



Iraq Risk Rating 4

(Risk Rating 1-4)

General Information:

Capital: Baghdad
Religion: Islam
Calling Code: +964

Language: Arabic
Time Zone: UTC +3
Drives on the: Right

Currency: Iraqi Dinar (IQD)

Iraqi dinar is the official currency, however you will also be able to spend Euros € and US Dollars \$ almost everywhere. Be aware that most people do not like to make change for large bills. Also note that any defects in the bills (creases, ink stamps from banks, tears, etc.) will raise suspicion that it is counterfeit. Carry mostly small bills in the form of Iraqi dinars for daily spending cash. Since the introduction of the new Iraqi dinar, its widespread acceptance and confidence has reduced the prominence of the USD, and many shopkeepers are now refusing to accept them. However, most people will still pay large hotel bills or rent payments using USD or EUR due to the sheer volume of notes required to pay with dinars.

Country Overview

The MASC Executive (MASC) advise against all travel to:

- Anbar province
- Ninewah province
- Salah-Al-Din province
- Diyala province
- Tam'mim (Kirkuk) province
- in Erbil province, south of Road 80, and within 10km of the border with Ninewah province between Road 80 and Road 2.

The MASC advise against all but essential travel to the rest of Iraq, including the remainder of the Kurdistan region.

The ongoing civil war in Syria has provided space for Daesh to expand and the group declared a caliphate in seized territory in Iraq and Syria in June 2014. The group is funded largely through the proceeds of criminal activity, with kidnapping, extortion and smuggling yielding sizable revenues and contributing to what are already high levels of crime and violence in the country. Despite the support of outside powers, Iraqi forces have struggled to combat Daesh, and have only recently been able to take back key cities with the help of US-led coalition military assistance.

Although the head of Daesh's chemical weapons program was captured in a US-led raid in March 2016, the group has allegedly carried out chlorine attacks in Iraq, the most recent of which occurred in Kirkuk. People in the area were hospitalised with severe breathing problems and others with skin burns.

Civil unrest is common in Iraq and is typically inspired by public grievances relating to terrorism, violence, poor public service provisions and government corruption as well as sectarian tensions.



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Unrest has affected the oil sector and key infrastructure, including ports, and activists will likely continue to target economically significant locations in order to gain leverage in disputes over economic, security and political conditions.

There are significant concerns regarding the Mosul Dam. Vital reconstruction work was stopped after Daesh advanced and took hold of the area in 2014. With melting snow raising water levels, the dam's gates are shut due to lack of maintenance heightening the risk of the dam's collapse. The resulting flood has the capacity to affect Mosul and much of the Tigris valley.

Summary and Overview of Major Events

Throughout the dates of 14th September to 27th September 2016, 58 Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) were detonated in Baghdad. 42 out of the 58 were targeted at civilians. In addition to this 12 were targeted at security forces as well as government personnel. The remainder of the attacks are as follows; One attack was carried out on an employee of the Sunni Endowment and the final three attacks were carried out on unknown targets. Five further IED attacks were carried out in the regions of Yusufiya, Mahmudiyah, Musayib and Shakhha.

MASC Executive is aware of four suicide bombings which took place across Baghdad. 106 people have been reported as killed and injured. In supplement to this a Vehicle-Borne IED was disarmed outside the Iraqi Airways office situated on Saadoun St.

Socio-Political tensions continue to rise as anti-government protesters continue to disrupt activity in Tahrir Square.

On the 25th of September, the University of Mamon was subjected to one of four suicide bombings which occurred within the city limits. A suicide bomber targeted an area in the vicinity of the University in the district of Mansour. The principal target of both attacks was military personnel. The suicide attacks resulted with several fatalities, one striking a gathering of Badr Brigade militiamen and the other a peripatetic checkpoint near a High School. The remaining two attacks resulted in two markets, Bayaa and Baghdad al-Jadeeda being the focus of the bombings.

These assaults ensued in the environment of heightened security in the city centre. Intelligence had suggested of an impending ISIS attack. Itinerant checkpoints were implemented to ensure that vehicle traffic was limited into central Baghdad. Several roads were impacted due to stringent checks. The following were subject to movable checkpoints.

