



Human Security Survey

Basra, Iraq — 2019

Summary of Key Findings

While traditionally Basra was not researched for its conflict dynamics within Iraq since none of its territory came under Da’esh (also known as the Islamic State or ISIS/ISIL) control in recent years, PAX has been conducting the Human Security Survey (HSS) in the governorate since 2017 for a number of key reasons. First, many of the frontline fighters against Da’esh were men from Basra who had joined one of an estimated 50 brigades of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMFs, locally known as Al-Hashd Al-Sha’abi), which are mostly sectarian (predominantly Shi’a) armed groups. While they formally fall under the Ministry of Defence, Government of Iraq (GoI), many are funded, trained and equipped by external actors, most notably the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). Now that Da’esh has officially been defeated, there is yet a comprehensive Demo-

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 currently also conducted in Kirkuk and Salahaddin governorates. This is the third year in which the survey is being conducted in Iraq.

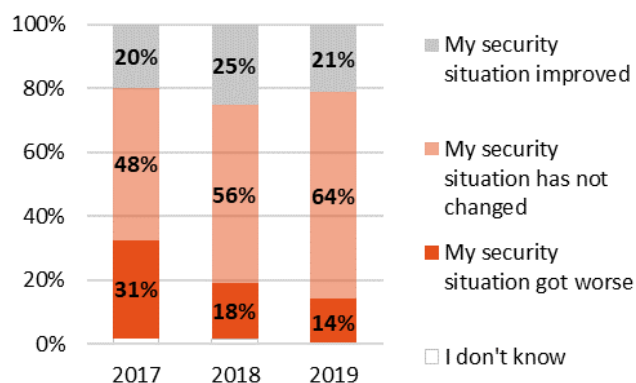
The survey in Basra took place over 3 weeks in **March-April 2019**. A total of **14** enumerators (6 females and 8 males) conducted **816** surveys (**44%** female respondents and **56%** male respondents) across all seven districts in the governorate. Target numbers were allocated across sub-districts based on population density, with specific research sites being selected or omitted based on security and access, with an eye to ensuring demographic diversity. Communities, households and individual respondents were selected to participate as randomly as possible using a set of systematic procedures in order to maximize generalizability. Participation is entirely voluntary with respondents given the choice to opt out of the survey at any point, and data are kept strictly confidential.



The team conducted 816 interviews in Basra

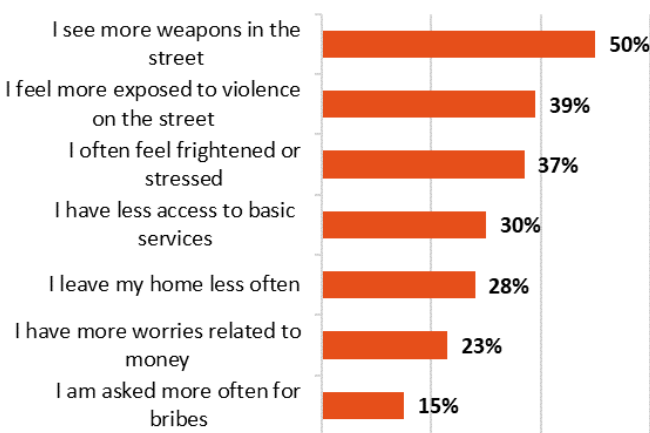
bilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) process to be put in place which can absorb these men returning to their homes. Furthermore, there were increasingly high levels of violent crime reported in the governorate, often related to smuggling of drugs and other illicit goods across international borders.¹ Last year also saw violent protests in the face of economic crisis (while most of the state revenue comes from oil from Basra, it remains one of the most under-served governorates), lack of electricity and clean water.² Returning soldiers and their families share a feeling of resentment, because they feel that their sacrifices for the country have largely remained unnoticed and unacknowledged.³

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR PERSONAL SECURITY SITUATION COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?



