



**IRAQ OIL REPORT**  
GROUND TRUTH CUSTOM RESEARCH

# Mosul and Disputed Territories Security Brief

JUNE 2016

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## INTRODUCTION

The Mosul and Disputed Territories Security Brief (MDTSB) is a monthly data-centric analytical brief on security developments in two critical areas of northern Iraq:

1. The territory in and around Mosul, including front lines between the Islamic State (IS) and anti-IS forces near Qayara and Makhmour.
2. Disputed territories east of Kirkuk, centered around the flashpoint town of Tuz Khurmatu (henceforth 'DIBs' section).

The MDTSB leverages two data sets – each containing thousands of data points – of violence (sigacts), civil unrest and troop movements in the Mosul sector and DIBs. All of the data is generated from on-the-ground reporting by Iraq Oil Report (IOR) staff in Mosul, Tuz Khurmatu, Kirkuk and elsewhere.

MTDSB subscribers will gain unparalleled insights into trends and evolving power dynamics in the Mosul sector and DIBs.

- The Mosul sector section contains maps and time series charts tracking violence involving IS, Peshmerga, Iraqi army, Sunni Tribal fighters, and anti-IS guerillas inside the so-called 'Caliphate'.
- The DIBs section contains maps and time series charts tracking evolving power dynamics and territorial control focused on Shia actors including militias operating under the al-Hashid al-Shabi framework, Kurds including KRG security forces, and IS.

### Graphics included in this report:

- Map: June 2016 violence in IS controlled territory in the vicinity of Mosul
- Map: June 2016 violence on the peripheries of IS controlled territory on the 'Mosul front'
- Map: Executions carried out by IS against residents of its 'Caliphate' in April – June 2016
- Map: Guerilla violence against IS in and around Mosul in April – June 2016
- Areas of control of KRG forces and Shia militias east of Kirkuk
- Map: Violence perpetrated by Kurdish forces, Shia forces and IS in disputed territories east of Kirkuk from Jan. – June 2016
- Map: Violence perpetrated by Kurdish forces, Shia forces and IS in disputed territories east of Kirkuk in June 2016
- Numerous time series charts analyzing violence in 'Mosul' and 'DIBs'

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## MOSUL SECTOR

This section looks at trends in violence in two distinct parts of the broader Mosul area:

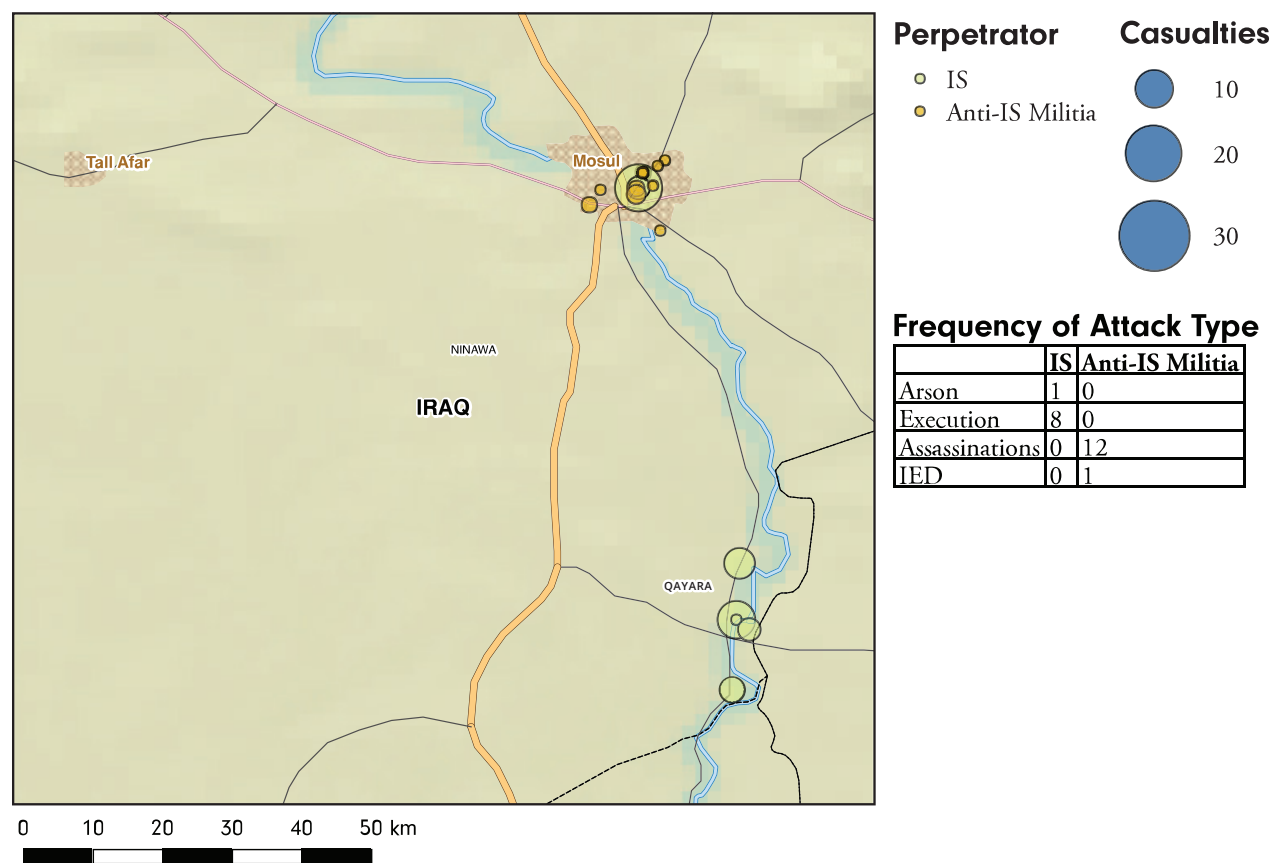
- Territory solidly within IS control
- Territory on the peripheries of IS control; ie, the 'front lines'

It should be noted that as anti-IS forces make progress, territory that was formerly classified as "Inside" IS control might shift to being classified as on the "Periphery".

