

August 18, 2020

Statement by KRG's Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy (OCIA)

KRG welcomes the US Department of State's "2019 Country Report on Terrorism: Iraq"

On June 24th, 2020, the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the US State Department published his 2019 Country Report on Terrorism, which is submitted first and foremost to the Congress. The report employs a national cross-national analysis on the implications, consequences, and state-sponsor of terrorism; in addition to a focus on the local endeavors in countries haunted by terrorism, and congressional funds devoted to repel the ailment internationally. A section of the report is dedicated to Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

ISIL's repulsive crimes remain imminent threats in areas whose status are disputes. ISIL exploited the current security gap between Peshmerga and the Iraqi Security Forces. For example, On November 29, 2019, ISIS attacked KRG security forces (Kulajo Asayish) headquarters in Kifri district, Diyala governorate, killing three Asayish members, including the unit's director.

ISIS sought to re-establish support among populations in Ninewa, Kirkuk, Diyala, Salah ad Din and Anbar provinces, especially in the areas of disputed control between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the federal government, where the division of responsibility for local security is unclear. Nevertheless, the report commends KRG as an example of border control and as having an inter-ministerial counterterrorism coordination mechanism.

Still, while border security along the periphery of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (KRI) is robust and administered by various security units under the Federal and KRG Ministry of Interior, the border with Syria south of the KRI remained porous and vulnerable to ISIS and other terrorist networks, as well as to smuggling and other criminal enterprises.

KRG welcomes the US Department of State's "2019 Country Report on Terrorism: Iraq". The report provides a compelling description of the political and security ailments Iraq have suffered due to terrorism and terrorism-related infringements on the political system in the country. Furthermore, it uses a problem-solution approach in the observations. KRG thereby acknowledges the US Department of State for their deliberate evaluations, and reiterates its commitment to the current collective-international effort to repel the threat of terrorism.

Furthermore, KRG calls upon the national and international partners to be more attentive to the security vacuum between KRI and the Federal security units. The gap has empowered ISIL militants to launch attacks on civilians, destroy private properties, burn farmed lands, among others; that have resulted in an apprehensive situation for the local

populations in those areas. Moreover, the volatile security conditions have also led to demographic changes in areas around Kerkuk and Khanaqin.

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