



# Human Security Survey

## Basra, Iraq — 2017

### Gender Security Dynamics

In March and April 2017, PAX and its local partner, the Iraqi Al-Firdaws Society conducted a survey across Basra governorate about the experiences of civilian populations with issues of insecurity and conflict. **The following discusses the key survey findings in which the gendered dynamics of insecurity and conflict became specifically apparent, including the different ways in which men and women in Basra experience and perceive insecurity.** The results detailed herein were drawn from interviews with **528 men** and **155 women**. We acknowledge that women are unfortunately underrepresented in our survey sample; a result of conservative gender norms in this part of Iraq that make it difficult to gain access to women, particularly when discussing sensitive topics. All differences between men and women shown in this report are generally statistically significant at a 95% probability level unless otherwise indicated. Given the relatively small female sample, however, results should be read with some caution. It is likely that some gendered differences are underestimated.

#### About the Human Security Survey:

The **HUMAN SECURITY SURVEY (HSS)** is a methodology developed by PAX's Protection of Civilians (PoC) department to **collect data and facilitate constructive dialogue about civilians' experiences, perceptions, and expectations in situations of conflict.** The intended purpose is threefold: 1) to increase the understanding of local security dynamics and trends; 2) to enhance the 'claim-making capacity' of civilians to identify their priorities and hold security providers and decision makers accountable; and 3) to inform evidence-based advocacy that enables international stakeholders to design and implement protection activities that reflect local realities. PAX implements all aspects of the HSS in Iraq in close collaboration with its partners on the ground, the **IRAQI AL-AMAL ASSOCIATION** and the **IRAQI AL-FIRDAWS SOCIETY**. The HSS is also conducted in Kirkuk and Salahaddin governorates.

The survey in Basra took place over 2 weeks in **March-April 2017**. Twelve enumerators completed 745 interviews across the governorate's 7 districts, **683** of which were used in the final analysis. **Communities, households, and individual respondents were selected to participate as randomly as possible using a set of systematic procedures in order to maximize generalizability.** For cultural reasons, our research protocol determined that female enumerators interviewed women, and male enumerators interviewed men. Participation is entirely voluntary and data are kept strictly anonymous and confidential.

Men and women spoke candidly about their perceptions of insecurity, particularly the widespread sense that violence and crime are increasing in Basra.

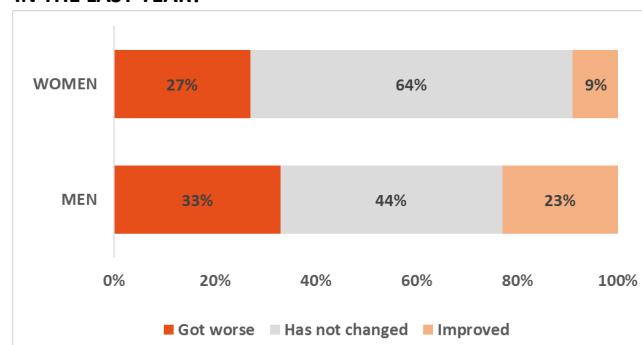
Number of surveys completed per district



Nearly **1/4** of participating households had experienced one or more types of insecurity in the previous year. The most common types of violence reported included: **assault with a weapon or attempted murder, robbery, murder, extortion, intimidation or harassment, and/or abduction or disappearance.** Notably, there were very few cases of sexual and gender based violence reported, with **only a few mentions of sexual assault, honour killing, or forced suicide.** Given the sensitivity of these topics, for both individuals and families, we anticipate significant underreporting. Women and men did not report significantly differently on the types of incidents experienced by their households.

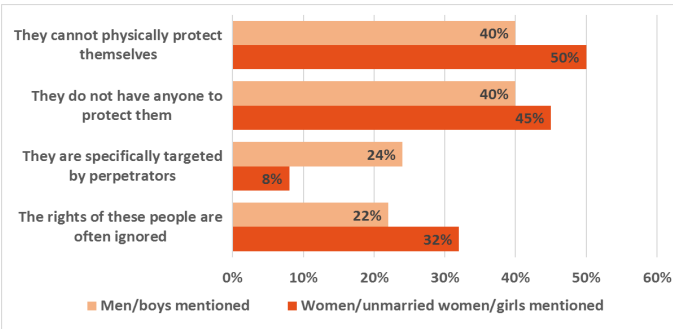
When asked about recent changes in their personal security situation, men were generally more positive than women, with **23%** saying their security situation improved, vs. **9%** of women:

#### HOW DID YOUR OWN PERSONAL SECURITY SITUATION CHANGE IN THE LAST YEAR?



When asked about changes that they or members of their households have had to make in their daily lives as a result of insecurity, men were more likely than women to report **more reliance on formal security forces (45% of men and 34% of women).** In contrast, women were more likely to say that people in their household had **joined formal security forces (19% of women and 6% of men).**