The maps, graphics and analysis highlight trends in violence perpetrated by – and against – IS, providing a data-driven assessment of changes in momentum and geographic focus of battle.

### Violence Inside IS Controlled Territory on the Mosul Front

JUNE 2016



#### Key trends

- IS carries out executions in Qayara and Mosul
- Anti-IS guerillas target IS in Mosul

**Analytical importance:** This map highlights all violence recorded by our on-the-ground data collectors in territory firmly within IS control in and around Mosul during the month of record. It



does not include 'front line' violence in the form of ground combat (ground combat can be found in the map titled, "Violence on the Peripheries of IS Controlled Territory"). Rather, the map draws on data covering violence that occurs inside territory controlled by IS. It intentionally excludes airstrikes, and instead focuses on violence perpetrated by actors living inside IS controlled territory. Color-coding differentiates between violence perpetrated by IS, and violence perpetrated against IS. The reader can use the map as a tool to identify geographies where IS control may be slipping, or, at a minimum, where IS feels compelled to use violence to maintain dominance.

**June 2016 analysis:** June saw IS-perpetrated violence inside territory under its control tightly clustered around the city of Qayara and its surrounding villages along the west bank of the Tigris. This was primarily in the form of executions of civilians attempting to flee toward ISF/ Peshmerga controlled territory, and secondarily executions of people suspected of collaborating with the ISF. The executions in Qayara were typically public (ie, in public squares) and horrific (burning victims alive in multiple cases), in a clear effort to terrorize the population of Qayara into submission.

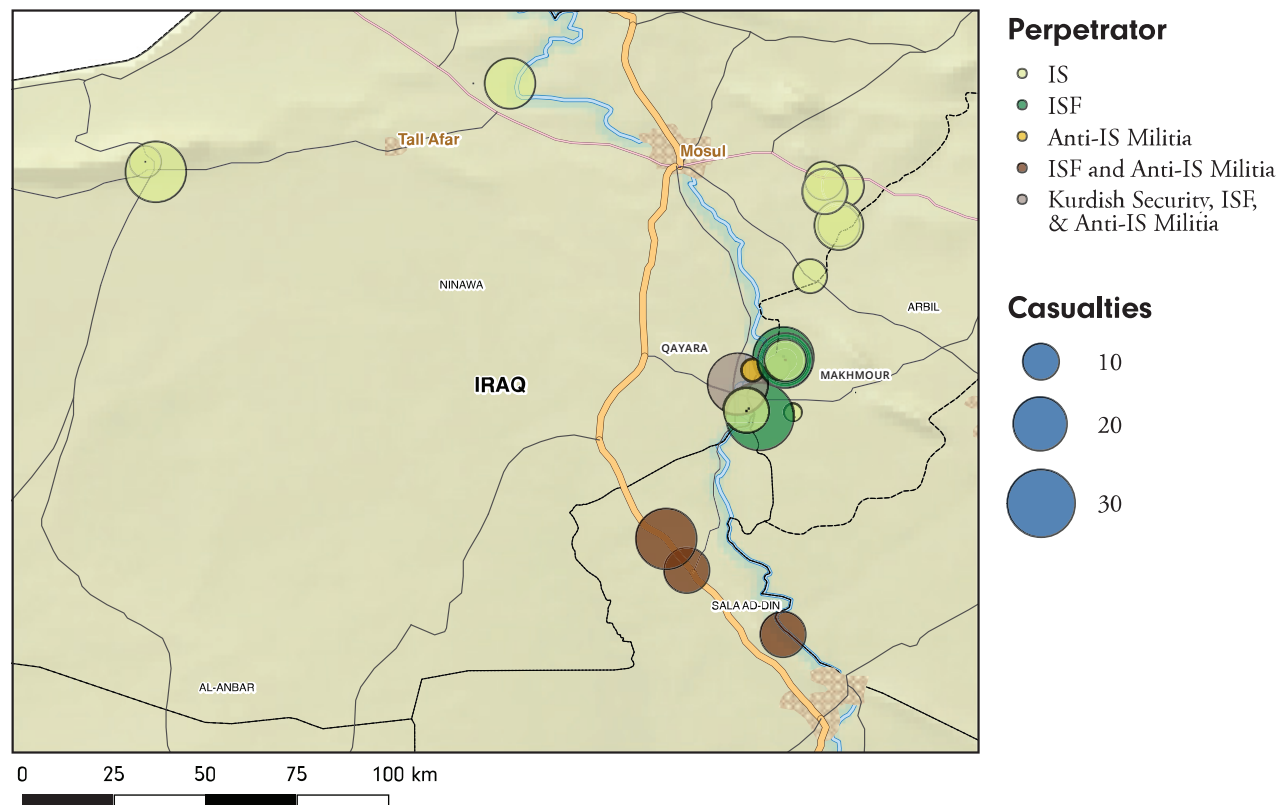
In Mosul, IS executed civilians in a similar manner, and for similar reasons. IS also executed a number of its own fighters in Mosul for disobedience. Meanwhile, anti-IS guerillas were active in Mosul during June, assassinating a number of IS fighters. The guerillas used a number of modes of violence, including small arms, grenades and IEDs. Local sources in Mosul associate the guerillas with ousted governor Athil al-Nujaifi.

