

Mosul and Tel Afar Context Analysis

Rise Foundation

December 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction
Methodology

MOSUL

Introduction
Security Forces Present in Ninewa Province post-IS
Ministry of Defense
Ministry of Interior
Federal Police
Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS)
Local Police
Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)
PMF Factions
Tribal/Local Hashd (Hashd Ashaieri)
Mapping PMF Groups in Mosul post-IS
PMF's Mandate in post-IS Mosul
Reasons people join the PMF
PMF and the Recruitment of Minors
“Fake Hashd Groups” and Non-Payment of Salaries
Tensions between PMF groups
Residents' Perception of PMF and ISF Operations in Mosul
Reports of Looting and Abuse
Lack of Access to Justice
The threat of IS returning and Combatting IS Ideology
Reconstruction
Politics
Economy
Daily Life

TEL AFAR

Tel Afar Background
IS Occupation and Liberation of Tel Afar
Returns to Tel Afar
Security Actors in Tel Afar
Infrastructure, Services, and Employment
Potential for Future Conflict
Annex: Iraqi Security Forces Taxonomy

INTRODUCTION

This field-research based report situates local developments in post-IS Mosul and Tel Afar and analyses residents' perceptions of such developments and the challenges they face moving forward.

Identification and prioritisation of report themes and subsections grew organically out of conversations with residents highlighting the most pressing issues currently facing them.

The report offers analysis rooted in extensive field research to help inform humanitarian and development organisations' considerations for future planning. As such, at times throughout the report, italicised subsections contain summarisation and analysis of key points for further attention.

Residents unanimously identified security as the most important issue in post-IS communities and as such, the report focuses in detail on analysis of security actors, particularly the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), and their provision of security in these areas.

Interviewees also identified lack of access to justice, fears of resurgent armed extremist groups in Ninewa Province, economic instability, minimal reconstruction, and lack of confidence in state functions and poor governance, including corrupt political and security actors, as negatively affecting their daily lives.

In Tel Afar specifically, interviewees also expressed frustration over a lack of an equitable returns process and fear of future Sunni-Shia communal friction.

The liberation of Mosul and Tel Afar cities was a pivotal event for Iraq in both symbolic and practical terms. However, despite the conventional military defeat of the Islamic State group (IS), conflict and other violence are not going away. Military victory against IS must be followed by a political and economic reconstruction strategy in order to prevent another resurgence of insurgency or Iraqi state failure.¹

Rise's field research reveals that post-IS life in Mosul and Tel Afar is a series of contradictions. Residents want a strong Iraqi Security Force (ISF) presence to maintain stability but fear a repeat of past abuses. Residents despise PMF groups alleged corruption and abuses and want them to leave their neighbourhoods but say if given the chance, they would join such groups to secure economic security and protection for their families, even as second rate members.

Residents demand the implementation of the rule of law (signs announcing 'the law is above everyone' hang above checkpoints throughout Ninewa Province), but are unanimous in their skepticism or cynicism about the ability or willingness of the Iraqi state to deliver justice. Residents demand increased funding for state reconstruction, especially in West Mosul, but lament that much of it will pad the pockets of competing security and political actors and call for stringent international oversight of reconstruction efforts.

The last time there was an opportunity to reinforce the Iraqi state for the benefit of its citizens was after the defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) insurgency in 2008: "a short-lived period of peace and greater popular participation in politics was followed by a swift return to civil war and a degradation of state authority."² In large part, that narrow window of opportunity was squandered.

The extent of military destruction, civilian displacement and public skepticism over the state's capacity to provide have raised the stakes of the need to avoid a similar mistake post-IS.

National and provincial elections due in 2018 presents a renewed opportunity to halt the cycle of failure and repair that has plagued the government since 2003, but residents doubt this will happen. Few can name a politician or political party they identify with or trust. In the absence of a long-established or well-developed political party to take forward Sunnis' interests, local Sunni leaders will be in no position to try to call the shots in Baghdad and influence the process of state reinforcement. Sunni residents interviewed

¹ Marc Lynch, "Securing the Peace After the Fall of ISIL," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/10/03/securing-peace-after-fall-of-isil-pub-73301>.

² "Iraq After the Fall of ISIS: The Struggle for the State," Chatham House, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/node/30483>.

say they have largely resigned themselves to finding ways to ensure security and stability, even if that means they will stay on the margins of society and transact with myriad local security actors they do not trust. Minority groups, such as Christians, have a still bleaker outlook for the future.

At best, the war against IS pressed a pause button on inter-community disputes, especially within the Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) as evidenced by Federal troops retaking of disputed territories from Kurdish security forces in Kirkuk and Ninewa Province areas. With Iraq's Shia, Kurdish and Sunni leaders now less able to rally or unify their constituents based principally on identity politics, intra-community rivalries will also define the next repair period.³

Fatigue, the barbarity and destruction wreaked by IS and the campaign to defeat them, and a desire for some stability may hedge against the emergence of violent extremism in the short to medium term, at least insofar as it guards against extremist groups seeking to replicate the IS project.

This should not be confused with positive prospects for stabilisation or improvement in the long-run. The long-term outlook looks bleak, and the threat of recruitment of Mosul and Tel Afar residents in a future insurgency against security forces and local government should not be underestimated. It may be inevitable without a material improvement in conditions. Violence will continue its cyclical rise and fall in Iraq, as it has without fail since the Iraqi state was destroyed in the American invasion of 2003 and Iraqi leaders' subsequent failure to rebuild. Until Iraq is a fully governed and secured nation, extremist groups will continue to thrive in its margins and seams.⁴

Despite deep psychological and physical scars, interviewees are remarkably resilient in adapting to the evolving new status-quo. Just like NGOs, residents are conducting their stakeholder mappings, figuring out which local players to align with to survive the post-IS period.

Civilians in Mosul in Tel Afar harbour few illusions about what the future may hold. As an Iraqi civilian from south of Mosul said, "As we say in Iraq, the bad is behind us and the worst is yet to come."

NGO actors should likewise be aware of the operational hurdles arising from the poor state of local governance in Ninewa province, surrounding political complications and Mosul's fragmented and dysfunctional security system. Planning aid, advocacy and development activities should incorporate a continually updated understanding of local political and security dynamics to maximise the possibility of success. The nature of the post-conflict environment will likely require more dynamic, quick-footed projects to be more effective.

More broadly, ahead of an upcoming major international donor conference in Kuwait, NGOs should also be alive to the possibility of navigating risks to deliver meaningful improvements in the civilian outlook for Mosul and Tal Afar.

Concerted NGO and international engagement, connecting efforts to navigate problematic governance and security systems coupled with bold, targeted funding for aid and reconstruction, can resist and partly reverse the disillusionment and instability that may otherwise breed serious future crises in Ninewa province.

³ "Iraq After the Fall of ISIS: The Struggle for the State," Chatham House, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/node/30483>.

⁴ Thanassis Cambanis, "The War on ISIS Held the Middle East Together," *The Atlantic*, October 17, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/raqqa-isis-middle-east-iraq-kurds/543120/>.

METHODOLOGY

This thematic report situates extensive field research in Mosul and Tel Afar cities within a wider lens for analysing dynamics and trends at the local level.

This report is based on more than 165 interviews conducted in Mosul, Tel Afar, and surrounding villages in Ninewa Province in Northern Iraq between mid-July and mid-November 2017. Additional interviews were conducted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and several follow up interviews were conducted remotely over the phone. An Iraqi researcher assisted with several interviews inside Mosul.

Rise interviewed a wide range of actors for this report, including: residents of East and West Mosul and surrounding villages; residents of Tel Afar and surrounding villages; Internally displaced people (IDPs) displaced from Mosul and Tel Afar; Iraqi Federal Police and Iraq Army members; former security service members; Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) leaders and members; Ninewa Provincial Council members; local government officials; tribal leaders; lawyers; a judge; national and international aid workers; formerly detained ; detainees' family members; national and international journalists, researchers, and security analysts.

Rise also conducted rapid humanitarian assessments in Mosul and Tel Afar during this period as areas of Mosul and Ninewa province were returned from IS to government control. These assessments informed research for this work. Secondary open sources including NGO publications, think tank reports, social media, and news reports are also cited.

MOSUL

Introduction

Mosul is the largest city in northern Iraq, with a pre-2014 population of approximately 1.2 million. It is the principal city and capital of the province - or governorate - of Ninewa. The city is majority Sunni Arab, with Kurdish, Christian, Shabek and other minorities. The city has been a persistent security issue since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. It was occupied by IS in June 2014, when militants launched a lightning offensive against unprepared and demoralized Iraqi army and federal police units. The June 2014 occupation was preceded by years of overlapping violent extremism and organized crime by militia groups, some of which were IS progenitors and/or rivals.

The offensive to liberate Mosul city and surrounding territories in Ninewa governorate, dubbed “We are Coming, oh Nineveh” was formally announced by Iraq’s Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on 16 October 2016. The offensive was preceded by several prior offensives, dubbed “shaping operations” by combined Iraqi security forces (ISF) in the months prior. These shaping operations encircled Mosul and the western town of Tel Afar. All major anti-IS operations in Iraq have received extensive military support from a multinational coalition of armed forces, led by the United States, under the banner of Operation Inherent Resolve (here, the Coalition).

ISF first cleared IS-controlled rural areas and outlying villages and towns in Nineveh Governorate outside Mosul city, after which ISF advanced into Mosul proper on 1 November. The ISF’s joint military command declared East Mosul liberated on 24 January 2017. Operations to retake the West began in February. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi announced the liberation of Mosul on 10 July⁵. Remaining pockets of IS resistance were cleared from Mosul’s central Old City area in the subsequent weeks.

Between October 2016 and June 2017, over 800,000 people were displaced from Mosul.⁶ Some neighbourhoods in the west, such as the Old City, have seen very limited returns due to devastating levels of destruction. The Norwegian Refugee Council estimated in mid-October that almost 700,000 Iraqis from Mosul and surrounding villages remain displaced and unable to return to their homes.⁷

Mosul residents inside Mosul suffered almost three years of worsening conditions under IS occupation, followed by a protracted military campaign reckoned to have included some of the most severe and costly urban warfare since WWII⁸. The battle over, Mosul residents are striving to rebuild their lives. For many Mosul residents, the IS occupation did not mark an abrupt, unforeseeable change of control overnight. Instead, as awful as it was, the overt rise of IS as an occupying power should be seen within a continuum of blight since 2003: a range of militant groups conducting targeted killings, kidnappings and pervasive racketeering; clumsy and at times sectarian security responses from the Iraqi state; feckless local governance; and neglect or worse from Baghdad. As such, Mosul city

⁵ “Iraqi PM Declares Victory over Islamic State in Mosul,” *Reuters*, July 11, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul/iraqs-abadi-to-declare-mosul-victory-few-pockets-of-resistance-idUSKBN19V105>.

⁶ OCHA. June 2017. *Iraq: Mosul Humanitarian Response Situation Report No. 37*. <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Mosul%20Humanitarian%20Response%20Situation%20Report%20No.%2037%20%285%20to%2011%20June%202017%29.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/236755>

⁸ “Iraqi Forces in Mosul See Deadliest Urban Combat since World War II,” USA TODAY, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/03/29/united-states-mosul-isis-deadly-combat-world-war-ii/99787764/>.

was in a rolling state of crisis for some ten years before it was officially occupied by IS.⁹ To contextualize the IS occupation and the challenges post-IS, a brief summary of pre-IS occupation conditions follows.

IS did not invade Mosul in June 2014. They and their progenitors were there for years before, working like parasites on a host rendered sickly through corruption, sectarianism and neglect.¹⁰ Al-Qaeda and allied groups gained control over the city's administration and economy years before IS came into power (IS's lineage is traceable to al-Qaeda in Iraq, then to the Islamic State of Iraq, which later become known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and after declaring an Islamic 'caliphate' in the territory it had seized, simply the 'Islamic State'. 'IS' is used throughout to refer to the group in its post-2011 iteration, reflecting analysis that the group is best understood as the latest iteration of a long-running trend of rejectionist militant jihadism with overlapping beliefs, personnel and resources). A precursor militant group to IS made its first public appearance in Mosul city on 10 November 2004 when it took over the streets and occupied dozens of police stations. IS did not deviate from this power game- the only difference was that it was "no longer the shadow government but the local government itself."¹¹

Fighting between jihadist groups and ISF, and terrorist attacks by IS, escalated between 2006 and 2008, sparking an exodus of thousands from their homes. Mosul historically had a mixed population with approximately 80% Arab Sunnis and the rest a mix of ethnic and religious minorities (although exact demographic information is hard to come by in view of the country's sectarian and ethnic conflict).¹² However, during this time, many of Mosul's ethnic and religious minorities (Christians, Kurds, Shabak, Turkoman Shia and Yazidis) fled to other areas, in some cases under direct threat of violence.¹³ Many minorities never returned or were severely depleted. "If some Arab Sunnis are worried about their physical safety in Mosul, what future would Mosul hold for Christians?" said one Christian from Mosul said who vowed never to return¹⁴. A Christian leader living in a village East of Mosul said that, while no one is physically preventing Christians' return, only a couple of Christian families have since returned to Mosul city but expected most never to return because they don't think they will ever be safe there.¹⁵ Minorities have thus sought refuge in more homogenous enclaves elsewhere in the Ninewa Plains that arc around the northwest to the east of the city, some within territory now or until recently was controlled by parallel military forces from the KRI. Others have moved elsewhere in Iraq. A sizeable number fled Iraq entirely, seeking asylum abroad.

As some minorities residents fled for their lives, Mosul city also received a number of IDPs. Turkoman and Arab Sunnis from eastern and southern villages arrived in Mosul in droves, often settling in the city's poorest and least serviced areas. A 2016 UN Habit Report claims that many of those who arrived into West Mosul in 2006 from surrounding districts are

⁹ "City Profile of Mosul, Iraq: Multi-Sector Assessment of a City under Siege - October 2016," ReliefWeb, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/city-profile-mosul-iraq-multi-sector-assessment-city-under-siege-october-2016>.

¹⁰ IBID

¹¹ IBID

¹² The last official countrywide census was conducted in 1997

¹³ See for detailed historical information about the exodus of specific ethnic and religious groups from Mosul: "City Profile of Mosul, Iraq: Multi-Sector Assessment of a City under Siege - October 2016," ReliefWeb, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/city-profile-mosul-iraq-multi-sector-assessment-city-under-siege-october-2016>.

¹⁴ Interview with Christian IDP from Mosul, August 2017.

¹⁵ Interview with Christian leader living in a village East of Mosul, November 2017

“among the city’s most vulnerable groups, making them easy prey for IS[IS] recruitment.”¹⁶ Many migrants moved to some of Mosul’s informal settlements dubbed after 2003 ‘failed security zones’ or self-governed areas that contemporary observers claimed were incubators for radicalisation. Al-Qaeda leaders, especially those from Tel Afar, settled in the Western neighbourhoods of *17 Tamouz*, *Al-Eslah Al-Zirahi*, and *Al-Nahrawan*, although radicalism developed in other parts of the city. Additionally, some armed group members moved to East Mosul once they gained more power and wealth, and as they eroded security conditions.

Ninewa ranks one of the poorest provinces in Iraq, though Mosul city was once a prominent commercial and cultural centre, known for good healthcare services and exported oil, agricultural, industrial, and mineral products, and higher education.

