



Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid

Hazard Mapping and Security Assessment

Al Salhiah & Al Baradi'yah

Basra Governorate

31-01-2021



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1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The following Hazard mapping and security assessment report was carried out by Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid by the MEAL Manager and the MEAL officer.

This report compiles information from different organisations with security expertise and adapted them to the project site. Mercy Hands first-hand knowledge of the situation in the area was also used for the development of the report.

Cooperation Partner

Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid

UNDP Project

Beautiful Basra: Job Creation through Green Urban Beautification and Revitalization of Basra Governorate

Project Country

Iraq

Project Area

Basra Governorate (*Al Baradhiya and Salhiya*)





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2. INTRODUCTION

Basra is an Iraqi city, which is located in the south of Iraq, on Shatt Al-Arab River, around 545 km south of the capital city (Baghdad). The province of Basra is bordered by Missan to the North East, and Thi Qar to the North West, and Basra is roughly 110 km (68 mi) from the Persian Gulf. There are eight districts in Basra province.

Basra had an estimated population of 2.5 million in 2012. Basra is also Iraq's main port, which is the port of Umm Qasr.

The Shatt-Al-Arab and Basra waterways respectively define the eastern and western borders of Basra. The city is penetrated by a complex network of canals and streams, which are vital for irrigation and other agricultural use. These canals were once used to transport goods and people throughout the city but, during the last two decades, pollution and a continuous drop in water levels have made river navigation impossible in the canals.

Basra has a hot desert climate, like the rest of the surrounding region, though it receives slightly more precipitation than inland areas due to its location near the coast. During the summer months, from June to August, Basra is consistently one of the hottest cities on the planet, with temperatures regularly exceeding 50°C in July and August. In winter, Basra experiences mild weather with average high temperatures around 20°C. On some winter nights, minimum temperatures are below 0 °C. High humidity – sometimes exceeding 90% – is common due to the proximity to the marshy Persian Gulf.

Basra contains the five largest oilfields of the country (South and North of the Rumaila oilfields, Zubair oilfield, West Qurna - 1 & 2, and Majnoon oilfield). Many foreign companies have been working in these oilfields. In April 2017, the Iraqi Parliament recognized Basra as Iraq's economic capital.



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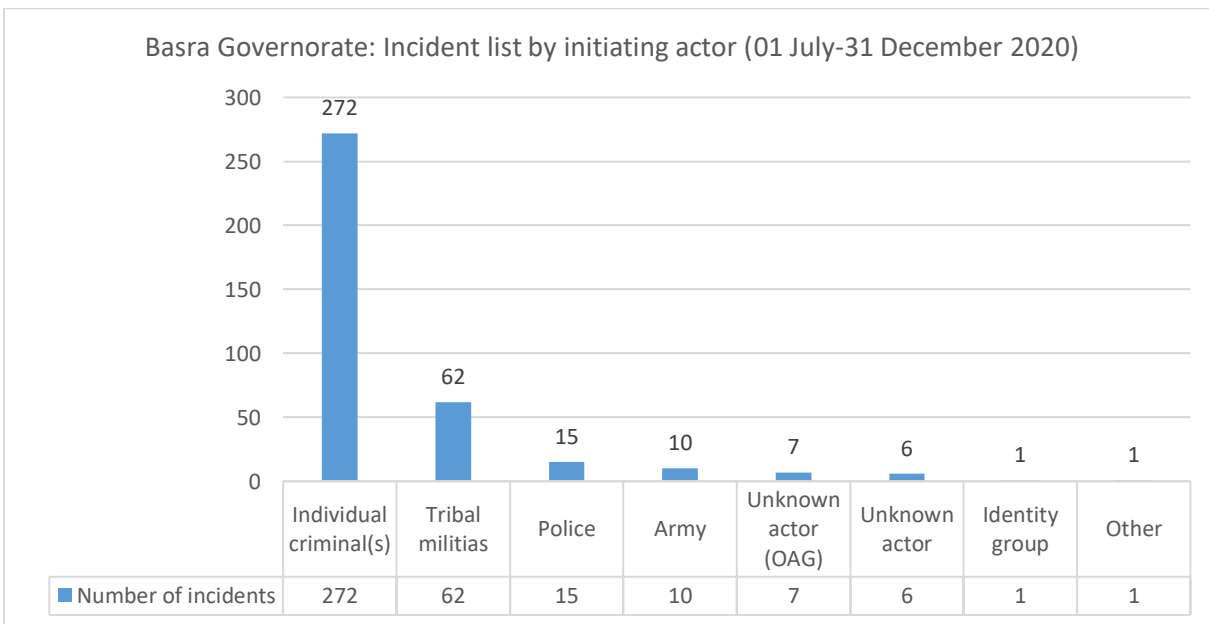
3. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Firstly, in order to analyse the progress of the risk and hazard situation in Basra governorate, an analysis of the security incidents from July 2020 to December 2020 was conducted utilising databases from the International NGO Safety Organisation – INSO, country office in Iraq.