*For more on IS executions and guerilla violence, see subsequent maps in this report: IS Perpetrated Executions and Guerilla Violence Against IS Inside the Caliphate.*

**Looking ahead:** Qayara is a prime example of a geography that, for the purposes of the June report, is considered "Inside" IS territory, but in July's edition, will be considered "Periphery." As IS' territorial control contracts toward its Iraq capital of Mosul, we expect IS use of executions and other means of coercive violence inside Mosul to increase. This will serve to cow the local population, which already suffers from fatigue induced by the constant threat of violence, and increasingly constrained access to food and quality refined fuel products. However, it may well also serve to incentivize local resistance against IS, as siege like conditions, coupled with increasing IS barbarity cause a sharp reduction in quality of life for Mosul residents.

## Violence on the Peripheries of IS Control

JUNE 2016



### Key trends

- *Anti-IS operations center around east bank of Tigris across from Qayara*
- *ISF takes lead in offensive operations, Peshmerga play smaller role*
- *However, IS continues to attack Peshmerga lines at Khazir*

**Analytical importance:** This map highlights all violence recorded by our on-the-ground data collectors in territory on the periphery of IS control in the month of record. It does not include airstrikes, and instead focuses fighting by

'on the ground' actors. The data allows readers to track trends in front line violence. It is color coded to differentiate not only between violence perpetrated by IS and anti-IS forces, but also to distinguish between actors within the anti-IS alliance. As a result, readers can determine trends in the frequency of offensive operations by Peshmerga forces, Iraqi security forces, and Sunni tribal fighters. In sum, the map enables readers to both track geographic shifts in front line violence, and trends in which members of the indigenous Iraqi anti-IS forces are taking the lead on the 'Mosul front'.

**June 2016 analysis:** June violence perpetrated by anti-IS forces was centered on two general locations: A- the east bank of the Tigris, across the river from Qayara; and B- along the road leading from Baiji to Qayara in the vicinity of Sherqat. Notably, these offensive operations against IS were primarily driven by the Iraqi army, and to a lesser extent Sunni Arab tribal militias rather than Peshmerga.

On the east bank of the Tigris, the Iraqi army 71<sup>st</sup> and 92<sup>nd</sup> brigades of the 15<sup>th</sup> division, augmented by the 37<sup>th</sup> armored brigade of the 9<sup>th</sup> division, drove IS out of a number of villages in and around Haji Ali, Nasir and a range of smaller villages on the east side of the Qayara bridge.

South of Qayara in the direction of Sherqat, offensive operations were undertaken by elements of the Iraqi army 9<sup>th</sup> division pushing north from Baiji, augmented by local tribal fighters and in some cases, Shia militia groups.

Where the Peshmerga were active was in defending IS offensive operations west of Gwer in the vicinity of Khazir, as well as west of Mosul in Sinjar and north of the Kisik junction.

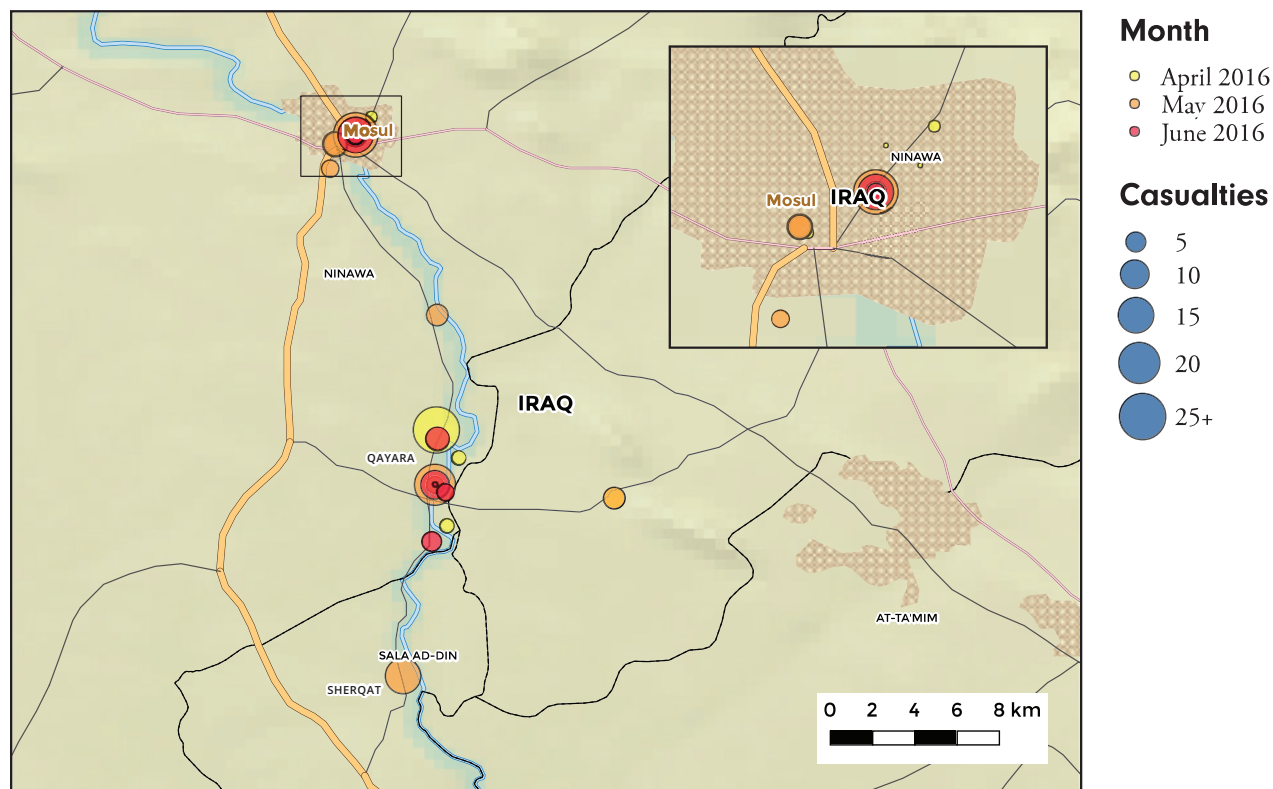
**Looking ahead:** With the noose now tightened around Qayara, the near term future will see significant fighting in that city and its outskirts, perpetrated by anti-IS forces, primarily Iraqi army. Fighting is also likely to occur on the outskirts of IS-held territory in Sherqat (involving Iraqi army and tribal fighters) and potentially the outskirts of Hawija (involving Peshmerga). Going forward, expect IS to continue launching offensives at perceived soft spots in the Iraqi army lines, as well as against Peshmerga at Khazir, Bashiqa and points northwest and west of Mosul. These efforts are unlikely an effort by IS to gain new ground, but rather, aimed at deterring the forces aligned

