

**1 July 28-29: Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi Replaces Three Operations Commanders within 24 Hours.** Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi promoted three new commanders to lead the Ninewa, Basra, and Samarra operations commands. Kadhimi assigned Maj. Gen. Ismail Shihab al-Mahlawi to Ninewa and Maj. Gen. Akram Saddam Mudannaf to Basra. Maj. Gen. Jabbar Hajim al-Darraj replaced Samara Operations Commander Staff Maj. Gen. Imad al-Zuhairi, who served as operations commander since 2015. New Basra Operations Commander Mudannaf previously led the 5th Iraqi Army Division, which is compromised by the Iranian proxy Badr Organization.

**2 July 29: Prime Minister Kadhimi and Finance Minister Ali Allawi Meet with International Energy Agency and Global Energy Companies to Discuss Economic and Energy Reforms.** Prime Minister Kadhimi and Finance Minister Ali Allawi met with Executive Director of the International Energy Agency Fatih Birol, unspecified US and British officials, and executives from German energy company Siemens, US energy company General Electric, French energy company Total, Italian energy company Eni, British energy company BP, and UAE energy company Crescent Petroleum to discuss economic and energy reforms. Birol proposed that Iraq could end the practice of wastefully burning natural gas in order to decrease energy costs and improve energy efficiencies. Readouts also indicate that the parties discussed how Iraq could lessen its dependency on Iranian natural gas by using its own natural gas to support domestic energy needs. The wide array of regional and international energy companies present at these meetings indicates Kadhimi's willingness to divest from Iraq's overreliance on Iranian energy.

**3 July 30: Unidentified Militants Launch Two Rockets at Baghdad International Airport.** Unidentified militants fired two Katyusha rockets toward military sites where US and Coalition troops are present within the Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) complex. Iraq's Security Media Cell (SMC), an official Iraqi military media body, confirmed the attack but reported no casualties and only minor material damage. SMC added that militants likely fired the rockets from two different locations in the Radwaniyah area, approximately 10 km south of BIAP. Iranian proxy militias explicitly denied responsibility for the attacks via Telegram and suggested that the attacks were staged to "damage the reputation of the [Islamic] Resistance," likely due to the timing of the attacks during the Islamic observance of Eid al-Adha.

**4 July 30: Ministry of Interior Investigation Concludes that Iran-linked Law Enforcement Forces Are Responsible for Killing Protesters.** Iraqi Minister of Interior Othman al-Ghanimi announced the findings of an investigation into the killing of at least three protesters during demonstrations in Tahrir Square on July 26. Ghanimi publicly identified two officers in the Iraqi Law Enforcement Forces (LEF) and claimed that they used their personal rifles to shoot protesters. Ghanimi identified a third culprit within the LEF who was involved in the killings in an unspecified manner. All three were arrested. Iraq's National Security Council, then led by the Iran-proxy Faleh al-Fayyadh, formed the LEF on October 23, 2019, to create a force capable of ending Iraq's popular protest movement. Iraq's LEF is likely modeled after Iran's LEF, which conducts its own violent crackdowns against protest movements in Iran. LEF killings of protesters undermines the authority of Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's government. The naming of the LEF officers fulfills Kadhimi's promise to hold security forces accountable for violence against protesters but may also further antagonize Iran's proxies.

**5 July 30: Kadhimi Classifies Fallen Demonstrators as Martyrs, Fulfilling a Key Promise to the Protest Movement.** Prime Minister Kadhimi announced that the 561 protesters killed by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) during the October 2019 protest movement will be designated as martyrs, making their families eligible for \$8,380 in compensation. Kadhimi promised to deliver justice to protest victims during his ascension to the premiership. The martyr designations demonstrate his ongoing efforts to engage with and uphold his promises to Iraq's popular protest movement.

**6 July 31: Prime Minister Kadhimi Calls for Early Elections in June 2021.** Prime Minister Kadhimi set June 6, 2021, as his desired date to hold early parliamentary elections, one of his core promises to the Iraqi people. Elections cannot legally go forward without parliamentary approval of the draft election law, drawing of districts, and passage of a new quorum rule for the Supreme Federal Court. Each of these measures has been stalled since December 2019. Kadhimi also condemned all foreign interference in Iraq in a nationalistic speech announcing the elections, asserting that Iraq would not be an arena for foreign conflict. Kadhimi added that Iraq needs US economic investment and security training more than a US military presence. Parliament is unlikely to cooperate with Kadhimi in order to set the conditions necessary for free and fair elections in time to meet his June 2021 target date.

