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AKE Bespoke Intelligence Reports

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Flashpoints

Baghdad, Kirkuk, Latifiyah, Basrah, Tal Afar, Fallujah

The following highways and routes should be considered extremely hostile:

- **The route to Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) is extremely dangerous. Restrictions are sporadically applied to this route.**
- **The Baghdad to Amman Highway remains particularly dangerous and should be avoided if at all possible. 'The Group of Death' has issued a video warning in which it threatens to cut off Highway 10, the major supply route between Amman and Baghdad.**
- **In the south of the country, carjacking and banditry are rife on the following routes: Safwan to Basrah, Nasiriyah to Basrah and Hamza to Diwaniyah.**
- **The roads from Baghdad to Fallujah remain extremely dangerous. A number of checkpoints have also been erected on the routes and are being manned by both Multinational Forces (MNF) and the Iraqi police.**
- **The route from Syria to Mosul in the north of Iraq has also proven dangerous in the past few weeks, as it the route from Baghdad to Mosul.**
- **While these routes have been highlighted, it should be noted that transit throughout Iraq is dangerous and no route can be guaranteed as being safe.**

Projections

Given the mounting evidence of a growing al-Qaeda presence in Iraq it is safe to assume that further co-ordinated and large-scale attacks can be anticipated.

Unconfirmed reports from 13 September claim that Habib Aktas has been killed in Iraq. He is alleged to have played a leading role amongst al-Qaeda militants in neighbouring Turkey. Among other attacks, Aktas is said to have been instrumental in the bombings against British and Jewish interests in Turkey in November 2003. Habib Aktas is known to have links to al-Zawahiri and also a person known as Ekinci. The somewhat shadowy Ekinci is known to have fought alongside Chechen rebels, providing further possible links between militants in Iraq and Russia.

Al Zawahiri is believed to have had a role in the assassination of Egyptian president, Sadat. The assassination was carried out by al-Islambuli (whose brother was also known to be an aide to bin-Laden), who are the namesakes of the group that claimed responsibility for the recent suicide bombing in Moscow and the bombing of two civilian aircraft. The names of both groups suggest al-Qaeda linkage thus increasing the risk to the captives, both Italian and Iraqi. Indeed, further linkage between the two groups is apparent in the statement released by the al-Zawahiri loyalists when they describe 'their attacks' against Russia.

AKE's Iraq Security Briefing of 9 September reported that al-Zawahiri has re-emerged on the scene. A video statement was released on 9 September in which he features and comments upon the

imminent defeat of US-led forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. As anticipated attacks by al-Qaeda linked Sunni groups have taken place in close proximity to the international zone.

Another leading al-Qaeda figure, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi has once again threatened the life of the transitional prime minister of Iraq, Iyad Allawi. The message was posted in voice form on several Islamist websites. Furthermore, another statement posted on 9 September threatened reprisals for the 'martyring' of four mujahadeen in Fallujah. It is highly likely that further attacks on targets of Western and foreign interest, the Iraqi transitional government and security forces will persist and are likely to gather in momentum, size and scope.

A statement released by supporters of Moqtada al-Sadr on 12 September threatened to kill four Iraqi police officers in Najaf if the police force does not cease following members of the Mehdi army and 'pressuring' the radical cleric. Little further information on this incident has been forthcoming, although a deadline of 72 hours was set.

Kidnapping remains a major problem, and one that may significantly increase if the ransom demanded by the groups holding the two French journalists (detailed below) is paid.

Summary

Zarqawi's group, Jamaat al-Tawhid has claimed responsibility for recent attacks carried out across the country. While not all the attacks are likely to have been carried out by the al-Qaeda-linked group, it is safe to assume that the majority were.

Attacks involved a range of tactics and weaponry, although suicide and vehicle bombings have been used in some of the most bloody attacks. Improvised Explosive Devices have been used with devastating effect against a number of military patrols resulting in multiple fatalities. Mortars and rockets have been launched at military and governmental targets, although, the results of these attacks have not been so devastating. Fire fights between insurgents and Multinational Forces (MNF) erupted on numerous occasions throughout the country, although particularly in the aftermath of attacks, such the under noted incident on Haifa Street. Military and Iraqi police assaults have continued against various Sunni strongholds, particularly Fallujah.

Kidnapping remains a significant risk to all personnel operating in Iraq.

Areas of continued concern

- **It is feared that mosques are potential hot spots for demonstrations, and possibly suicide and other explosive attacks in the coming days and weeks**
- **Hotels remain at risk of attack, particularly those providing residence to Western personnel, including those in the 'Green Zone', despite increased security**
- **All facilities relating to the energy industry in Iraq remain at risk of attack, including offices and vehicles**
- **Police stations, local government and Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) facilities continue to be the target of demonstrations and suicide attacks**
- **The homes and offices of those involved in the political development of Iraq, those of personnel involved in the former regime (i.e. low level Ba'athists) and those of tribal leaders are believed to be under an increased risk of attack or assassination**

The following other buildings and facilities are consistently at risk:











- **Any building, element of infrastructure or machinery involved with the reconstruction effort (particularly the energy industry)**
- **Coalition facilities of all nationalities (inhabited by contractors, NGO workers, diplomatic and military personnel)**
- **Civic buildings, particularly police stations, diplomatic offices and those of NGOs and media organizations**
- **Any convey/vehicle carrying personnel from the media/NGOs or indeed contractors**

and diplomatic staff is at risk of attack at all times

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AKE risk ratings

	1-9	Generally stable and secure
	10-19	Instability
	20-29	Hostile
	30-39	Highly unstable
	40-49	Widespread militancy
	50-59	Low intensity conflict
	60-69	Advanced guerrilla war/civil war
	70-79	Limited conventional war
	80-89	Regional war
	90-100	Total war (sub-nuclear)

For more in-depth analysis of the security situation in Iraq as well as other world hot spots see [Global Intake](#), AKE's online strategic information and intelligence tool.

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