A series of depredations eroded the city’s commerce, culture, security and political clout, coincident with the Iran-Iraq war, the introduction of international sanctions against Iraq, and the 2003 invasion. Until the early 1990s, extremist jihadism was marginal, after which it was incubated through the “faith Campaign” introduced by the notionally secular ruling Baath Party¹⁷.

It was, however, an economically divided city, and increasingly so post-2003. Chronic housing shortages pushed poor families into the Old City, where families often shared cramped accommodation, or to unzoned shambling developments on the city’s western fringes, which often lacked running water or reliable electricity.

Rampant corruption exacerbated residents’ woes and facilitated the takeover of the city’s resources. IS’s takeover subsequently crushed the economy and unemployment, taxes, and poverty rates skyrocketed¹⁸ and thousands more fled the city.

Violence from extremist groups interplayed with the state’s heavy-handed and discriminatory response, breeding resentment. Armed groups’ activities in Mosul and Ninewa Province post-2003 rendered civilian life insecure at best, with the country in a state of near civil war between 2006 and 2008, and increasingly abusive police reported in 2012 and 2013. Residents also resented practices of the Iraqi army and police. For many, Iraqi forces - particularly the Federal Police - were sectarian (a predominantly Shia force in part due to de-Bathification measures and some Sunnis subsequent refusal to join the new forces in protest) and abusive, citing unnecessary checkpoints, raids, ill-treatment and arbitrary arrests as examples.¹⁹

In turn, the Iraqi army was fearful of residents, some of whom who had lost their jobs with security forces and subsequently joined extremist groups, and also distrustful of local police whom they perceived as infiltrated by extremists. In addition to IS precursors, Baathist militias drawing heavily from sacked military officers had a resilient presence throughout Ninewa.

¹⁶ “City Profile of Mosul, Iraq: Multi-Sector Assessment of a City under Siege - October 2016,” ReliefWeb, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/city-profile-mosul-iraq-multi-sector-assessment-city-under-siege-october-2016>.

¹⁷ See “Mosul before ISIS” section of “[ISIS] Hisba in Mosul: Systematic Oppression in the Name of Virtue r/Syriancivilwar,” reddit, accessed December 3, 2017, https://www.reddit.com/r/syriancivilwar/comments/48m137/isis_hisba_in_mosul_systematic_oppression_in_th/.

¹⁸ Joanna Paraszczuk, “The ISIS Economy: Crushing Taxes and High Unemployment,” *The Atlantic*, September 2, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/isis-territory-taxes-recruitment-syria/403426/>.

¹⁹ Andrew Slater, “The Monster of Mosul: How a Sadistic General Helped ISIS Win,” *The Daily Beast*, June 19, 2014, sec. world, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/06/19/iraq-put-a-death-squad-commander-and-torturer-in-charge-of-mosul-no-wonder-isis-is-winning>.

Sectarianism aside, Iraqi security institutions were top-heavy and ill-coordinated. Corruption within both Army and Ministry of Interior forces was rife, hollowing out capabilities through extensive embezzlement and payroll fraud.

Then Prime Minister Maliki failed to hold perpetrators accountable. Unaided by an ineffectual political class of political representatives locally and nationally, Mosul and Ninewa were largely sidelined economically. Residents felt abandoned by the central government in Baghdad, and treated with mistrust. By mid-2014, the city was primed for security collapse, having also rotted from within in terms of governance, rule of law and the local economy.

To deliver lasting security worth the enormous cost of liberation, bearing in mind the institutional collapses in Mosul that allowed the IS occupation, Iraq observers stress that the governance in the post-IS period is more important than the military victory alone.

However, despite an extensive run-up to the battle, neither the Iraqi government nor international actors worked effectively to plan for post-victory governance or to deliver aid and reconstruction equal to the extent of the war damage. Observers and residents alike remain skeptical that the Iraqi government is willing or able to make the necessary reforms to stop the cycles of violence. Severe problems with local government give residents little reason for optimism.

Security Forces Present in Ninewa Province post-IS

The military campaign against IS in Mosul and Ninewa comprised several forces across the full spectrum of ISF. Likewise, in the post-IS phase, the area is controlled by a diverse range of forces. Security cooperation is inconsistent.

Ministry of Defense

The Iraqi army is part of the Ministry of Defense (MoD). All forces in Mosul, excluding the PMF but including the army, federal police, National Security Service and military intelligence,, are officially under the umbrella command of the Ninewa Operations Command (NOC) led by Iraqi army Major General Najim Abdullah al- Jubouri. Army Lieutenant General Abdulameer Rasheed Yarallah was the commander for the “We are coming, oh Ninewa” liberation operations. The 16th Division currently maintains presence in Eastern Mosul. The Iraqi Army was heavily involved in the fighting to liberate Mosul, particularly the 9th Armoured Division and 15th and 16th Infantry Divisions. Most forces have since withdrawn, some to participate in operations elsewhere. (See Rise’s July 2017 Mosul Context Analysis²⁰ for detailed information about security forces active in the fight to liberate Mosul from IS).

The MoD includes most of Iraq’s military aviation capability (through the army or the Iraqi Air Force), with attack helicopters and F-16 jets used in Ninewa operations.

A combination of military intelligence units are also involved in the ongoing screening of possible IS affiliates and interrogations, sometimes in parallel. Such forces were not encountered during field research.

Ministry of Interior

²⁰ <http://rise-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Rise-Post-ISIS-Mosul-Context-Analysis.pdf>

The Iraqi Ministry of Interior (Mol) is the government ministry responsible for policing across Iraq. The current Minister of Interior is Qasim Mohammad Jalal al-Araji, a member of the *Badr Organization*, a political party closely linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. In agreements made during the formation of the government to balance sectarian representation, it was established that a *Badr* member would always be Minister of Interior. Accordingly, a high percentage of Mol staff are *Badr* members.²¹

There are three key armed groups within the Mol, Federal Police (FP), Iraqi Police (IP) and the Emergency Response Unit (ERU). Both the federal police and the ERU are heavily militarized, with both relied on extensively for offensive and holding operations in Mosul. The Mol is the most significant state security actor in Iraq, with the largest budget allocation of any state security institution.

Federal Police

The Mol commands the 37,000 strong Federal Police, a five-division motorised infantry force. Iraq's Federal Police functions in an equivalent manner to many countries' national guard or reserve forces. It was designed to be able to respond to domestic conflicts which require a military deployment beyond the capacity of local police, whilst avoiding the political difficulties raised by deploying the army domestically. The Federal Police were heavily involved in the fighting to retake Mosul from IS, especially in West Mosul. They functioned as a holding force in East Mosul during the battle to liberate Mosul but are now currently functioning as a holding force and policing unit in West Mosul. Federal Police wear black and blue camouflage and vehicles, distinctive from other ISF forces.

It has been reported by several Mosul residents that some PMF troops, often specifically *Badr*, have worn the blue uniforms of the Federal Police and embedded with them. This has been a way for the PMF to be active in areas in which they do not officially operate, such as Mosul, and is likely facilitated by the *Badr* influence over the Mol.²² Moreover, two local PMF leaders in Mosul estimated that 60-70 percent of Federal Police members in Mosul are affiliated with *Badr* brigades, although Rise was unable to confirm this independently. A security analyst covering Ninewa Province alleged that a substantial number of Federal Police soldiers who fled Mosul in June 2014 have since returned within the PMF (below).²³

Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS)

The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) is Iraq's elite counter terrorism special forces. They were used as the leading force in the battle for east Mosul and were key for operations in the west as well. The CTS is organised with a 3-tiered structure: CTS > CTC > ISOF. The CTS is the head organisation and operates at a quasi-ministerial level, reporting directly to the Prime Minister. However, the CTS was never legally codified as a ministry. Their independence is a contentious issue due to the autonomy it gives them as a military force. The CTS was formed with extensive US oversight, including training from US special forces. The CTS' creation as a counter terrorism unit has provided it with close links to Iraqi intelligence organisations.

Local Police

²¹ Interview with Iraq Analyst, October 2017

²² <http://rise-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Rise-Post-ISIS-Mosul-Context-Analysis.pdf>

²³ Interview with security analyst in Erbil, October 2017

The Iraqi Police (IP) form Iraq's civilian policing component. Within Nineveh they are referred to as the Ninewa Police. Unlike the army and Federal Police, which are recruited nationally and so have large contingents from Iraq's southern (majority Shia) provinces, Iraqi Police are recruited locally.

Before June 2014, ostensibly because of the poor security situation in Mosul, IP were under the authority of federal troops. There was a poor relationship between the two forces and the security of the city was primarily managed by the former. However, residents claim that their authority in Mosul is effectively subordinate to PMF forces (addressed below). In practice this manifests in cases where both IP and PMF are stationed at a checkpoint, that PMF troops will be the senior officers in charge.²⁴

Under IS occupation, IP officers and former officers were targeted in a sweeping IS security purge, with hundreds arrested and imprisoned and/or executed.

Head of Ninewa Police General Rakan Watheq Hamdani announced on October 20 a plan for unit redeployment and intensified operations to "shield the city of Mosul from possible IS infiltration." General Hamdani added that the majority of IP stations within the city are now operational, and that they are looking to raise the number of recruits from 13,000 to 20,000 across Ninewa.²⁵ According to two Ninewa Provincial Council members, prior to IS's takeover, there were approximately 30,000 IP present in Mosul. On October 22 Ninewa Police established a committee to receive returning recruits which are required to provide ID, approval from a local official, and a signed pledge that there is no "security or legal indicator" against them to be reconsidered for re-employment.²⁶

Still, many former local police members remain without work. Several former local police members from Mosul complained that they were targeted by IS and now are left without a safety net by the state. One former local police officer in West Mosul said "I used to be a soldier in the local police in East Mosul. When Daesh [an Arabic moniker for IS] came, they blew up my house and killed many of my comrades. Now, the Iraqi government refuses to take us back as local police officers. We have no safety net even though I served my government for many years," he complained.

Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are a military umbrella organization comprised of more than 60 militias from across Iraq. They are also known as the Popular Mobilization Units, or the *Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi* in Arabic (for a detailed listing of many of the known PMF Brigades see Iraqi writer Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi's Hashd Brigade Numbers Index article).²⁷ A diverse grouping, they resist any singular description of their motives, capabilities and loyalties.

The PMF was formed in 2014 after the Iraqi army collapsed and IS took control of Mosul in June. Then Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki called for volunteers to aid the Iraqi army to defend the country from IS. Iraq's supreme Shia religious cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani issued a fatwa calling for men to join the fight against IS. The fatwa

²⁴ <http://rise-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Rise-Post-ISIS-Mosul-Context-Analysis.pdf>

²⁵ ديارنا, "شرطة نينوى تعزز وجودها في الموصل", accessed December 3, 2017, http://diyaruna.com/ar/articles/cnmi_di/features/2017/10/20/feature-04.

²⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/policeninewa/>. Accessed October 2017, link no longer works.

²⁷ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "Hashd Brigade Numbers Index," Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://www.aymennjawad.org/2017/10/hashd-brigade-numbers-index>.

was bereft of any communal exclusivity- it was an appeal to Iraqis as a national community rather to particular sub-communities, and did not in itself create or demand a new security apparatus.²⁸

Sistani's fatwa, however, was effectively a rallying cry for Shia communities in Baghdad and Iraq's southern provinces. As such, it initially led to the creation of a profusion of Shia militias and the more overt standing of pre-existing (and more powerful) Shia militia groups. Together these groups forestalled IS advances towards Baghdad and have contributed to several victories. While doing so, they often out-recruited Iraq's sullied and demoralized conventional armed forces, for a time offering better wages and the opportunity to defeat IS under an overtly religious banner.

The militias each remain as separate armed units, with their own branding, recruitment practices, political sympathies and religious interests, which vary widely. In total, militias under the PMF system account for more than 150,000 men. PMF units are assigned generic PMF ID, and receive allocations of wages and weapons through the *Al-Hashed Al-Shabee* (Popular Mobilisation) Committee.

While the PMF are notionally under the command of the Prime Minister, effective command and control, however, is extremely diverse. Some groups work in lockstep with Iraq's conventional military, while others - such as the pro-Khamenei Badr Organization, Asaib Ahl al-Haq and others - remain effective operational independence while engaging in a mutually beneficial pretense that they function within a proper state military/civilian hierarchy. These groups are also closely aligned with former PM Nouri al-Maliki, who after his ouster in 2014 has positioned himself as a pro-Iran hardliner in opposition to current PM (and fellow Dawa party member) Abadi. However, given Abadi's recent military successes in defeating IS and recovering disputed territories from the KRI, some pro-Khamenei groups have sought to distance themselves from Maliki, if only publicly.

According to Iraq researcher Renad Mansour "For Maliki and his supporters, the fatwa allowed the original seven paramilitaries, along with other groups created thereafter, to emerge from clandestine or semi-clandestine anonymity. It gave them legitimacy, which gave them access to the public through their own radio and television networks, as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts; these groups now had their own legitimate names, logos, and publicly displayed photographs. In short, Maliki used Sistani's fatwa to give official sanction to these groups for the first time and allowed them to operate out in the open with full state funding."²⁹

After 2014, Sunni Muslim and other minority militias have joined the PMF, though most recruits and firepower remains with large majority Shia militias that existed before 2014. According to one tribal Sunni PMF leader operating south of Mosul, tribal or local PMF groups are also assigned regiment numbers but they are not allowed to expand beyond small regiments to become Brigades (although in a few instances they have). He complained that Sunni local groups are granted only a fraction of the weapons and support that Shia PMF groups enjoy and that they must rely on some Western funding to remain operational in securing neighbourhoods post-IS.³⁰ (See more information about Local/Tribal Hashd groups below)

²⁸ Renad Mansour Jabar Faleh A., "The Popular Mobilization Forces and Iraq's Future," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://carnegie-mec.org/2017/04/28/popular-mobilization-forces-and-iraq-s-future-pub-68810>.

²⁹ Renad Mansour Jabar Faleh A., "The Popular Mobilization Forces and Iraq's Future," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://carnegie-mec.org/2017/04/28/popular-mobilization-forces-and-iraq-s-future-pub-68810>.

³⁰ Interview with Sunni Hashd Leader, November 2017

The Popular Mobilisation Committee was established as a government ministry to administer the militias of the PMF. The PMF receives funding and support from the Government though many of its militias have also received funding from international or private sources. Funding is allocated by the Committee, not by Abadi. Despite Abadi's attempts to reign in pro-Khamenei actors' influence over the budget the pro-Khamenei camp controls the PMF commission. Although he is no longer the official head, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis allegedly has the final word on who gets what. By being in charge of dividing the lump funds designated for the PMF from the PMO, then, pro-Khamenei leaders such as Hadi Ameri and Muhandis are in a position to control the flow of volunteers by allocating funds to their preferred groups. This has raised complaints from some militias that funding is not being allocated equally, with PMF leaders such as Moqtada al-Sadr, complaining that pro-Khamenei actors can direct allocation of funds to their preferred groups, and not Sadr and Sistani groups. Some analysts argue that the MoI relations with the commission further allow for preferential treatment of pro-Khamenei groups.

