



# OIR IN BRIEF

The 16th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) summarizes the quarter's key events and oversight of the U.S. mission to defeat ISIS and train, advise, and assist local partners to improve regional stability. Due to the partial government shutdown and the furlough of staff at the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development, this report does not contain sections on Governance and Civil Society, Humanitarian Assistance, and Stabilization.

## United States Announces Plans to Withdraw Troops from Syria *pp. 2-7, 16-19*

- On December 19, President Trump announced the U.S. military would **withdraw** troops from **Syria**.
- The **withdrawal** process was **ongoing** at publication of this report.
- In public and in responses to the DoD OIG, officials stated that **U.S. Syria policy** has **not changed**.
- **Approximately 2,000 ISIS fighters remained** in the region of eastern Syria where U.S. forces have been operating.
- USCENTCOM officials stated, "absent sustained pressure, **ISIS could likely resurge** in Syria in six to twelve months."
- "Currently, ISIS is regenerating key functions and capabilities **more quickly in Iraq than Syria**."



## Turkey Offers to Take Over the Fight Against ISIS in Syria *pp. 6, 26-27*

- Turkish President **Erdogan** offered to **deploy Turkish forces** to fight ISIS in **Syria** after the United States withdraws forces from the country.
- Turkey has **not participated** in ground operations against ISIS **since 2017** and has not fought ISIS in the Middle Euphrates River Valley.

## SDF Continues to Fight ISIS but Relies Heavily on Coalition Support *pp. 19-20, 22-23*

- The **SDF captured Hajin**, the last major town held by ISIS, although fighting around the town continued.
- Although the SDF are "tenacious fighters," CJTF-OIR said that **Coalition support** is "**vital** to the SDF's ability to **defeat ISIS** in the Middle Euphrates River Valley."

## ISIS Down to Last Stronghold in Syria but Still a Battle-Experienced Force *pp. 20-22*

- ISIS remained capable of **coordinating offensives and counteroffensives**, and temporarily retook territory on the Iraq-Syria border from the SDF.
- Remaining ISIS fighters were described by CJTF-OIR officials as "**battle-experienced**," "**hardened**," and "**well-disciplined**."
- ISIS generated **revenue** through smuggling, taxation, criminal activities, and external donations.

## ISIS Carries Out Attacks in Rural Iraq *pp. 29-33*

- ISIS conducted **IED attacks, assassinations, robbery and money laundering** this quarter.
- **Rugged terrain and poor weather** helped ISIS maintain freedom of movement and threaten civilians and security forces.

## The ISF is Reliant on Coalition Support in Intelligence and Institutional Reform *pp. 36-40*

- CJTF-OIR stated that Iraq **lacks a tasking system** for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets and **vetting procedures** for human intelligence.
- CJTF-OIR stated that even trained ISF units have **shortfalls** in command and control, leadership, physical resilience, and ability to execute "**basic minor infantry tactics**."

## Oversight and Investigations *pp. 48-67*

- Lead IG agencies and partners completed **9 reports** including a classified evaluation of social media exploitation to support OIR.
- Lead IG investigations resulted in **1 arrest, 2 criminal charges, and 2 convictions**.
- One **conviction** was of an American who **conspired to acquire and transfer surface-to-air missiles** to Libya, the United Arab Emirates, and Iraq.