Analysing the information with perspective will allow us to assess the situation in the area more accurately, identifying trends and key actors taking part in the incidents.

Secondly, a still-photograph of the situation in December will be analysed, in order to check the latest incidents and how these are distinct from the previous months.

a. Situation analysis between July 2020-December 2020.



As it can be seen in the graph above, during the last 6 months, the main initiating actor in the Basra Governorate has been individual criminals, with a total number of 272 incidents reported. Followed by Tribal militias and the Army and the Police with similar numbers.

There are few incidents attributed to Unknown actors, so even though if these get attributed to an actor, these will not affect the analysis that individual criminals are the main source of security incidents in the Basra Governorate.



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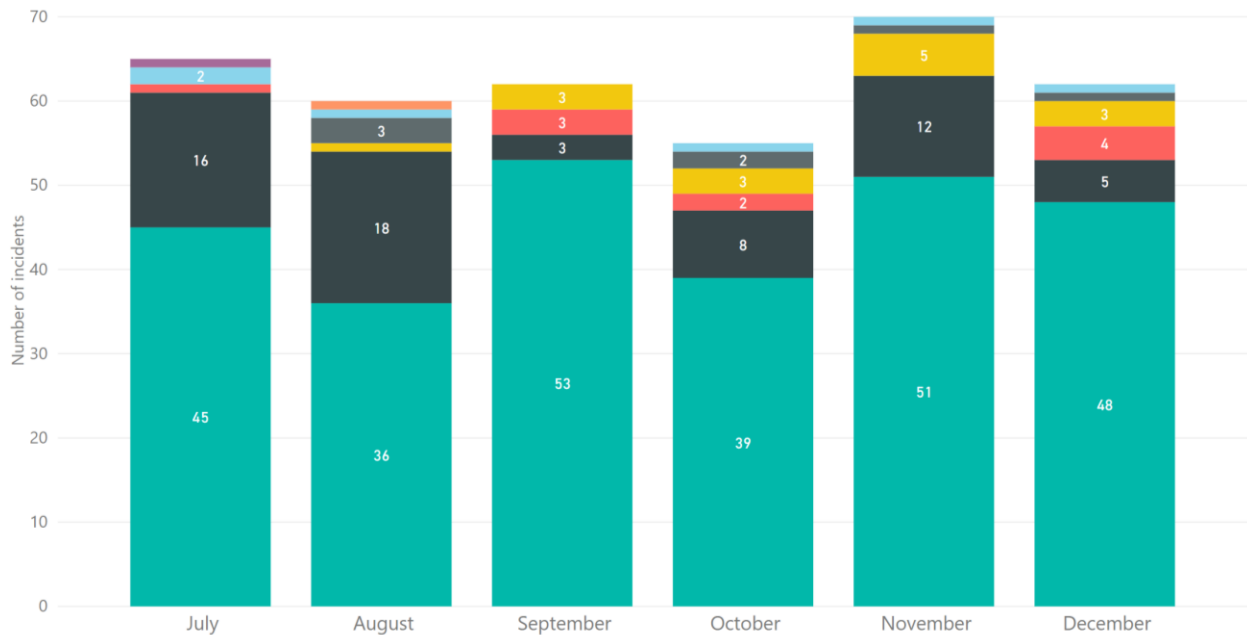


It is notorious to mention that there was no incident involving NGO workers during the entire second half of the year 2020.

In total there have been 67 incidents between July and December in which there has been reported at least one casualty.

Number of incidents (July - December 2020) by Initiating actor and number of incidents

Initiating actor ● Individual criminal(s) ● Tribal militias ● Army ● Police ● Unknown actor (OAG) ● Unknown actor ● Identity group ● Other



As it can be appreciated in the graph above, the number of incidents remained stable during the second half of 2020. Although the incident number remained high, there was no significant increase in the incidents initiated by a specific actor that could point us to a certain trend.