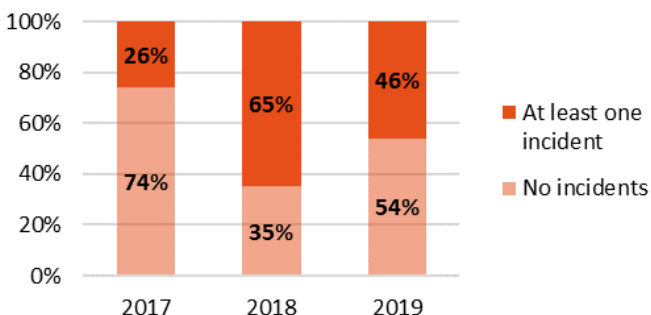
In 2017, **48%** of the respondents felt that their security situation had not changed, whereas this proportion was **56%** in 2018. Despite access to electricity and basic services improving in Basra this year, residents surveyed remained pessimistic about their current and future security environment. A staggering **64%** of respondents felt that their security situation had not improved from the last year, and another **14%** felt that their security situation had actually deteriorated in comparison to last year's. Of these, half of the respondents reported seeing more weapons on the street, **39%** reported as feeling more exposed to violence and harassment, **37%** reported as feeling stressed and **30%** reported having less access to basic services such as water, health and education facilities.

HOW HAS THE WORSENING PERSONAL SECURITY SITUATION IMPACTED YOUR DAILY LIFE?



46% of the respondents reported that either themselves or a member of their household faced at least one security threat within the past year. While this marks an overall increase as compared to 2017 (**26%**), the percentage has decreased after a spike in 2018 (**65%**).

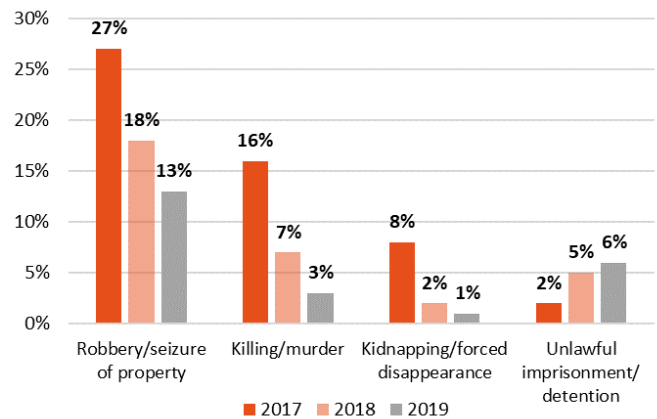
HAVE YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD BEEN A VICTIM OF SECURITY THREATS WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?



The data points to a steady downward trend in the share of reported robberies (from **27%** in 2017 to **13%** in 2019), killings (from **16%** in 2017 to **3%** in 2019) and kidnappings or forced disappearances (from **8%** in 2017 to only **1%** in 2019), whereas the percentage of respondents who experienced unlawful imprisonment and detention increased from **2%** in 2017 to **6%** in 2019. In 2019, less than half of

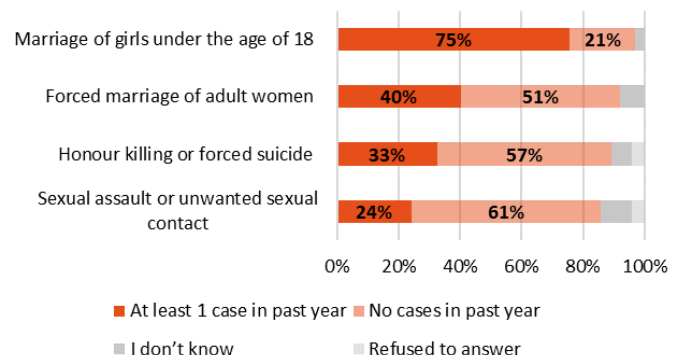
respondents who faced at least one security threat made significant changes to their daily life as a result.