against IS from massing troops for offensive operations. However, given the growing numbers of ISF and Peshmerga forces on the peripheries of IS territorial control, it is likely that the anti-IS forces can maintain defensive positions while also massing forces for offensives.



## IS Perpetrated Executions

APRIL 2016 - JUNE 2016



### Key trends

- Executions in Qayara as a percentage of overall executions jump in June
- Execution rates in Mosul remain steady month on month

**Analytical importance:** There is building anecdotal evidence that there is a correlation between the rate of IS perpetrated executions in a given area, and the group's concern over local insurrection/its inability to control the local population. Looking at time series trends in geographical location of execution incidents (here 'incident' is defined as an episode of IS

executing one or more individual, and does not take into account total number of individuals killed) can help test this theory, and, in the future, provide insight into where IS may feel it is losing control.

**June 2016 analysis:** Between April and May, 21% of all incidents of IS perpetrated executions occurred in Qayara. In June, that figure leapt to 56%. The most plausible rationale for this is that IS executes people – including civilian residents, former members of the ISF and its own fighters – in places it fears it is at risk of losing control. This is likely done in an effort to deter residents from rising up against IS when word reaches the former

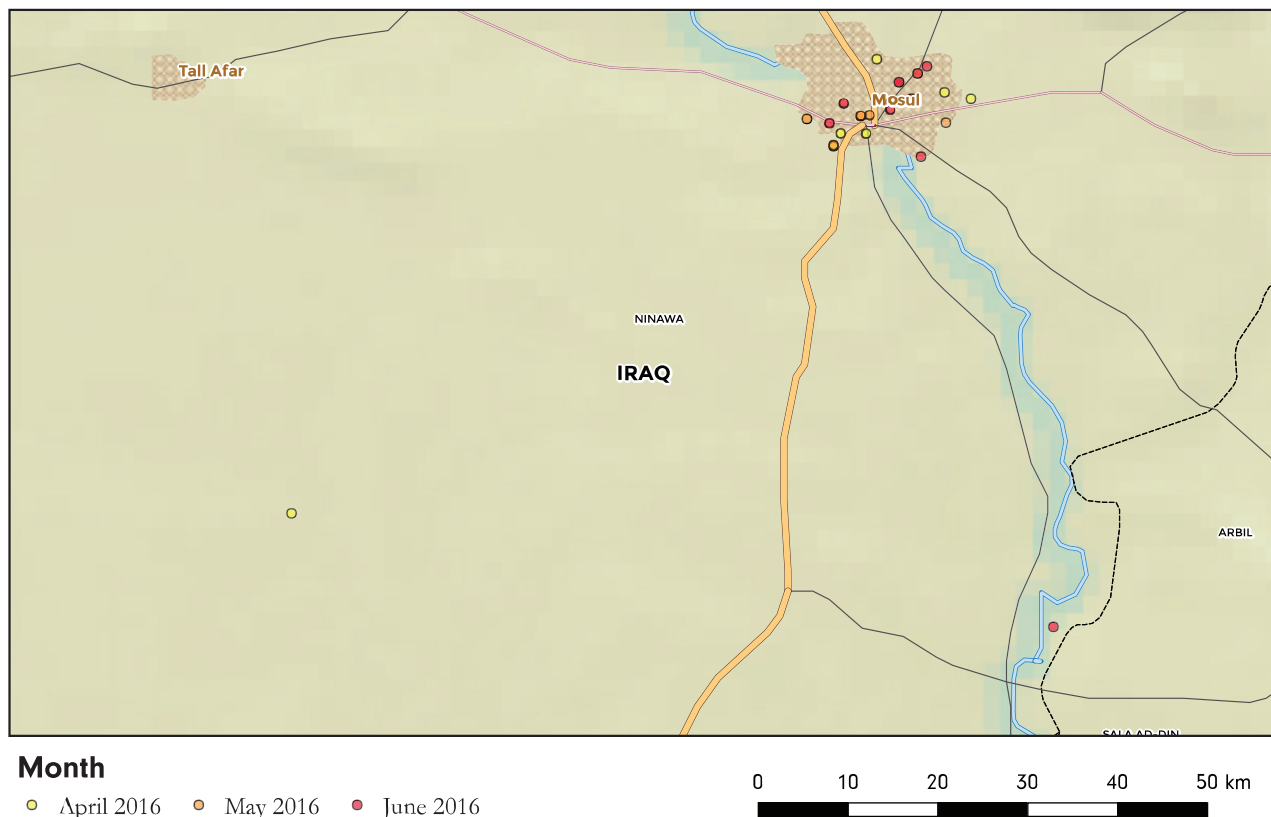
that ISF/Peshmerga are preparing to launch a ground offensive in the area. This is particularly critical for IS, as if they assess a low degree of probability of a local civilian insurrection, IS can dedicate more fighters to the front.

