

1 July 22: Likely Iranian Proxy Militants Target Vehicle of Iraqi Contractors Working for the Coalition with an IED. Unidentified militants reportedly detonated an IED in the al-Batha District of Dhi Qar Province targeting an Iraqi logistics convoy carrying supplies to US-led Coalition forces at an unspecified military installation. The explosion caused some damage to a vehicle but did not result in any casualties. Unspecified Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) arrested an unidentified individual filming the explosion nearby. The US-designated terrorist organization Haraqat Hezbollah al-Nujaba (HHN), claimed that the attack was undertaken by the "Islamic Resistance," the name adopted by Iran's proxy militia network in Iraq. Ashab al-Kahf (AK), one of 10 "shadow militias" which have emerged since the January death of Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani, threatened the Iraqi government shortly after the explosions, stating that if the ISF harms any members of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, AK will destroy the US Embassy with dozens of rockets a day. Electricity shortages also spurred protests in the summers of 2011, 2015, and 2018.

2 July 22-27: Prime Minister Kadhimi Accelerates Iraqi Army Deployments to Retake Border Crossings from Iran-backed Militias. Prime Minister Kadhimi deployed Iraqi Army units to border crossings in three border provinces with Iran between July 22 and 27. Kadhimi is likely attempting to reclaim the crossings both to recover revenue and to signal his reformist agenda to the United States ahead of the upcoming US-Iraq Strategic Dialogue. One of the Iraqi Army units arrested two smugglers at the Zurbatiya crossing in Wasit Province on July 22. Federal authorities fired officials at Zurbatiya and at Mandali crossing in Diyala Province between July 18 and 24. Basra Operations Command also bolstered physical barriers on the Iran-Iraq border at Shalamchah crossing in Basra Province on July 24 to prevent illegal crossings.

3 July 23: Likely Iranian Proxy Attempts Attack Using Commercial Drone Near US Embassy. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) internal Federal Investigation and Intelligence Agency (FIIA) discovered a drone flying over Baghdad's Jadriyah neighborhood, approximately 2 km from the US Embassy. Iraq's Security Media Cell (SMC), an official military body, confirmed that the drone carried a 2 kg projectile fixed to the drone that unspecified ISF dismantled upon capturing the device. The use of a drone-borne explosive by likely Iranian proxies may be in response to the US Embassy's recent installation of the Counter Rocket, Artillery, and Mortar (C-RAM) system which has since thwarted incoming rocket attacks.

4 July 24: Iranian Proxy Militia Launches Four Rockets at Coalition Forces at Basmaya. Unidentified militants launched four Katyusha rockets, likely from neighboring Diyala Province, at the Basmaya military base, approximately 26 km south of Baghdad on the afternoon of July 24. The SMC reported that the rockets caused no casualties but that one rocket struck a warehouse, a second rocket caused damages to vehicles, and two more landed in remote areas resulting in no damage. Usbat al-Thairen (UaT), an Iranian proxy shadow militia, claimed the attack. Coalition forces were present at Basmaya but were scheduled to hand over control to the ISF on July 25. This attack is the second daytime attack claimed by UaT and was likely conducted the day before the pre-planned Coalition consolidation in order to validate the propaganda claim that UaT drove out Coalition forces.

5 July 24: Iraqi Security Forces Free German Civil Society Activist and Protest Supporter from Likely Iranian Proxy Kidnappers. Unspecified ISF units composed of MoI personnel and intelligence officials conducted a raid to free German national Hella Mewis from unspecified kidnappers in the Rasafa district of central Baghdad. Likely Iranian proxy militants kidnapped Mewis in central Baghdad on July 20. MoI Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Khaled al-Muthanna announced that no kidnappers were arrested. Kadhimi likely struck a deal with militias to free Mewis. Mewis is a Baghdad-based art curator and known supporter of the October 2019 anti-government protest movement, making her an obvious target for intimidation by Iran's proxies in Iraq.

6 July 24: Iraq Makes Separate Agreements with Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council for Electricity Development Projects in Southern Provinces. Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian announced that Iran agreed to build new electricity generators and repair the electrical grids in Iraq's Karbala and Najaf Provinces. The Iraqi Ministry of Electricity also stated that the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) agreed to bolster Basra Province's electrical capacity with 500 megawatts of electricity. The GCCIA also stated that it would soon expand its development projects outside of Basra. The Iraqi government is likely attempting to mitigate mass electricity protests while simultaneously rebalancing its reliance on foreign energy imports away from Iran in line with US pressures.

7 July 25: US Forces Hand Over Basmaya Military Base to Iraqi Security Forces. US forces handed over control of the Basmaya military base to the ISF as part of the Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR)'s drawdowns from and consolidations within Iraq. USAF Maj. Gen. Kenneth P. Ekman, the deputy commander of CJTF-OIR, publicly announced the intent to transfer the base on July 22 and said that "there will be some degree of a reduction in force in Iraq. That's what success looks like." A Spanish training contingent previously stationed at the base also returned to Spain. The handover comes one day after a rocket attack claimed by Iranian proxy militia Usbat al-Thairen targeted the base and caused material damage.