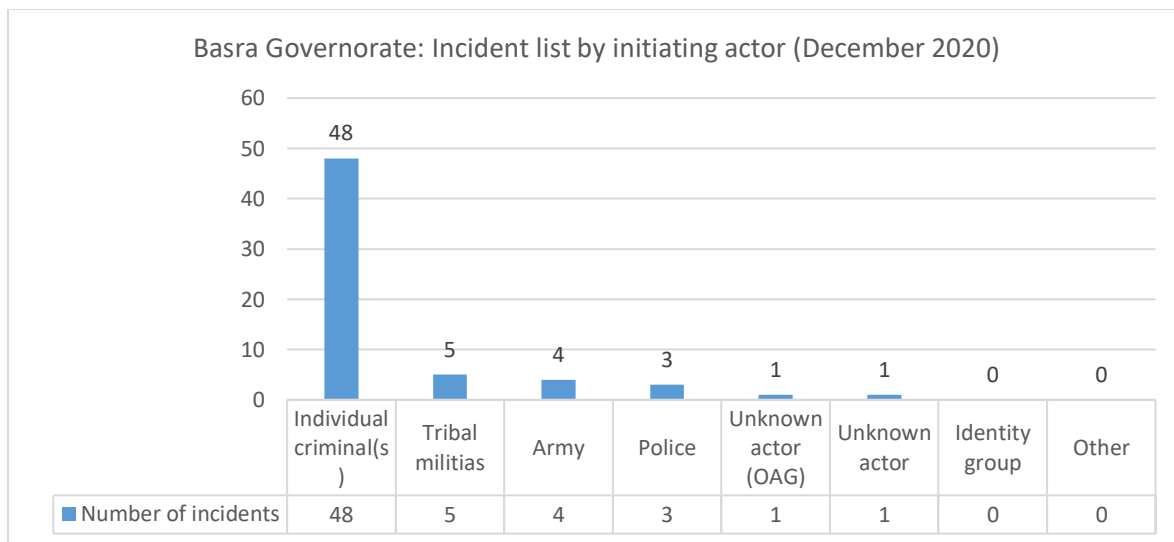
November was the month with the most incidents with 70, on the contrary to October, with 55. In the last month of the year, the number of incidents were 62, showing a decrease of 8.



Find below a breakdown of the numbers by month, initiating actor and number of incidents.

Month	Number of incidents	Individual criminal(s)	Tribal militias	Police	Army	Unknown actor (OAG)	Unknown actor	Identity group	Other
July	65	45	16	0	1	0	2	0	1
August	60	36	18	1	0	3	1	1	0
September	62	53	3	3	3	0	0	0	0
October	55	39	8	3	2	2	1	0	0
November	70	51	12	5	0	1	1	0	0
December	62	48	5	3	4	1	1	0	0
	374	272	62	15	10	7	6	1	1

b. Situation analysis in December 2020



During December 2020, in the southern region of Iraq, security incidents included repeated roadside IEDs detonated, two of them in the Basra District Centre. According to INSO Iraq information, most of the security incidents in the Basra Governorate during December 2020, have been acts of criminal nature, performed by individuals. These incidents are from different gravity, some of them resulting in civilian casualties.

Tribal disputes and clashes are a concern regarding security, and several casualties were reported (including collateral casualties) during December, mainly in the Hartha district.

Find listed below the most repeated and common incidents and cases based on Mercy Hands perceptions in the field.



- **Protests:** Continuous protests related to anti-corruption and unemployment. On 07th of January 2021, Engineers were protesting for jobs in front of Basra Oil Company HQs in Basra city.

And also the 30,000 daily wages contractors have been pretending front the governorate building and Basra directorate building to get their entitlements.

- **Assassinations:** Many activists, journalists and the influential on social media have been assassinated, also in Qibla. Being the victims are 2 young men. Different causes but some of them due to tribal disputes and others seem to be related to anti-corruption protests.

- **Smuggling:** From the out the borders, mostly street drugs, sold in Iraq or into the Gulf States (Saudi and Kuwait). Also, a major organized smuggling operation taking place at the port of Basra, which seems to be the main source of funding for political parties and military factions.