**Looking ahead:** IS actually implemented less execution 'incidents' in Mosul during June than

it did in either April or May. If there is indeed a correlation between the rate of IS executions, and the group's concern over local insurrection, this would imply that IS still feels relatively comfortable in its Iraq capital. Looking ahead, a spike in execution incidents in Mosul may serve as an indicator that IS is feeling less confident in its ability to dominate the local population.

## Guerilla Violence Against IS Inside the Caliphate

APRIL 2016 - JUNE 2016



### Key trends

- Volume of attacks and fatalities in guerilla targeting of IS static month on month
- Suggests that IS incapable of neutralizing

*guerillas, though nor is guerilla efficacy showing signs of increasing*

**Analytical importance:** This map demonstrates where local guerillas are launching attacks against IS inside IS-controlled territory. Local sources describe these guerilla groups as capable, and typically constituted of former Saddam era special forces or intelligence operatives. Studying trends in their attack frequency and locations provides insight into their potential to play a role in future attacks on IS-held territory.

**June 2016 Analysis:** June saw anti-IS guerillas kill 16 IS militants over 12 incidents. This marks no significant departure from May (11 incidents; 11 fatalities) or April (10 incidents; 17 fatalities). Notably, the overwhelming majority of guerilla violence targeting IS occurs in or around Mosul city, and is fairly evenly distributed on the 'left side' and 'right side' of the Tigris.

**Looking ahead:** Anti-IS guerillas continue to operate at a steady pace in Mosul city, using primarily small arms, and intermittently IEDs and grenades, to kill IS militants. We anticipate guerilla violence to continue at a similar pace, though any marked change in pattern would be worth monitoring. A steep drop in activity would suggest IS success in penetrating and dismantling guerilla networks, while a sharp increase in activity would point to either an enhanced ability of existing guerilla groups to recruit, or a diminished IS counter intelligence capability.

## DIBS SECTOR

This section looks at trends in violence along the southern border of the KRG's territorial control, between Kirkuk and the Iranian border. Data is drawn from a network of on-the-ground researchers data collectors in Kirkuk, Tuz Khurmatu, Kalar and Khanaqin. The DIBs section allows readers to track trends in violence

perpetrated by IS, as well as conflict between Peshmerga and Shia militia groups operating under the al-Hashid al-Shabi framework.

This geography is critical because it is the principle 'front line' between KRG and Shia militia forces, and is in the immediate vicinity of Kirkuk and its oil resources, and continued pockets of IS territorial control and sleeper cell presence.

### AREA OF OPERATIONS FOR ARMED ACTORS IN DIBS

**Analytical importance:** The two below map focus on the intersection of KRG security forces and Kurdish civilians, Shia militia groups and Shia Turkomen civilians, and IS in disputed territories east of Kirkuk.

The first map uses six months of security data to establish where Kurdish and Shia forces and civilians enjoy territorial control by tracking where they respectively perpetrate violence.

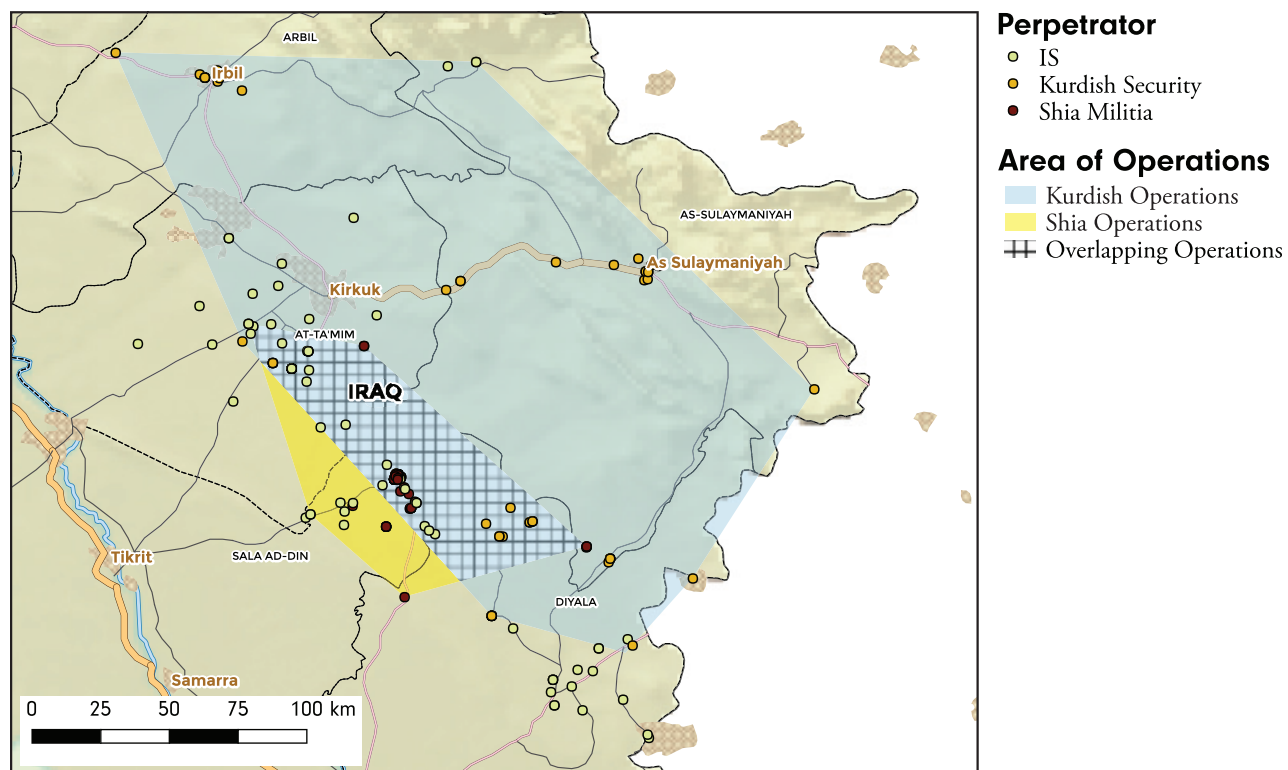
The second map shows violence perpetrated by actor in June 2016, allowing the reader to contrast activity in June 2016 with six months of data establishing territorial control. The violence in the second map includes acts perpetrated by security forces (Peshmerga and Shia militias operating under the al-Hashid al-Shabi framework) as well as actions by Kurdish and Shia Turkomen civilians, and IS.

