

Report on the Protection of Armed Civilians in Iraq UN Office of the High Commissioner for
Human Rights UN Assistance Mission
for Iraq 2 October 2014

A UN report released Thursday lists a “staggering array” of gross human rights abuses and “acts of violence of an increasingly sectarian nature” committed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and associated armed groups over a nine-week period, as well as a number of violations committed by Iraqi security forces (ISF) and associated forces in their efforts to combat ISIL.

The report, produced jointly by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights covers the period from 6 July to 10 September and lists a litany of serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross abuses of human rights that have been perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups, “with an apparent systematic and widespread character.”

“These include attacks directly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, executions and other targeted killings of civilians, abductions, rape and other forms of sexual and physical violence perpetrated against women and children, forced recruitment of children, destruction or desecration of places of religious or cultural significance, wanton destruction and looting of property, and denial of fundamental freedoms,” the report says.

“Members of Iraq’s diverse ethnic and religious communities, including Turkmen, Shabak, Christians, Yezidi, Sabaeans, Kaka’e, Faili Kurds, Arab Shi’a, and others have particularly been affected by the situation,” the report continues. “ISIL and associated armed groups intentionally and systematically targeted these communities for gross human rights abuses, at times aimed at destroying, suppressing or cleansing them from areas under their control. ISIL and associated armed groups also murdered captured soldiers and other security forces or government personnel.”

“This report is terrifying,” said Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq Nickolay Mladenov, noting that hundreds of other allegations concerning the killing of civilians were not included because they had not yet been sufficiently verified. “Iraqi leaders must act in unity to restore control over areas that have been taken over by ISIL and implement inclusive social, political and economic reforms” he added.

The report also describes violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law reportedly committed by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and affiliated armed groups during the same period.

“These included air strikes and shelling as well as conduct of particular military operations or attacks that may have violated the principles of distinction and proportionality under international humanitarian law,” the report says.

On Wednesday UNAMI announced that overall a total of at least 9,347 civilians have been

killed so far in 2014 and 17,386 have been wounded, well over half of them since ISIL began overrunning large parts of the north in early June.

“The array of violations and abuses perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups is staggering, and many of their acts may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein.

“Because of this,” Zeid continued, “I strongly recommend that the Government of Iraq considers acceding to the Rome Statute, and, as an immediate step, accepts the exercise of the International Criminal Court’s jurisdiction with respect to the current specific, horrendous situation facing the country. This type of situation, where massive gross violations and abuses are taking place, including direct targeting of many thousands of civilians because of their religious or ethnic identity, is precisely why the International Criminal Court was created.”

(...) Read the full press release [here](#) , and the full report [here](#) .