Total Iraqi federal budget spending on the PMF in 2017, excluding any undeclared support from Iran and other actors, is US \$1.63 billion. This compares to US \$25.83 billion of non-PMF security costs (MoD, MoI and CTS) in the 2017 budget.³¹ The PMF receives 6 percent of Iraq's security-related spending, despite providing 28 percent of the country's frontline armed strength. In terms of per capita resourcing, the PMF still lag far behind all the other security agencies in a manner that one analyst suggests "their growth into a permanent institution is being deliberately curtailed in favour of traditional security organisations."³²

While whittling the PMF's entitlements, Abadi has also attempted to put them on a sounder institutional footing, in a delicate balancing act of legitimating while restraining the PMF's strongest and most independent militias.

With order 91, Abadi formally incorporated the PMF into the Iraqi Security Forces as an 'independent military formation' under his command through executive order 91 in February 2016, with Iraq's parliament upgrading this further by way of a law passed in November. Despite this ostensible institutionalisation, the PMF militias are largely organised by individual alliances, depending on how closely one militia's goals may align with another and with the state. Militias within the PMF come from every strain of Iraqi society and politics, and often have very different or opposing political and religious interests. Order 91 and the subsequent Hashed law have given the PMF a great deal of legitimacy, but there has not been corresponding changes to ensure an effective chain of command over the militias.³³

However, the situation is fluid and this allocation could change post 2018 elections. The results of this election will indicate the direction the country is moving in, and by extension, what the future holds for the PMF. Ultimately, PMF militias will be involved in Iraqi politics for the foreseeable future. This fact worries residents and observers alike—longstanding critique within the academic literature has been that supporting non-state forces can detract from long-term state-building by exacerbating competition for power and legitimacy in a state already struggling to maintain authority and control

³¹ "Mini-Hizballahs, Revolutionary Guard Knock-Offs, and the Future of Iran's Militant Proxies in Iraq," War on the Rocks, May 9, 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/05/mini-hizballahs-revolutionary-guard-knock-offs-and-the-future-of-irans-militant-proxies-in-iraq/>.

³² IBID

³³ <http://rise-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Rise-Post-ISIS-Mosul-Context-Analysis.pdf>

PMF Factions

The PMF contains three distinct factions, based on various subgroups' respective allegiances to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and Muqtada al-Sadr. These latter two are both critical of Iranian influence in Iraq, and were hostile to former Prime Minister Maliki. They have at times offered positive but conditional support for current Prime Minister Abadi.

The first PMF faction includes groups closely aligned with Iranian Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the Iran Revolutionary Guards Corps, some of which have also become political actors. They are generally regarded as the most powerful groups in the PMF. Its members pay lip service to Sistani, but in reality they swear allegiance to Khamenei.³⁴ Many used to be close to Maliki but have since distanced themselves from him, at least publicly, following Abadi's military successes fighting IS and retaking disputed territory from Kurdish security forces.³⁵ The strongest individual group is the Badr Organization, which also boasts 22 MPs in Baghdad and is the oldest effective pro-Khamenei group in Iraq, established in 1983. Some of its groups, such as, Saraya Khurasani and Kata'ib Hezbollah, are direct arms of Iran's IRGC and the Iranian foreign intelligence agency, Itilaat.³⁶ During the course of Rise's research, the majority of Shia PMF groups identified in Mosul and Tel Afar are PMF groups which belong to this pro-Khamenei faction or are local Hashd groups supported by larger PMF Shia groups from this faction.

A major exception is Atheel Al-Nujaifi's Haras Ninewa PMF group which is at odds and not aligned with pro-Khamenei factions, and which mostly acts as a supplementary policing unit. Similarly, other small, tribal Hashd regiments present in Mosul are not supported by pro-Khamenei groups either. According to an Iraqi researcher and writer, more broadly, pro-Khamenei groups are looking to expand upon their previously limited influence they had in Ninewa Province pre-2014 and now it is being done in a more overt manner given the political cover and legitimacy afforded to it by the PMF name. They are also looking to block perceived threats of Turkish influence in the future.³⁷ According to another Iraq analyst, control over Ninewa Province is important as a highway passage to Syria to advance Iranian interests in Syria, protect Iran's border areas, and build a corridor for Iran to extend its influence into the Levant.³⁸

The second faction includes several apolitical units and some Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) units that swear allegiance to Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and the organization he leads, the Marjaiyya in Iraq's southern city of Najaf. Sistani groups' presence has been limited in Ninewa Province but are active elsewhere in Iraq.

The third faction includes Pro-Sadr Faction Muqtada al-Sadr's Peace Regiments (Saraya al-Salam) which were re-constituted from his former militia shortly after the notorious June 2014 massacre of around 1,700 soldiers and cadets by IS at Camp Speicher near Tikrit. In

³⁴ Renad Mansour Jabar Faleh A., "The Popular Mobilization Forces and Iraq's Future," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://carnegie-mec.org/2017/04/28/popular-mobilization-forces-and-iraq-s-future-pub-68810>.

³⁵ Interview with Iraq political analyst, November 2017

³⁶ Renad Mansour Jabar Faleh A., "The Popular Mobilization Forces and Iraq's Future," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://carnegie-mec.org/2017/04/28/popular-mobilization-forces-and-iraq-s-future-pub-68810>.

³⁷ Interview with Iraq researcher and writer, November 2017

³⁸ Interview with Iraq analyst, November 2017

effect, this was a rebranding of Sadr's former Mahdi Army, which had been suspended in 2008 but had kept many of its networks intact. Sadr has already forged a number of pragmatic relationships to this end, working with influential anti-Maliki Sunni leaders as well as secular Shia and Sunni leaders. Sadr's Saraya al-Salam PMF group has a limited presence in Mosul and Ninewa Province. Sadrists have however set up political offices in Mosul to make political inroads ahead of upcoming 2018 elections.

Tribal/Local Hashd (Hashd Ashaieri)

The Tribal Hashd is comprised of a variety of local Sunni tribal militias that have been incorporated into the PMF. Despite their tribal Hashd name, almost all officially operate under the PMF umbrella. Initially, a number of Sunnis and minority groups (such as Yezidi, Turkmen, Shabak, and Christians) joined to fight IS. Now they function as local security forces in their areas of origin, a mechanism encouraged by the coalition in default of ready and capable local police forces to hold and police liberated territory.

Tribal or local "minority" armed groups have existed in Iraq over the past decade but their presence and power has increased since the rise of IS.³⁹ In some areas they are the primary security actors, but in many cases they act "as auxiliary forces to these larger security actors, helping to 'hold' areas by manning checkpoints, conducting security patrols, or simply putting a local face on what are otherwise viewed as outside forces by local communities."⁴⁰ Acting through local groups allows some Shia PMF groups to infiltrate areas where they may not have local legitimacy to do so otherwise. For example, Badr Organisation uses the Christian Babylon Brigades to cement its foothold in Christian areas of East and West Mosul. Several Christian IDPs living outside of Mosul said however that they don't see the group as representing them but rather serves as a proxy for Badr Organisation's aspirations in the area, and Babylon Brigades have clashed with other Christian PMF militias in the Ninewa Plains after arrests triggered by allegations of relic lootings.

A number of tribal Hashd groups are being funded by larger Shia PMF groups such as Badr Organisation and other Iranian backed PMFs for funding. Yet the relationship that joins Sunni tribal and political leaders with the PMF is a marriage of convenience based on a common need to fight, and for local leaders to re-establish their localized patchworks of fiefdoms of influence and control.⁴¹ To that end, several tribal groups have allegedly padded their ranks with underage fighters to beef up their payroll. Tribal Hashd groups have also been accused of committing atrocities in apparent post-liberation revenge and/or score-settling attacks⁴². Now, in the post-IS phase, many local groups need larger PMF groups' access to political connections and power to compete in the crowded, competitive security actor environment in Mosul and other areas emerging post-IS.

³⁹ "Iraq after ISIL: An Analysis of Local, Hybrid, and Sub-State Security Forces," ReliefWeb, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-after-isil-analysis-local-hybrid-and-sub-state-security-forces>.

⁴⁰ IBID

⁴¹ IBID

⁴² "Iraq: Tribal Militia Tortured Detainees in Revenge Attacks during Mosul Offensive | Amnesty International," accessed December 3, 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/11/iraq-tribal-militia-tortured-detainees-in-revenge-attacks-during-mosul-offensive/>.

Mapping PMF Groups in Mosul post-IS

While PMF groups, at least officially, were not directly involved in the fighting to retake Mosul city from IS, many have since developed a security and political presence in the city. (Mosul residents claim that PMF groups were involved in the fighting to liberate Mosul, particularly in West Mosul, partly facilitated by Federal Police's role there, which is closely connected to Badr Brigades).

During the course of Rise's research from mid-July to mid-November 2017, Rise identified approximately two dozen armed groups operating in Mosul. There are currently an unknown number of PMF groups active in Mosul but the number is likely much higher.

According to one local PMF commander, PMF regiments in Mosul range in size from approximately 50-1,000 individuals. According to security sources, "tribal" Hashd members make approximately \$400 US dollars/month while members of pro-Khamenei Shia PMF groups make upwards of \$650 US dollars/month.

Deputy Commander of Ninewa Operations, Major General Abdul Karim al-Shuweili, oversees the distribution of PMF forces in Mosul, which is dependent in part on political agreements, individual group's influence, and military needs elsewhere.

The distribution of forces is not fixed, and changes frequently. During the course of research, some brigades were transferred more than once. Similarly, it is not impossible that some groups listed below are no longer operating in Mosul city. Exact mapping of actor's locations is therefore both difficult and of limited use at this point in time.

Instead, this report identifies trends of PMF deployment and operations in Mosul to inform humanitarian and development actors operating in this space.

PMF and affiliated armed groups identified in East Mosul:

- PMF Brigade #90 *Farsan Jabour Hashd*.⁴³ This group is affiliated with MP Ahmad al-Jabbouri⁴⁴ and allegedly receives funding from pro-Khamenei PMF groups⁴⁵
- PMF tribal regiments affiliated with the Shammar tribes. According to Mosul residents and some PMF leaders, the Shammar tribe has at least 3 regiments present in Mosul
- PMF tribal regiment 13, led by a Mosul University professor.
- PMF tribal regiment 24, led by Omar Alaf
- PMF tribal regiment 21, allegedly affiliated with Badr brigades
- PMF tribal regiment affiliated with Iraqi MP Faris al-Sinjari
- PMF tribal regiment 17, under the leadership of Ghazi Abar. Local news sources reported in September 2017 that the Ninewa Governor will open an investigation into allegations of the brigade's involvement in illegal arrests in Ninewa⁴⁶
- PMF tribal regiment affiliated with the Luheibi tribe
- PMF Brigade 14 *Kutaibha al shuhahda*⁴⁷

⁴³ "تشكيل فرسان الجبور - Home," accessed December 3, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/fursan.aljobor/>.

⁴⁴ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "Hashd Brigade Numbers Index," Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://www.aymennjawad.org/2017/10/hashd-brigade-numbers-index>.

⁴⁵ Interviews with Iraqi journalist and PMF member in Mosul, September 2017

⁴⁶ <http://www.nrttv.com/AR/Detail.aspx?Jimare=58088>

⁴⁷ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "Hashd Brigade Numbers Index," Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://www.aymennjawad.org/2017/10/hashd-brigade-numbers-index>.

- PMF tribal regiment affiliated with MP Mohammed Nouri Abdul Rabo from Qayyarah (a town 60 kilometers south of Mosul city)
- PMF Shabak Brigade 30 affiliated with Shabak MP Haneen Qado
- PMF tribal regiment affiliated with the Sabaaen Tribe (Seventh Day Tribe)

Groups identified in West Mosul:

- PMF tribal regiment *Nawadar Shamr*. PMF tribal regiment affiliated with MP Abdul Raheem al-Shammari, who allegedly receives support from pro-Khamenei PMF groups
- PMF tribal regiment Asoud Shamr⁴⁸, affiliated with the Shamr tribe and MP Ahmad Madloul Jarba
- PMF tribal regiment affiliated with the Luheibi tribe
- PMF tribal group affiliated with MP Abdulrahman Lueizi⁴⁹
- PMF tribal group affiliated with the Jabbouri tribe
- PMF tribal regiment affiliated with Sada Muamira Al Mussi⁵⁰
- PMF Badr Brigades
- PMF Brigade 313 *Saraya al-Salam*⁵¹
-

Groups identified in both East and West Mosul:

- PMF tribal regiment Ramah Brigade 24⁵², affiliated with Minister of Education and Islamic party member Muhammad Iqbal Omar
- PMF Brigade 50 Babylon Brigades
- PMF Haras Ninewa. Affiliated with former Governor Atheel al-Nujaifi. Politically at odds with pro-Khamenei groups

Groups identified South of Mosul:⁵³

- PMF tribal regiment affiliated with MP Abdul Rahman Al-Luweizi
- PMF tribal regiment Jabour, affiliated with politician Aziz Sinjar

Several additional PMF groups were identified as having political offices and/or small military installations in East and West Mosul, but it was unclear whether they are also officially appointed to man checkpoints and coordinate security in Mosul. PMF groups in West Mosul include: *Kataib Hezbollah*, *Asai'b Ahl al-Haqq*, *Saraya al Khorasani*, *Saraya al-Salam* (Peace Brigades) and *Kata'ib al-Imam Ali*.

Local journalists said that larger Shia PMF groups were found more on the West Side because of the role they played, in conjunction with and/or under the guise of Federal Police, in liberating the west from IS.

More broadly, it is important to note that even when PMF groups do not have a visible street presence they may well maintain a representative presence in several neighborhoods. Such presence highlights the political as well as security nature of these

⁴⁸ See Asoud Shamr's youtube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZUYhecloVJs8HNKN6RZnBg>

⁴⁹ عبد الرحمن اللوزي

⁵⁰ سادة معامرة الموسوي

⁵¹ Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "Hashd Brigade Numbers Index," Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://www.aymennjawad.org/2017/10/hashd-brigade-numbers-index>.

⁵² "رماح الموصل - Home," accessed December 3, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/RmAh24/>.

⁵³ There is a large presence of tribal and PMF groups south of Mosul. However, as this report's focus is Mosul and Tel Afar city, a taxonomy of these groups are beyond the scope of this report.

groups, and their desire to convert the latter into the former in a competitive and dysfunctional post-IS environment. Representative offices function as support-gathering sites pre-positioning for upcoming provincial and national elections in May 2018. Offices may also serve as intelligence gathering hubs; bases to project mediation, patronage or other localized influence-garnering activities; and as sites from which to engage in irregular post-liberation business activity, such as electricity generator provision and fuel reselling. Such PMF trends exist elsewhere in Iraq, as evidenced by PMF activities in Salah al Din province, where Badr and others maintain offices for the purposes stated above.

PMF groups appear to use one of two tactics to penetrate Mosul neighbourhoods: franchising or local Hashd proxies. A resident in East Mosul for example, said in September that *Kata'ib Hezbollah* attempted to recruit him as a local face to establish and manage their *Kata'ib Hezbollah* political office in East Mosul in exchange for \$1,500 US dollars, weapons, and protection, but that he ultimately rejected the offer. Large political parties and Hashd groups may also use local Hashd as proxies to establish a foothold in communities where they may otherwise be viewed as outsiders if they flew their own flag. For example, Badr attempts to penetrate Christian neighbourhoods throughout Mosul through the use of the Christian Babylon Brigades who claim to be protecting Christian homes, churches, and properties. Many of these recruits are local Sunnis from Mosul. Similarly local Sunni tribal leaders establish tribal Hashd groups through the support of larger, Shia PMF groups. (see section on Tribal/Local Hashd groups above).