- Mansour Street
- 14 Ramadan Street
- Abu Nuwas



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- Main route in Karada
- Eastern end of Jadriyah
- Sadoun Street

The road blocks were considered a success due to the absence of attacks within the cordoned off precincts.

September was a particularly merciless month in contrast to August. Baghdad was exposed to more than twice as many suicide bombings rivalled to that of August. The September bombings hallmarked the end of a two-month absence of suicide bombings within the city centre. The past two months' attacks were centralised around the checkpoints on the city edges. The apprehension of these attacks is that there is a strong manifestation of terrorist cells within the city centre. These attacks have not only highlighted that ISIS has generated new ways of smuggling IEDs into Baghdad, but that the manufacture and production of such devices are hypothetically being created inside the metropolis itself.

These attacks have contrasted profoundly against the trend of the past eight months. IED attacks within Baghdad have decreased. It must be emphasised conversely, that to date, there have been nine fewer IED attacks this month paralleled to that in August. Nevertheless, this number is more than likely to be exceeded within the forthcoming days. The attacks have been a combination of more than just targeting soft civilian targets across Baghdad but, attacks targeting security patrols on the outskirts of town as well as seven adhesive, under vehicle bombers, targeting civilian and government personnel.

Whilst analysing the locations of these attacks in Baghdad. It is worth stating that they have been fairly coherent and uniform since the commencement of 2016. The only prominent exclusion to this was the deficiency of IED attacks within Sadr City.

The start of October has seen two suicide attacks within Baghdad. MASC Executive's Global Human Intelligence Network has reported that one explosion struck along Mutabak Street. The secondary detonation was concentrated towards the Hawra Medical Centre.

The MASC Executive (MASC) advise against all travel in Erbil province, south of Road 80, and within 10km of the border with Ninewah province between Road 80 and Road 2.

Small scale attacks have been carried out across several northern and central provinces. Ninawa and Hawja areas have seen a jump in small scale bombings this week. Islamist militants, lead by Islamic state continues conflict with Iraq and Jurshif security forces. Intelligence gathered from the ground in Erbil suggests that these attacks, though small were a coordinated and a joint effort. The major concern with these attacks is that they have been carried out at a time when security was already at a allegedly intensified level.



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This week has seen a reduction of detected incidents in the northern provinces. 17 confrontations were reported. Conversely, incident figures in the north do not accurately depict and reflect the security situation within the northern provinces. The prevailing security trepidations are the developing ground assaults on Mosul.

The 17th of September saw more than 50 families displaced from the area. Iranian artillery shelled the village of al-Sid Kan in the northern eastern territory of Ahril, neighbouring the border with Iran's West Azerbaijan Province. Movement of Iran-Kurdistan Free Life Party (Iran-PJAK), a Kurdish revolutionary group has been reported. The group are involved in an ongoing uprising in contradiction of the west border of Iran. Iran-PJAK have the provocation to downfall the Iranian theocracy and institute rule for Iran's minorities.

Across border shelling is likely to prevail in the coming week. In the spring of this year Iran-PJAK fighters attacked Iranian forces in Sanadaj. This marked the renewal of their struggle for independence. Three confirmed shelling's from Iranian forces in Iraq since august have only intensify the already on going guerrilla war.

KDP headquarters was subjected to gun fires by several armed men on the 26th of September. This particular shooting was carried out intestinally on the eve of the one-year anniversary of the protests in which Gorran Movement and PUK followers attacked KDP offices across Sulaymaniyah. The anniversary of these protests were not only marked by gunfire but socio-political tensions as many individuals took to the streets demanding government reforms.

Due to the nature of the social-political tensions as well as the underlying terror threat in the region the main road along Arbil to Sulaymaniyah was then issued with variable checkpoints. Though, it must be said that these protests were all peaceful the rising tensions between government and civilians cannot go unaccounted for. Further violence is expected in the coming weeks at KDP sites in Sulaymaniyah

Intelligence has reported that no change in military positions across the region despite numerous attacks in Ninawa and Makhmur. There has been a successful offensive in Shirqat which was undermined by a series of ISIS attacks along the Kurdish-ISIS frontier in Ninawa. Assaults were carried out near and around; Bashiqaq, Sinjar, and al-Kuwayr.

