



03 June 2004

Flashpoints

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

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 Baqoubah 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

The drive-by shooting in Kirkuk on 28 May (detailed in AKE Iraq Security Briefing of 1 June) in which Colonel Mohammed Hamid, a senior member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), died coupled with the car bomb attack on the offices of the PUK in Baghdad on 1 June suggest that the PUK is being specifically targeted. Personnel are advised to be vigilant around any facility or person associated with the political party. It should not be forgotten that in addition to the threat of ethnic conflict, Iraq's Kurdish population was specifically threatened by al-Zarqawi in his 17-page memo detailed in AKE Iraqi Security Briefing of 10 February this year.

The continuing confrontation involving Moqtada al-Sadr and the failed ceasefire remains volatile. Further clashes can be anticipated. Radical Shi'a demonstrations may also occur brought on by the appointment of the new Iraqi cabinet and the influence of other religious groupings and ethnicities within it, which is frowned upon by Sadr.

The British embassy in Tehran was the focus of approximately 300 demonstrators on 28 May. The protestors gathered to demonstrate their anger against the situation in neighbouring Iraq and vowed to kill British prime minister Tony Blair. The demonstration followed the call by the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for a national day of mourning for the victims in Iraq and for the desecration of holy Shi'a sites. The crowd was repelled by some 250 police officers armed with batons and riot shields. Reports indicate that only one protestor was arrested, a significantly low number of arrests for a demonstration in the Iranian capital which usually result in a plethora of detentions. It is believed that the others gathered in Palestine Square to fill in forms pledging to carry

out 'martyrdom operations' (suicide attacks) against Coalition forces operating in Iraq. While the signatures gathered are, at present, believed to be symbolic, it is clear that there is significant anger at the ongoing situation in Iraq. The border between the two countries is presently closed thereby limiting the immediate possibility of a rush of suicide bombers into Iraq although it is possible that some militants could pose as pilgrims to gain access to the country.

Summary

As suggested in AKE Iraq Security Briefing of 1 June, violence in the north of the country has increased. Incidents in northern Iraq have included attacks on convoys and on a US military base to the north of Kirkuk. Furthermore, there is concern that incidents of violence will increase, particularly vis-à-vis ethnic tension and also tensions within ethnic groupings given the ending of the KONGRA-GEL (formerly the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)) five-year ceasefire.

Elsewhere in Iraq Vehicle Borne Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) have been a preferred target of insurgents with two detonated in the past 48 hours, three within a three-day period. Kidnapping has also re-emerged in recent days with the seizure of several persons from a variety of countries. Experience suggests that more kidnappings will follow. Of course, the usual array of weaponry and tactics have also been utilised with the use Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Small Arms Fire (SAF), Rockets and mortars in evidence. Hijackings have also persisted throughout the country.

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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)

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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