

Iraq – Situation Update

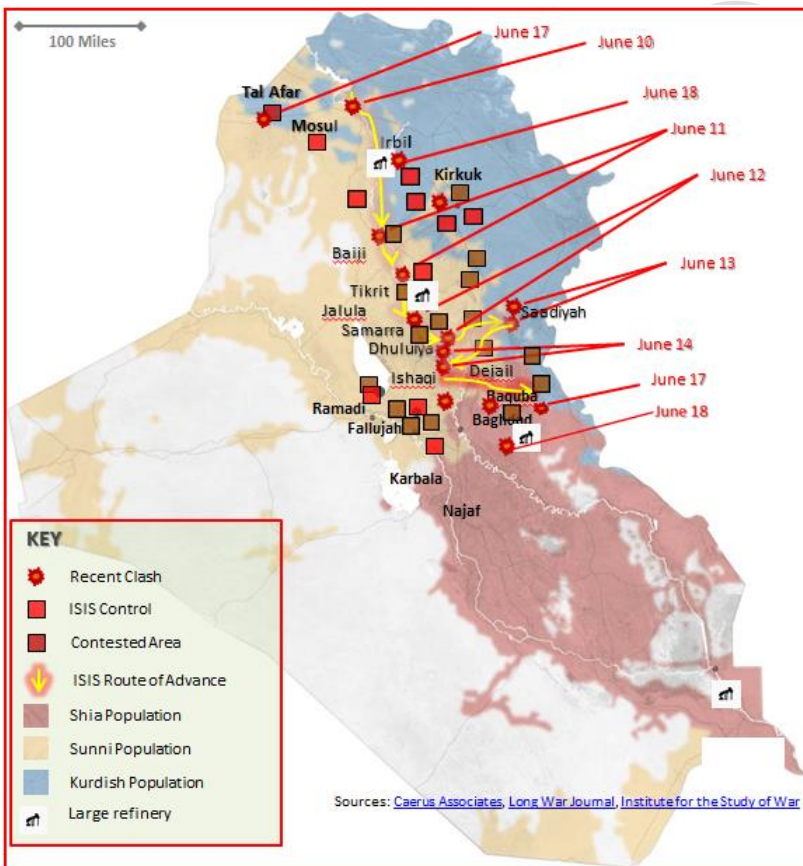
IRAQ UPDATE AS AT 16:00, 18 JUNE 2014

With the nation of Iraq facing the prospect of sectarian violence and potential state failure, the Iraqi security forces continue in their battle to stem the extremist tide of ISIL (now supported by extreme Sunni and ex Ba’ath party insurgents) which threatens to control the northern and western approaches to the capital, Baghdad.

ISIL maintains its efforts to consolidate its hold on territory captured in the North, where heavy fighting persists between Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and militants in Tal Afar. Airstrikes have occurred in areas west of Mosul where around 40 Indian and Asian nationals are reported to have been taken hostage. Kurdish Peshmerga forces are engaged with ISIL to the West and South of Kirkuk, currently held by the Kurds. In Salah ad-Din Province 75 per-cent of the Beiji oil refinery is reported to remain in insurgent hands after an attempt by ISF to recapture it. Mortars and heavy machine guns were deployed by ISIL in this assault. Nearer to Baghdad, in Diyala province, the strategic town of Baqubah remains contested, the ISF having repelled a previous ISIL attack. To the west of Baghdad the towns of Fallujah, Ramadi and Saqlawiyah (Anbar province) are subject to fighting following a major assault by ISF and militia this morning.

To the south of Baghdad militants have appeared and clashed with ISF, heightening the risk in the Jurf as-Sakhr area and the surrounding towns. Here, the local Shia population, as in Baghdad, is preparing to fight alongside the ISF thus heightening Iraq’s already corrosive sectarian tensions. In

Baghdad itself, a car bomb killed seven civilians and injured 21 in Sadr City. More attacks are to be expected. The threat to Baghdad itself remains the same as yesterday: It is unlikely that the city will fall to the insurgents. However the likelihood of what is fast becoming a broad Sunni insurgency penetrating the north and western suburbs, deploying indirect fire weapons indiscriminately or against key points and routes and detonating IED’s in Shia areas must not be discounted. Iran’s declaration that it will defend Shia holy sites will also exacerbate tensions.



In terms of travel and security advice the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has advised against all travel to the districts of Ramadi and Fallujah in Anbar province, and to the whole of Ninewah, Salah-ad-Din and Diyala provinces. Frontier Medex have graded the country at 'Alert' status, recommending evacuation from Ninewah, Tamim, anbar, Salah-ad-Din and Diyala provinces.

Recommended Actions:

1. Rehearsal (desk top) of the Evacuation Plan (including securing of premises and hibernation drills), Assembly Areas, Embarkation Points clarified and stores maintained in all facilities.
2. Close monitoring of political/social activity. This should involve daily updates with facilities and people on the ground up to the corporate HQ.
3. Stockpiling of food and other critical necessities
4. All non-essential personnel should consider evacuating while the critical transports nodes are open. Particularly in the areas close to the unrest
5. Avoid all areas where gatherings may take place, specifically religious sites.
6. Close liaison with Embassies and other expatriate companies.
7. Personal documents to be carried by all, at all times.
8. Ensure that there are several means of viable communication with employees

Additional considerations by the Corporate Headquarters:

1. Look at possible early relocation of non-essential personnel.
2. All personnel prepared for possible relocation/evacuation if the situation should deteriorate further
3. Evacuation by commercial aircraft assessment.
4. All non-essential visits should be postponed
5. Consider the implications to your business should the situation deteriorate and how can you protect it.



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