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**Intermediate League of Arab States Council:**

**Abuses Committed by ISIS in Iraq**

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BACKGROUND GUIDE

**Topic: Abuses committed by ISIS in Iraq**

**History of the Council**

The Arab league is an organization that consists of members from northern Africa and southwest Asia, referred to as independent Arab states. There are a total of 21 members, the first six of these being Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia. The league was formed in Cairo, on March 22, 1945. The administrative center is also in Cairo and the Arab league’s Secretary-General is currently Amr Moussa, previously the Foreign minister of Egypt.

According to <http://www.arableagueonline.org> the goals of the Arab league are “Like similar organizations in the world whose goal is to look after their members’ economic, political, cultural, national and religious interests, the Arab League has been active in helping the Arab world grow economically and culturally, while finding solutions to resolve conflicts both within the league and outside of it.” With the main goal according to the Charter of the Arab League being “strengthening of the relations between the member-states, the coordination of their policies in order to achieve co-operation between them and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty; and a general concern with the affairs and interests of the Arab countries.“ The Arab league strives to resolve current issues and find new solutions in the Arab countries as well as resolve past conflicts.

List of Members: Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

**Pertinent Information**

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), has taken control of as much as a third of Iraq, including Iraq’s second largest city, Mosul. The group is accused of a “staggering array” of human rights abuses in Northern Iraq, many of which could be considered war crimes. Among these human rights violations, the group is also involved in terrorist activities, ranging from bombings in major cities to murdering foreign journalists. The hostilities between ISIS and the current government in Iraq is a threat to the lives citizens in the Northern part of the country, the wellbeing of foreigners in Iraq and the sovereignty of neighboring nations.

Women under the ISIS regime have faced particularly harsh treatment including armed attacks against female professionals, including doctors and lawyers. In August, over 400 women were taken by ISIS from the Nineveh region of Iraq and of those women, “150 unmarried girls and women, predominantly from the Yazidi and Christian communities, were reportedly transported to Syria, either to be given to ISIS fighters as a reward or to be sold as sex slaves.” In addition, cases of rape were not uncommon during the capture of Mosul by ISIS.

 Iraq has fought back against ISIS through armed action, including air strikes, as a response to ISIS terrorism which left at least 2000 Iraqis dead or wounded in August alone. The Iraqi air strikes cause large collateral damage including “significant civilian death” according to witness testimony. U.S. forces working in Iraq have also conducted missions in ISIS controlled Iraq, including their own airstrikes against ISIS targets. However, the U.S. remains wary of sending in ground forces due to the violate situation in the Middle East as a whole.

 ISIS has funded itself through extortion and capturing resources from the Iraqi government. Theft and kidnapping, as is the case with the girls from the Nineveh region, has been used to fund smaller cells and funds are shared in between groups with in ISIS. As of mid-2014, ISIS is estimated to have amassed around $2 billion USD worth of funding. Around 75% of this is estimated to have come from assets and resources captured from Mosul during their take over and through commandeering oil fields in Syria. In addition, some supporters of Al-Qaeda have provided funding, such as Khalifa Muhammad Turki al-Subaiy who helped fund the 9/11 attacks.

**History of the Issue**

Eight years ago, the terrorist group al Qaeda located in Iraq, began a movement against the dominant Shia community. As al Qaeda drew closer to success marked significantly by the bombing of the Al-Askariya Mosque in Samarra, the tables began to turn. U.S. American forces intervened and were able to kill Osama Bin Laden, al Qaeda’s radical leader. Finally, the United States withdrew U.S. troops from Iraq. However, once the United States had withdrew armed forces within Iraq, Iraqi officials began to speak of a “third generation” of al Qaeda radicalisms. Suspicion began to rise as uncertainties of what the future might hold were persistently debated. In 2012, a former spokesman for the U.S. military in Iraq, Major General Jeffrey Buchanan, cautioned that “if the Iraqi security forces are not able to put pressure on them, they could regenerate” (Major General Jeffrey Buchanan). Major General Buchanan also noted the weakness and lack of professional soldiers, the disparity between military units in Iraq, as well as the lack of equipment Iraq would need to fend off another radical group such as al Qaeda.

 As many dreaded, in 2006, a new al Qaeda regiment was established under the name ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq. This group would later add “and Syria” to their name to make it the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. New leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi shared his vision in hopes to expand ISIS support. Baghdadi calls for the establishment of a pure Islamic state that stretches across the region while attempting to promote resentment towards the Sunni population. ISIS has begun imposing Sharia law in the towns under their control, forcing their Islamic ideologies upon everyone in their path. The ISIS seeks to establish a new Islamic caliphate. The group began as a faction of Al-Qaeda under the control of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In early 2014, the group released a document claiming to be able to trace the lineage of its current leader, [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr_al-Baghdadi), back to Muhammad.