TYPES OF THREATS FACED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



While in 2017, residents of Abu Al-Kaseeb district had the highest likelihood of becoming victims of violence (**33%** of households compared to the governorate wide average of **21%**), in 2019 residents of Al-Faw had the highest likelihood of facing a violent incident (**69%** compared to the governorate average of **46%**), followed by Al-Qurna (**53%**) and Al-Zubair (**51%**). This may be explained by the fact that the oil fields in Al-Qurna and Al-Zubair were stages of mass protests in the governorate during the summer of 2018. Protestors were attacked with batons and rubber hoses, with those in Al-Qurna also being shot at.⁴ Similarly, the country's only deep-water port Umm Qasr, located in Al-Faw district, was also blocked by the protestors in 2018.⁵

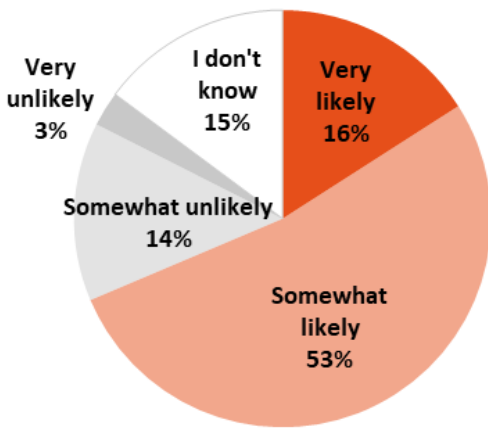
CASES OF SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE HAPPENING TO WOMEN OR GIRLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY



While it is hard to get accurate quantitative data on issues regarding Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) given the cultural norm of not discussing such issues openly, **55%** of respondents reported seeing women or girls from their community facing verbal or physical harassment while out on the street. When asked about the most common types of incidents they have seen within their communities, **33%** respondents reported the incidence of honour killing, and **40%** reported the incidence of forced marriages, while **75%** reported the incidence of girls being married under the age of 18 years. For men and boys experiencing incidents of

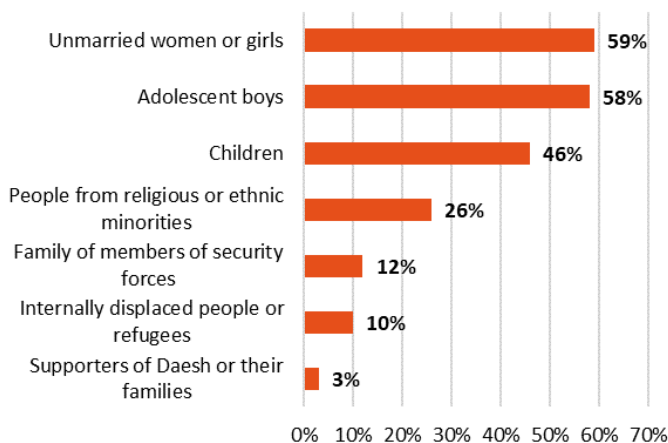
SGBV, **45%** respondents reported males facing verbal or physical harassment, as well as early marriages (for more details, please refer to the governorate gender dynamics report).

DO YOU EXPECT THAT YOU ARE LIKELY TO BECOME A VICTIM OF VIOLENCE?



On questions around vulnerability, the majority of those interviewed feel that they are somewhat likely (**53%**) or very likely (**16%**) to become victims of violence. Of the **69%** of respondents who feel that they are somewhat or very likely to become victimised, **80%** reported that it would likely be because they are caught up in a random or indiscriminate act of violence, most likely (**78%**) at the hands of an unknown criminal. While **56%** of respondents feel that only some people in their community are more likely to be exposed to violence than others due to their age, gender, ethnicity, or other factors, a more than proportionate percentage of respondents in Abu Al Khaseeb (**48%**) and Shatt Al Arab (**45%**) compared to the governorate average of **39%** feel that all people in their community are equally likely to be exposed to violence. In terms of the groups most likely to be exposed to violence, **59%** of the respondents listed unmarried women or girls to be most at risk, and **58%** listed adolescent boys to be most at risk. These two groups were

