kurdish community, the majority group in the district on one side and the Arabs on the other side. In Jalawla, the conflict is between the victims of the ISIS and ISIS affiliated families/tribes.
	REGIONAL/ EXTERNAL ACTORS	Iran and through the authorities in the border Iranian governorate of Kermanshah and Al-Quds Force is viewed as having a significant influence in Diyala, and Iraq more broadly. Iran supported the PMUs and the Government of Iraq during the war against ISIS, and it continues to have a strong influence on these actors. It is believed that Iran is in conflict with the KRG, led by KDP and with the Sunni parties and Sunni population in Diyala who do not support Iranian interference or influence in the province.
	MAIN ISSUES	There are two main issues in Diyala: 1) the political issues that shape the relationship among the main and secondary actors; and 2) the daily concerns and needs of the broader population in the province. For example, the negative relationship between the KRG and Peshmerga on one side, and the local government, mainly the Governor, the Government of Iraq and the PMUs on the other side is a conflict relationship over territorial disputes (Article 140 of the constitution), oil exploration and production, and displacement and demographic changes in these disputed areas. Broader citizen issues and concerns in Diyala include lack of basic services, housing, unemployment, and fear of ISIS sleeper cells and ISIS families.
	CONFLICT RELATIONSHIPS	This type of relationship often shapes interactions between main actors, secondary actors, main actors and secondary actors, and a main actor and an external actor, as shown in the map. For example, Sunni political parties and Sunni citizens are in conflict with the Government of Iraq and the PMUs, as well as with the Shia population as secondary actors and with Iran as an external actor.
	CONTENTIOUS COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	Contentious cooperation occurs between two main actors, such as between the head of the dissolved Provincial Council and the Governor. These two actors need to cooperate on security and reconstruction in the province, while the issue of the devolution of powers and ethno-sectarian aspirations remain contentious issues among them. This relationship can also occur between a main actor and a secondary actor or between a main actor and an external actor.
	COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	A cooperative relationship occurs when actors have a positive working relationship cooperate and typically do not have any major conflicts among them. For example, PMUs in Diyala are in close cooperation with the Government of Iraq. Some components such as Shia communities are also in cooperation with the PMU.
	DISTRUST	Distrust is the core characteristic that defines relations among the different components in Diyala. For example, minority components are fearful and do not trust other minority components, and they do not trust the main Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish components. Christians and Turkmen still fear for their future in the province. Distrust also governs the relationship between civil society, citizens and the local and central governments as citizens' expectation of good governance, services, employment, education and many other issues have yet to be met.

