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Flashpoints

Baghdad (Sadr City, Green Zone), Najaf, Kufah, Fallujah, Ramadi, Kirkuk, Karbala,

The following highways and routes should be considered extremely hostile:

- The roads from Baghdad to Fallujah have reopened although they remain extremely dangerous. A number of checkpoints have also been erected on the routes and are being manned by both Coalition Forces (CF) and the Iraqi police. There is however no access to Fallujah from the main Highway.
- The Baghdad to Amman Highway remains particularly dangerous and should be avoided if at all possible.
- Routes in the vicinity of Najaf, Kufah and Karbala should be avoided, as should those around al-Kut.
- Amarah is likely to witness further attacks and travel on roads to and from the city should only be undertaken with caution.
- The route from Baqubah to Mosul has been subject to a number of attacks over the past 48 hours and should be considered dangerous.
- 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

Ethnic tension in the northern oil city of Kirkuk is brewing following the assassination of leading figures of Kurdish and Turkomen populations. While there has not been any 'full-scale' fighting between the factions for a number of months, the situation is volatile and the coming days and weeks may witness a surge in hostilities between these two groups and also the resident Arab population of north Iraq.

There has been an increase in security incidents over the weekend and this is highly likely to continue. Indeed, given the recent brutal violence and massacre of non-Muslim workers in Saudi Arabia, it is possible that further energy-related attacks could be forthcoming within Iraq itself. It should be remembered that the last major attacks against such facilities in Iraq and in Saudi Arabia happened within a relatively short time of each other.

What is interesting and indeed worrying about the most recent Saudi attacks is the fact that foreigners, particularly Westerners, were specifically separated from their Islamic colleagues within the compound. Previous attacks in the Saudi Kingdom have not segregated their victims, instead, those Muslims caught up in the blasts and/ or attack have been considered Jahilli (from the term Jahiliyya detailed in previous Iraq Reports, those who have gone astray from the true path) and have therefore been treated by the groups with equal disdain. In this instance, the singling out of non-Muslims may be a result of the Islamic world's reaction to previous attacks (particularly those in Iraq) that have targeted Muslims. It is possible that similar tactics could be employed by al-Qaeda sympathizers and militants in Iraq. In this regard, non-Muslim personnel of all backgrounds are potentially at risk.

Summary

Despite the hope raised last week by al-Sadr's pledged ceasefire, violence has persisted in all locations occupied by his militia - the Mehdi army and both the Coalition and Mehdi army have claimed the other

to be responsible for breaking the ceasefire. In reality, however, promises previously made by the radical cleric have been broken suggesting that even if Coalition patrols in Kufah and Najaf (detailed below) are halted to allow the withdrawal of Mehdi forces, the cleric may merely be buying himself time. Even if the ceasefire does come about it is unlikely that all militiamen will cease their militant activities given the pledges made by Sadr previously. It is unlikely that Sadr will hand himself over to the Coalition to face murder charges made against him and thus the Coalition will not cease their attempt to capture the cleric. The ongoing situation is therefore more likely to persist albeit with lulls in activity. The coming days will reveal the intentions of Sadr, at least in the short term.

Throughout Iraq attacks and incidences of violence have continued. The usual array of weaponry and tactics have been displayed including: Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Small Arms Fire (SAF), Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs), rockets and mortars. Targeted assassinations particularly in the form of drive-by shootings have persisted as have random and specific hi-jackings and kidnappings. Indeed, recent days have also demonstrated the use once again of car bombs.

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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 convoy/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)

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