



Al Qaim Massacre

Iraqi War Crime Documentation Centre
and Foreign Relation Bureau, Iraq

Introduction

This report has been written in a collaborative effort between researchers at the Amman based Iraqi War Crimes Documentation Center (IWDC) and the UK based Foreign Relations Bureau, Iraq (FRB). It uncovers facts not documented elsewhere, regarding the latest offensive on the Islamic State controlled Iraqi border town of Qaim.

It presents information on the sites targeted by government aircrafts and the names of those killed and injured. It offers a critical outlook on the way in 'liberation operations' are being executed and their impact upon defenceless populations. It concludes with a series of recommendations to prevent similar events from reoccurring.

Background

As the conflict between Iraq's official armed forces, irregular militias and the Islamic State (IS) intensifies, ordinary civilians are still paying the heaviest price.

Following advances by Iraqi forces into Mosul (de facto capital of IS) in mid-October this year, the country has witnessed unrelenting atrocities that remain largely untold to global audiences. As the death toll climbs, urgent questions about the manner in which IS-held cities are being 'liberated' have gone unanswered, similar to calls for investigations to hold to account actors in breach of international humanitarian law.

The death of an estimated 120 people in Qaim on 7 December 2016 barely filtered through to social media pages or made it to the top of news headlines. The attack came less than 24 hours after US coalition forces deliberately struck a hospital complex in Mosul, allegedly used by IS.



A local activist told the Iraqi War Crimes Documentation centre that "IS arrived to the scene 20 minutes after bombardment began, and threatened to kill local citizen journalists, should they decide to film future events".

As one of few places in Iraq without internet supply, news of the massacre took several hours to reach the outside world. It broke after IS-run Amaq news agency, published footage they had confiscated from citizen journalists. The video captures scenes of devastation across the market square where bombs were dropped by Sukhoi jets.



The excuse of 'IS in Qaim' has offered a rhetorical shield behind which officials from Baghdad's central government have hidden. There is no denying the excessive use of force however, as exposed by the scale of human loss and suffering. No excuse can relieve the government of its responsibility. The tragedy is neither new nor unique, just another crime in a long list of those carried out under the cover of fighting IS.

The latest attack on Qaim marks the fourth incident in which the town has come under fierce aerial bombardment. Till today, no one has been held responsible for the onslaught its population has forcibly endured.

June 2003 (US forces)
June 30th 2014 (Iraqi forces)
August 8th 2015 (Iraqi forces)

Iraqi air force jets ordered the attack in the early hours of the morning on three different locations, along Qaim's main commercial stretch, as medical sources and eyewitness accounts verified. The same sources confirmed that a sizeable proportion of the dead included women and children, but were unable to name female victims at the request of their families.

Speaking on behalf of Iraq's ministry of interior, Brigadier General Saad Maan said during an interview on the state run Al Iraqiya channel that "the attack on Qaim was a success which was carried based on detailed and reliable intelligence information". In spite of that, the facts on the ground contradict Maan's version of events.

Legally prohibited strikes

Based on interviews conducted with eye witnesses and medical sources in Qaim, below is a list of the three locations that Iraqi government planes bombed. Dividing each of these was a mere 900 meters (approximately), but together they form Qaim's main commercial road.

1.

عمارة القوزي

Al Qouzi building consisted of several shops located at the bottom of the building, and residential flats on top. Close by, there was a retirement office where pensioners go to collect their monthly pension allowance.



2.

عمارة ال نهيره

N'hayra building was another commercial area regularly frequented by townsmen and women.



3.

السوق المقابل لجامع القائم الكبير

The Qaim Souq, opposite the grand mosque, is the busiest market place where home supplies and groceries are sold. It was the third site targeted by the Iraqi air force.



Dead but not forgotten

The FRBI and the Iraqi War Crimes Documentation Center researched, corroborated, and documented the names of those killed by Iraqi government Sukhoi jets, with the help of local medical sources, that shall not be named for security seasons.

Hamoud Aboud (Abu Qusai Al Salmani)

