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Glossary

ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
Gol	Government of Iraq
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
IS	Islamic State
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government

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Sources of information include Mercy Corp Humanitarian Access Team (MC HAT), INSO, and websites including, but not exclusive, Institute for the Study of War, Chatham House, Human Rights Watch, Al Jazeera, SouthFront, Rudaw, Al-Monitor, iMMAP, and Reliefweb.

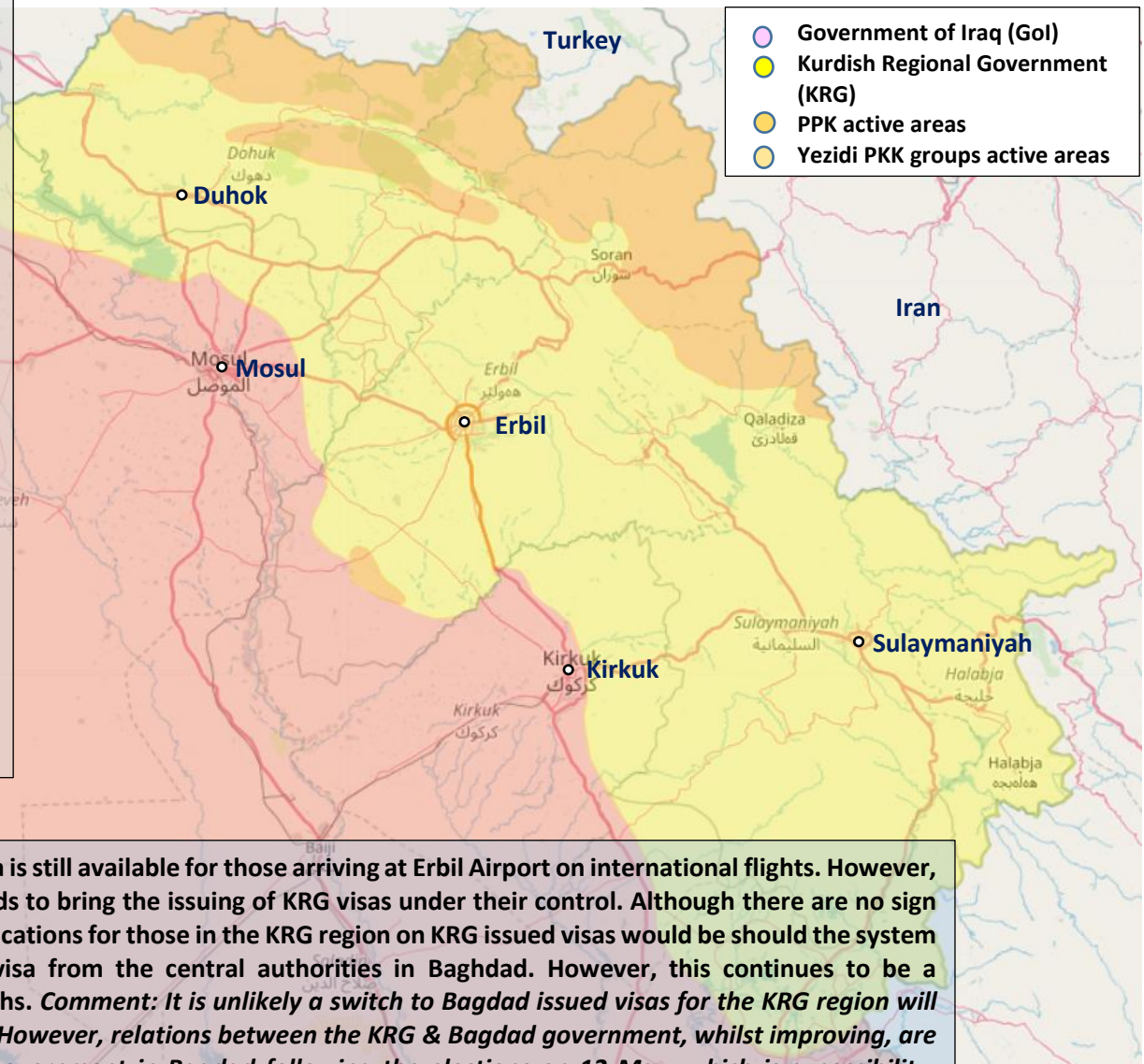
In the text when '*Comment: ...*' appears in *italic* and the subsequent text is also in *italic*, this information is not fact, but the opinion of the author.