8 July 25: Progress Remains Unlikely in Investigation of Hashimi Assassination. Anonymous aides to and allies of Prime Minister Kadhimi said that the identification of whoever ordered the July 6 assassination of prominent Iraqi security analyst and informal Kadhimi advisor Hisham al-Hashimi "could be too politically explosive." An anonymous advisor to Kadhimi said that Kadhimi "wants justice, but his hands are tied." The head of the Parliamentary Security and Defense Committee claimed that there was "progress" on the investigation. However, any real punishment of the assassins, likely members of Iran's proxy militia network in Iraq, remains unlikely. Hashimi was likely killed as a warning to Kadhimi and other reformists to stop interfering with Iran's militia networks.

9 July 26: Mysterious Explosions Hit Two PMF Bases in 24 hours as Iranian Proxies Blame US Airstrikes. Mysterious explosions occurred at two Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) weapons depots, one at the al-Saqr military base, 11 km south of Baghdad, and one at Camp Speicher in Salah ad-Din Province, 168 km north of Baghdad. The explosions were likely the result of a US or Israeli attack intended to limit the capabilities of Iran's Iraqi proxies as tensions increase across the region. Camp Speicher is a key PMF training base manned by at least three Iran-backed groups, including US-designated terrorist organization Kata'ib Hezbollah. Iranian proxy militias alleged that "external" airstrikes targeted the bases, alluding to the United States or Israel. The SMC blamed high temperatures and poor storage as the cause of the explosions.

10 July 26-27: Iraqi Security Forces Kill Three Anti-Government Protesters During Baghdad Rally. Unspecified members of the ISF killed at least three protesters and injured 21 others using live ammunition and tear gas canisters fired directly into crowds at a demonstration beginning on July 26 in Tahrir Square, Baghdad. Kadhimi condemned the killings and ordered an investigation team to present him with their findings within 72 hours. The MoI claimed two days after the protests that "criminal" agitators attempted to provoke the security forces, resulting in the crackdown. Kadhimi is under significant pressure from protesters and the public to fulfill a core promise and hold security forces accountable for violence against protesters. However, Kadhimi is also likely under pressure from Iran-linked ISF members and entrenched security interests to not punish those responsible for the killings.

11 July 27: Likely Iranian Proxy Militants Launch Three Rockets at Camp Taji Military Base, Damaging Iraqi Aircraft. Unidentified militants launched three rockets at the Iraqi military section of Camp Taji, 24 km north of Baghdad. One rocket landed on Iraq's 15th Air Force Squadron and caused "significant damage" to one of its aircraft, according to the SMC. A second rocket caused material damage to a weapons and defense warehouse, and the third did not explode. Usbat al-Thairen, an Iranian proxy shadow militia, claimed responsibility for the attack via IRGC-linked Telegram channels, according to a BBC correspondent.

12 July 28: Iranian Proxy Militia States Support for the Protest Movement against Poor Government Service Provision and Unemployment. Nasr al-Shammari, the spokesperson for the Iranian proxy militia and US-designated terrorist organization Hezbollah Haraqat al-Nujaba (HHN), released a statement defending Iraq's popular protest movement. The statement said that "we will always remain with the rightful demands of our noble people and with the peaceful demonstrators." Iran's proxy militias engaged in violent repression of Iraqi protesters during Fall 2019. Their newfound embrace of the current protest movement against poor service provision and high unemployment is likely an effort to sabotage and undermine Prime Minister Kadhimi's political and popular support and ensure his inability to deliver on key priorities, including holding early elections and cracking down on corrupt militias.

13 July 28: Pro-Kadhimi Bloc Iraqis Alliance Unanimously Elects Ammar al-Hakim as President in First Meeting. The Iraqis Alliance, a newly formed, pro-Prime Minister Kadhimi parliamentary bloc, held its first official meeting and unanimously elected Shi'a cleric and former Wisdom Trend leader Ammar al-Hakim as the bloc's president. The Iraqis Alliance also elected a former member of Haider al-Abadi's Victory Alliance to the position of Vice President, a former Irada Movement member as spokesperson, and the former head of the Nation bloc, a small State of Law Coalition splinter party, as parliamentary leader. The four leadership positions of the Iraqis Alliance reflect the four main constituent parties that joined forces to create the new bloc.



- Iraqi Security Forces
- ISIS
- Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)
- Major Cities
- Anti-ISIS Coalition
- Iran
- Iraqi Council of Representatives
- Demonstration
- Iranian Proxy Militias
- Religious Figures
- Iraqi Prime Minister and Cabinet

Graphic by Brian Carter, Nicole Millar, and Calvin Pugh with Katherine Lawlor and Brandon Wallace
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Key Takeaway: Iran's Iraqi proxy militias are accelerating their campaign to constrain Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's attempts to reign in militias and reclaim Iraqi sovereignty. Militias diversified their attacks against Iraqi, US and opposition actors with not only rocket attacks but also the kidnapping of a well-known German national, the IED targeting of an Iraqi logistics convoy supporting the US-led Coalition, and the killing of protesters by Iranian-infiltrated Iraqi Security Forces. Meanwhile, the United States or Israel likely targeted two weapons depots belonging to Iran-aligned militias in Iraq as regional US- and Israeli-Iranian tensions increased. The combination of these kinetic activities and the resumption of mass protests calling for improved electricity services in the brutally hot Iraqi summer threaten to overwhelm Kadhimi's precariously constructed government.

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