PMF's Mandate in post-IS Mosul

Security after liberation is the main priority for Mosul residents. Establishing a strong presence vis-à-vis other security actors is the priority of armed groups. Research indicates these two sets of aims do not necessarily work to provide satisfactory security, and instead may often work against it.

The Iraqi government is now substantially relying on PMF forces for post-operation security and governance roles in Mosul and Tel Afar in part due to personnel limitations. This diffuses the authority of the central government and increases the risk of localised tensions. According to Iraq researcher Renad Mansour, the “PMF is now as much part of the problem as part of the solution.”⁵⁴

These disparate but combat-experienced fighting forces are motivated to fight IS, but in a post-military environment are motivated by competition amongst themselves. With their large numbers they can exploit considerable resources and enjoy political clout.⁵⁵ This will prove to be a catalyst for security vulnerabilities against any future IS insurgency, or other armed extremist groups, intra-PMF violence and volatility moving forward. Elections set for May 2018 exacerbates this risk.

On the ground, the PMF often manages security inside a neighbourhood, while the ISF or local police conduct ringfence security through checkpoints, though this is not always the case. In some instances, for example in mixed villages East of Mosul, PMF groups are relegated to the outskirts of the village in a bid to minimise their presence in the heart of villages where they are not always wanted by locals.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Renad Mansour Jabar Faleh A., “The Popular Mobilization Forces and Iraq’s Future,” Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://carnegie-mec.org/2017/04/28/popular-mobilization-forces-and-iraq-s-future-pub-68810>.

⁵⁵ “Looking Beyond Mosul,” Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/66373>.

⁵⁶ Interview with local leader from a village East of Mosul, November 2017

Residents in different neighbourhoods reported that Hashd groups are involved in collecting detailed information about the community demographics. For example, residents in different neighborhoods in East and West Mosul in September reported that PMF groups distributed forms residents were required to fill out requesting details about residents' family members, ages, job profession, etc.

According to residents and PMF members themselves, a major role of the PMF in east and west Mosul is also to investigate terrorism cases and detain suspected IS members in conjunction with police and National Security Service officers, an ostensible reason for such invasive mandatory questionnaires. However, according to Human Rights Watch, Iraqi law does not permit PMF groups to carry out arrests or database screening for IS suspects.⁵⁷ One PMF unit leader said that upon arrest, he coordinates with other Hashd groups and the ISF to share detainees information. He claimed that is generally more effective in this role than local police. Their diffuse street presence throughout the community means that residents are more apt to report IS activity to them and not the ISF or local police, who generally remain at their stations, he claimed.

For example, in late August the Federal Police was seen by Rise regulating entry and exit at the perimeter of the *al-Jadeeda* neighbourhood of West Mosul, while a Babylon Brigade unit managed security inside. The Babylon Brigade described their work as “protecting Christian property, houses, shops, and churches.” Much of the Christian-owned infrastructure was destroyed during IS’s time or used as bases of their operations. Most of the Babylon Brigade members were Sunni from just outside Mosul, but they also had some minority group members. None of the members themselves were Christian but most spoke highly of Christians with one saying, “We want Christians to return...they are kind, peaceful, and respectful. Once they return, we can say that life has returned to Mosul.” One boasted that they are the only authorised faction to “work with Christians” and praised their leader Rayan Kaldani saying “He is a great leader and we will vote for him. He is going to get an important political position in the future.” Others also spoke highly of Khamenei saying, “he hates Daesh [IS] so we love him.”

Reasons people join the PMF

Interviewees say they initially joined the PMF out of a desire to rid the area of IS. Many now report joining for salary and employment opportunities, especially in light of high unemployment levels in an extensively damaged and unreconstructed post-war Mosul. Others cite need for protection and social prestige as reason to join the PMF. PMF members are more likely to enjoy immunity from an “IS witch hunt”- joining a group is a useful way to exonerate oneself or their families from allegations of affiliation with IS, and the attendant risk of an arbitrary arrest into a dysfunctional criminal justice system that can mean effective disappearance, or unlawful summary punishment, or execution by way of sectarian or tribal ‘justice.’ Moreover, according to interviewees, opportunities to join the ISF remain limited, so PMF membership is one of the few ways to get *wasta* and protection of the armed forces from corrupt or violent actors.

Finally, some want revenge. Devastated by loss of family members and livelihoods, people want justice which Iraq’s criminal justice system has historically failed to provide, and which looks set to fail to do with overcrowded detention centers, overwhelming reliance on confessional evidence, and a widespread perception that detainees are able to bribe their way to freedom.

PMF membership is an attractive option to deliver justice summarily, with an opportunity to gain social power into the bargain. When asked whether they or their family members are PMF members, Mosul resident interviewees often responded “No, I wish!” Others

⁵⁷ Email correspondence with Human Rights Watch Researcher, October 2017

complained that membership to Hashd groups is obtained only through connections, especially Baghdad connections, and even payment to join.

Employment in Iraq is largely wedded to government employment and largesse, with a high level of reliance on non-productive civil service jobs to manage unemployment, and a welter of pension and welfare programs creating an ingrained expectation of financial support from the state.⁵⁸ With the federal budget under duress, opportunities to join or rejoin the ISF in Mosul limited, and neither the state nor international actors funding anything beyond extremely limited basic ‘stabilisation’ projects, short-term employment with local PMF groups is becoming a stop-gap for some until better options are found in the future.

In addition to minorities joining minority-dominated PMF groups and Sunnis joining tribal Hashd groups, Sunnis are also joining Shia PMF groups, with some even joining pro-Khamenei groups. Two Sunni members of pro-Khamenei groups separately said that although they hadn’t faced any discrimination as Sunnis members of said groups, leadership positions are held by Shias only. One Sunni member clarified that “there are no illusions about it. Sunni members will always remain second-rate members in Shia PMF groups.” With several Ninewa residents dubbing local, Sunni tribal Hashd groups “the children’s show”⁵⁹ it’s no wonder that some chose to join pro-Khamenei groups, even if they remain “second-rate” members. This trend isn’t limited to Ninewa Province. An Iraqi security analyst working in areas south of Ninewa governorate said that even groups like *Kata’ib Hezbollah* and *Asaib Ahl al-Haq* will accept Sunni members if the price is right.⁶⁰

At the beginning of September, *Badr* was seen jointly operating a checkpoint with Federal Police in the *Wadi Hajjar* neighbourhood in West Mosul. The *Badr* member said he is from East Mosul but his relatives are from the Wadi Hajr neighborhood. He said that since he joined *Badr* in October 2016, there has been close coordination between *Badr* and the security forces to secure Mosul and said that now Mosul was liberated, *Badr* had presence manning checkpoints in several neighborhoods. He said that he is among a number of Sunni recruits from the Mosul area and claimed to make approximately \$430 US dollars/month.

Several Hashd members working in Mosul, both tribal Hashd and Shia Hashd groups, claimed to have been trained by American troops in Makhmour and said that working conditions are good, receiving medical attention and regular R&R. One Hashd member working in the *Akidat* neighbourhood said at the beginning of September: “We participated in the liberation of Mosul and now we are getting sent to control different checkpoints. As soon as West Mosul stabilises further, more Hashd will be sent to Mosul.” He said that he benefitted from the US training because he learned “not to fire on IS suspects in a crowd of civilians.”

PMF and the Recruitment of Minors

Some residents living in East and West Mosul complained of an increase in the PMF’s recruitment of minors (including boys under 15) roaming the streets. The residents separately alleged that they had gotten their guns through membership with the PMF, although Rise could not independently verify these allegations. Other residents said that boys obtained weapons by bribing officials to give them fake gun licenses and PMF ID cards.

⁵⁸ Interview with Iraq analyst, September 2017

⁵⁹ A number of Ninewa Province residents used this pejorative term over the course of Rise’s research in reference to local Hashd groups

⁶⁰ According to an Iraqi security analyst, some Sunni PMF members allegedly paid large sums of money to join said groups

“Fake Hashd Groups” and Non-Payment of Salaries

Some actors are exploiting the popularity of the Hashd phenomenon and are creating ‘fake’ groups i.e. units of irregulars either impersonating PMF-registered militias or falsely claiming theirs is registered with the Popular Mobilization Committee.⁶¹ Three residents reported that they had joined a group, realised it was fake, and then quit. These ‘fake’ units appear to be set up to exploit gaps in security coverage to create money-making opportunities, such as the establishment of irregular checkpoints as a source of bribes or shake-downs, to run electricity generator syndicates, and the like. Their profusion, even if minor, indicates that use of the PMF as a diffuse security mechanism for Mosul has easily led to gaps that may come to be exploited by more malign groups later. One Iraq analyst warned that such tactics could potentially be utilized by resurgent Baathist militants or IS/post-IS jihadist cells.⁶²

Others join official PMF groups but claim that they are yet to be paid. More than a dozen PMF members interviewed over the course of Rise’s research alleged that they hadn’t been paid. For example, Rise interviewed a member of a local Hashd group in Mosul on August 28. He is a Mosul University graduate but worked in restaurants because upon graduation he couldn’t find another job. He then joined a local Hashd group in December 2016 because some of his friends and cousin were joining. He says that even though it’s a local Hashd group the group is aligned to a larger PMF Shia group. He said that salary was one of the main reasons why he joined the group but that he also wanted to protect his neighbourhood and get rid of IS. Monthly salary is approximately \$650 US dollars/month for manning checkpoints in Mosul neighborhoods but he said that he hasn’t been paid since he joined. “Every two months we protest and demand payment and they keep promising to pay us but so far nothing. Some Hashd members have fought and died for our group but were never paid and their families received no benefits when they died,” he said. “Of course someone is benefitting though. This is a political game and elections are coming next year,” he said.

Tensions between PMF groups

According to Joost Hiltermann, Program Director, MENA for International Crisis Group: “For most Iraqi actors, Daesh is not their primary target but a secondary one - an obstacle that needs to be defeated on the way to what really matters: outcompeting their local or regional rivals.”⁶³

Since the defeat of IS in Mosul, armed groups have sporadically clashed within the city. For example, in July, politically opposed PMF groups *Kata’ib Shuhada* (pro-Khamenei) and *Haras Ninewa* (led by Sunni leader Nujeifi), clashed near Mosul University in which was later rendered “a miscommunication.”⁶⁴ In October, local IP reportedly killed four PMF members when their group tried to conduct activities in areas not under their area of

⁶¹ “..... سياسي عندهم 36 فصيل فضائي بالحشد الشعبي كلنا نعرف الحشد الشعبي و دوره و بطولاته 36” Justpaste.It, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://justpaste.it/fakehashd>.

⁶² Interview with Iraq analyst, November 2017

⁶³ “Reconciling Iraq’s Hard Realities,” Crisis Group, May 31, 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/iraq-reconciling-hard-realities>.

⁶⁴ “مسلمو فصيلين شيعي وسني يتقاتلون في الموصل” @Elaph, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://elaph.com/Web/News/2017/7/1158910.html>.

operation.⁶⁵ Even PMF groups from the same faction have clashed. On 10 August, a security analyst reported that two pro-Khamenei groups clashed in the West Mosul neighbourhood of Mansour in disputes over food distribution to residents in the area, causing the ISF to intervene to deescalate the situation.

While relatively limited in scale for now, prospects for future intra-PMF violence remain high. The multiplicity of armed actors with overlapping and unclear mandates, coupled with competition over political and economic gains to be reaped from neighbourhood presence, means Mosul will likely see more such violence in the months to come. Violence is likely to become localised and opaque in such complex environments. With more restricted access to post-IS Mosul, the security fabric is likely to become less well understood by international agencies and researchers as time goes on.

⁶⁵ العراق: توتر أمني بعد مقتل أربعة من الحشد الشعبي الشيعي برصاص شرطي، ”العربي الأصيل“ 2017, <http://www.alarabyasil.com/pages.php?option=browse&id=60157>.

Residents' Perception of PMF and ISF Operations in Mosul

Rise Analysis: Civilians broadly view PMF groups as abusive and untrustworthy. A broadly negative perception of the PMF - and certain groups within it in particular - augurs badly for civilian security at present and in the near term, by limiting the effectiveness of the PMF as a localized security mechanism. It will provide significant challenges to NGO actors looking to operate in Mosul, who will have to simultaneously develop functional relations with PMF groups while gaining trust from local civilians and non-security stakeholders.

The PMF's popularity across Iraq is high, especially in mainly Shia areas. However, the PMF's reputation in post-IS Sunni areas is largely negative, with some outliers. ISF generally earned higher praise but residents still voiced dissatisfaction.

Residents generally held a more favourable impression of ISF. Many expressed desire for the ISF to remain in Mosul, despite a pre-2014 history of abuse and strained relations (especially with the Federal Police), which is likely tied to hopes of a central government capable of providing services and enforcing security, a security defined as providing safety for its citizens and not as a force to shield corrupt and abusive practices from accountability.

When asked directly whether about the relationship between the security forces and residents is good, residents unflinchingly replied yes. Rise researchers concluded this reflexive answer was more indicative of residents' lingering fears of being labeled IS supporters if they criticize security forces rather than reflective of actual trust levels of ISF forces. The same residents who reported good relations with ISF later shared incidents of looting, abuse, kidnappings, and other grievances later in the same conversation. Still, most agree that security is better now than right before or during IS. When asked about their future, most remain pessimistic.

One resident said that the future of Sunnis is

“Marginalization. We will return to how things were before Daesh.”

Trust in the PMF is generally less in the East than the West.

In the West, the general sentiment among residents is that PMF forces are biased and not well-trained, citing incidents of looting observed both during the fight to liberate Mosul and afterwards. Interviewees further cited high levels of urban destruction in the west as reason for distrust of PMF forces, in keeping with a general higher level of skepticism about the conduct of the battle.

Others say that despite low levels of trust, they have to cooperate with the PMF and ISF forces in their communities because they are the only security forces present. Still some East and West residents said that they avoid all interaction with the PMF due to reported involvement in blackmail and looting.

Residents suggested solutions for limiting security forces' transgressions, with several saying that all PMF should completely withdraw from Mosul, leaving only IP and ISF present. Others said that security forces, whether PMF or ISF, without local members should remain in their barracks (presumably as a response force in the event of IS sleeper cell attacks) and allow only local forces to conduct neighbourhood patrols and policing.

Reports of Looting and Abuse

Rise Analysis: Researchers encountered many allegations by residents of PMF looting and abuse that qualified a broadly negative civilian perception of PMF groups. Accounts of

looting and abuse could not be independently verified although claims are consistent with similar allegations made by other entities operating in such neighborhoods.

The apparent pervasiveness of looting in particular points to both a real and perceived failure in civilian policing. Amid a continuing absence of institutionalized security, reconstruction or service provision, PMF groups are perceived to operate with impunity, which also fuels resentment of the federal and provincial government for perceived neglect.

To the extent that local populations interact with PMF units, they do so warily in recognition that only by working through them can they travel, trade and conduct their own basic reconstruction in the absence of state provision. The largely exploitative and lawless system of competition between security forces, sectarian resentment and the absence of the state combine to provide a mutually reinforcing cycle of degeneration in both actual security conditions and relationships between security actors and the populations they ostensibly serve. This has already created a delicate and combustible environment for NGO actors, and may in the future incubate future insurgency.