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Locations	Risk Level	Comment	Forecast
Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, Zokho and direct routes between within KRG borders (except those areas assessed as High).	Moderate	<i>Whilst threats faced by INGOs in these areas would suggest the Risk Level is Low, but the vulnerability to INGO staff, particularly international staff, caused by the political dispute between the KRG and Government of Iraq, and uncertainty over visas increases the Risk Level to Moderate.</i>	<i>*A resolution to the KRG-Gol political dispute is on hold until after the Iraq elections. Visa issues may become more complex after the election if the opposition win. *. Pre-election violence is expected to continue. *Border incursions and airstrikes by the Turkish military on PKK targets are expected to continue. *No change in Risk Levels expected.</i>
Kirkuk Governorate, Hawijah Governorate, Mosel, Telafar, Sinjar Districts, within 10km of Turkey and Iran border.	High	<i>Whilst the Risk Levels are assessed as High in these areas, INGOs are operating and the areas are visited by international staff. With strong Security Operating Procedures and Contingency Plans, it is possible to work in these areas.</i>	<i>*No improvements in the poor security in the listed areas is expected for the near to medium future. *Harassment of INGO staff likely to increase as INGOs areas of operations grow. Pre-election violence to continue. *Risk Levels will most probably remain high.</i>

1. Political and Conflict Summary (Map as at 6th May 2018. Source <http://syriancivilwarmap.com>)

PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE – Iraq’s Parliamentary elections are to be held on 12 May 2018. The elections decide the 329 members of the Council of Representatives who will in turn elect the Iraqi President & Prime Minister. The KRG governorates of Erbil, Dohuk & Sulaymaniyah account for 44 seats; Kirkuk 12. Whilst the KRG governorates of Erbil & Dohuk experience approximately only 2% of INSO recorded incidents in the country, with Kirkuk they are experiencing a higher proportion of pre-election violence. Violent incidents in Erbil have included physical attacks on candidates in several villages, a drive-by shooting targeting the convoy of a party leader & the most serious incident was the murder of the Administrative Head of the KRG Election Commission. In Kirkuk IEDs detonated next to 2 politician’s convoys, killing one & injuring 12, political offices were attacked with grenades & violence broke-out between opposing supporters at a political rally. *Comment: Pre-election violence is nothing new in Kurdish areas. In the mid-1990s most of the current political parties fought each other in a civil-war. Recent events following last year’s referendum on separation from Iraq fuelled these long-standing feuds. Further pre-election violence, including IEDs & shootings, are expected. To exacerbate the situation IS have stated they will disrupt the election with attacks on voting stations & candidates.*