KIRKUK PROVINCE CONFLICT MAP



	MAIN ACTORS	The Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and the local government, specifically the Arab Sunni Governor and the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) are the main actors in Kirkuk. For political parties, the main actors are the two main Kurdish parties, Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the Iraqi Turkmen Front, and the Arab Gathering in Kirkuk.
	SECONDARY ACTORS	The secondary actors are the citizens of Kirkuk who are segregated into homogenous ethno-sectarian communities: Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Shia Turkmen, Shia Shabak, and Christians who exert their influence through the main actors. The conflict among the secondary actors is shaped by the conflict among the main actors, but it can vary across the province. For example, in the capital of Kirkuk City, the conflict is characterized as occurring among the Kurds, Sunni Arabs, and Sunni Turkmen. In other districts such as Hawija, the conflict is within in the Sunni Arab community, the majority group in the district, between the victims of the conflict with ISIS and ISIS families. In Daquq district, the conflict is between the the Kakayee Kurds and Shia Turkmen affiliated with the PMUs.
	REGIONAL/ EXTERNAL ACTORS	Iran is viewed as having a significant influence in Kirkuk, and Iraq more broadly, through the presence of the Revolutionary Guard. Iran supported the PMUs and the Government of Iraq during the war against ISIS, and it continues to have a strong influence on these actors. It is believed that Iran is in conflict with the KRG, led by KDP and the Sunni population in Kirkuk does not support Iranian interference or influence in the province. Similarly, while Turkey is in a contentious cooperative relationship with the KRG/KDP and the Sunnis in Kirkuk, it is an ally and supports the Iraqi Turkmen Front.
 <small>POLITICAL CONCERNS DAILY CONCERNS</small>	MAIN ISSUES	There are two main issues in Kirkuk: 1) the political issues that shape the relationship among the main and secondary actors; and 2) the daily concerns and needs of the broader population in the province. For example, the negative relationship between the KRG and Peshmerga on one side, and the local government, mainly the Governor, and the Government of Iraq and the PMUs on the other side are in conflict over territorial disputes (Article 140 of the constitution), oil exploration and production, and displacement and demographic changes in these disputed areas. Broader citizen issues and concerns in Kirkuk include lack of basic service, housing, unemployment, and fear ISIS sleeper cells and ISIS families.
	CONFLICT RELATIONSHIPS	This type of relationship often shapes interactions between main actors, secondary actors, main actors and secondary actors, and a main actor and an external actor, as shown in the map. For example, Sunni political parties and Sunni citizens are in conflict with the Government of Iraq and the PMUs, as well as with the Shia Turkmen as secondary actors and with Iran as an external actor.
	CONTENTIOUS COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	Contentious cooperation occurs between two main actors, such as between the local government and the Government of Iraq where these actors need to cooperate on some issues although they have unsettled issues between them. The case of the local government and the Government of Iraq, these two actors need to cooperate on security and reconstruction in the province, while the issue of the devolution of powers remains a tense issue between them. This relationship can also occur between a main actor and a secondary actor or among a main actor and an external actor. For example, minority groups' relationship with the Government of Iraq and the KRG (secondary actor between main actor), or the KRG/KDP and Turkey (main actor and external actor).
	COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	A cooperative relationship occurs when actors have a positive working relationship cooperate and typically do not have any major conflicts among them. For example, PMUs in Kirkuk are in close cooperation with the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces. Some components such as Shia Turkmen are also in cooperation with the PMUs.
	DISTRUST	Distrust is the core characteristic that defines relations among the different components in Kirkuk. For example, minority components are fearful and do not trust other minority components, and they do not trust the main Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish components. Christians, and Kakayee Kurds still fear for their future in the province. Distrust also governs the relationship between citizens and the local and central governments as citizens' expectation of good governance, services, employment, education and many other issues have yet to be met.