The southern territories of Qayyarah have seen a 3 kilometre advancement of ISF, establishing positions in al-Hawd village. In addition to this 3 km advance 400 US military advisers have been deployed to Qayyarah Airbase. Attacks by groups of ISIS militants are likely to continue. These attacks however are more than likely to be ineffective due to coalition airstrikes as well as the significant ISF presence in the area. Operations at the base to likely to continue as normal.



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The recapture of Mosul has been the dominating security concern. On the 22nd of September several meetings took place with US General Joseph Votel, who led a delegation mission to Kurdistan. The delegation met with Kurdish President Masoud Baznai in order to negotiate and prepare for the Mosul Assault.

The operation is set to commence on the 19th of October so intelligence sources have said. However, the US commander of Operation in Iraq notably avoided October and said that the operation would commence at the end of the year. It remains unlikely that the operation will commence in the first half of October. The strategic assault will require the support and cooperation of Kurdish Peshmerga, ISF and the Sunni tribal forces in the province of Ninawa.

During an interview with the BBC, Minister, Abadi struck a coy tone when asked about Shia PMU involvement. He was reported saying that he could not stop the participation of those whom the city belonged to. It is more than a considerable possibility that the involvement of Shia PMUs is likely. If there is to be an altercation between the Kurds and Baghdad the progress as well as the success of the operation is destined to be adversely affected.

Airstrikes have continued throughout the provinces. However, no territorial gains against IS positions have been reported. IS have fired IDF into Qayyara Airbase. US Authorities have established and confirmed that testing of samples show the presence of mustard gas. Allegedly no US personnel were injured during the event.

Crime Risk Rating: **LOW**

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein and the withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq, crime has increased with organised criminal groups, Islamist militants and high levels of corruption within government and security forces. Areas under control of militant groups, predominantly Daesh, contribute heavily to crime statistics in Iraq. The group takes millions of dollars in fees, taxes, extortion and from smuggling and black markets. They are also responsible for the large amount of kidnappings, robberies and trafficking of people, oil and stolen goods.

Major cities have also seen a rise in criminal activity. In Baghdad, crimes linked to tribal disputes, religious tensions and terrorism have increased and led to security concerns for expatriates. In January 2016, three American contractors were abducted by gunmen while in the southern Baghdad suburb of Dora. The three were later released and their kidnapping has been linked to two Shi'a militia groups.

The southern city of Basra has not been immune to crime either. In August 2015 unidentified gunmen shot and killed an Italian national as he visited a bank. The victim was a manager for a logistics company operating in the city, however it is believed that this was a crime of opportunity and that he was not targeted because he was a foreigner. In September 2015, a Basra city official was attacked and stabbed while couriering \$280,000 intended for reconstruction projects.

Petty crime, including pickpocketing in crowded areas such as markets and from private residences or hotels is common. Armed robberies and assaults on commercial properties is also common in



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Baghdad, often resulting in violence and fatalities. Weapons are easily available throughout Iraq, and are often used in armed robberies and car-jackings. Major highways and bored crossings between Iraq and Jordan and/or Kuwait are particular hotspots for car-jackings.

Terrorism Risk Rating: MEDIUM

Daesh's origins stem from the previous war in Iraq, and at the time were referred to as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The group took advantage of the civil war in Syria and expanded its operations into the neighbouring country. The group split with al-Qaeda in 2013 after long-running disputes regarding tactics, leadership and targeting strategies and was hence forth known as Islamic State (now referred to as Daesh). Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the group's leader, declared the area they controlled as an Islamic caliphate in June 2014, and now boasting an estimated 31,000 fighters started targeting civilians of Shi'a, Christian, Yazidi and Turkmen ethnicity.

The ongoing civil war in neighbouring Syria has enable Daesh to grow and expand further into Iraq. Daesh and other armed groups control parts of Iraq, particularly in Anbar, Ninewah, Salah-Al-Din and Diyala provinces. The front line between Daesh and Iraqi and Kurdish Security Forces is changeable. There's an increased risk within 10km of the front line. This underscores the vulnerability of Iraq to regional conflicts and the country's porous borders have allowed militant groups to cross with ease, firm up their positions and defences and launch attacks on both Iraq and Syria from within the country.