The first map draws from six months of data – from Jan. 2016 through June 2016. The polygons are established by data points indicating where Kurds (including Peshmerga) and Shia (primarily Turkomen, and including Shia militias) perpetrated acts of violence over the past six months. The orange (Kurd) and red (Shia) dots

indicate GPS coordinates where violence was perpetrated, and form the basis for the polygons. Green dots indicate GPS coordinates where IS perpetrated violence.

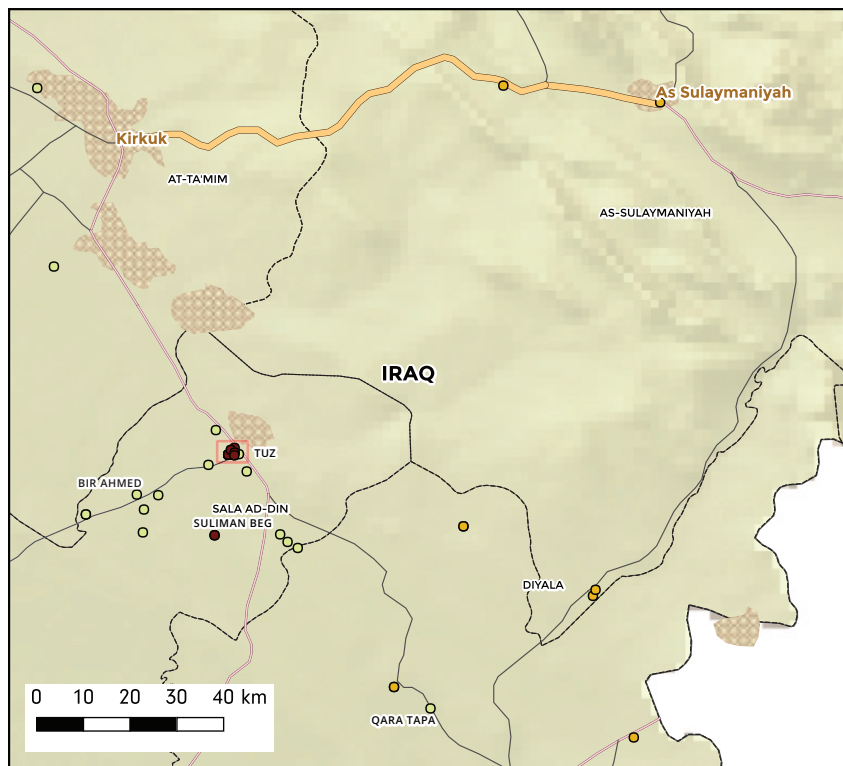
The second map shows GPS coordinates where Kurds, Shia and IS perpetrated violence during June 2016.

## Kurds, Shia Turkomen and IS: Areas of control in disputed territories east of Kirkuk JANUARY 2016 - JUNE 2016



## Military Action by Actor East of Kirkuk

JUNE 2016

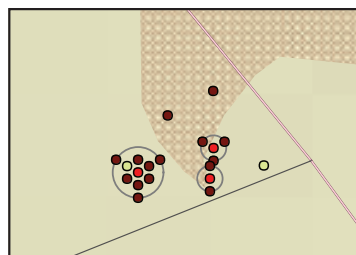


### Perpetrator

- IS
- Kurdish Security
- Shia Militia

### Frequency of Attack

	IS	Kurds	Shia
Arson	3	1	1
Fighting	4	0	0
Force Deployment	0	1	0
IED	6	2	4
IDF	2	0	0
Kidnapping	1	1	6
Small Arms	2	4	7



Bright red point denotes point where attacks contained within surrounding circle occurred.

### Key trends

- IS attacks in June largely occurred southwest of Tuz
- Shia actors violence centered around Tuz and Amerli, targeting civilians/alleged IS collaborators
- Kurdish security forces quiet in June, though Kurdish civilians engaged in some criminal violence

**June 2016 analysis:** June saw IS launch a number of attacks against Shia al-Hashid al-Shabi forces in Bir Ahmed and surrounding villages, Suliman Beg and Qara Tapa. Shia Turkomen and Shia al-

Hashid al-Shabi perpetrated violence was tightly clustered around Tuz Khurmatu, and primarily targeted Sunni Arab and Sunni Turkomen civilians (some of who stand accused of being IS collaborators).