When asked to identify which types of people in their community are most vulnerable to violence and why, respondents spoke about gender at much higher rates than any other identifying factors. **Young men or boys** were named most frequently, with **50%** of respondents, followed by **women (43%), young women or girls (24%), men (23%),** and/or **unmarried women or girls (16%)**. A difference that stood out was that while **25%** of male respondents mentioned men/boys as vulnerable, only **14%** of female respondents did so. Below is a summary of the most frequently mentioned reasons for why respectively men/boys and women/girls were seen as vulnerable. The only statistically significant difference is on the reason “They are specifically targeted by perpetrators”, mentioned more often about men than women.



(Based on 314 respondents who mentioned only either men/boys or women/girls as vulnerable. More options were allowed.)

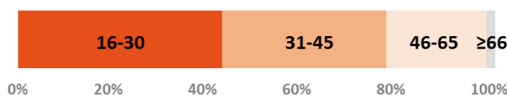
### OUR RESPONDENTS IN BASRA:

Participation in the survey was completely voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. Randomization procedures were used to identify communities, households, and individuals, although the participant selection processes were structured so as to maximize the likelihood of gender balance and an appropriately diverse representation on the basis of ethnic and religious identity. Even with these efforts, we found it difficult to achieve equal participation of women in Basra, particularly in more conservative areas.

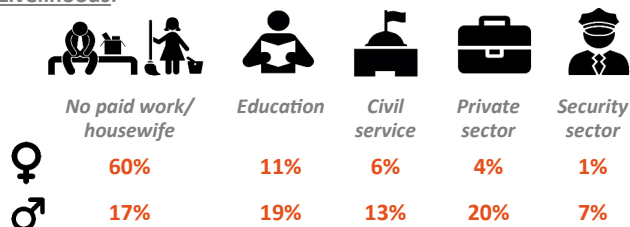
#### Gender balance:



#### Age distribution:



#### Livelihoods:



#### Ethnic and religious identity:

When asked openly to describe their identity group(s), **88%** of respondents said Iraqi and **25%** said Muslim. Smaller percentages identified more specifically as either Shia (**16%**) or Sunni (**3%**), and there was a small number of people who identified themselves as: Assyrian, Christian, Kurdish, or Mandaean.

## SECURITY PERCEPTIONS WOMEN MEN

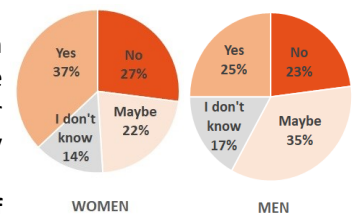
Percentage that agrees with the following statements:

I generally feel safe from violence or crime in my community	<b>26%</b>	<b>35%</b>
I generally feel safe from violence or crime in my own household	<b>37%</b>	<b>60%</b>
Girls should not be subject to harassment on the street no matter what they are wearing	<b>59%</b>	<b>48%</b>
It is best for our protection when security forces are from within our community because they know us well	<b>67%</b>	<b>58%</b>
Handing in all of our weapons would reduce violence and crime in this community	<b>70%</b>	<b>80%</b>
The national government in Baghdad is taking clear steps to reduce violence in our community	<b>16%</b>	<b>29%</b>

There are interesting differences when it comes to perceptions of certain security issues. In general, men rate their own feelings of safety higher than women do. Notably, more than **60% of women said that they generally do not feel safe from violence or crime within their own households** (compared with **37%** of men). This may be because women are more liable to face incidents of domestic violence or the fact that women travel less often outside of the home than their male family members.

### IN THE NEXT YEAR, DO YOU PERSONALLY EXPECT TO BECOME A VICTIM OF VIOLENCE?

The higher sense of insecurity among women was also clear from the question regarding their expectations of personally becoming a victim of violence, in which **37% of women said yes vs. 25% of men.**



A striking similarity rather than difference was found on the question “**There should be more women serving in the police to address security issues facing women**” where around **60%** of both men and women agreed.

PAX’s PoC team will continue putting out periodic summary reports about different thematic topics for each of the 3 governorates where we currently conduct the HSS in Iraq (Basra, Kirkuk, and Salahaddin). Other forthcoming reports in this series will cover: *Experiences and Perceptions of Vulnerability*; and *Civilian Relationships to Security Actors and Other Authorities*. Please check out our website for more information, or contact us via poc@paxforpeace.nl. For other information regarding our Iraq and Gender Programs please visit: [www.paxforpeace.nl/our-work/programmes](http://www.paxforpeace.nl/our-work/programmes).

The HSS is made possible with the generous support of the **Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs**.

Please note: All icons used herein are sourced from FlatIcon and used in accordance with their author licenses.