When asked what the PMF's role is in post-IS Mosul one resident replied "they came to take, not to serve." Indeed, many residents complained of aid diversion, looting, robberies, blackmail, extortion, arbitrary arrests and disappearances. Notably, federal Police, local police, and army personnel were also accused of similar transgressions, though to a lesser degree. Taken together, residents' statements suggest that the mode of security provided by PMF units is giving rise to a generalized mistrust of security forces generally.

Residents usually had at least one story of abuse or looting to share. One resident in the *Rifai* neighborhood reported in August that members of a local Hashd group and *Babylon Brigades* arrested him and confiscated his car saying it belonged to an IS member. Upon his release they tried to sell the car back to him. The resident subsequently reported the incident to the Federal Police who then arrested the *Babylon* members and made them pledge not to enter the neighbourhood again.

Also in August several aid workers reported that the *Badr*-affiliated Shabak PMF Brigade 30 manning a checkpoint leading into East Mosul was detaining IDPs and demanding cash for their release.

In October a former resident of the Old City reported that he tried to re-enter the Old City but was prevented from doing so unless he paid a bribe. He said

"I wanted to go back because I heard that Babylon Brigades and other groups were looting everyone's belongings. I am living in East Mosul with no job and can barely afford rent for my family so wanted to get whatever wasn't destroyed during the liberation of Mosul from IS to my rental home. But I can't afford the bribe fee to enter. I assume next time I go home everything will be gone."⁶⁶

Sometimes residents reported looting without knowing the perpetrators' identity. A resident interviewed during a rapid assessment in August in the *Akidat* neighborhood in West Mosul said that looting was happening on a nightly basis but that they didn't know who the perpetrators were. Many generators were looted, leaving residents without power because government electricity lines were not yet repaired, he said.

PMF members are not the only ones alleged to have committed abuses. In September one PMF leader in Mosul reported arresting alleged perpetrators of a crime involving kidnapping and looting only to later realize that they were actually ISF members.

⁶⁶ Interview with Old City Resident, October 2017.

Some residents complained of looting during security checks and raids on houses. Some alleged that security forces weren't really looking for weapons but instead used it as an excuse to steal people's valuables. When asked about allegations of looting, a retired general living in West Mosul said "I know how these things work, I buried my valuables in the backyard." Similarly one resident in the *Mosul al-Jadeeda* neighborhood said that "I've seen Federal Police soldiers stealing public and private property, openly, in front of everyone. Everyone knows they do this."

One woman in the *Wadi Hajr* neighbourhood (reputedly among ISF a hotbed of IS support) reported that her house is frequently searched and that she is verbally harassed during such raids. She said that female-headed households are particularly vulnerable to extortion. Female interviewees also reported harassment at checkpoints, especially women whose relatives have been detained as IS suspects. Men also reported being verbally harassed and called *Daesh* at checkpoints or casually, while walking down the street by security forces and PMF members. A resident in Hay Tanak reported being beaten by security forces while stopped at a checkpoint in October in the neighbourhood.

One resident, reflecting on the resentment and mistrust that led to prior insurgency in Mosul, said

"this is an old mistake that the security forces keep doing...when will it stop?"

One humanitarian actor interviewed in August estimated that between 40 and 50 percent of their aid delivered to East Mosul was diverted by non-state actors, PMF or ISF units.

Even if groups are given orders not to divert aid, it doesn't mean that local units will abide by such orders at the local level, particularly in the diffuse, largely unsupervised PMF structure. Examples of such practice are rife. At the end of August, Zinjili residents reported IP were blocking food aid delivery, taking it all for themselves. They also accused the Federal Police of monopolising water distribution and siphoning off a substantial chunk for themselves.

Political leaders at government's highest levels acknowledge corruption's corrosive effects upon society. PM Abadi recently announced a large-scale anti-corruption campaign. Reportedly this campaign will have political consequences, although it remains to be seen whether it will be effective in addressing the structural causes of widespread corruption.⁶⁷ Abadi's announcement presents an opportunity for organisations to support reforms where appropriate at the local level.

⁶⁷ Iraq security analyst report, December 2017

Lack of Access to Justice

Rise Analysis: Interviewees in Mosul and Talafar widely advocated for the need for an equitable criminal justice system to provide redress and stability post-IS. They were equally unanimous in their skepticism or cynicism about the ability or willingness of the Iraqi state to deliver that justice.

That skepticism is borne out. Ground research and rights agency reporting indicates severe flaws through the process of investigating, arresting, trying and detaining suspected IS militants, that amount to an opaque, overwhelmed and arbitrary justice system. ISF have a well-documented history of abuses in Mosul pre-IS, cited above. Moslawis have an embedded cultural memory of absent or abusive justice, which together with a preservational need to appear strongly anti-IS to a dysfunctional security apparatus is helping to drive the desire for revenge attacks.⁶⁸

Terrible detention conditions, with suspects commonly held incommunicado, breed deep resentment among suspects' families and communities. Pervasive perceptions that IS suspects may bribe their way out further undermine the integrity of the system.

Real and perceived failures in rule of law and criminal justice are therefore an urgent threat to Mosul's security and stability. The corollary is that tangible improvements may help to drive broader stabilization of Mosul post-IS. Given the issue's importance, it is explored in detail below.

After the destruction wrought by IS, it's difficult to control people's desire for retribution. Iraqi's lack of faith in the formal justice sector pushes people towards the informal justice sector. Thirst for revenge against IS thus manifested itself as extra-judicial executions by security actors and revenge killings by residents.

One East Mosul resident in July said of IS suspects that

"we don't want them to go to jail because they will be let out. It's better for them to be killed. Sons of IS members should also be killed- the father taught them IS's ideology and the whole family believed it. We need to get rid of them."⁶⁹

Others referred alleged IS suspects to security officials for arrest but also exploited the system to settle personal grievances. Allegations of IS affiliation is a convenient way to settle scores with a neighbour whose fate is likely to sit in lengthy pre-trial detention without recourse to due process.

Humanitarian workers and analysts alike warn that mistreating or wrongfully convicting people could have serious consequences. One humanitarian worker claimed that ostracised

⁶⁸ Iraqi journalist Ghaith Abdul-Ahad for example describes the heritage of torture in Iraq as evolving in a linear path from Saddam's intelligence agency, to the Americans in Abu Ghraib, and then to the sectarian forces of the Iraqi government and its militias. See more here: Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, "After the Liberation of Mosul, an Orgy of Killing," *The Guardian*, November 21, 2017, sec. World news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/21/after-the-liberation-of-mosul-an-orgy-of-killing>.

⁶⁹ Interview with resident in East Mosul, July 2017

detainees and their family members could become easy future recruitment targets for extremist groups.⁷⁰

Iraq's application of the overly broad 2005 anti-terrorism law has been widely criticised. Article 4 punishes with death anyone who has committed, incited, planned, financed, or assisted a terror act and stipulates a life sentence for anyone who covers up such an act or harbours those who participated. Evidence for detaining individuals under the anti-terrorism law mostly comes from secret informants. Secret informants inform one of many different security agencies that someone conducted or supported terrorist activity and then the person's name is added to security database lists for arrest. Each security agency has a different list. Detainees allegedly are often interrogated by several different security agencies upon arrest.⁷¹

Evidence is based almost entirely on secret informants renders it an inherently opaque process giving rise to manipulation. Because of the tenuous security situation, checkpoints in Mosul are commonplace, seriously restricting the freedom of movement for anyone feared to be on one of many lists. The number of people detained, convicted, or executed under the anti-terrorism law is unknown. According to an international legal expert working in Iraq, the government's record keeping is notoriously poor and suspected that the government itself may not even know what the real numbers are.⁷² News outlets and security-monitoring groups report that arrests of IS-suspects in Mosul and Tel Afar continue on a weekly if not daily basis.

Iraqi legal professionals are well-aware of this dire situation. More than a dozen lawyers separately interviewed between July and October 2017 alleged that many investigations into IS suspects and detainees are unlawful. The majority of the lawyers alleged that most people arrested under the anti-terrorism law are not given access to lawyers, cannot call family members, and regularly are subjected to ill-treatment and torture sometimes resulting in coerced confessions. Media and rights agencies have depicted extremely squalid, cramped detention facilities, where pre-trial incarceration can last for weeks or months.

Sunni terrorism suspects are almost exclusively tried under this law, although one lawyer noted that she did encounter a Shia man facing charges under this law. Otherwise, Shia offenders of potentially similar violent crimes are prosecuted under the penal code. The law is therefore viewed by several Sunni residents in Ninewa Province as a sectarian tool to target and oppress Sunnis.

Security and judicial actors blame each other for the system's entrenched failures.

One security officer in Mosul complained that the judiciary requires that the witness who gave statements accusing someone of being IS to give a second statement in court in confirmation of their initial testimony.⁷³ The officer said that this may expose the witness to potential retribution if their identity is not protected. IS and other extremist groups are known to threaten would-be informants and their family members if they are known to inform authorities.

⁷⁰ Emily Feldman On 10/2/17 at 11:48 AM, "ISIS's Victims Are Taking Revenge However They Can," Newsweek, October 2, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-victims-mosul-thirsting-revenge-675324>.

⁷¹ Interview with Iraqi lawyer, July 2017

⁷² Interview with International legal expert on Iraq, August 2017

⁷³ Interview with security official in Mosul, September 2017

Meanwhile one investigative judge complained that case files sent to judges' desks by security actors often lack sufficient legal evidence.⁷⁴ One humanitarian worker working in the judicial sector said that some judges complained they waste their time on cases lacking sufficient evidence, revenge cases lacking merit, and cases based solely on weak statements by secret informants. The humanitarian worker said that while judges have gotten better about recognising such cases, detainees may languish for long periods while testimony is investigated, overwhelming judges with weak or fabricated cases.⁷⁵ Even when a case is rejected, a detainee can be lost in a network of prisons and less formal detention facilities. Where informant testimony is deemed insufficient, some residents complain that justice is not being served and IS members are walking free again in Mosul.

Many PMF groups pride themselves for their efficiency and effectiveness as a security force combatting terrorism. In evidence of residents' trust in their capacity to secure neighbourhoods, several PMF leaders separately shared taped recordings with Rise researchers of residents giving confidential statements against individuals they allege are IS. Such recordings clearly showed the face and identity of the individual giving the statements, raising questions over confidentiality and security concerns for those willing to come forward.⁷⁶ Violent reprisal against witnesses who come forward is well known and any actor collecting such information should preserve their confidentiality.

Many detainees never make it before a judge. Lawyers and detainees' family members complained that once people are detained, they often disappear. Others languish in pre-trial detention for weeks or months. One lawyer said that families are often scared to go ask about a detained son, fearing authorities will only arrest another.⁷⁷ Many are detained in abhorrent conditions. At least 5 detainees died a Qayyarah detention facility during the summer of 2017 allegedly due to poor conditions in confinement.

Sometimes even those who are not suspected of terrorist activity are detained. The relatives of convicted, killed or suspected IS relatives - commonly wives and children - have been sometimes forcibly sent to camps "for their own protection," that in practice are internment sites. Residents in Hay Tanak in Mosul reported in August that IS families were told to leave the neighbourhood and when several families refused, they were forcibly removed.

When asked about this incident a Federal Police representative said that sometimes IS family members are moved to avoid communal tensions, but denied that residents are forcibly removed.⁷⁸ Other Iraqi officials support the importance of sending IS family members to "special camps to psychologically and intellectually rehabilitate them and, if responsive, reintegrate them in society."⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Interview with an Iraqi judge, August 2017

⁷⁵ Interview with humanitarian worker, August 2017

⁷⁶ Interviews with PMF leaders in Mosul, August and September 2017

⁷⁷ Interview with Iraqi lawyer, August 2017

⁷⁸ Interviews with residents and security officials in Hay Tanak neighborhood in Mosul, August 2017

⁷⁹ "بدء فصل وترحيل عوائل عناصر داعش النازحة من الموصل واسكانهم في مخيمات خاصة - شبكة لالش الاعلامية" accessed December 3, 2017, <http://www.lalishduhok.com/news/post/153225>.

⁸⁰ Accessed October 2017. <https://aawsat.com/home/article/982051/%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%C2%AB%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4%C2%BB-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B5%D8%B9%D8%A8-%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%84>

According to Human Rights Watch, “there is no legal power under Iraqi law to detain people on this basis, nor is it legal to detain individuals merely because a spouse or parent was a member” of IS. Furthermore, under international law, “Iraqi authorities may detain children only as a measure of last resort, and all detention needs to have a clear legal basis and be decided on an individual basis.”⁸¹ While protecting IS families from revenge killings by other residents is a real threat, interning IS family members indefinitely, without charge is not the solution.

Lawyers representing IS suspects have also faced severe hindrances. Iraqi authorities issued arrest warrants for more than 20 private lawyers last summer on charges of IS affiliation for their past work in IS courts.⁸² At the beginning of September several lawyers told Rise that they haven’t gone to court in over a month, fearful that they will be arrested, even though to their knowledge no warrants have been issued for their arrest. Rise also interviewed the brother of a lawyer defending IS detainees. His brother was arrested in court separately from the first wave of arrests of lawyers in August.

Bribes for release appear to be a systemic problem.

One former local police officer in Mosul offered an example of how the economics of the justice system has changed post-IS, saying

“Before, an IS member paid \$10,000 to get out of jail. Now it’s several times more. The government is still corrupt, prices have just gone up.”⁸³

One lawyer working in Mosul alleged that she and several other lawyers have overseen cases where judges have offered to alter witness statements favourably in exchange for bribes.⁸⁴ One former security official told Rise that after liberation, some detainees imprisoned during the IS occupation were transferred to Baghdad instead of released. Authorities allegedly refused to release them without payment from their relatives.

Several former detainees shared stories of alleged ill-treatment at the hands of IS and now the ISF. For example, a muezzin from Mosul reported being dismissed from his job by IS, who tortured him and then confiscated his property when he didn’t comply with their orders. In May 2017, he was later arrested by the ISF on grounds that he was affiliated with IS. During his detention, he says that security forces took all his money, denied him access to a lawyer contact with his family, and tortured him. He still has visible marks on his legs from the alleged abuse. He says that he was one of the lucky ones that was released, saying most people get out only through *wasta* or bribery. Still, his mother said he was seriously traumatised and depressed after ISIS tortured him, and after a second round of abuse, he has fallen back into depression and can’t work and provide for his family.

A second mother of a current detainee says that her son was also arrested by the IS *Hisba* religious police four times for offences such as smoking, wearing pants that are too long, and having a moustache that is too long. Her son was arrested by the ISF in March 2017 in

⁸¹ Human Rights Watch, “Iraq/KRG: 1,400 Women, Children From ISIS Areas Detained,” Human Rights Watch, September 20, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/20/iraq/krg-1400-women-children-isis-areas-detained>.

⁸² Human Rights Watch, “Iraq: Lawyers Arrested for Work in ISIS Courts,” Human Rights Watch, August 10, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/10/iraq-lawyers-arrested-work-isis-courts>.

⁸³ Interview in West Mosul, September 2017

⁸⁴ Interview with lawyer, July 2017

East Mosul on suspicion that he is affiliated with IS, which the mother denies, pointing out that he hated IS and was always getting into trouble with them.