 ISIS has continued to grow and expand, not only in Iran and Syria, but their ideas have spread to other nations outside their boarders, an exploit significant enough for the world to turn towards what’s happening in Iran and Syria.

**Recent Action**

As ISIS grows in power, the United Nations is scrambling for solutions. Through the numerous debates concerning ISIS, many countries agree that immediate action must be taken. Numerous countries have also called for a collaborative solution such as Mladenov, a former Bulgarian foreign minister. “Iraq’s allies and the international community should work with the authorities to prevent a human rights tragedy…the United Nations in Iraq will do all it can to support the government and people of Iraq in alleviating the unspeakable suffering of Amerli’s inhabitants” (Mladenov). Also in support of the idea of collaboration is Great Britain’s Prime Minister David Cameron who recently called ISIS “a menace” and stated that “it [the solution] is about working with others to extinguish this terrorist threat” (Prime Minister Cameron). In addition, Great Britain agreed to help arm Kurdish forces, support the Iraqi government, and continue to supply humanitarian aid where needed.

 In August 2014, at the request of France, the United Nations Security Council called upon nations to provide imperative international action in support of the Iraqi government in fighting ISIS. This assistance would consist of aid to ease the suffering the Iranian citizen population has endured while under the threat of ISIS. France has already begun reconnaissance flights over Iraq and has donated 18,000 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition in support of the struggle against ISIS. French President François Hollande announced that France “will participate in efforts to hit terrorist locations in Iraq” (President François Hollande).

 That same month France called upon the United Nations Security Council to partake in international exploit to support the Iraqi government, President Barack Obama made the United States’ support clear. President Obama along with allies and partners of the United States vowed to provide support to degrade and eventually terminate the militant group that has slaughtered numerous Iraqi citizens. Following this public proclamation, the United States has, since then, conducted more than 150 airstrikes in Iraq against ISIS. On September 17th, President Obama announced that Saudi Arabia had agreed to host efforts to train and equip Syrian opposition forces to fight in the battle against the Islamic State. The United States also encouraged Saudi Arabia, with the support of Qatar and Egypt, to run negative campaign aids against ISIS to dissuade people from joining. Saudi Arabia has additionally invested $500 million in the U.N humanitarian aid agency in Iraq.

 Similar to Saudi Arabia, Germany has also agreed to train in the overall effort to fight against ISIS. Germany has also announced that they are sending military assistance to the Kurdish region to partake in efforts in that area. It has been noted that Germany favors action related towards diminishing ISIS propaganda and recruitment and have already placed bans on any activity within their country that supports ISIS including the flying the black ISIS flag.

 Also in support of the United States’ and Saudi Arabia’s efforts, is Australia who is preparing to position military aircrafts in the United Arab Emirates. Australia has also demonstrated support in helping to stem the humanitarian crisis that this calamity has created. Australia has agreed to send military advisors however; Prime Minister Tony Abbott made it clear that Australian combat troops will not partake in ground combat.

 The Netherlands have recently been praised by the state department for their efforts in combatting ISIS. Dutch leaders have proposed the possibility of an amendment to a national law that would deny citizenship to those who worked in collaboration with terrorists such as ISIS. Also eager to help is Canada whose State Department official noted that Canada had sent equipment and ammunition across the Iraqi border to help combat ISIS. In a recent meeting with State Department officials, Canada also gave recognition to Poland, Denmark, Albania, and Croatia for similarly providing supplies and ammunition in the struggle to defeat ISIS. Additional named on that list were New Zeeland, Romania, and South Korea who was emphasized for giving $1.2 million to combating ISIS.

 Lastly, Turkey has also taken steps in the war effort. Turkey has taken action towards cutting the flow of money to ISIS and have also denied entry to, or deported, several thousand foreign militants heading to Syria with the intention of joining forces with ISIS. The United States hopes that Turkey will halt oil exports from ISIS run areas that provide financial aid for their terrorist group.

**Questions to Consider**

* Are ground forces a viable option to combat this insurgency?
* Is a diplomatic solution or a military solution better for the long term?
* How much sovereignty are Middle East nations willing to give up?
* Could Syria under Bashar Al-Assad be a necessary ally in the fight against ISIS?
* Does ISIS pose a serious threat to nations outside of the Middle East?

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