During Daesh's 2014 offensive throughout Syria and Iraq, the Iraqi military was struggling with poor morale and inadequate leadership. They were no match to the battle hardened group, and quickly lost ground in important and strategic areas such as Tikrit, Mosul and Irbil. In the process, the military left behind weapons and equipment including large numbers of armoured vehicles and tanks, weapons and ammunition, all of which were seized by Daesh.

Bombings are the most frequent type of attack in Iraq, with improvised explosive devices, suicide and vehicle born attacks known to have killed large numbers of both civilians and members of the security forces. Daesh also carries out targeted assassinations, kidnappings and sexual violence. Chemical weapons attacks have also been reported. In late February 2016, Kurdish authorities reported that Peshmerga militants and civilians were treated for nausea and vomiting in Sinjar after homemade rockets containing a chemical substance were fired. Officials said the chemical that was fired was probably chlorine, which is banned under the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention. In March 2016, it was reported that rockets fired by Daesh were filled with chlorine gas landed to the north and south of Kirkuk, hospitalising people with respiratory problems and skin burns.

In August 2014, a US-led coalition began a campaign of air strikes against Islamist militant groups at the request of the Iraqi government. Several European countries, including France, the UK and Netherlands as well as Australia eventually joined the military campaign, launching direct attacks against Daesh militants who have seized control of large parts of the country. Germany and other countries have provided arms, training and other support to Kurdish Peshmerga and regular Iraqi security forces along with several hundred US advisers. Areas recently liberated from Daesh,



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including are likely to contain remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. The security situation throughout Iraq remains uncertain, and could deteriorate quickly.

There are also a number of Sunni, Shi'a and Kurdish militant groups operating within Iraq. Some of the Sunni groups are opposed to the incumbent Iraqi government, and have known to have aligned with Daesh. They include the nationalist General Military Council of Iraqi Revolutionaries and Ba'athist Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqa al-Naqshabandia (JRTN). Other Sunni groups are directly opposed to Daesh and the government include Salafist organisations such as Jaysh al-Mujahidin and Ansar al-Islam (an al-Qaeda affiliate).

While Daesh has proved effective at targeting sites in Iraqi Kurdistan (including a car bombing outside the US consulate in Erbil, killing three and injuring 15), Kurdish Peshmerga forces have been largely successful in repelling and retaking ground once held by Daesh. Kurdish forces seized control over the oil rich city of Kirkuk after Iraqi troops fled in June 2014, and they have since clashed with IS fighters in the city and other parts of northern Iraq, including near Mosul.

However, the presence of regionally active Kurdish militants in Iraqi Kurdistan further complicates the security environment. Both Iran and Turkey have carried out cross-border attacks on the positions of Kurdish rebels inside Iraqi Kurdistan. In August 2015, there were reports that Turkish air strikes against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebels in northern Iraq had occurred near oil fields, highlighting the risk from a decades-long conflict between Ankara and the PKK.

Tensions between Sunni rebels and the Kurdish community in neighbouring Syria could fuel more attacks against targets in Kurdistan given Erbil has increased its support for the rebels.

Civil Unrest Risk Rating: **MEDIUM**

Civil unrest in Iraq is regularly linked to high levels of sectarian violence and political dissatisfaction, particularly concerning matters of terrorism, violence, government corruption and mismanagement. The current poor state of security, public services, economy, living conditions and sectarian tensions are likely to cause continued unrest. The number of demonstrations rise during the warm weather months, as electricity supplies are strained and lead to power cuts.

This was especially true in 2015 where unrest began in the south of Iraq, eventually spreading to become nationwide, with tens of thousands protesting in Baghdad and large crowds in other cities throughout the country. The pressure put on the government as a result of the protests led to major reform, with a specific focus on government corruption.

More recently, in late February 2016 over one hundred thousand people took part in a demonstration in Baghdad's Tahrir Square to protest against corruption and call for Abadi's government to implement long promised reforms. Small scale anti-corruption protests have been taking place on a regular basis in the Iraqi capital, however thousands joined the rally as influential cleric Moqtada al-Sadr called on followers to participate. It has been suggested that the demonstration was intended to be a mass show of strength for Sadr and an opportunity for the cleric to re-assert himself politically as a torch-bearer for reforms.



