



08 June 2004

### Flashpoints

Baghdad (Sadr City, Green Zone, airport road), Mosul, Kufah, Balad, Baqoubah, Karbala, Najaf

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.
- The Baghdad to Amman Highway remains particularly dangerous and should be avoided if at all possible.
- The route to Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) is extremely dangerous. Restrictions have been applied to this route.
- 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

Media personnel should be particularly careful following the death of one of their colleagues and the serious injury of another in neighbouring Saudi Arabia on 6 June. It is possible that the global television coverage the incident has received may encourage some of the more media astute insurgent groupings operating in Iraq (al-Qaeda for one) to carry out similar attacks. This warning does not only apply to media personnel but all foreigners, not just Westerners, operating in Iraq.

It is likely that the suicide and vehicle-borne attacks of recent days will continue and will increase in size and scope. The fact that Iraq's al-Qaeda figurehead al-Zarqawi is thought to have been involved in the most recent attacks, most probably with the assistance of other Extra Territorial Elements (ETEs), means further attacks of this kind can be anticipated, mostly likely on a more grand scale.

A fatwa (religious edict) has been posted on an Islamist web site within the Saudi Kingdom. Worryingly, the fatwa legitimises the mutilation of 'infidel' corpses, a practice that has become more frequent in both the Saudi Kingdom and in neighbouring Iraq. The religious figure responsible for calling the fatwa is Sheikh Omar Abdullah Hassan al-Shehabi. He has advocated the mutilation of the dead as (a) a reciprocal act if the enemy has disfigured Muslims or when it is of service to the Islamic nation and (b) to 'gladden the heart of an Islamic warrior' and to 'terrorise the enemy'. Just because the fatwa was called in Saudi Arabia does not mean it is limited to the Kingdom but will apply throughout the Islamic world.

Unconfirmed reports claim that 90 US military uniforms were stolen in the northern city of Mosul, together with a HMMWV (HUMVEE) military vehicle. If this report is accurate it is highly possible that it will be used in forthcoming attacks

## Summary

There has been a marked increase over the past week of the use of targeted explosive devices detonated by suicide bombers or planted in vehicles. It is likely that this trend will continue and increase in frequency and size as the transition of power approaches. Military bases have been among the preferred targets of recent days and there has been a return to the targeting of police stations and recruiting stations (for police and army). The discovery of the body of an Iraqi (detailed below) with a warning not to work with the Coalition pinned to it underlines the threat to those personnel working or viewed as assisting the Coalition or foreign presence in Iraq. Throughout Iraq attacks and incidents of violence have persisted over the weekend period including, in particular, ambushes and hijackings that have resulted in several fatalities. Drive-by shootings and targeted assassinations have also continued. The usual array of weapons have also been in evidence, primarily improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs) although small arms fire (SAF), rocket-propelled grenades, rockets and mortars have also been reported as having been used by insurgents in recent days.

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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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	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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