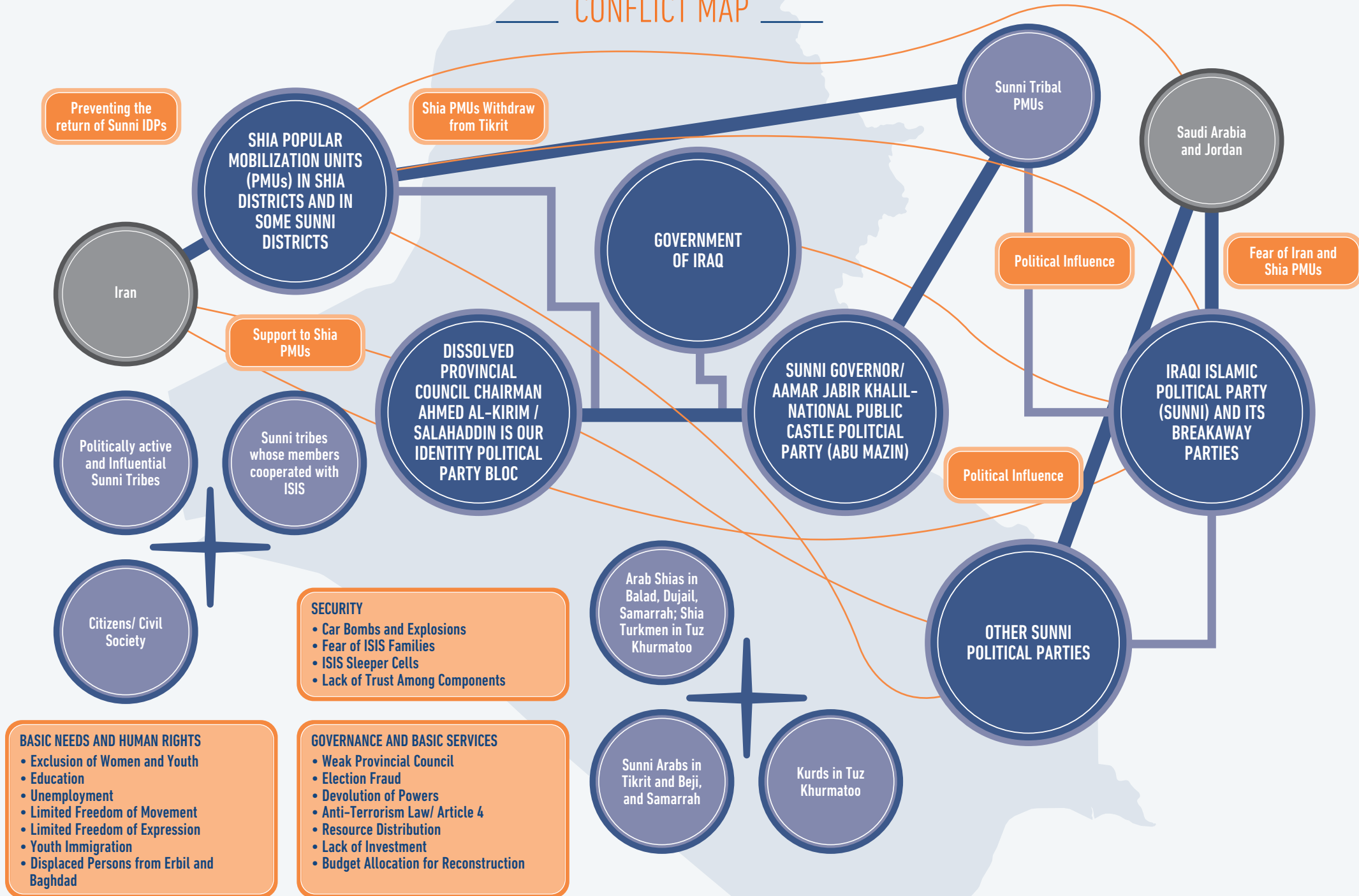
NINEWA PROVINCE CONFLICT MAP



 MAIN ACTORS	<p>The Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs), including the Shia-dominated PMUs, and the local Shia Shabak/Hanin Qadoa are in a cooperative relationship with the Government of Iraq. These actors, however, are in a contentious relationship with the Peshmerga, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and Kurdish political parties, namely KDP and PUK. The local government in Ninewa has a contentious relationship with both the Government of Iraq and the KRG.</p>
 SECONDARY ACTORS	<p>Citizens in Ninewa typically live in homogenous ethno-sectarian communities in the province (Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Shia Turkmen, Shia Shabak, Christians, and Yezidis). These groups often exert their influence through their relationships with the main actors. The relationship among all these groups is characterized by distrust and fear, which further influences how each group interacts with the main actors in the province. For example, Christians are in contentious relationship with the KRG, the Government of Iraq, and PMUs, and in some cases, the Christian community is spilt into groupings that lean more toward one of the three main actors. Similarly, while the Yezidis distrust the Sunni Arab tribes in their places of origin, they are seeking protection from all the main actors in the province and different groups of Yezidis are aligned with different actors, including the KRG and Peshmerga, the Government of Iraq and PMUs, and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).</p>
 REGIONAL/ EXTERNAL ACTORS	<p>Iran is viewed as having a significant influence in Ninewa, and Iraq more broadly, through the presence of the former Revolutionary Guard. Iran supported the PMUs and the Government of Iraq during the war against ISIS, and it continues to have a strong influence on these actors. It is believed that Iran is in conflict with and against the KRG's influence in the province and the Sunni population in Ninewa does not support Iranian interference or influence in Ninewa. Similarly, Turkey, which is seen as being in a contentious cooperative relationship with the KRG/KDP and in cooperation with the al-Nujaifi Sunni family in Mosul. Turkey also believes it has an historical claim in the region and seeks to restore the old Ottoman Empire Wilayat of Mosul and its support to the Iraqi Turkman Front (ITF) exacerbates the conflict among the main ethno-sectarian actors in Ninewa.</p>
 MAIN ISSUES POLITICAL CONCERNS DAILY CONCERNS	<p>There are two main issues in Ninewa: 1) the political issues that shape the relationship among the main and secondary actors; and 2) the daily concerns and needs of the broader population in the province. For example, the contentious relationship between the KRG/Peshmerga on one side, and the local government and the Government of Iraq/PMUs on the other side is fueled by disputes and claims over issues, such as territorial control, oil exploration, and displacement and demographic changes in disputed areas. Broader citizen issues and concerns in Ninewa include lack of basic service, housing, unemployment, and fear ISIS sleeper cells and ISIS families.</p>