The mother even admitted that war complicates things, indicating that she would have been OK if he was mistakenly held even for a few months, saying in September

“It’s war, I know mistakes happen and it takes some time to sort mistakes out, but now it’s been eight months and I can’t even talk to him. That’s too long.”⁸⁵

The wife of a former detainee said that her husband was arrested by a local Hashd group in December 2016 in East Mosul and then transferred to the police’s custody. He was finally released after nine months when it was confirmed that he was mistakenly arrested due to similarity of name to a listed suspect. He returned home, covered in bruises and visibly weak. Now he rarely ventures outside, fearful of any interaction with state or security actors, doesn’t like daylight, and can’t work. His wife said her family is in need of financial assistance but that the local national ration system office refuses to help.⁸⁶ “A representative at the PDS office told me that she won’t provide me with aid because my husband was accused of being with IS, even though he wasn’t and has since been released. And because of the trauma he can’t work so we have to rely on the goodwill of others to survive.”⁸⁷

A third mother interviewed in Mosul at the end of August said that two of her sons were arrested on suspicion of affiliation with US. A judge in Qayyarah found them not guilty and subsequently ordered their release but authorities at the detention facility won’t release them until she pays \$2,000.

Another wife said that when her husband’s brother fled, a known IS member, the ISF arrested her husband instead. She fears that he won’t be released unless his brother turns himself in, but says that they don’t know where he is.

⁸⁵ Interview with a detainee’s mother, Mosul, September 2017.

⁸⁶ The national PDS rations cards were introduced in 1991 as a safety net to help Iraqis endure the international embargo imposed on the country following the Iraq-Kuwait war, and were available to all Iraqis regardless of their income level. The cards were never canceled and continued after the fall of the former regime in 2003. Poor families rely on this card to facilitate monthly access to basic food stuffs. See UNDP’s 2016 Mosul report for further details. “City Profile of Mosul, Iraq: Multi-Sector Assessment of a City under Siege - October 2016,” ReliefWeb, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/city-profile-mosul-iraq-multi-sector-assessment-city-under-siege-october-2016>.

⁸⁷ Interview in Mosul, September 2017

The threat of IS returning and Combatting IS Ideology

Mosul residents widely express fatigue and a desire to completely rid the city of IS but noted that this is impossible when some known IS still walk the streets and live in their homes freely, especially in poorer neighbourhoods.

Citing the poor security, justice and reconstruction outlook reported here, many believe that IS, or another form of it, will return to haunt the city. One East Mosul resident said that she knows of an IS member who has even since joined a PMF group, apparently as a way to secure his existence in post-IS Mosul. Because of such incidents, Mosul residents are worried that violent extremism will return.

Plans to combat extremism remain limited. When asked what the strategy is to combat IS reincubating, a federal police commander in West Mosul simply said “kill them.” He later added that mosques are providing child friendly spaces to focus children exposed to IS ideology and conflict on “peace and to get rid of bad ideas.”

One provincial council member said that provincial council members have been working closely with UNDP for several years on this issue in preparation for the post-IS period but did not give further specifics.⁸⁸ When East and West Mosul residents asked whether there are government, religious, school or other programs in place to combat IS ideology all answered with a resounding “no.”

UN agencies and NGOs often describe an urgent need to address IS indoctrination and severe pervasive mental trauma, but no apparent resourced plan equal to the scale or urgency of these issues is yet in place.

Fatigue, the barbarity and destruction wreaked by IS and the campaign to defeat them, and a desire for some stability may hedge against the emergence of violent extremism in the short to medium term, at least insofar as it guards against extremist groups seeking to replicate the IS project.

People have resigned themselves to the status quo until they can't take it anymore. Yet most of the root causes, whether sectarian, political criminal or regional,⁸⁹ which foster violence and extremism remain unaddressed, and the city remains in large parts devastated. In the meantime, IS or other extremist group variations will maintain operational capacity in terrain with limited security presence as they have elsewhere in the country. IS's enclaves are rapidly shrinking, but IS has consistently sought to destabilize areas outside of its control prior to their loss of Mosul City.

The long-term outlook looks bleak, and the threat of recruitment of Moslawis in a future insurgency against security forces and local government should not be underestimated. It may be inevitable without a material improvement in conditions. Violence will continue its cyclical rise and fall in Iraq, as it has without fail since the Iraqi state was destroyed in the American invasion of 2003. Until Iraq is a fully governed and secured nation, extremist groups will continue to thrive in its margins and seams.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Interview with a Provincial Council member, November 2017

⁸⁹ “How Falluja Can't Forget,” BBC News, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/Falluja>.

⁹⁰ Thanassis Cambanis, “The War on ISIS Held the Middle East Together,” *The Atlantic*, October 17, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/raqqa-isis-middle-east-iraq-kurds/543120/>.

Reconstruction

Rise Analysis: To some extent, this unregulated reconstruction in East Mosul has been successful and a testament to residents' resiliency, with a civilian return coupled with privately-funded rebuilding getting the centre of the Eastern half of the city partly functioning within a few months of liberation. But this is impossible in the West, where residents are poorer, connections are weaker, mistrust runs higher and a dysfunctional, allegedly abusive and diffuse security system comprised largely of PMF units prevents free movement of civilians and goods. Absent major institutional assistance, the West will rot.

Government officials claim that reconstruction of Mosul is a top priority but plans remain vague while resources remain pitifully insufficient. Broad plans for all provinces affected by “terrorist and military operations” set forth by the Ministry of Planning in 2016, for example, may be a good start, but they are in essence aspirational documents lacking means and methods.

This vernacular remains typical of political efforts directed at the crisis. A March 26, 2017 Ninewa Provincial Council Five Year Strategy is 10 pages of generalities and no substance. Meanwhile, some analysts suggest that Baghdad has no appetite to rebuild formerly IS-ruled areas and predicted that allocation of reconstruction funds will be limited at best.

According to an Iraq analyst covering Mosul:

“The central government thinks they’ve already done Ninewa a favor by liberating them from IS and that’s enough. The burden of reconstruction is not their problem.”⁹¹

Even if Baghdad does want to play a larger role, lack of funds is a real issue. Its’ struggle against IS, coupled with a long-running budget crisis from low oil prices, have left Iraq’s coffers dangerously empty. There’s not much to spare for reconstruction, and even untouched provinces are short of cash, leaving most residents in post-IS areas to largely fend for themselves.⁹²

Local and provincial government officials and humanitarian actors alike complain that funds are limited. They express hope that an upcoming international donor conference in Kuwait in early 2018 will pump much needed capital into Ninewa Province’s reconstruction.

Yet Mosul’s sustainable reconstruction will not be possible without strong public sector institutions to lead and oversee the process to ensure that benefits are distributed equitably. There is still not yet any system of governance that can reliably and effectively channel resources into Mosul at scale.

Corruption is rampant, with even local government officials conceding during interviews that transgressions are and will continue to impede reconstruction’s progress (though most single out the PMF units for blame). In untouched areas, Iraq is rated as one of the most corrupt countries on earth⁹³ (Transparency International ranked Iraq 166 out of 176 in its 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index), evidence from Mosul shows it fits within a well-documented pattern of yet worse corruption in post-conflict environments.

⁹¹ Interview with Iraq analyst, August 2017

⁹² “How Falluja Can’t Forget,” BBC News, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/Falluja>.

⁹³ Transparency International ranked Iraq 166 out of 176 in its 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Politics

Rise Analysis: Confidence in state functions and governance is extremely low. Several Mosul residents highlighted the importance of international observers for elections and the reconstruction process, expressing skepticism that corrupt officials could be trusted to do it alone, even if some of those international actors had their own checkered history of occupation and grievance-producing actions in Iraq. Such safeguards appear unlikely to be provided, though measures to restore confidence in the basic functions of politics and governance are sorely needed.

Meanwhile, political parties continue to set up political offices and installations throughout Mosul ahead of next year's provincial and national elections, and more immediately to cement their patchwork influence at an ultra-local level. NGOs should be aware that the development of PMF party activities will complicate their activities inside the city, likely obstructing access and operations at times.

As discussed above, many traditional Shia political parties, such as the High Council, the *Dawa Party* (which counts Prime Minister Abadi and Maliki as members) and some harder line pro-Khamenei parties such as *Asaib Ahl al-Haqq*, are making inroads in Mosul. Pro-Khamenei groups did have presence in Ninewa Province pre-IS but now residents claim that their presence is much more expansive, in part facilitated by the presence of associated PMF groups in and around Mosul. However, some local activists claimed that such installations are often being set up without official licensing.⁹⁴

A representative from *Asaib Ahl al-Haqq* told Rise at the end of October that the party, like any political party, has political aspirations (the party stood for general elections in 2014, though they only won one seat in parliament) so it is only natural that they would have a presence in Mosul. He said that since 2012 they've had a presence in Ninewa Province, noting that despite its majority Sunni make-up, there are Shia in Tel Afar, around Mosul, and more broadly in Ninewa Province. While the party's base may generally be found in the Shia-dominated south, the party doesn't discriminate as it's a national party for all, he said.⁹⁵

Such national rhetoric is not dissimilar to other pro-Khamenei groups, such as *Badr Organization*, who are seeking to portray a more moderate, nationalist image ahead of elections and anticipated aid funding to come from Western States to be disseminated at a local level. One analyst stated that moderated tones are part of *Badr's* efforts to become more palatable to potential western donor states.⁹⁶

Other Shia parties, such as the *Sadrist Trend*, have also attempted to make inroads in Mosul, building on a reputation for their associated *Sayarah al-Salam* militia to be less sectarian in its outlook and behaviour, and regional outreach by Sadr to neighbouring Sunni states, particularly Saudi Arabia, in an effort to differentiate himself relative to other Shia parties as a nationalist Iraqi leader. In July, Moqtada al Sadr invited Sunnis from Mosul to visit Najaf and Karbala, mirroring similar reconciliation activities by civil society organizations with which Sadr has developed an uneasy alliance under a generalist reform banner. A relative of a participant told Rise that even though such trips are overtly

⁹⁴ Interview in Mosul, September 2017

⁹⁵ Interview with *Asaib Ahl al-Haqq* representative, October 22

⁹⁶ Interview with Iraq analyst, November 2017

political, that his cousin went on the trips because “why not? It’s a free trip and we have been living under war for years.”⁹⁷

Historically, the “preeminent Sunni-majority political bloc, Etihad, is not unified due to ongoing rivalry between the *Mutahidun* and the *Iraqi Islamic party*...the bloc has remained a fixture in parliament out of necessity to counter Shia political dominance.”⁹⁸ *Mutahidun* is in disarray following the demise of the Nujaifi brothers who lead the party.

Former Ninewa governor Atheel al-Nujaifi is persona non grata in the province after impeachment proceedings against him in Iraq’s parliament, and there is a warrant for his arrest if he returns from his exile in the KRI to federal Iraqi territory. His brother, Osama Nujaifi, was sacked as parliament speaker as part of government formation process in 2014.

Together, they have retreated into far-flung plans for declaring Ninewa a federal region with the indulgence of their patrons in Turkey and with marginal figures elsewhere such as UAE- based tycoon Khamis Khanjar, and have worked to undermine the weak incumbent Ninewa governor Nawful al-Agub. Agub’s position is tenuous following corruption scandals for which he narrowly survived impeachment proceedings but some analysts claim he will almost certainly be run out of office following the May 2018 elections. This is unlikely to lead to the resurgence of the Nujafis, who are no longer a major factor in Sunni politics in Iraq more generally. On the ground, however, Atheel’s *Haras Ninewa* still has presence in some neighborhoods in Mosul and some Mosul residents expressed support for Atheel noting that he is one of the few Sunni officials actually from Mosul.

Adding to this division is the alleged intimidation of traditionally strong Sunni parties operating in Ninewa Province. Several Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) party members in November separately alleged that members of Shia political parties and PMF groups are threatening them to stay out of Mosul and have such yet to officially reopen their political offices in town. The officials also claimed that the *Iraqi Islamic Party* and *Mutahidun* were similarly facing pressures and threats to stay clear of Mosul. As such, these parties are pushing for the postponement of provincial and federal elections, saying that fair elections cannot be held under such conditions. These allegations should be taken with the caveat that the KDP and the Nujafis are closely allied as mutual clients of Ankara, and in the context of the dire unpopularity of both the KDP and *Mutahidun* in post-IS Ninewa.

While many residents interviewed in Mosul did not speak highly of the Shia parties, neither did many speak highly of the Ninewa Provincial Council. Some complained that only three of its members are actually from Mosul and others the large presence of KDP officials in the provincial council who spent much of their time living in the KRI. One resident in New Mosul said that the council doesn’t help its constituents and instead just “uses media appearances to make propaganda.”

Some Mosul residents expressed support for Nujaifi, calling him a man of Mosul (he has long-standing ties to the city dating to the time of the Ottoman Empire). Despite his arrest warrant, his money and local power exerted through his media outlets, associations, still make him an attractive choice, or at least a least bad choice for some.

Since 2003 the government has continuously failed to secure Mosul and build “an inclusionary political system which enabled different ethnic and religious communities to

⁹⁷ Interview in Mosul, August 2017

⁹⁸ “Iraq After the Fall of ISIS: The Struggle for the State,” Chatham House, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/node/30483>.

participate meaningful in governance.”⁹⁹ Moreover, the governments have failed to adequately “provide services, create job opportunities and achieve an acceptable level of economic and social development.”¹⁰⁰ Now, compounded by patchwork security and an almost total absence of tangible reconstruction and other evidence of the reinstatement of effective state support, residents expressed skepticism and pessimism about their futures as Iraqi citizens.

In this dispirited and fractured environment, political power and clout will likely be closely connected to security power on the ground. Residents are doing their own stakeholder mapping. As one Sheikh living in a village west of Mosul said, “I don’t know who we will align with yet because I don’t know who will be the most powerful one.”

However, further political developments will come to light in the coming months. One Iraq analyst expects that beyond establishing presence in neighbourhoods, real political developments won’t happen until substantial reconstruction money starts to flow in. “That’s when everyone will start to make moves,” she said.¹⁰¹

Economy

Mosul city was once a prominent commercial centre known for good healthcare services and exported oil, agricultural, industrial, and mineral products before its economy almost entirely collapsed under IS. Now, most industries’ infrastructures are destroyed and the vast majority of residents are unemployed. Many Mosul residents are government employees. Except for pensions, employees were not paid during IS’s occupation of Mosul. Most factories, public and private, across all industries remain partially or fully destroyed. Most hospitals are destroyed. Basic services, such as electricity, water, and education, are up and running although not at full capacity. Service provision in West Mosul remains subpar at best. East Mosul has partially recovered due to large trade volumes for construction and basic goods predominantly from the Kurdistan region, but political tensions and poorer accessibility have left West Mosul more cut off from sources of trade and supplies.

To survive, many returnees in Mosul reported relying on family member’s retirement stipends, informal debt, and occasional day labor in construction or cleaning services to survive. The Iraqi government cut salary payments into IS-controlled Mosul in July 2015, leaving many families bereft after exhausting cash savings. IS killings of large numbers of men, displacement and casualties from the war have broken down many traditional family structures in which the male head of the household acted as breadwinner, leaving women and children to work informally. The loss or confiscation of government IDs has impeded access to government rations and salaries post-liberation. Price gouging in the latter days of the occupation for basic foodstuffs or the relative expensiveness of displacement into rented accommodation in the Kurdistan region ran down the savings of many families. Large numbers of civilians live hand-to-mouth. One resident of the *Mushafa 1* neighborhood said in August 2017 that he occasionally gets day labor work but even then it’s only when he has *wasta*. One humanitarian worker reported an uptick in survival sex (prostitution based on extreme need) among women.