Mishtaqa Hamid Aboud Al Salmani

Younis Ratib Ghnyan Al Kubaisi

Nasr Sh'hab Soheil Al Hardani

Sulaiman Mohammad Ibrahim Al Hardani

Ahmad Khalouf Al Rawi

Jihad Hardan Al Salmani

Yousif Jihad Hardan Al Salmani

Makhlouf Duhman Mohammad Al Karbouli

Hassan Hamad Jassim Al Salmani

Abd Al Wahab Mishtaqa Mohammad Al Salmani

Mishtaqa Mohammad Al Salmani

Abd Al Muhaymin Hamoud Al Salmani

Ayoub Sabri Al Salmani

Habib Mohammad Touqan Al Farraji

Laith D'ham Abdalqadr Al Mufti

Mohammad Hamad Mohammad Khalifa Al Salmani

Abdalrahman Al Muflih Abd Al Razaq Al Salmani

Abd Al Qadr Ghyan Al Karbouli

Anas Ratib Ghnyan

Rafah Jubayr Al Kubaisi

Khalaf hamad Jassim Al Salmani

Jamal Satm Hubit Al Hardani

Omar Mohammad Adballah Al Karbouli

Aws Ahmad Abd Hamadi Al Salmani

Mohsin Abd Sawid Al Mahlawi (elderly man)

Hamdan Hussein (was visiting Qaim from Dughaima دغيمه)

The family of J'bayer Matar Al Karbouli (16 killed, entire family wiped out)

The family of Satar J'bayer Matar Al Karbouli (entire family wiped out)

Mustafa Hassan Hamad Al Salmani

Anwar Mohammad Kurdi Al Salmani

Saddam Saleh Muhawish Al Salmani

Sabah Hamdan Majoun Al Salmani

Uthman D'ham Maagul Al Salmani

Muhannad Issam Denhash Al Rawi

Bilal Dawoud Fahad Al Rawi

Zaki M'hai Al Rawi and his son

Mahmoud Khashan Selbi Al Karbouli

Fatah Al Kubaisi

Ali Mishaan Nawar

Jubair Ahmad Khalaf

The wife of Ubaid Mohammad Al Damouk

Mohammad Khalaf Jassim Al Salmani Abu Jassim

Omar Mohammad Jassim

Alaa Hussein Al Rawi

Mutlaq Al Durbasi abu Hakim

The family of Ali Obeid Al Karbouli

Dhiya Hussein Khalaf Al Karbouli

Ahmad Mahmoud Abdallah Al Karbouli

Lutfi Naguib Al Rawi

Infant deaths

Ahmad Obeid Al Salmani

Ali Ayoub Sabri Al Salmani

Bakr Omar Hassan Al Rawi

Mohammad Omar Hassan Al Rawi

Daughter of Ali Uwaid Hamad

Mustafa mohammad Khalaf

Su'oud Juma Su'oud Matar

Idris Shakir Khalaf Al Karbouli

Aya Shakir Khalaf Al Karbouli

Kutaiba Shakir Khalaf

Yousif Faisal Hassan Al Salmani

The injured

Hamid Igaidi Raghieb Aasi

Omar Ajeel Al Qouzi

Abdallah Noman Al Qouzi

Bassim Mazin Al Qouzi

Hatem J'bayer Al Kubaisi

Mazin J'bayer Al Kubaisi

Soheib mohammad Hamoud Al Salmani and his son

Matar Aboud Hamad Al Salmani

Nouman Mawloud Al Qouzi

Nabil Abd Al Sattar

Mohammad Jihad Al Kubaisi

Dilly Hardan Attiya Al Salmani

Ibrahim Khalaf Aboud Al Karbouli

Mahmoud khalaf AL Karbouli

Khalif Mhawash Al Karbouli

Ali Uwaid Hamoud

In Breach of International Legal obligations

The orders that allowed for aerial attacks on Qaim's civilian population, grossly contradict article 51 of the Geneva protocol relating the the protection of victims of international armed conflict, signed back in June 1977. International laws to which states involved in the liberation effort are signatories, are designed to limit the nature of armed conflict. This has not happened in the case of Iraq. The government, coalition partners, and Islamic state terrorists have all failed to comply with these standards.

Under article 51, point II, the civilian population, as stated, should "not be the object of attack" and "acts or threats of violence ... are prohibited". As far as these laws are concerned, attacks on civilians populations or areas in which they reside or own properties cannot be justified. These laws are repeatedly disregarded by the official government. Little has been done by the international community to prevent similar atrocities from happening or to hold actors responsible to account.



Recommendations

All parties involved in liberation efforts must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, to uphold the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants and the principle of proportionality. To adopt all available precautionary measures ahead of 'liberation operations', including prior warnings of general military operations in the area.

To ensure safe passage for the evacuation of all civilians at risk of being attacked

Ending the use of explosive weapons, consistent with the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks.

To conduct transparent and impartial investigations into allegations of war crimes, including the facts covered by this report.

To conduct investigations into the exercise of air raids, that have resulted in the death of hundreds.

To provide immediate and adequate reparations to the victims of this war, and the families whose members have been killed, injured and traumatised as a result of recent operations and air raids. Compensation should also be awarded to Iraqis whose properties and homes have been destroyed or damaged.

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