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International events and sectarian tensions can have a direct effect on civil unrest in Iraq. The execution in Saudi Arabia of the prominent Shi'a cleric Nimr al-Nimr in early January 2016 led to protest throughout the Arab world. Thousands demonstrated against the execution across Iraq. Protests were reported near the Green Zone in Baghdad, as well as in the southern cities of Najaf, Karbala and Basra, where locals demanded a boycott of Saudi goods. The cleric's execution and ensuing unrest has worsened already heightened sectarian tensions in Iraq and across the region.

In Iraqi-Kurdistan, a key route used by oil tankers was blocked by residents angered by an ongoing financial crisis. The Sulaimani-Kalar road has regularly been blocked since mid-January as a row over government wages and demanding an improvement of services.

Also in Iraqi-Kurdistan hundreds of protesters demonstrated outside the UN compound in Erbil to call for an end to a new air strike campaign against the PKK by the Turkish Air Force. There were reports that policemen were wounded as the protests became violent. The Turkish military announced the launch of a new widespread air campaign to target Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants in northern Iraq.

Natural Disasters

While there are no major natural disasters that threaten Iraq, the country does suffer extremely high temperatures in the summer months, reaching up to 49°C. These temperatures and occasional dust storms can interrupt business operations. These storms can obscure visibility, impacting transportation, damaging agriculture, and negatively impacting public health. Operations at oil facilities may also be suspended during sandstorms. Sand storms and high winds have in the past disrupted operations at the al-Basra Oil Terminal.

There are significant concerns regarding the Mosul Dam. Vital reconstruction work was stopped after Daesh advanced and took hold of the area in 2014. With melting snow raising water levels, the dam's gates are shut due to lack of maintenance heightening the risk of the dam's collapse. The resulting flood has the capacity to affect Mosul and much of the Tigris valley.

Health & Wellbeing

The medical sector is poorly developed and has limited capacity to address the country's health needs. Foreign nationals should ensure vaccinations are up to date prior to any visit to the country. While occasional outbreaks of communicable diseases do warrant caution, the level of risk to visitors is manageable.

There has been a prolonged period of deterioration in the quality of medical services in Iraq relating to the ongoing security situation and ongoing conflict with Daesh, as well as Iraq's struggling economy.

The large numbers of those displaced by the conflict, combined with budget cuts, poor care and diminishing aid supplies has led to an increase in illnesses, along with a warning of a potential rise in water-borne illnesses and diseases. Iraq has a history of recent diseases; in 2012 northern Iraq saw a major outbreak of cholera, Baghdad had an outbreak of Hepatitis E in 2011 and an outbreak of polio



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in 2014. With up to 15,000 potential cases of tuberculosis on an annual basis, Iraq has one of the highest rates of infection in the middle east.

Local Travel

The MASC Executive (MASC) advise against all travel to:

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- Ninewah province
- Salah-Al-Din province
- Diyala province
- Tam'mim (Kirkuk) province
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The MASC advise against all but essential travel to the rest of Iraq, including the remainder of the Kurdistan region.

Iraq is in desperate need of infrastructure repair, after decades of constant conflict has seen basic infrastructure lacking. Routes in and out of Baghdad may become blocked and airports closed or inaccessible at little or no notice.

The road network is poor and in some areas unusable and driving standards are cause for serious concern with Iraq having one of the world's highest rates of traffic fatalities. There continue to be fatal roadside bombings and attacks on military and civilian vehicles. False vehicle checkpoints have been used to launch attacks. There is also a risk of carjacking and robbery and areas recently liberated from Daesh are likely to contain remnants of war and improvised explosive devices.

Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Basra International Airports are generally considered secure, but Baghdad International Airport has been the target of attacks in the past. On 26 January 2015, a Fly Dubai aircraft was struck by gunfire on approach to Baghdad International Airport. No injuries were reported but some carriers temporarily suspended flights. On 15 March 2015, several rockets landed on the outskirts of Erbil, to the west of the city. No injuries were reported but some carriers temporarily suspended flights to and from Erbil airport.