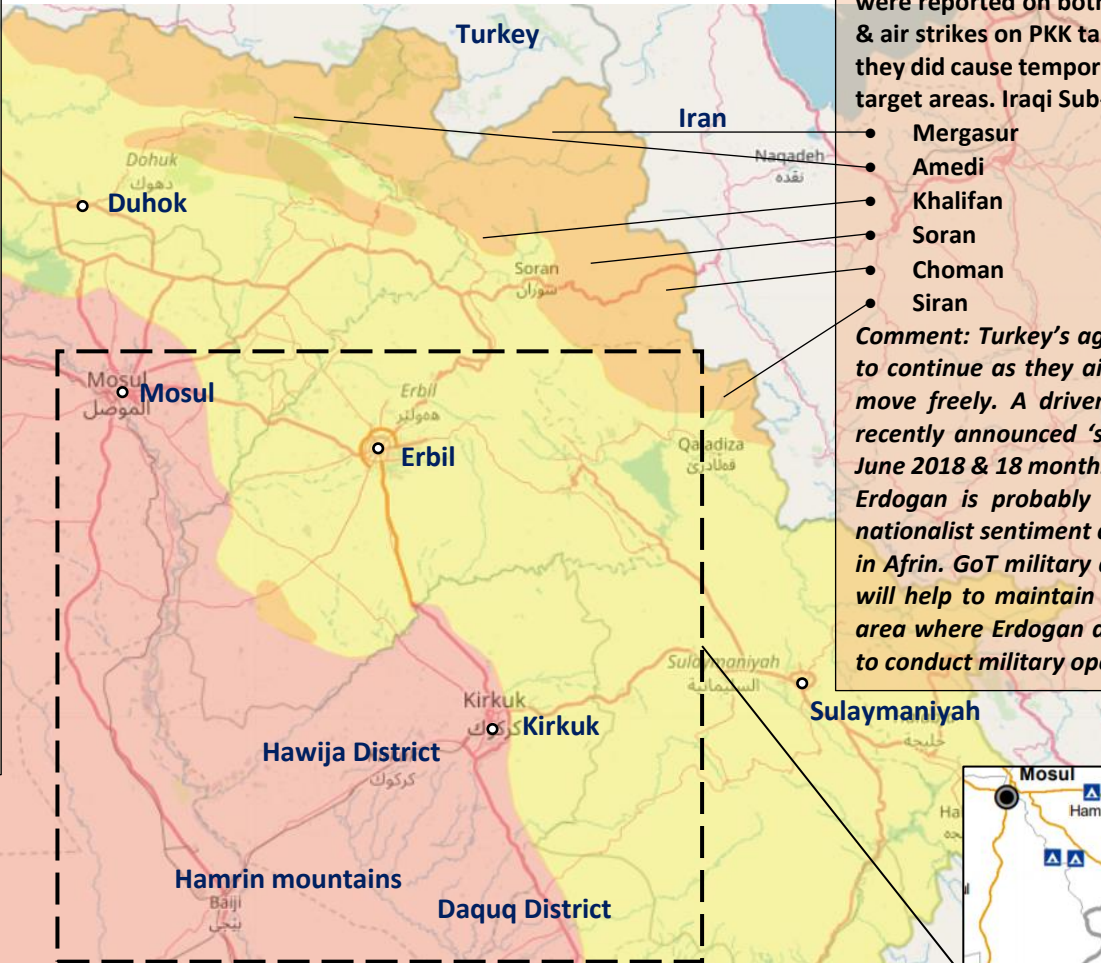
ERBIL AIRPORT & VISAS – Currently a KRG visa is still available for those arriving at Erbil Airport on international flights. However, the central government in Baghdad still intends to bring the issuing of KRG visas under their control. Although there are no signs as to when this will happen, or what the implications for those in the KRG region on KRG issued visas would be should the system change. The alternative is to get an Iraq visa from the central authorities in Baghdad. However, this continues to be a bureaucratic drawn-out process taking months. *Comment: It is unlikely a switch to Baghdad issued visas for the KRG region will happen without prior warning or indicators. However, relations between the KRG & Baghdad government, whilst improving, are still difficult. Should there be a change in government in Baghdad following the elections on 12 May, which is a possibility, relations could worsen. If the opposition win it is likely Iran will have greater influence in Iraq’s affairs & the Iranian government is not on good terms with the Kurdish political party currently controlling the KRG – the Kurdistan Democratic Party.*

NGO HARASSMENT BY SECURITY FORCES – NGOs are increasingly reporting incidents of intimidation, harassment & detention by government armed actors in Ninawa governorate. Female NGO staff have been harassed at checkpoints, staff have been detained on suspicion of being IS members, staff have been assaulted, & armed actors have entered camps with their weapons to arrest beneficiaries. *Comment: The incidents demonstrate the lack of respect or understanding for humanitarian principles & humanitarian space amongst the numerous armed actors. Both the Iraqi army & Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs), usually Shia militia operating with some autonomy from the Iraqi forces, are responsible for the incidents. An improvement in the situation is not expected & may become worse as NGO's expand their operations.*

TURKISH & PKK CONFLICT – Throughout April armed clashes between the GoT military & the PKK continued in the mountainous areas along the Iraqi-Turkey border. Casualties were reported on both sides. The GoT also conducted artillery & air strikes on PKK targets. Whilst no casualties are reported, they did cause temporary displacement of civilians close to the target areas. Iraqi Sub-districts effected are:

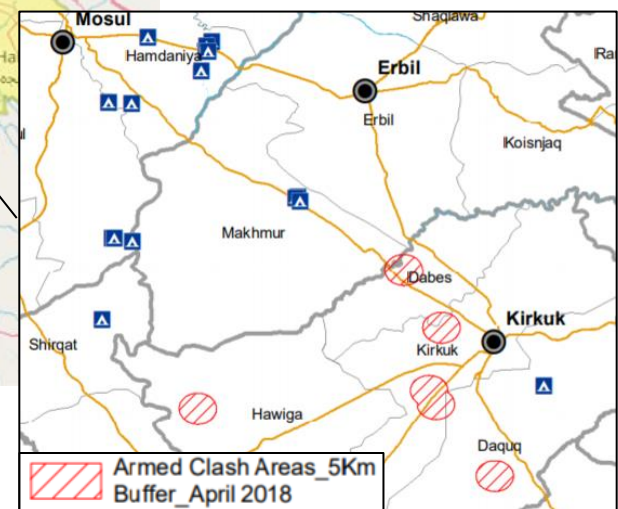
- Mergasur
- Amedi
- Khalifan
- Soran
- Choman
- Siran

Comment: Turkey's aggressive activity inside Iraq is expected to continue as they aim to suppress PKK ability to operate & move freely. A driver behind continued GoT activity is the recently announced 'snap' general election in Turkey, on 24 June 2018 & 18 months early. By calling the election, President Erdogan is probably hoping to take advantage of current nationalist sentiment created by the recent military successes in Afrin. GoT military activity in north Iraq, pursuing the PKK, will help to maintain the nationalist sentiment. It is also an area where Erdogan does not require the consent of the GoR to conduct military operations, unlike north Syria.



- Government of Iraq (GoI)
- Kurdish Regional Government (KRG)
- PPK active areas
- Yezidi PKK groups active areas

IS ACTIVITY IN KIRKUK GOVERNORATE – IS continued to be active west & south of Kirkuk City, in the Hamrin mountain range, the open deserts of Hawija District, & Daquq District. Attacks include 2 roadside IEDs against civilian vehicles, & several IEDs & shooting attacks on Iraqi security forces & associated Shia militia. *Comment: The attacks are likely to increase as IS carries out its threat to intensify its campaign against security actors before & during the elections in May 2018.*



2. Humanitarian Situation

Summary of 'WHO Situation Report Issue Number #2 01 – 31 MARCH 2018'

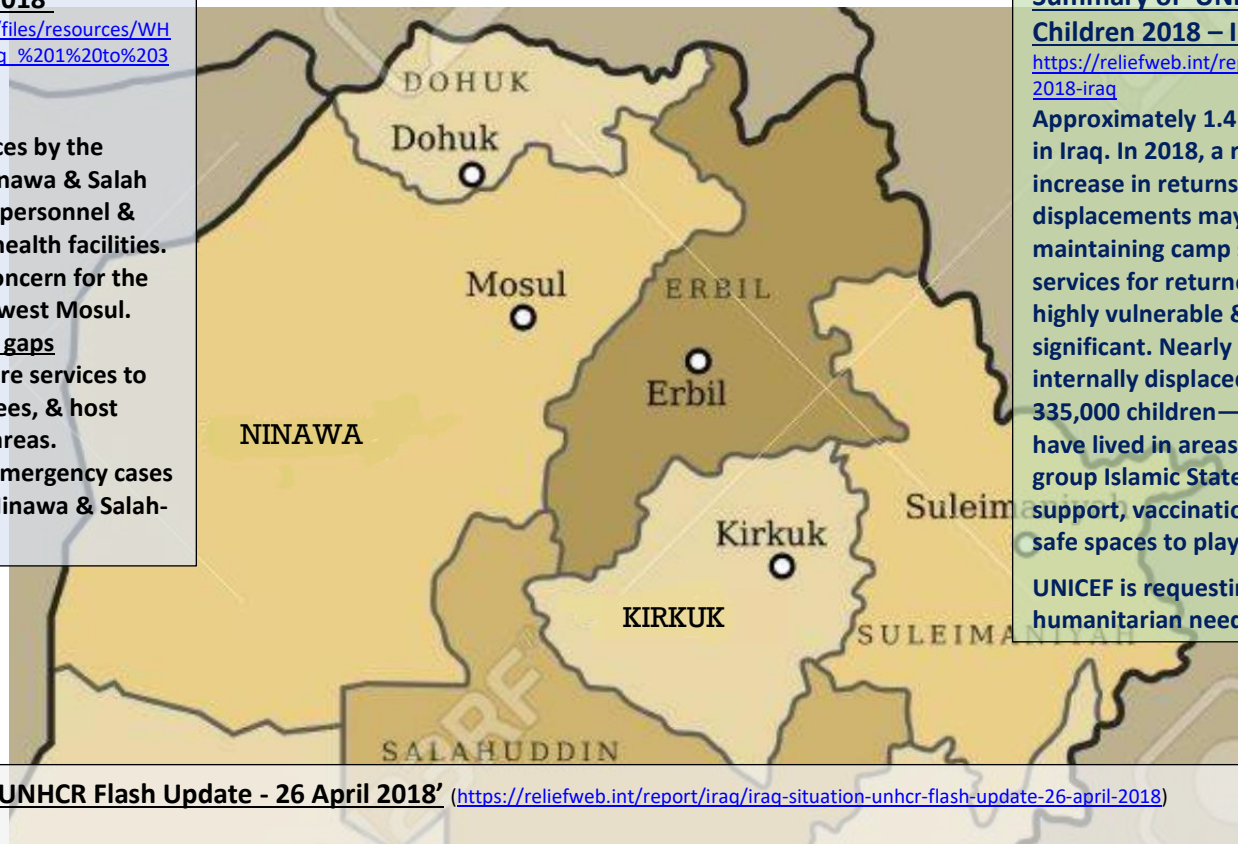
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WHO%20Situation%20Report%20for%20Iraq%201%20to%2031%20Mar%202018.pdf>