 CONFLICT RELATIONSHIPS	<p>This type of relationship often shapes interactions between main actors, secondary actors, main actors and secondary actors, and a main actor and an external actor, as shown in the map. For example, Sunni Arab political parties are in conflict with the Government of Iraq and the KRG, all main actors of the conflict in Ninewa. Linked to the main actors are the secondary actors and external actors who are influenced by the conflict relationship among the main actors. For example, because the KRG and Iran are in conflict due to Iran's support to the PMUs, the Kurdish populations and the Sunni Arab populations in Ninewa, who are considered secondary actors because of their association with the KRG and Sunni political parties, are also in conflict with Iran.</p>
 CONTENTIOUS COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	<p>Contentious cooperation occurs between two main actors. For example, The Governor of Ninewa who is Sunni is in a contentious cooperative relationship with the Shia-led Government of Iraq. These two main actors need to cooperate on some issues although they have unsettled issues between them. Another example includes the cooperation between the local government in Ninewa and the Government of Iraq on security issues and the restriction of Kurdish influence although the issue of power devolution remains a source of conflict between them. A contentious cooperative relationship can also occur between a main actor and a secondary actor. For example, the contentious cooperative relationship between minority groups such as Christians and the Government of Iraq and the KRG. This relationship can also exist between a main actor and an external actor such as in the case of Turkey and the KRG/KDP.</p>
 COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	<p>A cooperative relationship occurs when actors have a positive working relationship and typically do not have any major conflicts among them. For example, the PMUs in Ninewa are in cooperative relationship with the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces, Shia Turkmen and Shia Shabak, and Iran. Similarly, the Kurdish political parties and Kurds in Ninewa are in cooperative relationship with the KRG.</p>
 DISTRUST	<p>Distrust is the core characteristic that defines relations among the different components in Ninewa. For example, minority components are fearful and do not trust other minority components, and they do not trust the main Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish components. Christians, Yezidis, Shabaks and Kakayee Kurds still fear for their future in the province. Distrust also governs the relationship between citizens and the local and central governments as citizens' expectation of good governance, services, employment, education and many other issues have yet to be met.</p>