Most of this violence perpetrated by Shia including al-Hashid al-Shabi in Tuz occurred in the days immediately after a June 16 attack by IS on al-Hashid al-Shabi and local police forces in Bir Ahmed, and took the form of detainment and reciprocal killing of accused IS collaborators. Due south of Tuz Khurmatu, the dark red dot indicates the killing of as many as 19 Sunni Arab and Turkomen prisoners at a jail in Amerli by al-Hashid al-Shabi forces and Shia Turkomen civilians.



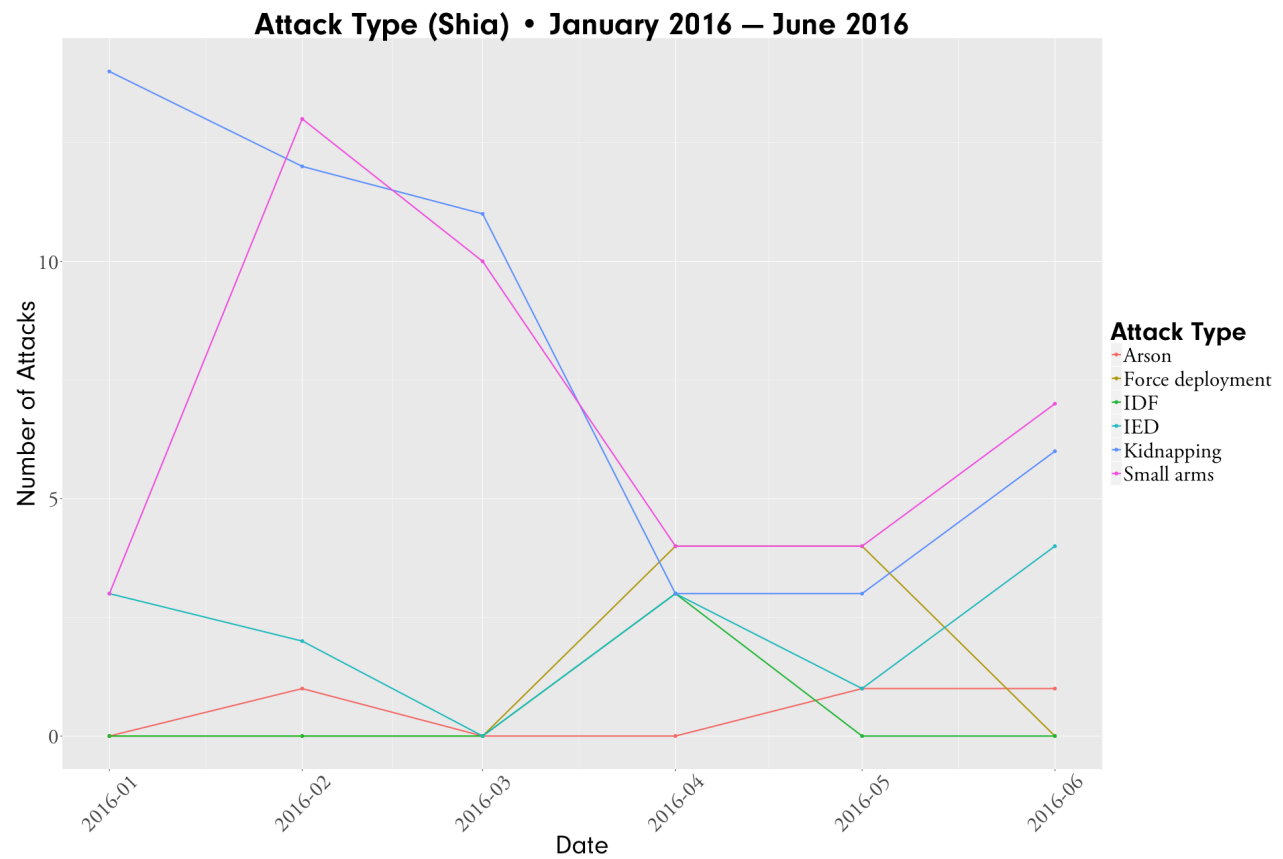
Kurdish security forces were quiet in June, with most of the June 'Kurdish' incidents reflecting small arms and IED attacks perpetrated by Kurdish civilians against other civilian or industry targets. Notable among these were two rudimentary IEDs placed near an oil field operated by Gazprom Neft. Local sources suggest this activity was driven by local business interests vying for contracts at the oil field.