**7 July 31: Iranian Proxy Militia Publishes Series of Cartoons Blaming the US for Electricity Shortages in Iraq amid Widespread Demonstrations against Blackouts.** Al-Ahad TV, a popular media outlet owned and operated by Iranian proxy and US-designated terrorist organization Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), published a series of cartoons blaming the United States for Iraq's ongoing electricity shortages. One cartoon depicted a giant hand donning a US flag forcefully holding a large light switch in the "off" position while an Iraqi woman struggles to turn the switch "on" in front of her crying children. A second cartoon featured the same large hand with a US flag separating an employee of the German electrical company Siemens from a group of Iraqis crying "we have been sacrificed." These cartoons are intended to redirect widespread outrage over a lack of services away from corrupt government officials and toward the United States amid nationwide protests over electricity shortages.

**8 Aug. 1- 2: Iraqi Parliamentarians Offer Mixed Reactions to Kadhimi's Call for June 2021 Early Elections.** A variety of Iraqi Members of Parliament (MPs) responded to Kadhimi's early election date. Most MPs aimed to protect their corrupt power bases from Kadhimi's proposed election reforms. State of Law Coalition leader and former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki claimed that Kadhimi has no authority to dissolve Parliament to hold elections. Iran-linked MPs, including the Badr-led Conquest Alliance and the political wing of US-designated terrorist organization Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, supported Kadhimi's announcement and called for even earlier elections in a likely effort to either pretend to support progressive ideals while slowing reforms behind the scenes, or to hold elections before Kadhimi and his allies can force through stalled electoral reform legislation. Early, free, and fair elections risk damaging the power bases of Iraq's corrupt and entrenched political elites, but rushed and poorly regulated elections could be easily stolen by traditional power players.

**9 Aug. 2: Kadhimi Fires the Commander of the Iranian-linked Law Enforcement Forces following Outrage over Video of Officer Misconduct.** Local news outlets and social media users circulated a three-month-old video of LEF members forcibly shaving and beating a 16-year-old protester while insulting his mother, a cultural taboo. Kadhimi responded to widespread outrage over the video by removing LEF Commander Maj. Gen. Saad Khalaf from his post and transferring him to the Department of Command. The transfer effectively serves as a disciplinary action that equates to fast-track retirement and suspension with pay. Kadhimi also met with the subject of the video and promised to provide him with a lawyer and to personally sponsor his studies.

**10 Aug. 4: Iranian Proxy Militia Targets an Iraqi-operated Logistics Convoy Supporting the US-led Coalition.** The Iraqi SMC reported that an improvised explosive device (IED) hit an Iraqi-operated contractor logistics convoy supporting the US-led Coalition in Suq al-Shuyukh city in Dhi Qar Province. SMC indicated that the attack resulted in material damage but no injuries. Saraya Thawra al-Ashreen al-Thania, an Iranian-aligned militia, claimed responsibility for the attack with a video on Telegram that implied that the contractors cooperated with or had prior knowledge of the attack. Saraya Thawra al-Ashreen al-Thania also claimed responsibility for an IED attack on logistics vehicles supporting US forces in Diwaniyah, Qadisiyah Province, on July 11.

**11 Aug. 4: Armed Unidentified Militants Launch RPG at Iraqi Activist's Home, Resulting in Heavy Material Damage.** Unidentified militants targeted the home of Maysan Student Union activist Reda al-Aqili in central Maysan Province with a rocket propelled grenade (RPG). The RPG burst through the outer wall of the house and caused substantial material damage. Aqili said in a statement that his "family was targeted by corrupt parties." Security officials opened an investigation but are unlikely to identify the culprits. Protesters continue to demonstrate in Maysan demanding basic public services and employment opportunities amid widespread electricity shortages.



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

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**Key Takeaway:** Iran-aligned actors continue to resist Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's campaign to steadily implement his core promises to the Iraqi people. Kadhimi demonstrated tangible success in holding security forces accountable for unlawful violence against protesters by arresting members of the Iran-aligned Law Enforcement Forces (LEF) and removing the group's commander. Kadhimi fulfilled another central promise by setting a date for early elections in June 2021, drawing backlash from entrenched political elites who fear losing their power base through free and fair elections. Kadhimi still faces an uphill battle to hold these elections; Iraq's parliament must pass a new elections law, draw electoral districts, and approve new rules for the Supreme Federal Court before the elections can be held.

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