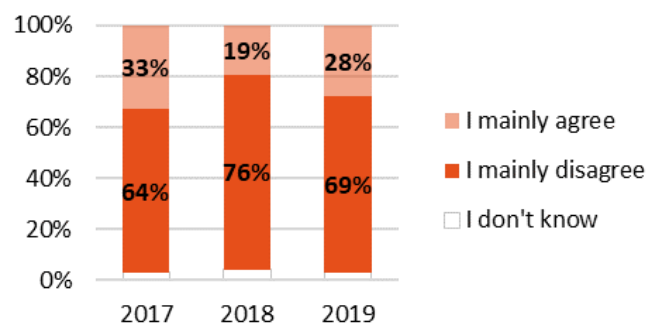
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE OR GROUPS DO YOU CONSIDER MOST LIKELY TO BE EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE IN THIS COMMUNITY?



also consistently the top two choices across all districts of Basra. Similarly, across the districts, respondents felt that adolescent boys are more exposed to risk because they are often outside the house, whereas for unmarried women and girls, they felt that since they are unable to physically protect themselves, and their rights are ignored, hence they are more likely to experience violence. Only in Al-Faw district (**75%**) did respondents feel that the main reason unmarried women and girls are targeted usually is a matter of revenge to restore family honour.

A staggering **69%** of those surveyed in Basra reported not feeling safe within their communities, showing the general mistrust that exists. While this was the case in governorates which were captured by Da'esh or had high numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the reason for this mistrust in Basra can be alluded to a variety of factors, including former PMF fighters returning to the governorate with a general dearth of jobs available. **66%** of the respondents feel that it is very easy to acquire firearms in the governorate, and **58%** of the respondents think that the national government in Baghdad is not taking adequate steps to reduce the levels of violence in their communities. The latter can also be alluded to the government authorities opening fire on protestors last year, as well as high rates of unemployment, which are estimated at over **30%** in Basra,⁶ compared to governorates which were controlled by Da'esh experiencing an estimated rate of **22%** unemployment, and governorates not controlled by Da'esh at **11%**.⁷

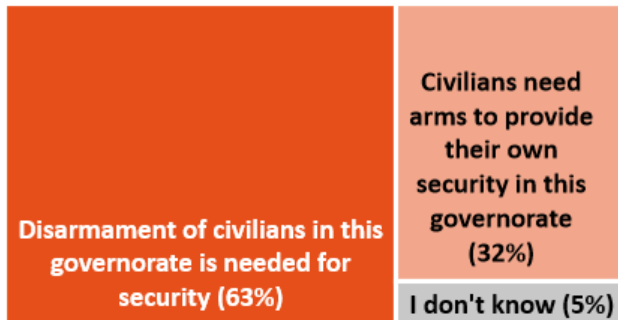
I GENERALLY FEEL SAFE FROM VIOLENCE OR CRIME IN MY COMMUNITY



When asked how to improve protection in the governorate, **63%** of respondents said that disarmament of civilians is needed to improve the security situation in Basra; however, **32%** of respondents did feel that civilians needed arms to provide for their own security in the governorate, perhaps alluding to their dissatisfaction with the security being provided by armed actors. Similarly, **72%** of respond-

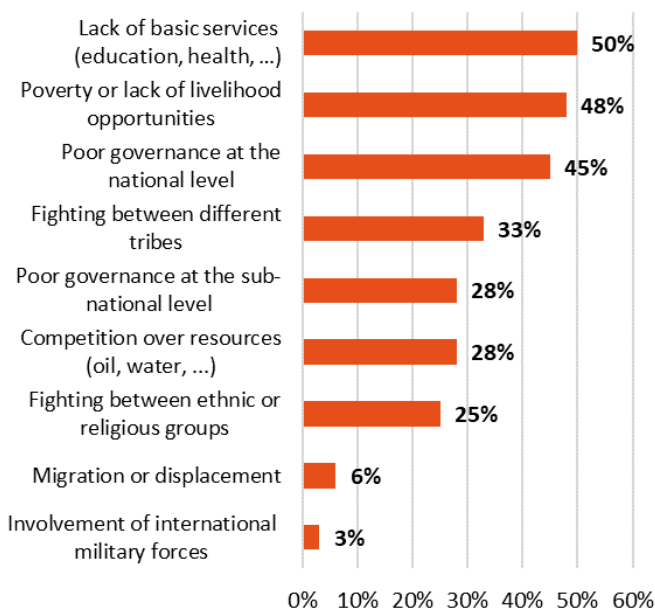
ents agreed that political and security actors need more information about civilians' priorities in order to improve the security situation in Basra.