Some residents of poorer, West Mosul neighbourhoods complained of lack of access to adequate services compared to other, wealthier neighbourhoods, predominantly in the

⁹⁹ Pax Report. “After ISIS: perspectives of displaced communities from Ninewa on return to Iraq’s disputed territory.” <http://www.paxchristi.net/news/new-pax-report-after-isis-perspectives-displaced-communities-ninewa-return-iraqs-disputed#sthash.n6hVQ1u3.dpbs>

¹⁰⁰ IBID

¹⁰¹ Interview in Erbil, October 2017

better preserved East, but also in pockets of the West. Some residents of Hay Tanak, for example, complained that their neighbourhood was purposely being marginalised as an alleged pro-IS neighbourhood. “Wealthier neighbourhoods can depend upon each other to rebuild their neighbourhoods, but here we’re poor and we can’t depend on each other for anything because we don’t have anything,” one Hay Tanak resident said. Absent reconstruction or credible promises of it, these areas appear doomed to return to their pre-IS status as enclaves of deprivation and resentment.

Daily Life

Residents are trying to find a new normal and are attempting to rebuild their lives. But many obstacles remain, particularly for residents of West Mosul, where war damage is extremely high and public infrastructure has been more extensively destroyed. Residents complained of terrible traffic, hours spent in traffic waiting to cross from East to West Mosul, and frequent insults when passing numerous checkpoints. Many reported drinking dirty water, having little to no electricity and relying on expensive generators for power. Many, especially in West Mosul, complain of a lack of access to transportation. Public transportation in West Mosul remains limited and many residents’ complained that their cars were stolen or burned by IS (many were also destroyed in the process of liberation as ISF sought to minimize the risks from IS suicide car bomb attacks) . Residents are forced to walk long distances to access services. Others are taking up bike riding.¹⁰²

Access for local media in the city is patchy and appears to have become more restrictive for Iraqi journalists after the declaration of victory. Some local journalists complained that they are sometimes prevented from reporting in Mosul. One journalist said that only journalists attached to political parties or affiliated with security actors were given good access to work.¹⁰³ Similarly an Iraqi women’s rights activist lamented that civil society initiatives in Mosul are few and far between and are mostly limited to volunteer humanitarian aid groups. She noted that unfortunately the situation was not much better pre-IS either. Institutions to support the re-emergence of civic life, such as the University campus and main fairground, are almost all in East Mosul, leading to a geographical imbalance in the normalization of public space.

Tensions between East and West Mosul residents continue. Residents from the East complain that IDPs from West Mosul are driving up rent prices and crowding their neighbourhoods. West Mosul residents now displaced in the East complain that they are looked down upon by East Mosul residents. One West Mosul resident complained that East Mosul is “like America” and that residents enjoyed access to services and lower levels of war destruction. One resident in the western Rifai neighborhood said that he doesn’t feel safe in West Mosul because there isn’t enough people around to make him feel safe and secure. Another West Mosul resident said that he wants to sell his house and never return, saying West Mosul “is done.”

¹⁰² “An Unexpected Encounter in Mosul’s Ruins,” Time, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://time.com/4708800/mosul-iraq-bicycle-boy-photo/>.

¹⁰³ Interview with local journalist from Mosul, September 2017

TEL AFAR

Tel Afar Background

Tel Afar district is a city and district located in Nineveh province in Northwestern Iraq, more than 50 kilometres west of Mosul. Approximately 60-70 percent of Turkmen in Tel Afar district is Sunni, with the remainder adhering to Shia Islam.¹⁰⁴ Sunni Arab and Kurdish communities also inhabit areas in the district outside of Tel Afar city.

Tel Afar is composed of four sub-districts including Rabia, Zummar, Ayadhiya and Tel Afar District Centre. Geographically, the region is located in a border area separating Kurdish lands to the north and Arab lands to the south in Anbar governorate. Rabia, Zummar, and Kisik Kupri are disputed territories, as both the central Iraqi government and the KRI claim authority there. In October and November, ISF, in coordination with PMF forces, wrested control of these areas from KRI security forces. The Central government and the KRI remain in political dispute over control of these areas.

Tel Afar district is home to many significant infrastructure installations such as the Ayn Zala and Butma Oilfields, Tel Afar Airbase, Kisik Kupri Military Base, and Kisik Kupri Refinery. Highway 47 connects Mosul, Tel Afar, and Sinjar Districts and extends to Syria, serving as the major thoroughfare through the area.

Tel Afar is important for Iran's securing of a highway passage to Syria through Eastern Iraq to advance Iranian interests in Syria, protect Iran's border areas, and build a corridor for Iran to extend its influence into the Levant. It follows that many of the PMF factions operating in the area are pro-Khamenei groups and their proxies.

Since the fall of the former regime in 2003, Tel Afar district has witnessed frequent bouts of sectarian clashes between Sunni and Shia Turkmen communities. Soon after Saddam Hussein's topple in 2003, "many Sunni Turkmen found themselves deprived of employment, representation and decision-making power. Sunni-based extremist organisations such as Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I) wishing to mount a resistance against what they perceived an illegitimate foreign occupation hence found a fertile ground for recruitment. Tel Afar became a hotbed for the Sunni insurgency."¹⁰⁵

The security situation improved slightly from 2009- 2014 reportedly due to increased security presence and integration of more Sunni members into the security forces.¹⁰⁶ However, on June 16, 2014 IS captured Tel Afar after a two-day battle. The area subsequently also served as a launching pad for IS' gruesome attacks on Yezidis in August 2014 and was reportedly used as a main slave-trade centre for IS's captured civilians.¹⁰⁷ The central role Tel Afar's central role in Sunni insurgencies and then later in the expansion of the IS caliphate has seriously damaged relations between Turkmen and surrounding minority communities, especially Yezidi communities.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ "Turkmen in Tal Afar: Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict | MERI," accessed December 3, 2017, http://www.meri-k.org/meri_posts/turkmen-in-tal-afar-perceptions-of-reconciliation-and-conflict/, page 5

¹⁰⁵ IBID

¹⁰⁶ IBID, page 5

¹⁰⁷ "Turkmen in Tal Afar: Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict | MERI," accessed December 3, 2017, http://www.meri-k.org/meri_posts/turkmen-in-tal-afar-perceptions-of-reconciliation-and-conflict/, page 6

¹⁰⁸ "Turkmen in Tal Afar: Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict | MERI," accessed December 3, 2017, http://www.meri-k.org/meri_posts/turkmen-in-tal-afar-perceptions-of-reconciliation-and-conflict/, page 23

IS Occupation and Liberation of Tel Afar

IS captured Tel Afar on June 16, 2014 after a two-day battle and initial displacement of civilians outside of Tel Afar began that same month. Previously, IS's take-over of Tel Afar led to the displacement of approximately 500,000 individuals from Tel Afar district, in particular Shia and Sunni government and security officials. The vast majority of Tel Afar's population fled and sought refuge in Sinjar, the KRI, Shia-majority areas in the south of Iraq such as Basra, Karbala, Baghdad, and Najaf, Turkey and opposition-held territory in Syria.¹⁰⁹

In October 2014 Kurdish Peshmerga forces fought alongside Arab Shammar tribesmen and liberated the Rabia sub-district and Zumar. Remaining portions of Ayadhiya and Tel Afar districts were not liberated until August 2017 although some areas of Ayadhiya (such as Qasbat al-Rai village) witnessed clashes with remnant IS fighters well into September 2017.

Still, many residents did not leave Tel Afar, including Tel Afar city, before or during clashes due to physical (elderly, sick, and disabled) and economic restraints preventing displacement, risks of physical violence inflicted by IS if caught displacing, and desires to protect assets such as land and livestock.

Some Sunnis interviewed also claimed that KRI authorities would not allow them to flee to surrounding KRI controlled areas.¹¹⁰ Therefore, despite some claims that the city was free of civilians, this was not true. In fact, when some fled Tel Afar city, several IDPs did not originally identify themselves as coming from Tel Afar city but from surrounding villages out of fear of arrest over the misconception that only militants were left in the city.¹¹¹

Conditions for those who remained in Tel Afar were harsh.

Shortages of food, water, and healthcare reached a critical stage. From late April 2017 until mid-July 2017, the main displacement routes were through Kurdish-controlled areas to the northeast, and through ISF-controlled areas to the south, facilitated by easier access to Kurdish-controlled areas northeast of the city and a perceived weakened position of IS. As operations to retake the city loomed, displacement levels in July and August peaked at over 2,000 people a day. In total over 36,000 people were displaced from Tel Afar during this time, though the vast majority fled before the military operations started.¹¹²

Operations to retake Tel Afar city and the rest of its surrounding areas began on 20 August 2017. ISF and PMF groups gained full control over Tel Afar on 31 August, citing minimal resistance and an absence of a significant civilian population.

In contrast to military operations to retake Mosul, the recapture of Tel Afar was swift, reportedly due to IS tactical withdrawals and a gradual dwindling of IS personnel and resources. Some IDPs fleeing from Tel Afar claimed a number of IS fighters were smuggled

¹⁰⁹ "Turkmen in Tal Afar: Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict | MERI," accessed December 3, 2017, http://www.meri-k.org/meri_posts/turkmen-in-tal-afar-perceptions-of-reconciliation-and-conflict/.

¹¹⁰ Interviews with Tel Afar IDPs in IDP camps, September 2017

¹¹¹ Interview with Humanitarian worker assisting Tel Afar IDPs, September 2017

¹¹² International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix. 16 September 2017.

out of the city and northwards towards Turkey by the Kurdistan's Worker's Party (PKK).¹¹³ However, pockets of IS fighters, including suicide vest-bearing militants trying to reach Peshmerga lines, continued to be discovered over the following weeks after liberation was officially announced.

Military operations were conducted by a mix of forces including Coalition forces, the Iraqi Airforce, the army's 9, 15, and 16th divisions, Federal police 6th division, Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) 1st and 3rd divisions¹¹⁴, the Emergency Response Division (ERD), specialised units (such as military engineers, etc.), as well as a mix of PMF militias (including PMF Brigades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 17, 26, 43, 47, and 53).¹¹⁵ This included many pro-Khamenei groups including *Badr Organisation*, *Asaib Ahl al-Haq*, *Kataib Jund al-Imam*, *Kata'ib Hezbollah* affiliates, among others. The non-Iran affiliated *Al Abbas Brigade*, who are already well integrated with the Iraqi army and are supported by the Najaf *Marjaiyya*, were also heavily involved in the fighting.¹¹⁶ The involvement of the PMF was a contentious issue due to fears of sectarian violence from Shia forces towards any Sunni Turkmen civilians remaining in the city. Turkey raised the PMF involvement as a red line that it would not tolerate, ostensibly in defence of the Sunni Turkmen population (though its protests were eventually ignored and the controversial *Haras Ninewa* units trained by Turkish officers north-east of Tal Afar were deployed in marginal roles in the Mosul operation and eventually subsumed into the PMF).¹¹⁷

Returns to Tel Afar

Shortly after Tel Afar's liberation, IDPs slowly began to return to Tel Afar district from several locations. For example, returns from Nimrod IDP camp to villages outside of Tel Afar such as Abu Maria began approximately 5 September.¹¹⁸

At the beginning of October, some family members of PMF fighters reportedly returned to Tel Afar city and some surrounding areas. Some Sunni residents complained that Tel Afar Shia residents are now returning as PMF members and bringing their families to ensure demographic returns in favor of their sect.

Local media reported that 160 families returned mid-October after electricity and water was restored in several areas.¹¹⁹ The 'official' returns process to Tel Afar city did not start until the end of October although Arab villages east of Tel Afar city experienced high rates of return well before this date.

¹¹³ Interviews with Tel Afar IDPs, August 2017

¹¹⁴ Musings on Iraq. *Start Of The Tal Afar Battle*. 21 August 2017. <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2017/08/start-of-tal-afar-battle.html>

¹¹⁵ Tel Afar military operations info-graphic published by Iraqi military war media and accessed on August 20, 2017. Link to posting is no longer available.

¹¹⁶ Malik, H. *Iraq, Iran struggle for control over Popular Mobilization Units*. Al Monitor. 04 August 2017. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/en/originals/2017/08/iraq-iran-popular-mobilization-units.html>

¹¹⁷ Majidiyar, A. *Iran-Backed Groups Playing "Extensive Role" in Tal Afar Operation*. Middle East Institute. 21 August 2017. <http://www.mei.edu/content/io/iran-backed-groups-playing-extensive-role-tal-afar-operation>

¹¹⁸ Interview with Humanitarian Worker assisting Tel Afar IDPs, September 2017

¹¹⁹ "قناة ان ار تي" accessed December 3, 2017, <http://www.nrttv.com/ar/Details.aspx?Jimare=61310>.

According to a local Tel Afar official, as of 15 November more than 1,000 families had returned to Tel Afar. Most returns were seen in villages on the outskirts of the city such as *Alolea*, *Mazraa*, and *Abu Maria*, with only 1,300 - 1,400 people returning to Tel Afar city itself. Local officials said that continued presence of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), unexploded ordnance (UXOs) and booby trapped houses, lack of services, and apprehension about the area's future security are the two main factors preventing returns. Earlier in November more than a dozen people were killed inadvertently entering booby trapped houses.

Although local officials neglected to give statistics on the number of Shia returns versus Sunni returns, some noted that logistically it is easier for Shia than Sunnis to return due to heightened security scrutiny of Sunni returnees' screening for potential IS affiliation. IDPs and local Sunni officials alike said that some Sunni Tel Afar residents are not planning to return anytime soon out of fear of retributory attacks.

During interviews, Sunni Tel Afar IDPs overwhelmingly expressed desire to return home but expressed doubt that their safe return would indeed be possible. Others expressed fear that they will be stuck in the camps for a long time. Some said that they attempted to return to Tel Afar but when they presented their Tel Afar IDs at checkpoints some were prevented from entry and made to return even though they alleged that they had obtained security permission to return.¹²⁰

Sunnis have also sought refuge in the KRI and in refugee camps in Turkey and Syria. Relatives in touch with their Sunni Turkmen relatives living in refugee camps in eastern Syria complained of seriously subpar camp conditions and fears of difficulty to return to Iraq in the near future.

Shia residents in Tel Afar also expressed fear of return. A Shia Turkman PMF soldier stationed in Tel Afar said that his family fled to Karbala in southern Iraq when IS overtook Tel Afar city. He said they want to return but that leaving the relative safety of southern Iraq for an unstable Tel Afar city seemed unlikely in the near future. Therefore, despite the perception that Shia have better protection guaranteed by the presence of high ranking Shia security and government officials in the city, Tel Afar's violent, sectarian past did not spare any group.

¹²⁰ Interviews with Tel Afar IDPs, September 2017

Security Actors in Tel Afar

Tel Afar's security situation is currently stable but a local official cautioned that this may not offer a real indication of security as the city is mostly uninhabited.