Following frequent complaints by businesses, the Iraqi government committed to easing the visa application process in May 2013 to grant multiple-entry visas to foreign investors, businesspersons and facility staff. Implementing the new rule has proved challenging, with companies continuing to report that the process of securing a visa remains time-consuming and unpredictable. Kurdistan, with its own immigration rules, has a much more streamlined process with many foreigners able to secure visas at their port of entry. With an eye toward removing the visa hurdle as a constraint on the oil sector, the southern province of Basra has also sought permission from Baghdad to grant visas independently.

According to Iraqi law you must get a visa before you travel. The Kurdistan region of Iraq routinely allow travellers to get a visa on arrival. These visas are only valid for 15 days. The government of Iraq doesn't regard them as valid for travel elsewhere in Iraq.



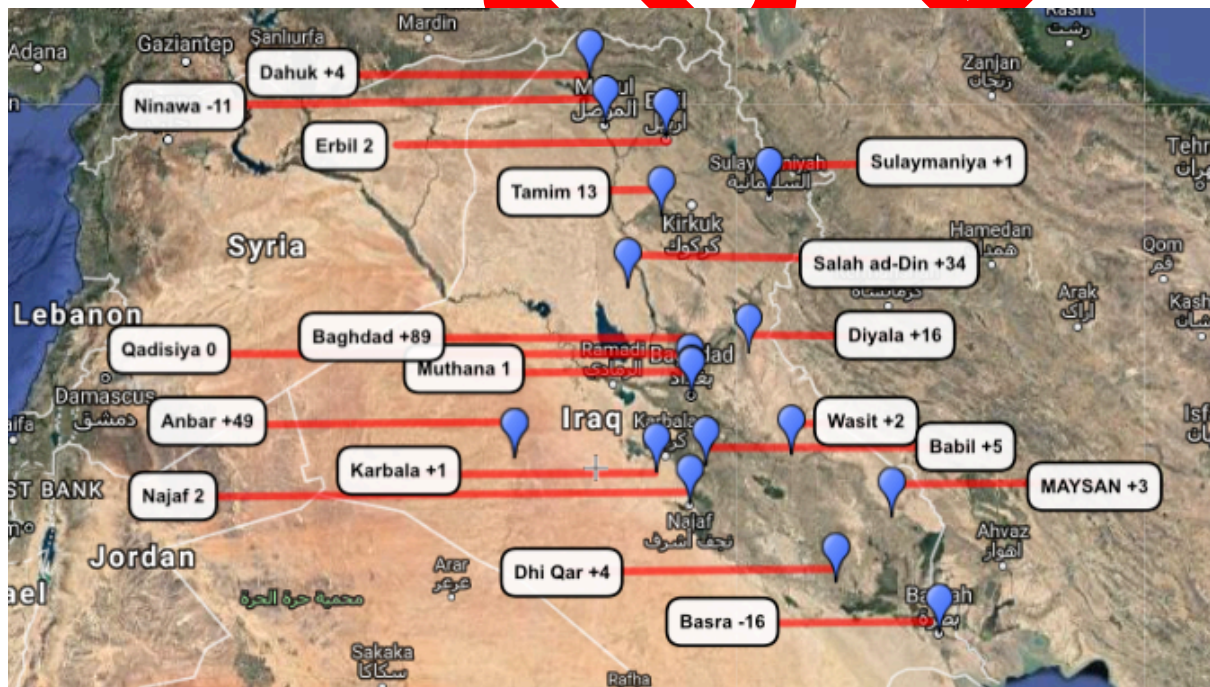
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Laws & Customs

- Local laws reflect the fact that Iraq is an Islamic country. You should respect local traditions, customs, laws and religions at all times and be aware of your actions to ensure that they do not offend other cultures or religious beliefs, especially during the holy month of Ramadan (6th June – 5th July) or if you intend to visit religious areas.
- You should dress modestly. Sale and consumption of alcohol is against the law. Police sometimes object to photography without prior permission.
- Carry ID, especially when travelling outside Baghdad (where you may encounter security force road checks). You should comply promptly with directions from the police and other Iraqi security forces.
- Homosexuality is a punishable offence in Iraq.
- Drugs laws are severe. Those found in the possession of any illegal drug may receive a prison sentence.