SALAHADDIN PROVINCE

CONFLICT MAP



	MAIN ACTORS	The main actors in Salahaddin include: the Government of Iraq, the local government, specifically the Arab Sunni Governor and Provincial Council Chairman, Shia PMUs, Sunni PMUs, Sunni political parties such as Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) along with key members, such as Saleem al-Juburi, Abdulqahar al-Samarria, Ayad Al-Samarria and Muthana Abdul-Samad, and other Sunni parties such as Mutahidun and Arab Project.
	SECONDARY ACTORS	The secondary actors are the citizens of Salahaddin who are segregated into homogenous ethno-sectarian communities: majority Sunni Arabs, Kurds in Tuz Khurmatoo, and Shia in Tuz Khurmatoo, Dujail, Balad and Samarra who exert their influence through the main actors. Among the majority Sunnis populations, tribes with members who cooperated with ISIS, such as tribesmen from al-I'zza and al-Obeid are also secondary actors. These tribesmen are in contentious relationships with each other and each linked to one of the main actors. The conflict among the secondary actors is shaped by the conflict among the main actors, but it can vary across the province. For example, in the city of Sammarrah, the conflict is between Arab Sunnis and Arab Shia, both secondary actors. In other districts such as Tuz Khurmatoo, the conflict is between the Shia Turkmen and Kurds. In majority Sunni populated areas, the conflict is between some of the Sunni tribes and other Sunni tribes whose tribesmen cooperated with ISIS.
	REGIONAL/ EXTERNAL ACTORS	Iran is viewed as having a significant influence in Salahaddin, and Iraq more broadly, through the presence of the Revolutionary Guard. Iran supported the PMUs and the Government of Iraq during the war against ISIS, and it continues to have a strong influence on these actors. It is believed that Iran is in conflict with the Sunni local government in Tikrit, and the Sunni population in Salahaddin does not support Iranian interference or influence in the province. Similarly, while Saudi Arabia and Jordan fear Iranian influence over the PMUs and the Government of Iraq, they are viewed as supportive to and cooperative with Sunni political parties such as IIP, Mutahidun, and Arab Project Trend. In response, the Shia populations are in conflict with Saudi Arabia and Jordan.
	MAIN ISSUES	There are two main issues in Salahaddin: 1) the political issues that shape the relationship among the main and secondary actors; and 2) the daily concerns and needs of the broader population in the province. For example, the negative relationship between the influential Sunni political leaders with the Government of Iraq and with Shia PMUs is over security control on territory, the return of Sunni IDPs to their places of origin, devolution of powers, corruption, demographic changes, and the Anti-Terrorism Law-Article 4. Broader citizen issues and concerns in Salahaddin include lack of basic service, housing, unemployment, reconstruction, jobs and fear ISIS sleeper cells and ISIS families.
	CONFLICT RELATIONSHIPS	This type of relationship often shapes interactions between main actors, secondary actors, main actors and secondary actors, and a main actor and an external actor, as shown in the map. For example, Sunni political parties and Sunni citizens are in conflict with the Government of Iraq and the PMUs all as main actors, as well as with the Shia population as secondary actors and with Iran as an external actor.
	CONTENTIOUS COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	Contentious cooperation occurs between two main actors, such as between the local government and the Government of Iraq where these actors need to cooperate on some issues although they have unsettled issues between them. In the case of the local government and the Government of Iraq, these two actors need to cooperate on security and reconstruction in the province, while the issue of the devolution of powers and corruption remains as a contentious issue between them. This relationship can also occur between a main actor and a secondary actor. For example, Sunni tribes and PMUs' relationships with Sunni parties such as IIP, a secondary actor and main actor.
	COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP	A cooperative relationship occurs when actors have a positive working relationship cooperate and typically do not have any major conflicts among them. For example, PMUs in Salahaddin are in close cooperation with the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces. Some components such as Shia Turkmen in Tuz Kurmatoo and Shia in Dujail, Samarra, and Balad also cooperate with the PMUs.
	DISTRUST	Distrust is the core characteristic that defines relations among the different components in Salahaddin. For example, the main Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish components are fearful and do not trust each other. Among the majority Sunni population distrust and fears also govern the relationships among the tribes, including some tribes whose tribesmen cooperated with ISIS. Distrust also governs the relationship between citizens and the local and Government of Iraq as citizens' expectation of good governance, services, employment, education and many other issues have yet to be met.



HER ROLE

We, **#HerRole** women peace activists, believe that the time for open and honest dialogue between Iraqis has arrived. We are circulating this platform to advocate and stimulate discussion amongst and between government officials, political and religious leaders, protestors, civil society, academia, and the international community on salient national reconciliation issues.

We call on all parties to consider these recommendations seriously in order to make meaningful strides toward a lasting peace in Iraq. The policy recommendations outlined in the platform seek to provide step-by-step measures for addressing the key issues needed to achieve an enduring reconciliation in Iraq and are based on consultations with and on the priorities of Iraqis. Over the last two years, we have gained public support and the respect of the Iraqi people by listening to their concerns and transforming their ideas and priorities into achievable solutions.

We call on decision makers at all levels of the Government of Iraq, civil society, and the international community, to take immediate action and implement these well researched, representative, and responsive policy recommendations. By taking action on these recommendations, the Government of Iraq and other key stakeholders will demonstrate their commitment to achieving peace and gain the support and legitimacy of the Iraqi people as the solutions provided in the platform are citizen-driven, have already garnered public buy-in and support and above all, resonates with large segments of the public, including the protestors.

Finally, this platform serves as a discussion and advocacy document for all those interested in bringing peace to Iraq. We welcome any peaceful and honest contribution that would help to advance the ultimate goals of this platform to create a new peaceful reality in Iraq, and empower and increase the access of women to meaningfully contribute to the national reconciliation process.