According to local officials in mid-November, security responsibilities in Tel Afar city is currently dispersed amongst an assortment of actors, including Iraqi Counter Terrorism Services (ICTS), Iraqi National Security Services (INSS), approximately 650 Federal Police Emergency Division members, more than 1,000 92nd Brigade of the 15th Division army soldiers, and around 200 local policemen. (See sections on Security and PMF forces in Mosul section above for further information about the background, mandate, and functions of each group)

PMF Brigade 53, *Liwa al Hussein*, also has a presence in the city. The Brigade is reportedly made up of 800 members, most of whom are Shia, including Shia Turkmen. 200 Sunni recruits were recently added to the Brigade but as of mid-November were still in the early stages of training.

PMF Brigade 53 is affiliated with *Badr* and is led by Mukhtar al-Mousawi.¹²¹¹²² al-Mousawi led PMF Brigade 53 in battles west of Mosul.¹²³ At the end of December 2016 al-Mousawi issued a call for registered PMF members from Tel Afar to transfer to Brigade 53 if desired¹²⁴ some of whom reportedly did.¹²⁵ Previously al-Mousawi served as the leader of the 'Ninewa Sector' Hashd group.¹²⁶

An August media report claimed that the PMF Brigade 53 was implicated in looting and demolishing houses,¹²⁷ a claim denied by Mousawi.¹²⁸ Prior to the start of military

¹²¹ " - Justpaste.It," accessed December 3, 2017, <https://justpaste.it/liwaalhusseinbadr>.

¹²² "القائد مختار الموسوي - Home," accessed December 2, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/SaidM0htar/>.

¹²³ "القائد مختار الموسوي", accessed December 3, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/SaidM0htar/photos/a.514740025360295.1073741829.405510899616542/723976437769985/?type=3&theater>

¹²⁴ "القائد مختار الموسوي", accessed December 3, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/SaidM0htar/photos/a.514740025360295.1073741829.405510899616542/691886284312334/?type=3&theater>

¹²⁵ Captain 313, "وصول قوة من عشائر تلعفر إلى معسكر لواء الحسين لانخراط في صفوف #لواء_حشد_تلعفر بقيادة##", pic.twitter.com/ZM7kEEI59, Tweet, @hsseinamer31815 (blog), October 12, 2016, <https://twitter.com/hsseinamer31815/status/789547205803798528>.

¹²⁶ "القائد مختار الموسوي", accessed December 3, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/SaidM0htar/photos/a.514740025360295.1073741829.405510899616542/691475317686764/?type=3&theater>

¹²⁷ Al Arabiya. *Popular Mobilization forces ransack liberated areas in Tal Afar*. 28 August 2017. <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2017/08/28/Popular-Mobilization-forces-ransack-liberated-areas-in-Tal-Afar.html>

¹²⁸ "القائد مختار الموسوي", accessed December 3, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/SaidM0htar/photos/a.411701752330790.1073741828.405510899616542/851056751728619/?type=3&theater>

operations to liberate Tel Afar, several social media posts claimed to show PMF Brigade 53 soldiers posing with decapitated militants¹²⁹ or actively chopping off militants' heads.¹³⁰

Outside of Tel Afar city other sources reported the presence of the *Ali al-Akbar* Brigades and *Badr's* presence outside of the city. *Badr* and its affiliates are present along the Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) from Tel Afar to Daquq district. According to a security analyst, this highlights their importance as a key stakeholder for engagement in a primary area of interface with the KRI.¹³¹

Complicating the already tense Sunni-Shia situation is the back and forth between GOI and KRI forces who exchanged fire on several occasions in Tel Afar district in November 2017.

Infrastructure, Services, and Employment

Electricity is supplied to the city's shops through the Badoush Electricity plant but most homes remain without electricity as most neighbourhood power lines are in need of repair. A local official estimated mid-November that less than half of buildings had electricity. Shops and the hospital are mostly destroyed.

One returnee complained that because several hospital employees were accused of cooperating with IS, the city was in desperate need of additional medical personnel capacity assistance from humanitarian organisations. In general, government employees with technical skills are in short supply and local officials complained that employees are exhausted from working around the clock to fill personnel gaps.

Historically, Tel Afar residents mainly worked as government employees or owned small shops. Residents outside the city mostly work in agriculture. Sunni employees who stayed in Tel Afar during IS's occupation of the city did not collect salaries. Those now attempting to return to Tel Afar must obtain security clearance to return to their old government jobs but many complain that the process is too long and drawn out. Some cite it as another example of injustice inflicted upon Sunni residents.

Potential for Future Conflict

Rise Analysis: Civilian returns and post-IS governance in Tel Afar will have to be carefully managed to avoid local and region disquiet about demographic change.

Safe return for displaced people from Tel Afar is not deemed possible without addressing some of the divisions and deep-seated distrust currently characterising the relationship between the Sunni and Shia Turkmen communities in Tel Afar.¹³²

For example, according to a local official, although the numbers of Sunnis and Shias occupying government positions are approximately equal, Sunnis continue to hold low level positions with Shias occupying decision-making positions. This phenomenon appeared to be evident during several October visits to Tel Afar in October: Sunni volunteers who worked for free alleged they were able to secure their work through political *wasta*,

¹²⁹ "القائد مختار الموسوي", accessed December 3, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/SaidM0htar/photos/a.514740025360295.1073741829.405510899616542/514740008693630/?type=3&theater>

¹³⁰ 2017 ابطال شباب تلعفر, محمد اسماعيل, accessed December 3, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v31l8knpZJQ>.

¹³¹ Iraq security analyst Interview, October 2017

¹³² "Turkmen in Tal Afar: Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict | MERI," accessed December 3, 2017, http://www.meri-k.org/meri_posts/turkmen-in-tal-afar-perceptions-of-reconciliation-and-conflict/, page 6.

risked their lives cleaning the streets from leftover explosive devices and unexploded ordnance while mostly Shia officials inhabited the municipality building and directed daily affairs. Shias also dominate the security forces. Sunni government officials, tribal leaders, and residents claimed during interviews that putting Sunnis in decision making positions hedges against future sectarian violence.

According to Shia residents, many want guarantees that IS and affiliates will not return in the future. Several Turkmen and Sunni tribal leaders interviewed acknowledge that this issue is an important part in restoring good relations between the embittered communities. The leaders strongly condemned crimes committed by members of their tribe and claimed to be cooperating closely with law enforcement to ensure punitive justice processes. Some Sunni tribal leaders also claimed to be fairly regular contact with Shia tribal leaders to efforts to facilitate the returns and reconciliation process but claimed to have yet meet face to face.¹³³

One Turkman Sheikh alleged that former Prime Minister Maliki previously blocked participation of Sunni interlocutors' involvement in reconciliation discussions in Baghdad while claiming otherwise, citing it as an example of previous politicised and flawed attempts at addressing sectarian grievances.¹³⁴ One local leader commented that previous failed attempts by the international community and NGOs to bring together the two sides has to date not amounted to much but that the practice itself in bringing the two communities to the table may prove beneficial to building future initiatives.¹³⁵

While a long history of sectarian violence in Tel Afar has left deep cleavages within the Turkmen community it is also important to note that amongst the more than dozen main Shia and Sunni Turkmen tribes present in Tel Afar, tribes are also mixed amongst Sunni and Shia members.¹³⁶ For example, the Hilaipek and el Chelabi tribes are mixed amongst Sunni and Shia members.

Most residents interviewed agreed that tribal affiliation is stronger than political party affiliations although some cautioned that with the rise of PMF groups and some affiliations to political parties (such as *Badr* and its affiliates) may change this calculus moving forward.

Several residents expressed frustration with what they perceived as limited government efforts to locate prisoners previously held in IS prisons in Tel Afar saying that thousands are missing from jails found empty upon liberation.

In interviews with Sunni IDPs still displaced outside of Tel Afar, several individuals requested that the international community oversee the ongoing returns process and upcoming elections, citing fears of discrimination against Sunnis if not otherwise monitored.

¹³³ Interviews with Tel Afar tribal leaders, September and October 2017

¹³⁴ Interview with Tel Afar tribal leader, October 2017

¹³⁵ Interview with local Tel Afar official, November 2017

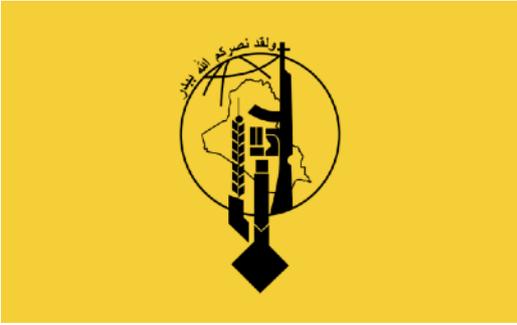
¹³⁶ Interview with Tel Afar Sheikh, September 2017

ANNEX: Iraqi Security Forces and Key Political Actors Taxonomy

Key Actor	Position	Associated Political Party	Associated Armed Group	Additional Information
Atheel al-Nujaifi	Former Governor of Ninawa	United for Reform Party	Haras Ninewa, part of the PMF (previously known as National Mobilization Units before integration into the PMF)	Position was revoked by the Iraqi parliament in May 2015 for reasons relating to Mosul’s fall to IS. Iraqi Federal Court issued an arrest warrant for him in October 2016 accusing him of espionage and providing support to Turkey by allowing their military to enter northern Iraq. Since the capture of Mosul by IS al Nujaifi has been based in Erbil and has close ties with the KDP.
Muqtada al Sadr	Spiritual Head of Ahrar Bloc and defacto leader of the Sadrist movement and Saraya al-Salam	Sadrist Movemet	Saraya al-Salam	Holds anti-corruption protests. Opposes Iran’s interpretation of Wilayat al-Fakih.
Nouri al-Maliki	Vice President of Iraq, former Prime Minister.	Islamic Dawa Parties	Several Shia PMFs	Strong ties to pro-Khameni groups and Iran. Ties to some pro-Khameni groups has weakened, at least publicly, in recent months due to PM Abadi’s battle field successes.
Hadi al-Amiri	Spokesperson for PMF, Leader of Badr Organization	Dawa Party	Badr Organization	Badr is reportedly the largest PMF group in Iraq
Haidar al-Abadi	Prime Minister	Islamic Dawa Party		Compromise candidate that succeeded Maliki, Coalition Ally

Abu Mahdi al Muhandis	Leader of Kataib Hezbollah, VP of PMF Committee. Began his career with the IRGC in 1983.		Pro Khamenei PMF group Kataib Hezbollah	Close ties with the Iranian Quds Force
Amar Hakim	Parliament Member	Iraqi National Wisdom Party	Saraya al Ashura, Saraya al Jihad	Former head of Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq
Qays Khazali	PMF Leader	Sadiqun Party	Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq	A former leader of the Iranian-backed special groups. Former follower of Muqtada al-Sadr until he split and formed his own group, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq
Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani	Grand Ayatollah			Issued fatwa (religious decree) to form the PMFs. Not aligned politically with Iran.
Ali Khamenei	Grand Ayatollah, Supreme Leader of Iran			Has influence over IRGC which in turn affects PMF decision making process
Falih al-Fayyadh	National Security Advisor; Technically in command of the PMF			
Nofal Hammadi	Former Governor of Ninewa, narrowly escaped impeachment attempts in Fall 2017.		Local PMF group in Mosul	
Qasim Mohammad Jalal al-Araji	Head of the Ministry of Interior	Senior Leader in the Badr Organization	Badr Brigades	
Haneen al-Qado	Shia Shabak MP	State of Law Coalition	PMF Brigade 30, coordinates closely with Badr Brigades	
Rayan al-Kaldani	Leader of Babylon Brigades		Babylon Brigades	
Bashar Kiki	Head of Ninewa Provincial Council	Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)		

Iraqi Security Forces and other Armed Groups

Name of Group	Leader	Details	Logo
<p>Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), Al-Hashd al-Shaabi in Arabic</p>		<p>Formed in 2014 following Ayatollah Sistani's Fatwa. In November 2016, Parliament passed a law legalizing the PMF. PMFs are majority Shia but contain mixed forces and some predominantly Shia Turkman, Shabak, Christian, and Yazidi groups. The PMF comprises more than 60 subgroups although new groups are still being added.</p>	
<p>Badr Organization</p>	<p>Hadi al-Ameri</p>	<p>Longest-standing and largest PMF, formed by Iraqi exiles in Iran during the 1980s. Pro-Khamenei PMF group. The Badr Organization is also a political party and currently has 22 of 328 seats in parliament. Badr has strong influence over the Ministry of Interior and the Federal Police. Badr allegedly also has informal dominance over the Ministry of Defense.</p>	
<p>Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haqq</p>	<p>Qais al-Khazali</p>	<p>Formed in 2006. Pro-Khamenei PMF group. Splinter group from the Mehdi Army.</p>	

Kataib Hezbollah	Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis	Formed in 2003. Pro-Khamenei PMF group with strong support from the Iran Revolutionary Guards.	
Imam Ali Brigades	Shibl al-Zaydi	Formed in 2014. PMF group. Linked to Harakat al-Iraq al Islamiyya political party	
Saraya al-Khorasani	Ali al-Yasri	Formed in 2013. Pro-Khamenei PMF group. Named after the alias of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei. Official logo is identical to that of the IRGC. Analysts allege Iran sends training and logistical aid for all PMF affiliated groups through Saraya al-Khorasani.	
Kataib Sayyad al-Shuhada	Abu Mustafa al-Sheibani	Pro-Khamenei PMF group	
Hashd al-Ashairi (Tribal Hashd)		Collective term for tribal Sunni forces. PMF group. US provides some training and light weapons to some groups.	

Haras Ninewa	Atheel al-Nujaifi (former Ninewa Governor). Military commander is General Mohammed al-Talib	Sunni PMF group. Reportedly partly drawn from former Iraqi police units in Mosul and Sunni Arabs and Kurds. Receives some support from Turkey.	
Saraya al-Salam (Peace Brigades)	Moqtada al Sadr (but military commander is Sayid Riyad)	Founded after the massacre at Camp Speicher in 2014. Pro-Sadr PMF group. Successor of Sadr's Mahdi Army.	
Ninewa Plains Protection Units (NPU)	General Behnam	Not under the PMF umbrella. Formed in 1980 under a different name, most recently rebranded in 2014. Armed wing of the Assyrian Democratic Movement.	
Abbas Combat Division	Maitham Al Zaidi	Sistani-linked PMF group founded in 2014. Some members have been partially integrated into the Ministry of Defense.	
Babylon Brigades	Christian leader Rayan Kalani. He was disowned from the Church.		

PMF Shia Shabak Hashd force (Hashd Brigade 30)	PMF group is affiliated with Shabak MP Haneen al-Qado	Mans checkpoints at eastern entrance to Mosul. Currently, presence is concentrated mostly in Ninewa Plains. Operates in close coordination with Badr Brigades.	
PMF Brigade 53 Liwa al-Hussein	Mukhtar al-Mousawi	Mostly Shia Turkman PMF group operating in Tel Afar. Affiliated with Badr Organisation.	
Federal Police, Emergency Division		Currently has presence in Tel Afar City	
Iraqi Army, 92 nd Brigade of the 15 th Division		Currently has presence in Tel Afar City	
Federal Police, 5 th Division		Currently polices Western Mosul	
Iraqi Army 16 th Division		Currently has presence in Eastern Mosul	