Significant Incident Time Line



- **Significant Incident 1** – Turkish artillery shelled various PKK positions. The location of the fire was directed towards the mountains, north east of Zakho. Iranian artillery fire struck al-Sid Kan, located northeast of Arbil



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- **Significant Incident 2** – The KDP Headquarters was attacked by a gunman, in Halabja on 26th of September
- **Significant Incident 3** - Socia-Political tensions regarding reforms in salary payments resulted in protests across the region of Sulaymaniyah on 27th September.
- **Significant Incident 4** – ISF have gained positions in al-Hawd, north of al-Qayyarah.
- **Significant Incident 5** – 400 United States military advisors have been deployed to an airbase located at al-Qayyarah
- **Significant Incident 5** – An ISIS suicide bomb attack was carried out in Peshmerga, in close proximity to Bashiqaq. In Peshmerga, south of Mosul Dam, a vehicle borne IED in a double suicide attack was detonated.
- **Significant Incident 6** - Two suicide bombers were shot dead and killed close to Sinjar
- **Significant Incident 7** - Numerous coalition air strike has impacted the following regions; Tal Afar, Kisik, Mosul, Sinjar, Sultan Abdullah and Qayyarah

Business

The insecurity in Iraq will continue to be a major cause for concern for businesses wishing to operate there. Fraud and corruption are rife within the government, creating challenging conditions for businesses, who may be exposed to illegal activity. As a result of public pressure and civil protest, the government has pledged major reforms, but it is unclear whether anti-corruption measures will be successful in reducing these levels. In Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index the country ranked 170 out of 175 countries.

High levels of fraud and corruption create serious compliance risks for foreign companies operating in Iraq. This is true at the lower end of government, with officials and civil servants offered bribes by locals in order to gain access to government services and benefits.

High levels of corruption are also known to be present in the Iraqi Kurdistan region, despite having a more positive business environment. The region offers a higher profit to oil companies wishing to operate there, however it comes with the threat of being banned by the Iraqi government to work on other production areas. The Iraqi government does not recognise any agreement signed between the Kurdistan Regional Government and international companies.

Business Tips



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- Iraqi businesspeople are relatively formal in their business dealings.
- The most common business greeting is the handshake with direct eye contact.
- Handshakes can be rather prolonged; try not to be the first person to remove your hand.
- Men should wait to see if a woman extends her hand.
- Business cards are given out. It would be beneficial to have one side of your card translated into Arabic.
- Due to the hierarchical nature of organisations or businesses the leader of an Iraqi team does most of the talking for his company or department.
- Subordinates are there to corroborate information or to provide technical advice and counsel to the most senior Iraqi.
- It is a good idea to send any information or agendas in Arabic in advance. If you are bringing a team send the names, titles, and a brief business bio of people attending.
- Decisions are generally made by the top of the company but this will be based on recommendations from pertinent stakeholders and technical experts who sit in on meetings.
- Iraqis often have several side discussions taking place during a meeting. They may interrupt the speaker if they have something to add. They can be loud and forceful in getting their point of view across.

Standing Travel Advice

- Assess if it's necessary to travel to Iraq. Take increased security precautions when travelling.
- There is a high risk of both small-scale opportunistic and large-scale terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists.
- Anti-government protests and social unrest could occur with the potential to cause travel disruption. In the event of unrest, foreign travellers and expatriates are unlikely to be at direct risk, but may need to remain flexible in their travel arrangements.
- Minimise time spent in the vicinity of likely targets; these include cultural and religious sites, government and military buildings, military facilities, Western embassies and foreign commercial assets. Be alert to suspicious behaviour and report any suspect packages to the authorities.
- Armoured 4x4s are suitable means of transport for business travellers.
- The quality of roads is poor, driving standards are variable and accident rates are high. You should not self-drive. It is advised to drive in convoys and avoid driving at night.
- Be aware of the potential cultural sensitivities, which could be cause for concern.
- Watch and read news about the destination and region prior to travel.
- Be vigilant in public areas and places that attract foreigners and Westerners - embassies, hotels, restaurants, bars and businesses
- Look out for anything suspicious. Report it to the local authorities immediately – many terrorist attacks are foiled by the vigilance of ordinary people.
- Try to avoid routines that make you an easier target – vary the time and route of your regular journeys.