- **Tribal disputes:** it is considered one of the major identified risking continues to be very active and out of control.

c. Key incidents Al Baradhiya and Salhiya

Key incidents - Al Baradhiya

Al Baradhiya is a safe area. It is a residential and commercial neighbourhood; a majority of its residences are tradesmen or wealthy people. UN agencies and INGOs have their main offices there, also a majority of consulates in Basra, such as the Iranian consulate.

On 17th August at 2:00 am, unknown tribesmen recently planted 1 IED, which detonated under unknown circumstances near a local Oil Contracts Company's office over a tribal dispute. No casualties were reported, and the office sustained damage to an unknown degree.

Key incidents - Salhiya

- On 6th November 4:00 pm, an unidentified armed individual discharged SAF towards his wife over a family dispute. As a result, his wife was killed. Subsequently, the perpetrator's brother exchanged SAF with ISF (Local Police) attempting to arrest the perpetrator. As a result, an ISF officer and the perpetrator's brother were wounded.



- On 25th September 6:00 pm, unidentified armed individuals exchanged SAF over a personal dispute. As a result, no casualties were reported. Subsequently, ISF (Local Police) arrested 2 perpetrators.
- On 16th July 6:00 pm, armed individuals exchanged SAF over a personal dispute. No casualties were reported. Subsequently, ISF arrested 3 alleged perpetrators.



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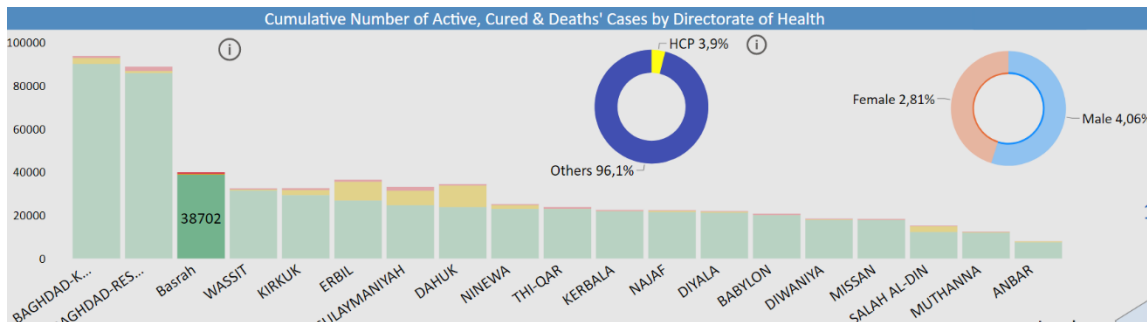


4. COVID-19 SITUATION OVERVIEW

While the COVID-19 emergency seems to be approaching its end and a vaccine has been found, it is still hard to predict when Iraqi citizens will be able to access it. At the same time, the appearance of different strains and variants of COVID-19 makes it difficult to predict how the situation will evolve worldwide and in Iraq.

Covid 19 Cases	Cases – cumulative total	Deaths – cumulative total	Transmission classification
Iraq ¹	597.774	12.834	Community transmission
Basra	39.868	911	Community transmission

Reported COVID-19 cases across Iraq continue to rise but at a slightly lower rate than in previous weeks, with a regular average of 2500 daily reported cases during November. In recent weeks, the Government of Iraq increased its testing capacity beyond 20.000 tests per day.



Cumulative number of active, cured and deaths cases with focus on Basrah

The last update from the World Health Organisation regarding Iraq showed that Basrah was the third governorate with most cases in the country.

According to UNHCR data, initial reports indicate that, despite the increase in the number of tests, the daily number of Covid cases across the country is decreasing. Close to 30 per cent of these cases have been detected in Baghdad, followed by Basrah, Erbil,

¹ World Health Organization, World Health Organization Website, <https://covid19.who.int/table>, (accessed 04/01/2021)