WITH WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TWO STATEMENTS DO YOU AGREE MOST?



While respondents are dismal on the security situation improving in the governorate (only 22% feeling that it will actually improve), they overwhelmingly (99%) allude to structural issues, such as economic, social or religious, and political issues, or a combination of all three, as causes of conflict. Echoing the same patterns, when asked to name the three most likely causes of future conflicts, the most chosen options included lack of basic services (50%), poverty or lack of livelihood opportunities (48%), and weak national level governance (45%).

WHAT ARE THE 3 MAIN FACTORS THAT ARE MOST LIKELY TO CAUSE FURTHER CONFLICT IN YOUR COMMUNITY IN THE NEXT YEAR?



When asked to list the three main changes needed to bring about lasting peace in Iraq, the respondents listed economic development (58%), national level political reform (50%) and disarmament or security sector reforms (50%) as their answers. These were also the top choices across the dis-

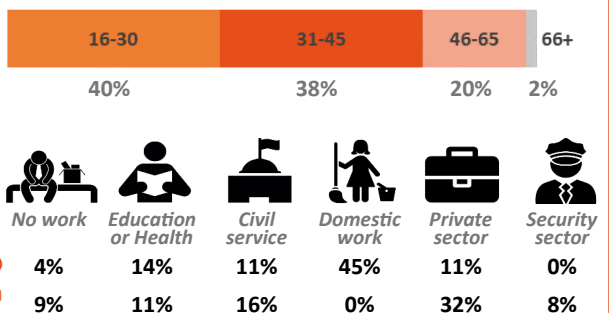
OUR RESPONDENTS IN BASRA:

Participation in the HSS is entirely voluntary and data are kept strictly anonymous and confidential. Communities, households, and individuals are approached for the survey through systematic and approximately random procedures, although the sampling and participant selection processes are structured to maximize the likelihood of gender balance and an appropriately diverse representation on the basis of ethnic and religious identity. (Note that our research protocol determines that female enumerators interview women, and male enumerators interview men.) Below is some information about our Basra sample:

Gender balance:



Age distribution:



Livelihood: Ethnic and religious identity:

Our respondents included 99% Arabs and 1% from 6 other ethnic minority groups (Afro-Iraqi, Armenian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Mandaean, or Syriac). When asked about religious identity, 96% said Muslim, and 4% identified as a member of a religious minority group (Christian or Mandaean).

tricts, except in Al-Faw, where respondents felt that better functioning formal security providers (69%), and improved access to justice (44%) was more important than national level political reform (38%).

Notes

- https://www.unodc.org/pdf/report_iraq_2003-09-01.pdf
- <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/protests-southern-iraq-intensify-instability-follow>; <https://blogs.unicef.org/blog/basra-oil-abundance-little-water-drink/>
- <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5cc9b20c4.pdf>
- <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/iraqi-police-disperse-protesters-outside-oilfield-as-unrest-grows-1.3568342>
- <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-protests/protesters-block-iraqi-commodities-port-idUSKCN1LL271>
- <https://apnews.com/c335ab38b6924cb8b71bf9579ff8380c/Soaring-unemployment-fuels-protests-in-southern-Iraq>
- ibid.

The HSS is made possible with the generous support of the **Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs**. In case of questions, please contact Saba Azeem at azeem@paxforpeace.nl

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