WHO Public health concerns

- Limited access to health services by the population in return areas in Ninawa & Salah Aldin due to shortage of health personnel & damaged secondary & tertiary health facilities.
- Safe water remains a major concern for the populations living in the city of west Mosul.

WHO Health needs, priorities & gaps

- Provision of primary health care services to the affected population, returnees, & host communities in newly retaken areas.
- Limited response to medical emergency cases in the newly re-taken areas in Ninawa & Salah-al-din governorates.



Summary of 'UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children 2018 – Iraq'

<https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/humanitarian-action-children-2018-iraq>

Approximately 1.4 million children remain displaced in Iraq. In 2018, a reduction in armed violence & an increase in returns are expected, though new displacements may continue. Therefore, maintaining camp services & ensuring critical services for returnees is necessary. Children remain highly vulnerable & protection concerns are significant. Nearly half of the population of internally displaced school-aged children—some 335,000 children—are out of school. Children who have lived in areas formerly held by the armed group Islamic State (IS) are in need of psychosocial support, vaccinations, support to re-enter school, & safe spaces to play.

UNICEF is requesting US \$101,151,160 to meet the humanitarian needs of children in Iraq in 2018.

Summary of 'Iraq Situation: UNHCR Flash Update - 26 April 2018' (<https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-situation-unhcr-flash-update-26-april-2018>)

Key figures

- 2.14 million IDPs remain displaced since January 2014
- 278,047 Iraqi refugees hosted in countries in the region, with 12,105 Iraqis in camps in Al-Hassakeh Governorate, Syria
- 646,056 IDPs in Ninewa
- 59,628 IDPs currently displaced due to military operations in Hawiga (Kirkuk) & Shirqat (Salah al-Din)

Population Movements – 34 % of the 2.14 million IDPs are currently displaced in KRG areas. The KRG region has two out the three governorates in the country where IDPs still exceed the number of returnees (Dohuk & Erbil; the third being Baghdad). IDPs returning to their areas of origin are facing a number of critical protection issues. For families, restriction of movement & harassment or intimidation (including in camps) continue in certain areas of displacement. Reduction of humanitarian assistance, coupled with limited opportunities for self-reliance & unequal power relationships in IDP camps, increase the risk of human rights abuses. UNHCR has noted an increase in sexual exploitation & abuse (SEA) allegations. In return areas in Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Anbar & Diyala Governorates, the main protection risks faced by returning families include violations of principles relating to the voluntariness, safety & dignity of return movements, security incidents resulting in injury or loss of life, contamination by explosive remnants of war (ERW) & improvised explosive devices (IED), rights violations by military or security actors, & concerns relating to intercommunal tensions or social cohesion.