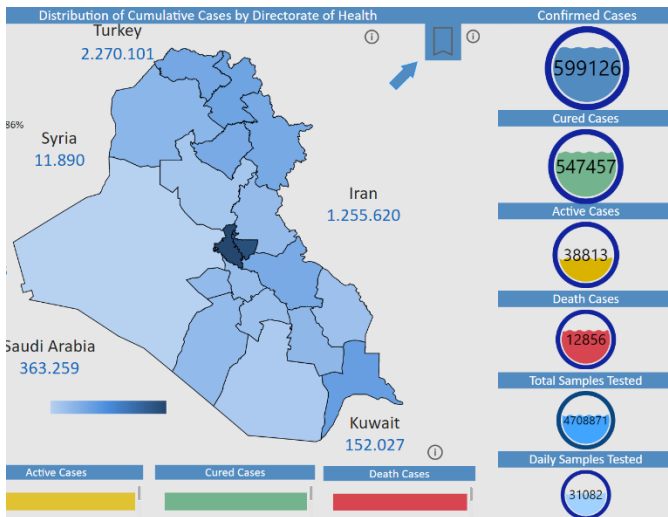


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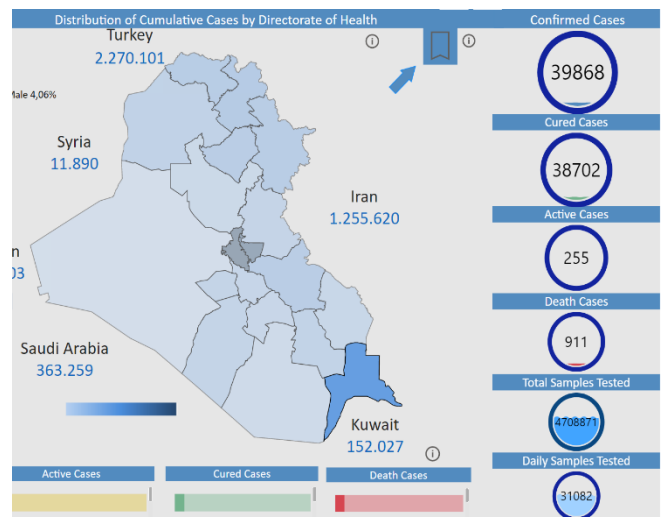


Sulyimaniyah and Wassit Governorates, while the infection rate is rising other governorates including Duhok.²

In the infographic below, we can see on the left the summarised situation of COVID-19 in the entire country of Iraq. The infographic on the right shows the same information but focused on Basrah Governorate.

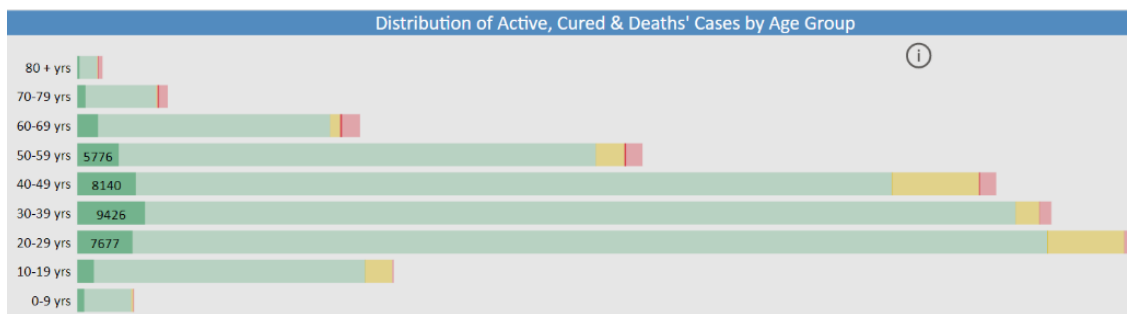


Infographic Dashboard of COVID-19 situation in Iraq. (January 6th 2020)



Infographic dashboard of COVID-19 situation with focus on Basrah. (January 6th 2020)

Age disaggregation of COVID-19 data (as seen below show us that Basrah follows the general trend of Iraq without significant differences. Oldest age groups tend to have the highest mortality rate, while some of the youngest tend to have higher active cases, but lower mortality rate.



WHO Dynamic Dashboard for Iraq with focus on Basrah Age group (<http://ow.ly/6Ghn50z9UTh>), (January 6th 2020)

In conclusion, COVID-19 situation in the Basra governorate remains similar to the rest of the country without significant differences. In any case, the evolution of the pandemic is something that should be monitored on an ongoing basis and thus reflected in the

² UNHCR, COVID-19 Update, (6 december 2020), Page 1



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programming, making amendments when it needed. As previously said reported COVID-19 cases across Iraq continue to be on the rise but at a slightly lower rate than in previous weeks.