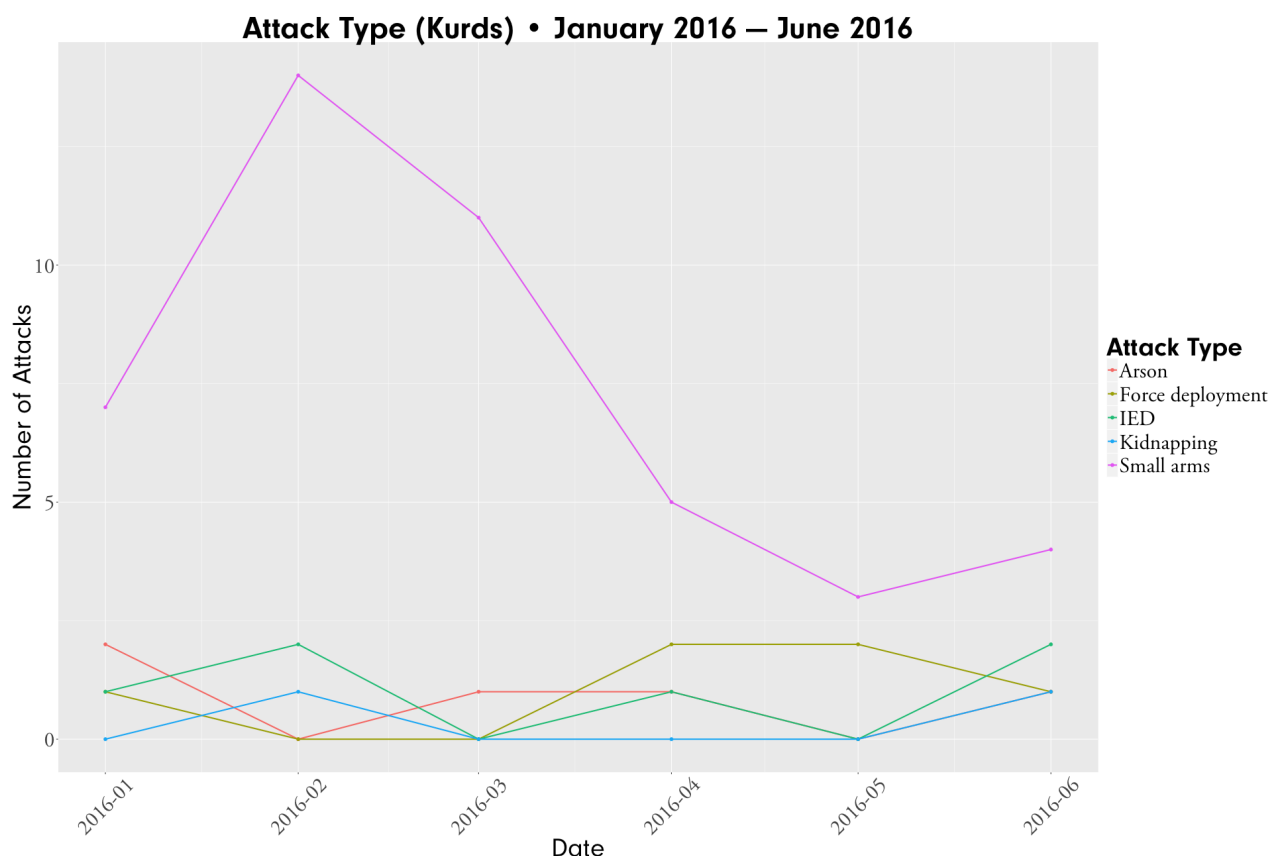
June was a quiet month in regards to fighting between Kurds and Shia Turkomen, with the lone incident being a clash between Peshmerga and al-Hashid al-Shabi forces in Bir Ahmed, following the defeat of an IS assault. That episode is in its self troubling however, as it shows that even in the context of fighting a common enemy in IS, Peshmerga-al-Hashid al-Shabi coordination is poor enough that in a charged environment, the two sides are liable to turn on each other.

**Looking ahead:** IS continues to retain the ability to launch limited offensives against al-Hashid al-Shabi and Peshmerga defensive positions. IS will likely continue to launch attacks on places like Qara Tapa and Bir Ahmed, using IS militants coming up from areas of Kirkuk province still under IS control, as well as cells operating out of the Hamrin Mountains.

The lull in violence between Kurds and Shia Turkomen is more reflective of the waxing and waning nature of that violence, rather than any marked improvement in inter-communal relations. Violence between those two actors is prone to erupting at short notice in Tuz Khurmatu, and potentially in northern Diyala between Peshmerga garrisoned Jalula and al-Hashid al-Shabi garrisoned Sadiyah.

## ATTACKS BY ACTOR





### Key trends

- *Shia actors use of kidnapping, small arms and IED increase month on month, though kidnapping rates still well below first three months of 2016*
- Violence perpetrated by Kurdish actors down across the board in June compared to six month averages
- *Lull in Kurdish-Shia Turkomen violence in Tuz explains lower reduced rate of violent incidents*

**Analytical importance:** The above charts show mechanisms of violence employed by Kurds and Shia (primarily Turkomen, including militiamen) From Jan. 2016 through June 2016. This violence

includes Peshmerga-Shia militia and Kurdish civilian-Shia Turkomen civilian violence centered in Tuz Khurmatu, as well as criminal and civil violence, and military engagements with IS. The charts allow readers to track evolving TTPs of armed actors in disputed territories east of Kirkuk.

**June 2016 analysis:** Kidnappings implemented by Shia actors fell steadily month on month from Jan. through May 2016, however this trend reversed course in June. The June jump was precipitated by a wave of reciprocal violence – including kidnapping – targeting Sunni Arabs and Sunni Turkomen in and around Tuz Khurmatu following a June 16 IS assault on villages south of

Tuz. Even with the spike, kidnappings perpetrated by Shia actors are still well below Jan-April levels. June saw a similar spike in small arms attacks perpetrated by Shia actors, which were centered in Tuz, and to a lesser extent Amerli. More than half of these attacks occurred within four days of the June 16 IS attack, with all targeting Sunni Arab and Sunni Turkomen civilians, or prisoners. Notably, after two straight months of Shia militia force deployments to disputed territories east of Tuz, there were zero force deployments in June, most likely due to a combination of the conclusion of the Bashir campaign, and the absence of Shia Turkomen – Kurdish fighting in Tuz.

As with every other month in 2016, in June small arms were the most utilized mode of violence by Kurdish actors. These were primarily episodes of criminally or politically motivated Kurd on Kurd violence. For the first time since Feb. 2016, Kurdish actors launched multiple IED attacks, with both June incidents described by local sources as intimidation efforts ordered by local PUK-aligned business interests in the vicinity of an oil field operated by Gazprom Neft.